

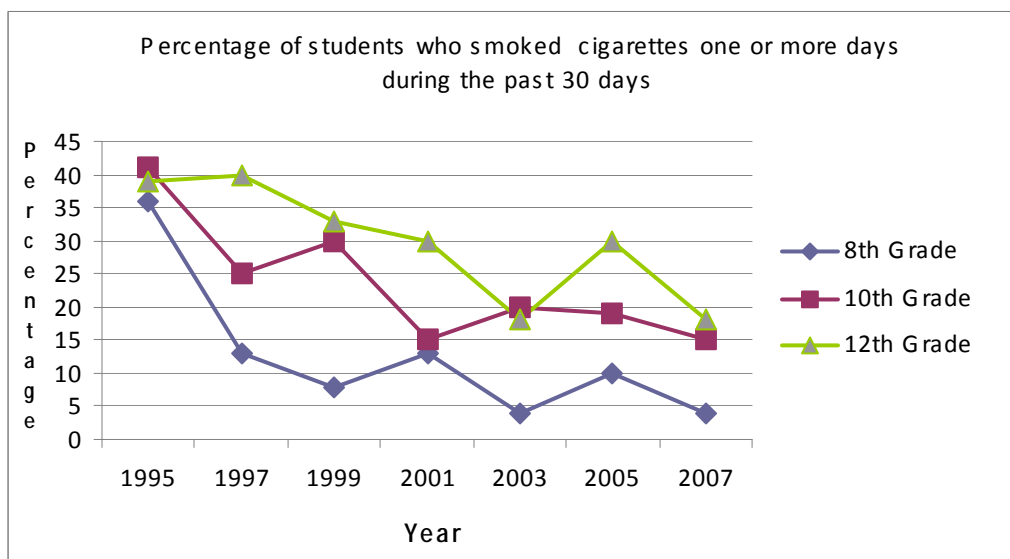
Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2007

In the spring of 2007, U-32 eighth-twelfth grade students participated in the Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). This survey, which has been given every two years since 1985 by the Vermont Departments of Health and Education, is the standard for measuring student attitudes and behavior regarding tobacco, alcohol and other drug use, safety issues like wearing seat belts or riding in a car with a driver who is impaired because of alcohol or marijuana use, sexual behavior, and other risk and resiliency measures.

The YRBS is part of a larger effort to help communities increase the “resiliency” of young people by reducing high-risk behaviors and promoting healthy behaviors.

Cigarettes

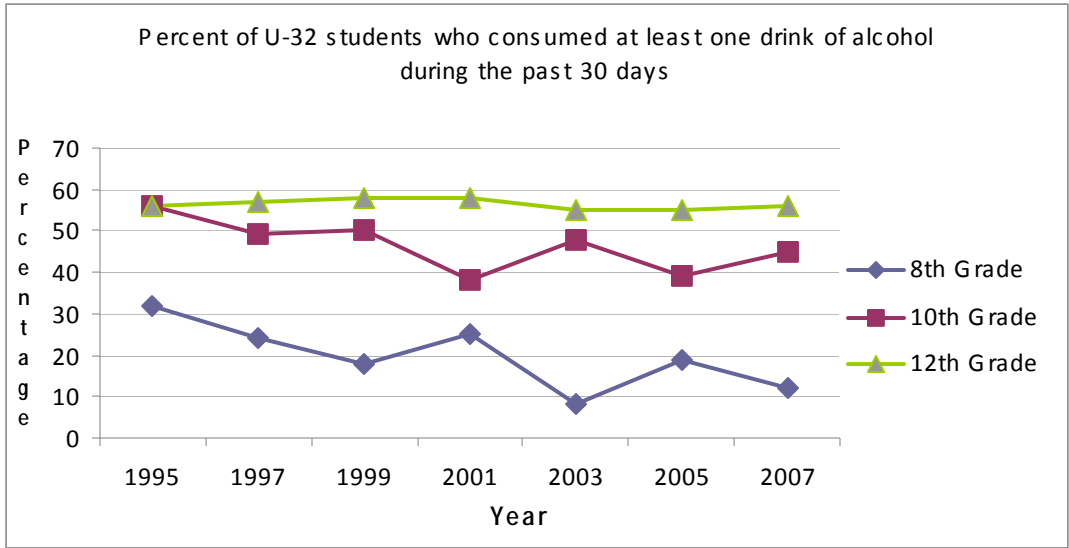
U-32 youth are smoking less. Since 1995, the number of students reporting they smoked cigarettes one or more days during the past 30 days dropped across all grade levels from a high of 41% among 10th graders in 1995 to 4% among 8th graders in 2007.



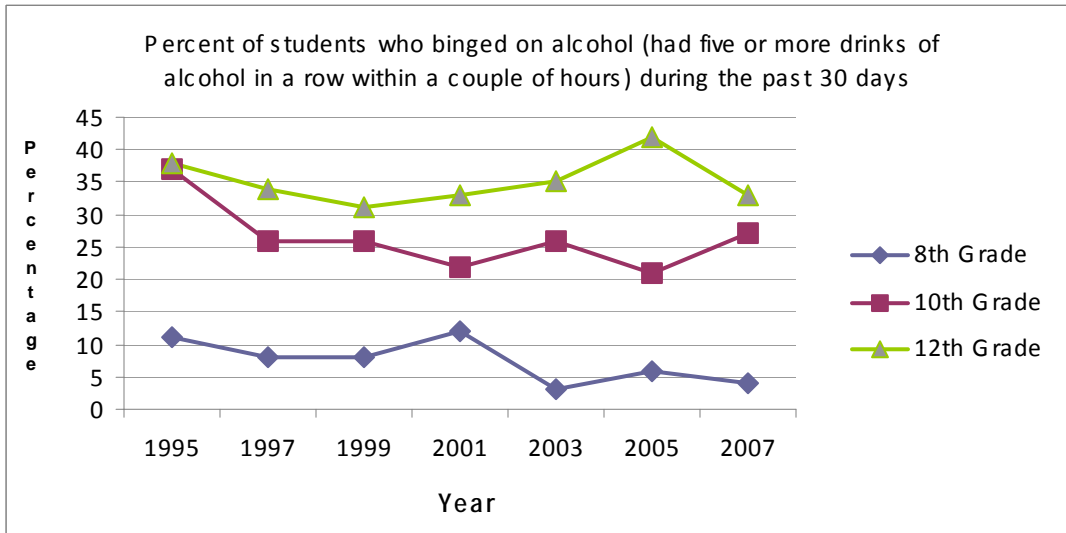
Alcohol

While the trend in alcohol use among younger students has decreased over the last twelve years, older student use has stayed the same, with over half of 11-12th grade students reporting using alcohol within the last 30 days. At 43%, males (average of 8-12th graders) report more use than females (39%).

The percentage of 8th graders reporting using alcohol within the last 30 days has decreased from 32% in 1995 to 12% in 2007.

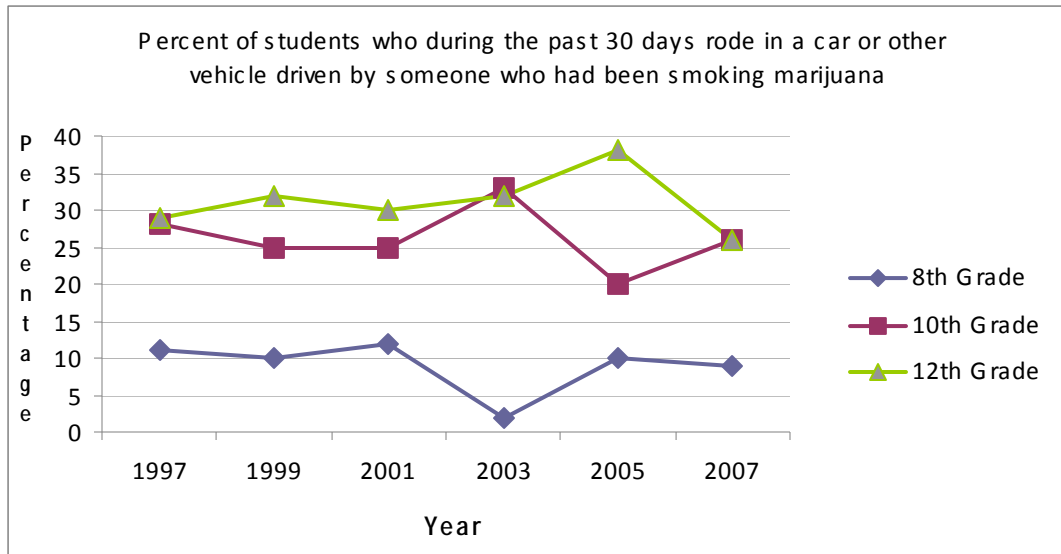


Forty percent of 11th graders (up from 29% in 2005) and 33% of 12th graders reported binge drinking (5 or more drinks of alcohol in a row within a couple of hours) during the past 30 days. Among students who drank alcohol during the past 30 days, 28% of females and 20% of males report getting their alcohol from home. Alcohol remains easily accessible and a relatively acceptable form of substance abuse among youth.



Marijuana

One quarter of U-32 students reported having used marijuana during the past 30 days, up from 19% in 2005. This is slightly higher than the statewide average.



Thirty percent of 11th graders and 26% of 10th and 12th graders reported they have recently ridden in a car or other vehicle driven by someone who had been smoking marijuana.

Perception of harm

Most students (70%) reported that they think there is great risk in people harming themselves from smoking one or more packs of cigarettes a day. Less than half (41%) of students felt that using marijuana regularly has great risk. And only 24% of students felt that there was great risk in people harming themselves by drinking one or two alcoholic drinks nearly every day.

Participation in youth programs and service to community

Healthy development depends not only on avoiding harmful behavior, but also on strengthening positive influence. Research shows that involvement in constructive, supervised extra-curricular activities is associated with reduced likelihood of involvement in risky behaviors such as school failure, drug use, and crime. In addition, evidence is emerging that students who participate in such activities are also more likely to engage in other “thriving” behaviors. Twenty-two percent of students spent one or more hours per week in clubs or organizations outside of school (not including sports).

Youth valued by their community

It stands to reason that young people respond positively when they perceive they are valued by others in their community. Forty-six percent of 8th-12th graders reported feeling valued in their community. Additionally, about 35% of high school students spend one or more hours per week volunteering their time to make their community a better place to live and 48% of students agreed that students help decide what goes on in their school.

For more information, call Central Vermont New Directions Coalition at 223-4949.