

# Portsmouth Youth Substance Abuse Needs Assessment SY2015-16

Portsmouth Prevention Coalition  
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## Table 1.0 – Response Rates for RISS

### Portsmouth RISS Respondents by Grade Compared to Total Enrollment

	7th	8th	Other	MS TOTAL	9th	10th	11th	12th	HS TOTAL	TOTAL ALL
Number of Respondents	148	161	1	310	165	160	190	165	680	990
Student Population	185	210	NA	395	205	197	243	221	866	1261
Rate of Return	80.0%	76.7%	NA	78.2%	80.5%	81.2%	78.2%	74.7%	78.5%	78.4%

The RISS survey was administered last spring at both the middle and high schools in grades 7-12. The return rates were very strong in both schools. This allowed the RISS results to be compared to previous Health and Wellness surveys conducted in 2013 and 2014.

# Demographic Data Points

## ZIP CODE RESPONSES

- 80.9% (801) of respondents were 02871  
(Portsmouth)
- 8.6% (85) were from 02837 (Little Compton).
- The distribution of the responses was excellent across grade. No survey response bias favoring one grade over another.
- The remaining respondents were from a variety of other zip codes or no zip code. It was clear that some students did not know their zip codes.

# Lifetime Use Rate Trends

- **Lifetime Use** tends to increase in tandem with grade level for all substances. “Lifetime use” suggest that a student has had at least once in their life tried a substance.
- **Alcohol** is the most likely “used” substance, with **marijuana** being the second most likely “used” substance. Prescription drug use was relatively low for all grade levels. Synthetic marijuana use was also negligible.
- **Lifetime tobacco use** was very low compared to other substances, up to 10<sup>th</sup> grade. However, use of “vaping” devises, E-cigarettes and other Nicotine Delivery Systems (NDSs) has increased dramatically, according to key informants and students in all three focus groups. Tobacco use may be on the increase again.

# Age of Onset

- 15.1% of high school students have smoked all or part of at least one cigarette during their lifetime.
- Cigarette/tobacco use age of onset seems to be highest between 14-17 years old (59.8% for HS students). This is up from former years, when reported onset was most likely between ages 12 and 14.
- 49.5% of all high school students reported having at least had one alcoholic drink in their lifetime.
- Age of onset for alcohol use is most likely between the ages of 14-17 years old, though a subgroup (14.8%) of early onset drinkers report having their first drinks at age 12 or younger. Research suggests that early onset drinkers have a higher propensity for binge drinking, long-term alcohol use and alcoholism.

# Age of Onset

- 34.4% of high school students reported having tried marijuana at least once in their lifetime.
- Age of onset for marijuana use is most likely to occur at ages 14 or 15, or during 8th or 9th grades.
- Approximately 20% of high school student who use marijuana reporting first use at age 13 or younger.
- 3.7% of students reported using an inhalant at least once. Age of onset for inhalants is bifurcated: 40% of those who use inhalants reported starting at age 10 or younger, while 44.5% reported use between 14-17 years of age. It may be that older students link “vaping” to being an “inhalant.”

## Last 30-Day Use by Substance for Portsmouth MS

### Portsmouth MS Past 30-Day Use Trends Data (2014 HW and 2016 RISS)

Grade	Grade 7			Grade 8			MS Total		
	2014	2016	Change	2014	2016	Change	2014	2016	Change
Tobacco	2.4%	0.7%	-1.7%	1.7%	1.9%	0.20%	3.8%	1.6%	-2.2%
Alcohol	10.4%	0.7%	-9.7%	21.1%	4.3%	-16.8%	15.6%	2.6%	-13.0%
Marijuana	6.8%	0.7%	-6.1%	14.3%	5.0%	-9.3%	10.5%	2.9%	-7.6%
RX Drugs	3.0%	1.4%	-1.6%	4.5%	1.9%	-2.6%	2.2%	1.6%	-0.6%

Active use is measured in terms of “Past 30-Day Use.” At the middle school, reported substance use rates over the past two years have declined dramatically for all substances, with the sole exception of 8<sup>th</sup> grade use of tobacco, which remained relatively stable.

# Last 30-Day Use by Substance

Portsmouth HS Past 30-Day Use Trends Data (2014 HW and 2016 RISS)

Grade	Grade 9			Grade 10			Grade 11			Grade 12			HS Total		
	2014	2016	Change	2014	2016	Change	2014	2016	Change	2014	2016	Change	2014	2016	Change
Tobacco	1.2%	1.2%	0.0%	6.3%	6.2%	-0.1%	8.1%	6.8%	-1.3%	5.9%	7.9%	2.0%	5.1%	5.6%	0.5%
Alcohol	23.6%	8.5%	-15.1%	36.1%	26.9%	-9.8%	53.9%	27.9%	-26.0%	62.2%	36.0%	-26.2%	42.5%	25.1%	-17.4
Marijuana	16.4%	7.9%	-8.5%	23.8%	28.3%	4.5%	43.0%	27.4%	-15.6%	43.7%	28.0%	-15.7%	30.7%	23.2%	-6.8%
RX Drugs	4.3%	3.7%	-0.8%	7.0%	2.5%	-4.5%	19.0%	3.7%	-15.3%	12.6%	4.3%	-8.3%	7.7%	3.4%	-4.3%

Dramatic drops were reported in use rates for alcohol, marijuana and prescription drugs over the past two years at the high school for all grades. Tobacco use slightly increase (+2.0%) in grade 12, and marijuana use was up by 4.5% for grade 10 students. Overall, high school alcohol use was down 17.4%, marijuana use down 6.8% and RX drug use down 4.3%



# Past 30-Day Use: TOBACCO

Past 30-Day Use by Grade - Tobacco						
Grade	7	8	9	10	11	12
Smoke all or part of a cigar	0.7%	0.6%	2.4%	7.5%	7.9%	11.9%
Use Dip or Snuff	0.7%	0.6%	1.8%	6.2%	4.2%	7.3%
Smoke all or part of a cigarette	0.7%	1.9%	1.2%	6.2%	6.8%	7.9%

Tobacco use is negligible at middle school but increases around 10<sup>th</sup> grade for all forms of tobacco listed above. The 12<sup>th</sup> grade students are the most likely grade cohort to smoke.

# Past 30-Day Use: ALCOHOL

## Past 30-Day Use by Grade - Alcohol

Grade	7	8	9	10	11	12
Drink 1+ drinks	0.7%	4.3%	8.5%	26.9%	27.9%	36.0%
Drink 5 or more at one time	0.7%	1.2%	3.7%	12.5%	16.3%	21.3%
Ride in a car with driver who was drinking	10.1%	9.9%	11.0%	8.1%	10.0%	10.4%

Alcohol use and binge use (5 or more drinks at one sitting) increase in 10<sup>th</sup> grade most noticeably. An equal number of students across grades (around 10%) reported having ridden in a car with a driver who has been drinking.

# Past 30-Day Use: MARIJUANA

Past 30-Day Use by Grade - Marijuana						
Grade	7	8	9	10	11	12
Use marijuana at least once	0.7%	5.0%	7.9%	28.3%	23.4%	28.0%
Use synthetic marijuana at least once	0.0%	0.6%	2.4%	1.2%	0.5%	1.8%
Drive after using marijuana	0.0%	1.2%	6.1%	6.6%	15.8%	22.6%

There is a noticeable jump in reported marijuana use from grades 9 to grade 10. Synthetic marijuana use is not favored by any students, though there is a slight bump in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. 15.8% of 11<sup>th</sup> and 22.6% of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students reported driving after using marijuana.

# Past 30-Day Use: PRESCRIPTION AND OTHER DRUGS

## Past 30-Day Use by Grade : Prescription and Other Drugs

Grade	7	8	9	10	11	12
Use OTC medicine for other purposes	0.7%	0.6%	1.2%	1.2%	1.1%	3.7%
Use RX medicine not prescribed to you	1.4%	1.9%	3.7%	2.5%	3.7%	4.3%
Use inhalants	0.7%	0.6%	1.2%	0.0%	1.6%	1.8%

Use of prescription drugs is relatively low but it does double in high school. Use of OTC medicine tripled in 12<sup>th</sup> grade to 3.7% in comparison to other high school grades. Reported inhalant use is also very low.

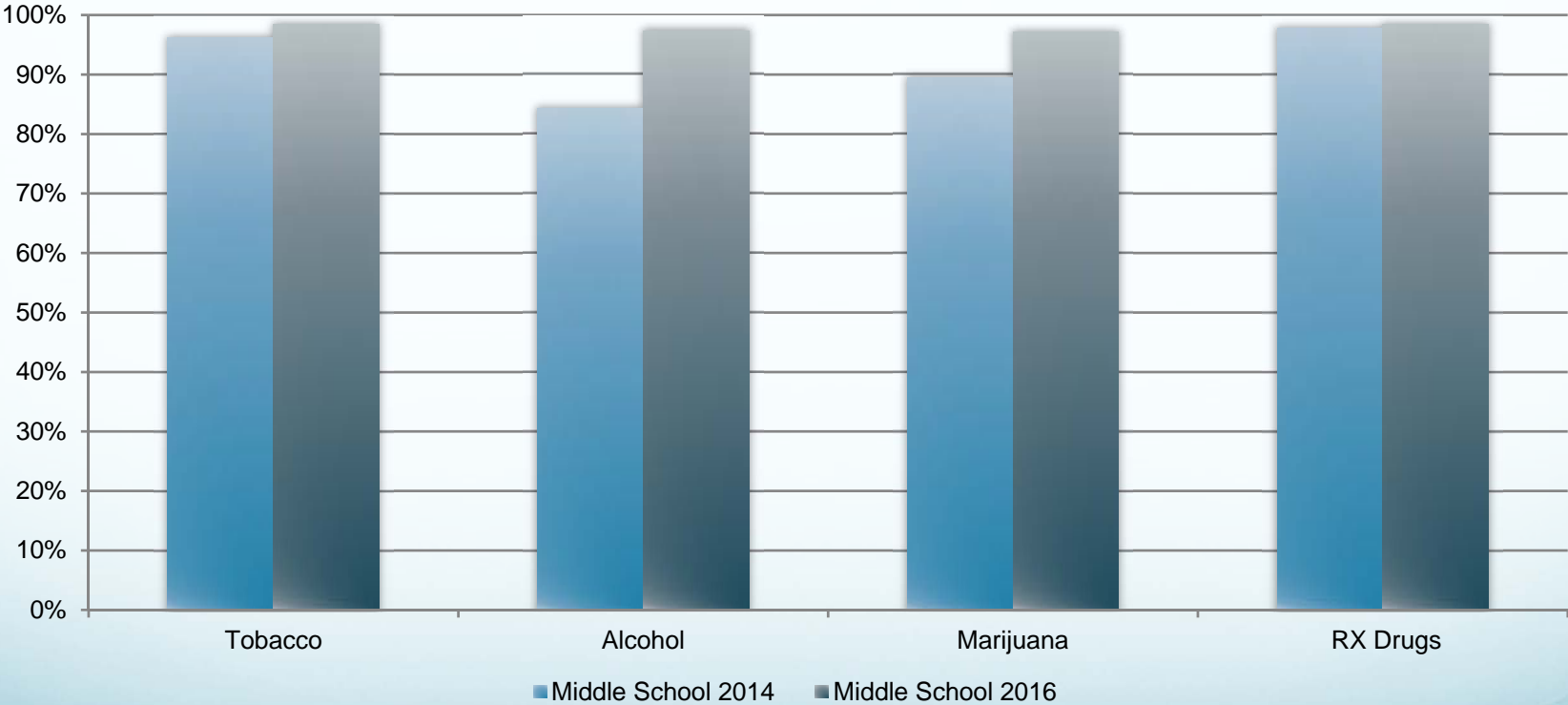
# Last 30-Day Use Comparison Two-Year

Portsmouth MS and HS						
Cumulative Comparison of Past 30-Day Use						
	Middle School			High School		
Substance	2014	2016	Change	2014	2016	Change
Tobacco	3.8%	1.6%	-2.2%	5.1%	5.6%	0.5%
Alcohol	15.6%	2.6%	-13.0%	42.5%	25.1%	-17.5%
Marijuana	10.5%	2.9%	-7.6%	30.7%	23.2%	-6.8%
RX Drugs	2.2%	1.6%	-0.6%	9.3%	3.5%	-4.3%

Overall substance use rates in Portsmouth middle and high schools. Both schools were down significantly for alcohol. Marijuana use dropped more at the middle school and slightly, but not significantly, at the high school. Tobacco use was up very slightly at the high school. Prescription drug use was down at the high school but about the same at the middle school.

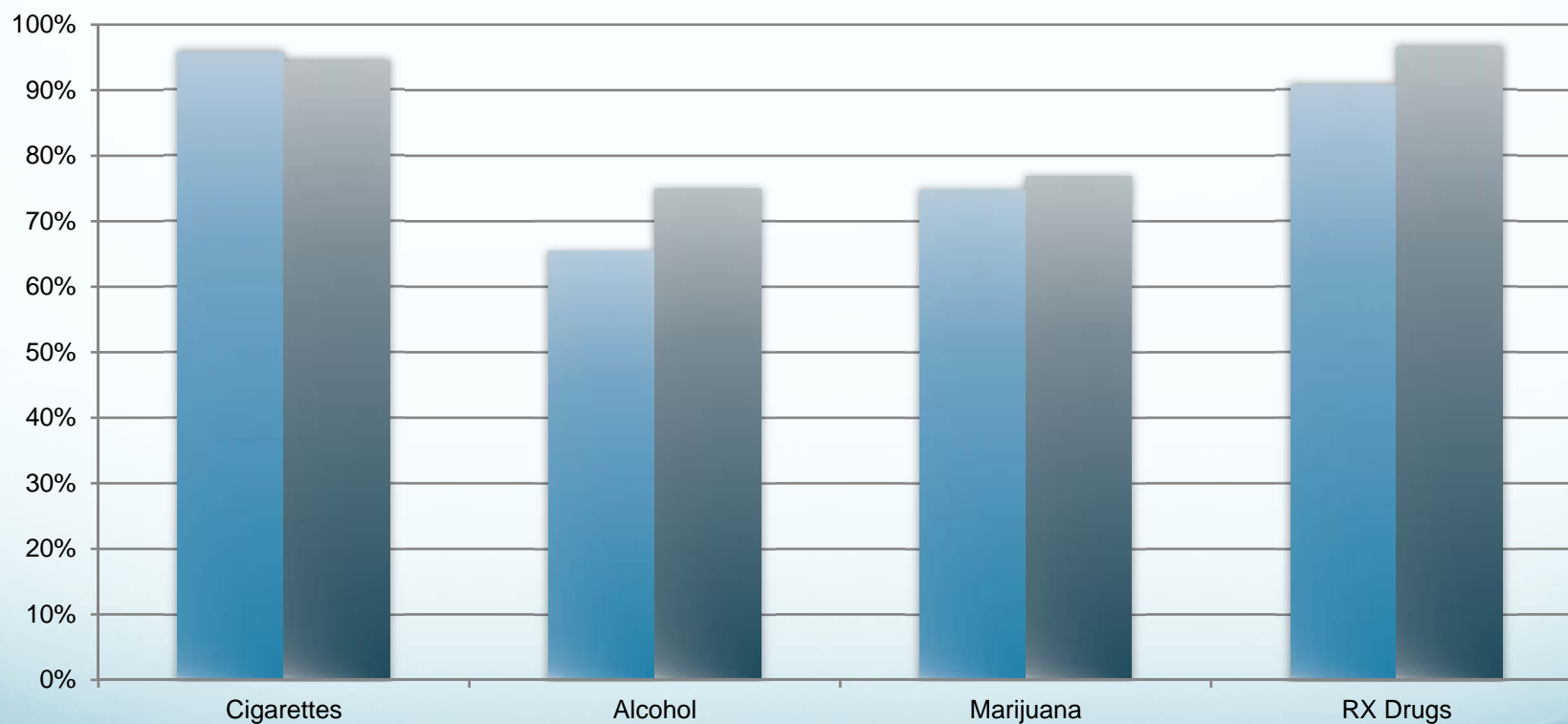
# Middle School Non Users by Substance 2014 and 2016

**Percentage of Middle School Non Users  
by Substance**



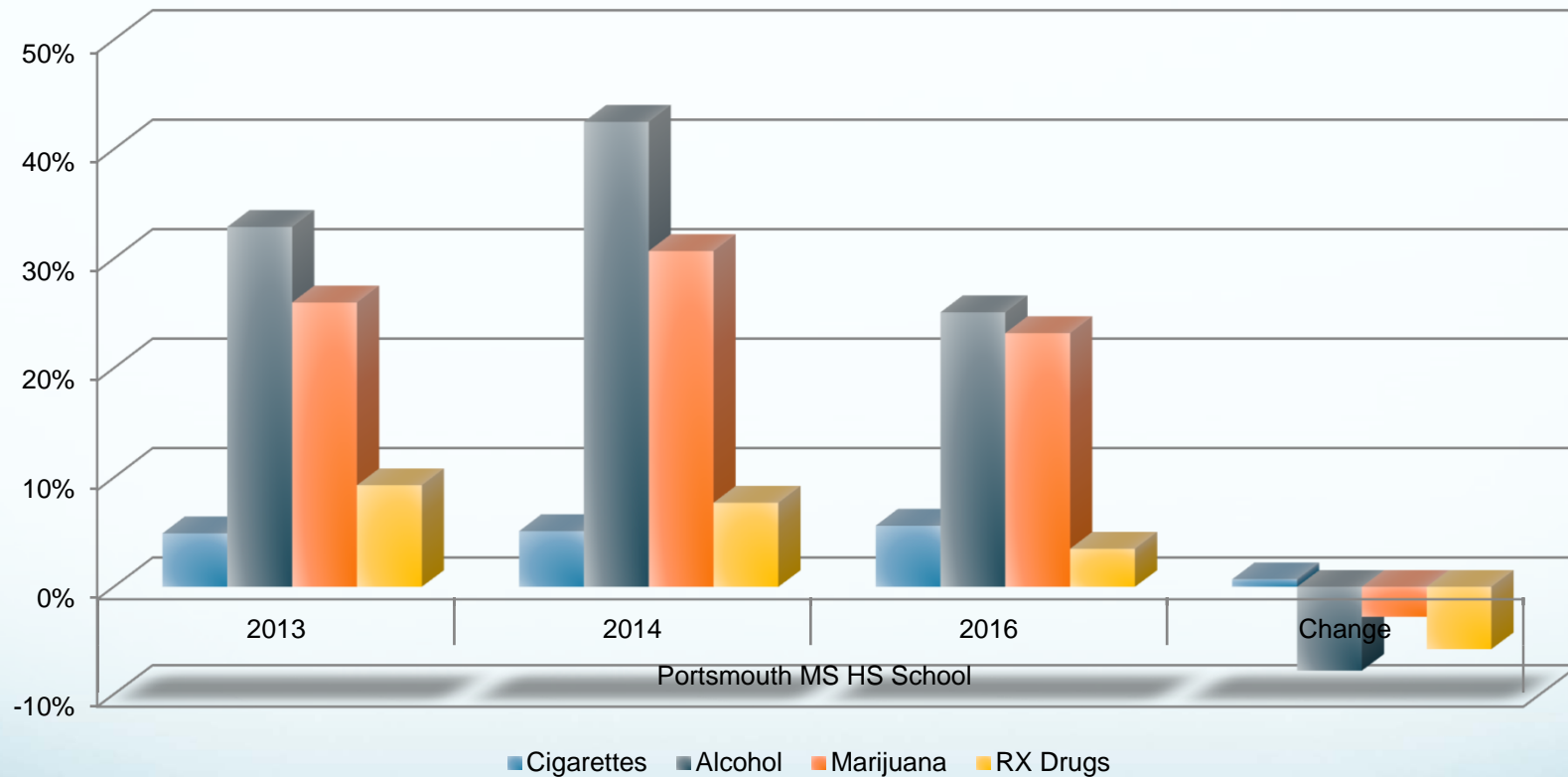
# High School Non Users by Substance 2014 and 2016

## PHS Non-Use of Substances School Year 2014 / 2016



# Overall Past 30-Days Users by Substance

## Four Year Trend in Past 30-Day Use



Overall significant decreases in alcohol, prescription drug use and marijuana use were reported over the past 4 years for all grades. There was a slight increase in tobacco use



# Last 30-Day Use by Substance

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Reported alcohol use dropped by 13% at the middle school and by 17.5% at the high school.
- Marijuana use dropped by 7.6% at the middle school and by 6.8 % at the high school.
- Prescription drug use dropped by 4.3% at the high school and by 0.6% in the middle school .
- Tobacco use dropped by 2.2% at the middle school but increased by 0.5% at the high school.

# Percentage Change Over 4 Years by Grade Cohort

Class of 2016

	2013	2014	2016	
	9th	10th	12th	% Change
Tobacco	5.3%	6.3%	7.9%	2.6%
Alcohol	19.5%	36.1%	36.0%	16.5%
Marijuana	14.3%	23.8%	28.0%	13.7%
RX Drugs	10.1%	7.0%	4.3%	-5.8%

Last year's graduating class demonstrated a lower level of use for RX drugs over time, with significant increases in alcohol and marijuana use from their freshman year until the point they took the RISS.

# Percentage Change Over 4 Years by Grade Cohort

Class of 2017

	2013	2014	2016	
	8th	9th	11th	% Change
Tobacco	1.1%	1.2%	6.8%	5.7%
Alcohol	12.2%	23.6%	27.9%	15.7%
Marijuana	6.7%	16.4%	27.4%	20.7%
RX Drugs	2.8%	4.3%	3.7%	1.1%

This year's graduating class showed some increase in tobacco use (+5.7%) and significant increases in marijuana use and alcohol use since the time they were in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Note that marijuana and alcohol use rates increased most in 9<sup>th</sup> grade but are lower than the previous year.

# Percentage Change Over 4 Years by Grade Cohort

## Class of 2018

	2013	2014	2016	
	7th	8th	10th	% Change
Substance				
Tobacco	0.0%	1.7%	6.2%	6.2%
Alcohol	9.3%	21.1%	26.9%	17.6%
Marijuana	4.6%	14.3%	28.3%	23.7%
RX Drugs	1.2%	4.5%	2.5%	1.3%

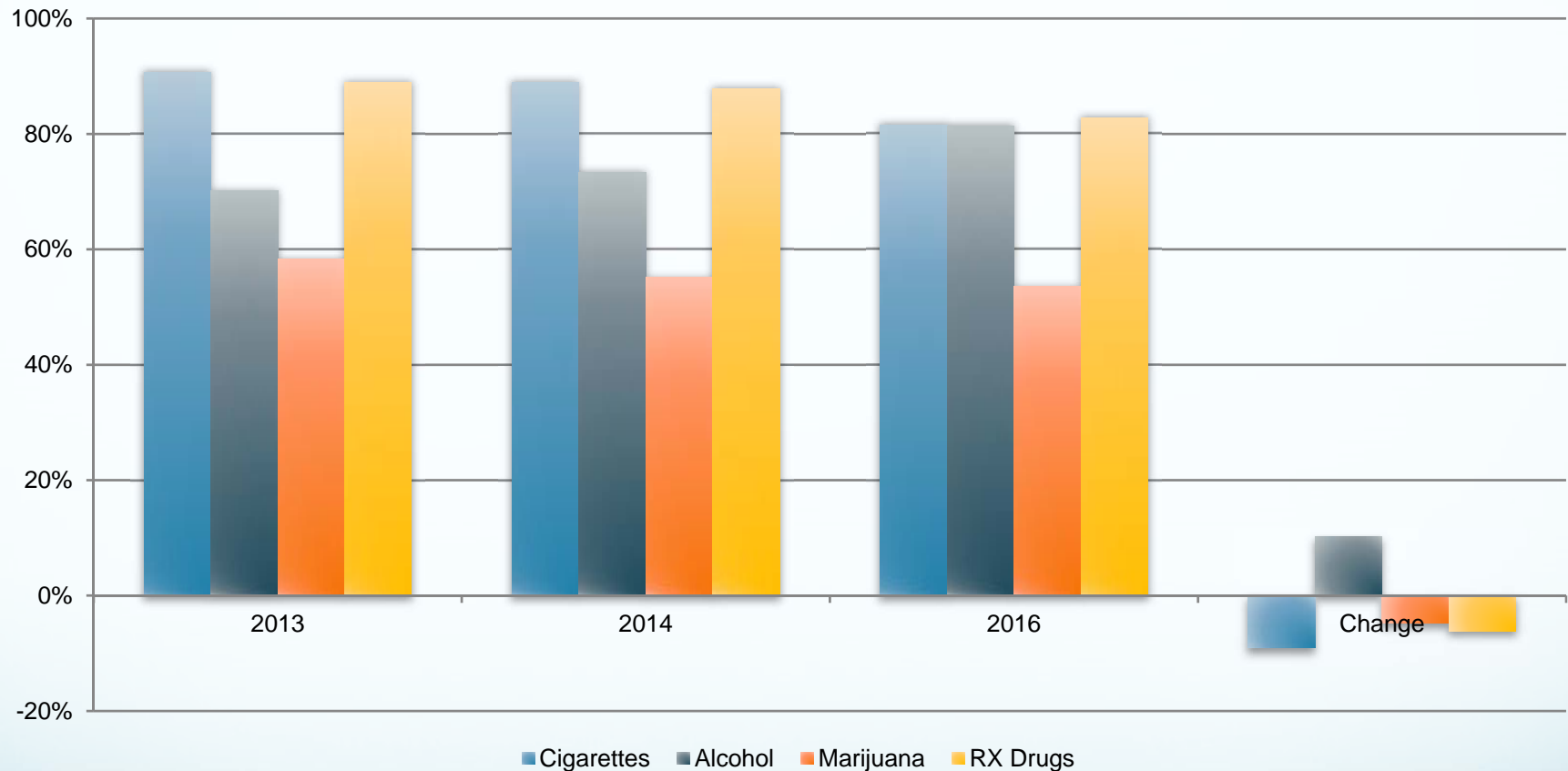
The Class of 2018 had a 4.5% rise in tobacco use during the past two Years, and a greater rise in marijuana use than in alcohol use, though both were higher in 8<sup>th</sup> grade than the other classes we reviewed.

# Perception of Risk of Harm

- Student perception of moderate or great harm or risk for cigarette use was over 80% at all grade levels.
- Binge drinking (5 or more drinks once or twice a week) was perceived as a moderate or great risk by over 70% of all students at all grades.
- The lowest perception for moderate/great risk or harm was for marijuana use (46.8%) recorded at the high school for using marijuana once or twice a week.
- Use of OTC Drugs, Prescription drugs and other illegal drugs were all perceived as moderate/great harm or risk at over 80%

# Perception of Risk Four-Year Trend

## Perception of Risk or Harm: 4-Year Trend



**Significant changes were noted in perception of risk of harm for all substances. Alcohol increased by 10.2 % while cigarette use dropped by 9.1%. Prescription drug use dropped by 6.1% and marijuana use fell by 4.8%. It is curious that perception of risk or harm for alcohol rose sharply while for marijuana it continued to decline. This is across all 6 grades that participated in the survey.**

# Perception of Parental & Peer Disapproval

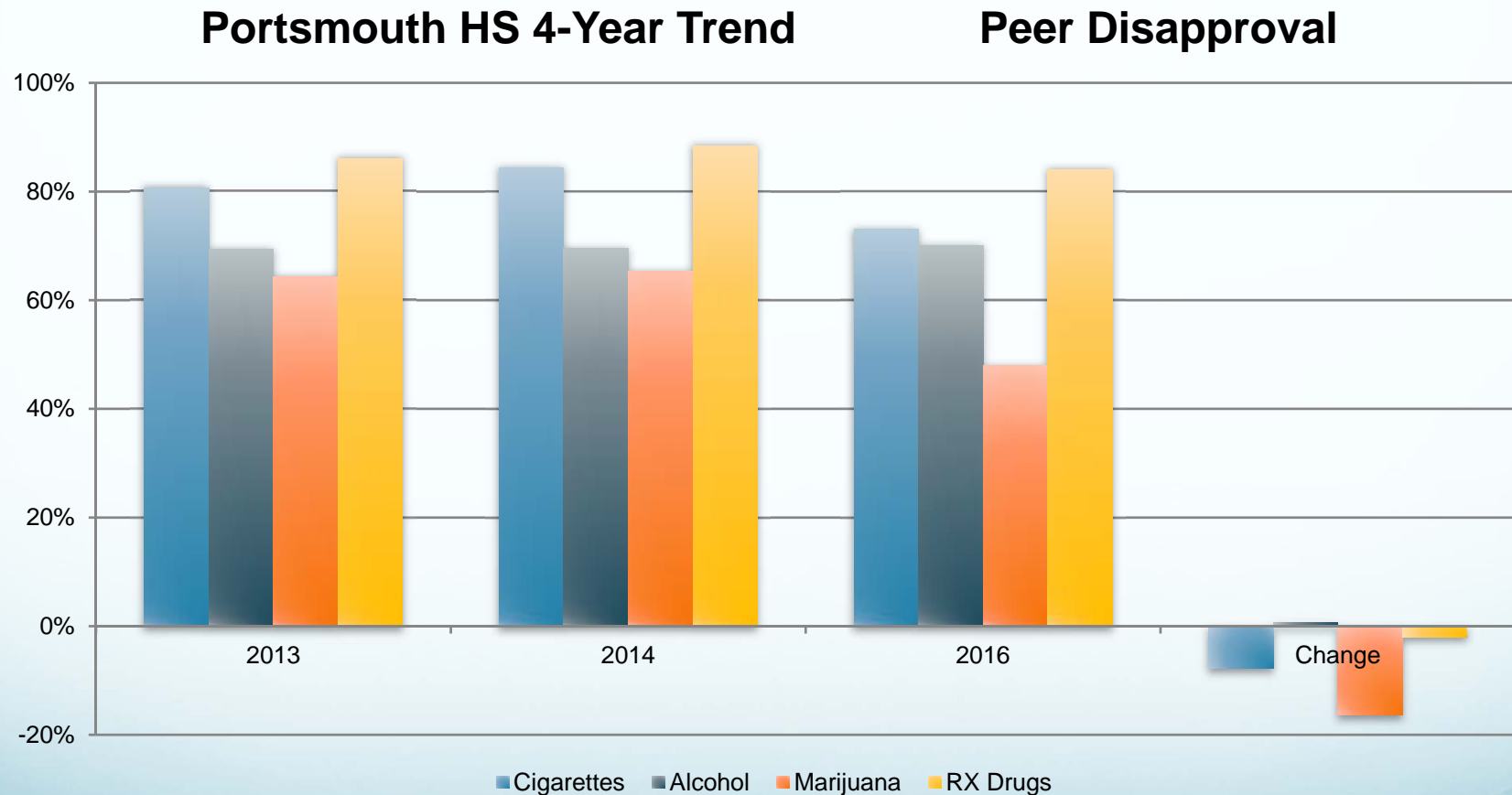
- Overall, perception of parent disapproval rates remained very high and stable for all substances, but show some decline for older students for alcohol and marijuana use.
- Peer disapproval on the other hand was high for tobacco, alcohol and prescription drug use, but fell to 42% for marijuana use.

# Peer Disapproval

- Over the four year period, peer disapproval decreased at the high school significantly for marijuana, from 64.3% in 2013 to 48.0% in 2016 which increases sharply as students progress in grade.
- Peer disapproval for cigarette smoking dropped by 7.7%, though it was still at 73%
- Student perceive that their peers disapprove of them using tobacco (73%), drinking alcohol (70%) or using prescription drugs (84%) than they do with using marijuana (48%)



# Peer Disapproval Four-Year Trend



Student reported the most change in peer disapproval, dropping for marijuana use by 16.3% and for cigarette smoking by 7.7%

# Comparison of Perception of Use and Actual (Last 30-Day) Use

- Perceived use is much greater than reported use in all cases.
- Alcohol has the closest alignment between reported, past 30 day, and perceived use; still there is a greater than 50 percentage point difference between reported use and perceived use.
- The gap between reported and perceived use remains consistent within and between years and locations.

# Focus Groups

- A total of **5 focus groups** were facilitated. **Three were with students in grades 8, 9/10, and 11.** The total number of students involved was **30**, There were 14 in one group at the middle school and 16 in the two groups at the high school. Active letters of consent were sent home with all participants, and all participant information will be held in confidence and kept anonymous. Groups were very vocal and willing to share.
- **Two parent groups** were held, one at the PMS and one in Little Compton with parents of students who attended high school in Portsmouth. A total of **13 parent** were involved. Their identities and responses will also be kept anonymous.

# Student Focus Group Results

1. Students tended to agree across groups that cigarette use was very unpopular, but that “vaping,” e-cigarettes and use of other nicotine delivery systems (NDS) has become very popular.
2. Alcohol was still perceived as the most likely substance of choice for many students, but marijuana was reported as just as often used. Students estimated that somewhere between 40 and 80% of their peers use alcohol and marijuana on a monthly basis.
3. Prescription drug use was viewed as mostly done by those who were heavy into drugs, though some female students mentioned use of Adderall for weight loss, and others to use for study purposes.

# Student Focus Group Results

4. Students perceived much greater risk or harm for those who were users of tobacco, prescription drugs and alcohol than they did for using marijuana. Many reported that their peers are most likely to use marijuana, since “they know it is safe” and that there are no consequences for use. “It’s almost legal.”
5. Access to marijuana was perceived as much easier by older students than to alcohol, while younger students tended to find it easier to get alcohol or prescription drugs than marijuana.
6. Use of illegal drugs like heroin and cocaine were mentioned, as well as hallucinogens like mushrooms and LSD by older students. However, they pointed out that this was in very small numbers.

# Student Focus Group Results

7. Students at the high school in all three groups agreed that the situation with substances in the PHS was “much better” since the School Resource Officer had been regularly present. They spoke about past issues with the senior class of 2015 having a lot of different substance issues and how this impacted the school.
8. Middle school students had a much lower understanding of substance use issues and shared mostly hearsay from older siblings or friends.
9. All groups agreed that parents would disapprove of any substance use (“They would kill me”) while peers are more likely to be much more tolerant, even when they do not use. But it was mentioned that in every clique there was at least one or two individuals who would use or try substances, and would influence others to do so.

# Parent Focus Group Results

1. Parents in both groups seemed to believe that alcohol and marijuana use starts in the middle schools (in Portsmouth as well as in Little Compton)
2. They were in agreement that alcohol and marijuana were the two predominant drugs of choice used at the high school.
3. Parents thought that athletes and kids who had home problems were the most likely users of substances.

# Parent Focus Group Results

4. Most parents agreed that while some parents knew about what was going on, many were in denial or just ignored the situation. A few times parties with parents present and even participating, were mentioned. This especially related to proms, graduation and birthdays.
5. Most parents felt that there was not enough being done at the schools, but they did not know about the school policies, the School Resource Officer or the Student Assistance Counselors.
6. Parents thought that the laws were strong enough but were not being enforced properly.



## Parent Focus Group Results

7. Parents demonstrated across groups very limited knowledge of what resources were available to address substance use in the community. However, all of them knew about the PPC and many were familiar with Project Purple.
8. Parents suggested that more education, more activities for students who did not get involved, and more contact to families in need were the most effective ways to address youth substance abuse.

# Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews were held during the spring with 7 local leaders: 2 school-based officials, 2 law enforcement professionals, 1 medical professional, 1 local community leader and 1 faith-based person.

Each interview lasted for 45 minutes to one hour. Special questionnaires and protocol were designed to match the knowledge and experience of the person by role. Notes were taken by hand and not recorded mechanically, and all participants will remain anonymous.

# Key Informant Interview Results

1. School-based personnel shared that there was little substance use occurring in the school, but that they were aware from anecdotal evidence that substances were being used by students before and after school, especially alcohol and marijuana. Tobacco was not perceived as an issue, but “vaping” was. Some use of Adderall use for dieting and study and Xanax for stress relief were mentioned
2. Marijuana use was detected in school usually by teachers noticing different behavior or by an adult noticing a distinct smell emanating from a student. Between 20- 30% of students who use marijuana were described as “regular users.”

# Key Informant Interview Results

3. KIs perceived that some athletes, those youth with little or no after-school activities, and kids in the alternative learning program were perceived as most likely substance users, though it was also considered to be an issue “across all groups”
4. Girls were thought as more likely to use pills, while boys more likely to use marijuana. Both genders were equally likely to use alcohol.
5. A medical provider identified two groups: white upper class and blue collar kids who are most likely groups to use alcohol. Students with familial and personal issues were considered more likely to use prescription drugs.

## Key Informant Interview Results

6. Law enforcement officers agreed that alcohol and marijuana were the most likely substances to be used by students, with some Adderall, Ritalin or Xanax use also present.
7. KIs felt that underage drinking was being monitored well, but that it was a dilemma for police to enforce the marijuana laws due to the nature of the criminal justice system, the limited consequences and the current law's structure.
8. Marijuana laws are viewed by police as "like a joke." Some KIs believe that parents need to be held accountable under the law for the behavior of their children.

# Key Informant Interview Results

9. Strong belief that the presence of the SRO at the school has made a major difference in how the students behave in school and how they relate to law enforcement.
10. Access to alcohol and marijuana often from older siblings and friends, and from stranger. Marijuana is considered much easier to access than anything else. It is “everywhere and anywhere.”
11. A local official cited the need to better support the financing of prevention efforts in the community, as well as to consider ordinances that would limit the sale of marijuana if it is legalized.

ANY QUESTIONS???

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