

# 2025 Minnesota Student Survey Findings and Trends

## Minnesota Prevention Alliance

### Overview

Minnesota Prevention Alliance is using Minnesota Student Survey (MSS) data to guide Drug Free Communities Program efforts. Wilder Research has prepared the following summary report, which includes 2025 findings and trend data for the state of Minnesota. Overall survey sample sizes are reported below (Figure 1). The number of students taking the survey declined steadily from 2016 to 2025. Not every respondent answered every question; percentages in this report are based on the sample size for each individual question.

#### 1. Survey sample size for the state of Minnesota

	2016	2019	2022	2025
8 <sup>th</sup> grade	44,983	44,919	37,896	32,070
9 <sup>th</sup> grade	45,309	45,232	35,553	31,023
11 <sup>th</sup> grade	36,576	35,224	27,387	24,795
Total	126,868	125,375	100,836	87,888

### Key findings

#### Substance use

- Rates of past month use of alcohol, vapes, and marijuana among Minnesota students were five percent or less, and rates decreased slightly from 2019 to 2025.
- Students who report marijuana use most commonly said they smoked it or vaped it, compared to dabbing or consuming a marijuana or THC-infused food or beverage.
- While Minnesota students were less likely to perceive great or moderate risk of harm from using marijuana compared to other substances, perceived marijuana risk did increase from 2019 to 2025.
- Minnesota students greatly overestimated the percentage of their peers who use substances monthly or more often. For example, three percent of students say they use marijuana monthly or more frequently, while 31% say they think most students at their school use monthly or more frequently.
- Among Ramsey County students reporting past month alcohol use, vaping, or marijuana use, the most commonly selected source was getting it from friends. Among students reporting alcohol use, the second most reported source was getting it from parents or other family members.

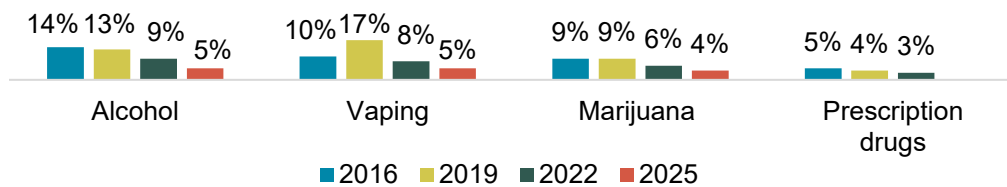
## Factors associated with substance use

- The proportion of students who perceive that adults at school and other adults in their community care about them very much” or “quite a bit” increased from 2019 to 2025 and feeling that adults in the community care was associated with lower rates of past month substance use.
- Two out of five Minnesota students said they might have a problem with spending too much time on social media. Over half of students, across all grades, said they spend at least one school night per week using screens (e.g., playing video games, texting, watching videos) between midnight and 5:00 AM. Students engaging in late-night screen time three or more school nights per week had higher rates of depressive and anxiety symptoms.
- In 2025, one out of five Minnesota students reported past two-week depressive symptoms, and one out of four reported past two-week anxiety symptoms. A larger percentage of students with depressive or anxiety symptoms reported substance use compared to those without mental health concerns.

## Substance use

Rates of past month substance use have declined slightly over time for all substances (Figure 2). Any tobacco includes cigarettes, cigars/ cigarillos, chewing tobacco, e-cigarettes, or hookah. The 2025 MSS did not include a question regarding past month prescription drug misuse.

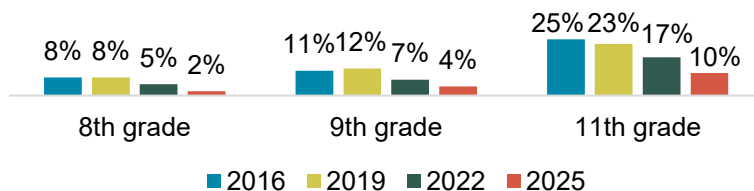
### 2. Percentage of Minnesota’s 8th, 9th and 11th graders reporting past 30-day use of alcohol, vaping, marijuana, and prescription drugs: 2016-2025 trends



## Alcohol

While rates of past month alcohol use increased by grade level, rates for all three grades have declined over time (Figure 3).

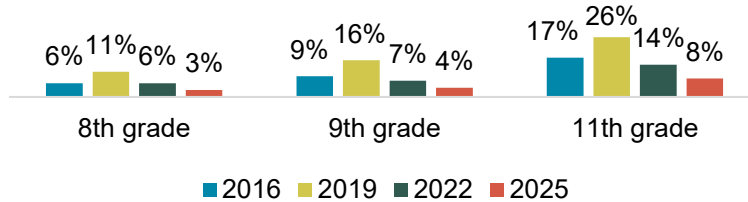
### 3. Minnesota students reporting past 30-day alcohol use: 2016-2025 trends



## Tobacco

After an initial increase in vaping rates from 2016 to 2019, statewide rates decreased steadily from 2019 to 2025 (Figure 4). One percent of Minnesota 8th, 9th, and 11th graders reported smoking cigarettes or using chewing tobacco, and less than one percent said they smoked cigars/cigarillos or hookah.

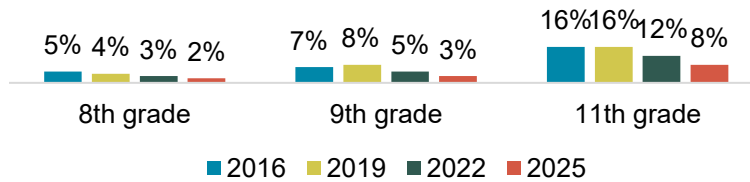
### 4. Minnesota students reporting past 30-day vaping: 2016-2025 trends



## Marijuana

Marijuana use rates decreased slightly but steadily from 2019 to 2025 (Figure 5). Among students reporting past month marijuana use, most said they smoked it (69%) or vaped it (66%). A smaller percentage of students said they ate it (38%), dabbled it (16%), or drank an infused beverage (11%). Among students who said they had ever used marijuana, most (67%) first used between the ages of 13 and 16.

### 5. Minnesota students reporting past 30-day marijuana use: 2016-2025 trends



## Prescription drug misuse

Students were asked about specific types of prescription drugs they had misused in the past 12 months. Most students reported no misuse of pain relievers, ADD/ADHD drugs, tranquilizers, or stimulants (Figure 6). Rates of misuse declined in 2025 across all prescription drug types.

### 6. Minnesota students reporting past 12-month prescription drug misuse, by type: 2025

	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	11 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Total
Pain reliever misuse <sup>a</sup>	1%	1%	1%	1%
ADD/ADHD drug misuse <sup>b</sup>	1%	1%	1%	1%
Tranquilizers <sup>c</sup>	1%	1%	1%	1%
Stimulants <sup>d</sup>	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%

<sup>a</sup> Example of pain relievers provided in the survey question include OxyContin, Percocet, Vicodin.

<sup>b</sup> Examples of ADD/ADHD drugs included Ritalin, Adderall, and hyper pills.

<sup>c</sup> Examples of tranquilizers provided in the survey question include Valium, Xanax, Klonopin.

<sup>d</sup> Examples of stimulants included Amphetamines or diet pills.

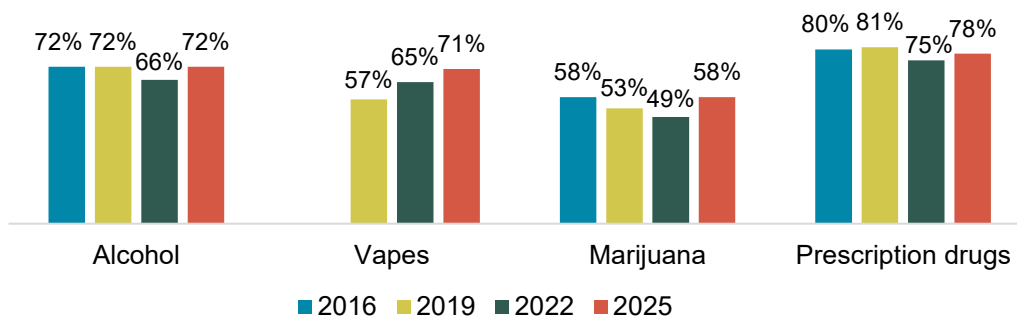
## Local conditions

Protective factors are characteristics at the biological, psychological, family, community, or cultural level that precede and are associated with a lower likelihood of negative outcomes such as substance use and mental health issues. Risk factors are characteristics associated with a higher likelihood of negative outcomes. As part of the Drug Free Communities Program, risk and protective factors are referred to as local conditions.

## Perceived risk of harm from substance use

Students were asked how much they think people risk harming themselves, physically or in other ways, if they smoke one or more packs of cigarettes per day, have five or more drinks of an alcoholic beverage once or twice per week, use marijuana once or twice per week, use prescription drugs not prescribed for them, or vape or use e-cigarettes. While Minnesota 8th, 9th, and 11th graders were least likely to perceive risk of harm from marijuana use, the rate did increase from 2022 to 2025 (Figure 7).

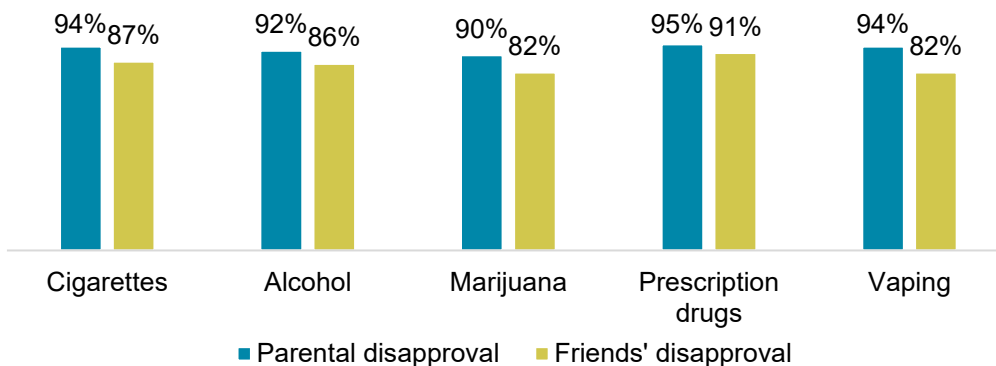
### 7. Perceived risk of great or moderate harm from substance use among 8th, 9th, and 11th graders, by substance type: 2016-2025 trends



## Perceived disapproval of substance use

Students were asked whether their parents or friends would disapprove of their substance use. Overall, Minnesota students perceived slightly higher levels of parental disapproval than of friends' disapproval. The proportion of students perceiving disapproval was high across all substances (Figure 8). Perceived friend disapproval increased from 2022 to 2025 for vaping (73% to 82%) and marijuana use (73% to 82%).

### 8. Minnesota students' perceptions of parent and friend disapproval of substance use, by substance type: 2025



## Perceived peer substance use

Students were asked how frequently they drink alcohol, use marijuana or THC, and vape/use e-cigarettes with either nicotine or marijuana/THC. They were also asked how frequently, in their opinion, most students at their school used each of those substances. Across all grade levels and substances, Minnesota students overestimated peer use by at least ten percentage points (Figure 9).

### 9. Minnesota students; perceived vs. actual use, by substance type: 2025

	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	11 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Total
I use tobacco (cigarettes, chew) monthly or more	1%	1%	2%	1%
I think MOST use tobacco monthly or more	13%	25%	30%	22%
I use alcohol monthly or more	2%	3%	9%	4%
I think MOST use alcohol monthly or more	17%	38%	53%	35%
I use marijuana monthly or more	2%	3%	6%	3%
I think MOST use marijuana monthly or more	15%	34%	47%	31%
I vape nicotine monthly or more	2%	3%	7%	4%
I think MOST vape nicotine monthly or more	33%	52%	62%	48%
I vape marijuana or THC monthly or more	2%	3%	6%	3%
I think MOST vape marijuana or THC monthly or more	24%	43%	53%	39%

## Access to substances

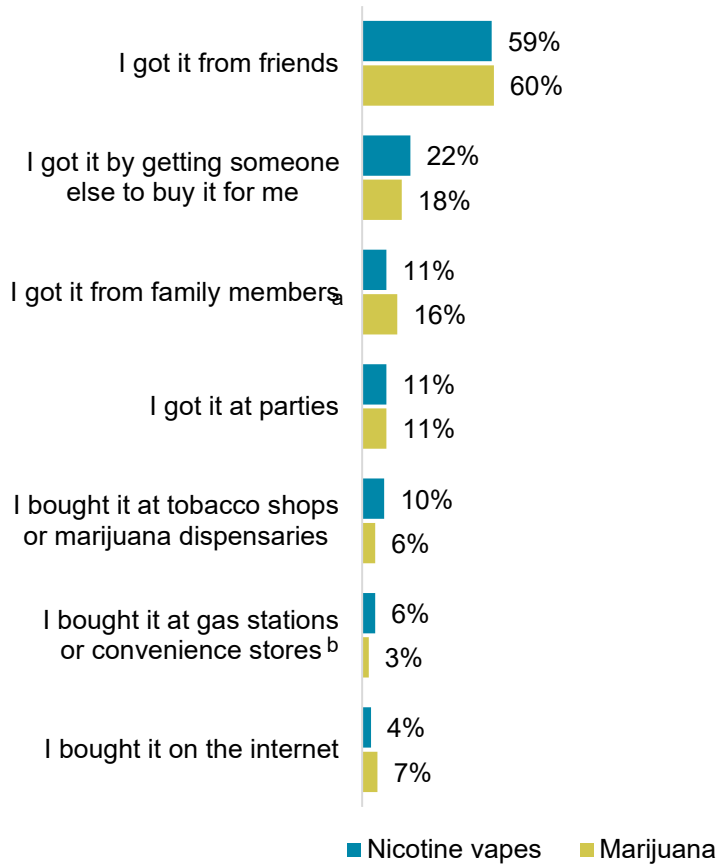
Students reporting any past 30-day alcohol use were asked to report how they got alcohol. They were asked to select all applicable sources. The most common sources reported were getting it from friends (38%) and family members (31%; Figure 10). Some response options were combined on the 2025 MSS. Overall, rates have changed little over time.

### 10. Sources of alcohol among 8th, 9th, and 11th graders reporting any past 30-day use, by year

	2019	2022	2025
<b>Got alcohol</b>			
From friends	38%	34%	38%
From parents	22%	27%	N/A
From other family members	13%	16%	N/A
From my parents or other family members	N/A	N/A	31%
At parties	22%	19%	23%
By getting someone to buy for me	13%	11%	15%
Some other way	15%	19%	20%
<b>Bought alcohol</b>			
At bars or restaurants	2%	2%	N/A
At stores	2%	2%	N/A
At gas stations or convenience stores	2%	2%	N/A
At bars or restaurants or stores other than liquor stores (e.g. gas stations, convenience stores)	N/A	N/A	3%
On the internet	1%	1%	2%
<b>Took alcohol</b>			
From my home	27%	26%	N/A
From a friend's home	7%	7%	N/A
From my home or a friend's home	N/A	N/A	18%

Similarly, students reporting any past 30-day vaping or e-cigarette use and marijuana use were asked to report how they obtained it. They were asked to select all applicable sources. Among Minnesota 8th, 9th, and 11th graders reporting any past 30-day nicotine vaping or past 30-day marijuana use, the most common source was getting it from friends (Figure 11). A smaller proportion of students reported getting vapes or marijuana from family members compared to those saying they got alcohol from their family.

**11. Sources of nicotine vapes and marijuana among students reporting any past 30-day use: 2025**



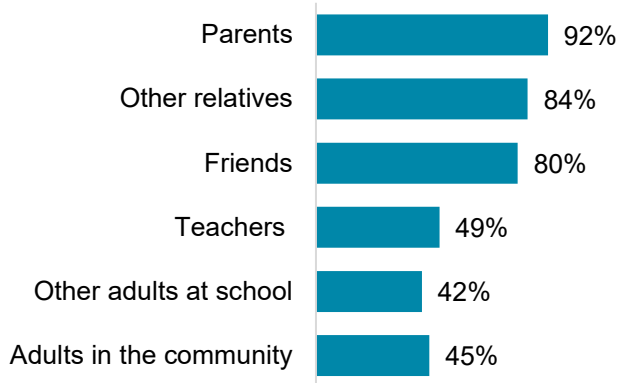
<sup>a</sup> Students reporting nicotine vaping were asked if they bought vapes at vape shops or other stores that only sell tobacco/nicotine. Students reporting marijuana use were asked if they bought it at a dispensary.

<sup>b</sup> Students reporting nicotine vaping were asked if they bought vapes at gas stations or convenience stores. Students reporting marijuana use were asked if they bought it at bars, restaurants, or other stores (e.g., gas stations).

## Caring

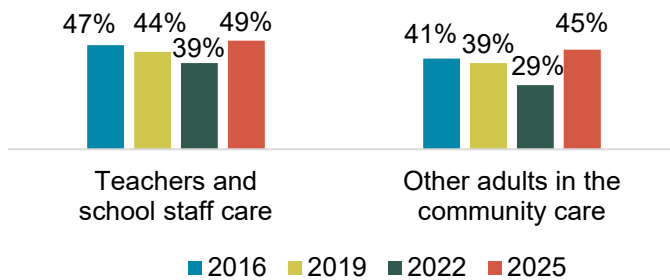
Students were asked about the extent to which they felt others cared about them. A majority believe that parents, relatives, and friends care about them very much or quite a bit (80-92%). However, smaller proportions believe that teachers, other adults at school, and other adults in the community care about them very much or quite a bit (42-49%; Figure 12).

### 12. Minnesota students' perceptions that others care about them very much or quite a bit: 2025



After declining steadily from 2016 to 2022, the proportion of students who perceive that teachers, school staff, and other adults in their community care about them very much or quite a bit increased in 2025 (Figure 13). Minnesota students who feel adults in the community care about them very much or quite a bit were two times less likely to report past month alcohol use, three and a half times less likely to report vaping, and three times less likely to report marijuana use, compared to students who feel adults in the community care some, a little, or not at all. Associations between feeling teachers and school staff care and past month substance use were similar to the associations with feeling other adults in the community care.

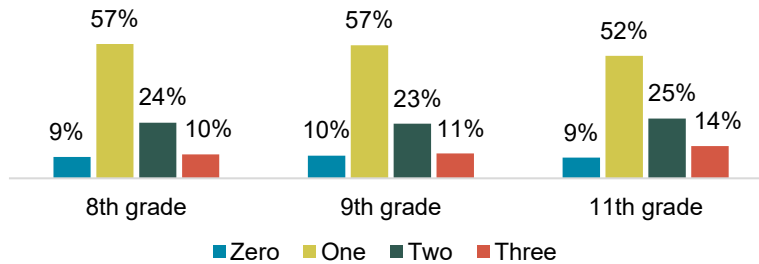
### 13. Minnesota students' perceptions that teachers and other school staff, and adults in the community care about them very much or quite a bit: 2016-2025 trends



## Supportive adults

Students were asked which adults they can talk to about problems they are having. Response options included parent or guardian, adult at school, some other adult, and “I don’t have any adults that I can talk to about problems I am having.” Students could mark all applicable responses. Most students across all grades were able to talk with at least one adult from one of the three categories (Figure 14). Parent or guardian was more frequently selected compared to other types of adults in their life. Students who have at least one adult they can talk to about problems were two and a half times less likely to report drinking alcohol, almost three times less likely to report vaping, and three times less likely to report marijuana use, compared to students who don’t have an adult in their life they can talk to.

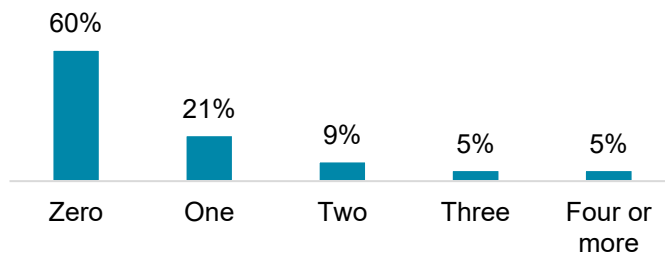
### 14. Number of types of adults that Minnesota students can talk to about problems, by grade: 2025



## Adverse childhood experiences

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood (before age 18), such as experiencing violence or abuse or growing up in a household with substance misuse or mental health problems. Forty percent of Minnesota students reported experiencing at least one ACE (Figure 15). One percent of students with an ACE score of zero reported past month vaping or marijuana use, and two percent reported alcohol use. Rates of past month use increased steadily by ACE score, with students who have an ACE score of four or more reporting the highest rates of alcohol use (21%), vaping (25%), and marijuana use (21%).

### 15. Students reporting ACEs, by number of ACEs: 2025



<sup>a</sup> ACEs comprise the MSS items of having ever had a parent or guardian in jail or prison, living with someone who drinks too much alcohol, living with someone who uses illegal drugs or misuses prescription drugs, experiencing verbal abuse from an adult in the home, experiencing physical abuse from an adult in the home, living with someone with mental health issues, witnessing domestic violence among adults in the home, or experiencing sexual abuse (by a family member, or someone outside the family).

## Bullying

Students were asked how frequently they experienced bullying behavior during the past 30 days. A larger proportion of 8th graders reported being bullied compared to older students, with over half saying they experienced any bullying in the past 30 days, and one out of four experiencing frequent bullying. Bullying increased slightly from 2016 to 2025 (Figure 16). Students who were bullied weekly or more in the past month were two and a half times more likely to report drinking alcohol, over three times more likely to report vaping, and almost three times more likely to report using marijuana compared to students who did not experience bullying.

### 16. Minnesota students experiencing bullying behavior, by frequency: 2016-2025 trends

	Bullied once or more in the past 30 days				Bullied weekly or more in the past 30 days			
	2016	2019	2022	2025	2016	2019	2022	2025
8th grade	49%	54%	56%	56%	18%	21%	23%	23%
9th grade	44%	48%	50%	49%	16%	18%	19%	19%
11th grade	38%	40%	43%	42%	13%	14%	17%	16%

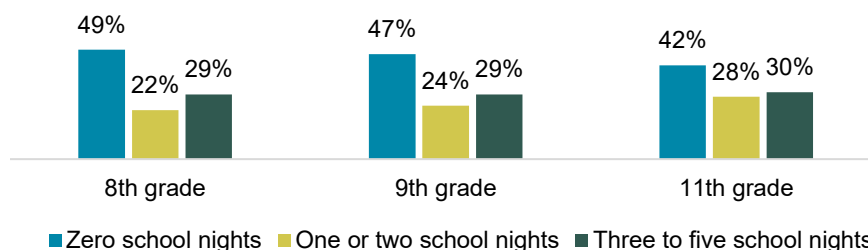
Note: The MSS includes questions about five types of bullying behaviors students have experienced at school, including: having been pushed, shoved, slapped, hit, or kicked when not kidding around; having been threatened with violence; having mean rumors or lies about them spread; experiencing sexual jokes, comments, or gestures made towards them; or having been excluded from friends, other students, or activities. Students experiencing bullying behavior reported one or more of these types of behaviors. The percentage of students who experience bullying weekly or more often is a subset of the percentage who experience bullying in the past month.

## Social media and screen time

The 2025 MSS included new questions about social media and screen time. Sixty-six percent of 8th graders, 73% of 9th graders, and 79% of 11th graders say they use social media several times per day or more often. Two out of five Minnesota students said they might have a problem with spending too much time on social media.

Over half of Minnesota students, across all grades, said they spend at least one school night per week using screens between midnight and 5:00 AM (Figure 17). Screen time included playing video games, watching videos, texting, and using social media. Students who use screens late at night three to five school nights per week report higher rates of depression (30% vs. 13%) and anxiety (33% vs. 18%) compared to those who do not use screens on school nights.

### 17. Late night screen time, by grade: 2025



## Mental health

One out of five Minnesota students reported past two-week depressive symptoms, and one out of four reported past two-week anxiety symptoms (Figure 18). Rates of both increased slightly from 2019 to 2022, then decreased in 2025 (Figure 19). Students with depressive symptoms were about 3.5 times more likely to report vaping, 2.5 times more likely to report alcohol use, and 3 times more likely to report marijuana use than students without depressive symptoms. Similarly, students with anxiety symptoms were three times more likely to report vaping, and over two times more likely to report drinking alcohol or using marijuana.

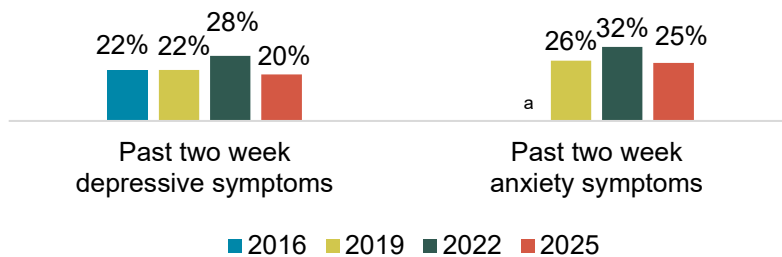
### 18. Depressive and anxiety symptoms, by grade: 2025

	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	11 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Total
Past two-week depressive symptoms <sup>a</sup>	19%	20%	21%	20%
Past two-week anxiety symptoms <sup>b</sup>	23%	25%	26%	25%

<sup>a</sup> Past 2-week depressive symptoms are measured using the Patient Health Questionnaire-2 (PHQ-2). Students were asked “Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems?” 1. Little interest or pleasure in doing things; 2. Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless. A PHQ-2 score ranges from 0-6. A cut point of 3 or greater is used to screen for depression. The PHQ-2 was added to the Minnesota Student Survey in 2016.

<sup>b</sup> Past 2-week anxiety symptoms are measured using the Generalized Anxiety Disorder-2 (GAD-2). Students were asked “Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems?” 1. Feeling nervous, anxious or on edge; 2. Not being able to stop or control worrying. A GAD-2 score ranges from 0-6. A cut point of 3 or greater is used to screen for anxiety disorder. The GAD-2 was added to the Minnesota Student Survey in 2019.

### 19. Depressive and anxiety symptoms, by grade: 2016-2025 trends

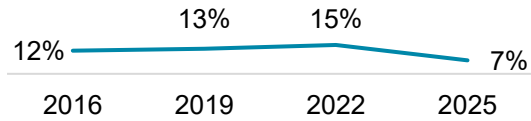


Note. See table note in Figure 18 for information regarding how depressive symptoms and anxiety symptoms were defined and measured.

<sup>a</sup>The GAD-2 was added to the Minnesota Student Survey in 2019. Accordingly, no 2016 data are available.

Rates of past-year suicidal ideation among Minnesota 8th, 9th, and 11th graders decreased slightly in 2025 (Figure 20).

## 20. Past 12-month suicidal ideation: 2016-2025 trends



### For more information

This summary presents highlights from the 2025 Minnesota Student Survey. For more information, contact Melissa Adolfson at Wilder Research, [Melissa.Adolfson@wilder.org](mailto:Melissa.Adolfson@wilder.org).

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APRIL 2026