

# Whatcom County

## Highlights from the Healthy Youth Survey 2025



WHATCOM COUNTY  
HEALTH AND  
COMMUNITY  
SERVICES



*"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."  
Benjamin Franklin*

# Healthy Youth Survey 2025



This is only a first look at some select topics. A full planning process will be used over time to better understand and utilize the results.



# About the Survey

- Administered in the Fall statewide since 2002
- Administered every two years to youth in grades 6, 8, 10 & 12
- Measures a variety of teen health attitudes and behaviors
- Students across Washington participated in the survey
- 4,565 youth participated in Whatcom County, representing seven school districts.

# HYS Topic Areas

## **Includes, but not limited to:**

- Mental health
- Substance use
- Social media and screen time
- Fitness
- Nutrition
- School success and performance
- Health conditions and health care
- Gambling
- Bullying
- Eating disorders
- Violence
- Safety
- Injury prevention

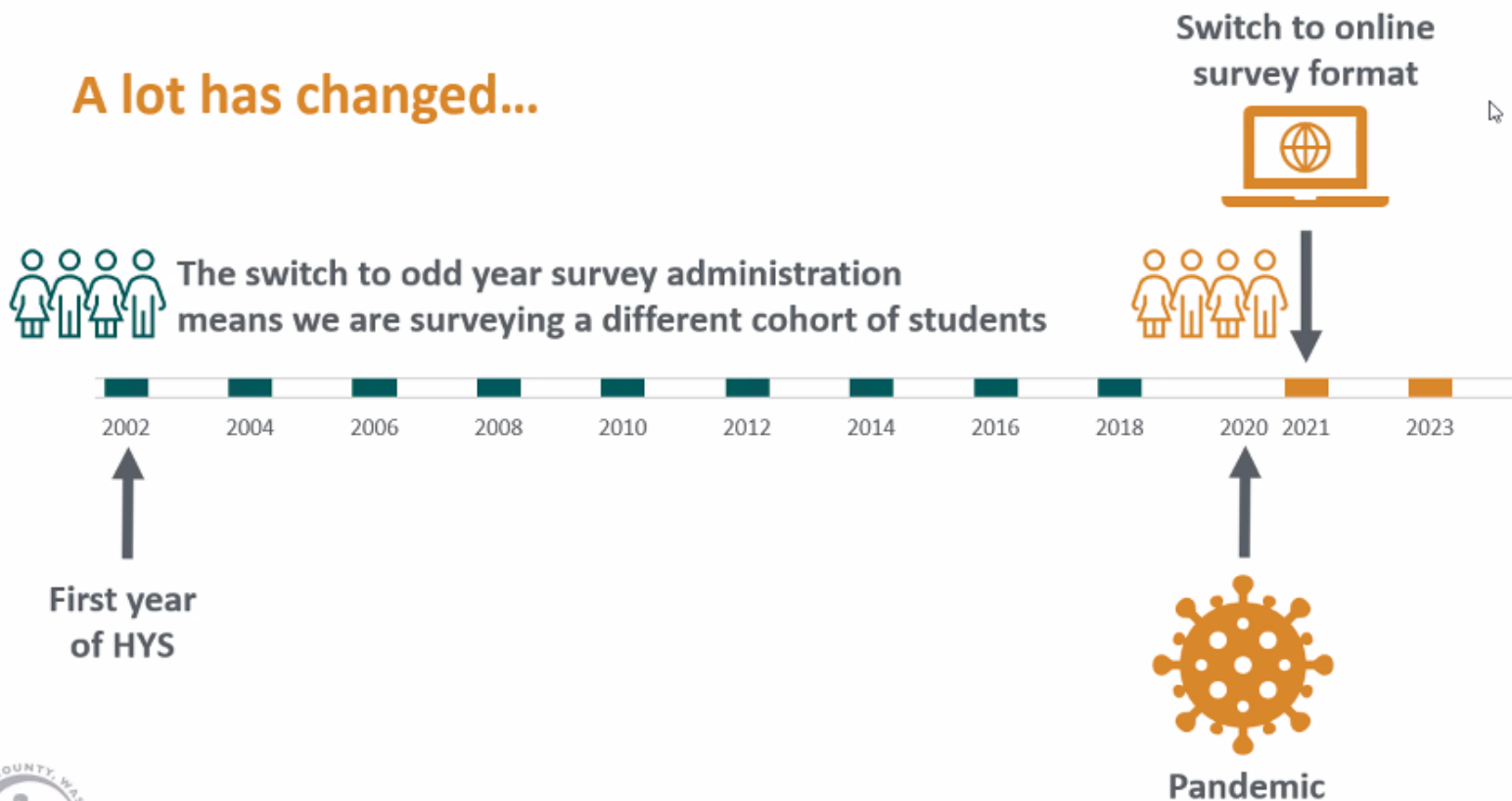
**And a LOT  
more!**



# Interpreting trends with data after 2021

Use caution when trying to interpret trends using data from the 2021 survey.

**A lot has changed...**



# County Participation Rates

## Survey Participation in this Report

|                                    | <u>Grade 6</u> | <u>Grade 8</u> | <u>Grade 10</u> |
|------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Number of students surveyed:       | 1,536          | 1,603          | 1,528           |
| Number of valid responses:         | 1,521          | 1,572          | 1,472           |
| Number of enrolled students*:      | 1,900          | 1,961          | 2,116           |
| Local survey participation rate**: | 80%            | 80%            | 70%             |

\* The estimate of enrolled students is based on figures from the 2025-26 school year, provided on the OSPI data portal: <https://www.askhys.net/Resources/Data>.

\*\* The survey participation rate is the number of valid responses divided by the number of enrolled students.

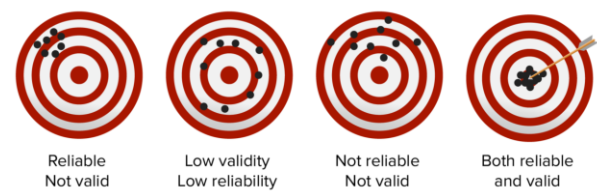
Note: Results not available for non-surveyed grades or grades suppressed for under-participation. See Past Participation for details: <http://www.askhys.net/Past>

# Confidence & Exclusions

## 26. How honest were you in filling out this survey?

|                                | (n=1,296)    | (n=1,193)    | (n=1,188)    |
|--------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| I was very honest.             | 82.1% (±2.1) | 80.7% (±2.2) | 79.8% (±2.3) |
| I was honest most of the time. | 16.5% (±2.0) | 16.3% (±2.1) | 17.2% (±2.1) |
| I was honest some of the time. | 1.4% (±0.6)  | 3.0% (±1.0)  | 3.0% (±1.0)  |
| I was honest once in a while.  |              |              |              |
| I was not honest at all.       |              |              |              |

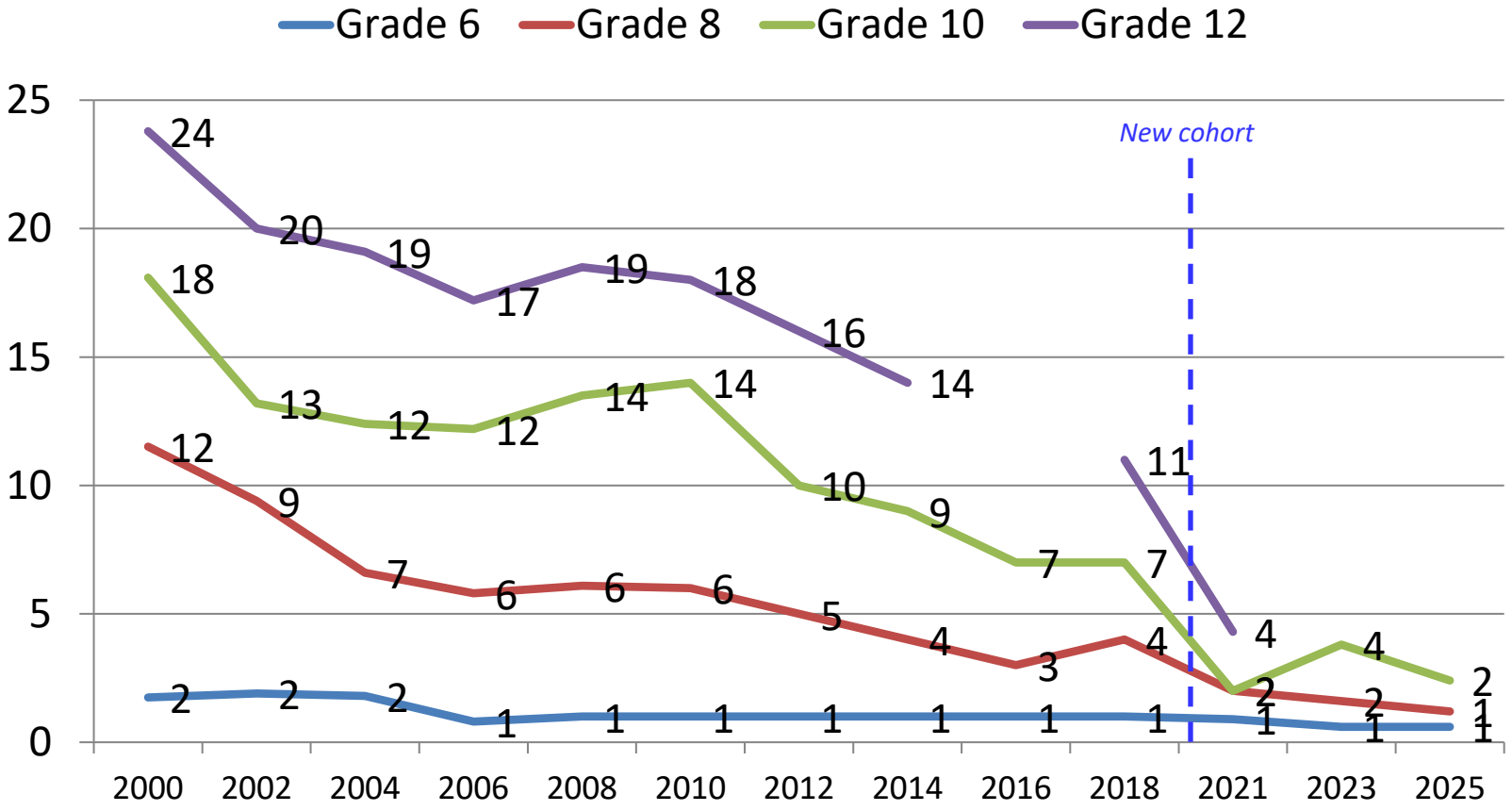
### Reliability and Validity



surveys pulled  
 surveys pulled

# 30-Day Use of Smoking Tobacco

Whatcom County (2000-2025)

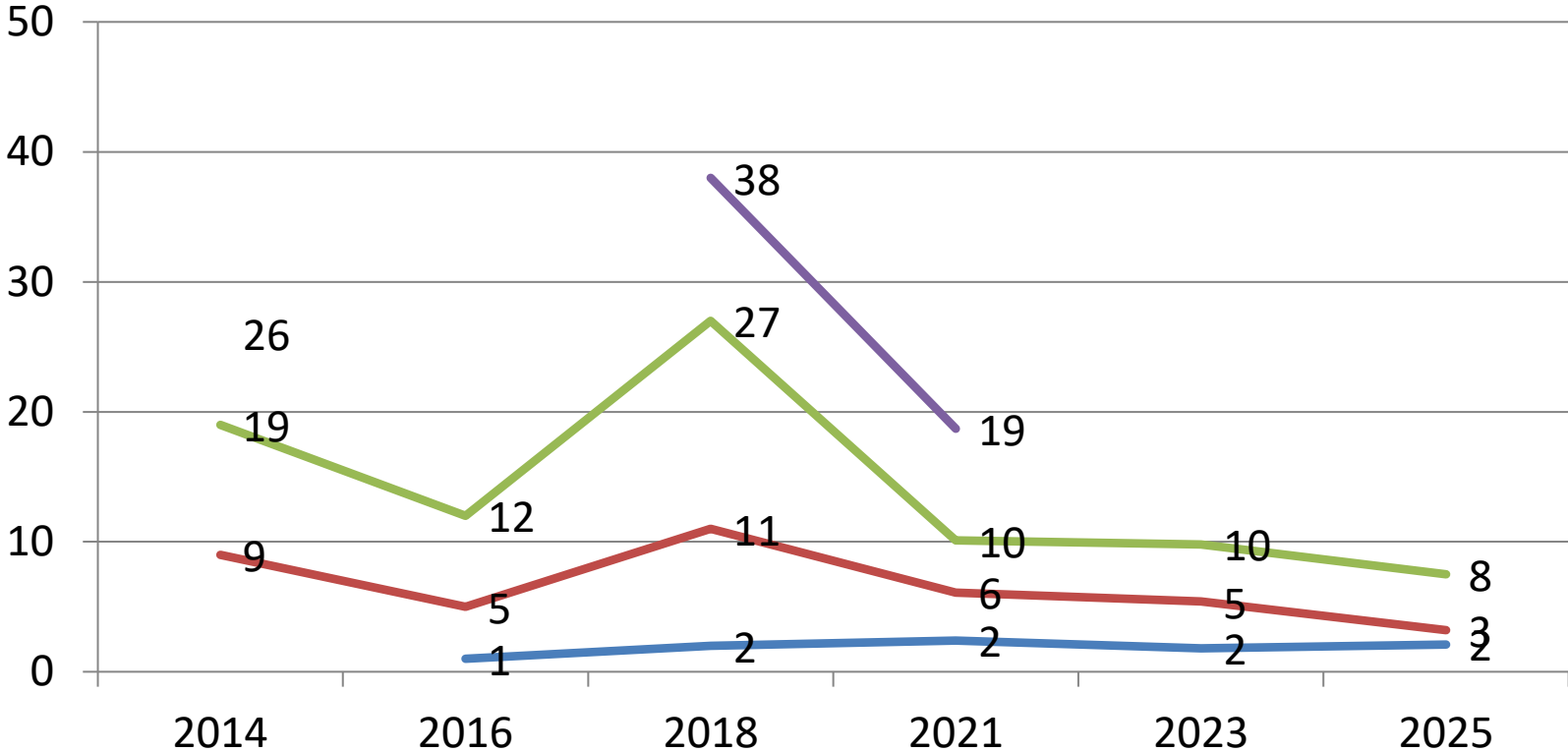


# 30-Day Use of E-Cigarettes or Vaping

Percent of students who report using an electronic cigarette, e-cig or vape pen in the past 30 days

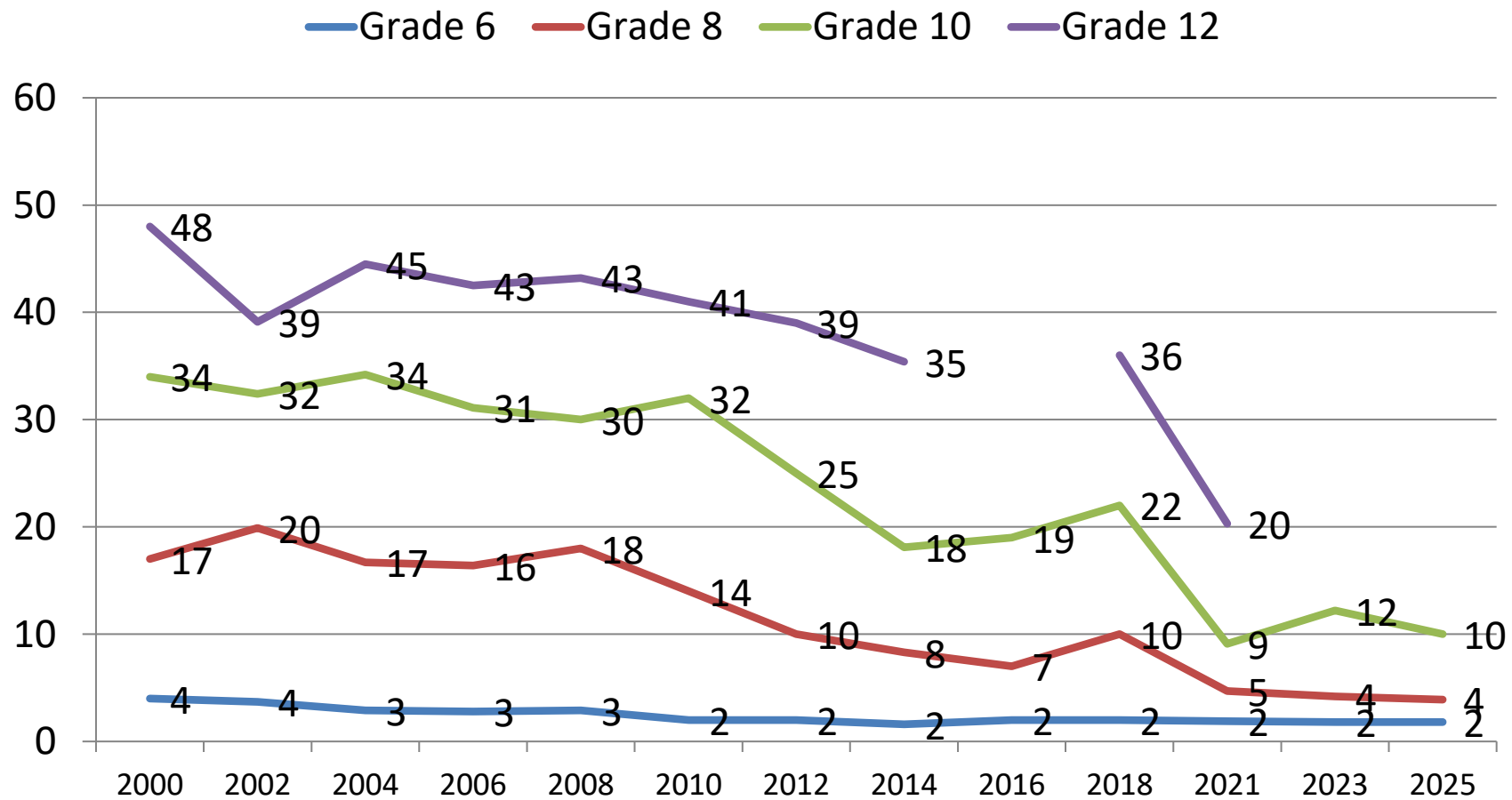
Whatcom County (2014-2025)

Grade 6   Grade 8   Grade 10   Grade 12



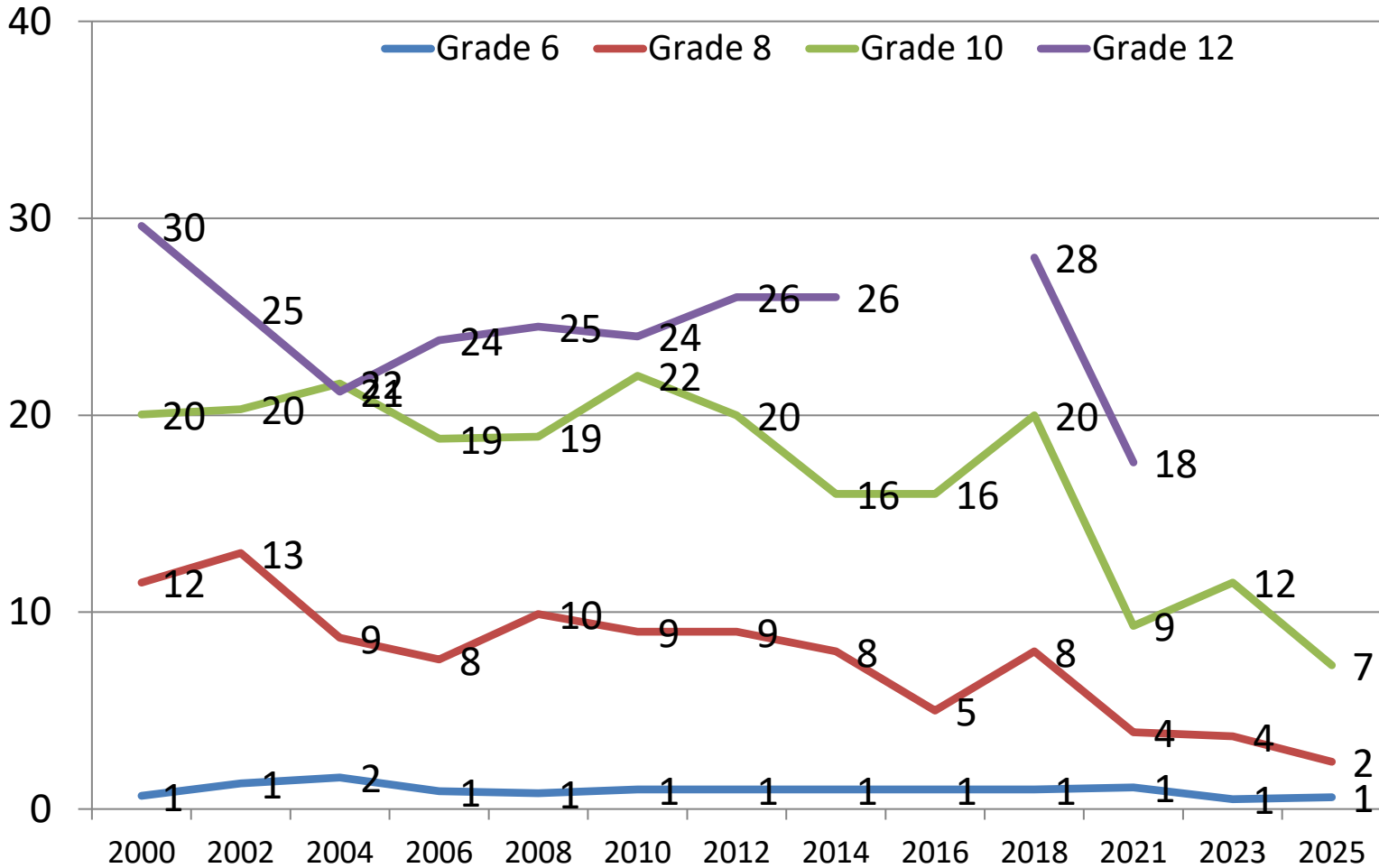
# 30-Day Use of Alcohol

Whatcom County (2000-2025)



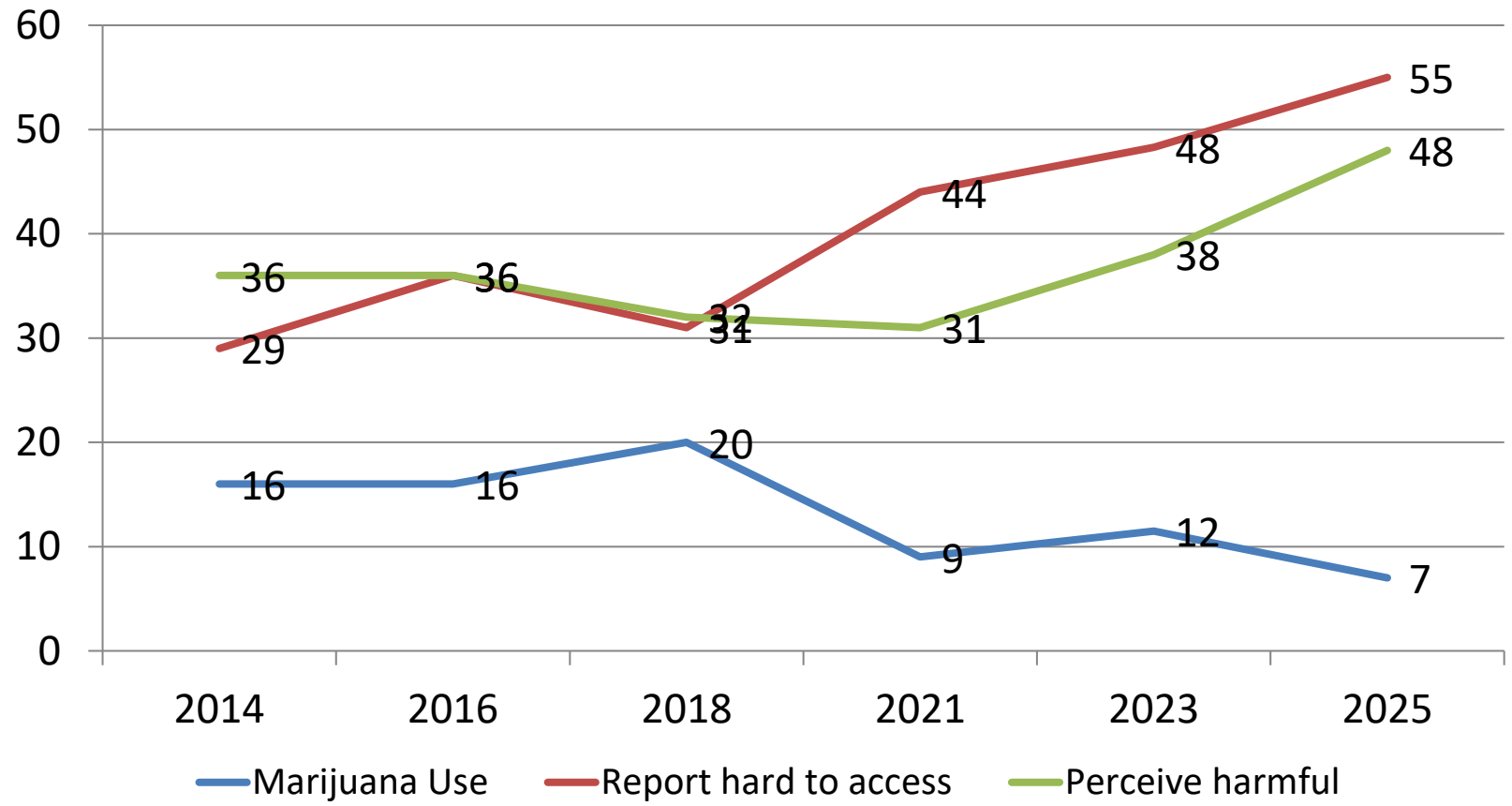
# 30-Day Use of Marijuana

Whatcom County (2000-2025)



# 30-Day Use of Marijuana

Use of Marijuana & Contributing Factors (10<sup>th</sup> Grade)



# Lifetime Use

Have you ever, even once in your life:

Whatcom County

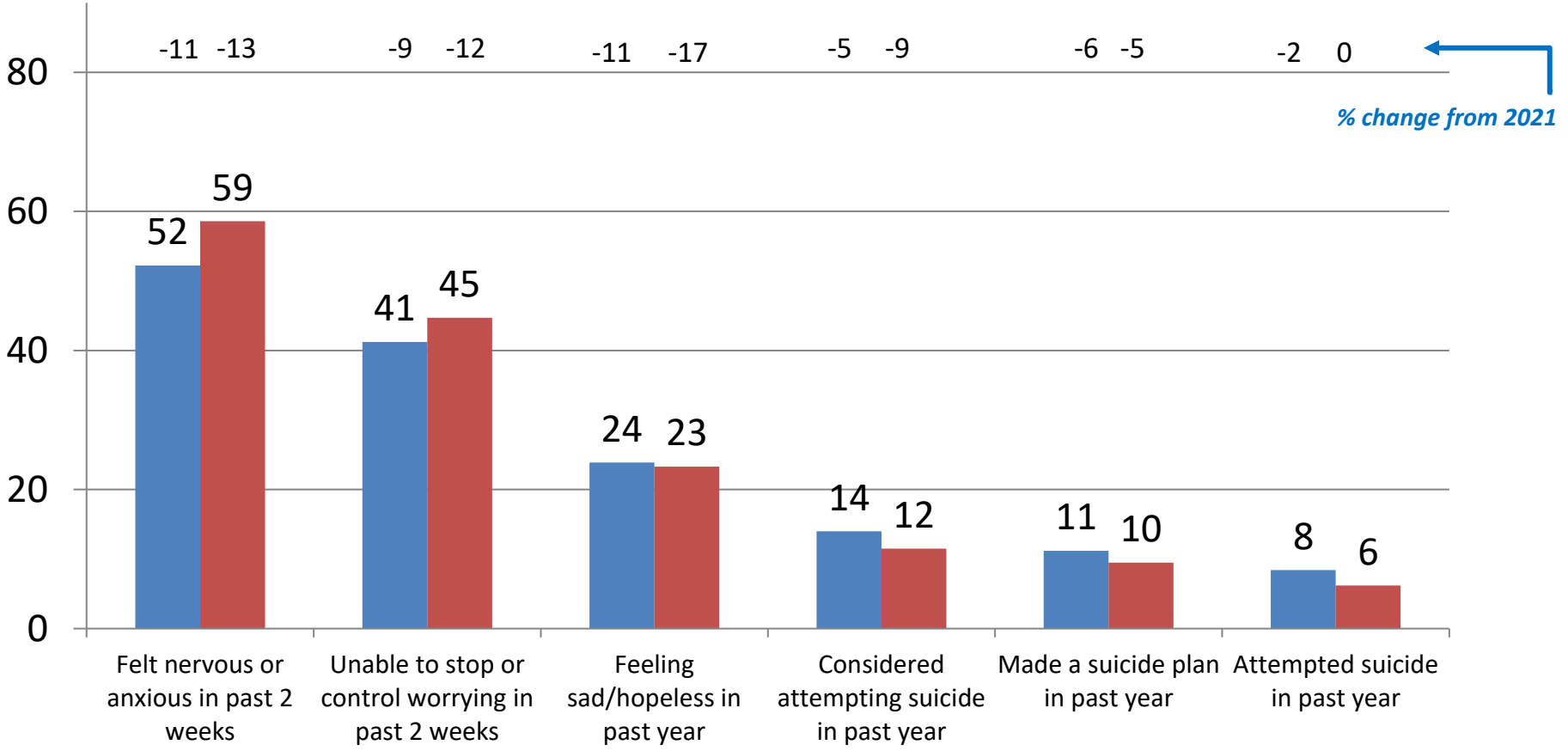
| 31. Have you ever, even once in your life used the following? Choose all that apply. | Grade 6 | Grade 8      | Grade 10     |
|--|---------|--------------|--------------|
|  | (n=0)   | (n=1,287)    | (n=1,234)    |
| Heroin   | **      | 0.5% (±0.4)  | 0.6% (±0.4)  |
| Methamphetamines (or meth, speed)  | **      | 0.5% (±0.4)  | 1.0% (±0.5)  |
| Fentanyl (or fet, fent)  | **      | 0.2% (±0.2)  | 0.8% (±0.5)  |
| Hemp-derived products (like delta-8 (8), delta-10 (10))                              | **      | 0.3% (±0.3)  | 1.8% (±0.7)  |
| Synthetic products (like K2, Spice)  | **      | 0.1% (±0.2)  | 0.3% (±0.3)  |
| Kratom   | **      | 0.2% (±0.2)  | 0.8% (±0.5)  |
| Bath salts (like Bliss, Blue Silk)   | **      | 1.2% (±0.6)  | 0.9% (±0.5)  |
| Psilocybin (or magic mushrooms, shrooms)   | **      | 0.9% (±0.5)  | 2.6% (±0.9)  |
| Ecstasy/Molly (or molly, MDMA)   | **      | 0.3% (±0.3)  | 0.8% (±0.5)  |
| None of these  | **      | 97.3% (±0.9) | 95.7% (±1.1) |

| 32. Used other illegal drugs? | (n=1,405)    | (n=0) | (n=0) |
|-------------------------------|--------------|-------|-------|
| Yes                           | 0.8% (±0.5)  | **    | **    |
| No                            | 99.2% (±0.5) | **    | **    |

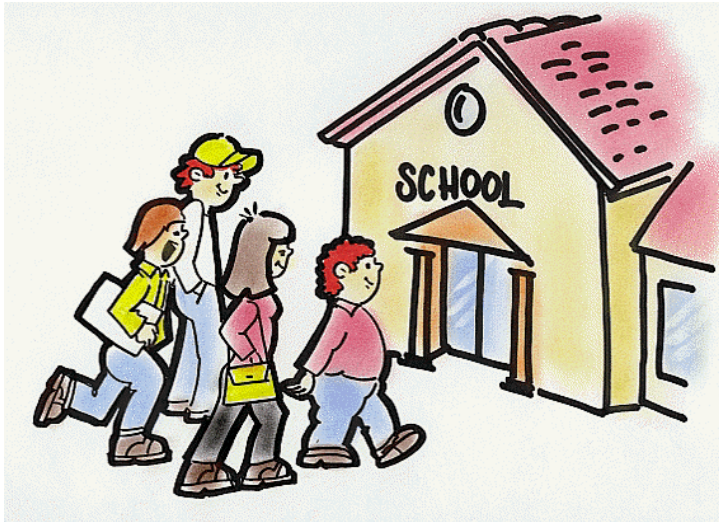
# Mental Health Status

Nearly two in three 10<sup>th</sup> graders reported feeling anxious.  
One in six 10<sup>th</sup> graders reported making a plan for suicide in the past year.



# Mental Wellness in the Classroom

## Impact on a classroom



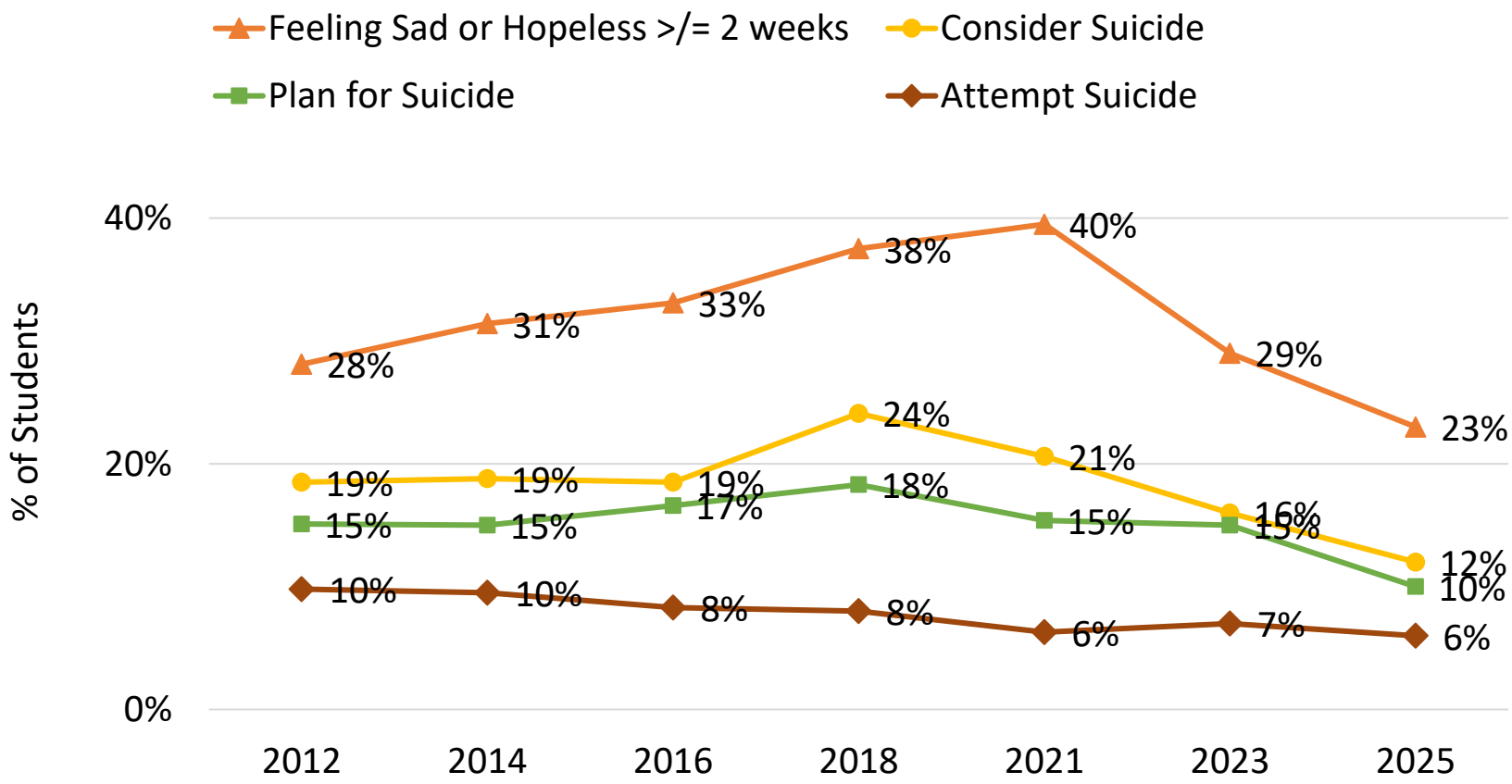
*\*feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge in the past 2 weeks*

*In a class of 30 students in grade 10 in  
Whatcom County:*

- 18** are dealing with anxiety\*
- 7** are dealing with depression
- 3** have contemplated suicide
- 3** have made a suicide plan
- 2** have attempted suicide

## Depressive Feelings & Suicide Contemplation/Plan/Attempt, 2012 through 2025, Grade 10

Percent of students in the past year



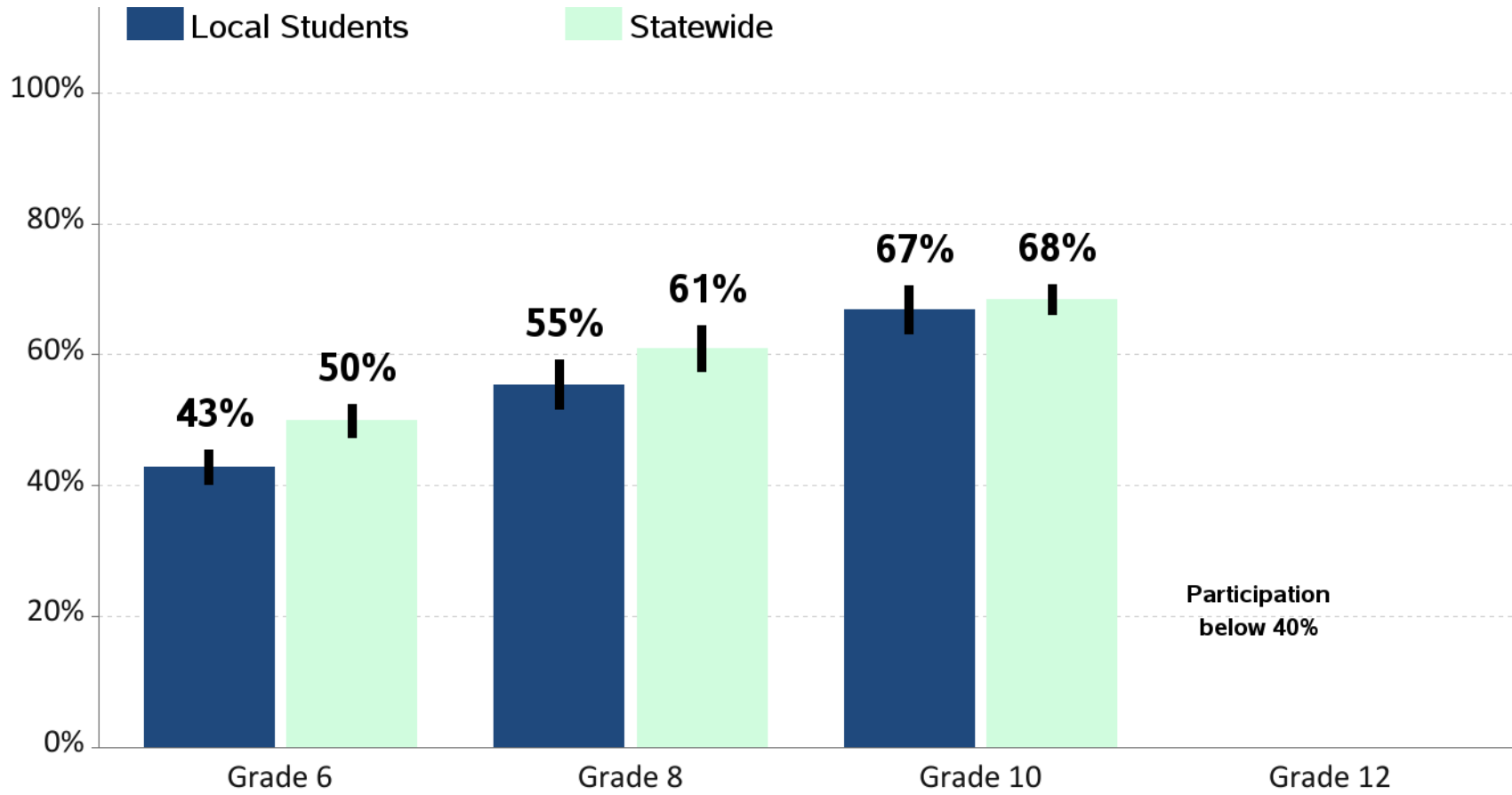
# Self-Harm

Nearly **1 in 5** 8<sup>th</sup> graders and **1 in 6** 10<sup>th</sup> graders reported self-harm in the past year.

| 136. During the past year, how many times did you do something to purposely hurt yourself without wanting to die, such as cutting or burning yourself on purpose? | Whatcom County   |                    |                     |
|---|------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
|   | Grade 6<br>(n=0) | Grade 8<br>(n=646) | Grade 10<br>(n=636) |
| 0 times   | **               | 77.2% (±3.2)       | 78.9% (±3.2)        |
| 1 or more times   | **               | 18.1% (±3.0)       | 15.7% (±2.8)        |
| Not sure  | **               | 3.6% (±1.4)        | 4.7% (±1.7)         |
| I do not know what this question is asking.   | **               | 1.1% (±0.8)        | 0.6% (±0.6)         |

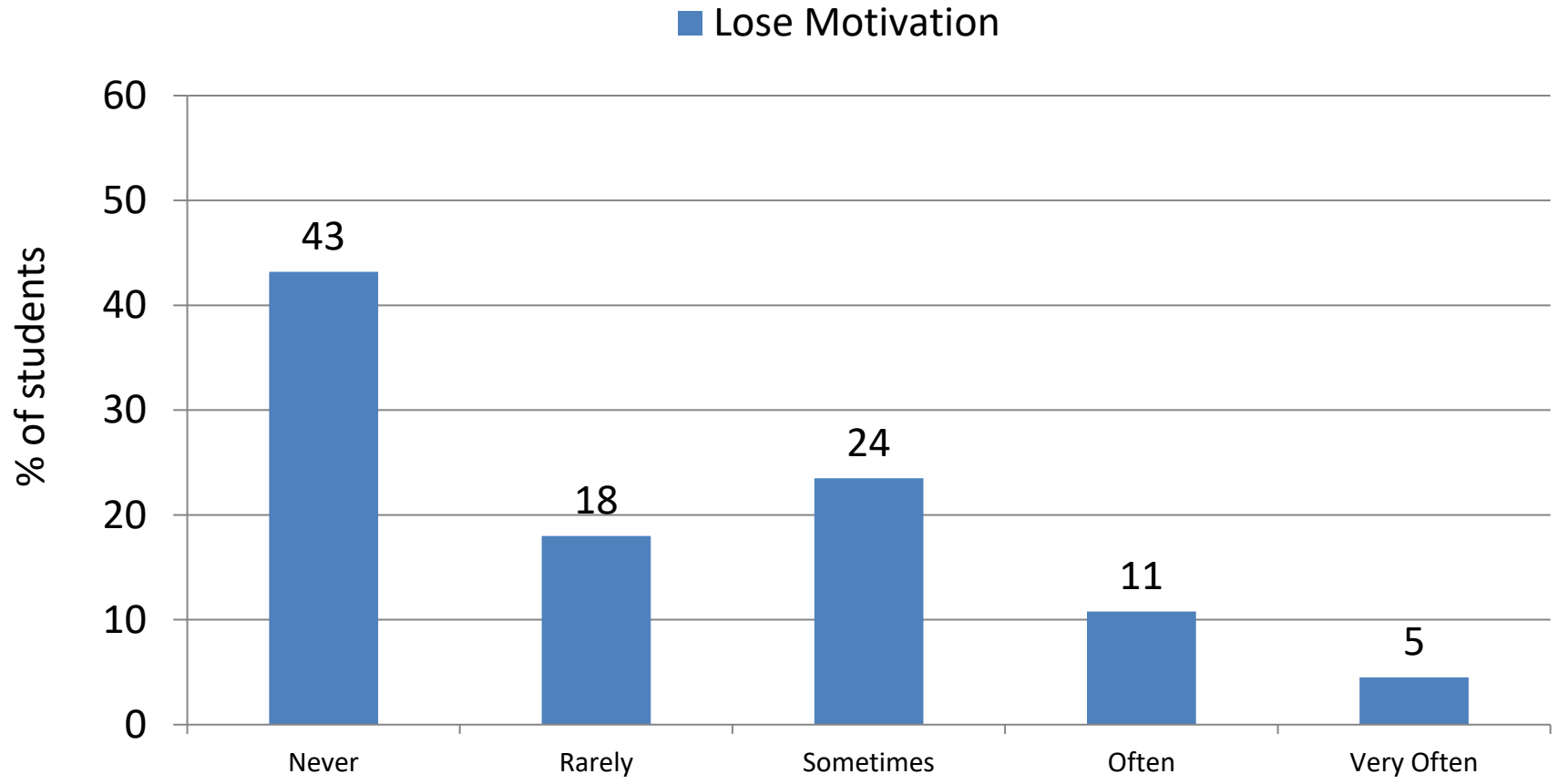
### Excessive Screen Time

Percent of students who report 3+ hours of screen time on an average school day  
(time spent in front of a TV, computer, smart phone, or other electronic device watching shows or videos, playing games, accessing the Internet, or using social media)



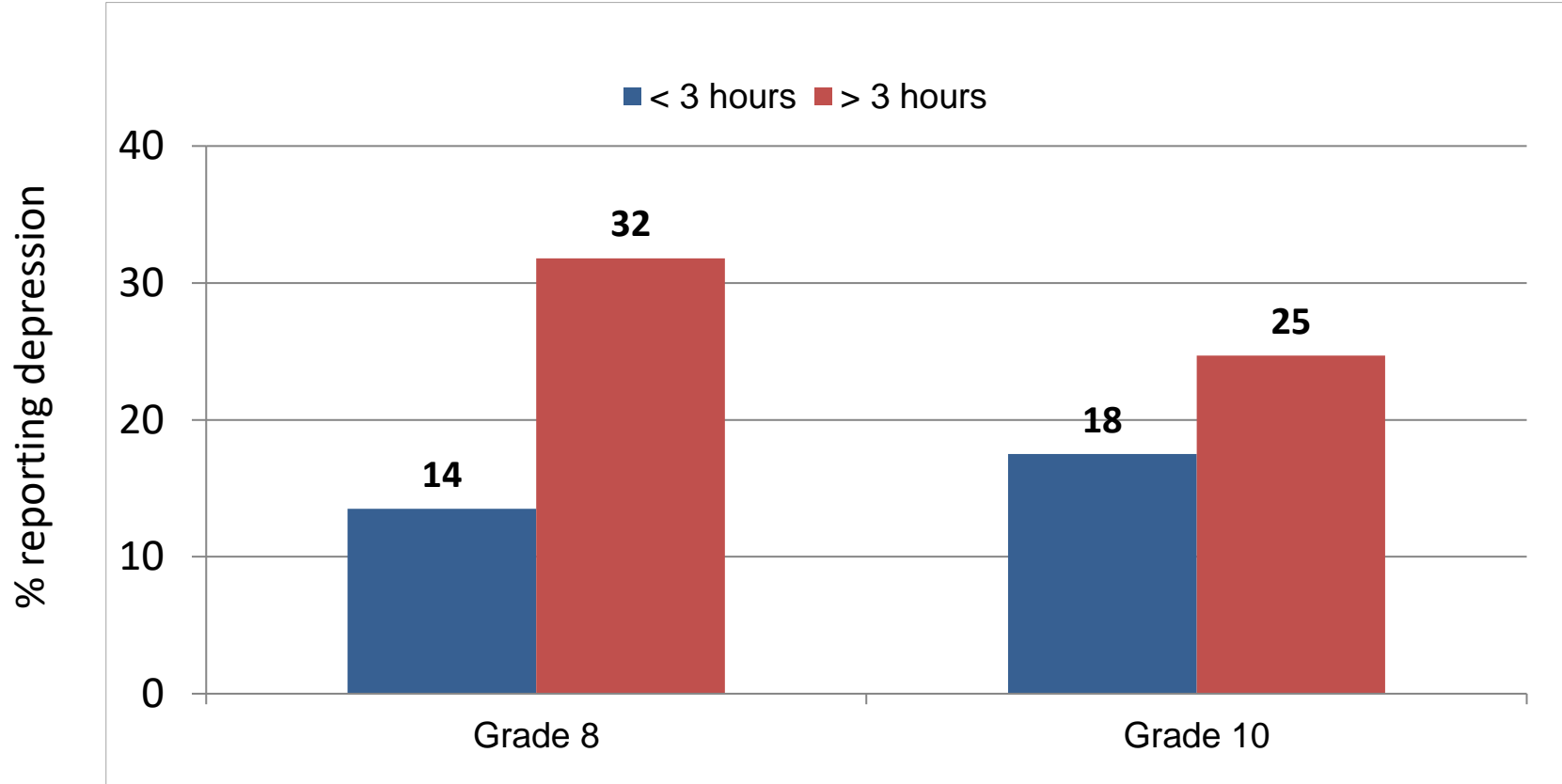
# Internet Impacts

How often do you **lose motivation** to do other things that need to get done because of the internet. (Grade 10)



# Screen Time Use & Depression

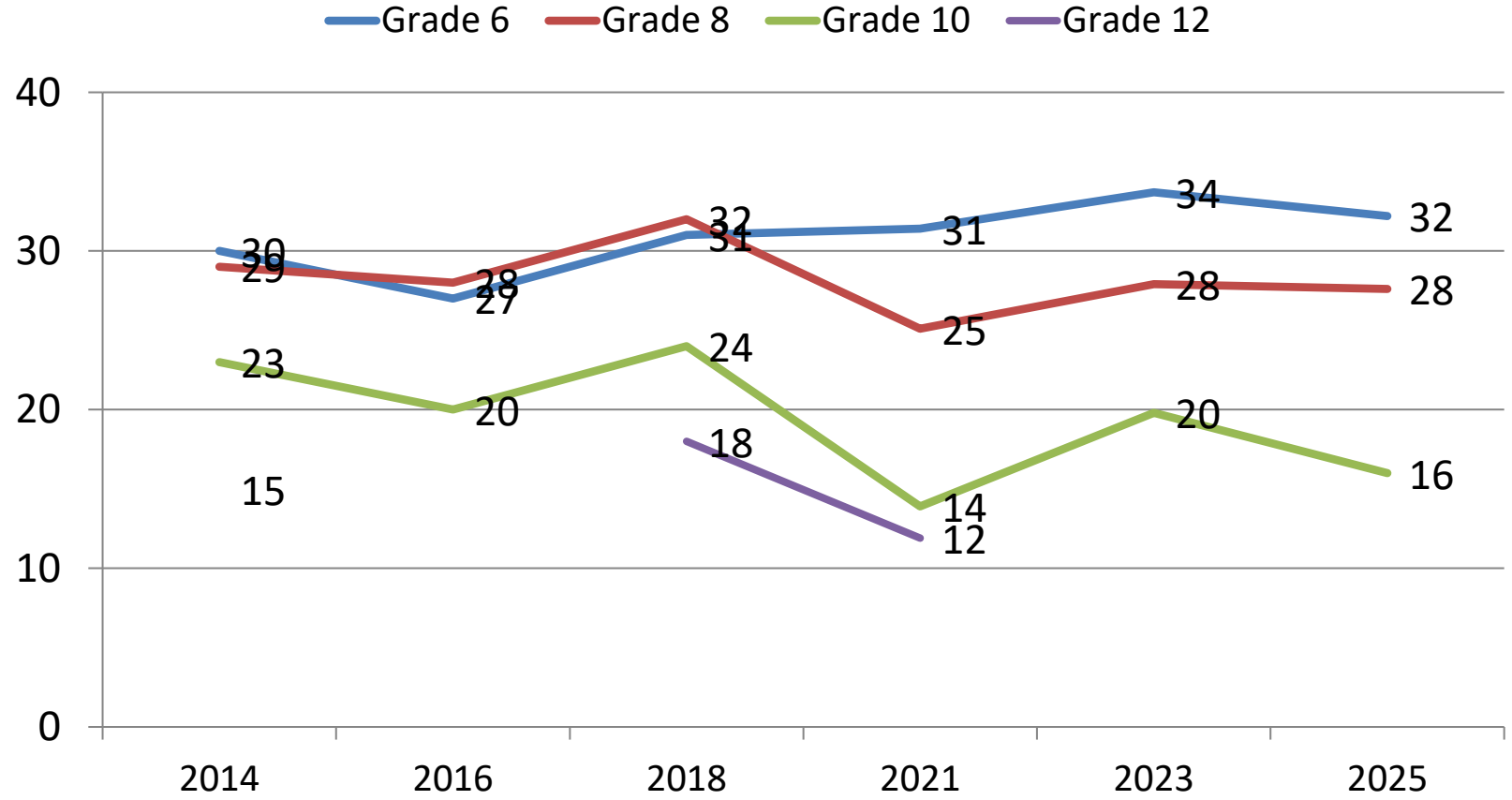
**Depression** is higher among students who report 3 or more hours of screen time (TV, computer, smart phone, or other electronic device watching shows or videos, playing games, accessing the Internet, or using social media (also called "screen time")(not counting schoolwork.)



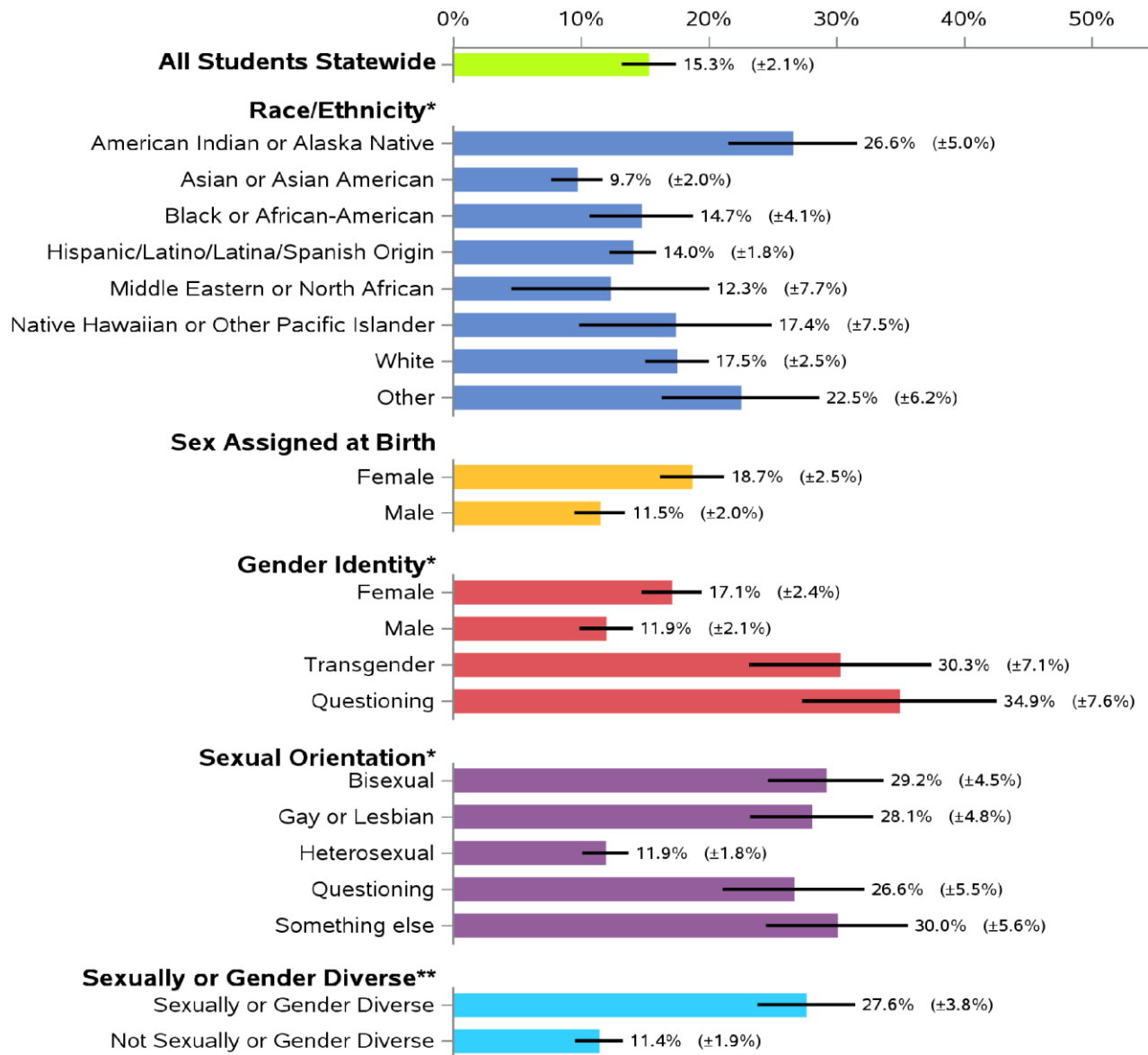
# Bullying

Percent of students who report being bullied in the past 30 days

*Bullying is when one or more students threaten, spread rumors about, hit, shove, or otherwise hurt another student over and over again.*

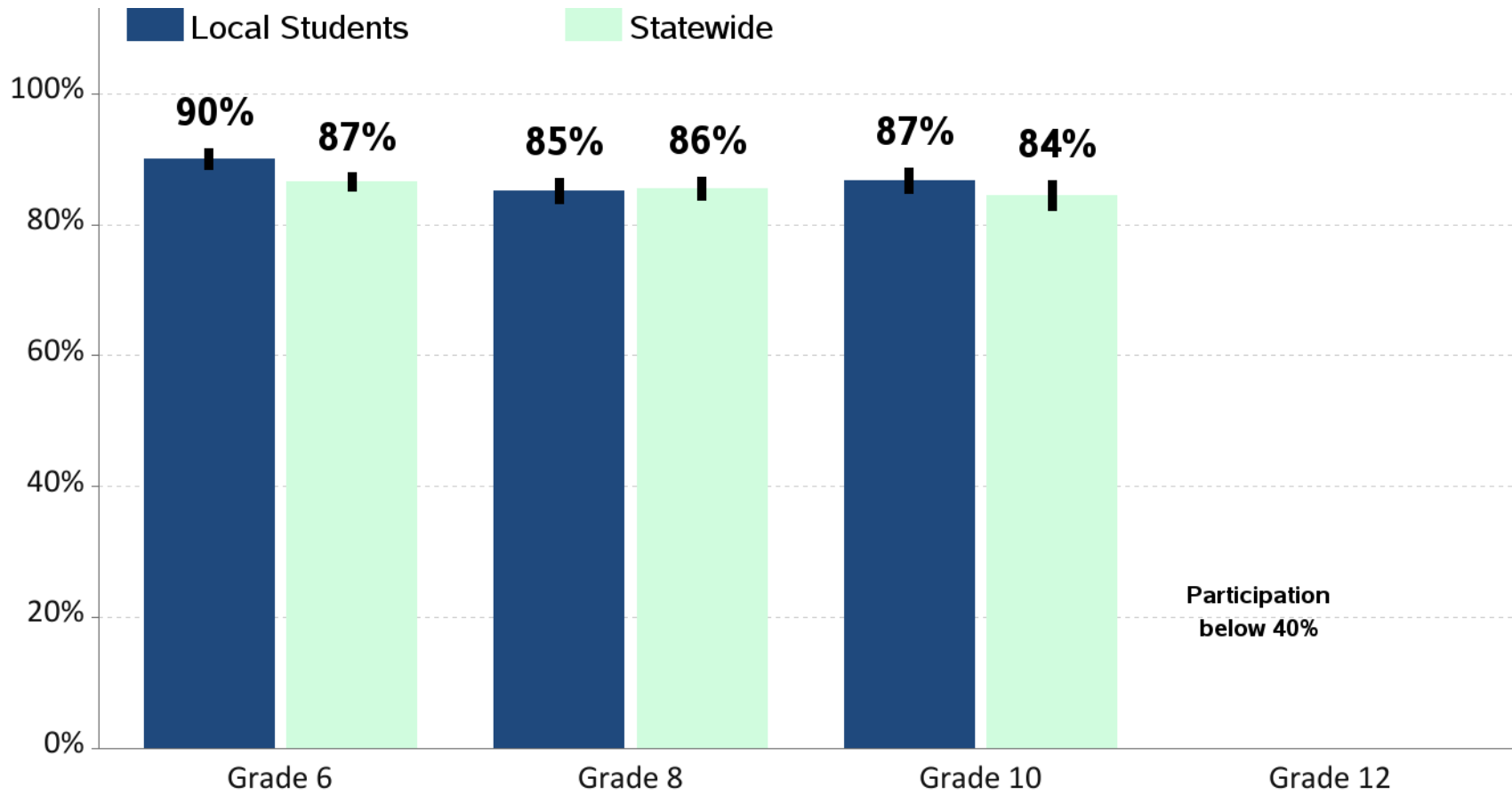


**Statewide**  
 relationship  
 between Bullied in  
 the past month  
 and demographics  
 (Grade 10)



### Feeling Safe During School

Percent of students who report that they feel safe during school



# Adverse Childhood Experiences Affect Adult Outcomes

- **Abuse:** Physical (22%\*), Emotional (28%\*), Sexual (19%\*)
- **Neglect:** Physical, Emotional
- **Household Dysfunction:** Household substance abuse, mental illness, divorce, incarceration, mother treated violently

*\*Whatcom County 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Students (Healthy Youth Survey 2025)*

*Probability given 1,000 American adults with...*

## 0 ACEs

1 in 16 smokes  
1 in 69 are alcoholic  
1 in 480 uses IV drugs  
1 in 14 has heart disease  
1 in 96 attempts suicide

## 3 ACEs

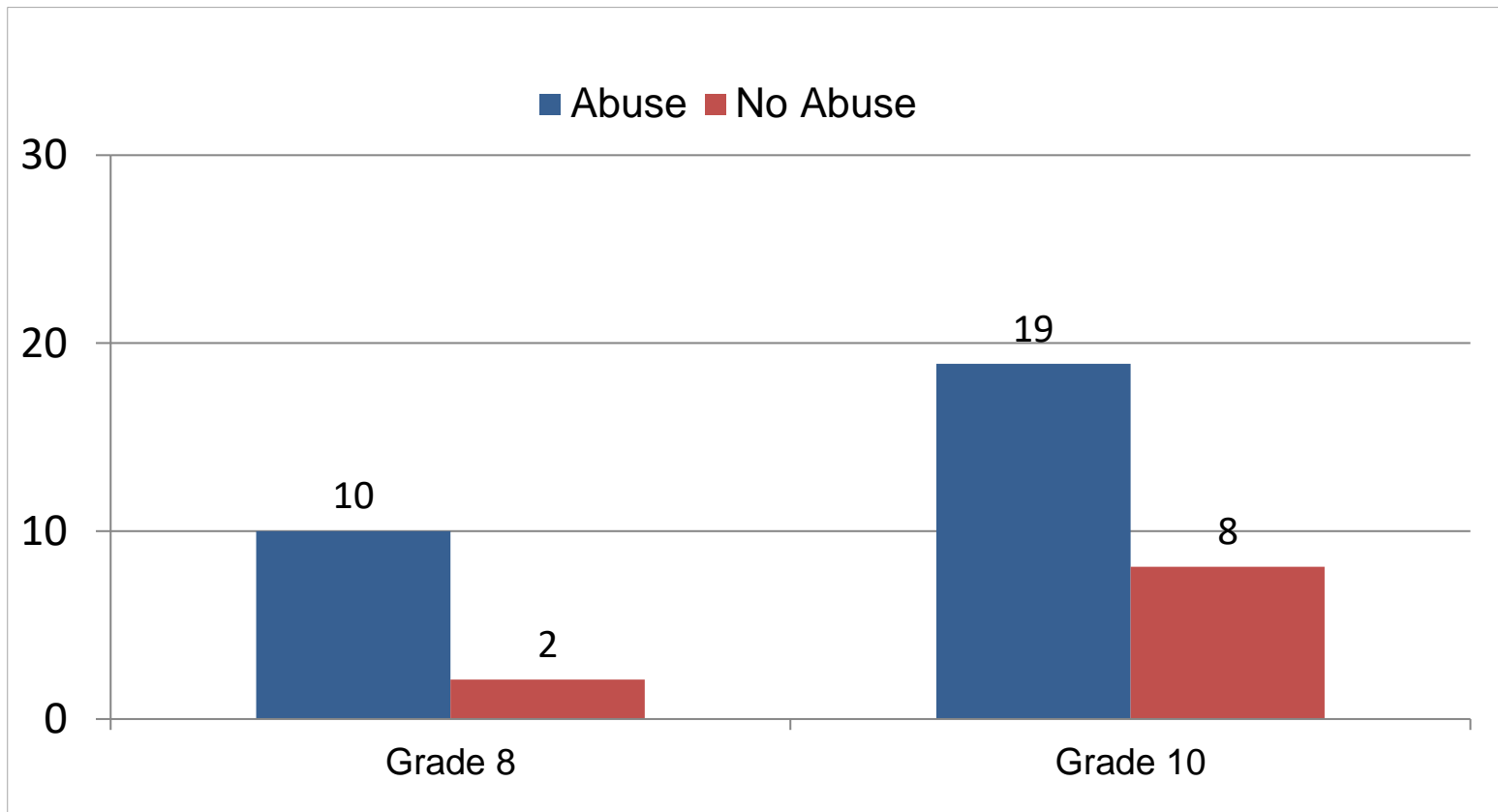
1 in 9 smokes  
1 in 9 are alcoholic  
1 in 43 uses IV drugs  
1 in 7 has heart disease  
1 in 10 attempts suicide

## 7+ ACEs

1 in 6 smokes  
1 in 6 are alcoholic  
1 in 30 use IV drugs  
1 in 6 has heart disease  
1 in 5 attempts suicide

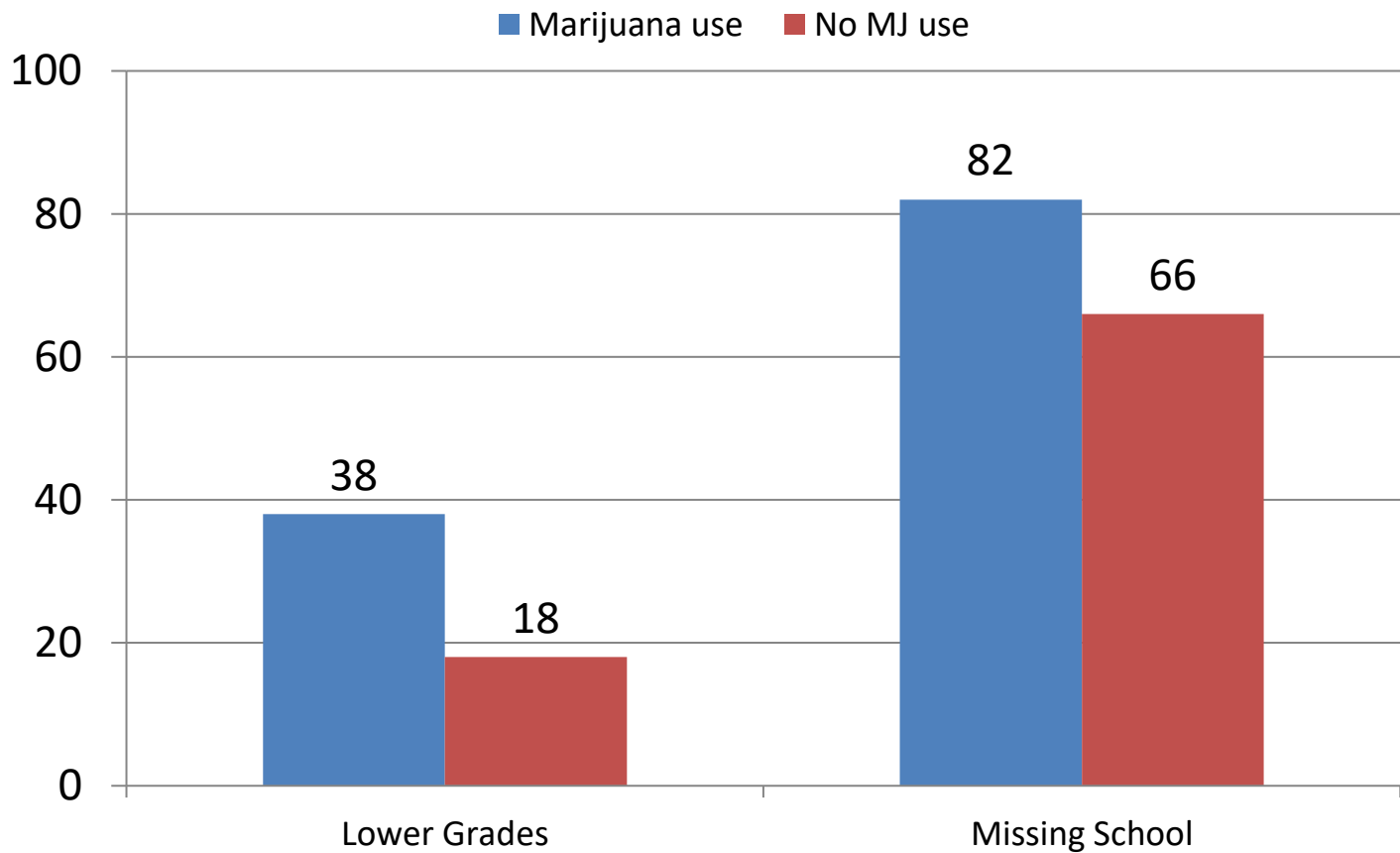
# Physical Abuse & Current Drinking

**Current drinking** is higher among students who report having ever been physically hurt by an adult (Has an adult ever physically hurt you on purpose-like pushed, slapped, hit, kicked or punched you).



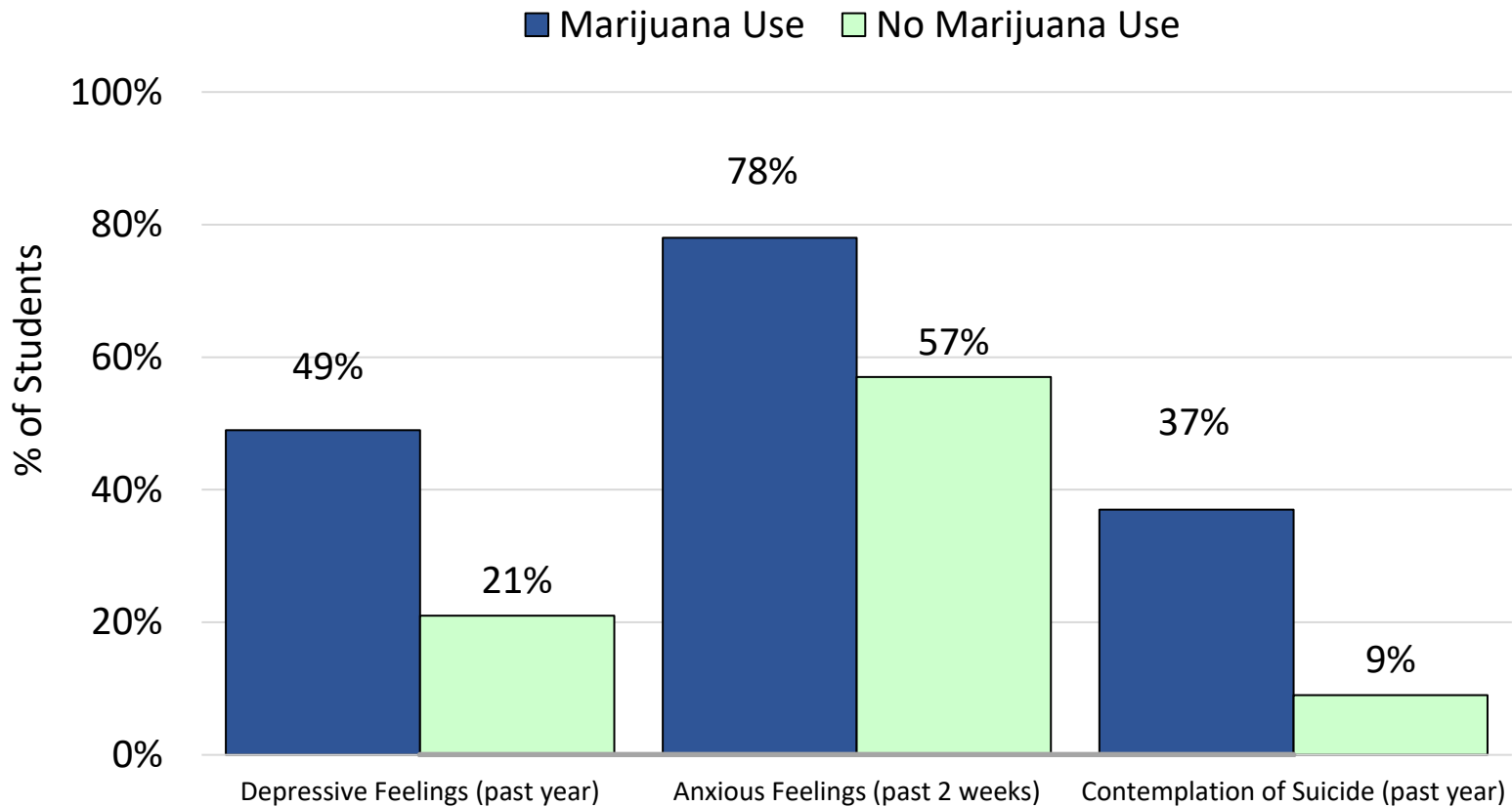
# Impact of Substance Use

Students in 10<sup>th</sup> grade that reported **current marijuana** use experienced **lower grades** and **missing more school**.



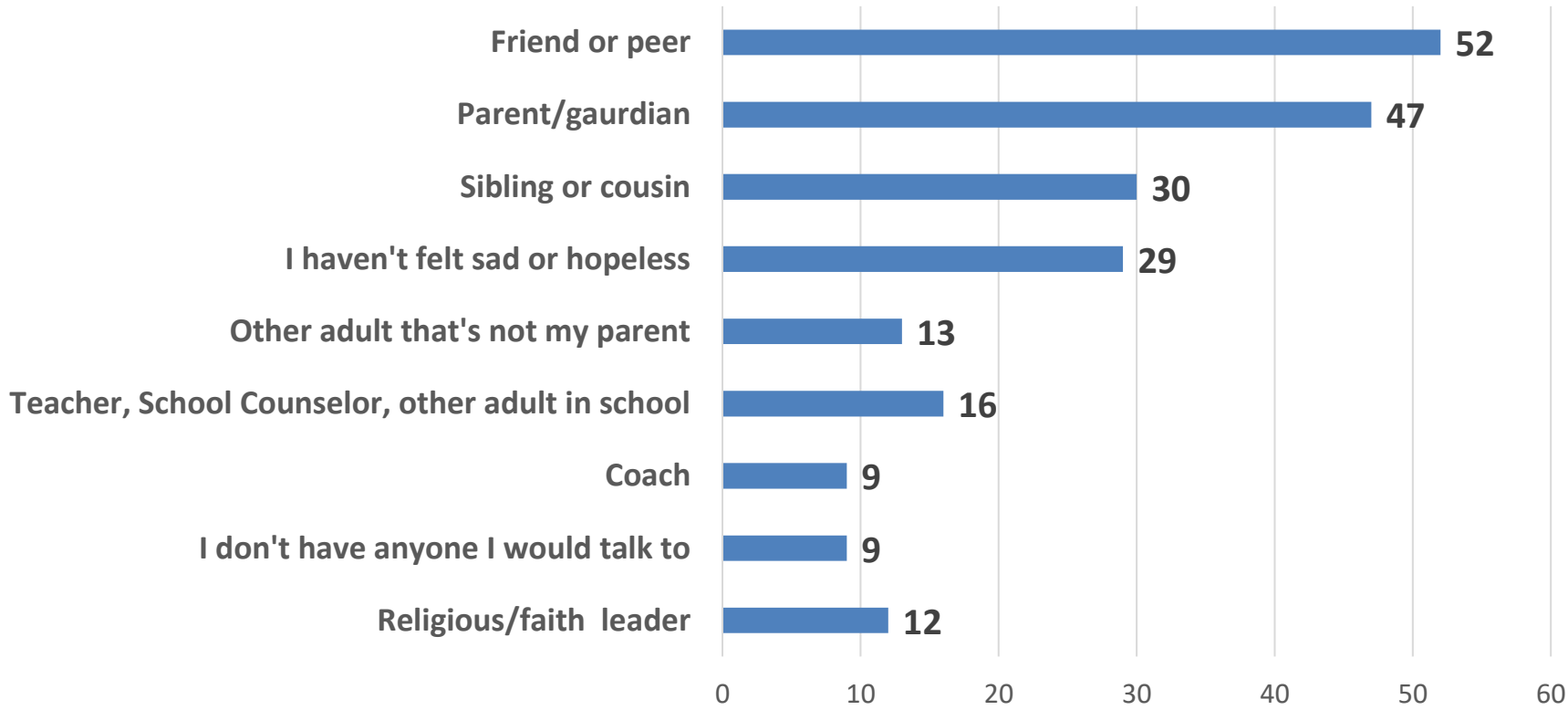
## Current Marijuana Use and Mental Wellbeing

10th grade students that report current marijuana use, report higher rates of depressive/anxious feelings and contemplation of suicide



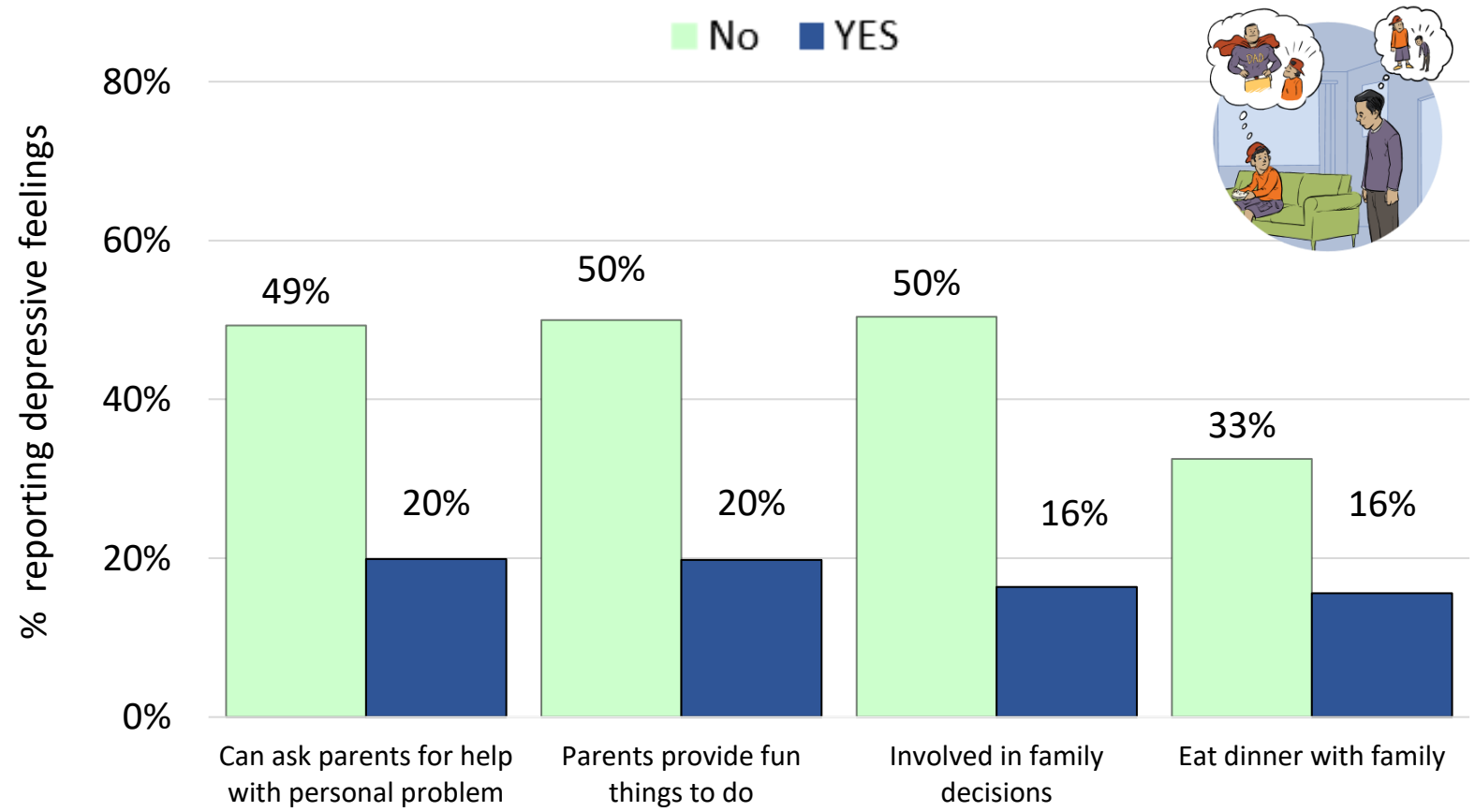
# Support

From 10<sup>th</sup> Graders: If you feel sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row, to whom would you most likely turn to for help? (choose all that apply)



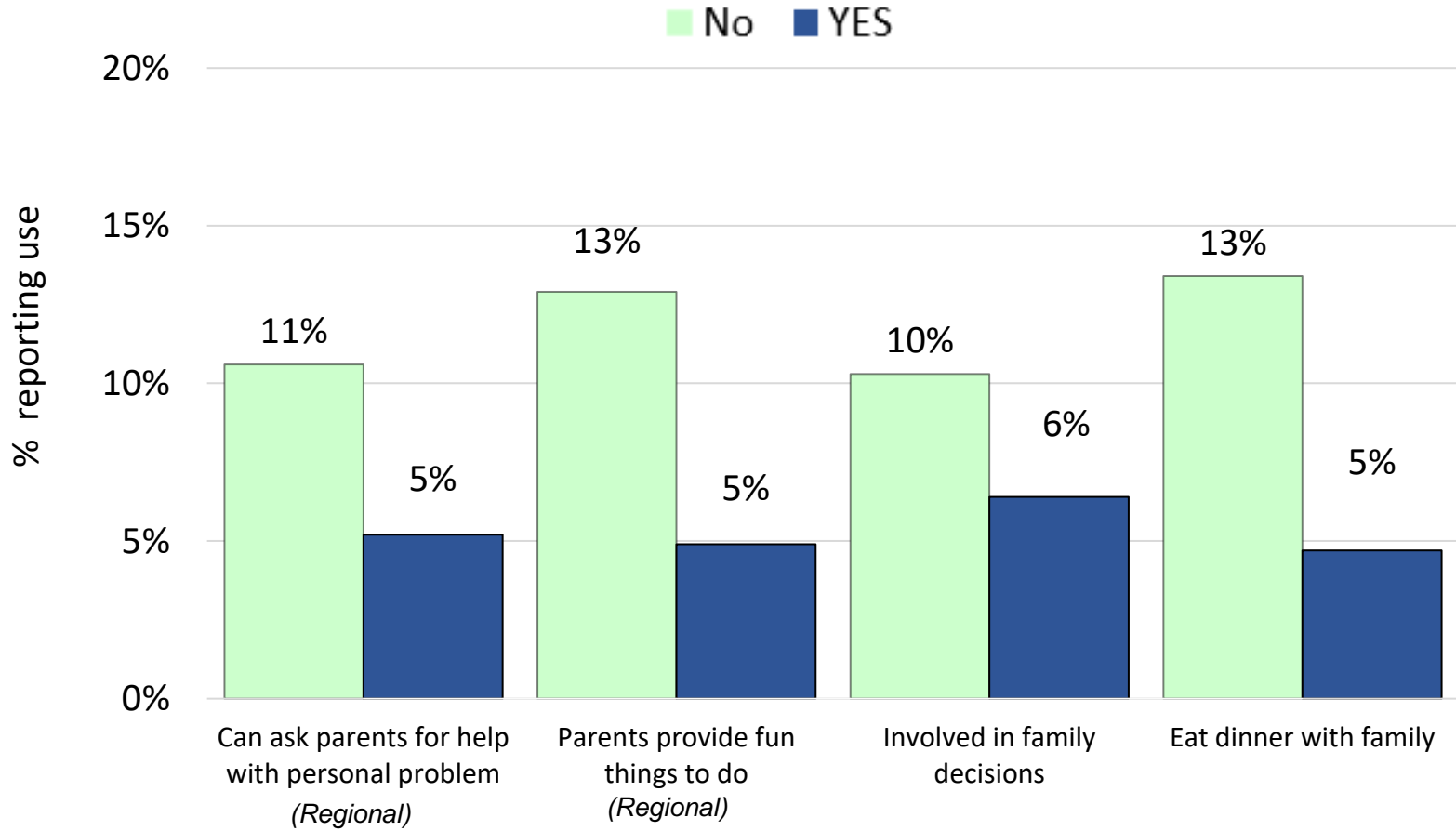
# Depressive Feelings & Family Protective Factors

10th grade students that report family protective factors report less depressive feelings



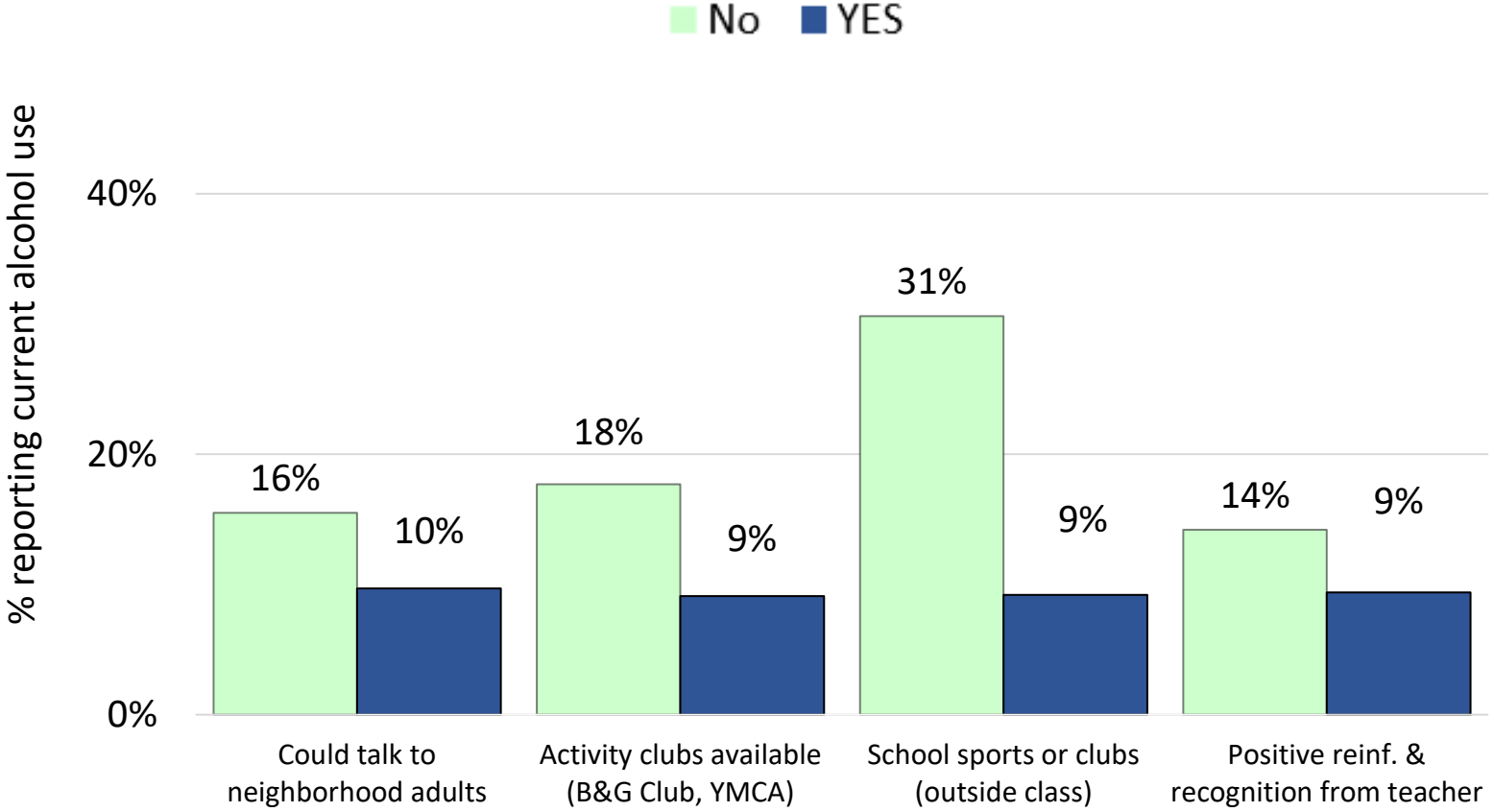
# Current Marijuana Use & Family Protective Factors

10th grade students that report family protective factors report less 30-day marijuana use



# Current Alcohol Use & Community/School Protective Factors

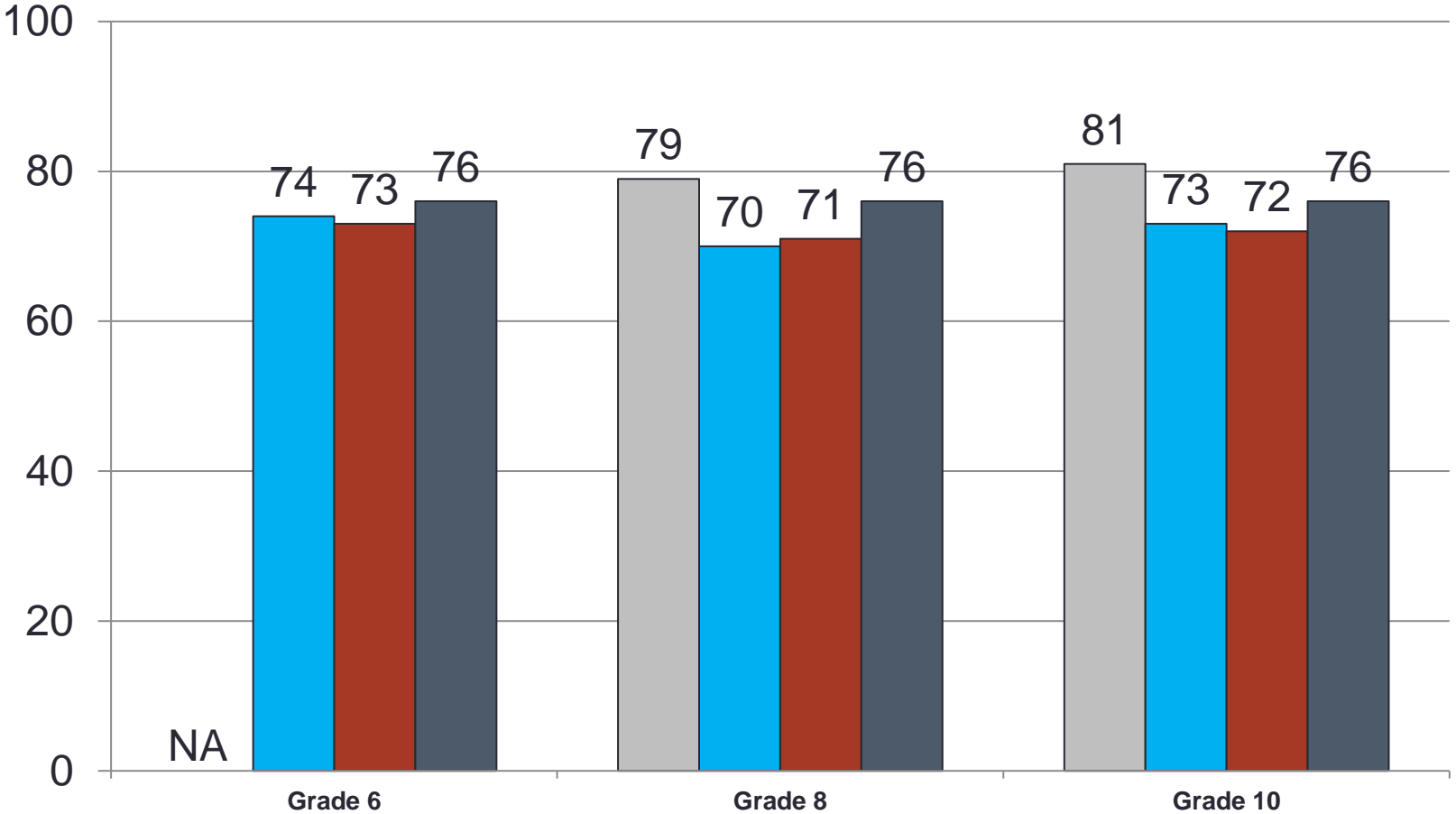
10th grade students that report community/school protective factors report less depressive feelings



# Children's Hope

Percent of students reporting "Moderately" or "Highly" Hopeful

2018 2021 2023 2025



# Benefits of Hope

Compared to students with “No” or “Low hope”, “**Highly Hopeful**” 10<sup>th</sup> grade youth reported:



**5x** less alcohol use



**2x** less marijuana use



**4x** less use of prescription drugs\*

*\*regionally*

**2x** less depression



**3x** less contemplation of suicide



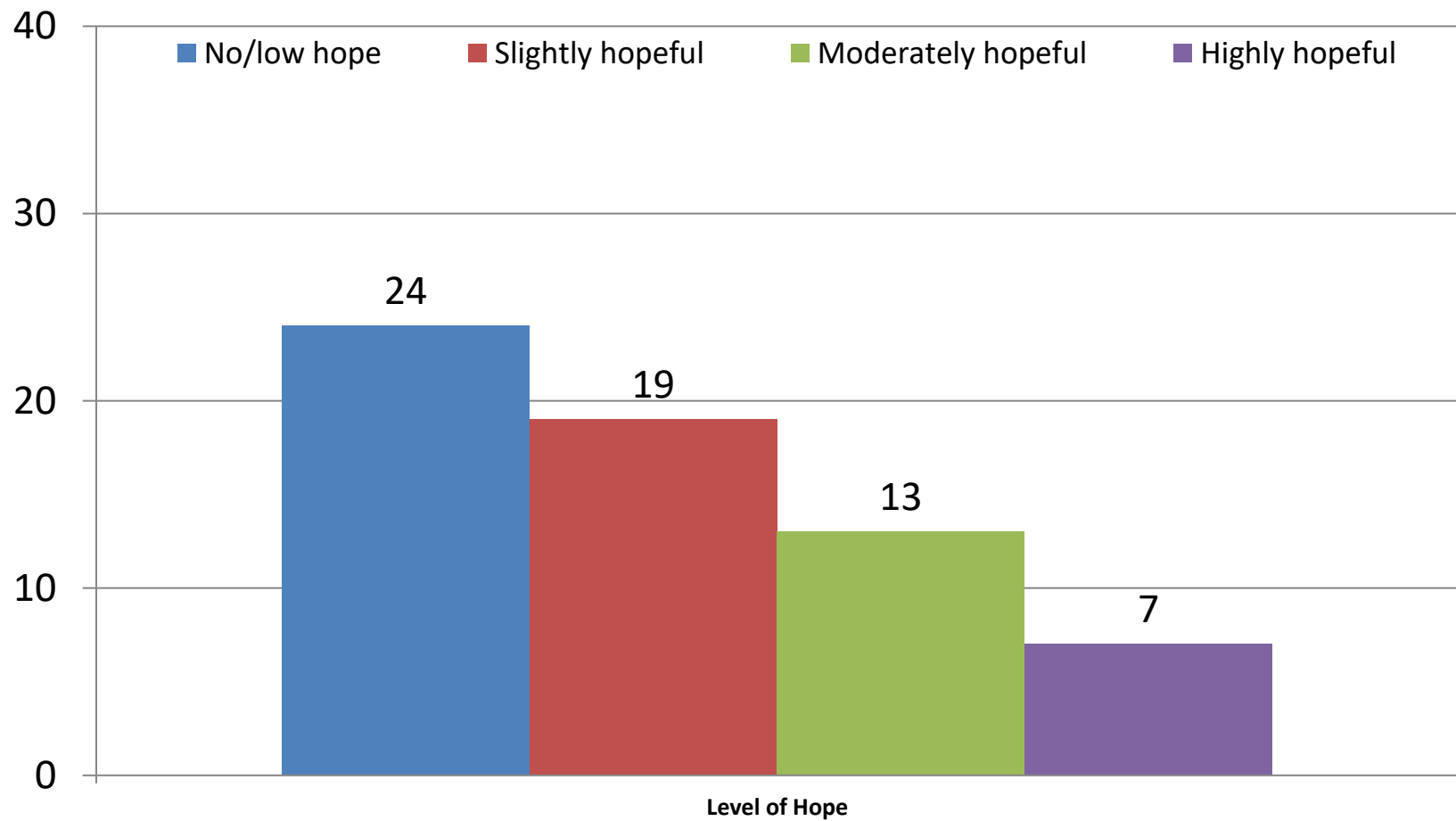
**1.5x** less likely to miss school

**1.5x** more likely to get better grades



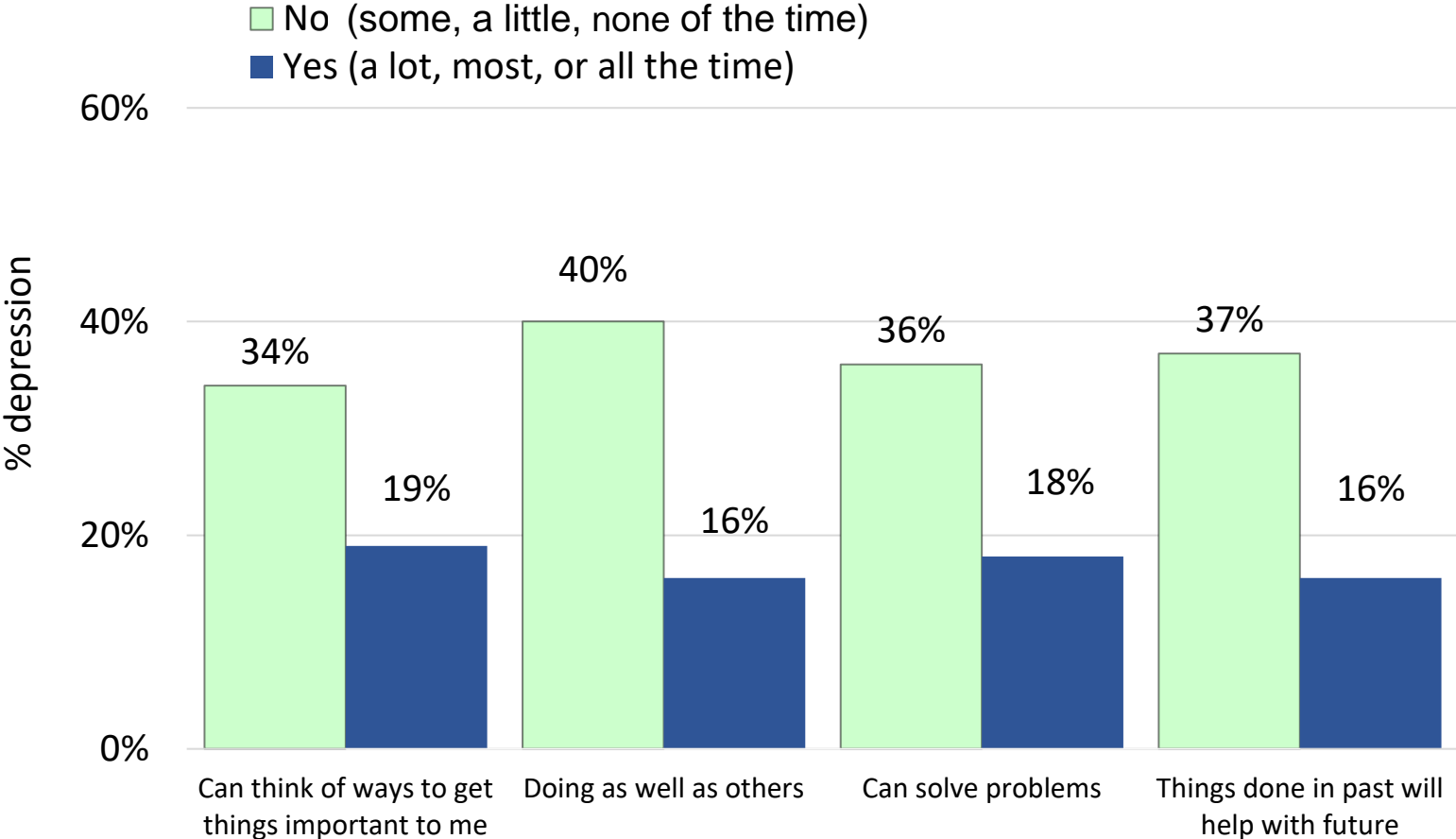
# Impact of HOPE on Contemplation of Suicide

Percent of **contemplation of suicide** among 10<sup>th</sup> grade students by Hope Scale.



# Depressive Feelings and Hope Indicators

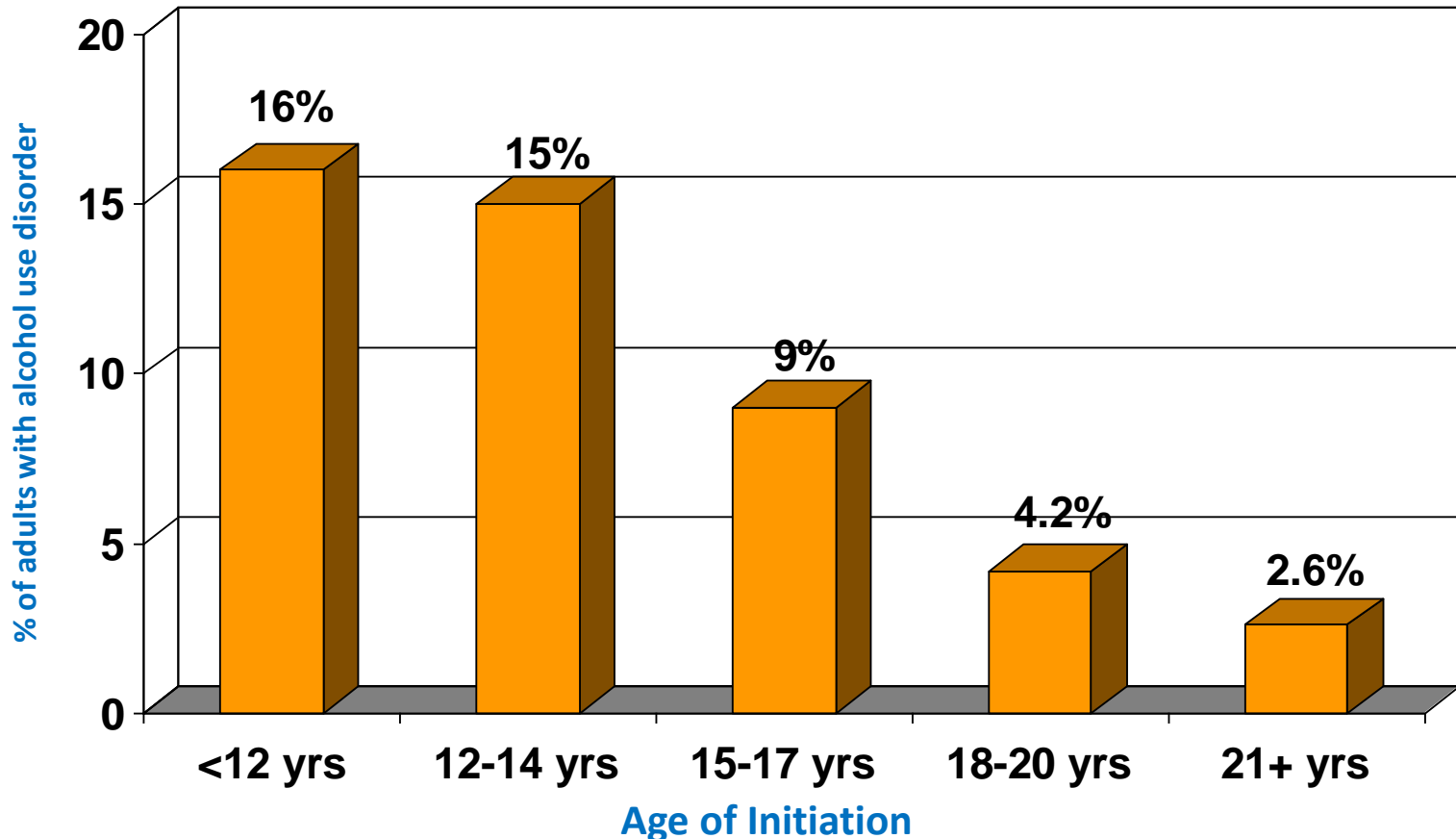
10th grade students who report hope indicators report less depressive feelings in past year



# Beyond the Healthy Youth Survey

- Why age matters
- Why prevention matters
- Snapshot of services
  - Prevention Coalitions
  - Community Services by domain
- Benefits and cost-savings

## Percentage of Past Year Alcohol Use Disorder\* Among Adults Aged 21 or Older by Age of First Use



\*Abuse or Dependence

(Source: SAHMSA, 2005)

# Early Prevention Matters

Heroin use is part of a larger substance abuse problem.

Nearly all people who used heroin also used at least 1 other drug.

Most used at least **3** other drugs.

**Heroin** is a highly addictive opioid drug with a high risk of overdose and **death** for users.

People who are addicted to...



ALCOHOL

are

**2x**



MARIJUANA

are

**3x**



COCAINE

are

**15x**



Rx OPIOID PAINKILLERS

are

**40x**

...more likely to be addicted to heroin.

# Prevention Coalitions

- **Prevention Coalitions** (Bellingham, Blaine, Ferndale, and Mt. Baker)

- Community Assessment and Strategic Planning
- Community and Capacity Building
- Direct Services (evidence-based best-practices)
  - Provided to youth and families (school and community-based)
  - Addressing identified risk and protective factors in 4 domains
- Training
- Environmental Strategies

## ***Strategic Prevention Framework***



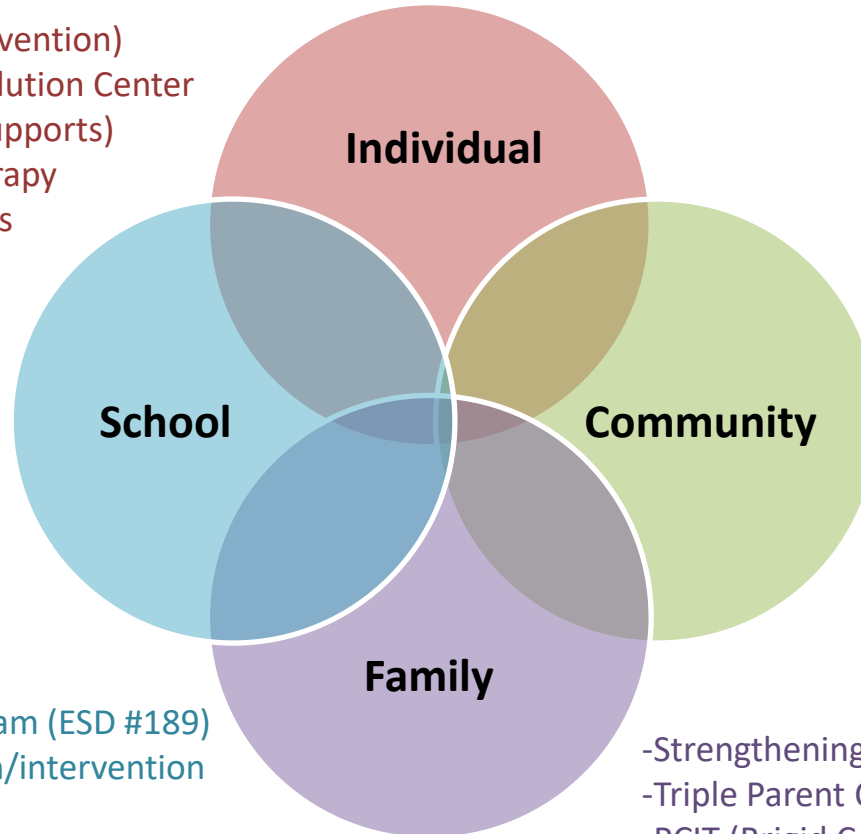
- **Coalition Support:**

- Bellingham: \$130k\* from Health Care Authority
- Ferndale: \$130k\* from Health Care Authority
- Blaine: \$125k from Drug Free Communities Grant (fiscal agent-Blaine School Dist.)
- Mt. Baker: \$130k\* from HCA and \$125k from DFC (fiscal agent-WFCN)

*\*leverages an additional 1 FTE through ESD #189 at each site*

# Services by the Four Domains

Examples of Available Services



- MAD HOPE (suicide prevention)
- Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center
- NAMI (mental health supports)
- Animals as Natural Therapy
- Social Norms Campaigns
- Peer to Peer
- Youth Summit
- Teletherapy
- Training

- Opioid Interventions (med return, naloxone dist., etc.)
- Coalition coordination
- Training
- Youth Mental Health First Aid
- Environmental & Policy (vaping, etc.)
- Campaigns (Starts with One)
- Events (All Hands, etc.)

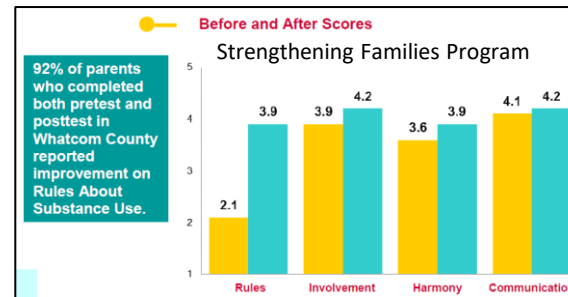
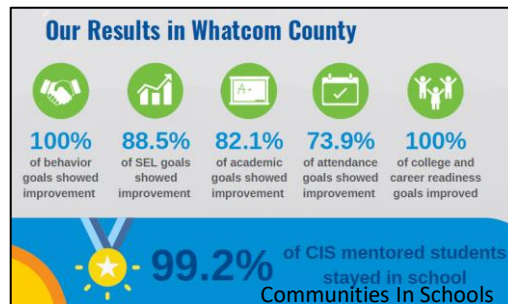
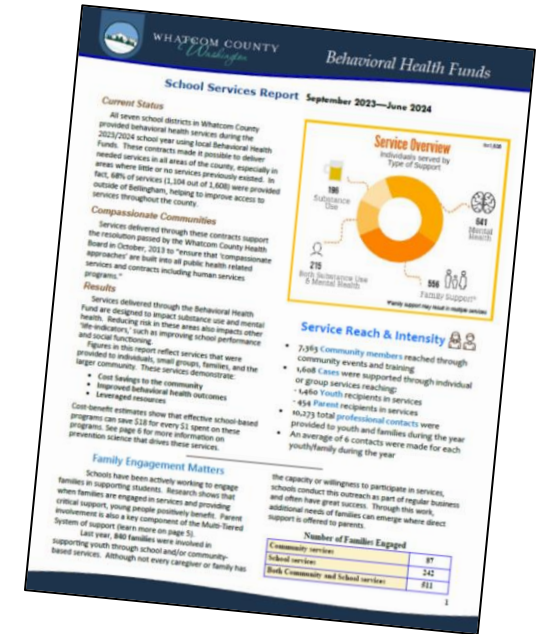
- Communities In Schools
- Project Success
- Student Assistance Program (ESD #189)
- Substance use prevention/intervention
- Mental health services
- Family Resource Centers
- School Discipline (Cascadia YMH)
- Professional development/training

- Strengthening Families Program (WSU)
- Triple Parent Coaching (Brigid Collins)
- PCIT (Brigid Collins)
- Nurse Family Partnership
- Whatcom Families Campaign
- Training (parent skills, monitoring, etc.)

# Outcomes & Savings

## Community and School-Based Services

- Effective school-based programs can save **\$18** for every dollar spent on these programs
- Strengthening Families Program has a return of **\$9.60** for every dollar spent implementing
- Every dollar invested in Communities In Schools creates **\$11.60** of economic benefit for the community



# Questions?



For questions or more information contact:

*Joe Fuller* [Jfuller@co.Whatcom.wa.us](mailto:Jfuller@co.Whatcom.wa.us)

*Kari Holley* [KHolley@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:KHolley@co.whatcom.wa.us)

*Rebecca Snearly* [RSnearly@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:RSnearly@co.whatcom.wa.us)

*Alyssa Pavitt* [APavitt@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:APavitt@co.whatcom.wa.us)

*Alicia Guildner* [AGuildne@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:AGuildne@co.whatcom.wa.us)



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