

Healthy Youth Survey 2014 Summary

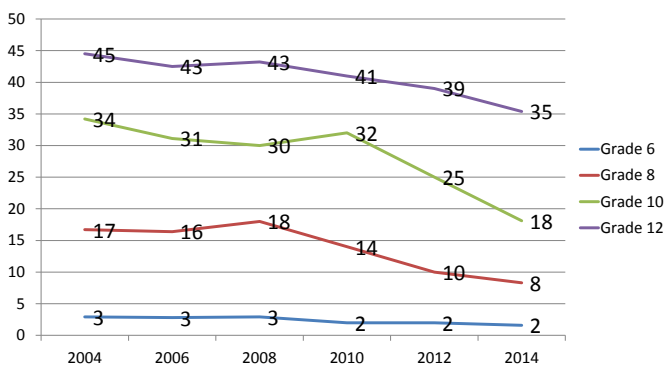
It's easier to build a child than mend an adult!

The Healthy Youth Survey is administered to students in grades 6, 8, 10, and 12 every two years in Whatcom County. This summary contains county data that relates to substance abuse and mental health. Data results from a specific school district must be requested from that district. More information about the Health Youth Survey can be found at www.askhys.net.

Substance Use

Substance use has gone down steadily in Whatcom County. Reductions in alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana have been seen in most grades in Whatcom County over the past ten years.

30-Day Use of Alcohol Whatcom County (2004-2014)



Some areas of concern still exist, including:

- 19% of 12th grade students reported being drunk or high at school in the past year
- 7% reported using alcohol and school property in the past month, and 9% reported using marijuana on school property in the past month
- Use of electronic cigarettes (e-cigs) as nearly double cigarette use at each reported grade level. E-cig use among 12th graders was 26%, 12% more than for cigarettes.



- 18% of 12th grade students reported riding with a drinking driver during the past month, and 28% reported riding with a riding with marijuana impaired driver

Substance use impacts school performance:

- Grades-lower grades were reported among students using marijuana (47%) compared to 28% among students who did not use marijuana. (Whatcom 12th graders)
- Skipping-30% more marijuana-using students reported skipping school than their peers who had not used it (Whatcom 12th graders)

Mental Health

Challenges with mental health are common, and can be found at any grade level. Youth experiencing depression report lower grades, more skipping school, more substance use, and increased risk of other negative behaviors.

Whatcom County Grade 12



- 1 in 2** report anxiety
- 1 in 3** report depression
- 1 in 5** report contemplating suicide
- 1 in 7** report making a suicide plan
- 1 in 14** report attempting suicide

Concerns around poor mental health:

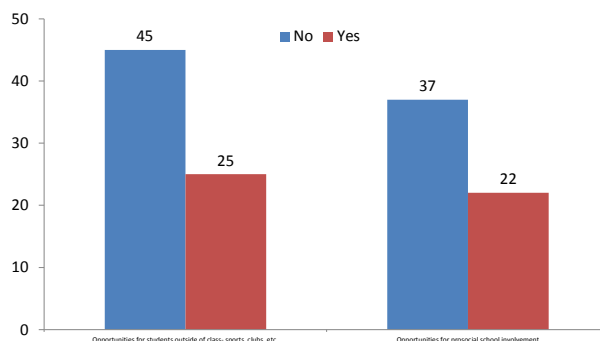
- 30% of 8th grade students reporting depression demonstrated lower grades, compared to 15% of their peers without depressive feelings
- Marijuana use among 8th grade students without depression is 4.6%. That figure triples among students with depression (14.5%).
- Students in grades 8, 10, and 12 report increased contemplation of suicide, making a suicide plan, and attempting suicide.

Protective Factors

Youth who feel connected to their family, school, and community are less likely to experience poor mental health and use substances, and are more likely to perform better in school and have healthier relationships. Supporting the development of these bonds offsets a broad array of risks.

Importance of School Connections

Percent of current marijuana use among 12th grade students by school engagement.



Source: Healthy Youth Survey 2012