

# Making the Connection: Tobacco Product Use and Academic Grades

Data from the 2015 National Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) show that students with higher academic grades are less likely to use tobacco products, including electronic vapor products, cigarettes, cigars, and smokeless tobacco. It is important to remember that these associations do not prove causation; there are many factors that can influence academic grades. School health professionals, school officials, and other decision makers can use this information to develop and reinforce policies, practices, and programs to prevent all kinds of tobacco product use among youth.

## Key findings

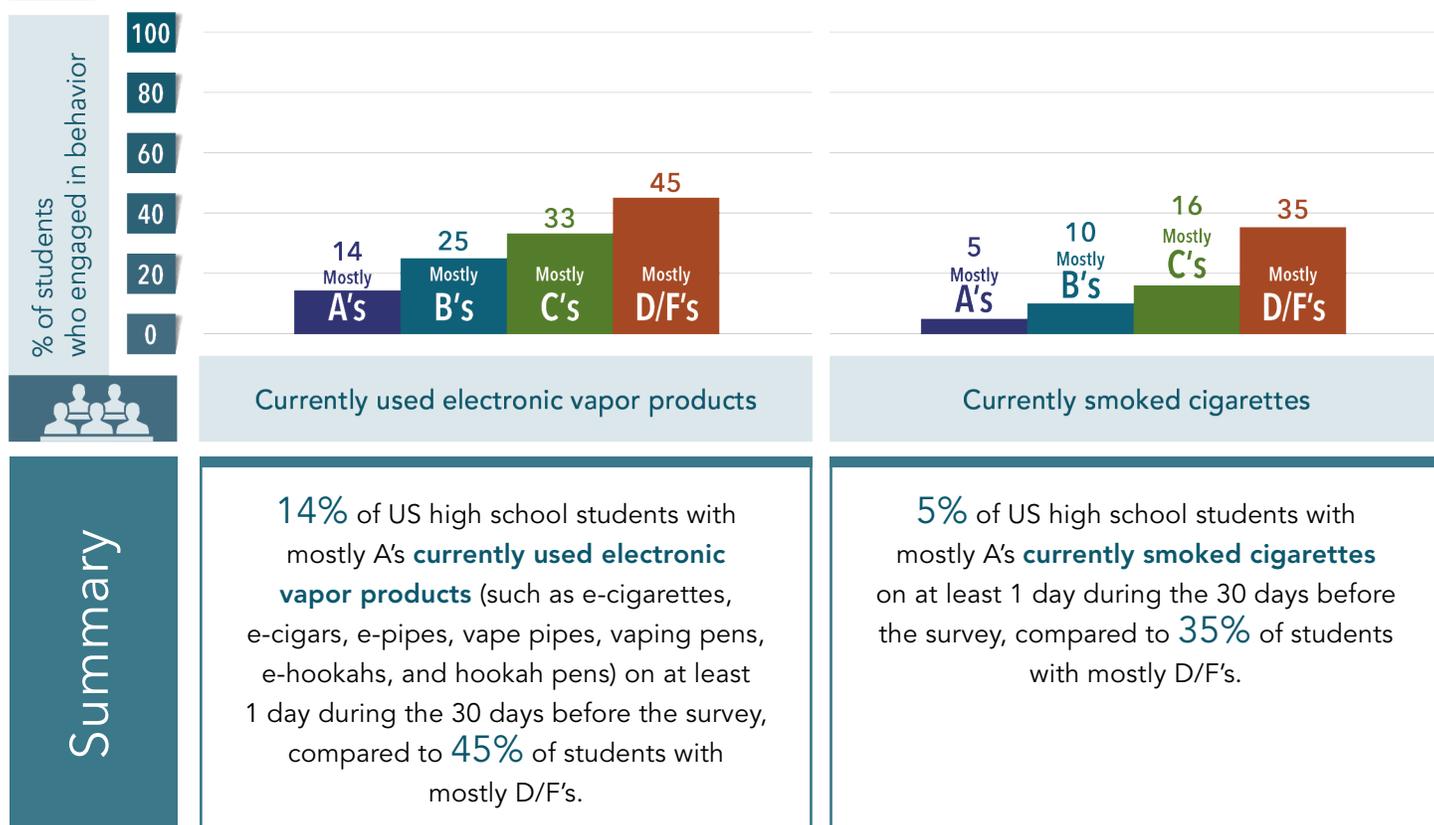
Compared to students with lower grades, **students with higher grades are**

**less likely to currently:**

- Use electronic vapor products.
- Smoke cigarettes.
- Smoke cigars.
- Use smokeless tobacco.

FIGURE 1A

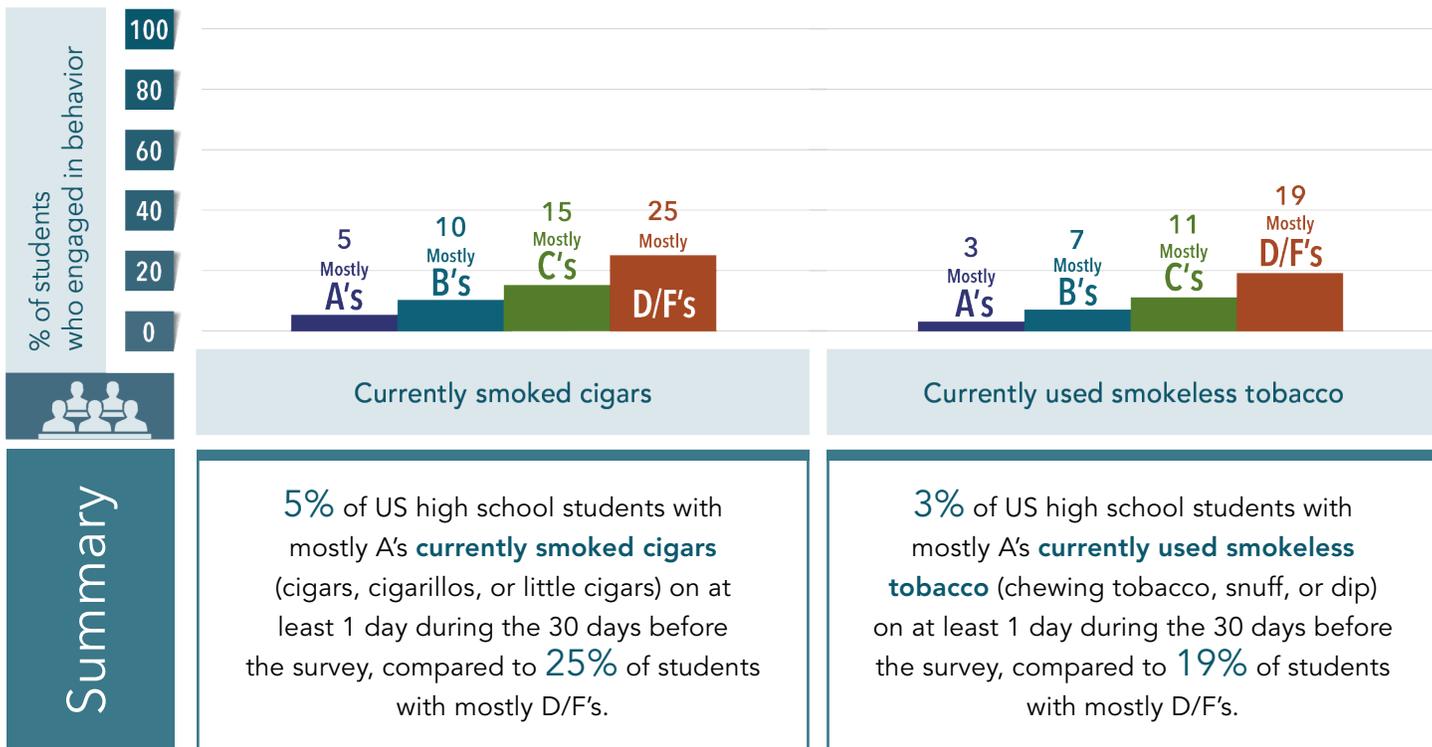
**Tobacco Product Use Behaviors, by type of academic grades earned**  
- United States, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2015



\*Figure 1<sup>A</sup> and Figure 1<sup>B</sup> illustrate the percentage of students who engaged in each risk behavior, by type of grades mostly earned in school (mostly A's, B's, C's, D's/F's) (row proportions). The percentage of students who did not engage in each risk behavior are not shown. However, the percentages of students who did and did not engage in each risk behavior, by type of grades mostly earned in school, sum to 100%. Logistic regression analyses (not shown) controlling for sex, race/ethnicity, and grade in school confirmed a significant association between tobacco product use behaviors and academic grades. You can also view data from other [2015 YRBS tobacco product use variables](#).

**FIGURE 1B**

**Tobacco Product Use Behaviors, by type of academic grades earned**  
- United States, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2015



**Summary**

5% of US high school students with mostly A's **currently smoked cigars** (cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars) on at least 1 day during the 30 days before the survey, compared to **25%** of students with mostly D/F's.

3% of US high school students with mostly A's **currently used smokeless tobacco** (chewing tobacco, snuff, or dip) on at least 1 day during the 30 days before the survey, compared to **19%** of students with mostly D/F's.

**Conclusions**

The results from the YRBS provide evidence of a significant association between academic grades and various kinds of tobacco product use. However, it is important to remember that there are many factors that can influence academic grades and tobacco product use.

There is a close relationship between health and education. By working together, education and health agencies, parents, and communities can ensure that students are healthy and ready to learn in school.

**About the Data**

The National YRBS monitors priority health-risk behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death, disability, and social problems among youth and adults in the United States. It is conducted every 2 years during the spring and provides data representative of 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students in public and private schools throughout the nation. In 2015, students completing the YRBS were asked, "During the past 12 months, how would you describe your grades in school?" and given seven response options (Mostly A's, Mostly B's, Mostly C's, Mostly D's, Mostly F's, None of these grades, Not sure). In 2015, 32% of students received mostly A's, 38% received mostly B's, 20% received mostly C's, 6% received mostly D's or F's, and 4% reported receiving none of these grades or not sure.

For more information, visit the [CDC's Healthy Schools website](#), or call 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636).



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