

## Strategies for Success

### Youth Survey Results for 2022

#### Carlsbad Independent School District

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The Strategies for Success (SFS) survey was collected online from middle and high school students across the Carlsbad Independent School District in February of 2022. **A total of 1,166 middle school students completed the SFS survey and 728 high school students completed the survey.** Questions on the SFS are used to monitor and measure the Carlsbad Community Anti-Drug and Gang Coalition's outcomes related to youth substance use, access to alcohol and other drugs, and perceptions of risk for using substances in the community and school. In addition to monitoring outcomes, the data help the community plan the most effective and needed prevention services.

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#### Positive Findings

- + Decreases occurred in alcohol use, e-cigarettes, and marijuana since 2020 for both middle and high school students.
- + Students say they refrain from substance use for health reasons and to protect their future plans.
- + Students perceived harm associated with using e-cigs increased.
- + High school students report decreases in regular cigarette use, prescription painkiller use, and misusing stimulants occurred.

#### Troubling Findings

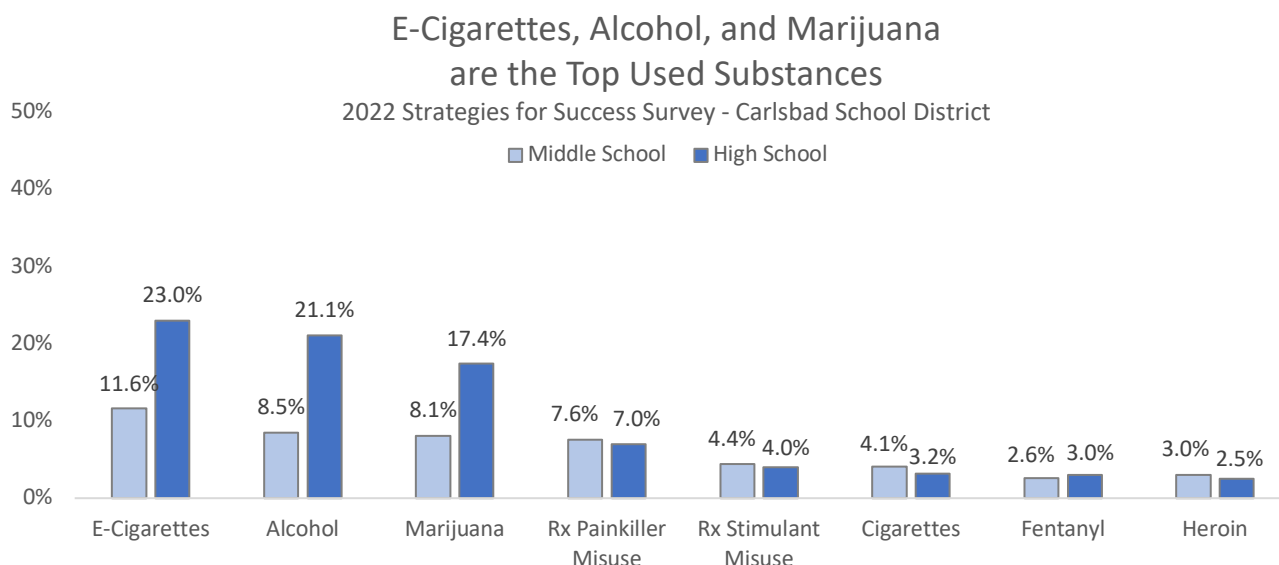
- Perceived risk of harm for drinking and using marijuana decreased.
- Students are most likely to access alcohol at parties and un-related adults.
- Youth report increases in getting alcohol from parents and parties.
- Students are reporting concerning levels of mental distress and suicide ideation.
- Students report misusing prescription painkillers (7%) and stimulants (4%).
- Students who identify as non-binary (rather than as a boy or girl) and students who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (rather than heterosexual) are much more likely to experience mental health risks and engage in substance use.

#### Data Limitations and Considerations

Due to the COVID pandemic, the Strategies for Success Survey has not been collected since the fall of 2019. Substantial disruptions to daily life and learning during the COVID pandemic, and stay-at-home orders may have had unknown influences on youth well-being and may still be impacting youth mental health and substance use. Significant changes reflected in the data (positive or negative) must be considered with caution. Although a large number of completed surveys were collected in 2022 (n=1,894), the sample size was smaller than 2020 (n=2,676) and 2019 (n=2,542).

## Current Substance Use

Current substance use is measured by the percentage of people who report using the specific substance in the past-30 days. Adolescent substance use is risky because research literature confirms that the brain does not stop developing until the early twenties and substance use during development can have lasting effects. <sup>1</sup> The graph below shows the current substance use among middle and high school students.



	Middle School	High School
<b>Positive changes since 2020</b>	E-Cig use decreased from 26.4% Alcohol use decreased from 13.0% Marijuana use decreased from 11.1%	E-Cig use decreased from 39.0% Alcohol use decreased from 34.4% Marijuana use decreased from 25.9% Cigarette use decreased from 7.5%



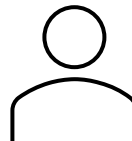
### Boys

Boys are more likely to use fentanyl and heroin than girls.



### Girls

Girls are more likely to use e-cigs, alcohol, and marijuana than boys.



### Non-Binary

Students who identify as non-binary or prefer to self-describe their gender are more likely to use cigarettes, marijuana, and fentanyl, and heroin.

<sup>1</sup> Volkow, ND. (2017). Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcn.2017.10.002>

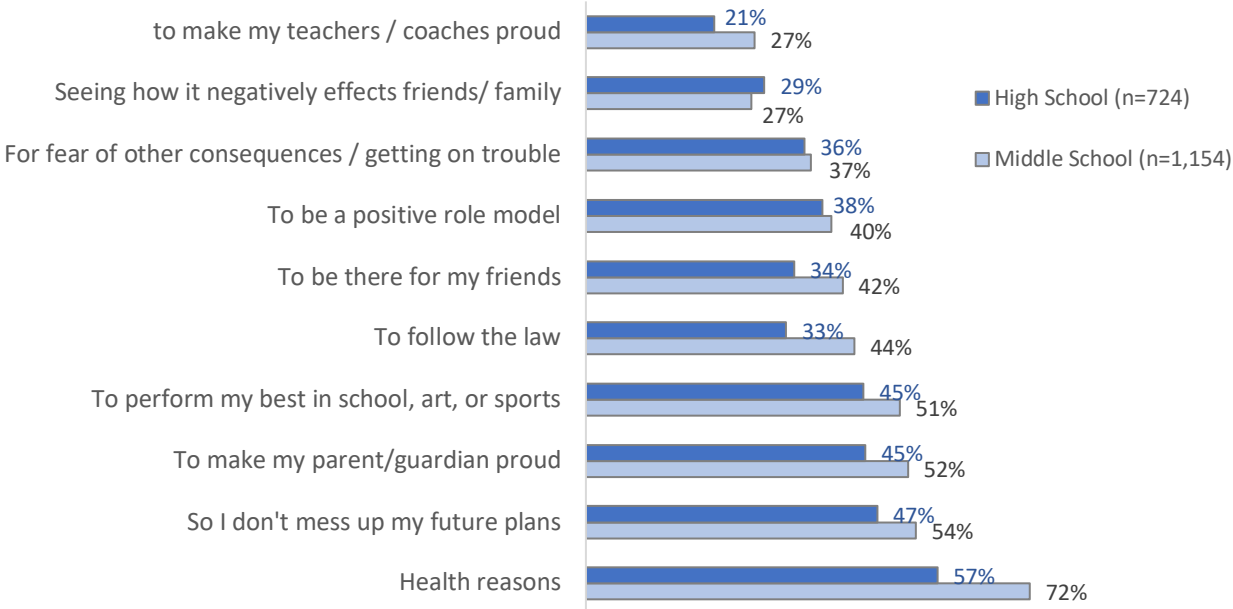
## Prevention Focuses on the Positive

Most students are not using alcohol or other substances. Prevention research shows that students with goals, supportive adults and peers, and connection to school and community are less likely to engage in risky behavior. The graph below displays the top reasons why students choose not to drink or use other substances.

*If you choose not to drink alcohol or use other substances, what would be your main reasons?*

### Students say health reasons, thier future plans, and not wanting to disappoint parents prevents them from using substances

2022 Strategies for Success Survey - Carl

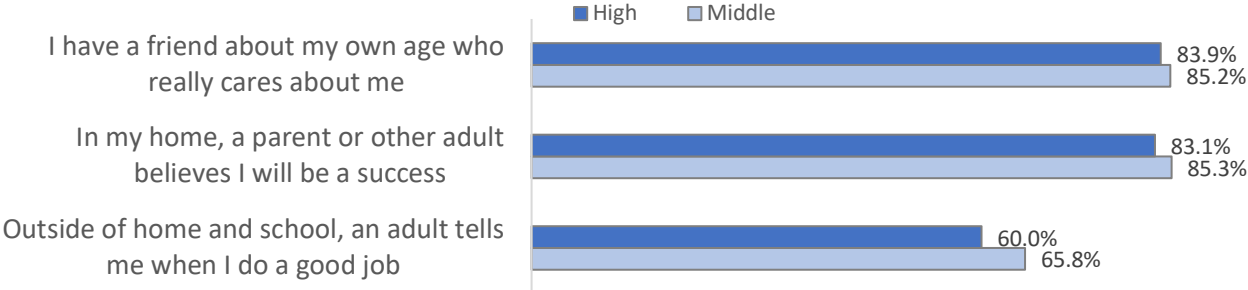


Students wrote in other reasons for not using substances such as “just not wanting to,” because of religious convictions, being scared that their parents would find out, and a few students specifically mentioned having alcoholism or depression run in their family, and not wanting to follow that path or experience those hardships.

## Most Students have Supportive Friends and Adults in their Life

*% who said "mostly true" or "very true"*

2022 Strategies for Success Survey - Carlsbad School District

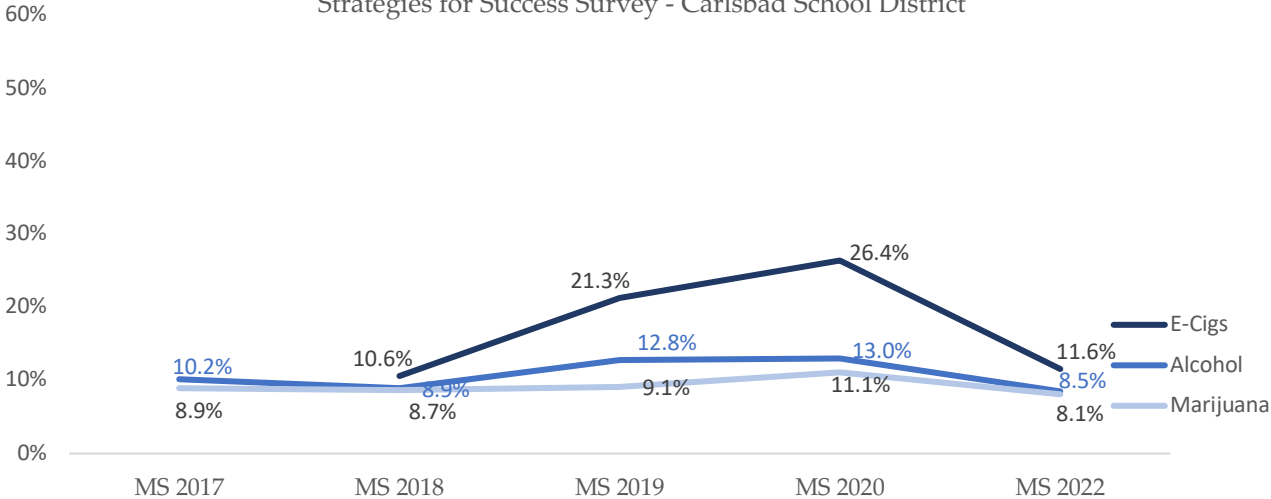


## Trends Among the Top Three Substances Show Reductions

\*No surveys were collected in 2021 due to COVID/school closures\*

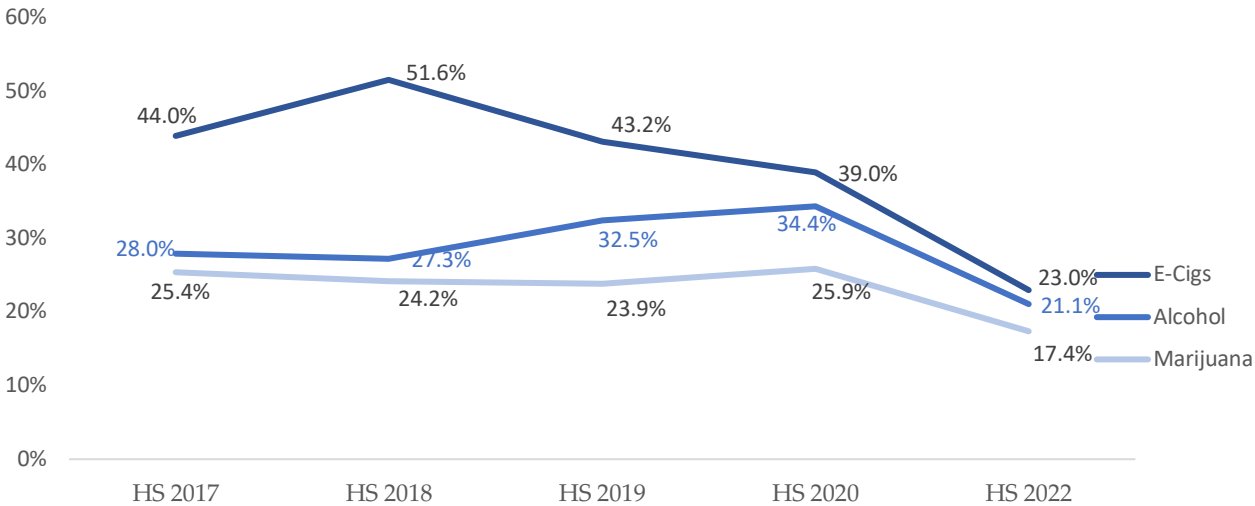
### Middle School Substance Use Declined Since 2020

Strategies for Success Survey - Carlsbad School District



### High School Substance Use Declined Since 2020

Strategies for Success Survey - Carlsbad School District

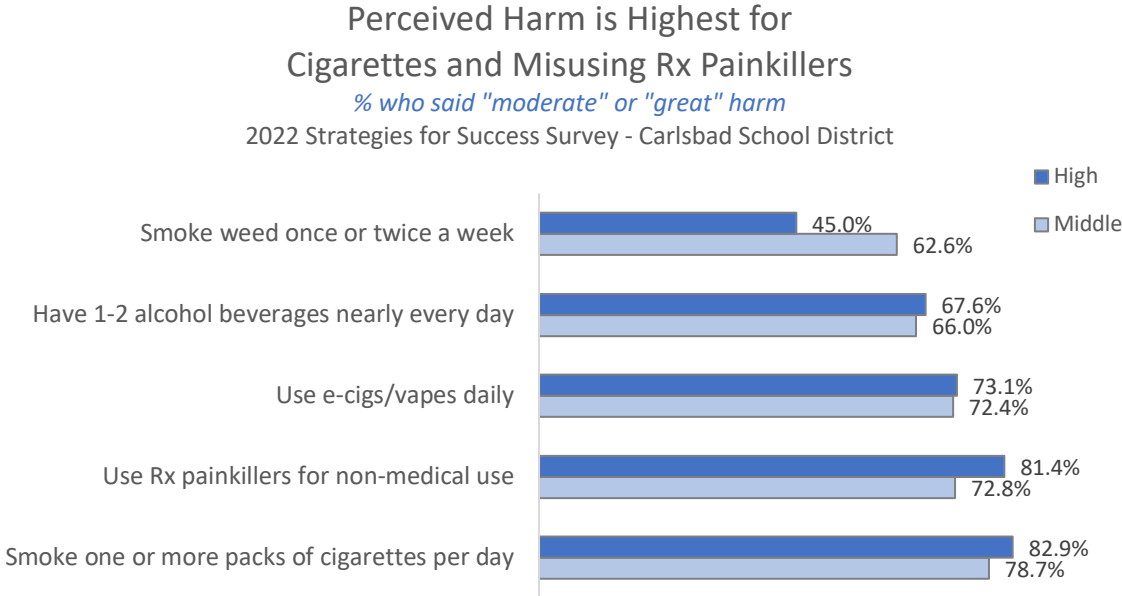


High School Substance Use (past 30-days)	U.S. YRBS 2019	New Mexico YRRS 2019	Carlsbad SFS 2022
E-Cigarettes	32.7%	33.4%	23.0%
Alcohol	29.2%	27.5%	21.1%
Marijuana	21.7%	28.4%	17.4%

SOURCES: NM <https://youthrisk.org> and U.S. <https://yrbs-explorer.services.cdc.gov/#/>

### Perception of Harm from Using Substances

A set of questions on the SFS asks about the perceived risk of harm associated with substance use. Higher perceived risk is associated with lower use. The graph below shows the percentage of students who said they risk “great” or “moderate” harm from using the substance as described.



A higher perceived risk of harm is associated with decreased tendency to engage in that behavior.

Perceived Risk of Harm <i>% who said moderate or great risk</i>	Middle			High		
	2019	2020	2022	2019	2020	2022
Smoking marijuana once or twice a week	70.5%	69.9%	62.6%	47.9%	46.4%	45.0%
Having 1-2 alcoholic beverages nearly every day	67.9%	79.4%	66.0%	62.8%	73.1%	67.6%
Using e-cigarettes daily	63.5%	79.0%	72.4%	52.9%	71.7%	73.1%

Perception of harm is increasing for e-cigarettes (desired) among high schoolers, but is decreasing for alcohol and marijuana (undesired) for both middle and high schoolers.

### Perception of Disapproval of Substance Use

Youth were asked “how wrong” they think parents and peers would think it is for someone their age to drink alcohol or use weed regularly. The tables show the percentage of students who answered “wrong” or “very wrong” to the question. Normative beliefs of substance use influence youth decisions to try substances.

#### Perceived peer disapproval is lower than personal and parental disapproval

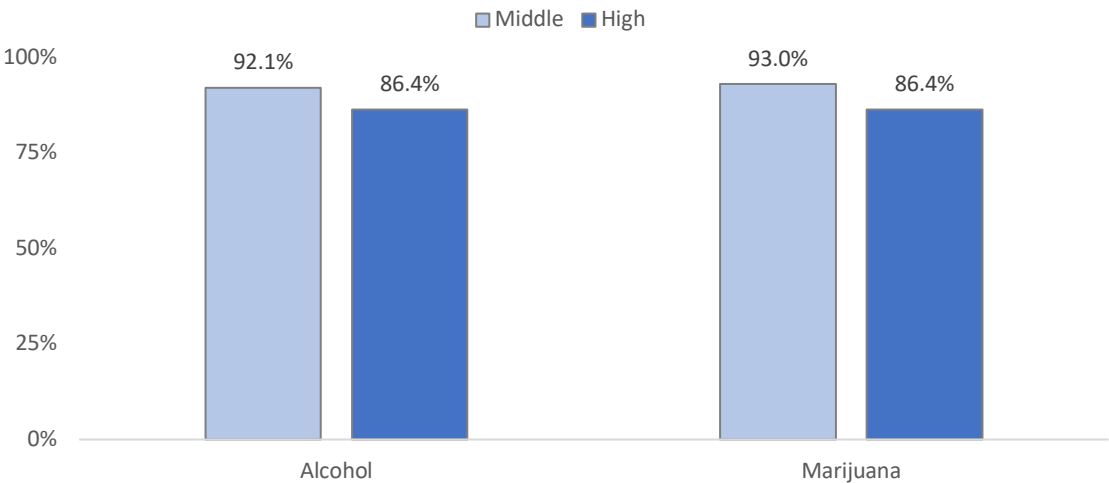
Alcohol	Middle		High	
	2020	2022	2020	2022
My <u>parents</u> feel it is wrong for me to drink regularly	90.6%	92.1%	82.8%	86.4%
<u>I think</u> it is wrong for someone my age to drink regularly	85.4%	88.1%	66.4%	68.8%
My <u>peers</u> think it is wrong for someone my age to drink alcohol	--	80.4%	--	47.0%

Marijuana *new in 2022*	Middle	High
My <u>parents</u> feel it is wrong for me to use weed/marijuana regularly	93.0%	86.4%
<u>I think</u> it is wrong for someone my age to use weed/marijuana regularly	85.5%	63.5%
<u>My peers</u> think it is wrong for someone my age use weed/marijuana regularly	78.8%	42.3%

### Perceived Parental disapproval of youth substance use is high

2022 Carlsbad Strategies for Success Survey

% who said their parents think is is “wrong” or “very wrong” for them to use



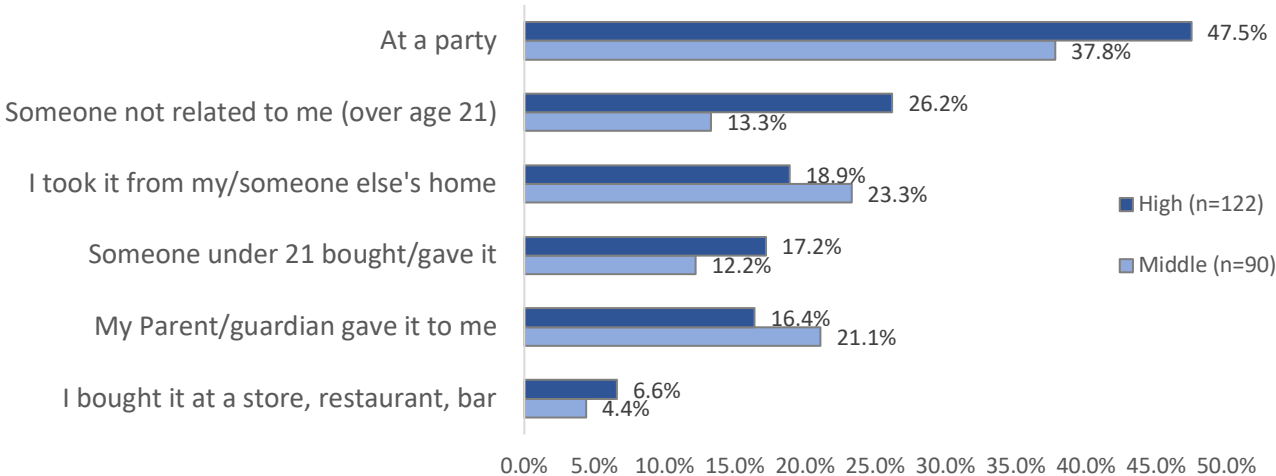
*How wrong would your parents think it is for you to use alcohol or marijuana regularly?*

### Sources for Alcohol for Minors

The Coalition works to reduce social access of alcohol to minors through coordination with law enforcement to hold adults accountable and educating parents and the community that it is a 4<sup>th</sup> degree felony to provide alcohol to minors. The graph shows where students report getting their alcohol. The percentage is only among the students who reported drinking in the past 30 days.

### Youth are Most Likely to Get Alcohol through Social Sources: Parties, Adults over age 21, or Taking it from Home

2022 Strategies for Access Survey - Carlsbad School District  
% among current users



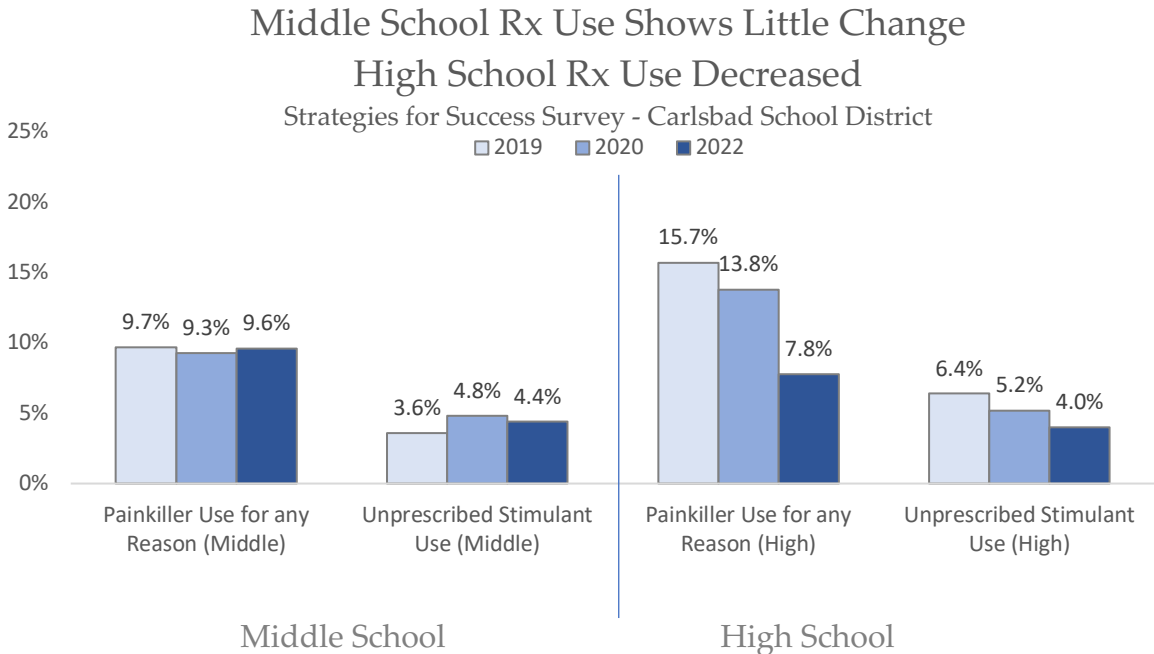
The most common sources of alcohol among high school students includes parties and unrelated adults. Middle school youth are more likely to report taking it from home than getting it from parents/guardians than high school youth.

Alcohol Access	Parent Guardian			At a Party		
	2019	2020	2022	2019	2020	2022
Middle School	13%	15%	<b>21%</b>	24%	36%	<b>38%</b>
High School	15%	13%	<b>16%</b>	34%	45%	<b>48%</b>

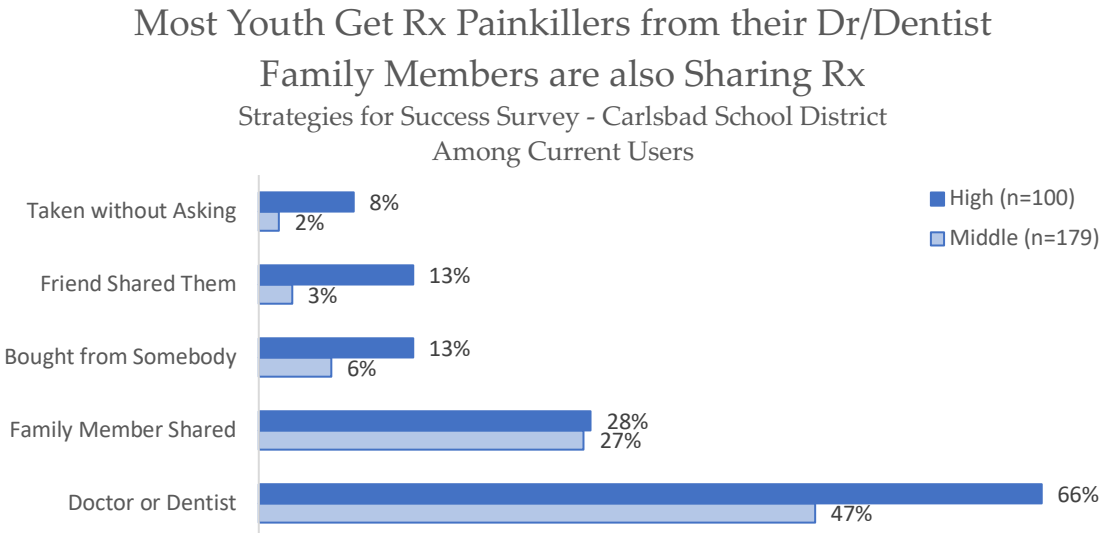
Middle school and high school students report increases in getting alcohol from both parents and parties.

### Prescription Painkiller Use and Access

The Coalition aims to reduce prescription painkiller misuse by educating adults on the dangers of sharing them with anyone to whom they were not prescribed, educating on safe storage and disposal, and promoting Drug Take Back Days. The graph below shows the percentage of students who took a prescription painkiller in the past 30-days for any reason and who used stimulants in a manner not prescribed by their doctor.



The graph below shows where middle and high school students report getting their prescription painkillers. This question is analyzed only using the students who report using a prescription painkiller in the past month.



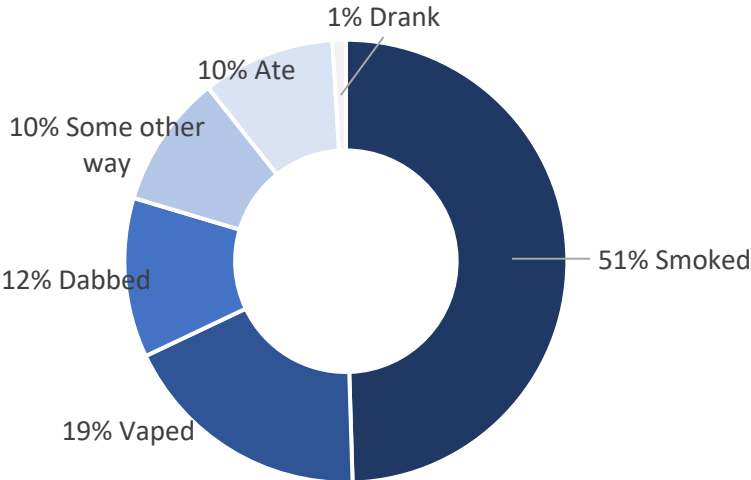


### Marijuana Use and Access

Marijuana use has become one of the most commonly used substances among youth in Carlsbad. Youth often perceive that marijuana is *safe* and even *healthy*, especially since medical and recreational marijuana have been legalized in New Mexico. There is a general lack of awareness of the damage marijuana causes to the developing brain.

### Smoking Marijuana is Most Common Consumption Method

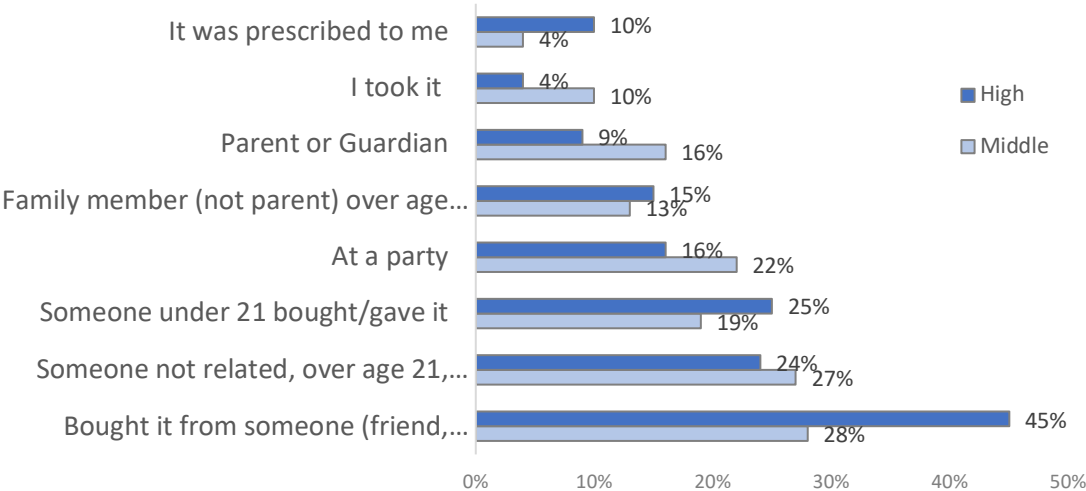
2022 Strategies for Success Survey - High School - Carlsbad School District  
Current Users n=116



Middle school youth who used marijuana (n=79) were most likely to smoke it (37%), followed by vape (20%), some other way (14%), Eat (13%), dab (11%), then drink it (5%).

### Most Youth get their Weed from Social Sources

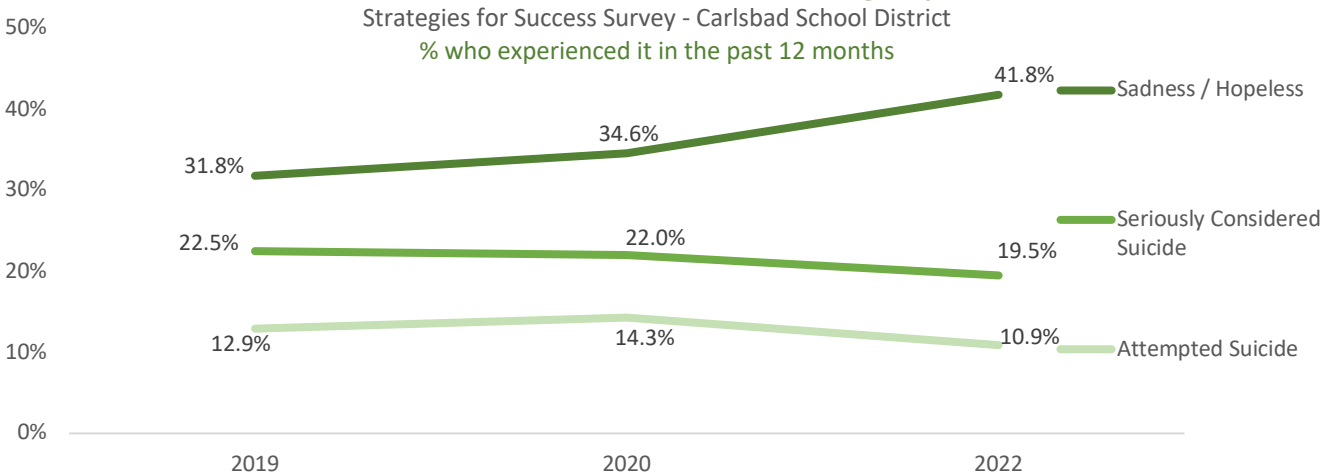
2022 Strategies for Success Survey - Carlsbad School District



### Mental Health Concerns

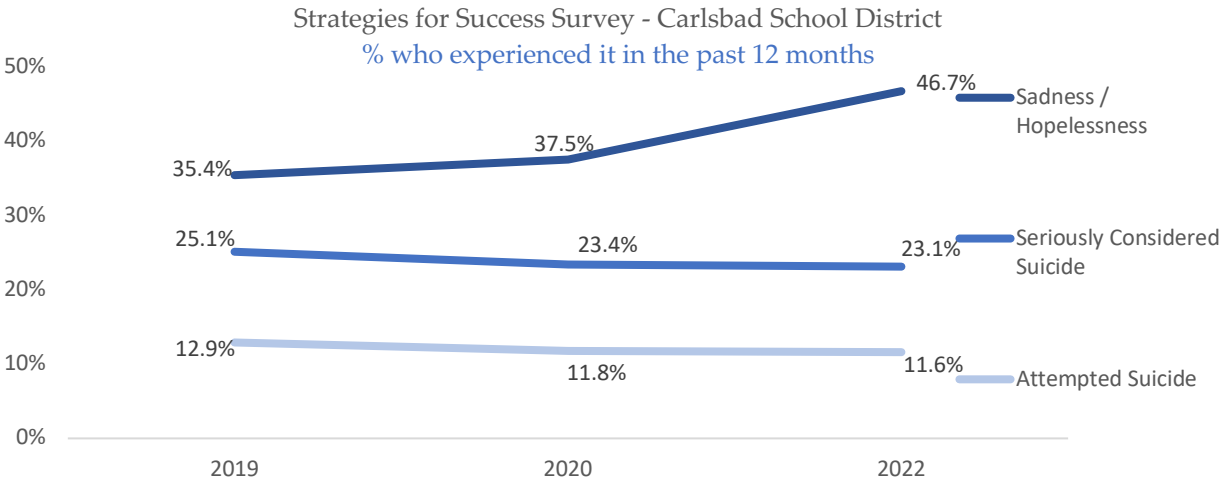
Mental health is closely linked with physical health, success in school, and other important youth outcomes. The graphs show the percentage of students who report **feeling sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more that it kept them from doing regular activities**, and those who seriously considered suicide and attempted suicide in the past year.

#### Middle School Sadness/Hopelessness Increases but Suicide Ideation Decreases Slightly



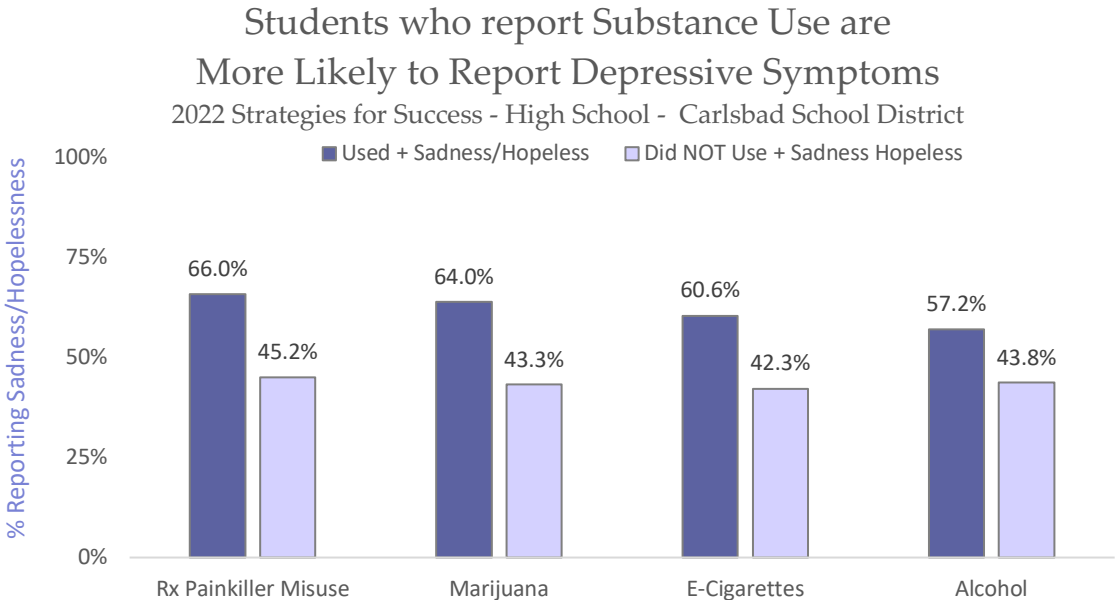
Mental Health Risks Carlsbad SFS 2022	Seriously Considered Suicide		Attempted Suicide	
	#	%	#	%
Middle School	224	19.5%	126	10.9%
High School	166	23.1%	84	11.6%

#### High School Youth Report a Significant Increase in Sadness/Hopelessness

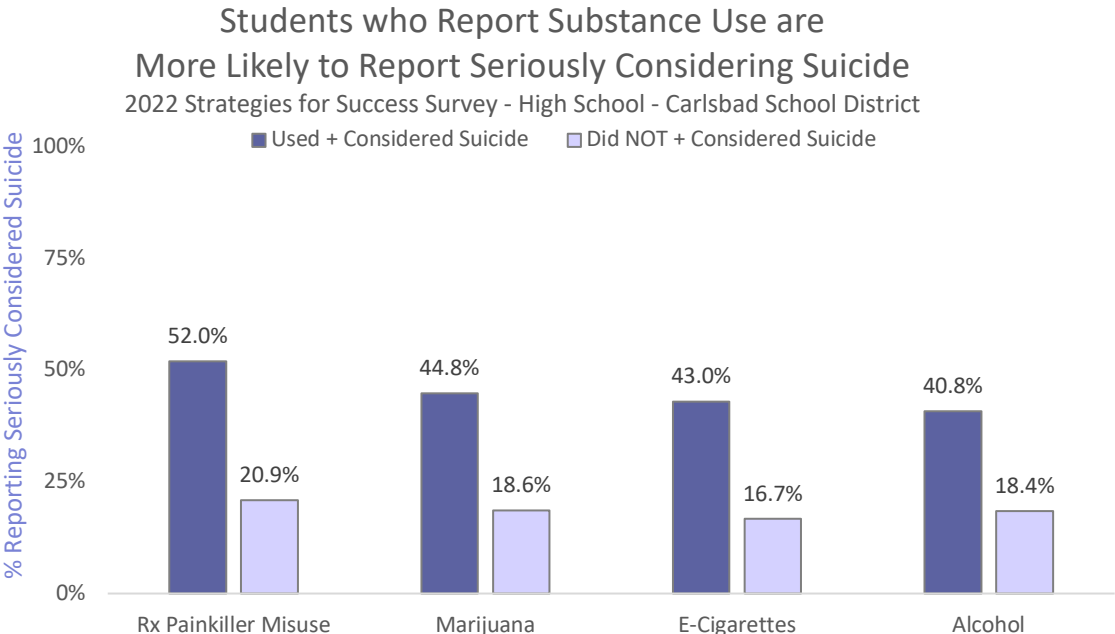


### Mental Health and Substance Use Overlap

The survey asks students if they experienced these mental health concerns in the past 12 months. The graphs below only include the students who report having the mental health issue, not the entire survey sample. They demonstrate how substance use and mental health issues co-exist, and students who use substances are more likely to report mental health issues.

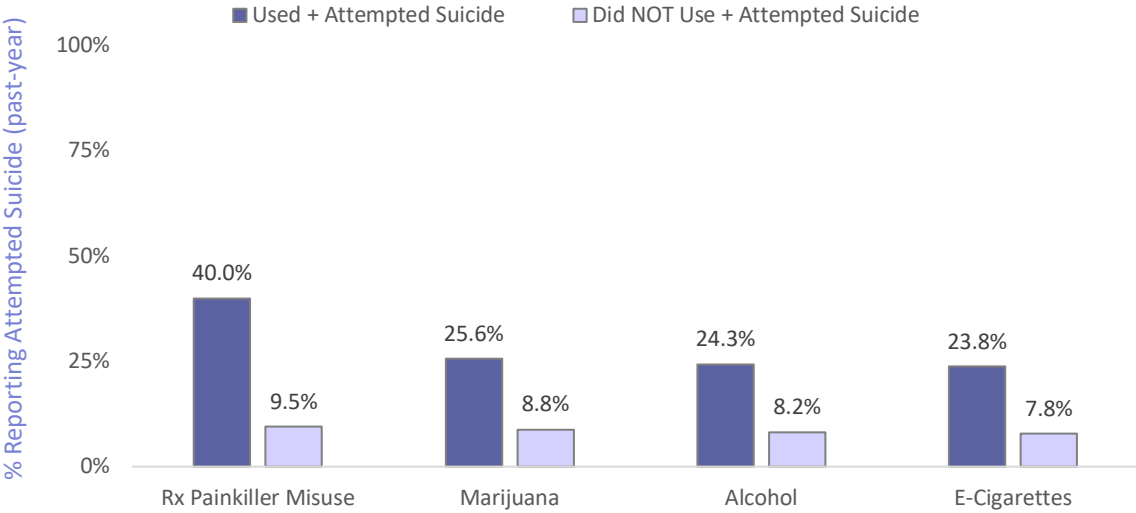


**Students who used substances were more likely to report the mental health issue than students who did not use substances.**



### Students who Report Substance Use are More Likely to Report Attempting Suicide

2022 Strategies for Success Survey - High School - Carlsbad School District



The graphs represent the percentage of youth who reported that they attempted suicide in the past year, and whether or not they also report using each substance in the past 30-days.

### Groups with Higher Mental Health Risks



#### Girls

Girls are more likely to report feelings of sadness, consider suicide, and attempt suicide than boys.



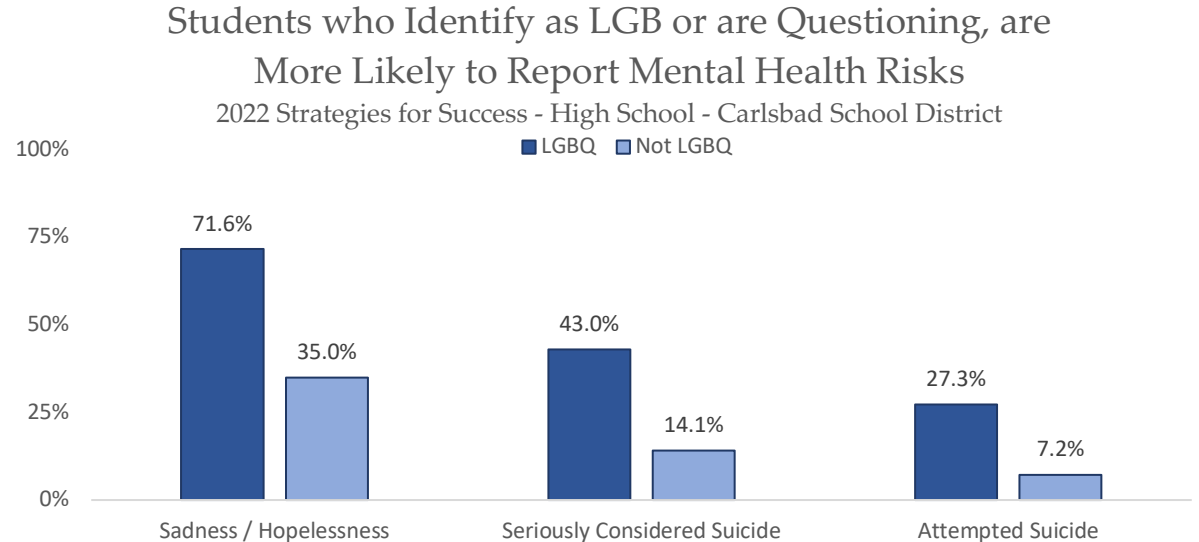
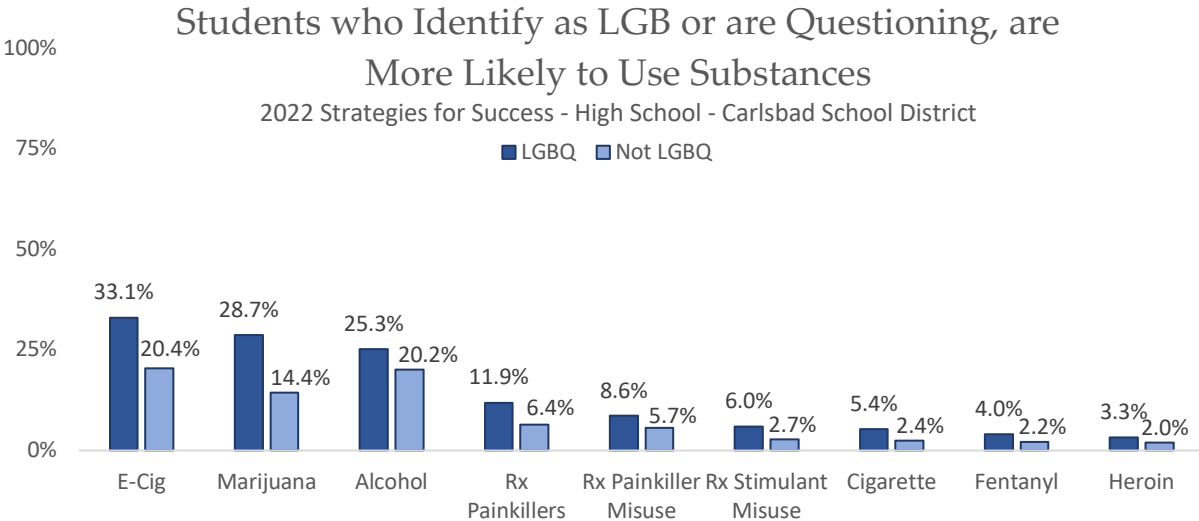
#### Non-Binary

Students who identify as non-binary or prefer to self-describe their gender are more likely to report feelings of sadness, consider suicide, and attempt suicide than their classmates who identify as boys or girls.

### Substance Use and Mental Health Among LGB Youth

Studies have shown youth who identify as being lesbian, gay, bisexual, or are questioning their sexuality (LGBQ) often exhibit higher risk factors, including mental health issues and substance use. The graph below shows the percentage of students who report using the substance in the past 30-days according to how they identify.

**About 20% of High School Students in the Carlsbad School District identify as LGB.**



## Recommendations

- Support mental health services and help equip teachers to better identify and refer students who are struggling to those services.
- Have clear rules about what youth can and cannot do at school and at home.
- Support programs, teachers, students, and staff who strive to make school the safest and best part of each students' day.
- Encourage students to think about going to college or technical school after they graduate high school.
- Tell students you believe in them.
- Show interest in students' schoolwork.
- Encourage students to pursue their interests and get involved in drama, debate, art, music, math league, sports, or other hobbies and areas of interest.
- Give students opportunities to use their skills and recognize them for trying.

**These are all protective factors that help buffer youth from risks and help them succeed. [Read more here:](https://youth.gov/youth-topics/substance-abuse/risk-and-protective-factors-substance-use-abuse-and-dependence) <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/substance-abuse/risk-and-protective-factors-substance-use-abuse-and-dependence>**

**Creating a safe school climate can prevent bullying, substance use, and truancy. <sup>2</sup>**

**School climate is all of our responsibility.** Students have the most influence on school climate but can also be influenced by volunteers, families, school staff, and community members.

- Be personable
- Provide praise to students liberally
- Encourage peer support
- Have an open door for students
- Make an effort to include students who are left out

## Thank You!

We would like to THANK everyone who played a role in helping us collect these data.

- All the **students** who took the time to answer the questions honestly;
- All the **teachers** who helped give instructions to students on completing the survey, took time out of their busy day, and gave up precious instruction time; and
- The **school administration and staff** who supported the data collection and want to use the findings to plan, implement, and evaluate programming.

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<sup>2</sup> Sulkowski, M. and Lazarus, P., Creating Safe and Supportive Schools and Fostering Students' Mental Health, (Routledge, 2016), 227-246.

## 2022 Strategies for Success - Demographics

### Carlsbad Independent School District

School	Number of Surveys
Carlsbad High School	630
Carlsbad Early College High School	88
Carlsbad Enrichment Center	2
Eddy Alternative	0
Carlsbad Intermediate School	794
Jefferson Montessori School	56
Alta Vista	326
	<b>1,896</b>

# of Surveys by Grade	6 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup>	Total
Middle School	374	338	439					<b>1,151</b>
High School				71	227	219	204	<b>721</b>

Not all students selected a grade

	Middle School		High School	
	#	%	#	%
N	<b>1166</b>		<b>728</b>	
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	539	46.9%	282	38.7%
Female	526	45.8%	401	55.1%
Non-Binary or prefer to self-describe	84	7.3%	40	5.5%
<b>Race/Ethnicity*</b>				
Hispanic	698	59.9%	422	58.0%
White	458	39.3%	352	48.4%
Native American	83	7.1%	49	6.7%
Other	94	8.1%	46	6.3%
<b>Mean Age</b>	<b>12.8</b>		<b>16.3</b>	
Identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Questioning	232	20.0%	151	20.9%

\*Students could check all that apply