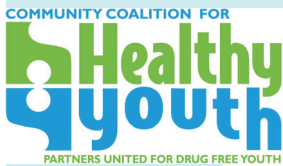


# 2010 YOUTH DEVELOPMENT SURVEY—TOMPKINS COUNTY SUMMARY OF HIGHLIGHTS Spring, 2011



**Community Coalition for Healthy Youth** [www.healthyyouth.org](http://www.healthyyouth.org)  
**Tompkins County Youth Services Dept.** [www.tompkins-co.org/youth](http://www.tompkins-co.org/youth)  
*Supported by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Drug Free Communities Support Program, #SP11382*



The Community Coalition for Healthy Youth, Tompkins County Youth Services Dept., TST BOCES, and superintendents and secondary principals in Dryden, Groton, Ithaca, Lansing, Newfield and Trumansburg School Districts collaborated to administer the Youth Development Survey (YDS) to Tompkins County students in grades 6-12 in October, 2010. (Two districts opted to survey only grades 7-12.) The YDS was developed in 2008 by the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services; in 2010 Tompkins County contracted directly for the survey with International Survey Associates/Pride Surveys.

The survey was designed to assess and measure risk and protective factors that predict problem behaviors such as delinquency, violence, dropping out of school, youth substance use and gambling. Tompkins County added 10 questions to gather additional local information about student connections to school and school climate.

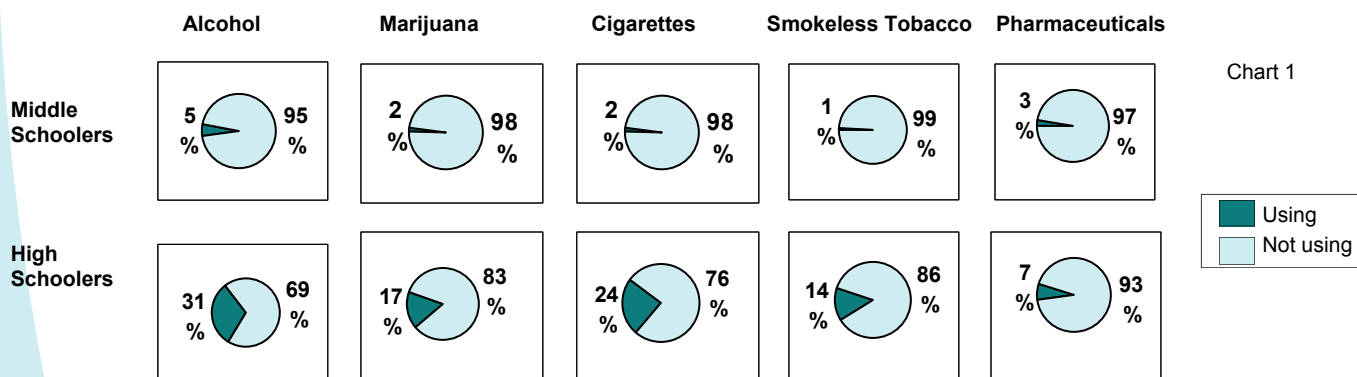
In Tompkins County 4,788 valid responses represent an 82% response rate of all enrolled students in the six participating districts and 14 participating schools.

The responses of Tompkins County students were compared to those of national peers. The results are being used in each district and at the County level to guide school and community efforts to prevent and reduce the use and abuse of alcohol and other drugs, to improve student connections to school and school safety, and to identify the risk and protective factors that our community can modify to improve students' long-term success.

The 2010 Tompkins County Survey Report lists all questions and the combined responses of all students. The Report is on file with Tompkins County Youth Services Dept. and TST BOCES. Each school superintendent and secondary principal also has a copy of the Total Sample Report. This summary is also available at [www.healthyyouth.org](http://www.healthyyouth.org) and [www.tompkins-co.org/youth](http://www.tompkins-co.org/youth).

## KEY FINDING RELATED to the USE of ALCOHOL, MARIJUANA and OTHER DRUGS

### Students reporting substance use\* within the past 30 days (current use)

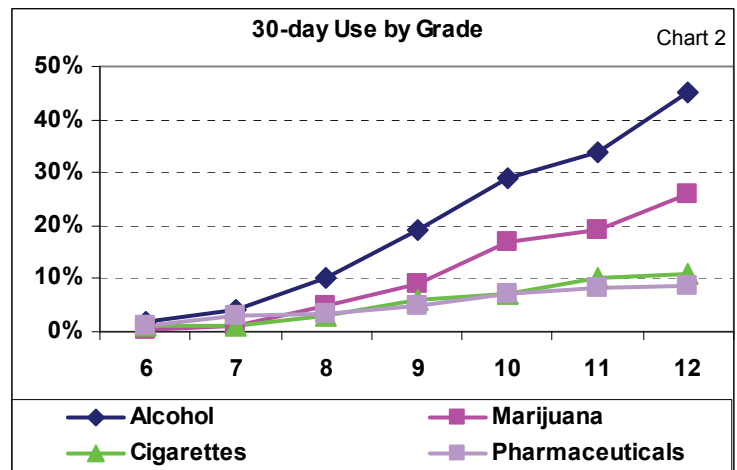


\*Definitions: Alcohol: A full drink of beer, wine, or hard liquor (not just a sip). Marijuana, cigarettes, smokeless tobacco: Any use. Pharmaceuticals: Any use of one or more of the following: cough or cold medicine to get high; prescription pain killers, prescription tranquilizers, prescription sedatives, or prescription stimulants without a doctor's authorization.

**Alcohol** continues to be the most widely used drug among Tompkins County youth. Most students (80%) did not drink alcohol in the 30 days before taking the survey. However, 55% of students in grades 6-12 have had a full alcoholic drink at least once in their lives, up from 49% in 2008. 18% of high schoolers reported binge drinking (5 or more drinks in a row) in the past two weeks. Comparisons with national peers show higher lifetime and 30-day use for local students in grades 10 and 12. Use by high school athletes is higher (32%) than for non-athletes (27%). Local youth who used alcohol most often obtained it from friends over age 21 (23%). The next most common source was at home with parents' permission (21%). Only 10% reported taking alcohol from home without their parents' knowledge. 84% of youth who used alcohol drank it in a private home, their own or a friend's. The average age of first alcohol use is 13.1 years.

**Marijuana** is the next most commonly used drug by Tompkins County youth. By 12th grade, 45% have tried marijuana at least once and 26% are current users (within the past 30 days). Both of these rates are higher than in 2008 when 34% had tried marijuana and 21% were current users. Current use rates by Tompkins youth exceed national rates for both 10th and 12th grades. Noticeable increases in use can be seen from grades 8 to 10; rates double between grades 8 and 9 and almost double again from grades 9 to 10 (see table 4a on P. 5). Use rates by high school athletes are lower (16%) than for non-athletes (18%). The average age of first marijuana use is 13.9 years. 57% of high schoolers reported that would be easy to get marijuana if they wanted. Of those youth who had used marijuana, 42% got it for free, 40% bought it, 8% grew it themselves, and 10% got it from home. 93% of students reported that their parents would disapprove of their using marijuana; fewer students say their parents would disapprove of their using marijuana than cigarettes.

**Tobacco** use by youth in Tompkins County is lower than that of national peers. Use rates for both cigarettes and smokeless tobacco decreased for most grades since 2008. Overall, 6% of students reported using smokeless tobacco and 8% reported using cigarettes in the past 30 days; use rates for both cigarettes and smokeless tobacco are higher in rural school districts. 97% of students said their parents would disapprove if they used cigarettes. The older students get, the more perceived harm they see from using cigarettes regularly; by 12th grade, 94% report potential harm from using cigarettes. (Compare this to only 60% of 12th graders reporting potential harm from using marijuana.) The average age of first use of cigarettes is 13.0 years.



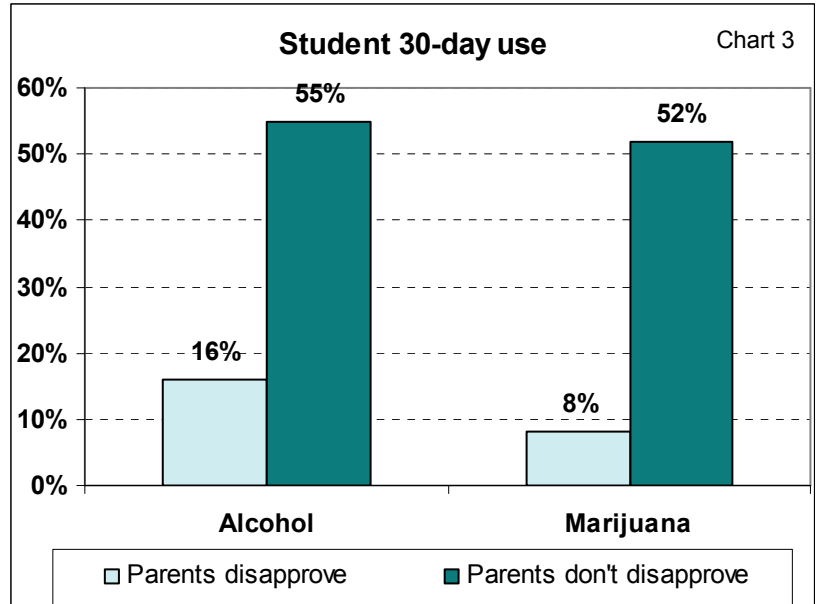
**Pharmaceuticals\*** are being misused at increasing rates across the country and Tompkins County shows evidence of this trend. The most common type used by local students is prescription pain killers, including dangerous, addictive opioids. While rates may appear low (2% of middle and 6% of high schoolers misused pain killers in the past 30 days), these students have significantly higher use of other substances as well. Misused pain killers are sometimes mixed with alcohol, a dangerous combination. High school students who reported using pharmaceuticals in the past 30 days have double the alcohol use rates (60%) and triple the binge drinking rates (57%) of other high schoolers. Most students who reported pharmaceutical use said they got these drugs for free, often taking them from their home or a friend's or relative's home without asking.

**Use rates of other drugs** are low among Tompkins youth. 30-day use rates of heroin, cocaine, meth, Ecstasy, and psychedelics are all below 1%. Inhalant use, more common in younger children due to easy access, peaks at 3% in 9th grade and drops to less than 1% in 12th grade.

\*Pharmaceutical drugs include non-prescription cough and cold medicine and use of any of these prescription drugs without a doctor's order: pain killers, tranquilizers, sedatives, stimulants.

**PARENTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**

There are many things parents and caregivers can do to reduce the likelihood of their children using alcohol and other drugs. The most simple is to express their disapproval. Only 8% of youth who said their parents would disapprove of their using marijuana reported recent (30-day) use as compared with 52% use rates reported by students who said their parents would not disapprove. (chart 3) Rates are significantly lower for alcohol, too, when parents disapprove.



Here are other things that Tompkins parents do that reduce substance use by their children: (See table 1)

**Keep track of their children**, their whereabouts and friends. Tompkins students who reported that their parents know where they are and who they are with had much lower 30-day use rates of alcohol (18% vs. 40%) and marijuana (9% vs. 30%) than students who said their parents did not monitor them.

Table 1

**Have clear family rules about alcohol and drug use.** Youth in families that have clear rules have significantly lower use rate than young people without clear rules.

Impact of parents on youth substance use								
30-day use	Keep track of whereabouts		Have clear family rules		Spend time having fun		Acknowledge a good job	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Alcohol	18%	40%	17%	38%	16%	32%	16%	28%
Marijuana	9%	30%	9%	24%	8%	20%	8%	15%
Pain killers	4%	10%	3%	10%	3%	8%	3%	7%
Binge drinking	9%	30%	9%	26%	8%	20%	8%	17%

**Have fun together.** Young people are much less likely to use alcohol or marijuana when their parents share fun time with them.

**Tell their children when they are doing a good job.** Youth who reported that their parents often or always notice when they are doing a good job and let them know about it are less likely to use alcohol or other drugs.

**STUDENTS' SCHOOL EXPERIENCE**

**Academics & School Support**

- Most middle (91%) and high (79%) schoolers said that they often or always try to do their best work at school.
- 87% of students said that there are lots of chances to talk one-on-one with teachers.
- 68% of middle schoolers and 42% of high schoolers said the things they are learning in school will be important to them later in life.
- 65% of middle and 58% of high schoolers said they have lots of chances to help decide things like class activities and rules.
- 54% of middle and 65% of high schoolers said they typically spend 3+ hours per week on homework.
- 21% of students reported that it is sometimes okay to cheat at school.

See more about students' school experience with school climate in Table 2 on next page.

## School Climate

At my school:	Middle school	High school
Teachers notice and tell me when I'm doing a good job	87%	83%
I have a trusted adult who can help with problems	70%	59%
I often/almost always enjoy being in school	55%	41%
I feel welcomed and appreciated by school adults	44%	49%
In general, I feel safe	39%	49%
School rules are fairly enforced	34%	40%
Students generally treat each other with respect	28%	34%

## OUT-of-SCHOOL TIME

**Activities** 97% of students reported that there are lots of chances for students to be involved in school-based activities;  $\frac{3}{4}$  said their their community offers youth activities such as scouting, boys/girls clubs, and 4-H. Most (80%) students participated in school-based extracurricular activities at least once during the past year and  $\frac{3}{4}$  participated in community-based activities. Students who participated regularly (10 or more times during the year) had lower marijuana use and binge drinking rates, were more committed to school and had lower rates of depressive symptoms than students who did not participate. However, extracurricular participation did not impact student use of alcohol.

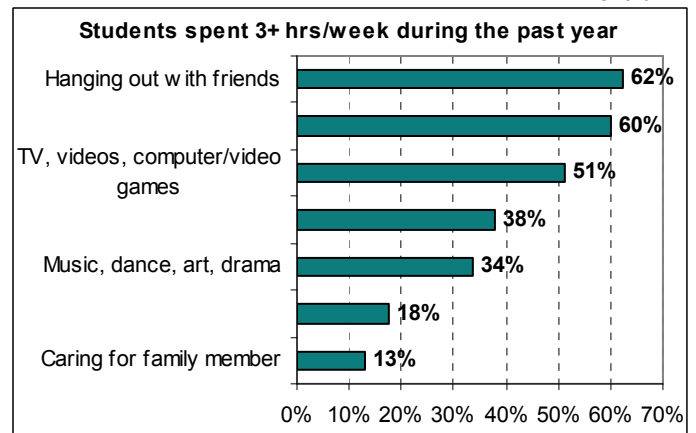
**Social/emotional health** More than one in four youth reported feeling sad or depressed most days during the past year. These youth reported higher use rates for alcohol, marijuana and pain killers than non-depressed students. They also like school less and are less successful academically. Fewer say they have a parent or trusted school adult they could ask for help with problems.

	Middle school	High School
I do the opposite of what people tell me, just to get them mad	18%	26%
I like to see how much I can get away with	19%	37%
It is alright to beat up people if they start the fight	22%	39%
I ignore rules that get in my way	15%	31%
Sometimes I think that life is not worth it	18%	27%
At times I think I am no good at all	29%	35%
I am inclined to think I am a failure	12%	15%

Table 2

In the last month:	Middle school	High school
Someone has said something hurtful to me at school	40%	33%
I "cut" or skipped school for a whole day at least once	12%	19%
Someone embarrassed, insulted, harassed or threatened me by an internet posting or text message	7%	10%
I was physically bullied at school	6%	7%
In the last year:		
I often/almost always tried to do my best work at school	91%	79%
I often/almost always enjoyed being in school	55%	41%
I have been suspended from school	6%	8%
I have been drunk at school	2%	13%

Chart 4



**Exercise**  $\frac{2}{3}$  of students said they exercise vigorously most days. 93% said their community offers sports teams for youth and 79% participated on a team during the past year.

**Cell phones** Most students have cell phones, only 35% of middle and 14% of high schoolers do not. One in five students used their cell phones during the past month after their parents thought they were in bed; few (9%) confessed to sending or forwarding gossip; 2% forwarded embarrassing photos or threats. 10% of middle and 41% of high school students admitted using their cell phone at school in the last month when they weren't supposed to.

## Appendix

NOTES: Local refers to students in Dryden, Groton, Ithaca, Lansing, Newfield and Trumansburg school districts in the designated grades (2010); in 2008 Newfield did not participate.

MTF refers to the Monitoring the Future survey given nationally each year to a sample of 50,000 students in grades 8, 10 and 12.

\*Regular use: Cigarettes - smoke one or more packs per day; Alcohol - one or two alcoholic drinks nearly every day;

Marijuana - not specified.

Pharmaceuticals: Use of one or more of the following without a doctor telling the person to take them: over-the-counter cough or cold medicine; prescription pain killers, sedatives, tranquilizers, or stimulants

Table 4a Current Use	Tompkins & National Students' Use of Substances in the Last 30 Days by Grade (middle school)							
	6 <sup>th</sup>		7 <sup>th</sup>		8 <sup>th</sup>			Ave. gr. 6-8
	2008	2010	2008	2010	2008	2010	MTF	local
Alcohol	4%	2%	7%	4%	14%	10%	14%	5%
Marijuana	<1%	<1%	1%	1%	5%	5%	8%	2%
Cigarettes	1%	1%	1%	1%	3%	3%	7%	2%
Smokeless tobacco	<1%	<1%	1%	1%	3%	2%	4%	1%
Pharmaceuticals	3%	1%	4%	3%	5%	3%	n/a	3%

Table 4b Current use	Tompkins & National Students' Use of Substances in the Last 30 Days by Grade (high school)										
	9 <sup>th</sup>		10 <sup>th</sup>			11 <sup>th</sup>		12 <sup>th</sup>			Ave. gr. 9-12
	2008	2010	2008	2010	MTF	2008	2010	2008	2010	MTF	local
Alcohol	20%	19%	32%	29%	29%	39%	34%	42%	45%	41%	31%
Marijuana	10%	9%	16%	17%	17%	20%	19%	21%	26%	21%	17%
Cigarettes	7%	6%	9%	7%	14%	11%	10%	8%	11%	19%	8%
Smokeless tobacco	5%	3%	5%	5%	8%	7%	10%	7%	6%	9%	6%
Pharmaceuticals	6%	5%	7%	7%	n/a	9%	8%	8%	9%	n/a	7%

Table 5a Perceived risk	Tompkins Students' Perception of Great Risk from Regular* Use by Grade (middle school)							
	6 <sup>th</sup>		7 <sup>th</sup>		8 <sup>th</sup>			Ave. gr. 6-8
	2008	2010	2008	2010	2008	2010	MTF	local
Alcohol	46%	50%	53%	48%	42%	45%	32%	48%
Marijuana	89%	76%	81%	76%	70%	66%	68%	73%
Cigarettes	70%	66%	71%	69%	70%	75%	61%	70%

Table 5b Perceived risk	Tompkins Students' Perception of Great Risk from Regular* Use by Grade (high school)										
	9 <sup>th</sup>		10 <sup>th</sup>			11 <sup>th</sup>		12 <sup>th</sup>			Ave. gr. 9-12
	2008	2010	2008	2010	MTF	2008	2010	2008	2010	MTF	local
Alcohol	45%	47%	44%	42%	33%	45%	41%	42%	43%	25%	43%
Marijuana	61%	55%	50%	46%	57%	40%	39%	41%	31%	47%	43%
Cigarettes	70%	73%	73%	75%	67%	75%	77%	73%	76%	75%	75%



Table 6a <b>First use</b>	Tompkins Students' Average Age of First Use by Grade (middle school)						
	6 <sup>th</sup>		7 <sup>th</sup>		8 <sup>th</sup>		Ave. gr. 6-8
	2008	2010	2008	2010	2008	2010	local
Alcohol	10.4	10.5	10.8	11.2	11.4	11.8	11.3
Marijuana	10.7	10.7	11.2	11.2	12.1	12.4	12.0
Cigarettes	10.4	10.8	10.7	11.1	11.2	11.8	11.4

No national comparison available

*People who start using alcohol by age 14 are 4 times more likely to become alcohol dependent in their lifetime than people who wait until they are 21 to start drinking.*

*Source: National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism*

Table 6b <b>First use</b>	Tompkins Students' Average Age of First Use by Grade (high school)								
	9 <sup>th</sup>		10 <sup>th</sup>		11 <sup>th</sup>		12 <sup>th</sup>		Ave. gr. 9-12
	2008	2010	2008	2010	2008	2010	2008	2010	local
Alcohol	12.5	12.6	13.2	13.4	13.8	13.9	14.4	14.4	13.6
Marijuana	12.9	12.9	13.8	13.8	14.1	14.2	14.7	14.8	14.1
Cigarettes	11.9	12.1	12.6	13.0	13.4	13.4	13.9	14.2	13.3

Table 7a <b>Parental disapproval</b>	Tompkins Students' Perception of Parental Disapproval of Substance Use by Grade (middle school)						
	6 <sup>th</sup>		7 <sup>th</sup>		8 <sup>th</sup>		Ave. gr. 6-8
	2008	2010	2008	2010	2008	2010	local
Alcohol	97%	98%	95%	96%	90%	94%	96%
Marijuana	99%	99%	99%	97%	97%	96%	97%
Cigarettes	98%	99%	98%	98%	97%	98%	98%

No national comparison available

*Students whose believe their parents disapprove are 3 times less likely to use alcohol and 6 times less likely to use marijuana. (see chart 3, P. 3.)*

*Source: 2010 Tompkins County Youth Development Survey*

Table 7b <b>Parental disapproval</b>	Tompkins Students' Perception of Parental Disapproval of Substance Use by Grade (high school)								
	9 <sup>th</sup>		10 <sup>th</sup>		11 <sup>th</sup>		12 <sup>th</sup>		Ave. gr. 9-12
	2008	2010	2008	2010	2008	2010	2008	2010	local
Alcohol	89%	92%	86%	88%	82%	82%	79%	75%	85%
Marijuana	94%	94%	92%	90%	90%	89%	90%	84%	90%
Cigarettes	96%	98%	95%	97%	94%	95%	93%	92%	96%

**For more information, contact the Community Coalition for Healthy Youth**

c/o Tompkins County Youth Services Dept., 320 W. M.L. King Jr. (State) St., Ithaca (607) 274-5310 or [www.healthyyouth.org](http://www.healthyyouth.org)

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