
KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH
EPIDEMIOLOGICAL PROFILE OF SUBSTANCE USE
AND ASSOCIATED HEALTH OUTCOMES
FALL 2025



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	01
Introduction	01
Demographic Characteristics of the Ketchikan Gateway Borough	10
Socio-demographics of the Ketchikan Gateway Borough	17
Substance Use in Ketchikan: Alcohol	31
Substance Use in Ketchikan: Marijuana	36
Substance Use in Ketchikan: Prescription Drugs	40
Substance Use in Ketchikan: Tobacco & Nicotine	44
Substance Use in Ketchikan: Other Drug Use	49
Substance Use in Ketchikan: Negative Health Outcomes	56
• Mental Health	56
• Sexually Transmitted Infections and Sexual Behavior	59
• Violence and Bullying	60
• Parental Substance Use	64
• Criminal Justice and School District Disciplinary Consequences	66

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Demographic Characteristics of the Ketchikan Gateway Borough

The Ketchikan Gateway Borough resides on Revillagigedo Island, which is **Lingít Aaní** - the traditional lands of the Taant'a Kwáan and Sanyaa Kwáan **Tlingit people** [1, 2]. Ketchikan gets its name from the Tlingit people, who named the creek Kichxáan Héeni and the town was built on the creek [1].

The Borough, which houses the **City of Ketchikan** and the **City of Saxman**, is bordered on the east and south by British Columbia, Canada, and the Pacific Ocean to the west. The state capital of Juneau is approximately 300 miles north. Since Ketchikan is located on an island, the only way to access the community is by boat or plane. Ketchikan is nestled within the **Tongass National Forest**, which is a temperate rainforest, providing Ketchikan a rainy and overcast climate. Ketchikan is home to a robust tourism and fishing industry and a diverse population of people.

Geography and communities

The Ketchikan Gateway Borough is the seventh most populous borough in Alaska [3]. The borough includes the **City of Ketchikan** and the **City of Saxman**. Due to Alaska's vast size, larger communities, such as the City of Ketchikan, become a hub of resources for neighboring communities. This means that people living in the adjacent communities of **Metlakatla** and on **Prince of Wales island** often travel to Ketchikan for healthcare, shopping, and community activities such as high school sports. These adjacent communities have a total population of **5,730** people [4]. Much like Ketchikan, all but one of these communities reside on islands and travel to them must be done by boat or plane. For this report's purposes, this area will be referred to as **Prince of Wales-Hyder (POW-Hyder)**, which is how it is designated in the census.

Metlakatla is the only Indian Reserve in the State of Alaska. It is located **20 miles south** of Ketchikan on Annette Island. It's home to a group of **Tsimshian** people who migrated from British Columbia in the late 1880's. These days its economy is centered around fishing and tourism [10, 5].

Hyder, a community of **only 48 people**, is in the same census area as Prince of Wales and Metlakatla despite being separated from those communities by the Ketchikan Gateway Borough [6]. It is located on the mainland, approximately **75 miles east** of Ketchikan. Hyder is difficult to access because the Misty Fjords National Monument Wilderness lays between it and Ketchikan [7]. Hyder is sometimes referred to as a **Canadian Outpost** due to its location on the U.S. border, across from the Canadian town of Steward [8]. Steward provides much of Hyder's resources, including utilities, shopping and allowing children from Hyder to attend school in Steward [8]. Since Hyder's hub community is Steward, Hyder will not be discussed further in this report.

Prince of Wales is the third largest island in the U.S. and home to approximately **4,000 people** located in **12 communities** across the island [9]. These communities vary in size from several dozen residents to just over a thousand [9]. The **Tlingit** people were the first to settle on the island, but **Haida** people began settling on the island in the 1700's [10]. Europeans first visited the island in the late 1700's and began settling on the island in the 1800's [10].

Ketchikan Gateway Borough and the POW-Hyder area are known as **Southern Southeast Alaska**. Since the communities in Southern Southeast Alaska are spread out, rural and remote, it is not uncommon for people residing in these communities to travel to Anchorage or Seattle for healthcare or other needs they cannot access within their home community or the hub community of Ketchikan.

Many of the communities across Southeast Alaska are located on the **Inside Passage**. This is a maritime route that begins in the Puget Sound in Washington and moves north till it ends in Skagway, Alaska [11]. The Alaska portion of this passage is **500 miles long** and flanked by islands, which protects ships from rough weather that can happen on open ocean [12]. It is a common cruise ship path, giving Southeast Alaska its robust tourism industry. It is also utilized by fishing boats, tugboats, ferries and the coast guard.

Population

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, **13,870** people reside within the Ketchikan Gateway Borough [13]. This includes the **8,168** people in the City of Ketchikan and the **384** people who reside within the City of Saxman [13]. The neighboring census area of Prince of Wales-Hyder (POW-Hyder) has a population of **5,753** [13]. This population includes the **1,465** people living in Metlakatla and the **4,120** people living on Prince of Wales Island, and the 48 people in Hyder [13].

The gender makeup of the Ketchikan Gateway Borough is **52% male and 48% female** [13]. This make up is slightly different from the national average of 49.6% male and 50.4% female, but similar to the Alaska statewide averages of 52.6% male and 47.4% female [14]. The population has grown **3.2%** since 2010 [15]. However, there was a population drop in the late 90's when the Ketchikan Pulp Company closed and new federal legislation changed the logging industry [16]. There were 14,000 people in Ketchikan in the 2000 census, so the borough has never fully recouped its population after the closure of the pulp mill [17].

Race and Ethnicity

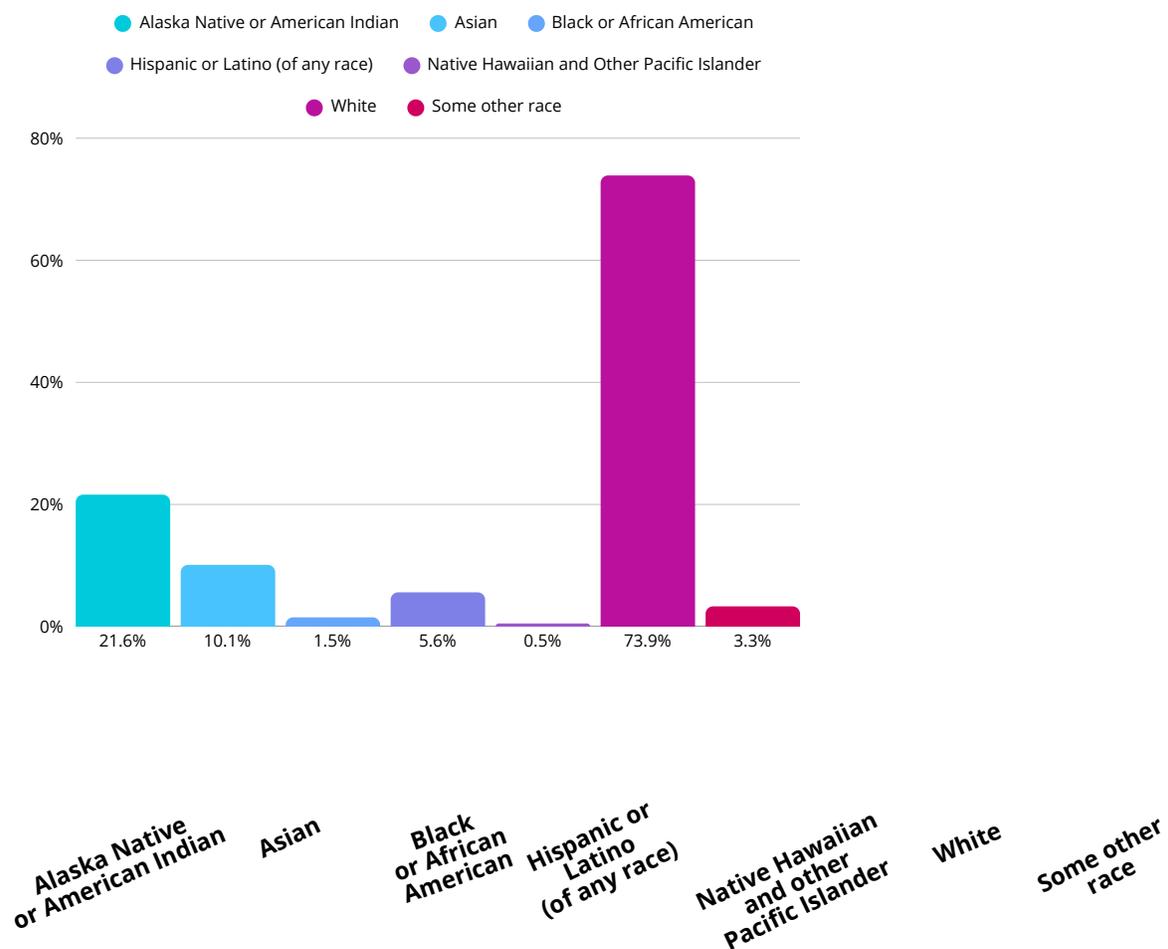
The largest portion of the community is **white at 76%** [13]. The next largest portion of the community is **Alaska Native and American Indian at 22%** [13]. There is also a significant **Asian** population in Ketchikan at **10%** [13]. Most of the Asian population in Ketchikan is Filipino. The **Filipino** community makes up **8%** of Ketchikan's population [13].

Race and Gender Demographics of Ketchikan Gateway Borough

	Count	%
Total Population	13,870	100%
Male	7,226	52%
Female	6,644	48%
White	10,503	76%
Alaska Native / American Indian	3,002	21%
Filipino	1,110	8%
Asian - Non Filipino	132	~1%
Black or African American	213	1.5%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	69	0.5%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	730	5.3%
Some other race	517	3.7%
Two or more races	1,754	12.6 %

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP05.

Race and Ethnicity of Ketchikan Gateway Borough City of Ketchikan, and the POW-Hyder Census Area



This chart shows the racial and ethnic populations by percentage in the City of Ketchikan, the Ketchikan Gateway Borough and the neighboring census area of Prince of Wales-Hyder. These racial categories are not mutually exclusive and will not sum to 100% **11.3%** of the City of Ketchikan report being two or more races; **10.5%** of the Ketchikan Gateway Borough report being two or more races; **13.5%** of POW-Hyder Census Area report being two or more races. Across communities, between **6-10% of multiracial people identified they were white and Alaska Native/American Indian**, and this was the largest subgroup of multiracial people [13].

U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP05.

Ages

The average age of people in the Ketchikan Gateway Borough is **40.6 years** [13]. 21% of the population is under 18 years old and 16.7% is over 65 years old [13]. 5.9% of the borough population is between 15 and 19 years old [13]. Nearly **40%** of the borough is **between 25 and 54 years old** and 11.6% of the population is between 15 and 24 years old [13]. Statistics for the City of Ketchikan and the neighboring community of POW-Hyder are very similar.

Age Demographics of Ketchikan Gateway Borough City of Ketchikan and Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area

Age Groups	Ketchikan Gateway Borough		City of Ketchikan		Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Under 10	1,663	11.9%	1,019	12.5%	643	11.1%
10 to 14	769	5.5%	464	5.7%	381	6.6%
15 to 19	815	5.9%	467	5.7%	353	6.1%
20 to 24	794	5.7%	536	6.6%	271	4.7%
Under 18	2,928	21%	1,748	21.4%	1,244	21.5%
21 and over	10,534	75.5%	6,128	75%	4,373	75.4%
Median Age	40.6 years		37 years		43.1 years	

U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP0

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Socio-demographics of the Ketchikan Gateway Borough

Income

According to the American Community Survey, the median household income for the Ketchikan Gateway Borough is **\$82,763 a year** [1]. The City of Ketchikan has a slightly lower median household income of **\$73,512**; and Prince of Wales-Hyder area had an even lower median income of **\$61,779** [1]. All three areas are lower than the State of Alaska's median income of **\$86,370** [1]. Approximately **44%** of the borough live in a household with an annual income of **less than \$75,000 a year** [1].

Poverty and cost of living

9.7% of the borough population lives below the poverty level [2]. The city has a slightly higher poverty level at **12.9%** and the neighboring area of POW-Hyder has a poverty level of **15.3%** [2]. The poverty level for the whole state is **10.5%** [2].

Poverty levels in all areas were higher for minors. **9.8%** of the population under 18 in the borough live below the poverty level; **13%** of people under 18 in the city live below the poverty level and **18.9%** of people under 18 in the POW-Hyder area live below the poverty level [2]. **13%** of people under 18 in the State of Alaska live below the poverty level [2].

Alaska is the **fifth most expensive state** to live in [4]. The cost of healthcare and groceries are higher in Alaskan cities than anywhere else in the nation [4]. The remoteness of Alaska's communities is part of what contributes so heavily to the cost of living, such as the expensive cost of shipping groceries to communities without a roadway, and traveling to hub communities for healthcare [4].

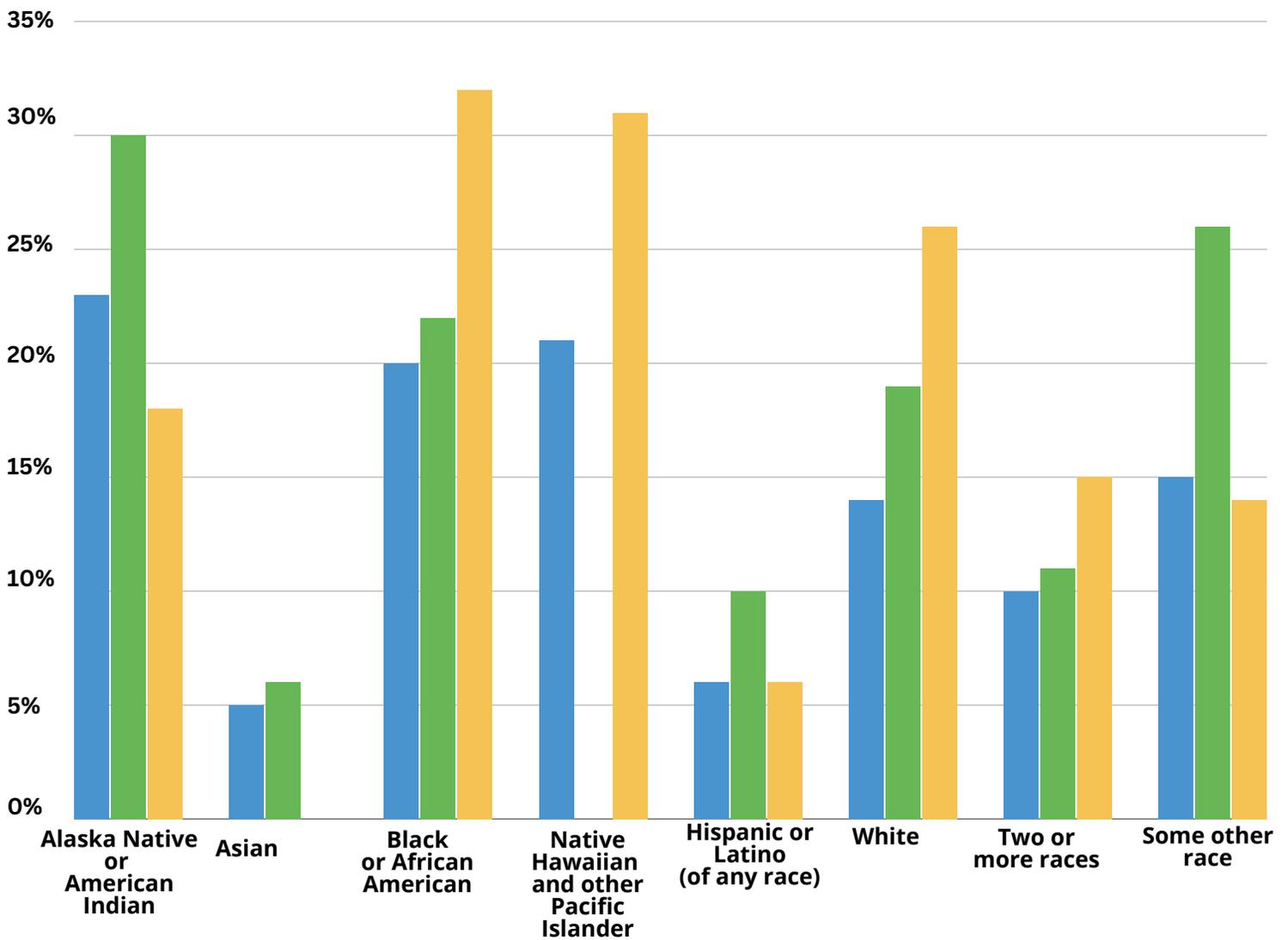
The Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development found **the average median rent in the borough increased by 16% from March of 2022 to March of 2023** [3]. **The cost of a house increased by nearly 3% in the same time** [3].

Households and Housing

There is an estimated **5,568** households in the borough, which includes the **3,285** households in the city [4]. There are approximately **2,334** households in the POW-Hyder area [4]. The average household size in the borough is **2.45 people**; the city is slightly smaller at **2.41 people** and POW-Hyder area is similar at **2.43 people** [4]. This is slightly smaller than the state average of **2.67** people [4]. **22.6%** of households in the borough have a female householder; **28%** of households in the city have a female householder; and **18%** of households have a female householder in the POW-Hyder area [4].

Percentage of Population Below Poverty Level by Race

● Ketchikan Gateway Borough
 ● City of Ketchikan
● Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). Selected Housing Characteristics. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP04.

Households and Housing Continued

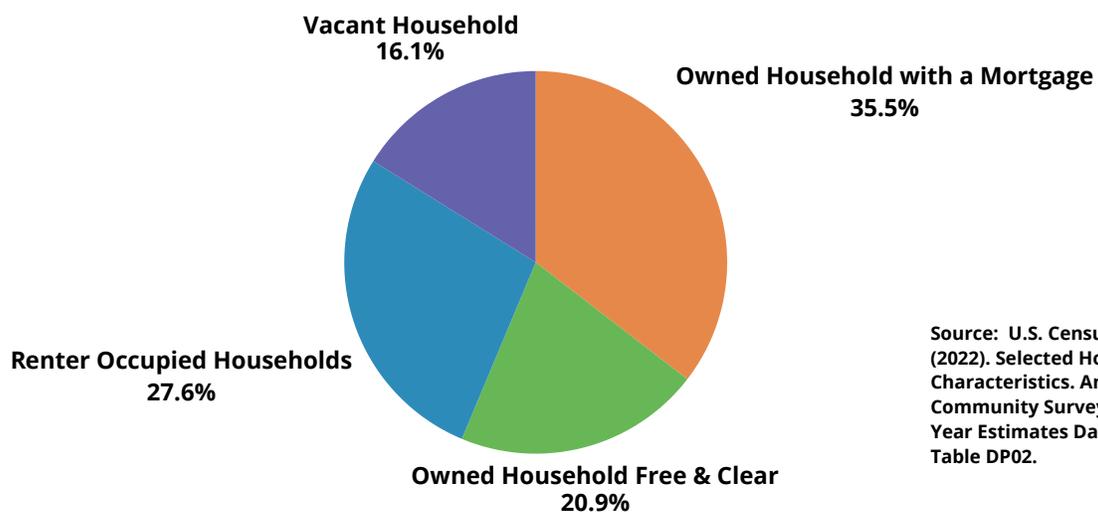
In 2023, the two local programs that support unhoused people provided services to approximately **416 people** [6,7]. According to an assessment completed by the Ketchikan Indian Community, **45% of tribal members welcomed an unhoused person to stay in their home**, and averaged **82 nights** of having an unhoused person stay with them [8].

17% of the households in the Ketchikan Gateway Borough are single-parent households [4]. These households are concentrated in the City of Ketchikan: **84%** of all single-parent households in the borough living **within the city limits** [4]. **24%** of households with children in the city are **single-parent households** [4]. The POW-Hyder area is similar with **22%** of households with children being **single-parent households** [4]. In March of 2024, there were **42** children in foster care in the borough [5].

There are a total of **6,615** housing units in the Ketchikan Gateway Borough. This includes the **3,934** households within the city limits [4]. **84.2%** of the housing units are occupied in the borough, and **83.5%** of housing units within the city limits are occupied [4]. This leaves a total **1,047 vacant units** in the borough, which includes the **649** vacant units within city limits [4]. The POW-Hyder area has **3,252** housing units, of which **71.8%** are occupied and **28.2%** are vacant [4]. The borough and city have similar rates to the State, in which **81.1%** of housing units are occupied and **18.9%** are vacant [4].

Over half of the housing units in the borough are single, stand alone houses at **54.1%** [4]. The city has more apartment buildings, with only **38.4%** of the housing in city limits being stand alone units [4]. **37%** of the households in the borough are multiunit, and **3.4%** live in a mobile home, boat or RV [4]. The majority of housing in the neighboring communities are stand alone, with **70%** of housing in the POW-Hyder area being single units. **63.3%** of the houses in the state are single, stand alone units [4].

Housing Occupancy of the Ketchikan Gateway Borough



Households and Housing Continued

Housing in Ketchikan is at a historic low, with costs rising for both renters and potential buyers [8]. The term “**vacant**” as used by the U.S. Census is not a true reflection of how much housing is available to buy or rent [9]. The census defines “vacant housing units” as a unit that no one is living in at the specific time the count was conducted, unless the occupants of the unit were only temporarily absent [10]. Seasonal housing makes up the largest category of “vacant” housing across the U.S. [9]. Housing estimates in most sources measure housing occupation at a single point in time, which fails to capture the true amount of housing available to rent or buy within the community [10]. Much of Ketchikan’s economy is based in seasonal work, such as tourism and fishing, which means it is difficult to estimate the true number of housing units available for sale or rent. Additionally, some housing units in Ketchikan are used as **vacation rentals** on platforms such as AirBnB and VRBO; other houses are the **secondary residence** of families who’s primary home is somewhere else. These vacation rentals and second homes are all considered “vacant” in sources such as the U.S. Census.

In addition to the current shortage of housing, there are a number of barriers to developing new housing in Ketchikan, from a lack of land that can be developed, to the cost of shipping supplies to the island [11]. Research conducted by the McDowell Group in 2019 found that low-income housing was particularly difficult in Ketchikan and that **poorer residents have been forced out of their housing due to rising rental costs** [11]. The same study also brought attention to the how the cost of living in Ketchikan makes maintenance on existing housing expensive to the point that some owners and property managers forgo necessary upkeep, and that community members felt that the borough does not do a good job of enforcing building codes related to safety [11].

Ketchikan, and Southeast Alaska in general, has a large **seasonal population**. This seasonal population impacts the cost of rentals across the year, with vacancy rates being much lower during the summer when tourism and seafood workers are present [11]. **The seasonal population exceeds the capacity of rentals in the community**, and employers report that hiring and retaining employees is made difficult by these housing challenges [11]. The neighboring communities of POW-Hyder have the same challenges.

Housing Cost Burden

Households are considered cost burdened when they spend **more than 30% of their income on rent, mortgage or other housing needs**. **33%** of all the households in the Ketchikan Gateway Borough are cost burdened and **32%** of households within the city are cost burdened [13]. **50.4%** of all households that rent are cost burdened, compared to **25%** of owner households (with or without a mortgage) that are cost burdened [13]. **29%** of households in the state are cost burdened [13]. The neighboring communities of POW-Hyder have slightly lower cost burden households with only **17%** of households being cost burdened [13]. The value of homes across Southeast Alaska has **increased by 45%** over the past decade, while wages have only increased by **22%** over the same time period [14].

Ketchikan Gateway Borough			City of Ketchikan		Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Housing Cost Burdened (Owner)	909	25%	505	28%	199	12%
Housing Cost Burdened (Renter)	901	50.4%	744	54.1%	198	35.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). Selected Housing Characteristics. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP04.

Transportation

Commuting in the borough is largely by personal vehicle. **82.5%** of workers in the borough got to work in a personal vehicle and **66.3%** of those commuted alone [15]. There is little difference at the city level - **80.7%** of workers got to work in a personal vehicle and **64.2%** drove alone [15]. The neighboring area of POW-Hyder also primarily used personal vehicles to commute to work at a rate of **71.3%** [15].

16.2% of people in the borough carpooled; **3.3%** used public transportation; **7.1%** walked and **2.7%** took a taxi, motorcycle or other means (starting in 2021, ATVs became legal on roads under 45mph, making them an increasingly common means of transportation in Ketchikan, though there is no explicit data on this means of transportation yet) [15].

Transportation Continued

The city of Ketchikan's commuter data is similar to the borough - **16.2%** carpool to work; **3.2%** used public transportation; **10.6%** walked; and **2.4%** took a taxi, motorcycle or other means [15]. The neighboring communities in POW-Hyder had similar data as well with **15.6%** carpooling to work; **less than 1%** using public transportation; 20.6% walked to work and **3.2%** took a taxi, motorcycle or other means [15].

The Ketchikan Gateway Borough road system is **only 30 miles long**. Most of the businesses in Ketchikan are located within the city limits, making walking to work almost unfeasible for anyone outside the city [16]. Additionally, the rainy and often windy weather is an added challenge for people commuting on foot. The borough has a bus system that travels island wide, but the bus only comes once an hour [17].

The neighboring communities in the POW-Hyder area have no public ground transportation. In these communities, taxis often fill the gap for public transportation (rideshare apps are uncommon in rural Alaskan communities). An Alaska Marine Highway vessel makes the forty-five minute sail **twice a day** between Ketchikan and Metlakatla [18]. Similarly, the Inter-Island Ferry Authority makes the three hour sailing between Ketchikan and Hollis on Prince of Wales **daily** [19]. In general, people living in the POW-Hyder area have to travel to Ketchikan to access the airport and other Alaska Marine Highway routes. There are small airlines that fly between communities, but this option can be costly and weather dependent. Ketchikan's airport is the primary link between the communities of Southern Southeast Alaska and the rest of the state and the rest of the country.

Employment Status

In 2023, the labor force in the borough averaged **6,747** people across the year [20]. However, due to the seasonal economies in Ketchikan, the labor force ranged from **6,207, in January and 7,623 people in July** [20]. This additional approximately 1400 people came to Ketchikan to work in the tourism or fishing industries [20]. The annual unemployment rate in 2023 was **3.7%** [20]. In 2019, it was estimated that approximately **36%** of Ketchikan's workforce came from outside the community [12]. Interestingly, Ketchikan's unemployment level is **lower than pre-COVID rates by 2-7% over the past ten years** [20].

Employment Status Continued

Southeast Alaska’s tourism industry is largely centered around cruise ships bringing tourists up and down the Inside Passage. This industry was thoroughly disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with **less than 200,000** tourists visiting Southeast Alaska on cruise ships in **2020 and 2021 combined** [14]. In **2022**, the industry rebounded with **1.2 million** visitors coming to Southeast Alaska on cruise ships, which matched pre-pandemic numbers [14]. In **2023**, the tourism industry exceeded all previous years with **1.69 million** people visiting the region on cruise ships and growth is expected to continue in 2024. [14].

Health Care Access and Capacity

Access to healthcare supports the community in working to bolster protective factors to offset or reduce risk factors. Access to care includes assessing how many health care providers exist in the community and the community member’s ability to access that care.

	Ketchikan Gateway Borough	Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area	Alaska	U.S.
Uninsured Adults	16%	22%	15%	12%
Uninsured Children	10%	13%	8%	5%
Ratio of primary care physicians to people.	810:1	570:1	1030:1	1330:1
Ratio of dentists to people.	1250:1	1880:1	950:1	1360:1
Ratio of Mental Health Providers to people.	60:1	120:1	140:1	320:1
Ratio of other primary care providers to people.	650:1	810:1	560:1	760:1

County Health Ranking (2024). Ketchikan Gateway Borough, AK.

Education Attainment

In the Ketchikan Gateway Borough, **95%** of people over 18 years old have graduated from high school and **26%** of people in the Borough have a bachelor’s degree or higher [21]. **90%** of people in the City of Ketchikan, 18 and over, have graduated from high school; **24%** have a bachelor’s degree or higher [21]. **91%** of people 18 and over in the POW-Hyder area graduated from high school; **18%** have a bachelor’s degree or higher [21].

In the 2022-2023 school year, the Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District had an attendance rate of **88%**, a graduation rate of **81%** and a dropout rate of **4%** [22].

	Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District	Annette Island School District	Craig City School District	Klawock City School District
Attendance Rate	88%	86%	97%	89%
Graduation Rate	81%	89%	27%	78%
Drop Out Rate	4%	0%	5%	4%

Sources: Alaska Department of Education & Early Development. (2024). Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District 2022-2023. Alaska’s Public Schools: A Report Card to the Public: 2022-2023, The Great State of Alaska.
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Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District

The **Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District (KGBSD)** is reflective of the whole community, with slight variations. **In the 23-24 school year, 2074 students were enrolled in the KGBSD** [29]. The district consists of **eight** schools and **one** distance learning program [29]. Three schools are traditional elementary schools: **Fawn Mountain, Houghtaling Elementary, and Point Higgins**. All three of these schools provide PreK-6th grade [29]. Two schools are charter schools: **Tongass School of Arts and Sciences (TSAS)**, which has grades PrK-6th; and **Ketchikan Charter School**, which has K-8th grade. **Schoenbar Middle School** is a traditional middle school with 7th - 8th grades [29].

Ketchikan High School (locally known as **Kayhi**), had **498** students enrolled during the 23-24 academic year [29]. **Revilla Alternative School**, which had **102** students during the 23-24 school year, however that number includes seventh and eighth grades [29].

The school district also offers two home school options: **Fast Track**, which had **83** students enrolled during the 23-24 school year [29]. Fast Track can be fully remote, online learning or blend in person classes at either Kayhi or Revilla with online lessons [29]. **PACE**, which is a statewide program for K-12th grade home schooling [30]. This program has a learning center in the Ketchikan Plaza Mall where students and families can receive additional support as needed. There were **8 high schoolers** enrolled in PACE in Ketchikan during the 23-24 school year, and **11 middle school students** [31]. There are other students being homeschooled in Ketchikan through other programs (such as IDEA), but these students are few and the exact number is difficult to measure.

Lastly, the **Ketchikan Indian Community (KIC)**, the local tribal entity, offers a **Tribal Scholars** program to any Alaska Native and/or American Indian student within the borough. This program delivers culturally-enriched education while working toward their high school diploma [32]. Youth in this program enroll in elective classes at Kayhi or Revilla to supplement the core classes and cultural studies of the Tribal Scholar's program [32].

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Substance Use in Ketchikan

Alcohol

Alcohol use is a major public health concern in the U.S. Alcohol use has been linked to several long term health concerns, such as injuries, violence, cancer, liver disease and high blood pressure [1]. Alcohol is the most commonly used substance by youth in the U.S. [1]. Youth who consume alcohol have higher rates of school absence; lower grades; social problems with peers; increased risk of suicide; engage in risky sexual behavior [2].

Research conducted by the McDowell Group estimated that **over half (51.6%)** of Alaskans **age 12 and older** consume alcohol; almost **a quarter** of Alaskan's age of 12 and older binge drink (24.2%); and **6.6% of Alaskans age 12 and over reported a alcohol use disorder** [3].

Alcohol Use Among Youth in Ketchikan

This baseline data was retrieved from the **Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)**. This is a biannual survey conducted by the CDC in partnership with the Alaska Department of Health. This survey asks students about their behaviors that can lead to poor health, including substance use and attitudes about substance use. The baseline YRBS data was collected in **2019**. The survey was not administered in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but was conducted in 2023.

20.1% of Kayhi students reported consuming alcohol within the **past 30 days** [4]. The Revilla student population was reported slightly higher alcohol consumption rates at **33.8%** of students reporting they had consumed alcohol within the past thirty days [5]. **15%** of Kayhi students had their first drink of alcohol **before age 13**, and **20.8%** of Revilla students had their first drink of alcohol **before age 13** [4, 5].

34.7% of Kayhi students believe that having five or more drinks once or twice a week are at risk of harming themselves, while **30.4%** of Revilla students think consuming five or more drinks once or twice a week could lead to harm [4, 5]

The table on the following page elaborates on alcohol use and perceptions of alcohol use. On the whole, Revilla students report using alcohol more frequently than their Kayhi peers.

Alcohol use among Ketchikan Youth

2023 Youth Risk Behavioral Survey Results

	Ketchikan High School	Statewide Traditional High Schools	Revilla Alternative High School	Statewide Alternative High Schools
Percentage of students had their first drink of alcohol before age 13.	15%	15.2%	20.8%	22.5%
Percentage of students who drank alcohol within the past 30 days.	20.1%	16.9%	33.8%	32.9%
Percentage of students who binged drank within the past 30 days.	12.3%	9%	22.8%	19.3%
Among students who drive, percentage who drove after consuming alcohol within the past 30 days.	6.1%	5%	suppressed	7%
Percentage of students who rode with a driver who had been drinking alcohol, within the past 30 days.	11.5%	11.7%	16.4%	17.4%
Percentage of students who think people greatly risk harming themselves if they have five or more drinks of an alcoholic beverage once or twice a week.	34.7%	31.1%	30.4%	28%

Note: Data points are suppressed when they are too small to be statistically reliable and could challenge the anonymity of respondents.

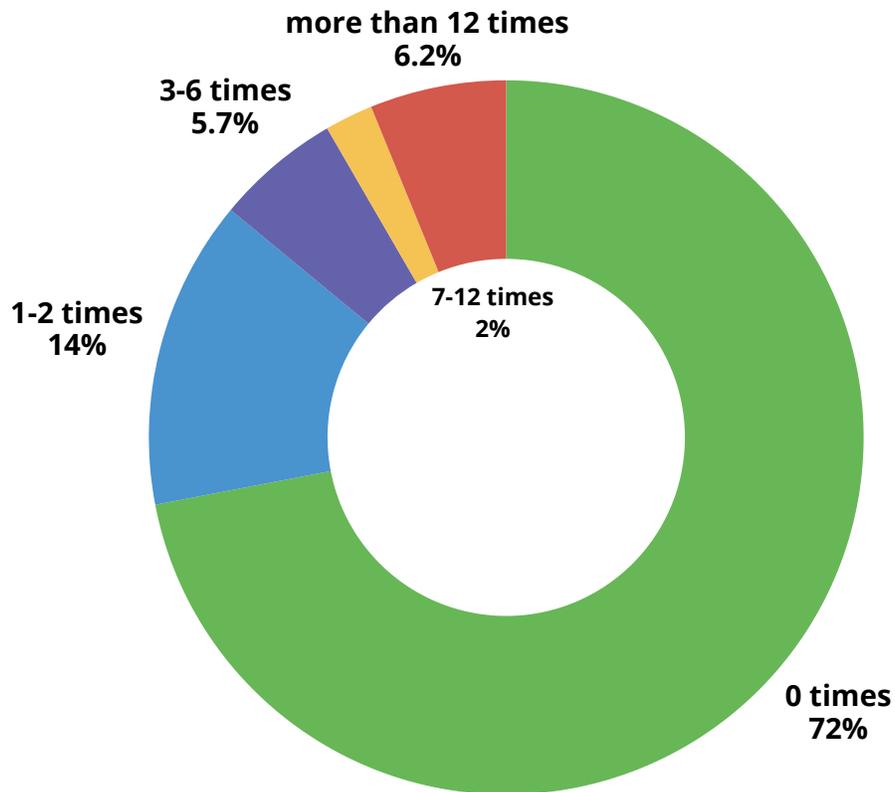
Source: Alaska Department of Health. (2024). 2023 Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District Traditional High School YRBS Results. Alaska Department of Health. (2024). 2023 Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District Alternative High School YRBS Results.

Alcohol Use In School Settings

The Association of Alaska School Boards conducts a survey on how students, staff and family feel about the school's climate, including how connected students feel to adults and peers, social emotional skills, and risky behaviors seen at school activities. The **2024 School Climate and Connectedness Survey** for the Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District gathered data from all 6th - 12th grade students in the District, which provides baseline data for alcohol use in school settings.

Survey respondents were asked how many times in the past twelve months did they witness students being at school or at school events under the influence of alcohol. **0 times was the largest percentage at 72%**, but **14%** reported seeing students under the influence of alcohol **1-2 times** in the past year at school or school activity [6]. **6%** of survey respondents reported seeing students under the influence of alcohol **12 or more times** within the past year [6].

Percentage of times survey respondents witnessed students being under the influence of alcohol at school or a school event in the past year.



Source: Panorama Education (2024). Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District 2024 Grade 6-12 Student Survey School Climate and Connectedness Survey. Retrieved from the Association of Alaska School Boards.



Alcohol related Consequences in the Ketchikan Gateway Borough

in 2024, the County Health Rankings found that **33%** of motor vehicle crash deaths in the borough involved alcohol [7]. This is lower than the state percentage of 35%, but higher than the national average of 26% [3].

Underaged drinking costs Alaskans approximately **\$361 million a year**, including costs associated with emotional distress, injuries, violence and traffic accidents [3].

Alcohol-related disorders were the **third leading cause of hospitalizations** and the **fourth leading cause of emergency department visits** across Southeast Alaska in 2022 [8].

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Marijuana

Marijuana is currently the most commonly used illegal substance in the U.S., and its use among all adult age groups is increasing [1]. 24 states have legalized cannabis for adult recreational use, including Alaska in 2015 [2]. Other states have decriminalized marijuana, which typically means an individual possessing a small amount of marijuana may receive a misdemeanor punishable by a fine but not jail time [2].

Marijuana has long-term health impacts. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, **1 in 6 people who begin using marijuana before the age of 18 will develop an addiction** [3]. When people start marijuana use at a young age, it can cause permanent IQ loss of up to 8 points [3]. Marijuana use has also been linked to depression, anxiety, suicide ideation, and psychotic episodes, though research is unclear if marijuana is the cause of any of these mental health conditions [3]. Marijuana users report higher levels of relationship problems, worse educational achievements, lower career achievement and lower life satisfaction than their peers [3]. People who drive under the influence of marijuana have slower reactions, decreased coordination, and difficulty responding to signals and sounds on the road [3].

Perceptions of marijuana as harmful is declining [3]. However, approximately **30% of marijuana users meet criteria to have some degree of marijuana use disorder** [4]. People who develop a marijuana dependence experience mood and sleep difficulties, irritability, restlessness and physical discomfort [4].

Marijuana Use Among Youth in Ketchikan

8.6% of Kayhi students reported consuming marijuana within the **past 30** days in the 2023 YRBS [5]. The **Revilla** student population had higher rates of current marijuana use with **43%** of students reporting consuming marijuana in the **past 30** days in the 2023 YRBS [6].

Lifetime rates of marijuana consumption is slightly higher than the 30-day use. **23.8%** of Kayhi students reported **ever using marijuana** during their life and **66.4%** of Revilla students report ever using marijuana [5, 6]. **4%** of Kayhi students tried marijuana for the **first time before age 13** and **17.4%** of Revilla students tried marijuana for the first time before age 13 [5, 6].

The table on the following page elaborates on marijuana use and perceptions of marijuana use among youth in Ketchikan. Trends of marijuana use between the populations of the two high schools are similar to their alcohol use. On the whole, **Revilla students report using marijuana more frequently than their Kayhi peers** [5, 6]. Both groups of students felt that their friends and parents would disapprove of them consuming marijuana, but a larger percentage of Kayhi students felt friends and parents would disapprove compared to the Revilla student body [5, 6].

Marijuana use and Perceptions among Ketchikan Youth

	Ketchikan High School	Statewide Traditional High Schools	Revilla Alternative High School	Statwide Alternative High Schools
Percentage of students who have ever consumed marijuana.	23.8%	32.6%	68.6%	66.4%
Percentage of students who tried marijuana for the first time before the age of 13.	4%	8%	17.4%	19.7%
Percentage of students who used marijuana within the past 30 days.	8.6%	17.8%	43%	43.9%
Percentage of students who drove after consuming marijuana within the past 30 days.	suppressed	11.2%	suppressed	21.4%
Percentage of students who think people greatly risk harming themselves if they use marijuana once or twice a week.	21.5%	20.7%	7.5%	5.9%
Percentage of students who think their <u>friends</u> feel it would be wrong or very wrong for them to use marijuana.	52.7%	39.7%	18.3%	20%
Percentage of students who think their <u>parents</u> feel it would be wrong or very wrong for them to use marijuana.	77%	73.4%	49.2%	49.8%

Note: Data points are suppressed when they are too small to be statistically reliable and could challenge the anonymity of respondents.

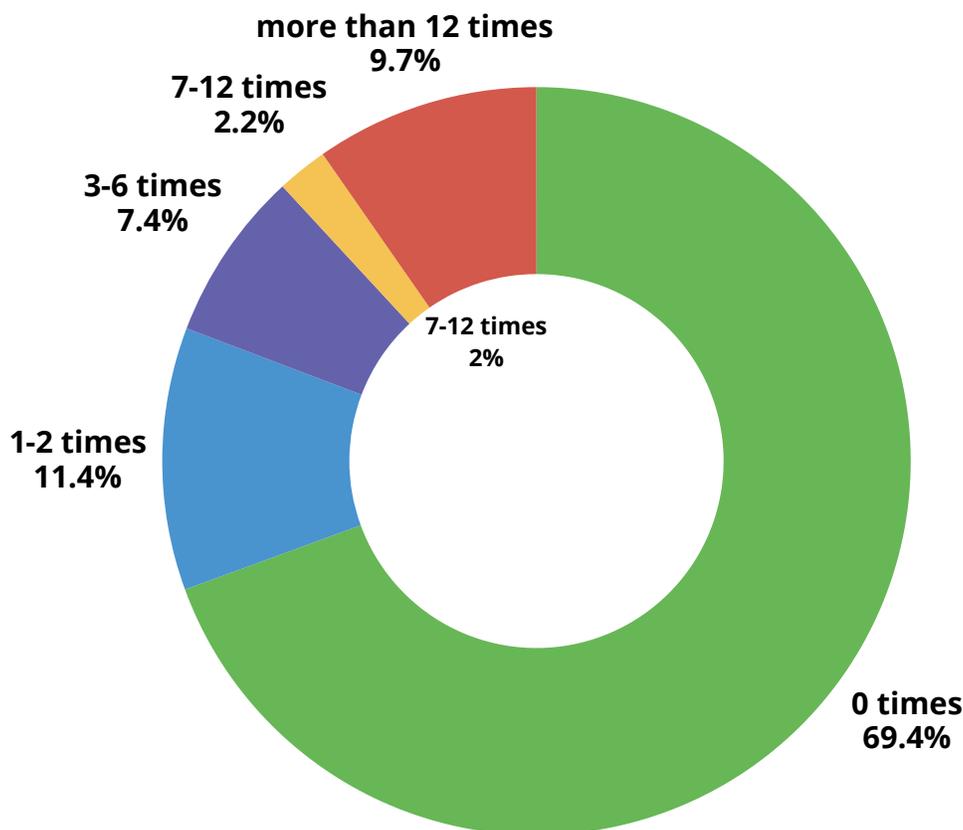
Source: Alaska Department of Health. (2024). 2023 Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District Traditional High School YRBS Results. Alaska Department of Health. (2024). 2023 Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District Alternative High School YRBS Results.

Marijuana Use In School Settings

The **2024 School Climate and Connectedness Survey** asked respondents how many times in the past twelve months did they witness students being at school or at school events under the influence of marijuana.

0 times was the largest percentage at **69%**, but **11%** reported seeing students under the influence of marijuana **1-2 times** in the past year at school or school activity [7]. **10%** of survey respondents reported seeing students under the influence of alcohol **12 or more times** within the past year [7]. This was an improvement upon the previous year's survey with **7% less** instances of individuals witnessing students under the influence of marijuana at school activities [7].

Percentage of times survey respondents witnessed students being under the influence of marijuana at school or a school event in the past year.



Source: Panorama Education (2024). Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District 2024 Grade 6-12 Student Survey School Climate and Connectedness Survey. Retrieved from the Association of Alaska School Boards.

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Prescription Drug Misuse

As mentioned earlier, this report is focusing on prescription pain reliever misuse. Many prescription pain relievers are **opioids**, either synthetically manufactured or derived from the opium poppy plant [1]. **Common prescription opioids include hydrocodone, oxycodone, morphine, codeine and fentanyl** [1]. These medications are typically prescribed to treat moderate to severe pain, but some people misuse them to feel relaxed or high [1]. Misuse happens when someone takes a prescription in a way or dosage other than prescribed; by taking someone else's prescription medication; or taking prescription medication for the purpose of feeling high [1]. However, according to research conducted by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, **67%** of people who misuse prescription pain relievers identified relieving physical pain as the reason why they were misusing pain relievers [2]. **2% of Americans (5.6 million people)** had a prescription pain reliever use disorder in 2022 [2]. **1% of American adolescents** (between 12 and 17 years old) had a prescription pain reliever use disorder, and **1.2% of Americans between 18 and 25** had a prescription pain reliever use disorder [2].

Prescription opioids can be highly addictive, and can cause overdoses and death [1]. **Drug overdose deaths has increased nationally, statewide and within the region** [3]. In 2018 in Southeast Alaska, there were 9 deaths attributed to a drug overdose, and in 2022 there were 27 drug overdose deaths in the region [3]. **Pain relievers were the most common substance people called the Oregon Poison Center about in 2023** (the Oregon Poison center responds to calls in Oregon, Alaska, and Guam) [4].

Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid that is 50-110 times more potent than morphine [5]. It is a prescription drug but is also made illegally [5]. It is typically prescribed as a transdermal patch, shot, or lozenge, but when it is illegally made, it is often in liquid, powder or pill form [5]. When used illegally, it is sometimes mixed with other illicit substances such as cocaine, methamphetamine or MDMA [5]. Fentanyl is effective in small quantities, so it can be a cheaper option to obtain a high than other illicit drugs [5]. However, because fentanyl is so strong in small quantities, overdosing on it is more likely, especially when people are unsure if fentanyl is in a substance they are using [5]. **Fentanyl and similar synthetic opioids are the most common drugs involved in overdose deaths** [5].

Prescription Drug Misuse Among Youth in Ketchikan

3.3% of Kayhi students reported taking a prescription pain medication (such as codeine, Vicodin, OxyContin, Hydrocodone, or Percocet) without a prescription or differently than how a doctor told them to use it within the **past 30** days in the 2023 YRBS [6]. **7%** of Revilla students reported misusing a prescription pain medication within the **past 30** days in the 2023 YRBS [7]. Lifetime rates of prescription pain medication misuse among Kayhi students was **11.2%**, and for Revilla students it was **20.8%** [6, 7].

Prescription Drug Misuse and Perceptions Among Ketchikan Youth

	Ketchikan High School	Statewide Traditional High Schools	Revilla Alternative High School	Statewide Alternative High Schools
Percentage of students who have ever misused prescription pain medication.	11.2%	13.4%	20.8%	23%
Percentage of students who misused prescription pain medication within the past 30 days.	3.3%	6.1%	7%	9.7%
Percentage of students who think people greatly risk harming themselves if they misuse prescription pain medications.	54.7%	51.1%	62.3%	56.2%

Source: Alaska Department of Health. (2024). 2013 Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District Traditional High School YRBS Results. Alaska Department of Health. (2024). 2023 Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District Alternative High School YRBS Results.

Prescription Drug Misuse Consequences

279 Alaskans died from an opioid overdose between February of 2023 and January of 2024 [8]. **18** of those deaths happened in Southeast Alaska [8]. From April of 2023 to March of 2024, there were **1,196 emergency department visits** in Alaska from opioid misuse and **100** of those visits happened in Southeast Alaska [8]. From February of 2023 through January of 2024, Emergency Medical Technicians responded to **619 non-fatal opioid overdoses** statewide and administered Naloxone (an opioid overdose reversing medication) **531 times** [8].

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Tobacco and Nicotine

Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death in Alaska [1]. Cigarettes are the most common way adults in Alaska use tobacco, with **18%** of Alaskan adults smoking cigarettes, but **31%** of Alaskans age 12 and over use tobacco or nicotine [2, 3]. Tobacco use is higher among lower socioeconomic status adults than high socioeconomic status adults [2]. **26%** of adults in Southeast Alaska use some form of tobacco or nicotine product [2]. Over the past twenty four years, **smoking has decreased statewide by almost 10%** [2].

Tobacco and Nicotine Use Among Youth in Ketchikan

Cigarette smoking is decreasing statewide among youth, however, nicotine vaping is increasing [4]. Almost 8% of high school students statewide report smoking cigarettes, while 26% report vaping nicotine [4].

20.3% of Kayhi students reported using some form of tobacco (cigarettes, smokeless, cigars, or vapor tobacco products) within the **past 30 days** in the 2019 YRBS [4]. **45.7%** of Revilla students reported using some form of tobacco within the **past 30 days** in the 2017-2019 YRBS [5].

The YRBS gathers data on different types of tobacco, and electronic vaping products (such as JUUL, vapes and vape pens) are the most common way youth in Ketchikan consume tobacco [4, 5]. **37%** of Kayhi students report having used an electronic vapor product at some point during their lives and **18.1%** report vaping tobacco within the past 30 days [4]. **71.4%** of Revilla students report having used an electronic vapor product at some point during their lives, and **30%** reported vaping tobacco within the past 30-days [5].

Tobacco Use among Ketchikan Youth

	Ketchikan High School	Statewide Traditional High Schools	Revilla Alternative High School	Statewide Alternative High Schools
Percentage of students who used <u>any</u> tobacco product within the past 30 days.	12.9%	22.9%	52%	47.9%
Percentage of students who have ever used a tobacco vapor product.	29.9%	37.8%	69.9%	65.7%
Percentage of students who used a vapor tobacco product within the past 30 days.	11.6%	17.3%	46.4%	42.4%
Percentage of students who used a vapor product daily during the past 30 days.	suppressed	5.5%	18.8%	18.7%
Percentage of students who have ever tried smoking a cigarette.	11.6%	22.9%	61.1%	53.6%
Percentage of students who smoked cigarettes in the past 30 days.	suppressed	6.5%	24.2%	18.1%
Percentage of students who smoked a whole cigarette before age 13.	6.7%	7.7%	22%	17.3%
Percentage of students who used chewing tobacco or similar products in the past 30 days.	suppressed	8.8%	6.2%	8.2%

Note: When the number of respondents on a data point is small, the exact percentage is suppressed to maintain the anonymity of respondents.

Source: Alaska Department of Health. (2024). 2023 Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District Traditional High School YRBS Results. Alaska Department of Health. (2024). 2023 Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District Alternative High School YRBS Results.

Perceptions of Tobacco Use among Ketchikan Youth

	Ketchikan High School	Statewide Traditional High Schools	Revilla Alternative High School	Statewide Alternative High Schools
Percentage of students who think people greatly risk harming themselves if they smoke one or more packs of cigarettes per day.	61.2%	54.8%	52.4%	50.8%
Percentage of students who think people greatly risk harming themselves if they use electronic vapor products every day.	43.7%	41.6%	37.2%	26.9%

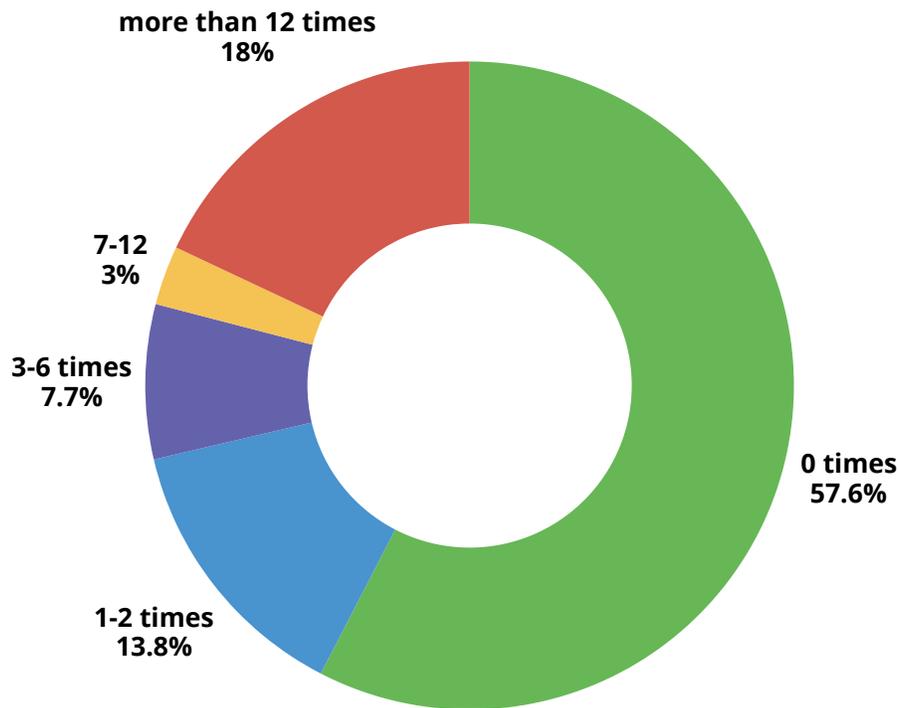
Source: Alaska Department of Health. (2024). 2023 Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District Traditional High School YRBS Results. Alaska Department of Health. (2024). 2023 Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District Alternative High School YRBS Results.

Tobacco Use In School Settings

The **2023 School Climate and Connectedness Survey** asked respondents how many times in the past twelve months did they witnessed students at school or at school events using a vape product such as e-cigarettes.

0 times was the largest percentage at 58%, but **14%** reported seeing students use some form of tobacco **1-2 times** in the past year at school or school activity [6]. However, **18%** of survey respondents reported seeing students use a vape product **12 or more times** at school or school events in the past year [6]. This was an improvement upon the previous year's survey with **6% less** instances of individuals witnessing students vaping at school or school activities [6].

Percentage of times survey respondents witnessed students using a vape product at school or a school event in the past year.



Source: Panorama Education (2024). Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District 2024 Grade 6-12 Student Survey School Climate and Connectedness Survey. Retrieved from the Association of Alaska School Boards.

Tobacco Use In School Settings Continued

The YRBS asks questions about tobacco use on campus. Statewide traditional high schools reported **2-6%** of students used some form of tobacco on school property [4]. The amount of Kayhi students who reported using tobacco on school property was too small to be statistically significant [4]. The statewide alternative school reported **7-8%** used some form of tobacco on school property, with **4-7%** of Revilla students reporting using some form of tobacco on school property [5]. Research conducted by the Alaska Tobacco Prevention and Control Program found that, of adults who have visited a school setting, **18%** saw someone using tobacco at school-sponsored events, **22%** report seeing tobacco use on school grounds but after school hours, and **12%** witnessed tobacco outside but on school grounds during school hours [7].

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Other Drug Use

Alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and prescription drugs are the most commonly used substances in the borough. However, there are some other substances that are used within the community.

As mentioned earlier, **opioids** are a type of drug that acts on the opioid receptors in the brain to depress the central nervous system by slowing down communication between the brain and body [1]. Opioids are typically used as a pain reliever, but they can also cause sensations of euphoria and relaxation in addition to tiredness, impaired concentration, and heart and lung problems [1]. **Heroin** is a common illicit opioid. It is typically injected into a vein, but it also smoked or snorted [2] Approximately **1.6%** of Kayhi students used heroin in the past 30 days and **4.5%** of Revilla students used heroin within the past 30 days [3, 4]. Rates of lifetime heroin use are slightly higher at **1.9%** of Kayhi students and **12.7%** of Revilla students having ever used heroin [3, 4].

Stimulants are a class of drugs that speed up messages between the brain and body, leading to people feeling more awake, alert, confident or energetic [5]. Stimulants can also cause anxiety, panic, seizures, headaches, stomach problems, aggression, and paranoia [5]. Common stimulants are caffeine, cocaine, amphetamines, and nicotine [5]. **Caffeine** is a fairly common stimulant with **90%** of U.S. adults consuming it regularly, typically in the form of a beverage such as coffee or soft drinks [6]. **Energy Drinks** are a type of beverage with high caffeine content and the CDC recommends that children not consume them [7]. Caffeine caused nearly 1500 youth to be sent to the emergency room in 2011 to treat dehydration, anxiety, insomnia and heart complications [7]. Nationally, **30-50%** of youth report consuming energy drinks [7]. Additionally, energy drinks are sometimes mixed with alcohol which can mask the effects of alcohol, causing people to drink more than they intended [8].

Cocaine is an illicit, addictive stimulant drug made from leaves of the coca plant [9]. It is snorted, injected, smoked, or rubbed on the gums, and it produces a euphoric high [9]. Consuming cocaine can cause heart disturbances, neurological effects, gastrointestinal complications, and death, typically from cardiac arrest or seizures [9]. Cocaine is often referred to as blow, snow, coke, or crack [10]. It is highly addictive and people who consume cocaine often binge the substance until they are exhausted or have no more to consume [10]. **1.8%** of Kayhi students reported using cocaine at least once, and **14.4%** of Revilla students reported using cocaine at least once [3, 4].

Other Drug Use Continued

Amphetamines are a group of stimulant drugs which includes both **prescription** medications that treat disorders such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), Parkinson's disease and narcolepsy; as well as illicit substances such as **methamphetamine** and cocaine [11]. **Adderall** is a common prescription medication to treat ADHD which is sometimes misused [12]. Methamphetamine, also known as meth, crystal meth, and speed, is a common illicit stimulant [11]. Methamphetamine is consumed through smoking, swallowing or snorting [11]. **2.6%** of Kayhi students have ever used methamphetamines and **1.9%** used methamphetamines within the past 30 days [3]. **13%** of Revilla students have ever used methamphetamines and **5.4%** used methamphetamines within the past 30 days [4].

Inhalants are more commonly used by middle school than high school youth [13]. Inhalants encompass a wide range of substances that are primarily consumed through inhalation for the purpose of inducing psychoactive or mind-altering effects [14]. These substances are found in hundreds of different products but there are four main categories of inhalants: volatile solvents, aerosols, gases, and nitrites [13].

Volatile solvents are liquids that vaporize at room temperature and are found in products such as paint thinners, gasoline, glues, and markers [13]. **Aerosols** are sprays that contain propellants and solvents and are found in spray paints, deodorant, hair spray, and cooking sprays [13]. **Gases** includes both household products and medical anesthetics [13]. These include: ether, chloroform, and nitrous oxide [13]. Nitrous oxide is commonly called "laughing gas" and it is the most commonly inhaled gas [13]. It is in whipped cream dispensers, giving it the nickname "whippits" [14]. The gases category also includes butane lighters, propane tanks and refrigerants [14]. The last category, **Nitrites** act on blood vessels and relax muscles [11]. It is often sold in small bottles labeled "video head cleaner," "room odorizer," or other cleaner or aromatic products [13]. People who use inhalants have been found to use any available inhalant, but may seek out a preferred substance [13].

The high produced by inhalants is short lived, so people who use inhalants prolong their high by inhaling repeatedly over several hours [14]. Inhalants cause a high that resembles alcohol intoxication followed by drowsiness, disinhibition, lightheadedness, agitation, and some inhalants also cause apathy, belligerence, impaired judgement, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, drowsiness, and many other negative side effects [15]. Inhalants can cause loss of consciousness or death, even from a single session of inhalant use by an otherwise healthy young person [14].

4.7% of Kayhi students report having used an inhalant at least once and **16.8%** of Revilla students report having used an inhalant at least once [3, 4].

Other Drug Use Continued

Benzodiazepines, also known as “benzos” are a central nervous system depressant, often prescribed to treat anxiety, muscle spasms, and seizures [16]. Common benzodiazepines include: Xanax, Ativan and Klonopin [16]. These drugs are typically consumed by crushing pills to powder for snorting [16]. Benzodiazepines cause sleepiness, relaxed mood, but also amnesia, hostility, irritability and disturbing dreams [16]. Benzodiazepines are sometimes taken in combination with opioids, and **14% of overdose deaths that involved opioids in 2021 also involved benzodiazepines** [17]. When people purchase opioids illicitly, they are sometimes unaware that benzodiazepines are present in the substance [17]. The sedative nature of benzodiazepines suppresses breathing and impairs cognitive function, which increases the chances of fatally overdosing [17]. **3.9%** of Kayhi students reported using benzodiazepines at least once, and Revilla’s response rate was too small to analyze [3,4].

MDMA (3,4-methylenedioxyamphetamine), which is commonly referred to as “**Ecstasy**,” however tablets sold as “Ecstasy” often contain other substances (such as caffeine, cocaine, ketamine, and methamphetamine), in addition to MDMA or in absence of MDMA [17]. MDMA is also known as “**Molly**,” and is consumed in powder or capsule form [18]. MDMA is both a stimulant and a hallucinogen that creates feelings of wellbeing, emotional warmth, empathy, increased extroversion, and enhanced sensory perception [19]. MDMA can also cause hyperthermia by impacting the body’s ability to regulate temperature, occasionally leading to death [19]. MDMA is known as a “party drug” or “club drug,” showing up first in party settings but now in a wider range of settings [18]. MDMA is commonly used alongside other substances, including alcohol and marijuana [18]. **3.1%** of Kayhi students and **15.5%** of Revilla students report having used ecstasy at least once.

Other Drug Use among Ketchikan Youth

	Ketchikan High School	Statewide Traditional High Schools	Revilla Alternative High School	Statewide Alternative High Schools
Percentage of students who have ever used inhalants.	6.5%	6.6%	suppressed	8.8%
Percentage of students who have ever used heroin.	suppressed	2.1%	suppressed	2.6%
Percentage of students who have ever used cocaine.	suppressed	3.6%	suppressed	6.9%
Percentage of students who have ever used methamphetamines.	suppressed	2.4%	suppressed	4.1%
Percentage of students who have ever used benzodiazepines.	3.9%	4.2%	6%	10.4%
Percentage of students who have ever used ecstasy.	suppressed	3.6%	8.2%	6.3%

Note: When the number of respondents on a data point is small, the exact percentage is suppressed to maintain the anonymity of respondents.

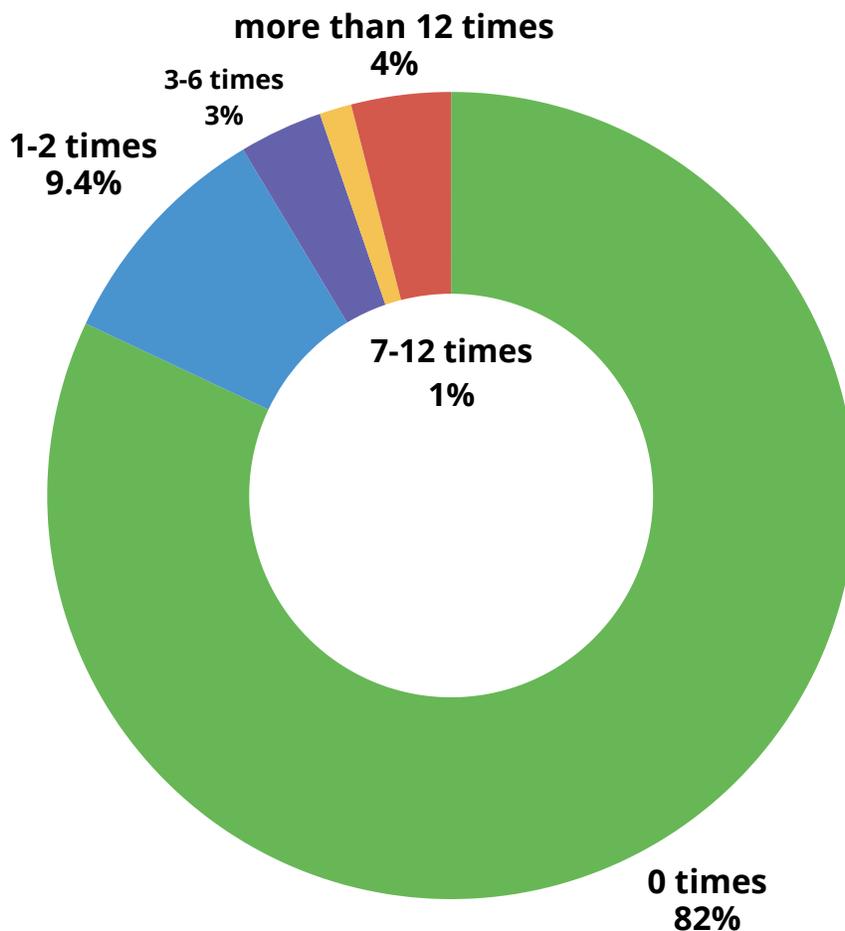
Source: Alaska Department of Health. (2024). 2023 Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District Traditional High School YRBS Results. Alaska Department of Health. (2024). 2023 Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District Alternative High School YRBS Results.

Other Drug Use In School Settings

The **2024 School Climate and Connectedness Survey** asked respondents how many times in the past twelve months did they witness students being at school or at school events being under the influence of drugs other than marijuana, alcohol or tobacco.

Overall, witnessing drug use was less common than witnessing students under the influence of marijuana, alcohol or tobacco at school events [20]. **82%** of respondents reported not seeing any drug use at school or school events in the past year [20]. **9%** reported seeing students under the influence of a drug **1-2 times** in the past year at school or school activity [20]. **8%** of respondents reported seeing drug use at school or school events **3 or more times** in the past year [20].

Percentage of times survey respondents witnessed students being under the influence of drugs (such as meth, heroin, cocaine, etc.) at school or school events



Source: Panorama Education (2024). Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District 2024 Grade 6-12 Student Survey School Climate and Connectedness Survey. Retrieved from the Association of Alaska School Boards.

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Negative Health Outcomes

Substance use is linked to a number of negative health outcomes, including cancer, dental issues, mental health disorders, and death [1]. Negative health outcomes from substance use exist across the lifetime, both directly caused by the substance use or indirectly linked to substance use. Exposure to substances in the womb can cause babies to be born premature, underweight, negatively impact their ability to learn, or even cause withdrawal symptoms after birth [2, 3]. Children can be impacted by substance use in their home, experiencing abuse, neglect and stress when their parents use substances [2]. Children and adolescent's brains are still developing, which means substance use can cause lasting brain changes [2]. When children and teens use substances, their chances of developing a substance use disorder increases, due to substances intervening in brain development [4]. People who use substances can also experience difficulties paying attention, remembering, and thinking clearly [2]. Substances impact the brain's reward system, overwhelming the brain with feelings of satisfaction, pleasure, or motivation that is much greater than a person would get from an ordinary activity [5]. This means the brain builds a connection between substance use and pleasure, which can cause some people to seek out substances above other activities, even to the detriment of their wellbeing [5].

Anyone, adult or youth, who uses substances is at increased risk of injury from lowered judgement and ability to assess risk [4]. Substance use is linked to increased risk of motor vehicle accidents, increased risky sexual behavior, and increased spread of infectious diseases [6, 7].

Mental Health

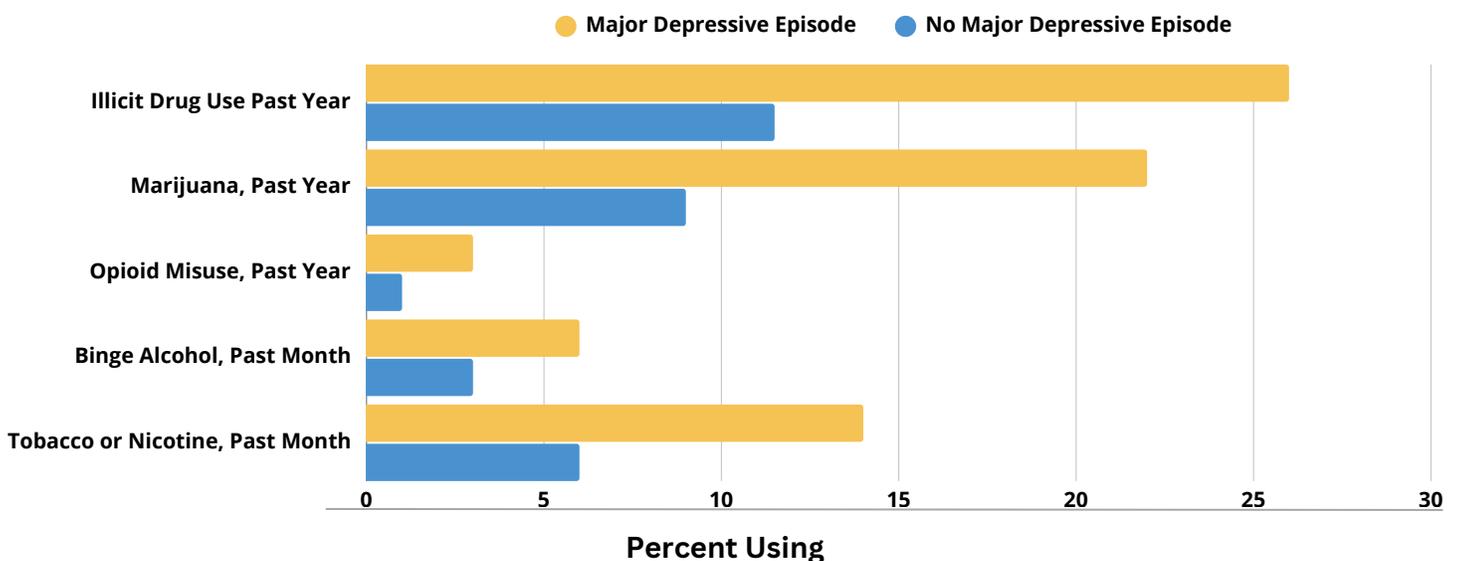
Individuals with substance use disorders are often also diagnosed with a mental disorder [8]. Anxiety disorders, depression, bipolar disorder, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, borderline personality disorder, psychotic illness, antisocial personality disorder, and schizophrenia have all been shown to have high co-occurrence rates with substance use disorders [8]. There is considerable overlap between serious mental illnesses and substance use disorders, with **1 in 4 people who have a serious mental illness also have a substance use disorder** [8]. Some experts hypothesize that individuals with a mental illness may use substances as a form of self-medication, but this can, over time, worsen mental health symptoms [9]. Lending validity to this hypothesis is research showing that people with mental health disorders, personality disorders, or substance use disorders are at higher risk of using prescription opioids for nonmedical reasons [8].

Mental Health Continued

Childhood and adolescent substance use impacts the developing brain and increases an individual's risk of developing a substance misuse disorder [8]. Early substance misuse is also linked to developing a mental illness later in life [8]. However, some research suggests that mental illness precedes substance use, especially in internalizing disorders, which includes depression and anxiety [8]. Substance use disorders and mental disorders share risk and protective factors, meaning it is challenging to determine which disorder came first [9].

Major depressive disorder is defined as having a period of two weeks or longer where for most of the day nearly every day, the individual felt depressed, or lost interest or pleasure in daily activities; and they also had problems with sleeping, eating, concentrating, struggling with their self-worth, and having reoccurring thoughts of death or suicide [10]. Youth with major depressive disorder are at higher risk of using an illicit drug than their peers [10]. **41.1%** of Kayhi students and **54.7%** of Revilla students reported experiencing a major depressive episode in the past year [11, 12].

Substance Use Among Adolescents Nationally by Past Year Major Depressive Episode



Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2023). Key Substance use and Mental Health Indicators in the United States: Results from the 2022 National Survey on Drug Use and Health.

Mental Health Continued

Individuals with major depressive disorder are at increased risk of attempting suicide [13]. **Depressive disorders were the 10th leading cause of hospitalization in Southeast Alaska in 2022 and the 6th leading cause of hospitalization statewide** [14]. Depressive disorders are the **leading** cause of hospitalization for children, adolescents and young adults between **5-24 years old** [14]. From 2009-2015, there were a thousand deaths from firearms, and **75%** of those thousand deaths were suicide [15]. **31%** of people who died by suicide by firearm had at least one mental health problem, and **51%** of people who died by suicide by firearm had used drugs or alcohol at the time of the incident [15]. Nearly **20%** of Kayhi students, and **34%** of Revilla students seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year [11, 12].

Major Depressive Episode and Suicide Among Ketchikan Youth

	Ketchikan High School	Statewide Traditional High Schools	Revilla Alternative High School	Statewide Alternative High Schools
Percentage of students who attempted suicide in the past 12 months.	17.7%	19%	20.9%	21.5%
Percentage of students who felt sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in the past 12 months.	41.1%	43.2%	54.7%	61.6%
Percentage of students who made a plan about how they would attempt suicide in the past 12 months.	17.2%	20.5%	32%	27.8%
Percentage of students who seriously considered attempting suicide in the past 12 months.	19.7%	22.6%	34.2%	35.5%

Source: Alaska Department of Health. (2024). 2023 Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District Traditional High School YRBS Results. Alaska Department of Health. (2024). 2023 Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District Alternative High School YRBS Results.

Physical Violence, Sexual Violence, Dating Violence and Bullying

Violence and substance use often coincide and impact each other. The links between substance use and violence are complex, with people who experienced violence being at greater risk of using substances, and people who use substances being at greater risk of experiencing violence [19]. For some victims of violence, using substances is a coping mechanism [19]. **People who experienced physical or sexual abuse as children have a 73% - 74% increased risk of developing a substance use disorder** [19]. From May of 2023 to May of 2024, **608** protective service reports were screened in by the Office of Children Services across Southeast Alaska, and, on average, **52.7% of these cases involved physical or sexual abuse** [20].

Youth who report misusing prescription drugs are more likely to report they have been the victim of physical or sexual dating violence than their peers [21]. **10.6%** of Kayhi students and **14.5%** of Revilla students reported experiencing physical dating violence in the past year [11, 12]. **12.4%** of Kayhi students and **11.9%** of Revilla students reported experiencing sexual dating violence in the past year [11, 12].

Substances are also used to control and coerce victims of human trafficking [22]. Researchers estimate that **up to 15% of human trafficking victims are coerced or controlled into a trafficking situation by their substance use** [22]. Individuals with substance use disorders, especially polydrug use disorders, are at higher risk of perpetrating violence than individuals without a substance use disorder [23].

Additionally, substance use is strongly linked to sexual violence. Results from the National Intimate Partner Violence Survey showed that **26%** of female rape victims, **30%** of male rape victims, and nearly **45%** of male victims forced to penetrate someone were using substances at the time of the assault [24]. Most of these survivors indicated that they had voluntarily used substances, but **15% - 32%** reported involuntary use of a substance [24]. **70 - 80%** of rape survivors and made to penetrate survivors reported that **the perpetrator was using substances at the time of the assault** [24]. Male victims are slightly more likely to be victimized in drug- or alcohol-facilitated sexual violence [24]. **Alcohol is the most common substance used to facilitate sexual violence** [24, 25].

Sexual and Dating Violence Among Ketchikan Youth

	Ketchikan High School	Statewide Traditional High Schools	Revilla Alternative High School	Statewide Alternative High Schools
Among students who dated, percentage who were physically hurt on purpose by someone they were dating in the past 12 months.	10.6%	6.3%	15.3%	14.5%
Among students who dated, percentage who were forced to do something sexual they did not want to do by a dating partner in the past 12 months.	12.4%	9.8%	12.8%	11.9%
Percentage of students who experienced any sexual violence in the past 12 months.	15.7%	12.9%	19%	21.9%
Percentage of students who were ever physically forced to have sexual intercourse when they did not want to.	8.9%	10.3%	23.6%	27.5%

Source: Alaska Department of Health. (2024). 2023 Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District Traditional High School YRBS Results. Alaska Department of Health. (2024). 2023 Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District Alternative High School YRBS Results.

Being exposed to violence as an adolescent, either as a witness or a target of violence, has been linked to both adolescent and adult substance use [26]. Bullying, also known as peer victimization, is linked to increased depression, physical injury, self-harm, emotional distress, sleep difficulties, lower academic achievement, substance misuse, and violence [27]. These negative outcomes impact the child engaging in the bullying behavior, the victim of the bullying, and bystanders of the bullying [28]. Some researchers theorize that the isolation that victims experience from the bullying is the link between bullying and substance misuse [29]. Nearly **35% of both Kayhi and Revilla students** reported being bullied in the past 12 months [11, 12].

Violence and bullying in Ketchikan Youth

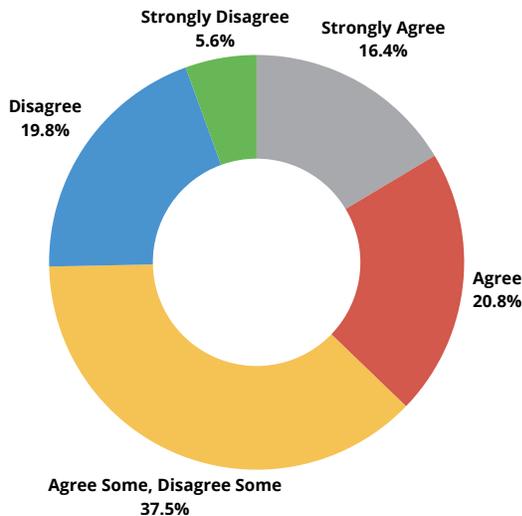
	Ketchikan High School	Statewide Traditional High Schools	Revilla Alternative High School	Statewide Alternative High Schools
Percentage of students who were bullied on or off school property; on their way to school; or electronically; in the past 12 months.	35%	30.7%	50.3%	34.7%
Percentage of students who were bullied on school property in the past 12 months.	24.4%	19.5%	22.8%	17.7%
Percentage of students who were electronically bullied past 12 months.	21.7%	20%	36.5%	23.3%
Percentage of students who were bullied when they were NOT on school property in the past 12 months.	21%	14.7%	31.9%	21.8%
Percentage of students who carried a weapon on school property in the past 30 days.	6.5%	5.6%	9.2%	7.5%

Source: Alaska Department of Health. (2024). 2023 Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District Traditional High School YRBS Results. Alaska Department of Health. (2024). 2023 Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District Alternative High School YRBS Results.

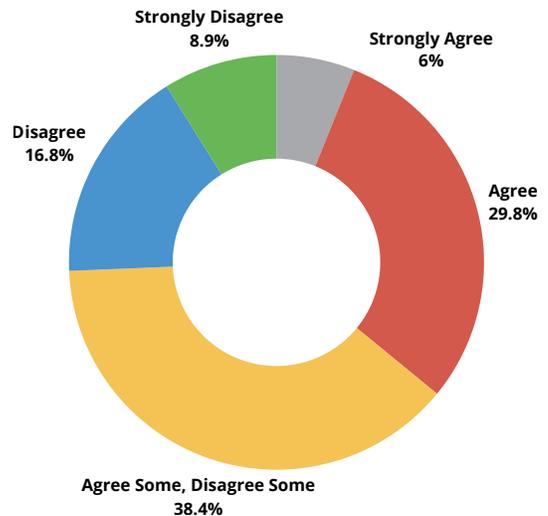
Violence In School Settings

The **2024 School Climate and Connectedness Survey** asked respondents how safe they felt at school. **64%** of respondents reported feeling safe at school; **82%** reported feeling safe traveling to and from school [30]. Respondents also reported rarely witnessing fights on school property, and that students rarely destroy school property or people’s personal items [30]. However, students also reported that bullying was common and others do not try to stop it [30].

Students who go to my school often spread rumors or lies about teach other online.



Most students in this school put others down



Sources: Panorama Education (2024). Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District 2024 Grade 6-12 Student Survey School Climate and Connectedness Survey. Retrieved from the Association of Alaska School Boards.
 Panorama Education (2023). Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District 2023 Grade 6-12 Student Survey School Climate and Connectedness Survey. Retrieved from the Association of Alaska School Boards.

Parental Substance Use

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services conducted a study in 2022 that found **21 million children in the U.S. live with a parent who misuses substances, and estimates of children living with a parent who has a substance misuse disorder range from 2 million to 9 million nationally** [31, 32]. Children with parents who have a substance misuse disorder are more likely to experience maltreatment [31]. Substances can impair a parent’s ability to care for their child, placing a child at risk of neglect [33]. Parental substance misuse also increases the chances a child is exposed to criminal activity such as the manufacturing of controlled substances; the selling of controlled substances; or being given drugs or alcohol [33].

Nationally, there has been an increase in children being placed into foster care in part due to substance misuse in their homes [33]. Nationally, parental substance use was a contributing reason for the removal of children in **35%** of out-of-home care cases [32]. In Alaska, **70% of all families screened in by the Office of Children Services being impacted by substance use or substance misuse** [34]. **1 in 3 children in Alaska are reported to the Office of Children services for maltreatment before their 8th birthday** [35]. Alcohol and marijuana are the first and second most common substances that parents misuse with opioids as the third most common [31].

Parental Substance Use Continued

Younger children are at greatest risk of being exposed to parental substance misuse. **Children under 12 were more likely to live with a parent who had a substance misuse disorder than older youth, with children under 3 being most likely to live with a parent who has a substance use disorder** [31]. **3%** of youth in Alaska are estimated to live with a parent who has a substance use disorder [31].

The vulnerability of young children extends all the way to the womb. Some newborns develop **neonatal abstinence syndrome**, which is when an infant goes through withdrawal from the substance they were exposed to in utero [31]. Additionally, new research shows that a father's consumption of alcohol prior to conception can contribute to the fetus developing deficiencies [36]. Nationally, **over 45,000** infants were referred to children services due to prenatal exposure to substances [37]. Rates of neonatal abstinence syndrome have been increasing, both nationally and in the State of Alaska for the past decade [38, 39]. Research conducted by the U.S. Department of Health and Human services found that **infants born with a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), which is caused by parental consumption of alcohol, has remained stable, but infants born with neonatal abstinence syndrome from other substances, mainly opioids, increased by 4% from 2009 to 2014** [38].

In 2021, **2.4%** of infants covered by Medicaid in Alaska had at least one insurance claim related to neonatal abstinence syndrome [39]. In 2018, Alaskans spent approximately **\$1 billion** on caring for children, youth and adults who have FASD, which includes **\$1.5 million** spent on foster children with FASD [40]. **6.5%** of Alaska's total population have FASD [40]. An estimated **5%** of homeless people in Alaska have FASD [40].

Alcohol consumption during pregnancy is going down. In 2009, nearly **6%** of Alaskan mothers reported consuming alcohol during the last three months of their pregnancy, and which **decreased to 4%** by 2016 [41]. Alcohol use during pregnancy was higher among mothers older than 25 years old [41]. In 2009, **7%** of Alaskan mothers older than 25 used alcohol during the last three months of pregnancy but this percentage decreased to **5%** by 2016 [41]. **3%** of Alaskan mothers under 25 reported using alcohol during the last three months pregnancy, and this number decreased to **1.6%** by 2016 [41].

Parental Substance Use Continued

Marijuana use during pregnancy is higher than alcohol use during pregnancy. Research on marijuana use during pregnancy is not as robust as research on alcohol use during pregnancy, but research has linked prenatal marijuana use to abnormal neurological development, low birthweights, and cancer [42].

In 2009, 7% of Alaskan mothers used marijuana during pregnancy and this percentage stayed the same through the duration of the study to 2016 [41]. Marijuana use varied depending on maternal age. **Mothers under 25 years old were more likely to use marijuana**, with **12%** reporting marijuana use during pregnancy in 2009, and **11%** reporting marijuana use during pregnancy in 2016 [41]. Marijuana use among mothers older than 25 was less, but **increased** over the same five year period. In 2009, **4%** of Alaskan mothers over 25 used marijuana during pregnancy and this number increased to **6%** by 2016 [41].

Criminal Justice and School District Disciplinary Consequences

Substance use is linked to criminal and delinquent behavior. **Approximately 65% of U.S. prison inmates have an active substance use disorder**, and an additional **20%** did not meet criteria for a disorder but were **under the influence of a substance at the time of their crime** [43].

Criminal justice involved youth, unfortunately, also experience issues with substances. Research conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics found that, nationally, **84% of youth in juvenile facilities have ever used drugs** [44]. **76%** reported having consumed alcohol in their life [44]. **60% of youth in juvenile facilities met the diagnostic criteria for a substance use disorder in the 12 months before entering custody**, and **36%** met the criteria for an alcohol use disorder in the 12 months prior to entering custody [44].

Research conducted by the University of Maryland found that twelfth graders who used substances had increased chances of skipping school and having low grades [45]. **Youth who used substances were nearly 3x more likely to skip school and 2x more likely to have low grades than their peers who reported never using substances** [45].

During the 2022-2023 academic year, **14%** of student discipline events were related to substance use (40 out of 280 discipline events) [46].

Criminal Justice and School District Disciplinary Consequences Continued

The **Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ)** works with youth who have been charged with an offense. DJJ's mission is to hold juvenile's accountable for their behavior; promote the safety and restoration of victims and communities; and assist offenders and their families in developing skills to prevent crime [47]. DJJ uses a restorative justice approach in order to ensure that juvenile offenders take personal responsibility in repairing the harm they may have caused, and to prevent crime by helping youth develop skills and competency so they have alternatives to law-breaking behavior [47].

Approximately **45% of youth referred to DJJ over the past decade were Alaska Native or American Indian, despite Alaska Native and American Indian youth only making up 31% of youth in Ketchikan** [48, 49]. Approximately **50%** of youth referred to DJJ over the past decade were white, which is reflective of the community with approximately 50% of the youth in Ketchikan being white [48, 49].

Approximately **76% of youth referred to DJJ over the past decade were male and 34% were female**, while boys make up 52% of youth in Ketchikan and girls make up 48% [48, 49].

The most common offense that youth get referred to DJJ are offenses against property. **41% of DJJ referrals in FY23 were for offenses against property; 28% were for offenses against persons, and 10% were for drug or alcohol related offenses** [48].

Criminal Justice and School District Disciplinary Consequences Continued

Youth who come into contact with the Criminal Justice System in Ketchikan may have the opportunity to have their offense referred to the Ketchikan Youth Court, a local restorative justice program for youth, instead of the Division of Juvenile Justice [47]. Requirements to be referred to the youth court include:

- The youth must be under 18 years old.
- The youth has not been through the Youth Court before.
- The youth admits to committing the offense.
- The offense would be a misdemeanor if committed by an adult. [47]

The youth court recruits and trains teens to serve as judges and lawyers in the process. This means the consequences youth face are set by their peers. Consequences are typically community service hours, paying restitution, attending classes, writing essays, and apologizing to people impacted by the offense [47]. Youth Court is also confidential, with only the youth involved in the process, the parents of the offender, and adult youth court staff are able to attend trials [47]. Often, once a teen has completed the consequences given to them by the court, the offense is removed from their record.

The Ketchikan Youth Court has provided services to 102 teens from 2017-2023, only rejecting 8 clients referred to the program [48]. The average age of youth referred to the program was 15 years old. **48% of the cases referred to youth court were related to substance use, with the majority of these cases being minor in possession of alcohol;** and a few instances of minor in possession of tobacco; and operating a vehicle after consuming alcohol [49]. There have been **zero** reoffences committed by youth who had completed the requirements of the Youth Court from 2017 through 2023 [49].

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Sexually Transmitted Infections and Sexual Behavior

Young people account for half of all new sexually transmitted infections (STIs, also known as sexually transmitted diseases, or STDs) [16]. STIs are transmitted through reusing drug paraphernalia and engaging in unsafe sexual behavior [16]. Substance use has been shown to increase reckless behavior, such as condomless sex, sex with multiple partners, or trading sex for substances [16]. Youth who use substances have higher rates of risky sexual behavior [17]. Alcohol use can impair decision making, which is linked to risky sexual decisions [18].

Sexual Behavior and Health of Ketchikan Youth

	Ketchikan High School	Statewide Traditional High Schools	Revilla Alternative High School	Statewide Alternative High Schools
Percentage of students who have ever had sexual intercourse.	40.7%	30%	67.7%	64.7%
Percentage of students who were currently sexual active.	32.1%	21%	55%	43.3%
Percentage of students who were tested for a sexually transmitted disease (other than HIV) in the past 12 months.	5.9%	7%	21.3%	19.9%
Percentage of students who had sexual intercourse for the first time before age 13.	5.2%	3.8%	suppressed	7.9%
Among students who were sexually active in the past 3 months, percentage who used no method of birth control	14%	13%	suppressed	16.7%

Source: Alaska Department of Health. (2024). 2023 Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District Traditional High School YRBS Results. Alaska Department of Health. (2024). 2023 Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District Alternative High School YRBS Results.