2017 Regional Youth Health Survey: Worcester Public High School Results

The purpose of the Greater Worcester Regional Youth Health Survey (RYHS) is to learn about youth health by directly surveying youth about safety, violence, substance use, nutrition, physical activity, mental health, and other health-related topics. Every two years, the RYHS is administered to public middle and high school students in the City of Worcester, Massachusetts, and surrounding towns by the Worcester Division of Public Health and the University of Massachusetts Prevention Research Center.

The results below are a summary of key findings from Worcester public high schools alone. The high schools surveyed in Worcester are Burncoat High School, Claremont Academy, Doherty Memorial High School, North High School, South High Community School, University Park Campus School, Worcester Technical High School, the Gerald Cremer Center, and Challenge/Reach Academies. A total of 5,174 Worcester high school students were surveyed, with the majority of respondents coming from Doherty High (23%), South High (19%), Worcester Tech (18%), North High (17%), and Burncoat High (15%).

Race, Ethnicity, & Immigration Grades 9-12

- English and Spanish are the languages used most often in the homes of Worcester high school-age youth.
- 67% of Worcester high school-age youth have always lived in the U.S.
- 49% of Worcester high school-age youth have two parents who were born outside of the U.S.
Education & Future
Grades 9-12

- 73% of Worcester high school-age youth report getting mostly As and Bs in school in the last year.
- 83% of Worcester high school-age youth see themselves going to college or another education training program after high school.
- 79% of Worcester high school-age youth like thinking about the future and are hopeful about it.

Home Life
Grades 9-12

- 28% of Worcester high school-age youth moved in the last year.
- 48% of Worcester high school-age youth sleep 7 or more hours on a school night.
- 5% of Worcester high school-age youth were physically hurt by someone in their family in the last year.
- 91% of Worcester high school-age youth have a safe place where they can stay on a regular basis.
- 75% of Worcester high school-age youth can talk to at least one adult family member about things that are important to them.

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Healthy Eating Grades 9-12

- 33% of Worcester high school-age youth ate breakfast 6 or 7 days in the last week.
- 12% of Worcester high school-age youth were hungry but didn’t eat because there wasn’t enough money for food in their house in the last week.
- 28% of Worcester high school-age youth always have fruits or vegetables to snack on at home.

Active Living Grades 9-12

- 57% of Worcester high school-age youth participated in a physical activity for at least 60 minutes on at least 3 days in the last week.
- 9% of Worcester high school-age youth spend no time in front of a screen for something other than school work on an average school day.
- 29% of Worcester high school-age youth walk or bike to school on at least three days per week.

Mental Health Grades 9-12

- 29% of Worcester high school-age youth felt so sad or hopeless almost everyday for two weeks or more in a row in the last year that they stopped doing some usual activities.
- 13% of Worcester high school-age youth hurt or injured themselves on purpose in the last year.
- 14% of Worcester high school-age youth seriously considered attempting suicide in the last year.
Violence & Safety Grades 9–12

- 8% of Worcester high school-age youth drove a vehicle when they had been drinking or using marijuana in the last month.
- 12% of Worcester high school-age youth texted or emailed while driving in the last month.
- 5% of Worcester high school-age youth have witnessed violence in their family in the last year.
- 21% of Worcester high school-age youth have a firearm in their home.
- 4% of Worcester high school-age youth felt pressure to join a gang in the last year.
- 12% of Worcester high school-age youth carried a weapon to protect themselves in the last month.
- 10% of Worcester high school-age youth were electronically bullied in the last year.
- 14% of Worcester high school-age youth were treated unfairly because of race or ethnicity in the last month.
- 8% of Worcester high school-age youth were treated unfairly because of sexual orientation or gender identity in the last month.

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### Substance Use Grades 9-12

- 7% of Worcester high school-age youth have ever smoked a cigarette.
- 10% of Worcester high school-age youth have ever smoked an e-cigarette.
- 32% of Worcester high school-age youth have ever used marijuana.
- 41% of Worcester high school-age youth have ever had a drink of alcohol other than a few sips.
- 6% of Worcester high school-age youth have ever taken a prescription pain medicine without a doctor’s prescription.
- 2% of Worcester high school-age youth have ever used heroin.

### Sexual Health Grades 9-12

- 31% of Worcester high school-age youth have had sexual intercourse.
- 20% of Worcester high school-age youth who have had sexual intercourse used drugs or drank alcohol before the last time they had sex.
- 52% of Worcester high school-age youth who have had sexual intercourse have had more than one sexual partner in their lifetime.
- 56% of Worcester high school-age youth who have had sexual intercourse used a condom the last time they had sex.
- 14% of Worcester high school-age youth identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or other.
- 8% of Worcester high school-age youth identify as transgender.
- 64% of Worcester high school-age youth have talked about ways to prevent STIs or pregnancy with parents or other adults in the community.
- 3% of Worcester high school-age youth were physically hurt or sexually coerced by a partner.

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