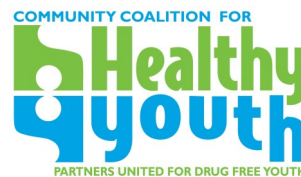


# 2012 Communities that Care® Youth Survey Summary of Highlights • Tompkins County Results Spring, 2013



Community Coalition for Healthy Youth [www.healthyyouth.org](http://www.healthyyouth.org)  
Tompkins County Youth Services Department [www.tompkins-co.org/youth](http://www.tompkins-co.org/youth)

## How are Tompkins County youth doing?

In fall, 2012, 4,695 students in grades 6-12 in fifteen Tompkins County schools (details on P. 5) completed the Communities that Care® Youth Survey. This summary uses the Risk and Protective Factor Framework to look at the survey results on how well youth are doing: in their communities, families, schools, and peer groups.

The responses of Tompkins County students are compared to those of national peers. The results are used in each district and at the County level to guide school and community efforts to prevent and reduce the use and abuse of alcohol and other drugs, to improve student connections to school and school safety, and to identify the risk and protective factors that our community can modify to improve students' long-term success.

The 2012 Tompkins County Survey Report lists all questions and the combined responses of all students. The Report is on file with Tompkins County Youth Services Dept. and TST BOCES. Each school superintendent and secondary principal also has a copy of their district/building report. This summary and more information about the Risk and Protective Factor Framework are also available at [www.healthyyouth.org](http://www.healthyyouth.org) and [www.tompkins-co.org/youth](http://www.tompkins-co.org/youth).

### Risk and Protective Factor Framework

To prevent a problem from happening, we need to identify the factors that increase the risk of that problem developing and then find ways to reduce the risks. Just as eating a high-fat diet is a risk factor for heart disease and getting regular exercise is a protective factor for heart disease, there are characteristics of the community, school, family, peer groups and individual youth that can help protect youth (protective factors), or put them at risk (risk factors) for drug use and other problem behaviors including delinquency, teen pregnancy, violence, and school drop-out.

The table below lists risk factors by domains (community, family, school, individual/peer) and the problem behaviors that can result from high risk scores in each area. A checkmark (✓) indicates that at least two national longitudinal studies have found that the risk factor predicts the problem behavior. (Research by Hawkins and Catalano, Social Development Research Group, University of Washington) Rows shaded in green are those risk areas in Tompkins County that were the highest in our 2012 survey. More details are found inside this report and at [www.healthyyouth.org](http://www.healthyyouth.org).

		Problem behaviors				
		Substance abuse	Delinquency	Teen pregnancy	School drop-out	Violence
TOMPKINS YOUTH RISK FACTORS to watch (shaded in green) and the problem behaviors that can result (✓).						
Community	Availability of drugs & firearms	✓				✓
	Community norms & laws favorable toward drug use	✓				
	Transitions & mobility	✓	✓		✓	
	Low neighborhood attachment & community disorganization	✓	✓			✓
	Extreme economic & social deprivation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Family	Family history of high risk behavior	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Family management problems	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Family conflict	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Favorable parental attitudes & involvement in the problem behavior	✓	✓			✓
School	Early & persistent antisocial behavior	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Academic failure in elementary school	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Lack of commitment to school	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Individual/peer	Alienation & rebelliousness	✓	✓		✓	
	Friends who engage in a problem behavior	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Favorable attitudes toward the problem behavior	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Early initiation of the problem behavior	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Full risk and protective factor scores and definitions can be found in the Tompkins County Survey Report at [www.healthyyouth.org](http://www.healthyyouth.org).

## Peer/Individual

*Strong Tompkins protective factors: Most Tompkins youth have strong beliefs in what is “right” or “wrong.” Most young people are socially competent and have skills to resist negative peer pressure.*

*Tompkins risk factors to watch: A considerable number of students report that both they and their peer group do not object to rebellious behaviors such as stealing, fighting, skipping school, or using drugs.*

### Tompkins Students and Their Peers

Risk taking is common among adolescents. As children mature, it’s natural for youth to assert their independence, spend more time with friends, seek new challenges, try new things, and take risks. Other developmental factors also contribute, including peer pressure, increased unsupervised time, responsibility and stress. Substance use is a risk that attracts many developing adolescents who often do not fully recognize its effects on health and behavior. The adolescent brain continues developing well into the 20’s; the use of alcohol or other substances can negatively affect this development.

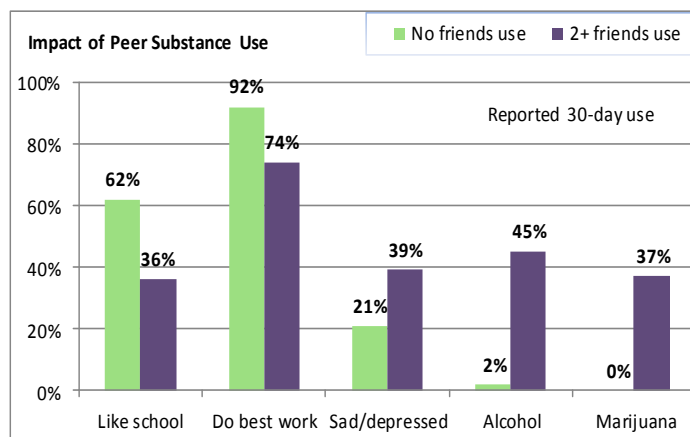
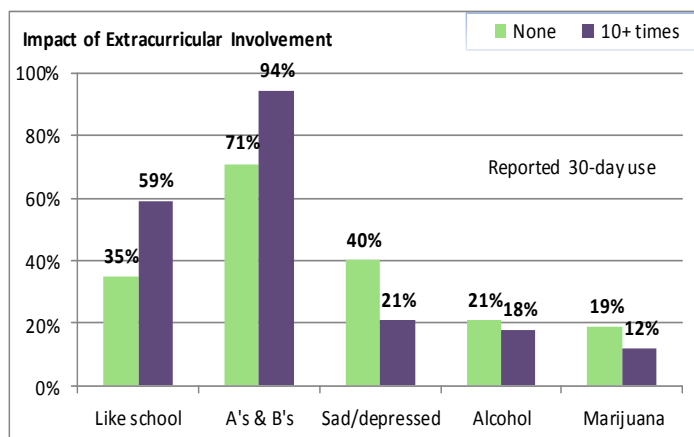
**Substance Use** There’s some good news with regard to alcohol, cigarettes, and prescription drugs. (see PP. 5-6) Youth use of these substances has decreased and perception of parental disapproval for using substances remains high. There is still cause for concern, however. Alcohol is the drug most commonly used by local youth. 29% of high schoolers report they used alcohol in the past 30 days and 17% reported binge drinking (5 or more drinks in a row) in the past two weeks. Nationally, binge drinking accounts for 90% of the alcohol consumed by youth. Over half of Tompkins youth who use alcohol get it from friends.

Marijuana use has increased and perception of parental and peer disapproval of marijuana use is lower than for the other three substances. Moreover, by 11th grade, only half of students see potential harm from using marijuana. Reported use of other substances (cocaine, heroin, inhalants, bath salts, meth) is below 2%; for smokeless tobacco, 7% of high school students report current use.

**Mental Health** Over one quarter of students reported feeling sad or depressed most days during the past year. Other questions dealing with student mental health are shown in the table at right.

Mental Health	M.S.	H.S.
Sometimes I think life isn’t worth it	18%	24%
At times I think I’m no good at all	28%	33%
I think I’m a failure	14%	17%
In the past year, I felt sad or depressed most days	26%	30%

**Extracurricular Activities** Being involved in structured activities with positive peers helps protect young people from engaging in problem behaviors. (see chart below) Over 80% of Tompkins youth say they took part in activities offered either at their school or in the community in the past year. 79% participated on a school or community sports team in the past year. But while participation in sports increases students’ commitment to school and improves their mental health, it also increases the likelihood that they will use alcohol or binge drink.



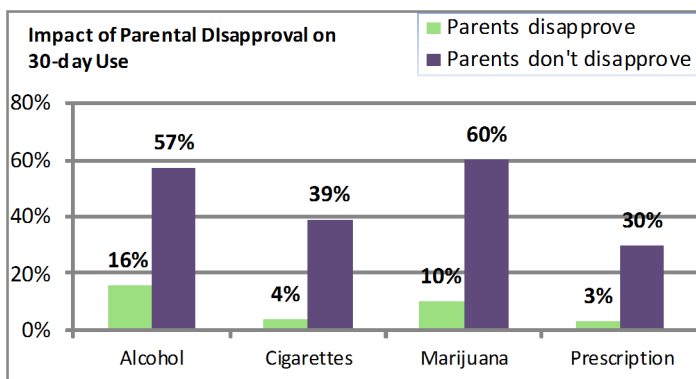
**Impact of Friends’ Attitudes and Behaviors** Being involved with peers who engage in substance use or other rebellious behaviors increases the likelihood of a young person also engaging in negative behaviors. Students who reported that none of their friends uses alcohol or marijuana are more engaged in school, show lower rates of depression, and are less likely to use alcohol or marijuana than students who say that two or more of their best friends use alcohol or marijuana. (see chart above) Similarly, when students say their best friends like school, they are more prone to like school.

## Family

*Strong Tompkins protective factors: Students report feeling that they are a valued part of their family and that they participate meaningfully in family responsibilities and activities, and that their families praise and encourage them.*

*Tompkins risk factors to watch: A considerable number of students note that their parents are tolerant of antisocial behaviors such as fighting, stealing and vandalism. In addition, a high rate of students report that their parents do not set clear expectations or monitor their behavior.*

### Tompkins Students and their Families



**Disapproval** There are many things that parents, caregivers, and families can do to reduce the likelihood that their children will use drugs or become involved in other negative behaviors. One of the simplest is to express disapproval. Only 10% of Tompkins youth who said their parents would disapprove of their using marijuana reported recent (past 30-day) use as compared with 60% use rates by students who said their parents would not disapprove. Use rates of other substances are also reduced when parents let their children know that they disapprove. (see chart at left)

**Supervision and Monitoring** It is natural that as young people get older that they have greater independence. But it is possible, and in fact, important, that their caregivers continue to set clear expectations for children's behavior, know where they are and whom they are with and if they do not come home on time. Asking if homework is done and knowing if young people skip school create better outcomes not only in terms of academic success but also lower the likelihood that youth will use alcohol, marijuana and other drugs.

**Support and Reward** When parents and other family members praise and encourage youth, let them know they're proud, and create a relationship in which youth can share their thoughts and concerns and get help from parents with their problems, young people engage in lower rates of problem behaviors including substance use.

### How Parents & Caregivers Can Impact Youth Substance Use & Academic Success

If parents... → then how likely students will... ↓	Keep track of whereabouts		Ask about homework		Acknowledge a good job		Spend time having fun		Can help with problems	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Use alcohol	16%	28%	17%	33%	16%	26%	16%	28%	16%	30%
Use marijuana	12%	24%	13%	25%	12%	19%	12%	22%	12%	23%
Binge drinking	9%	22%	9%	21%	9%	16%	9%	22%	9%	19%
Like school	54%	28%	53%	38%	58%	32%	55%	37%	56%	31%
Do best work	87%	66%	86%	75%	89%	73%	88%	74%	88%	70%
Get A's & B's	88%	73%	88%	80%	90%	75%	89%	77%	89%	76%

**Set A Good Example and Know Your Family Risk** Of those young people who reported using alcohol in the past year, 22% said their most common way of getting the alcohol was from their parents with their parents' permission. Another 13% got it from home without their parents' permission and 7% obtained it from another relative. Over one third (35%) of Tompkins high schoolers reported having a family member with a severe alcohol or drug problem; these young people have higher alcohol, marijuana, and binge drinking rates than those without a family history of substance abuse.

## Community

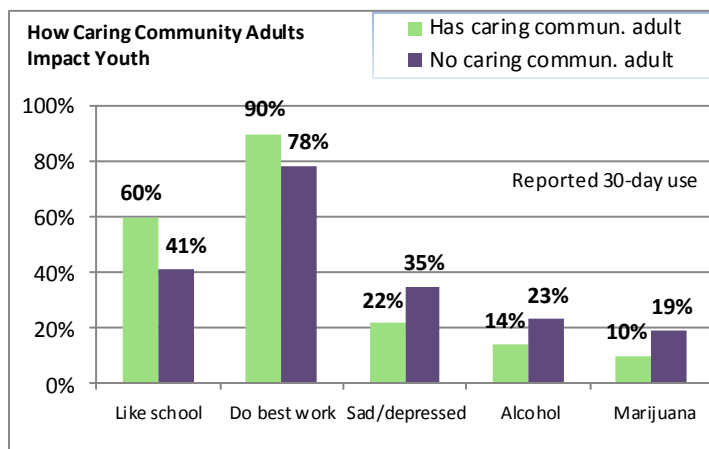
*Strong Tompkins protective factor: Area young people say there are many chances for them to be involved in community activities.*

*Tompkins risk factor to watch: Youth in Tompkins County report that their community is not safe or well maintained, has crime and not enough surveillance.*

### Tompkins Students' Community Life

A supportive community, like a supportive family, impacts the likelihood that young people will avoid risk behaviors and will be successful at school and in the community. Tompkins youth who express that there are community members who notice and encourage them to do their best and recognize their efforts and successes are more connected to school, less likely to be sad or depressed, and less likely to use alcohol or other drugs.

- 86% of young people report that their community offers youth activities such as scouting, sports teams, and 4-H.
- 86% also state that they feel safe in their neighborhood.
- Only 27% say that if a young person used alcohol, he/she would be caught by the police. But 79% say that most adults in their community disapprove of underage drinking.
- 36% said that a young person who used marijuana would likely be caught by the police. And 85% reported that community adults disapprove of youth use of marijuana.
- 12% of Tompkins youth report that they regularly do volunteer or community service.
- High school students assert that it would be easier to get marijuana than alcohol if they wanted.



Perceived Ease of Access to Substances		
	M.S.	H.S.
Alcohol	19%	56%
Marijuana	11%	61%
Cigarettes	15%	46%

## School

*Strong Tompkins protective factors: Local students report having opportunities to participate meaningfully in school activities. Schools recognize and reward students for their contributions at school.*

### Tompkins Students' Experiences at School

#### The good news—

- 94% of middle and high school students declare that there are lots of chances at their school to get involved in clubs, sports, and other school activities outside of class.
- 83% of middle and 86% of high school students affirm that there are lots of chances to talk one-on-one with teachers.
- 53% of middle and 34% of high school students report that their school lets their parents know when they have done something well.
- 49% of middle and 37% of high school students state that most of their courses are interesting and stimulating.

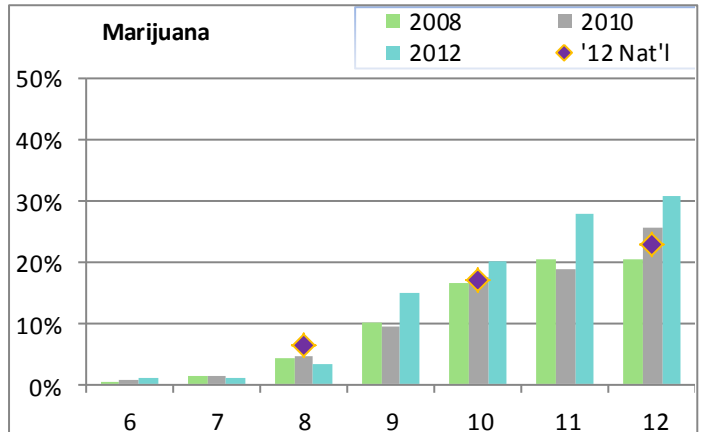
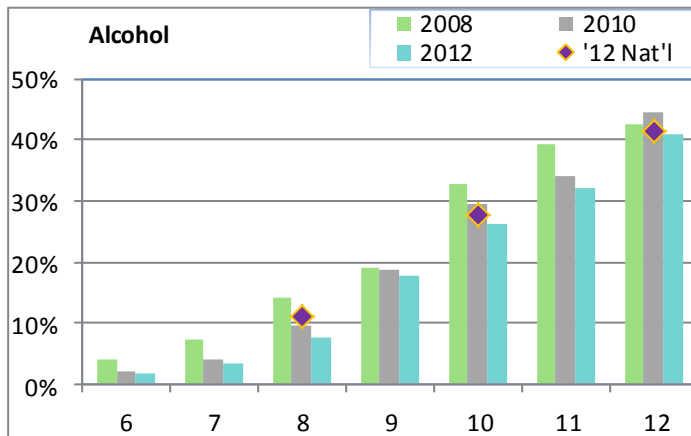
#### The not-so-good news—

- 16% of middle and 20% of high school students report they cut at least one full day of school in the past month.
- 18% of high school students report that they had been drunk or high at school at least once during the past year.
- 25% of high school students state that it's sometimes OK to cheat at school.
- 6% of middle and 7% of high school students say they were suspended at least once in the past year.

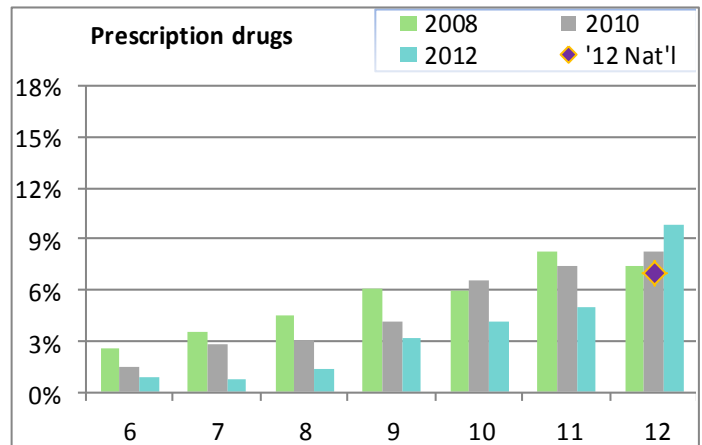
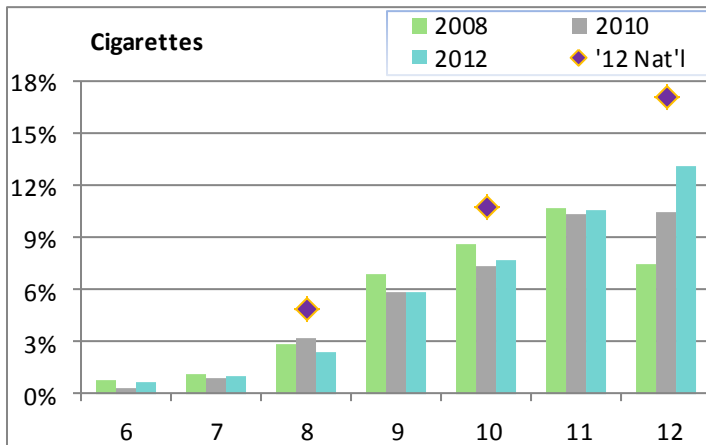
School Climate	M.S.	H.S.
Usually tries to do best work at school	90%	79%
Feels safe in school	87%	86%
Teachers notice a good job & let me know	80%	70%
Usually likes being in school	62%	43%
Has a trusted adult in school who can help me with problems	50%	47%
School rules are fairly enforced	33%	39%
Was verbally bullied at school in past month	29%	26%
Students treat each other with respect	27%	36%
Was physically bullied at school in past month	6%	5%

## Appendix

### Tompkins Time Trends: Current (Past 30-day) Substance Use by Grade



Tompkins County **alcohol** use is down for all grades since 2008 and, for the first time, rates are below national rates for all grades. **Marijuana** use increased sharply for grades 9-12 since 2008. Note jump between 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grades and steady increase through the high school years. Rates by local 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders exceed use by national peers.



While **cigarette** use remained relatively unchanged for most grades, it increased for Tompkins students in grade 12. Local rates are significantly lower than national rates.

Non-medical use of **prescription drugs** decreased for all grades except 12<sup>th</sup>. 12<sup>th</sup> grade use exceeds national rates.

### Tompkins Time Trends: Age of First Use - Middle school (M.S., grades 6-8) and High school (H.S., grades 9-12)

	2008		2010		2012	
	M.S.	H.S.	M.S.	H.S.	M.S.	H.S.
<b>Alcohol</b>	11.0	13.5	11.3	13.6	11.1	13.5
<b>Marijuana</b>	11.8	14.0	12.0	14.1	11.9	14.0
<b>Cigarettes</b>	10.9	13.0	11.4	13.3	11.2	13.4

The age of first use of cigarettes has increased for middle and high schoolers since 2008. For alcohol and marijuana, age of first use is relatively unchanged.

People who start using alcohol by age 14 are 4 times more likely to become alcohol dependent in their lifetime than people who wait until they are 21 to start drinking.

**NOTES:**

National (Nat'l): refers to the Monitoring the Future survey given nationally each year to a sample of 50,000 students in grades 8, 10 and 12

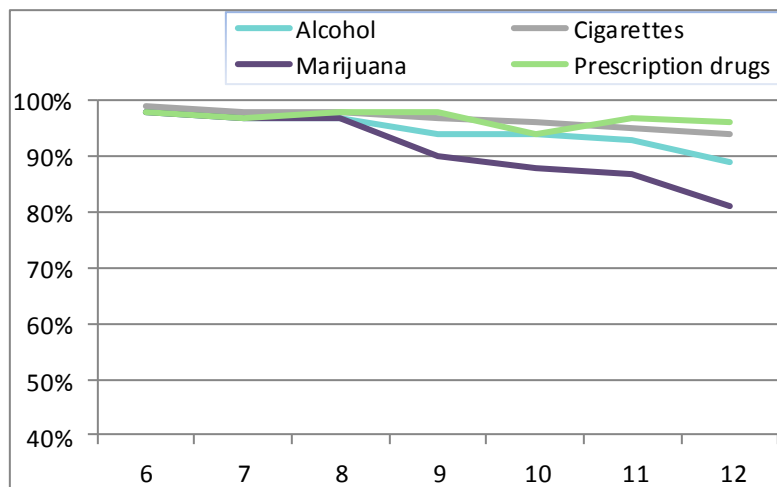
Current use: Use within the past 30 days

Regular use: Cigarettes - smoke one or more packs per day; Alcohol - one or two alcoholic drinks nearly every day; Marijuana - not specified

Prescription drugs: Use of prescription pain killers, sedatives, tranquilizers, and/or stimulants without a doctor telling the person to take them

Participating schools: Dryden Middle and High School; Groton Middle and High School; Ithaca's Boynton and DeWitt Middle Schools, Lehman Alternative Community School, Ithaca High School; Lansing Middle and High School; Newfield Middle and High School; New Roots Charter School; Trumansburg Doig Middle School and Dickerson High School; 81% participation rate for the County

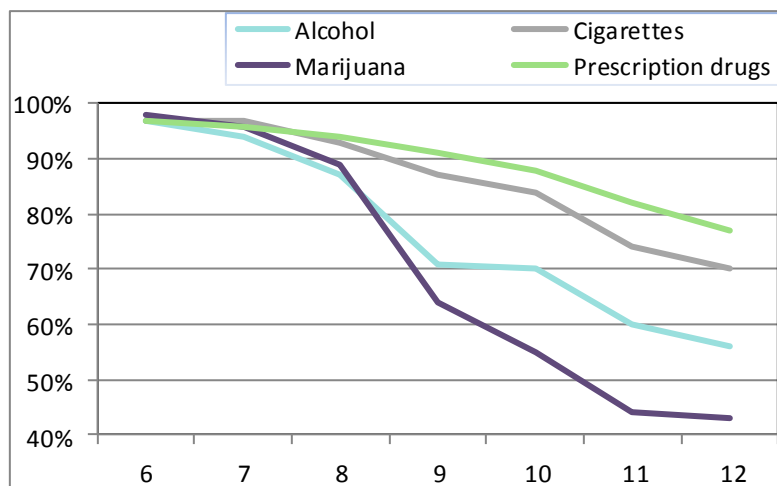
### Tompkins Students' Perception of Parental Disapproval of Substance Use by Grade



As they get older, students believe their parents are *less likely* to disapprove if they use substances. The greatest decrease in perceived parental disapproval is for marijuana.

Students who believe their parents disapprove are 3 times less likely to use alcohol and 6 times less likely to use marijuana. (see chart, P. 3.)

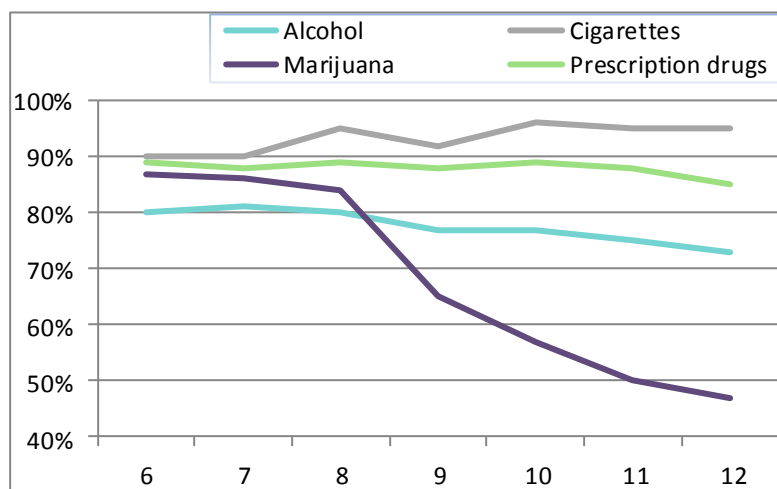
### Tompkins Students' Perception of Friends' Disapproval of Substance Use by Grade



In 6th grade, nearly all students say their friends would disapprove if they used any of the four tracked substances. By 12th grade, disapproval rates have dropped. For marijuana, only 43% of 12th graders say their friends would disapprove of if they used marijuana.

See chart on P. 2 for the impact of friends' use of and attitudes toward substance use.

### Tompkins Students' Perception of Harm from Regular Substance Use by Grade



Perceived harm\* from cigarette use *increases* slightly with age while perceived harm from marijuana use *decreases* significantly. By 12th grade, fewer than half of students report harm from regular use of marijuana.

\*Moderate or great risk of harm from regular use.

For more information, contact the Community Coalition for Healthy Youth

c/o Tompkins County Youth Services Dept., 320 W. M.L. King Jr. (State) St., Ithaca (607) 274-5310 or [www.healthyyouth.org](http://www.healthyyouth.org)

The opinions, findings and conclusions or recommended in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of U.S. SAMHSA or the Drug Free Communities Support Program.

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