



2022 Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey

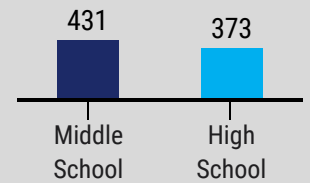
Highlands County Report

Survey Background

This report presents key findings from the 2022 Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey (FYSAS) for Highlands County. Full FYSAS data tables for each county are available at the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) website. Detailed information on the survey's methodology is included in the FYSAS Statewide Report, which is also available at the DCF website.

The final Highlands County FYSAS sample included 431 middle school students and 373 high school students, yielding a maximum margin of error of +/- 4.6 percentage points for the overall sample.

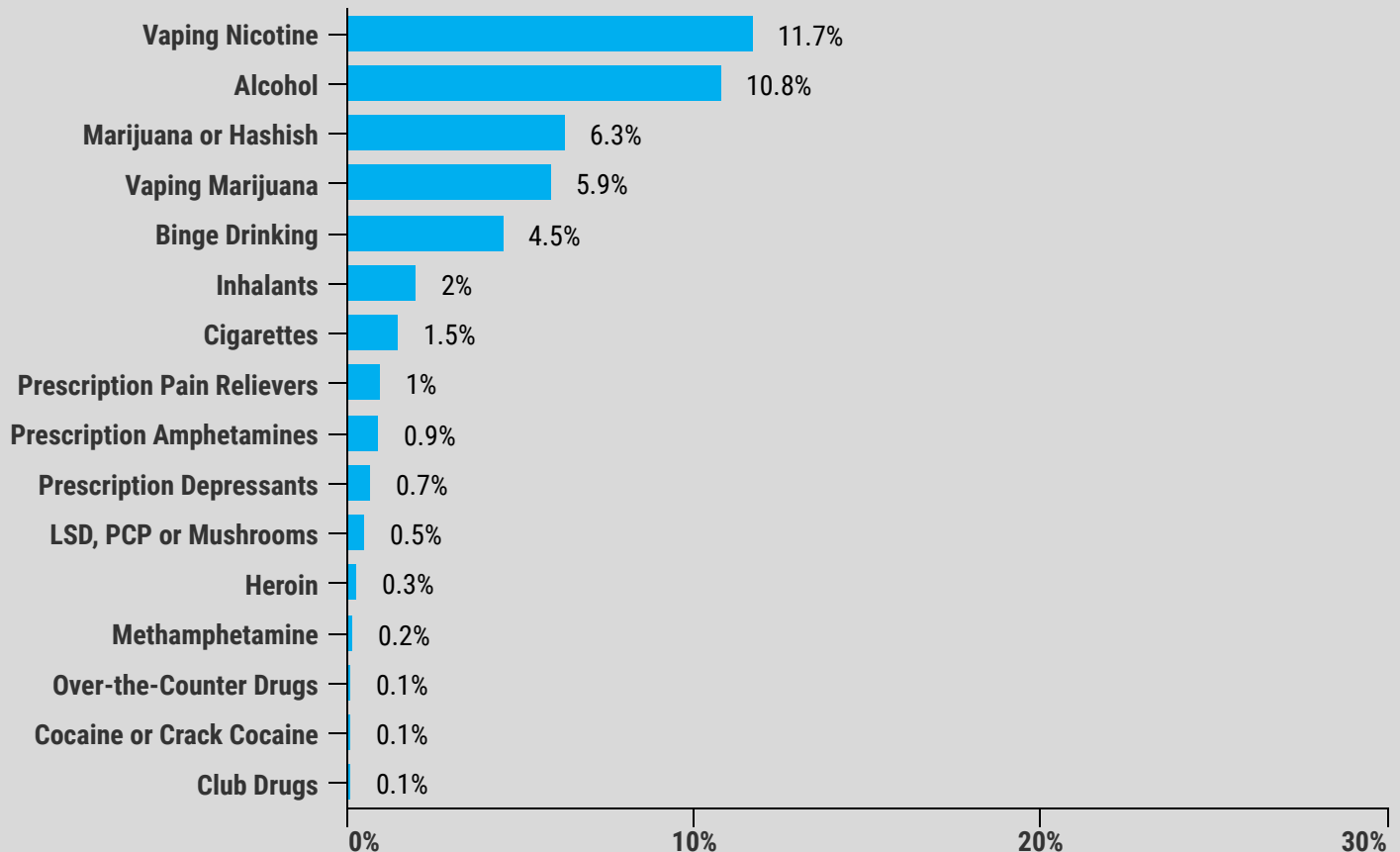
Highlands County Sample Size



Substance Use Among Highlands County Students

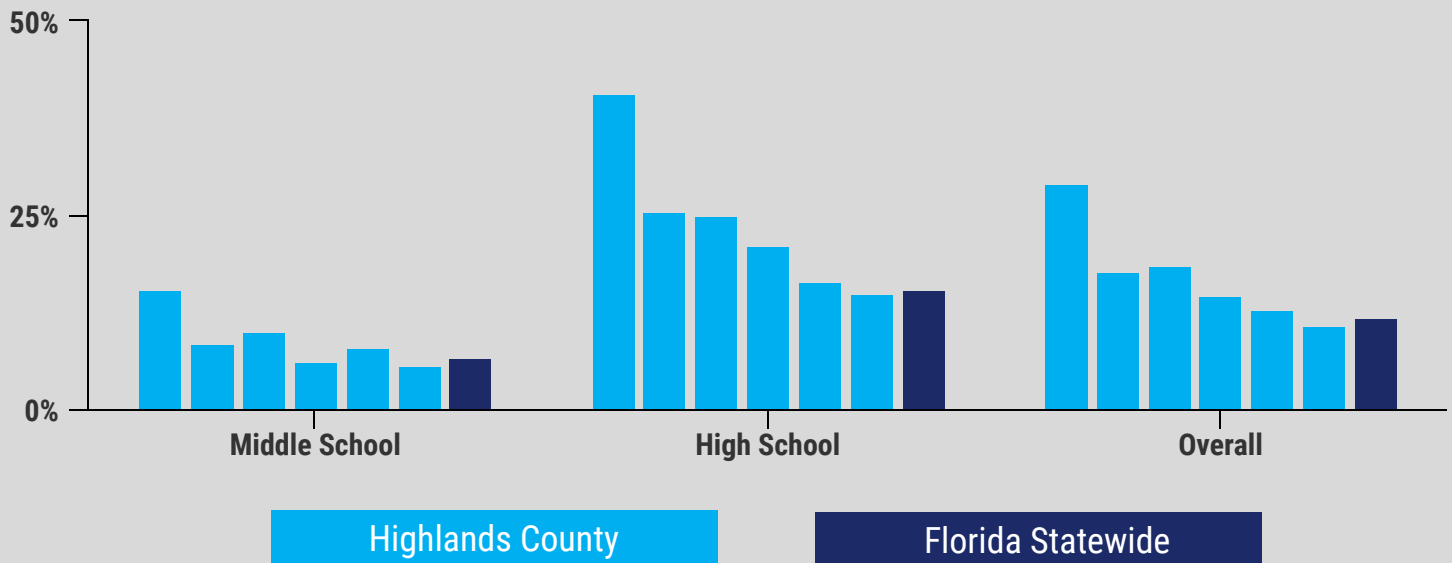
The graph below shows past-30-day substance use prevalence rates for the combined sample of middle school and high school students. Past-30-day prevalence (whether a student has used a substance on one or more occasions within the past month) is the standard indicator of current use.

Highlands County: Past-30-Day Substance Use



Highlands County | Alcohol Use

Past-30-Day Alcohol Use, Highlands County 2012-2022 and Florida 2022

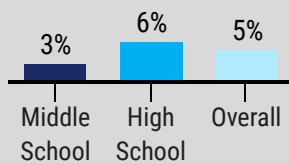


High-Risk Alcohol Use

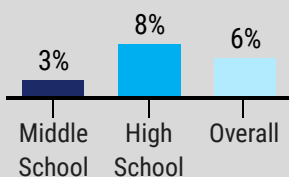
The FYSAS includes several indicators of drinking behaviors that are particularly dangerous for adolescents. These include binge drinking (five or more drinks in a row within the past two weeks), blacking out from drinking, riding with a drinking driver, and driving after drinking. Please note that the blacking out and driving measures are only included on the high school questionnaire.

Binge Drinking

Highlands County

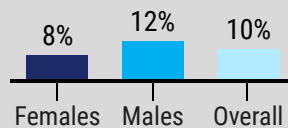


Florida Statewide

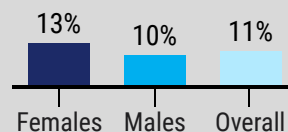


Blacking Out

Highlands County

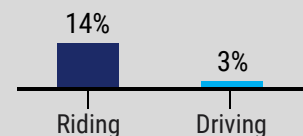


Florida Statewide

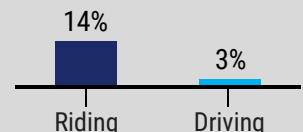


Drinking and Driving

Highlands County

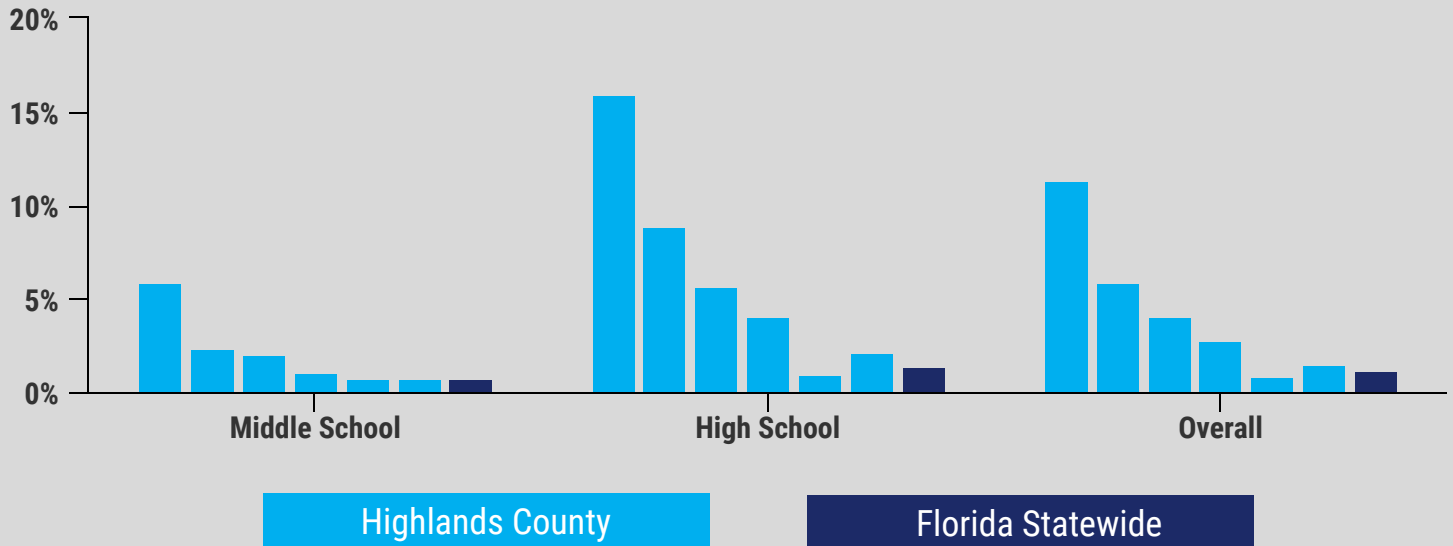


Florida Statewide



Highlands County | Cigarette Use

Past-30-Day Cigarette Use, Highlands County 2012-2022 and Florida 2022

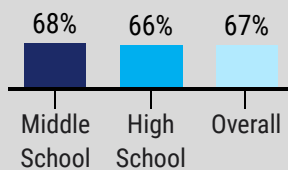


Attitudes Towards Cigarette Use

The remarkable reduction in cigarette use among Florida students is driven, in part, by the norms and values youth hold about smoking. The first graphs below show the percentage of students who believe there is a "great" risk associated with daily cigarette use. Prevalence rates for personal disapproval of smoking, as well as perceptions of peer disapproval, are shown in the second and third graphs.

Great Risk of Harm

Highlands County

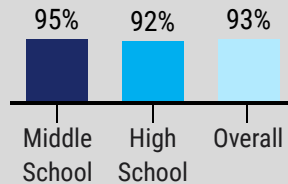


Florida Statewide



Personal Disapproval

Highlands County

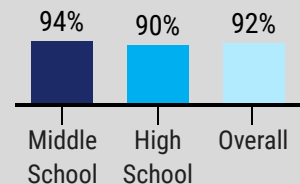


Florida Statewide



Peer Disapproval

Highlands County

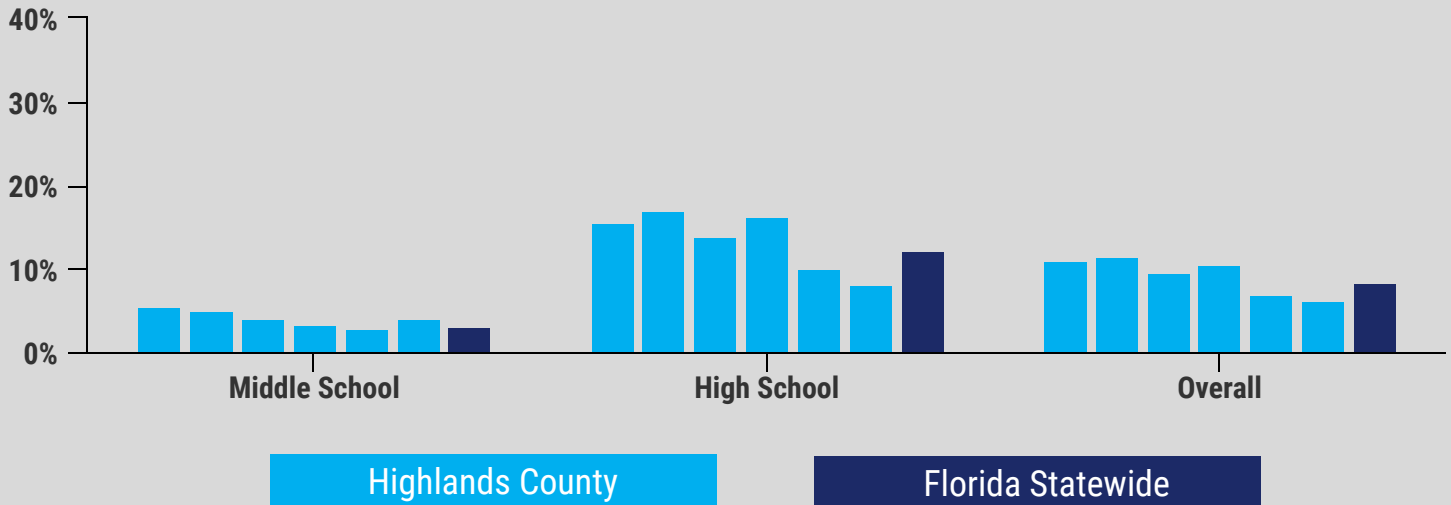


Florida Statewide



Highlands County | Marijuana Use

Past-30-Day Marijuana Use, Highlands County 2012-2022 and Florida 2022

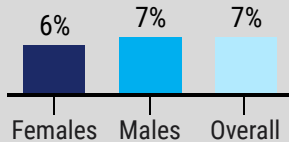


Additional Data on Marijuana Use

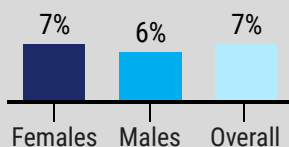
The first graphs show the percentage of high school students who started using marijuana at age 14 or younger. Early initiation is one of the strongest predictors of highly problematic substance use. The second graphs show the percentage of students who said that their friends think it would be “wrong” or “very wrong” to smoke marijuana. Peer disapproval is strongly associated with lower rates of substance use. The third graphs show the percentage of high school students who, in the past 30 days, rode with a marijuana-using driver or drove a vehicle after using marijuana.

Early Initiation

Highlands County

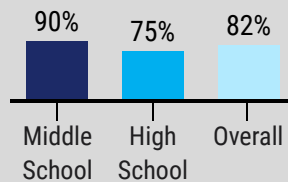


Florida Statewide

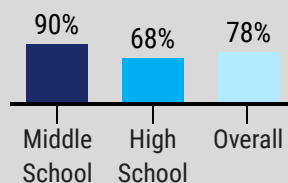


Peer Disapproval

Highlands County

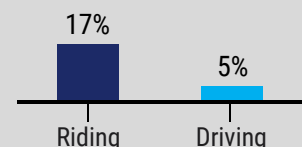


Florida Statewide

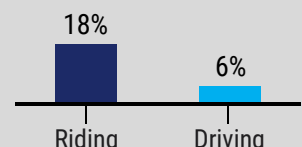


Marijuana and Driving

Highlands County



Florida Statewide

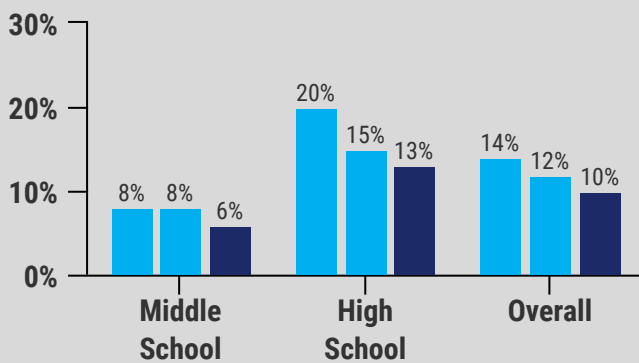


Highlands County | Vaping

Nicotine Vaping and Marijuana Vaping

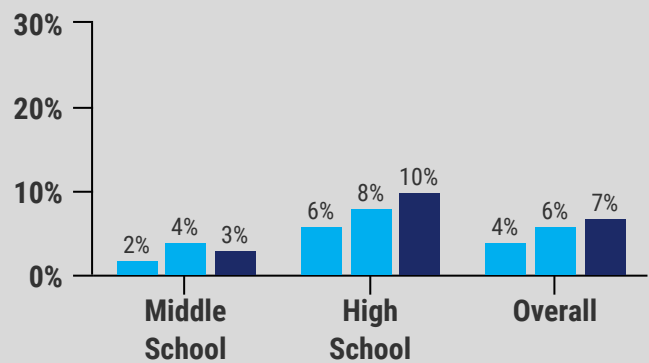
Vaping has rapidly emerged, both within Florida and across the nation, as one of the most prevalent forms of adolescent substance use. In 2020, new items that distinguish between nicotine vaping and marijuana vaping were added to the FYSAS questionnaire. The graphs below show the percentage of students reporting one or more occasions of vaping nicotine and vaping marijuana within the past 30 days. For Highlands County, the graphs show the change in vaping prevalence rates between 2020 and 2022. Comparison data for Florida as a whole are shown for 2022.

Past-30-Day Nicotine Vaping



Highlands County 2020-2022

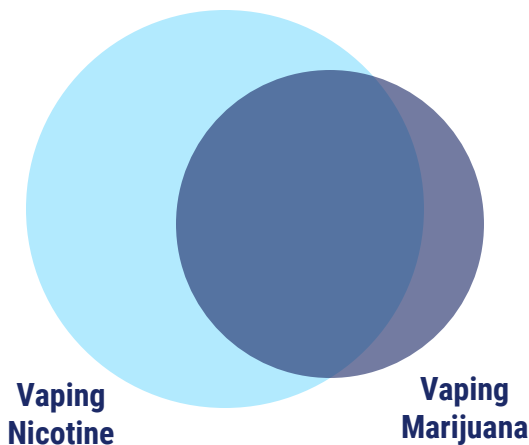
Past-30-Day Marijuana Vaping



Florida Statewide 2022

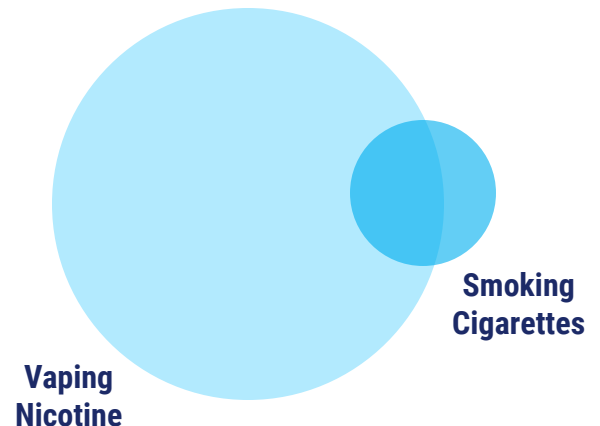
Nicotine and Marijuana Vaping Overlap

Vaping isn't just a nicotine delivery system. **39%** of Highlands County students who vape nicotine also vape marijuana, and **82%** of students who vape marijuana also vape nicotine.



Vaping Nicotine and Smoking

The majority of students who vape nicotine did not transition from smoking cigarettes. Their vaping is independent of cigarette use. Only **8%** of Highlands County students who vape nicotine also smoke cigarettes.



Highlands County | ACEs

Trauma and Youth Development

Adverse childhood experiences, commonly known as **ACEs**, are traumatic events experienced during childhood that have been linked to a broad range of negative health and behavior outcomes, including impaired cognitive development, high-risk behavior such as substance use, difficulty forming positive social relationships, high rates of chronic disease, and employment and financial difficulties.

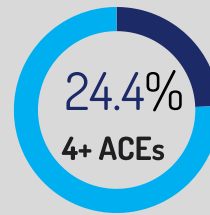
FYSAS and ACEs

While trauma-related measures are often included on student health behavior surveys, the FYSAS is one of the first large-scale youth data collection efforts to include a comprehensive set of ACE questions. The high school version of the survey measures 10 areas of childhood trauma with known links to health and behavior.



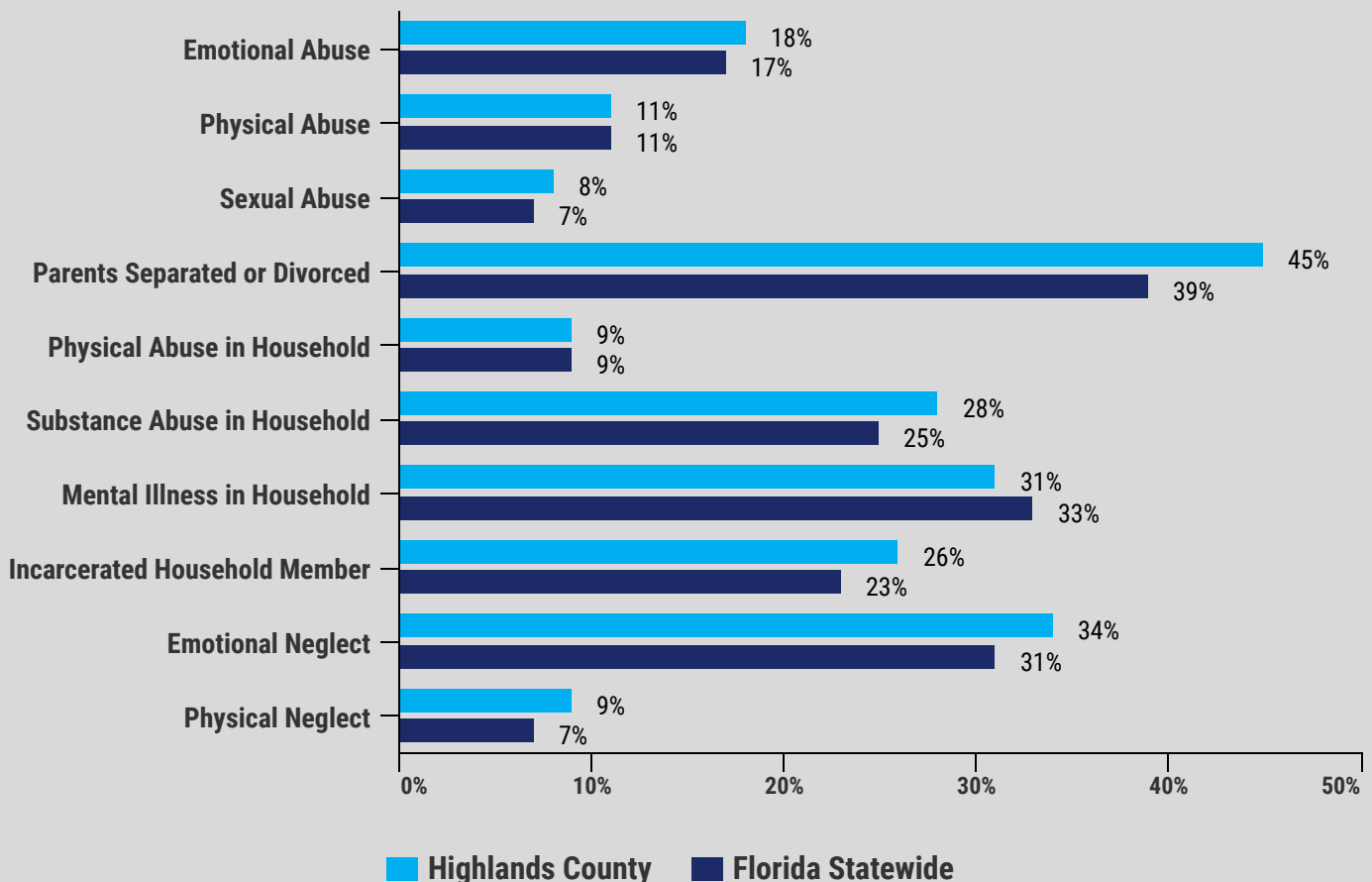
**Average ACE
Score = 2.1**

The average number of ACEs reported by Highlands County high school students is **2.1**.



Exposure to **four or more ACEs** is considered a high level of trauma. **24.4%** of Highlands County high school students have been exposed to at least four ACEs.

How prevalent is childhood trauma among Highlands County and Florida youth?

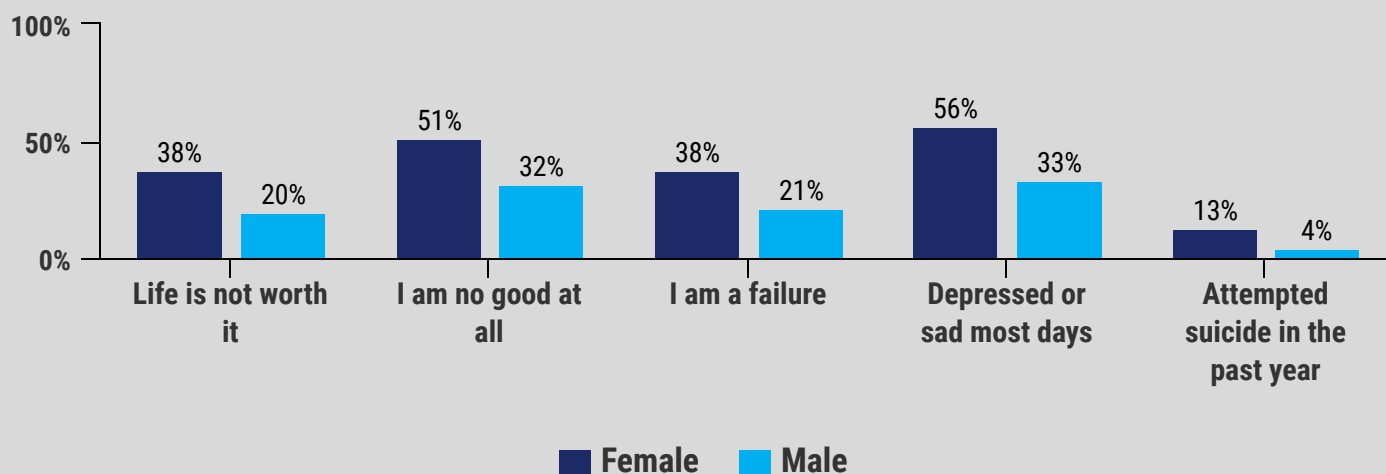


Highlands County | Emotional Health

Depression and Suicide

The FYSAS asks students about four symptoms of depression. (Please note that positive answers to these questions do not constitute a clinical diagnosis of depression.) Female students are more likely than male students to report these symptoms. The 2022 questionnaire also included a new item addressing suicide. Female students are also more likely than male students to report attempting suicide on one or more occasions in the past year.

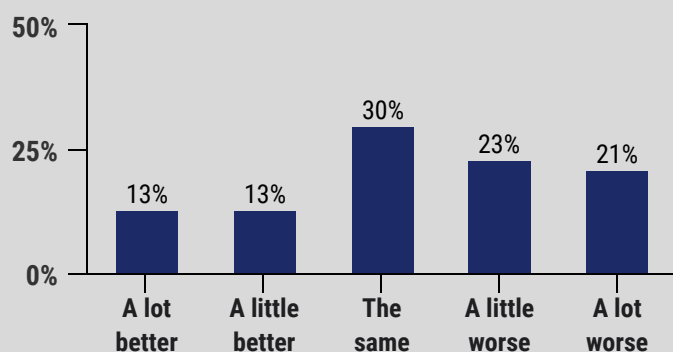
Percentage of Highlands County students reporting symptoms of depression and one or more suicide attempts within the past year



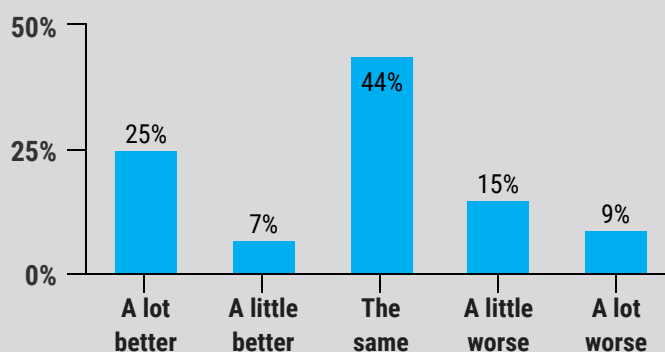
The COVID-19 Pandemic

The 2022 FYSAS questionnaire asked Highlands students to describe how their emotional health (level of stress, anxiety, and depression) was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Female students were more likely to report a negative change during the pandemic, including **21%** who said their emotional health has gotten "a lot worse."

How has the emotional health (level of stress, anxiety, and depression) of Highlands County students changed during the COVID-19 pandemic?



Female Students



Male Students