

TOBACCO USE AMONG LOUISIANA YOUTH

**FINDINGS FROM THE LOUISIANA
YOUTH TOBACCO SURVEY**

2019

Tobacco Use Among Louisiana Youth

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Resources

For additional information on Well-Ahead Louisiana, please visit <http://wellaheadla.com/Living-Well-Ahead/Geaux-Tobacco-Free/Tobacco-Free-Data>. Information on TFL can be found at <http://tobaccofreeliving.org>.

For more in-depth information on vaping and e-cigarettes, please refer to the [2019 E-Cigarette Use Among Louisiana Youth Report](#).

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For help quitting tobacco, call 1-800-QUIT-NOW, visit www.quitwithusla.org, or visit teen.smokefree.gov.

Tobacco Use Among Louisiana Youth

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Considerable progress has been made in reducing cigarette smoking among our nation's youth.¹ However, the tobacco product landscape continues to evolve to include a variety of tobacco products, including smoked, smokeless, and electronic products, such as e-cigarettes (vapes).² Tobacco use among Louisiana youth remains a public health concern. The prevalence of addictive tobacco products like cigarettes, cigars, smokeless, and e-cigarettes among Louisiana students remains considerably higher than national averages. The Louisiana Youth Tobacco Survey (LYTS) monitors tobacco-use trends and behavior among middle and high school students in Louisiana, which is crucial to the development and planning of cessation and prevention programs. The survey offers insight into prevalence, cessation, peer influence, perception, access, and secondhand smoke.

Trends

- Cigarette use has decreased by a third among high school students from 2015 to 2019 (from 18% in 2015 to 12% in 2019).
- E-cigarette use has tripled among both middle and high school students from 2015 to 2019 (Middle School (MS): from 5% in 2015 to 15% in 2019; High School (HS): from 9% in 2015 to 32% in 2019).

Prevalence

- 1 in 3 Louisiana high school students use e-cigarettes.
- Male middle school students were 2 times more likely to use smokeless and hookah tobacco when compared to female middle school students (Smokeless: 6% of males compared to 3% of females; Hookah: 10% of males compared to 5% of females).
- Male high school students were 3 times more likely to use smokeless and two times more likely to use hookah when compared to female high school students (Smokeless: 14% of males compared to 5% of females; Hookah: 13% of males compared to 7% of females).
- Black middle school students were 2 times more likely to use cigars/cigarillos and hookah when compared to white middle school students (Cigars/Cigarillos: 8% of black students compared to 4% of white students; Hookah: 9% of black students compared to 5% of white students).
- White high school students were 2 times more likely to use e-cigarettes when compared to black high school students (40% of white students compared to 21% of black students).
- Black high school students were 1.5 times more likely to use cigars/cigarillos and hookah when compared to white high school students (Cigars/Cigarillos: 18% of black students compared to 12% of white students; Hookah: 11% of black students compared to 7% of white students).

Cessation

- Of middle school students who saw healthcare providers in the last year, less than 1 in 4 were asked about tobacco use and were advised against it.
- Of high school students who saw healthcare providers in the last year, less than 2 in 5 were asked about tobacco use and were advised against it.

¹ Office of the Surgeon General. (2014). *The Health Consequences of Smoking-50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta: US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (US), National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health.

² Office of the Surgeon General. (2016). *E-cigarette Use among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Peer Influence

- High school students were 3 times more likely to accept a cigarette from a friend when compared to middle school students (MS: 3% and HS: 8%).

Perception

- Middle school students perceive all addictive tobacco products like cigarettes, cigars, smokeless, hookah, and e-cigarettes as more dangerous than high school students.
- 1 in 3 students reported that they didn't know enough information about e-cigarettes to determine if they were less harmful, equally harmful, or more harmful than combustible cigarettes.

Access

- Of both middle and high school students who reported attempting to purchase addictive tobacco products like cigarettes, cigars, smokeless, hookah, and e-cigarettes, 4 out of 5 were able to do so.

Secondhand Smoke

- Of students who work, about half reported exposure to secondhand smoke at least 1 out of the last 7 days (MS: 52% and HS: 45%).
- High school students were more likely than middle school students to report that tobacco use was sometimes or always allowed in their family's home and vehicle.

Tobacco Use Among Louisiana Youth

INTRODUCTION

Tobacco initiation prevention remains a significant priority of Well-Ahead and TFL. This is supported by the body of evidence that indicates that the majority of tobacco users develop the habit in their adolescent years.³ The addiction rate for smoking is higher than the addiction rates for marijuana, alcohol, or cocaine.⁴ Symptoms of serious nicotine addiction often occur only weeks or even just days after youth “experimentation” with smoking first begins.⁵ Because adolescence is a critical period of growth and development, exposure to nicotine may have lasting, adverse consequences on brain development.⁶ The national Youth Tobacco Survey (YTS) provides states with the data needed to design, implement, and evaluate comprehensive tobacco control programs, which work to both prevent youth from initiating in addictive tobacco products like cigarettes, cigars, smokeless, hookah and e-cigarettes and also help those who have already started using to quit. Access to dangerous tobacco products continues to be a concern, as youth reported few limitations to purchasing tobacco products. With recent federal legislative changes, “raising the federal minimum legal sales age of tobacco to 21 and restricting the sale of flavored e-cigarette cartridges (excluding menthol)” (FDA-2019-D-0661), monitoring of accessibility will be crucial.

Background

Well-Ahead utilizes the LYTS data to understand youth tobacco use and trends to help design, implement, and evaluate the youth portion of its tobacco prevention and control program. TFL utilizes the data trends to design and implement its NextEra® program, a statewide youth movement uniting Louisiana high school students to advocate for tobacco-free lifestyles. The LYTS collected detailed information regarding the quantity and frequency of use of all addictive tobacco products, as well as knowledge, perceptions, and attitudes associated with tobacco use. The LYTS was conducted in 2008, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, and 2019.

Methods

LYTS collects tobacco-related data from middle school students grades 6-8 and high school students grades 9-12. The students are chosen from among 40 randomly selected middle schools and 40 randomly selected high school across the state. A two-stage cluster sample design is used to ensure a representative sample of students. The first stage consists of randomly selected schools within the grade range specified with a probability proportional to enrollment size. The second stage consists of randomly selecting classrooms within the selected schools, and all students in these selected classes are eligible to participate. The self-administered questionnaire is anonymous. LYTS data are weighted to adjust for any unequal probabilities of selection, nonresponse, and disproportionate selection of different demographic groups.

The race/ethnicity demographic breakdown is limited to “non-Hispanic White,” “non-Hispanic Black,” and “Other” due to the small sample size of specific race/ethnicity categories. “Other” includes those who reported race as Hispanic, Latino, American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, or Other Pacific Islander. Survey results of participants who selected more than one race were included in all race categories they chose.

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2018). *Youth and Tobacco Use*. Atlanta: CDC.

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (1995, November 10). Symptoms of Substance Dependence Associated with Use of Cigarettes, Alcohol, and Illicit Drugs—United States 1991-1992. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)*, 44(44), 830-831,837-839.

⁵ DiFranza, J. R., & et al. . (2000, September). Initial Symptoms of Nicotine Dependence in Adolescents. *Tobacco Control*, 9, 313-319.

⁶ Office of the Surgeon General. (2014). *The Health Consequences of Smoking-50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta: US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (US), National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health.

Tobacco Use Among Louisiana Youth

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Cigarettes	A thin cylinder of ground or shredded tobacco that is wrapped in paper, lit, and smoked.
E-cigarettes	A battery-powered cartridge that includes a heating element that vaporizes a liquid solution that may contain a mixture of nicotine, flavors, and other chemicals that help to make aerosol. E-cigarettes are known by many different names. They are sometimes called “e-cigs,” “e-hookahs,” “mods,” “vape pens,” “vapes,” “tank systems,” and “electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS).” For more information, please visit What Are E-Cigarettes .
Cigars/Cigarillos	A tube of tobacco that is thicker than a cigarette, wrapped in tobacco leaf, lit, and smoked. Cigars include regular cigars, cigarillos, and little filtered cigars.
Smokeless	Is tobacco that is not burned, includes tobacco that can be sucked, chewed, spit, swallowed, or spitless, and often comes in variety of flavors. Products include chewing tobacco, snuff, and dissolvable.
Hookah	A water pipe that is used to smoke specially-made tobacco that comes in different flavors.
Ever Use	Defined as the Use even just once over the course of one’s lifetime
Current Use	Defined as the Use one or more times in the last 30 days
Middle School	Middle School students (MS) are students in grades 6-8 at the time of the survey
High School	High School students (HS) are students in grades 9-12 at the time of the survey
LYTS	Louisiana Youth Tobacco Survey
TFL	Louisiana Campaign for Tobacco-Free Living
Well-Ahead	Well-Ahead Louisiana
EVALI	E-cigarette or Vaping Product Use Associated Lung Injury
Prevalence	Prevalence is a statistical concept referring to the number of cases of a disease that are present in a particular population at a given time (NOTE: incidence refers to the number of new cases that develop in a given period).

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DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographic Breakdown of Students Who Participated in the 2019 Louisiana Youth Tobacco Survey				
	Middle School		High School	
	Unweighted Frequency	Weighted %	Unweighted Frequency	Weighted %
<i>Total</i>	1,501	100	1,178	100
<i>Sex</i>				
<i>Male</i>	700	51%	555	50%
<i>Female</i>	797	49%	613	50%
<i>No Response</i>	4	--	10	--
<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>				
<i>Non-Hispanic White</i>	634	45%	479	45%
<i>Non-Hispanic Black</i>	656	45%	505	43%
<i>Other</i>	319	11%	286	11%
<i>No Response</i>	85	--	44	--
<i>Grade</i>				
<i>6</i>	606	35%	--	--
<i>7</i>	593	33%	--	--
<i>8</i>	368	32%	--	--
<i>9</i>	--	--	373	28%
<i>10</i>	--	--	352	26%
<i>11</i>	--	--	292	23%
<i>12</i>	--	--	137	23%
<i>Other</i>	2	--	--	--
<i>No Response</i>	26	--	24	--

LYTS, 2019

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RESULTS

Product Trends

Louisiana students are asked each survey year about their current use of addictive tobacco products like cigarettes, cigars, smokeless, hookah, and e-cigarettes. Over time, cigarette use has declined among high school students. Progress can be attributed to educational efforts and implementing infrastructure to make combustible cigarettes less accessible. Louisiana continues to see upward trends among e-cigarettes, cigars and cigarillos, and hookah use. From 2015 to 2019, e-cigarette use has tripled among both middle school and high school students (MS: 5% in 2015 to 15% in 2019; and HS: 9% in 2015 to 32% in 2019). Cigar and Cigarillos have increased by almost 50% among high school students (HS: 11% in 2015 to 16% in 2019). Hookah use has tripled among middle school students and doubled among high school students (MS: 2% in 2015 to 7% in 2019; and HS: 4% in 2015 to 10% in 2019).

Figure 1. Percentage of Louisiana Middle School Students Who Currently Use Tobacco Products Breakdown (2015-2019), LYTS 2019

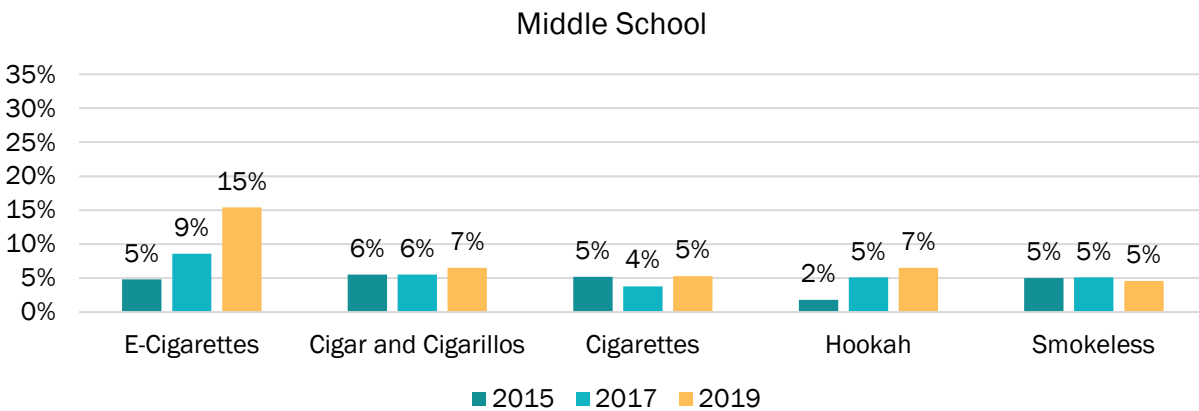
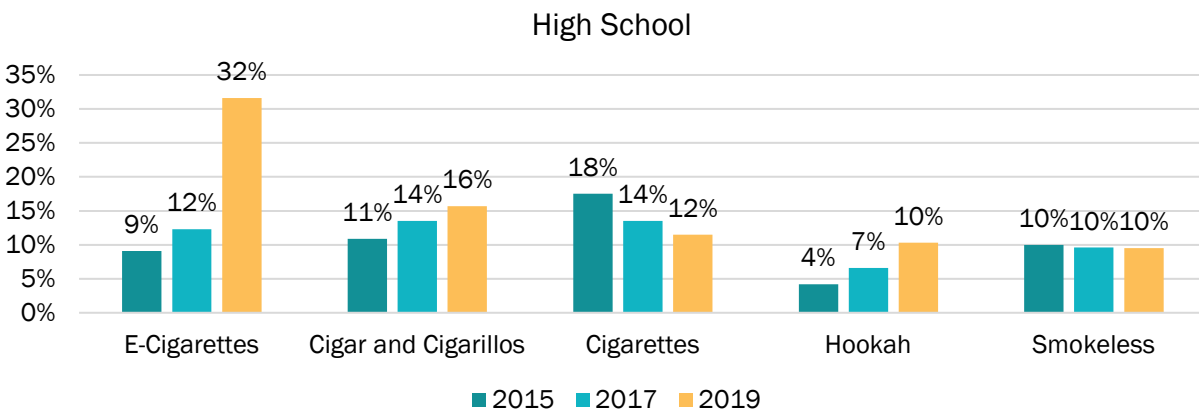


Figure 2. Percentage of Louisiana High School Students Who Currently Use Tobacco Products Breakdown (2015-2019), LYTS 2019

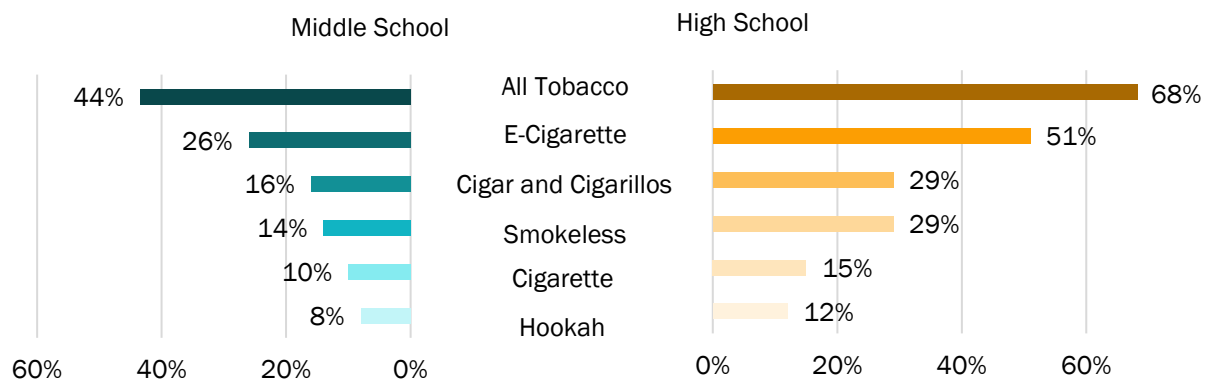


Prevalence

Students were asked if they had ever tried and currently use tobacco products. When reviewing these trends, it is important to note that communities of color and low-income communities disproportionately experience institutionalized racism and local zoning policies that result in higher retail densities of businesses that sell and advertise tobacco products (compared to predominately white and wealthy communities). These factors contribute to a higher prevalence of tobacco use and exposure among those populations and members experience psychological and physiological consequences of racism and limited financial resources. Together, these combined forces push people toward tobacco use. When stressful circumstances are compounded by higher rates of tobacco exposure, health risks increase.⁷

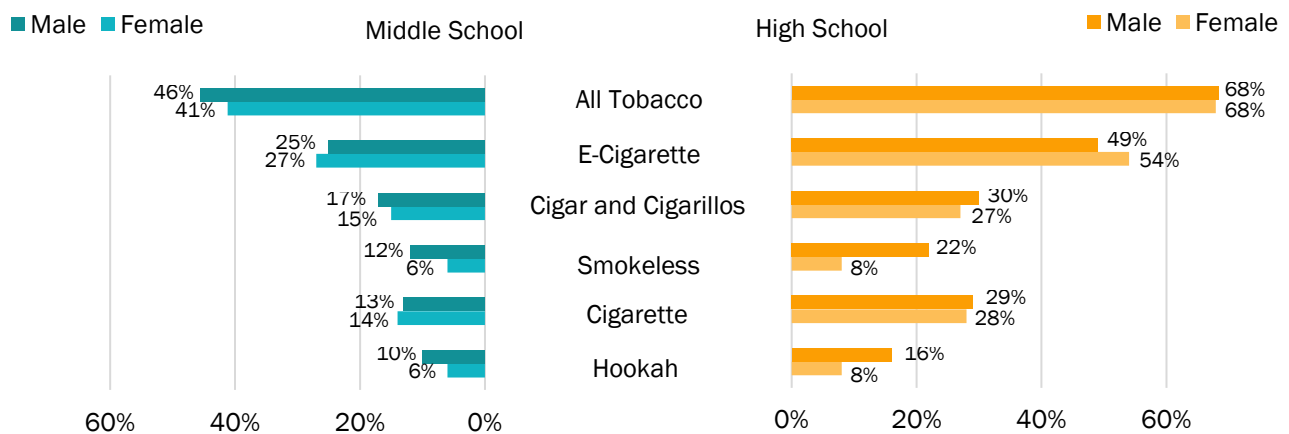
Students were asked whether they had ever tried e-cigarettes, cigars and cigarillos, cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, or hookah. Forty-four percent (44%) of middle school students and 68% of high school students reported ever trying any kind of tobacco product. E-cigarettes are the most popular tobacco product, with 26% of middle school students and 51% of high school students reporting they have tried these products. Cigars and cigarillos (MS: 16% and HS: 29%) are the next most commonly used, followed by smokeless (MS: 14% and HS: 29%), cigarettes (MS: 10% and HS: 15%), and hookah (MS: 8% and HS: 12%).

Figure 3. Percentage of Students Who Have Ever Used Tobacco Products, LYTS 2019



When the data is stratified by sex, male students are more likely to have ever tried smokeless tobacco (MS: 12% of males and 6% of females; HS: 22% of males and 8% of females) and hookah (MS: 10% of males and 6% of females; HS: 16% of males and 8% of females). There are no notable differences between sexes for other products.

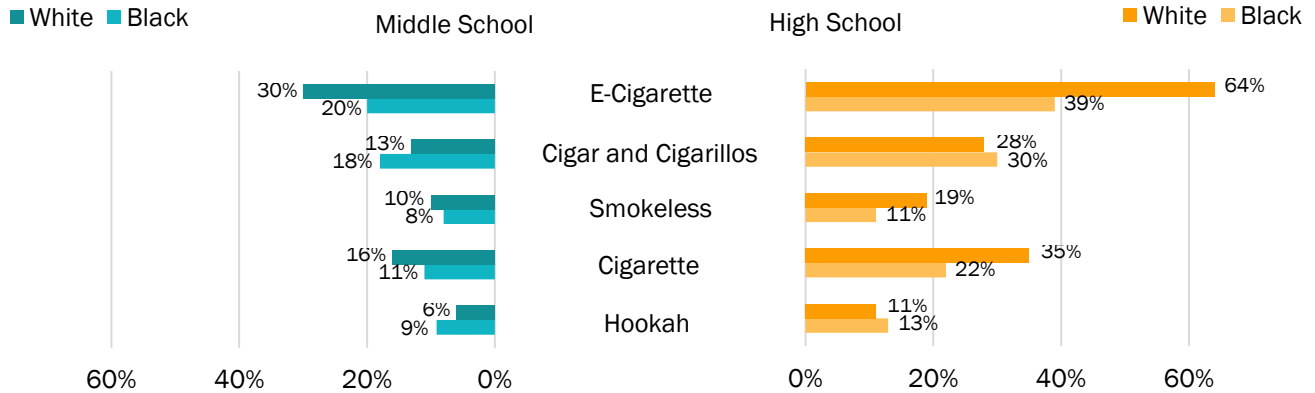
Figure 4. Percentage of Students Who Have Ever Used Tobacco Products by Sex, LYTS 2019



⁷ Read, U. M., Karamanos, A., Silva, M. J., Molaodi, O. R., Enayat, Z. E., Cassidy, A., . . . Harding, S. (2018). The influence of racism on cigarette smoking: Longitudinal study of young people in a British multiethnic cohort. *PLoS ONE*, 13(1).

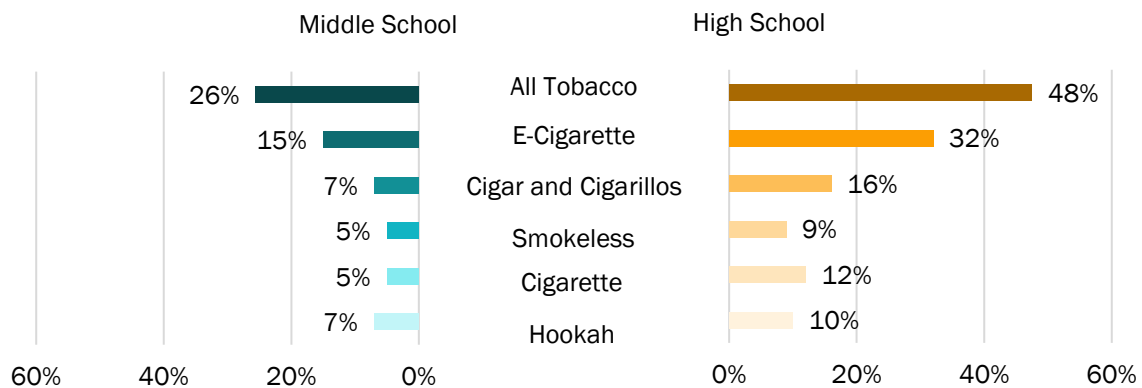
When the data are stratified by race, white students are more likely than black students to have ever tried e-cigarettes (MS: 30% of white students and 20% of black students; HS: 64% of white students and 39% of black students) and cigarettes (MS: 16% of white students and 11% of black students; HS: 35% of white students and 22% of black students). White high school students are almost twice as likely to have tried smokeless when compared to black students (white students: 19% and black students: 11%). More black students had ever tried cigars/cigarillos (MS: 18% of black students and 13% of white students; HS: 30% of black students and 28% of white students) and hookah (MS: 9% of black students and 6% of white students, HS: 13% of black students and 11% of white students). There are no notable differences between races for other products.

Figure 5. Percentage of Students Who Have Ever Used Tobacco Products by Race, LYTS 2019



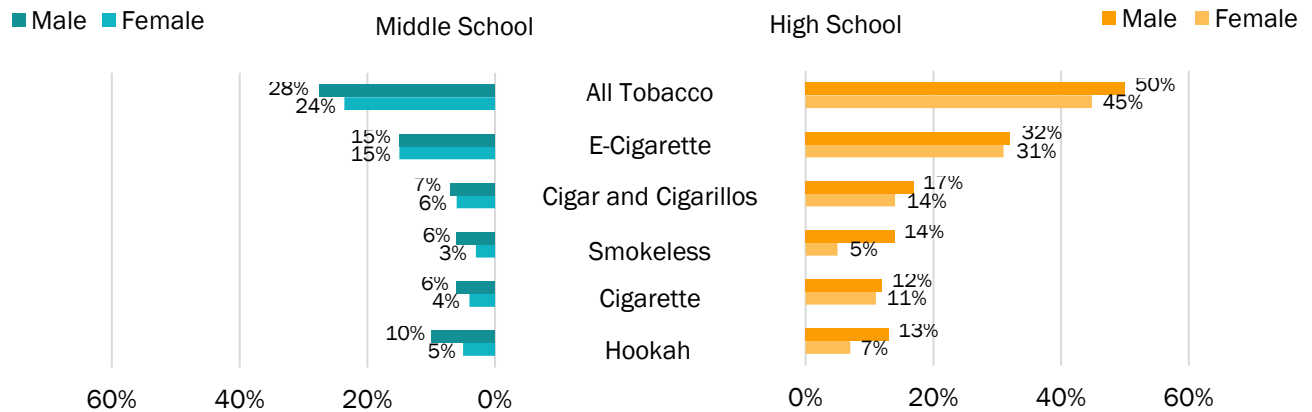
Students were then asked about tobacco use in the past 30 days. Twenty-six percent (26%) of middle school students and 48% of high school students reported current use of at least one of tobacco product in the past 30 days. E-cigarettes were found to be the most popular product (MS: 15% and HS: 32%). Cigars and cigarillos (MS: 7% and HS: 16%) are the next most commonly used followed by smokeless (MS: 5%, HS: 9%), cigarettes (MS: 5%, HS: 12%), and hookah (MS: 7%, HS: 10%).

Figure 6. Percentage of Students Who Used Tobacco Products in the Past 30 Days, LYTS 2019



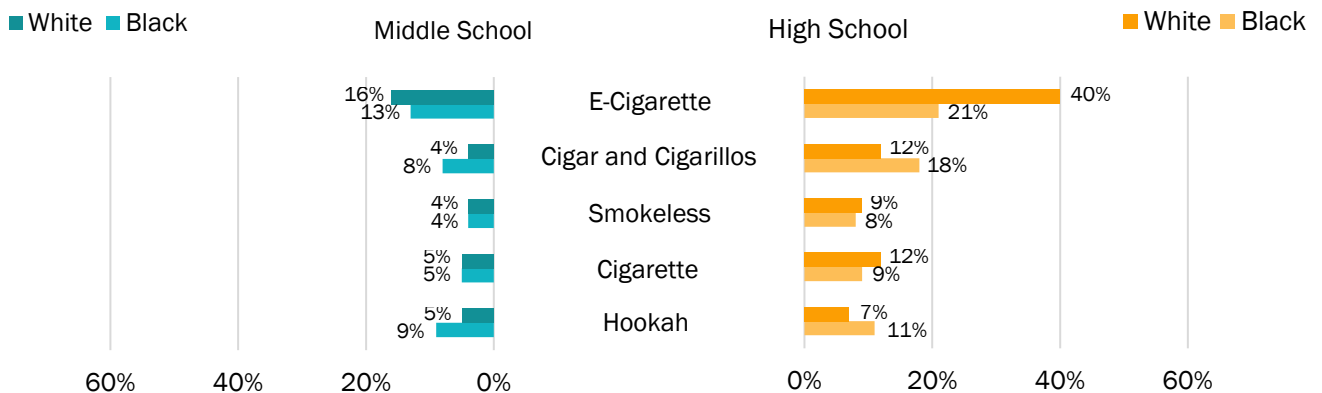
When tobacco product use in the past 30 days is stratified by sex, male students are more likely to use smokeless tobacco (MS: 6% of males and 3% of females; HS: 14% of males and 5% of females) and hookah (MS: 10% of males and 5% of females; HS: 13% of males and 7% of females). There is no notable difference between sexes for other products.

Figure 7. Percentage of Students Who Used Tobacco Products in the Past 30 Days by Sex, LYTS 2019



When tobacco product use in the past 30 days are stratified by race, white high school students are twice as likely to use e-cigarettes when compared to black high school students (white: 40% and black: 21%). Black students are more likely to use cigars and cigarillos (MS: 8% of black students and 4% of white students; HS: 18% of black students and 12% of white students), as well as, hookah (MS: 9% of black students and 5% of white students; HS: 11% of black students and 7% of white students). There are no notable differences between races among other products.

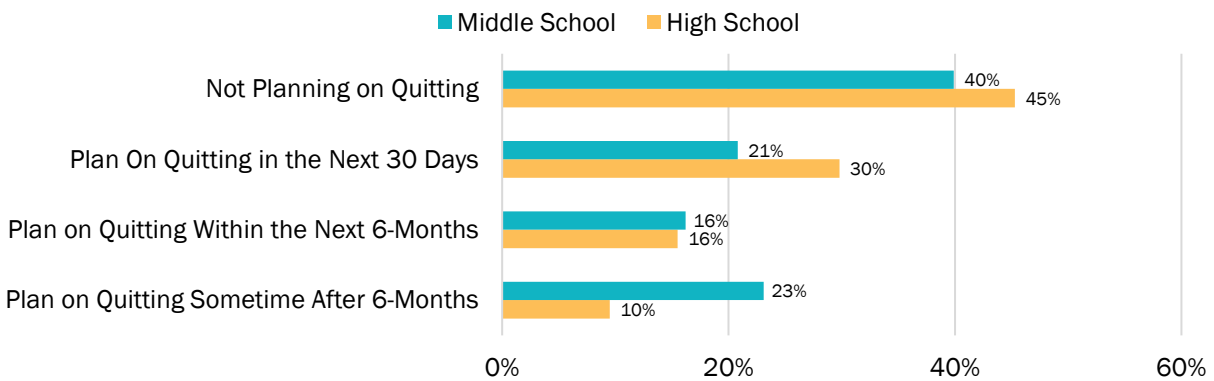
Figure 8. Percentage of Students Who Used Tobacco Products in the Past 30 Days by Race, LYTS 2019



Cessation

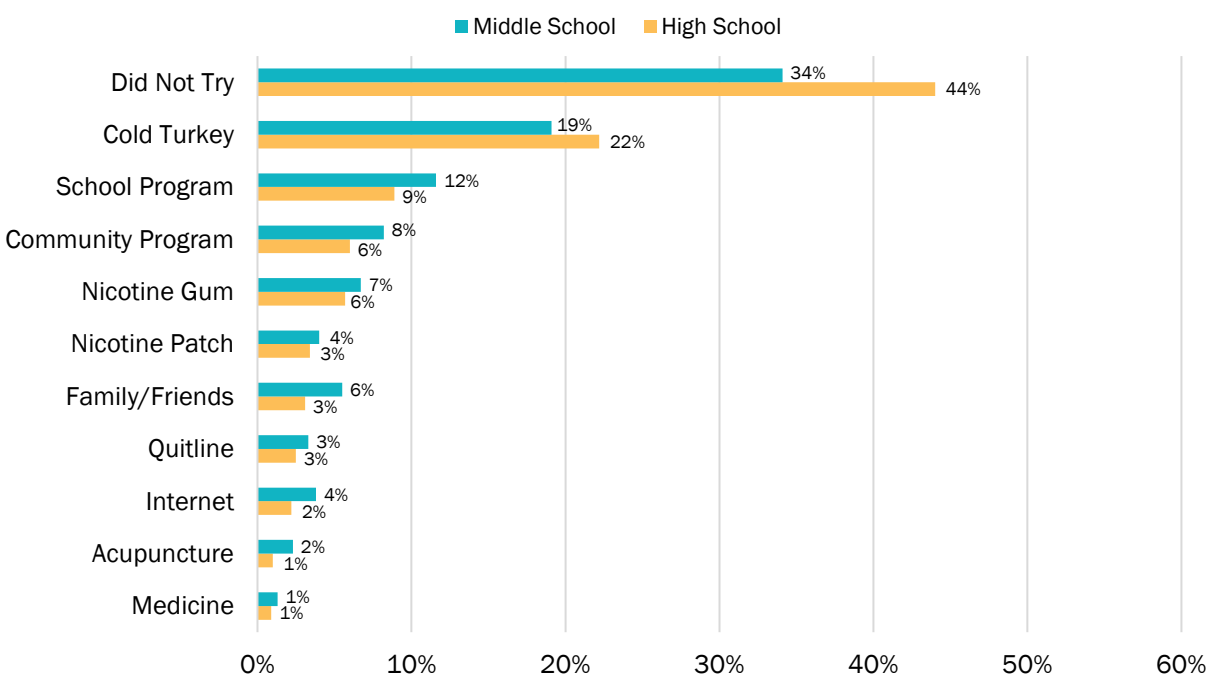
CDC's best practices suggest that healthcare providers should ask youth about their tobacco use, advise against it, and refer them to cessation resources. Approximately 4 out of 5 Louisiana middle school and high school students reported seeing a dentist, nurse, or doctor in the last 12 months. Of those students, very few were asked about tobacco use or advised against using tobacco. Of those who reported seeing a healthcare provider, more than 79% of middle school students and 62% of high school students were not asked whether they use tobacco. Those students also reported that 74% of middle school students and 70% of high school students were not advised by their healthcare provider to avoid addictive tobacco products like cigarettes, cigars, smokeless, hookah and e-cigarettes. Louisiana middle school and high school students who report tobacco use were asked if and when they planned on quitting. The majority of students said they did not plan on stopping (MS: 40% and HS:45%).

Figure 9. When Students Plan on Quitting Tobacco Products, LYTS 2019



Students were asked if they had used any resources to quit any addictive tobacco product for good. Of students who reported ever using any tobacco products, most had not tried to quit (MS: 34% and HS: 44%). If students had made a successful quit attempt, most reported going cold turkey (MS: 19% and HS: 22%).

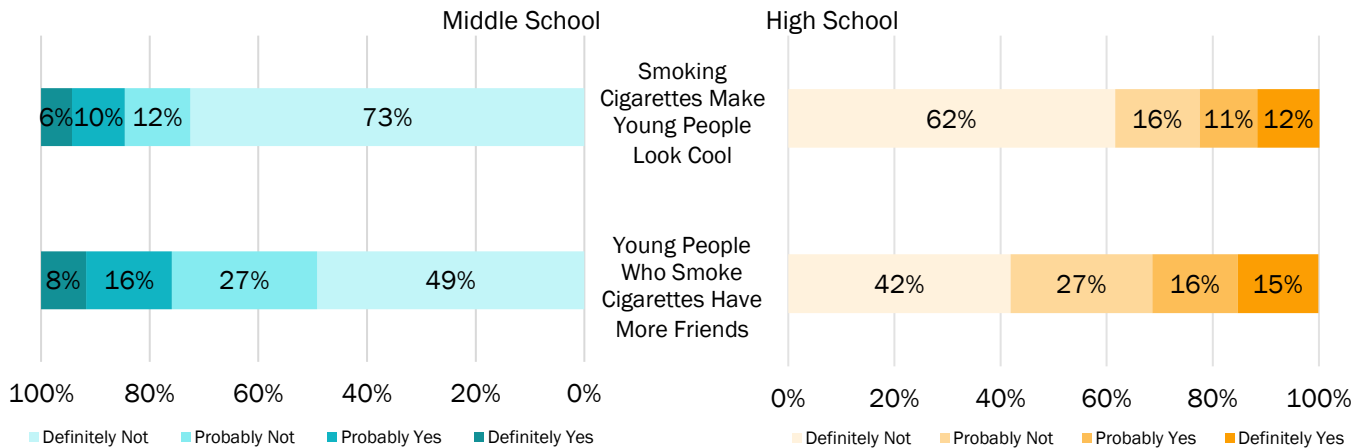
Figure 10. How Students Quit Tobacco Products, LYTS 2019



Peer Influence

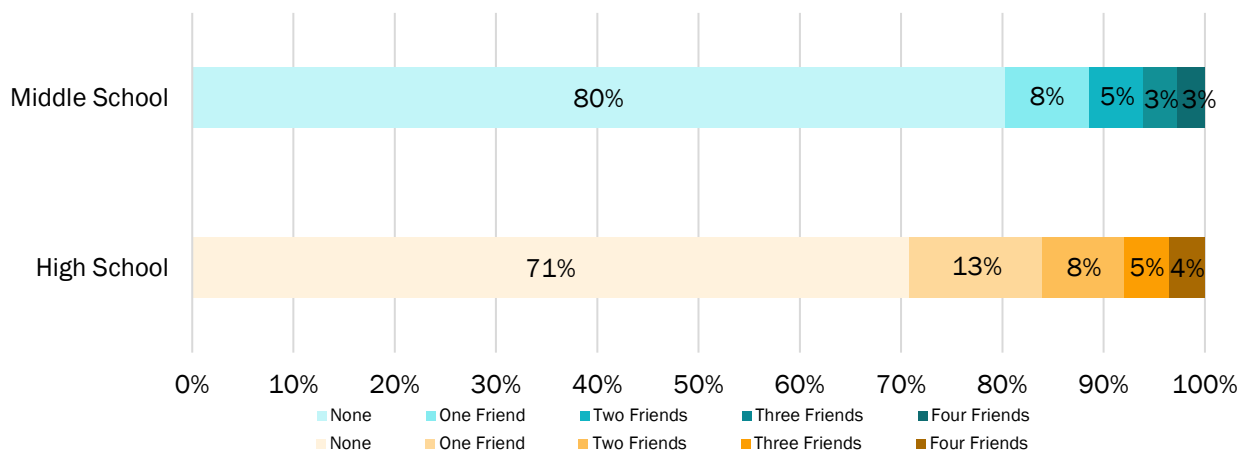
Students were asked questions about peers' influence on their initiation of tobacco products. High school students were more likely to be influenced by their peer group. Twelve percent (12%) of high school students responded that cigarettes "definitely" made young people look cooler, and 11% responded that it "probably" made young people look cooler, compared to 6% and 10% of middle school students, respectively. High school students were also more likely to agree that young people who smoked cigarettes had more friends. Fifteen (15%) of high school students responded "definitely," and 16% responded "probably," compared to 8% and 16% of middle school students, respectively.

Figure 11. Students' Beliefs About Popularity and Cigarettes, LYTS 2019



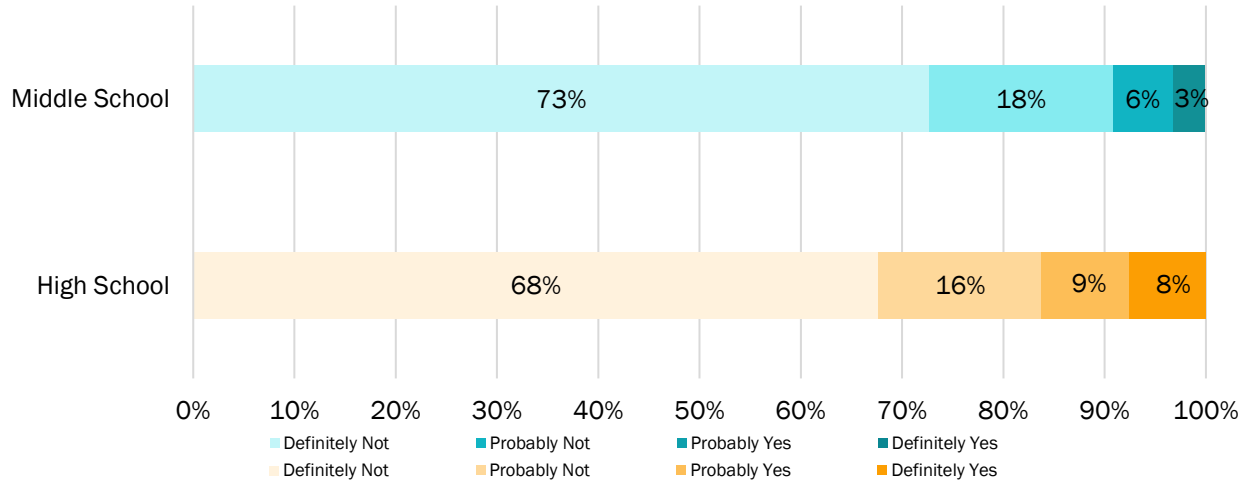
High school students were more likely to have a close friend who was a cigarette smoker. Twenty-nine percent (29%) of high school students reported having one or more friends who smoked compared to 20% of middle school students.

Figure 12. Smoking Among Closest Friends, LYTS 2019



High school students were more likely to be influenced by their best friend, with 8% reporting they would smoke if their best friend offered them a cigarette, compared to just 3% of middle school students. Another 9% of high school students reported they would “probably” smoke if their best friend offered a cigarette, compared to 6% of middle school students.

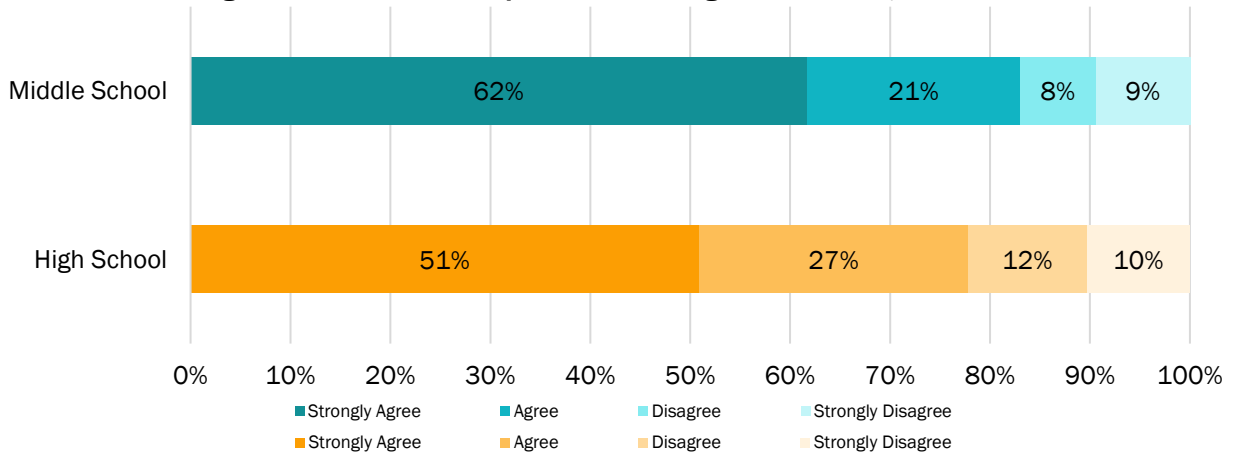
Figure 13. Peer Influence When Offered a Cigarette, LYTS 2019



Perception

Younger students were more likely to perceive greater danger from tobacco products. Sixty-two percent (62%) of middle school students strongly believe that “all tobacco products are dangerous” compared to 51% of high school students.

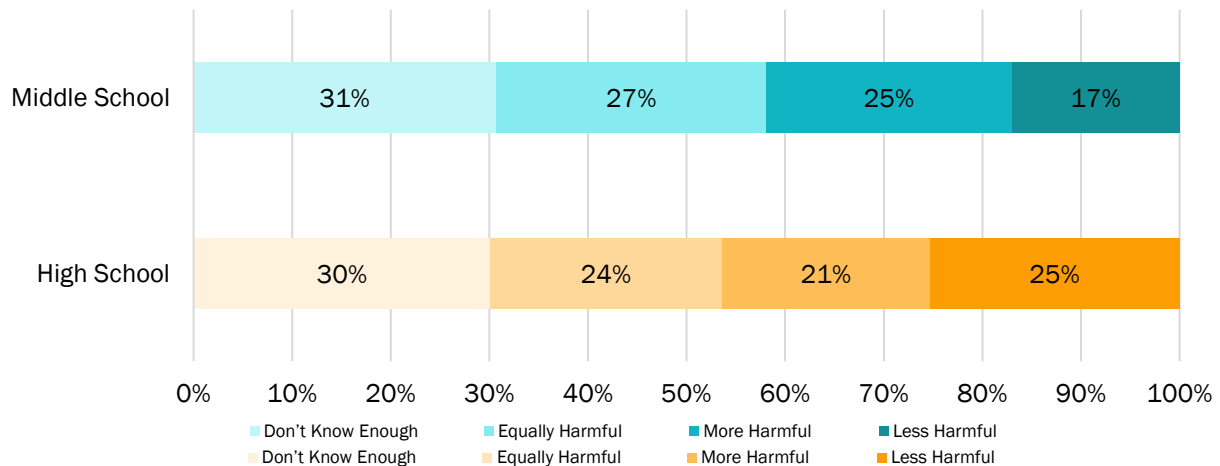
Figure 14. Students Perceptions of the Dangers of Tobacco, LYTS 2019



Most students reported they did not know enough to assess whether they believed e-cigarettes were equally as or more harmful than smoking cigarettes. Thirty-one (31%) of middle school students said they did not know enough to determine harm, as did 30% of high school students. However, 1 in 4 high school students (25%) said that e-cigarettes are less harmful compared to 1 in 6 middle school students (17%).

54% of Middle School Students and 60% of High School Students Believe That Tobacco Companies Try to Get Young People (Under 18) To Use Tobacco Products

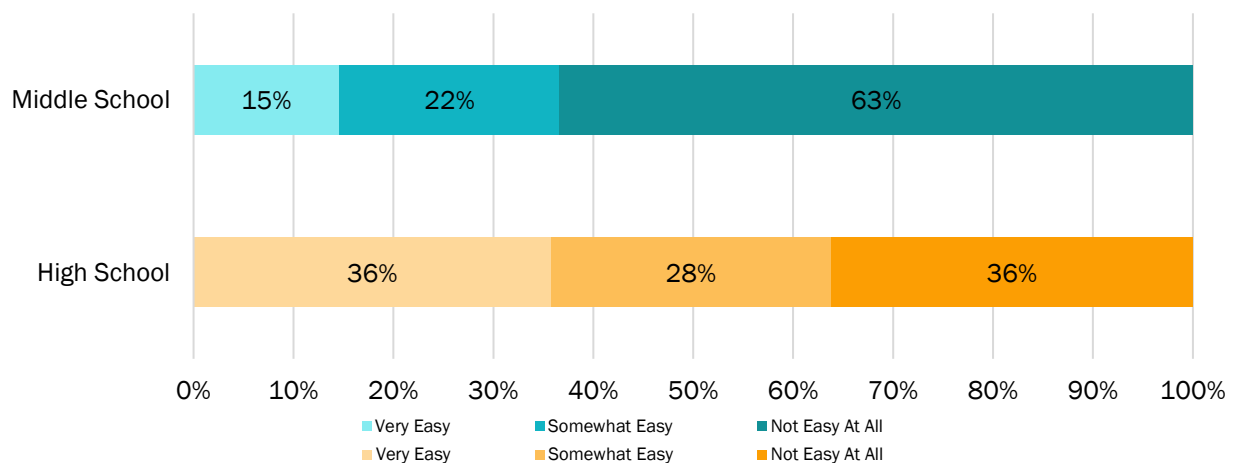
Figure 15. Students Perceptions of the Harms of E-Cigarettes Compared to Smoking Cigarettes, LYTS 2019



Access

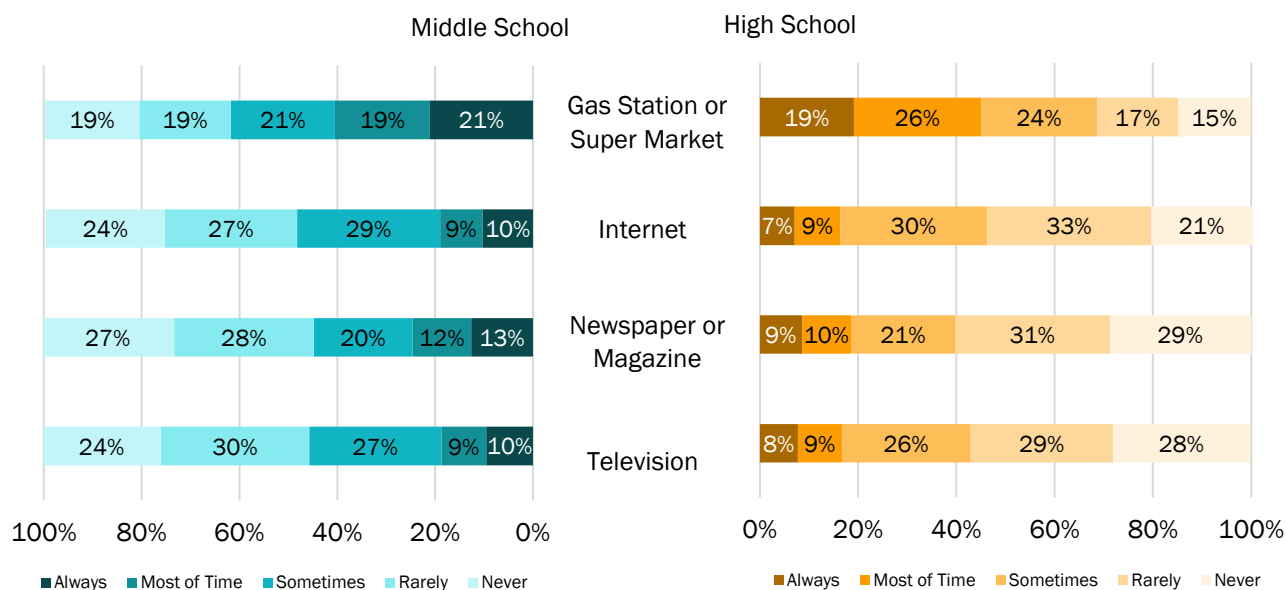
Students reported on the accessibility of tobacco products like cigarettes, cigars, smokeless, hookah, and e-cigarettes in Louisiana. Students found that tobacco products were very accessible and easy to obtain. Students reported how easy or difficult it would be to get tobacco products if they wanted them. Middle school students perceived obtaining tobacco products to be much more difficult than high school students (MS: 63% and HS: 36%). Over a third of high school students reported obtaining dangerous tobacco products would be very easy.

Figure 16. How Easy Is It to Obtain Tobacco Products, LYTS 2019



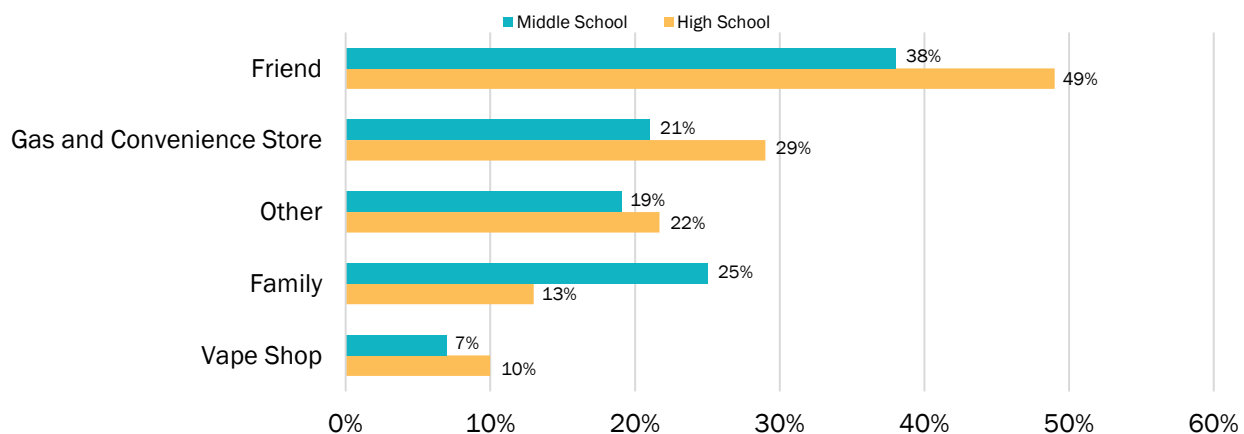
Louisiana middle school and high school students reported places where they saw e-cigarette advertisements and promotions. Of the students who reported access to each type of media or location, the most common place students reported always seeing ads were in gas stations and supermarkets (MS: 21% and HS: 19%).

Figure 17. Where Students Saw Advertisements for E-Cigarettes, LYTS 2019



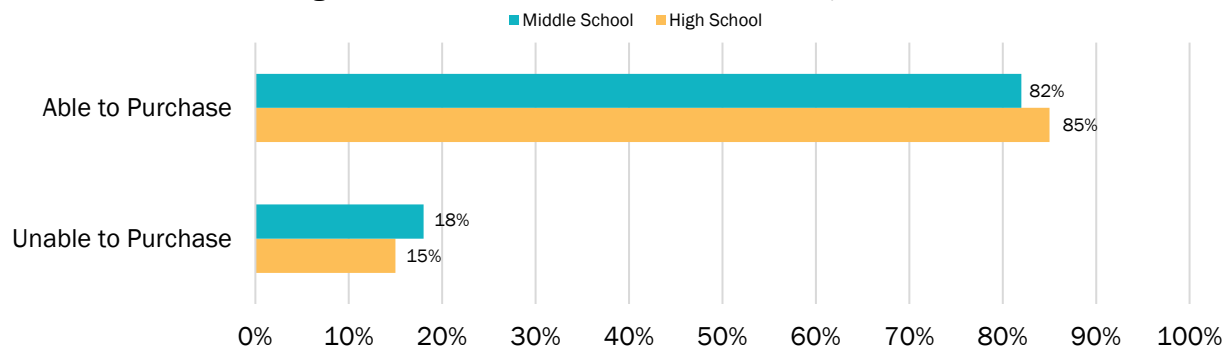
Louisiana middle school and high school students who purchased e-cigarettes most often purchased them from their friends (MS: 38% and HS: 49%). Gas stations and convenience stores were the second most common. The “Other” category consists of other people, mall kiosks, internet, and not listed. Gas stations were also the highest reported place students experienced advertisements (Figure 17). Knowing that a person who starts using addictive tobacco products as a youth is likely to become a reliable customer, the tobacco industry spends an enormous amount of resources appealing and targeting youth, especially heavily in rural communities, in communities of color, and to people who identify as LGBT+. These findings indicate the need to explore the impact of advertisements on youth initiation and access to e-cigarettes, as well as other dangerous tobacco products.

Figure 18. Where Youth Report Purchasing E-Cigarettes, LYTS 2019



More than 20% of Louisiana middle school students and 25% of Louisiana high school students reported trying to purchase tobacco products in the last 30 days. Of those who reported attempting to buy tobacco products, 4 out of 5 students were successful. This finding indicates that a high percentage of youth can access tobacco products reasonably easily, which suggests a need for increased regulation and policy. Addressing access at a system level protects not only those who are currently susceptible to initiation, but also future generations.

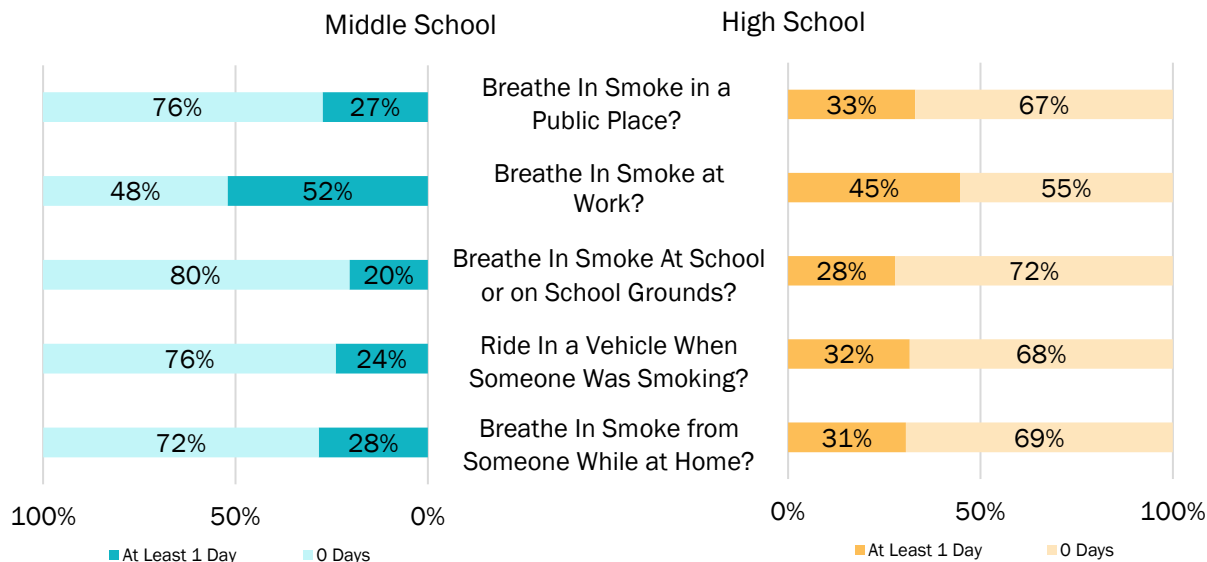
Figure 19. Able to Purchase Tobacco Products, LYTS 2019



Secondhand Smoke

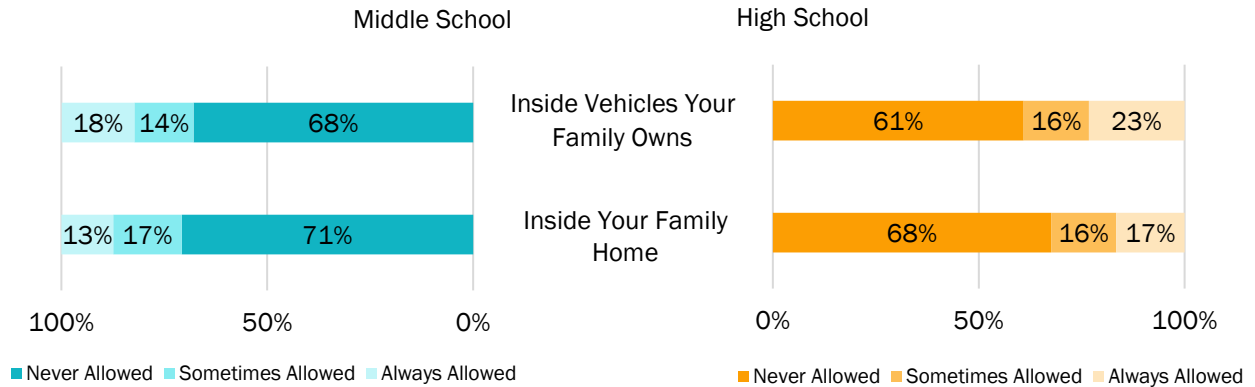
Louisiana middle school and high school students reported on their exposure to secondhand smoke. Students reported on places if it applied to them in the last seven days. Of students who had jobs, approximately half reported breathing in secondhand smoke at least one day during the previous seven (MS: 52% and HS: 45%). The least likely place students would be exposed to secondhand smoke was at school or on school grounds (MS: 20% and HS: 28%). A state-level legislative response can protect youth, adults, and communities who may be disproportionately exposed to secondhand smoke and affected by tobacco use.

Figure 20. Places Where Youth Report Being Exposed to Secondhand Smoke, LYTS 2019



Louisiana middle school and high school students were asked about exposure to secondhand smoke inside their family's vehicles and homes. Even if a family does not smoke, youth can be exposed to secondhand smoke that travels through vents, doors, and windows. This affects low-income youth more than affluent youth, because they are more likely to live in apartment complexes or multi-unit buildings rather than single-family homes. Middle school students reported that tobacco was less frequently allowed in their family's homes and vehicles than high school students.

Figure 21. Places Where Youth Report Smoking is Allowed by Adults, LYTS 2019



This report is a collaborative effort of Well-Ahead Louisiana
and the Louisiana Campaign for Tobacco-Free Living.

