

Waukesha County Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2021 High School Spotlight

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey, administered to students across Waukesha County in 2021, provides us a window into the physical, mental health and emotional well-being of Waukesha County youth. Students were asked about motor vehicle safety, school safety, mental health, sexual behavior, tobacco, alcohol, drug use, online behavior, physical health, nutrition, trauma, adversity, protective factors, and more.

This report will **spotlight** important data and key messages from the 2021 Waukesha County High School report. To view the entire report visit the Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey webpage <https://dpi.wi.gov/sspw/yrbs>.

Who Participated

In the 2020-21 school year, there were 27 public schools in Waukesha county that served high school students. 16 of these 27 schools (59%) participated in the survey. 11 of the 27 public high schools in the county (41%) met or exceeded the minimum 50% school level response rate, which was one criteria for generating county-level data.

Participating schools included: Menomonee Falls High, Oconomowoc High, Mukwonago High, Muskego High, Arrowhead High, Pewaukee High, North High, South High, Waukesha Engineering Preparatory Academy, Waukesha Academy of Health Professions, Waukesha East Alternative School, West High, High School of Health Sciences, Kettle Moraine High, School for Arts and Performance, Kettle Moraine Global School for Global Leadership and Innovation,

A total of 10827 usable responses were collected from the 16 participating schools listed above. This represented 53% of public high school students in the county.



To see the full report visit: dpi.wi.gov/sspw/yrbs



Suicide

1 in 7 students (15%) have seriously considered suicide. In recent years, youth suicides and suicidal ideation have been on the rise (see e.g. Ruche et al). At the same time, only 22% of students say that they can get the help they need when feeling emotionally distressed.

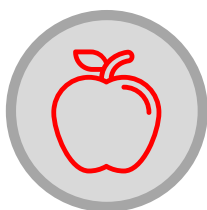
female students are more likely to consider suicide than male students (Female: 20%, Male: 11%) and LGBT students are more likely to consider suicide (LGBT: 40%; Straight-cisgender:10%) and less likely to get emotional support (LGBT: 16%; Straight-cisgender: 24%)when needed than straight-cisgender students.



1 in 7 students (15%) have seriously considered suicide

Bullying

17% of students reported experiencing bullying at school in the past 12 months. However, students who were food insecure, LGBT, who had lower grades, who have a disability or chronic illness, or students in special education were more likely to have experienced bullying in the last 12 months.



36% of food insecure students experienced bullying
(Not Food Insecure: 20%)



41% of LGBT students experienced bullying
(Straight-cisgender: 20%)



41% of lower average grade (D's or F's) students experienced bullying
(A's:19%)



37% of students with a disability or chronic illness experienced bullying
(No disability: 20%)



35% of students in special education experienced bullying
(Never had services:20%)

Protective Factors

Students who feel connected, included, and engaged at school generally do better academically and socially. Strong school connectedness can buffer young people against anxiety, depression, and peer pressure.



2 of 3 STUDENTS feel like they belong at school

While higher risk groups often report a lower sense of belonging, teachers, administrators, and classmates within a school can have a tremendous impact on how included or excluded such students feel. One thing that can make a significant, positive difference for students' school experience is whether or not they have at least one trusted adult at school.



70% of students have a teacher they can confide in

Being engaged in sports, drama, or other extracurricular activities can play a positive role in students' mental and physical health, as well as academic outcomes. At the same time, such activities are often out of reach for students with the greatest needs. Students from economic disadvantage, as well as those with trauma, face greater barriers to such participation.

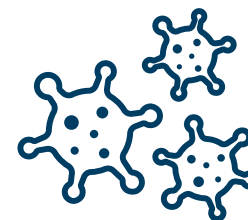


71% of students participate in an extracurricular

COVID-19



1 in 5 students (18%) had a parent or caregiver lose their job during COVID-19. American Indian Students were more likely to experience an adult or caregiver losing a job during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Half (49%) of students knew at least one person who got very sick or died from COVID-19. ("Very sick" was defined as "having to spend one or more nights at the hospital")

Driving and School Safety



42% of students text while driving



13% of students rode with a driver who had been drinking



85% of students feel safe at school

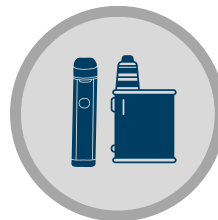


11% of students were in a fight and/or threatened with a weapon at school

Substance Use



16% of students are sexually active. Of those students, 65% used a condom during their last sexual intercourse



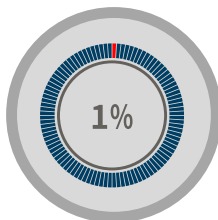
11% of students currently vape. 25% report that they have tried vaping



23% of students currently use alcohol. 44% report they have tried drinking



8% of students currently use marijuana. 17% have tried marijuana



1% of students have used heroin in the past 12 months and 1% of students have used methamphetamines in the past 12 months



10% of students have misused over-the-counter or prescription pain medicine

Physical Health and Nutrition



17% of students sleep 5 or fewer hours per night. On average, younger students (9th and 10th grade) sleep more than older students (11th and 12th grade).



65% of students exercise 4-7 days a week. LGBT students are less likely to exercise most days compared to straight-cisgendered peers. (LGBT: 43%, Straight-Cisgender:73%)



44% of students eat vegetables every day. Students with low grades were less likely to eat vegetables every day. (A's: 50%, B's: 40%, C's: 35%, D's & F's: 29%)



74% of students spend 3+ hours a day in front of a screen such as a TV, smart phone, Xbox, or other device

Trauma and Adversity

Experiences of violence and other forms of trauma can affect all aspects of a student's life, including their health, their behavior, and their ability to engage meaningfully in their education.



15% of students **experienced sexual or dating violence** including rape, sexual assault, or intimate partner violence. LGBT are three times more likely to experience dating or sexual violence. (LGBT: 35%, Straight-Cisgender: 11%)



1 in 4 students (28%) have **lived at four or more residences**. Students with low grades are more likely to have lived in 4 or more residences as compared to students with higher average grades. (A's: 22%, B's: 30%, C's: 40%, D's & F's: 52%)



1 in 5 students (19%) are **food insecure**, and have experienced hunger due to a lack of food at home.

Students who experience food insecurity are more likely to have lower grades, lack a sense of belonging at school, experience bullying, and have a mental health concern.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Mental health continues to be a top priority area for high school aged students in Waukesha County. The YRBS survey students were asked about their mental wellbeing over the past year, as well as any experiences harming themselves or considering or attempting suicide.

56%

of Waukesha County answered affirmatively to at least one of the questions about anxiety, depression, or self-harm.

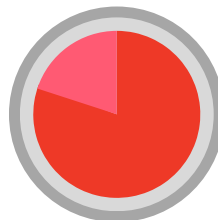
(56% All; 71% Female, 43% Male, 87% LGBT, 50% Straight-Cisgender)

Anxiety

Half (50%) of Waukesha County students reported significant problems with anxiety in the past year. A larger percent of female students report having problems with anxiety as compared to male students (65%, 36%). LGBT identifying students report having anxiety at nearly double the rate of their straight or cisgendered classmates (80%, 44%).



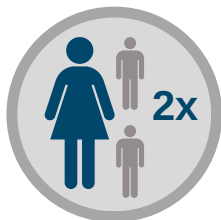
2 of 3 FEMALE STUDENTS reported problems with anxiety



80% of LGBT STUDENTS reported problems with anxiety

Depression

Nearly one-third (30%) of Waukesha students reported problems with depression in the past year. The percent of female and LGBT students who report experiencing prolonged, disruptive sadness is larger when compared to their male, straight, and cisgendered classmates. (40% Female, 21% Male; 62% LGBT, 23% Straight-Cisgender)



FEMALE STUDENTS were twice as likely to report problems with depression



62% of LGBT STUDENTS reported problems with depression