



YOUTH DRUG SURVEY
CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2010

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 1972, Substance Abuse Prevention Services (formerly The Charlotte Drug Education Center) has implemented a countywide youth drug survey every two - three years. These data are collected to determine the current level of incidence and prevalence of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other drug use among school age youth. Due to the longitudinal nature of the research, changes in local patterns and trends can be observed. During November/December 2010, Substance Abuse Prevention Services (SAPS) in collaboration with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, and with the support from volunteers from the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Drug Free Coalition administered the self-report survey instrument to 4273 youth ages 12-18.

Sampling Procedure

The sample selection was a proportionate stratified random sample of all students in grades 6 through 12 from all Charlotte-Mecklenburg public schools. The surveys were monitored to provide anonymity for the students. A total of 3,923 surveys were completed and, after deleting those surveys where students answered that they had used a fabricated drug or otherwise showed internal inconsistency (3.8%), the number of usable surveys was 3,714. With a sample of this size one can have 95% confidence that the actual findings for the results are within $\pm 1.5\%$.

Substance Use in 2010

Students reported using a variety of drugs. Students most commonly report using the substances that have been traditionally referred to as "gateway drugs," i.e., alcohol, cigarettes, and marijuana. As usual, alcohol ranks first as the drug most used by the student population (15.3%) followed by marijuana use (12.0%) and then cigarette smoking (8.6%).

1. Current Use (Used within the last 30 days)

Cigarettes/tobacco

- There has been a decrease in the percent of students smoking cigarettes but an increase in the percent smoking cigars with tobacco and for using any tobacco product.
 - 8.6% of all students indicate that they **smoked cigarettes** in the last 30 days – **decrease over 2008.** (9.9% in 2008 and 12.7% in 2006)
 - 16.4% indicate they used **some type of tobacco** product in the last 30 days – an **increase over 2008.** (12.8% in 2008 and 16.7% in 2006)
 - 12.7% smoked **cigars** with tobacco in the last 30 days – **Twice the percent as in 2008**

Alcohol

- There is an **increase** in the percent of high school students drinking alcohol in the last 30 days but a decrease in the percent of middle school students using alcohol in the last 30 days
 - 15.3% indicate they drank alcohol in the last 30 days **This is an increase over 2008** (14.0% in 2008, 17.2% in 2006 and 14.9% in 2004)

- 3.3% middle school (4.7% in 2008, 6.2% in 2006; 5.9% in 2004) -decrease
- **25.1%** high school (21.7% in 2008 25.3% in 2006; 24.3% in 2004)-increase
- There is a decrease in the percent of students who binge drank in the last 30 days
 - 4.8% indicate they had five or more drinks in a couple of hours (binge drinking).
This is a DECREASE over 2008
(5.6% in 2008, 6.0% in 2006; 6.1 in 2004)

- 28.5% of those who drank alcohol in the last 30 days say they binge drank. This compares with 38.0% in 2008, 32.5% in 2006 and 47.7% in 2004.
- 16.2% middle school (30.6% in 2008, 12.7% in 2006; 22.7% in 2004)
- 29.9% high school (49.1% in 2008, 36.0% in 2006; 55.5% in 2004)

- The percent of students binge drinking in the last 30 days increases from 3.3% in the 9th grade to 17.8% in 12th grade

Marijuana

- There has been a significant increase in the use of marijuana in the last 30 days by High School students but not Middle School students
 - 12.0% of all students admit using marijuana in the past 30 days **SIGNIFICANT INCREASE**
(10.0% in 2008, 10.8% in 2006 and 7.3% in 2004)
 - 1.9% of Middle School students (2.9% IN 2008, 3.1% in 2006 and 2.7% in 2004) - decrease
 - 20.3% of High School students (15.8% in 2008, 16.6% in 2006 and 12.3% in 2004) - increase

2. National Comparisons

- Charlotte data show lower alcohol use in the last 30 days in all comparable grades than reported by national data in 2010.
- Proportionately **more 10th and 12th grade** students in Charlotte admit using marijuana in the last 30 days than students report nationally.
- Proportionately **more 10th grade** Charlotte students also report cigarette smoking.

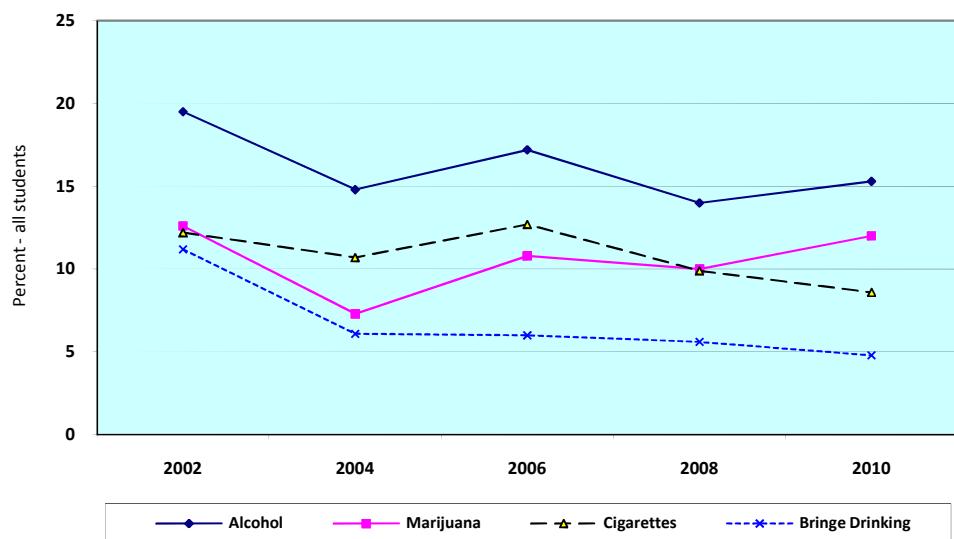
3. North Carolina Comparisons

- Charlotte Mecklenburg data show lower proportions using cigarettes, alcohol or cocaine in the last 30 days than are reported by students in the State.
- Proportionately **more** Charlotte 9th grade and 12th grade students admit using marijuana than the same grade students in the state.

- More Charlotte 9th grade students, both male and female, and females in 10th and 12th grades have used marijuana in the last 30 days than comparable students in the State.
- More White and Multi-racial males and minority females in the 9th to 12th grades in Charlotte have used marijuana in the last 30 days than comparable students in the State.

4. Trends – 30 Day Use - Overall

- Alcohol and marijuana use is increasing, cigarettes and binge drinking are decreasing



5. Trends – Gender¹

- The increase in alcohol consumption and marijuana use applies to BOTH males and females
 - Alcohol: males increased from 14% to 15.6%;
 - Alcohol: females increased from 14.3% to 15.9%
 - Marijuana: males increased from 11.0% to 15.2%
 - Marijuana: females increased from 9.0% to 9.6%

6. Trends – Grade

- Alcohol consumption and marijuana use have substantially increased for 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students while the proportions have decreased for 6-9th grade students
- Binge drinking has decreased for all grades except 10th and 12th

¹ The overall percent of alcohol consumption is 15.3%. This is based on all students who answered. Some did not give their gender. Therefore, these percentages are based on only those who gave their gender on the survey.

Substance Use	Grade							
	6 N=553	7 N=567	8 N=543	9 N=642	10 N=563	11 N=443	12 N=389	
Cigarettes last 30 days	1.5 (1.4*)	2.4 (4.0)	4.6 (7.9)	10.2 (13.1)	15.2 (11.9)	13.8 (15.5)	15.7 (18.8)	
Alcohol last 30 days	0.6 (2.2)	2.7 (4.0)	6.5 (7.9)	14.6 (16.1)	24.4 (17.6)	29.0 (23.4)	39.3 (34.8)	
Binge last 30 days	0.2 (0.7)	0.3 (1.3)	1.6 (3.2)	3.3 (5.3)	6.5 (6.0)	9.0 (11.0)	17.8 (16.2)	
Marijuana last 30 days	0.3 (0.7)	1.4 (2.1)	4.2 (6.1)	12.6 (13.9)	20.0 (11.6)	23.5 (18.6)	29.9 (21.4)	

* The number in parentheses is 2008.

7. Trends – Race

- Hispanic students were proportionately more likely to have smoked, Native American students to have drunk alcohol but the percent of White students was highest for binge drinking and Multi-racial students to have used marijuana. The lowest percent of use of each substance is lowest for Asian students.

Substance Use	African American	Asian	White	Hispanic	Native American	Multi-racial
Cigarettes last 30 days	6.5	4.5	10.5	10.9	6.8	9.6
Alcohol last 30 days	12.4	8.5	18.2	14.0	25.0	19.4
Binge last 30 days	2.0	1.7	8.2	5.0	6.8	5.4
Marijuana last 30 days	11.9	4.0	12.7	9.0	13.6	17.3

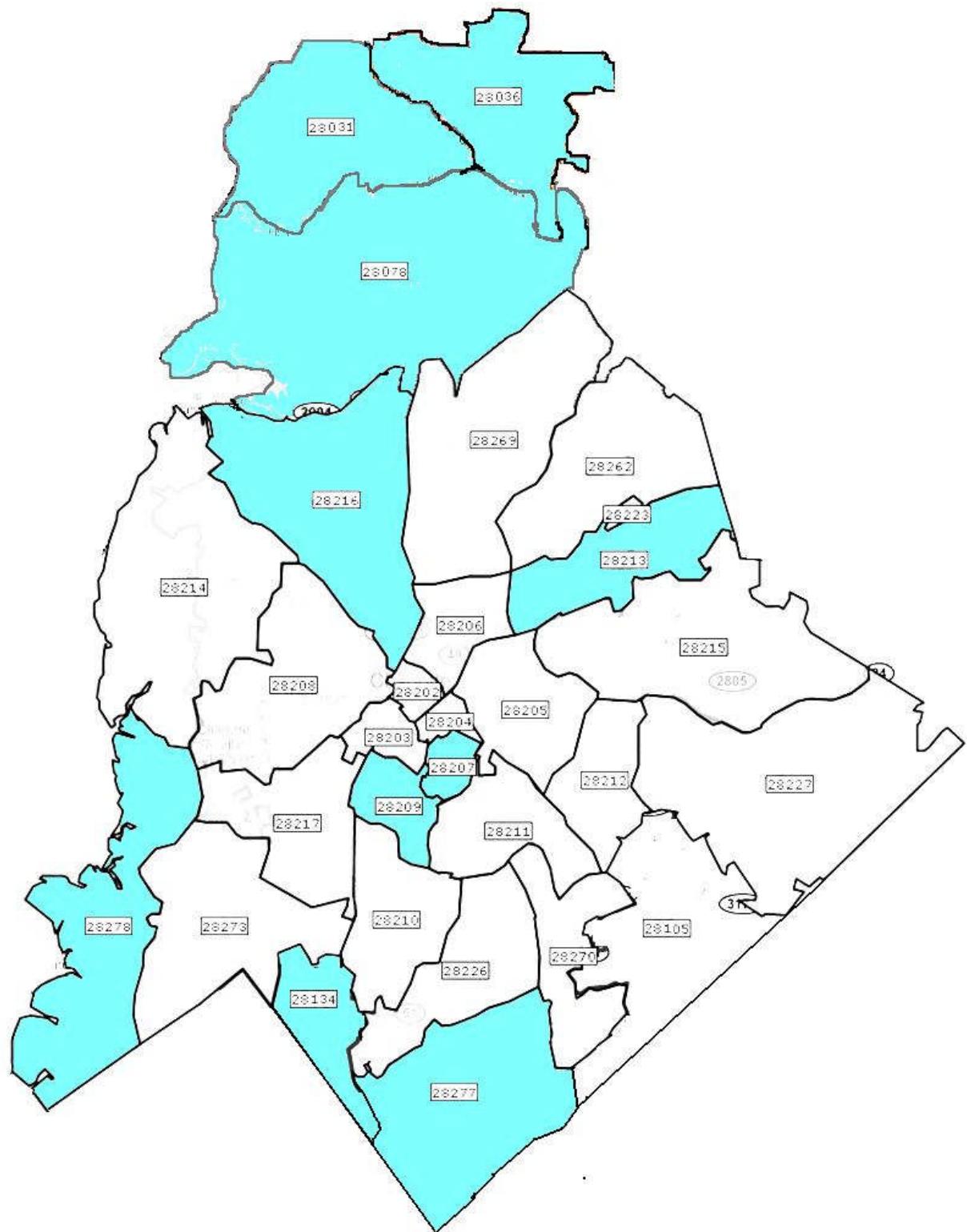
8. Use by zip code

- A few zip codes show over 15% of students using cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana and binge drinking while other zip codes have fewer students engaging in the behaviors. Zip codes with more than 25 students and above 15% using one or more of the substances are:

28031	28207	28216
28036	28209	28277
28078	28213	28278
28134		

- Zip code 28213 has 45.6% of high school students admitting alcohol consumption in the last 30 days and 29.1% using marijuana in the last 30 days
- Zip code 28278 has 33.0% using alcohol, 27.2% using marijuana and 20.4% binge drinking

Zip codes with more than 25 students and above 15% using one or more of cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana or binge drinking



9. Other Substances—including cocaine

- Use of most other drugs is less than two percent and less than in 2008
- 6.2% of students indicate they have consumed alcoholic energy drinks within the last 30 days
- 24.5% of students say they have consumed energy drinks in the last 30 days.

10. Age at first use

The average age to begin smoking is 12.7
 consuming alcohol is 13.6
 using marijuana is 13.6
 binge drinking is 14.3

- There is little difference by gender except that males start using marijuana on average at 13.3 and females at 13.9 years.
- There is little difference in the average age of first use by race. However:
 - Asian youth try cigarettes at a younger age (10.9) than other groups
 - White youth are the oldest to start to consume alcohol (13.4)
 - Native American students try marijuana at a slightly younger age (12.5) than others
 - African American and Multi-racial youth binge drink earlier (13.9)

11. Perception of Risk/harm

- The percent of students who see significant risk of harming themselves is LOWEST for 1 or 2 drinks occasionally (29.2%) and for occasional marijuana smoking (31.5%)
 - 41.5% of students see NO RISK or only “some risk” in having 1-2 drinks occasionally; this is an increase from 39.1% in 2008
 - 34.1% of students see NO RISK or only “some risk” in occasional marijuana smoking; this is an increase from 25.8% in 2008
- The perception of significant risk of harming oneself by smoking marijuana occasionally or regularly has decreased substantially for both males and females since 2008
 - Fewer than 20% of 10th through 12th grade students see significant risk in occasional marijuana smoking while over 70% see smoking a pack of cigarettes a day as having significant risk
 - Only 52% of 6th grade students see significant risk in occasional marijuana smoking
- Students are more likely to see smoking a pack of cigarettes as a significant risk of harming oneself than to see occasional marijuana smoking as harmful.

- The perception of significant risk from occasional or regular alcohol consumption and the risk from binge drinking have all **decreased** for both male and female students since 2008.

12. Perception of Parental Disapproval

- Over 95% of students perceive parental disapproval for the use of all substances.

13. Perception of Peer Approval

- While the majority of students think that their peers would disapprove of using substances, 22% think their peers would approve of occasional marijuana smoking and 28% think their peers would approve occasional alcohol use.
 - 13.9% of Middle School students feel that peers would approve of occasional alcohol use
 - 16.1% of Middle School students feel that peers would approve of occasional marijuana use
 - 35.6% of High School students feel that peers would approve of occasional alcohol use
 - 43.3% of High School students feel that peers would approve of occasional marijuana use
- There is a significant relationship between the perception of peer approval and use.
 - 41.1% of students who feel peers would approve of occasional alcohol use, drank alcohol in the last 30 days; this compares with only 3.5% who felt that their peers would disapprove ($p<.000^2$).

14. Perception of Use in Schools

- System-wide the perception is that 45% of students drink alcohol and 45% smoke marijuana. The perception is that 35% use some other kind of drugs
 - Middle School students think that:
 - 24% of students drink alcohol,
 - 22% smoke marijuana and
 - 22% use other drugs
 - High School students think that:
 - 61% drink alcohol
 - 64% smoke marijuana
 - 45% use other drugs

² $p<.000$ means that the findings could have occurred by chance less than at least once in 1,000 times

There is a statistically significant relationship between perception of how many other students drink or use marijuana and how many of one's own friends drink or use some kind of drug and a student's own use.

15. Lifetime Use –Ever Used

- Students admitting ever smoking cigarettes has continued to *decline* since 2004
- Life time alcohol use has *increased* but binge drinking has *decreased* since 2008
- Lifetime marijuana use has *increased* while lifetime cocaine use has *decreased* since 2008

Cigarettes – Lifetime Use

- 18.9% of all students admit to having smoked cigarettes (20.6% in 2008, 26.7% in 2006 and 24.9% in 2004) This is a continuous decrease since 2004

Alcohol-Lifetime

- 37.8% of students admit to ever having used alcohol. (34.7% in 2008, 40.1% in 2006 and 34.8% in 2004). This is an **increase** over 2008.

Binge drinking –Lifetime

- 12.2% of students admit to ever binge drinking. (14.1% in 2008). The percent **decreased** since 2008.

Marijuana - Lifetime

- 23.9% of all students admit using marijuana (20.6% in 2008. 22.8% in 2006 and 17.1% in 2004). This is an **increase** over 2008

Cocaine – Lifetime

- 1.7% of all students admit using cocaine (2.1% in 2008, 2.2% in 2006 and 1.0% in 2004). This is a **decrease** from 2008

16. Attitudes toward Drugs

In 2008 Partnership for a Drug-Free America released **The Partnership Attitude Tracking Study (PATS)**. The study asked students in the 7th through 12th grades to respond to 16 reasons why “kids use drugs.” We used the statements in that research for our study.

- 84.2% of students agreed with the statement that youth who used drugs would say “being high feels good.” Only 46.3% of students in our research in 2008 agreed with this statement
- The second most agreed to statement is that students do drugs do so “to deal with the pressures and stress of school.” 80.3% in 2010; 77.5% in 2008.
- Two reasons ranked third in why Charlotte students think kids do drugs: “It helps kids when they’re having a hard time” and “to look cool” 79.7%.

- “Looking cool” was the number one reason in 2008 with 77.5% agreeing with the statement in 2008.
- The least agreed reason in both studies was to “help students study better,” 27.9% in 2010. 14.9% in 2008.
- Students who believe that students who use drugs would believe that “Kids use drugs to deal with the pressures and stress of school” are three times more likely to have drunk alcohol in the last 30 days, used marijuana in the last 30 days and to have binge drunk in the last 30 days than students who did not agree with the statement.
- Students who agree with the statement that students who used drugs would “... think that being high feels good,” are six times more likely to have drunk alcohol in the last 30 days, used marijuana in the last 30 days and to have binge drunk in the last 30 days than students who did not agree with the statement
- Students who agree with the statement that students who used drugs would believe that “Drugs help kids when they’re having a hard time,” are three times more likely to have drunk alcohol in the last 30 days, used marijuana in the last 30 days and to have binge drunk in the last 30 days than students who did not agree

17. Access to Drugs

- Students are finding it easier to get alcohol and marijuana than they did in 2008.

- 56.7% of all students say that it is either fairly easy or very easy to get alcohol; 43.3% found it easy in 2008.
- 48.4% of all students say that marijuana is fairly or very easy to get; 33.4% found it easy in 2008.

EASE OF GETTING SUBSTANCES, 2010		
	Can't get/Fairly Hard	Fairly Easy/Very Easy
Alcohol	43.3	56.7
Marijuana	51.6	48.4
Cocaine	87.5	12.5
Other Drugs	73.2	26.8

18. Source of Drugs

- The primary source for cigarettes, alcohol and prescription drugs to get high, for those admitting use, is from friends.

Cigarettes:

- 52.5% got their last cigarette from friends (53.5% in 2008, 49.8% in 2006 and 47.3% in 2004)

Alcohol: Overall 15.3% indicate they drank alcohol in the last 30 days; of those who did:

- 32.8% got their alcohol from friends (32.8% in 2008, 35.4% in 2006 and 35% in 2004)

The proportion of youth who drank alcohol the last 30 days who said they got it from their parents decreased from 20.3% in 2008 to 17.2%

Prescription Drugs: The question was asked, “The last time you took a prescription drug to get high how did you get it.”

- 68.3% of the students who said the last time they took a prescription drug to get high they got it from a friend.
- 64.7 Middle School 69.2% High School
- 21.2% say they took it from home.

19. Location of Use

- Of students who drank alcohol in the last 30 days, 11.6% did so at home with parents. There is no way to determine the circumstances but the wording of the question said “more than a sip.” (12.4% in 2008)
- The largest proportions (50.4%) drank their alcohol at a friend’s house or at parties at friends’ houses. Another 5% drank at parties in their own homes and 4% drank at parties at strangers’ houses.

6.7% of students who drank alcohol within the last 30 days drank at home alone (10.5% in 2008).

- 8.5% in Middle School 6.5% in High School

38.5% of High School students and 21.8% of Middle School students last drank at a party

Of students who drank alcohol in the last 30 days

- 38.9 % have had **alcohol** at concerts or festival events (37.9% in 2008)

This is an increase

- 26.3% of Middle School students (21.2% in 2008)
- 40.4% of High School students (40.7% in 2008)

- 16.0% have had **alcohol** at sports events (16.4% in 2008)

This is a slight decrease

- 7.8% of Middle School students (11.8% in 2008)
- 16.9% of High School students (17.1% in 2008)

20. Parental Rules

- 87.0% of students say that their parents have strict rules against drinking alcohol (87.1% in 2008).

Students who say their parents have NO strict rules about alcohol and drug use are twice as likely to have drunk alcohol or used marijuana in the last 30 days than students with parents who have rules ($p<.000$)

- Of the students who said their parents had no clear rules, 27.9% drank in the last 30 days compared with 13.9% who said their parents had strict rules
- Of the students who said their parents had no clear rules, 23.4% use marijuana in the last 30 days compared with 10.4% who said their parents had strict rules

21. User Correlates

- Students with a brother or sister under 21 who smokes are nearly 3 times more likely to smoke ($p<.000$).
- Students with an adult in their home who smokes are nearly twice as likely to smoke ($p<.000$).
- It is statistically significant ($p<.000$) that the students with lower grades (C and below) are more likely to have smoked in the last 30 days.
- The more absences a student has had, the more likely the student has smoked within the last 30 days ($p<.000$)
- Students receiving grades of A last year are less likely than students receiving F to have consumed alcohol in the last 30 days ($p<.003$).
- The more unexcused absences, the greater the likelihood that students consumed alcohol in the last 30 days ($p<.000$).

There is a significant relationship between students who smoke and who also drink alcohol.

- Only 11% of students who did not smoke in the last 30 days consumed alcohol but
- 57.9% of those who smoked also drank.

- Students from homes where parents have no strict rules about the use of alcohol and drugs were twice as likely to binge drink alcohol in the last 30 days than students from homes with clear rules.

- The more unexcused absences, the greater the likelihood that students binge drank in the last 30 days ($p<.000$).
- Students receiving grades of A last year are less likely than students receiving F to have binge drank in the last 30 days
- Poor school performance and unexcused absences are significantly related to smoking marijuana ($p<.000$).

22. Conclusions

Positive findings:

- Students with parents who have strict rules regarding alcohol and drugs are significantly less likely to drink or use drugs.
- There has been a decrease in the percent of students smoking cigarettes
- There has been a decrease in the percent of Middle School students using alcohol in the last 30 days
- There is a decrease in the percent of students who binge drank in the last 30 days
- There has been a decrease in the percent of Middle School students who used marijuana in the last 30 days
- Charlotte Mecklenburg data show lower alcohol use in the last 30 days in all comparable grades than reported by national data in 2008.
- Charlotte Mecklenburg data show lower proportions of students using cigarettes, alcohol or cocaine in the last 30 days than are reported by students in the State.
- The proportion of students consuming alcohol or using marijuana has decreased for 6-9th grades
- The use of drugs other than alcohol, marijuana and tobacco products is less than two percent and less than in 2008
- Over 95% of students perceive parental disapproval for the use of all substances.
- The proportion of youth who drank alcohol the last 30 days who said they got it from their parents decreased from 20.3% in 2008 to 17.2%
- The proportion of students who drank at home alone has decreased since 2008
- There has been a slight decrease in the proportion of youth who drank alcohol at sports events

Negative findings:

- There has been an increase in the percent smoking cigars with tobacco and using any tobacco product.

- There is an increase in the percent of High School students drinking alcohol in the last 30 days
- There has been a significant increase in the use of marijuana in the last 30 days by High School students
- Proportionately more 10th and 12th grade students in Charlotte admit using marijuana in the last 30 days than students report nationally.
- Proportionately more 10th grade Charlotte students than students nationally report cigarette smoking.
- Proportionately more Charlotte 9th grade and 12th grade students admit using marijuana than the same grade students in the State.
- More Charlotte 9th grade students, both male and female, and females in 10th and 12th grades have used marijuana in the last 30 days than comparable students in the State
- Alcohol consumption and marijuana use have substantially increased for 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students
- The average age to begin smoking is 12.7, consuming alcohol is 13.6, using marijuana is 13.6, and binge drinking is 14.3
- The percent of students who see significant risk is LOWEST for 1 or 2 drinks occasionally (29.2%) and for occasional marijuana smoking (31.5%)
- The perception of significant risk from occasional or regular alcohol consumption and the risk from binge drinking have all decreased since 2008.
- The perception of significant harm (physically or in other ways) to them for smoking marijuana occasionally or regularly has decreased substantially since 2008
- 84.2% of students agreed with the statement that kids who use drugs would believe that “being high feels good.” Only 46.3% of students in 2008 agreed with this statement
- Students are finding it easier to get alcohol and marijuana than they did in 2008.
- There has been a slight increase in the percent of youth drinking alcohol at concerts and festivals