



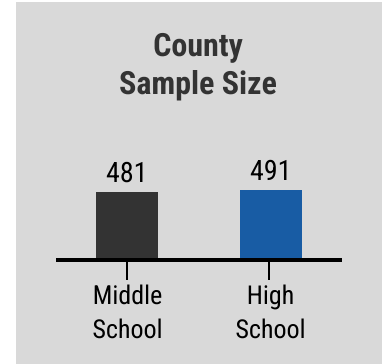
# 2024 Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey

## Polk County Report

### Survey Background

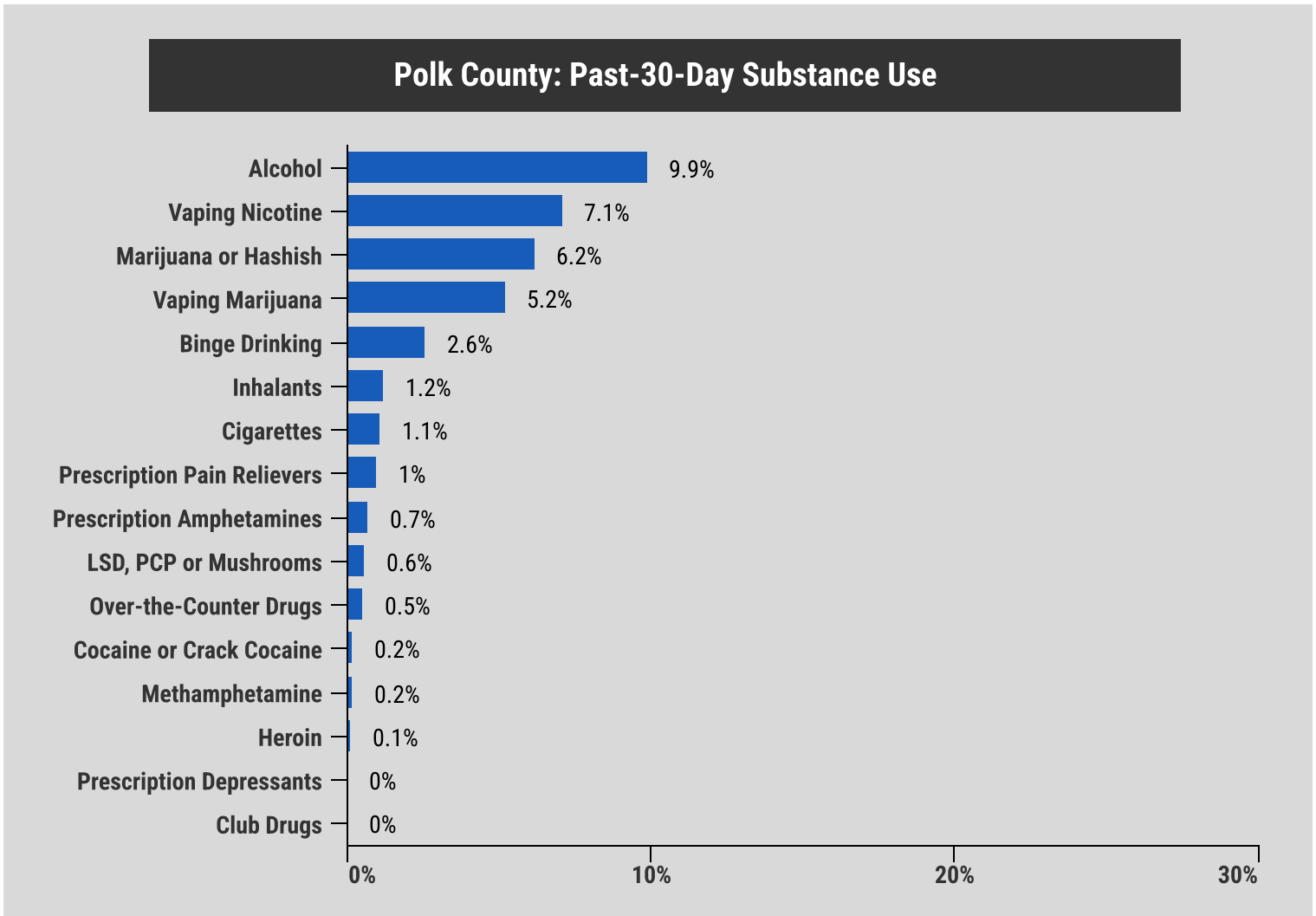
This report presents key findings from the 2024 Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey (FYSAS) for Polk County. Full FYSAS data tables for each county are available at the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) website. Detailed information on the survey's methodology is included in the FYSAS Statewide Report, which is also available at the DCF website.

The final Polk County FYSAS sample included 481 students from 12 middle schools and 491 students from 12 high schools, yielding a maximum margin of error of +/- 4.4 percentage points for the overall sample.



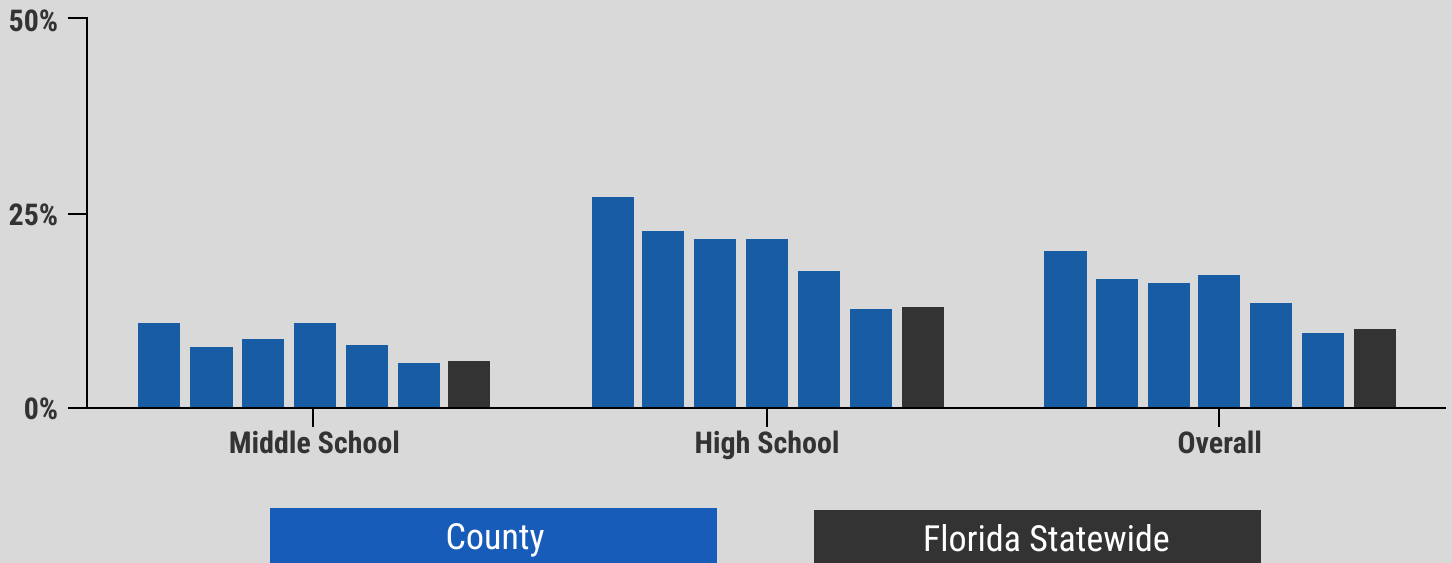
### Substance Use Among Polk County Students

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.



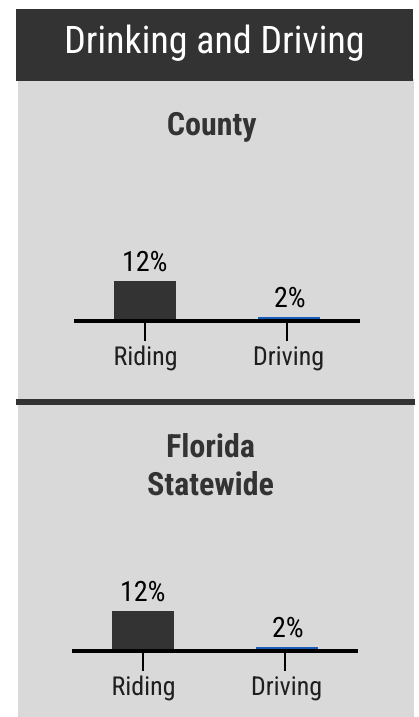
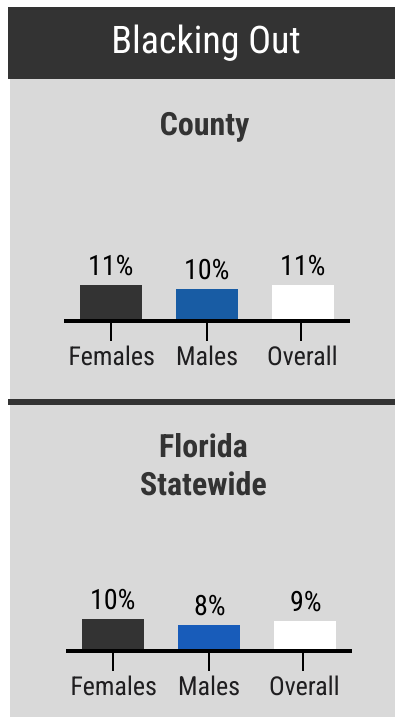
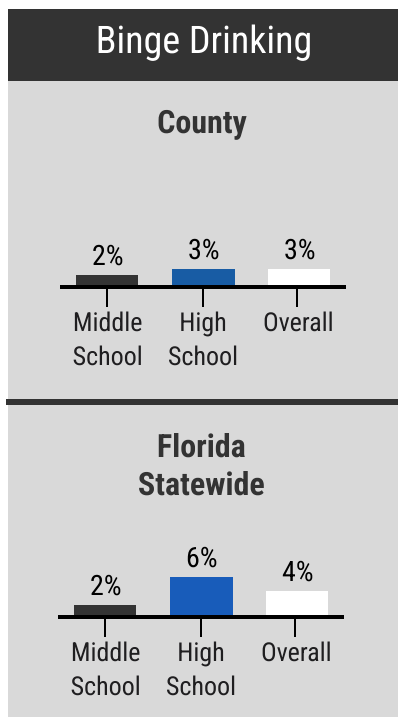
# Polk County | Alcohol Use

## Past-30-Day Alcohol Use, Polk County 2014-2024 and Florida 2024



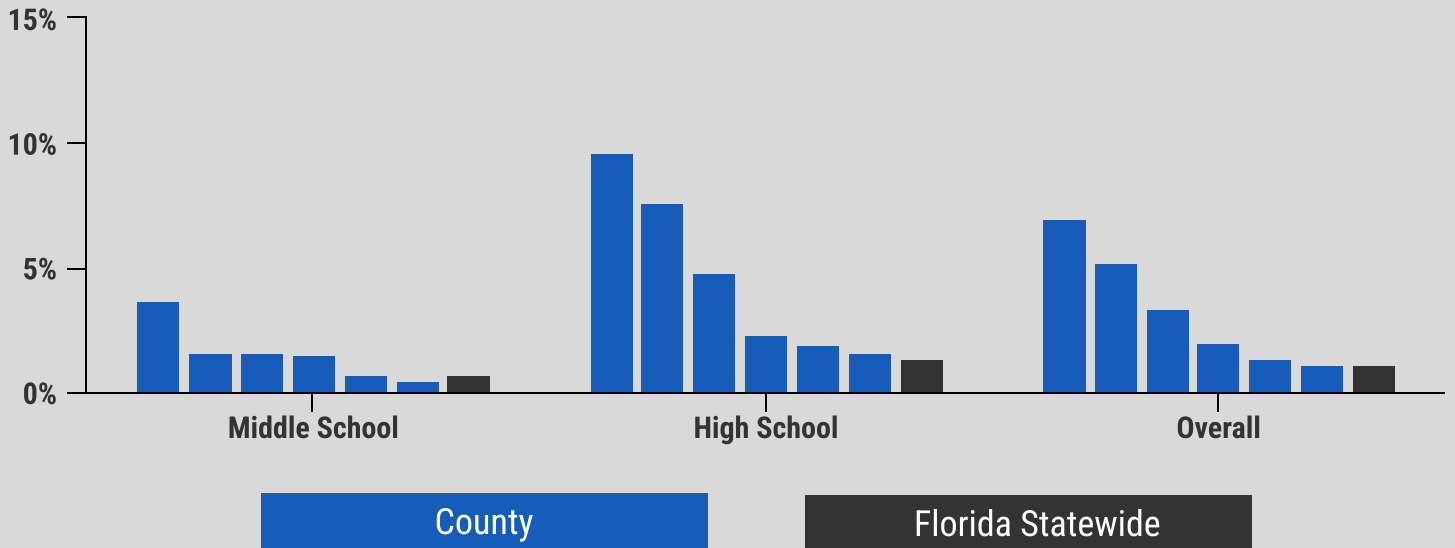
### High-Risk Alcohol Use

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.



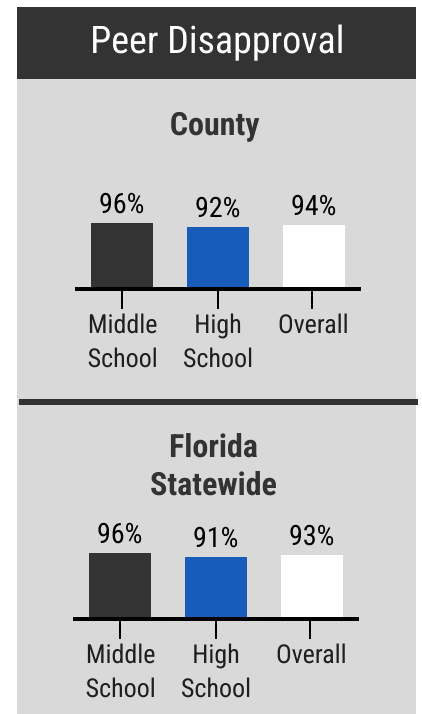
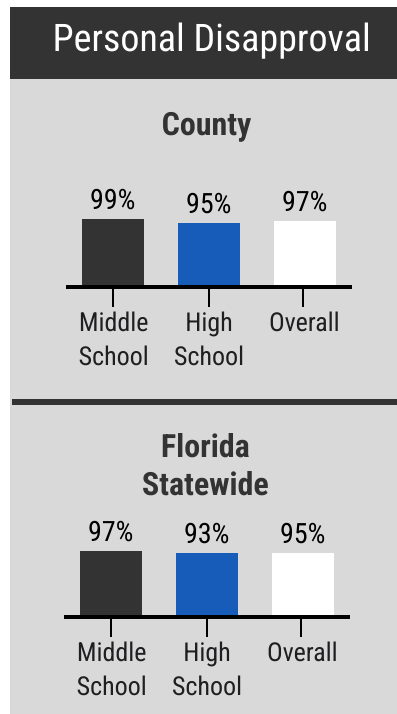
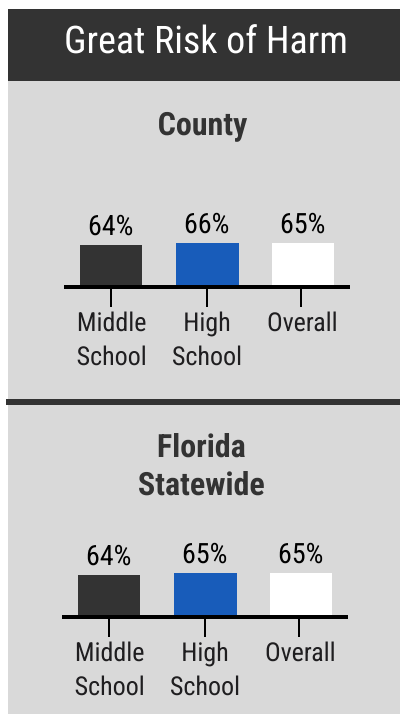
# Polk County | Cigarette Use

## Past-30-Day Cigarette Use, Polk County 2014-2024 and Florida 2024



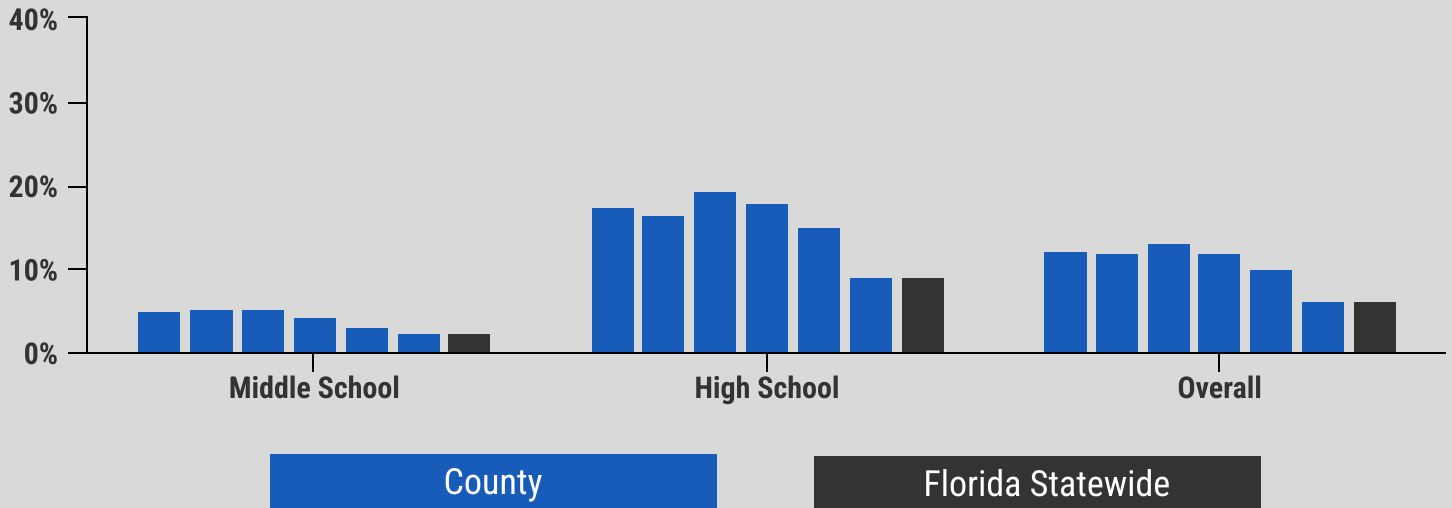
## Attitudes Towards Cigarette Use

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.



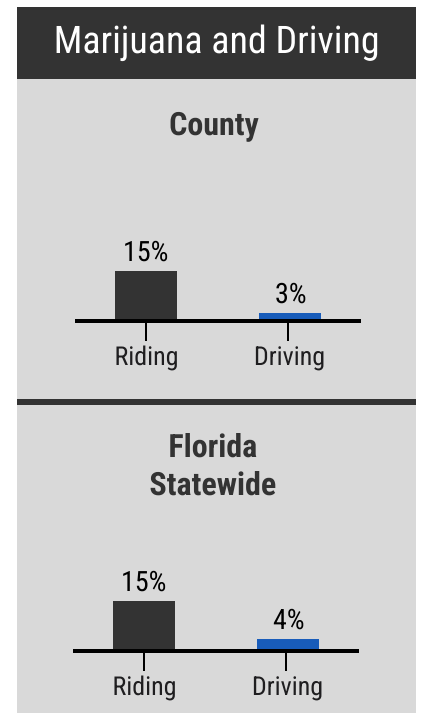
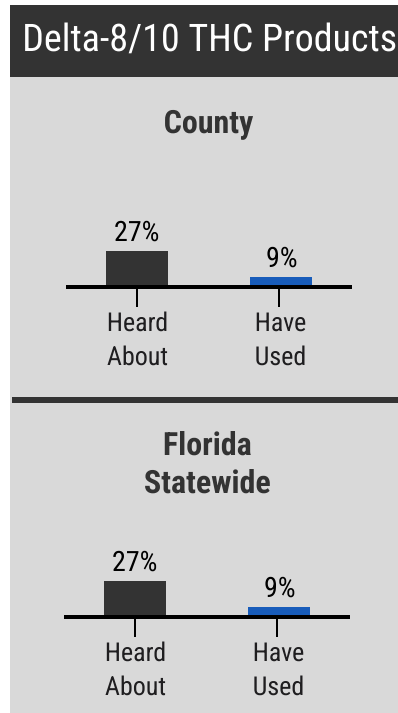
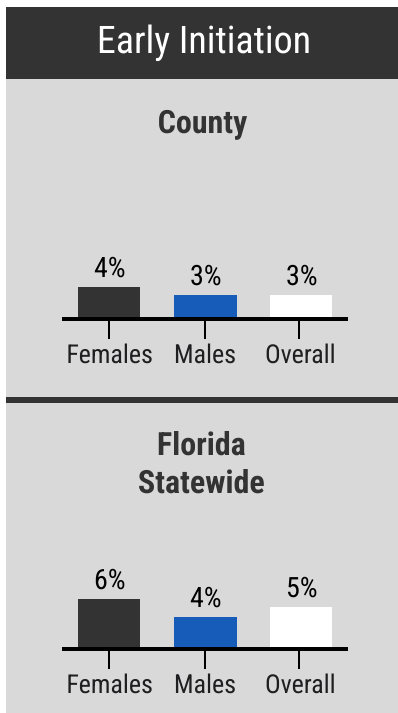
# Polk County | Marijuana Use

## Past-30-Day Marijuana Use, Polk County 2014-2024 and Florida 2024



### 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 have heard about or used Delta-8 and Delta-10 THC products. Hemp-derived Delta-8/10 THC products can be legally purchased in Florida if the buyer is 21 years old. 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.

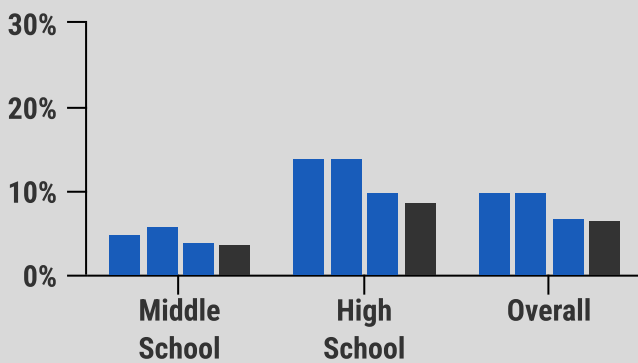


# Polk County | Vaping

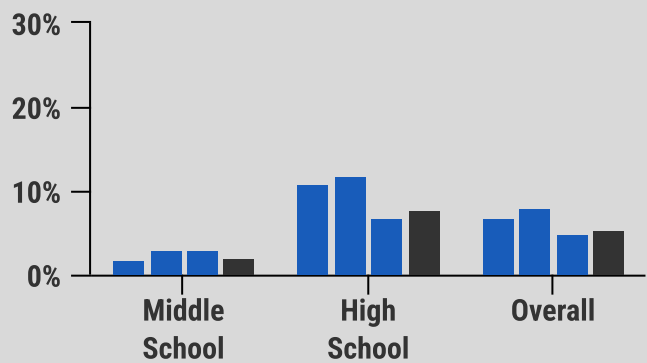
## Nicotine Vaping and Marijuana Vaping

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 Polk County, the graphs show the change in vaping prevalence rates between 2020 and 2024. Statewide comparison data for Florida as a whole are shown for 2024.

### Past-30-Day Nicotine Vaping



### Past-30-Day Marijuana Vaping

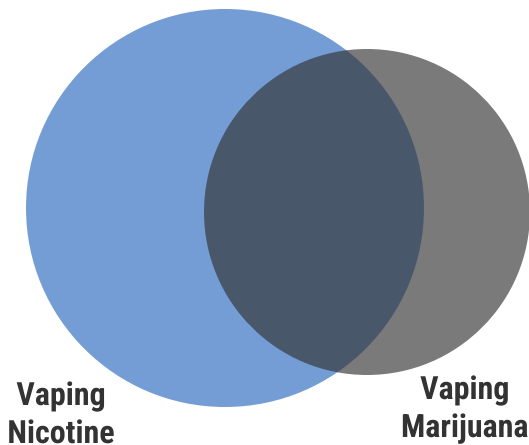


County 2020-2024

Florida Statewide 2024

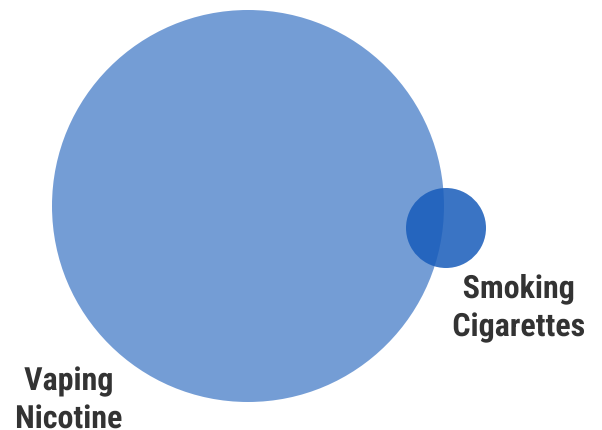
## Vaping Nicotine and Vaping Marijuana

This overlap reveals the role of vaping as a substance delivery system. **45%** of Polk County students who vape nicotine also vape marijuana, and **62%** of students who vape marijuana also vape nicotine.



## Vaping Nicotine and Smoking Cigarettes

The majority of students who vape nicotine did not transition from smoking cigarettes. Their vaping is independent of cigarette use. Only **5%** of Polk County students who vape nicotine also smoke cigarettes.



# Polk 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.

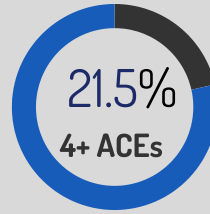
## FYSAS and ACEs

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.



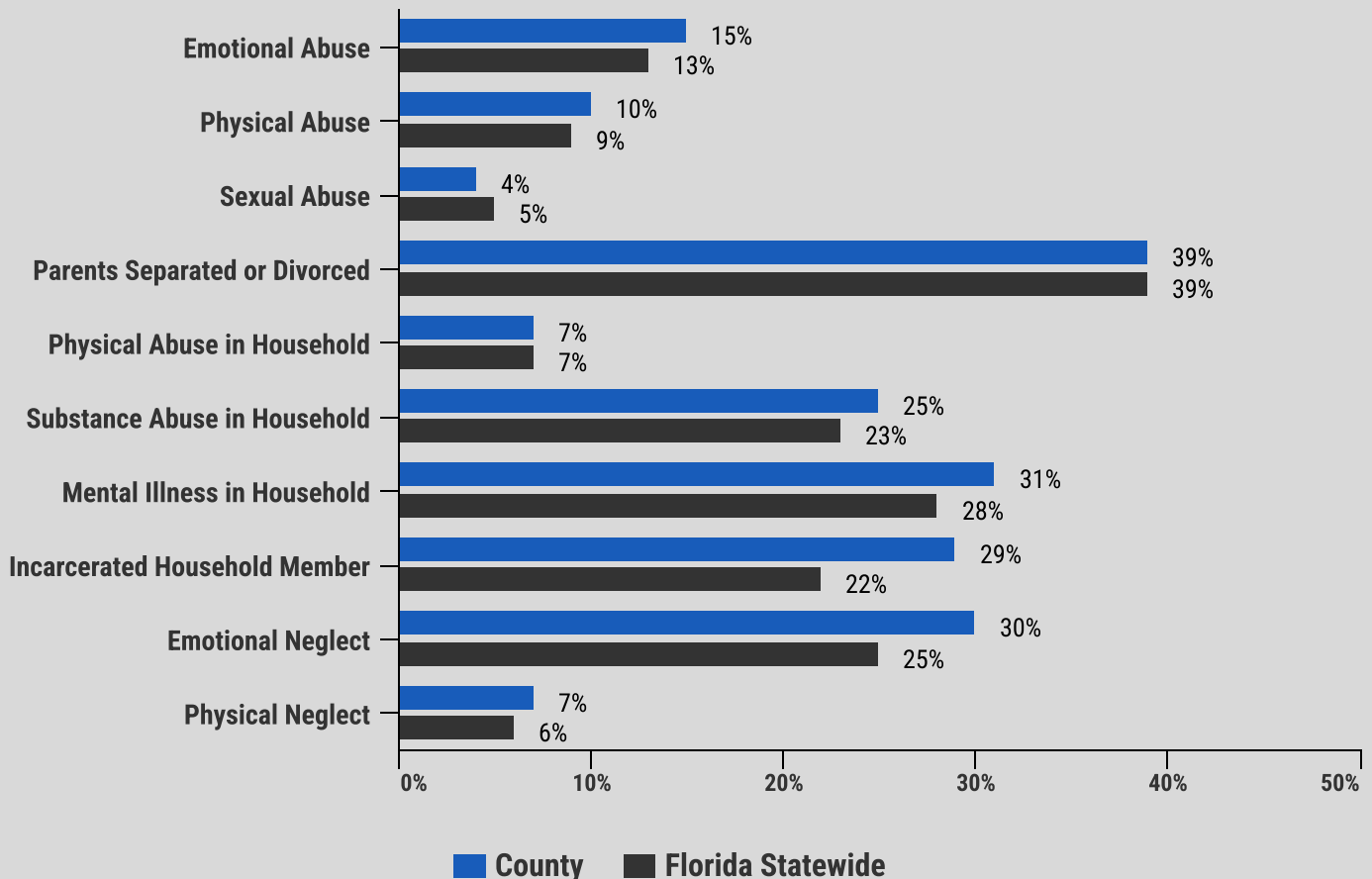
**Average ACE  
Score = 1.9**

The average number of ACEs reported by Polk County high school students is **1.9**.



Exposure to **four or more ACEs** is considered a high level of trauma. **21.5%** of Polk County high school students have been exposed to at least four ACEs.

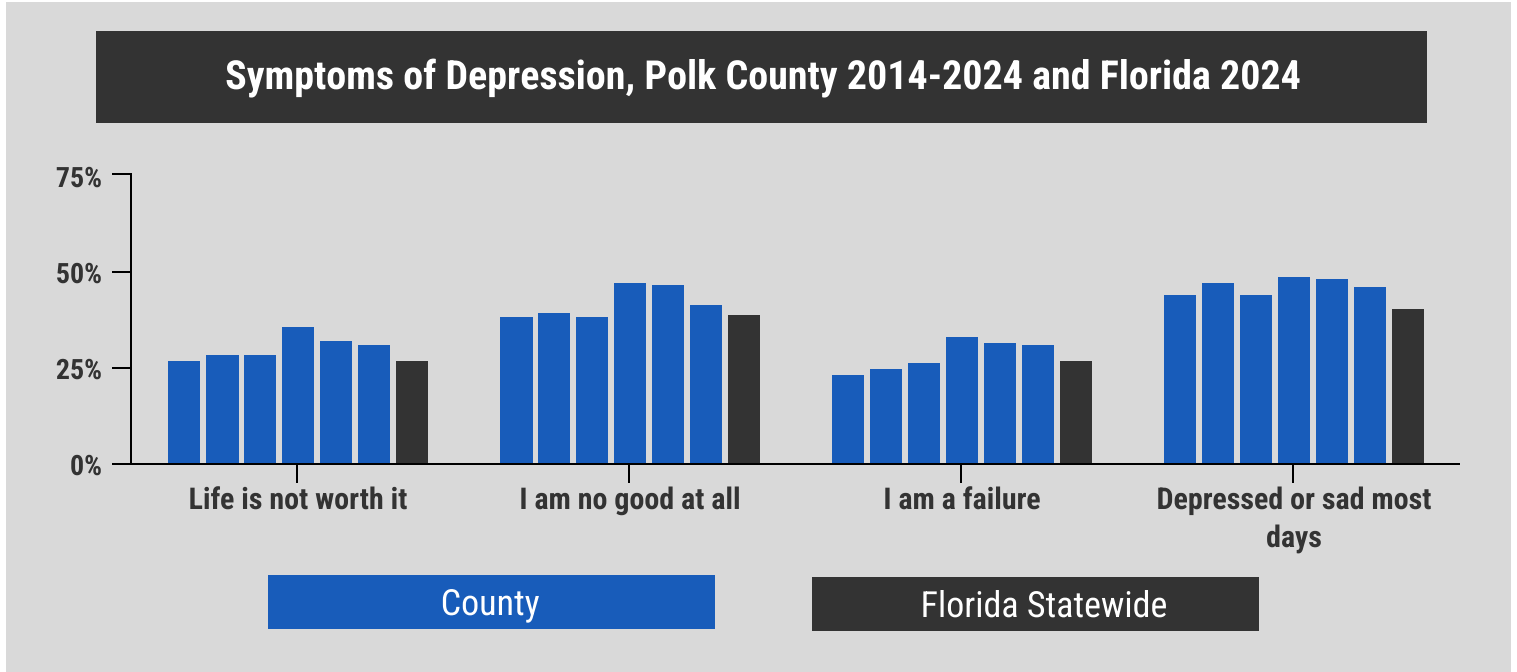
## How prevalent is childhood trauma among Polk County and Florida youth?



# Polk County | Emotional Health

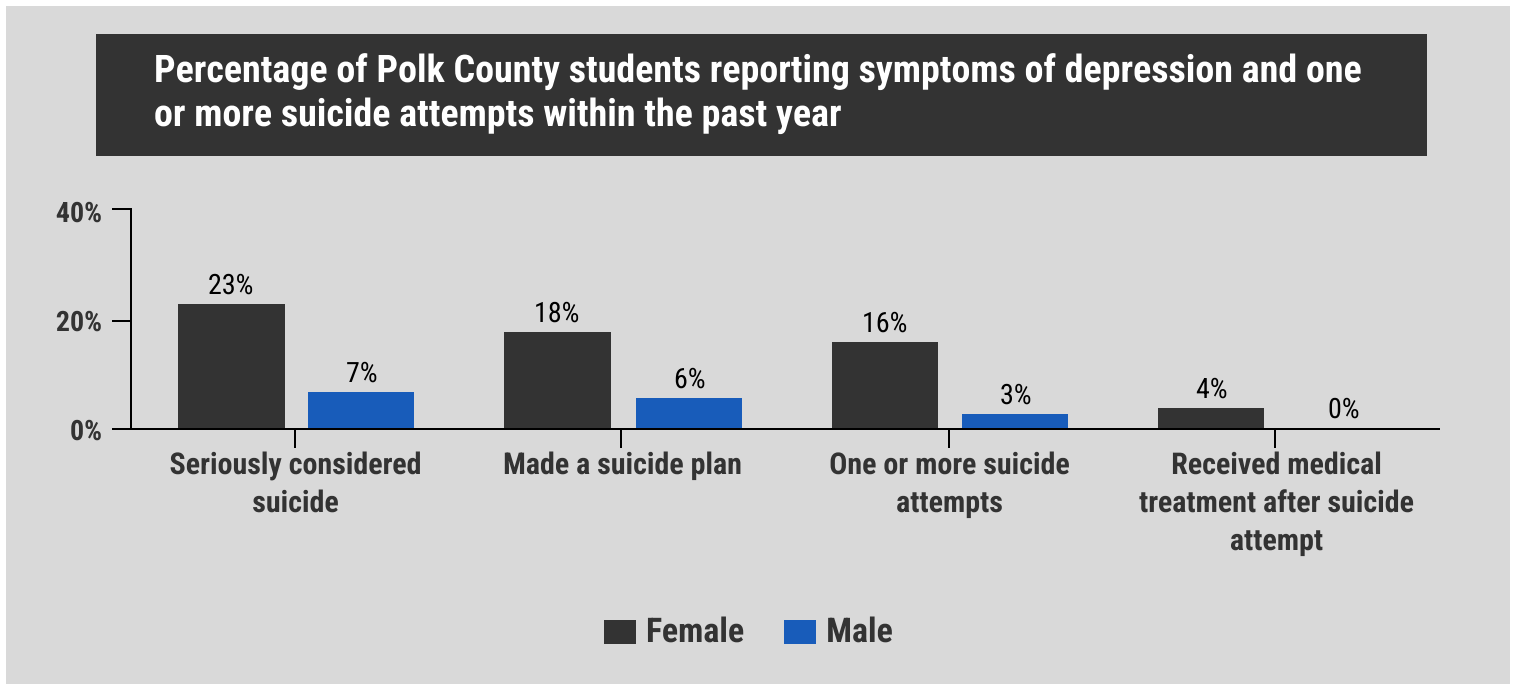
## Symptoms of Depression

The FYSAS asks students about four symptoms of depression. Across the state as a whole, prevalence rates for these indicators increased for more than a decade before peaking in 2022 and declining in 2024.



## Suicidal Ideation and Behavior

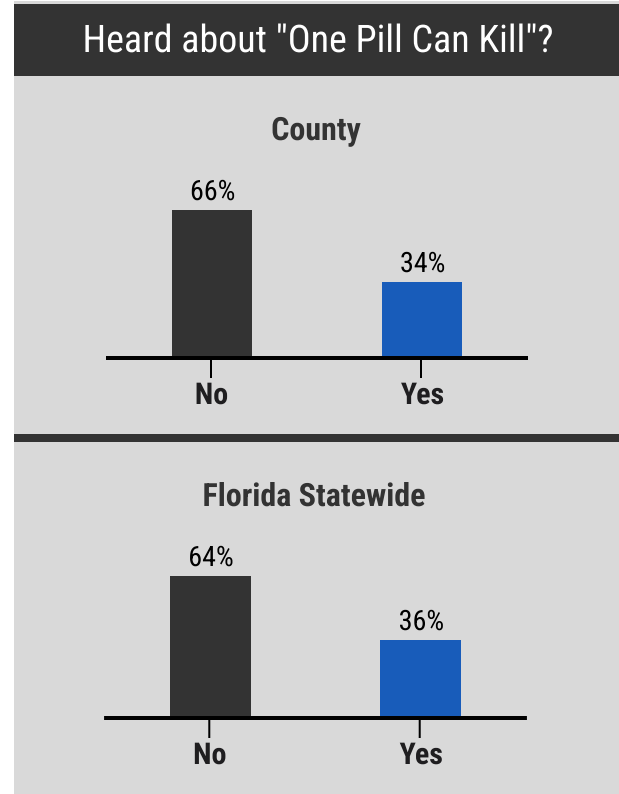
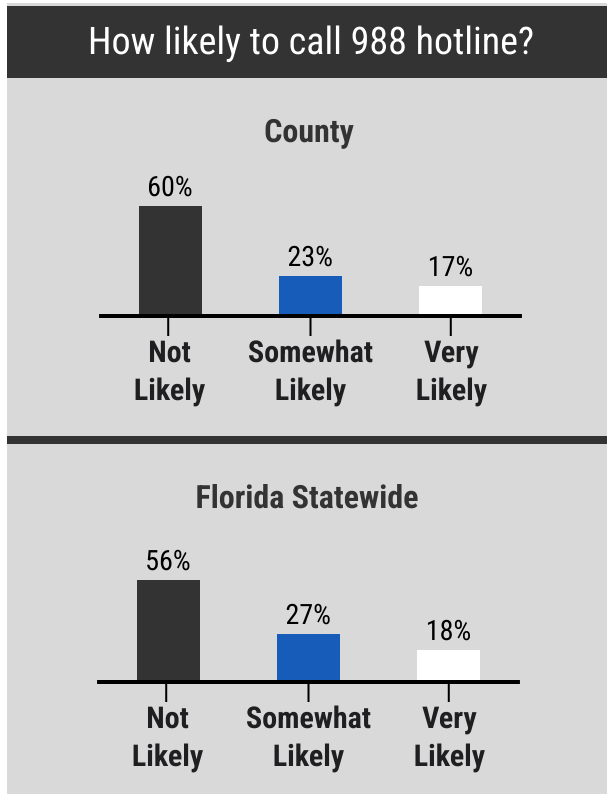
In 2023, a new set of questions addressing thinking and behavior related to suicide was added to the FYSAS questionnaire. The graphs below show the past-year prevalence rates for seriously thinking about suicide, making a suicide plan, attempting suicide on one or more occasions, and receiving medical care after a suicide attempt for an injury, poisoning, or overdose. Across all four measures, female students generally report substantially higher rates of suicidal thinking and behavior.



## The 988 Hotline and the "One Pill Can Kill" Campaign

The 988 hotline is a national program, supported by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, that provides 24-hour, confidential support to people experiencing a suicide crisis or emotional distress. The FYSAS questionnaire asks students how likely they would be to call 988 if they were feeling overwhelmed, upset, or suicidal. At the state level, **18%** of students said they were "very likely" to call.

To warn Floridians about the dangers posed by fentanyl and other synthetic opioids, Florida has joined the "One Pill Can Kill" educational campaign. Statewide, **36%** of students reporting having seen or heard this prevention message.



Some groups are more likely than others to use the 988 crisis hotline. Across Florida as a whole, both younger students and male students are more likely to report that they would use the hotline if they were experiencing suicidal thoughts or other difficulties.

## Percentage of students in Polk County who are "very likely" to call the 988 hotline if they are experiencing a suicide crisis or an emotional crisis

