



**'03 STUDENT DRUG USE CONSISTENT WITH 5- AND 10-YEAR AVERAGES**

- QUESTION IS HOW MUCH DRUG USE IS ACCEPTABLE, AUTHOR SAYS
- YOUTH LESS LIKELY TO MISBEHAVE WHILE AT SCHOOL

WASHINGTON, Sept. 3 – Despite a two percent increase, the number of students using illegal drugs during the 2002-2003 school year remained consistent with the past five-year average of 24% annual use and slightly lower than the 10-year average of 26%, according to the Pride Survey, the nation’s largest, independent assessment of adolescent drug use, violence and other behaviors.

The rates of annual alcohol use and cigarette smoking among adolescents both remained lower than the five- and ten-year averages, although cigarette smoking climbed 1% from the previous year.

	2002	2003	5-yr avg.
<b>Illicit drugs</b>	22	24	24
<b>Alcohol</b>	50	50	52
<b>Cigarettes</b>	26	27	31

% annual use, grades 6-12

*[Annual reported use means a student used a drug at least once in the past year.]*

Over the five-year period from 1999 to 2003, annual use of illegal drugs ranged from a low of 22% to a high of 27%, averaging 24% over the period. In the 2002-2003 school year, 24% of students reported annual use of an illicit drug.

*“The question is how much teen-age drug use is acceptable to the nation,” said Dr. Thomas J. Gleaton, author of the survey.*

*“If one in four teens using drugs is acceptable, we have done well in controlling drugs over the past decade. If a quarter of our youth on drugs is unacceptable, we need stronger action to truly dent teen problems,” he said.*

More

Gleaton noted that teen drug use is often associated with other negative behaviors such as carrying guns, violence, suicide, joining gangs and declining academic performance (see accompanying document).

Over the last 10 years, Gleaton noted, drug usage has risen year-to-year on four occasions, fallen four times, and remained unchanged once.

*“We are locked in at somewhere around one quarter of our 11- to 18-year-olds using drugs,” he said.*

Pride’s findings are consistent with the federally sponsored Monitoring the Future Survey (MTF), conducted by the University of Michigan. While Pride Surveys encompass seven grade levels from 6-12, MTF looks at three grades – 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> but does not consolidate data for the three grades.

*[For example, over the past 10 years, MTF reported an average 39% annual use of any illicit drug by 12<sup>th</sup> graders – the same percentage found by Pride. In its latest report (2002) MTF places 12<sup>th</sup> grade drug use at 41% while Pride reported 38% for 2003.]*

### **Study points to important role of parents, community**

Students responding to the Pride Survey were less likely to use, buy or sell drugs at school, more likely to carry a gun outside school buildings, and more likely to be punished by school officials than parents when they break the rules.

While 8% said they buy or sell drugs at school, 14% answered while not at school.

Asked where they use illicit drugs, students most frequently responded at a friend’s home and least frequently said school. More said they use drugs in a car or in their own home than in schools.

Asked when they use drugs, most said weekends and the fewest answered during school. More students said they use drugs after school and on weeknights than during school.

<b>Where drugs are used</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Friend’s house</b>	14
<b>Other place</b>	11
<b>Own home</b>	10
<b>Car</b>	8
<b>School</b>	5

<b>When drugs are used</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Weekends</b>	16
<b>Weeknights</b>	8
<b>After school</b>	8
<b>During school</b>	5

*“Schools aren’t absolutely safe, but schools aren’t war zones as they are often portrayed,” Gleaton said.*

More

<b>In school/outside school</b>	<b>%</b>	Three times as many students said they carried a gun “for protection or as a weapon” <i>while not at school</i> as said they carried a gun to school (13% vs. 4%). Students who carried guns were more likely to use drugs. For example, among students who carried a gun to school, 42% reported that they used cocaine, compared to 3% cocaine use among students who did not carry a gun.
<b>Carried gun to school</b>	4	
<b>Carried gun outside</b>	13	
<b>Buy/sell drugs at school</b>	8	
<b>Buy/sell drugs outside</b>	14	

The study found that both educators and parents talk to youth about the problems of drugs, and set clear rules, but school personnel were more likely to administer punishment when rules were broken. More than three-fourths of students (76%) said schools were likely to punish them for breaking rules, compared to 59% who said their parents were likely to punish them.

Only 19% of students said their teachers never talk to them about alcohol and drug problems, and only 15% said their parents never do so.

**Methodology**

The study was conducted during the 2002-03 school year and involved students nationwide. The Pride Survey represents data from sixth through 12th grade students collected between August 2002 and June 2003. Participating schools are sent the Pride Questionnaire with explicit instructions for administering the anonymous, self-report instrument. Schools that administer the Pride Questionnaire do so voluntarily or in compliance with a school district or state request.

**Comparing Pride Survey to MTF**

Results of the Pride Survey are usually consistent with the National Institute on Drug Abuse’s Monitoring the Future Survey (MTF), which has not been published for the 2002-03 school year.

<b>ANY ILLICIT DRUG ANNUAL USE – PRIDE VS. MONITORING THE FUTURE (MTF)</b>															
	2001-2002			2000-2001			1999-00			1998-99			1997-98		
<b>Grade</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Pride</b>	16.5	32.0	37.4	19.8	34.4	41.4	19.3	33.9	40.2	22.1	35.0	40.2	25.1	37.2	41.0
<b>MTF</b>	17.7	34.8	41.0	19.5	37.2	41.4	19.5	36.4	40.9	20.5	35.9	42.1	21.0	35.0	41.4
<b>Diff.</b>	+1.2	+2.8	+3.6	-0.3	+2.8	0.0	+0.2	+2.5	+0.7	-1.6	+0.9	+1.9	-4.1	-2.2	+0.4

The 2002-03 Pride Survey was released in a news conference Sept. 3, 2003, at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

Individual state or regional breakdowns are not available.

**A full copy of the report is available at [www.pridesurveys.com](http://www.pridesurveys.com).**

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