

# **Lexington High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey**

## **2013 Results**

# **Background on Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey**

- Department of Elementary and Secondary Education administers the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) in selected high schools every other year.
- Conducted analysis of YRBS since 1995.
- Focuses on major risk behaviors threatening health and safety of young people
  - tobacco use,
  - alcohol and other drug use,
  - sexual behavior that might lead to unintended pregnancy or sexually transmitted disease,
  - dietary behavior and physical activity, and
  - behaviors associated with intentional and unintentional injury.
- Survey is anonymous

# **Demographics of 2013 YRBS (N=1,664)**

**Grade:** 29% in 9th, 25% in 10th, 24% in 11th,  
and 22% in 12th

**Gender:** 48% male, 51% female; 0.3%  
transgender , 0.6% other

**Ethnicity:** 57.2% White, 3.0% Black, 24.6% Asian,  
2.2% Hispanic/Latino, 12.9% Other

# Comparison Groups

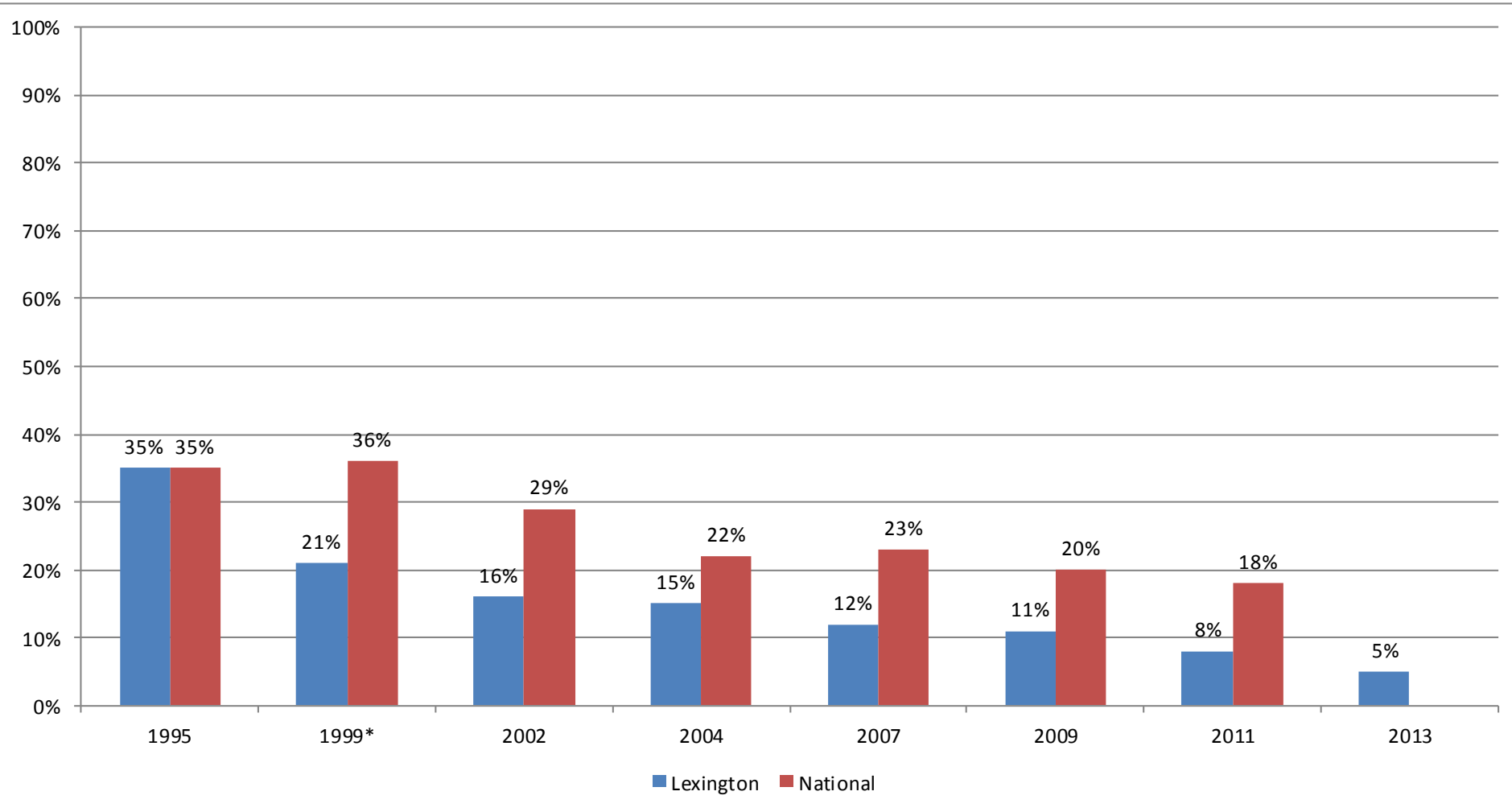
- Lexington High School data compared to:
  - Previous LHS Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) data
  - National YRBS data (through 2011)
  - Massachusetts YRBS data (through 2011)
  - Regional six school study (2012)
    - A YRBS administered to students from six school districts (Acton, Acton-Boxborough, Boxborough, Concord, Concord-Carlisle, Groton-Dunstable, Littleton, Maynard, and Westford) in grades 9 through 12 in 2012

# Patterns of Student Cigarette Use

- Only 15% of students have ever tried smoking (down from 19% in 2011)
- In 2013, 5% of all students report smoking cigarettes in past 30 days
  - *Lower than the 18% national average and 14% state average (2011)*
  - *Lower than the 9.5% from the regional six school report average (2012)*

# Cigarette Smoking Trends Over Time

## Lexington and National *(smoked in last 30 days)*



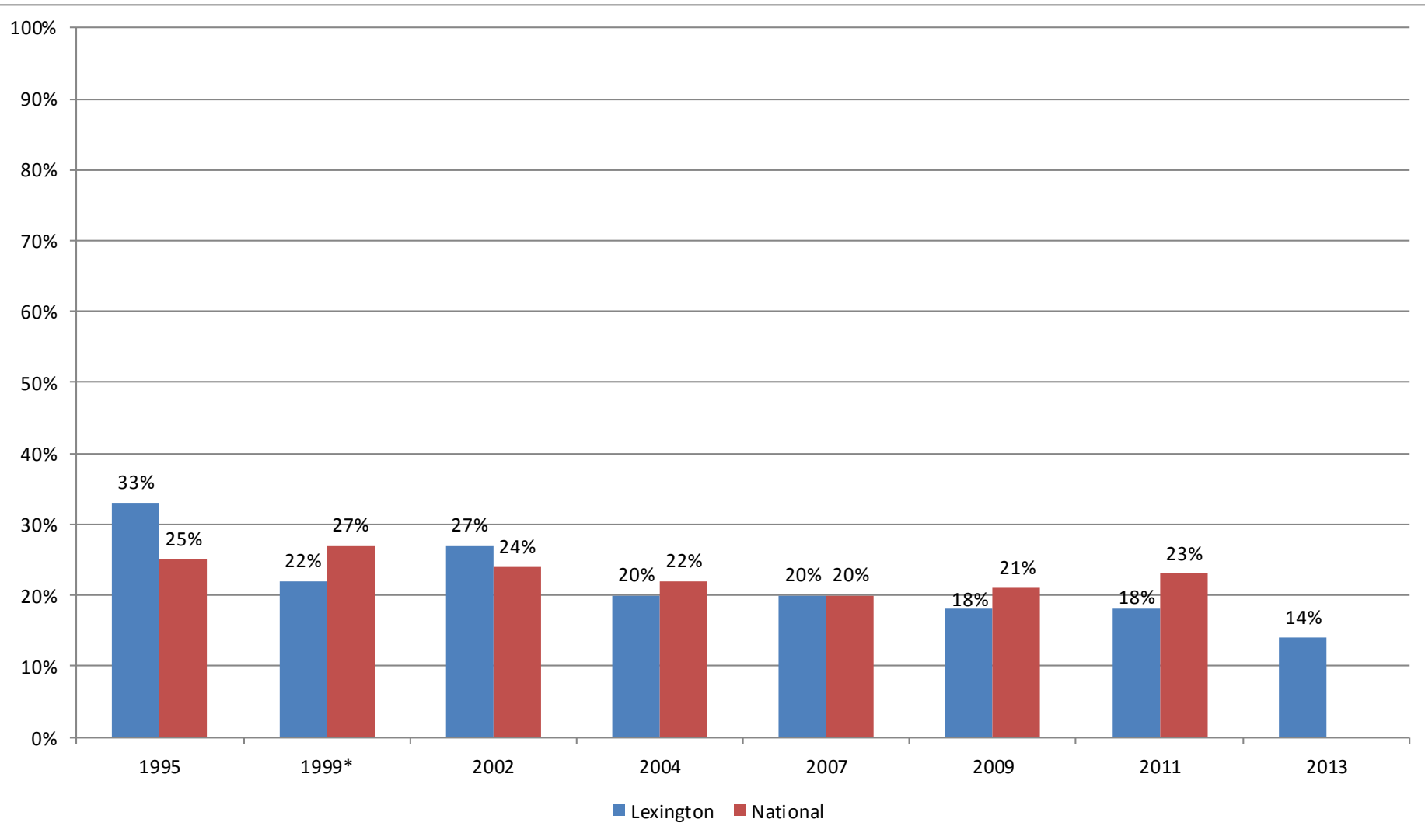
# Patterns of Marijuana Use

- 23% of students have tried marijuana in their lifetime
  - *Lower than 40% national average, 43% Massachusetts average and 33% regional six schools report average*
- 14% reported using marijuana at least once in the past 30 days.
  - *Lower than the 23% national average, 28% state average and 22% six schools report average*
  - Males and females are equally likely to report smoking marijuana
  - Students more likely to have used marijuana than to smoke cigarettes

# Marijuana Use Over Time

## Lexington and National

*(smoked in last 30 days)*





# Patterns of Other Drug Use

- In 2013, 1.6% reported using cocaine, and 1.2% used speed at least once in the their lifetime.
- Serious drug use has gone down over time
  - In 1995, 14% reported they had sniffed glue/aerosol at least once in their life compared to only 3% in 2013.
  - In 2002, 3.3% reported they had used cocaine at least once compared to only 1.6% in 2013.
- In 2013, 4% reported using over the counter medicines to get high and 2.9% used Rx pain medication to get high at least once in their lifetime.

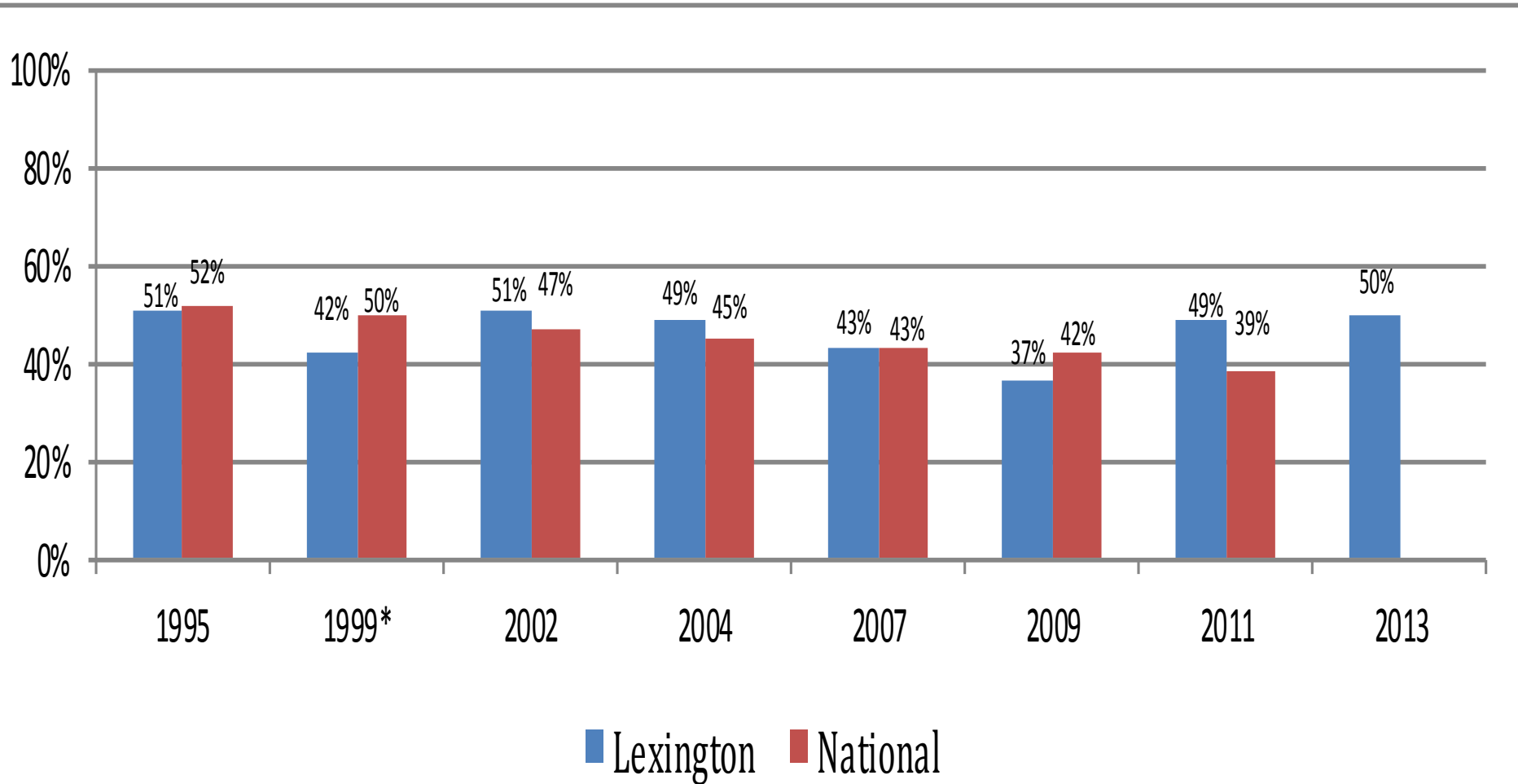
# Patterns of Student Drinking

- In 2013, 67% of students reported drinking alcohol in their lifetime
  - *Decrease from 78% reported in 2011 and 2009*
- 50% of students reported having at least one drink on one or more days in the past month
  - *Nearly identical to 2011 findings (49%)*
  - *Higher than 39% national average, 40% Massachusetts average, and 33% six schools report average*
- 24% of students reported binge drinking (more than 5 drinks in a row) in the past month
  - *Decrease from 29% reported in 2011*
  - *Compared to 22% national average, 22% Massachusetts average and 20% six schools report average*

# Student Drinking Over Time

## Lexington and National

*(drank in last 30 days)*



# Sexual Activity

- 14% of students report having sexual intercourse
  - *Compared to 17% in 2011 and 20% in 2009*
  - *46% national average, 47% Massachusetts average, 26% six schools average*
- Older students more likely to engage in sexual intercourse
  - 4% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders
  - 8% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders
  - 19% of 11<sup>th</sup> graders
  - 29% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders
- Proportion of students who report using a condom if sexually active has decreased from 2011 - 66% in 2013 compared to 70% in 2011.

# Sexual Activity – Oral Sex

- **22% of students report having oral sex**
  - Decreased from 27% reported in 2011 and 29% in 2009
  - Compared to 34% in regional six school study
- **Of the proportion of students in each grade who reported that they have had oral sex at least once:**
  - 7% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders
  - 18% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders
  - 27% of 11<sup>th</sup> graders
  - 40% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders
- **Of those who have had oral sex, 23% report having four or more partners (17% in 2011)**
- **32% of students reported sending or receiving a sexual message electronically and 18% of students reported sending or receiving a sexual picture electronically.**

# Harassment

- 21% of students report being a victim of harassment at school or because of something that happened at school.
  - Of students who report harassment, 26% told no one
- Of students who report being harassed:
  - 83% report being harassed by students while in school
  - 10% report being harassed by a teacher while in school
  - 30% report being harassed over the internet or by email
- Males and females report roughly equal levels of harassment. 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders report proportionately more harassment than 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders.
- Harassment does vary by student's self-reported sexual orientation
  - Bisexual and students who are unsure of their sexual orientation more likely to report harassment than heterosexual or gay or lesbian students.

# Academic Stress

- **Students continue to express stress associated with academics**
  - 15% report classes cause “extreme stress”
  - 41% report classes cause “a lot of stress”
  - 91% report their stress has increased since starting high school
  - 81% felt pressure from parents to get good grades; 66% felt pressure from teachers to get good grades
  - 83% report atmosphere at LHS encourages academic competition; 78% report the atmosphere in the town of Lexington encourages academic competition
- **Gender impact of academic stress**
  - Doing poorly on a test bothers young women more than young men (49% of women “bothered a lot” compared to 36% men)
- **Planning for the future causes extreme stress**
  - 31% of students indicated feeling “extreme stress” planning for life after high school

# Academic Stress and Other Stress

- In 2013, only 24% students thought their teachers were aware of their level of stress
- Students rated not performing well on an exam as causing them greater or equivalent stress (46% bothered a lot) as other stressful life events such as family illness (44% bothered a lot) or breaking up with a significant other (41% bothered a lot)
- Extra-curricular activities cause less stress
  - 4% report extreme stress from sports
  - 2% report extreme stress from clubs
  - 3% report extreme stress from other extra-curricular activities

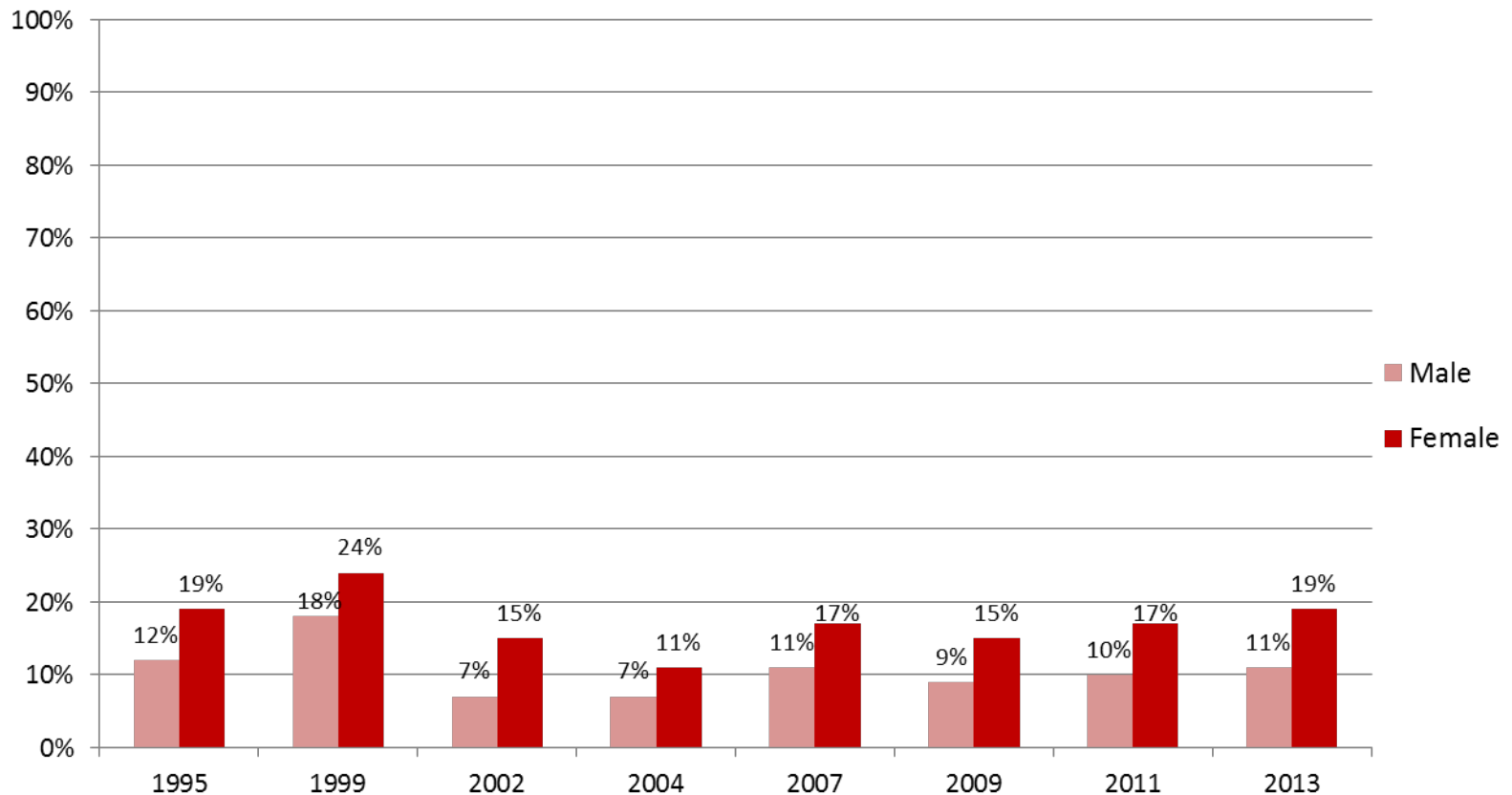


# Coping with Stress

- Programming at LHS designed to help reduce stress may be having a positive impact
  - Proportion of students who report classes cause them extreme stress continues to decrease from 2004 to 2013
  - Students report a number of healthy responses for dealing with stress:
    - 40% indicated they listen to music when they experience stress
    - 67% reporting they exercise when they are feeling stress.
    - Only 55% of students indicated that they dealt with stress by drinking alcohol
  - But only 24% of students thought their teachers were aware of their level of stress

# Consider Suicide

**14% (n=247) of students report “ever seriously considered attempting suicide” in last 30 days**



# Conclusions

- Progress continues in reduction of cigarette smoking and drug use
- Stress remains a challenge for students of LHS
  - Stress of LHS may contribute to risky behavior
  - Planning for the future a particular source of stress
  - This atmosphere makes health programming particularly important
- Programs to reduce stress may be having an impact
  - Health education continues to have a positive impact on student decision making
  - Students report they receive the most accurate information about sex from:
    - Health teachers (62%)
    - Friends (16%)
    - Parents (19%)