



# Holly Area Schools

*Excellence in Action!*

April 10, 2024

Dear Parents of Holly Area Schools,

At Holly Area Schools, we are committed to providing a world-class education that helps prepare our Bronchos for success. As I share this third communication in a series focusing on the health and wellness of our students, I want to thank our Broncho parents for all the positive feedback they have provided about our new informational series.

Earlier this week, I shared a link to the Brookings Institution webinar titled **The Negative Impact of Social Media and Smartphones on Children's Mental Health**. I highly encourage all Broncho parents to listen to a recording of the webinar, which can be found [here](#), as part of our continued collective efforts to help all Bronchos achieve and succeed. Please start the video at 1:12 (1 minute and 12 seconds) to hear the relevant information about this important issue.

The webinar discusses how the proliferation of social media and smartphones has contributed to a mental health crisis among our youth. Children increasingly spend many hours a day scrolling through video shorts on platforms like TikTok. This is particularly concerning with youth depression rates, bullying, attention problems, anxiety, self-harm, eating disorders, suicide and other mental health issues on the rise. Despite these alarming trends, there are no regulations on social media or smartphone use for children in the United States.

In the webinar, Professor Jonathan Haidt from the New York University Stern School of Business discusses the negative effects of social media and smartphones on our children and potential solutions that involve parents, teachers, schools, tech companies, and governments. Professor Haidt, one of the world's leading social psychologists and experts on the impact of social media and smartphones on children, pointed out the decline of the "play-based childhood" over the past several years. He points out a sharp reduction in children's access to unsupervised outdoor free play.

**Ironically, he states we are "over protecting" our youth in the real world while "under protecting" them in the virtual world.**

The charts below outline trends since 2010, when smartphones were made widely available loaded with social media platforms, high-speed internet access and unlimited data plans.

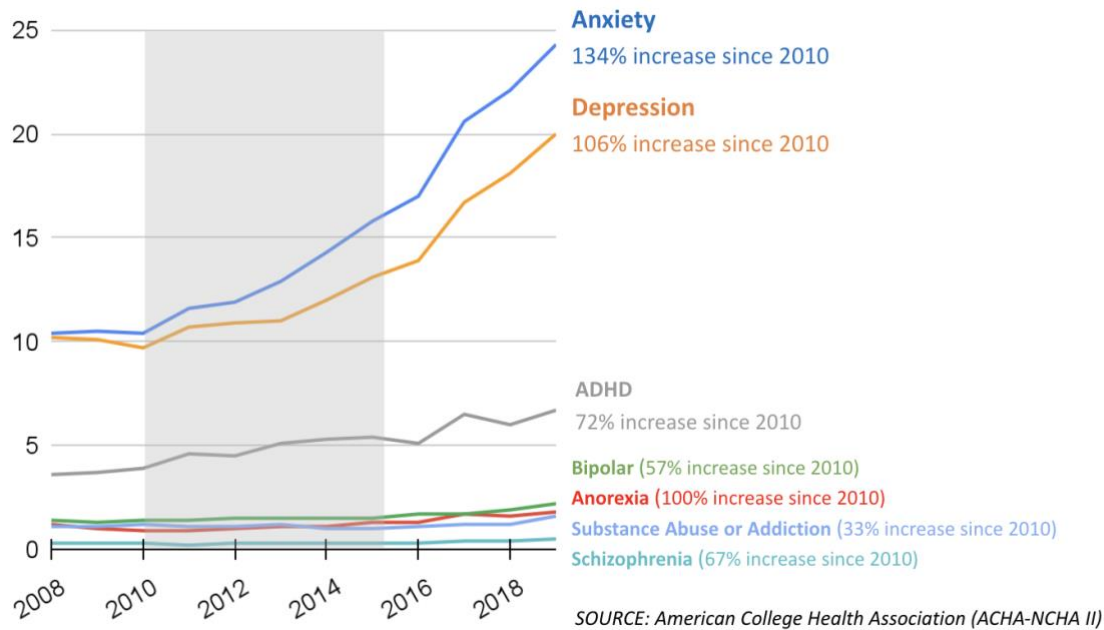
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## Administration Office

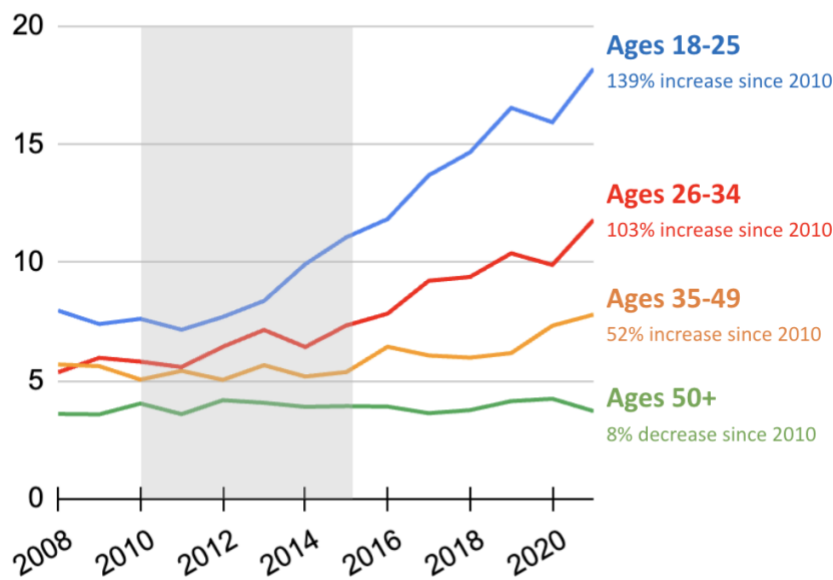
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## Percent of U.S. Undergraduates Diagnosed with a Mental Illness



## Percent U.S. Anxiety Prevalence



SOURCE: U.S. National Survey on Drug Use and Health

This information will be added to our district's new [Student Mental Health Webpage](#) on our Holly Area Schools website.

On a related note, **I would like to express my appreciation to our Holly Area Schools Board for the action they took at Monday's School Board Meeting. Our Board passed a resolution to join the nationwide litigation against Social Media Platforms.** The lawsuit asserts that social media companies target minors to maximize profits despite knowing the severe detrimental effects of excessive social media use.

Thank you for taking the time to read this important message. Our collective efforts can make a significant difference in the lives of our students. Thank you for your continued support, and I welcome your feedback on this issue so critical to the success of our Bronchos.

Sincerely,

Scott M. Roper, Superintendent  
Holly Area Schools