

Dane County Youth Assessment (DCYA) 2024: Gun Access

Dane County Youth Commission

August 20, 2025

Sensitive Content Notice

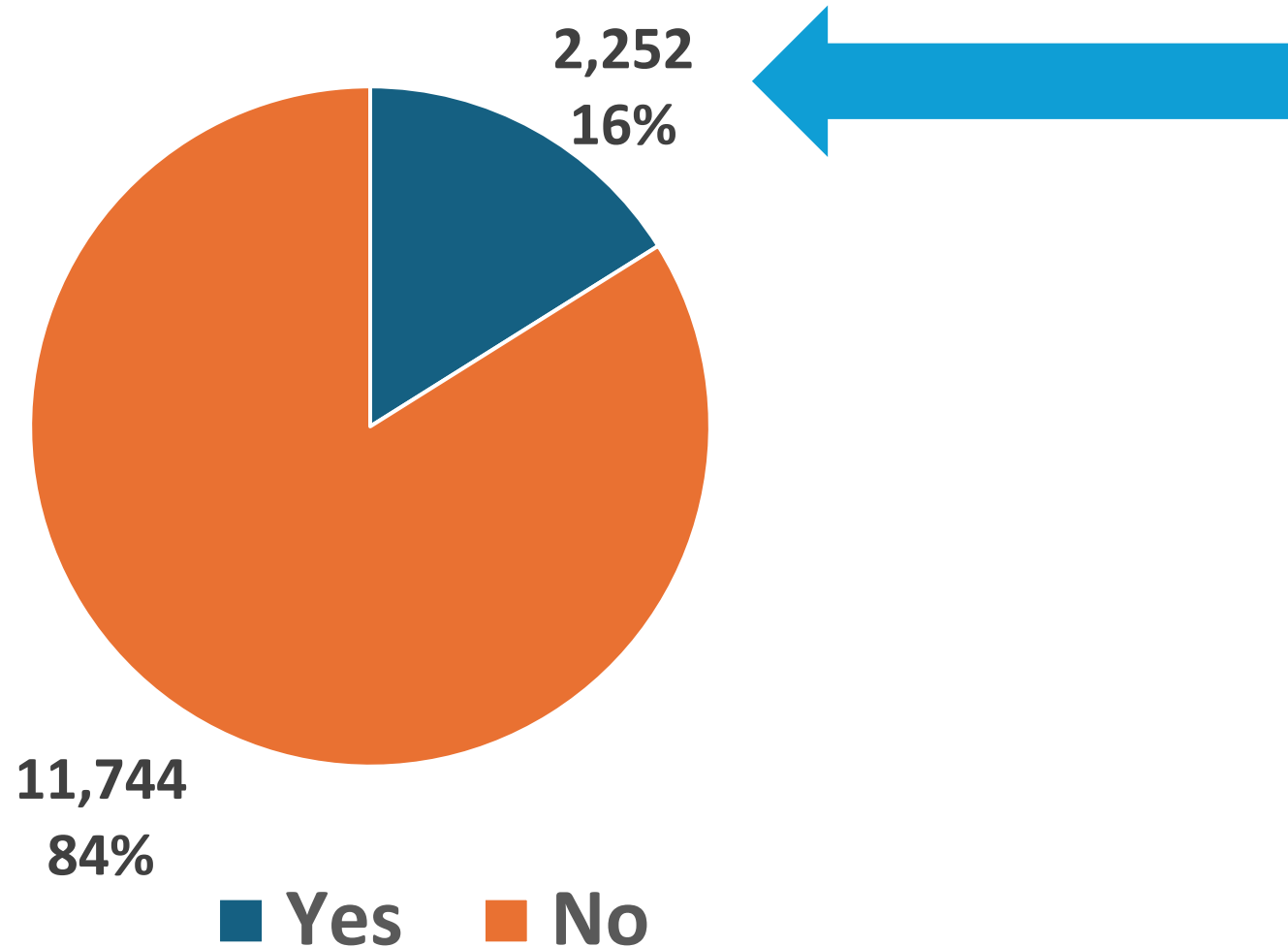
- In addition to data related to gun access, data related to mental health, including suicide, will be shared during this presentation

DCYA Background

- Survey conducted among middle and high school students every three years to capture their opinions, concerns, behaviors, attitudes, and experiences on a wide range of topics
- Partners include Dane County, the City of Madison, Public Health Madison Dane County, the United Way of Dane County, and 17 school districts
- 24,471 students in grades 7-12 completed the survey in 2024
 - Most districts captured over 80% of their students

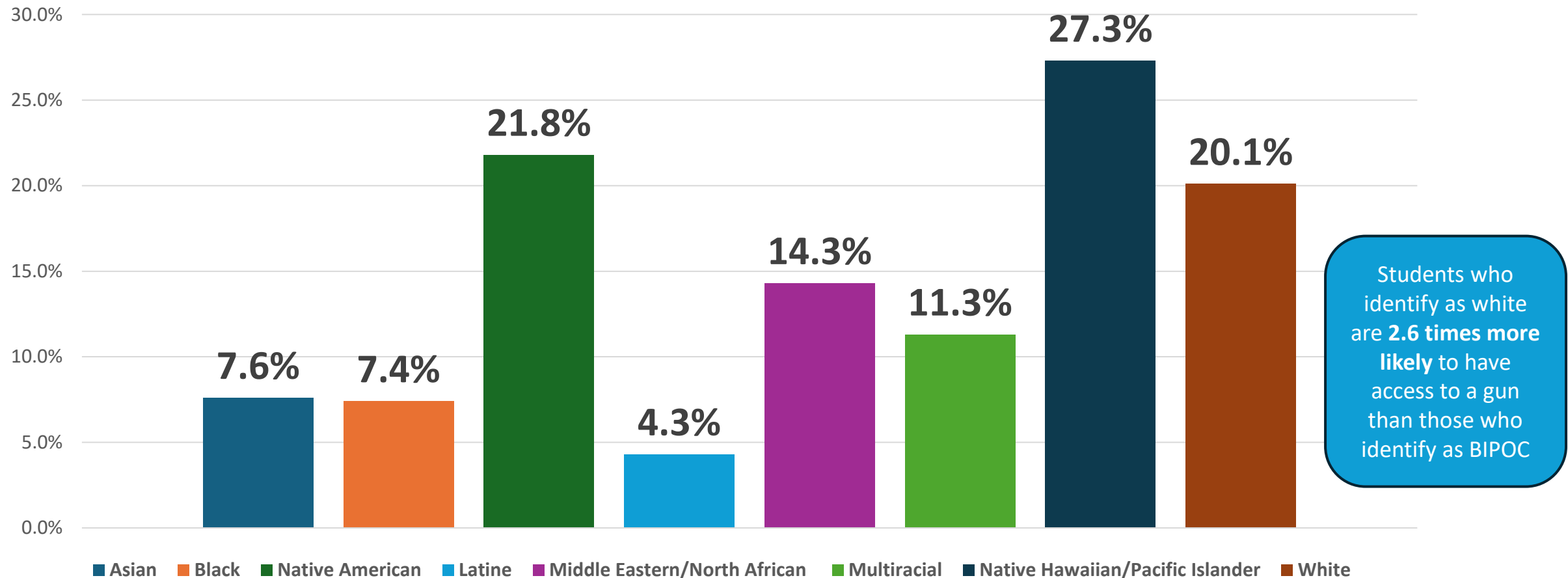
Primary Survey Question of Focus:

Do you have access to a gun? (HS only)

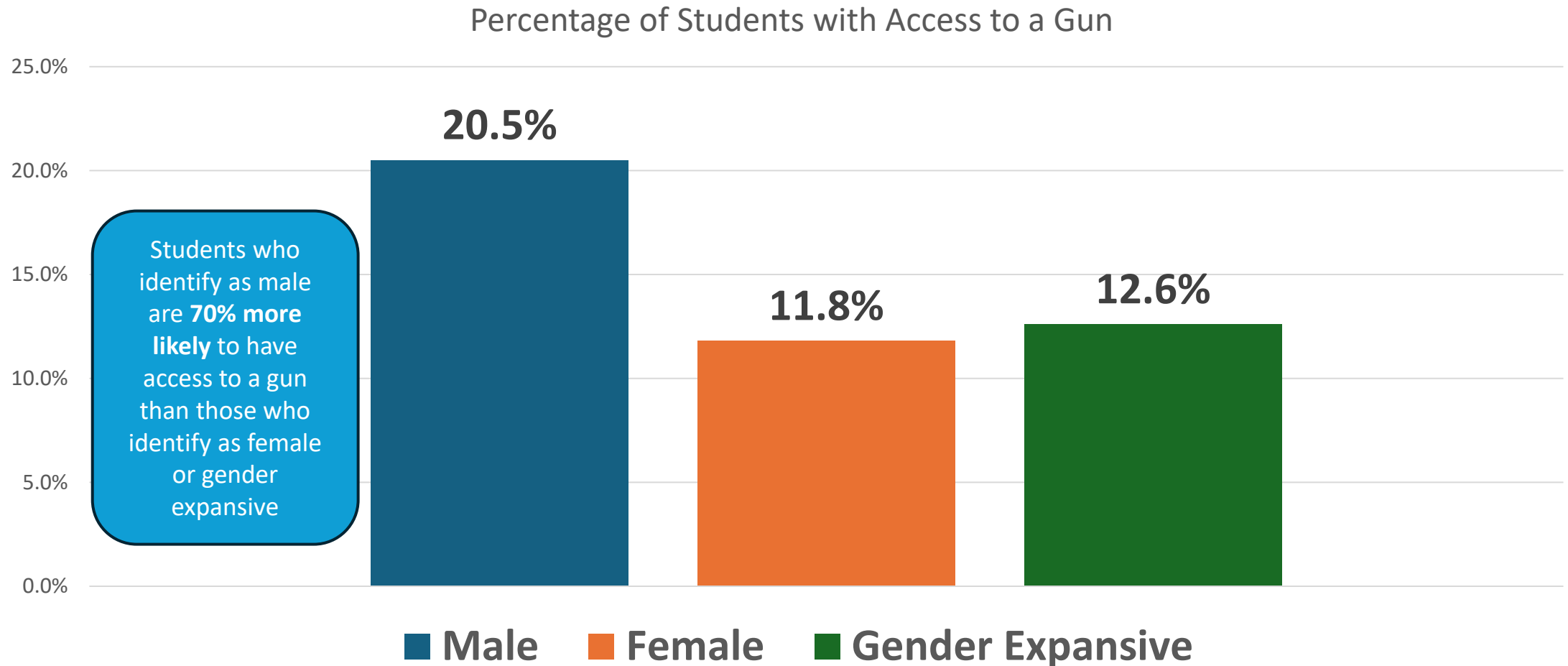


Differences Across Demographics: Race/Ethnicity

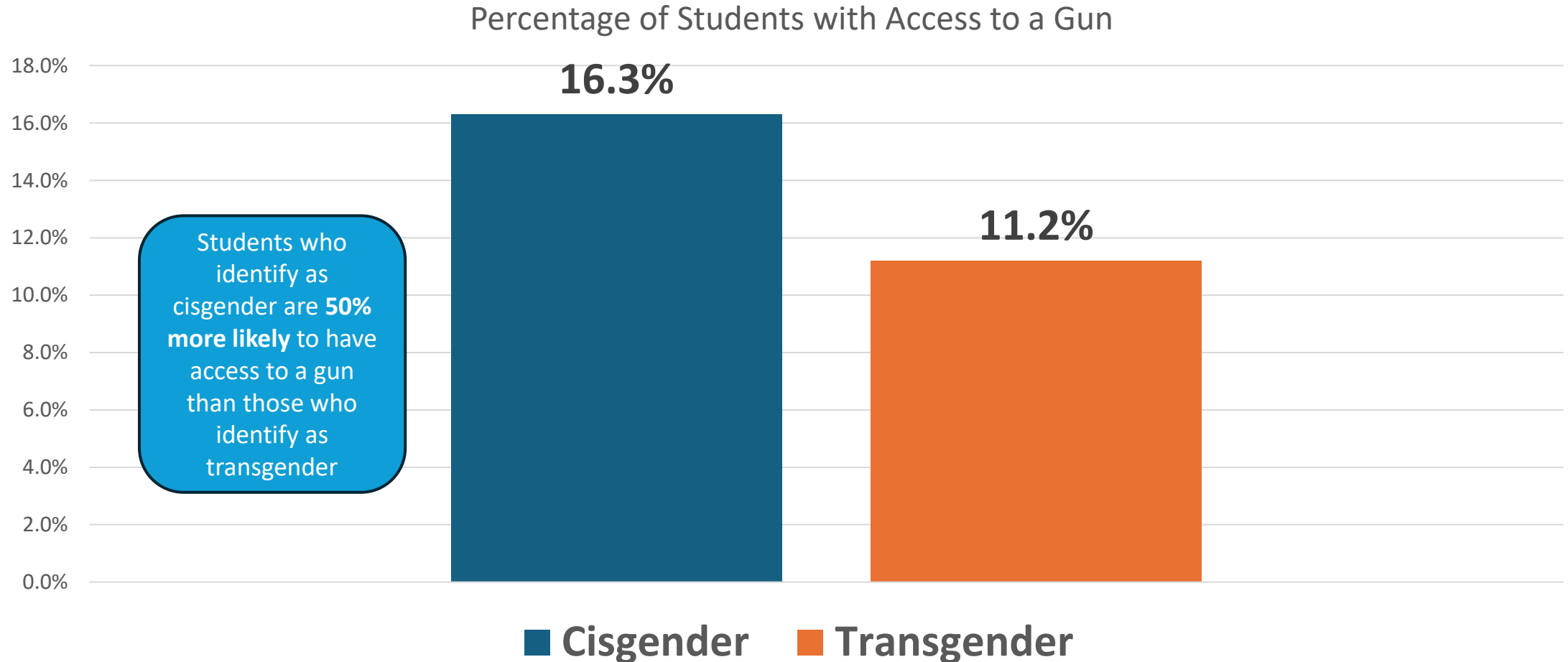
Percentage of Students with Access to a Gun



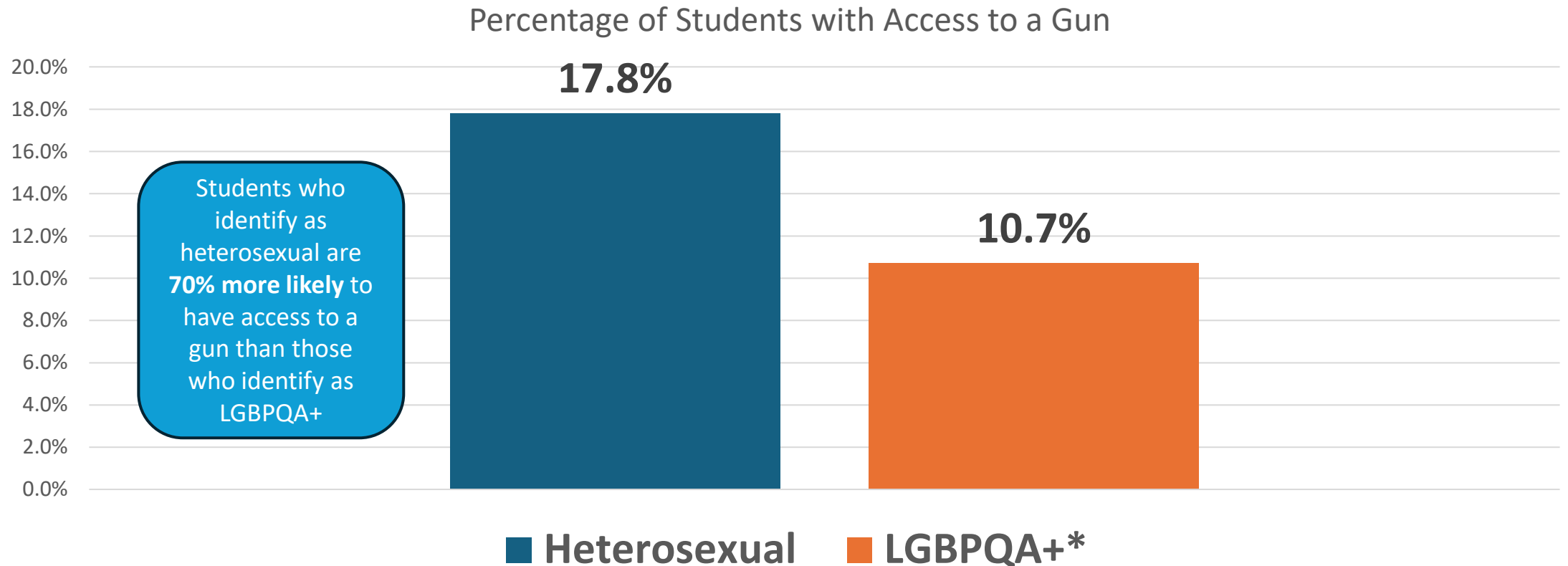
Differences Across Demographics: Gender Identity



Differences Across Demographics: Transgender Identity



Differences Across Demographics: Sexual Orientation



* Data for students who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Pansexual, Questioning, Asexual, or another sexual orientation not listed are combined due to relatively small numbers of students reporting access to a gun across multiple groups

Who is most likely to have access to a gun?

- **25.2%** of white male students reported having access to a gun compared to **11.8%** of all other students
- White male students are **2.1 times** more likely to have access to a gun than all other students combined

Gun Access + School Connectedness

Using a 6-item scale to measure connectedness at school, those who report **not feeling connected** at school are **24% more likely** to have access to a gun than those report feeling connected at school (18.8% vs. 15.2%)

Those who report **not feeling close to people** at school are **5% more likely** to have access to a gun than those who report feeling close to people at school

Those who report **not feeling safe** at school are **7% more likely** to have access to a gun than those who report feeling safe at school

Those who report **not feeling a sense of belonging** at school are **14% more likely** to have access to a gun than those who report feeling a sense of belonging at school

Gun Access + Mental Health

- Using a 3-item scale developed at UCLA to measure loneliness, those who report **feelings of loneliness** are **12% more likely** to have access to a gun than those who don't report feeling lonely
- Those who report **NOT receiving mental health services** are **26% more likely** to have access to a gun than those who report receiving mental health services

Gun Access + Mental Health

- Those who report **suicide ideation** are **42% more likely** to have access to a gun than those who have not thought seriously about killing themselves in the past year
 - Among white males this increases to 51%
- Those who report **making a plan to attempt suicide** are **55% more likely** to have access to a gun than those who have not made a plan to attempt suicide in the past year
 - Among white males this increases to 67%
- Those who report **attempting suicide** are **47% more likely** to have access to a gun than those who have not attempted suicide
 - Among white males, this increases to 220%

Additional Data to Address Follow-up Questions

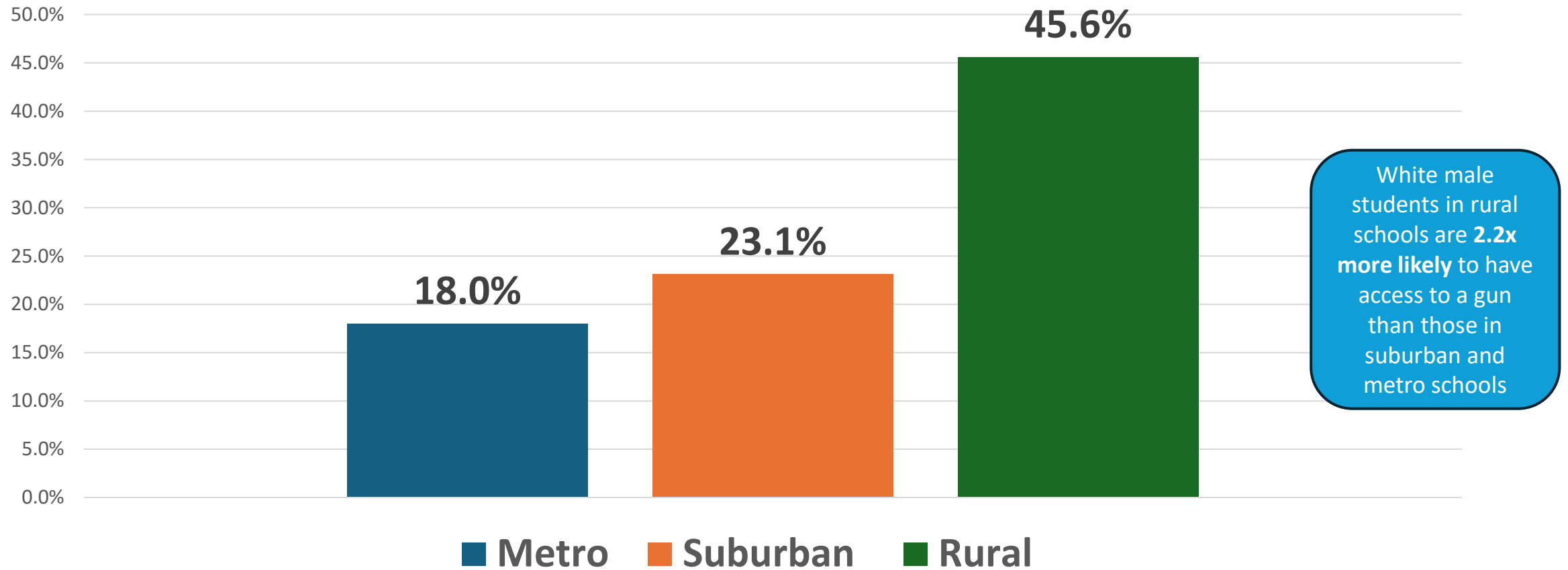
February 4, 2026

Do white male students have more access to guns because of hunting?

- The survey does not directly ask any questions about hunting
- In Wisconsin:
 - Men & boys are much more likely to hunt than women & girls
 - People in rural areas are more likely to hunt than people in urban areas, and hunting is more likely to be part of rural cultural identity
- Dane County school districts have been broken down into three geographical areas – Inner Metro, Middle Suburban, and Outer Rural – based on population density, proximity to downtown Madison, transportation & infrastructure, economic patterns, and student demographic diversity

Gun Access by Geography

Percentage of White Male Students with Access to a Gun



Factors Associated with Gun Access among White Male Students

Those who report not feeling connected to school are more likely to have access to a gun

- Similar association for white males in metro/suburban and rural schools

Those who report suicide ideation are more likely to have access to a gun

- Similar association for white males in metro/suburban and rural schools

Those who report making a plan and/or attempting suicide are more likely to have access to a gun

- **Stronger associate for white males in metro/suburban schools than rural schools**

Those NOT receiving mental health services are more likely to have access to a gun

- Similar association for white males in metro/suburban and rural schools