

YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FOR 2022

Prepared For

 Emerson Hospital

Spring 2022

2022 Emerson YRBS Methodology

- Data collected in March/April 2022
- Administered entirely online
- Student participation is confidential
- 77% of students participated

Students Participating in 2022 Emerson YRBS

	Total Surveyed	6th Grade	8th Grade	High School
2022 TOTAL:	7,722	1,498	1,527	4,684
Acton-Boxborough Regional School District	1,848	384	322	1,139
Ayer Shirley Regional School District	421	95	123	202
Bedford Public Schools	1,115	180	191	744
Concord-Carlisle High School/Concord Public Schools	993	174	171	644
Carlisle Middle School/Carlisle Public Schools	128	53	75	0
Groton-Dunstable Regional School District	657	117	142	398
The Bromfield School (Harvard Public Schools)	442	74	82	285
Littleton High School/Littleton Public Schools	586	126	125	334
Maynard Public Schools	430	85	80	265
Nashoba Regional School District	1,102	210	216	673



Overall Summary of Findings

As students mature, they show a tendency to engage in more risky behaviors and have lower levels of parental involvement.

- **6th grade are more likely to struggle with:**
 - Self-harm
 - Being bullied at school
- **However, 6th graders also report:**
 - Greater trust in teachers to stop bullying
 - More sleep at night
 - More parental oversight



- **Older students engage more in risky behaviors:**
 - Sexual harassment
 - Sexual messaging, sexual intercourse, and pornography
 - Alcohol, e-cigarette, and marijuana use
 - Depression
 - Suicide consideration
- **They also have higher stress from academics, COVID-19, and home**



The findings for 2022 reflect worrisome increases in stressful situations, depression and self-harm.

Increased among all grades:

- **Sexual harassment**
- **Stress and depression**
- **Self-harm**
- **Suicide attempts**

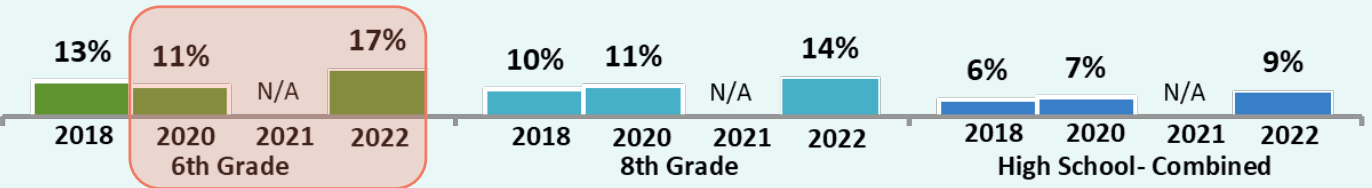
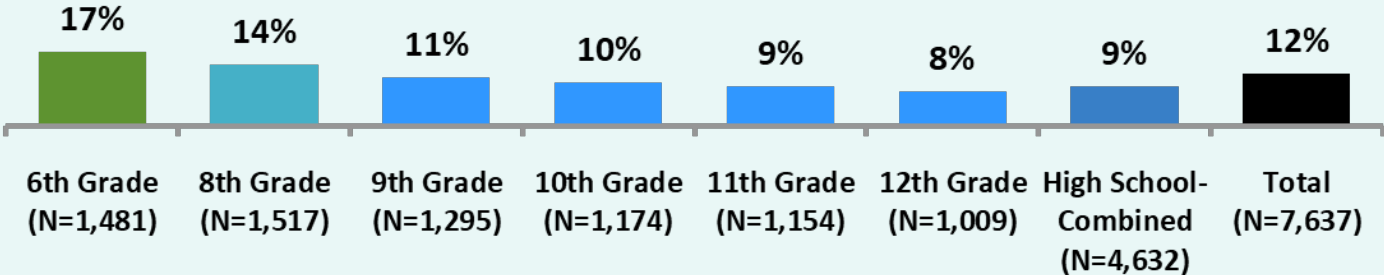
Increased particularly among 6th graders:

- **Being bullied at school**
- **Self-harm**
- **Stress from home**



Students in 6th grade are significantly more likely to have experienced bullying compared to pre-pandemic times.

Been Bullied in School in the Past 12 Months



Bullied students are more likely to:

- Be cyberbullied (45%)
- Be sexually harassed (44%)
- Feel depressed (54%)

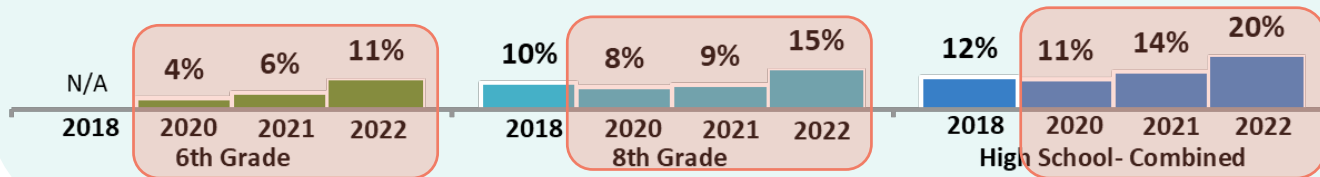
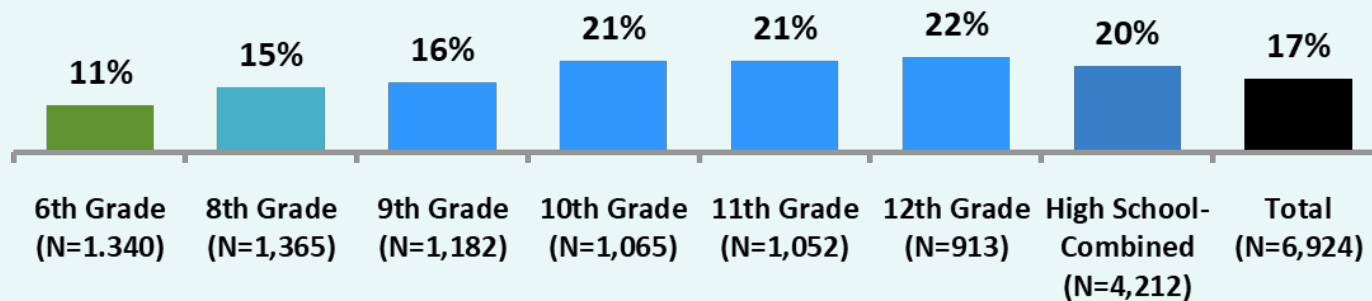
They may cope by engaging in:

- Self-harm (42%)
- Consider suicide (32%)
- Drink alcohol (18%)
- Use e-cigarettes or marijuana (13%)



Across all grades, students are more likely to report experiencing sexual harassment compared to prior years.

Experienced Sexual Harassment Online or in Person in the Past 12 Months



Sexually harassed students are more likely to:

- Be bullied (28%) cyberbullied (28%)
- Feel depressed (59%), self-harm (48%), consider suicide (32%)
- Be in the “low resilience” segment (39%)

They may cope by engaging in:

- Unhealthy dieting (29%)
- Drink alcohol (25%)
- Have sexual intercourse (21%)

* Note: Response options changed in 2021, to include sexual harassment online.



Q52

During the past 12 months have you received unwelcome comments or actions of a sexual nature which made you uncomfortable (sexual harassment)?

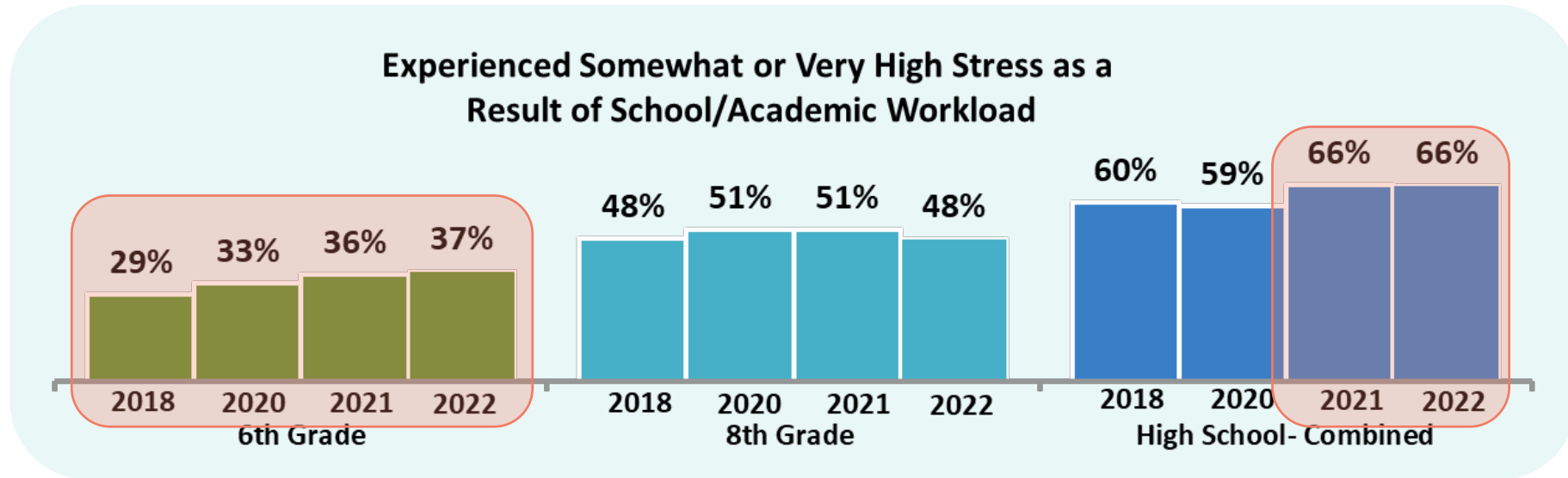
2018

2020

2021

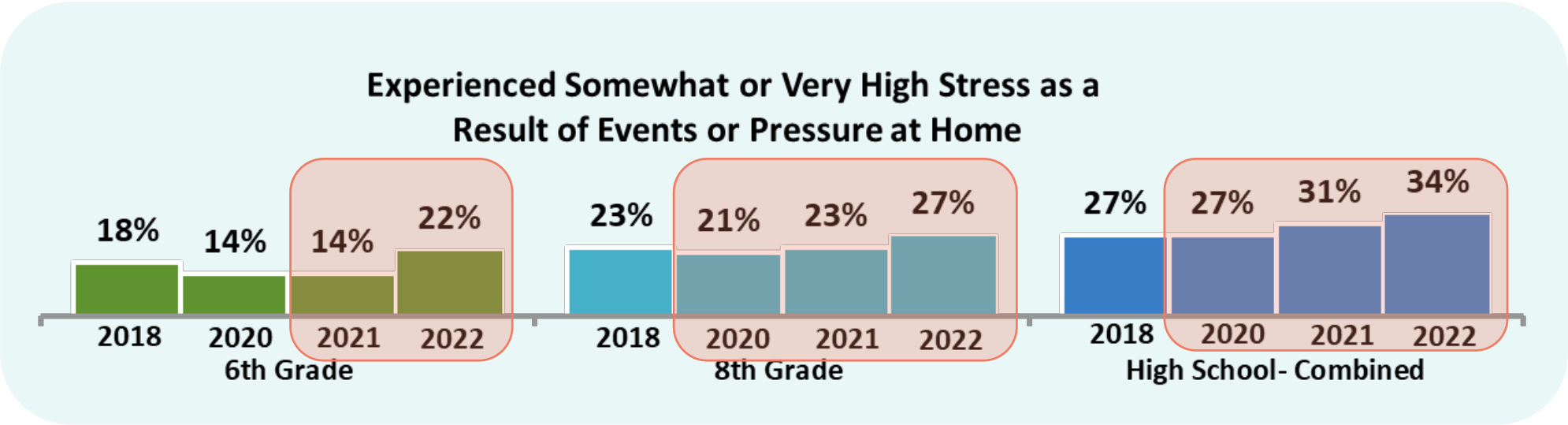
2022


Students in 6th grade and high school report higher levels of stress from academics compared to prior years. Academics is generally the largest source of stress.



Q53, Q55	During the past 12 months what level of stress have you experienced as a result of... your school/academic workload? ...events or pressure at home?	2018	2020	2021	2022
Q54	During the past 12 months what level of stress have you experienced as a result of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic?			2021	2022

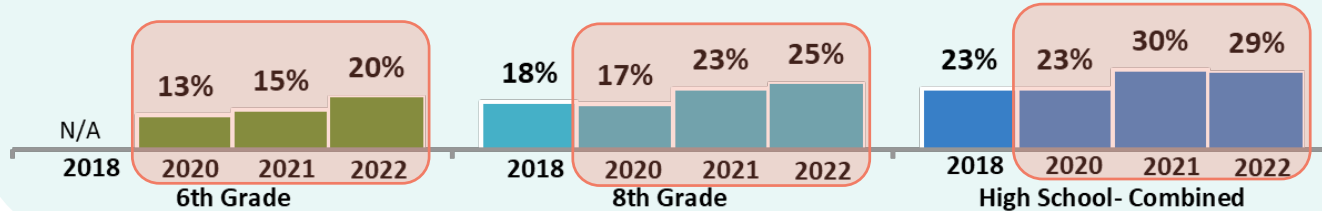
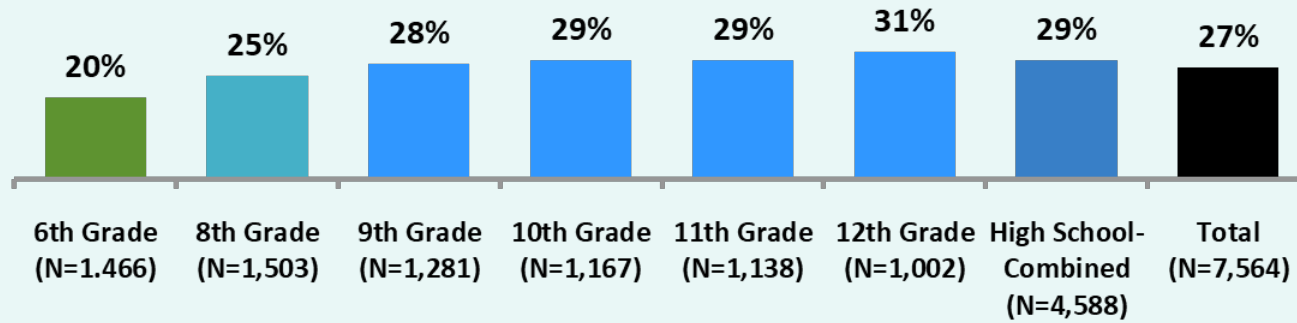
Students in all grades are experiencing higher levels of stress from events and pressure at home.



	Q53, Q55	During the past 12 months what level of stress have you experienced as a result of... your school/academic workload? ...events or pressure at home?	2018	2020	2021	2022	Market Street Research Page 9
	Q54	During the past 12 months what level of stress have you experienced as a result of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic?			2021	2022	

Students in all grades report higher levels of depression compared to pre-pandemic periods.

Felt Depressed for Two Weeks or More in Past 12 Months



Students experiencing depression are more likely to:

- Be bullied (24%) or cyberbullied (22%)
- Be sexually harassed (38%)
- Be in the “low resilience” segment (42%)

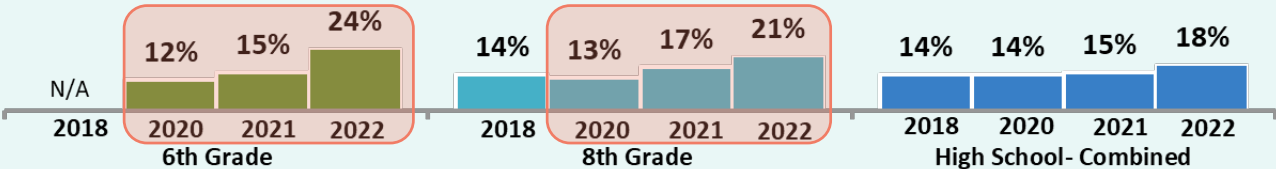
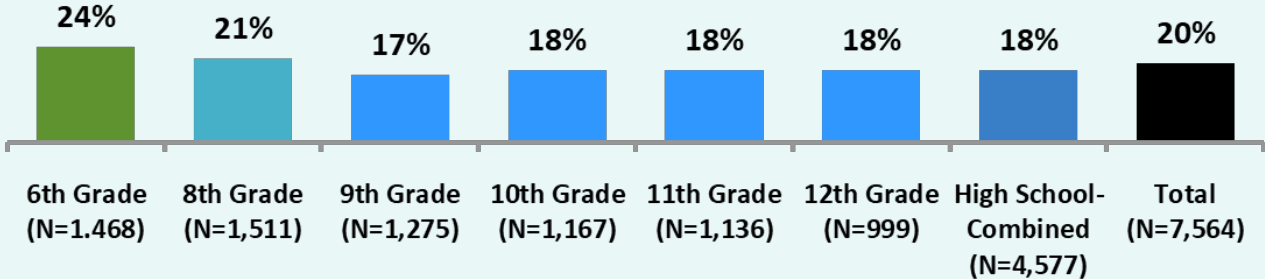
They may cope by engaging in:

- Self-harm (47%) or consider suicide (38%)
- Drink alcohol (18%)
- Use e-cigarettes (12%) or marijuana (14%)
- Engage in unhealthy dieting (24%)



Middle school students report alarming rates of self-harm, up significantly from pre-pandemic.

Injured or Hurt Self on Purpose in Past 12 Months



Students who self-harm are more likely to:

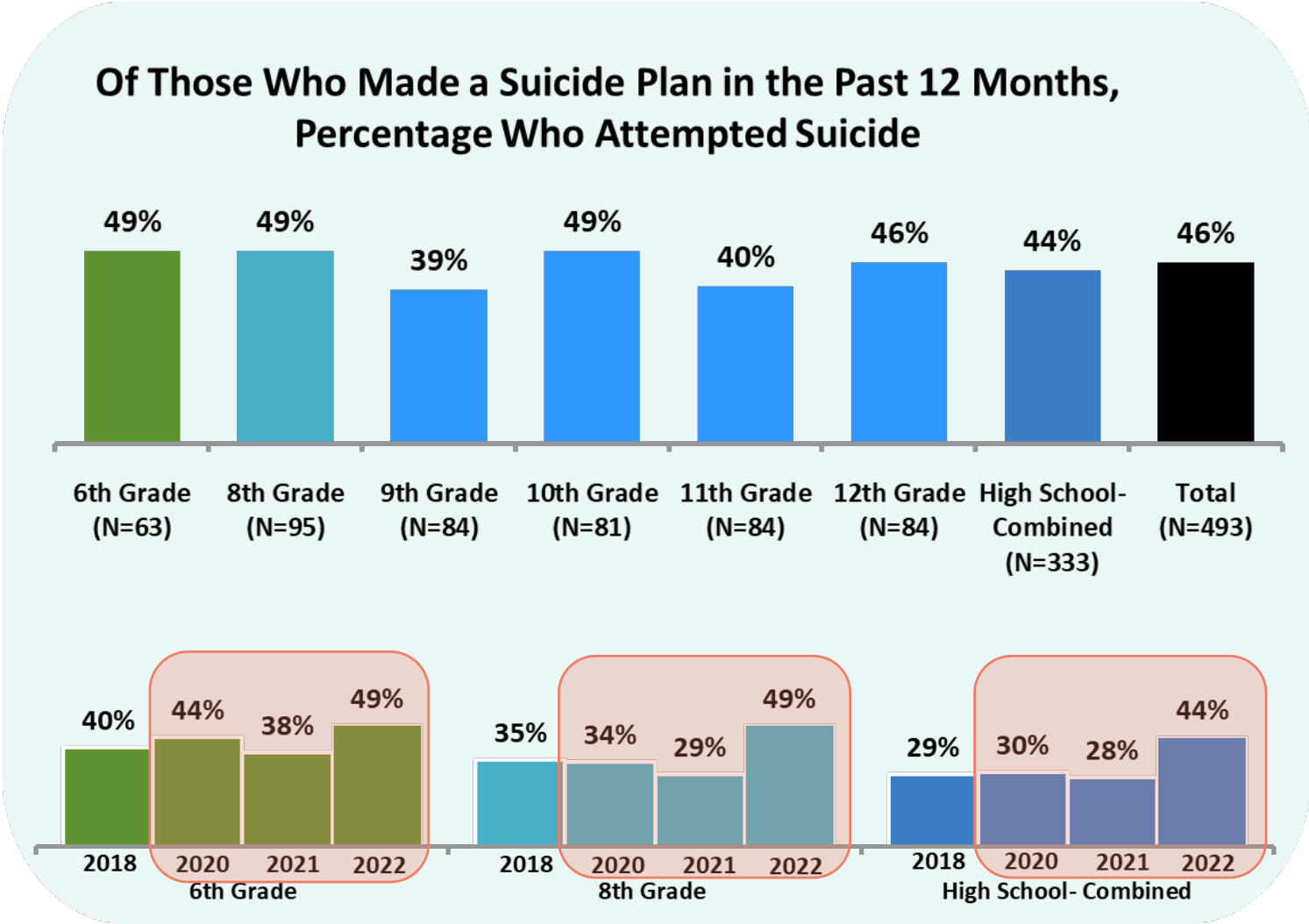
- Be bullied (25%) or cyberbullied (23%)
- Be sexually harassed (41%)
- Be depressed (63%) or consider suicide (42%)
- Be in the “low resilience” segment (41%)

In addition to self-harm, coping mechanisms may include:

- Drink alcohol (17%)
- Use e-cigarettes (11%) or marijuana (14%)
- Engage in unhealthy dieting (27%)



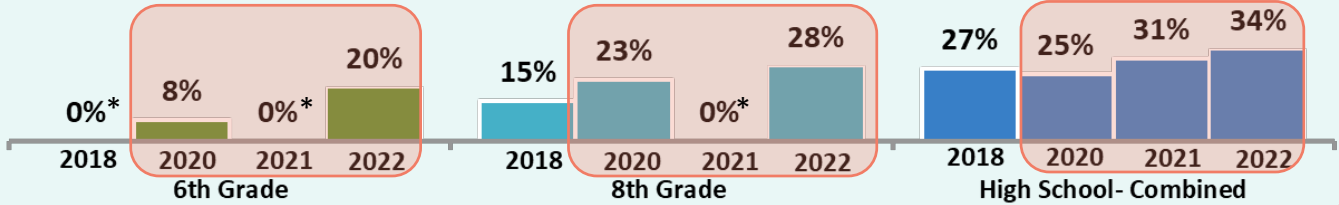
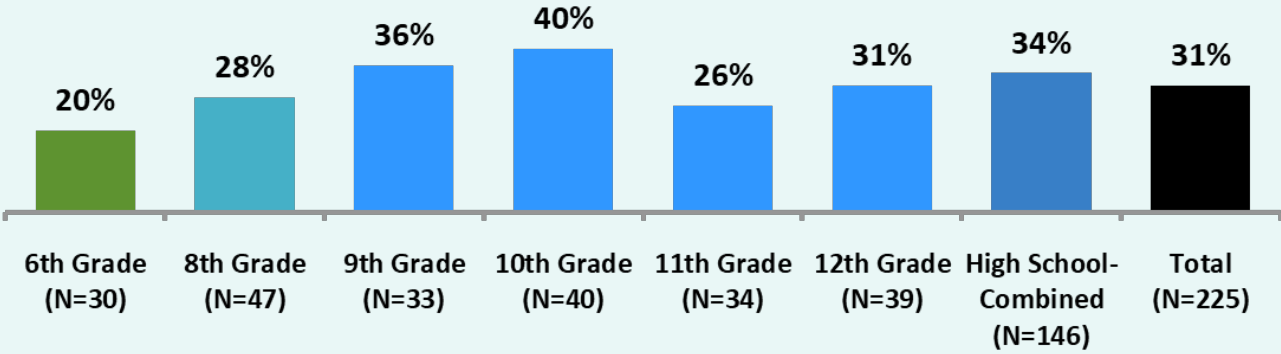
Students in all grades are more likely to carry through on suicide plans than in the past.



Q75	During the past 12 months did you make a plan about how you would attempt suicide?	2018	2020	2021	2022
Q76	During the past 12 months how many times did you actually attempt suicide?	2018	2020	2021	2022

Students who attempted suicide are more likely to have required medical care.

Of Those Who Attempted Suicide in the Past 12 Months, Percentage Who Needed Treatment from Doctor or Nurse



*Note, Ns are small and may not represent trends in the population



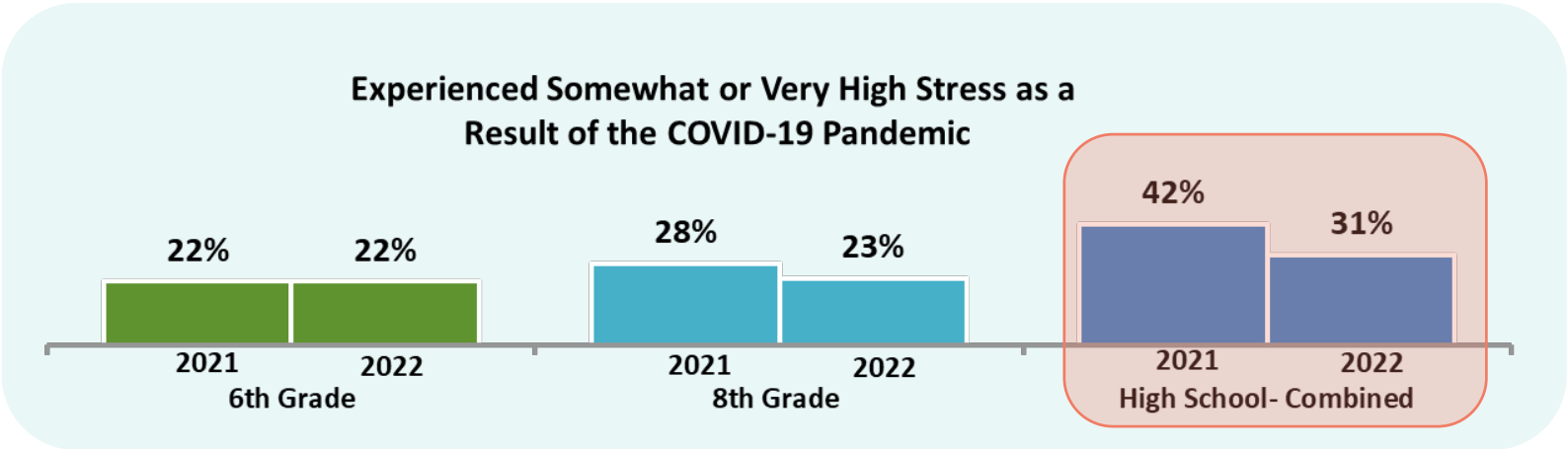
However, this year also saw some substantial *decreases* in risky attitudes and behaviors.

Decreases noted included:

- **Stress from the pandemic**
- **Substance use**
 - **E-cigarettes**
 - **Marijuana**
 - **Alcohol**
- **Sending or receiving sexually explicit messages**
- **Unmonitored cellphone use**

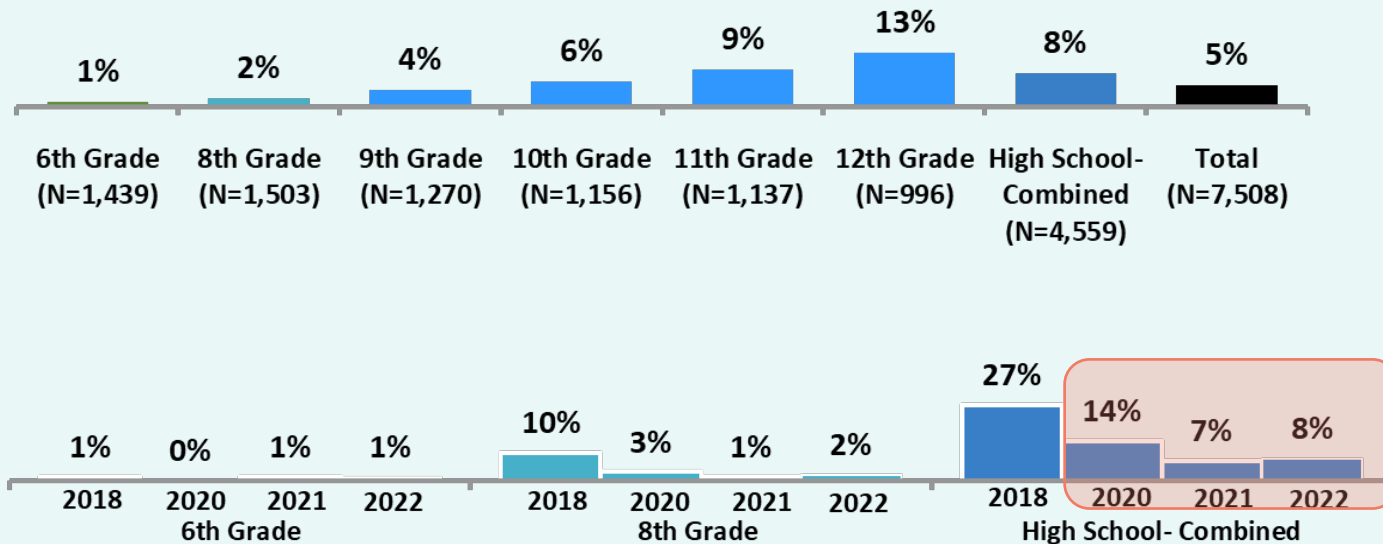


Significantly fewer high school students report stress related to the pandemic than in the past, though the pandemic still causes them more stress than younger students.



While use of e-cigarettes still increases with age, use among high school students has been declining for years, and high school students are currently about a third as likely to use e-cigarettes as in the past.

Has Used an E-Cigarette or Vaped in Past 30 Days



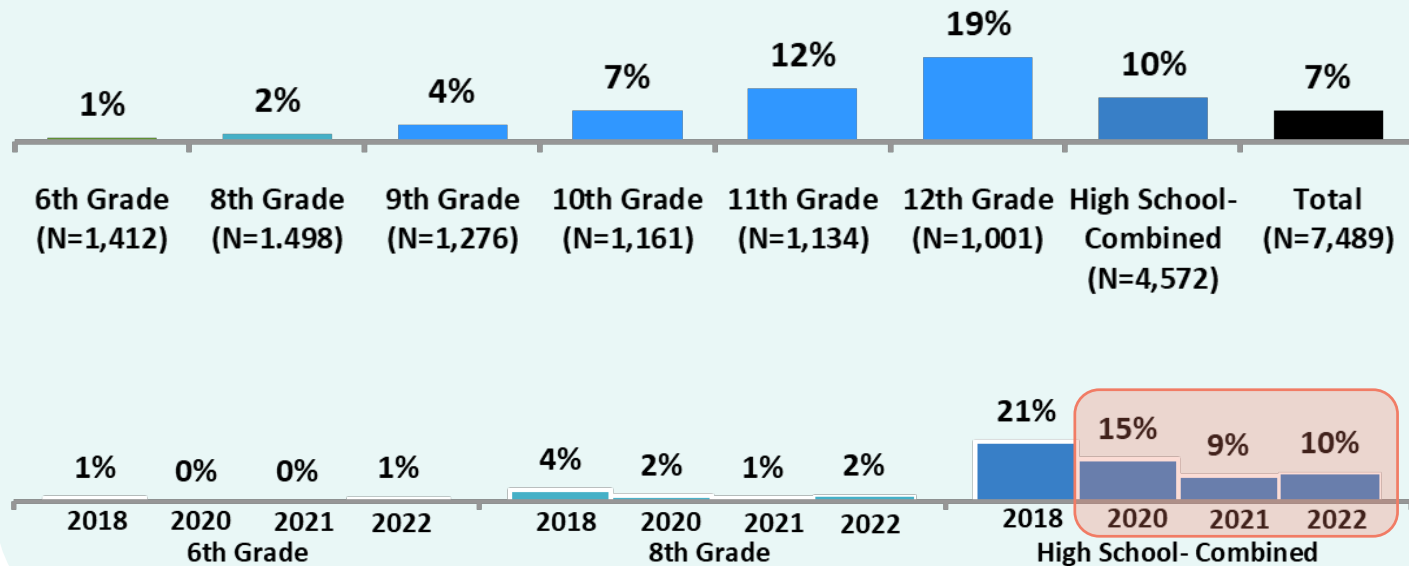
Students who vape are also more likely to:

- Drink alcohol (75%)
- Use marijuana (71%)
- Have sexual intercourse (54%)
- View pornography (68%)
- Send or receive sexual messages (54%)
- Engage in unhealthy dieting (33%)
- Be in the “low resilience” segment (36%)



Like vaping, marijuana use is trending downward.

Has Used Marijuana or Marijuana-Related Products in the Past 3 Months



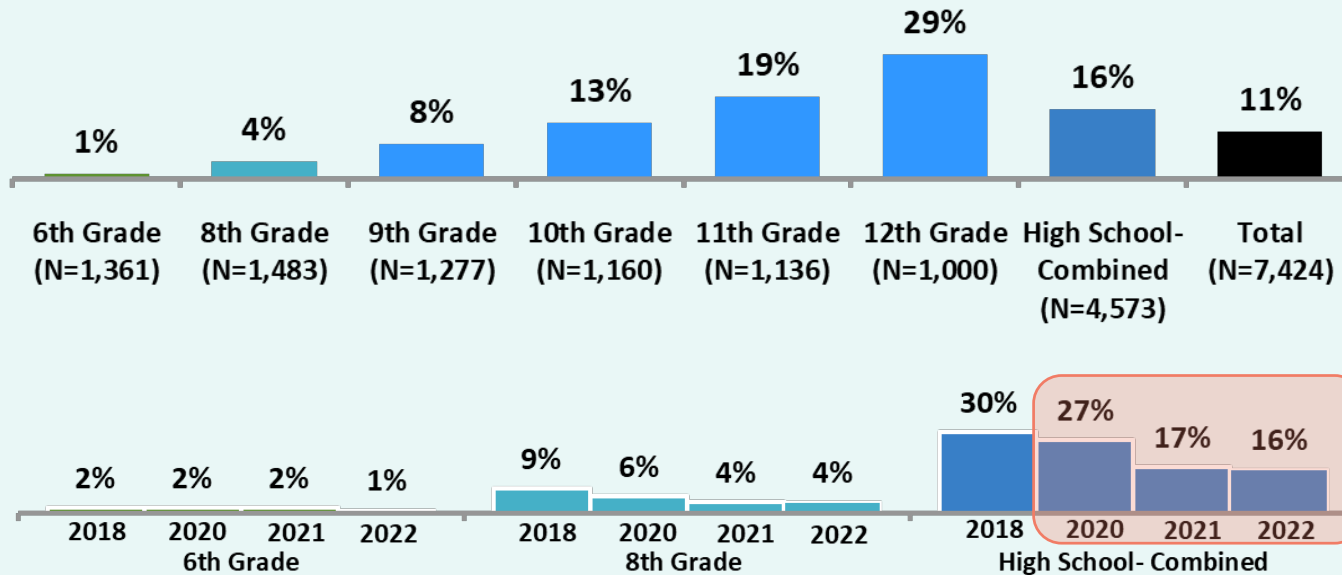
Students who use marijuana are also more likely to:

- Drink alcohol (73%)
- Use e-cigarettes (58%)
- Have sexual intercourse (51%)
- View pornography (70%)
- Send or receive sexual messages (50%)
- Engage in unhealthy dieting (32%)
- Be in the “low resilience” segment (33%)



Like vaping and marijuana use, alcohol consumption is declining, though it remains more popular among high school students.

Drank Alcohol in the Past 30 Days



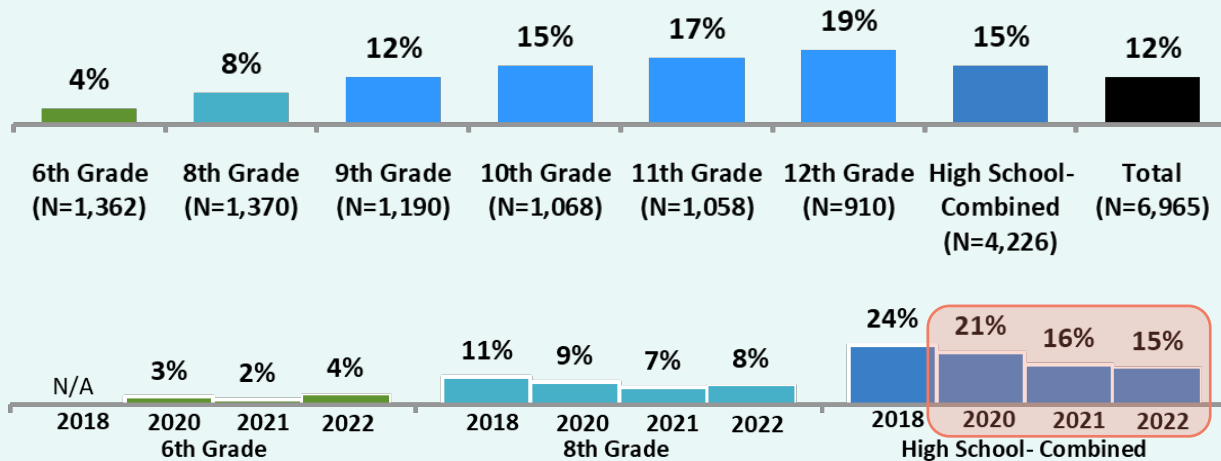
Students who drink alcohol are also more likely to:

- Use e-cigarettes (37%) or marijuana (44%)
- Have sexual intercourse (39%)
- View pornography (59%)
- Send or receive sexual messages (39%)
- Engage in unhealthy dieting (27%)
- Be in the “low resilience” segment (26%)

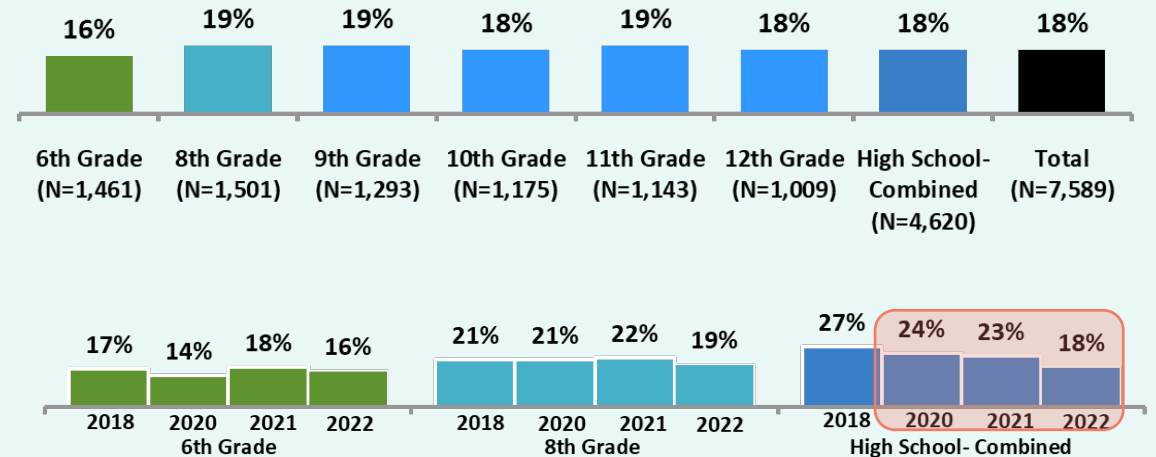


High school students are also less likely to engage in sexting or find themselves in risky situations because of information they share electronically.

Sent or Received Sexually Explicit Messages or Photos Electronically in the Past 12 Months



Has Been in a Risky/Unwanted Situations Because of Information Shared Electronically



Q49	Have you ever found yourself in a risky/unwanted situation because of information you shared electronically?	2018	2020	2021	2022
Q51	In the past 12 months have you participated in any group chats meetings or events on social media where the discussion made you uncomfortable but you had a hard time leaving?				2022

As in past years, certain groups are significantly more likely to engage in risky behavior.

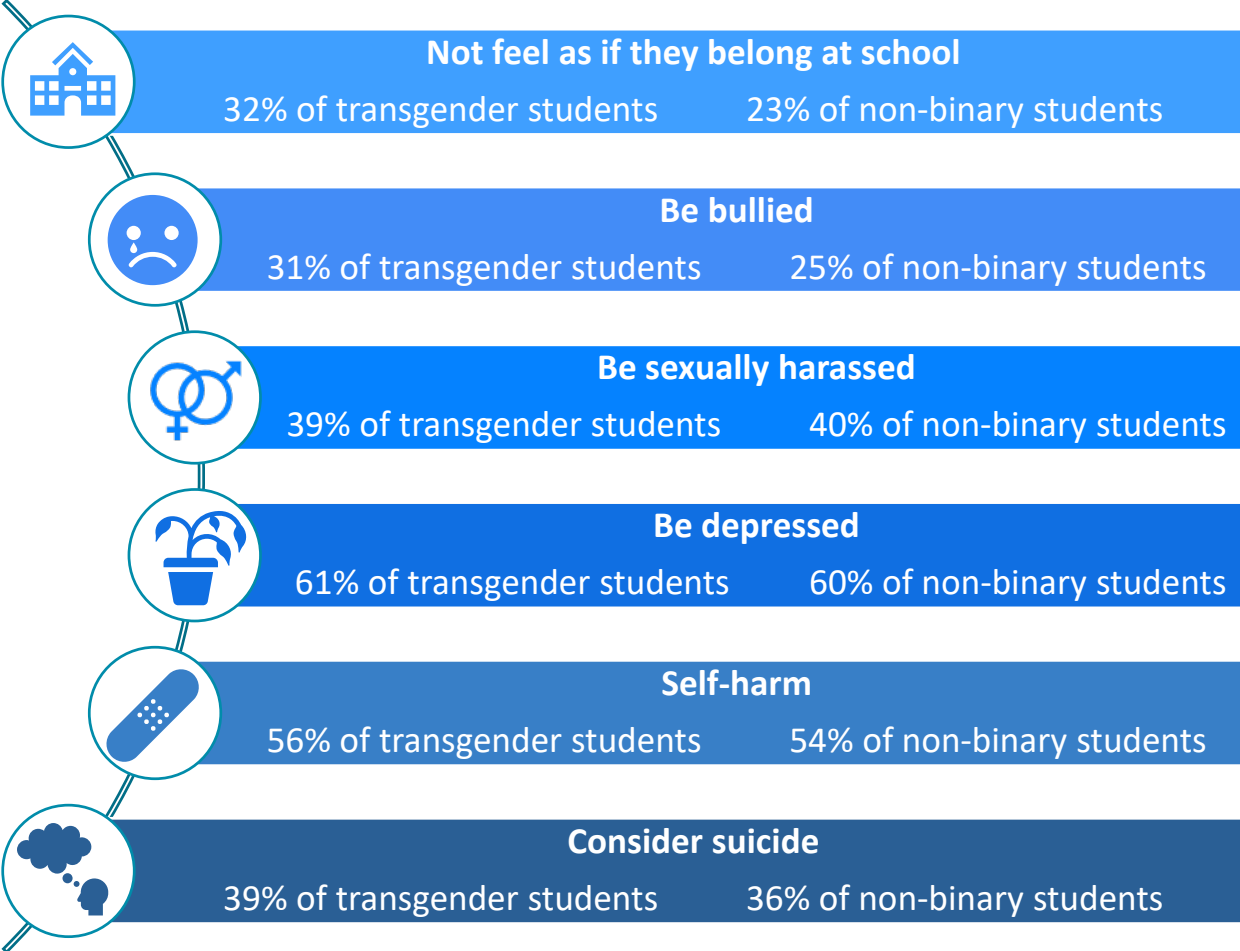
Higher risk groups:

- **Transgender**
- **Non-binary**
- **Racial/ethnic groups including:**
 - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
 - American Indian or Alaska Native
 - Black or African American
 - Southeast Asian American



Students who identify as transgender or non-binary are especially vulnerable.

Increased likelihood to:



These students are 2x as likely not to know where to go or who to talk to if they had a serious problem.

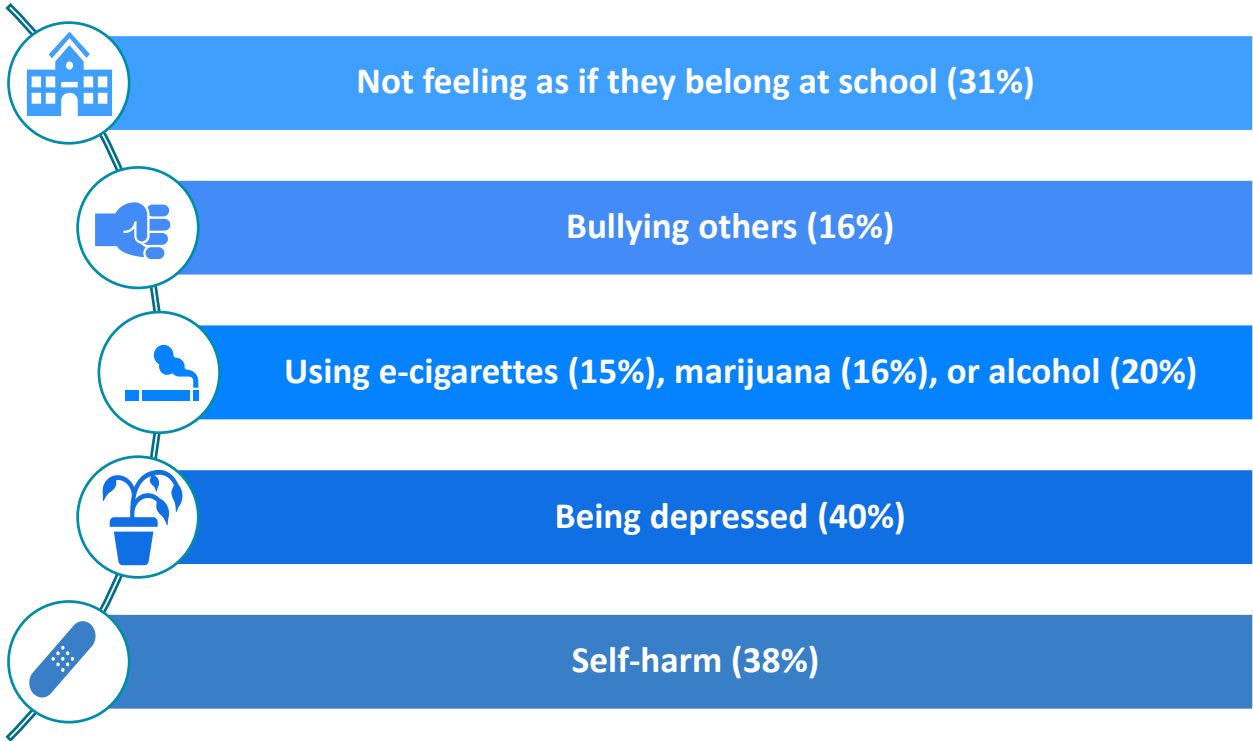
Over half indicate feeling depressed or engaging in self-harm.

Over a third of students considered suicide at some point in the last 12 months.



Certain racial and ethnic groups also have an increased incidence of several risk behaviors, particularly Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students.

Those who identify as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander have an increased likelihood to:



Other groups with higher risk behaviors:

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Black or African American
- Southeast Asian American

These students are more likely not to know where to go or who to talk to if they had a serious problem.

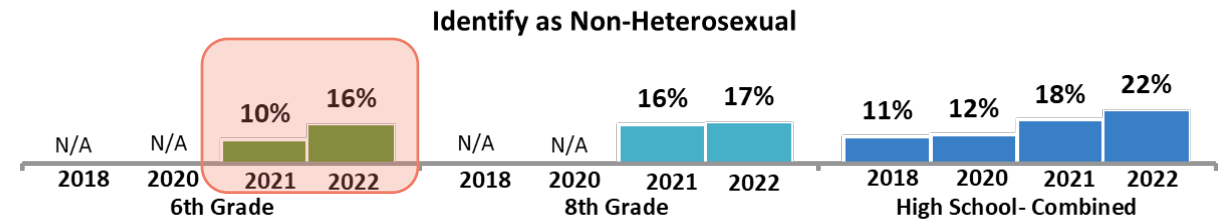


Appendix A: Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Student Demographic Profile

2022	6 TH Grade	8 TH Grade	High School
Gender (Q3)*			
Female	44%	45%	48%
Male	50%	50%	47%
Non-binary	6%	5%	5%
Transgender (Q4)**			
Yes	2%	3%	3%
No	90%	94%	94%
Not sure	7%	3%	3%
Sexual Orientation (Q5)			
Straight (heterosexual)	65%	75%	72%
Gay or lesbian (homosexual)	3%	3%	5%
Bisexual	7%	8%	12%
Another orientation (asexual, pansexual etc.)	6%	6%	5%
Not sure	19%	8%	6%
Identify as Hispanic/Latinx**			
Yes	9%	8%	9%
No	91%	92%	91%
Race/Ethnicity- Select as many as apply (Q16)*			
American Indian or Alaska Native	5%	2%	1%
Southeast Asian American	2%	2%	2%
Middle Eastern American	3%	2%	3%
Asian American	17%	18%	19%
Black or African American	5%	6%	4%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	1%	1%	1%
White	62%	74%	75%
Don't Know	18%	7%	4%

- Among high school students, the proportion who identify as non-heterosexual has steadily increased over the past 4 years.
- Additionally, there was a slight increase this year among 6th graders.



* Question was changed from previous surveys
 ** New Question