



EAGLE RIVER
YOUTH COALITION
MAKING **YOUTH** A **COMMUNITY** PRIORITY

EAGLE COUNTY'S
HEALTHY KIDS COLORADO SURVEY 2015-2016

HIGHLIGHTS OF LOCALLY RELEVANT RESULTS

A PROJECT OF THE EAGLE RIVER YOUTH COALITION

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In general, the 2015 results show mixed results regarding the health of youth in Eagle County. Where trend data are available, the following domains showed slight to moderate improvements from 2013 on many of the individual items, and/or favorable comparisons to state and national rates. These include:

- Drinking alcohol,
- Using marijuana,
- Using most other illicit substances,
- Engaging in physical activity,
- Eating habits, and
- Engaging in extracurricular activities

While alcohol showed a dramatic decrease between 2009 and 2013 and largely closed previously existing gaps with national rates (only available at the high school level), the gaps increased somewhat between 2013 and 2015 as national rates fell more than they did locally. Among high school students, alcohol use dropped slightly and perception remains steady and relatively high for students at both middle and high school. Current marijuana use held steady and lifetime marijuana use saw a decline. Among middle schools students, both alcohol and marijuana use saw sizable declines. Another positive note is the negative trend on ease of getting marijuana than was seen between 2011 and 2013 appears to have reversed between 2013 and 2015.

Single year-on-year changes are not as significant as the three to five year trends, which remain quite positive overall. Much of these longer-term gains can be attributed to the efforts of the Eagle River Youth Coalition to expand public awareness and provide leadership on priority issues facing youth, increase prevention services for substance abuse, expand environmental prevention and intervention strategies, and promote best practices. Gains are also largely due to improved services and better coordination among youth serving organizations in Eagle County

The 2015 results also point to areas of concern for youth in the county. These include:

- Perception of risk for marijuana use,
- Use of both alcohol and marijuana,
- Frequency of marijuana use among those that used in the past 30 days,
- Bullying, and
- Depression and suicide.

Specifically, perception of risk or harm from marijuana use has continued to decline at both the middle and high school levels. For middle school students the single year decline remains small and marijuana use is still perceived to be more harmful than alcohol use. The reverse is true for high school students, where the perception of harm for marijuana use is lower than for alcohol and the gap is increasing faster. Additionally, the percent of high school students who currently use both marijuana and alcohol has increased and frequency of using marijuana for those that are regular users of the substance is relatively high.

Bullying is another area of concern. While it is not surprising that middle school incidence of bullying is greater than in high school, local middle school rates continue to climb from 2011. Nearly half of all middle school students were bullied in the 12 months prior to survey administration and one out five were victims of electronic bullying.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the depression and suicide indicators have continued to move in a negative direction since 2011. The negative trends were especially strong among middle school students, who showed negative gains on all of the depression and suicide indicators and sharp increases from 2011 for feeling sad or hopeless, seriously considering suicide, and attempting suicide.

Although there are a number of heightened areas of concern that the 2015 HKCS survey results point to, there were also areas that were indicative of increased protections that are present. Specifically, the profile of local youth on the various physical health and nutrition measures show that local youth generally fare better than youth in the United States overall. This type of protection can help offset some of the deleterious effects of the various risk-factors that are present in the county. It is known that the recreational lifestyle in the Eagle River Valley promotes a relaxed attitude toward drinking and use of other drugs for adults as well as youth, but parent outreach, such as the Eat Chat Parent series offered by ERYC, is one important mechanism for offsetting this risk factor. Another is providing ample opportunities for pro-social involvement in the community. Keeping youth engaged in extra-curricular activities and affording regular interaction with pro-social peers, regardless of whether they are school-based or offered through the various local third party non-profits are other key protective factors. Of particular significance, are recent developments by both ERYC and the InteGreat! collaborative to increase the level of support for wrap-around services for local youth. The in-school community is an important source of protective factors and yet the stubbornly high achievement gap among local students indicates that there are segments of the student population for whom these protections are not being realized. Leveraging the various strengths of all sectors in the local community is instrumental for enabling low-performing students to thrive both in and out of school.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Eagle River Youth Coalition has been surveying students on alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) use, engagement in other risky behaviors, and key risk and protective factors at the county's high schools every two years since the 2001-2002 school year. Starting with the 2007-2008 school year, Eagle County adopted the use of the Healthy Kids Colorado Survey (HKCS). HKCS was adopted locally to enable stronger comparisons of Eagle County results to statewide and national trends.

The HKCS was designed to be administered in grades 6-12 and includes the following domains:

- Physical activity and nutrition,
- Safety, bullying, and violence,
- Mental health,
- Alcohol, tobacco and other drug use,
- Healthcare
- School, and
- Sexual health (high school only).

The survey is also given every two years at the state level and the administration window is roughly concurrent with the local administration effort. During the 2013 and 2015 administrations, Colorado was unable to meet the minimum requirements to secure a representative sample to produce weighted results that enable comparisons to other states. However, local comparisons to statewide results and statewide comparisons to national findings are still valid.

There have been five administrations of the HKCS in Eagle County: 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, and 2015. This report focuses on results, trends and comparisons to state and national results, as available, across this period of time. All local results presented in this report are based on an unweighted analysis and may not match reports for local reports produced by UC Denver, which used a weighted analysis. While Eagle County has been surveying high school (HS) students since 2001, in 2009 they moved to also include 7th and 8th grade middle school (MS) students. Survey size and response rates since 2007 are shown in Table 1. A sampling methodology was employed at the school district's high schools during this past administration, which accounts for the lower response rates in grades 9-12. It is important to note that while Eagle County includes the towns of El Jebel and Basalt, located in the extreme southwest part of the county, youth from these communities are served by Roaring Fork School District and are not included in the Eagle County survey sample.

Table 1. HKCS Response Rate by Grade and Year.

Year	Level	Grade	Total Students	Students Surveyed	Response Rate
2007	MS	7 th	384	-	-
		8 th	398	-	-
		Total	782	N/A	N/A
	HS	9 th	412	278	67%
		10 th	419	248	59%
		11 th	364	183	50%
		12 th	368	148	40%
Total	1,563	857	55%		
2009	MS	7 th	402	307	76%
		8 th	447	352	79%
		Total	849	659	78%
	HS	9 th	447	346	77%
		10 th	404	315	78%
		11 th	401	274	68%
		12 th	445	262	59%
Total	1,697	1,197	71%		
2011	MS	7 th	443	389	88%
		8 th	449	376	84%
		Total	892	765	86%
	HS	9 th	445	374	84%
		10 th	435	365	84%
		11 th	394	302	77%
		12 th	423	275	65%
Total	1,697	1,316	78%		
2013	MS	7 th	517	455	88%
		8 th	515	468	91%
		Total	1,032	923	89%
	HS	9 th	484	433	89%
		10 th	464	396	85%
		11 th	448	372	83%
		12 th	501	375	75%
Total	1,897	1,576	83%		
2015	MS	7 th	533	482	90%
		8 th	531	465	87%
		Total	1,064	947	89%
	HS*	9 th	576	279	48%*
		10 th	616	278	45%*
		11 th	538	285	53%*
		12 th	558	253	45%*
Total	2,288	1,095	48%*		

* A sampling methodology was used at Eagle Valley, Battle Mountain, and Red Canyon high schools.

Results from this survey are used locally to:

- Inform planning efforts and needs assessments,
- Monitor how alcohol, tobacco and other drug attitudes and use change over time,
- Monitor how health attitudes and behaviors change over time,
- Identify areas for additional prevention and intervention programming,
- Evaluate the impact of local prevention and intervention programs,
- Persuade additional resource investment in local programming.

The aim of this report is to provide a concise and locally relevant summary of the 2015 results for key sections of the survey. Longitudinal trends are examined and comparisons made to statewide and national results. Specific areas of focus for this report are on alcohol, marijuana and other drugs; bullying; suicide and depression; and nutrition and physical health.

II. ALCOHOL, MARIJUANA and OTHER DRUGS

Alcohol

Figure 1 shows that the percent of high school students who had their first drink of alcohol before the age of 13 has steadily decreased since 2007. The positive change between 2011 and 2015 was a remarkable ten percent and Eagle County is now four percent below the state and three percent below the national figure. Figure 2 shows the percentage of students that currently use alcohol has been steadily decreasing since 2009 locally, as well as at the state and national levels. Since 2011, the decline in Eagle County has been on a similar trajectory as at the state level, but has persistently remained at least five percent higher. Binge drinking (Figure 3) saw excellent improvements between 2009 and 2013, but not much change since the last administration of the HKCS. In 2013, binge drinking among high schools students in Eagle County had closed the gap with the national rate. Between 2013 and 2015, the rate saw greater improvement nationally than locally and currently the local rate is two percent higher.

Figure 1. Age of First Use Before 13: Alcohol (Grades 9-12).

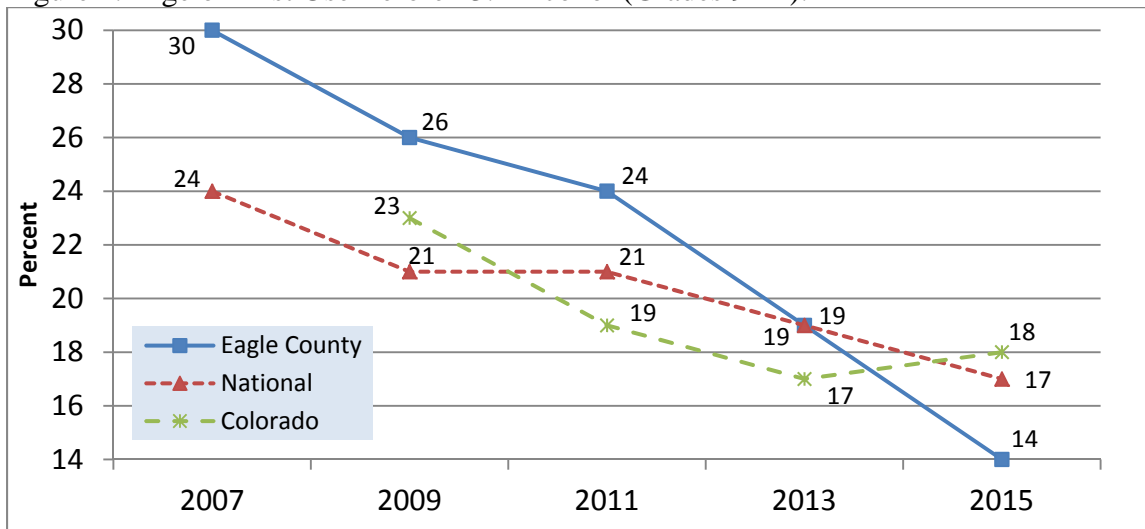


Figure 2. Past 30 Days Use: Alcohol (Grades 9-12).

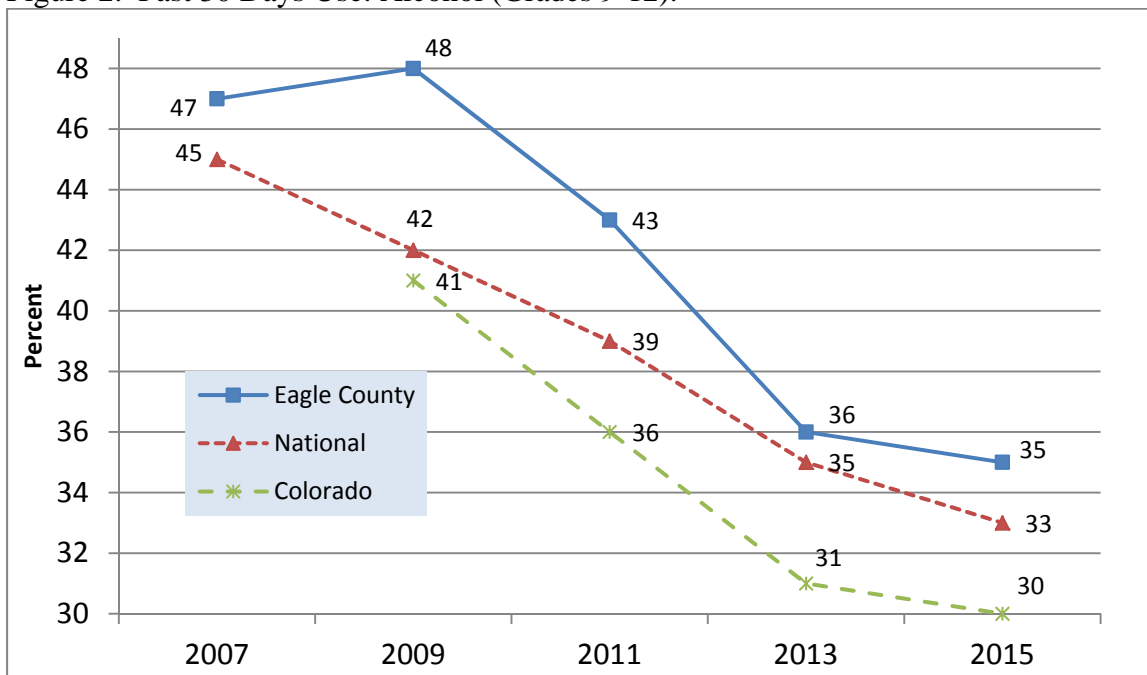


Figure 3. Past 30 Days Use: Binge Drinking (Grades 9-12).

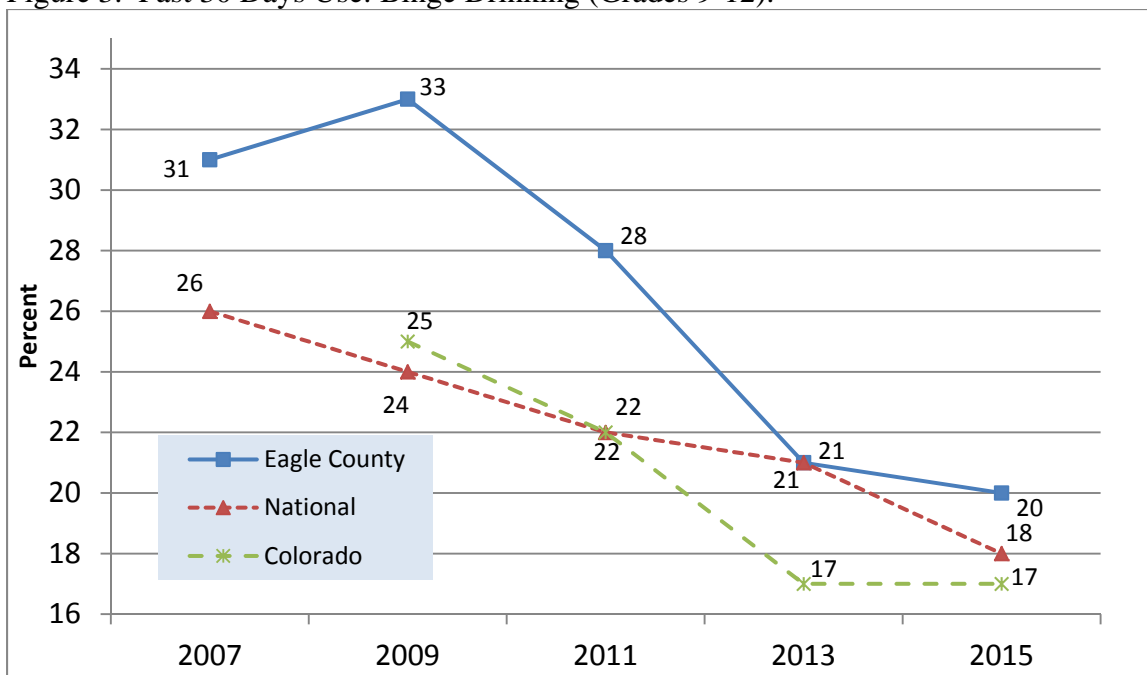


Figure 4 shows the percent of local middle school students surveyed that had their first drink before the age of 13, who currently use alcohol, and who indicate binge drinking in the past 30 days. Current alcohol use and binge drinking saw excellent improvements over the last administration of the survey, but the percentage of students that indicated use before age 13 has increased slightly.

Figure 4. Alcohol Consumption for Eagle County Students in Grades 7 & 8.

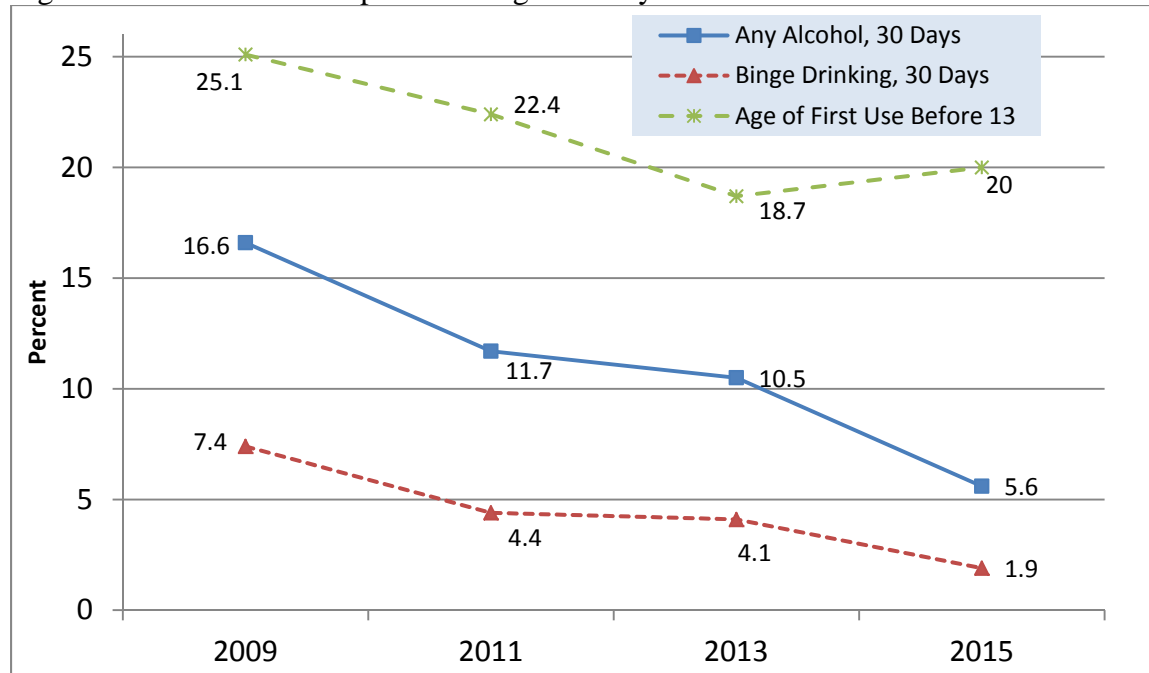
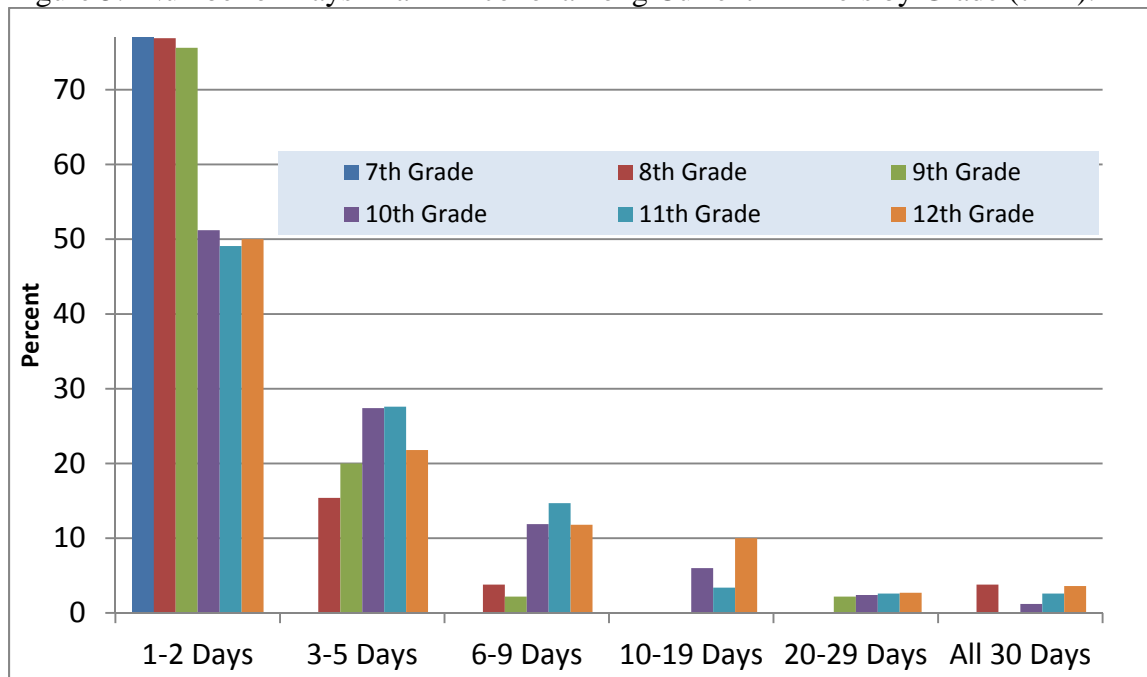


Figure 5 shows the frequency of using alcohol in the past 30 days among current alcohol drinkers in grades 7-12. Not surprisingly, these results show that frequency of alcohol consumption for those that drink goes up over time, with the most dramatic shift occurring between grades 9 and 10. By grade 11, 23% of current drinkers consume alcohol on six or more days per month. This is a strong improvement from 2011, where 36% of the 11th graders that were current drinkers reported using alcohol on 6 or more days per month.

Additionally, current survey results show that 30% of the current drinkers in grades 7 and 8 (N=50) binge drink at least once per month, which is a 10% improvement from the last survey administration. About half (48%) of current drinkers in grades 9 and 10 (N=129) binge drink. For current drinkers in grade 11 (N=116), this rate increases to 62%, and then to 66% for current drinkers in grade 12 (N=110).

Figure 5. Number of Days Drank Alcohol among Current Drinkers by Grade (7-12).



Not surprising is the finding that there are dramatic differences between perceived use of alcohol among both middle and high school students in Eagle County and actual frequency of alcohol drinking. While 2015 results show that 35% of 9th – 12th graders indicate use of alcohol in the past 30 days, survey respondents believe that 68% of students in their school consume alcohol at least once per month. Similarly, 20% of 9th – 12th graders acknowledge that they binge drink at least once per month, but survey respondents believe that 59% of students at their school do so. As current alcohol use and binge drinking have declined since 2011, so has perception of use among peers – by 12% and 13%, respectively.

In terms of obtaining alcohol, the 2015 results show that 25% of high school students feel that it is very easy to get and another 34% feel that it is “sort of easy.” In comparison to 2013, these results show a 6% improvement for those that said “very easy” and a 4% negative change for those that said “sort of easy”. Fortunately, middle school students, as a whole, feel that it is substantially more difficult to obtain alcohol. About 16% of 7th and 8th graders report that it is very easy to obtain alcohol, and another 21% “sort of easy.”

The 2015 survey results show that very few of the current high school alcohol drinkers typically buy their alcohol in a store (3.7%), restaurant/club (0.6%), or at a public event (1.4%). Rather, the majority (40.2%) indicate that someone gave alcohol to them. About 20% indicate that they give money to someone else to get it for them. Some (9.6%) take alcohol from a store or family member and 24.1% say they usually get it “some other way.” In comparison to 2013, those who say someone gave them alcohol increased by nearly 6%, but those that say that they give money to someone to purchase it and those that take it both declined by (2% and 3%, respectively).

With regard to where high school students consumed alcohol in the past 12 months, the majority of those that drank indicate it was typically at someone else’s home (58.2%) followed by consuming it in their own home (26.5%). About 6% indicate at a public event; 5% at a park, beach, or parking lot; and 3% at a restaurant, bar, or club. Alcohol consumption on school property and while in a vehicle were both less than 1% each.

In general, the pattern of results for how current drinkers at middle school acquire alcohol is roughly similar to the high school results, although giving money to someone else to get it for them is rare. The most common way of 7th and 8th graders obtaining alcohol is someone giving it to them (40.2%), followed by getting it some other way (24.1%). About 10% indicate that they take it from a store or family member. In terms of where middle school students report typically drinking, 58.2% say their own home and 26.2% in someone else’s home, 5.6% at a place such as a park, beach, or parking lot, and 2.8% at a restaurant, bar, or club. The remaining choices were selected by two or less students each.

Marijuana

Figure 6 shows an inverse trend on the percent of high school students that ever used marijuana in Eagle County as compared to the national rates between 2007 and 2011, but then tracks similarly between 2011 and 2015. Local use rates have come down from the high point set in 2009 and are currently 2% below national and 1% below state rates. Figure 7 shows that local current use (past 30 days) of marijuana has declined slightly since 2009 and then held steady between 2013 and 2015. The statewide rate climbed 1% since the last HKCS administration, while nationally the rate came down 1% over the same period.

Figure 6. Lifetime Use: Ever Used Marijuana (Grades 9-12).

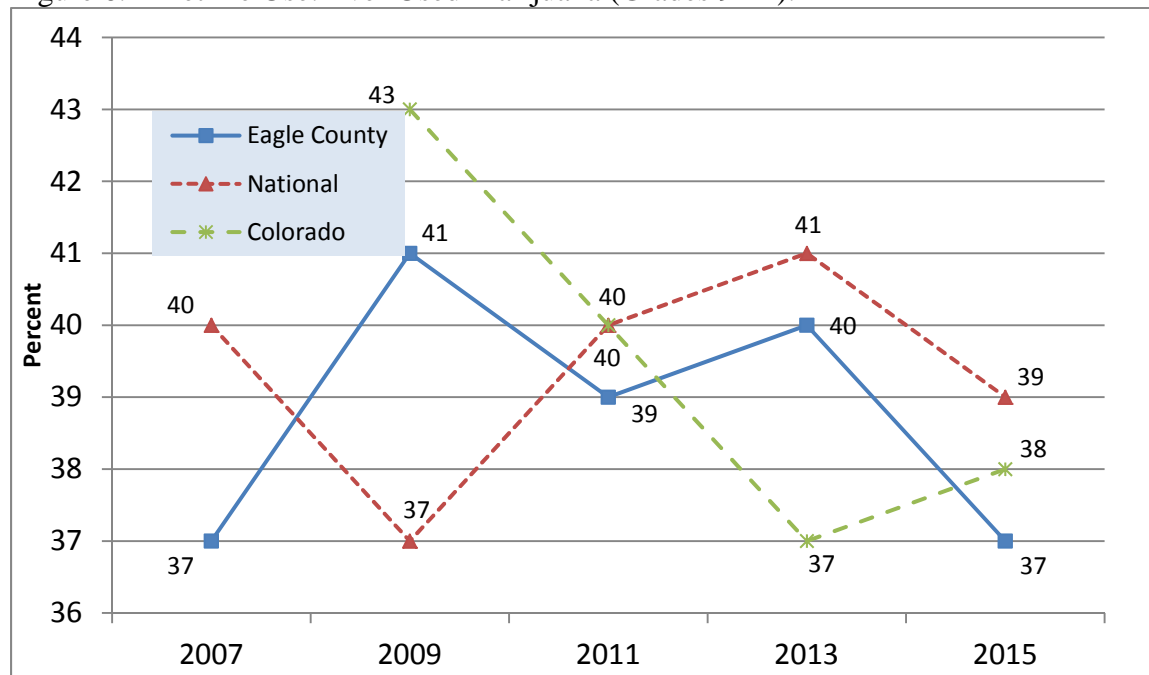


Figure 7. Past 30 Days Use: Marijuana (Grades 9-12).

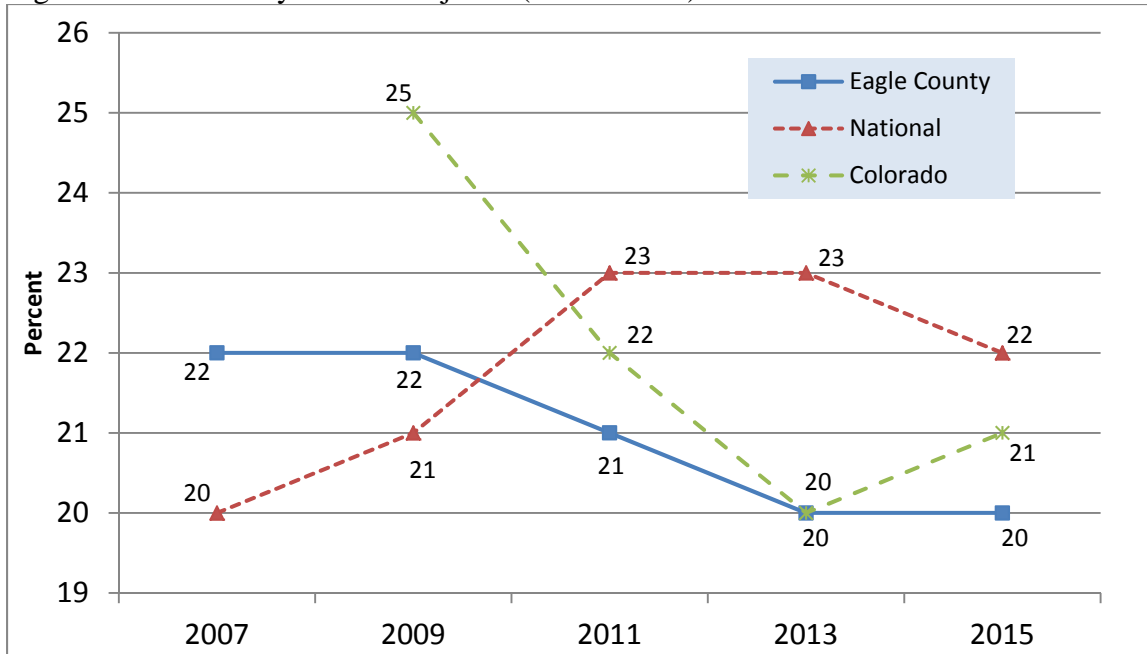


Figure 8 shows a sizeable decline since 2013 in the percentage of students in the middle school grades that used marijuana at least once in their lifetime and those that are current users. The percentage that indicated ever having used and current use are both at their lowest point ever in the history of surveying the middle school population.

Figure 8. Marijuana Use for Students in Grades 7 & 8.

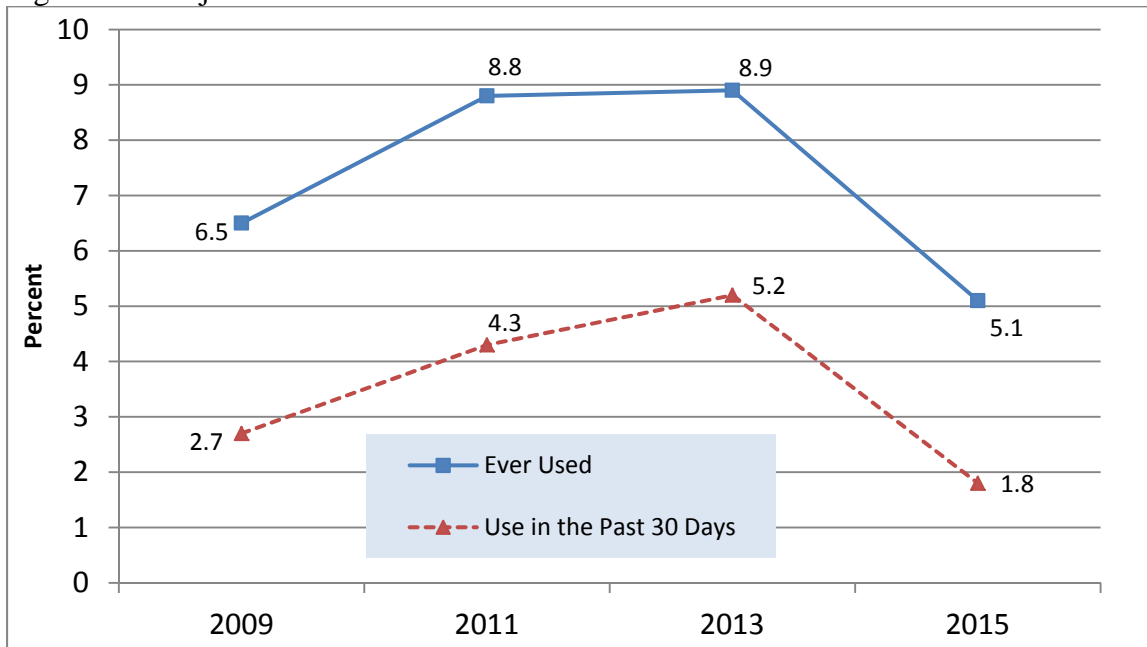
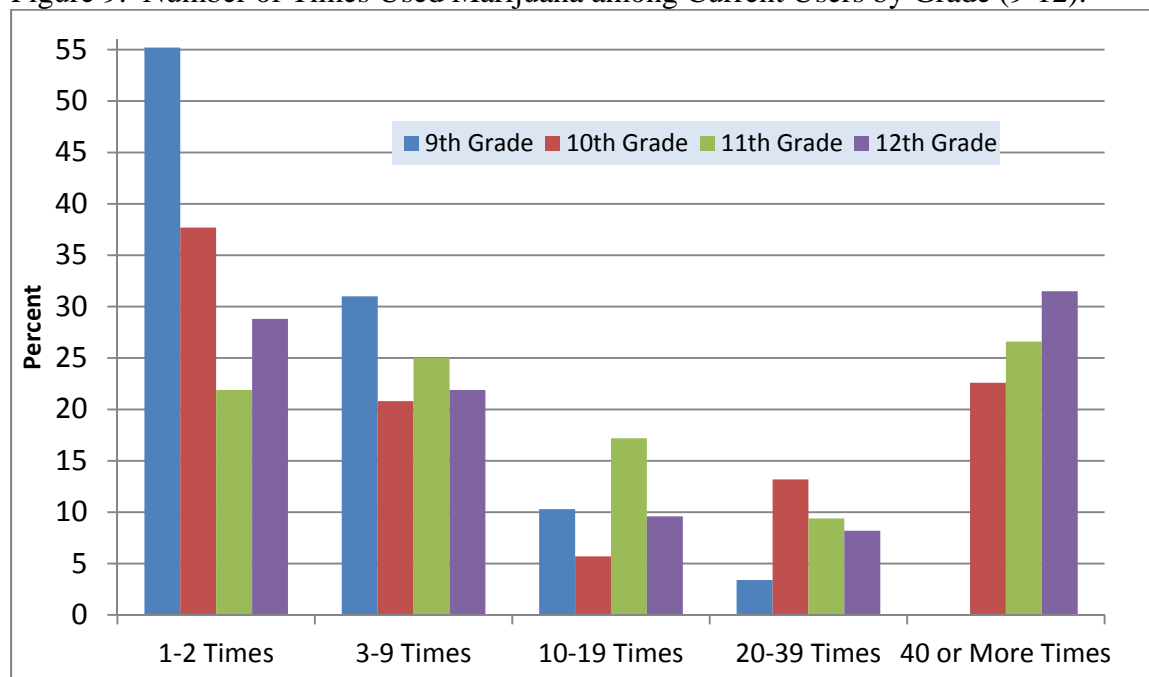


Figure 9 shows that frequency of marijuana use among current users goes up as high school grade level increases, but that even in 9th grade, about 14% of current users of marijuana (N=29) engage in the activity more than 10 times a month. Current results show that frequency of use soars among users between 9th and 10th grade, with nearly 42% of 10th grade users (N=53) indicating use of 10 or more times per month. By 12th grade, about half of the users of marijuana (N=73) engage in the activity more than 10 times per month and 1 out of 3 engage in the activity more than 40 times a month. Middle school respondents were not included in this chart because only a very small number of 7th and 8th grade students report 30-day use of more than 1 or 2 days. The pattern overall for high school students in comparison to alcohol, shows that among users, there is a substantial proportion of students in grade levels 10-12 that use marijuana quite frequently.

Figure 9. Number of Times Used Marijuana among Current Users by Grade (9-12).



The latest survey results show that it may now be getting more difficult for high school students to get marijuana. The percentage of students that say it is “very easy” or “sort of easy” increased from 54% in 2011 to 56% in 2013, but has now decreased to 52%.

Not surprisingly, high school students believe that marijuana is much easier to get than students in grades 7 and 8. For students in the middle school grades, those that say it is “very easy” or “sort of easy” went up from 15% in 2011 to 19% in 2013, but has now come back down to 15%.

The 2015 survey results show that among current marijuana users, 50.5% of high school students indicate they typically get marijuana by someone giving it to them. About one-third (29.1%) of high school users indicate they get it “some other way.” At least a portion of the latter percentage likely reflects the students that typically purchase it from an illegal marijuana dealer

since that choice was not provided as an option on the survey. This question was removed from the middle school version of the survey in 2015.

The percentage that say they obtained marijuana from someone with a medical card increased from 8% in 2011 to 16% in 2013 among current users in high school and then came down to 11% in the current survey administration. About 6% of users of marijuana indicate that they get it with their own medical marijuana license. The remaining options (at a public event, at school, take it from a family member) were selected by only one or two high school students each. This response option was removed from the middle school version of the survey in 2015.

Among high school marijuana users, 87.8% indicate that they usually smoke it, 6.1% say they use a vaporizer, and 5.1% say they eat it. When asked to “select all that apply” in the past 30 days, almost all marijuana users say they smoked it at least once, about half say they consumed an edible, about half dabbed it, and about a third used a vaporizer.

Alcohol and Marijuana

Looking specifically at high school students who currently use alcohol, nearly half also report current use of marijuana at least once a month. This rate for marijuana use for those that drink alcohol is over double the rate that is reported for the general high school population. The rate was 43% in 2007 and 2009, 45% in 2011, 42% in 2013, and 47% in 2015. Similarly, looking at those that report current marijuana use, 84% report also using alcohol, which represents a 9% increase from 2013, but roughly equivalent to the three survey administrations prior to 2013. These results underscore the fact that many students report using both marijuana and drinking alcohol in the past 30 days. Among the entire high school student population surveyed, 16% used both in 2015, which is up from 14% used in 2013 and down from 17% in 2011.

Figure 10 shows that perceived risk of harm from marijuana and alcohol use among high school students started to differ substantially over the past five administrations of the survey. In 2007, perceived risk of using marijuana regularly was slightly higher than drinking 1-2 times nearly every day. After 2011, perceptions of harm from marijuana use declined while for alcohol use it stayed steady. Between 2011 and 2015, perceived harm from drinking alcohol remained steady at a relatively elevated level while it has been declining for use of marijuana. In 2015, a total of 55% of high school students report at least a moderate risk of harm from regular marijuana use.

Figure 10. Perceived Risk of Harm: Alcohol and Marijuana, 1=No Risk, 2=Slight Risk, 3=Moderate Risk and 4=Great Risk (Grades 9-12).

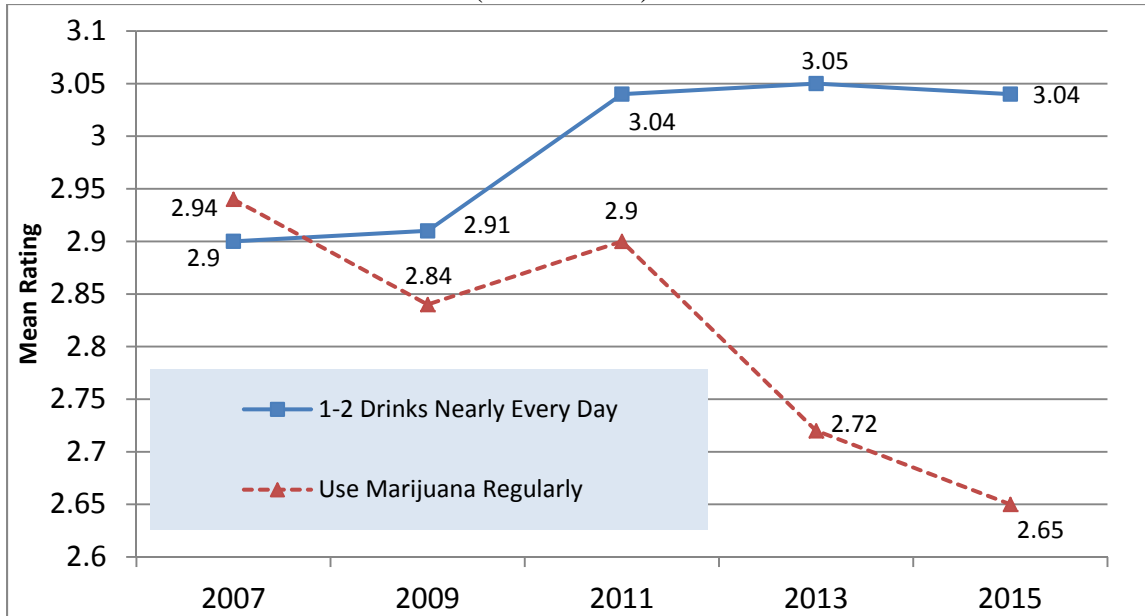
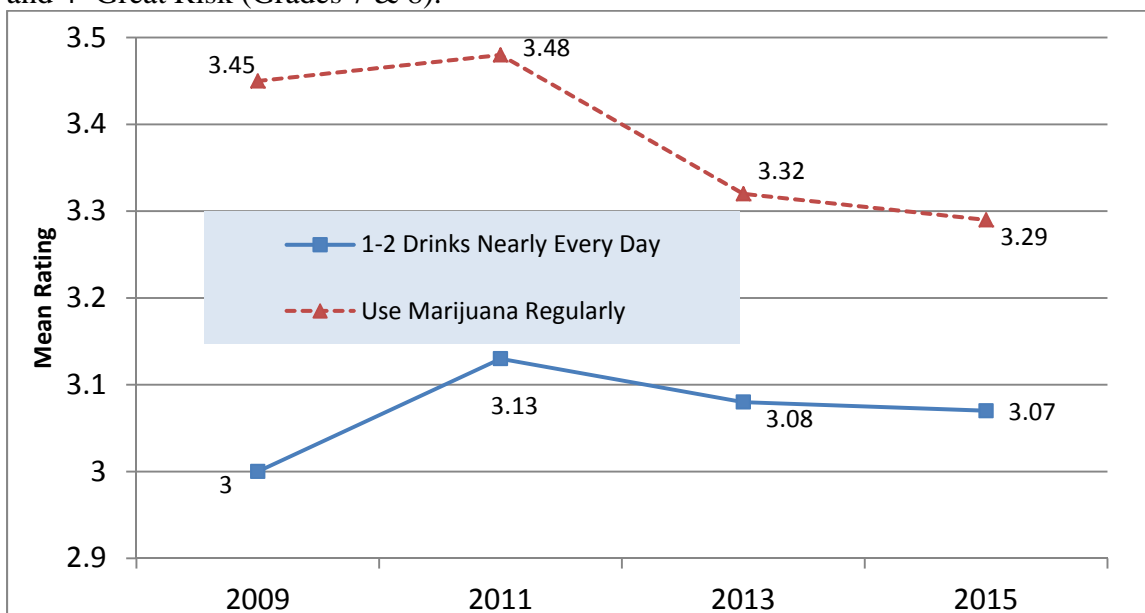


Figure 11 shows the perception of harm trends between 2009 and 2015 for the middle school students surveyed. Unlike high school student results, middle schools students perceive more risk from using marijuana than drinking alcohol. At the same time, perceived risk of harm for both alcohol and marijuana has been declining since 2011, but the decline for marijuana has been steeper, especially between 2011 and 2013. In 2015, a total of 78% of middle school students report at least a moderate risk of harm from regular marijuana use.

Figure 11. Risk of Harm: Alcohol and Marijuana, 1=No Risk, 2=Slight Risk, 3=Moderate Risk and 4=Great Risk (Grades 7 & 8).



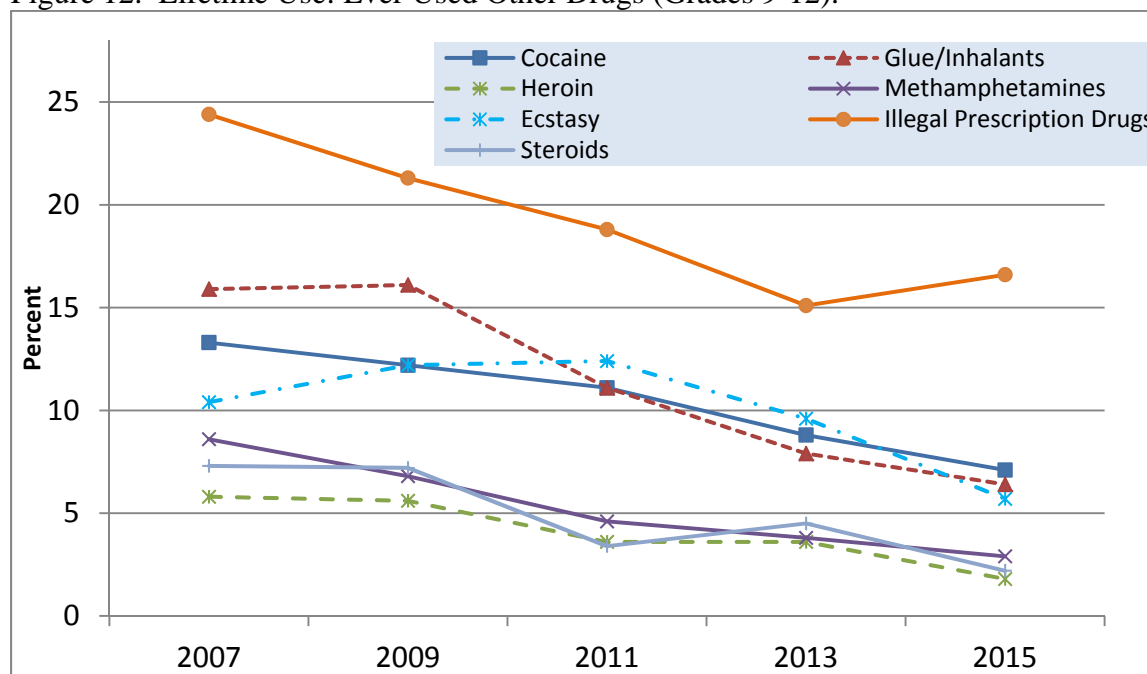
Other Illicit Drugs

Figure 12 shows the percent of high school students that ever used each of the other substances asked about in the survey by year. With the exception of illegal prescription drugs, all these substances saw a downward trend between 2007 and 2015. Lifetime use of ecstasy increased slightly between 2007 and 2011 and has since been coming down. Not shown in the chart is that about 8% of high school students indicate illegal use of prescription drugs in the past 30 days, which is down 1% from 2013 (this was the only of these substances for which 30 day use was asked about).

In 2015, Eagle County lifetime use rates for these substances in comparison to the national averages are as follows:

- 1.9% over for cocaine,
- 0.7% over for ecstasy,
- 0.1% under for methamphetamines,
- 0.2% under for illegal prescription drugs,
- 0.3% under for heroine,
- 0.8% under for inhalants, and
- 1.3% under for illegal steroid use.

Figure 12. Lifetime Use: Ever Used Other Drugs (Grades 9-12).



Summary

Although progress continues to be made on reducing alcohol use and most of the other illicit drugs asked about on the survey, the steep declines in alcohol use that have occurred among high school students in previous years have tapered off over the last two administrations of the survey. Use of alcohol before age 13 among is one exception among high school students, which showed a 5% decline. Current alcohol use and binge drinking among high school students in Eagle County remain higher than both state and national rates. Alcohol use among middle school students showed stronger improvements over the last two survey administrations, with less than 6% who indicate current use and less than 2% who indicate binge drinking.

Current marijuana use has stayed steady at the high school level and those that indicate use over their lifetime has decreased. These use indicators saw small increases at the state level, which elevates the significance of the local results. Perception of harm among high school students for marijuana has been declining steadily since 2011, however, and is an area of concern. At the same time, marijuana use among middle school students saw declines from 2013, and while perception of harm has come down slightly over the same period, it remains quite high overall. The most recent survey results show that the percent of current marijuana users among high school students in Eagle County compares favorably to national use rates. However, frequency of use among current users remains high.

In general, progress has been good at the middle school level, but has slowed at the high school level.

III. VIOLENCE and BULLYING

According to the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (CSPV) at the University of Colorado’s Institute of Behavioral Violence (<http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/>), homicide is the second leading cause of death for youth between the ages of 10 and 24, youth are three times more likely than adults to be victims of violence and the cost of youth violence exceeds \$158 billion each year. Moreover, the impact of school-based bullying has not only been linked to an increased risk of suicide for victims, but also to the possibility that the victim will react violently, as demonstrated by the Columbine High School tragedy in Colorado in 1999. Deleterious effects of bullying are not limited to the victim only. Bystanders of bullying and acts of violence in schools are also negatively impacted and a high incidence of bullying can create a pervasive climate of discomfort and tension that severely undermines the ability of students to focus on learning.

Table 2 shows the high school results from the various items on the HKCS that are related to violence and bullying. All Eagle County rates are at or below the national results, which is good improvement from 2013 when being bullied on school property in the past 12 months was 3% higher than the national rate and electronic bullying was about 1% higher.

Table 2. 2015 High School Violence and Bullying Compared to State and National (Grades 9-12).

Item	Eagle County	Colorado	Nationwide
Carried a Weapon at Least Once During the Past 30 Days	13.8%	15.9%	16.2%
Carried a Weapon on School Property at Least Once During the Past 30 Days	3.2%	3.7%	4.1%
Threatened or Injured with a Weapon on School Property at Least Once During the Past 12 Months	3.8%	5.6%	6.0%
In a Physical Fight at Least Once in the Past 12 Months	18.8%	20.1%	22.6%
Bullied on School Property in the Past 12 Months	17.7%	20.1%	20.2%
Electronically Bullied During the Past 12 Months	12.1%	15.5%	15.5%
Did not Go to School Because of Safety Concerns at Least Once in the Past 30 Days	3.8%	5.5%	5.6%
Forced to Have Sex During the Past 12 Months	6.0%	6.6%	6.7%
Dating Violence During the Past 12 Months	4.4%	9.6%	9.6%

Figures 13 and 14, however, show that the rate of bullying in grades 7 and 8 combined are significantly higher than in the high school grades combined. While state and national comparisons do not exist for the middle school grades, the pattern of results for these younger students indicates the problem of bullying has been rising steadily. Middle school bullying has

increased 11% and electronic bullying 4% since 2011, while these rates over the same period decreased in high school.

Figure 13. Bullying Past 12 Months and Not Going to School Past 30 Days Because of Safety Concerns.

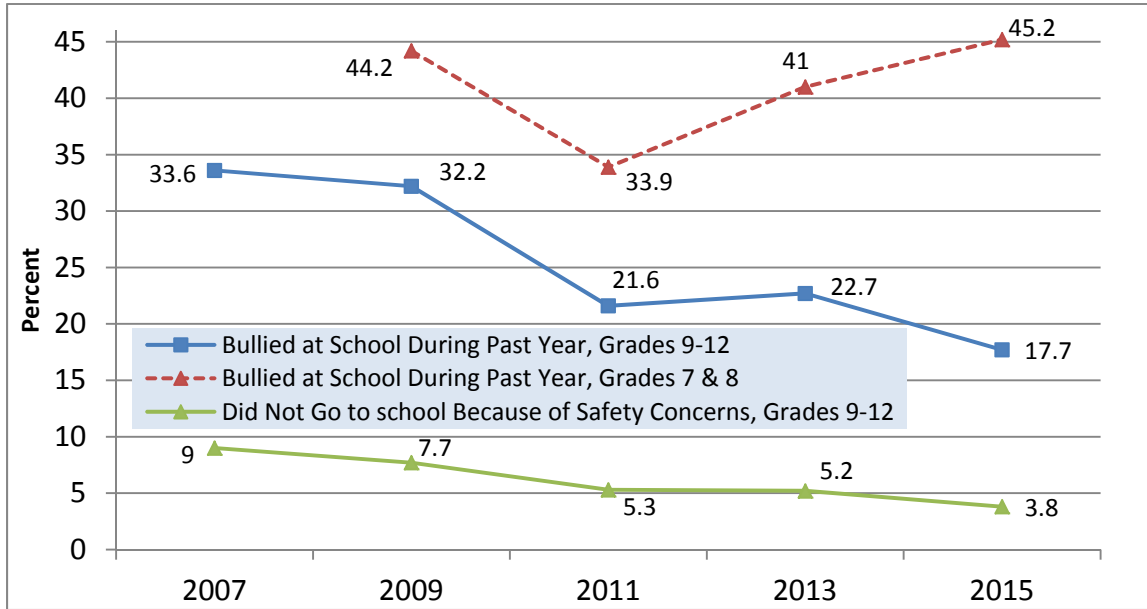
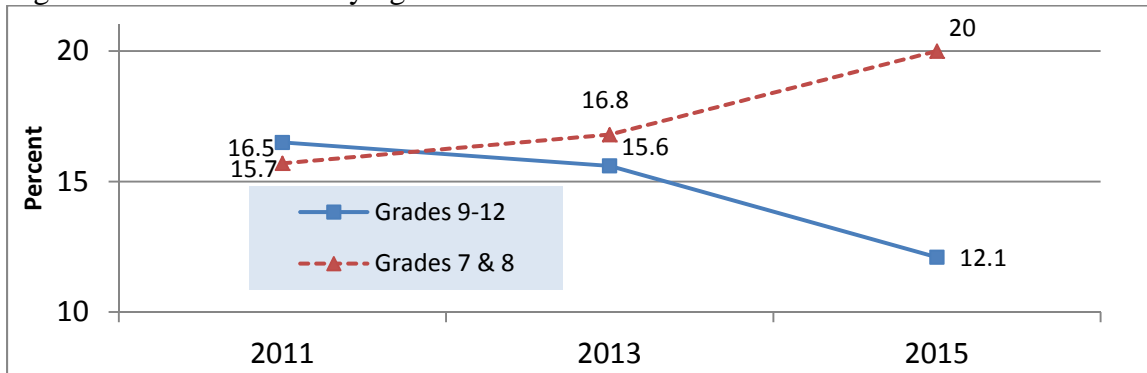


Figure 14. Electronic Bullying.



Summary

Although bullying indicators measured by the survey compare favorably to national results, these comparisons are only available for students in grades 9-12. Middle school bullying has gone up substantially since 2011 and electronic bullying has also increased. These results underscore that bullying at the middle school level is an issue that needs to continue to be addressed by the local community. Additionally, the finding that nearly half of all students in grades 7 and 8 have been bullied in the prior 12 months is particularly troublesome and highlights that bullying prevention needs to start as early as possible and additional in-school interventions for these grades are warranted.

IV. SUICIDE and DEPRESSION

Suicide is the third leading cause of death among teenagers, and although females are more likely to attempt suicide than males, males are four times more likely to complete suicide. The U.S. Department of Justice estimates that 500,000 teenagers attempt suicide each year. The most common current methods used for suicide of young people are hanging/suffocation and poisoning.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, risk factors for suicide include:

- Past suicide attempts. Approximately one-third of teens who successfully complete suicide have made a previous attempt.
- A close family member who attempted or completed suicide.
- The presence of a loaded and accessible gun in a teen’s home and a recently publicized suicide or suicide attempt.
- Recent losses or certain stressful situations, such as getting into trouble at school, fighting/breaking up with a boyfriend or girlfriend, the breakdown of the family unit, fighting with friends, trouble with the police, moving, and the pressure to perform/achieve, etc.

Table 3 shows the 2015 high school results from the five items on the HKCS that are directly linked to suicide and depression and compares these to national results. While the current rates for Eagle County compare favorably to state and national rates, the local rate since 2013 have increased 0.5% for seriously considering suicide, 1.2% for making a suicide plan, 1% for attempting suicide, and 0.3% for an attempt that needed to be treated by a doctor or nurse.

Table 3. 2015 High School Suicide and Depression in the Past 12 Months Compared to State and National (Grades 9-12).

Item	Eagle County	Colorado	Nationwide
Felt Sad or Hopeless for 2 Weeks or More	23.9%	29.5%	29.9%
Seriously Considered Attempting Suicide	15.1%	17.4%	17.7%
Made a Suicide Plan	12.9%	14.1%	14.6%
Attempted Suicide	7.9%	7.8%	8.6%
Suicide Attempt Treated by a Doctor or Nurse	2.9%	3.0%	2.8%

Figures 15 and 16 show the trends on the suicide and depression items over the past four administrations of the survey by school level. The dashed lines in the charts represent the results from grades 7 and 8 combined and the solid lines for grades 9-12 combined. At the high school level, the percent of youth feeling sad or hopeless has improved since the last survey administration and is near the rate seen in 2011. Those that seriously considered suicide also improved slightly, but nowhere near the negative gains seen between 2011 and 2013. All other suicide items at the high school level continued the negative trend from 2011.

The pattern of results for students in grades 7 and 8 is of much greater concern because every single indicator has continued to move in a negative direction from 2011. Statewide and national benchmarks for these grades are lacking, but the fact that a greater percentage of students are feeling sad or hopeless in grades 7 and 8 than what is seen at the high school grades and that the current middle school rate is at an all-time high across the history of the survey highlights an important area of need. The percent that seriously consider suicide in grades 7 and 8 nearly doubled since 2011, exceeding the historical high mark set for high school students. The percent of students in the middle school grades that make a suicide plan has also risen sharply since 2011, while those that attempt suicide continues to rise slightly.

Figure 15. Feeling Sad or Hopeless and Seriously Considering Suicide by School Level and Year.

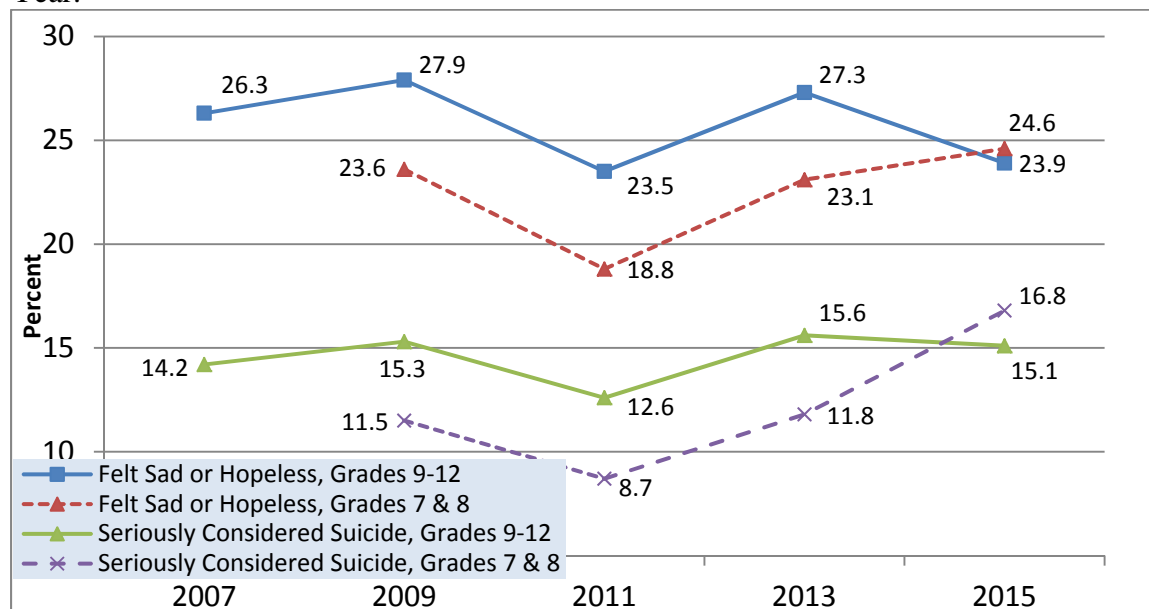
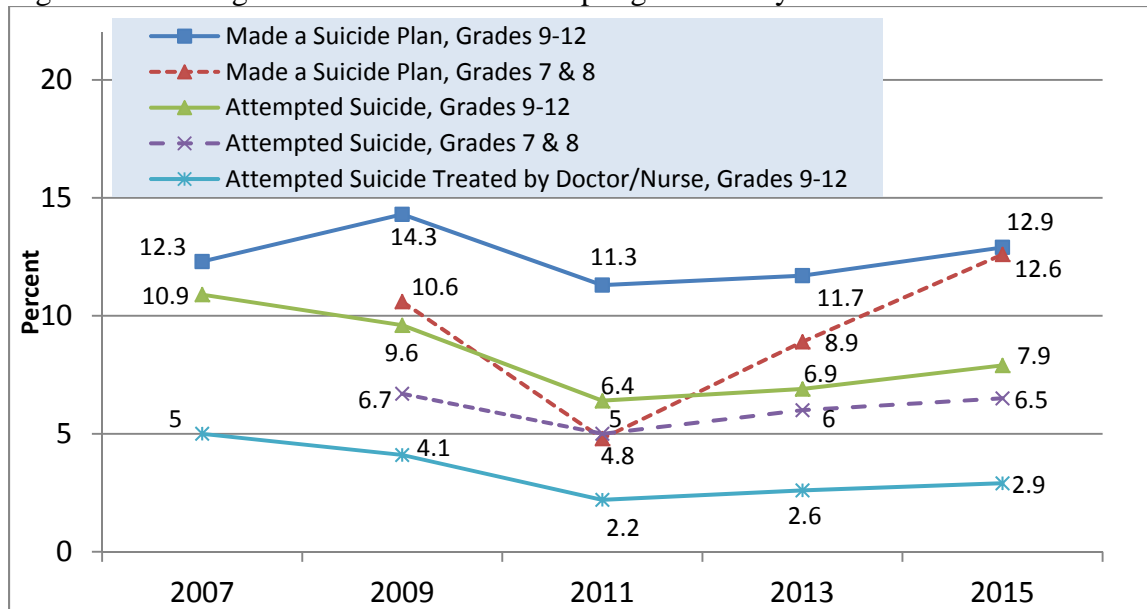


Figure 16. Making a Suicide Plan and Attempting Suicide by School Level and Year.



Summary

Unfortunately, the progress made between 2009 and 2011 in the area of suicide and depression was largely lost between 2011 and 2015, especially among middle school students. With the exception of feeling of sad or hopeless among high school students, no other substantial gains have been realized since the last survey administration, and two indicators moved sharply in a negative direction among middle school students. While the negative gains were also seen at the state level, the national picture shows a minimal decline, and again, these comparisons are available for the high school grades only.

Clearly, the severity of each completed suicide is such that even very small percentages underscore situations that need to be addressed by the larger community. The item regarding suicide attempts that had to be treated by a doctor or nurse was dropped from the middle school version of the survey, but current survey results show that 29 high school students were treated for a suicide attempt in the 12 months prior to administering the survey. This finding coupled with the results indicating that 60 middle school students and 79 high school students made a suicide attempt (regardless if it was treated by a doctor or nurse) indicates that Eagle County has many youth that are coming alarmingly close to completion, signifying that this continues to be an area of high need for the county.

V. NUTRITION and PHYSICAL HEALTH

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (<http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/index.html>), during the past 20 years, there has been a dramatic increase in obesity in the United States and both adult and child rates remain high. Overall, obesity among children, adolescents, and young adults age 2 to 19 is at 17% and has not changed substantially since 2003. There are both short-term as well as long-term effects of obesity on youth health. Short-term impacts include bone and joint problems, pre-diabetes, high cholesterol, and high blood pressure. There are also negative impacts from stigmatization that can lead to social and psychological problems such as social ostracization, poor self-image and low self-esteem. Long-term impacts include increased risk of a large number of health issues, such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, many types of cancer, and osteoarthritis. Obesity in the United States has reached epidemic proportion as vast portions of the population are making increasingly poor nutritional choices and leading sedentary lifestyles. Although Colorado has historically had one of the lowest obesity rates of all states in the country, obesity rates have nonetheless also climbed in the state as well.

Table 4 shows how Eagle County high school students in 2015 compare to national results on the various survey questions that deal with health and nutrition. Overall, and as expected, the local results compare quite favorably to national results, with the exception of eating fruits and vegetables at least once a day. However, note that the item asking about fruit consumption was different on the national YRBS than the HKCS version employed locally.

All indicators moved in a positive direction between 2013 and 2015 and this domain highlights an area of strength for the community. The strongest growth includes vegetable consumption (+9%), trying to lose weight (-8%), physically activity (+6%), fruit consumption (+5%), and eating breakfast (+4%). All other indicators improved by 3% or less.

Table 4. 2011 High School Nutrition and Health Results Compared to State and National (Grades 9-12).

Item	Eagle County	Colorado	Nationwide
Described Themselves as Slightly or Very Overweight	22.1%	28.0%	31.1%
Trying to Lose Weight	34.3%	40.4%	47.7%
Ate Fruit One or More Times per Day during the Past 7 Days*	51.7%	44.6%	63.3%*
Ate Vegetables One or More Times per Day during the Past 7 Days	53.6%	44.8%	61.0%
Drank Soda One or More Times per Day during the Past 7 Days	10.4%	17.1%	20.4%
Ate Breakfast on All 7 Days during the Past 7 Days	46.1%	39.2%	36.3%
Physically Active at Least 60 Minutes per Day on 5 or More Days	56.6%	51.9%	48.6%
Played Video Games or Non-School Related Computers Use 3 or More Hrs. per Day on an Avg. School Day	25.2%	34.1%	41.7%
Watched Television 3 or More Hrs. per Day on an Avg. School Day	14.4%	18.9%	24.7%
Played on at Least One Sports Team during the Past 12 Months	69.1%	60.1%	57.6%

*National results include fruit juice, while locally and statewide it does not.

Figures 17 and 18 show the middle and high school trends on frequency of physical activity and amount of television watching on a typical school day across the past five administrations of the survey. The frequency of at least 60 minutes of physical activity in the past 7 days increased among high school students, but decreased slightly among students in grades 7 and 8. Additionally, middle school students are more likely to engage in at least 60 minutes of physical activity than are high school students, but the gap has closed since 2013. The amount of television watched continues to decrease for both middle and high school students, but the decline since 2011 has been greater for high school students. In 2015, 57% of high school students and 62% of middle school students report physical activity of at least 60 minutes or more on five or more days per week, on average. For television watching on an average school day in 2015, 14% of high school students and 19% of middle school students report watching it more than three hours per day.

Figure 17. Average Frequency of at Least 60 Minutes of Physical Activity in the Past 7 Days by Year and School (3=2 Days, 4=3 days, 5=4 Days and 6=5 Days).

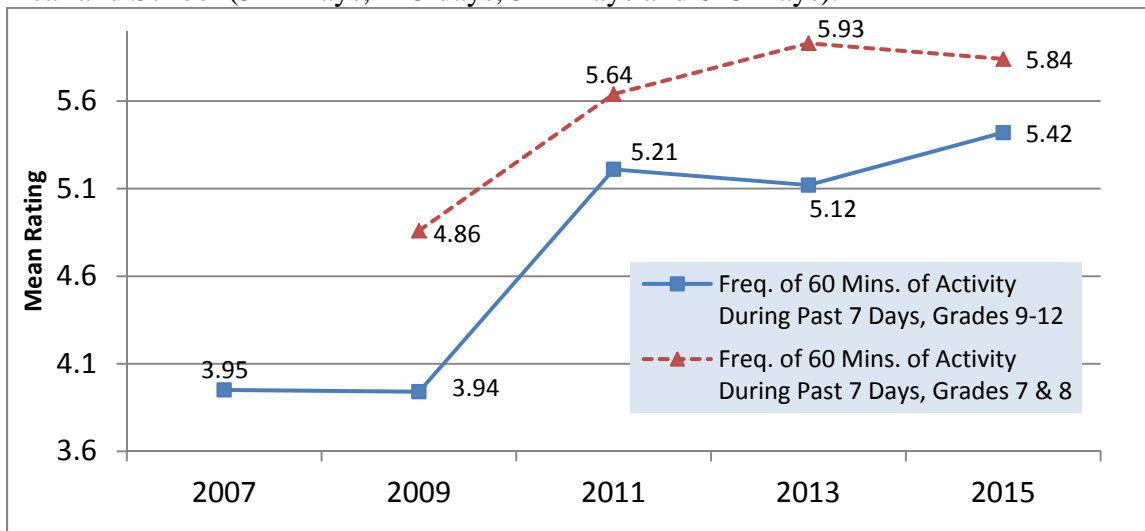


Figure 18. Average Frequency of TV Watching on a Typical School Day by Year and School Level (3=1 Hour per Day and 4=2 Hours per Day)

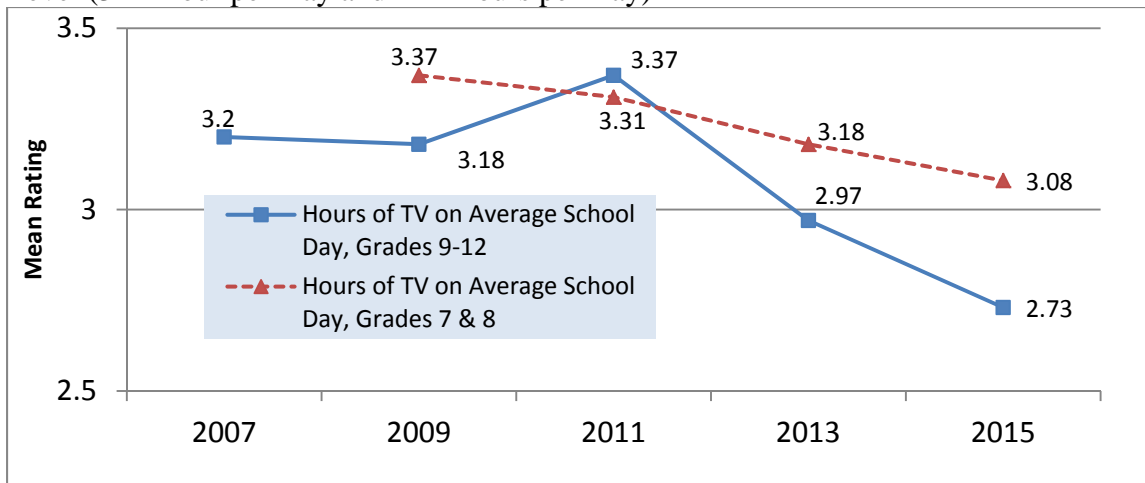


Figure 19 compares middle and high school student results on the nutrition and physical health questions included in the HKCS. Not surprisingly, these results show that middle school students lead a healthier lifestyle than high school students overall. The chart also shows that the majority of both middle and high school students play on at least one sports team per year. Also, relatively few drink soda daily, but note that the question wording does not include diet soda and the inclusion of energy drinks is ambiguous. Given recent research of the deleterious effect of both on health and wellness, the results from this single item should not be overstated. Indeed, a number of questions were added in 2015 to the high school version of the survey and results showed that sugar-sweetened beverages (lemonade, sweetened tea or coffee, Snapple, etc.), sport

drinks (Gatorade, PowerAde, etc.), and energy drinks (Red Bull, Jolt, etc.) are all commonly used by students in Eagle County. At the same time, 76% of high school students say they drink at least one or more bottles or glasses of unflavored water a day and 37% indicate they drink 4 or more bottles or glasses per day.

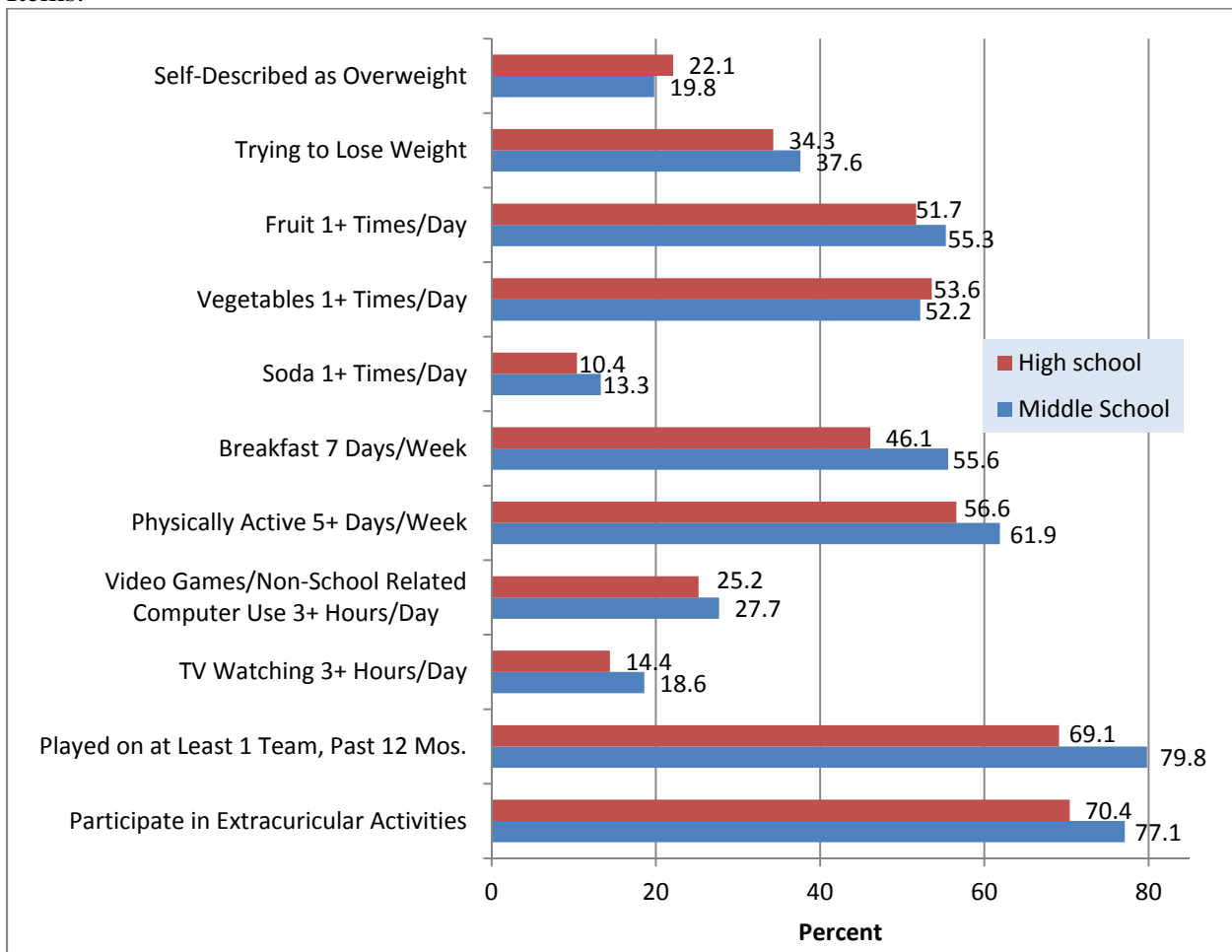
Overall, the largest differences between middle and high school students are participation on team sports, participation in extracurricular activities, eating breakfast, and the amount of physical activity.

In comparison to 2013, most indicators saw only nominal changes (less than 4%) with the following exceptions seen at the high school level only:

- 9% increase on consuming vegetables
- 8% decrease on the percentage of students trying to lose weight.
- 6% increase on physical activity
- 5% increase on eating fruit

Additionally, the percent of middle school students who indicate playing on sports teams decreased by 4%.

Figure 19. 2015 High School versus Middle School Responses on HKCS Nutrition and Health Items.



Summary

Results on the various nutrition and physical health attitudes and behaviors are quite positive overall and support the conclusion that this is an area that provides a level of protection for local youth, which may offset some of the negative impacts of existing risk factors, such as high alcohol use, depression and suicide ideation, in the community and a high percentage of families living in poverty. Local results are considerably more positive than the national results and have generally stayed relatively steady or moved in a positive direction since 2013 for high school students.

While results are relatively positive, there is still room for improvement. Large percentages of students are still skipping breakfast at least one day per week and do not eat fruits and vegetables regularly. Additionally, about 10% of all students surveyed play video games or use computers for non-school related use five or more hours per day on a typical school day and about 4% watch five or more hours of TV per day, both of which are considered very unhealthy for physical as well as mental health, especially if these types of use patterns remain steady over longer-term periods of time.

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- ❖ Town of Vail (www.vailgov.com)



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