# MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey 2018:
# Insights on Changes in Mental Health Statistics at WMS

Prepared for: WMS PTO Middle & More Coffee

November 18, 2019

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# Agenda

**Analytical Insights:**
Mental health statistics and related metrics are some of the most significant changes seen in the 2018 MWAHS relative to prior years
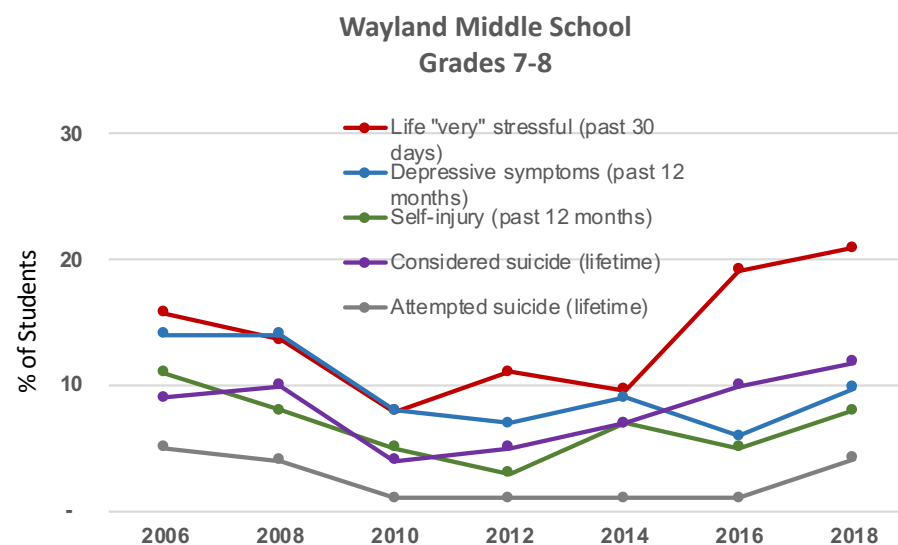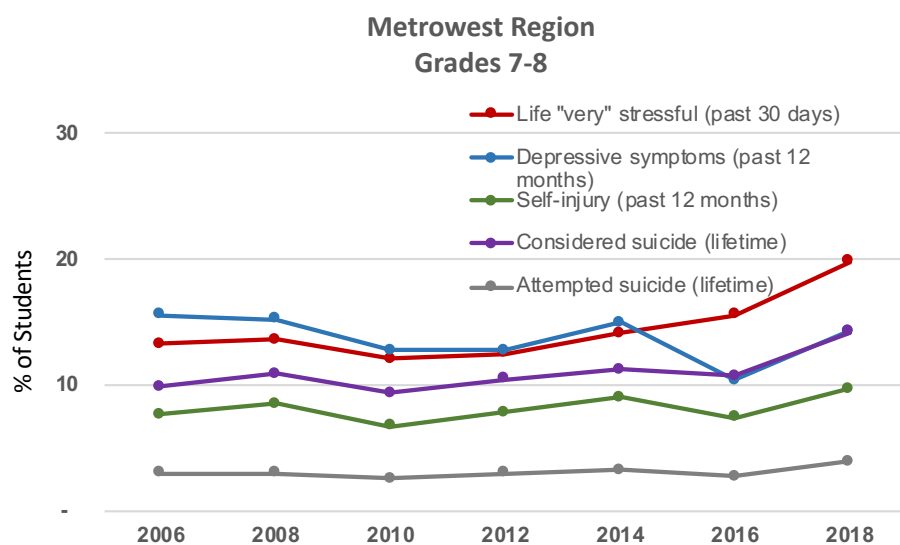
- What is changing?
- Why is it changing?

**Discussion**

- What can schools do?
- What can parents do?

# Summary: While MetroWest Mental Health Stats Have Been Stable with Recent Increases, WMS Had Improved with Much Sharper Increases in 2016-18
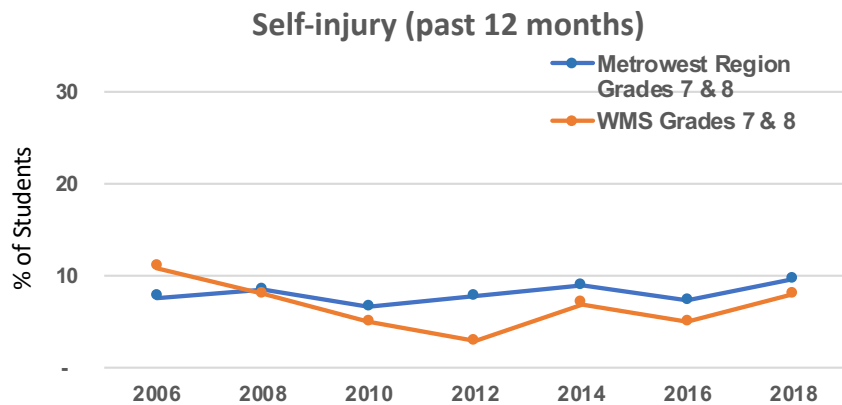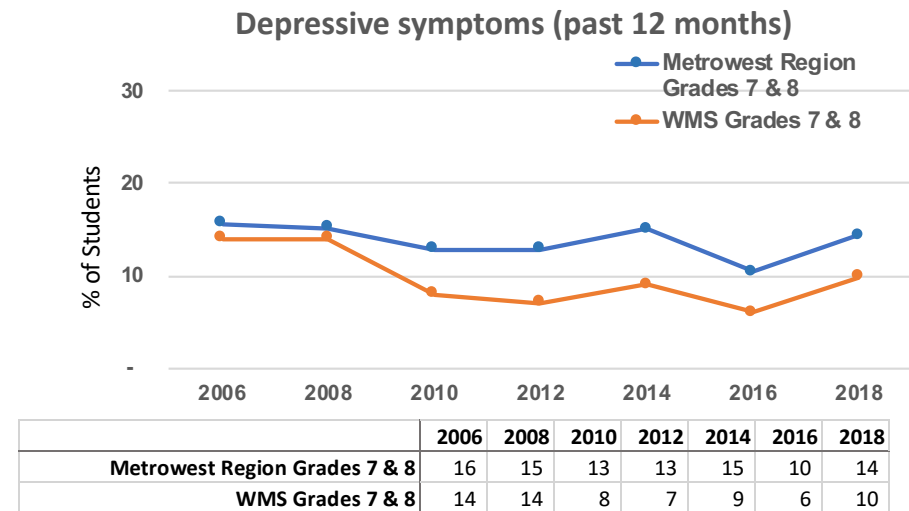## - *MetroWest vs. WMS on next pages -*



**Metrowest Region Grades 7-8**
- Life "very" stressful (past 30 days)
- Depressive symptoms (past 12 months)
- Self-injury (past 12 months)
- Considered suicide (lifetime)
- Attempted suicide (lifetime)

**Wayland Middle School Grades 7-8**
- Life "very" stressful (past 30 days)
- Depressive symptoms (past 12 months)
- Self-injury (past 12 months)
- Considered suicide (lifetime)
- Attempted suicide (lifetime)

* Note: WMS 7/8th Graders = 408 students

# Detail: Diminishing Gap Between MetroWest Region vs. WMS (1 of 2)

## Life "very" stressful (past 30 days)



|  | 2006 | 2008 | 2010 | 2012 | 2014 | 2016 | 2018 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Metrowest Region Grades 7 & 8 | 13 | 14 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 16 | 20 |
| WMS Grades 7 & 8 | 16 | 14 | 8 | 11 | 10 | 19 | 21 |

## Depressive symptoms (past 12 months)



|  | 2006 | 2008 | 2010 | 2012 | 2014 | 2016 | 2018 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Metrowest Region Grades 7 & 8 | 16 | 15 | 13 | 13 | 15 | 10 | 14 |
| WMS Grades 7 & 8 | 14 | 14 | 8 | 7 | 9 | 6 | 10 |

## Self-injury (past 12 months)



|  | 2006 | 2008 | 2010 | 2012 | 2014 | 2016 | 2018 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Metrowest Region Grades 7 & 8 | 8 | 9 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 7 | 10 |
| WMS Grades 7 & 8 | 11 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 7 | 5 | 8 |

For discussion purposes only.

* Note: WMS 7/8th Graders = 408 students

# Detail: Diminishing Gap Between MetroWest Region vs. WMS (2 of 2)

## Attempted suicide (lifetime)
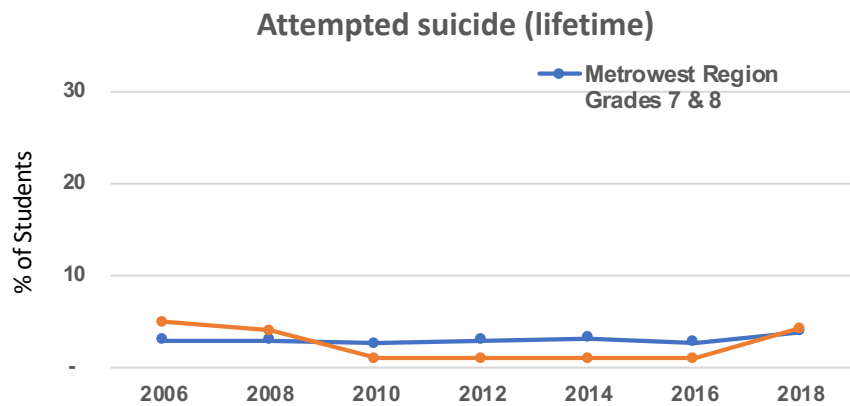


| | 2006 | 2008 | 2010 | 2012 | 2014 | 2016 | 2018 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Metrowest Region Grades 7 & 8 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| WMS Grades 7 & 8 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 |

## Considered suicide (lifetime)
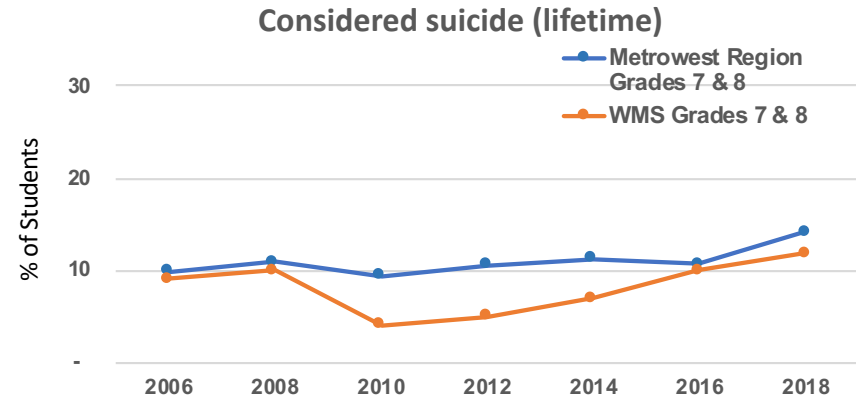


| | 2006 | 2008 | 2010 | 2012 | 2014 | 2016 | 2018 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Metrowest Region Grades 7 & 8 | 10 | 11 | 9 | 11 | 11 | 11 | 14 |
| WMS Grades 7 & 8 | 9 | 10 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 10 | 12 |

* Note: WMS 7/8th Graders = 408 students

# What Caused The Smaller Gap? Something Shifted 2006-2012 vs. 2016-2018
## Staff theories are a mix of likely shifting and static conditions

Betsy Gavron's note in MMM:

Our staff had a range of theories as to why we might see heightened levels of anxiety, despite many efforts in recent years to lessen the pressure of homework expectations (starting HW in class, reducing the amount of assigned HW, and instituting CUB weekends). Teachers suggested:

- Living in a post - 9/11 world sets parents and children on edge,

- Experiencing the intensity of our 24 hour news cycle can be fear inducing,

- Living in an affluent, high-performing community can create excessive pressure,

- Social pressures lead some to think they need to do it all - be attractive, achieve academically, athletically, musically…,

- Some students appear to be over-scheduled (homework, plus several sports, plus music lessons plus religious ed plus…) leading students to be exhausted and struggle to make decisions themselves,

- Living in a high tech world with constant input from screens (social media, video games) doesn't allow for down time, restorative outdoor exploration, or even skills for navigating boredom or relaxation, or

- Some parent's inability to bear their children's upset/distress leads to parents fixing things for their kids and children don't develop distress tolerance skills or see themselves as capable of solving problems (of course it is always our fault as parents

In reality there is no single cause of anxiety and each manifestation is unique. There seems to be a complex interplay of biology and environmental factors that lead some students to struggle with unhealthy levels of anxiety. Regardless of the genesis of the anxiety we find ourselves tasked with helping students build the skills to manage the anxiety they experience.

| | |
|---|---|
| ⬅➡ | Static condition |
| ⬆ | Worsening condition |
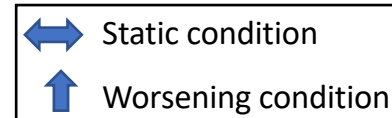
# What Has Changed? (1 of 2)

Actual data shown in Appendix

1. **There are not significant changes in student time utilization from 2014-2018, other than screen time not for school**
   a. "Screen time not for school" dipped in 2014 and increased again in 2016-18
   b. % Sleeping 8 hours down slightly
   c. Time online increased significantly 2010-2104, but stable after

2. **However, students appear to be more active on social media**
   a. Posted 30 or more messages or photos/videos on your social media profile (past 7 days), up from 18.2% to 30.9%

3. **Also, students appear to have a more negative impression of social media**
   a. Fewer feel more connected to peers or that they are getting support during challenging times
   b. Increased belief spending too much time on social media

4. **Gaming (new stat in 2018 MWAHS) can help students feel more connected to friends, but also is seen as a means of escaping life**
   a. Comparable or better than MetroWest region on stats

5. **"School issues" identified as most often cited cause of stress**
   a. With exception of safety issues, all sources of stress increasing, especially physical and/or emotional health

6. **Increasing negative perception of body weight**
   a. More trying to lose weight
   b. Increasing perception of being slightly-very overweight

7. **Cyberbullying and bullying increased from 2016-2018**
   a. Cyberbullying had been stable, but spiked up in 2018
   b. Bullying had been declining, but increased in 2018, including on school property

# What Has Changed? (2 of 2)

Actual data shown in Appendix

8. **Some of the protective measures have decreased, although remain much stronger than MetroWest region**
    a. All stats on decline except "I feel close to people at school"
    b. Significant decrease in "teachers at this school treat students fairly" after a period of improvement

9. **Student recognize that their peers may be suffering, with a significant increase in concern about a peer hurting themselves**
    a. More than a 50% increase in concern about a student hurting themselves
    b. Significant gap between concern and telling an adult
    c. More likely to tell a non-school adult, and that has increased, but no where close to rate of increase in concern
        • What do non-school adults do with this information?

10. **There are barriers to kids seeking help**
    a. Key barriers:
        • Don't want other students to know
        • Wouldn't have time or want to miss class
        • School counselor or therapist wouldn't help OR I should handle problems on my own
    b. Barriers increase with 8th graders relative to 6/7

11. **A significant percentage of parents don't appear to set rules, monitor, discuss – 2016 MWAHS data (of course, as reported by students)**
    a. 34% students report no rules about social media
    b. 54% of students report never/rarely monitor social media uses
    c. 56% parents never/rarely discuss how to act appropriately and responsibly online

# Agenda

**Analytical Insights:**
Mental health statistics and related metrics are some of the most significant changes seen in the 2018 MWAHS relative to prior years

- What is changing?

- Why is it changing?

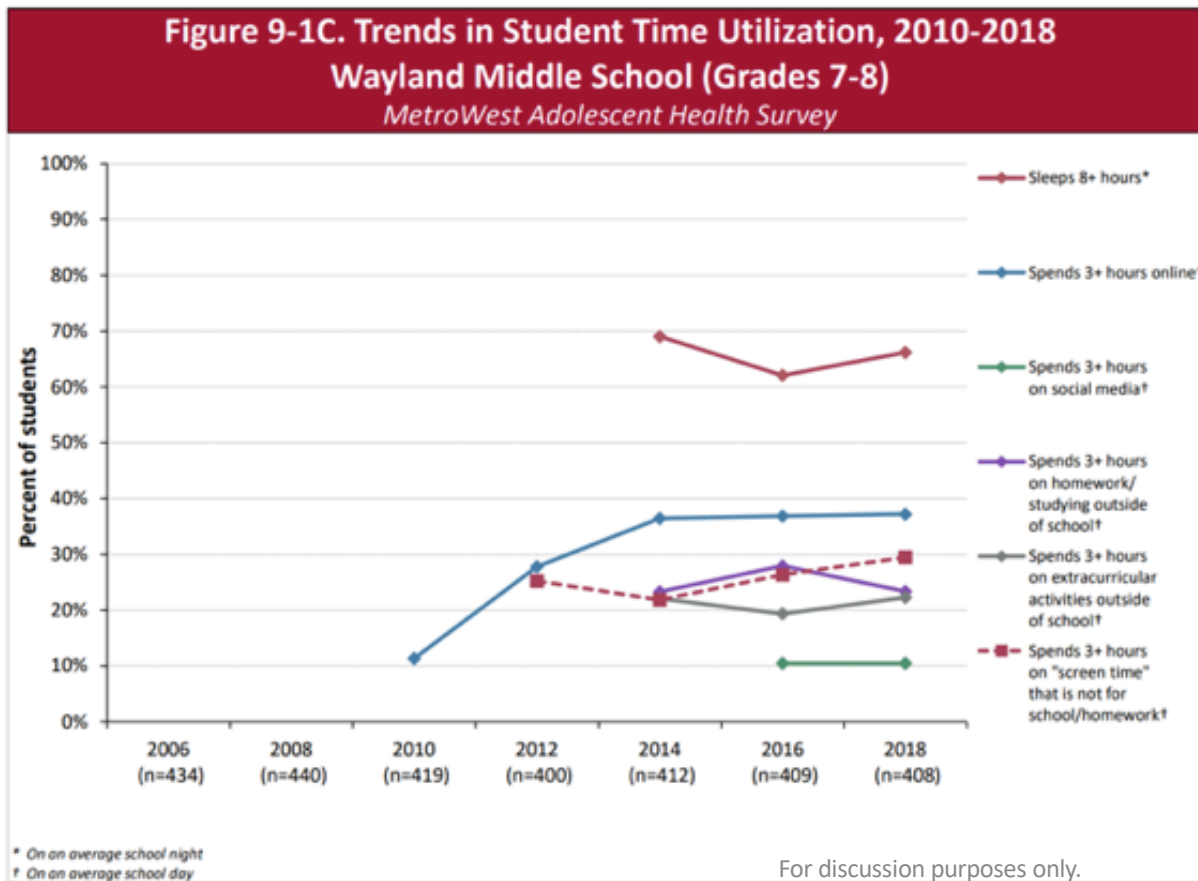**Discussion**
- What can schools do?

- What can parents do?

**Materials:**

➢ **Access the full 2018 MWAHS Report for WMS here**

➢ **Access the Data Presentation by Wayland Public Schools and Wayland Cares on the 2018 MWAHS on 10/28/19 here**

# APPENDIX

# There Are Not Significant Changes in Student Time Utilization from 2014-2018, Other Than Screen Time Not for School



Figure 9-1C. Trends in Student Time Utilization, 2010-2018
Wayland Middle School (Grades 7-8)
MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey

- Screen time not for school dipped in 2014 and increased again in 2016-18

- Sleep down slightly

- Time online increased significantly 2010-2104, but stable after

* Note: WMS 7/8th Graders = 408 students

# However, Students Appear to Be More Active on Social Media

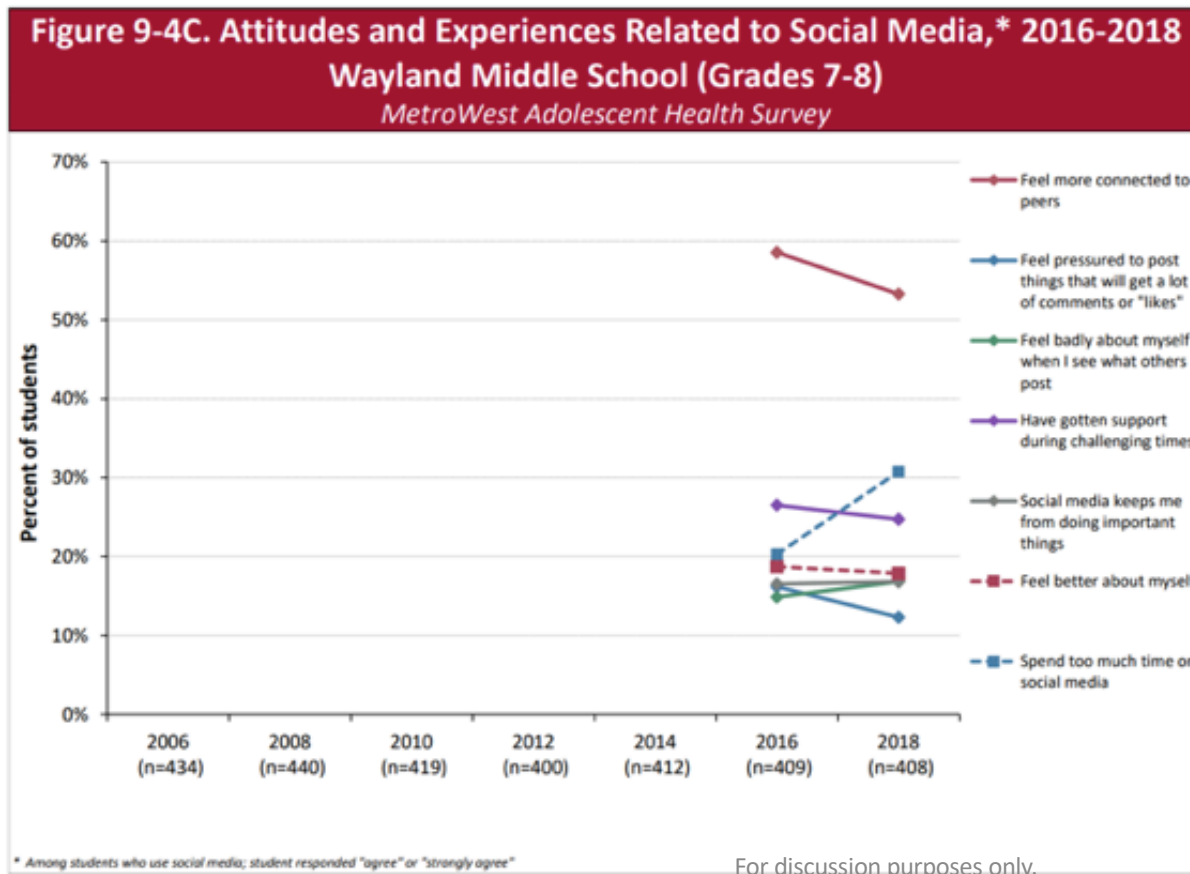| Table 9-2B. Online, Social Media, and Gaming Behaviors, 2006 - 2018 Wayland Middle School (Grades 7-8) MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey, 2018 | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Wayland (%)** | | | | | | |
| | **2006** | **2008** | **2010** | **2012** | **2014** | **2016** | **2018** |
| | *(434)* | *(440)* | *(419)* | *(400)* | *(412)* | *(409)* | *(408)* |
| **ONLINE BEHAVIORS AND USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA** | | | | | | | |
| Spend 3 or more hours online (average school day) | – | – | 11.3 | 27.8 | 36.4 | 36.8 | 37.2 |
| Spend 3 or more hours on social media sites (average school day) | – | – | – | – | – | 10.5 | 10.5 |
| Posted 3 or more messages or photos/videos on your social media profile (past 7 days)* | – | – | – | – | – | 18.2 | 30.9 |
| Spend 3 or more hours gaming (average school day)ᵗ | – | – | – | – | – | – | 9.5 |
| **SOCIAL MEDIA USE ᵗ** | | | | | | | |
| I spend a lot of time thinking about social media or planning how to use it. | – | – | – | – | – | – | 3.5 |
| I feel an urge to use social media more and more. | – | – | – | – | – | – | 4.5 |
| I use social media in order to forget about personal problems. | – | – | – | – | – | – | 4.3 |
| I have tried to cut down on my social media use without success. | – | – | – | – | – | – | 5.3 |
| I become restless or troubled if I am prohibited from using social media. | – | – | – | – | – | – | 1.5 |
| I use social media so much that it has a negative impact on school, work, sports, or other important activities. | – | – | – | – | – | – | 0.5 |
| **GAMING BEHAVIORS (past 6 months) ᵗ** | | | | | | | |
| Thought about playing a game all day long | – | – | – | – | – | – | 5.8 |
| Spent increasing amounts of time on games | – | – | – | – | – | – | 9.4 |
| Played games to forget about real life | – | – | – | – | – | – | 6.8 |
| Others unsuccessfully tried to reduce your game use | – | – | – | – | – | – | 5.6 |
| Felt bad when you were unable to play games | – | – | – | – | – | – | 4.3 |
| Had fights with others (e.g., family, friends) over your time spent on games | – | – | – | – | – | – | 4.0 |
| Neglected other important activities (e.g., school, work, sports) to play games | – | – | – | – | – | – | 2.3 |

\* Among students who use social media
ᵗ Playing online or video games
‡ Student responded "often" or "very often"

- Posted 30 or more messages or photos/videos on your social media profile (past 7 days), up from 18.2% to 30.9%
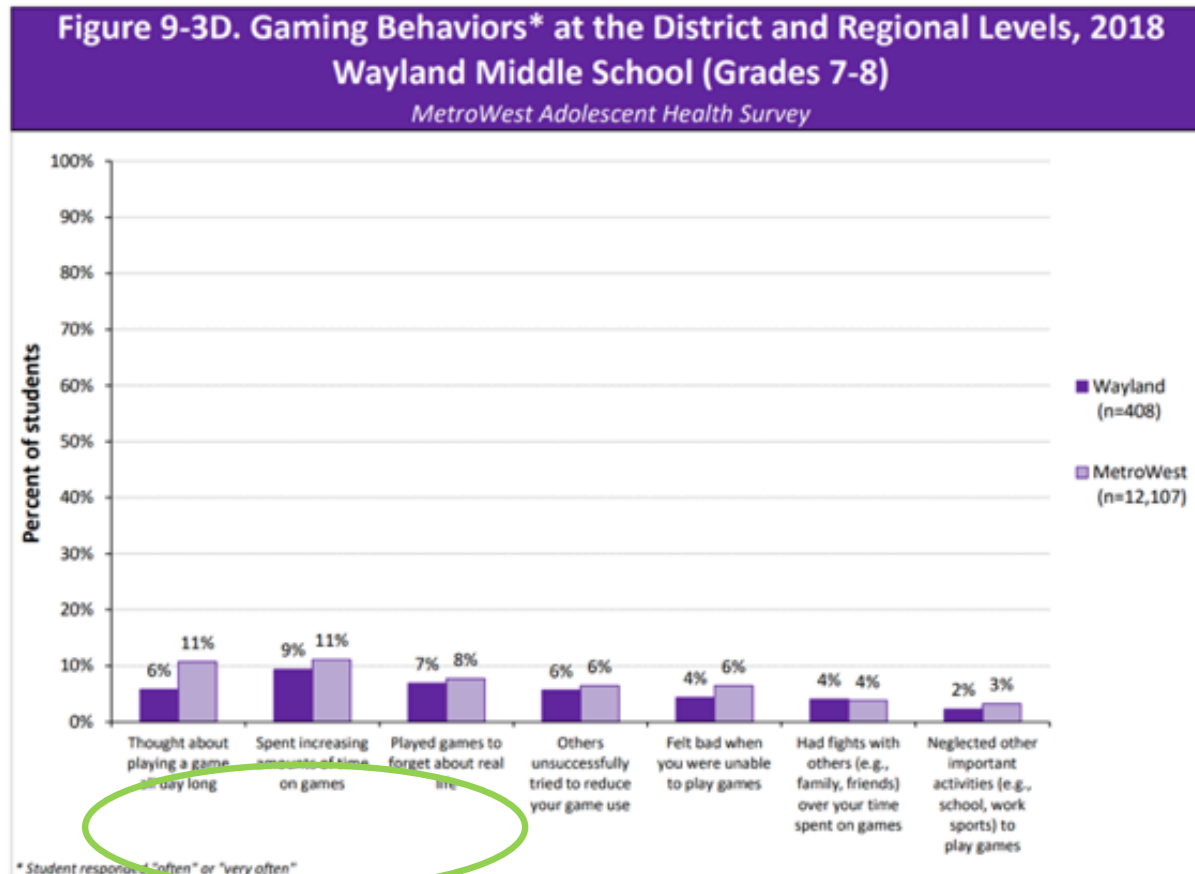
# Also, Students Appear To Have a More Negative Impression of Social Media



**Figure 9-4C. Attitudes and Experiences Related to Social Media,* 2016-2018 Wayland Middle School (Grades 7-8)**
*MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey*

Legend:
- Feel more connected to peers
- Feel pressured to post things that will get a lot of comments or "likes"
- Feel badly about myself when I see what others post
- Have gotten support during challenging times
- Social media keeps me from doing important things
- Feel better about myself
- Spend too much time on social media

X-axis: 2006 (n=434), 2008 (n=440), 2010 (n=419), 2012 (n=400), 2014 (n=412), 2016 (n=409), 2018 (n=408)

* Among students who use social media; student responded "agree" or "strongly agree"

- Fewer feel more connected to peers
- Fewer feeling they are getting support during challenging times
- Increased belief spending too much time on SM

* Note: WMS 7/8th Graders = 408 students

For discussion purposes only.                    13

# Gaming Can Help Students Feel More Connected to Friends, But Also is Seen As A Means of Escaping Life



Figure 9-3D. Gaming Behaviors* at the District and Regional Levels, 2018
Wayland Middle School (Grades 7-8)
MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey
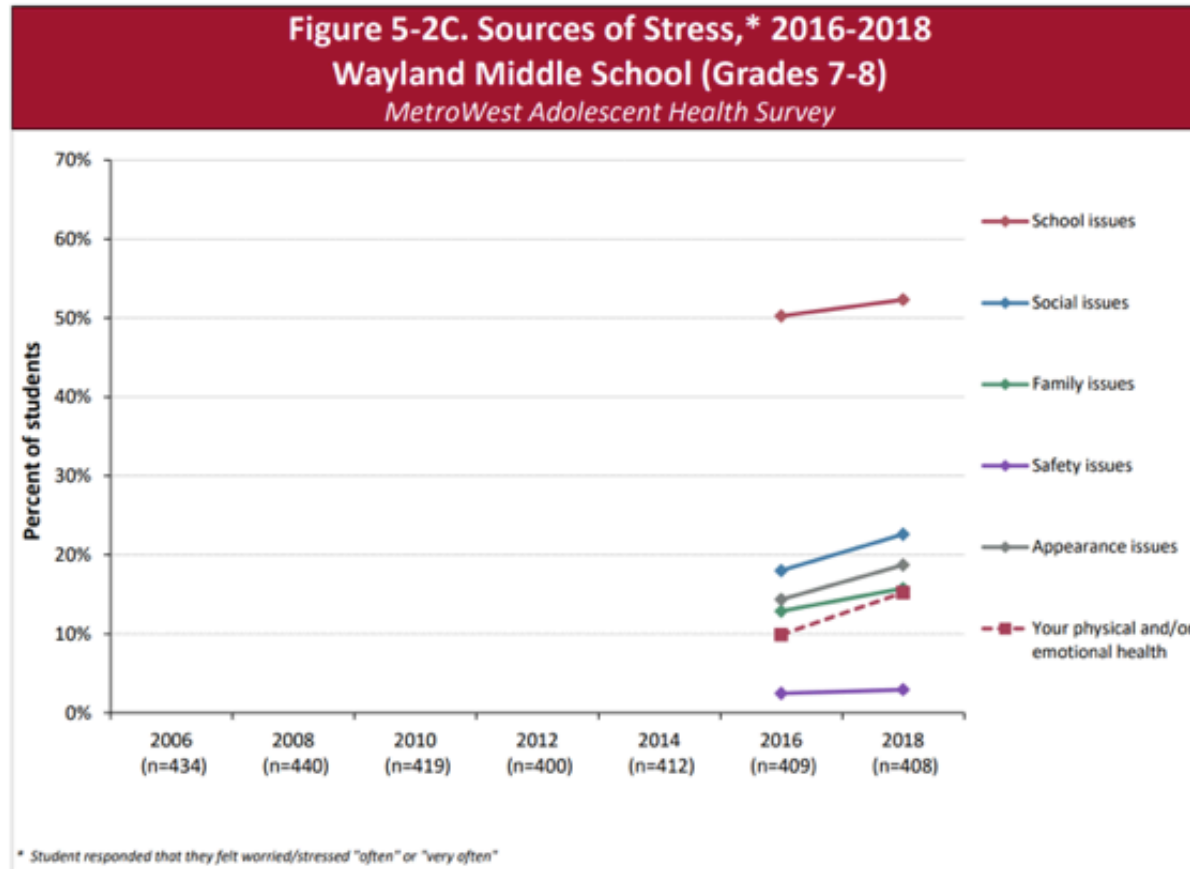
- Comparable or better than Metrowest Region on stats

* Note: WMS 7/8th Graders = 408 students

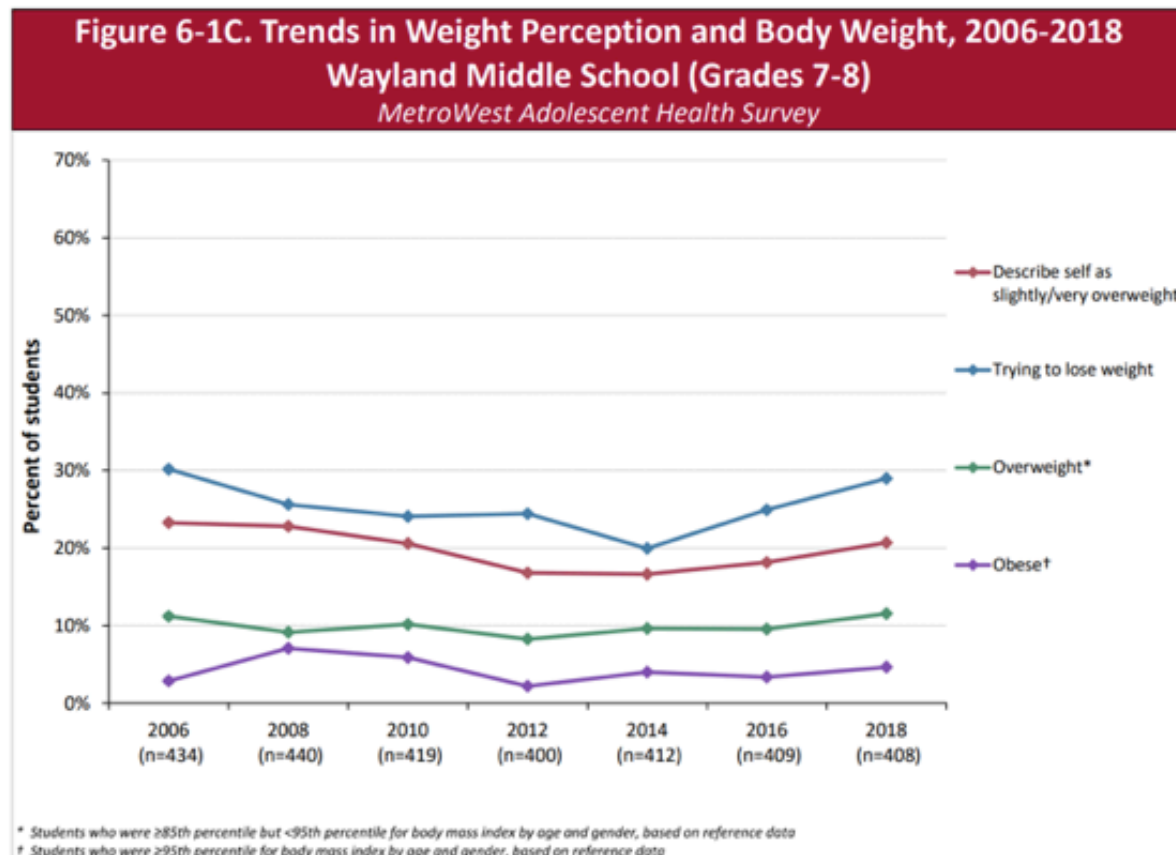# "School Issues" Identified as Most Often Cited Cause of Stress

Figure 5-2C. Sources of Stress,* 2016-2018
Wayland Middle School (Grades 7-8)
MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey



* Student responded that they felt worried/stressed "often" or "very often"

- With exception of safety issues, all sources of stress increasing, especially physical and/or emotional health

* Note: WMS 7/8th Graders = 408 students
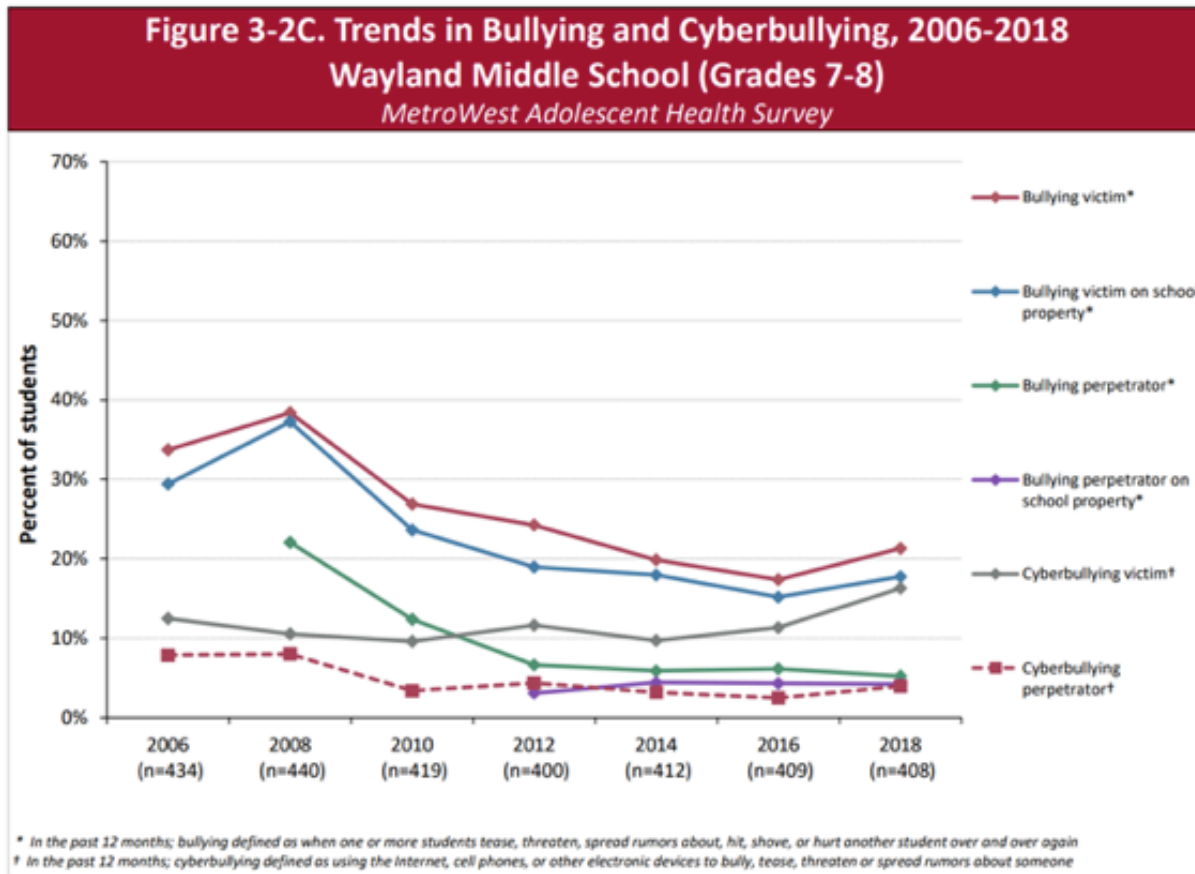
# Increasing Negative Perception of Body Weight



Figure 6-1C. Trends in Weight Perception and Body Weight, 2006-2018
Wayland Middle School (Grades 7-8)
MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey

- More trying to lose weight
- Increasing perception of being slightly-very overweight
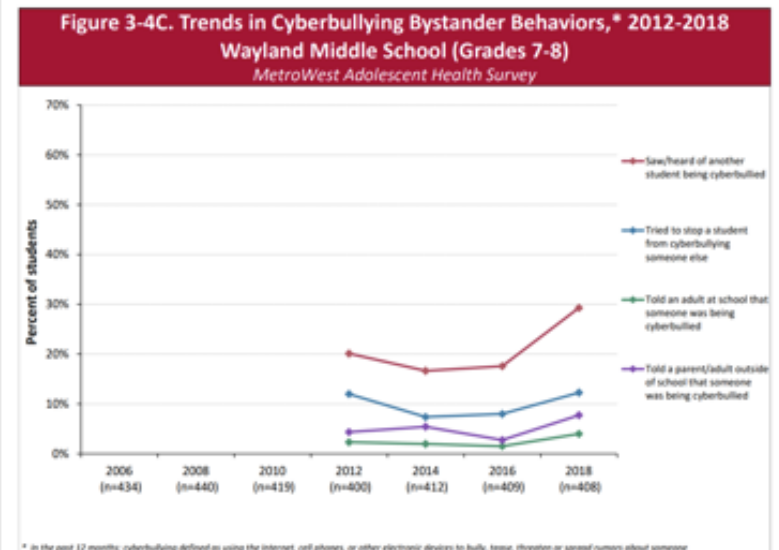
* Note: WMS 7/8th Graders = 408 students
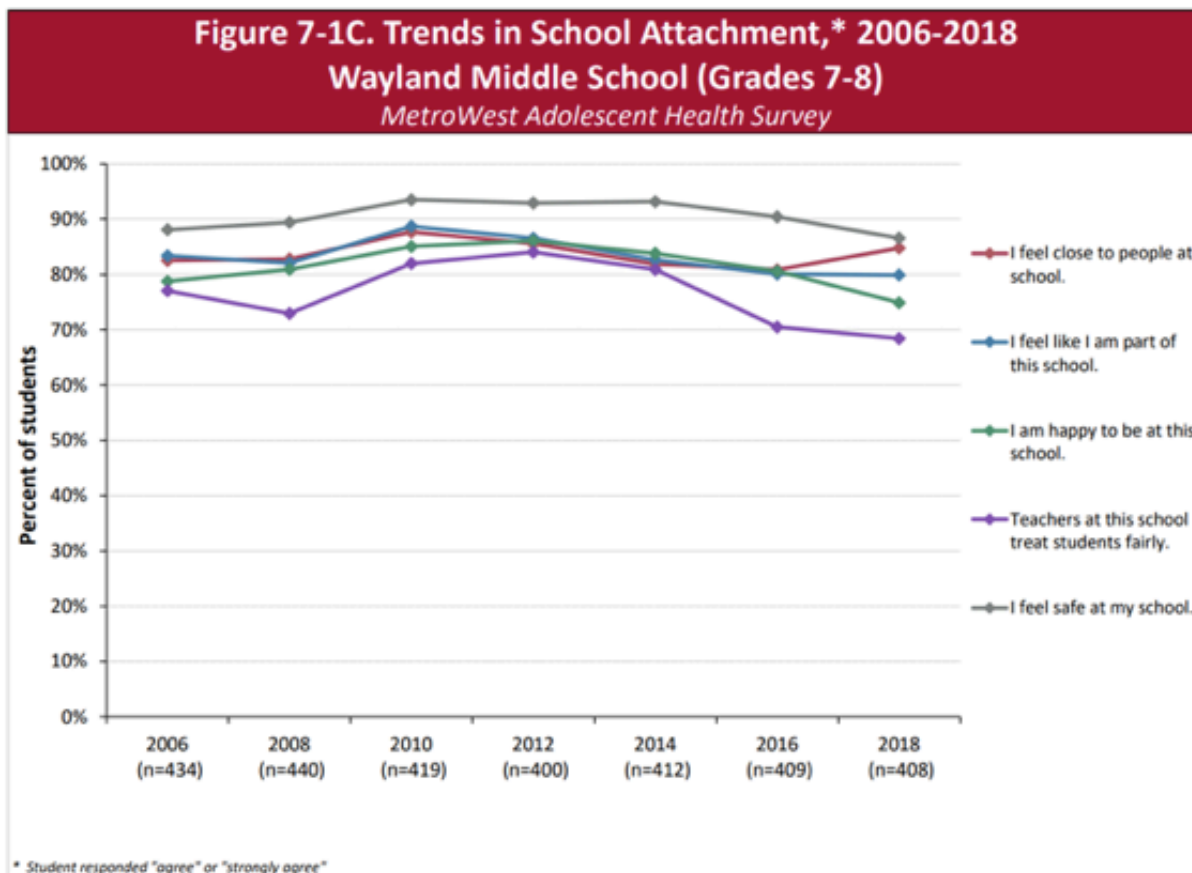
# Cyberbullying and Bullying Increased from 2016-2018



Figure 3-2C. Trends in Bullying and Cyberbullying, 2006-2018
Wayland Middle School (Grades 7-8)
MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey

- Cyberbullying had been stable, but spiked up in 2018

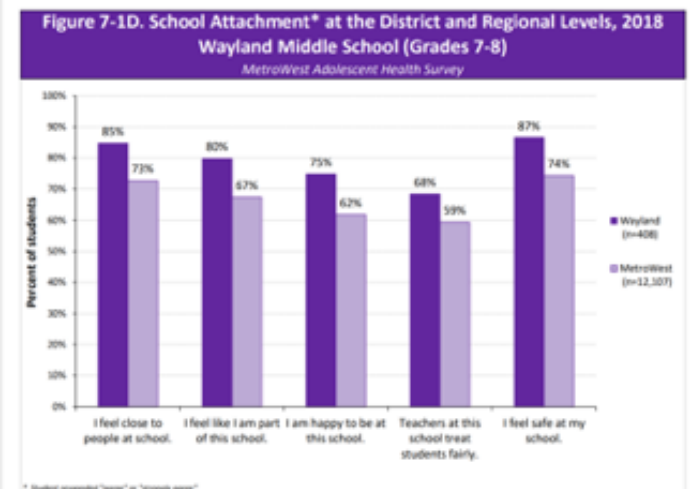- Bullying had been declining, but increased in 2018, including on school property



Figure 3-4C. Trends in Cyberbullying Bystander Behaviors,* 2012-2018
Wayland Middle School (Grades 7-8)
MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey

* Note: WMS 7/8th Graders = 408 students

For discussion purposes only.

17

# Some of the Protective Measures Have Decreased, Although Remain Much Stronger than Metrowest Region



Figure 7-1C. Trends in School Attachment,* 2006-2018
Wayland Middle School (Grades 7-8)
MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey
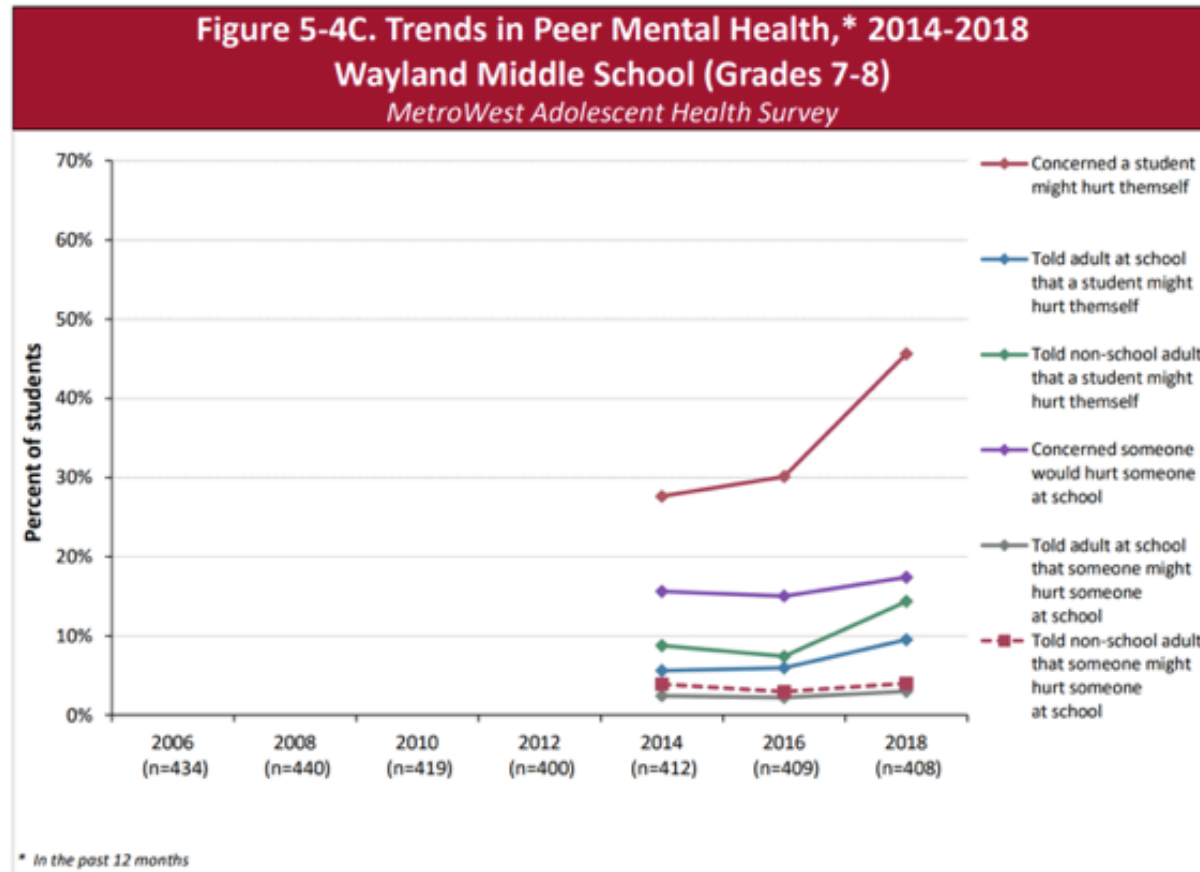
- All stats on decline except "I feel close to people at school"

- Significant decrease in "Teachers at this school treat students fairly" after a period of improvement



Figure 7-1D. School Attachment* at the District and Regional Levels, 2018
Wayland Middle School (Grades 7-8)
MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey

* Note: WMS 7/8th Graders = 408 students

For discussion purposes only.

18

# Student Recognize That Their Peers May be Suffering
## Significant increase in concern about a peer hurting themselves



Figure 5-4C. Trends in Peer Mental Health,* 2014-2018
Wayland Middle School (Grades 7-8)
MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey

* In the past 12 months

- More than a 50% increase in concern about a student hurting themselves

- Significant gap between concern and telling an adult

- More likely to tell a non-school adult, and that has increased, but no where close to rate of increase in concern
  - What do non-school adults do with this information?

* Note: WMS 7/8th Graders = 408 students

For discussion purposes only.

# There are Barriers to Kids Seeking Help



Figure 5-6B. Barriers to Seeking Help at School for Emotional Challenges* by Grade, 2018
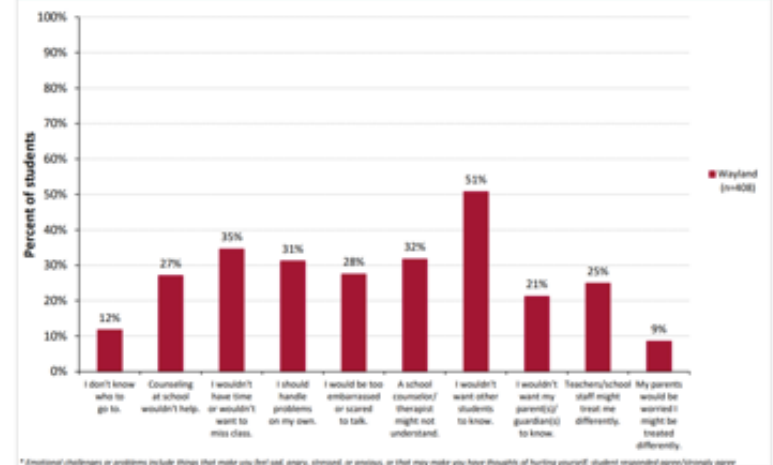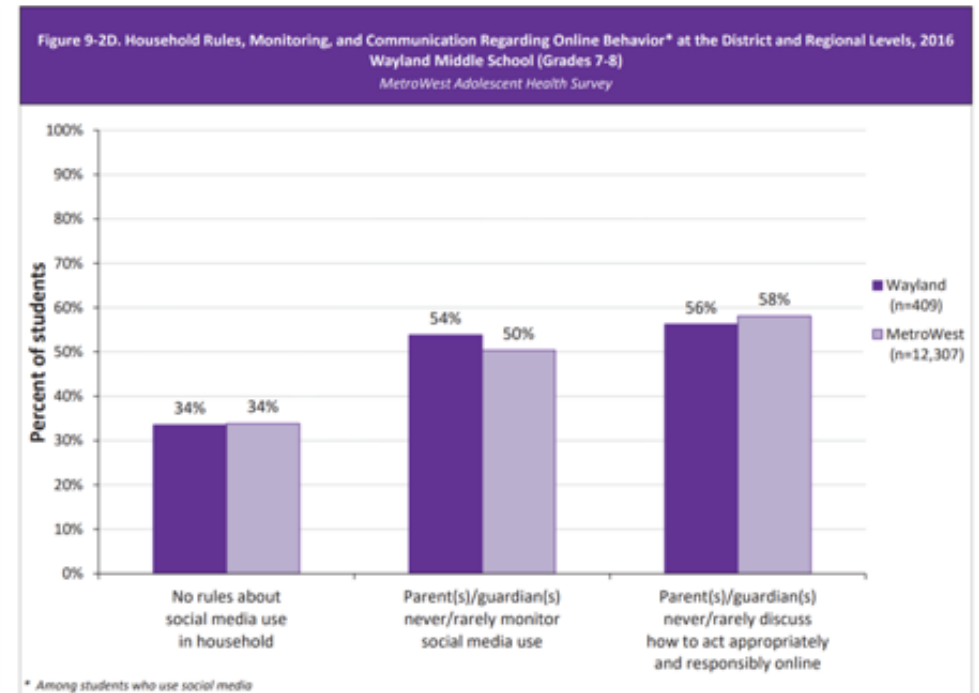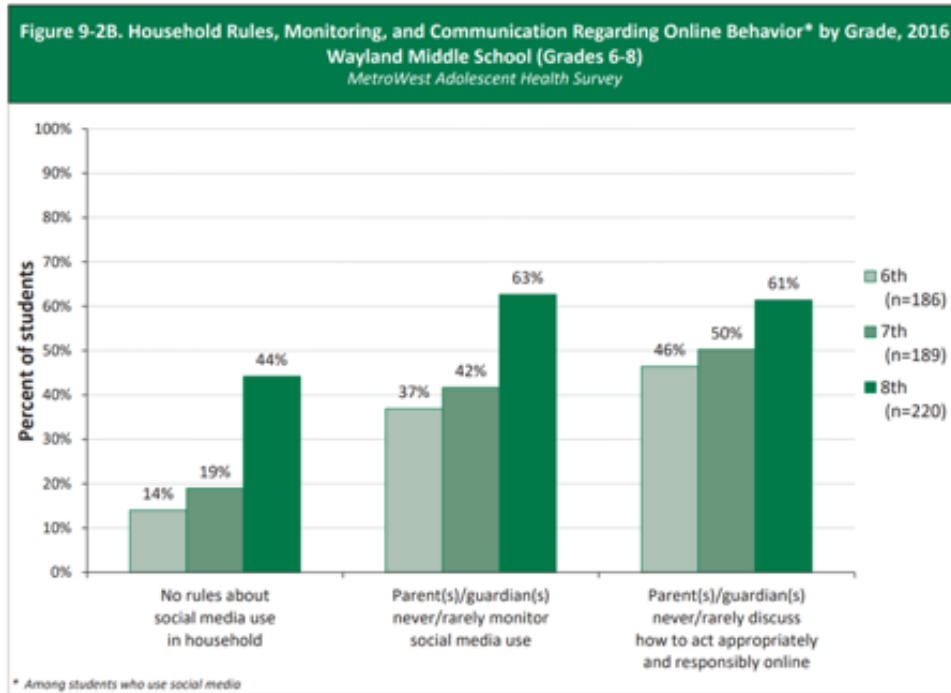Wayland Middle School (Grades 6-8)
MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey
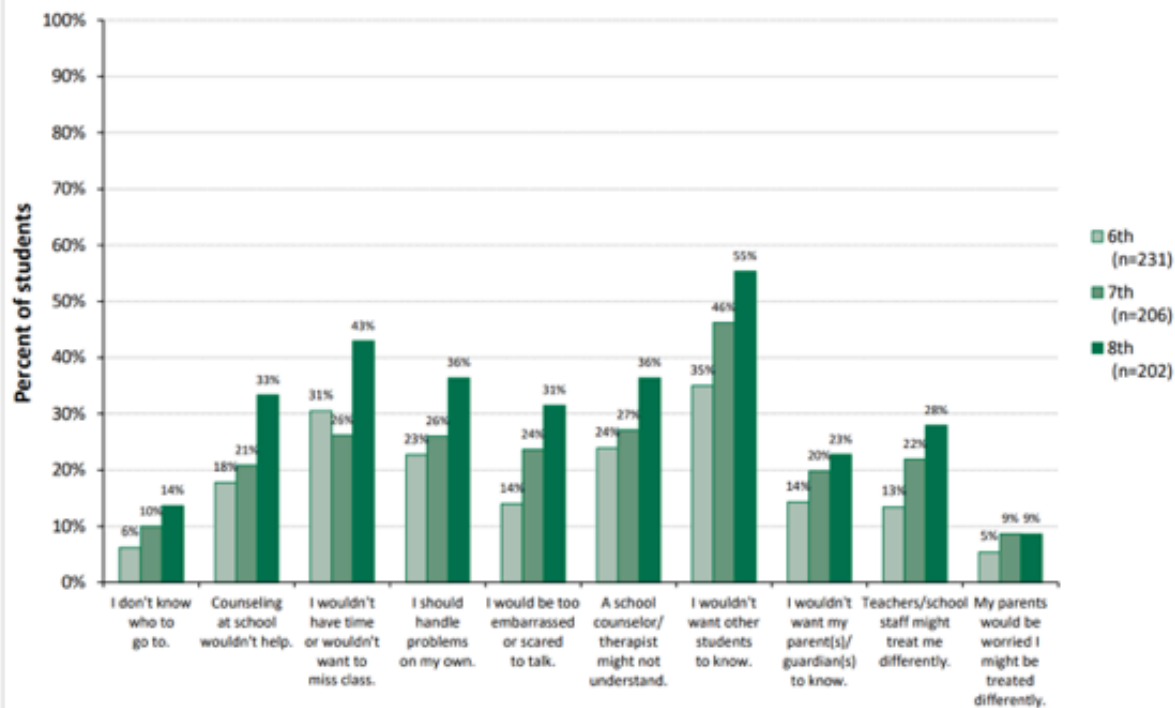
* Emotional challenges or problems include things that make you feel sad, angry, stressed, or anxious, or that may make you have thoughts of hurting yourself; student responded agree/strongly agree

Key barriers:

- Don't want other students to know

- Wouldn't have time or want to miss class

- School counselor or therapist wouldn't help OR I should handle problems on my own

Barriers increase with 8th graders relative to 6/7



Figure 5-6C. Barriers to Seeking Help at School for Emotional Challenges,* 2018
Wayland Middle School (Grades 7-8)
MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey

* Note: WMS 6/7/8th Graders = 639 students

For discussion purposes only.

20

# A Significant Percentage of Parents Don't Appear to Set Rules, Monitor, Discuss – 2016 MWAHS Data



Figure 9-2B. Household Rules, Monitoring, and Communication Regarding Online Behavior* by Grade, 2016
Wayland Middle School (Grades 6-8)
*MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey*

* Among students who use social media



Figure 9-2D. Household Rules, Monitoring, and Communication Regarding Online Behavior* at the District and Regional Levels, 2016
Wayland Middle School (Grades 7-8)
*MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey*

* Among students who use social media

- Even less so for 8th Grade
- Question dropped in 2018 MWAHS

* Note: WMS 6/7/8th Graders = 639 students