



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY Emerson Youth Risk Behavior Survey

The Emerson Hospital Youth Risk Behavior Survey has been conducted bi-annually since 1998. It was initiated to provide educators with reliable data that can assist in the ongoing development of health education curriculum and programs within Emerson's community. This year, 11,044 students in grades 6, 8, and 9, 10, 11 & 12 from nine public school districts participated in the survey, constituting a 96% participation rate. Students from Acton-Boxborough, Ayer-Shirley Regional School District, Concord and Concord-Carlisle, Groton-Dunstable, Harvard (The Bromfield School), Littleton, Maynard, Nashoba Regional, and Westford Public Schools took the anonymous online survey in school in March 2018 as it was administered by professional staff from each district.

While alcohol and tobacco use are generally trending downward among students, the survey shows that vaping use is increasing among those in 6th and 8th grade and high-schoolers. According to the results of the 2018 Emerson Hospital Youth Risk Behavior Survey, vaping amongst youth in area public schools has doubled since 2016. In the 2016 survey, 10% of students reported they had vaped. In 2018, that number doubled to 20% of students. The most common vaping substances that youth in grades 6 through 12 report are flavored nicotine and marijuana – both highly addictive substances.

The 2018 Youth Risk Behavior Survey also reveals that 37% of 6th graders, 64% of 8th graders and 85% of high-schoolers sleep an average of seven or fewer hours per night during the school week. These percentages are up significantly from 2014 when just 17% of 6th graders, 42% of 8th graders and 71% of high-schoolers reported sleeping an average of 7 or fewer hours on school nights. Even more surprising, 5% of students receive four or less hours of sleep per night. Students least likely to get the recommended hours of sleep include those whose grades are below average or not passing, bully others and identify their gender as transgender or "other."

When it comes to social media use, based on the 2018 survey data, more than one quarter of high school students (27%) have been in a risky or unwanted situation because of information shared electronically. This may be correlated with a lack of a parents or guardian monitoring their social media use. 53% of all students report that their parents or guardians do not monitor their social media use at all, including 77% of 12th graders.

Here are some specifics for Nashoba:

- **Vehicular Safety** – The most common experience of impaired driving is riding in vehicles while drivers are using cell phone (40%), followed by older teens driving and using cell phones
- **Emotional Wellbeing** – The greatest source of stress reported by youth in 2018 is school; this is true for all grades, although the proportion experiencing high stress because of academic workload increases with age.
- **Risk Behaviors and the Internet** – About one-fifth (17%) surveyed have social media accounts their parents or guardians are unaware
- **Bullying** – About 7% said they had been bullied during the year, and 2% said they had bullied others
- **Violence** – Most Nashoba youth surveyed have not missed any school in the past month because they felt they would be unsafe at school or on their way to or from school.
- **Sexual Behavior** – About 3% of Nashoba 8th graders, and 25% of Nashoba high school youth said they had ever had sexual intercourse. These rates have been gradually declining since 2012
- **Tobacco, Alcohol and Drug Use** – One-fifth (20%) admit having vaped in the past 30 days. Use increases rapidly starting in 8th grade (7%) with the highest reported rate in 12th grade (34%)

To access the complete 2018 Emerson Hospital Youth Risk Behavior Survey results, please visit our website at <https://www.nrsd.net> , Emerson Survey Results are located under Health and Wellness Services.