

# **2021 Somerville Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) Pulse Check Summary**

**JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc.**

**October 12 , 2021**

# Youth Risk Behavior Assessment (YRBS)

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## What is the YRBS?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) anonymous, biennial, and voluntary school-based survey measuring adolescent **health risk behaviors and experiences**.

## Priority Areas

- Impact of COVID-19
- Mental health
- Substance use
  - Tobacco
  - Alcohol
  - Marijuana
  - Electronic vapor products
  - Other drugs
- Unintentional injuries and violence
- Sexual behaviors
- Nutrition and physical activity

# Demographics

Distribution of Somerville MS respondents			
<b>Total</b>		<b>821</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Grade</b>			
6 <sup>th</sup> Grade		275	34.0%
7 <sup>th</sup> Grade		270	33.4%
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade		263	32.6%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
AI/AN*		23	2.9%
Asian		32	4.1%
Black or African American		69	8.8%
NH/PI**		3	0.4%
White		290	36.8%
Other		284	36.0%
Multi-Racial		88	11.2%
Hispanic/Latino		338	42.7%
<b>Gender</b>			
Male		418	52.0%
Female		345	42.0%
Genderqueer		31	3.9%
I don't know		10	1.2%

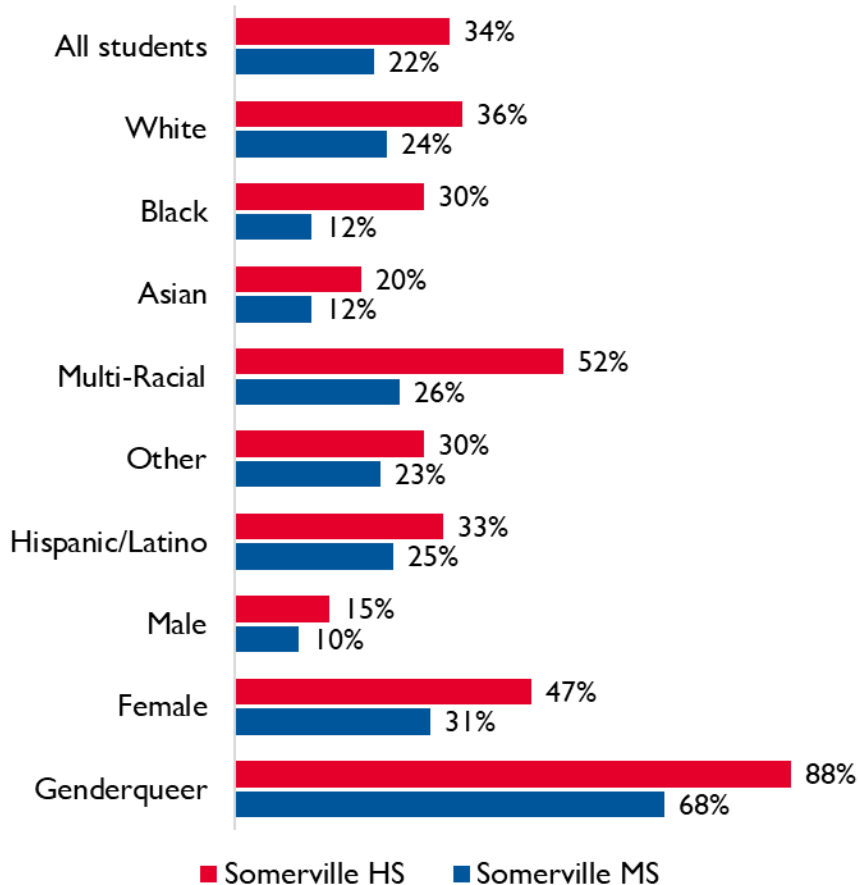
Distribution of Somerville HS respondents			
<b>Total</b>		<b>601</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Grade</b>			
9 <sup>th</sup> Grade		201	33.8%
10 <sup>th</sup> Grade		163	27.4%
11 <sup>th</sup> Grade		133	22.4%
12 <sup>th</sup> Grade		97	16.3%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
AI/AN*		4	0.4%
Asian		41	7.0%
Black or African American		60	10.3%
NH/PI**		2	0.3%
White		268	46.1%
Other		153	26.3%
Multi-Racial		24	9.3%
Hispanic/Latino		245	41.7%
<b>Gender</b>			
Male		280	47.1%
Female		282	47.5%
Genderqueer		24	4.0%
I don't know		8	1.4%

\*American Indian/Alaska Native

\*\*Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

# Coronavirus Pandemic

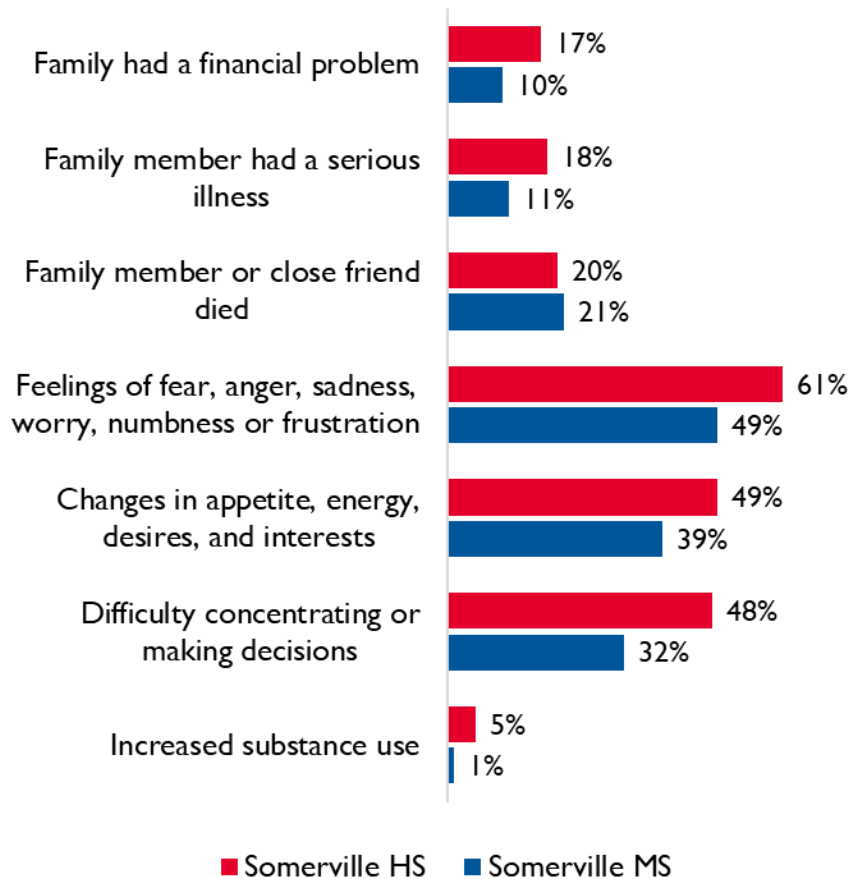
**Percent of Somerville Students Who Reported Struggling with their Mental Health During the Coronavirus Pandemic**



- Over half of HS students and about one-fifth of MS students reported that they struggled with their mental health (most of the time or always) during the pandemic.
- Multi-Racial students were more likely to report that they struggled with their mental health.
- Genderqueer students were significantly more likely to report that they struggled with their mental health.
- Student reports of struggling with their mental health increased by grade.

# Coronavirus Pandemic

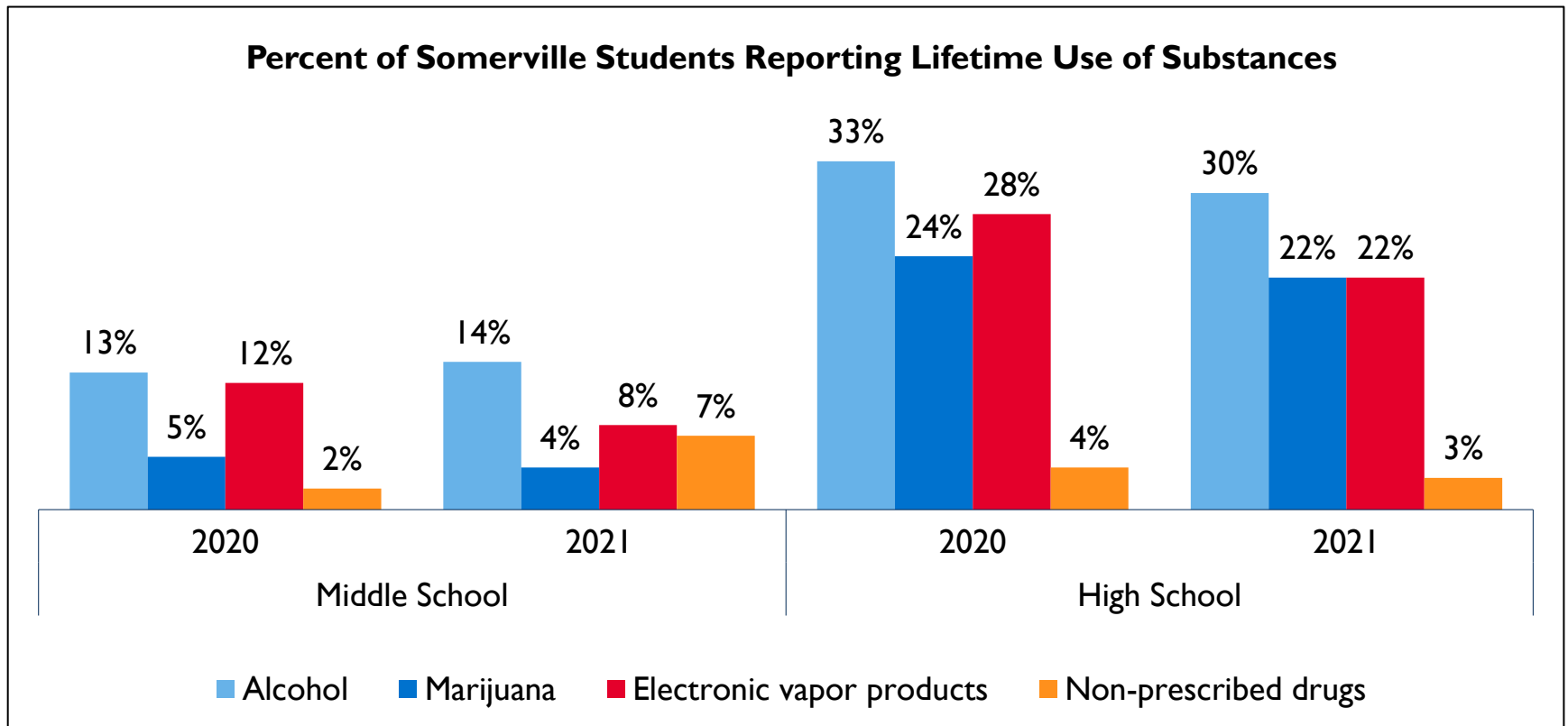
## Adverse Family Experiences and Somerville Student Reactions to the Coronavirus Pandemic



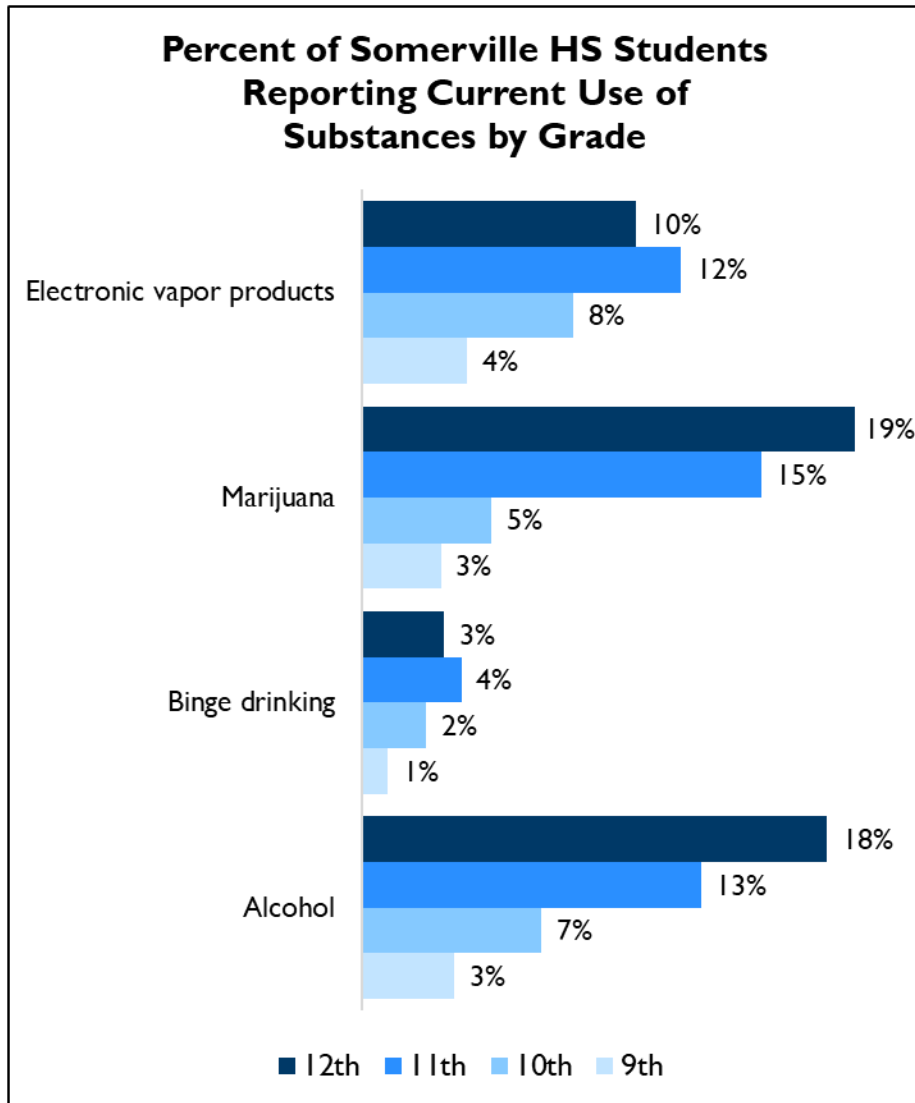
- The majority of students did not report experiencing adverse financial or health-related affects of the pandemic, however:
  - 22% of HS and 24% of MS students had a family member or close friend who died.
  - 28% of HS and 32% of MS students had difficulty concentrating or making decisions.
  - 5% of HS and 1% of MS students reported increased substance use.

# Substance Use

- Reported lifetime use of substances is similar to prior years.
  - Alcohol is the most reported lifetime substance used by both HS and MS students.
  - The percent of students reporting lifetime use of any substance increases by grade.



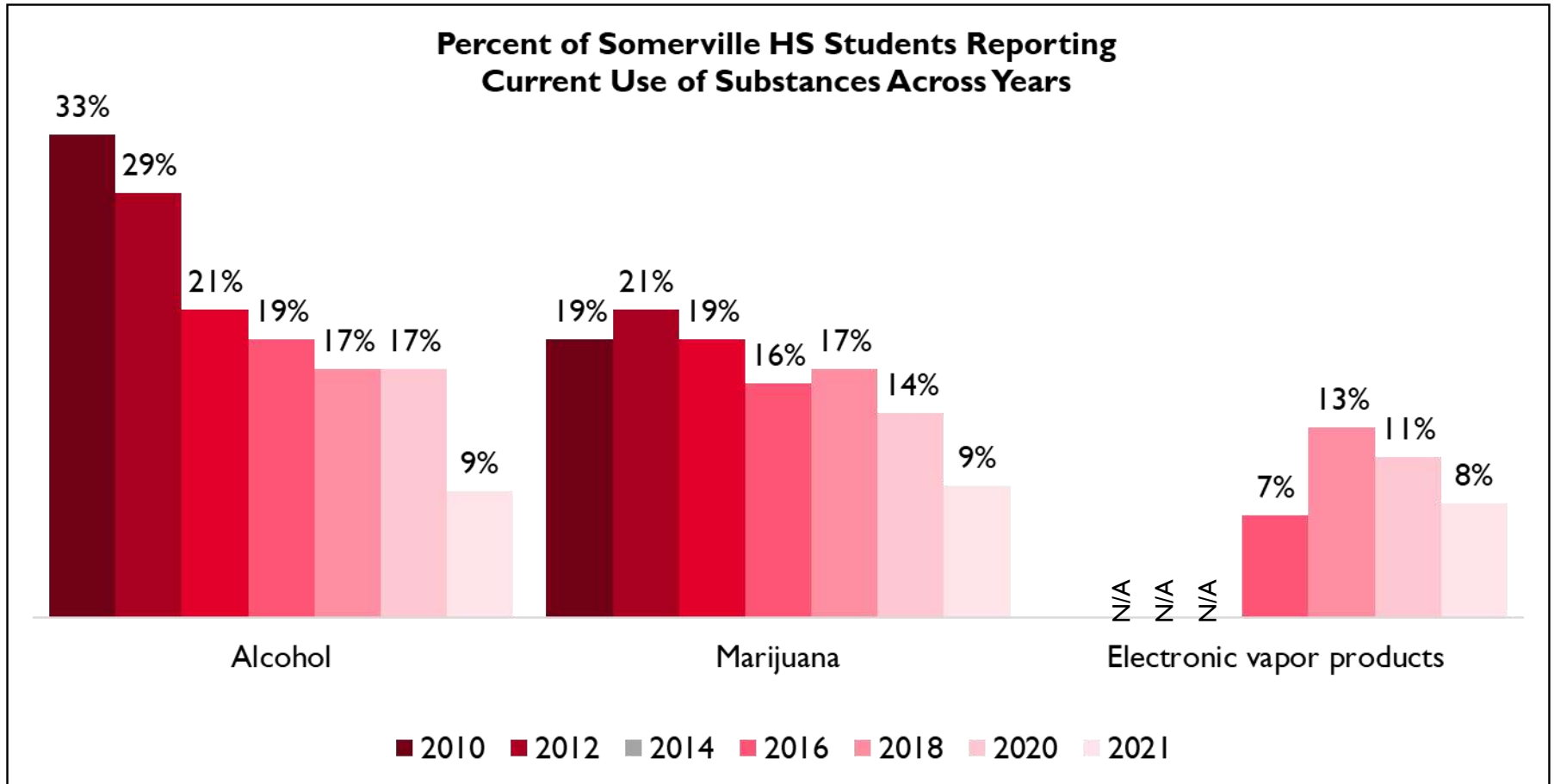
# Substance Use



- Somerville HS students reported similar rates of current alcohol, marijuana, and electronic vapor products use.
  - Overall, the percent of students reporting current use of any substance increases by grade.
  - Use of substances varied across race/ethnicities. Asian students were least likely to report current substance use.
  - Genderqueer students were most likely to report current substance use.

# Substance Use

- Current use of substances by Somerville HS students has decreased over time.





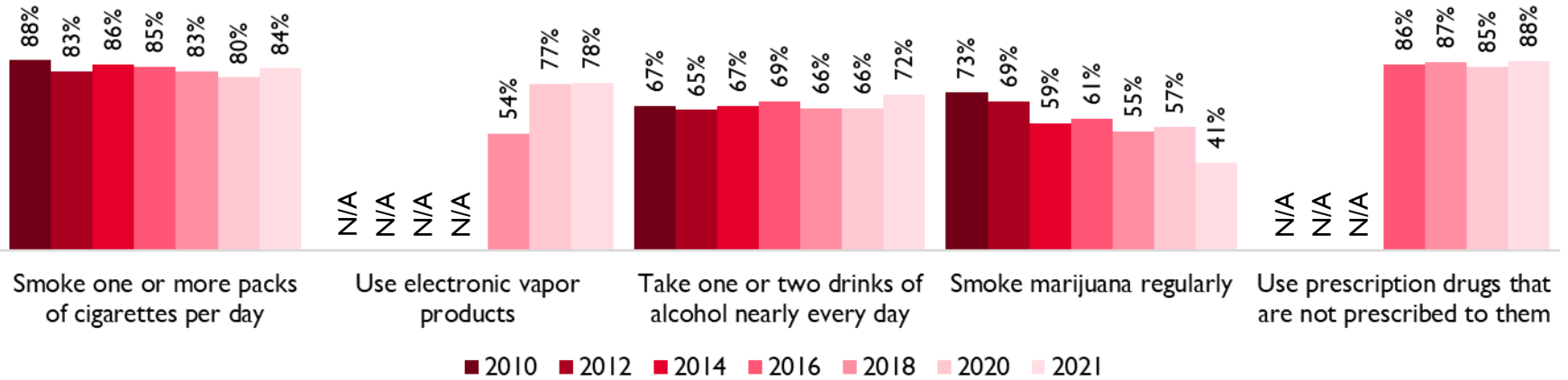
# Substance Use

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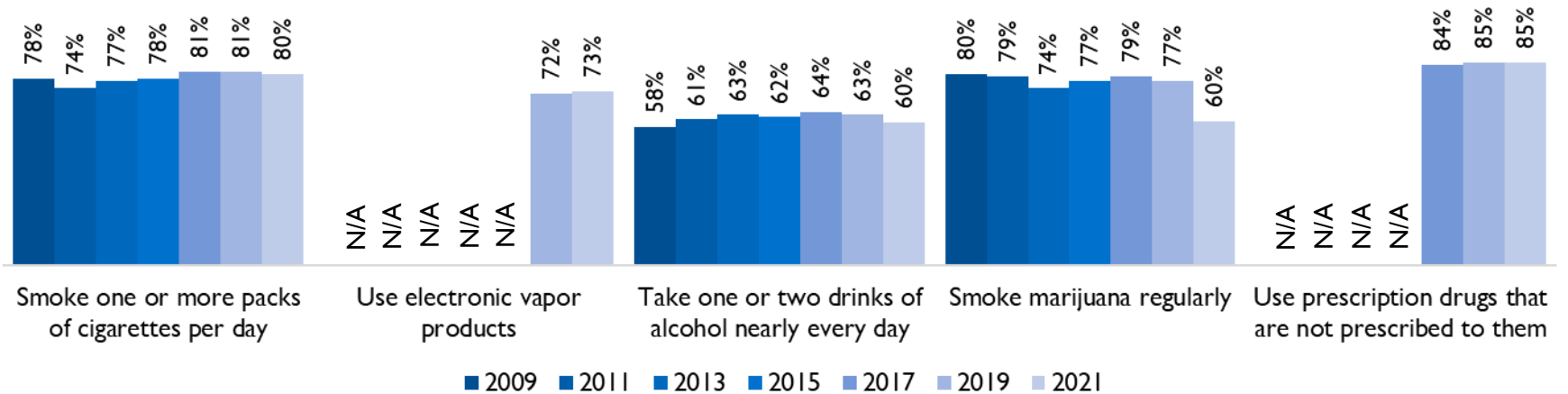
- Somerville students perceived using prescription drugs that are not prescribed to them as the most risky, followed by smoking one or more packs of cigarettes per day, and using electronic vapor products.
- The perceived harm of most substances was similar over time, however the perceived risk of marijuana use has decreased significantly.

# Substance Use

**Percent of Somerville HS students reporting perceived risk (moderate risk or great risk) of use of substances across years**



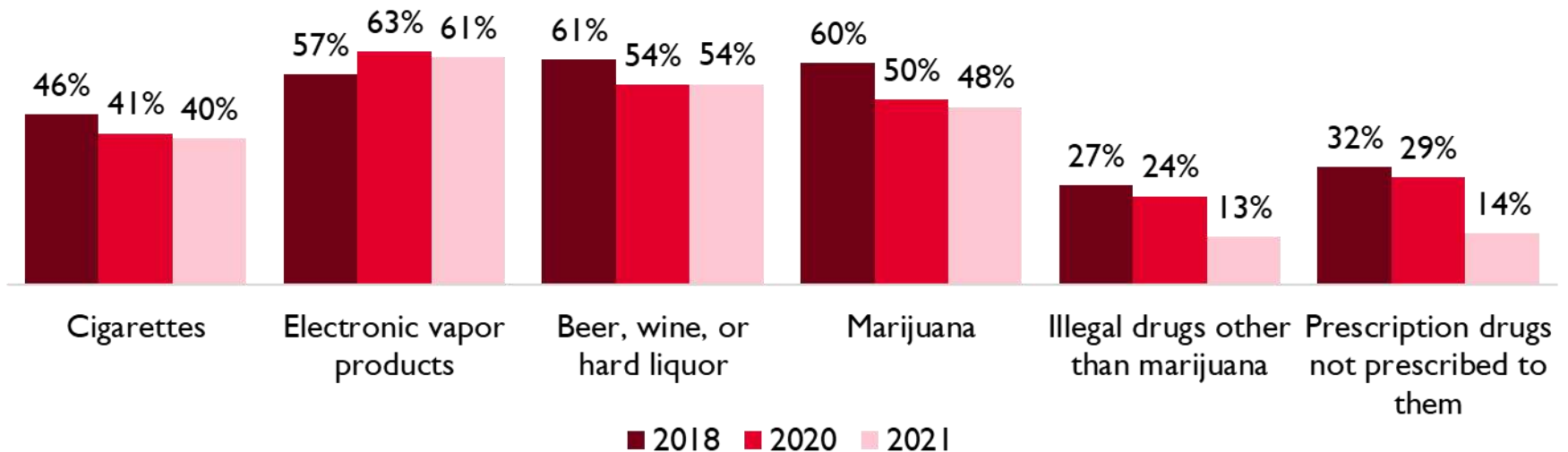
**Percent of Somerville MS students reporting perceived risk (moderate risk or great risk) of use of substances across years**



# Substance Use

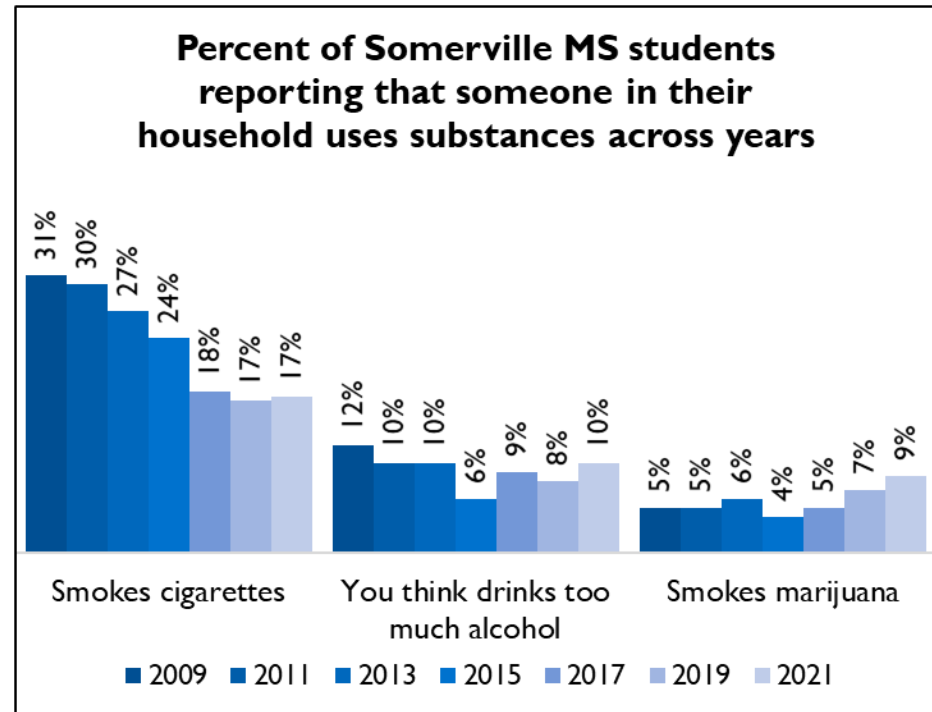
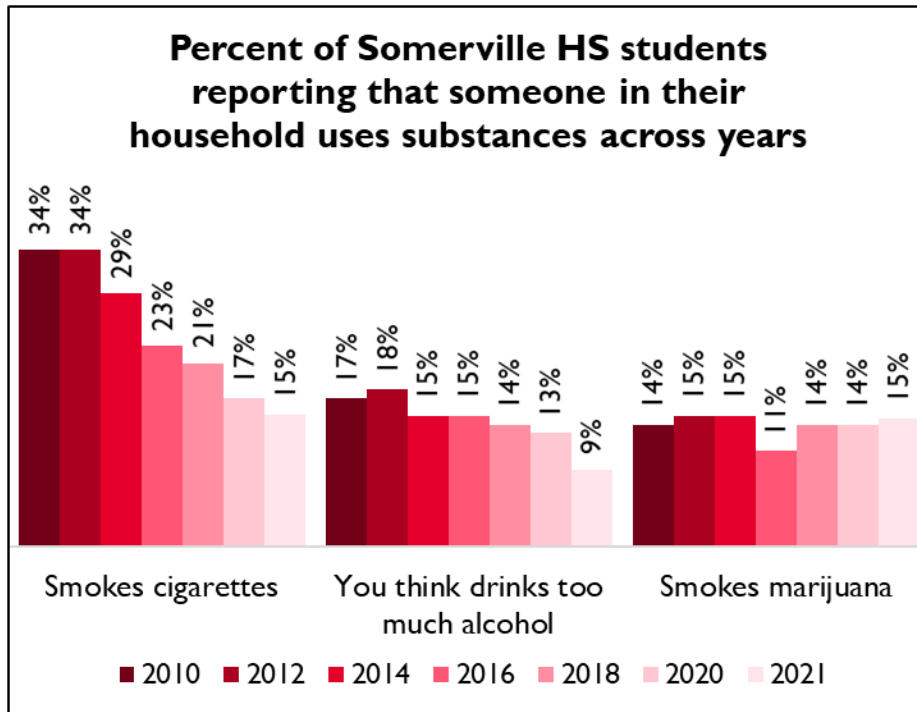
- Somerville HS students perceived electronic vapor products as the easiest to obtain, followed by alcohol, marijuana, cigarettes, prescription drugs not prescribed to them, and illegal drugs other than marijuana.
- Perceived access to obtaining substances declined between 2018 and 2021 with the largest decline in the ease of access to prescription drugs (32% in 2018 compared to 14% in 2021).

**Figure 24. Percent of Somerville HS students reporting perceived ease (sort of easy or very easy) of obtaining substances across years**

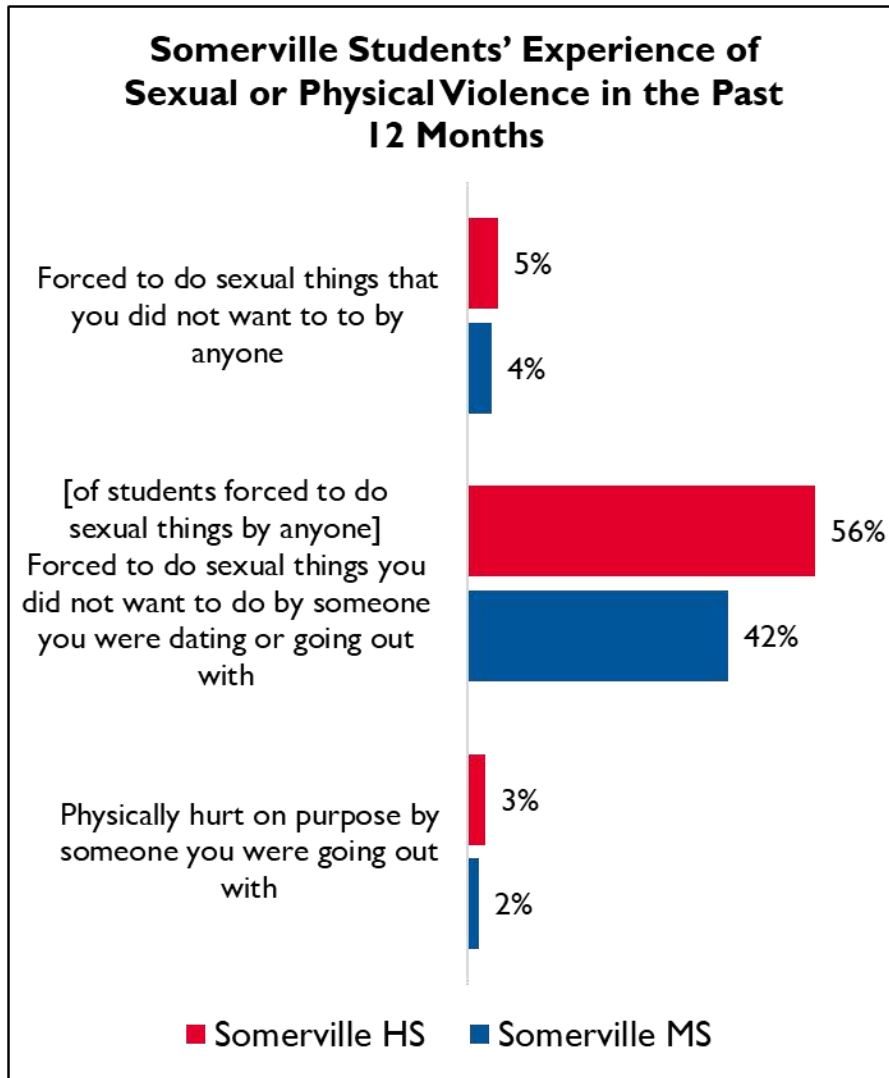


# Substance Use

- Somerville HS students were similarly likely to report living with someone who smokes cigarettes or marijuana (15%, respectively) followed by drinks too much alcohol (9%), uses electronic vapor products (8%), uses illegal drugs other than marijuana (1%), and uses prescription drugs not prescribed to them (1%).
- The exposure to substance use has relatively decreased over time, however exposure to marijuana remains at similar levels to prior years.

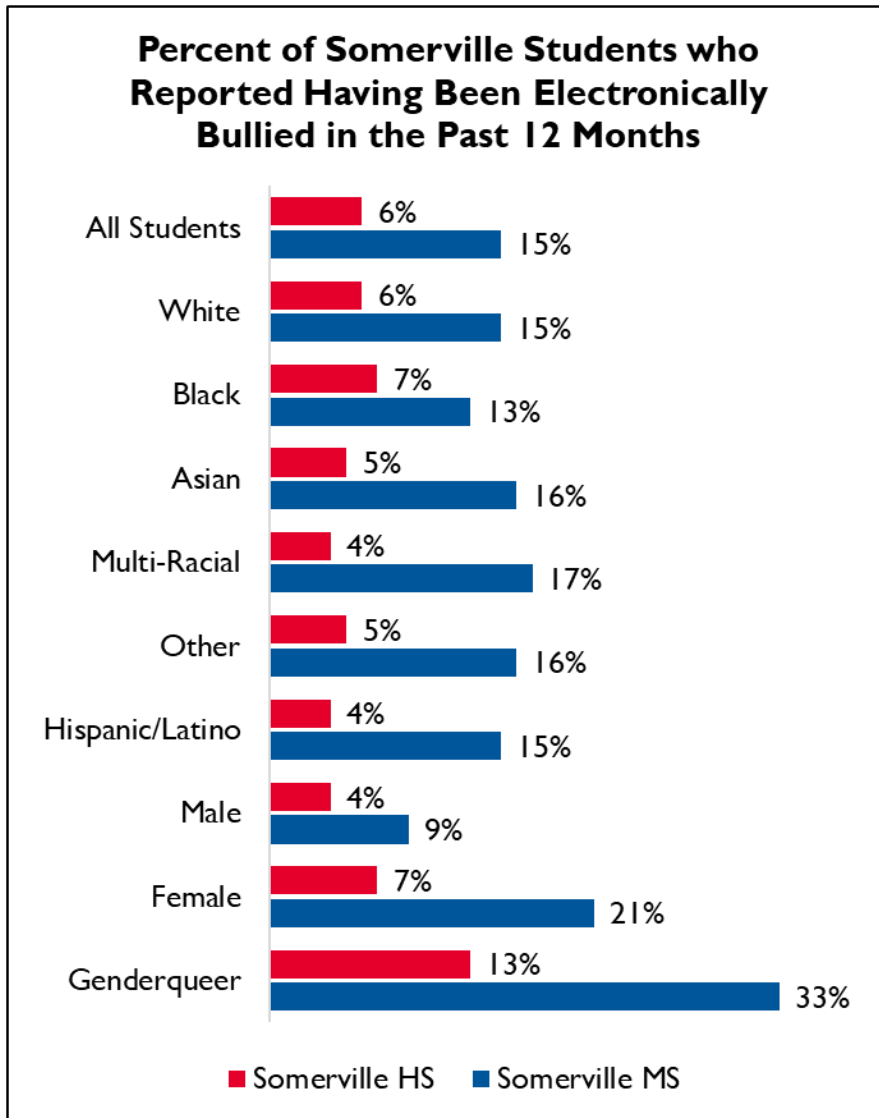


# Unintentional Injury & Violence



- The majority of Somerville HS and MS students have one teacher or adult at school, an adult outside of school, or a coping strategy to help with their stress.
  - Black and Hispanic/Latino HS students and MS students of an “Other” race were more likely to experience sexual violence by anyone.
  - Genderqueer students are more likely to experience sexual violence by anyone.

# Unintentional Injury & Violence

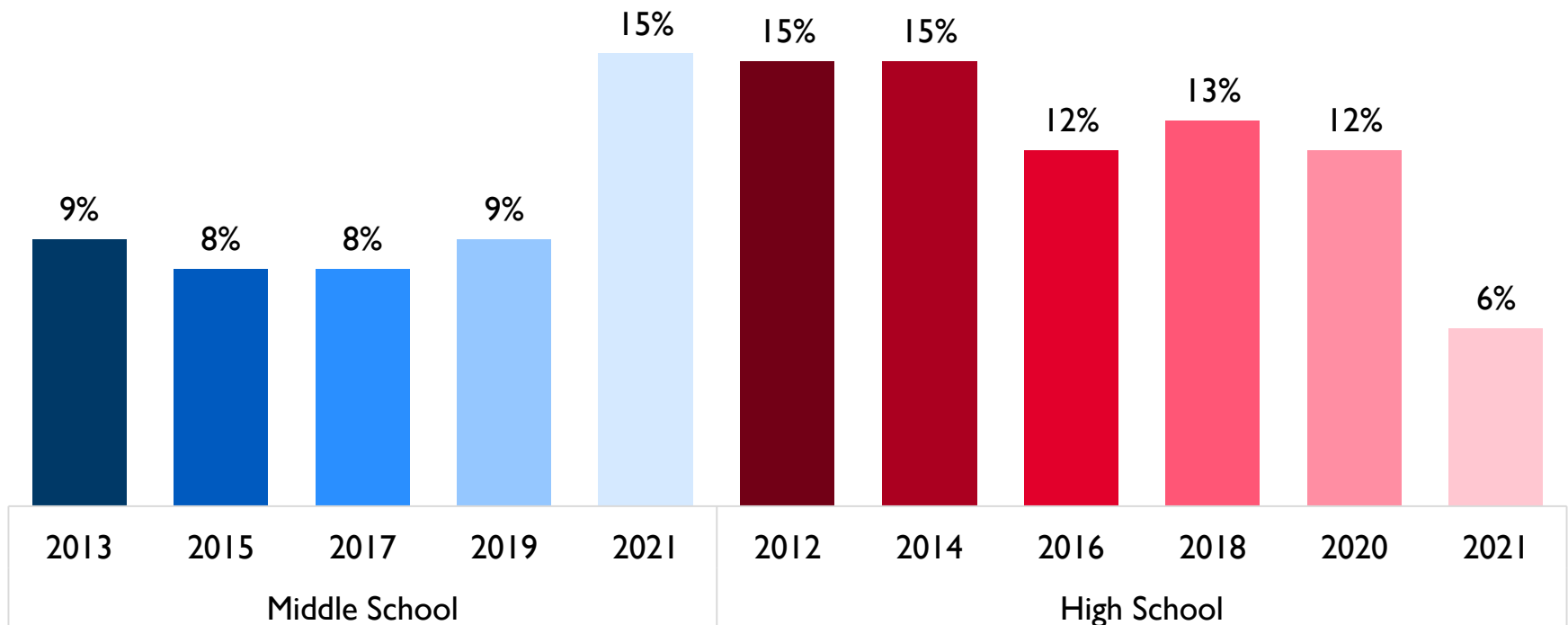


- MS students were more likely to report having been electronically bullied in the past 12 months than HS students (15% v 6%).
  - Black HS students and Multi-Racial MS students were more likely to report having been electronically bullied.
  - Genderqueer students are more likely to report having been electronically bullied.
  - As students increased in grade, they were generally less likely to report having been electronically bullied.

# Unintentional Injury & Violence

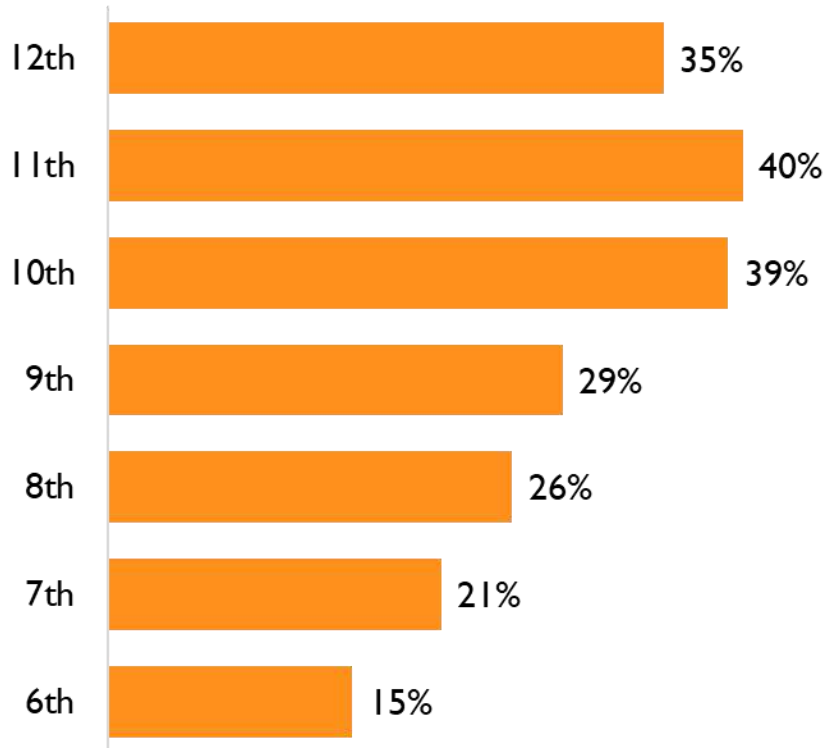
- Electronic bullying in MS increased significantly in 2021 while electronic bullying in HS decreased significantly compared to prior years.

**Percent of Somerville Students who Reported Having Been Electronically Bullied in the Past 12 Months Across Years**



# Mental Health

**Percent of Somerville Students who Reported that they were Under Overwhelming Stress (most of the time or always) in the Past 12 Months by Grade**



- 35% of HS and 21% of MS students reported that they were under overwhelming stress in the past 12 months.
- Students were more likely to report that school demands or expectations and busy schedules were the most frequent cause of negative stress.
  - School issues remained the most frequent cause of negative stress. Stress from social issues decreased significantly, dropping from 31% in 2020 to 8% in 2021.
  - In MS and HS the greatest source with stress was keeping up with schoolwork.

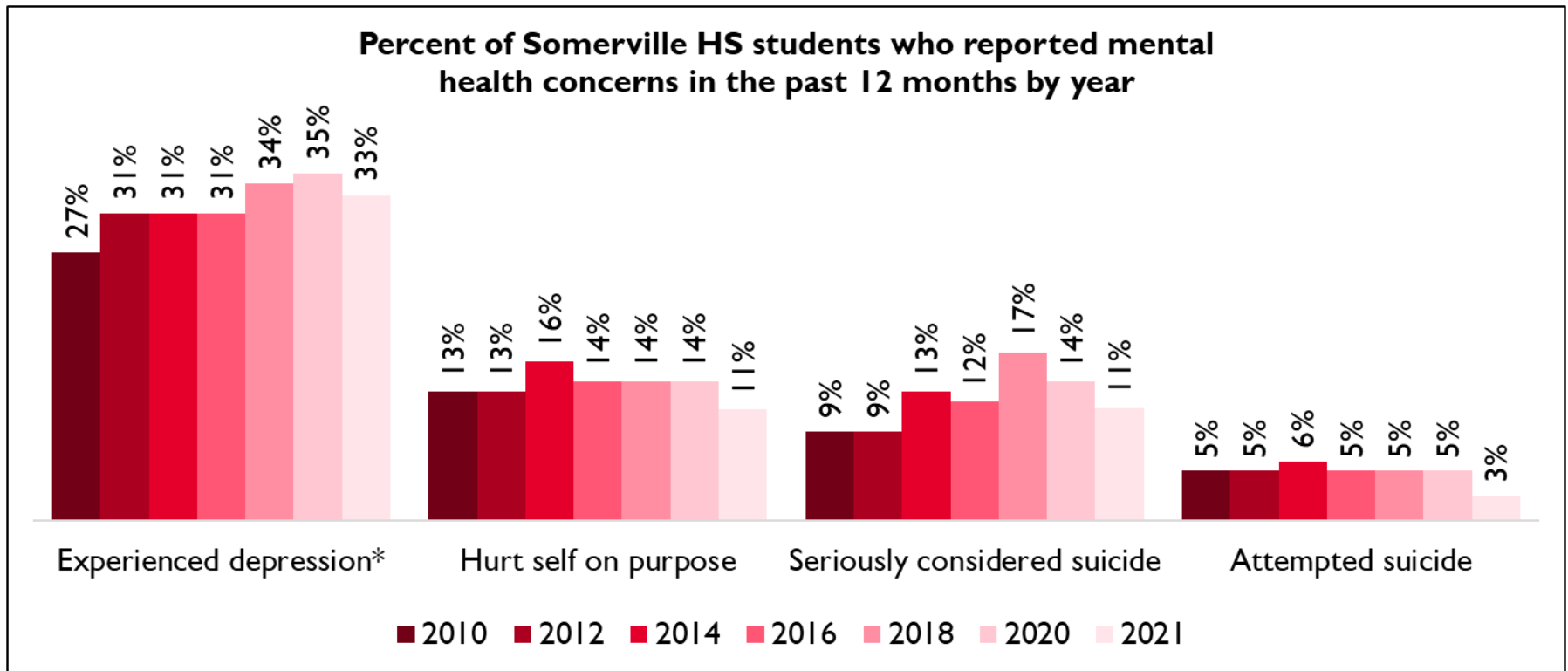


# Mental Health

Percent of Somerville HS students who reported depression, self-harm, and suicidality in the past 12 months				
	Experienced depression	Hurt self on purpose	Seriously considered suicide	Attempted suicide
Overall	33%	11%	11%	3%
White	32%	16%	14%	3%
Black	40%	7%	8%	0%
Asian	11%	5%	5%	2%
Multi-Racial	43%	12%	20%	6%
Other	34%	6%	7%	2%
Hispanic/Latino	37%	8%	9%	2%
Male	19%	3%	5%	0%
Female	42%	15%	14%	3%
Genderqueer	79%	42%	46%	17%

# Mental Health

- In 2021, HS students reported mental health concerns similarly to prior years with a slight decrease from 2020.



# Mental Health

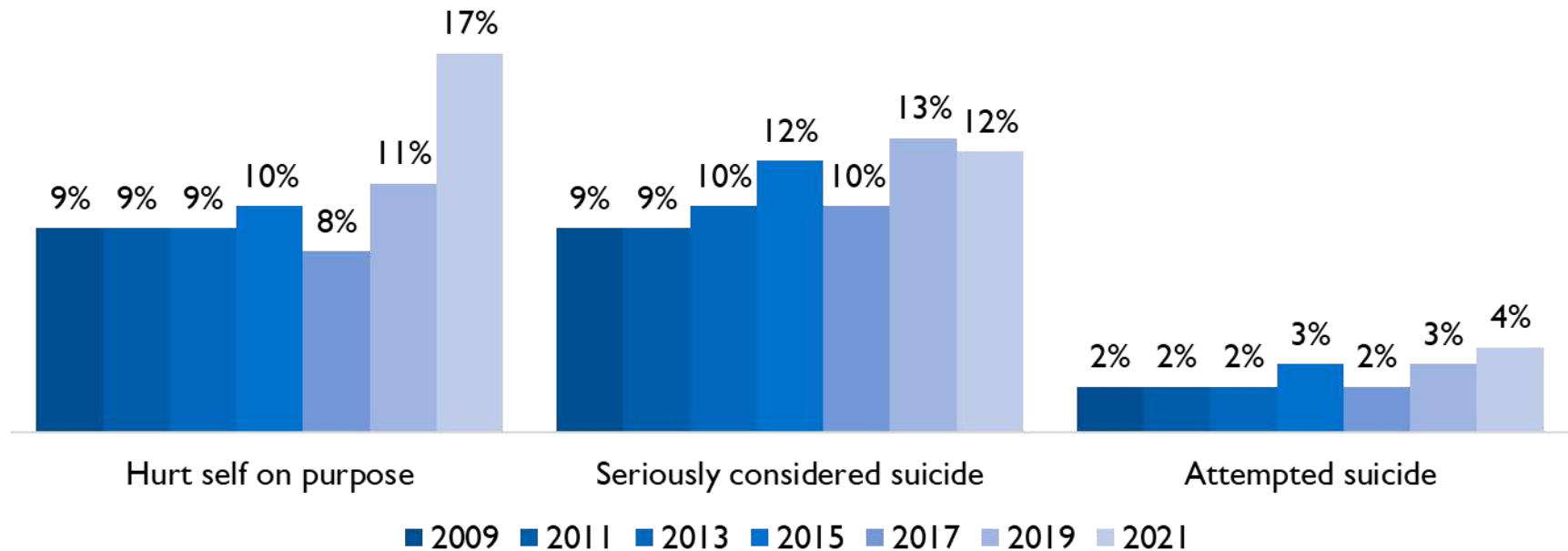
Percent of Somerville MS students who reported depression, self-harm, and suicidality in the past 12 months

	Experienced depression	Hurt self on purpose	Seriously considered suicide	Attempted suicide
Overall	26%	17%	12%	4%
White	21%	17%	12%	2%
Black	20%	21%	12%	5%
Asian	28%	16%	9%	3%
Multi-Racial	32%	23%	18%	4%
Other	29%	14%	12%	5%
Hispanic/Latino	32%	17%	14%	5%
Male	15%	8%	6%	1%
Female	36%	23%	16%	6%
Genderqueer	66%	58%	59%	25%

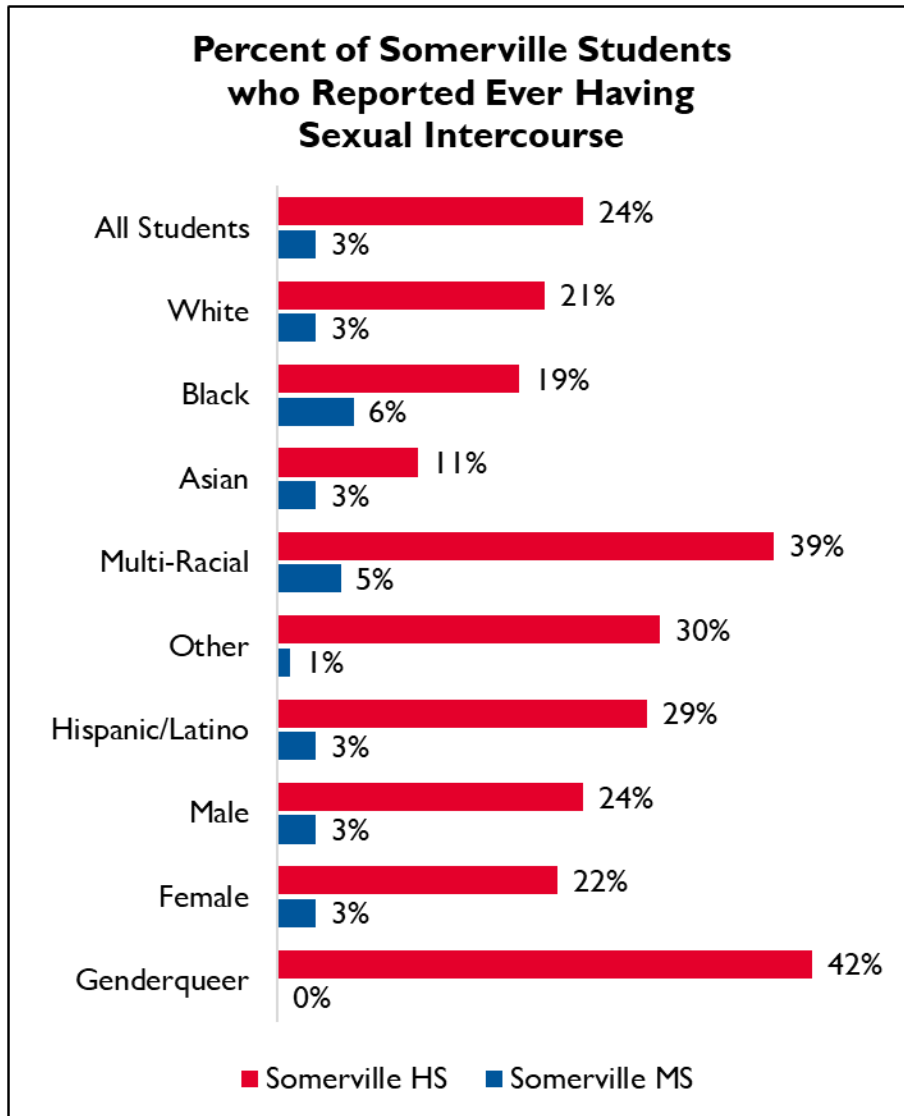
# Mental Health

- In 2021, there was a significant increase in the percent of MS students reporting self-harm and a slight increase in attempted suicides.

**Percent of Somerville MS students who reported mental health concerns in the past 12 months by year**



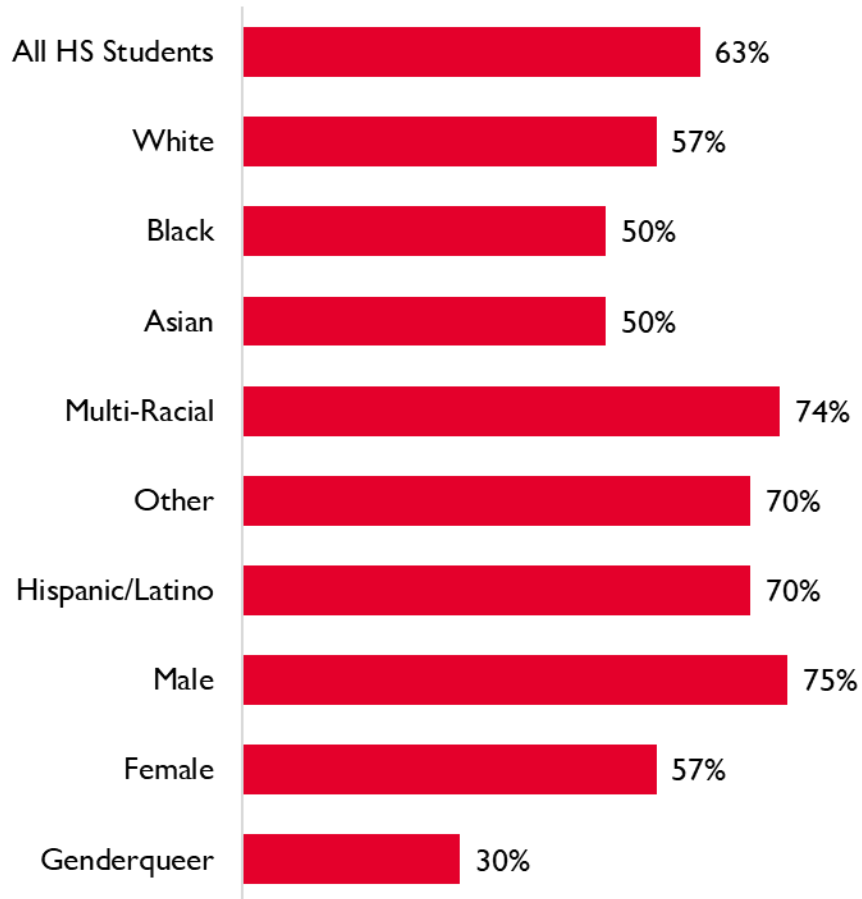
# Sexual Behaviors & Reproductive Health



- 24% of Somerville HS students and 3% of MS students reported that they had ever had sexual intercourse.
  - Multi-Racial HS students and Black MS students were more likely to report ever having had sexual intercourse.
  - Genderqueer HS students were about twice as likely as male and female students to report ever having had sexual intercourse.
- Students were slightly less likely to report ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 2020.

# Sexual Behaviors & Reproductive Health

**Percent of Somerville HS Students  
who Reported Using a Condom the Last  
Time they had Sexual Intercourse**



- Of the students who reported ever having had sexual intercourse, 63% of HS students and 72% of MS students reported that they or their partner used a condom the last time they had sexual intercourse.
  - Multi-Racial HS students and Asian MS and students who identified as an “Other” race were more likely to report using a condom.
  - Male HS students and female MS students were more likely to report using a condom..
- Somerville students were slightly more likely to report condom use compared to 2020.

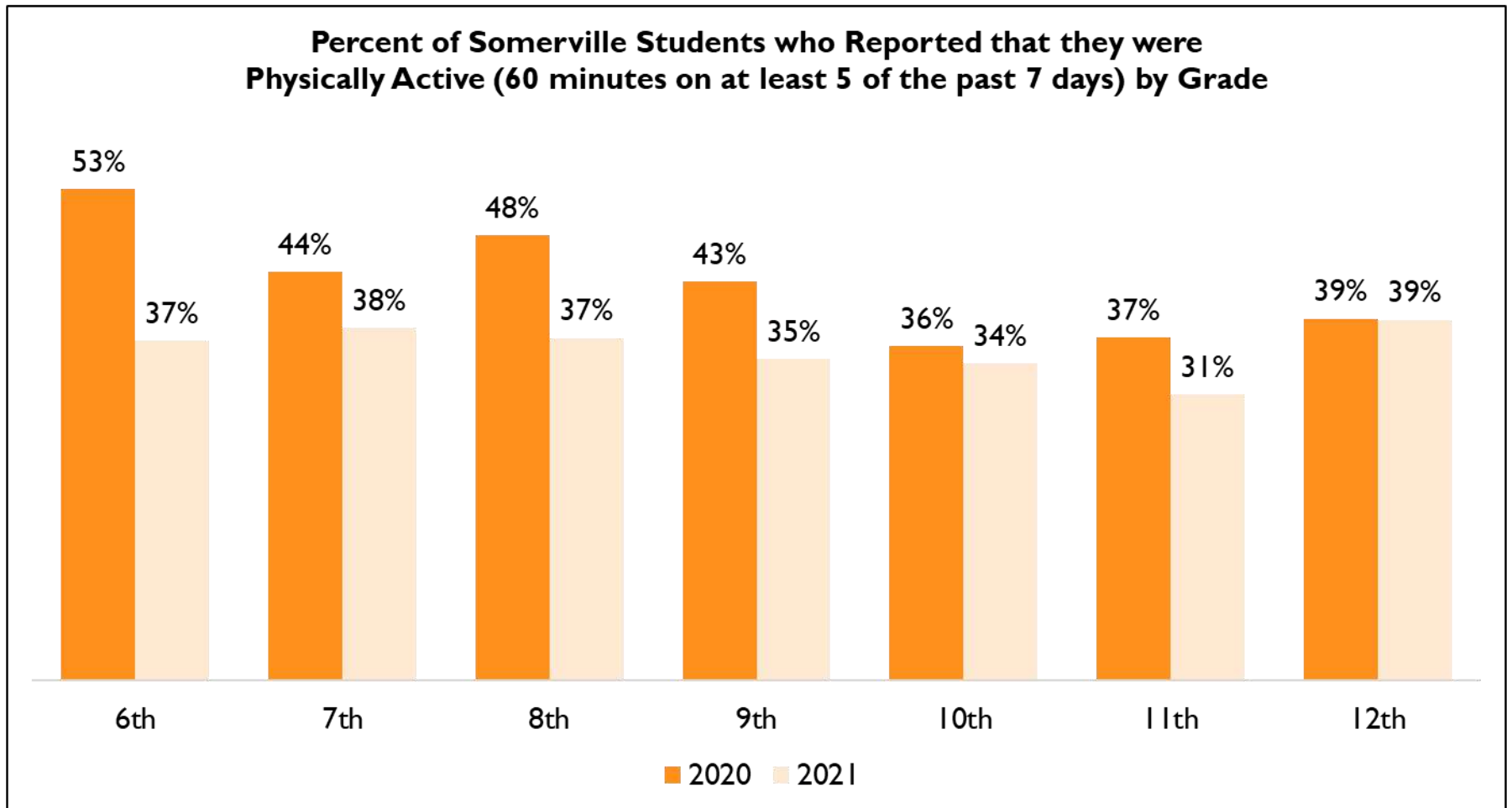
# Nutrition & Physical Activity

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- 50% of HS students and 49% of MS students report that they are about the right weight.
  - HS students reported the description of their weight similarly across genders. Genderqueer
  - MS students were most likely to report that they were underweight.
- 48% of HS and MS students report that they are trying to lose weight.
  - Female students are more likely to report trying to lose weight and genderqueer students are more likely to report not wanting to do anything about their weight.
  - Male HS students were more likely to report trying to gain weight and male MS students were more likely to report that they want to stay the same weight.
- These percentages are similar to prior years.

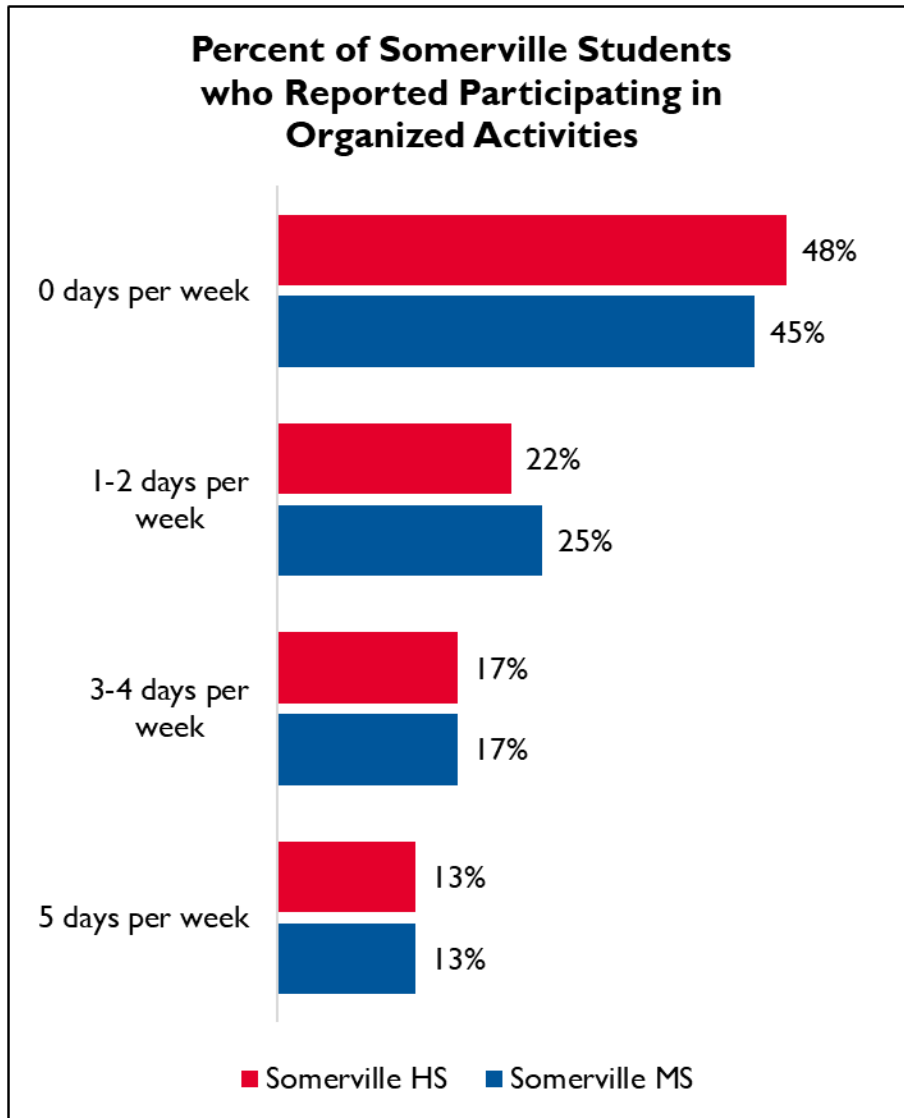
# Nutrition & Physical Activity

- 34% of HS students and 37% of MS students reported that they were physically active (60 minutes for 5 out of the past 7 days).





# Organized Activities



- Students are more likely to report no participation in out of school programs.
  - Students of an “Other” race were more likely to report no participation.
  - Students reported no participation similarly across gender and grade.
- Students were most likely to report that they had no barriers to accessing after school programs. If there were barriers, students were more likely to report that they didn’t know about the activities or they had too much homework.

# Summary

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- Over half of HS students and almost one-fourth of MS students reported that they struggled with their mental health most of the time or always during the coronavirus pandemic.
- While the majority of students did not experience any adverse financial or health-related affects of COVID-19, 20% of HS students and 21% of MS students had a family member or close friend who died.
- Alcohol was most commonly used by HS and MS students. About one-third of HS students report having drank alcohol in their lifetime.
- Current use of substances has decreased across years.
- Students were most likely to be exposed to cigarettes, marijuana, and alcohol in their household.
- 5% of HS and 4% of MS students reported experiencing sexual or physical violence in the past 12 months.
- Electronic bullying in MS increased significantly in 2021 while it decreased significantly in HS compared to prior years.

# Summary

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- School issues were the most common cause of overwhelming stress for HS and MS students. The greatest reported source of stress in school was keeping up with school work.
- Suicidal ideation and attempts were similar to prior reporting years, although MS students were significantly more likely to report engaging in self-harm.
- Students most often identified an adult outside of school or a coping strategy as their support network.
- 24% of HS students and 3% of MS students reported that they had ever had sexual intercourse.
- 50% of HS students and 49% of MS students report that they are about the right weight.
- Students were slightly less likely to report being physically active compared to 2020.
- HS and MS students were more likely to report that they did not participate in out of school time programs (48% and 45%, respectively).

**Thank you!**