



2025 Student Survey

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Contents

Objectives **3**

Methodology **4**

Executive Summary **6**

Detailed Findings **9**

Next Steps **91**

Appendix **93**

Detailed Findings

Core Measures **10**

Alcohol Use **25**

Vaping Nicotine **37**

Marijuana/THC Use **43**

Rx Drug Use **51**

Social Media Use **53**

Gaming, Gambling, & Texting **56**

Mental Health **60**

Student Relationships **65**

Bullying **72**

Protective Behaviors **75**

LGBTQ Students **78**

Objectives

1. Describe perceptions and experiences regarding substance misuse, mental health, social media, gaming, gambling, social supports, and family norms among Fairfield youth in grades 7-12 in the year 2025.
2. Monitor trends in protective factors and risky behaviors over time.
3. Community stakeholders utilize information provided by youth for the questionnaire to enhance and plan initiatives and activities for the community's young people.

Methodology

- Fairfield youth in grades 7-12 were invited, by their respective schools, to complete the 51-item online questionnaire.
- Schools invited to complete the questionnaire included:
 - Middle Schools: Fairfield Woods, Roger Ludlow, Tomlinson
 - High Schools: Fairfield Ludlowe, Fairfield Warde, Walter Fitzgerald
- The survey was administered through Qualtrics, an online, secure data collection platform.
- The 2025 Fairfield Youth Survey questionnaire was adapted from several state and national survey tools, including:
 - National Outcome Measures (NOMs), Office of National Drug Control Policy
 - Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey (YRBSS), Center for Disease Control
 - The Search Institute's Developmental Assets Profile
 - Governor's Prevention Initiative for Youth Student Survey (Connecticut)
 - Connecticut School Health Survey, Department of Public Health
- Topics examined included: substance use, mental health, school engagement, connectedness and support, social media use, gaming, gambling, and bullying.

Thank you...

Fairfield CARES Data Committee for their work in reviewing and updating the 2025 questionnaire
Fairfield Public Schools for taking the time to inform parents and disseminate the questionnaire to students

Methodology

- Sample Size
 - 2499 Fairfield youth completed the questionnaire
 - 361 surveys were excluded from the dataset due to large amounts of missing data
 - Final sample size = 2088 student surveys
- Survey Response Rates*
 - Robust MS response rate
 - HS response rates decline as grade level decreases

Survey Response Rates by Grade Level			
Grade in School	Sample Count	2025 Enrollment	Response Rate*
Grade 7	468	684	68%
Grade 8	591	689	86%
Grade 9	372	642	58%
Grade 10	280	668	42%
Grade 11	226	730	31%
Grade 12	138	703	20%
Grade not indicated	13	n/a	n/a
Grades 7-8	1059	1373	77%
Grades 9-12	1016	2743	37%
Grades 7-12	2088	4116	51%

**For comparison, the 2023 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey response rate was 35.4%
 (Source: Overview and Methods for the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System — United States, 2023. MMWR Suppl 2024;73(Suppl-4):1–12*

Executive Summary

Respondent Characteristics

The study sample consisted mostly of non-Hispanic white respondents. Just over half of the respondents identified as male. Under 10% of respondents identify as LGBTQ. Respondents' ages ranged from 11 to 19, with a mean age of 14 years.

Characteristics	n	%
Grade in School		
7th	468	22.6
8th	591	28.5
9th	372	17.9
10th	280	13.5
11th	226	10.9
12th	138	6.7

51% MS

49% HS

Characteristics	n	%
Gender		
Female	887	42.5
Male	1105	52.9
Non-binary	26	1.2
Prefer to self-identify	42	2.0
Prefer not to answer	27	1.3
Hispanic or Latino, yes	320	15.4
Race		
American Indian or Alaskan Native	23	1.1
Asian American	169	8.2
Black	77	3.7
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	7	0.3
White	1536	74.3
Multiracial	256	12.4
Identify as LGBTQ		
Yes	190	9.1
No	1764	84.7
Unsure	68	3.3
Prefer not to answer	60	2.9
Mean		SD
Age (yrs.)	14.32	1.64

Key Findings

1. Core measures for substance use, perceived harm of substance use, perceived peer disapproval, and perceived parent disapproval continue to improve over time (2019-2025).

2. Reductions in substance use over time might be due to growing perceptions of harm and reductions in perceived peer and parent approval for substance use over time.

3. Not surprisingly, friends impact substance use. Students most often access vape devices and THC from friends, access alcohol from friends, and most often use alcohol, vape devices, and THC with their friends at home or a party.

4. Parents/guardians play a key role in Fairfield students' substance access and use. Perceived parent disapproval of substance use declines as grade level increases, dropping to only 38% by senior year. Both MS and high school students most often report their parents as their source for alcohol.

5. Social media use is high. Almost all (99%) of Fairfield students use social media at least one hour per day, with the average being 3-4 hours. Students report more positive impacts for social media(e.g., connecting to others) than negative ones, yet social media is a source of stress for over ¼ of MS and 1/3 of HS students.

6. Mental health among Fairfield students remains a concern. One third experience depression and anxiety and one fifth experience feelings of isolation. Factors related to students' academic and future expectations are particularly stressful for HS students.

7. Some students are engaging in risky behaviors related to substance use, including driving while intoxicated, riding with others who are intoxicated, and more.

8. Students identifying as LGBTQ or are unsure of their sexual orientation use substances and experience poor mental health than other students. They also express less love and support from their parents/guardians and feel less connected to others.

Detailed Findings

Drug Free Communities (DFC) Core Measures



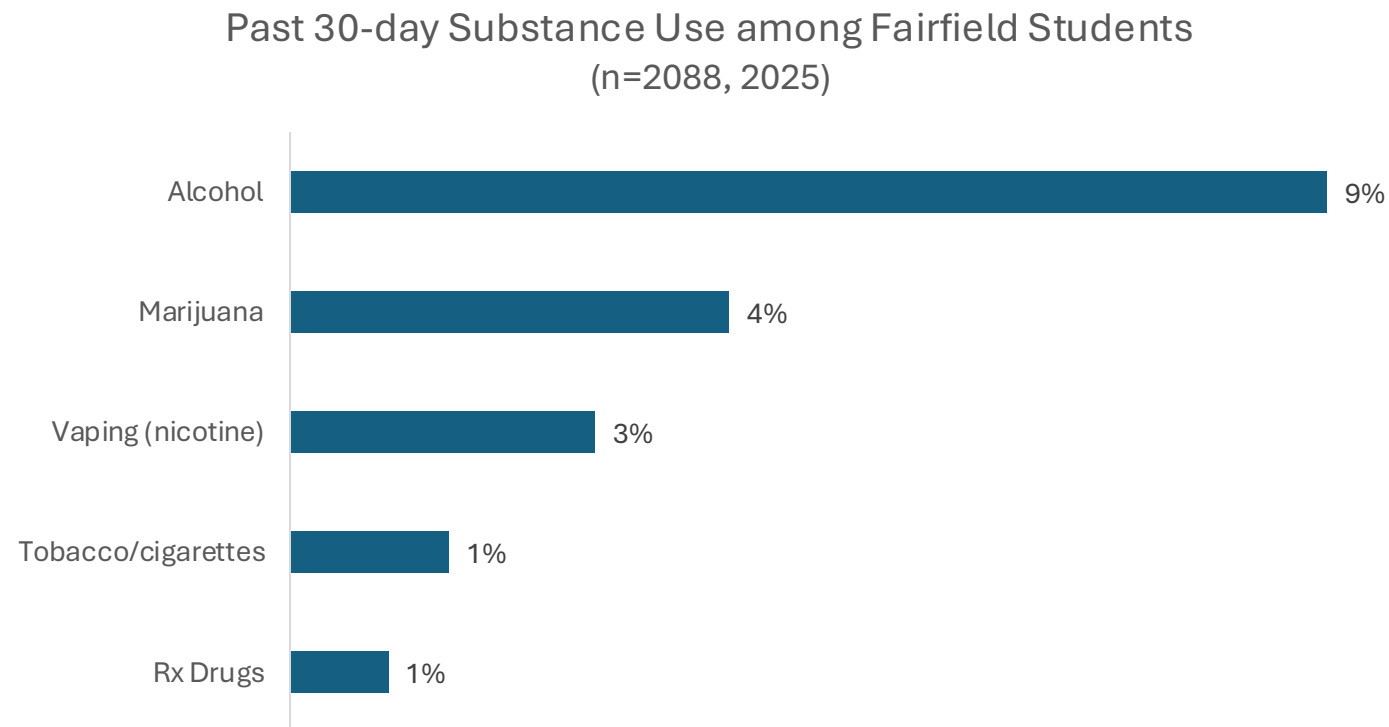
Overview of DCF Core Measures

The Drug Free Communities (DFC) National Evaluation Team evaluates the effectiveness of the DFC Support Program in achieving its goals of increasing collaboration and reducing or preventing substance misuse among youth. As a DFC grantee, Fairfield CARES is required to collect four core measures through its Fairfield Youth Survey. The core measures include:

- Past 30-day Use: the percentage of youth who report using alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, or prescription drugs not prescribed to them at least once in the past 30 days.
- Perception of Risk: the percentage of youth who report that there is moderate or great risk in binge drinking, smoking one or more packs of cigarettes per day, smoking marijuana once or twice a week, or using prescription drugs not prescribed to them.
- Perception of Parental Disapproval: the percentage of youth who report that their parents feel regular use of alcohol is wrong or very wrong, and report that their parents feel any use of cigarettes, marijuana, or prescription drugs not prescribed to them is wrong.
- Perception of Peer Disapproval: the percentage of youth who report that their friends feel regular use of alcohol is wrong or very wrong, and report that their peers feel any use of cigarettes, marijuana, or prescription drugs not prescribed to them is wrong.

Past 30-day substance use: Overview of 2025 data

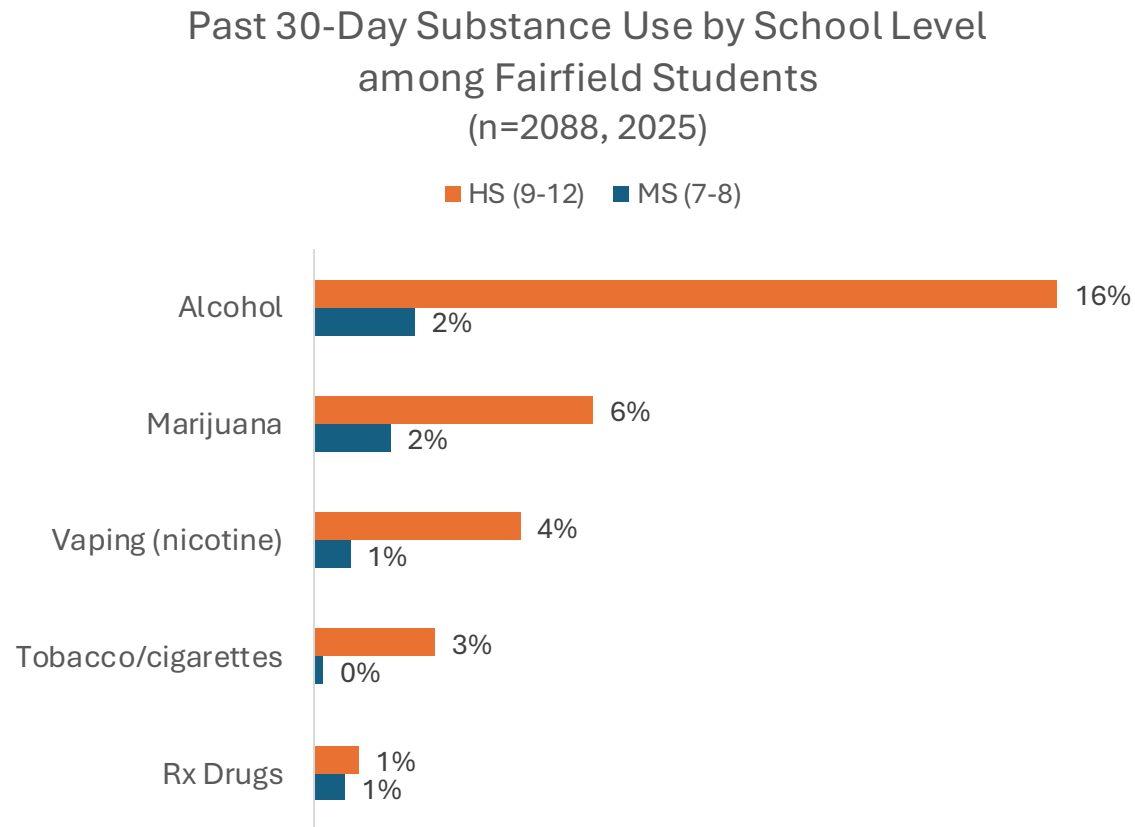
Alcohol is the most commonly used substance reported by Fairfield youth in the past 30 days.



Q. Thinking back over the past 30 days. On how many days, if any, did you: drink 1 or more alcoholic beverages (beer, wine, liquor)? use marijuana or THC products? Smoke cigarettes ? use a vaping device or e-cig with nicotine ? use prescription drugs not prescribed to you?

Past 30-day substance use: Overview of 2025 data

Substance use among Fairfield HS students is lower than that of CT HS students overall.



Substance Use among CT High School Students, 2023 YRBS* for Comparison

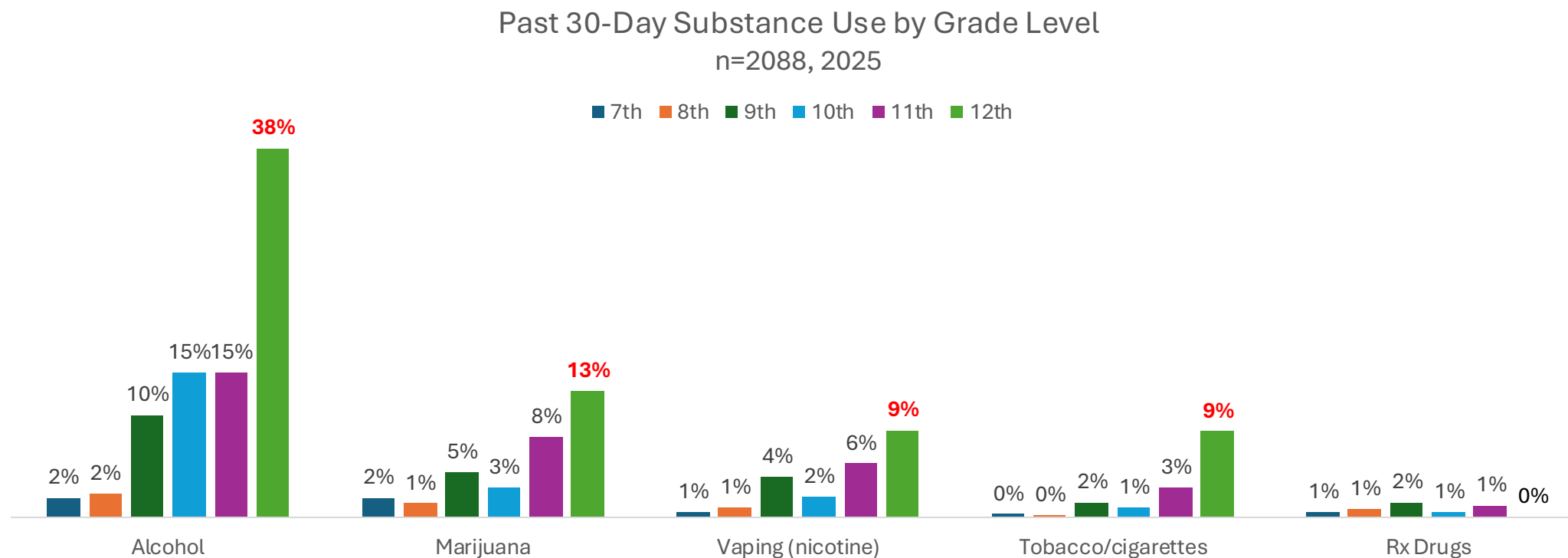
Substance	CT HS students
Alcohol	22.1%
Marijuana/THC	14.7%
Vaping	11.9%
Tobacco/cigarettes	4.1%

Source: CDC, CT Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System 2023

Q. Thinking back over the past 30 days. On how many days, if any, did you: drink 1 or more alcoholic beverages (beer, wine, liquor)? use marijuana or THC products? Smoke cigarettes ? use a vaping device or e-cig with nicotine ? use prescription drugs not prescribed to you?

Past 30-day substance use by grade level, 2025

Substance use increases with grade level, with the most significant rise in use, occurring in 12th grade, particularly for alcohol.

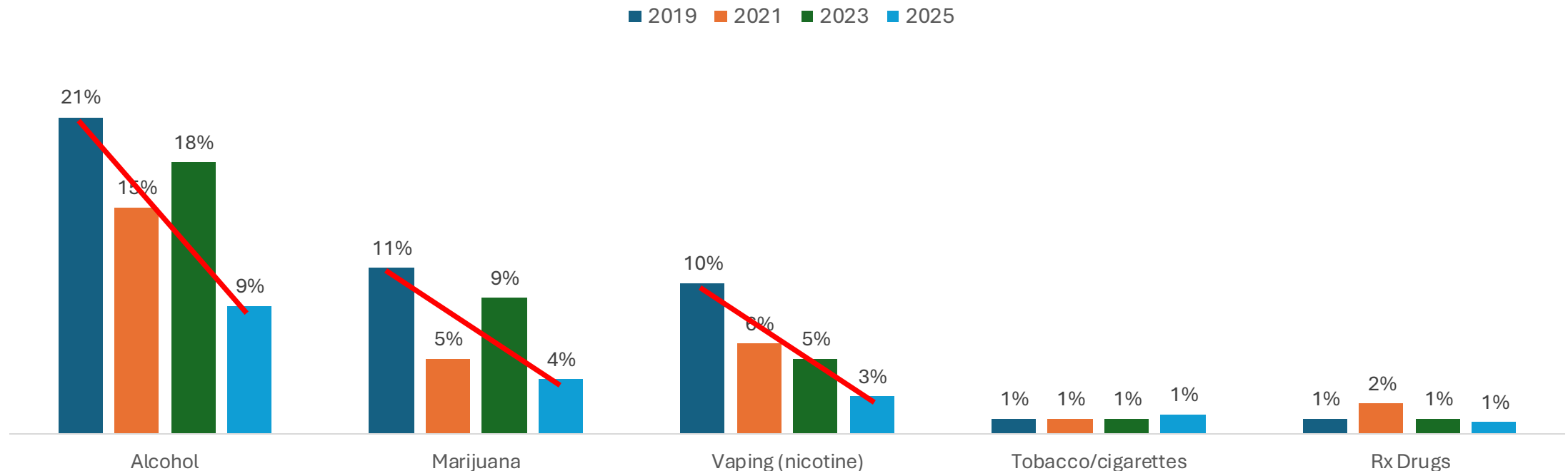


Q. Thinking back over the past 30 days. On how many days, if any, did you: drink 1 or more alcoholic beverages (beer, wine, liquor)? use marijuana or THC products? Smoke cigarettes ? use a vaping device or e-cig with nicotine ? use prescription drugs not prescribed to you?

Past 30-day substance use: Trends over time, 2019-2025

Great news! There have been significant reductions in alcohol, marijuana, and vape use among Fairfield students from 2019-2025.

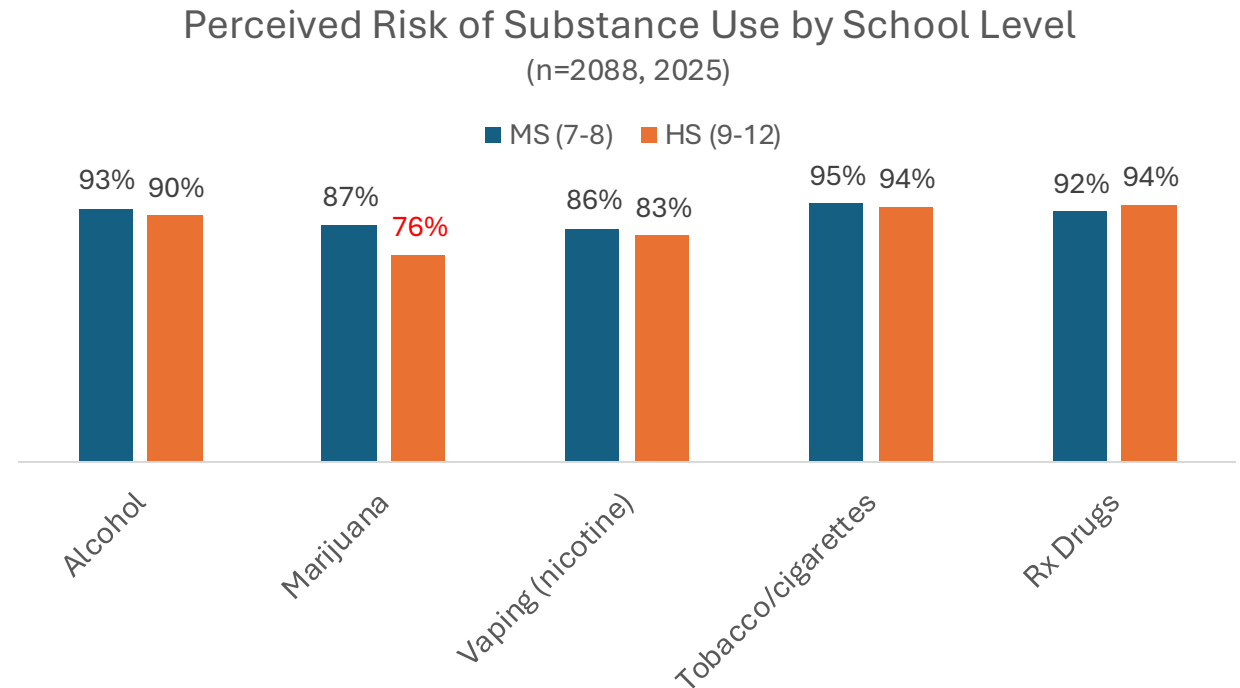
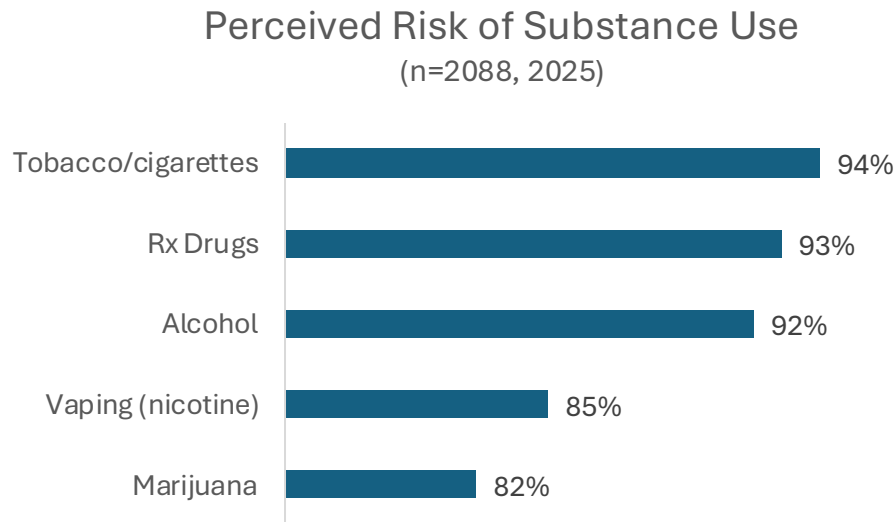
Trends in Past 30-day Substance Use, 2019-2025



Q. Thinking back over the past 30 days. On how many days, if any, did you: drink 1 or more alcoholic beverages (beer, wine, liquor)? use marijuana or THC products? Smoke cigarettes ? use a vaping device or e-cig with nicotine ? use prescription drugs not prescribed to you?

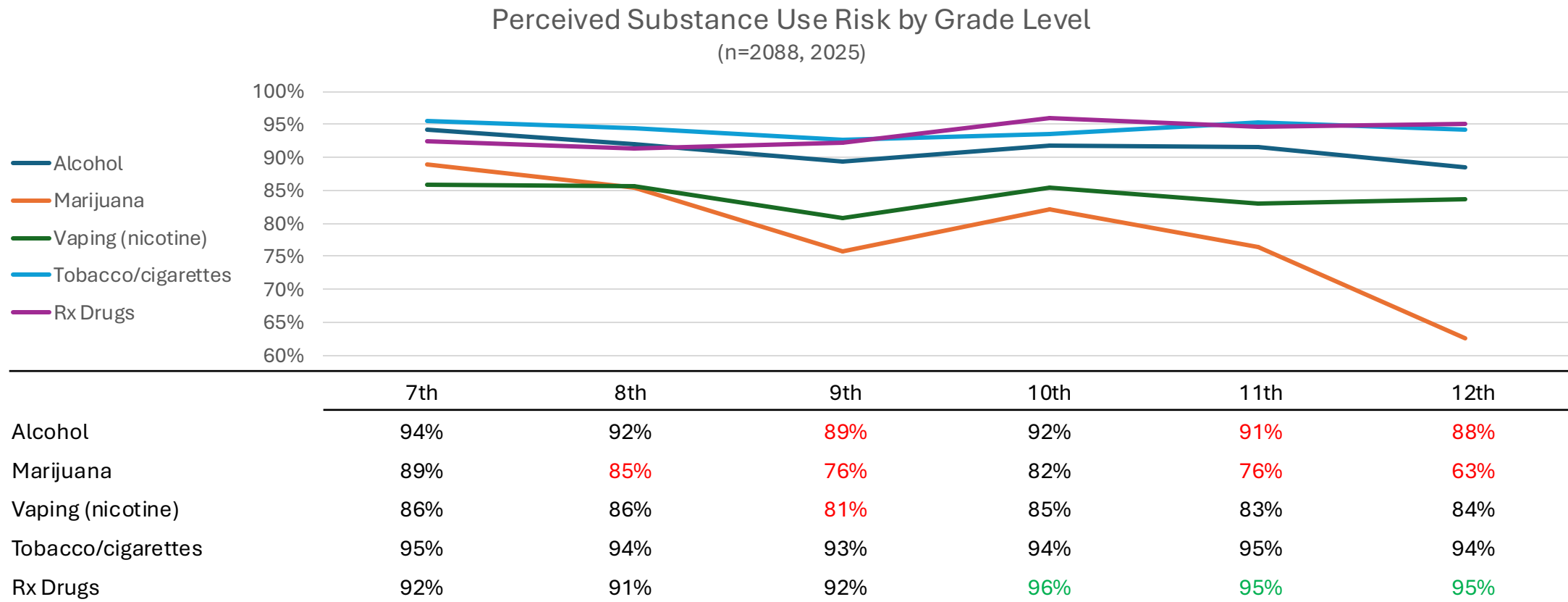
Perception of substance use risk: Overview of 2025 data

Perceived substance use risk is higher among middle school vs. high school students for all substances other than prescription drug use without a prescription. The perceived risk of marijuana/THC use among HS students is relatively low.



Perception of substance use risk: 2025 data by grade

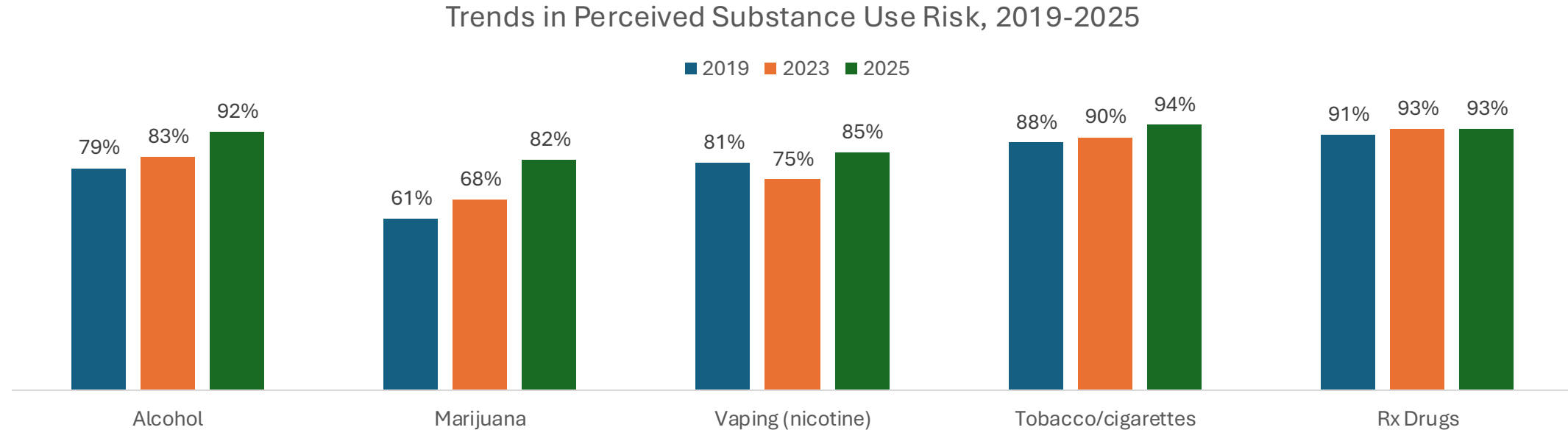
Trends in perceived risk across grade level vary by substance type, with the greatest declines observed for perceived risk of marijuana and alcohol use from 7th to 12th grade.



Q: How much do you think people risk harming themselves physically or in other ways when they do the following 1 or 2 times per week.... Drink 5 or more alcoholic beverages, Use marijuana or THC products, Use nicotine through a vaping device, Smoke cigarettes (one or two packs/day), Use prescription drugs that are not prescribed to them?

Perception of substance use risk: Trend over time, 2019-2025

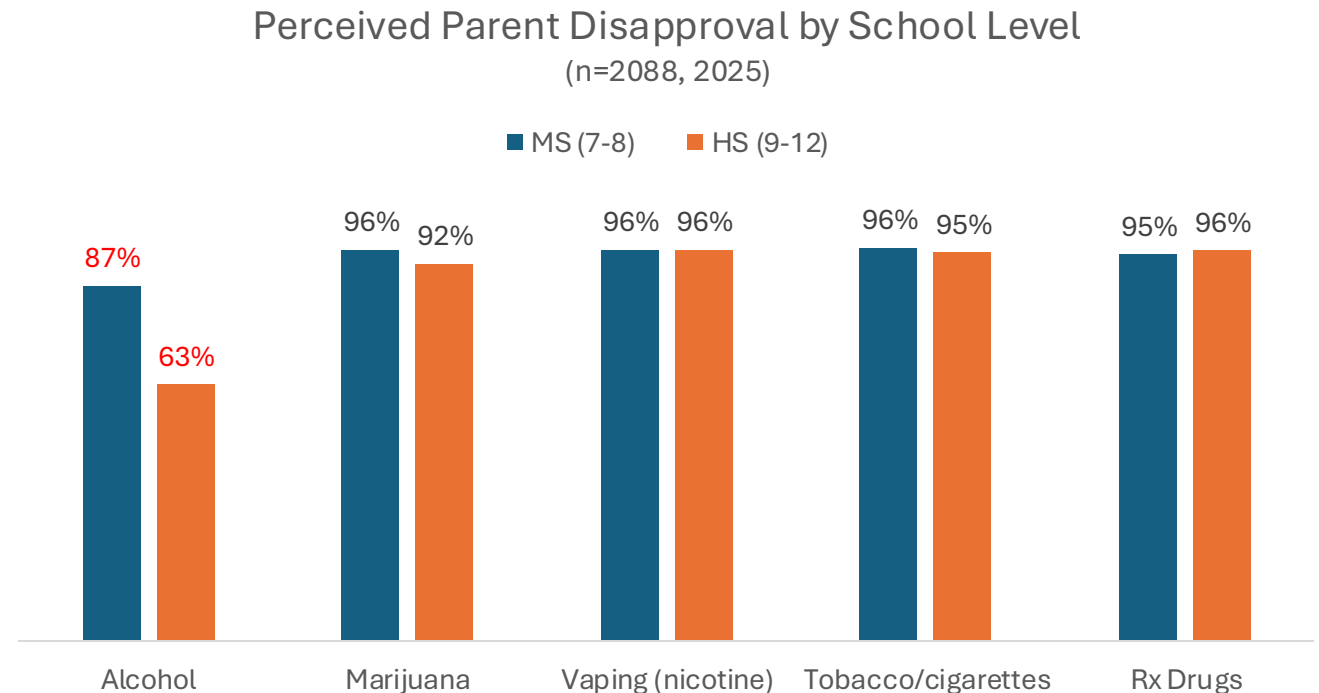
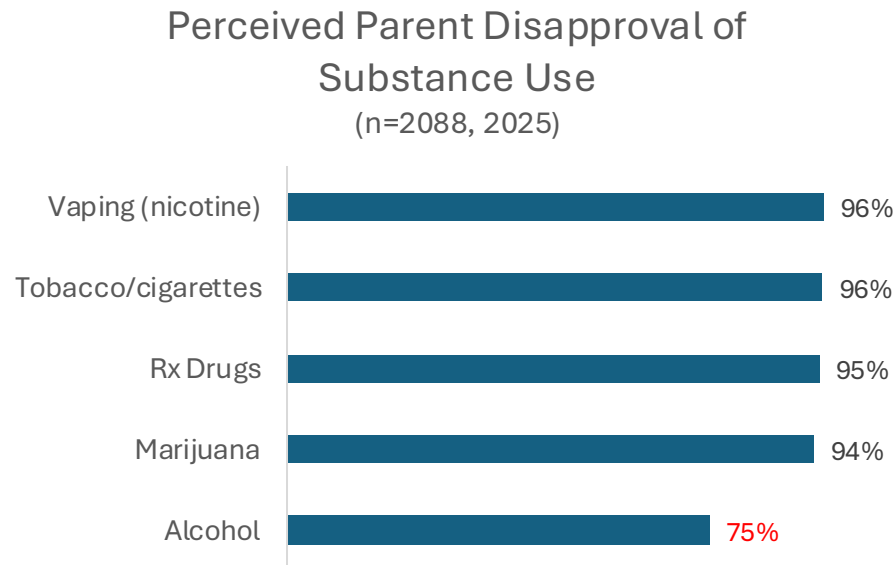
Perceived risk for substance use of all kinds has increased among Fairfield students over time particularly for alcohol and marijuana.



Q: How much do you think people risk harming themselves physically or in other ways when they do the following 1 or 2 times per week.... Drink 5 or more alcoholic beverages, Use marijuana or THC products, Use nicotine through a vaping device, Smoke cigarettes (one or two packs/day), Use prescription drugs that are not prescribed to them?

Perceived parental disapproval of substance use: Overview of 2025 data

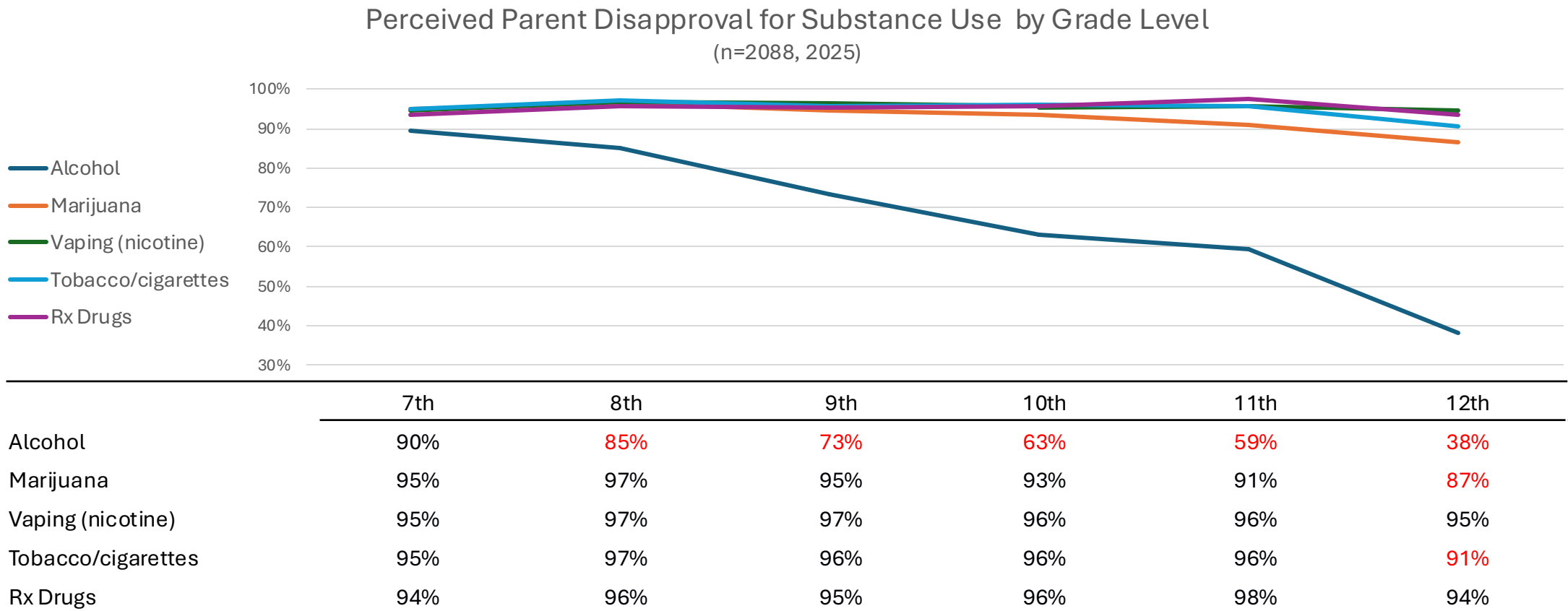
Perceived parent disapproval of alcohol use is much lower compared to other substances.



Q: How wrong do your parents feel it would be for you to do the 1 or 2 times per week.... Drink 5 or more alcoholic beverages, Use marijuana or THC products, Use nicotine through a vaping device, Smoke cigarettes (one or two packs/day), Use prescription drugs that are not prescribed to them?

Perceived parent disapproval of substance use: 2025 data by grade

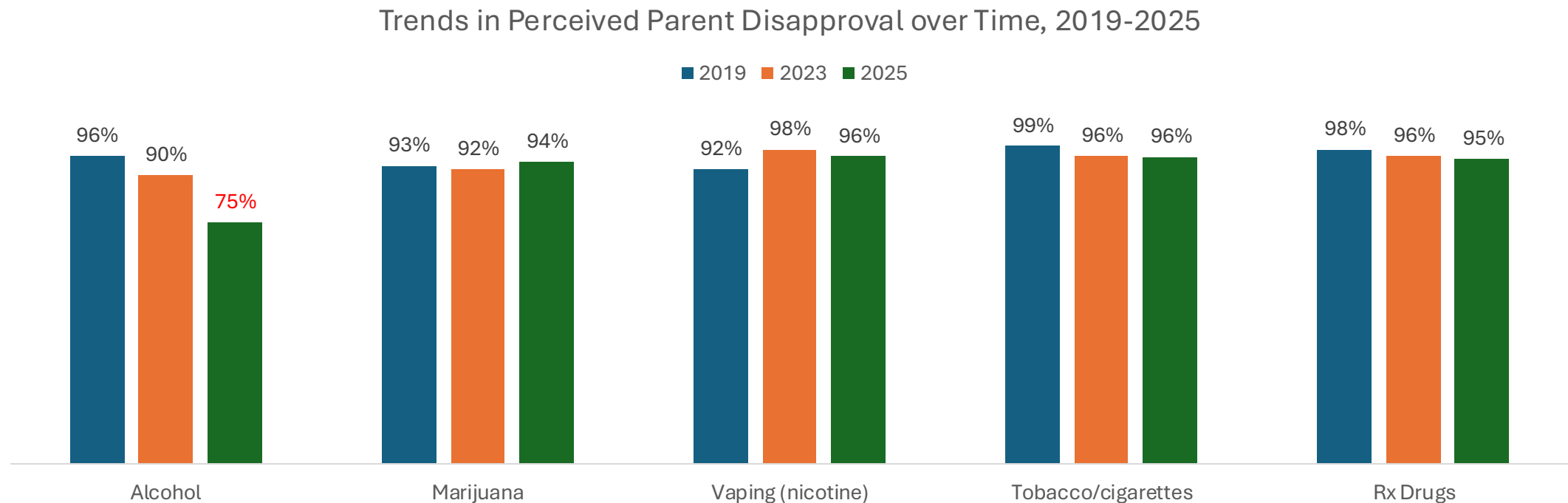
By students' senior year, only 38% of students report that their parents disapprove of them drinking alcohol 1-2 times per week.



Q: How wrong do your parents feel it would be for you to do the 1 or 2 times per week.... Drink 5 or more alcoholic beverages, Use marijuana or THC products, Use nicotine through a vaping device, Smoke cigarettes (one or two packs/day), Use prescription drugs that are not prescribed to them?

Perceived parent disapproval of substance use: Trend over time, 2019-2025

Perceived parent disapproval of alcohol has declined over time, particularly from 2023 to 2025.



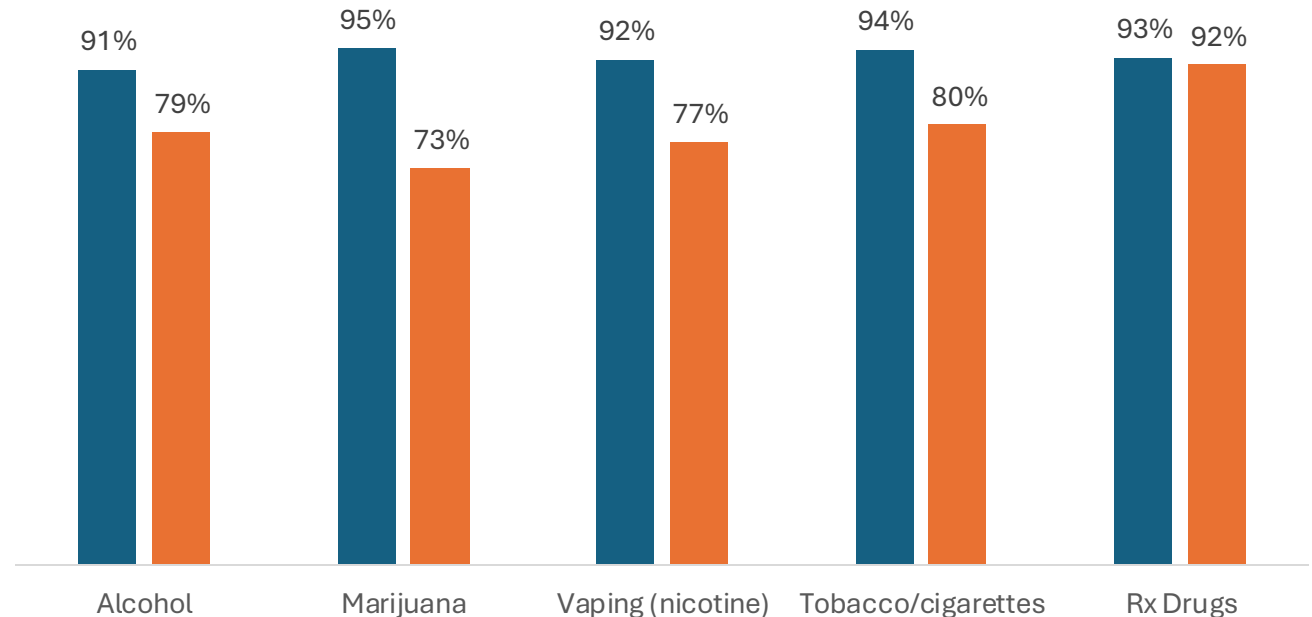
Q: How wrong do your parents feel it would be for you to do the 1 or 2 times per week.... Drink 5 or more alcoholic beverages, Use marijuana or THC products, Use nicotine through a vaping device, Smoke cigarettes (one or two packs/day), Use prescription drugs that are not prescribed to them?

Perceived peer disapproval: Overview of 2025 data

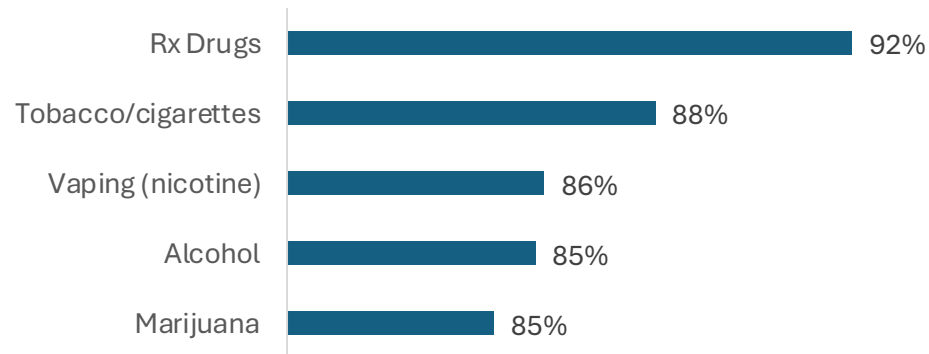
Perceived peer disapproval is lower in high school than middle school for all substances except prescription drug use without a prescription.

Perceived Peer Disapproval by School Level
(n=2088, 2025)

■ MS (7-8) ■ HS (9-12)



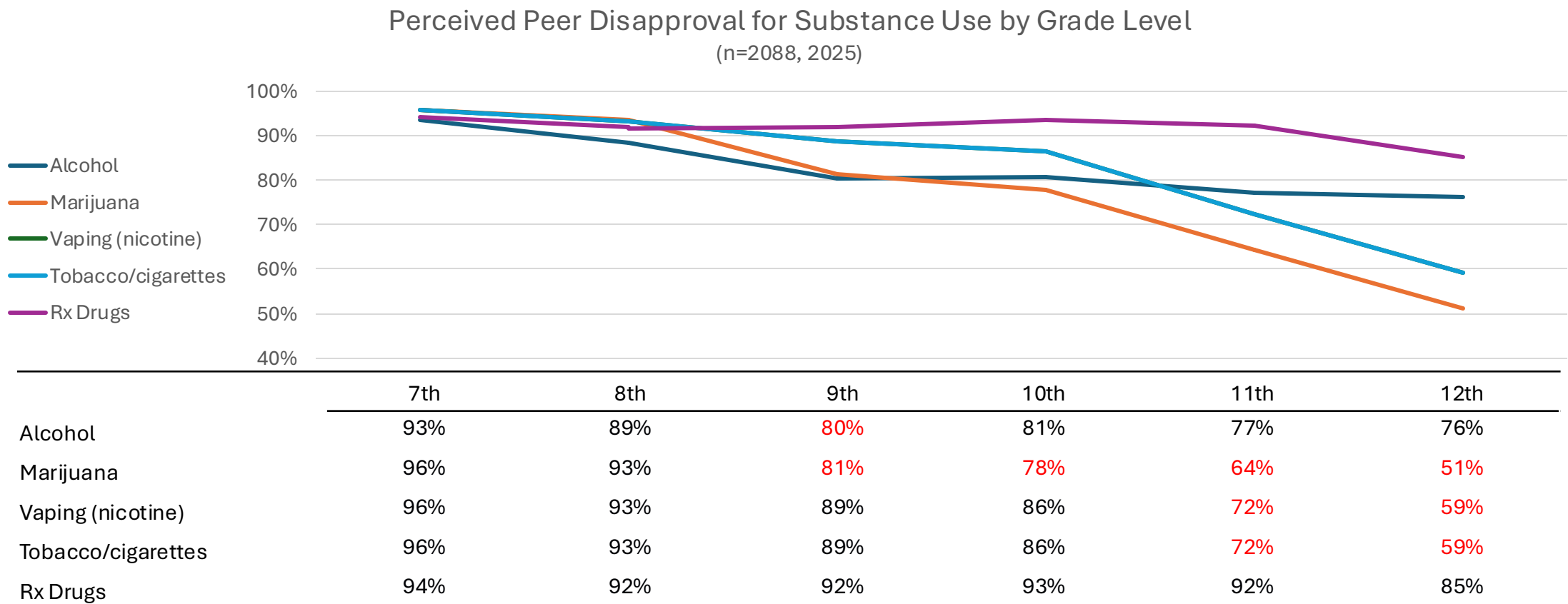
Perceived Peer Disapproval of Substance
Use
(n=2088, 2025)



Q: How wrong do your friends feel it would be for you to do the 1 or 2 times per week.... Drink 5 or more alcoholic beverages, Use marijuana or THC products, Use nicotine through a vaping device, Smoke cigarettes (one or two packs/day), Use prescription drugs that are not prescribed to them?

Perceived peer disapproval of substance use: 2025 data by grade

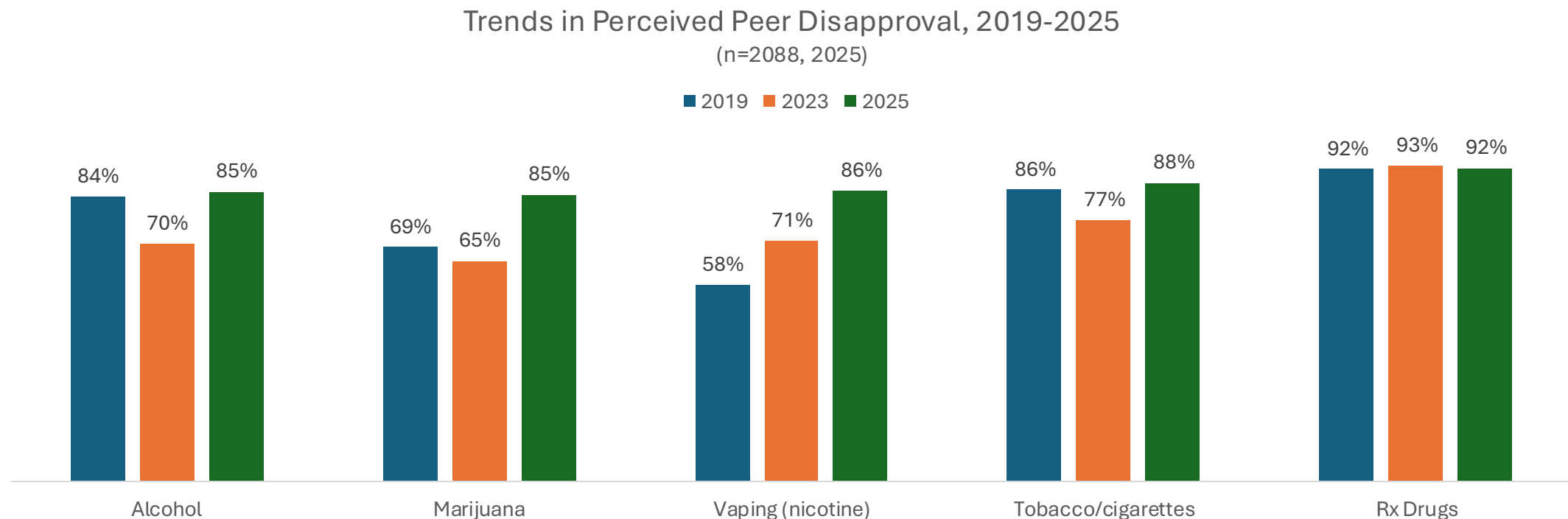
Perceived peer disapproval is lower as grade level increases, particularly for marijuana and cigarette use. Junior and senior level students show particularly low perceived peer disapproval.



Q: How wrong do your friends feel it would be for you to do the 1 or 2 times per week.... Drink 5 or more alcoholic beverages, Use marijuana or THC products, Use nicotine through a vaping device, Smoke cigarettes (one or two packs/day), Use prescription drugs that are not prescribed to them?

Perception of peer disapproval: Trend over time, 2019-2025

Perceived peer disapproval is highest for prescription drug use with no prescription; peer disapproval for all other substances, while slightly lower, has increased over time.



Q: How wrong do your friends feel it would be for you to do the 1 or 2 times per week.... Drink 5 or more alcoholic beverages, Use marijuana or THC products, Use nicotine through a vaping device, Smoke cigarettes (one or two packs/day), Use prescription drugs that are not prescribed to them?

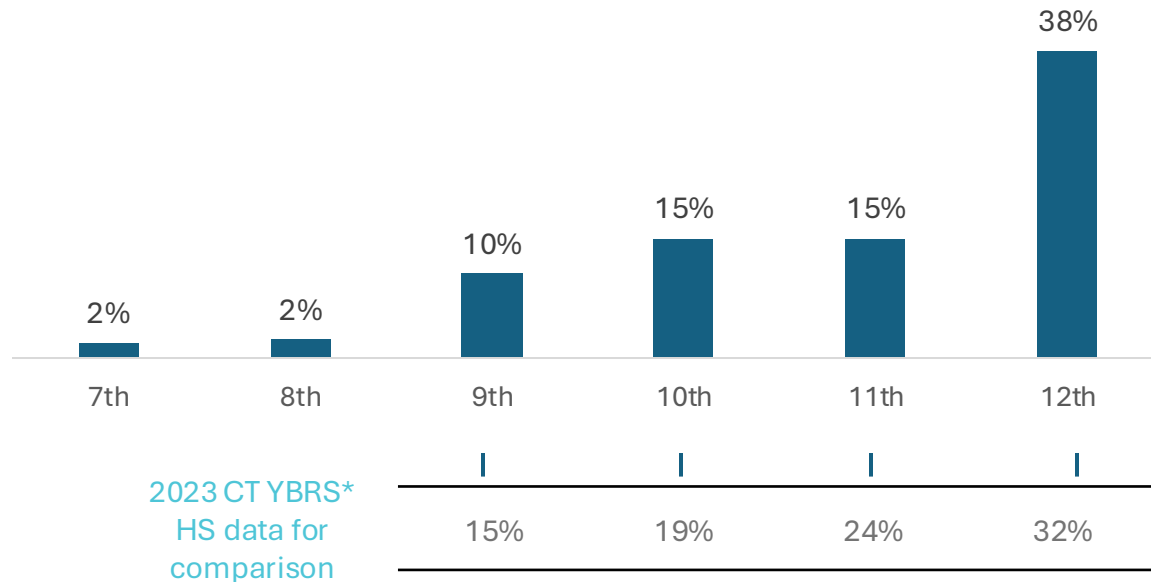
Deeper Dive into Alcohol Use



Alcohol use among Fairfield students

Fewer Fairfield high school students drink alcohol compared to the proportion of CT high schoolers who drink alcohol until 12th grade, when the trend reverses.*

Past 30-day Alcohol Use by Grade
(n=2088, 2025)



Average Age of Initiation for Alcohol Use
among Fairfield Youth is 13.25 years
(SD=2.64), Median =14 years

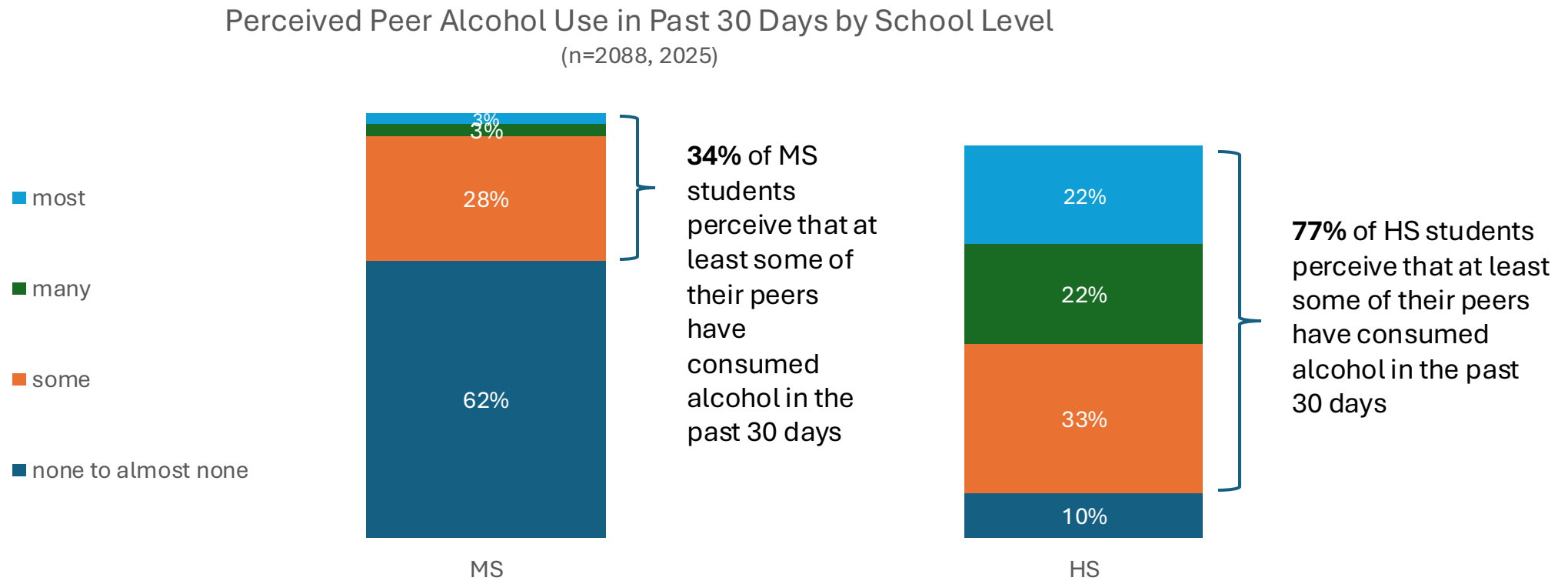
There were no significant differences in past 30-day alcohol use by students' demographic characteristics

Q. Thinking back over the past 30 days. On how many days, if any, did you drink 1 or more alcoholic beverages (beer, wine, liquor)?

*Source: CDC Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), 2023

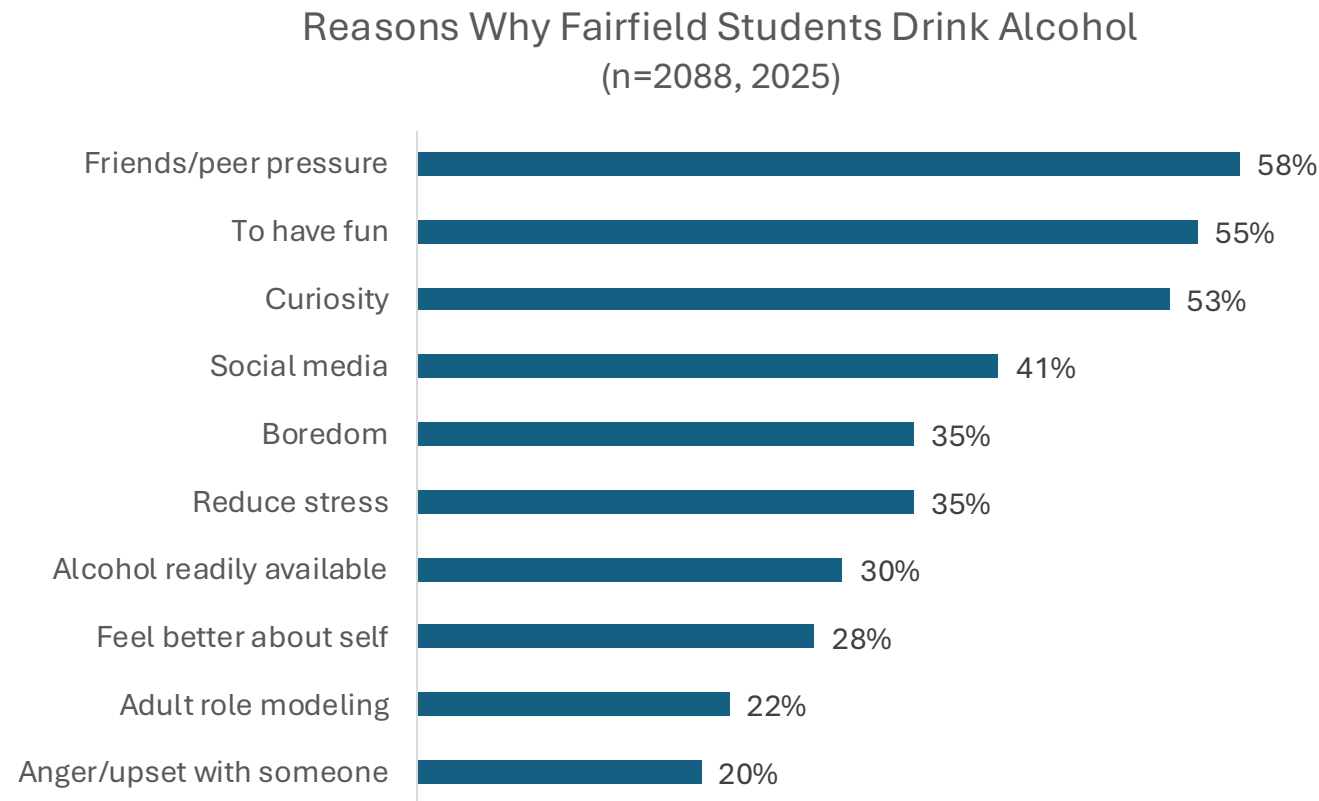
Alcohol use among Fairfield students

Significantly more high school than middle school students perceive that at least some of their friends have consumed alcohol in the past 30 days



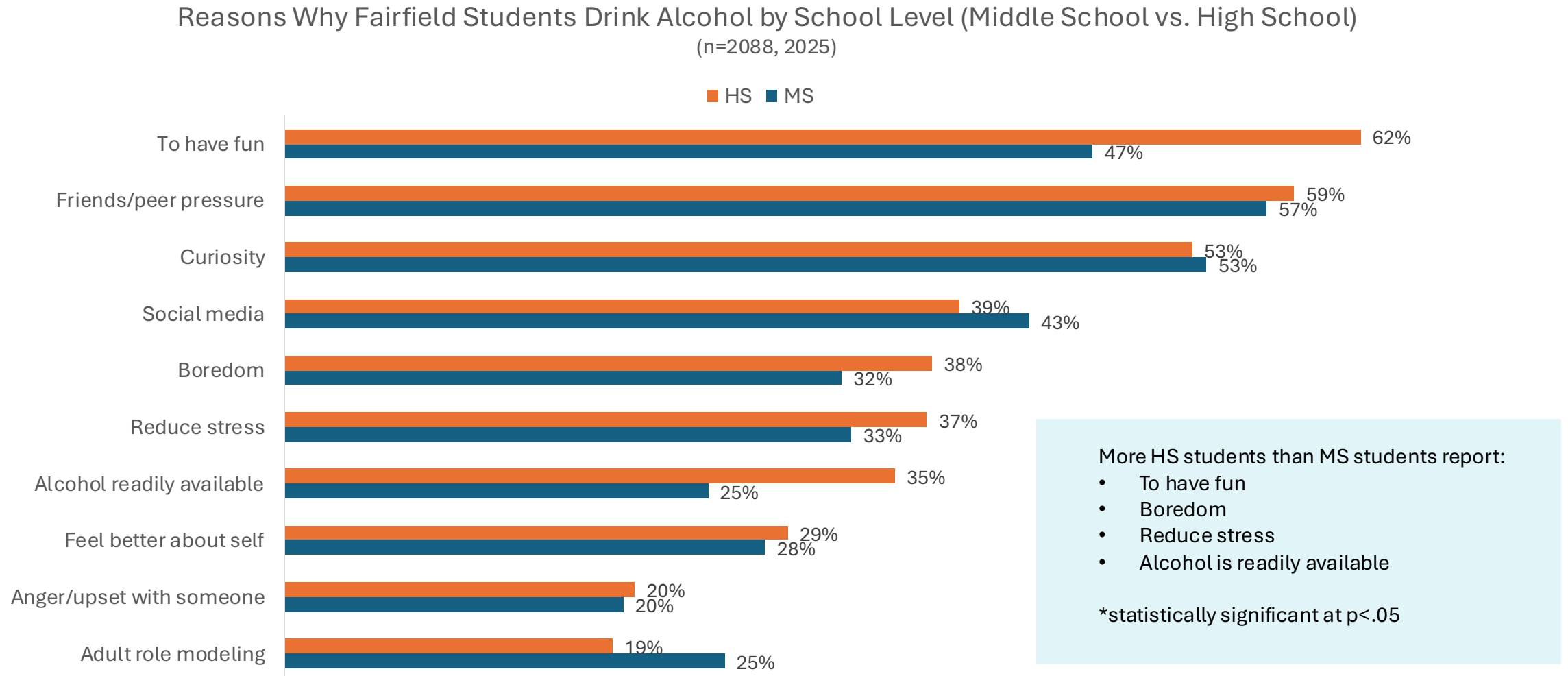
Factors associated with underage alcohol use

Fairfield students report friends/peer pressure as the largest influence on underage drinking, followed by the desire to have fun and curiosity.



Factors associated with underage alcohol use by school level

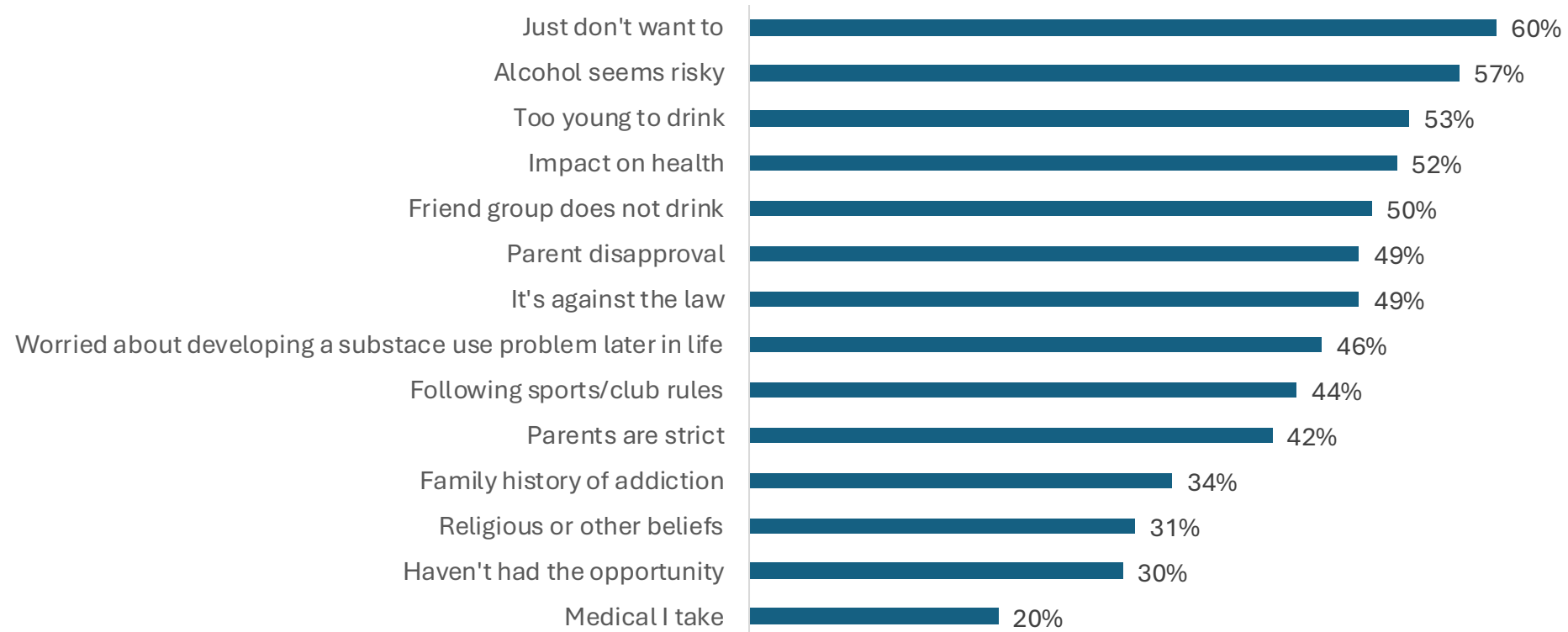
Some factors which influence alcohol use are more often reported by HS than MS students



Factors preventing or reducing underage alcohol use

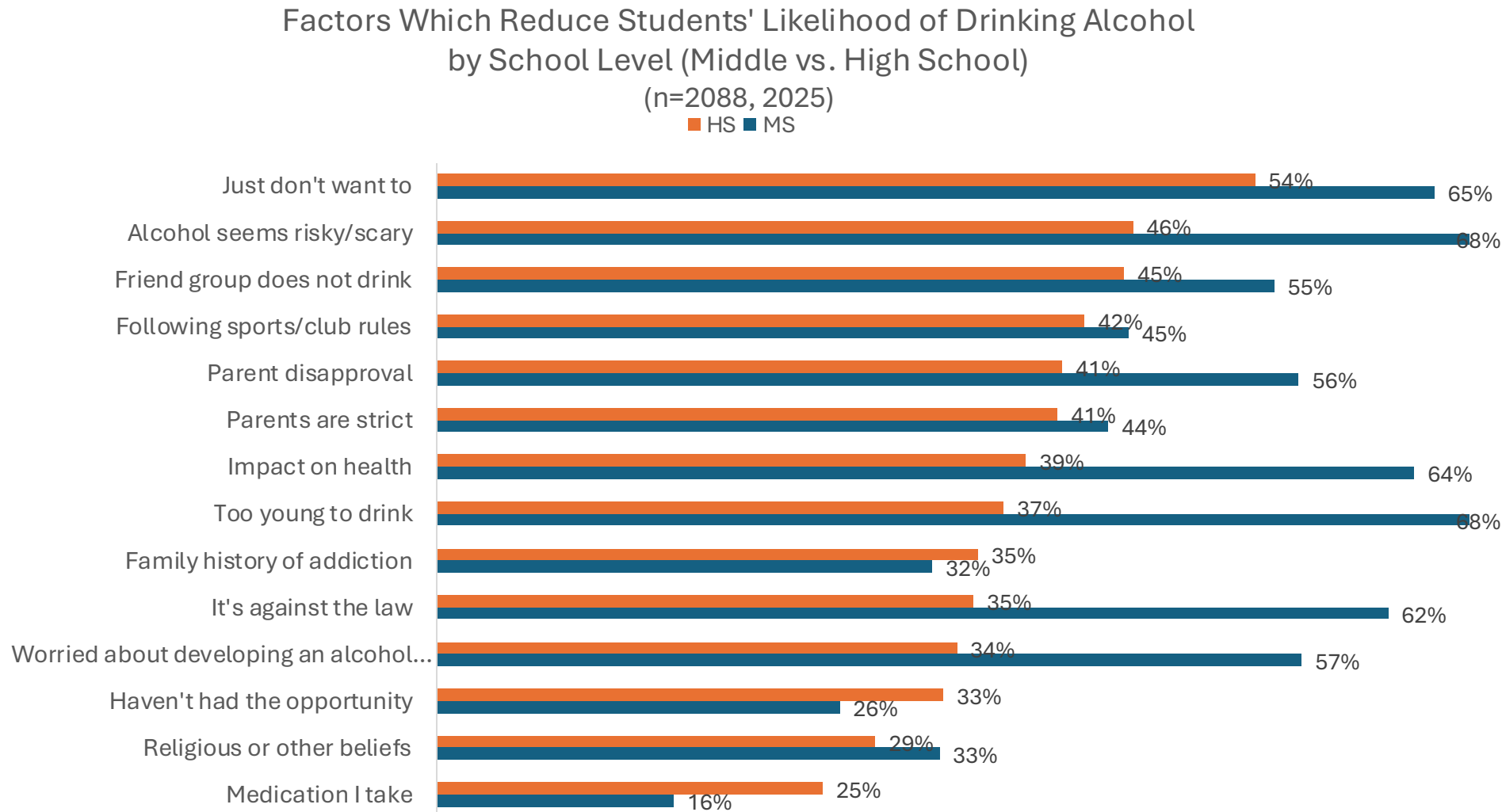
Students' top reason for not drinking: they just don't want to.

Reasons Why Fairfield Students Drink Alcohol by School Level, Middle School and High School
(n=2088, 2025)



Factors preventing underage alcohol use by school level

MS students more often report several barriers to alcohol use compared to HS students



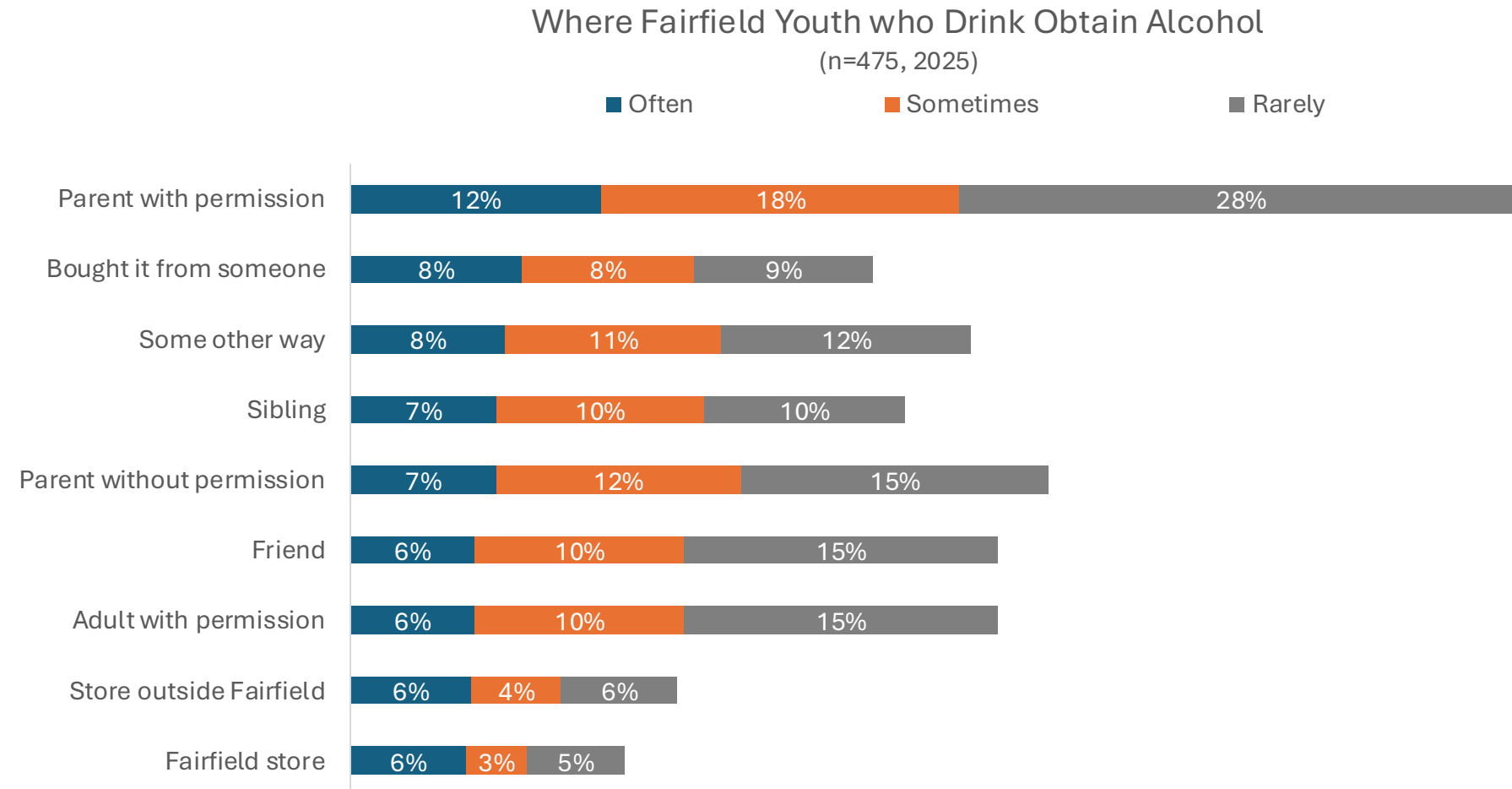
More MS than HS students report:

- Too young to drink, Impact on health, Parents strict, Parents disapprove, Following sports rules, Friend group does not drink, Alcohol seems risk, Just don't want to

*statistically significant at $p < .05$

Fairfield students' alcohol source

Fairfield students who drink most often access alcohol from their parents with permission



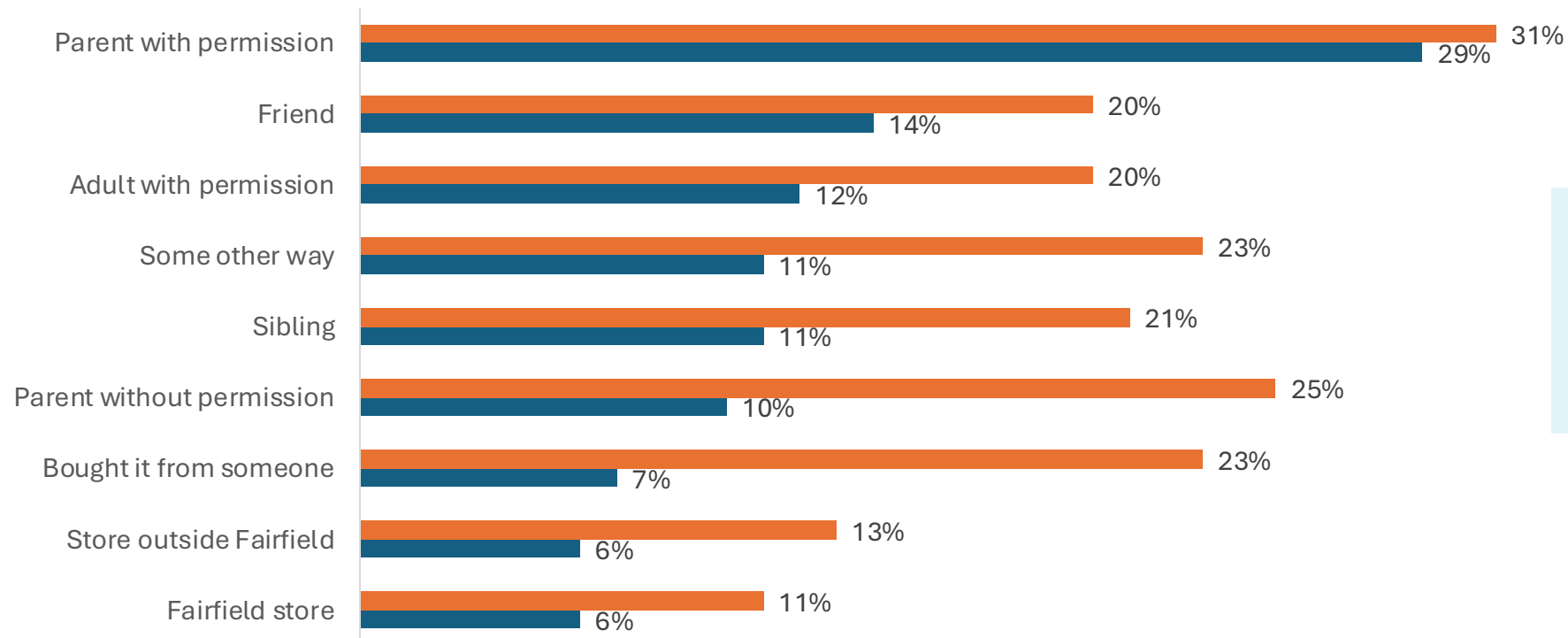
Fairfield middle and high school students' alcohol source

Both middle and high school parents most often obtain alcohol from their parents with permission.

Fairfield Middle and High School Students' Alcohol Source

(n=132, 2025, T2B - Sometimes or Often)

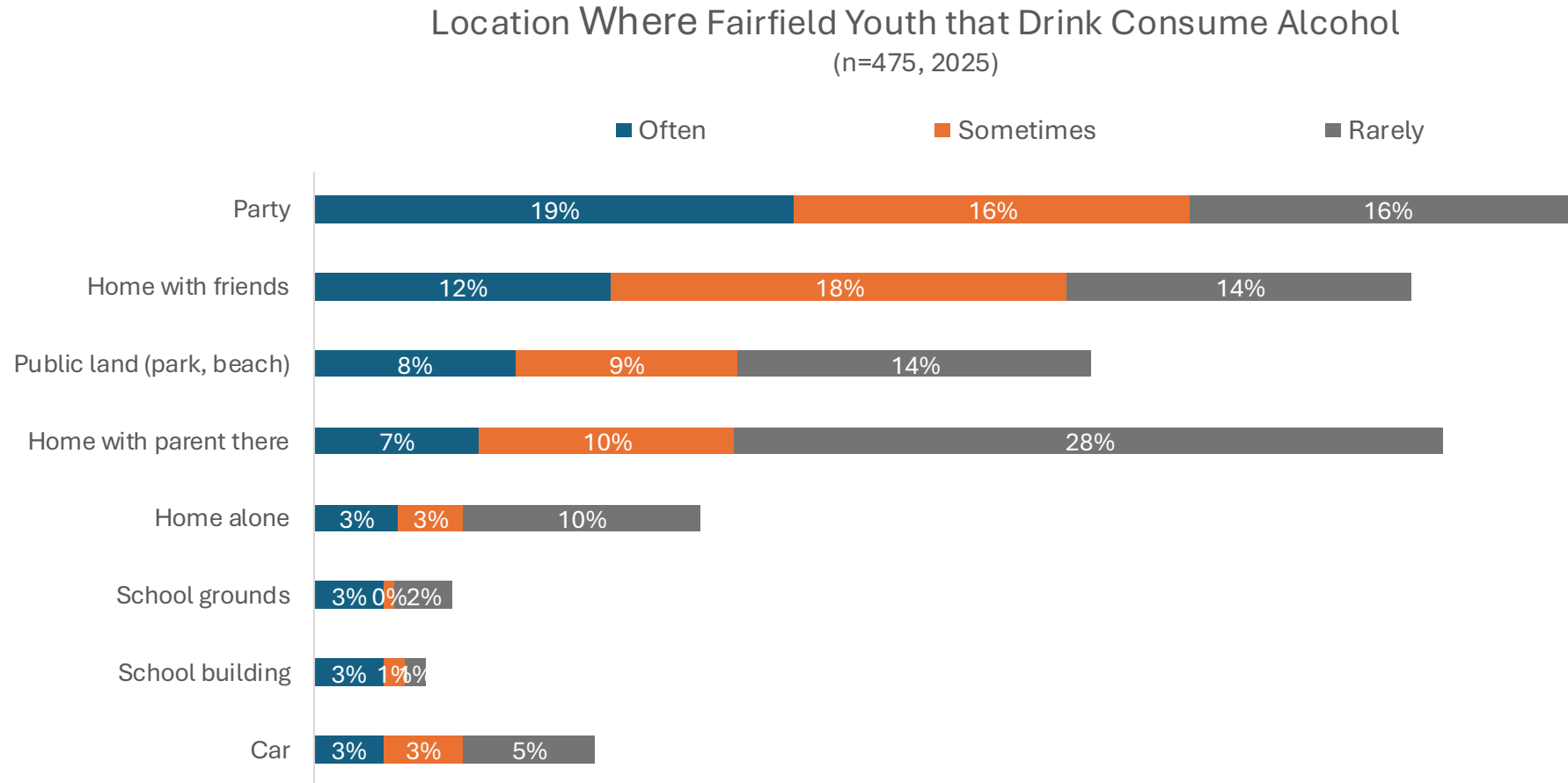
■ HS ■ MS



57% of HS
vs.
39% of MS students
report that it is
easy to obtain Alcohol

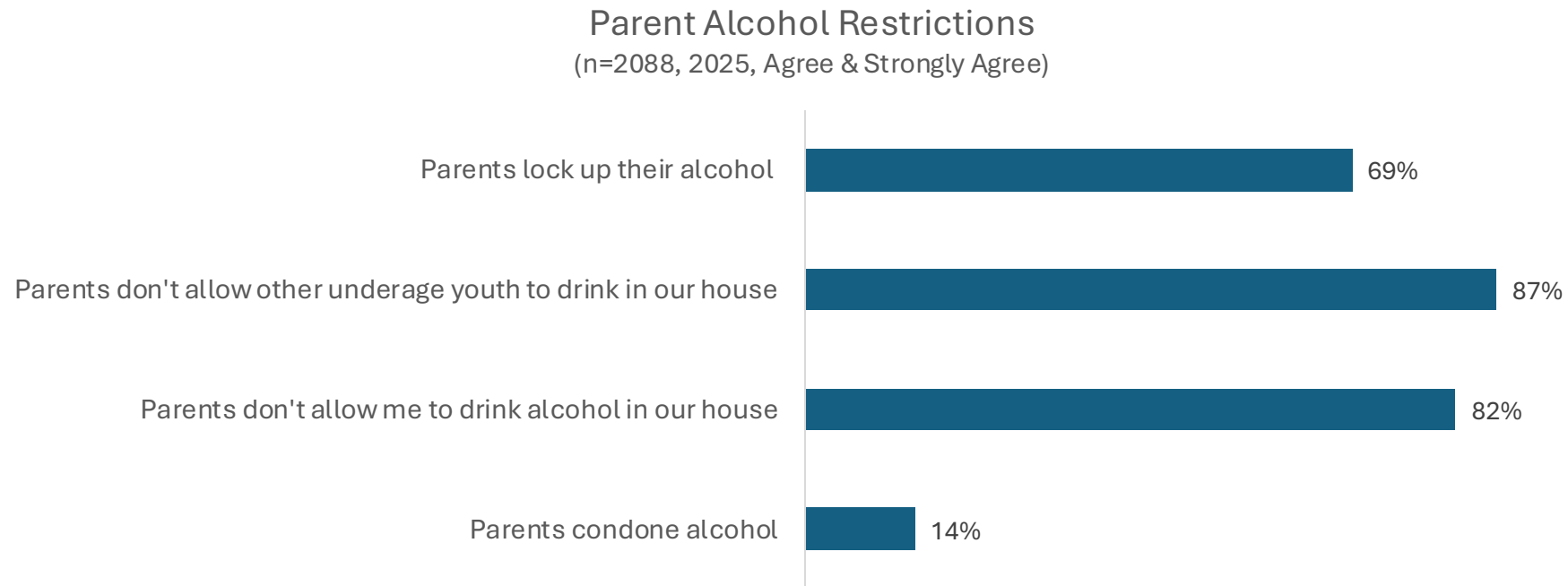
Location where Fairfield youth drink alcohol

Fairfield students most often drink in social settings, at a party or home with friends



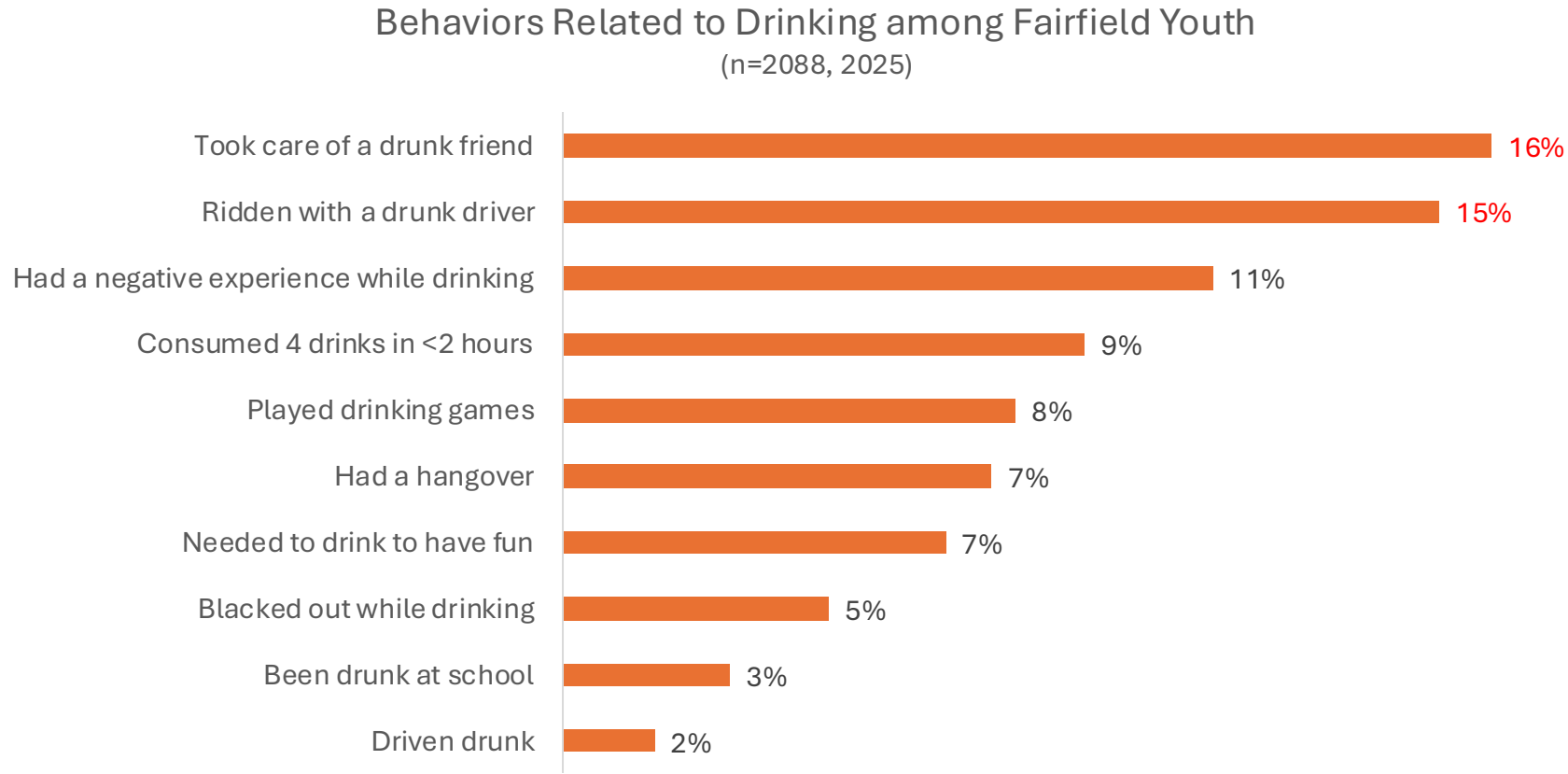
Parent/Guardian's alcohol access restriction

Fairfield students who drink most often drink in social settings, at a party or home with friends



(Risky) behaviors and experiences related to drinking

Top behaviors associated with alcohol use include taking care of a drunk friend and riding in the car with a drunk driver



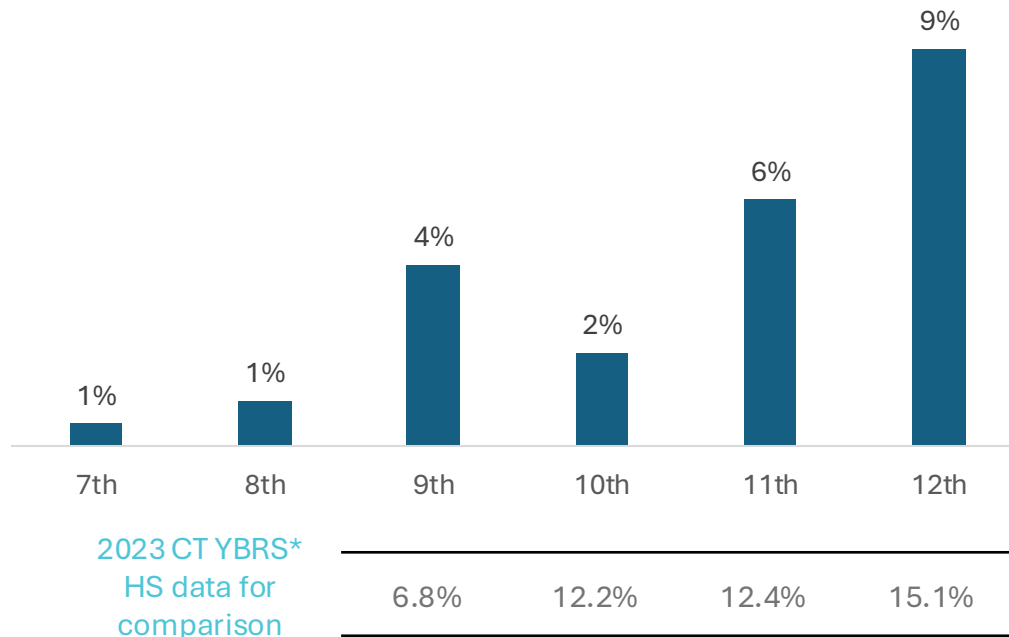
Deeper Dive into Students' Use of Vaping Nicotine



Vaping nicotine among Fairfield students

Fewer Fairfield high school students vape nicotine than the the proportion of CT high schoolers who vape nicotine, according to YRBS 2023 data.*

Past 30-day Vaping Nicotine by Grade
(n=2088, 2025)



Average Age of Initiation for Vaping Nicotine
among Fairfield Youth is 13.30 years (SD=0.30),
Median =14 years

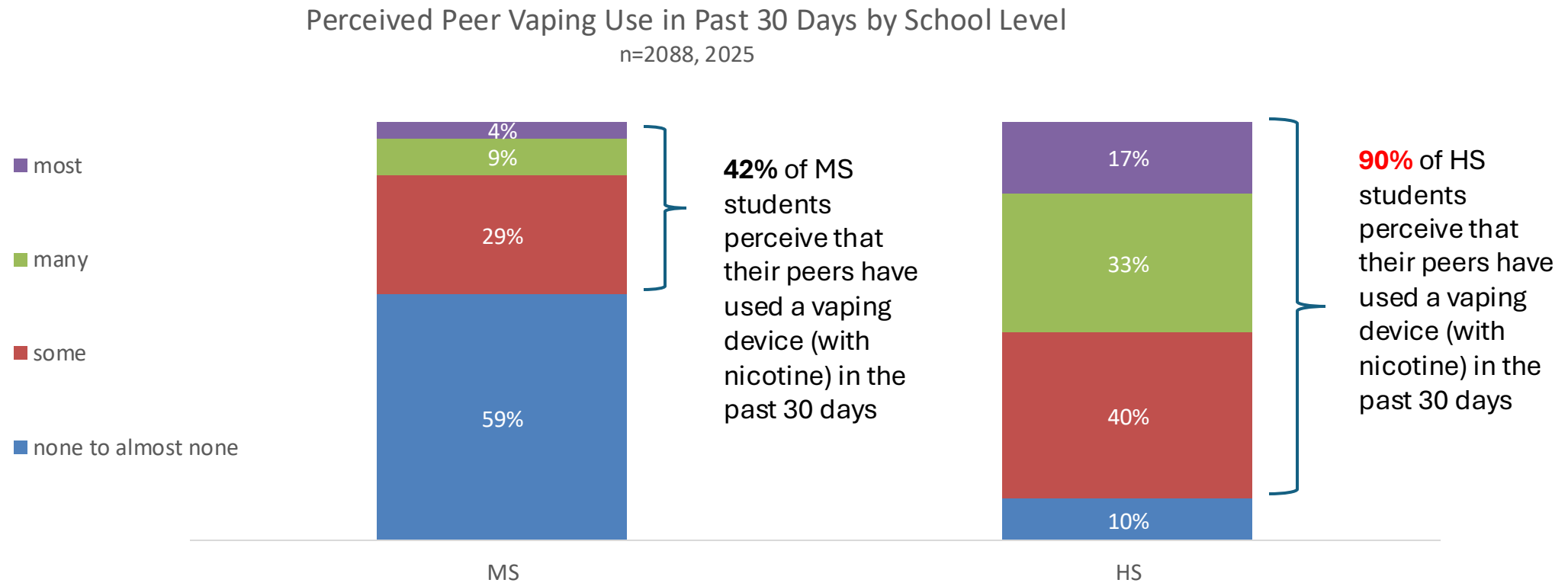
There were no significant differences in past 30-day vape use by students' demographic characteristics

Q. Thinking back over the past 30 days. On how many days, if any, did you use a vaping device or e-cig with nicotine?

* Source: CDC Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), 2023

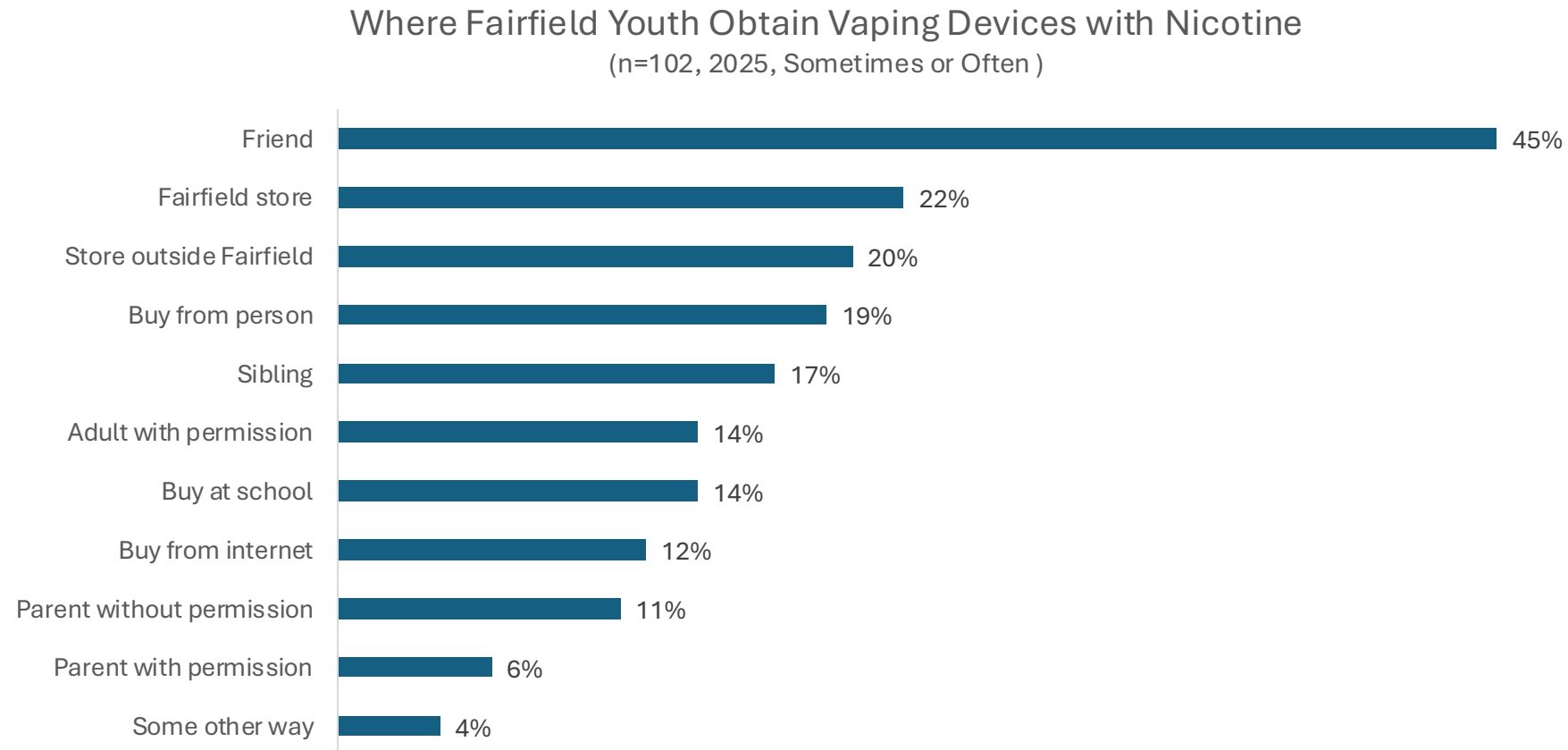
Vaping nicotine among Fairfield students

Significantly more high school than middle school students perceive that at least some of their friends have vaped nicotine in the past 30 days



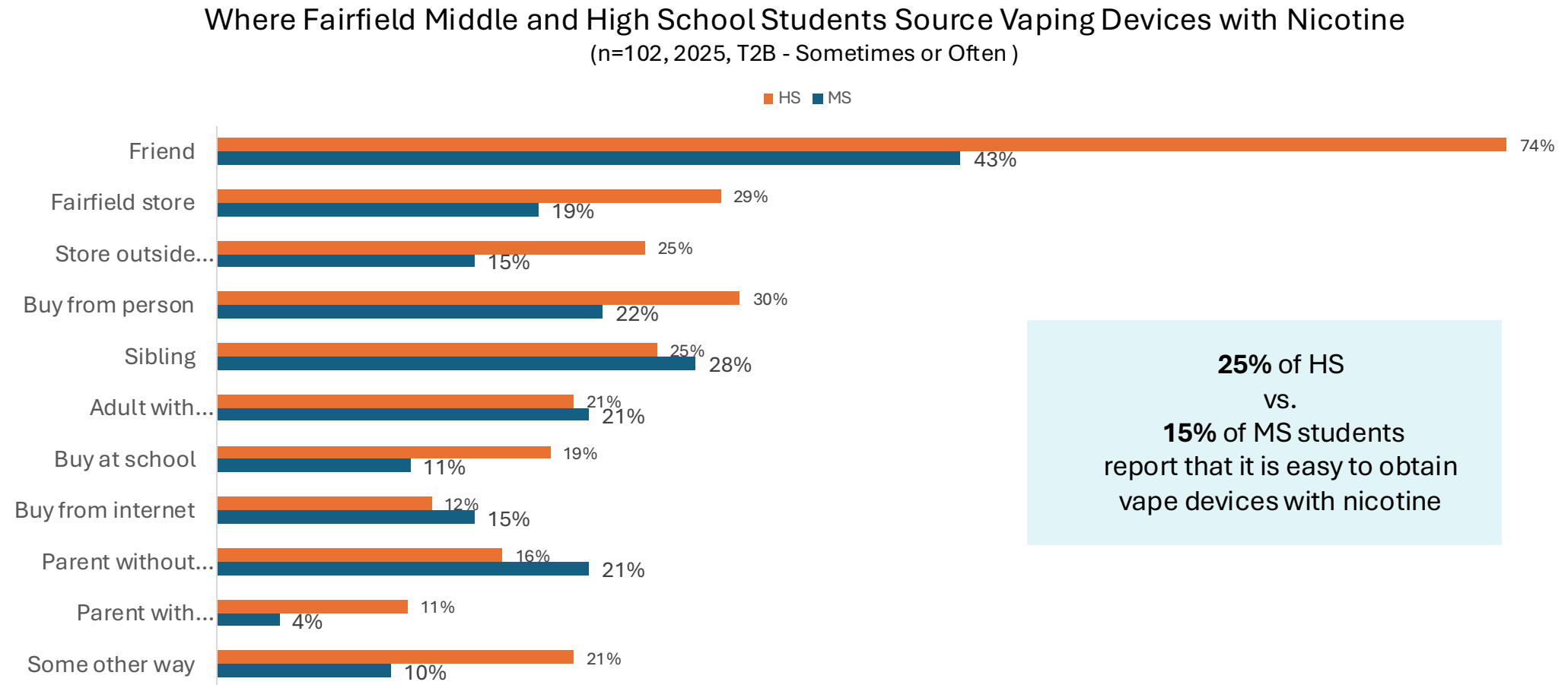
Where Fairfield students obtain vape devices with nicotine

Fairfield students who vape mostly report obtaining their vape device from friends.



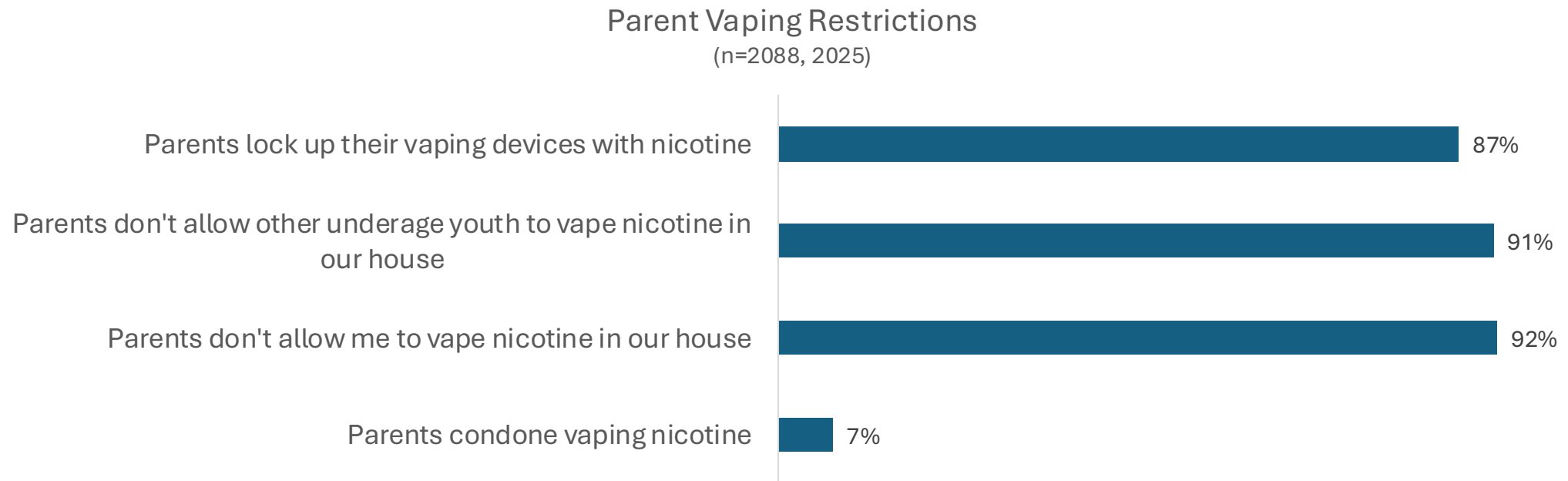
Where Fairfield middle and high school students obtain vape devices with nicotine

Both MS and HS students most commonly obtain vape devices from friends.



Parent/guardian's vape device access restrictions

Most parents don't allow underage use of vape devices and lock up their vape devices.

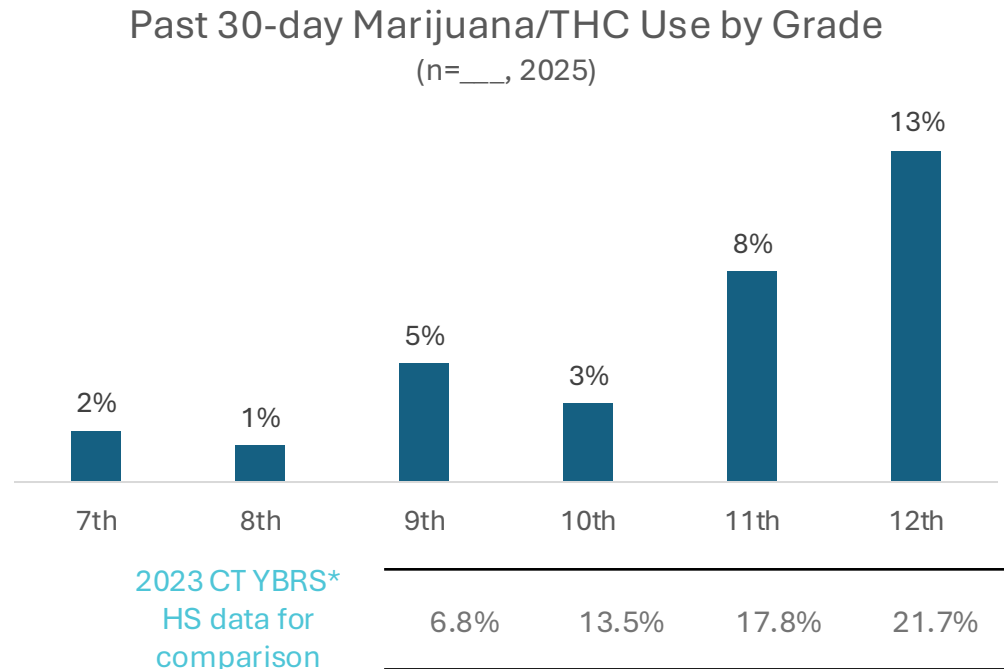


Deeper Dive into Students' Use of Marijuana/THC



Marijuana/THC use among Fairfield students

Fewer Fairfield high school students use marijuana/THC than the the proportion of CT high schoolers who use marijuana/THC, according to 2023 CT YRBS data.*



Average Age of Initiation for Marijuana/THC Use
among Fairfield Youth is 14.32 years (SD=2.37),
Median =15 years

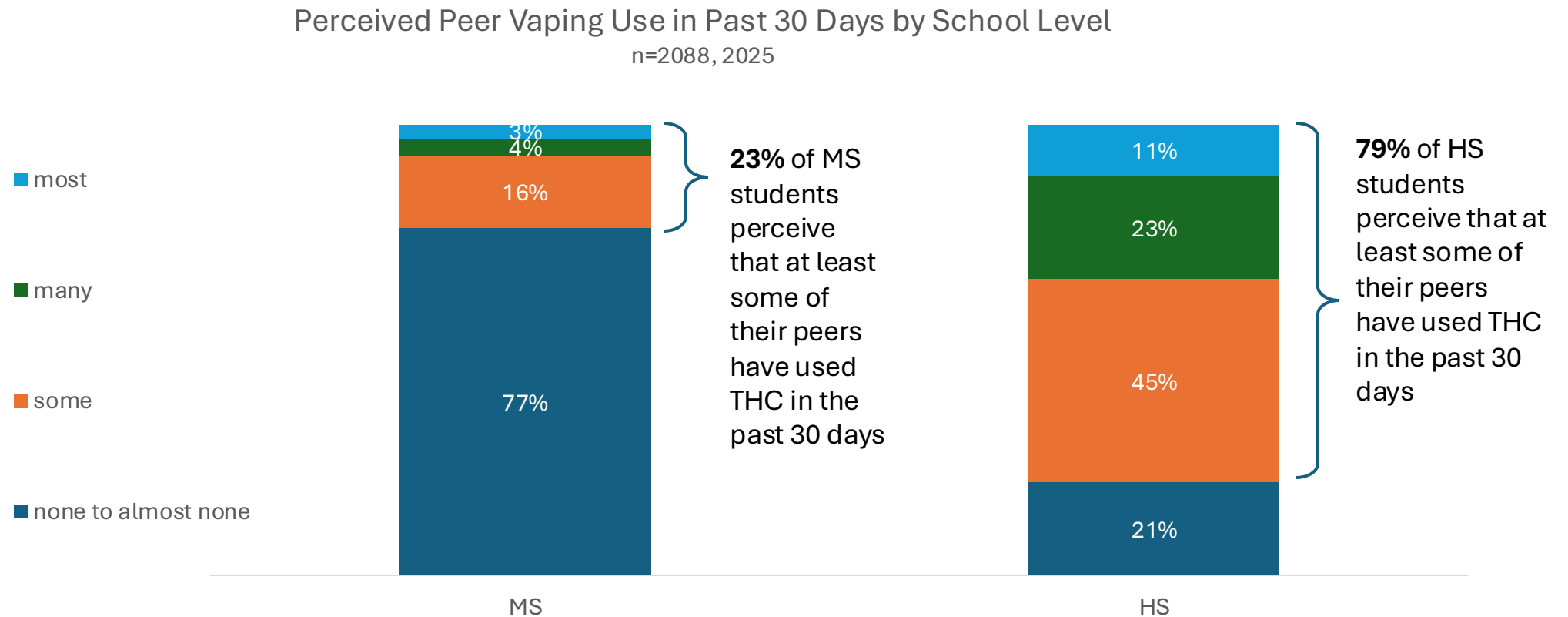
There were no significant
differences in past 30-day THC
use by students' demographic
characteristics

Q. Thinking back over the past 30 days. On how many days, if any, did you use marijuana or THC products?

*Source: CDC Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), 2023

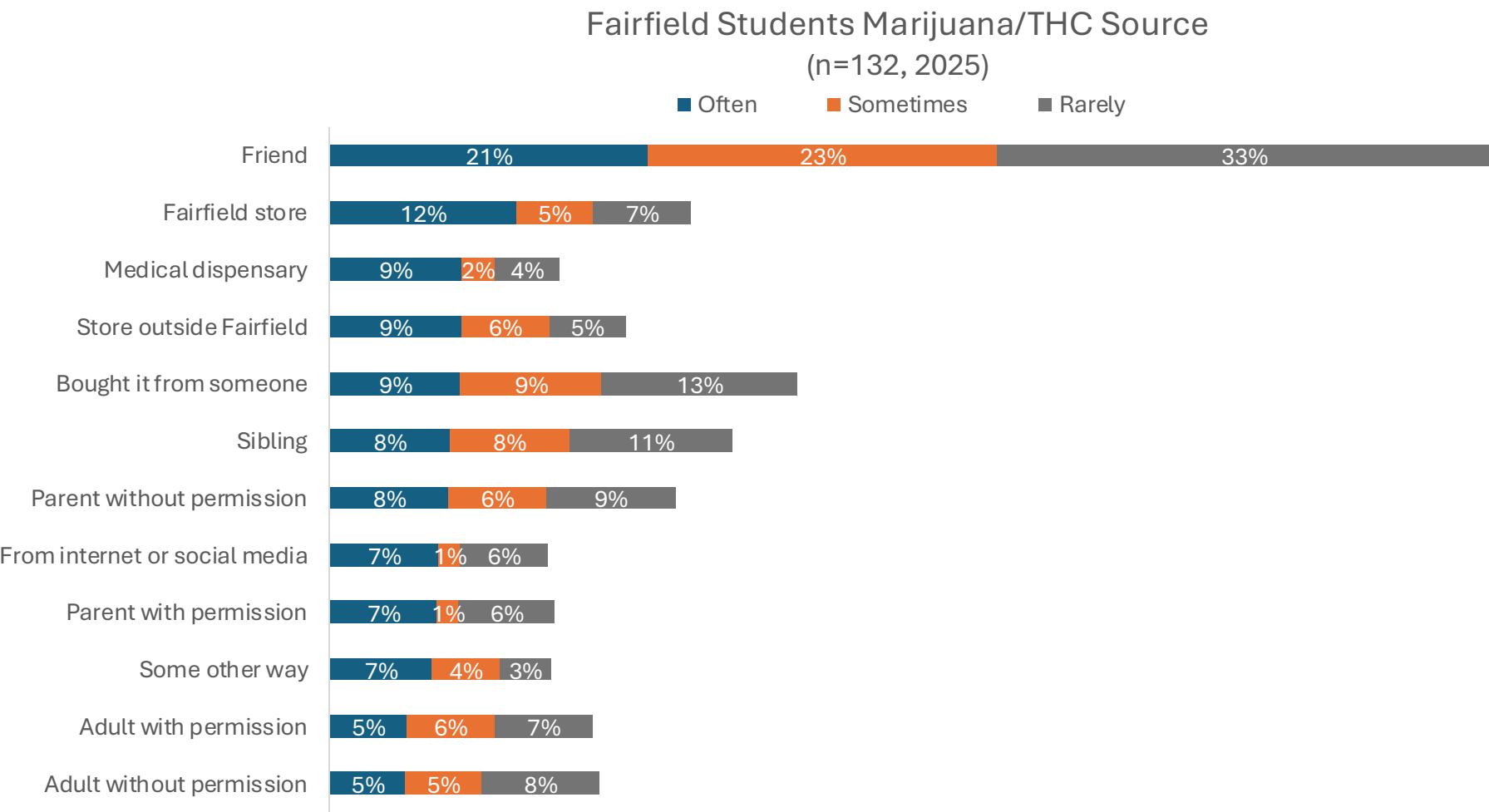
Marijuana/THC use among Fairfield high school and middle school students

Significantly more high school than middle school students perceive that at least some of their friends have used marijuana/THC in the past 30 days.



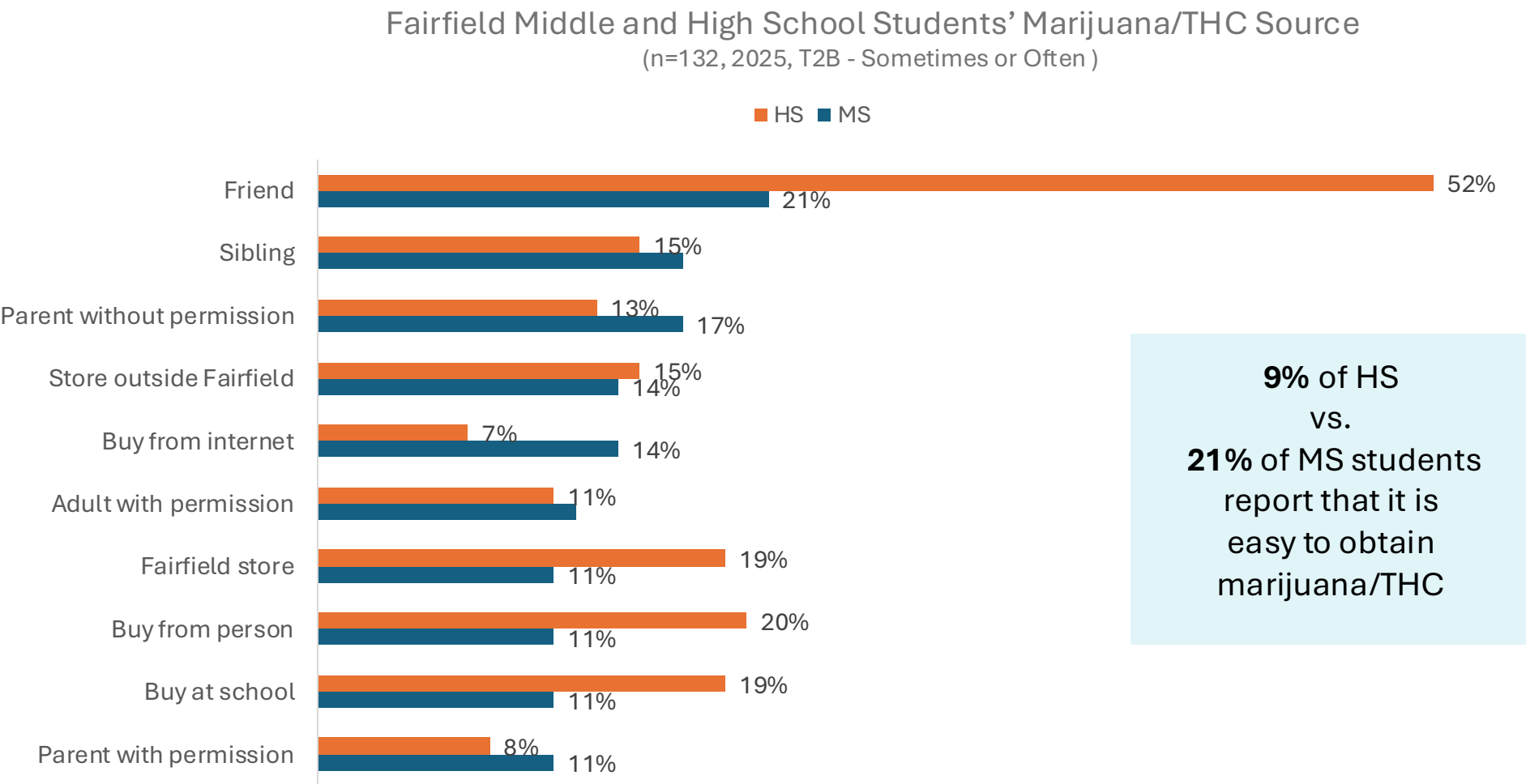
Where Fairfield students obtain marijuana/THC

Fairfield students most often obtain Marijuana/THC from their friends.



Fairfield middle and high school students' marijuana source

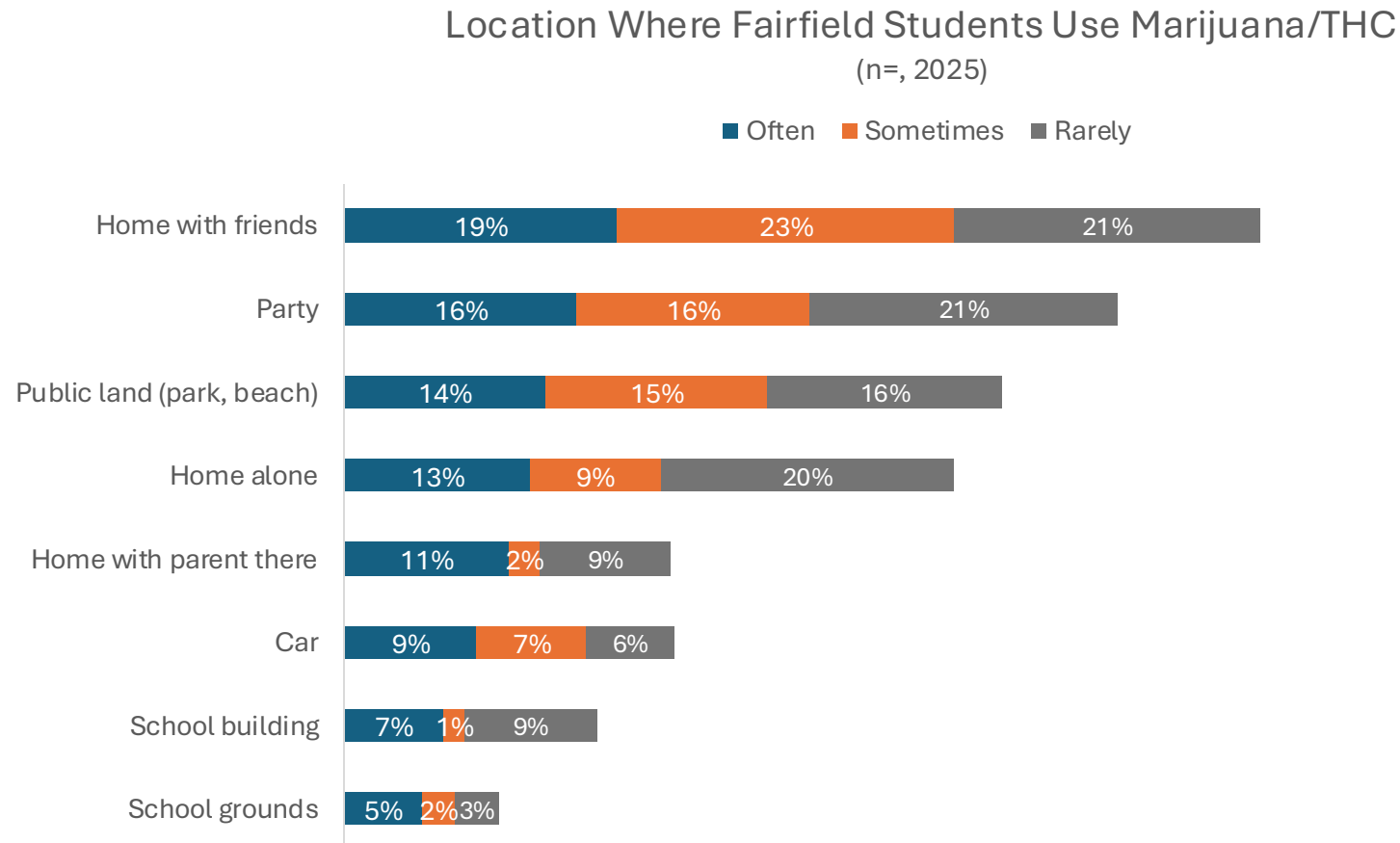
Both middle and high school parents most often obtain THC from a friend. HS students buy THC more often than MS students.



Q: Where do you get marijuana/THC products? (4 pt. scale for each item listed: often, sometimes, rarely, never)

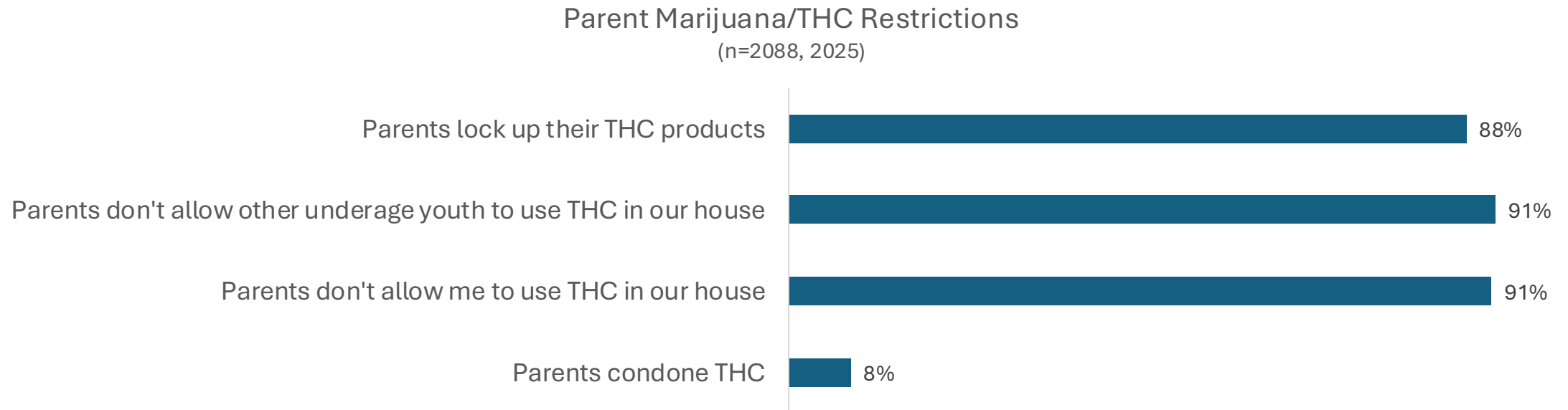
Location where Fairfield students use marijuana/THC

Fairfield youth most often use Marijuana/THC in social settings at home with friends or at a party.



Parent/guardian's marijuana/THC rules and restrictions

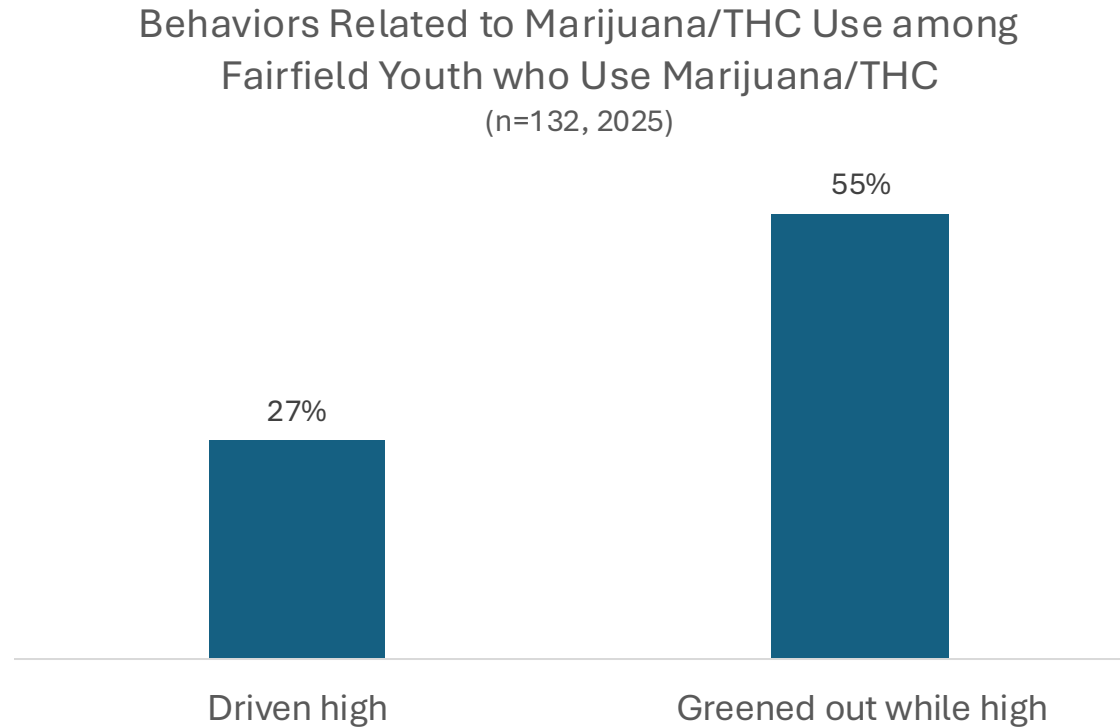
Most parents don't allow underage use of THC and lock up their THC products.



Q: My parents/guardians: lock up their THC products, don't allow other underage youth to use THC in our house, don't allow me to use THC in our house, condone THC use (5 pt. agreement scale)

Risk behaviors and experiences associated with marijuana/THC use among Fairfield students

Half of the students who use marijuana have passed out, and over one quarter have driven high.



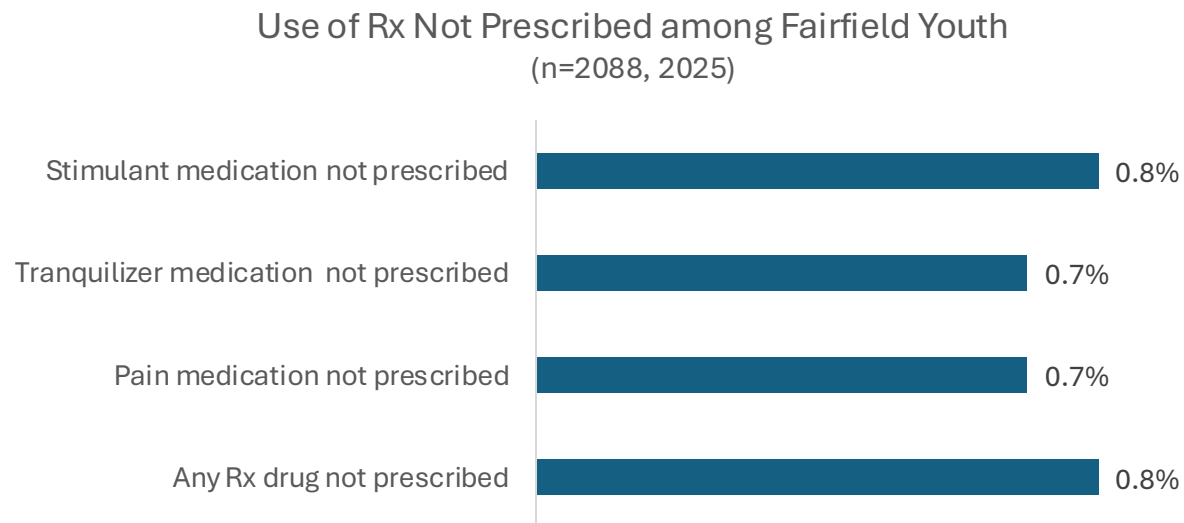
Deeper Dive into Prescription Drug Use (without drug prescription)



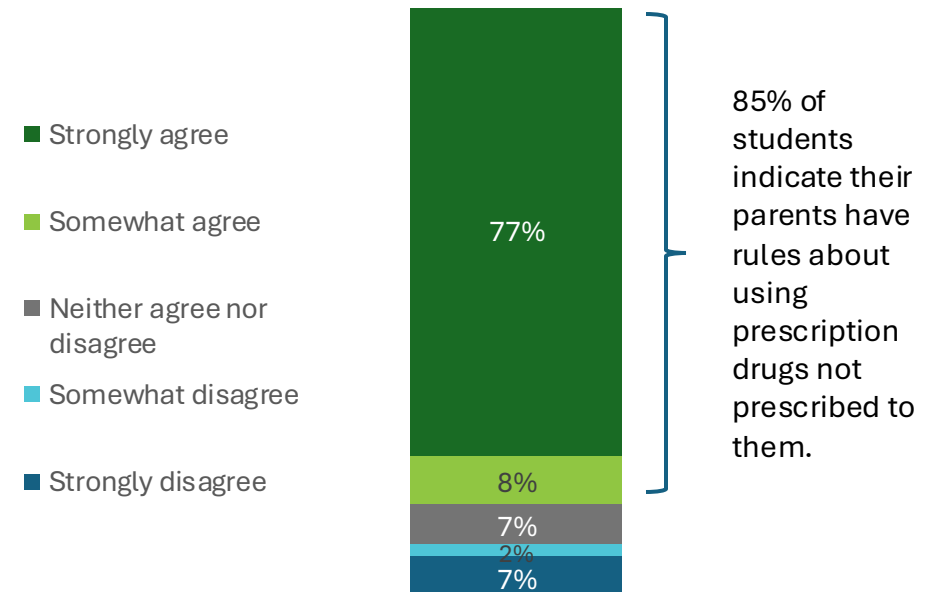
Use of prescription drugs (Rx) with no prescription

Fairfield students most often use Marijuana/THC socially, at home with friends or at a party.

15% of Fairfield youth report that it is easy to access prescription drugs not prescribed to them



Parents have Rules about Prescription Drug Use
(n=2088, 2025)



Q: Thinking back over the past 30 days. On how many days, if any, did you use prescription drugs not prescribed to you?

Q: My parents/guardians have clear rules discouraging me from using prescription drugs not prescribed to me.

Social Media Use



Time spent using social media

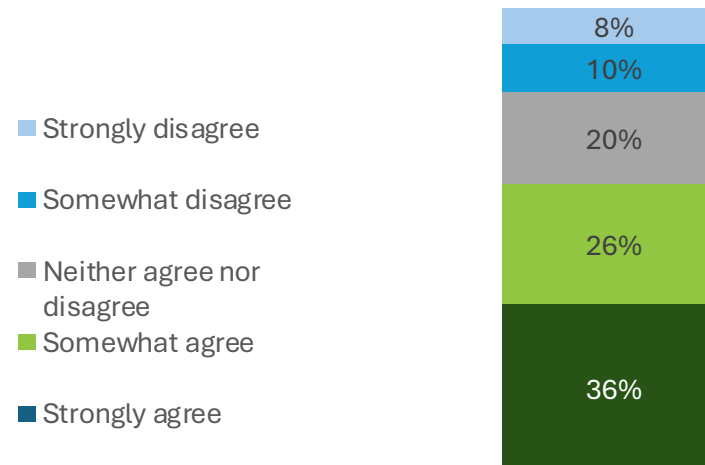
Fairfield students report an average of 3-4 hours social media use per day; most have rules for social media use

Students reported a range of 0 to 10 hours of social media per day.

- Average time spent on social media = 3.98 (SD = 2.62) hours
- Median time spent on social media = 3 hours

99% of Fairfield students report 1+ hours using social media on an average day.

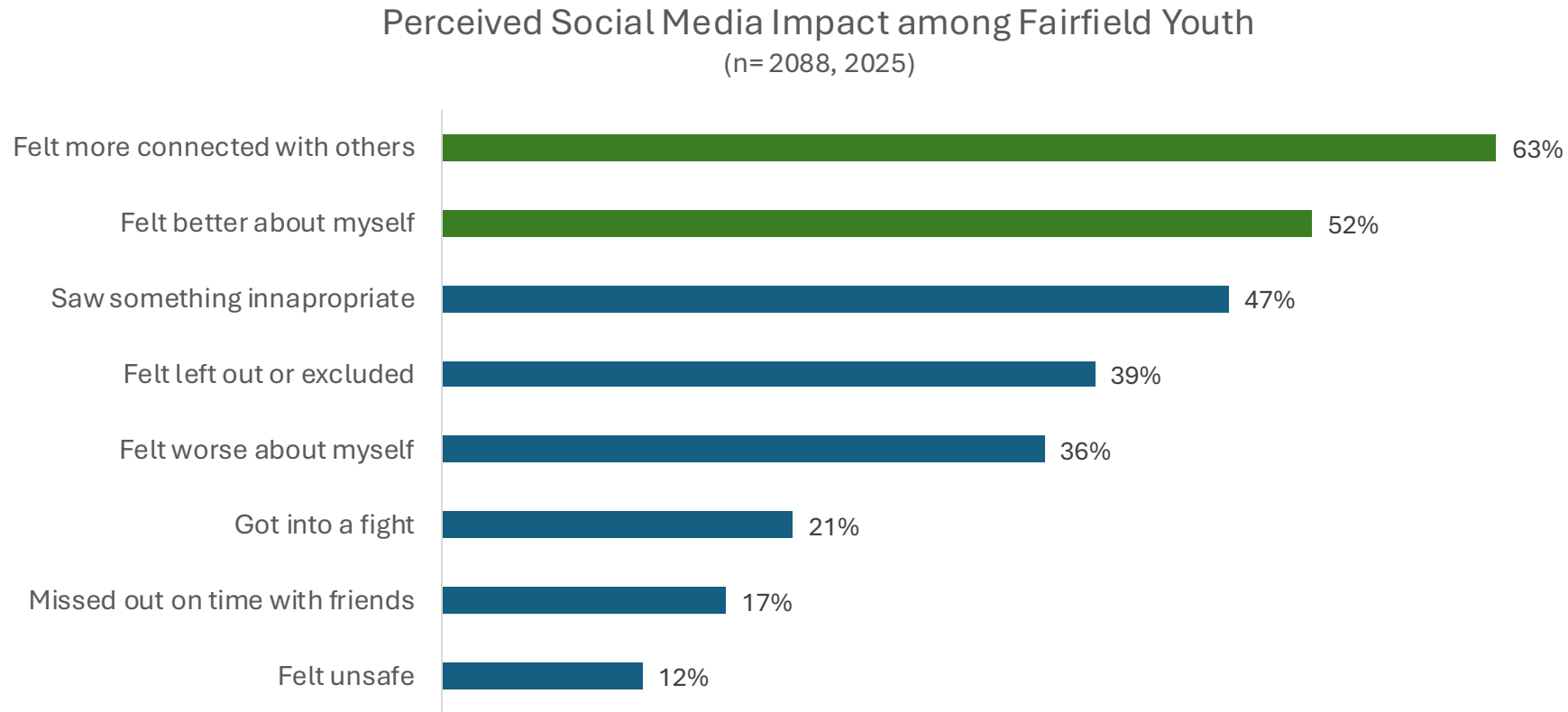
Parents Provide Rules for Social Media Use
(n=2088, 2025)



62% of Fairfield youth report that their parents provide clear rules for social media use

Perceived impact of social media use

A greater proportion of Fairfield students report positive impacts of social media use than negative.



Gaming, Gambling, & Texting



Gaming among Fairfield students

Fairfield students report an average of 2-3 hours of gaming per day and perceive both positive and negative impacts

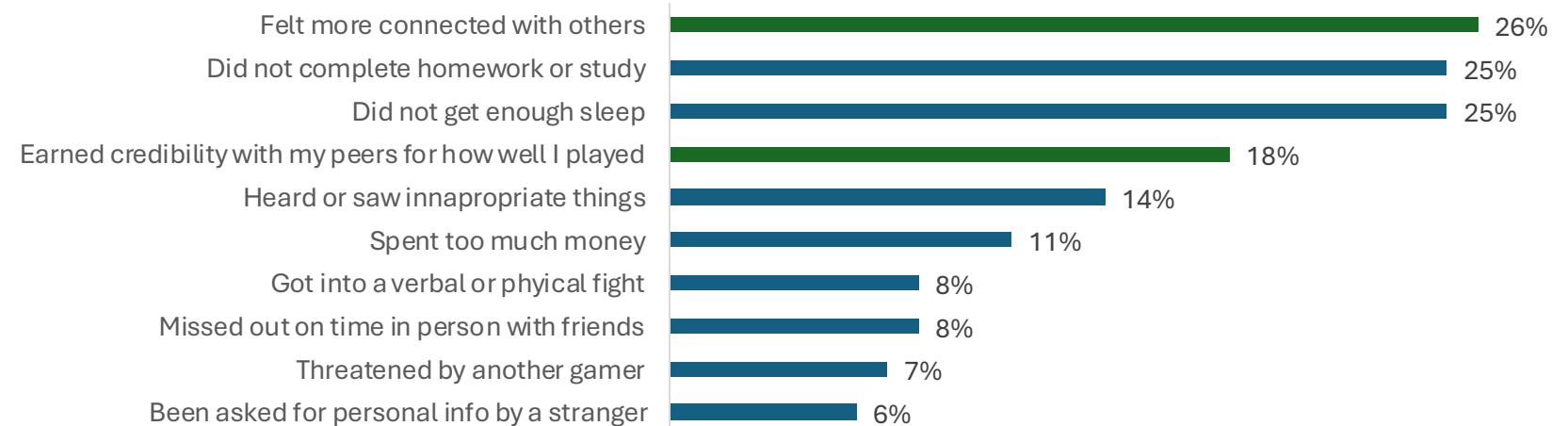
Students reported a range of 0 to 10 hours of gaming time per day.

- Average time spent gaming = 2.74 (SD = 2.65) hours
- Median time spent on gaming = 2 hours

89% of Fairfield students report 1+ hours of gaming on an average day.

Perceived Impact of Video Game Use among Fairfield Students

(n=2088, 2025)



Q: About how many hours on a typical day do you engage in the following: video games/mobile gaming?

Q: Have you experienced any of the following as a result of playing video games? (select all that apply)

Time spent gambling

Gambling is limited among Fairfield students and discouraged by parents.

Students reported a range of 0 to 10 hours of gaming time per day.

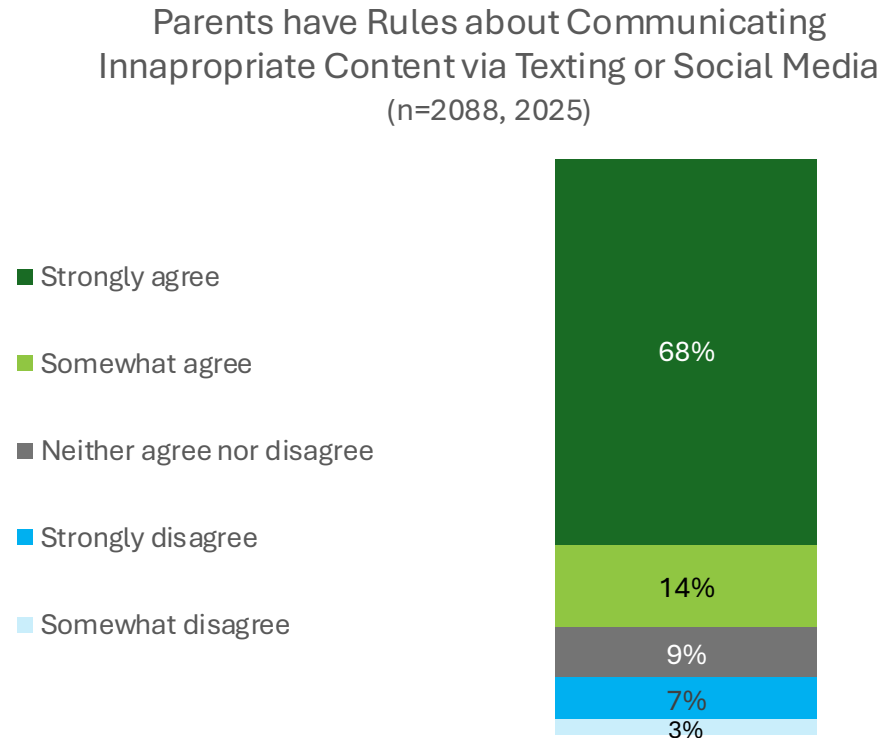
- Average time spent gaming = 2.03 (SD = 3.49) hours
- Median time spent on gaming = 0 hours

42% of Fairfield youth report 1+ hours gambling on an average day.

81% of students report that their parents discourage gambling

Texting among Fairfield students

Several texting questions were included in the questionnaire; these are presented below.



9% of Fairfield students report texting while driving at least 1 time in the prior 12 months.

14% of Fairfield students have been electronically bullied through either text or social media.

Q: My parent(s) or guardian(s) have clear rules discouraging me from communicating inappropriate content with others via text or on social media (e.g., nude photos or bullying texts) – 5pt Agreement scale

Q: During the past 12 months, how many times have you driven a car while texting? (yes/no)

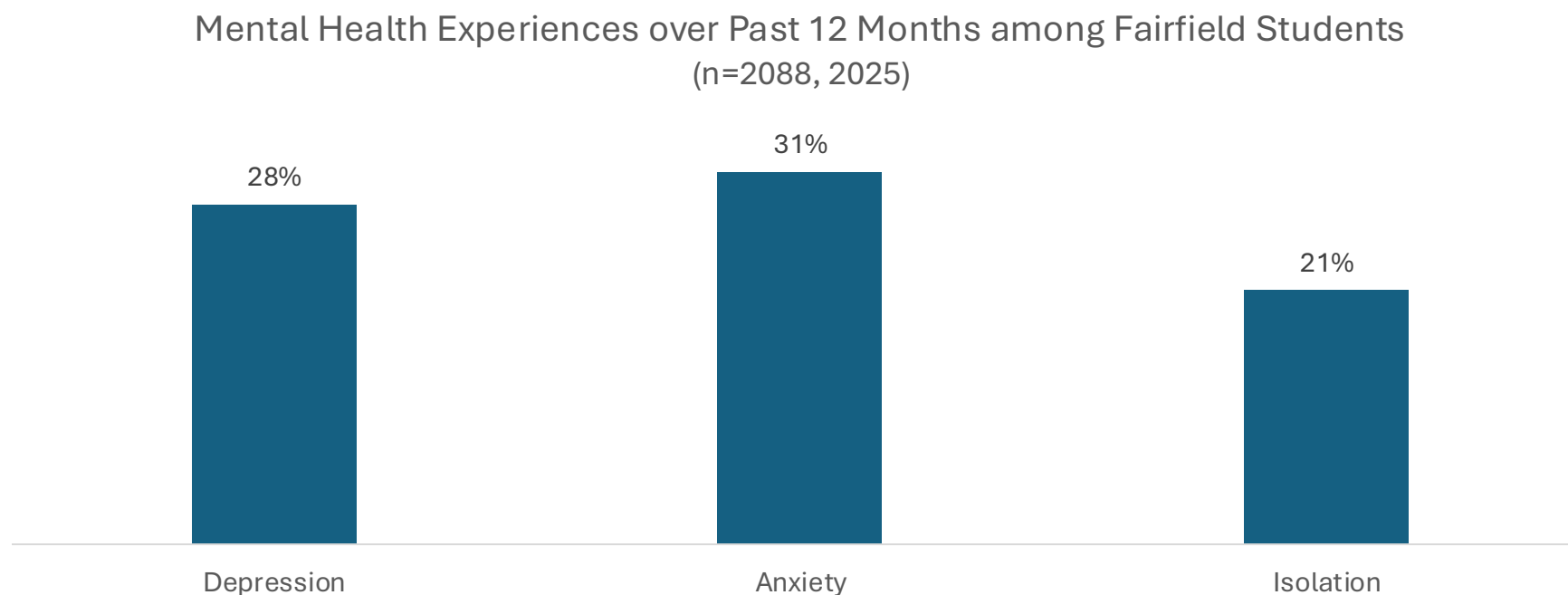
Q: During the past 12 months, have you ever been electronically bullied (e.g., bullied through texting, Instagram, Snapchat, or other social media?) (yes/no)

Mental Health



Fairfield students' self-report depression, anxiety, and isolation

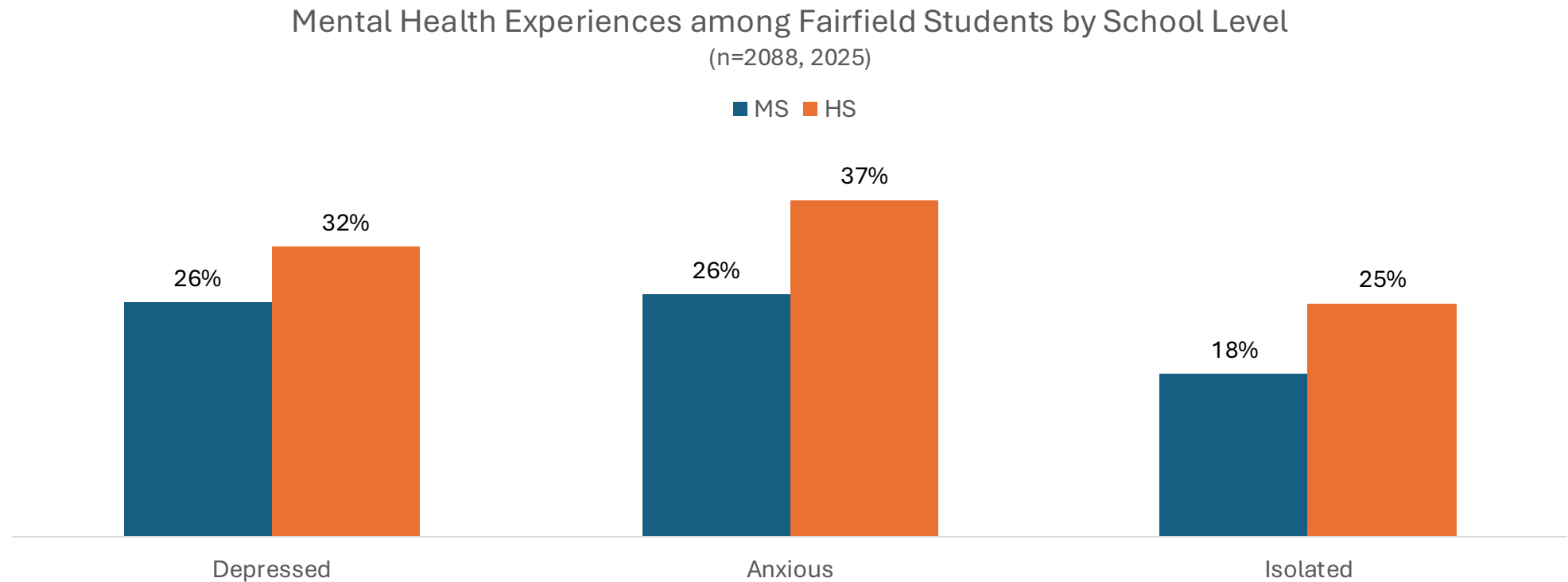
About one-third of Fairfield students experienced depression or anxiety in the prior 12 months.



Q. During the past 12 months, did you ever feel so: **sad or hopeless** almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities? **anxious** almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities? **isolated** almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities?

Fairfield students' self-report depression, anxiety, and isolation by school level

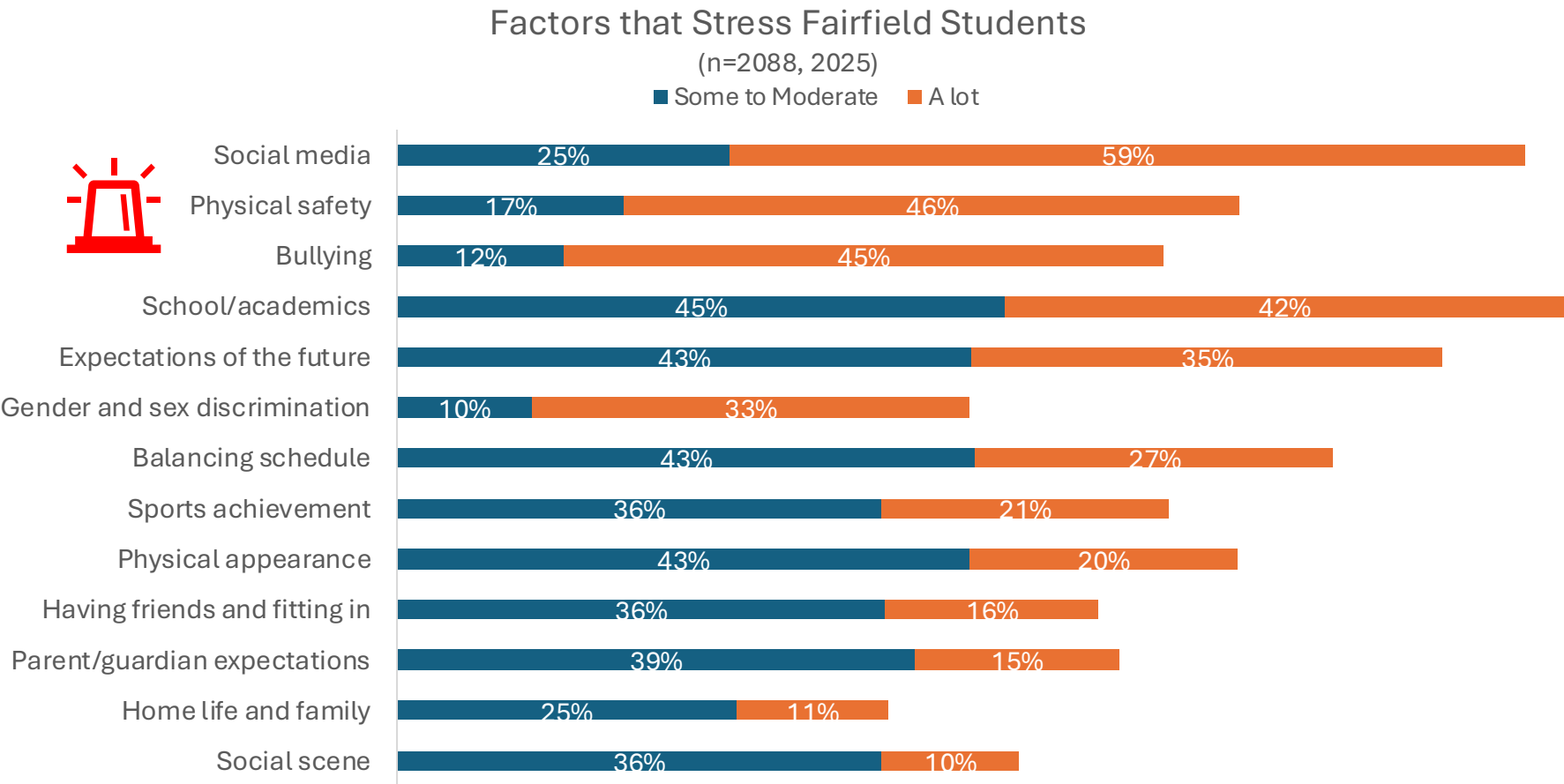
A greater proportion of Fairfield high school than middle school students report experiencing depression, anxiety, and isolation



Q. During the past 12 months, did you ever feel so: **sad or hopeless** almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities? **anxious** almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities? **isolated** almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities?

Factors that stress Fairfield students

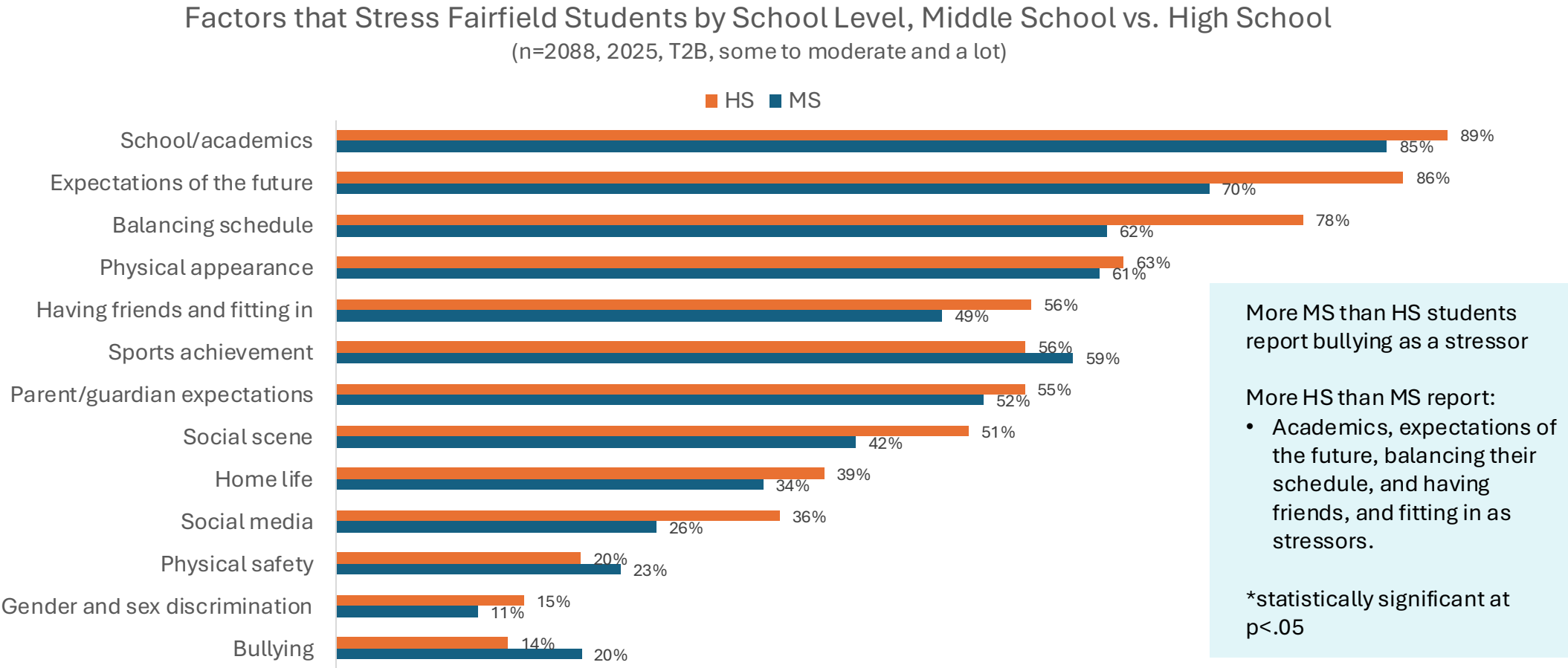
Fairfield students most often report that social media contributes to their stress, followed by academics, expectations for the future, and balancing their schedule. Concerns about physical safety and bullying are alarmingly high



Q. How much stress, anxiety, or worry do the following give you in your day-to-day life? (3-pt scale: none to low, some to moderate, a lot)

Factors that stress Fairfield students by School Level

Some differences in factors that stress students between MS and HS

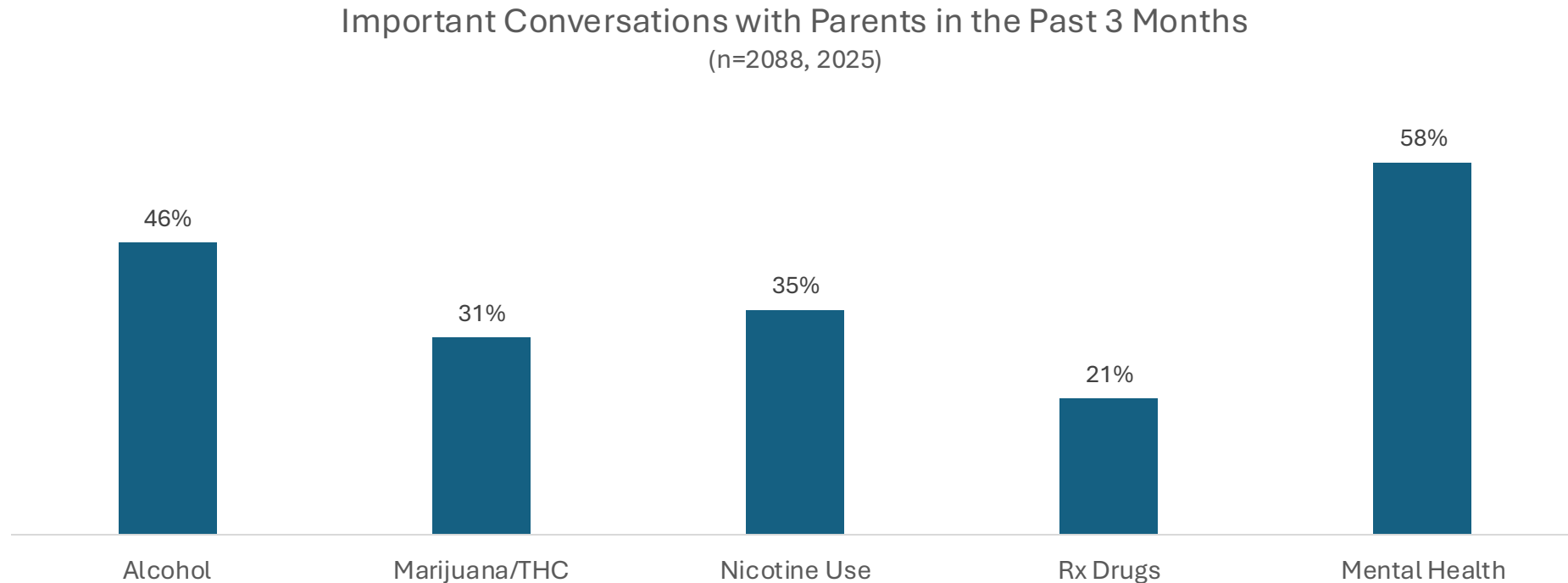


Student Relationships and Support



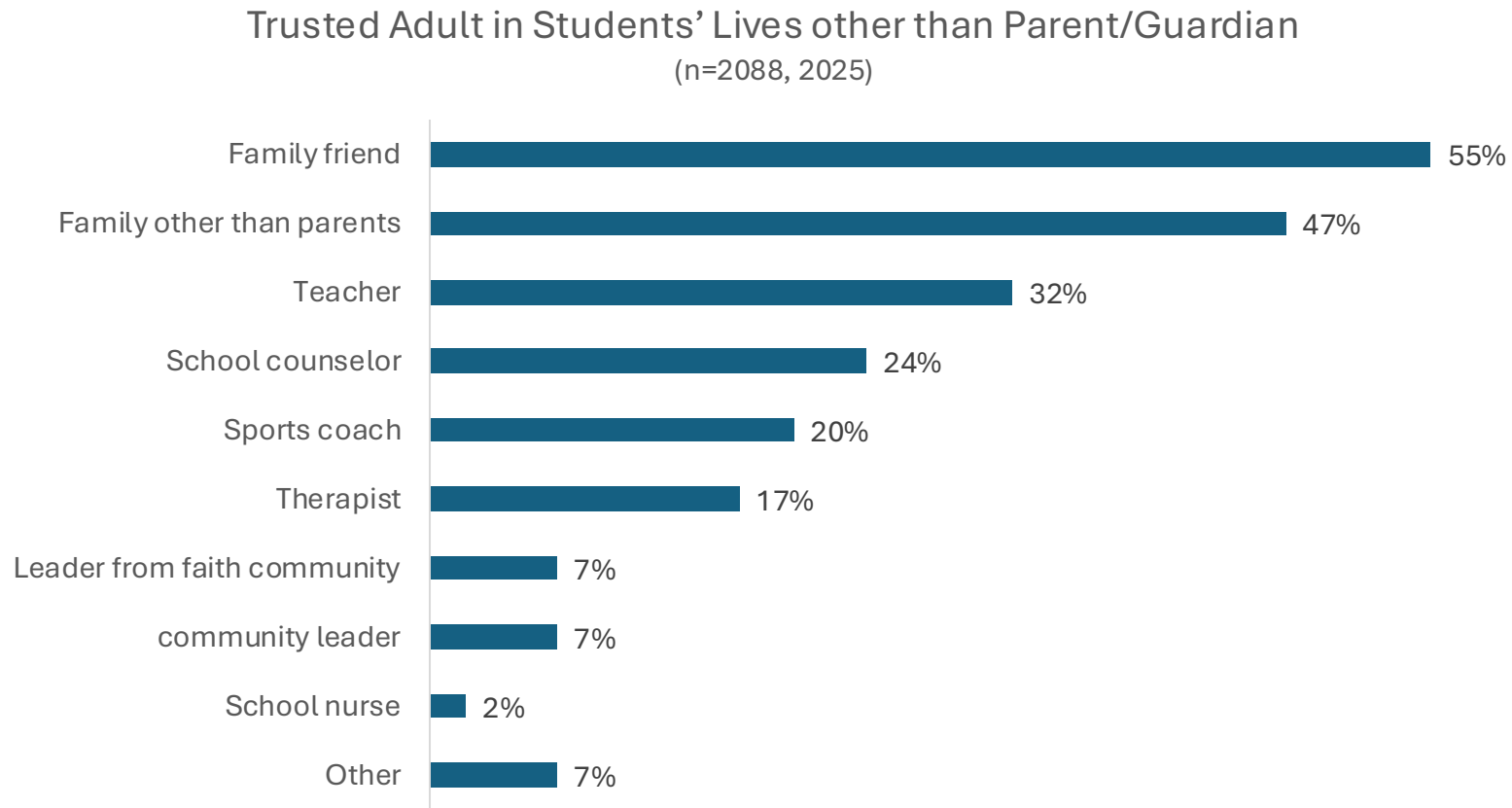
Students' conversations with parent/guardian

Students had most often spoken with their parent/guardian about mental health followed by alcohol use.



Trusted adult in students' lives other than their parent/guardian

The majority of students selected a leader from their faith community as their trusted adult.



Parent awareness of student activities and interactions with students

Students had most often spoken with their parent/guardian about mental health followed by alcohol use.

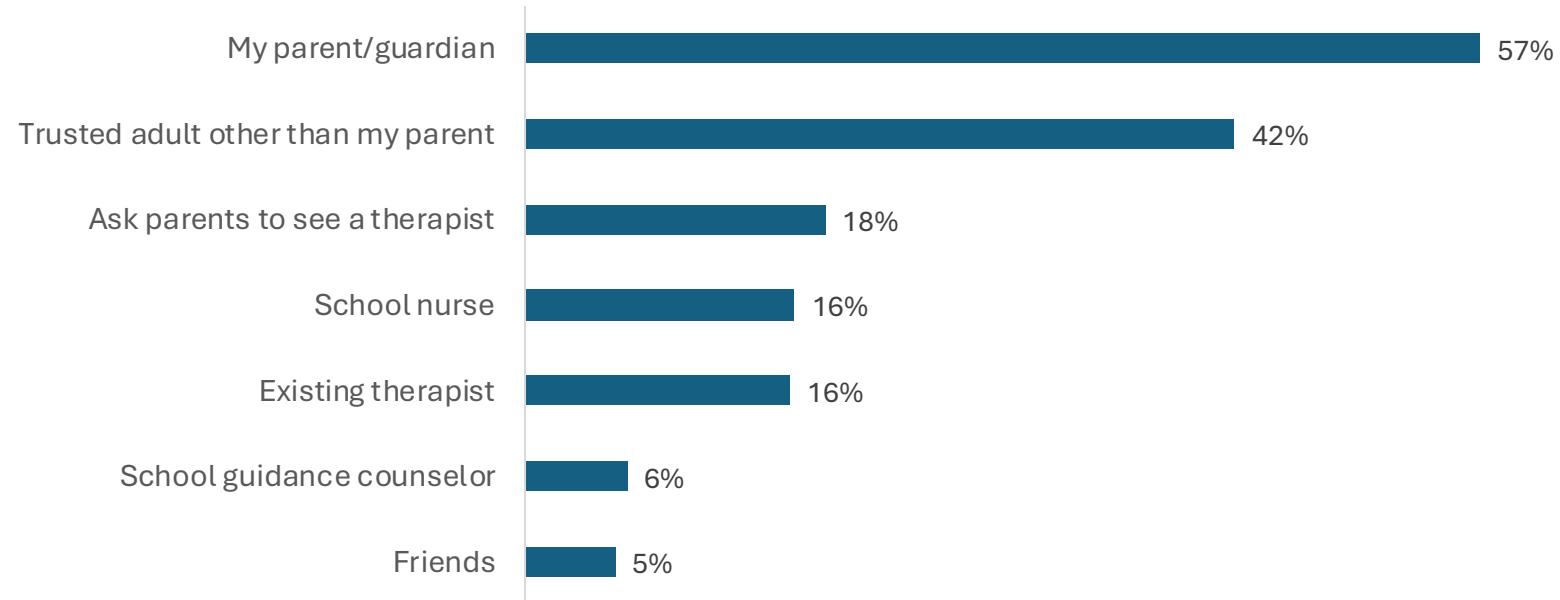
Parent Awareness of Student Activities and Interactions with Students
(n=2088, 2025, T2B - agree and strongly agree)



Students' support system for concerns

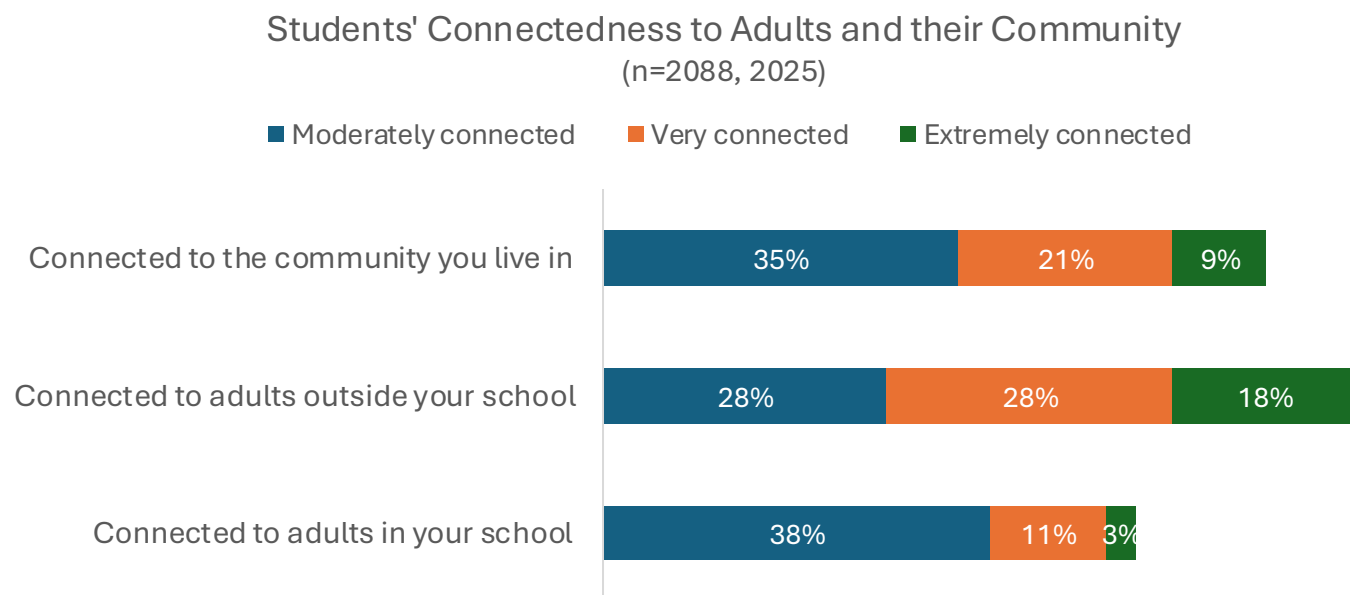
The majority of students would talk to their parent/guardian or another trusted adult if they had a concern about mental health or substance use.

Person Students would Talk To about a Substance Use or Mental Health Concern
(n=2088, 2025)

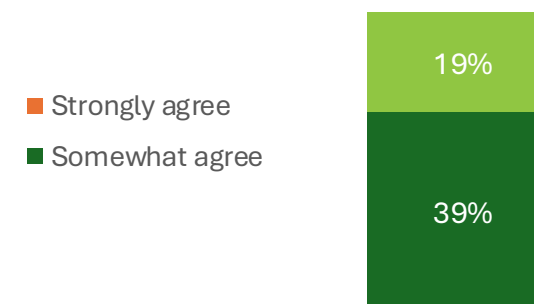


Students' connectedness to adults and community

The majority of students feel connected to adults and their community and feel that their teachers really care about them.



Student Perceptions that their Teachers
Care About Them
(n=2088, 2025)



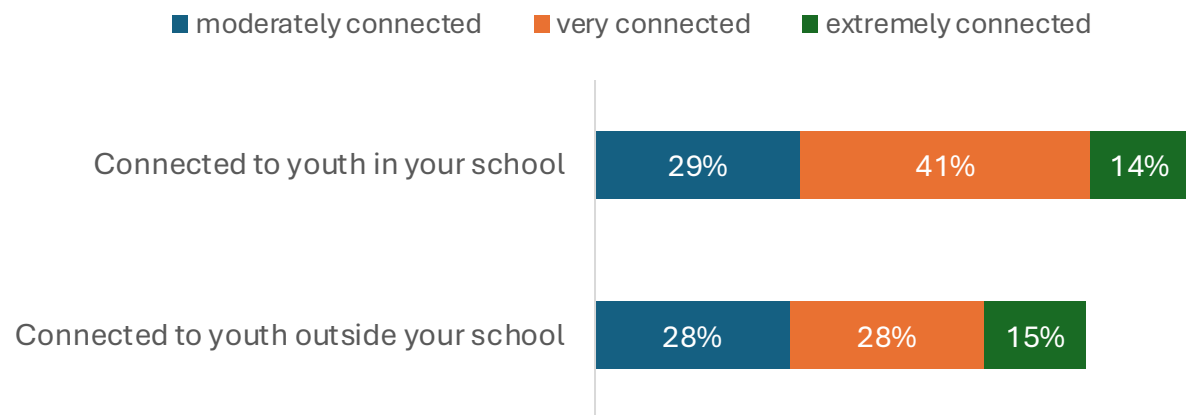
Q. How connected do you feel to...? (5 pt scale from not connected to extremely connected)

Q. Please choose the response that best describes how you feel: The teachers in my school really care about me. (5-pt agreement scale)

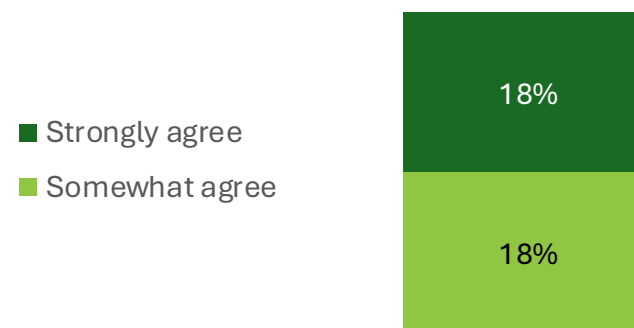
Students' connectedness to peers

The majority of students feel connected to other youth in and/or outside their school, but only 36% report that the students in their school care about them.

Students' Connectedness to Other Youth
(n=2088, 2025)



Students' Perception that Other Students in
their School Care About Them
(n=2088, 2025)



Q. How connected do you feel to...? (5 pt scale from not connected to extremely connected)

Q. Please choose the response that best describes how you feel: Students in my school care about me. (5-pt agreement scale)

Bullying



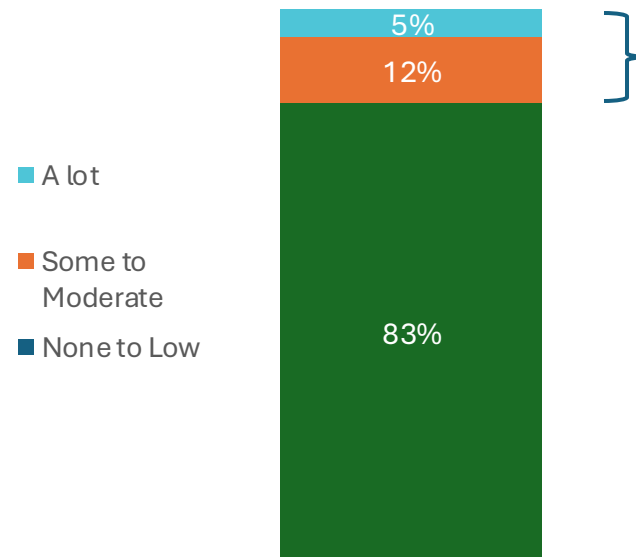
Bullying was defined for Fairfield youth in the questionnaire as *“the repeated communication (written, verbal or electronic) or physical acts by one or more people that cause someone physical or emotional harm, including fear, creates a hostile environment and/or damage to property.”*

Bullying impact among Fairfield students

Just under one-fifth of Fairfield students report distress related to bullying in the prior year.

Bullying was defined for Fairfield youth in the questionnaire as *“the repeated communication (written, verbal or electronic) or physical acts by one or more people that cause someone physical or emotional harm, including fear, creates a hostile environment and/or damage to property.”*

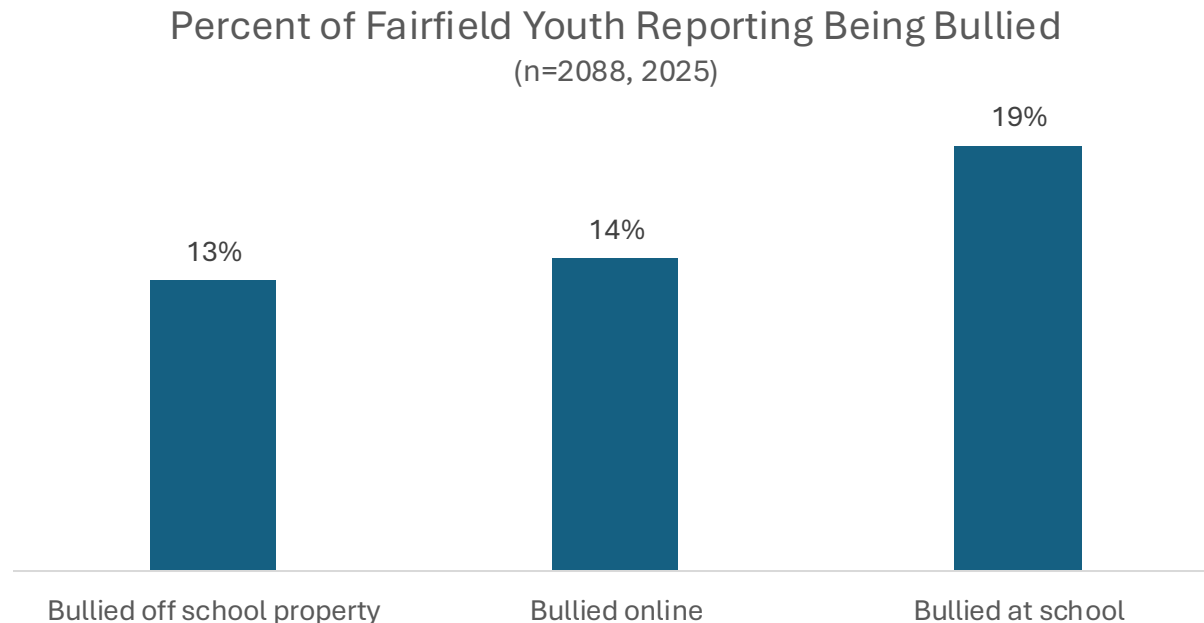
Stress Due to Bullying Experience
(n=2088, 2025)



17% of Fairfield students report at least some stress, anxiety, or worry due to bullying.

Prevalence of bullying among Fairfield students

Just under one-third of Fairfield students have been bullied in the prior year.



26% of Fairfield students report being bullied in at least one of the three locations below

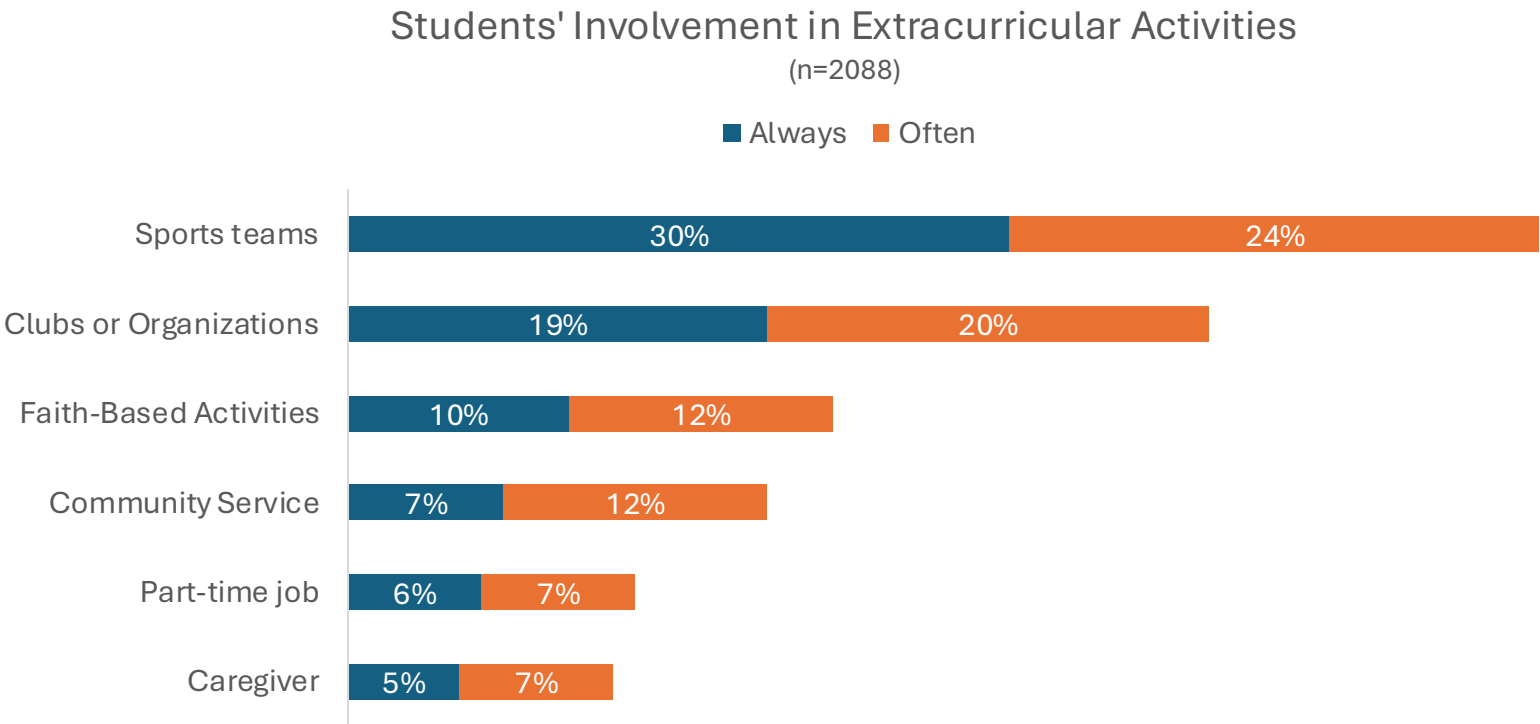
8% of Fairfield students report bullying someone in the prior 12 months

Protective Behaviors among Fairfield Youth



Fairfield students' school and extracurricular engagement

Students are most involved with sports teams and clubs/organizations.



Fairfield students' sleep and physical activity behaviors

Fairfield students self-report sufficient physical activity and sleep for overall health.

Protective Behaviors	Hours/Typical Day	
	Mean (SD)	Median
Physical Activity**	3.99 (2.67)	3
Sleep	7.53(1.69)	7.5
Naps	1.93(2.91)	1

**Self-report PA is likely overestimated



LGBTQ students



Characteristics of students who are LGBTQ or unsure of their sexual orientation

Fairfield students self-report sufficient physical activity and sleep for overall health.

Identify as LGBTQ		
Yes	190	9.1
No	1764	84.7
Unsure	68	3.3
Prefer not to answer	60	2.9

**Identify as LGBTQ or
Unsure of their sexual orientation**
n=258 students, 12.4% of respondents

Students who are LGBTQ and Unsure

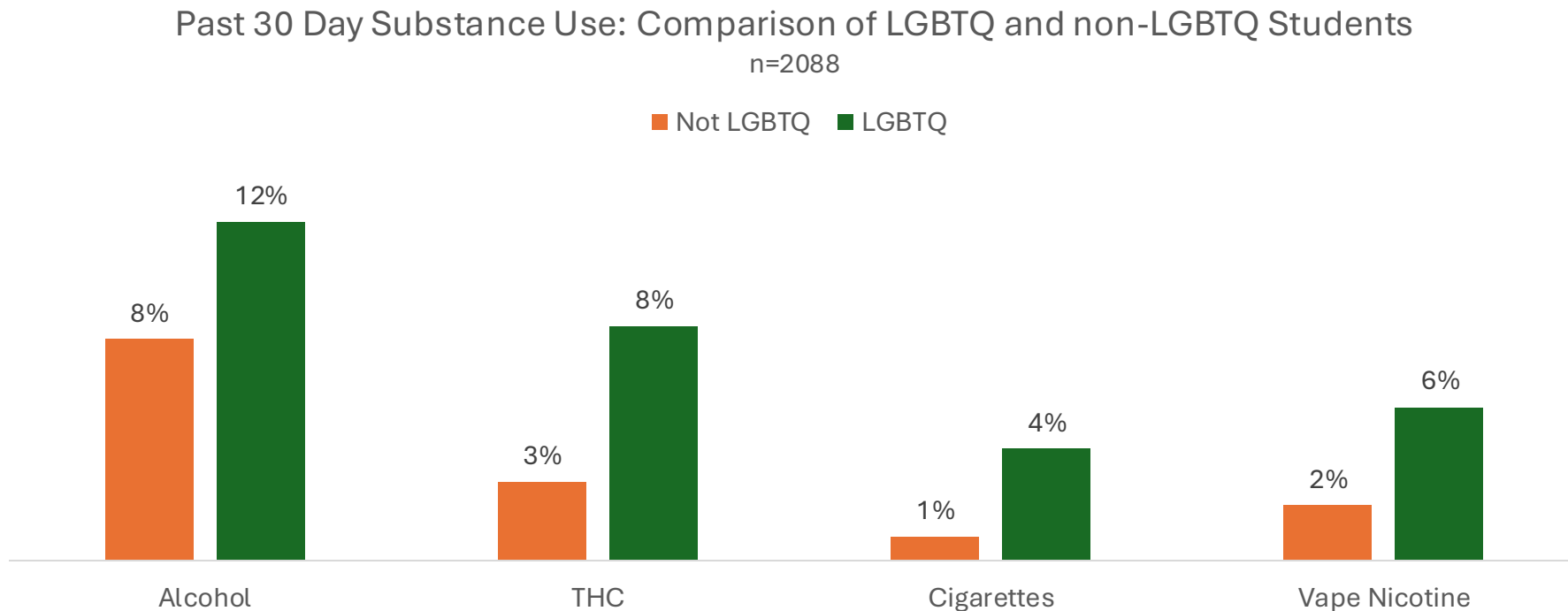
- Average age: 14.83(1.82)
- 57% female, 21% male, 17% non-binary/self-identify
- 16% Hispanic
- 70% white, 12% multiracial, 10% Asian, 6% black, 2% other
- 38% middle school, 63% high school

*Greater proportion of high school students & females compared to the full respondent sample



Past 30-day substance use among students identifying as LGBTQ or unsure of sexual orientation

A greater proportion of students identifying as LGBTQ or 'unsure of sexual orientation' have used all substances in the past 30 days than those who do not.



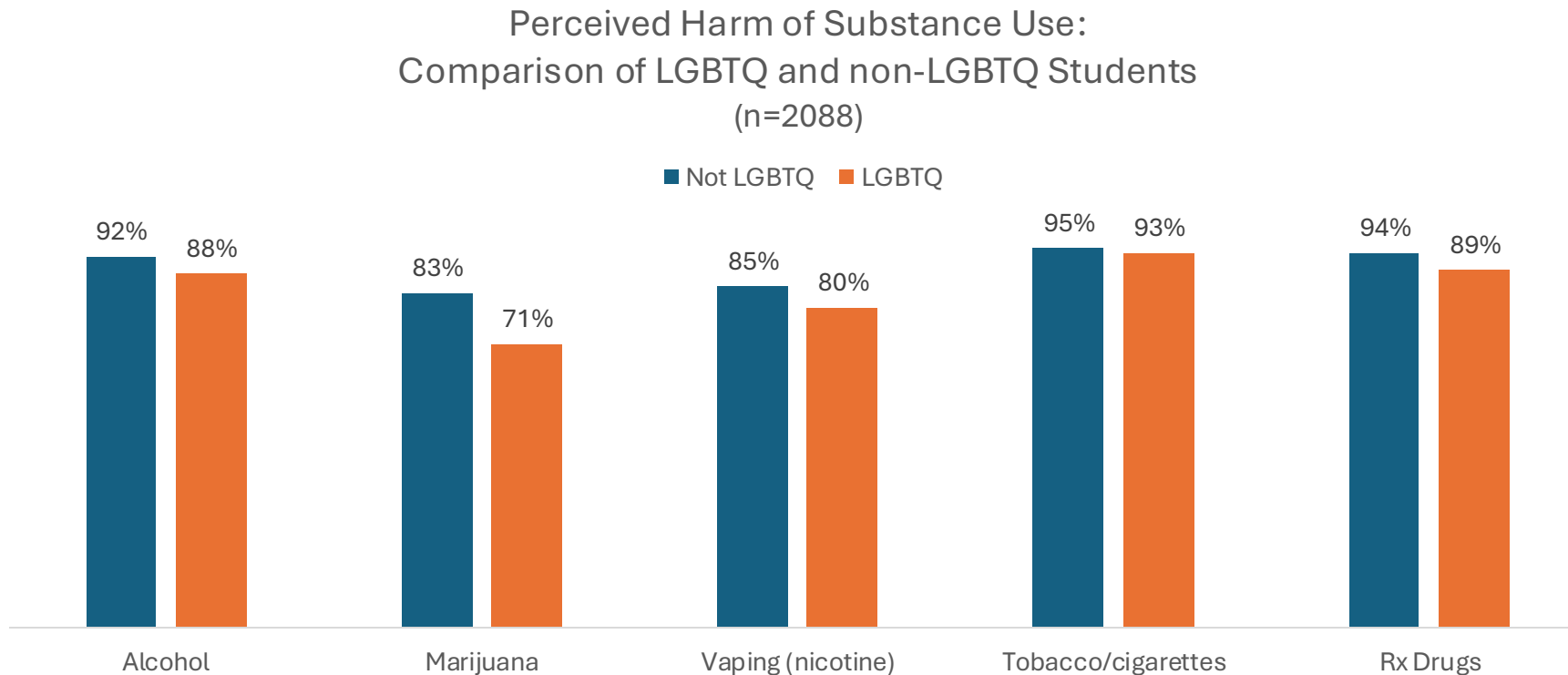
Q: Do you identify as a member of the LGBTQ+ community?

Q: Thinking back over the past 30 days. On how many days, if any, did you: drink 1 or more alcoholic beverages (beer, wine, liquor)? use marijuana or THC products? Smoke cigarettes ? use a vaping device or e-cig with nicotine ? use prescription drugs not prescribed to you?



Perceived substance use harm among students identifying as LGBTQ or unsure of sexual orientation

Lower perceived harm for all substances among students who identify as LGBTQ or are unsure of sexual orientation compared to students who do not identify as LGBTQ.

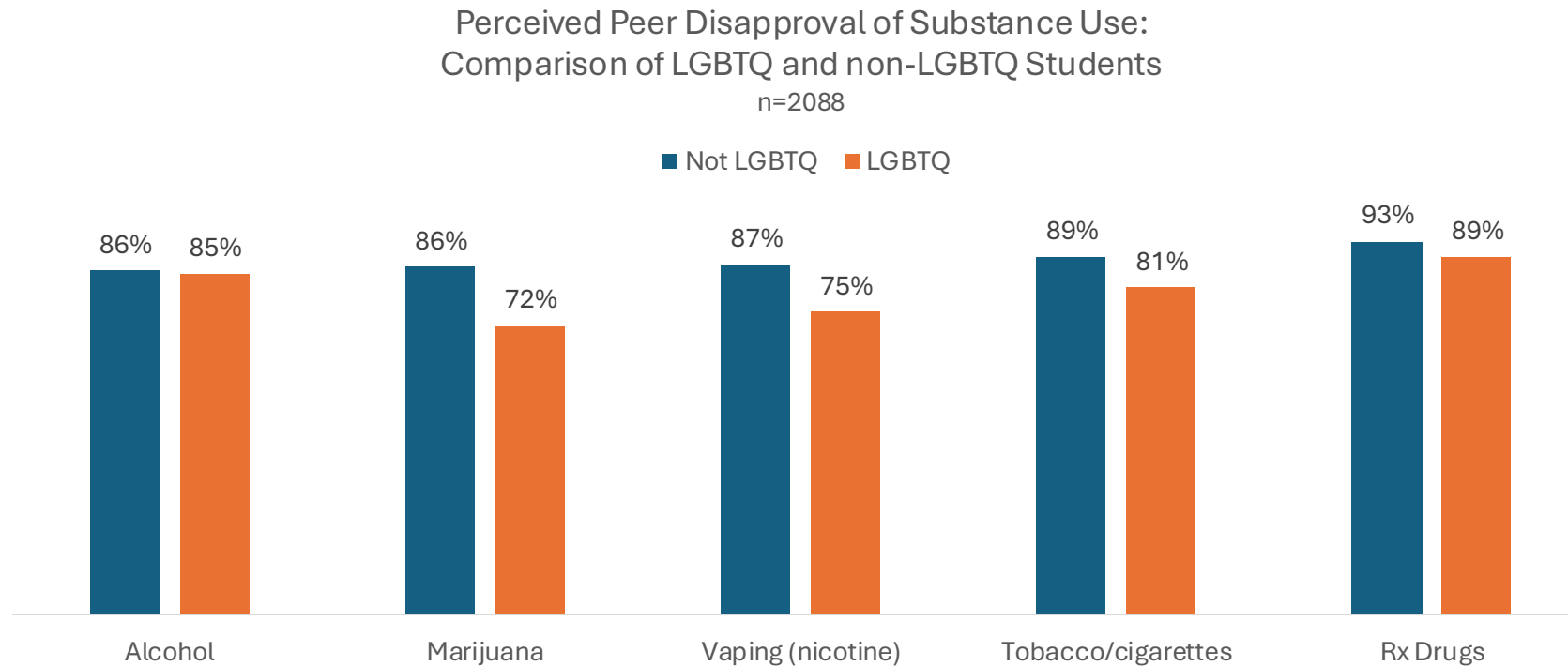


Q: Do you identify as a member of the LGBTQ+ community? Q: How much do you think people risk harming themselves physically or in other ways when they do the following 1 or 2 times per week.... Drink 5 or more alcoholic beverages, Use marijuana or THC products, Use nicotine through a vaping device, Smoke cigarettes (one or two packs/day), Use prescription drugs that are not prescribed to them?



Perceived peer disapproval of substance use among students identifying as LGBTQ or unsure of sexual orientation

Lower peer disapproval for marijuana, vaping nicotine, and cigarettes among students who identify as LGBTQ or are Unsure compared to students who do not identify as LGBTQ.



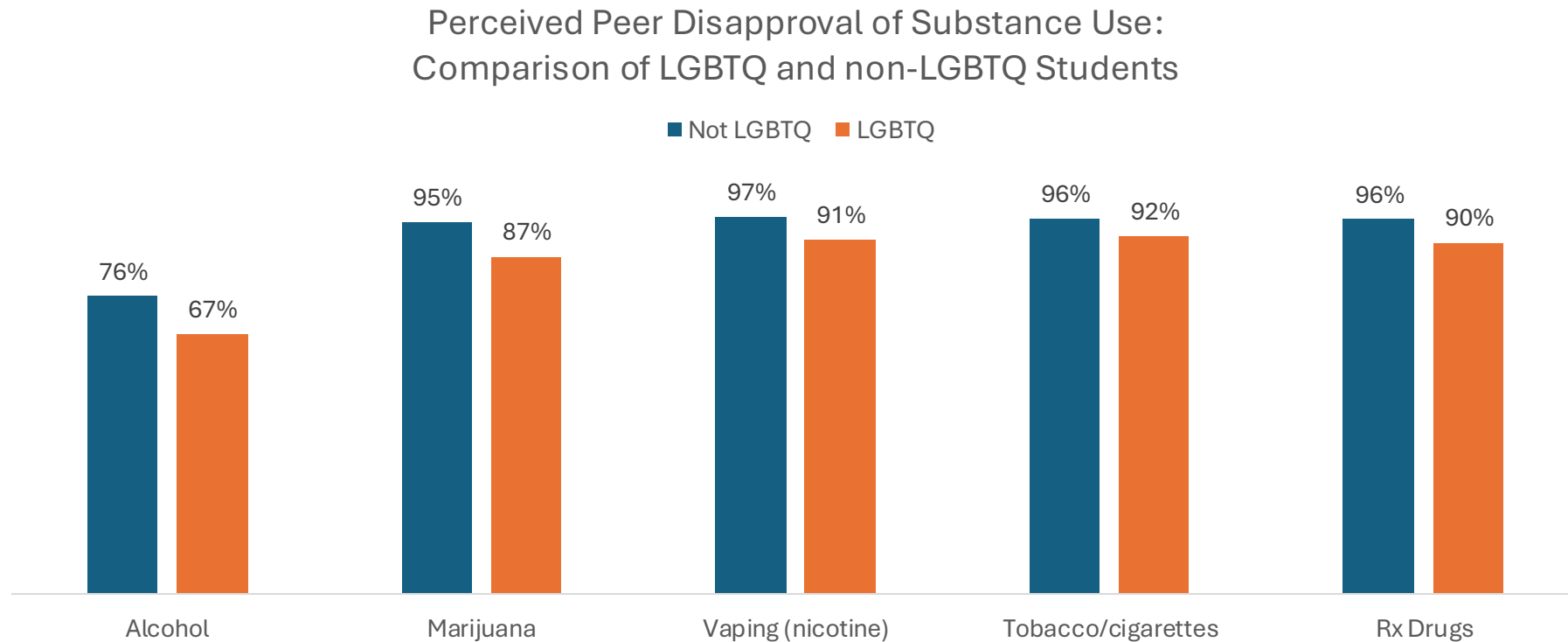
Q: Do you identify as a member of the LGBTQ+ community?

Q: Thinking back over the past 30 days. On how many days, if any, did you: drink 1 or more alcoholic beverages (beer, wine, liquor)? use marijuana or THC products? Smoke cigarettes ? use a vaping device or e-cig with nicotine ? use prescription drugs not prescribed to you?



Perceived parent disapproval of substance use among students identifying as LGBTQ or unsure of orientation

Lower parent disapproval for all substances among students who identify as LGBTQ or are unsure of sexual orientation compared to students who do not identify as LGBTQ.



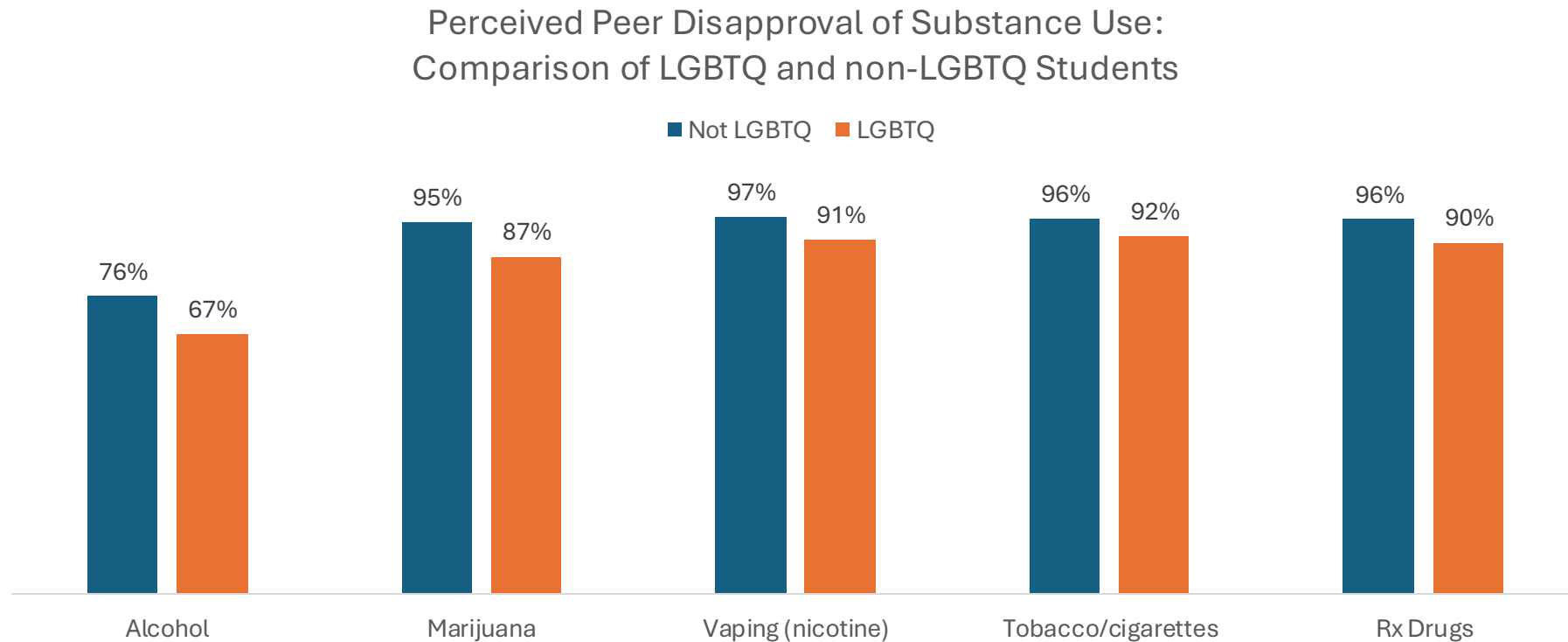
Q: Do you identify as a member of the LGBTQ+ community?

Q: How wrong do your friends feel it would be for you to do the 1 or 2 times per week.... Drink 5 or more alcoholic beverages, Use marijuana or THC products, Use nicotine through a vaping device, Smoke cigarettes (one or two packs/day), Use prescription drugs that are not prescribed to them?



Perceived parent disapproval of substance use among students identifying as LGBTQ or unsure of orientation

Lower parent disapproval for all substances among students who identify as LGBTQ or are unsure of sexual orientation compared to students who do not identify as LGBTQ.



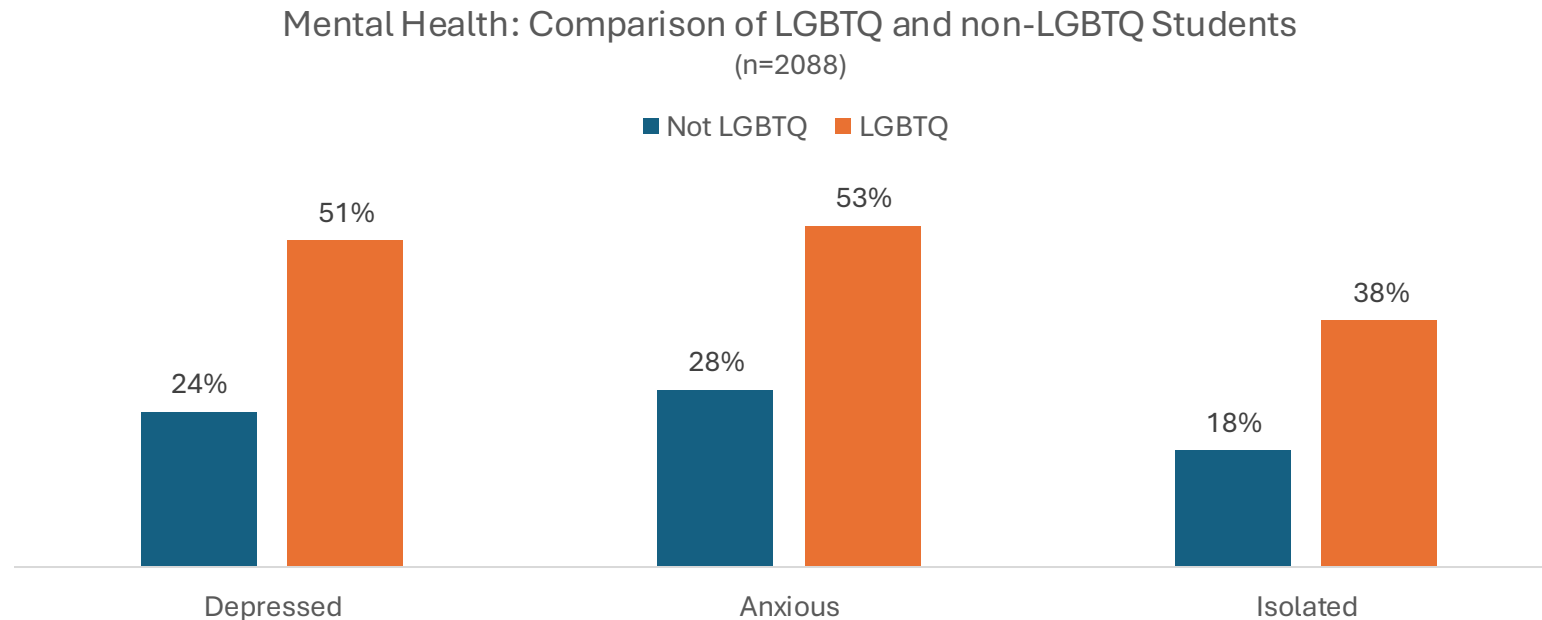
Q: Do you identify as a member of the LGBTQ+ community?

Q: How wrong do your parents feel it would be for you to do the 1 or 2 times per week.... Drink 5 or more alcoholic beverages, Use marijuana or THC products, Use nicotine through a vaping device, Smoke cigarettes (one or two packs/day), Use prescription drugs that are not prescribed to them?



Self-report depression, anxiety, and isolation among students identifying as LGBTQ or unsure of orientation

Students identifying as LGBTQ or Unsure of sexual orientation experience more depression anxiety and isolation than other students.



Q: Do you identify as a member of the LGBTQ+ community?

Q. During the past 12 months, did you ever feel so: **sad or hopeless** almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities? **anxious** almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities? **isolated** almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities? - yes/no

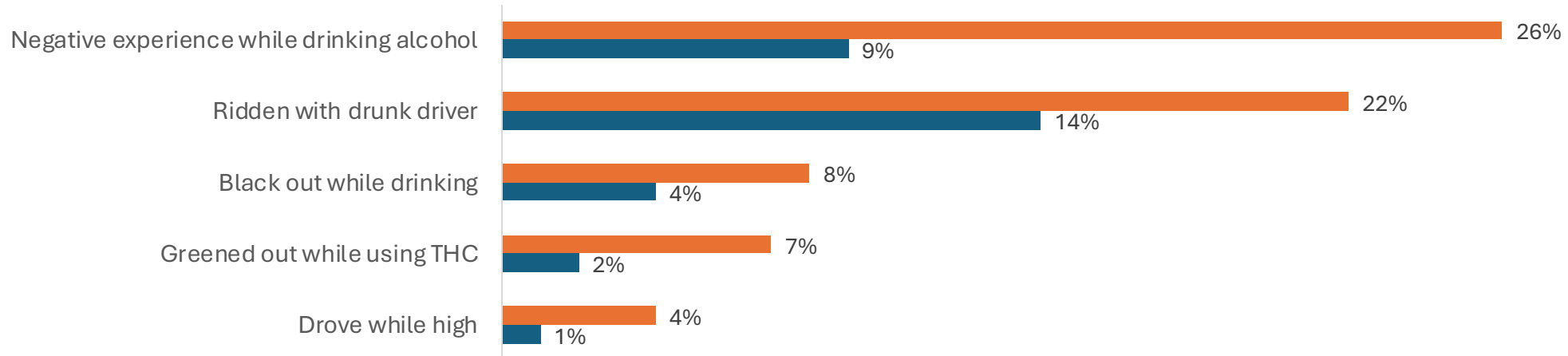


Risk behaviors for students identifying as LGBTQ or unsure of sexual orientation

Students identifying as LGBTQ or Unsure of sexual orientation engage in more risk behaviors related to substance use than other students

Risky Behaviors & Experiences: Comparison of LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ Students
(n=2088, 1+ times in prior year)

■ LGBTQ ■ Not LGBTQ



Q: Do you identify as a member of the LGBTQ+ community?

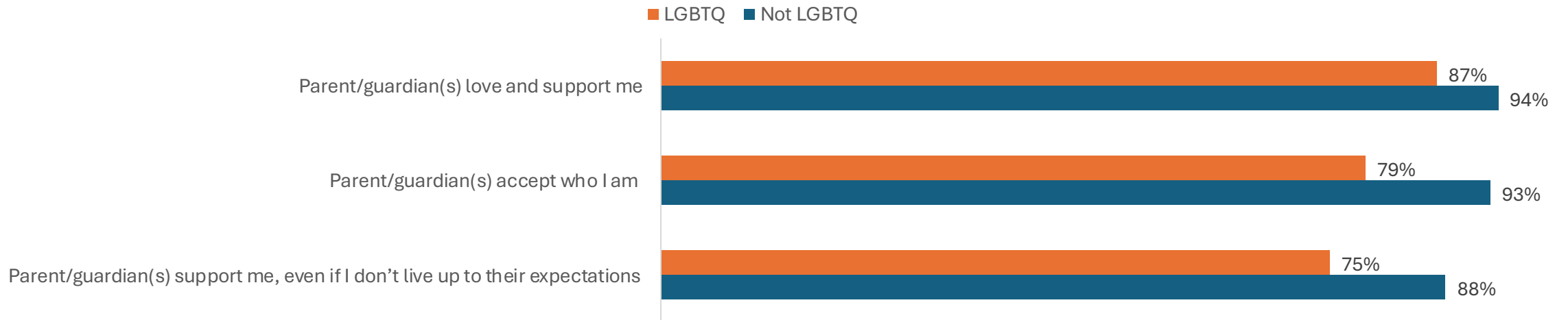
Q. During the last twelve months, how many times have you..... (none, 1+ times)



Perception of parent/guardian love, acceptance, and support among LGBTQ or unsure of sexual orientation

Students identifying as LGBTQ or Unsure of sexual orientation less often report love, acceptance, and support from their parents than other students.

Perception of parent/guardian love, acceptance, and support : Comparison of LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ students
(n=2088, T2B – agree and strongly agree)



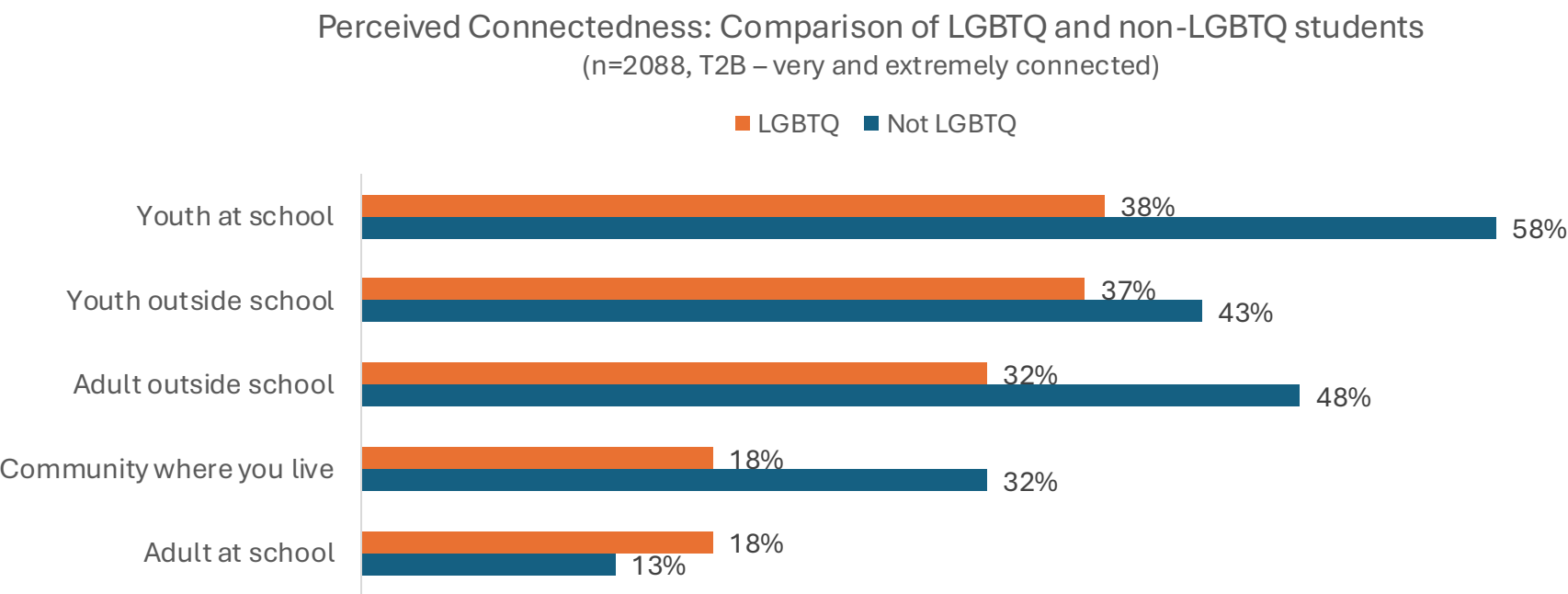
Q: Do you identify as a member of the LGBTQ+ community?

Q. My parents/guardians: love and support me, accept me for who I am, will stand by me and support me, even if I don't live up to their expectations, 5 pt. agreement scale



Connectedness for students identifying as LGBTQ or unsure of sexual orientation

Students identifying as LGBTQ or Unsure of sexual orientation perceive less connectedness to other youth in and outside of school, adults in and outside of school, and the community they live in.

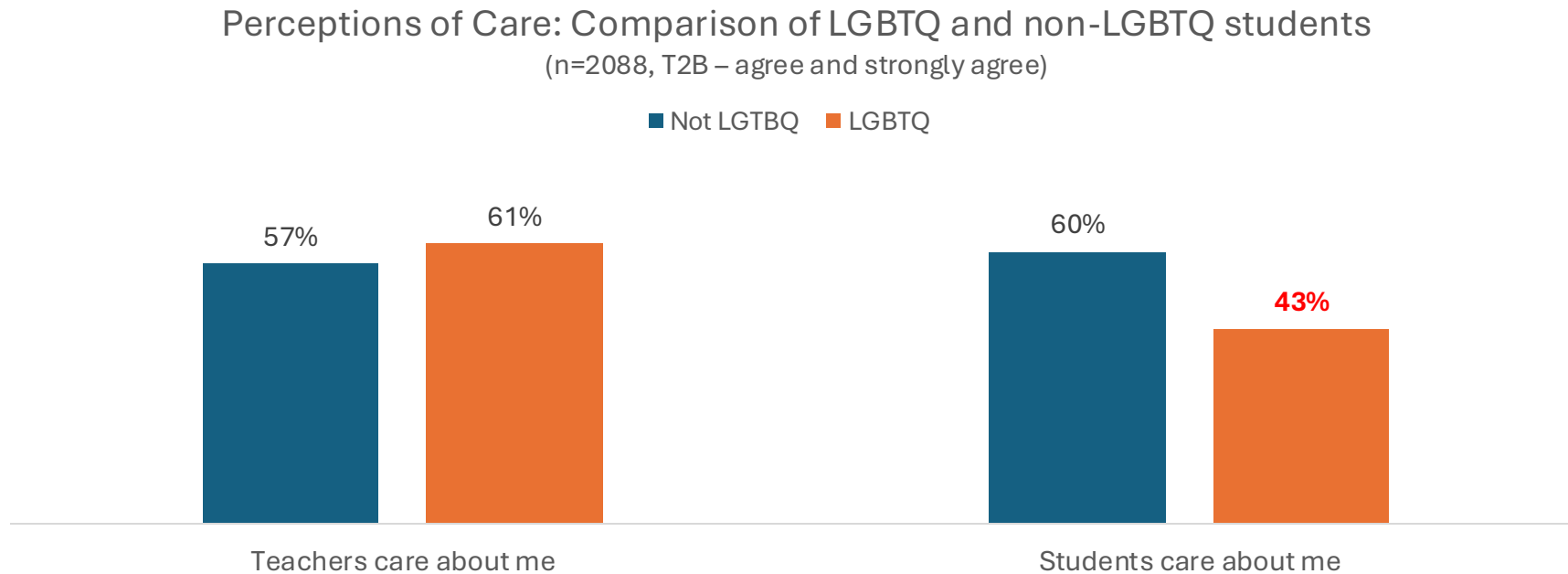


Q: Do you identify as a member of the LGBTQ+ community?
Q. How connected feel you feel to... 5 pt. connectedness scale



Perceptions of care among students identifying as LGBTQ or unsure of sexual orientation

Fewer students identifying as LGBTQ or Unsure of sexual orientation perceive that other students care about them compared to students who do not identify as LGBTQ.



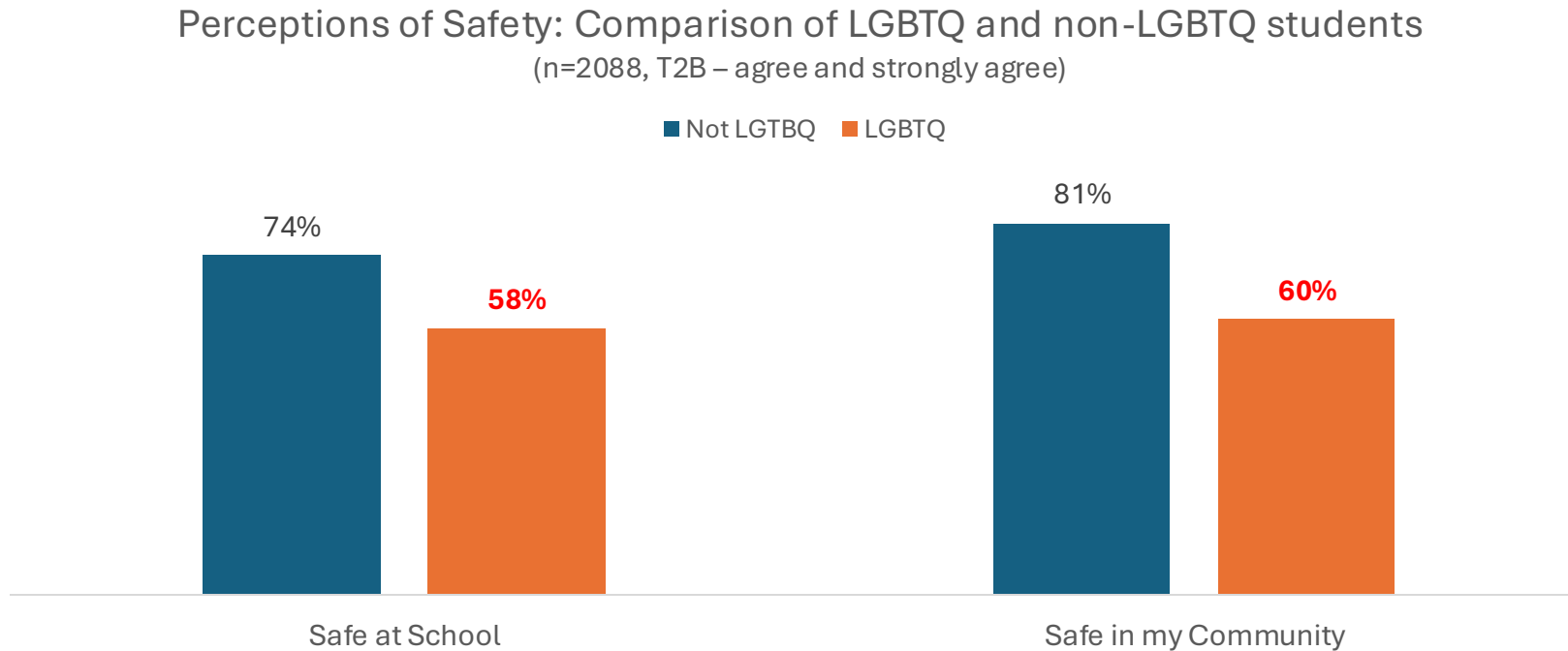
Q: Do you identify as a member of the LGBTQ+ community?

Q. Please choose the response that best describes how you feel: my teachers really care about me; students in my school really care about me - 5 pt agreement scale



Perceived safety among students identifying as LGBTQ or unsure of sexual orientation

Students identifying as LGBTQ or Unsure of sexual orientation feel less safe at school and in their community compared to other students.



Q: Do you identify as a member of the LGBTQ+ community?

Q: Please choose the response that best describes how you feel: I feel safe at school, I feel safe in my community - 5 pt agreement scale

Next Steps

Key Findings and Suggested Application

Key Findings	Suggested Application
Core measures for substance use, perceived harm of substance use, perceived peer disapproval, and perceived parent disapproval continue to improve over time (2019-2025).	Continue FairfieldCARES' health promotion activities. Disseminate findings to FFC stakeholders.
Not surprisingly, friends impact substance use. Students most often access vape devices and THC from friends, access alcohol from friends, and most often use alcohol, vape devices, and THC with their friends at home or a party.	Consider peer education and social network interventions to leverage students who don't want to use substances.
Parents/guardians play a key role in Fairfield students' substance access and use. Perceived parent disapproval of substance use declines as grade level increases, dropping to only 38% by senior year. Both MS and high school students most often report their parents as their source for alcohol.	Continue education for parents about restricting substance use access, including locking up substances and not distributing substances to underage youth.
Social media use is high. Almost all (99%) of Fairfield students use social media at least one hour per day, with the average being 3-4 hours. Students report more positive impacts for social media(e.g., connecting to others) than negative ones, yet social media is a source of stress for over 1/4 of MS and 1/3 of HS students.	Engage students and their families to examine social media use and its impact on students' well-being.
Mental health among Fairfield students remains a concern. One third experience depression and anxiety and one fifth experience feelings of isolation. Factors related to students' academic and future expectations are particularly stressful for HS students.	Provide education and support for students to manage stress, anxiety, depression, and isolation, particularly as it relates to current and future expectations.
Some students are engaging in risky behaviors related to substance use, including driving while intoxicated, riding with others who are intoxicated, and more.	Harm reduction efforts are needed for those students who do use substances.
Students identifying as LGBTQ or are unsure of their sexual orientation use substances and experience poor mental health than other students. They also express less love and support from their parents/guardians and feel less connected to others.	Targeted health promotion efforts are needed for the student population identifying as LGBTQ and unsure of their sexual orientation. Efforts should address connectedness, mental health, and substance use.

Appendix

Suggested changes to questionnaire for 2026

- Shorten the questionnaire wherever possible.
- Physical activity – change question to: how many times per week they engage in at least 60 minutes of physical activity, which better aligns with the national recommendations for 60 minutes of activity per day.