

# **Texas School Survey Of Drug And Alcohol Use**

## **Dripping Springs ISD**

### **Secondary Executive Summary**

#### **Introduction**

The Texas School Survey is an annual collection of self-reported tobacco, alcohol, inhalant, and substance use data from among elementary and/or secondary students in individual districts throughout the state of Texas. The survey, conducted by the Public Policy Research Institute (PPRI) in conjunction with the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (TCADA), is also administered every other year to a representative sample of Texas students in grades 4 through 6 and grades 7 through 12.

Data from the statewide sampling, administered in the Spring of 2002, are incorporated into an over-time database maintained by TCADA to track trends in substance use so that policymakers at the state level have up-to-date information upon which to base decisions and plot prevention strategies. These data also serve as an overall standard of comparison for use by those at the district level to interpret, and act upon, local survey findings in a similar way.

The executive summary begins with a section containing a general demographic overview of those who took the survey in the participating district. This is followed by sections dealing with the various substances covered by the survey---tobacco, alcohol, inhalants, and illicit drugs. The summary concludes with a section that explores selected characteristics associated with substance use in the district and a final one dealing with where students come by what they know about drugs and alcohol and to whom they might turn if they thought they were having a problem.

For context, each section dealing with substance use will begin with a brief, over-time glimpse of the statewide trends in the 1990's with regard to that substance. Use data are then sandwiched in between subsections dealing with environment and, where the data are applicable, with behavior specifically associated with substance use.

Items that are generally recognized as contributing to the environment in which substance use is most likely to occur include availability, peer use, and parental attitudes. Included in the behavior category are such things as "binge drinking" (the consuming of five or more alcoholic beverages at one time), attending class drunk or stoned, use of alcohol or illicit drugs at parties, or operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

As for the actual, self-reported use of each substance, it is important to note the frequency of such use. Is it experimental, a once-in-a-lifetime thing? Is it casual use, a once-in-a-while behavior? Or is it regular use, a monthly, weekly, or---in the case of tobacco products in particular---a daily habit? Further, use data are used to differentiate between those who smoke cigarettes from those who use a smokeless tobacco product, those who drink beer from those who drink wine coolers,

those who sniff correction fluid from those who sniff glue, and those who smoke marijuana from those who snort powdered cocaine.

Three final points should be noted about the data. First, due to the differences in rounding procedures, there may be slight discrepancies between the percentages referred to in the tables and those reflected in the executive summary and in the corresponding figures. Second, due to the small number of students surveyed in this district, no between-grade comparisons can be made---although comparisons between grade groupings (7 and 8 and 9 through 12) can be made.

**Finally, some data in this report are marked with an asterisk. Data so marked are estimated to be statistically significant at the .01 level from the comparable data for the state as a whole. This means that in only one of a hundred samples would a difference this large have occurred when there was no difference between the district and state data. Differences in very small districts will seldom be statistically significant due to the small number of cases. Differences that are not marked may be important, but should be treated with more caution than those that are statistically significant.**

The percentages referred to in the executive summary that follows were taken from the tables found in "Part I: District Survey Results." Figures referenced throughout this report are included in "Part III: Executive Summary."

## **Demographic Overview**

In the Spring of 2002, the Texas School Survey was administered to students in grades 7 through 12 in the Dripping Springs Independent School District (DSISD). Texas School Survey protocols, formulated to ensure that the data used in this analysis has an acceptable probability of error, called for the district to administer the survey to all of the secondary students. The accuracy of the data requires that school staff administering the survey followed the protocols.

A total of 1046 students completed the questionnaire. Of that number, 102 surveys were excluded from analysis because students did not indicate their grade or age, or because they were identified as exaggerators (i.e., claimed to have used a non-existent drug or reported overly excessive drug use). The final number of surveys included in the overall district analysis was 944, consisting of:

- Nineteen percent who are 7th graders, 16 percent who are 8th graders, 18 percent who are 9th graders, 17 percent who are 10th graders, 15 percent who are 11th graders, and 14 percent who are 12th graders;
- Less male (43 percent) than female (57 percent) students;
- An ethnic breakdown that is 82 percent white, 8 percent Mexican-American, 2 percent African-American, 2 percent Native American, 1 percent Asian-American, and 5 percent other;
- Seventy-five percent who say they live in a two-parent home, and 75 percent who report they have lived in the district for three or more years; and

- Seventy-two percent who say their parent(s) are college graduates, and 9 percent who indicate they qualify for free/reduced lunches at school.

## **Tobacco**

General tobacco use includes both cigarettes and smokeless tobacco products.

**Statewide Overview.** Well over half of secondary students statewide reported experimental use of tobacco products throughout the previous decade. In 2000, however, the number of these students who reported such use dipped slightly. This downward trend has continued through the 2002 statewide assessment so that less than half of the secondary students indicated a lifetime use of tobacco products. The prevalence of those secondary students reporting past-month general tobacco use had been inching upward through 1996, but had leveled off in 1998 and declined appreciably in the 2000 and 2002 statewide surveys. This downward movement in tobacco use appears to be more prevalent with regard to cigarettes than it does with regard to the smokeless variety.

**District Overview.** Overall, the general use of tobacco products among Dripping Springs ISD students in the lower grade grouping (grades 7 and 8) in 2002 was somewhat similar to that reported by their counterparts statewide, although this grade grouping did report a somewhat lower rate of experimental general tobacco use. On the other hand, DSISD students in the upper grade grouping (grades 9 through 12) were using these products at rates higher than those indicated by their peers statewide, including statistically significant differences with regard to past-month general tobacco use and daily cigarette use.

**Environment.** Two-thirds of DSISD students (66 percent) reported that cigarettes are somewhat or very easy to get (64 percent statewide), while 14 percent said most or all of their close friends smoke cigarettes (12 percent statewide).

Over half of district students (57\* percent) indicated that smokeless tobacco products are somewhat or very easy to get (44 percent statewide), and 6 percent said most or all of their close friends use smokeless tobacco (5 percent statewide).

Students were asked about parental attitudes toward the use of cigarettes by “kids your age.” Eighty-six percent of DSISD students said their parents strongly or mildly disapprove of kids smoking (82 percent statewide), while 7 percent said their parents neither approve nor disapprove (8 percent statewide), and 4 percent said they “don't know” how their parents feel about kids their age smoking cigarettes (9 percent statewide).

Forty-six percent of Dripping Springs students believe that tobacco use is “very dangerous” (47 percent statewide) (Fig. 15).

**Use.** Thirty-seven\* percent of Dripping Springs students reported general tobacco use at least once during their lifetimes (45 percent statewide) (Fig. 1). Experimental use of a tobacco product was

reported by 22 percent of district 7th and 8th graders (32 percent statewide) and 46 percent of DSISD 9th through 12th graders (52 percent statewide) (Fig. 3).

Twenty-two percent of Dripping Springs ISD students said they had used a tobacco product during the past month (18 percent statewide) (Fig. 2). Past-month general tobacco use was reported by 10 percent of DSISD 7th and 8th grade students (10 percent statewide) and 28\* percent of district 9th through 12th grade students (23 percent statewide) (Fig. 4).

Thirty-six\* percent of Dripping Springs students reported smoking cigarettes at least once during their lifetimes (43 percent statewide), while 20\* percent said they had smoked cigarettes during the past month (16 percent statewide), and 9\* percent reported smoking cigarettes on a daily basis (5 percent statewide). Daily cigarette use was indicated by 2 percent of district 7th and 8th graders (1 percent statewide) and 13\* percent of Dripping Springs 9th through 12th graders (6 percent statewide).

Experimental use of smokeless tobacco products was reported by 13 percent of DSISD students (13 percent statewide), 6 percent said they had used a smokeless tobacco product during the past month (5 percent statewide), and 1 percent reported using a smokeless tobacco product on a daily basis (1 percent statewide).

## **Alcohol**

Alcohol is the most widely used substance among students statewide and in the Dripping Springs ISD.

**Statewide Overview.** As the 1990's began, 81 percent of secondary students statewide reported experimental alcohol use. Over the decade that followed, the number of these students reporting such use inched downward in each successive statewide assessment. In 2002, just over two-thirds of secondary students (71 percent) reported lifetime alcohol use. On the other hand, past-month alcohol use among secondary students statewide has been more of a roller-coaster-ride through the same period, beginning with 43 percent of these students in 1990, dropping to 37 percent in 1992, inching back upward to 39 percent in 1994, leveling off in 1996 and 1998 at 38 percent, and dipping down to 36 percent in 2000. The number of secondary students statewide indicating recent alcohol use in the 2002 statewide assessment was 35 percent.

**District Overview.** Overall, Dripping Springs ISD students were drinking alcohol in 2002 at rates somewhat similar to those reported by their peers statewide. However, both grade grouping reported significantly lower rates of lifetime alcohol than did their counterparts statewide. In addition, DSISD students reported significantly lower rates than did students statewide with regard to wine coolers as a beverage of choice and the binge-drinking of wine coolers.

**Environment.** Thirty-two percent of district students reported most or all of their close friends drink alcohol (33 percent statewide), and 78\* percent said alcohol (beer, wine coolers, wine, and liquor) was somewhat easy or very easy to obtain (71 percent statewide).

Students who said they consume alcohol were asked where they obtained it most of the time or always. Thirty-five percent of district students said they obtain alcohol "at parties" (37 percent statewide), while 34 percent responded that they get it "from friends" (31 percent statewide), and 9 percent reported they get alcohol "from the store" (11 percent statewide).

Parental attitudes can be a major factor in whether or not a student uses alcohol. When asked how their parents feel about kids their age drinking beer, 81 percent of Dripping Springs students said their parents strongly or mildly disapprove (79 percent statewide), while 10 percent said their parents neither approve nor disapprove of such behavior (10 percent statewide), and 4\* percent said they "don't know" how their parents feel about kids their age drinking beer (8 percent statewide) (Fig. 16).

Less than half of DSISD students (44 percent) feel that it is "very dangerous" to use alcohol (46 percent statewide) (Fig. 15).

**Use.** Fifty-nine\* percent of Dripping Springs students reported consuming alcohol at least once during their lifetimes (71 percent statewide) (Fig. 1). Experimental use of alcohol was reported by 42\* percent of district 7th and 8th grade students (58 percent statewide) and 68\* percent of DSISD 9th through 12th grade students (78 percent statewide) (Fig. 5).

Thirty-four percent of Dripping Springs ISD students said they had consumed alcohol during the past month (35 percent statewide) (Fig. 2). Past-month alcohol use was reported by 18 percent of DSISD 7th and 8th graders (22 percent statewide) and 43 percent of district 9th through 12th graders (41 percent statewide) (Fig. 6).

The alcoholic beverages most often consumed by Dripping Springs students are beer (49 percent/52 percent statewide) and wine coolers (45\* percent/53 percent statewide). Thirty-three percent of DSISD students said they drink beer on a weekly or monthly basis (31 percent statewide), and 24 percent said they drink wine coolers weekly or monthly (27 percent statewide).

**Behavior Associated With Use.** "Binge drinking" is the consumption of five or more beers, wine coolers, servings of wine, or drinks with liquor at one time. Thirty-four percent of Dripping Springs ISD students reported "binge drinking" beer at least once during their lifetimes (34 percent statewide), while 17 percent said they usually drink five or more beers at a time on average when they drink (17 percent statewide). One-time "binge drinking" of wine coolers was reported by 29\* percent of DSISD students (35 percent statewide), while 9\* percent said they usually drink five or more wine coolers at a time on average when they drink (14 percent statewide).

Thirteen\* percent of Dripping Springs students reported attending at least one class during the past school year while "drunk" (9 percent statewide). Attending class intoxicated was indicated by 7 percent of DSISD 7th and 8th graders (8 percent statewide) and 17\* percent of district 9th through 12th graders (10 percent statewide) (Fig. 11).

Eighteen percent of DSISD 9th through 12th grade students said that they had driven a car after having "a good bit to drink" at least once during the past year (13 percent statewide). Driving while

intoxicated four or more times during the past year was reported by 5 percent of district 9th through 12th graders (4 percent statewide) (Fig. 13).

Thirty-three percent of Dripping Springs students said alcohol was used at most or all of the parties they attended in the past school year (34 percent statewide). Alcohol use at most or all parties was reported by 10 percent of DSISD 7th and 8th grade students (12 percent statewide) and 47 percent of district 9th through 12th grade students (45 percent statewide) (Fig. 14).

Three\* percent of DSISD students said they had gotten into trouble with their teacher because of alcohol use at least once during the past school year (1 percent statewide), while 4 percent reported they had gotten in trouble with the police because of their alcohol use during the past year (4 percent statewide), and 9 percent said they had "difficulties of any kind" with friends because of one's own drinking (8 percent statewide).

## **Illicit Drugs**

Illicit drugs are defined as controlled substances and include marijuana, cocaine (powdered form and crack), uppers (stimulants), downers (narcotics), hallucinogens, and ecstasy.

**Statewide Overview.** In 1990, as part of a general downward trend in the use of illicit substances, a quarter of secondary students statewide (25 percent) reported experimental use of an illegal drug and 10 percent said they had used an illegal substance during the past month. This downward trend bottomed out in 1992, as 22 percent of secondary students reported lifetime use of any illicit substance and 8 percent indicated past-month use. The use of marijuana by this student population closely paralleled this overall trend.

In 1994, however, these prevalence rates began to climb---most particularly with regard to past-month use. Thus, 28 percent of this student population indicated use of an illegal drug at least once in their lifetimes, while more recent use nearly doubled from that reported two years earlier---to 14 percent. By 1998, experimental use of illicit substances had climbed to 36 percent; however, hopeful signs began to appear as those secondary students statewide reporting past-month use of an illicit substance actually edged downward to 17 percent from the 18 percent these students had reported in the 1996 assessment. This was followed two years later by declines in illicit drug use both in the lifetime (34 percent) and past-month (15 percent) categories. Again, marijuana use appears to have mirrored these trends. In the most recent assessment, the lifetime use remained steady at 34 percent, while the past-month use inched back up to 15 percent. Marijuana use did not substantially change according to the 2002 statewide survey.

The use of ecstasy by secondary students statewide is arguably the most troubling trend apparent over the last several statewide assessment---especially so in 2002. Between 1996 and 2000, experimental ecstasy use remained steady at about 5 percent, whereas past-month ecstasy use crept up from just under 1 percent to 2 percent during that same period. In 2002, 9 percent of secondary students statewide indicated experimental ecstasy use and 3 percent said they used ecstasy during the previous month.

**District Overview.** Overall, the use of illicit drugs, and of marijuana in particular, among Dripping Springs ISD students in the lower grade grouping in 2002 was somewhat similar to that reported by their counterparts statewide. DSISD students in the upper grade grouping were using illicit substances at rates somewhat higher than those indicated by their peers statewide, including significant differences with regard to past-month marijuana use, attending at least one class stoned, driving at least one time stoned, and attending parties where illicit drugs were routinely present. In addition, district students (all grades) reported significantly higher rates than did students statewide with regard to the perceived easy availability of marijuana, uppers and downers, the experimental use of powdered cocaine, crack, hallucinogens, uppers and downers.

**Environment.** Students were asked how available they believed certain substances were to obtain. Just over half of DSISD students (53\* percent) said marijuana was somewhat or very easy to obtain (47 percent statewide); about a quarter reported that ecstasy (27 percent/30 percent statewide), uppers (27\* percent/19 percent statewide), downers (24\* percent/19 percent statewide), and powdered cocaine (22 percent/22 percent statewide) were easily accessible to them. Thirteen percent of district students said they believed heroin was somewhat or very easy to obtain (14 percent statewide).

With regard to the question of the effects of peer influence on substance use, 25\* percent of DSISD students reported most or all of their close friends smoke marijuana (19 percent statewide). And when asked about parental attitudes toward marijuana use, Dripping Springs students reported a disapproval rate of 85 percent (86 percent statewide). Five\* percent of district students said they "don't know" how their parents feel about kids their age using marijuana (7 percent statewide), while 6 percent said their parents neither approve nor disapprove (4 percent statewide) (Fig. 16).

Fifty\* percent of Dripping Springs students believe that marijuana use is "very dangerous" (58 percent statewide). As for how DSISD students viewed the risks associated with the use of certain other illicit substances, 77 percent feel that use of ecstasy is "very dangerous" (79 percent statewide), 81 percent believe that powdered cocaine use is "very dangerous" (85 percent statewide), 83\* percent feel that the use of crack is "very dangerous" (87 percent statewide), and 87 percent believe that heroin is "very dangerous" (88 percent statewide) (Fig. 15).

**Use.** In the Dripping Springs ISD, 34 percent of students reported experimental use of an illicit drug (34 percent statewide), and 33 percent of DSISD students reported smoking marijuana at least once in their lifetimes (32 percent statewide) (Fig. 1). Experimental use of marijuana was reported by 17 percent of district 7th and 8th grade students (18 percent statewide) and 41 percent of DSISD 9th through 12th grade students (40 percent statewide) (Fig. 9).

Past-month marijuana use was reported by 21\* percent of Dripping Springs ISD students (14 percent statewide) (Fig. 2). Smoking marijuana during the past month was indicated by 10 percent of DSISD 7th and 8th graders (8 percent statewide) and 27\* percent of district 9th through 12th graders (18 percent statewide) (Fig. 10).

Other illicit substances are used by a smaller number of Dripping Springs ISD students. Twelve\* percent of DSISD students said they had used powdered cocaine (7 percent statewide), 12\* percent reported using uppers (7 percent statewide), 11\* percent said they had used downers (7 percent

statewide), 10 percent reported using ecstasy (9 percent statewide), 9\* percent said they had used hallucinogens (4 percent statewide), 5\* percent indicated they had used crack (3 percent statewide), 4 percent said they had used steroids (2 percent statewide), 3 percent indicated they had used Rohypnol (5 percent statewide), and 3 percent reported using heroin (2 percent statewide) at least once during their lifetimes (Fig. 1).

**Behavior Associated with Use.** Seventeen\* percent of DSISD students reported attending at least one class in the past year while "stoned" on marijuana (12 percent statewide). Attending class while stoned was reported by 9 percent of Dripping Springs 7th and 8th graders (8 percent statewide) and 22\* percent of district 9th through 12th graders (15 percent statewide) (Fig. 12).

Driving under the influence of drugs at least once during the past year was reported by 19\* percent of Dripping Springs ISD 9th through 12th grade students (13 percent statewide). Driving under the influence of drugs four or more times during the past year was reported by 5 percent of district 9th through 12th graders (3 percent statewide).

Twenty-five\* percent of the Dripping Springs ISD students said that marijuana and/or other drugs were used at most or all of the parties they attended during the school year (21 percent statewide). Marijuana and/or other drug use at most or all parties was indicated by 11 percent of DSISD 7th and 8th grade students (9 percent statewide) and 34\* percent of district 9th through 12th grade students (28 percent statewide).

Three percent of DSISD students said they had gotten into trouble with their teacher because of illicit drug use at least once during the past school year (2 percent statewide), while 5\* percent reported they had gotten in trouble with the police because of their use of illegal drugs during the past year (3 percent statewide), and 8 percent said they had gotten into "difficulties of any kind" with their friends during the past year because of their own drug use (6 percent statewide).

## Inhalants

In general, inhalants are common, licit substances (paints, thinners, correction fluid, glue, etc.) which, when sniffed, huffed, or inhaled, produce an intoxicating effect. Lifetime and past-month inhalant use percentages have been adjusted to reflect reported use of both specific inhalants and inhalant use generally. This adjustment was made because some students responded positive to specific use without responding positive to generic use, while some students responded positive to generic use but not specific inhalants.

**Statewide Overview.** Nearly a quarter of secondary students statewide indicated they had experimented with an inhalant substance in the 1992 assessment. The number of these students reporting such use dropped to 19 percent two years later, began to creep back upward in 1996 (19 percent) and 1998 (22 percent), and started downward again in 2000 (20 percent). Experimental inhalant use fell further, to 18 percent, among secondary students in most the recent statewide assessment. Past-month inhalant use among the secondary student population statewide held steady at 5 percent through 1996, ticked up to 8 percent two years later, and dropped a percentage point in 2000. The number of these students reporting past-month inhalant use stayed flat in the 2002 survey.

**District Overview.** Overall, Dripping Springs ISD students were using inhalants in 2002 at rates similar to those reported by their counterparts statewide.

**Environment.** Four\* percent of DSISD students reported most or all of their close friends use inhalants (2 percent statewide), and 72\* percent believe that inhalant use is "very dangerous" (77 percent statewide) (Fig. 15).

**Use.** Eighteen percent of Dripping Springs students reported using inhalants at least once during their lifetimes (18 percent statewide) (Fig. 1). Experimental use of an inhalant was indicated by 20 percent of district 7th and 8th graders (19 percent statewide) and 16 percent of DSISD 9th through 12th graders (17 percent statewide) (Fig. 7).

Eight percent of Dripping Springs ISD students said they had used inhalants during the past month (7 percent statewide) (Fig. 2). Past-month inhalant use was reported by 9 percent of DSISD 7th and 8th grade students (9 percent statewide) and 7 percent of district 9th through 12th grade students (6 percent statewide) (Fig. 8).

Ten percent of DSISD students said they had used two or more different kinds of inhalant substances during their lifetimes (9 percent statewide). The inhalant substances most frequently used by Dripping Springs students were nitrous oxide/laughing gas (10 percent/6 percent statewide), liquid/spray paint (9 percent/8 percent statewide), correction fluid/whiteout (8 percent/8 percent statewide), and those in the "other inhalants" category (8 percent/8 percent statewide).

Six percent of district students said they had inhaled glue (4 percent statewide), 5 percent indicated they had inhaled gasoline (4 percent statewide), 5 percent reported inhaling paint thinner (4 percent statewide), and 5 percent indicated they had inhaled substances in the "other sprays" category (4 percent statewide) at least once during their lifetimes.

### **Characteristics Associated With Drug Use**

In the statewide survey, and with the notable exception of uppers, female students were somewhat less likely to have used an illicit drug than were male students. In the Dripping Springs ISD, male students were somewhat more likely to have used inhalants, powdered cocaine or ecstasy, nearly two times more likely to have used crack, and over two times more likely to have used hallucinogens, Rohypnol or steroids than were district female students. There were no other significant differences by gender among DSISD students with regard to the use of tobacco products, alcohol, marijuana, uppers, downers or heroin.

## Drug and Alcohol Information

The influence of drug education programs may be reflected in students' attitudes toward the use of specific substances reported above. Sixty-four percent of Dripping Springs ISD students said they had gotten information about drugs and alcohol from a school source since classes began in the Fall (61 percent statewide). “An assembly program” was reported by 72\* percent of district students as a source for information about drugs and alcohol (47 percent statewide), 59\* percent reported getting this information from an “invited school guest” (37 percent statewide), and 38\* percent said the source for information about drugs and alcohol was a “health class” (48 percent statewide).

When asked where they would go for help with a drug or alcohol problem, the largest percentage of Dripping Springs students said they would seek help from their friends (78\* percent/73 percent statewide). Fifty-four\* percent of DSISD students said they would seek help from an adult friend or relative for help with a drug or alcohol problem (59 percent statewide), and 58 percent said they would turn to their parents for such help (58 percent statewide). District students are least likely to seek help for a drug or alcohol problem from a counselor or program in school (26\* percent/33 percent statewide) or another adult in school, such as a teacher or nurse (26\* percent/30 percent statewide) (Fig. 17).

Since school began in the Fall, 5\* percent of Dripping Springs students reported seeking help for any problems connected with alcohol or drug use from someone other than family or friends (8 percent statewide).