

# Social Attitudes Toward Tobacco Use



## Results from the 2008 Florida Youth Tobacco Survey

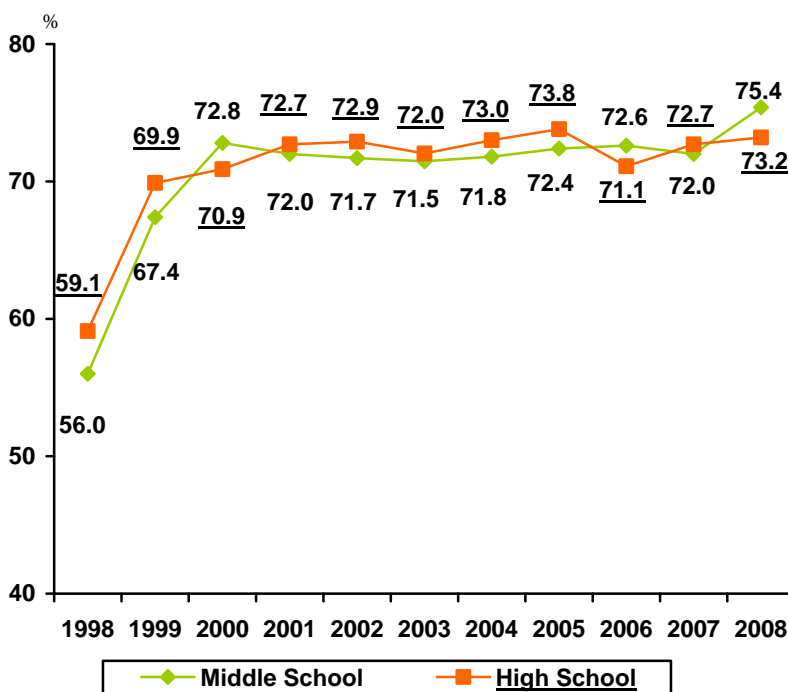
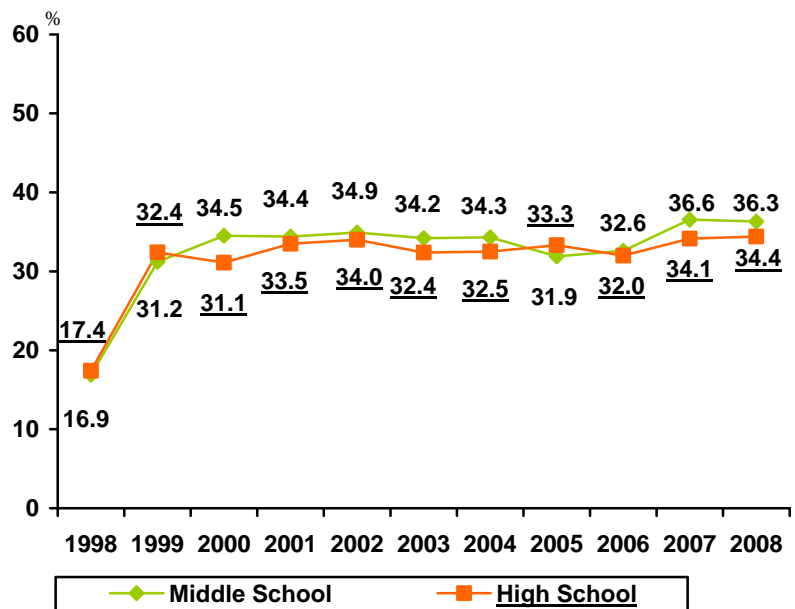
\*Fact Sheet 4\*

### Introduction

The Florida Youth Tobacco Survey (FYTS) was administered in the spring of 2008 to 38,510 middle school students and 40,283 high school students in 744 public schools throughout the state. The survey response rate for middle schools was 79%, and the survey response rate for high schools was 73%. The FYTS has been conducted annually since 1998. The data presented in this fact sheet are weighted to represent the entire population of public middle and high school students in Florida.

### Smoking Cigarettes and Making Friends

Among middle and high school students, the percentage who **definitely did not think** that young people who smoke cigarettes have more friends increased significantly from 1998 to 1999. From 1999 to 2008, the trend of this belief has remained relatively flat. In 2008, middle school students had a lower prevalence of believing that cigarette smokers have more friends than high school students.

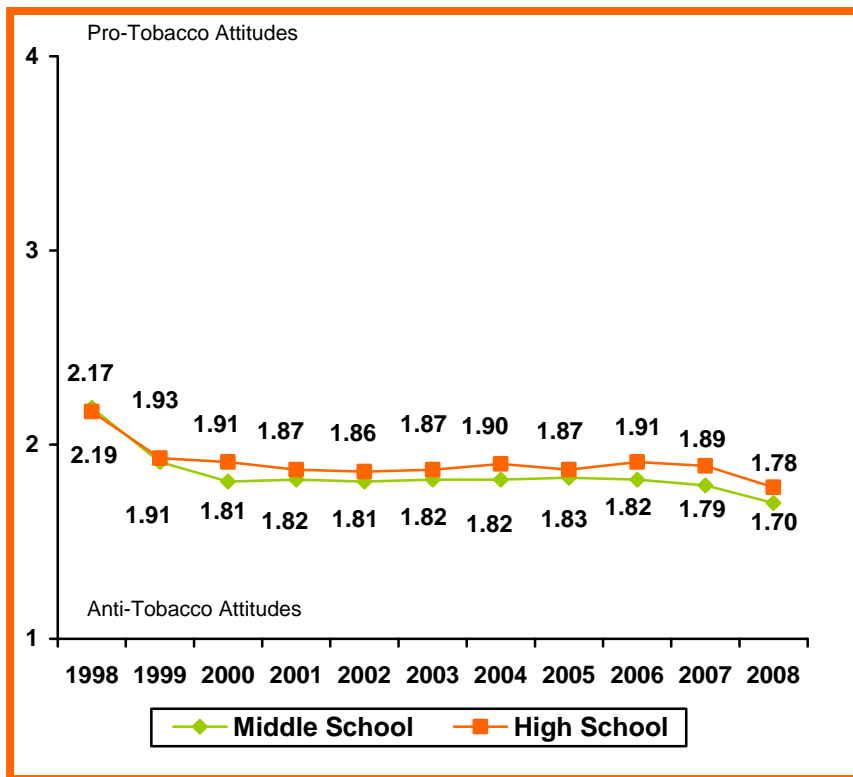
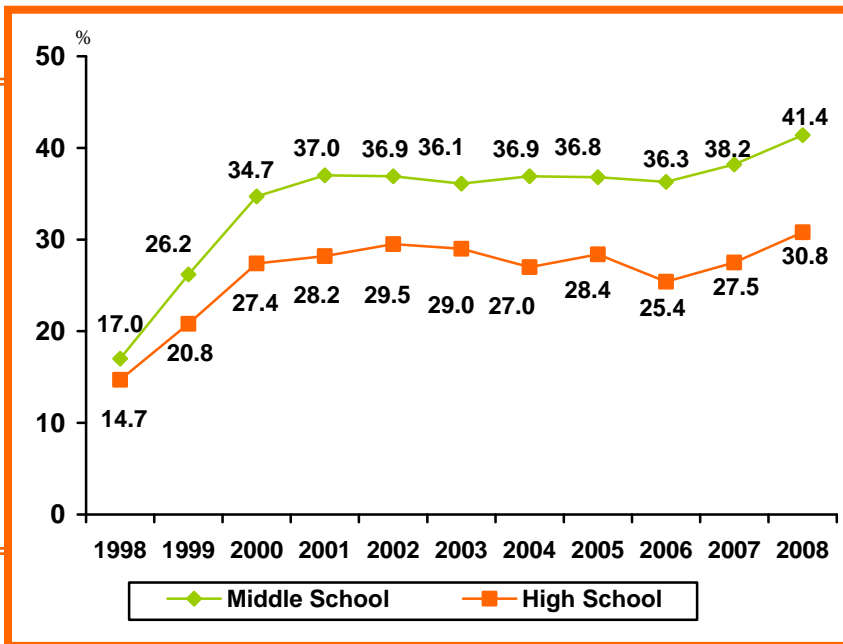


### Smoking Cigarettes and Cool or Fit In

From 1998 to 2008, the percentage of Florida students who **definitely did not think** that smoking cigarettes makes young people look "cool" or "fit in" increased by 34.6% among middle school students and by 23.9% among high school students. Middle school students had a lower prevalence of believing that smoking cigarettes helps young people look cool or fit in.

### Smoking and Social Activities

From 1998 to 2008, the percentage of Florida students who **definitely did not think** that smoking cigarettes helps people feel more comfortable in social activities increased by 143.5% among middle school students and by 109.5% among high school students. Middle school students have consistently had a lower prevalence of believing that smoking helps people feel more comfortable in social situations than high school students.



### Mean Scores of Social Attitudes

Mean score is calculated using responses to the three social attitude-related questions. Each response was scored on a four-point scale, and then the three values were averaged. The scores range from 1 to 4, with higher scores indicating pro-tobacco attitudes.

Among both middle and high school students, the social attitudes toward tobacco changed dramatically from pro-tobacco to anti-tobacco during 1998 to 2000, leveled out from 2000 to 2007, but showed signs of significant decrease from 2007 to 2008. This signifies an overall shift towards more anti-tobacco attitudes among Florida youth.

For more information about the FYTS, please contact the Chronic Disease Epidemiology and Surveillance Section, at (850) 245-4401, or by e-mail at [ChronicDisease@doh.state.fl.us](mailto:ChronicDisease@doh.state.fl.us). You can also visit our website at <http://www.FloridaChronicDisease.org>.

