

Minnesota Student Survey Report 2025 Youth Gambling Data

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Overview and Background

In order to monitor youth gambling in the state of Minnesota, this research team prepares a report for Minnesota Alliance on Problem Gambling every three years as part of a contract to analyze and report data and provide updates on the Minnesota Student Survey (MSS). There had been a few significant changes in the assessment of gambling in the survey that did not involve this team, rather the MSS staff and committee made a change that significantly impacted the ability to compare this year's rates of gambling to past years.

As a direct result of unexpected changes in the assessment (due to decisions of the MSS survey team), we are not able to estimate statewide rates of gambling in the sample as defined in previous years and as highlighted in the report, skip rule screening questions were included that use behaviors that are not strictly defined as gambling (intersection of gaming and possibly gambling like behaviors).

New Item that Invokes Skip Rule Logic added to the 2025 Minnesota Student Survey: Impact on Survey Rates, Results and Interpretation

This year the MSS staff added/changed screening items to the 2025 assessment that involved a screening item using a skip rule which determines whether a participant receives the gambling items that come thereafter. This item includes behaviors that are not traditionally defined as gambling (online game purchases) alongside select examples traditionally considered gambling (lottery, scratch offs) but maintains the root stem as gambled or made bets (which is defined as gambling). This skip rule asks the question: "During the last 12 months, how often have you gambled, made bets, bought lottery tickets or scratch offs, or made purchases in online games?"

Any student who answered more than "not at all" was then given later items in the gambling survey. Unfortunately, also included in the list of possible forms of betting or gambling defined in the stem of the question are items that align with gaming behaviors that are not likely gambling (purchases in online games). While gambling can occur in

online gaming environments, there are specific types of gambling behaviors that are defined as gambling within gaming and the question is too vague and inclusive to catch those types of gambling or gambling like activities in gaming environments (such as skins betting, loot boxes, wagering on video gaming outcomes, etc.). We therefore had to create another level of screening to make sure the group we included in this report were those students who participated in forms of gambling we had previously defined in other reports.

These new 2025 skip rules impacted the ability to properly estimate overall state rates of past gambling in the sample (traditionally defined as wagering money in various contexts and with established assessment tools considered valid in our field). To address these issues and derive a sample of gamblers in the study that endorsed forms of gambling consistent with the literature on measurement (as defined in the 2022 MSS data sample), we used previously included valid tools to screen the percentage of those who answered the screening item in the positive who also endorsed the traditional forms of gambling we have assessed in previous surveys (2022 and earlier). We report the percent of students in the subsample who passed the new skip rule AND who endorsed those traditional forms of gambling among those who said yes to this imperfect skip rule question. In addition, some students did not receive the gambling item that would have allowed an estimate of gambling in the population that approximated other years. In sum, a skip rule was implemented that affected the numbers of students who received questions about their gambling (yes or no), making it difficult to provide accurate comparable estimates of gambling (yes or no) in the sample using 2025 data. In the appendix, we provide a brief summary of the survey changes that impacted this assessment.

The team reviewing the data determined that estimates of frequent and problem gambling were not affected by this change in assessment in the same ways as the yes/no gambling behaviors in the sample. Therefore, we report frequent and problem gambling estimates in the 2025 sample

Methodology

Participants

As a way to describe the group of students who self-identified as gamblers engaging in traditional forms of gambling after saying yes to the new skip rule.

The MSS staff who program the computer administration of the survey inserted a skip question before the gambling questions. They changed this without our knowledge, consent, consultation or input and we believe it reduced the number of students who completed the gambling questions. It also made direct comparisons from 2022 rates difficult or impossible to estimate. Therefore, we cannot accurately report some rates and

proportions and we cannot compare results from this administration to past administrations of the MSS. We believe the skip rule has the effect of eliminating students who gamble infrequently *more* than those who gambling frequently, so we feel comfortable reporting on rates of frequent gambling and rates of problem gambling.

Skip Rule Analysis and the Impact on the MSS Assessment of Gambling (2025)

As a result of these changes, substantially fewer youth received the gambling assessment due to the skip rule changes.

To compare the 2022 assessment to the 2025 assessment, we looked at the number of students shown the gambling items in the sample in 2022 and 2025

- 2022: N= 83545 (are shown gambling items) -> 27152.125 (some gambling)
- 2025: N = 72992 -> skip rule -> 15375 (are shown gambling items) -> 11382 (some gambling)

In sum, substantially fewer students in the sample were shown the gambling questions, which is likely how gambling was defined parenthetically in the skip rule. Of those students shown the questions, and answering positive to the gambling items (informal sports/games, formal sports/games,

A concern our team had was that the skip rule is not an equal opportunity excluder, meaning that the remaining 15373 might have a bias towards types of gambling that were clearly included in the skip rule or seem clearly like gambling to teens. We might acknowledge this possibility and still provide types of gambling among self-identified gamblers.

Results

Demographics of the overall sample are displayed in Table 1.

The demographics of the subsample of participants that endorsed gambling on the traditional types of gambling included in our analysis can be found in Table 1a.

Who are “self-identified gamblers in the MSS?”

- **Participants who were shown and answered the question more often than “not at all” AND endorsed any of the following traditional forms of gambling.**
 - “During the last twelve months, how often have you made bets, bought lottery tickets or scratch offs, or made purchases in online games?”

- AND yes to gambling/betting in the last twelve months on the following types of games”
 - Formal or informal sports/games
 - Lottery
 - Casino
 - Online

Proportion of any gambling by type among self- identified gamblers.

Note: the rates shared here are not overall rates of gambling types in the sample, rather the percent of self-identified gamblers per a screen after the new skip rule was added. They are not intended to reflect a prevalence or state wide level rate.

Table 2. Any Gambling By Type Among Self-Identified Gamblers

- Among self-identified gamblers in the sample (11,382, Female N0 2648, Male N= 8734), Informal sports and games and formal sports and games were the most popular among both genders (68.1% and 46.6% for the self- identified gamblers by screen overall, and 60.3% and 70.4% for informal sports for girls and boys respectively; 33.2% and 50.7% for formal sports for girls and boys respectively)
- The second most popular forms of gambling were lottery and online gambling at 28% each in the overall self-identified gamblers sample.
- Casino gambling was least popular at 6.2 %.

Table 3. Frequent gambling by types among Self-Identified Gamblers

- Among all self- identified gamblers in the sample, about 14.2 percent gambled frequently (once a week or more) on informal sports or games, 10% on formal sports or games, 2.2% on lottery, 1.4% on casino, 6.6 percent on online and 22.7 % of the self identified gamblers in the sample were gambling frequently (one time or more a week).

Table 4. Percentage of Self-identified gamblers who endorsed levels of Problem Gambling

- Among only the self-identified gamblers in the sample, about 80 % endorsed no problem gambling, 16.4% endorsed subclinical levels falling short of problem gambling and 3.5% endorsed problem gambling, Estimates were similar across grades with percents being slightly higher in grade 11 (4.2% among self identified gamblers).

What forms of gambling are most popular among those endorsing these types of gambling?

- Among those who endorsed traditional forms of gambling (N=11382)), they are listed below from most to least popular and the rates of endorsement in the population among those who endorsed any of these types is reported below.
 - Informal sports and games
 - Formal sports and Games
 - Lottery and online
 - Casino
- The most common form of betting was betting on informal games of skill such as cards, sports, or games of personal skill such as video gaming, pool, golf or bowling .

Trends (2022 to 2025)

Due to changes in survey assessments, direct comparisons related to rates of gambling from 2022 to 2025 cannot be determined.

What is Problem Gambling?

Problem Gambling is gambling that interferes with a person's life including relationships and responsibilities. Cardinal signs are preoccupation with gambling, and loss of control of one's gambling (e.g. continued gambling in spite of adverse consequences of gambling). Other signs of problem gambling include hiding the evidence of gambling, feeling bad about one's gambling and skipping out on family and friends in order to gamble.

Among the Minnesota Youth Gambling on these types of games in this sample (with this screening method) how many experience problem gambling?

- 3.5% of self-identified gamblers in the sample endorsed problem gambling but the rate cannot be an estimate of state wide prevalence.

Data Analysis Completed by and Verified by:

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Table 1: *Demographics of 2022 Sample Overall*

	Grade 8 N = 31,761	Grade 9 N = 28,925	Grade 11 N = 22,859	Total
BioSex				
Female	16,261 (51.20%)	14,976 (51.78%)	11,752 (51.41%)	42,989 (51.46%)
Male	15,500 (48.80%)	13,949 (48.22%)	11,107 (48.59%)	40,556 (48.54%)
Age				
12	34 (0.11%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	34 (0.04%)
13	12,437 (39.16%)	41 (0.14%)	0 (0.00%)	12,478 (14.94%)
14	18,992 (59.80%)	11,880 (41.07%)	0 (0.00%)	30,872 (36.95%)
15	295 (0.93%)	16,727 (57.83%)	28 (0.12%)	17,050 (20.41%)
16	3 (0.01%)	257 (0.89%)	9,505 (41.58%)	9,765 (11.69%)
17	0 (0.00%)	20 (0.07%)	13,087 (57.25%)	13,107 (15.69%)
18	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	226 (0.99%)	226 (0.27%)
19	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	13 (0.06%)	13 (0.02%)
Race				

American Indian or Alaskan Native	391 (1.23%)	334 (1.15%)	138 (0.60%)	863 (1.03%)
Asian or Asian American	2,150 (6.77%)	1,888 (6.53%)	1,355 (5.93%)	5,393 (6.46%)
Black, African or African American	2,520 (7.93%)	1,799 (6.22%)	1,280 (5.60%)	5,599 (6.70%)
Hispanic or Latino/a	2,050 (6.45%)	1,772 (6.13%)	1,291 (5.65%)	5,113 (6.12%)
Middle Eastern or North African	147 (0.46%)	120 (0.41%)	84 (0.37%)	351 (0.42%)
Multiple Races	3,229 (10.17%)	2,899 (10.02%)	2,140 (9.36%)	8,268 (9.90%)
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	49 (0.15%)	50 (0.17%)	34 (0.15%)	133 (0.16%)
No answer	295 (0.93%)	159 (0.55%)	100 (0.44%)	554 (0.66%)
White	20,930 (65.90%)	19,904 (68.81%)	16,437 (71.91%)	57,271 (68.55%)
Region				
Greater Minnesota	14,847 (46.75%)	14,126 (48.84%)	11,206 (49.02%)	40,179 (48.09%)
Minneapolis/Saint Paul Metro Area	16,914 (53.25%)	14,799 (51.16%)	11,653 (50.98%)	43,366 (51.91%)

Table 1a. 2025

This now only includes the ~11k students who endorsed one of the gambling items identical to 2022 (A78 A-E).

label	levels	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 11	Total
Total N (%)		3876 (34.1)	3950 (34.7)	3556 (31.2)	11382
BioSex	Female	1075 (27.7)	891 (22.6)	682 (19.2)	2648 (23.3)
	Male	2801 (72.3)	3059 (77.4)	2874 (80.8)	8734 (76.7)
Age	12	1 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.0)
	13	1499 (38.7)	5 (0.1)	0 (0.0)	1504 (13.2)
	14	2338 (60.3)	1429 (36.2)	0 (0.0)	3767 (33.1)
	15	36 (0.9)	2466 (62.4)	8 (0.2)	2510 (22.1)
	16	2 (0.1)	48 (1.2)	1393 (39.2)	1443 (12.7)
	17	0 (0.0)	2 (0.1)	2092 (58.8)	2094 (18.4)
	18	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	58 (1.6)	58 (0.5)
	19	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (0.1)	5 (0.0)
Race	American Indian or Alaskan Native	61 (1.6)	49 (1.2)	43 (1.2)	153 (1.3)
	Asian or Asian American	255 (6.6)	256 (6.5)	195 (5.5)	706 (6.2)
	Black, African or African American	223 (5.8)	227 (5.7)	159 (4.5)	609 (5.4)
	Hispanic or Latino/a	289 (7.5)	243 (6.2)	213 (6.0)	745 (6.5)
	Middle Eastern or	5 (0.1)	13 (0.3)	5 (0.1)	23 (0.2)

label	levels	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 11	Total
	North African				
	Multiple Races	475 (12.3)	487 (12.3)	395 (11.1)	1357 (11.9)
	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	10 (0.3)	6 (0.2)	4 (0.1)	20 (0.2)
	No answer	27 (0.7)	25 (0.6)	22 (0.6)	74 (0.7)
	White	2531 (65.3)	2644 (66.9)	2520 (70.9)	7695 (67.6)
Region	Greater Minnesota	1784 (46.0)	1702 (43.1)	1627 (45.8)	5113 (44.9)
	Minneapolis/Saint Paul Metro Area	2092 (54.0)	2248 (56.9)	1929 (54.2)	6269 (55.1)

Table 2. *Any Gambling By Type Among Self-Identified Gamblers*

Overall N = 11,382		Female N = 2,648	Male N = 8,734
All Students			
Informal Sports/Games	7,668 (68.1%)	1,587(60.3%)	6,081 (70.4%)
Formal Sports/Games	5,204 (46.6%)	865 (33.2%)	4,339 (50.7%)
Lottery	3,091(28.0%)	1,154(44.3%)	1,937 (23.0%)
Casino	690 (6.2%)	143 (5.5%)	547 (6.5%)
Online	3,110(28.0%)	421(16.1%)	2,689 (31.6%)
Grade 8			
Informal Sports/Games	2,570(67.0%)	645 (60.3%)	1,925(69.5 %)
Formal Sports/Games	1,756 (46.1%)	391 (36.9%)	1,365 (49.7%)
Lottery	1,137 (30.3%)	484 (45.6%)	653 (24.3%)
Casino	209 (5.5%)	54 (5.1%)	155 (5.7%)
Online	1,083 (28.5%)	160 (15.1%)	923 (33.8%)
Grade 9			

Informal Sports/Games	2,679 (68.5%)	551(62.0%)	2,128 (70.4%)
Formal Sports/Games	1,816 (47.0%)	287 (32.8%)	1,529 (51.1%)
Lottery	1,001 (26.1%)	384 (43.8%)	617 (20.9%)
Casino	182 (4.7%)	35 (4.0%)	147 (5.0%)
Online	1,093.0 (28.4%)	145.0 (16.5%)	948.0 (31.8%)
Grade 11			
Informal Sports/Games	2,419 (68.7%)	391 (57.8%)	2,028(71.4 %)
Formal Sports/Games	1,632 (46.8%)	187 (27.8%)	1,445 (51.3%)
Lottery	953 (27.6%)	286 (42.8%)	667 (23.9%)
Casino	299 (8.7%)	54 (8.1%)	245 (8.8%)
Online	934 (27.0%)	116 (17.3%)	818 (29.3%)

Table 3. Frequent gambling by types among Self-Identified Gamblers

	Overall N = 11,382	Female N = 2,648	Male N = 8,734
All Students			
Informal Sports/Games	1,600 (14.2%)	157 (6.0%)	1,443 (16.7%)
Formal Sports/Games	1,113 (10.0%)	73 (2.8%)	1,040 (12.2%)
Lottery	239 (2.2%)	41 (1.6%)	198 (2.3%)
Casino	155 (1.4%)	20 (0.8%)	135 (1.6%)
Online	730 (6.6%)	65 (2.5%)	665 (7.8%)
Frequent Gambling	2,512 (22.7%)	247 (9.5%)	2,265 (26.8%)
Grade 8			
Informal Sports/Games	487 (12.7%)	73 (6.8%)	414 (15.0%)
Formal Sports/Games	307 (8.1%)	40 (3.8%)	267 (9.7%)
Lottery	81 (2.2%)	22 (2.1%)	59 (2.2%)
Casino	54 (1.4%)	11 (1.0%)	43 (1.6%)
Online	258 (6.8%)	29 (2.7%)	229 (8.4%)
Frequent Gambling	760(20.2%)	110 (10.5%)	650 (24.0%)

Grade 9			
Informal Sports/Games	544 (13.9%)	54 (6.1%)	490 (16.2%)
Formal Sports/Games	370 (9.6%)	21 (2.4%)	349 (11.7%)
Lottery	70 (1.8%)	13 (1.5%)	57 (1.9%)
Casino	46 (1.2%)	40 (0.5%)	42 (1.4%)
Online	259 (6.7%)	18 (2.1%)	241 (8.1%)
Frequent Gambling	853 (22.3%)	82 (9.4%)	771(26.0%)
Grade 11			
Informal Sports/Games	569 (16.2%)	30 (4.4%)	539 (19.0%)
Formal Sports/Games	436 (12.5%)	12 (1.8%)	424 (15.0%)
Lottery	88 (2.5%)	6 (0.9%)	82 (2.9%)
Casino	55 (1.6%)	5.0 (0.7%)	50 (1.8%)
Online	213(6.2%)	18 (2.7%)	195 (7.0%)
Frequent Gambling	899 (26.0%)	55 (8.2%)	844 (30.3%)

Table 4. Percentage of Self-identified gamblers who endorsed levels of Problem Gambling

	Overall N = 11,382	Female N = 2,648	Male N = 8,734
All Students			
No Problem Gambling	9,111 (80.0%)	2,316(87.5%)	6,795 (77.8%)
Subclinical Problem Gambling	1,867(16.4%)	275 (10.4%)	1,592 (18.2%)
Problem Gambling	404 (3.5%)	57 (2.2%)	347 (4.0%)
Grade 8			
No Problem Gambling	3,172 (81.8%)	945 (87.9%)	2,227 (79.5%)
Subclinical Problem Gambling	581 (15.0%)	106 (9.9%)	475 (17.0%)
Problem Gambling	123 (3.2%)	24 (2.2%)	99 (3.5%)
Grade 9			
No Problem Gambling	3,194 (80.9%)	787 (88.3%)	2,407 (78.7%)
Subclinical Problem Gambling	625 (15.8%)	88 (9.9%)	537 (17.6%)
Problem Gambling	131 (3.3%)	16 (1.8%)	115 (3.8%)
Grade 11			
No Problem Gambling	2,745 (77.2%)	584 (85.6%)	2,161 (75.2%)
Subclinical Problem Gambling	661 (18.6%)	81 (11.9%)	580 (20.2%)

Problem Gambling	150 (4.2%)	17 (2.5%)	133 (4.6%)
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