

SPIRIT

Missouri School-based Substance Abuse Prevention
Intervention and Resources Initiative

Ninth Year Report

2010-2011

Missouri Department of Mental Health Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse

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Executive Summary

Introduction – An Overview of the SPIRIT Project

The School-based Prevention Intervention and Resources Initiative (SPIRIT) is a project sponsored by the Missouri Department of Mental Health, Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse (ADA). SPIRIT was launched in 2002. FY2010, from fall of 2010 to spring 2011, was the ninth year of the project. The purpose of the initiative is to delay the onset and decrease the use of substances, improve overall school performance, and reduce incidents of violence among children and youth in high-risk school districts.

Each of Missouri's five ADA regions is represented by the five school districts participating in SPIRIT: Carthage R-IX, Hickman Mills C-1, Knox Co. R-1, New Madrid Co. R-1, and Ritenour. They serve high-risk populations characterized by: 1) greater than 60% free/reduced lunch; 2) standardized test scores below state average; 3) alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use above state average; 4) graduation rates lower than the state average; and 5) a high number of referrals to juvenile authorities. The individual needs of each district vary as do the demographics, such as the size of the population, the average student/teacher ratio, race/ethnicity distribution, location, resources and community setting (e.g., urban or rural). Initially, regardless of the number of schools in a district, SPIRIT was implemented in only one at the elementary, middle, and high school, resulting in participation of 41% of the total number of schools available. During the 2009-2010 school year, SPIRIT was expanded to include 91% of schools within participating districts by including all schools serving students through grade 9. This increased the number of students served from approximately 3,900 in 2002 to over 10,000 in 2010-2011.

In the SPIRIT implementation model, a prevention agency is paired with each participating school district. Prevention specialists from the agencies assist in facilitating evidence-based substance abuse and violence prevention programs, help to identify and respond to additional needs of some students for selective or indicated services, provide screening and referral services upon request, and offer resources and technical assistance as needed. Each district and school determines whether prevention specialists or classroom teachers implement the prevention programs. Thus, who implements the program varies by site and even by school within each district.

All prevention programs implemented are evidence-based and are listed on an approved list, e.g., the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP). Each participating district has identified specific behavioral challenges within their student population, such as bullying, aggressive behavior and substance use, and particular prevention programs are selected to address these issues. Some changes have been made in the programs implemented as a response to the needs of the school or district. Programs implemented in SPIRIT FY2010 included PeaceBuilders or Second Step in the elementary schools (supplemented by Too Good For Drugs in some districts), Life Skills Training or Second Step in the middle schools and Too Good For Drugs or Project Towards No Drug Abuse in the high schools.

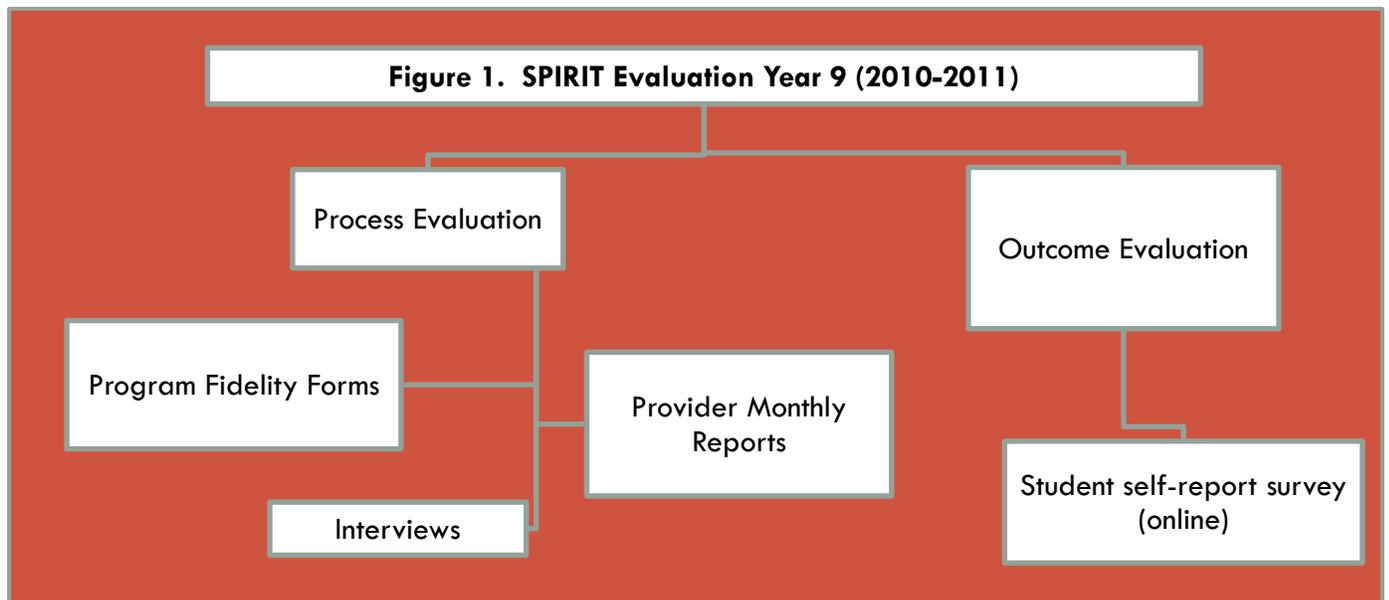
Evaluation. Annual evaluation of the SPIRIT program is conducted by the Child and Family Mental Health Services Unit of the Missouri Institute of Mental Health (MIMH). The evaluation includes an annual student survey, interviews with SPIRIT providers and school administrators, review of monthly reports

submitted by the provider agencies, and analysis of program fidelity from forms documenting program implementation submitted by program implementers. (Figure 1)

The self-report survey instrument used to assess the main goals of the program explores students' substance use, attitudes toward substance use and perceived risk of use, aggression and problem behaviors, school performance and attitudes toward school, individual protective factors and perceptions of SPIRIT effectiveness. Data collection timing and methods have changed as the number of students and schools in participating districts have increased and as on-line data collection methods have improved. Initially, in 2002, all consented students completed two surveys per year (pre/post) using paper-pencil instruments. Beginning in the fifth year of the project (2006-2007), only one survey per year was administered toward the end of the school year and results from this instrument were compared to those of previous years. In 2010, all sites shifted to on-line surveying methods.¹

Throughout this report, SPIRIT student responses are compared to samples of Missouri and U.S. youth. Data for Missouri youth were drawn from the 2010 Missouri Student Survey (MSS), a statewide survey of 6th – 12th grade students attending public schools. The U.S. sample was drawn from youth who completed the 2009 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH).

All students attending schools in which SPIRIT is implemented receive prevention programming (n = 10,425 in the 2010-2011 school year). In order to participate in the evaluation, however, students must be in the 4th grade or higher and have parental consent. The consent rates vary by district, but across all SPIRIT sites 81% of all students eligible for the evaluation were consented. Each consented and eligible 4th – 9th grade student is assigned a unique identification code used each year of their participation in order to match and track responses over time while maintaining confidentiality. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select 1,343 students who completed surveys to represent the SPIRIT population, thus equalizing the influence of district, school, sex, and grade level.



¹ One site with limited computer access in its elementary schools continues to use paper/pencil methods of data collection.

Summary of Outcome Findings

Substance Use

- Over 30% of 6th – 9th grade students in the selected SPIRIT sample reported ever having had more than a sip or two of alcohol and 12.2% reported use of marijuana in their lifetime.
- When asked whether they had used alcohol regularly (once or twice a month), fewer SPIRIT youth (8.7%) reported use compared with those in the US sample (17.0%).
- Among SPIRIT youth in 6th – 9th grade, 19.1% reported using cigarettes in their lifetime, similar to Missouri and national reports of youth usage. SPIRIT students had less 30-day cigarette use than either the MSS or a national sample.
- In Year 9, students were less likely to report using cigarettes or alcohol in the past month than those in Year 8. Additionally, in Year 9 fewer students reported positive attitudes toward cigarette and alcohol use than in Year 8.
- The percentage of students reporting lifetime use of marijuana, inhalants, ecstasy, and methamphetamine were similar between SPIRIT and Missouri youth. However, SPIRIT youth began using cigarettes, alcohol and marijuana at a younger age than the average youth in Missouri.
- The likelihood of trying marijuana showed only a small increase (approximately 4%) between 4th – 5th grade and 6th – 8th grade, but a large increase (16.5%) between middle school/junior high and 9th grade.

Table 1. SPIRIT, Missouri and US Drug Use Comparison

		SPIRIT ¹	Missouri ²	US ³
Cigarettes	Lifetime use	19.1	21.2	22.2
	Past month (30-day)	4.4	10.7	8.9
	Age of initiation	10.9	12.3	n/a
Alcohol	Lifetime use ⁴	37.1	---	---
	Past month (30-day)	11.1	15.3	14.7
	Age of initiation	11.0	12.5	n/a
Marijuana	Lifetime use	12.2	11.8	17.0
	Past month (30-day)	5.6	6.4	7.3
	Age of initiation	12.7	13.5	n/a
Inhalants	Lifetime use	4.5	6.6	9.2
	Past month (30-day)	1.8	3.4	1.0
	Age of initiation	11.7	11.9	n/a

¹ SPIRIT, spring 2011, 6th – 9th grade, n = 885 (average age = 13.61); note: there were no participating youth in the 9th grade from the Knox school district.

² Missouri Student Survey (MSS) 2010, 6th – 9th grade, n = 92,901 (average age = 13.72)

³ National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) 2009, n = 24,625 (12 – 17 years of age)

⁴ The SPIRIT survey alcohol use question was worded differently from the MSS and NSDUH; thus comparison data have not been included in this report. SPIRIT students were asked “how old were you the first time you had more than a sip or two of alcohol”. The Missouri and U.S. questionnaires included more specific instructions: “We are not asking about times when you only had a sip or two from a drink or drank only for religious purposes. Throughout these questions, by a ‘drink,’ we mean a can or bottle of beer, a glass of wine or a wine cooler, a shot of liquor, or a mixed drink with liquor in it.” SPIRIT youth were not instructed to only count those times when they consumed an entire can, bottle, glass, or shot, but rather anything more than a sip or two.

- A smaller percentage of SPIRIT students used cigarettes, alcohol or prescription medication without a prescription in the past 30 days compared to the average 6th-9th grade Missouri student.
- The reported percentage of driving a vehicle after drinking alcohol was similar among the average 6th – 9th grade student in Missouri (2.5%) and among SPIRIT students (2.3%). SPIRIT students were much less likely (14.7%), however, to have ridden in a vehicle with a driver who had been drinking compared to other Missouri students (21.4%).
- SPIRIT students were less likely to report having ridden in a vehicle with a driver who had been drinking in Year 9 than in Year 8, both among all 6th – 9th grade youth and among lifetime alcohol users.

Attitudes toward Substance Use

- Approximately 45% of 6th – 9th grade youth thought that most teenagers use cigarettes and alcohol, while a higher percentage (57-59%) thought that most adults use cigarettes and/or alcohol. Approximately equal percentages of students thought that most teenagers and most adults use marijuana (35.6% and 34%).
- Students were much more likely to indicate they might use alcohol in the future (23.6%) than cigarettes (4.8%) or marijuana (6.9%).
- The majority of students (approximately 67-69%) thought that cigarettes and alcohol could potentially harm the user. A higher percentage (79%) thought that using marijuana was risky. Among those in the 6th – 9th grades, the majority thought the use of ecstasy, methamphetamine, inhalants, and prescription drugs without a prescription posed a moderate to great risk. Methamphetamine use was perceived to be most risky.
- Although most students thought that the use of any substance was wrong, the use of cigarettes or alcohol was more likely to be considered acceptable. Comparisons of Year 8 and Year 9 showed that the percentage of students reporting alcohol use to be “very wrong” was lower and the percentage reporting “wrong” was higher in Year 9 than in Year 8.
- The majority of students (approximately 67-69%) thought that cigarettes and alcohol could potentially harm the user. A higher percentage (79%) thought that using marijuana was risky. Among those in the 6th – 9th grades, the majority thought the use of ecstasy, methamphetamine, inhalants, and prescription drugs without a prescription posed a moderate to great risk. Methamphetamine use was perceived to be most risky.
- Interestingly, the percentage of youth reporting they might use cigarettes or marijuana in the future was similar to the percentage who reported actually using in the past 30 days. However, while only 11.1% reported using alcohol in the past month, over 23% intended to do so in the future. This information combined with the perception that most adults use alcohol indicates that there is an expectation of alcohol use in adulthood.
- In Year 9, students were less likely to indicate that they may use substances when they get older than in Year 8.
- A similar percentage of students in both Year 8 and Year 9 considered the use of alcohol to either be “not wrong at all” or “a little bit wrong.” In Year 9, however, the percentage of students reporting alcohol use “very wrong” was less and the percentage reporting “wrong” was

higher than in Year 8. This indicates that there may be subtle shifts in the perception of the wrongfulness of alcohol use.

- Youth in 4th – 5th grade were more likely to think that using marijuana was wrong in Year 9 than in Year 8.

Problem Behavior

- Over 36.4% of youth in the 4th – 9th grade reported having been harassed or bullied (in general) within the past three months. Not only were the students who had been bullied more likely to report having rumors spread about them and being made fun of, but they are also more likely to report doing those things to others.
- The most common problem behaviors reported by students were making fun of others (60.2%) and being made fun of by others (59.1%).
- Very few youth (less than 8%) reported using the internet or a cell phone to embarrass or hurt another student or being harassed by another student by those means.
- Many behaviors decreased as grade level increased. Forty-four percent of 4th – 5th graders reported being bullied, whereas only 25.1% of 9th grade youth reported experiencing bullying or harassment. Interestingly, however, the percentage of youth who reported making fun of others increased in the higher grade levels.
- Males (23.8%) were more likely than females (12.8%) to report being in a physical fight in the past three months whereas females were more likely to report having been bullied. Over 40% of females reported having been harassed or bullied in the past three months, whereas only 22.1% of males reported having experienced the same.
- In Year 9 compared to Year 8, a smaller percentage of students reported being bullied, afraid of being beaten up, or physically assaulted in the past three months.

School Performance

- Most students reported they received an average of either A's or B's last year. Regardless of grade level, a greater percentage of females (86.5%) reported high grades than did males. As grade level increased, fewer students reported mostly A's or B's.
- Grades and feelings of safety at school were lower among 6th – 8th graders who were bullied.
- Almost 1/3 of students reported missing at least one day when asked how many whole days of school were missed in the past 30 days because of being skipped or cut. Only 12.5% of students reported skipping three or more days.
- Over a quarter (29.6%) of the students reported having been sent to the office for disciplinary reasons in the past three months. Regardless of grade level, males (35.3%) were also more likely than females (24.1%) to be sent to the office. Males (56.0%) were more likely than females (48.8%) to receive an in-school suspension or detention as a result, especially among students in the lower grade levels.
- The likelihood of receiving any type of discipline (i.e., detention, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspensions) increased as grade level increased.

- The majority (73-88%) of students reported positive attitudes toward school regardless of the question being asked. However, over a quarter of students (26.2%) did not think teachers treated them fairly and 20.1% reported not being happy at school. Students in lower grades were more likely than those in higher grades to have positive attitudes toward school.

Program Effectiveness

- Youth reported equivocal levels of satisfaction with SPIRIT and perceived the effectiveness of the program to be analogous in Year 8 and Year 9.
- The majority (83.3%) of students responded that they liked the program at least a little.
- Youth were most likely to report that the program helped them with anger management (80.9%) and resistance skills (81.2%), and that the time spent on the program was generally helpful (81.9%).
- Youth were least likely to indicate that they thought the program caused other students to be nicer to them, with only a little over half (53.8%) reporting that the program had this effect even a little.

Protective Factors

- Students reported feeling sad if they saw animal being hurt (82.9%), feeling sad if someone was left out (78.9%), and feeling bad if someone else got their feelings hurt (81.9%). The percentage of students who were empathetic decreased as grade level increased.
- Regardless of grade level, there were fewer males (57.9%) who reported feelings of empathy to all empathy questions than females (75.4%).
- A greater percentage of 4th – 9th grade youth reported that they made good decisions (81.2%) than thought about their choices (62.2%), how those decisions affect others (62.8%), and the consequences of their decisions (66.1%).
- Students who answered “Often” or “All the Time” to every decision making statement were identified as good decision makers (41.0%). In general, as grade level increased, both males and females were less likely to report good decision making skills, with the exception of males in the 6th – 8th grade who were more likely than males in any other grade level to be identified as good decision makers. However, among youth in 4th – 5th grades, a greater percentage of females than males fit the description of good decision makers.
- Students who answered “Agree” or “Strongly” to every caring adult statement were categorized as having positive adult support (74.9%). The percentage of youth reporting positive adult support decreased as grade level increased, such that 81.9% of youth in the 4th – 5th grade, 74.1% of 6th – 8th grade youth, and only 67.5% of 9th graders reported positive adult supports.

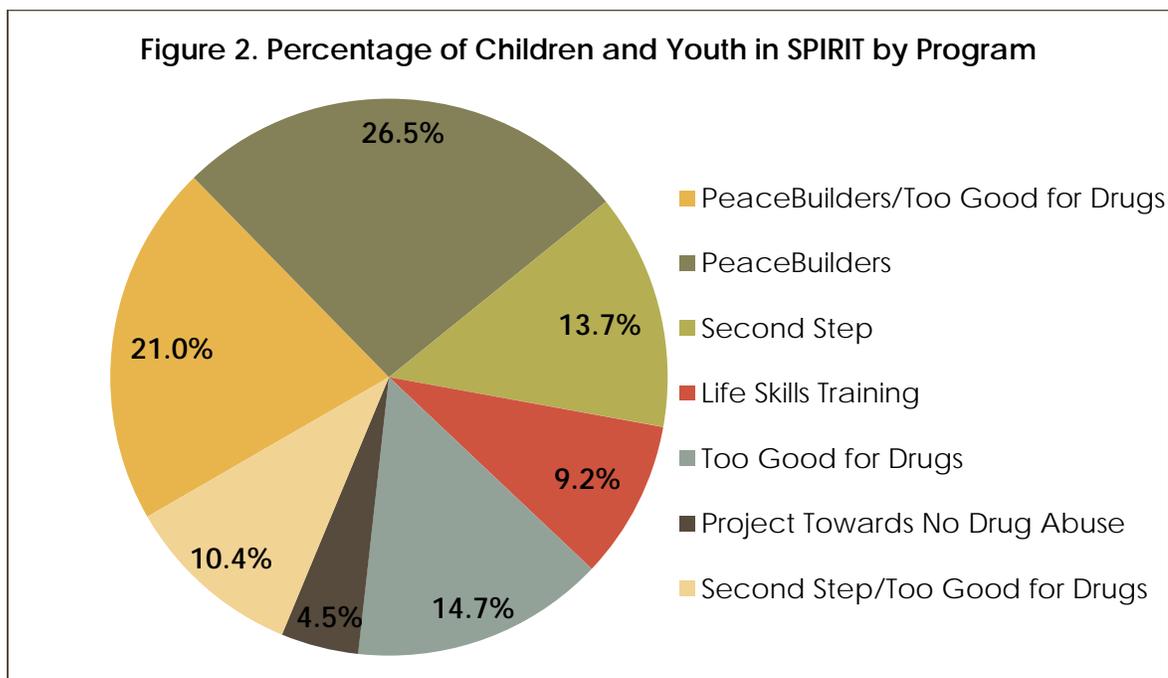
Recommendations

- The likelihood of trying marijuana showed a large increase (16.5%) between middle/junior high school students and those in the 9th grade. It is recommended that emphasis be placed on resistance skills as well as on the educational component of the middle, junior, and high school curriculum.

- The age of initiation of cigarette, alcohol and marijuana use is lower among students in the SPIRIT sample than among Missouri youth responding to the MSS. This suggests a need to provide drug education lessons as well as a focus on good decision making skills among elementary school children.
- While only 11.1% of SPIRIT students reported using alcohol in the past month, over 23% intended to do so in the future. This information combined with the perception of 59% of the students that most adults use alcohol indicates that there is an expectation of alcohol use in adulthood. Greater emphasis on educating students about actual adult alcohol use, as well as teenage use, is recommended.
- In Year 9, students were less likely to report having used cigarettes or alcohol in the past month than in Year 8. Additionally, fewer students reported positive attitudes toward cigarette and alcohol use in Year 9 than in Year 8. It is important to continue prevention efforts to support this positive trend.
- The fact that a lower percentage of SPIRIT students than MSS students rode in a car with someone who had been drinking shows that they are making some good decisions. More emphasis on the need to make the same good decision about their own drinking and driving is needed.
- The fact that ecstasy use is not perceived to be much more risky than marijuana use indicates a need to provide more information about the relative dangers of specific substances.
- As youth get older, they report that the level of adult support in their lives decreases such that by 9th grade, only 67.5% of students report a high level of adult support. Teachers can be an important source of support to the students, and thus it is recommended that the schools learn more about why almost 40% of students in 9th grade perceived that they were not treated fairly and try to remedy that situation.
- The high percentage of students that report making good decisions without having considered other factors indicates that education about the decision making process needs to be improved. It is important for students to understand that thinking through all of their choices as well as the effect on others and the potential consequences of the decisions are all important factors in making good decisions.

Chapter 1 - The SPIRIT Programs

In the ninth year of the SPIRIT project, prevention programming was implemented at all school levels in the five participating school districts. Program implementation information was collected from interviews with prevention providers and school administrators during the 2010-2011 school year, monthly reports by the prevention provider agency, and fidelity forms completed by teachers of the evidence-based prevention programs. The following are brief descriptions of the information gathered from these sources.



Participating School Districts

Carthage R-IX. In the Carthage School District, PeaceBuilders was implemented in all five elementary schools (K – 4th grade) by prevention specialists from the provider agency. PeaceBuilder principles were reinforced throughout the entire school communities. In the middle school (5th- 6th grade), PeaceBuilders was taught by a prevention specialist and was supplemented by Too Good For Drugs. Life Skills Training was taught by health and physical education (PE) teachers in the junior high school (7th – 8th grade) and 9th grade students in the high school.

PeaceBuilders provides flexibility in the curriculum and thus the prevention specialists were able to creatively build lessons around issues that were particularly relevant to specific classrooms or to the school as a whole. Principals in Carthage cited many examples of ways in which SPIRIT had helped to improve school climate and relationships among students. The common language of PeaceBuilders again was mentioned as a powerful tool in creating understanding within the school community, whether it was in relation to disciplinary actions or praise.

Hickman Mills C-1. Prevention specialists from the provider agency implemented programming in all eight elementary schools (4th – 5th grade), the middle school (6th – 7th grade) and junior high (8th – 9th grade) in the Hickman Mills School District. Second Step and Too Good For Drugs were implemented in the elementary schools, and Second Step in the middle school and junior high.

This was a challenging year for Hickman Mills as they went through a reconfiguration of their schools due to budget cuts. A single middle school was created that served grades 6-7 and a single junior high was created to serve students in grades 8-9. These schools replaced the two middle schools (grades 6-8). The two high school that previously served students in grades 9-12 were consolidated into one school for students in grades 10-12. The importance and contributions of the SPIRIT prevention specialists in the middle and junior high schools, particularly in light of the challenges of the school changes, were recognized by the principals of these schools.

Knox County R-I. In Knox School District, classroom teachers and a prevention specialist coordinated implementation of PeaceBuilders in the elementary school (K – 5th grade). A prevention specialist also taught Second Step in the middle school (6th – 8th grade). A mentoring program for high school freshman, begun during Year 8, was continued in an attempt to reduce the number of students dropping out of school.

The prevention specialists were active in the community as well, and they successfully engaged community members and organizations in support of the prevention efforts related to SPIRIT. Events like Donuts for Dads and Muffins for Moms have been supported by the community. Additionally, PeaceBuilder lessons have even been taught to pre-school children, so they are truly prepared when they enter kindergarten.

New Madrid County R-I. SPIRIT was implemented in all three elementary schools (K – 5th grade) in the New Madrid School District. The program was also implemented in the middle school (6th – 8th grade) and to 9th grade students at the high school. A prevention specialist from the provider agency taught PeaceBuilders at the elementary schools, and classroom teachers provided reinforcement of the lessons. School-wide activities, such as reciting the PeaceBuilder pledge also reinforced the PeaceBuilder message. A prevention specialist taught Second Step at the middle school and Project Towards No Drug Abuse to the 9th grade students at the high school. Supplementary lessons from The Truth about Drugs from the Foundation for a Drug Free World were used with high school students.

The SPIRIT prevention specialists have worked with teachers in each of the schools to create events and innovative activities to reinforce SPIRIT. In the elementary schools, for instance, a Peace Café was created and in all schools, both students and teachers were recognized and given awards as PeaceBuilders. At the beginning of the school year, abbreviated lessons from SPIRIT were even offered to parents to help them understand more about the goals of SPIRIT and the specific programs provided.

Ritenour. In the Ritenour School District, prevention specialists implemented programming in all six elementary schools (4th – 5th grade), both middle schools (6th – 8th grade), and 9th grade students in the high school. Second Step was taught in the elementary schools with supplements from Too Good For Drugs. Too Good For Drugs was taught in the two middle schools and the high school.

Principals in the Ritenour district were particularly appreciative of the work that the prevention specialists did with small groups of children and youth who needed additional assistance in developing appropriate behaviors. They felt that SPIRIT made essential contributions to improvements in behavior and school climate.

Fidelity Documentation and Interviews

Fidelity forms were completed by each program implementer. These forms documented the degree to which each particular program adhered to its evidence-based model. The specific lesson taught, the number of minutes, and the frequency of implementation were recorded as were any changes that the teacher made to the lessons (lengthened, shortened, material added, made more age or culturally appropriate). Data show that programs at all of the districts were implemented with fidelity. Most modifications to programs were to make them more age and/or culturally appropriate.

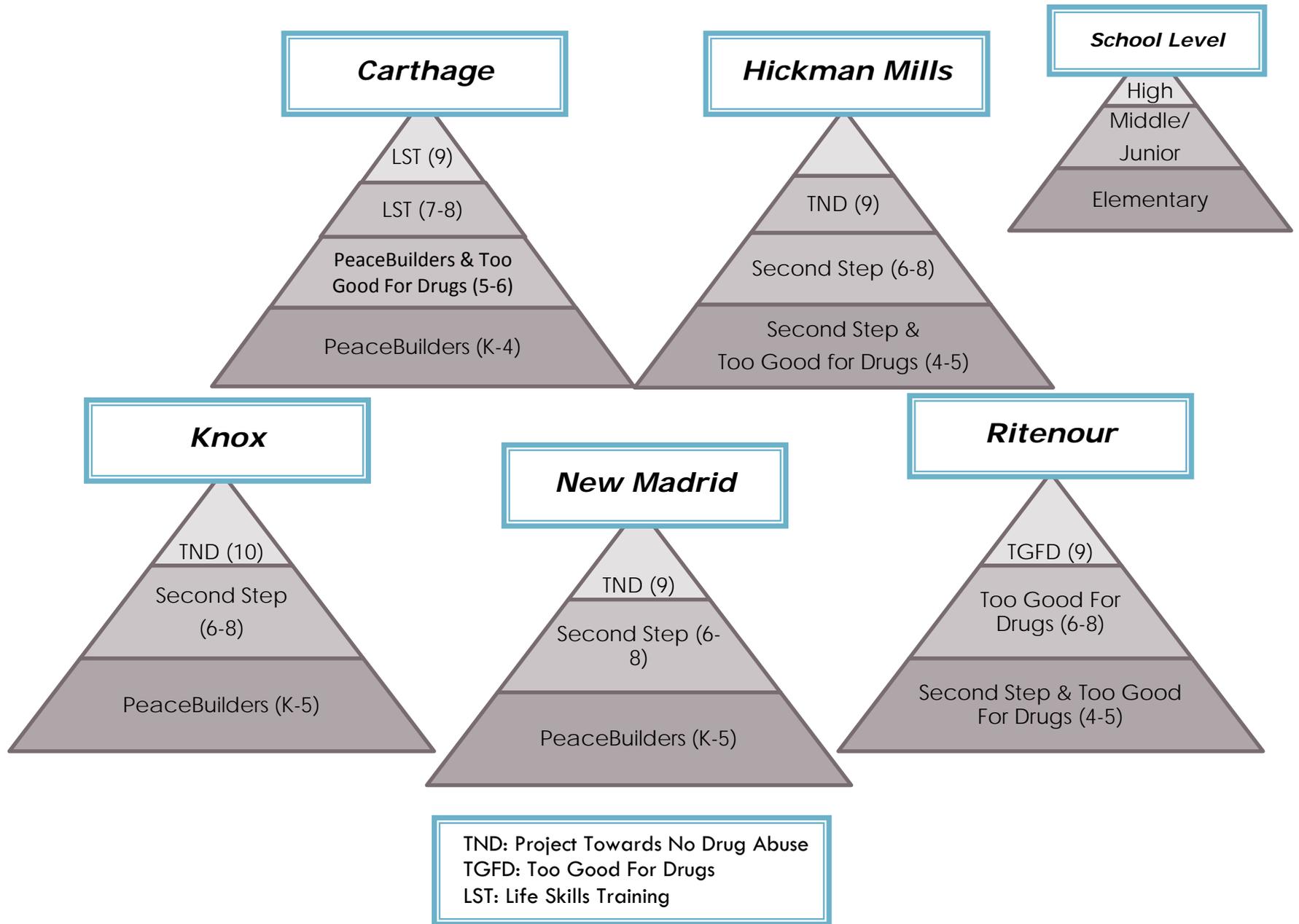
Principals from all of the districts expressed appreciation for being included in the SPIRIT program, as they have throughout the years during which the program has existed. Most commented on the ability of the prevention specialists to effectively work with the students in both program implementation and small group work, and they cited examples of ways in which SPIRIT positively impacted their students and their schools. Following are some of those comments:

- "I can't even begin to think what our schools would be like without SPIRIT"* --District Superintendent
- "By the time kids who have had SPIRIT programming since elementary school get to the high school, we have very few behavioral problems. It has made a huge difference in our school."* --High school principal
- "The teachers particularly like the way SPIRIT reinforces the principle of respect that we use to guide behavior in our school."* --Elementary principal
- "When parents are surveyed about which activities they believe are important to retain in our school, most of them say 'SPIRIT.'"* --Elementary principal
- "Teachers comment about the difference in the behavior of students who have participated in the small groups that SPIRIT has provided."* --Middle school principal
- "When our students are with students from other schools, our students are better behaved, and I believe it is because of PeaceBuilders."* --Elementary principal
- "The only change I would recommend in SPIRIT is to have the specialists here more often. They make a big difference."* --High school principal
- "With all of the emphasis on MAP scores, it is challenging for teachers to fit in all of the "extra" programming that has been offered. But when teachers were asked to prioritize and to identify which programs they would eliminate, they were willing to give up all of the other programming before they would give up SPIRIT."* --Elementary principal
- "Last year there were a lot of physical fights. This year we might have had three. So, I know that the program is having an effect. I know that the kids are learning."* --Elementary counselor

Principals, regardless of district, again spoke of problems such as the lack of parental involvement, poverty, transiency, and community violence that impact the schools. Principals also cited lack of parental supervision and parental drug use or incarceration as problems that many students have to deal with. They believe that these factors make prevention programming and SPIRIT even more important in providing protective factors that can buffer against substance use and violence.

The following figure displays the prevention program being implemented in each district and grade level.

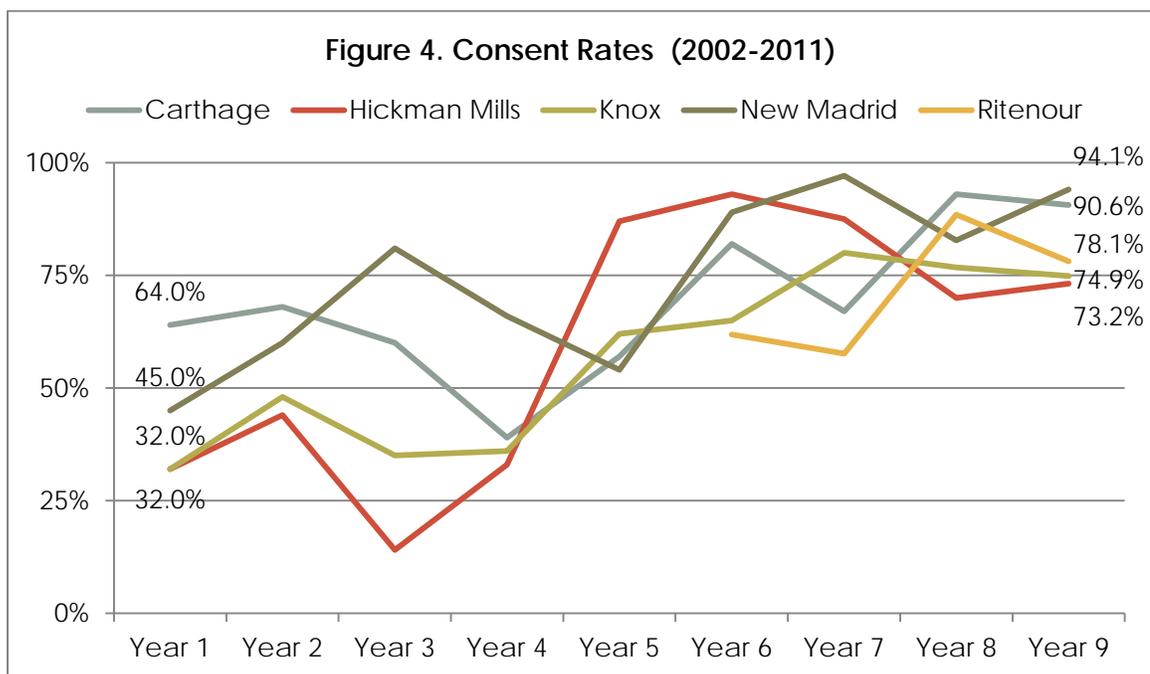
Figure 3. Program Implementation by Site, Year 9 (2010-2011)



Chapter 2 – Sample Selection and Demographics

In Year 9, 10,425 students in the kindergarten through twelfth grades received prevention programming through SPIRIT. However, only students in grades 4-9 who received parental consent and who assented to participate were eligible to be included in the evaluation.

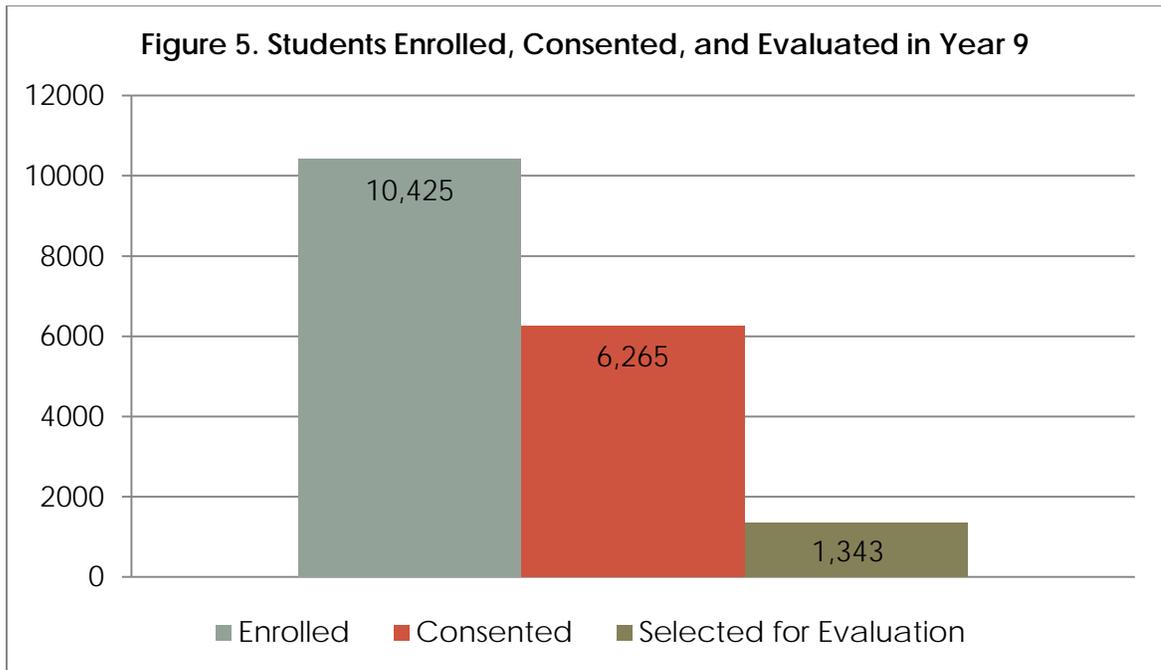
Approximately 81% (6,265) of the students in the 4th – 9th grade who were enrolled in SPIRIT received parental consent to participate in the evaluation. The overall percentage of consents increased from Year 8 (76%) to Year 9 (81%). Two of the five school districts have a consent rate above 90%.



Sample Selection

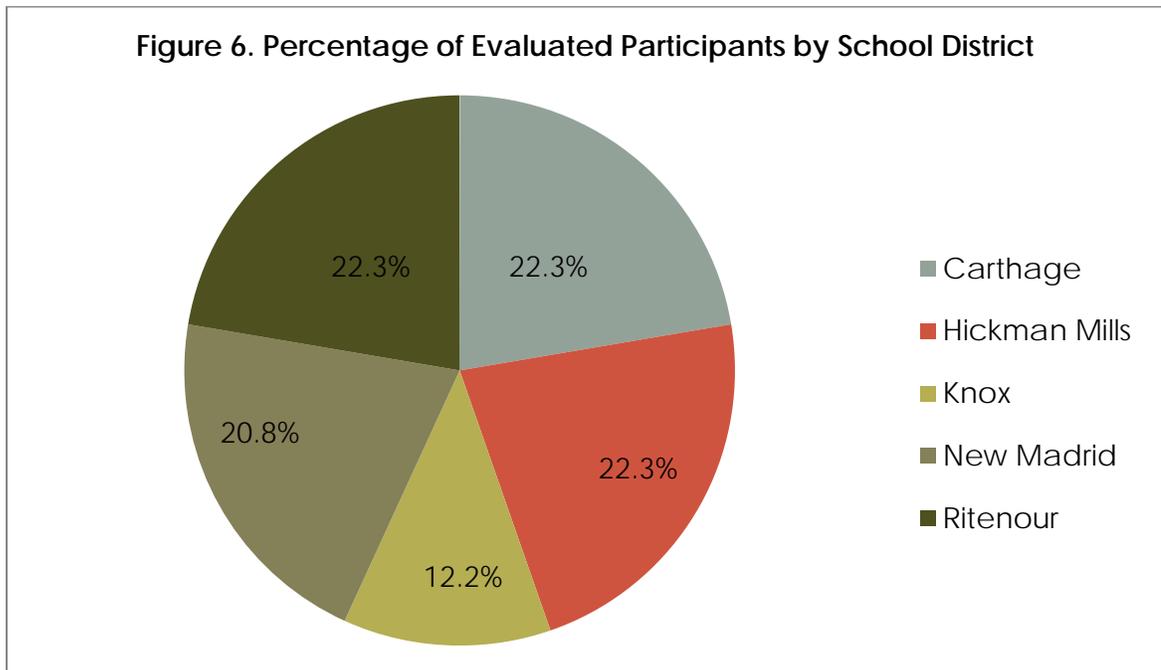
Students who received parental consent to participate in the evaluation completed a survey. In order to assess the SPIRIT program in its entirety, an effort was made to eliminate bias or influence from any particular school district. Samples, therefore, were adjusted to reflect the demographics of each school district² and consisted of 100 students from each grade level (4th-5th, 6th-8th, 9th) in each of the districts since the size of school districts and the individual schools within those districts vary, some districts have fewer than 100 youth per grade group. The final sample size was 1,343 students. The statistics in the remainder of this report reflect the behaviors and attitudes of these students.

² School districts have varying demographic profiles, use different provider agencies, and in many cases implement different prevention programs. Considering these factors, the data set was post-stratified through random sampling to provide equal influence to each school district and within each district. Within each school district, each school, grade, and sex was represented equally.

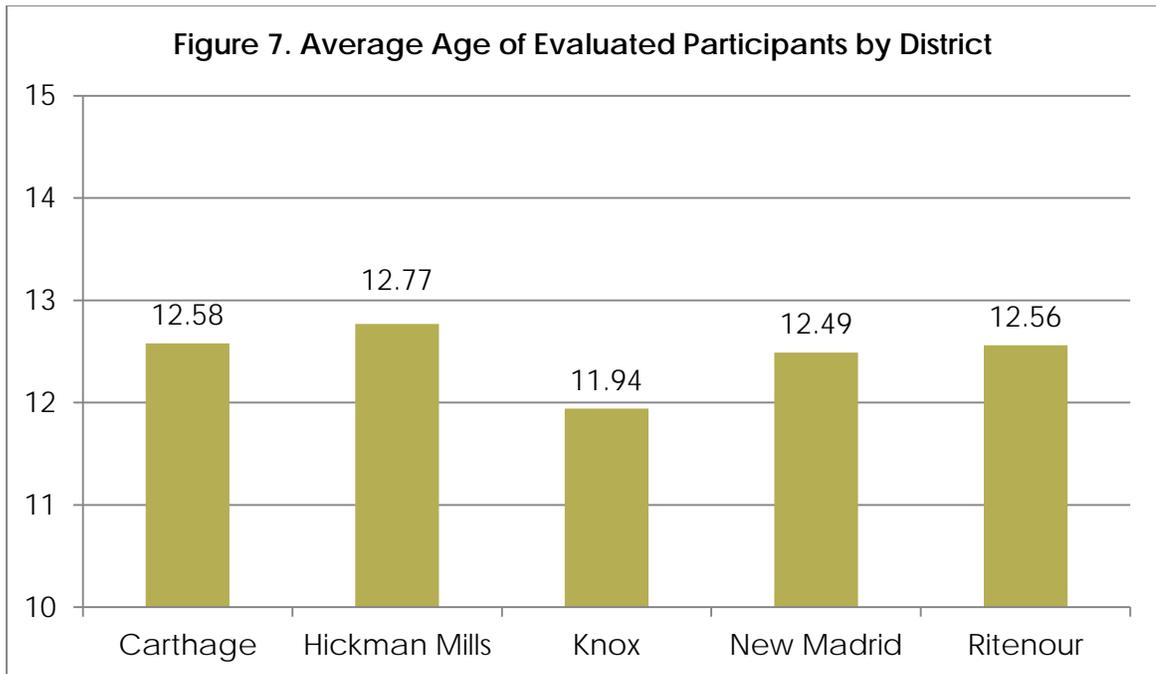


Demographic Distributions of the Evaluation Sample

Knox school district is significantly smaller than the other participating school districts, thus every Knox student who completed a valid survey was included. The Hickman Mills school district is also slightly under represented due to fewer 9th grade participants.



While the average age of students in the evaluation was 12.52 years of age, Knox students had a lower average age because the SPIRIT program was not implemented in grade 9 during the 2010-2011 school year.



The selected sample of students was 52.4% White, 32.5% Black, and 11.4% Latino (of any race). The majority of the students in the Hickman Mills school district are Black, while most of the Carthage, Knox, and New Madrid students are White. There are more students of Latino descent in the Carthage and Ritenour school districts than in any other.

	Carthage	Hickman Mills	Knox	New Madrid	Ritenour
Hispanic/Latino (of any race)	22.0	9.3	1.8	2.2	16.7
Not Hispanic or Latino					
White/Caucasian	70.7	10.3	93.9	67.0	40.0
Black/African-American	3.3	78.0	1.2	26.5	38.7
Native American/Alaskan Native	2.7	1.0	1.8	1.4	1.7
Asian	0.3	0.7	0.0	0.4	1.0
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other (not otherwise specified)	0.3	0.7	1.2	2.5	2.0

The SPIRIT sample has a smaller percentage of white youth and more Latino youth than the Missouri Student Survey (MSS), the data from which comparisons were made. There are fewer Black youth included in the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), the survey used to compare SPIRIT to the average youth in the US.

Table 3. Percentage of Participants by Race/Ethnicity by Survey			
	SPIRIT ¹	Missouri ²	United States ³
Hispanic/Latino (of any race)	11.4	3.2	17.3
Not Hispanic or Latino			
White/Caucasian	52.4	81.3	60.5
Black/African-American	32.5	9.0	13.4
Native American/Alaskan Native	1.7	2.3	1.4
Asian*	0.5	1.4	3.2
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.1	.04	0.3
Other (not otherwise specified)	1.3	2.4	4.0

¹ SPIRIT Survey (2011), 4th – 9th grade selected participants

² Missouri Student Survey (2010), 4th – 9th grades

³ National Survey on Drug Use and Health (2009), 12-17 years of age

There were an equal percentage of males (49.2%) and females (49.2%) in the SPIRIT sample. In districts where there was an over-representation of one gender over the other, it is due to the small size of the district or particular schools within the district.

Table 4. Percentage of Evaluated Participants by Sex					
	Carthage	Hickman Mills	Knox	New Madrid	Ritenour
Male	50.0	50.0	48.7	47.1	50.0
Female	50.0	50.0	51.3	52.9	50.0

Chapter 3 - Substance Use

The following chapter presents information about substance use among 4th – 9th grade youth. As noted in the table or chart descriptions, data are most often reported by groupings of grades 4 - 5, 6 - 8 and grade 9. Wherever possible, substance use of SPIRIT students was compared to the most current estimates of use from two other surveys: 1) the 2010 Missouri Student Survey (MSS), and 2) the 2009 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH).

Lifetime Substance Use

Students in 4th – 5th grades were asked whether they had ever, even once, smoked part or all of a cigarette, had more than a sip or two of alcohol, or used marijuana. Students in the 6th – 9th grade were asked how old they were the first time they smoked part or all of a cigarette, had more than a sip or two of alcohol, used marijuana or a variety of other drugs. Among the selected 4th – 9th grade sample, 14.1% reported having smoked a cigarette. Over 30% reported ever having had more than a sip or two of alcohol and 8.5% reported use of marijuana in their lifetime.

Lifetime Substance Use Comparisons with State and National Samples. Among SPIRIT youth in 6th – 9th grade, 19.1% reported using cigarettes in their lifetime, similar to Missouri and national reports of youth usage. The percentage of youth reporting lifetime use of marijuana, inhalants, ecstasy, and methamphetamine were also similar between SPIRIT and Missouri youth.

Comparisons cannot be made between SPIRIT, Missouri, and national statistics in the percentage of youth who had *more than a sip* of alcohol in their lifetime because of differences in the question wording³. When asked whether they had used alcohol regularly (once or twice a month), fewer SPIRIT youth (8.7%) reported use compared with those in the US sample (17.0%).

³Because the SPIRIT survey alcohol use question was worded differently from the MSS and NSDUH; comparison data have not been included in this report. SPIRIT students were asked “how old were you the first time you had more than a sip or two of alcohol.” The Missouri and U.S. questionnaires included more specific instructions: “We are not asking about times when you only had a sip or two from a drink or drank only for religious purposes. Throughout these questions, by a ‘drink,’ we mean a can or bottle of beer, a glass of wine or a wine cooler, a shot of liquor, or a mixed drink with liquor in it.” SPIRIT youth were not instructed to count only those times when they consumed an entire can, bottle, glass, or shot, but rather anything more than a sip or two.

Table 5. Estimates of SPIRIT, Missouri, and US Lifetime Substance Use (6th – 9th grade)

	SPIRIT Total ¹	MO ²	US ³
Cigarettes	19.1	21.2	22.2
Alcohol (more than a sip) ⁴	37.1	---	---
Alcohol (once or twice a month)	8.7	---	17.0
Marijuana	12.2	11.8	---
Ecstasy	1.1	1.5	---
Methamphetamine	0.8	0.7	---
Inhalants	4.5	6.6	9.2
Prescription Drugs without Rx	3.3	9.4	---

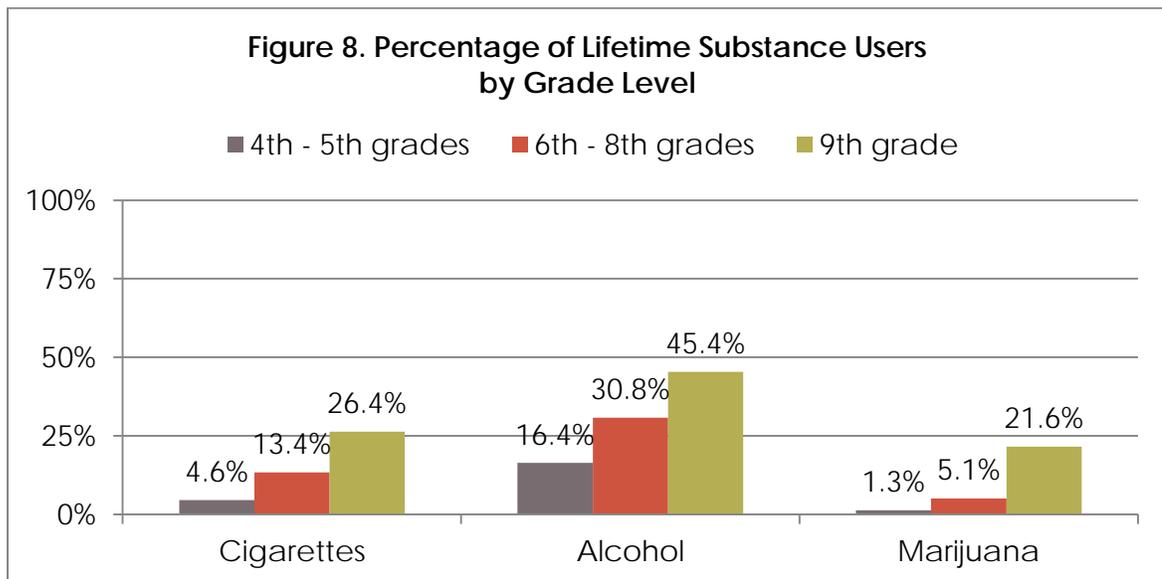
¹ SPIRIT, spring 2011, 6th – 9th grade, n = 885 (average age = 13.61); note: there were no participating youth in the 9th grade from the Knox school district.

² Missouri Student Survey (MSS) 2010, 6th – 9th grade, n = 92,901 (average age = 13.72)

³ National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) 2009, n = 24,625 (12 – 17 years of age)

⁴Please consider the written explanation in the preceding footnote regarding the absence of Missouri and national comparison data.

Lifetime Substance Use by Grade Level. The higher the grade level, the more likely youth were to have used cigarettes, alcohol, and marijuana. The increase in the percentage of cigarette and alcohol users was relatively consistent between grade levels, with an 8-14% increase in the percentage of users between the 4th – 5th and 6th – 8th grade levels and the 6th – 8th and 9th grade levels. The likelihood of trying marijuana showed only a small increase (approximately 4%) between 4th – 5th grade and 6th – 8th grade, but a large increase (16.5%) between middle school/junior high and the entrance into 9th grade.



Lifetime Substance Use by Sex. There were no differences between the percentage of males and females who reported having ever used cigarettes, alcohol, or marijuana in their lifetime.

Past Month (30-day) Substance Use

Students in 4th – 9th grade were asked whether they used substances in the month prior to taking the survey. Among the selected sample, 3.1% reported smoking a cigarette, 8.5% drinking alcohol, and 4.1% using marijuana in the past 30 days.

30-day Substance Use Comparisons with State and National Samples. A smaller percentage of SPIRIT students used cigarettes, alcohol or prescription medication without a prescription in the past 30 days compared to the average 6th-9th grade Missouri student. The use of marijuana and inhalants in the past month among SPIRIT students did not differ greatly from youth in Missouri or from United States. Fewer SPIRIT participants reported having smoked cigarettes in the past month than did Missouri or US youth.

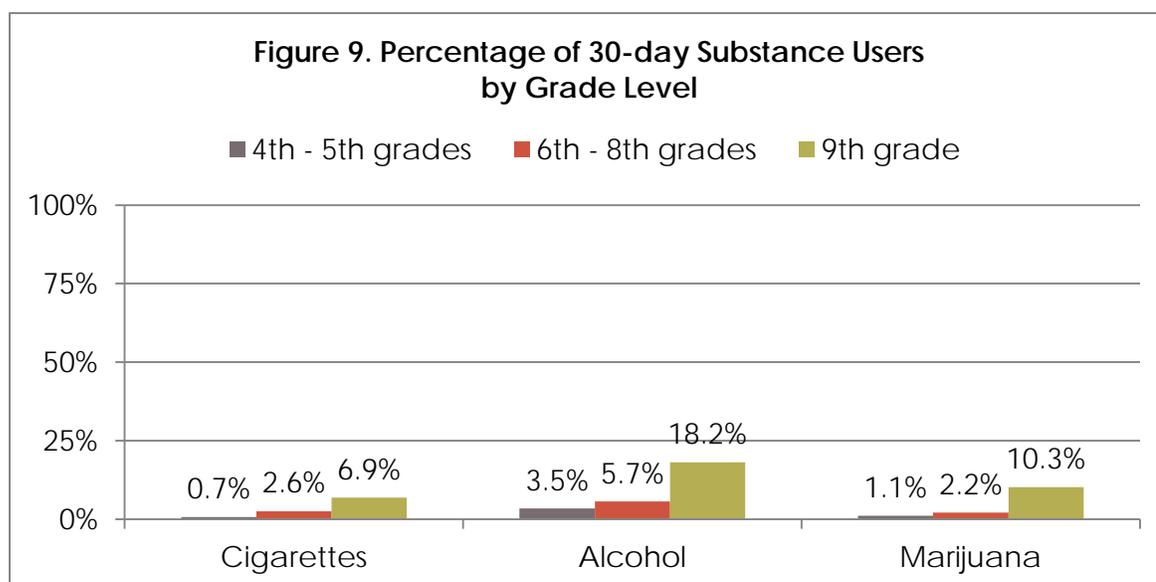
	SPIRIT Total ¹	MO ²	US ³
Cigarettes	4.4	10.7	8.9
Alcohol	11.1	15.3	14.7
Marijuana	5.6	6.4	7.3
Inhalants	1.8	3.4	1.0
Prescription Drugs without Rx	1.1	5.8	---

¹ SPIRIT, spring 2011, 6th – 9th grade, n = 885 (average age = 13.61); note: there were no participating youth in the 9th grade from the Knox school district.

² Missouri Student Survey (MSS) 2010, 6th – 9th grade, n = 92,901 (average age = 13.72)

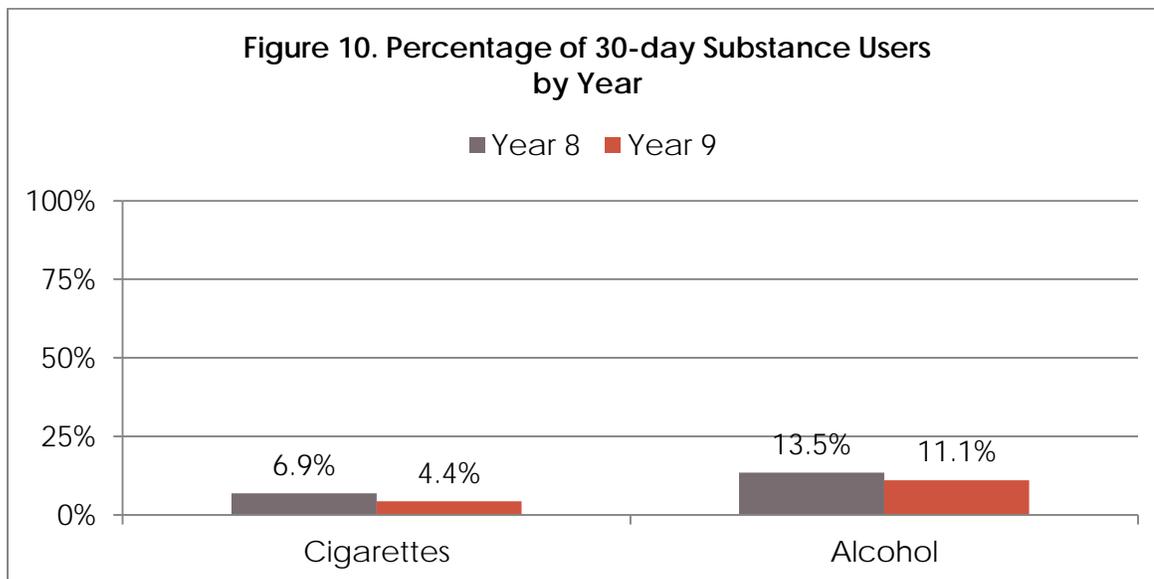
³ US National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) 2009, n = 24,625 (12 – 17 years of age)

30-day Substance Use by Grade Level. The percentage of youth who used substances in the past month did not increase much from the 4th – 5th grade to the 6th – 8th grade levels. However, there was a larger percentage of 9th grade youth who reported 30-day substance use than their younger counterparts. The largest increase occurred among alcohol users, with 5.7% of 6th-8th grade youth and 18.2% of 9th grade youth reporting having had at least a sip of alcohol in the past month.



30-day Substance Use by Sex. Males and females were equally as likely to have used cigarettes, alcohol, or marijuana in the past month.

30-day Substance Use by Year. In Year 9, students were less likely to report having used cigarettes or alcohol in the past month than in Year 8.



	SPIRIT Year 8	SPIRIT Year 9
Cigarettes	6.9	4.4
Alcohol	13.5	11.1
Marijuana	5.5	5.6
Inhalants	2.8	1.8
Prescription Drugs without Rx	2.8	1.1

Age of 1st Substance Use (Age of Initiation)

Students in 6th – 9th grade were asked to indicate how old they were the first time they used alcohol, cigarettes, and other drugs.

Age of 1st Substance Use Comparisons with State Samples. SPIRIT youth began using cigarettes and marijuana at a younger age than the average youth in Missouri.

	SPIRIT Total ¹	MO ²
Cigarettes	10.94	12.29
Alcohol (more than a sip) ³	11.06	---
Alcohol (once or twice a month)	12.25	---
Marijuana	12.66	13.53
Ecstasy	11.80	---
Methamphetamine	13.00	---
Inhalants	11.72	11.95
Prescription Drugs without Rx	12.15	---

¹ SPIRIT, spring 2011, 6th – 9th grade, n = 885 (average age = 13.61); note: there were no participating youth in the 9th grade from the Knox school district.

² Missouri Student Survey (MSS) 2010, 6th – 9th grade, n = 92,901 (average age = 13.72)

³ For explanation regarding the absence of Missouri comparison data, please consider the written explanation in the footnote on page 7 regarding the absence of Missouri comparison data.

Age of 1st Substance Use by Sex. On average, males who had used ecstasy or prescription drugs in their lifetime were more likely to have done so at a younger age than females.

Table 9. Age of 1 st Substance Use by Sex		
	Males	Females
Cigarettes	10.61	11.25
Alcohol (more than a sip)	10.73	11.38
Alcohol (once or twice a month)	12.29	12.23
Marijuana	12.33	12.96
Ecstasy	10.50	13.75
Methamphetamine	13.20	12.50
Inhalants	12.15	11.48
Prescription Drugs without Rx	11.33	12.86

Substance Use Extent and Circumstances

SPIRIT students in 6th – 9th grade were asked how many cigarettes they smoked, how many drinks they had when they drank, if they binge drank in the past 30 days, if they were drunk or high at school in the past three months, if they rode in a vehicle when the driver was drinking, and whether they drove while drunk.

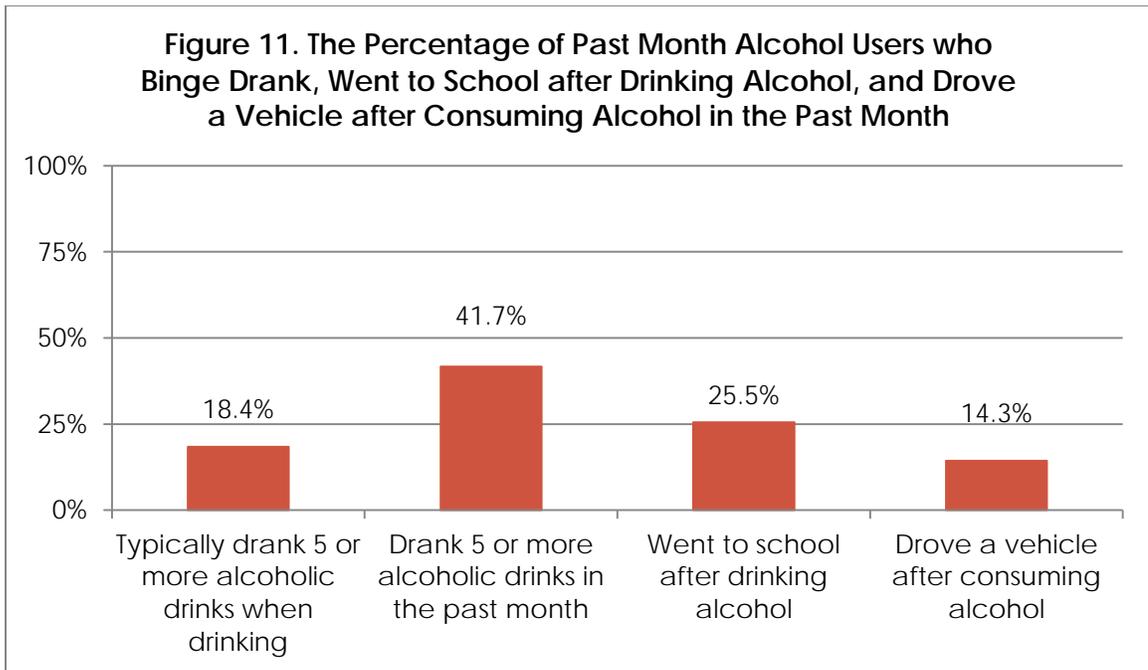
Among those who reported smoking cigarettes in the past 30 days, 23.1% of students usually had one cigarette or less on the days that they smoked, 28.2% reported smoking 2-5 cigarettes, and 17.9% smoked about a half of a pack (6-15 cigarettes) on an average day.

Of those who reported drinking alcohol in the past 30 days, 30.6% of the students reported typically only having one drink on the days that they drink and over 35% reported having 2-4 drinks. More than 18% of 6th – 9th graders reported usually having 5 or more drinks on the days that they drink.

Youth were then asked to report if they had participated in binge drinking in the past month. Binge drinking is defined as having five or more drinks on the same occasion. A total of 5.6% of all 6th – 9th grade youth reported binge drinking. Among those who reported having an alcoholic drink in their lifetime, 14.5% binge drank in the past 30 days. Binge drinking was reported by 41.7% of youth who drank any alcohol in the past month.

The binge drinking rate in Missouri was higher (8.0%) than among SPIRIT youth (5.6%).

Among all 6th – 9th grade youth, 4.7% reported being drunk or high at school in the past three months; however, among lifetime alcohol users, the percentage of youth who reported being drunk or high at school in the past month was 11.1%. Over one-fourth (25.5%) of students reporting alcohol use within the past month reported they were drunk or high at school.

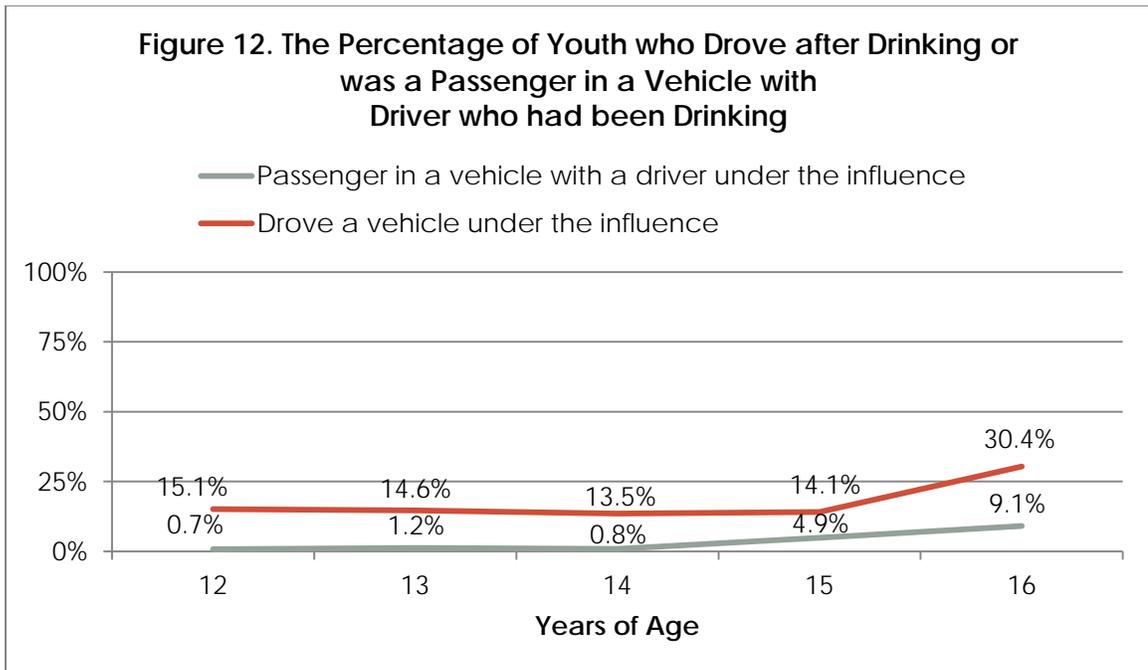


Students were also asked to indicate their experience with drunk driving, both as a driver and a passenger. Among all 6th – 9th grade students, 2.3% reported having driven a car when drinking. Over 14% of all SPIRIT 6th – 9th grade youth reported that they rode in a car with a driver who had been drinking.

Table 10. Percentage of youth within the past month who rode with a driver who had been drinking or drove themselves after drinking (6th – 9th Grade)

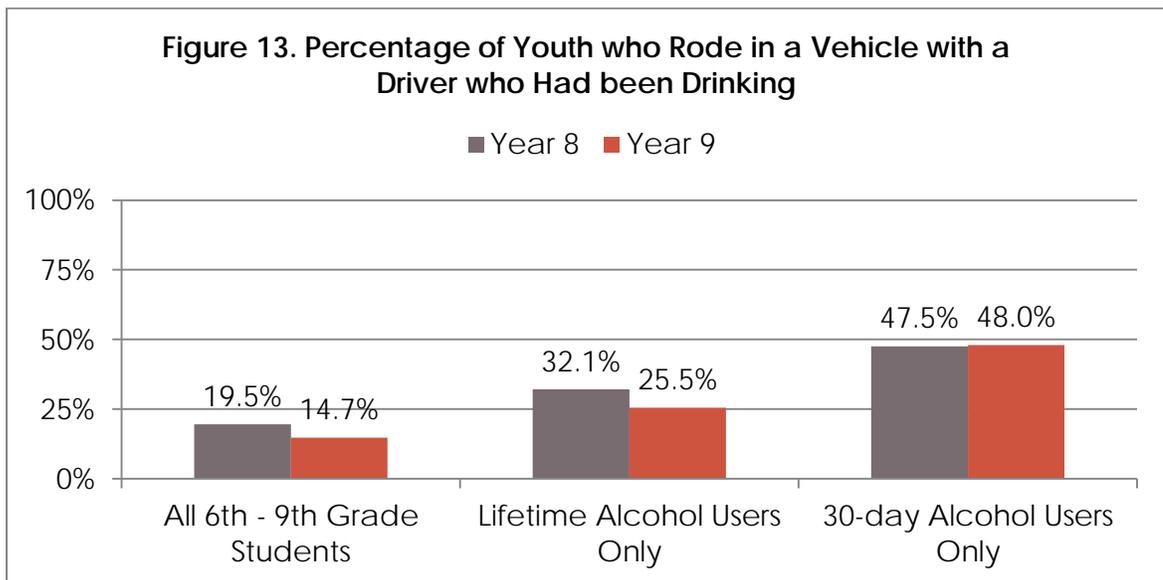
	Total Sample (regardless of reported alcohol use)	Among Lifetime Alcohol Users	Among 30-day Alcohol Users
Rode in a vehicle with a driver who had been drinking	14.7	25.5	48.0
Drove after having drunk alcohol	2.3	5.0	14.3

Vehicles and Alcohol Use by Age. When comparing student responses regarding vehicles and alcohol use dependent on their age there is a noticeable increase at age 16 in the percentage of youth reporting both driving while under the influence and being a passenger while another driver was under the influence of alcohol. Before the age of 16 an assumption might be made that students are being driven by parent, guardian, or another adult. The percentage of youth between the ages of 12 and 15 who reported being the passenger while their driver was under the influence remained consistently near 15%. A much larger percentage, 30.4%, of students 16 years of age or older reported the same experience.



Vehicles and Alcohol Use Comparisons with MSS. The reported rates of driving a vehicle after drinking alcohol were similar among the average 6th – 9th grade student in Missouri (2.5%) and among SPIRIT students (2.3%). SPIRIT students were much less likely (14.7%), however, to have ridden in a vehicle with a driver who had been drinking compared to other Missouri students (21.4%).

Vehicles and Alcohol Use by Year. Students were less likely to report having ridden in a vehicle with a driver who had been drinking in Year 9 than in Year 8, both among all 6th – 9th grade youth and among lifetime alcohol users.



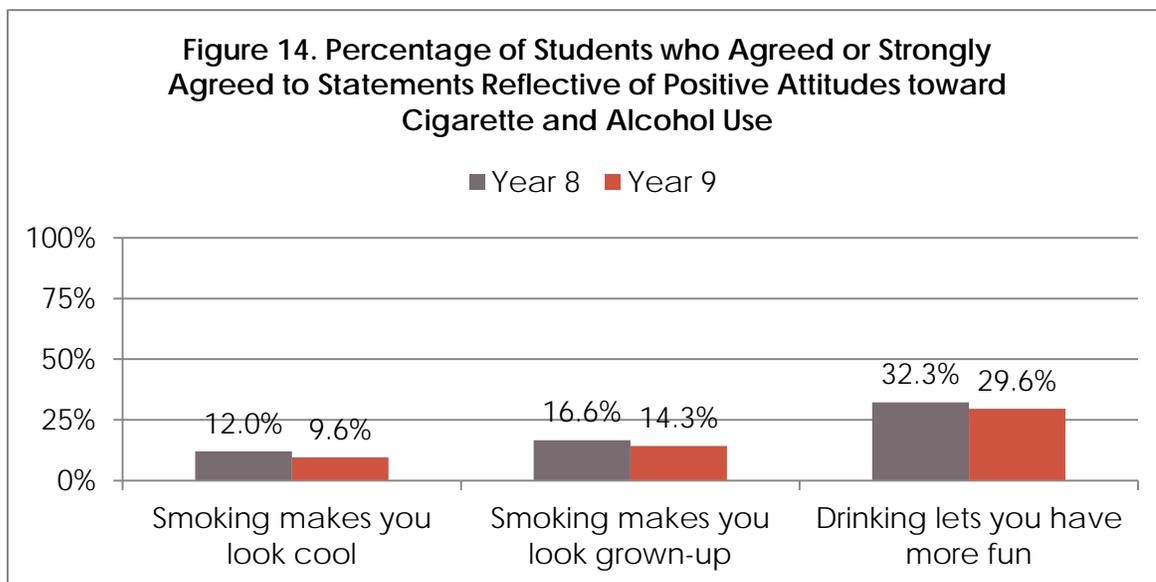
Summary

- Among SPIRIT youth in 6th – 9th grade, 19.1% reported using cigarettes in their lifetime, similar to Missouri and national reports of youth usage.

- In Year 9, students were less likely to report having used cigarettes or alcohol in the past month than in Year 8. Additionally, fewer students reported positive attitudes toward cigarette and alcohol use in Year 9 than in Year 8.
- The percentage of youth reporting lifetime use of marijuana, inhalants, ecstasy, and methamphetamine was also similar between SPIRIT and Missouri youth.
- Fewer SPIRIT students used cigarettes in the past 30 days than youth in either the Missouri or national sample.
- SPIRIT youth began using cigarettes and marijuana at a younger age than the average youth in Missouri. However, a smaller percentage of SPIRIT students used cigarettes, alcohol or prescription medication without a prescription in the past 30 days compared to the average 6th-9th grade Missouri student
- The likelihood of trying marijuana showed only a small increase (approximately 4%) between 4th – 5th grade and 6th – 8th grade, but a large increase (16.5%) between middle school/junior high and the entrance into 9th grade.
- The reported percentage of students driving a vehicle after drinking alcohol was similar among the average 6th – 9th grade student in Missouri (2.5%) and among SPIRIT students (2.3%). SPIRIT students were much less likely (14.7%), however, to have ridden in a vehicle with a driver who had been drinking compared to other Missouri students (21.4%).
- It was much more likely for a student of 16 years of age (30.4%) to report having driven a vehicle under the influence of alcohol than a student between 12-15 years of age (14.1%).
- Students were less likely to report having ridden in a vehicle with a driver who had been drinking in Year 9 than in Year 8, both among all 6th – 9th grade youth and among lifetime alcohol users.

Chapter 4 - Substance Use Attitudes

Students in the 4th – 9th grades were asked to report on the extent to which they thought most teenagers and adults used drugs, whether they might use drugs when they were older, how risky drugs were to the health of those who use, and how wrong they thought the use of drugs was. The majority of students (90.4%) strongly disagreed that smoking makes you look cool. Most (85.7%) also strongly disagreed that smoking cigarettes makes you look more grown-up. Fewer students, but still a majority (70.4%), strongly disagreed that drinking lets you have more fun. In Year 9, fewer students reported positive attitudes toward cigarette and alcohol use than in Year 8.



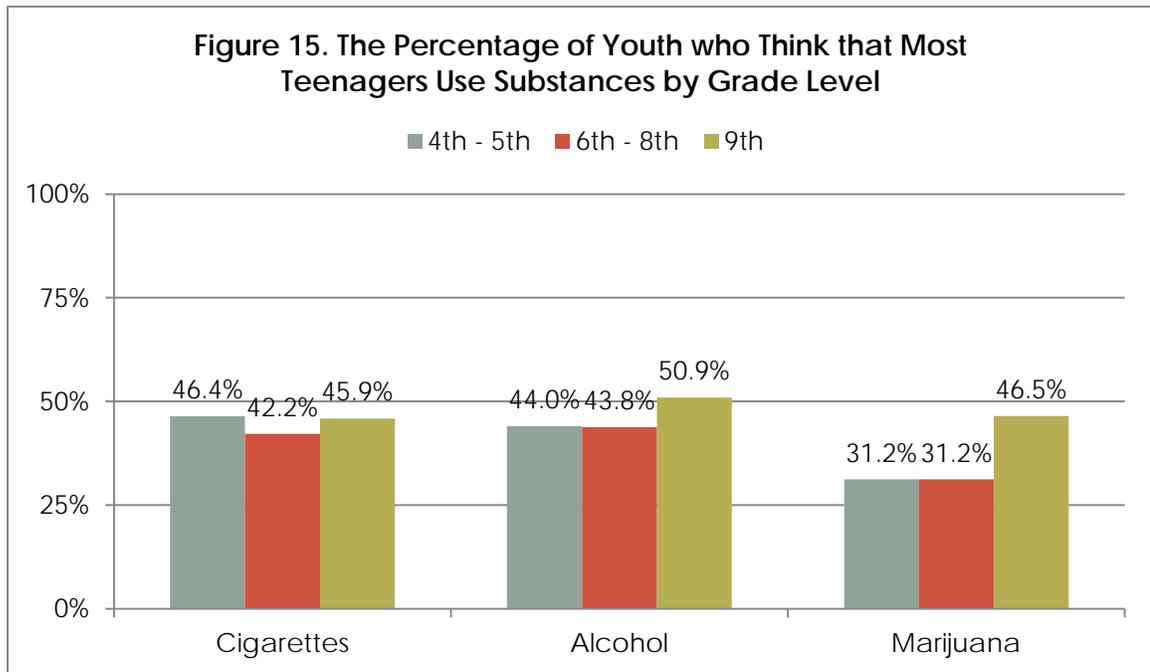
Substance Use Norms

Approximately 45% of 6th – 9th grade youth thought that most teenagers use cigarettes and alcohol. Fewer (35.6%) thought that most teenagers use marijuana. Youth were more likely to think that adults use cigarettes and alcohol, than teenagers. The majority of 6th-9th grade youth (57-59%) thought that most adults use cigarettes and/or alcohol. In comparison, only 34% thought that most adults use marijuana.

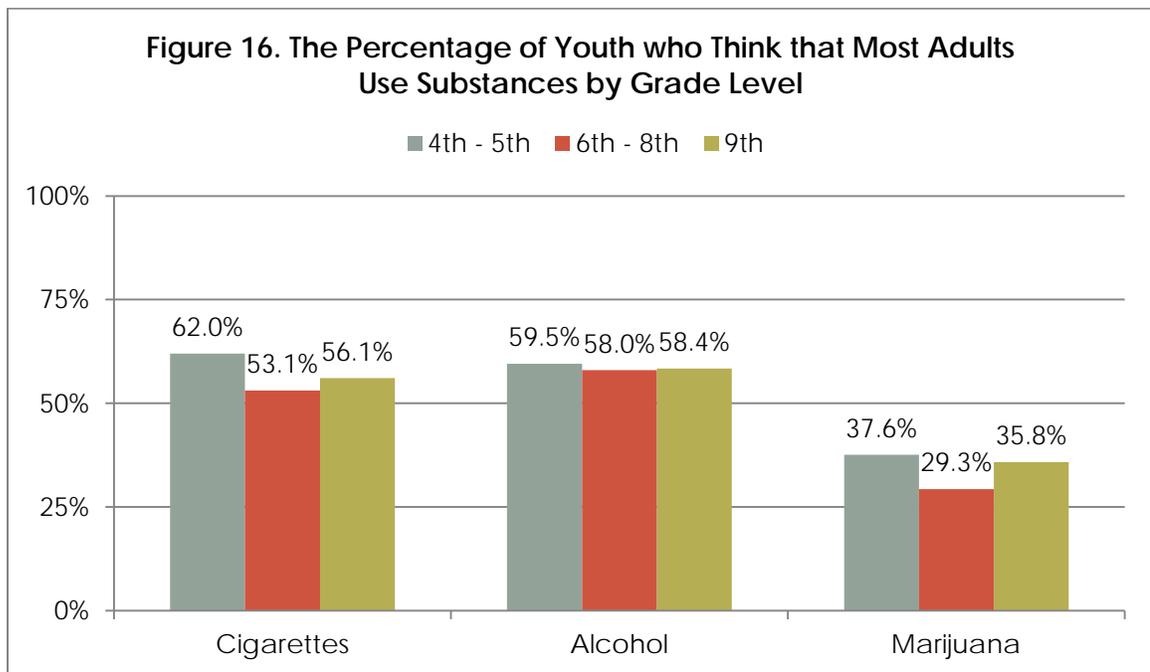
Table 11. Youths' Perception of Substance Use among Adults and Teenagers
(Response to the statement: Most teenagers/adults use "substance.")

		Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
Teenager Use	Cigarettes	29.6	25.8	34.4	10.3
	Alcohol	29.1	25.0	36.0	9.9
	Marijuana	41.4	23.0	25.2	10.4
Adult Use	Cigarettes	23.1	19.9	37.3	19.6
	Alcohol	23.3	18.1	36.9	21.7
	Marijuana	40.9	25.1	24.0	10.0

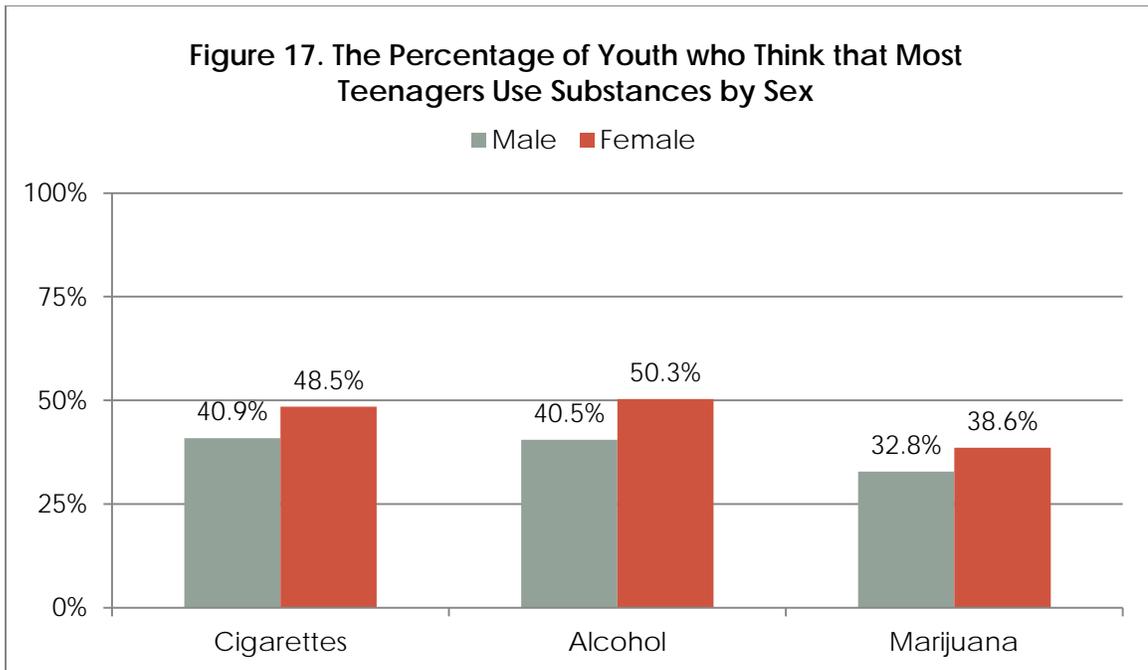
Substance Use Norms by Grade Level. Students' perception of teen cigarette use did not vary by grade level. A greater percentage of youth in the 9th grade than those in lower grade levels, however, thought that most teenagers used alcohol and/or marijuana.



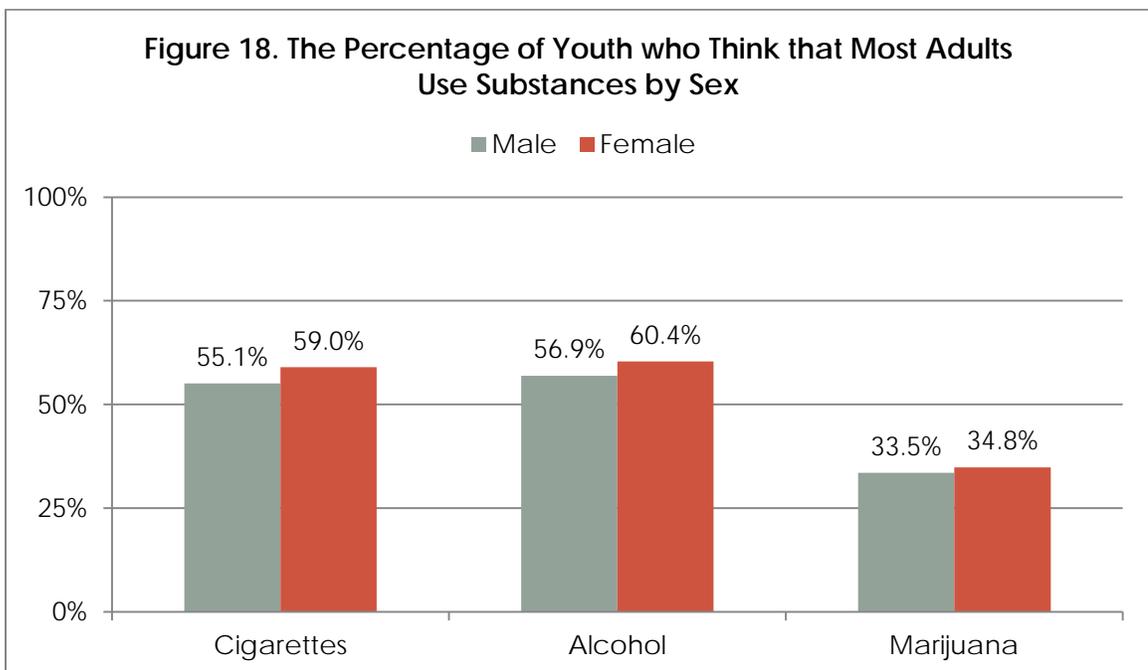
Student perception of adult use of cigarettes was lower in 9th grade than in 4th-5th. Regardless of grade level, youth had similar perceptions of adult alcohol use. Youth in the 6th – 8th grade were the least likely to think that most adults used marijuana.



Substance Use Norms by Sex. In general, females were more likely than males to think that most teenagers used substances.



In contrast to perceptions of teenage use, a similar percentage of males and females thought most adults used substances.



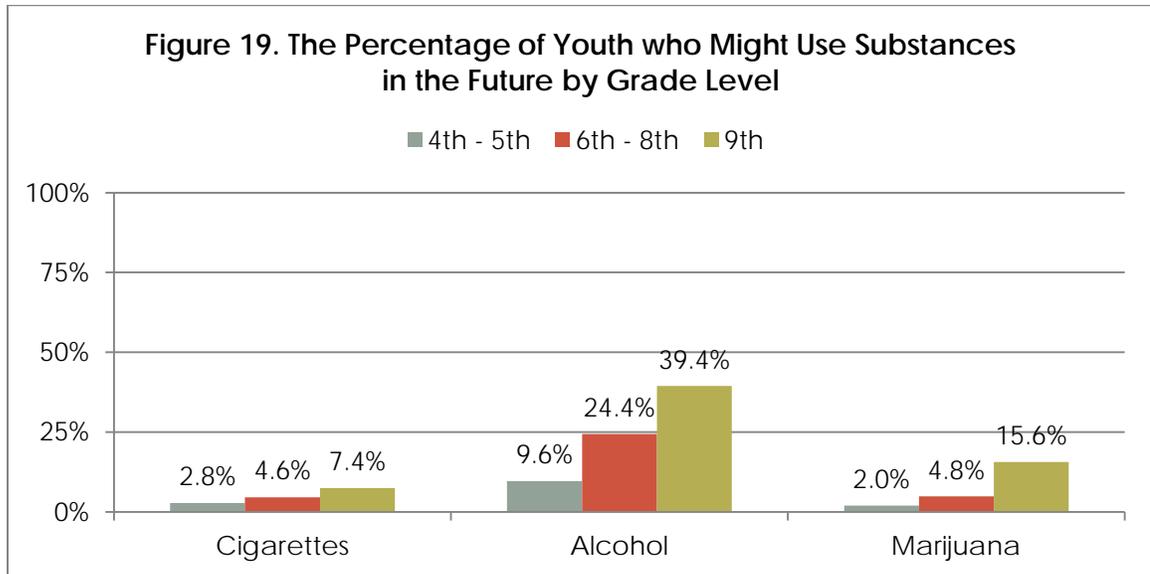
Substance Use Intentions

Students were much more likely to indicate they might use alcohol in the future (23.6%) than cigarettes (4.8%) or marijuana (6.9%). Interestingly, the percentage of youth reporting they might use cigarettes or marijuana in the future was similar to the percentage who reported actually using in the past 30 days. As reported in the previous chapter, 4.4% of youth reported using cigarettes in the past 30 days and 5.6% reported using marijuana. However, while only 11.1% reported using alcohol in the past month, over 23% intended to do so in the future. This information combined with the perception that most adults use alcohol indicates that there is an expectation of alcohol use in adulthood.

Table 12. Youths' Intentions to Use Substances
(Response to the statement: I might use "substance" when I get older.)

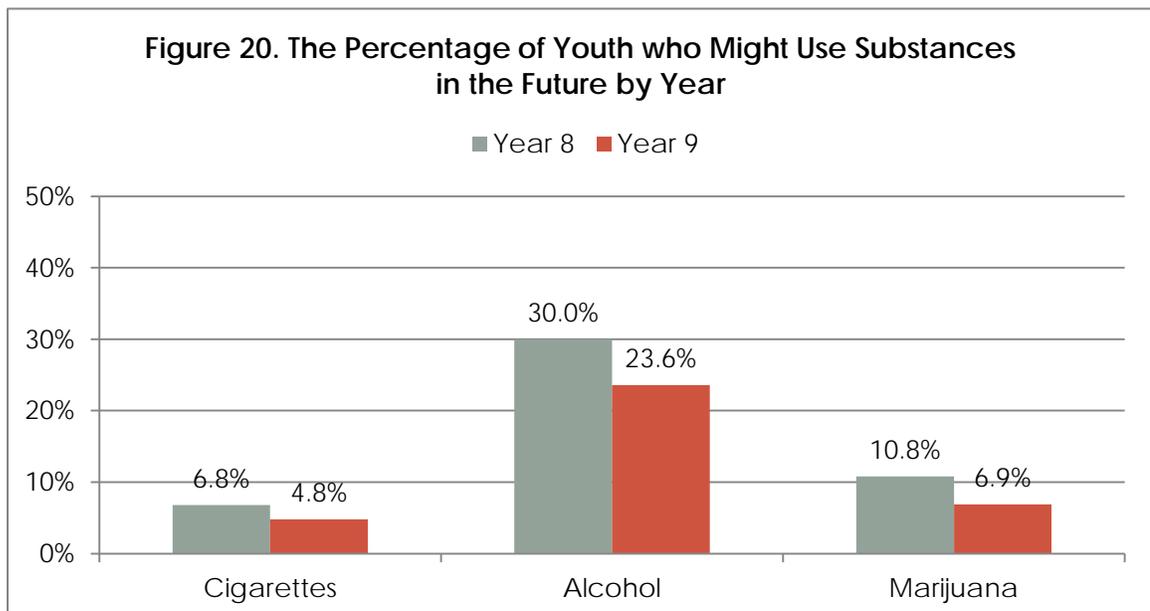
	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
Cigarettes	83.9	11.4	3.9	0.9
Alcohol	56.6	19.8	18.6	5.0
Marijuana	85.3	7.8	5.1	1.8

Substance Use Intentions by Grade Level. In general, students' intention to use substances increased as grade level increased. The largest increases occurred in their intentions to use alcohol, with only 9.6% of 4th – 5th grade youth reporting that they might use when they get older, increasing up to 39.4% of 9th grade youth.



Substance Use Intention by Sex. Males and females were equally as likely to report that they might use cigarettes, alcohol, or marijuana in the future.

Substance Use Intentions by Year. In Year 9, students were less likely to indicate that they may use substances when they get older than in Year 8.

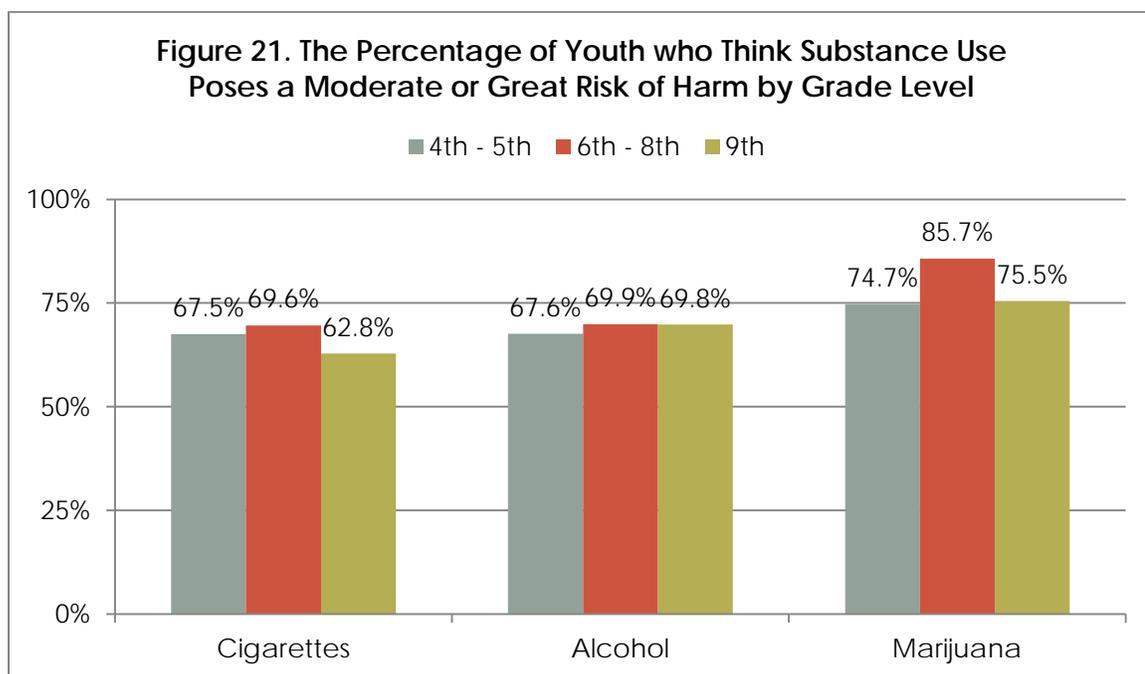


Risk of Harm from Substance Use

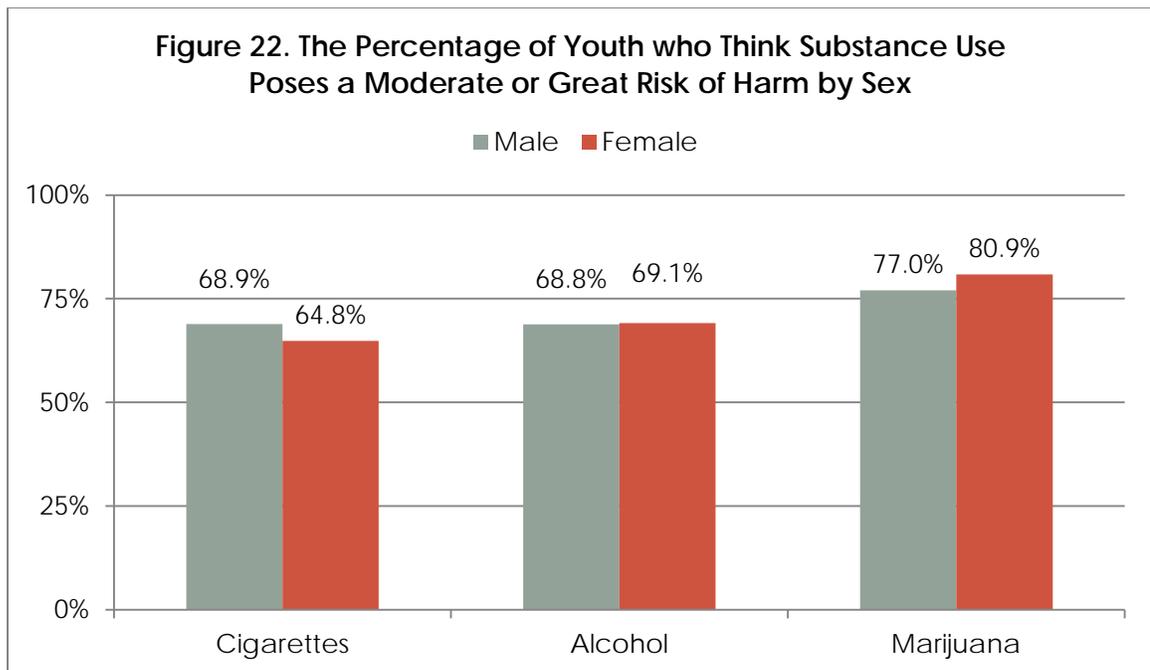
All participating students, in grades 4th – 9th, were asked to indicate how much they thought people risked harming themselves physically, or in other ways, if they used substances (cigarettes, alcohol, and marijuana). Only youth in grade 6 and higher were asked to report on their perception of the riskiness of other drugs. Approximately 67-69% of students thought that cigarettes and alcohol could potentially harm the user. A higher percentage of youth (79%) thought that using marijuana was risky. Among those in the 6th – 9th grades, the majority thought the use of ecstasy, methamphetamine, inhalants, and prescription drugs without a prescription posed a moderate to great risk. Methamphetamine use was perceived to be most risky.

Table 13. Youths' Perception of Risk of Harm from Using Substances (4 th – 9 th grade)				
	No Risk	Slight Risk	Moderate Risk	Great Risk
Smoke part or all of a cigarette	13.1	20.0	30.3	36.6
Drink any type of alcohol	11.1	19.8	35.1	34.0
Use Marijuana	12.1	8.8	19.3	59.7
(6 th – 9 th grade)				
Use ecstasy occasionally	6.8	7.1	22.0	64.1
Use meth occasionally	7.0	3.5	14.6	74.9
Use inhalants	6.8	6.6	21.0	65.6
Use prescription drugs w/out Rx	7.1	5.2	20.7	67.0

Risk of Harm by Grade Level. There were no differences among students at differing grade levels in the perception of how harmful cigarettes and alcohol could be, with the exception of a slightly smaller percentage of youth in the 9th grade who thought that using cigarettes was risky. Interestingly, youth in the 6th – 8th grade were much more likely than youth in the other grade levels to think that marijuana was harmful.



Risk of Harm by Sex. Males and females associated a similar degree of risk with various substances.



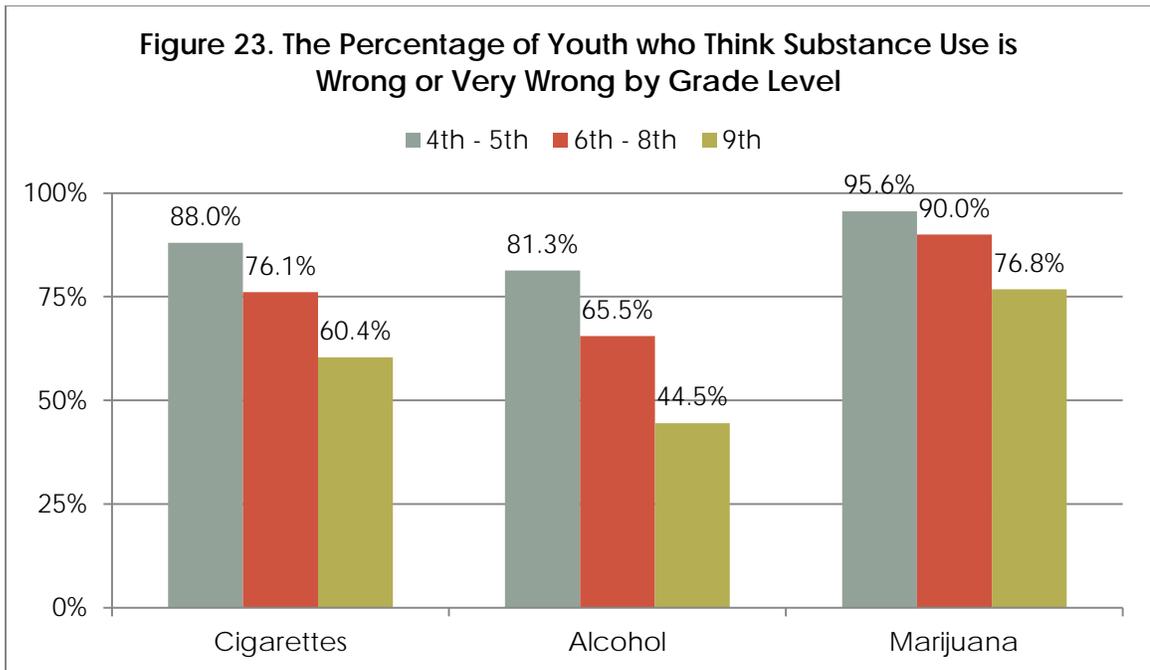
Risk of Harm by Year. Among 6th – 9th grade students in Year 9, cigarette and alcohol use was perceived to be more risky than in Year 8. There was no difference in perceived risk of harm among 4th – 5th graders between Year 8 and Year 9.

Disapproving Attitudes toward Substance Use

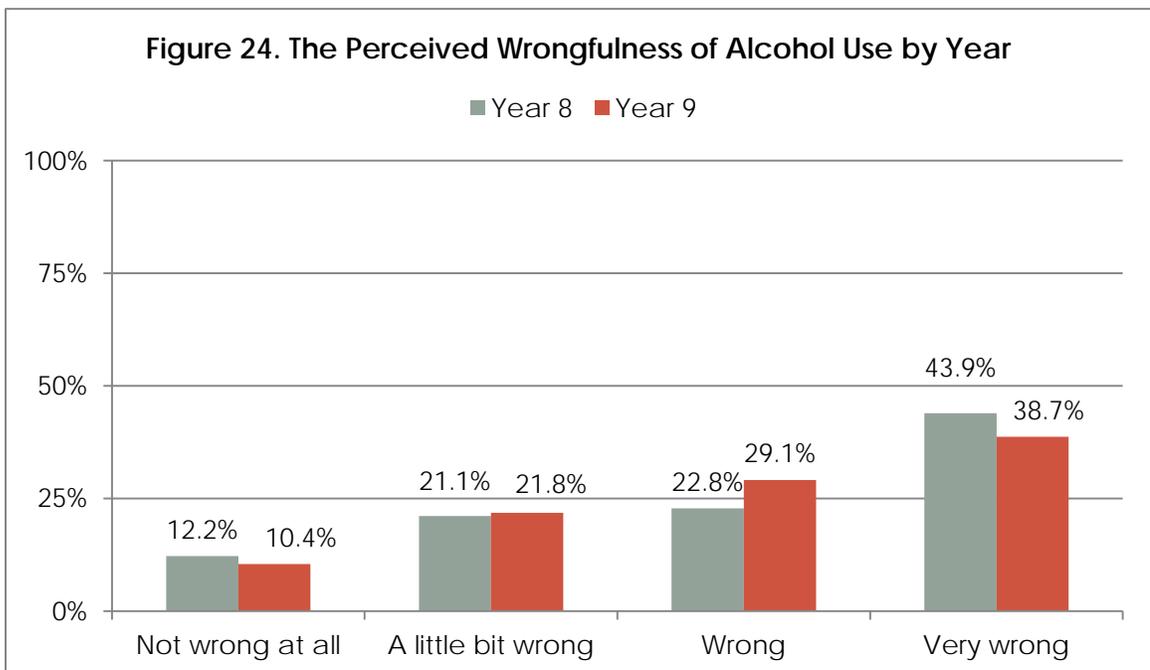
Although most students thought that the use of any substance was wrong, the use of cigarettes or alcohol was more likely to be considered acceptable. Only 67.8% of youth thought that using alcohol was either wrong or very wrong. Similarly, only 75.7% thought that using cigarettes was wrong or very wrong. Comparatively, anywhere from 88-94% thought that using any other drug was wrong or very wrong.

	Not Wrong at All	A Little Bit Wrong	Wrong	Very Wrong
Smoke part or all of a cigarette	7.7	16.6	30.9	44.8
Drink any type of alcohol	10.4	21.8	29.1	38.7
Use Marijuana	5.5	6.3	16.2	72.1
(6 th – 9 th grade)				
Use ecstasy occasionally	3.8	4.8	20.9	70.5
Use meth occasionally	2.7	3.8	16.4	77.1
Use inhalants	3.1	5.5	20.3	71.2
Use prescription drugs w/out Rx	2.9	4.8	19.8	72.5

Disapproving Attitudes by Grade Level. Students tended to be more accepting of substance use as their grade level increased. The most drastic change occurred in the perception of alcohol. While 81.3% of youth in the 4th – 5th grades thought it was wrong to drink, only 44.5% of 9th grade youth thought it was wrong.



Disapproving Attitudes by Year. In Year 9 the perception of alcohol use changed slightly compared to Year 8. A similar percentage of students in both Year 8 and Year 9 considered the use of alcohol to either be “not wrong at all” or “a little bit wrong.” In Year 9, however, the percentage of students reporting alcohol use “very wrong” was less and the percentage reporting “wrong” was higher than in Year 8. This indicates that there may be subtle shifts in the perception of the wrongfulness of alcohol use. Youth in 4th – 5th grade were more likely to think that using marijuana was wrong in Year 9 than in Year 8.



Summary

- While approximately 45% of 6th – 9th grade youth thought that most teenagers use cigarettes and alcohol, a fewer percentage (35.6%) thought that most teenagers use marijuana. The

majority of 6th-9th grade students (57-59%) thought that most adults use cigarettes and/or alcohol, while only 34% thought that most adults use marijuana.

- Students were much more likely to indicate they might use alcohol in the future (23.6%) than cigarettes (4.8%) or marijuana (6.9%).
- The majority of students (approximately 67-69%) thought that cigarettes and alcohol could potentially harm the user. A higher percentage (79%) thought that using marijuana was risky. Among those in the 6th – 9th grades, the majority thought the use of ecstasy, methamphetamine, inhalants, and prescription drugs without a prescription posed a moderate to great risk. Methamphetamine use was perceived to be most risky.
- Although most students thought that the use of any substance was wrong, the use of cigarettes or alcohol was more likely to be considered acceptable. Comparisons of Year 8 and Year 9 showed that the percentage of students reporting alcohol use “very wrong” was lower and the percentage reporting “wrong” was greater than in Year 8.
- Interestingly, the percentage of youth reporting they might use cigarettes or marijuana in the future was similar to the percentage who reported actually using in the past 30 days. However, while only 11.1% reported using alcohol in the past month, over 23% intended to do so in the future. This information combined with the perception that most adults use alcohol indicates that there is an expectation of alcohol use in adulthood.
- In Year 9, students were less likely to indicate that they may use substances when they get older than in Year 8.
- A similar percentage of students in both Year 8 and Year 9 considered the use of alcohol to either be “not wrong at all” or “a little bit wrong.” In Year 9, however, the percentage of students reporting alcohol use “very wrong” was less and the percentage reporting “wrong” was higher than in Year 8. This indicates that there may be subtle shifts in the perception of the wrongfulness of alcohol use.
- Youth in 4th – 5th grade were more likely to think that using marijuana was wrong in Year 9 than in Year 8.

Chapter 5 - Problem Behavior

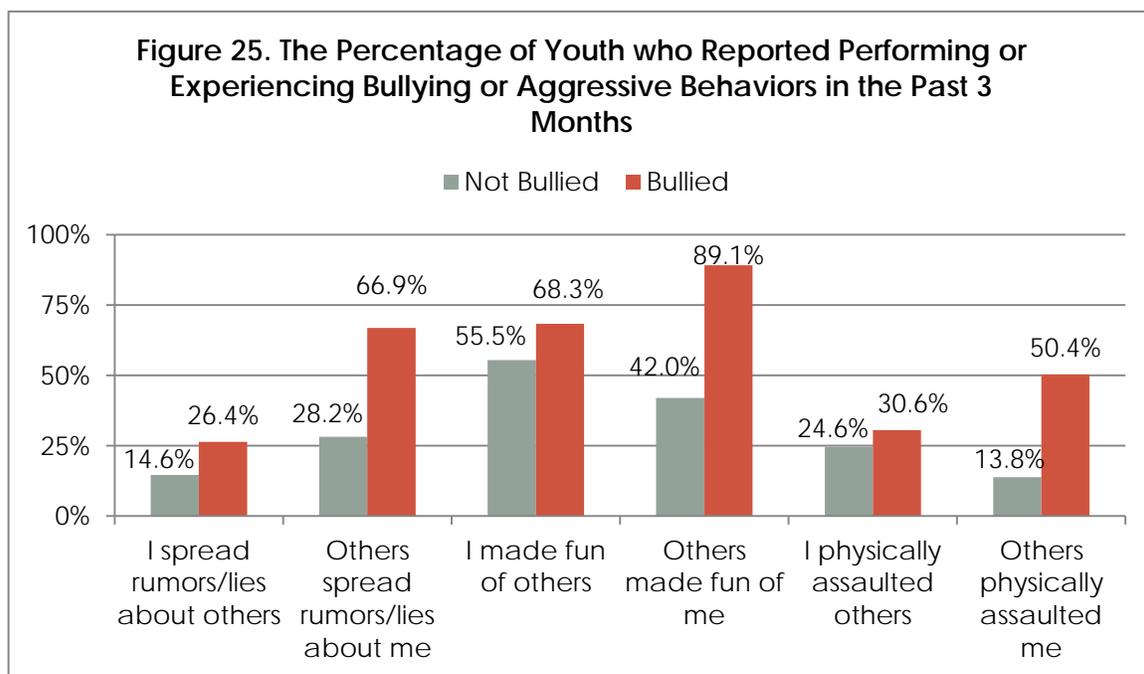
Students in 4th – 9th grades reported the number of times in the past three months they had engaged in aggressive and problem behaviors and/or they were the victims of that type of behavior from other students. Over 36.4% of youth in the 4th – 9th grade reported having been harassed or bullied (in general) within the past three months. Almost 5% indicated that they had been bullied ten or more times.

The most common problem behaviors reported by students were making fun of others (60.2%), and being made fun of by others (59.1%). Almost 19% of youth admitted to spreading rumors about others, however a much larger percentage (42.2%) thought others had spread rumors about them.

Almost 18% of youth were afraid of being physically beaten up, approximately the same percentage (18.3%) reported having been in a physical fight in the past three months. A greater percentage of youth reported physically assaulting another student (26.8%) or being assaulted by someone else (26.9%). Physical assault includes hitting, pushing, slapping, kicking and shoving when one is not kidding around.

Very few youth (fewer than 8%) reported using the internet or a cell phone to embarrass or hurt another student or being harassed by another student by those means. A very small percentage of youth reported using a weapon to threaten or bully another (3.5%) or having a weapon used against them in a similar manner (6.8%).

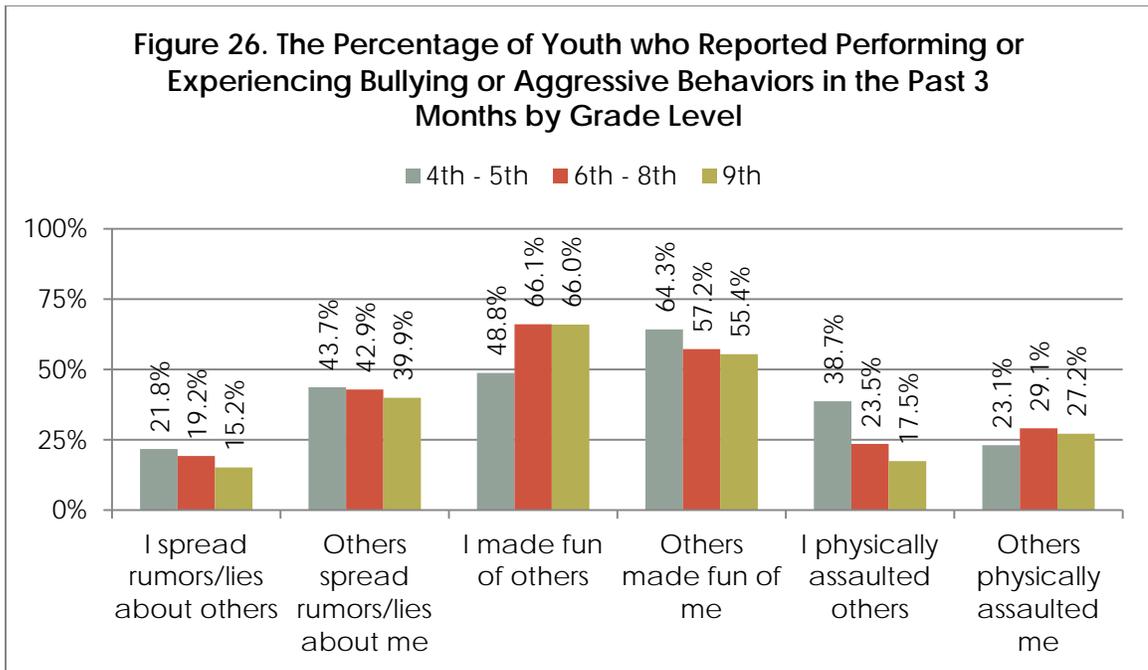
Those who answered that they had been bullied at least one time in the past three months (in response to the general bullying questions) were compared to those who reported that they weren't bullied. The chart below shows that not only were the students who had been bullied more likely to report having rumors spread about them and being made fun of, but they are also more likely to report doing those things to other students.



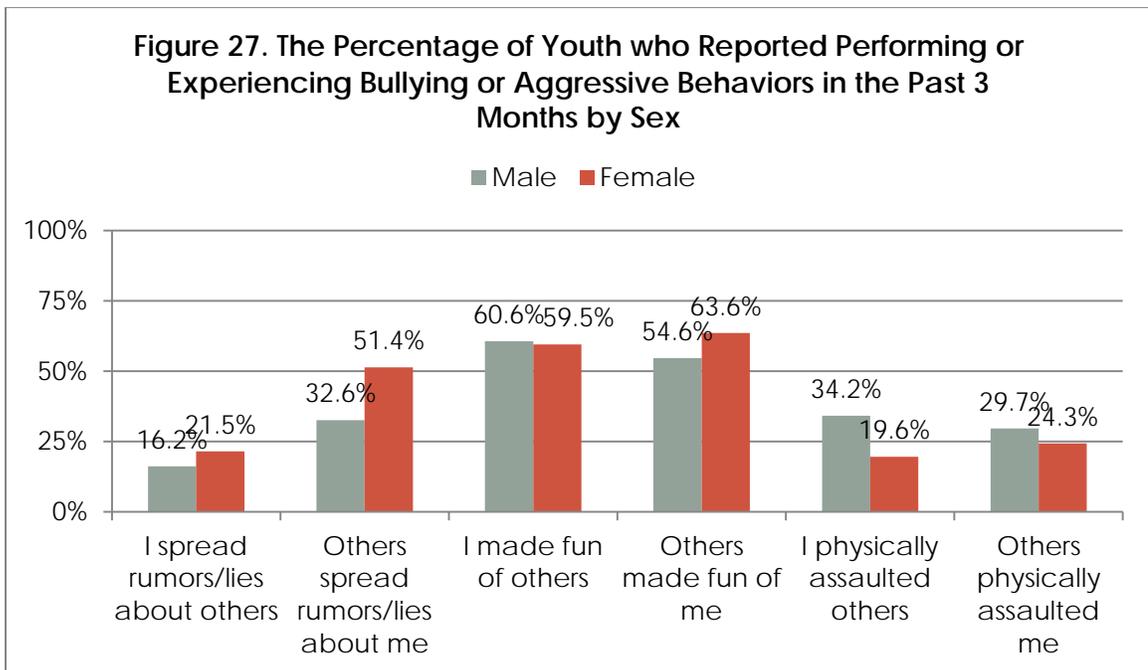
Those who reported being bullied were also much more likely to report being afraid of being beaten up, with 38.1% reporting being afraid compared to only 6.1% of youth who reported that they hadn't been bullied.

Table 15. Frequency of Problem Behavior in Past 3 months					
	Never	1-2 times	3-5 times	6-9 times	10 or more times
Been harassed or bullied	63.6	21.3	7.2	3.0	4.8
Been afraid of being beaten up	82.2	11.9	2.4	1.3	2.2
<i>Emotional/Relational Problem Behavior</i>					
Made fun of other people	39.8	35.9	9.5	4.4	10.3
Been made fun of	40.9	35.3	10.4	3.8	9.7
Spread mean rumors or lies about other kids at school	81.1	15.1	2.0	0.7	1.0
Had mean rumors or lies spread about you at school	57.8	26.3	8.5	2.5	4.9
<i>Emotional/Relational Problem Behavior through Technology</i>					
Used the Internet to post pictures or text that might embarrass or hurt another student	92.2	5.3	1.0	0.4	1.1
Had pictures or text that embarrassed or hurt you posted through the Internet	92.2	5.5	1.1	0.5	0.6
Used a cell phone to send text messages or pictures that might embarrass or hurt another student	92.8	5.0	0.7	0.7	0.9
Had text or picture cell phone messages sent about you that were embarrassing or hurtful	92.4	5.1	0.9	0.6	1.0
<i>Physically Aggressive Problem Behavior</i>					
Hit/pushed other kids at school when not playing around	73.2	18.7	4.6	1.4	2.1
Been pushed, shoved, slapped, hit or kicked by someone who wasn't just kidding around	73.1	15.6	5.6	1.9	3.8
Been in a physical fight	81.7	13.5	2.3	1.2	1.3
<i>Use of weapons to threaten or bully</i>					
Used any weapon to threaten or bully someone	96.5	2.0	0.4	0.3	0.8
Been threatened or injured with a weapon, such as a gun, knife, or other weapon	93.2	4.9	0.8	0.2	0.9

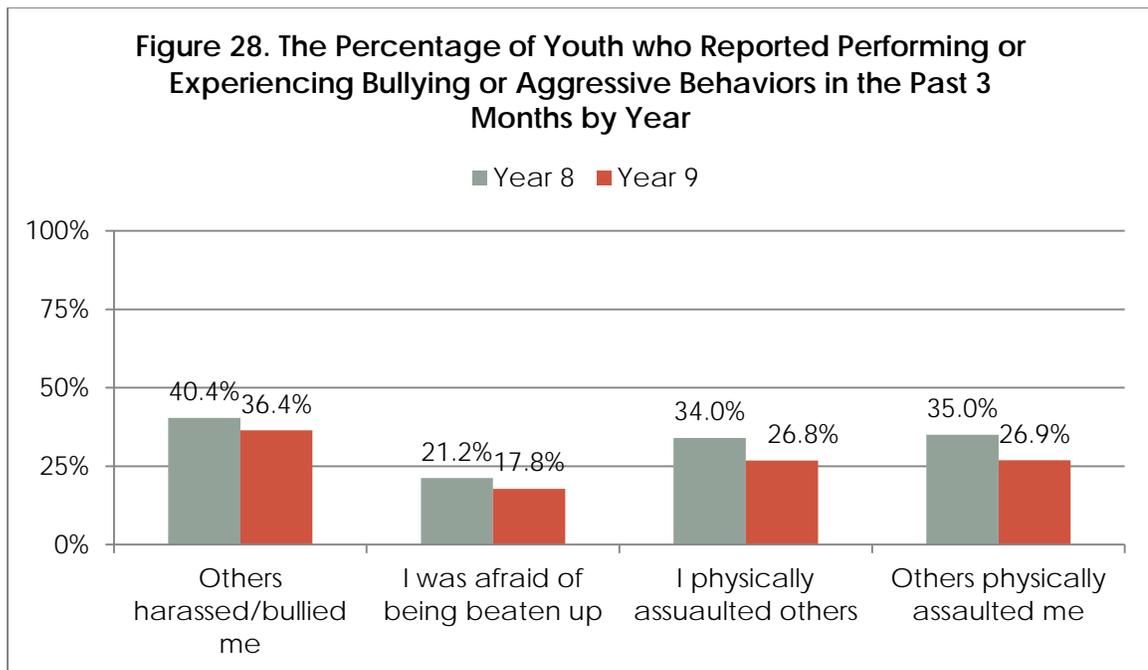
Problem Behavior by Grade Level. Many behaviors were reported by a similar percentage of students regardless of grade level. Abuse via the internet or cell phone, for example hovered around 5-10% for all grade levels.



Problem Behavior by Sex. In general, males were more likely than females to report experiencing physical aggression in the past three months. For example, 23.8% of males compared to 12.8% of females had been in a physical fight. Females were more likely to report bullying in general. Over 40% of females reported having been harassed or bullied in the past three months, whereas only 22.1% of males reported having experienced the same.



Problem Behavior by Year. In Year 9 compared to Year 8, a smaller percentage of students reported being bullied, afraid of being beaten up, or physically assaulted in the past three months.



Summary

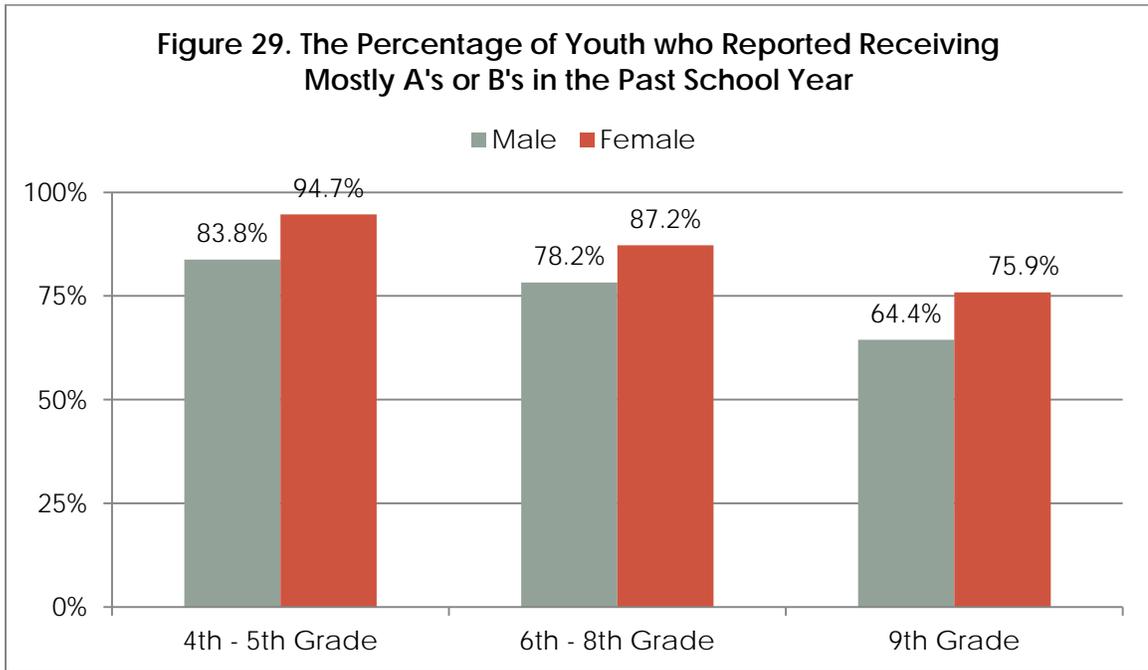
- Over 36.4% of youth in the 4th – 9th grade reported having been harassed or bullied (in general) within the past three months. Not only were the students who had been bullied more likely to report having rumors spread about them and being made fun of, but they were also more likely to report doing those things to others.
- The most common problem behaviors reported by students were making fun of others (60.2%) and being made fun of by others (59.1%).
- Very few youth (less than 8%) reported using the internet or a cell phone to embarrass or hurt another student or being harassed by another student by those means.
- Many behaviors decreased as grade level increased. Forty-four percent of 4th – 5th graders reported being bullied, whereas only 25.1% of 9th grade youth reported experiencing bullying or harassment. Interestingly, however, the percentage of youth who reported making fun of others increased in the higher grade levels.
- Males (23.8%) were more likely than females (12.8%) to report being in a physical fight in the past three months whereas females were more likely to report that they had been bullied. Over 40% of females reported having been harassed or bullied in the past three months, whereas only 22.1% of males reported having experienced the same.
- In Year 9 compared to Year 8, a smaller percentage of students reported being bullied, afraid of being beaten up, or physically assaulted in the past three months.

Chapter 6 - School Performance and Attitudes

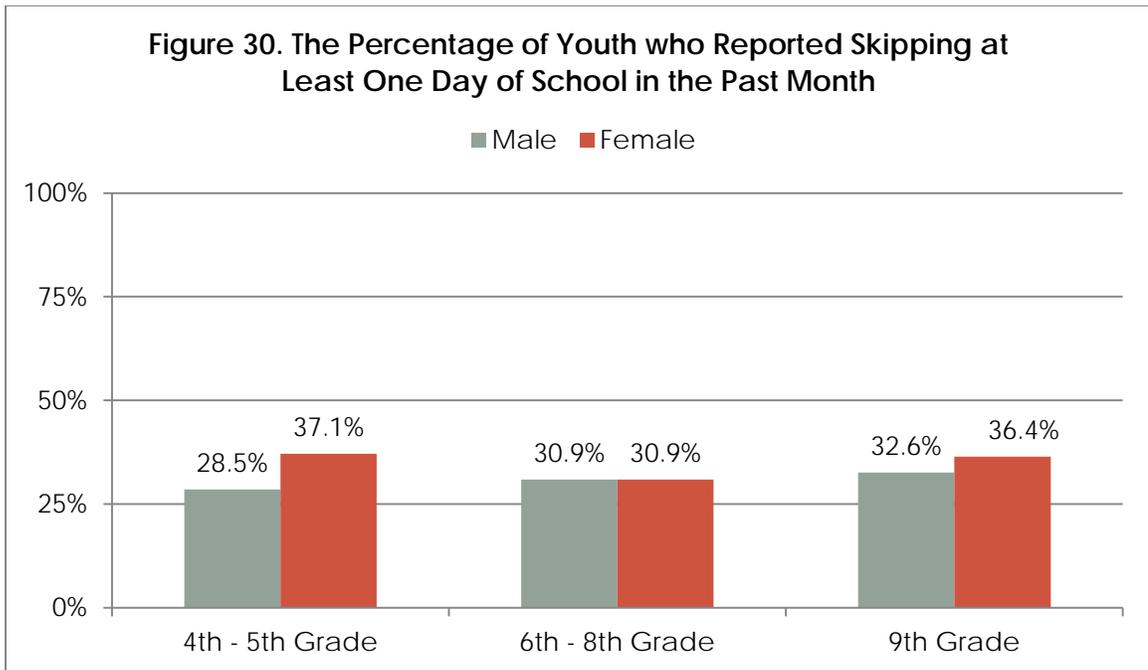
School performance and attitude data were collected from students in 4th – 9th grade. They were asked to report their average grades, the number of times they skipped school, and the number of times they received discipline in the form of in-school suspension/detention and out-of-school suspension.

Grades, Absences, & Disciplinary Incidents

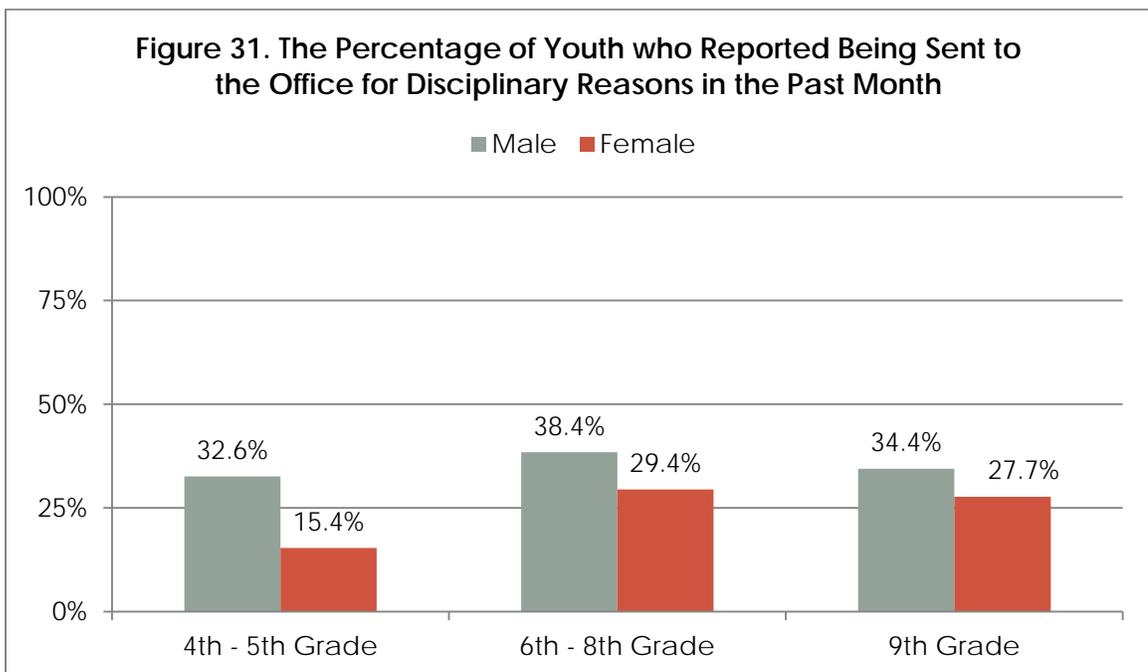
Most students (81.5%) reported that their average grades last school year were either A's or B's. Regardless of grade level, a greater percentage of females (86.5%) reported mostly A's or B's than did males (76.3%). As grade level increased, fewer students reported mostly A's or B's. Further, grades and feelings of safety at school were lower among 6th – 8th graders who were bullied.



When asked how many whole days of school were missed in the past 30 days by students because they skipped or cut, 32.4% of students reported missing at least one day. Only 12.5% of students reported skipping three or more days. Males in the 4th – 5th grade were less likely to report having skipped school in the past month than females.

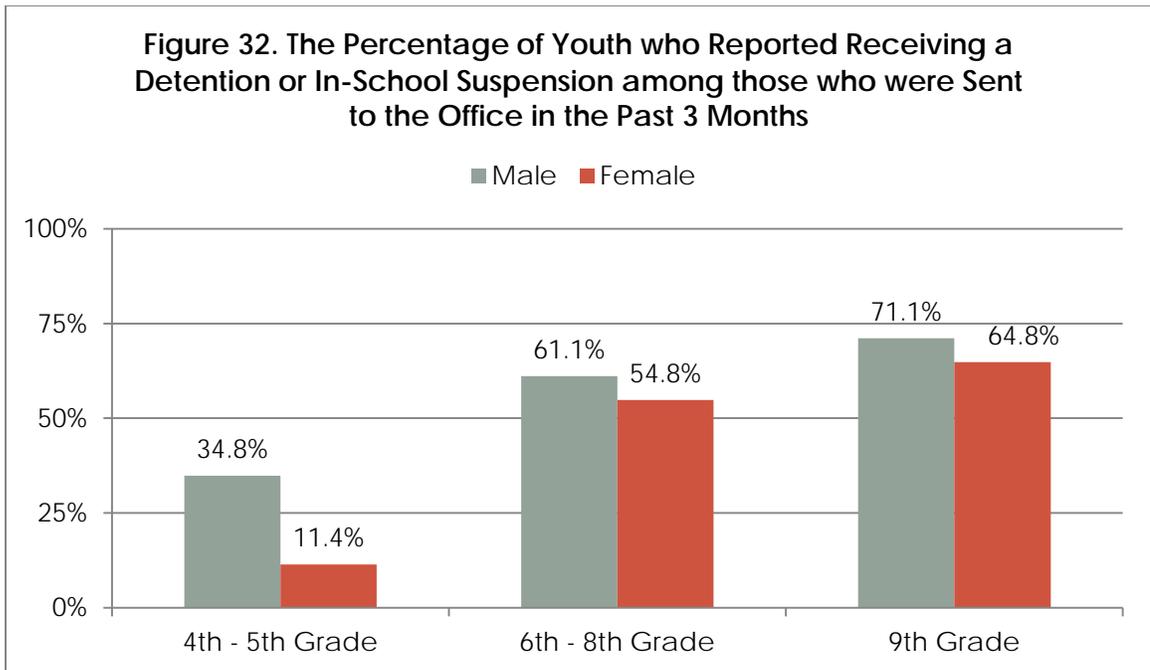


Over a quarter (29.6%) of the students reported having been sent to the office for disciplinary reasons in the past three months. Regardless of grade level, males (35.3%) were more likely than females (24.1%) to be sent to the office for disciplinary reasons.

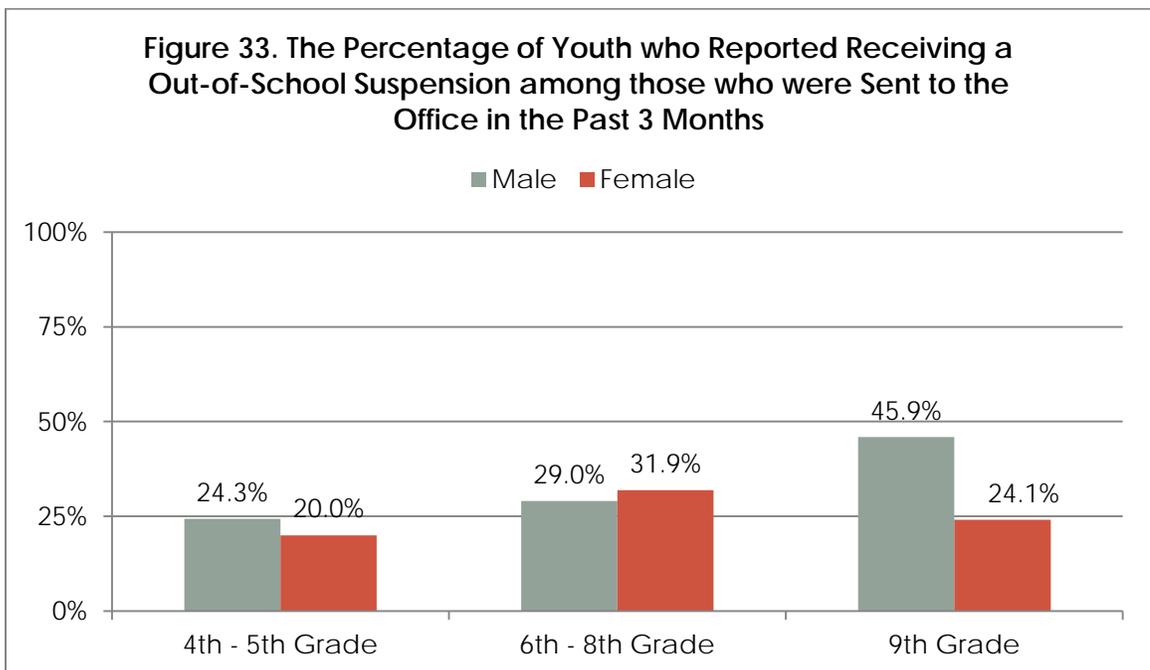


Less than a quarter of students (21.5%) reported receiving in-school suspension or detentions. Again, males (26.6%) were more likely than females (16.5%) to receive in-school suspensions, regardless of grade level. The likelihood of receiving any type of discipline (i.e., detention, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspensions) increased as grade level increased.

Of students who reported they had been sent to the office in the past three months, males (56.0%) were more likely than females (48.8%) to receive an in-school suspension or detention as a result, especially among students in the lower grade levels.



A different pattern emerged regarding out-of-school suspension among those who reported they had been sent to the office in the past three months. Just over 10% of students received an out-of-school suspension. Regardless of grade level males (12.7%) were more likely than females (7.8%) to receive out of school suspensions. Males in the 9th grade were much more likely than females to receive an out-of-school suspension as a result of being sent to the office in the past three months.



Attitudes toward School

Students in the 4th – 9th grades reported their attitudes toward school by the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with statements concerning their happiness, safety, and connectedness. Between 73-88% of students reported positive attitudes toward school regardless of the question being asked. However, over a quarter of students (26.2%) did not think teachers treated them fairly and 20.1% reported not being happy at school.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel close to people at this school.	3.4	10.5	60.4	25.6
I am happy to be at this school.	6.8	13.3	48.2	31.7
I feel like I am a part of this school.	3.7	12.6	50.5	33.3
The teachers at this school treat students fairly.	7.5	18.7	45.7	28.1
I feel safe at this school.	3.8	11.3	50.7	34.2
I feel safe going to and from this school.	3.0	8.5	50.7	37.9

Attitudes toward School by Grade Level. There was a slight trend for youth in the higher grade levels to report less positivity toward school than youth in the lower grade levels, such that a difference between 4th – 5th grade youth and 9th grade youth could be detected. The difference was most pronounced in those who reported being happy at school, feeling like a part of the school, feeling safe at school, and especially among those who thought they were treated fairly by teachers. Only 63.8% of 9th grade youth reported that teachers treated them fairly compared to 85.3% of 4th – 5th grade youth.

	4 th - 5 th Grade	6 th - 8 th Grade	9 th Grade
I feel close to people at this school.	86.6	88.1	82.5
I am happy to be at this school.	85.6	79.1	74.0
I feel like I am a part of this school.	88.7	82.8	78.9
The teachers at this school treat students fairly.	85.3	70.0	63.8
I feel safe at this school.	90.0	86.0	77.5
I feel safe going to and from this school.	90.2	87.6	87.9

Attitudes toward School by Sex. Males and females had similar attitudes toward school, regardless of grade level.

Summary

- Most students reported they received an average of either A's or B's last year. Regardless of grade level, a greater percentage of females (86.5%) reported high grades than did males. As grade level increased, fewer students reported mostly A's or B's.
- Grades and feelings of safety at school were lower among 6th – 8th graders who were bullied.
- Almost 1/3 of students reported missing at least one day when asked how many whole days of school were missed in the past 30 days because of being skipped or cut. Only 12.5% of students reported skipping three or more days.

- Over a quarter (29.6%) of the students reported having been sent to the office for disciplinary reasons in the past three months. Regardless of grade level, males (35.3%) were also more likely than females (24.1%) to be sent to the office. Males (56.0%) were more likely than females (48.8%) to receive an in-school suspension or detention as a result, especially among students in the lower grade levels.
- The likelihood of receiving any type of discipline (i.e., detention, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspensions) increased as grade level increased.
- The majority (73-88%) of students reported positive attitudes toward school regardless of the question being asked. However, over a quarter of students (26.2%) did not think teachers treated them fairly and 20.1% reported not being happy at school. Students in lower grades were more likely than higher grades to have positive attitudes toward school.

Chapter 7 - Program Effectiveness

Students in 4th – 9th grades were asked to report the extent to which they felt the program was effective and their level of satisfaction with the SPIRIT program implemented in their school. When asked if they liked the program, the majority (83.3%) of students responded that they liked it at least a little. Youth were most likely to report that the program helped them with anger management (80.9%), resistance skills (81.2%), and that the time spent on the program was generally helpful (81.9%). Youth were least likely to indicate that they thought the program caused other students to be nicer to them, with only 53.8% reporting that the program had this effect even a little.

Table 18. Effectiveness of and Satisfaction with SPIRIT
(4th – 9th grades)

	No, not at all	No, not much	Yes, a little	Yes, a lot
Did you like the program?	7.1	9.6	45.8	37.5
Did the program teach you what to do when you are angry?	8.7	10.4	36.0	44.9
Do you act better because of the program?	12.9	16.9	38.7	31.5
Did the program help you feel better about yourself?	10.8	15.6	36.7	36.9
Does the program help you to say no to harmful things other kids might want you to do?	8.7	10.1	32.8	48.4
Has the program helped you to get along better with other people?	11.8	15.5	37.4	35.4
Are other kids nicer to you because of the program?	21.5	24.7	31.7	22.1
Was the time spent on the program helpful?	8.8	9.3	40.5	41.4

Program Effectiveness by Grade Level. A greater percentage of students in 4th - 5th grades thought the program was effective than students in the 6th - 9th grades. Students in grades 6-9 responded similarly to the younger students, however, in that they liked the program, thought the program taught them what to do when they were angry and helped them to act better. Although 9th grade students differed significantly from 6th - 8th graders in their perceptions of the effectiveness of the program to help them with resistance skills and interpersonal relationships, their responses were similar to 6th - 8th grade students when asked whether the time spent on the program was helpful.

Table 19. Effectiveness of and Satisfaction with SPIRIT by Grade Level
(Yes, a lot & Yes, a little, combined Percentages)

	4 th – 5 th Grade	6 th – 8 th Grade	9 th Grade
Did you like the program?	93.0	77.8	78.9
Did the program teach you what to do when you are angry?	85.7	78.8	77.7
Do you act better because of the program?	82.8	64.7	62.4
Did the program help you feel better about yourself?	84.0	70.2	65.5
Does the program help you to say no to harmful things other kids might want you to do?	87.6	80.6	74.3
Has the program helped you to get along better with other people?	86.1	69.4	61.2
Are other kids nicer to you because of the program?	64.4	52.0	43.3
Was the time spent on the program helpful?	91.2	77.7	76.3

Program Effectiveness by Sex. Overall, males and females perceived the program similarly. A greater percentage of females, however, reported liking the program than males. Females were also more likely to indicate that the program increased their anger management and resistance skills.

Table 20. Effectiveness of and Satisfaction with SPIRIT by Sex
(4th – 9th grades; Yes, a lot & Yes, a little, combined Percentages)

	Male	Female
Did you like the program?	80.3	86.4
Did the program teach you what to do when you are angry?	78.4	83.0
Do you act better because of the program?	70.2	70.5
Did the program help you feel better about yourself?	72.9	74.3
Does the program help you to say no to harmful things other kids might want you to do?	79.3	83.2
Has the program helped you to get along better with other people?	72.3	73.4
Are other kids nicer to you because of the program?	55.8	52.0
Was the time spent on the program helpful?	81.1	82.8

Summary

- The majority (83.3%) of students responded that they liked the program at least a little.
- Youth were most likely to report that the program helped them with anger management (80.9%), resistance skills (81.2%), and that the time spent on the program was generally helpful (81.9%).
- Youth were least likely to indicate that they thought the program caused other students to be nicer to them, with only a little over half (53.8%) reporting that the program had this effect even a little.
- A greater percentage of females reported liking the program than males. Females were also more likely to indicate that the program increased their anger management and resistance skills.

Chapter 8 - Protective Factors

Youth who have strong decision making skills, high levels of empathy, and feel connected to and cared for by adults in their lives are less likely to act aggressively, bully others, or start using alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. These skills and psychological variables are protective factors that form a barrier against these destructive behaviors. Youth in the 4th – 9th grades were asked to report their empathy, decision making skills, and their perception that adults in their life cared about them.

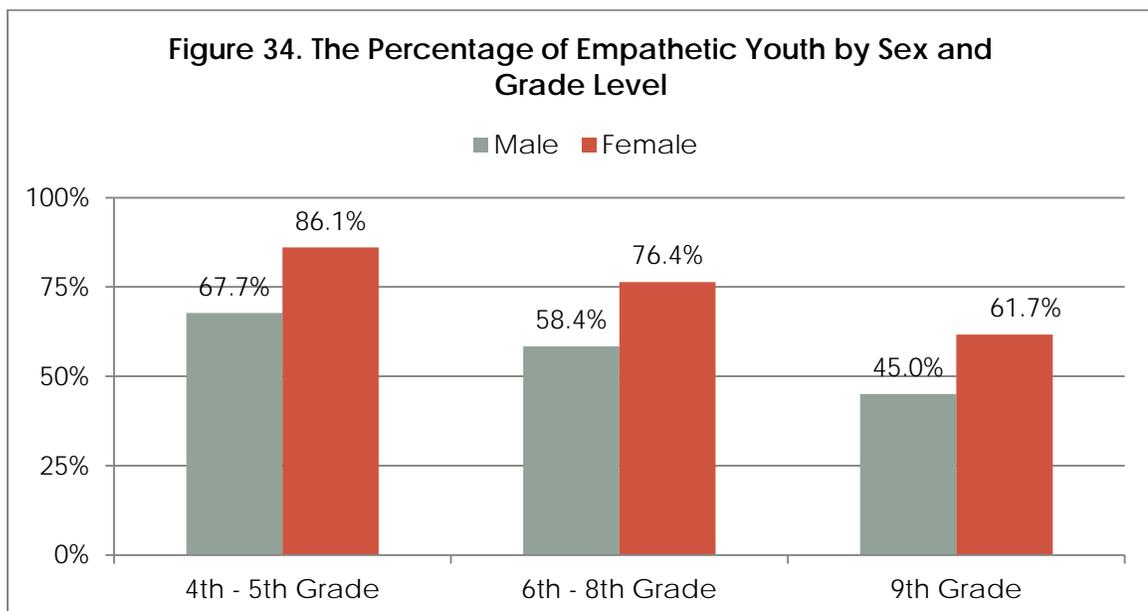
Empathy

The majority of students reported strong levels of empathy. They reported being sad if witnessing an animal being hurt (82.9%), feeling sad if someone was left out (78.9%), and feeling bad if someone else got their feelings hurt (81.9%). A significantly higher percentage of students strongly agreed they would get upset seeing an animal being hurt than would feel sad or bad if a person was left out or had their feelings hurt.

Table 21. Youth Capacity for Empathy
(4th – 9th grades)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
It makes me sad if I see someone who is left out.	4.9	16.3	50.3	28.6
I get upset when I see an animal being hurt.	4.9	12.3	34.5	48.4
I feel bad when someone else gets their feelings hurt.	4.5	13.6	53.4	28.5

Empathy by Sex & Grade Level. Students who answered “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” to every empathy statement showed a strong level of empathy (66.9%). Across grade levels, the percentage of these empathetic students decreased as grade level increased. In addition, regardless of grade level, there were fewer males (57.9%) who reported feeling empathetic than females (75.4%).

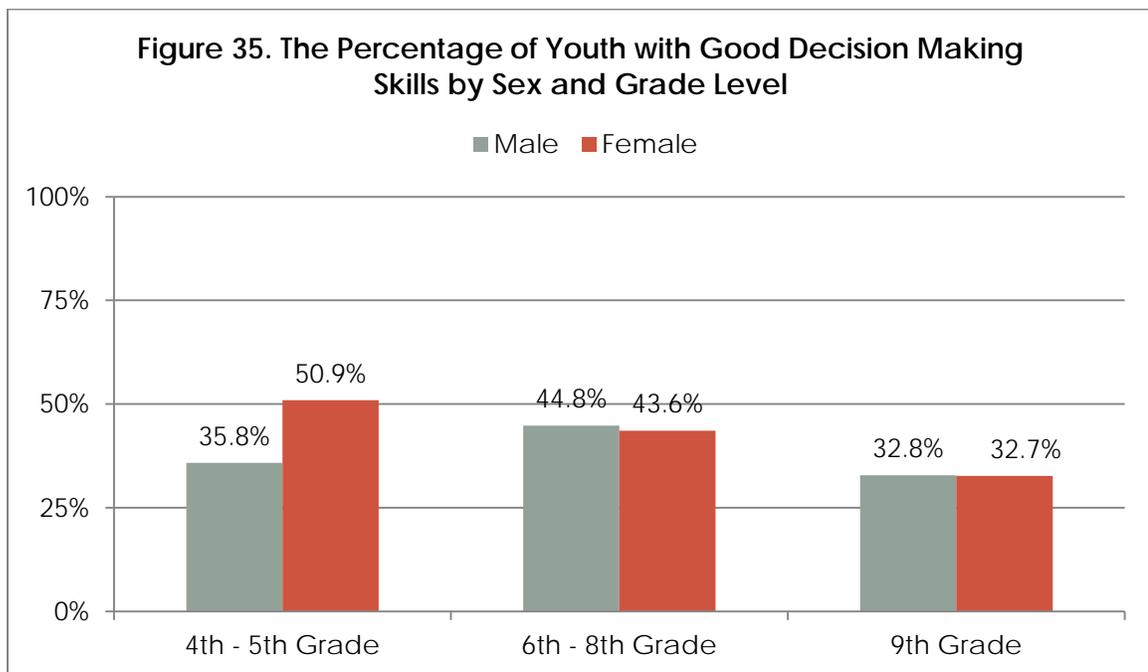


Decision Making

A greater percentage of 4th – 9th grade youth reported that they made good decisions (81.2%) than thought about their choices (62.2%), how those decisions affect others (62.8%), and the consequences of their decisions (66.1%).

	Never	Sometimes but not Often	Often	All the Time
How often do you stop to think about your choices before you make a decision?	3.7	34.1	48.5	13.7
How often do you stop to think about how your decisions may affect others' feelings?	7.0	30.3	47.4	15.4
How often do you stop to think about all of the things that may happen as a result of your decisions?	7.0	27.0	45.2	20.9
How often do you make good decisions?	1.9	16.9	64.1	17.1

Decision Making by Sex & Grade Level. Students who answered “Often” or “All the Time” to every decision making statement were identified as good decision makers (41.0%). In general, as grade level increased, both males and females were less likely to report good decision making skills, with the exception of males in the 6th – 8th grade. Males in the 6th – 8th grade were more likely than males in any other grade level to be identified as good decision makers. Overall, the percentage of females and males who were good decision makers did not differ (42.9% and 38.4%, respectively). However, among youth in 4th – 5th grades, a greater percentage of females than males fit the description of good decision makers.



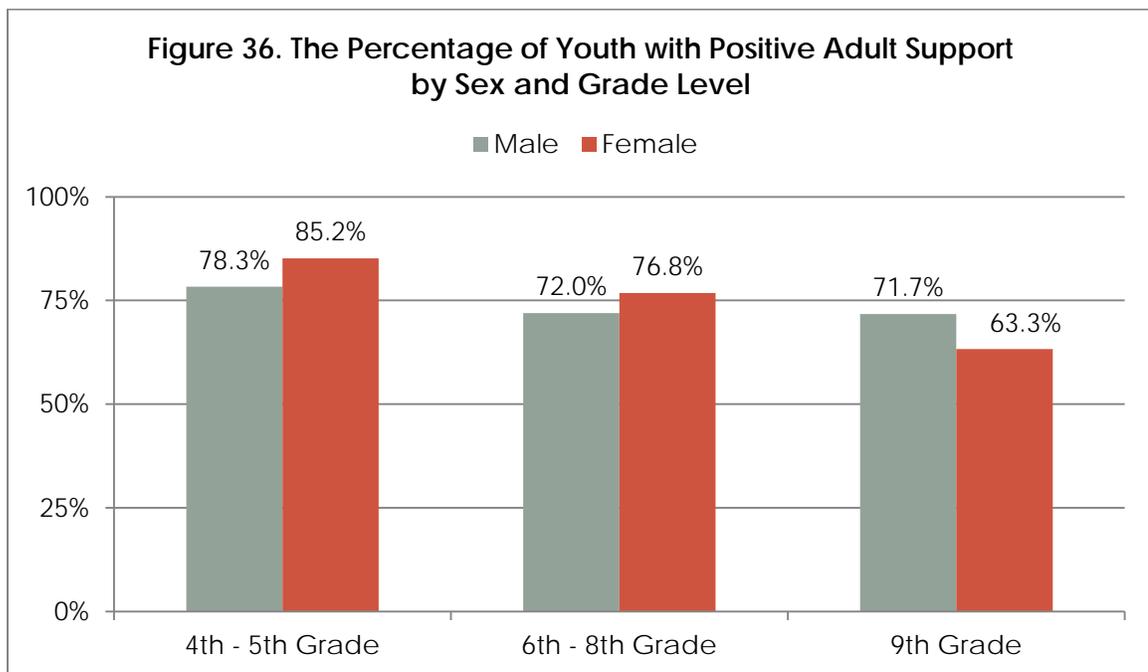
Caring Adults

Youth in 4th – 9th grades were asked to indicate the extent to which they thought that the adults in their lives, both at school and at home, were supportive of them and listened to them. The majority of students

reported the presence of caring adults in their lives. However, a greater percentage of youth reported the presence of caring adults in their home (91-92%) than in school (83-85%).

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
At school, there is a teacher or another adult whom I can go to if something is really bothering me.	5.2	9.5	42.6	42.6
At school, there is a teacher or another adult who listens to me when I have something to say.	4.2	9.2	50.7	35.9
At home, there is a parent or another adult whom I can go to if something is really bothering me.	3.2	5.4	31.0	60.4
At home, there is a parent or another adult who listens to me when I have something to say.	2.6	5.5	35.3	56.6

Caring Adults by Sex & Grade Level. Students who answered “Agree” or “Strongly” to every caring adults statement were categorized as having positive adult support (74.9%). The percentage of youth reporting positive adult support decreased as grade level increased, such that 81.9% of youth in the 4th – 5th grade, 74.1% of 6th – 8th grade youth, and only 67.5% of 9th graders reported positive adult supports. Overall, there was no difference between males (74.1%) and females (75.7%), regardless of grade level. However, the decrease in the presence of caring adults as grade level increased was most drastic among females.



Summary

- Students reported feeling sad if they saw animal being hurt (82.9%), feeling sad if someone was left out (78.9%), and feeling bad if someone else got their feelings hurt (81.9%). The percentage of students who were empathetic decreased as grade level increased.
- A greater percentage of 4th – 9th grade youth reported that they made good decisions (81.2%) than thought about their choices (62.2%), how those decisions affect others (62.8%), and the consequences of their decisions (66.1%).

- Students who answered “Often” or “All the Time” to every decision making statement were identified as good decision makers (41.0%). In general, as grade level increased, both males and females were less likely to report good decision making skills, with the exception of males in the 6th – 8th grade. Males in the 6th – 8th grade were more likely than males in any other grade level to be identified as good decision makers. Overall, the percentage of females and males who were good decision makers did not differ (42.9% and 38.4%, respectively). However, among youth in 4th – 5th grades, a greater percentage of females than males fit the description of good decision makers.
- Students who answered “Agree” or “Strongly” to every caring adult statement were categorized as having positive adult support (74.9%). The percentage of youth reporting positive adult support decreased as grade level increased, such that 81.9% of youth in the 4th – 5th grade, 74.1% of 6th – 8th grade youth, and only 67.5% of 9th graders reported positive adult supports.

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