

# HIGHLIGHTING THE POSITIVE: SOMALI STUDENTS + SUBSTANCE USE



SUMN.org FACT SHEET

2019

## Somali Students in Minnesota

### Introduction

Immigrants from Somalia and American-born citizens of Somali descent comprise the 5<sup>th</sup> largest cultural group in Minnesota (after white, African-American, Mexican, and Hmong residents), with an estimated population of about 47,000 as of 2016. Just over 2% of Minnesota Student Survey respondents in 2016 identified as Somali.

Likely as a result of their unique cultural context, Somali students perform remarkably well on a number of indicators associated with substance use.

### Substance Use

The Minnesota Student Survey (MSS) asks 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> graders about past-month use of substances, such as alcohol and tobacco. According to the 2016 MSS:

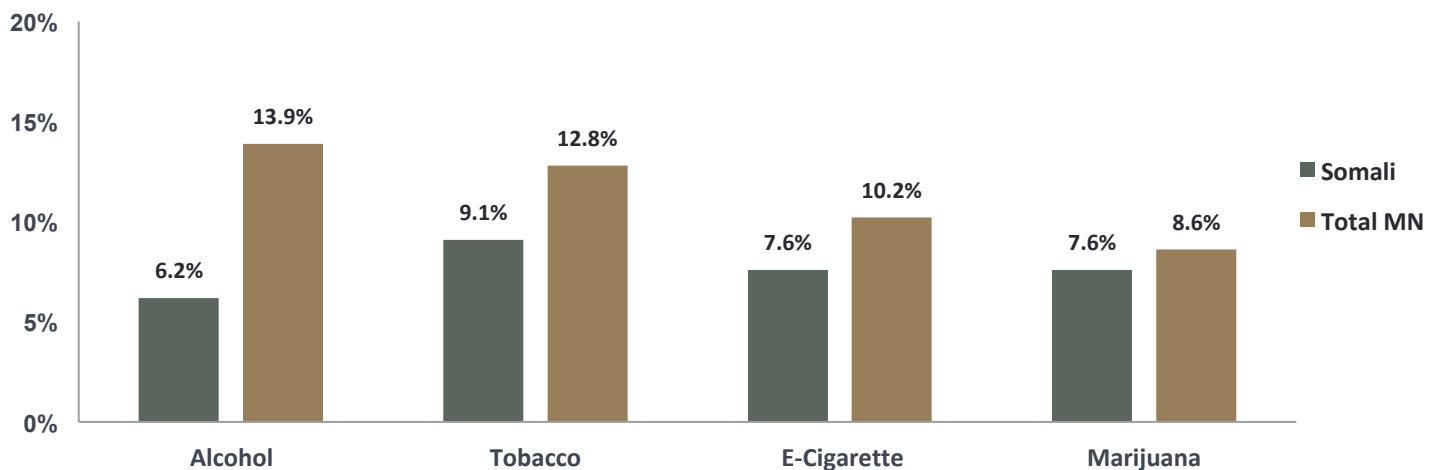
- Somali 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders are less than half as likely as the state average to report past-month alcohol use.
- E-cigarette use has increased dramatically among young people in Minnesota, but Somali students are less likely to report any tobacco use (which includes e-cigarettes, cigarettes, cigars, hookah, and smokeless tobacco).
- Somali students are less likely to report marijuana use.

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*For more information on alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use, consequences, contributing factors, and treatment, as well as mental health data, visit **SUMN.org***

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## Somali Students Report Relatively Low Rates of Substance Use 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> Graders, 2016 MSS



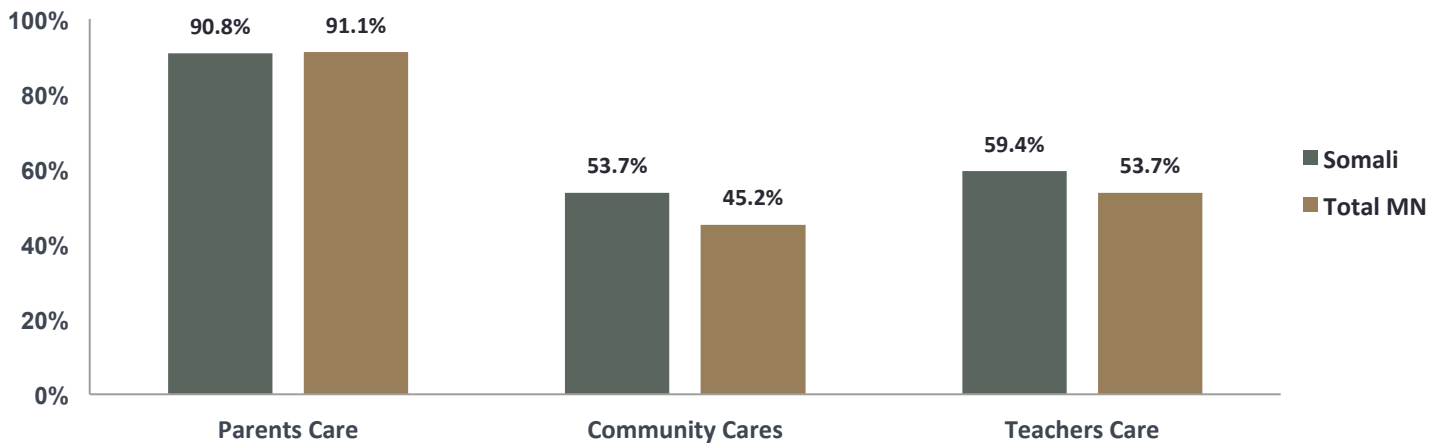
## Protective Factors

Correspondingly, while Somali students are less likely to engage in substance use, they are also more likely to report a number of factors that protect against substance use, such as educational engagement and feeling cared for by adults in their lives. They are also more likely to report individual protective factors, as measured by the Developmental Assets scales: empowerment, positive identity, and social competence.\*

- Somali students are about as likely to report that their parents care “quite a bit” or “very much” about them.
- More than half of Somali students report believing that the adults in their communities and in their schools care about them “quite a bit” or “very much.”

### Somali Students Tend to Have Good Relationships with Adults in Their Lives

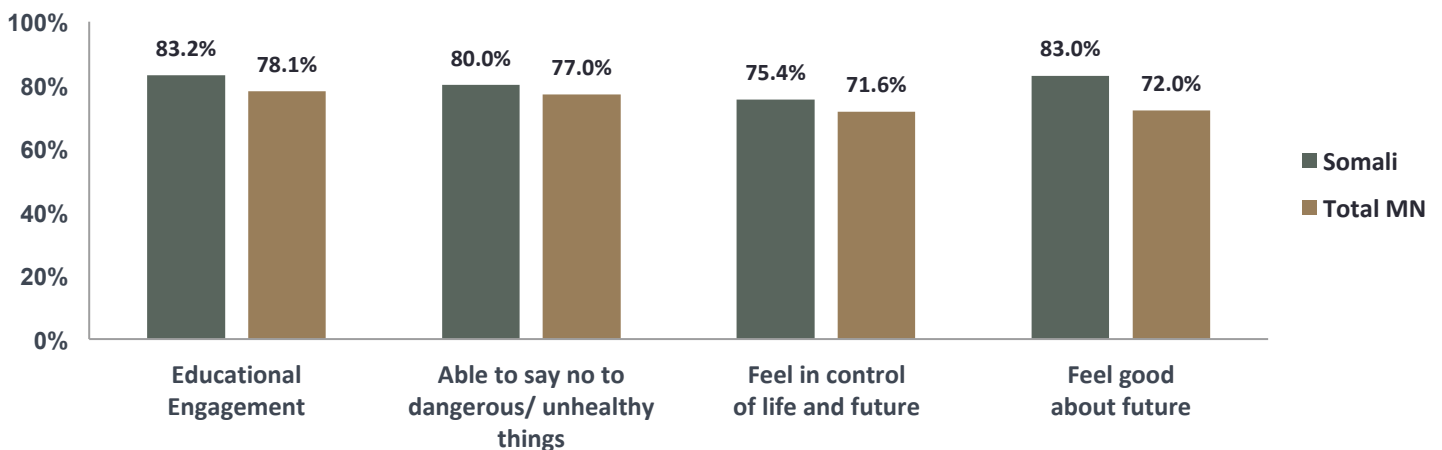
5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> Graders, 2016 MSS



- Somali students report having relatively high levels of educational engagement.
- A large majority of Somali students report internal protective factors, such as feeling empowered to avoid dangerous influences, and feeling good about their futures.

### Somali Students Have High Levels of Internal Protective Factors

5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> Graders, 2016 MSS

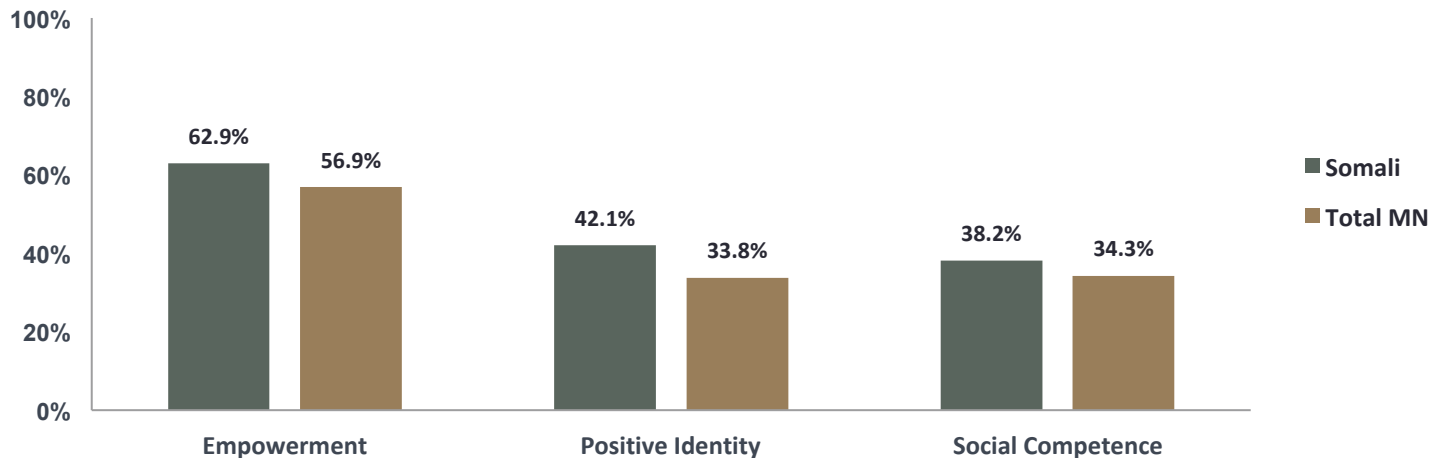


## Developmental Assets

The Developmental Assets framework was devised by the Search Institute to identify skills and behaviors that contribute to positive adolescent development. Survey questions were generated and grouped to compose a series of scales to assess such development. For the Minnesota Student Survey (MSS), questions were added to create the following scales: Social Competence, Positive Identity, and Empowerment.\* Relatively high levels of Somali students report these competencies, which are associated with better mental health and lower levels of substance use.

### Somali Students Perform Well on the Developmental Assets Scales\*

5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> Graders, 2016 MSS



Find more information from the Somali Youth Community Epi Profile—as well as profiles on other populations in the state—at SUMN.org.

\*The Search Institute's Developmental Assets scales are used and adapted with permission from Search Institute (2004). The Developmental Assets Profile. Minneapolis: Author. Copyright © 2004 by Search Institute ([www.search-institute.org](http://www.search-institute.org)). All rights reserved. For more information on MSS use of Developmental Assets, please find fact sheets on each of the scales at SUMN.org.

## State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup

Minnesota's SEOW has been monitoring substance abuse trends since 2007. The Workgroup helps guide prevention planning at the state level, and provides training and technical assistance to communities. In, 2008 the SEOW launched the Substance Use in Minnesota (SUMN) website to ensure quick and easy access to data for prevention professionals.

### SUMN.org

SUMN is a one-stop-shop for data, tools, and prevention resources. Visitors can search county, regional, and state level data by topic, by location, and by demographic producing tables, charts, graphs, and maps. View and download data products, such as this fact sheet, and find tips on finding, analyzing, translating, using, and disseminating data.

### Contact Us

For questions or more information regarding the State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup or SUMN.org, please email: [info@sumn.org](mailto:info@sumn.org)

To contact the Regional Prevention Coordinator for your region, please visit: [www.rpcmn.org](http://www.rpcmn.org)

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