

**ALABAMA YOUTH  
TOBACCO SURVEY**

**ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
TOBACCO PREVENTION AND CONTROL**

# INTRODUCTION AND METHODS

The Alabama Youth Tobacco Survey (AL YTS) is conducted by the Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch of the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH), through a grant from the Office on Smoking and Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Alabama conducted the first AL YTS in 2000, and continues to administer the survey biennially. The AL YTS is a comprehensive survey of tobacco use, access, cessation, knowledge and attitudes, and exposure to secondhand smoke among middle school and high school students in Alabama.

The 2016 AL YTS is a representative survey of public middle school and high school students in Alabama. The survey sample design is a two-stage cluster design. In the first stage, schools are selected randomly within the grade range specified with a probability proportional to enrollment size. The survey was administered at 62 schools to 2,510 high school students in Grades 9 through 12. The survey was also completed by 3,033 students at 71 middle schools containing Grades 6 to 8.

At the second stage, classes are randomly selected from within the selected schools, and all of the students within a selected class are surveyed. The high school participation rate was 77 percent, and the student participation rate was 80 percent. This yields an overall participation rate of 61 percent for high school surveys. The middle school participation rate was 72 percent, and the student participation rate was 85 percent. The overall participation rate for middle school surveys was 62 percent.

The AL YTS is a voluntary, self-administered questionnaire consisting of 72 questions. These questions cover various tobacco-related topics such as prevalence of tobacco use, access to tobacco products, use of tobacco at school, cessation, knowledge and attitudes, media and advertising awareness, and exposure to secondhand smoke. Survey administration procedures are designed to protect student privacy and allow for anonymous participation.

Data gathered from the AL YTS is utilized to enhance Alabama's capacity to design, implement, and evaluate the youth component of its Tobacco Prevention and Control Program. Results are used to identify future priority areas and monitor progress toward state plan goals.

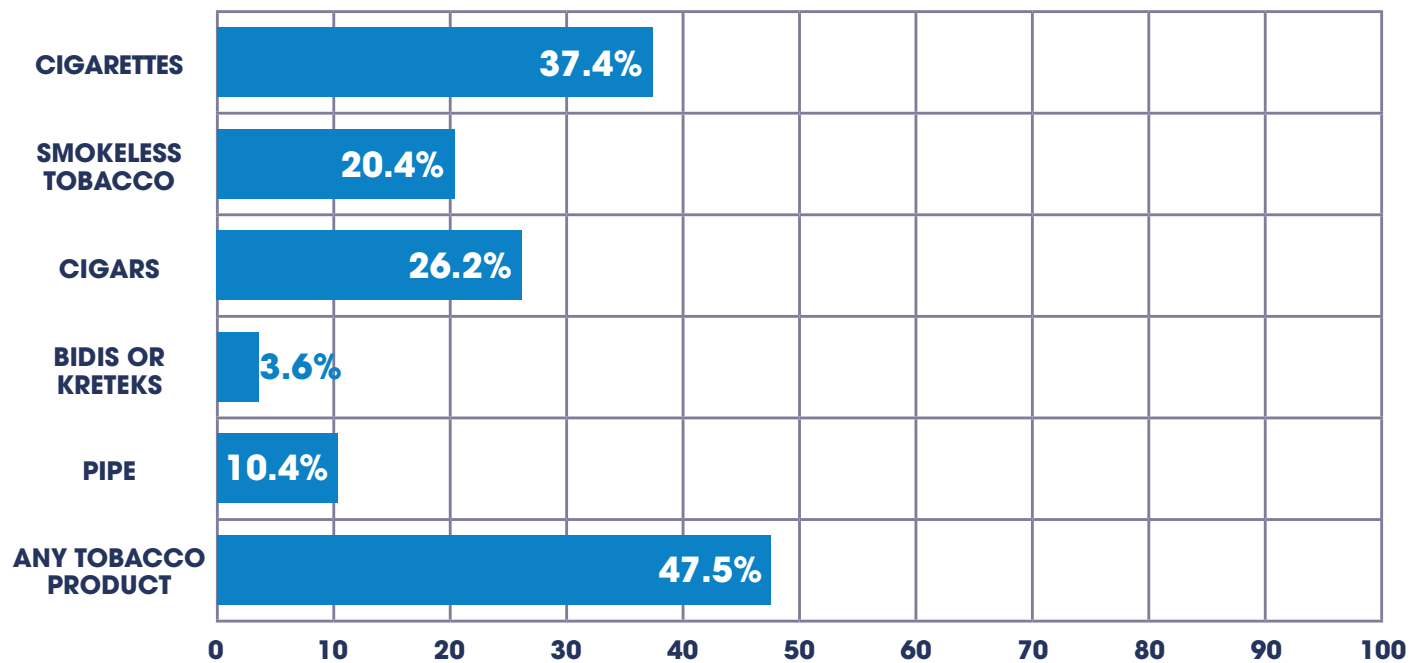
# USE OF ANY TOBACCO

Students were asked about use of tobacco such as cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, cigars, bidis or kreteks, and pipes. Students were considered “ever tobacco users” if they ever tried any tobacco in their lifetime.

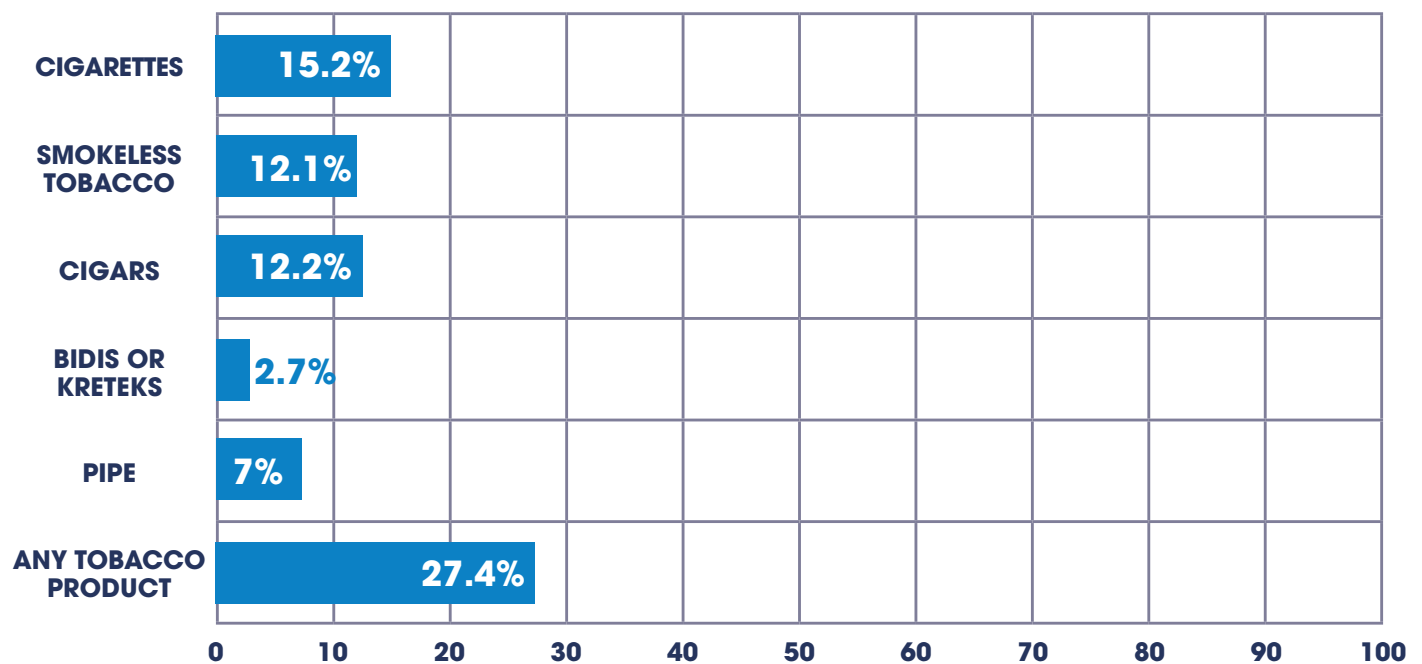
- Cigarettes were the most commonly used tobacco product by middle and high school students.
- The percentage of high school students who tried tobacco decreased from 53.2 percent in 2014, to 47.5 percent in 2016.
- The percentage of middle school students who tried tobacco decreased from 32.9 percent in 2014, to 27.4 percent in 2016.

Overall, fewer students have tried any form of tobacco from 2014, to 2016.

## HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO EVER USED TOBACCO BY PRODUCT



## MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO EVER USED TOBACCO BY PRODUCT

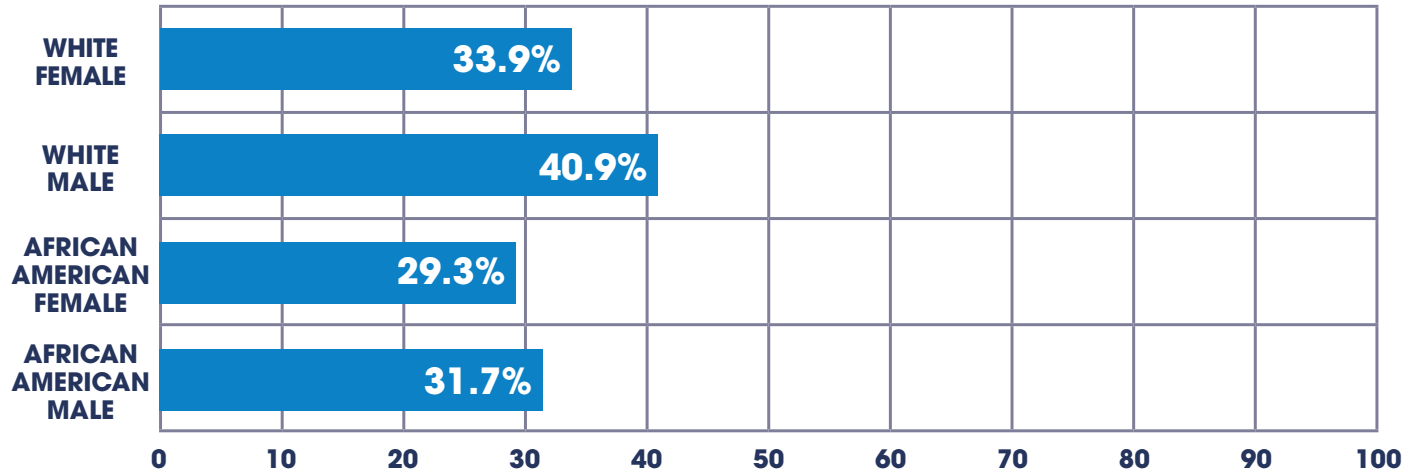


# EVER TRIED CIGARETTE SMOKING

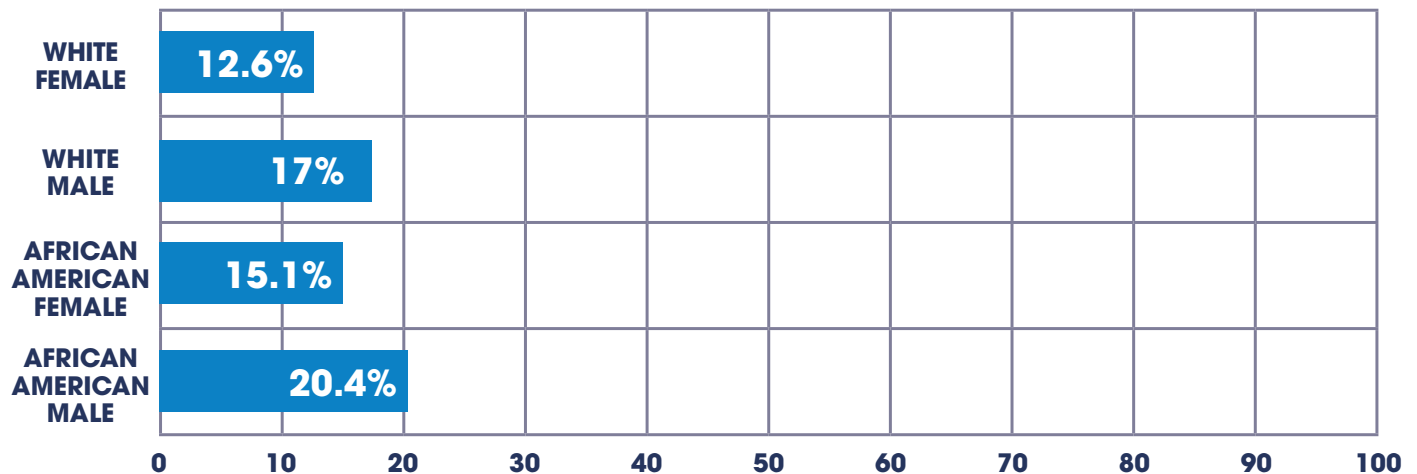
Students were asked whether they had ever tried cigarette smoking (even one or two puffs) in their lifetime.

- Overall, 37.4 percent of high school students had ever tried cigarette smoking in 2016.
- A total of 15.2 percent of middle school students had ever tried cigarette smoking.
- In high school, male students were slightly more likely to try smoking than female students.

## HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO EVER TRIED CIGARETTE SMOKING BY GENDER AND RACE



## MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO EVER TRIED CIGARETTE SMOKING BY GENDER AND RACE

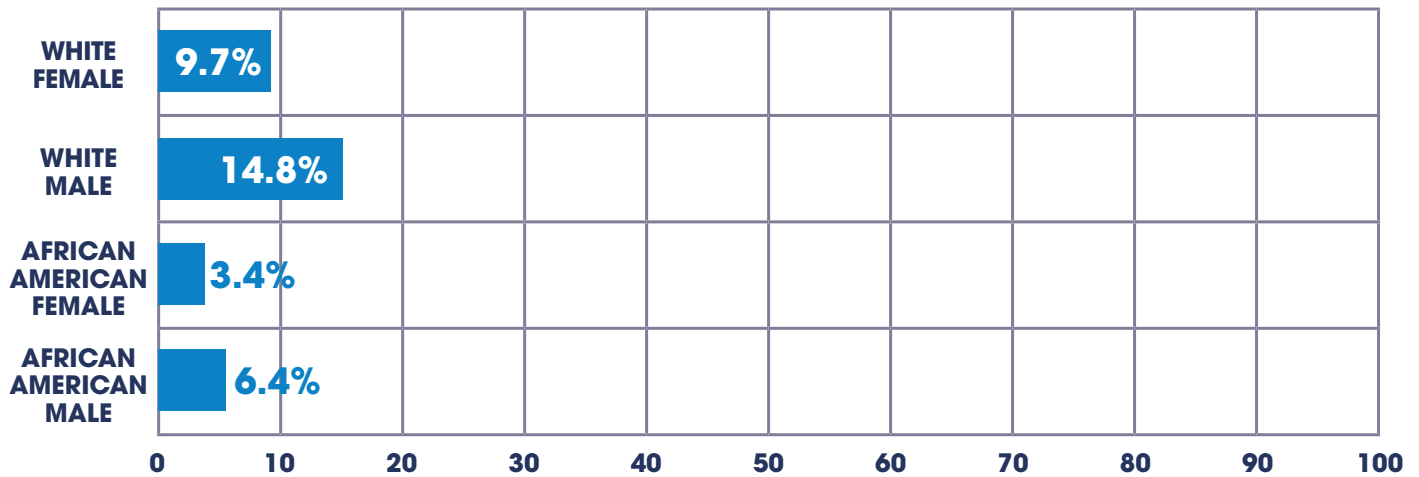


# CURRENT CIGARETTE SMOKERS

Students were asked about their use of cigarettes during the past 30 days. Students were considered “current smokers” if they reported smoking cigarettes at least once within the past 30 days.

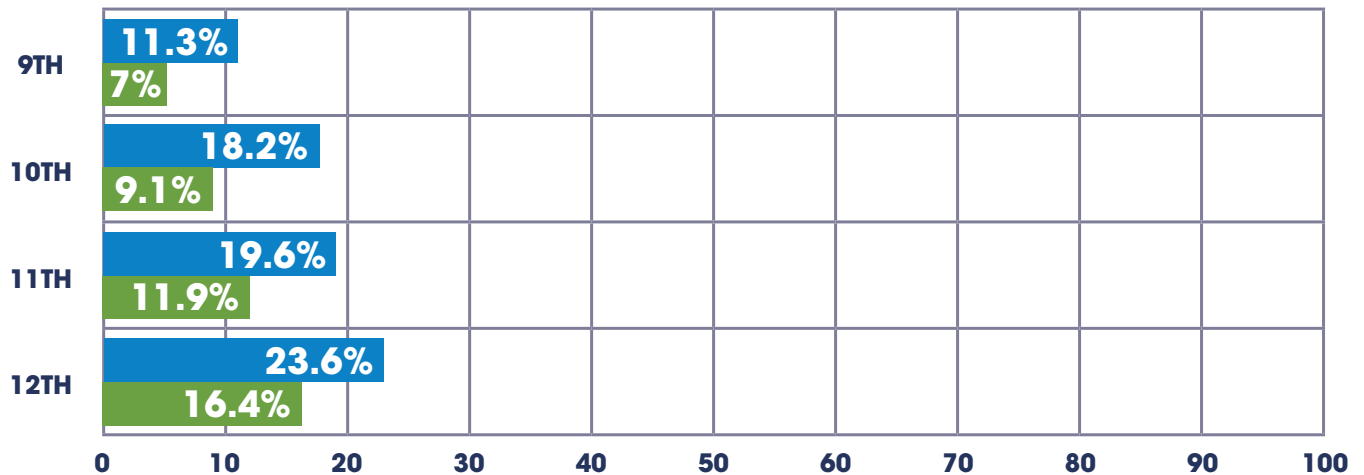
- The current smoking rate among high school students decreased from 17.8 percent in 2014, to 10.9 percent in 2016.
- Among high school students, whites were more likely to smoke than African Americans.
- The overall smoking rate for middle school students declined from 6.4 percent in 2014, to 3.4 percent in 2016.

## HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO REPORTED CURRENT SMOKING BY GENDER AND RACE



## HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO REPORTED CURRENT SMOKING BY GRADE AND SURVEY YEAR

■ 2014  
■ 2016

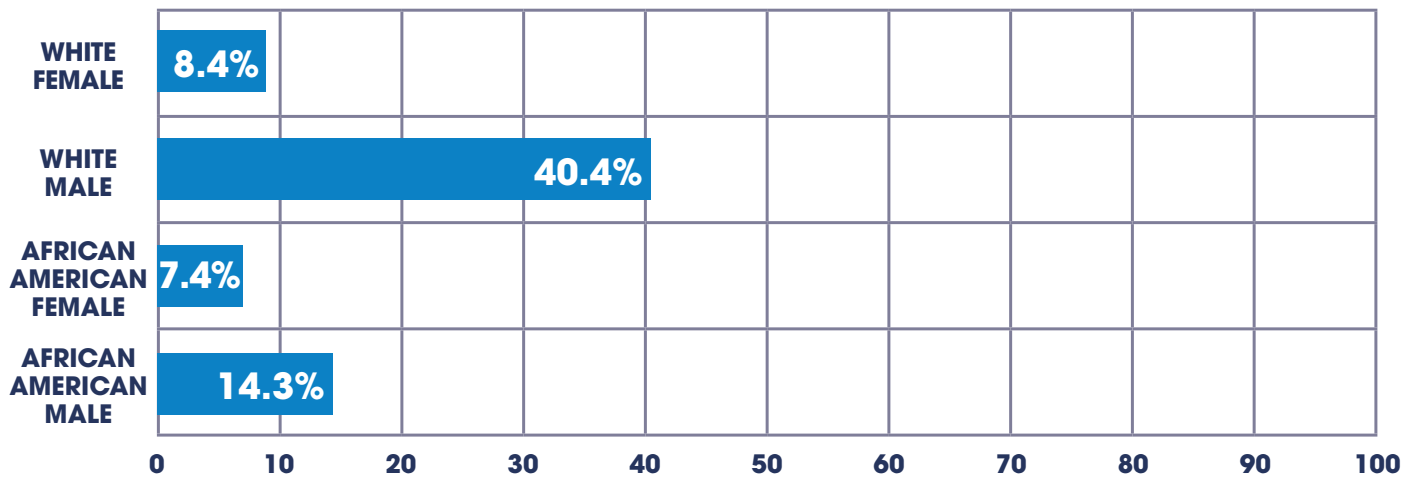


# EVER TRIED SMOKELESS TOBACCO

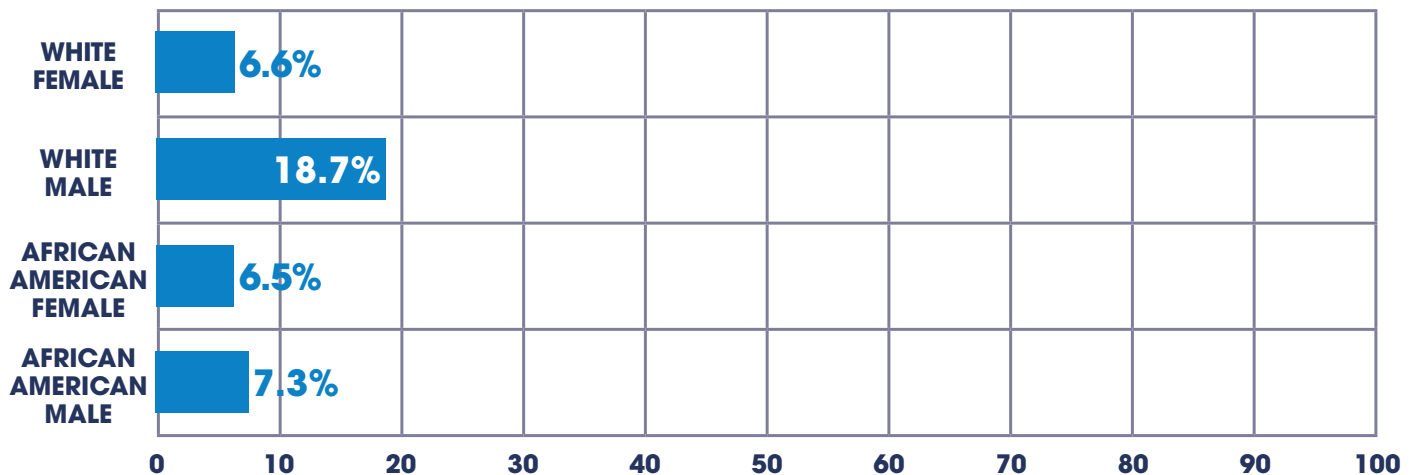
Students were asked whether they had ever tried chewing tobacco, snuff, or dip.

- White males were more likely than any other group to try smokeless tobacco in both middle school (18.7 percent) and high school (40.4 percent).
- The percentage of middle school students that tried smokeless tobacco decreased from 16.0 percent in 2014, to 12.1 percent in 2016.
- Both middle school and high school students were more likely to try cigarette smoking than smokeless tobacco.

## HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO EVER TRIED SMOKELESS TOBACCO BY GENDER AND RACE



## HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO EVER TRIED SMOKELESS TOBACCO BY GENDER AND RACE

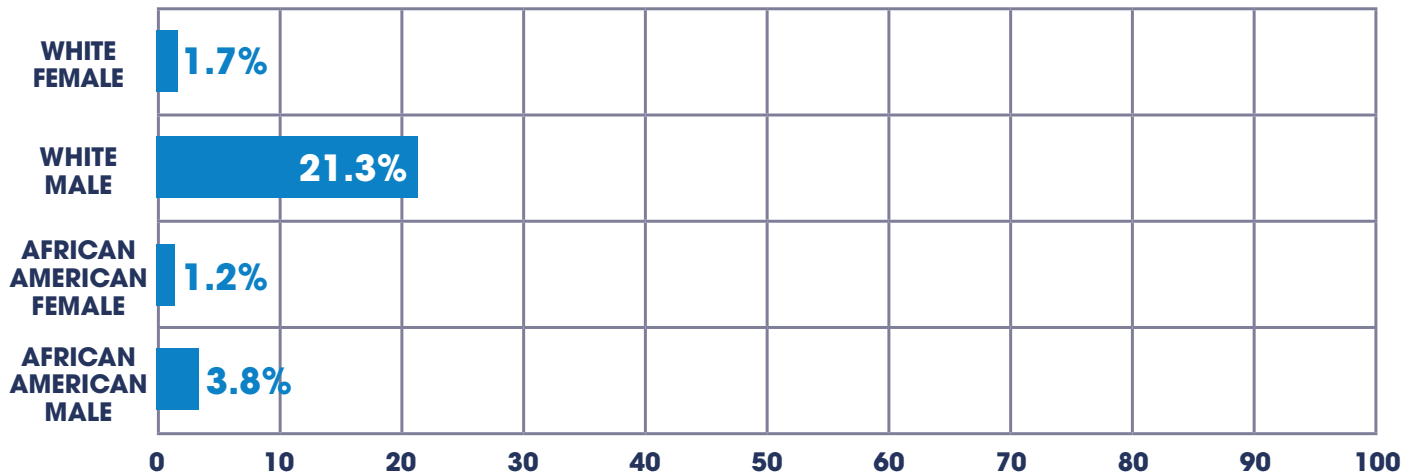


# CURRENT USE OF SMOKELESS TOBACCO

Students were asked about their use of smokeless tobacco during the past 30 days. Students were considered “current smokeless tobacco users” if they reported using smokeless tobacco at least once within the past 30 days.

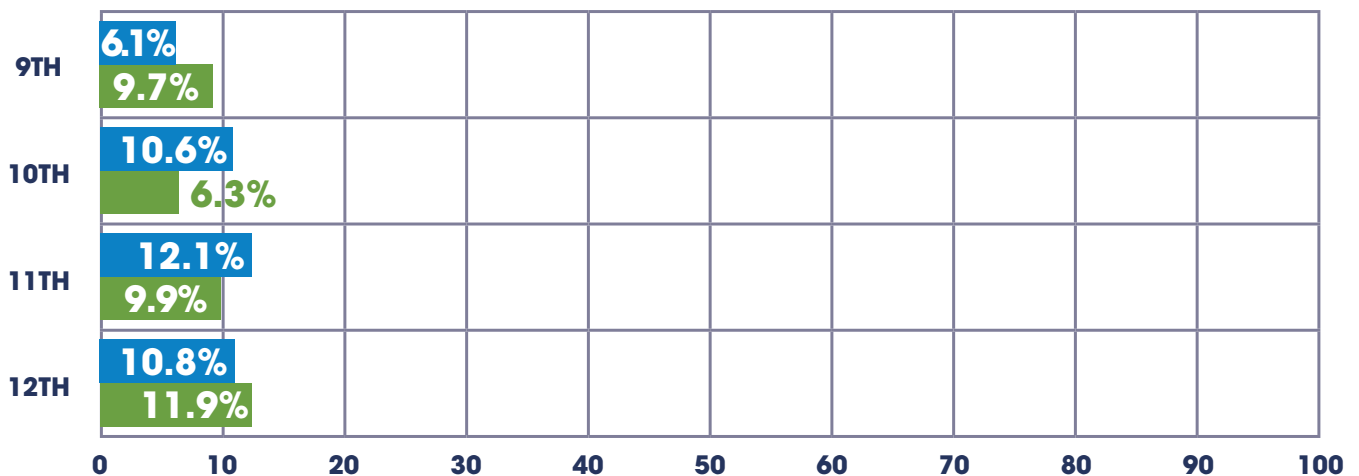
- Use of smokeless tobacco among high school students had a minimal decrease from 9.7 percent in 2014, to 9.3 percent in 2016.
- In 2016, white males had the highest current smokeless tobacco rate at 21.3 percent.
- Middle school students’ use of smokeless tobacco decreased from 6.7 percent in 2014, to 4.0 percent in 2016.

## HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO REPORTED CURRENT USE OF SMOKELESS TOBACCO BY GENDER AND RACE



## HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO REPORTED CURRENT SMOKELESS TOBACCO USE BY GRADE AND SURVEY YEAR

■ 2014  
■ 2016

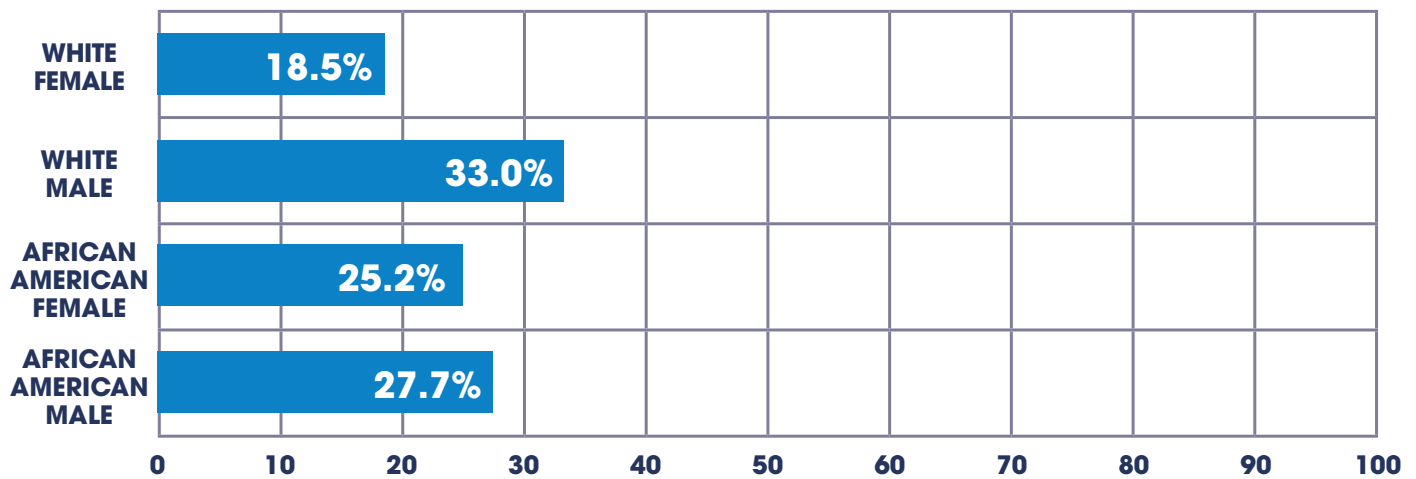


# EVER TRIED CIGARS

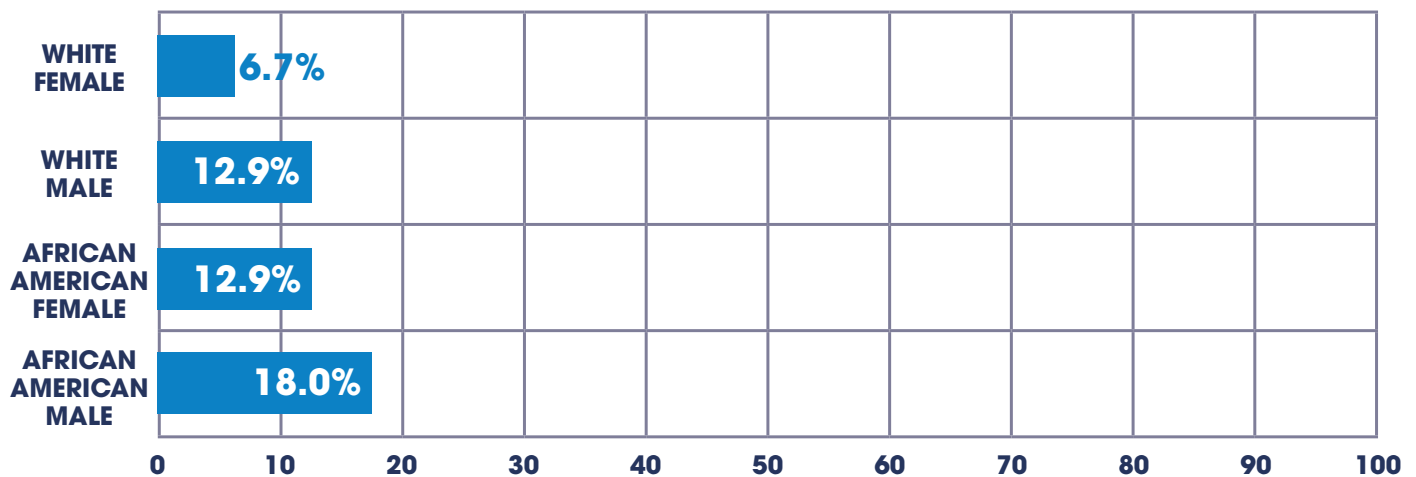
Students were asked whether they had ever tried cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars (even one or two puffs) in their lifetime.

- 12.2 percent of middle school students tried cigars in 2016, which shows a continued decline over the course of several surveys.
- 14.6 percent in 2014.
- 16.4 percent in 2012.
- 17.8 percent in 2010.
- 21.3 percent in 2008.
- There was a decrease in high school students who ever tried cigars from 26.2 percent (2016), 30.2 percent (2014), and 36.7 percent (2012).

## HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO REPORT EVER USING CIGARS BY GENDER AND RACE



## MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO REPORT EVER USING CIGARS BY GENDER AND RACE



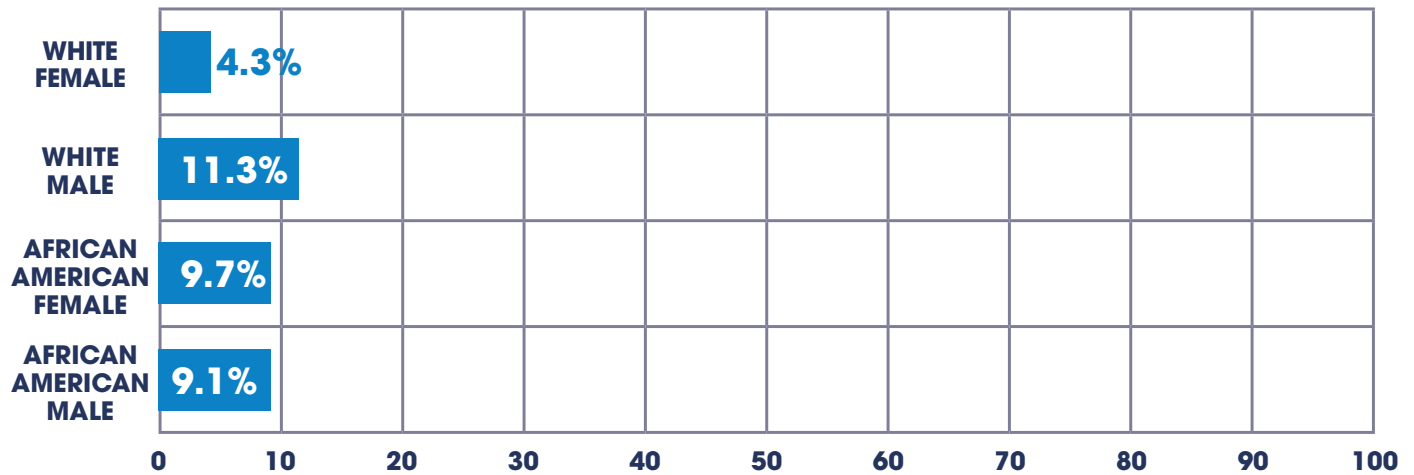


# CURRENT USE OF CIGARS

Students were asked about their use of cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars during the past 30 days. Students were considered “current cigar smokers” if they reported smoking cigars at least once within the past 30 days.

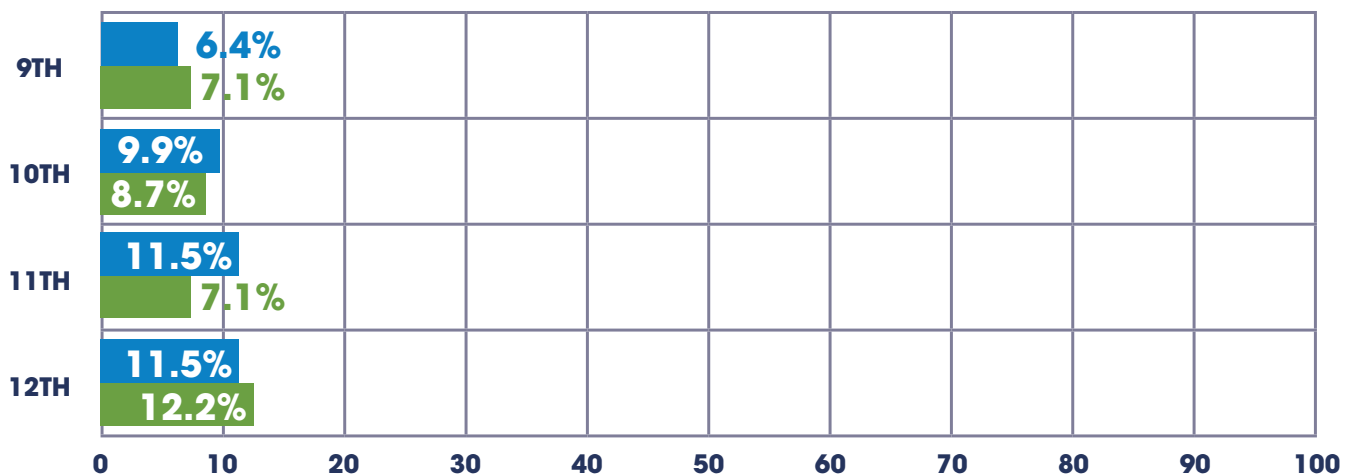
- The current use of cigars among high school students decreased from 9.7 percent in 2014, to 8.8 percent in 2016.
- Current cigar use among high school students has continued to decline since 2012.
- Overall, male high school students (10.2 percent) are more likely to use cigars than female high school students (7.3 percent).

## HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO REPORTED CURRENT USE OF CIGARS BY GENDER AND RACE



## STUDENTS WHO REPORTED CURRENT USE OF CIGARS BY GRADE AND SURVEY YEAR

■ 2014  
■ 2016

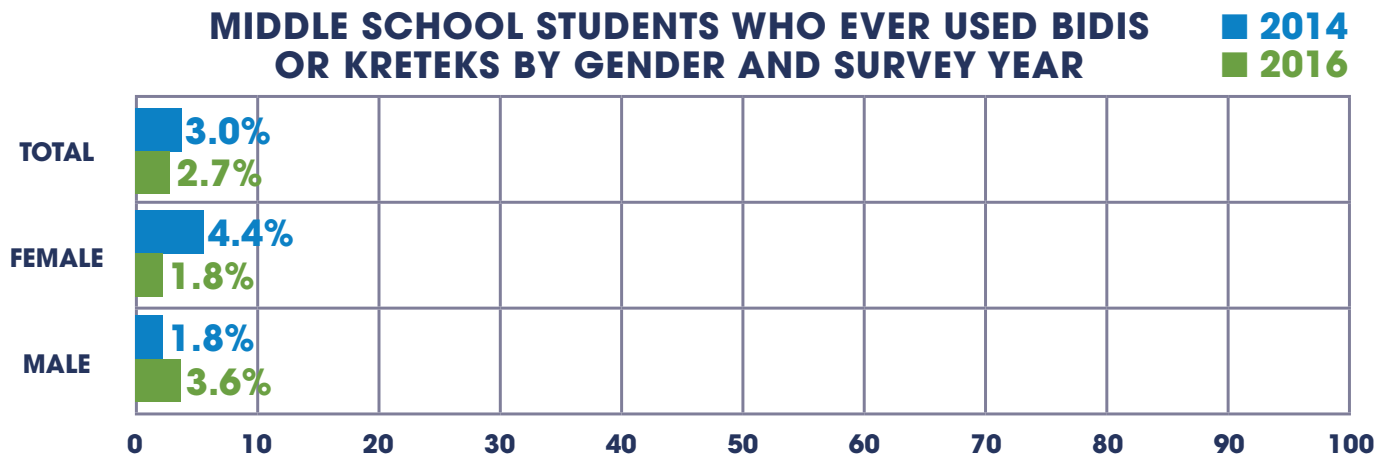
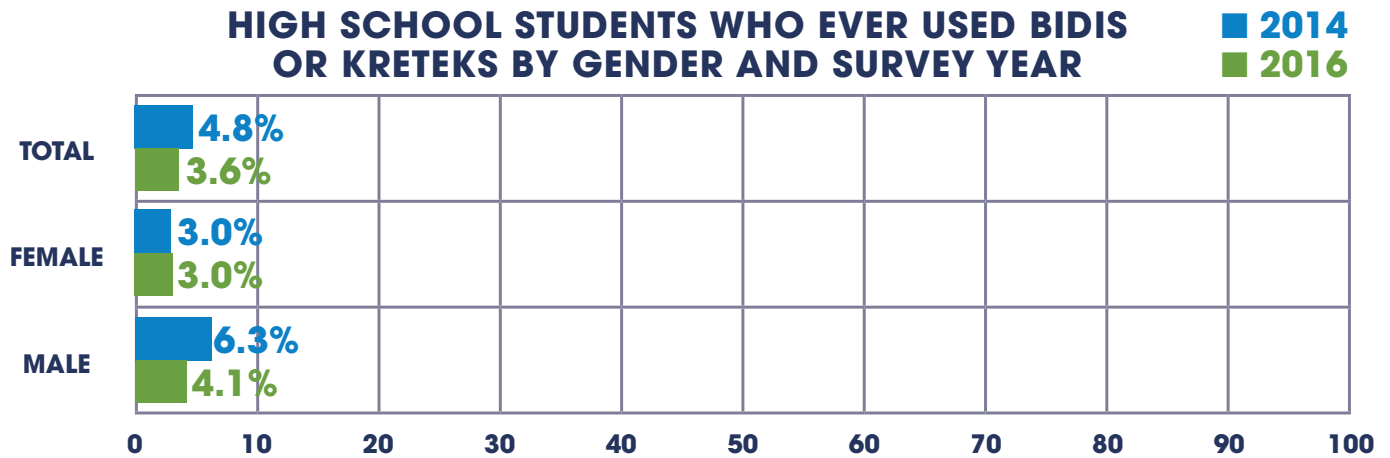


# EVER TRIED BIDIS OR KRETEKS

Students were asked whether they had ever tried bidis or kreteks (even one or two puffs) in their lifetime.

- The total percentage of middle and high school students who tried bidis or kreteks decreased from 2014, to 2016.
- Males were also more likely than females to try bidis or kreteks.
- However, there was an increase in usage among middle school males in 2016.

This is a form of tobacco that must still be considered for prevalence rates to remain low.



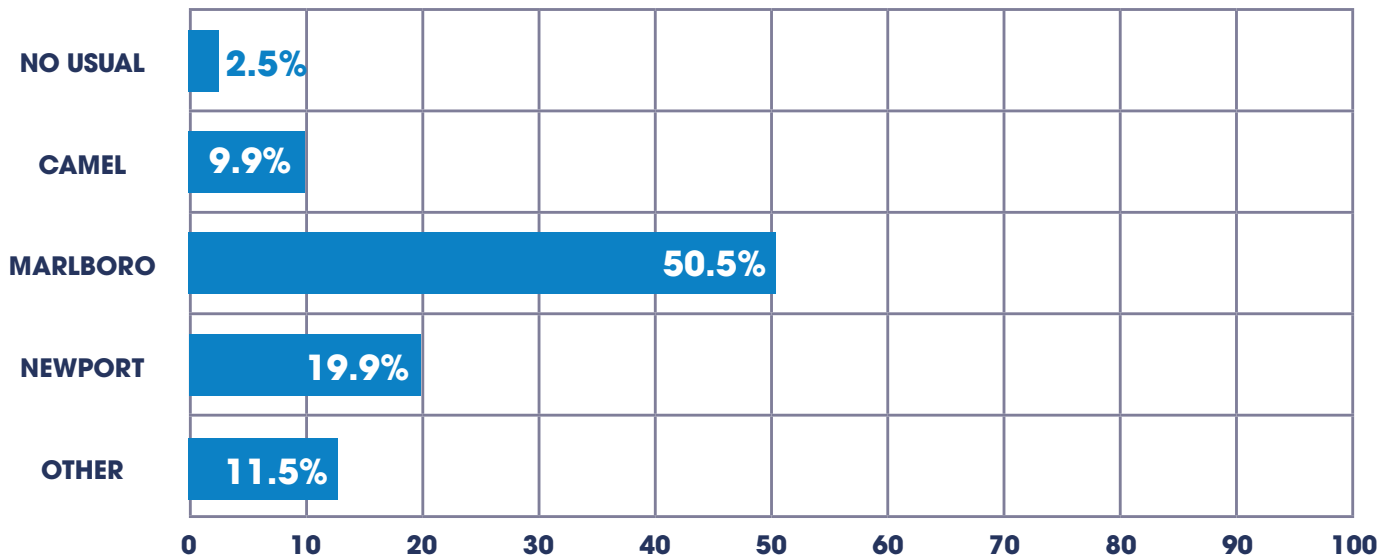
# PREFERRED CIGARETTE BRANDS

Current smokers were asked which brand of cigarettes they usually smoked in the past 30 days. Promotion, advertising, and product placement play an important role in determining which brand students typically smoked.

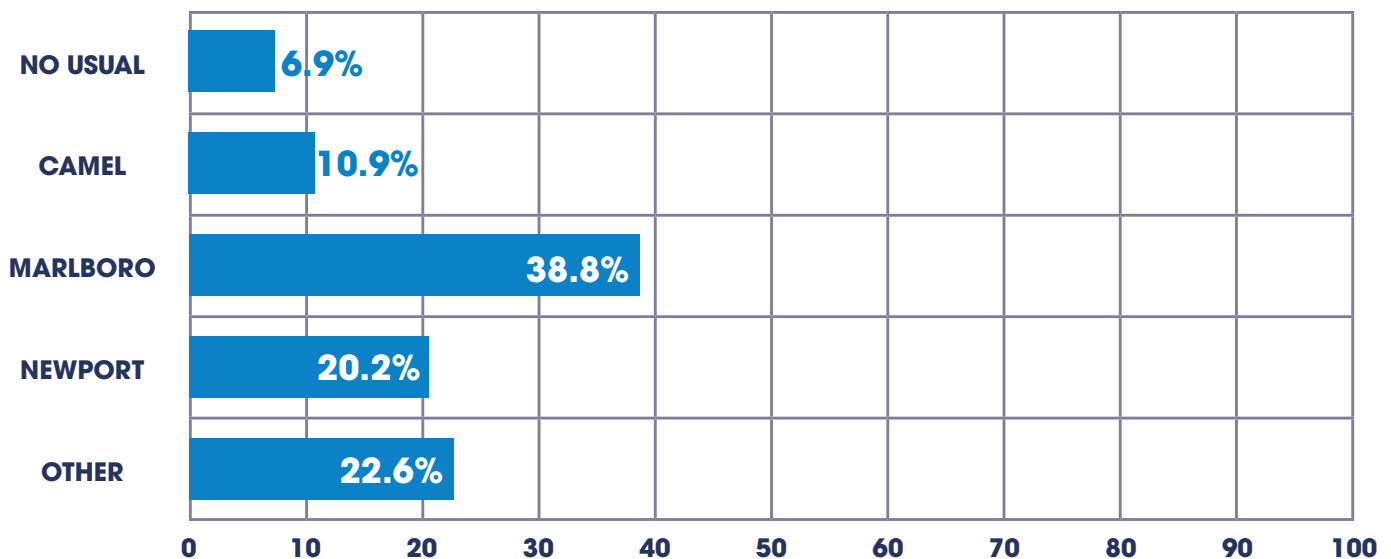
- Marlboro is the most frequently smoked brand in high school (50.5 percent) and middle school (38.8 percent).
- In high school, white smokers prefer Marlboro (61.3 percent), and African American smokers prefer Newport (68.5 percent).

Education to help inform youth about tobacco product advertising may help decrease smoking and increase awareness of large tobacco company advertising.

### PREFERRED CIGARETTE BRAND OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO REPORTED CURRENT SMOKING



### PREFERRED CIGARETTE BRAND OF MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO REPORTED CURRENT SMOKING

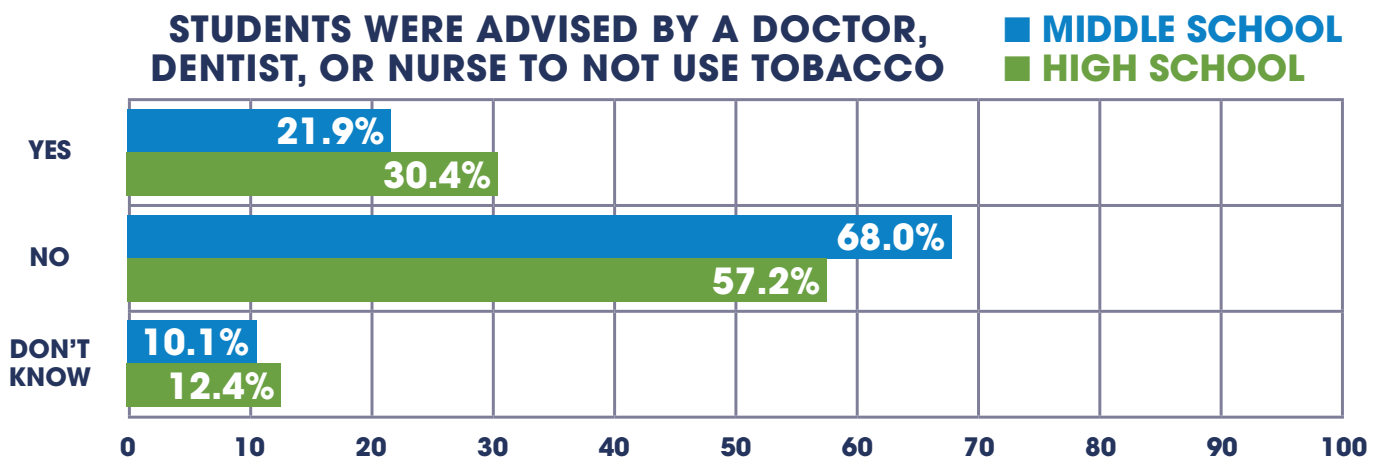
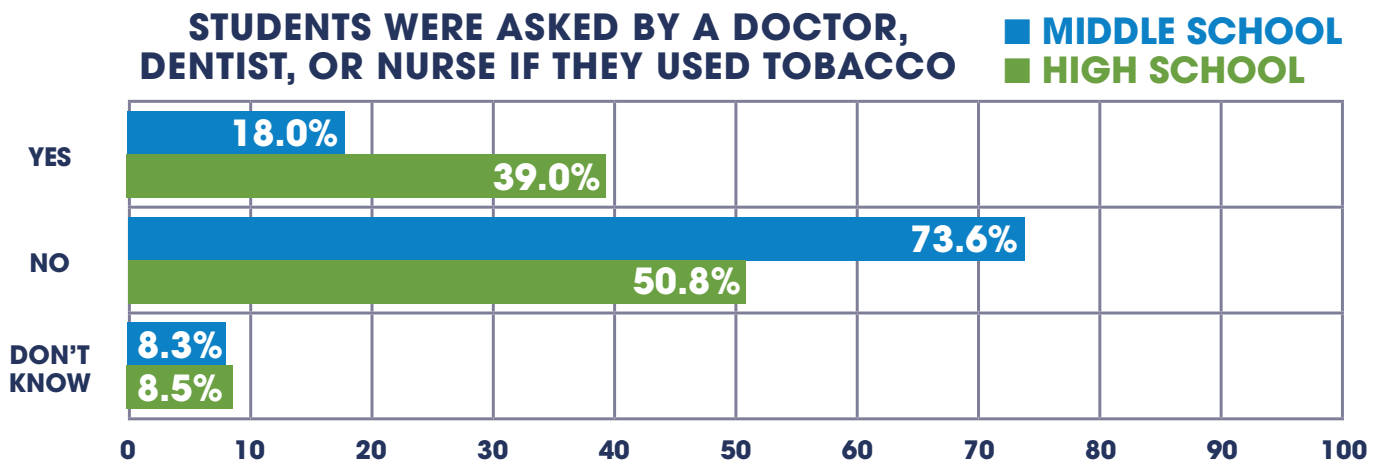


# TOBACCO DISCUSSION WITH HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

Students were asked if a doctor, dentist, or nurse asked them about tobacco use, and/or advised them not to use tobacco of any kind in the past 12 months.

- More than half of high school (50.8 percent) and middle school (73.6 percent) students were not asked by a healthcare professional about the use of tobacco in the past 12 months.
- Students were advised by a healthcare professional not to use tobacco an average of 26 percent of the time.

Education and information needs to be given to healthcare professionals about the importance of preventing and identifying tobacco use in youth.



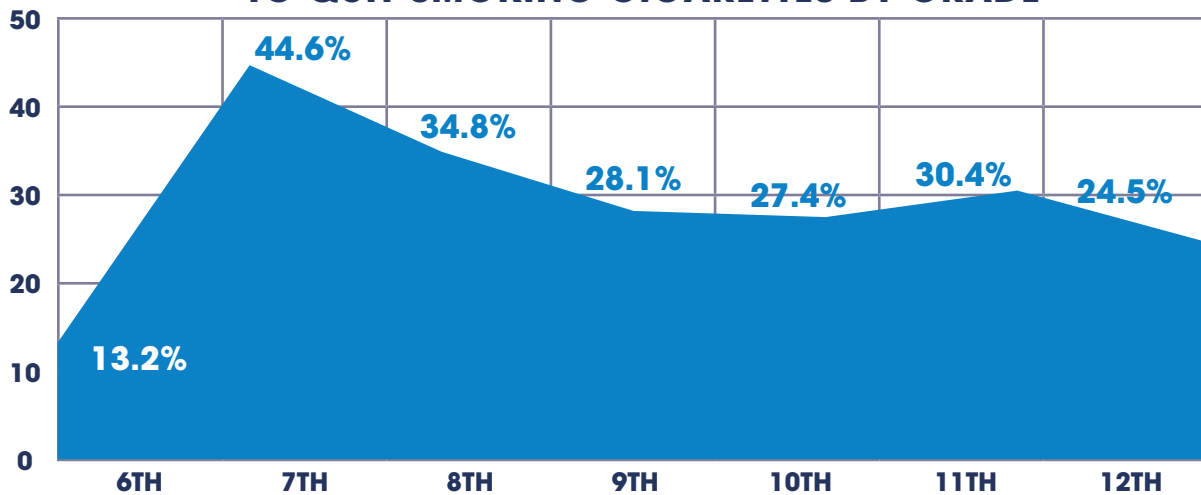
# CESSATION AND QUIT ATTEMPTS

Students were asked if they wanted to quit smoking cigarettes. Students were also asked about their attempts to quit smoking.

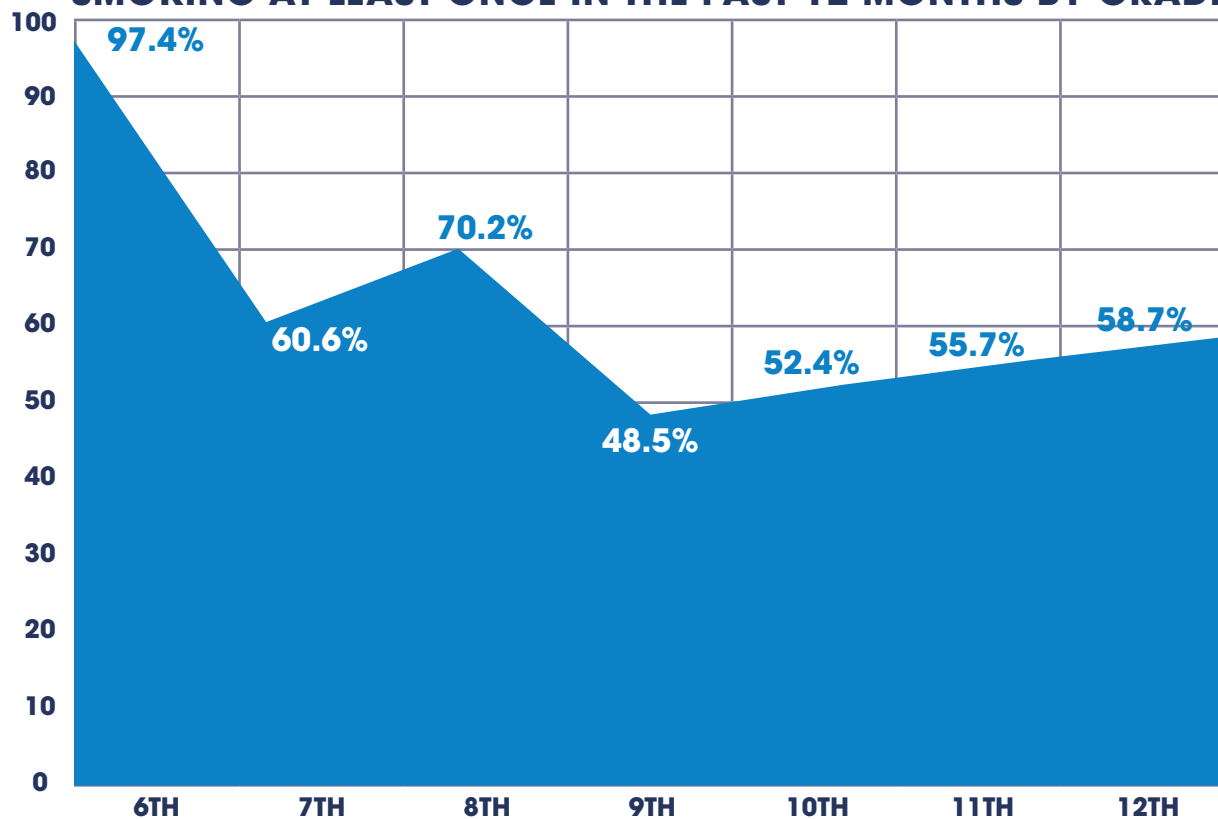
- Fewer high school student smokers (38.6 percent) wanted to quit smoking than middle school student smokers (52.6 percent).
- The overall rate of students who currently smoke and have tried to quit in the past 12 months is higher in middle school than in high school.

Education and information about cessation needs to be provided to young smokers since an average of about 30 percent of smokers in Grades 6-12 reported making at least one attempt to quit smoking.

### STUDENTS WHO CURRENTLY SMOKE AND WANT TO QUIT SMOKING CIGARETTES BY GRADE



### STUDENTS WHO CURRENTLY SMOKE AND TRIED TO QUIT SMOKING AT LEAST ONCE IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS BY GRADE

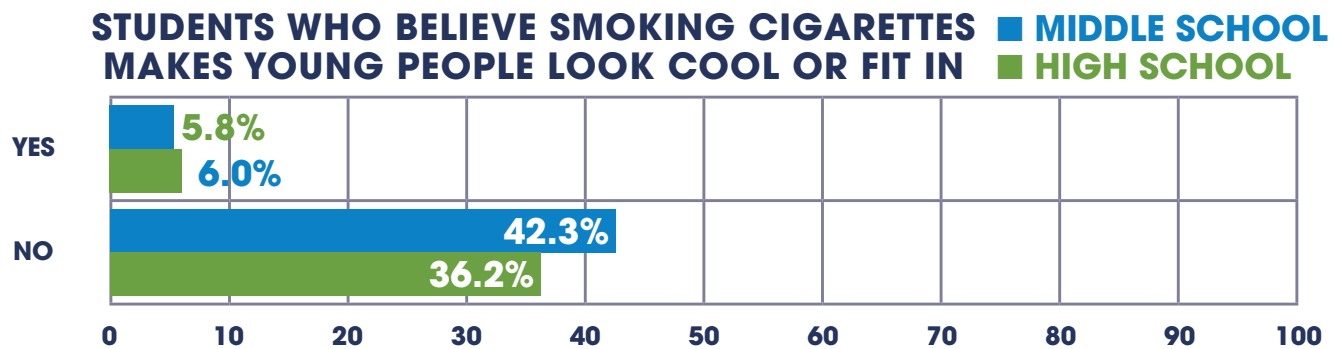
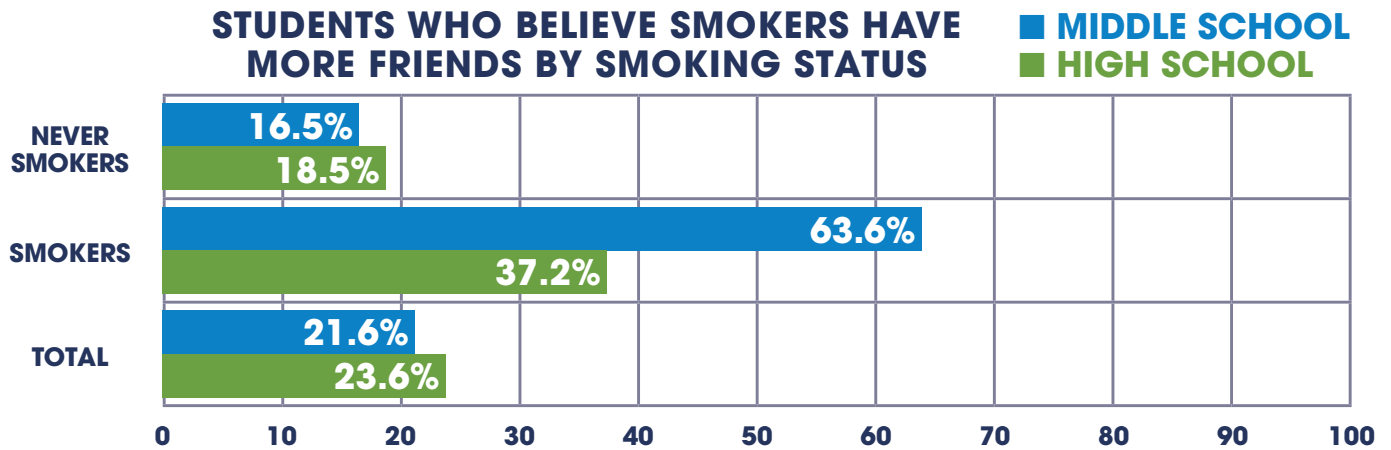


# SOCIAL BELIEFS ABOUT SMOKING

Students were asked to rate a series of statements about the perceived social benefits of smoking. Students were considered to be current smokers if they reported smoking cigarettes at least once within the past 30 days. Students were considered to have never smoked if they have never tried cigarette smoking, even one or two puffs.

- Current smokers are more likely than never smokers to believe smokers have more friends and smoking makes young people look cool or fit in.

Education is needed to teach students that smoking and tobacco use does not improve social status or increase the number of friends a person will have.



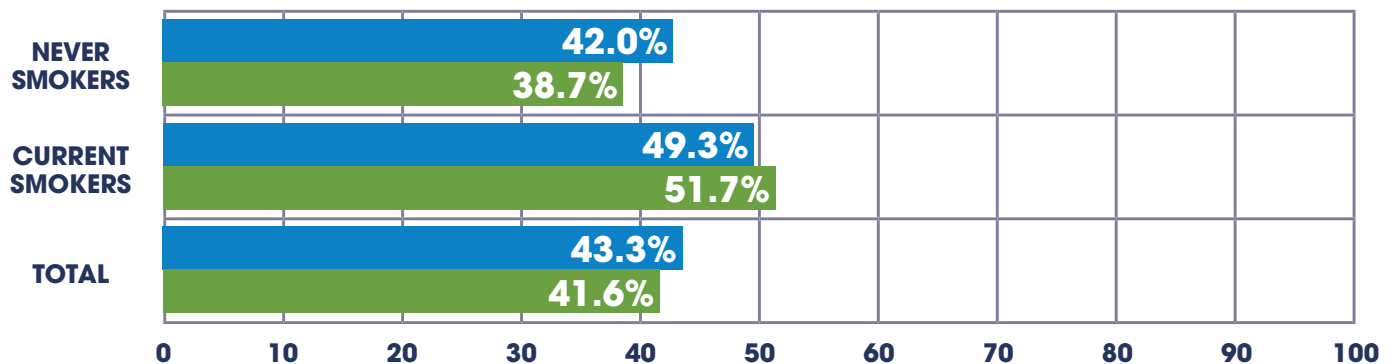
# TOBACCO USE EDUCATION

Students were asked if their parents or guardians discussed the dangers of tobacco use with them in the past 12 months. Students were also asked if they were taught in any of their classes about not using tobacco products.

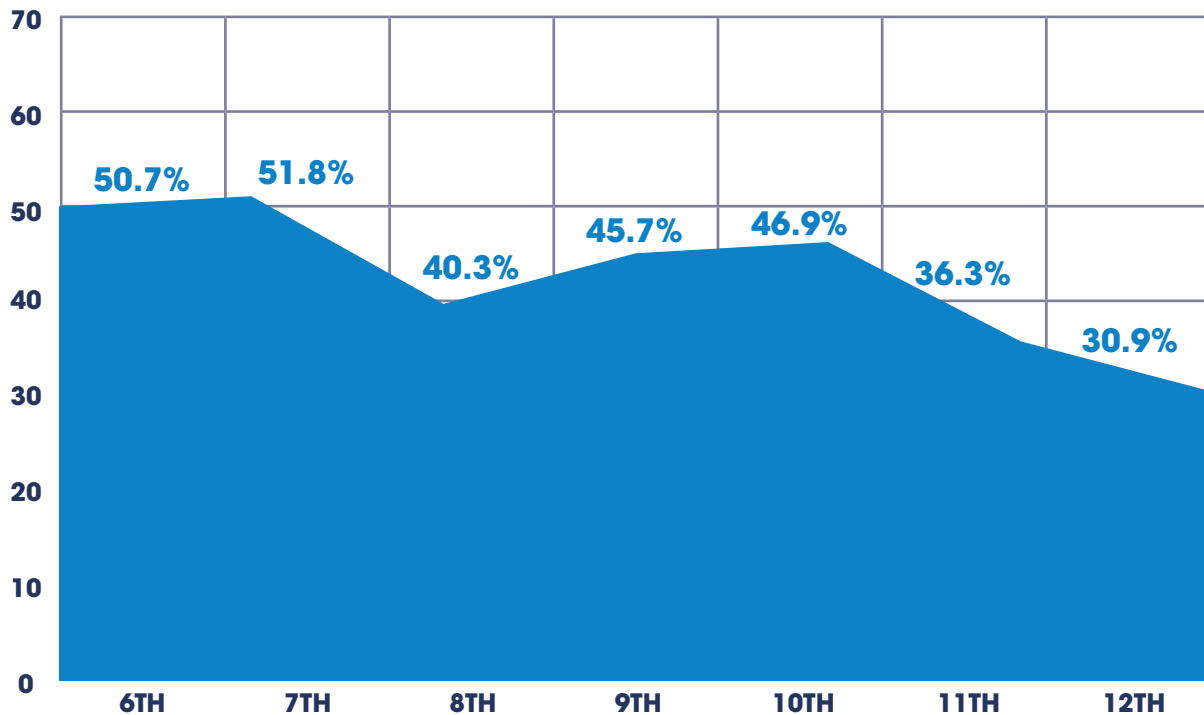
- Overall, an average of 42 percent of middle and high school students discussed the dangers of tobacco use with their parents.
- There is about a 20 percent difference between the rate of education on the dangers of tobacco use received by students in the 6th (50.7 percent) and 12th (30.9 percent) grades.

The amount of tobacco education given to students needs to increase. Tobacco education and discussion informs students of the dangers of tobacco use and encourages prevention and cessation.

## STUDENTS WHO DISCUSSED WITH THEIR PARENTS NOT USING TOBACCO PRODUCTS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS



## STUDENTS TAUGHT IN SCHOOL CLASSES ABOUT NOT USING TOBACCO PRODUCTS BY GRADE

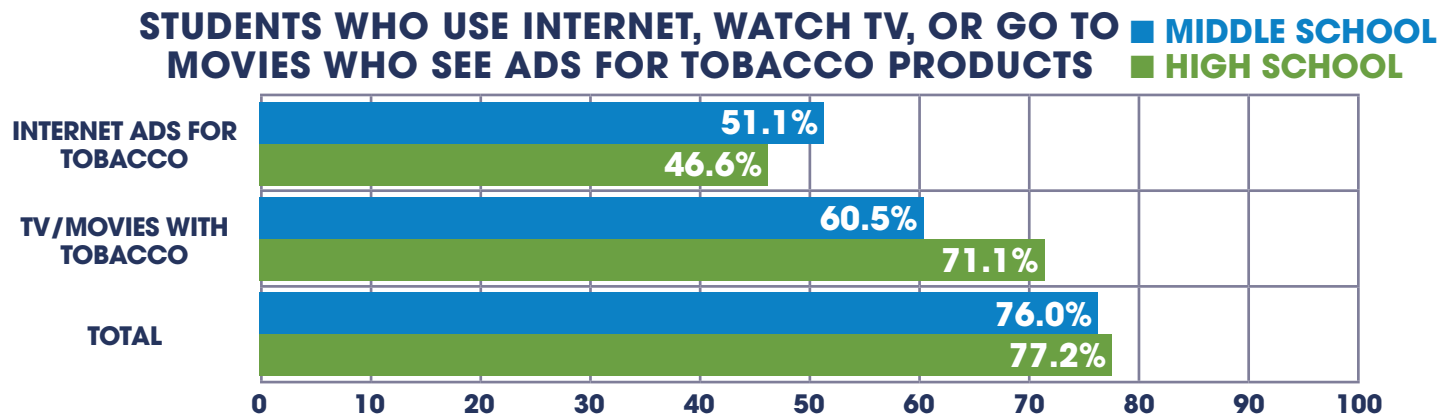


# TOBACCO INFLUENCE IN THE MEDIA

Students continue to be exposed to tobacco use and promotions through media outlets. Students were asked how often they saw actors using tobacco on TV or in movies, and how often they saw tobacco ads on the Internet.

In both middle school and high school, about 8 out of 10 students saw tobacco ads through various media outlets.

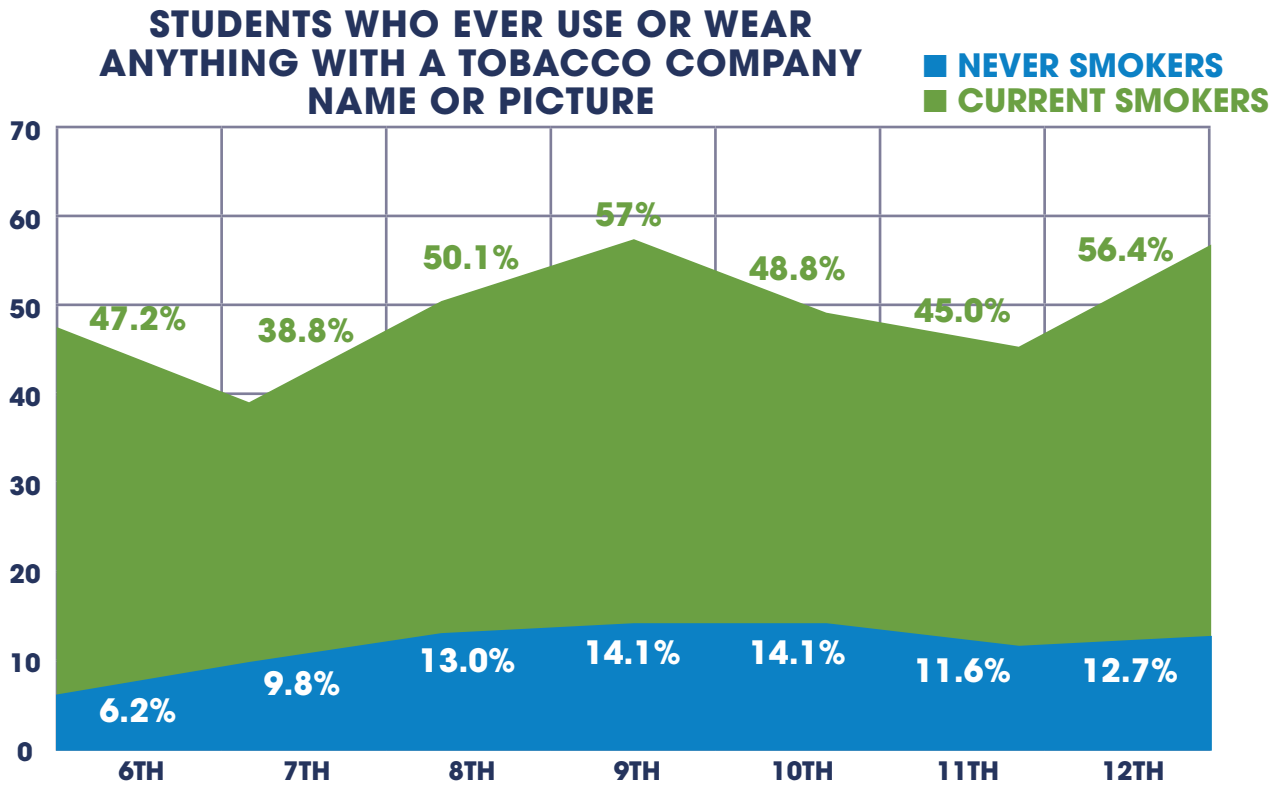
Media outlets have been a successful way to expose youth to tobacco products. This is also an excellent way to expose youth to prevention or cessation measures through outlets such as social media, radio ads, or TV ads.





# RECEPTIVENESS OF TOBACCO ADVERTISING

Students were asked if they would use or wear something that had a tobacco company name or picture on it. Students who currently use tobacco are at least three times more likely to use products with a tobacco company name or picture than students who have never used tobacco.

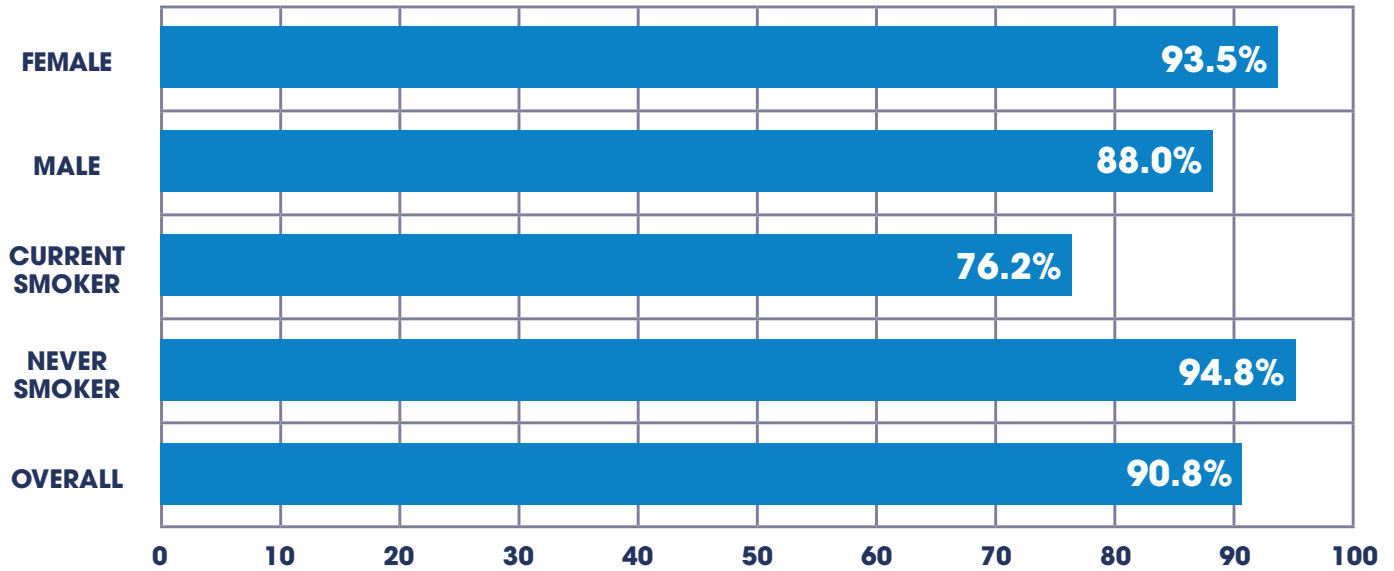


# SECONDHAND SMOKE

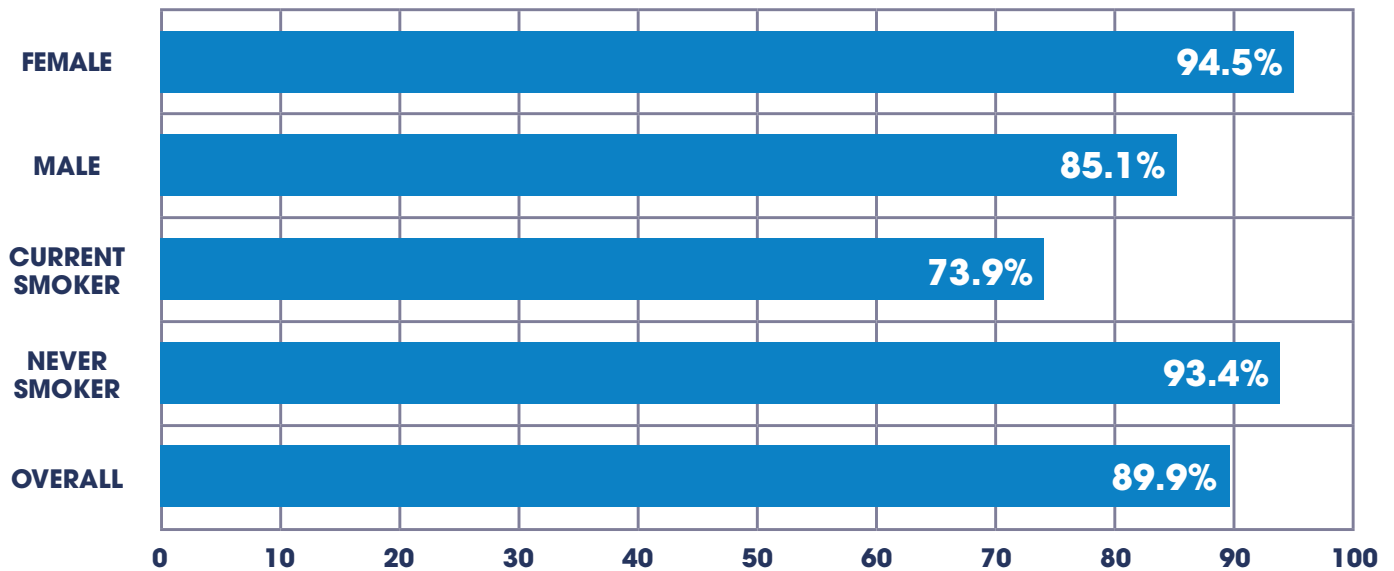
Students were asked if they think secondhand smoke is harmful. Knowledge of the harmful effects of tobacco may help students in their decisions not to begin smoking and to avoid tobacco smokers.

- Overall, about 9 out of 10 students believe secondhand smoke is harmful to them.
- Both middle school (93.4 percent) and high school (94.8 percent) students who have never smoked are more likely than those who currently smoke to believe that secondhand smoke is harmful.

## HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO BELIEVE SECONDHAND SMOKE IS HARMFUL



## MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO BELIEVE SECONDHAND SMOKE IS HARMFUL

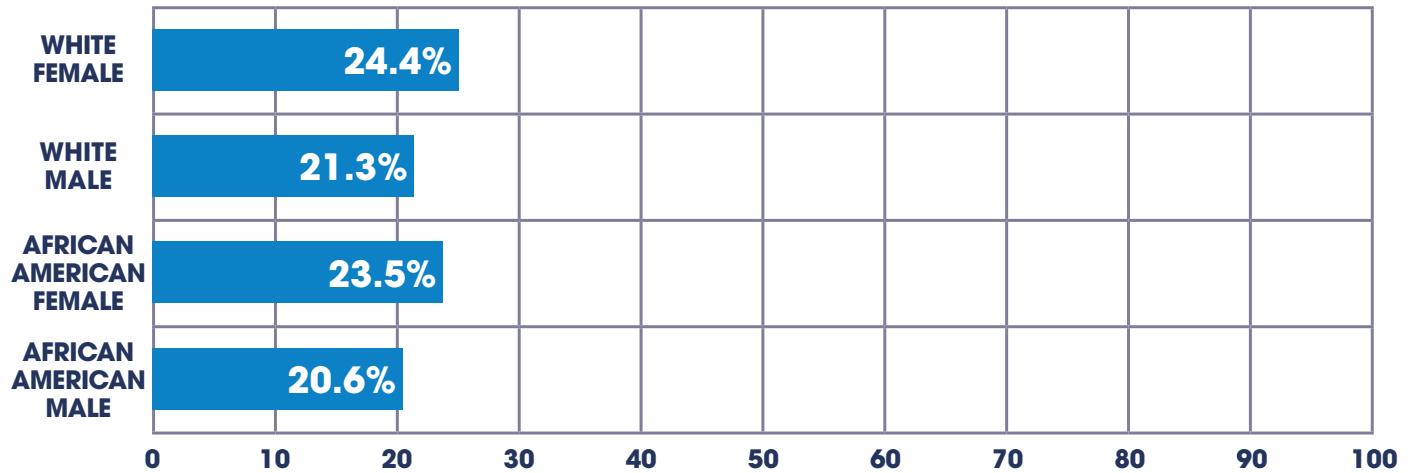


# EXPOSURE TO SECONDHAND SMOKE IN THE HOME

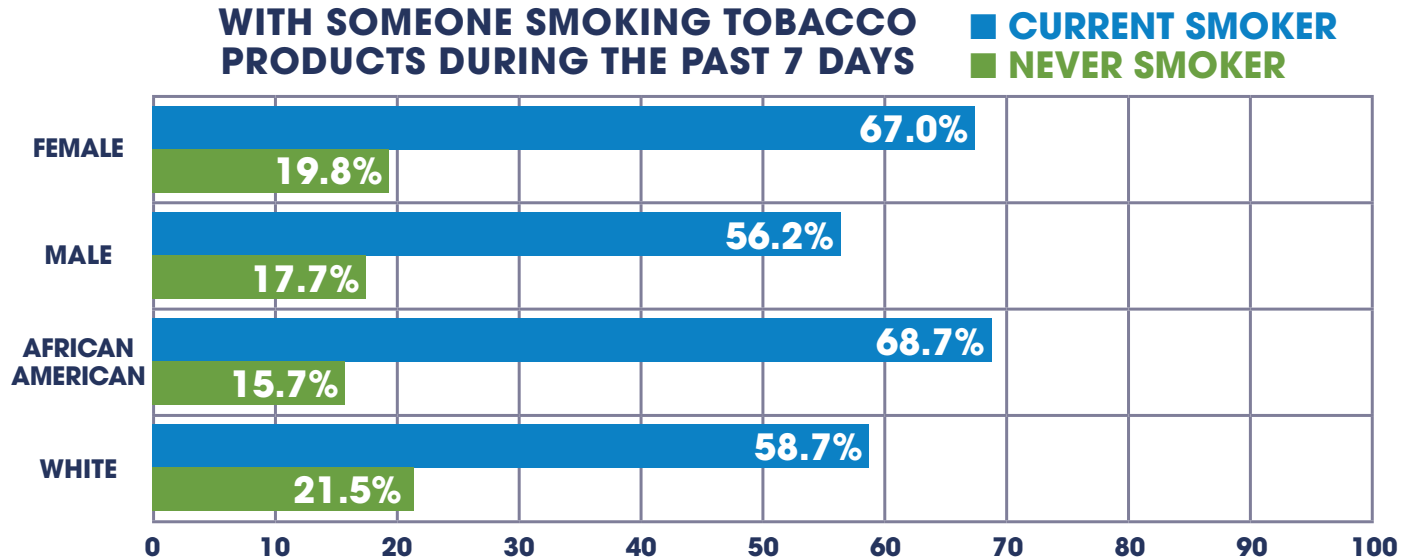
To assess how many students are being exposed to cigarette smoke at home, students were asked if they live with someone who smokes cigarettes.

- In high school, current smokers are more likely than never smokers to live with someone smoking tobacco.
- White females were the most likely and African American males were the least likely among middle school students to live with someone who smokes cigarettes.

## MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO LIVE WITH SOMEONE SMOKING TOBACCO DURING THE PAST 7 DAYS



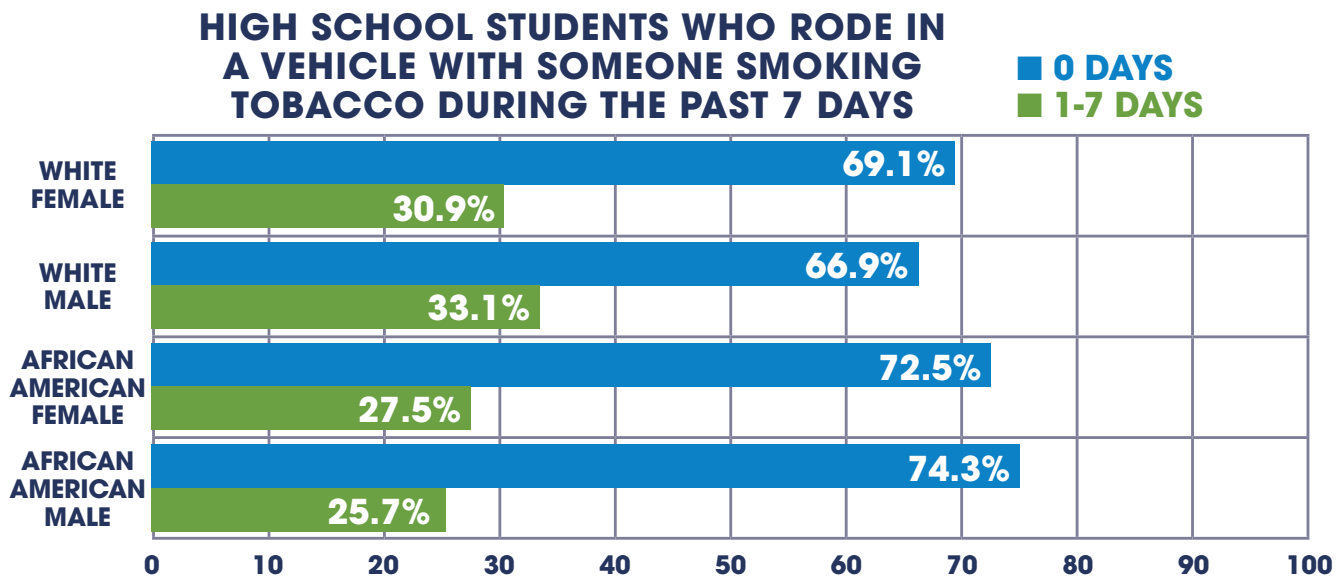
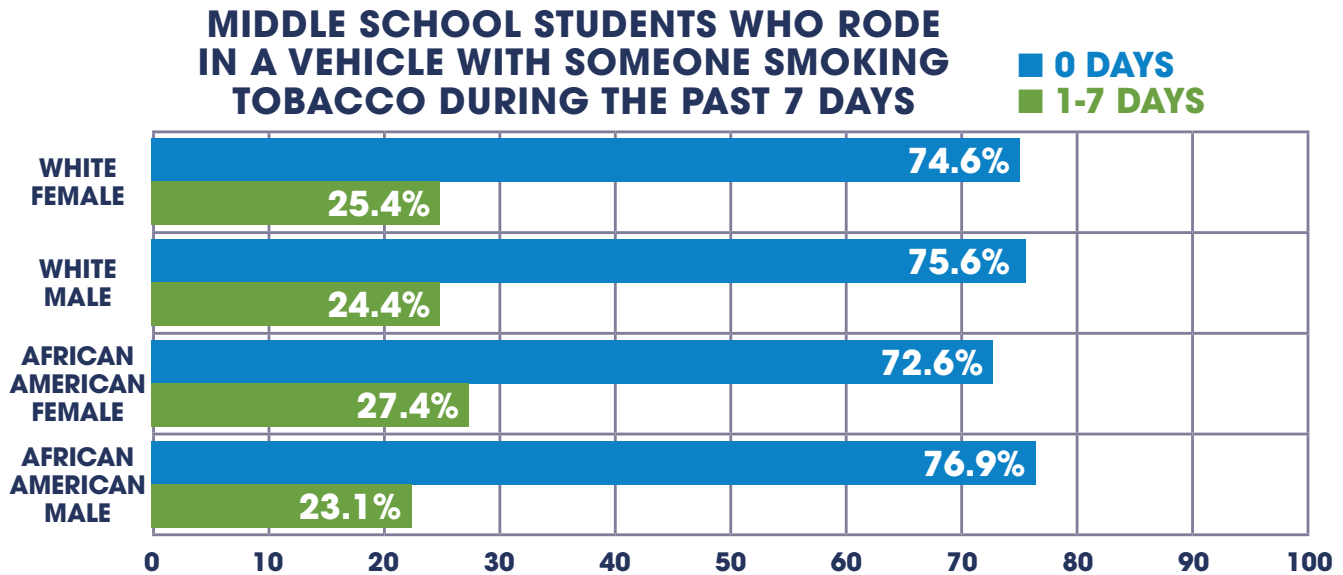
## HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE HOME WITH SOMEONE SMOKING TOBACCO PRODUCTS DURING THE PAST 7 DAYS



# EXPOSURE TO SECONDHAND SMOKE IN THE CAR

Students were asked if they had ridden in a car with someone who was smoking tobacco during the past 7 days.

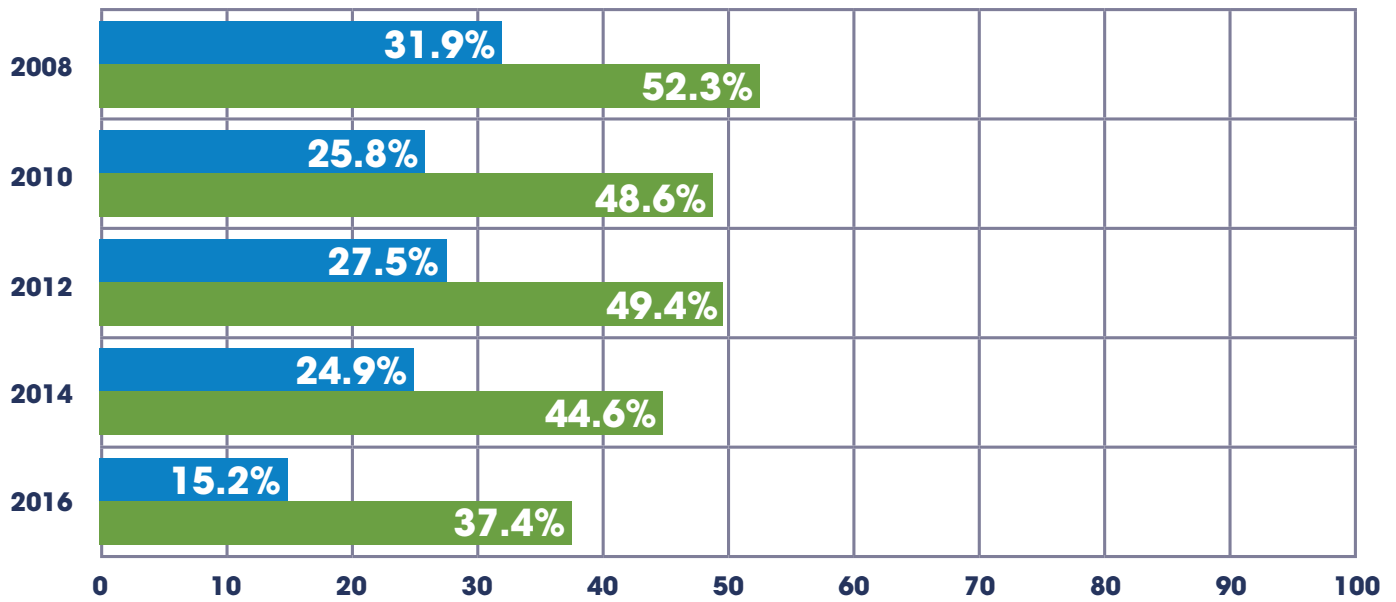
- Current smokers were more likely than never smokers to ride with someone smoking tobacco.
- High school and middle school students have similar percentages for riding in a vehicle with tobacco smokers.



# CIGARETTE TRENDS

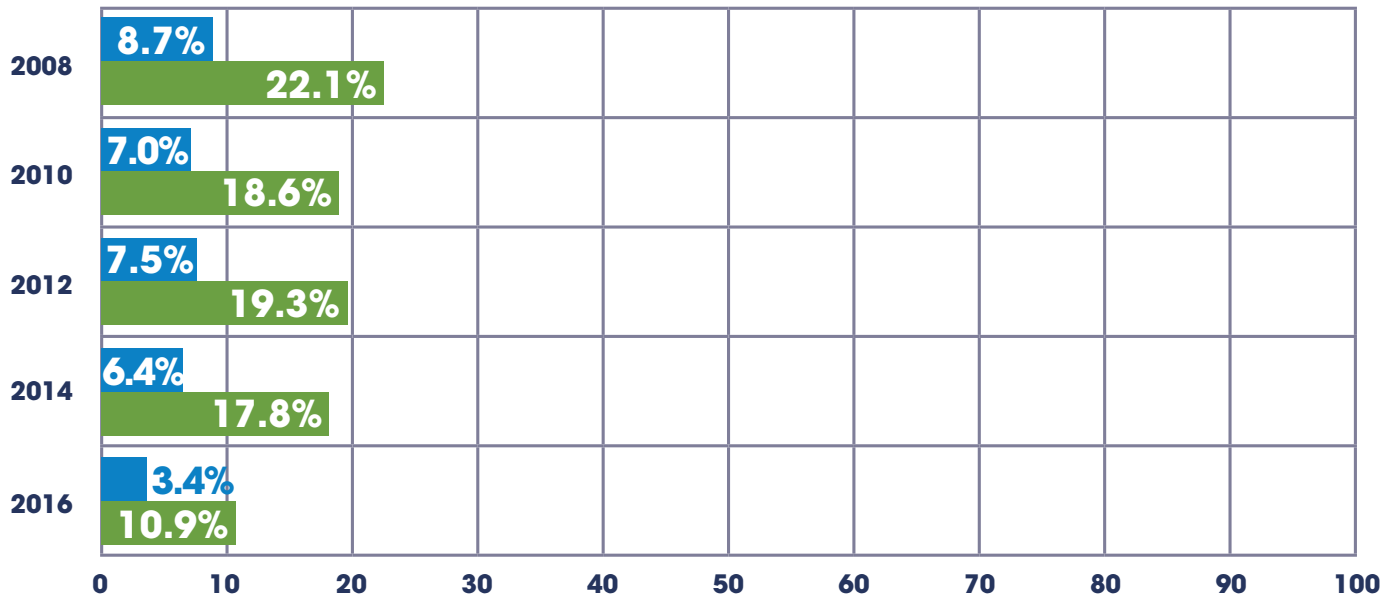
## STUDENTS WHO EVER TRIED CIGARETTE SMOKING, 2008-2016

■ MIDDLE SCHOOL  
■ HIGH SCHOOL

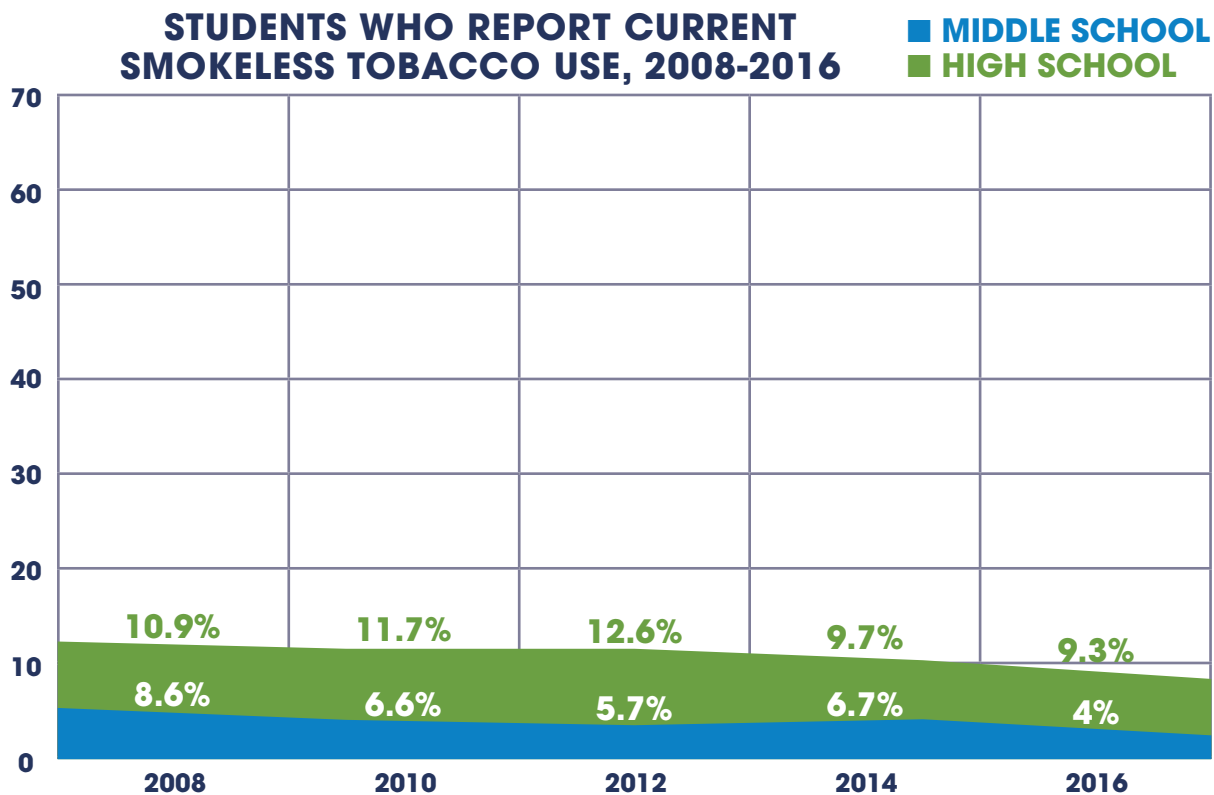
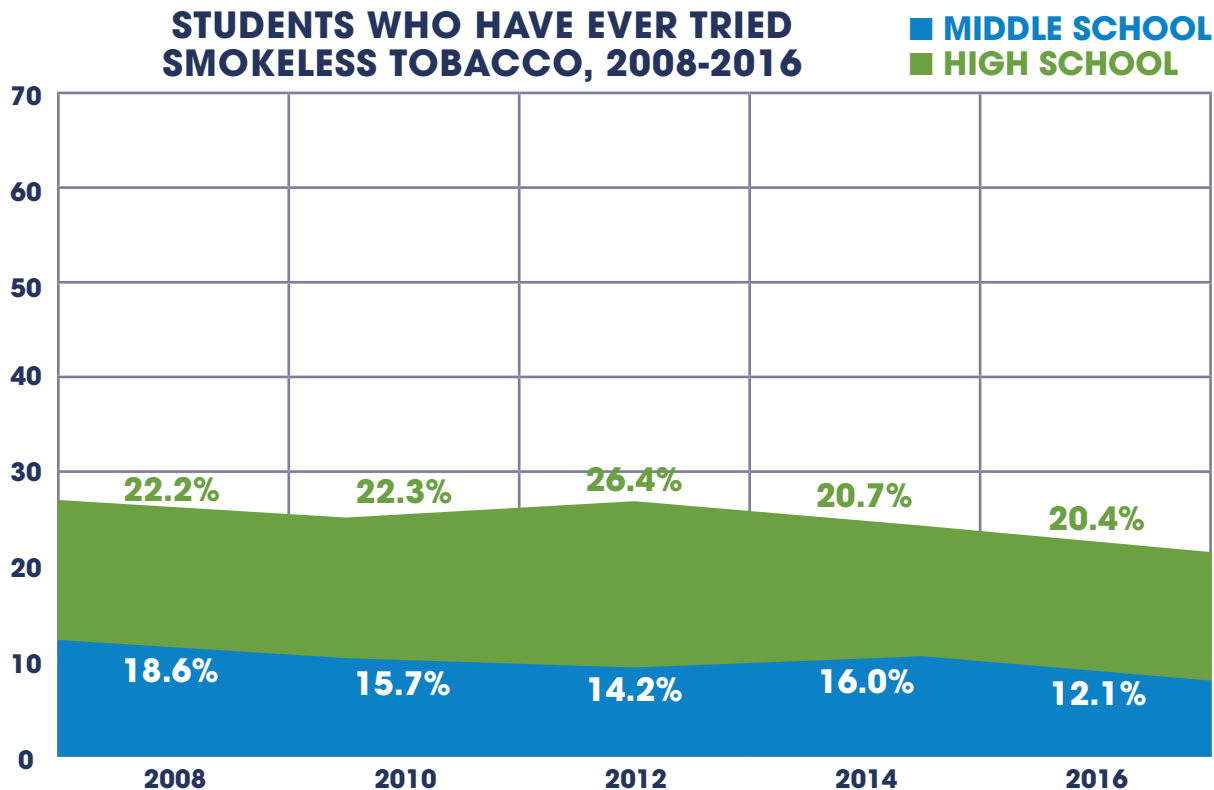


## STUDENTS WHO REPORT CURRENT CIGARETTE SMOKING, 2008-2016

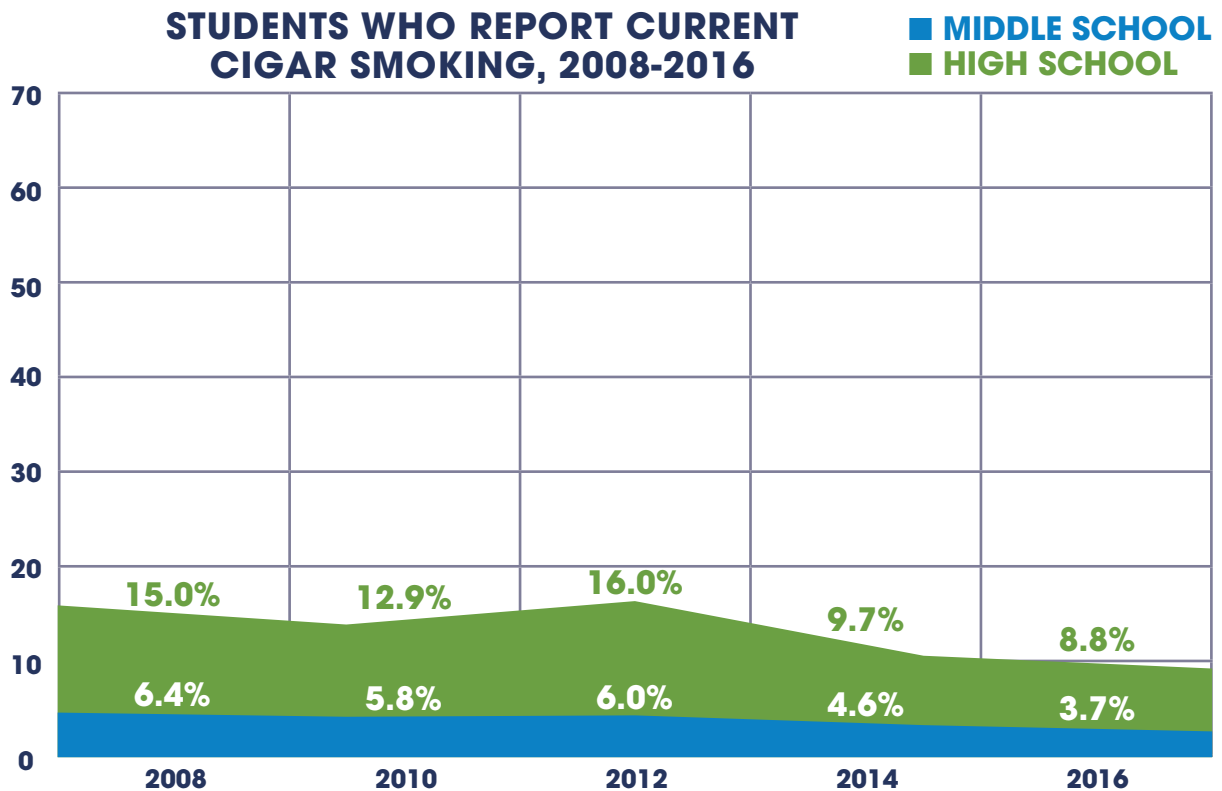
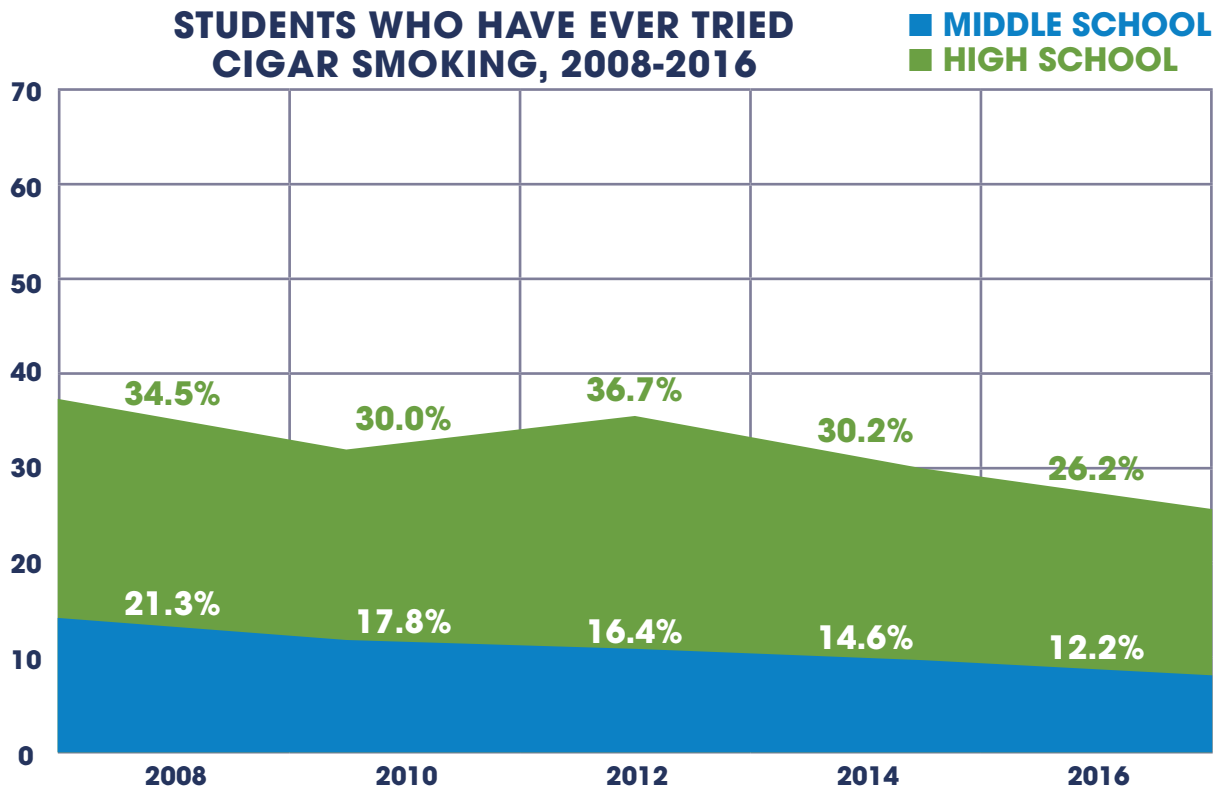
■ MIDDLE SCHOOL  
■ HIGH SCHOOL



# SMOKELESS TOBACCO TRENDS



# CIGAR TRENDS



## TRENDS SUMMARY

The trends in usage of different forms of tobacco over several years show the progress or decline in progress of methods of prevention, cessation, education, media, and other factors.

After a small decrease between years 2008-2010, the middle school percentages remain steady from years 2010-2014 with an overall decline of 16.7 percent among those who ever tried cigarette smoking. The high school students who ever tried cigarette smoking had a slight decline from years 2008-2010 and declined again from years 2012-2016. The overall decrease for high school students was 14.9 percent. However, the prevalence rates for current smokers are stable among middle school students from years 2008-2014, among high school students during years 2008-2010, and years 2014-2016.

Trends in smokeless tobacco attempts or usage have varied in both positive and negative ways. For high school students, the percentage of those who ever tried smokeless tobacco remained level except an increase in 2012. The middle school students have a steady decrease until an increase in 2014. The increase also follows an increase in the current use of smokeless tobacco. High school students have a steady increase in current use until the decline starts in 2014. Middle schools also have a steady decrease in current use until an increase in 2014. This shows the need to educate and to prevent students from trying smokeless tobacco so they do not become current users.

The current use of cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars also resembles the popularity of trying cigars among students. Overall, there has been a downward trend in the percentage of middle school students trying cigar smoking. The current smoking rates among middle school students remained level until a decline from 2012-2016. The rates for high school students fluctuated for both ever trying cigar smoking and current cigar smoking.



## SUMMARY / CONCLUSIONS

Data from the 2016 AL YTS help monitor and evaluate progress toward reaching goals in the state plan and identify areas where focus is needed in the future. The use of tobacco is dangerous to everyone including youth. Youth may initially try tobacco during middle school or high school, and with other social beliefs and exposures, this may encourage youth to become a current tobacco user.

Over a third (37.5 percent) of both high school and middle school students have tried some form of tobacco product in their lifetime. Cigarettes are the most likely to be tried, even more than smokeless tobacco or cigars. The current cigarette smoking rate of African American females in high school (3.4 percent) is significantly lower than all other groups. Overall, males (30.4 percent) are more likely to try cigars than females (21.9 percent).

Social sources influence the choices youth make about use of tobacco, cessation, and social beliefs about tobacco. Schools should provide education to students about the dangers of tobacco and the lack of social benefits from tobacco use. Students are exposed to tobacco promotions and advertising. Students and their adult contacts should be informed and educated about tobacco influence through media sources such as tobacco ads on Internet, tobacco use on TV or in movies, or wearing/using anything with a tobacco company name or picture.

Student smokers should be encouraged to quit smoking by making quit attempts and providing information to aid in cessation. Healthcare providers need to ask middle school and high school students about the use of tobacco. Then, they can provide information and education about the dangers of tobacco or provide information to encourage cessation. All students should be advised by healthcare professionals not to use tobacco and informed about cessation services.

Results and data from youth in the AL YTS provide important information needed to change tobacco use among youth. This data could help everyone in the progress toward more tobacco knowledge. Improvements in youth tobacco use may also help reduce tobacco use in the future.