



# **2004 Sidebar Report**

***Great Lakes Center for Youth Development***

***June 2005***

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# Introduction

In October 2004, the Great Lakes Center for Youth Development (GLCYD) fielded a companion survey to the 2004 Assets Survey conducted by the Search Institute and available at <http://www.soyreport.org/2004reportdiscussion.php>. The 2004 companion survey followed a similar effort in 2002 that focused on youth employment status, career pathways, youth migration, and exposure to secondhand smoke (<http://www.soyreport.org/SidebarSurvey2002.php>). The 2004 effort collected data from 2,172 Marquette and Alger County youth on three topics:

- Post High School Plans
- Substance Related Risk Behaviors
- Weight and Exercise

The sample characteristics are detailed in Table 1. The data throughout this report are generally presented by grade level because they reveal developmental differences among adolescents at different stages of maturity. Where they are present, gender differences are also identified.

**Table 1. Sample Characteristics for 2004 Sidebar Survey**

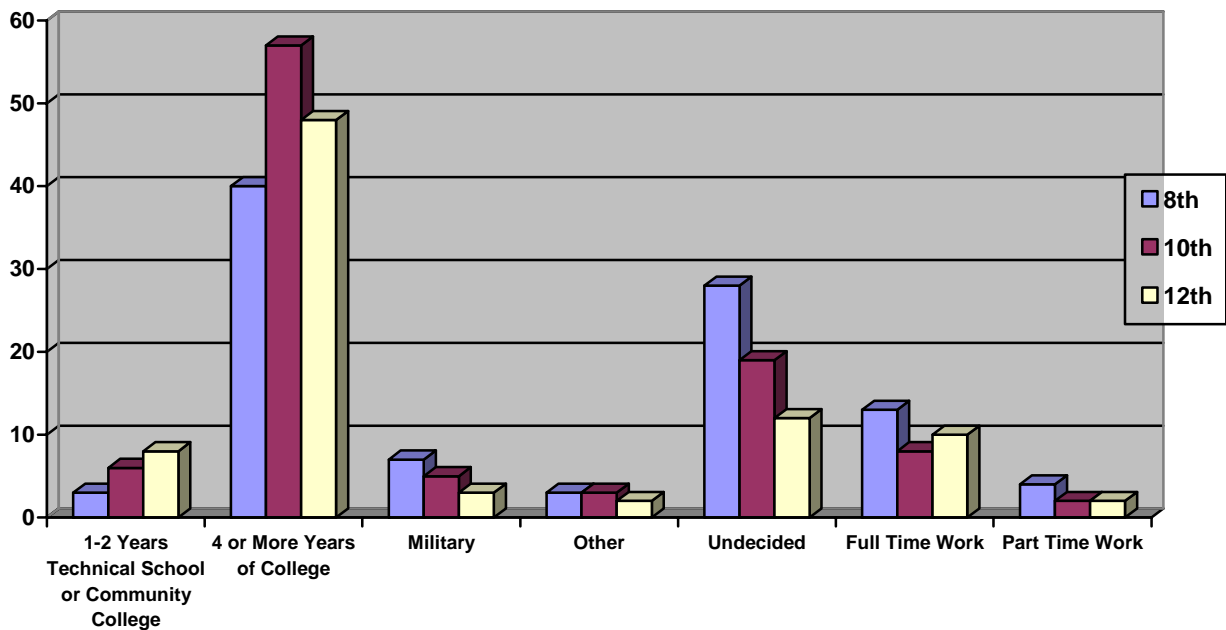
		Number of Youth	Percent
<b>Total Sample</b>		<b>2172</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Gender</b>			
	<b>Male</b>	<b>1039</b>	<b>48</b>
	<b>Female</b>	<b>1099</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Grade</b>			
	<b>8th</b>	<b>665</b>	<b>31</b>
	<b>10th</b>	<b>790</b>	<b>37</b>
	<b>12th</b>	<b>685</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
	<b>White</b>	<b>1927</b>	<b>89</b>
	<b>Black</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>1</b>
	<b>American Indian</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>3</b>
	<b>Asian</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>2</b>
	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>1</b>

# Post High School Plans

The emphasis on post high school plans in this survey – as in the 2002 survey – is intended to address a critical concern of community leaders in the Upper Peninsula. That is, too many young people leave the region and fail to return. Understanding what youth like about the area, their probable professional choices, the age at which they begin to consider critical choices, and their immediate destinations can help planners better address the needs of area youth post high school. Specifically, this information can help to inform programs and policies designed to teach youth about the choices available in the region and encourage them to stay in the area or return after meeting their educational goals.

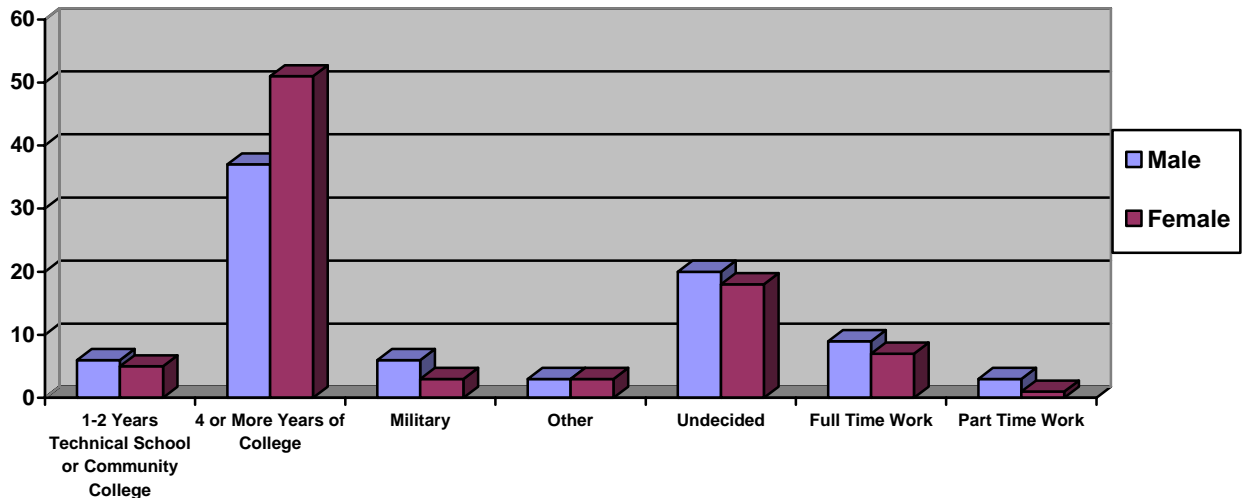
The differences revealed in Figure 1 between 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> graders are probably due to differences in their stage of development. For example, 8th grade students are more likely to be undecided about their future plans and to indicate that they will work full- or part-time. Interestingly, 10<sup>th</sup> grade students (57%) are more likely than 12<sup>th</sup> grade students (48%) to plan to attend four or more years of college. While this difference may suggest the impact of grades, finances, or other realities as students approach graduation, it may also present an opportunity for the external environment (family, schools, programs) to intervene and provide assistance and encouragement in maintaining post-high school college plans among high school students.

**Figure 1. Percentage of Students Indicating Various Post-High School Plans by Grade Level**



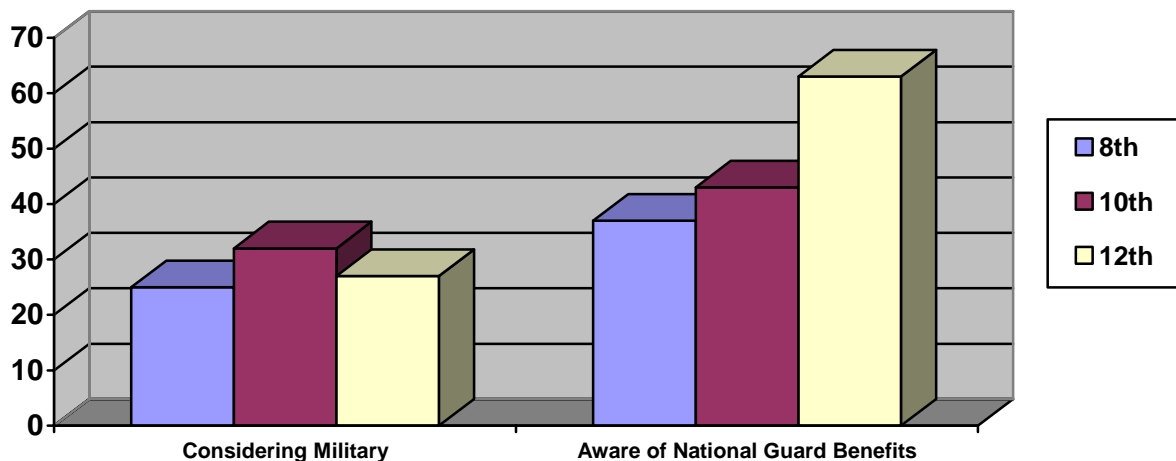
Not surprisingly in light of national trends, Figure 2 reveals that female students (51%) are more likely than male students (37%) to have post-high school college plans. They are also half as likely (3% versus 6%) as their male counterparts to have plans to enter the military.

**Figure 2. Percentage of Students Indicating Various Post-High School Plans by Gender**



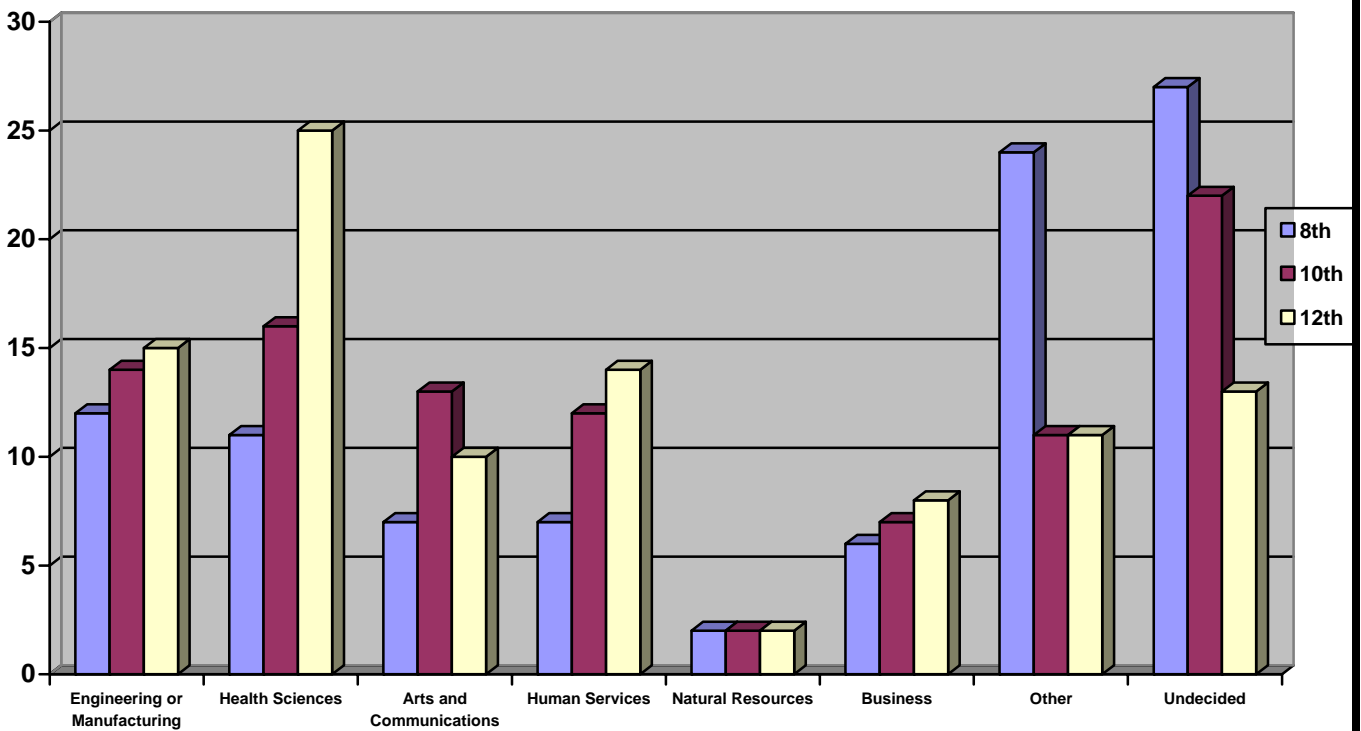
The results reported in Figure 3 show small differences by grade level in those students considering the military as a post-high school option, but increasing knowledge of National Guard benefits. In related but unreported findings, half as many female (19%) as male (38%) students have “considered military service as an option after high school,” but there is virtually no gender difference in the awareness of National Guard benefits.

**Figure 3. Percentage of Students Considering the Military and/or Aware of National Guard Benefits by Grade Level**

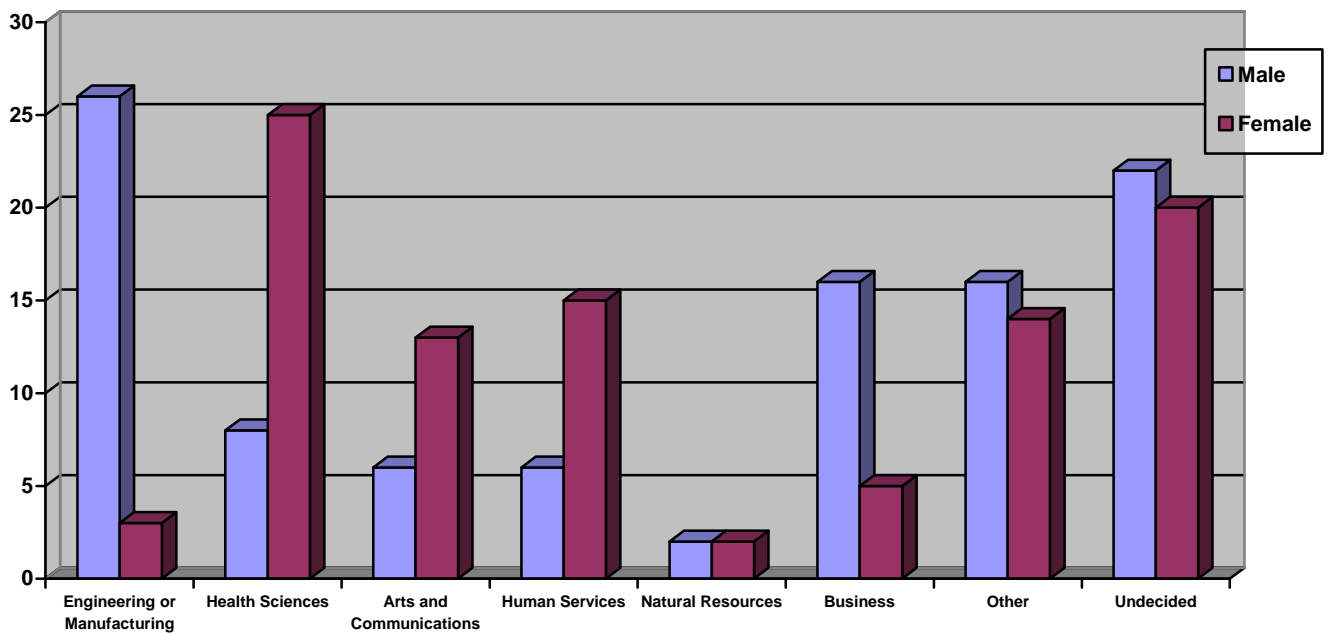


As expected, Figure 4 shows that 8<sup>th</sup> grade students typically do not have well-formed career choices when compared to 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. Figure 5, however, reveals significant gender differences that mirror long-term national trends. Male students (26%) are more than eight times more likely than female students (3%) to plan a career in engineering, manufacturing and industrial technology. Conversely, female students are more likely than males to plan on careers in health sciences (25% versus 8%), arts and communications (13% versus 6%), and human services (15% versus 6%). Male students are also three times more likely (16% versus 5%) to plan on a career in business, management, marketing, and technology.

**Figure 4. Percentage of Students Choosing Various Career Pathways by Grade Level**



**Figure 5. Percentage of Students Choosing Various Career Pathways by Gender**



The data reported in Figure 6 shows no remarkable differences by grade level in where students would like to live and work as an adult. Overall, 33% would like to leave the state while 20% would like to stay in their home county or in the Upper Peninsula.

**Figure 6. Percentage of Students Indicating Where They would Like to Live and Work as an Adult by Grade Level**

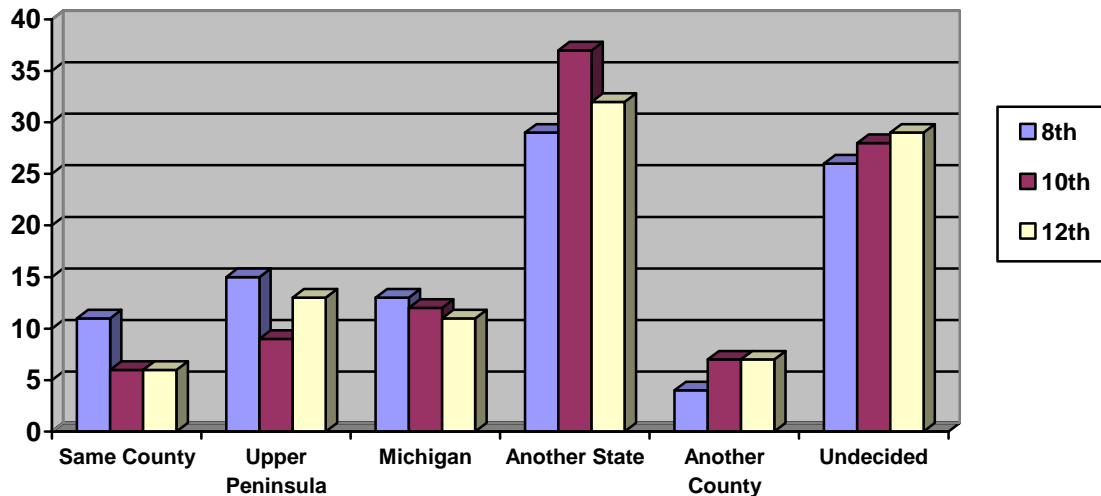
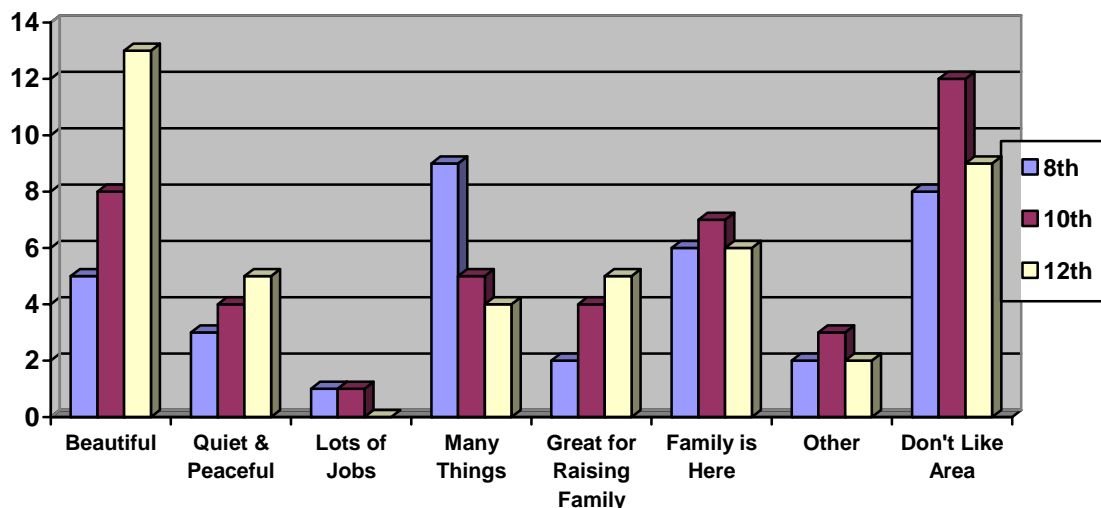


Figure 7 shows that as students get older they are more likely to identify specific aspects of the area that they like best. For example, 8<sup>th</sup> grade students are more likely to indicate that there are “many things I like to do here” (9% versus 5% and 4%, respectively), while 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders are more likely to state that the area is “beautiful” or “quiet and peaceful.” The only appreciable difference by gender (unreported findings) is that male students are more than three times more likely than female students (10% versus 3%) to indicate that there are “many things I like to do here.”

**Figure 7. Percentage of Students Indicating What They Like About Area by Grade Level**



# Substance-Related Risk Behaviors

The 2004 companion survey asked a number of questions regarding substance-related risk behaviors and the findings are reported in Figures 8 – 14. As in the previous section, results are reported by grade and gender differences are noted where they exist. While the Youth Asset Survey measures substance use, the community had little information about where youth acquired substances and from whom. With assistance from Marquette County Health Department and Project WEAVE, survey questions were developed to help gain information about how and from whom youth access substances.

Figure 8, for example, indicates the percentage of students, by grade level, who believe that it is wrong or very wrong for “someone your age” to engage in drinking beer, wine or hard liquor, smoke cigarettes, smoke marijuana, or use LSD, cocaine, amphetamines or another illegal drug. As expected, the percentages are higher for younger students and generally increase for illegal substances. Interestingly, the cigarette and marijuana results are very similar, probably reflecting successful anti-smoking campaigns in the school systems. There are no appreciable gender differences.

**Figure 8. Percentage of Students Indicating that the Following Behaviors are “Wrong” or “Very Wrong” for Someone Their Age to Engage In by Grade Level**

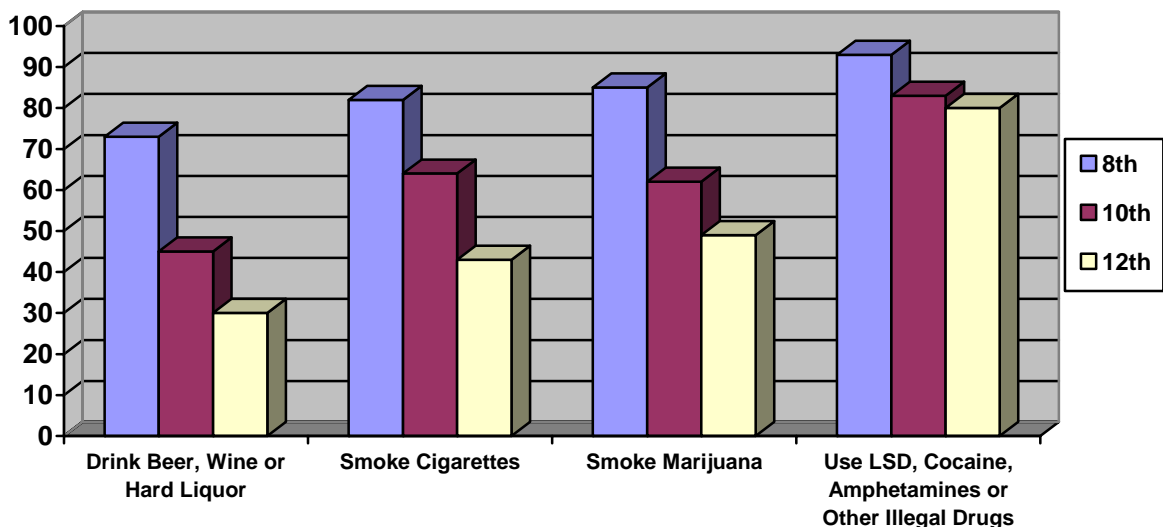
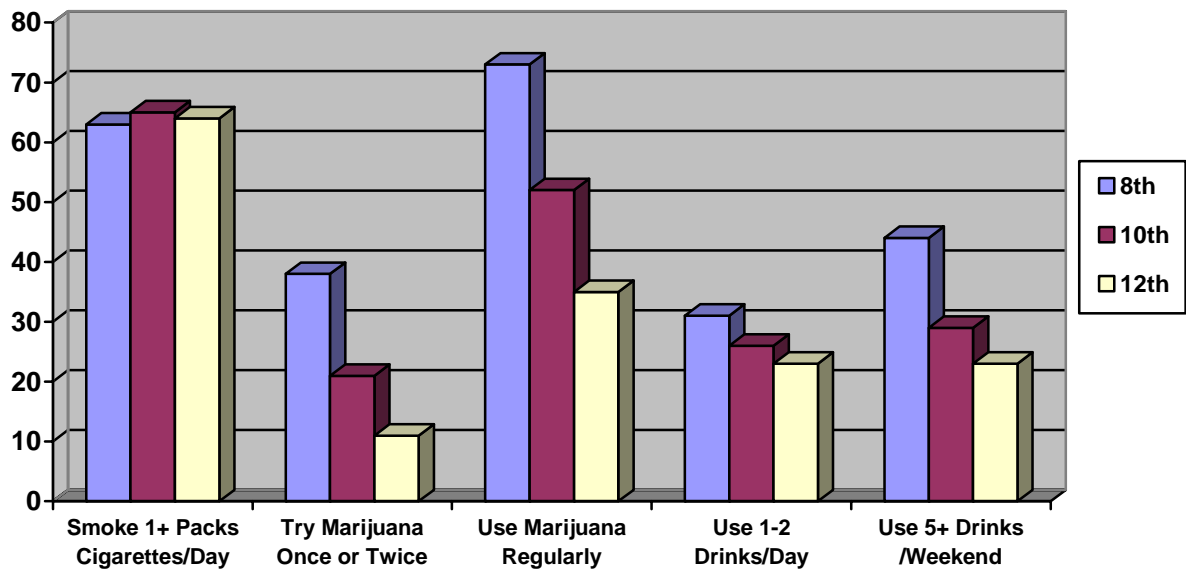


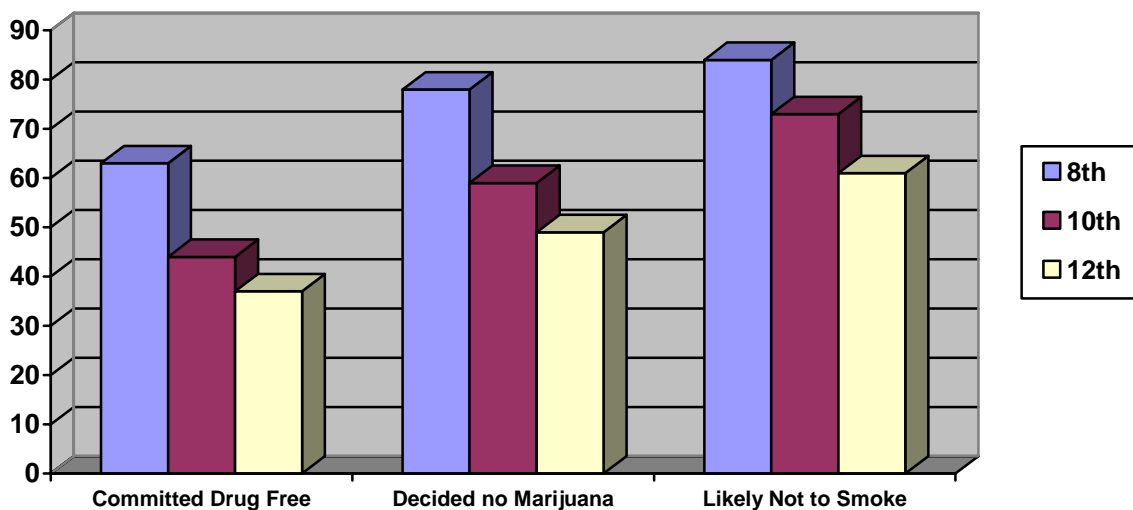
Figure 9 shows a similar pattern among students for behaviors thought to pose a great risk. Overall, risk reporting declines as grade increases, and smoking cigarettes and regular marijuana use are thought by more students at all grade levels to pose a greater risk than alcohol use or trying marijuana. In findings not reported in Figure 9, female students are more likely than male students to report that regular marijuana use (58% versus 48%) and one or two drinks nearly every day (31% versus 23%) pose a great risk.

**Figure 9. Percentage of Students Indicating that the Following Behaviors Pose a “Great Risk” of Harm by Grade Level**



The same basic pattern of results persists when looking at students' decision to have a drug-free life and not smoke marijuana or cigarettes. Eighth grade students are more likely to have made such decisions (at least for the time being) than 10<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. Moreover, a greater percentage of students in all grades are committed to not smoking cigarettes than marijuana.

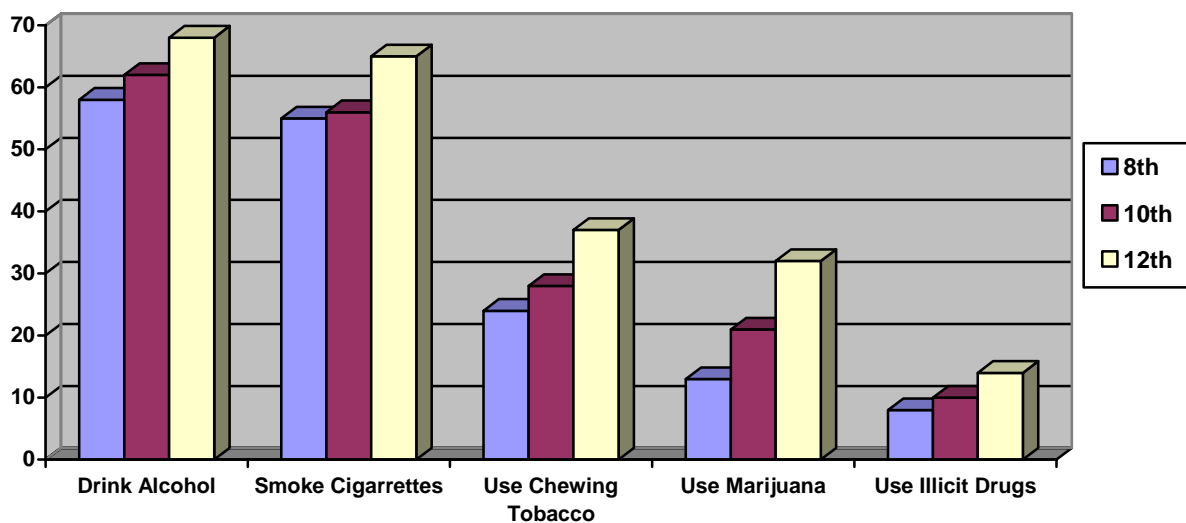
**Figure 10. Percentage of Students Indicating that They are Committed to a Drug-Free Life, Decided to Stay Away from Marijuana, and are Likely Not to Smoke Cigarettes in the Next Year by Grade Level**



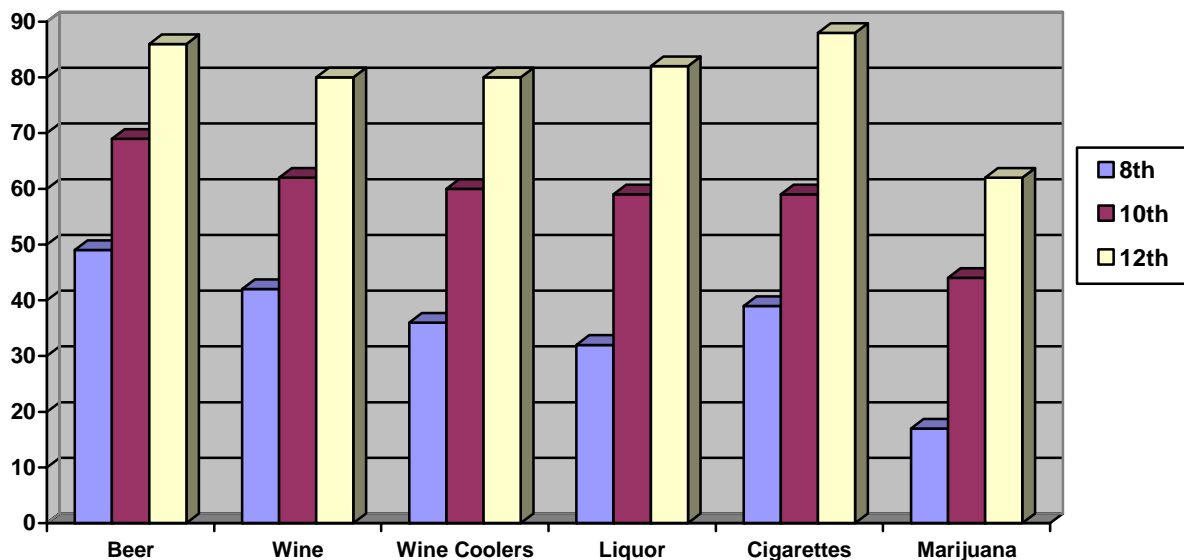
A different pattern is apparent when students are asked about exposure to adults who engage in various substance-related risk behaviors (see Figure 11). Not surprisingly, the older the student, the more likely they are to have adults in their life who drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes, use chewing tobacco, smoke marijuana, or use illicit drugs. There are no significant gender differences except that male students (34% versus 25%) are more likely than female students to be around adults who chew tobacco.

Similarly, Figure 12 reveals that the percentage of students who believe that various substances (i.e., beer, wine, wine coolers, liquor, cigarettes, marijuana) are easy or very easy to obtain increases substantially by grade level. Again, there are no significant gender differences.

**Figure 11. Percentage of Students Exposed to Adults who Engage in the Following Risk Behaviors at Least One Day Per Week by Grade Level**

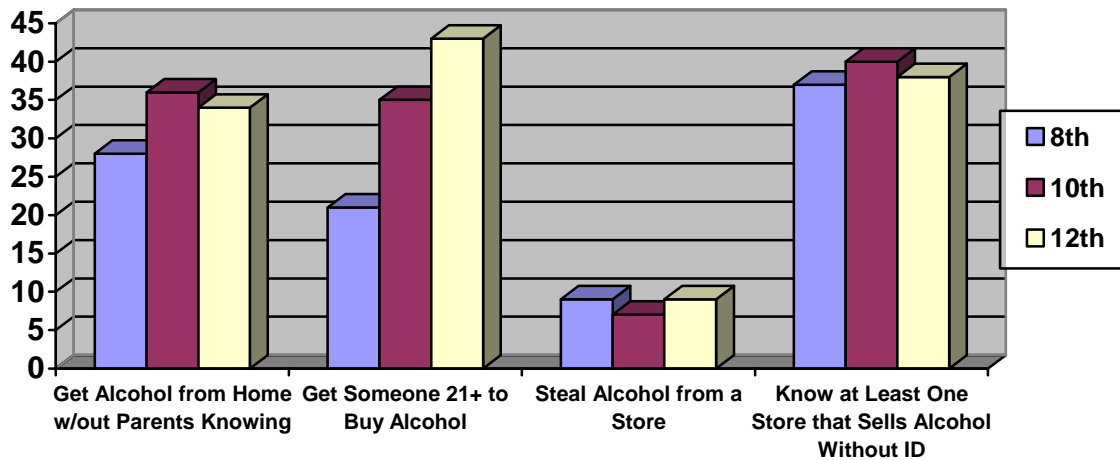


**Figure 12. Percentage of Students Indicating that the Following Substances would be “Easy” or “Very Easy” to Obtain by Grade Level**



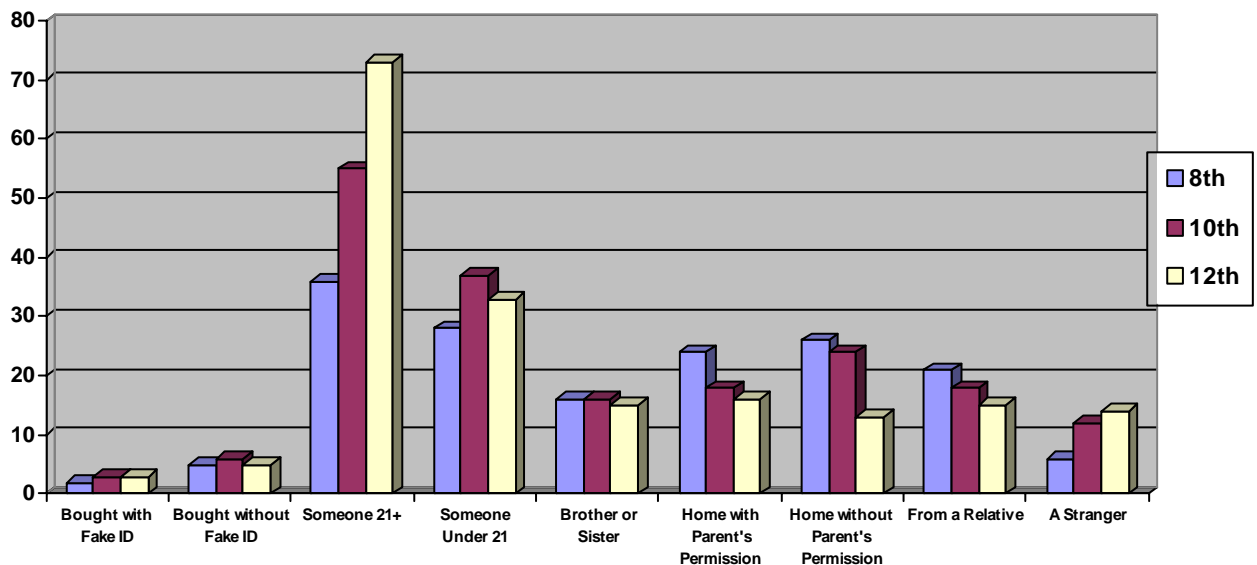
As indicated in Figure 13, roughly one-third of students report that it would be easy or very easy to obtain alcohol without parents knowing. There are grade differences (the higher the grade the greater the likelihood that it is easy or very easy) in getting someone over 21+ to buy alcohol. Only 8% of students indicate it would be easy or very easy to steal alcohol from a store. Conversely, 39% of students know of at least one store that sells alcohol to without an ID or proof of age.

**Figure 13. Percentage of Students Indicating that the Following would be “Easy” or “Very Easy” to Do by Grade Level**



Finally, Figure 14 reveals important grade level differences. These results show that 8<sup>th</sup> grade students are more likely to obtain alcohol from home, a parent or a relative than older students. Conversely, older students are more likely to obtain alcohol from someone 21 or older or from a stranger. Unreported data show that male students are slightly more likely than female students to buy alcohol themselves (with or without a fake ID) and female students are slightly more likely to get alcohol from someone else regardless of age.

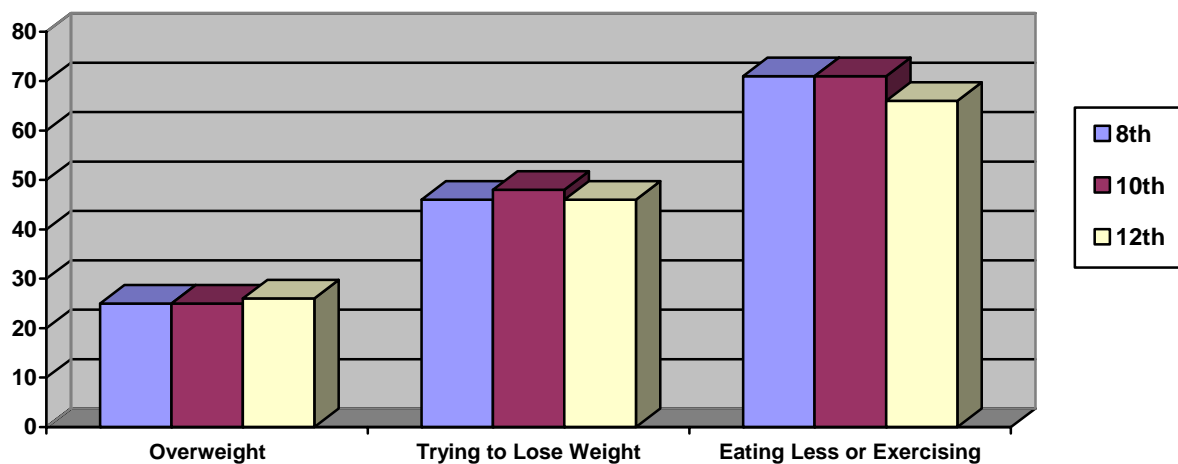
**Figure 14. Percentage of Students who Drink, Percentage Indicating the Following Sources for Obtaining Alcohol by Grade Level**



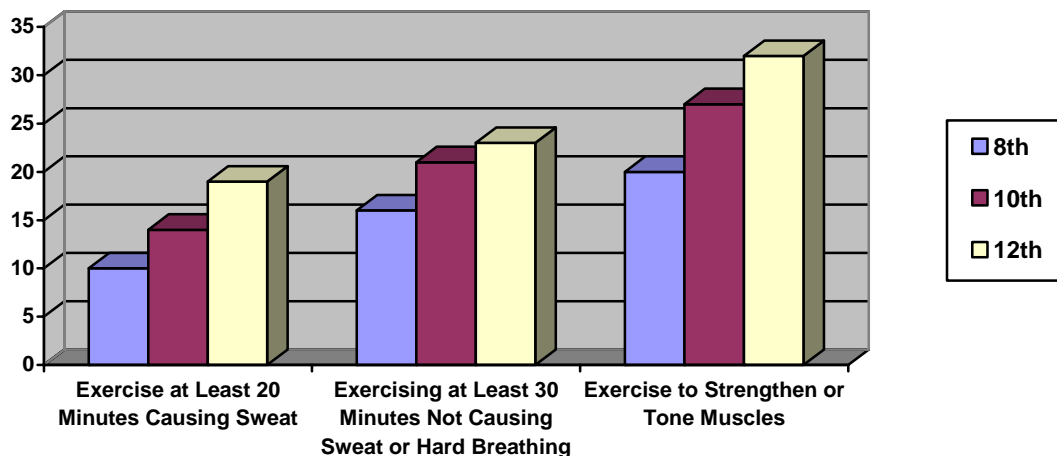
# Weight and Exercise

Attention to weight/obesity and exercise among adolescents has been a focus of national attention in recent years. The 2004-companion survey asked three questions regarding weight and two regarding exercise that are summarized in Figures 15, 16, 17, and 18. Overall, Figure 15 shows no grade level differences in the percentage of students who think that they are overweight, are trying to lose weight, or are eating less or exercising. Conversely, Figure 16 shows clear grade level differences in exercise such that at higher-grade levels, students are less likely to participate in exercise. The percentage of students indicating nonparticipation increase in all grades as the amount of exercise increases. For example, 19% of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students did not exercise for at least 20 minutes causing a sweat within the last seven days, compared to 14% and 10% of 10<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, respectively. Similarly, 32% of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students did no exercises to strengthen or tone muscles within the last seven days compared to 27% and 20% of 10<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, respectively.

**Figure 15. Percentage of Students Indicating that They are Slightly/Very Overweight, Trying to Lose Weight, and/or Ate Less or Exercised to Lose Weight in Last 30 Days by Grade Level**

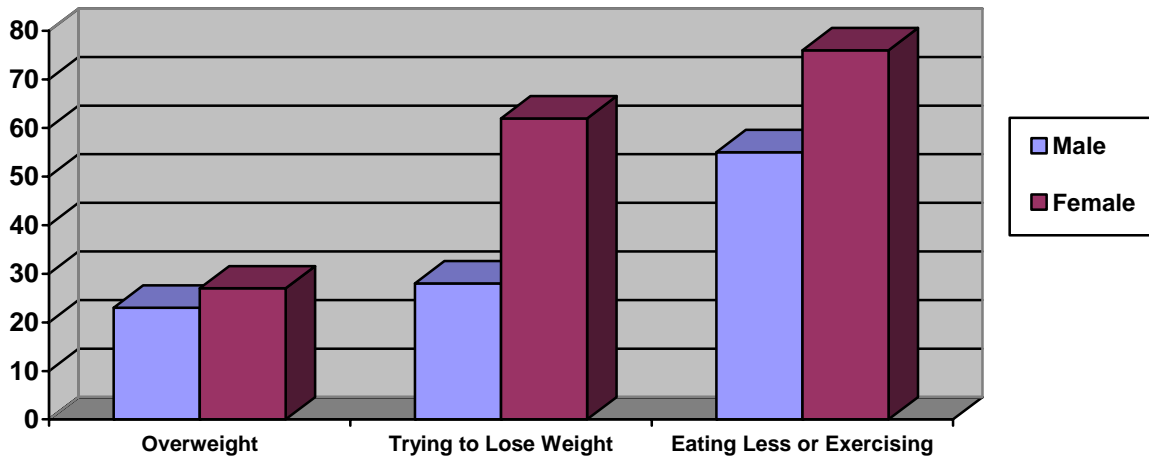


**Figure 16. Percentage of Students Not Participating in Three Levels of Exercise by Grade Level**

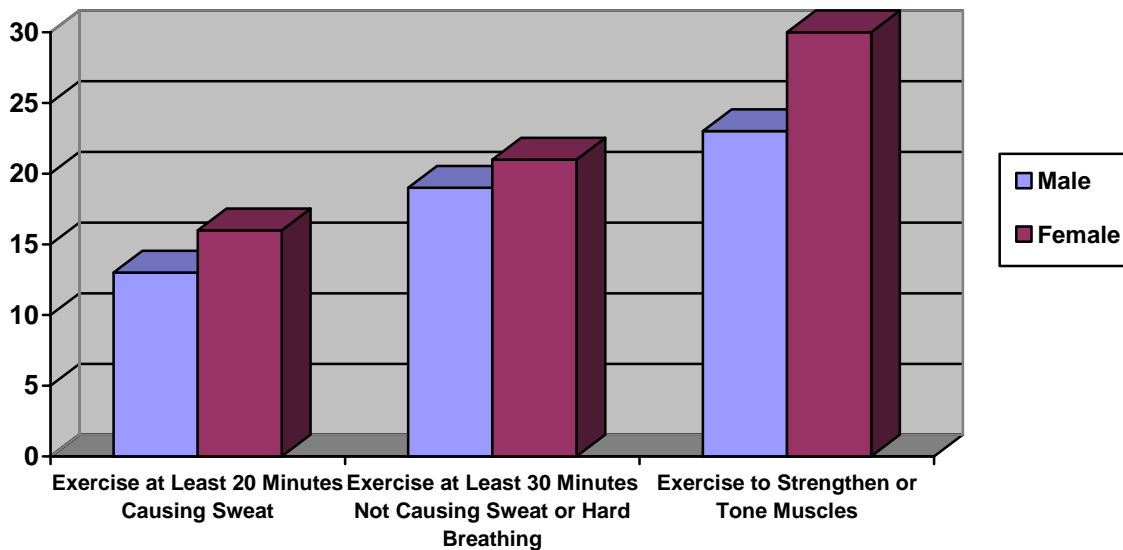


As expected, there are substantial differences in the weight loss and exercise data by gender as indicated in Figures 17 and 18. Female students are more likely than male students to think that they are overweight (27% versus 23%); to be trying to lose weight (62% versus 28%); and to be eating less or exercising to lose weight (76% versus 55%) (see Figure 17). Female students are also more likely to participate in physical activity at all levels, but, as reported previously, the percentage of both males and females participating in exercise decreases as the level of activity increases.

**Figure 17. Percentage of Students Indicating that they are Slightly/Very Overweight, Trying to Lose Weight, and/or Ate Less or Exercised to Lose Weight in Last 30 Days by Grade Level**



**Figure 18. Percentage of Students Not Participating in Three Levels of Exercise by Grade Level**



# Summary

The 2004 companion survey of 2,172 Marquette and Alger County youth conducted by the Great Lakes Center for Youth Development provides important data regarding differences among youth in post-high school plans, substance related risk behaviors, and weight and exercise. In general, consistent grade level differences are noted that, in many respects, parallel developmental differences in adolescents as they mature from 8<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades. Moreover, while there were few gender differences noted, those that do exist are worthy of further discussion, especially in the areas of weight and exercises.

With respect to substance-related risk behaviors, it may be particularly important to note observed differences in access to alcohol by grade level. Younger students who drink are more likely than older students to obtain alcohol at home or through relatives. Conversely, older students are more likely than younger students to obtain alcohol from someone 21 or older... probably friends. It is also interesting to note that smoking cigarettes is viewed as risky, probably reflecting the success of public health programs and information in this area while marijuana is not viewed in the same way.

Overall, these findings suggest that there are several possible avenues through which intervention and education may positively impact youth in our area. More information about exemplar programs can be found in the 2005-2006 State of the Youth Report at <http://www.soyreport.org/2004reportdiscussion.php>.