

# Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey

## Data Brief

### Behaviors of Eighth Grade Students by School Type

In Vermont, eighth graders attend schools where they are the oldest (K-8; 5-8; 6-8; 7-8) and with older students (K-12; 6-12; 7-12). Of eighth graders who took the 2009 YRBS, 67% (3,721) were in schools where they were the oldest and 33% (1,793) were in schools with older students.

Students in 10th, 11th, and 12th grade are more likely to report risky behaviors. Their conduct may influence younger students. The purpose of this data brief is to examine whether eighth graders who attend school with older students have different behavior rates than eighth graders who do not.

#### *Personal Safety*

Eighth graders in schools with older students were more likely to report riding in a car or other vehicle with an under-the-influence driver, being in a physical fight on school property, and being offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property. Other differences were not significant<sup>1</sup>.

	8th graders mixed with older students	8th graders not mixed with older students
Rode with someone who had been drinking, past 30 days	23%	19%
Rode with someone who had used marijuana, past 30 days	14%	8%
Was bullied, past 30 days	24%	23%
Bullied someone, past 30 days	24%	23%
Bullied electronically, past 12 months	15%	16%
Physical fight, past 12 months	37%	34%
Physical fight on school property, past 12 months	21%	16%
Offered, sold, or given illegal drug on school property, past 12 months	14%	9%

#### *Tobacco, Alcohol, and Marijuana Use*

Eighth graders in schools with older students were more likely to start drinking (28% vs. 21%) or smoking cigarettes (13% vs. 9%) before age 13. There was no significant difference in marijuana use before age 13 (8% vs. 7%) by school type.

Eighth graders in schools with older students were more likely to report using cigarettes (11% vs. 7%), chewing tobacco (6% vs. 4%), alcohol (20% vs. 16%) or marijuana (10% vs. 8%) in the past 30 days. There was no difference in binge drinking by school type (8% vs. 6%).

<sup>1</sup> We tested for statistical significance using a mixed effects regression model that accommodates for the interdependence among students within local education agencies (schools, supervisory unions, or school districts).

### Attitudes and Perceptions of Substance Use

Eighth graders in schools with older students were less likely to think that there is great risk of harm from smoking 1-2 packs of cigarettes daily or using marijuana regularly. They were more likely to think that cigarettes or marijuana are easy to obtain. They were less likely to report that it is wrong or very wrong for their peers to smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol, or use marijuana. They were less likely to think their parents would think it is wrong or very wrong for them to smoke cigarettes or drink alcohol. Other differences were not significant.

	8th graders mixed with older students	8th graders not mixed with older students
Great risk of harm from:		
Smoking 1-2 packs of cigarettes daily	60%	68%
Consuming 1-2 drinks daily	27%	30%
Smoking marijuana regularly	58%	65%
Easy or very easy to obtain:		
Cigarettes	47%	39%
Alcohol	52%	53%
Marijuana	31%	25%
Wrong or very wrong for people your age to use:		
Cigarettes	83%	88%
Alcohol	70%	75%
Marijuana	81%	87%
Parents would think it is wrong or very wrong for you to use:		
Cigarettes	95%	97%
Alcohol	88%	90%
Marijuana	94%	95%

### Sexual Behaviors

Eighth graders in schools with older students were more likely to have ever had sex (18% vs. 14%) and were more likely to have had sex before age 13 (15% vs. 11%). Among eighth grade students who had ever had sex, there was no significant difference in alcohol or drug use before last sex (23% vs. 22%) or condom use (74% vs. 71%) by school type.

### Assets

Eighth graders in schools with older students were equally likely to agree or strongly agree that they help decide what goes on in school (53% vs. 53%) and that they matter to their community (48% vs. 52%) as eighth graders in schools where they are the oldest.

For more information, contact Erika Edwards, Ph.D., M.P.H. (erika.edwards@ahs.state.vt.us; 802-863-7246). For the Data Brief archive, visit: [http://www.healthvermont.gov/research/yrbs/data\\_briefs.aspx](http://www.healthvermont.gov/research/yrbs/data_briefs.aspx)