

In 2015, VOX ATL created our own Atlanta Teen Survey to fill an information gap. This year's survey answered these important questions from teens' perspectives:

- What do teens need?
- Where are teens spending time after school?
- How do teens like to communicate?
- Where do teens feel valued?
- How do teens experience mental health resources?

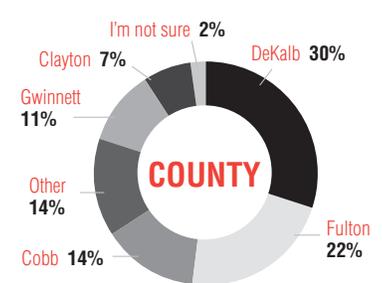
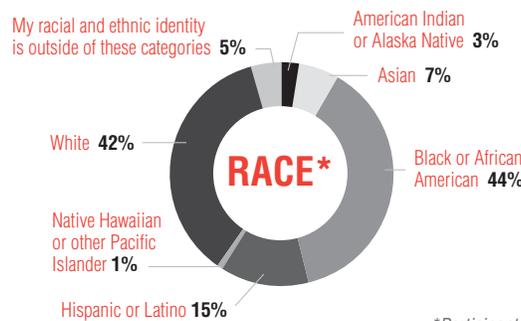
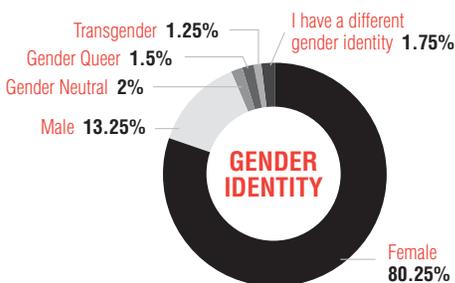
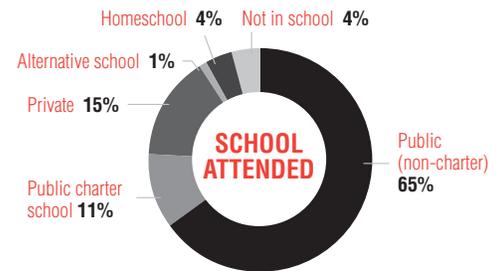
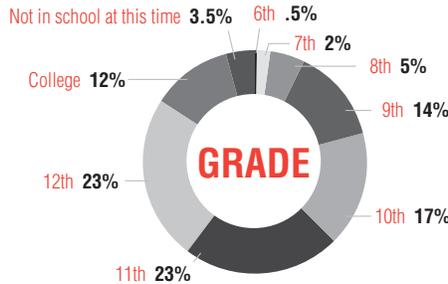
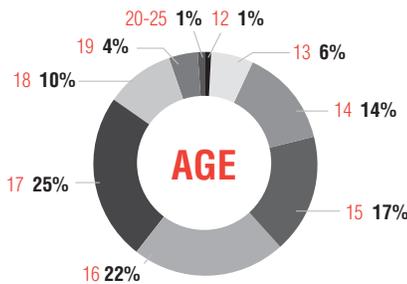
METHODOLOGY

For our sixth annual Atlanta Teen Survey, we designed and administered a 10-minute survey through SurveyMonkey, and teens could enter their email address at the end to be entered into multiple drawings to win a gift card. The survey was designed by VOX ATL staff with input from teen leaders.

VOX ATL promoted the survey to community partners such as schools and youth-serving organizations, including the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, which supports the mental health research in this survey. We also published the survey link and teens' promotional graphics via our social media channels, including advertising on Facebook and Instagram. And we encouraged members of our after-school and summer programs to take the survey and share it with their peers.

WHO TOOK THE SURVEY?

This survey had 911 participants and 597 complete responses. Respondents ranged in age from 12-25 years old, with an average age of 17. The primary focus of our survey was metro Atlanta, with 14% of respondents located outside Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Fulton and Gwinnett. The majority of respondents identified as female (80%) and Black or African-American (44%) or white (42%). The vast majority are in school (96%), and most of those youth (65%) attend a non-charter public school.



*Participants could choose more than one category for this question.

“Lights On Afterschool was my first facilitation event with VOX as I had joined over quarantine. I had no idea what the ATS was before the event, but as we prepared for the event I read through the slides of data to create a Kahoot for the guests. Reading through it was honestly shocking to me because I had not imagined that over 900 teens had taken the survey. Seeing the survey results as they related to mental health and got more personal with each question created a mosaic in my mind of the many teens in [this region] and how we are all connected and separated through the various questions. I wanted to relay this experience to the audience at Lights On Afterschool and focused on recreating the narrative I found hidden within the data. **The data suggested where teens needed support** and I made sure to vocalize everything teens would benefit from through the survey. This made me feel like I was empowering teens across Atlanta and in a way that would reach people who needed to hear it the most: adults. I really enjoyed preparing for this and leading the discussion on the survey through the Kahoot and how my first experience facilitating with VOX turned out!”

— OIESHEE, 16 YEARS OLD, CHAMBLEE CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL

TEENS AND MENTAL HEALTH

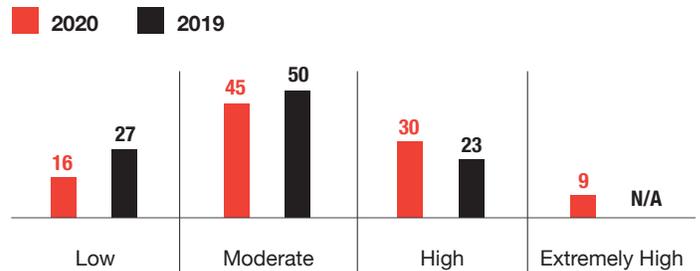
STRESS

653 PEOPLE ANSWERED THE QUESTION ABOUT STRESS LEVELS.

Stress levels for teens are greater this year than last year.



WHAT IS YOUR AVERAGE DAILY LEVEL OF STRESS?



CAUSES OF STRESS

Most (74%) said **school** is the biggest cause of their stress.

Preparing for life after high school and **body issues** were tied at 51% for the next biggest stressors.

Family challenges (50%) followed closely.



WHAT CAUSES YOU THE MOST STRESS (choose your top 3)

School	74%
Your body/appearance	52%
Preparing for life after high school	51%
Family challenges	50%
Mental health disorders	34%
Trying to fit in socially	33%
Past traumatic experiences	31%
Financial stress	21%
Dating	20%
Sports/extracurricular activities	11%
Peer pressure	10%
Other	5%

COPING WITH STRESS

653 RESPONDENTS NAMED SOMETHING THAT HELPS ALLEVIATE STRESS.

Making something creative (56%), talking it out with peers (47%), going for a walk (37%).

Only 20% said "Seeking support from parent/guardian or other trusted adult."

HOW DO YOU COPE WITH STRESS

Making something creative	56%
Talking it out with peers	47%
Going for a walk	37%
Exercise	35%
Writing it out	33%
Reading	31%
Getting involved in an extracurricular activity	27%
Mindfulness or meditation	24%
Seeking support from your parent/guardian or other trusted adult	20%
Other	18%

"If teens just knew more about the resources they are open to, and if more adults started to care (especially the parents) our mental health wouldn't be on such a down low. Parents and guardians need to step up and realize that mental health is the EPITOME of everything."

STIGMA

67% said teens they know talk openly about mental health



SUICIDE

The percentage of youth who have had suicidal thoughts (61%) and know someone who have had suicidal thoughts (87%) increased significantly from last year. (2019 responses were 35% and 70% respectively.)



GETTING HELP & ACCESS TO CARE

643 YOUTH ANSWERED THIS QUESTION

77% said they know where/how to find mental health care if they need it*

70% said they do not feel ok asking for help.

298 youth said they do not know what their school does to support students' mental health.

Other barriers to getting care include:

- Cost (65%)
- Don't know where to go* (44%)
- Parent/Guardian said "no" to care** (43%)
- Transportation (31%)
- Don't like the therapist (30%)
- Lost care during COVID (19%)

* While 77% of respondents to this question said they know where to find help if they need it, 44% said not knowing where to go is a barrier to getting help.

** Many respondents commented about not feeling able to talk with parents/guardians about mental health.

Survey respondents speak out about mental health



"People around me don't have access to the help they need because of their family and because of the cost."

"The amount of stress is beyond me...I am trying to keep my mental health in balance, but I can already see my old-school habits coming back. I am breaking out and gaining weight, which will in turn make my mental a whole lot harder to cope with."

"Many teens feel comfortable talking to each other, and while that is great, us teens haven't been prepared to handle such situations. A lot of us maybe aren't empathetic or don't know what to do, and it can make a situation worse."

"Youth mental health and wellness is important because of what we are exposed to. For instance Covid-19 and Racism-20 has a huge toll on the youth because of the limits due to the virus and being scared to have a voice because of the color of our skin."

"I'm scared. I had to quit my sport because I realized that I was doing too much. Students are really stressed because they have so many other things going on at home."



Thanks to the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities for supporting this annual survey and seeking youth voices to reduce stigma and strengthen Georgia's quality system of care.

WHAT TOPICS MATTER TO TEENS?

Teens were asked to share what topics are the most important to them today. The top five were:

- 86%** Discrimination (-isms - racism, sexism, ageism, bullying, etc.)
- 72%** Arts & culture
- 70%** Mental health
- 65%** Teens and the law (know your rights, interaction with law enforcement)
- 62%** Life after high school (college & career)

WHERE DO TEENS FEEL VALUED?

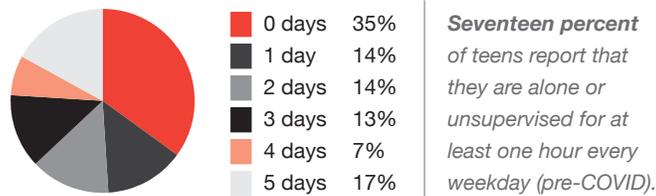
When asked where teens felt valued, the most common answer was with their peers (**80%**). Less than one-third said they feel valued in an afterschool program* (**26%**). Very few said they feel valued in their faith-based organizations (**17%**). About **16%** said they do not feel valued at all.

* This could be because most are not in an afterschool program, as national data shows most teens are not enrolled in an afterschool program.

TEENS AFTER SCHOOL

Out-of-school time may have looked very different this year, but teens' need for constructive things to do and positive ways to connect was more important than ever in 2020. 773 youth answered these questions related to what they do, and want to do, outside of school.

How many days per week (pre-COVID) were you home alone / somewhere unsupervised?



Teens shared what they did after school, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic:

	Often	Sometimes	Never
I go home	74%	24%	2%
I go to a friend's house	12%	46%	42%
I go to my job, internship or work-study program	19%	21%	60%
I stay at my school for after-school activities, including sports	40.5%	34.5%	25%
I hang out outdoors (alone or with friends)	19%	55%	26%
I go to an after-school program that is not at my school	12%	17%	71%

What influences how youth spend time outside of school?

Teens indicated that the following had lots or some influence on their decision:

- 94%** Opportunities that interest me
- 90%** Opportunities that might influence my future
- 87%** Affordability/price
- 87%** My parents/guardians
- 86%** Location
- 85%** Transportation
- 82%** School Requirements

Teens were also asked what they would like to do after school, if they could.

The top four responses were to hang out in a relaxing space just for teens (**66%**), work a part-time job (**64%**), have career-related experiences, like an internship or job shadowing (**53%**), and volunteer/community service (**48%**).

NEWS & COMMUNICATIONS

Teens shared that they get their news from social media (**86%**), digital news websites (**63%**), and discussions with parents / family (**54%**).



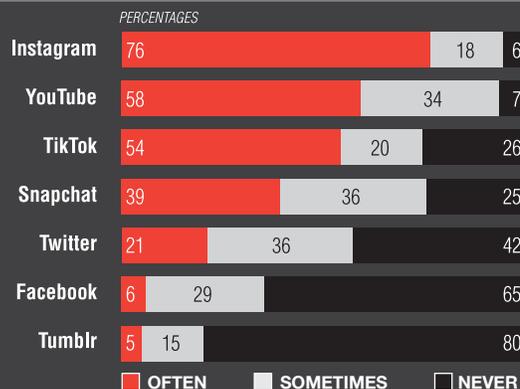
TEENS FEEL MODERATELY INFORMED ON CURRENT ISSUES

I try my best to stay informed but it could be better	44%
I make it a priority to stay up to date on current issues	23%
I know the basics of what is going on	18%
I keep up with the issues that interest me	13%
I don't keep up with current issues or it does not interest me	2%

Technology and media use

The most common way that teens report communicating with their peers is by texting (**53%**). No other form of communication came close, with the next answer, social media DMs, at **30%**.

THE TOP THREE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS ARE INSTAGRAM, YOUTUBE AND TIKTOK.



VOXATL



Join us online to share your art, share your story:

FACEBOOK.com/voxxox
 TWITTER/INSTAGRAM: @VOXROXATL
 YOUTUBE: Youtube.com/VOXATL
 www.voxatl.org