



2019 Middle and High School Student Health & Wellness Survey Executive Summary

INTRODUCTION

In the Spring of 2019, Lab administered a comprehensive, anonymous health and wellness survey to more than 960 Lab students in grades six through 12. The aim of the survey was to learn directly from students about their social and emotional experiences, physical health and habits, and safety. These factors and others collectively signal the extent to which individuals and groups at Lab feel healthy, safe, respected, included, successful, and valued.

We thank the students who shared their perspectives and provided our community with this valuable information. Many of the results were consistent with last year's responses, while the newly added questions provide additional insight into our students' social and emotional experiences. When considering the data, there are moments when particular aspects of demographic information become salient and we find it important to sort student responses by gender and/or race/ethnicity. We do so to highlight disparities in experience, while recognizing the limitations of the options presented to students within the metrics of the survey. In addition, this summary highlights the 2018 results for all questions that were asked in both years where there was a statistically significant difference between 2018 and 2019.¹ Lab is using these results, as well as the results from last year, to continue to drive conversations and improvements around health education, student support, coordinated social-emotional learning, and community engagement.

KEY FINDINGS BY CORE SEL COMPETENCIES

Social and emotional learning (SEL) enhances students' capacity to integrate skills, attitudes, and behaviors to deal effectively and ethically with daily tasks and challenges. Considering students' responses in the context of SEL helps assess their intrapersonal, interpersonal, and cognitive competence as well as the impact of external factors on their social and emotional health. It also encourages partnership and engagement between home and school in order to support students' wellness and growth in the corresponding [SEL competencies described by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning \(CASEL\)](#).



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¹ Where appropriate, we used nationally benchmarked questions that enable us to compare data with other students' responses across the country. However, tailoring the survey to Lab's needs necessarily meant that not all results have national comparison points. Similarly, while we preserved some questions from our 2018 instrument to enable comparisons, responding to the feedback from our community during the revision process meant that many questions were changed. In addition, when comparing results from 2018 and 2019, it is important to note that the 2019 results included 12th grade students, whereas the 2018 survey results did not.

SELF-AWARENESS

CASEL definition: The ability to accurately recognize one’s own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior. The ability to accurately assess one’s strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a “growth mindset.”

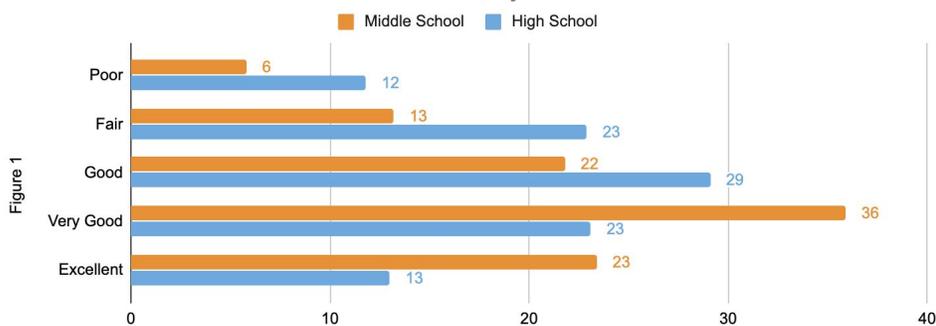
Self-Perception of Physical Health and Diet

- The majority of Lab students in both Middle and High School reported that they considered themselves in good, very good or excellent health, and that their diet was moderately, very, or extremely well-balanced.

Identifying Emotions and Self-Perception

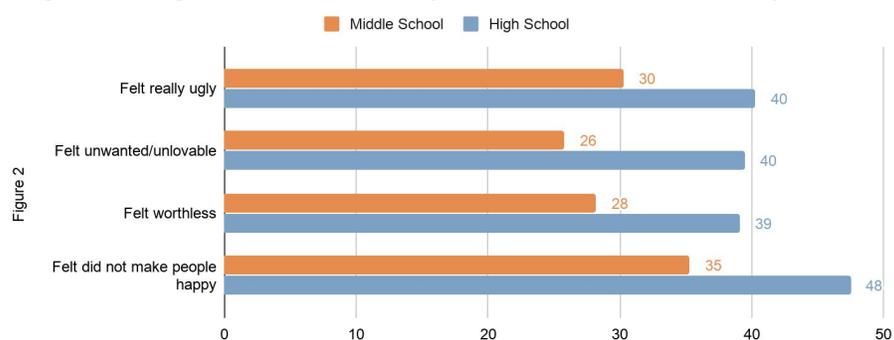
- 81% of Middle School students and 65% of High School students self-rated their overall mental and emotional health as good, very good, or excellent, and 6% and 12%, respectively, described their overall mental and emotional health as poor. (See Figure 1.) In addition, 66% of Middle School students and 51% of High School students said that they were mostly or very happy with themselves, while 18% and 27%, respectively, said they were only somewhat or not at all happy with themselves.

Self-Rated Mental and Emotional Health, by School



- Approximately half of Middle School students and two-thirds of High School students reported having some form of persistent negative feelings about themselves—such as feeling really ugly, unwanted, worthless, or not making others happy—every day for at least two weeks in the previous 12 months. The most frequently reported feeling was not making other people happy. (See Figure 2.)

Negative Thoughts Students Had Daily for 2+ Consecutive Weeks, by School



- Roughly one-third of Lab students said that in the last 12 months, they had experienced feelings of sadness or hopelessness almost every day for at least two weeks such that they stopped doing some of their usual activities. Those feelings were more common for older students at Lab, and generally consistent with national averages.

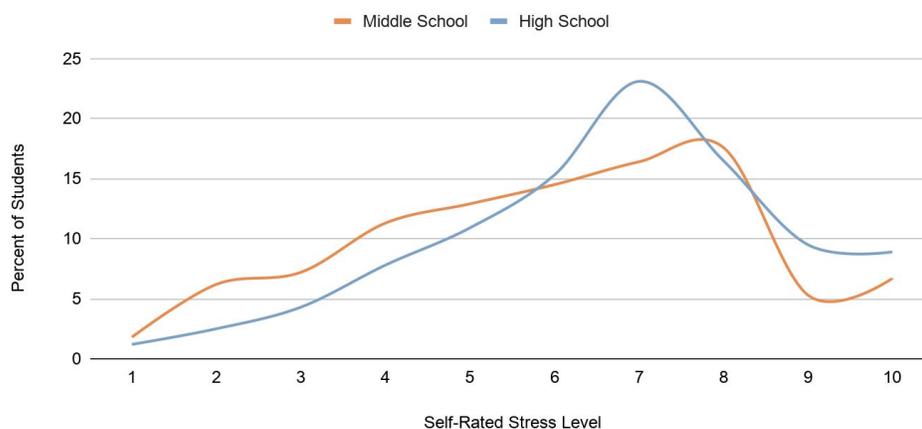
SELF-MANAGEMENT

CASEL definition: The ability to successfully regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations—effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself. The ability to set and work toward personal and academic goals.

Stress and Coping

- On average, Middle School students rated their typical school day stress as 6 on a 10 point scale, while High School students rated their stress as 6.7. (See Figure 3.) When students were asked to identify their top three sources of stress, 74% of Middle School students identified school work, 77% identified grades, and 25% identified family expectations. Similarly, 70% of High School students identified school work, 62% identified grades, and 37% identified college/post-graduation plans.

Typical School Day Stress Level on 10 Point Scale, by School



- Approximately half of the students in all grades indicated they were mostly or very confident in their ability to cope with stress, and another quarter of students reported they were moderately confident in their ability. There were no significant differences between grades. When students were asked to identify the ways they cope with stress, 73% of Middle School students identified listening to music, 70% identified talking with friends, and 69% identified watching television or movies. For High School, 86% of students identified listening to music, 79% identified sleeping, 76% identified surfing the web or using social media, and 76% identified watching television or movies.
- 9% of Middle School students and 16% of High School students reported engaging in intentional self-harming behavior such as cutting or burning themselves in the previous 12 months.
- 11% of Middle School and 18% of High School students reported having seriously considered suicide in the past 12 months, which is generally consistent with national averages but still deeply troubling.*

Time Spent on Homework

- On average, Middle School students reported spending 2.7 hours doing homework each school night and 4 hours total on the weekends. High School students reported spending 3.6 hours each school night and 5.8 hours total on the weekends, on average. (See Figure 4.)

Average Daily Time on Homework - School Nights, by Year and School

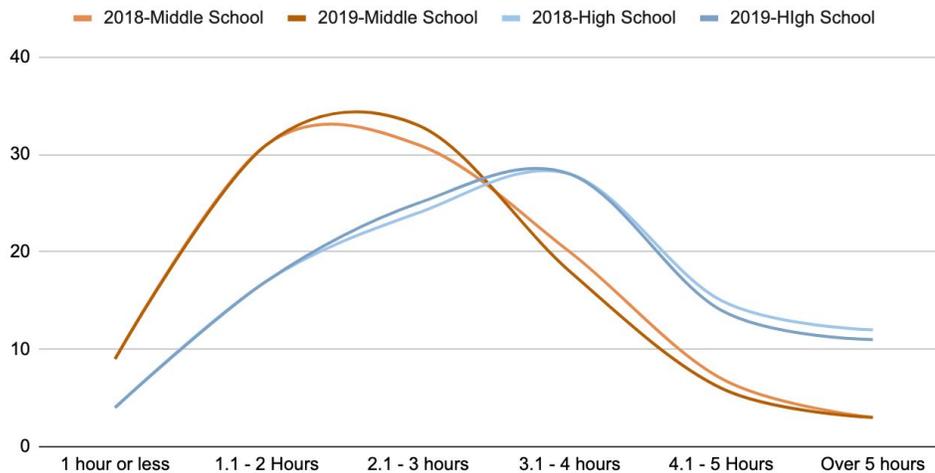


Figure 4

- Most students reported that they typically engage in at least one other activity while doing their homework. 68% of Middle Schoolers and 82% of High Schoolers said they usually listen to music, and 57% of Middle Schoolers and 60% of High Schoolers said they eat while doing their homework. In addition, 24% of Middle School students reported that they typically talk or text on the phone, 17% use social media, email, or chat, 23% watch TV/movies/videos, and 22% talk to family or friends in person while doing homework. These activities were more common amongst High School students: 44% reported talking or texting on the phone; 39% reported using social media, email, or chat; 31% reported watching TV/movies/videos; and 29% talking to family or friends in person while doing homework.

Physical Activity

- The CDC recommends that school-aged children be physically active for at least 60 minutes each day. Most Middle School students reported that they were physically active for 60+ minutes for at least five of the previous seven days, and 25% reported having been physically active for 60+ minutes all of the previous seven days. Most High School students reported that they were physically active for 60+ minutes for four of the previous five days, and 14% reported having been physically active for 60+ minutes all of the previous seven days.

Time Spent on Extra-Curriculars

- Middle School students typically spend about 6.75 hours at school each day during regular school hours, for a total of almost 34 hours each five-day week. In addition, 26% of Middle School students reported spending up to 2 hours participating in scheduled extra-curricular activities outside of regular school hours during a typical five-day school week, while 26% reported spending between 2 and 4 hours, 30% reported spending between 4 and 8 hours, and 17% reported spending more than 8 hours each week.
- High School students typically spend about 7 hours at school each day during regular school hours, for a total of about 35 hours each five-day week. In addition, 15% of High School students reported spending up to 2 hours participating in scheduled extra-curricular activities outside of regular school hours during a typical five-day school week, while 24% reported spending

between 2 and 4 hours, 34% reported spending between 4 and 10 hours, and 27% reported spending more than 10 hours each week.

Screen Time

- On average, Middle School students reported spending 2 hours per school day in front of a screen for purposes other than school work; High School students reported spending 2.8 hours per school day. (See Figure 5.)

Total Non-Schoolwork Screen Hours on an Average School Day, by Year and by School

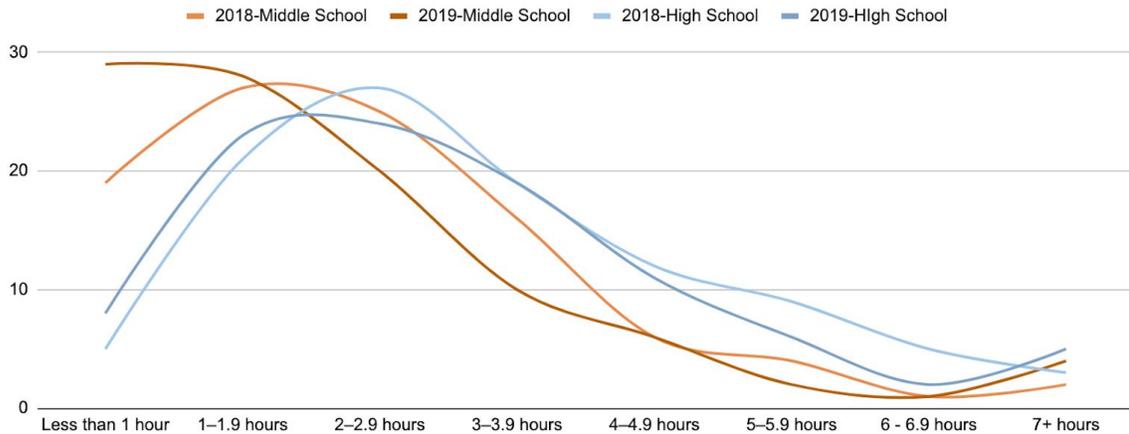


Figure 5

Sleep

- The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that children aged 6–12 sleep between 9 and 12 hours each night and that teens aged 13–18 sleep between 8 and 10 hours each night. On average, Middle School students reported sleeping approximately 8.2 hours on school nights, and High School students reported sleeping approximately 7 hours on school nights. While results for Middle School students were generally consistent with a year ago, the 2019 results for High School students showed more students reporting sleeping fewer than 6 hours and more students reporting sleeping 8-8.9 hours than the 2018 results; this difference is due in part to the inclusion of the 12th grade students’ responses as students 12th grade were more likely to report fewer hours of sleep than students in lower grades. (See Figure 6.)

School Night Sleep Hours, by Year and by School

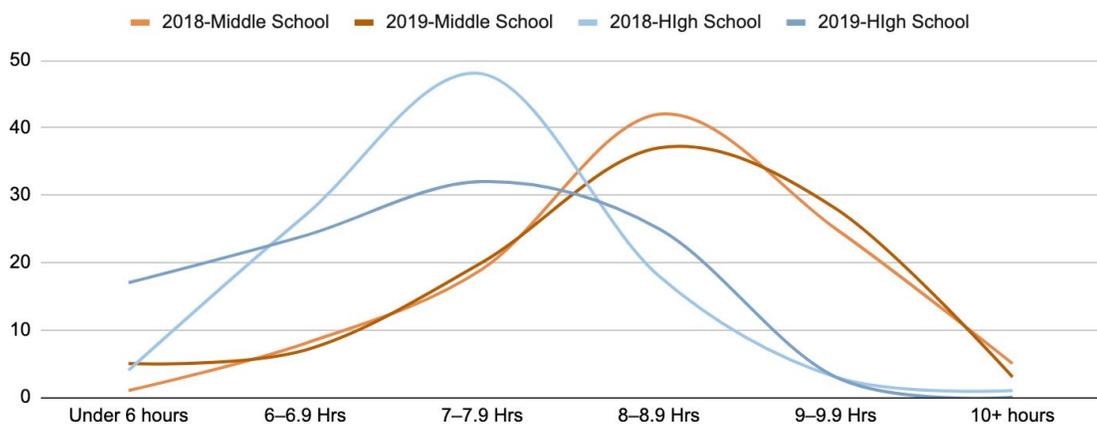
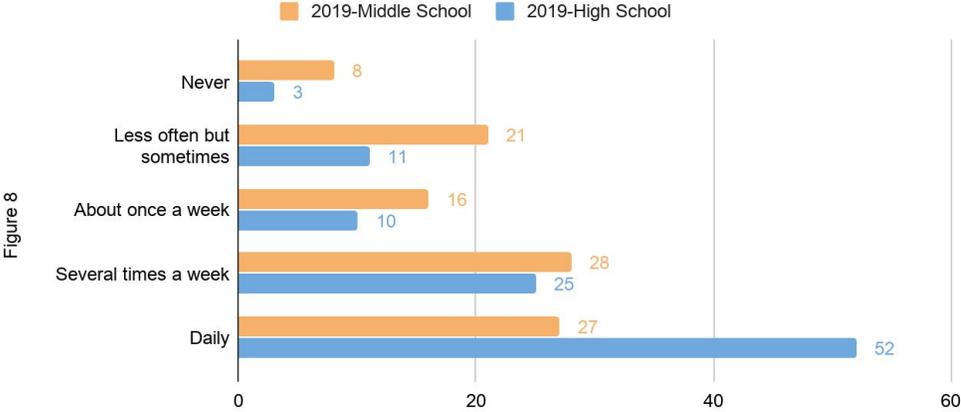


Figure 6

- The average number of hours that students slept on Friday and Saturday nights was within the AAP’s recommended range for their age. On average, Middle School students reported sleeping 9.6 hours each weekend night, and High School students reported sleeping 9.3 hours each weekend night.
- Nearly all students reported that homework affects the time they go to bed at least some of the time. Approximately one-quarter of Middle School students and one-half of High School students said it affects their bedtime daily. (See Figure 7.)

How Often Homework Affects Time to Bed, by Year and School



SOCIAL AWARENESS

CASEL definition: The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The ability to understand social and ethical norms for behavior and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.

S

Social and Ethical Norms for Behavior

- Nearly all students (93%) reported that they treat others with kindness most or almost all of the time. 15% of all students said they had experienced someone posting negative comments about them on social media or the internet in the last 30 days, while 23% of Middle School students and 14% of High School students said they had been bullied on Lab property in the past 12 months.

Support Systems

- 79% of students reported that they have a friend at school who is available to support them most of the time or as often as needed, while 10% reported that they feel that their friends are never available or are available a lot less than needed.
- The majority of Lab students reported that they have an adult they can rely on for help or support if they are down, stressed, worried, or upset. 72% of all students reported that they can rely on a parent for support, 59% said they can rely on an adult at school (e.g., a teacher or nurse). (See Figure 8.)

Adults Students Can Rely on for Help or Support, by School

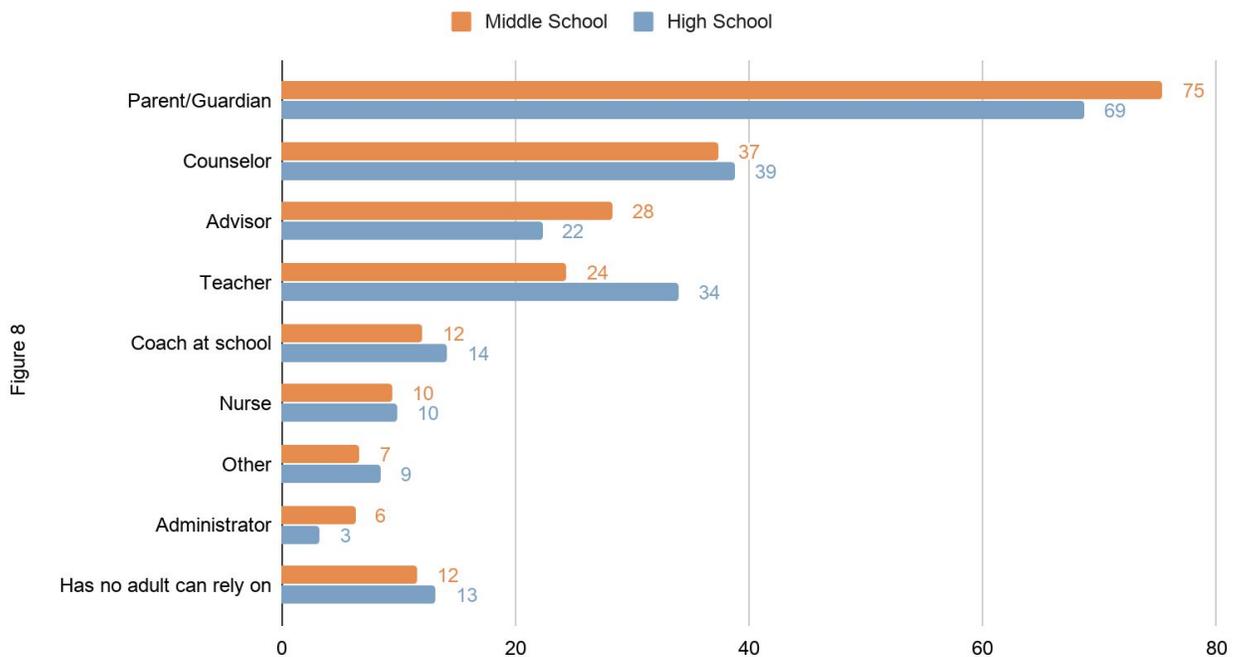


Figure 8

RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

CASEL definition: The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. The ability to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed. **S**

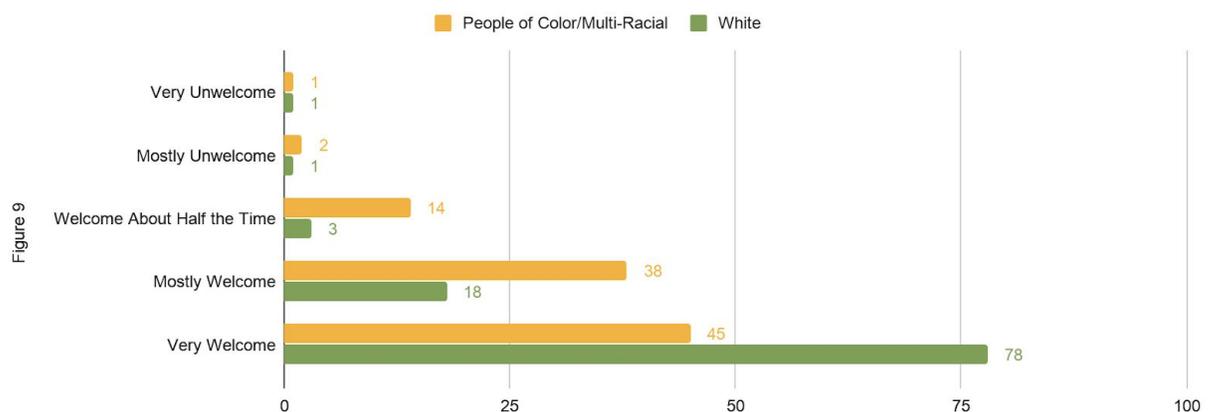
Asking for Help

- About 40% of students reported they were mostly, or very comfortable asking for support when they were feeling down, stressed, worried, or upset, while about one quarter of students reported feeling moderately comfortable, and one-third of students reported that they were only somewhat or not at all comfortable asking for support.

Sense of Belonging and Maintaining Rewarding Relationships

- Most students (68%) reported that they mostly or very much felt that they belong at Lab. Younger students and self-identified male students were more likely to report positive feelings of belonging. 75% of students said they felt very welcome at school based on their gender identity, with older, self-identified male students most likely to report positive feelings of welcomeness. Overall, 60% of students reported feeling very welcome based on their self-identified race or ethnicity, however, students who identified as white were far more likely to report positive feelings of welcomeness (78% report feeling very welcome) than students who identified as people of color or multi-racial/ethnic (45% report feeling very welcome). (See Figure 9.)

Feeling of Welcomeness Based on Self-Identified Race/Ethnicity, by Race/Ethnicity

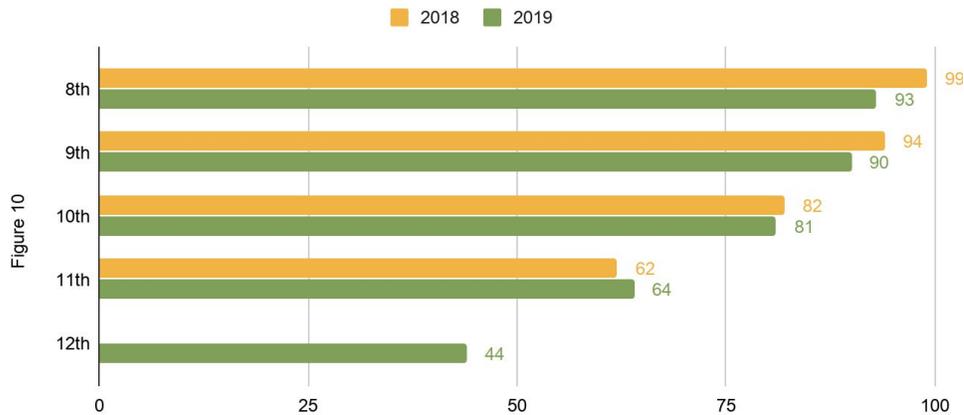


- The majority of Lab students (86%) reported mostly or very much having a close friend at school or being part of a friend group. Most (90%) also said they are treated well by their friends most of the time or almost always.

Sexual Relationships

- Overall, in the High School, 28% of students reported that they had engaged in oral, anal, or vaginal sex in their lifetime as compared to 40% of high school students nationally who have engaged in sexual intercourse, a significantly higher number that does not include students who have engaged in oral sex without having engaged in intercourse. There was a statistically significant increase between 2018 and 2019 survey results for the percentage of students in eighth grade who reported ever engaging in sexual activity (7% as compared to 1%). (See Figure 10.)

Students Who Report Never Engaging in Oral, Anal, or Vaginal Sex, by Year and by Grade



Harm from Others

- In the 2019 survey, 61% of Middle School students and 71% of High School students reported that they had not experienced anyone physically hurting them on purpose in the previous year, which was generally consistent with the results in Lab’s 2018 survey.
- About 2% of eighth graders and 6% of High School students combined reported that they were forced to do “sexual things” that they did not want to do, including kissing, touching breasts or genitals over clothing, or being physically forced to have sexual intercourse in the previous 12 months.* Nationally, about 10% of high school students reported that they had been forced to do “sexual things.”

RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING

CASEL definition: The ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms. The realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and a consideration of the well-being of oneself and others.

Helmet Use

- About one-third of Middle School students and one-quarter of High School students reported always wearing a helmet while using bicycles, skateboards, or rollerblades, and an additional 31% of Middle School students and 21% of High School students reported wearing a helmet most of the time.

Car Safety

- The majority of students reported always wearing a seatbelt when riding in a car (74% of Middle School students and 60% of High School students). 96% of Middle School students and 94% of High School students reported that they had not knowingly ridden in a car driven by someone under 21 years old who was under the influence of alcohol or another substance in the previous 30 days. 25% of High School students who had driven in the previous 30 days reported that they had used an electronic device without a hands-free system while they were driving during that time, and about 3% reported driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol in the same time period.

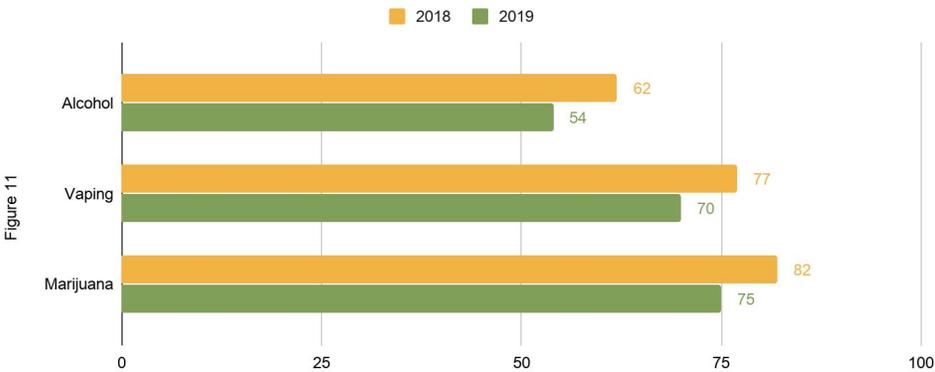
Personal & Community Safety

- At Lab, 89% of all students reported that they did not have access to a gun, while 6% were unsure whether they have access, and 6% reported they did have access to a gun.
- Four students reported carrying a gun on school property since the beginning of the 2018–2019 academic year, which was the same number as reported carrying a gun on school property during the 2017–2018 academic year on the 2018 survey.
- 1% of all students reported hearing first-hand of another Lab student bringing a gun on school property since September 2018, while an additional 5% of students reported hearing second-hand of another Lab student bringing a gun. This question in the 2019 survey revised the broader question on 2018 survey to ask only about “Lab” students. In 2018, 1% of students reported hearing first-hand of “another student” bringing a gun on school property during the 2018–2019 academic year, while an additional 1% of students reported hearing second-hand of another student bringing a gun. These responses are disturbing and unfortunately only give limited information. For example, the numbers also do not indicate why a student may have brought a gun to school (e.g., to harm themselves or others, or for protection). These results also do not indicate whether the student reported this information to an adult.*

Substance Use

- Among Middle School students for the 2019 survey, 87% reported they have never consumed more than a few sips of alcohol, 96% reported they have not used vapor products, and 98% denied using marijuana. Middle School students’ reported lifetime use of alcohol and vaping increased between 2018 and 2019 from 8% to 13% for alcohol and 2% and 4% for vaping. Despite the increase, the 2019 frequencies were less than two-thirds of the most recent national averages for middle school students.
- Alcohol, marijuana, and vapor product use is prevalent in the High School, but is significantly less than national averages. 62% of U-High students reported they have never consumed more than a few sips of alcohol (compared to 40% of high school students nationally). Further, 70% of High Schoolers reported they have not used a vapor product and 75% said they have not used marijuana (compared to 59% and 64%, respectively, nationwide). Each of these categories showed increased prevalence of substance use in the 2019 results as compared to the 2018 results, which is in part due to the inclusion of the 12 grade students who were more likely to report substance use. (See Figure 11.)

High School Students Who Have Never Tried Alcohol, Vaping, or Marijuana, by Year



- The vast majority of students in grades 8 through 12 reported they had not used any substance to get high. 8% of students in grades 8–12 reported taking a prescription medicine that was not prescribed to them or at a higher than recommended dose in order to get high, stay awake or

study, or for some other purpose. In addition, 8% of students in grades 10–12 reporting having used substances other than prescription medicines to get high.

***Affirmative responses to these questions triggered the survey to display a message urging the student to please tell a parent, teacher or counselor about that information.*

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this executive summary is to continue a community-wide conversation, reflect on our existing curriculum, programs, and practices, consider our students' experiences at home and at school, and to inform our collaborative response. We encourage our community to talk openly about health and wellness concerns—including suicide and guns at school—and we provide resources on the [Learning & Counseling webpage](#) to help families guide those conversations at home. It is important that we all reflect on this information and come together as a community to respond in a way that supports our students' growth, builds trust, strengthens communication, and improves the overall wellness, safety, and inclusivity of our community.