REPORT ON

THE 2010 YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY

FOR STUDENTS IN GRADES 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, AND 12

FOR THE

ACTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

AND THE

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOLS

PREPARED BY:

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BACKGROUND AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In 1997, Ms. Leslie Luppold, the Senior Vice-President of Operations for Emerson Hospital, reached out to several school districts from the hospital’s service area to attempt to determine areas of common interest and concern. A number of discussions ensued and through this process, Emerson Hospital and the Health Education Coordinators from the four school districts which responded, decided to collaborate on the development and implementation of the first joint Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) Project in 1998.

Using an instrument based on the YRBS from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, students from grades 6, 8, and 11 were surveyed and the responses to those surveys were tabulated and analyzed. Much information of value to Emerson Hospital, the four school districts (the Acton and Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools, the Concord and Concord-Carlisle Regional Schools, the Littleton Public Schools, and the Westford Public Schools), as well as their respective communities, important to program planning and curriculum development, was gathered and shared broadly.

This effort was undertaken for a second time (including seven school districts) in the year 2000. Because of the success of the first two projects, it was decided to undertake this effort in 2002 and every other year thereafter in the hopes of developing up-to-date, reliable data on youth risk behavior. Also, beginning with the survey of 2000, the scope was expanded to include all students from grades 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12.

In May of 2009, with the support and encouragement of administration from Emerson Hospital and each school district, a committee comprised of representatives from Emerson Hospital and Health Education Coordinators from seven area school districts, met and worked for several months to update and refine the YRBS and the process for its implementation and analysis.

The members of this committee included: Ms. Bonnie Kaplan-Goldsmith and Ms. Naomi Funkhouser from Emerson Hospital; Dr. Carolyn Imperato from the Acton and Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools; Mr. Curtis Bates from the Boxborough Public Schools; Ms. Kathy Bowen from the Concord and Concord-Carlisle Regional Schools; Ms. Alice Lenhart from the Groton-Dunstable Regional Schools; Ms. Cindy Roper from the Littleton Public Schools; Ms. Lisa MacLean from the Maynard Public Schools; Ms. Donna Pobuk from the Westford Public Schools; and Mr. James Byrne from Northeast Health Resources. It is because of their continuing commitment and collaboration that this project and report are a reality.
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INTRODUCTION

Through the support and assistance of Emerson Hospital, the Youth Risk Behavior Survey was implemented with students in grades 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 in seven school districts including the Acton Public and Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools, during March of 2010. These surveys were primarily based on those developed specifically for middle school and high school students at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia. Students responded to questions which fall under general categories of risk behaviors including: safety, violence, suicide, tobacco use, alcohol use, drug use, gambling, HIV/AIDS education, sexual behavior, dietary behavior, and physical activity. Emerson Hospital and the seven school districts contracted with Northeast Health Resources (NHR) to assist in the design of the instrument and to carry out the tabulation and an analysis of the data gathered from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey.

Every other year, the Massachusetts Department of Education carries out a Youth Risk Behavior Survey for high school students from a cross-section of school systems in the state. The most recent of these surveys for which data is currently available was carried out during the Spring of 2007 and was administered to students from 59 randomly selected public school systems. A comparison with certain of the data from the results of that survey will also be provided. No such survey for middle school students is carried out on a state-wide basis.

The data gathered from the surveys in each of the school districts, was tabulated individually and then combined to form an aggregate database. The seven school systems included in this aggregate are the Acton and Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools, the Boxborough Public Schools (grade 6 only), the Concord and Concord-Carlisle Regional Schools, the Groton-Dunstable Regional Schools, the Littleton Public Schools, the Maynard Public Schools, and the Westford Public Schools. As part of the following analysis, a comparison with certain of the data from the results of that aggregate will also be provided.

After much consideration and planning, the 2010 Grade 6 survey was piloted on a web-enabled basis in four of the seven school districts. The survey itself was identical in all ways to the traditional paper and pencil surveys except that it was carried out online. The four districts which implemented this pilot program are the Acton Public Schools, the Boxborough Public Schools, the Littleton Public Schools, and the Maynard Public Schools.
SURVEY PROCESS

In the Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools it was agreed that the Youth Risk Behavior Survey would be distributed to all students in grades 6, 8, and 9 through 12 during March of 2010. Parents were informed in advance of the survey and no students were exempted at parental request. The survey was administered on March 10, 2010 simultaneously to all students in grade 8 and over the course of the day in English class at the high school. In grade 6 the survey was carried out in a web-enabled format over the course of the school day (due to computer lab availability) also on March 10, 2010. In each school the survey was administered by professional staff from the school district. Teachers were provided with written instructions which were read to students before taking the survey.

Once all of the surveys were completed, they were gathered and tabulated. There were a total of 868 students who responded to the middle school survey: 378 from grade 6 (females – 180, males – 198), and 490 from grade 8 (females – 267, males – 220). Three eighth grade respondents did not indicate their gender.

There were a total of 1,791 students who responded to the high school survey: 483 from grade 9, 436 from grade 10, 448 from grade 11, and 413 from grade 12. There were 847 females and 936 males who responded to the survey. Eight students did not indicate their gender and eleven students did not indicate their grade.

Of the 2,863 students enrolled in grade 6, grade 8, and grades 9 through 12 on the date of administration, 2,659 participated in the survey. This constitutes a participation rate of 93% (grade 6: 93%, grade 8: 98%; and high school: 92%).

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Frequencies of responses are reported for all items in the survey and cross-tabulations are provided for three demographic characteristics: grade, gender, and grade/gender. The results of the survey, including all cross-tabulations, are presented under separate cover. Please note that the data results were tabulated in percentages, rounded to the nearest tenth of one percent, and not all percentages will total exactly 100 due to rounding and no responses in some cases.
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Aggregate of Respondents
From Seven School Districts
2010 YRBS Student Sample

Grade and Gender

**Grade 6**: 1,436 Respondents

- Females: 49.2%
- Males: 49.7%
- Gender not indicated: 1.1%

**Grade 8**: 1,434 Respondents

- Females: 53.3%
- Males: 46.2%
- Gender not indicated: 0.4%

**Grade 9**: 1,547 Respondents

- Females: 48.5%
- Males: 51.5%
- Gender not indicated: 0%

**Grade 10**: 1,433 Respondents

- Females: 48.6%
- Males: 51.0%
- Gender not indicated: 0.3%

**Grade 11**: 1,408 Respondents

- Females: 48.2%
- Males: 51.4%
- Gender not indicated: 0.4%

**Grade 12**: 1,302 Respondents

- Females: 50.5%
- Males: 49.5%
- Gender not indicated: 0%
**DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS (CONT’D)**

**School District**

**Grade 6:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School District</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acton</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
<td>378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boxborough</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concord</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groton - Dunstable</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Littleton</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maynard</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westford</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
<td>376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>1,436</strong></td>
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**Grade 8:**

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<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acton - Boxborough</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
<td>490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concord</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groton - Dunstable</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Littleton</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maynard</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westford</td>
<td>25.1%</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>1,434</strong></td>
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**High School:**

<table>
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<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acton - Boxborough</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
<td>1,791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concord - Carlisle</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td>1,080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groton - Dunstable</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Littleton</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maynard</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westford</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
<td>1,489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>5,727</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OVERVIEW OF MAJOR FINDINGS

There is much important and relevant information to be found in an analysis of the tabulations of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey as taken by students from the Acton and Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools. This is true when one looks at the tabulations of all students taken as a group and is especially so when one looks at the cross-tabulations by grade and gender.

With students having responded to 62 questions in grade 6, 89 questions in grade 8, and 111 questions at the high school, much can be said about the responses to each of those questions. However, it is not the intention here to discuss the results of each question. Rather, it is the intention of this report to highlight certain of the results and to offer comparisons with data gathered from the implementation of the 2007 Massachusetts High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey and the seven school district aggregate data. It is hoped that the following as well as a more detailed analysis of the results of this survey, will assist the Acton and Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools and their Health Advisory Committee in their on-going development of health education curriculum.
SAFETY

- **1.1%** of sixth grade respondents (1.1% - aggregate) and **5.6%** of eighth grade respondents (6.1% - aggregate) report that they “never” or “rarely” wear a seatbelt when riding in a car (grade 8: females – 3.3%, males – 8.1%).

- **One-tenth (10.3%)** of sixth grade respondents (11.1% - aggregate) and **30.3%** of eighth grade respondents (32.9% - aggregate) report that they “never” or “rarely” wear a helmet when riding a bicycle. In grade 6 there was no variation by gender while in grade 8 males report doing so more frequently (females – 24.7%, males – 37.2%).

- **7.4%** of sixth grade respondents (6.9% - aggregate) and **14.5%** of eighth grade respondents (12.2% - aggregate) report “never” or “rarely” wearing a helmet when they go skiing or snowboarding. There was no variation by gender in either grade.

- **1.6%** of sixth grade respondents (1.5% - aggregate) and **6.6%** of eighth grade respondents (7.4% - aggregate) report having ridden in a car or other vehicle driven by a minor (under age 21) who had been drinking alcohol or using other drugs on at least one occasion during the thirty days prior to the survey (grade 8: females – 1.9%, males – 12.4%).

- **0.8%** of sixth grade respondents (1.0% - aggregate) and **2.7%** of eighth grade respondents (3.2% - aggregate) report that they believe that it is always safe to meet someone in person who they initially met through electronic communication in any form (grade 8: females – 0.8%, males – 5.0%).

- **17.7%** of sixth grade respondents (11.4% - aggregate) and **17.2%** of eighth grade respondents (20.0% - aggregate) report having been threatened, humiliated, or experienced hostile behaviors from others through electronic communication in any form during the previous 12 months. The experience of cyber-bullying varied little in either grade (grade 6: females – 16.1%, males – 18.2%; grade 8: females – 18.9%, males – 16.4%). Further, **8.6%** of sixth graders and **13.8%** of eighth graders report doing so to someone else.

- **One** eighth grade respondent in eight (12.3%) (10.9% - aggregate) reports receiving sexually explicit messages or photos electronically (also called “sexting”) during the previous 12 months (females – 8.2%, males – 17.4%).
 Violence Related Behaviors

- 6.1% of sixth grade respondents (6.5% - aggregate) and 14.4% of eighth grade respondents (13.7% - aggregate) report having carried any type of weapon such as a gun, knife or club during the thirty days prior to the survey. Male respondents (grade 6 – 10.1%, grade 8 – 27.7%) were much more likely to have done so than were females (grade 6 – 1.7%, grade 8 – 3.4%). Further, 0.3% of 6th grade respondents (0.2% - aggregate) and 2.8% of 8th grade respondents (2.5% - aggregate) report having done so on school property during the school day.

- Over one-third (34.3%) of sixth grade respondents (26.7% - aggregate) and 20.4% of eighth graders (21.7% - aggregate) report having been bullied in school during the twelve months prior to the survey. There was little variation by gender in grade 6 (grade 8: females – 18.5%, males – 22.8%). Among all respondents, 1.6% (1.8% - aggregate) of 6th graders and 4.1% (3.9% - aggregate) of 8th graders report having resisted with physical force.

- 8.2% of eighth grade respondents (6.0% - aggregate) report having been sexually harassed by someone in school during the 12 months prior to the survey (females – 8.6%, males – 7.7%).

- 4.9% of eighth grade respondents (4.5% - aggregate) report having ever been hurt physically or sexually by a date or someone they were going out with (females – 1.9%, males – 8.7%). Further, 2.7% of all respondents (2.6% - aggregate) report having ever done so to someone else.

- 11.8% of eighth grade respondents (12.7% - aggregate) report having been shouted at, sworn at, scared, threatened, or insulted by someone they were dating or going out with on at least one occasion during the twelve months prior to the survey. Male respondents report this experience most frequently (females – 9.8%, males – 14.3%). In addition, 8.9% of all respondents (9.7% - aggregate) report having done so to someone else (females – 8.3%, males – 9.7%).

- 12.9% of eighth grade respondents (12.3% - aggregate) report having hurt themselves on purpose (for example by cutting, burning, or bruising yourself on purpose) on at least one occasion during the previous twelve months. There was no variation by gender.
SUICIDE

- **6.1%** of sixth grade respondents (3.8% - aggregate) and **10.3%** of eighth grade respondents (10.0% - aggregate) **report having seriously considered attempting suicide** during the twelve months prior to the survey. In both grades, males report doing so most frequently (grade 6: females – 4.4%, males – 7.6%; grade 8: females – 7.9%, males – 13.2%).

- **1.3%** of sixth grade respondents (1.0% - aggregate) and **6.6%** of eighth grade respondents (4.8% - aggregate) **report having actually attempted suicide** on at least one occasion during the twelve months prior to the survey. In grade 6 there was no variation by gender while in grade 8 male respondents report attempting suicide twice as frequently as females (females – 4.5%, males – 9.1%).
Tobacco Use

- 1.1% of sixth grade respondents (1.1% - aggregate) and 8.0% of eighth grade respondents (10.6% - aggregate) report having ever tried cigarette smoking (grade 8: females – 4.1%, males – 12.8%). Further, 3.0% of eighth graders report having tried cigarette smoking for the first time before the age of 11.

- No sixth grade respondents (0.4% - aggregate) and 3.7% of eighth grade respondents (4.7% - aggregate) report having smoked cigarettes on at least one occasion during the thirty days prior to the survey (grade 8: females – 0.7%, males – 7.3%).

- 3.7% of eighth grade respondents (4.1% - aggregate) report having smoked cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars during the thirty days prior to the survey (females – 0.7%, males – 7.3%).

- When eighth graders were asked their perception about how many students at their grade level in their school had smoked cigarettes during the previous month, 17.7% believed that over one-quarter of their peers had done so. In fact, 3.7% of all eighth grade respondents actually report having smoked cigarettes during the previous month.
Alcohol Use

- **4.2%** of sixth grade respondents (3.7% - aggregate) and **21.4%** of eighth grade respondents (19.8% - aggregate) report having ever had a drink of alcohol other than for religious reasons (grade 6: females – 3.3%, males – 5.1%; grade 8: females – 13.5%, males – 31.3%). Further, **5.0%** of sixth graders and **8.0%** of eighth graders report having done so for the first time before the age of 12.

- **2.4%** of sixth grade respondents (1.8% - aggregate) and **10.1%** of eighth grade respondents (9.8% - aggregate) report having had at least one drink of alcohol on at least one occasion during the thirty days prior to the survey. There was no variation by gender in grade 6 while in grade 8 males (15.9%) report recent alcohol use much more frequently than females (5.3%).

- **5.6%** of eighth grade respondents (5.7% - aggregate) report having attended parties held in homes in their school district where alcohol use by teens is allowed, either occasionally or frequently during the twelve months prior to the survey. Male respondents (9.6%) report this experience more frequently than females (2.3%).

- When eighth graders were asked their perception about how many students at their grade level in their school had used alcohol during the previous month, **35.9%** believed that over one-quarter of their peers had done so. In fact, **10.1%** of all eighth grade respondents actually report having used alcohol during the previous month.
ILLEGAL DRUG USE

- 0.5% of sixth grade respondents (0.6% - aggregate) and 8.0% of eighth grade respondents (8.5% - aggregate) report having ever used marijuana (grade 8: females – 3.4%, males – 13.6%). Further, 3.0% of eighth graders report having used marijuana for the first time before the age of 12.

- 0.3% of sixth grade respondents (0.4% - aggregate) and 5.3% of eighth grade respondents (6.0% - aggregate) report having used marijuana on at least one occasion during the thirty days prior to the survey (grade 8: females – 2.6%, males – 8.6%).

- When eighth graders were asked their perception about how many students at their grade level in their school had used marijuana during the previous month, 21.5% believed that at least one-quarter of their peers had done so. In fact, 5.3% of all eighth grade respondents actually report having used marijuana during the previous month.

- 7.4% of sixth grade respondents (4.6% - aggregate) and 6.8% of eighth grade respondents (6.2% - aggregate) report having sniffed glue, or breathed the contents of spray cans, or inhaled any paints or sprays to get high at least once during the thirty days prior to the survey. Males in both grades (grade 6 – 9.6%, grade 8 – 12.3%) report using inhalants recently more frequently than females (grade 6 – 5.0%, grade 8 – 2.3%).

- 4.7% of eighth graders (4.6% - aggregate) report having used someone else’s prescription medication during the twelve months prior to the survey (females – 2.2%, males – 7.8%).

- 0.8% of sixth grade respondents (0.6% - aggregate) and 2.9% of eighth graders (2.5% - aggregate) report having ever taken steroid pills or shots without a prescription (grade 8: females – 1.1%, males – 5.1%).

- 1.3% of sixth grade respondents (0.7% - aggregate) and 11.8% of eighth grade respondents (7.2% - aggregate) report having been offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property during the twelve months prior to the survey (grade 8: females – 6.8%, males – 17.9%).
**Gambling**

- **15.3%** of sixth grade respondents (13.8% - aggregate) and **24.2%** of eighth grade respondents (23.4% - aggregate) report having gambled by betting on the lottery, Keno, sporting events, casino games, cards, or racing at least once during the twelve months prior to the survey. Male respondents in both grades (grade 6 – 24.2%, grade 8 – 36.4%) report this behavior much more frequently than females (grade 6 – 5.6%, grade 8 – 14.2%). Further, **8.0% of sixth graders** and **13.2% of eighth graders** report having gambled during the prior thirty days.

- **0.5%** of sixth grade respondents (0.6% - aggregate) and **4.5%** of eighth grade respondents (5.0% - aggregate) report having spent one or more hours online using the internet to gamble during the previous month (grade 8: females – 1.1%, males – 8.6%).

**HIV/AIDS Education**

- **4.8%** of sixth grade respondents (35.8% - aggregate) and **56.7%** of eighth grade respondents (66.9% - aggregate) report having ever been taught about AIDS or HIV infection in school. There was little variation by gender in either grade.

- One-fifth (23.5%) of sixth grade respondents (27.1% - aggregate) and **31.8%** of eighth grade respondents (33.9% - aggregate) report having ever talked about AIDS or HIV infection with their parents or other adults in their family (grade 6: females – 20.6%, males – 26.3%; grade 8: females – 32.2%, males – 31.5%).

**Sexual Behavior**

- **7.4%** of eighth grade respondents report having ever had sexual intercourse compared to 8.5% from the six district aggregate. Male respondents (13.7%) were much more likely to have had this experience than were females (2.3%). Further, **3.9%** of all eighth graders (3.9% - aggregate) report having had sexual intercourse for the first time before the age of 12.

- **11.1%** of eighth grade respondents (10.4% - aggregate) report having ever had oral sex. Males (19.1%) report this experience much more frequently than females (4.5%).
Dietary Behavior

- 56.6% of sixth grade respondents and 63.0% of eighth grade respondents described themselves as being at about the right weight while many were trying to lose weight (grade 6 – 29.2%, grade 8 – 29.9%) (aggregate: grade 6 – 27.0%, grade 8 – 33.5%) and others were trying to gain weight. In grade 8 female respondents (38.6%) were much more likely to be trying to lose weight than were males (19.5%), while there was very little variation in grade 6.

- During the thirty days prior to the survey, in order to lose weight or to keep from gaining weight:
  - 62.3% of sixth graders (63.5% - aggregate) and 55.2% of eighth graders (58.6% - aggregate) report having exercised.
  - 27.8% of sixth graders (23.1% - aggregate) and 24.2% of eighth graders (24.3% - aggregate) report having eaten less food, fewer calories, or foods low in fat.
  - 3.2% of sixth graders (2.1% - aggregate) and 3.5% of eighth graders (5.1% - aggregate) report having gone without eating for 24 hours or more.
  - 0.3% of sixth graders (0.2% - aggregate) and 2.1% of eighth graders (two females) (2.0% - aggregate) report having taken any diet pills, powders, or liquids without a doctor’s advice.
  - 0.8% of sixth graders (0.5% - aggregate) and 1.2% of eighth graders (1.9% - aggregate) report having vomited or taken laxatives.

- 6.6% of sixth grade respondents (6.7% - aggregate) and 16.4% of eighth graders (17.1% - aggregate) report drinking a caffeinated beverage such as coffee, coffee drinks, tea, soda, sports drinks, or drinks like Red Bull at least once per day on average during the previous seven days. Males in both grades report doing so more frequently (grade 6: females – 4.5%, males – 8.6%; grade 8: females – 11.2%, males – 22.8%).

- 12.0% of sixth grade respondents (12.6% - aggregate) and 23.5% of eighth grade respondents (24.1% - aggregate) report that they ate breakfast on fewer than five days during the week before the survey. In both grades, female respondents report doing so more frequently than males.
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- **83.7%** of sixth grade respondents (83.4% - aggregate) and **82.0%** of eighth grade respondents (78.4% - aggregate) report having exercised or participated in physical activity for at least 20 minutes that made them sweat or breathe hard on at least three days during the seven days prior to the survey. There was little variation by gender in either grade.

- **9.6%** of sixth grade respondents (13.8% - aggregate) and **42.8%** of eighth grade respondents (41.0% - aggregate) report that they get seven or fewer hours of sleep each night on average (grade 6: females – 8.4%, males – 10.6%; grade 8: females – 48.3%, males – 36.2%).

- **16.2%** of sixth grade respondents (16.5% - aggregate) and **30.3%** of eighth grade respondents (31.1% - aggregate) report that they watch TV, play video games, or use a computer for at least 3 hours or more per day on an average school day outside of school. Males in both grades report doing so most frequently (grade 6: females – 12.8%, males – 19.3%; grade 8: females – 26.8%, males – 34.5%).
HIGH SCHOOL - GRADES 9, 10, 11, AND 12

As mentioned earlier in this report, the Youth Risk Behavior Survey was administered to Acton-Boxborough High School students in grades 9 through 12 during March of 2010. This report is an overview analysis of certain of the results of that survey. The complete tabulations of student responses to that survey are also available for review.

The following includes comparisons with certain of the data from the 2007 Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey as well as the six district aggregate. It should be noted that some of the questions in this survey were not asked of students in the Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey.
SAFETY

- **4.2%** of all respondents (5.9% - aggregate) (15% - MA YRBS) report “never” or “rarely” wearing a seatbelt when riding in a car driven by someone else. There was little variation by grade (females – 2.5%, males – 5.9%). Among those most likely to drive, 1.5% of 11th graders and 4.4% of 12th graders report “never” or “rarely” wearing a seatbelt when they themselves drive.

- **15.5%** of all respondents (16.3% - aggregate) report “never” or “rarely” wearing a helmet when they go skiing or snowboarding. The incidence of not wearing such a helmet increased each year by grade (grade 9 – 11.0%, grade 10 – 16.3%, grade 11 – 16.7%, grade 12 – 18.4%) and was higher among males (females – 13.6%, males – 17.3%).

- **One-fifth (20.5%)** of all respondents (21.2% - aggregate) report having ridden in a car or other vehicle driven by a minor (under age 21) who had been drinking alcohol or using other drugs at least once during the thirty days prior to the survey. The incidence of this experience increased each year by grade (grade 9 – 10.0%, grade 10 – 16.1%, grade 11 – 21.1%, grade 12 – 35.9%). Male respondents report this experience most frequently (females – 16.5%, males – 24.2%).

- **8.7%** of all respondents (8.8% - aggregate) (11% - MA YRBS) report having driven a car or other vehicle when they had been drinking alcohol on at least one occasion during the thirty days prior to the survey. Respondents from grade 12 (20.1%) were most likely to have done so. The groups which most frequently reported this behavior were 11th grade males (14.1%), 12th grade females (15.8%), and 12th grade males (24.4%). By comparison, **13.9%** (14.4% - aggregate) report driving a car or other vehicle when they had been using marijuana during the same period of time.

- **Nearly one-third (31.5%)** of all respondents (33.3% - aggregate) report having driven a car while using a cell phone to talk or text at least once during the previous thirty days. Among those most likely to drive, 47.1% of 11th graders and 70.9% of 12th graders report having done so (females – 30.1%, males – 32.6%).

- **15.8%** of all respondents (17.2% - aggregate) report having been threatened, humiliated, or experienced hostile behaviors from others through electronic communication in any form during the previous 12 months (grade 9 – 13.3%, grade 10 – 18.9%, grade 11 – 15.4%, grade 12 – 15.8%). There was little variation by gender. Further, **10.5%** of all respondents report having done so to someone else.

- **22.7%** of all respondents (21.7% - aggregate) report having received sexually explicit messages or photos electronically (also called “sexting”) during the 12 months prior to the survey (grade 9 – 13.9%, grade 10 – 24.0%, grade 11 – 23.5%, grade 12 – 29.6%). Males (25.8%) report this experience more frequently than females (19.4%).
VIOLANCE RELATED BEHAVIORS

- **2.3%** of all respondents (2.9% - aggregate) report having **carried a gun on school property** on at least one occasion during the thirty days prior to the survey (grade 9 – 1.2%, grade 10 – 1.8%, grade 11 – 1.3%, grade 12 – 3.6%). Males report doing so most frequently (females – 0.7%, males – 3.5%).

- **5.2%** of all respondents (5.6% - aggregate) (5% - MA YRBS) report having **carried a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club on school property** on at least one occasion during the thirty days prior to the survey. There was little variation by grade. Males (8.1%) were more likely to have carried a weapon on school property than were females (1.8%). Further, **3.8%** report having done so **during the school day**.

- **3.5%** of all respondents (4.9% - aggregate) (5% - MA YRBS) report having **been threatened or injured by someone with a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club on school property** at least once during the twelve months prior to the survey. There was little variation by grade. Males (5.2%) report this experience more frequently than females (1.4%).

- **5.4%** of all respondents (6.4% - aggregate) (11% - MA YRBS) report having **ever been hurt physically or sexually by a date or someone they were going out with**. The incidence of this experience was highest in grade 12 (7.3%) and lowest in grade 11 (3.8%) (females – 6.8%, males – 4.2%). Among all respondents, **3.1%** (3.3% - aggregate) report having ever done so to someone else.

- **12.7%** of all respondents (15.8% - aggregate) report having **been shouted at, sworn at, scared, threatened, or insulted by someone they were dating or going out with** on at least one occasion during the twelve months prior to the survey. The incidence of this experience was lowest in grade 9 (grade 9 – 9.6%, grade 10 – 13.1%, grade 11 – 12.1%, grade 12 – 16.0%). Females report this experience most frequently (females – 14.5%, males – 11.0%). Among all respondents, **10.4%** (13.0% - aggregate) report having done so to someone else.

- **14.6%** of all respondents (14.9% - aggregate) (22% - MA YRBS) report having **been bullied in school** during the twelve months prior to the survey. The incidence of this experience decreased each year by grade (grade 9 – 19.1%, grade 10 – 16.7%, grade 11 – 11.4%, grade 12 – 10.0%) and was higher among males (females – 13.1%, males – 15.8%). Further, **3.0%** of all respondents (2.8% - aggregate) report that they **resisted being bullied in school with physical force**.
VIOLENCE RELATED BEHAVIORS (CONT’D)

- **6.1%** of all respondents (6.6% - aggregate) report having been sexually harassed in school during the twelve months prior to the survey. The incidence of this experience was lowest in grade 11 (grade 9 – 5.0%, grade 10 – 9.0%, grade 11 – 3.8%, grade 12 – 6.1%). Female respondents (7.4%) report being sexually harassed more often than males (4.8%).

- **One respondent in eight (12.3%)** (13.2% - aggregate) (17% - MA YRBS) reports having hurt themselves on purpose (cuts, burns, bruises) on at least one occasion during the previous twelve months (grade 9 – 7.3%, grade 10 – 14.9%, grade 11 – 14.1%, grade 12 – 12.7%). Females (14.9%) report such self-injury more frequently than males (9.9%).
**SUICIDE**

- **12.5%** of all respondents (11.8% - aggregate) (13% - MA YRBS) **report having seriously considered attempting suicide** during the twelve months prior to the survey. The incidence of this behavior was highest in grade 10 (grade 9 – 8.3%, grade 10 – 16.4%, grade 11 – 11.8%, grade 12 – 13.1%). Female respondents (14.6%) report seriously considering suicide more frequently than males (10.5%).

- **4.0%** of all respondents (4.3% - aggregate) (8% - MA YRBS) **report having actually attempted suicide** on at least one occasion during the twelve months prior to the survey. The incidence of those who report attempting suicide was highest in grade 12 (grade 9 – 2.3%, grade 10 – 4.6%, grade 11 – 2.5%, grade 12 – 5.6%). There was very little variation by gender (females – 3.3%, males – 4.5%).
Tobacco Use

- **One-sixth (16.9%)** of all respondents (22.2% - aggregate) (46% - MA YRBS) **report having ever tried cigarette smoking, even one or two puffs.** The incidence of lifetime cigarette smoking increased each year by grade (grade 9 – 8.9%, grade 10 – 15.6%, grade 11 – 17.0%, grade 12 – 25.9%) and was higher among males (females – 12.5%, males – 20.6%). Further, **5.0%** of all respondents (6.0% - aggregate) **report having tried cigarette smoking for the first time before the age of 13.**

- **7.8%** of all respondents (11.3% - aggregate) (18% - MA YRBS) **report having smoked cigarettes on at least one day during the thirty days prior to the survey** (grade 9 – 4.3%, grade 10 – 7.6%, grade 11 – 6.5%, grade 12 – 11.9%). Males (10.3%) report recent cigarette use more frequently than females (5.0%).

- **9.6%** of all respondents (11.1% - aggregate) (15% - MA YRBS) **report having smoked cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars on at least one occasion during the thirty days prior to the survey.** 12th graders (19.5%) report this behavior much more frequently than those from the other grades (grade 9 – 3.5%, grade 10 – 7.1%, grade 11 – 8.1%). Males (14.7%) were much more likely to have done so than were females (3.9%).
ALCOHOL USE

- **54.0%** of all respondents (57.4% - aggregate) (73% - MA YRBS) **report having had at least one drink of alcohol (other than for religious reasons) on at least one occasion during their lives** and **8.5%** (10.7% - aggregate) (20% - MA YRBS) **report having had their first drink of alcohol before the age of 13**. The incidence of lifetime alcohol use increased each year by grade (grade 9 – 34.1%, grade 10 – 51.6%, grade 11 – 60.8%, grade 12 – 71.8%) (females – 51.2%, males – 56.3%).

- **Nearly one-third (32.5%)** of all respondents (35.1% - aggregate) (46% - MA YRBS) **report having had at least one drink of alcohol on at least one occasion during the thirty days prior to the survey**. The incidence of recent alcohol use also increased each year by grade (grade 9 – 14.5%, grade 10 – 27.5%, grade 11 – 37.7%, grade 12 – 52.3%). Male respondents (34.3%) report doing so slightly more frequently than females (30.5%).

- **21.7%** of all respondents (22.6% - aggregate) (28% - MA YRBS) **report having had five or more drinks of alcohol in a row** (within a couple of hours) on at least one occasion during the thirty days prior to the survey. The incidence of recent binge drinking increased each year by grade (grade 9 – 7.7%, grade 10 – 16.1%, grade 11 – 25.7%, grade 12 – 38.3%). Again, males report this behavior more frequently (females – 18.7%, males – 24.5%).

- **One quarter (24.8%)** of all respondents (27.1% - aggregate) **report having attended parties held in homes in their school district where alcohol use by teens was allowed, either occasionally or frequently** during the twelve months prior to the survey. The incidence of this experience increased each year by grade (grade 9 – 9.5%, grade 10 – 21.4%, grade 11 – 31.7%, grade 12 – 38.4%). There was no variation by gender.

- **When asked their perception about how many students at their grade level in their school had used alcohol during the previous month, 19.3% believed that over three-quarters of their peers had done so** and another 34.7% (total of 54.0%) believed that over half had done so. In fact, **32.5%** of all respondents actually **report having used alcohol during the previous month**.
**ILLEGAL DRUG USE**

- **29.2%** of all respondents (32.5% - aggregate) (41% - MA YRBS) report having ever used marijuana and **3.0%** (4.4% - aggregate) (9% - MA YRBS) report having done so for the first time before the age of **13**. The incidence of lifetime marijuana use increased significantly each year by grade (grade 9 – 10.6%, grade 10 – 23.4%, grade 11 – 35.1%, grade 12 – 49.5%) (females – 24.5%, males – 33.5%). Further, **21.1%** of all respondents (22.9% - aggregate) (25% - MA YRBS) report having used marijuana on at least one occasion during the thirty days prior to the survey (females – 15.5%, males – 26.0%).

- When asked their perception about how many students at their grade level in their school had used marijuana during the previous month, 7.7% believed that over three-quarters of their peers had done so and another 21.0% (total of 28.7%) believed that over half had done so. In fact, **21.1%** of all respondents actually report having used marijuana during the previous month.

- **7.6%** of all respondents (8.5% - aggregate) report having used someone else’s prescription medication during the twelve months prior to the survey (grade 9 – 4.8%, grade 10 – 6.7%, grade 11 – 7.2%, grade 12 – 11.3%). There was no variation by gender.

- **3.6%** all respondents (4.9% - aggregate) (9% - MA YRBS) report having ever used any form of cocaine, including powder, crack, or freebase. The incidence of lifetime cocaine use was highest among respondents from grade 12 (grade 9 – 2.1%, grade 10 – 3.5%, grade 11 – 1.6%, grade 12 – 6.2%) (females – 2.4%, males – 4.7%).

- **2.9%** all respondents (4.2% - aggregate) report having sniffed glue, or breathed the contents of spray cans, or inhaled any paints or sprays to get high on at least one occasion during the thirty days prior to the survey (grade 9 – 1.9%, grade 10 – 2.3%, grade 11 – 0.7%, grade 12 – 5.4%) (females – 1.4%, males – 4.2%).

- **4.0%** of all respondents (5.1% - aggregate) (7% - MA YRBS) report having ever used MDMA (i.e. ecstasy, “E”, “X”) (grade 9 – 2.4%, grade 10 – 3.2%, grade 11 – 2.3%, grade 12 – 6.7%). Male respondents (4.9%) report doing so slightly more frequently than females (2.9%).


**ILLEGAL DRUG USE (CONT’D)**

- 7.5% all respondents (8.1% - aggregate) report having ever used any “other type” of illegal drug such as LSD (acid), PCP, mushrooms, Ketamine (Special K), Rohypnol (Roofies), or GHB. The incidence of this behavior was highest in grade 12 (grade 9 – 3.7%, grade 10 – 6.5%, grade 11 – 5.8%, grade 12 – 13.4%) and was higher among males (females – 4.6%, males – 10.1%).

- Nearly one-fourth (23.2%) of all respondents (18.0% - aggregate) (27% - MA YRBS) report having been offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property on at least one occasion during the twelve months prior to the survey. The incidence of this experience increased each year by grade (grade 9 – 15.2%, grade 10 – 22.8%, grade 11 – 26.2%, grade 12 – 29.2%). Male respondents (29.5%) were much more likely to have been offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property than were females (16.2%).
**Gambling**

- **27.0%** of all respondents (27.5% - aggregate) report having gambled by betting on the lottery, Keno, sporting events, casino games, cards, or racing at least once during the twelve months prior to the survey (grade 9 – 24.5%, grade 10 – 22.4%, grade 11 – 27.6%, grade 12 – 33.1%). Further, male respondents (39.0%) report doing so much more frequently than females (13.7%). In fact, **15.4%** of all respondents (16.2% - aggregate) report having gambled during the previous month.

- **3.7%** of all respondents (4.5% - aggregate) report having spent one or more hours online using the internet to gamble during the previous month. There was little variation by grade. Male respondents report having done so most frequently (females – 1.4%, males – 5.7%).

**HIV/AIDS Education**

- **43.6%** of all respondents (44.7% - aggregate) report having ever talked about AIDS or HIV infection with their parents or other adults in their family. The incidence of this experience increased each year by grade (grade 9 – 34.7%, grade 10 – 39.8%, grade 11 – 49.2%, grade 12 – 52.4%) and there was little variation by gender (females – 45.1%, males – 42.3%).

- **93.7%** of all respondents (92.7% - aggregate) (89% - MA YRBS) report having ever been taught about AIDS/HIV infection in school. There was very little variation by grade or gender.
**SEXUAL BEHAVIOR**

- **24.3%** of all respondents (26.4% - aggregate) (44% - MA YRBS) report having ever had sexual intercourse. The incidence of lifetime sexual intercourse increased each year by grade (grade 9 – 8.9%, grade 10 – 19.5%, grade 11 – 25.5%, grade 12 – 45.4%). Males report this behavior slightly more frequently (females – 22.8%, males – 25.8%). Further, **3.4%** of all respondents (3.6% - aggregate) (6% - MA YRBS) report having had sexual intercourse for the first time before the age of 13.

- **7.1%** of all respondents (7.3% - aggregate) (12% - MA YRBS) report having had sexual intercourse with four or more partners during their lives. The incidence of this behavior was highest in grade 12 (grade 9 – 3.1%, grade 10 – 6.0%, grade 11 – 5.2%, grade 12 – 13.5%) and was slightly higher among males (females – 5.7%, males – 8.4%).

- One respondent in five (20.0%) (20.7% - aggregate) (33% - MA YRBS) reports having had sexual intercourse on at least one occasion during the three months prior to the survey. The incidence of recent sexual intercourse increased each year by grade (grade 9 – 7.8%, grade 10 – 15.5%, grade 11 – 18.4%, grade 12 – 39.7%) (females – 18.7%, males – 21.2%).

- **6.9%** of all respondents (8.0% - aggregate) report having drunk alcohol or used drugs before they had sexual intercourse the last time (grade 9 – 2.7%, grade 10 – 5.3%, grade 11 – 7.0%, grade 12 – 12.0%) (females – 4.8%, males – 8.7%).

- Nearly one-third (32.3%) of all respondents (35.0% - aggregate) report having ever had oral sex, either given or received. The incidence of lifetime oral sex increased each year by grade (grade 9 – 12.4%, grade 10 – 29.5%, grade 11 – 35.0%, grade 12 – 54.4%). Males report this experience more frequently than females (females – 30.3%, males – 34.2%). Further, **30.8%** of all respondents (32.4% - aggregate) report having oral sex at least once during the previous twelve months.

- When asked their perception about how many students at their grade level in their school had ever had sexual intercourse, 20.7% believed that more than half of their peers had done so. In fact, **24.3%** of all respondents actually report having ever had sexual intercourse.
DIETARY BEHAVIOR

- While 60.9% of all respondents described themselves as being at about the right weight, 37.3% (38.8% - aggregate) (46% - MA YRBS) were trying to lose weight. Females (54.1%) were much more likely to be trying to lose weight than were males (22.2%) who were much more likely to be trying to gain weight.

- During the thirty days prior to the survey, in order to lose weight or to keep from gaining weight:
  - 60.3% of all respondents (60.5% - aggregate) report having exercised. (females – 68.2%, males – 53.3%)
  - 34.2% of all respondents (32.6% - aggregate) report having eaten less food, fewer calories, or foods low in fat. (females – 50.0%, males – 20.0%)
  - 6.5% of all respondents (7.2% - aggregate) (11% - MA YRBS) report having gone without eating for 24 hours or more. (females – 9.9%, males – 3.3%)
  - 3.4% of all respondents (3.5% - aggregate) (6% - MA YRBS) report having taken diet pills, powders, or liquids without a doctor’s advice. (females – 3.3%, males – 3.2%)
  - 3.9% of all respondents (3.6% - aggregate) (5% - MA YRBS) report having vomited or taken laxatives. (females – 5.8%, males – 2.2%)

- Nearly one-quarter (23.5%) of all respondents (25.3% - aggregate) report drinking a caffeinated beverage such as coffee, coffee drinks, tea, soda, sports drinks, or drinks like Red Bull at least once per day on average during the previous seven days. The incidence of this behavior increased each year by grade (grade 9 – 18.6%, grade 10 – 21.9%, grade 11 – 23.7%, grade 12 – 29.0%). Males (24.9%) report drinking caffeinated beverages more frequently than females (21.6%).

- 29.9% of all respondents (32.5% - aggregate) report having eaten breakfast on fewer than five days during the week prior to the survey. The incidence of this behavior was highest in grades 11 and 12 (grade 9 – 25.9%, grade 10 – 23.7%, grade 11 – 33.6%, grade 12 – 36.2%). There was no variation by gender.
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- **78.2%** of all respondents (74.3% - aggregate) report having exercised or participated in physical activities for at least 20 minutes on at least three days during the week prior to the survey. The incidence of such regular exercise varied little by grade or gender (females – 77.3%, males – 79.5%).

- **64.9%** of all respondents (64.6% - aggregate) report that they get seven or fewer hours of sleep each night on average. The incidence of this behavior increased each year by grade (grade 9 – 56.4%, grade 10 – 64.0%, grade 11 – 69.0%, grade 12 – 71.5%). Females report doing so most frequently (females – 70.4%, males – 60.1%).

- More than one-third (36.1%) of all respondents (36.9% - aggregate) report that they watch television, play video games, or use a computer 3 hours or more per day on an average school day outside of school. The incidence of this behavior was highest in grade 12 (grade 9 – 31.6%, grade 10 – 31.2%, grade 11 – 38.7%, grade 12 – 42.6%) and was higher among males (females – 31.2%, males – 40.6%).