Each year, state agencies, community organizations, and nonprofits throughout Delaware rely on data to design and strengthen prevention efforts. Much of this information comes from surveys conducted among Delaware students and educators, and is used to:

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- Learn more: https://www.cdhs.udel.edu/seow/school-surveys

How did COVID-19 Impact the Delaware School Surveys (DSS)?

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Translating Data into Prevention: Delaware’s School Based Surveys

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Data from the 2021 Delaware Secondary School Survey, all frequencies rounded to the nearest whole percent. Funding for this project has been provided by the Department for Health and Social Services, Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health-State of Delaware through Award SP020704 from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).
Most eleventh graders reported that they had not been bullied in school or cyberbullied in the past year.

About one in four eleventh graders say that they do not feel safe in school or that they only feel safe some of the time.

About a third of eleventh graders report student violence is a problem often or sometimes, though most say that it is rarely a problem in their school.

Eleventh graders who report feeling unsafe in their school also report student violence being a problem more often than those who feel safe in their school.

While most eleventh graders felt that school rules were strictly enforced most of the time or often, 25% thought they were only enforced sometimes and 9% thought they were rarely or never enforced.

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The majority of eleventh graders report never going hungry in the last 30 days due to not having enough food in their home. However, 18% rarely or sometimes had difficulty finding enough to eat. Students who identified as white faced food insecurity less often compared to all other groups.
Substance Use
Findings from the 2021 Delaware School Survey of Eleventh Grade Students

Past Month Substance Use

- Alcohol: 13%
- Marijuana: 11%
- Cigarettes: 1%
- Vaping: 7%
- Other Illegal Drug*: 2%

Perception of Great Harm

- Smoke a Pack of Cigs. a Day: 56%
- Use Vaping Device: 34%
- Binge Drink: 43%
- Smoke marijuana regularly: 24%
- Use Rx Drugs without prescription: 57%

What are students consuming in vaping devices?
(among students who report vaping)

- E-Liquid*: 44%
- Marijuana: 32%
- Nicotine: 51%

Note: This is a mark-all-that-apply question, so students may report using more than one of these substances.
*E-liquids, also known as e-juice or vape juice, is a fluid used in vaporizers or electronic cigarettes that contain artificial flavoring and sometimes nicotine.

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**2021 Delaware School Survey**

**Eighth Grade School Environment**

**How did COVID-19 Impact the Delaware School Surveys (DSS)?**

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**Translating Data into Prevention:**

Delaware’s School Based Surveys

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**Depression**

Nine in ten eighth graders reported being bothered by feeling down, depressed, or hopeless in the past two weeks at least some of the time.

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Most eighth graders reported that they had not been bullied in school or cyberbullied in the past year.

School Safety
About one in four eighth graders say that they do not feel safe in school or that they only feel safe some of the time.

Student Violence
About a third of eighth graders report student violence is a problem often or sometimes, though most say that it is rarely a problem in their school.

Eighth graders who report feeling unsafe in their school also report student violence being a problem more often than those who feel safe in their school.
Substance Use
Findings from the 2021 Delaware School Survey of Eighth Grade Students

Past Month Substance Use

- Alcohol: 5%
- Marijuana: 4%
- Cigarettes: 1%
- Vaping: 3%
- Other Illegal Drug*: 1%

Perception of Great Harm

- Smoke a Pack of Cigs. a Day: 45%
- Use Vaping Device: 30%
- Binge Drink: 37%
- Smoke marijuana regularly: 34%
- Use Rx Drugs without prescription: 50%

* Vaping includes Juul and electronic cigarettes. **Other drugs* includes ecstasy, hallucinogens, street uppers, inhalants, cocaine, crack, heroin and synthetic marijuana used to get high.

What are students consuming in vaping devices? (among students who report vaping)

- E-Liquid*: 46%
- Marijuana: 24%
- Nicotine: 46%

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Note: Students were asked how much people risk harming themselves when engaging in any of these activities.

Note: This is a mark-all-that-apply question, so students may report using more than one of these substances.

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Most fifth graders report that they had not been bullied in school. Students who experienced bullying reported higher levels of feeling unsafe at school compared to their peers who were not bullied.

**Feeling Unsafe**
- Bullied: 12%
- Not Bullied: 5%

About two in three fifth graders say that the disruptive behavior of other students, such as talking or fighting, keeps teachers from teaching students who want to learn.

In addition, 17% of students feel that most kids do not obey the teachers most of the time.

**Teacher Relationships**
Over half of fifth graders report they feel supported by their teachers, and 20% feel supported by another adult in their school.

- Teacher: 56%
- Other adult at school: 20%

94% of fifth graders feel safe in their school most of the time.

Data from the 2021 Delaware Secondary School Survey, all frequencies rounded to the nearest whole percent.

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In 2019, over 60% of boys and girls both said they felt sad, empty, hopeless, angry, or anxious. Out of those students, 30% never or rarely got the kind of help they needed.

Although mental health worsened for girls in 2021, it remained stable for boys. In addition, there was no change to help seeking.

In 2019, 12% of fifth graders went hungry on at least one day in the past month because they had no food at home.

Food Insecurity

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2021 Delaware School Survey
Fifth Grade Perception of Substance Use Risk

Perceptions of Risk: Cigarettes and Alcohol

1-2 Alcoholic Drinks Daily
- No Risk: 16%
- Little Risk: 40%
- Much Risk: 26%
- Don't Know: 19%

1+ Packs of Cigarettes Daily
- No Risk: 8%
- Little Risk: 52%
- Much Risk: 22%
- Don't Know: 17%

Fifth grade students perceive smoking cigarettes daily to be more harmful than drinking alcohol daily.

Perceptions of Risk: Marijuana

Smoking Marijuana Weekly
- No Risk: 19%
- Little Risk: 45%
- Much Risk: 31%
- Don't Know: 6%

Trying Marijuana
- No Risk: 20%
- Little Risk: 25%
- Much Risk: 31%
- Don't Know: 31%

Most fifth graders think weekly marijuana use is very risky, but they perceive there to be less risk with only trying marijuana once or twice.

Risk of Substance Use and Parental Involvement

Students who report being told by their parents not to use marijuana or alcohol perceive regular use of these substances to be riskier than students whose parents did not tell them not to use them. In general, students find marijuana to be a riskier substance to use than alcohol.

Told by Parents Not to Use Alcohol
- No Risk: 15%
- Little Risk: 44%
- Much Risk: 24%
- Don't Know: 24%

Not Told by Parents Not to Use Alcohol
- No Risk: 16%
- Little Risk: 28%
- Much Risk: 30%
- Don't Know: 17%

Told by Parents Not to Use Marijuana
- No Risk: 6%
- Little Risk: 52%
- Much Risk: 26%
- Don't Know: 16%

Not Told by Parents Not to Use Marijuana
- No Risk: 16%
- Little Risk: 32%
- Much Risk: 23%
- Don't Know: 39%

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