



Risk & Protective Factors

Erie County, PA

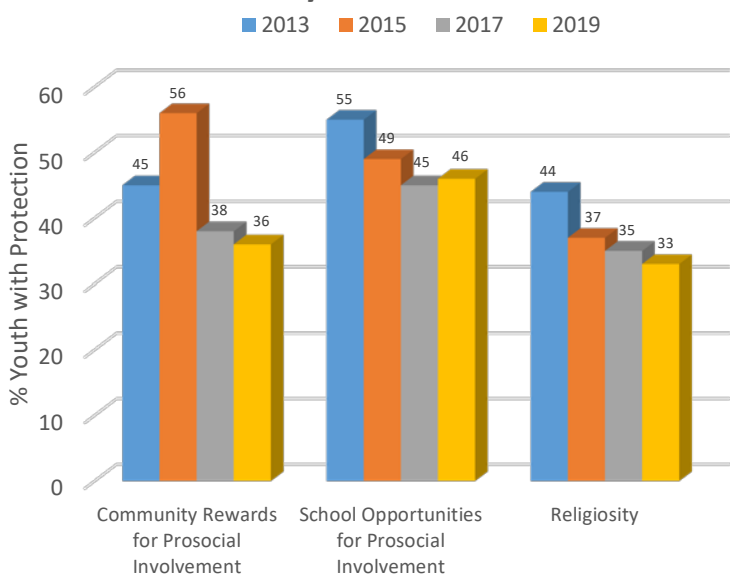
PREVENTION IS SCIENCE.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS are factors that buffer youth against risk factors and reduce the likelihood of a youth engaging in harmful behaviors.

RISK FACTORS are factors that increase the likelihood of youth engaging in harmful behaviors.

PRIORITY FACTORS are those factors that have been identified as areas of focus in the Community Action Plan either in 2012 or 2017 for youth in Erie County.

Priority PROTECTIVE Factors



Prevention programming requires a long-term commitment as generational patterns of behavior will not improve in a short-term period, but over 15-20 years of concentrated effort.

The trend of the priority protective factors remains concerning, as the percentage of youth protected by the factors has been trending downwards. In 2019, there was an increase in school opportunities, driven mostly by increases in 6th and 12th graders. While overall religiosity has continued to decline, there was an increase of religious activity involvement reported by 6th graders.

Trends in priority risk factors continue to fluctuate, with low neighborhood attachment being the one risk factor with a constant upward trajectory. Family history of antisocial behavior, poor family management, and perceived risk of drug use dropped slightly in 2019 while family conflict remained the same and parental attitudes favorable towards antisocial behaviors significantly increased. Most of the priority risk factors for Erie County youth remain in the family domain.

COMMUNITY REWARDS- When young people are recognized and rewarded for their contributions in their community, they are less likely to become involved in harmful behaviors.

SCHOOL OPPORTUNITIES- When young people have opportunities to participate in meaningful activities at school, they are less likely to engage in problem behaviors.

RELIGIOSITY- Young people who regularly attend religious activities are less likely to engage in unhealthy behaviors.

LOW NEIGHBORHOOD ATTACHMENT- Low neighborhood bonding is related to higher levels of juvenile crime & drug selling.

POOR FAMILY MANAGEMENT- Inconsistent and inappropriate punishment inflicted by parents as well as a failure to provide clear expectations & supervision increases the likelihood a youth will engage in unhealthy behaviors.

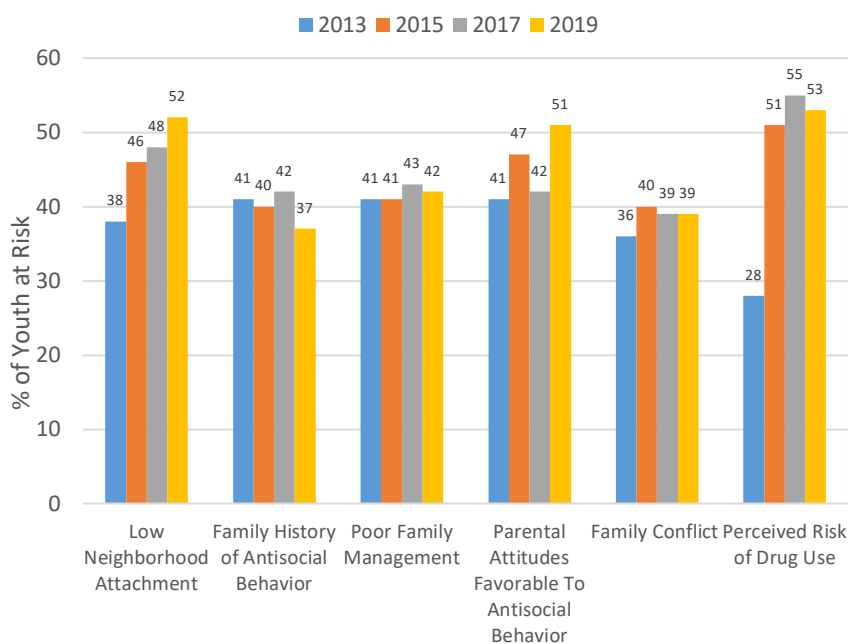
FAMILY HISTORY OF ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOR- When youth are raised in a family with a history of problem behaviors, the youth is more likely to also engage in those problem behaviors.

FAMILY CONFLICT- Children raised in families in high conflict are at risk for both delinquency and drug use.

PERCEIVED RISK OF DRUG USE- Young people who do not perceive drugs use as risky are far more likely to engage in drug use.

PARENTAL ATTITUDES THAT FAVOR ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIORS- In families where parents are involved in unhealthy behaviors, the youth are more likely to also be involved in those behaviors and that risk is further increased if parents involve children in their own unhealthy behavior.

Priority RISK Factors



Substance Use & Abuse

Erie County, PA



Higher prevalence drugs are often considered to be more socially acceptable; however, their acceptability can potentially lead to additional drug use.

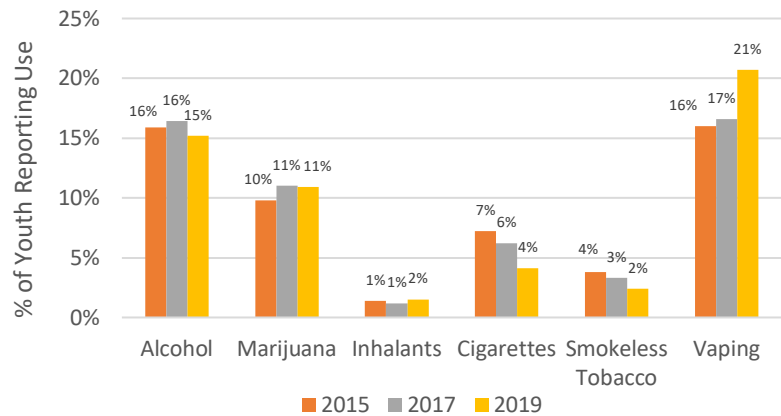
Youth reporting alcohol use has remained fairly constant, with a slight decrease in 2019.

Vaping has surpassed alcohol as the most prevalent drug of use among youth and has increased to 21% of youth reporting use in the past 30 days in 2019. Of those youth reporting vaping use, 46% have vaped flavoring, 50% nicotine, 25% marijuana or hash oil and 17% report having vaped a substance they did not know.

Cigarette and smokeless tobacco use continue to trend downwards.

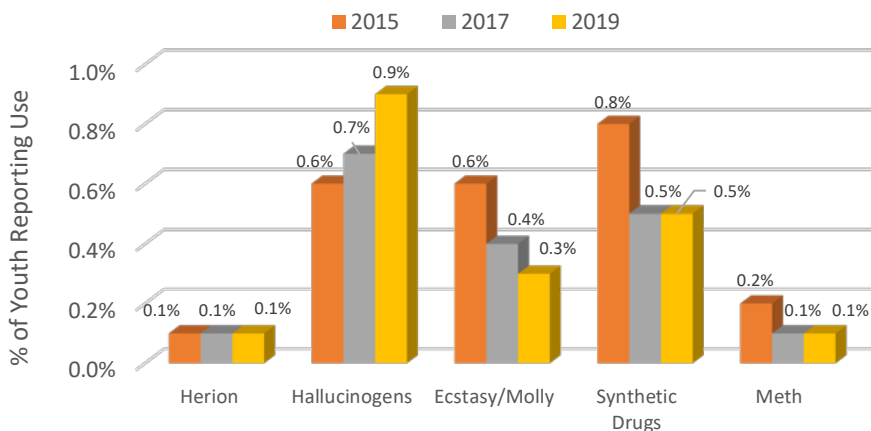
Higher Prevalence Drugs

Past 30 Day Use



Additional Drugs

Past 30 Day Use



Despite ongoing concerns of increases in opioid use and overdoses in adult populations, reported use of illicit drugs among youth has remained relatively low. Reported use for heroin, synthetic drugs and meth remained stable, while decreasing among ecstasy/molly.

The only increase identified has been an increase among the use of hallucinogens, although that use still remains below 1% of all 6th, 8th, 10th and 12th graders. The greatest use reported for hallucinogens remains in the 12th grade, having increased from 1.5 in 2017 to 2.4 in 2019 and also increasing among the 10th grade from 0.8 in 2017 to 1.1 in 2019.

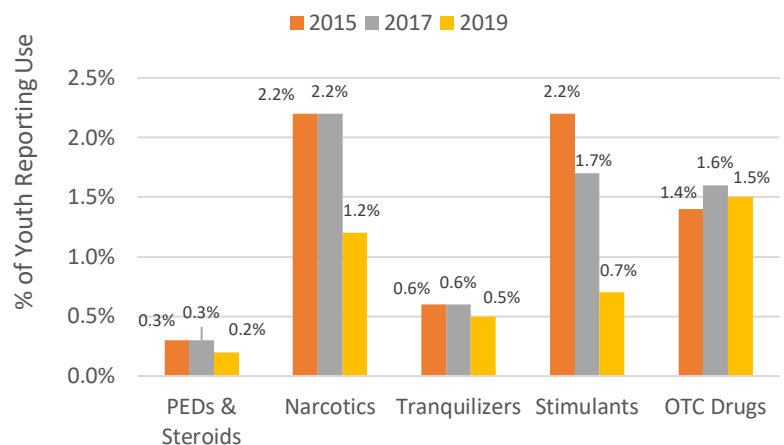
The issue of non-medical use of prescription drugs has emerged as a major health issue. According to the Monitoring the Future study, prescription drugs are the most abused category of drugs following alcohol, tobacco and marijuana. Youth often believe these drugs are safer than the illicit drugs because they are prescribed by a doctor. In 2014, the CDC identified that 75% of new heroin users reported having abused prescription opioids prior to turning to heroin.

As reported by Erie County youth, OTC (Over the Counter) drugs are reported as the most frequently used prescription drug followed by narcotics. All categories of prescription drug use declined in 2019 with the greatest decreases in narcotics (falling from 2.2% to 1.2%) and stimulants (falling 1.7% to 0.7%).

PEDs/Steroids and Tranquilizers has slight decreases in 2019 but have remained relatively low and stable.

Prescription Drugs

Past 30 Day Use

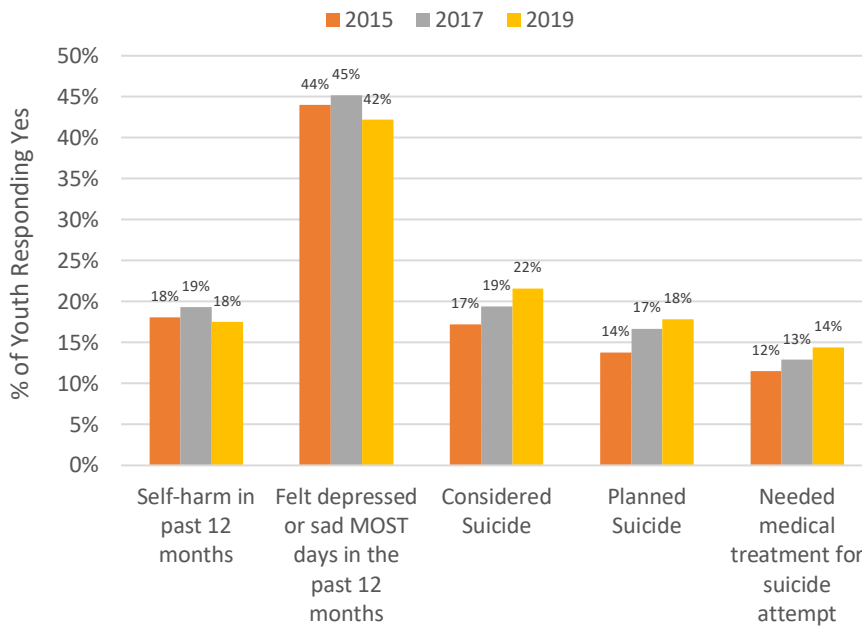




Social & Emotional Health

Erie County, PA

Emotional Health Indicators



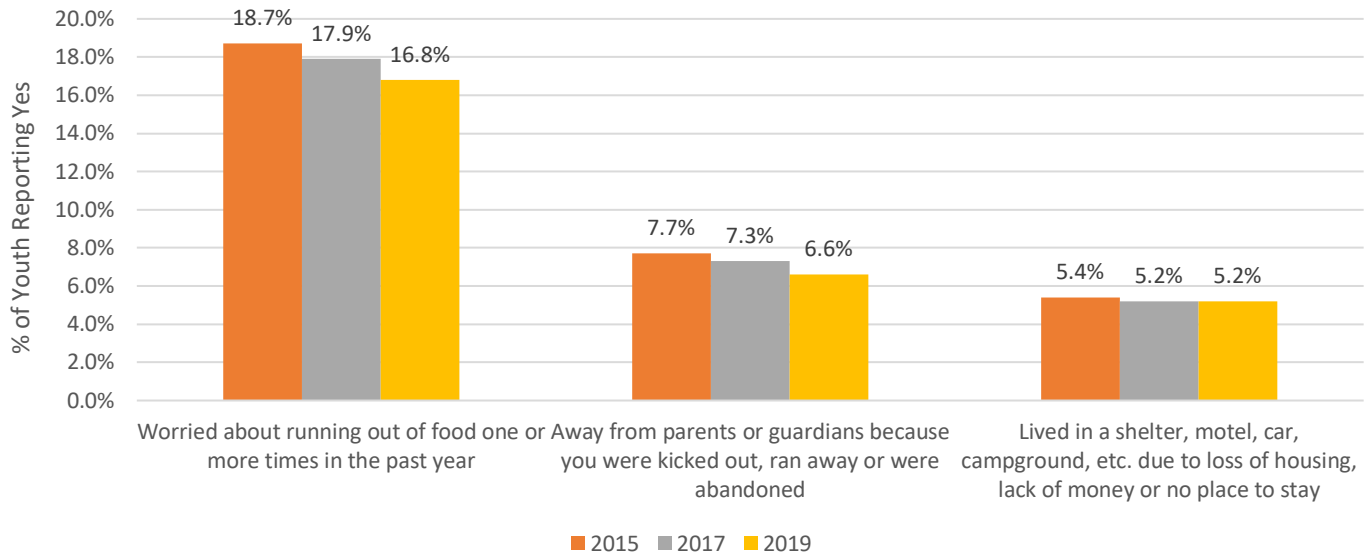
Stress, anxiety, loneliness and frustration are all emotions that can negatively impact youth outcomes and emphasize the importance of good mental health habits such as building coping skills, resiliency and experiencing good judgement.

Indicators associated with depression symptoms on the PAYS remain concerning for Erie County youth. While Erie County youth report slight decreases in self-harming behavior and feeling sad most days during the past 12 months, 42% of youth are still reporting feeling sad most days.

Youth indicating they have considered suicide (22%), planned suicide (18%) and needed medical treatment for a suicide attempt (14%) has been steadily increasing in every category, and higher than the state averages in every category indicating a greater focus needs to be taken on the emotional and mental health of our youth.

Trauma and instability create stress within youth and can negatively impact the overall health and well-being of youth. Food insecurity and housing instability are two of those factors. While decreasing, the percentage of youth worried about running out of food one or more times during the past year is at 17%. The number of youth having lost housing and living in a shelter, motel, car or campground has remained stable at 5%. The number of youth away from parents/guardians for being kicked out, running away or being abandoned has remained relatively stable around 7%. Fifteen percent of youth reported having changed homes once or twice in the past twelve months while a 7% of youth reported having changed homes three or more times in the past three years. Food insecurity and housing stability as reported through the PAYS is higher for Erie County youth when compared to state averages. Worry about food was consistent across all grade levels. Youth having no place to stay was reported at a higher percentage for 6th graders (7%) while youth aware from parents due to being kicked out or abandoned was highest among the 12th grade (9%).

Social Health Incidators



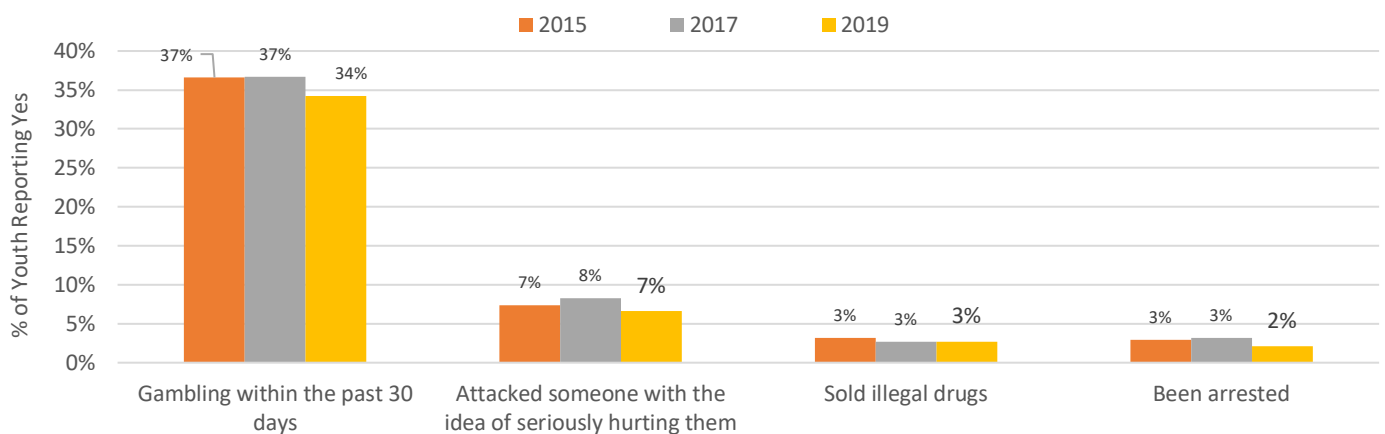
Antisocial Behaviors

Erie County, PA

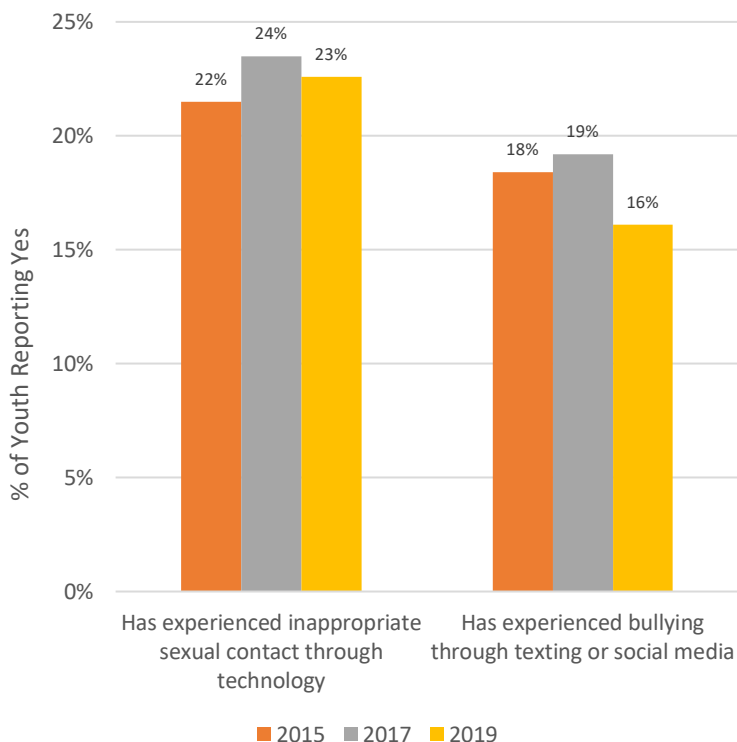


Antisocial behaviors involve aggression against adults or peers, as well as destruction to property, self or others. They also include less overt behaviors that include addictive behavior, such as gambling. Gambling within the past 30 days has decreased among Erie County youth from 2017 (37%) to 2019 (34%). Thirty-four percent of youth report having gambled during his/her lifetime. In 2019, 3% of youth reported having lied about his/her gambling habits and almost 6% of youth reported the need to bet “more and more” money. The most common form of gambling in 2019 was lottery tickets with 20% of youth reporting using, followed by personal skill games (pool, darts, video games) with 19% reporting. Attacking someone with the idea of seriously hurting them was reported in 2019 by 7%, a decrease from 8% in 2017; however, that remains higher than the state average of 5%. The youth in 10th grade report the highest percentages at 8% followed by 8th graders at 7%. Youth reporting having sold illegal drugs remained the same at 3%, slightly higher than the state average of 2%. Being arrested decreased to 2%, matching the state average.

Antisocial Behaviors



Victimization Through Technology



There has been increased public awareness of “cyber bullying” due to high profile cases of suicide connected to incidents of malicious use of social media by bullies who can remain virtually anonymous and not constrained by the normative social constraints of their behavior. The life of a modern teen and their social circles are intertwined with texting, social media and the internet. When that social space is invaded by bullying and harassment, seeking refuge at home no longer applies.

In Erie County, 16% of youth indicate they have been bullied through technology or social media, which is down from 18% in 2015 and 19% in 2017 but still higher than the state average of 14%. Youth in 8th and 10th grades report the highest percentages at 18% and 12th grade reports the lowest percentages at 12%.

The percentage of youth who have experienced inappropriate sexual contact through technology has been higher than those reporting having experiencing bullying through texting and social media with 23% of youth reporting having had inappropriate sexual contact through technology. While down from 2017, it remains higher than the state, which is 21% for 2019. Youth in tenth grade report the highest percentages (30%) followed by 8th grade (25%).



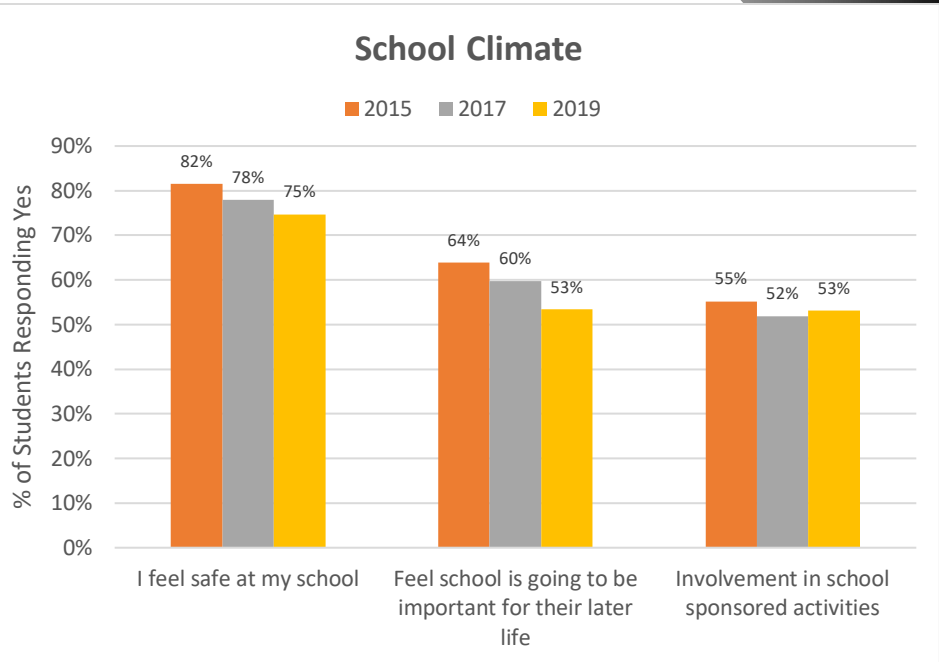
School Climate & Safety

Erie County, PA

Safe, supportive schools are essential to a student's academic success. School climate and safety have become ever increasing focal points of prevention programming. Attitudes towards school safety have been on a downward trend over the past 3 years with 75% of youth reporting feeling safe in school in Erie County, lower than the state average of 80%.

Students identifying the importance of school later in their life has also been decreasing with 53% reporting "yes" in 2019; however, this is above the state average of 50%.

Young people participating in activities fosters healthy development and provides opportunity for bonding with role models and peers. In 2019, 53% of youth in Erie County reported being involved in school sponsored activities, up slightly from 2017 but lower than the state average of 60%.



Violence on school property has become a serious concern over recent decades, particularly where guns and knives are involved. While the percentage of students reporting being threatened at school decreased from 25% (2017) to 24% (2019), Erie County remains higher when compared to the state which is 19%. Students threatened with a weapon was 6% compared to the state at 4%. Ten percent of students report having been attacked on school property, and 2% reported being attacked with a weapon. Eighth graders report the highest percentage of students being threatened (30%) while sixth graders report the highest percentage of students being attacked at school (13%). Tenth graders report the highest percentage of students being attacked with a weapon (3%).

Other antisocial behaviors reported in school involve drugs and alcohol. In 2019, 8% of students reported having been offered drugs at school which has remained consistent over the past three reporting periods and is par with the state. Students reporting having been drunk or high at school also remains consistent at 7%. High school students, 10th graders (14%) and 12th graders (13%) report higher percentages of being offered drugs at school. Twelfth graders have historically reported the highest percentage of students having been drunk or high at school; however, they were surpassed by the 10th graders in 2019 with 12% of 10th graders reporting having been drunk or high at school compared to 11% of 12th graders.

