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Springfield Youth Health Surveys

Understanding Youth Gambling Behavior in Springfield

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PARTNERS FOR HEALTH EQUITY

About this presentation

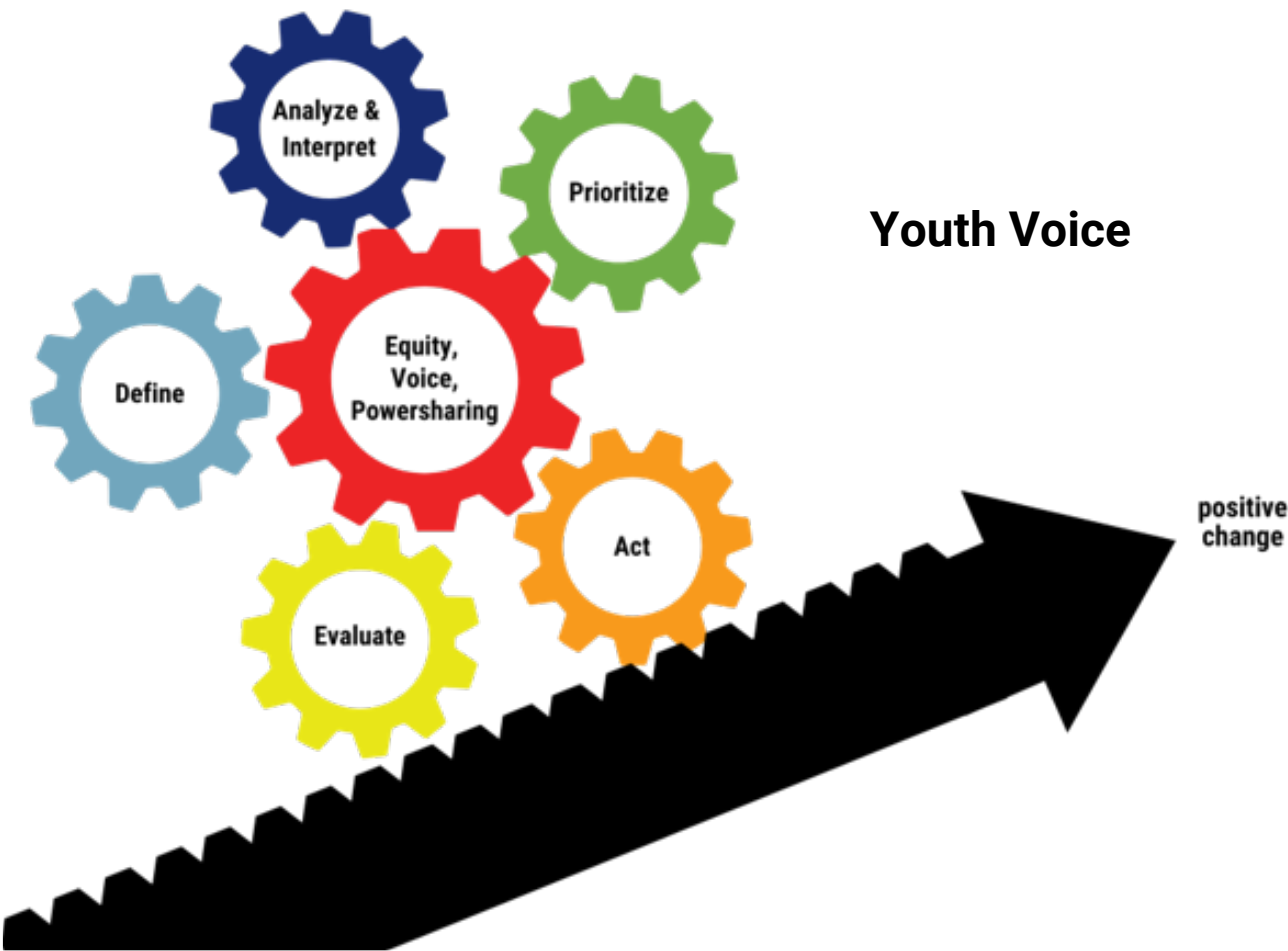
Kathleen Szegda, PhD, MPH, MS, presented this PowerPoint at the [Massachusetts Gaming Commission's Open Meeting held on May 22, 2025](#).

The meeting was recorded, and [her presentation](#) begins at timestamp 56:32.



About the Springfield Youth Health Survey Initiative

- **Goal:** use data for action to support youth health in Springfield
- **Partnership** effort started in 2014



Youth Health Survey (YHS)

8th grade students
Modified version of survey used by MDPH and MDESE

Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)

10th and 12th grade students
Modified version of survey used by MDPH and MDESE, developed by CDC

Different funders have supported the initiative over time:

2024 Planning Team Partners:



Understanding Youth Gambling Behavior

- MGC initially funded in 2019 after the opening of MGM in 2018
- Community concerns about the impact of a casino (WMCHIA)
- Interest in understanding the impact of a casino on youth gambling behavior
- Starting gambling at a young age is a risk factor for problematic gambling later in life
- Added gambling questions to understand the prevalence of gambling

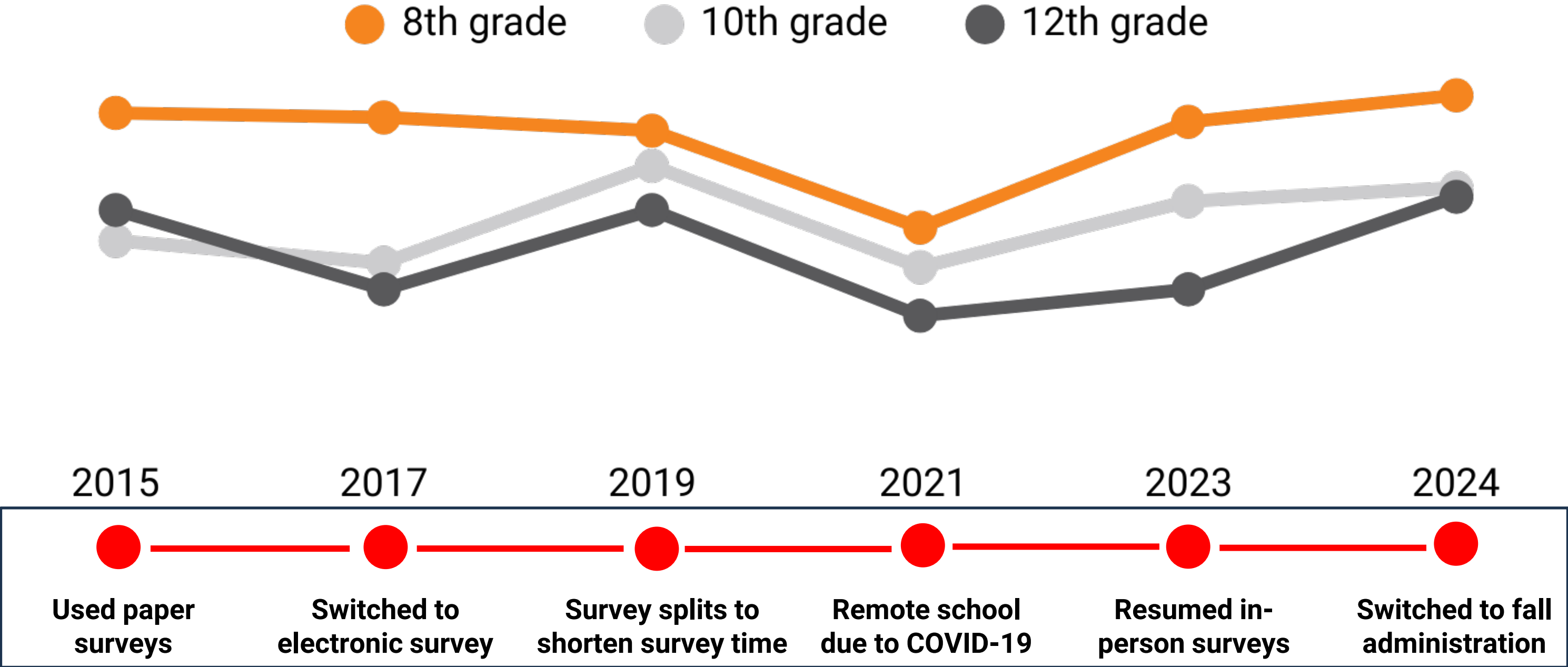


Western MA Casino HIA, Public Health Institute of Western MA, (formerly Partners for a Healthier Community), 2014

Youth Survey Methods

Participation Rates Over Time

(% of students in each grade that completed the survey out of all enrolled SPS students in each grade)



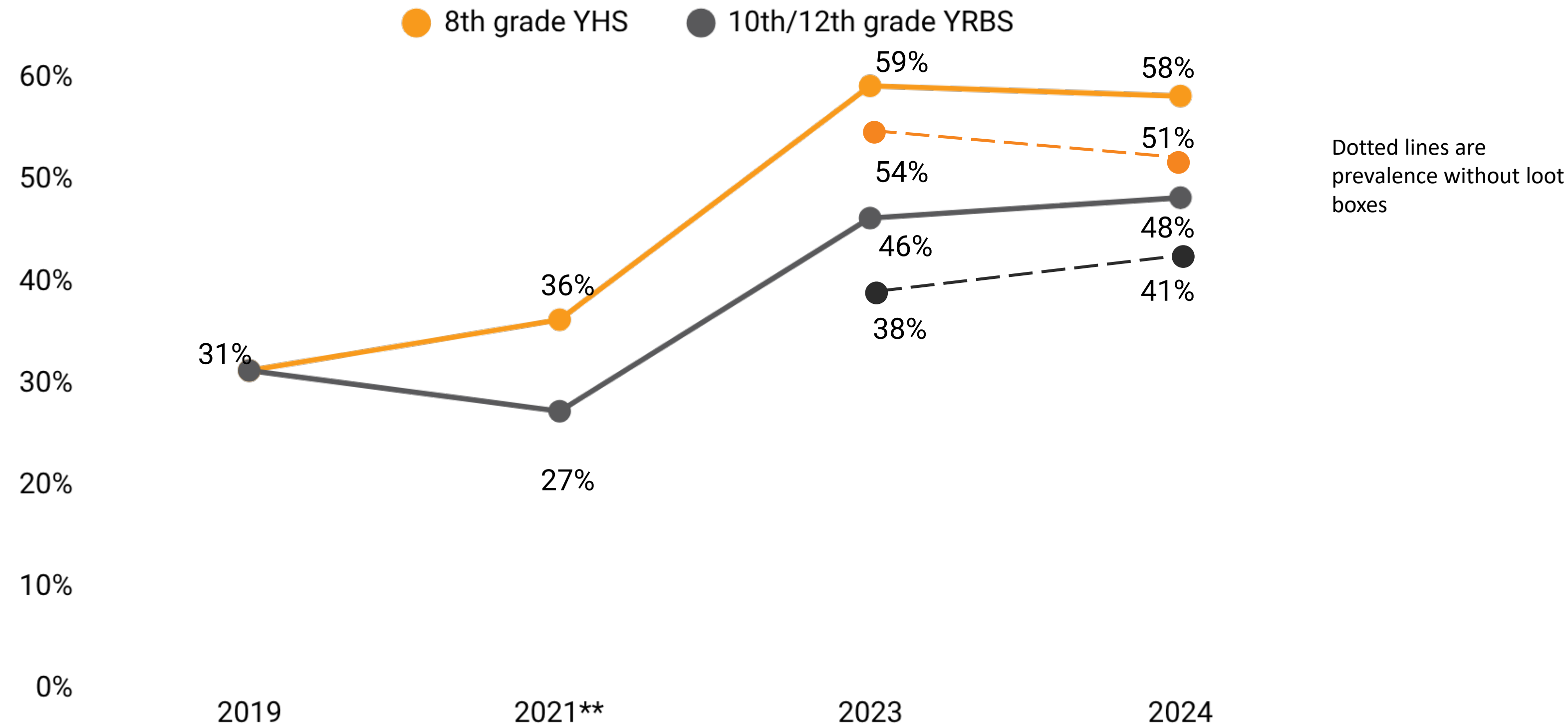
Types of Gambling on Springfield YHS/YRBS, 2024

- **Lottery tickets**
- **Sports betting** (updated for 2024)
 - Sports betting, (not including fantasy sports), not online, with friends or family*
 - Sports betting, (not including fantasy sports), online*
 - Playing fantasy sports without using money*
 - Betting on fantasy sports*
- Playing **card games** for money with friends or family*
- **Games of skill** (i.e. pool, video games)*
- Opening/buying a **loot box in a video game**
- Gambling **online without using money**
- Gambling **online with money**
- Betting money on **horse races***
- Playing **bingo** for money
- Playing **slot machines/table games at a casino** (casino gambling grouped together for 2024)*

* Question language has changed from year to year. Use caution when drawing comparisons over time. Please refer to the Youth Health Survey Initiative page on our website to learn more (linked at the end of this presentation).

* response options were collapsed in 2024

Gambling Prevalence* Over Time

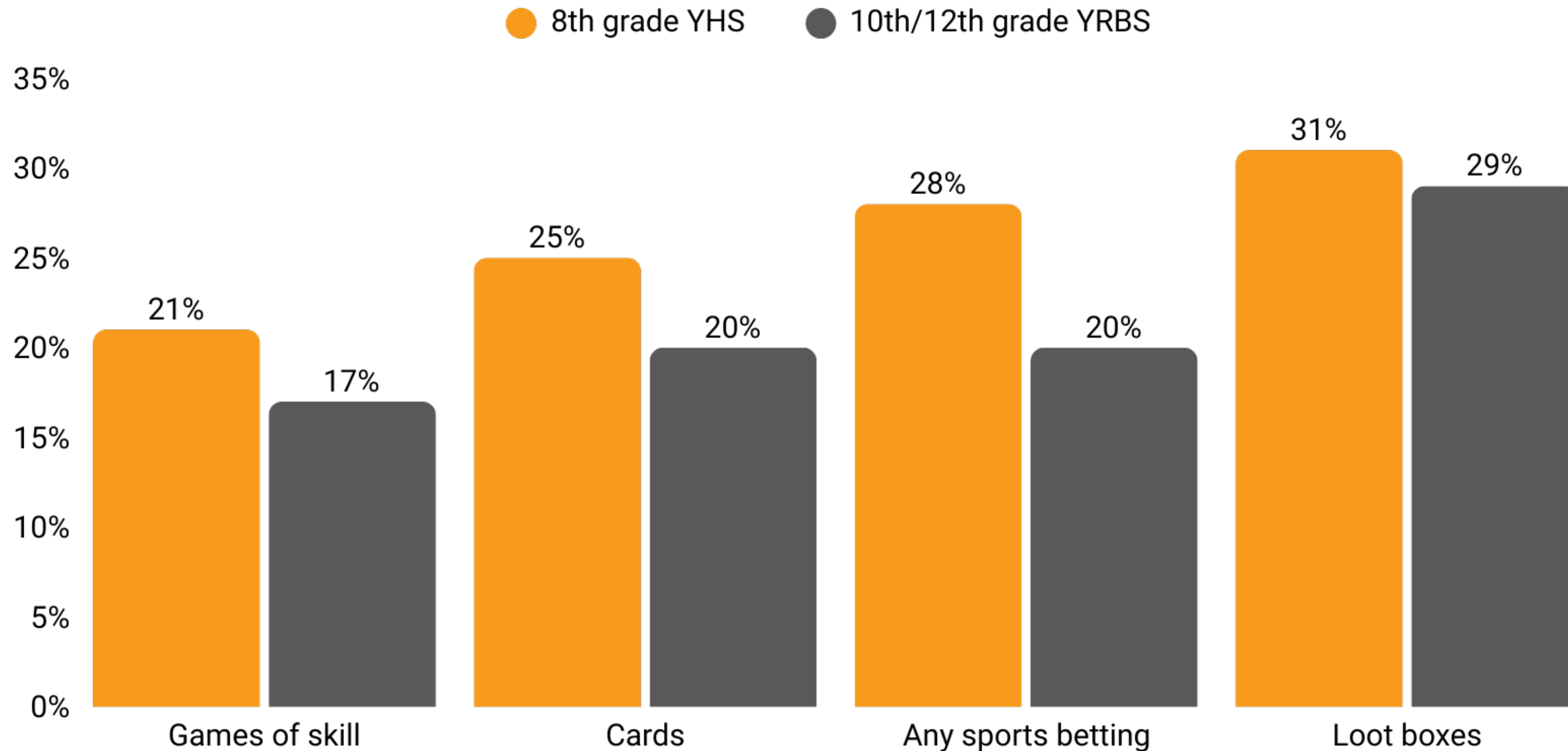


* Not all gambling behaviors have been asked about each year. For example, more detailed sports betting questions were added in 2024, and loot boxes were asked about starting in 2023. Casino table games and slot machines were combined into one question in 2024.

** COVID-19 year; low response rates; interpret with caution

Most Common Types of Gambling, 2024

YHS & YRBS



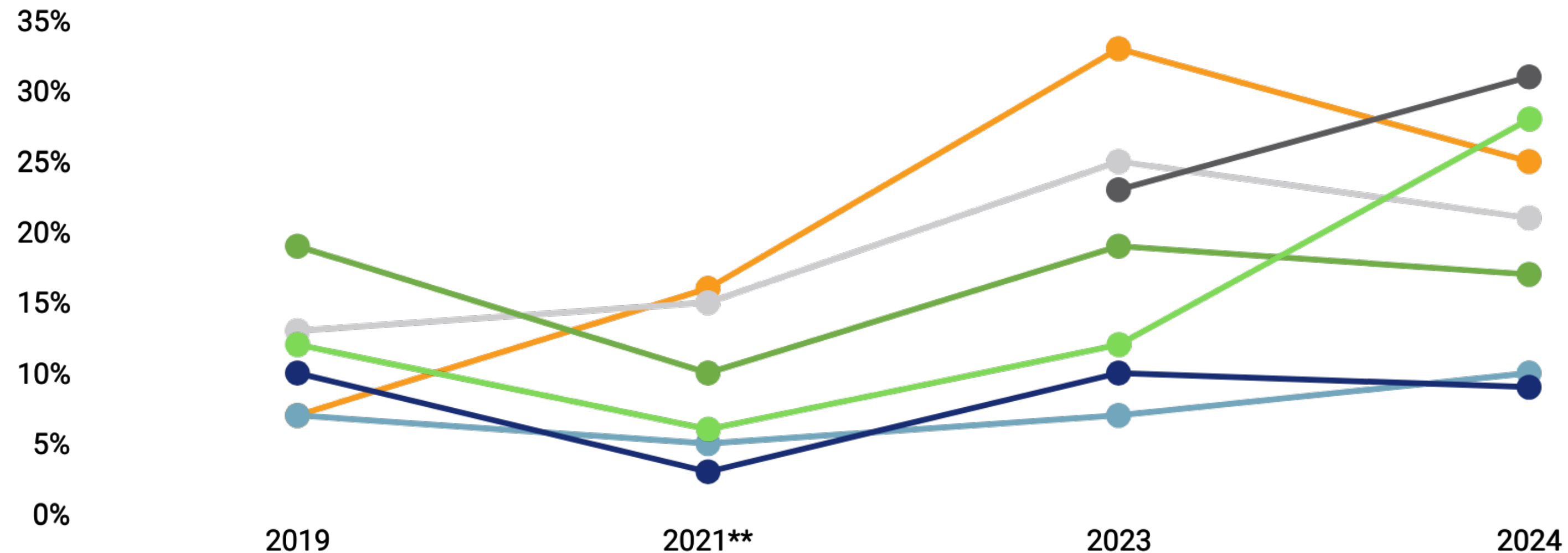
Omitted "Don't know" responses

Note: Previous to 2024, sports betting was captured in one question; this is the first time sports betting has been broken out with specificity

Commonly Reported Types of Gambling* Over Time, 8th Grade

The percent of students who reported engaging in the following gambling behaviors in the past year:

- Playing card games for money
- Games of skill
- Opening loot boxes
- Lottery tickets
- Bingo
- Sports gambling
- Gambling with money online

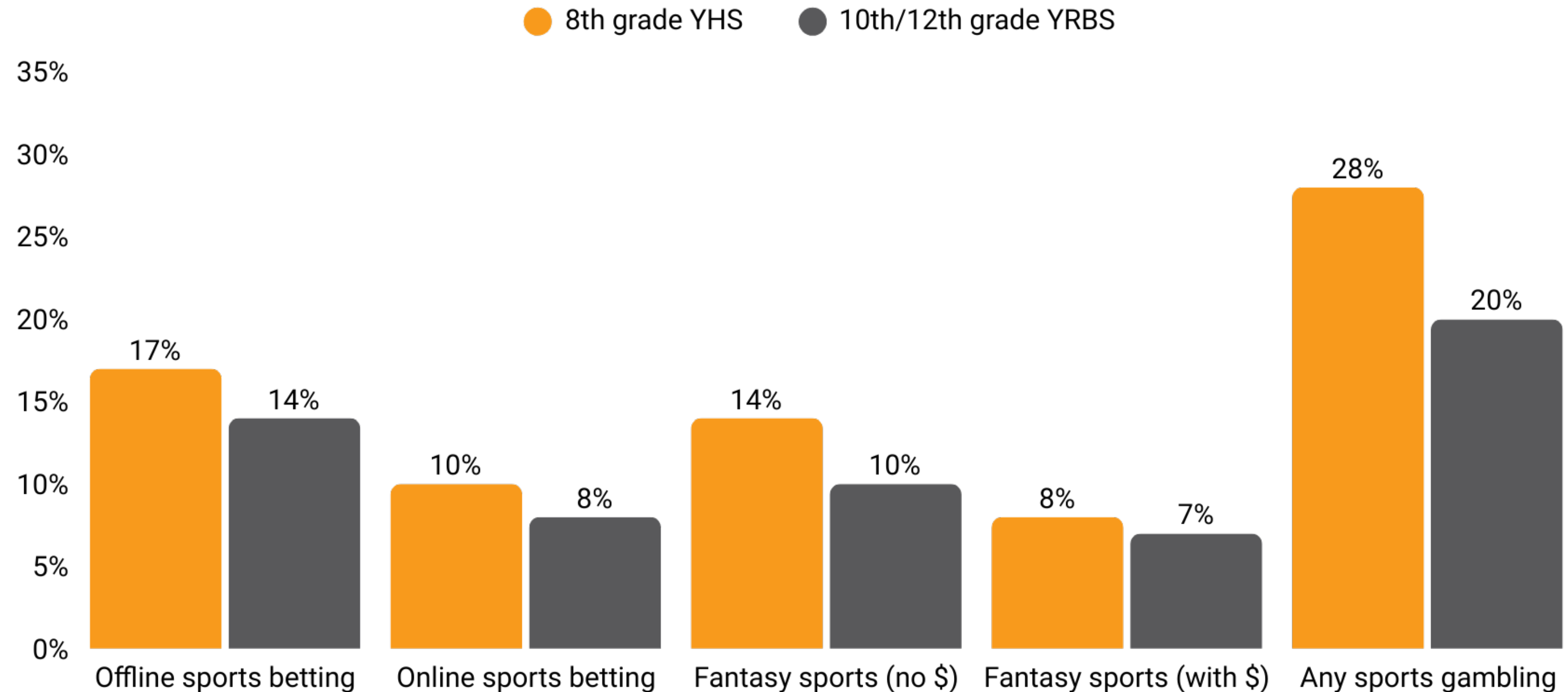


* Not all gambling behaviors have been asked about each year. In 2024, questions about sports betting were separated out for the first time (differentiating offline sports betting, online sports betting, and fantasy sports). In 2023, loot boxes were asked about for the first time.

** COVID-19 year; low response rates; interpret with caution

Sports Gambling, 2024

The percent of students who reported engaging in the following gambling behaviors in the past year:



Omitted "Don't know" responses

Note: Previous to 2024, sports betting was captured in one question; this is the first time sports betting has been broken out with specificity

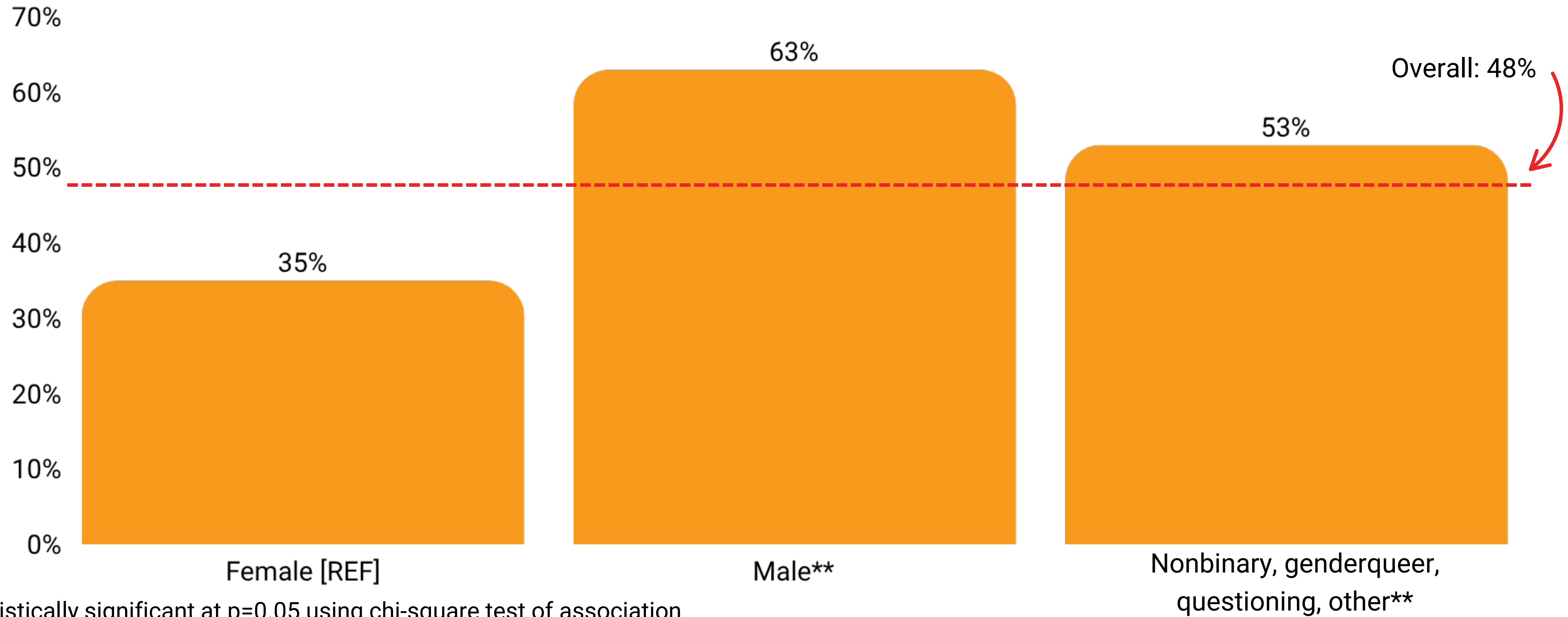
Gambling Prevalence* by Identity, 2024

Springfield YHS 8th Grade



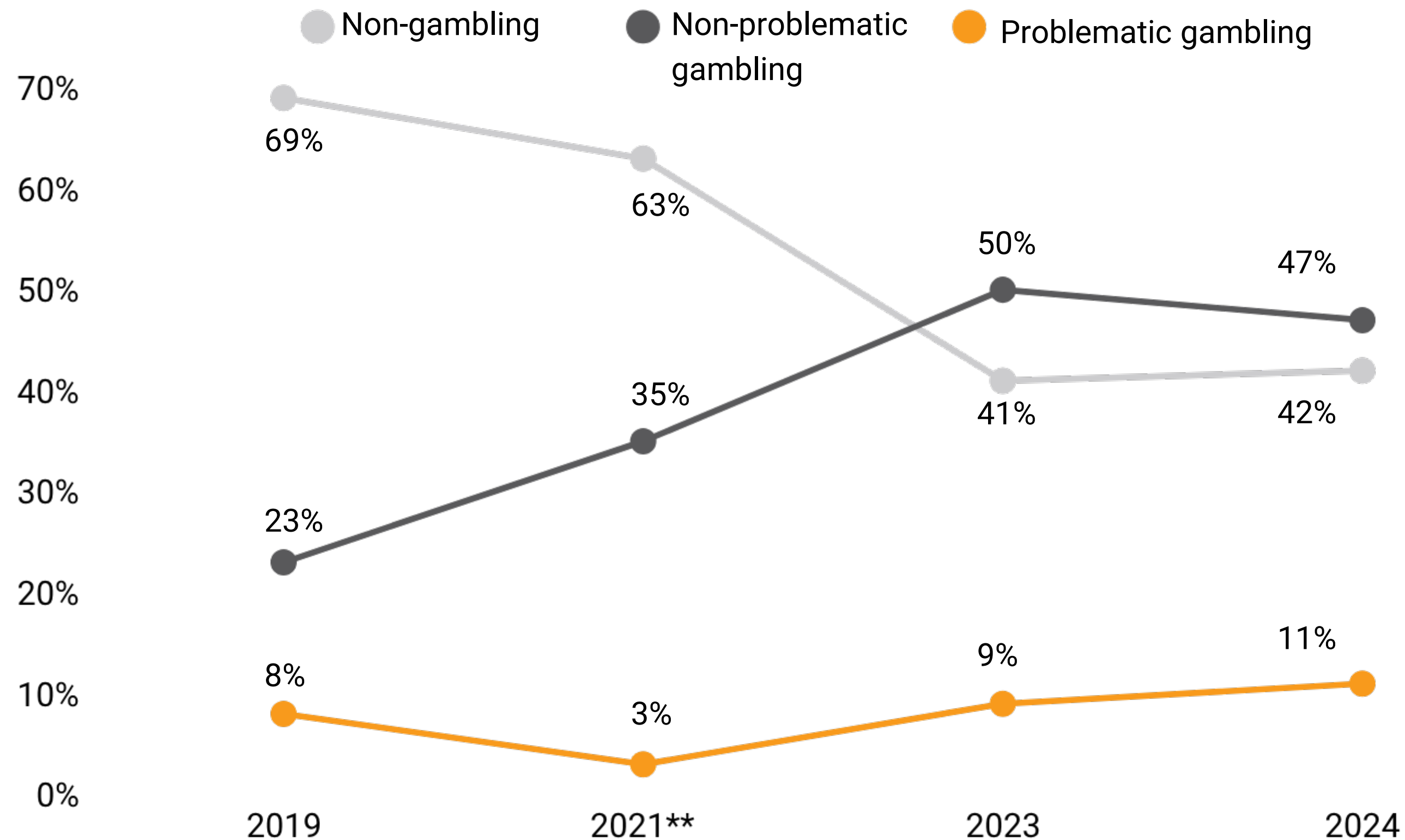
Gambling Prevalence* by Identity, 2024

Springfield YRBS 10th/12th Grades



** Statistically significant at $p=0.05$ using chi-square test of association

Problematic Gambling* Over Time, 8th Grade



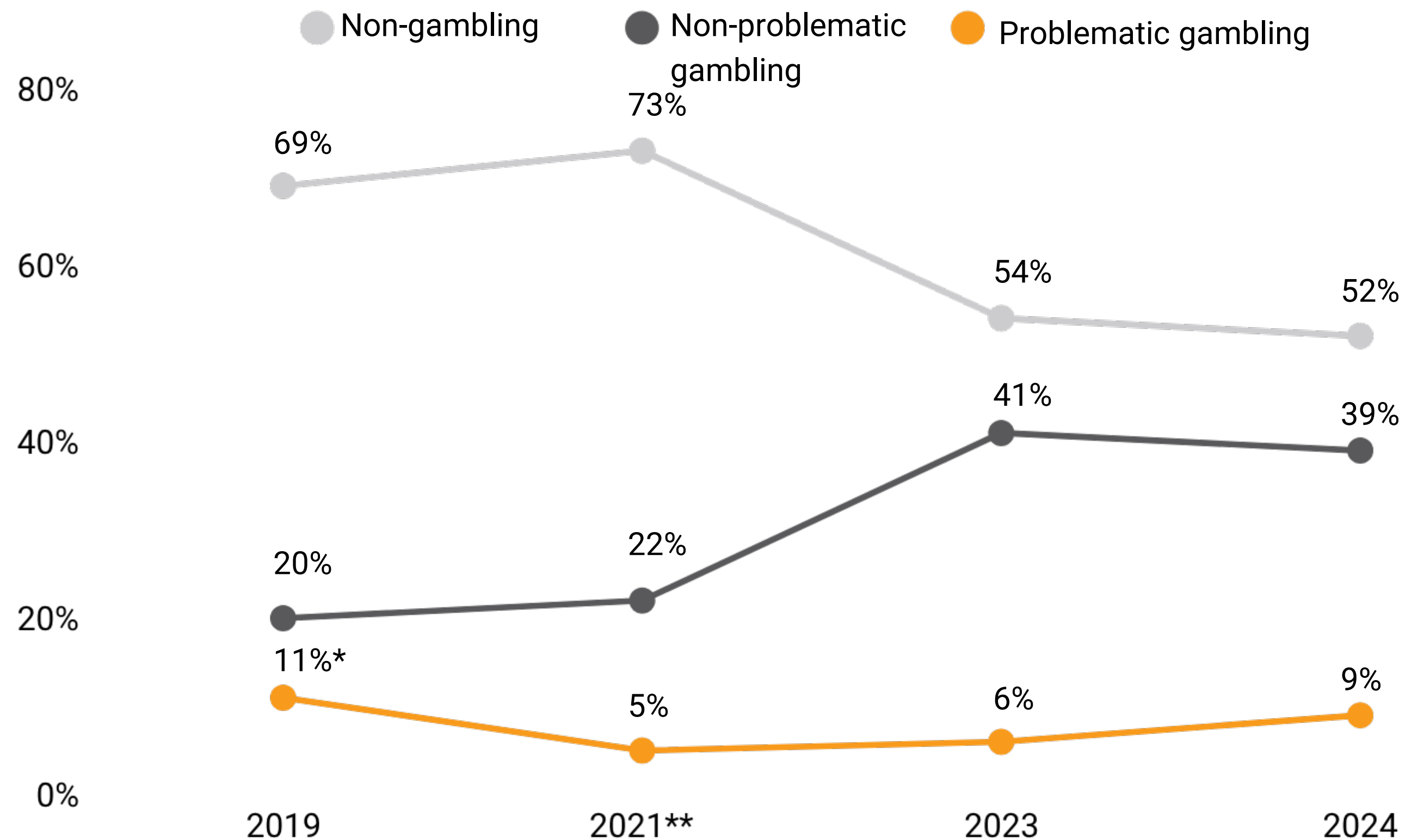
* "Problematic gambling" is the phrase used by the NLCLiP.

Lepper J, Haden B. Testing NLCLiP: Validation of Estimates of Rates of Non-problematic and Problematic Gambling in a Sample of British Schoolchildren. *J Gambi Stud*. 2013;29(1):15-27. doi:[10.1007/s10899-012-9294-0](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10899-012-9294-0)

The gambling questions on the YHS have changed over the years, including with the addition of loot boxes in 2023, and expansion of sports betting-related questions in 2024.

** Surveys conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic when school was virtual; be aware of low response rates

Problematic Gambling* Over Time, 10th/12th Grades



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Thank you!

[Learn more](#) about the Springfield Youth Health Survey Initiative, including full questionnaires, methods, and responses to all questions:

