

Vaping and tobacco use among youth in two communities in Hampden County, MA

Data from the 2015-2025 Youth Health Surveys

Updated October 2025

Our Health Equity Statement

A history of social, economic, and environmental inequities, such as racism and gender-based discrimination, are embedded in societal institutions and result in poor health. These unjust inequities affect communities differently with some bearing a great burden of poorer health. These inequities can influence health more than individual choices or access to health care. The Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts recognizes its responsibility to dismantle these injustices by promoting health through policies, practices and organizational systems that benefit all.

About the survey initiative

What are the youth health surveys?

- Surveys administered to eighth, tenth, and twelfth grade students in Springfield every 2 years since 2015
 - Expanded survey efforts to Chicopee, Holyoke, and Ludlow during the 2024-25 school year
- Broad health focus areas such as:
 - Nutrition and physical activity
 - Mental health and substance use
 - Sexual health
 - Violence and injury prevention
 - Gambling

Why do we survey?

- These surveys provide critical, local data to support action to improve the health of youth in these communities.
- Survey data have been used to inform programming and initiatives, support advocacy and policy changes, assess current and ongoing needs, and apply for funding

Methods and data notes

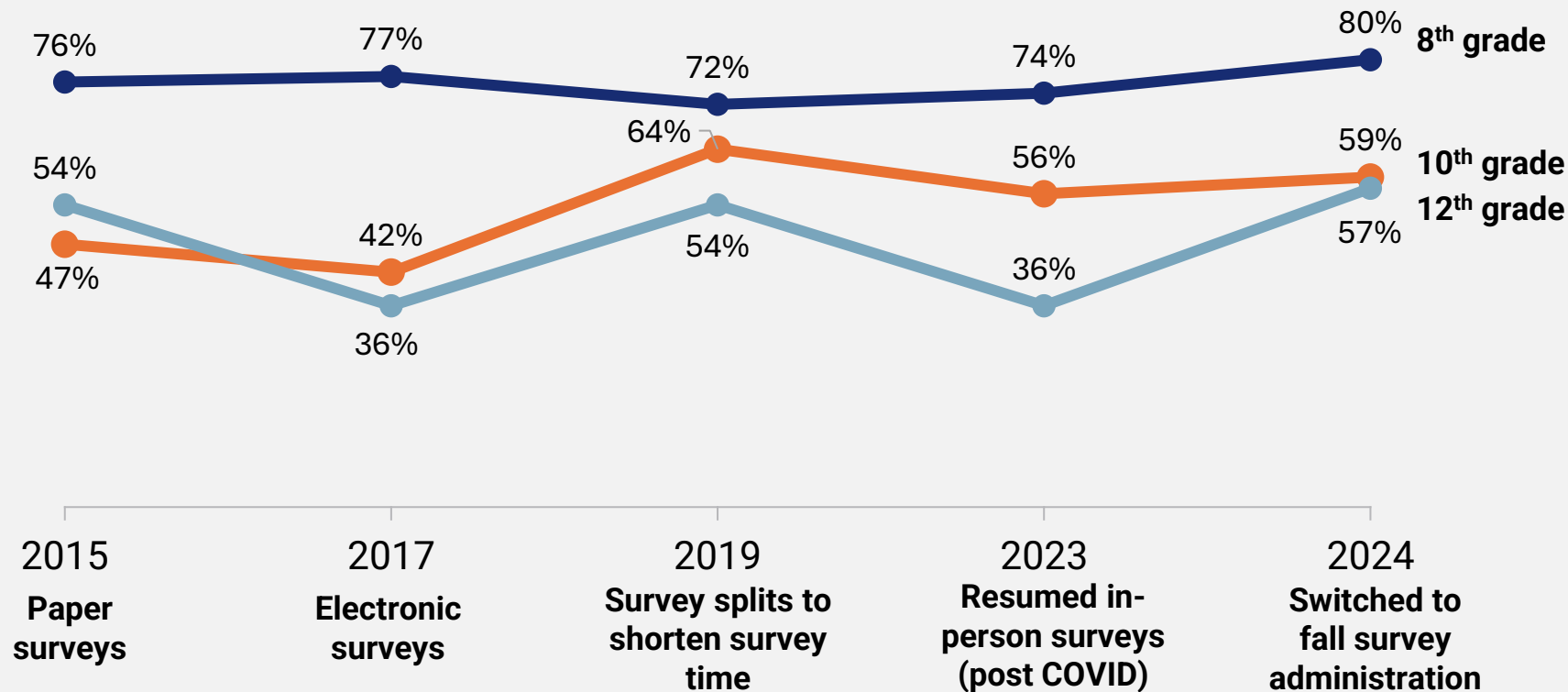
- The 2024-25 surveys were conducted throughout the 2024-25 school year
 - all surveys were conducted using the online Alchemer survey platform
 - parents and guardians had the opportunity to opt out through a passive consent process
 - students also had the option to opt out of taking the survey
- To learn more about our methods, please visit our [webpage on the Youth Health Survey Initiative](#).
- All comparisons between groups were made using chi-square tests of independence
- Grades 10 and 12 (who both took the Youth Risk Behavior Survey) are combined for each community to provide the largest sample size possible for analysis.
- Where possible, data are compared to statewide data from the [MA Youth Health Survey](#).

Youth Survey data over time

Data over time are only available for
Springfield

Participation rates in Springfield over time

Participation rates by grade, Springfield Youth Surveys

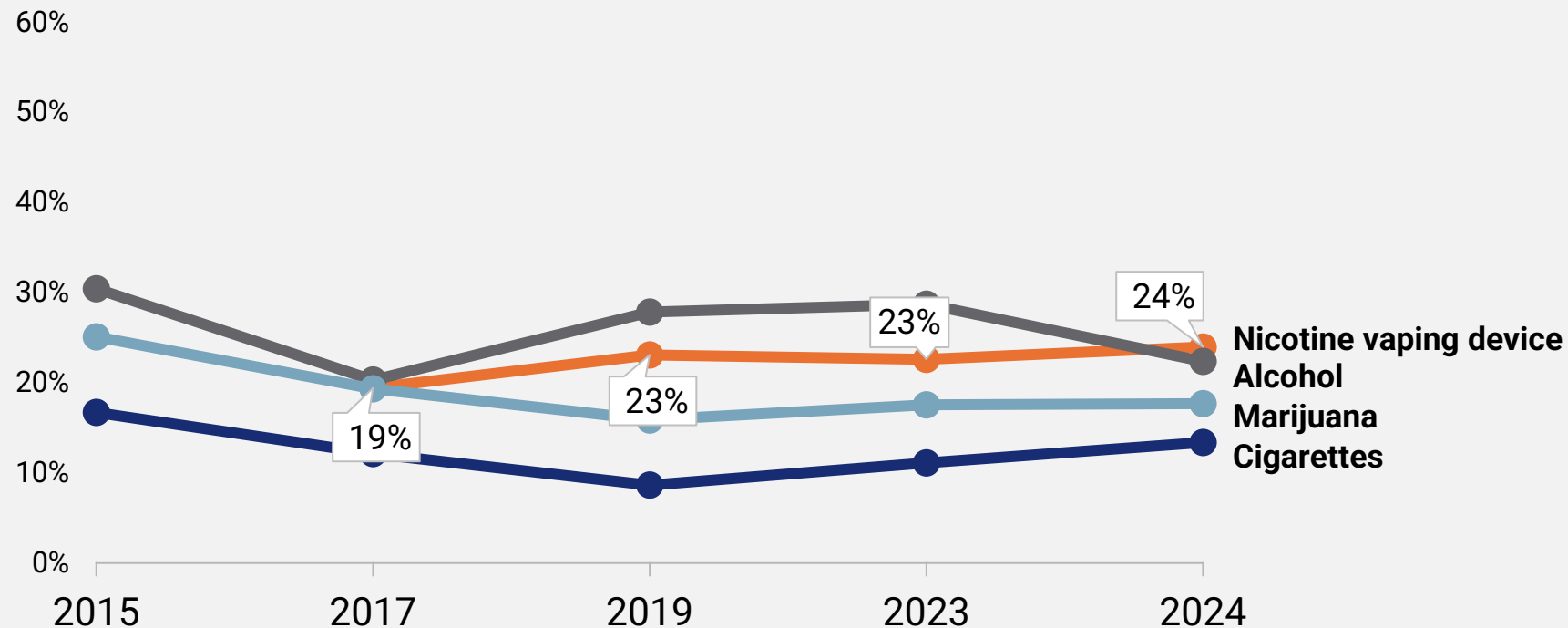


* Data from 2021 are not captured here due to the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically impacting response rates.

Participation rates have varied over the years, and the Planning Team has adjusted aspects of survey administration to ensure that it runs smoothly. Some of these changes are detailed below the graph.

Substance use among Springfield 8th graders over time

Percentage of 8th grade students who reported ever using each substance by year*

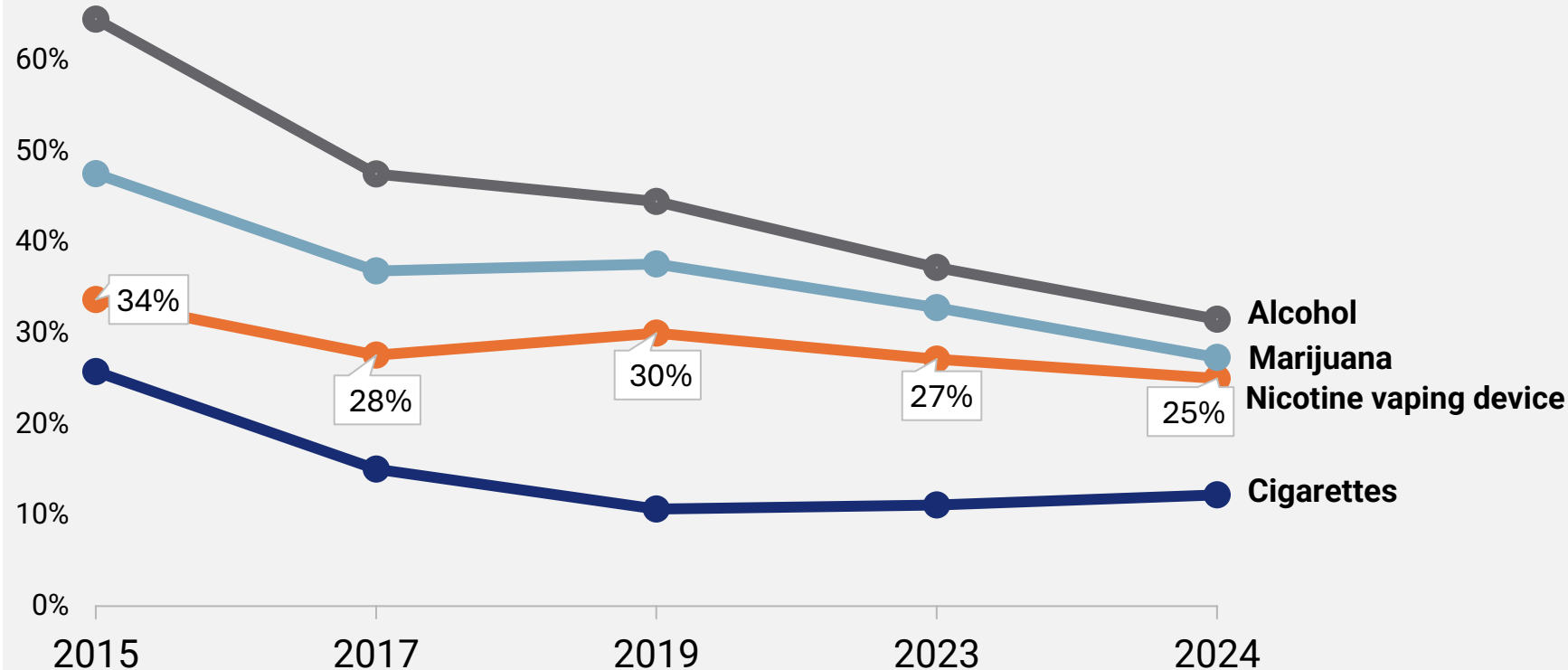


* Data from 2021 are not captured here due to the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically impacting response rates.

Since the vaping question was added in the 2017 round of the surveys, it has been one of the **most reported** types of substances that eighth graders in Springfield have reported ever using.

Substance use among Springfield 10th and 12th graders over time

Percentage of 10th and 12th grade students who reported ever using each substance by year*



*Note: Data from 2021 are not captured here due to the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically impacting response rates.

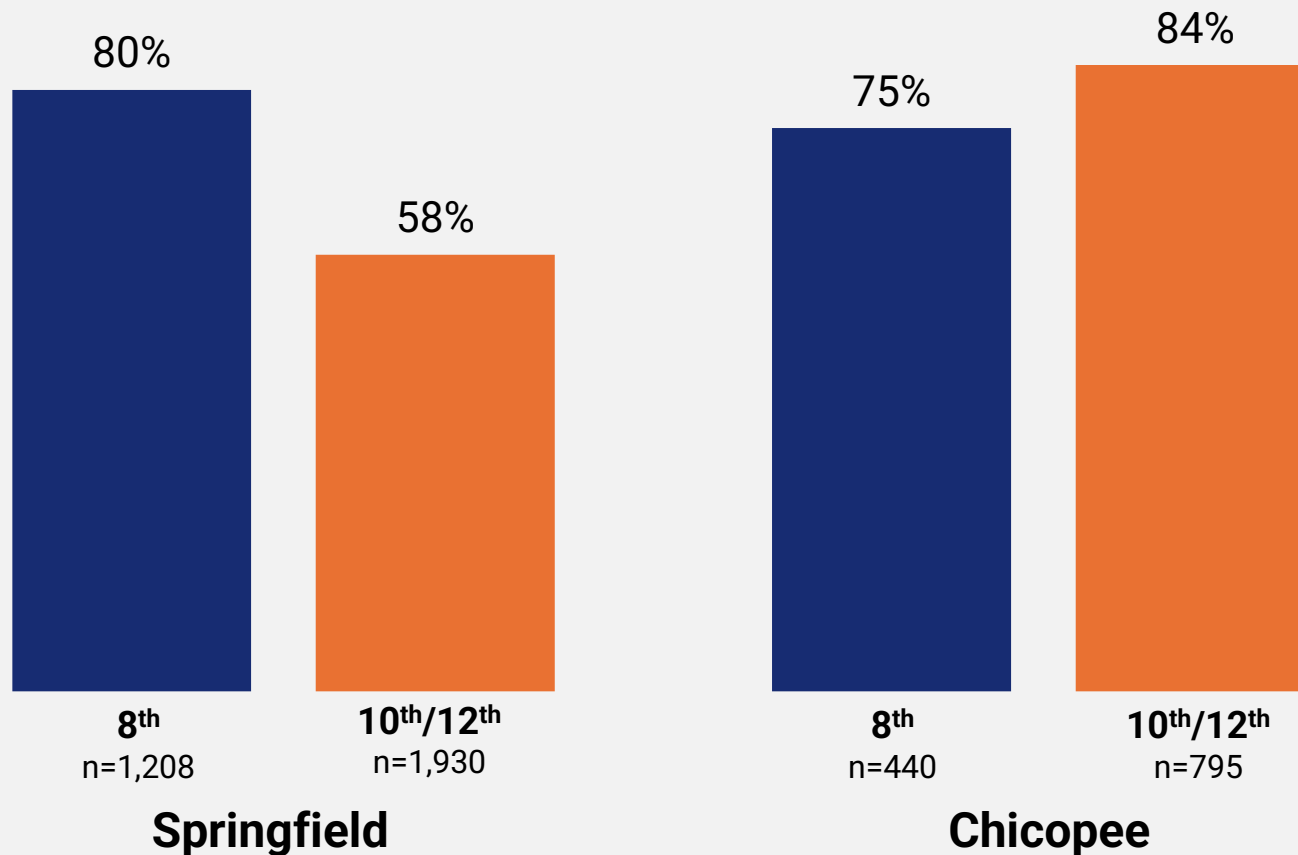
A quarter or more tenth and twelfth graders have consistently reported ever having tried vaping since this question was added to the YRBS in 2015.

Data from the 2024- 2025 Youth Health Surveys

Including data from Springfield and Chicopee

2024-25 Youth Survey Participation Rates

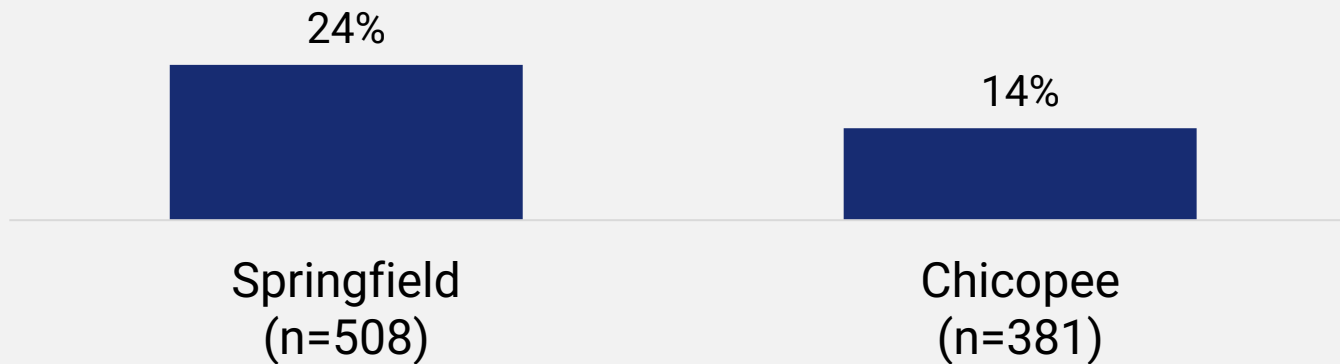
Youth survey participation rates, 2024-25



Participation rates are calculated using estimated enrollment at each school. The higher the participation rate, the more confident we feel that the results are an accurate representation of the experiences of the student body.

In both communities, more than one in ten eighth-grade students reported ever vaping.

Percentage of eighth grade participants who reported ever vaping, 2024-25 Youth Health Surveys

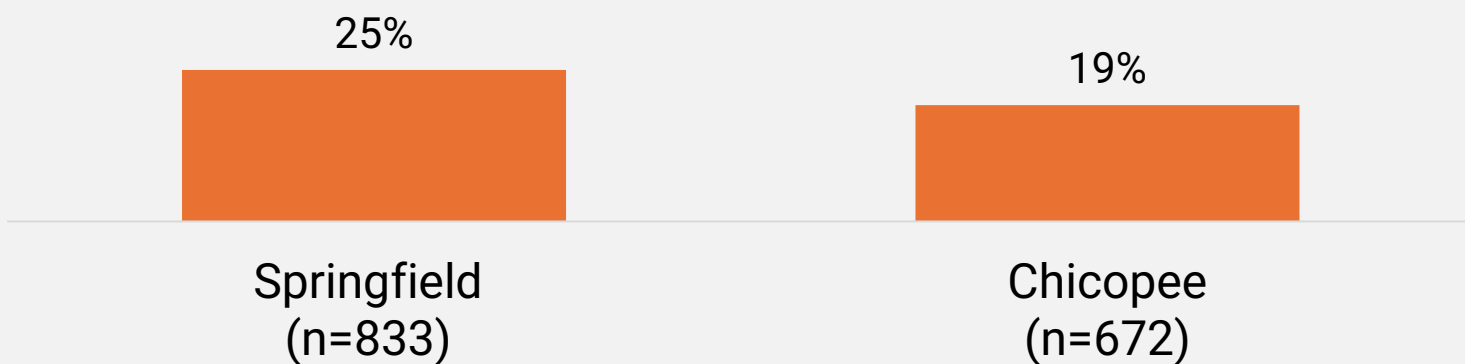


In the 2023 statewide Massachusetts Youth Health Survey, 15% of eighth grade students reported ever vaping.



Three-quarters or more of tenth and twelfth graders had never vaped.

Percentage of 10th and 12th grade participants who reported ever vaping, 2024-25 Youth Risk Behavior Surveys



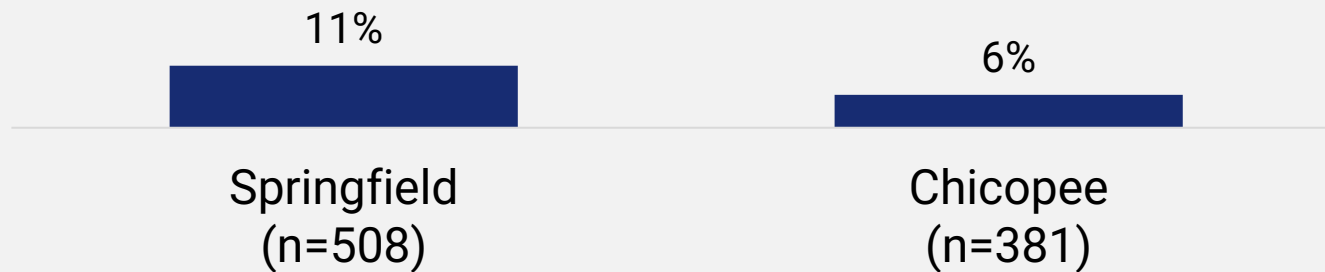
Among high schoolers (grades 9-12) who took the statewide Massachusetts Youth Health Survey, 30% reported ever vaping. When broken out by grade*, 29% of tenth graders and 42% of twelfth graders reported this.



*Data from the statewide MA YHS is not available for 10th and 12th grade combined

A majority of eighth grade students did not report vaping in the past 30 days.

Percentage of 8th grade participants who reported vaping in the past 30 days, 2024-25 Youth Health Surveys



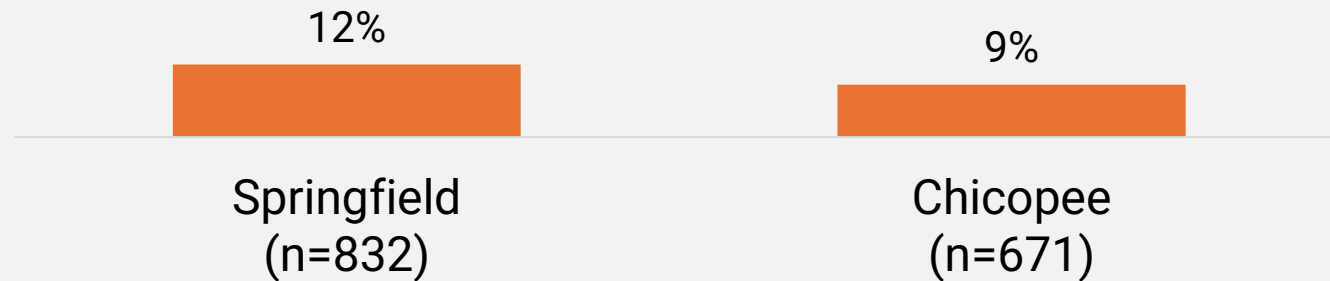
Among eighth graders who took the statewide Massachusetts Youth Health Survey, 14% reported having vaped in the past month.



Only data from Chicopee and Springfield were reportable for this question.

Roughly one in ten tenth and twelfth graders surveyed reported vaping in the past month.

Percentage of 10th & 12th grade participants who reported vaping in the past 30 days



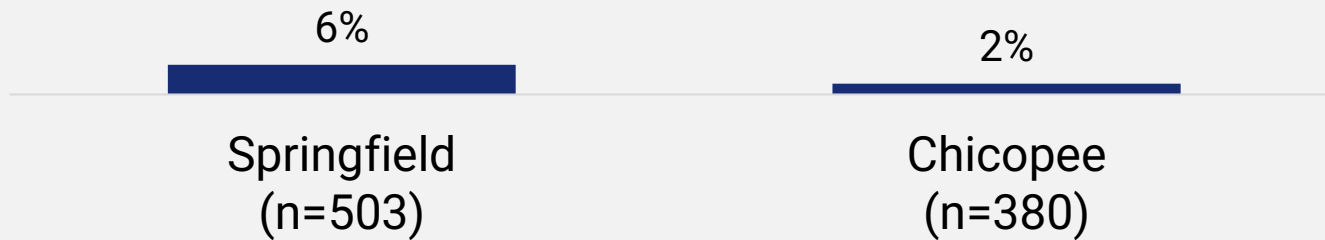
Among high schoolers (grades 9-12) who took the statewide Massachusetts Youth Health Survey, 16% reported using a vape product in the past 30 days. When broken out by grade*, 13% of tenth graders and 25% of twelfth graders reported this.



*Data from the statewide MA YHS is not available for 10th and 12th grade combined

A large majority of eighth graders reported no use of nicotine pouches, snus, or dissolvable tobacco products in the past month.

Percentage of 8th grade participants who reported use of nicotine pouches, snus, or dissolvable tobacco products in the past 30 days:

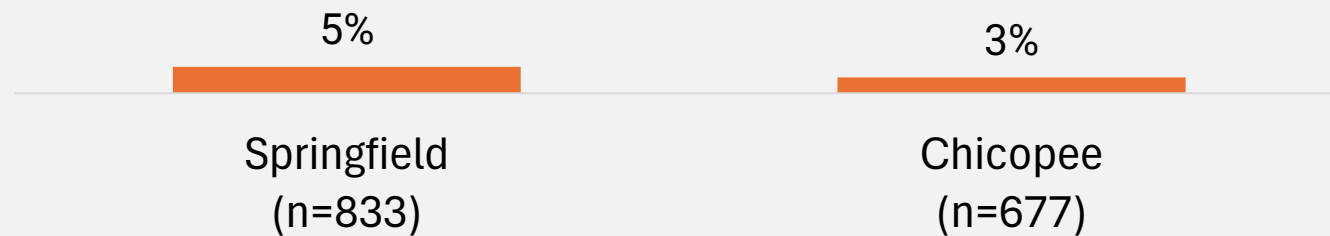


The MA Youth Health Survey for middle schoolers does not ask about smokeless tobacco use in the past 30 days.



Most tenth and twelfth graders, across all districts, did not report use of nicotine pouches, snus, or dissolvable tobacco products in the past month.

Percentage of 10th & 12th grade participants who reported use of nicotine pouches, snus, or dissolvable tobacco products in the past 30 days:



Among high schoolers (grades 9-12) who took the statewide Massachusetts Youth Health Survey, 3% reported using smokeless tobacco* in the past 30 days. When broken out by grade[^], 3% of tenth graders and 6% of twelfth graders reported this.

* "Smokeless tobacco" includes nicotine pouches, chewing tobacco, snuff, dip, snus, or dissolvable tobacco products.

[^]Data from the statewide MA YHS is not available for 10th and 12th grade combined

Disaggregated Data from the 2024-2025 Youth Health Surveys

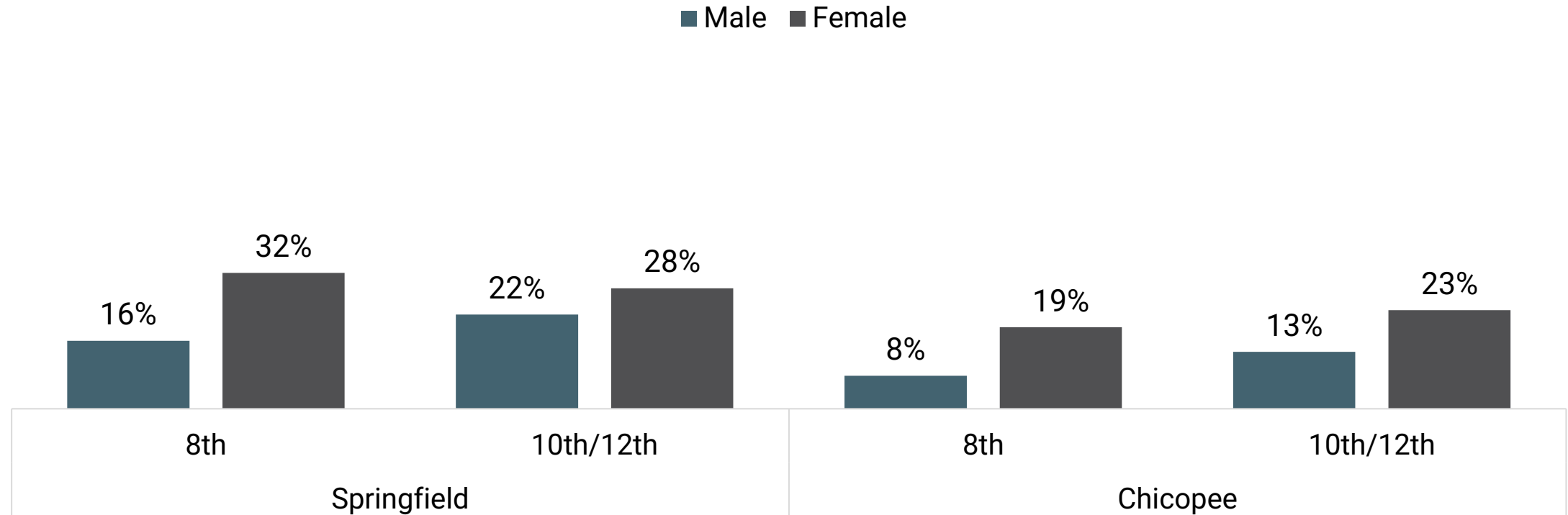
Including data from Springfield and Chicopee

Notes on disaggregation

- To protect students' identities, we couldn't report data for all communities and demographic groups.
- We tried to break down results by race and ethnicity, but some groups were too small to report. This means we're missing important parts of students' experiences.
- The data doesn't reflect all identities or how they may overlap.
- Differences between groups are influenced by societal-level factors, such as systemic racism and other unfair systems that affect access to opportunities.

Female students were more likely to report ever vaping as compared to male students.

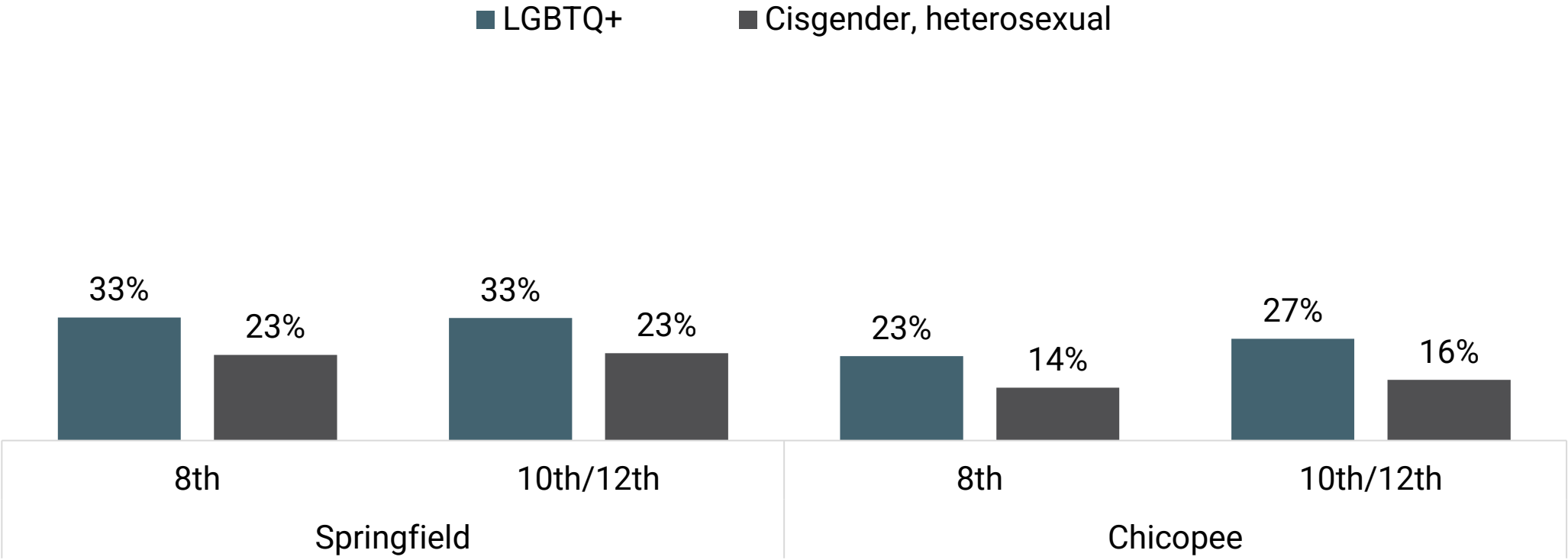
Percentage of 2024-2025 YHS & YRBS participants who have ever vaped by gender



Male students' responses were significantly different from female students' responses at $p < 0.05$ in all surveys where data could be reported except the Ludlow YRBS. Among high schoolers who took the 2023 MA YHS, 35% of female students and 26% of male students reported ever vaping. Note: Students who reported identifying as nonbinary, genderqueer, questioning, or another gender are not included in this chart due to small sample size.

LGBTQ+ students were more likely to report ever vaping than their cisgender, heterosexual counterparts.

Percentage of 2024-2025 YHS & YRBS participants who have ever vaped by LGBTQ+ experience



LGBTQ+ students' responses were significantly different from cisgender, heterosexual students' responses at $p < 0.05$ in all surveys where data could be reported. Among high schoolers who took the 2023 MA YHS, 37% of LGBTQ+ students and 29% of cisgender, heterosexual students reported ever trying vaping. Note: Holyoke is not pictured in this graph due to the small sample size; Ludlow is not pictured in this graph because this question was not asked in their surveys.

The Youth Survey Initiative Teams

Springfield:

- Springfield Public Schools
- Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts
- Springfield Department of Health and Human Services
- Stop Access Springfield Coalition
- Youth Mental Health Coalition
- Massachusetts Gaming Commission
- & other partners!

Chicopee:

- Chicopee Public Schools
- Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts