

MELROSE HIGH SCHOOL YRBS 2007 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION AND SURVEY METHODS

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is conducted at a national and state level every 2 years and monitors the behaviors of High School teens that are related to the leading causes of morbidity and mortality among youth and young adults. The Melrose High School 2007 YRBS was adapted from the state's 2005 survey and administered in April of 2007. In total, 684 teens in grades 9-12 participated in this voluntary and anonymous survey – a response rate of 76%.

2007 YRBS RESULTS¹

Tobacco Use

- Lifetime use of tobacco (41%) among Melrose High School teens has decreased from the 2003 and 2005 rates (46% and 45% respectively) and is lower rate than the state (51%).
- However, cigarette use on school property has increased to 12% from 9% in 2005.
- Melrose High School teens reported smokeless tobacco use (11%) and cigar use (16%) at higher rates than the state (4% and 14% respectively).

Alcohol Use

- A little more than half (56%) of Melrose High School youth consumed at least one drink of alcohol in the 30 days prior to the survey (current drinkers). This is a higher rate than the 2005 state rate (48%). The Melrose 2007 rate is comparable to the 2005 rate (54%) and slightly higher than the 2003 Melrose rate (51%).

¹ Massachusetts rates are from 2005, the most recent year for which comparable YRBS data is available, unless otherwise indicated.

- Melrose High School teens (42%) reported binge (or heavy episodic) drinking at a much higher rate than teens across the state (27%). Additionally, 74% of current drinkers had participated in binge/heavy episodic drinking in the 30 days prior to the survey.
- The rate of those who reported having a first drink of alcohol before age 13 has steadily declined from 27% in 1999 to 19% in 2007.

Marijuana and Other Drug Use

- Current use of marijuana has slightly increased from 23% in 2003 to 26% in 2007. The 2007 Melrose rate is the same as the state rate of 26%. Lifetime use of marijuana (43%) has remained relatively unchanged since 2001 (44%) and is comparable to the state rate of 45%.
- The rate of Melrose High School teens who used marijuana before the age of 13 (7%) remained unchanged from 2003 and is lower than the state rate of 9%.
- Melrose High School teens reported current abuse of over-the-counter medications like cough/cold syrup at an increasing rate (19%) from 2003 (14%).
- In Melrose, twenty-three (23%) of High School teens reported being offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property, a lower rate than 2005 (28%) and the state (30%).
- Lifetime prescription pain reliever abuse (a new question) was reported by Melrose High School youth at 14%.

Violence Related Behaviors and Experiences

- In the 12 months prior to the survey, approximately 37% of Melrose High School teens reported being harassed at or to or from school citing unwanted sexual comments or attention as the most common form of harassment. This is an increase from previous years, 33% in 2003 and 32% in 2005.
- Half of the tenth graders reported harassment at or to or from school during the 12 months prior to the survey.

- Despite the harassment and bullying rates, 49% of Melrose High School youth reported always feeling safe from physical harm at school and 43% reported feeling usually safe from physical harm.
- Sixteen (16%) of Melrose High School teens reported hurting or injuring themselves on purpose; 17% in 2005.
- Melrose High School teens reported carrying a weapon (12%) and getting into a physical fight in the past 12 months (24%) at somewhat lower rates than teens across the state (weapon-carrying, 15%; physical fight, 29%).

Suicidal Thinking and Behavior

- Rates of Melrose High School teens who seriously considered suicide (14%), made a suicide plan (12%), and attempted suicide (11%) have increased from 2005.
- Girls reported higher rates of feelings of sadness and hopelessness almost every day for 2 weeks or more (32%), considering suicide (17%), and making a suicide plan (13%) than boys (20%, 11% and 11% respectively). However, boys reported attempting suicide at rates higher than girls (12%).

Behaviors Related to Unintentional Injuries

- Thirteen percent (13%) of Melrose High School teens reported they never or rarely wear a seat belt when riding in a car driven by someone else, which is somewhat lower than the state rate of 15%.
- Thirty-two percent (32%) of Melrose High School teens reported riding in a car driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol in the 30 days prior to the survey, which is higher than the state (27%).
- The rate of Melrose High School teens who reported that they drove after they had been drinking (14%) is also higher than the state rate of 11%.

Sexual Behaviors and HIV/AIDS Prevention

- The rate of recent (past 3 months) sexual intercourse among Melrose High School teens (28%), decreased from 32% in 2005.

- Seven percent (7%) of teens reported sexual intercourse before age 13. This is a sharp increase from 2005 (3%).
- Of the teens who reported recent sexual intercourse, 28% drank alcohol or used drugs before their last sexual intercourse, down from 39% in 2005.
- Fifty-nine (59%) of teens who had sex in the past 3 months reported using a condom during their last sexual intercourse. This is lower than the 2005 state rate (65%).

Dietary Behaviors, Weight Control and Physical Activity

- More boys (13%) were overweight according to the Body Mass Index (BMI) compared to girls (2%). However 69% of girls reported they were trying to lose weight compared to 26% of the boys.
- Sixty-three percent (63%) of Melrose High School teens participated in regular vigorous physical activity on 3 or more of the 7 days before the survey.

Protective Factors

- Eighty-one percent (81%) of Melrose High School teens felt they could talk to a parent or other adult family member about things that are important (perceived family support) to them.
- Nearly two-thirds (65%) of Melrose High School teens felt there was a teacher or other adult in the school that they could talk to if they had a problem.
- Ninth and 10th graders (58% and 59%, respectively) were less likely to report having a teacher or other adult in the school they could talk to about things that were important compared to 11th and 12th graders (69% and 78%, respectively).
- As in 2005, more than half (56%) of Melrose High School teens reported spending at least one hour a month on volunteer work or community service.
- More than two-thirds (69%) Melrose High School teens reported participating in at least one sports team.