

2023 - Youth Behaviour Survey - FINAL Highlights Report



Prepared for:



and



School District of Mystery Lake

Prepared by:



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May 2023

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The Adolescent Health Education Committee (AHEC) was provided with Overall Detailed Tables which presented student responses to each question by student gender and grade level. In addition, AHEC was provided with school specific results for distribution to each of the participating schools. AHEC provides each school with an electronic copy of their school specific information/tables, as well as an electronic copy of the Overall Detailed Tables.

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INTRODUCTION

A. Background

Since 1986, the Northern Health Region (formerly Burntwood Regional Health Authority) and Mystery Lake School District have surveyed students on a number of health-related issues. Proactive Information Services Inc., a Manitoba-based company specializing in educational research and evaluation, has provided design assistance, technical support and reporting for all surveys.

Originally, the survey was limited to those students attending R.D. Parker Collegiate. However, since 1992, all seven schools located in the Mystery Lake School District have participated. The following discussion provides an overview of the information resulting from the 2023 survey, as well as comparisons to previous years, where feasible. The questionnaire has undergone multiple revisions over each survey period limiting the ability to make comparisons over time. Furthermore, as a Highlights Report, the following discussion does not provide a detailed analysis of the data.

B. Instrument Design

Since 1986, a number of community agencies have been involved in the development of the questionnaire. However, the efforts to keep the survey current and relevant continues to be led by the Adolescent Health Education Committee (AHEC). AHEC is a Thompson-based committee that meets on a bi-monthly basis and is currently comprised of representatives from Shared Health, the RCMP, the School District of Mystery Lake, and the Northern Health Region - Thompson. In preparing for the 2023 survey, the AHEC committee expended considerable effort and time revising and adding to the survey questions¹. Their substantial efforts are acknowledged here.

C. Survey Administration

The administration of the 2023 survey was overseen by the AHEC Chairperson. Students participating in the survey were assured they would remain anonymous and their individual responses would remain confidential. The AHEC Chairperson forwarded 875 completed questionnaires to Proactive for data preparation (i.e., coding and scanning), analysis, and the preparation of this report.

¹ Revisions to the survey instrument since 1986 limits the ability to track some changes over time.

HIGHLIGHTS

A. Respondent Background Information

- ◆ The reported gender identity of the respondent group was split between male (49%) and female (43%) students, while 8% indicated other gender identities.²
- ◆ Students in Grades 7/8 made up 43% of the respondents, while students in Grades 9/10 made up 35%, and students in Grades 11/12 comprised 22% (Table 1).

Grade Level	1999	2002	2010	2013	2016	2019	2023
Grade 7	21%	23%	23%	21%	19%	22%	20%
Grade 8	18%	22%	21%	20%	18%	20%	23%
Grade 9	18%	17%	16%	20%	17%	16%	16%
Grade 10	17%	17%	14%	18%	18%	14%	19%
Grade 11	15%	12%	13%	12%	15%	14%	12%
Grade 12	10%	9%	14%	9%	13%	13%	10%

- ◆ Eighty-one percent of students reported living with one or both biological parents.
- ◆ Two percent of students indicated that they or their partner had, at some point, been pregnant. Furthermore, one percent of students reported being parents.

B. Wellness

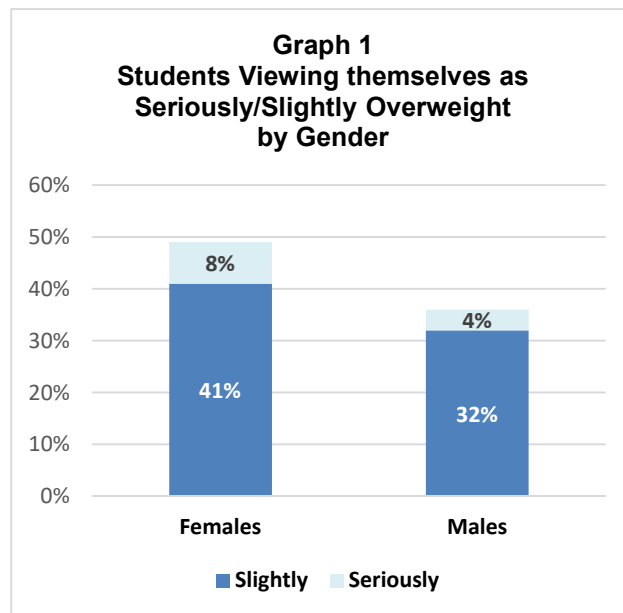
1. Nutrition

- ◆ Overall, students reported feeling they had enough to eat (84%), a slight decrease from 2019 (88%).
- ◆ While two-thirds (66%) of students never/rarely consume free food or drinks provided by the school, 24% of students indicated consuming free food or drinks “some days”.³
- ◆ Overall, nearly half (44%) of students considered themselves “about the right weight.” Seven percent of students viewed themselves as being “seriously overweight,” while 36% saw themselves as being “slightly overweight.” These findings have shown little change since 2008.

² The answer category ‘non-binary’ was added.

³ This question removed information regarding ‘breakfast meals’.

- ◆ As in previous years, females (49%) were more likely than their when male peers (36%) to view themselves as being “overweight” (Graph 1).



- ◆ Approximately half of the students (54%) reported feeling “terrified about being overweight,” compared to 39% in 2016, and 49% in 2019. Females (68%) were much more likely than males (40%) to express these feelings, moving the divide to 28% as compared to 18% in 2019.
- ◆ Consistent with previous years, females (30%) were more likely than males (20%) to report dieting for weight loss in the last six months.
- ◆ Dieting stayed relatively comparable by grade level from 2019 to 2023.
- ◆ The vast majority of students (79%) “never” used vomiting as a strategy. However, females (30%) were much more likely to vomit to lose weight than their male peers (9%). Notably, half of students (49%) had used excessive exercising to lose weight.
- ◆ Overall, 23% of students reported “never” drinking coffee/tea (females 19%; males 27%).⁴
- ◆ Overall, approximately half of the students (47%) reported “never” drinking energy drinks, while over a third (39%) reported drinking energy drinks “a few times”. Furthermore, almost three-quarters of students (73%) indicated “never” eating energy bars, whereas one in five students (21%) responded they ate energy bars “a few times”.

2. Sleep

- ◆ Half of the students (49%) reported getting between six and seven hours of sleep in a 24-hour period; followed by eight to ten hours (35%). Thirteen percent of students reported sleeping zero to five hours.⁵

⁴ This question added ‘tea’ as an answer. This change makes comparisons to previous years difficult.

⁵ Changes to this question’s answers do not allow for comparisons to previous years.

- ◆ Males (43%) were more likely to report getting eight to ten hours of sleep than were their female (29%) peers. Interestingly, the percentage of students getting eight to ten hours sleep decreased while progressing through the grades (Grade 7: 44%; Grade 8: 40%; Grade 9: 39%; Grade 10: 30%; Grade 11: 20%; Grade 12: 22%).

3. Physical Activities

- ◆ Overall, students were most likely to be physically active 3 times a week or more (35%) and daily (35%) during school hours. Furthermore, students are physically active 3 times a week or more (32%), once a week (28%), or daily (25%) outside school hours.⁶
- ◆ Notably, Grade 7 (During: 20%; Outside: 21%) and Grade 8 (During: 22%; Outside: 23%) students represented the lowest percentages by grade level for daily physical activity both during and outside of school hours.
- ◆ Consistent with 2019, half of the students (50%), participated in “sports activities.” Of note, females (51%) and males (54%) reported participating in these activities to a greater extent when compared to individuals that indicated their gender as non-binary (28%).⁷
- ◆ Interestingly, there is little difference between females (56%) and males (55%) participating in “non-sport individual activities.” However, females (25%) were more likely than males (15%) to belong to school or community clubs or organizations.
- ◆ Students in Grade 12 were most likely to work a part-time job of 15 hours or more (38%) and a part-time job of less than 15 hours a week (32%).

C. Gang Membership

- ◆ In 2023 there was a slight decrease in reported gang membership with 2% of students reporting being current gang members. However, this percentage has not fluctuated much from previous years.

⁶ Several changes occurred to this question, which do not allow for comparisons to previous years.

⁷ The reader should note that the number of students indicating the gender category of non-binary is relatively small.

D. Human Sexuality

1. Sexual Activity

- ◆ Students indicated that dating and relationships (51%), how to tell if it is love (49%), and talking to parents about sexual topics (21%) were their three main concerns regarding sexuality.⁸
- ◆ In 2023, 22% of students reported having engaged in oral sex, changing little since 2019. The percentage of students reporting this sexual activity ranged from Grade 7 (2%) to Grade 12 (54%).
- ◆ Overall, 22% of students engaged in vaginal sex compared to 26% in 2019. The percentage of students reporting this sexual activity ranged from 3% in Grade 7 to 56% in Grade 12, varying little from 2016.
- ◆ Overall, 6% of students reported having engaged in anal sex; this has remained nearly the same since 2005.
- ◆ Almost identical to 2019, approximately one in five students overall (23%) engaged in sexting. However, diverging from 2019, this varied by students' gender (female: 27%; male: 19%). Moreover, this activity steadily increased by grade level; Grade 7 (4%), Grade 8 (11%), Grade 9 (20%), Grade 10 (33%), Grade 11 (46%) and Grade 12 (48%).
- ◆ Overall, sharing of nude photos (20%) had similar results as sexting; females (27%) reported sharing more nude photos than males (14%). Additionally, this activity ranged from Grade 7 (5%) to Grade 12 (43%).
- ◆ Overall, 19% of students indicated they have felt pressured to perform a sexual activity. This varied by gender with females (24%) being more likely than males (11%) to feel this way. These numbers steadily increase with grade level.
- ◆ Overall, 14% of students had engaged in sexual activity under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Students in Grade 12 (30%) and Grade 11 (31%) were most likely to report having done so. These percentages stayed consistent with 2019.
- ◆ Overall, 10% of students offered or performed sexual acts to feel more accepted. However, females (15%) were much more likely than males (3%) to report doing so. Notably, females more than doubled in this regard from 2019 (7%).

⁸ This question added several answer categories in 2023.

2. Sexually Transmitted Infections

- ◆ Overall, almost three-quarters of students were aware they could acquire sexually transmitted infections (STIs) during unprotected oral sex (71%), unprotected vaginal sex (79%), or unprotected anal sex (73%). Student awareness increased with grade level. This has shown little change since 2013. In 2023, Grade 12 students were the most likely to be aware they could acquire STIs during oral sex (92%), vaginal sex (96%) and anal sex (88%).
- ◆ Thirty-two percent of students engaging in vaginal sex reported “never” or “rarely” using a condom. Furthermore, of the 199 students engaging in oral sex, 126 indicated they “never” use condoms. Additionally, of the 80 students that responded to engaging in anal sex, 50 indicated “never” using a condom⁹.
- ◆ When asked the main reasons for NOT using condoms for protection, approximately two-thirds of students (74%) reported not engaging in sexual activity, changing little since 2016 (68%) and 2019 (71%).
- ◆ For students who were sexually active, 53% used condoms. The most frequent reasons for non-use were that “condoms are uncomfortable” (28%) and that they “ruin the mood” (27%).

3. Birth Control/Contraceptive Methods

- ◆ Overall, for students who were sexually active, condoms (78%), masturbation (52%) and birth control pills/patch (37%) were most frequently used as methods for birth control in 2023. These percentages show little change from 2019. Three percent of students indicated they used abortion as a birth control method.¹⁰
- ◆ Interestingly, males (34%) were more likely than females (21%) to report abstinence in 2023, which is a reversal from 2019 (females 27%, males (12%).

4. Pornography:

Overall, students were most likely not to have watched pornography (55%). Females (68%) were more likely than males (45%) never to watch pornography. Males (7%) were more likely than females (1%) to watch pornography “daily.”

⁹ Students demonstrated confusion in answering certain questions related to sexual activity. This confusion may explain the increase in percentage of students “never” using a condom. Furthermore, some categories had very small numbers. Therefore, number of students, instead of percentages, were reported for these questions.

¹⁰ Abortion was added as an answer category in 2023.

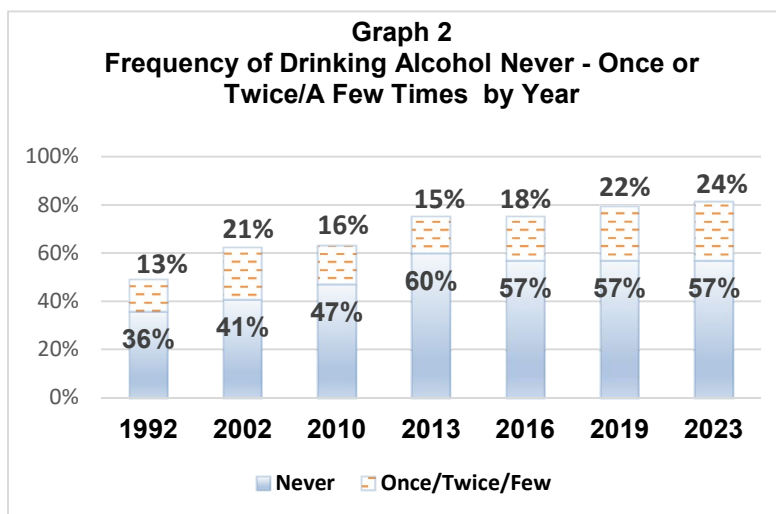
E. Drug Use, Gambling, and Technology

1. Tobacco¹¹

- ◆ Overall, 88% of students reported never having smoked cigarettes/cigars. Males (93%) were more likely than females (84%) to indicate never having smoked cigarettes/cigars. Additionally, approximately three quarters of students indicated never having vaped with nicotine (74%) or vaped for flavour (76%). Similar to the cigarettes/cigars' percentages, males (Nicotine: 83%; Flavour: 85%) were more likely to respond never having vaped with nicotine or vaped for flavour, than their female (Nicotine: 63%; Flavour: 67%) peers.
- ◆ Overall, students in Grade 10 increased daily vaping with nicotine (2019: 7%; 2023: 19%), Grade 11 (2019: 16%; 2023: 25%), and Grade 12 (2019: 15%; 2023: 23%).
- ◆ Students most frequently reported having started smoking between 11 to 14 years of age (62%)¹².
- ◆ The most frequent influences on students' decisions to quit smoking were a family member medically affected by smoking/vaping (40%) and friends (36%).
- ◆ Forty-three percent of students indicated their parent/guardian smoke or vape in their household.

2. Alcohol¹³

- ◆ Since 2013, approximately three-quarters of students reported either "never" drinking or having done so "once or twice/a few times"¹⁴, a substantial decrease in the frequency of drinking since 1992 (Graph 2).



¹¹ Changes in reported tobacco use may be a result of continued revisions to tobacco-related questions.

¹² Several changes occurred to this question, which do not allow for comparisons to previous years.

¹³ Revisions to the 2023 alcohol-related question wording and scales mitigated against making comparisons over time.

¹⁴ In 2023, the category was changed from "once or twice" to become "tried a few times."

- ◆ In 2023, four students (0%) reported drinking “daily,” while 2% reported drinking “more than once a week” and 3% reported doing so “once a week”.
- ◆ As one might expect, students in Grades 7, 8 and 9 were most likely to report never using alcohol. While there was an increase in the percent of students in grades 10 and 12 reporting never using alcohol, a slight decrease was seen in Grade 11 students when compared to the last survey period (Table 2).

Grade Level	1992 %	2002 %	2010 %	2013 %	2016 %	2019 %	2023 %
Grade 7	78	69	80	91	92	85	78
Grade 8	47	50	63	84	73	76	78
Grade 9	35	34	38	57	63	59	52
Grade 10	24	27	40	43	41	38	43
Grade 11	18	17	26	41	38	41	35
Grade 12	15	15	15	21	23	25	35

- ◆ Sixty-two percent of students responded that they started drinking between the ages of 13-16 years old.
- ◆ Overall, for students who do drink, 24% reported “never” drinking until drunk, with males (29%) more likely than females (20%) to report “never” drinking until drunk.
- ◆ Twenty-six percent of students reported drinking until they were drunk “all” and/or “most” of the time. This has stayed relatively the same when compared to previous years (2023: 26%, 2019: 29%, 2016: 28%). However, it was noted that students were more likely to report drinking until drunk in 2013: 33% and 2010: 33%.

3. Other Drugs

- ◆ Overall, 73% of students indicated they “never started” using drugs that were neither alcohol, tobacco, or nicotine¹⁵. Of the students who had used drugs, almost all had used cannabis (92%). A third of these students (33%), regardless of gender, reported using cannabis “daily” (female: 35%; male: 31%).
- ◆ The likelihood of cannabis use increased as students progressed through the grades.

¹⁵ It should be noted that the definition of marijuana was changed on the 2005 questionnaire. Furthermore, the category was change in 2023 from “drugs that are neither alcohol nor tobacco” to become “are not alcohol, tobacco, or nicotine.”

- ◆ Overall, 81% of students reported “never” using prescription drugs; 83% reported “never” using cocaine, and 54% “never” used mushrooms. Drugs most likely to be used “once or twice” included; mushrooms (37%), cocaine (12%), and prescription drugs (9%).
- ◆ Fifty-two percent of students that used drugs indicated that a family member being medically affected by drugs or alcohol would influence their decision to quit, closely followed by a friend (39%).

4. Gambling¹⁶

- ◆ Sixty-six percent of students reported “never” gambling, while 24% did so “once or twice.” However, students in 2023 continued from 2019 (71%) to be less likely to gamble when compared to students in 2008 when 50% said “never”.

5. Technology

- ◆ Overall, 24% of students reported “none” for number of hours spent gaming daily. Females (45%) were much more likely than males (9%) to report “none” for number of hours spent gaming. Similarly, 68% of males spent more than 2 hours a day gaming, compared to 25% of female students.¹⁷
- ◆ Students in Grade 7 (53%), Grade 8 (53%) and Grade 9 (55%) were more likely to spend 2 hours a day or more gaming; in comparison to Grade 10 (45%), Grade 11 (45%), and Grade 12 (36%) students.
- ◆ Overall, in 2023, 47% of students spent more than 4 hours a day on social media, which is a 10% increase from 2019. Females (60%) were almost twice as likely as males (32%) to spend this amount of time on social media per day. Moreover, in comparison to 2019 (44%), females increased their social media use of 4 hours or more by 16%.
- ◆ Interestingly, students in Grade 7 (42%), Grade 8 (42%), and Grade 12 (41%) indicated they were on social media for more than 4 hours. A little over half of students (51% - 54%) in Grades 9 through 11 indicated 4 or more hours of social media use.

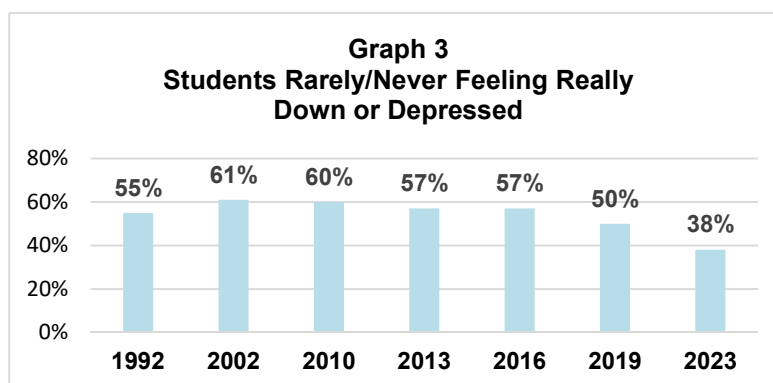
¹⁶ Changes to this question related to student gambling limited the comparisons that can be made with past surveys.

¹⁷ The wording for this question’s answers were changed from “video-gaming” to “gaming”.

F. Anxiety, Depression and Suicide

1. Depression and Suicide

- Continuing the trend from 2013 to 2019, in 2023 even fewer students (38%) reported “rarely” and/or “never” feeling “really down or depressed” (Graph 3). Almost one in three students (30%) reported having these feelings “all” or “most of the time.” As in previous years, females (24%) were less likely than males (55%) to report never/rarely feeling down or depressed. However, males decreased from 69% in 2019 to 55% in 2023.



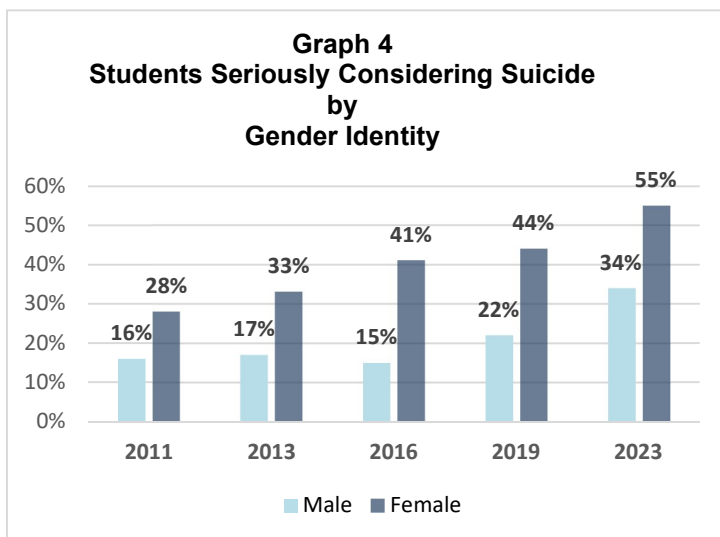
- Females (39%) were more than twice as likely than males (16%) to report feeling down or depressed “all” or “most” of the time; representing an increase of 13% for females as compared to 2019.
- In 2023, forty-five percent of students indicated they felt really worried or anxious “all” or “most” of the time. Females (62%) were more than twice as likely than males (25%) to report feeling worried or anxious “all” or “most” of the time.
- Notably, there was a sharp increase in feeling anxious “all” or “most” of the time from 2019 (33%) to 2023 (45%). Furthermore, females reporting feeling anxious “all” or “most” of the time increased from 2019 (44%) to 2023 (62%).
- In general, there was no difference across grade levels in reporting feelings of depression or anxiety.

- Overall, the frequency with which students reported having considered suicide continues to increase (Table 3); 2023 marked the largest increase in students considering suicide between reporting reports in 31 years.

1992	22%
2002	23%
2010	22%
2013	25%
2016	29%
2019	35%
2023	47%

- Students were most likely to reach out to parents/guardians (37%) and friends (31%) concerning suicide. Importantly, of the 392 students who have considered suicide, 82% indicated they had reached out to someone concerning suicide.

- ◆ Females continue to be much more likely than their male peers to report having considered suicide (Graph 4).



◆ Approximately half of students in Grade 10 (51%) and Grade 12 (48%) reported having considered suicide; whereas almost two thirds of Grade 11 students (62%) indicated having considered suicide.

◆ While the group is small, it must be noted that of the 69 students in the “other” gender category 58 (or 84%) reported having considered suicide.

- ◆ Overall, approximately one quarter (23%) of students reported having attempted suicide. Almost one third of female students (31%) and twelve percent of male students reported having attempted suicide. Students in Grades 7 and 8 were not as likely to report having attempted suicide, in comparison to Grades 9 through 12. Furthermore, females were almost three times as likely to report currently intentionally harming themselves (females: 35%; males: 12%). All percentages increased from 2019.
- ◆ While the group is small, it must be noted that 49% of students in the “other” gender category reported having attempted suicide. Additionally, 93% of students in this category indicated feeling depressed “some” to “all of the time;” and 99% indicated feeling worried or anxious “some” to “all of the time.”
- ◆ Overall, 54% of students reported “a close friend or family member” had “attempted or died by suicide,” a continued increase from 40% in 2013, 45% in 2016, 49% in 2019.
- ◆ Approximately one quarter of students (26%) reported intentionally harming themselves. Females (35%) were almost three times as likely to indicate intentionally harming themselves than their male (12%) peers.

2. Safety and Self-Esteem

- ◆ Similar to 2019, students (50%) reported “always” and/or “often” feeling safe in their community. Furthermore, males (58%) compared to females (45%)

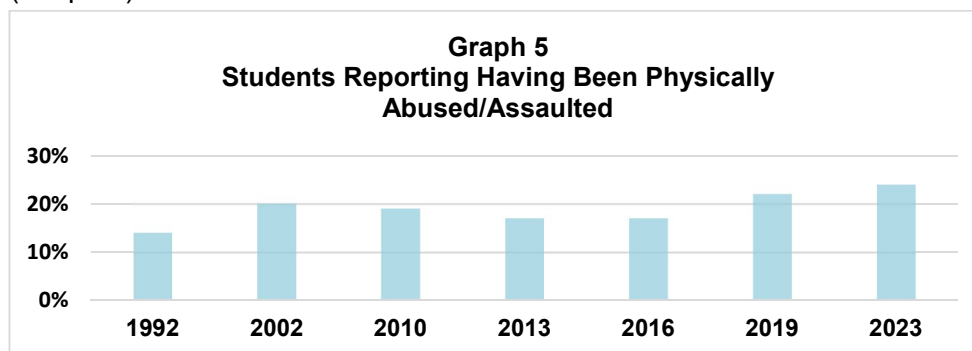
continued to be more likely to “always” and/or “often” feel safe in their community.

- ◆ Three-quarters of students (74%) reported “always” or “often” feeling safe in school, a slight increase from 2019 (71%).
- ◆ Again, as in 2016 and 2019, approximately one in ten students (12%) felt bullied by other students “always” and/or “often,” varying little since 2013 (14%). Females (15%) were almost twice as likely than males (7%) to report feeling bullied by other students “always” or “often”.
- ◆ Students reporting “always” or “often” bullying other students remained at 3%. Females (18%) indicated they bully other students “sometimes” to “always” slightly more than males (10%). In addition, 6% of students reported bullying someone “on-line/social media.”
- ◆ Staying the same as 2019, 4% of students reported “always” or “often” being bullied by school staff. Females (5%) were more likely to indicate being bullied by school staff “always” or “often” in comparison to their male (2%) peers.
- ◆ Increasing from 2019 (25%), 34% of students “always” or “often” worry or get anxious about going to school in 2023. Additionally, 35% of students indicated they worry about being as good as other kids “always” or “often”. Females (45%) were more than twice as likely to respond “always” or “often” than males (22%) regarding how much they worried about being as good as other kids.

G. Safety and Abuse¹⁸

1. Physical Abuse/Assault

- ◆ Almost a quarter of students (24%) reported being physical abused/assaulted (Graph 5).



¹⁸ Changes to the question’s wording made comparisons over time difficult.

- ◆ Approximately one in three females (30%) reported having been “physically abused/assaulted,” as compared to 16% of males.
- ◆ A quarter of Grade 7 students (25%) reported having been physically abused/assaulted (Table 4). Students at all grade levels, except Grade 12, had increased incidents of abuse/assault.

Table 4
Students Reporting Having Been Physically Abused/Assaulted by Grade Level and Year

Grade Level	1992 %	2002 %	2010 %	2013 %	2016 %	2019 %	2023 %
Grade 7	8	15	11	16	11	17	25
Grade 8	10	14	14	15	18	14	17
Grade 9	17	33	20	15	17	22	23
Grade 10	13	23	22	18	18	23	27
Grade 11	17	21	25	14	20	28	33
Grade 12	17	20	25	25	18	31	20

- ◆ Of the students who indicated they had been physically assaulted, parent/guardian (37%) were most likely to be reported as the assailant.

2. Emotional Abuse

- ◆ Overall, 39% of students indicated they had been mentally/emotionally abused. Females (49%) were more than twice as likely as males (23%) to indicate having had this experience. Mental/emotional abuse increased by 5% from 2019.
- ◆ Approximately, one-third of students in Grades 7 (34%) and Grade 8 (32%) reported having been mentally/emotionally abused. In comparison, approximately 40% of students in Grade 9 (39%) and Grade 11 (42%) reported have been mentally/emotionally abused. However, almost half of the students in Grade 10 (46%) and Grade 12 (46%) reported experiencing metal/emotional abuse. All of these percentages increased from 2019.

3. Sexual Abuse/Assault

- ◆ In 2023, 20% of students reported having been sexually abused/assaulted. This percent has increased from 8% in 2016 and 13% in 2019. Females (30%) were six times as likely to report having experienced sexual abuse/assault than males (5%). Students reporting this experience ranged from 13% of students in Grade 7 to 29% of students in Grade 11.

