

Summary of Results from the 2007-2008 Somerville High School Health Survey

Submitted to:

The Somerville Public Schools,
The Cambridge Health Alliance, and
The Somerville Cares About Prevention Coalition through
The Somerville Health Department

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BACKGROUND

REPORT FORMAT

In February of 2008, 1,125 Somerville high school students (grades 9-12) took part in the 2007-2008 Somerville High School Health Survey. The survey was developed by the Somerville Public Schools, the Cambridge Health Alliance, and the Somerville Cares About Prevention Coalition through the Somerville Health Department. Based on surveys such as the *Youth Risk Behavior Survey* (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), *Monitoring the Future* (NIDA, University of Michigan), *Profiles of Student Life – Attitudes and Behaviors*, and the *Survey of Student Resources and Assets* (America’s Promise and Search Institute), the questionnaire was designed to gather information on some of the important issues facing youth in Somerville, such as substance use, violence and safety, and stress. Similar surveys of Somerville high school students were conducted during the 2001-2002, 2003-2004, and 2005-2006 school years.

This report summarizes results from the Somerville High School Health Survey. It is designed to provide an overview of key survey data, focusing on four main themes: (1) What do the data from this survey tell us about the challenges facing youth in our community?; (2) Are there any important sub-population differences among respondents (such as by gender or grade)?; (3) How have the data changed since the last administration of the survey?; and (4) How do results in Somerville compare to those in Massachusetts as a whole? The summary presents an overview of findings grouped according to the following themes: Substance Use, Violence and Safety, Mental Health, Sexual Behavior, Weight Perception and Control, Physical Activity, and Resiliency. The main results in each section are illustrated using charts that are complemented by supplementary data or information. An appendix containing selected data follows the main results.

WHO CONDUCTED THE SURVEY?

The survey was conducted by the Somerville Public Schools, the Cambridge Health Alliance, and the Somerville Cares About Prevention Coalition through the Somerville Health Department in collaboration with Social Science Research and Evaluation, Inc. (SSRE), a non-profit social science research firm located in Burlington, Massachusetts.

HOW AND WHEN WAS THE SURVEY CONDUCTED?

The survey was administered as a questionnaire in February of 2008 to all Somerville public school students in grades 9 through 12. The number of respondents in each grade is as follows:

9th	10th	11th	12th	Other/ Unknown	TOTAL
282	279	293	266	5	1,125

School administrators set aside approximately 20-30 minutes for students to complete the survey. The attending classroom teacher was responsible for passing out the questionnaires and maintaining order. In addition to English, the survey was translated into Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian.

WHAT DID THE SURVEY ASK ABOUT?

The survey focuses on issues ranging from demographic and background items (e.g., gender, age), to student substance use (e.g., alcohol, tobacco, other drugs), to other issues related to student health such as depression and suicide, violence and safety, sexual behavior, and dietary behavior.

VALIDITY

There is a good deal of research about the ways in which students respond to surveys and whether they tell the truth. This work indicates that student survey results are reasonably accurate provided that student participation is voluntary and that the respondents cannot be identified. The Somerville High School Health Survey met these conditions. The voluntary nature of the survey was explained to both students and their parents. Prior to the survey, parents were given the opportunity to opt their child(ren) out of the survey. In addition, students could choose not to participate or to skip any items. The confidential nature of the survey was highlighted in the questionnaire instructions that asked students not to put their name on the questionnaire and explained that their answers would not be viewed by anyone who knows them.

Two other steps were taken to increase validity. First, each questionnaire was reviewed to identify any on which students obviously provided frivolous answers. Such questionnaires were omitted from all analyses. Second, analyses were conducted to test for the reasonableness of responses and for the consistency of responses across related items. When inconsistent responses were identified, the entire case or the suspect items for that case were treated as missing data in all subsequent analyses. These two procedures identified few problems.

The validity of the survey is also bolstered by using a questionnaire based largely upon existing instruments such as the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), Monitoring the Future (University of Michigan), and Profiles of Student Life – Attitudes and Behaviors and Survey of Student Resources and Assets (America's Promise and Search Institute). These standardized instruments have been thoroughly tested and administered in large-scale research studies (see Brener, N., Kann, L., McManus, T., Kinchen, S.A., Sundberg E.C., and Ross, J.G. [2002]. "Reliability of the 1999 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Questionnaire." *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 31, 336-342).

NON-RESPONDENTS

The survey results can be generalized only to students who were present when the survey was administered. The results may not reflect responses that might have been obtained from students who were absent or truant on the day(s) that the survey was administered, nor from students who have dropped out of school.

TRENDS

Trend comparisons can provide useful information on whether certain behaviors or conditions have improved, worsened, or stayed the same over time. In fact, it is best to repeat a survey such as this at regular intervals in order to track changes over time. Because this is the fourth administration of the Somerville High School Health Survey (similar surveys were administered in 2002, 2004 and 2006), it is possible to look at certain trends among Somerville youth.

COMPARATIVE DATA

A limitation of such data is that it is difficult to compare results from Somerville to results from other communities. Making comparisons to other communities is quite complicated – surveys are not exactly alike, the populations used may differ in unknown ways, the timing of the surveys may vary, and so on. Although it is natural to want to compare to other communities, a great deal can be learned simply by looking at Somerville data and the most useful comparisons are made by looking at Somerville over time.

In addition to selected trend data for Somerville, limited comparisons can be made to Massachusetts as a whole since the Massachusetts Department of Education administers the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) to a sample of Massachusetts high school students every two years. The most recent administration of this survey occurred in the spring of 2007; however, data from that survey were not available at the time of this report. When possible, comparisons are made to the most recent data available from the 2005 Massachusetts YRBS.

WHO HAS THE PROBLEM?

Although this survey was administered to high school students, this does not mean that the issues addressed are confined solely to youth. For example, national studies of substance use show that rates of use are higher among young adults than adolescents. It is also important to keep in mind that while the survey focuses on a number of risky behaviors, it may not fully address the many positive aspects of adolescent life.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

Data on health behavior among youth is typically collected in public schools because it is comparatively simple to collect data from what is essentially a "captive" audience. The fact that data on youth are collected in schools, however, does not mean that the schools bear the sole or even the largest responsibility for the risky behaviors revealed in these surveys. Issues such as those addressed in the survey are not school problems; they are community problems that require the attention of all community members and organizations.

Substance Use

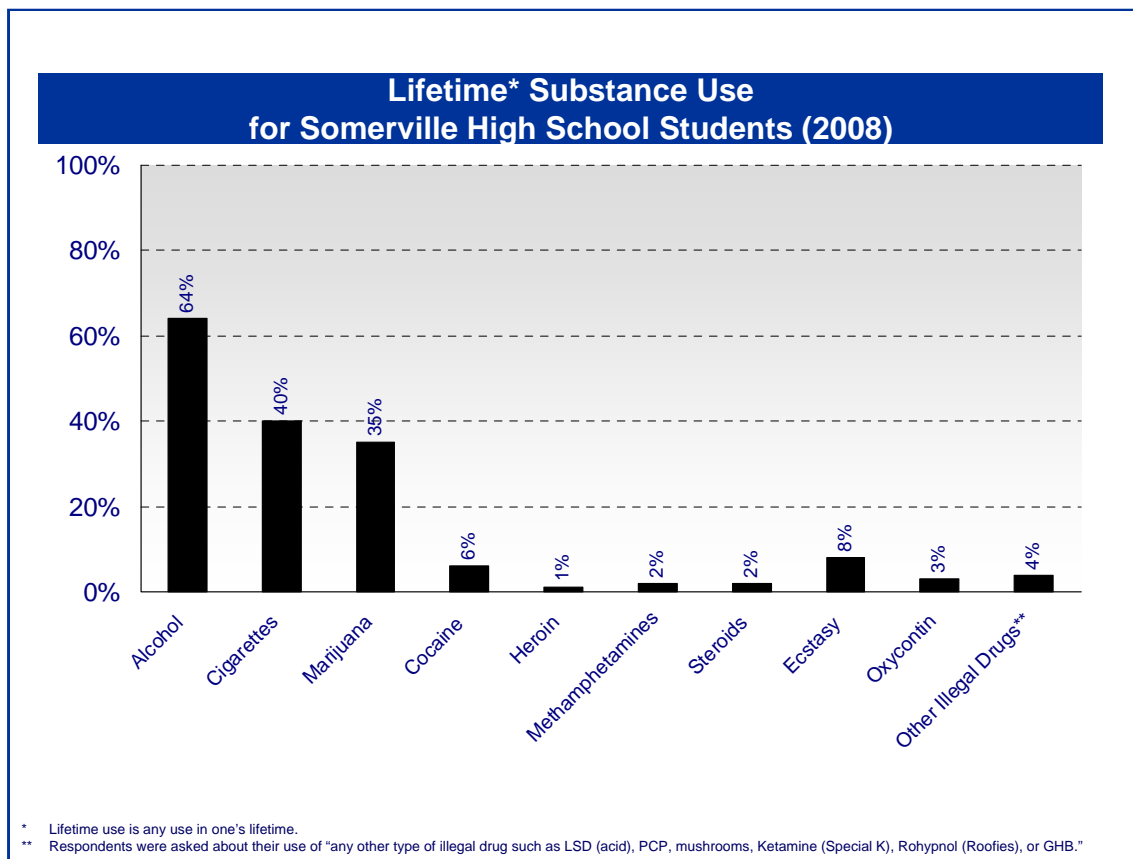
What substances are used most often by Somerville youth?

How does use change as youth age?

Are boys or girls more likely to use substances?

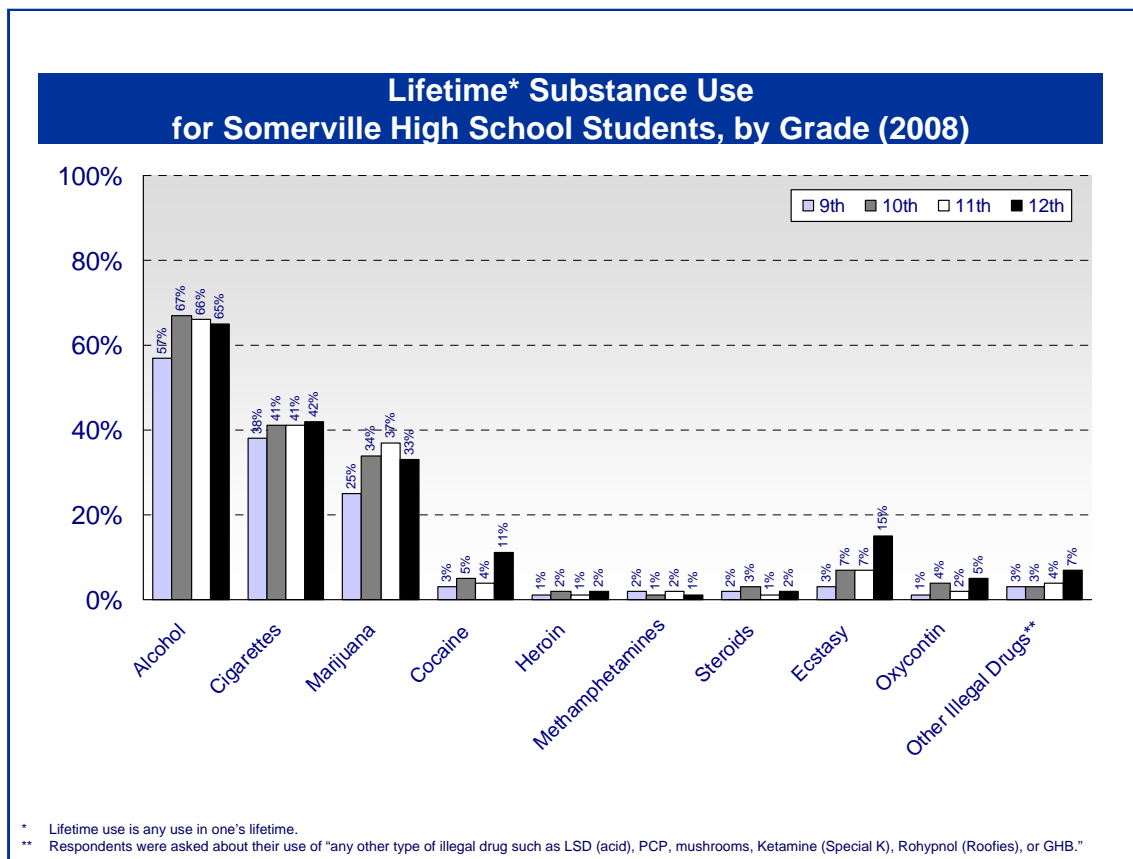
How has use changed in Somerville over time?

Are rates of substance use higher or lower in Somerville than in other places?



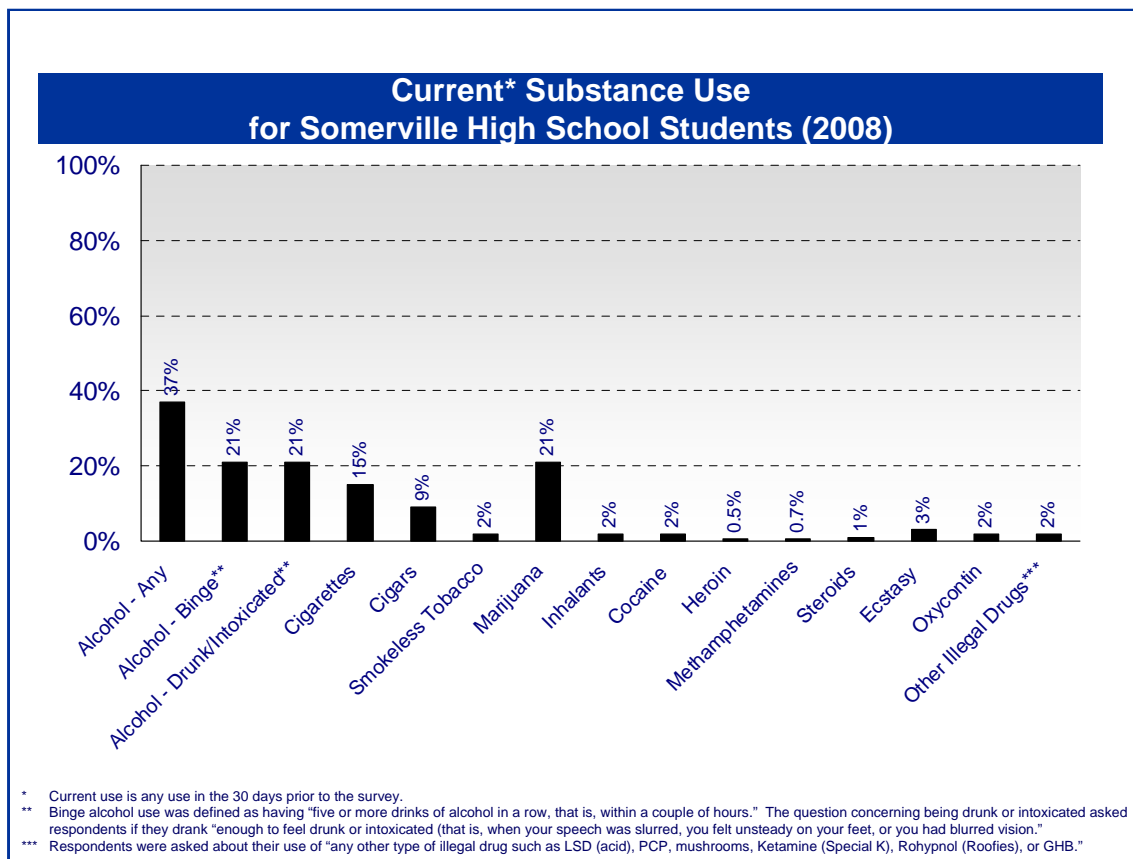
SELECTED POINTS

- Lifetime substance use is any use in one's lifetime.
- The questions about alcohol were preceded by the following instruction, "The next questions ask about drinking alcohol. This includes drinking beer, wine, wine coolers, and liquor such as rum, vodka, or whiskey. For these questions, drinking alcohol does NOT include drinking a few sips of wine for religious purposes."
- Alcohol is the substance of choice, with 64% of Somerville high school students reporting that they had consumed alcohol in their lifetime. Less than half reported ever smoking cigarettes (40%) or marijuana (35%). Use of other illegal drugs is much lower with less than 10% reporting ever using ecstasy (8%), cocaine (6%), other illegal drugs (4%), oxycontin (3%), methamphetamines (2%), steroids (2%), or heroin (1%).



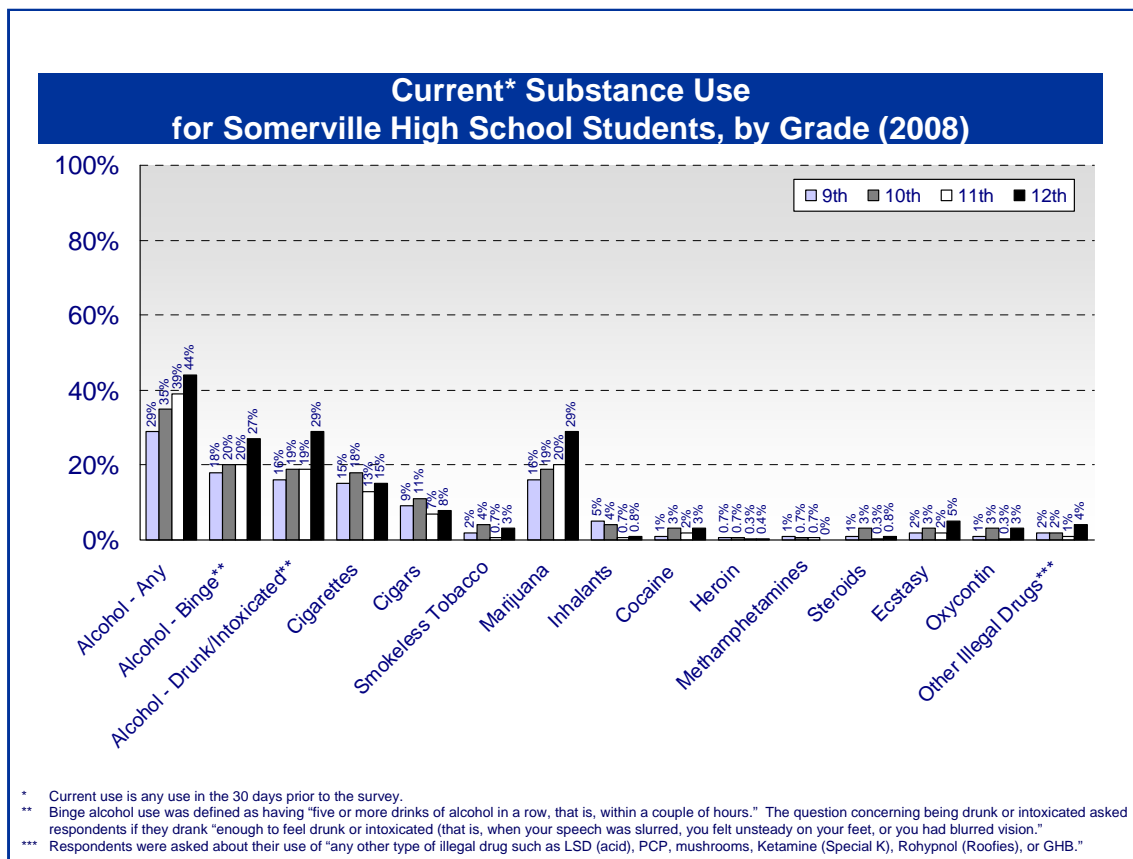
SELECTED POINTS

- Overall, the percentage of students who reported ever using substances increased with age/grade between grades 9 and 12. For example, 38% of Somerville 9th graders reported ever smoking cigarettes, compared to 42% of 12th graders.
- By late winter of their senior year, roughly two-thirds of Somerville youth have tried alcohol (65%), close to half have tried cigarettes (42%), and one-third have tried marijuana (33%).
- Note the comparatively high rates of lifetime use of ecstasy (15%), cocaine (11%), oxycontin (5%), and other illegal drugs (7%) among Somerville 12th graders.



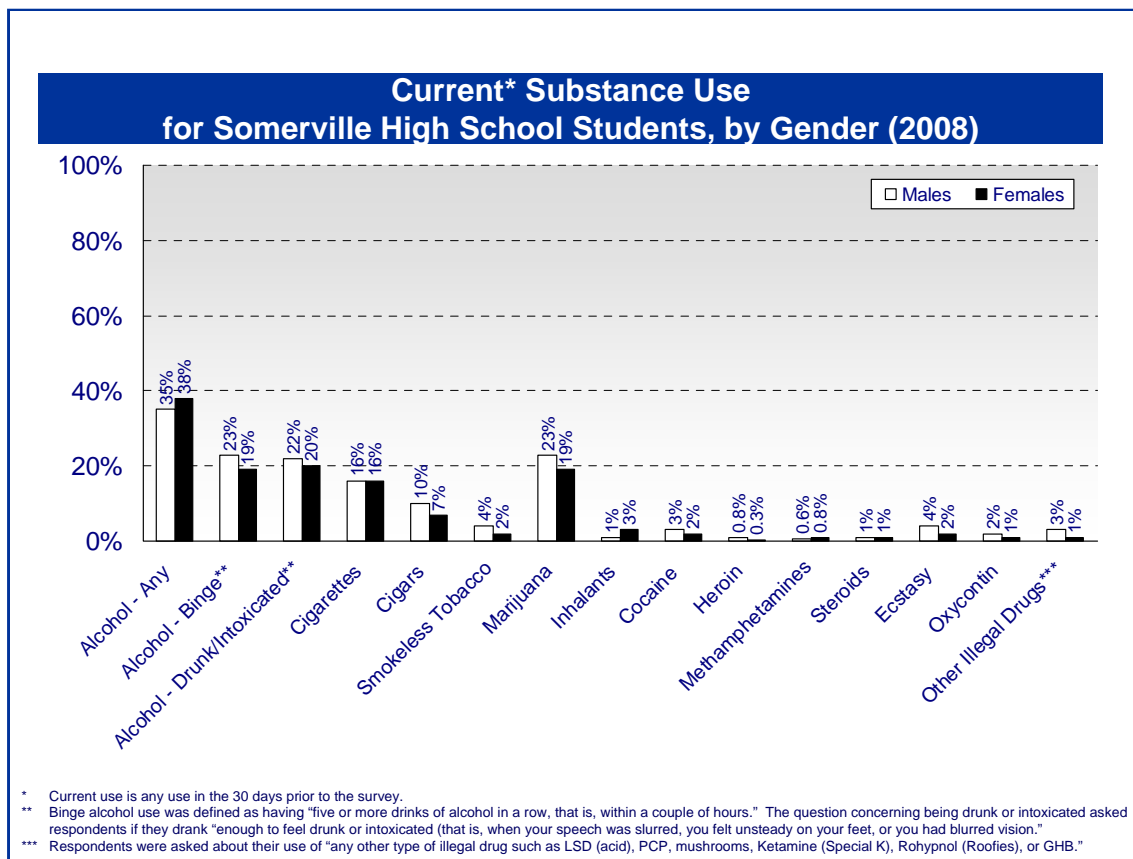
SELECTED POINTS

- Current use is any use in the 30 days prior to the survey.
- Alcohol is the substance of choice, with 37% of Somerville high school students reporting that they consumed alcohol in the 30 days prior to the survey.
- Twenty-one percent (21%) of respondents reporting both binge drinking and drinking to intoxication in the same time period. This means that over half of those who drank in the past 30 days engaged in heavy drinking.
- Note that the rate of current marijuana use (21%) is higher than the rate of current cigarette use (15%).
- Current use of illegal drugs other than marijuana is comparatively low.



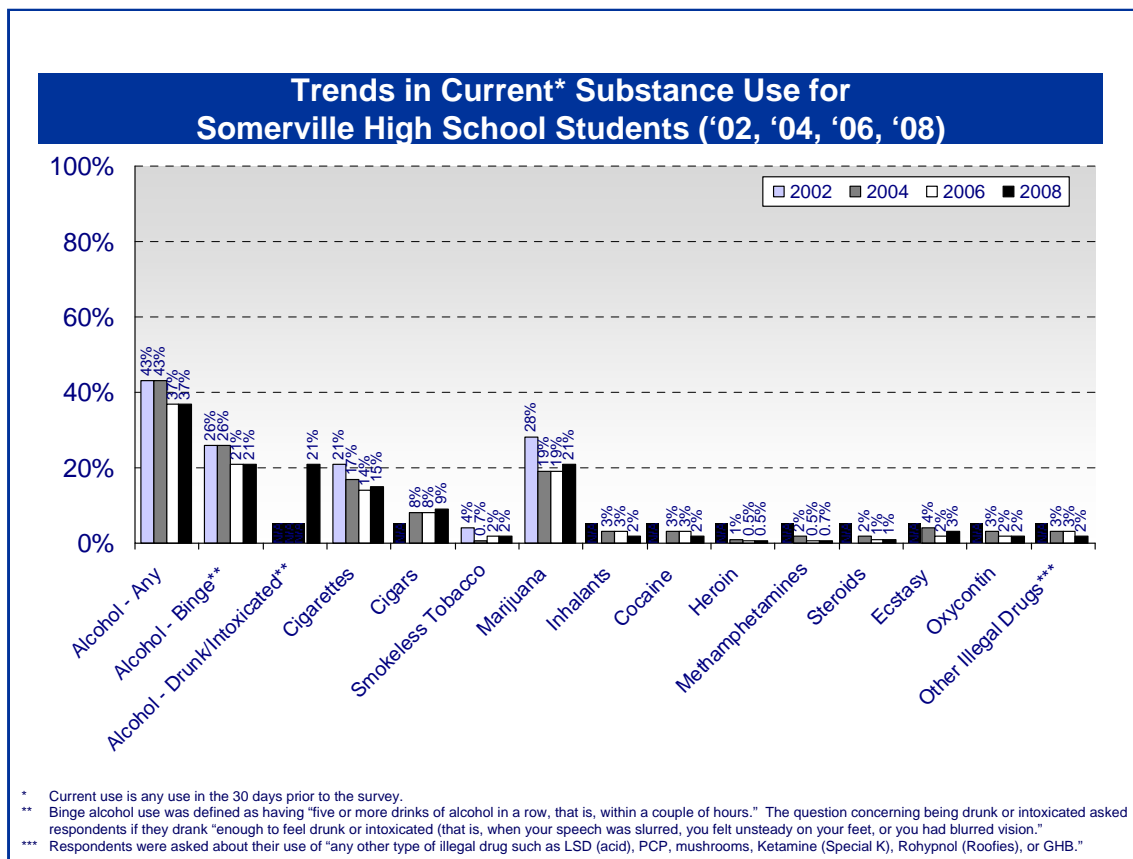
SELECTED POINTS

- The percentage of Somerville high school youth who reported current use of more commonly used substances such as alcohol and marijuana increased with age/grade. For example, the percentage of students who reported current marijuana use increased from 16% in 9th grade to 29% in 12th grade.
- Current use of tobacco products (cigarettes, cigars, and smokeless tobacco) did not increase in the same way, and use of illegal drugs other than marijuana generally remained at a comparatively low level across grades.



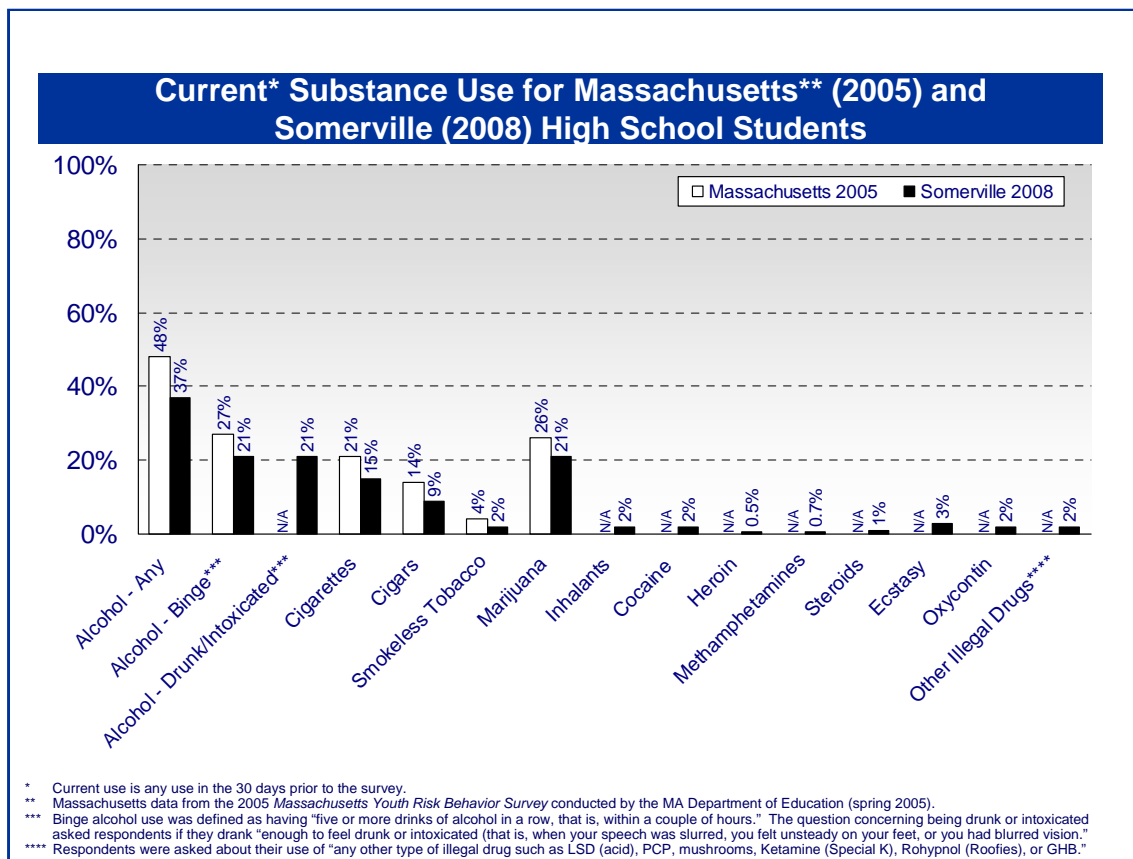
SELECTED POINTS

- Overall, Somerville high school males and females reported very similar rates of current substance use.
- Females (38%) were more likely than males (35%) to report any current alcohol use, while males were more likely to report heavy alcohol use: binge drinking (23% males, 19% females), drinking until drunk/intoxicated (22% males, 20% females).
- Males were more likely than females to report current use of cigars (10% males, 7% females), smokeless tobacco (4%, 2%), marijuana (23%, 19%), cocaine (3%, 2%), ecstasy (4%, 2%), oxycontin (2%, 1%), and other illegal drugs (3%, 1%).



SELECTED POINTS

- 2008 rates of current substance use among Somerville high school were generally similar to those observed in 2006. For example, current alcohol use and binge drinking were unchanged.
- Although slight, there were consistent increases in use of substances consumed through smoking. Current cigarette use increased from 14% to 15% between 2006 and 2008, current cigar use increased from 8% to 9%, and current marijuana use increased from 19% to 21%.

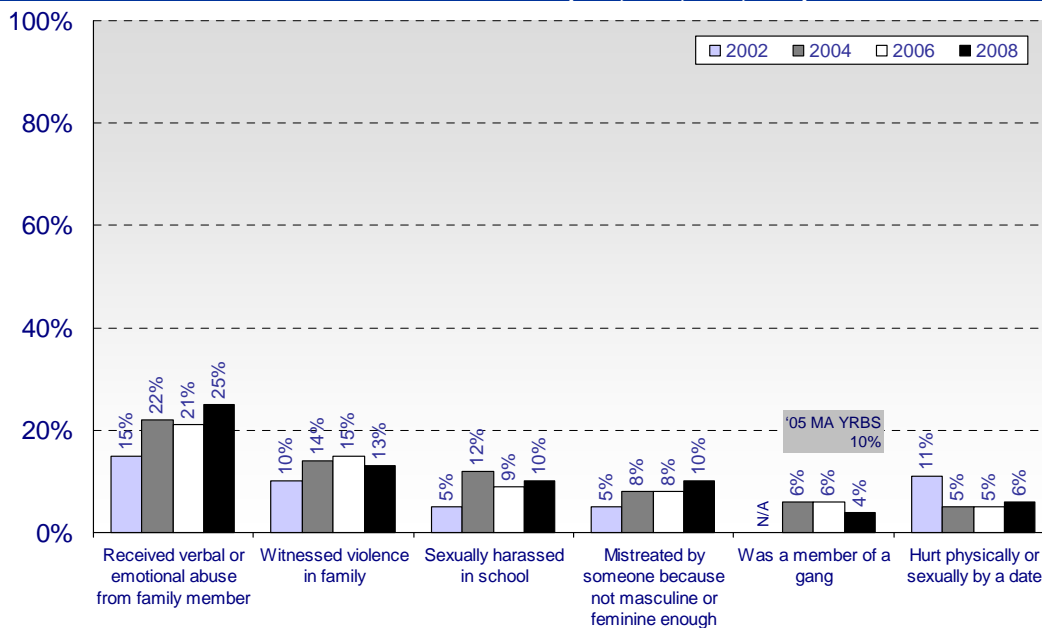


SELECTED POINTS

- Current use rates for all substances were lower in Somerville than in Massachusetts as a whole (comparing Somerville 2008 to the most recent Massachusetts 2005 data):
 - Alcohol (48% MA vs. 37% Somerville)
 - Binge Alcohol (27% vs. 21%)
 - Cigarettes (21% vs. 15%)
 - Cigars (14% vs. 9%)
 - Smokeless Tobacco (4% vs. 2%)
 - Marijuana (26% vs. 21%)
- Comparative data are not available for other substances because the questions were not included in the Massachusetts survey.

Violence and Safety

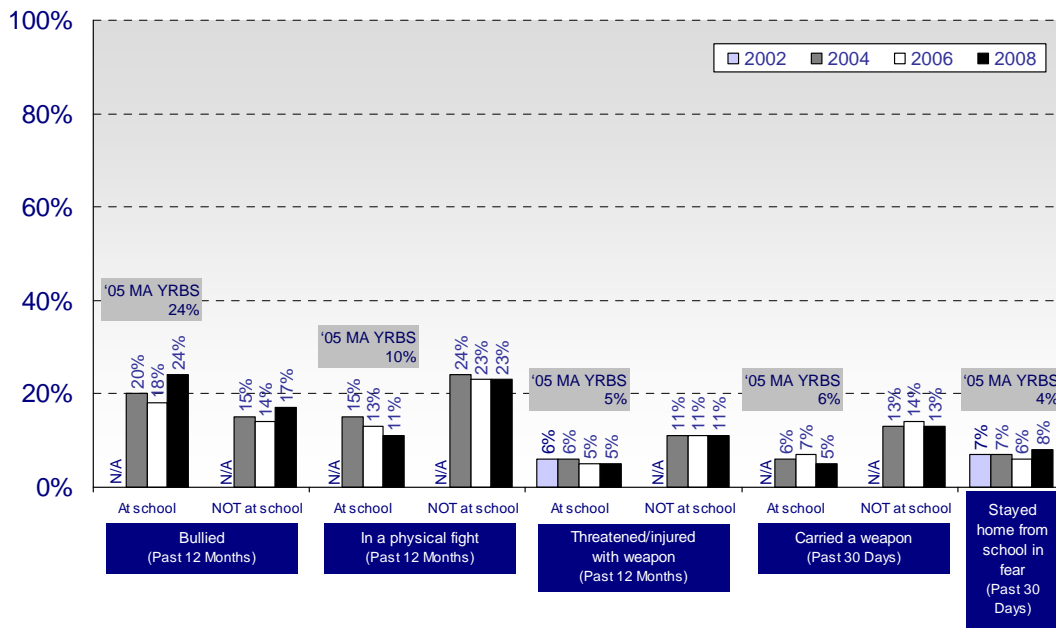
Trends in the Percent of Somerville High School Students Who Reported Family and Personal Violence-Related Experiences in the Past 12 Months ('02, '04, '06, '08)*



SELECTED POINTS

- The data illustrate family and personal violence-related experiences that respondents reported happened to them at least once in the past 12 months. One-quarter (25%) of Somerville high school students reported being verbally or emotionally abused by a family member; approximately one in ten witnessed family violence (13%), were sexually harassed in school (10%), and/or were mistreated by someone who thought they weren't masculine or feminine enough (10%); and approximately one in twenty were a member of a gang (4%) or had been physically or sexually hurt by a date (6%).
- **Trends:** Available trend data reveal slight and inconsistent variations between 2006 and 2008 in violence-related experiences among Somerville youth. Slight increases were observed in rates of receiving verbal/emotional abuse from a family member (21% in 2006, 25% in 2008), being sexually harassed in school (9%, 10%), being mistreated by someone when perceived as not masculine/feminine enough (8%, 10%), and being hurt physically or sexually by a date (5%, 6%). Rates of witnessing family violence (15%, 13%) and being a gang member (6%, 4%) showed slight decreases.
- **Comparisons:** Available data comparing Somerville 2008 results and Massachusetts 2005 results show that fewer Somerville high school students reported being a member of a gang (4% Somerville, 10% MA). *MA data from the 2005 MA Youth Risk Behavior Survey.*
- **Gender:** Females were more likely than males to have experienced most of these issues: verbally/emotionally abused (19% males, 30% females), witnessed family violence (12%, 14%), sexually harassed in school (7%, 13%), hurt by a date (3%, 8%). Males were more likely to report being a gang member (6%, 1%), and both were equally likely to report being mistreated for being perceived as not masculine/feminine enough (10%, 10%).
- **Grade:** Rates by age/grade varied by item. For example, there was no consistent pattern in differences by age/grade in the percentage of respondents who reported receiving verbal/emotional abuse, witnessing family violence, or being hurt by a date. Rates of being sexually harassed in school (14% among 9th graders, 6% among 12th graders), being mistreated for not being masculine/feminine enough (14% 9th grade, 8% 12th grade), and being a gang member (5% 9th grade, 2% 12th grade) declined with age/grade. See Appendix A for details.

Trends in Violence and Safety-Related Experiences among Somerville High School Students ('02, '04, '06, '08)*



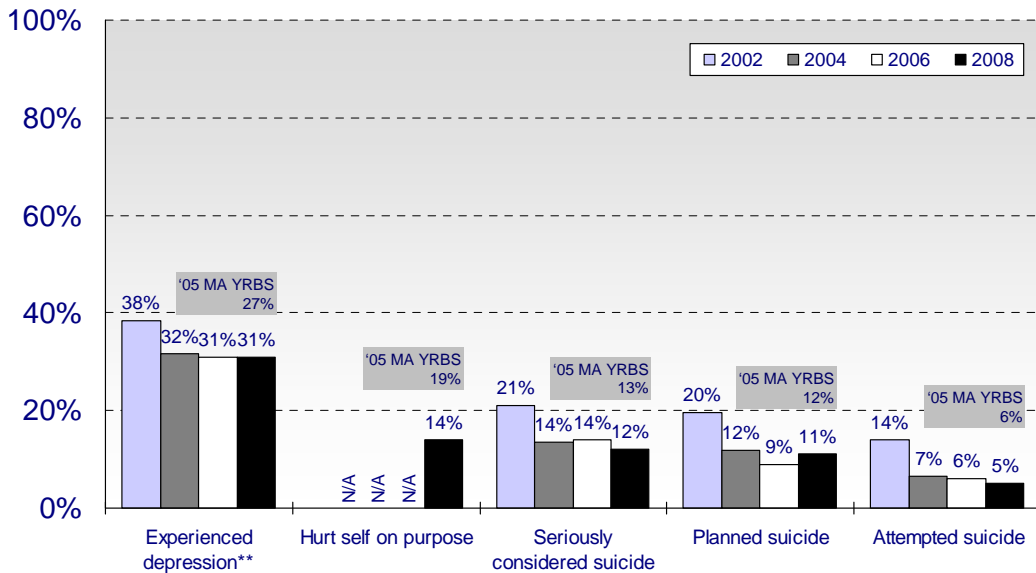
* Comparative data are available only for the items listed. Massachusetts data from the 2005 *Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey* conducted by the MA Department of Education (spring 2005).

SELECTED POINTS

- The data illustrate violence and safety-related experiences occurring in the past 12 months (bullied, in a physical fight, threatened/injured with a weapon) or in the past 30 days (carried a weapon, stayed home from school in fear), most detailing experiences that occurred both at school and when NOT at school. All available comparative data are highlighted.
- On and Off School Property:** Respondents reported that fighting, being threatened/injured with a weapon, and weapon carrying were all twice as likely to have occurred when they were away from school than when they were at school; however, they were more likely to be bullied *at school* (24% of 2008 respondents reported being bullied at school in the past 12 months, compared to 17% who were bullied when they were not at school).
- Trends:** Available trend data reveal general stability between 2006 and 2008 in these issues among Somerville youth. Exceptions include rates of bullying, which increased both at school (18% to 24%) and when not at school (14% to 17%), and physical fighting at school, which continued a downward trend since 2004 (15%, 13%, 11%).
- Comparisons:** In general, rates of these issues were similar among both 2008 Somerville and 2005 Massachusetts youth: bullied on school property (24% Somerville, 24% MA), in a physical fight at school (11%, 10%), threatened/injured with a weapon at school (5%, 5%), carried a weapon (5%, 6%). However, the percentage of students who reported staying home from school out of fear for their safety in the past 30 days was twice as high in Somerville (8%) as MA (4%). *MA data from the 2005 MA Youth Risk Behavior Survey.*
- Gender:** Males were approximately twice as likely as females to report all behaviors related to fighting and weapons. Both were equally likely to report being bullied at school, while females were more likely to report being bullied when not at school and staying home from school out of fear for their safety. See Appendix A for details.
- Grade:** In general, reports of being bullied, physical fighting, and staying home from school out of fear were more common among younger respondents and highest among 9th graders. Reports of either carrying a weapon or being threatened/injured with one varied only slightly and inconsistently across ages/grades. See Appendix A for details.

Mental Health

Self-Harm, Depression, and Suicidal Ideation and Behavior in the Past 12 Months Among Somerville High School Students ('02, '04, '06, '08)*

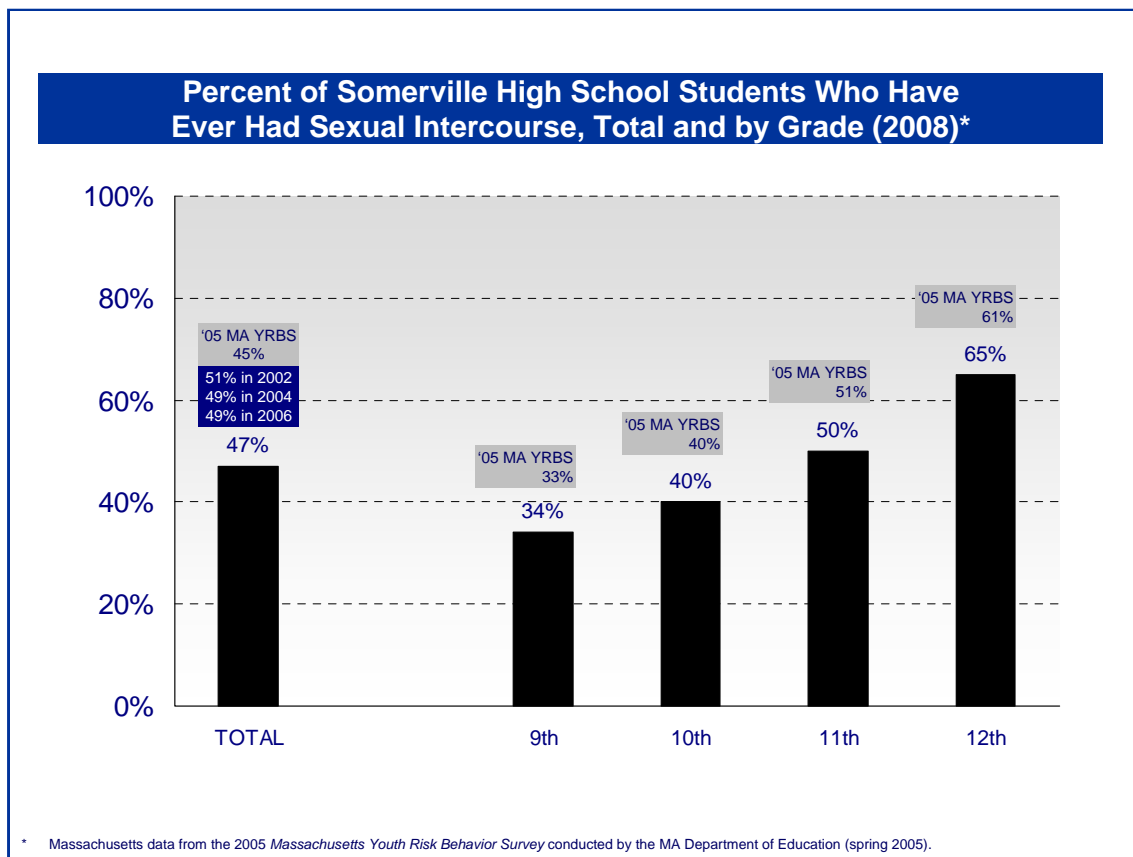


* Massachusetts data from the 2005 Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey conducted by the MA Department of Education (spring 2005).
 ** Depression is defined in the survey as feeling "so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities."

SELECTED POINTS

- Thirty-one percent (31%) of 2008 Somerville high school students reported experiencing *depression* in the 12 months prior to the survey, while 14% reported hurting themselves on purpose, 12% *seriously considered* suicide, 11% *planned* to commit suicide, and 5% *attempted* suicide.
- **Trends:** Trend data on self-harm are not available as that was a new item in the 2008 survey. The rate of reported *depression* remained steady at 31%. Rates of suicidal ideation and behavior varied slightly: *seriously considered* suicide (14% to 12%), *planned* suicide (9% to 11%), *attempted* suicide (6% to 5%).
- **Comparisons:** The 2008 rate of reported depression among Somerville high school students (31%) was higher than the Massachusetts 2005 average (27%). Rates for suicidal ideation and behavior were similar among both populations, with the Somerville rates falling slightly below state averages: *seriously considered* suicide (12% Somerville, 13% MA), *planned* suicide (11% Somerville, 12% MA), *attempted* suicide (5% Somerville, 6% MA). MA data from the 2005 MA Youth Risk Behavior Survey.
- **Gender:** Female Somerville high school students were far more likely than their male counterparts to have reported each of these issues in 2008: reported *depression* (22% males, 40% females), self-harm (9%, 17%), *seriously considered* suicide (8%, 15%), *planned* suicide (7%, 14%), *attempted* suicide (4%, 6%).
- **Grade:** There were no consistent differences by grade in reports of these mental health issues (see Appendix A).

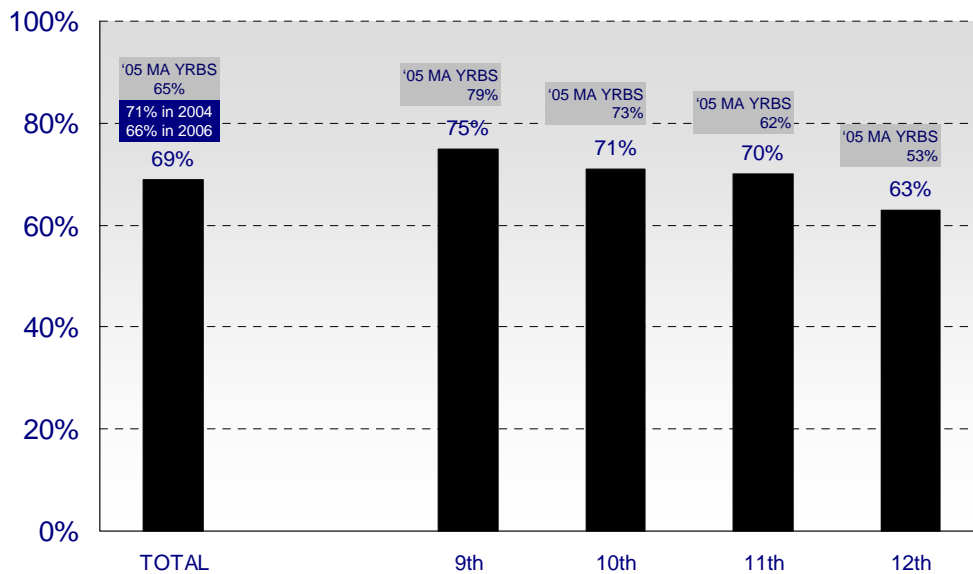
Sexual Behavior



SELECTED POINTS

- Forty-seven percent (47%) of all 2008 Somerville high school students reported ever having sexual intercourse: 34% of 9th graders, 40% of 10th graders, 50% of 11th graders, and 65% of 12th graders.
- **Trends:** There was a slight decrease between 2006 and 2008 in the percentage of Somerville high school students who reported ever having sexual intercourse (49% to 47%), continuing a downward trend since 2002.
- **Comparisons:** The rate of lifetime sexual intercourse among 2008 Somerville high school students (47%) was slightly higher than the 2005 Massachusetts rate (45%). Rates observed in each grade were similar to state rates with the exception of 12th grade, in which Somerville respondents (65%) were more likely than MA respondents (61%) to report ever having sexual intercourse. *MA data from the 2005 MA Youth Risk Behavior Survey.*
- **Gender:** A larger percentage of 2008 Somerville high school males (51%) than females (44%) reported ever having sexual intercourse.
- **Grade:** The percentage of Somerville students who reported having sexual intercourse increased with age/grade (34% in 9th grade to 65% in 12th grade).

Percent of Sexually Active Somerville High School Students Who Used a Condom at the Last Time They Had Sex, Total and by Grade (2008)*

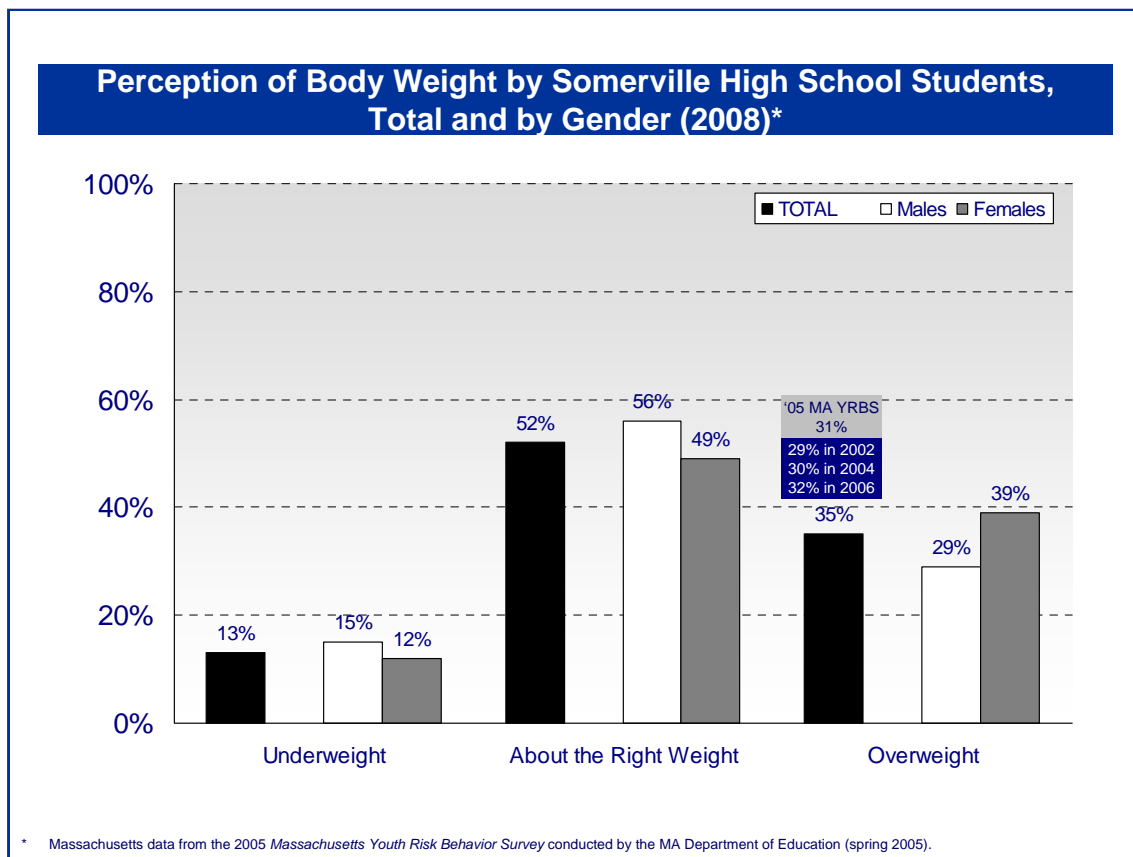


* Massachusetts data from the 2005 Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey conducted by the MA Department of Education (spring 2005).

SELECTED POINTS

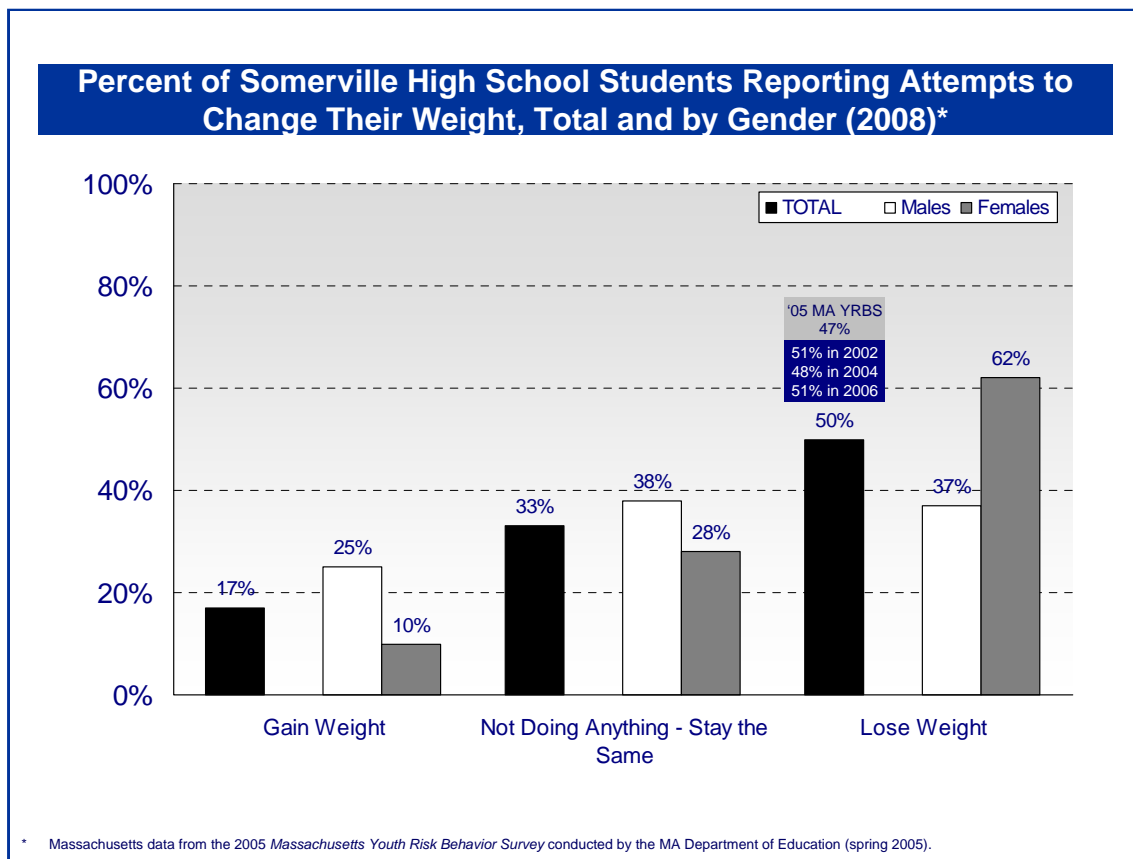
- Of those 2008 Somerville high school students who reported ever having sexual intercourse, 69% reported using a condom the last time they did so.
- **Trends:** The percentage of sexually active Somerville high school students who reported that they or their partner used a condom the last time they had sexual intercourse increased from 66% in 2006 to 69% in 2008, reversing a decrease previously observed between 2004 and 2006.
- **Comparisons:** A greater percentage of 2008 Somerville high school students (69%) than 2005 Massachusetts students (65%) reported using a condom at their last sexual intercourse. While Somerville and Massachusetts data both demonstrate that youth are less likely to use condoms as they age, this decline among Somerville youth is less severe, and Somerville 11th and 12th graders are more likely than their Massachusetts counterparts to report condom use at last intercourse (11th grade – 70% Somerville, 62% MA; 12th grade – 63% Somerville, 53% MA). *MA data from the 2005 MA Youth Risk Behavior Survey.*
- **Gender:** Male Somerville high school students (75%) were more likely than females (62%) to report that they or their partner used a condom the last time they had intercourse.
- **Grade:** The percentage of Somerville high school students who reported using a condom during their last sexual intercourse decreased with age/grade, falling from a high of 75% among 9th graders to a low of 63% among 12th graders.

Weight Perception and Control



SELECTED POINTS

- Thirteen percent (13%) of 2008 Somerville high school students described themselves as *underweight*, 52% as *about the right weight*, and 35% as *overweight*.
- Twelve percent (12%) of Somerville high school females described themselves as *underweight* compared to 15% of males, 49% as *about the right weight* compared to 56% of males, and 39% as *overweight* compared to 29% of males.
- **Trends:** The percentage of Somerville high school students who described themselves as *overweight* increased from 29% in 2002, to 30% in 2004, 32% in 2006, and 35% in 2008.
- **Comparisons:** Somerville 2008 high school students (35%) were more likely than 2005 Massachusetts (31%) high school students to describe themselves as *overweight*. *MA data from the 2005 MA Youth Risk Behavior Survey.*
- **Grade:** There were no consistent differences by age/grade in 2008 Somerville high school students' perception of whether they were *overweight* (9th grade – 35%, 10th grade – 35%, 11th grade – 38%, 12th grade – 30%).

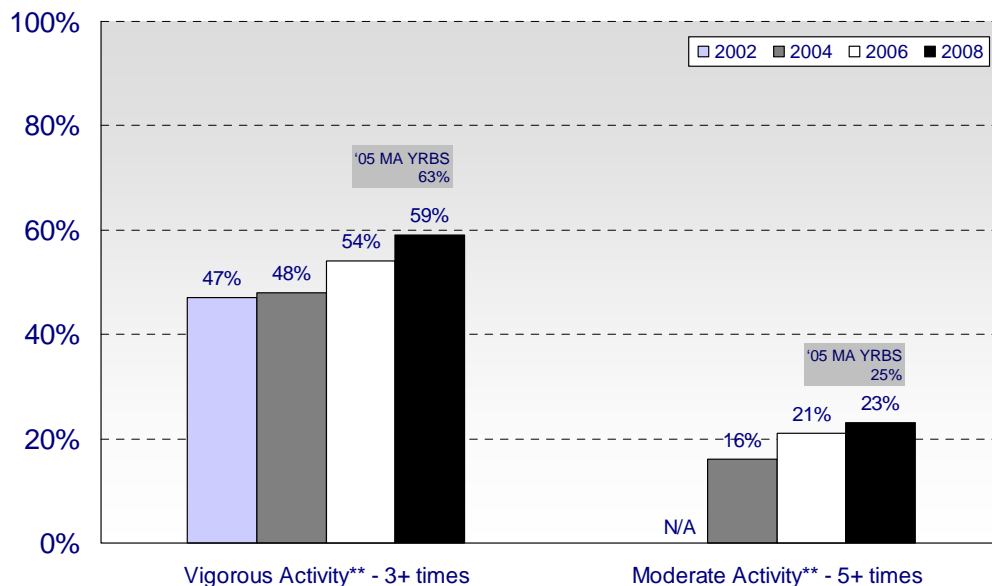


SELECTED POINTS

- Seventeen percent (17%) of 2008 Somerville high school students reported that they were trying to *gain weight*, 33% were trying to *stay the same weight*, and 50% were trying to *lose weight*.
- Somerville high school males were much more likely than females to report that they were trying to *gain weight* (25% males, 10% females) or *stay the same weight* (38%, 28%), while females were far more likely to report trying to *lose weight* (37% males, 62% females).
- **Trends:** The overall percentage of Somerville high school students who reported that they were trying to *lose weight* showed little change between 2006 (51%) and 2008 (50%). Reports of trying to *lose weight* have remained at close to 50% since 2002.
- **Comparisons:** A larger percentage of 2008 Somerville (50%) than 2005 Massachusetts (47%) high school students reported that they were trying to *lose weight*. *MA data from the 2005 MA Youth Risk Behavior Survey.*
- **Grade:** The percentage of 2008 Somerville high school students who reported that they were trying to *lose weight* decreased with age/grade (9th grade – 55%, 10th grade – 54%, 11th grade – 50%, 12th grade – 43%).

Physical Activity

Percent of Somerville High School Students Who Reported Physical Activity in the Past 7 Days ('02, '04, '06, '08)*

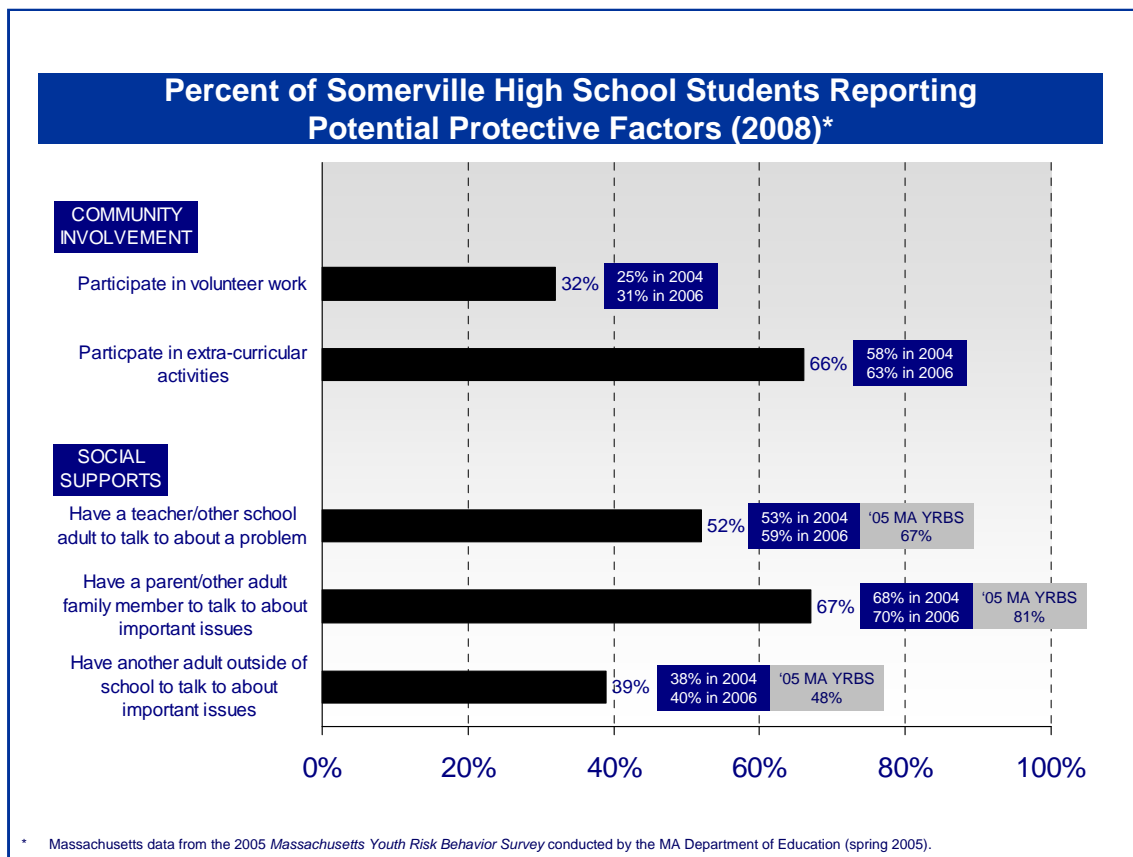


* Massachusetts data from the 2005 Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey conducted by the MA Department of Education (spring 2005).
 ** Vigorous physical activity was defined as participating in physical activities that make you sweat or breathe hard for at least 20 minutes.
 Moderate physical activity was defined as participating in physical activities that do not make you sweat or breathe hard for at least 30 minutes.

SELECTED POINTS

- Fifty-nine percent (59%) of Somerville high school students reported participating in *vigorous* physical activity at least 3 times in the past 7 days and 23% reported engaging in *moderate* activity at least 5 times in the same period.
- Vigorous physical activity was defined in the survey as participating in physical activities that make you sweat or breathe hard for at least 20 minutes. Moderate physical activity was defined as participating in physical activities that do not make you sweat or breathe hard for at least 30 minutes.
- **Trends:** There have been consistent increases in both *vigorous* and *moderate* activity over time. Reports of regular *vigorous* activity increased from 47% in 2002, to 48% in 2004, 54% in 2006, and 59% in 2008. Reported *moderate* activity increased from 16% in 2004, to 21% in 2006, and 23% in 2008 (2002 data are not available).
- **Comparisons:** Rates of reported regular physical activity remain below state averages: *vigorous* activity three or more times (59% Somerville, 63% MA), *moderate* activity five or more times (23% Somerville, 25% MA). MA data from the 2005 MA Youth Risk Behavior Survey.
- **Gender:** Somerville males were far more likely than females to report engaging in both *vigorous* activity (70% males, 49% females) and *moderate* activity (27% males, 20% females).
- **Grade:** The percentage of Somerville high school students who reported engaging in regular *vigorous* physical activity was higher among 9th and 10th graders (62% each) than 11th and 12th graders (56% and 57% respectively). The percentage of students who reported engaging in regular *moderate* activity increased with age/grade (21%, 22%, 23%, 26%).

Resiliency



SELECTED POINTS

- While the Somerville survey focused on many risk behaviors, it also contained items designed to measure the strength of certain protective factors such as social support and community attachment.
- **Trends:** The percentage of Somerville high school students who reported community involvement increased between 2006 and 2008, continuing an upward trend since 2004: volunteer work (25%, 31%, 32%), extra-curricular activities (58%, 63%, 66%). Rates of reported access to adult social supports declined between 2004 and 2006 -- school adult confidant (59% to 52%), family adult confidant (70% to 67%), non-family/school adult confidant (40% to 39%) – reversing increases previously observed between 2004 and 2006.
- **Comparisons:** Comparative Massachusetts data are available only for the items related to social supports. These data show that Somerville high school students were less likely to report having caring adults to speak with about problems: a teacher or other school adult (52% Somerville, 67% MA), a parent or other adult family member (67% Somerville, 81% MA), another adult outside of school (39% Somerville, 48% MA). *MA data from the 2005 MA Youth Risk Behavior Survey.*
- **Gender:** Males were more likely than females to report participating in extracurricular activities (68% males, 65% females) and having a family adult confidant (70%, 63%). Female students were more likely than males to report volunteering (28% males, 35% females) and having either a school adult (48%, 55%) or non-family/school adult (37%, 42%) to talk to about a problem.
- **Grade:** The percentage of Somerville high school students who reported participating in extra-curricular activities (65%, 65%, 68%, 67%) varied little from grade to grade. The percentage of students who reported participating in volunteer work and having social supports tended to increase with age/grade: volunteer work (20%, 29%, 37%, 41%), teacher/other school adult confidant (41%, 49%, 52%, 66%), parent or other family adult confidant (64%, 65%, 67%, 71%), another adult outside of school (34%, 39%, 40%, 43%).

Appendix A:

Selected Data Tables

2007-2008 SOMERVILLE HIGH SCHOOL HEALTH SURVEY

Alcohol and Other Drug Use – High School (N≈1,125)

	TOTAL							GENDER		GRADE			
	Somerville				MA YRBS			Somerville 2008		Somerville 2008			
	2002 (1466)	2004 (1382)	2006 (1003)	2008 (1125)	2001 (4204)	2003 (3624)	2005 (3522)	Females (594)	Males (523)	9 th (282)	10 th (279)	11 th (293)	12 th (266)
LIFETIME (any use in lifetime)													
Alcohol	64.6%	65.5%	62.9%	63.7%	81%	75%	76%	66.6%	60.4%	56.8%	67.2%	66.1%	65.2%
Binge alcohol use ¹	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Drunk or intoxicated ²	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Cigarettes	N/A	47.6%	41.5%	40.3%	62%	53%	51%	42.6%	37.9%	37.6%	40.8%	41.1%	41.7%
Cigars, cigarillos, little cigars	N/A	22.8%	19.8%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Smokeless Tobacco	N/A	3.3%	4.2%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Marijuana	N/A	36.9%	33.5%	35.2%	50%	47%	45%	34.1%	36.5%	25.4%	34.2%	37.0%	33.3%
Inhalants	13.9%	8.3%	8.7%	8.4%	12%	N/A	N/A	10.0%	7.1%	10.7%	8.7%	5.5%	10.2%
Cocaine	N/A	6.5%	4.5%	5.5%	8%	8%	8%	4.6%	6.6%	2.5%	5.1%	3.8%	10.9%
Heroin	N/A	1.7%	1.3%	1.3%	3%	3%	2%	1.2%	1.3%	1.4%	1.5%	0.7%	1.5%
Methamphetamines	N/A	3.1%	1.6%	1.5%	7%	6%	4%	1.9%	1.2%	2.1%	1.1%	1.7%	1.1%
Steroids (no prescription)	5.2%	2.3%	1.8%	1.5%	5%	5%	4%	1.9%	1.9%	1.8%	3.3%	0.7%	1.9%
Ecstasy	N/A	8.8%	5.4%	7.7%	13%	9%	7%	8.0%	7.6%	2.9%	6.9%	6.5%	15.0%
Oxycontin (no prescription)	N/A	6.2%	2.9%	3.2%	N/A	N/A	N/A	3.1%	3.3%	1.4%	4.0%	2.1%	5.3%
Other Illegal Drugs ³	N/A	6.7%	4.9%	4.1%	N/A	N/A	N/A	3.2%	5.2%	2.5%	3.3%	3.8%	7.2%
CURRENT (any use in past 30 days)													
Alcohol	42.9%	43.3%	37.4%	36.7%	53%	46%	48%	37.9%	35.2%	29.3%	35.3%	38.8%	44.4%
Binge alcohol use ¹	26.3%	25.5%	20.8%	20.9%	33%	27%	27%	19.0%	22.9%	17.8%	19.9%	19.7%	27.1%
Drunk or intoxicated ²	N/A	N/A	N/A	20.6%	N/A	N/A	N/A	19.5%	21.5%	16.0%	19.3%	18.5%	29.3%
Cigarettes	20.5%	16.8%	14.2%	15.4%	26%	21%	21%	15.6%	15.5%	14.9%	18.1%	13.3%	15.4%
Cigars, cigarillos, little cigars	N/A	7.6%	7.5%	8.7%	13%	12%	14%	7.3%	10.4%	8.9%	10.5%	7.2%	8.3%
Smokeless Tobacco	4.4%	0.7%	1.5%	2.3%	4%	4%	4%	1.2%	3.7%	1.8%	4.0%	0.7%	3.0%
Marijuana	27.9%	18.9%	19.0%	20.8%	31%	28%	26%	18.9%	22.9%	16.0%	18.7%	19.9%	29.1%
Inhalants	N/A	2.9%	3.4%	2.4%	N/A	N/A	N/A	3.2%	1.3%	4.6%	3.6%	0.7%	0.8%
Cocaine	N/A	2.8%	2.6%	2.1%	N/A	N/A	N/A	1.7%	2.7%	1.4%	2.5%	2.0%	2.6%
Heroin	N/A	1.0%	0.5%	0.5%	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.3%	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%	0.3%	0.4%
Methamphetamines	N/A	1.9%	0.5%	0.7%	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.8%	0.6%	1.4%	0.7%	0.7%	0.0%
Steroids (no prescription)	N/A	1.6%	1.3%	1.2%	N/A	N/A	N/A	1.2%	1.2%	1.1%	2.6%	0.3%	0.8%
Ecstasy	N/A	3.6%	2.2%	3.0%	N/A	N/A	N/A	2.4%	3.9%	1.8%	2.9%	2.4%	5.3%
Oxycontin (no prescription)	N/A	3.0%	1.9%	1.6%	N/A	N/A	N/A	1.4%	1.9%	1.1%	2.6%	0.3%	2.6%
Other Illegal Drugs ³	N/A	2.7%	2.8%	2.1%	N/A	N/A	N/A	1.4%	2.9%	1.8%	1.5%	1.0%	4.1%

¹ Respondents were asked if they had "5 or more drinks of alcohol in a row, that is, within a couple of hours."

² Respondents were asked if they drank "enough to feel drunk or intoxicated (that is, when your speech was slurred, you felt unsteady on your feet, or you had blurred vision.)"

³ Respondents were asked about their use of "any other type of illegal drug such as LSD (acid), PCP, mushrooms, Ketamine (Special K), Rohypnol (Roofies), or GHB."

2007-2008 SOMERVILLE HIGH SCHOOL HEALTH SURVEY

Violence and Safety – High School (N≈1,125)

	TOTAL							GENDER		GRADE			
	Somerville				MA YRBS			Somerville 2008		Somerville 2008			
	2002 (1466)	2004 (1382)	2006 (1003)	2008 (1125)	2001 (4204)	2003 (3624)	2005 (3522)	Females (594)	Males (523)	9 th (282)	10 th (279)	11 th (293)	12 th (266)
VIOLENCE-RELATED EXPERIENCES IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS													
Witnessed violence in your family (12 months)	9.8%	13.6%	14.5%	13.0%	N/A	N/A	N/A	14.2%	11.6%	14.5%	12.8%	10.4%	14.6%
Received verbal or emotional abuse from someone in your family (12 months)	15.3%	21.6%	21.3%	24.6%	N/A	N/A	N/A	29.9%	18.8%	23.3%	27.8%	22.0%	25.1%
Mistreated by someone who thought you were not masculine or feminine enough (12 months)	4.6%	8.0%	8.2%	10.3%	N/A	N/A	N/A	10.3%	10.1%	13.9%	10.8%	8.4%	8.2%
Sexually harassed in school (12 months)	4.5%	12.4%	9.4%	10.2%	N/A	N/A	N/A	13.2%	6.8%	13.7%	12.2%	9.0%	6.2%
Hurt physically or sexually by a date or someone you were going out with (12 months)	10.9%	5.0%	4.9%	5.6%	N/A	N/A	N/A	7.9%	3.0%	5.9%	4.6%	6.1%	5.4%
Were a member of a gang (12 months)	N/A	6.0%	5.9%	3.5%	8.0%	10%	10%	1.2%	6.0%	4.9%	3.9%	3.2%	1.9%
BULLYING, FIGHTING, & THREATENING IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS													
Bullied at school (12 months)	N/A	19.9%	17.8%	23.7%	N/A	23%	24%	23.3%	24.3%	28.3%	27.1%	21.9%	17.0%
Bullied when NOT at school (12 months)	N/A	15.4%	13.7%	17.2%	N/A	N/A	N/A	19.0%	15.1%	18.2%	18.6%	14.8%	17.4%
In a physical fight on school property (12 months)	N/A	15.0%	12.8%	10.6%	12%	10%	10%	7.8%	13.6%	14.6%	12.2%	6.2%	9.8%
In a physical fight when NOT on school property (12 months)	N/A	24.0%	23.1%	23.0%	N/A	N/A	N/A	18.3%	28.2%	27.2%	23.3%	21.6%	19.9%
Threatened or injured with a weapon on school property (12 months)	5.8%	6.3%	5.2%	5.1%	8%	6%	5%	3.7%	6.7%	5.0%	7.2%	5.8%	2.3%
Threatened or injured with a weapon when NOT on school property (12 months)	N/A	10.5%	11.3%	11.1%	N/A	N/A	N/A	8.8%	13.6%	11.4%	11.9%	10.3%	10.9%
WEAPONS CARRYING AND STAYING HOME FROM SCHOOL IN THE PAST 30 DAYS													
Carried a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club on school property (30 days)	N/A	5.8%	6.9%	5.0%	6%	5%	6%	2.9%	7.5%	5.0%	4.3%	6.2%	4.5%
Carried a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club when NOT on school property (30 days)	N/A	12.7%	14.4%	12.7%	N/A	N/A	N/A	6.4%	20.0%	12.1%	11.8%	12.8%	14.3%
Stayed home from school because of fear for safety (30 days)	7.2%	6.6%	5.5%	7.8%	8%	5%	4%	9.1%	6.2%	9.3%	8.6%	8.5%	4.5%

2007-2008 SOMERVILLE HIGH SCHOOL HEALTH SURVEY

Mental Health – High School (N≈1,125)

	TOTAL							GENDER		GRADE			
	Somerville				MA YRBS			Somerville 2008		Somerville 2008			
	2002	2004	2006	2008	2001	2003	2005	Females	Males	9 th	10 th	11 th	12 th
	(1466)	(1382)	(1003)	(1125)	(4204)	(3624)	(3522)	(594)	(523)	(282)	(279)	(293)	(266)
PERSONAL EXPERIENCES IN PAST 12 MONTHS													
Divorce or separation in family	6.5%	6.9%	8.2%	8.5%	N/A	N/A	N/A	9.6%	7.0%	10.7%	11.3%	7.9%	4.2%
Family moved	9.8%	13.3%	14.7%	13.6%	N/A	N/A	N/A	14.1%	12.9%	16.8%	16.4%	11.7%	9.5%
Family member or close friend died	28.7%	41.7%	38.4%	32.2%	N/A	N/A	N/A	35.4%	28.6%	33.9%	29.7%	36.6%	28.6%
Ran away from home	5.2%	4.9%	6.2%	6.5%	N/A	N/A	N/A	7.5%	5.3%	7.4%	7.1%	5.4%	6.1%
ISSUES THAT CAUSE WORRY - Percent of students who report worrying "fairly often" or "very often" about issues in past month													
School issues (grades, homework, tests, etc.)	N/A	N/A	N/A	63.9%	N/A	N/A	N/A	71.9%	55.0%	61.9%	66.6%	61.3%	66.6%
Social issues (friendships, dating, teasing, etc.)	N/A	N/A	N/A	38.0%	N/A	N/A	N/A	43.1%	32.0%	36.4%	38.0%	35.4%	42.0%
Appearance issues (your weight, how you look, etc.)	N/A	N/A	N/A	41.5%	N/A	N/A	N/A	53.6%	27.4%	47.5%	41.5%	38.3%	39.1%
Family issues (relationship with your parent[s], family's financial situation, family health concerns, etc.)	N/A	N/A	N/A	39.8%	N/A	N/A	N/A	48.1%	30.0%	35.4%	41.7%	39.1%	42.7%
COPING AND CONTROL - Percent of students who report experiencing issues "fairly often" or "very often" in past month													
Found that you could not cope with all of the things that you had to do	N/A	N/A	N/A	24.8%	N/A	N/A	N/A	31.7%	16.8%	26.2%	25.1%	21.6%	26.4%
Angered because of things that were outside of your control	N/A	N/A	N/A	31.8%	N/A	N/A	N/A	37.1%	26.0%	30.5%	35.6%	28.4%	33.3%
SELF-HARM, DEPRESSION, AND SUICIDE													
Hurt/injured self on purpose (12 months)	N/A	N/A	N/A	13.5%	N/A	18%	19%	17.1%	9.4%	14.9%	17.9%	10.0%	11.7%
Depressed ¹ (12 months)	38.4%	31.6%	30.7%	31.0%	29%	28%	27%	39.5%	21.5%	27.5%	33.9%	28.7%	35.0%
Seriously considered suicide (12 months)	21.0%	13.5%	13.6%	11.5%	20%	16%	13%	14.9%	7.9%	10.9%	14.1%	11.0%	10.3%
Made plan to commit suicide (12 months)	19.5%	11.8%	9.0%	10.6%	15%	13%	12%	13.7%	7.3%	13.7%	12.2%	7.2%	9.1%
Attempted suicide (12 months)	14.1%	6.6%	5.8%	5.3%	10%	8%	6%	6.3%	4.2%	6.8%	5.1%	4.5%	4.9%
SOCIAL SUPPORTS													
Have a parent or other adult family member to talk to about important issues	N/A	68.3%	69.8%	66.6%	76%	N/A	81%	63.4%	70.4%	64.0%	64.8%	67.0%	70.8%
Have a teacher or other adult school staff member to talk to about a problem	N/A	52.7%	59.3%	51.9%	65%	N/A	67%	55.3%	47.8%	40.9%	48.7%	52.4%	66.2%
Have another adult outside of school to talk to about important issues	N/A	38.3%	39.6%	39.1%	50%	N/A	48%	41.5%	36.5%	33.9%	38.6%	39.9%	43.2%

¹ Depression was described in the survey as feeling "so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities."

2007-2008 SOMERVILLE HIGH SCHOOL HEALTH SURVEY

Health – High School (N≈1,125)

	TOTAL							GENDER		GRADE			
	Somerville				MA YRBS			Somerville 2008		Somerville 2008			
	2002	2004	2006	2008	2001	2003	2005	Females	Males	9 th	10 th	11 th	12 th
	(1466)	(1382)	(1003)	(1125)	(4204)	(3624)	(3522)	(594)	(523)	(282)	(279)	(293)	(266)
SEXUAL BEHAVIOR													
Ever had sexual intercourse	50.8%	48.8%	49.1%	47.3%	44%	41%	45%	44.2%	51.2%	34.3%	40.4%	50.4%	64.9%
Condom use at last intercourse ¹	N/A	71.4%	66.2%	68.5%	58%	57%	65%	62.1%	74.7%	75.0%	70.5%	69.7%	63.1%
Alcohol/drugs at last intercourse ¹	N/A	17.1%	16.4%	16.7%	23%	N/A	23%	13.3%	20.2%	15.6%	11.1%	17.7%	20.0%
Ever been/gotten someone pregnant	8.1%	5.2%	4.4%	5.7%	5%	4%	5%	6.8%	4.5%	3.6%	4.8%	5.2%	9.5%
Ever sexual contact against will	N/A	8.0%	8.1%	8.3%	10%	10%	10%	11.3%	5.0%	8.4%	5.9%	8.8%	10.1%
Ever had an STD	2.8%	1.6%	1.1%	1.6%	3%	6%	5%	2.6%	0.6%	1.8%	0.4%	2.8%	1.5%
Ever taught about AIDS/HIV in school	89.2%	87.7%	87.9%	87.0%	94%	92%	93%	90.1%	84.0%	81.8%	93.0%	85.8%	87.8%
Ever talked with parents or other family adults about AIDS/HIV infection	51.3%	48.5%	53.3%	48.8%	N/A	N/A	N/A	51.6%	45.8%	46.7%	47.2%	50.4%	51.0%
WEIGHT													
Describe self as slightly/very overweight	28.5%	30.4%	32.1%	34.5%	33%	31%	31%	38.8%	29.3%	35.3%	35.2%	37.5%	29.5%
Trying to lose weight	50.7%	47.8%	50.8%	50.2%	47%	46%	47%	61.5%	37.3%	54.7%	54.1%	49.6%	42.6%
WEIGHT LOSS OR MAINTENANCE ACTIVITIES IN PAST 30 DAYS													
<i>Exercised</i>	41.1%	67.0%	69.1%	75.0%	32%	N/A	N/A	72.6%	77.6%	78.5%	77.7%	75.2%	68.8%
<i>Ate less food, fewer calories, or foods low in fat</i>	34.7%	44.2%	44.5%	47.4%	9%	N/A	N/A	59.0%	33.9%	49.4%	50.8%	45.7%	44.2%
<i>Fasted for 24 hours or more</i>	9.8%	11.9%	13.1%	11.6%	14%	12%	11%	13.7%	9.0%	14.2%	11.5%	10.2%	10.9%
<i>Took diet pills/powders/liquids without a doctor's advice</i>	6.3%	6.5%	6.7%	5.5%	8%	7%	5%	6.7%	4.3%	5.2%	4.6%	5.8%	6.6%
<i>Vomited/took laxatives</i>	3.4%	5.0%	4.2%	4.3%	6%	6%	6%	4.9%	3.7%	6.0%	3.8%	4.3%	3.1%
<i>Tried a fad/trend diet</i>	1.6%	8.0%	8.0%	6.8%	N/A	N/A	N/A	7.2%	6.3%	9.3%	6.8%	5.5%	5.5%
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN PAST 7 DAYS													
Participated in regular <i>vigorous</i> physical activity (3 or more times in week)	46.9%	48.1%	54.3%	58.8%	63%	61%	63%	49.3%	69.9%	61.7%	61.6%	56.1%	56.6%
Participated in regular <i>moderate</i> physical activity (5 or more times in week)	N/A	16.1%	21.4%	23.0%	25%	24%	25%	19.6%	27.2%	21.3%	22.1%	22.9%	26.2%

¹ Of those who had sexual intercourse.