



# Safe & Drug-Free Schools

February 2009



## 2008 Report Card on America's Youth

### *A Hole in Our Moral Ozone*

A survey of over 29,000 high school students revealed entrenched moral/ethical issues that appear to be getting worse. Despite the fact that 98% of students surveyed indicated, "It's important for me to be a person with good character," their answers were contradictory:

Thirty percent admitted stealing from a store in the past year (up two percent from 2006); 23% said they stole from a parent or other relative, and 20% from a friend.

Forty-two percent said they lied to save money in the last year (up from 39%); 83% confessed they lied to a parent about something significant (65% to a teacher).

Cheating in school was labeled as 'rampant' with 64% (up from 60%) indicating they cheated on a test during the year, 38% doing so two or more times. Thirty-six percent said they used the internet to plagiarize.

**Bad?** It's worse than even these numbers represent. More than 26% said they lied on the survey and despite this dishonesty, etc., 93% said they were satisfied with their personal ethics; 77% said they were better than most.

[www.charactercounts.org/programs/reportcard/index.html](http://www.charactercounts.org/programs/reportcard/index.html)

### SUICIDE PROTOCOL

If you have a concern, report it **immediately**.

Notify administration:

even if it means a phone call at home

even if it is late at night

If you can't reach an administrator, call 3-2100

If the student is with you, stay directly with the

student: **Never** Leave the Student Alone



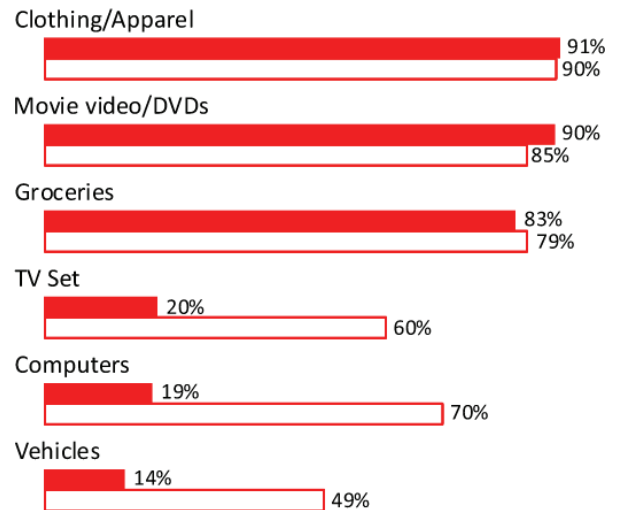
According to the 2007 YouthPulse survey conducted by Harris Interactive, teens have a significant impact on the purchasing decisions of their parents/caregivers.

"This year's YouthPulse reveals that young people ages 8-21 years old spend over \$132 billion annually, which represents an increase of over \$20 billion since last year."

Here are some highlights from the report.

**Influence Index:** % Who Decide or Influence Purchases

■ 8- to 12- year-olds    □ 13- to 21- year-olds



At first glance these categories may seem innocuous but consider how clothing choices impact school climate. As well, the tremendous influence 13- to 21- year-olds have on entertainment-related purchases is significant due to the influence the entertainment industry has on youth.

Lastly, given the state of nutritional decline in young people across the US, teen influence on grocery choices has significant repercussions for schools.

Bottom line: Parents need to take an active role in guiding teen choices.

Source:

[www.harrisinteractive.com/news/newsletters/k12news/HI\\_TrendsTudes\\_2008\\_v07\\_i01.pdf](http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/newsletters/k12news/HI_TrendsTudes_2008_v07_i01.pdf)

## Signs & Symptoms of Drug Use

The following are not always indicative of drug use and may indicate stress or depression. Even so, they warrant attention when you see them, and remember if you see a definitive change of any sort, follow up!

### Physical Signs:

- Loss or increase in appetite.
- Red watery eyes, pupils larger or smaller than usual; blank stare.
- Smell of substance on breath, body or clothes.
- Runny nose; hacking cough.
- Nausea, vomiting or excessive talkativeness.
- Tremors or shakes in hands, feet or head.

### Behavioral Signs:

- Change in friends, new hang-outs, avoidance of the old crowd.
- Drop in grades.
- Difficulty in paying attention, forgetful.
- Moodiness, irritability.
- Silliness or giddiness.
- Chronic dishonesty.
- Unexplained need for money.
- Found in possession of drug paraphernalia.

### Drug Specific Symptoms:

**Marijuana:** Glassy, red eyes; loud talking and inappropriate laughter; sleepiness; loss of interest, motivation; weight gain or loss.

**Alcohol:** Clumsiness; difficulty walking; slurred speech; sleepless; poor judgment; dilated pupils.

**Tobacco/Nicotine:** Smell of tobacco; stained fingers or teeth.

## Safety Services Department

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## OTC's and Prescriptions Top List

The "latest federal data shows that seven of the top ten drugs being misused by high school seniors are legal prescription or **over-the-counter** (OTC) medications."<sup>1</sup> OTC drugs, such as cold remedies, are widely available and are easy to purchase. Many OTC drugs contain dextromethorphan (DXM), which can produce a "high" feeling and be extremely dangerous when taken in high doses. **DXM is found in more than 120 non-prescription cold remedies** such as Robitussin, Vicks, and Coricidin HBP.

Teens also have easy access to prescription medications through family and friends, and report that they use prescription drugs because they "believe [they are] not illegal, there is less shame attached to using them, [and] there are fewer side effects than street drugs".<sup>2</sup> Additionally, teens indicate prescription medications are the better choice "because some parents don't care as much if you get caught."<sup>2</sup>

Top reasons teens report using OTC and prescription drugs include helping to cope with pressures and to self-medicate. Other reasons noted were partying, escaping reality, experimentation, and boredom.

Some signs teens might be abusing prescription and/or OTC drugs include constricted pupils, slurred speech, or flushed skin. Be alert to personality changes, mood swings, irritability, excessive energy, sleepiness or avoiding sleep, sweating, appetite loss, forgetfulness, or clumsiness. Also watch for signs around the house such as missing pills, unfamiliar pills, or empty cold medicine bottles or packages.

<sup>1</sup>[www.jointogether.org/news/features/2008/youth-use-of-legal-drugs.html](http://www.jointogether.org/news/features/2008/youth-use-of-legal-drugs.html)

<sup>2</sup>[www.theantidrug.com](http://www.theantidrug.com)

## February Events

### National Teen Dating Abuse Awareness & Prevention Week *February 2 - 6*

National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline  
1-866-331-9474

[www.loveisrespect.org](http://www.loveisrespect.org)

Information on dating violence and awareness

[http://crapo.senate.gov/issues/teen\\_dating\\_violence/media.cfm](http://crapo.senate.gov/issues/teen_dating_violence/media.cfm)  
Powerful PSAs on Teen Dating Violence Prevention