

# **GUNN HIGH SCHOOL - Palo Alto Reality Check Survey, Fall '08**

## **Key Findings and Detailed Report**

### **BACKGROUND:**

Beginning in Spring, 2004, all 5 secondary schools in Palo Alto Unified School District surveyed students for their use, attitudes and perceptions of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs (ATOD) and related risk behaviors. The purpose was to gather reliable, local data from Palo Alto youth and strategize effective measures in the schools and greater community based on those local results. Consultants from Montana State University's MOST of Us Project created, hosted and provided analysis of the survey. Annual surveys that followed allowed for some measure of evaluation in tracking trends in behavior as well as student perceptions. Paly, Jordan and Terman students were surveyed in 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007. Gunn and JLS students were surveyed in 2004, 2005 and 2006.

For the school year, 2008 – 2009, a new web-based survey was created in-house, called the Palo Alto Reality Check Survey (PARCS) and was conducted at all 5 secondary schools in October, 2008. The goal has been to continue to capture reliable local data on student behaviors, perceptions and attitudes related to ATOD, but also to make the survey more meaningful to students. New questions were created for the survey, incorporating years of student feedback, discussion and 3 stated main areas of concern:

- Need for improved communication with adults around ATOD
- binge drinking
- drinking and driving (driving under the influence)

New questions examined:

- Likely Use of Safety Strategies
- DUI – Alcohol AND marijuana
  - Attitudes
  - Barriers to Safer decision-making
  - Perceptions of same grade peers
- # of Typical Drinks at parties
- Dating preferences re: ATOD use
- Supporting friends' choices
- Concern for friends and ATOD
- Support for School and Community ATOD policies and enforcement
- Sense of ATOD awareness and resources

Participation was very high at all campuses – roughly 80% of students reflected in the final data. Equally important as capturing reliable local data is making sure the students' time and energy are respected by having their "voices" reflected back to them as quickly, and thoroughly as possible.

This brief Key Findings Report attempts to report the most global, meaningful facts and salient points that can be gleaned from the survey data. However, these findings call for a closer examination of student responses, improvements in ATOD education and honest discussion with students, parents and community. A lengthy, detailed report of student responses to individual questions follows this introductory section of basic findings.

### **School-based population results: (aggregate)**

This year's survey results reconfirm 3 important points:

1. The majority of high school students in Palo Alto are making healthy decisions and express healthy attitudes when it comes to alcohol, drug use and related high risk behaviors.
2. The majority of students are overestimating the degree to which their school peers are involved in these behaviors (sometimes dramatically). This degree of misperception puts students at risk for higher use in the future.
3. The number of students that do report regular substance use and high risk behaviors and attitudes (like DUI, binge drinking, etc.) is of concern and demands attention.

Two new findings on this year's surveys:

1. The majority of students share school and community values regarding alcohol at dances, driving/riding under the influence, binge drinking, etc. – yet expressed concern about the fairness and enforcement of particular policies (campus and community).
2. A large majority of students want youth voices to be included in future policy and decision-making.

### **Specialized Reports – disaggregated by:**

- Grade
- Gender
- Drivers License Status & DUI
- Reported Non-use of Alcohol
- Reported Monthly Use of Alcohol
- Reported Weekly Daily Use of Alcohol

In general, the disaggregated data reports reinforce & confirm expected findings above as well as –

1. Reported use of alcohol and other drugs increases with age.
2. Other drug use and high-risk behaviors such as binge drinking, driving after drinking alcohol or after using marijuana increase with the reported frequency of alcohol use.
  - It is a small percentage of students (8-10%) - but concerning number of students - who engage in multiple risk behaviors.

- Those who report drinking more frequently tend to:
    - drink more heavily,
    - use other drugs,
    - drive under the influence of both alcohol and marijuana,
    - express less concern about these behaviors
    - underestimate their peers' attitudes
    - are less likely to choose safety strategies (although the results are mixed and detailed re: likely use of safety strategies )
3. The degree of misperceptions of how “most students” at their school behaved or felt with regard to alcohol, drug use and related risk behaviors increased with the level of reported use of alcohol. (The more frequently students use alcohol, the higher their degree of misperception of their peers' use of alcohol)
  4. The phenomenon of overestimating one's peers' involvement in substance use and risk behaviors is also evident when students were asked for their perception about students in their same grade (new question this year). This was true for all grades.
  5. Students who possess a drivers license were more likely to have driven under the influence of alcohol or marijuana than students without a drivers license (*important to note that this may be linked more to advanced age than drivers license status!*).
    - The number of students who reportedly drove under the influence of either alcohol or marijuana without a drivers license might be a surprising result.
  6. DUI and Marijuana results reveal a lower concern among students for this risk behavior (as compared with DUI and alcohol) – suggesting an important area for future discussions.
  7. All categories of students – regardless of gender, grade, or frequency of alcohol use -
    - vastly overestimated the degree of students (licensed drivers) driving under the influence of alcohol or marijuana.
    - Expressed their desire to have youth voices heard in policy decision-making
    - Expressed strong disapproval of using breathalyzers on 100% of students at dances (however, there was very strong support for using breathalyzers on students whose behavior suggested they had been drinking – even among students who reported weekly/daily drinking (61%). Students took time to express their opinions in the open-ended option on the support for policy section (see future specialized report on this).
  8. Although there were some differences between the survey responses at the 2 high schools, the consistencies in responses overall are striking – consistent with previous years – and lend support to the general reliability of the data.
  9. The student responses (“data”) – and this analysis - should be viewed as a “snapshot” of a given campus on a given day. This report is the result of a simple, but careful and thoughtful examination of student responses. Care was taken during the creation of the survey and in the data analysis to assure (to

the best of our ability), reliable results. Data would need to be subjected to more rigorous and sophisticated analysis in order to claim statistical significance, etc.

10. The student responses (results/data) suggest more discussion with students is indicated - possibly focus groups - in order to extract full meaning from their responses (and for problem-solving on some of our most serious health risk behaviors).. (For example - Why did high numbers of students prefer not to answer certain questions? How should we interpret a sizable group that consistently responds “unsure”? Why are some safety strategies more – or less – likely to be chosen by students?...et cetera.)

## Detailed Report of Student Responses:

### 1. What school do you attend?

- Student Body = 1926
- 1763 surveyed = 86.6% of student body took the survey
- 183 surveys (10.3% of surveys) failed the survey honesty filters
- 1580 surveys were valid = reflecting 82% of Gunn's student body

### 2. What is your gender?

An equal % of males and females are represented in this data (50.3/49.7%).

### 3. How old are you?

49% of students were 15 y.o or younger; 51% were 16 y.o. or older.

### 4. What grade are you in? 50.1% = underclassmen; 49.9% = upper classmen

- Freshmen – 26.9%
- Juniors – 26.9%
- Sophomores – 23.2%
- Seniors - 23%

### 5. How do you describe yourself? (comment on whether the demographics are representative of the school?)

### 6. Which of the following groups or activities have you participated in?

- More than half of students report they are involved in school athletics (52.4%) and after-school programs in the community (53.3%) (community sport teams, boy or girl scouts, dance, theater, gymnastics, etc.)
- 43.7% say they have part-time jobs such as baby- or pet-sitting, yard work, etc.
- And nearly 3 out of ten say they participate in after-school programs at their school

### 7. Do you ever use the following substances? If so, how often?"

*Students were offered 6 possible responses on this question – Never, Tried it a couple of times, a few times a year, about monthly, about weekly, daily*

#### TOBACCO - Use and Perceived use by peers

- More than 8 out of 10 Gunn students (84.1%) report they "NEVER" use tobacco – and another 7% % say they have tried it once or twice.
- 2% (31) students use tobacco weekly; 2.6% (40) said they use tobacco on a daily basis.
- Although Gunn students possess an overwhelming norm of NON-use (84.1%), only 1 student in 4 accurately perceives that non-use of Tobacco is the norm at their school

#### ALCOHOL - USE

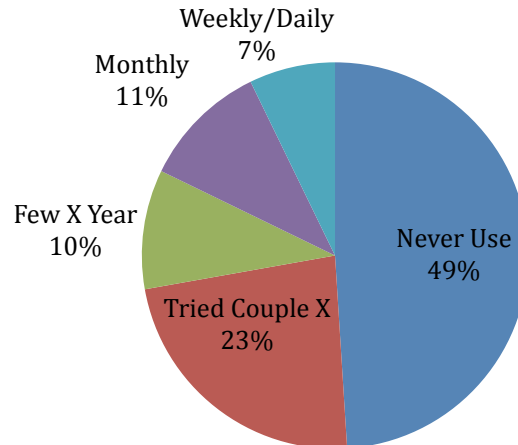
- **More than 8 out of 10 Gunn students say they don't drink in a typical month (82.2%).**

Commentary/Trends: This degree of healthy behavior is quite a bit higher than in previous year's surveys – 73.8% in Spring '06). *It is important to note that in previous years, surveys were conducted further into the school year (Feb or March) – and this may account for some of the discrepancy in results. (As students mature over the course of a school year, use of alcohol and other drugs typically increases)*

- \*\* Important to note: The # of students who responded that they "Never" use alcohol increased – 49% (compared to 43.6 %, Spring '06).

- The % of students who report the most frequent use of alcohol (weekly or daily) remained the same as in past years – 5.2% (80 students) – weekly use; 2.0% (31 students) – daily use (S '06: 4.7% weekly; 1.75% daily).
- **TAKEAWAY – most Gunn students' (84.1%) use of alcohol is limited to a few times a year or not at all.**

### Gunn Students - Reported Alcohol Use '08



### MARIJUANA – USE

- **Nearly 8 out of 10 Gunn students (78.8%) say they never use marijuana.**

#### Commentary/Trends:

- This degree of non-use is slightly higher than in any previous year of surveying (76% in S, 2004; 75% – S,'05; 75.8% – S, '06;). (Note: change from Spring to Fall surveying may account for this change in survey results).
- The number of students who say they have “tried it a couple of times” was nearly exactly the same as the previous surveys (6.2%).
- The number of students who report the highest use – “About Weekly” (2.6%) and “Daily” (3.6%) – remains relatively unchanged from the most recent past year of surveying (S – '06: Once/Week – 3.3%, Daily – 3.8%).
  - In actual numbers, the number of students reporting Weekly/Daily use of marijuana is 95/1535 (45 students did not answer the question).
- The relative consistency of student responses over 4 years of surveying stands out – and suggests student honesty and highly reliable data.

### OTHER ILLEGAL DRUGS - USE

- **9 out of 10 Gunn students say they never use other illegal drugs.**
- A small %, but concerning number of students report monthly (1.7%), weekly (0.6%), and daily (1.6%) of other illegal drugs. (a combined # = 60 students/1580).

Commentary/Trends: This is consistent with previous years' survey findings as well.

**PRESCRIPTION DRUG USE - (any prescription drugs that were not prescribed or intended for you)**

- **9 out of 10 Gunn students say they never use prescription drugs that were not intended for them.**

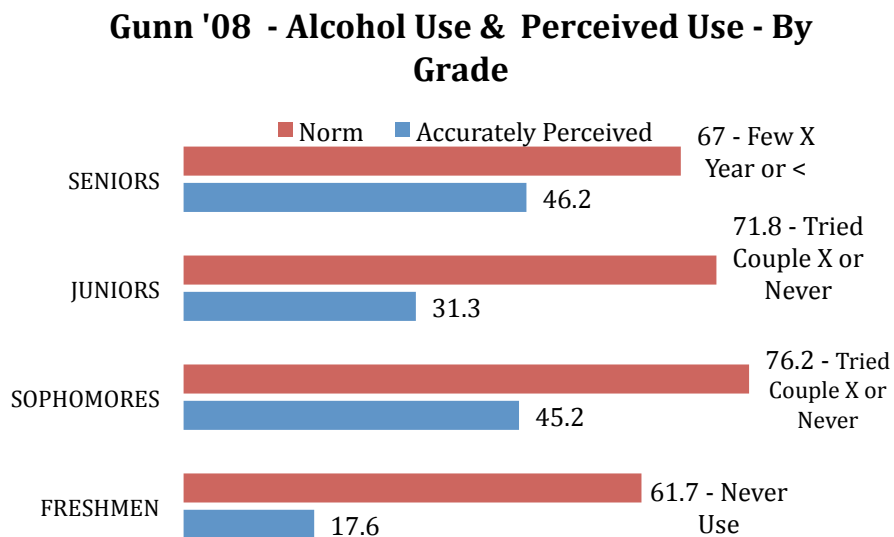
Commentary/Trends: This represents a new category in the student survey – so we have no way to compare this to previous years. While state and national studies raise concern about increased use rates among teenagers of prescription pain medicines, etc., it is important to note that this category represents ANY prescription medication – not just pain meds. (In previous years students were asked specifically about particular prescription drugs – such as narcotics and stimulants such as Ritalin or Adderall.)

- While Gunn students reflect an overwhelming norm of Non-Use of these drugs - It is still a concern that 9.1% of students report they have at least tried prescription drugs – with 51 students reporting monthly, weekly or daily use.

**8. How often do you think most students in your same grade use TOBACCO ALCOHOL MARIJUANA OTHER ILLEGAL DRUGS ANY PRESCRIPTION DRUGS (that were not prescribed for them)**

- Asking students for their perception of their same grade peers' substance use was one of the new questions on this year's survey.
- The question was added in response to student and community feedback that questioned the value of using schoolwide norms and perceptions (suggesting same grade norms and/or small group norms would be more "salient" to examine – and less prone to misperception).
- The results reveal that students dramatically misperceive the healthy behaviors of their same grade peers. This was true for every grade, gender, and substance.

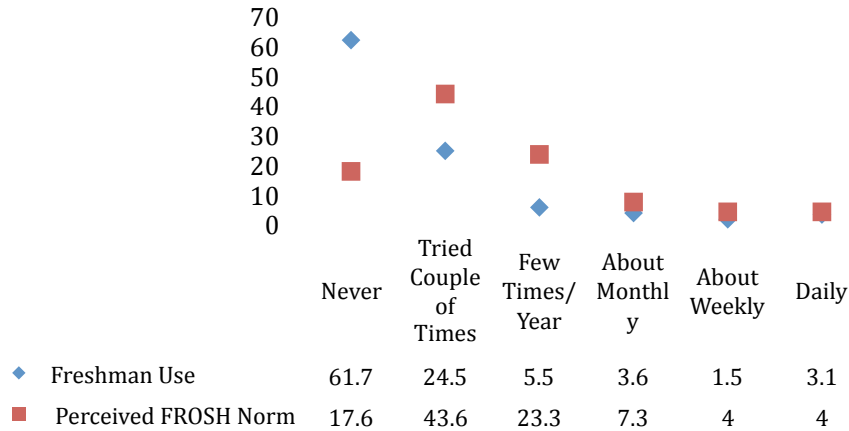
Example – Alcohol Use Norms & Perceived Norms by Grade:



By Grade – Comparing Alcohol Use & Perceived Norms of Use by “Same Grade Peers”:

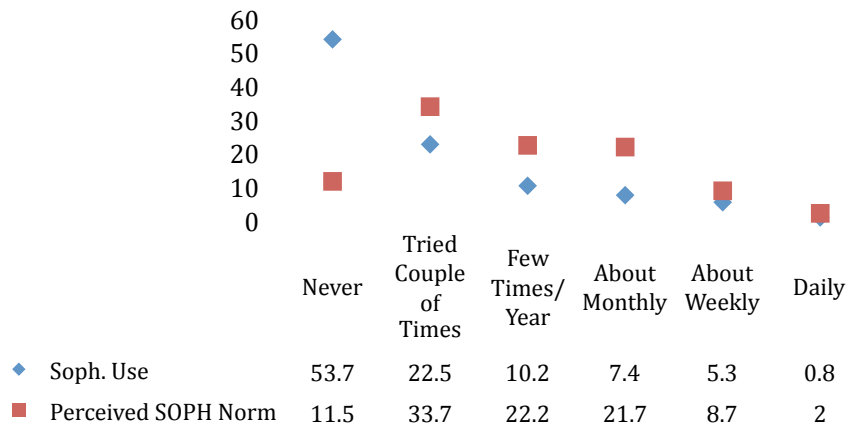
**Freshmen**

**Gunn Freshmen Alcohol Use & Perception - '08**



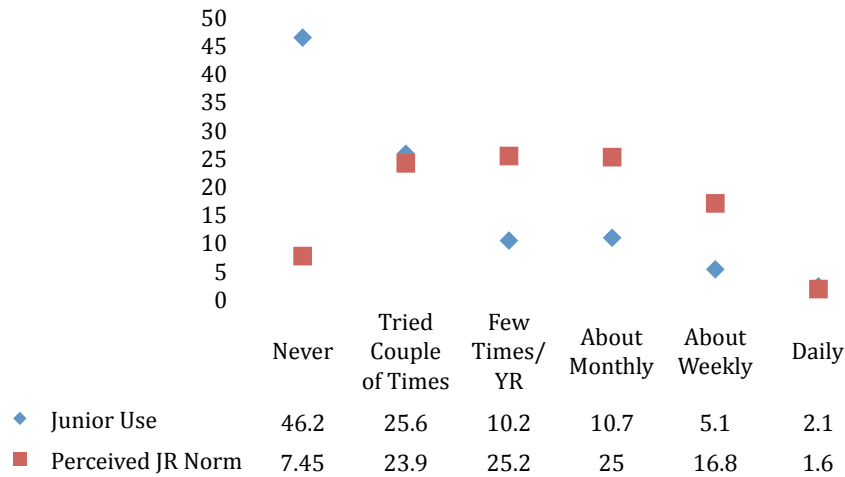
**Sophomores**

**Gunn Sophomore Alcohol Use & Perception '08**



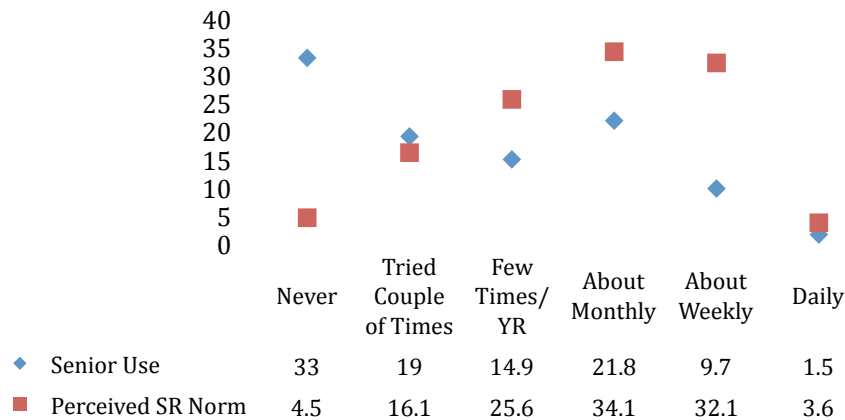
**Juniors**

**Gunn Junior Alcohol Use & Perception - '08**



**Seniors**

**Gunn Senior Alcohol Use & Perception '08**



**9. How often do you think most students at your school use**

**TOBACCO – STUDENT PERCEPTION**

- **Although Gunn students report an overwhelming norm of NON-Use of tobacco, only 1 in 4 Gunn students accurately perceive that most students at their school never use tobacco.**

Commentary/Trends: Cigarette smoking – even by a small % of students - is a highly visible act. (In the words of one student, “we don’t notice or register people “not smoking”... just those who do” – and this accounts for an exaggerated perception of prevalence”.

- Previous years of “Social Norms” efforts to correct misperceptions revealed steady progress – with consecutive, yearly increases in the % of students who accurately perceived the true norm on their campus.

**ALCOHOL – STUDENT PERCEPTION**

- 72% of students say they have either tried alcohol once or twice or never use it – but only 1 in 3 students accurately perceive that MOST students rarely use alcohol.

**MARIJUANA – Student Perception**

Commentary/Trends:

- Gunn students are dramatically overestimating their peers’ use of marijuana – in spite of an overwhelming norm of NON-use expressed in the data.
- Student misperception about their peers’ use of marijuana INCREASED since the previous survey in Spring ’06.
  - This was the only drug for which misperception increased (tobacco, alcohol, other illegal drugs all remained similar to Spring ’06 results).
  - Student insight into “why” misperception increased on their campus – especially as levels of NON-use increased – would be very valuable.
  - This may indicate the need for more focused school efforts on marijuana OR for reframing efforts to include a discussion of true norms.

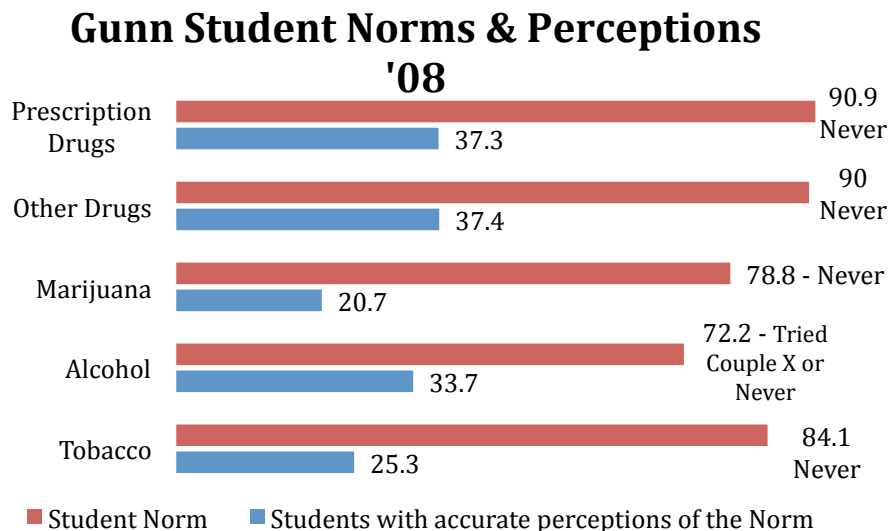
**OTHER ILLEGAL DRUGS – student perception**

- Although 9 out of 10 students say they NEVER use other illegal drugs, fewer than 4 in 10 students were accurate that most students never use other illegal drugs.
- Nearly half (47.4%) of students estimated that most students tried illegal drugs “a couple of times – or used a few times a year – when in fact only 5.2% of students reported this degree of use.

**ANY PRESCRIPTION DRUGS (that were not prescribed for them) – student perception**

- Although 9 out of 10 students say they NEVER use prescription drugs that were not prescribed for them, fewer than 4 out of 10 students accurately perceived that most students at their school never took prescription drugs that were unintended for them.

Commentary/Trends: Gunn student responses reveal a high degree of healthy behaviors and decision-making among the school’s student body. However, Gunn students are overestimating their fellow students’ degree of involvement with alcohol and drug use (sometimes dramatically) – and are underestimating the health among their student body as a whole.



**10. When you're at a party or social gathering with other students – and alcohol is available – how many drinks do you typically consume?**

- **47.3% of students report they have never attended a party where alcohol is available.**

Commentary/Discussion: IMPORTANT NOTE: The wording of this question failed to stipulate “alcoholic drinks” – so the data cannot be assumed to reflect that all students interpreted the question in the same way. (this will be corrected on subsequent surveys).

- Nevertheless, PADACC believes it is likely that MOST students did understand that “drinks” referred to alcoholic drinks. Support for our assumption:
  - When we look at the responses on Question 11 – that asks for their perception about other students typical # of drinks, the pattern of overestimating student risk behavior is clearly present.
  - Comparing Gunn and Paly student responses – the pattern of their responses on these two questions is almost identical (lending support for the assumption that most students interpreted the question in similar fashion).
- If we interpret the data with this assumption – of those that say they do go to parties where alcohol is being served (811):
  - **42.5% say they have “0” drinks.**
  - 20.9% say they have 1 or 2
  - 18.7% say they have 3 or 4
  - **17.7% say they have 5 or more (144 students)**
- **Although the numbers reveal the majority have “0”, the number of students stating they have 5 or more drinks is cause for concern. This is a dangerous pattern of alcohol use – and strongly suggests a need for student discussion! (as local teens had suggested)**

*This question was included in direct response to concerns and suggestions of local teens who said they were concerned specifically about their peers who drank heavily – or “binged”. Asking about the number of typical drinks, although incomplete, is a useful screening question (as is the # of times a person “got drunk” in the past year)*

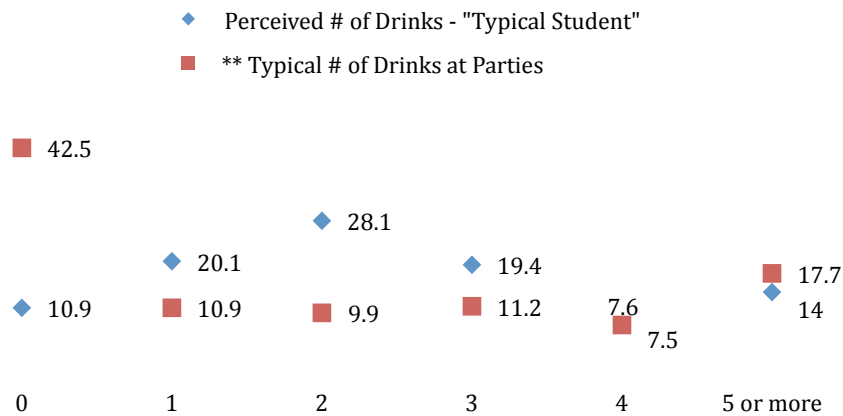
**11. How many drinks do you think the typical student at your school consumes when they attend parties where alcohol is available?**

Commentary/Trends: See above explanation re: the problematic wording of this question.

However, if we are to carefully assume that most students correctly understood the meaning of “drinks” – the pattern of overestimating their peers’ use is present here as well.

- Students underestimated the number of students who have 0 drinks (only 10.9% chose this response)
- Students overestimated the number of students who have 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 or more drinks.
- Although students are correct that there is a problem of binge drinking among teens – they still overestimate how large the problem is. (and that puts them at higher risk for this behavior).

## Gunn '08 - Typical # of Drinks at Parties - Actual & Perceived



Q10: *When you're at a party...with other students – and alcohol is available – how many drinks do you typically consume?* Q11 – *How many drinks do you think the typical student at your school consumes when they attend parties where alcohol is available?*

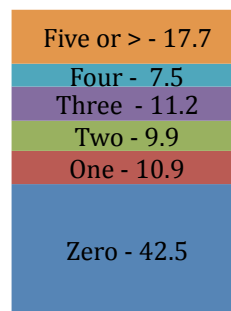
Q10 & 11 Comparison. Q10 - \*\* 47% of students said they had not been to a party when alcohol has been available. The responses of the remaining 53% of students (for the typical # of drinks they consume at parties where alcohol is available) are shown here (in red). Q11 - Student perceptions of how many drinks the “typical student at their school” consumes at such parties are shown in blue.

Another view – same data:

## Gunn '08 - Typical # of Drinks at Parties Actual & Perceived



Perceived # of Drinks - "Typical Student"



\*\* Typical # of Drinks at Parties

### 12. How often, if ever, have you been drunk in the past 12 months?

- More than half of students (58.4%) responded that they don't drink – and another 17.9% say they drink - but have never been drunk. ( 76.3 % of all students represented by these 2 responses).

Commentary/Trends: But that still leaves us with 25.7% who have been drunk at least once in the past year – and 10.2% (or 158 students) who report they got drunk “about monthly”, “weekly” or “daily”.

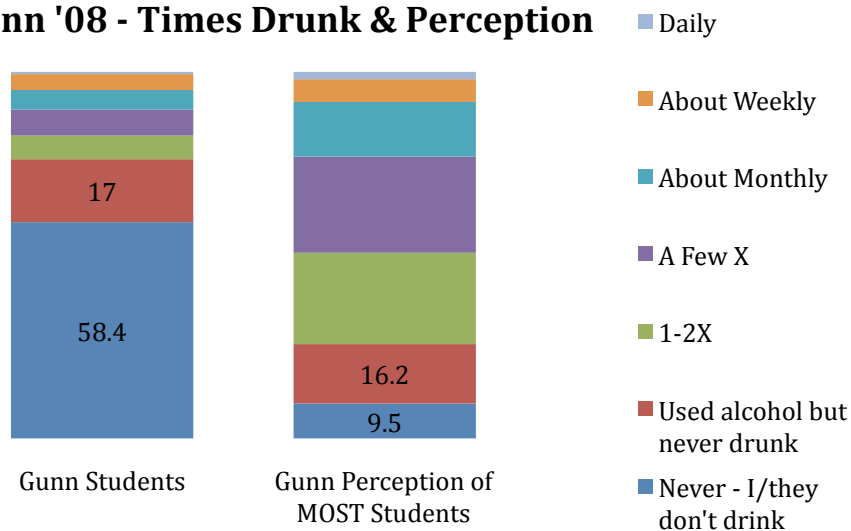
- This was another question aimed at responding to student concerns about binge drinking (a pattern of drinking that leads to intoxication – or being “drunk”) – and once again the data bears out their concern.
  - Although a large majority of students have never been drunk (intoxicated) – a significant number of students report they “get drunk” on a regular basis
  - This is another example of our challenge to appreciate and deal with the full context of teen behavior re: alcohol use (celebrate the overwhelming norm of healthy behavior and decision-making – but respond to the fact that way too many of our youth are engaging in behaviors that are serious red flags for their immediate and long-term health.

**13. How often do you think most students in your same grade have been drunk in the past 12 months? (did not run report – TBC)**

**14. How often do you think most students in your school have been drunk in the past 12 months?**

- 1 in 4 students were accurate in their perception that most students haven’t been drunk in the past year.
- The rest continued the pattern of overestimating their peers’ degree of this type of drinking

**Gunn '08 - Times Drunk & Perception**



**15. Are you a licensed driver?**

- 23.7% of Gunn students say they are licensed drivers.

**16. In the past 12 months, how many times have you driven a car while under the influence of any amount of alcohol?**

- 93.3% of Gunn students say they have never driven a car under the influence of alcohol in the past 12 months.
- 102 Gunn students (6.7%) said they made the decision to get behind the wheel after drinking alcohol (in the past 12 months) - with 54 saying they had done so at least 2, 3, 4 or more times. This is of great concern. (check report on barriers to safer decision)

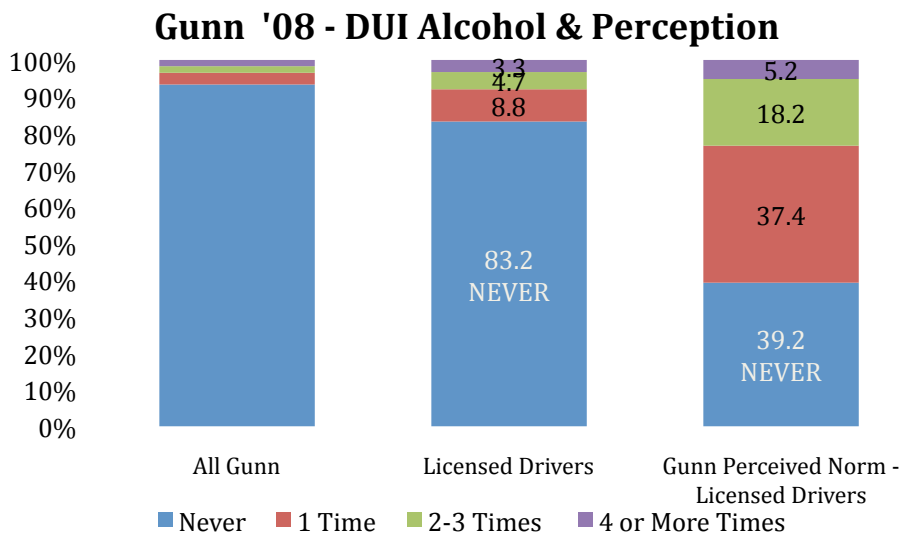
- Of the 363 *licensed drivers* that answered this question, 302 (83.2 %) said they had never driven under the influence of alcohol.
- Therefore, 41/102 students who reported driving under the influence of alcohol (at least once in the past 12 months) did so without a valid drivers license.

Commentary/Trends:

- The results reveal a reduction in student involvement in this risk behavior compared to previous year surveys – however the fact that this survey was run in the Fall (and previous surveys were run in the Spring) may account for the difference in results.
- In order to get a true sense of this risk behavior, the results suggest we should continue to ask all students this question (as well as whether they have a drivers license).

**17. In the past 12 months, how many times do you think most students at your school who are licensed to drive drove under the influence of any amount of alcohol?**

- Approximately 4 out of 10 students were accurate in perceiving that MOST licensed drivers at their school do not drink and drive.
- 6 out of 10 students underestimated the healthy practices of their peers with regard to drinking and driving.
  - Nearly 4 in 10 said they believe most drivers had done this at least once – and 18% believed most licensed drivers had done so at least 2 or 3 times.



**18. In the past 12 months, how many times have you ridden in a car that was driven by a student under the influence of any amount of alcohol?**

- 85.9% of Gunn students say they have never been driven by a student who had been drinking

Commentary/Trends: This question was worded differently than in previous surveys – this year asking specifically if they had ridden with a **STUDENT** who was driving after drinking alcohol.

- In previous years, roughly 77-79% of students said they had not ridden with a driver who had been drinking.
- The discrepancy on the data may be due to the change in timing of the survey – or this new wording that specified **STUDENT** drivers. (The old wording would have allowed students to respond positively if they had been driven by a parent...)

**19. In the past 12 months, how many times do you think most students in your school rode in a car that was driven by a student under the influence of any amount of alcohol?**

- Slightly more than 1 in 3 students were accurate in perceiving that most students had never ridden with another student who was driving under the influence of alcohol.
- One out of four students believed the majority had ridden with a “drinking student driver” at least two, three, four or more times.

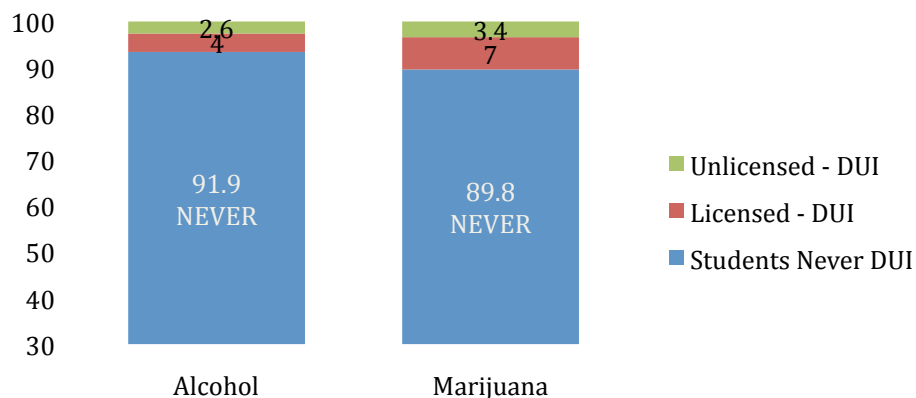
**20. In the past 12 months, how many times have you driven a car after using marijuana?**

- Nearly 9 out of 10 students (89.5%) say they have never driven under the influence of marijuana.
- More students say they have driven under the influence of marijuana than alcohol (10.5% vs. 6.7%)
- 70.9% of licensed drivers (256/363) say they have never driven after using marijuana
- 105 students reported they have driven after using marijuana at least once in the past 12 months.
- Just about 2/3 of these students (105/160) say they have a valid driver’s license. (55 unlicensed drivers say they have driven under the influence of marijuana - reinforcing the need to ask DUI questions of all students regardless of drivers license status)

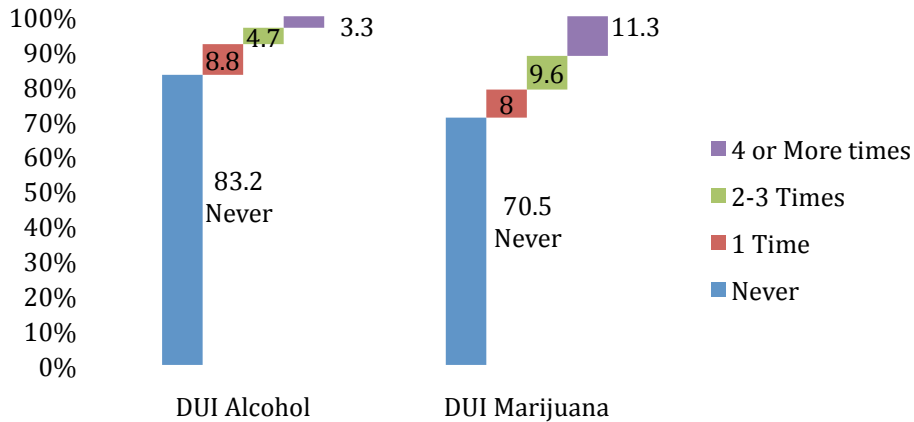
**Commentary/Trends: The # of students that drove four or more times under the influence of marijuana was more than double the number of students who drove that many times under the influence of alcohol.**

- This is worth exploring in detail with students – as it has been suggested that there is information being shared that driving under the influence of marijuana is not as dangerous as with alcohol.
  - Another misperception to address – with research and accurate context to be shared.

## Gunn '08 - DUI Alcohol & Marijuana



## Gunn '08 - Licensed Driver DUI Alcohol & Marijuana



**21. In the past 12 months, how many times do you think most students at your school who are licensed to drive have driven a car after using marijuana?**

- 44% of students were accurate that most licensed drivers at GUNN do not drive after using marijuana.
- More GUNN students believe that licensed drivers at their school drive after using marijuana than alcohol (and with more frequency).

Commentary/Trends: It would be valuable to investigate and better understand student perceptions re: DUI and alcohol versus DUI and marijuana.

**22. Would you rather date someone who does or does not:**

**Smoke cigarettes**

- Nearly 9 out of 10 students would rather NOT date a smoker.

Commentary/Trends: Gunn students express a strong attitude against cigarette smoking. This was a new question created for this year's survey – attempting to create a survey that would be more relevant and interesting to the students themselves.

**Drink alcohol:**

- 52.3 % of Gunn students would rather NOT date someone who drinks alcohol –
- 4 out of 10 students said it didn't matter either way

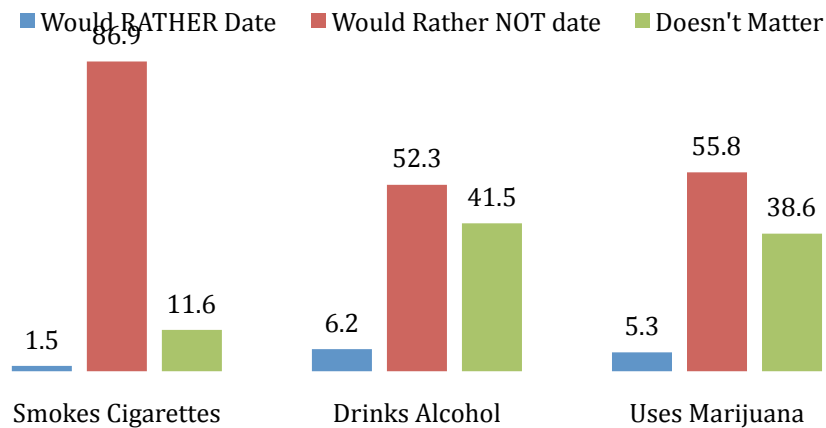
**Use marijuana:**

- 72.8% would not want to date a marijuana user
- 1 in 5 students said it didn't matter either way

Commentary/Trends: Gunn students do not express the same dislike for marijuana smokers as they do for cigarette smokers. Interesting opportunity for student discussion.

Possible Discussion Question: How do you explain students' more "permissive" attitudes about dating someone who drinks alcohol (as compared to attitudes about cigarette smoking or marijuana)?

## Gunn '08 - Dating Attitudes & Substance Use



### 23. How do you think most students at your school feel about dating someone who:

#### Smokes cigarettes:

- 2 out of 3 students were accurate that most students would not want to date a smoker – closer to reality than for other drugs. But they were still underestimating the healthy attitudes among their peers.

#### Drinks alcohol:

- Although there was no strong norm revealed in the above question about preference to date or not date someone who drinks alcohol – 61.4% of students assume that most Gunn students don't care either way about dating someone who drinks alcohol.

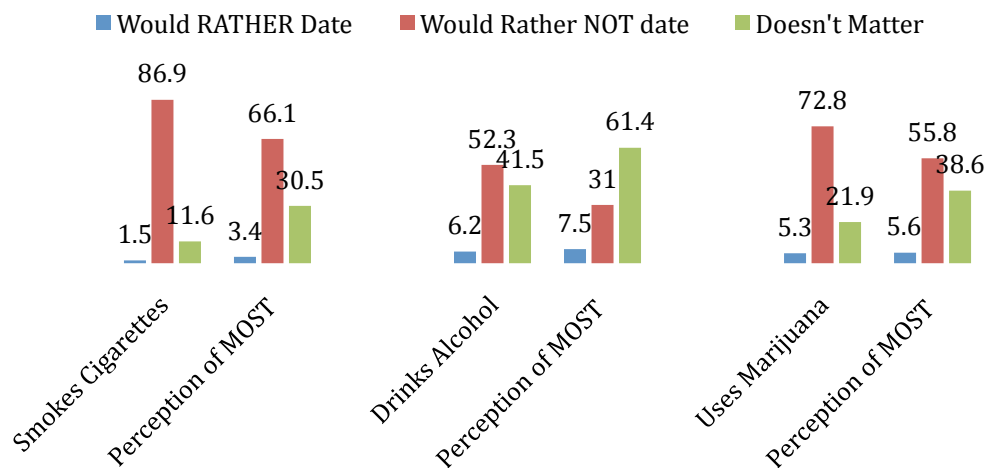
Commentary/Trends: This appears to be an underestimation of the number who prefer NOT to date someone who uses alcohol as well as an underestimation of the degree that students care or think about this issue.

#### Uses marijuana:

- Slightly more than half of Gunn students were accurate that the majority of students would rather NOT date someone who smokes marijuana.

Commentary/Trends: Again, students underestimate the degree that their fellow students care or think about this issue.

## Gunn Perceived & Actual Dating Attitudes - Substance Use



### 24. Which statement best represents your attitude about drinking alcoholic beverages (beyond a few sips at a family or religious gathering)?

- The most common student response (42%) was “Drinking in moderation is alright for adults, but not for students my age” – closely followed by “Occasional drinking at my age is OK as long as it does not interfere with academics or other responsibilities” (40.3%)
- 10.6% of students said “drinking alcohol at any age is never OK
- 4.8% felt frequent drinking by teens was OK

#### Commentary/Trends/ Opportunities for discussion:

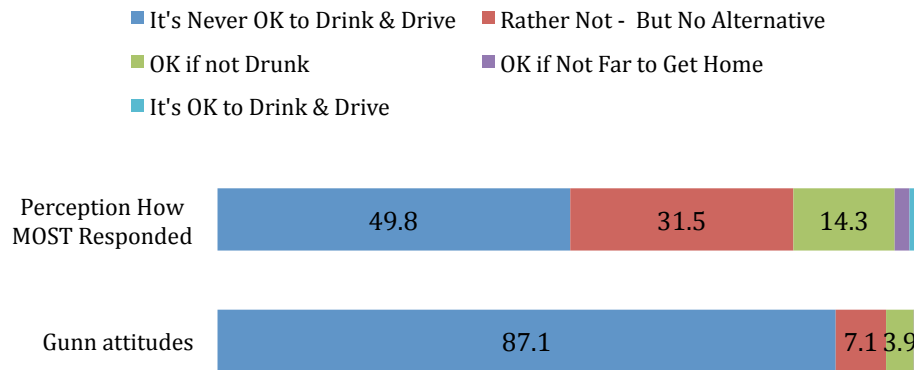
- Local students that worked with PADACC over the past 2 years expressed a similar attitude (occasional alcohol use is OK by teens) because they believed most students used alcohol “responsibly”. It was the group of teens that “binge drank” that had them most concerned (and where they felt community efforts should focus). The opportunity for discussion with youth and adults:
  - How do you define “responsible” or “occasional” drinking, in general? (Can you come up with guidelines?)
  - Can you think of circumstances where people should NOT drink alcohol?
  - (This is an important exercise/examination for adults, as well as for teens).
  - Opportunity to discuss alcohol’s less recognized impact on health (depressant, coping issues, etc.).

### 25. Which statement best represents the most common attitude among students at your school about drinking alcoholic beverages?

- More than half of students at Gunn High school (55.5%) thought most students believed “occasional drinking is okay as long as it doesn’t interfere with academics...”
- Only 22.5% of students were accurate that the most common attitude was “drinking in moderation is okay for adults, but not for students my age”.

**26. Which statement best represents how you feel about drinking and driving (after any amount of alcohol)?**

### Gunn '08 - Drinking & Driving Attitudes & Perceptions



- 87.1% of students express the attitude, “It is never okay to drink and drive”
- 7% of students , however, say while they would prefer not to drink and drive, sometimes they “don’t feel there is any alternative”
- A small percentage – but still concerning number of students (59) believe it is okay to drive “as long as I’m not drunk”; 14 students (0.9%) said it’s okay to drink and drive “as long as they don’t have far to go to get home”; another 0.9% said they believe it’s okay to drink and drive after drinking alcohol.

Commentary/Trends/Opportunities for discussion:

- The healthy decision-making and behavior of the vast majority of students deserves to be acknowledged and discussed
- Further discussion into the barriers for safe-decision-making (perceived or real) is essential in order to reduce the numbers of students who actually DO drive after drinking alcohol (in spite of their preference not to).
- Share and brainstorm reasonable and available alternatives to drinking and driving (rather than messages that say, “just don’t do it”).
- When the small but concerning number of students hear that the overwhelming attitude among teens is to “Never drink and drive”, that can serve as a powerful constraining effect on these higher-risk individuals.
- “What are the alternatives that students can use to avoid drinking and driving?”
- “Can someone give an example of a time when they felt there was no other alternative?” (have students brainstorm solutions/problem-solve together)

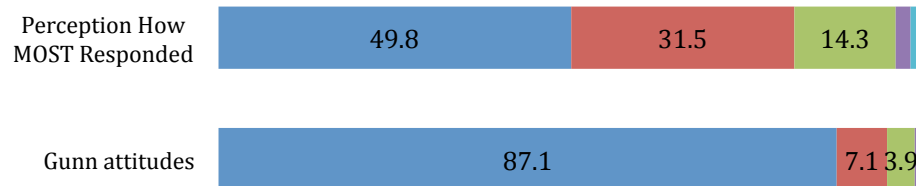
**27. Which statement below about drinking and driving (after any amount of alcohol) best represents the most common attitude among students at your school?**

- Nearly 5 out of 10 students (49.8%) recognize that the vast majority (87%) of teens believe it is never okay to drink and drive.
- Close to 1/3 of teens believe most of their peers would prefer not to drink and drive – but don’t believe there is any other alternative (compared with 7.1% who actually expressed this attitude)

- An underestimation of their peers' healthy attitudes is revealed in these responses as well.

## Gunn '08 - Drinking & Driving Attitudes & Perceptions

- It's Never OK to Drink & Drive    ■ Rather Not - But No Alternative
- OK if not Drunk    ■ OK if Not Far to Get Home
- It's OK to Drink & Drive



Commentary/Trends/Opportunities for discussion:

- It is critical to use this data in discussion with teens.
- “How do you think student misperceptions about how their peers feel about drinking and driving affect the amount of actual drinking and driving (among teens)?”
- “How can the misperceptions among students be explained?”

**28. If you don't drink alcohol – or sometimes choose not to – how likely is it that you would use the strategies below in order to avoid drinking at a party/social gathering where alcohol is being served?**

**LIKELY – in order**

	Very Likely + Likely	(Very Likely)	Unlikely + Very Unlikely
Drink non-alcoholic beverages (soft drinks, water, coffee...)	78	54.6	13.
Tell people “I don't want to drink” if they ask me	75.3	48.6	14.5
Hang out with people who don't drink	61.9	36.9	22.8
Go to parties but make a plan with friend(s) to avoid alcohol	57.2	27.7	27.4
Make an excuse when drinks are offered	53.9	29.3	30.3
Avoid parties if I know people will be drinking	41.8	23	41
Leave parties if I see people drinking	32.8	17.9	49.3
Hold onto a beer or alcoholic drink but don't drink from it	23.5	10.8	57.8

Commentary/Trends: Gunn students report using a variety of strategies to avoid using alcohol

- A large majority report - 3 out of 4 or more – say they are most likely to simply drink non-alcoholic beverages, state that they don't want to drink, or hang out with non-drinkers.
- Given the top 3 responses above - this data suggests that most teens feel comfortable among their peers when choosing not to drink
- Although for this type of question, and it's relevance/importance to students, it's important to look beyond whether a majority responded. It's very important to note that, for each safety strategy, there were always SOME students who said they were likely to use it to avoid drinking (a safety measure). Every strategy on this list has value to some Gunn students.
- For each strategy, about 15% responded "unsure". It would be interesting to ask a focus group for their thoughts regarding "unsure" responses.
- There was a great deal of diversity among student responses as well. This question - and others like it relating to strategies - lend themselves to deeper student discussion.
- PADACC believes that student discussions and problem solving around safety strategies enhance healthy decision-making and reduce high-risk behaviors

**UNLIKELY – in order**

	<b>Unlikely + Very Unlikely</b>	Very Unlikely		Very Likely + Likely
Hold onto a beer or alcoholic drink but don't drink from it	<b>57.8</b>	33.1		23.5
Leave parties if I see people drinking	<b>49.3</b>	21.3		32.8
Avoid parties if I know people will be drinking	<b>41</b>	19.1		41.8
Make an excuse when drinks are offered	<b>30.3</b>			53.9
Go to parties but make a plan with friend(s) to avoid alcohol	<b>27.4</b>			57.2
Hang out with people who don't drink	<b>22.8</b>			61.9
Tell people "I don't want to drink" if they ask me	<b>14.5</b>			75.3
Drink non-alcoholic beverages (soft drinks, water, coffee...)	<b>13</b>			78

- Even though a majority of students said they would be unlikely to "Hold onto an alcoholic drink – but not drink from it" – more than 2 out of 10 students said they **would** use this strategy !

Commentary/Trends: The importance of students having a variety of safety strategies at their disposal is what's critical here; that they are thinking about how to avoid alcohol at times; and that a majority feel comfortable being up front about their choice NOT to drink.

- Student focus groups would be valuable to better understand the thinking behind the responses.

**29. If you are at a party or social gathering where alcohol is being served, how likely would you be to use the strategies below in order to lower the risks associated with drinking? (please answer even if you consider yourself a non-drinker)**

30. (Q29 continued)

**Note:** Unfortunately, a response of “I don’t drink” was inadvertently included. So for each statement – approximately 37 - 45% of students responded “I don’t drink”. The data below looks only at the remaining group of student responses – and reports the percentage within that group.

LIKELY – In order

	Very Likely + Likely	(Very Likely)	Unlikely + Very Unlikely
Make sure there is a designated driver among my friends	86	57.3	5.8
Make a plan with my friends to look out for each other’s safety	75.9	43.8	11.4
Make sure there is always someone in my group who isn’t drinking	72.9	43	11.4
Make sure I can stay overnight if I know I will be drinking	67.1		15.4
Drink non-alcoholic beverages (soda, water, coffee)	64.6		19.1
Limit myself to a small amount of alcohol	64.3		20.4
Make sure to eat a meal beforehand	61.9		16.9
Avoid mixing beer, wine, and hard alcohol	61.4		21.9
Call a friend, family member, or another trusted adult to pick me up	54.88		26.7
Ask myself “Would I do this if I were sober?”	46		28
Call Safe Ride for a ride home	55.6		23.2
Avoid playing drinking games	51.8		33.3
Call my parents to pick me up	36.6		49.2
Call a Taxi to pick me up	27.1		50.8

**Among the group of students who did not identify as non-drinkers:**

Commentary/Trends:

- The 3 most popular strategies to lower risks associated with drinking (likely to be used by more than 7 or 8 out of 10 students) – involved planning, coordinating with their peers.
  - This illustrates the importance of peers among this age group
- High degree of likely use was reported for many of the strategies listed. (If students find strategies acceptable, they are more likely to be employed – reducing risk and harm)
- >6 out of 10 report they limit their alcohol intake to a “small amount” – yet more than 2 out of 10 students said they would be unlikely to limit their intake.
  - Local teens have shared their belief that the majority of teens who do drink, do so moderately – and that *their* concern lies with the smaller but significant number of teens who binge drink or drive under the influence. This set of responses lends support to their statements.
- Focus groups of students would shed important light on the thoughts behind strategies.

UNLIKELY – Listed In order

	Unlikely + Very Unlikely	(Very unlikely)	Very Likely + Likely
Call a Taxi to pick me up	50.8		27.1
Call my parents to pick me up	49.2	32.6	36.5
Avoid playing drinking games	33.3		51.8
Ask myself “Would I do this if I were sober?”	28		46
Call a friend, family member, or another trusted adult to pick me up	26.3		54.8
Call Safe Ride for a ride home	23.2		55.6
Avoid mixing beer, wine, and hard alcohol	21.9		61.4
Limit myself to a small amount of alcohol	20.4		64.3
Drink non-alcoholic beverages (soda, water, coffee)	19.1		64.8
Make sure to eat a meal beforehand	16.9		61.9
Make sure I can stay overnight if I know I will be drinking	15.4		67.1
Make sure there is always someone in my group who isn’t drinking	11.4		72.9
Make a plan with my friends to look out for each other’s safety	11.4		75.9
Make sure there is a designated driver among my friends	6.8		84.4

Commentary/Trends: With this question – looking at students’ likely use of safety strategies – it is important to note that for every strategy *some* students were likely to use it (and is therefore very valuable to that student and his/her safety). While there are clearly strategies that appeal to a majority of students, *any* strategy that is employed is valuable.

- However, It would be important and useful for future discussions with students (either in focus groups, or among families or in classrooms) to inquire why students reject particular strategies (especially those that students reject in great numbers) – such as “call my parents to pick me up”

**31. If you have ever driven after drinking alcohol OR have ridden with a driver who had been drinking alcohol, what got in the way of making the safer decision to NOT drink and drive (or to not ride with a drinking driver)?**

- More than 7 out of 10 students said they have never been faced with this situation – and another 17.5% said they have always been able to make the ‘safer decision” – more than 9 out of 10 students.

- The chart below compares schoolwide responses with those of students who say they “Never Use, use “about Monthly”, and “Weekly or Daily”.

	All Gunn	Never Users	Monthly	Weekly/Daily
Never been in this situation	77.4	86.8	37.8	23.4
Always able to make safer decision	17.5	11.6	25.6	17
Knew no other alternative	8.5	2.1	23.7	25.2
Afraid to call my parents	7.1	1.8	17.7	18.9
Afraid to miss my curfew	4.3	1.2	9.1	17.1
Chose not to use safe Ride	3.3	.9	7.3	10.8
Safe Ride Unavailable	4.5	.5	12.2	18
Confident in my driving ability – even after alcohol	5.3	.4	17.7	26.1
Confident in Driver's ability - even after alcohol	9.7	1.7	26.8	38.7
Too drunk to make a safe decision	4.6	.7	11	24.3

Commentary/Trends/Opportunities for discussion: The number of students who expressed a variety of common rationale for getting behind the wheel, or for being driven by someone who had been drinking – is of concern.

- 140 students said they were confident in the driver’s ability (even though the driver had been drinking). Another 77 said they were confident in their own ability to drive after drinking.
- Their responses reveal there is room – and need – for basic education around the effects of alcohol on driving ability.
- This question and the student responses provide a rich opportunity to discuss alternatives to this high-risk behavior and actually problem-solve for future situations.
  - Local teens cited drinking and driving (along with binge-drinking and improved communication with adults around these issues) as one of their three top priorities and concerns related to underage drinking
  - Problem-solving to remove /address the barriers to making safe decisions is critical to effectively reducing this dangerous behavior.
  - This is an important question to use in student discussions. Rather than focus on the number of students who do or do not engage in this high-risk behavior, the question gets to the deeper issue of “why”. The ensuing discussions among students hold real potential for reducing this high risk-behavior.
  - Summaries of student discussions could be shared with parents – encouraging valuable family discussions around rules, values, priorities and consequences.

**32. If you are at a party/social gathering where alcohol is being served and you choose not to drink how do you think your closest friends would typically respond?**

- My closest friends don’t drink, so they’d be fine with my decision. – 47%
- Even if they choose to drink, they would be ok with my decision not to drink. – 38.5%
- They would initially try to get me to change my mind – but would eventually be okay with my decision. – 10.4%
- They would give me a hard time for not drinking – but we would still be friends. – 3%
- They would not want to be friends with me in the future – 1.2%

Commentary/Trends: Survey responses suggest the majority of students do not experience or perceive overt peer pressure to drink alcohol when they choose not to drink at parties.

**33. If you are at a party/social gathering where alcohol is being served and your friend chooses not to drink, how would you typically respond to their decision?**

- My friends and I don't drink, so I'd be fine with their decision. – 51.7%
- Even if I choose to drink, I would be ok with their decision not to drink. – 39.3%
- I would probably try to change my friend's mind at first - – but would eventually be okay with my friend's choice. – 5.8%
- I would probably give my friend a hard time for not drinking – but we would still be friends – 2%
- I wouldn't want to be friends with them in the future – 1.2%

Commentary/Trends: Survey responses suggest the majority of students are comfortable with their friends' choosing not to drink – and would not put pressure on their friends to do otherwise.

**Opportunities for discussion Question 32 & 33.**

- Although most students said they would support and not pressure their friends to drink alcohol, they slightly underestimated that their friends would be as supportive should they themselves choose not to drink.
- However, because this question asked how their friends would respond (rather than “most students at your school” or the typical student...) student perceptions were much closer to reality than on any other question that asked about “most students at your school”.
- Students tend to be more accurate in their perceptions of their “group's” or friends' actual behavior – although a discrepancy between perception and actual behavior or attitudes continues to exist.

**34. How concerned would you be if your friends:**

**Used alcohol –**

- The largest # of student responses (24.6%) said they would be very concerned.
- 19.4% said they were not at all concerned if their friends used alcohol.
- The remaining responses were fairly evenly divided.

Commentary/Trends: This “spread” reveals that students do not all think alike – and it would be interesting to engage them in a discussion on this particular question.

- The discussion would no doubt, address what is meant by “used alcohol”. Students would benefit from a discussion that dealt with personal guidelines/limits and attitudes regarding alcohol use, what is “moderate use”, “heavy”, binge.
- The spread may also reflect the fact that alcohol is ubiquitous in our culture – and becomes legal to use by age 21.

**Were drinking to get drunk (binge drinking)**

- As stated earlier, local students cited binge drinking as a top concern for them.

Commentary/Trends: The data confirms that this is a concern for a majority of high school students - 69.4% of student responses said they would be concerned if their friends were drinking to get drunk (56% said they would be “very concerned”). (see graph below)

**Drove a car after drinking alcohol**

- 75.4% of students said they would be very concerned if their friends drove after drinking.
- 88.3% of students chose the two highest levels of concern (of 7 possible responses)

Commentary/trends: This is consistent with what we heard from Paly and Gunn students over the past 2 years (that they were very concerned about their friends who engaged in this particular high-risk behavior)

### **Used marijuana**

- 57.5% of student responses revealed concern for friends who use marijuana (with 46% saying they would be VERY concerned)
- 16% said they were “not at all concerned” if their friends used marijuana

Commentary/Trends: Students express diverse attitudes and thinking when it comes to marijuana use. It would be interesting to explore student ideas and thoughts when there is this degree of spread in the responses. (see graph)

### **Drove a car after using marijuana**

- 60% of Gunn students say they would be very concerned if their friends drove under the influence of marijuana (compared to 75% with alcohol).
- Nearly 3 out of 4 (73.2%) students chose the 2 highest levels of concern for this question
- 8.4% (123 students) said they would be not at all concerned about DUI/marijuana (compared to 4.6% or 68 students who said they would be not at all concerned about DUI/alcohol)

Commentary/Trends: This question was created for this year’s surveys – in response to a concern that students may believe that driving under the influence of marijuana is less dangerous than when driving under the influence of alcohol.

- Clearly there is a difference in student concern when it comes to driving under the influence of alcohol or marijuana.

Opportunity for discussion: This difference in attitude about DUI/alcohol and marijuana would be especially important to explore with students (available research as well as student attitudes).

### **Used drugs other than marijuana**

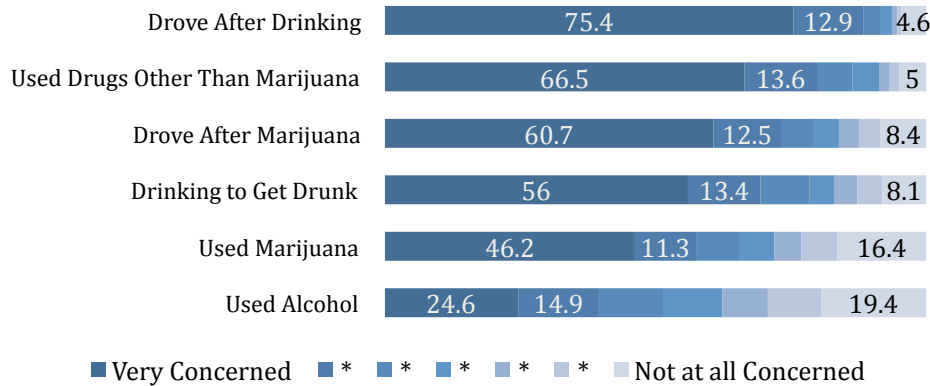
- 66.5% of students would be very concerned if their friends’ used drugs other than marijuana.
- 8 out of 10 students chose the top two responses – showing a high level of concern for friends who choose to use drugs other than marijuana.

Commentary/Trends: this predominant attitude is consistent with previous years’ surveys as well)

Q.34 Chart – Responses listed in order of concern

## Gunn '08

### How Concerned Would You Be if Your Friends...



#### 35. Have you ever obtained alcohol in the following ways?

- In order of the most common way students obtained alcohol...
  - My parents let me have it – 35.5% (64.5% No) (However, we cannot tell from the responses whether students are referring to being allowed wine at a family dinner – or whether parents provided alcohol ad lib)
  - I drank it at a party and don't know where it came from – 27.8% (72.2% NO)
  - A friend who was under 21 gave it to me or bought it for me – 25.2% (74.8, No)
  - I took it from my parents without their knowledge – 21% (79% No)
  - A friend who was over 21 gave.... – 19.6% (80.4% No)
  - Another relative gave it... - 14.8% (85% No)
  - A brother or sister gave it... - 11.1% (88.9% No)
  - A stranger bought it for me - 8 %
  - I bought it at a store – 6.7% (93.3% No)
  - I took it from a store. – 5.4% (94.6%)

#### 36. Do your parents permit you and your friends to drink alcohol in your home?

- 90.3% of students say their parents do not allow them and their friends to drink alcohol in their home.

Commentary/Trends: This is consistent with) previous years' survey results – revealing a consistent community norm that is unsupportive of providing alcohol to minors .

#### 37. In the past 12 months has someone in your family talked with you about issues related to drug and alcohol use?

- 50.7% of students say someone in their family had talked with them about alcohol and drug use.

Commentary/Trends/Opportunity for discussion: In previous years surveying – a similar question asked if , in the past 12 months, parents had spoken to them about family rules about using alcohol or drugs. Yes answers ranged from 49 – 52.7%.

- We hope that this report can help generate questions that will stimulate conversations within families, classrooms, and groups of friends.
- Especially important would be discussions related to DUI (both alcohol and marijuana) – given student responses that give cause for concern.

#### 38. Do you typically drink alcohol before or during school dances?

- 18.2% of students say they do not attend dances.(265)

- Of the remaining Gunn students answering this question (1195):
  - 92.4% of students who attend dances (1104) said they do not typically drink alcohol before or during school dances.
  - 7.6% (91) students said they typically drink before or during school dances.

**39. What percentage of students do you think drink alcohol before or during a typical school dance?**

**40. How strongly do you agree with these measures?**

Commentary/Opportunities for Discussion: In general, students weighed in with a strong collective voice on policy issues relating to alcohol and drug use.

- The diverse nature of student responses throughout this section – and the nature of the questions/responses themselves – suggest focus groups might be in order – to flush out and better understand the complexities and meaning of student responses.
- There was a consistent number of students ( approx. 30%) who said they neither agreed nor disagreed on most all questions in this category. This would be important to examine why they answered in this way - exploring student opinions and beliefs about the effect of such policies.
- **Include youth in future policy decisions – 70%** of students agree/strongly agree (4.8% disagree/strongly disagree)
  - Large majority of students who would like their voices heard as policy decisions are being made.
- **Give students more on-campus opportunities to discuss issues and challenges that are relevant to their daily lives – 55.4%** agree/str.agree (12.2% disagree/str. disagree)

Commentary/Discussion: Most students have limited to no formal opportunities within school to engage in discussions with other students about issues of concern and importance to their health or social lives. (Living Skills is a one semester course that provides the curriculum and formal opportunities for discussions of this nature).

- This question was asked due to a large # of Gunn students who attended a student-run assembly (Spring '08) and (on evaluation) said they would like more opportunities to come together and discuss issues of importance to the daily lives of high school students
- Quick, one-time lectures that talk “at” students or shock them have been shown to be ineffective in reducing health-risk behaviors.
- Psychologically- safe opportunities to discuss health and social-related topics on campus appear to be welcomed by students.
- **Stronger enforcement of current DUI laws – 61.1%** agree/str/agree (13.1% disagree/str. disagree)

Commentary/Discussion: This question was included because of student comments at Town Hall meetings that DUI laws were weakly enforced. We wanted to poll all students for their attitudes on stronger enforcement.

- Student focus group would help clarify.
- **Improve communication between parents and teens around alcohol use - 58.7%** agree/str. agree (11.1% disagree/str/disagree)

Commentary/Discussion: In previous 2 years, students said they would like to improve communication with adults around alcohol use. Survey responses suggest that nearly 6 out of 10 students agree.

- **Parents should remove consequences when the safer decision - to not drink and drive or ride with a drinking driver – is made.** – 58.2% agree/str.agree (9.7% disagree/str.disagree)

Commentary/Discussion: Important discussion about rules and consequences and their effects on student decision-making re: DUI

- Curfews, zero-tolerance positions (often intended to keep students “safe”) are barriers to some students making the safer decision to NOT drink and drive, etc.
- This issue needs to be explored among students, among parent groups, within families.
- The data from this survey can be used to stimulate such discussions – and provide parents with another opportunity to convey their concern for their child’s safety and open up communication on these important issues.

#### **41. How strongly do you agree or disagree with these measures?**

- **Enforce the current school rules and city laws about underage drinking** – 57.7% agree (16.4% disagree)

Commentary/Discussion: This question was included due to student comments about lack of enforcement at school and in City.

- Focus group would be helpful to better understand this and the following question

- **Enforce the current school rules and city laws about underage drinking – but with more consistency and fairness** – 62.5%

Commentary/Discussion: Included due to student comments about lack of fairness/inconsistent enforcement of policy

- An additional 5% of students agreed that policies should be enforced when the provision for better consistency and fairness was included.
- Results suggest students support enforcement as well as reinforce there needs to be an improvement in consistency/fairness

- **Use breathalyzers only on students at dances whose behavior suggests they’ve been drinking** – 57.5% agree (17.9% disagree)

Commentary/Discussion: Results reveal the norm of student support for (1) policy to not drink at dances and (2) support for using technology to confirm students who may have been using alcohol.

- **Use breathalyzers on all students at school dances** – 20% agree, 56.5% disagree

Commentary/discussion: Low student support (strong student opposition) for policies that impose breathalyzers on all students

- It is important to note that this does not suggest that students have a permissive attitude about drinking at dances (see response above). In fact, the majority of students who attend dances say they do not drink before or during dances.

- **Random use of breathalyzers at school dances** – 22.4% agree, (51.7% disagree)

Commentary/Discussion: Results do not differ much from question asking for 100% use of breathalyzers.

- All these questions would be valuable to discuss within student focus groups
- **Less punishment and more assistance for students with alcohol or drug-related health issues** – 55.8% agree (14.4% disagree)
  - Another area that would be more deeply understood within a student focus group or larger student group discussion.

**42. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

	Strongly agree + agree	Neither	Strongly Disagree + Disagree
I would know <u>how to tell</u> if my friend had a problem with alcohol or other drugs.	<b>71.4</b>	20.4	8.2
I would know <u>how to get help</u> for my friend if they had a problem with alcohol or other drugs.	<b>60.8</b>	26.7	12.5
I would <u>like to learn how to tell</u> if a friend had a problem with alcohol or other drugs.	<b>52.3</b>	33.3	14.4
I would <u>like to learn how to get help</u> for someone with an alcohol or other drug problem	<b>52.7</b>	33.3	14
I would <u>go to my parents</u> if I had a problem with alcohol or other drugs.	<b>48.7</b>	26.1	25.2
Adults at my school would be helpful if you have a problem with alcohol or other drugs	<b>38.4</b>	33.4	28.3
We receive quality drug and alcohol education at my school.	<b>46.9</b>	34.4	18.7
Student health and wellbeing are important at my school.	<b>67.6</b>	24.5	7.9

Commentary/Discussion: This question was included to discern how students felt about their knowledge and ability to determine if someone had an alcohol problem as well as whether they would LIKE to learn these things. We were also curious to hear whether students would approach their parents for help – or whether they felt adults at school would be helpful.

- The data suggests that deeper discussion with students is warranted.
- A large majority (7 out of 10) students expressed confidence that they would know if a friend was in trouble with alcohol or other drugs. (And 6 of 10 students said they would know how to get help for that friend).
- Still slightly more than half of students said they would like to LEARN how to tell if (and how to get help for ) someone with an alcohol or drug problem.

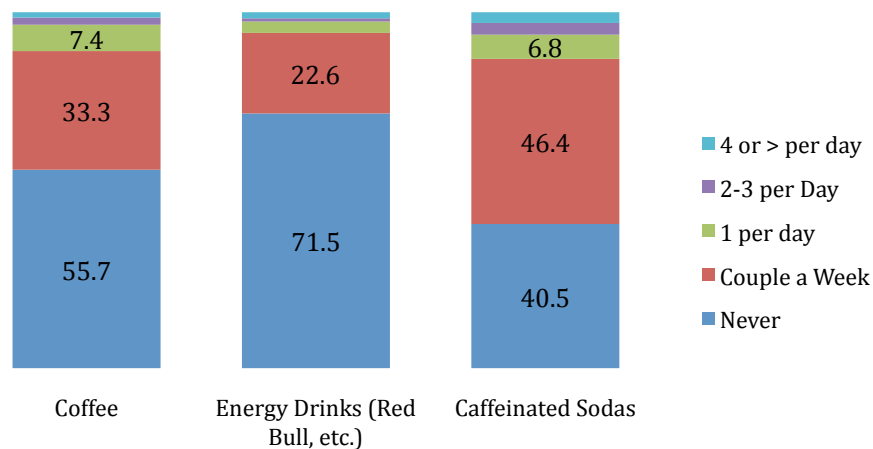
- Slightly fewer than half of Gunn students said they would go to their parents with an alcohol or drug problem – and 1 out of 4 said they would not. This warrants further discussion among students – and may tie in to a discussion about barriers to using safety strategies, getting help when help is needed, etc.
  - Large numbers of parents believe that their children will come to them with a problem like this – and that teens will call them for a safe ride home if they have been drinking. This data (along with the Safety strategy questions) suggest that this is true for only half of students.
  - If this data is shared with parents, they can engage in valuable conversation with other parents AND open up a new conversation with their children.
- Students were nearly evenly divided in their responses about adults at school being helpful to students with alcohol or drug problems. Slightly more than 1/3 of students agreeing that adults were helpful, 1/3 unsure, and 3 in 10 disagreeing.
  - Another good topic for a focus group of students.
  - “How do you explain the student responses for this question? What ideas do you have for improving this situation?”
- 2 out of 3 students agreed that student health and wellbeing were important at their school.
- It would be interesting to go over each of these statements with students – give the breakdown of responses from their student body – and ask for their insights.

**43. In the past 12 months, do you remember seeing any tobacco, alcohol or drug prevention advertisements, brochures or posters at your school?**

41% of students said they had seen prevention materials at their school. 25% had not – and 33% were not sure.

**44. How many stimulant drinks do you have in a day?**

**Gunn '08 - Stimulant Drinks**



### **Specialized Reports – disaggregated by:**

- Grade
- Gender
- Drivers License Status & DUI
- Reported Non-use of Alcohol
- Reported Monthly Use of Alcohol
- Reported Weekly Daily Use of Alcohol

In general, the disaggregated data reports reinforce & confirm expected findings above as well as –

**GRADE:** Reported use of alcohol and other drugs increases with age.

- The phenomenon of overestimating one’s peers’ involvement in substance use and risk behaviors is also evident when students were asked for their perception about students in their same grade (new question this year). This was true for all grades. (see Chart illustration in Q8 above).

**GENDER:** In general, male students report higher frequency of substance use and typically consume more drinks at parties than female students (markedly so by Senior year). Results were somewhat mixed when it came to “times drunk in past 12 months” as well as alcohol use in general.

**Drivers License Status and DUI:** More than 9 out of 10 Gunn students – and 4 out of 5 Gunn students who are licensed to drive say they have never driven under the influence of alcohol.

- Students who possess a drivers license were more likely to have driven under the influence of alcohol or marijuana than students without a drivers license (*important to note that this may be linked more to advanced age than drivers license status!*).
- However, both licensed and unlicensed students report they have driven under the influence of alcohol and marijuana. (see chart above in Q20).

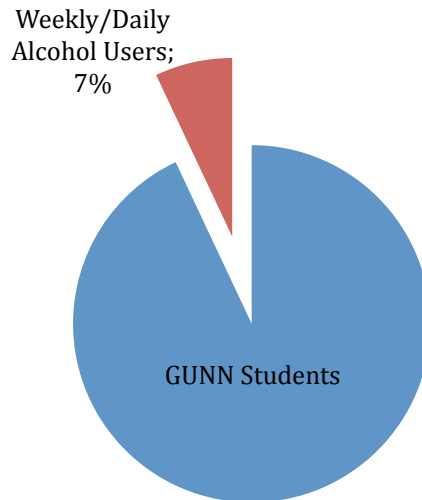
**Frequency of Alcohol Use:** Other drug use and high-risk behaviors such as binge drinking, driving after drinking alcohol (or after using marijuana) increase with the reported frequency of alcohol use.

- It is a small percentage of students (8-10%) - but concerning number of students - who engage in multiple risk behaviors.
- Those who report drinking more frequently tend to:
  - drink more heavily
  - use other drugs
  - drive under the influence of both alcohol and marijuana
  - express less concern if their friends engage in health risk behaviors
  - underestimate the degree of their peers’ healthy attitudes
  - are less likely to choose safety strategies (although the results are mixed and detailed re: likely use of safety strategies)
- The degree of misperceptions of how “most students” at their school behaved or felt with regard to alcohol, drug use and related risk behaviors also increased with the level of reported use of alcohol. (The more frequently

students use alcohol, the higher their degree of misperception of their peers' use of alcohol)

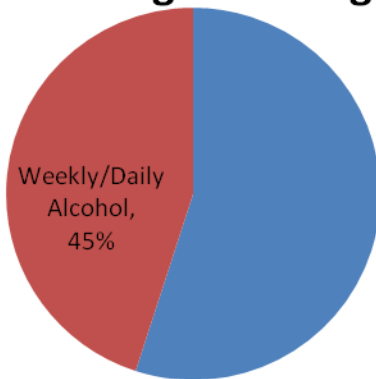
**Illustrations:**

Students that report Weekly or Daily use of Alcohol represent 5.2% and 2.0% (respectively) of the students in the survey. Together they represent 7.2% of students surveyed and 14% of the students who say they have ever used alcohol.

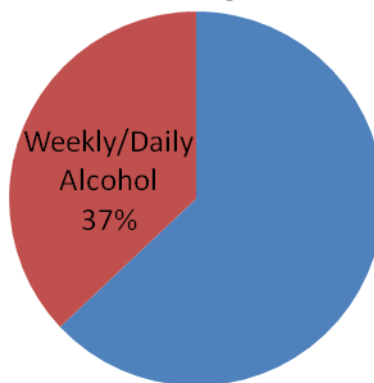


Weekly/Daily Users of Alcohol – 17% of alcohol users account for high proportions of all reported incidence of:

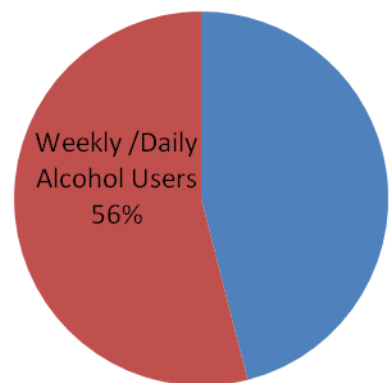
**Drinking & Driving**



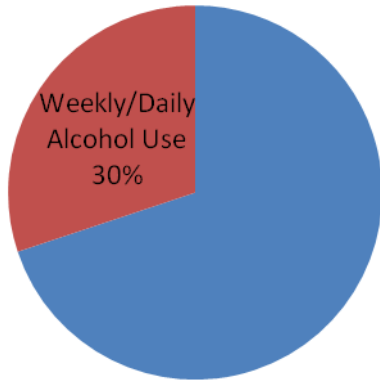
**DUI Marijuana**



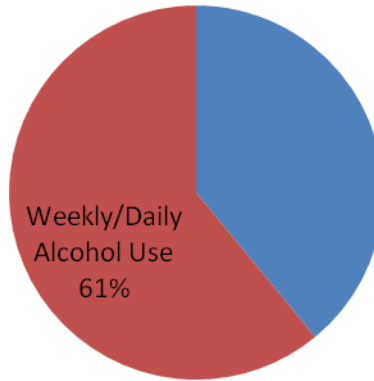
**Drinking at Dances**



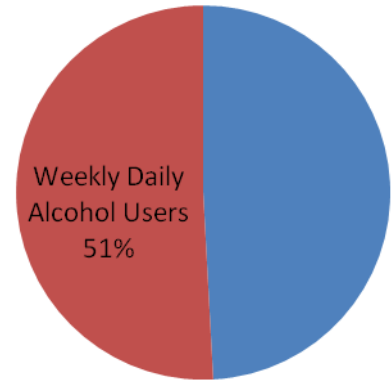
### Marijuana Use



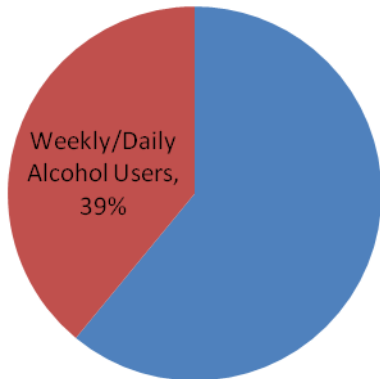
### Other Drug Use



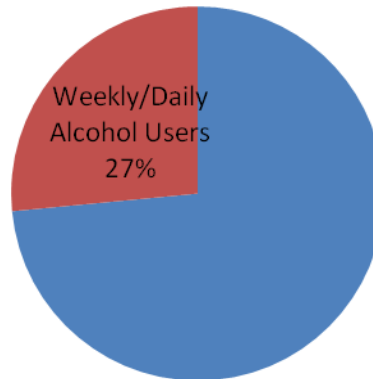
### Prescription Drug Use



### 4-5 or > Drinks (Typical)



### Drunk in Past Year



#### All categories of students – regardless of gender, grade, or frequency of alcohol use

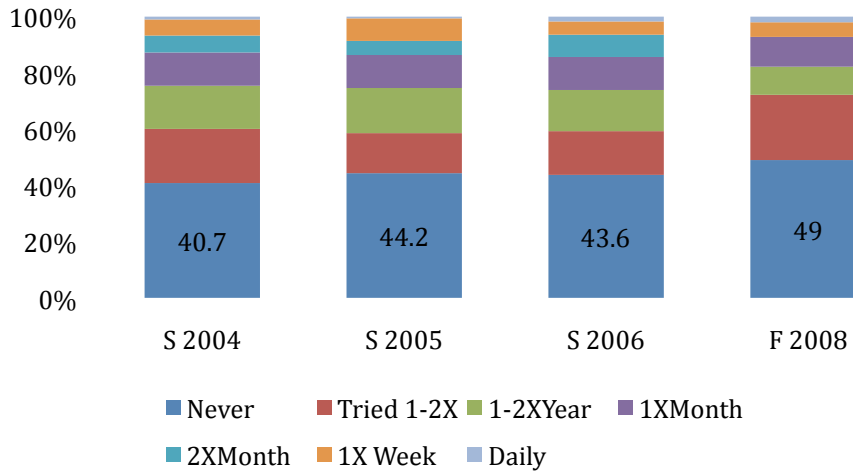
- vastly overestimated the degree of students (licensed drivers) driving under the influence of alcohol or marijuana.
- Expressed their desire to have youth voices heard in policy decision-making
- Expressed strong disapproval of using breathalyzers on 100% of students at dances (however, there was very strong support for using breathalyzers on students whose behavior suggested they had been drinking – even among students who reported weekly/daily drinking (61%). Students took time to express their opinions in the open-ended option on the support for policy section (see future specialized report on this).

#### Data Trends –

4 years of surveying at Gunn High School reveal strong consistency in the data (see alcohol example below). The consistency strengthens confidence in the reliability of the data. Higher rates of reported abstinence in the Fall '08 survey may be due to:

- Students were surveyed earlier in the school year than in previous years
- New wording and response options for substance use questions

## Gunn Alcohol Use Trends - S '04 - F '08



Although there were some differences in the survey responses between the 2 high schools, the overall similarity in student responses is striking – consistent with previous years' comparison – and lends support to the general reliability of the data.

Example:

## Paly - Gunn Alcohol Use Comparison Fall 2008



This basic report was prepared by Becky Beacom, Palo Alto Medical Foundation – February, 2008

For questions or more information, please contact: Karin Bloom, Project Director for the Palo Alto Drug & Alcohol Collaborative (PADACC) – 650-380-2571