



2016—2017 AISD Substance Use and Safety Survey Results

District - Level Summary

About the Survey

The Austin Independent School District (AISD) Department of Research and Evaluation (DRE) conducted annual Student Substance Use and Safety Surveys (SSUSS) each spring semester from 1991 through 2015, after which it conducted the survey only in alternate years. This year, DRE administered the survey electronically. The purpose of this survey is to monitor students' self-reported knowledge, attitudes, and behavior related to substance use, perceptions of school safety, and experiences with student bullying on campus. Results from this survey can be used to inform and assist with district- and campus-level substance use and school safety planning.

Respondents' Demographics

In the spring of 2017, 6,176 students from a representative random sample of 10,937 students in grades 6 through 12 submitted valid responses to the survey, yielding a response rate of 56%. Of these respondents, 2,403 (39%) were high school students and 3,773 (61%) were middle school students. At both levels, females outnumbered males with 1,320 (55%) in high school and 1,908 (51%) in middle school. The majority of the respondents were Hispanic (56% and 51% at middle and high schools, respectively). The survey respondents were reflective of the district population with respect to race but not to gender.

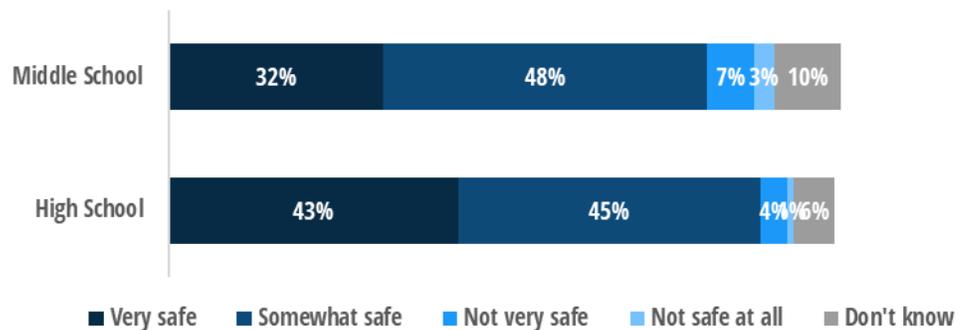
Key Findings

Most Students Feel Safe in School

Figure 1.

The vast majority of respondents indicated they felt safe at school. However, high school students, were significantly more likely than middle school students to indicate they felt **very safe** at school.

How safe do you feel when you are at school?



Source: 2016—2017 Substance Use and Safety Survey, AISD DRE ($n = 6,176$)

Most Serious Problems on Campus

When asked to identify the most serious problem at their campus, middle school respondents most frequently selected items representing interactions between students, such as student fighting and physical aggression (20%); and student harassment, threats, and bullying (20%). High school respondents most frequently reported students' marijuana use (30%) as the most serious problem at their campus.

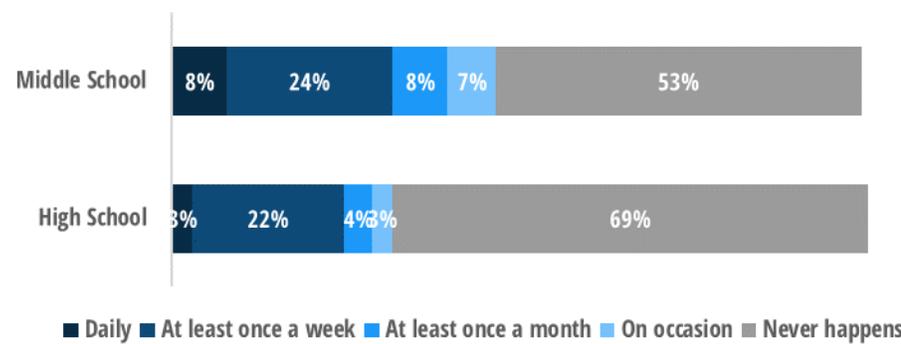
Bullying Experience and Magnitude

As expected, given the reports of most serious problems cited above, middle school students were more likely to report that they experienced bullying and that bullying is a big problem at their school.

Figure 2.

High school students were more likely than middle school students to report that they never experienced bullying of any type at their school.

How often have you experienced any type of bullying at your school?

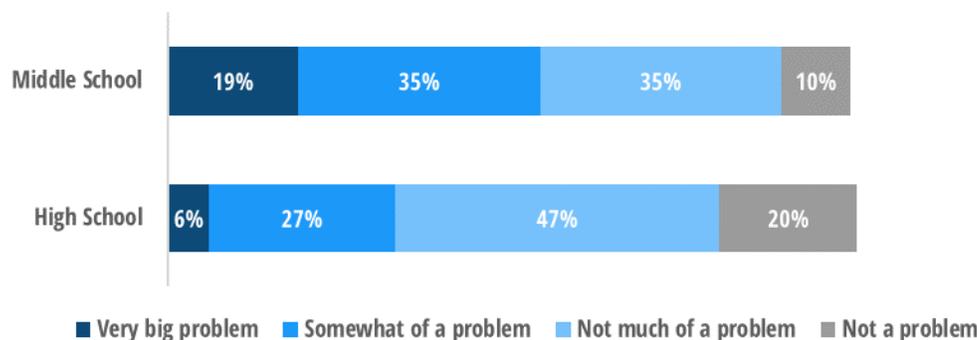


Source: 2016—2017 Substance Use and Safety Survey, AISD DRE (n = 6,062)

Figure 3.

High school students were less likely than middle school students to believe bullying at their campus was a very big problem.

How big a problem do you think bullying is at your school?



Source: 2016—2017 Substance Use and Safety Survey, AISD DRE (n = 6,133)

When it is not feasible to survey an entire population, researchers use samples instead. When using a sample to make inferences about a population, interpret results with caution. For example, although 87% of a sample may select a survey response, this does not necessarily mean 87% of the entire population feels the same way. To interpret the sample data cautiously, researchers use the following information to construct an interval that describes the range within which results for the population are likely to fall:

- a) *Population size* - The total number of students;
- b) *Sample size* - The number of survey respondents; and
- c) *Confidence interval (CI)* - 95%

The 95% CI is used commonly, indicating that you can be 95% confident that the true population result falls within the constructed interval.

Based on a high school sample of 2,403 and population enrollment of 20,214, the CI for all high schools is + and -1.88%. Based on a middle school sample of 3,773 and population enrollment of 15,907, the CI for all middle schools is + and -1.39%.

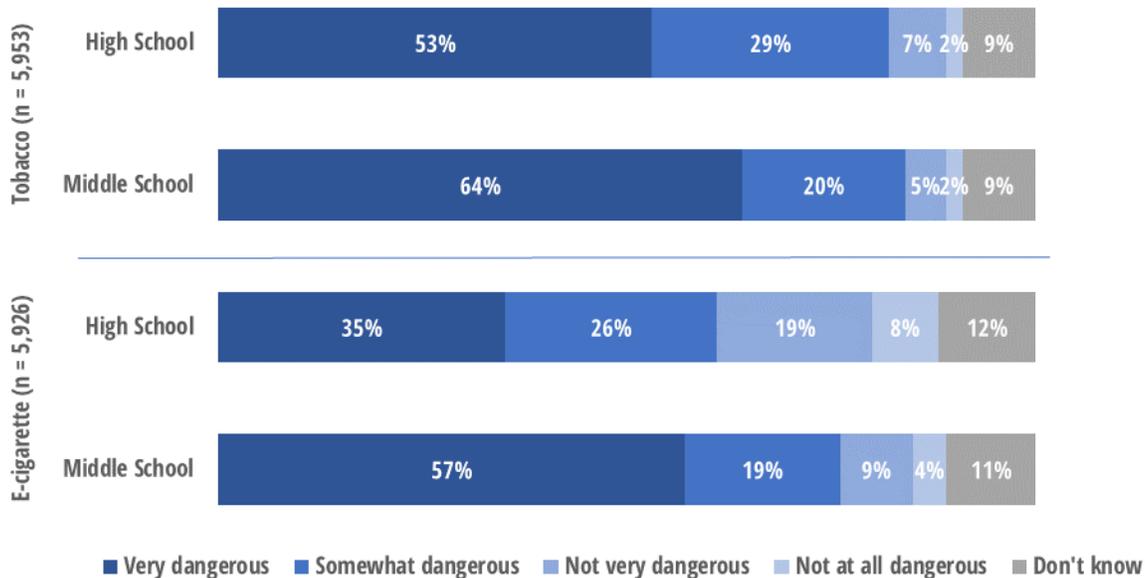
To make inferences about the level of population using the sample data, the results should be interpreted with computed CI above (i.e., either 1.88% or 1.39% for high school and middle school, respectively) on each side of the sample statistics. For example, in 2017, 8% of respondents at the high school level indicated they had friends who belonged to a gang. Applying the CI (i.e., adding and subtracting 1.88 percentage points) to the 8% yields a range of 6.12% to 9.88%. Therefore, you can be 95% confident that between 6.12% and 9.88% of all students at the high school level would indicate that their friends belonged to a gang.

Tobacco and E-cigarettes Use

Figure 4.

Both middle and high school students believed that it is more dangerous to use tobacco than e-cigarettes. However, a greater percentage of middle school students than high school students thought both tobacco and e-cigarettes were **very dangerous**.

How dangerous is it for kids your age to use ...



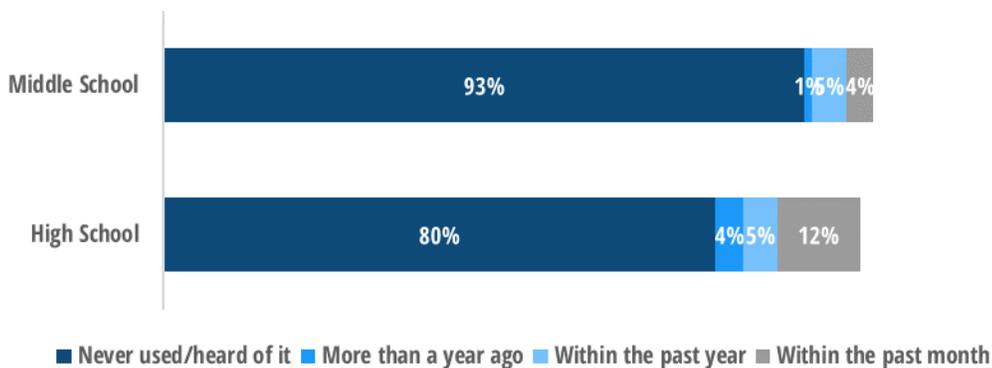
Source: 2016–2017 Substance Use and Safety Survey, AISD DRE

Marijuana Use

Figure 5.

Most of the students reported that they **never used or heard of marijuana**. However, more high school than middle school students indicated that they used marijuana within the past month or **year**.

What is the most recent you have used marijuana?



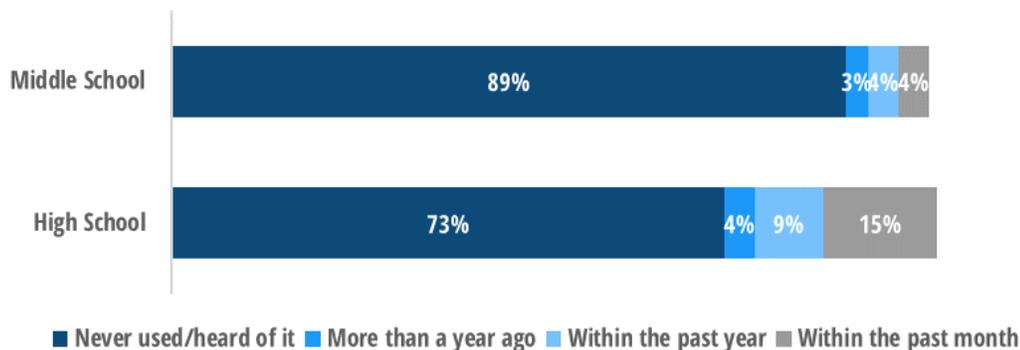
Source: 2016–2017 Substance Use and Safety Survey, AISD DRE (n = 6,078)

Alcohol Use

Figure 6.

A greater percentage of middle school than high school students indicated that they **never used or heard of** alcohol. Overall, reports from both middle school and high school students indicate that alcohol was the most used substance.

What is the most recent you have used alcohol?



Source: 2016–2017 Substance Use and Safety Survey, AISD DRE ($n = 6,070$)

Other Drugs

Nearly all middle (99%) and high school students (97%) reported that they never used or never heard of other illegal drugs, such as cocaine, ecstasy, hallucinogens, heroin, or methamphetamines. Students were also surveyed about their most recent use of cocaine, ecstasy, hallucinogens, or methamphetamine; all with minimal (0–4%) use “ever” and most with 2% or less use within the past month.

Sources of Information on Drugs, Alcohol, or Violence

Respondents were asked about their sources of information on drugs, alcohol, and violence. At middle schools, 72% of respondents reported that most of their information was obtained from their coach or P.E. teacher, while 43% of high school respondents indicated that another class was their main source of their information.

More information about the current and prior SSUSS results, including campus-level reports, may be accessed on our website at <https://www.austinisd.org/dre/district-campus-surveys>

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