



## Suicide Ideation, Drug Use

## and Montana Students

### What is the problem?<sup>1</sup>

#### Among high school students who have attempted suicide<sup>2</sup>. . .

##### Safety

- 20% carried a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club during the past 30 days on school property (10% of non-suicidal students)
- 25% did not go to school due to feelings of being unsafe at school or on their way to or from school during the past 30 days (9% of non-suicidal students)
- 25% were threatened or injured with a weapon on school property during the past 12 months (8% of non-suicidal students)
- 26% were bullied on school property during the past 12 months (22% of non-suicidal students)
- 29% were electronically bullied during the past 12 months (37% of non-suicidal students)

##### Alcohol and Other Drug Use

- 39% had a drink of alcohol during the past 30 days (26% of non-suicidal students)
- 31% had a binge drinking<sup>3</sup> episode during the past 30 days (16% of non-suicidal students)
- 54% ever used marijuana in their lifetime (33% of non-suicidal students)
- 10% had used methamphetamines in their lifetime (2% of non-suicidal students)
- 15% had used ecstasy in their lifetime (3% of non-suicidal students)
- 28% ever took prescription pain medicine without a doctor's prescription or differently than how a doctor told them to use it (11% of non-suicidal students)

### What are the solutions?<sup>4</sup>

#### Among middle/junior and senior high schools. . .

##### Policy

- 55% of schools have a School Improvement Plan that includes health-related objectives on social and emotional climate
- 96% of schools have a designated staff member to whom students can confidentially report student bullying and sexual harassment, including electronic aggression
- 95% of schools use electronic, paper, or oral communication to publicize and disseminate policies, rules, or regulations on bullying and sexual harassment, including electronic aggression

##### Health Education

- 71% of schools' health education staff worked with mental health staff on health education activities
- 96% of schools taught students about alcohol- or other drug-use prevention
- 99% of schools taught students about emotional and mental health topics
- 95% of schools taught students about suicide prevention
- 96% of schools' health education teacher taught about the mental and social benefits of physical activity
- 51% of schools provided parents and families with health information designed to increase knowledge for preventing student bullying and sexual harassment, including electronic aggression (i.e., cyber-bullying)
- 58% of schools' health education teacher received professional development on emotional and mental health during the past two years
- 88% of schools' health education teacher taught about the differences between proper use and abuse of over-the-counter medicines and prescription medicines
- 96% of schools' health education teacher taught about harmful short- and long-term physical, psychological, and social effects of using alcohol and other drugs
- 91% of schools' health education teacher taught interpersonal communication skills to avoid alcohol and other drug use (e.g., refusal skills, assertiveness)
- 76% of schools' health education teacher would like to receive professional development on emotional and mental health
- 65% of schools' health education teacher received professional development on suicide prevention during the past two years
- 70% of schools' health education teacher would like to receive professional development on suicide prevention
- 35% of schools' health education teacher received professional development on alcohol- or other drug-use prevention during the past two years
- 71% of schools' health education teacher would like to receive professional development on alcohol- or other drug-use prevention

<sup>1</sup> 2023 Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey data representative of all high school students in Montana.

<sup>2</sup> Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey Suicide Report – cross-tabulation analysis of students who had attempted suicide during the past year.

<sup>3</sup> Binge drinking is 4 or more drinks of alcohol in a row, within a couple of hours, (if female), 5 or more drinks (if male).

<sup>4</sup> 2022 School Health Profiles data representative of middle/junior and senior high schools in Montana.