



Assessment of Youth Risk and Protective Factors and Behaviors for Anchorage Youth: An Update to “Growing Up Anchorage”

Addendum of 2019 YRBS Data for Anchorage School District
August 6, 2021

Anchorage Youth Development Coalition

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Introduction

The report *Assessment of Youth Risk and Protective Factors and Behaviors for Anchorage Youth: An Update to “Growing Up Anchorage”* was completed in 2020 and included analysis of Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) data for Anchorage School District (ASD) high school students to better understand the current status of identified risk and protective factors and risk behaviors among Anchorage youth, trends in risk and protective factors and risk behaviors among Anchorage youth, and whether correlations exist between risk and protective factors and risk behaviors among Anchorage youth. Although this assessment was completed in 2020, YRBS data for 2019 was not yet available at the time of completion and the report therefore only included YRBS data through 2017.

As an addendum to the 2020 report, this update summarizes 2019 YRBS data for ASD high school students for indicators included in the 2020 report to provide Center for Safe Alaskans and the Anchorage Youth Development Coalition with the most recent data available to inform their work. Data presented here include indicators for ASD traditional high school students for 2009-2019 as well as Alaska statewide traditional high school students in order to provide a comparison. Data for ASD alternative high school students are also included for each indicator. However, the data for ASD alternative high school students is not weighted due to the percentage of students that were sampled (48%)¹ and a comparison to Alaska statewide alternative high school data is therefore not provided.

Changes to the 2019 YRBS

Two pertinent questions were asked on the 2019 YRBS for the first time, and data for these indicators is included in this report:

- Percent of students who are frequently or almost always able to control their emotions when they need to. (Figure 7)
- Percent of students who are able to remain quiet or extremely calm when things go wrong. (Figure 8)

Several questions included in the 2020 report were not asked on the 2019 YRBS and are not included in this addendum. These indicators include:

- Percent of students who made a suicide attempt in the past 12 months that resulted in an injury, poisoning, or overdose that had to be treated by a doctor or nurse.

¹ Weighting is a technique that makes the results representative of the student population from which the data were collected. When the overall response rate meets or exceeds the weighting threshold, the data are weighted and the results represent all students in a particular school type in a particular area (e.g., all alternative high school students in ASD). When the overall response rate falls below the weighting threshold, the data are not weighted. Unweighted results only represent the students who completed the survey and cannot be generalized to all students in a particular school type in a particular area. The Alaska YRBS program requires an overall response rate of at least 50% for district-level YRBS data to be weighted. Alaska YRBS district-level data are weighted by sex within grade. The Anchorage School District alternative high school results were not weighted.

https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/rachaelushkowicf/viz/AlaskaYRBS_district_Anchorage_Alternative/Story1

- Percent of students that considered, planned, or attempted suicide during the past 12 months that talked about it to someone such as a friend, family member, teacher, doctor, counselor, or hotline.
- Percent of students who ever used synthetic marijuana.
- Percent of students who agree or strongly agree that their school has clear rules and consequences.
- Percent of students who volunteer at school or in the community one or more hours per week.

Two additional questions included in the 2020 report that were not asked on the 2019 YRBS survey were replaced with similar questions in this addendum:

- A question asking students to indicate how many times they had been in a physical fight in the past 12 months was not included on the 2019 YRBS. A similar question asking students to indicate how many times they had been in a physical fight *on school property* in the past 12 months is included in this addendum instead.
- A question asking students to indicate where they usually slept in the past 30 days was not included on the 2019 YRBS. A similar question asking students to indicate whether they ever slept away from their parents' or guardians' home because they were kicked out, ran away, were abandoned, or felt unsafe in their home during the past 12 months is included in this addendum instead.

Summary of Findings

When examining the 2019 YRBS data for ASD traditional high school students, ASD alternative high school students, and Alaska statewide traditional high school students, two key patterns emerge. These are:

1. In most cases ASD traditional high school students appeared to fare better than ASD alternative high school students. That is, a higher percentage of traditional high school students experienced protective factors, and a higher percentage of alternative high school students experienced risk factors and risk behaviors.
2. In most cases a similar percentage of ASD traditional high school students appeared to experience protective factors, risk factors, and risk behaviors as did traditional high school students statewide.

When examining changes over time to specific indicators, there were several changes worth noting in 2019:

1. There was a decrease in the percentage of traditional high school students in ASD who reported that in their community they feel like they matter to people in 2019 compared to 2017 (53.4% in 2017 and 44.4% in 2019). (See Figure 1)

2. There was a decrease in the percentage of traditional high school students in ASD who reported they do not feel alone in their life in 2019 compared to 2017 (59.8% in 2017 and 50.1% in 2019). (See Figure 3)
3. There was an increase in the percentage of ASD students who reported feeling sad or hopeless from 2017 to 2019. This increase was more pronounced for ASD alternative high school students (increase from 44.2% to 52.5%) than it was for ASD traditional high school students (increase from 35.7% to 39.3%). (See Figure 9)
4. There was an increase in the percentage of ASD students from 2017 to 2019 who reported experiencing all three risk factors for suicide. This included the percentage of both ASD traditional and ASD alternative high school students who reported that they seriously considered suicide in the past 12 months (Figure 10), that they made a plan about how they would attempt suicide in the past 12 months (Figure 11), and that they attempted suicide in the past 12 months (Figure 12). Perhaps most significant is that the percent of ASD traditional high school students who reported they attempted suicide in the past 12 months rose from 10.5% in 2017 to 20.0% in 2019, and the number of ASD alternative high school students who reported they attempted suicide rose from 23.1% in 2017 to 25.7% in 2019.
5. There appeared to be a downward trend for both ASD traditional and ASD alternative high school students in past 30-day alcohol use (Figure 19) and in past 30-day cigarette smoking (Figure 24). In both cases, this downward trend was more apparent for alternative high school students. At the same time there was an increase in the percentage of both traditional and alternative ASD high school students who reported they had ever used an electronic vapor product (Figure 26).
6. For both ASD traditional and ASD alternative high school students, there was an increase in the percent of students whose friends and whose parents feel it is wrong or very wrong to drink alcohol or to use marijuana from 2017 to 2019. In both cases, the increase was more apparent for traditional high school students than it was for alternative high school students. Figures 36 and 37 display friend perceptions of alcohol and marijuana use, and Figures 39 and 40 display parent perceptions of alcohol and marijuana use.
7. While there was an increase from 2017 to 2019 in the percentage of traditional high school students who reported that their friends feel it is wrong to misuse prescription pain medicine (increase from 71.9% in 2017 to 78.4% in 2019) and who reported that their parents feel it is wrong to misuse prescription pain medicine (increase from 85.8% to 88.5%), in both cases there was a decrease in the percentage of alternative high school students who reported their friends feel it is wrong to misuse prescription pain medicine (decrease from 65.0% in 2017 to 62.3% in 2019) and who reported their parents feel it is wrong (decrease from 81.5% in 2017 to 77.1% in 2019) (Figures 38 and 41).

Limitations

Limitations of ASD Alternative High School Student Data

Data for ASD alternative high school students for 2019 is not weighted because the response rate fell below the threshold for weighting. Weighting is a technique that makes the results representative of the student population from which the data were collected. When the overall response rate meets or exceeds the weighting threshold, the data are weighted and the results represent all students in a particular school type in a particular area (e.g., all alternative high school students in ASD). When the overall response rate falls below the weighting threshold, the data are not weighted. Unweighted results only represent the students who completed the survey and cannot be generalized to all students in a particular school type in a particular area. The Alaska YRBS program requires an overall response rate of at least 50% for district-level YRBS data to be weighted. Alaska YRBS district-level data are weighted by sex within grade. The Anchorage School District had a 48% response rate for alternative high school students in 2019.²

Limitations of Analysis

The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services website was unavailable at the time of this report. In addition, Alaska YRBS program staff had limited capacity at this time and an analysis of data was only available using pre-determined criteria. A comparison of 2019 YRBS data to previous years' YRBS data for ASD high school students could therefore not be provided for the following indicators:

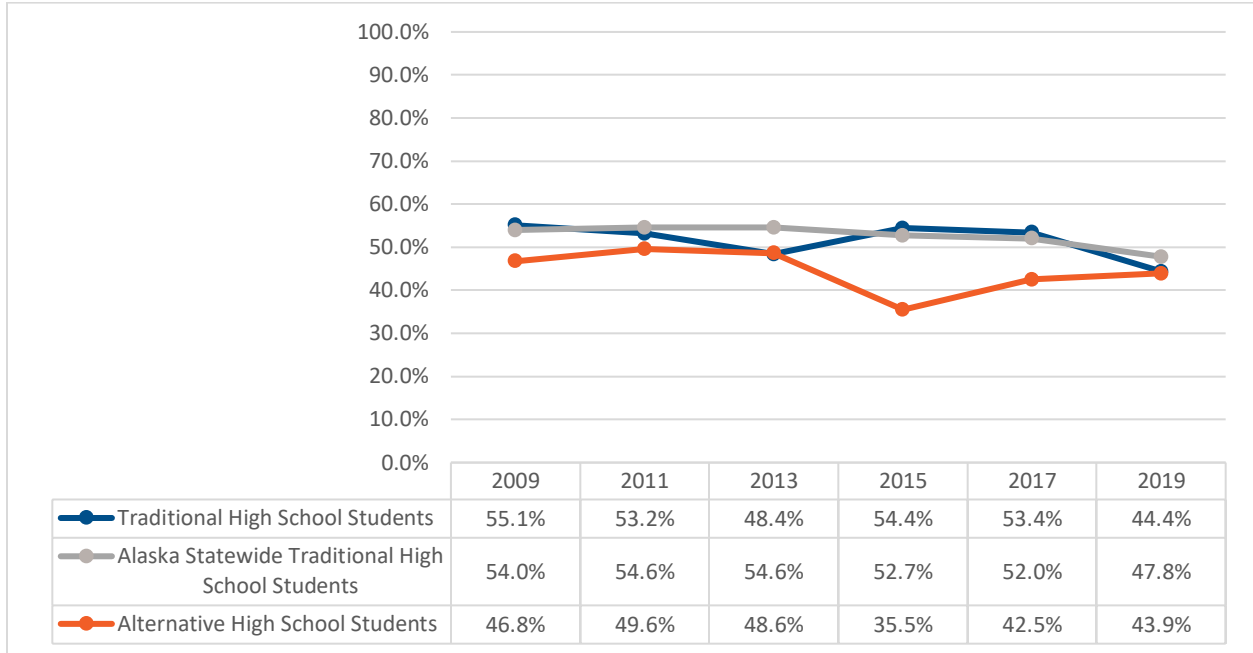
- Students in a physical fight on school property in the past 12 months
- How students got the alcohol they drank
- Perceived risk of harm from alcohol use
- Perceived risk of harm from marijuana use
- Perceived risk of harm from prescription pain medicine misuse
- Physical activity in the past week

² Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, YRBS program
https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/rachaelushkovic/viz/AlaskaYRBS_district_Anchorage_Alternative/Story1

Student Connectedness and Resilience

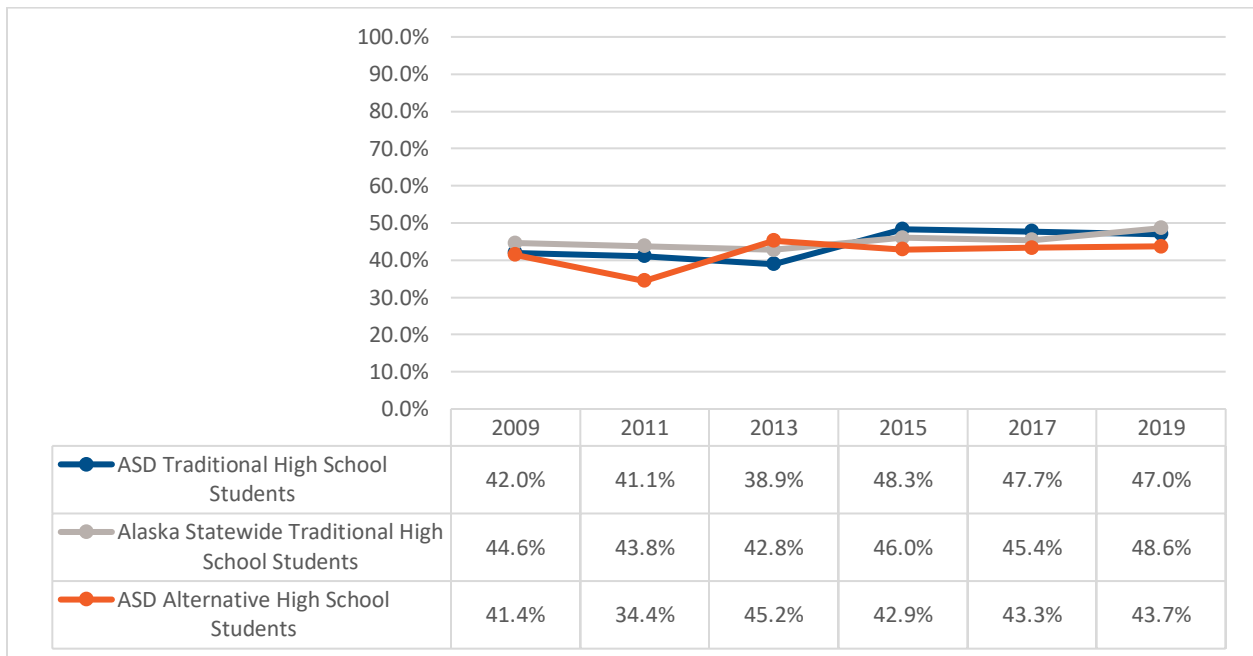
Youth Mattering

Figure 1: Percent of students who agree or strongly agree that in their community they feel like they matter to people



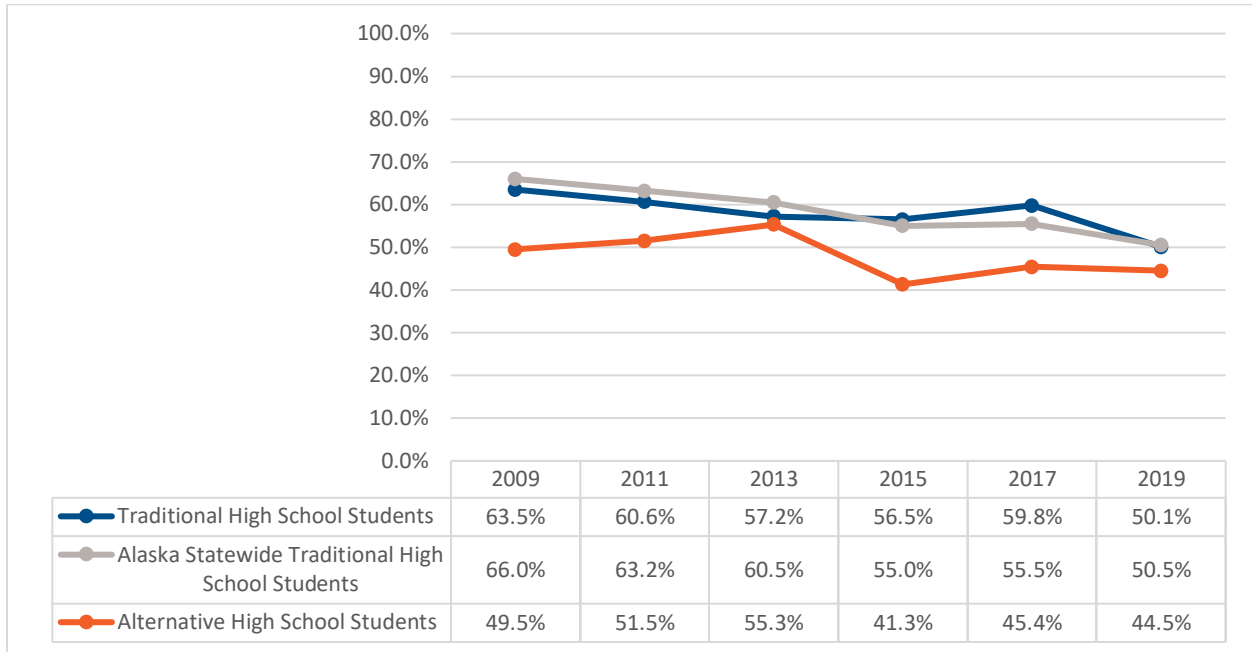
Comfortable Seeking Help from 3 or More Adults

Figure 2: Percent of students who feel comfortable seeking help from 3 or more adults besides their parents if they have an important question affecting their life



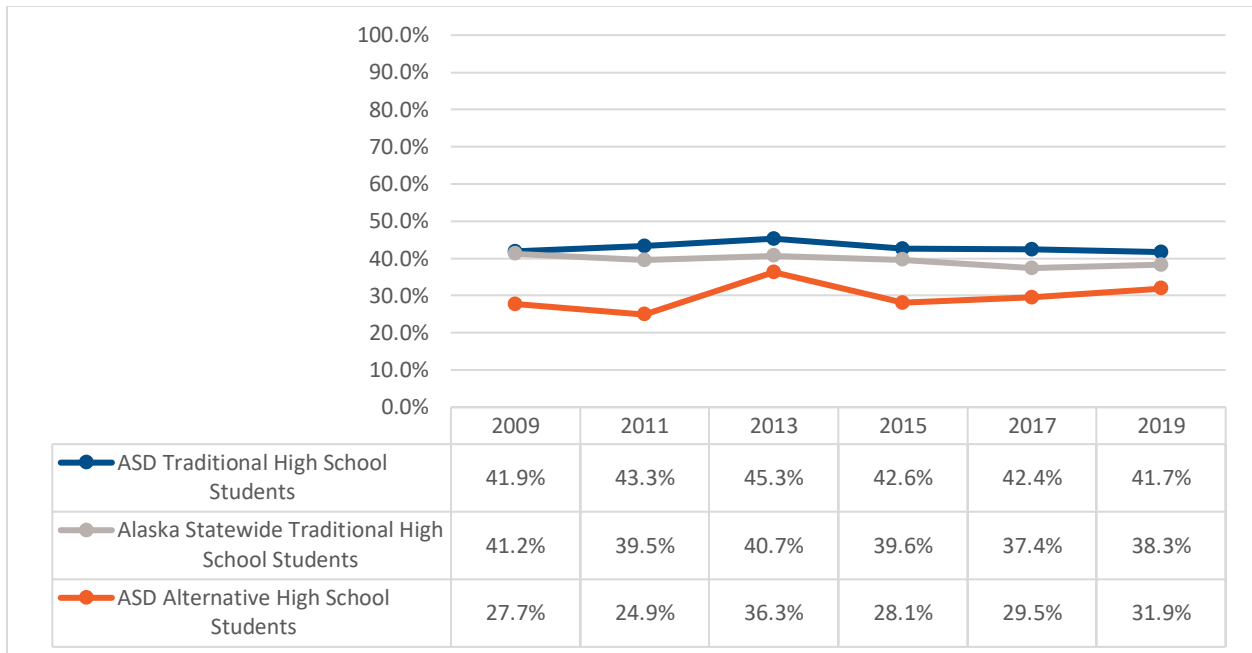
Youth Who Do Not Feel Alone

Figure 3: Percent of students who disagree or strongly disagree that they feel alone in their life



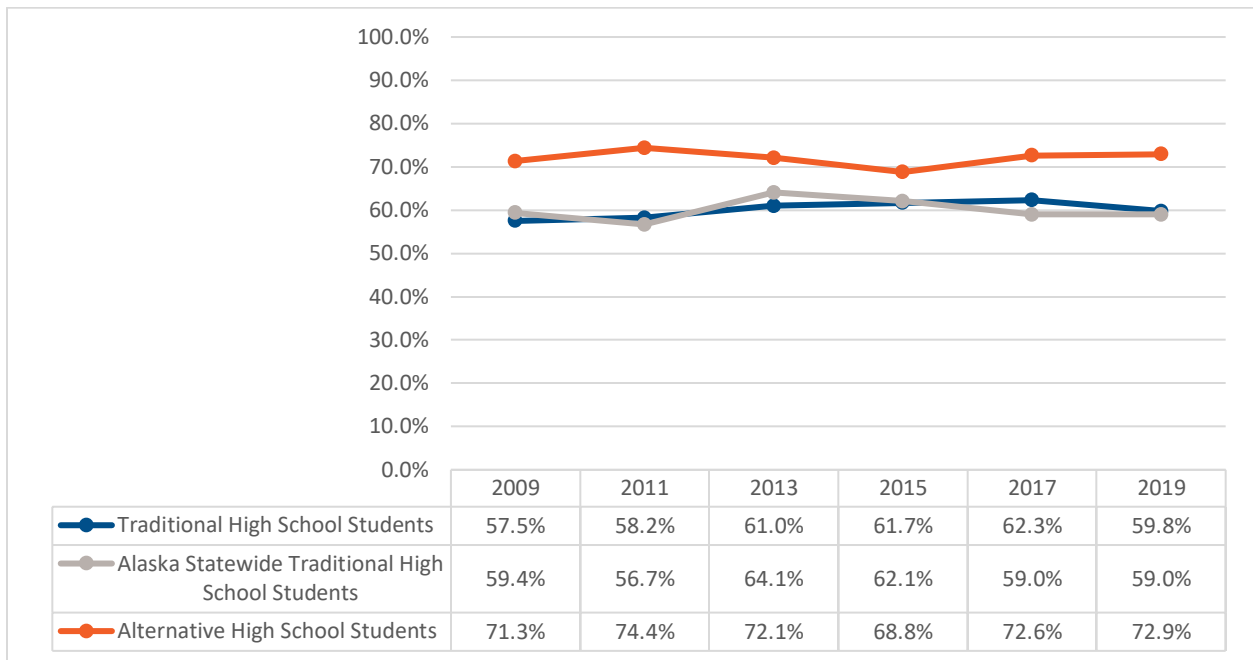
Parents Talk with them about School Nearly Every Day

Figure 4: Percent of students who had 1+ parent talk with them about school nearly every day



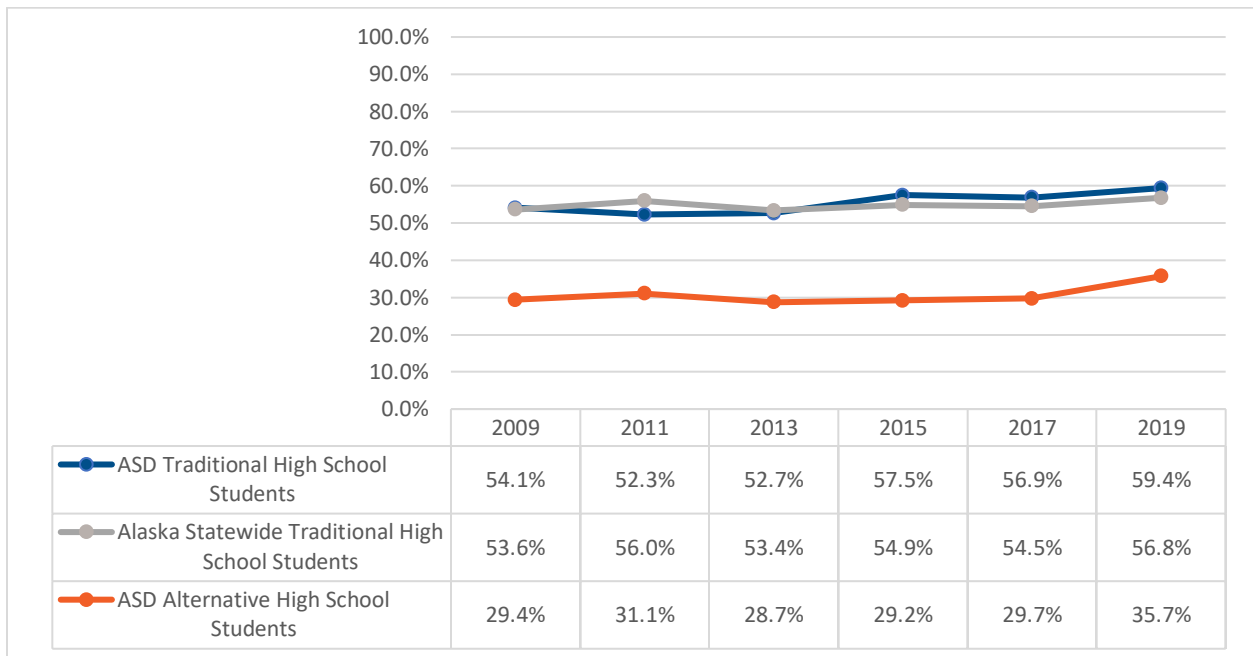
Teachers Care and Give Encouragement

Figure 5: Percent of students who agree or strongly agree that their teachers really care and give them a lot of encouragement



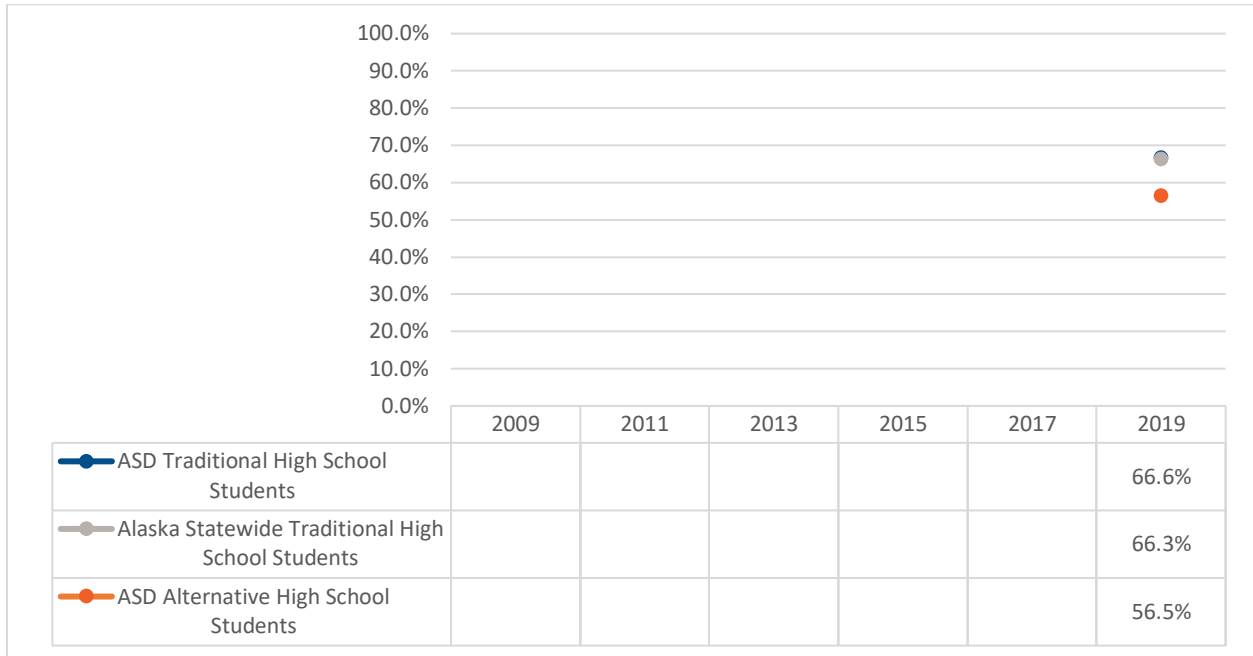
Participation in Organized Activities

Figure 6: Percent of students who participate in organized afterschool, evening, or weekend activities on one or more days per week



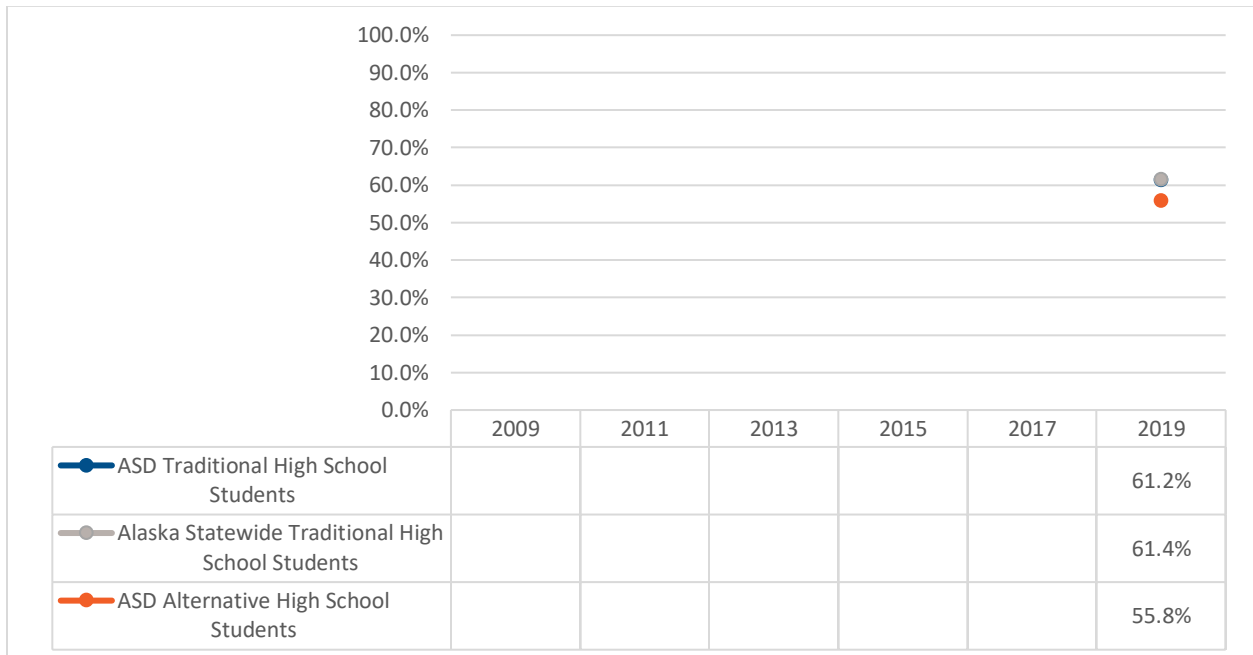
Able to Control Emotions³

Figure 7: Percent of students who are frequently or almost always able to control their emotions when they need to



Able to Remain Calm when Things go Wrong⁴

Figure 8: Percent of students who are able to remain quiet or extremely calm when things go wrong



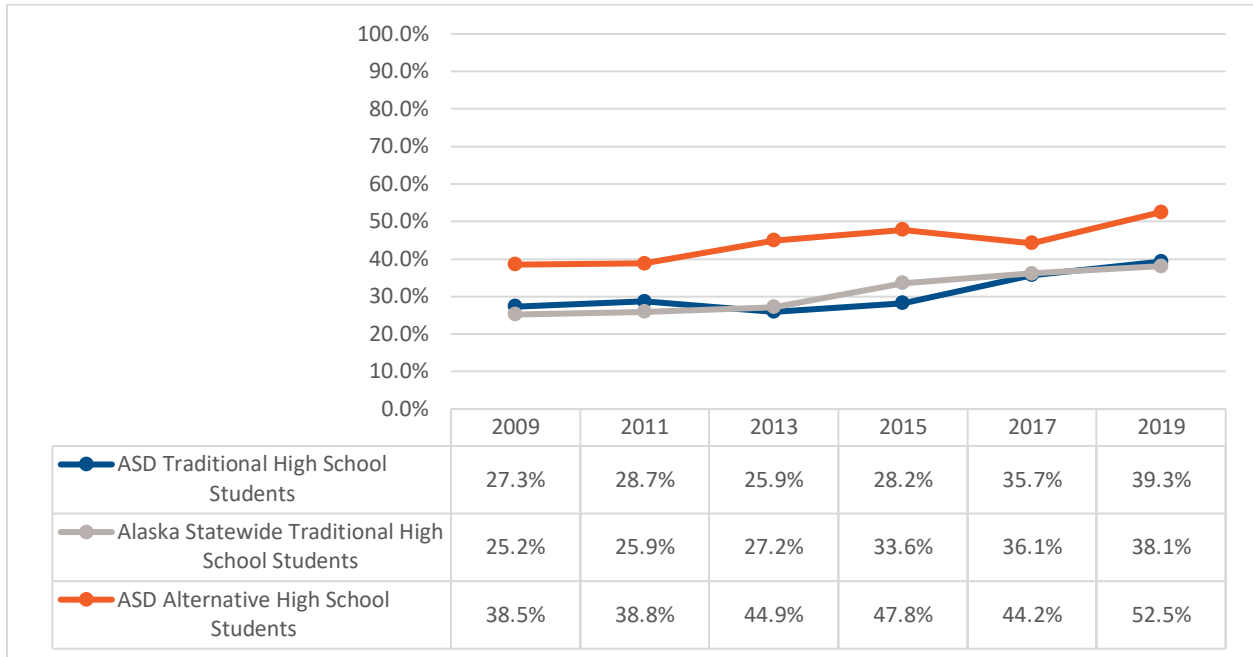
³ This question was asked for the first time on the 2019 YRBS.

⁴ This question was asked for the first time on the 2019 YRBS.

Depression and Suicide

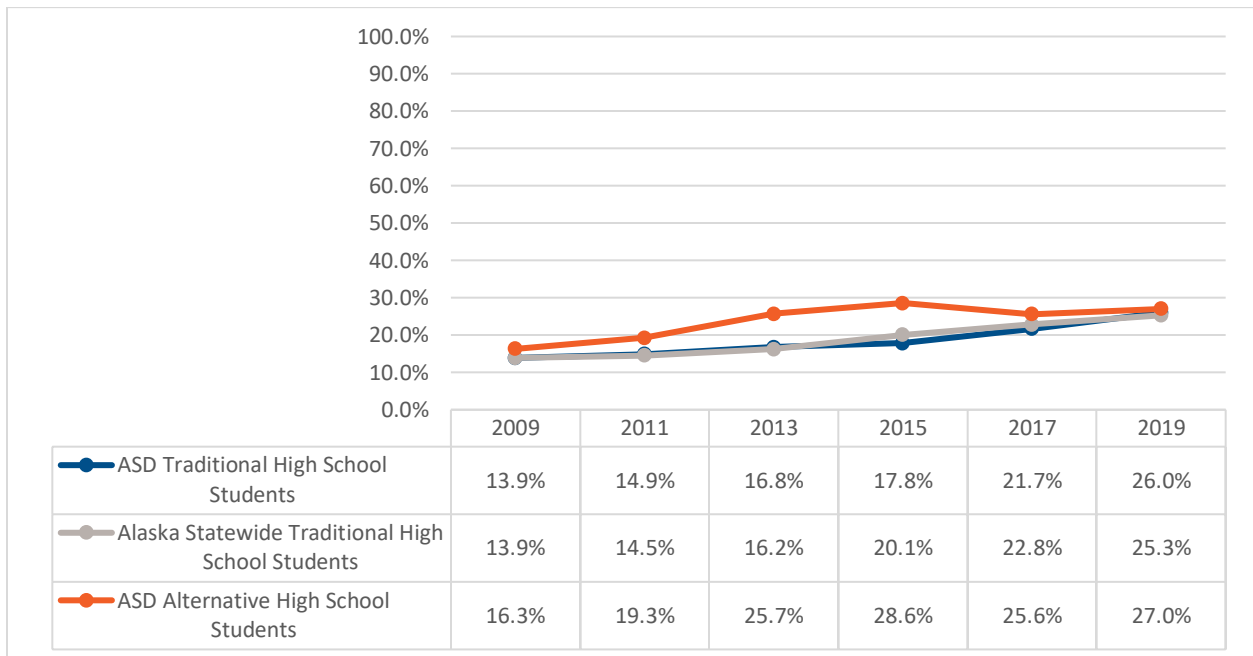
Felt Sad or Hopeless

Figure 9: Percent of students who felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for 2 weeks or more in a row that they stopped doing some usual activities



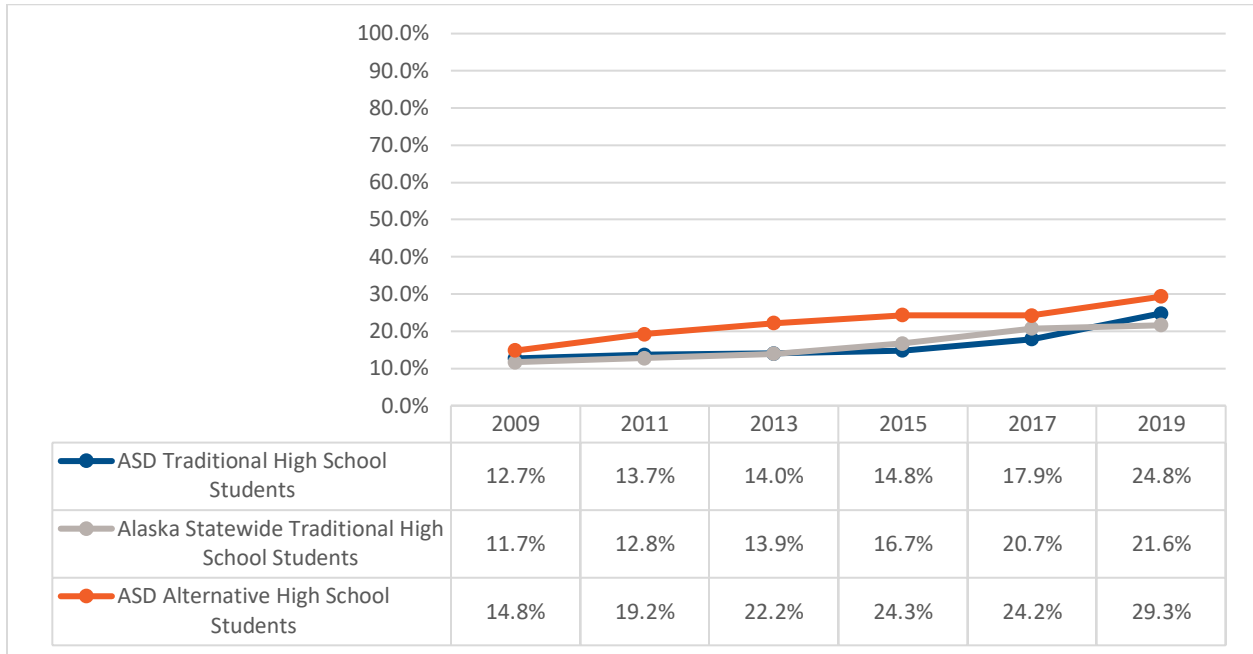
Seriously Considered Suicide

Figure 10: Percent of students who seriously considered attempting suicide during the past 12 months



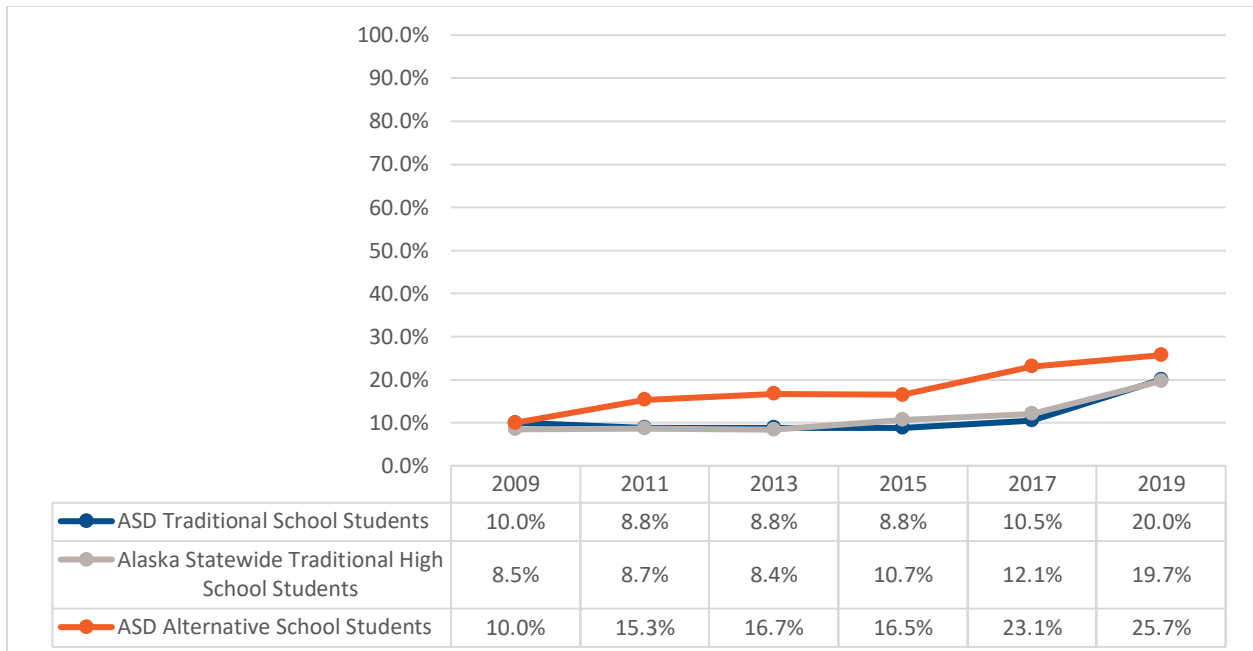
Planned a Suicide Attempt

Figure 11: Percent of students who made a plan about how they would attempt suicide in the past 12 months



Attempted Suicide

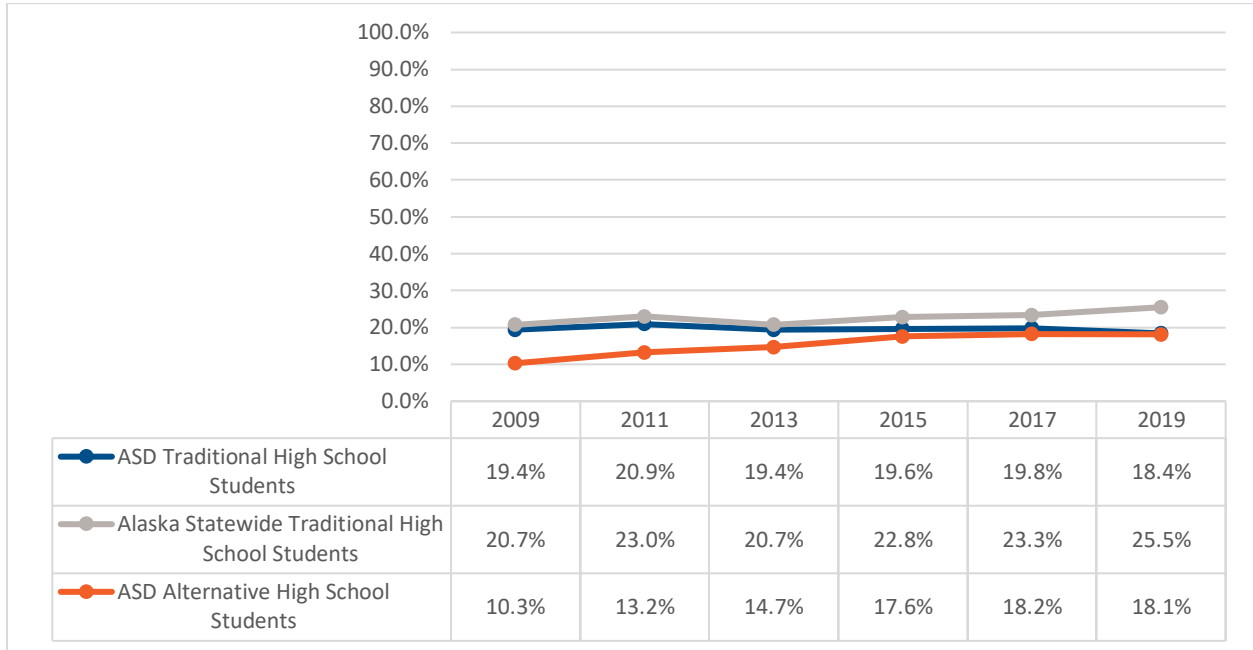
Figure 12: Percent of students who attempted suicide one or more times in the past 12 months



Violence and Bullying

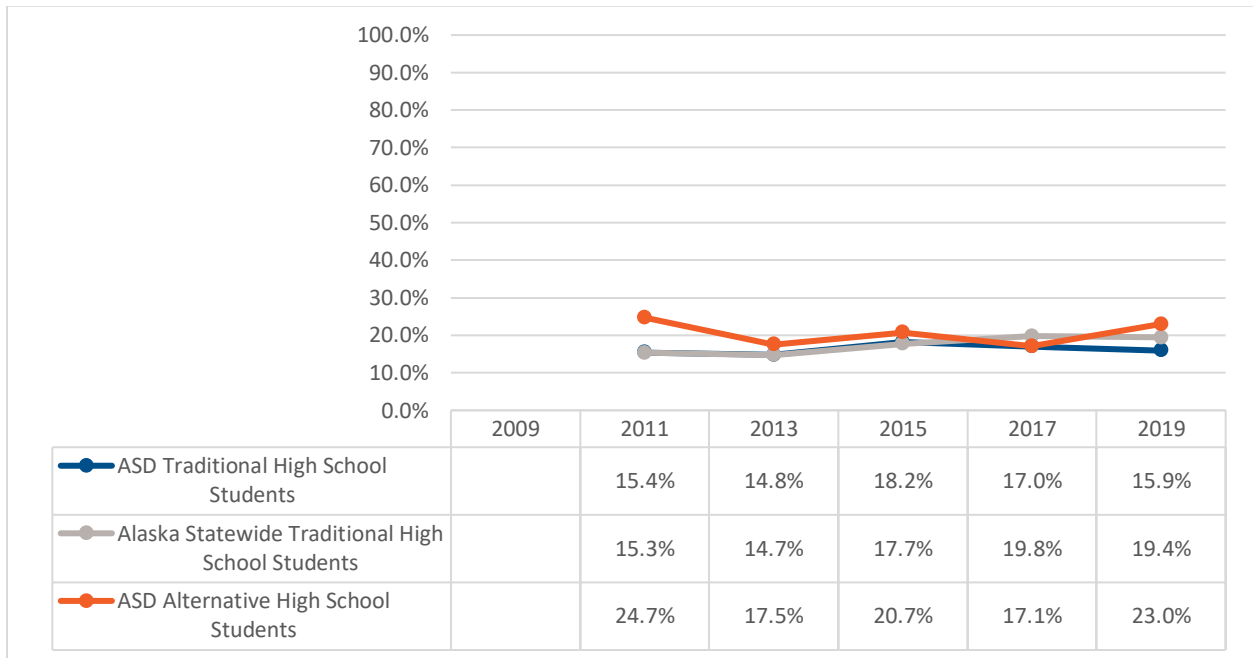
Bullied on School Property

Figure 13: Percent of students who were bullied on school property in the past year



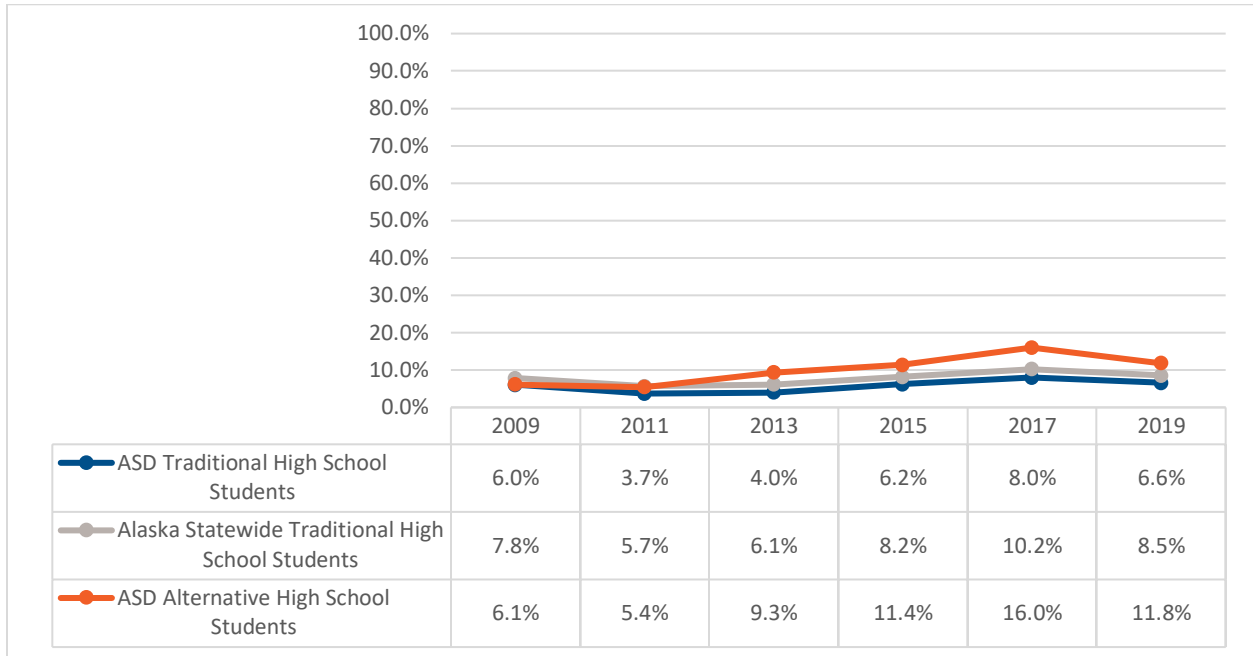
Bullied Electronically

Figure 14: Percent of students who were electronically bullied in the past year



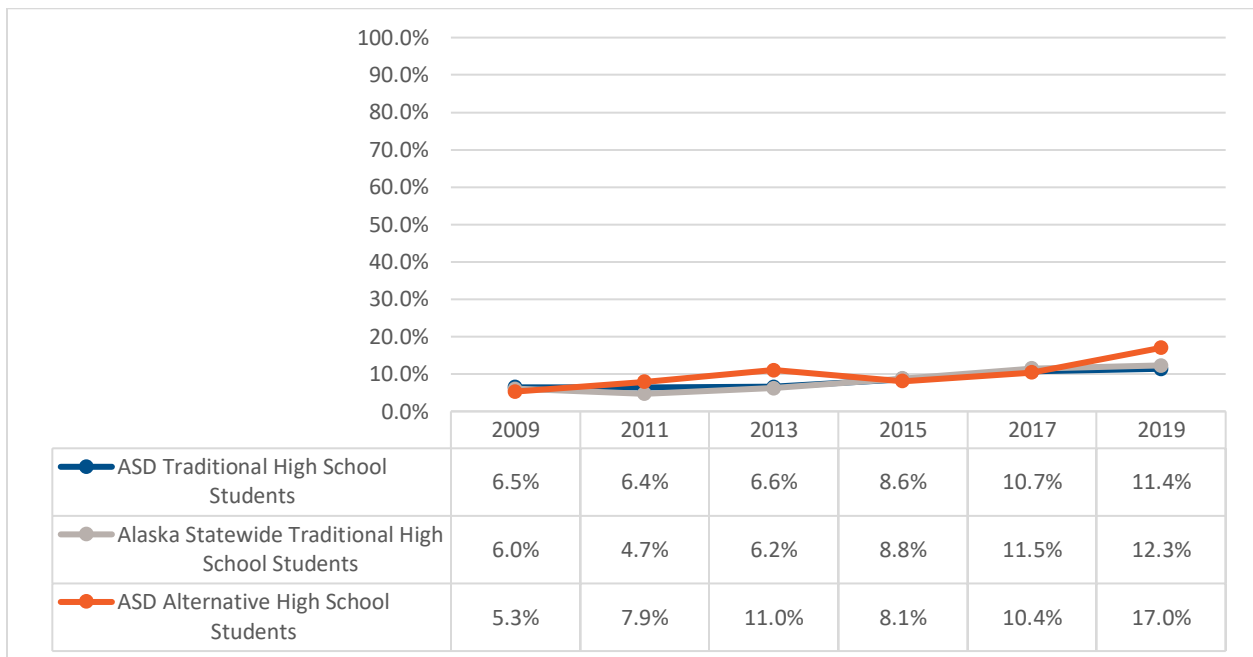
Carried a Weapon on School Property

Figure 15: Percent of students who carried a weapon on school property in the past 12 months



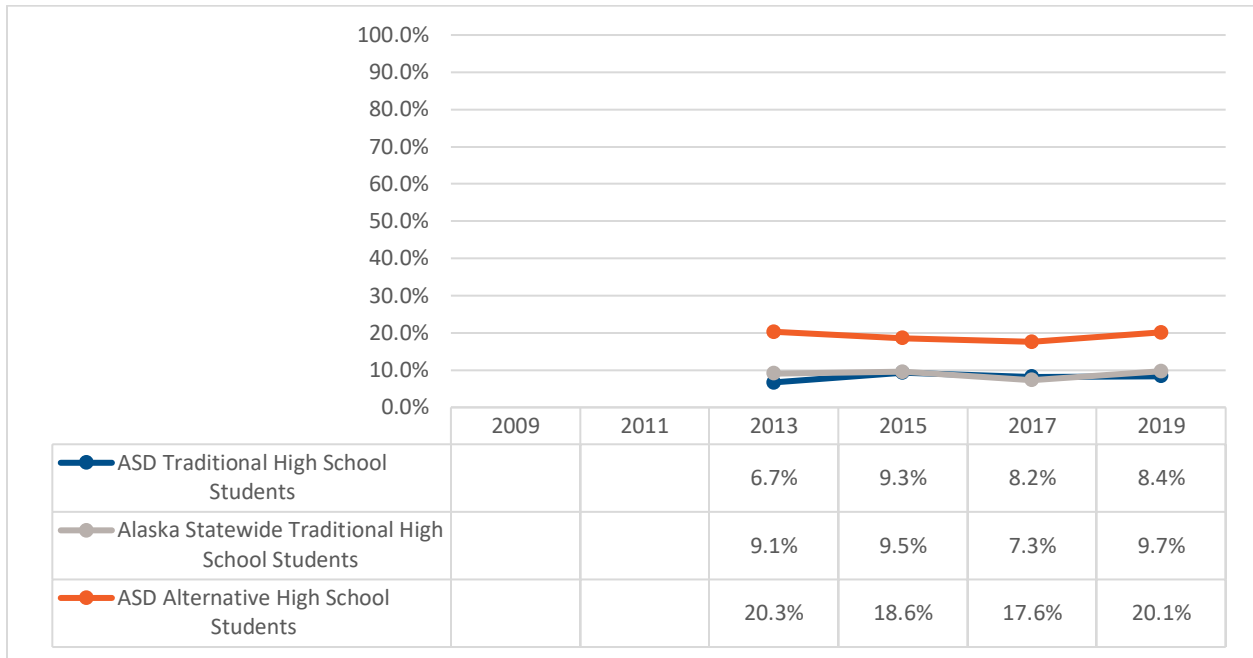
Did not Go to School Because they Felt Unsafe

Figure 16: Percent of students who did not go to school on one or more days in the past 30 days because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school



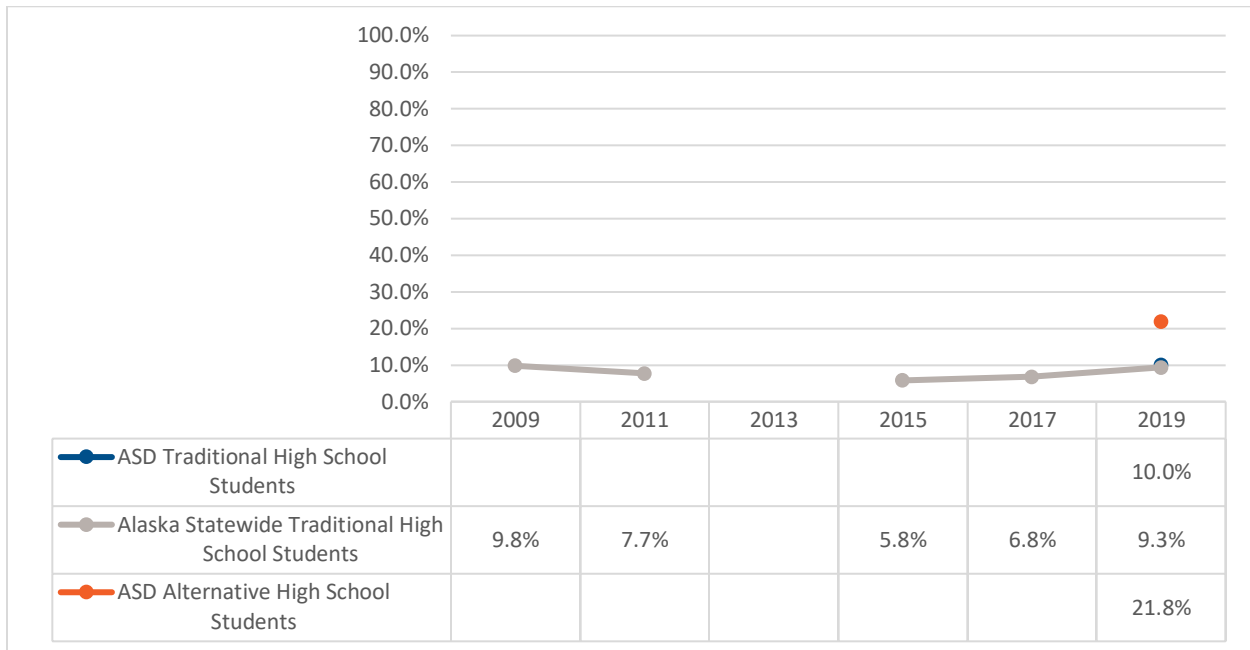
Experienced Physical Dating Violence

Figure 17: Percent of students who were physically hurt one or more times by someone they were dating or going out with in the past 12 months



Physical Fight on School Property^{5,6}

Figure 18: Percent of students who were in a physical fight on school property in the past 12 months



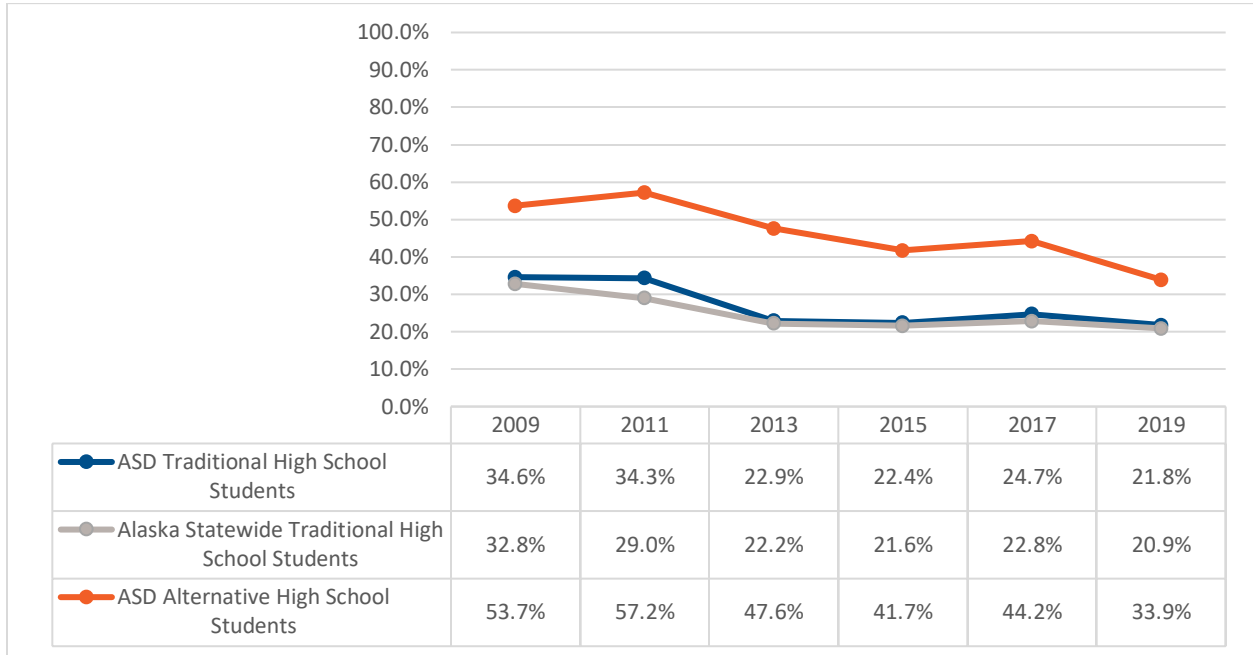
⁵ This question was not included on the 2013 YRBS.

⁶ Responses to the question “During the past 12 months how many times have you been in a physical fight?” were analyzed in the 2020 assessment. However, this question was not asked on the 2019 YRBS so responses to the question “During the past 12 months how many times have you been in a physical fight on school property?” were used instead. Data for ASD high school students for the years 2009-2017 could not be obtained at the time of this report due to unavailability of the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services website and limited Alaska YRBS program staff capacity.

Alcohol Use

Current Drinking

Figure 19: Percent of students who had at least one drink of alcohol on at least one of the past 30 days

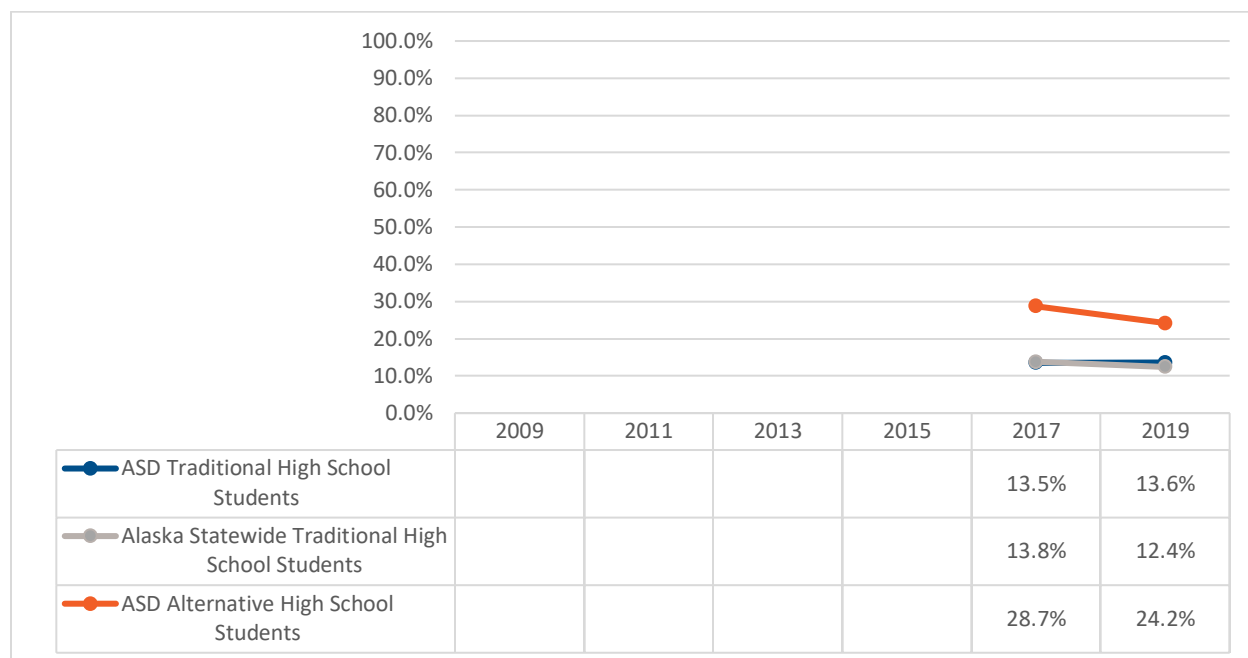


How Students got Alcohol

Data for all ASD high school students (traditional and alternative high school students combined) was analyzed in the 2020 assessment to compare the percentage of students who purchased their alcohol, had someone else buy it for them, and had someone else give it to them for the years 2009 through 2017. The same response breakdown for 2019 YRBS data could not be obtained at the time of this report due to unavailability of the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services website and limited Alaska YRBS program staff capacity.

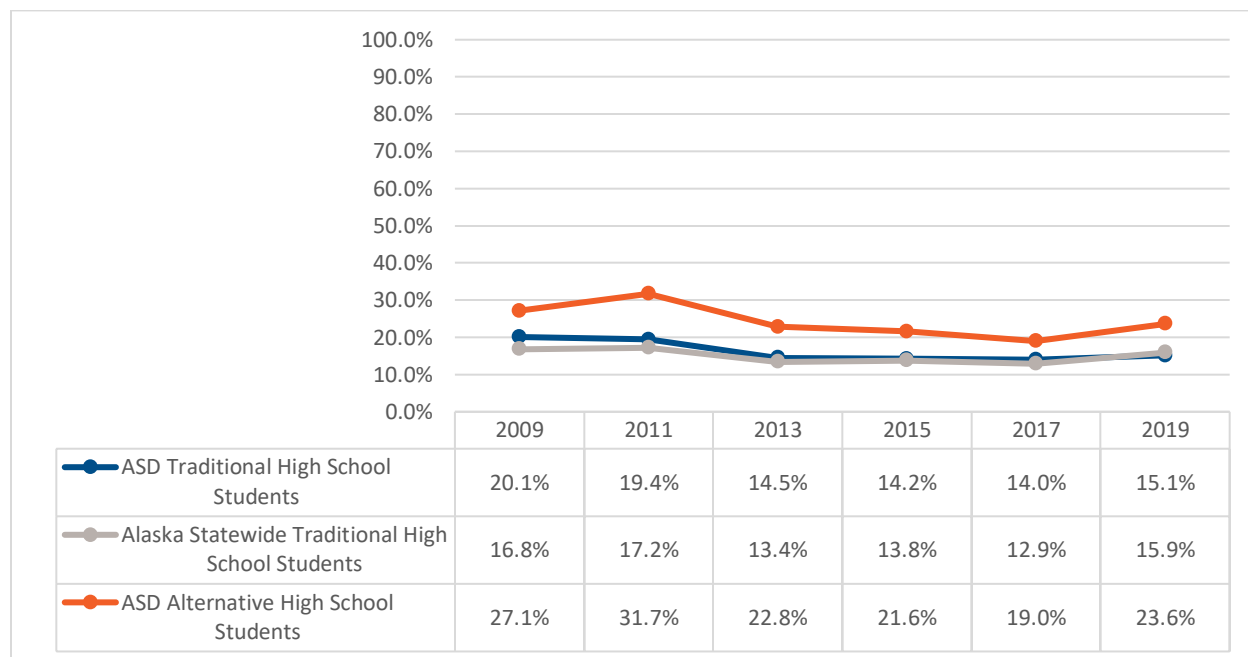
Binge Drinking⁷

Figure 20: Percent of students who binge drank at least once in the past 30 days (4 or more drinks in a row within a couple of hours for females, 5 or more drinks of alcohol in a row within a couple hours for males)



First Drink Before Age 13

Figure 21: Percent of students who had their first drink of alcohol other than a few sips before age 13

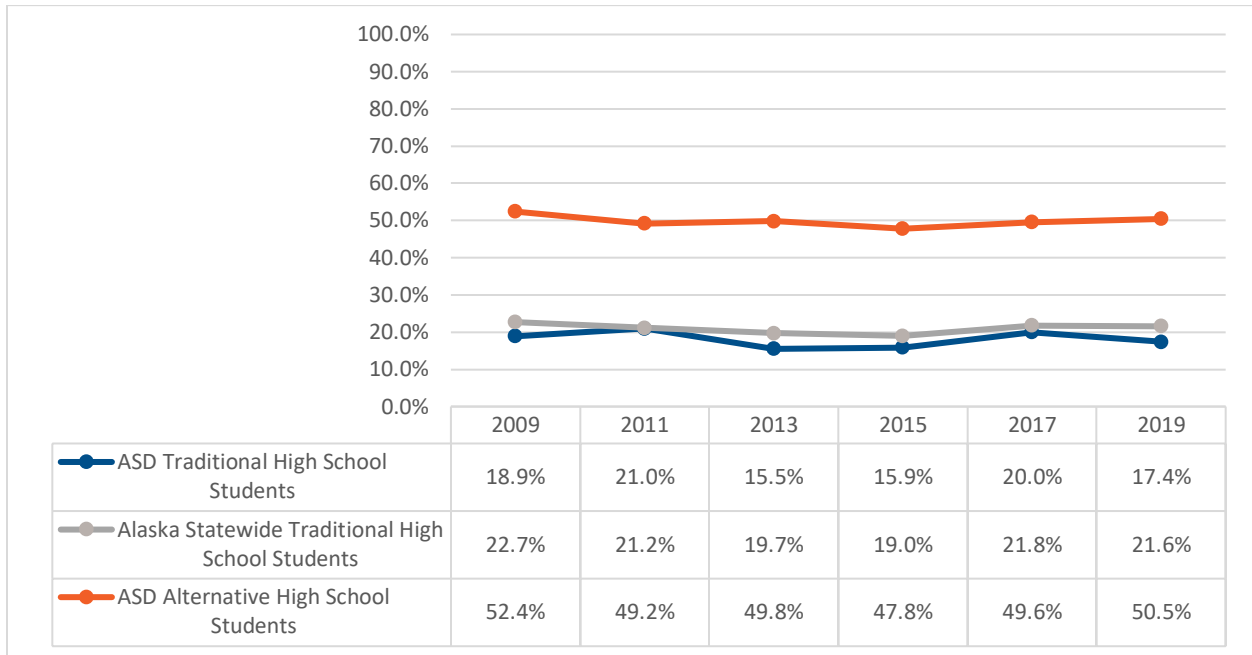


⁷ The definition of binge drinking changed in 2017 to 4 or more drinks in a row for females and 5 or more drinks in a row for males. Prior to 2017 the definition of binge drinking was 5 or more drinks in a row for all students. Only data from 2017 and 2019 are included in order to provide an accurate comparison.

Marijuana Use

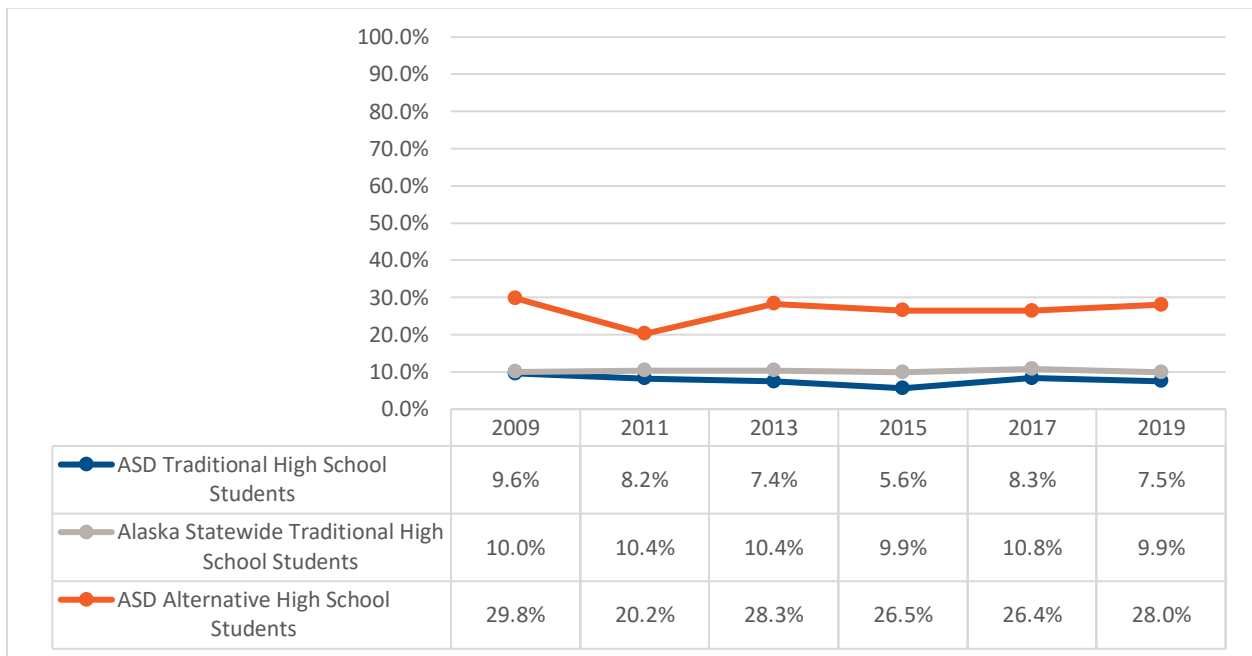
Current Marijuana Use

Figure 22: Percent of students who used marijuana one or more times during the past 30 days



Used Marijuana Before Age 13

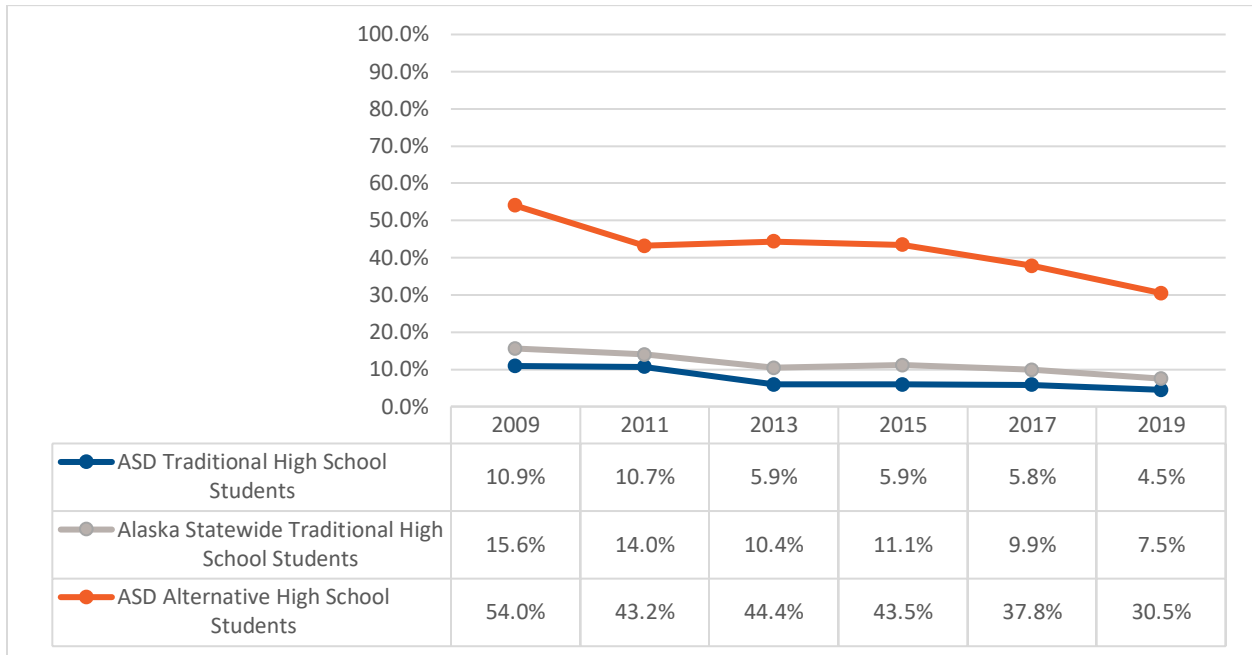
Figure 23: Percent of students who used marijuana for the first time before age 13



Tobacco Use

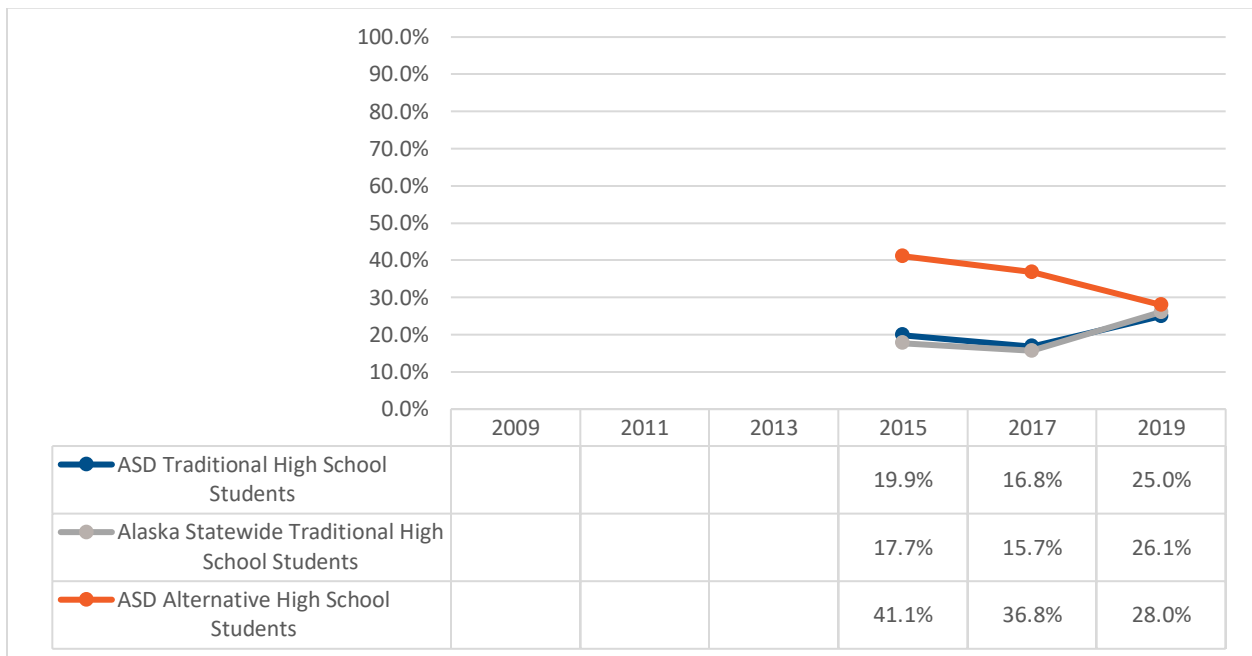
Current Cigarette Smoking

Figure 24: Percent of students who smoked cigarettes one or more times during the past 30 days



Current Electronic Vapor Use⁸

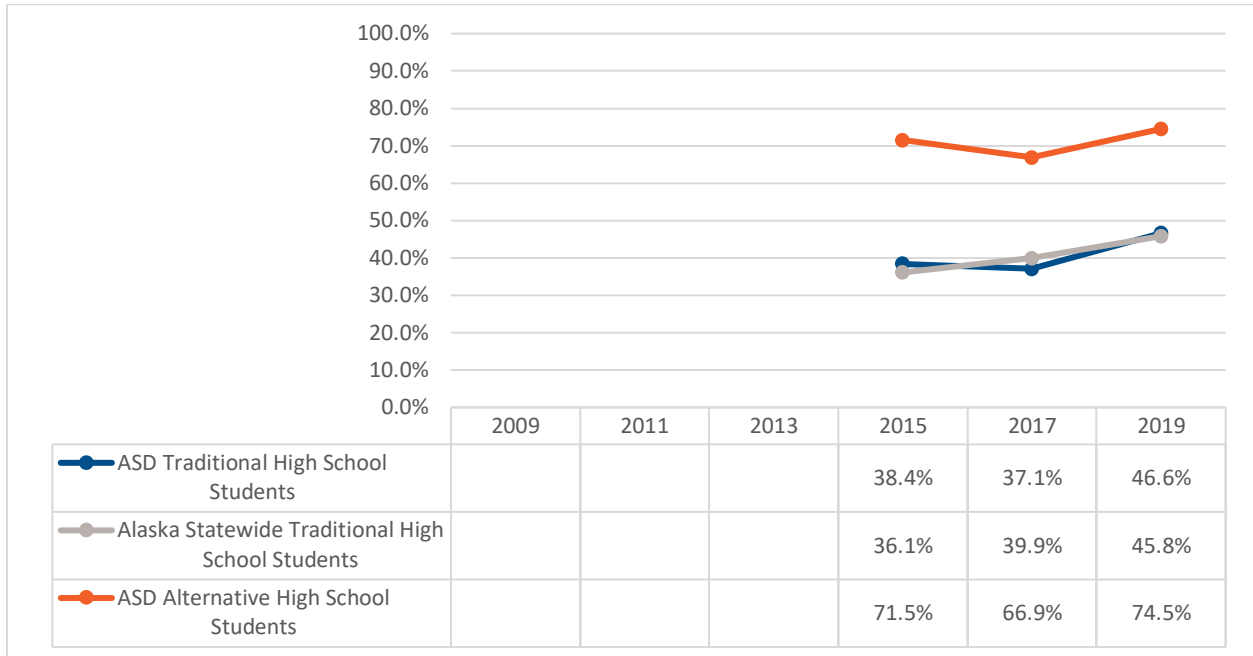
Figure 25: Percent of students who used electronic vaping products during the past 30 days



⁸ This question was asked for the first time on the 2015 YRBS.

Ever Used an Electronic Vapor Product⁹

Figure 26: Percent of students who ever used vaping products

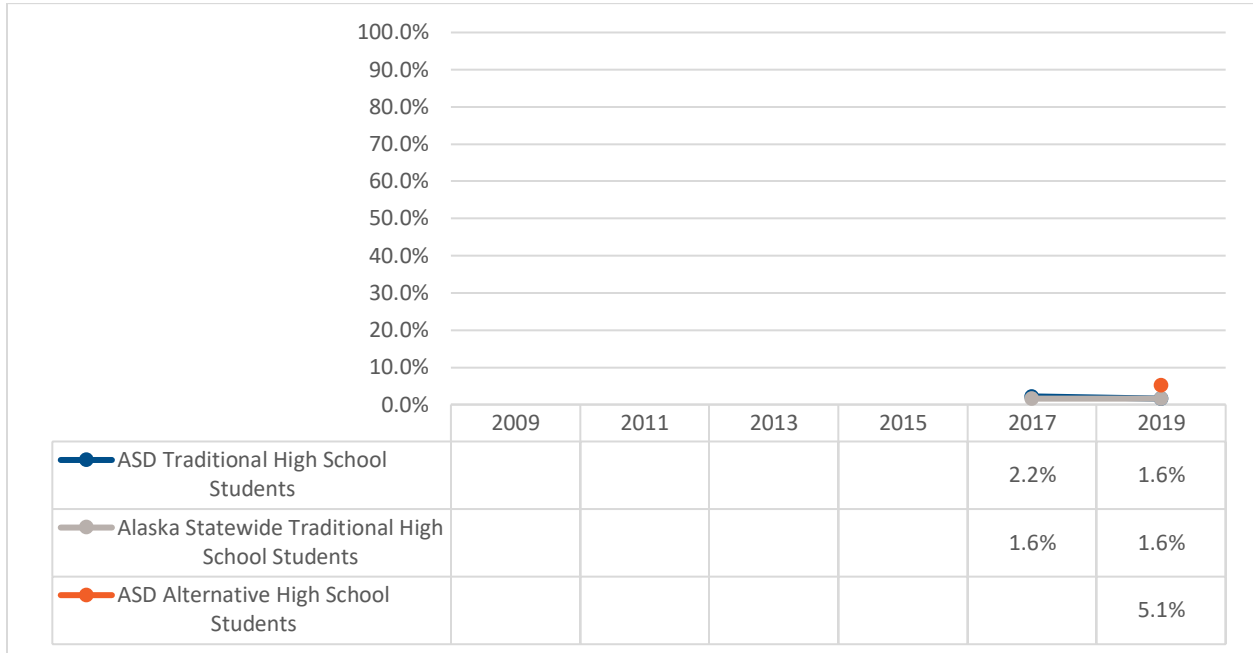


⁹ This question was asked for the first time on the 2015 YRBS.

Other Drug Use

Current Heroin Use¹⁰

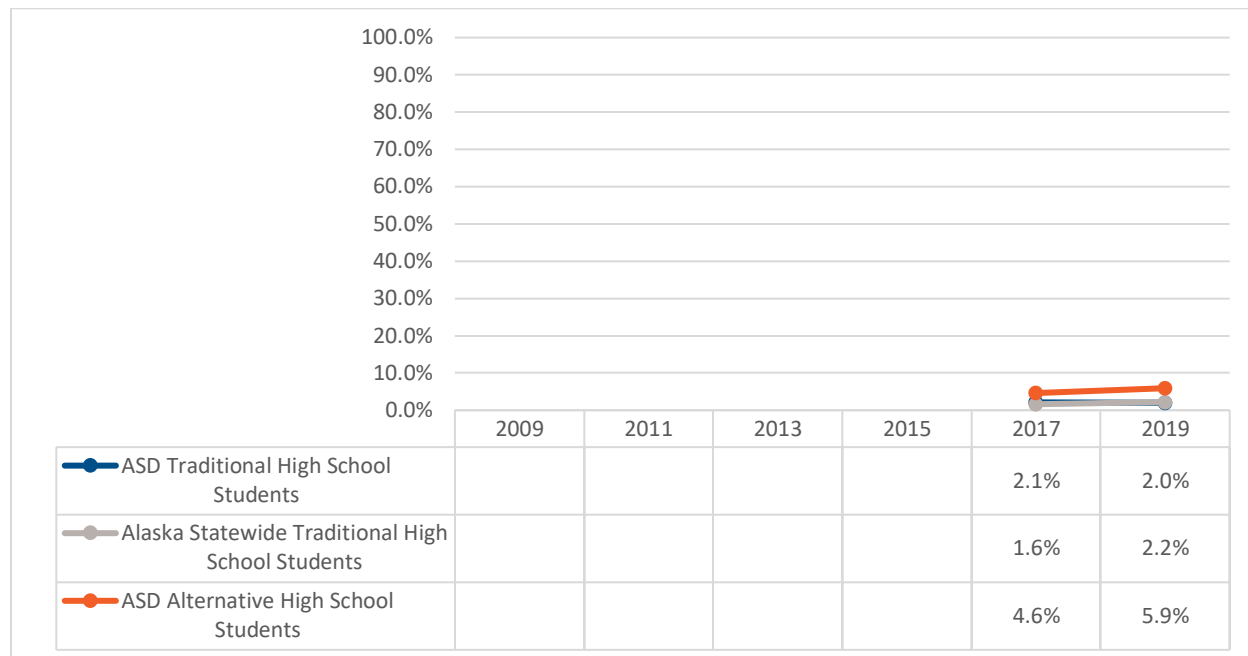
Figure 27: Percent of students who used heroin in the past 30 days



¹⁰ This question was asked for the first time on the 2017 YRBS. Data for ASD Alternative High School students for 2017 is suppressed due to the small number of student responses.

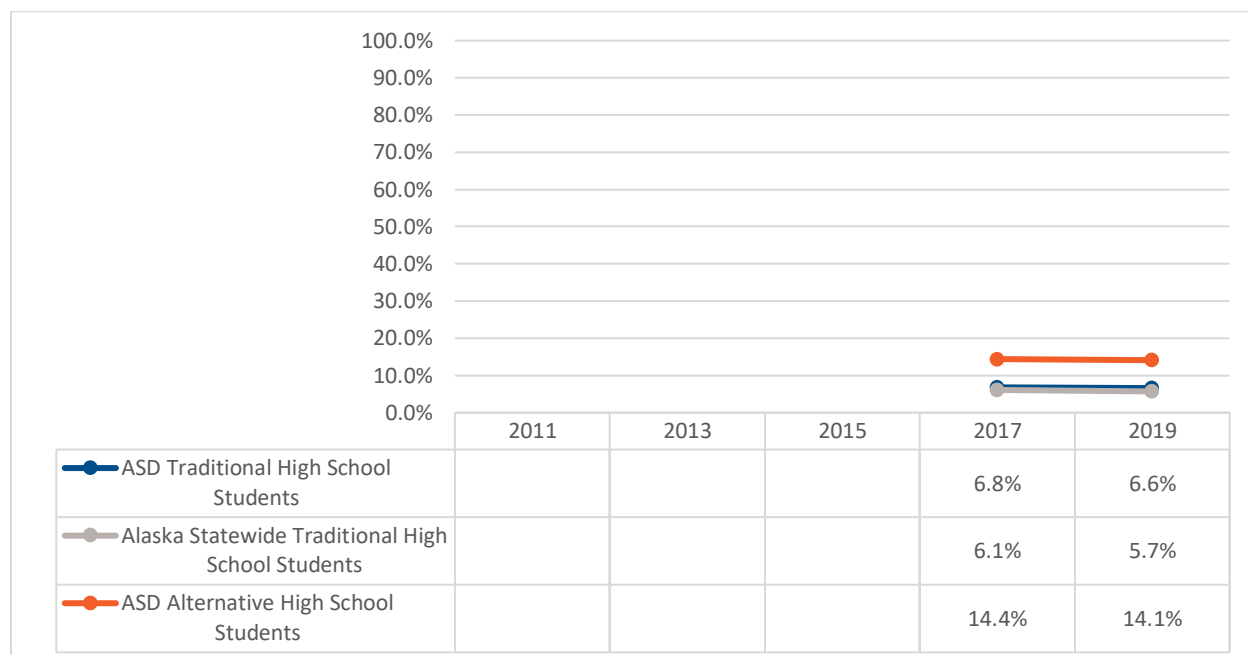
Current Methamphetamine Use¹¹

Figure 28: Percent of students who used methamphetamines in the past 30 days



Current Prescription Pain Medicine Misuse¹²

Figure 29: Percent of students who have taken prescription pain medicine without a doctor's prescription or differently than how a doctor told them to use it in the past 30 days

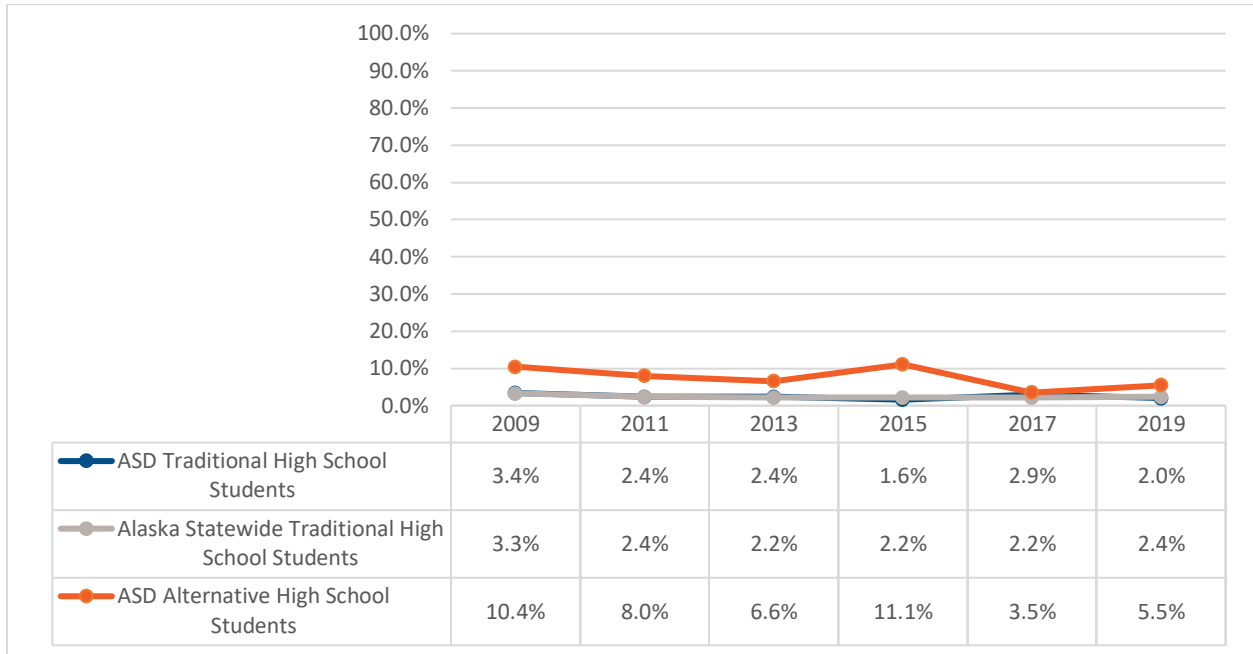


¹¹ This question was asked for the first time on the 2017 YRBS.

¹² The wording of this question was changed in 2017. Prior to 2017 students were only asked whether they had ever taken a prescription drug without a prescription. Results are only provided for 2017 and 2019 to provide an accurate comparison.

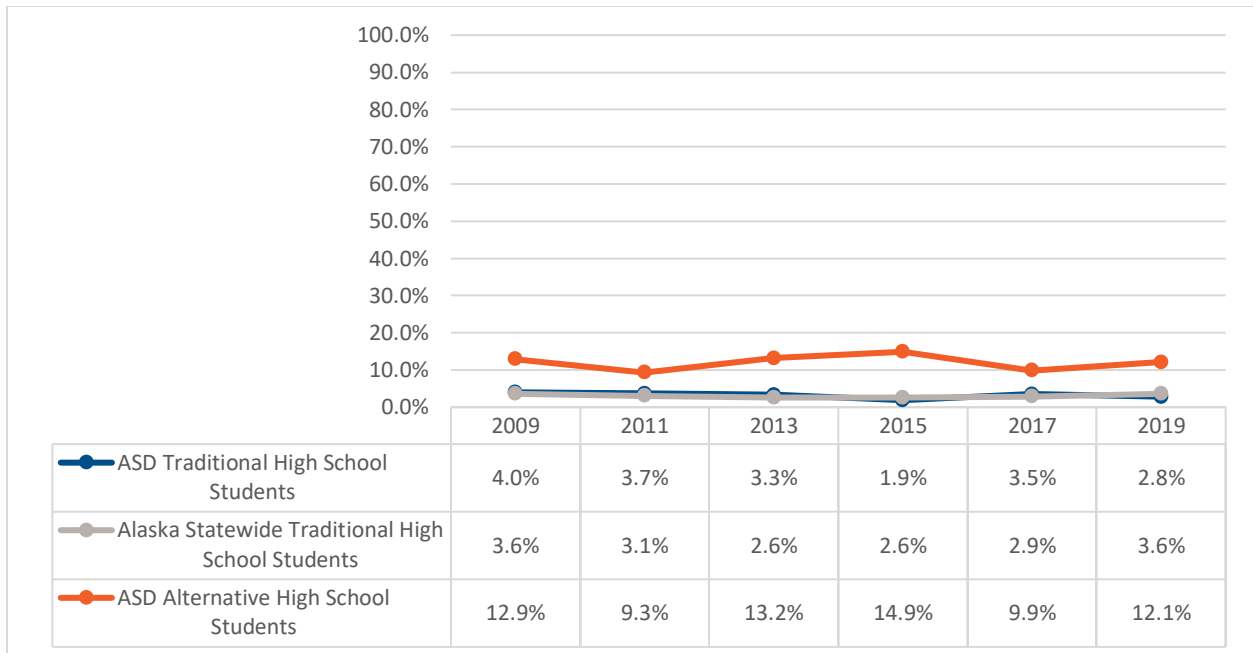
Lifetime Heroin Use

Figure 30: Percent of students who ever used heroin



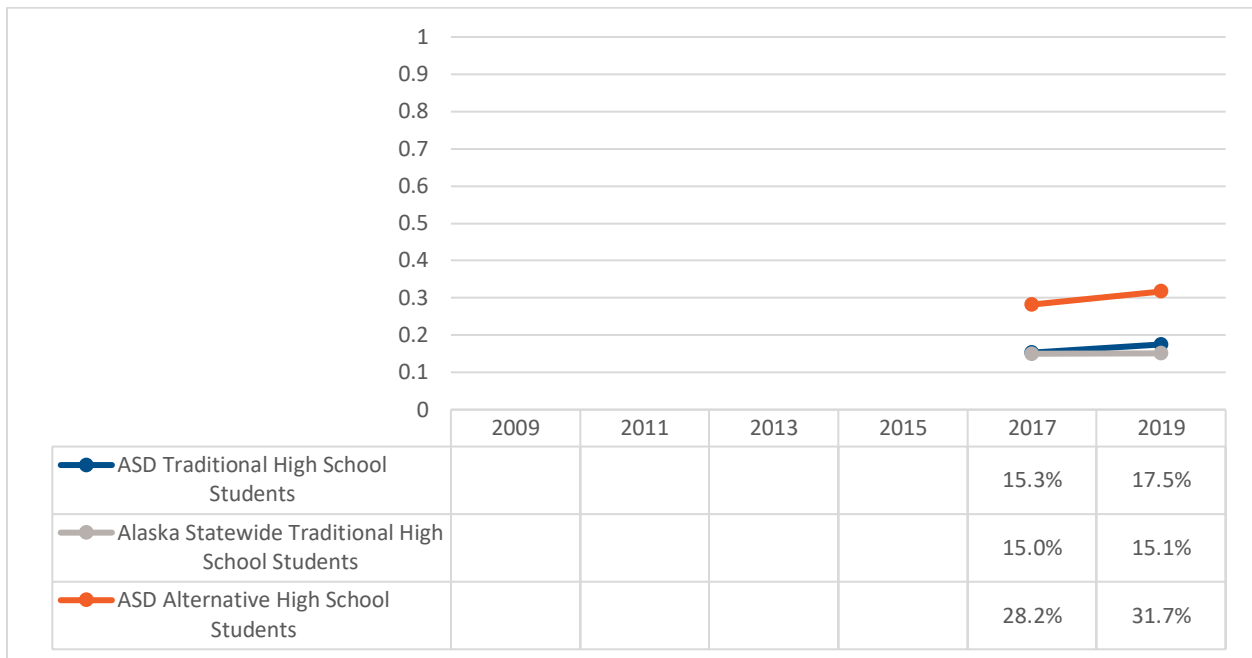
Lifetime Methamphetamine Use

Figure 31: Percent of students who ever used methamphetamines



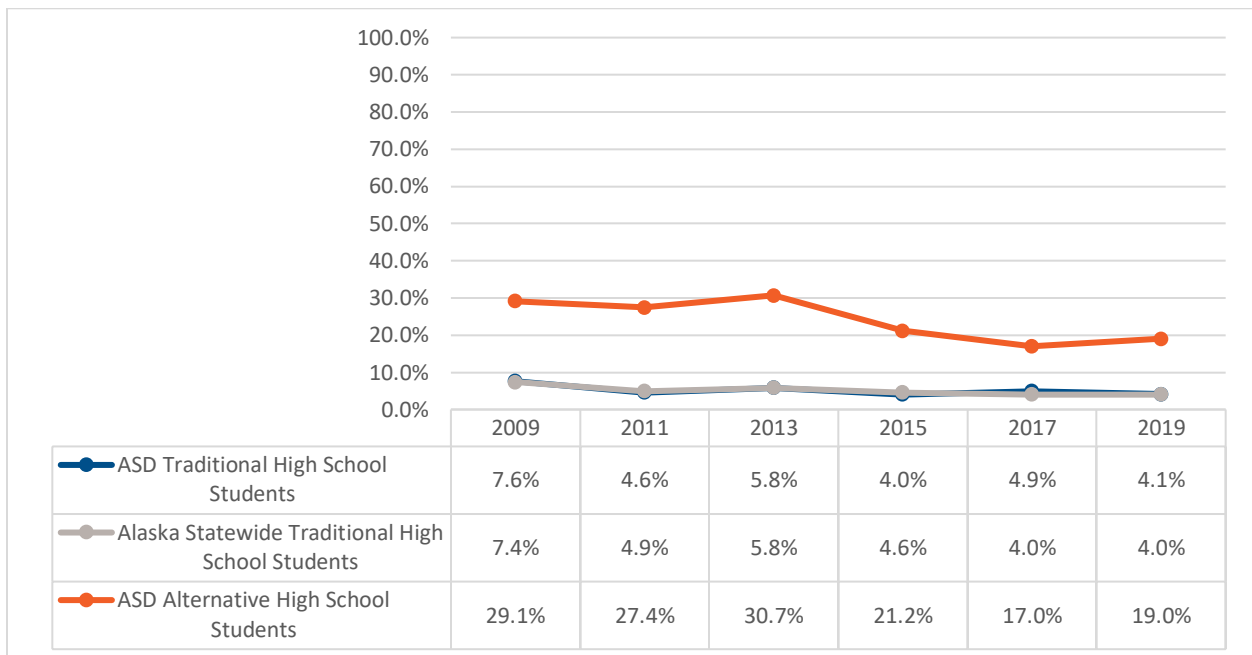
Lifetime Prescription Drug Misuse¹³

Figure 32: Percent of students who have ever taken prescription pain medicine without a doctor's prescription or differently than how a doctor told them to use it



Lifetime Cocaine Use

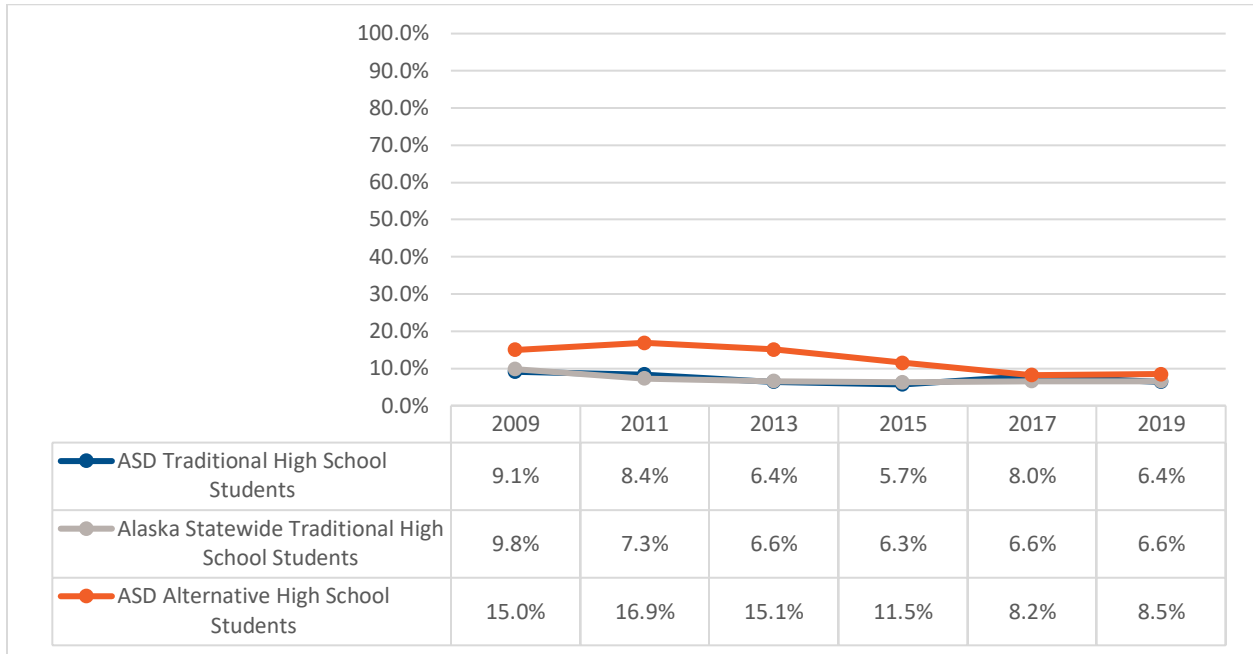
Figure 33: Percent of students who ever used cocaine



¹³ The wording of this question was changed in 2017. Prior to 2017 students were only asked whether they had ever taken a prescription drug without a prescription. Results are only provided for 2017 and 2019 to provide an accurate comparison.

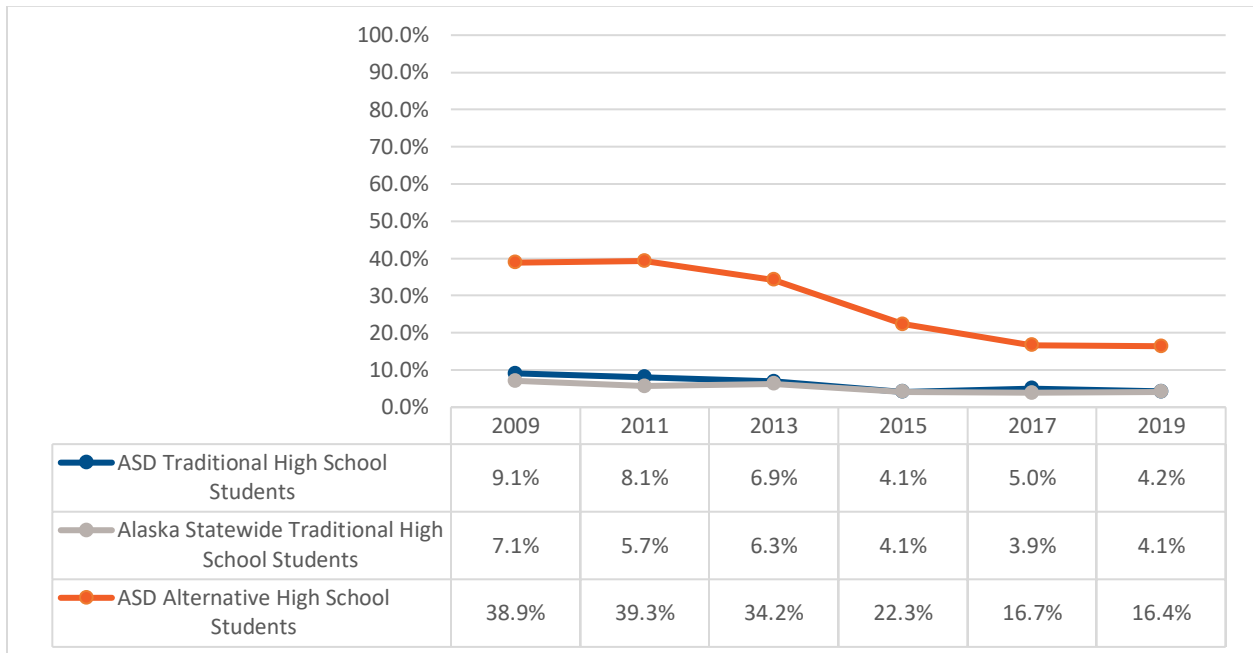
Lifetime Inhalants Use

Figure 34: Percent of students who ever used inhalants



Lifetime Ecstasy Use

Figure 35: Percent of students who ever used ecstasy

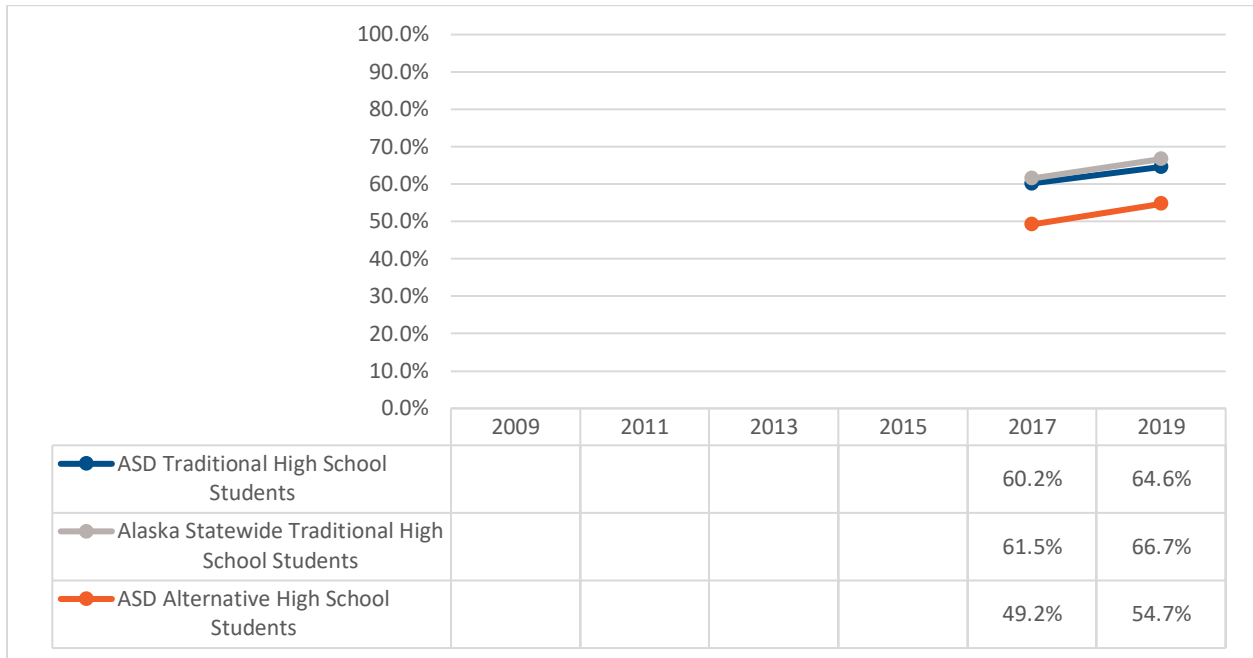


Substance Use Perceptions

Friend Perceptions

Friends Feel Drinking Alcohol is Wrong¹⁴

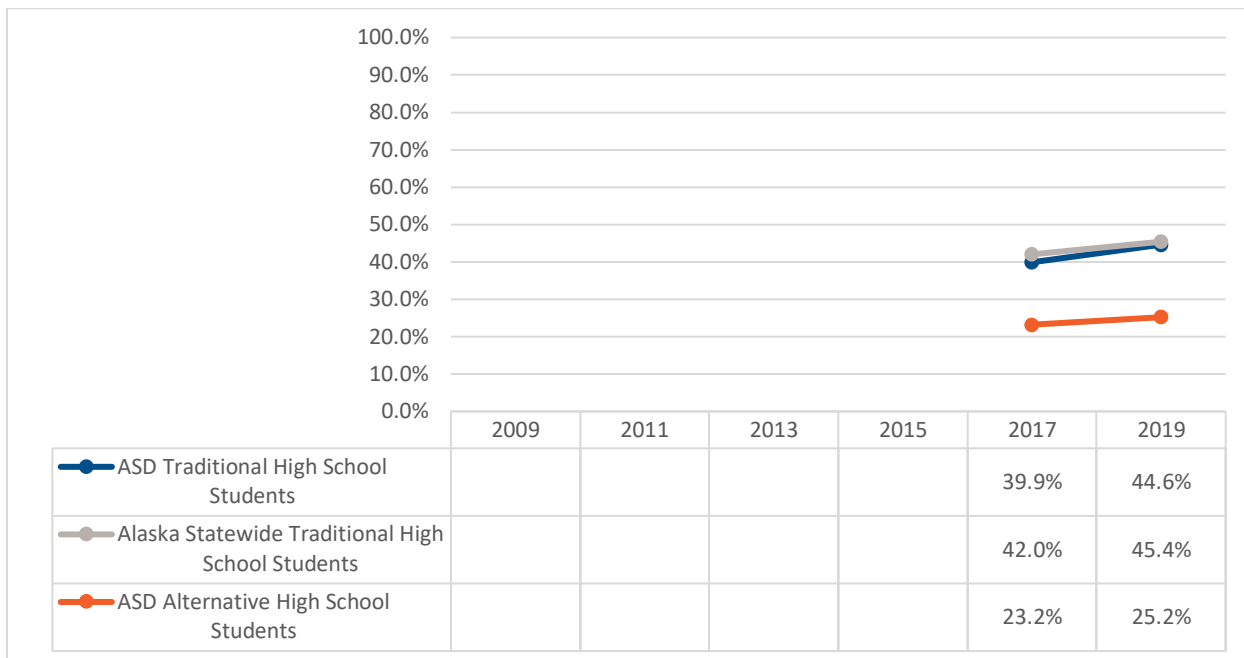
Figure 36: Percent of students whose friends feel it would be wrong or very wrong if they had one or two drinks of an alcoholic beverage nearly every day



¹⁴ This question was asked for the first time on the 2017 YRBS.

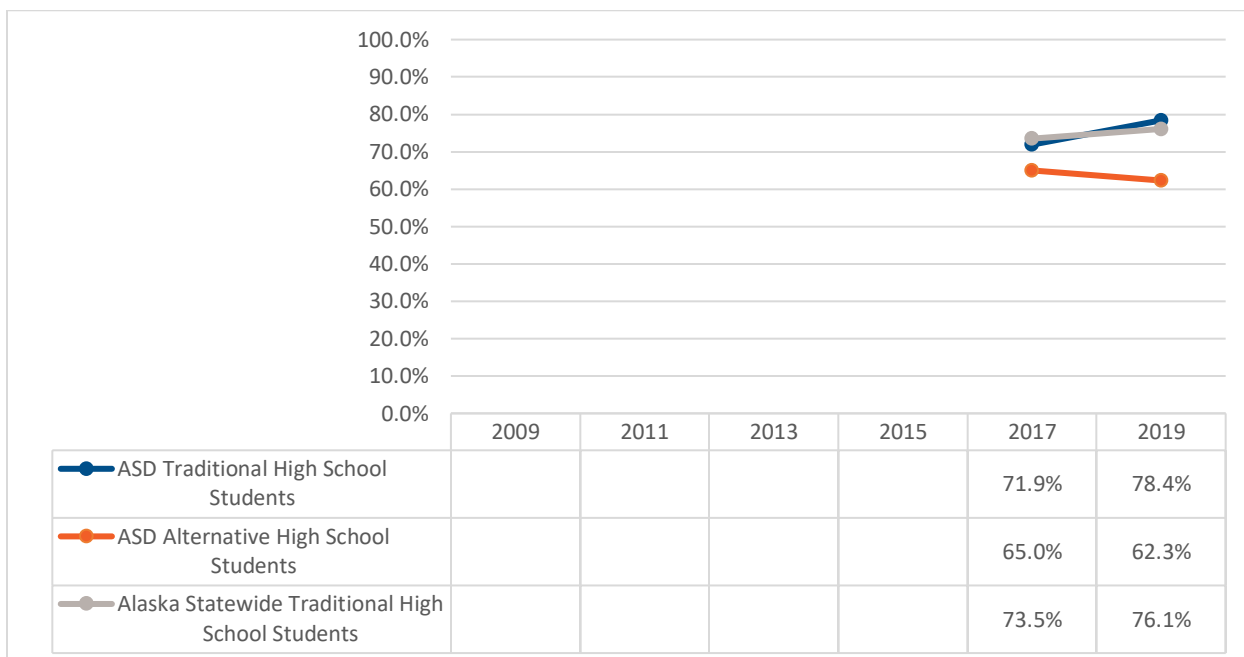
Friends Feel Marijuana Use is Wrong¹⁵

Figure 37: Percent of students whose friends feel it would be wrong or very wrong if they use marijuana



Friends Feel Prescription Pain Medicine Misuse is Wrong¹⁶

Figure 38: Percent of students whose friends feel it would be wrong or very wrong if they used prescription pain medicine without a doctor's prescription or differently than how a doctor told them to use it



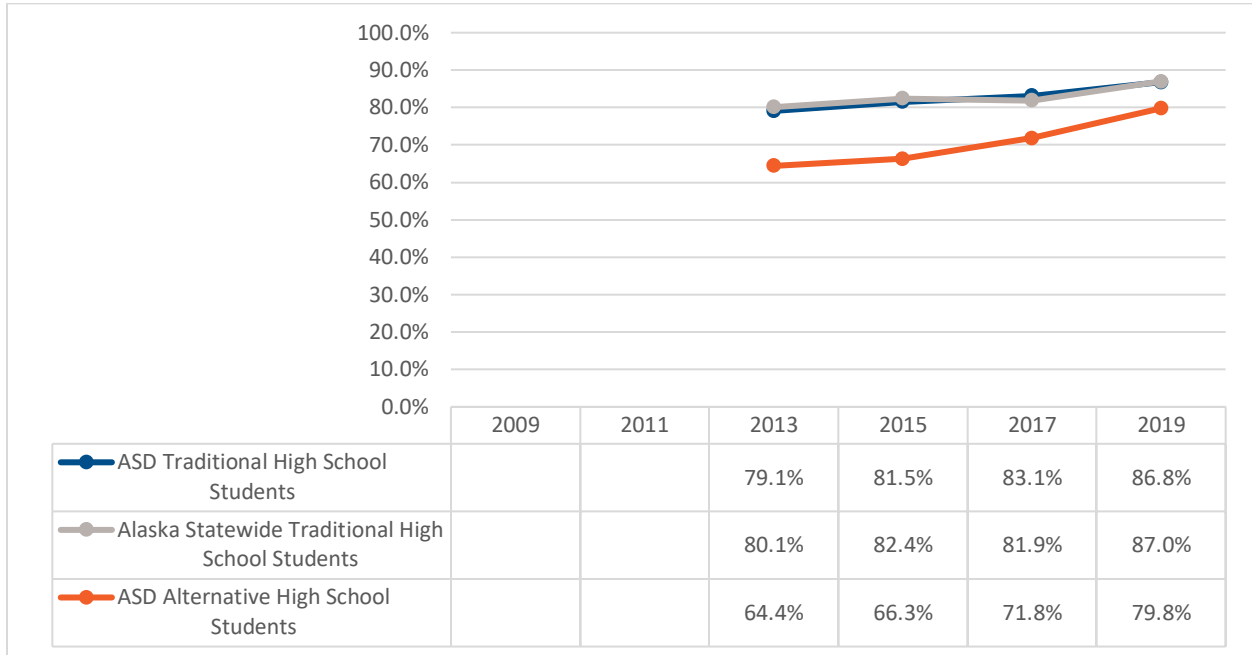
¹⁵ This question was asked for the first time on the 2017 YRBS.

¹⁶ This question was asked for the first time on the 2017 YRBS.

Parent Perceptions

Parents Feel Drinking Alcohol is Wrong¹⁷

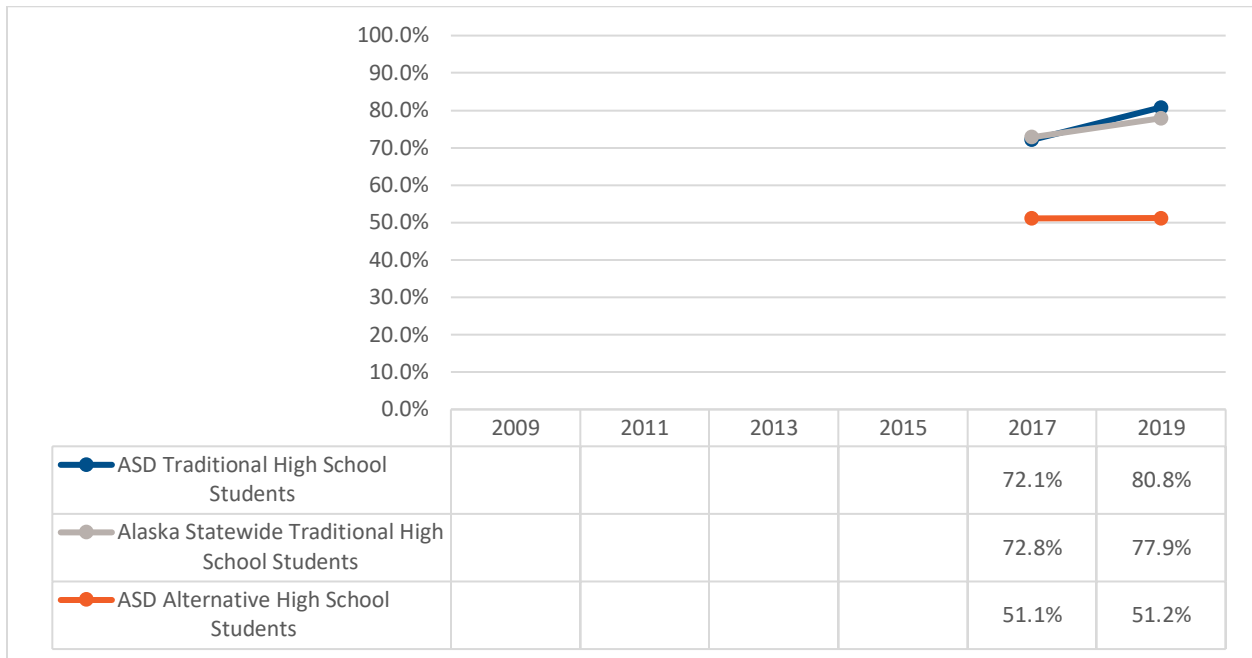
Figure 39: Percent of students whose parents feel it would be wrong or very wrong if they had one or two drinks of an alcoholic beverage nearly every day



¹⁷ This question was asked for the first time on the 2013 YRBS.

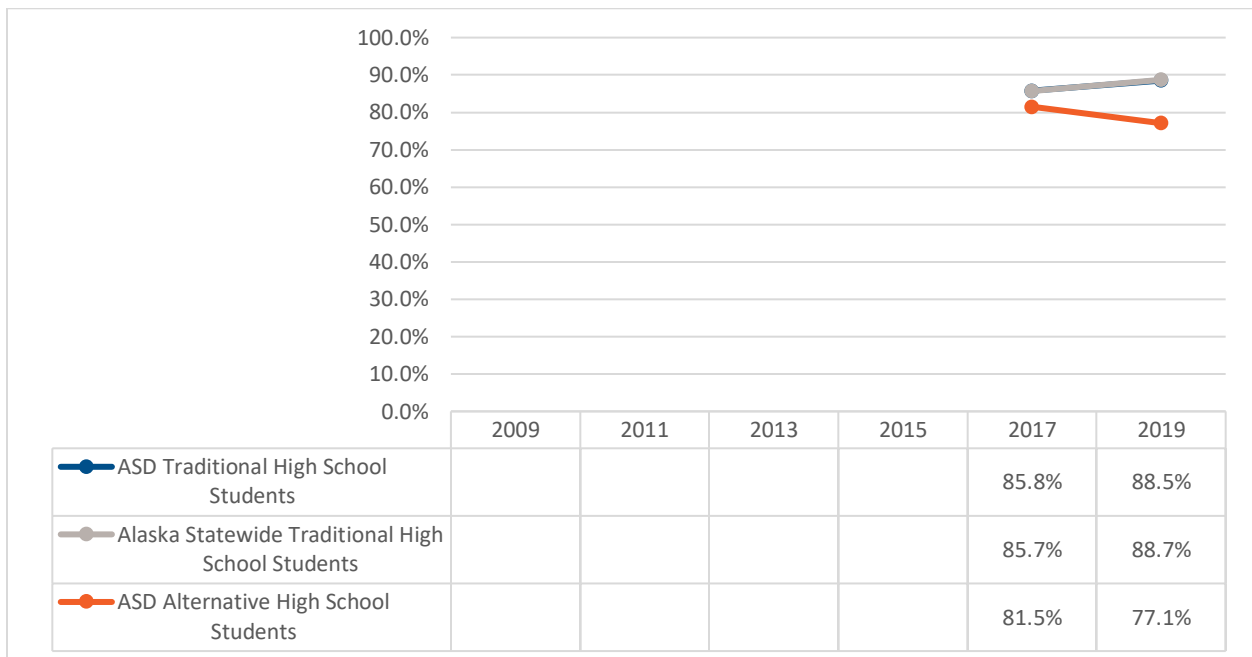
Parents Feel Marijuana Use is Wrong¹⁸

Figure 40: Percent of students whose parents feel it would be wrong or very wrong for them to use marijuana



Parents Feel Prescription Pain Medicine Misuse is Wrong¹⁹

Figure 41: Percent of students whose parents feel it would be wrong or very wrong for them to use prescription pain medicine without a doctor's prescription or differently than how a doctor told them to use it



¹⁸ This question was asked for the first time on the 2017 YRBS.

¹⁹ This question was asked for the first time on the 2017 YRBS.

Student Perceptions

Perceived Risk of Harm from Alcohol Use^{20,21}

Figure 42: Percent of students who think there is moderate or great risk of harming themselves if they have 5 or more drinks of an alcoholic beverage once or twice a week

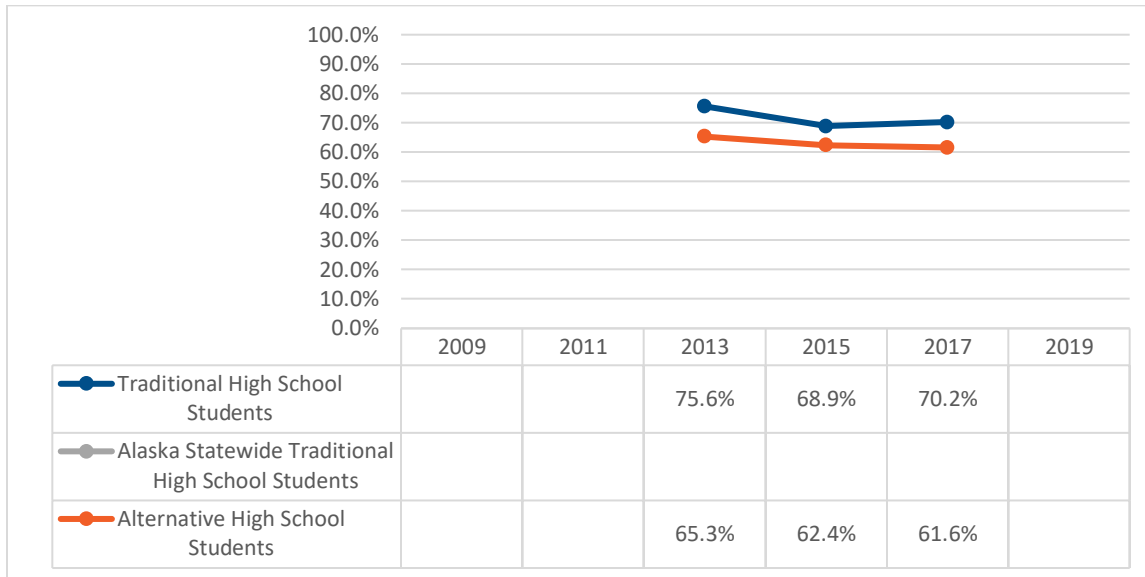
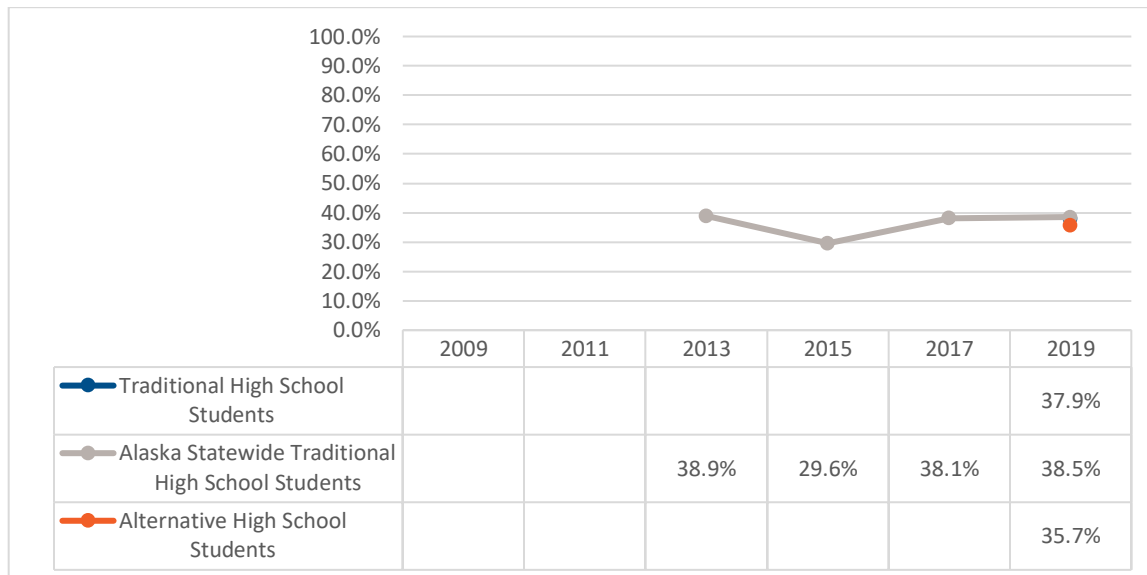


Figure 43: Percent of students who think there is great risk of harming themselves if they have 5 or more drinks of an alcoholic beverage once or twice a week



²⁰ This question was asked for the first time on the 2013 YRBS.

²¹ The percent of ASD students who think there is moderate or great risk of harming themselves was analyzed for the 2020 assessment. However, only data for ASD students who think there is great risk of harming themselves could be obtained for the 2019 YRBS due to the unavailability of the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services website and limitations in Alaska YRBS program staff capacity at the time of this report. For the same reason, data could not be obtained for only those ASD students who think there is a great risk of harming themselves for the years 2013-2017.

Perceived Risk of Harm from Marijuana Use^{22,23}

Figure 44: Percent of students who think there is moderate or great risk of harming themselves if they use marijuana once or twice a week

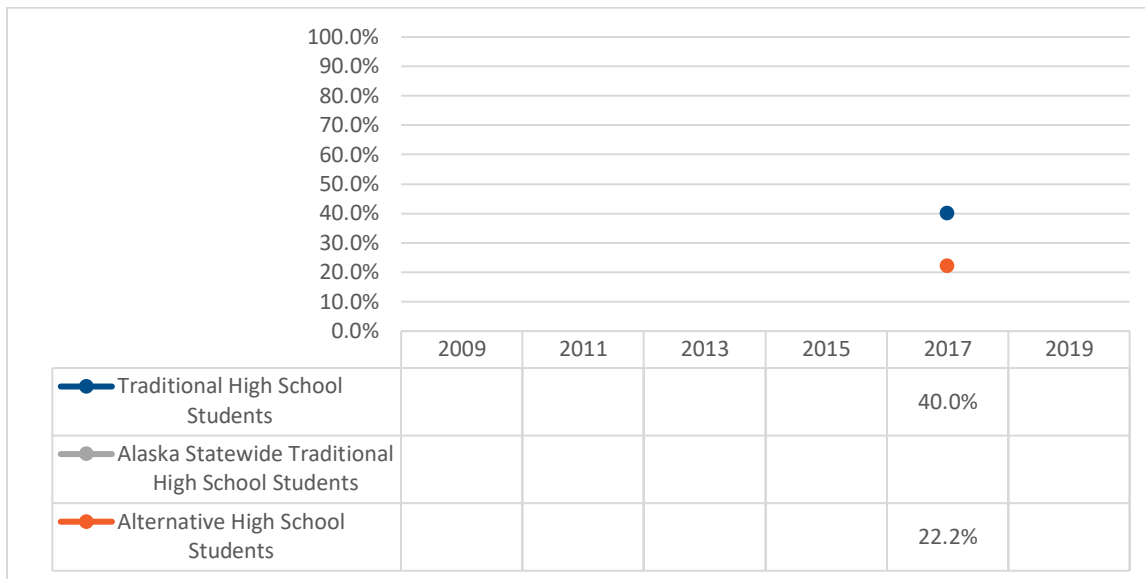
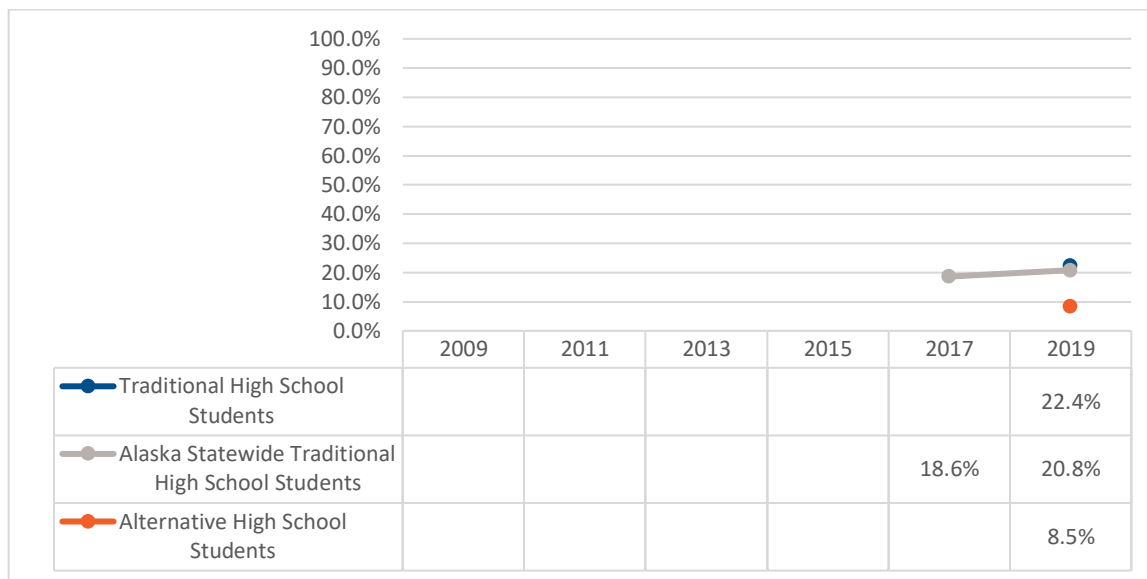


Figure 45: Percent of students who think there is great risk of harming themselves if they use marijuana once or twice a week



²² This question was asked for the first time on the 2017 YRBS.

²³ The percent of ASD students who think there is moderate or great risk of harming themselves was analyzed for the 2020 assessment. However, only data for ASD students who think there is great risk of harming themselves could be obtained for the 2019 YRBS due to the unavailability of the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services website and limitations in Alaska YRBS program staff capacity at the time of this report. For the same reason, data could not be obtained for only those ASD students who think there is a great risk of harming themselves for 2017.

Perceived Risk of Harm from Prescription Pain Medicine Misuse^{24,25}

Figure 46: Percent of students who think there is moderate or great risk of harming themselves if they use prescription pain medicine without a doctor's prescription or differently than how a doctor told them to use it

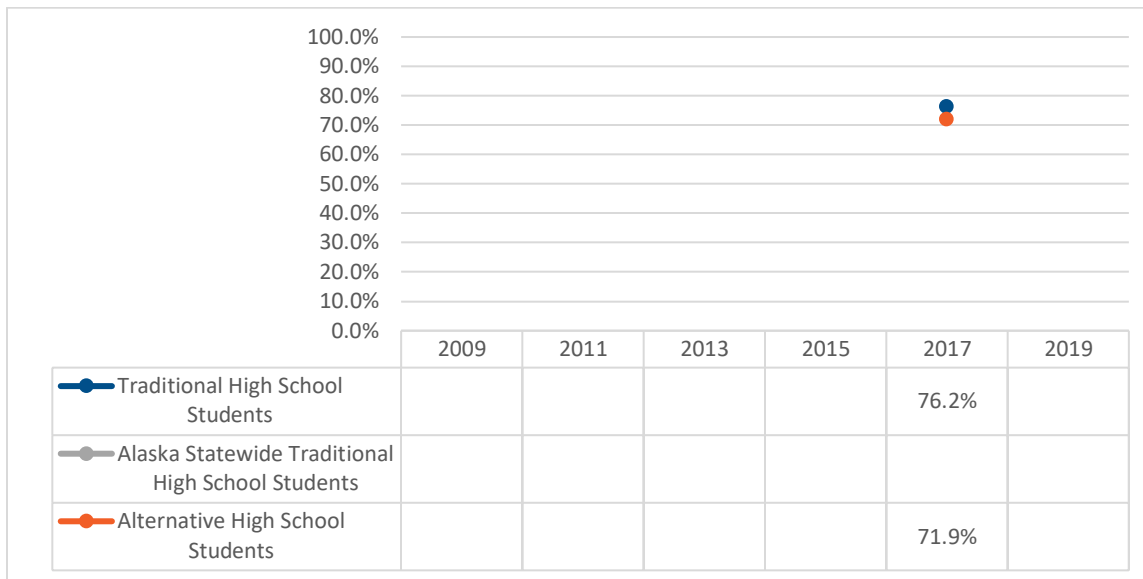
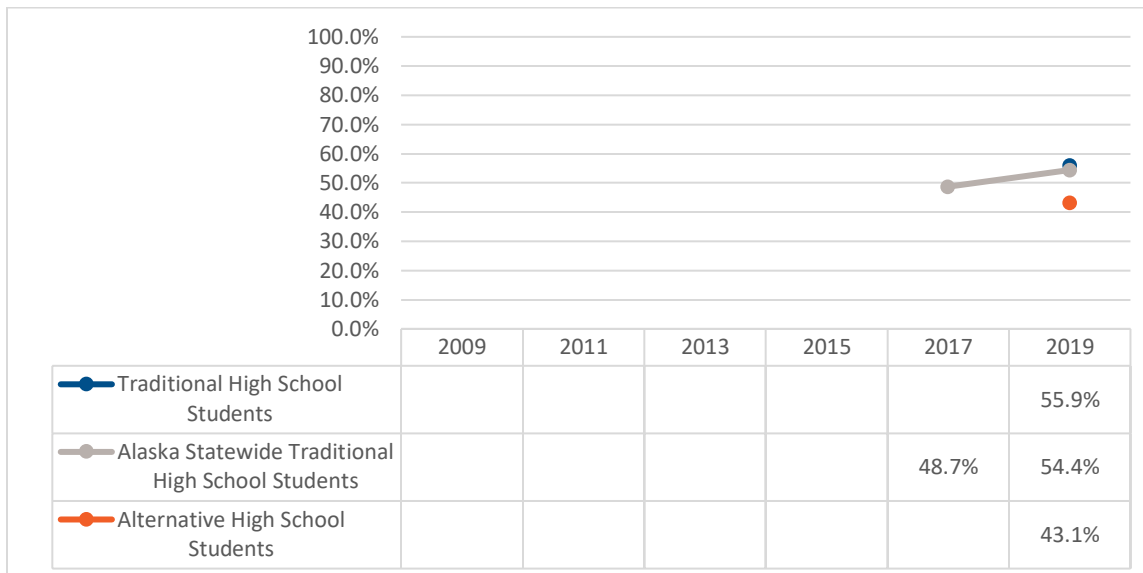


Figure 47: Percent of students who think there is great risk of harming themselves if they use prescription pain medicine without a doctor's prescription or differently than how a doctor told them to use it



²⁴ This question was asked for the first time on the 2017 YRBS.

²⁵ The percent of ASD students who think there is moderate or great risk of harming themselves was analyzed for the 2020 assessment. However, only data for ASD students who think there is **great** risk of harming themselves could be obtained for the 2019 YRBS due to the unavailability of the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services website and limitations in Alaska YRBS program staff capacity at the time of this report. For the same reason, data could not be obtained for only those ASD students who think there is a great risk of harming themselves for 2017.

Physical Activity

Physical Activity²⁶

Figure 48: Percent of students who were physically active for at least 60 minutes per day on 1 or more days in the past week

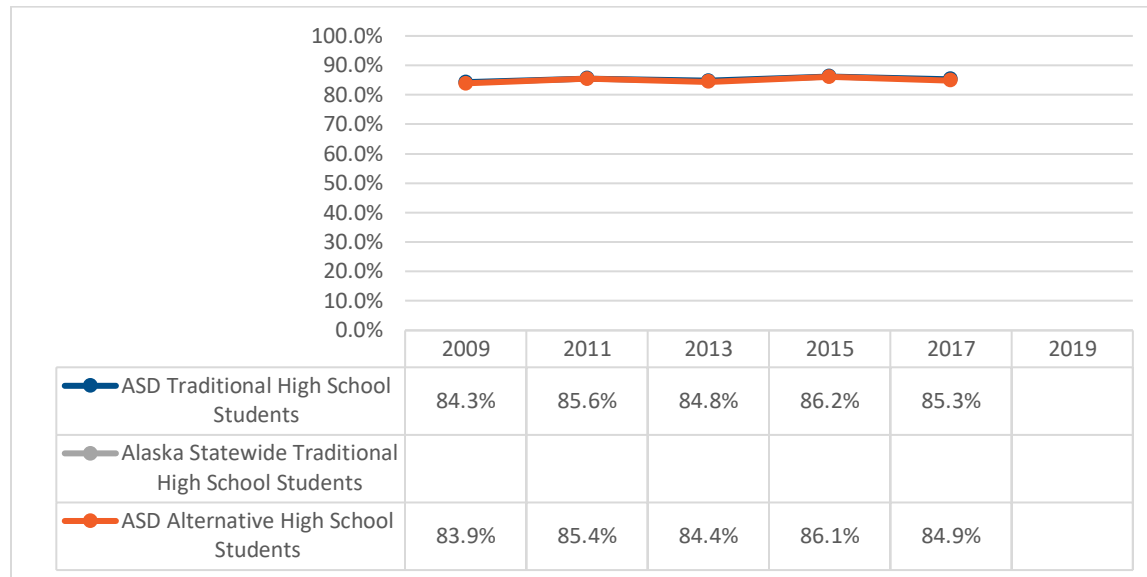
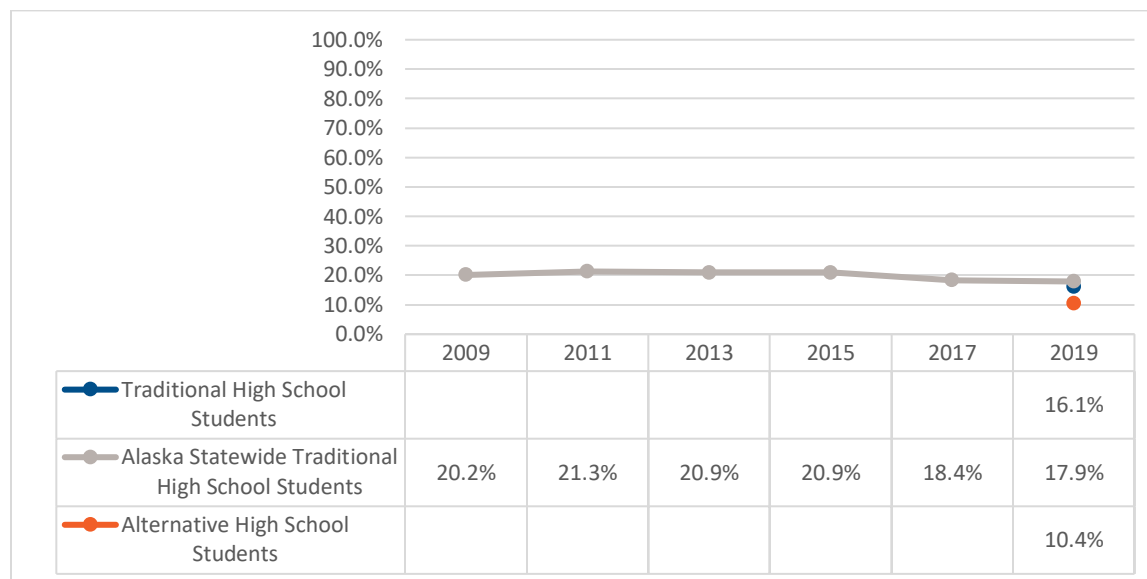


Figure 49: Percent of students who were physically active for at least 60 minutes per day on all 7 days in the past week

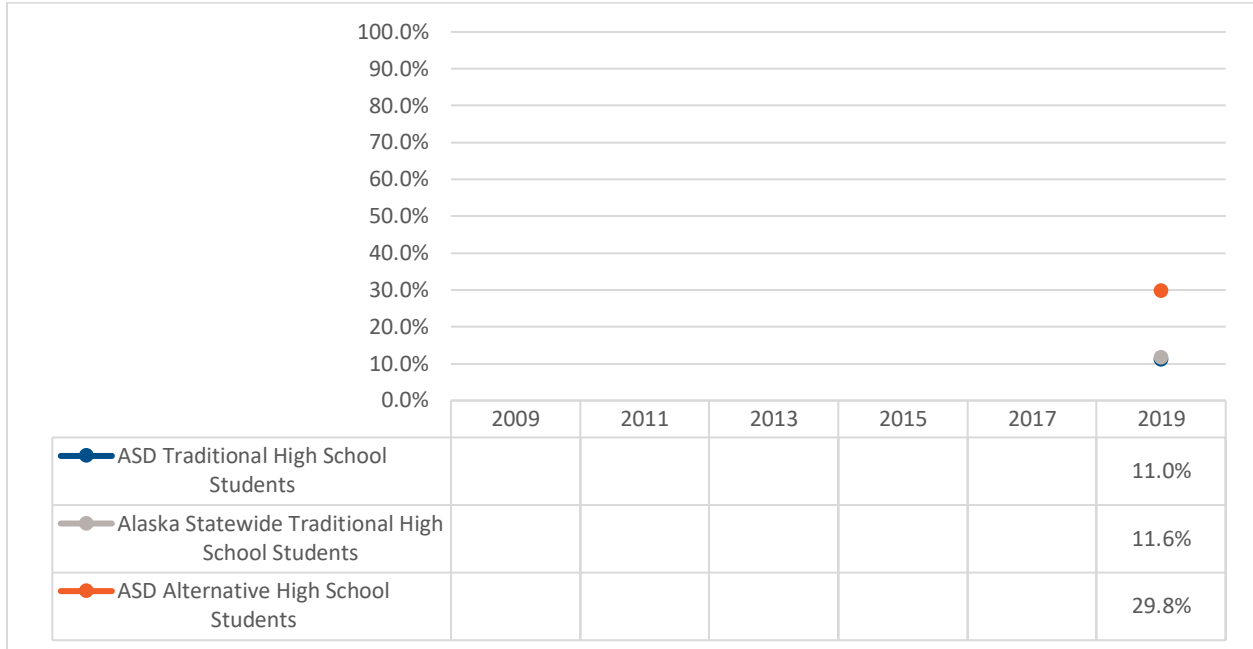


²⁶ The percent of ASD students who were physically active on 1 or more days in the past week was analyzed for the 2020 assessment. However, only data for ASD students who were physically active on all 7 days of the past week could be obtained for the 2019 YRBS due to the unavailability of the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services website and limitations in Alaska YRBS program staff capacity at the time of this report. For the same reason, data could not be obtained for only those ASD students who were physically active on all 7 days of the past week for the years 2009-2017.

Other Health Indicators

Experienced Homelessness²⁷

Figure 50: Percent of students who ever slept away from their parents' or guardians' home because they were kicked out, ran away, were abandoned, or felt unsafe in their home during the past 12 months



²⁷ This question was asked for the first time on the 2019 YRBS.