

# VIOLENCE AND SUICIDE

## Fact Sheet



The Michigan Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is part of a nationwide surveying effort led by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to monitor students' health risks and behaviors in six categories identified as most likely to result in adverse outcomes. These categories include unintentional injury and violence, tobacco use, alcohol and other drug use, sexual behaviors that contribute to unintended pregnancy or disease, dietary behaviors, and physical inactivity. High response rates allow results of the 2009 YRBS to be generalized to all Michigan students in grades 9-12.



### Of Vital Concern: The National Perspective

Homicide is the second leading cause of death among all youth aged 15-19 years and is the leading cause of death among black youth aged 15-19 years. In 2005, 84% of homicide victims 15 to 19 years old were killed with firearms. Firearms intensify violence and increase the likelihood of fatality in a conflict. Of all violent deaths that occurred on school property between 1994 and 2006, 65% involved firearms. Nearly 100% of school districts have a policy prohibiting weapon possession or use by high school students on school property. Among high school students nationwide in 2007, 18% had carried a weapon, 5% had carried a gun, and 6% had carried a weapon on school property on at least 1 day during the 30 days before the survey.

Physical fighting is a marker for other problem behaviors and is associated with serious injury-related health outcomes. Bullying victimization is associated with depression, suicidal ideation, increased odds of repeated common health problems, school absenteeism, psychological distress, and feeling unsafe at school.

Suicide is the third leading cause of death among youth aged 15-19. The suicide rate for persons aged 15-19 was 7.7 per 100,000 in 2005 down from 8.2 per 100,000 in 2003. Among high school students nationwide in 2007, 14% had seriously considered attempting suicide, 11% had made a plan about how they would attempt suicide, and 7% had attempted suicide one or more times during the 12 months before the survey.

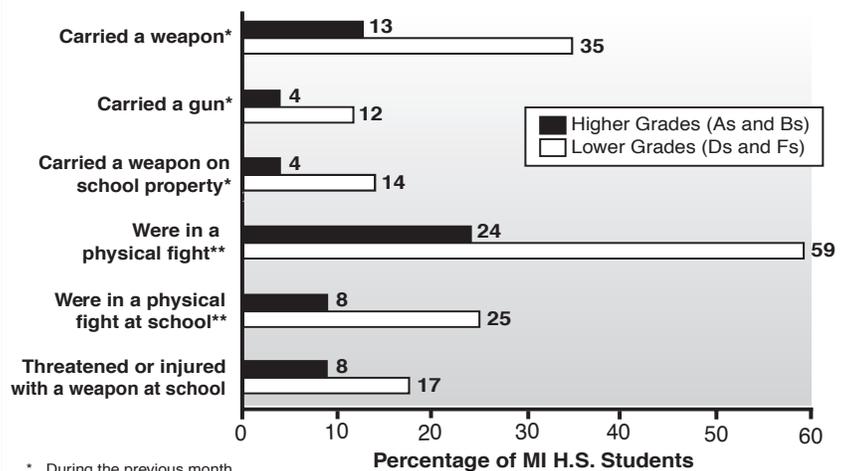


### 2009 Survey Results

- ◆ The majority of students had not **carried a gun** or **carried a weapon** of any kind **on school property**.
- ◆ The majority of students had not experienced violence, such as **fights resulting in injury** and **threats with weapons**, and had **not missed school due to feeling unsafe**. However, nearly a quarter had experienced some form of **bullying**<sup>1</sup> at school in the past year.
- ◆ Students with low grades were more likely than students with higher grades<sup>2</sup> to experience violence on and off school property, including **carrying weapons** and **guns**, **fighting**, and being **threatened or injured** with a weapon (Figure 1).

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#### Fights and Weapons by Academics

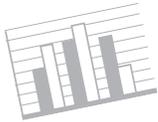


<sup>1</sup> Bullying is when one or more students tease, threaten, spread rumors about, hit, shove, or hurt another student over and over again.

<sup>2</sup> Self report grades earned in school are used to assess academic achievement with high grades representing students with mostly As and Bs, average grades with Cs, and low grades with mostly Ds and Fs.

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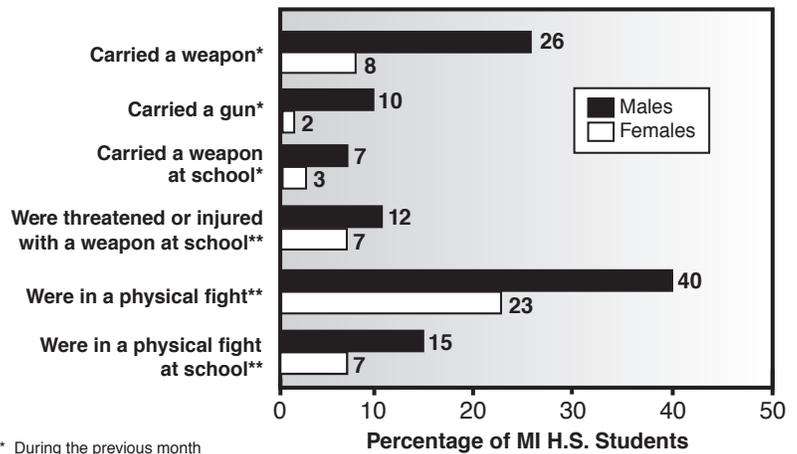


### 2009 Survey Results (continued)

- ◆ Males were three times more likely than females to **carry a weapon** and five times more likely to **carry a gun**. They were also more likely to carry a **weapon on school property** and to be **threatened or injured** with a weapon at school (Figure 2).
- ◆ Black and Hispanic students were more likely than white students to have been in a **physical fight** on and off school property and Hispanic students were more likely than white students to have been in a **fight requiring treatment**.
- ◆ Black and Hispanic students were more likely than white students to carry a **weapon on school property** as well as **skip school** because they did not feel safe. Hispanic students were also twice as likely as white students to have been **threatened with a weapon** at school (Figure 3).
- ◆ More ninth and tenth graders than twelfth reported having had been **bullied** at school.
- ◆ Males were more likely than females to have been in a **physical fight** and two times more likely to have been in a **fight at school** (Figure 2).

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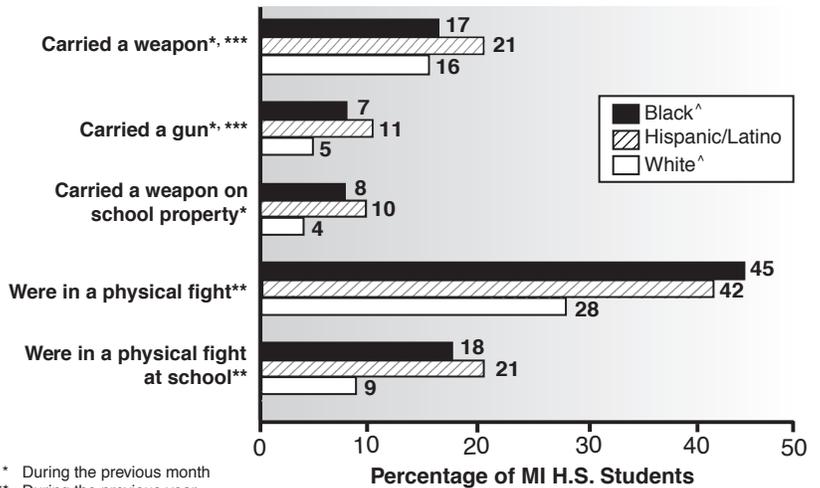
### Fights and Weapons by Gender



\* During the previous month  
 \*\* During the previous year

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### Weapons and School Safety

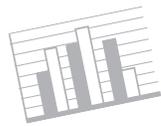


\* During the previous month  
 \*\* During the previous year  
 \*\*\* Not a statistically significant difference  
 ^ Non-Hispanic

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### 2009 Survey Results (continued)

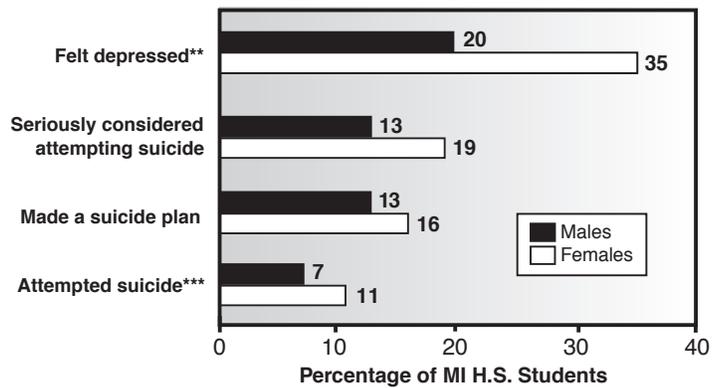


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- ◆ One in six students, regardless of gender, had been **physically hurt on purpose by a boyfriend or girlfriend**. However, more black and Hispanic students than white students had been hurt by a boyfriend or girlfriend.
- ◆ One in four students reported **feeling depressed**<sup>3</sup> and one in six seriously **considered suicide** during the past year. This was true for students in all grade levels.
- ◆ More females than males reported feeling **depressed** as well as **considering** suicide and making a **plan** to commit suicide (Figure 4).
- ◆ Hispanic students were more likely to seriously **consider** suicide in the past year than white students. Black students were more likely than white students to actually **attempt** suicide.
- ◆ Students with low grades were twice as likely as students with high grades to report **depression** as well as to have **considered suicide** and made a **plan** on how they would attempt it. They were also three times as likely to have **attempted suicide** and to have had an **attempt requiring medical treatment** during the past year (Figure 5).

<sup>3</sup> *Feeling depressed* means feeling so sad or hopeless almost every day for more than two weeks in a row that they stopped doing some usual activities.

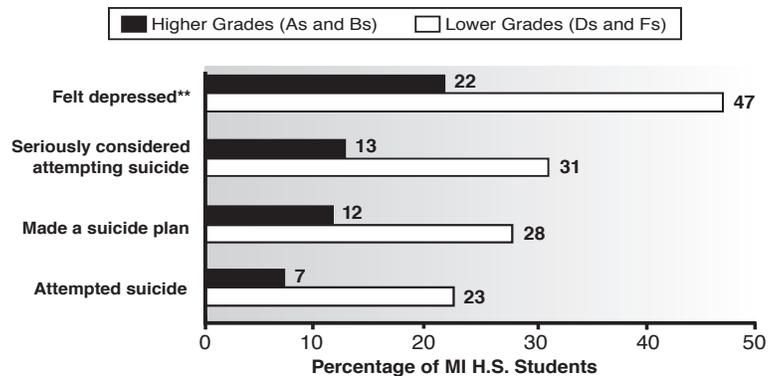
### Depression and Suicide\*



\* During the previous year  
 \*\* Felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that they stopped doing some usual activities  
 \*\*\* These percentages do not represent a statistically significant difference between genders.

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### Depression and Suicide by Academics\*



\* During the previous year  
 \*\* Felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that they stopped doing some usual activities

## Trends



In the past decade, high school students are significantly more likely to carry a weapon and, specifically, carry a gun. They are, however, less likely to consider suicide.

**Contact Information**  
 Michigan Department of Education, Grants Coordination and School Support,  
 Coordinated School Health and Safety Programs  
 P.O. Box 30008, Lansing, Michigan 48909 Phone: 517-241-4284  
 Web: www.michigan.gov/mde

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SURVEY QUESTION	MI	GENDER		GRADE				RACE/ETHNICITY		
	2009	M	F	9	10	11	12	Black <sup>^</sup>	Hispanic/Latino	White <sup>^</sup>
% of students who <b>carried a weapon</b> , such as a gun, knife or club, on one or more of the past 30 days	17	26	8	17	18	16	15	17	21	16
% of students who <b>carried a gun</b> on one or more of the past 30 days	6	10	2	5	7	6	5	7	11	5
% of students who <b>carried a weapon</b> , such as a gun, knife or club, <b>on school property</b> on one or more of the past 30 days	5	7	3	4	5	6	6	8	10	4
% of students who <b>did not go to school</b> on one or more of the past 30 days because they <b>felt unsafe</b> at school or on their way to or from school	7	7	7	5	8	9	7	17	16	4
% of students who had been <b>threatened or injured with a weapon on school property</b> one or more times during the past 12 months	9	12	7	11	11	8	8	11	16	8
% of students who were in a <b>physical fight</b> one or more times during the past 12 months	32	40	23	35	32	34	26	45	42	28
% of students who were <b>injured in a physical fight and had to be treated</b> by a doctor/nurse one or more times during the past 12 months	5	5	3	4	6	5	4	7	8	4
% of students who were in a <b>physical fight on school property</b> one or more times during the past 12 months	11	15	7	14	12	12	7	18	21	9
% of students who were ever hit, slapped or <b>physically hurt on purpose</b> by their <b>boyfriend/girlfriend</b> during the past 12 months	15	15	15	12	17	15	17	23	22	13
% of students who had ever been <b>bullied on school property</b> during the past 12 months	24	21	27	30	25	23	16	18	30	25
% of students who ever <b>felt so sad or hopeless</b> almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that they <b>stopped doing some usual activities</b> during the past 12 months	27	20	35	27	28	28	27	28	36	27
% of students who seriously <b>considered attempting suicide</b> during the past 12 months	16	13	19	18	15	17	13	17	23	15
% of students who <b>made a plan</b> about how they would attempt <b>suicide</b> during the past 12 months	15	13	16	16	13	16	13	16	21	14
% of students who actually <b>attempted suicide</b> one or more times during the past 12 months	9	7	11	10	10	10	7	16	13	7
% of students whose <b>attempted suicide</b> resulted in an injury, poisoning, or overdose that <b>had to be treated</b> by a doctor or nurse during the past 12 months	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	5	6	2

<sup>^</sup>Non-Hispanic

For additional information on the YRBS results, please log on to [www.michigan.gov/yrebs](http://www.michigan.gov/yrebs)