

2008 NEW YORK STATE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT SURVEY

TOMPKINS COUNTY RESULTS

SUMMARY OF HIGHLIGHTS

Summer, 2009

Community Coalition for Healthy Youth www.healthyyouth.org
Tompkins County Youth Services Department www.tompkins-co.org/youth
Supported by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
Drug Free Communities Support Program # H79 SP11382

The Community Coalition for Healthy Youth, Tompkins County Youth Services Dept., TST BOCES, and superintendents and secondary principals in Dryden, Groton, Ithaca, Lansing and Trumansburg School Districts collaborated to administer the New York State Youth Development Survey (NYSYDS) to Tompkins County students in grades 6-12 in October, 2008. The NYSYDS was produced by International Survey Associates/Pride Surveys under a contract with the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services.

The survey was designed to assess and measure risk and protective factors that predict problem behaviors such as delinquency, violence, dropping out of school, youth substance use and gambling. Tompkins County added 9 questions to gather additional local information about student connections to school and school climate.

In Tompkins County 4,919 valid responses represent an 82% response rate of all enrolled students in the five participating districts and 12

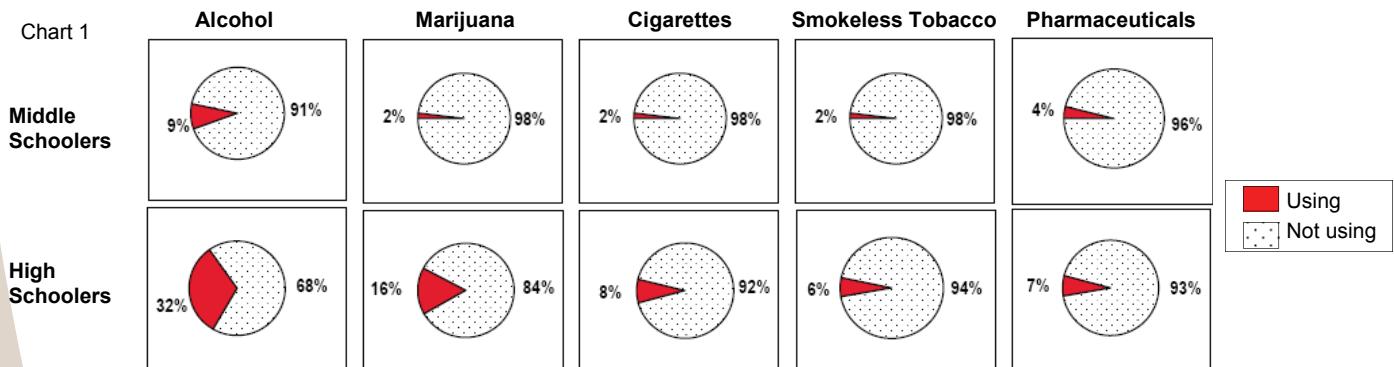
participating schools. Statewide, the survey was completed by over 111,000 students in 409 schools.

The responses of Tompkins County students were compared to those of their state and national peers. The results are being used in each district and at the County level to guide school and community efforts to prevent and reduce the use and abuse of alcohol and other drugs, to improve student connections to school and school safety, and to identify the risk and protective factors that our community can modify to improve students' long-term success.

The 2008 Tompkins County Survey Report lists all questions and the combined responses of all students. The Report is on file with Tompkins County Youth Services Dept. and TST BOCES. Each school superintendent and secondary principal also has a copy of the Total Sample Report. This summary is also available at www.healthyyouth.org and www.tompkins-co.org/youth.

KEY FINDINGS RELATED to the USE of ALCOHOL, MARIJUANA AND OTHER DRUGS

Students reporting substance use within the past 30 days (Current use)



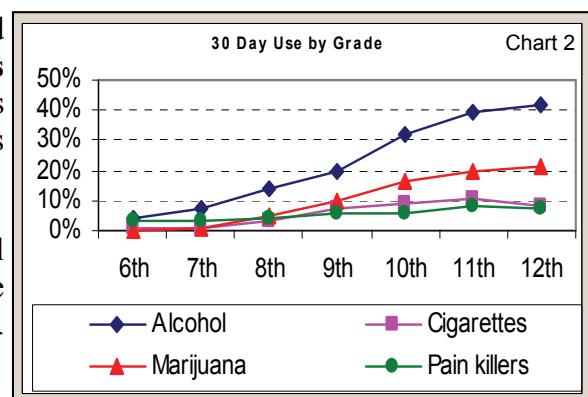
Alcohol is the most widely used drug among Tompkins County youth. Most students (78%) did not drink alcohol in the 30 days before taking the survey. However, 49% of students in grades 6-12 have tried alcohol at least once in their lives. Comparisons with national peers show higher rates of lifetime use for Tompkins students in grades 8, 10 and 12. Among county high school students, one in three had used alcohol at least once in the 30 days before taking the survey and one in six reported drinking at binge levels (five or more alcoholic drinks in a row) at least once in the past two weeks. (See tables in appendix for selected data.) 13% of high schoolers reported they have been drunk or high at school during the past year (the 12 months prior to taking the survey).

Local youth who used alcohol most often obtained it from their parents (21% with their parents' permission, 10% without) or from friends (23%). 86% of youth who used alcohol drank it in a private home, their own or a friend's. The average age of first alcohol use is 12.9 years.

Marijuana is the next most commonly used drug by Tompkins County youth. By 12th grade, 34% have tried marijuana and 21% are current users (within the past 30 days). Rates of current use double from 8th (5%) to 9th (10%) grades as students move from middle to high school. The average age of first marijuana use locally is 13.8 years and as students get older, they see less potential harm from use. Overall students think their parents disapprove less of their using marijuana than cigarettes.

Cigarette use rates are less than or equal to state and national peer rates for most grades. However, **smokeless tobacco** use rates are higher than state peer rates for grades 8-12. The average age of first cigarette use by Tompkins students is 12.6, the youngest age for any drug.

Inhalants are more often used by middle than high school students, both nationally and locally. 30-day local use rates peak at 4% in 8th grade and drop to 1% by 11th grade. Local use rates are comparable to national and state rates.



Use of pharmaceutical drugs* for non-medical purposes is an emerging trend both nationally and locally. The most common type used by Tompkins students is prescription pain killers, including dangerous, addictive opioids such as OxyContin, Vicodin and Demerol. Even 3% of middle schoolers have use pain killers in the past 30 days without a doctor telling them to; the rate is highest in 11th grade (8%) and most common for ages 15-17. 5% of Tompkins students are high risk abusers, using an unprescribed pharmaceutical drug 6 or more times in their lifetime. Students who abuse pharmaceutical drugs have higher rates of alcohol (60%) and marijuana (43%) use than the general student population (see charts, P. 1, for general use rates). National research shows that most (57%) young people using pain killers obtained them for free from a friend or relative; this includes 10% who took them without asking. (Our survey did not include questions about where students obtain or use pharmaceutical drugs.)

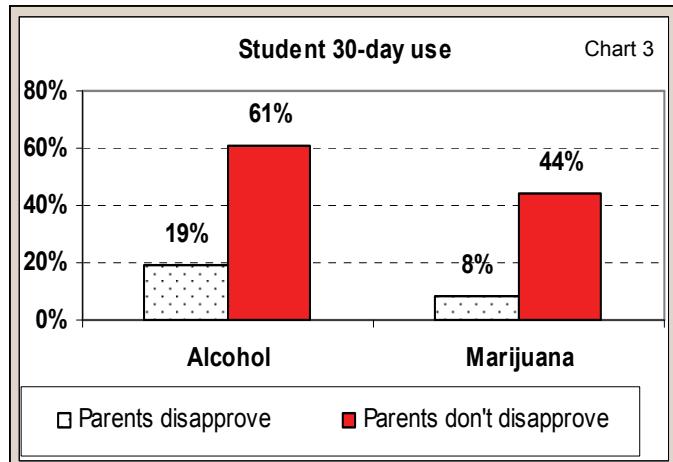
Use rates of other drugs are low among Tompkins youth. 30-day use rates of heroin, cocaine, meth, psychedelics, and Ecstasy are all below 1%.

* Pharmaceutical drugs include non-prescription cough and cold medicine and these prescription drugs: pain killers, tranquilizers, sedatives and stimulants.

PARENTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Students whose parents disapprove of youth use of alcohol and other drugs have significantly lower use rates. Only 8% of students whose parents disapprove of youth marijuana use had used marijuana in the past 30 days as compared with 44% use rates for students whose parents do not disapprove. (Chart 3)

Here are a few other things that Tompkins parents do that significantly reduce substance use by their children (see table 1 for details):



Keep track of their children, their schedules and whereabouts. Tompkins students who reported that their parents know where they are and who they are with had much lower 30-day use rates of alcohol (20% vs. 46%), marijuana (9% vs. 24%) and prescription pain killers (4% vs. 12%) than students who said their parents did not monitor them.

Have clear family rules about alcohol and drug use. Youth in families that have clear rules have significantly lower use rates than young people without clear rules.

Table 1	Impact of parents on youth substance use							
	Keep track of whereabouts		Have clear family rules		Spend time having fun		Acknowledge a good job	
30-day use	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Alcohol	20%	46%	19%	41%	11%	34%	19%	30%
Marijuana	9%	24%	9%	21%	8%	19%	8%	16%
Pain killers	4%	12%	4%	10%	10%	9%	4%	9%
Binge drinking	10%	30%	11%	22%	10%	20%	10%	18%

Spend time having fun together. Young people are much less likely to use alcohol or marijuana when their parents share fun times with them.

Tell their children when they are doing a good job. Youth who reported that their parents often or always notice when they are doing a good job and let them know about it are less likely to use alcohol or other drugs.

STUDENTS' SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

Academics Most middle (89%) and high (78%) schoolers said that they often or always try to do their best work at school. 85% of middle and 87% of high school students said that there are lots of chances to talk one-on-one with teachers. 68% of middle schoolers and 44% of high schoolers said the things they are learning at school will be important for later in life. More high school (69%) than middle school students (58%) said they typically spend 3 or more hours a week on homework. While 54% of middle schoolers said they often/almost always enjoyed being in school during the last year, the rate drops to 41% for high schoolers. 87% of middle schoolers and 71% of high schoolers reported that it is not OK to cheat at school.

School climate

At my school:	Middle school	High school
I have a trusted adult at school who can help with problems	69%	58%
Teachers notice and tell me when I'm doing a good job	85%	85%
I feel welcomed and appreciated by teachers	51%	58%
Students treat each other with respect	28%	34%
School rules are fairly enforced	40%	47%
In general, I feel safe	46%	56%
I have been suspended from school during the last year	8%	8%

Table 2

In the last month:	Middle school	High school
Someone said something hurtful to me at school	70%	60%
I was physically bullied at school	12%	9%
Someone embarrassed, insulted or threatened me by an internet posting or text message	11%	30%
I helped another student who had been physically or emotionally hurt	52%	46%
I helped a student who looked lonely or depressed	43%	48%
I tried to get a student to stop being mean or hurtful	31%	32%
I got an adult to help a student out of a bad situation	13%	11%

STUDENTS' OUT-of-SCHOOL TIME

Time out of school Half of middle schoolers and $\frac{2}{3}$ of high schoolers participated in school-based clubs and activities 3 or more times in the past year. 97% of both middle and high schoolers reported that there are lots of chances for students to be involved in school-based extracurricular activities. $\frac{3}{4}$ of all students participated in a community-based activity and 54% volunteered to do community service in the past 12 months. Students who participate regularly in community programs enjoy school more, get better grades, are suspended less, volunteer more, and have lower use rates of most drugs than students who do not participate.

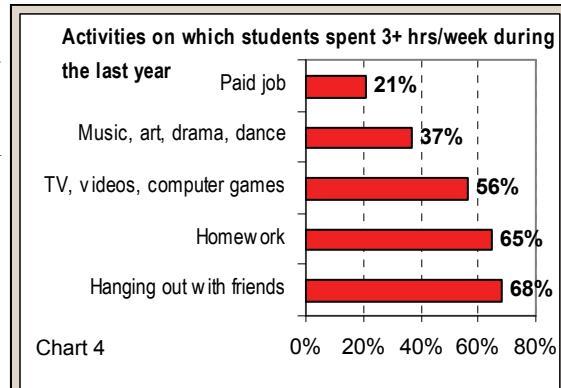
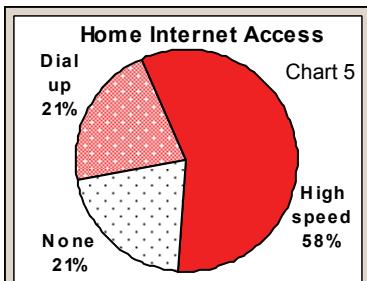


Chart 4

Exercise 72% of middle schoolers and 62% of high schoolers said they exercise vigorously most/every day. 82% of middle schoolers and 75% of high schoolers participated on an athletic team during the past year.

Social/emotional health Most students feel good about themselves but 28% said they felt sad or depressed most days during the past year. 23% answered "yes" when asked if they sometimes think that life is not worth it. And 13% responded that all in all, they think they are a failure.



Computers Most (87%) students have access to a computer at home. Many more high (70%) than middle (34%) schoolers reported having a MySpace or Facebook (or similar) account. 29% of middle schoolers and 48% of high schoolers typically spend at least 3 hours a week socializing on the internet. Only one in 5 high schoolers and 2 in 5 middle schoolers said their parents closely monitor their internet use.

Appendix

NOTES: Local refers to students in Dryden, Groton, Ithaca, Lansing and Trumansburg school districts in the designated grades.

State refers to 111,647 students from 409 schools across New York State who participated in the survey.

MTF refers to the Monitoring the Future survey given nationally each year to a sample of 50,000 students in grades 8, 10 and 12.

*Regular use: Cigarettes - smoke one or more packs per day; Alcohol - one or two alcoholic drinks nearly every day;
Marijuana - not specified.

Table 3a Current Use	Tompkins, NYS & National Students' Use of Substances in the Last 30 Days by Grade (middle school)							
	6 th		7 th		8 th			Ave. gr. 6-8
	local	state	local	state	local	state	MTF	local
Alcohol	4%	n/a	7%	7%	14%	14%	16%	8%
Marijuana	<1%	n/a	1%	1%	5%	3%	6%	2%
Cigarettes	1%	n/a	1%	2%	3%	5%	7%	2%
Smokeless tobacco	<1%	n/a	1%	1%	3%	2%	4%	2%
Inhalants	2%	n/a	4%	4%	4%	5%	4%	3%
Prescr. pain killers	3%	n/a	3%	3%	4%	4%	n/a	3%

Table 3b Current use	Tompkins, NYS & National Students' Use of Substances in the Last 30 Days by Grade (high school)										
	9 th		10 th			11 th		12 th			Ave. gr. 9-12
	local	state	local	state	MTF	local	state	local	state	MTF	local
Alcohol	20%	25%	32%	32%	29%	39%	40%	42%	49%	43%	32%
Marijuana	10%	8%	16%	13%	14%	20%	18%	21%	22%	19%	16%
Cigarettes	7%	7%	9%	9%	12%	11%	12%	8%	16%	20%	8%
Smokeless tobacco	5%	2%	5%	3%	5%	7%	5%	7%	5%	7%	6%
Inhalants	3%	4%	2%	3%	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%	1%	1%
Prescr. pain killers	6%	6%	6%	7%	n/a	8%	7%	7%	7%	n/a	6%

Table 4a Perceived risk	Tompkins Students' Perception of Great Risk from Regular* Use by Grade (middle school)				
	6 th	7 th	8 th		Ave. gr. 6-8
	local	local	local	MTF	local
Alcohol	46%	53%	42%	32%	47%
Marijuana	89%	81%	70%	72%	77%
Cigarettes	70%	71%	70%	60%	70%

No state comparison available

Table 4b Perceived risk	Tompkins Students' Perception of Great Risk from Regular* Use by Grade (high school)						
	9 th	10 th		11 th	12 th		Ave. gr. 9-12
	local	local	MTF	local	local	MTF	local
Alcohol	45%	44%	35%	45%	42%	24%	44%
Marijuana	61%	50%	65%	40%	41%	52%	49%
Cigarettes	70%	73%	69%	75%	73%	74%	73%

Table 5a First use	Tompkins & NYS Students' Average Age of First Use by Grade (middle school)				
	6 th	7 th	8 th	Ave. gr. 6-8	Ave. gr. 7-8
	local	local	local	local	state
Alcohol	10.4	10.8	11.4	11	11.5
Marijuana	10.7	11.2	12.1	11.8	12.1
Cigarettes	10.4	10.7	11.2	10.9	11.3

No national comparison available

Table 5b First use	Tompkins, NYS & National Students' Average Ave of First Use by Grade (high school)						
	9 th	10 th	Ave. gr. 9-10	11 th	12 th	Ave. gr. 11-12	Ave. gr. 9-12
	local	local	state	local	local	state	local
Alcohol	12.5	13.2	12.8	13.8	14.4	13.9	13.5
Marijuana	12.9	13.8	13.4	14.1	14.7	14.5	14.0
Cigarettes	11.9	12.6	12.5	13.4	13.9	13.6	13.0

Table 6a Parental disapproval	Tompkins Students' Perception of Parental Disapproval of Substance Use by Grade (middle school)			
	6 th	7 th	8 th	Ave. gr. 6-8
	local	local	local	local
Alcohol	97%	95%	90%	94%
Marijuana	99%	99%	97%	98%
Cigarettes	98%	98%	97%	98%

No state or national comparison available

Table 6b Parental disapproval	Tompkins, NYS & National Students' Perception of Parental Disapproval of Substance Use by Grade (high school)				
	9 th	10 th	11 th	12 th	Ave. gr. 9-12
	local	local	local	local	local
Alcohol	89%	86%	82%	79%	85%
Marijuana	94%	92%	90%	90%	92%
Cigarettes	96%	95%	94%	93%	98%

For more information, contact the Community Coalition for Healthy Youth
c/o Tompkins County Youth Services Dept., 320 W. State St., Ithaca (607) 274-5310 or www.healthyyouth.org

The opinions, findings and conclusions or recommended in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of U.S. SAMHSA or the Drug Free Communities Support Program.