



# 2020 Rhode Island Student Survey

Blackstone Valley  
Prevention  
Coalition

BARRINGTON BLOCK ISLAND BRISTOL-  
WARREN BURRILLVILLE CHARIHO  
COVENTRY CRANSTON  
EASTGREENWICH EASTPROVIDENCE  
EXETER-WESTGREENWICH JOHNSTON  
LITTLECOMPTON MIDDLETOWN  
NARRAGANSETT NEWPORT N  
ORTH KINGSTOWN NORTH  
PROVIDENCE NORTHSMITHFIELD  
PAWTUCKET PORTSMOUTH S  
CITUATESMITHFIELD SOUTH  
KINGSTOWN TIVERTON WARWICK WEST  
WARWICK WESTERLY

*Participating School Districts in 2020. Note: Providence School District not included in survey.*



## Background

The Rhode Island Student Survey (RISS) is a collaboration among the Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (RI BHDDH), the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH), and the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE). The Survey, which is one of the three State agency surveys, is administered every other year. The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is administered by RIDOH on those off years. The RISS is a risk and prevalence survey for Rhode Island youth in middle and high schools.<sup>1</sup> A risk and prevalence survey looks at a set of factors or conditions to which youth may be exposed that are associated with negative behavioral health outcomes and the extent to which youth may report engaging in problem behavior. It explores substance use, bullying, depression, suicide, and violence.

## Purpose

The intention and purpose of the RISS is to identify areas where there are strengths that can be built upon and to put additional resources to those areas that need improvement. There are other surveys administered in schools, but most do NOT allow for the ability to analyze data at the school district or community level. This data is crucial for planning and evaluating prevention services especially when resources are so scarce. It is imperative to have community level data in order to apply for and receive federal funds.

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<sup>1</sup> Public and private schools within Rhode Island participated. The 2020 survey received responses from one private school.

## RISS Data Collection

The RISS was administered during three different time periods from 2020-2021. This was due to the COVID-19 pandemic causing a statewide shut-down and schools pivoting from in-person learning to virtual. We felt strongly that schools could not handle administering the RISS virtually during the shift of moving to a different way of educating. We thought that this would have been too heavy of a burden for schools.

Also, there was concern for the privacy of the student completing the survey in close proximity to a parental figure or guardian, which might influence students' answers or participation in completing the RISS.

The RISS data was collected in 5 Blackstone Valley school districts in Rhode Island, but two did not meet the threshold. In total, the RISS was completed by 819 students and 3 school districts (Burrillville, North Smithfield, Pawtucket) were included. **20% of the students completed the RISS pre-COVID-19 statewide school shutdown and 80% of the students completed the RISS post-COVID-19 statewide school shutdown.** The RISS currently has fifty-eight (58) questions. There is no personally identifiable information associated with the RISS. Local parent permission procedures were followed before administration, including informing parents that their child's participation was voluntary. The questions are arranged in a particular way and explore specific topic areas. The questions are also asked across several domains such as the individual, peers, family, school, and community. The RISS is offered in Spanish and English. It is an online survey that takes approximately 30 minutes or less to complete. Each student who participates in the RISS receives an informational brochure with supportive resource information.

Results of the survey are reviewed in aggregate tables, not at the individual level. The data is not meant to identify individuals. To be included in the final reports, each grade at a school needs to have at least 60% of their students complete the survey. This participation requirement further protects students from potentially being identified by the way in which they respond to the questions. It also ensures that the results are an accurate representation of the student population. RISS 2018 and 2020 survey data were compared using a two proportion z-test, which measures potential differences in proportions between two groups. Results were considered statistically significantly different if p-value < 0.05. Statistical comparisons between survey administrations (2018 vs. 2020) do not control for potential differences in participating schools.

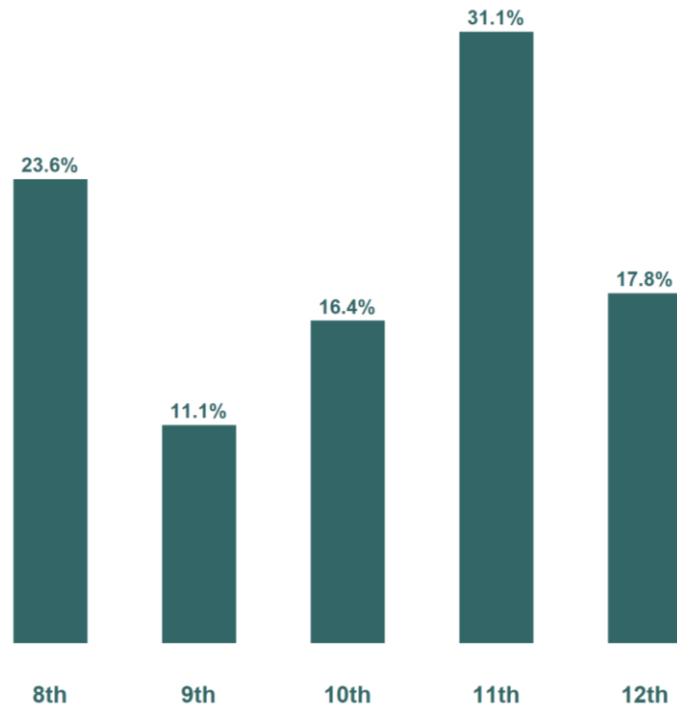


# Demographics

**819** Students participated  
In the survey\*

## Grade

8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades had the most responses



\*Number of students surveyed from Blackstone Valley school districts listed on page 2.

## Sexual Orientation

80.6% Heterosexual (straight)

11.0% Bisexual †

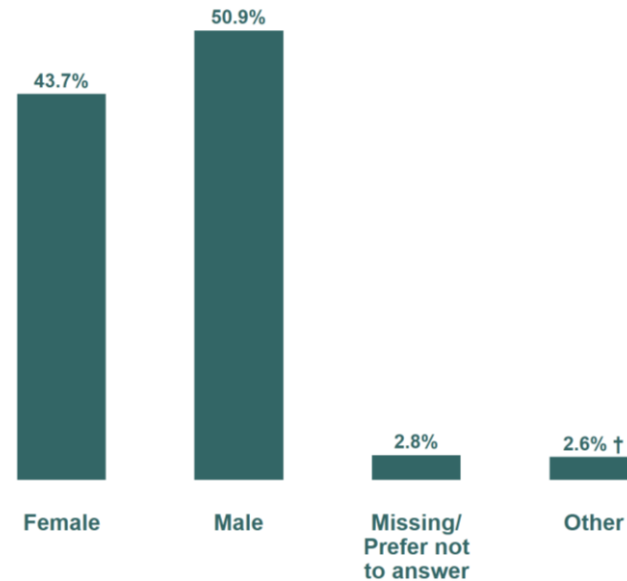
5.4% Not sure/Chose not to respond ▽

3.1% Gay or Lesbian

† Statistically significant increase compared to RISS 2018

▽ Statistically significant decrease compared to RISS 2018

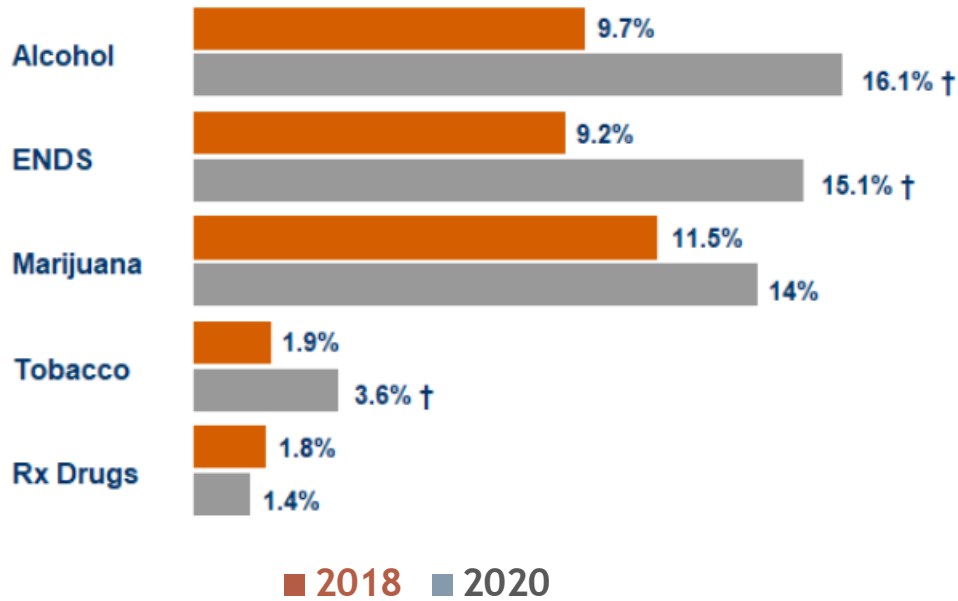
## Gender Identity



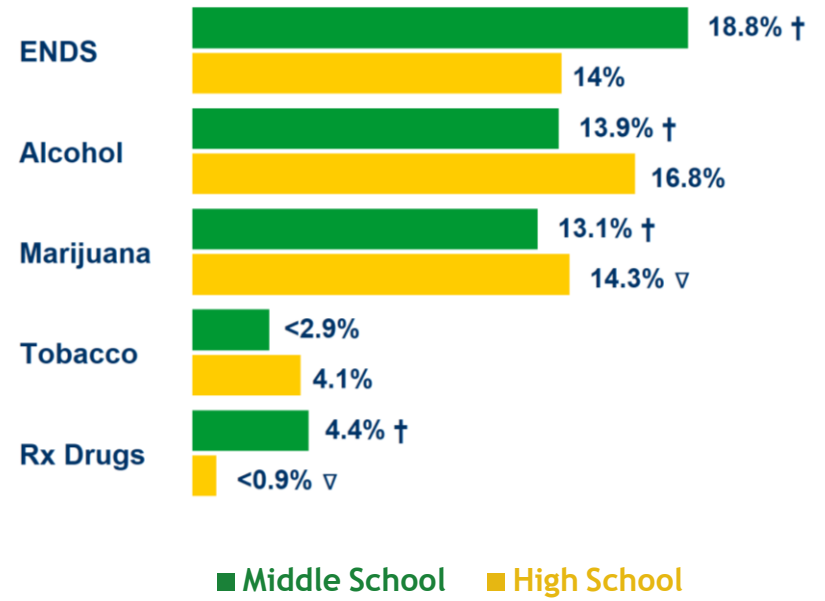
**17 (2.1%) of students identify as transgender**

# Substance Use

## Past 30 Day Use by Substance and Year



## Past 30 Day Use by Substance and Year (Middle School vs. High School)



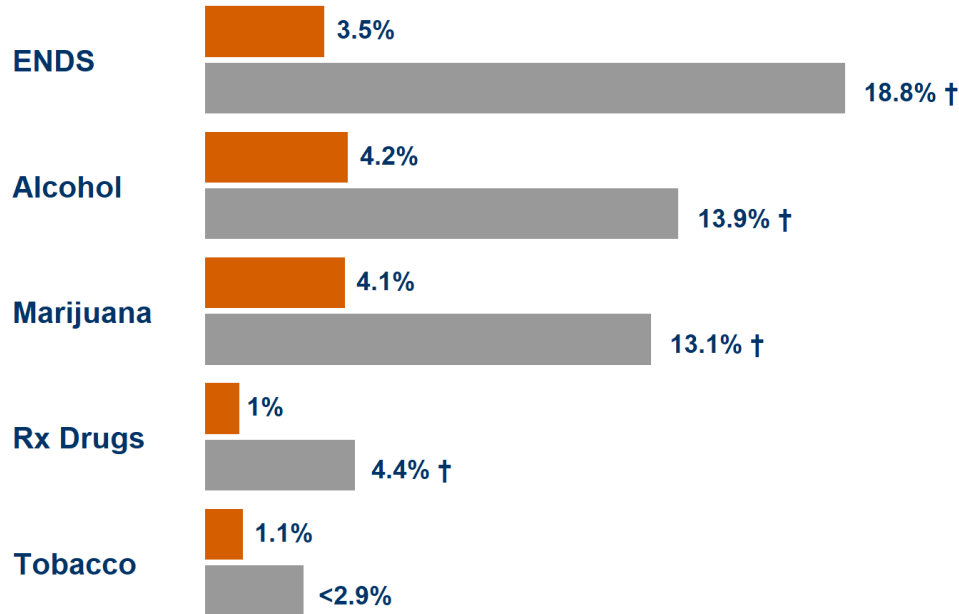
Compared to 2018, there was an increase in use of alcohol, tobacco, and Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS), also known as e-cigarettes or vape pens or devices.

† Statistically significant increase compared to RISS 2018  
 ▽ Statistically significant decrease compared to RISS 2018

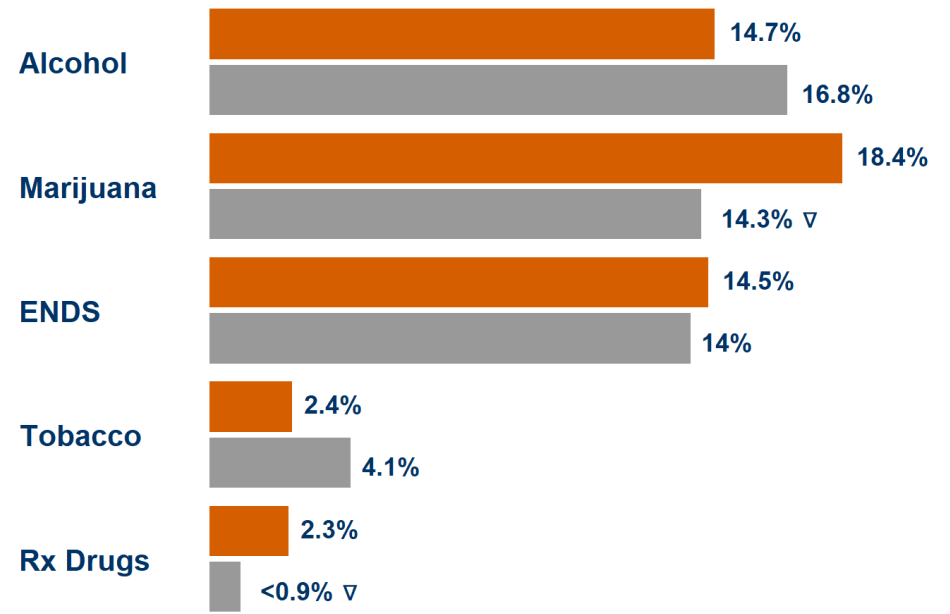


# Substance Use by School Level

## Past 30 Day Use Middle School



## Past 30 Day Use High School



■ 2018 ■ 2020

† Statistically significant increase compared to RISS 2018

▽ Statistically significant decrease compared to RISS 2018

Compared to 2018, marijuana, alcohol, ENDS, and prescription drug use increased among middle school students, while marijuana and prescription drug use decreased among high school students.

# Access and Availability

## Obtaining Prescription Drugs

Among the 23 (3.2%) students who reported having ever used a prescription drug not prescribed for them...



Most students reported obtaining prescription drugs by taking it from someone or getting it from a friend.

### Count It! Lock It! Drop It!®



**Count** your pills once every two weeks. This will prevent theft and ensure that medications are taken properly.

**Lock** up your medications and store them in a place that others would not think to look.

**Drop** off unused/expired medications for proper disposal. Police departments across Rhode Island have permanent drug disposal bins.

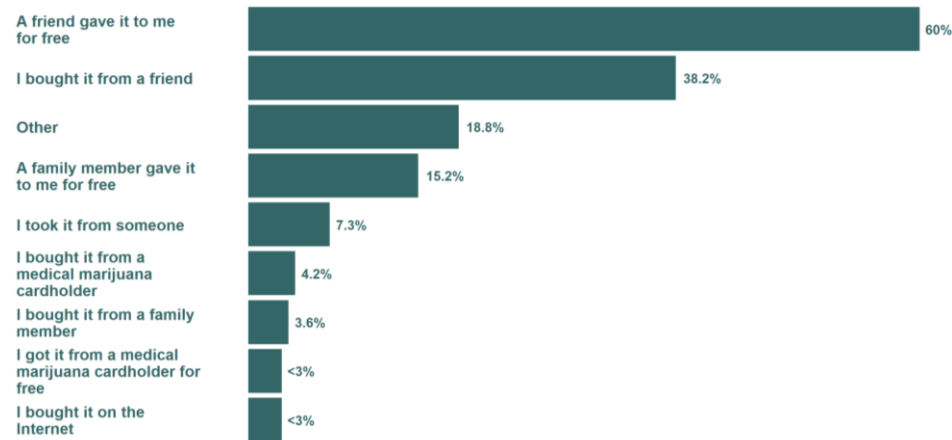


Students reporting use of prescription drugs not prescribed to them listed pain relief pills, ADHD medications, and sedatives

# Access and Availability

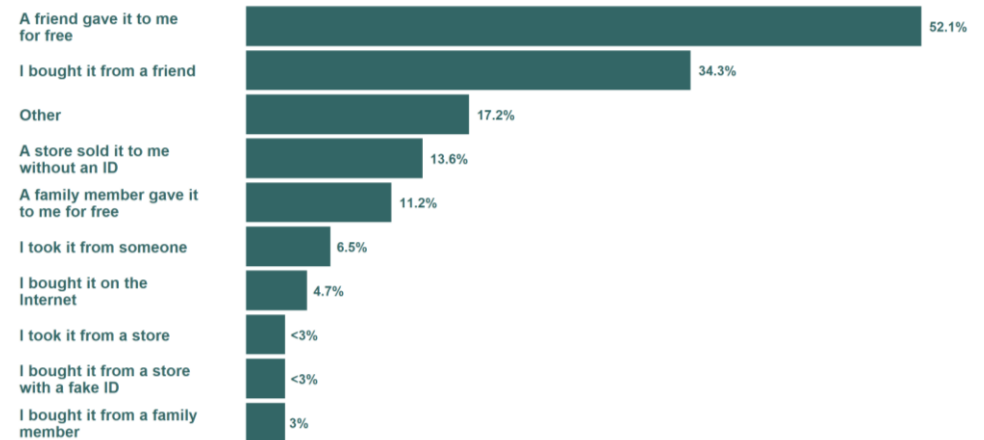
## Obtaining Marijuana

Among the 165 (22.2%) students who reported having ever used marijuana...



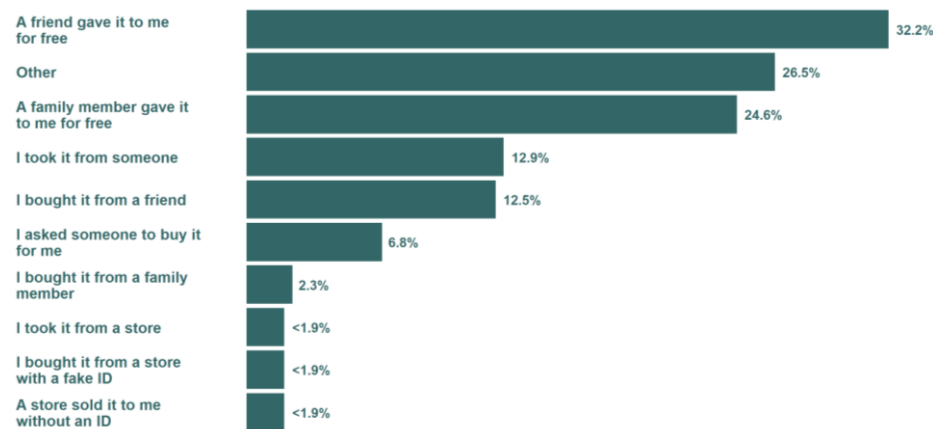
## Obtaining ENDS

Among the 169 (23.1%) students who reported having ever used ENDS...



## Obtaining Alcohol

Among the 264 (36.8%) students who reported having ever consumed an alcoholic beverage...



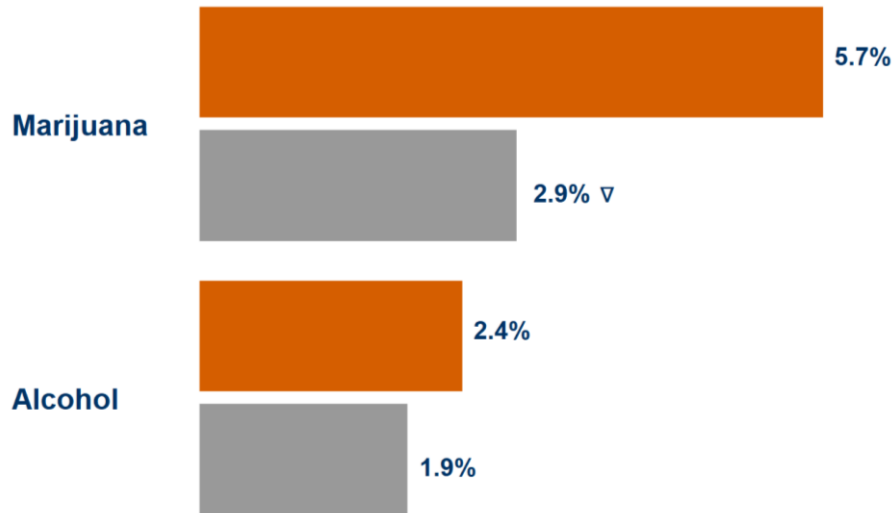
Most students reported obtaining marijuana, ENDS, and alcohol from a friend.





# Under the Influence

Percentage of students who have ever driven under the influence of:



Percentage of students who have ever been a passenger in a vehicle driven by someone under the influence of:



■ 2018 ■ 2020

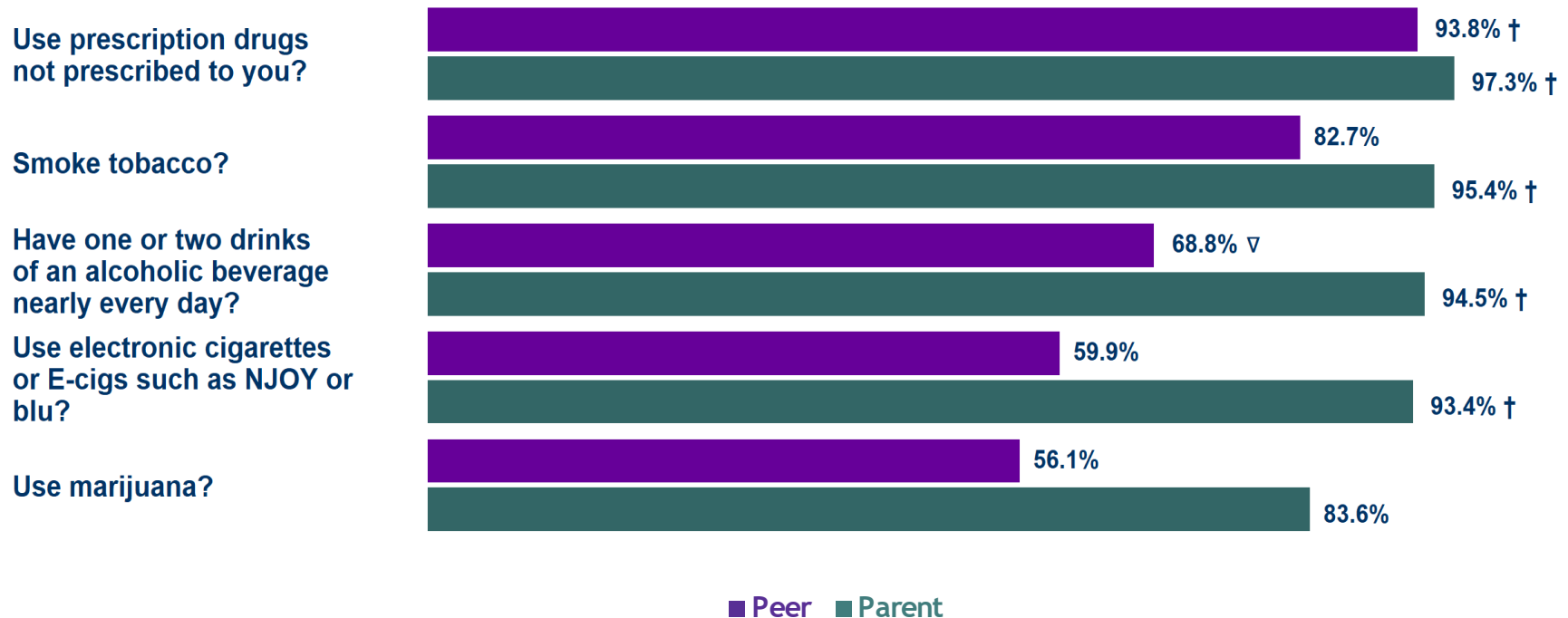
† Statistically significant increase compared to RISS 2018

▽ Statistically significant decrease compared to RISS 2018

Compared to 2018, there was a decrease in students who have ever driven under the influence of marijuana or been a passenger in a vehicle of someone driving under the influence of alcohol.

# Parent & Peer Disapproval

Percentage of students who believe parents/peers would disapprove of the following:



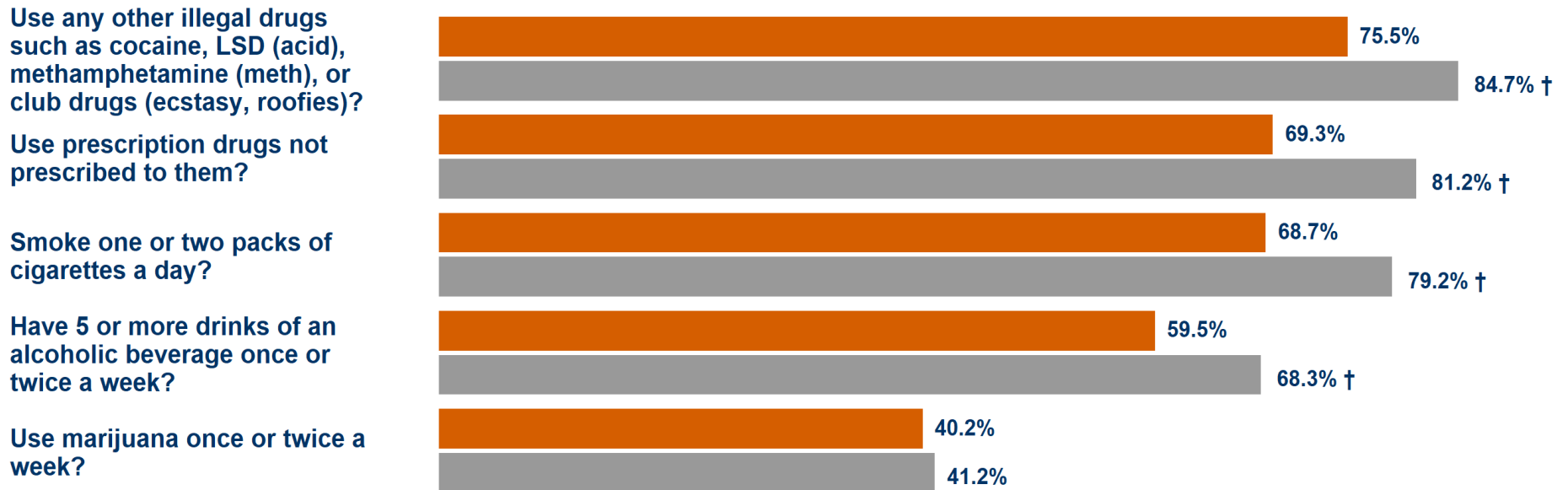
† Statistically significant increase compared to RISS 2018

∇ Statistically significant decrease compared to RISS 2018

Parents are the most powerful influence on their children when it comes to preventing alcohol and other drug misuse. **Talk early, talk often, listen.**

# Perception of Risk

Percentage of students who agree that people risk harming themselves (physically or in other ways) if they:



■ 2018 ■ 2020

† Statistically significant increase compared to RISS 2018

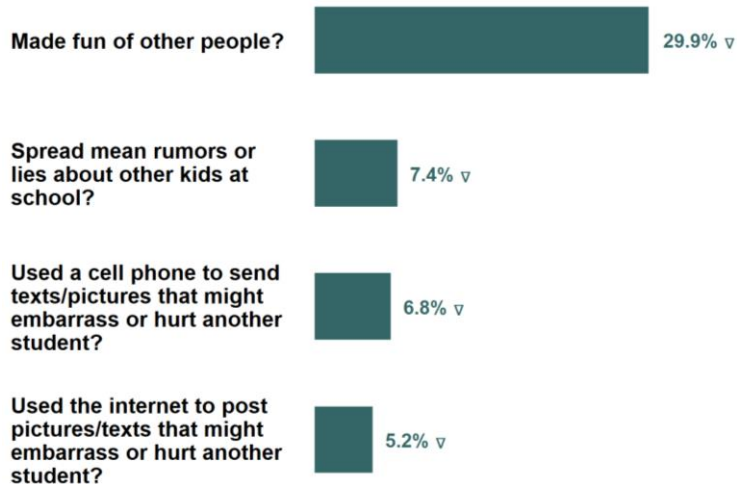
▽ Statistically significant decrease compared to RISS 2018

**Students considered marijuana use to be less risky compared to other substances.**

# Bullying

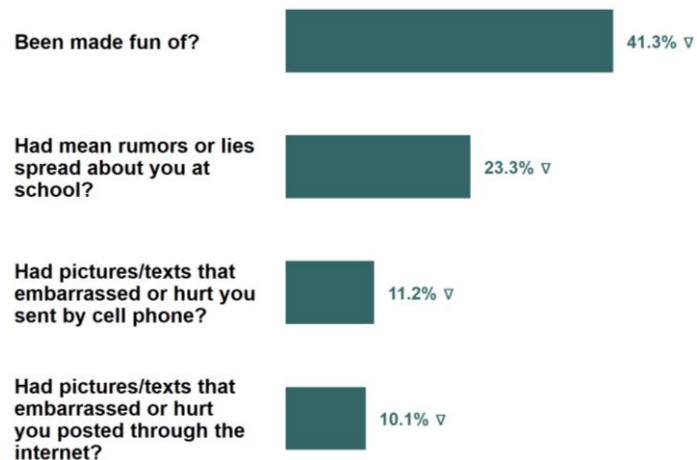
## Bullying (Perpetrated)

At least once in the last 3 months...



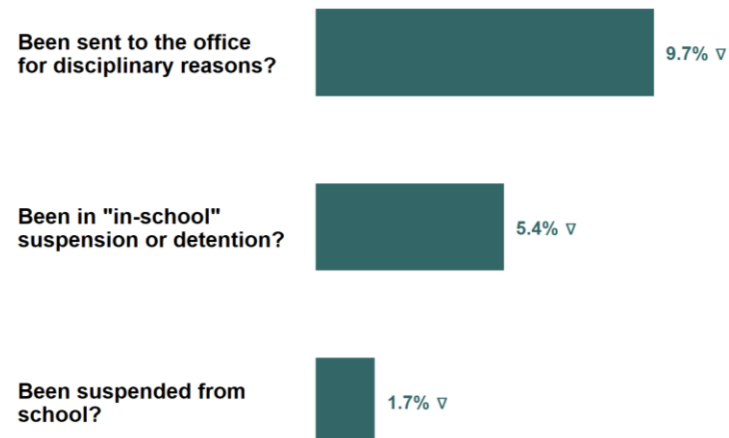
## Bullied (Experienced)

At least once in the last 3 months...



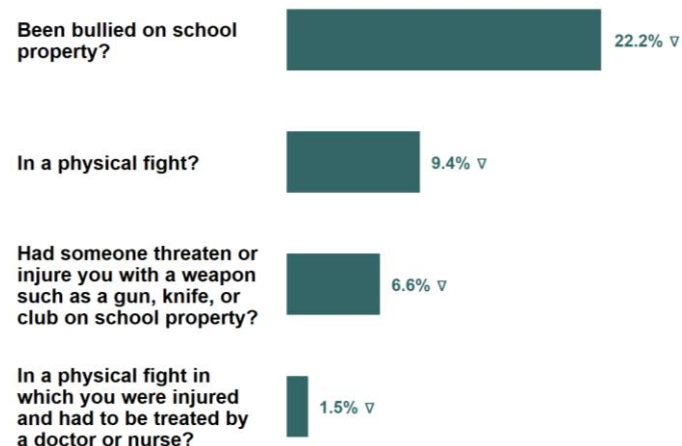
## Disciplinary action

At least once in the last 3 months...



## Physical Violence

At least once in the last year...



† Statistically significant increase compared to RISS 2018

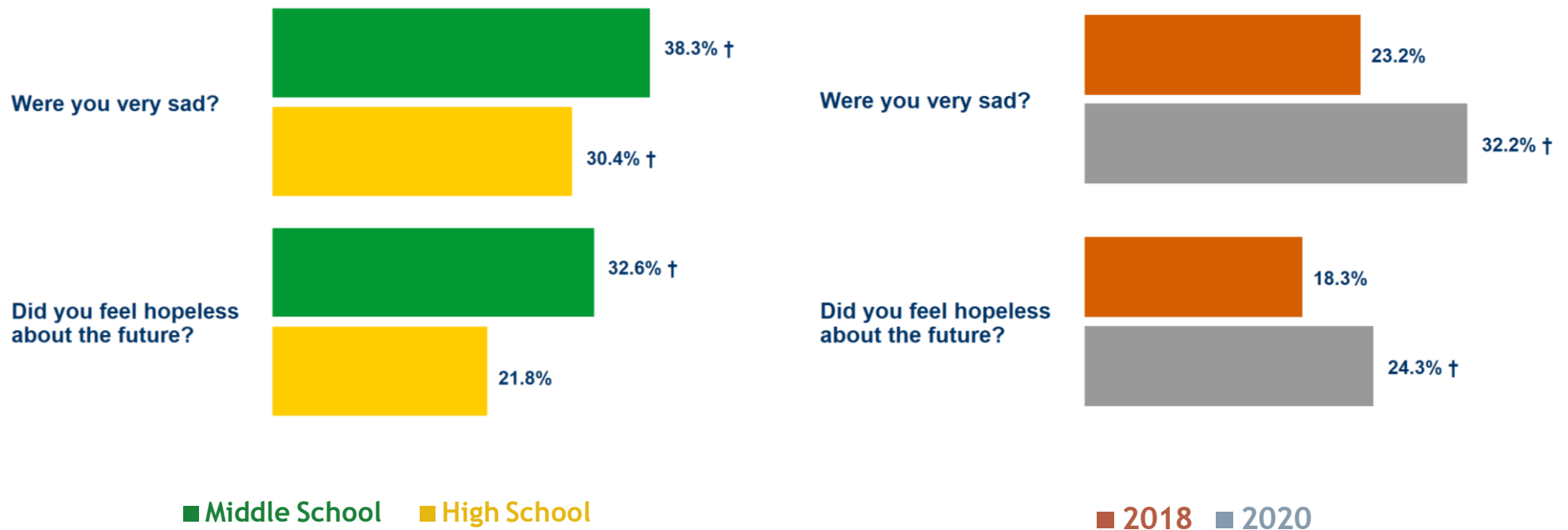
▽ Statistically significant decrease compared to RISS 2018



**There was a statistically significant decrease in experiences related to bullying, being bullied, disciplinary action and physical violence compared to 2018.**

# Mental Health

In the last 30 days...



† Statistically significant increase compared to RISS 2018

∇ Statistically significant decrease compared to RISS 2018

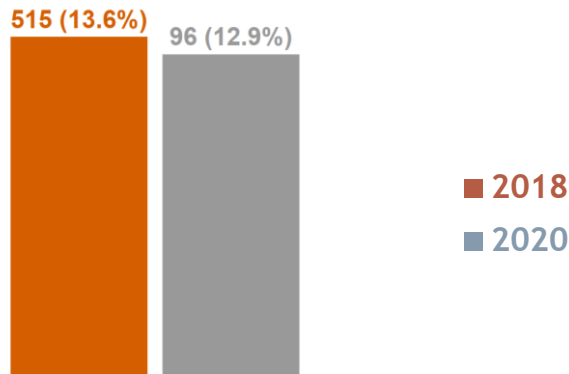
**Compared to 2018, there was a statistically significant increase in negative feelings surrounding mental health, regardless of school level.**



# Mental Health

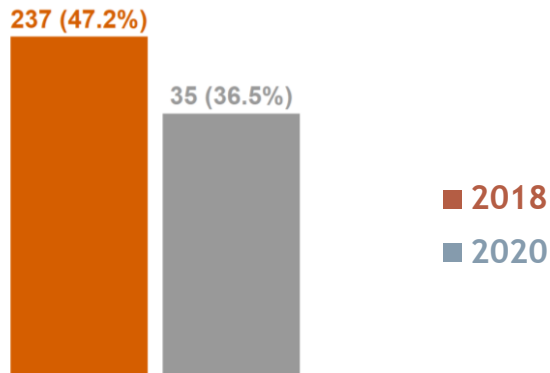
## Among all students...

Number of students who have ever considered attempting suicide



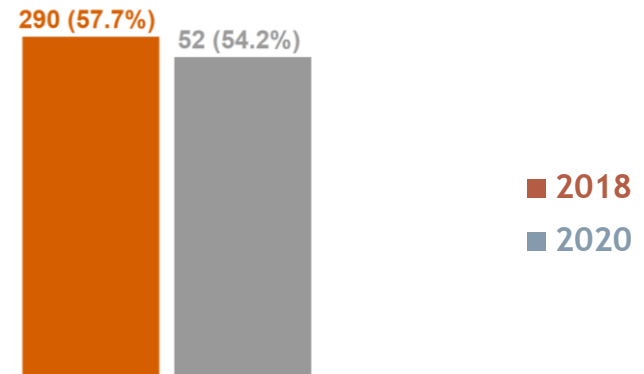
## Among students who have ever considered attempting suicide...

Number of students who have ever attempted suicide



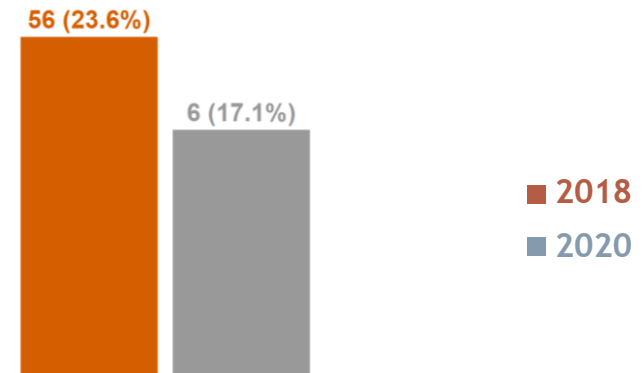
## Among students who have ever considered attempting suicide...

Number of students who have ever made a plan about how they would attempt suicide



## Among students who have ever attempted suicide...

Number of students who have ever attempted suicide which resulted in an injury, poisoning, or overdose that had to be treated by a doctor or nurse



† Statistically significant increase compared to RISS 2018

∇ Statistically significant decrease compared to RISS 2018

# Thank you!

The Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals would like to acknowledge the cooperation and effort of all the schools and students who participate in the Rhode Island Student Survey each administration year.



**Dan McKee**  
Governor



**Womazetta Jones**  
Secretary



**Richard Charest**  
Director



**Dr. Nicole Alexander-Scott**  
Director



**Angelica Infante-Green**  
Commissioner,  
RI Department of Education



# Resource List

## Substance Misuse

- ❖ [health.ri.gov/tobacco](http://health.ri.gov/tobacco)
- ❖ [riprevention.org](http://riprevention.org)
- ❖ <https://cadyinc.org/resources/get-the-facts/keeping-your-child-safe-around-prom-and-graduation-time/>
- ❖ <https://www.riprc.org/>
- ❖ <http://tobaccofree-ri.org/smoke-free-school-policy.htm>
- ❖ <http://tobaccofree-ri.org/local-ordinances.htm>
- ❖ <https://www.alcohol.org/teens/binge-drinking/>
- ❖ [https://www.riprc.org/elearning/marijuana\\_adolescent\\_brain/#/](https://www.riprc.org/elearning/marijuana_adolescent_brain/#/)
- ❖ [https://www.riprc.org/elearning/e-cigarettes/#/?\\_k=m4kq44](https://www.riprc.org/elearning/e-cigarettes/#/?_k=m4kq44)
- ❖ <https://bhddh.ri.gov/prevention/prescription-drug-disposal-sites>
- ❖ <https://bhddh.ri.gov/substance-use/addiction/individual-and-family-information/help-opioid-dependence/community-based>

## Bullying

- ❖ [stopbullying.gov](http://stopbullying.gov)
- ❖ <https://www.glad.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/ride-transgender-students-guidance-6-7-16.pdf>
- ❖ [https://www.ride.ri.gov/studentsfamilies/healthsafety/\\_socialemotionalllearning.aspx](https://www.ride.ri.gov/studentsfamilies/healthsafety/_socialemotionalllearning.aspx)
- ❖ <https://www.ride.ri.gov/StudentsFamilies/HealthSafety/SchoolMentalWellnessResources.aspx>
- ❖ <https://www.ride.ri.gov/StudentsFamilies/HealthSafety/BullyingSchoolViolence.aspx>

## Behavioral Health Crises/Depression/Suicidal Ideation

- ❖ <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/>

- ❖ <https://www.ride.ri.gov/StudentsFamilies/HealthSafety/EmergencyPreparedness.asp>
- ❖ <http://bit.ly/2LhcuUx>
- ❖ [changedirection.org](http://changedirection.org)
- ❖ <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfywK0KYI9wcTIHkciK5tI5Qp5hOHgRicISnjuJGwRGgqjVaQ/viewform>
- ❖ [https://projectchildsafesafe.org/safety\\_kit\\_site/?safety\\_kit\\_state=rhode-island](https://projectchildsafesafe.org/safety_kit_site/?safety_kit_state=rhode-island)
- ❖ <https://health.ri.gov/violence/about/suicide/>
- ❖ <https://www.bhlink.org/>
- ❖ <https://learningforquality.org/login/>

## Business

- ❖ <http://riprc.org>
- ❖ <https://recoveryfriendlyri.com/>
- ❖ <https://rrforum.org/>
- ❖ <http://tobaccofree-ri.org/policy-briefs.htm>
- ❖ <https://www.bhlink.org/>

## Education

- ❖ [health.ri.gov/tobacco](http://health.ri.gov/tobacco)
- ❖ <https://cadyinc.org/resources/get-the-facts/keeping-your-child-safe-around-prom-and-graduation-time/>
- ❖ <https://www.glad.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/ride-transgender-students-guidance-6-7-16.pdf>
- ❖ <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/>
- ❖ <http://ride.ri.gov/StudentsFamilies/HealthSafety/EmergencyPreparedness.aspx>
- ❖ <http://bit.ly/2LhcuUx>
- ❖ [changedirection.org](http://changedirection.org)





# Resource List

- ❖ <http://tobaccofree-ri.org/smoke-free-school-policy.htm>
- ❖ <https://www.bhlink.org/>
- ❖ [https://www.ride.ri.gov/studentsfamilies/healthsafety/\\_socialemotionalllearning.aspx](https://www.ride.ri.gov/studentsfamilies/healthsafety/_socialemotionalllearning.aspx)
- ❖ [https://www.ride.ri.gov/StudentsFamilies/HealthSafety/\\_SchoolMentalWellnessResources.aspx](https://www.ride.ri.gov/StudentsFamilies/HealthSafety/_SchoolMentalWellnessResources.aspx)

## Safety

- ❖ [health.ri.gov/tobacco](http://health.ri.gov/tobacco)
- ❖ <https://www.riprc.org/>
- ❖ <https://www.bhlink.org/>

## Medical/Health

- ❖ <https://www.riprc.org/>
- ❖ <https://www.bhlink.org/>

## Government

- ❖ <https://www.bhlink.org/>

## Community/Family Supports

- ❖ DrugFree.org
- ❖ <http://riprc.org>
- ❖ [https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/dating-matters-toolkit/?deliveryName=USCDC\\_1104-DM9553#/](https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/dating-matters-toolkit/?deliveryName=USCDC_1104-DM9553#/)
- ❖ <https://learningforquality.org/login/>
- ❖ <https://strengtheningfamiliesri.blogspot.com/>
- ❖ <https://www.resthelps.org/>
- ❖ <https://www.bhlink.org/>