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THE STATUS OF GIRLS IN WISCONSIN

THE ALVERNO REPORT | 2018-19



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RESEARCH CENTER FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

Table of Contents

4 Acknowledgments	24 SECTION 4: Post-Secondary Education Entrance Examinations 24 Aspirations 25	45 SECTION 10: Sexual Health Sexual Behavior 45 Contraception Use 46 Teen Pregnancy 46 Sexually Transmitted Infections 47 Sexual Violence 47 Sexual Education 47
5 Letter from the Director	26 SECTION 5: Media Engagement Media Influence 26 Television..... 26 Online Media 27	49 SECTION 11: Violence and Abuse Child Abuse and Neglect..... 49 Teen Dating Violence 49 Bullying 49 Relational Aggression/ Fighting and Safety 51 Sexual Assault 52 Human Trafficking 52
7 Overview	29 SECTION 6: Political Activity Registration and Voting 29 Political Engagement..... 30	53 SECTION 12: Crime and Incarceration Juvenile Justice 53 Gender Disparities 53 Racial Disparities 54 Southeastern Wisconsin 54
8 SECTION 1: Demographics General Population 8 Race and Ethnicity 8 Place of Residence 9 Immigration Status..... 10 Languages Spoken 11 Sexual Orientation..... 11	31 SECTION 7: Physical Health Nutrition..... 31 Oral Health of Wisconsin Ninth Graders 33 Immunization 34 Physical Activity and Obesity ... 35 Other Disease..... 37	55 SECTION 13: Social Support and Activities Social Support 55 Needs for and Sources of Social Support 55 Extra and Co-Curricular Activities 57
12 SECTION 2: Economic Health Poverty..... 12 Safety Net Usage 13 Homelessness 14 Participation in Labor Force.... 14 College Affordability and Earnings Premium 15	38 SECTION 8: Mental Health Depression and Anxiety 38 Self-Harm and Suicide 38 Eating Disorders 39 Support and Help-Seeking 40	59 References
16 SECTION 3: Primary and Secondary Education School Enrollment and Attendance 16 Mathematics 17 Science..... 19 English Language Arts 20 Social Studies..... 21 Advanced Placement Examinations..... 22 Graduation and Dropout Rates 22	42 SECTION 9: Substance Use Tobacco Use..... 42 Alcohol Use..... 43 Marijuana Use..... 44 Other Drug Use..... 44	

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We are deeply appreciative of our sponsors who continue to make *The Alverno Report: The Status of Girls in Wisconsin* possible.

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Letter from the Director

The fourth publication of *The Alverno Report: The Status of Girls in Wisconsin* reflects the ongoing growth and challenges that girls are experiencing in our state. While the report reveals that we must do better to support girls in Wisconsin who might be facing poverty, high levels of anxiety, and bullying, it also provides a picture of girls that demonstrates they have found ways to thrive. For example, teen pregnancy rates have significantly decreased over the past four years. And girls continue to excel in their ability to comprehend, analyze, and communicate, as shown in their English Language Arts test scores. The report paints a picture of prolific media users who are strongly tied to their social networks, inspiring me to think of the future impact Wisconsin girls could have as they engage in civic life.

At Alverno College, we are committed to improving the lives of women and girls in our community through liberal arts education. The Research Center for Women and Girls (RCWG) is a vital extension of our mission as it provides research by and for women in our community. In 2007, with the generous support of the Women's Fund of Greater Milwaukee, the Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast, and the Wisconsin Women's Council, the RCWG produced the first report of its kind in Wisconsin. With the 2007 publication came a commitment to continue to carry out this important documentation of girls' lives in our state. The RCWG is pleased to continue to partner with these organizations and to add the American Association of University Women's Milwaukee branch, to its list of supporters. Our organizations continue to be committed to the significant role of research in providing a critical picture of how we can collaborate and employ our resources to improve the lives of women and girls.

The Research Center for Women and Girls and the dedicated project team that created this report anticipate the data will continue to serve as a catalyst for significant dialogue, informed decision-making, and transformational actions at the community, organizational, and individual level—all to support the well-being of our girls.

With much gratitude and hope for the future,



Jodi RB Eastberg, PhD

Executive Director

Alverno College Research Center for Women and Girls



SISTER JOEL READ CENTER

Overview

The Alverno Report: The Status of Girls in Wisconsin 2018-19 is the fourth issue of the report by the Research Center for Women and Girls at Alverno College (RCWG). Since 1970, the RCWG has been devoted to producing scholarly research that can be applied to improving the lives of women and girls and by extension our communities in Wisconsin and beyond. The first publication of *The Status of Girls in Wisconsin* report in 2007 provided a strong framework for our researchers to draw comparisons over time. Data on girls (in most cases, ages 10 to 19 years old) across Wisconsin are drawn from multiple sources, compiled, and analyzed by our affiliated researchers. As was true for previous editions, a major goal for the report is to provide relevant data through a centralized resource. This report continues our commitment to raising awareness regarding issues and challenges that impact girls in our state.

The report itself is non-partisan and attempts where possible to remain neutral in its interpretation. That said, we have indicated troubling findings such as the number of girls experiencing anxiety, contemplating self-harm, and experiencing bullying. We have also indicated areas where girls' well being has shown improvement such as the declining number of girls who smoke tobacco and the decreasing number of teen pregnancies in our state. Girls' lives continue to be impacted by the societal changes that impact all of us: increased access to and use of media devices, an increasingly diverse society, and an economic system that disproportionately leaves women and girls struggling in the face of poverty.

In order to help our readers understand these and many more issues facing our girls, we have drawn comparisons over time, between Wisconsin girls and boys, and also between Wisconsin and U.S. girls. The report provides a framework to facilitate a complex and nuanced understanding. The report is organized into content sections, and we have strategically placed graphs, tables, infographics, and callout boxes that point to key findings and questions. As with every report of its kind, there are gaps in the data available. At times, we have called attention to these gaps in the hopes of creating potential avenues for future investigation. We envision and hope, through collaboration with community stakeholders, that this report may inspire future studies to delve into some of the key issues we've identified.

About Alverno College

Alverno College promotes the academic, personal and professional development of its students in a collaborative and inclusive environment. Undergraduate programs for women are offered in more than 60 areas of study, and graduate programs in education, nursing, community and school psychology, music therapy and business are open to women and men.

A leader in higher education innovation, Alverno has earned international accolades for its highly effective ability-based, assessment-as-learning approach to education, which emphasizes hands-on experience and develops in-demand skills. The college, Wisconsin's first Hispanic-Serving Institution, ranks among the top schools in the Midwest for its commitment to undergraduate teaching and innovation by *U.S. News & World Report*. For the past two years, *The Wall Street Journal/Times Higher Education* named Alverno the country's most inspiring college.

Based in Milwaukee, Wis., Alverno College is a four-year independent, Catholic, liberal arts college.

SECTION 1:

Demographics

KEY POINTS

- Wisconsin's population is less diverse than that of the United States as a whole.
- As with the rest of the country, the current generation of girls (from birth to 18 years old) is more diverse than previous generations.

General Population

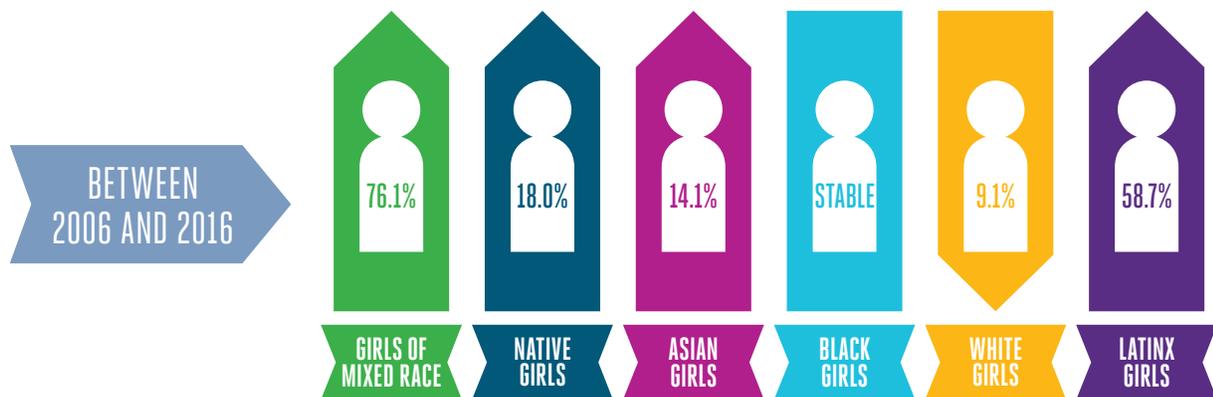
In 2016, the latest year for which data are available, there were 636,157 girls under the age of 18 in Wisconsin. Girls make up 48.9% of the population of children under 18 in Wisconsin and 11.0% of the overall state population. The latter figure is generally comparable to the share that girls comprise of the U.S. population, 11.3%.¹

Race and Ethnicity

Statewide, 78.4% of girls identify as White² (71.4% as White and not Latinx*; see note on page 11),³ 8.8% as Black,⁴ 5.2% as more than one race,⁵ 3.5% as Asian,⁶ 1.1% as Native American,⁷ and 4.0% as other races.⁸ This

distribution is less racially diverse than the United States as a whole, wherein 73.3% of people identify as White, but more diverse than the overall state population, wherein 86.2% of Wisconsinites identify as White.⁹ Compared to 2006, the trend toward diversification is clear: although the population of girls in 2006 compared to 2016 is roughly the same, the number of mixed-race girls increased by 76.1% in that time, the number of Native American girls increased by 18.0%, and the number of Asian girls increased by 14.1%. The number of Black girls remained stable, and the number of girls identified as White, non-Latinx, decreased by 9.1% between 2006 and 2016.¹⁰

Demographics Infographic 1. Changes in the populations of Wisconsin girls by racial and ethnic identification



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2016, 2006). Sex by Age, Tables B01001B through B010001I. American Community Survey 5-year estimates.

A similar pattern can be seen with Latinx identification. Here, 11.4% of Wisconsin girls of any race identify as Latinx, compared to 5.9% of the overall Wisconsin population and 17.3% of the United States population.¹¹ In Wisconsin, the largest share of Latinx girls (72.6%) trace their heritage to Mexico, with Puerto Rico as the second most commonly cited cultural background (14.7%).¹² Since 2006, the number of girls identifying as Latinx has increased by 58.7%.¹³

Place of Residence

These demographic patterns differ depending on the geographic region of the state. Wisconsin has 12 “Metropolitan Statistical Areas” (MSAs), defined as a city with a population of more than 50,000 and the counties where people reside primarily in that urban area or commute to it.¹⁴ These 12 MSAs comprise 63.4% of the overall state population and 68.1% of the state population of girls.

Demographics Table 1. Percentage of girls, ages 0-17, by racial and ethnic identification and Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)

MSA	TOTAL POPULATION	POPULATION GIRLS 0-17	% WHITE	% BLACK	% MIXED RACE	% ASIAN	% NATIVE AMERICAN	% LATINX (ANY RACE)
MILWAUKEE	1,571,730	183,085	50.3%	22.4%	5.8%	4.5%	0.4%	16.3%
MADISON	597,219	62,739	71.3%	7.1%	6.5%	5.4%	0.3%	9.9%
GREEN BAY	314,555	42,529	63.0%	1.9%	6.0%	3.3%	2.5%	11.1%
APPLETON	231,452	27,077	84.3%	1.9%	3.4%	4.2%	1.6%	6.9%
RACINE	194,873	22,806	59.1%	13.6%	10.2%	1.1%	0.7%	20.7%
OSHKOSH-NEENAH	169,487	17,322	82.0%	3.0%	4.3%	3.1%	0.5%	7.6%
EAU CLAIRE	165,262	17,080	86.7%	1.0%	4.6%	4.1%	0.5%	3.4%
JANESVILLE	160,986	18,700	72.5%	4.2%	8.6%	1.2%	0.4%	14.8%
WAUSAU	135,367	15,407	80.5%	1.5%	3.5%	10.0%	0.2%	4.9%
LA CROSSE**	117,538	11,531	83.4%	1.2%	5.3%	7.5%	0.6%	2.5%
SHEBOYGAN	115,269	12,893	73.8%	1.9%	4.9%	9.8%	0.1%	11.0%

Source: U.S. Census (2016). Tables B01001B through I.

Rows do not add to 100% because the “other race” category is not included, and Latinx identification is possible for all races.

Figures for White racial classification use “White, non-Hispanic” Census category.

**Note: The La Crosse MSA also includes Houston County, Minn., but data here are for Wisconsin only.

The largest MSA in Wisconsin is the Milwaukee metropolitan area. It consists of Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Washington, and Waukesha counties, and contains 28.8% of the population of girls in Wisconsin. These counties show considerable variation in their demographic patterns. While the Milwaukee Primary Metropolitan Statistical Area (PMSA) contains a significantly more ethnically diverse population than many other areas in the state, most of that diversity is seen within Milwaukee County itself. The satellite suburbs align more closely with the general demographics of the state (see Demographics Table 2).

Demographics Table 2. Racial and ethnic identification of girls in the four-county Milwaukee Primary Metropolitan Statistical Area

COUNTY	TOTAL POPULATION	POPULATION GIRLS 0-17	% WHITE	% BLACK	% MIXED RACE	% ASIAN	% NATIVE AMERICAN	% LATINX
MILWAUKEE	955,306	114,896	30.1%	34.5%	6.9%	5.0%	0.5%	22.0%
OZAUKEE	87,625	9,439	87.5%	1.5%	3.6%	2.9%	0.5%	4.3%
WASHINGTON	133,422	15,286	87.1%	2.3%	4.0%	1.4%	0.1%	6.1%
WAUKESHA	395,377	43,464	82.7%	1.9%	3.9%	4.4%	0.2%	7.5%

Source: U.S. Census (2016). Tables B01001B through I.

Figures for White racial classification use “White, non-Hispanic” Census category.

Rows do not add to 100% because the “other race” category is not included, and Latinx identification is possible for all races.

About two-thirds of the population of Wisconsin live in urban areas, and about one-third lives in rural areas. Girls who identify as racial or ethnic minorities are clustered in the urban areas, with the exception of Native American girls, who are more likely to live in rural areas compared to the overall girl population. Black and Asian or Asian American girls are particularly likely to live in urban areas, and the state population of Black girls is heavily concentrated in Milwaukee County.

Demographics Table 3. Residence of Wisconsin girls, ages 0-17, by location and race/ethnicity

	WHITE	BLACK	MIXED RACE	ASIAN	NATIVE AMERICAN	LATINX
LIVING IN MSAS	62.3%	92.8%	77.2%	89.4%	41.9%	77.8%
LIVING IN MILWAUKEE PMSA	20.3%	73.0%	31.7%	37.0%	10.1%	41.8%
LIVING IN MILWAUKEE COUNTY	7.6%	70.7%	23.8%	26.1%	8.3%	35.3%

Source: U.S. Census (2016). Tables B01001B through I.

Figures for White racial classification use “White, non-Hispanic” Census category.

Rows do not add to 100% because the “other race” category is not included, and Latinx identification is possible for all races.

Immigration Status

The U.S. Census estimated that in 2016 there were 1,276,271 children aged 0 to 17 years old in Wisconsin who were natural citizens of the United States;¹⁵ this figure is 98.1% of the population of children in Wisconsin. About 9,376 naturalized citizens who were born in another country make up 0.7% of Wisconsin children, and children who are not U.S. citizens but who are counted by the U.S. Census, make up 1.2% of children in Wisconsin, which amounts to approximately 15,391 children. Among all immigrants in Wisconsin, the largest single group comes from Mexico, which accounts for 31.6% of the immigrants in the state, followed by India (8.6%) and Laos (6.6%).¹⁶

Additionally, the American Immigration Council (AIC) estimated that there were about 80,000 undocumented immigrants in Wisconsin, about 1.3% of the overall state population. The AIC reports that about 3% of children in Wisconsin are U.S. citizens who live with at least one undocumented family member.¹⁷

Languages Spoken

The vast majority of Wisconsin residents (91.2%) report speaking only English in their homes. Further, 8.8% speak another language at home, but this figure includes those who also speak English; only 3.2% of residents report that they speak English less than “very well.”¹⁸

Among those Wisconsin children under 18 who speak languages other than English (including those who also speak English), the most common language spoken is Spanish. Here, 60.5% of Wisconsin children who speak languages other than English speak Spanish, while 18.0% speak other Indo-European languages, 17.8% speak Asian or Pacific Islander languages, and 3.4% speak other languages.¹⁹

Sexual Orientation

In a 2012 Gallup poll,²⁰ 2.8% of Wisconsin residents identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender (LGBT); it is possible that identification as a sexual or gender minority may be higher among younger Wisconsinites, which is consistent with Gallup’s findings nationally that younger people are more likely to identify as sexual or gender minorities than are older residents. The 2017 Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey, administered by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction to high school students across the state, found that about 10% of students identified as lesbian, gay, or bisexual. Additionally, 1.4% of girls identified as transgender, as did 2.6% of boys.²¹

***Note:**

In this report, the word *Latinx* will be used to describe individuals of Latin or Hispanic descent. When data has been collected using the term *Hispanic*, however, we will maintain the use of that term.

SECTION 2:

Economic Health

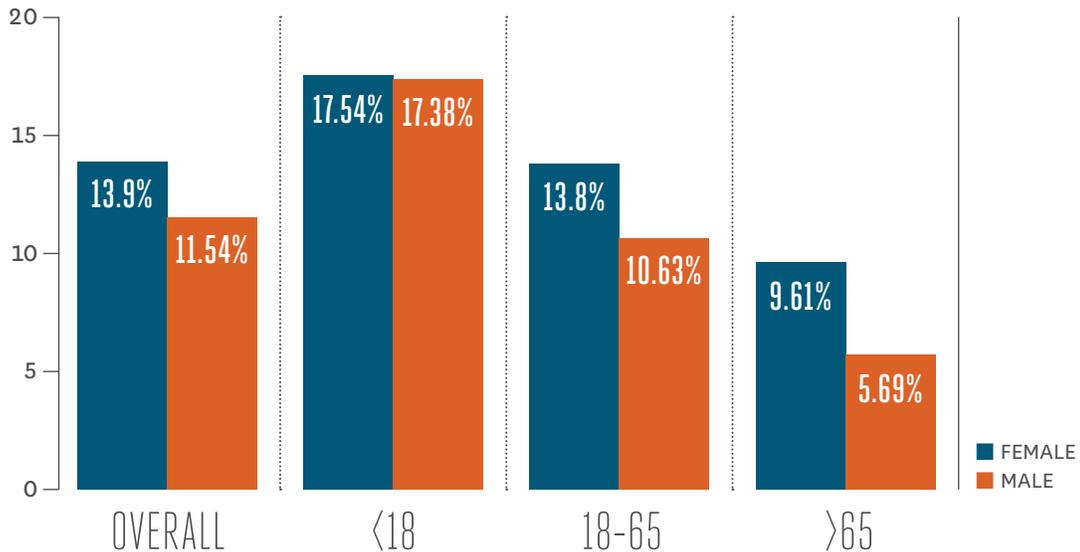
KEY POINTS 

- Nearly one in five girls in Wisconsin lives below the poverty level.
- Economic distress is correlated with race and ethnicity.

Poverty

Wisconsin girls are more likely to live in poverty than the general state population. Nearly one in five girls under 18 (17.5%) were under the federal poverty level,¹ compared to 11.8% of the general population.² Wisconsin women experience higher rates of poverty in every age group, and while the difference between the poverty rate for girls and boys is not the largest gender gap, the poverty rate is considerably higher for Wisconsin youth than for adults (see Economic Health Graph 1).

Economic Health Graph 1. Wisconsin poverty rates by age and sex

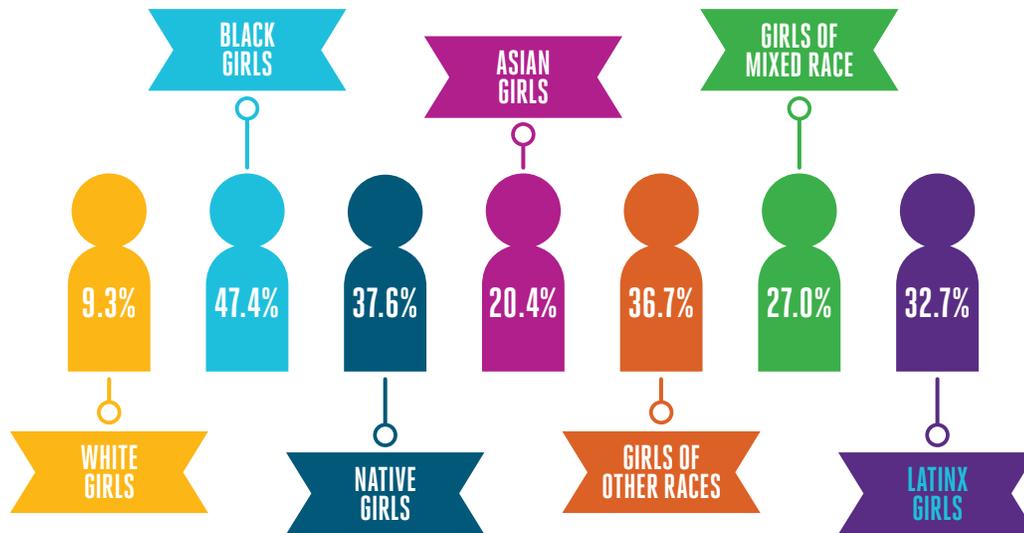


Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2016). Poverty Status in the Last 12 Months, Table S17001. 2016 American Community Survey 5-year estimates.

The Wisconsin poverty rate for girls is slightly lower than the poverty rate for girls in the United States as a whole (21.3%). The poverty rate for girls in the Milwaukee Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) is 21.8%, and among girls living in poverty, more than one-third of those girls (36.4%) live in the four-county Milwaukee MSA.

Poverty among Wisconsin girls is not equally distributed among racial and ethnic groups. Significantly fewer White, non-Latinx girls are below the poverty line (9.3%)³ than Black girls (47.4%),⁴ Native American girls (37.6%),⁵ Asian girls (20.4%),⁶ girls of other races (36.7%),⁷ and girls of mixed race (27.0%).⁸ Of girls of Latinx heritage, 32.7% (regardless of race) are below the poverty line.⁹

Economics Infographic 1. Wisconsin girls' poverty rates by race and ethnicity



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2016). Poverty Status in the Last 12 Months by Sex and Age, Tables B17001B through B17001I. American Community Survey 5-year estimates.

In 2012, one out of every eight Wisconsin residents (12.6%) reported not having enough money to buy food at some time in the previous year; for children, the rate of food insecurity was one in five (20.7%).¹⁰ Among Wisconsin residents reporting food insecurity in 2012, 64% had income levels that made them eligible for nutrition assistance programs, at or below 185% of the federal poverty level, while more than one-third of food-insecure people (34%) were above the eligibility cutoff.¹¹ The risk of food insecurity rises to one in three people for “vulnerable populations,” which include households with children and households with noncitizens.¹² Black and Latinx households have more than twice the risk of food insecurity as White households in Wisconsin.

Safety Net Usage

Low-income families may be eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) administered by the United States Department of Agriculture. This program provides financial support for some food purchases. Of 656,926 households in Wisconsin with children under age 18, 129,738 households (19.7%) received SNAP assistance.¹³ Of those households, 56% were at or above the federal poverty line.

Additionally, 69.4% of households receiving SNAP benefits were headed by a White householder, 19.8% by a Black householder, and the remainder by all other racial categories covered by the U.S. Census. Of SNAP households, 10.7% were headed by a person identifying as Latinx of any race.¹⁴ In an average month, about 330,000 Wisconsin children receive food assistance through SNAP.¹⁵

The federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program provides cash benefits to families in need of financial assistance. The majority of assistance is for adults through Wisconsin Works (W-2), which provides benefits to adults with dependent children if they engage in activities such as job training. About 9,000 adult Wisconsin residents with dependent children received these benefits in 2017;¹⁶ because some people have more than one child, the number of children benefiting from W-2 is higher. If a caretaker for a child is not a candidate for the W-2 program, Wisconsin provides assistance through Kinship Care and Caretaker Supplement programs. In 2017, an average month saw Wisconsin provide assistance to about 10,000 families through these two programs,¹⁷ making it a much smaller form of assistance than SNAP.

About 77,000 low-income families in Wisconsin receive federal rental assistance. Of non-elderly, non-disabled recipients, 79.0% were working families. Roughly a quarter of these households (27.0%) include children; the largest share of assistance goes to the elderly and people with disabilities. The majority of the remaining recipients are working families. The Center for Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) notes that “for every assisted household in Wisconsin, twice as many low-income households are homeless or pay more than half their income for rent and do not receive any federal rental assistance due to limited funding.” Households that apply a substantial share of income to rent are vulnerable to homelessness. In the 2014-15 school year, CBPP estimated that more than 18,000 Wisconsin children lived in what they called “unstable housing,” a sign of this vulnerability.¹⁸

“For every assisted household in Wisconsin, twice as many low-income households are homeless or pay more than half their income for rent and do not receive any federal rental assistance due to limited funding.”

According to the U.S. Census, 33.0% of Wisconsin residents receive health insurance through public programs, and 5.3% of Wisconsin residents have no health insurance.¹⁹ Public health insurance for children in Wisconsin is provided through the Child Health Insurance Program (CHIP), branded in Wisconsin as BadgerCare Plus. In May 2018, BadgerCare Plus provided coverage for 421,956 children, or roughly one-third of all children in Wisconsin.²⁰

Homelessness

Using data from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), which collects data from 80% of the beds dedicated to homeless individuals in the state, the Institute for Community Alliances (ICA) reported that 26,405 clients experienced homelessness at some point in 2016. This figure does not include those who sought refuge at centers for domestic violence, nor does it include people who have dealt with homelessness through private means such as staying with friends. Of these clients, 7,494 (28.4%) were under 18 years of age; 929 were unaccompanied minors and the remainder were served as part of a family unit. Of these clients, 44% were served in Milwaukee and Dane counties, although to some extent this percentage reflects both population density and the location of facilities available to serve the homeless.²¹

Disparities in Homelessness Rates

Like other economic issues, homelessness affects racial and ethnic minorities in a disproportionate way. The ICA notes that “Black Wisconsin residents are almost 12 times more likely to experience homelessness. Wisconsin residents who are multiracial or American Indian are almost six times as likely to experience homelessness, and Latino/a residents are more than twice as likely to experience homelessness. The racial disparity in Wisconsin homelessness cannot be explained by poverty rates alone.”²²

Although the HMIS does not collect information on gender identity or sexual orientation, other evidence suggests that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) children are at particular risk of homelessness.

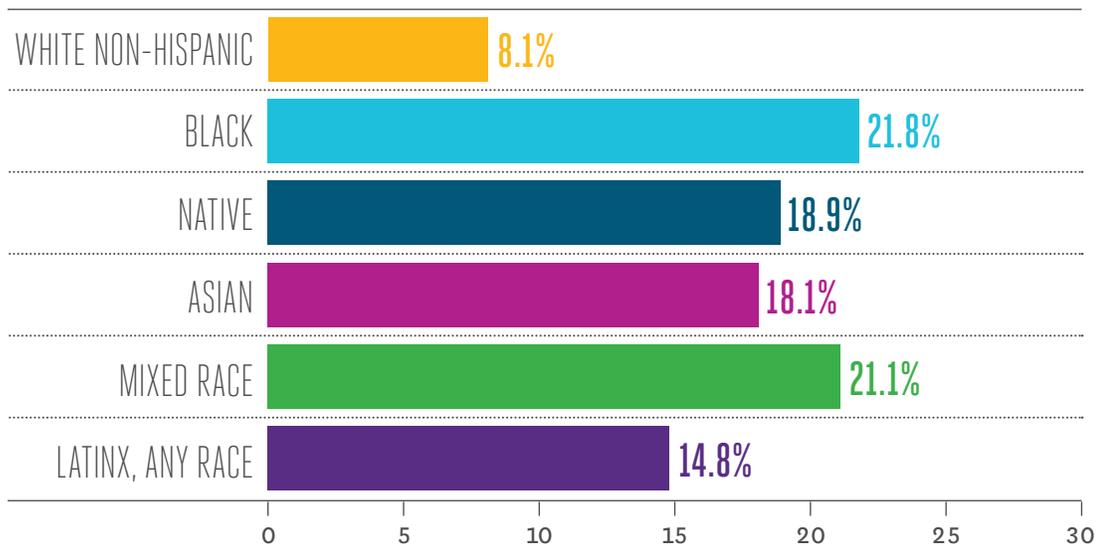
A 2011 survey of facilities across the country that serve homeless youth indicated that LGBT youth made up 30% of their clients who sought housing-related aid such as emergency shelter or transitional living. Family rejection based on sexual orientation or gender identity was cited by a majority of these clients (68%) as a cause of their homelessness.²³

Participation in Labor Force

Among Wisconsin girls ages 16 to 19 overall, 53.0% are participating in the labor force; that is, they are working for pay or actively seeking employment.²⁴ Among those in the labor force, 87.3% are employed and 12.7% are unemployed. Wisconsin boys of the same age have a slightly lower rate of participation in the labor force (49.1%), and among boys in the labor force, the unemployment rate is higher (16.3%).²⁵

As with other economic indicators, girls’ employment rates vary by race and ethnicity; see Economic Health Graph 2. The unemployment rate for Wisconsin girls of color ages 16 to 19 is more than twice the unemployment rate for White, non-Latinx girls, and the unemployment rate for Latinx girls is nearly twice that of their White, non-Latinx counterparts.

Economic Health Graph 2. Wisconsin girls' unemployment rates by race and ethnicity



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2016). Sex by Age by Employment Status for the Population 16 Years and Older, Tables B23002B, C, D, G, H, and I. Unemployment rates are the percentage of the population actively seeking employment but without a job.

College Affordability and Earnings Premium

A college education is an important credential for girls and their families as they seek future economic security. The Wisconsin Institute for Research on Poverty found that a college degree produces an earnings premium of \$800,000 over a person's working life, and college degrees are expected to be required for 45% of jobs by the year 2020.²⁶ In 2016, Wisconsin women with bachelor's degrees had a median income of \$40,915, compared to a median income of \$23,872 for women with a high school diploma.²⁷

The share of college costs borne by students and their families has steadily increased as other funding sources, such as state support of public universities and federal Pell grants, has

decreased. Increases in tuition, and the student share of that tuition, hits low-income families the hardest, resulting in an increase in the share of college costs as a percentage of household income from 29% to 40% between 2007 and 2011.²⁸ In 2017, 67% of college graduates in Wisconsin had student loan debt. The average debt for Wisconsin college graduates was \$30,059, representing an increase of 49% in average debt in a decade. Wisconsin ranked sixth for percentage of students with debt and 17th for the amount of debt carried.²⁹ The increase in student loan debt has implications for the future economy, as people carrying student loan debt are less likely to make major purchases such as homes and vehicles.³⁰

SECTION 3:

Primary and Secondary Education

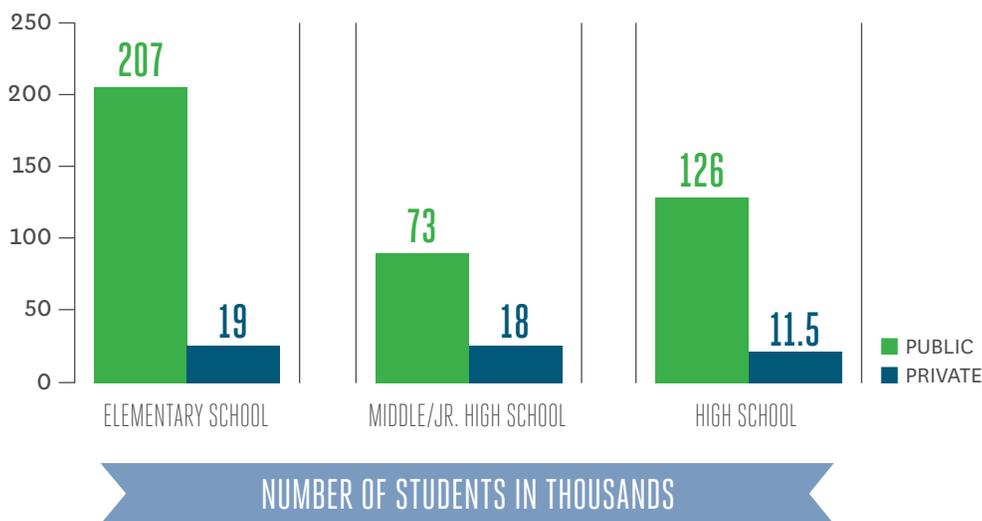
KEY POINTS 

- As in previous reports, we see Wisconsin girls doing better than boys in English Language Arts, but boys outpace girls at the advanced levels of mathematics and science.
- In Wisconsin a higher proportion of boys compared to girls score a 3 or better on AP exams.

School Enrollment and Attendance

During the 2017-18 academic year there were 11 times more girls enrolled in public elementary and high schools compared to private schools in Wisconsin.¹ This difference is reduced at the middle/junior high school level, with only four times as many girls enrolled in public institutions compared to private (see Education Graph 1).² This trend is nearly identical with the data reported in our 2014 *Status of Girls* report.

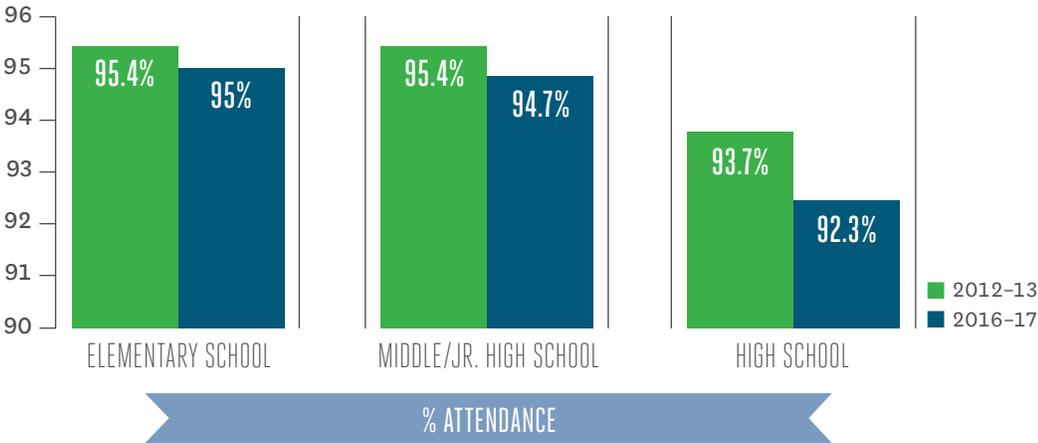
Education Graph 1. Wisconsin girls enrolled in school, public and private, 2017-18



Source: State of Wisconsin, Department of Public Instruction (2018). Wisconsin Information System for Education Data Dashboard (WISEdash).

School attendance rates for Wisconsin girls in elementary, middle/junior high school, and high school have dropped slightly for girls, comparing between the 2012-13 and 2016-17 school years (attendance rates are calculated by dividing the number of days attended by the total possible days for each school year). The biggest drop in attendance rates between the two academic years occurred at the high school level, with a 1.4% decrease in attendance (see Education Graph 2).³

Education Graph 2. Attendance rates in Wisconsin schools, comparing 2012-13 to 2016-17



Source: State of Wisconsin, Department of Public Instruction (2018). Wisconsin Information System for Education Data Dashboard (WISEdash).

Mathematics

During the 2015-16 academic year, Wisconsin started a new assessment, the Wisconsin Forward Exam. The Forward Exam was created to track how students are doing in relation to Wisconsin academic standards, which articulate what students should be able to do in order to be college and/or career ready. The Forward Exam is an online assessment given in the spring of each year in grades 3 to 8 for English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics, grades 4 and 8 in science, and grades 4, 8, and 10 in social studies.⁴ Students can test into one of four categories: below basic, basic, proficient, or advanced, which are described in Education Table 1.

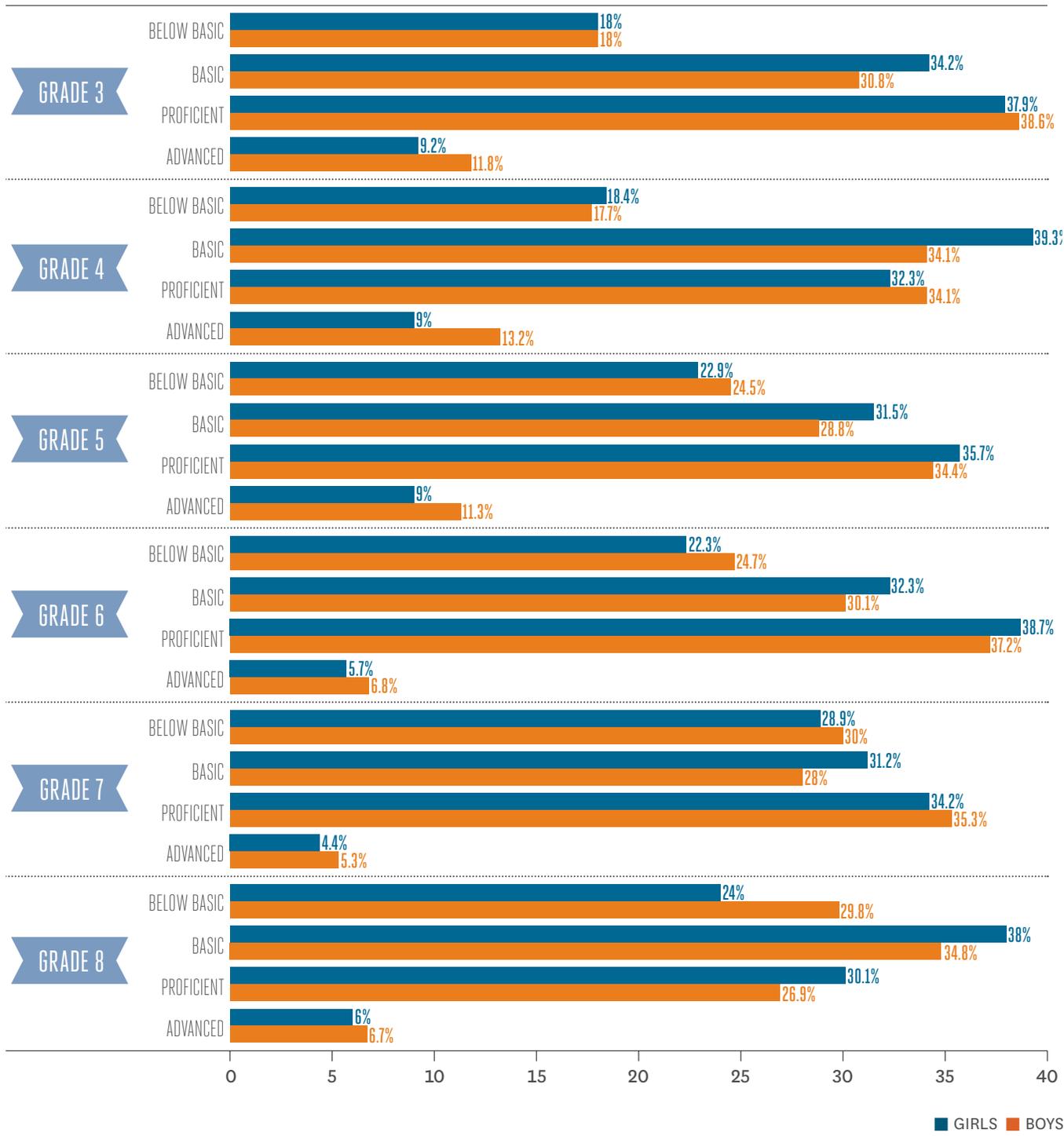
Education Table 1. Wisconsin Forward Exam performance levels

PERFORMANCE LEVEL	
ADVANCED	Student demonstrates thorough understanding of and ability to apply the knowledge and skills for their grade level that are associated with college content-readiness.
PROFICIENT	Student demonstrates adequate understanding of and ability to apply the knowledge and skills for their grade level that are associated with college content-readiness.
BASIC	Student demonstrates partial understanding of and ability to apply the knowledge and skills for their grade level that are associated with college content-readiness.
BELOW BASIC	Student demonstrates minimal understanding of and ability to apply the knowledge and skills for their grade level that are associated with college content-readiness.

Source: State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (2018). Wisconsin Information System for Education Data Dashboard (WISEdash), Wisconsin Forward Exam Levels. Retrieved from <https://dpi.wi.gov/wisedash/about-data/forward>.

As shown in Education Graph 3, in mathematics, boys consistently outpaced girls in all grade levels in the advanced category. However, the disparity decreases by grade 8. More girls than boys can be found at the basic mathematics level for all grade levels, while boys in grades 5, 6, 7, and 8 have a higher percentage of individuals in the below basic category compared to girls.⁵

Education Graph 3. Forward Exam mathematics score classifications, by grade level and gender, 2016-17



Source: State of Wisconsin, Department of Public Instruction (2018). Wisconsin Information System for Education Data Dashboard (WISEdash).

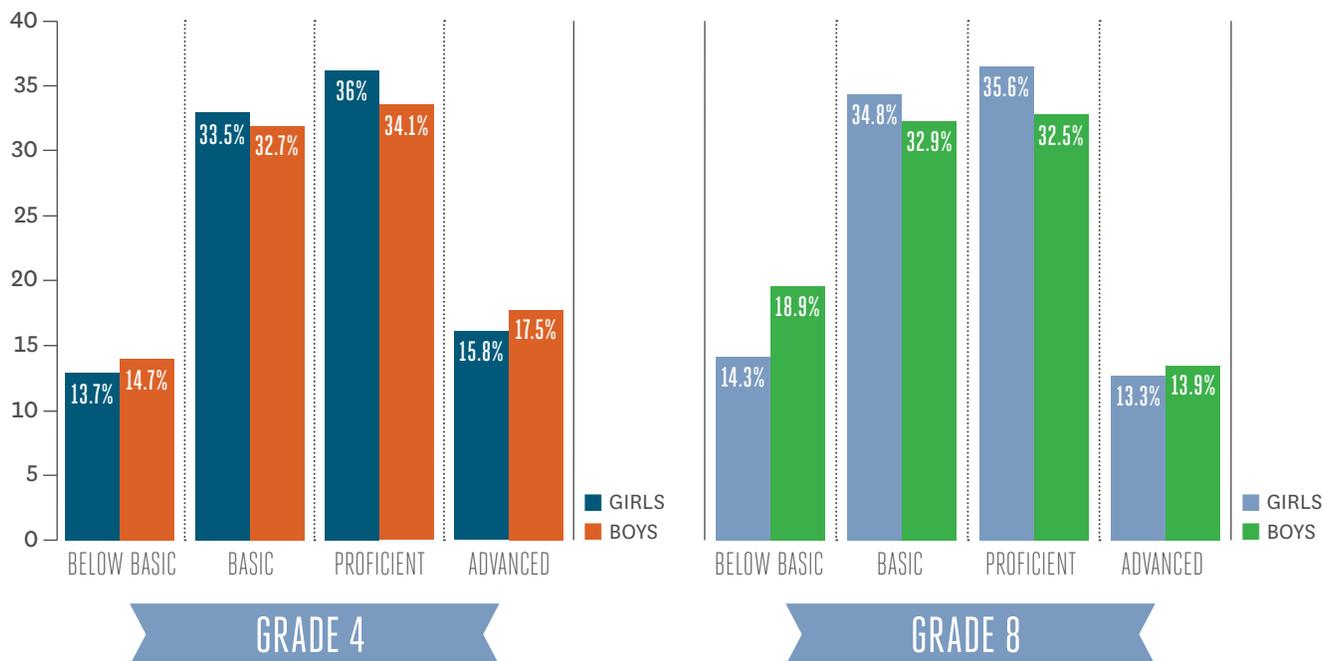
Beyond the Report

Why do Wisconsin boys consistently do better than girls at the advanced levels of mathematics?

Science

The science portion of the Forward Exam is an online assessment administered to Wisconsin public school students in grades 4 and 8 during the spring of every school year.⁶ The majority of students during the 2016-17 school year tested into either the basic or proficient levels, with the greater percentage in the proficient category (see Education Graph 4). The 2016-17 Forward mathematics exam resulted in most 4th and 8th grade students being either basic or proficient as well, but with the greater percentage in the basic category. These data suggest that Wisconsin students are doing better in science compared to mathematics.

Education Graph 4. Forward Exam science score classifications, by grade level and gender, 2016-17



Source: State of Wisconsin, Department of Public Instruction (2018). Wisconsin Information System for Education Data Dashboard (WISEdash).

Girls consistently outpaced boys in both grades at the proficient level: 36.0% of girls in 4th grade were at the proficient level and 35.6% were proficient in science in 8th grade, while the percentage of boys at the proficient level was 34.1% and 32.5% respectively (see Education Graph 4).⁷ However, a higher proportion of boys compared to girls can be seen in both grades at the advanced level. Looking at the below basic levels in both testing grades, a smaller proportion of girls fell into this category compared to boys.

Beyond the Report

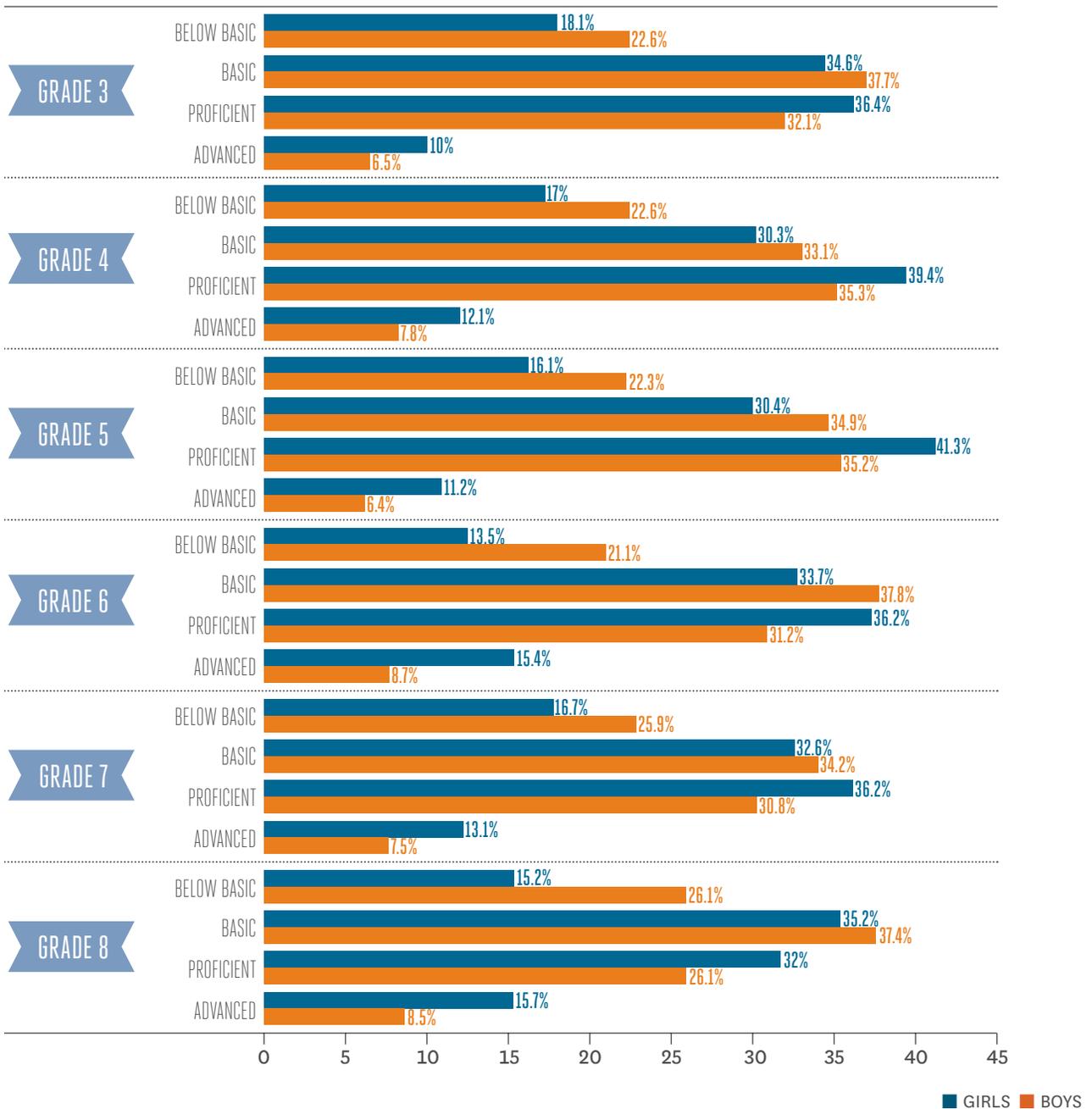
In both science and math, girls outperform boys at the basic and proficient levels. However, girls underperform at the advanced level. Why might we see this trend?

English Language Arts

The English Language Arts (ELA) Forward Exam is an online assessment administered to Wisconsin public school students in grades 3 through 8 during the spring of every school year.⁸

The majority of students in all six grade levels fell into the basic and proficient levels (see Education Graph 5).⁹ Girls consistently outperformed boys, with a higher percentage of girls falling into proficient and advanced levels compared to boys in all grade levels. In contrast, a higher percentage of boys could be found in the below basic and basic categories for all six grade levels.¹⁰

Education Graph 5. Forward Exam English Language Arts score classifications, by grade level and gender, 2016-17



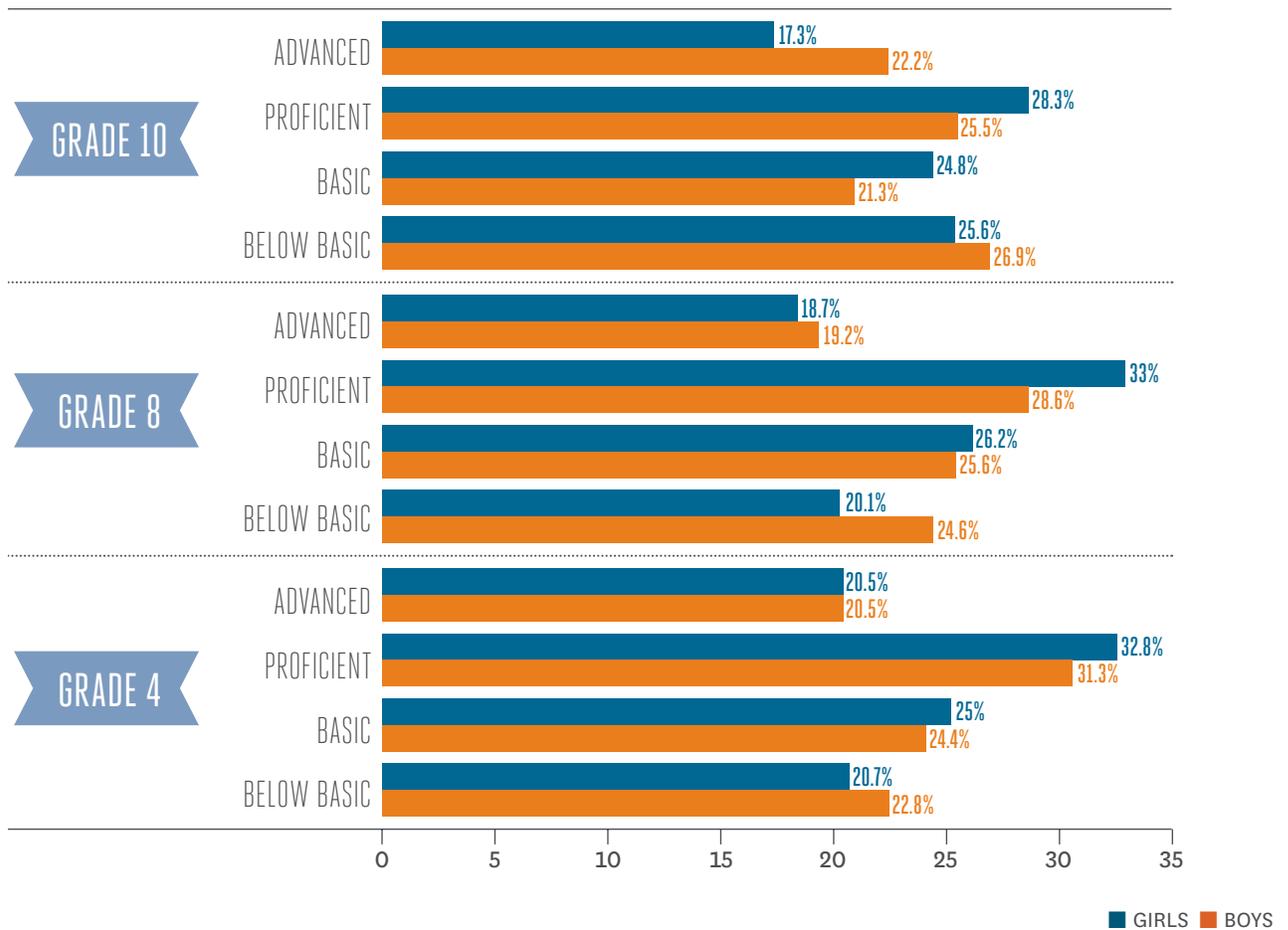
Source: State of Wisconsin, Department of Public Instruction (2018). Wisconsin Information System for Education Data Dashboard (WISEdash).

Social Studies

The Wisconsin Forward social studies exam is administered to students online during the spring semester in grades 4, 8 and 10.¹¹ The 2016-17 Forward social studies exam revealed that the largest proportion of girls in all three grade levels were found in the proficient category (see Education Graph 6).¹² However, boys had the highest proportion in the proficient category only in 4th and 6th grades, while the largest proportion of boys in 10th grade fell into the below basic category.¹³ Despite the high

percentage of 10th grade boys demonstrating below basic performance in social studies, they had a higher percentage of students in the advanced category compared to girls.¹⁴ Boys had a higher percentage of students in the advanced category in both 8th and 10th grades compared to girls, and the percentage of 4th grade boys and girls in the advanced category was equal at 20.5%.¹⁵

Education Graph 6. Forward Exam social studies score classifications, by grade level and gender, 2016-17



Source: State of Wisconsin, Department of Public Instruction (2018). Wisconsin Information System for Education Data Dashboard (WISEdash).

Beyond the Report

Why do boys start outpacing girls at the advanced level starting in 8th grade? Why does the disparity increase in the 10th grade?

Advanced Placement Examinations

Advanced Placement (AP) examinations are taken by students during May of every school year. Students achieving a 3 or higher on AP exams often earn college credit for those courses at many colleges nationwide.¹⁶ The exam scoring is on a five-point scale where 5=extremely well qualified, 4=well qualified, 3=qualified, 2=possibly qualified, and 1=no recommendation.¹⁷ The percentage of high school students taking AP exams has increased from 12.7% in the 2012-13 academic year to 16.4% in 2016-17.¹⁸ The percentage of girls taking AP exams has been consistently higher than boys over

the past five school years, with 19.3% of girls and 13.6% of boys taking AP exams in 2016-17. The percentage of girls participating in AP exams has increased by 4.6% since 2012, while increasing by only 2.6% in boys since 2012.¹⁹

However, similar to findings in the 2014 *Status of Girls* report, a higher proportion of boys compared to girls scored a 3 or better on AP exams. In the 2016-17 school year, 68.3% of boys and 63.5% of girls scored a 3 or better on AP exams.²⁰

Beyond the Report

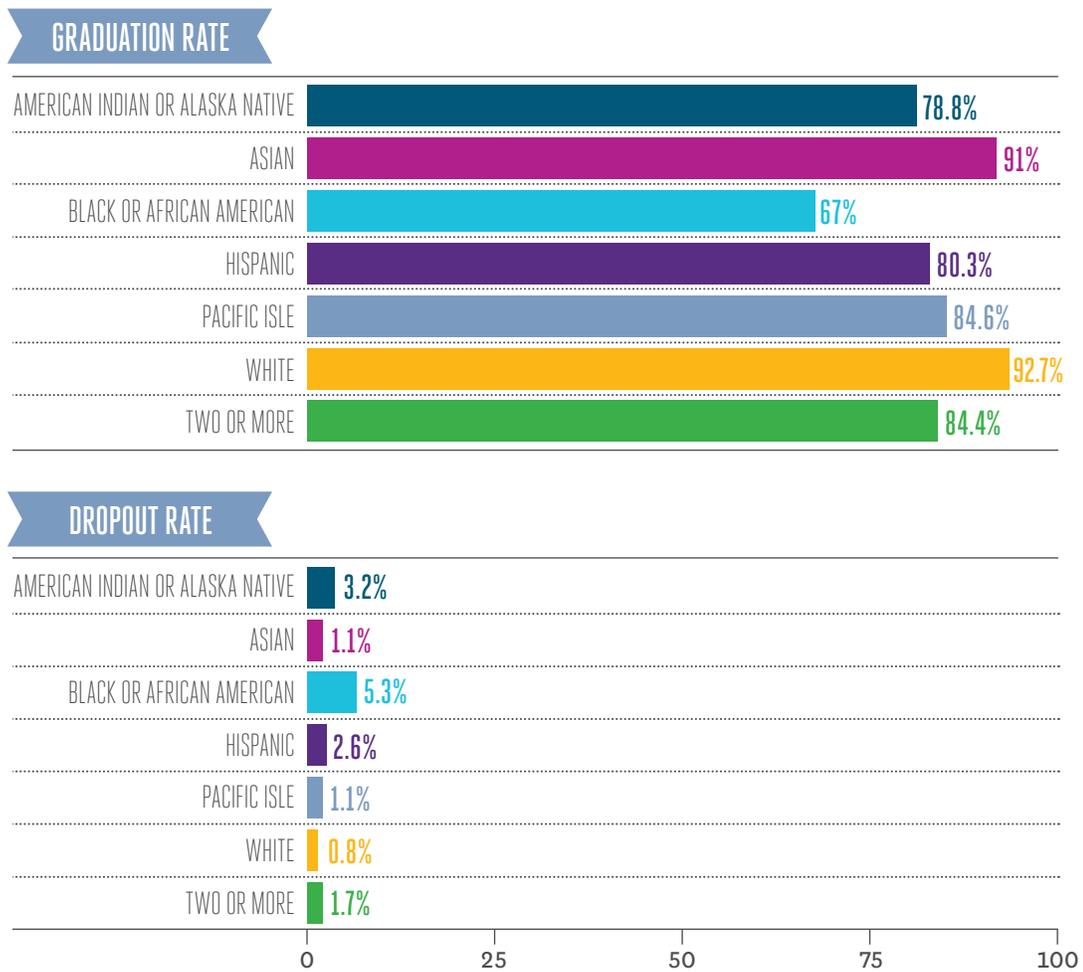
In Wisconsin, a higher proportion of girls take AP exams compared to boys. However, a higher percentage of boys compared to girls score a 3 or above. This is critical because many colleges require a score of 3 or better to receive college credit for AP courses. This puts women at a disadvantage compared to men from the first day of classes when they start college.

Graduation and Dropout Rates

A higher percentage of girls in Wisconsin public schools graduated during the 2016-17 academic year receiving a regular diploma compared to the percentage of boys receiving a regular diploma, with just over 90.0% of girls graduating and 86.5% of boys (four-year cohort data).²¹ The percentage of boys in the 2016-17 four-year cohort that dropped out was slightly higher than the percentage of girls, 1.7% and 1.2%, respectively.²²

Similar to the 2014 *Status of Girls* report, when looking at Wisconsin graduation and dropout rates for the 2016-17 school year by race, White students had the highest graduation rate (92.7% with a regular diploma), while Black students had the lowest graduation rate (67.0% with a regular diploma).²³ Black students had the highest dropout rates in 2016-17, at 5.3%. The race with the lowest dropout rates was White, at 0.8% (see Education Graph 7).²⁴

Education Graph 7. Wisconsin high school graduation rate (regular diploma) and Wisconsin high school dropout rate, 2016-17



Source: State of Wisconsin, Department of Public Instruction (2018). Wisconsin Information System for Education Data Dashboard (WISEdash).

Mind the Gaps

As in 2014, dropout and graduation rates by both race and gender are not available. This data could prove useful when identifying under-represented groups in areas like STEM with respect to high school success.

SECTION 4:

Post-Secondary Education

KEY POINTS

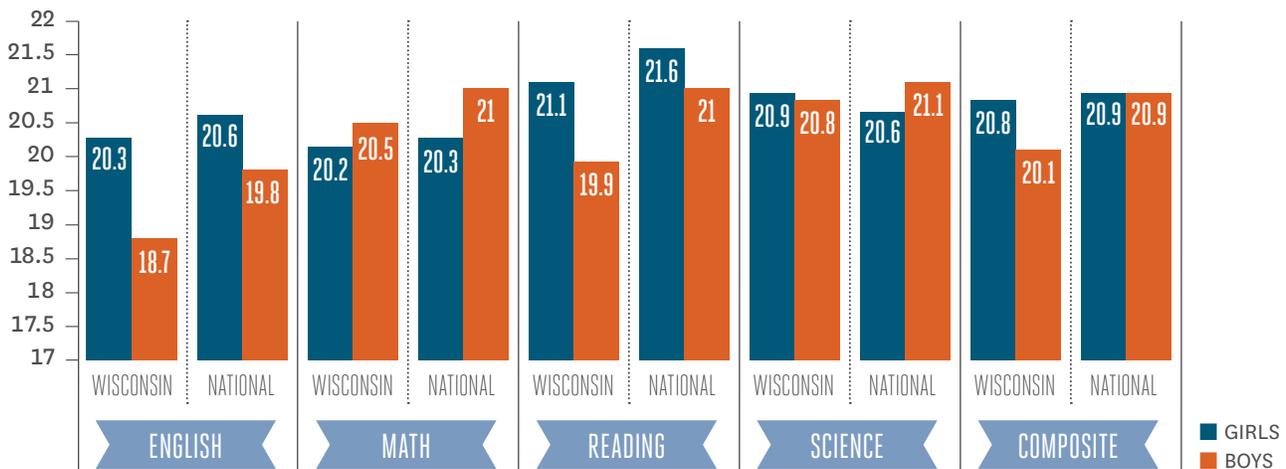


- Overall, Wisconsin girls achieved their highest ACT scores on the reading portion of the test.
- The percentage of Wisconsin girls who intend to enroll in a four-year college after graduation continues to be higher than the percentage of Wisconsin boys.

Entrance Examinations

The ACT and SAT are two of the most common assessments that high school students take to gain admission into four-year colleges. Many students opt to take just the ACT since this is the predominant assessment used by most colleges and universities to make admissions decisions. The ACT contains exams on English, math, reading, science, and an optional writing test. The majority of students take the ACT during their junior year of high school. Wisconsin students in 2016 scored consistently lower on most sections of the ACT compared to national averages (except for Wisconsin girls in science; see Education Graph 8). This is quite a change from the 2014 *Status of Girls Report*, where Wisconsin students did consistently better than national averages.¹

Education Graph 8. Average ACT scores by gender, United States and Wisconsin, by gender, 2016



Sources: National Data: The ACT, Inc. ACT Profile Report; The Graduating Class 2016 (2018). Wisconsin Data: State of Wisconsin, Department of Public Instruction, Wisconsin Information System for Education Data Dashboard (WISEdash).

In 2016, Wisconsin girls achieved their highest scores on the reading portion of the ACT with an average of 21.1 compared to the national average in reading of 21.6 for girls and 21.0 for boys.² Girls outpaced boys in Wisconsin on the science portion of the exam, which is a change from the 2014 *Status of Girls* report, where they scored lower than boys in Wisconsin but did better than girls and boys at the national level.³ Overall, girls in Wisconsin had a higher average composite score (20.8) than boys (20.1).⁴ Wisconsin girls' composite score was only slightly lower than the national average for girls and boys of 20.9.⁵

Aspirations

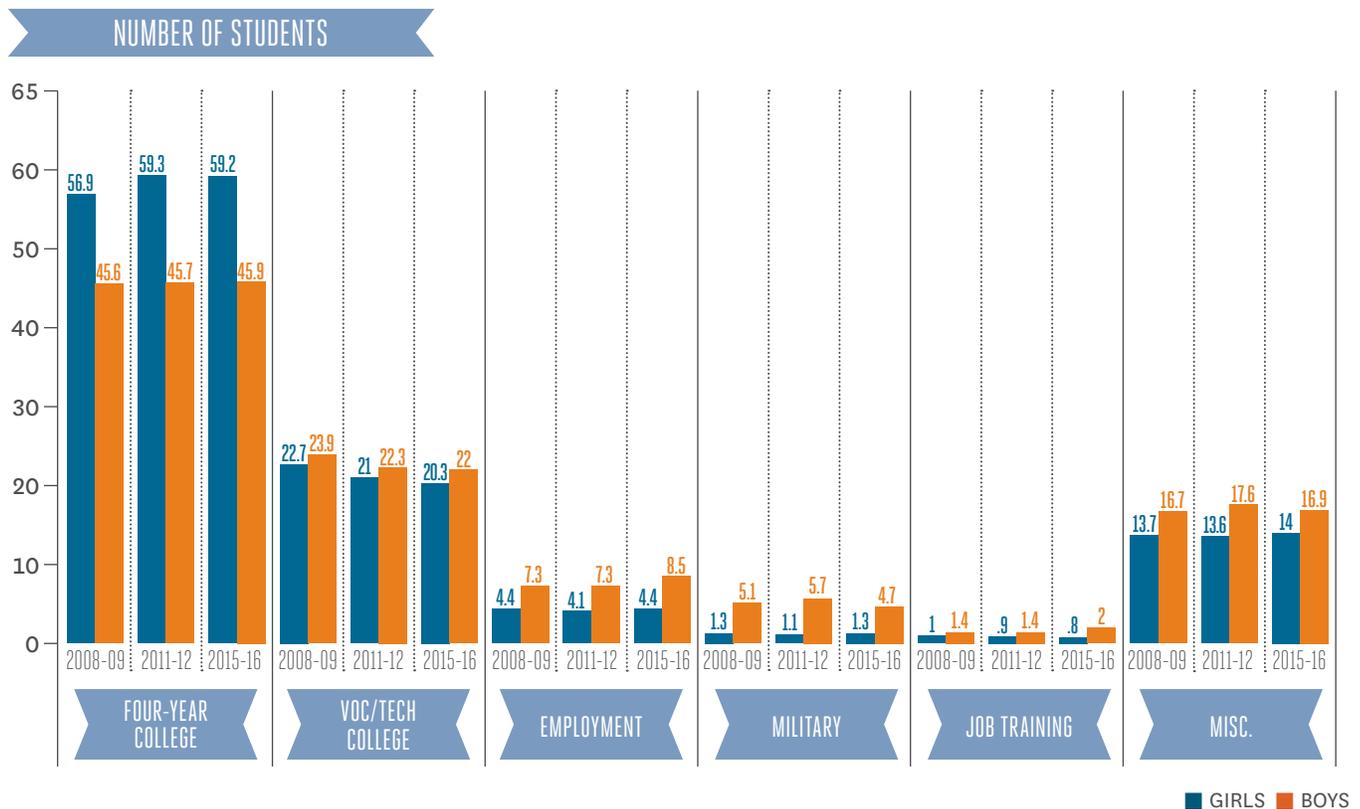
In Wisconsin, post-graduation plans are collected yearly on all new graduates from public schools statewide as part of the Wisconsin School District Performance Report.⁶

The percentage of Wisconsin girls intending to go to a four-year college after graduation has been consistently higher compared to boys. The 2008-09 data showed a gap of 11.3 percentage points between girls and boys, and this gap rose to 13.3 percentage points in the 2015-16 academic year (see Education Graph 9).⁷ However, a higher percentage of boys compared to girls was seen in all five remaining categories (vocational/technical college, employment, military, job training, and miscellaneous) during the 2008-09, 2011-12, and 2015-16 school years.⁸ Similar to previous years, the largest percentage of both girls and boys in the 2015-16 school year can be found aspiring to enroll in a four-year college upon graduation (59.2% of girls and 45.9% of boys).⁹

Mind the Gaps

Why do we continue to see a higher percentage of girls with four-year college aspirations than boys?

Education Graph 9. Post-secondary aspirations of Wisconsin students, by gender, 2008-09, 2011-12, and 2015-16



Source: State of Wisconsin, Department of Public Instruction (2018). Wisconsin Information System for Education Data Dashboard (WISEdash).

SECTION 5:

Media Engagement

KEY POINTS

- Social media and smartphone use is almost ubiquitous in teens' lives.
- Girls, more than boys, are heavy online consumers. Of those teens surveyed nationally, half of girls reported being “near-constant” users compared to 39% of boys.
- There has been a dramatic increase in the number of hours Wisconsin girls report being on computers or video or computer games. They now surpass boys in this measure.
- Significantly more Wisconsin girls than boys reported experiencing cyberbullying.

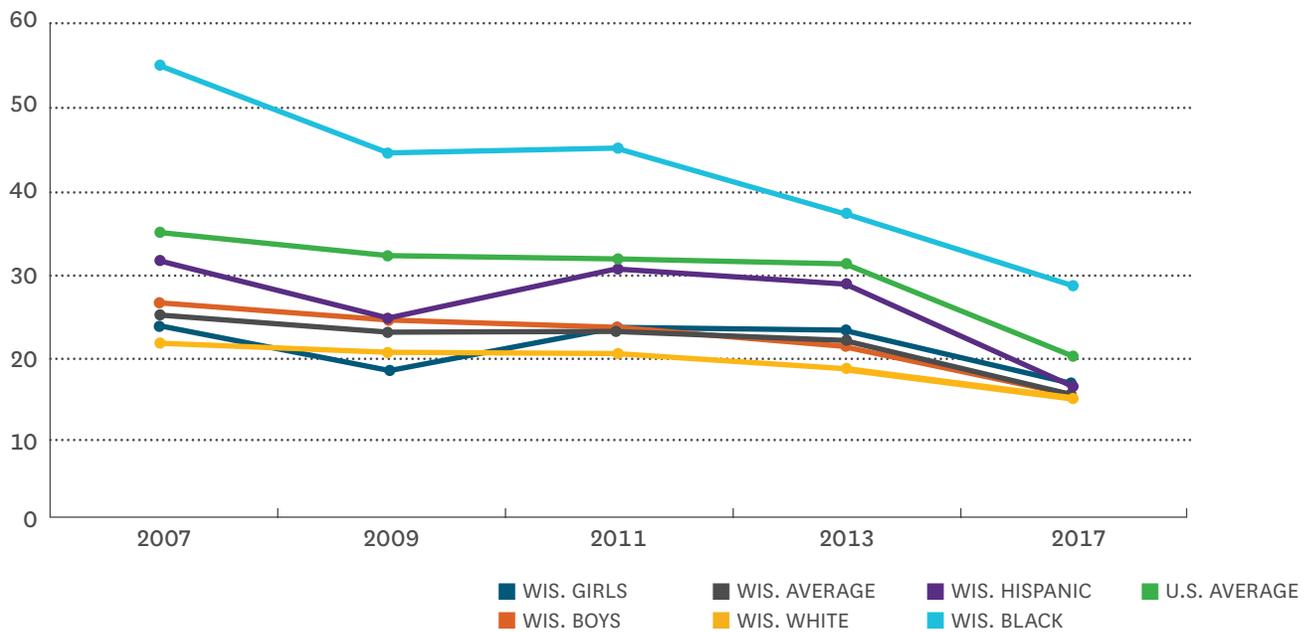
Media Influence

Media use by, and messages about, girls and women have been a persistent and powerful influence on the lives of girls in the United States. Whether print or digital, via advertising or entertainment, media messages and portrayals continue to shape girls' sense of themselves and how they interact with their peers and adults. Since the 2014 *Status of Girls* report, the influence of media, especially social media, has continued to rapidly increase. Today, social media and smartphone use are almost ubiquitous in teen girls' lives. Their attitude toward the type of influence it has on them and their peers is ambivalent.

Television

Teens continue to view significant amounts of television in Wisconsin. While the numbers are significant, the number of teens spending more than three hours per day watching television is decreasing. The trend has changed over the past decade, with female teens spending slightly more time than their male peers watching three or more hours of television per day (17.1% of girls compared with 16.3% of boys).¹ The number of hours spent watching television by Black teens has dramatically dropped, with 55.2% of surveyed Black teens indicating they watched three or more hours of television per day in 2007 compared to 29.7% in 2017.² This compares to a national average of 20.7% of teens who report watching three or more hours of television per day.

Media Engagement Graph 1. Percentage of Wisconsin students who watched television three or more hours per day (on an average school day)



Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (2017). Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 10-Year Trend Analysis Report.

Online Media

The decrease in television time is undoubtedly related to the increasing time teens are spending on other “screens,” including video games or computers. There has been a dramatic increase in the number of girls reporting they spend time on computers or video or computer games. In 2007, the Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) found that 15.5% of girls reported spending three or more hours per day in this way; by 2017, the number increased to 41.5% of girls. In the 2017 YRBS, girls have surpassed boys in their daily use of online media.³

“In a 2018 Pew Charitable survey of 743 teens ages 13 to 17 from a variety of racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds, 95.0% reported having or having access to a smartphone, compared with 75.0% in 2014.”

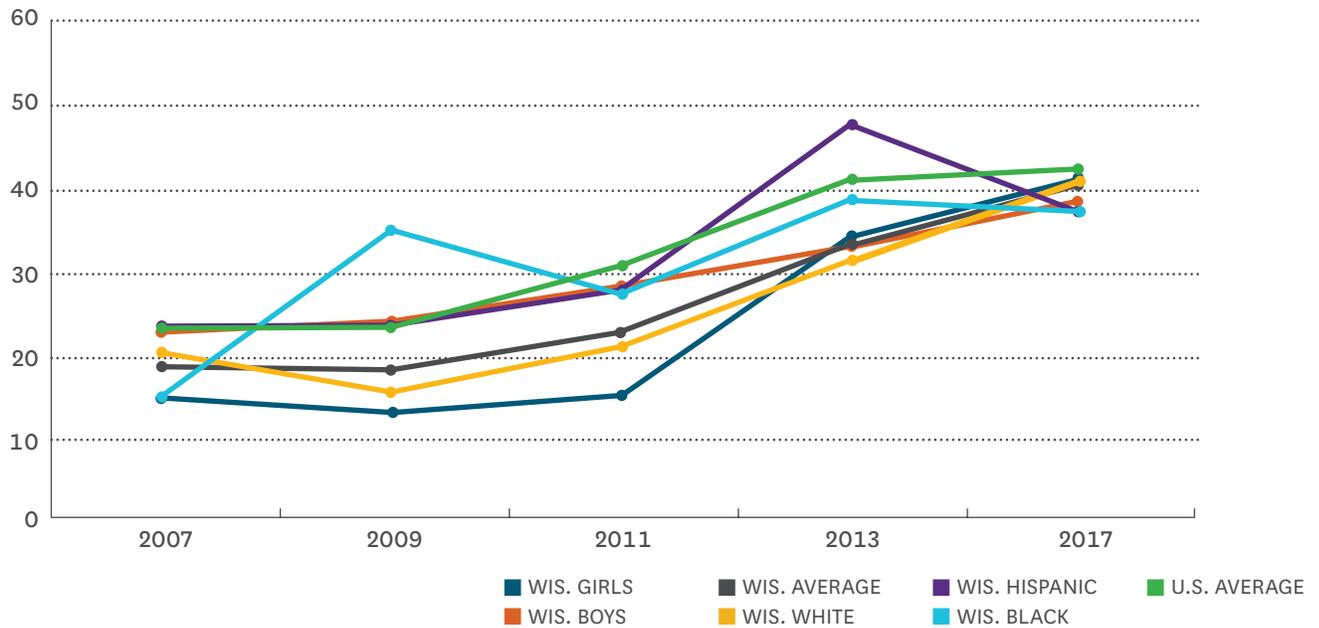
Wisconsin data mirrors national trend data. In a 2018 Pew Charitable Trust survey of 743 teens ages 13 to 17 from a variety of racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds, 95.0% reported having or having access to a smartphone, compared with 75.0% in 2014. Mobile technology has undoubtedly influenced young people to dramatically increase usage. Of teens, 45.0% report being online “almost constantly.” This was up 21.0% since the survey was conducted in 2014. Girls, more than boys, are heavy online

consumers. Of those teens surveyed by Pew, half of girls (50.0%) reported being “near-constant” users compared to 39.0% of teen boys; 54.0% of Latinx teen respondents indicated they were online “almost constantly” compared to 41.0% of White teens.⁴

Use of online media via computers and video games can offer a wide variety of experiences for girls that shape their attitudes toward it. The Pew Research Center study *Teens, Social Media & Technology 2018* reported that YouTube (85.0%), Instagram (72.0%) and Snapchat (69.0%) are their most popular/most often used social media platforms. Teens, however, do not agree whether social media has a positive or negative effect on their lives — 31.0% report “mostly positive,” 24.0% say “mostly negative,” and 45.0% report neither positive nor negative. Of those who reported social media being “mostly positive,” 40.0% reported this was because they used social media to connect with friends and family, 16.0% said that it was easier to find news and information, and 15.0% reported that it was a means of meeting others with the same interests.⁵

Teens are increasingly using the internet as a source of information, which may shape how educators, parents, and organizations choose to share information with teens in the future. For example, a 2015 study from the Center on Media and Human Development School of Communication at

Media Engagement Graph 2. Percentage of Wisconsin students who played video or computer games or used a computer three or more hours per day (on an average school day)



Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (2017). Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 10-Year Trend Analysis Report.

Northwestern University reported that while teens are still most likely to access health information from parents (55.0%), health classes (32.0%), and doctors/nurses (29.0%); a growing number are accessing the internet to find information about their health (25.0%).⁶

Among those teens who reported social media as “mostly negative,” 27.0% perceived social media as a source of bullying or rumor spreading, 17.0% said it harms relationships/lack of in-person contact, 15.0% said it provides unrealistic views of others’ lives, 14.0% said it causes distractions or addiction, and 12.0% noted peer pressure.⁷

“While there is not specific data on Wisconsin girls’ attitudes toward social media, we do know that they are more likely than their male peers to be bullied through texting or social media.”

While there is not specific data on Wisconsin girls’ attitudes toward social media, we do know that they are more likely than their male peers to be bullied through texting or social media.

Significantly more girls than boys reported experiencing cyberbullying, with 24.9% of girls reporting they had been bullied in the past year compared to 11.9% of boys. Moreover, students were more likely to report being electronically bullied earlier in high school. About one-third (33.6%) of the 233 female 9th grade respondents reported being electronically bullied.⁸ Cyberbullying continues to be a significant issue for Wisconsin girls.

As social media and other forms of online media are now seemingly inseparable from the teen experience, parents, teachers, mental health practitioners and teens themselves will need to continue to evaluate the ways in which constant messaging to girls shapes their lives.

Beyond the Report

Girls are spending much more time on their devices than in the past; therefore, it is important that we continue to ask questions about their impact on girls’ lives. What messages are girls receiving from social media “influencers”? How does social media shape girls’ social support structures and peer networks?

SECTION 6:

Political Activity

KEY POINTS

- Wisconsin girls at or near voting age comprise a relatively untapped source of political power.
- Many Wisconsin girls are politically engaged, even if they do not vote in a specific election.

Registration and Voting

Each year, more than 30,000 girls in Wisconsin turn 18 and become eligible to vote.¹ Nationally, between one-third and one-half of eligible voters between 18 and 20 years of age are registered to vote at the time of national elections, with higher rates of registration during presidential election cycles.² Registered voters in this age group are less likely than older voters to cast ballots,³ though there are differences by sex and race. Young women are more likely to vote than young men, and young Black women have the highest rate of voter turnout of ethnic groups studied.⁴ Still, young voters have the lowest voting rate of any age group, both because of lower rates of registration and lower voter turnout rates than older citizens.⁵ In 2016, non-registered voters in this age group gave lack of interest as the most frequently cited reason (38.0%) for nonparticipation in the election, followed by missing registration deadlines (23.0%).⁶

There are both emerging and well-established groups working to increase voter turnout among newly eligible voters. Rock the Vote, a national organization founded in 1990, provides state-specific resources to assist and encourage young people to vote. Rock the Vote labels Wisconsin as “a slacker” when it comes to voting rights. The organization not only urges young Wisconsinites to vote but to also advocate for greater protection of voting rights.⁷ Other groups that promote voter registration include the League of Women Voters’ high school outreach program, and VOTE.org. The ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge offers prizes and recognition to



EACH YEAR, MORE THAN 30,000 GIRLS IN WISCONSIN TURN
18 AND BECOME
ELIGIBLE TO VOTE

colleges and universities that increase the rate of student voting.⁸ Tufts University’s Institute for Democracy and Higher Education offers publicly available data on student voting behavior and strategies for increasing political knowledge and activity among college students.⁹

In 2018, the March for Our Lives movement was founded by students who survived a school shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. One of the major

aims of this movement has been to register new voters, and indeed, the March for Our Lives website has a “Register to Vote” button prominently located on every page.¹⁰ Members of this movement conducted a national tour focused on voter registration in the summer of 2018.

Political Engagement

Voting is an important form of political activity, but it is not the only form. Relying only on voting data can give a misleading impression about levels of political engagement among young people. A 2011 study by Tufts University through the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement¹¹ identified six categories of civic engagement and assessed the percentage of youth described by each category. Researchers found that more than 75% of youth are engaged in political activity of some kind, from talking about issues and posting online to donating money and taking on civic leadership positions. Nationally, young women are more likely than young men to vote, volunteer, donate money, or belong to community associations. They are, however, less likely to hold leadership positions in community groups.¹²

“While women are more civically engaged than young men on several indicators, they remain under-represented in civic and political leadership.”

Though young women score as well as young men on average on tests of civic knowledge,¹³ there are gaps in opportunities to learn about and engage in politics that

disproportionately affect different demographic groups.¹⁴ In general, schools that serve mostly lower-income students offer fewer opportunities for students to engage in civic education, such as working on service projects, interacting with civic leaders, and engaging in simulations of democratic processes.

In Wisconsin, several organizations offer statewide opportunities for students to help address the civic opportunity gap. Badger Girls State,¹⁵ sponsored by the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Wisconsin, has, since 1937, offered high school junior girls the opportunity to build a political community from the ground up by electing representatives and passing laws as well as creating their own media. Students are chosen from high schools across the state based on their scholarship and leadership service. Similarly, the YMCA sponsors an annual Youth in Government conference that offers Wisconsin youth from grades 7 to 12 the chance to participate in a statewide conference. Delegates can participate as part of the legislative branch, judiciary, or media.¹⁶ Both of these organizations send representatives to national conferences.

For those youth interested in international affairs, the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee’s Institute of World Affairs hosts an annual Model United Nations for high school students each year. Delegates from around the state take the perspective of representatives of different countries and debate resolutions. Students are charged with representing their assigned countries as realistically as possible,¹⁷ an immersive exercise in perspective-taking that requires deep analysis of the political, economic, and social climate of their country and region.

Wisconsin girls may also form new groups to represent emerging political needs. In 2018, 18-year-old Katie Eder of Shorewood, Wis., founded the 50 Miles More march, which later transitioned into a nationwide movement. Motivated by the emergence of March for Our Lives, Eder and her classmates recruited students to walk 50 miles from Madison to Janesville to draw attention to the need for reform of gun laws to reduce school shootings.¹⁸ Eder is now the executive director of #50MilesMore, a nonprofit organization with the goal of supporting nationwide political activism on this issue.¹⁹

SECTION 7:

Physical Health

KEY POINTS

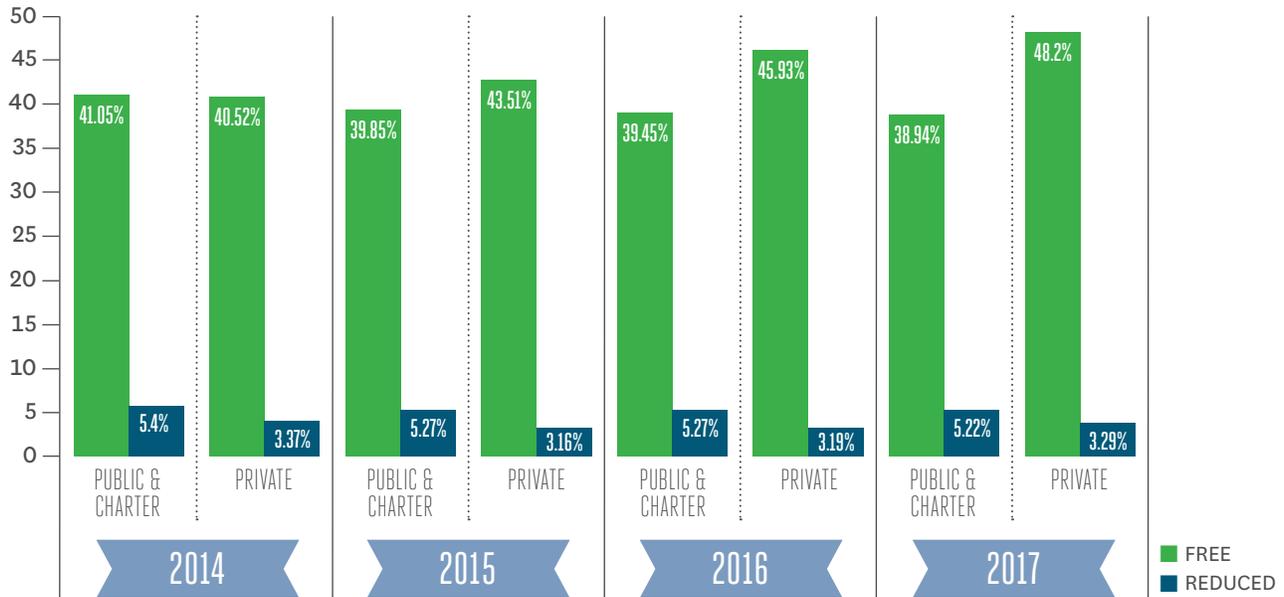
- Over the past four years, the percentage of Wisconsin students receiving a free lunch at private schools has increased but decreased for public and charter school students.
- Nearly twice the percentage of Wisconsin boys are defined as obese compared to girls, but a slightly higher percentage of girls are classified as overweight compared to boys.

Nutrition

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), through the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) agency, offers multiple programs that provide healthy supplemental food for children. The programs overseen by FNS are the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, Summer Food Service Program, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, and Special Milk Program. Administered by agencies at the state level, each of these programs helps fight hunger and obesity by reimbursing schools, child care centers, and after-school programs for providing healthy meals to children.¹ Of the six national programs, the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), established in 1946, is the primary program for providing well-balanced lunches to school children for free or at reduced cost.

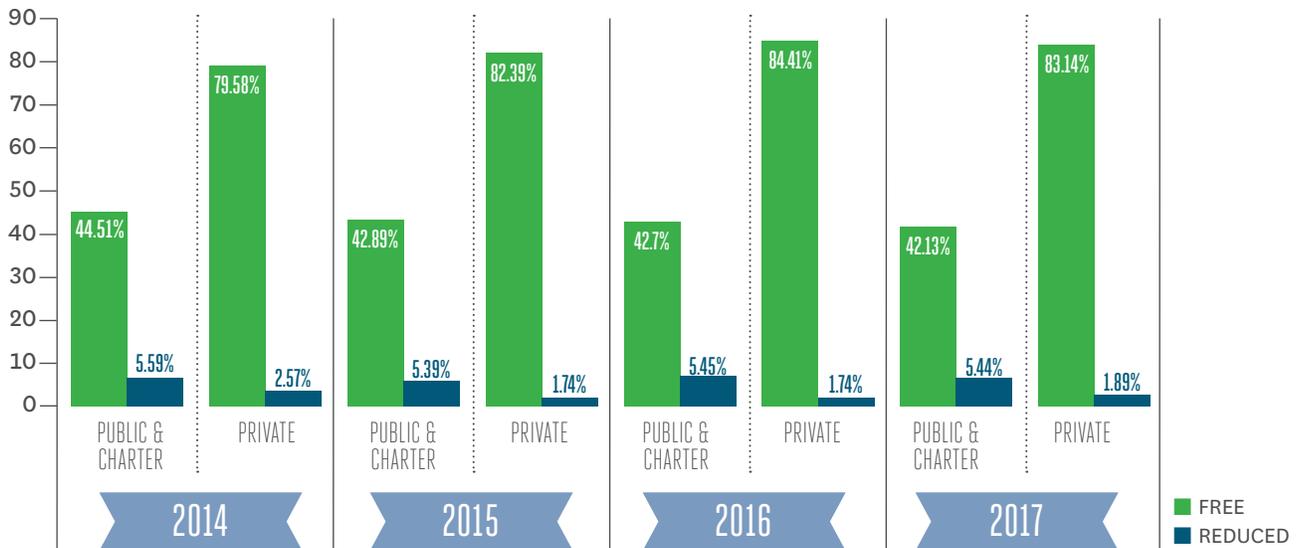
In Wisconsin, the percentage of students in public and charter schools receiving a free lunch decreased slightly from 41.1% in 2014 to 38.9% in 2017 (see Physical Health Graph 1).² However, the percentage of students in private Wisconsin schools receiving a free lunch increased from 40.5% in 2014 to 48.2% in 2017.³ The percentage of Wisconsin students in both public and private schools receiving a reduced-price lunch dropped slightly by 0.2% and 0.1%, respectively, between 2014 and 2017.⁴ We see similar patterns when looking at other nutrition programs in Wisconsin like the School Breakfast Program (see Physical Health Graph 2).

Physical Health Graph 1. Percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunches in Wisconsin, public/charter, and private schools, by school year, 2014-17



Source: State of Wisconsin, Department of Public Instruction (2018). Program statistics.

Physical Health Graph 2. Percentage of students receiving free or reduced breakfast in Wisconsin, public/charter and private schools, by school year, 2014-17



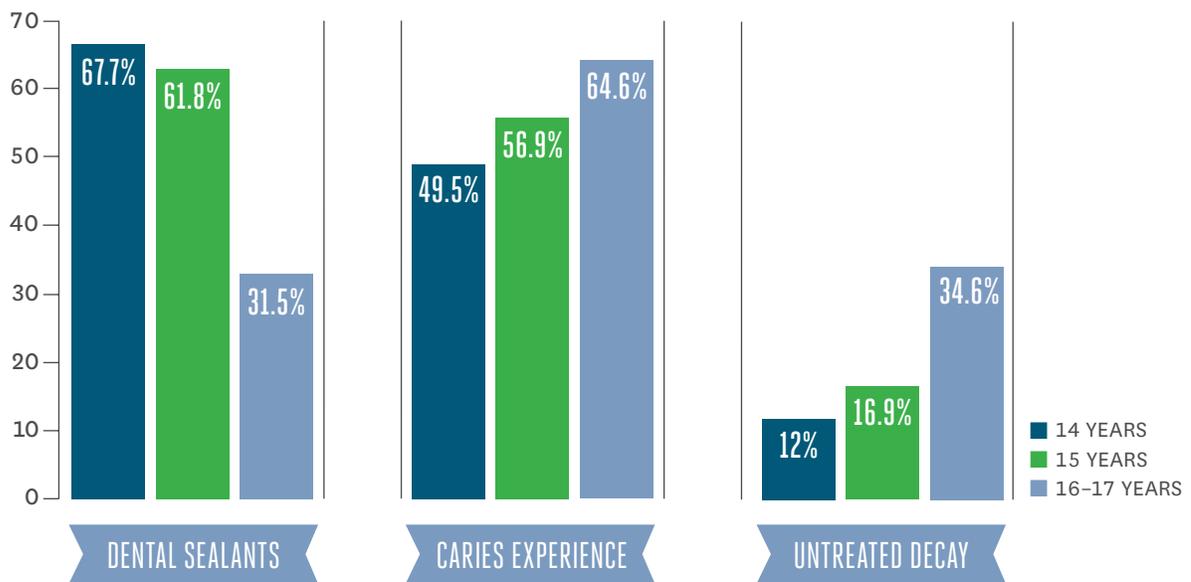
Source: State of Wisconsin, Department of Public Instruction (2018). Program statistics.

Oral Health of Wisconsin Ninth Graders

In the 2014 *Status of Girls* report, findings from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) Healthy Smiles/Healthy Growth Survey showed that dental caries (calculated indicator from treated decay and untreated decay) and untreated decay was on the decline in Wisconsin, at least during the survey time frames, from 2001 to 2013.⁵ Also, the data showed that the percentage of students with dental sealants increased in Wisconsin during the survey periods. Dental sealants are plastic coatings applied to the back teeth and have been shown to reduce cavity formation on first molars.⁶ These encouraging findings come from data collected on 3rd grade students that participated in the dental screenings.

During the 2013-14 school year, the Wisconsin Healthy Smiles survey screened 9th grade high school students instead. This was a significant change since older students have risk factors not found in younger children like hormonal changes due to puberty, greater tooth surface, and having more autonomy over brushing and flossing.⁷ The 2015 Healthy Smiles survey collected data from 1,162 9th grade students from 10 schools across Wisconsin, with age ranges from 14 to 17 years.⁸ The survey revealed that the percentage of students experiencing dental caries and the percentage of students with untreated decay increased with age (see Physical Health Graph 3).⁹ Also, we see that the percentage of students having dental sealants decreased with increased age (see Physical Health Graph 3).¹⁰

Physical Health Graph 3. Dental sealants, caries experience, and untreated decay, by age

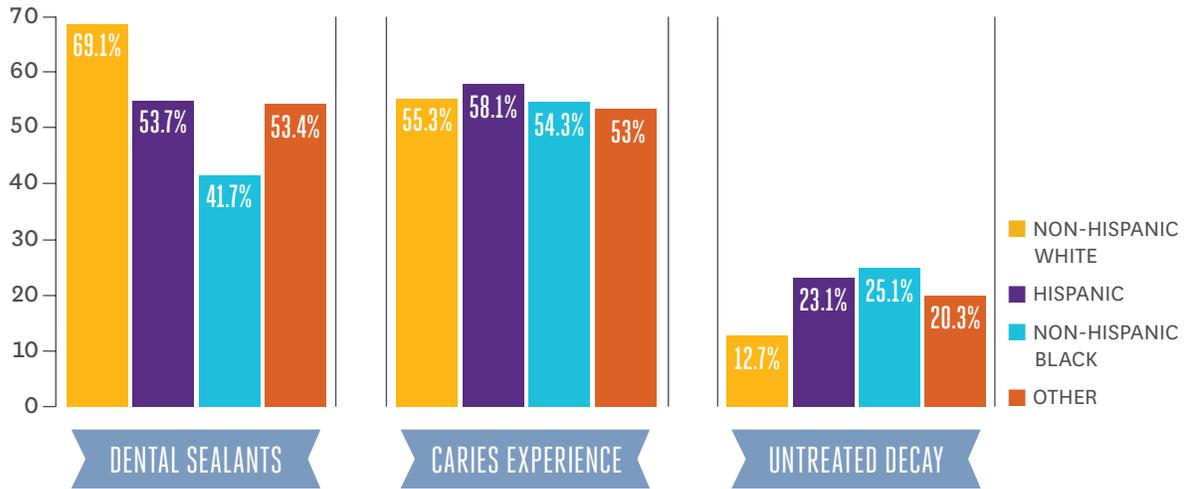


Source: Wisconsin Department of Health Services (2015). Healthy Smiles/Healthy Growth survey.

In addition to disparities between age groups, the study also found differences between ethnic/racial groups. The percentage of Latinx, Black, and other students with untreated decay was nearly twice that of White students (see Physical Health Graph 4; “other” included American Indian and Alaska

Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, multiracial, and unknown). As well, there were disparities found in the percentage of students with dental sealants with respect to race, with Black students having the lowest percentage of individuals with sealants.

Physical Health Graph 4. Dental sealants, caries experience, and untreated decay, by race and ethnicity



Source: Wisconsin Department of Health Services (2015). Healthy Smiles/Healthy Growth Survey.

The only data where girls and boys differed from each other was found on self-report surveys given to all participants. A lower percentage of boys compared to girls “considers oral health good or fairly good,” “takes care of teeth well or fairly well,” “worries about the appearance of teeth,” “experienced pain 2+ times in past year,” and “brushes teeth 2+ times per day.”¹¹

Immunization

The Wisconsin DHS publishes student immunization laws by age/grade requirements for each academic year. The 2017-18 school year requirements can be seen in Physical Health Table 1. The Wisconsin Student Immunization Law applies to any student admitted to a public or private Wisconsin elementary, middle, junior or senior high school or to a Wisconsin daycare center.¹² Parents and guardians can seek an immunization waiver for personal conviction, religious, or medical/health reasons.¹³ Students with waivers on file can be excluded from attending school if there is an outbreak of disease for which they are not immunized.¹⁴

Physical Health Table 1. Wisconsin student immunization law, by age/grade, 2017-18

AGE/GRADE	VACCINE (NUMBER OF DOSES)				
	DTP/DTaP/DT (4)	Polio (3)	Hep B (3)	MMR (1)	Varicella (1)
PRE-K (2-4 YEARS)	DTP/DTaP/DT (4)	Polio (3)	Hep B (3)	MMR (1)	Varicella (1)
GRADES K THROUGH 5	DTP/DTaP/DT/Td (4)	Polio (4)	Hep B (3)	MMR (2)	Varicella (2)
GRADES 6 THROUGH 12	DTP/DTaP/DT/Td (4)	Polio (4)	Hep B (3)	MMR (2)	Varicella (2)

ABBREVIATIONS: DT=Diphtheria and Tetanus vaccine (pediatric); Td=Tetanus and diphtheria vaccine (for 7 years or older); DTaP=Diphtheria, Tetanus and acellular Pertussis vaccine (pediatric); DTP=Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis vaccine (no longer available); Hep B=Hepatitis B vaccine; MMR=Measles, Mumps and Rubella vaccine; Var=Varicella (chickenpox vaccine)

Source: Wisconsin Department of Health Services (2017-18). Wisconsin School Immunization Requirement Booklet.

Physical Health Table 2 shows the percentage of Wisconsin students meeting the minimum immunization requirements as well as the percentage seeking waivers as well as the percentage of students behind schedule in meeting the minimum requirements. The greatest area of concern can be found in the state’s largest school district, Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS). During the 2017-18 school year, 8.0% of MPS students were “behind schedule.” A student is considered “behind schedule” if he or she has an immunization record but does not meet the minimum immunization requirements, if the student is not in process (does not meet the minimum immunizations but has a demonstrating receipt of the first doses of required vaccines within 30 days of admission), and if the student does not have a waiver.¹⁵

Physical Health Table 2. Wisconsin student immunization law compliance, public and private schools, kindergarten (and pre-K) through grade 12, by school year

COMPLIANCE CATEGORY	2016-2017		2017-2018	
	WISCONSIN	MPS	WISCONSIN	MPS
MEETS MINIMUM	92.5%	85.1%	92.3%	85.8%
IN PROCESS	0.6%	1.4%	0.6%	1.4%
MEDICAL WAIVER	0.3%	0.7%	0.3%	0.6%
RELIGIOUS WAIVER	0.3%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%
PERSONAL CONVICTION WAIVER	4.2%	1.2%	4.3%	1.4%
BEHIND SCHEDULE	1.6%	8.3%	1.7%	8.0%
NO RECORD	0.4%	3.1%	0.4%	2.4%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Health Services (2017-18). Wisconsin School Immunization Requirement Booklet.

The human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine is not currently required for adolescents in the state of Wisconsin. HPV is a very common virus with about one in four people in the United States currently infected.¹⁶ Certain HPV types can lead to mouth, throat, anus, and rectal cancers in both men and women. In addition, penile cancers can occur in men. For women, HPV infections can cause cervical, vaginal, and vulvar cancers. However, there are vaccines that can prevent infection with the types of HPV that cause these cancers.¹⁷ According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), both girls and boys who are 11 or 12 years old should get two shots of the HPV vaccine six to 12 months apart.¹⁸ The percentage of adolescents between the ages of 13 and 18 receiving the two-shot sequence of HPV vaccine has steadily increased in Wisconsin over the past five years. In 2013, 19.1% of adolescents in Wisconsin received the two-shot HPV vaccine. In 2017, the percentage rose to 39.0%.¹⁹

Physical Activity and Obesity

The CDC encourages children and adolescents to engage in age-appropriate activities that include aerobic activity, muscle strengthening, and bone strengthening.²⁰ Physical activity, along with a healthy diet, is one of the most important things a person can do to reduce the risk of numerous ailments and diseases like obesity and diabetes.²¹

The Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey showed that the percentage of high school girls not being physically active for 60 minutes per day on five days of the week increased from 55.9% in 2013 to 58.3% in 2017 (see Physical Health Table 3).²² However, in the same category (not being physically active for 60 minutes per day on five days of the week), boys had a decrease between 2013 and 2017. We also see a higher percentage of girls not participating in physical education (PE) classes in 2017 than in 2013.

One category where we see girls doing better in Wisconsin is the percentage of high school girls watching three hours of television per day. The percentage dropped by 6.3 percentage points between 2013 and 2017.²³ However, the percentage of girls who play video or computer games or who used a computer for three or more hours per day increased by 6.7 percentage points between 2013 and 2017.²⁴

Physical Health Table 3. Percentage of Wisconsin high school students engaging in behaviors related to physical exercise, by gender, 2013 versus 2017

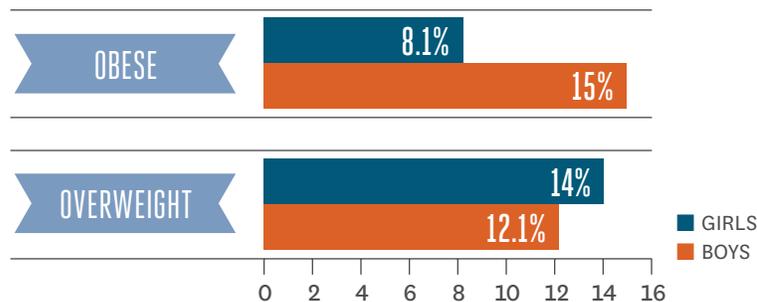
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY	2013		2017	
	GIRLS	BOYS	GIRLS	BOYS
Were not physically active at least 60 minutes per day on 5 or more days before the survey (doing any kind of physical activity that increased their heart rate and made them breathe hard some of the time, during the 7 days before the survey).	55.9%	45.1%	58.3%	44.1%
Did not go to physical education (PE) classes on 1 or more days (in an average week when they were in school).	50.5%	45.3%	54.5%	44.0%
Did not go to physical education (PE) classes on all 5 days (in an average week when they were in school).	61.5%	59.6%	65.5%	60.4%
Played video or computer games or used a computer for 3 or more hours per day (on an average school day).	34.8%	33.5%	41.5%	39.2%
Watched television 3 or more hours per day (on an average school day).	23.4%	21.6%	17.1%	16.3%

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2013 and 2017). Physical Activity: Data, Trends and Maps.

The percentage of high school students sampled in Wisconsin in 2013 who were either obese or overweight differed between girls and boys. Obese is defined as body mass index (BMI)-for-age and sex \geq 95th percentile based on the 2000 CDC growth chart.²⁵ Overweight is defined as BMI-for-age and sex \geq 85th but $<$ 95th percentile based on the 2000 CDC growth chart.²⁶ We see that nearly twice the percentage of Wisconsin boys were defined as obese compared to girls during 2013 (see Physical Health Graph 5).²⁷ However, a

slightly higher percentage of Wisconsin girls (14.0%) were classified as overweight in 2013 compared to boys (12.1%).²⁸ The Wisconsin data is slightly better than the national numbers for the same time period, with 16.6% and 10.9% of boys and girls, respectively, being defined as obese at the national level.²⁹ We see similar trends for the national data with respect to the overweight classification in 2013, with boys at 16.5% and girls at 16.6%.³⁰

Physical Health Graph 5. Percentage of 9th-12th graders in Wisconsin who are obese or overweight, by gender



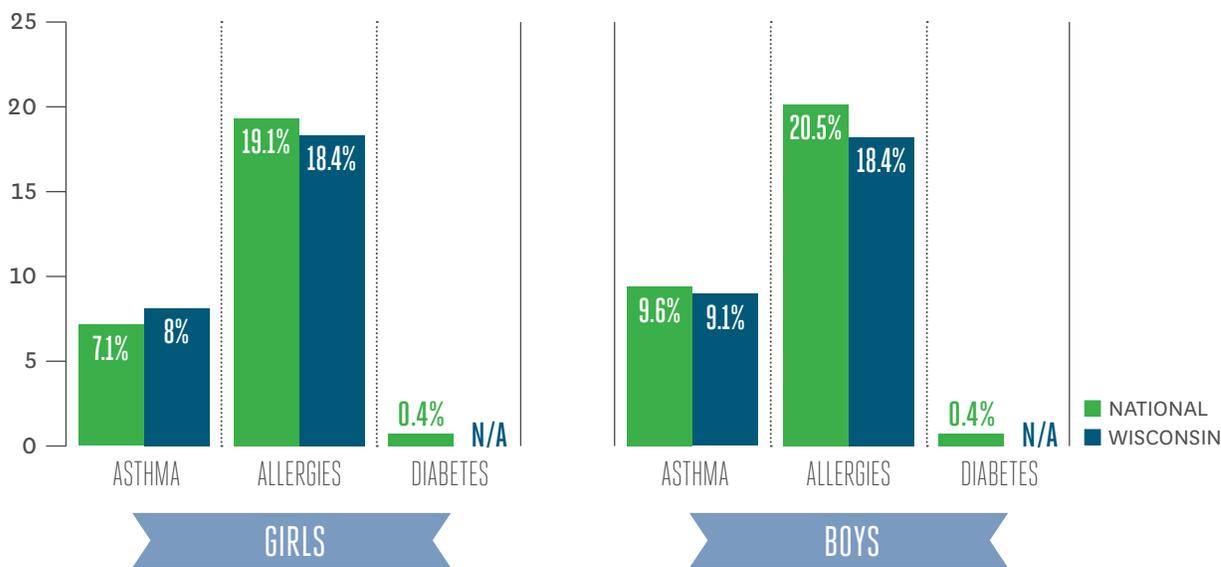
Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2013). Obesity: Data, Trends, and Maps.

Other Disease

In addition to obesity, other diseases are important when considering girls in Wisconsin. We looked at the prevalence of asthma, allergies, and diabetes in girls and boys 17 years of age and younger (see Physical Health Graph 6). When comparing to the national levels, a lower percentage of Wisconsin boys have asthma, but girls in Wisconsin are 0.9 percentage points higher than the national data for girls with asthma.³¹ When looking at the percentage of Wisconsin girls

and boys with allergies (includes food, drug, insect, and other allergies), we see allergies in 18.4% of girls and 18.8% of boys.³² The percentage of children with allergies in Wisconsin is slightly lower than the national percentages.³³ The percentage of children with diabetes (not differentiated by diabetes type) at the national level was 0.4% for both girls and boys (Wisconsin data is not available).³⁴

Physical Health Graph 6. Percentage of children with asthma, allergies, and/or diabetes, national versus Wisconsin, 2016



Source: National Survey of Children's Health (2016). Children and Family Health Measures.

SECTION 8:

Mental Health

KEY POINTS



- More Wisconsin girls than boys report suicidal planning and behaviors, as well as self-harm behaviors.
- Suicidal youth report lower rates of being able to access help when needed compared to nonsuicidal youth.

Depression and Anxiety

Depression is a common and serious illness that can include a range of symptoms in adolescents, such as feeling sad, anxious, or empty; irritability; loss of pleasure; and problems with concentration.¹ Among adolescents nationally, the prevalence of depression in girls (19.4%) exceeded the rate in boys (6.4%) in 2016.²

The Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) in 2017 included the following question that addresses depression symptoms: During the past 12 months, did you ever feel so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities?³

Overall, 27.0% of respondents said yes to this question. Expected differences mirroring national trends (cited above) between girls (38.1%) and boys (16.2%) was apparent.⁴ Differences across race/ethnicity groups were also noted: Latinx (31.6%), Black (31.0%), White (25.3%), and multiple races (34.0%).⁵

Regarding anxiety, 39.9% of students surveyed reported having significant problems over the past 12 months, with girls (50.3%) indicating higher incidences than boys (29.2%).⁶

Self-Harm and Suicide

Based on the 2017 Wisconsin YRBS, a special report was created that specifically addresses the topic of suicide.⁷ The survey included four questions related to suicidal ideation and behavior:

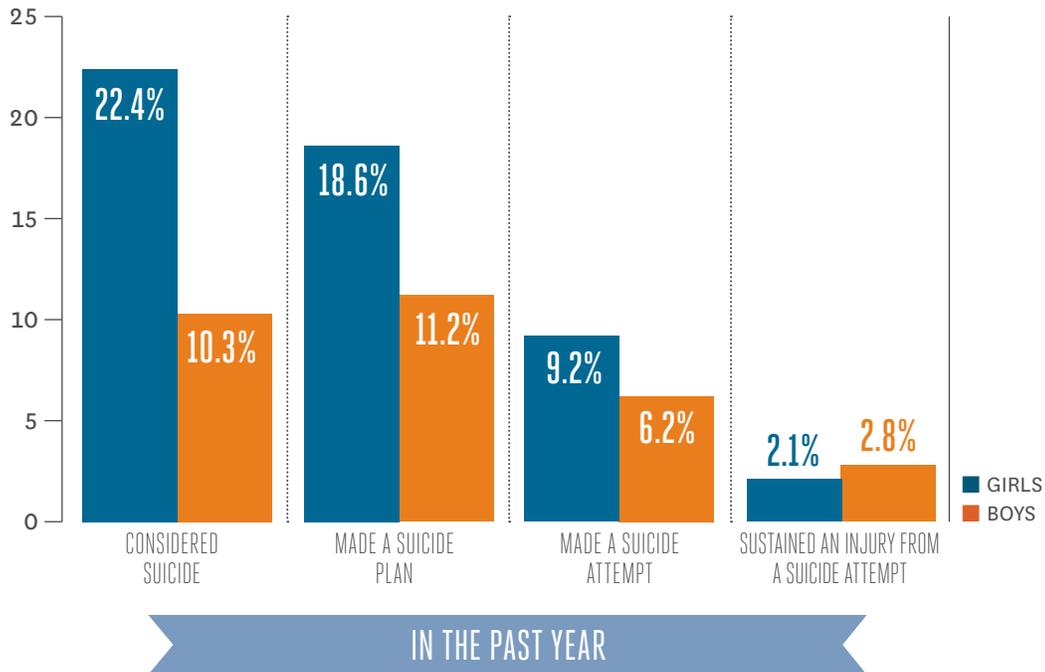
- Considered suicide: During the past 12 months, did you ever seriously consider attempting suicide?
- Planned suicide: During the past 12 months, did you make a plan about how you would attempt suicide?
- Attempted suicide: During the past 12 months, how many times did you actually attempt suicide?
- Attempt-related injury: If you attempted suicide during the past 12 months, did any attempt result in an injury, poisoning, or overdose that had to be treated by a doctor or nurse?

Overall in the past 12 months, 16.4% of Wisconsin youth indicated that they had considered suicide, 15.0% planned suicide, 7.8% attempted suicide, and 2.5% reported that they sustained injury due to a suicide attempt.⁸ The report notes that these numbers represent a recent increase in suicidal ideation and behavior among Wisconsin youth, which mirrors national trends.⁹

Broken down by sex, we again see that girls report higher levels of considering suicide in the past 12 months (22.4% girls;

10.3% boys), planning suicide in the past 12 months (18.6% girls; 11.2% boys), and attempting suicide in the past 12 months (9.2% girls; 6.2% boys). The exception to this pattern was with sustaining an injury as a result of a suicide attempt in the past 12 months (2.1% girls; 2.8% boys).¹⁰ These percentages are shown in Mental Health Graph 1.

Mental Health Graph 1. Percentage of girls and boys on variables related to suicide



Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (2017). Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results, Questions 26-29. Retrieved from <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sspw/pdf/yrbssuicidehelpseeking.pdf>.

Considering the intersection of sex and race/ethnicity, we see that youth of color report higher suicide attempts, with 12.7% of girls of color, 10.7% of boys of color, 7.6% of White girls, and 4.8% of White boys reporting that they had made a suicide attempt in the past 12 months.¹¹

The special report on the topic of suicide among Wisconsin youth identifies risk factors through comparing respondents in certain demographic groups to the overall numbers. The following groups were associated with higher risk of considering, planning, and attempting suicide as compared to the overall averages: LGBT youth, those with a disability, homeless youth, those with low grades, and those who also reported being victimized by sexual or dating violence, or by bullying.¹²

In addition to suicidal ideation and behaviors, the 2017 Wisconsin YRBS asked students about engaging in intentional self-harm without the intention of dying. Here, a noticeable difference was seen between girls (24.1%) and boys (8.9%).¹³

Eating Disorders

Nationally, prevalence of eating disorders among adolescent girls (3.8%) exceed the rates among adolescent boys (1.5%).¹⁴ In Wisconsin, the 2017 YRBS included questions relevant to eating disorders. While 15.0% of students met criteria for being overweight, 60.8% of girls and 29.4% of boys reported that they are trying to lose weight.¹⁵

Support and Help-Seeking

Given the clear need for support, the 2017 Wisconsin YRBS asked students who reported experiencing difficulties with sadness, anxiety, or anger whether they felt like they received the kind of help they needed. Only 28.1% responded yes,¹⁶ which indicates the need for increased availability of support.

What types of support seem beneficial? Many students indicated that they would be most likely to talk to a friend (49.9%) or a parent or other family member (21.9%).¹⁷ Connections at school are also clearly important. When focusing on youth who reported considering suicide, 45.4% noted feeling like they belong at school, compared with 75.8% for youth who had not considered suicide.¹⁸ Further,

61.7% of those who had considered suicide indicated that they felt like they had a teacher to talk to when they needed to, compared with 73.7% of youth who had not considered suicide.¹⁹ For students who had considered suicide, 26.8% said that they were not sure who they would talk to if they wanted to talk to someone, compared with 10.6% of those who had not considered suicide.²⁰ Finally, of those who had considered suicide, 62.1% noted that they rarely or never get the help they need, compared with 29.7% who had not considered suicide.²¹ These percentages are shown in Mental Health Table 1.

Mental Health Table 1. Percentage of girls and boys on variables related to suicide

	YOUTH WHO CONSIDERED SUICIDE	YOUTH WHO HAD NOT CONSIDERED SUICIDE
Reported feeling like they belong at school	45.4%	75.8%
Reported that they felt like they had a teacher to talk to when they needed it	61.7%	73.7%
Reported that they were not sure who they would talk to if they needed to talk to someone	26.8%	10.6%
Reported that they rarely or never get the help they need	62.1%	29.7%

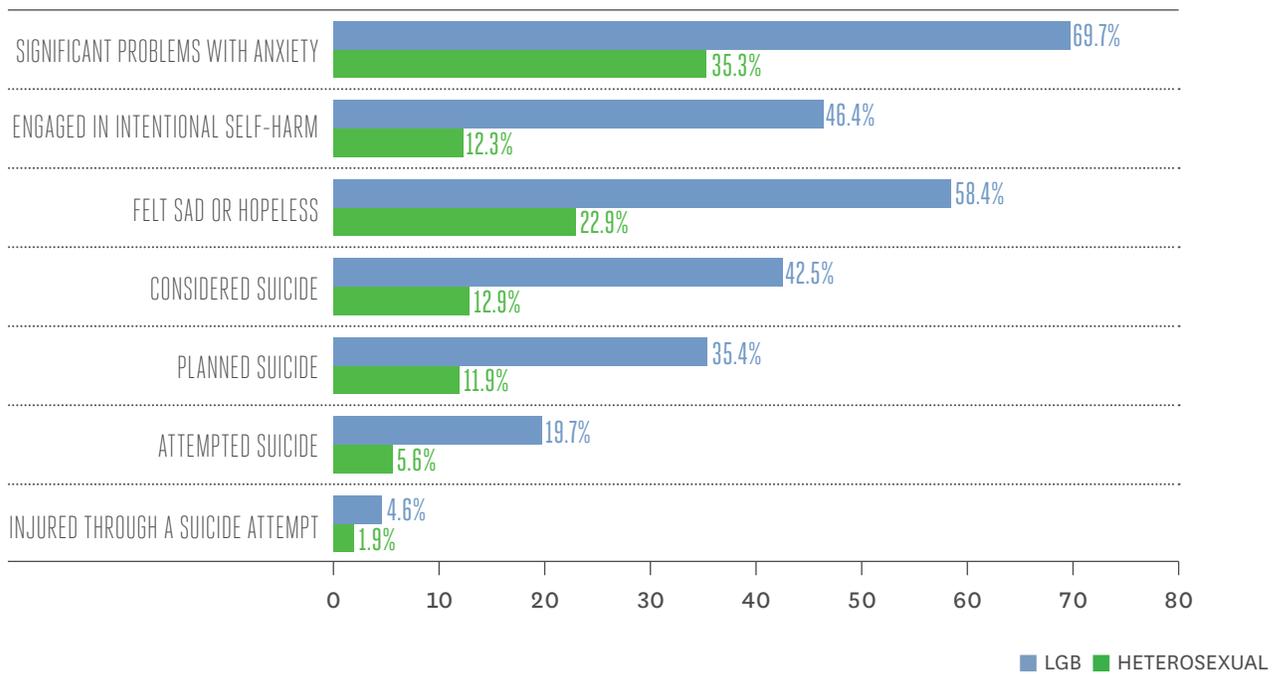
Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (2017). Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results, Special Topic: Suicide and Help Seeking. Retrieved from <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sspw/pdf/yrbssuicidehelpseeking.pdf>.

Taken together, these data suggest that services and resources to assist students as well as their support people would be beneficial. Responding to this need, Wisconsin’s Department of Public Instruction offers suicide prevention training for school staff²² and resources for increasing mental health access.²³

Special Populations

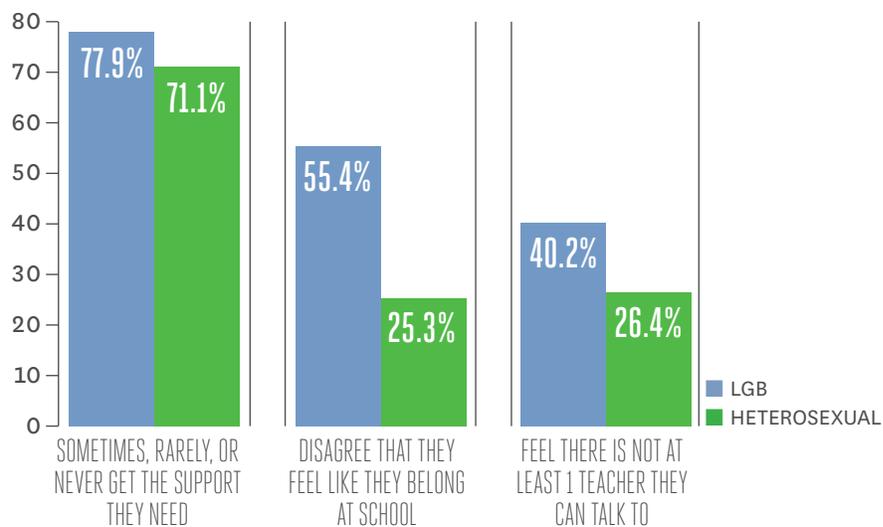
The 2017 Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey included a report focused on risk behaviors and sexual identity. This allows the ability to ascertain relative risk levels of lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) students versus overall trends, revealing that LGB youth reported greater mental health struggles and less social support.²⁴ LGB students comprise a highly vulnerable group, reporting higher levels of depression, suicidal thoughts, and suicidal behaviors compared to their heterosexual peers. Comparisons are shown in Mental Health Graph 2 and Mental Health Graph 3.

Mental Health Graph 2. Percentage of LGB and heterosexual students reporting mental health concerns



Source: Wisconsin Department of Instruction (2017). Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results, Risk Behaviors and Sexual Identity Report. Retrieved from <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sspw/pdf/yrebs17sexualidentity.pdf>.

Mental Health Graph 3. Percentage of LGB and heterosexual students reporting access to support



Source: Wisconsin Department of Instruction (2017). Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results, Risk Behaviors and Sexual Identity Report. Retrieved from <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sspw/pdf/yrebs17sexualidentity.pdf>.

SECTION 9:

Substance Use

KEY POINTS

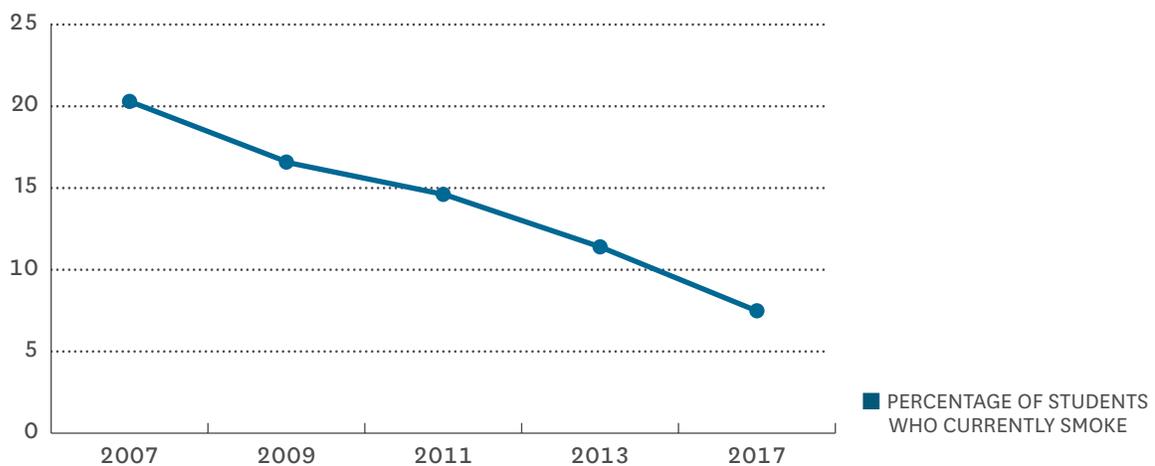
- Rates of youth smoking continue to decline in Wisconsin and nationally.
- Girls in Wisconsin report higher rates of alcohol use than boys.

Tobacco Use

According to the 2017 Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), 23.7% of girls and 25.2% of boys reported that they have tried smoking cigarettes at least once,¹ with 7.1% of girls and 7.9% of boys indicating that they began smoking before age 13.² According to the CDC, working to prevent tobacco use at a young age is critical, given the vast majority of smokers first try it before age 18.³

The trend in tobacco use among Wisconsin youth overall over the past 10 years is shown in Substance Use Graph 1, showing a decline in smoking over time. In 2017, 6.4% of Wisconsin girls and 9.1% of Wisconsin boys reported that they currently smoke cigarettes.⁴

Substance Use Graph 1. Percentage of Wisconsin students who smoked at least one cigarette in the last 30 days



Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (2017). Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results, 10-Year Trend Analysis Report. Retrieved from <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sspw/pdf/yrbs07-17trend.pdf>.

In terms of frequency of smoking, 2.0% of Wisconsin girls reported that they smoked cigarettes “frequently” (on 20 days within the past month)⁵ and 1.3% of Wisconsin girls said that they smoked cigarettes daily.⁶ It is encouraging that 40.0% of girls and 36.3% of boys in Wisconsin responded that they have tried to quit using all tobacco products at some point during the past 12 months.⁷ While youth tobacco use has been declining nationally, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that if youth smoking continues at the current rate, 5.6 million of those under 18 will likely experience early death due to tobacco-related causes.⁸

In comparison to rates of cigarette smoking, youth who report currently using electronic vapor products are higher: 8.8% of girls and 14.0% of boys in Wisconsin.⁹ This is compared to 10.5% of girls and 15.9% of boys nationally.¹⁰

Special Populations

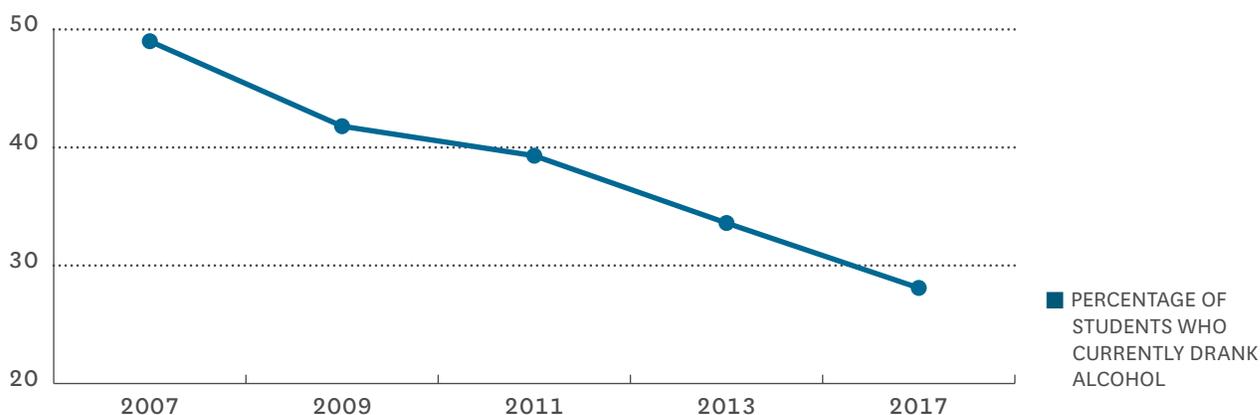
There are important differences in rates of cigarette smoking when comparing heterosexual youth with their lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) counterparts. In Wisconsin, the percentage of heterosexual youth reporting that they currently smoke is 6.8%; the percentage of LGB youth is 15.8%.¹¹ Additionally, there are differences across racial groups with reported rates of current cigarette smoking as follows: Multiple races (12.3%), White (8.0%), Black (6.2%), and Latinx (4.1%).¹²

Alcohol Use

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) identifies underage drinking as a serious public health problem, with alcohol being the most commonly used substance among youth.¹³ Nationally, there has been an ongoing trend of declining youth alcohol use. Reports of current alcohol use among youth have steadily trended downward for more than 10 years and is currently at 29.8%.¹⁴

The NIAAA notes that many young people begin experimenting with alcohol at an early age. By age 15, about 33.0% of adolescents report having had at least one drink, and that number rises to about 60.0% by age 18.¹⁵ According to the 2017 Wisconsin YRBS, 12.6% of girls and 18.1% of boys indicated that they took their first drink of alcohol before age 13.¹⁶ Nationally, 62.6% of girls reported that they drank alcohol at least once;¹⁷ in Wisconsin, that number is 67.2%.¹⁸ The rate of current drinking for Wisconsin girls (32.9%)¹⁹ is higher than that for Wisconsin boys (28.1%),²⁰ and higher than the national rate for girls (31.8%).²¹ Trends in alcohol use by Wisconsin girls and boys are shown in Substance Use Graph 2.

Substance Use Graph 2. Trends in alcohol use among Wisconsin youth



Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (2017). Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 10-Year Trend Analysis Report. Retrieved from <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sspw/pdf/yrbs07-17trend.pdf>.

Binge drinking, defined as consuming many drinks (five for young men, four for young women) on the same occasion, continues to be an area of concern given the negative health and behavioral implications associated with it.²² In Wisconsin, 15.6% of girls and 17.0% of boys report engaging in binge drinking at least once within the past month.²³

What are some of the concerning behavioral implications of alcohol use among youth? Often, this relates to an increased likelihood of engaging in potentially risky behaviors. For example, 17.1% of Wisconsin girls reported that they have ridden in a car with a driver who had been drinking, and 3.4% of Wisconsin girls indicated that they have driven after drinking.²⁴ Furthermore among Wisconsin youth, 13.9% of girls and 20.1% of boys noted that they usually drank alcohol or used drugs before having sex.²⁵ There are also potentially negative consequences for school performance, as 10.9% of girls and 13.6% of boys in Wisconsin reported that they have attended school at least once within the past year while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.²⁶

Marijuana Use

In adolescents, marijuana use can be associated with difficulty with memory and learning, attention problems, and increased risk of mental health problems.²⁷ The 2017 Wisconsin YRBS found that 30.7% of girls and 29.9% of boys responded that they have used marijuana at least once.²⁸ This compares with 35.9% of girls and 35.2% of boys nationally.²⁹ In Wisconsin, there is a noteworthy difference in reports of using marijuana at least once when comparing heterosexual students (29.1%) and lesbian, gay, and bisexual students (40.8%).³⁰

Reports of marijuana use nationally indicate that 19.8% of youth report current use.³¹ In Wisconsin, 14.9% of girls and 17.0% of boys report current marijuana use.³² Regarding current use among Wisconsin youth, there are also noteworthy differences across racial/ethnic groups: Black (24.7%), Latinx (21.9%), White (13.7%), and multiple races (27.0%).³³

Other Drug Use

Other types of drug use of interest include cocaine, inhalants, over-the-counter drugs, and prescription pain medications. For cocaine use, reported rates of use among Wisconsin girls (3.1%)³⁴ are similar to those seen nationally among girls (3.5%).³⁵ For inhalants, fewer Wisconsin girls (4.2%)³⁶ reported using them at least once compared to girls nationally (6.4%).³⁷ Finally, among Wisconsin youth, 5.4% of girls and 6.6% of boys reported using over-the-counter drugs to get high.³⁸ Overall, 18.4% of Wisconsin youth indicated that they have been offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property.³⁹

Consistent with the national dialogue around the “opioid epidemic,” there is concern about adolescent opioid misuse.⁴⁰ Nationally, 14.4% of girls and 13.4% of boys reported taking pain medication without a doctor’s prescription or differently than prescribed at least once.⁴¹ In Wisconsin, those numbers are 10.4% of girls and 11.8% of boys.⁴² The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services offers helpful guidelines for addressing opioid misuse among youth, including a list of best practices, lesson plans for educators, and information about state-level legislation related to the problem.⁴³

SECTION 10:

Sexual Health

KEY POINTS

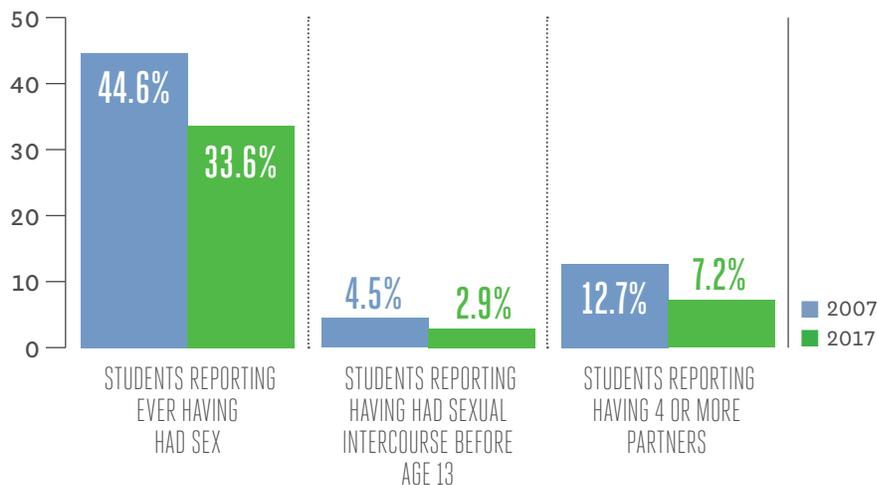
- Students continue to report declining rates of sexual activity and teen pregnancy.
- Rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are higher in Milwaukee County than in other parts of the state, with girls of color much more likely to contract an STI.

Sexual Behavior

In 2017, 33.6% of Wisconsin students reported ever having had sex, as compared to 44.6% in 2007. Girls and boys had similar rates of sexual activity, with 34.9% of boys and 32.1% of girls reporting ever having had sex. Wisconsin students continue to report that they are less likely to have sex than in the past, which is in line with national trends.¹ Students also were less likely to engage in early sexual activity than in the past, with only 2.9% of students reporting having had sexual intercourse before age 13, as compared to 4.5% in 2007.

Students were also more likely to engage in safer sexual practices. They reported having fewer sexual partners than in the past, with only 7.2% of students reporting having four or more partners (down from 12.7% in 2007), and 67% reporting having had one or two partners.² Condom use was also common, with 62.8% of students reporting having used a condom during their last sexual intercourse.

Sexual Health Graph 1. Changes in sexual activity by Wisconsin youth



Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (2017). Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Summary Report. Retrieved from <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sspw/pdf/yrebs-2017-final-summary-report.pdf>.

Special Populations

Sexual minority youth (those who have had sexual encounters with a same-sex peer) were more likely than their peers to engage in risky sexual behaviors in 2011,³ including having had intercourse before age 13 and having had four or more lifetime partners. In 2011, one in 11 high school students identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or unsure, and one in 10 sexually active students had same-sex sexual contact.⁴ Rates of sexual and dating violence were particularly high among sexual minority students, with 17.4% of students who identified as lesbian, gay, or bisexual reporting having experienced violence.⁵

Contraception Use

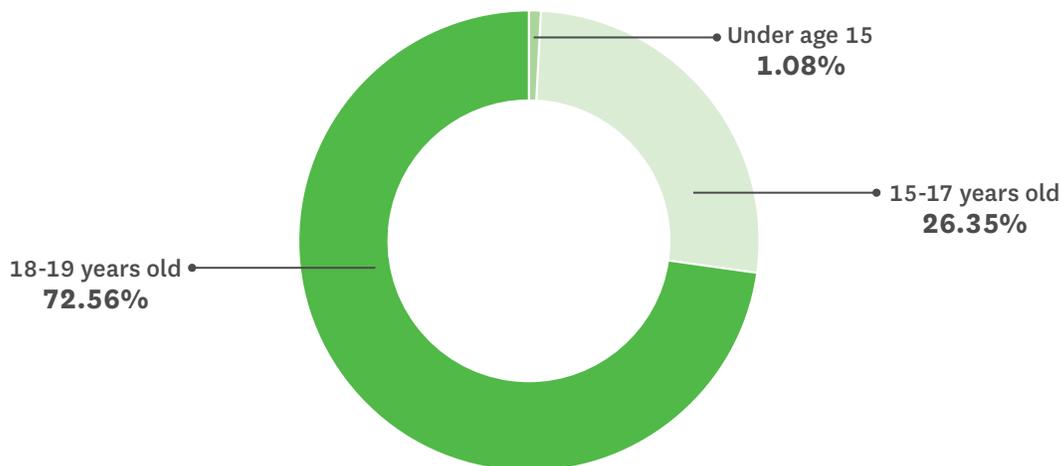
The 2020 Wisconsin Health Plan included a goal to “establish a norm of sexual health and reproductive justice.”⁶ This goal was to be partly measured by an increase in the percentage of teens reporting that they or their partner used a condom during their most recent sexual intercourse. From 2007 to 2017, there was no notable change in students who reported using a condom during their most recent sexual encounter⁷ (62.8% in 2017; 61.4% in 2007). There was no significant change in the percentage of students who reported using other forms of birth control (including pills, an IUD, a birth control shot or patch, or a birth control ring) before their most recent sexual intercourse (37.5% in 2017, 34.9% in 2013), or the number of students who reported using no form of birth control⁸ (7.8% in 2017, 10.8% in 2007).

Teen Pregnancy

The 2020 Wisconsin Health Plan also included a goal to decrease unintended teen pregnancies and racial disparities in teen birth rates.⁹ While data were not available on the

intention behind pregnancies, data show that there is a decrease in teen pregnancy rates. Overall, 6.0% of births nationally in 2015 were to girls under the age of 20.¹⁰ This reflects an overall decline in teen birth rates since its peak in 1991. Wisconsin has had a 63.0% decrease in teen births since 1991, and a 10.0% decrease from 2014 to 2015.¹¹ In Wisconsin, 4.2% of births in 2016 were to girls under the age of 20.¹² Of these, the vast majority occurred to girls between the ages of 15 to 19 years old. Girls under the age of 15 accounted for 1.1% of births, 26.4% were to girls ages 15 to 17, and 72.6% were to girls ages 18 to 19. Wisconsin had similar rates regarding the ages of teen pregnancies, as 1.1% were to girls under the age of 15, 22.9% were to girls ages 15 to 17, and 75.9% were to girls ages 18 to 19.¹³ Overall, Wisconsin ranked 42 out of 51 states and territories for teen birth rates for ages 15 to 19, indicating that Wisconsin had a lower than average rate of teen births (22.3 births per 1,000 girls nationally, compared to 16.2 births per 1,000 girls in Wisconsin).

Sexual Health Graph 2. Ages of Wisconsin mothers under the age of 20 in 2016



Source: Wisconsin Department of Health Services (2017). Wisconsin Interactive Statistics on Health Query System. Retrieved from <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/wish/index.htm>.

When looking at teen pregnancies by race, there were some differences when comparing Wisconsin to the national average. In Wisconsin, 47.1% of teen pregnancies were to White, non-Latinx girls, as compared to 39.4% nationally. Nationwide, 21.9% of teen pregnancies were to Black, non-Latinx girls (26.8% in Wisconsin), 2.1% were to American Indian or Alaska Native (3.2% in Wisconsin), 1.9% to Asian or Pacific Islander girls (3.2% in Wisconsin), and 35.0% to Latinx girls (19.4% in Wisconsin).

The majority of teen births in Wisconsin (62.5%) were born full-term, with only 7.8% born before 35 weeks gestation.¹⁴ These rates are comparable to the overall averages for all pregnancies (65.8% born full-term, and 5.8% born before 35 weeks gestation). Teen mothers were less likely to receive early prenatal care, with 59.5% of teen mothers receiving prenatal care in the first trimester, as compared to 76.4% of all mothers. They were also less likely to receive adequate prenatal care as determined by the Kessner Index, with 11.3% of teen mothers receiving inadequate or no prenatal care, as compared to 5.8% of all mothers. In Wisconsin, 11.4% of babies born to teen mothers were low birthweight at birth, compared to 7.4% of overall births.¹⁵

Teen mothers were less likely to breastfeed their babies, with 60.4% of teen mothers indicating that they breastfed their babies, as compared to 76.9% of all mothers.¹⁶ Teen mothers were also much more likely than other mothers to receive WIC support during their pregnancy (70.8% of teen mothers, compared to 29.5% of all mothers), which is likely at least partly due to girls continuing to attend school rather than having full-time employment.

Sexually Transmitted Infections

In 2011, half of all HIV cases in Wisconsin were in Milwaukee County.¹⁷ In Milwaukee County, the age group that accounted for the largest percentage of these cases was 15 to 19 years old. Although HIV disproportionately impacted boys and men, there were also large racial and ethnic disparities for girls.¹⁸ The rate of HIV infection for Black girls and women was more than 25 times higher than for White girls and women. It was more than five times higher for Latinx and Asian women and girls compared to White women and girls.

Rates of chlamydia and gonorrhea infection in Wisconsin for 2016 showed significant discrepancies between boys and girls aged 15 to 19, with 78.6% of cases of chlamydia and 63.3% of cases of gonorrhea being girls.¹⁹ Overall, 44.0% of cases in this age group of chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis occurred in Milwaukee County.²⁰

Between 2001 and 2010, the rate of chlamydia infection increased in Milwaukee County by 22.0%, and in the rest of Wisconsin by 51.0%.²¹ The increase may have been partly due to increased screening and emphasis on reporting by

providers, but also reflect a troubling trend. These diseases also disproportionately impact young people. In 2010, young adults aged 15 to 24 accounted for 72.0% of chlamydia cases in the state and 66.0% of gonorrhea cases.²²

There are also important racial disparities in STI infection in Wisconsin. For young people aged 15 to 19 in 2016, Black youth accounted for 34.0% of chlamydia diagnoses, 55.8% of gonorrhea diagnoses, and 63.2% of syphilis diagnoses.²³

Sexual Violence

There are important discrepancies in the numbers of girls and boys who report being the victims of sexual violence. In the 2017 Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 8.9% of girls, as compared to 5.1% of boys, reported ever having been raped.²⁴ Similarly, 15.0% of girls reported having been forced into any sexual activity, as compared to 5.0% of boys. Students who have experienced sexual or physical violence are more likely to experience mental health concerns such as anxiety and depression, and nearly half of students who attempted suicide had been the victims of violence.²⁵

Sexual Education

The Centers for Disease Control published 16 Critical Sexual Education Topics that they felt integral to sexual education in schools.²⁶ Nationally, large urban school districts were more likely than other school districts to cover all 16 of these pregnancy, HIV, or STI prevention topics in middle school grades 6 to 8 (31.6% compared to 17.1%) and 9 to 12 (72.0% compared to 45.5%).²⁷

In Wisconsin, 94.2% of schools reported teaching the benefits of being abstinent.²⁸ While this is a high rate, the numbers are less encouraging about other important aspects of sexual health. Further, 63.8% of schools reported that they taught students how to use a condom,²⁹ and 60.1% reported educating students about all seven types of contraception identified by the CDC.³⁰ The form of contraception that was reportedly discussed least was emergency contraception, with 65.8% of Wisconsin schools reporting teaching about it. In addition, 36.6% of Wisconsin schools provided curricula or supplementary materials that included information about HIV, STI, or pregnancy prevention relevant to LGBTQ youth.³¹ While all of these numbers are higher than the national average,³² they reflect a relatively low level of compliance with these recommended minimum standards.

Sexual Health Table 1. Critical sexual education topics identified by the CDC

1	How to create and sustain healthy and respectful relationships
2	Influences of family, peers, media, technology, and other factors on sexual risk behavior
3	Benefits of being sexually abstinent
4	Efficacy of condoms
5	Importance of using condoms consistently and correctly
6	Importance of using a condom at the same time as another form of contraception to prevent pregnancy
7	How to obtain condoms
8	How to correctly use a condom
9	Communication and negotiation skills
10	Goal-setting and decision-making skills
11	How HIV and other STDs are transmitted
12	Health consequences of HIV, other STIs, and pregnancy
13	Influencing and supporting others to avoid or reduce sexual risk behaviors
14	Importance of limiting the number of sexual partners
15	How to access valid and reliable information, products, and services related to HIV, STIs, and pregnancy
16	Preventative care that is necessary to maintain reproductive and sexual health

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2014). 16 Critical Sexual Education Topics. Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/profiles/pdf/16_criteria.pdf.

SECTION 11:

Violence and Abuse

KEY POINTS

- Higher rates of child abuse are found in girls compared to boys in Wisconsin.
- Wisconsin lesbian, gay, and bisexual students report higher rates of being victimized by violence and bullying compared to their heterosexual peers.

Child Abuse and Neglect

In 2016, a total of 42,644 referrals were made to Child Protective Services (CPS) in Wisconsin, representing a 3.7% increase over the past 10 years.¹ Of these, 3,419 were substantiated reports of child neglect, 831 substantiated reports of physical abuse, 1,026 of sexual abuse, and 24 of emotional abuse.² Most reports were made by educational personnel, law enforcement, and social service workers.³ Looking at boys and girls, we see higher rates of reported abuse among Wisconsin girls (4.1 per 1,000 children) compared to boys (3.3 per 1,000 children).⁴ In 2016, there were 22 child fatalities in Wisconsin due to maltreatment,⁵ 11 of which were in Milwaukee County.⁶

Teen Dating Violence

According to the 2017 Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 8.9% of girls and 5.1% of boys reported that they had been physically forced into having sex at least once.⁷ There were differences noted across racial groups for this variable among Wisconsin youth: Latinx (10.0%), Black (6.9%), and White (6.6%).⁸ Additionally, lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth in Wisconsin reported higher rates of being physically forced into having sex (16.1%) as compared to their heterosexual peers (5.7%).⁹

Looking specifically at dating violence, Wisconsin youth were asked whether they had experienced sexual dating violence defined as follows: kissing, touching, or being physically forced to have sexual intercourse at least once in the past year. Among students who dated someone during the 12 months before the survey, 15.0% of girls and 5.0% of boys endorsed having

experienced sexual dating violence at least one time.¹⁰ As above, there were differences between lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth (16.0%) compared with heterosexual youth (9.2%).¹¹

Also related to dating violence, Wisconsin students were asked whether they had experienced physical dating violence defined as follows: being hit, slammed into something, or injured with an object or weapon at least once in the past year. Among those who dated someone during the 12 months before the survey, 8.8% of girls and 4.5% of boys reported having experienced physical dating violence at least one time.¹² As with sexual dating violence, lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth (11.1%) also reported higher levels than their heterosexual counterparts (6.0%).¹³

Bullying

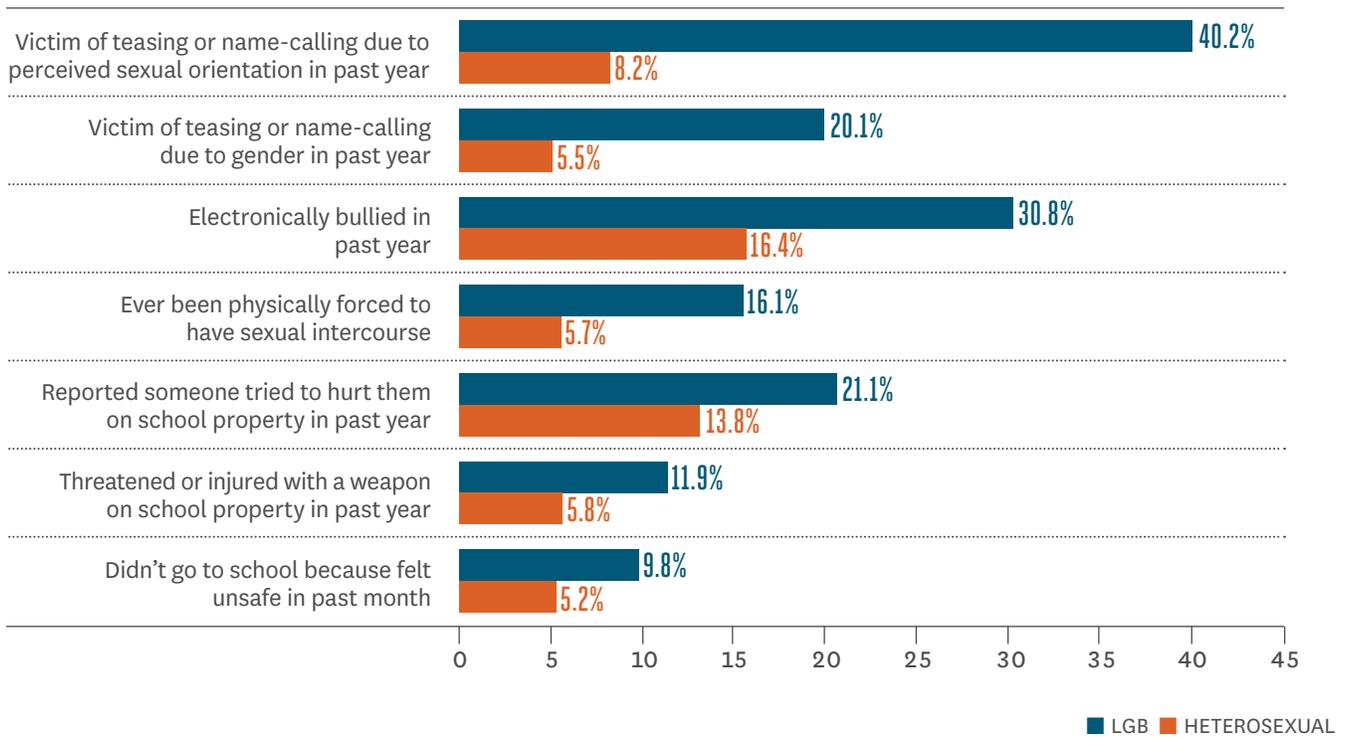
The 2017 Wisconsin YRBS asked several questions related to bullying, both in person and electronically. Of the students surveyed, 17.2% of girls disagreed that bullying is a problem at school (compared with 35.6% of boys).¹⁴ Further, 28.3% of Wisconsin girls and 20.1% of boys reported that during the past year, they had been bullied on school property at least once.¹⁵ Looking at electronic bullying (cyberbullying), 24.9% of girls in Wisconsin and 11.9% of boys reported experiencing this at least once in the past year.¹⁶

The survey also included questions about being teased because of one’s perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. Here, 12.0% of girls responded that they had been teased because they were perceived to be lesbian, gay, or bisexual (compared with 11.9% of boys),¹⁷ and 10.0% of girls noted that they had been teased because of their gender (compared with 4.5% of boys).¹⁸

The U.S. government website StopBullying.gov provides ideas for bullying prevention across a range of settings, including school programs as well as information on laws and policies.¹⁹

Special Populations
 The 2017 Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey included a report focused on risk behaviors and sexual identity. This allows the ability to ascertain relative differences between lesbian, gay, and bisexual students (LGB) versus overall trends, revealing that LGB youth often reported greater levels of being victimized by violence and bullying. Comparisons are shown in Violence and Abuse Graph 1.

Violence and Abuse Graph 1. Percentage of LGB and heterosexual students reporting violence and bullying



Source: Wisconsin Department of Instruction (2017). Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results, Risk Behaviors and Sexual Identity Report. Retrieved from <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sspw/pdf/yrebs17sexualidentity.pdf>.

Relational Aggression/Fighting and Safety

In addition to bullying and cyberbullying, the 2017 Wisconsin YRBS contained questions related to physical fighting. For all questions shown in Violence and Abuse Table 1, boys reported higher incidences than girls.

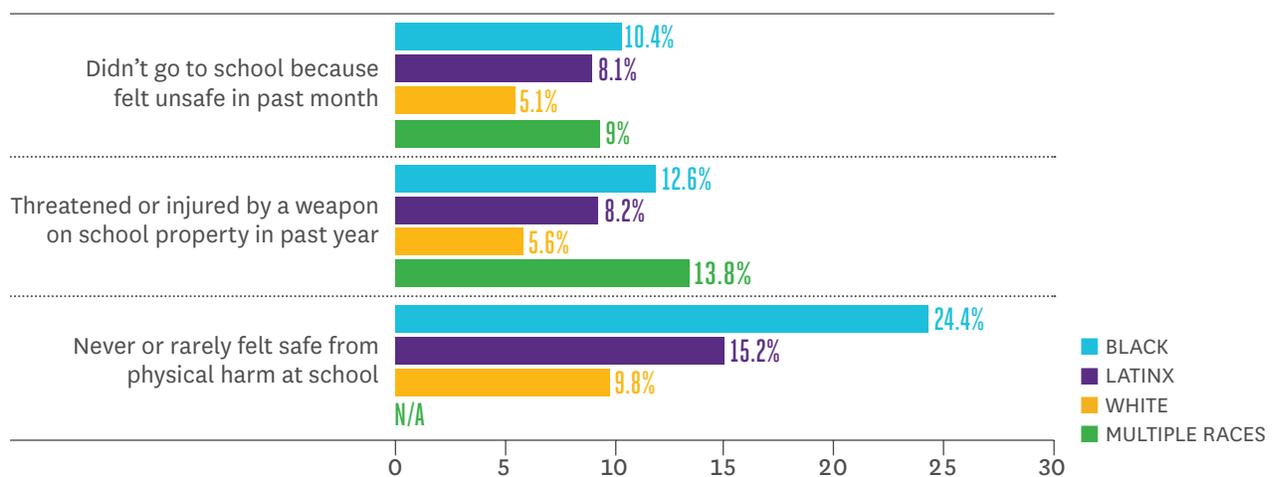
Violence and Abuse Table 1. Rates of relational aggression/fighting for Wisconsin girls and boys

	GIRLS	BOYS
Had a fight in the past year	12.8%	26.7%
Had a physical fight in the past year on school property	3.7%	10.3%
Reported that someone tried to hurt them on school property in the past year	9.7%	20.0%
Reported that they rarely or never get the help they need	62.1%	29.7%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (2017). Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results, Questions 17, 18, and 90. Retrieved from <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sspw/pdf/yrbs17summarytables.pdf>.

Further investigating concerns regarding physical safety at school, 7.6% of Wisconsin girls (compared to 5.0% of boys) reported that they did not go to school at least once in the past month because they felt unsafe.²⁰ Additionally, 4.7% of girls and 8.9% of boys in Wisconsin stated that they were threatened or injured by a weapon on school property at least once in the past year.²¹ Finally, 9.6% of girls and 13.9% of boys noted that they never or rarely felt safe from physical harm at school.²² Importantly, there were noteworthy differences across racial/ethnic groups for these variables, as shown in Violence and Abuse Graph 2.

Violence and Abuse Graph 2. Safety indicators at school, by race/ethnicity



Note: Data for students of multiple races for the variable "never or rarely felt safe from physical harm at school" not available.
 Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (2017). Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results, Questions 15, 16, and 91.
 Retrieved from <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sspw/pdf/yrbs17summarytables.pdf>.

Finally, 3.5% of girls and 6.6% of boys in Wisconsin noted that they carried a weapon on school property at least once in the past year.²³ Broken down by racial/ethnic group, these numbers are: 10.8% of students of multiple races, 8.2% of Latinx students, 4.3% of White students, and 3.8% of Black students endorsed this question.²⁴ Overall, 1.8% of girls and 7.8% of boys in Wisconsin responded that they had carried a gun (not used for hunting or sport) at least once in the past year.²⁵

Sexual Assault

The Wisconsin Department of Justice Uniform Crime Reporting system tracks sex offense data across the state, which includes all reports made by law enforcement agencies across the state. Sex offenses include forcible (e.g., rape, sodomy/oral sex, assault with an object, and fondling) and non-forcible (e.g., incest and statutory rape) offenses.²⁶ Of the 5,294 total offenses reported in 2017, 4,501 victims were female and 790 were male.²⁷ For girls, Violence and Abuse Table 2 shows the breakdown by age group.²⁸

Violence and Abuse Table 2. Incidences of sex offenses against Wisconsin girls

AGE GROUP	NUMBER OF REPORTED SEX OFFENSES
0-4	180
5-9	505
10-12	410
13-14	688
15-17	1,155
18-22	523

Source: Wisconsin Department of Justice (2018). Wisconsin Uniform Crime Reporting Data Dashboard, Offense Counts. Retrieved from <https://www.doj.state.wi.us/dles/bjia/ucr-sex-offense-data>.

Human Trafficking

The Wisconsin Department of Justice Human Trafficking Initiative’s mission is “to make Wisconsin inhospitable to human traffickers and to support victim-centered strategies and partnerships throughout the state.”²⁹ The initiative includes guidelines for law enforcement, in addition to information for specific industries, such as health care, bus transportation, and the hotel and lodging industry.³⁰

In 2018, a report was released that provides estimates of the extent of human trafficking in the Milwaukee area. The report estimates that between 2013 and 2016, 340 people under age 25 were victims of sex trafficking in Milwaukee.³¹ Of these, 97.0% were female and 65.0% were Black; 55.0% were under age 18.³²

SECTION 12:

Crime and Incarceration

KEY POINTS

- There continue to be significant racial disparities in juvenile crime and incarceration, with young people of color more likely to be charged with a crime and incarcerated.
- The most common crimes committed by girls in the juvenile justice system were less serious than the most common crimes committed by boys.
- The vast majority of girls in Wisconsin's juvenile detention facility have a mental health condition.

Juvenile Justice

The juvenile justice system is a system by which youth between the ages of 10 and 17 face charges for criminal offenses. The overall goal of the system is purported to be rehabilitation rather than punishment, as offenders are under the age of criminal culpability. Overall, rates of juvenile delinquency have decreased nationally, with a decrease of 53.0% between 1997 and 2015.¹ The majority (63.0%) of juvenile offenses result in probation, with only 26.0% resulting in placement of the youth in a detention facility and 11.0% resulting in other outcomes. Nationally, there has been a trend toward reducing incarceration for juvenile offenders, and the rate of juvenile incarceration in Wisconsin declined 75.0% between 1999 and 2013.²

Wisconsin currently has four juvenile detention facilities, and only one of those facilities (Copper Lake School) has female residents.³ As previously noted, incarceration is associated with high rates of mental illness.

In 2018, 94% of girls at Copper Lake School had a mental health condition, and 75% of residents had a serious mental health condition.⁴

This is particularly important to note in light of recent litigation against the Wisconsin Department of Corrections regarding concerns about safety, abuse, and provision of mental health treatment.⁵

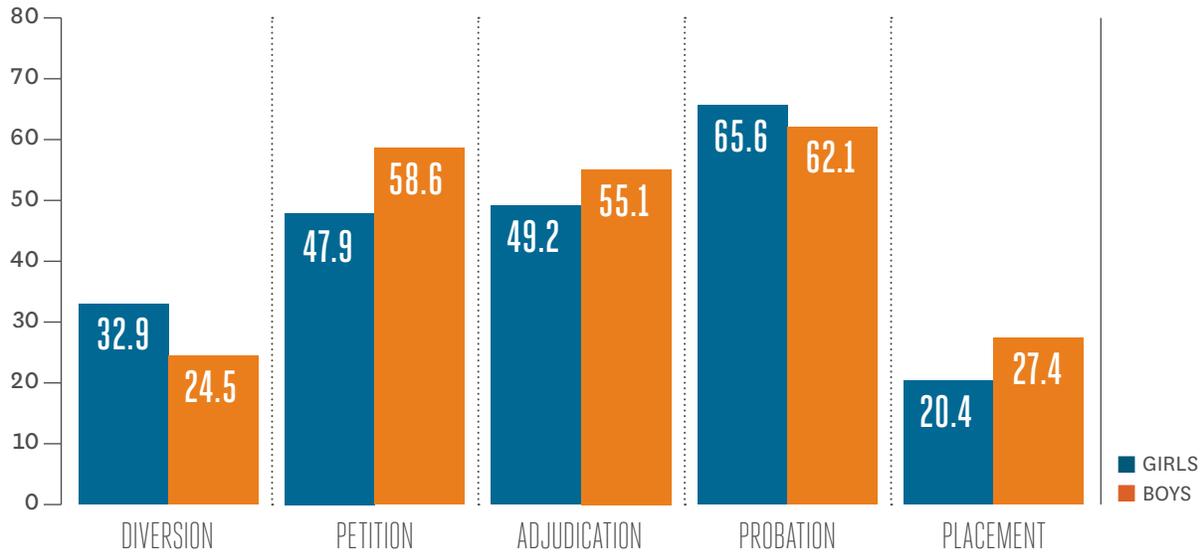
Gender Disparities

In Wisconsin, as well as nationwide, there is a significant divide in involvement with the juvenile justice system by gender, with 11.0% of new Wisconsin court commitments to juvenile facilities being girls and 89.0% being boys.⁶ While this reflects only those who were ultimately convicted and sentenced to a facility, this trend is seen across the juvenile justice system. Nationally, only 28.0% of the delinquency cases were girls and 72.0% were boys.⁷ Relative to each other, however, arrests of girls have increased and arrests of boys have declined nationally, due mostly to a large decrease in the arrests of boys.⁸

There are also significant differences in the types of crimes committed and outcomes for boys and girls. The most common offenses for girls to be involved in the Wisconsin juvenile justice system were: operating a vehicle without the owner's consent, battery, resisting or obstructing an officer, robbery, and theft.⁹ The most common offenses for boys tended to be

more serious and included robbery, burglary, sexual assault, and battery.¹⁰ There are also differences in outcomes for boys and girls. Cases involving girls were more likely than cases involving boys to be diverted or receive probation.¹¹ This may be partly due to the less serious nature of crimes for which girls tend to be arrested.

Crime and Incarceration Graph 1. U.S. delinquency case processing rates in 2014, rate per 100 referred cases



Source: National Center for Juvenile Justice (2018). Spotlight on Girls in the Juvenile Justice System. Retrieved from https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/snapshots/DataSnapshot_GIRLS2015.pdf.

Of Wisconsin juveniles released from the juvenile justice system in 2010, there were also significant differences in recidivism rates for boys and girls.¹² At one year after release, 90.2% of girls were non-recidivists, as compared to 63.8% of boys. At five years after release, 68.9% of girls were non-recidivists, with only 35.5% of boys in the same category.

Racial Disparities

Nationally, conversations about juvenile justice have focused on the significant racial and ethnic disparities in arrest rates and outcomes. This is particularly true in Wisconsin. Nationally, 42.0% of juveniles in residential detention facilities are Black, while the rate is 56.0% in Wisconsin. Of youth who were committed to juvenile facilities in Wisconsin in 2014, 68.8% of them were Black, and 26.7% were White.¹³

Although overall juvenile arrests have decreased in Wisconsin by 48.5%, racial disparities in arrests have increased in the state of Wisconsin.¹⁴ In 2006, Black youth were three times as likely as White youth to be arrested, and this increased to four times as likely in 2012. In 2012, Black youth were 12 times as

likely as White youth to be arrested for a violent crime. After being arrested, Black and American Indian youth were twice as likely as White youth to be detained. White youth were also more likely to be offered diversion and probation.¹⁵

Southeastern Wisconsin

In Wisconsin, the majority of youth involved in the juvenile justice system are from Milwaukee County. Racial disparities were also particularly prominent in Milwaukee County, with Black youth nine times more likely than White youth to be found delinquent, and three times more likely to be incarcerated outside of the home.¹⁶ Overall, juvenile detention rates have declined in Milwaukee County between 2006 and 2013, and these declines were larger for White youth than for Black youth (47.6% and 22.3%, respectively).¹⁷

SECTION 13:

Social Support and Activities

KEY POINTS



- Wisconsin girls are most likely to turn to a friend for support. They are less than half as likely to turn to a parent.
- LGBT students are both the least likely to feel a sense of belonging while in high school and to report having an adult or teacher at school with whom they can discuss a problem.
- Wisconsin youth, like their peers nationally, are most likely to participate in sports as an extra or co-curricular activity. Participation rates in music and academic activities outside the classroom remain consistent.

Social Support

Social support is defined as a person's social relationships including family, friends and significant others promoting health and well-being.¹ Evidence suggests that whether or not a person actually receives "support," the person's perception that others will provide resources at a time of need is significantly important in buffering stress and potentially leading to positive physical health outcomes. Girls' social support networks are particularly important to understand as girls, more than boys, experience anxiety and stress, especially in their adolescent years.²

Needs for and Sources of Social Support

While social support for girls can come from parents, peers, and other significant persons such as teachers, coaches, or mentors; research suggests that girls, more than boys, tend to rely heavily on peers for their support network. The 2017 Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Study demonstrates that students often turn to peers for help rather than adults. Wisconsin girls indicated that they were most likely to turn to a friend (49.9%) for support while 21.9% would turn to a parent. But 18.3% of all student respondents (girls and boys) indicated they were unsure of whom to turn to when they were sad, hopeless, anxious or otherwise distressed.³ Building

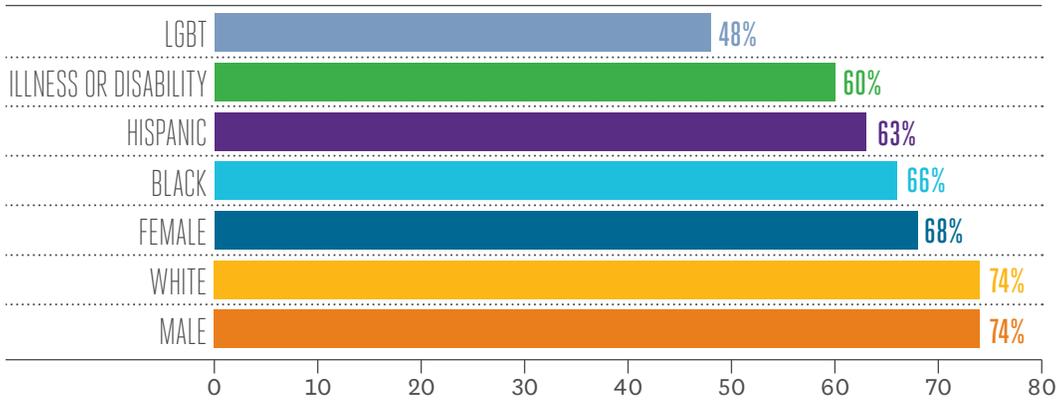
supportive networks of friends can be especially important because girls also report that their peer groups are not only a source of support, but also frequently a source of stress. As developmental psychologists Lisa Sontag-Padilla and Julia Graber describe, "because girls tend to rely heavily on peers for emotional support and intimacy, interpersonal stress is found to be more strongly related to depression for girls than for boys."⁴

Although girls rely on their peers, they can also find peer relationships to be stressful. A 2017 survey of more than 11,000 girls nationwide found that during high school, 86% of girls surveyed reported that "most girls are in competition with one another." While girl peer groups could be the source of stress, the survey also found that "girls who report that they get along well with other girls and trust other girls reported the lowest levels of sadness and depression."⁵ The relationship between girls and their peer social support is significant in understanding girls' well-being.

A student's sense of belonging is also an important indicator of perceived social support at school. Significant findings have shown that girls, more than boys, rely on social support from their peers and that these relationships are more important in defining girls' identity and self-definition.⁶ The 2017

Wisconsin YRBS summary report notes that of the 2,067 high school students surveyed, 70.8% felt they belonged at their school. However, gender, race and sexual orientation play a role in that sense of belonging. White males reported a higher sense of belonging (77.7%) compared with all female respondents (68%), Black respondents both male and female (66%), or Latinx respondents male and female (63%). LGBT students are both the least likely to feel a sense of belonging (48%) and to report having an adult or teacher at school that they can talk to about a problem (57.8%).⁷

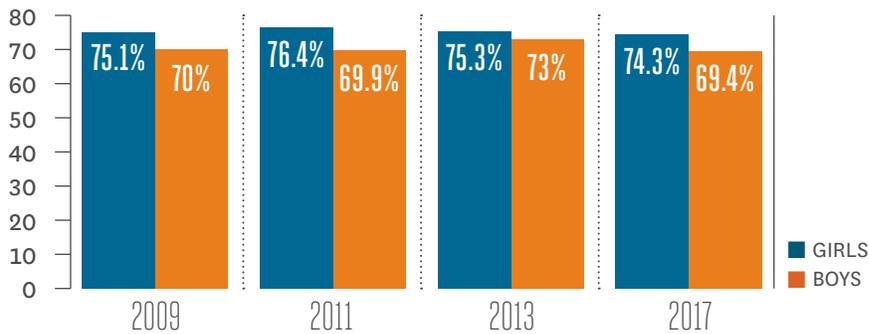
Social Support and Activities Graph 1. Sense of belonging at school



Source: Katherine McCoy (2018). Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Summary Report. Retrieved from <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sspw/pdf/yrbs-2017-final-summary-report.pdf>.

According to the 2017 Wisconsin YRBS summary report, 50% of the 1,067 Wisconsin high school-aged girls self-reported anxiety and 38.1% reported symptoms of depression, indicating a need to ensure young women have the support they need to address these conditions. It is therefore reassuring that the same report indicated strong positive influences or protective factors such as strong family and teacher support. Of the 2,067 boys and girls surveyed, 71.6% reported having at least one teacher or other adult at school they could talk to. Since 2009, girls consistently reported being more likely to have an adult or teacher at school they feel they can talk to than their male peers. Additionally, young women’s ability to identify at least one such support at their school increased from 66.1% of 9th graders to 81.3% of seniors. This suggests that as girls mature or develop a sense of belonging in high school, they are able to develop this school-based sense of social support.⁸

Social Support and Activities Graph 2. Percentage of students who reported there is at least one teacher or other adult in their school that they can talk to if they have a problem



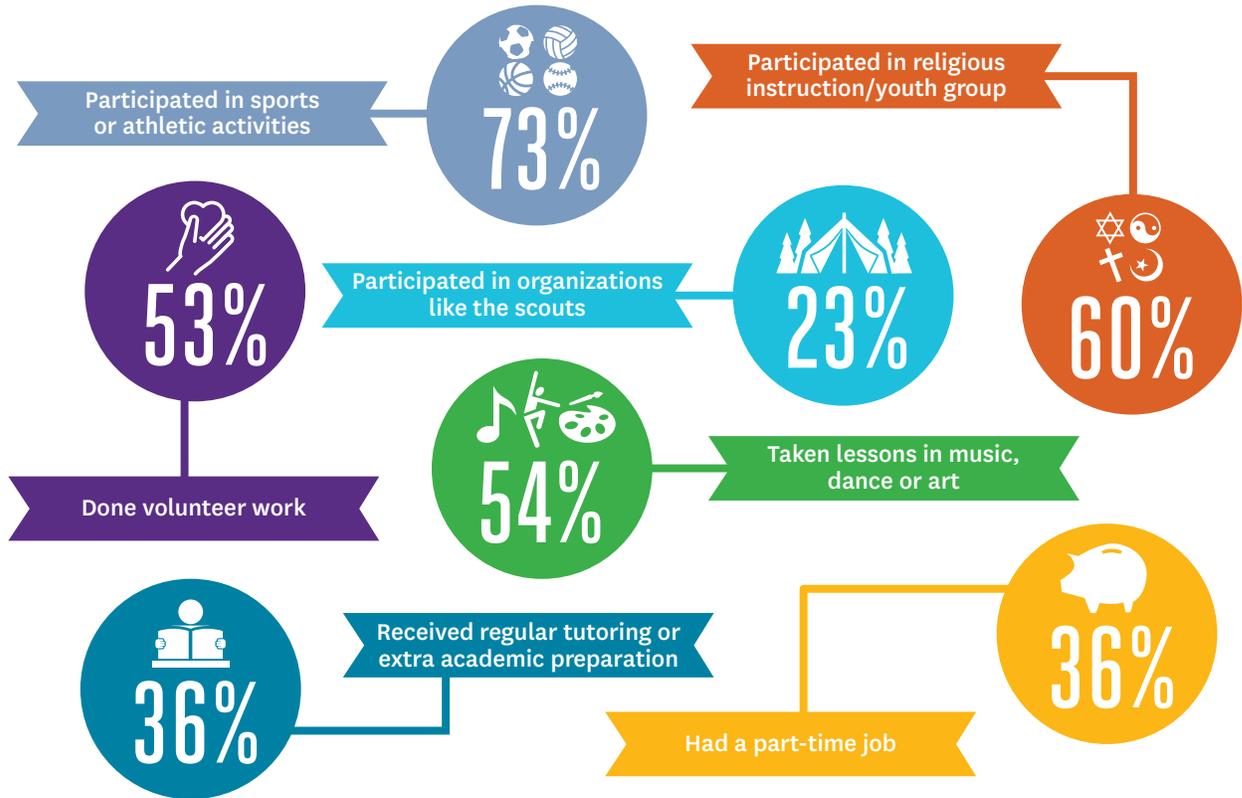
Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (2017). Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 10-Year Trend Analysis Report.

Extra and Co-Curricular Activity

Extra and co-curricular activity is associated with more positive adolescent outcomes across categories such as risk behaviors, academic achievement, and mental health.⁹ Furthermore, social support has been found to be a significant factor in influencing girls' participation in some activities. One meta-analysis on the role of social support on physical activity behavior in adolescent girls found that parental and peer support positively impacted girls' physical activity level.¹⁰ Providing opportunities for extra and co-curricular activity continues to be an important factor in creating positive outcomes for boys and girls in Wisconsin.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, girls ages 15 to 19 report spending an average of 5.23 hours per day on "leisure and sports." This is second only to time on "personal care, including sleep" (10.63 hours per day) and more than reported average time on "educational activities" (3.14 hours per day).¹¹ In the 2015 Pew Research Center study *Parenting in America*, seven of 10 parents reported that their children had participated in sports or athletic activities in the 12 months prior to the survey. Further, 50% or more reported their children had participated in the following: religious instruction/youth group, music, dance or art lessons, and volunteer work.¹²

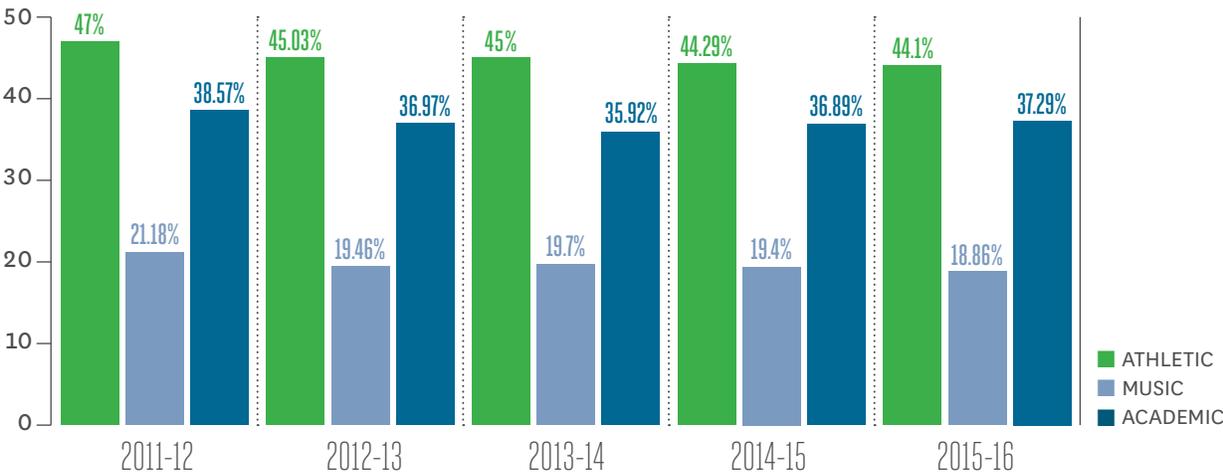
Social Support and Activities Infographic 1. Percentage of parents who report any of their children have _____ in the past 12 months



Source: Pew Research Center (2015). *Parenting in America: Outlook, worries, aspirations are strongly linked to financial situation.*

A 2014 Girl Scouts report on the state of girls in the United States ranked Wisconsin girls first in the nation for physical health and safety.¹³ The 2017 YRBS study indicates that some indicators of student activity rates remain steady or have improved compared with previous years (see Physical Health section).¹⁴ According to statewide data collected by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, in 2011-12, 47% of students participated in school sponsored athletic activities. By 2015-16 the percentage had dropped to 44.1% with the number of athletic offerings dropping from 14,052 to 13,143. Minimal decreases were also reported in the number of Wisconsin students participating in music and academic extra and co-curriculars (see Social Support and Activities Graph 1).¹⁵

Social Support and Activities Graph 3. Percentage of Wisconsin students, grades 6 to 12, in athletic, music, and athletic extra-/co-curriculars



Source: State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (2018). Wisconsin School District Performance Report, Extra-/Co-Curricular Activities, School-Sponsored Community Activities.

Overall, ensuring that girls develop a sense of perceived social support from friends, family, and schools remains significantly important to their ability to navigate the stressful adolescent years. As the number of girls reporting anxiety increases, the number of opportunities for academic, music and physical activity beyond the classroom is decreasing or sustaining at previous levels. The number of girls who report having a perceived adult social support network and friends they can talk to, however, remains high. Continued evaluation of social support and activity of those more vulnerable to anxiety, depression and bullying (such as racial/ethnic minorities and those identifying as LGBT) is recommended due to their comparatively higher reporting of stress and anxiety and lower reporting of perceiving social support from adults and peers.

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