



# 2022

## Rhode Island Student Survey

Region 7  
South County

Author: Hailey Voyer

**BARRINGTON BRISTOL–WARREN BURRILLVILLE  
COVENTRY CRANSTON CUMBERLAND  
EAST PROVIDENCE EXETER–WEST GREENWICH  
JOHNSTON LITTLE COMPTON MIDDLETOWN  
NEWPORT NORTH KINGSTOWN  
NORTH PROVIDENCE PAWTUCKET  
PORTSMOUTH SCITUATE SMITHFIELD  
SOUTH KINGSTOWN TIVERTON WARWICK  
WEST WARWICK WOONSOCKET**

*Participating School Districts in 2022. Note: Providence School District not included in survey.*



## Background

The Rhode Island Student Survey (RISS) is a collaboration among the Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (RI BHDDH), the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH), and the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE). The RISS is administered every other year and examines risk and prevalence of substance use, bullying, depression, suicide, and violence among Rhode Island youth in middle and high schools.<sup>1</sup>

## Purpose

The intention and purpose of the RISS is to identify areas where there are strengths that can be built upon and to put additional resources to those areas that need improvement. There are other surveys administered in schools, but most do NOT allow for the ability to analyze data at the school district or community level. This data is crucial for planning and evaluating prevention services especially when resources are so scarce. It is imperative to have community level data in order to apply for and receive federal funds.

## RISS Data Collection

The RISS was administered from 3/11/2022 to 6/11/2022. In Region 7 (South County), 1,504 students from 2 school districts and 4 schools completed the survey. The RISS currently has sixty-nine (69) questions. There is no personally identifiable information associated with the RISS. Local parent permission procedures were followed before administration, including informing parents that their child's participation was voluntary. The questions are arranged in a particular way and explore specific topic areas. The questions are also asked across several domains such as the individual, peers, family, school, and community. The RISS is offered in Spanish and English. It is an online survey that takes approximately 30 minutes or less to complete. Each student who participates in the RISS receives an informational brochure with supportive resource information.

Results of the survey are reviewed in aggregate tables, not at the individual level. The data is not meant to identify individuals. To be included in the final reports, each grade at a school needs to have at least 60% of their students complete the survey. This participation requirement further protects students from potentially being identified by the way in which they respond to the questions. It also ensures that the results are an accurate representation of the student population. RISS 2020 and 2022 survey data were compared using a two-proportion z-test, which measures potential differences in proportions between two groups. Results were considered statistically significantly different if  $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ . Statistical comparisons between survey administration years do not control for potential differences in participating schools

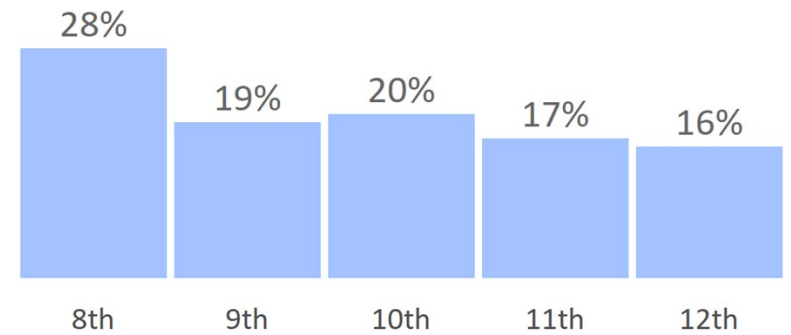
# Demographics



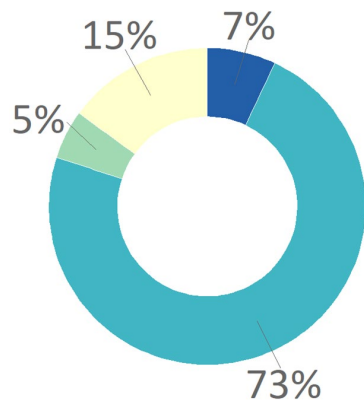
**1,504**

students participated in the survey

Grade

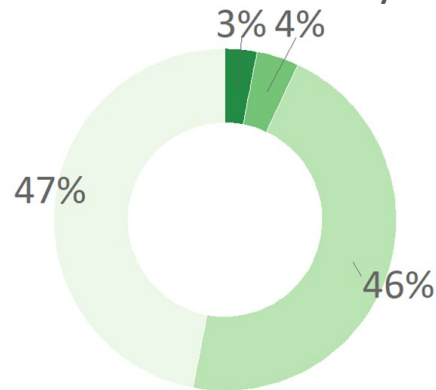


Sexual Orientation



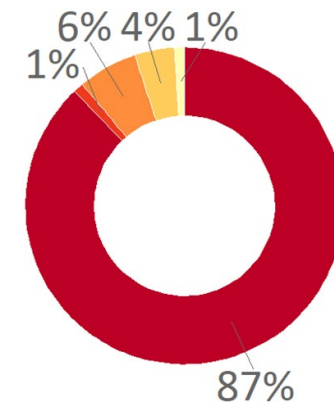
- Bisexual
- Gay or Lesbian
- Heterosexual
- Not Sure

Gender Identity



- Female
- Male
- Other
- Prefer not to answer

Race



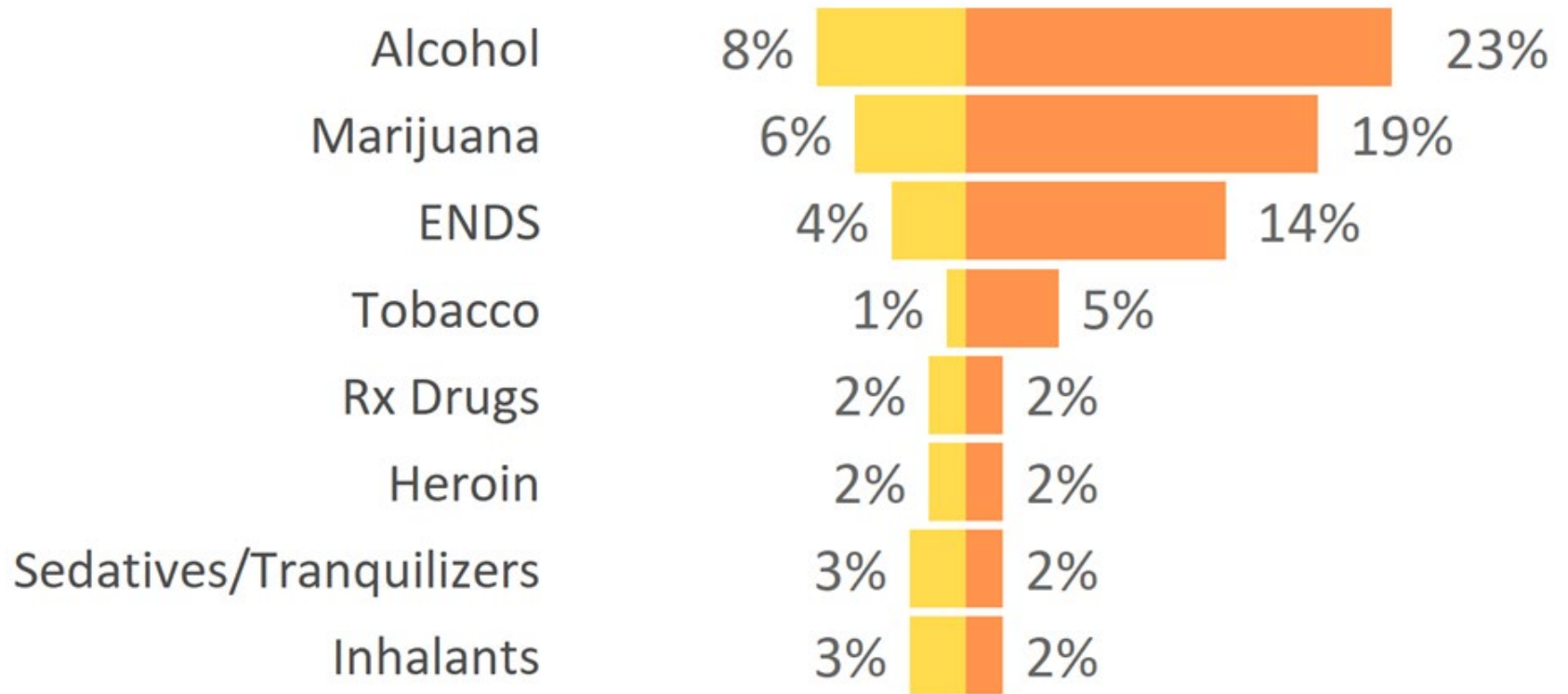
- American Indian/Alaska Native
- Asian American
- Black/African American
- Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander
- White

62 (4%) of students identified as transgender



# Substance Use

Past 30-Day Use



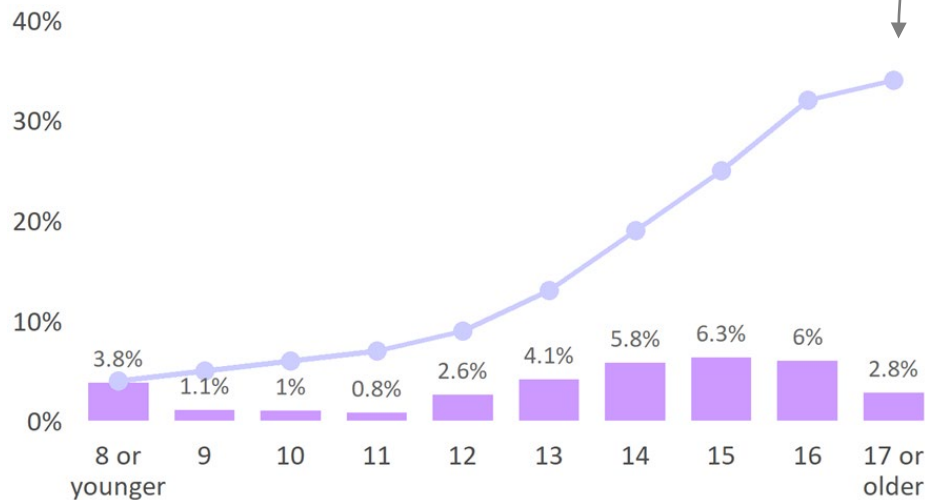
■ Middle School ■ High School



# Substance Use

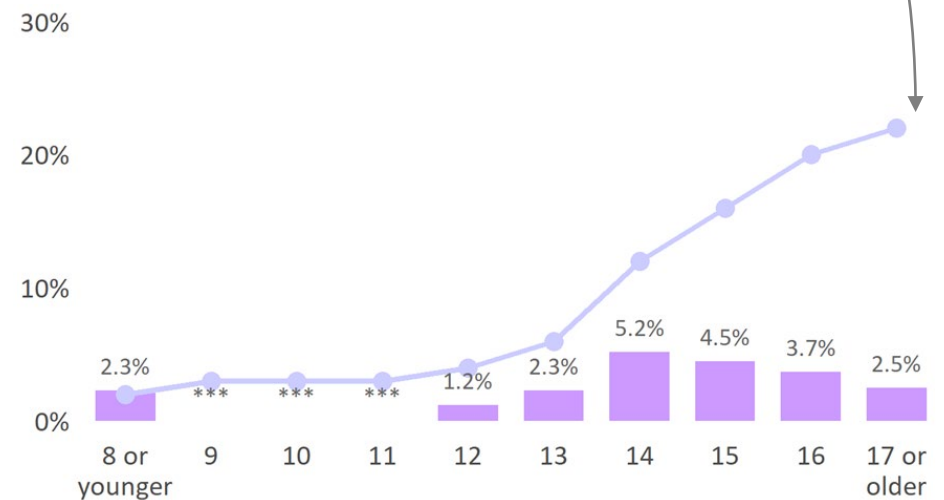
## Age at First Use

### Alcohol



34% of students have had alcohol by age 17, compared to 32% in 2020

### Marijuana



Roughly 22% of students have used marijuana by age 17, the same as in 2020

■ Age at first use    ● Cumulative Total

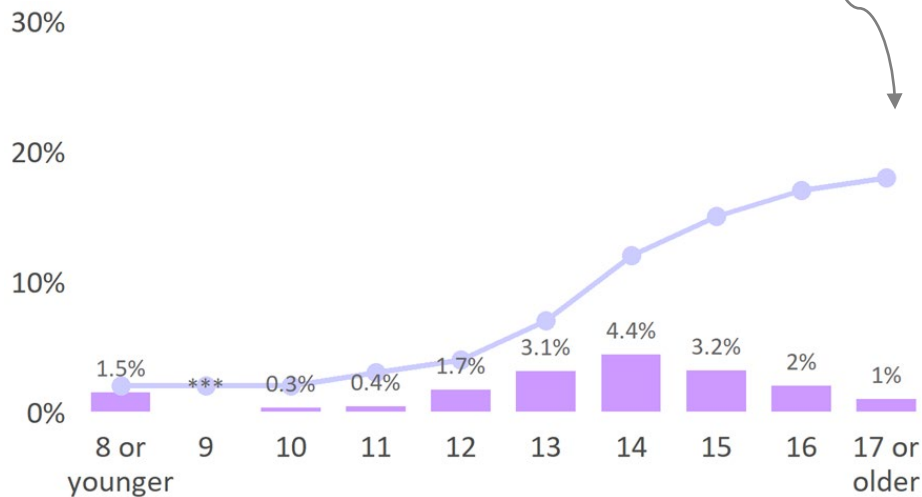
On average, students reported using alcohol and marijuana for the first time between ages 13-16.



# Substance Use

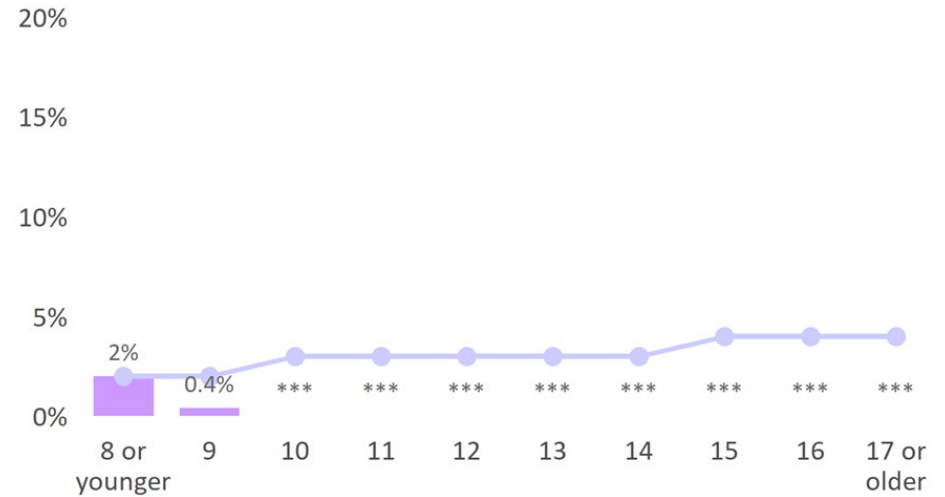
## Age at First Use

### ENDS



18% of students have used ENDS by age 17, compared to 21% in 2020

### Inhalants



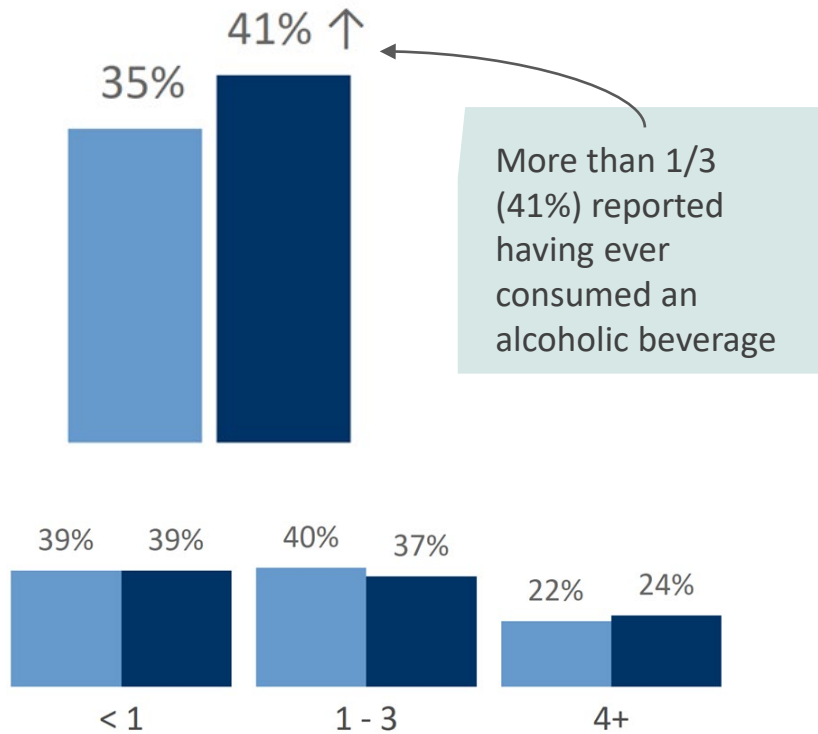
On average, students reported using inhalants for the first time at 8 years or younger, compared to ages 13-16 for ENDS.



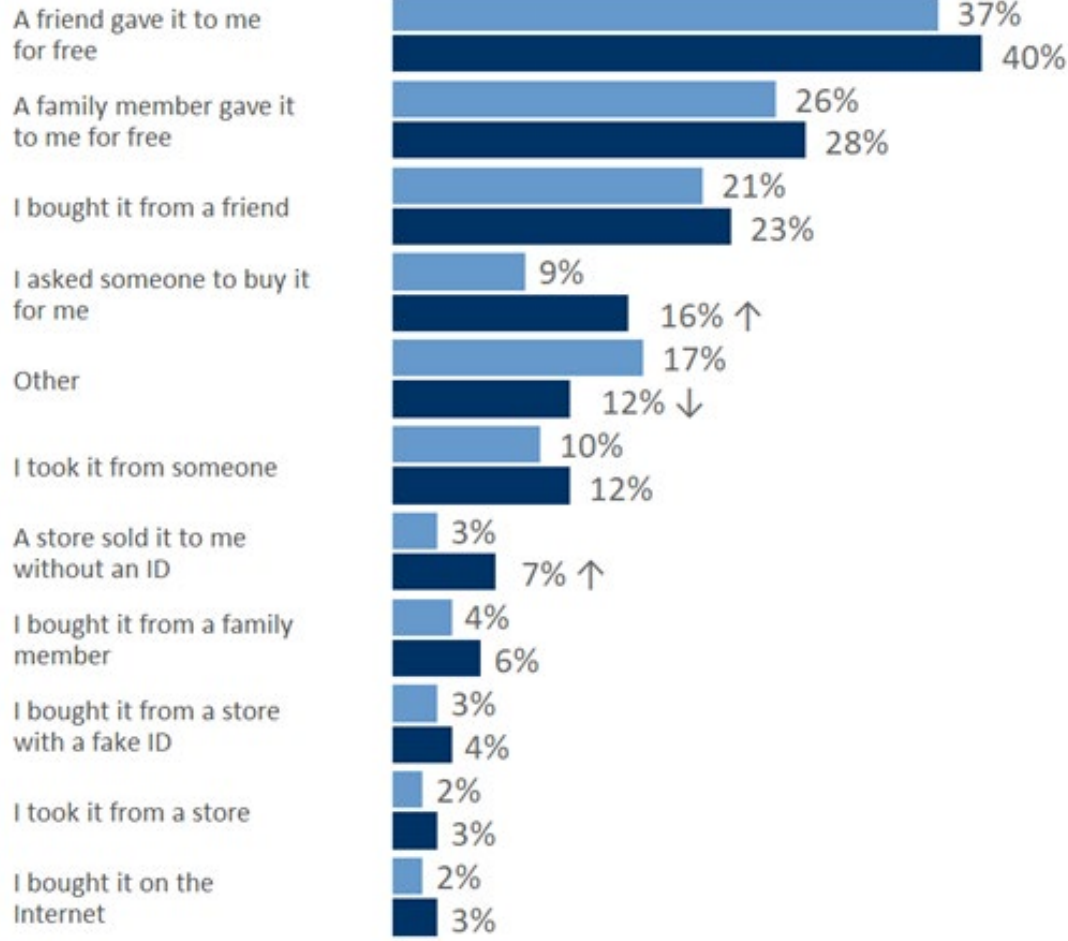
# Access and Availability\*

## Alcohol

Among high school students...



High school students are consuming about the same number of drinks on average compared to previous years.



Most reported obtaining alcohol from a friend for free

\*Questions regarding access to substances are “select all that apply”, thus percentages likely do not add up to 100%





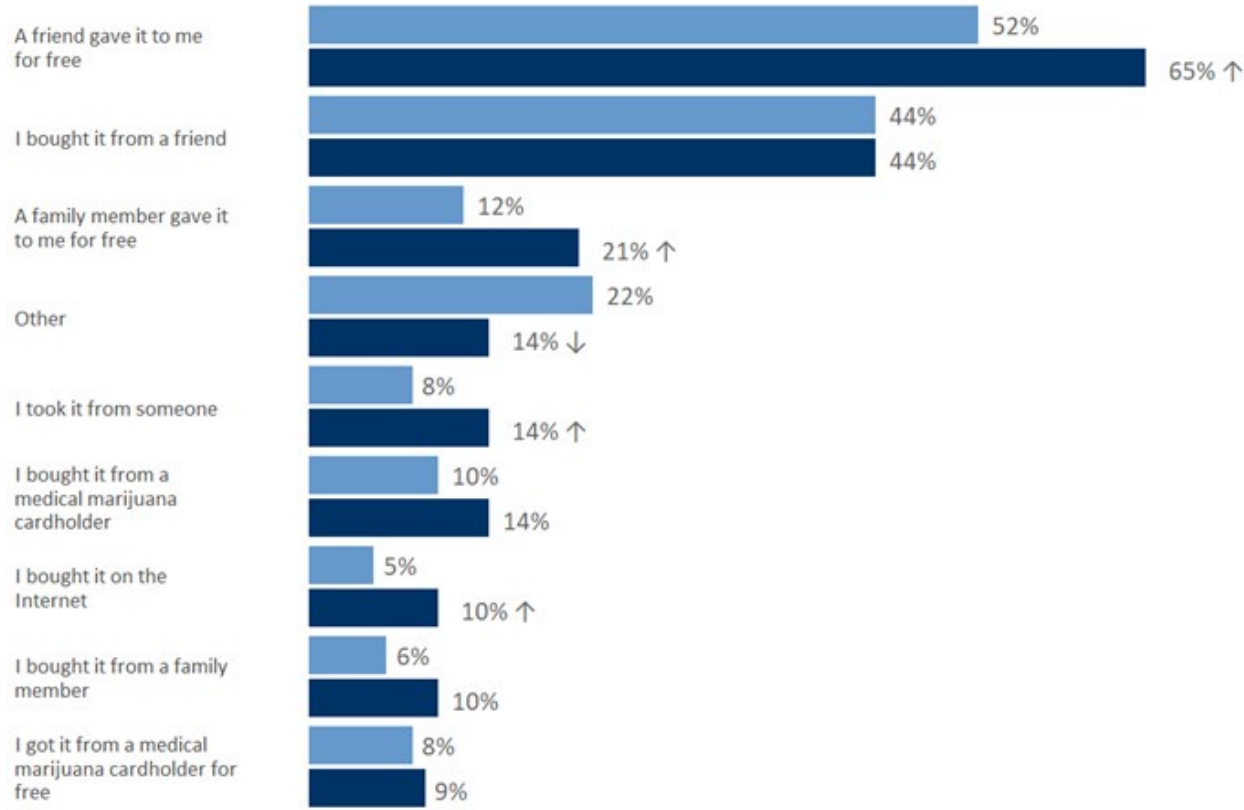
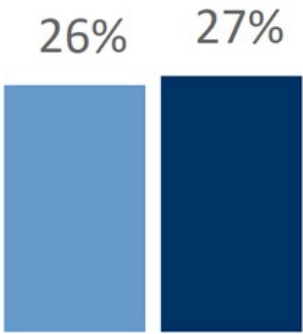
# Access and Availability\*

## Marijuana

Among high school students...

Most students reported obtaining marijuana from a friend for free

Exactly 27% reported having ever used marijuana



\*Questions regarding access to substances are “select all that apply”, thus percentages likely do not add up to 100%

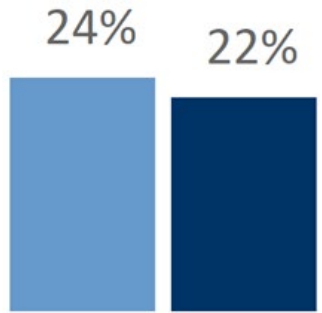


# Access and Availability\*

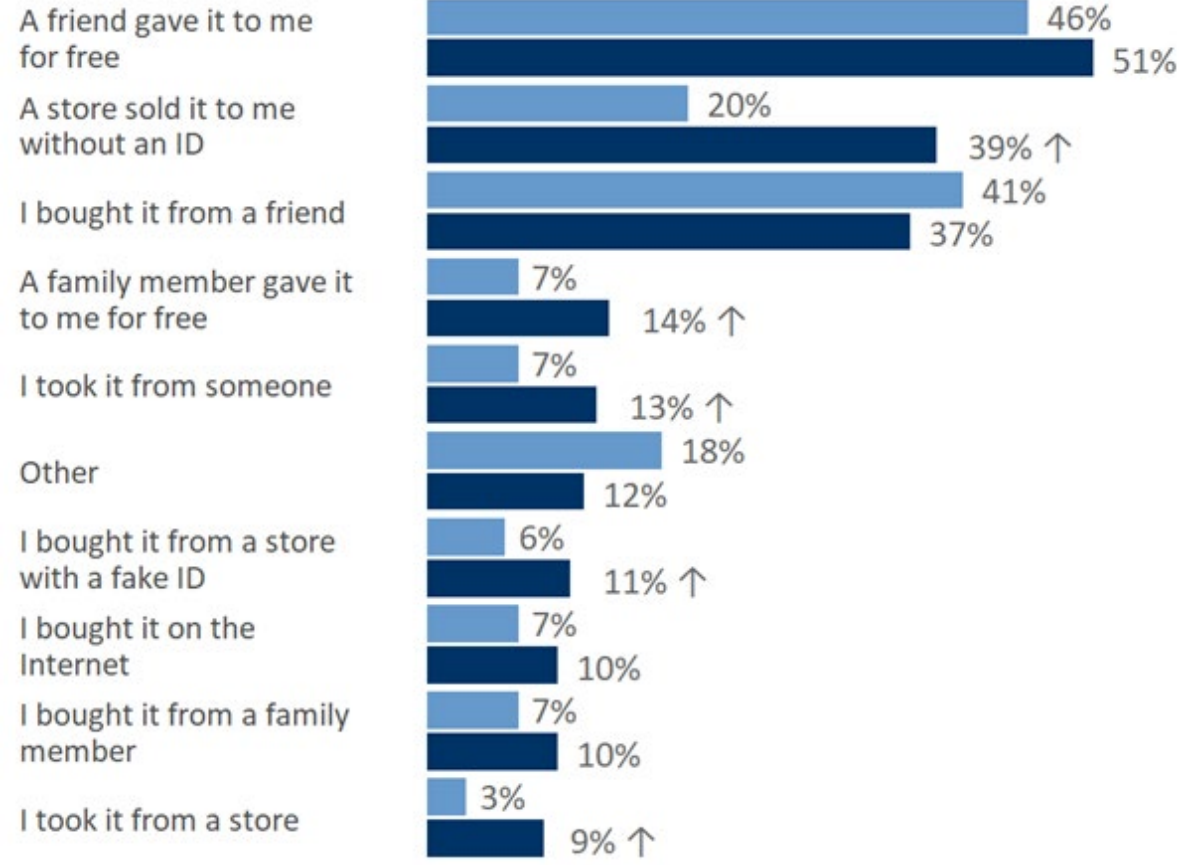
## ENDS

Among high school students...

Exactly 22% reported having ever used ENDS



Most students reported obtaining ENDS from a friend for free



\*Questions regarding access to substances are “select all that apply”, thus percentages likely do not add up to 100%

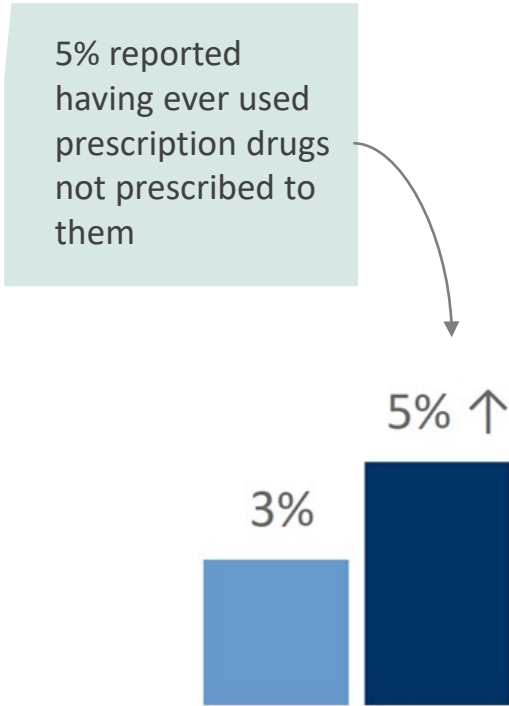
■ 2020 ■ 2022




# Access and Availability\*

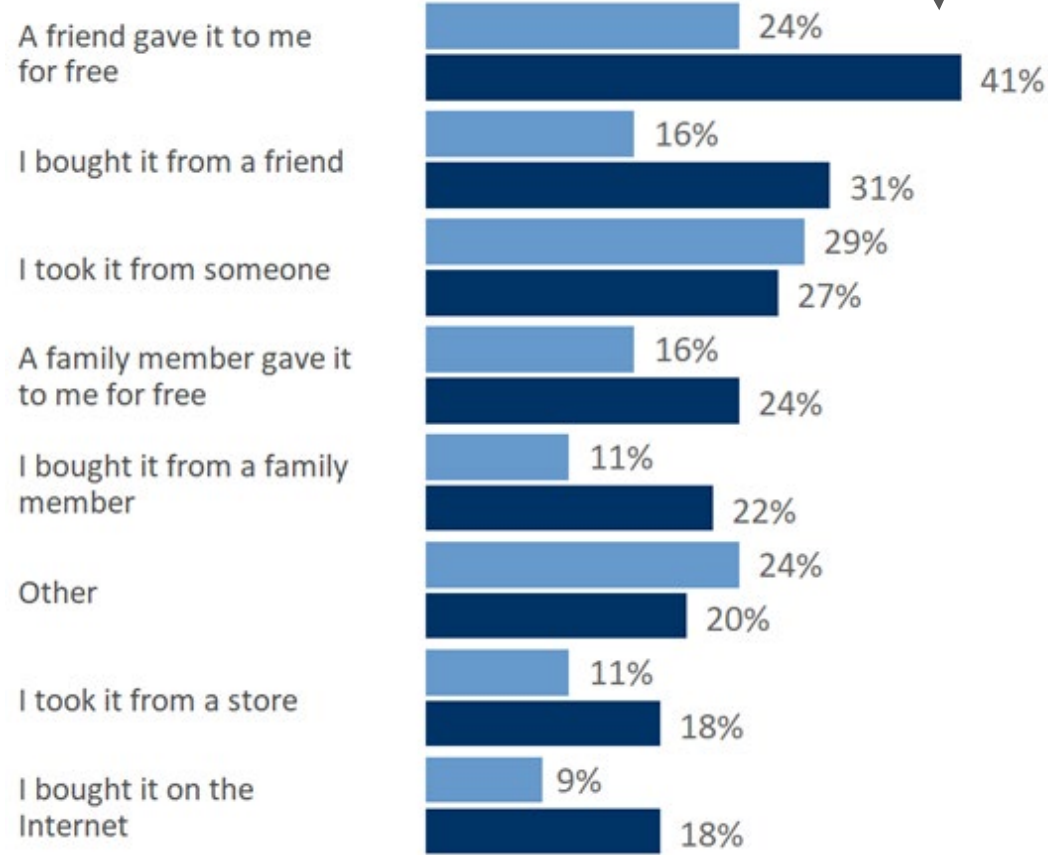
## Prescription Drugs

Among high school students...



 Students reporting use of prescription drugs not prescribed to them listed pain relief pills, ADHD medications, and sedatives

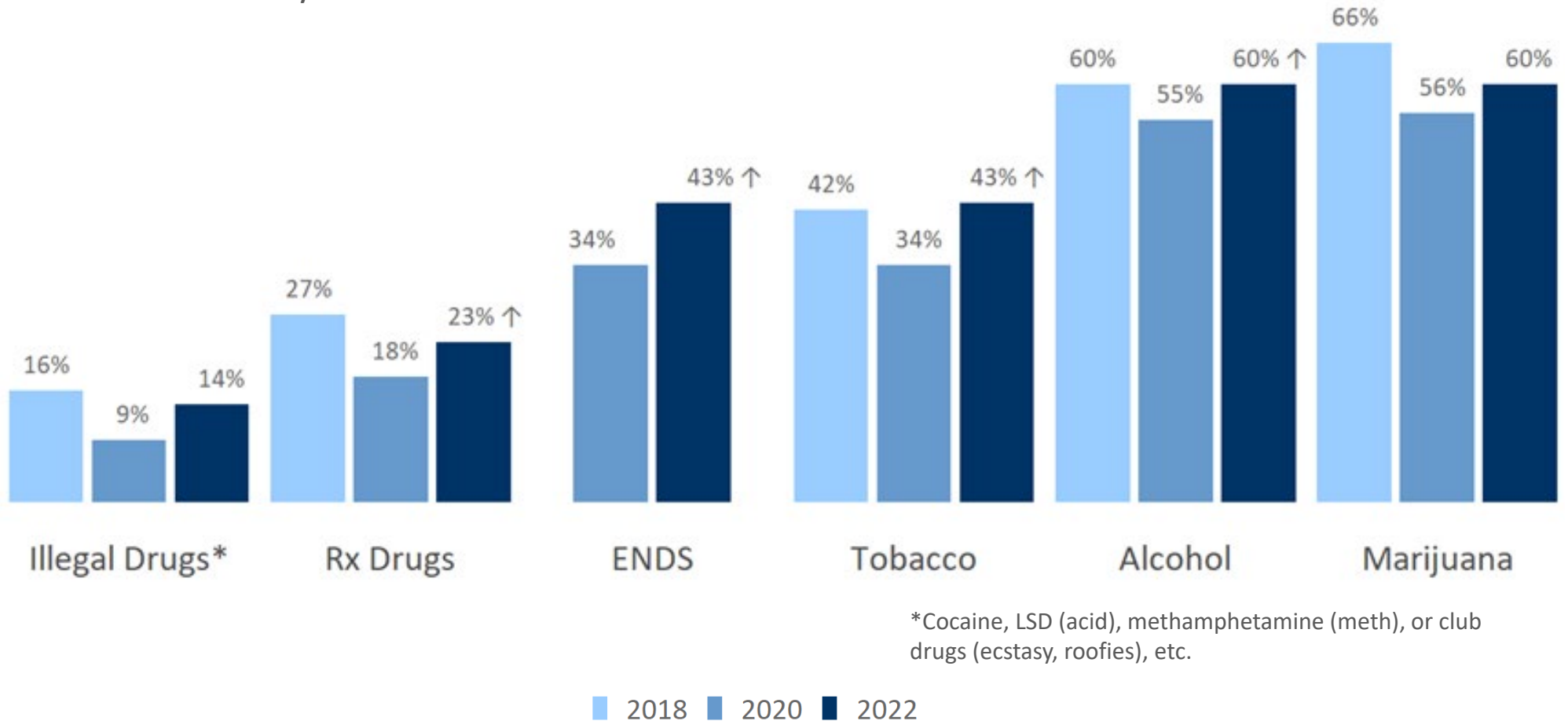
Most students reported obtaining prescription drugs from a friend for free



\*Questions regarding access to substances are “select all that apply”, thus percentages likely do not add up to 100%

# Access and Availability

Percentage of high school students who believe it would be easy for them to obtain:



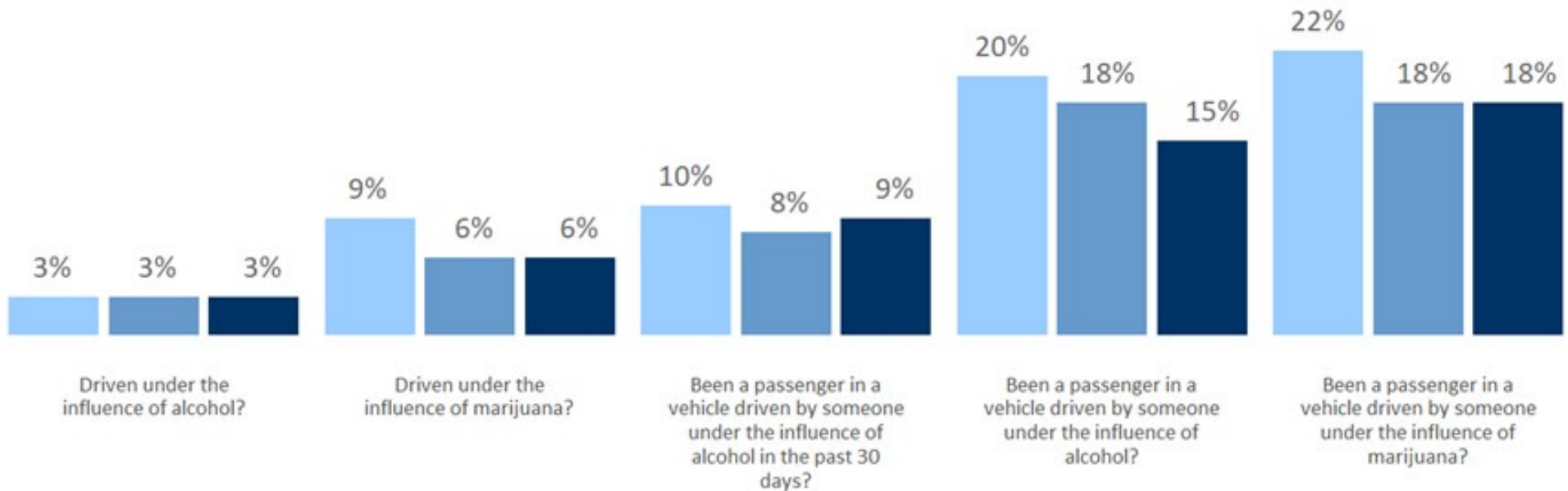
\*Cocaine, LSD (acid), methamphetamine (meth), or club drugs (ecstasy, roofies), etc.

The percentage of students reporting ease of obtaining substances has significantly increased for prescription drugs, ENDS, tobacco, and alcohol.



# Under the Influence

Percentage of high school students who have ever:



■ 2018 ■ 2020 ■ 2022

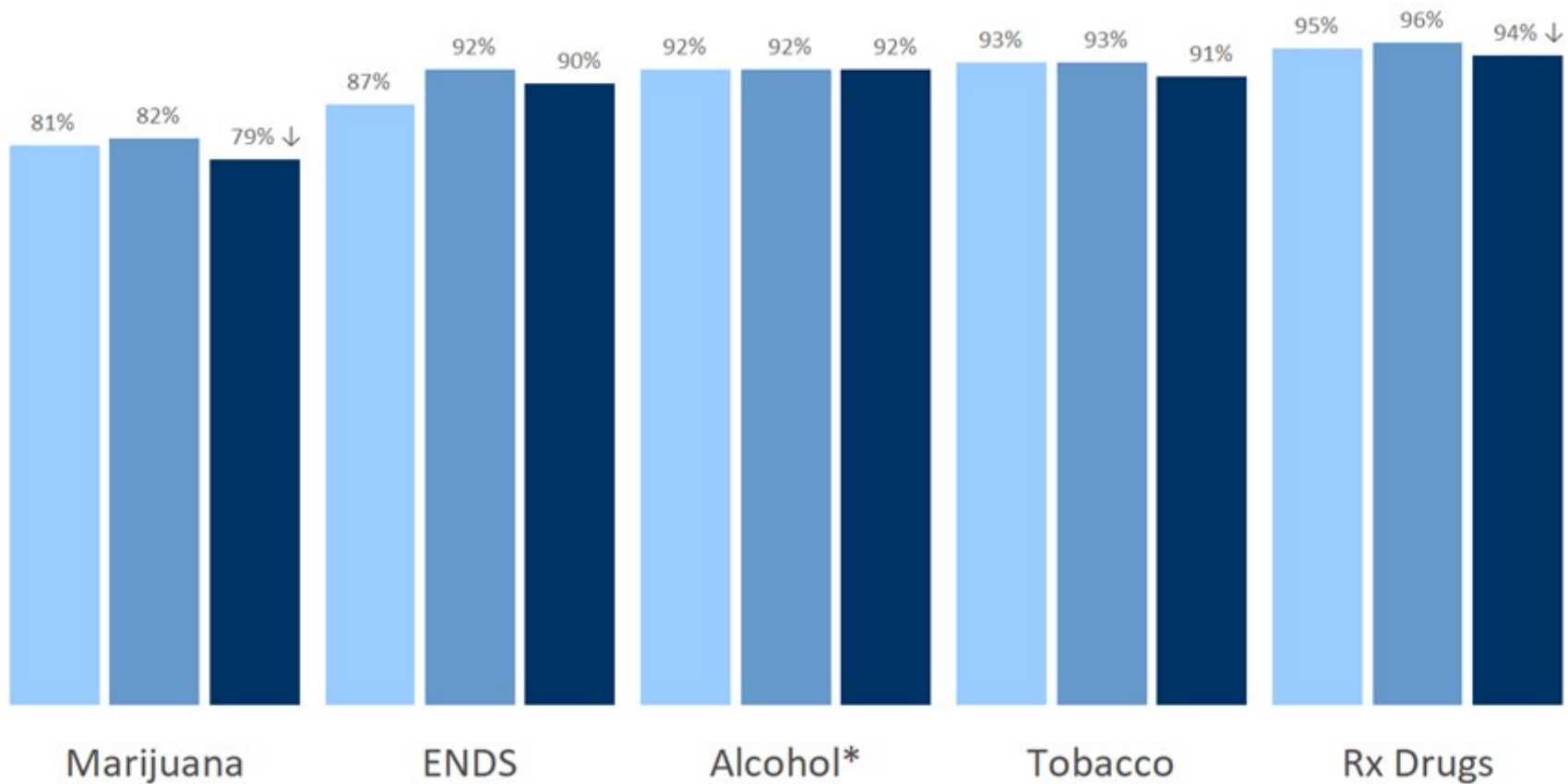
The percentage of students who report ever being a driver or passenger in a vehicle driven by someone under the influence has remained steady since 2020.



↑ Statistically significant increase compared to RISS 2020  
 ↓ Statistically significant decrease compared to RISS 2020

# Parent Disapproval

Percentage of high school students who believe parents would disapprove of using the following:



\*Alcohol use = 1 or 2 drinks nearly every day

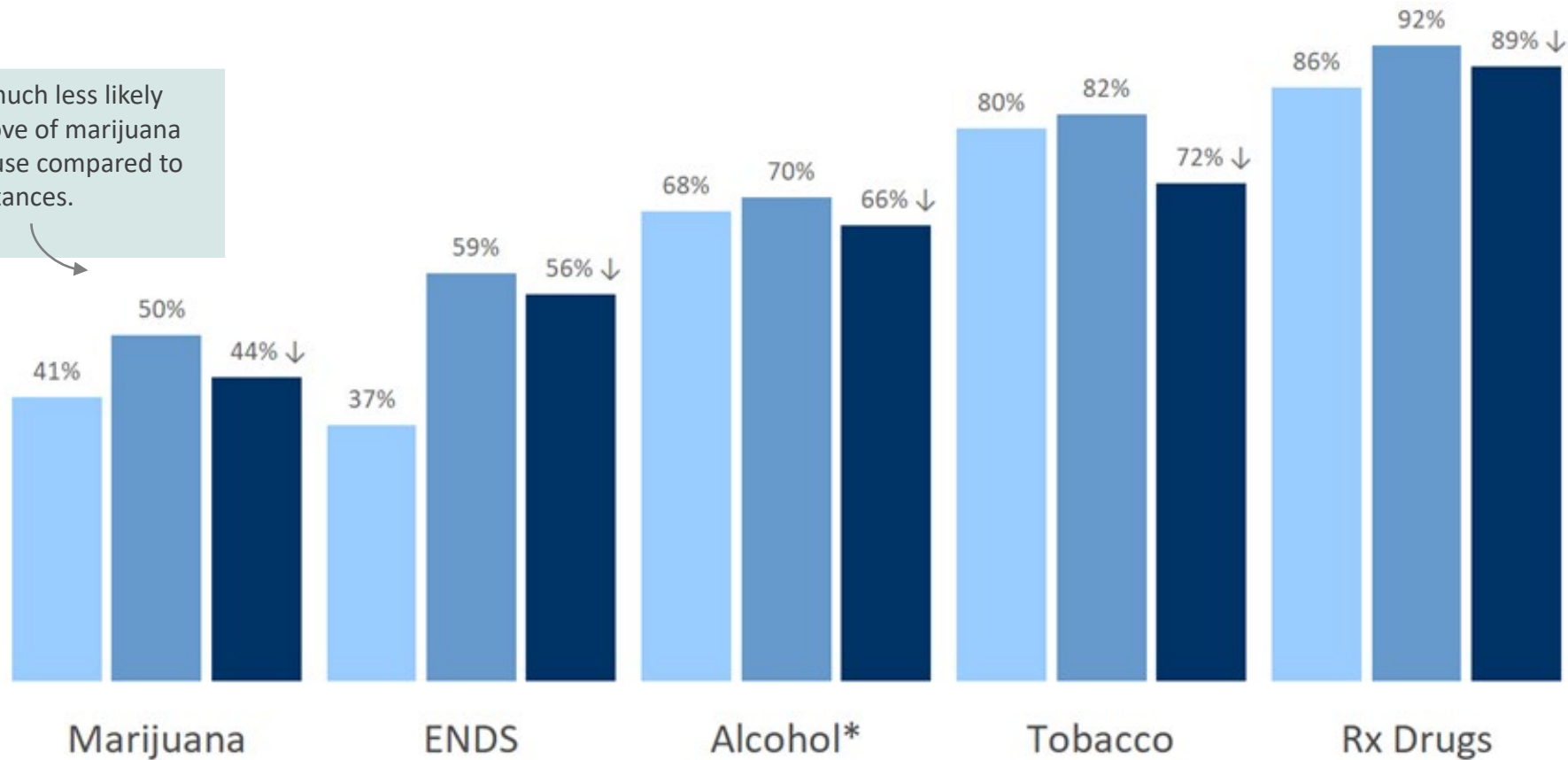
Perceived parental disapproval continues to remain high, with at least 75% of students believing their parents would disapprove of any substance use.



# Peer Disapproval

Percentage of high school students who believe peers would disapprove of using the following:

Peers are much less likely to disapprove of marijuana and ENDS use compared to other substances.

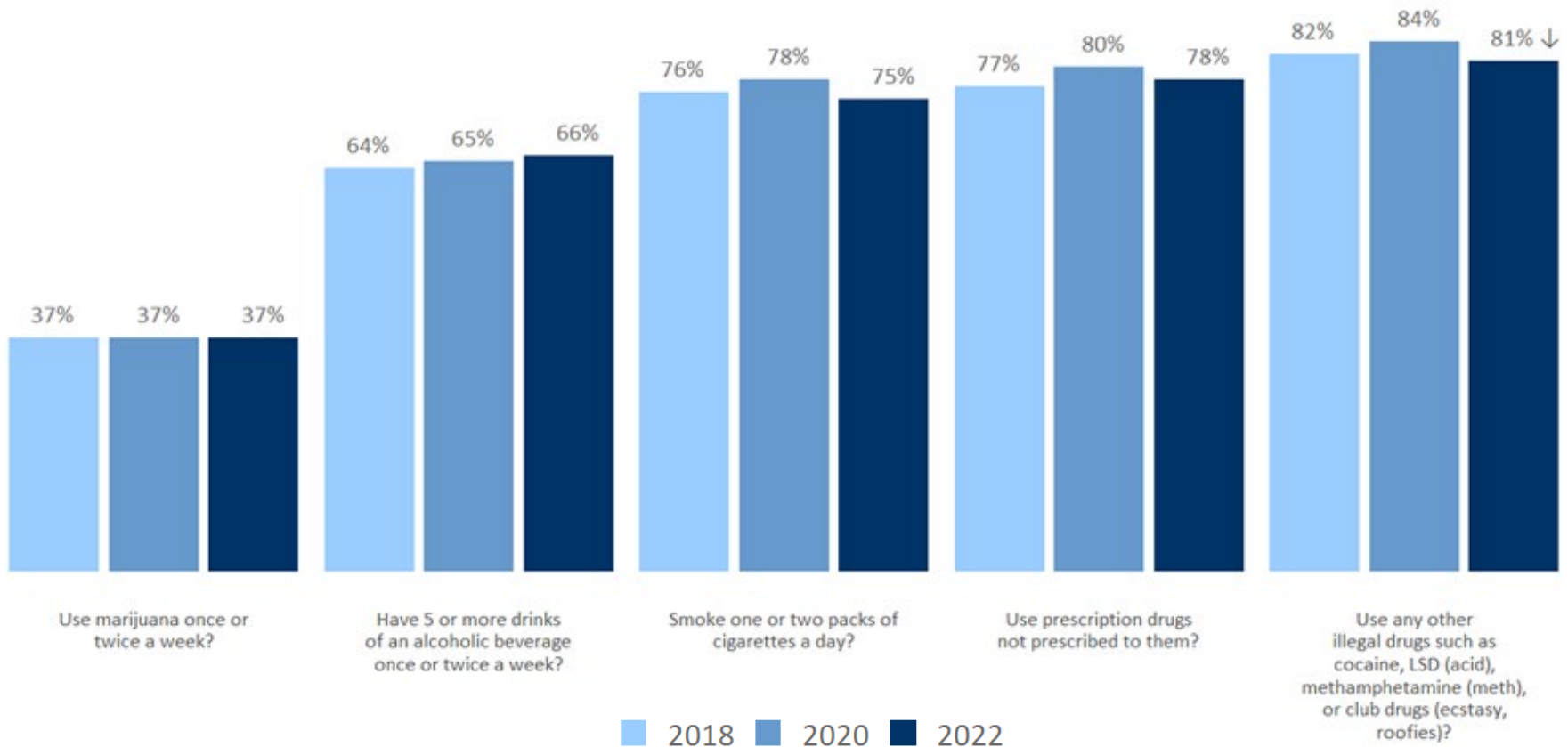


\*Alcohol use = 1 or 2 drinks nearly every day



# Perception of Risk

Percentage of high school students who agree that people risk harming themselves (physically or in other ways) if they:



Compared to other substances, students report a low risk of harm with using marijuana.

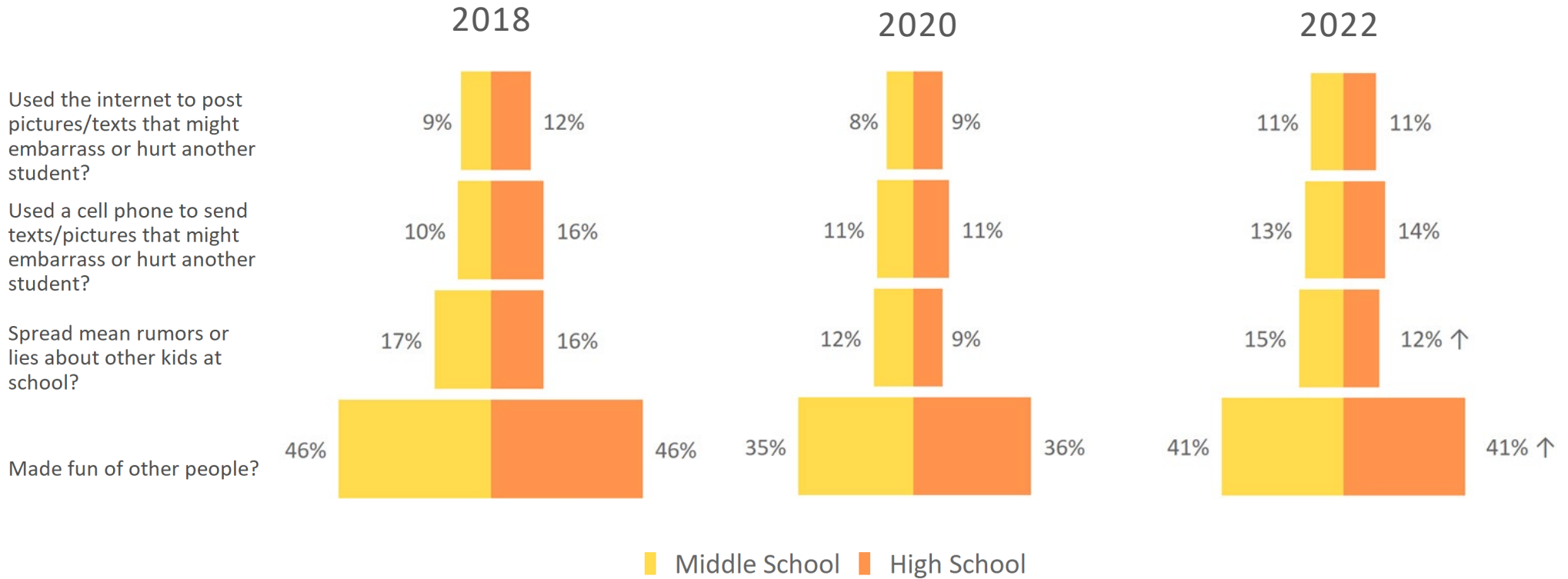


↑ Statistically significant increase compared to RISS 2020  
↓ Statistically significant decrease compared to RISS 2020



# Perpetrating Bullying

In the last 3 months...



Rates of perpetrating bullying are starting to rise back up to pre-pandemic levels among all students.

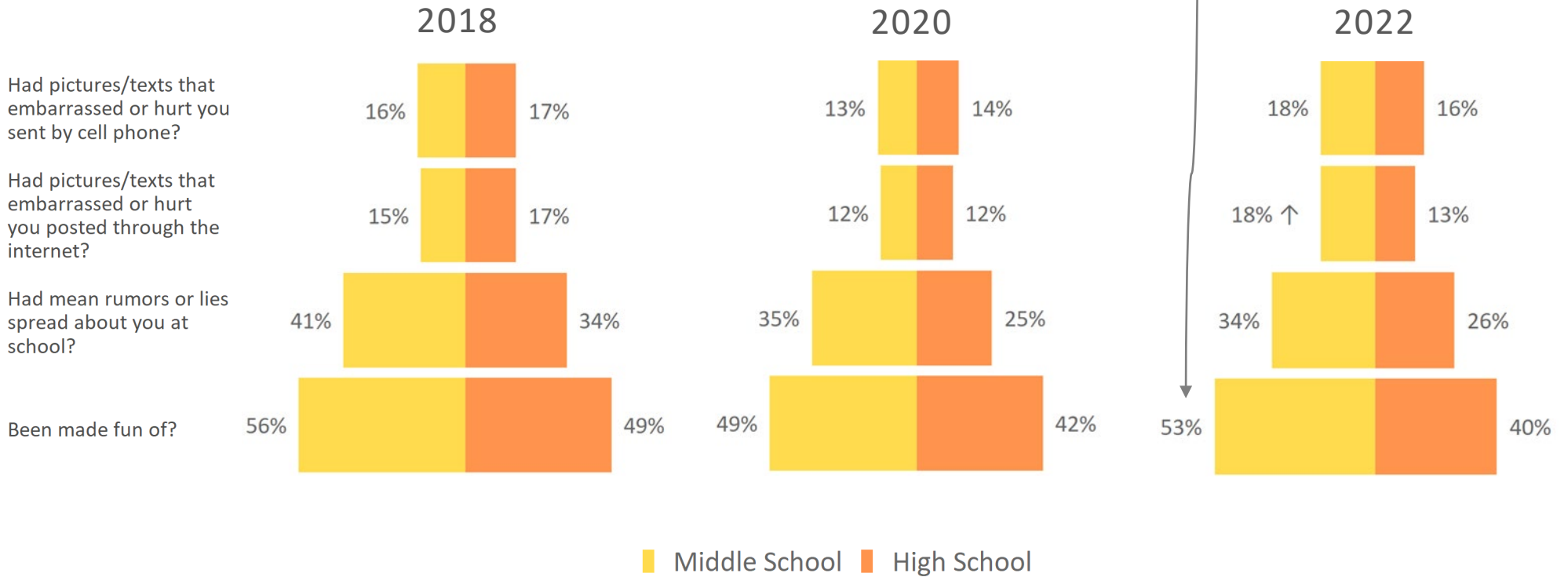


↑ Statistically significant increase compared to RISS 2020  
 ↓ Statistically significant decrease compared to RISS 2020

# Experiencing Bullying

In the last 3 months...

Just over half (53%) of middle school students reported being made fun of in 2022.



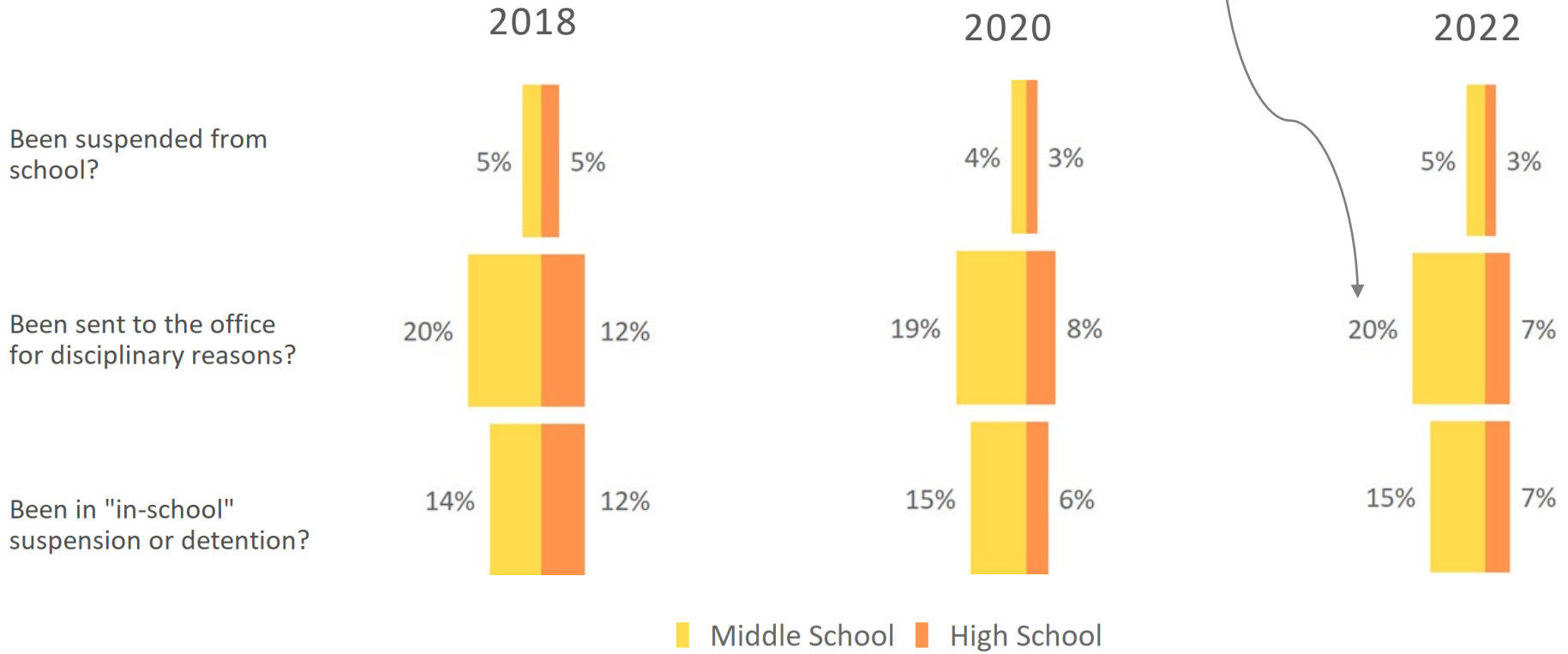
Rates of bullying are starting to rise back up to, and even surpassing, pre-pandemic rates.



# Disciplinary Action

In the last 3 months...

20% of middle school students reported being sent to the office, compared to only 7% of high school students.



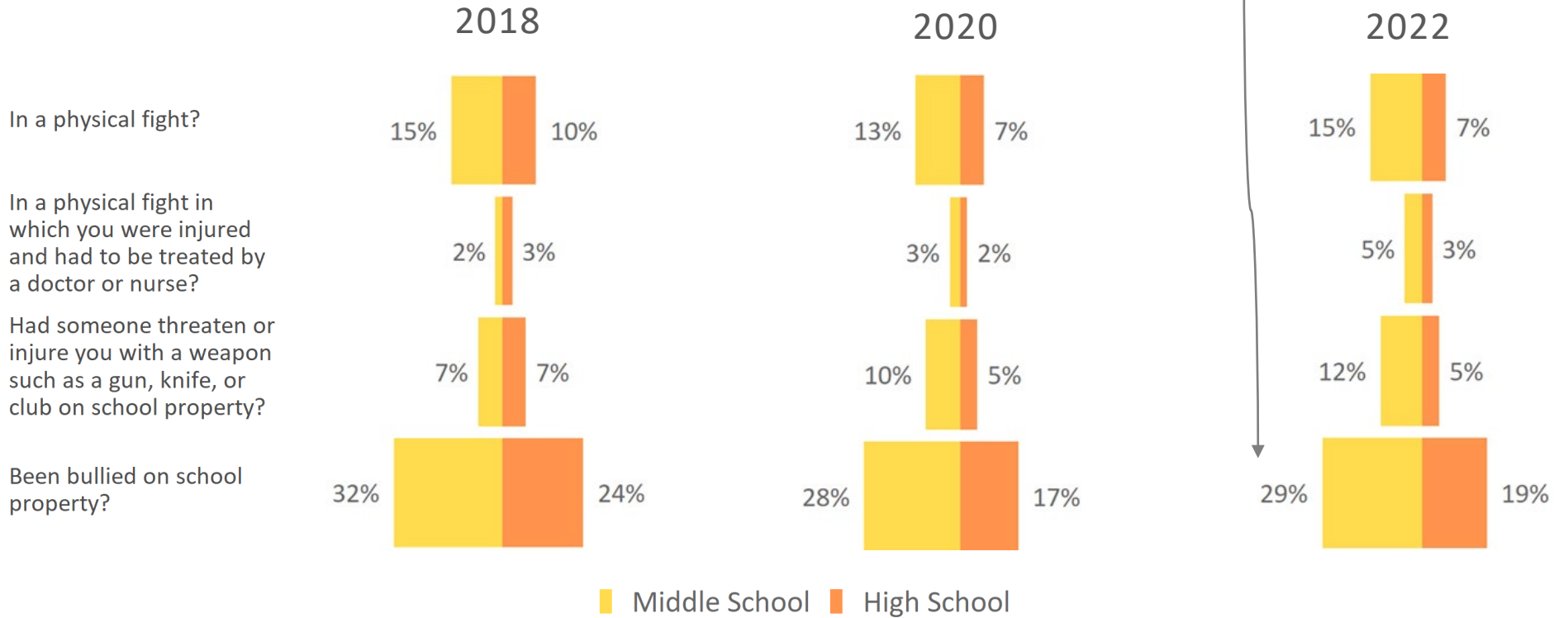
The percentage of students facing disciplinary action has remained steady among all students.



# Physical Violence

In the last 3 months...

29% of middle school students reported being bullied on school property, compared to just 19% of high school students



The percentage of students engaging in physical violence has remained steady among all students.

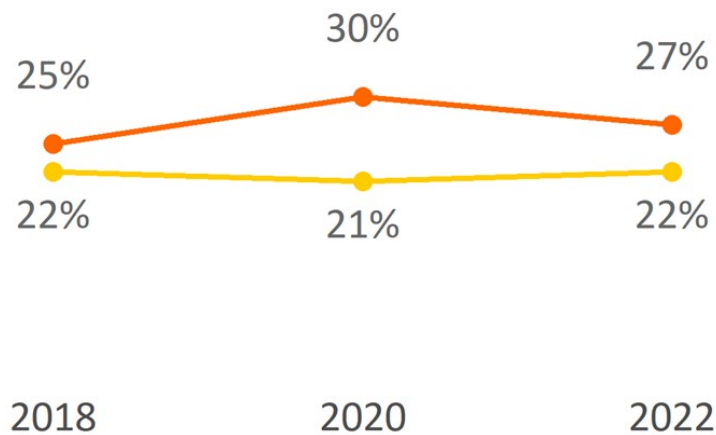


# Mental Health

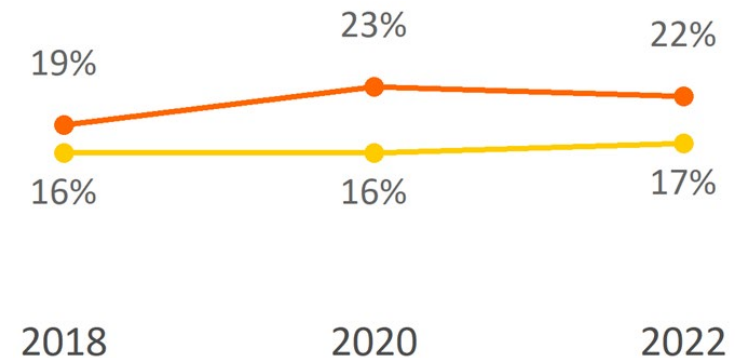
In the last 30 days...

Were you very sad?

% of students that responded "often" or "always"



Did you feel hopeless about the future?



● Middle School ● High School

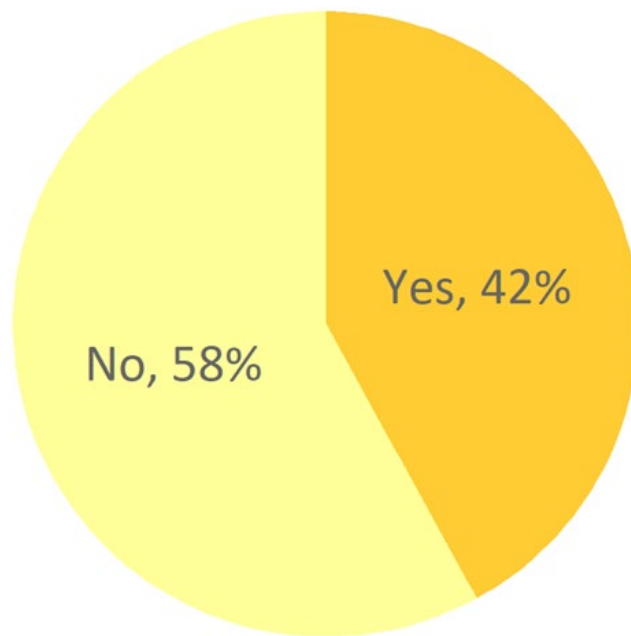
Compared to 2020, the percentage of students reporting negative feelings surrounding mental health has remained relatively steady.



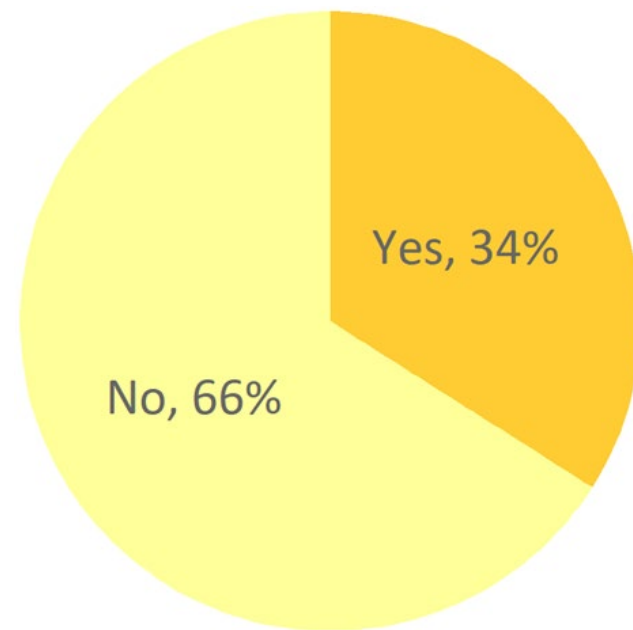
# Mental Health - Pandemic

Percentage of middle school students who...

Struggled with mental health issues during the pandemic?



Talked with a school counselor either in-person or on zoom?

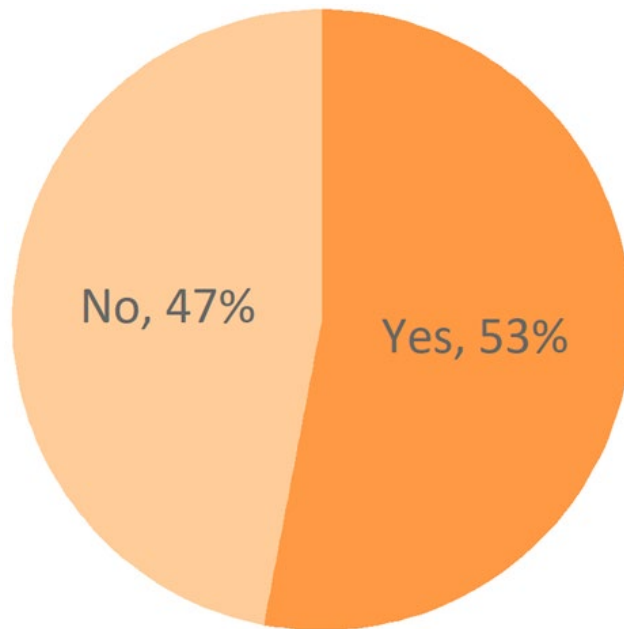


Of the 42% of middle school students who reported struggling with mental health, only 34% spoke with a school counselor.

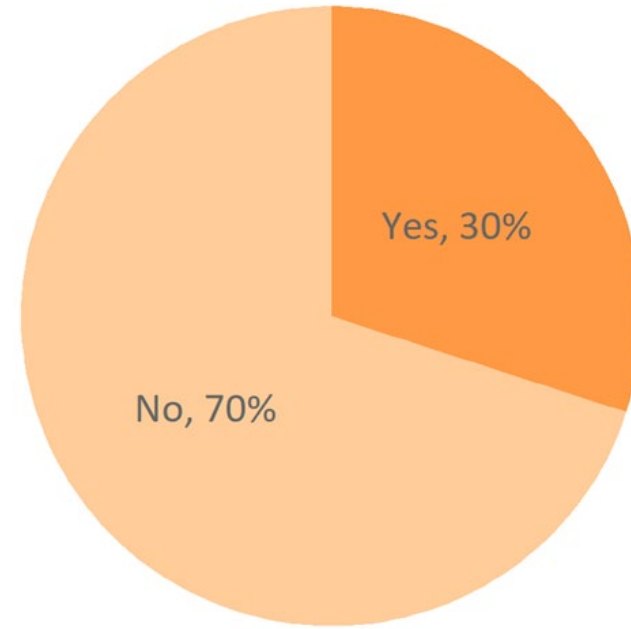
# Mental Health - Pandemic

Percentage of high school students who...

Struggled with mental health issues during the pandemic?



Talked with a school counselor either in-person or on zoom?

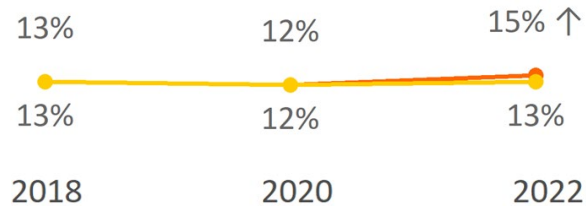


Among the 53% of high school students who reported struggling with mental health, only 30% spoke with a school counselor.

# Suicide

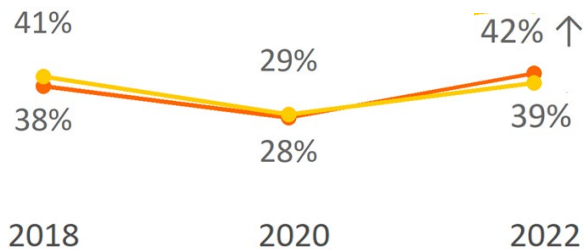
## Among all students...

Number of students who have ever considered attempting suicide



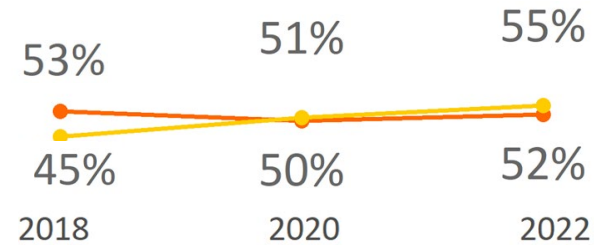
## Among students who have ever considered attempting suicide...

Number of students who have ever attempted suicide



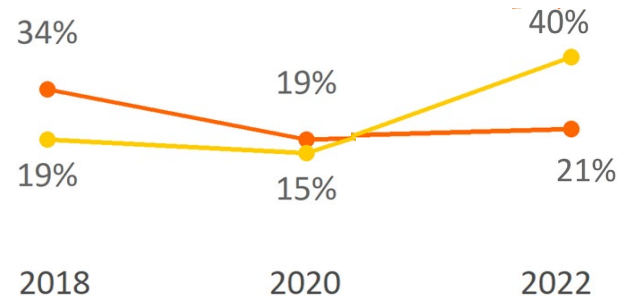
## Among students who have ever considered attempting suicide...

Number of students who have ever made a plan about how they would attempt suicide



## Among students who have ever attempted suicide...

Number of students who have ever attempted suicide which resulted in an injury, poisoning, or overdose that had to be treated by a doctor or nurse



● Middle School ● High School

Suicide rates have significantly increased among high school students.





# What you can do

## ⚠ Behavioral Health Crises/Depression/Suicidal Ideation

- [Kids' Link RI™](#) is a hotline for children in emotional crisis offered by Gateway Healthcare, Lifespan, Hasbro Children's Hospital and Bradley Hospital. **If someone you love is going through a mental health or substance use crisis, you can access 24/7 help through Kids' Link RI™. Call 1-855-543-5465.**



- **Train your faculty and school staff to recognize the signs of suicidal ideation/mental health distress using an evidence-based curriculum.**
  - [Rhode Island Student Assistance Services \(RISAS\)](#) provides evidence-based programs in schools and communities to prevent substance use and promote mental health.
  - The Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) recommends [Mental Health First Aid](#) training.
- Visit [RIDOH's Suicide page](#) for more information about **suicide prevention** and current initiatives.
- **Schools should perform a walk-through of their suicide prevention protocol/policy** annually as part of their district's mandatory School Safety Plan. Click [here](#) to access a model School Safety Plan for districts from RIDE and the RI Emergency Management Agency.
- [The Rhode Island Department of Education \(RIDE\)](#) provides information and resources to help you **ensure your school meets the state requirements for health education, specifically by addressing the required topics of mental health and suicide prevention within the curriculum**, and ensuring that students know which school staff to speak to if they or their friends are experiencing suicidal thoughts.
  - You can access a free mental health curriculum guide for high school students [here](#).
- **Help your community prioritize mental health and emotional well-being with support from [Give an Hour](#)**, an organization that provides no-cost counseling through their volunteer provider network and empowers communities and individuals to take control of their mental health through customized programs and resources.

## Behavioral Health Crises/Depression/Suicidal Ideation Continued

- Help prevent the misuse of medications by ordering FREE medication lock bags through the [Over-the-Counter Doesn't Mean On-the-Counter campaign](#).
  - Locking up your medications can help save lives, so [click here to order a FREE medication lock bag](#) sent directly to you.
- You can order a free [safety kit from Project ChildSafe](#), which includes gun safety locks.
- [988 is the new suicide and crisis lifeline](#) in Rhode Island, offering 24/7 access to trained crisis counselors.
  - If you are in need of crisis support or worried about a loved one who may need crisis support, **call or text 988**.
- [BH Link](#) aims to ensure all Rhode Islanders 18+ experiencing mental health and substance use crises receive the appropriate services they need in an environment that supports their recovery. To access confidential support and get connected to care: **Call 401-414-LINK (5465)**.
- For an introduction to understanding, recognizing, and addressing mental health in your community, visit the [Learning for Quality learning module](#).
- Learn more about how to become a recovery-friendly workplace through [Rhode Island's Recovery Friendly Workplace Initiative](#).



# What you can do: By Sector

 Business,  Medical/Health,  Government

- **Attend [RI Prevention Coalition](#) events and/or become an active Coalition member.** The Regional Coalitions bring experts in the fields of adolescent development, addiction and prevention to inform and mobilize the community to focus on the dangers kids face and how we, as a community, can reduce those risks they face every day.
  - If you would like to become an active member of the coalition at the regional or community level, [contact your local coalition](#) to learn more.
  - For more information about the RI Regional Prevention Task Forces, and to learn about current initiatives, visit the [BHDDH Community Based Prevention page](#).
- [Donate](#) to your local Prevention Coalition program or sponsor an event.
- Use [best practices](#) and [policies](#) for selling tobacco or alcohol to avoid selling to minors.

## Education

- **Enforce state laws that ban all tobacco product use and possession on all school properties at all times**, including use of e-cigarette devices and smokeless tobacco.
  - To print enforcement signs, visit [health.ri.gov/tobacco](https://health.ri.gov/tobacco) and select “publications”.
- Learn more about how to **support Tobacco Free Youth Initiatives in your school** through [Tobacco Free Rhode Island \(TFRI\)](#).
- **Support teachers/staff in learning about current trends in tobacco product use**, how flavored tobacco products target youth, and evidence-based prevention strategies.
- Learn more about how to enforce a [Smoke-Free School Policy](#) from TFRI.
- **For free technical assistance from the RI Tobacco Control Program**, call the RI Department of Health at **401-222-5960**.
- Learn more about how to **increase visibility and awareness in your community about the dangers of alcohol, other drugs, and impaired driving**, especially during prom and graduation season, through this [pre-prom and graduation planning kit](#) created by [Communities for alcohol and Drug-Free Youth](#).
- You can access support from peer-leadership programs to **hold athletes and participants in school organizations to a no-use policy**, even when not in school. [Athletes Against Substance Abuse \(VAASA\)](#) is a peer-leadership program in which high school athletes pledge to remain alcohol and drug free and are trained to address younger students as positive role models.
  - To learn more about establishing a no-use policy or to collaborate with your school Student Assistance Counselor, call [RISAS](#) at **401-732-8680**.
- **RIDE offers resources to support schools in developing policies on anti-bullying** to help ensure safe and supportive learning environments for all RI Youth.
  - Learn more about how schools can support transgender and gender nonconforming students through [this guide from RIDE](#).
- **Focus on youth engagement** and work with your school district to prevent use of substances at all school-related functions.
- **Develop strategies for routine monitoring of bathrooms and parking lots** for youth substance use.

## Education Continued

- Utilize the following resources to educate students and adults:
  - [RIPRC](#)
  - [Binge Drinking on Teen Brain Development](#)
  - [Marijuana and the Adolescent Brain](#)
  - [What's Up with E-Cigarettes?](#)
- Additional Resources:
  - [Social & Emotional Learning \(SEL\)](#)
  - [School Mental Wellness Resources](#)
  - [Rhode Island Student Assistance Services \(RISAS\)](#)

## Safety

- **Enforce state laws that ban all alcohol, marijuana and tobacco product use, possession, and driving under the influence at all times**, including use of all e-cigarette devices and smokeless tobacco.
  - To print enforcement signs, visit [health.ri.gov/tobacco](https://health.ri.gov/tobacco) and select “publications”.
- **Perform regular compliance checks** and check with your local [prevention coalition](#) for assistance and to share data.
- **Consider implementing other enforcement activities which include:**
  - Crackdowns on false identification;
  - Programs to deter older youth or adults from providing alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, or e-cigarette products to minors;
  - Party patrols to prevent drinking at large gatherings;
  - “Cops in shops” to keep minors from purchasing alcohol;
  - Youth-focused campaigns to enforce impaired driving laws;
  - Investigations to determine the source of alcohol and hold the responsible party accountable for their role in alcohol related incidents.
- The **Rhode Island Cannabis Act** was signed into law in May 2022, legalizing the personal use and licensed retail sale of marijuana to those age 21 or older. You can **learn more about this legislation [here](#)**, and **stay informed about the risks and impacts of marijuana [here](#)**.
- Learn more about how the [Youth Driven traffic safety and leadership program](#) led by RISAS and supported by the RI Department of Transportation Office On Highway Safety can help RI students better understand traffic safety with a focus on substance use prevention strategies and safe decision making skills.
- **Learn how to recognize an overdose and respond using naloxone (or Narcan®)**, a medicine that can reverse an opioid overdose.
  - You can learn more about how to access naloxone and naloxone training at [Prevent Overdose RI](#) and the [Preventing Overdose and Naloxone Intervention \(PONI\)](#) program.
- Locate a permanent prescription drug disposal site near you using the [BHDDH Drug Disposal Site list](#).



## Community/Family Supports

- Evidence-based prevention programs show that we can **create an environment that protects kids from alcohol and substance abuse by boosting protective factors** like:
  - Effective parenting;
  - Eating meals together;
  - Building self-esteem;
  - Extracurricular school programs;
  - Faith-based youth programs and community-sponsored youth programs.
- **Talk early and often to kids about alcohol and drugs.** According to [DrugFree.org](https://www.drugfree.org), a majority (62%) of teens who reported alcohol use said they had their first full alcoholic drink by age 15, and one in four (25%) said they drank a full alcoholic drink for the first time by age 12 or younger, so start these conversations early. In addition, try to **encourage your child to talk about their feelings, thoughts and fears, and maintain strong bonds with your teens while setting clear limits** through things like having family meal time, asking about homework and school projects, learning what websites/apps your teen is using, and getting to know your teen's friends.
  - Parents and caregivers can use SAMHSA's [Screen4Success tool](https://www.samhsa.gov/screening-tool), offered through their *Talk They Hear You* Campaign, to better understand the health, wellness, and wellbeing of their children and find resources to address their needs.
- When adults respond quickly and consistently to bullying behavior, they send the message that it is unacceptable. Visit [stopbullying.gov](https://stopbullying.gov) to learn more about how you can help stop bullying behavior.
- Explore the [CDC's Dating Matters Toolkit](https://www.cdc.gov/teenpregnancy/toolkit/) to find resources around how you can **encourage strategies to promote healthy teen relationships**.
- Consider participating in **parent skill building courses** like [Strengthening Families](https://www.strongfamilies.org/).
- You can learn more about skills for families living with someone experiencing substance use disorder through resources such as [REST](https://www.rest.org/).

# Thank you!

The Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals would like to acknowledge the cooperation and effort of all the schools and students who participate in the Rhode Island Student Survey each administration year.



**Dan McKee**  
Governor



**Anna Novais**  
Acting Secretary



**Richard Charest**  
Director



**Dr. Utpala Bandy**  
Interim Director



**Angelica Infante-Green**  
Commissioner,  
RI Department of Education





# Resource List

## Behavioral Health Crises/Depression/Suicidal Ideation

- <https://www.lifespan.org/centers-services/kids-link-ri>
- <https://risas.org/>
- <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/>
- <https://health.ri.gov/violence/about/suicide/>
- <https://www.ride.ri.gov/StudentsFamilies/HealthSafety/EmergencyPreparedness.aspx>
- <https://www.ride.ri.gov/>
- <http://bit.ly/2LhcuUx>
- <https://giveanhour.org/>
- <https://riprevention.org/campaigns/>
- <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfywK0KYI9wcTIHkciK5tI5Qp5hOHgRiCSnjuJGwRGgqjVaQ/viewform>
- [https://projectchildsafesafe.org/safety\\_kit\\_site/?safety\\_kit\\_state=rhode-island](https://projectchildsafesafe.org/safety_kit_site/?safety_kit_state=rhode-island)
- <https://www.bhlink.org/988>
- <https://www.bhlink.org/>
- <https://learningforquality.org/login/>
- <https://recoveryfriendlyri.com/>

## Business, Medical/Health, and Government

- <https://riprevention.org/>
- <https://riprevention.org/contact/>
- <https://bhddh.ri.gov/substance-useaddiction/individual-and-family-information/help-opioid-dependence/community-based>
- <https://rrforum.org/>
- <https://tobaccofree-ri.org/policy-briefs.htm>



# Resource List

## Education

- <https://health.ri.gov/tobacco>
- <https://tobaccofree-ri.org/>
- <https://tobaccofree-ri.org/smoke-free-school-policy.htm>
- [https://health.ri.gov/programs/detail.php?pgm\\_id=33](https://health.ri.gov/programs/detail.php?pgm_id=33)
- <https://cadyinc.org/resources/get-the-facts/keeping-your-child-safe-around-prom-and-graduation-time/>
- <https://cadyinc.org/>
- <https://risas.org/our-programs/other-programs/>
- <https://risas.org/contact-us/>
- <https://www.ride.ri.gov/StudentsFamilies/HealthSafety/BullyingSchoolViolence.aspx>
- <https://www.glad.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/ride-transgender-students-guidance-6-7-16.pdf>
- <https://www.riprc.org/>
- <https://alcohol.org/teens/binge-drinking/%0A/>
- [https://www.riprc.org/elearning/marijuana\\_adolescent\\_brain/#/](https://www.riprc.org/elearning/marijuana_adolescent_brain/#/)
- <https://www.riprc.org/elearning/e-cigarettes/#/?k=m4kq44>
- <https://www.ride.ri.gov/studentsfamilies/healthsafety/sociallearning.aspx>
- <https://www.ride.ri.gov/StudentsFamilies/HealthSafety/SchoolMentalWellnessResources.aspx>

## Safety

- <https://health.ri.gov/tobacco>
- <https://riprevention.org/>
- <https://www.rilegislature.gov/pressrelease/PressReleaseFiles/Ma%20Legalization%20in%20RI%20FINAL%20030122.pdf>
- <https://riprevention.org/marijuana/>
- <https://www.youthdriven.org/>
- <https://preventoverdoseri.org/get-naloxone/>
- <https://poniri.org/>
- <https://bhddh.ri.gov/prevention/prescription-drug-disposal-sites>

## Community/Family Supports

- <https://DrugFree.org>
- <https://www.samhsa.gov/talk-they-hear-you/screen4success>
- <https://www.stopbullying.gov/>
- [https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/dating-matters-toolkit/?deliveryName=USCDC\\_1104-DM9553#/](https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/dating-matters-toolkit/?deliveryName=USCDC_1104-DM9553#/)
- <https://strengtheningfamiliesri.blogspot.com/>
- <https://www.resthelps.org/>

