

2007 TEEN HEALTH SURVEY

A Report on the Franklin County/North Quabbin Youth Risk Behavior Survey



**Sponsored by the Community Coalition for Teens
A program of the Franklin County Regional Council of Governments**

**in collaboration with
The Regional School Health Task Force
and
The Communities That Care Coalition**

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October 2007

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The Franklin County/North Quabbin Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Since 2003, the Community Coalition for Teens (CCT) has worked in partnership with area school districts, through the Regional School Health Task Force, to conduct an annual Teen Health Survey of 8th, 10th and 12th graders in schools in Franklin County and the North Quabbin. This document is a report of findings from the 2007 Teen Health Survey, based on 1527 responses from seven participating school districts: Athol-Royalston, Frontier, Gill-Montague, Greenfield, Ralph C. Mahar, Mohawk Trail, and Pioneer Valley.

The survey instrument, the 2007 Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), was provided by the Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE), and was identical to that administered to a sample of high school students across the state. The DOE-administered survey samples only a handful of students in Franklin County and the North Quabbin, so it does not provide detailed information about local student behavior.

The state survey can, however, be used as a point of comparison to local findings. In this report, local 2007 data are compared to statewide data for 2005, the most recent data available. Local and state findings are also compared to national YRBS data from 2005. (Publication of state data for 2007 is expected in December 2007, and publication of national data is ex-

pected in the summer of 2008. When those data become available, this report will be revised and posted on the CCT website.)

Because the state and national YRBS is administered only to high school students, comparisons are possible only for 10th and 12th grade, not for 8th grade.

This report has two parts. Part One presents survey highlights. It touches on a range of issues, and draws comparisons to data from the first Teen Health Survey, conducted in 2003, and to YRBS data for the state and the nation.

Part Two begins with a summary table displaying data on five topics the survey addresses: substance use, violence and injury-related behaviors, substance use and violence on school grounds, sexual behaviors, and weight control and physical activity. The table presents findings for 8th, 10th, and 12th graders separately, and provides comparisons to state and national data for 10th and 12th grade. The 10th and 12th grade data are also presented graphically in a series of charts that follows the table.

To assess whether differences observed between local, state, and national levels are statistically significant, a 95% confidence interval was constructed around each percentage,

and represented by “error bars” on the charts. The confidence interval has a 95% chance of containing the “true” rate, or a rate unaffected by chance events. The difference between two percentages is said to be statistically significant when their confidence intervals do not overlap. On the table, the state and national figures that are significantly different from the local figure are highlighted in bold lettering.

The text, table and charts in this report represent only a portion of survey findings. Some of the 99 items on the questionnaire are not displayed in any of the charts, and others that are shown could have been displayed differently or analyzed in different ways.

The Community Coalition for Teens therefore invites community members to contact CCT with requests for additional information. Also available are:

- The 2007 YRBS questionnaire (downloadable from the CCT website in pdf format)
- Cross tabulations for each question, by grade of respondent

- Additional analyses on request, such as responses by sex, race, or sexual orientation
- Data from Teen Health Surveys of 2003 through 2006. Reports on those surveys are posted on the publications page of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments website, <http://www.frcog.org/>

CCT does not release data about individual school districts. Requests for district-level data should be made to the district of interest.

For additional information about the Community Coalition for Teens or the Teen Health Survey, please contact:

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Part One: Survey Highlights

Most teens in Franklin County and the North Quabbin make healthy choices.

Our teens' choices are illustrated below in findings on a few key survey topics.

Note that in the text that follows:

The overall figures given for area teens are combined results for all 8th, 10th and 12th grade respondents.

When comparisons are made to the first Teen Health Survey, conducted in 2003, only five school districts are included in the analysis: Frontier, Gill-Montague, Greenfield, Mohawk Trail, and Pioneer Valley. These were the original five districts involved in the survey; Athol and Mahar joined the process later. Elsewhere, when comparisons are not being drawn to 2003, the statistics refer to collective findings from all seven school districts.

Local 2007 data is compared to state and national YRBS data for 2005, the most recent data available. In these comparisons, **bold** lettering denotes state and national figures that are significantly different from local figures.

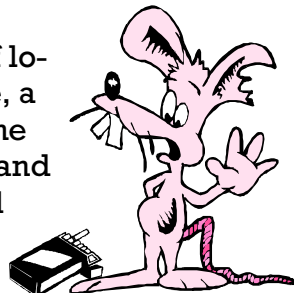
Tobacco

By far the majority of our teens (85%) do not smoke cigarettes, and teen cigarette smoking has declined in the years since 2003, when CCT conducted the first Teen Health Survey. As compared to 2003, 2007 smoking rates are:

- 48% lower for 8th graders,
- 19% lower for 10th graders, and
- 10% lower for 12th graders.

Local teen smoking rates are lower than rates for the state and the nation. Sixteen percent of local 10th graders smoke, as compared to 20% of 10th graders across the state and 21% nationwide.

Twenty-five percent of local 12th graders smoke, a proportion similar to the statewide rate of 24% and lower than the national rate of 28%.



Alcohol

Most local teens (63%) do not drink alcohol, and in 2007, fewer reported recent alcohol use (past 30 days) than in the first Teen Health Survey. As compared to 2003, 2007 use rates are:

- 28% lower for 8th graders,
- 25% lower for 10th graders, and
- 7% lower for 12th graders.

Fewer local 10th graders (39%) report recent alcohol use than do 10th graders across the state (46%) and nation (42%). Alcohol use among local 12th graders (61%) is higher than use among 12th graders in Massachusetts (54%) and nationwide (**51%**).

Similarly, local 10th graders are less likely to report binge drinking (21%) than their peers at the state (25%) and national level (25%), and local 12th graders are more likely to do so (44% locally vs. MA **32%** and US **33%**).

Marijuana

Most local teens (82%) do not use marijuana. In 2007, a significantly lower percent of teens reported using marijuana in the previous 30 days than in the first Teen Health Survey. As compared to 2003, 2007 use rates are:

- 54% lower for 8th graders,
- 35% lower for 10th graders, and
- 15% lower for 12th graders.

Marijuana use by local 10th graders (19%) is similar to peers across the state (20%) and lower than peers nationwide (28%). Local 12th grade use (33%) is higher than in the state (28%) and the nation (23%).

Fighting

As they go through high school, our teens learn to avoid physical fights.

In 8th grade, 70% of respondents said they had not been in a physical fight in the past year. The percent of respondents avoiding fights rose to 78% among 10th graders and 83% among 12th graders.

Moreover, local teens report substantially less fighting than teens across the state and the nation:

- 22% of local 10th graders said they had been in a fight in the past year, as compared to **31%** of Massachusetts 10th graders and **37%** of 10th graders in the United States.
- 18% of local 12th graders say they had been in a fight in the past year, as compared to 20% of Massachusetts 12th graders and **29%** of 12th graders in the United States.

School Safety

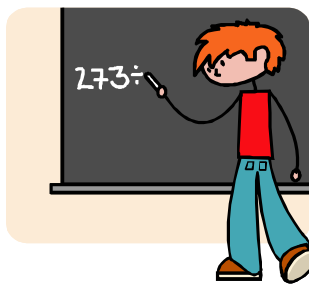
Local schools are doing a good job of providing a safe and drug-free environment for our teens.

As discussed above, a minority of our teens do smoke, drink, or use marijuana. Very few, however, choose to do so on school grounds.



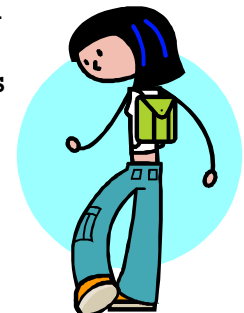
On the whole, local teens report less substance use and less violence on

school grounds than do teens across the state and nationwide. For example, comparing local 10th graders to Massachusetts 10th graders and



10th graders nationally:

- 2% of local 10th graders drank alcohol on school grounds as compared to 4% in the state and 5% in the nation.
- 2% used marijuana on school grounds, as compared to 7% in the state and 5% in the nation.
- 6% were in a physical fight at school, as compared to 9% in the state and 14% in the nation.
- 3% were threatened or injured with a weapon at school, as compared to 5% in the state and 9% in the nation.



Support from Adults

Of all 8th, 10th, and 12th graders surveyed, **86% said they have a parent or other adult at home with whom they can talk about important things.** Those who had an adult to talk with at home were:

- 43% less likely to smoke cigarettes,
- 27% less likely to drink alcohol, and
- 46% less likely to use marijuana



than their peers who said they did not have an adult at home to talk with.

More than two-thirds (69%) said they have a teacher or other adult at school they can talk to if they have a problem. Those who had an adult to talk with at school were

- 19% less likely to smoke cigarettes,
 - 16% less likely to drink alcohol, and
 - 27% less likely to use marijuana
- than their peers who said they did not have an adult at school to talk with.

Having an adult to talk with about important things is also strongly correlated with teens' psychological health. As compared to teens who said they did not have anyone to talk with, those who had someone to talk with at home were 55% less likely to report symptoms of depression, and those who had someone to talk with at school were 30% less likely to report symptoms of depression.

Extracurricular Activities

About half of local teens (51%) participate in an organized activity after school or on weekends. Forty-three percent do volunteer work or community service.

These activities are correlated with performance in school. Eighty-three percent of teens who participate in an extracurricular activity report earning mostly A's and B's in school, as compared to 66% of teens who do not, and 82% of teens who do volunteer work earn mostly A's and B's, as compared to 70% of those who do not.

Diet and Exercise

More than half of local teens (55%) said they ate breakfast on 5 or more days a week. Those who reported daily breakfasts tended to do better in school than those who had breakfast less often. Of those who ate breakfast at least 5 days a week, 81% reported earning mostly A's and B's in school, as compared to 68% of those who ate breakfast 0 to 4 times a week.

More than two-thirds of our teens (69%) report an hour or more of physical exercise on three or more days a week. Seventy-one percent have a physical education class at least one day a week. Sixty-two percent report having played on one or more sports teams in the previous year.



Part Two: Data Table and Charts

Part Two consists of one summary table and 7 pages of charts. The table presents data for 8th, 10th and 12th graders on 30 questions ranging over most of the topics included in the survey.

In the table and charts, local data from the 2007 Franklin County/North Quabbin YRBS are compared to the latest state and national data available, the 2005 Massachusetts YRBS and the 2005 national YRBS survey conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (Publication of state data for 2007 is expected in December 2007, and publication of national data is expected in the summer of 2008. When those data become available, this report will be re-

vised and posted on the CCT website.)

Comparisons are made for 10th and 12th graders only. The state and national surveys were administered to high school students, not junior high students, so there is no point of comparison to local 8th graders.

Confidence intervals are indicated by error bars on the charts. The difference between two percentages is statistically significant when their confidence intervals do not overlap. On the table, state and national statistics that are significantly different from local statistics are highlighted in bold lettering.

Community Coalition for Teens ❖ 2007 Teen Health Survey

Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data: US 2005, Massachusetts 2005, and Franklin County/North Quabbin 2007	Percent						
	8th gr	10th grade			12th grade		
	2007 FC/NQ	2005 U.S.	2005 MA	2007 FC/NQ	2005 U.S.	2005 MA	2007 FC/NQ

Substance Use Behaviors

Current smoking	6.9	21.4	20.0	15.9	27.6	23.5	24.6
Current smokeless tobacco	1.4	7.5	4.7	5.2	8.4	4.8	6.7
Current cigar use	4.0	12.6	14.2	11.1	17.5	15.4	23.0
Current alcohol use	18.2	42.0	46.1	39.4	50.8	54.0	60.5
Current binge drinking	6.2	24.6	25.4	20.8	32.8	32.3	43.8
Current marijuana use	6.3	20.2	28.3	19.4	22.8	28.0	32.5

Violence & Injury-Related Behaviors

Carried a weapon	12.0	19.4	14.6	15.5	16.9	12.1	15.8
Was in a physical fight	30.3	36.6	30.6	22.2	29.1	20.0	17.5
Rarely or never wore a seatbelt	12.1	8.6	14.0	9.7	10.8	13.7	13.5
Rode with a driver who had been drinking alcohol	16.0	27.8	25.6	20.9	30.1	28.7	29.2
Drove after drinking alcohol	2.1	6.6	7.1	6.8	17.1	16.7	20.0
Considered suicide, past year	11.0	17.3	12.1	14.5	14.8	12.8	11.7

Substance Use and Violence on School Property

Smoked cigarettes on school property	1.0	6.2	9.0	4.5	8.2	10.4	6.5
Drank alcohol on school property	1.7	4.5	4.1	1.8	4.8	3.8	4.7
Used marijuana on school property	0.9	4.6	7.2	2.3	4.1	5.1	5.6
Was offered, sold, or given drugs on school property	17.4	27.5	34.2	25.1	24.9	23.3	29.8
Carried a weapon at school	1.3	6.9	4.8	5.4	6.7	5.7	5.6
Was in a physical fight at school	12.5	14.4	8.9	5.9	8.5	8.6	2.3
Threatened or injured with a weapon at school	5.2	8.8	5.4	2.9	5.8	4.1	3.4
Skipped school because felt unsafe	3.9	6.3	4.2	4.3	4.9	3.3	2.2

Sexual Behaviors

Had sexual intercourse in lifetime	13.6	42.8	40.1	38.3	63.1	61.3	65.9
Had four or more sexual partners in lifetime	2.2	11.5	9.4	6.4	21.4	19.1	16.5
Had sexual intercourse in the 3 mos. before the survey	6.4	29.2	29.6	25.5	49.4	48.5	49.4
Used a condom at last intercourse (a)	62.2	65.3	72.7	64.7	55.4	53.4	54.2
Use alcohol or drugs at last intercourse (a)	23.1	21.1	23.3	22.4	23.1	21.4	22.0

Note: (a) Among students who had sexual intercourse in the three months before the survey

Weight Control and Physical Activity

Thought they were overweight	27.5	30.2	30.5	25.7	33.7	32.4	31.8
Were trying to lose weight	47.7	44.4	46.1	48.8	46.4	44.5	50.5
Attended a physical education class at least once/wk	77.8	59.2	64.8	72.8	38.8	42.2	60.0
Watched three or more hours of television per day	26.7	40.1	34.1	27.1	31.4	28.6	19.9

BOLD shows statistically significant difference with local statistic

