

# Highlights from the MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey

*Informing data-driven school and community  
health policies and practices*



## 2018 | Ashland High School

GRADES 9-12



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# Highlights from the 2018 MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey

## Ashland High School Report

### Background and Methodology

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The MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey (MWHAS), an initiative of the MetroWest Health Foundation, signifies a deep commitment to improving adolescent health and wellness by supporting data-driven advancements in prevention efforts, programs, and policies. The 2018 survey is the 7<sup>th</sup> administration of the MWAHS, which has been administered every other year since 2006 in the region served by the MetroWest Health Foundation. In 2018 alone, over 41,000 middle and high school students in all 25 communities in the region participated in the survey. Ashland High School has participated in the MWAHS since 2006.

The 2018 high school survey was administered to a census of students in grades 9 through 12 in all 26 high schools in the MetroWest region. In total, 24,746 high school students in the region participated in this voluntary and anonymous survey. At Ashland High School, 773 students in grades 9 through 12 participated in the 2018 MWAHS, representing 93% of students.

As in previous survey waves, local procedures were followed to inform parents of the survey and give them the choice to opt out their child(ren). Students were also informed that their participation was voluntary and that no names or other identifying information were being collected. Data collection at each school was guided by a protocol that protected the privacy of students' responses.

This report summarizes current youth behaviors on key health indicators in the areas of substance use, violence, bullying, mental health, sexual behavior, physical activity, and protective factors. The 2018 reports include new information on emerging trends such as use of electronic vapor products (including e-cigarettes) and areas of heightened concern, such as stress and anxiety, and social media use. The data allow for an examination of behavioral trends across seven time points from 2006 to 2018. Current data from 2018 are provided by sex and grade, and trends over the seven waves of the MWAHS are highlighted.

Findings from the MWAHS are used by schools and communities to improve health education, inform prevention efforts, and set priorities for achieving a healthier youth population. By monitoring trends in adolescent health and risk behaviors for well over a decade, the survey data has improved efforts across the region to better understand, prioritize, and address the most pressing physical and mental health challenges facing youth today.

## Key Findings: Substance Use

### Cigarette Smoking (Conventional)

- 2018 Patterns** » **10% of students have smoked a cigarette in their lifetime, and 3% smoked recently (in the past 30 days).**
- » Males are more likely than females to smoke in their lifetime (12% compared with 8%) and in the past 30 days (4% compared with 2%).
  - » Initiation of smoking increases from 4% in 9<sup>th</sup> grade to 18% in 12<sup>th</sup> grade.
- 2006-2018 Trends** » **Cigarette smoking has declined markedly: Reports of lifetime smoking decreased from 38% in 2006 to 10% in 2018.**
- » During the same time period, current smoking (in the past 30 days) dropped from 17% to 3%.
  - » Cigarette smoking decreased substantially among both males and females.
  - » In the MetroWest region, reports of cigarette smoking have declined steadily since 2006.

### Electronic Vapor Products<sup>\*</sup>

- 2018 Patterns** » **44% of youth have used electronic vapor products (EVPs) in their lifetime, and 34% used EVPs in the past 30 days.**
- » EVP use is similar among females and males. For example, current use is reported by 34% of both females and males.
  - » Lifetime EVP use increases from 25% in 9<sup>th</sup> grade to 60% in 12<sup>th</sup> grade, and current use increases from 18% to 46%.
  - » 5% of high school students report using EVPs daily in the past 30 days.
  - » 62% of youth perceive moderate or great risk in using EVPs, with higher perceptions of risk among females and younger students.
- 2006-2018 Trends** » **EVP use has increased rapidly in the last two years: The proportion of youth who ever tried EVPs increased from 28% in 2016 to 44% in 2018.**
- » Current EVP use increased from 18% in 2016 to 34% in 2018.
  - » While EVP use increased substantially among both females and males since 2016, the recent increase was greater among females. For example, lifetime use increased from 20% in 2016 to 42% in 2018 among females, and from 36% to 46% among males.
  - » Despite the increase in EVP use, perception of risk rose steadily, from 47% in 2014 to 62% in 2018.
  - » Reports of EVP use in the MetroWest region have also risen considerably since 2016.

<sup>\*</sup> Electronic vapor products (EVPs) include electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) like JUUL, Phix, Vuse, MarkTen, and blu, and other electronic vapor products like vapes, vape pens, e-cigars, e-hookahs, hookah pens, and mods.

## Alcohol Use

- 2018 Patterns** » **52% of students drank alcohol in their lifetime, and 27% drank in the past 30 days.**
- » 13% report recent binge drinking.\*
  - » Lifetime and current alcohol use are slightly higher among females than males. For example, 29% of females and 25% of males report current drinking.
  - » Reports of binge drinking are somewhat similar among females (12%) and males (14%).
  - » Alcohol use increases substantially by grade: Current drinking increases from 16% in 9<sup>th</sup> grade to 33% in 12<sup>th</sup> grade, and binge drinking increases from 4% to 21%.

- 2006-2018 Trends** » **Alcohol use in high school has declined substantially: From 2006 to 2018, lifetime use decreased from 69% to 52%, and current use decreased from 45% to 27%.**
- » Binge drinking also decreased during this time, from 27% to 13%.
  - » Drinking declined among both males and females. For example, lifetime drinking decreased from 69% in 2006 to 54% in 2018 among females, and from 70% to 51% among males.
  - » In the MetroWest region, alcohol use has declined substantially since 2006.

## Marijuana Use

- 2018 Patterns** » **30% of youth have ever used marijuana, and 22% used marijuana in the past 30 days.**
- » Males are slightly more likely than females to initiate marijuana use (34% compared with 27%) and report recent use (27% compared with 18%).
  - » Marijuana use increases substantially by grade. For example, lifetime use increases from 6% in 9<sup>th</sup> grade to 46% in 12<sup>th</sup> grade. 33% of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students have used marijuana in the past 30 days.
  - » 6% of youth have used marijuana on school property in the past 30 days.
  - » 26% of youth have used marijuana in an electronic vaping device in their lifetime.
  - » A majority of youth (66%) report that marijuana is “fairly easy” or “very easy” to obtain.
  - » 55% of youth perceive that using marijuana is of “moderate” or “great risk.” Lower risk perception is associated with increased use.

- 2006-2018 Trends** » **After past declines, marijuana use is slightly higher in 2018. For example, lifetime use decreased from a high of 37% in 2010 to 25% in 2016, with reports slightly higher in 2018 at 30%. Future data will determine if this represents the beginning of a trend.**
- » Current marijuana use is also higher in 2018 (22%) compared with 2016 (18%).
  - » There are recent increases in marijuana use among both females and males.
  - » Marijuana use in the MetroWest region is also slightly higher in 2018 after previous declines.

\* Binge drinking is defined as consuming 4 or more drinks in a row for females, or 5 or more drinks in a row for males in the past 30 days. This does not take into account body weight or other factors that influence intoxication levels.

## Prescription Drug Misuse\*

- 2018 Patterns** » **6% of youth have misused prescription drugs in their lifetime, and 3% have misused prescription drugs in the past 30 days.**
- » Lifetime prescription drug misuse is similar by sex (6% of both females and males).
  - » Reports of lifetime misuse increase slightly by grade, from 9th grade (6%) to 12<sup>th</sup> grade (8%).
  - » 3% of youth have misused prescription stimulants in their lifetime.
  - » 4% have misused prescription pain medicine in the past 30 days.†

- 2006-2018 Trends** » **Lifetime misuse of prescription drugs decreased from 10% in 2006 to 5% in 2016 and were similar in 2018 at 6%.**
- » Reports of prescription drug misuse have declined steadily among males (from 14% in 2006 to 6% in 2018), whereas they have varied among females from 2-9% over the seven surveys.
  - » There has been a substantial decrease in prescription drug misuse in the region since 2006.

## Key Findings: Impaired and Distracted Driving

### Impaired Driving

- 2018 Patterns** » **14% of students report being a passenger in a car driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol in the past 30 days, and 5% rode with a high school driver who had been drinking.**
- » **16% of students report being a passenger in a car driven by a high school student who had been using marijuana in the past 30 days.**
  - » 3% of 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students who drive report driving after drinking in the past 30 days, and 13% report driving after using marijuana.
  - » Males are more likely than females to report driving after using marijuana (20% vs. 7%); reports of driving after drinking are similar among males and females (3% vs. 2%).
  - » 12<sup>th</sup> grade drivers are more likely to report driving after drinking (4% vs. 1%) or using marijuana (15% vs. 10%), compared with 11<sup>th</sup> grade drivers.

- 2006-2018 Trends** » **Consistent with the decline in alcohol use, reports of riding in a car driven by someone who had been drinking decreased steadily from 29% in 2006 to 14% in 2018.**
- » Fewer high school drivers report driving after drinking, from 20% in 2006 to 3% in 2018.
  - » Reports of driving after using marijuana decreased from 16% in 2012, when this data was first collected, to 13% in 2018.
  - » Drinking and driving among youth in the MetroWest region has declined substantially since 2006, and driving after using marijuana is also lower in recent surveys.

\* Without a doctor's prescription, such as using someone else's prescription or obtaining the medicine illegally.

† Includes opioids like codeine, Vicodin, OxyContin, Hydrocodone, and Percocet. The wording "prescription pain medicine" was used for consistency with wording used on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Youth Risk Behavior Survey.

## Distracted Driving

- 2018 Patterns** » **34% of youth rode in a car with a high school driver who was texting in the past 30 days, and 38% of 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade drivers report texting while driving.**
- » Reports of texting while driving are higher among males than females (43% vs. 33%).
  - » Many more 12<sup>th</sup> grade drivers report texting while driving (52%) compared with 11<sup>th</sup> grade drivers (24%).

- 2006-2018 Trends** » **Reports of texting while driving among 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade drivers decreased from 43% in 2010 to 38% in 2018.** (2010 was the first year that the survey asked about texting while driving.)
- » In the MetroWest region, texting while driving decreased from 2010 to 2016 and then was similar in 2018.

## Key Findings: Violence

### Physical Fighting

- 2018 Patterns** » **12% of youth have been in a physical fight in the past 12 months, and 5% have been in a fight on school property.**
- » Many more males than females report fighting (17% compared with 7%) and fighting on school property (9% compared with 2%).
  - » Reports of physical fighting are higher in grade 9 (16%) compared with grades 10 through 12 (9-10%).

- 2006-2018 Trends** » **Fewer youth are involved in physical fights. Reports of fighting in the past 12 months decreased steadily, from 27% in 2006 to 12% in 2018, and have remained similar in recent surveys.**
- » Reports of fighting on school property decreased from 12% in 2006 to 5% in 2014 and remained at that level over the past two surveys.
  - » There were notable decreases in fighting among both males and females: From 2006 to 2018, fighting decreased from 41% to 17% among males, and from 14% to 7% among females.
  - » In the MetroWest region, physical fighting has decreased steadily since 2006, both overall and on school property.

## Weapon Carrying

**2018 Patterns** » **6% of youth carried a weapon in the past 30 days, and 1% carried a weapon on school property.**

- » More males (9%) than females (3%) report carrying weapons.
- » Reports of weapon carrying range from 3-8% and are lowest among 10<sup>th</sup> grade youth.
- » 6% of youth were threatened or injured with a weapon in the past 12 months, and 3% were threatened or injured with a weapon on school property.

**2006-2018 Trends** » **After remaining similar from 2006 to 2014 at 6-8% with slightly higher reports in 2014 (10%), weapon carrying returned to 6% in 2018.**

- » Weapon carrying on school property has declined steadily from 4% in 2006 to 1% in 2018.
- » Reports of being threatened or injured with a weapon in the past 12 months have been similar at 6% in recent surveys after declining from 12% in 2006.
- » In MetroWest, weapon carrying declined slightly in 2018 after remaining steady in prior years.

## Key Findings: Bullying and Cyberbullying

### Bullying

**2018 Patterns** » **26% of high school youth have been bullied in the past 12 months, and 23% have been bullied on school property. 11% of students report bullying other students.**

- » Slightly more females than males are victims of bullying in general (27% compared to 24%) and on school property (24% compared to 22%).
- » Bullying at school is higher in 9<sup>th</sup> grade (30%) than in grades 10 through 12 (19-22%).
- » Many bullying victims do not seek help from adults: Among students bullied at school, 31% had talked to a school adult, and 44% had talked to a parent/adult outside of school.
- » 16% of youth reported being verbally harassed in the past 12 months due to their race, ethnicity or culture, 6% due to their sexual orientation or gender identity, 7% due to a disability, and 27% due to their appearance (height, weight, or how they look).
- » LGBTQ youth are at elevated risk of bullying at school (32%) compared with heterosexual cisgender youth (22%).
- » Youth with learning and/or physical disabilities are also more likely to be bullied at school than youth without disabilities (35% vs. 21%).

**2006-2018 Trends** » **After declining from a peak of 28% in 2010 to 21% in 2016, school bullying victimization is slightly higher in 2018 at 23%. Future data will show if this is indicative of a trend.**

- » Reports of overall bullying victimization follow a similar pattern.
- » There are slight increases in bullying victimization at school among both females and males.
- » Bullying victimization is also slightly higher in 2018 in the MetroWest region after decreasing in prior years.

## Cyberbullying

- 2018 Patterns** » **19% of youth report being victims of cyberbullying in the past 12 months, and 8% reported cyberbullying someone else.**
- » Females are more likely to be victims of cyberbullying than males (22% vs. 16%).
  - » Cyberbullying decreases slightly by grade, from 21% in 9th grade to 16% in 12<sup>th</sup> grade.
  - » The majority of cyberbullying victims do not seek help from adults: Among students who were cyberbullied in the past 12 months, only 19% had talked to an adult at school and 35% had talked to a parent or other adult outside of school.
  - » LGBTQ youth are much more likely to be cyberbullied than heterosexual cisgender youth (29% vs. 18%).
  - » Youth with disabilities are also at elevated risk of being victimized online compared to youth without disabilities (34% vs. 17%).
- 2006-2018 Trends** » **Cyberbullying increased from 15% in 2006 to a high of 22% in 2014, and has been lower at 19% since 2016.**
- » The recent decrease in cyberbullying was driven by females, from a high of 29% in 2014 to 22% in 2018. Cyberbullying among males has been similar at 15-16% since 2014.
  - » Cyberbullying victimization has decreased in the MetroWest region since 2012.

## Key Findings: Mental Health

### Stress and Anxiety

- 2018 Patterns** » **35% of students report that their life was very stressful in the past 30 days.**
- » Females are much more likely than males to report this level of stress (45% vs. 23%).
  - » Reports of stress are lowest in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades (29% and 24%, respectively). By 12<sup>th</sup> grade, 48% of students report that life is very stressful.
  - » School is the most common source of stress, reported by 69% of youth. This is followed by stress related to social issues (37%).
  - » 34% of students report feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge on at least half the days in the past two weeks, and 28% report feeling unable to stop or control worrying. Reports of anxiety symptoms are over twice as high among females as males and are highest in 12<sup>th</sup> grade.
  - » 39% of youth report feeling tired or having little energy, 31% report sleeping problems, 25% report having trouble concentrating in school, and 28% report eating problems.
- 2006-2018 Trends** » **After rising from 26% in 2006 to 41% in 2016, reports of stress are lower in 2018 at 35%.**
- » The decrease in stress from 2016 to 2018 was greater among females (from 56% to 45%) than among males (from 26% to 23%).
  - » In the MetroWest region, stress increased substantially in earlier surveys and then levelled in 2018.

## Depressive Symptoms, Self-Injury, and Suicidality

- 2018 Patterns**
- » **21% of students reported depressive symptoms in the past 12 months.\***
  - » **12% of youth reported self-injury in the past 12 months.†**
  - » **13% of youth said they had seriously considered suicide in the past 12 months, and 3% had made a suicide attempt during this time.**
  - » Females are more likely than males to report all of the above mental health problems. For example, 28% of females and 13% of males report depressive symptoms.
  - » Reports of depressive symptoms range from 18-28% by grade and are highest in 11<sup>th</sup> grade.
  - » LGBTQ youth report elevated mental health problems. Compared with heterosexual cisgender youth, they are more likely to report depressive symptoms (47% vs. 17%), self-injury (34% vs. 8%), and suicidal ideation (32% vs. 11%).
  - » Youth with disabilities also report more mental health problems than youth without disabilities, including depressive symptoms (34% vs. 19%), self-injury (27% vs. 9%) and considering suicide (25% vs. 11%).
  - » Many youth who report mental health problems are not receiving mental health services: Among students reporting depressive symptoms, 34% talked to a school counselor, therapist, or psychologist at school, 13% talked to a school nurse, and 37% of students talked to a therapist, psychologist, or other mental health professional outside of school.

- 2006-2018 Trends**
- » **Depressive symptoms are slightly higher in 2018, whereas reports of other mental health problems are somewhat similar in recent surveys.**
  - » Specifically, reports of depressive symptoms in 2018 (21%) were higher than in 2016 (17%), with prior reports ranging from 16-24%. The recent increase in depressive symptoms was driven more by females (from 22% in 2016 to 28% in 2018) than males (from 11% to 13%).
  - » Self-injury has been similar at 12% since 2016, with prior reports ranging from 12-14%.
  - » Reports of seriously considering suicide have ranged from 11-13% during all years of the MWAHS, with reports of 13% in 2018 and a small increase noted among females. Reports of suicide attempts have ranged from 3-5% with reports of 3% in 2018.
  - » Depressive symptoms are slightly higher in the MetroWest region in 2018, with little change in self-injury and suicidality in recent surveys.

\* Depressive symptoms are defined as feeling sad or hopeless almost every day for two or more weeks during the past 12 months.

† Self-injury is defined as cutting, burning, or bruising oneself on purpose in the past 12 months.

## Key Findings: Sexual Behavior

### Sexual Intercourse and Condom Use

- 2018 Patterns** » **21% of youth have engaged in sexual intercourse during their lifetime, and 15% are currently sexually active (had intercourse within the past three months).**
- » The proportion of youth who have had intercourse in their lifetime increases from 5% in 9<sup>th</sup> grade to 42% in 12<sup>th</sup> grade. 32% of 12<sup>th</sup> grade youth are currently sexually active.
  - » Among sexually active youth, 67% used a condom the last time they had intercourse.
  - » 15% of youth used alcohol or drugs before they had sexual intercourse the last time (19% of males and 11% of females).
- 2006-2018 Trends** » **Reports of lifetime sexual intercourse decreased from 33% in 2006 to 21% in 2018.**
- » There is also a decrease in the number of youth who are currently sexually active, from 23% in 2006 to 15% in 2018.
  - » Condom use among youth who are currently sexually active has ranged from 58-72% over the course of the MWAHS.
  - » MetroWest region data also shows a decrease in sexual intercourse in high school.

## Key Findings: Physical Activity, Overweight/Obesity, Sleep

### Physical Activity

- 2018 Patterns** » **49% of youth report moderate physical activity in the past week,\* and 66% of youth report vigorous physical activity.†**
- » Males are more likely than females to report moderate physical activity (59% compared to 41%) and vigorous physical activity (73% compared with 60%).
  - » Reports of moderate physical activity decrease from 53% in 9<sup>th</sup> grade to 46% in 12<sup>th</sup> grade.
  - » 15% of youth (18% of females and 11% of males) report no moderate physical activity in the past 7 days.
- 2006-2018 Trends** » **The proportion of youth reporting moderate exercise increased from 38% in 2006 to 54% in 2016, and was lower in 2018 at 49%. The decline was driven by a decrease in physical activity among females.**
- » In MetroWest, physical activity has been similar since 2016 after increasing in prior surveys.

\* Moderate physical activity is defined as activity that increases heart rate and makes you breathe hard for ≥60 min on 5+ of the past 7 days.

† Vigorous physical activity is defined as exercising for at least 20 minutes that makes you sweat and breathe hard on 3+ of the past 7 days.

## Overweight/Obesity

**2018** » **21% of youth are overweight or obese.\***

- Patterns**
- » Males are more likely than females to be overweight or obese (26% compared with 17%).
  - » Overweight/obesity ranges from 17-27% during the high school years.

**2006-2018** » **Overweight/obesity has ranged from 18-21% since 2006, with 2018 reports at 21%.**

- Trends**
- » In the MetroWest region, overweight/obesity has not changed notably over the seven surveys.

## Sleep

**2018** » **Only 25% of youth get 8 or more hours of sleep on an average school night.**

- Patterns**
- » More males than females get 8 hours of sleep per night (28% compared to 22%).
  - » Reports of getting 8 or more hours of sleep decrease substantially as students get older, from 35% in 9<sup>th</sup> grade to 18% in 12<sup>th</sup> grade.
  - » As noted earlier, 31% of youth (41% of females and 20% of males) report sleep issues related to being stressed, anxious, or worried.
  - » Youth who sleep less than eight hours per night are more likely to report poor mental health, including depressive symptoms (25% vs. 9%), self-injury (14% vs. 4%) and seriously considering suicide (16% vs. 5%).

**2006-2018** » **The proportion of youth sleeping 8 or more hours on an average school night decreased from 27% in 2014 to 18% in 2016, but increased to 25% in 2018. (2014 was the first year that sleep data was collected.)**

- Trends**
- » Both females and males report more sleep from 2016 to 2018.
  - » Youth in the MetroWest region also report getting less sleep in 2018 compared with 2014.

\* Overweight/obesity is based on self-reported height and weight, which is used to calculate body mass index. Overweight/obesity is defined as being in the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile or above for body mass index by age and sex, based on reference data.

## Key Findings: Online Behavior

### Time Spent Online, Social Media Use, and Gaming

- 2018 Patterns**
- » **65% of youth spend three or more hours online on the average school day.**
  - » **33% spend three or more hours per day on social media, specifically, and 12% spend three or more hours gaming.**
    - » Females are more likely than males to spend three or more hours on social media daily (39% vs. 25%), and males are more likely to spend three or more hours gaming (22% vs. 3%).
    - » Youth report both positive and negative attitudes towards social media. On the positive side, social media helps youth feel more connected to peers (60%), provides a source of social support (28%), and helps them find people with common interests and hobbies (51%). On the negative side, social media makes a sizeable minority of students feel badly about themselves or excluded (25%), keeps them from doing important things like homework or family responsibilities (36%), and has hurt relationships with peers (13%).
    - » 49% of all youth feel they spend too much time on social media (56% of females and 39% of males).
    - » Youth who spend three or more hours on social media daily are more likely to report cyberbullying victimization (25% vs. 16%) and perpetration (13% vs. 6%).
    - » Youth who spend more time on social media are more likely to report substance use and mental health problems. For example, high users of social media are more likely to report current alcohol use (31% vs. 24%) and marijuana use (28% vs. 18%). They are also more likely to report depressive symptoms (27% vs. 18%).
- 2006-2018 Trends**
- » **The proportion of youth spending three or more hours online on an average school day has increased substantially from 2010 (31%) to 2018 (65%).** (2010 was the first year this data was collected.)
    - » Increases in time spent online are similarly large among both females and males.
    - » In the MetroWest region, the proportion of youth spending three or more hours online daily more than doubled from 2010 to 2018.

## Key Findings: Protective Factors

### School Attachment and Engagement

- 2018 Patterns** » **About two-thirds of youth report being engaged in and connected with their school.**  
This is indicated by agreement with statements such as “I feel close to people at this school” (72%), “I am happy to be at this school” (61%), and “I feel safe in my school” (73%).
- » Reports of school attachment are similar among females and males.
  - » School attachment is higher in grades 9 and 10, relative to grades 11 and 12.

- 2006-2018 Trends** » **Several indicators of school attachment are slightly lower in 2018 after having been relatively stable in prior surveys.**
- » For example, the proportion of students reporting that they feel happy to be at their school decreased from 66% in 2016 to 61% in 2018, and the proportion reporting that they feel like a part of their school decreased from 68% to 65%. In addition, student reports of feeling safe in their school decrease from 82% to 73%; these findings may reflect perceptions of physical and/or emotional safety.
  - » Several indicators of school attachment are also lower in 2018 in the MetroWest region compared with prior years.

### Adult Support

- 2018 Patterns** » **75% of youth have at least one teacher or other adult at school to talk to if they have a problem, and 88% of youth have a parent or other adult outside of school to talk to about things that are important to them.**
- » Adult support at school is higher among females (77%) than males (72%).
  - » Reports of adult support at school are lowest in 9<sup>th</sup> grade (62%) and highest in 11<sup>th</sup> grade (84%).
  - » Reports of adult support outside of school are similar by sex and grade.

- 2006-2018 Trends** » **Reports of adult support at school increased from 58% in 2006 to 75% in 2018.**
- » There have been increases in adult support at school among both females and males.
  - » Adult support outside of school has been similar at 86-90% since 2006.
  - » In the MetroWest region, there has also been an increase in adult support at school since 2006.

## Conclusions

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Now having completed the 7<sup>th</sup> administration, the MWAHS is an invaluable tool for guiding schools and communities across the region to take data-driven approaches to improve adolescent health. The 2018 survey data identifies areas of concern while also highlighting important progress that has been made since the survey began more than a decade ago. The 2018 data show that Ashland is making important advances in some behavioral health areas, such as alcohol use, cigarette smoking, and sexual behavior. While these demand continued attention, the data also highlight other areas of concern, including use of electronic vapor products, marijuana use, and mental health. Continued use of the MWAHS data to identify priorities and drive local decisions will help to address the greatest challenges to adolescent health and lead to safer and healthier communities.

# High School Key Indicators

2006–2018 Trends  
2018 Patterns by Sex  
2018 Patterns by Grade

# Ashland High School (Grades 9-12)

## 2006-2018 Trends in Key Indicators

*MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey*

	Year of Survey (%)						
	2006 <i>(637)</i>	2008 <i>(650)</i>	2010 <i>(672)</i>	2012 <i>(665)</i>	2014 <i>(652)</i>	2016 <i>(675)</i>	2018 <i>(773)</i>
<b>SUBSTANCE USE</b>							
Lifetime cigarette smoking	37.5	34.0	26.6	19.0	13.2	11.7	9.8
Current cigarette smoking (past 30 days)	16.5	16.9	11.8	7.9	3.4	4.0	2.9
Lifetime electronic vapor product use*	–	–	–	–	25.3	28.1	43.9
Current electronic vapor product use (past 30 days)*	–	–	–	–	15.1	17.9	33.7
Lifetime alcohol use	69.4	62.1	56.0	53.6	58.9	51.6	52.2
Current alcohol use (past 30 days)	44.5	35.7	30.8	31.2	36.1	34.4	27.0
Binge drinking (past 30 days) <sup>†</sup>	26.5	21.0	19.3	19.8	18.1	20.1	12.5
Rode with driver who had been drinking (past 30 days)	28.6	22.7	21.2	20.4	14.0	16.7	14.4
Lifetime marijuana use	33.0	32.9	36.9	30.8	27.9	25.4	29.9
Current marijuana use (past 30 days)	17.0	25.6	26.6	20.5	18.3	17.5	21.9
Lifetime prescription drug misuse <sup>‡</sup>	10.0	11.5	9.3	8.5	6.9	4.8	6.3
<b>VIOLENCE</b>							
Physical fighting (past 12 months)	26.9	21.0	21.5	16.7	13.5	14.2	11.6
Physical fighting on school property (past 12 months)	11.7	9.1	8.5	6.9	4.7	4.6	5.3
Carried a weapon (past 30 days)	8.1	6.3	7.5	6.8	7.3	10.0	5.7
Carried a weapon on school property (past 30 days)	4.4	2.9	2.7	2.9	2.2	2.1	1.0
<b>BULLYING VICTIMIZATION</b>							
Bullying victim (past 12 months)	29.1	30.0	30.9	26.4	25.7	21.1	25.9
Bullying victim on school property (past 12 months)	26.7	26.3	28.3	24.5	23.7	20.5	23.2
Cyberbullying victim (past 12 months)	15.4	18.1	20.9	20.3	22.2	19.3	19.2
<b>MENTAL HEALTH</b>							
Life "very" stressful (past 30 days)	26.4	27.3	26.2	23.1	34.2	41.4	34.8
Depressive symptoms (past 12 months)	22.3	19.2	18.4	16.4	23.8	16.9	21.2
Self-injury (past 12 months)	11.9	13.3	12.0	13.0	14.1	12.4	11.7
Considered suicide (past 12 months)	11.0	10.9	10.5	11.3	13.0	11.2	13.4
Attempted suicide (past 12 months)	4.6	3.9	4.5	4.6	4.9	3.6	3.4
<b>SEXUAL BEHAVIOR</b>							
Lifetime sexual intercourse	32.6	27.3	29.6	24.3	22.9	22.8	20.8
Currently sexually active (past 3 months)	22.7	20.4	22.1	19.7	18.7	19.3	15.3
Condom use at last intercourse <sup>§</sup>	58.0	68.2	65.0	72.2	71.2	68.5	67.3
<b>PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND BODY WEIGHT</b>							
Exercised for ≥60 minutes on 5 or more days/week	38.4	29.9	39.2	44.1	45.4	54.0	48.7
Overweight or obese <sup>**</sup>	21.3	21.3	22.7	20.6	20.6	17.8	21.0

\* Includes electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) like JUUL, Phix, Vuse, MarkTen, and blu, and other electronic vapor products, like vapes, vape pens, e-cigars, e-hookahs, hookah pens, and mods

† From 2006 to 2014, binge drinking was defined as 5 or more drinks in a row on one or more occasion for all students. Since 2016, binge drinking has been defined as 4 or more drinks in a row for females and 5 or more drinks in a row for males.

‡ Without a doctor's prescription

§ Among currently sexually active youth

\*\*Students who were ≥85th percentile for body mass index by age and gender, based on reference data

# Ashland High School (Grades 9-12)

## 2018 Key Indicator Patterns by Sex

*MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey*

	Sex (%)		Total (%)
	Female (421)	Male (339)	
<b>SUBSTANCE USE</b>			
Lifetime cigarette smoking	7.8	12.0	9.8
Current cigarette smoking (past 30 days)	1.9	4.2	2.9
Lifetime electronic vapor product use*	42.3	46.4	43.9
Current electronic vapor product use (past 30 days)*	33.7	33.7	33.7
Lifetime alcohol use	53.6	50.6	52.2
Current alcohol use (past 30 days)	29.0	25.1	27.0
Binge drinking (past 30 days) <sup>†</sup>	11.7	13.8	12.5
Rode with driver who had been drinking (past 30 days)	16.4	12.0	14.4
Lifetime marijuana use	26.6	33.6	29.9
Current marijuana use (past 30 days)	17.7	26.9	21.9
Lifetime prescription drug misuse <sup>‡</sup>	6.1	6.4	6.3
<b>VIOLENCE</b>			
Physical fighting (past 12 months)	6.9	16.7	11.6
Physical fighting on school property (past 12 months)	1.7	9.2	5.3
Carried a weapon (past 30 days)	2.6	9.5	5.7
Carried a weapon on school property (past 30 days)	0.5	1.5	1.0
<b>BULLYING VICTIMIZATION</b>			
Bullying victim (past 12 months)	26.9	24.3	25.9
Bullying victim on school property (past 12 months)	24.3	21.8	23.2
Cyberbullying victim (past 12 months)	21.7	16.1	19.2
<b>MENTAL HEALTH</b>			
Life "very" stressful (past 30 days)	44.8	22.7	34.8
Depressive symptoms (past 12 months)	27.8	12.6	21.2
Self-injury (past 12 months)	15.7	6.4	11.7
Considered suicide (past 12 months)	16.1	10.1	13.4
Attempted suicide (past 12 months)	3.9	3.1	3.4
<b>SEXUAL BEHAVIOR</b>			
Lifetime sexual intercourse	16.9	26.4	20.8
Currently sexually active (past 3 months)	13.6	17.7	15.3
Condom use at last intercourse <sup>§</sup>	71.4	63.2	67.3
<b>PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND BODY WEIGHT</b>			
Exercised for ≥60 minutes on 5 or more days/week	40.9	58.9	48.7
Overweight or obese <sup>**</sup>	17.1	25.9	21.0

\* Includes electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) like JUUL, Phix, Vuse, MarkTen, and blu, and other electronic vapor products, like vapes, vape pens, e-cigars, e-hookahs, hookah pens, and mods

† From 2006 to 2014, binge drinking was defined as 5 or more drinks in a row on one or more occasion for all students. Since 2016, binge drinking has been defined as 4 or more drinks in a row for females and 5 or more drinks in a row for males.

‡ Without a doctor's prescription

§ Among currently sexually active youth

\*\*Students who were ≥85th percentile for body mass index by age and gender, based on reference data

# Ashland High School (Grades 9-12)

## 2018 Key Indicator Patterns by Grade

*MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey*

	Grade (%)				Total (%)
	9 <sup>th</sup> (208)	10 <sup>th</sup> (194)	11 <sup>th</sup> (197)	12 <sup>th</sup> (165)	
<b>SUBSTANCE USE</b>					
Lifetime cigarette smoking	4.4	7.2	10.2	18.2	9.8
Current cigarette smoking (past 30 days)	1.0	1.0	3.6	6.7	2.9
Lifetime electronic vapor product use*	24.6	43.2	50.8	60.0	43.9
Current electronic vapor product use (past 30 days)*	18.2	32.8	39.6	46.0	33.7
Lifetime alcohol use	36.8	43.8	62.9	68.9	52.2
Current alcohol use (past 30 days)	15.6	26.3	34.5	33.3	27.0
Binge drinking (past 30 days) <sup>†</sup>	3.9	13.5	13.3	21.3	12.5
Rode with driver who had been drinking (past 30 days)	13.7	13.5	16.8	13.9	14.4
Lifetime marijuana use	6.4	28.3	40.8	46.3	29.9
Current marijuana use (past 30 days)	3.9	22.5	29.6	33.1	21.9
Lifetime prescription drug misuse <sup>‡</sup>	6.1	4.7	7.2	7.5	6.3
<b>VIOLENCE</b>					
Physical fighting (past 12 months)	16.4	9.8	10.2	8.6	11.6
Physical fighting on school property (past 12 months)	8.7	3.6	3.6	4.8	5.3
Carried a weapon (past 30 days)	7.7	2.6	6.6	6.1	5.7
Carried a weapon on school property (past 30 days)	1.0	0.5	1.5	1.2	1.0
<b>BULLYING VICTIMIZATION</b>					
Bullying victim (past 12 months)	32.4	24.7	21.0	24.4	25.9
Bullying victim on school property (past 12 months)	29.8	21.9	19.3	21.2	23.2
Cyberbullying victim (past 12 months)	20.9	19.7	19.3	16.5	19.2
<b>MENTAL HEALTH</b>					
Life "very" stressful (past 30 days)	28.6	24.0	40.5	48.4	34.8
Depressive symptoms (past 12 months)	19.2	19.2	28.0	17.6	21.2
Self-injury (past 12 months)	12.6	10.9	12.9	9.4	11.7
Considered suicide (past 12 months)	13.1	13.6	14.5	11.4	13.4
Attempted suicide (past 12 months)	4.0	3.6	3.1	3.1	3.4
<b>SEXUAL BEHAVIOR</b>					
Lifetime sexual intercourse	5.1	15.7	25.0	41.6	20.8
Currently sexually active (past 3 months)	3.5	8.9	20.4	32.1	15.3
Condom use at last intercourse <sup>§</sup>	71.4	76.5	64.1	66.0	67.3
<b>PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND BODY WEIGHT</b>					
Exercised for ≥60 minutes on 5 or more days/week	52.9	48.3	46.4	46.2	48.7
Overweight or obese**	16.5	21.6	27.0	18.9	21.0

\* Includes electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) like JUUL, Phix, Vuse, MarkTen, and blu, and other electronic vapor products, like vapes, vape pens, e-cigars, e-hookahs, hookah pens, and mods

† From 2006 to 2014, binge drinking was defined as 5 or more drinks in a row on one or more occasion for all students. Since 2016, binge drinking has been defined as 4 or more drinks in a row for females and 5 or more drinks in a row for males.

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**Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC)**

43 Foundry Avenue  
Waltham, MA 02453

[www.edc.org](http://www.edc.org)

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