

GORHAM SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

Office of the Superintendent

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February 2015

Dear Parents,

As you may have heard from your child, the school administered the Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey (MIYHS) to all of our students. Every two years the survey is given in schools across Maine, including the Gorham School District. The purpose of the survey is to gather information on the health-related behaviors and attitudes of 5th through 12th grade students. The data is used to help school districts and our public health partners know how students' thinking and behavior around health has changed over time. It's used to develop plans for preventing teen alcohol and drug use as well as increasing the overall health of students. While the results of this survey will not be available until the fall, we wanted to take this opportunity to share with you some of the notable results from the 2013 MIYHS data and some of our ideas for improving our students' health. The data was prepared by our partners at the Public Health Program of The Opportunity Alliance and is attached.

From the data sheet, you can see that we still have many young people in our community using drugs and alcohol on a regular basis. So what do we do about this problem? We all have to work together! The problem of teen alcohol and drug use is one the whole community shares and will require the whole community to come together to find solutions.

For our part, Gorham High School and Middle School students are receiving substance abuse education in their health classes to understand the risks and consequences associated with underage drinking and drug use. Students in the elementary schools are participating in the DARE Program to enhance decision-making skills and making healthy choices.

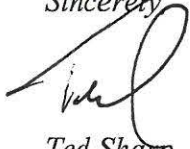
Faculty and staff are receiving substance abuse prevention training this year to expand and refine their knowledge of the challenges and dangers of alcohol and drugs, as well as best practice prevention tools. This will enhance their effectiveness working with their students.

We know your job as parents is difficult so we want to continue to find way to support your prevention efforts. The Public Health Program can provide you with resources on how to talk to your child about drugs and alcohol, when you visit their website: www.publichealthprogram.org. The "Back Each Other Up" campaign can also provide support for you, by connecting you with other parents in an effort to support each other and work together. Please take a moment to go to the website, www.backeachotherup.org to sign the pledge saying you will not allow teens to drink alcohol or smoke marijuana in your house.

Please know the Gorham School Department is committed to making our schools a safe place for students to learn. We are here to support you and the community to ensure we are graduating successful and healthy students.

If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions, please do contact the Principal of your child's school.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ted Sharp', written in a cursive style.

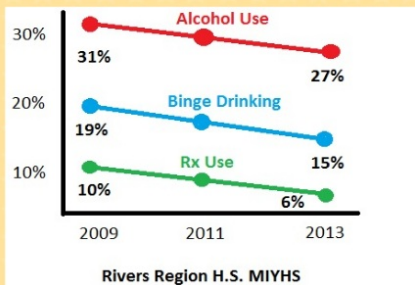
*Ted Sharp
Superintendent of Schools*

2013 Rivers Region* Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey Data

*Rivers Region includes the towns of Cape Elizabeth, Gorham, Scarborough, South Portland, and Westbrook

Positive Results

There has been a significant decrease in the number of Rivers Region high school students reporting that they used alcohol, binge drank or misused prescription drugs in the past 30 days



In 2013, 10% of Rivers Region High School students report smoking cigarettes regularly compared to 13% of Maine High School students



Some Challenges we Face:

In 2013, 3 out of 5 Rivers Region High School Students did NOT think it was risky to use marijuana once or twice a week.

MARIJUANA



In 2013, 1 out of 4 Rivers Region High School Students used marijuana in the past 30 days

In 2013, 15% of Rivers Region High School students said they do NOT think their parents feel it is wrong from them to smoke marijuana



In 2013, 3 out of 5 Cumberland County High School students said they would NOT be caught by their parents if they drank alcohol.

MIYHS also points to solutions!

Rivers Region High School students who said they think their parents feel it is NOT wrong for them to drink alcohol or use marijuana were 5 times as likely to drink and 12 times as likely to use marijuana.



Talk to your teen

Rivers Region High School students who think they will NOT be caught by their parents for drinking are 7 times as likely to drink.



Have clear and consistent rules

Rivers Region High School students who think it is easy to get alcohol and marijuana are 3 times as likely to drink and 12 times as likely to use marijuana.



Lock up alcohol and other drugs

All parents can feel isolated, especially in difficult parenting moments



Talk to other parents

**Parents,
You Matter!**

A young person's brain isn't fully developed, especially around decision making, until they are in their 20's

www.backeachotherup.org

A resources for parents in Cumberland County!



For more information and resources, please visit our website:
www.publichealthprogram.org