

Missouri Student Survey Lincoln County – 2024 Grade-Level Analysis Key Findings



Lincoln County Resource Board

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Missouri Student Survey Results for Lincoln County- 2025
Grade-level Analysis
Special Report by:
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This special report provides the key findings from the grade-level analysis that was conducted on the 2024 Missouri Student Survey (MSS) with Lincoln County public school students ranging from 6th to 12th grades. The MSS was developed and administered by the Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH), with data analysis conducted by the Missouri Institute of Mental Health (MIMH), which also assumed responsibility for data collection beginning in 2016.

The Missouri Student Survey comprises hundreds of questions covering a broad range of topics, including depression, substance use, mental health, bullying, school-related behaviors, and self-injury/suicide. Schools are instructed to have all 9th grade students complete the survey, along with one additional grade level. However, the selection process for this additional grade has varied over time and across Lincoln County schools, introducing some inconsistency in data collection.

The data tables in this report were developed by Cynthia J. Berry, Ph.D., of Berry Organizational & Leadership Development (BOLD) LLC. *Additional analyses have been conducted including this grade-level analysis special report.* The rating scale associated with each item is noted below each table or in the last column of the table. The full survey, including the precise wording of questions and the complete rating scale, is available at: [Missouri Student Survey | dmh.mo.gov](https://dmh.mo.gov).

Demographic Data	MO %	LC %
Male	44.6%	50.5%
Female	55.4%	49.5%
Hispanic or Latino	13.7%	7.3%
Black or African American	16.8%	3.2%
White/Caucasian	62.7%	84.2%
Other - Multiracial	6.7%	12.6%

The statewide random sample, used for Missouri's reported data, comprised 96 schools (48 middle schools and 48 high schools). A total of 33 schools participated, representing 34% of the sample. The final random sample for the 2024 MSS included 2,826 students, with data weighted to reflect state-level demographics, as detailed in the public report. The Missouri data presented in this report are derived from this random sample.

Grade Data	MO %	LC %
6 th Grade	9.3%	15.7%
7 th Grade	25.4%	13.9%
8 th Grade	15.6%	15.0%
9 th Grade	10.2%	19.0%
10 th Grade	15.8%	13.0%
11 th Grade	17.2%	14.4%
12 th Grade	6.4%	9.0%

For county-level data, after data cleansing, the sample size consisted of 92,449 students from 93 counties (81%). It is important to note that prior to 2016, all MSS reports relied on convenience sampling.

Implications of Findings

While the survey data was not collected from every 6th through 12th grade student in Lincoln County, due to proper data collection methods, the sample of student respondents is representative of the population of students for that year, especially for 9th graders since this was the predominant grade sampled. There were 2,416 Lincoln County students who made up the sample that completed the 2024 MSS. For generalization purposes, an estimated 5,303 students in grades 6 through 12 were enrolled in the Lincoln County public school district during the 2023-2024 academic year, with each grade level comprising between 699 and 811 students. Therefore, when it is reported that 26.9% of student respondents said they were "often/always very sad in the past 30 days," this could be representative of 1,427 Lincoln County public school district students (6th through 12th grades).

When looking at Table 14, the Grade-level Analysis of the Missouri Student Survey 2024 Lincoln County (LC) Sample here is what to look for:

- 1. The first seven columns (after the item information) provide the percentages for the identified grade level in that column, linked to the rating scale information provided in the last column. For each item, the Consultant applied conditional formatting to highlight the grade that is perceived as the most negative (red) and the most positive (green).*
- 2. Columns 9 and 10 display the gender percentages, while column 11 shows the difference between the female and male percentages. In column 11 (titled Gender Diff.), the orange highlighting indicates a difference between females and males that is more than 5%. This data is provided as additional information for the LCRB, so the narrative is limited in the report for gender differences.*
- 3. The LC 2024 column provides the item percentages for all Lincoln County student respondents in 2024.*

Comparative data with the state can be found in the full sample report.

Prioritized Key Findings

► Perceived access to substances increased significantly in high school

Perceptions that alcohol, e-cigarettes, marijuana, and over-the-counter (OTC) medications are easy to obtain rise sharply in high school. By 12th grade, 59.0% of students perceived alcohol and e-cigarettes as accessible, and 58.3% perceived OTC drugs as easy to get, indicating a critical prevention window during the high school years.

► Early exposure to impaired driving was a key concern in middle school

18–19% of 6th-8th graders reported riding with a driver under the influence of alcohol or drugs, far higher than reported rates of actual youth DUI. This early exposure suggests normalization of unsafe behavior and requires early education and community intervention.

► Substance use patterns varied by age, while several substances peaked in middle school

While high schoolers more commonly report alcohol and marijuana use, middle schoolers showed higher use of inhalants, synthetic drugs, OTC and prescription drugs (Rx drugs). For example, prescription drug misuse was highest in 8th grade (4.6%).

► Perceived harm of substances remained high, but marijuana perception declined significantly with age

Most students viewed heavy alcohol use, cigarettes, and prescription drug misuse as harmful. However, perceived harm of marijuana use dropped to just 54.2% in 12th grade, down from 87.7% in 6th.

► Disapproval of substance use decreased in high school

The belief that using substances are “wrong” remained high in middle school but declined in high school—particularly in 11th and 12th grades for marijuana, alcohol, and e-cigarettes. This drop in disapproval could increase normalization and risk.

► Depressive symptoms were widespread, with 6th and 9th grade students most affected

In 9th grade, students reported the highest rates of schoolwork disruption (45.4%) and irritability (39.7%), while 6th graders reported the highest rates of a sleeping disruption (37.9%), eating disruption (31.0%), and feeling very sad (30.2%). Mental health concerns were consistently higher for female students, especially around emotional symptoms and daily disruptions.

► Self-harm and suicidal thoughts were most common in 7th-9th grade

Self-injury was highest among 7th graders (27.4%), and suicide ideation and planning peaked in 8th and 9th grades.

- **Seriously considering suicide:** 13.4% in 8th grade
 - **Suicide planning:** 10.0% in 9th grade
- Female students reported self-harm at more than twice the rate of males (28.9% vs. 13.8%) and also had significantly higher rates of ideation and planning.

► Perceptions of peer gun carrying rose steadily through high school

Reported awareness of peers carrying guns increased from 8.5% in 6th grade to 37.7% by 12th grade, with a sharp increase beginning in 9th grade.

► Bullying, especially emotional and online, peaked in middle and early high school

Emotional bullying was extremely high across middle school, peaking with 51.8% of 8th graders admitting to perpetration. However, 9th graders had the highest percentage who reported they were perpetrators (60%) and victims (71.0%).

- **Online bullying victimization** remained above 29% from 6th-9th grade, then dropped sharply in later high school grades.
- **Female students consistently reported higher victimization rates**, especially for emotional bullying, online/cellphone bullying, and rumor spreading.

► **Cheating peaked in 9th grade**

Belief that it's okay to cheat peaked in 9th grade (39.2%). These findings suggest a need to reinforce academic integrity in early high school.

► **Fighting was most common in early grades; Safety-related absenteeism was highest in 6th grade**

26.1% of 6th graders reported fighting, and 16.1% missed school due to safety concerns. These rates decline with age but indicate the need for violence prevention and safety reinforcement in early middle school.

Summary of Significant Differences Found with Grade-level Analysis of the MSS within Lincoln County, Missouri – 2024

Age of First Use

The **2024 Missouri Student Survey (MSS)** assessed the average age at which Lincoln County (LC) students first used various substances. Grade-specific data were not available for most substances, with the exception of alcohol. However, the table below includes a breakdown of average age of first use by gender. While gender differences are not further analyzed in the narrative, this data is provided for reference.

- **Alcohol:** Among 9th graders, the average age of initiation was 12.4 years, increasing to approximately 13.6 years for 11th graders.
- **Gender Comparison:** On average, males in Lincoln County reported initiating substance use at 12.6 years, compared to 13.7 years for females.

MSS Table 1. Missouri Student Survey – Age of First Use

MSS Trends	Grades							Gender		Gender	LC	MO
Average Age of First Use	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	F	M	Diff.	2024	2024
Alcohol				12.4		13.6		12.4	12.2	0.3	12.3	12.4
E-Cigarettes				12.8				12.6	12.4	0.3	12.6	13.2
Marijuana								13.7	12.6	1.0	13.8	13.7

Source: Missouri Department of Mental Health provided MSS data to BOLD to prepare in this format.

Rating: Average age of first use

Note: Gender information is included in this and other tables throughout the report but will not be summarized or interpreted further in the main narrative.



Ease of Availability of Substances

Students were asked how easily they could access various substances in their communities. The percentages below reflect the combined responses for “very easy” and “sort of easy” to access. The data show clear grade-level differences and concerning trends in perceived availability as students progress through school.

- **Grade-Level Differences:** As expected, 6th graders consistently reported the lowest perceived accessibility across all substance categories, indicating that younger students were less likely to view substances as readily available. This perception increased steadily with grade level, with 12th graders who reported the highest perceived accessibility for all substances except prescription and synthetic drugs.
- **Substantial Increases Across Grades:** Significant increases in perceived access were observed between 6th and 12th grade:
 - **Alcohol:** Reported accessibility rose from 25.7% in 6th grade to 59.0% in 12th grade.
 - **Electronic Cigarettes:** Increased from 22.0% in 6th grade to 59.0% in 12th grade, a variance of 37%.
 - **Marijuana:** Grew from 7.3% in 6th grade to 48.4% in 12th grade, a 41% increase.
 - **Over-the-Counter (OTC) Drugs:** Rose from 28.3% in 6th grade to 58.3% in 12th grade, a 30% difference.
 - **Cigarettes:** Increased more modestly, from 15.6% in 6th grade to 44.3% in 12th grade, a 28.7% difference.
- **Highest Accessibility by Substance:**
 - **Alcohol and Electronic Cigarettes:** Both were rated as easily accessible by 59.0% of 12th graders, the highest percentage among all substances.
 - **Over-the-Counter Drugs:** Also perceived as highly accessible, with 58.3% of 12th graders indicating ease of access.
 - **Prescription Drugs:** Rated as most accessible by 21.7% of 9th graders, though this figure remained relatively stable across higher grades.
 - **Synthetic Drugs:** Peaked at 26.1% in 9th grade, with only moderate increases across other grades.
 - **Other Illicit Drugs:** Remained the least accessible overall, increasing from 2.8% in 6th grade to 12.9% by 11th and 12th grades.

These findings reinforce the need for age-targeted prevention efforts, particularly in high school, where perceived availability of alcohol, vaping products, marijuana, and OTC medications becomes markedly more common. Interventions should consider the rising perception of accessibility and its potential influence on substance use initiation and normalization among older students.



MSS Table 2. Ease of Availability

MSS Trends	Grades							Gender		Gender	LC	MO
Ease of Availability	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	F	M	Diff.	2024	2024
alcohol	25.7%	31.1%	42.7%	51.1%	46.2%	47.1%	59.0%	43.5%	41.7%	1.8%	42.6%	39.9%
cigarettes	15.6%	22.3%	29.4%	35.3%	30.8%	37.3%	44.3%	28.7%	31.0%	-2.3%	30.1%	30.3%
electronic cigarettes	22.0%	32.0%	36.7%	48.2%	45.1%	55.9%	59.0%	41.5%	41.7%	-0.2%	41.6%	40.9%
marijuana	7.3%	13.6%	18.3%	29.5%	30.8%	42.2%	48.4%	25.1%	26.0%	-0.9%	25.7%	30.5%
other illicit drugs	2.8%	2.9%	3.7%	7.2%	7.6%	12.9%	12.9%	4.9%	8.9%	-4.0%	6.9%	8.5%
over the counter drugs	28.3%	39.8%	44.4%	56.5%	47.8%	51.0%	58.3%	51.3%	41.4%	9.9%	46.3%	43.6%
prescription drugs	14.2%	19.2%	21.3%	21.7%	17.4%	17.8%	21.0%	20.1%	17.8%	2.3%	19.0%	16.9%
synthetic drugs	18.1%	21.4%	19.6%	26.1%	20.7%	22.5%	23.0%	23.8%	19.8%	3.9%	21.8%	21.0%

Rating scale – very easy/sort of easy

Lifetime Substance Use

Students were asked whether they had ever used various substances in their lifetime. The percentages below reflect affirmative responses and highlight both grade-level trends and early initiation concerns. The 2024 data show that substance experimentation was not limited to high school, with some of the highest usage rates appearing as early as 6th and 7th grade.

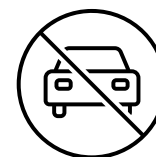
- **Alcohol:** Lifetime use of alcohol peaked at 32.7% among 12th graders, followed closely by 30.9% in both 9th and 11th grades. 6th graders reported a 13.8% usage rate. Use of alcohol on more than one occasion followed a similar pattern, peaking at 30.9% in 12th grade.
- **Electronic Cigarettes:** Lifetime use was highest among 12th graders (26.8%), with similarly elevated rates in 11th (26.5%) and 9th grade (23.9%). Early use was evident, with 11.7% of 7th graders and 8.2% of 6th graders reporting trying e-cigarettes.
- **Marijuana:** Use increased consistently with grade level, reaching 20.4% in 12th grade. While only 1.8% of 6th graders reported use, this rose to 10.4% by 9th grade and more than doubled in the final years of high school.
- **Cigarettes:** Usage began as early as 6th grade (4.5%), showing a steady upward trend through high school. Use peaked in 11th grade at 15.0%, followed by 14.0% in 12th grade.
- **Over-the-Counter (OTC) Drug Misuse:** The highest rate was 4.5% in 9th grade, but surprisingly, 6th graders were close behind at 3.8%. Use tapered off across the upper grades, with just 1.9% reported in 12th.
- **Prescription Drug Misuse:** Usage peaked in 8th grade (4%). Sixth and seventh graders each reported 1.9% lifetime use.
- **Synthetic Drugs:** Early experimentation was most prevalent in 6th (2.8%) and 7th grade (2.9%), but use dropped to below 2.0% across all later grades, reaching 0% by 11th and 12th.
- **Chew Tobacco:** Highest among 12th graders at 8.9%. Use remained very low in middle school grades, at or below 2.2%.
- **Inhalants:** Use was most prevalent in 7th grade (2.9%), but steadily declined, reaching 0% by 12th grade. This suggests early experimentation that doesn't carry into later years.
- **Methamphetamine:** At 0% across all grades except 9th graders at 0.7%.
- **Club Drugs and Cocaine:** Extremely limited in use. Club drugs were reported only in 9th grade (0.7%), while cocaine was reported by 1.0% of 7th graders and 11th graders.
- **Hallucinogens:** Reported most often in 12th grade (3.7%) and 11th (3.1%), with very low or no use in earlier grades.

MSS Table 3. Lifetime Substance Use Lincoln County 2024

MSS Trends	Grades							Gender		Gender	LC	MO
Lifetime Use	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	F	M	Diff.	2024	2024
alcohol use	13.8%	20.2%	19.3%	30.9%	20.2%	30.9%	32.7%	23.7%	23.6%	0.1%	23.7%	19.9%
alcohol use (times)	10.9%	17.5%	18.5%	30.7%	20.0%	29.2%	30.9%	22.5%	21.9%	0.6%	22.2%	18.0%
chew use	1.8%	1.0%	1.8%	2.2%	2.2%	4.1%	8.9%	1.1%	4.2%	-3.1%	2.7%	1.6%
cigarette use	4.5%	3.8%	6.4%	9.4%	6.5%	15.0%	14.0%	7.1%	8.9%	-1.8%	8.0%	7.4%
club drug use	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	-0.3%	0.1%	0.6%
cocaine use	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.6%	-0.3%	0.6%	0.5%
E-cig use	8.2%	11.7%	18.2%	23.9%	15.4%	26.5%	26.8%	21.7%	14.6%	7.1%	18.2%	18.0%
hallucinogen use	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	1.5%	0.0%	3.1%	3.7%	1.2%	1.1%	0.0%	1.2%	1.9%
heroin use	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	-0.3%	0.1%	0.2%
hookah use	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	1.4%	2.2%	3.1%	3.7%	1.4%	1.7%	-0.3%	1.6%	2.9%
inhalant use	0.9%	2.9%	2.8%	1.5%	1.1%	2.1%	0.0%	1.5%	1.7%	-0.3%	1.7%	2.4%
marijuana use	1.8%	1.9%	6.4%	10.4%	5.6%	19.6%	20.4%	9.5%	7.4%	2.1%	8.6%	12.7%
methamphetamine use	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	-0.3%	0.1%	0.3%
OTC drug misuse	3.8%	1.9%	2.8%	4.5%	2.2%	2.1%	1.9%	2.3%	3.2%	-0.8%	2.8%	3.5%
Rx drug misuse	1.9%	1.9%	4.6%	3.7%	2.2%	2.1%	3.6%	2.6%	3.1%	-0.5%	2.9%	3.3%
synthetic drug use	2.8%	2.9%	1.9%	1.5%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	1.7%	1.7%	0.0%	1.7%	1.9%

Rating Scale - Yes

The 2024 data confirmed that substance use was not isolated to older students. In fact, several substances were initiated as early as 7th and 9th grade. Alcohol, e-cigarettes, and marijuana, meanwhile, peaked in high school. These findings reinforce the importance of starting prevention education early and sustaining it through high school to address both early experimentation and continued risky during adolescence.



Past Month Substance Use

Students were asked whether they had used various substances in the past 30 days, with percentages representing those who reported use on at least one day during that period. While many patterns mirrored lifetime use trends, the 2024 data revealed critical differences by grade level and substance type—particularly in early exposure to risk behaviors and escalation of use in high school.

- **Impaired Driving Exposure:** A striking 18.3% of 6th graders reported riding with a driver under the influence of alcohol or drugs. This rate increased slightly in 7th grade (19.4%) and remained high in 8th (18.3%) and 9th grade (16.2%). The lowest was 5.5% among 12th grade students.
- **Alcohol Use and Binge Drinking:** Past-month alcohol use increased from 0.9% in 6th grade to a peak of 13.5% in 11th grade, with 12th grade close behind at 10.9%. Binge drinking, defined as consuming five or more drinks in a row within two hours, peaked at 5.2% in 11th grade and remained low in middle school (1.9% in 7th grade and 1.8% in 8th grade).
- **E-Cigarettes:** Reported use rose from 3.6% in 6th grade to 14.4% in 11th grade. The most significant jump occurred between 8th (5.6%) and 9th grade (10.1%), indicating a critical transition point during entry into high school.
- **Marijuana:** Use remained at 0% in 6th and 7th grades, then peaked at 10.4% in 11th grade.
- **Inhalants:** Use was highest in 8th grade (1.9%), with 0.7% of 9th graders and 1.0% of 7th and 11th graders reported recent use.
- **OTC and Prescription Drug Misuse:** Over-the-counter drug misuse peaked in 9th grade at 2.2%, while prescription drug misuse was most commonly reported in 8th grade (2.8%). Both remained below 3% across all grades.
- **Synthetic Drugs:** Use remained rare overall, with the highest percentage in 7th grade (2.0%). Use declined steadily in higher grades, with 0% reported in both 11th and 12th grades.
- **Tobacco Products (Cigarettes, Chew, Hookah):**
 - **Cigarette Use** rose from 1.8% in 6th and 8th grades to a peak of 6.1% in 11th grade.
 - **Chew Tobacco** use peaked in 12th grade (3.6%) and remained minimal in lower grades.
 - **Hookah** use reached 1.8% in 12th grade but was reported at or below 1.1% in all other grades.

MSS Table 4. Past Month Substance Use Lincoln County 2024

MSS Trends	Grades							Gender		Gender	LC	MO
Past Month Use	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	F	M	Diff.	2024	2024
alcohol use	0.9%	3.9%	6.4%	13.2%	10.0%	13.5%	10.9%	8.1%	8.6%	-0.5%	8.3%	6.8%
chew use	0.0%	1.0%	0.9%	0.7%	1.1%	2.0%	3.6%	0.6%	1.7%	-1.1%	1.1%	0.5%
cigarette use	1.8%	1.0%	1.8%	3.6%	2.2%	6.1%	3.5%	1.4%	3.9%	-2.5%	2.7%	1.9%
driving under the influence	0.0%	1.0%	0.9%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%	0.6%	0.6%	0.0%	0.6%	0.6%
e-cig use	3.6%	4.9%	5.6%	10.1%	5.5%	14.4%	12.7%	9.2%	6.5%	2.7%	7.9%	9.1%
hookah use	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	0.7%	1.1%	1.0%	1.8%	0.6%	0.8%	-0.3%	0.6%	1.3%
inhalant use	0.0%	1.0%	1.9%	0.7%	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.6%	0.9%	-0.3%	0.7%	1.1%
marijuana use	0.0%	0.0%	2.8%	4.4%	2.2%	10.4%	9.4%	3.8%	4.0%	-0.2%	3.9%	7.3%
OTC drug misuse	1.9%	1.0%	1.9%	2.2%	1.1%	1.0%	0.0%	1.2%	1.7%	-0.6%	1.4%	1.6%
Rx drug misuse	0.9%	1.0%	2.8%	1.5%	1.1%	1.0%	1.9%	1.5%	1.1%	0.3%	1.4%	1.5%
riding with a driver under the influence	18.3%	19.4%	18.3%	16.2%	9.0%	8.3%	5.5%	16.5%	12.5%	3.9%	14.6%	13.0%
synthetic drugs	1.9%	2.0%	0.9%	0.7%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	1.2%	1.1%	0.0%	1.2%	0.9%
past two weeks binge drinking	0.0%	1.9%	1.8%	3.7%	3.4%	5.2%	3.8%	2.3%	3.1%	-0.8%	2.7%	2.2%

Rating Scale – 1+ days; except for past two-weeks binge drinking - 1+ times.

The 2024 findings illustrate two critical patterns. First, middle school students were more likely to report early exposure to risky behaviors, including riding with impaired drivers and experimenting with inhalants or synthetic substances. Second, high school students, especially in 11th and 12th grades, reported higher rates of alcohol, e-cigarette, and marijuana use. These findings reinforce the importance of implementing prevention strategies that are developmentally tailored, beginning as early as elementary school and continuing through high school.

Perceptions of Peer Substance Use

Students were asked to estimate how many of their peers used various substances. As in prior years, the 2024 data revealed a consistent overestimation of peer use compared to students’ own self-reported behaviors. This misperception increased with age and may have contributed to the normalization of substance use, particularly in high school.

- Middle School (6th-8th Grades):**
 Perceptions of peer alcohol use increased from 23.7% in 6th grade to 36.8% in 8th grade for alcohol. Perceived peer marijuana use rose even more steeply, from 16.9% in 6th to 33.3% in 8th. Estimated prescription and other illicit drug use also climbed steadily across these grades.
- High School (9th-12th Grades):**
 - Alcohol:** Estimated peer use peaked at 47.8% in 12th grade.
 - Marijuana:** Perceived use reached 51.7% in 9th grade and remained high through 12th grade (50.7%).
 - Cigarettes:** Peer estimates increased to 31.9% in 12th grade, more than triple the 6th grade perception (8.5%).
 - Illicit Drugs:** The highest perceived illicit drug use peaked at 38.2% in the 11th grade.

Despite these inflated perceptions, actual use of substances at school remained minimal. In 2024, only 0.9% of 8th graders reported alcohol use on school grounds (the highest among all of the grades), and marijuana use peaked at just 2.1% in 11th grade, with 1.9% for 12th grade.

MSS Table 5. Peer and School Substance Use Lincoln County 2024

MSS Trends	Grades							Gender		Gender	LC	MO
Substance Use	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	F	M	Diff.	2024	2024
Peer alcohol use	23.7%	29.9%	36.8%	46.2%	36.7%	42.7%	47.8%	42.4%	32.1%	10.3%	37.4%	34.8%
Peer smoking cigarettes	8.5%	10.3%	11.4%	19.4%	17.2%	25.2%	31.9%	17.0%	16.7%	0.3%	16.9%	12.5%
Peer smoking marijuana	16.9%	27.1%	33.3%	51.7%	36.4%	43.6%	50.7%	40.4%	33.1%	7.4%	36.8%	25.6%
Peer other illicit drug use	6.8%	11.3%	16.8%	28.5%	24.5%	38.2%	37.7%	24.2%	20.7%	3.5%	22.6%	24.3%
School alcohol use	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.6%	-0.3%	0.4%	0.6%
School marijuana use	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	0.7%	0.0%	2.1%	1.9%	0.9%	0.9%	0.0%	0.7%	2.4%

Rating Scale – peer items – 1+ friends; school items -1+ days.



Perception of Harm Among Substances



Students were asked how harmful they believed various substances to be, with percentages representing those who rated them as posing a “moderate risk” or “great risk.” While perceptions of harm remained high overall, differences emerged across grade levels and substance categories.

Alcohol

- **Nearly Daily Drinking:** Rated as least harmful among 7th graders at 72.1% and rose to the highest at 77.2% with 11th graders.
- **Heavy Episodic Drinking (5+ drinks once or twice a week):** Perceptions were highest with 6th graders at 86.8% and lowest at 80% for 11th graders.
- **General Alcohol Use (no dosage specified):** Ratings declined across grades, from 67.6% at the highest in 6th grade to the lowest at 58.0% in 11th grade.

Cigarettes and E-Cigarettes

- **Cigarettes (1+ pack/day):** Perceived as harmful by 88.8% of 6th graders, with high awareness persisting through high school (84.5% in 12th grade). The lowest was found with 11th graders at 81.8%.
- **E-Cigarettes:** Perceived harm declined across grades, from 79.2% in 6th to 69.5% in 12th grade. Perceptions dropped below 70% in both 11th and 12th grades.

Other Substances

- **Illicit Drugs:** Perceived harm remained high across all grades, peaking at 94.5% in 8th grade. While younger students generally viewed illicit drug use as risky, perceptions declined slightly in later grades, dropping to 89.0% in 11th.
- **OTC Drugs to Get High:** Risk perceptions rose from their lowest at 76.9% in 6th grade to 86.2% in 12th grade.
- **Rx Drug Misuse:** Viewed as harmful by 87.5% of 6th graders, the lowest among the grades, to 91.4% of 12th graders.
- **Synthetic Drugs:** Perceived harm increased from 79.0% in 6th grade to 87.9% in 12th, with consistently high concern across grades 8–12.

A Significant Decline in Perceived Harm: Marijuana

Unlike most substances, marijuana showed a consistent and significant **decline** in perceived risk as students advanced in grade level. Rather than increasing with age, concern about marijuana use weakened steadily across middle and high school:

- **6th Grade:** Reported the highest concern at 87.7% of students who perceived marijuana use as harmful.
- **Grades 7–10:** Perceived harm declined progressively, dropping to 71.4% by 10th grade.
- **11th Grade:** Reflected the lowest concern at 53%.

The 2024 findings revealed that perceived harm of substance use did not consistently increase with age among LC students. While perceptions of risk remained relatively high for many substances, including prescription drugs and synthetic drugs, others such as alcohol (particularly with no dosage specified), cigarettes, and e-cigarettes, showed flat or declining trends across grade levels. These patterns suggested that as students moved through middle and high school, their concern about the dangers of certain substances diminished.

MSS Table 6. Perception of Harm for Various Substances Lincoln County 2024

MSS Trends	Grades							Gender		Gender	LC	MO
Perception of Harm	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	F	M	Diff.	2024	2024
alcohol (1 or 2 drinks nearly every day)	72.4%	72.1%	75.9%	77.0%	77.2%	74.0%	76.3%	77.0%	73.0%	4.0%	75.0%	71.6%
alcohol (5 or more drinks 1-2 a week)	86.8%	83.7%	85.2%	85.6%	82.6%	80.0%	81.4%	86.0%	81.3%	4.7%	83.9%	77.5%
alcohol (no dosage)	67.6%	64.4%	63.9%	60.6%	64.5%	58.0%	61.0%	63.7%	61.8%	1.9%	62.8%	62.7%
cigarettes (1+ pack per day)	88.8%	86.5%	88.0%	85.6%	84.8%	81.8%	84.5%	87.1%	84.1%	3.0%	85.7%	82.2%
e-cigarettes	79.2%	76.9%	77.8%	73.9%	76.9%	69.7%	69.5%	74.9%	75.1%	-0.2%	75.0%	72.2%
marijuana	87.7%	82.7%	76.9%	71.7%	71.4%	53.0%	54.2%	75.2%	69.8%	5.4%	72.4%	67.9%
other illicit drugs	90.4%	91.3%	94.5%	94.2%	91.4%	89.0%	89.8%	92.5%	91.0%	1.5%	91.8%	88.4%
OTC drugs to get high	76.9%	78.6%	78.0%	79.7%	85.9%	80.0%	86.2%	80.5%	80.1%	0.4%	80.3%	77.6%
Rx drug misuse	87.5%	89.3%	89.0%	91.3%	89.1%	87.9%	91.4%	89.6%	88.5%	1.1%	89.2%	85.5%
synthetic drugs	79.0%	80.6%	85.3%	87.0%	84.8%	85.9%	87.9%	85.0%	83.4%	1.6%	84.2%	81.9%

Rating Scale – Moderate/great risk

Perceptions of How Wrong Substance Use Is

Students were asked how wrong they consider substance use, with responses for “wrong” and “very wrong” combined. While most students disapproved, notable differences emerged between middle and high school students.

Overall Trends

- **High Disapproval Across Grades:** Most substances received consistently high disapproval ratings—often above 85% throughout middle and high school. While some decline occurred in later grades, especially for substances like e-cigarettes and marijuana, disapproval remained strong overall.
- **Middle School Disapproval:** Sixth graders consistently reported the strongest disapproval across nearly all substances. Disapproval declined gradually through high school, with the most noticeable drops occurring between 9th and 11th grade.

Substance-Specific Findings

- **Alcohol:**
 - **General Use (no dosage specified):** Disapproval declined from 91.7% in 6th grade to 67.7% in 11th.
 - **Nearly Daily Use (1–2 drinks/day):** Disapproval remained high, with a modest decline from 95.4% in 6th grade to 87.6% in 11th, followed by a rebound to 91.2% in 12th.
 - **Heavy Episodic Drinking (5+ drinks/week):** Disapproval dropped from 97.2% in 6th to 87.6% in 11th, then again rose to 91.2% in 12th.
- **Cigarettes:** Disapproval of smoking a pack a day stayed strong across all grades, decreasing from 97.2% in 6th to 86.6% in 11th.
- **E-Cigarettes:** Showed one of the steepest declines in disapproval, from 94.4% in 6th grade to 77.3% in 11th grade.
- **Marijuana:**
 - **General Use:** Disapproval dropped from 96.3% in 6th grade to 71.9% in 12th.
 - **Weekly Use:** Declined from 97.2% in 6th to 76.8% in 12th.
 - **Smoking Marijuana:** Dropped steadily from 97.2% in 6th grade to 73.2% in 12th.
- **OTC Drug Misuse:** Disapproval remained consistently high, with little variation—ranging from 90.5% (9th graders) to 95.1% (7th graders).
- **Rx Drug Misuse:** Received the most uniform disapproval, with responses between 94.4% (10th grade) and 97.2% (6th grade) across all grade levels.

MSS Table 7. Perception of Substance Being Wrong- Lincoln County 2024

MSS Trends	Grades							Gender		Gender	LC	MO
Item	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	F	M	Diff.	2024	2024
alcohol (no dosage)	91.7%	84.5%	82.2%	70.4%	72.8%	67.7%	69.6%	78.3%	77.0%	1.3%	77.5%	81.2%
alcohol (1-2 drinks almost daily)	95.4%	93.1%	93.6%	90.4%	89.0%	87.6%	91.2%	92.8%	90.7%	2.1%	91.6%	92.3%
alcohol (5+ drinks 1-2x/week)	97.2%	95.1%	96.3%	90.4%	89.0%	87.6%	91.2%	93.3%	92.3%	1.0%	92.7%	93.5%
cigarettes (1+ pack per day)	97.2%	95.1%	94.4%	88.9%	92.3%	86.6%	87.7%	92.5%	92.0%	0.4%	92.1%	92.1%
E-cigs	94.4%	91.3%	89.0%	83.1%	87.0%	77.3%	80.4%	85.8%	87.6%	-1.7%	86.6%	86.6%
marijuana	96.3%	96.2%	91.7%	84.6%	85.9%	75.0%	71.9%	89.0%	85.6%	3.4%	87.3%	83.9%
marijuana (1-2 times/week)	97.2%	97.1%	93.5%	87.5%	88.0%	79.2%	76.8%	90.7%	88.4%	2.4%	89.4%	86.5%
marijuana (smoke)	97.2%	96.1%	91.7%	85.2%	86.7%	75.3%	73.2%	89.2%	85.8%	3.4%	87.5%	77.1%
OTC drug misuse	93.5%	95.1%	93.5%	90.5%	94.5%	94.8%	94.6%	94.5%	92.4%	2.1%	93.4%	93.0%
Rx drug misuse	97.2%	96.1%	96.3%	94.9%	94.4%	95.8%	96.4%	95.9%	95.7%	0.2%	95.8%	95.6%

Rating scale - wrong/very wrong

Overall Implications & Recommendations for Substance Use Prevention and Intervention

1. Early Substance Initiation and Risk Exposure

Students in Lincoln County reported using many substances as early as 6th and 7th grade. Middle school also showed the highest usage rates for inhalants, synthetic drugs, OTC, and prescription medications. Additionally, 18–19% of 6th–8th graders reported riding with a driver under the influence, well before they begin driving themselves.

Recommendation: Initiate prevention efforts in upper elementary and early middle school to address early initiation, correct misperceptions, and equip students with refusal and safety strategies. Engage families and youth-serving organizations in reinforcing safe norms and addressing adult modeling of impaired behavior.

2. Sharp Increase in Substance Access and Risk During High School Transition

Perceptions of easy access to alcohol, e-cigarettes, marijuana, and OTC medications increased dramatically starting in 9th grade, with over 58% of 12th graders reporting these substances were easy to obtain.

Recommendation: Use the 9th grade transition as a strategic window to intensify prevention programming. Educate students on the risks of accessibility, peer pressure, and community availability. Partner with local coalitions to reduce supply-side access (e.g., store policies, safe medication disposal).

3. Shifting Attitudes and Declining Perception of Harm in High School

While many students perceived alcohol and prescription misuse as harmful, the perceived harm of marijuana dropped drastically, from 87.7% in 6th grade to 54.2% in 12th. Similarly, disapproval of substance use declined across high school years, particularly for marijuana, alcohol, and e-cigarettes.

Recommendation: Provide sustained, developmentally appropriate substance education throughout middle and high school. Focus on correcting misperceptions, reinforcing health consequences, and using interactive or peer-led formats to maintain relevance and engagement.

4. Substance Use Risk Varies by Grade—Target Interventions Accordingly

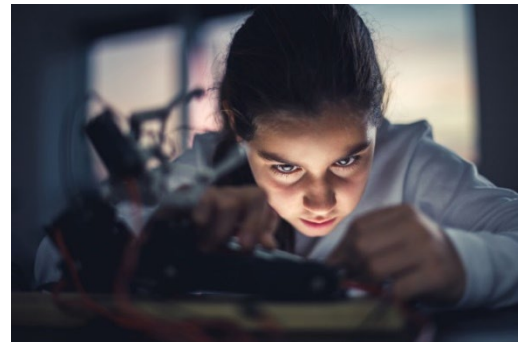
Substance use patterns showed age-specific variation: middle school students were more likely to misuse inhalants and prescription drugs, while high school students more commonly used alcohol and marijuana.

Recommendation: Tailor prevention content by grade level. Focus middle school interventions on dangers of experimentation with household substances and medication misuse, while high school programs should emphasize long-term consequences, impaired driving, and risks associated with alcohol and marijuana.

5. High Exposure to Impaired Driving Signals Broader Community Risk

Exposure to impaired driving, particularly in early grades, suggests normalization of unsafe adult behavior and environmental risks beyond school control.

Recommendation: Expand educational efforts to include families, caregivers, and the broader community. Deliver targeted outreach about impaired driving risks, host prevention workshops, and partner with law enforcement and public health to address environmental risk factors.



Mental Health: Depressive Symptoms and Protective Factors

Students were asked to indicate how frequently they experienced certain depressive symptoms over the past 30 days. Responses of “often” and “always” were combined to reflect the percentage experiencing regular disruption in their daily functioning. These symptoms included eating and sleep disturbances, difficulty concentrating on schoolwork, and persistent negative emotions such as sadness, hopelessness, and irritability. Students were also asked to rate positive indicators of mental health and coping, such as optimism about their future, stress management, adult support, and knowledge of community resources. For these positive items, percentages reflect agreement or strong agreement.

Depressive Symptoms

The 2024 data revealed that depressive symptoms were **widespread across grade levels**, with some symptoms that peaked during the high school transition, while others remaining elevated through upper grades. Contrary to earlier patterns suggesting a 9th grade peak, Lincoln County students showed **consistently high rates of distress** across several grades, especially from 6th through 11th.

- **Eating Disruption:** 31.0% of students in both 6th and 9th grade reported frequent disruptions in eating, among the highest of all grades. Disruption declined somewhat by 12th grade (21.0%).
- **Feelings of Hopelessness:** This indicator remained relatively stable from grades 6–9, hovering between 16.1% and 18.8%, before dipping slightly in 10th (11.7%) and rising again in 11th (19.4%).
- **Irritability:** 39.7% of 9th graders and 37.9% of 6th graders indicating frequent irritability. Even in 12th grade, rates remained elevated at 30.2%.
- **Disruption with Schoolwork:** The highest rates appeared in 9th grade (45.4%) and remained high throughout middle and high school, indicating persistent struggles with focus and motivation related to mental health.
- **Sleeping Disruption:** Around one-third of students across most grades reported frequent sleep issues, with the highest rate among 6th graders (37.9%) and 8th & 9th graders (35.7%).
- **Feeling Very Sad:** This symptom was most common among 6th graders (30.2%) and remained elevated through 9th grade (28.9%). By 12th grade, it declined to 23.8%, though it still impacted nearly one in four students. The lowest was for 10th grade at 20.2%.

Gender Disparities: Across nearly all depressive indicators, female students reported significantly higher rates of symptoms than males. For example:

- 36.9% of females reported eating disruptions, compared to 20.2% of males.
- 44.2% of females reported irritability, compared to 24.9% of males.
- Feelings of sadness affected 36.5% of females versus 16.9% of males.

The data demonstrated that depressive symptoms were not isolated to a specific grade but instead reflected **persistent emotional distress beginning as early as 6th grade** and extending through high school. Patterns of eating and sleep disruption, sadness, and irritability were notably high, and in some cases, more elevated in earlier grades than in 12th.



MSS Table 8. Depression & Other Mental Health Related Items - 2024

MSS Trends	Grades							Gender		Gender	LC	MO
Depression	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	F	M	Diff.	2024	2024
Student eating disruption	31.0%	28.6%	30.4%	31.0%	24.5%	28.2%	21.0%	36.9%	20.2%	16.7%	28.5%	28.1%
Student feels hopeless	18.8%	16.2%	16.1%	17.6%	11.7%	19.4%	14.5%	18.5%	14.8%	3.7%	16.7%	16.6%
Student irritable	37.9%	35.2%	32.4%	39.7%	33.0%	31.1%	30.2%	44.2%	24.9%	19.3%	34.7%	35.7%
Student school work disruption	40.0%	38.1%	39.6%	45.4%	39.4%	37.9%	28.6%	43.7%	34.6%	9.1%	39.4%	37.7%
Student sleeping disruption	37.9%	34.0%	35.7%	35.7%	29.8%	32.4%	25.8%	40.4%	26.8%	13.7%	33.7%	33.8%
Student very sad	30.2%	26.7%	27.7%	28.9%	20.2%	26.9%	23.8%	36.5%	16.9%	19.6%	26.9%	27.4%

Rating Scale – Often/Always (table above)

The second set of items shed light on students' optimism, stress management, and perceived access to support:

- **Optimism About the Future:** Student optimism remained fairly high across all grade levels, with gradual increases as students moved into upper high school. Optimism was lowest in 6th grade (65.1%) and peaked in 12th grade at 79.4%. These findings suggest that older students may develop a more hopeful perspective as they near graduation and gain more independence.
- **Healthy Stress Management:** Only 46.9% of 9th graders felt they handled stress in a healthy way, the lowest among all grade levels. In contrast, this rate reached 60.3% by 12th grade. However, gender differences were notable: only 46.3% of female students reported healthy stress management, compared to 59.2% of males, indicating that a significant portion of female students may struggle to cope with stress effectively.
- **Adult Support Networks:** Most students reported having adults to turn to when feeling overwhelmed, but support declined during high school. While 78.6% of 8th graders said they had adult support, this dropped to 70.4% in 9th grade and remained in the mid-70% range through 12th grade. These findings may reflect changing student–adult dynamics during adolescence, especially as students transition into high school.
- **Awareness of Community Resources:** Only 62.1% of 10th graders reported knowing where to go in the community to get help, a concerning figure given the heightened mental health symptoms also reported at this grade level. Awareness was similarly low in 9th (65.5%) and 11th grade (65.1%) and remained below 70% through 12th grade. This gap indicates that despite the presence of community resources, approximately one-fourth to one-third of students may not know how to access them when needed.

MSS Table 9. Student Support Related Items – 2024

MSS Trends	Grades							Gender		Gender	LC	MO
Item	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	F	M	Diff.	2024	2024
Student feels optimistic about their future	65.1%	69.2%	72.1%	66.9%	69.5%	72.6%	79.4%	71.8%	68.9%	3.0%	70.1%	70.5%
Student feels that they handle stress in a healthy way	52.7%	52.4%	53.1%	46.9%	53.7%	54.7%	60.3%	46.3%	59.2%	-12.9%	52.7%	53.5%
Student has adults in their life to turn to when things feel overwhelming	77.0%	75.2%	78.6%	70.4%	77.7%	74.3%	74.6%	75.1%	75.1%	0.0%	75.0%	70.7%
Student knows where to go in their community to get help	74.3%	74.5%	73.5%	65.5%	62.1%	65.1%	67.2%	71.4%	67.1%	4.3%	69.1%	68.2%

Rating Scale – Agree/Strongly agree

Overall Implications

Mental health concerns peaked during key academic transitions, most notably in 6th and 9th grades when students reported the highest rates of depressive symptoms, emotional disruption, and difficulty coping. These issues were especially pronounced among female students, who consistently reported significantly higher levels of emotional distress, self-harm, and suicidal ideation. These findings highlight the need for early, sustained, and developmentally aligned MH supports that begin before transitions occur and continue through high school.

Recommendation: LC schools and community partners should implement a layered, school- and community-based mental health strategy that prioritizes transitional grades and students at elevated risk. Priority actions include:

- Teaching and reinforcing healthy stress management and coping strategies, starting in middle school and extending through at least 9th grade.
- Strengthening student awareness and understanding of available mental health services through youth-friendly language and accessible platforms.
- Expanding access to trusted adult relationships within school buildings, particularly for students entering or adjusting to high school environments.
- Integrating gender-responsive practices that acknowledge and address the heightened mental health needs of female students.

Self-Harm and Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviors

Students were asked if they had engaged in self-harm or experienced suicidal thoughts or behaviors in the past year.

- **Self-Injury:** Reported by over one in four students in 7th grade (27.4%; similar with 8th and 9th grade). Self-harm was least reported by 13.7% of 10th graders yet remained a concern in 11th (21.2%) and 12th grades (17.5%). Female students reported self-injury at more than twice the rate of males (28.9% vs. 13.8%).
- **Suicide Planning:** Most common in 9th grade (10.0%), with elevated rates in 8th (9.8%) and 7th grade (9.5%). Rates dropped significantly in 10th grade (3.2%) and remained lower in 12th (4.8%). Female students reported planning suicide at over double the rate of males (11.0% vs. 4.9%).
- **Seriously Considering Suicide:** Highest among 8th graders (13.4%) and 7th graders (13.2%), followed by 9th (12.1%) and 11th graders (11.4%). The lowest was found with 10th graders at 5.2%. Female students again reported significantly higher rates (14.4%) compared to males (6.4%).
- **Suicide Attempts:** Most frequently reported by 11th (6.7%) and 8th graders (6.3%). Rates were lowest for 10th graders (1.0%).
- **Suicide Attempts Resulting in Injury:** Reported at low levels across all grades, peaking at 1.9% in 7th grade and 1.8% in 8th grade. All other grades reported 1.4% or lower.

MSS Table 10. Suicide-Related Items – 2024

MSS Trends	Grades							Gender		Gender	LC	MO
Suicide and Self-injury	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	F	M	Diff.	2024	2024
Self-injury	19.6%	27.4%	23.6%	24.1%	13.7%	21.2%	17.5%	28.9%	13.8%	15.1%	21.4%	21.5%
Past year planning suicide	7.0%	9.5%	9.8%	10.0%	3.2%	8.7%	4.8%	11.0%	4.9%	6.2%	7.9%	8.4%
Past year seriously considering suicide	8.0%	13.2%	13.4%	12.1%	5.2%	11.4%	10.9%	14.4%	6.4%	7.9%	10.6%	11.7%
Past year attempting suicide	3.5%	5.7%	6.3%	5.7%	1.0%	6.7%	3.1%	6.9%	2.7%	4.2%	4.8%	5.2%
Past year suicide with injury	0.9%	1.9%	1.8%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%	0.3%	1.7%	1.1%	1.4%

Rating scale – yes except * is 1+ time

Overall Implications

Self-injury and suicide-related behaviors were most prevalent between 7th and 9th grade, with concerning rates also re-emerging in 11th grade. Among 7th graders, more than one in four reported self-harm, while suicide ideation and planning peaked in 8th and 9th grades. Female students were disproportionately affected, with more than twice the rate of self-injury and significantly higher rates of suicidal thoughts and planning compared to males. These findings reflect an urgent need for comprehensive prevention and intervention strategies that begin early, are sustained through high school, and are responsive to gender-specific risks.

Recommendation: Schools and communities should implement a comprehensive, developmentally tailored strategy to reduce youth self-harm and suicidal behavior. This includes:

- Initiating early identification and support efforts beginning in middle school, when many of these risks first emerge.
- Providing ongoing access to suicide prevention programming, therapeutic resources, and peer supports throughout high school, particularly in 11th grade where risk increases again.
- Ensuring gender-responsive approaches that specifically address the emotional health and relational stressors experienced by female students.
- Expanding access to trained mental health professionals and building strong networks of trusted adults within school settings to foster help-seeking behavior and emotional safety.

An integrated, school-based response, complemented by community partnerships, will be essential to preventing suicide, reducing self-injury, and promoting long-term emotional well-being among youth.

School-based Student Behaviors and Supports

Students were asked various questions about their decision making, academic attitudes, and school-related behaviors. For most items, percentages reflect students who agreed or strongly agreed with each statement. One item (“days skipped or cut”) represents the percentage of students who reported missing at least one day of school during the past year.

The data reveal a mix of encouraging trends, especially in perceived support from teachers and parents, as well as challenges in rule enforcement, absenteeism, and attitudes toward academic dishonesty. Gender differences were present but less pronounced than in other domains.

Positive Behaviors & Support

- **Parental Monitoring:** Most students reported that their parents check homework, comment on good work, and involve them in decision making. Monitoring was highest in 6th grade (89.6%) and declined into 11th grade (75.8%). Parental consultation in decisions was highest in 8th grade (73.3%) and lowest in 11th grade (66.0%). Positive recognition from parents remained steady across grades, with the lowest among 12th graders again (79.8%) with a slight peak again in 12th (86.8%).
- **Teacher Feedback:** Teacher recognition of good work remained relatively strong, with rates ranging from 72.6% in 7th grade to 80.9% in 12th grade.
- **School Communication with Parents:** Fewer students reported that the school contacted parents with praise. The highest rate was in 6th grade (56.3%), but this fell steadily through 11th grade (36.9%), then rose modestly in 12th (44.9%).
- **Perceptions of Fairness and Discrimination:** Most students felt they were treated fairly. Agreement that “students are not discriminated against” ranged from 76.0% in 9th grade to 88.2% in 12th grade. Perceptions of fair rule enforcement were lowest in 9th grade (60.3%) and highest in 12th (72.5%).



Negative Behaviors

- **Cheating:** Belief that it is acceptable to cheat increased steadily from 6th (12.3%) to a peak in 9th grade (39.2%). Rates remained elevated in 11th (38.7%) and 12th grade (33.3%).
- **Ignoring Rules:** Reported by 9–19% of students across all grades, peaking at 18.9% in 9th grade. The lowest rate was among 12th graders (9.5%).
- **Oppositional Behavior:** Highest in 7th grade (17.1%) and 9th grade (16.8%), with lower rates in 8th (11.5%) and 12th (9.4%).
- **Days Skipped or Cut:** Absenteeism was widespread, with more than 37% of students in every grade reporting at least one missed day. The highest rate occurred in 6th grade (53.3%), while the lowest was in 10th grade (37.4%).

Overall Implications

The transition into high school, especially 9th grade, was marked by increased cheating, absenteeism, and declines in both parental and teacher engagement. Beliefs that cheating is acceptable peaked in 9th grade and remained high, while students reported the lowest sense of fairness in rule enforcement and equal treatment. These patterns point to weakened accountability and climate during a critical developmental period.

Recommendation: Schools should reinforce academic and behavioral expectations during the high school transition through:

- Advisory or mentorship programs that build connection and promote positive norms.
- Clear academic integrity policies integrated into school culture and classroom practice.

- Staff training to improve equitable discipline and student perceptions of fairness.
- Sustained family and teacher engagement throughout high school, not just in early grades.
- Early intervention strategies to address absenteeism and re-engage students.



Creating a strong support system in 9th grade can help stabilize behavior, promote fairness, and improve overall school climate.

MSS Table 11. School-based Behaviors – 2024

MSS Trends	Grades							Gender		Gender	LC	MO
School-based Student Behaviors	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	F	M	Diff.	2024	2024
No discrimination in student treatment	82.9%	80.4%	79.1%	76.0%	77.6%	79.6%	88.2%	77.7%	82.2%	-4.6%	79.9%	84.0%
Rules are enforced fairly	66.1%	66.0%	64.0%	60.3%	66.3%	62.4%	72.5%	63.6%	66.3%	-2.8%	64.8%	66.7%
Parents check on students homework	89.6%	85.3%	85.6%	80.6%	82.6%	75.8%	79.2%	80.1%	86.2%	-6.1%	83.1%	74.8%
Parents consult student when making decisions	72.1%	69.6%	73.3%	69.2%	70.9%	66.0%	71.7%	65.2%	75.7%	-10.5%	70.2%	65.9%
Parents notice and comment on good work	85.8%	84.3%	84.9%	79.9%	81.4%	79.8%	86.8%	79.6%	86.8%	-7.3%	83.1%	76.0%
School notifies parents with praise	56.3%	42.5%	43.5%	42.5%	42.4%	36.9%	44.9%	39.6%	48.8%	-9.3%	44.1%	40.3%
Teachers notice and comment on good work	77.3%	72.6%	75.7%	78.1%	75.8%	76.6%	80.9%	76.8%	76.6%	0.2%	76.6%	74.4%
Student believes it is ok to cheat	12.3%	17.0%	25.7%	39.2%	32.6%	38.7%	33.3%	27.5%	29.1%	-1.6%	28.4%	27.6%
Student ignores rules	14.0%	15.1%	17.7%	18.9%	13.5%	17.0%	9.5%	13.8%	17.5%	-3.7%	15.8%	17.2%
Student is oppositional	13.2%	17.1%	11.5%	16.8%	12.6%	16.0%	9.4%	13.9%	14.2%	-0.4%	14.2%	14.4%
Days skipped or cut*	53.3%	47.7%	46.1%	48.6%	37.4%	43.2%	42.0%	48.8%	43.7%	5.1%	46.2%	44.0%

Rating Scale – Agree/Strongly agree; * Rating Scale - 1+ days

Fighting & Perception of School Safety

Students provided insights into school violence and safety by reporting on physical altercations, weapon threats, safety-related absenteeism, and their perceptions of peer gun carrying. Fighting and threats were reported if they occurred at least once in the past year, while safety perceptions reflect combined “strongly agree” and “agree” responses.

Physical Altercations & Injuries

- **Fighting:** Incidents were most common among 6th graders (26.1%), with steady declines across grade levels to 9.2% in 12th grade. A smaller spike occurred in 9th grade (17.5%). Fighting was reported more than twice as often by males (22.8%) compared to females (10.8%).
- **Fighting with Injury:** 6th graders also reported the highest rate of injury-related fighting (5.1%). This dropped to below 2% for most high school grades, with the lowest found among 10th graders at 1%.

Weapon Threats and Safety-Driven Absenteeism

- **Victim of Weapon Threat at School:** Rates peaked in middle school, with 13.1% of 7th graders and 12.7% of 9th graders reporting being threatened with a weapon. Rates declined steadily through high school to 4.6% in 12th grade.
- **Days Missed Due to Safety Concerns:** 6th grade students reported the highest rate of safety-related absenteeism (16.1%), followed by 7th (11.2%). Absenteeism decreased into high school, with the lowest reported in 12th grade (2.9%).

Peer Gun Carrying

- **Perception of Friends Carrying Guns:** Student awareness of peer gun carrying escalated significantly through middle and early high school, rising from 8.5% in 6th grade to a peak of 37.7% in 12th grade. Female students reported higher rates (26.6%) than males (21.4%), a reversal of typical patterns seen in other domains.

Perceptions of School Safety

- Most students felt their schools were safe. Agreement remained relatively stable from 6th through 11th grade (81.7%–83.8%), with the highest perception in 12th grade (89.7%).

MSS Table 12. Fighting & Perception of School Safety – 2024

MSS Trends	Grades							Gender		Gender	LC	MO
Item	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	F	M	Diff.	2024	2024
Past year fighting	26.1%	20.6%	15.9%	17.5%	12.5%	12.0%	9.2%	10.8%	22.8%	-12.1%	16.9%	14.9%
Past year fighting with injury	5.1%	2.8%	3.5%	4.2%	1.0%	1.9%	1.5%	2.2%	4.0%	-1.8%	3.1%	2.1%
Past year victim of weapon threat at school	11.0%	13.1%	12.4%	12.7%	8.3%	7.4%	4.6%	10.5%	10.4%	0.1%	10.5%	8.8%
Perception of school safety	81.7%	82.1%	85.2%	84.1%	83.8%	83.8%	89.7%	83.6%	84.2%	-0.6%	83.9%	81.9%
Days missed due to safety concerns	16.1%	11.2%	10.4%	11.0%	7.0%	9.0%	2.9%	11.7%	8.5%	3.1%	10.2%	10.8%
Peer gun carrying	8.5%	13.1%	20.4%	30.6%	25.5%	36.0%	37.7%	26.6%	21.4%	5.2%	24.0%	10.0%

Rating Scale – 1+ times *Strongly agree/agree; ** 1+ days; *** 1+friends

Overall Implications

Fighting, weapon threats, and safety-related absenteeism were most common in grades 6–9, while perceived peer gun carrying rose steadily through high school, peaking in 12th grade. Males were more likely to report physical fights, while females more often reported awareness of peers with weapons. Although overall school safety perceptions remained strong, younger students may require more visible reassurance, while high school students face increasing exposure to serious safety concerns.

Recommendation: Schools and community partners should implement age- and gender-responsive strategies to promote safety and reduce violence risks, including:

- Early violence prevention and conflict resolution programming in middle school.
- Gun safety awareness, peer-reporting systems, and anonymous tip lines in high school.
- Increased adult presence and supervision in grades 6–9 to address early safety concerns.
- Consistent, trauma-informed supports that consider gendered patterns in violence exposure and reporting.

A proactive, developmentally tailored approach can help reduce violence, improve perceptions of safety, and support student well-being across grade levels.

Bullying Perpetration and Victimization

Students reported whether they had perpetrated or been the victim of different types of bullying during the past three months. This included online/cell phone bullying, emotional bullying, physical bullying, and rumor spreading.

Key Insights

- **Online/Cell Phone Bullying:** Perpetration peaked in 9th grade (23.4%), while victimization was also high from 6th–9th grades (around 30–33%), before dropping sharply to 15.4% in 12th grade. Female students (34.9%) reported significantly higher victimization online than males (22.5%).
- **Emotional Bullying:** Perpetration was highest in 9th grade (60.0%) and remained elevated in 7th and 8th grade. Victimization followed a similar pattern, with 71.0% of 9th graders and over 64% of students in grades 6–8 reporting emotional bullying. The lowest percentage was found with 12th graders at 41.5%. Female students (66.0%) were more likely than males (54.1%) to report being emotionally bullied.
- **Physical Bullying:** Physical bullying peaked in 6th grade, with 43.2% reporting victimization and 23.7% admitting to perpetration. These rates declined steadily through high school, reaching their lowest in 11th and 12th grade (12.1% victimization, 4.5% perpetration).
- **Rumor Spreading:** Perpetration of rumor spreading was most common in 9th grade (22.2%), while victimization remained widespread from 6th–9th grades (48–51%). Rates declined in upper grades. Female students (53.2%) reported much higher victimization from rumor spreading than males (35.5%).

Overall Implications

Bullying, especially emotional, rumor-based, and online, peaked in middle school and early high school, with 9th grade showing consistently high rates. Physical bullying was more common in younger grades and declined over time. Female students reported significantly higher victimization, especially with online and relational forms of bullying.

MSS Table 13. Bullying – 2024

MSS Trends	Grades							Gender		Gender	LC	MO
Past 3-Month Bullying	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	F	M	Diff.	2024	2024
perpetrator of online or via cell phone	16.8%	19.8%	22.8%	23.4%	16.5%	18.5%	10.6%	20.1%	17.8%	2.3%	19.0%	16.8%
perpetrator of emotional bullying	41.5%	47.6%	51.8%	60.0%	40.2%	40.7%	39.4%	48.0%	45.9%	2.1%	46.9%	45.2%
perpetrator of physical bullying	23.7%	22.6%	15.8%	17.4%	8.2%	7.4%	4.5%	10.7%	19.8%	-9.1%	15.3%	13.3%
perpetrator of rumor spreading	20.3%	17.0%	19.1%	22.2%	15.5%	15.7%	12.1%	16.6%	19.5%	-2.9%	18.0%	17.9%
victim of bullying online/ via cell phone	29.7%	29.5%	33.6%	33.1%	24.7%	27.8%	15.4%	34.9%	22.5%	12.4%	28.9%	25.3%
victim of emotional bullying	68.4%	64.5%	65.8%	71.0%	49.5%	46.3%	41.5%	66.0%	54.1%	11.8%	60.1%	56.0%
victim of physical bullying	43.2%	38.3%	31.6%	29.9%	16.7%	12.1%	12.3%	26.7%	28.5%	-1.8%	27.7%	23.4%
victim of rumor spreading	50.0%	47.7%	50.9%	49.3%	38.5%	35.2%	30.8%	53.2%	35.5%	17.7%	44.5%	42.1%

Rating scale – 1+ time

Recommendation: Schools should begin prevention efforts before middle school, focusing on digital safety, emotional regulation, and conflict resolution. Key strategies include:

- Structured, schoolwide anti-bullying and digital citizenship programs starting in upper elementary.
- Peer support systems, student-led initiatives, and accessible reporting tools.
- Gender-responsive programming that addresses the unique patterns of victimization among female students.
- Ongoing reinforcement of safe online behavior and respectful peer interactions throughout middle and early high school.

A proactive, comprehensive approach can reduce harm, improve peer relationships, and strengthen school climate across grade levels.

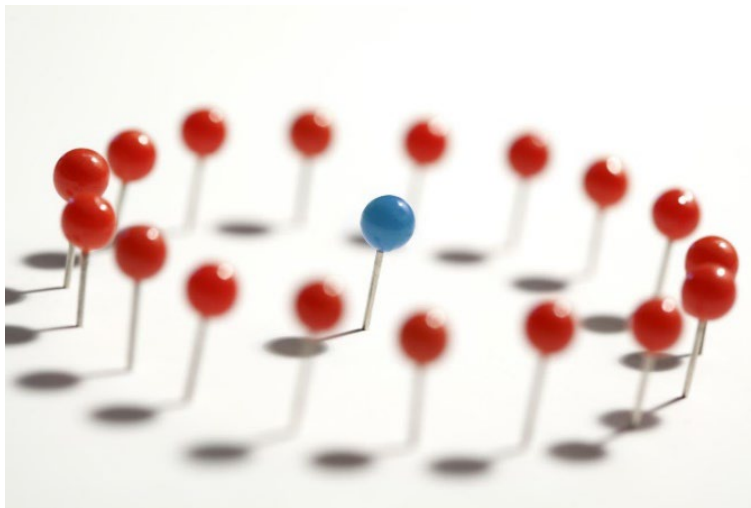


Table 14: Grade-level Analysis of the Missouri Student Survey 2024 Lincoln County Sample

Missouri Student Survey										Gender	LC	Rating scale
Item	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	Female	Male	Diff.	2024	for data point
Depression scale - Student eating disruption	31.0%	28.6%	30.4%	31.0%	24.5%	28.2%	21.0%	36.9%	20.2%	16.7%	28.5%	Often/always
Depression scale - Student feels hopeless	18.8%	16.2%	16.1%	17.6%	11.7%	19.4%	14.5%	18.5%	14.8%	3.7%	16.7%	Often/always
Depression scale - Student irritable	37.9%	35.2%	32.4%	39.7%	33.0%	31.1%	30.2%	44.2%	24.9%	19.3%	34.7%	Often/always
Depression scale - Student school work disruption	40.0%	38.1%	39.6%	45.4%	39.4%	37.9%	28.6%	43.7%	34.6%	9.1%	39.4%	Often/always
Depression scale - Student sleeping disruption	37.9%	34.0%	35.7%	35.7%	29.8%	32.4%	25.8%	40.4%	26.8%	13.7%	33.7%	Often/always
Depression scale - Student very sad	30.2%	26.7%	27.7%	28.9%	20.2%	26.9%	23.8%	36.5%	16.9%	19.6%	26.9%	Often/always
Student feels optimistic about their future	65.1%	69.2%	72.1%	66.9%	69.5%	72.6%	79.4%	71.8%	68.9%	3.0%	70.1%	Strongly/Agree
Student feels that they handle stress in a healthy way	52.7%	52.4%	53.1%	46.9%	53.7%	54.7%	60.3%	46.3%	59.2%	-12.9%	52.7%	Strongly/Agree
Student has adults in their life to turn to when things feel overwhelming	77.0%	75.2%	78.6%	70.4%	77.7%	74.3%	74.6%	75.1%	75.1%	0.0%	75.0%	Strongly/Agree
Student knows where to go in their community to get help	74.3%	74.5%	73.5%	65.5%	62.1%	65.1%	67.2%	71.4%	67.1%	4.3%	69.1%	Strongly/Agree
Past 3 month bullying online or via cell phone	16.8%	19.8%	22.8%	23.4%	16.5%	18.5%	10.6%	20.1%	17.8%	2.3%	19.0%	1+ times
Past 3 month emotional bullying	41.5%	47.6%	51.8%	60.0%	40.2%	40.7%	39.4%	48.0%	45.9%	2.1%	46.9%	1+ times
Past 3 month physical bullying	23.7%	22.6%	15.8%	17.4%	8.2%	7.4%	4.5%	10.7%	19.8%	-9.1%	15.3%	1+ times
Past 3 month rumor spreading	20.3%	17.0%	19.1%	22.2%	15.5%	15.7%	12.1%	16.6%	19.5%	-2.9%	18.0%	1+ times
Past 3 month victim of bullying online or via cell phone	29.7%	29.5%	33.6%	33.1%	24.7%	27.8%	15.4%	34.9%	22.5%	12.4%	28.9%	1+ times
Past 3 month victim of emotional bullying	68.4%	64.5%	65.8%	71.0%	49.5%	46.3%	41.5%	66.0%	54.1%	11.8%	60.1%	1+ times
Past 3 month victim of physical bullying	43.2%	38.3%	31.6%	29.9%	16.7%	12.1%	12.3%	26.7%	28.5%	-1.8%	27.7%	1+ times
Past 3 month victim of rumor spreading	50.0%	47.7%	50.9%	49.3%	38.5%	35.2%	30.8%	53.2%	35.5%	17.7%	44.5%	1+ times
Self-injury	19.6%	27.4%	23.6%	24.1%	13.7%	21.2%	17.5%	28.9%	13.8%	15.1%	21.4%	Yes
Past year planning suicide	7.0%	9.5%	9.8%	10.0%	3.2%	8.7%	4.8%	11.0%	4.9%	6.2%	7.9%	Yes
Past year seriously considering suicide	8.0%	13.2%	13.4%	12.1%	5.2%	11.4%	10.9%	14.4%	6.4%	7.9%	10.6%	Yes
Past year attempting suicide	3.5%	5.7%	6.3%	5.7%	1.0%	6.7%	3.1%	6.9%	2.7%	4.2%	4.8%	1+ times
Past year suicide with injury	0.9%	1.9%	1.8%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%	0.3%	1.7%	1.1%	Yes
Past year fighting	26.1%	20.6%	15.9%	17.5%	12.5%	12.0%	9.2%	10.8%	22.8%	-12.1%	16.9%	1+ times
Past year fighting with injury	5.1%	2.8%	3.5%	4.2%	1.0%	1.9%	1.5%	2.2%	4.0%	-1.8%	3.1%	1+ times
Past year victim of weapon threat at school	11.0%	13.1%	12.4%	12.7%	8.3%	7.4%	4.6%	10.5%	10.4%	0.1%	10.5%	1+ times
Perception of school safety	81.7%	82.1%	85.2%	84.1%	83.8%	83.8%	89.7%	83.6%	84.2%	-0.6%	83.9%	Strongly/Agree
Days missed due to safety concerns	16.1%	11.2%	10.4%	11.0%	7.0%	9.0%	2.9%	11.7%	8.5%	3.1%	10.2%	1+ days
Peer gun carrying	8.5%	13.1%	20.4%	30.6%	25.5%	36.0%	37.7%	26.6%	21.4%	5.2%	24.0%	1+ friends
No discrimination in student treatment	82.9%	80.4%	79.1%	76.0%	77.6%	79.6%	88.2%	77.7%	82.2%	-4.6%	79.9%	Strongly/Agree
Rules are enforced fairly	66.1%	66.0%	64.0%	60.3%	66.3%	62.4%	72.5%	63.6%	66.3%	-2.8%	64.8%	Strongly/Agree
Parents check on students homework	89.6%	85.3%	85.6%	80.6%	82.6%	75.8%	79.2%	80.1%	86.2%	-6.1%	83.1%	Strongly/Agree
Parents consult student when making decisions	72.1%	69.6%	73.3%	69.2%	70.9%	66.0%	71.7%	65.2%	75.7%	-10.5%	70.2%	Strongly/Agree
Parents notice and comment on good work	85.8%	84.3%	84.9%	79.9%	81.4%	79.8%	86.8%	79.6%	86.8%	-7.3%	83.1%	Strongly/Agree
School notifies parents with praise	56.3%	42.5%	43.5%	42.5%	42.4%	36.9%	44.9%	39.6%	48.8%	-9.3%	44.1%	Strongly/Agree
Teachers notice and comment on good work	77.3%	72.6%	75.7%	78.1%	75.8%	76.6%	80.9%	76.8%	76.6%	0.2%	76.6%	Strongly/Agree
Student believes it is ok to cheat	12.3%	17.0%	25.7%	39.2%	32.6%	38.7%	33.3%	27.5%	29.1%	-1.6%	28.4%	Strongly/Agree
Student ignores rules	14.0%	15.1%	17.7%	18.9%	13.5%	17.0%	9.5%	13.8%	17.5%	-3.7%	15.8%	Strongly/Agree
Student is oppositional	13.2%	17.1%	11.5%	16.8%	12.6%	16.0%	9.4%	13.9%	14.2%	-0.4%	14.2%	Strongly/Agree
Days skipped or cut	53.3%	47.7%	46.1%	48.6%	37.4%	43.2%	42.0%	48.8%	43.7%	5.1%	46.2%	1+ days
Age of First Use – Alcohol				12.4		13.6		12.4	12.2	0.3	12.3	Average
Age of First Use – E-Cigarettes				12.8				12.6	12.4	0.3	12.6	Average
Age of First Use – Marijuana								13.7	12.6	1.0	13.8	Average

Missouri Student Survey										Gender	LC	Rating scale
Item	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	Female	Male	Diff.	2024	for data point
Lifetime alcohol use	13.8%	20.2%	19.3%	30.9%	20.2%	30.9%	32.7%	23.7%	23.6%	0.1%	23.7%	Yes
Lifetime alcohol use (times)	10.9%	17.5%	18.5%	30.7%	20.0%	29.2%	30.9%	22.5%	21.9%	0.6%	22.2%	1+ Times
Lifetime chew use	1.8%	1.0%	1.8%	2.2%	2.2%	4.1%	8.9%	1.1%	4.2%	-3.1%	2.7%	Yes
Lifetime cigarette use	4.5%	3.8%	6.4%	9.4%	6.5%	15.0%	14.0%	7.1%	8.9%	-1.8%	8.0%	Yes
Lifetime club drug use	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	-0.3%	0.1%	Yes
Lifetime cocaine use	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.6%	-0.3%	0.6%	Yes
Lifetime electronic cigarette use	8.2%	11.7%	18.2%	23.9%	15.4%	26.5%	26.8%	21.7%	14.6%	7.1%	18.2%	Yes
Lifetime hallucinogen use	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	1.5%	0.0%	3.1%	3.7%	1.2%	1.1%	0.0%	1.2%	Yes
Lifetime heroin use	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	-0.3%	0.1%	Yes
Lifetime hookah use	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	1.4%	2.2%	3.1%	3.7%	1.4%	1.7%	-0.3%	1.6%	Yes
Lifetime inhalant use	0.9%	2.9%	2.8%	1.5%	1.1%	2.1%	0.0%	1.5%	1.7%	-0.3%	1.7%	Yes
Lifetime marijuana use	1.8%	1.9%	6.4%	10.4%	5.6%	19.6%	20.4%	9.5%	7.4%	2.1%	8.6%	Yes
Lifetime methamphetamine use	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	-0.3%	0.1%	Yes
Lifetime OTC drug misuse	3.8%	1.9%	2.8%	4.5%	2.2%	2.1%	1.9%	2.3%	3.2%	-0.8%	2.8%	Yes
Lifetime Rx drug misuse	1.9%	1.9%	4.6%	3.7%	2.2%	2.1%	3.6%	2.6%	3.1%	-0.5%	2.9%	Yes
Lifetime synthetic drug use	2.8%	2.9%	1.9%	1.5%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	1.7%	1.7%	0.0%	1.7%	Yes
Past month alcohol use	0.9%	3.9%	6.4%	13.2%	10.0%	13.5%	10.9%	8.1%	8.6%	-0.5%	8.3%	1+ days
Past month chew use	0.0%	1.0%	0.9%	0.7%	1.1%	2.0%	3.6%	0.6%	1.7%	-1.1%	1.1%	1+ days
Past month cigarette use	1.8%	1.0%	1.8%	3.6%	2.2%	6.1%	3.5%	1.4%	3.9%	-2.5%	2.7%	1+ days
Past month driving under the influence	0.0%	1.0%	0.9%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%	0.6%	0.6%	0.0%	0.6%	1+ days
Past month electronic cigarette use	3.6%	4.9%	5.6%	10.1%	5.5%	14.4%	12.7%	9.2%	6.5%	2.7%	7.9%	1+ days
Past month hookah use	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	0.7%	1.1%	1.0%	1.8%	0.6%	0.8%	-0.3%	0.6%	1+ days
Past month inhalant use	0.0%	1.0%	1.9%	0.7%	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.6%	0.9%	-0.3%	0.7%	1+ days
Past month marijuana use	0.0%	0.0%	2.8%	4.4%	2.2%	10.4%	9.4%	3.8%	4.0%	-0.2%	3.9%	1+ days
Past month OTC drug misuse	1.9%	1.0%	1.9%	2.2%	1.1%	1.0%	0.0%	1.2%	1.7%	-0.6%	1.4%	1+ days
Past month Rx drug misuse	0.9%	1.0%	2.8%	1.5%	1.1%	1.0%	1.9%	1.5%	1.1%	0.3%	1.4%	1+ days
Past month riding with a driver under the influence	18.3%	19.4%	18.3%	16.2%	9.0%	8.3%	5.5%	16.5%	12.5%	3.9%	14.6%	1+ days
Past month synthetic drugs	1.9%	2.0%	0.9%	0.7%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	1.2%	1.1%	0.0%	1.2%	1+ days
Past two weeks binge drinking	0.0%	1.9%	1.8%	3.7%	3.4%	5.2%	3.8%	2.3%	3.1%	-0.8%	2.7%	1+ times
Ease of availability - alcohol	25.7%	31.1%	42.7%	51.1%	46.2%	47.1%	59.0%	43.5%	41.7%	1.8%	42.6%	Very/sort of easy
Ease of availability - cigarettes	15.6%	22.3%	29.4%	35.3%	30.8%	37.3%	44.3%	28.7%	31.0%	-2.3%	30.1%	Very/sort of easy
Ease of availability - electronic cigarettes	22.0%	32.0%	36.7%	48.2%	45.1%	55.9%	59.0%	41.5%	41.7%	-0.2%	41.6%	Very/sort of easy
Ease of availability - marijuana	7.3%	13.6%	18.3%	29.5%	30.8%	42.2%	48.4%	25.1%	26.0%	-0.9%	25.7%	Very/sort of easy
Ease of availability - other illicit drugs	2.8%	2.9%	3.7%	7.2%	7.6%	12.9%	12.9%	4.9%	8.9%	-4.0%	6.9%	Very/sort of easy
Ease of availability – OTC drugs	28.3%	39.8%	44.4%	56.5%	47.8%	51.0%	58.3%	51.3%	41.4%	9.9%	46.3%	Very/sort of easy
Ease of availability – Rx drugs	14.2%	19.2%	21.3%	21.7%	17.4%	17.8%	21.0%	20.1%	17.8%	2.3%	19.0%	Very/sort of easy
Ease of availability - synthetic drugs	18.1%	21.4%	19.6%	26.1%	20.7%	22.5%	23.0%	23.8%	19.8%	3.9%	21.8%	Very/sort of easy
Method of Alcohol Access: Family gives/sells to me				47.6%		40.0%		46.3%	37.3%	9.0%	41.8%	Lifetime users only
Method of Alcohol Access: A friend gives/sells to me				33.3%		50.0%		39.0%	21.7%	17.3%	30.3%	Lifetime users only
Method of Alcohol Access: Buy it online				2.3%		0.0%		1.2%	1.2%	0.0%	1.2%	Lifetime users only
Method of Alcohol Access: I ask a stranger to buy it				2.4%		3.3%		1.2%	2.4%	-1.2%	2.4%	Lifetime users only
Method of Alcohol Access: I buy from store, bar, etc.				0.0%		10.0%		2.4%	7.1%	-4.7%	4.2%	Lifetime users only
Method of Alcohol Access: I take it w/o permission				34.9%		16.7%		28.4%	16.9%	11.5%	22.9%	Lifetime users only
Method of Alcohol Access: Other				11.9%		16.7%		14.8%	25.3%	-10.5%	20.5%	Lifetime users only
Peer alcohol use	23.7%	29.9%	36.8%	46.2%	36.7%	42.7%	47.8%	42.4%	32.1%	10.3%	37.4%	1+ friends
Peer smoking cigarettes	8.5%	10.3%	11.4%	19.4%	17.2%	25.2%	31.9%	17.0%	16.7%	0.3%	16.9%	1+ friends

Missouri Student Survey										Gender	LC	Rating scale
Item	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	Female	Male	Diff.	2024	for data point
Peer smoking marijuana	16.9%	27.1%	33.3%	51.7%	36.4%	43.6%	50.7%	40.4%	33.1%	7.4%	36.8%	1+ friends
Peer other illicit drug use	6.8%	11.3%	16.8%	28.5%	24.5%	38.2%	37.7%	24.2%	20.7%	3.5%	22.6%	1+ friends
School alcohol use	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.6%	-0.3%	0.4%	1+ days
School marijuana use	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	0.7%	0.0%	2.1%	1.9%	0.9%	0.9%	0.0%	0.7%	1+ days
Perception of enforcement - alcohol	53.5%	41.5%	30.7%	24.1%	23.7%	19.3%	27.3%	29.9%	33.6%	-3.7%	31.7%	Yes or Yes!
Perception of enforcement - cigarettes	53.0%	42.5%	33.3%	27.6%	25.5%	19.3%	23.9%	30.9%	34.4%	-3.5%	32.6%	Yes or Yes!
Perception of enforcement - guns	75.4%	71.7%	63.2%	55.2%	49.5%	49.5%	53.0%	61.4%	58.7%	2.7%	60.1%	Yes or Yes!
Perception of enforcement - marijuana	64.9%	56.6%	46.5%	32.4%	35.1%	25.7%	31.8%	41.7%	42.7%	-1.0%	42.1%	Yes or Yes!
Perception of friends feelings on student alcohol use	84.6%	88.8%	87.6%	79.5%	74.5%	77.3%	76.8%	84.2%	78.9%	5.4%	81.7%	wrong/very
Perception of friends feelings on student cigarette use	90.4%	91.5%	90.3%	84.8%	81.6%	78.9%	77.9%	87.4%	84.0%	3.4%	85.7%	wrong/very
Perception of friends feelings on student e-cig use	87.0%	85.0%	85.0%	75.9%	71.7%	64.2%	67.6%	76.7%	78.3%	-1.6%	77.4%	wrong/very
Perception of friends feelings on student marijuana smoking	91.3%	90.7%	86.7%	78.5%	76.3%	65.1%	61.8%	81.0%	78.2%	2.7%	79.6%	wrong/very
Perception of friends feelings on student marijuana use	87.0%	85.0%	85.0%	75.9%	71.7%	64.2%	67.6%	76.7%	78.3%	-1.6%	77.4%	wrong/very
Perception of friends feelings on student Rx drug misuse	92.2%	89.7%	92.0%	91.0%	91.8%	90.8%	91.2%	92.7%	89.7%	3.0%	91.1%	wrong/very
Student perception of peers having one or two alcoholic drinks nearly every day	20.2%	22.3%	28.3%	36.6%	41.1%	41.4%	36.8%	31.3%	32.5%	-1.2%	31.9%	
Perception of parental feelings on student marijuana use	99.0%	98.0%	96.2%	93.9%	91.6%	85.9%	84.6%	93.6%	93.4%	0.2%	93.5%	wrong/very
Perception of parental feelings on student marijuana smoking	99.0%	98.0%	97.1%	95.4%	94.0%	87.1%	84.3%	95.1%	94.0%	1.2%	94.6%	wrong/very
Perception of parental feelings on student alcohol use	97.0%	95.0%	97.1%	93.9%	94.0%	89.2%	88.2%	93.6%	94.6%	-1.0%	94.1%	wrong/very
Perception of parental feelings on student alcohol use (1-2 drinks nearly every day)	91.9%	89.1%	88.3%	80.3%	79.5%	76.3%	72.5%	82.6%	83.8%	-1.2%	83.3%	wrong/very
Perception of parental feelings on student cigarette use	98.0%	96.0%	98.1%	94.7%	94.0%	92.5%	90.4%	94.8%	95.5%	-0.7%	95.2%	wrong/very
Perception of parental feelings on student OTC drug misuse	97.0%	96.0%	96.1%	94.6%	94.0%	92.5%	90.4%	95.4%	94.3%	1.1%	94.7%	wrong/very
Perception of parental feelings on student Rx drug misuse	99.0%	98.0%	97.1%	95.4%	94.0%	87.1%	84.3%	95.1%	94.0%	1.2%	94.6%	wrong/very
Perception of parental feelings on student vaping	97.0%	95.0%	97.1%	93.9%	94.0%	89.2%	88.2%	93.6%	94.6%	-1.0%	94.1%	wrong/very
Perception of harm - alcohol (1 -2 drinks almost daily)	72.4%	72.1%	75.9%	77.0%	77.2%	74.0%	76.3%	77.0%	73.0%	4.0%	75.0%	moderate/great risk
Perception of harm - alcohol (5+ drinks 1-2x a week)	86.8%	83.7%	85.2%	85.6%	82.6%	80.0%	81.4%	86.0%	81.3%	4.7%	83.9%	moderate/great risk
Perception of harm - alcohol (no dosage)	67.6%	64.4%	63.9%	60.6%	64.5%	58.0%	61.0%	63.7%	61.8%	1.9%	62.8%	moderate/great risk
Perception of harm - cigarettes (1+ pack per day)	88.8%	86.5%	88.0%	85.6%	84.8%	81.8%	84.5%	87.1%	84.1%	3.0%	85.7%	moderate/great risk
Perception of harm - electronic cigarettes	79.2%	76.9%	77.8%	73.9%	76.9%	69.7%	69.5%	74.9%	75.1%	-0.2%	75.0%	moderate/great risk
Perception of harm - marijuana	87.7%	82.7%	76.9%	71.7%	71.4%	53.0%	54.2%	75.2%	69.8%	5.4%	72.4%	moderate/great risk
Perception of harm - other illicit drugs	90.4%	91.3%	94.5%	94.2%	91.4%	89.0%	89.8%	92.5%	91.0%	1.5%	91.8%	moderate/great risk
Perception of harm - OTC drugs to get high	76.9%	78.6%	78.0%	79.7%	85.9%	80.0%	86.2%	80.5%	80.1%	0.4%	80.3%	moderate/great risk
Perception of harm – Rx drug misuse	87.5%	89.3%	89.0%	91.3%	89.1%	87.9%	91.4%	89.6%	88.5%	1.1%	89.2%	moderate/great risk
Perception of harm - synthetic drugs	79.0%	80.6%	85.3%	87.0%	84.8%	85.9%	87.9%	85.0%	83.4%	1.6%	84.2%	moderate/great risk
Perception of wrongness - alcohol	91.7%	84.5%	82.2%	70.4%	72.8%	67.7%	69.6%	78.3%	77.0%	1.3%	77.5%	wrong/very
Perception of wrongness - alcohol (1-2 drinks almost daily)	95.4%	93.1%	93.6%	90.4%	89.0%	87.6%	91.2%	92.8%	90.7%	2.1%	91.6%	wrong/very
Perception of wrongness - alcohol (5+ drinks 1-2x/week)	97.2%	95.1%	96.3%	90.4%	89.0%	87.6%	91.2%	93.3%	92.3%	1.0%	92.7%	wrong/very
Perception of wrongness - cigarettes	97.2%	95.1%	94.4%	88.9%	92.3%	86.6%	87.7%	92.5%	92.0%	0.4%	92.1%	wrong/very
Perception of wrongness - electronic cigarettes	94.4%	91.3%	89.0%	83.1%	87.0%	77.3%	80.4%	85.8%	87.6%	-1.7%	86.6%	wrong/very
Perception of wrongness - marijuana	96.3%	96.2%	91.7%	84.6%	85.9%	75.0%	71.9%	89.0%	85.6%	3.4%	87.3%	wrong/very
Perception of wrongness - marijuana (once or twice a week)	97.2%	97.1%	93.5%	87.5%	88.0%	79.2%	76.8%	90.7%	88.4%	2.4%	89.4%	wrong/very
Perception of wrongness - marijuana (smoke)	97.2%	96.1%	91.7%	85.2%	86.7%	75.3%	73.2%	89.2%	85.8%	3.4%	87.5%	wrong/very
Perception of wrongness - OTC drug misuse	93.5%	95.1%	93.5%	90.5%	94.5%	94.8%	94.6%	94.5%	92.4%	2.1%	93.4%	wrong/very
Perception of wrongness - Rx drug misuse	97.2%	96.1%	96.3%	94.9%	94.4%	95.8%	96.4%	95.9%	95.7%	0.2%	95.8%	wrong/very

About the Author

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Cynthia Berry is a distinguished psychologist specializing in Industrial/Organizational, Personality, and Experimental Psychology. In January 2006, she founded Berry Organizational and Leadership Development (BOLD), LLC, showcasing her expertise in Human Resources, Organizational and Fund Development, Program Evaluation, and Research. With a career spanning over 25 years, Dr. Berry has demonstrated exceptional proficiency in large-scale community health needs assessments, psychometrics, and employee/management training.

Dr. Berry's extensive skill set in program evaluation and assessment development, coupled with her deep understanding of organizational behavior, human resources, applied health, mental health, and youth/individual development, has led to remarkable successes in securing grants and fundraising for various not-for-profit organizations across St. Charles, Lincoln, Montgomery, St. Louis, and Warren Counties in Missouri. She has personally raised over \$10 million for numerous programs she has helped develop and implement. Furthermore, Dr. Berry has empowered multiple not-for-profits through the creation of measurement tools, outcome tracking processes, decision-making procedures, and client service delivery management systems, as well as the successful execution of various quality improvement projects. Her leadership in spearheading a capital campaign and achieving COA accreditation has further underscored her commitment to organizational excellence.

Over the past decade, BOLD has emerged as the preeminent expert in Eastern Missouri (including Franklin, Lincoln, Lincoln, St. Charles, and St. Louis Counties) for conducting needs assessments focused on behavioral health and substance use. Dr. Berry has collaborated with children's and adult's services funding boards on numerous projects and made significant contributions to the Seniors Count initiative, aimed at promoting independent living for seniors and addressing their specific needs. From 2012 to 2019, she served as an adjunct faculty member at the esteemed Brown School of Washington University, instructing master's degree students in the Evaluation of Programs and Services.

Dr. Cynthia Berry's experience and diverse accomplishments have firmly established her as a respected authority in psychology and organizational development, particularly in conducting needs assessments that inform community services and enhance program effectiveness.

