

Center for Health & Safety Culture

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Ashland High School Student Survey Key Findings Report:

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Prepared for Ashland Decisions at Every Turn
Coalition

A Drug Free Communities Grant-Funded Coalition

Massachusetts



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Hope, Concern, and Action

This report reveals data about alcohol, tobacco, and other drug (ATOD) use and beliefs among Ashland High School students. As you will read on the following pages, there are three important conclusions to acknowledge:

- (1) Most youth are making good decisions and have healthy beliefs about ATOD;
- (2) Many youth drastically over-estimate the prevalence of ATOD use among their peers and therefore are at greater risk for using ATOD themselves; and
- (3) Too many youth are using ATOD, which is both illegal and risky.

A comprehensive prevention effort must address all of these conclusions.

So, while most students at Ashland High School are making good decisions about ATOD, the negative impacts for some that do use are devastating. Alcohol-related accidents, including car crashes, are a leading cause of death among 15-24 year-olds. Alcohol use contributes to poor academic performance, violence, property damage, sexual assaults, and other negative consequences.

These data indicate that Ashland High School must take action to prevent ATOD use. Since most students are making healthy choices about not using, they become our greatest ally. We can all work together to increase the majority of youth who are making healthy decisions. One way to do this is to use these data to correct the misperceptions that teens have about their peers and ATOD.

The role of the community is to clearly communicate that while most teens are making healthy choices, any underage ATOD use is illegal, dangerous, and unacceptable – to both teens and adults. Communicating accurate information and establishing clear guidelines will cultivate even stronger positive community norms across Ashland High School.

Survey Background

The results presented in this report are based on the 2018 Positive Community Norms Student Survey. These data represent findings from a survey involving Ashland High School. The results in this report focus on youth substance use and attitudes. These survey results are based on 628 (662 before cleaning) surveys of students in grades 9, 10, 11, and 12 from Ashland High School; the overall response rate for student surveys is 86%.

What These Data Tell Us

Youth Substance Use and Perceived Use

In 2018, 82% of students (Ashland High School grades 9-12) report using alcohol less than monthly. However, 65% of these same students perceive **most students** at their school use alcohol monthly or more often, and 59% of these same students perceive **most adults** in their community use alcohol weekly or more often. *Q16C, Q17C, Q18B*

In 2018, 87% of students report drinking alcohol at a party or social occasion with other students less than monthly in the past 12 months. *Q9A*

In 2018, 72% of students report never being drunk in the past 12 months. *Q9B*

In 2018, most students report never using other drugs. However, many students perceive that **most students** at their school use these drugs (see table below). *Q16, Q17*

	Students who report never using...	Students who perceive most students in their school use...
Commercial tobacco (smoke, cigars, chew, snuff)	90%	74%
Electronic vapor products (e-cigarette, e-cigars, vaping pens, Juuls, e-hookahs, and hookah pens)	63%	90%
Marijuana (cannabis, pot, weed, dabs)	76%	86%
Cocaine (crack, rock, freebase)	99%	31%
Methamphetamines / Amphetamines (meth, diet pills, speed, crank)	99%	20%
Heroin	99%	18%
Other illegal drugs including sedatives (downers), hallucinogens (LSD, PCP, mushrooms), opiates (heroin, smack, horse), and designer drugs (ecstasy, MDMA)	96%	34%
Inhalants (glue, solvents, gas)	98%	30%
Over the counter drugs for the purpose of getting high (cough medicine, cold tablets)	97%	33%
Prescription pain drugs not prescribed to you (OxyContin, Percocet, Vicodin, codeine)	97%	32%
Prescription ADHD drugs not prescribed to you (Adderall, Ritalin)	98%	37%
Bath salts (Flakka)	99%	19%
Mushroom tea	98%	20%

In 2018, 80% of students perceive **most adults** in their community use commercial tobacco (smoke, cigars, chew, snuff). *Q18A*

In 2018, 72% of students perceive **most adults** in their community use marijuana (cannabis, pot, weed, dabs). *Q18C*

In 2018, 42% of students perceive **most adults** in their community use prescription drugs not prescribed to them. *Q18D*

Alcohol Use, Consequences and Perceptions

In 2018, 90% of students report **never** riding in a car or other vehicle in the past 12 months driven by someone who drank alcohol before or while driving. However, 77% of these same students perceive **most students** at their school had one or more times; 76% of these same students perceive **most adults** in their community had as well. *Q10*

In 2018, 97% of students report **never** driving a car or other vehicle in the past 12 months while drinking alcohol or after drinking alcohol. However, 54% of these same students perceive **most students** at their school had; 59% of these same students perceive **most adults** in their community had. *Q11*

Attitudes and Perceptions about Alcohol and Tobacco

The following chart shows the average (i.e., mean) of the responses for each of two groups: those students who have never used alcohol and those students who have used alcohol. The results only include students in grades 10 – 12 to reduce the impact of age. The chart reveals how these critical beliefs vary between the two groups.

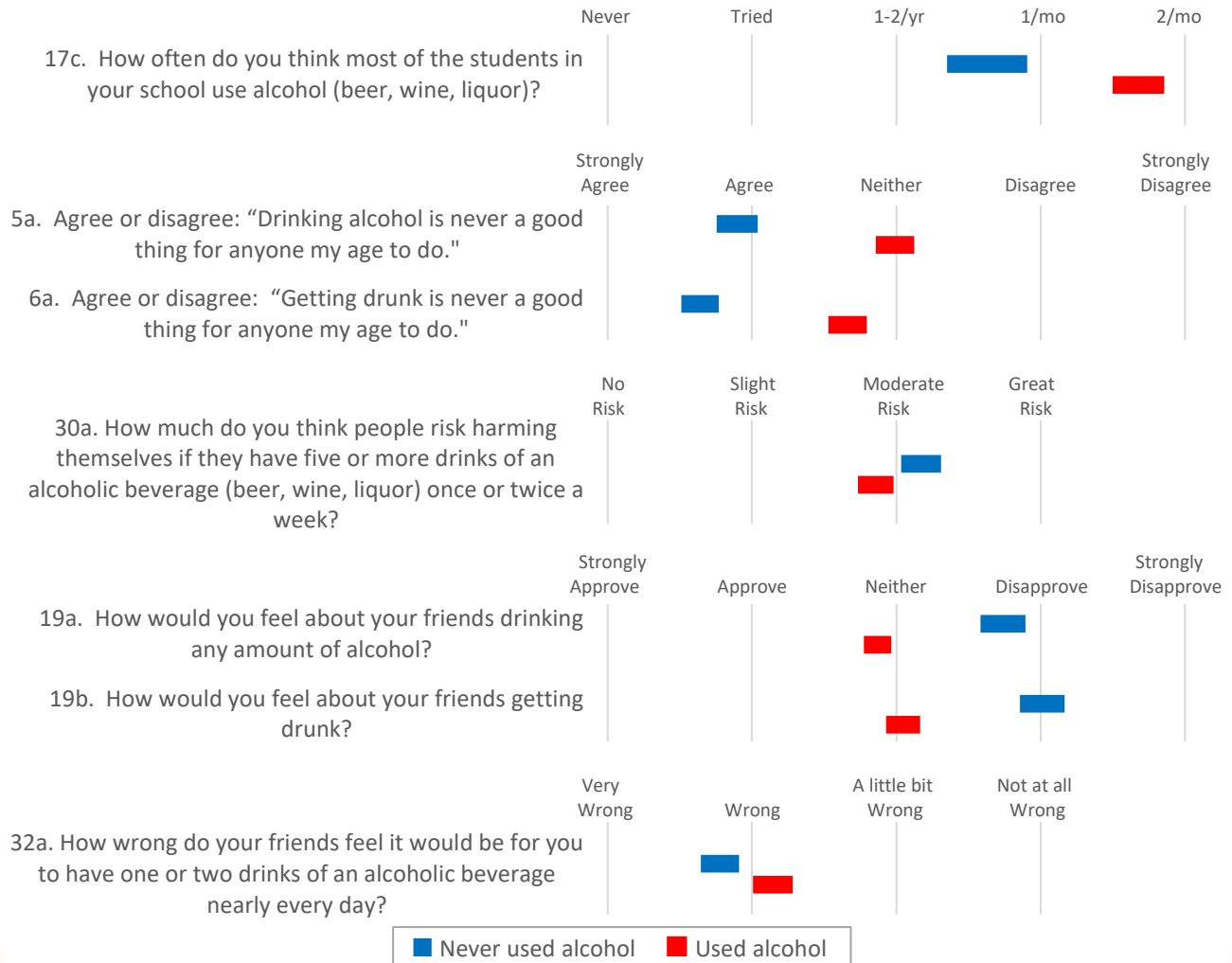


Figure 1. Means (with 95% confidence intervals) of Response to Various Questions About Alcohol

Attitudes and Perceptions about Alcohol and Tobacco (Continued)

In 2018, 60% of students **strongly agree or agree** that “drinking alcohol is never a good thing for anyone my age to do.” However, 69% of these same students perceive that **most students** at their school do not agree (either disagree or neither agree nor disagree). *Q5A, Q5B*

In 2018, 68% of students **strongly agree or agree** that “getting drunk is never a good thing for anyone my age to do.” However, 58% of these same students perceive that **most students** at their school do not agree (either disagree or neither agree nor disagree). *Q6A, Q6B*

In 2018, 73% of students believe **people risk harming themselves** (physically or in other ways) if they have five or more drinks of an alcoholic beverage (beer, wine, liquor) once or twice a week. *Q30A*

In 2018, 72% of students report they would rather **not drink alcohol** when they hang out with their friends. However, 36% of these same students perceive that **most students** at their school would rather drink alcohol when they hang out with their friends. *Q7, Q8*

In 2018, 40% of students **disapprove** of their friends drinking any amount of alcohol. *Q19A*

In 2018, 68% of students **strongly agree** that they would support a friend if he/she chose not to drink alcohol. However, 70% of these same students perceive that **most students** at their school do not feel the same way. *Q20A, Q20B*

In 2018, 52% of students **disapprove** of their friends getting drunk. *Q19B*

In 2018, 75% of students think their friends would feel it is **wrong** if they have one or two drinks of an alcoholic beverage nearly every day. *Q32A*

In 2018, 78% of students **strongly disapprove** of their friends driving a vehicle after drinking alcohol. *Q19E*

In 2018, 72% of students **strongly disapprove** of their friends riding in a vehicle with a driver who has been drinking alcohol. *Q19F*

In 2018, 67% of students **strongly agree** that “using commercial tobacco (including cigarettes, cigars, and chewing tobacco) is never a good thing for anyone my age to do.” However, 75% of these same students perceive that **most students** at their school do not feel this way. *Q12A, Q12B*

In 2018, 79% of students **disapprove** of their friends smoking cigarettes or cigars. *Q19C*

In 2018, 85% of students think their friends would feel it is **wrong** if they smoke tobacco (cigarettes or cigars). *Q32B*

In 2018, 84% of students believe **people risk harming themselves** (physically or in other ways) if they smoke one or more packs of cigarettes per day. *Q30B*

Marijuana Use, Consequences and Perceptions

In 2018, 62% of students **strongly agree or agree** that “using marijuana (cannabis, pot, weed, dabs) is never a good thing for anyone my age to do.” However, 74% of these same students perceive that **most students** at their school do not feel this way. *Q14A, Q14B*

In 2018, 53% of students believe **people risk harming themselves** (physically or in other ways) if they smoke marijuana once or twice a week. *Q30C*

In 2018, 40% of students **disapprove** of their friends trying marijuana once or twice. *Q19I*

In 2018, 63% of students **disapprove** of their friends smoking marijuana frequently. *Q19J*

In 2018, 66% of students **strongly agree** that they would support a friend if he/she chose not to use marijuana. However, 69% of these same students perceive that **most students** at their school do not feel this way. *Q21A, Q21B*

In 2018, 59% of students think their friends would feel it is **wrong** if they smoked marijuana. *Q32C*

In 2018, 80% of students **disapprove** of their friends driving a vehicle after using marijuana. *Q19G*

In 2018, 80% of students **disapprove** of their friends riding in a vehicle with a driver who has been using marijuana. *Q19H*

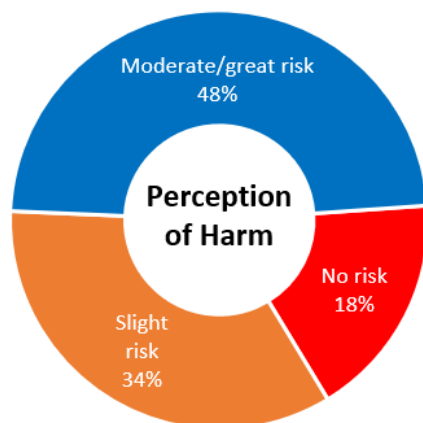
Electronic Vapor Products, Consequences and Perceptions

In 2018, 63% of students **strongly agree or agree** that “using electronic vapor products (e-cigarette, e-cigars, vaping pens, Juuls, e-hookahs, and hookah pens) is never a good thing for anyone my age to do.” However, 82% of these same students perceive that **most students** at their school do not feel this way. *Q13A, Q13B*

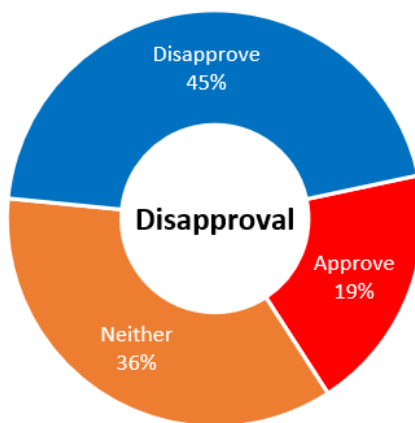
In 2018, 48% of students believe **people risk harming themselves** (physically or in other ways) if they use electronic vapor products (vaping, Juuling). *Q30D*

In 2018, 45% of students **disapprove** of their friends using electronic vapor products (vaping, Juuling). *Q19D*

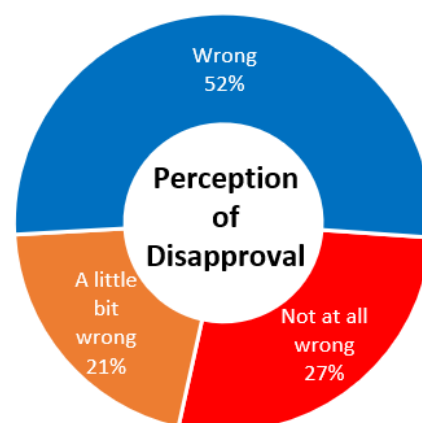
In 2018, 52% of students think their friends would feel it is **wrong** if they use electronic vapor products (vaping, Juuling). *Q32D*



30d. How much do you think people risk harming themselves (physically or in other ways) if they use electronic vapor products (vaping, Juuling)?



19d. How would you feel about your friends using electronic vapor products?



32d. How wrong do your friends feel it would be for you to use electronic vapor products?

Figure 2. Key Beliefs About Using Electronic Vapor Products

Attitudes and Perceptions about Other Drugs

In 2018, 79% of students **disapprove** of their friends trying drugs other than marijuana once or twice. *Q19K*

In 2018, 64% of students **strongly disapprove** of their friends using drugs other than marijuana frequently. *Q19L*

In 2018, 72% of students **strongly agree** that “using prescription drugs not prescribed to you is never a good thing for anyone my age to do.” However, 63% of these same students perceive that **most students** at their school do not feel this way. *Q15A, Q15B*

In 2018, 66% of students **strongly disapprove** of their friends trying prescription drugs not prescribed to them. *Q19M*

In 2018, 86% of students believe **people risk harming themselves** (physically or in other ways) if they use prescription drugs not prescribed to them. *Q30E*

In 2018, 89% of students thought their friends would feel it was **wrong** if they use prescription drugs not prescribed to them. *Q32E*

Student Perceptions of Parents

In 2018, 93% of students report that their parents **do not allow** them and their friends to drink alcohol at their homes. *Q23*

In 2018, 65% of students **strongly agree or agree** that “parents should not let their teens and their teens’ friends drink alcohol at home.” However, 62% of these same students perceive **most students** in their school do not feel this way, and 24% of these same students perceive **most parents** of students in their school do not feel this way. *Q25A, Q25B, Q25C*

In 2018, 71% of students **strongly agree or agree** that “parents and other adults should clearly communicate with their children about the importance of not using alcohol.” However, 50% of these same students perceive **most students** at their school do not feel this way, and 20% of these same students perceive **most parents of students in their school** do not feel this way. *Q22A, Q22B, Q22C*

In 2018, 75% of students report that their parents had discussed their family rules about youth not using alcohol with them in the past 12 months. And, 18% of these same students perceive **most other students’ parents** from their school **had not discussed** their family rules about youth not using alcohol with them in the past 12 months. *Q26A, Q26B*

In 2018, 76% of students report that their parents feel it is **wrong** for them to drink any alcohol. Similarly, 96% of students report that their parents feel it is **wrong** for them to have one or two drinks of an alcoholic beverage nearly every day. *Q31A, Q31B*

In 2018, 96% of students report that their parents feel it is **wrong** for them to smoke tobacco (cigarettes or cigars). *Q31C*

In 2018, 87% of students report that their parents feel it is **wrong** for them to smoke marijuana. *Q31D*

In 2018, 85% of students report that their parents feel it is **wrong** for them to use electronic vapor products (vaping, Juuling). *Q31E*

In 2018, 96% of students report that their parents feel it is **wrong** for them to use prescription drugs not prescribed to them. *Q31F*

Student Awareness of Campaign Efforts for Ashland High School

In 2018, 71% of students report seeing tobacco, alcohol, or other drug prevention campaign advertisements, posters, or brochures in their school in the past 12 months. *Q33*

In 2018, 68% of students report seeing "STAND" messages in their school in the past 12 months. *Q34*

In 2018, 25% of students report hearing or seeing "STAND" messages on average a few times a week or more often in the past 12 months. 57% report hearing or seeing similar messages on average a few times a year or less often in the past 12 months. *Q35*

The following chart summarizes the ways students report seeing or hearing "STAND" messages. *Q36*

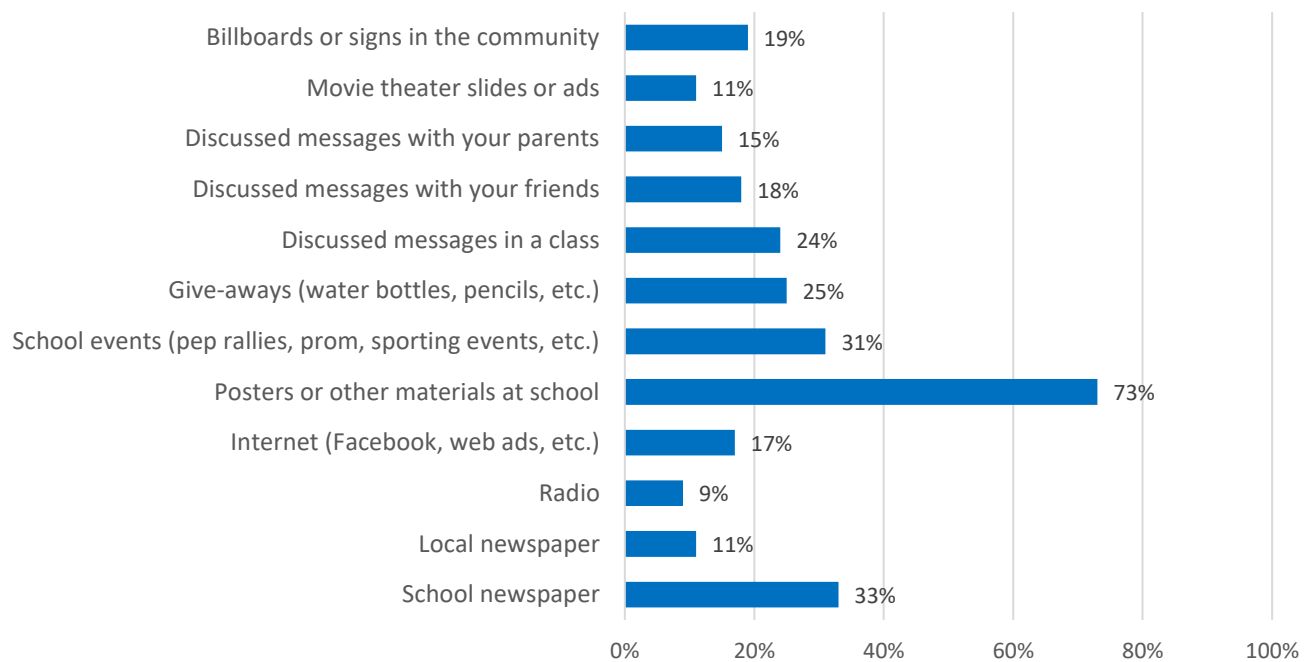


Figure 3. Ways Students Report Seeing "STAND" Messages

Key Actions

This report reveals both hope and concern when it comes to preventing alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use in Ashland High School. As with all communities, there are still serious problems that must be addressed.

As a community member, your voice matters. Data are only helpful when put into action. Here are key actions you can take:

- ✚ Share and discuss this report with coalition members, community leaders, and friends (see dialog questions below)
- ✚ Use this information to promote hope for successfully reducing ATOD use
- ✚ Promote intervention and treatment options
- ✚ Compare these data with other findings in your community
- ✚ Use these data to guide policy development
- ✚ Frame media and steer public conversations using these data
- ✚ Create messages to correct misperceptions among youth, parents, and community members

Questions to Foster Meaningful Dialog

Questions to Focus Collective Attention

- What opportunities can you see that the data are revealing?
- What do we still need to learn about this issue?
- What would someone who had a very different set of beliefs than you do say about these data?

Questions to Reveal Deeper Insights

- What has had real meaning for you from what you have seen in the data?
- What surprised you? What challenged you? What encouraged you?
- What needs clarification?
- What has been your major learning, insight, or discovery so far from these data?

Questions to Create Forward Movement

- What is possible here?
- What will it take to create change?
- What needs our immediate attention going forward?

Adapted from Brown, J., Isaacs, D., Community, W. C., Senge, P., & Wheatley, M. J. (2005). *The World Café: Shaping Our Futures Through Conversations That Matter* (1st edition). San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.



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