

# USA NOTES

University/Schools Alliance—*Partners in Prevention* [www.udel.edu/usa](http://www.udel.edu/usa)

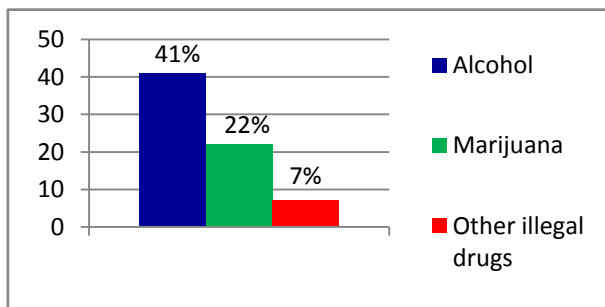
Volume 7, Issue 1

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## The Average Classroom, The Average School

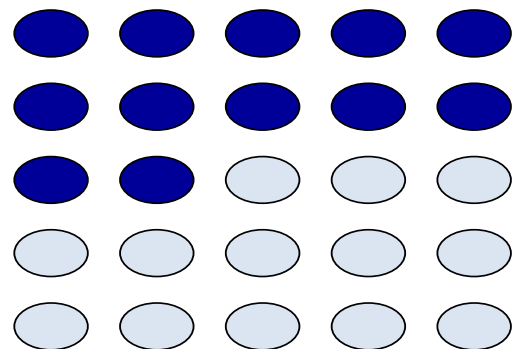
Most parents and school administrators think of teen risk-taking as “deviant.” Most teens, however, think of behaviors such as drinking alcohol or smoking marijuana as “normal.” Where does this disconnect come from? Statistics on teen risk behaviors are usually cited as percentages or shown in bar charts, comparing alcohol use to marijuana use or comparing statewide percentages to national ones. This makes them appear isolated. But what really impacts teens’ perception of “normal” is what they see around them—in their classroom and in their school.

If we look at the percentage of teens that currently drink alcohol and use drugs in Delaware, we can make the statement that more students use alcohol than drugs.



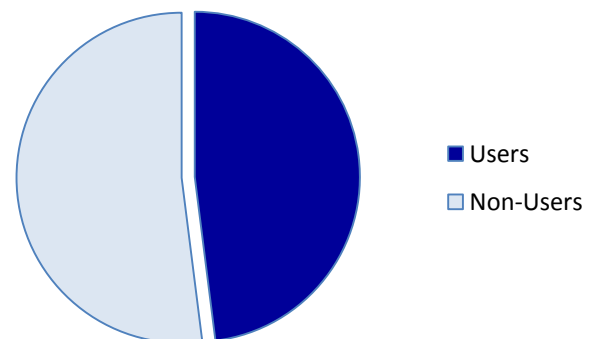
But these are frequently not separate behaviors—teens who use alcohol are far more likely to use other drugs than those who don’t drink alcohol, and those who use other illegal drugs almost invariably drink alcohol too. So a more appropriate chart might show those who “use” versus those who don’t.

If instead, we look at the percentage of students in an average classroom who “use,” we find that 48% have used alcohol and/or drugs in the past 30 days, which is how we define “current users.” So the average classroom your child sits in every day, whether or not your child “uses,” looks like this:



And the average school of 1000 students, would include 480 “users,” and look like this:

### Users vs. Non-Users in the Average School

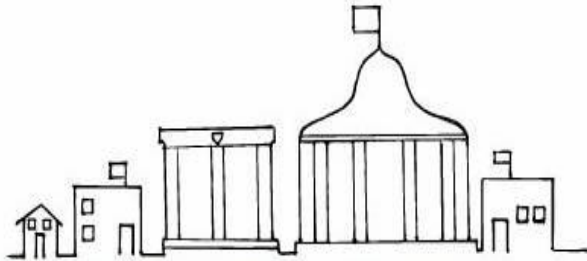


So, sitting in that classroom or that school, whether the individual child uses or not, it appears that using is normal.

University/Schools Alliance thanks the Delaware Drug and Alcohol Tracking Alliance (DDATA) for data analyses and other information. Information concerning substance use in Delaware for youth and adults is available at: [www.udel.edu.delawaredata](http://www.udel.edu.delawaredata).

University/Schools Alliance is a coalition of New Castle County public, private and Diocese high school and the University of Delaware working together to:

- *Reduce substance use among Delaware secondary school students*
- *Create and support networks of students, parents, school and community sharing resources, strategies and support to sustain youth substance use reductions*



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## UPCOMING EVENTS:

### Coalition Meetings:

November 11<sup>th</sup>, 3:30 @UD Coop. Extension Office

### Other Trainings and Events:

October 28—YELL/SADD Conference  
Dover Sheraton

University/Schools Alliance is a federally funded Drug-Free Community (Office of National Drug Control Policy and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention). Data from the 2008 Delaware School Survey, University of Delaware, Center for Drug and Alcohol Studies

