

**Masconomet Middle School
2016 Youth Risk Behavior Survey
Results**

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Tri-Town Council**

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Sample and Methodology

Survey

The 2016 Masconomet Youth Survey was based on MA YRBS by the CDC; MOST OF US Teen Norms Survey; National Social Norms Resource Center – Assessment of Norms, Behaviors, and Attitudes; Survey of Student Norms – Hobart and William Smith Colleges – Alcohol Education Project. Questions in the survey measured student demographics, substance use, protective factors, depression, personal safety, and sexual health. Social norms questions were added to assess perceptions among Masconomet Middle School youth on areas of substance use. Survey questions were reviewed and developed using the lens of Search Institute’s 40 Developmental Assets Model.

Sample

The survey was administered on November 21, 2016. The final number and demographic profile of youth surveyed are discussed below.

Data cleaning and validity

Several steps were taken to ensure that the gathered data accurately reflects the behaviors of Masconomet Middle School youth, a process known as “data cleaning.” The completeness and logical consistency criteria used by the CDC were applied to the surveys. If a student answered fewer than 20 questions, his/her survey was dropped (completeness). If a student’s responses were “inconsistent” (e.g. they indicated they were 15 years old but said they had their first drink at age 17, or they responded in one question that they never have been sexually active and in a following question that they have had 3 sexual partners) responses to both questions (except for age) were set to missing.

Following the data cleaning procedure, the final number of completed surveys for the Masconomet Middle School Youth Risk Behavior Survey in 2016 is 556 youth. Youth might have chosen not to answer certain questions so that the total number of responses to questions varies.

Comparison Data

Since the survey administered at Masconomet Middle School was based on an existing instrument, comparison data for many question items is publicly available. Comparisons are useful for providing context to survey results and can aid in identifying both strengths and priority areas.

Where available, comparison data is provided in this report. National comparison numbers are from the 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Survey data set issued by the Centers for Disease Control. State comparison numbers used are from the 2015 Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey data set reported by The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and Public Health. This is the most current comparison data available.

Sample

Masconomet Middle School Survey Population

Total number of youth enrolled	648
Number of youth absent on day of survey	24
Number opt-outs	60
Surveys removed or unaccounted for (e.g. youth did not complete)	8
Final sample included in analysis for this report	556
Representation rate (% of youth included in analysis out of total available to take the survey)	98.6%

Demographic Profile

	Number	Percentage
Total Valid Surveys	556	100%
Sex		
Female	283	50.9%
Male	267	48.0%
Missing total	6	1.1%
Grade		
7th grade	272	48.9%
8th grade	281	50.5%
Missing total	3	.5%
Age	Number	Percentage
11 years old or younger	0	.0%
12 years old	197	35.4%
13 years old	270	48.6%
14 years old	85	15.3%
15 years old	2	.4%
Missing total	2	.4%

Race/Ethnicity (youth were allowed to select more than one response)

White	448	83.4%
Black or African American	9	.9%
American Indian or Alaska Native	15	2.8%
Southeast Asian American	10	.9%
Hispanic or Latino	18	3.4%
Asian American	27	5.0%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	3	.6%
Other	83	15.5%

Executive Summary

Overall

There were a large number of differences across time (2016 vs 2014) – mostly in a “negative” direction. Understanding the reasons for those changes would be very valuable. We sought to determine if there were differences in demographics across time (e.g. a larger percentage of boys or older youth since these groups tend to be significantly different from girls and younger youth in a “negative direction” on a number of questions).

However changes in gender and age do not confirm that hypothesis since there were slightly higher percentages of girls and younger youth this year compared with 2014. The only demographic difference that is notable is race/ethnicity where the percentage of youth responding “other” tripled between 2014 and 2016. Similarly, percentages of Southeast Asian and Asian youth also increased. However, since we did not look for differences across responses by race/ethnicity we can’t conclude that different racial/ethnic groups responded to the questions differently. I recommend that in 2018, analysis by race/ethnicity be included.

A second possible explanation is that the 2014 cohort was an anomaly. Responses of the 2016 cohort actually look fairly close to responses from 2012 and 2010 cohorts, while the 2014 group is different from 2010, 2012, and 2016. If examination of 2016 HS responses from 9th and 10th graders (who were the 2014 MS cohort) shows that these youth are less likely to engage in risky behaviors, it would support the cohort explanation.

Substance Use

- Relatively small numbers of youth reported either lifetime or current use of the substances examined with lifetime use percentages ranging from 1.6% to 6.4% and current use percentages, from .3% to 5.4%
- Electronic nicotine devices appear to have more appeal to youth than other substances.
- Boys were more likely than girls to use all substances except electronic vapor products and older youth were more likely than younger youth to use tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana. This represents a shift from 2014 when there were few differences across demographic groups.
- The vast majority of youth thought that substance use posed moderate or great risk of harm (over 75% for all substances) and youth thought that both parents and peers would feel substance use was wrong or very wrong (above 85%).
- Perceptions of risk and peer disapproval were significantly lower than in 2014 for marijuana, tobacco, and alcohol.
- In general, boys, older youth, and 8th graders perceived significantly less risk and peer disapproval for substance use than did girls, younger youth, and 7th graders.
- Most youth over-estimated their peers use of substances when compared with actual use but the levels have increased significantly since 2014. That is, in 2016 more youth thought their peers were current substance users than in 2014.
- The one exception to the general conclusions above was use of prescription drugs where there were fewer differences

across demographic groups and no increase in perceived use compared with 2014.

Sexual Behavior

- About 1 in 25 youth reported being sexually active – about 1/2 with multiple partners. Three quarters of those who are sexually active used a condom the last time they were active.

Behaviors that Contribute to Unintentional Injuries

- Few youth ride with drivers who have been drinking (6.0%) or smoking marijuana (2.0%).

Behaviors that Contribute to Violence

- About 1 in 5 said they carried a weapon at some point and about 1 in 3 said they have gotten into a fight at some point.
- Boys were more likely than girls to report both behaviors.
- There were no differences across time on these questions.

Bullying

- About 20% of the youth reported having been bullied and about 2% reported having bullied others.
- About 10% reported being cyber-bullied and 3% reported being a cyber-bully.
- Most bullying was verbal rather than physical.
- Fewer youth reported frequent teacher intervention in episodes of bullying than in 2014.

Stress, Depression, and Self-Harm

- Almost 10% reported stress was a problem always and almost 1 in 4 reported it was a problem often – both responses were significantly higher than in 2014.
- Girls were more likely than boys to report stress as a problem always and 8th graders were more likely than 7th graders to respond often or always.
- School work and self-expectations were the most common sources of stress.
- Most youth used positive stress management techniques although about 1 in 6 said they had no way to manage stress.
- About 1 in 8 reported being clinically depressed at some point – a significant increase from 2014.

Protective Factors

- Most youth had an adult to confide in and at least ½ appeared to feel valued based on their responses to several questions.
- Positive responses to questions about peers and adults in the community caring about the student decreased significantly between 2014 and 2016.
- Most youth engaged in sports or extra-curricular activities or community service with reported involvement in after-school activity significantly higher than in 2014.

Weight, Weight Management, Exercise and Nutrition

- About equal numbers of youth saw themselves as underweight or overweight (around 20%). There was no difference across time.
- Close to 1/3 of the youth reported trying to lose weight – and most used exercise or calorie reduction as their weight loss methods.
- Nearly all youth reported being physically active at least 20 minutes at least one day in the past 7.
- Virtually all youth reported using electronic media for things other than school work every day with nearly half reporting use for three or more hours a day.
- Most youth reported eating fruits or vegetables at least 4 times in the past 7 days and about ½ reported eating breakfast every day.
- About 10% said they drank a caffeinated beverage at least once a day and the same percentage reporting having an energy drink at least once in the past 30 days.

Substance Use

Comparison to 2014, 2012 and Massachusetts Data

Charts 1 and 2 on the following pages demonstrate lifetime and current (past 30 day) use of various substances for MASCO in 2016, 2014 and 2012, and Massachusetts in 2015.

Between 2014 and 2016 there were no significant differences in either lifetime or 30 day use of cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana, prescription drugs, or inhalants.

Tobacco/Nicotine

About 1 in 50 youth reports having ever tried cigarette smoking (2.5%) with 14 year olds more likely than 12 year olds (5.9% vs 1.0%), boys more likely than girls (4.2% vs .7%), and 8th graders more likely than 7th graders (4.3% vs .7%) to say they had tried smoking. About 1 in 100 reported ever having smoked a whole cigarette (1.3%). Similarly, just 1 in 100 (1.1%) reported that they had smoked in the past 30 days. Close to 1 in 20 reported using electronic smoking devices in the past 30 days (5.4%). Older youth (15 years old) were more likely than younger youth to report that they had used these devices 10 or more days. In terms of other tobacco products, about 1 in 50 (2.5%) had tried some other product (mostly commonly, cigars (.9%) or hookahs/water pipes (.7%)). The most common ways to obtain tobacco products was to be given them by someone 18 or older or some other method (33% of those who use tobacco for each response).

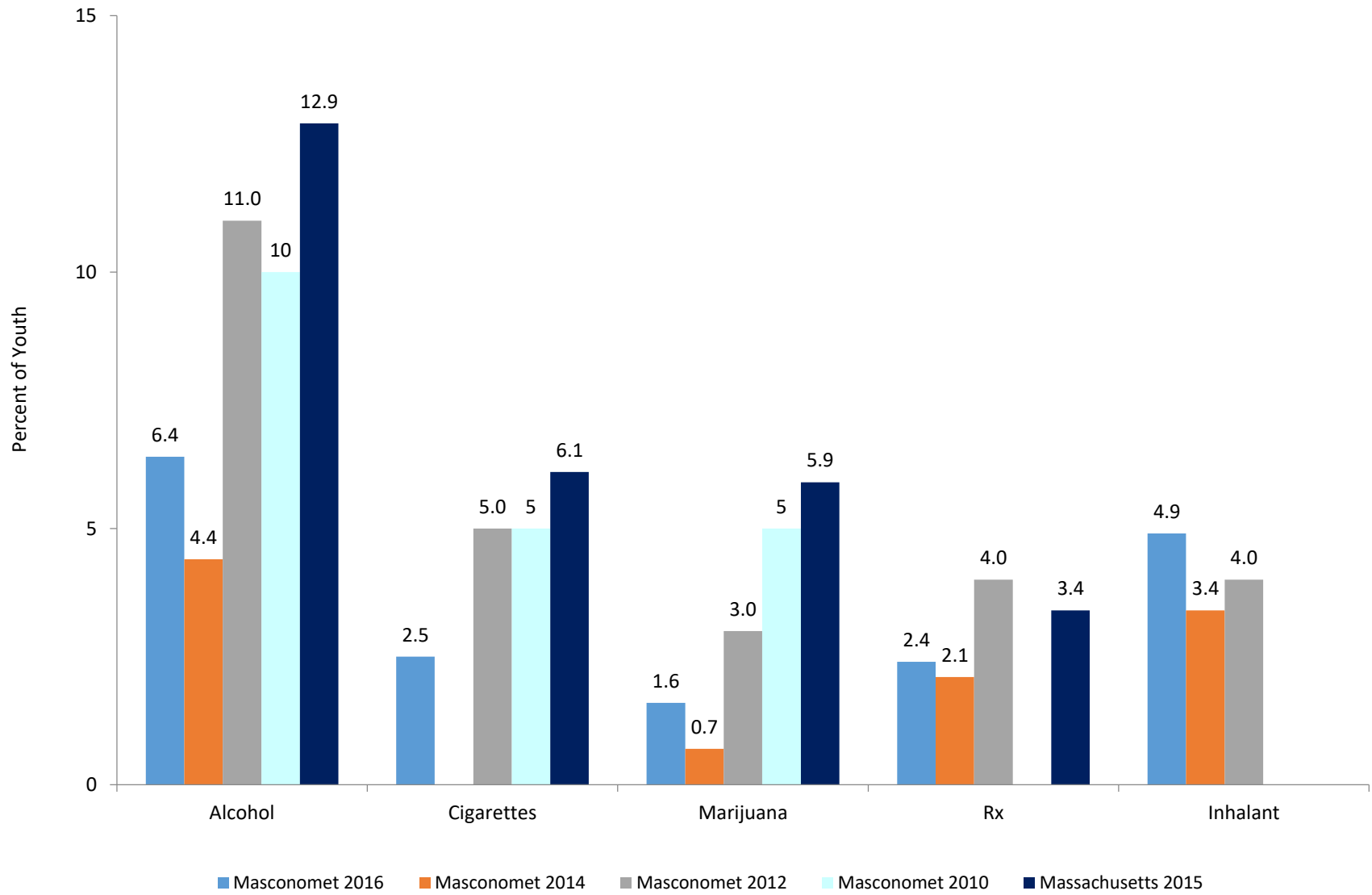
Alcohol

Slightly more than 1 in 20 youth reported lifetime use of alcohol with 12.1 years as the age of onset – slightly higher than 2014. About 1 in 50 reported current use of alcohol (2.0%) and about 1/5 of those who drank reported at least one incident of high risk drinking in the past 30 days (.5%). About 1 in 3 reported that alcohol would be fairly or very easy to obtain (32.6%) a significant decline from 2012 (41%). Boys were more like than girls (14.7% vs 8.6%) and 8th graders were more likely than 7th graders (16.9% vs 6.7%) to respond “very easy”. About 6 in 10 of those who drank reported obtaining alcohol at home – and about 30% each indicated they drank at home or at family events.

Other substances

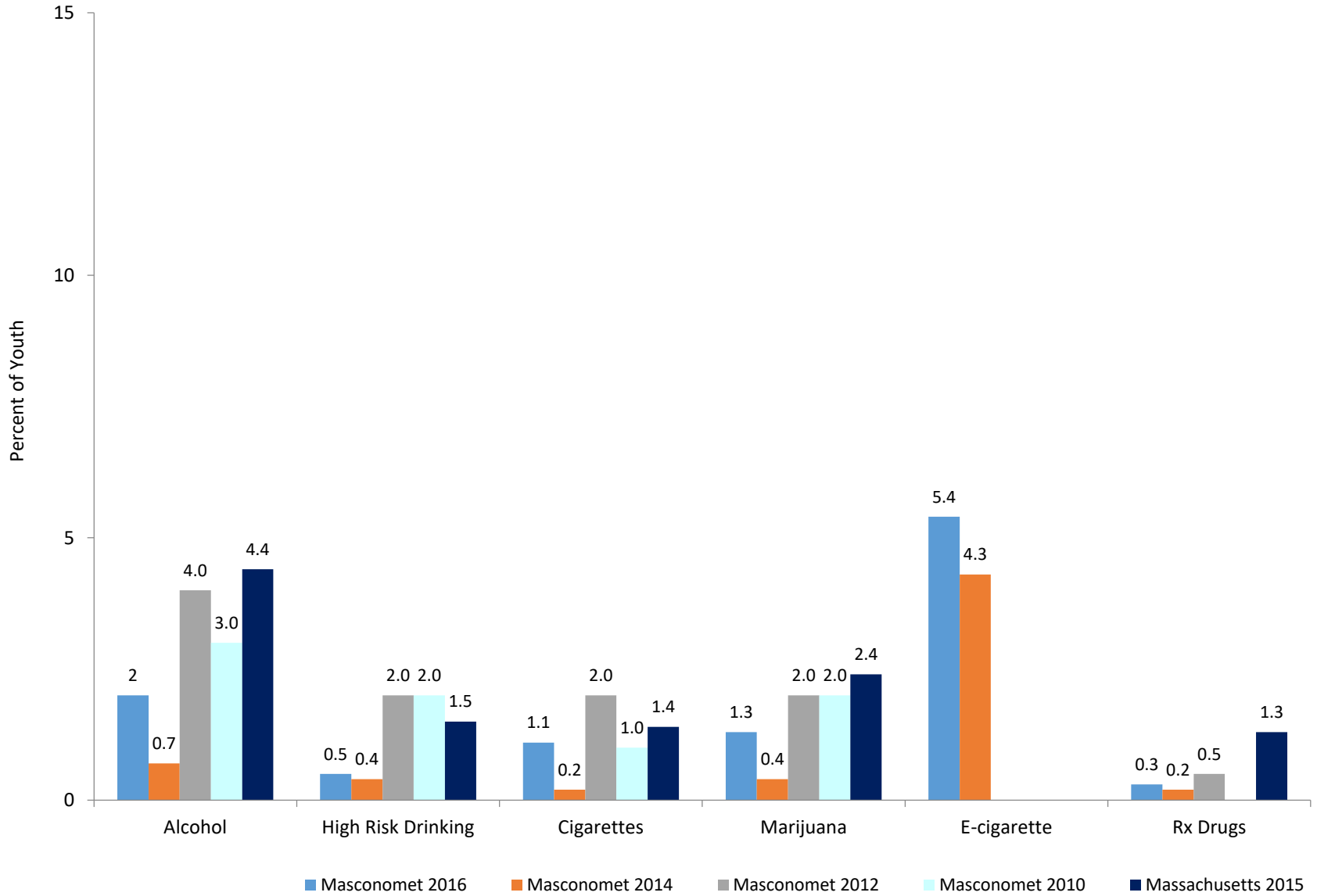
In terms of lifetime use, inhalants were the most common other substance with 4.9% reporting have used inhalants at least once, followed by prescription drugs without a prescription (2.4%), marijuana (1.6%), and over the counter medications (1.3%). There were a very limited number of current users of either marijuana (1.3%) or prescription drugs without a prescription (.4%). Age of onset for marijuana was 12.5 yrs.

**Chart 1: MASCO Middle School Lifetime Substance Use 2016
Compared to MASCO 2014, 2012, 2010 and Massachusetts 2015**



MASCO 2010 data available only for alcohol, cigarettes, and marijuana

Chart 2: MASCO Middle School Past 30 Days Substance Use 2016 Compared to MASCO 2014, 2012, 2010 and Massachusetts (2015)



Perception of Risk of Harm, Parental and Peer Disapproval

Chart 3 shows that in 2016 the vast majority of middle school youth perceived that substance use entailed great or moderate risk of harm with all five substances above 75% and cigarettes and misuse of prescription drugs over 90%. Perceptions of great risk for use of marijuana were significantly lower in 2016 than in 2014 (48.0% vs 59.4%) but perceptions of great risk of binge drinking were significantly higher (73.9% vs 63.7%).

Chart 3 reveals that nearly all youth think their parents and peers think use of the substances is wrong or very wrong (with parents over 90% for all substances and friends over 85%). The percent of youth who said they felt their parents would think alcohol use was wrong or very wrong declined significantly from 2014 to 2016 (93.3% to 88.6%) – the second decrease in a row. Similarly, the percent for marijuana declined from 96.3% to 92.1%. For tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana, the percent of “very wrongs” decreased significantly from 2014 to 2016, while the percent of “wrongs” increased significantly. The percent of youth saying their peers think use of alcohol and marijuana was “very wrong” also declined significantly from 2014 to 2016.

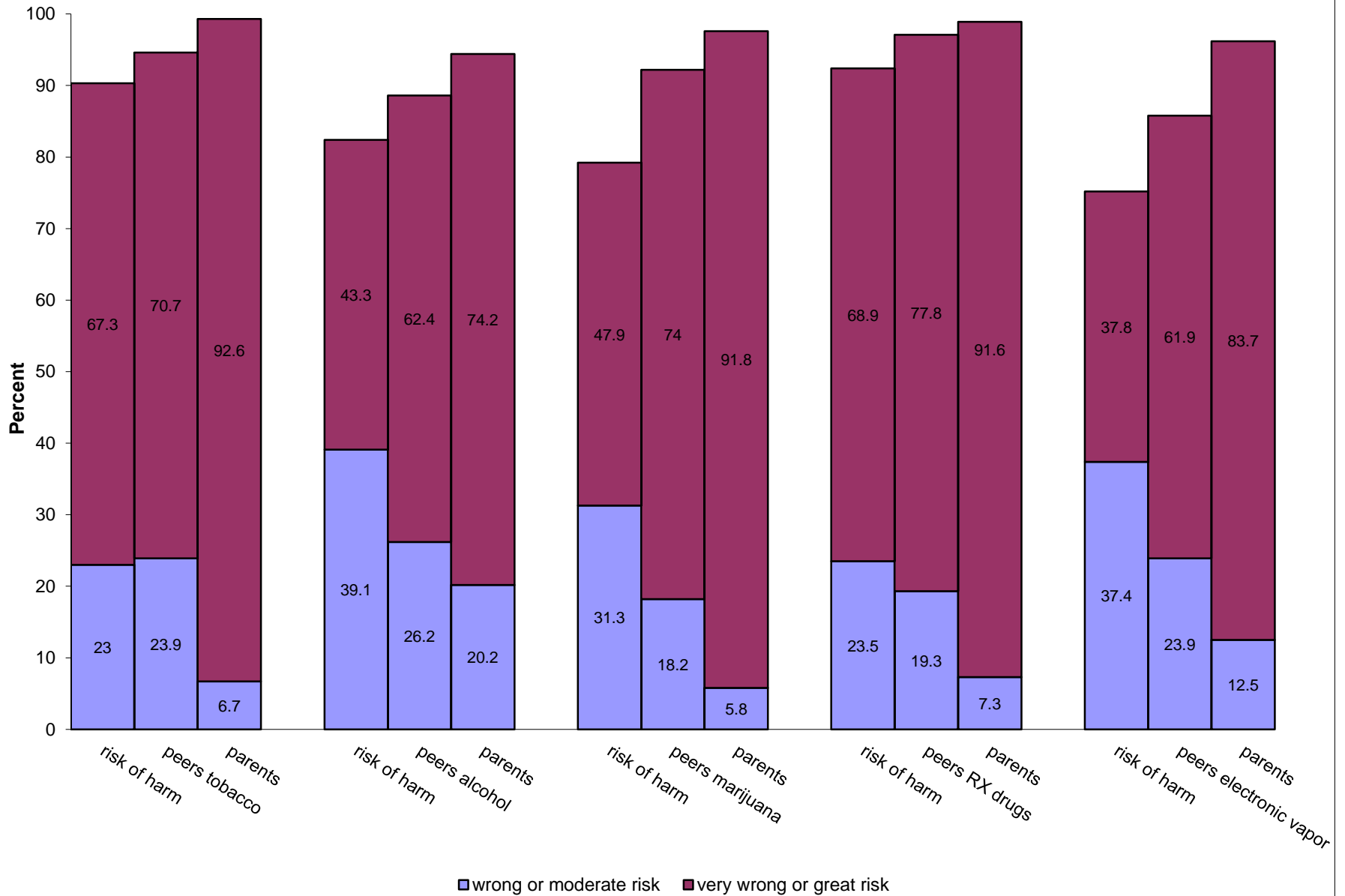
In 2016, as in 2014, there were differences across age, grade, and gender in terms of perceived harm and perceived parental and peer disapproval. The general pattern was older youth (14 yrs), 8th graders, and boys saw less risk and perceived less disapproval than younger youth (12 yrs), 7th graders and girls. Tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana generally had fewer differences across these groups; electronic vapor products showed the most differences and prescription drugs fell between the two groups. Interestingly, perceptions of friends’ approval or disapproval of substances had a larger number of differences between groups than did perceived risk or perceived parental disapproval. All substances except prescription drugs showed differences across age, gender, and grade for perceptions of friends’ disapproval, while only marijuana showed this pattern for parents’ disapproval.

Social Norming

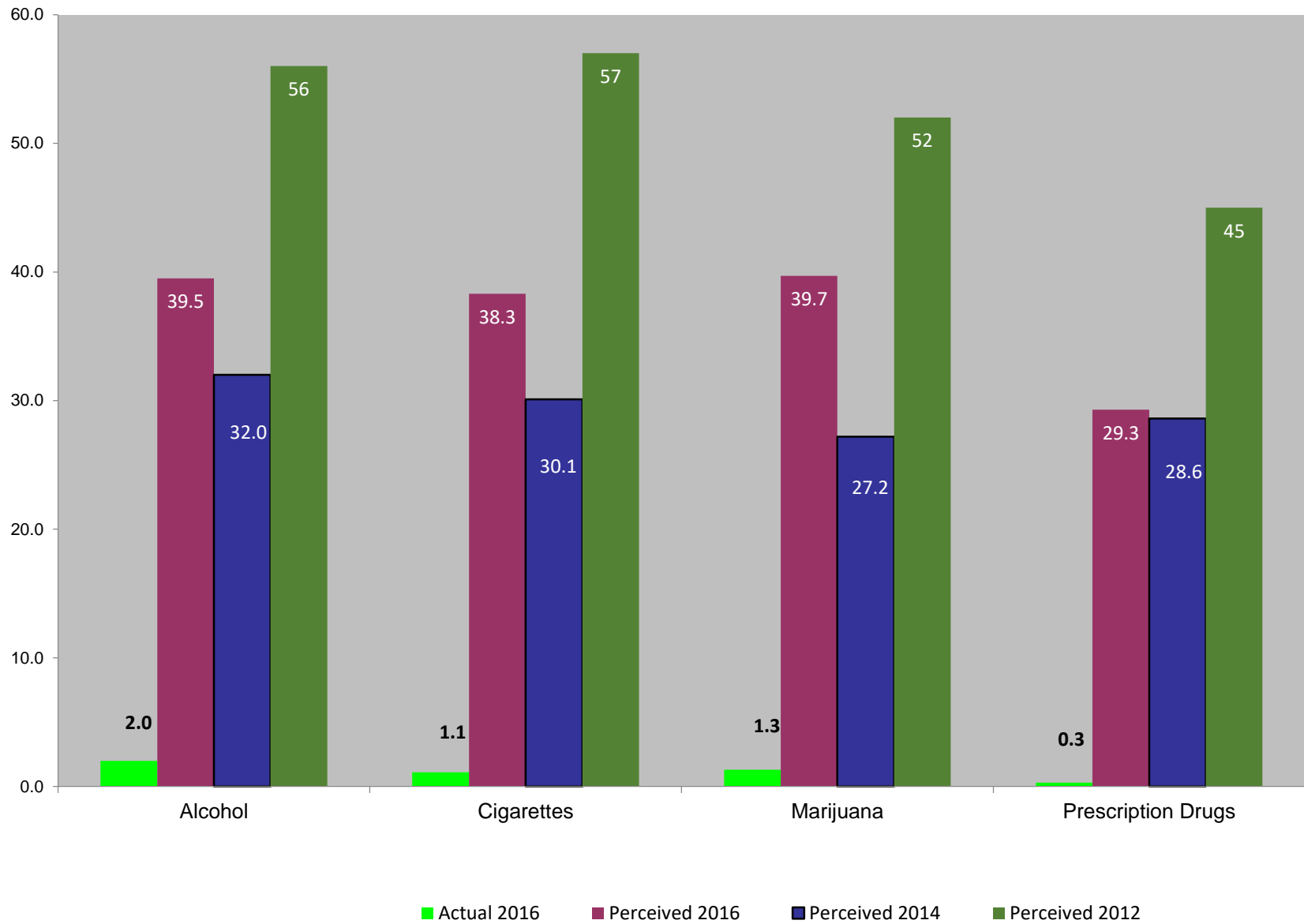
MASCO middle schoolers substantially over-estimate use of cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana, and prescription drugs – by 29 to 38 points – not enough to be classified as “misperception” – but still substantial. Estimates of use increased significantly from 2014 to 2016 for tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana, but not for prescription drugs. This is part of a pattern of apparent increases in risky behavior from 2014 to 2016. However, it could be that the 2014 cohort was an anomaly since 2016 data is fairly similar to 2012 and 2010.

As in 2014, older youth (14 yrs), and 8th graders were consistently more likely than younger youth (12 yrs) and 7th graders to over-estimate use. Girls were more likely than boys to over-estimate tobacco use while boys were more likely than girls to overestimate heavy marijuana use (40 times or more in past 30 days). The only substance for which there were no differences was prescription drugs.

Chart 3: Risk of Harm and Parental and Peer Disapproval of Five Substances



**Chart 4: Actual 30 day use (2014) vs perceived use rate (2012 and 2014)
MASCO - Middle School**



Sexual Behavior

About 1 in 25 youth indicated that they had been sexually active at some point in their lives (3.7%) with an age of onset of 12.9 years. More than 8 in 10 of those who responded they have been sexually active said they have had either 1 (33%) or 2 (50%) partners and 75% of those who have been sexually active indicated that they had used a condom the last time.

In 2014 and 2016, the questions in this section dealt with the concept of being “sexually active”, whereas in 2012 and in the 2015 Massachusetts survey, the questions specified sexual intercourse – thus results cannot be compared with state data and can only be compared with Tri-Town data for 2014 and 2016.

Behaviors That Contribute to Unintentional Injuries

Youth were asked about three areas where their behavior could result in unintentional injuries.

About 2/3 of the youth who rollerblade, bike, etc. choose not to wear a helmet on some occasions but only slightly more than 1 in 6 rarely or never wear that protective gear (16.4%). Eighth graders were more likely than 7th graders and boys were more likely than girls to report never wearing a helmet (21.9% vs 9.7% and 22.7% vs 8.9%). There were no significant differences across time.

Relatively small numbers of middle school youth ride in cars driven by those who have used alcohol (6.0%) or marijuana (2.0%) prior to driving. There was no significant difference across time. Fourteen year olds were more like than 12 or 13 year olds to have ridden with people who had been drinking (14.1% vs 4.6% and 4.5%) and to have ridden with those who had used marijuana (8.2% vs 1.0% and .7%).

Behaviors That Contribute to Violence

Close to 1 in 5 youth reported that they had carried a weapon at some point in their lives (18.1%). Boys were more likely than girls to report having carried a weapon (29.4% vs 7.5%).

The percentage of youth indicating that they had not gone to school at least 1 day in the last 30 because of feeling unsafe in traveling to school or at school was 4.9%.

Nearly 1/3 of the youth reported having been in a fight at some point in their lives (30.0%) with boys more likely than girls and 8th graders more likely than 7th graders to report that behavior (48.3% vs 12.5% and 33.9% vs 26.05, respectfully). About 1 in 50 were injured severely enough in a fight to require medical attention (2.0%). There were no differences across time on these two questions.

Bullying

Student as Victim of Bullying

About 2 out of 10 middle school youth reported having been bullied at school in the past couple of months (19.4%) with most reporting the frequency as once or twice (13.1%). There were no significant differences across gender, age, or grade. Slightly more than 10% reported cyber-bullying (11.6%) with girls more likely than boys to report the frequency as once or twice in the past few months (12.0% vs 4.2%). There were no significant differences across time for frequency of being bullied.

The most common forms of bullying reported were being called names/being made fun of (10.6%), and having rumors spread about the victim (10.7%).

Student as Perpetrator of Bullying

About 1 in 50 youth indicated that they had bullied another student in the past couple of months (1.8%). The primary way that youth bullied was teasing (1.1%). About the same number (2.9%) report cyber-bullying other youth with 14 year olds more likely than 12 or 13 year olds to indicate they cyber-bullied other youth (4.4% vs 1.5% and 1.9%)

Responses to Bullying

When asked how they reacted when they were bullied youth said they preferred to walk away/ignore (17.1%), tell the bully to stop (16.2%), to tell parents or other adult family member (9.7%) and respond with words or actions (9.3%)

The most common responses of youth when they see someone else being bullied are to try to help the student being bullied (39.5%), to tell an adult (at school or home) (15.4%) or to tell a teacher (14.3%). More youth reported trying to help in 2016 than in 2012 (36.2% vs 30%) and fewer reported watching but feeling they should help (7.8% vs 20%). Note: 2014 responses to bullying behaviors were similar to 2016 responses.

Only ¼ of the youth reported that teachers attempted to intervene in bullying situations “almost always” (26%) – a significant decrease from 2014 (42%). Only about 1 in 10 youth said teachers almost never intervene (10.9%).

Location of Bullying

As in 2014, youth reported that hallways (18.2%), social media (18%), and the cafeteria (14.7%) were the most common locations for bullying to occur.

Stress, Depression, and Self-Harm

Stress:

When asked how much of a problem stress was 33.4% replied “Not a problem at all/Almost never a problem” while 9.6% replied “Always a problem”. Girls were more likely than boys to respond “Always” (12.4% vs 6.4%), while boys were more likely to respond “Not at all” (12.4 vs 4.2%) and 8th graders were more likely than 7th graders to respond “Always” or “Often” (40% vs 24%). Youth were significantly more likely to respond “Always” or “Often” in 2016 compared with 2014 (9.5% vs 6.3% and 22.7% and 18.0%, respectively).

The most frequently mentioned sources of stress were

- School work (77.6%)
- My expectations of myself (35.7%)
- Parents’ expectations of me (26.2%)
- Friendships (24.0%)

The remaining responses (family, extra-curricular) were chosen by about 15% to 20% of the youth.

Most youth employed some type of positive stress management technique with the most common being

- Journal/draw/listen to music/spend time alone (30.9%)
- Talk to parent or family member (26.7%)
- Talk to friends (22.7%)
- Exercise/yoga (13.4%)

More than 1 in 6 said they had no way to manage stress (16.2%) and about than 1% used drugs or alcohol to manage stress.

Depression and Self-harm (including suicide):

When asked if they exhibited signs of clinical depression (feeling sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row) 13.8% responded “Yes” with 8th graders more likely than 7th graders to indicate agreement. This represents a significant increase from 2014 when 8.5% of all youth responded “Yes”. Slightly more than 5% reported having hurt or injured themselves on purpose at least once (6.9%) with girls more likely than boys to say yes (9.5% vs 4.2%) – again a significant increase from 2014 (3.3%).

During the past twelve months, 6.4% said they seriously considered suicide – up significantly from 2014 (3.7%) and 3.3% said they made a plan about how they would attempt suicide. During the past 12 months .9% said they actually attempted.

Protective Factors

Protective factors are associated with the prevention of risky behaviors and substance use.

Supportive Adults:

Close to $\frac{3}{4}$ of the youth reported having at least one teacher or other school adult they could talk with about important things (73.3%). Seventh graders were more likely than 8th graders to say they did have such an adult (79.4% vs 67.3%). Outside of school only 2.5% said they did not have an adult to turn to about things important to them, while nearly $\frac{2}{3}$ mentioned parent or other adult family member (64.8%) and more than $\frac{1}{4}$ mentioned both family and non-family adults (27.9%). Boys were more likely to mention only family members (71.8% vs 58.4%), while girls were more likely to have both family and non-family adults to talk to (35.9% vs 19.9%). Fourteen year olds were more likely than 13 year olds to mention non-family resources (5.9% vs 1.1%) and 8th graders were more likely than 7th graders to respond both family and non-family (33.3% vs 22.5%).

When asked if they had spoken with an adult family member about various topics, close to $\frac{1}{2}$ said they had not (44.7%), while 41.0% had discussed marijuana; 35.8%, alcohol; 32.6%, tobacco; 31.7%, electronic vapor products; and 21.2% sexual activity. About 15% had talked about use of prescription drugs without a prescription.

Feeling Valued:

Between $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{2}{3}$ of the youth strongly agreed or agreed with each of these statements:

- I feel my teachers care about me and give me encouragement and support. (63.3%)
- I feel my peers at this school care about me as a person. (54.4%)
- I feel that adults in the Tri-Town community care about me as a young person. (59.1%)

Agreement with the last two questions was significantly lower in 2016 than in 2014.

Participation in extra-curriculars:

More than 80% of the youth reported being involved in an organized after-school activity (81.5% - significantly higher than 70.2% in 2014); and more than 4 in 10 said they spent at least 1 hour on volunteer work or community service (44.3%). Girls were more likely than boys to report being involved in after school activities (88.2% vs 74.9%).

Weight, Weight Management, Exercise, Nutrition and Sleep

Weight and Weight Management:

About 20% of the youth described themselves as very underweight (2.4%) or slightly underweight (16.2%) and similar proportions saw themselves as slightly overweight (19.9%) or very overweight (2.2%); the remaining 59.3% thought their weight was about right. Boys were more likely than girls to see themselves as very underweight (4.2% vs .7%) and girls more likely than boys to described themselves as slightly overweight (23.7% vs 16.0%) Eight graders were more likely than 7th graders to see themselves as slightly overweight (23.4 vs 16.3%), while 7th graders were more likely than 8th graders to respond slightly underweight (21.6% vs 11.2%). There was no significant change across time for youth in general.

While only about 20% see themselves as overweight, 36.6% report that they are trying to lose weight (significantly higher than 2014 – 31.5%) . Significantly fewer report wanting to stay the same weight compared with 2014 (22.0% vs 29.7%). One in ten say they are trying to gain weight. Boys were more likely than girls to report trying to gain weight (16.9% vs 3.6%) and girls and 8th graders were more likely than boys and 7th graders to say they were trying to lose weight (43.3% vs 29.9% and 41.2% vs 31.9%, respectively).

Only 7.3% of the youth mentioned unhealthy weight management methods (e.g. fasting, diet pills, vomiting, laxatives). Preferred methods of weight management were exercise (64.5%) and eating fewer calories (34.4%).

Physical Activity:

Student responses in this area in 2016 were very similar to responses in 2014. More than 9 in 10 youth reported engaging in 20 minutes of physical activity that made them sweat and breathe hard at least one day in the last seven (96.2%) with boys doing so more frequently than girls.

“Electronic” Activity:

Only 2.0% said they did not use an electronic device for non-homework activities and 9.0% said they used one for less than an hour a day. In contrast 43.3% said they used a computer or smartphone 3 or more hours per day with 8th graders more likely than 7th graders to report heavy use. In 2016 youth reported using electronic devices for longer durations than in 2014.

Nutrition:

Most youth reported consuming vegetables or fruits at least some time in the past seven days.

	Not in past 7 days	1 to 3 times in past 7 days	4 to 6 times in past 7 days	At least once a day
Vegetables or fruits	2.4%	14.1%	21.8%	61.7%

Breakfast: More than ½ reported eating breakfast every day (54.1%) and 6.2% reported never eating breakfast with boys more likely than girls to report they eat breakfast every day (59.2% vs 49.6%)

Caffeine: More than 3 times as many youth reported not having a caffeinated beverage in the past 7 days (32.5%) as reported having caffeine at least once a day (9.4%).

Energy Drinks: Slightly more than 1 in 10 indicated they had an energy drink in the past 30 days (10.7% - with boys and 8th graders more likely than girls and 7th graders to say they did so (14.3% vs 7.1% and 15.1% vs 6.3%, respectively)).

Sleep:

Median number of hours of sleep for the respondents was 8.33 with 55.8% reporting averaging 8 hours or more each night. Eighth graders tended to report somewhat less sleep than 7th graders.