

School Connectedness in the MetroWest Region

Highlights from the 2023 MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey (Grades 6-12)

Most middle school and high school youth report feeling connected to their school.*

Middle School

64%

← Feel close to people at this school →

64%

← Feel like part of this school →

54%

← Are happy to be at this school →

56%

← Feel teachers treat students fairly →

69%

← Feel safe in their school →

High School

61%

61%

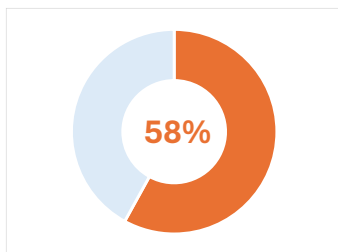
58%

60%

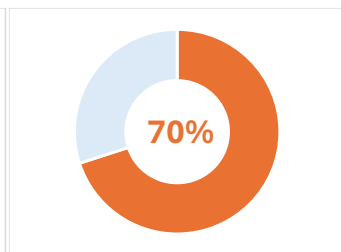
72%



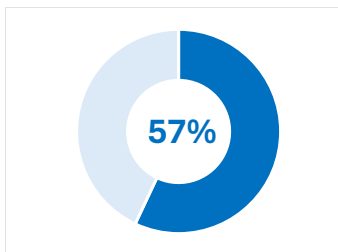
Feeling like part of this school* is reported by:



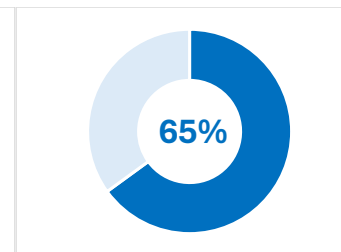
58% of middle school girls



70% of middle school boys



57% of high school girls



65% of high school boys

School connectedness is lower among:

Youth with disabilities†



For example, in middle school:

58% of youth with disabilities feel close to people at school (vs. 66% of youth without disabilities).

46% of youth with disabilities are happy to be at their school (vs. 56% of youth without disabilities).

LGBTQ+ youth



For example, in high school:

51% of LGBTQ+ youth feel close to people at school (vs. 64% of heterosexual cisgender youth).

47% of LGBTQ+ youth feel happy to be at their school (vs. 61% of heterosexual cisgender youth).

Youth who lack school connectedness are more likely to have poor mental health and report risk behaviors.

For example, youth who don't feel like part of their school report:

Depressive symptoms

3.2x higher depressive symptoms in MS (past 12 months)

2.6x higher depressive symptoms in HS (past 12 months)

Substance Use

2.2x higher alcohol use in MS (in their lifetime)

1.9x higher nicotine vaping in HS (past 30 days)

School bullying

2.0x higher risk of being bullied at school in MS (past 12 months)

2.1x higher risk of being bullied at school in HS (past 12 months)

The MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey (MWAHS) has been conducted by Education Development Center (EDC) since 2006, with funding from the MetroWest Health Foundation. The MWAHS is a voluntary and anonymous survey of youth in 25 communities that provides data to inform local adolescent health priorities and programs. In 2023, 38,074 students in grades 6-12 participated, representing 89% of middle school youth and 79% of high school youth in the region.

* Percent of students reporting that they "agree" or "strongly agree" with each statement about school connectedness

† Students who report having a physical disability and/or a learning disability

‡ Depressive symptoms are defined as feeling so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities (in the past 12 months)