
2019 YRBS Results

A summary

Administered to AHS in April 2019

AHS students:907

Table 1. Distribution of Arlington high school respondents

	Male N (%)	Female N (%)
Total	426 (47.0)	481 (53.0)
Level		
Grade 9	110 (25.8)	141 (29.4)
Grade 10	114 (26.6)	136 (28.2)
Grade 11	123 (28.8)	109 (22.6)
Grade 12	79 (18.6)	95 (19.8)
Race/Ethnicity		
AI/AN/NH/PI*	2 (.4)	4 (.8)
Asian	40 (9.6)	60 (12.6)
Black or African American	15 (3.6)	14 (3.0)
White	325 (78.0)	356 (75.2)
Multi-Racial	35 (8.4)	39 (8.2)

*American Indian/Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

Administered to OMS and Gibbs in April 2019

Gibbs students: 417

OMS Students: 729

Table 2. Distribution of Arlington middle school respondents

	Male N (%)	Female N (%)
Total	538 (47.0)	608 (53.0)
Level		
Grade 6	225 (41.8)	192 (31.6)
Grade 7	164 (30.4)	212 (34.8)
Grade 8	149 (27.6)	204 (33.6)
Race/Ethnicity		
AI/AN/NH/PI*	10 (2.0)	7 (1.2)
Asian	64 (12.4)	55 (9.2)
Black or African American	26 (5.0)	17 (2.8)
White	385 (74.0)	461 (77.6)
Multi-Racial	35 (6.8)	54 (9.0)

*American Indian/Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

The District refers to the Middlesex League

Beginning in 2017, the Middlesex League, which includes the school districts of **Arlington, Burlington, Belmont, Lexington, Melrose, Stoneham, Reading, Wakefield, Watertown, Wilmington, Winchester, and Woburn**, decided to collaborate on the YRBS to provide comparative data specific to their region.

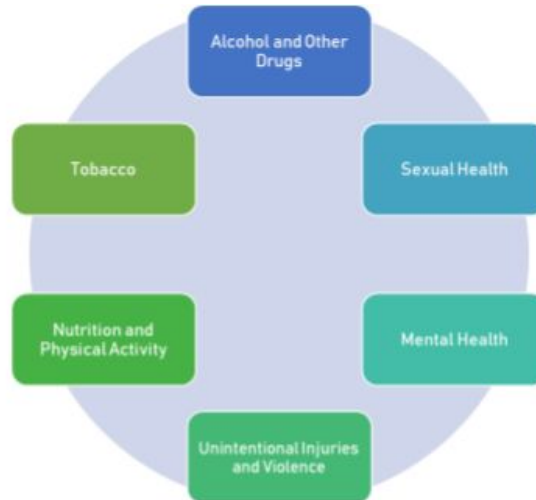
Local superintendents and health coordinators agreed to develop a common YRBS instrument to be administered every two years based on the core YRBS developed by the CDC and used by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

The initial 2017 YRBS included the districts of: Arlington, Burlington, Melrose, Stoneham, Wakefield, Winchester, and Woburn. This would allow these individual school districts and the region overall to better understand and respond to the health risks facing youth in their communities, as well as to promote information sharing and coordination across the school districts, health officials, and other community-based service providers.



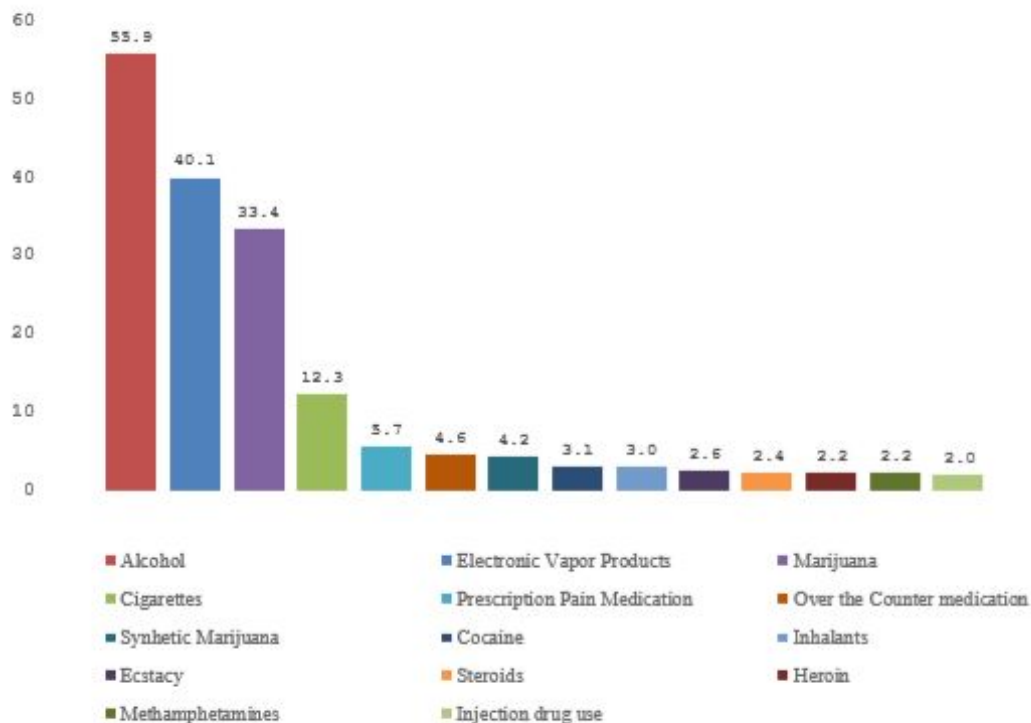
What is the YRBS

The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) was developed in 1990 and continues today to monitor certain risky health behaviors and other priority areas among school-aged youth and young adults. Data collected through the anonymous, biennial, and voluntary Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) allows for the YRBSS to determine the prevalence of risky health behaviors; assess general trends health behaviors over time, examine the co-occurrence of health behaviors; provide comparison data for geographies and subpopulations; and monitor progress toward achieving Healthy People objectives and program indicators. These health behaviors include the following areas:



Substance use in the Middlesex League

Figure 7. Lifetime use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs among HS students in the Middlesex league



Substance Use: Alcohol

58% report ever drinking alcohol (same as 2017)

A decline in the % of AHS students who currently drink from 27.9 % in 2017 to 24.5% 2019

A decline in the % of AHS students who binge drink from 16.0% in 2017 to 11.6% in 2019

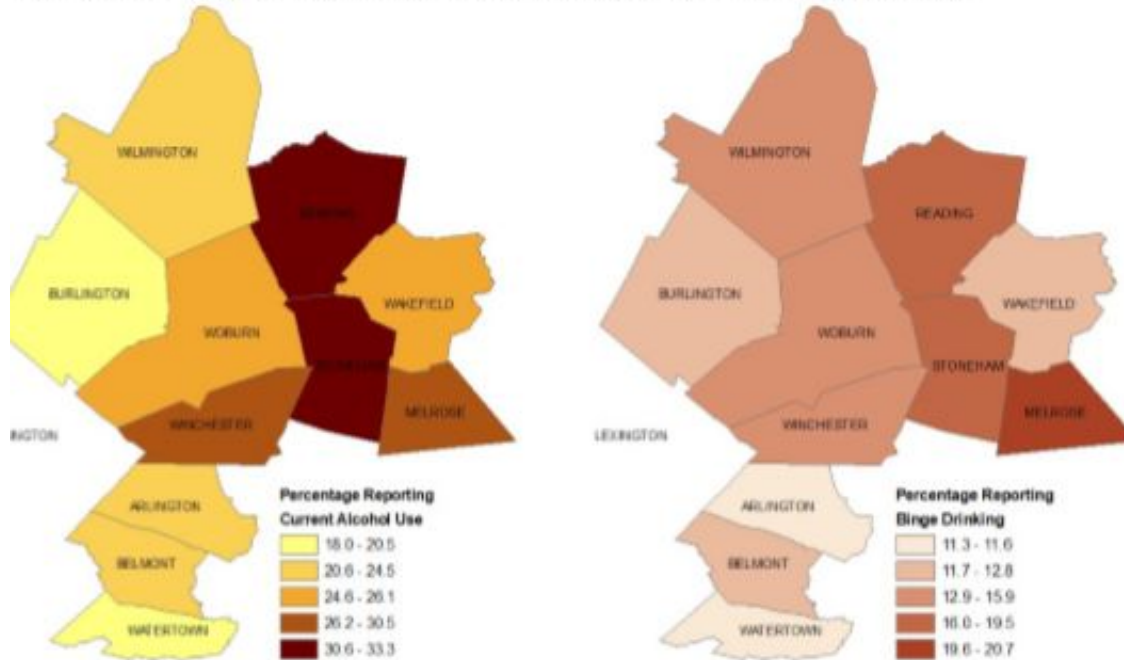
Middle School students were less likely to drink alcohol than their Middlesex league counterparts
12.8% Arlington compared to 13.1%

Conclusions: Alcohol use rates have decreased but current use is reported by 25% of the population and half of those who drink, binge drink (12%). We will continue education to parents and students and create policies and procedures to help reduce access and use.

Map of Alcohol use and binge drinking

Alcohol

Figure 9. Current Alcohol use and binge drinking among HS students in the Middlesex league



Substance Use: Marijuana

There is an increase in rates of lifetime and current use of marijuana at AHS. Students that have used in 2019: 35% (was 32% in 2017)

Students reporting current use: 21.5% (was 20.4% in 2017) AHS marijuana use is slightly higher than the district averages of lifetime use: 33.4% current use 20.7%

MS students are 2.9% less likely than other district students to use marijuana.

Arlington students fared the best in the district for having the lowest percent (4.4%) of students who tried marijuana before the age of 13.

However over half of AHS students see little to no risk for harm when it came to using marijuana once or twice a week as (34.6% little risk, 21.9% no risk)

Conclusions: Legalization and dispensaries are sending a mixed message to our youth. Ease of access (vaping) enables consumption of THC. Enhancing the education of Middle School Students (before use) is a goal. Conversations about perception of harm.

Substance Use: Other Drugs

Most prevalent is non-prescribed or improperly used RX medicine (3.8%) but still used less than the district(5.7%)

An increase in the percent 17.2% of AHS students were offered, sold or given an illegal drug on school property. (13.5% in 2017). Arlington fared worst in the region (13.6%) but better than the Commonwealth (20.1%) and the state (19.8%)

AHS ever used: Cocaine 2.0%, Heroin 1.1%, inhalants 1.7%

- 74.6% see themselves at risk if they use an RX drug not prescribed to them.

Conclusion: Illicit drug use rates are very, very low. But availability of RX drugs on campus is increasing.

Use of alcohol, tobacco and Other among HS students drugs by school district

Table 3. Use of alcohol, tobacco and Other among HS students drugs by school district

	Cigarettes	Electronic Vapor Products	Alcohol	Marijuana	Prescription Pain Medication	Steroids	Cocaine	Heroin	Methamphetamines	Ecstasy	Synthetic Marijuana	Over the Counter medication	Inhalants	Injection drug use
Wilmington	11.4	42.5	54.0	36.1	9.7	5.9	6.1	5.8	5.5	5.4	5.9	7.8	6.0	5.4
Reading	13.0	40.1	57.6	33.0	6.8	3.5	5.2	4.8	4.5	4.8	7.0	7.7	5.7	3.4
Woburn	14.2	46.2	56.1	38.0	6.4	2.6	3.5	2.6	2.9	3.1	4.8	5.0	3.3	2.4
Watertown	13.5	38.8	46.0	25.1	6.5	2.3	3.4	2.7	2.5	3.2	4.0	4.0	2.3	1.7
Burlington	8.0	40.4	52.6	32.0	5.2	2.3	3.2	1.9	2.3	2.0	4.1	3.7	2.0	1.6
Middlesex	12.3	40.1	55.9	33.4	5.7	2.4	3.1	2.2	2.2	2.6	4.2	4.6	3.0	2.0
Winchester	11.8	37.1	55.7	29.7	4.2	1.7	3.0	2.0	1.9	2.2	3.7	3.8	2.2	1.3
Wakefield	12.9	45.9	56.6	38.5	5.5	1.5	2.9	1.6	2.1	2.8	3.2	4.8	3.8	1.3
Stoneham	13.2	43.0	59.3	37.5	4.2	1.2	2.8	.9	1.1	1.2	4.3	4.4	2.1	.9
Melrose	12.9	42.9	59.4	35.7	4.3	1.9	2.7	1.3	1.1	1.8	4.3	2.7	2.0	1.1
Arlington	11.6	37.7	58.0	35.0	3.8	1.4	2.0	1.1	1.1	1.6	2.7	2.7	1.7	1.0
Belmont	.	30.4	55.6	27.4	7.1	.	.9	.5	.5	1.1	2.9	4.0	2.3	.

Note: Darker shading represents higher percentage of use and lighter shading represents a lower percentage of use

Substance Use: Tobacco/Nicotine/Vapes

AHS rates of lifetime cigarette use remains at 11.6% (same as in 2017)

AHS Rates of current use of e-cigarettes rose significantly from 8.3% (2017) to 22.6% (2019)

Number of AHS students who have ever vaped 37.7% Vaped on school property: 8.8%

42.7% see themselves at moderate risk for harming themselves using ecigarettes. 38.5% see a great risk. Yet they still do it.

53.4% of students who use tobacco/nicotine products did NOT try to quit in the last 12 months.

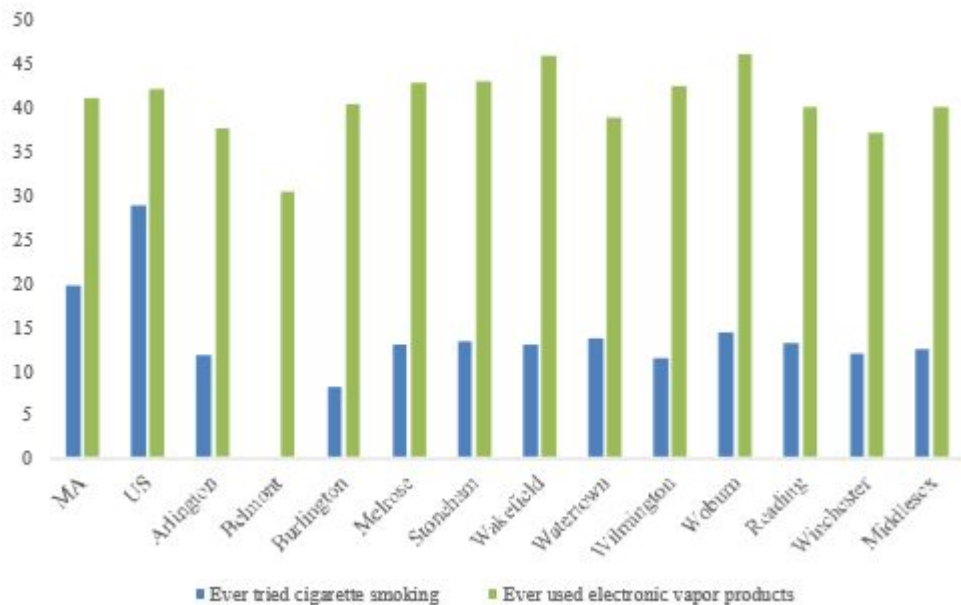
Middle School students who tried cigarettes: 1.9%

Middle School Students who ever used a vape: 7.4% & Currently use vapes: 3.5%

Conclusions: Our student activists in the 84 and their research and peer support help change the climate in school. Launching a vaping cessation group at Robbins library in October. AHS and OMS do NOT suspend for a first violation but rather engage the student in education, risk assessment and support. Social media promotes vaping as trendy and safe.

Tobacco use and vaping in the Middlesex League

Figure 8. Percentage Reporting Tobacco use and electronic vapor products among HS students in the Middlesex league

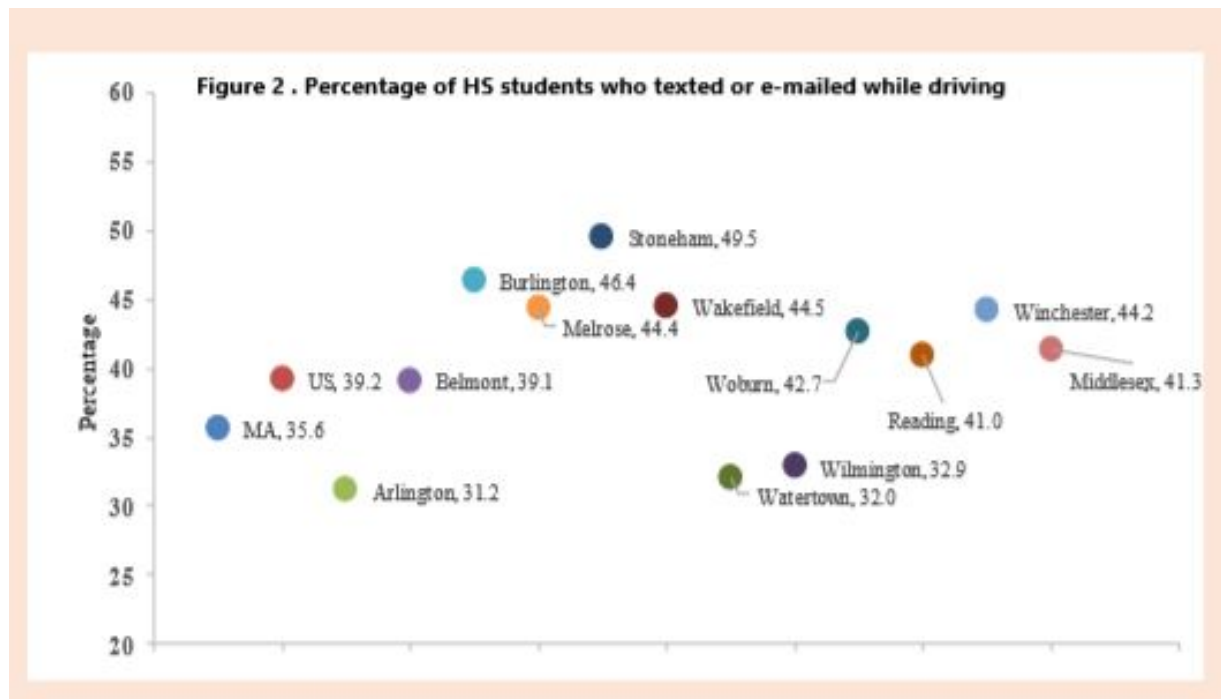


Personal Safety

- 12.2% of AHS students report ever riding in a vehicle with a driver who had been drinking alcohol
 - **Decrease** from 2016 (13%)
 - 14% have had their property stolen or damaged
 - 14% have been physically abused by a parent or adult in their home.
- 4.7% of AHS students who drive, report ever driving under the influence of alcohol
 - **Decrease** from 2016 (5%)
- 9.6% of AHS students who drive, report ever driving under the influence of marijuana
- 31.2% of AHS students who drive, report having texted while driving
 - **Increase** from 2017 (18.2%)
 - 84.4% of OMS students wear a helmet when riding a bicycle (best in district)

Conclusion: The Coalition has launched a drugged driving unit in Driver's Ed to help raise awareness about drugged and distracted driving.

Figure 2: Unintentional Injury



Violence

- 12.8% of AHS students report being bullied on school property
 - **Increase** from 11.8% in 2017
- 10.5% of AHS students report being bullied electronically
 - **Decrease** from 14% in 2016
- 11.1% of AHS students report being in a physical fight
 - **Decrease** from 13.2%
 - 6% report carrying a weapon

Middle School:

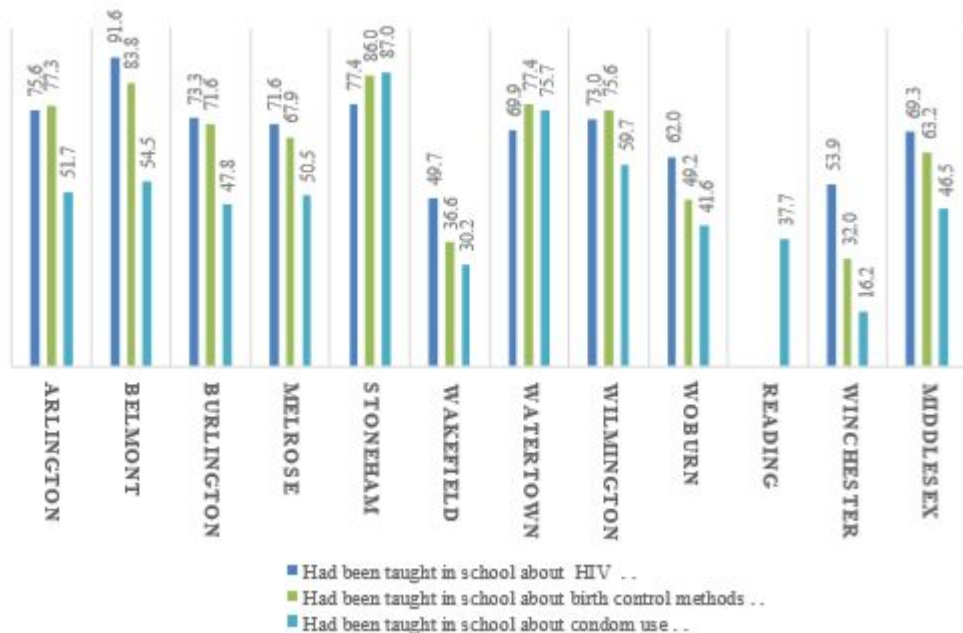
- 14.4% of AMS students report being bullied on school property
- 30.2% of AMS students report being bullied electronically
- 31.8% of AMS students report being in a physical fight
- 14.3% report carrying a weapon
- **Conclusion: Arlington had the lowest rates in the district for being in a physical fight in the last 12 months 11.1%**

Sexual Health

- Percentage of AHS students who ever had sexual intercourse or are sexually active has dropped and is below regional rates. Ever had (21.6) Active (13.8%) compared to 2017: (23.8% & 17.2%)
- 10.9% report drinking alcohol or using drugs before a sexual encounter.
- The % of students who **did not** use a condom during a sexual encounter rose to 37.1% (30% in 2017) and is one of the highest in the district despite 77% reporting having learned about birth control methods in school.
- 36.7% of AHS students sent or received a sexual message or nude electronically (unchanged from 2017)
- 8.7% of AHS students who were sexually active, did not use any method of **pregnancy** prevention during intercourse.
- Middle School students who have ever had sexual intercourse is 2.3%
- But 50.0% of MS students who were sexually active did **not use** a condom.
- **Conclusions: Sexual activity is lower than the average for the region. Access to condoms for high school students or a look at the sexual education would help reduce the number of those having unprotected sex and stop the spread of STDs.**

HIV and Sex Education by school district

Figure 11. Percentage of HS students reporting HIV and Sex education by school district.



Nutritional Health

Among AHS students 2.8% did not eat vegetables 7 days before the survey.

Substantially more students in Arlington drink soda one or more times a day compared to others in the Commonwealth. 44.7%

5.8% of students in Arlington are obese and 12.5% are overweight. (lower than other districts)

10.2% do not eat breakfast

40% Played video games more than 3 hours a day

Arlington had the lowest rate of concussions in the district @ 8.7% (15.1 national average)

72.2% of AHS students did NOT get 8 hours or more of sleep on an average school night.

Mental Health-AHS

82.6% of AHS students report feeling like they were under an overwhelming amount of stress. **AHS students fared the worst** in this category out of all other districts

Yet, 82.6% of AHS students report having a healthy activity that helps them to relieve stress

11% of AHS students report wanting a serious thought of suicide. **Decrease** from 14% in 2017

15.3% of AHS students report wanting to do something to injure themselves

25.7 % of AHS students report feeling hopeless or sad (every day for over 2 weeks in a row)

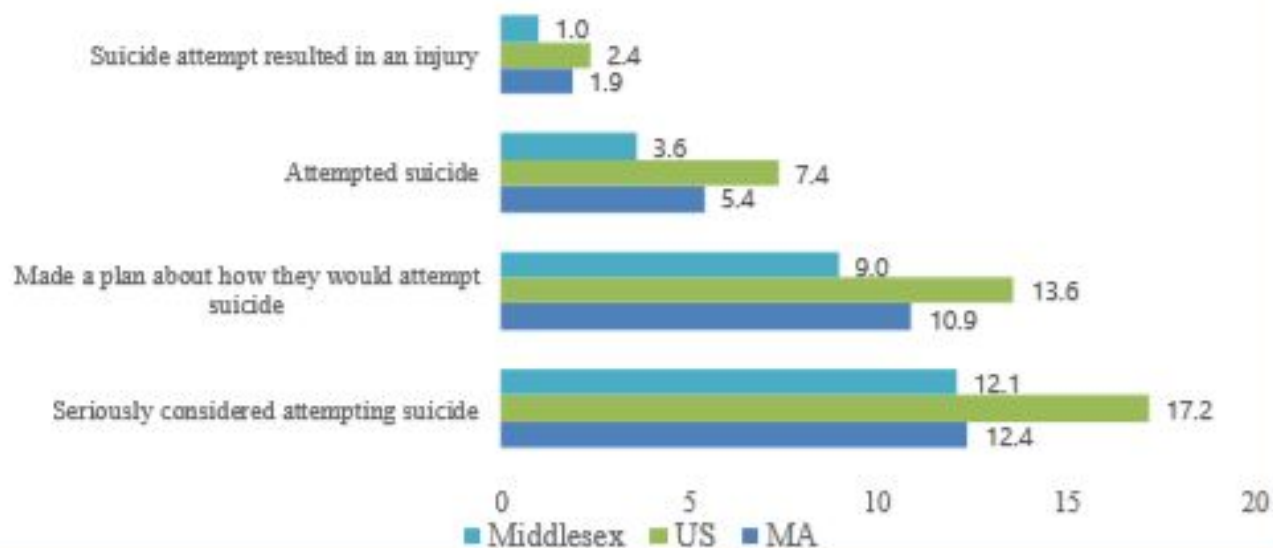
61.3% has a trusted adult in school they can talk to if they have a problem.

82.9% can talk to at least one parent of adult family member about things that are important to them.

Conclusions: Framing conversations about stress to emphasize some stress is good will help change perceptions. Continue to promote resources for suicide prevention and destigmatize mental health

Reports of Suicidal ideation

Figure 5. Reports of Suicidal ideation among HS students in the past 12 month



Mental Health-Middle School

32.7% of OMS students report that school demands and expectations are the source of the most negative stress

Other sources of negative stress that were not far behind included keeping up with school work, having a busy schedule, and having to study things you don't understand

15% of Middle students report wanting a serious thought of suicide. Believe it or not, this is slightly lower than the district average

8.6 made a plan for suicide.

Conclusions: Framing conversations about stress to emphasize some stress is good will help change perceptions. Continue to promote resources for suicide prevention and destigmatize mental health

Conclusions:

- **Substance use continues to be a major problem** among High school and middle school students with alcohol being the most reported substance of use. In this age group, high rates of underage drinking and binge drinking were reported. Similarly, students have displayed considerably high rates of marijuana use, prescription drug abuse, smoking and most notably an increase in the use of e-cigarettes and vaping products. Consistent with national trends, tobacco use seems to have declined.
- A high percentage of students in the league **engage in behaviors that potentially increase the risk of unintentional injuries** such as driving under the influence and distracted driving. Middlesex League students were more likely to engage in texting and driving, a major risk factor for motor vehicle accidents and hence unintentional injuries.
- The percentage of Middlesex league students engaging in **risky sexual behaviors is notably high with a concerning number of students having early sexual encounters and reporting use of illicit drugs or alcohol before a sexual encounter and not engaging in safe sexual practices such as using a condom or use of contraception. The rates of reported sexual violence and dating violence though lower than the state average, are also concerning.**
- A considerably high number of Students in the Middlesex league have reported **problems with mental health including having frequent feelings of sadness as well as thoughts of suicide.** With increasing rates of suicide across the nation, this is of major concern and is worth noting. One in four high schools students (26.5%) in the Middlesex League region reported that they felt sad or hopeless almost every day .