

Prevention through Afterschool Programs and Out-of-school Activities

Afterschool programs and extracurricular activities are an essential component of community prevention efforts. Young people spend much of their time outside of their homes and outside of school. This “third space” is an important place for them to get what they need as they grow up. Approximately 24% percent of Vermont’s children and youth, grades K-12, are currently enrolled in afterschool programs. Of those children and youth not currently in programs, 33% would participate if a program were available. We celebrate the \$600k of one-time funds that was allocated last year to work toward increasing access to afterschool and summer learning programs. We know that \$2.5million/year is needed to ensure that families across Vermont have access to the programs they need for their children and youth.

An effective component of statewide prevention efforts is to ensure that every young person in every Vermont community has access to safe, supportive, accessible, and affordable out-of-school time options. Reports from the Marijuana Commission, the Opioid Coordinating Council, and the Advisory Council on Child Poverty and Strengthening Families all recommend investments in afterschool and out-of-school activities for Vermont’s youth.

Take away’s from Finland’s approach:

- Youth centers and youth workers in every municipality and neighborhood
- National outcome targets: (1) a hobby for every youth and (2) one hour or more of physical activity for every youth every day
- Youth engagement and youth rights at every level

Take away’s from Iceland’s approach:

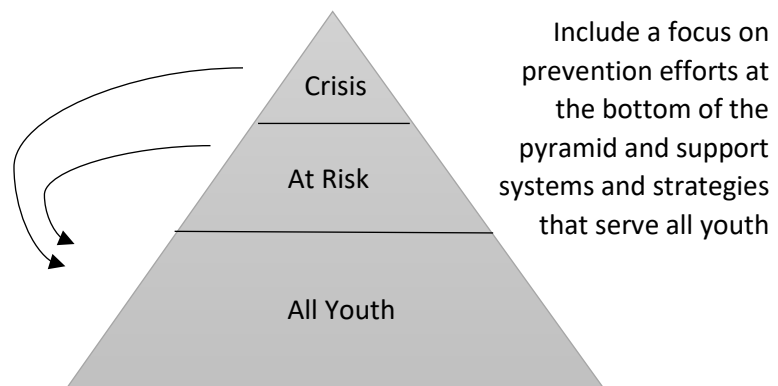
- Parent engagement
- Data driven strategies
- Sports and other extracurricular activities for every youth at least three times per week

RECOMMENDATIONS

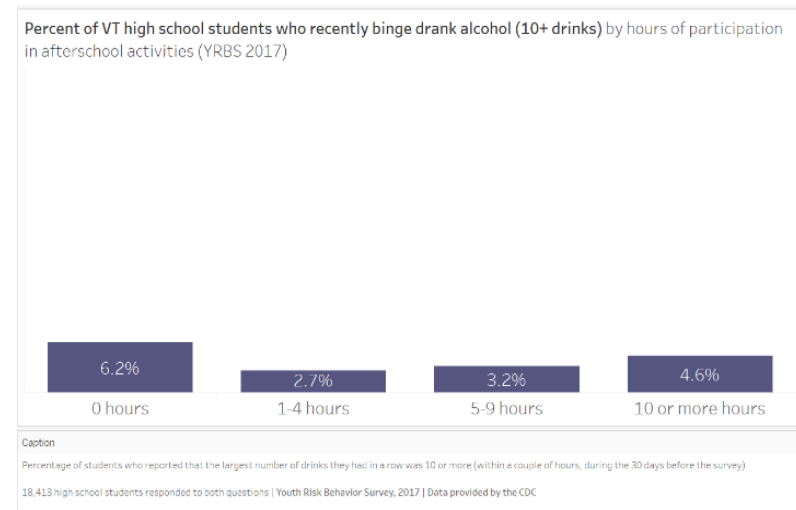
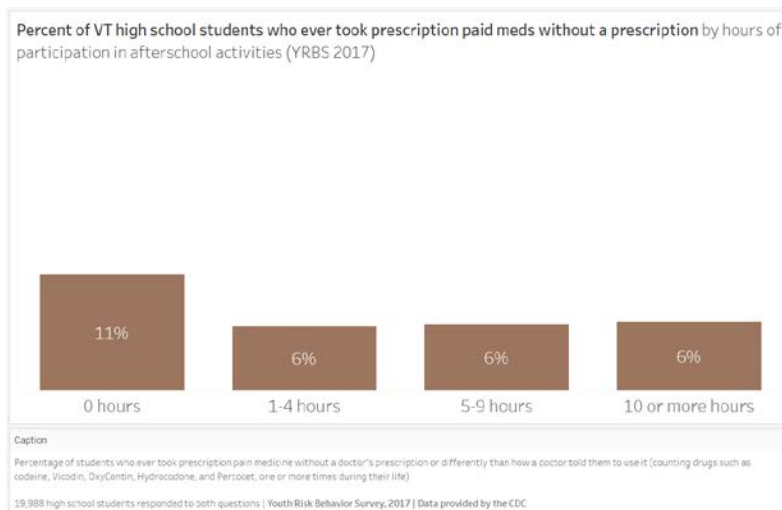
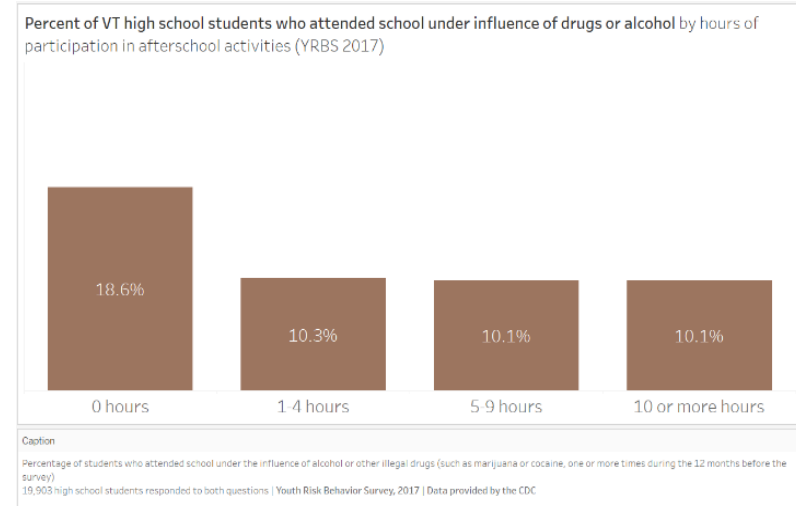
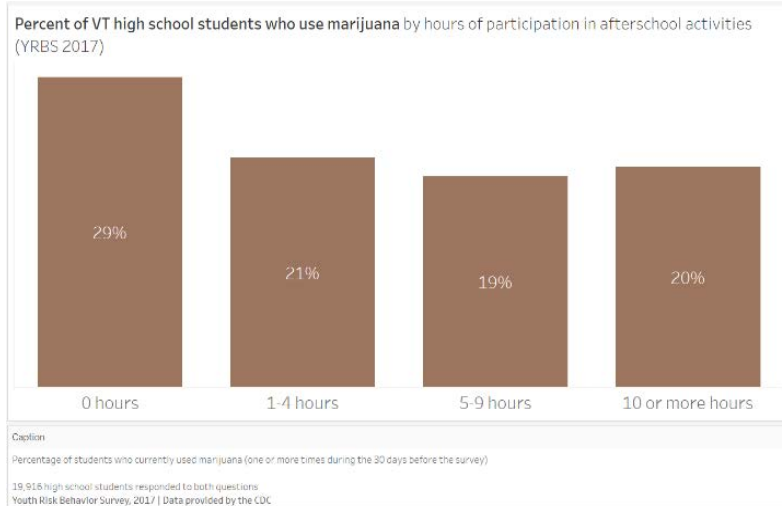
Include Vermont Afterschool or a designee on the proposed Substance Misuse Prevention Council

Allocate funding to increase access to afterschool programs and out-of-school activities. Rather than placing funding for afterschool programs under regional prevention networks consider making use of the statewide approach that the Agency of Human Services is currently investing in with the Tobacco Settlement Funds and that aligns with the recommendations of the legislative working group under Vermont’s PreK-16 Council. This approach also makes use of the state’s multiyear investment in professional development and support for the afterschool field and utilizes existing public-private funding for these supports through Vermont Afterschool.

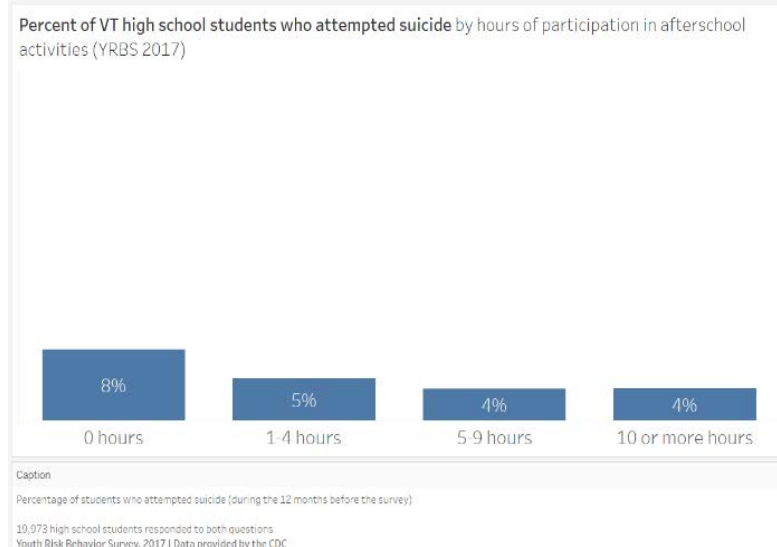
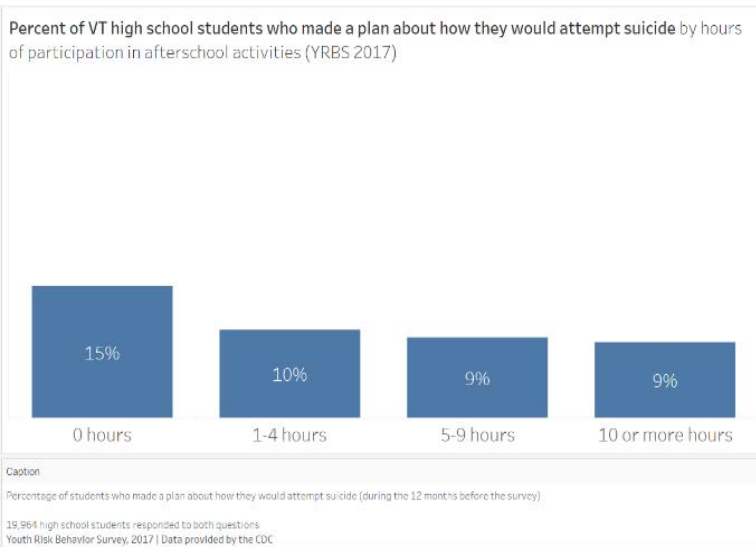
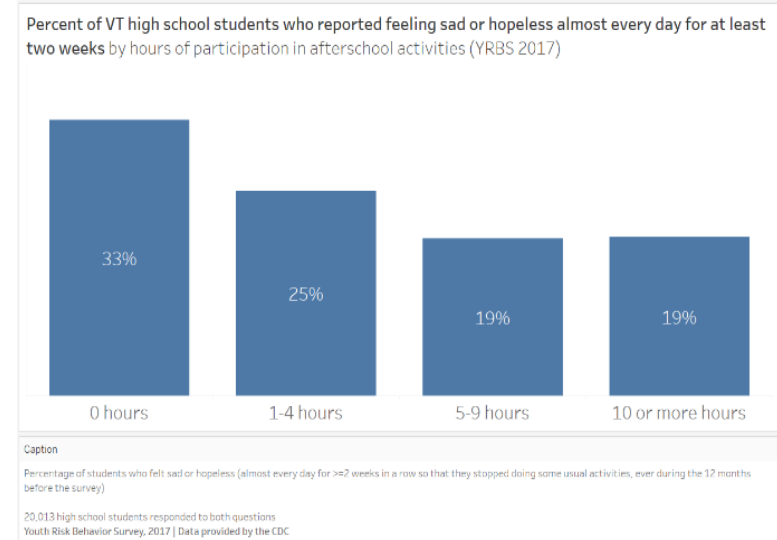
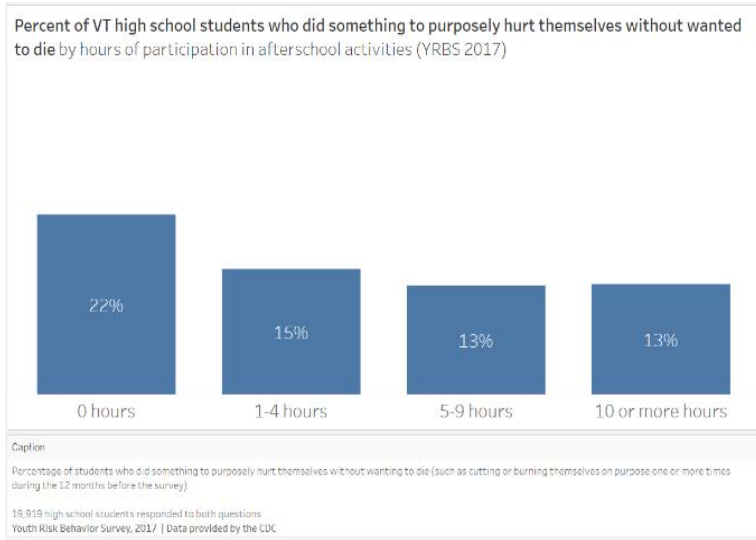
Avoid too narrow a definition of prevention (e.g., consider Finland’s pyramid) and focus on strategies for all youth not just those at risk or at the top of the pyramid.



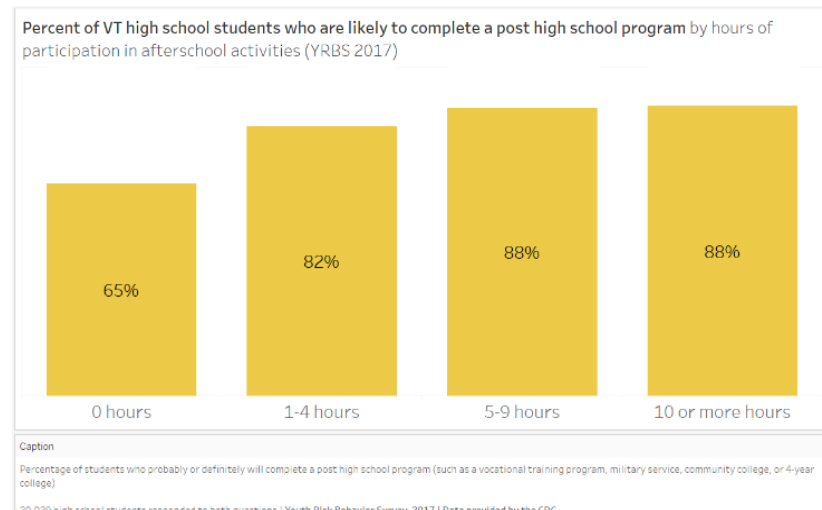
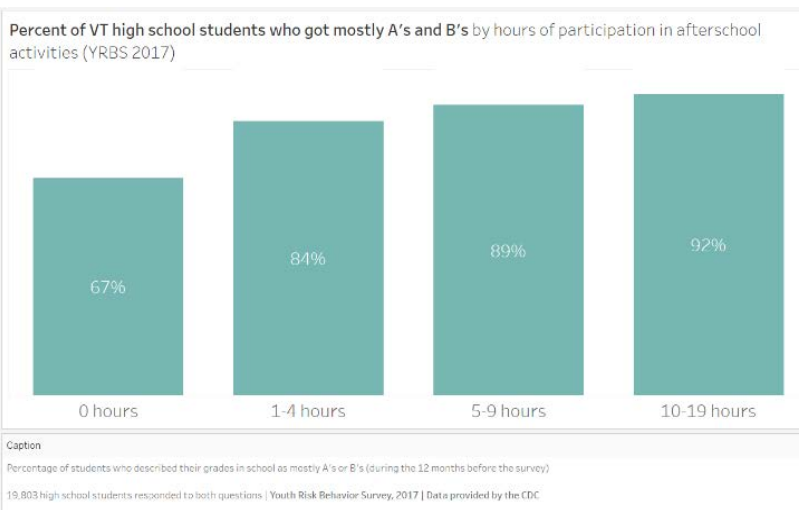
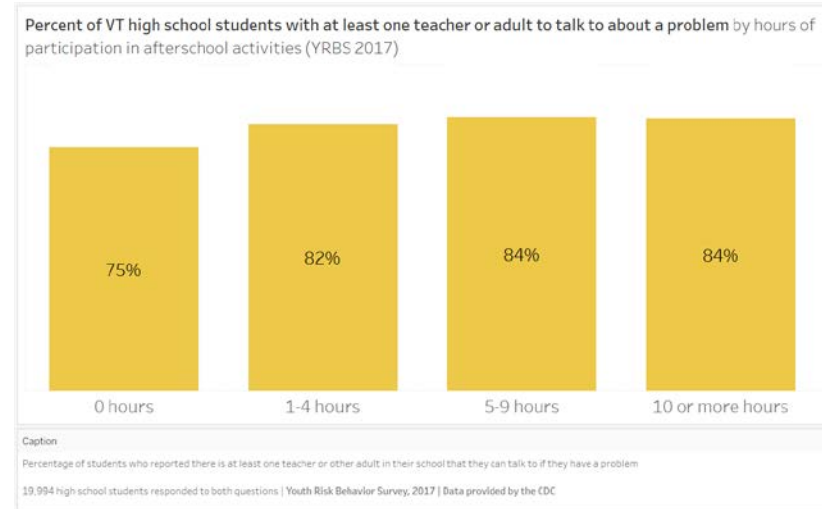
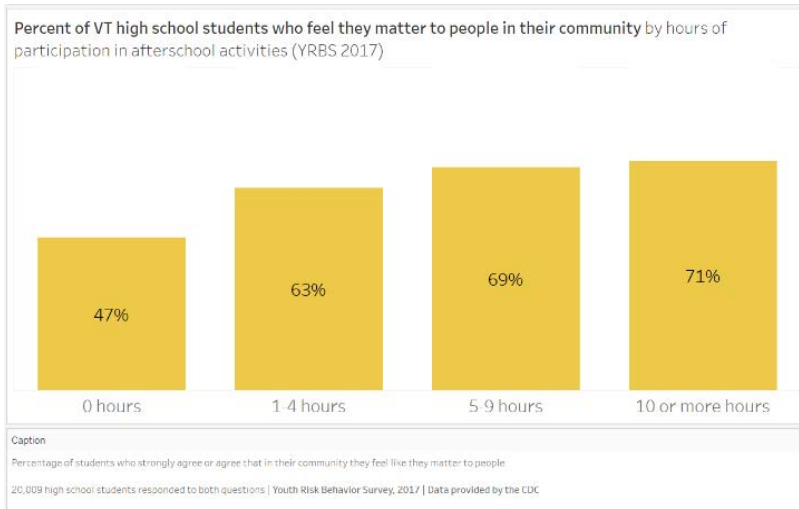
SUBSTANCE USE



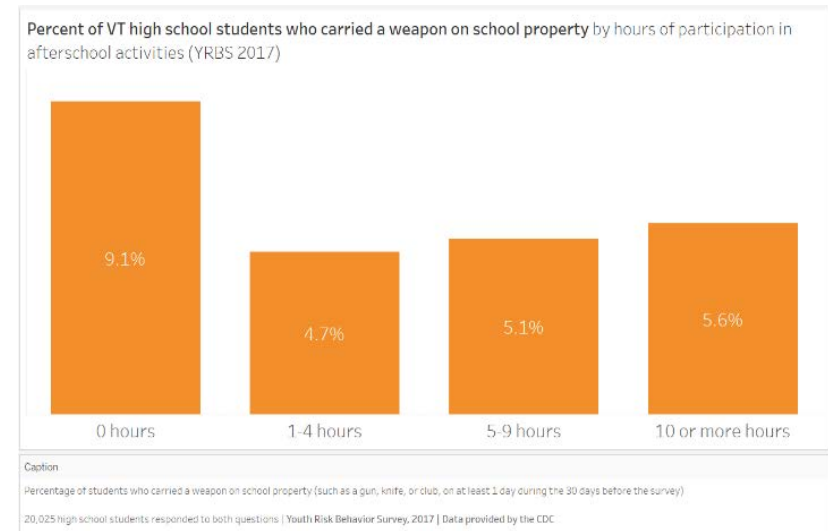
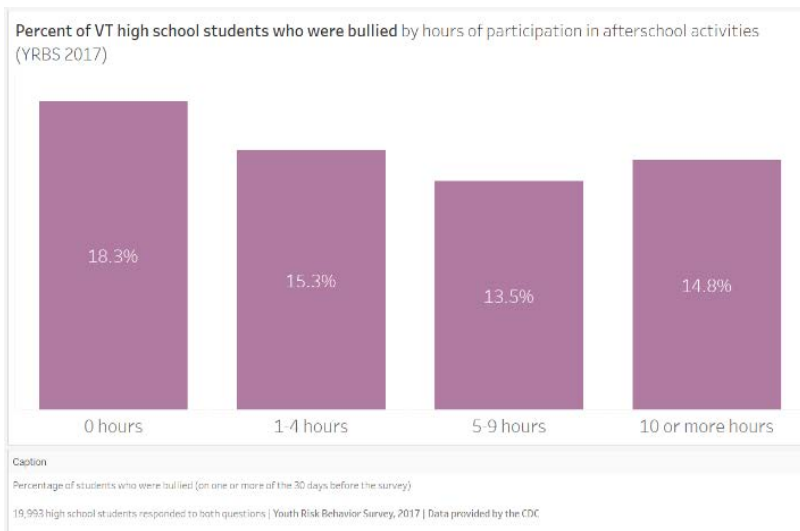
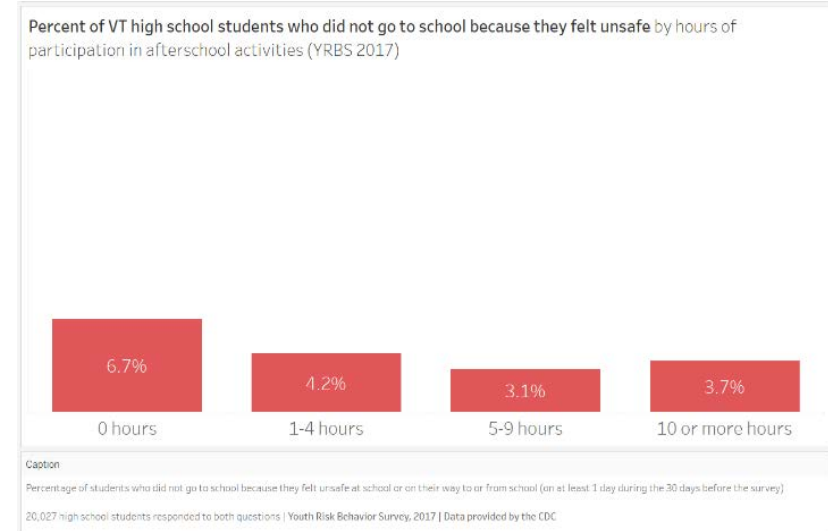
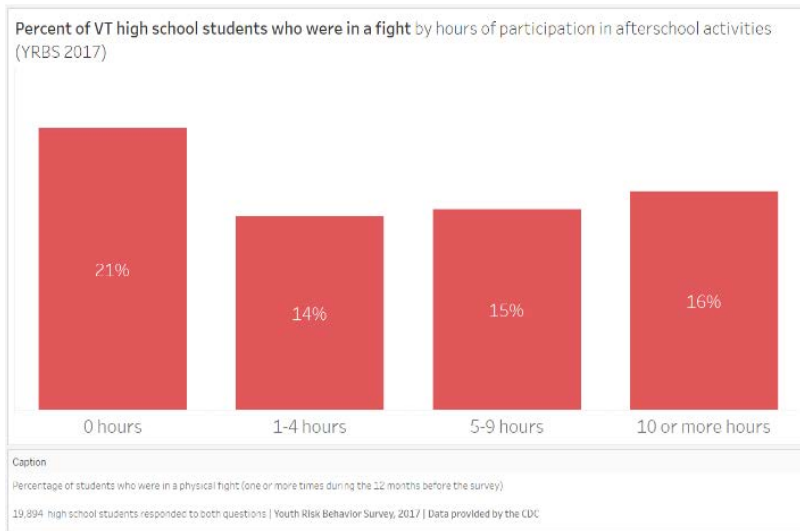
MENTAL HEALTH



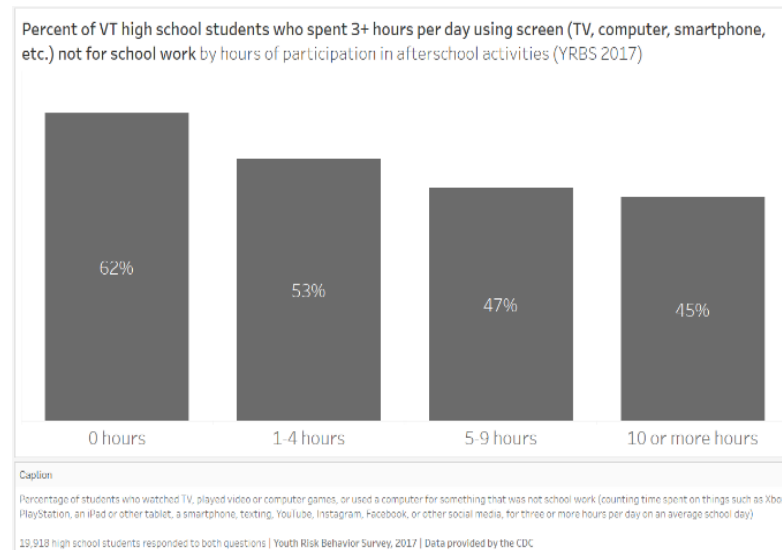
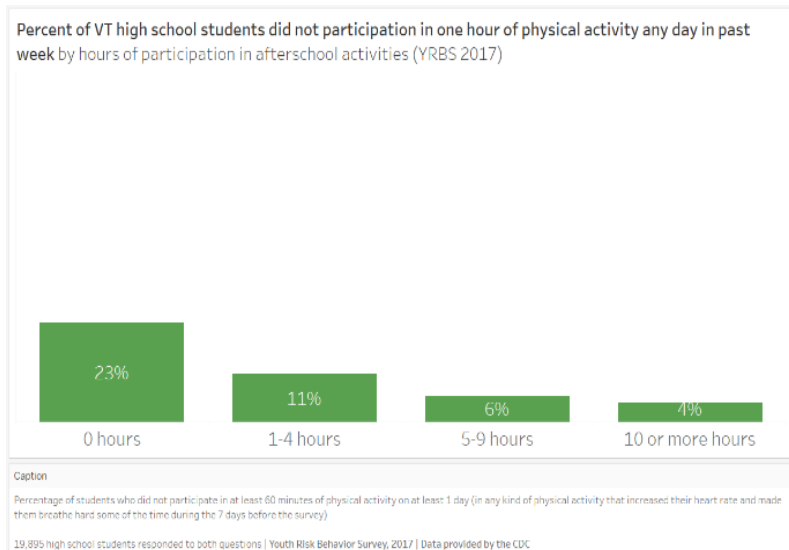
CONNECTEDNESS AND ENGAGEMENT



SAFETY



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



NOTES:

- In breaking out sub-populations, one group where we note a lower than expected level of participation in extracurricular activities is students who identify as LGBT. This is something that we are talking with program providers about.
- On a number of items, we see an increase in risky behaviors for students reporting 20 hours or more per week of participation in extracurricular activities. We do not yet fully understand the reasons for this but have submitted a research proposal to the University of Vermont College of Medicine Public Health Projects and are looking for some research assistance in this area.