The Vermont Youth Project (VYP) is a statewide initiative supporting communities with creating a built environment that embraces positive youth development. As the state developer and manager of VYP, Vermont Afterschool helps participating communities with establishing local coalitions centered around positive youth development, creating localized plans to address risk and protective factors of youth, supporting youth voice and engagement, and building cross-sector partnerships and collaboration. Communities that participate in VYP commit to empowering youth and creating healthy accessible spaces for youth to be themselves, engage with peers, learn new skills, and connect with caring adults.

The Vermont Youth Project takes inspiration from Finland's efforts on youth voice as well as the Planet Youth data tool and the Icelandic Model of Prevention. However, ultimately this is a Vermont model designed to support the great efforts already happening in your community. Communities participating in this project have a support system that helps with amplifying, connecting, and refocusing the great programming and efforts already happening in your community as well as identifying new opportunities to provide healthy environments for youth.

Participating communities will each have specific and localized plans that start with access to real-time key data findings so they know what’s going on with their youth right now. With these findings, the communities implement local strategies with support and facilitation from VYP staff and consultants.
### 2021 Updates and Survey Findings

**FIVE COMMUNITIES PARTICIPATING**
Enosburg, Fair Haven, Richford, Rutland City, and Swanton started year two of a five-year pilot.

**KEY FINDINGS**
1. **Substance use**: Rates are relatively high, particularly with alcohol, cannabis, and vaping
2. **Parent and Family Engagement**: Parental collaboration and co-communication are relatively low
3. **Perceptions**: There is a culture of acceptance, particularly around alcohol and cannabis
4. **Third Space Activities**: Unorganized free time (e.g., late outside hours) and lack of participation in structured activities during out-of-school time is significant
5. **Covid-19**: Covid-19 has impacted youth mental health and wellbeing

**VYP YEAR 2**
In year 2, VYP communities are working on increasing parent collaboration and co-communication, continuing to build strong local coalitions focused on positive youth development, increasing access to third space activities, establishing youth councils that will lead a participatory budgeting process to fund $5000 of youth-led initiatives in each community, and increasing community engagement.

**WHAT’S NEXT?**
1. Local community coalitions have created 6-month action plans based on the year 2 local key findings.
2. Local youth councils are working through a supported participatory budgeting process to fund $5000 of youth-led initiatives in their community that support the local key data findings.
3. Workshops hosted by Vermont Afterschool on the VYP key data findings, youth council participatory budgeting process, youth mental health first aid, and training in youth resilience and adolescent development for sports coaches.

**INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE?**
Contact Robin Katrick at Vermont Afterschool
Youth and Community Health Coordinator / Vermont Youth Project State Lead
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**27%**
11th and 12th graders report staying outside the home past midnight once or more a week

**52%**
11th and 12th grade students report they are a little or a lot more lonely due to Covid-19

**70%**
Students reported they are spending a little or a lot more time online due to Covid-19

**27%**
Middle school students reported trying alcohol by the age of 13

**78%**
Middle school students report their parents know the parents of their friends

**46%**
Adolescents would like to continue to live in the same community

**89%**
High school students report it’s easy to receive caring and warmth from their parents

**15%**
Middle school students report hanging out at a friends house with no adult present

**31%**
11th and 12th graders have reported using marijuana

**45.5%**
High school students report that Covid-19 has impacted their mental health a little or a lot.

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The Vermont Youth Project is supported by Vermont Afterschool, a nonprofit dedicated to ensuring that children and youth in every Vermont community have access to high-quality out-of-school time programs.

[www.vermontafterschool.org/vyp](http://www.vermontafterschool.org/vyp)