

\*My heart cares and shows respect.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS of  
**BROOKLINE**



# Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey: Summary, Trends, and Next Steps

Fall 2023

# Agenda

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- MYRBS Introduction
- 2023 Summary and 10-year Trend Report (local, state, and national)
- Next Steps

# MA Youth Risk Behavior Survey

- The youth risk behavior survey (YRBS) was developed by the (CDC) to monitor behaviors that contribute to wellness and the leading causes of death, disease, injury, and social problems among youth.
  - DESE, in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), conducts the Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey (MYRBS) in randomly selected public middle and high schools in every odd-numbered year.
  - Many school districts and municipalities also conduct their own administration of the MYRBS in order to gather a deeper understanding of the needs of their community.

# MA Youth Risk Behavior Survey

The MYRBS consists of a middle school and high school survey:

- Emotional health and well-being
- Nutrition and physical activity
- Technology use
- Use of nicotine, alcohol, and other drug use
- Behaviors related to sexual activity and healthy decision-making
- Behaviors that contribute to unintentional injuries

These data can be used to:

- Understand the current prevalence of risk-taking behaviors and protective factors;
- Understand trends across time in risk-taking behaviors and protective factors;
- Compare current prevalence and trend data to local, state, and national data sets;
- **Inform, design, and refine programming that supports student wellness.**

# MA Youth Risk Behavior Survey

- In April 2023, an MYRBS introduction letter was sent to all PSB families who had a student in grades 6 to 12. This letter described the purpose of the MYRBS, how the MYRBS would be administered, access to the full list of MYRBS questions, and opt-out information.
  - 36 total students (less than 1% of students eligible) were opted out of the survey by their guardians. **It is important to note that students also had the opportunity to opt out of the survey at the point of administration.**
- In May 2023, the MYRBS was administered.
  - Students in grade 6 completed the survey during an advisory period or a core academic block, students in grades 7 and 8 completed the survey during a Health class, and students in grades 9 to 12 completed the survey during an Advisory period.

# MA Youth Risk Behavior Survey

- 2,271 PSB students in grades 6 to 12 participated in the MYRBS.
  - In grades 6 to 8, 1,367 students completed the survey (92.9% participation rate)
  - In grades 9 to 12, 904 students completed the survey (44% participation rate).
    - Participation rate was similar to 2021 administration, but lower than the participation rate obtained during the 2017, 2015, and 2013 administrations of the YRBS (which were 75%).
- The demographics of the students who completed the survey were compared to the demographics data of all students in PSB. A separate analysis was also completed to compare the demographic data of BHS students.
  - The race/ethnicity data provided by students who completed the 2023 MYRBS was generally consistent with the race/ethnicity data of the full population of students who attend PSB.
  - Students who identified as African American/Black were underrepresented in the BHS sample and students who identified as White were slightly overrepresented in the BHS sample.

Race/Ethnicity	2022-2023 DESE	2022-2023 YRBS (n=904)
African American/Black	7.4%	5.0%
Asian	16.0%	17.1%
Hispanic/Latinx	12.9%	12.4%
Multi-Race Non-Hispanic	10.3%	11.1%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.1%
Native American	0.0%	0.4%
White	53.3%	58.8%

# MA Youth Risk Behavior Survey

- Although a relatively similar number of male and female-identifying students completed the Middle School 2023 MYRBS, **56.1% of the BHS respondents identified as female.**
- 28.1% of respondents to the middle school 2023 MYRBS were in 6th grade, 34.6% were in 7th grade, and 37.3% were in 8th grade.
- For the high school 2023 MYRBS, 32.3% of respondents were in 9th grade, 27.0% were in 10th grade, 23% were in 11th grade, and 17.7% were in 12th grade.



# MA Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Demographics	All Students (n=2271)	High School (n=904)	Middle School (n=1367)
<b>Sex Assigned at Birth</b>			
Female	52.6%	56.1%	50.3%
Male	46.0%	41.7%	48.9%
Intersex	0.2%	0.3%	0.1%
<b>Gender Identity</b>			
Female (Cisgender)	46.3%	47.7%	47.0%
Male (Cisgender)	43.9%	39.4%	47.0%
Transgender	0.9%	0.9%	1.1%
Non-binary, agender, gender fluid, or genderqueer	6.3%	9.7%	4.1%
I describe my gender identity in some other way	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%
<b>Sexual Identity</b>			
Heterosexual (straight)	68.3%	60.9%	73.5%
Gay or lesbian	5.8%	9.6%	3.2%
Bisexual	8.7%	13.7%	5.4%
Questioning	8.7%	6.6%	10.2%
I describe my sexual identity in some other way	8.4%	9.3%	7.8%
<b>IEP<sup>a</sup></b>	11.8%	12.2%	11.6%
<b>504 Accommodations</b>	7.3%	10.8%	4.9%
<b>Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch<sup>c</sup></b>	28.1%	14.4%	37.2%

<sup>a</sup>Students endorsing "I'm not sure": 23.4% for all students; 10.5% for BHS, and 31.9% for middle school.

<sup>b</sup>Students endorsing "I'm not sure": 31.0% for all students, 14.7% for BHS, and 41.8% for middle school

<sup>b</sup>Students endorsing "I'm not sure": 31.4% for all students, 23.7% for BHS, and 36.6% for middle school.

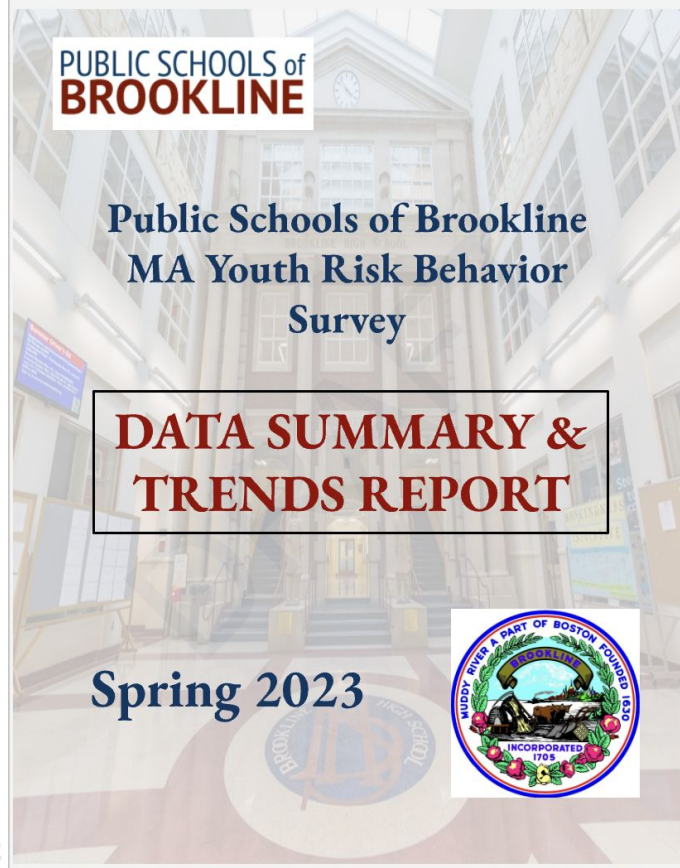
All data are provided directly  
by students.



# Data Summary and Trends Report

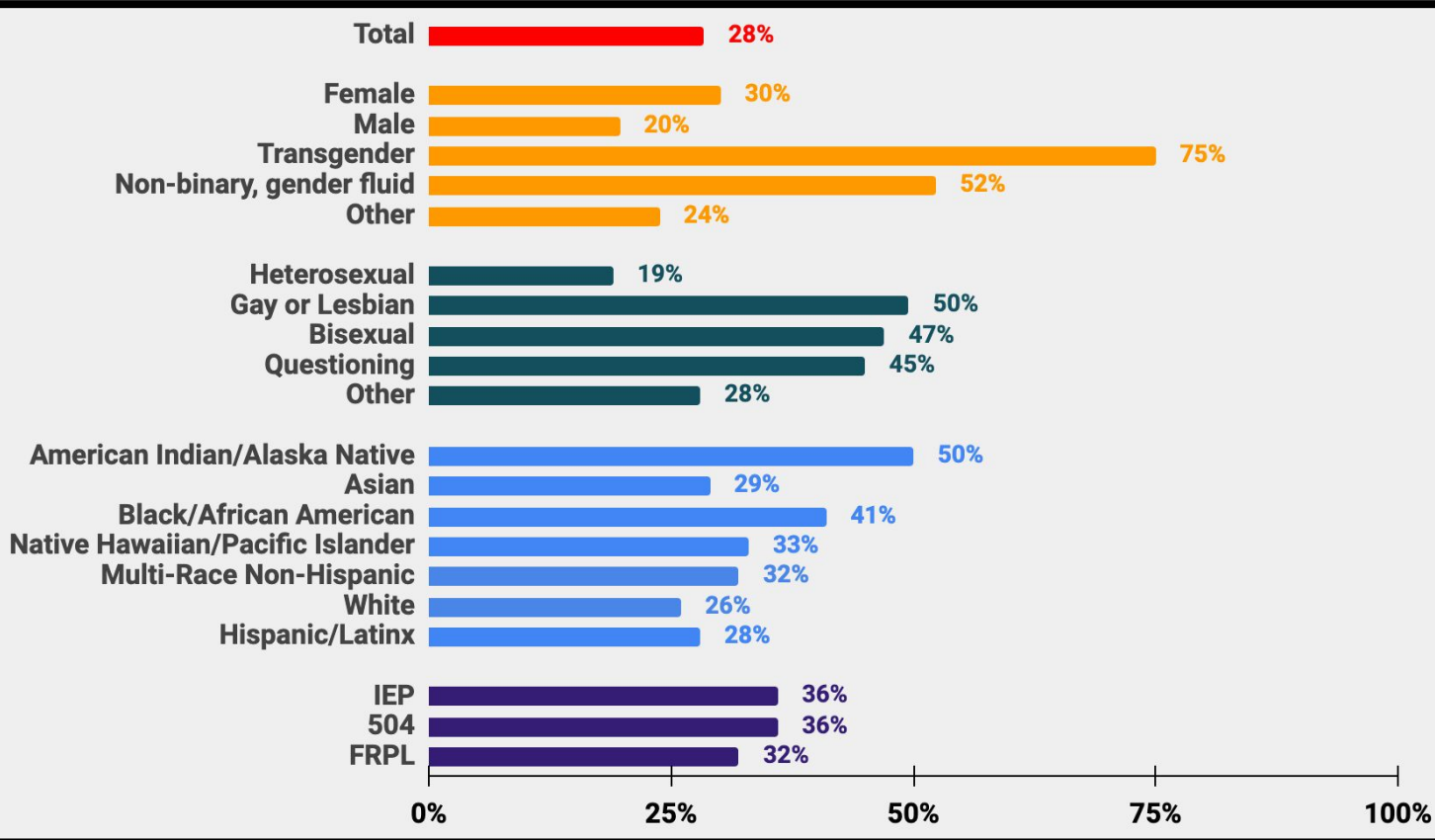
- Mental Health and Protective Factors
- Substance Use
- Safety
- Technology Use and Sleep

# Data Summary and Trends Report



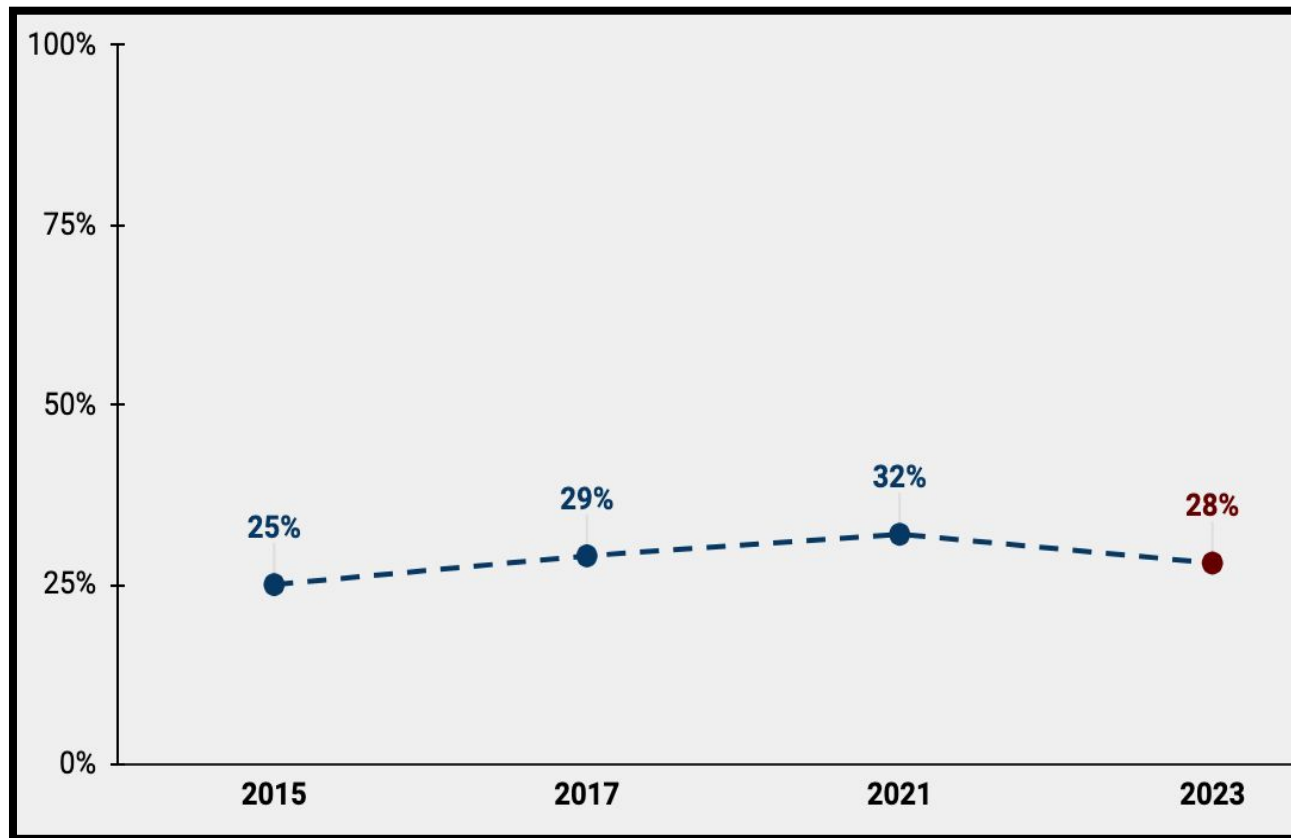
The full data and summary trends report will be publicly available on the PSB Website.

# BHS Persistent Feelings of Sadness or Hopelessness



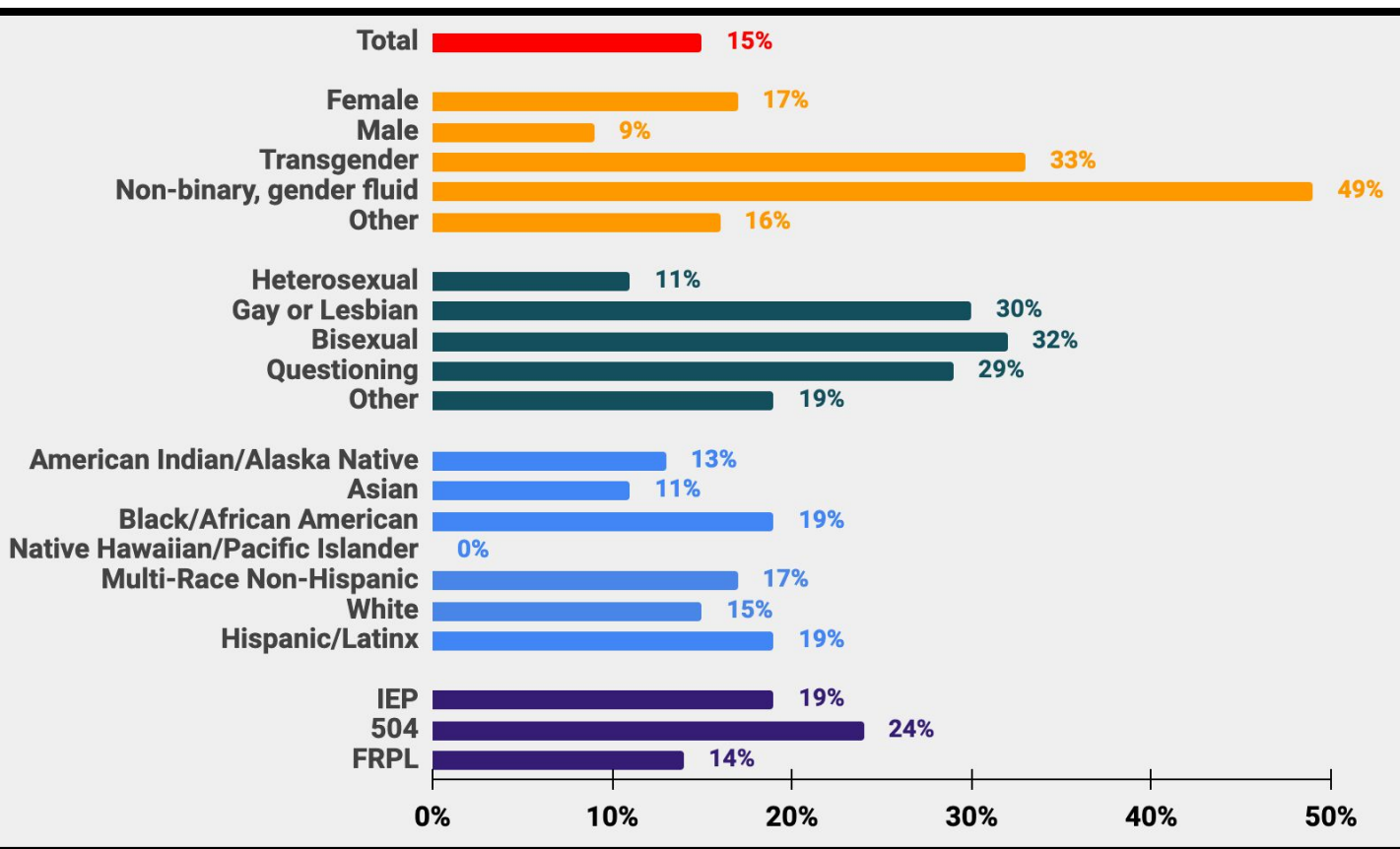
Students who identified as female, LGBTQ+, AAPI, Black/African American, or Multi-Race Non-Hispanic, and students who report being in special education, having a 504 accommodation plan, or being eligible for free or reduced-price lunch were more likely to report persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness.

# BHS Persistent Feelings of Sadness or Hopelessness (Brookline Trend Data)



**In 2021, 42% of high school students nationally and 34% of students in MA reported persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness on the YRBS.**

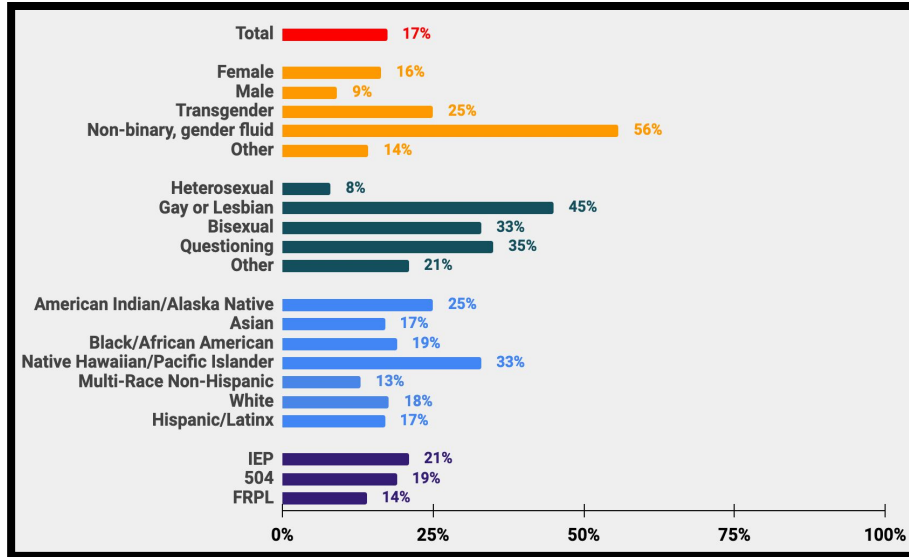
# Middle School Persistent Feelings of Sadness or Hopelessness



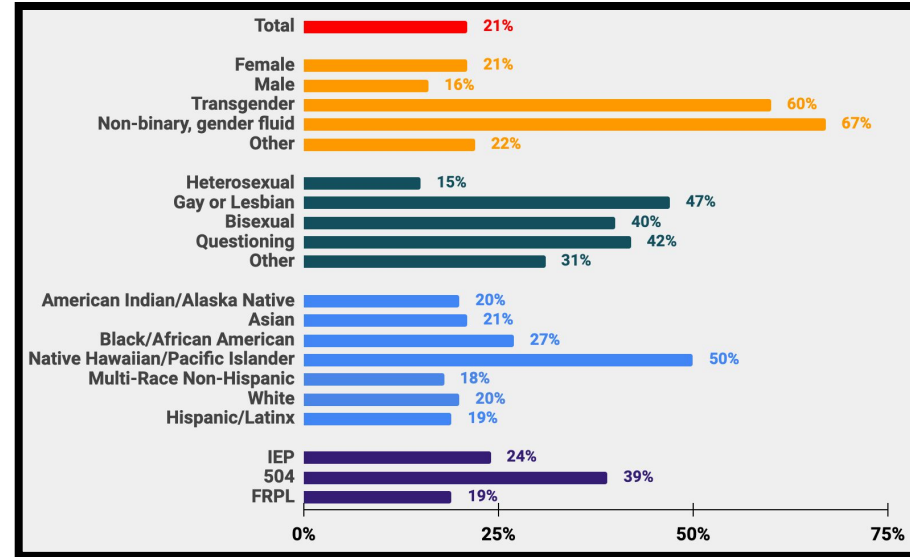
Students who identified as LGBTQ+, Black/African American, or Hispanic/Latinx, and students who reported being in special education or having a 504 accommodation plan were more likely to report persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness.

# Engagement in Self-Injury

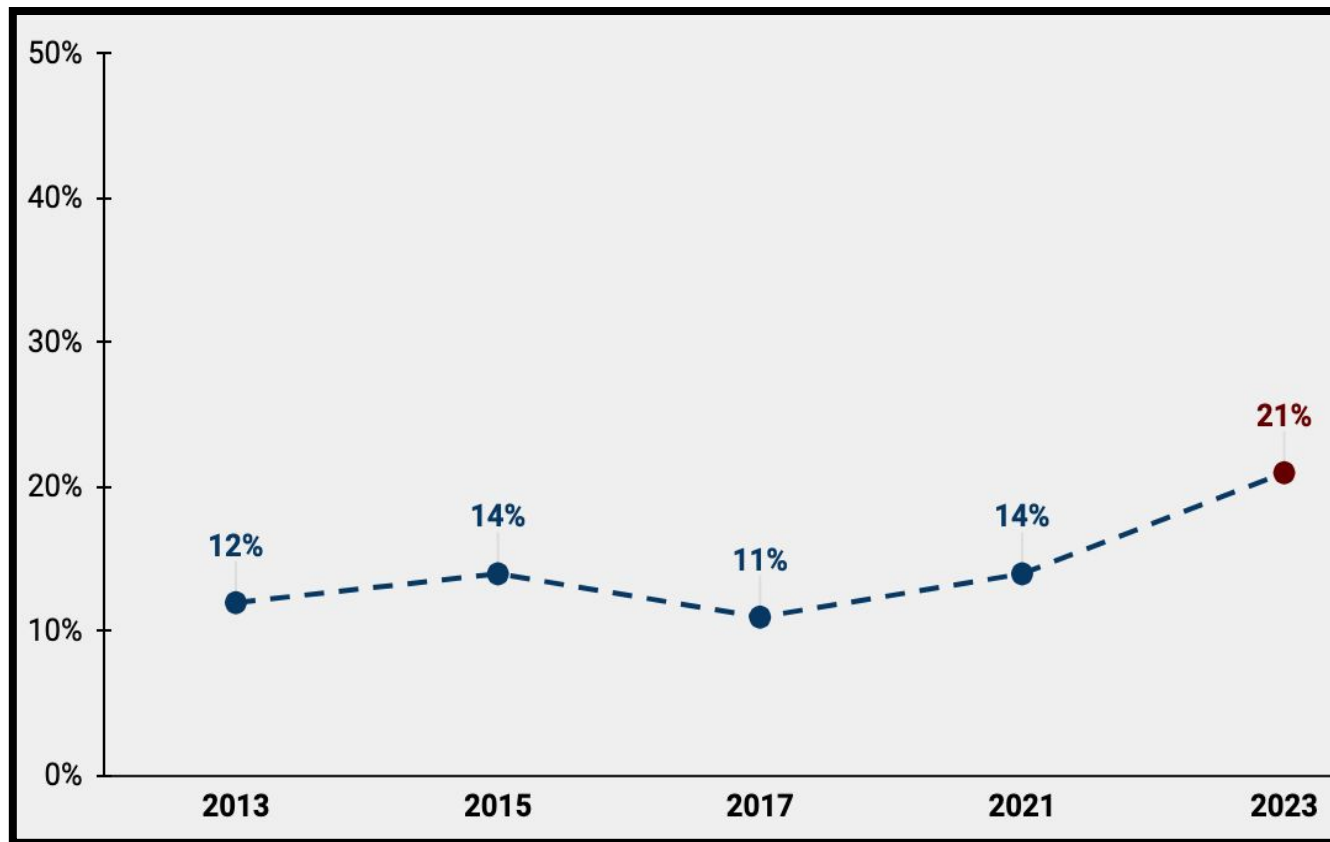
## BHS



## Middle School



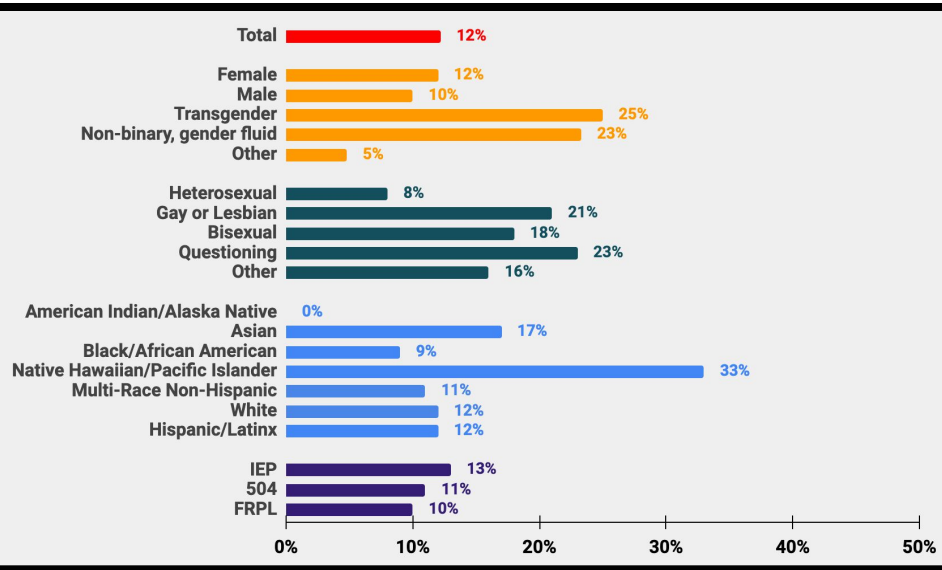
# Middle School Engagement in Self-Injury



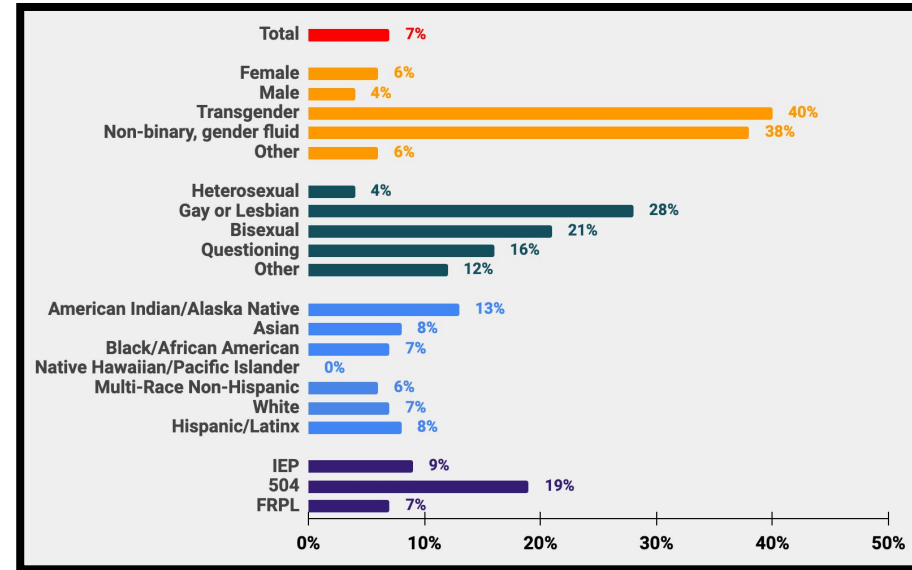


# Seriously Considering Suicide

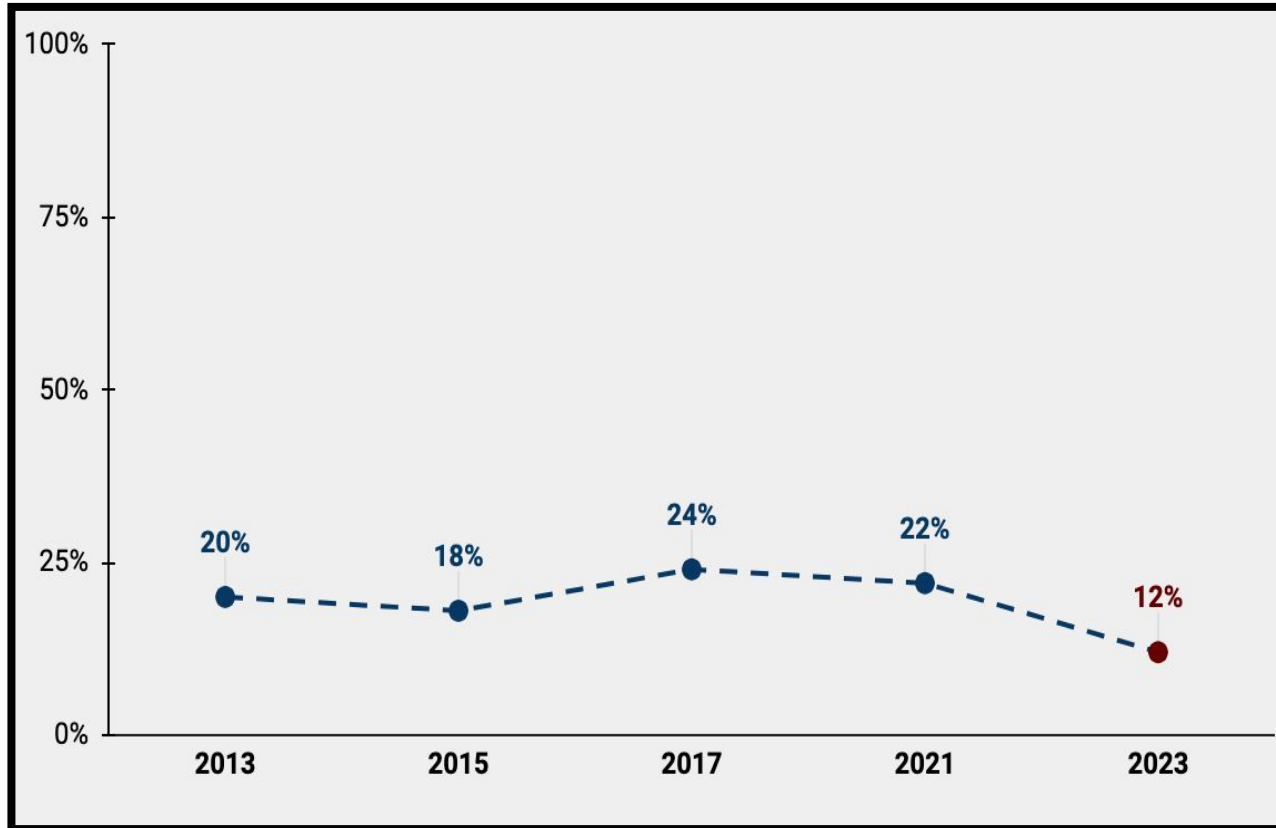
## BHS



## Middle School

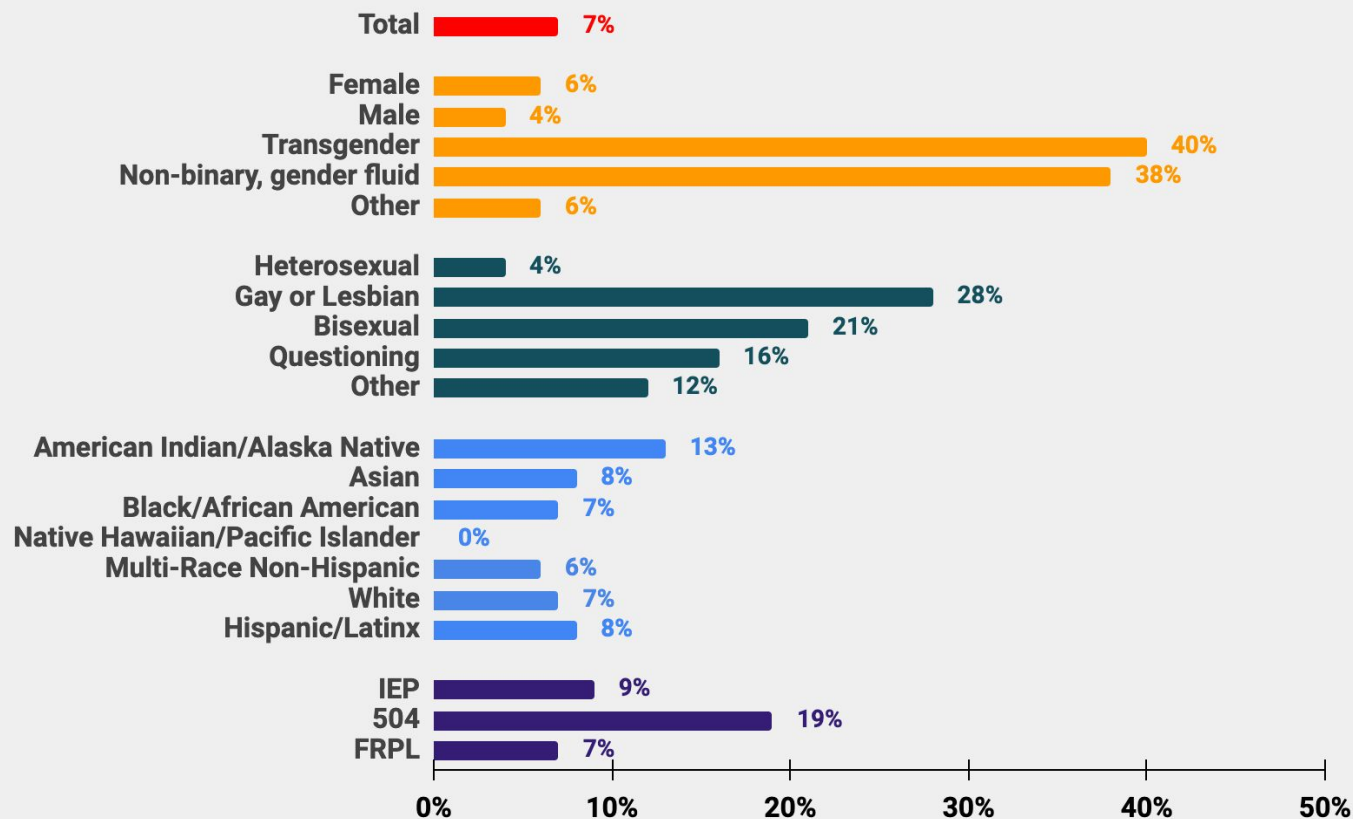


# BHS Seriously Considered Suicide



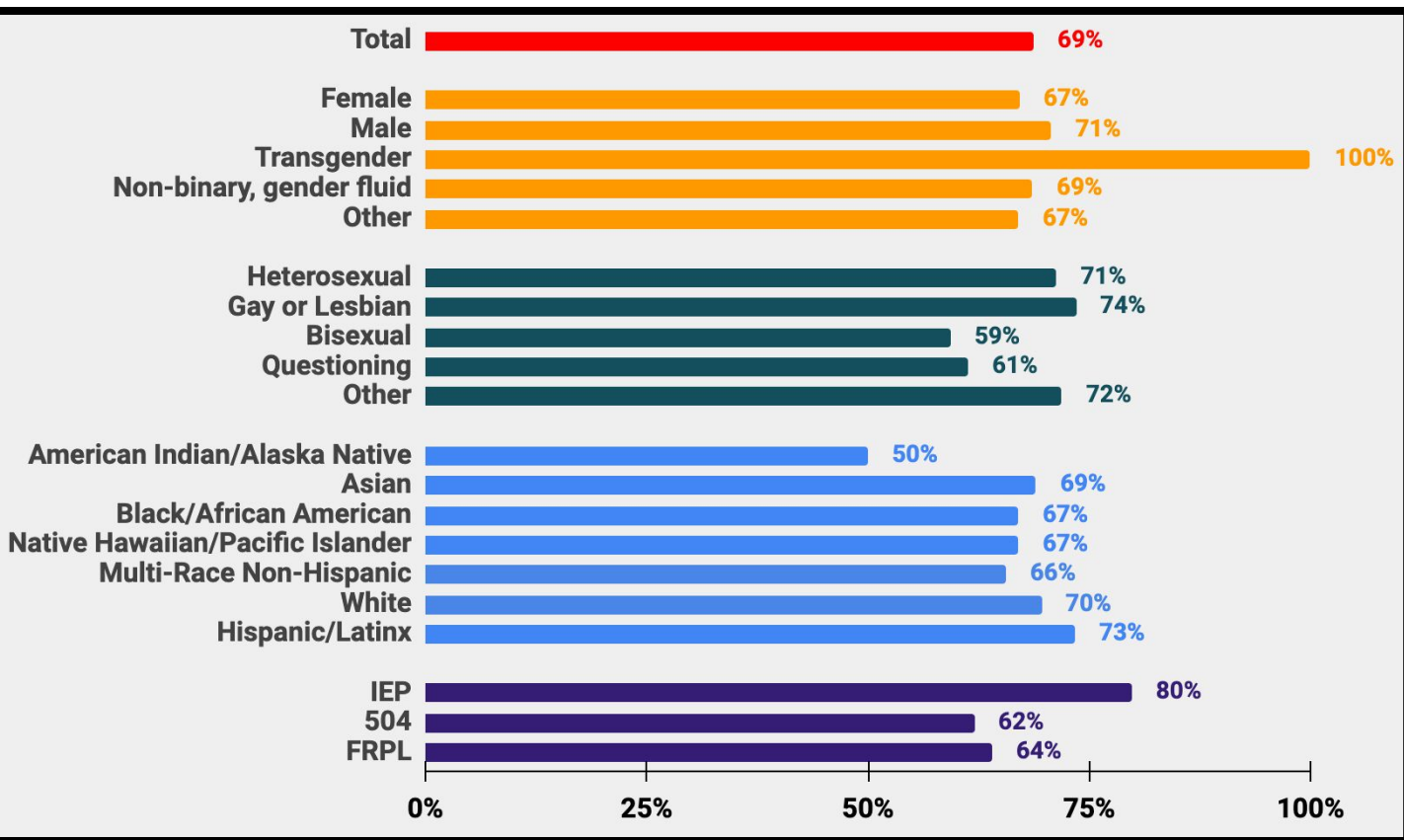
**In 2021, 22% of high school students nationally and 15% of high school students in MA reported seriously considering suicide on YRBS.**

# Middle School Seriously Considered Suicide



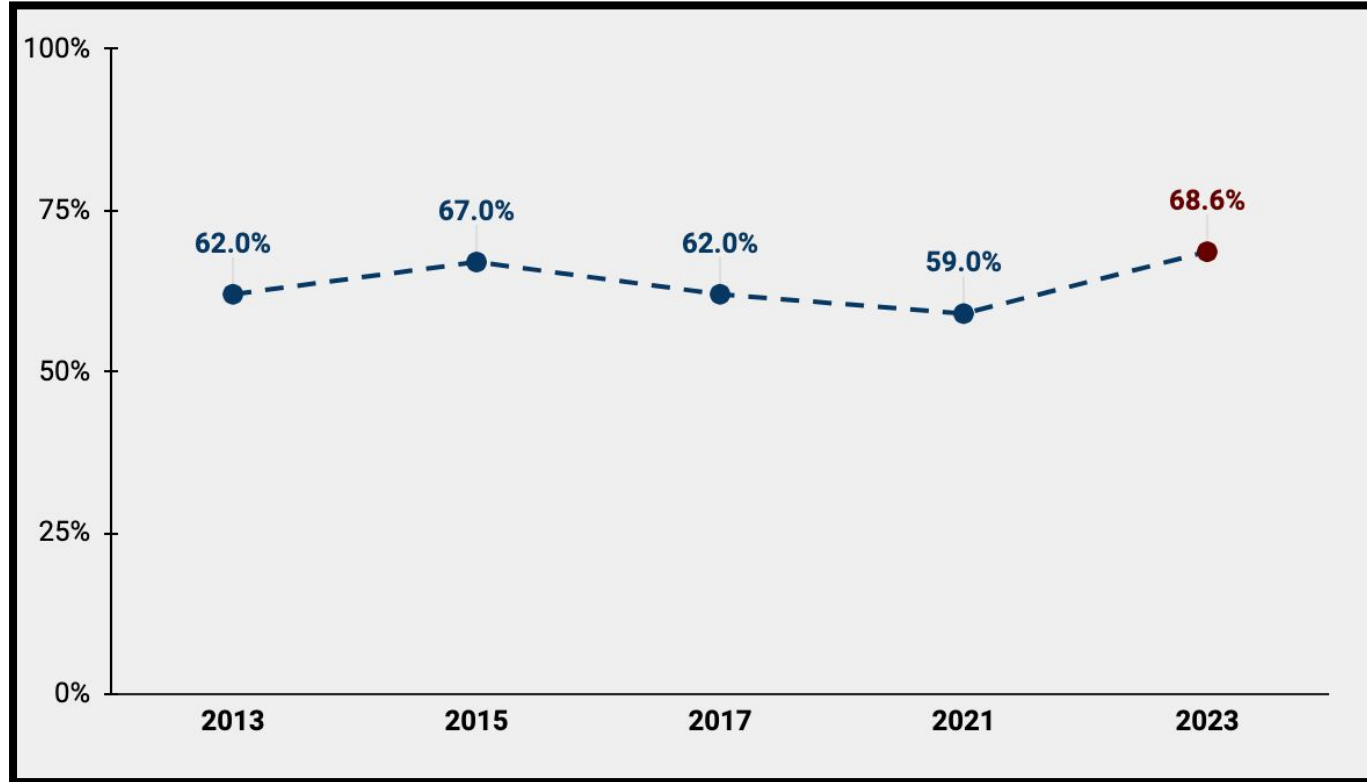
Students who identified as LGBTQ+ or reported having a 504 accommodation plan were more likely to report seriously considering suicide.

# BHS Safe Adult at School

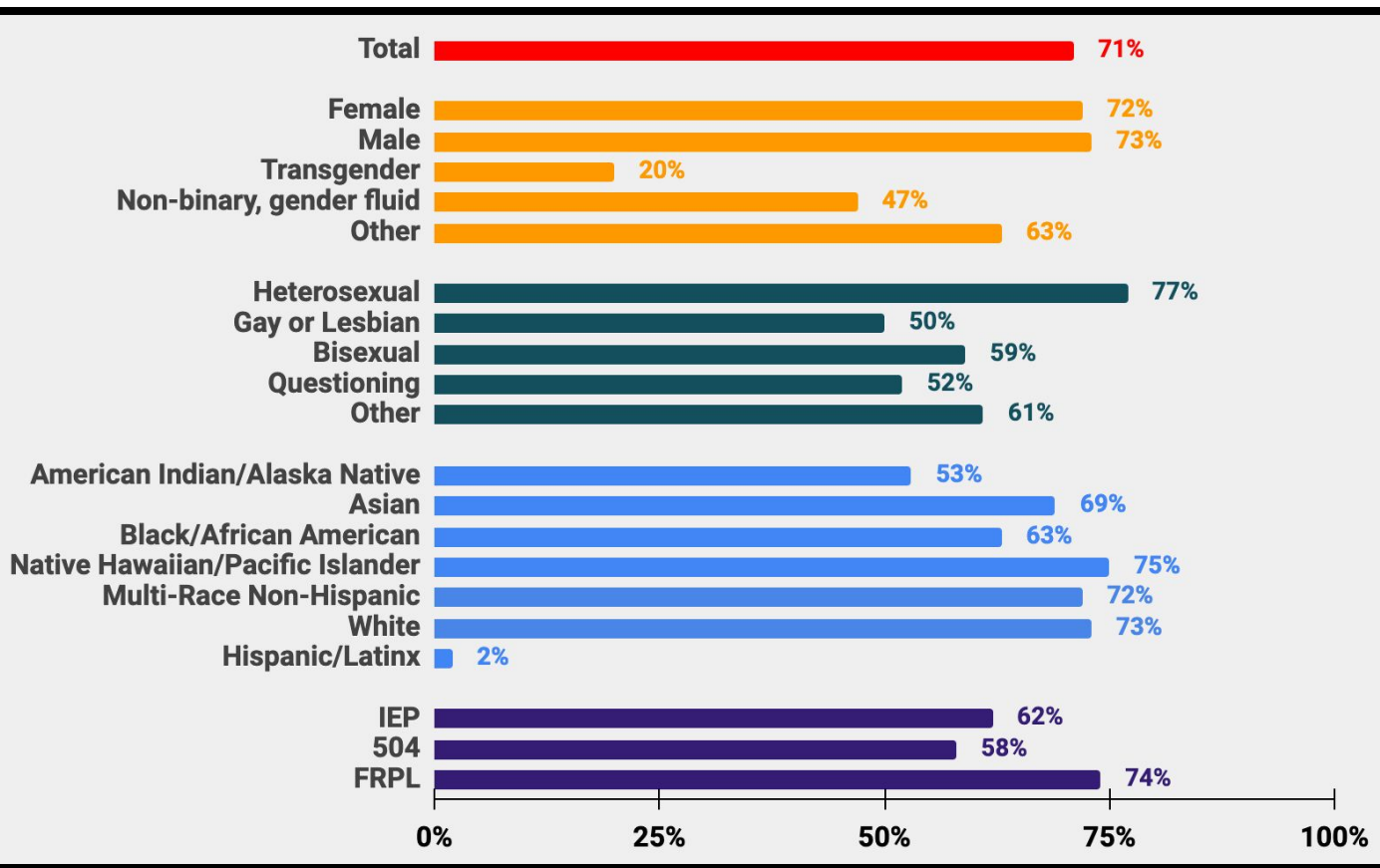


Students who identified as bisexual or questioning or reported having a 504 accommodation plan were slightly less likely to be able to identify a safe adult at school.

# BHS Safe Adult at School (Trend Data)



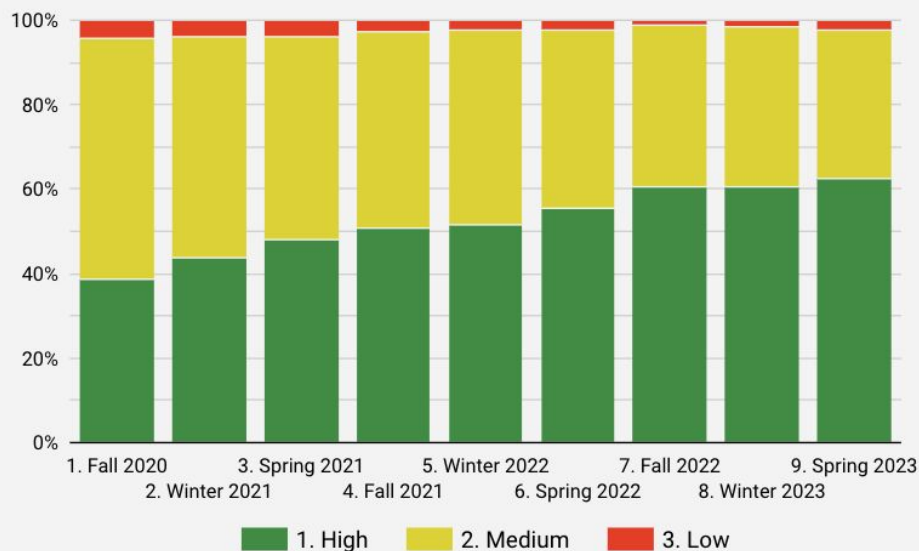
# Middle School School Belonging



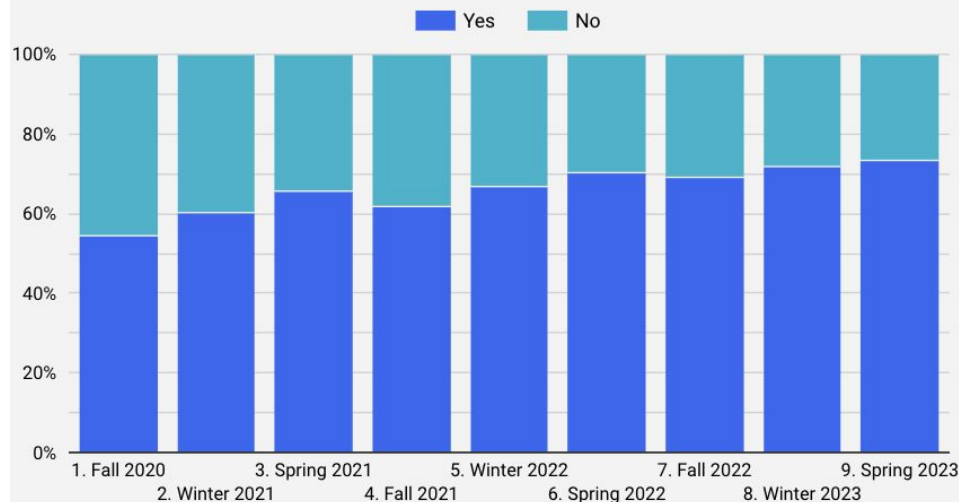
Students who identified as LGBTQ+, Black/African American, or reported being in special education or having a 504 accommodation plan were less likely to endorse strong school belonging.

# Grades 6 to 12 Belonging Data, Safe Adult Data

% of Students Endorsing High, Medium, and Low School Belonging

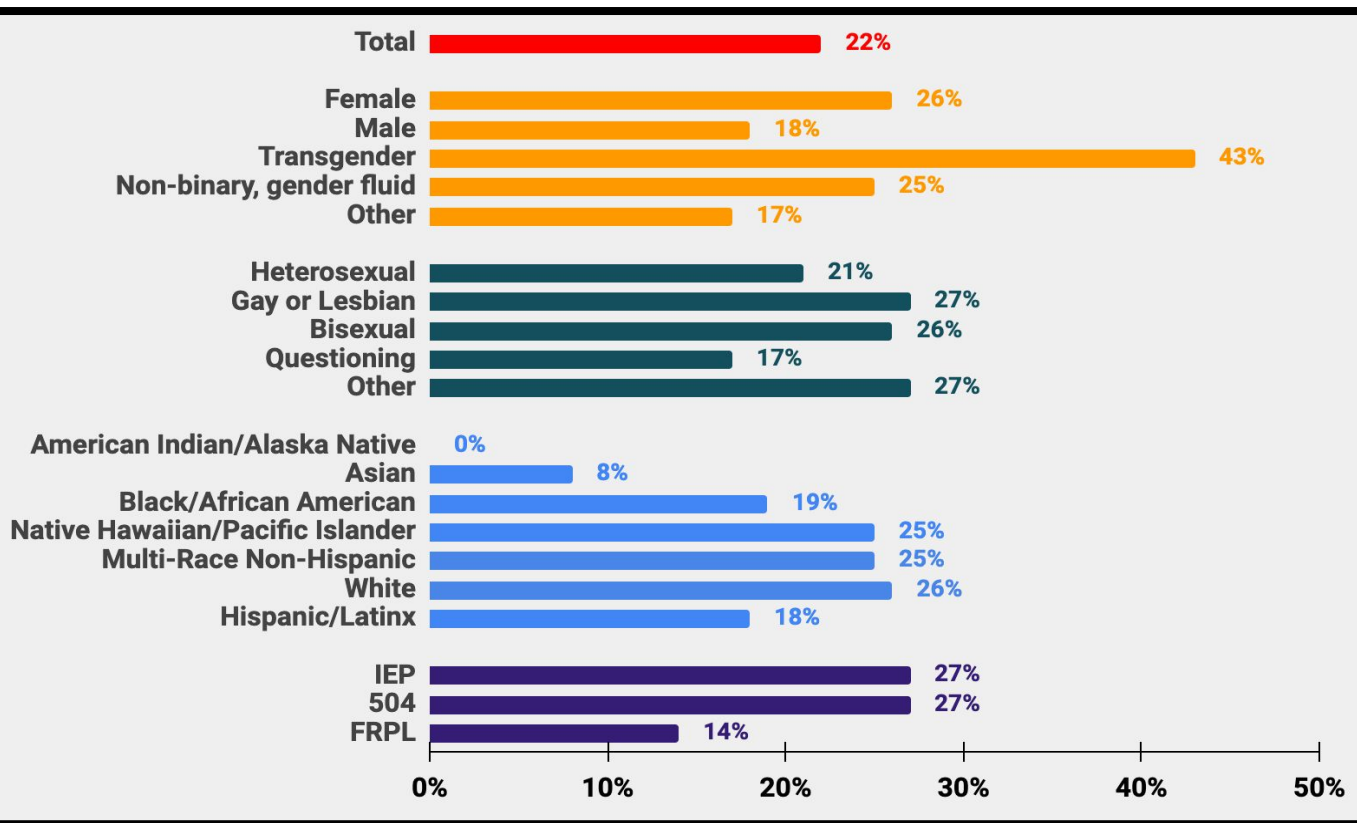


Safe Adult at School by Measurement Occasion





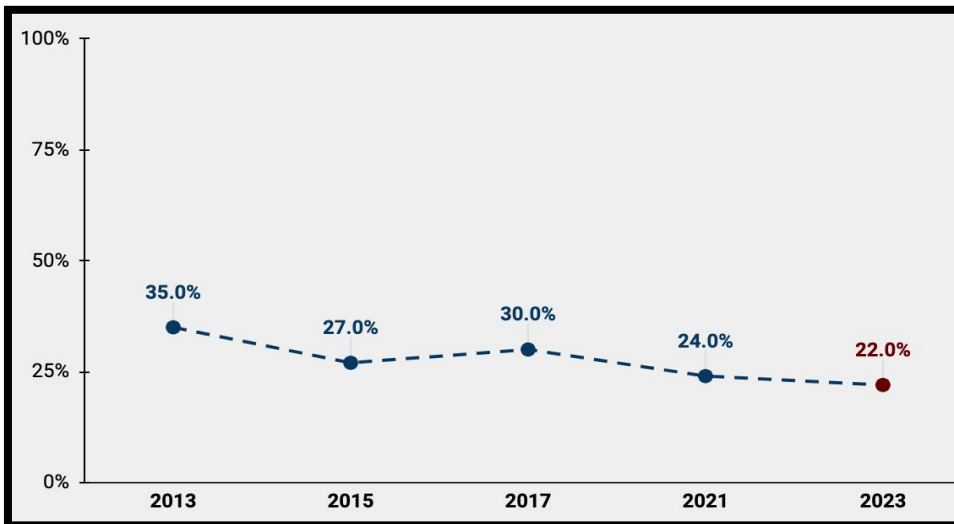
# BHS Alcohol Use Last 30 days



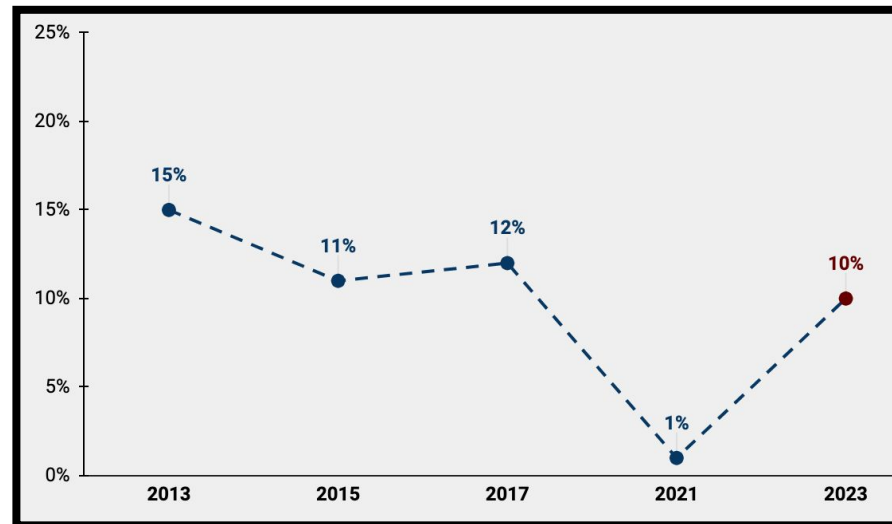
Students who identified as female, transgender, non-binary, gay or lesbian, bisexual, White, Multi-Race Non-Hispanic, and students who reported being in special education or having a 504 accommodation plan were more likely to have used alcohol in the last 30 days.

# Alcohol Use Last 30 days

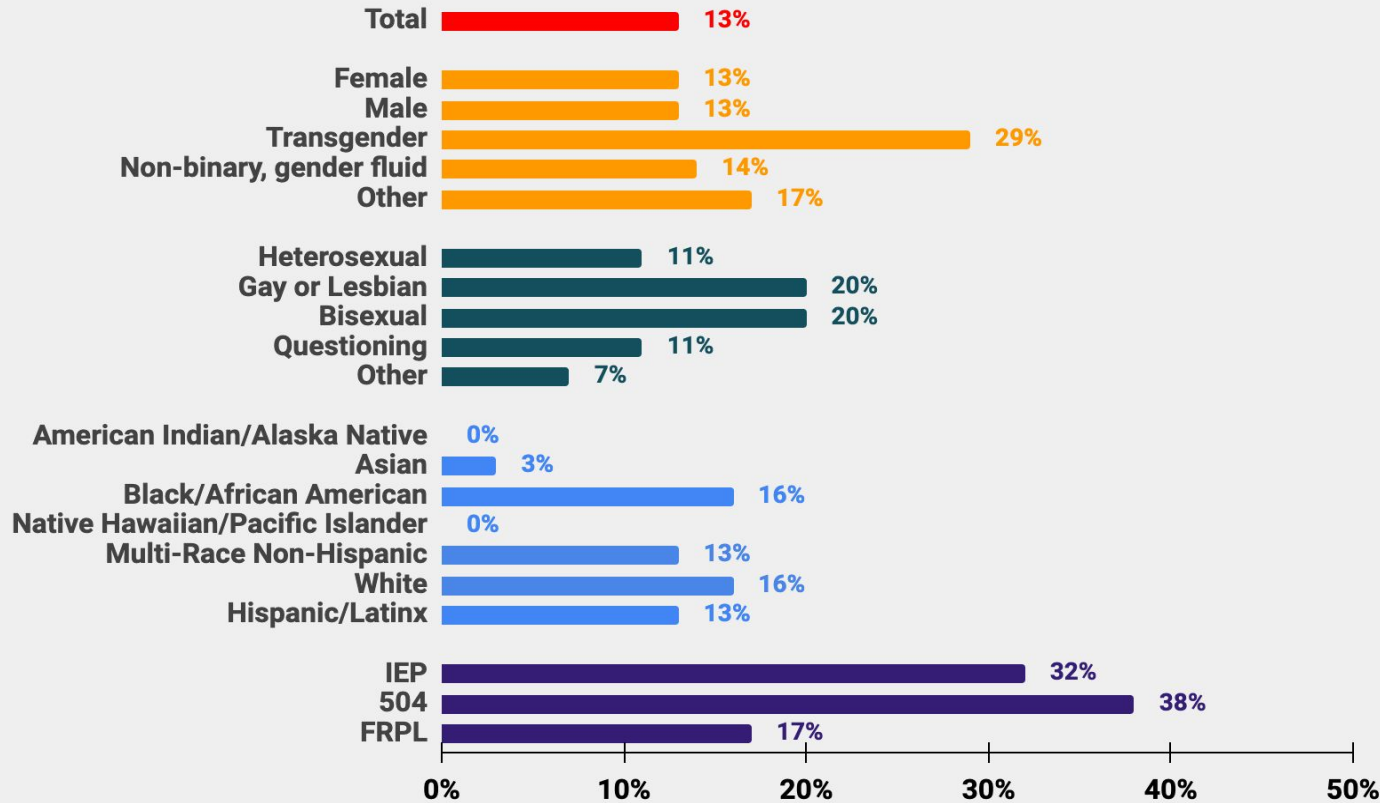
## BHS



## Middle School

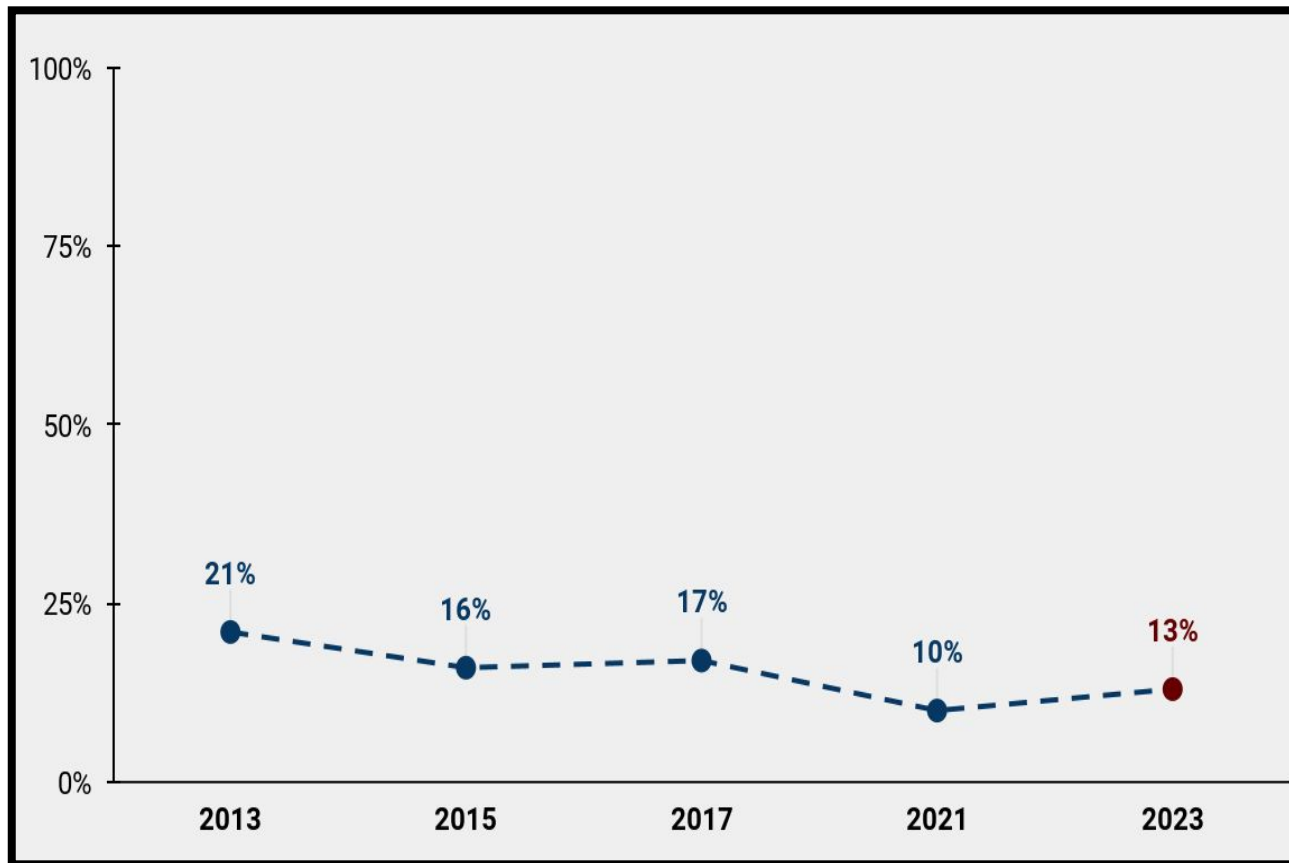


# BHS Marijuana Use (Last 30 Days)



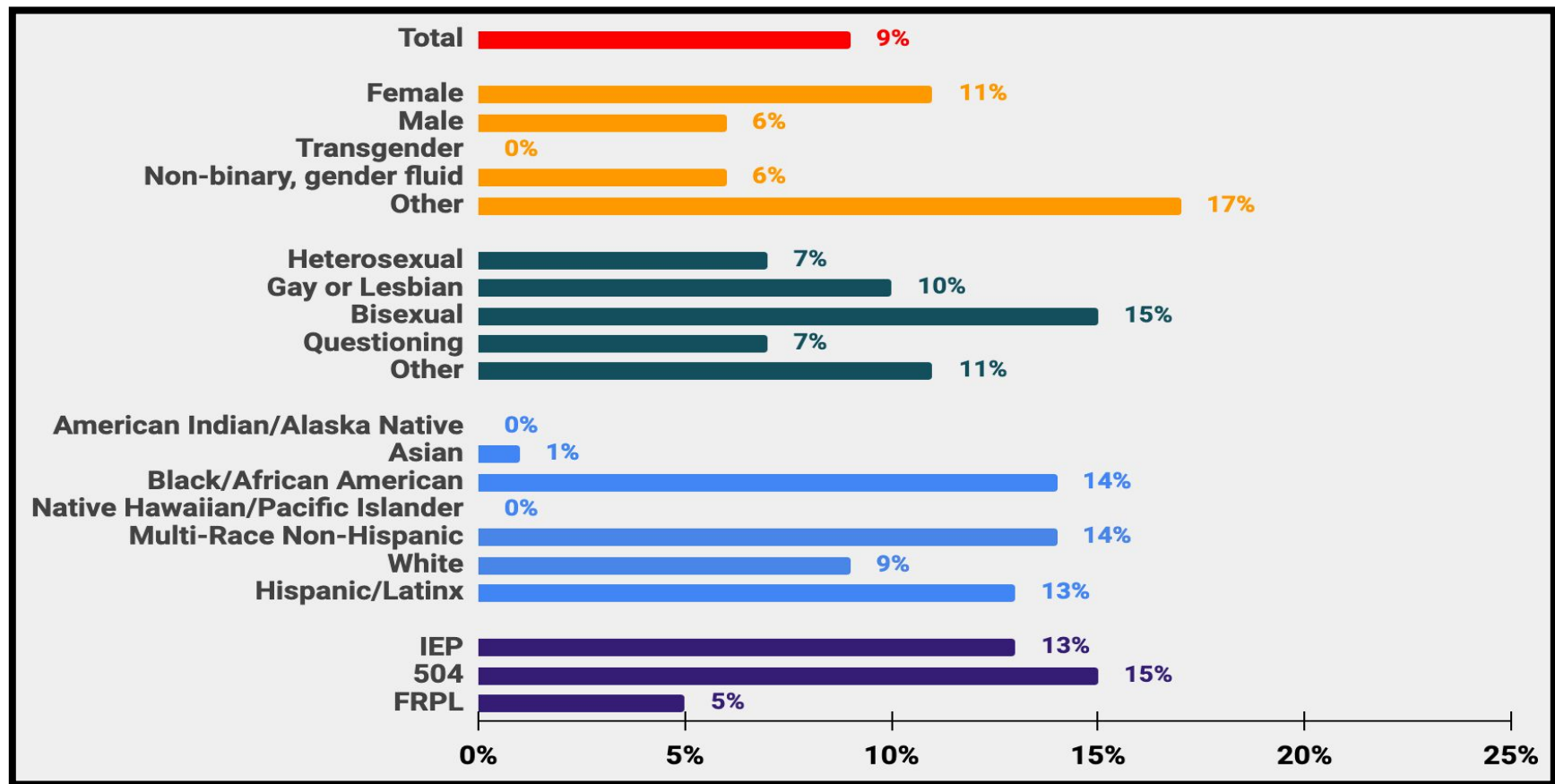
Students who identified as transgender, gay or lesbian, or bisexual and students who reported being in special education or having a 504 accommodation plan were more likely to have used marijuana in the last 30 days.

# BHS Trends in Marijuana Use (Last 30 Days)



**In 2021, 16% of high school students nationally and 18% of high school students in MA reported using marijuana in the last 30 days on the YRBS.**

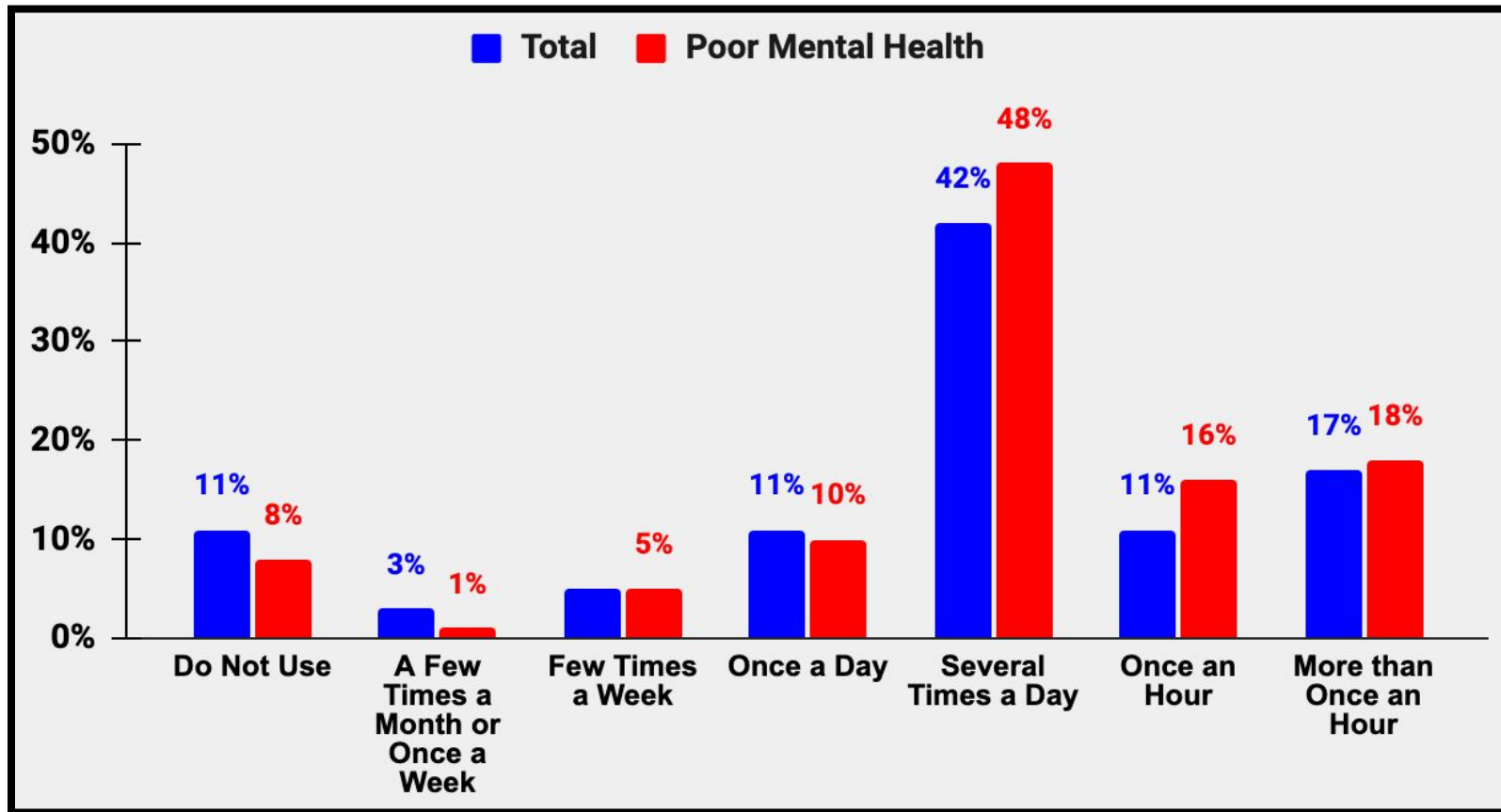
# BHS Electronic Vapor Use Last 30 days



# Middle School Substance Use

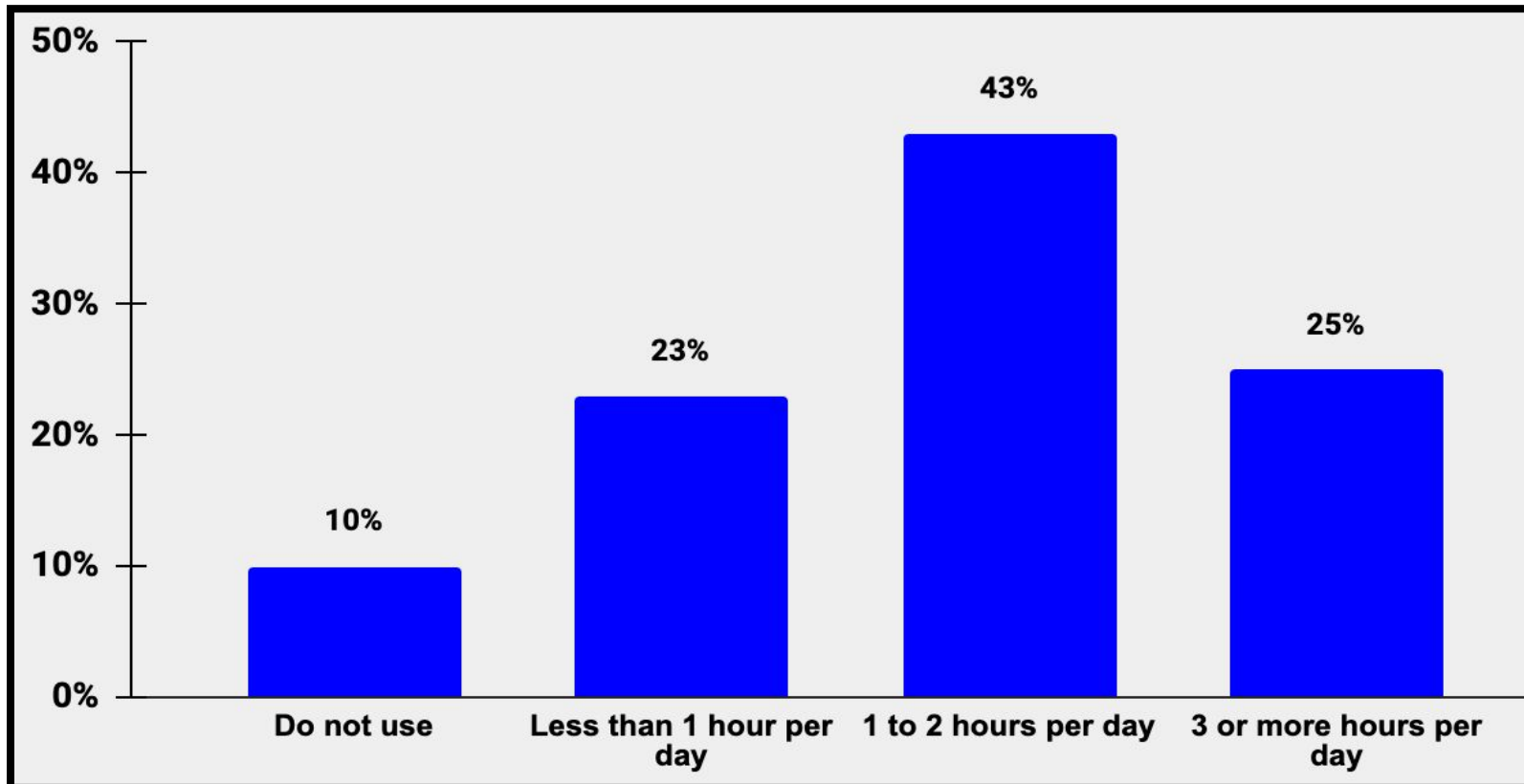
- In 2023, 2% of middle school students reported lifetime use of marijuana and 3% of middle school students reported having tried a vape product in their lifetime.

# BHS Frequency of Social Media Use

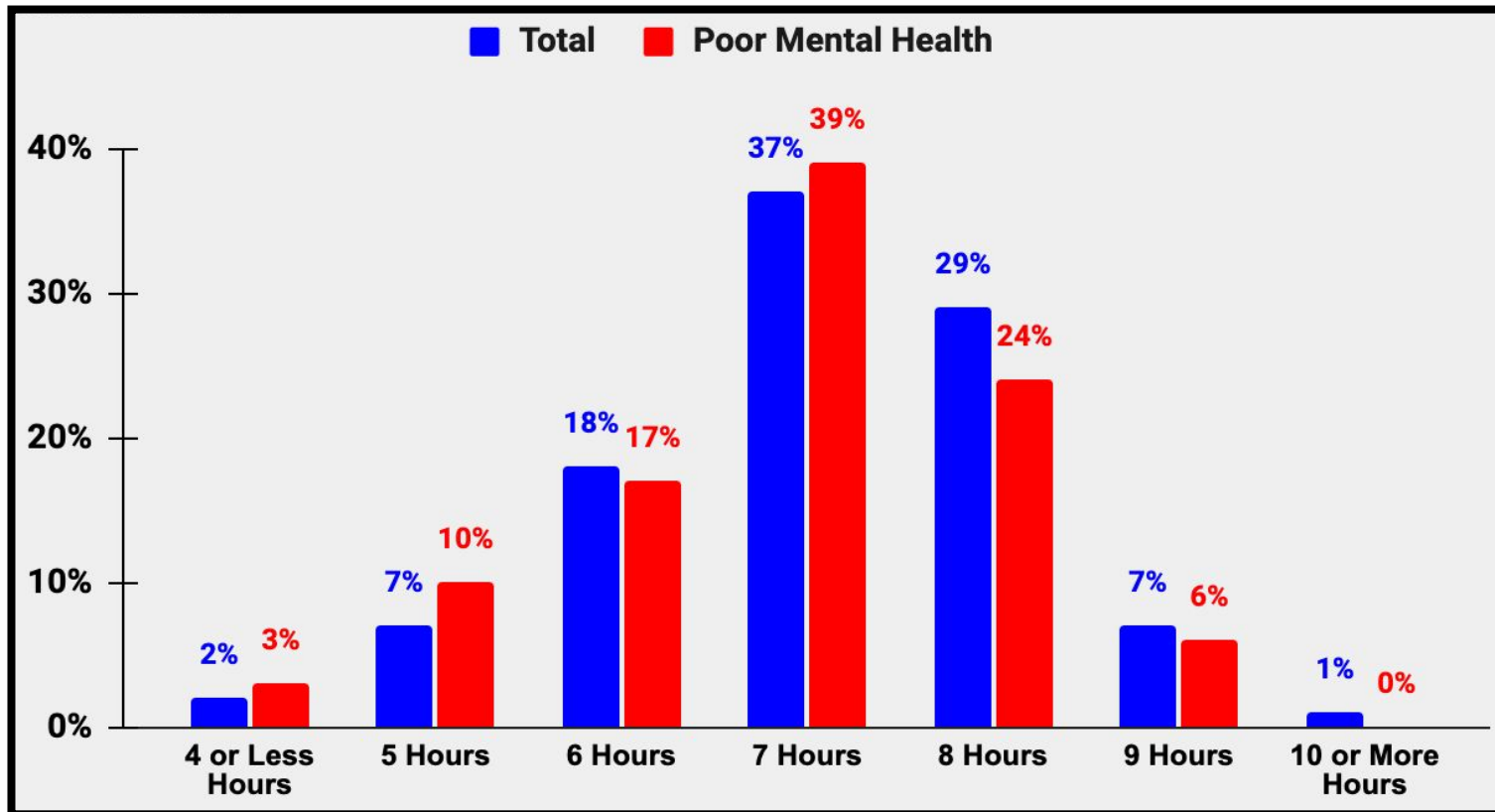




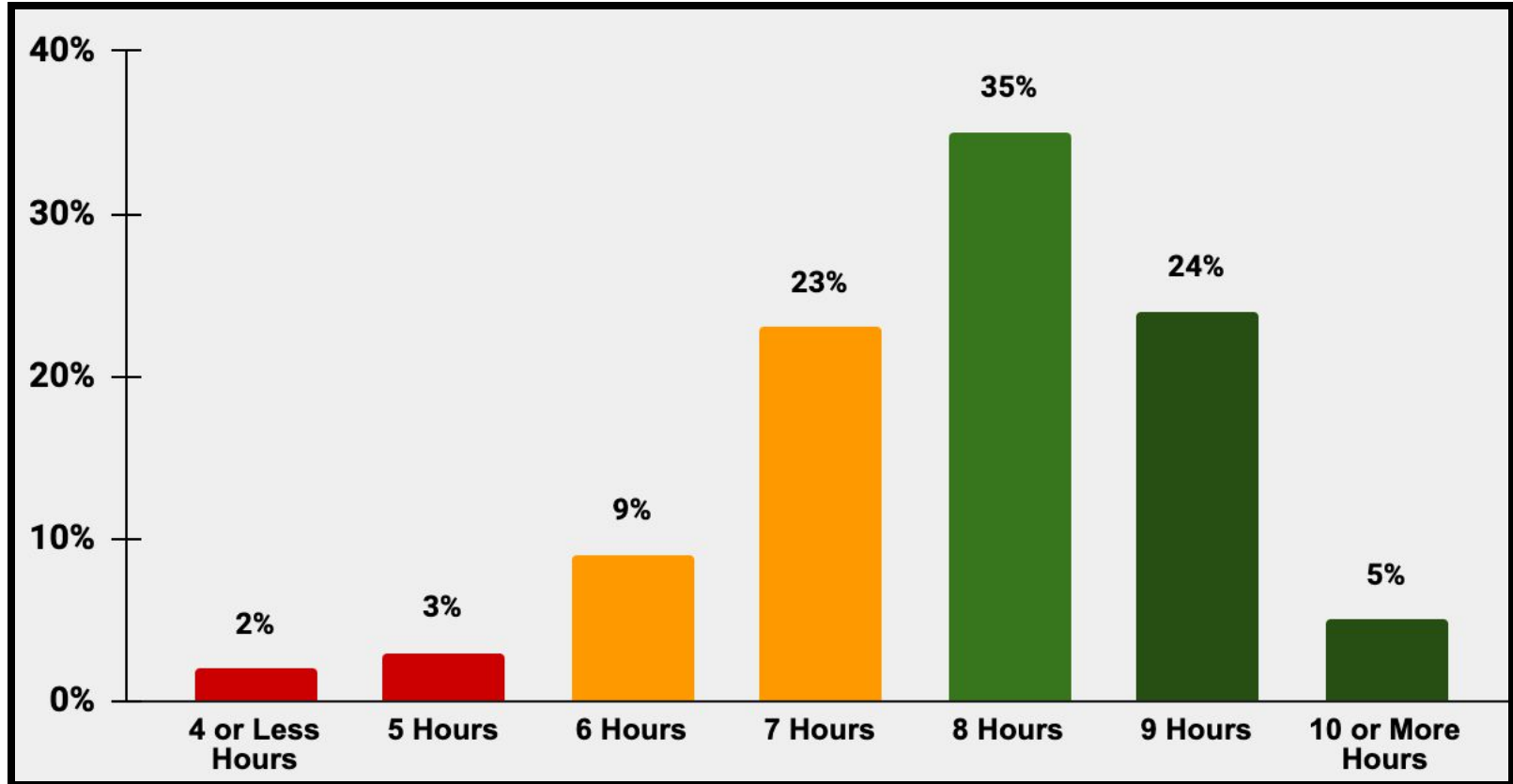
# Middle School Frequency of Screen Time



# BHS Sleep



# Middle School Sleep



# Next (and on-going) Steps

## Proactive Supports

- Actively teaching social-emotional skills in K to 5 classrooms (Second Step)
- Ongoing prioritization of belonging and relationships for all staff
- Signs of Suicide (SOS) in 7th and 9th grade (self injury)
- Ongoing skills instruction in health classes around healthy coping, relationships, safety, and engagement in health-promoting behaviors.
- Queer Student Union at BHS

# Next (and on-going) Steps

## Proactive Supports

- Parent and Guardian Workshops
  - What are you Puffing? Vaping and our Youth on October 25, 2023 from 6:00 – 7:30 pm
  - Healthy Balance: Screen Time on December 6, 2023 from 6:00 – 7:30 pm.
  - The Digital Well-Being Playbook, on January 24, 2024 from 6:00 – 7:30 pm.
  - November 7, MLK Room at 7pm – Planned Parenthood presentation “Let’s Be Honest,” targeting 8th and 9th grade parents about creating an environment of trust and comfort in talking with children about relationships and sexuality.

# Next (and on-going) Steps

## Responsive Supports

- Adjustment counselors in all K to 8 schools
- Ongoing small-group therapeutic groups in all K to 8 schools
- Ongoing school-based individual counseling for students in PreK to 12
- Cartwheel Care
- Brookline Center
- Quincy Family Resource Center

# Partnership with the Brookline Public Health

- MOU between PSB and DPH has been finalized.
- At BHS, Peer Leadership and SHARP warriors work to create a healthier school culture.
  - Peer Leadership focuses on substance use prevention, violence prevention, and improving student mental health.
- Social workers from BPHHS sees all students who are found to be using substances, but also anyone who is at risk of using, those who self-identify as needing help, and family members.
- Annual Wellness Summit: During the last school year, the team held a wellness summit to foster youth lead community conversations around preventing and intervening student substance use and violence prevention. In the summit both problems and solutions were identified.
- Brookline Marijuana Research Study to be finalized this fall
- Community Health Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan

# Resources

- **988:** Anyone can call or text this number to receive immediate confidential support for yourself or someone else that is experiencing distress.
- **The Trevor Project:** Provides 24/7 support for people who are LGBTQ+
  - Call 1-866-488-7386 or text START to 678678
- **Massachusetts Behavioral Health Helpline:** Call or text 833-773-2445
  - It serves as a resource for finding government benefits and services, nonprofit organizations, support groups, volunteer opportunities, donation programs, and other local resources.
- **Instride Health:** <https://www.instride.health/for-providers/>
- **New Harbor Behavioral Health Care:** <https://newharborbh.com/>
- **Boston Children's Digital Wellness Lab:** <https://digitalwellnesslab.org/parents/>



# Questions and Answers

