

MISSOURI STUDENT SURVEY

# RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS

## COMPARISON 2016-2024

BRADFORD, SUSAN, PEABODY, RUTH, GARRETT, LIZ



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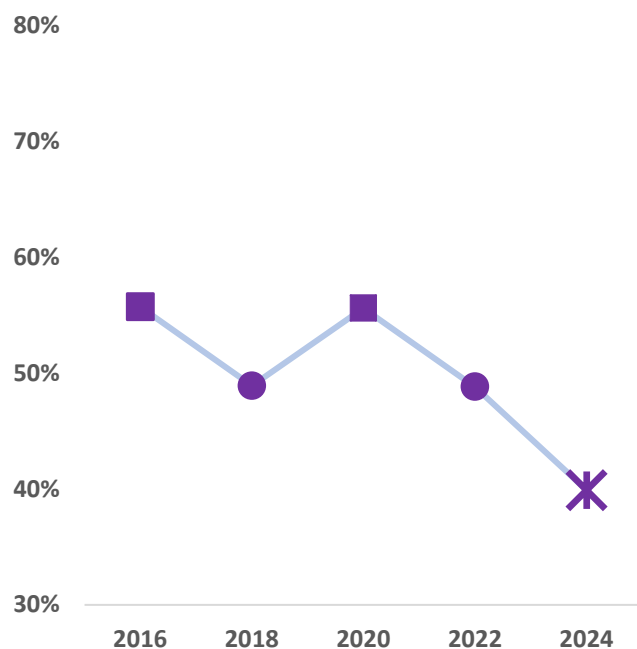
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## Introduction

From January through February 2024, the Missouri's Institute of Mental Health, in partnership with Missouri's Department of Mental Health, Division of Behavioral Health, conducted the Missouri Student Survey. The survey asked participants from 6<sup>th</sup> grade to 12<sup>th</sup> grade questions pertaining to substance use, social life, and mental health. While a full report was published earlier this year with preliminary findings, this document is meant to be read as an addendum to the 2024 Missouri Student Survey Report found [here](#).

Previous data from 2016 to 2022 was compared to 2024 data in order to find patterns in the data regarding risk and protective factors for substance use and mental illness. Project staff conducted chi-square tests for each variable to determine trends in statistical significance. All protective and risk factors listed below have been found to be statistically significant with lower than 0.001 significance level. That means that readers can be 99.9% confident that there is a significant difference in percentages across at least one of the years and the rest. All of the variables tested were included in this report. In order to indicate which groups are similar or different according to the statistical test, points on the graphs are represented by shapes. Data points represented by a square, for example, is statistically similar to another data point on the same graph that might have a square. If no data point shapes match, that means all groups differ from one another and statistical change occurred between each year.

Example of how to interpret data:



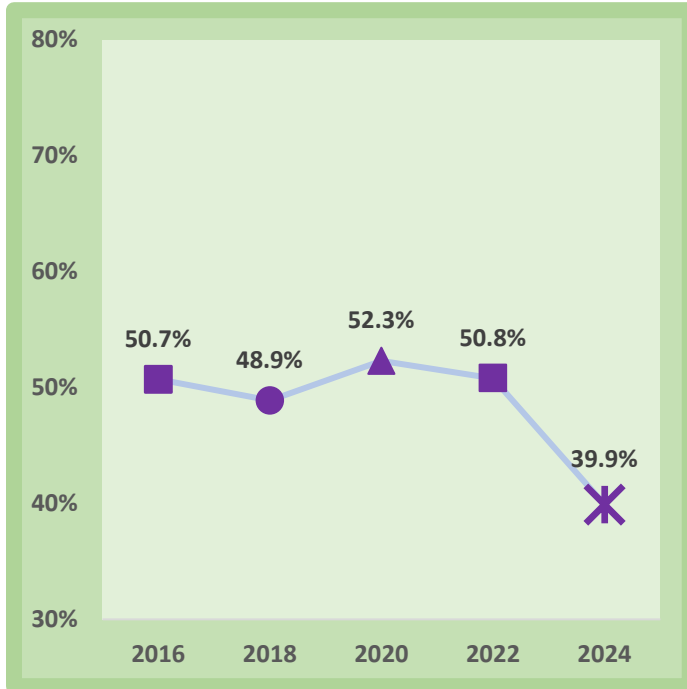
In this example, 2016 and 2020 are both represented by squares which means there is NO statistical difference between 2016 and 2020. Likewise, 2018 and 2022 are represented by circles which mean there is NO statistical difference between 2018 and 2022. However, 2016 and 2020 are statistically different from 2018, 2022, and 2024 because the symbols differ between them. The point in 2024 is represented by an asterisk, a different shape than a circle or a square, which means it is statistically different from all other years.

It would help to think of this as of a sorting task – if the shape between two points doesn't match exactly, there is a statistical difference.

# Substance Misuse

## Alcohol

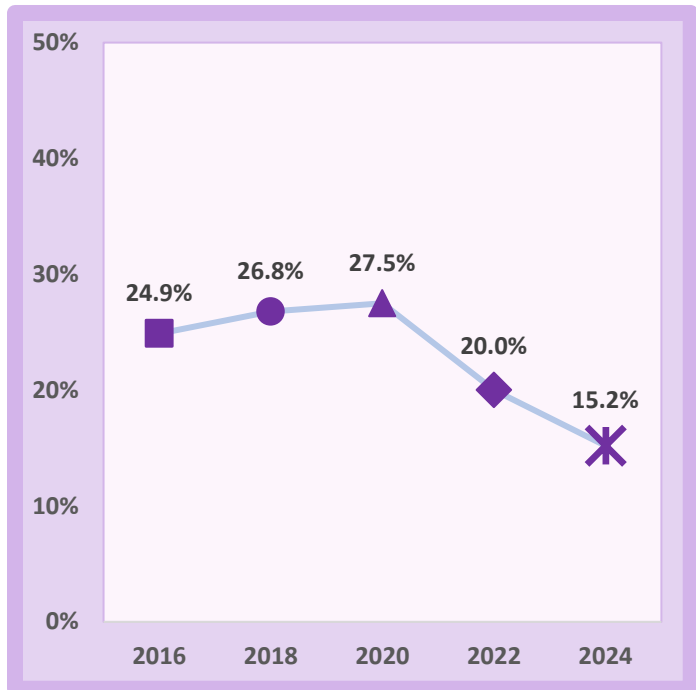
Believe it is Easy to Obtain Alcohol (Sort of Easy or Very Easy)



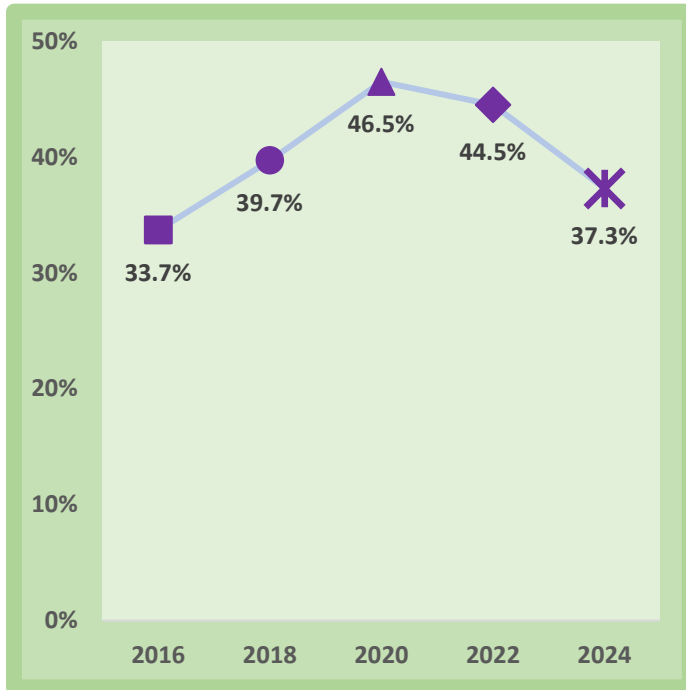
In 2024, the percentage of youth who believed it is “very easy” or “sort of easy” to obtain alcohol dropped significantly from 50.8% in 2022 to 39.9% in 2024. In 2024, most youth who reported ever drinking alcohol got it from family (37.9%), from friends (29.9%), or take it without permission (24.8%).

Believes Their Peers Would Find It Cool if Someone Their Age Drank Alcohol (Very Cool or Pretty Cool)

A smaller percentage of youth reported finding it cool if someone their age drank alcohol in 2024 than in 2022, following a downward trend. In 2024, only 15.2% of youth believed that their peers would find it cool if they drank, a marked decrease from 27.5% in 2020 and 20.0% in 2022.



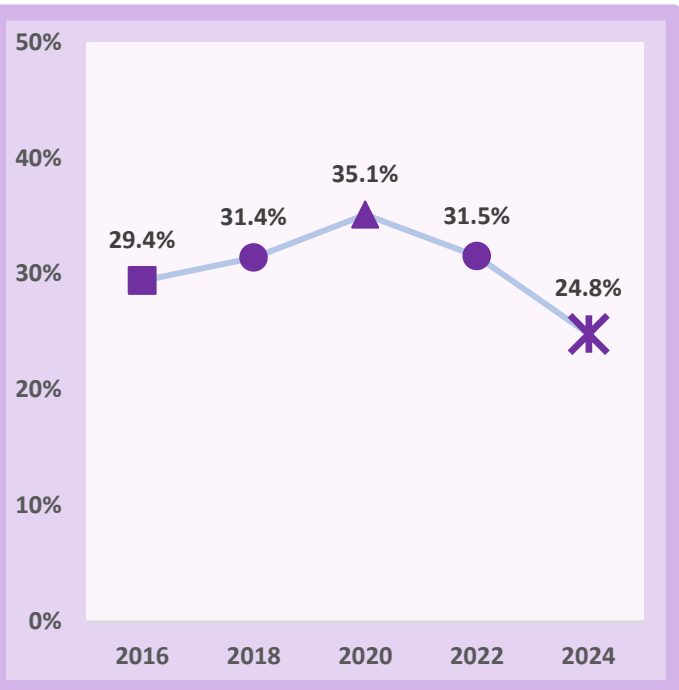
Believes People Don't Risk Harming Themselves if They Drink Alcohol (No Risk at All or Slight Risk)



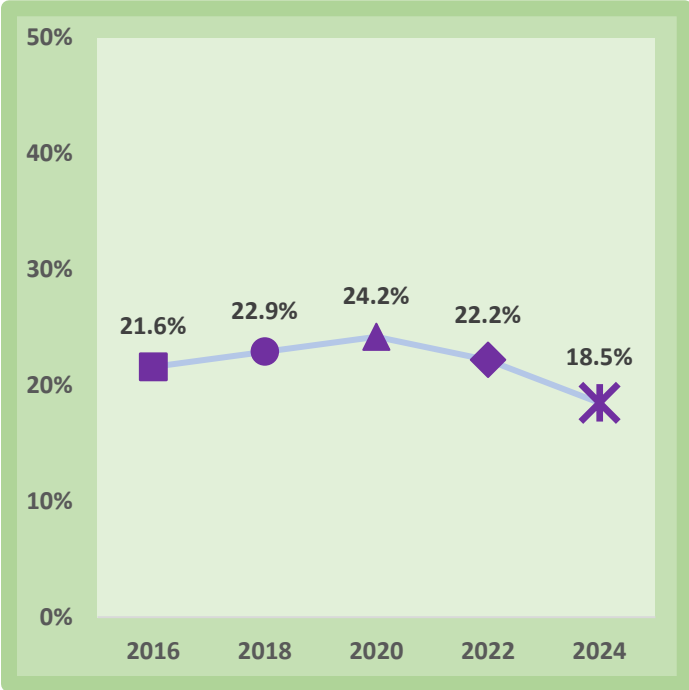
The percentage of youth who believed there was no or slight risk of harm (physically or otherwise) if someone drank alcohol peaked in 2020 but continued to decline in following survey periods. In 2024, only 37.3% of students believed there was “no risk at all” or “slight risk” of harming oneself if someone drank alcohol.

Believes People Don't Risk Harming Themselves if They Take 1-2 Drinks Daily (No Risk at All or Slight Risk)

Similar to when asked about an unspecified dose of alcohol, a lower percentage of youth believed that there was “no risk at all” or “slight” risk to drinking one to two drinks of alcohol every night in 2024 (24.8%) than in previous years. This number has been declining since 2020.



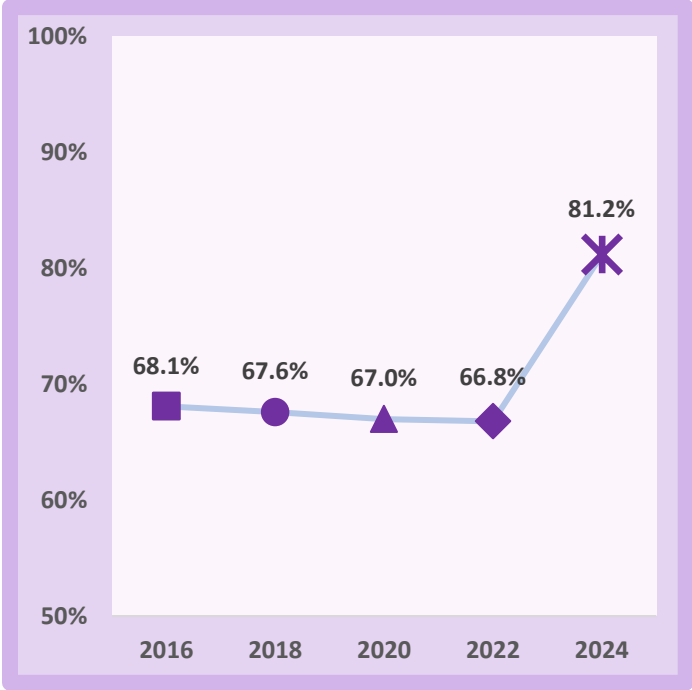
Believes People Don't Risk Harming Themselves if They Have 5+ Drinks Once or Twice Per Week (No Risk at All or Slight Risk)



In 2024, 18.5% of youth believed that people do not risk harming themselves if they drank five or more drinks once or twice per week. This is lower than previous years, and it appears that there is a downward trend to this percentage.

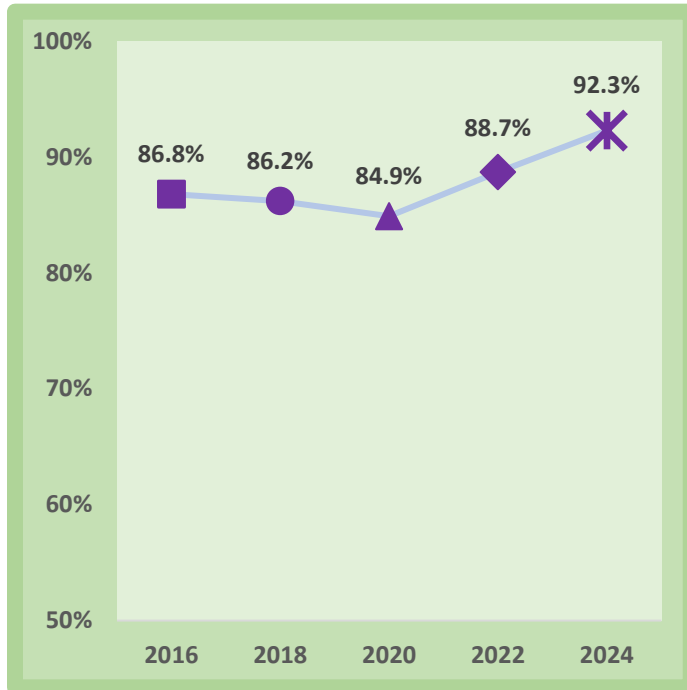
Believes That it is Wrong for Them to Drink Any Type of Alcohol (Wrong or Very Wrong)

In 2024, there was a large increase in the percentage of students who believed that it is wrong or very wrong for them to drink any type of alcohol. The percentage jumped from 66.8% in 2022 to 81.2% in 2024.





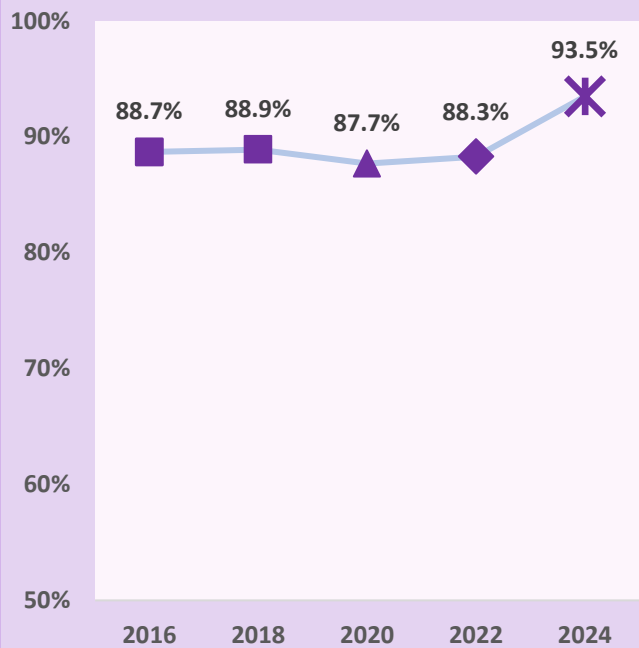
Believes That it is Wrong for Them to Take 1-2 Drinks Nearly Every Day (Wrong or Very Wrong)



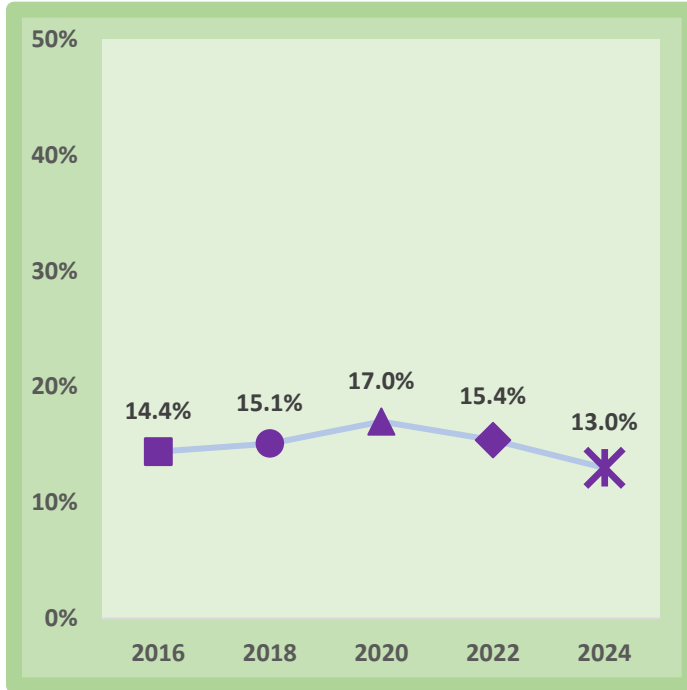
Each year since 2020, the percentage of youth who believe it would be wrong for them to take one or two drinks nearly every day increased. In 2020, 84.9% of youth believed it to be wrong, and this number increased in 2022 to 88.7% and then to 92.3% in 2024.

Believes That it is Wrong for Them to Have 5+ Drinks Once or Twice a Week (Wrong or Very Wrong)

Similar to the trend of students believing it to be wrong to take one or two drinks per day, in 2024, the percentage of students who believed it to be wrong for them to take five or more drinks of alcohol once or twice a week rose to 93.5% from 88.3% in 2022.



Rode in a Vehicle Where Driver Consumed Alcohol in Past Month (1+ times)

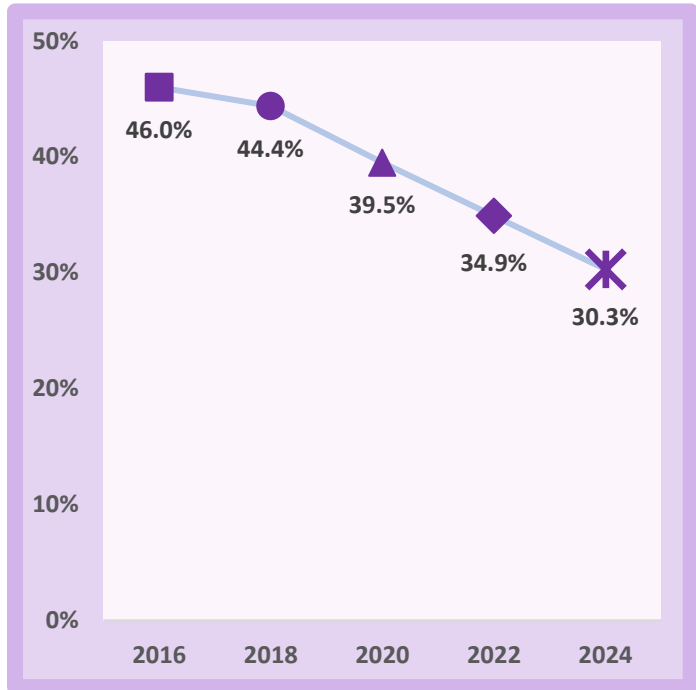


There was a slight decrease in the percentage of youth who rode with a driver who consumed alcohol in the past month since 2020. In 2024, 13% rode in a car with a driver who consumed alcohol at least one time, dropping from 15.4% in 2022.

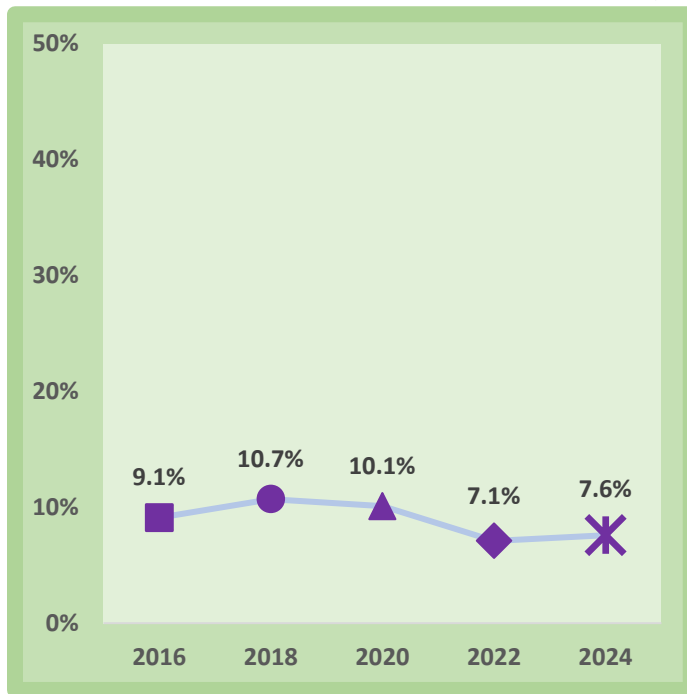
## Cigarettes

Believe it is Easy to Obtain Cigarettes (Sort of Easy or Very Easy)

A steady decrease in the percentage of students who believe it is easy to obtain cigarettes occurred since at least 2016. In 2016, 46% of youth believed it to be “sort of easy” or “very easy” to get cigarettes if they wanted some, but this decreased to 30.3% by 2024.



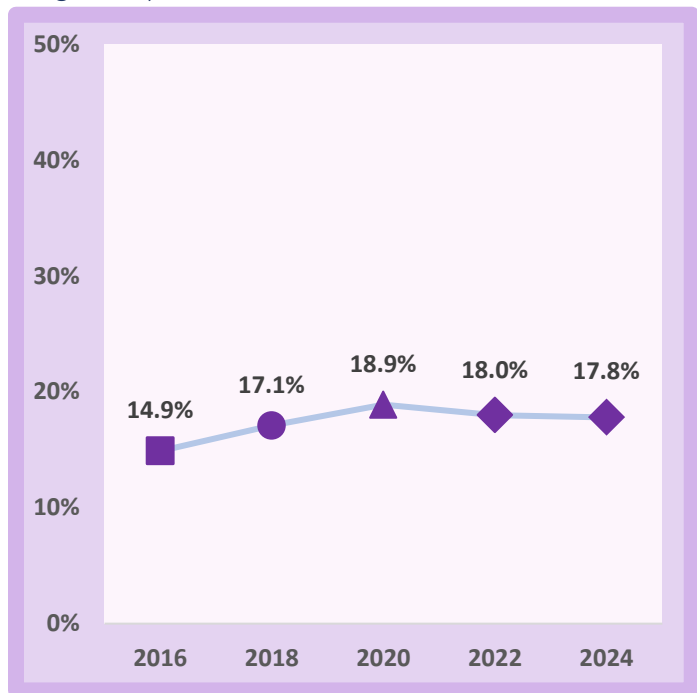
Believes Their Peers Would Find It Cool if Someone Their Age Smoked Cigarettes (Very Cool or Pretty Cool)



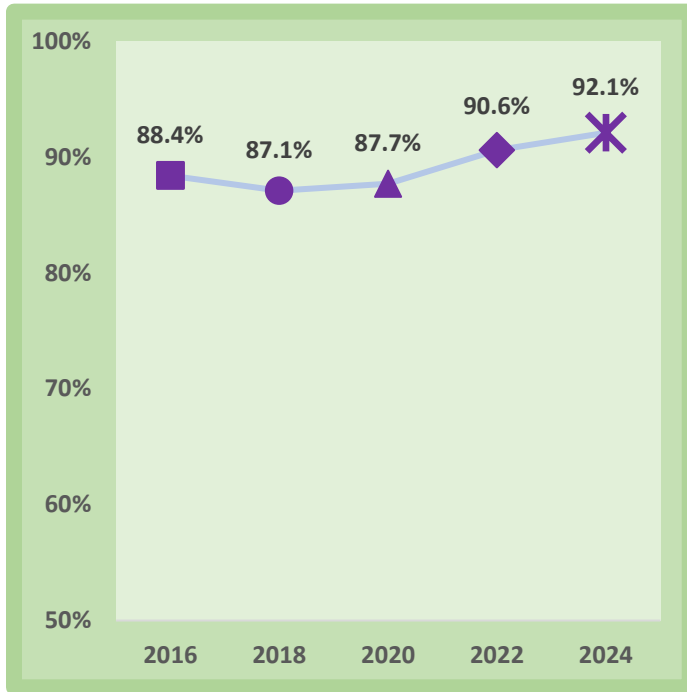
In 2024, 7.6% of survey participants said that they believe their peers would find it cool if someone their age smoked cigarettes. This is a slight increase since 2022 (7.1%).

Believes People Don't Risk Harming Themselves if They Smoke 1+ Packs of Cigarettes Daily (No Risk at All or Slight Risk)

Since 2022, the percentage of students who believe there is "no risk at all" or "slight risk" of someone harming themselves if they smoked one or more packs of cigarettes per day has remained steady. There is not a statistical difference between 2022 and 2024's percentages (18% vs 17.8% respectively).



### Believes That it is Wrong for Them to Smoke Tobacco Cigarettes (Wrong or Very Wrong)

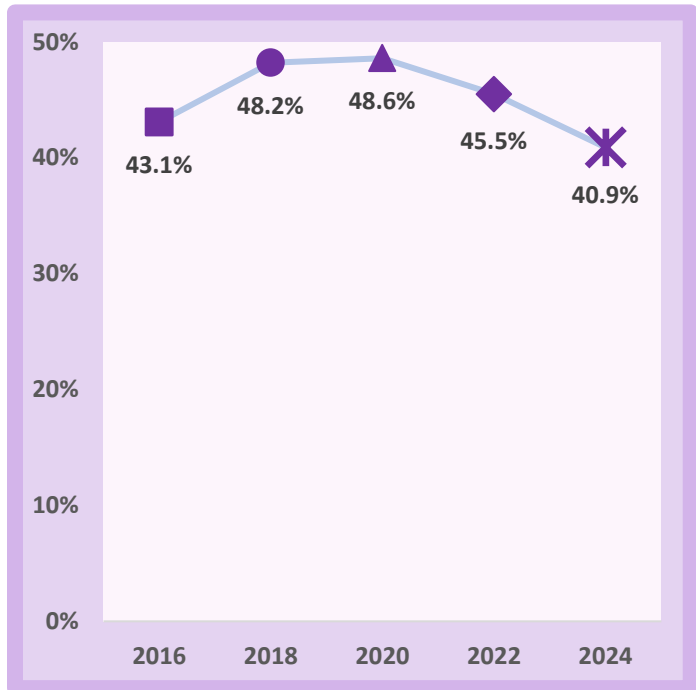


In 2024, 92.1% of survey participants believed that it would be wrong for them to smoke cigarettes. This is the highest percentage than since at least 2016.

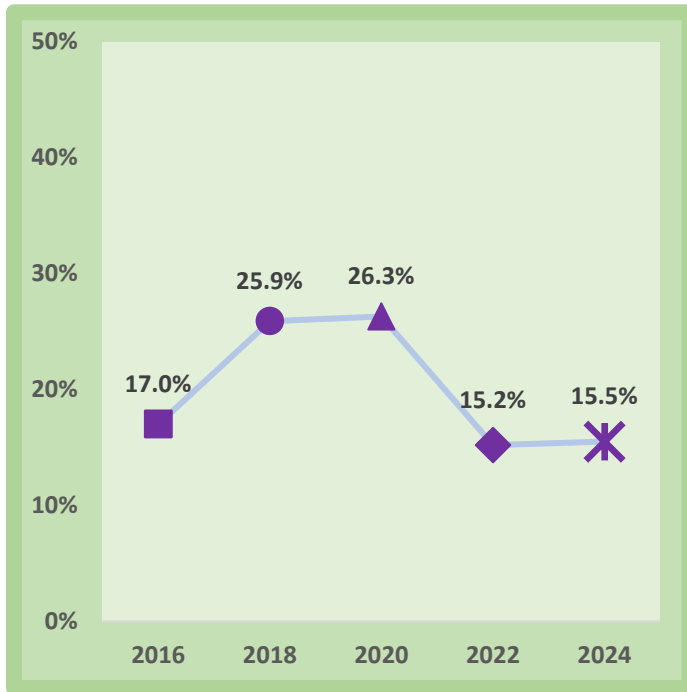
### Vapes/Vaping Devices

#### Believe it is Easy to Obtain Vape/Vaping Devices (Sort of Easy or Very Easy)

Perceived availability of vaping devices was low compared to previous years. The percentage of youth who believed it to be “sort of easy” or “very easy” to obtain a vape or vaping device was 40.9%. The rate has been declining since 2020, where the percentage was 48.6%.



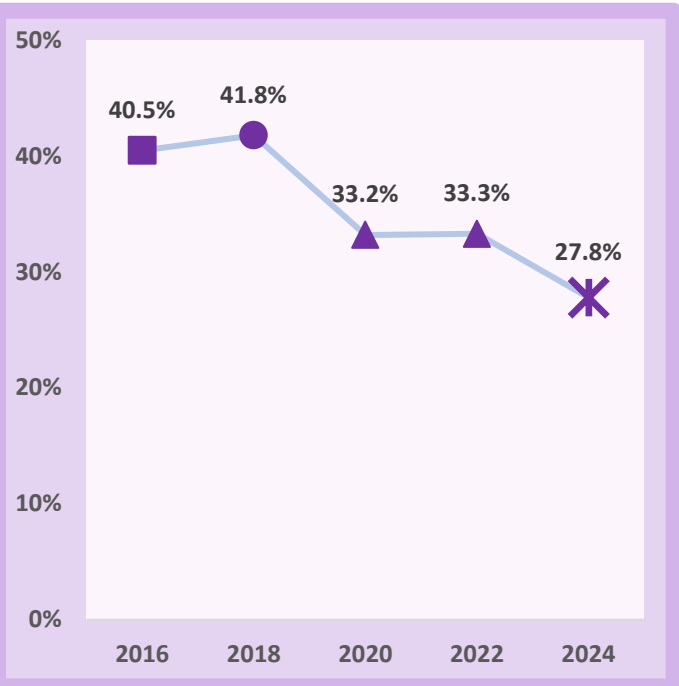
Believes Their Peers Would Find It Cool if Someone Their Age Used Vapes/Vaping Devices (Very Cool or Pretty Cool)



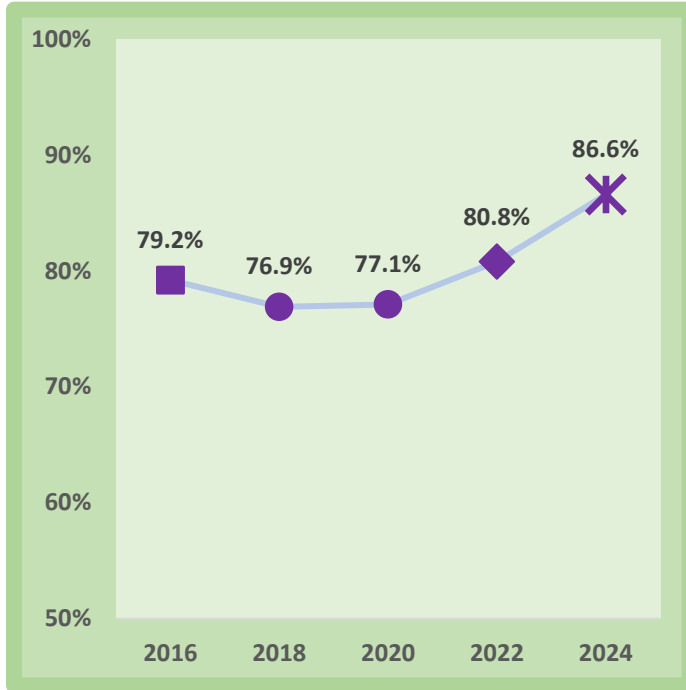
While in 2020, 26.3% of survey participants who believed their peers would think it is cool if someone their age used vaping devices. In 2024, this percentage dropped to 15.5% by 2024.

Believes People Don't Risk Harming Themselves if They Used Vapes/Vaping Devices (No Risk at All or Slight Risk)

The percentage of youth who believe there is "slight risk" or "no risk at all" to harm oneself if they used vaping devices has been declining over time. In 2024, 27.8% believed there was no or little risk of harm while in 2018, the percentage was as high as 41.8%.



Believes That it is Wrong for Them to Use Vapes/Vaping Devices (Wrong or Very Wrong)

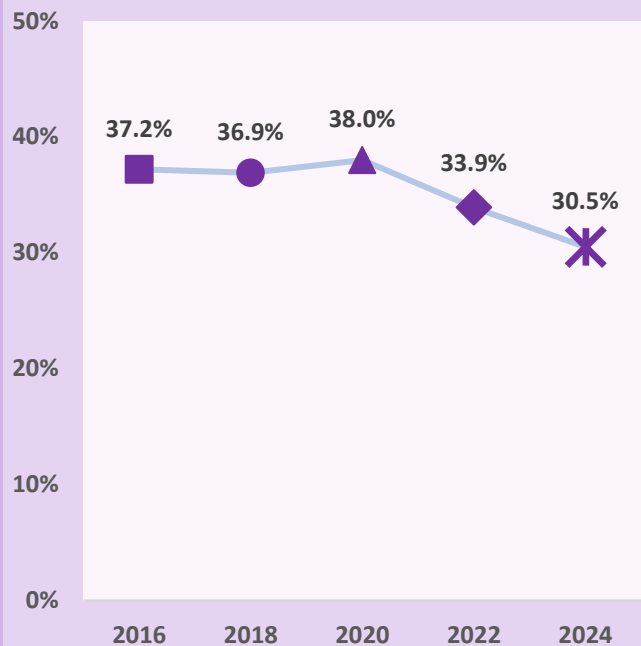


Students' perception of whether it would be wrong for them to use vapes changed over time. In 2018, as little as 76.9% of students believed it to be "wrong" or "very wrong" if they used vaping devices. In 2024, this rose to 86.6%.

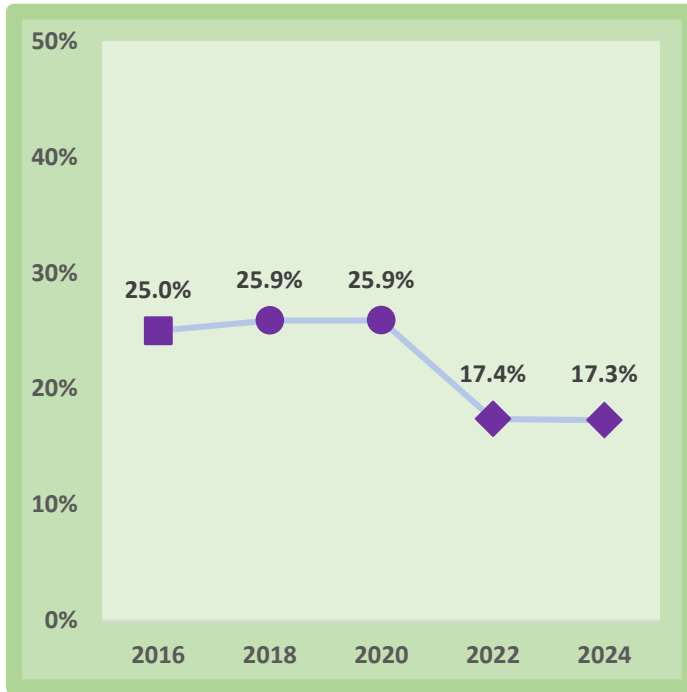
## Marijuana

Believe it is Easy to Obtain Marijuana (Sort of Easy or Very Easy)

Perceived availability of marijuana has decreased from 38% in 2020 to 30.5% in 2024. This means that the percentage of youth who believe it to be "sort of easy" or "very easy" to get marijuana if they wanted some has dropped by 7.5%.



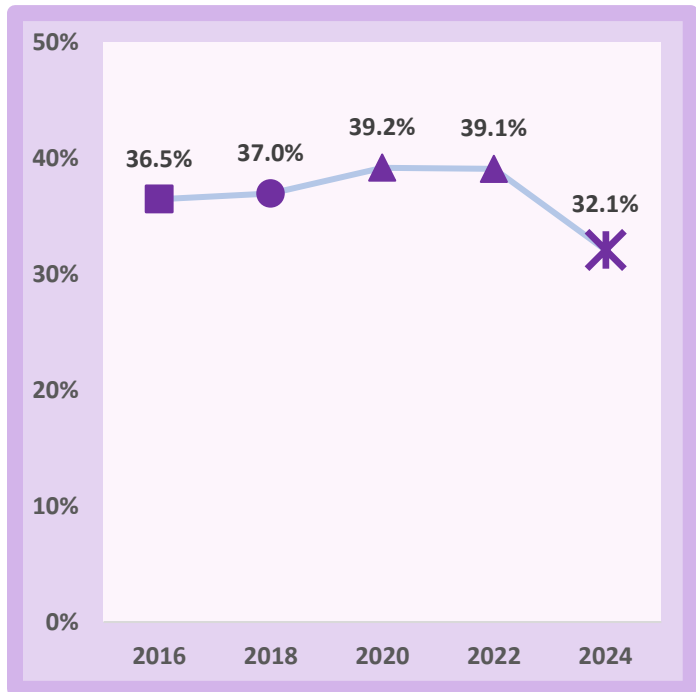
Believes Their Peers Would Find It Cool if Someone Their Age Used Marijuana (Very Cool or Pretty Cool)



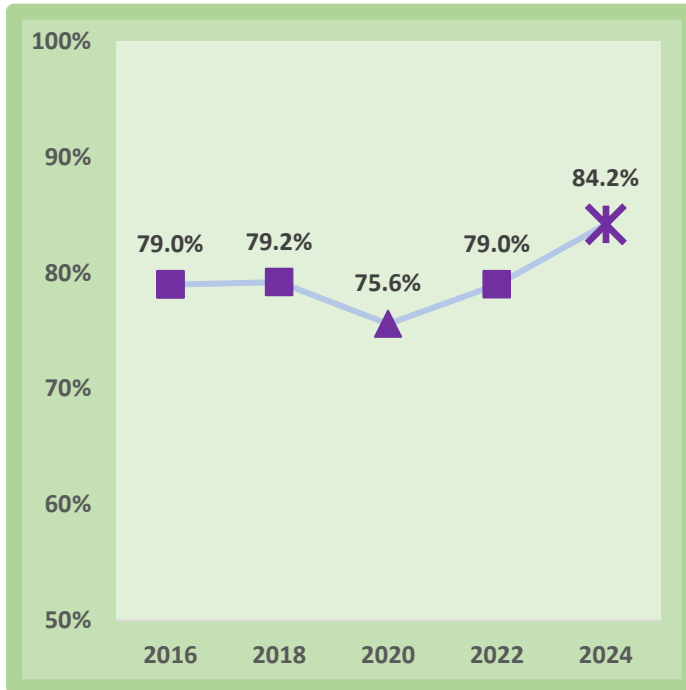
Similar percentage to 2022, 17.3% of students believed that their peers would think it is cool if someone their age smoked marijuana in 2024. In 2022, the percentage dropped from 25.9% to 17.4% and remained steady in 2024.

Believes People Don't Risk Harming Themselves if They Used Marijuana Once or Twice Per Week (No Risk at All or Slight Risk)

After at least two years of stagnating percentages, a statistically significant decrease in the percentage of students who believed there was "no risk at all" or "slight risk" to harming oneself if they used marijuana once or twice per week occurred. Dropping from 39.1% in 2022, 32.1% believed there to be little to no risk.



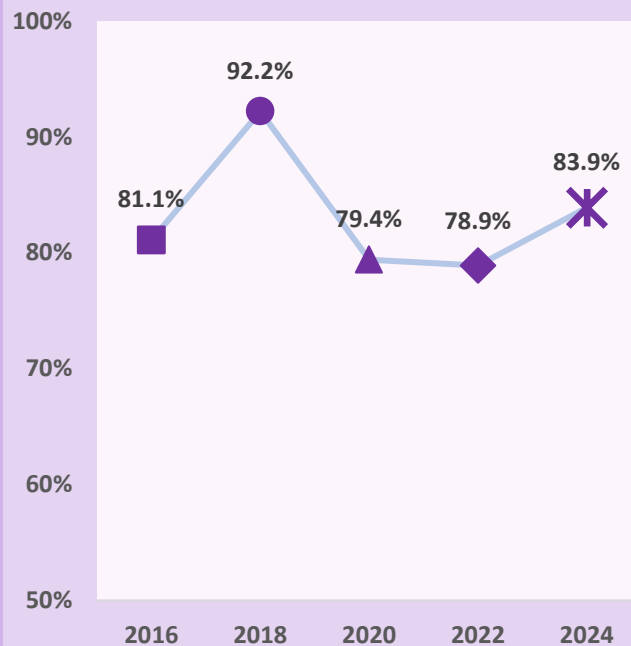
Believes That it is Wrong for Them to Use Marijuana (Wrong or Very Wrong)



Since 2020, the percentage of students who believed it would be “wrong” or “very wrong” for them to use marijuana has been steadily increasing. In 2024, as much as 84.2% of students believe that it is wrong for them to use marijuana.

Believes That it is Wrong for Them Use Marijuana Once or Twice a Week (Wrong or Very Wrong)

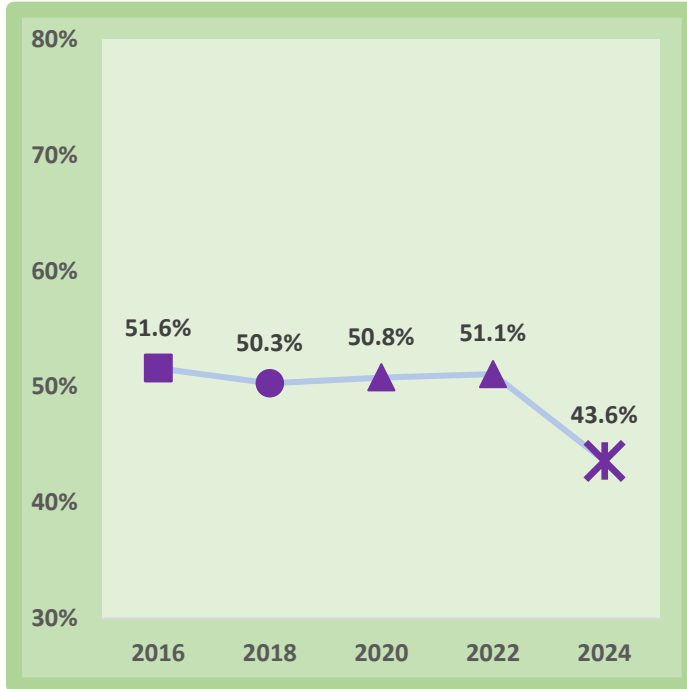
In 2024, 83.9% of students believed that it would be wrong for them to use marijuana once or twice per week. This is an increase from 2022 when it was 78.9%.





## Over-The-Counter Medications

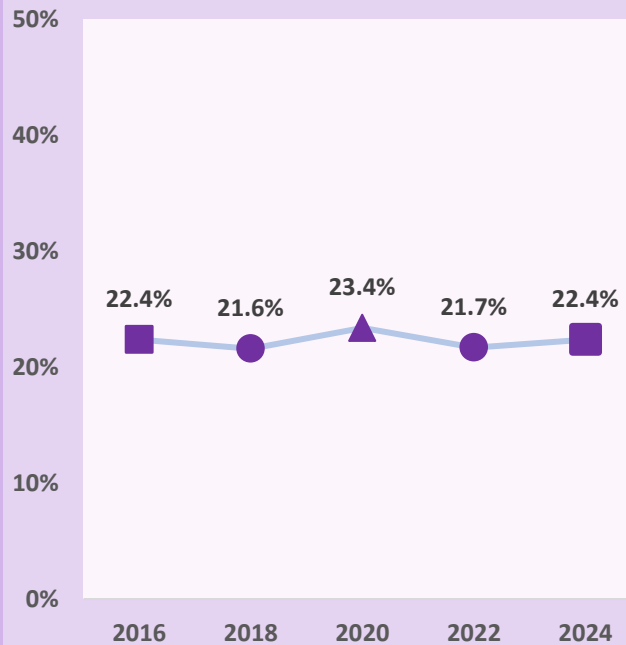
Believe it is Easy to Obtain Over-The-Counter Drugs When Not Sick (Sort of Easy or Very Easy)



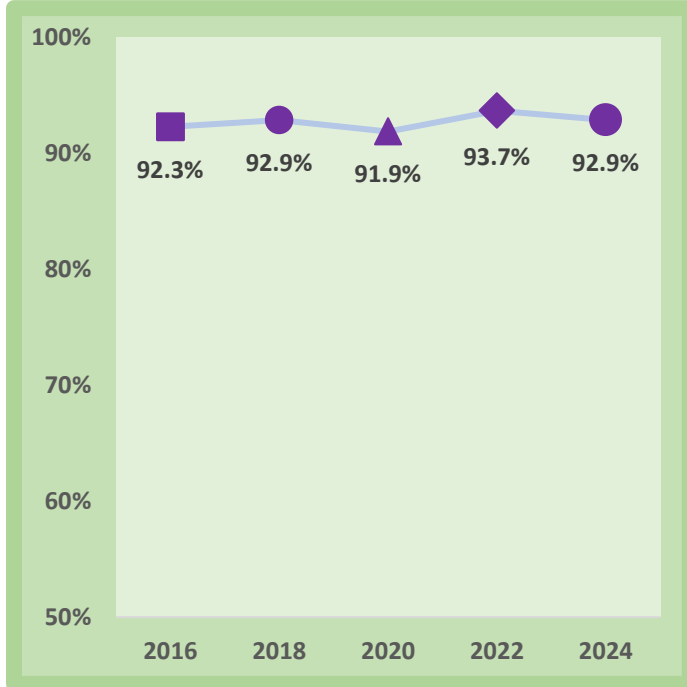
After at least two reporting periods of steady percentages, the percentage of youth who believe that it is easy to obtain over-the-counter medication when they are not sick dropped to 43.6%. Since at least 2016, results remained over 50%.

Believes People Don't Risk Harming Themselves if They Use Cough Medicine to Get High (No Risk at All or Slight Risk)

The rate of youth in 2024 who believe that there is "no risk at all" or "slight risk" in using cough medicine to get high is statistically indistinguishable from 2016's percentage of 22.4%. Fluctuations in percentages over time have not exceeded 2% meaning that this rate has remained steady.



### Believes That it is Wrong for Them to Use Over-The-Counter Drugs to Get High (Wrong or Very Wrong)

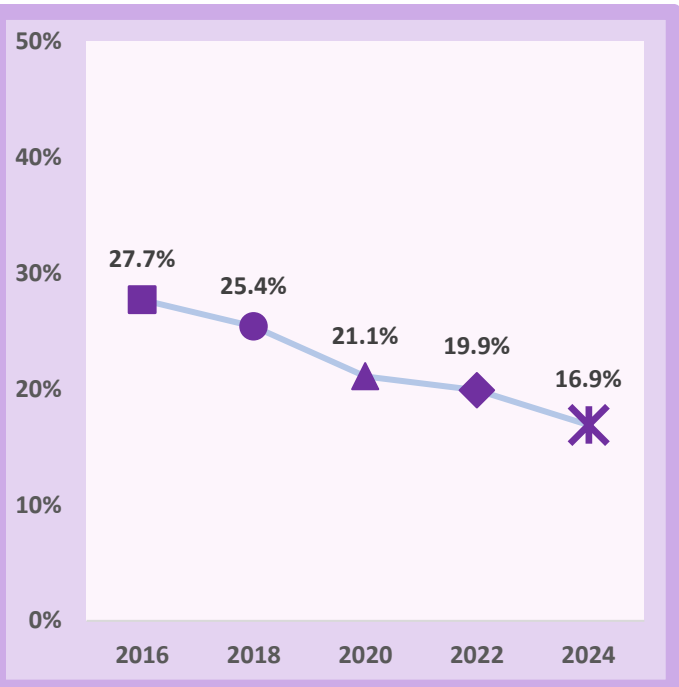


Similarly, percentages have not fluctuated more than 2% since 2016 when asked about perception of wrongness of using over-the-counter medication to get high. In 2024, 92.9% of students surveyed believed that it would be “wrong” or “very wrong” for them to use.

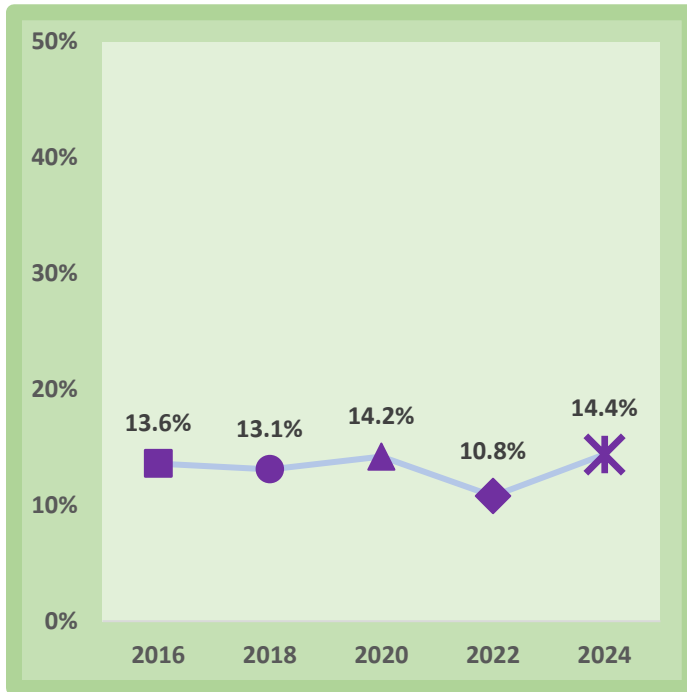
### Prescription Medication

#### Believe it is Easy to Obtain Prescription Drugs Not Prescribed to Them (Sort of Easy or Very Easy)

A steady decrease in the percentages of youth who believed it would be easy to obtain prescription medication without a prescription occurred since 2016. In 2024, only 16.9% believed that it would be “sort of easy” or “very easy” obtain, much lower than 2016’s rate of 27.7%.



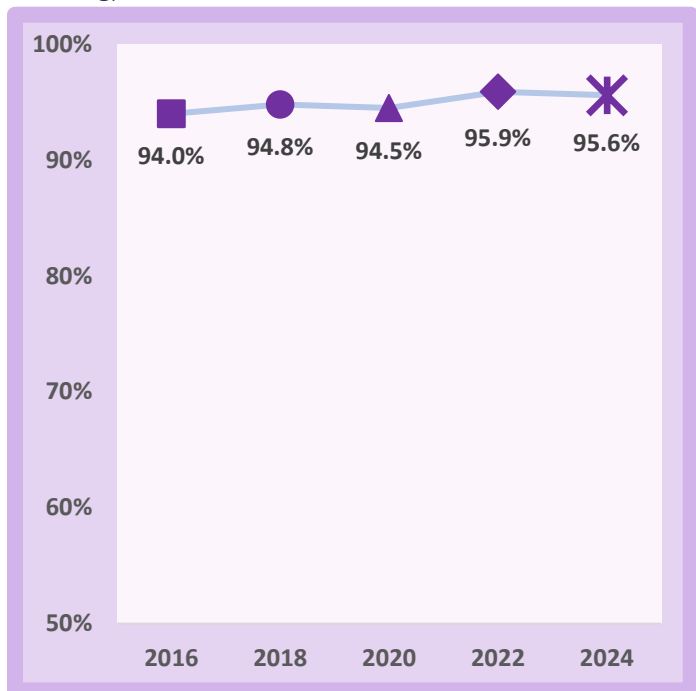
Believes People Don't Risk Harming Themselves if They Use Prescription Drugs Not Prescribed to Them (No Risk at All or Slight Risk)



Similar to over-the-counter medication, rates have remained relatively steady of youth who believe that there is “no risk at all” or “slight risk” to using prescription drugs not prescribed. In 2022, there was a small dip, where 10.8% of students said there was no or little risk of harm, but it jumped to 14.4% in 2024.

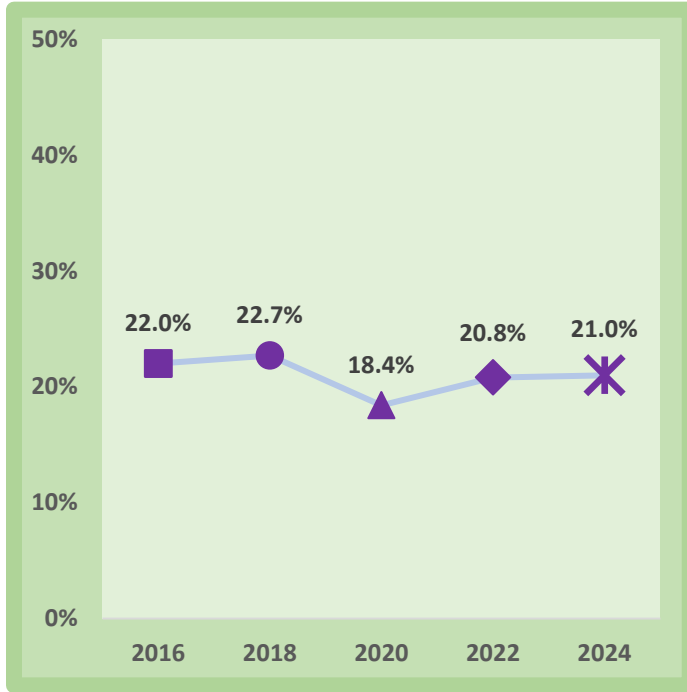
Believes That it is Wrong for Them to Use Prescription Drugs Not Prescribed to Them (Wrong or Very Wrong)

Percentages of students who believe it to be wrong for them to use prescription drugs not prescribed to them has remained steady. In 2024, 95.6% of survey participants believed that it would be wrong for them to use prescription drugs that are not prescribed to them.



## Other Substances

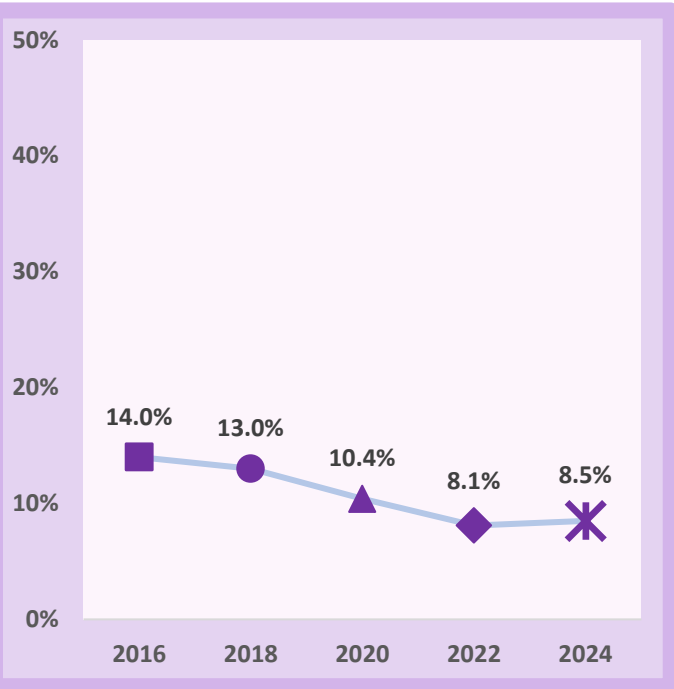
Believe it is Easy to Obtain Synthetic Drugs (Sort of Easy or Very Easy)



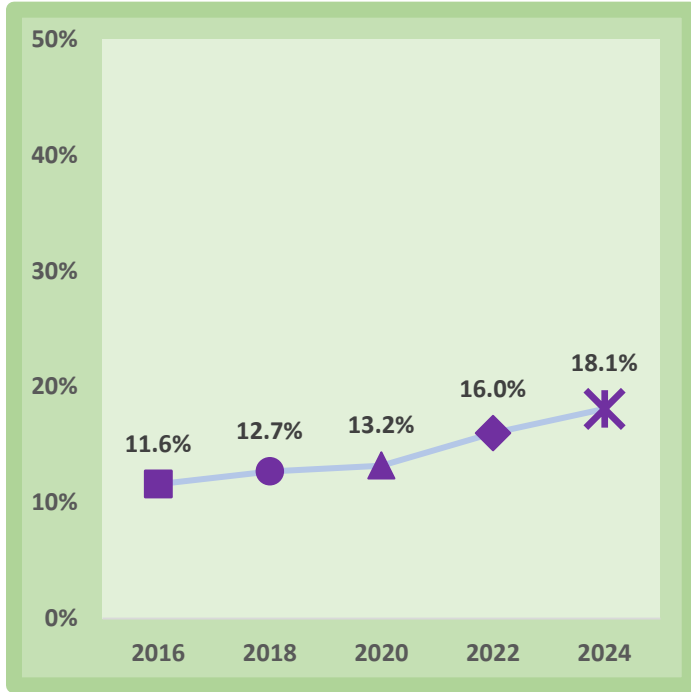
Except for a dip in 2020 (18.4%), percentages of students who believe that it would be easy to obtain synthetic drugs if they wanted them has remained steady. In 2024, 21% believed that if they wanted to obtained synthetic drugs, it would be easy to get some.

Believe it is Easy to Obtain Other Illegal Drugs (Sort of Easy or Very Easy)

From 2016 to 2020, the rate of students who believe it to be easy to obtain other illegal drugs declined from 14% to 8.1%. In 2024, the percentage rose again to 8.5%.



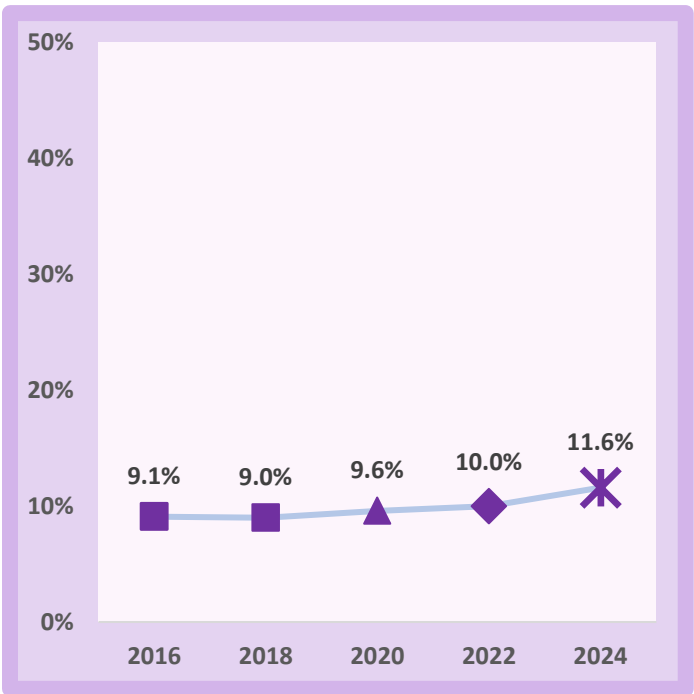
Believes People Don't Risk Harming Themselves if They Use Synthetic Drugs (No Risk at All or Slight Risk)



Youth increasingly believe that there is “no risk at all” or “slight risk” in harming oneself if they used synthetic drugs. In 2024, 18.1% of survey participants believed there to be little or no risk, much higher than 11.6% in 2016.

Believes People Don't Risk Harming Themselves if They Use Any Other Illegal Drugs (No Risk at All or Slight Risk)

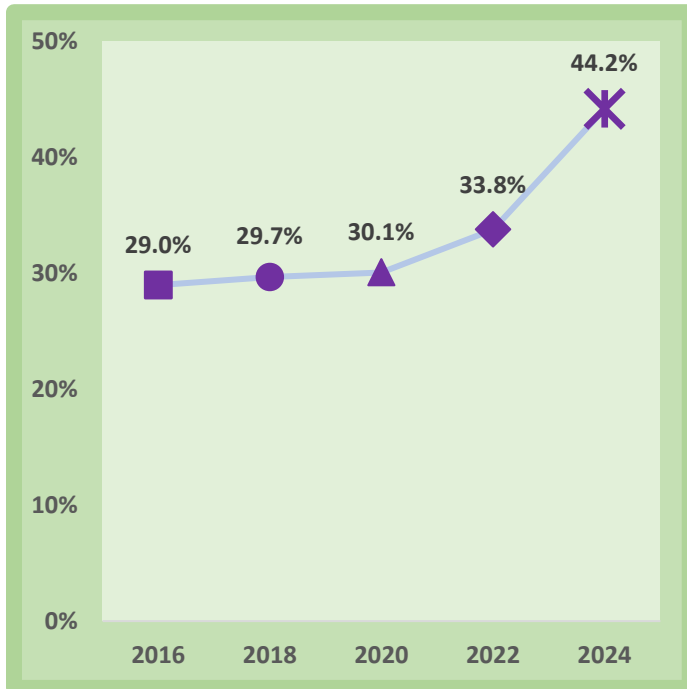
While rates have remained relatively steady, there has been a slight increase in students who believe that there is little or no risk in harming oneself if they use any other unspecified illegal drug. In 2024, 11.6% of students believed there to be “no risk at all” or “slight risk” of harm if someone used “other illegal drugs”, up from 10% in 2022.



# Student Safety and Mental Health

## Student Safety

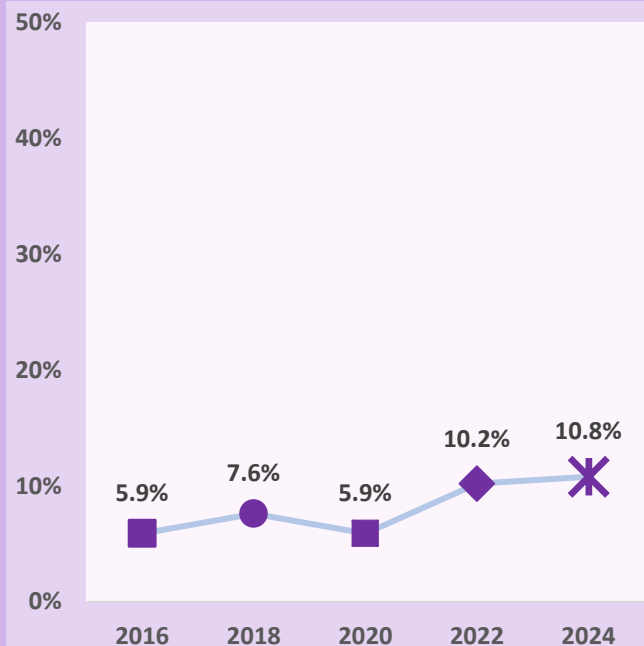
Missed School Due to Skipping or Cutting in Past Month (1+ Days)



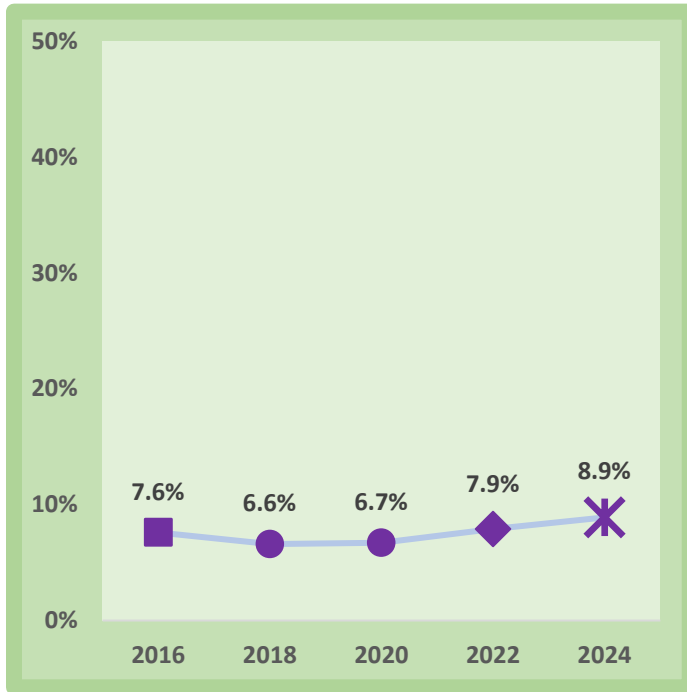
Since 2016, there has been a continual increase in percentage of youth who missed school due to skipping or cutting class in the past month. In 2024, 44.2% of youth have skipped class, compared to 33.8% in 2022.

Missed School Because They Felt Unsafe in Past Month (1+ Days)

In 2024, 10.8% of youth reported missing school at least once in the past month. While this percentage is similar in 2022 (10.2%), it is much higher than the 2020 rate of 5.9%.



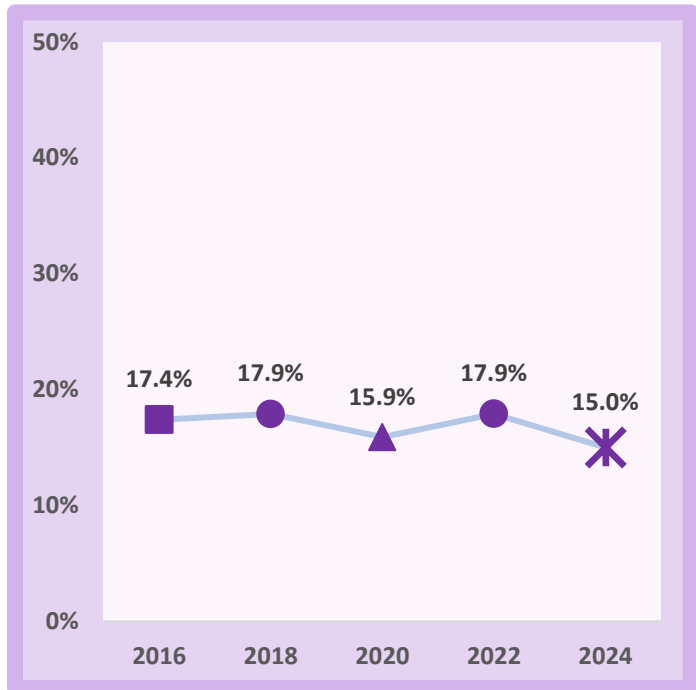
### Been Threatened or Injured with a Weapon on School Property in Past 12 Months (1+ times)



There has been a slight increase since 2018 in students who report being threatened or injured with a weapon on school property. In 2024, 8.9% of students have been threatened or injured, and this is an increase from 7.9% in 2022.

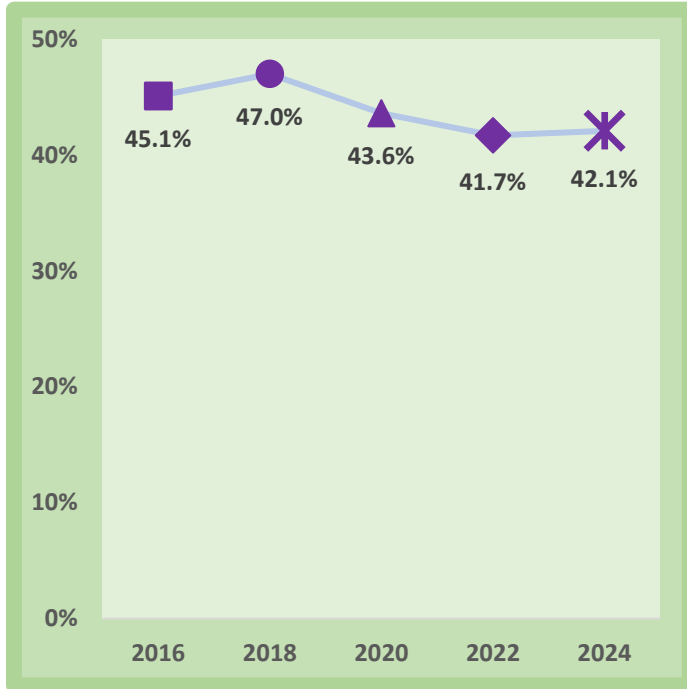
### Been in a Physical Fight in the Past 12 Months

In 2024, 15% of youth have been in a physical fight within the past 12 months. This is lower than the percentage of youth who have been in a fight in 2022 (17.9%).



## Student Bullying

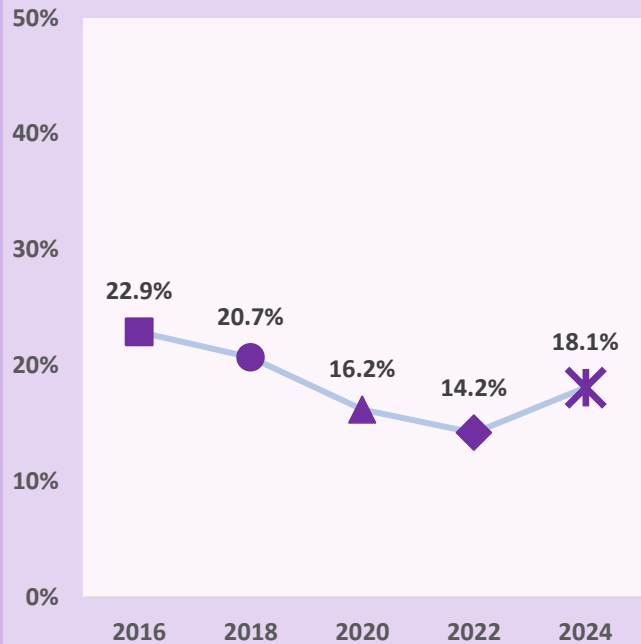
Had Mean Rumors Spread About Them in Past Three Months (1+ times)



While there was not a large change from 2022 to 2024 in the percentage of youth who had mean rumors spread about them in the past three months (41.7% vs 42.1%), it has decreased from 47% in 2018.

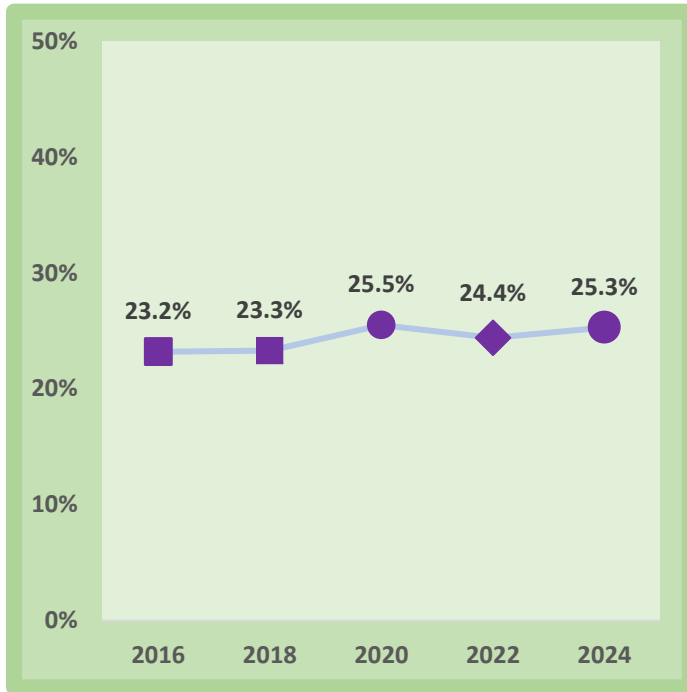
Spread Mean Rumors About Other People in Past Three Months (1+ times)

While there had been a downward trend in the percentage of youth who reported spreading mean rumors about other people in the past three months since 2016, in 2024, there was a spike in this number. In 2024, 18.1% spread rumors while in 2022, 14.2% spread rumors, indicating a 3.9% increase.





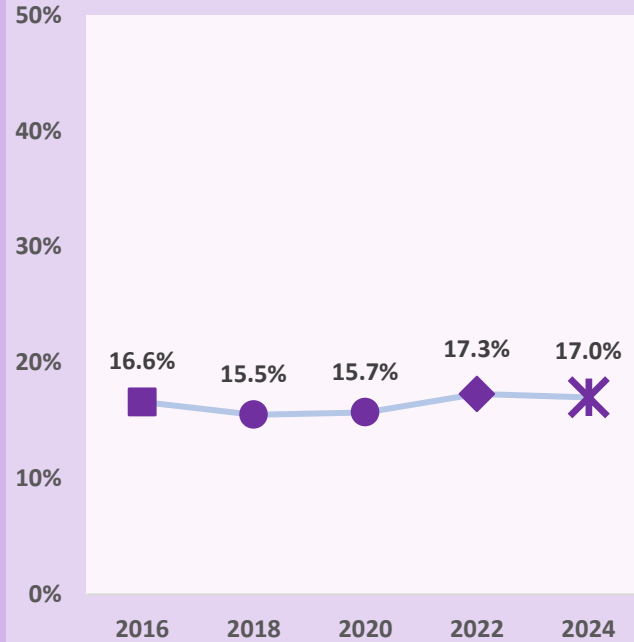
Been Bullied Online or Via Text Message in Past Three Months (1+ times)



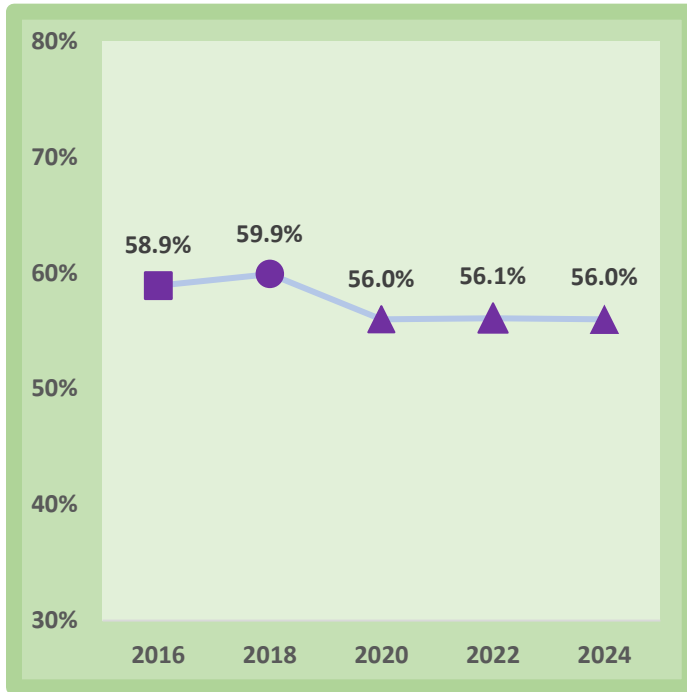
The percentage of youth who have been bullied online or via text message in the past three months has remained steady. In 2024, 25.3% of youth report being bullied online or via text message, and this is statistically similar to the rate in 2020.

Bullied Online or Via Text Message in Past Three Months (1+ times)

Similarly, the percentage of youth who report being bullied has remained steady over time. In 2024, 17% of youth report being bullied online or via text message at least one time in the past three months.



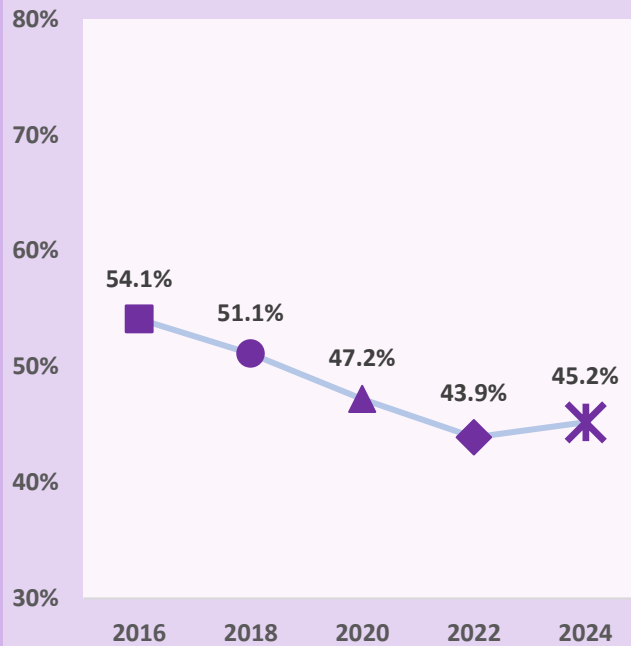
Been Made Fun of By Others in the Past Three Months (1+ times)



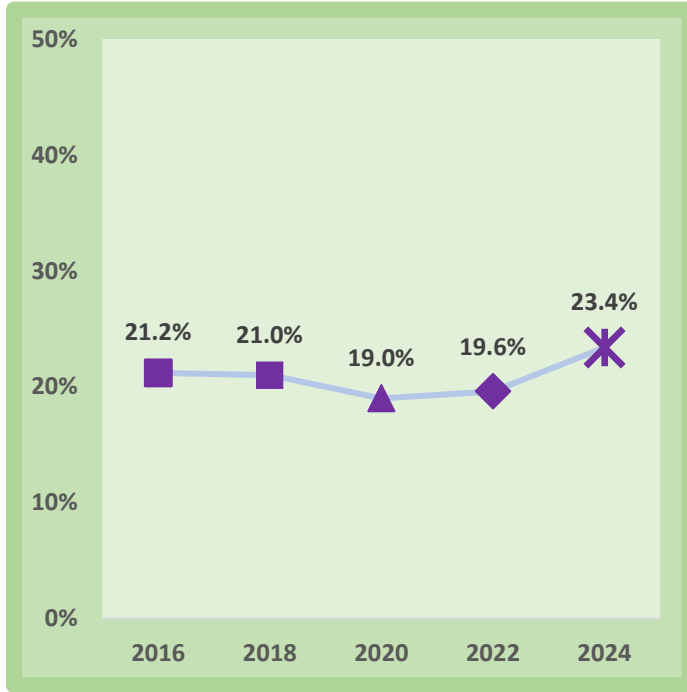
Since 2020, statistically, the percentages of youth who report being made fun of by others in the past three months has remained stagnant. In 2024, it remains at 56%.

Made Fun of Others in the Past Three Months (1+ times)

From 2016 to 2022, the percentage of youth who report making fun of others in the past three months declined from 54.1% in 2016 to 43.9% in 2022. In 2024, the percentage rose again, hitting 45.2%.



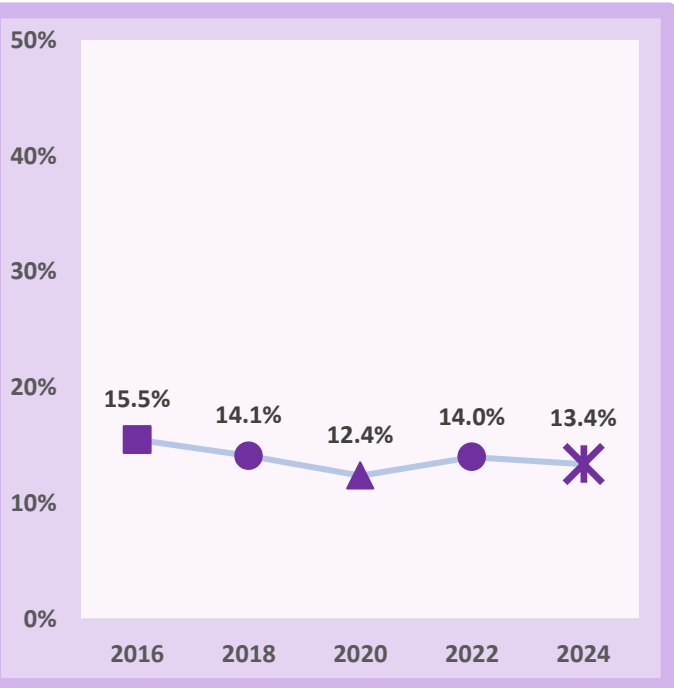
Been Physically Bullied in the Past Three Months (1+ times)



While the percentages remain similar from 2016 to 2024, there was a small spike in percentage of youth who report being physically bullied in the past three months, rising from 19.6% in 2022 to 23.4% in 2024.

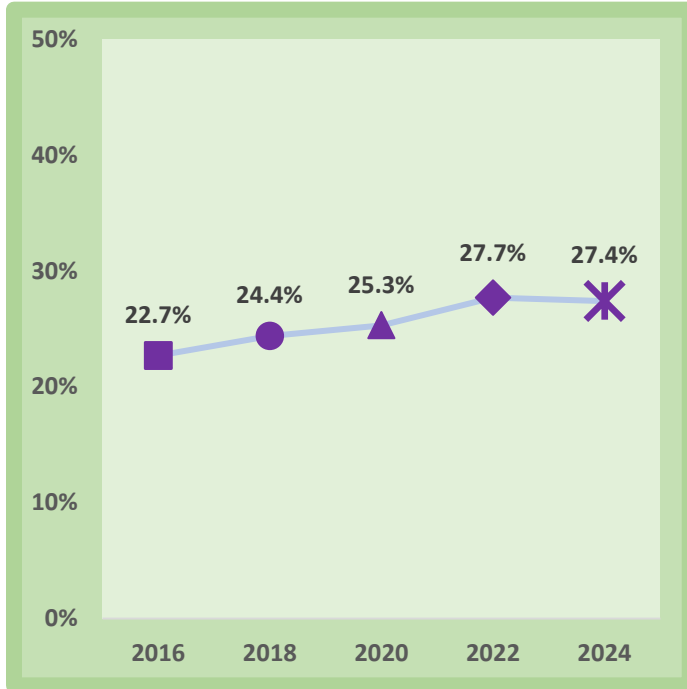
Physically Bullied Others in the Past Three Months (1+ times)

The percentage of youth who report physically bullying others at least one time in the past three months, has remained steady over time. In 2024, 13.4% of youth had been physically bullied.



## Mental Health Indicators

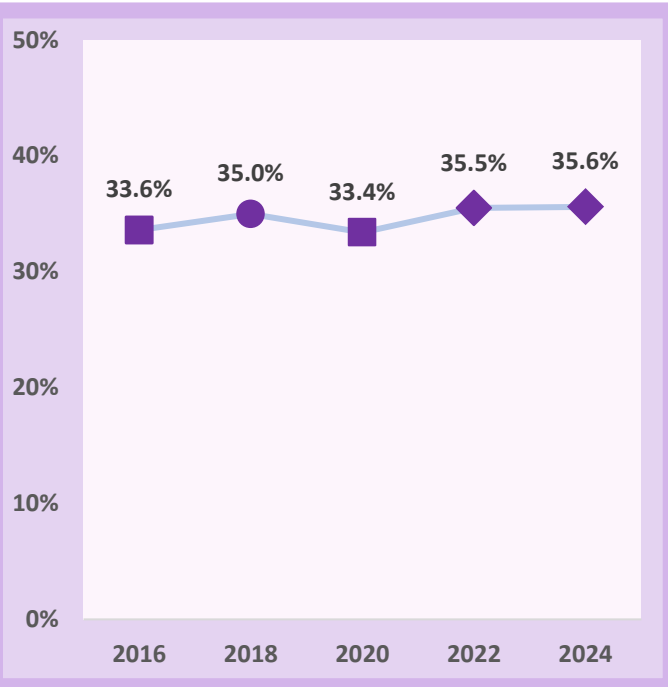
Felt Sad or Depressed in the Past Month (Often or Always)



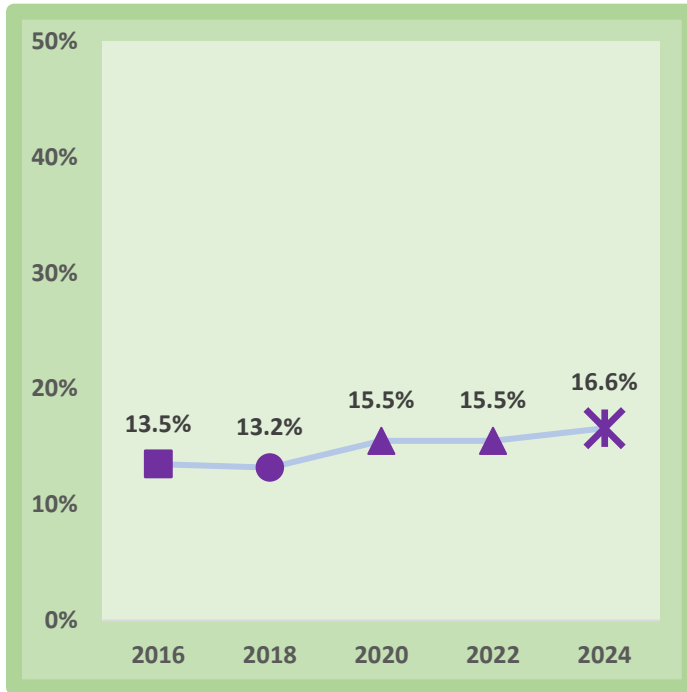
A slow increase in percentage of students who report feeling sad or depressed often or always in the past month occurred from 2016 to 2022, raising about 5%. In 2024, the percentage dropped very slightly to 27.4%.

Felt Grouchy or Irritable or in a Bad Mood in the Past Month (Often or Always)

Since 2022, the percentage of students who feel grouchy or irritable often or always in the past month has remained statistically similar. In 2024, 35.6% of participants indicated these symptoms in the past month.



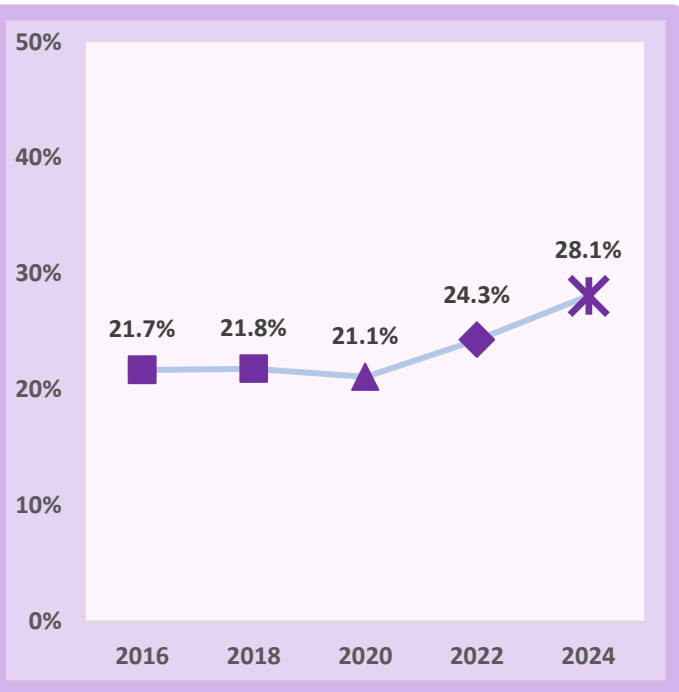
Felt Hopeless About the Future in the Past Month (Often or Always)



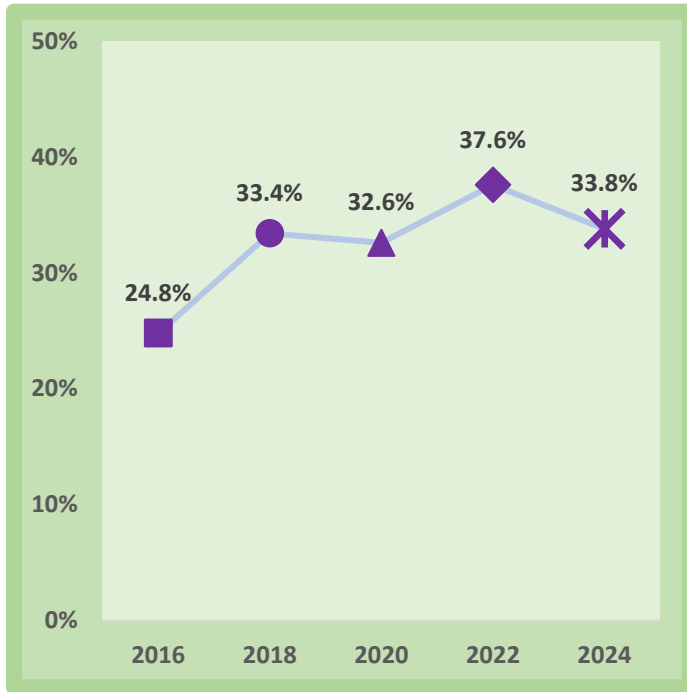
In 2024, 16.6% of youth reported often or always feeling hopeless about their future in the past month. This rose from 15.5% in 2022.

Felt like Not Eating or Eating More than Usual in the Past Month (Often or Always)

Since 2020, there has been an increase in students who said they eat more or less than usual in the past month. In 2020, only 21.1% reported these symptoms whereas in 2024, the percentage rose to 28.1%.



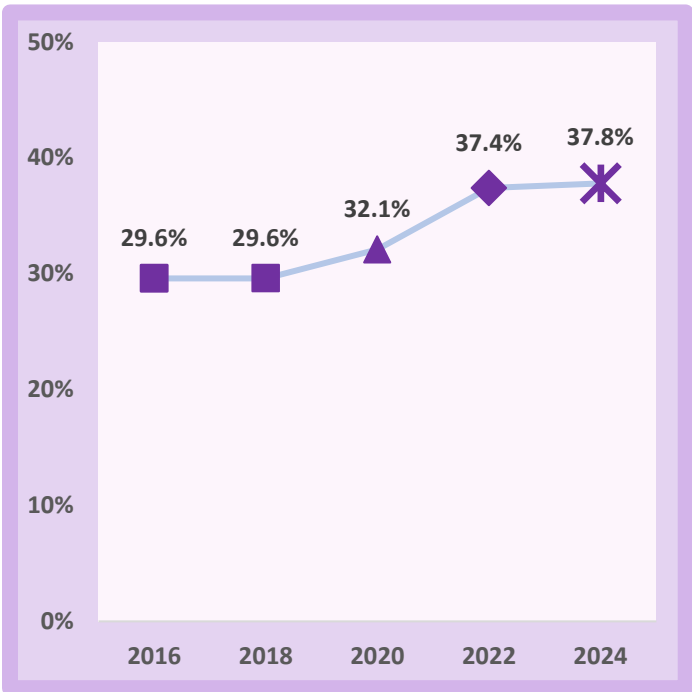
Slept a Lot More or a Lot Less Than Usual in the Past Month (Often or Always)



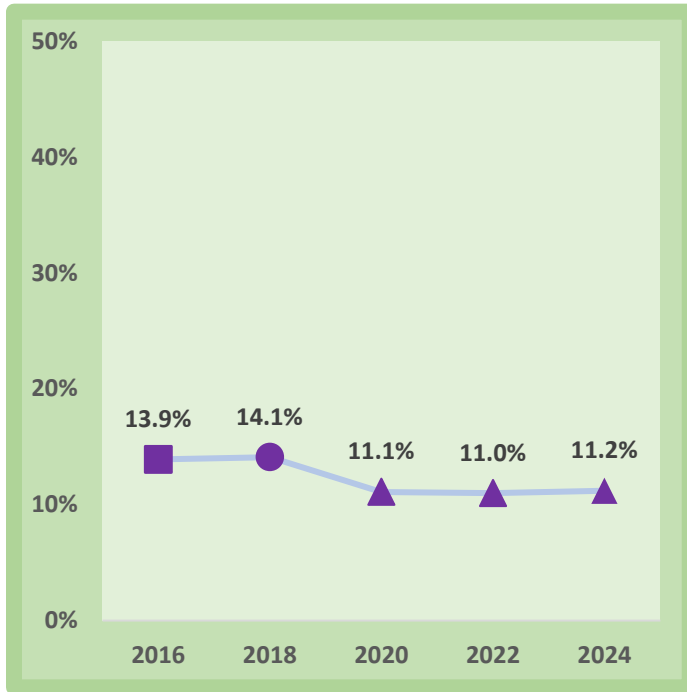
In 2024, 33.8% of participants indicate that they often or always sleep a lot more or a lot less than usual in the past month. This dropped from (37.6%) in 2022 to 33.8% in 2024. However, 2024's rate is still higher than 2016's.

Had Difficulty Concentrating on School Work in the Past Month (Often or Always)

In 2024, 37.8% of students had difficulty concentrating on their schoolwork often or always in the past month, a similar rate to 2022 (37.4%).



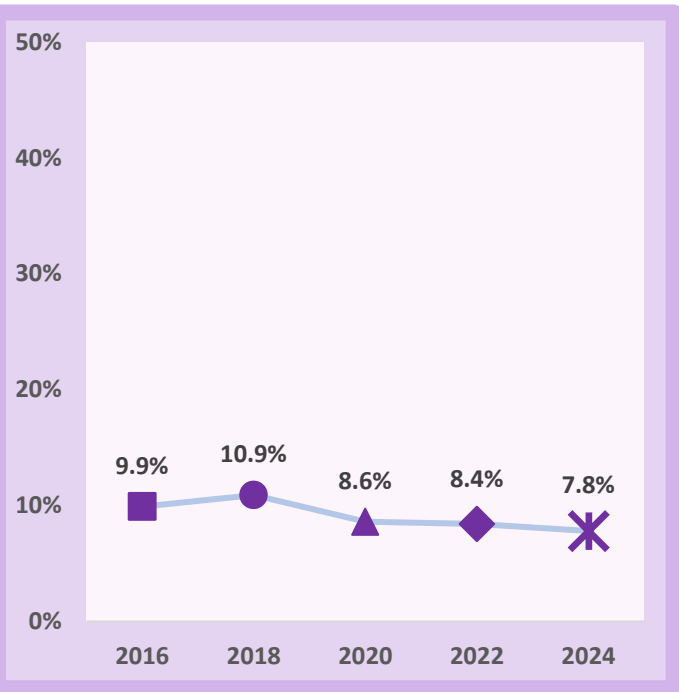
### Considered Suicide in the Past Year (1+ times)



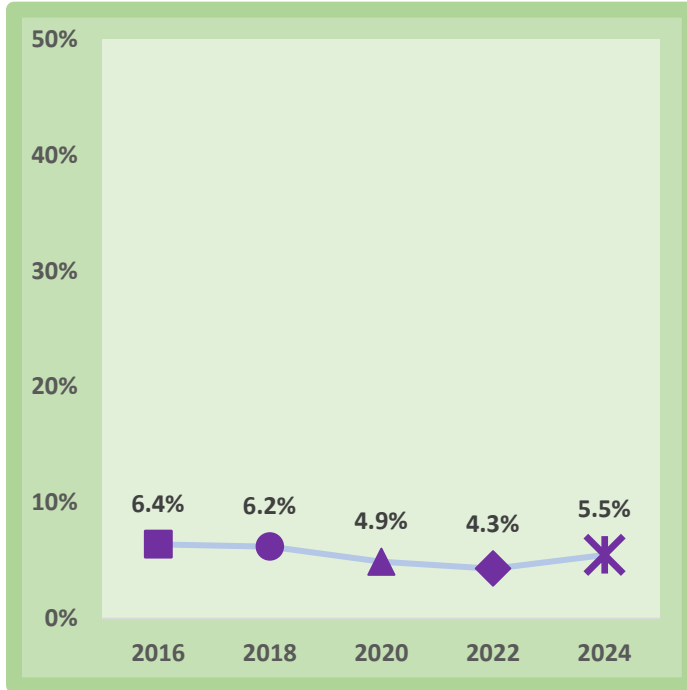
The percentage of students who considered suicide in the past year in 2024 has been statistically consistent with the percentages in 2020 (11.1%) and 2022 (11.2%).

### Planned Suicide in the Past Year (1+ times)

Only slightly lower than 2022's percentage (8.4%), 7.8% of students in 2024 planned suicide at least once in the past year.



### Attempted Suicide in the Past Year (1+ times)



In 2024, 5.5% of youth attempted suicide at least one time in the past year. This rose 1.2% since 2022 where the attempt percentage was at 4.3%.

### Attempted Suicide and was Treated by a Doctor or Nurse for Injury, Poisoning, or Overdose (1+ time)

Similar to previous years, in 2024, one percent of students attempted suicide at least once and was treated by a doctor or nurse for injury, poisoning or overdose.

