

# The Student Stressors and Assets Survey:

An Assessment of the Developmental Assets™ of Students in the Bernards Township School District

Prepared for  
Bernards Township School District  
August 2018

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# **The Student Stressors and Assets Survey: An Assessment of the Developmental Assets™ of Students in the Bernards Township School District**

**Prepared by Kirk Harlow, Dr.P.H.  
August 2018**

## **Executive Summary**

The results of a survey to examine the Developmental Assets of 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students in Bernards Township, NJ School District (School District) are presented in this report. The survey was similar to surveys conducted in 2005 and 2012. Developmental Assets are factors, that if present, may help prevent or protect against high-risk or problem behavior such as drug abuse or delinquency. The eight Developmental Asset categories that were examined included:<sup>1</sup>

1. **Support**—support from family, school, and community;
2. **Boundaries and expectation**—clear expectations and limits;
3. **Constructive use of time**—enriching activities in which young people can participate;
4. **Commitment to learning**—lifelong commitment to learning and education;
5. **Positive identity**—Sense of purpose and worth;
6. **Social competencies**—Skills equipping young people to make effective choices;
7. **Positive values**—guiding values for choices; and
8. **Empowerment**—valuing of young people by the community.

## **Survey Design and Distribution**

The initial design of the survey occurred in 2005 and was a collaborative effort involving staff of the Bernards Township Health Department, staff from the Bernards Township School District, and Kirk Harlow, Dr.P.H. The 2018 survey is based on the 2005 survey.

Survey items to assess the Developmental Assets and other content areas were developed in two ways. Twenty-five of the survey's questions were taken directly from the survey, Search Institute Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors.<sup>2</sup> This instrument was designed by the Search Institute as a tool to examine Developmental Assets, and the items selected were identified by the design group as representative of the Developmental Asset areas to be assessed.

The remaining questions were designed specifically for this survey. These items were designed to capture information on a number of additional attributes and behaviors of students to help understand factors that may be associated with the Developmental Assets. Some of the other

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<sup>1</sup> See the Search Institute, <https://www.search-institute.org/our-research/development-assets/developmental-assets-framework/>

<sup>2</sup> © Search Institute, Minneapolis, MN, 1996. The items were used by permission. For the current survey, see: <https://www.search-institute.org/surveys/choosing-a-survey/ab/>

information that was collected included student demographics, student cheating activities, bullying experiences, potential adult confidants, and participation in extra-curricular activities.

The target population for the survey included all 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th graders in the School District. Parents were informed of the survey and asked to grant permission to complete the survey. The surveys were conducted using a computer-based platform. Access to the surveys was provided to students whose parents granted permission. Students were encouraged to complete all survey items, but were given the option to choose either “Don’t know” or “Not applicable” on questions they did not want to answer. Student responses to the survey were completely anonymous.

The response rates by gender and grade are presented in Table 1. There were 1314 completed surveys, resulting in an overall response rate of 72%. As Table 1 shows, there are some differences in response rates when looked at by gender and grade. The response rates were lowest among the 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades. In addition, the response rates for females were somewhat higher than males’ in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades.

<b>Table 1. Response Rates by Grade and Gender</b>			
<b>Grade</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>6th</b>	81%	82%	83%
<b>8th</b>	86%	85%	85%
<b>10th</b>	59%	69%	65%
<b>12th</b>	60%	70%	66%
<b>Total</b>	67%	74%	70%

## **Results and Conclusions**

Two tables designed to provide an overview of the survey results are presented below. These tables provide the results of selected survey items that represent each of the Developmental Asset categories. The mean scores for seven of the eight Developmental Asset categories are presented in Table 2. Because the Developmental Asset category, Constructive Use of Time, was measured in terms of participation in activities, the results are presented separately in Table 3.

The mean scores presented in Table 2 for the Developmental Asset categories all are above the midpoint score of 3; results consistent with the more detailed frequency scores noted in the full report. As Table 3 shows, about three-fourths of the students indicated participation in some athletic or intramural activity. The results of the survey also indicated that most students considered their participation athletic or intramural activities at least worthwhile.

These results indicate that most students surveyed reported high levels of Developmental Assets. This suggests that most students had in place factors that contribute to reducing risk or problem behaviors. While the summary tables do not include the results of all survey items, the general results presented are consistent with those discussed in detail in the full report.

<b>Table 2. Mean Scores for Selected Developmental Asset Categories</b>				
<b>Asset Categories</b>	<b>Grade</b>			
	<b>6th</b>	<b>8th</b>	<b>10th</b>	<b>12th</b>
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Mean</b>
<b>Support</b>				
Parent Support Summary	4.23	4.02	3.86	3.91
School Support Summary	3.72	3.34	3.10	3.47
Other Support Summary	3.90	3.68	3.53	3.65
<b>Boundaries and Expectations</b>				
Family/School Rules Summary	3.85	3.86	3.71	3.60
<b>Commitment to Learning</b>				
Commitment to School Summary	4.20	4.10	4.09	4.18
<b>Positive Identity</b>				
Emotional Wellbeing Summary	4.18	3.97	3.97	3.94
<b>Social Competencies</b>				
Resistance Summary	4.04	3.73	3.47	3.47
People Relationships Summary	3.98	3.87	3.92	3.96
<b>Positive Values</b>				
Work Ethic/Responsibility Summary	3.55	3.33	3.40	3.37
<b>Empowerment</b>				
Empowerment and Safety Summary	3.41	3.06	3.12	3.28

<b>Table 3. Percent of Students Participating in Athletics/Intramural Sports</b>	
<b>Grade</b>	<b>% Yes</b>
<b>6th</b>	89.5%
<b>8th</b>	82.4%
<b>10th</b>	82.8%
<b>12th</b>	80.1%

The Developmental Asset categories are very broad constructs. The summary tables do not fully reflect some of the variations within the Developmental Asset categories. Even though the overall scores are positive, several areas merit further comment. A brief list summarizing these findings follows.

- While parental support was high, about one-fourth of all students indicated feeling too much pressure to do well from parents. Students who felt too much pressure from parents were more likely to indicate feeling they did not get the support they need from parents.
- About half of the students indicated getting support from teachers, but only about 40% of all students indicated feeling that teachers really cared about them. Most students identified a “Close relative or family friend” as their most likely confidant if they need support. About half of student indicated they would be at least “Somewhat likely” to consider a teacher or coach as a confidant.
- Students indicated feeling that school and family rules were clear. About 20% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders, however, indicated they would not get punished for breaking family rules.
- Most students indicated high levels of achievement motivation. They reported expecting to do well, that hard work would lead to positive results, and realistic expectations of success. There was, however, a small segment of students who did not expect to succeed with hard work.
- Most students indicated they felt good about themselves and did not experience frequent sadness or loneliness. About 25% of 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders, however, reported feeling sad a lot of the time. In addition, the results indicated feelings of sadness were associated with a variety of factors including feeling there is not someone to turn to, parents do not provide needed help and support, the school does not provide encouragement, and not expecting to succeed.
- Most students indicated they thought things through before acting, although about 25% students of indicated a tendency toward acting impulsively. The results also suggest that students who reported doing things they regret afterwards were more likely to respond that they did not think things through before acting.
- Copying another student’s homework was the most common form of cheating reported. By 10<sup>th</sup> grade, over half of the students reported copying two or more times in the past year. About one quarter of 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders reported copying an Internet document for a classroom assignment two or more times. The findings also indicated students who cheat in one way are more likely to cheat in other ways. In addition, there was a positive correlation between the belief that people who are willing to lie or break rules are more likely to succeed and cheat in school.
- Over 80% of the students had never been bullied in any way. Around 5% of students, however, reported experiencing some form of bullying once a week or more. In addition, those students who experienced bullying once a week or more were more likely to report feeling sad and lonely.

- About 12% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders reported riding with someone their own age who had been drinking. They indicated they believed 30% of the drivers were drunk. Over one-quarter of students responded they had ridden in a car with someone not their age who had been drinking. Further, they reported they thought 19% of those drivers were drunk.

## **Implications of the Results**

The results of the survey indicated that most students possess high levels of the Development Assets. These results are consistent with the positive results from the surveys conducted in 2005 and 2012.<sup>3</sup> This suggests that one of the most important steps for the School District and community is to continue to sustain the positive results into the future. While the overall results are positive, there are some findings that warrant additional comment.

First, there is a segment of about 25% of students who may be experiencing some form of emotional problems. The limited questions on the survey to identify that group are just broad indicators. It is not possible to determine the severity or even if these are temporary circumstances. These findings should be viewed as a signal that suggests additional attention to the emotional wellbeing of students may be worthwhile.

The findings also indicate that the students experiencing some form of emotional difficulty also are likely to experience other issues. The results suggest that students in this group are more likely to feel like they have no one to turn to, do not get the support they need from their parents, and feel they are not getting encouragement in school. Also, students reporting feeling sad a lot were less likely to reach out to a confidant than other students. In other words, students who are experiencing emotional difficulties not only feel they are not getting needed support, but may not reach out to someone. The challenge is to find approaches to engage students who may be experiencing emotional difficulties.

Second, the evidence that some students are riding in cars in which the driver is drunk suggests the need for increased efforts to prevent driving while drunk. It may not be possible to prevent drinking among young people, but communicating about designated drivers, approaches for taking the keys of a potential drunk driver, and arrangements with local taxi companies are among the possible responses to the issue.

Third, the results indicate that riding with someone who may be drunk is not just about peers riding together. It may be necessary to help students be able to address a situation in which a parent or other adult may be driving under the influence of alcohol.

Fourth, cheating in school is a national problem, and the survey's results reveal the problem is also present in these students. In addition, for some students there is the belief that it may be necessary to cheat to achieve success. It may be useful to explore approaches to reduce cheating such as software that identifies plagiarism in written work. A greater challenge will be to counter attitudes in which some cheating is viewed as an acceptable means to an end.

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<sup>3</sup> More information comparing the results of surveys is available in the report, *Annual Comparisons of Developmental Assets Results, Bernards Township School District, 2005, 2012, and 2018*.



Finally, about 25% of students responded they did not think things through before acting, and those students were more likely to do things they regret. It is important to see these results as an indication that this segment of students is aware that they act without thinking and regret it afterward. It is possible these students may be receptive to learning ways to strengthen their ability to “look before they leap.” Making resources available to students to aid them in this area may be a useful step.

**Full Report Continued on Next Page**

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## **Introduction**

The results of a survey conducted in Spring 2018 of 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students in Bernards Township, NJ School District are presented in this report. The survey was similar to surveys conducted in the School District in 2005 and 2012. It was designed to examine the Developmental Assets of students. Developmental Assets are factors, that if present, may help prevent or protect against high-risk or problem behaviors such as drug abuse or delinquency. The eight categories of Developmental Assets are briefly listed below.<sup>4</sup>

1. **Support**—support from family, school, and community;
2. **Boundaries and expectation**—clear expectations and limits;
3. **Constructive use of time**—enriching activities in which young people can participate;
4. **Commitment to learning**—lifelong commitment to learning and education;
5. **Positive identity**—Sense of purpose and worth;
6. **Social competencies**—Skills equipping young people to make effective choices;
7. **Positive values**—guiding values for choices; and
8. **Empowerment**—valuing of young people by the community.

In addition to information about the Developmental Assets, several other categories of information were collected. These included student demographics, bullying experiences, potential adult confidants, participation in extra-curricular activities, and student engagement in cheating.

## **Survey Design and Procedures**

### **Survey Design**

The original design of the survey was in 2005. It was a collaborative effort involving staff of the Bernards Township Health Department, staff from the Bernards Township School District, and Kirk Harlow, Dr.P.H. The 2012 and 2018 surveys were based on that survey.

Survey items for the content areas were developed in two ways. First, twenty-five of the survey's questions were taken directly from the *Search Institute Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors*.<sup>5</sup> This instrument was designed by the Search Institute as a tool to examine

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<sup>4</sup> See the Search Institute, <https://www.search-institute.org/our-research/development-assets/developmental-assets-framework/>

<sup>5</sup> The Search Institute's survey items were used by permission. © Search Institute, Minneapolis, MN, 1996.

Developmental Assets, and the items selected were identified by the 2005 design group as representative of the Developmental Asset areas to be assessed. These represented survey items that had demonstrated effective construction, thereby improving the overall survey design.

Additional questions were designed specifically for this survey applying commonly used formats in the construction of the items or adapting items used in other surveys. The questions used to examine student cheating were adapted from a survey conducted by the Josephson Institute.<sup>6</sup>

## Survey Distribution

The target population for the survey included all 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> graders in the School District. Parents were informed of the survey and asked to grant permission to complete the survey. The survey was provided to students through a computer-based platform. Students were given time in class to complete them.

There were a total of 1314 surveys with an overall response rate of 72%. The response rates by gender and grade are presented in Table 4. As Table 4 shows, there are some differences in responses rates when looked at by gender and grade. The response rates were lower in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades than in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. In addition, the response rates were lower for males than females in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades. Since students were given the option to select “Not Applicable” or “Don’t Know” for the survey questions, some of the results that follow may be for slightly fewer students than the total 1314 respondents.

<b>Table 4. Response Rates by Grade and Gender</b>			
<b>Grade</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>6th</b>	81%	82%	82%
<b>8th</b>	86%	85%	85%
<b>10th</b>	59%	69%	64%
<b>12th</b>	60%	70%	65%
<b>Total</b>	67%	74%	70%

## Survey Results

The results of the survey are presented in several sections. The demographic characteristics of the students completing the survey are presented in the first section. This is followed by a section, Developmental Assets, that includes the results of the survey for each of the eight Developmental Asset categories. The results for questions not specifically part of the analysis of Development Assets are presented in several sections that follow. Comparisons of selected results from 2018 to those from surveys in 2005 and 2012 are presented in a separate report, *Annual Comparisons of Developmental Assets Results, Bernards Township School District, 2005, 2012, and 2018*.

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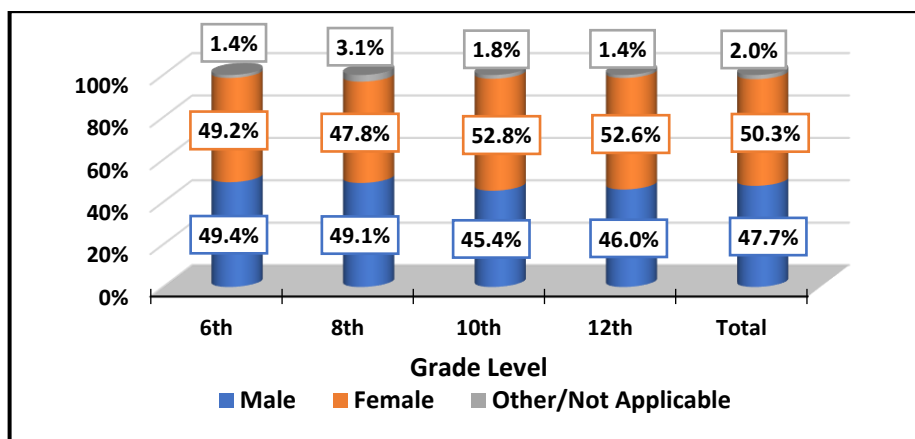
<sup>6</sup> See this website for more information: <http://charactercounts.org>

## Student Characteristics

A number of characteristics of the students completing the survey are presented in this section. Among these are students' gender, age, ethnicity/race, and current living situation.

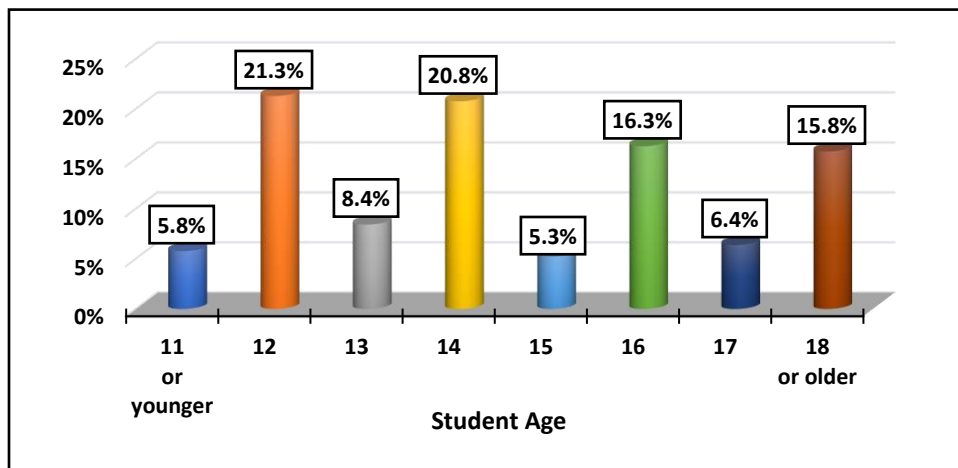
The gender breakdown by grade level of the student respondents is presented in Figure 1. Overall, there were slightly more female respondents (50.3%) than male respondents (47.7%). The results, however, are slightly different among the grade levels. The difference in proportions for males and females is greater for respondents in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades than in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades. Although the gender distribution of respondents does not match exactly that of the overall student population, it is very similar.

**Figure 1. Student Gender by Grade**



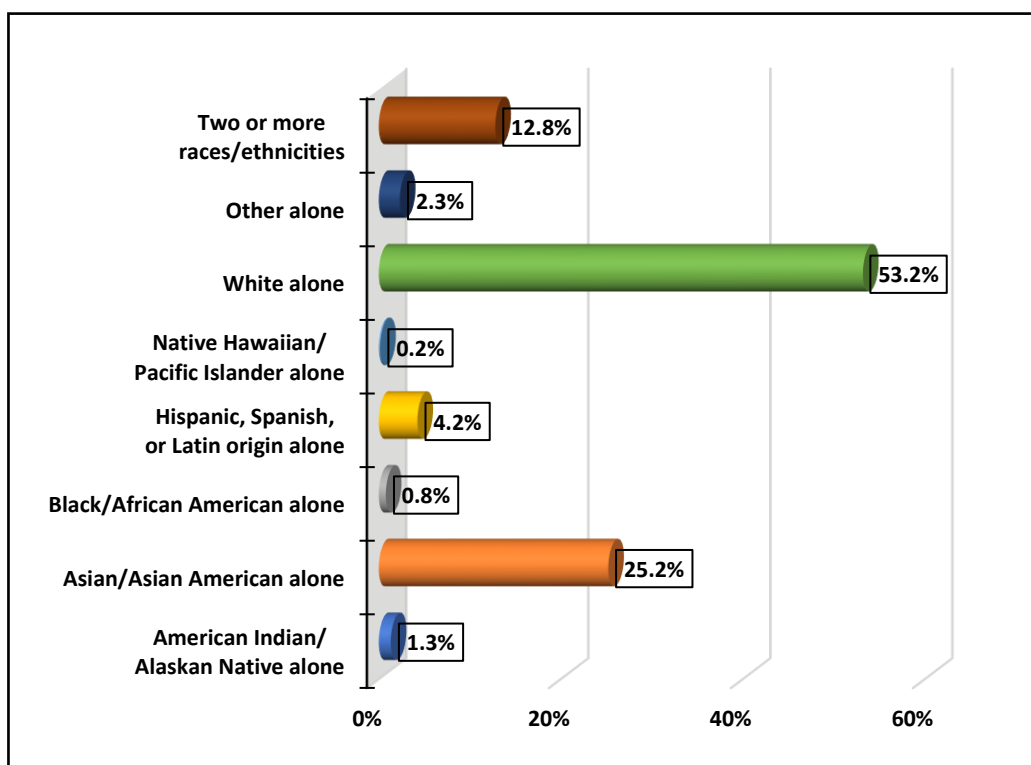
The age distribution of students presented in Figure 2 is consistent with ages expected for the grades surveyed. A slightly greater proportion of students was 14 and under than 15 and older reflecting the larger number of student respondents from grades 6 and 8.

**Figure 2. Current Age of Students**



As shown in Figure 3, about half of the students responding indicated “White alone” as their race/ethnicity, and a sizable number of students (25.2%) indicated “Asian or Pacific Islander alone.” The next largest group of students indicated more than one race/ethnicity (12.6%). Only small proportions of students selected the other race/ethnic groups. Although there are potential differences in definitions of race/ethnicity, the results for race/ethnicity of the respondents are similar to those reported for the school district.

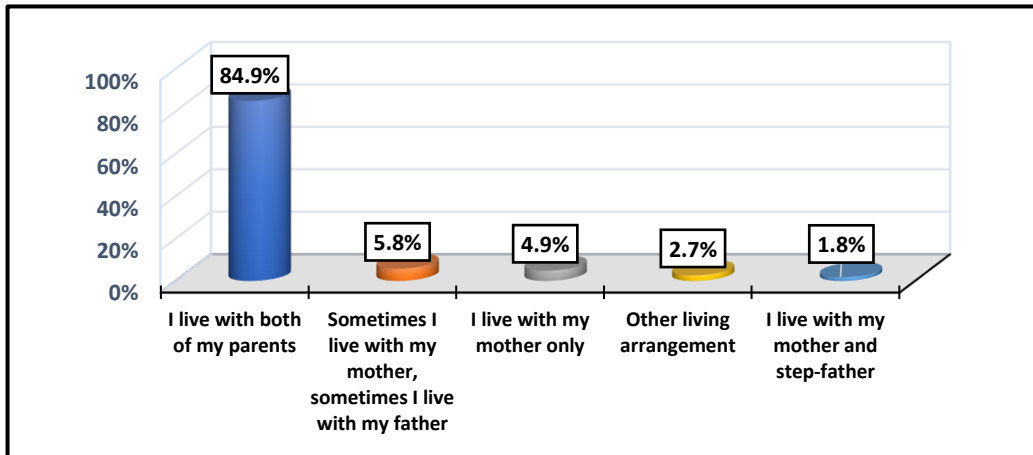
**Figure 3. Ethnic Composition of Students**



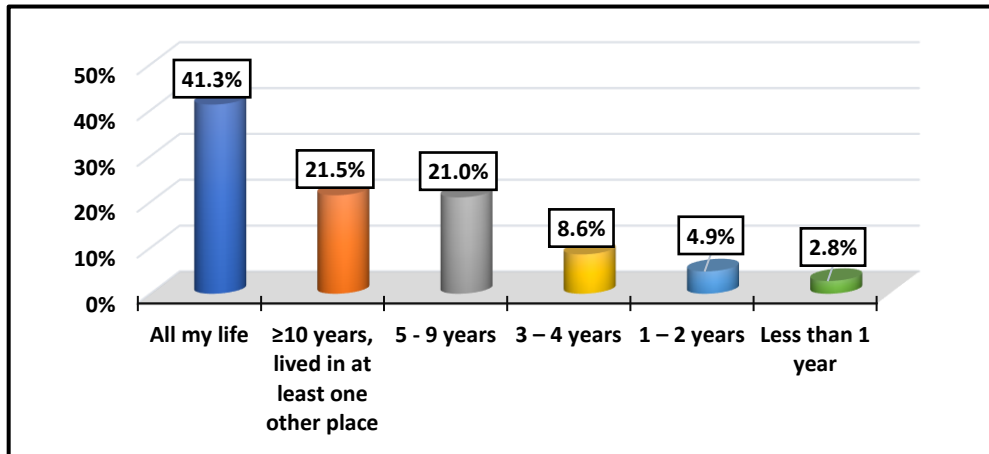
The results about students’ current living situation are presented in Figure 4. Most students, 84.9%, indicated living with both parents. This is a markedly higher proportion than the 58% reported by the U.S. Census Bureau for Bernards Township.<sup>7</sup> Most student respondents have lived in the community over 5 years (See Figure 5). Nearly two-thirds have lived in the community over 10 years. Taken together, these results indicate a very stable living situation for student respondents.

<sup>7</sup> Source: United States Census Bureau, 2010 Census of the Population, Table QT-P12. Retrieved from: <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CE>, 8/1/2018.

**Figure 4. Current Living Situation**

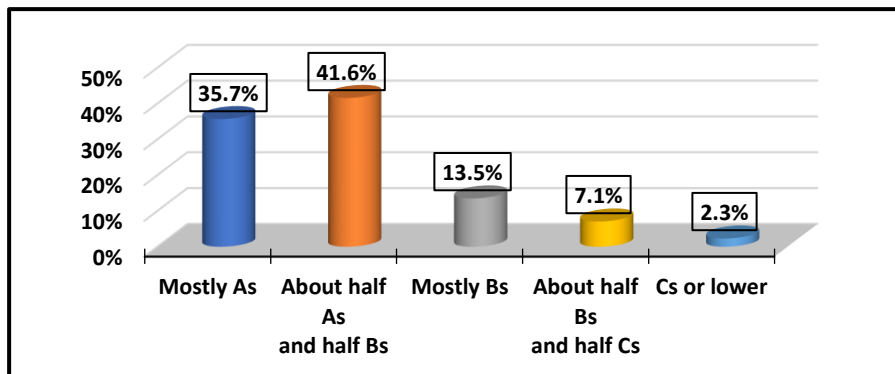


**Figure 5. Time Lived in Community**



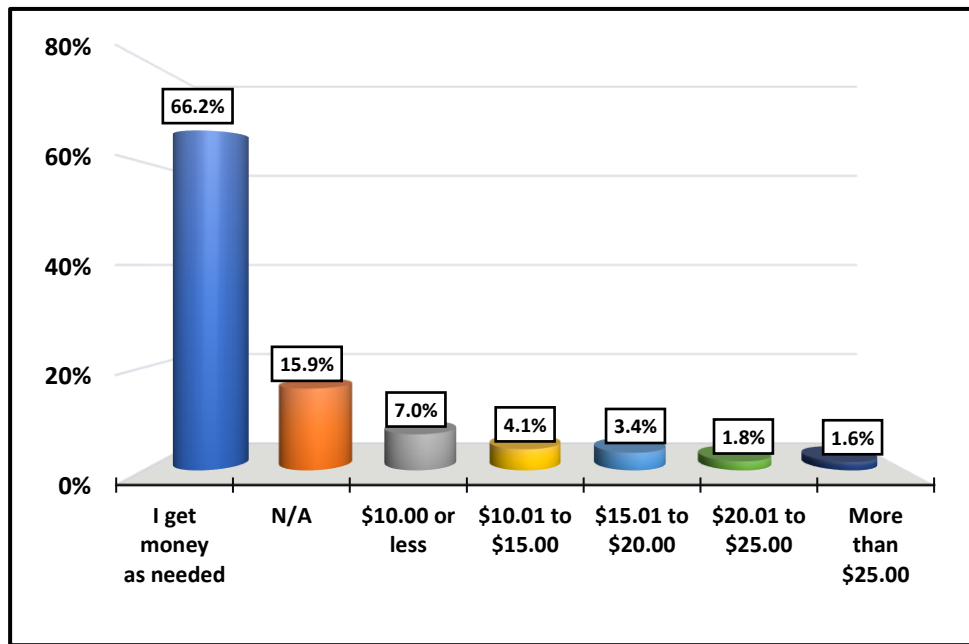
The results of students' self-reported class grades are presented in Figure 6. Over three-fourths of the students indicated receiving at least As and Bs. Only 2.3% of students reported receiving Cs or less. By traditional standards, the performance of most students is above average.

**Figure 6. School Grades**



As presented in Figure 7, most students (66.2%) report that they “Get money as needed” rather than a specific allowance. The results in Table 5 breaking down allowance by grade, indicate that the high proportion of students responding “Getting money as needed” is similar across all four grade levels.

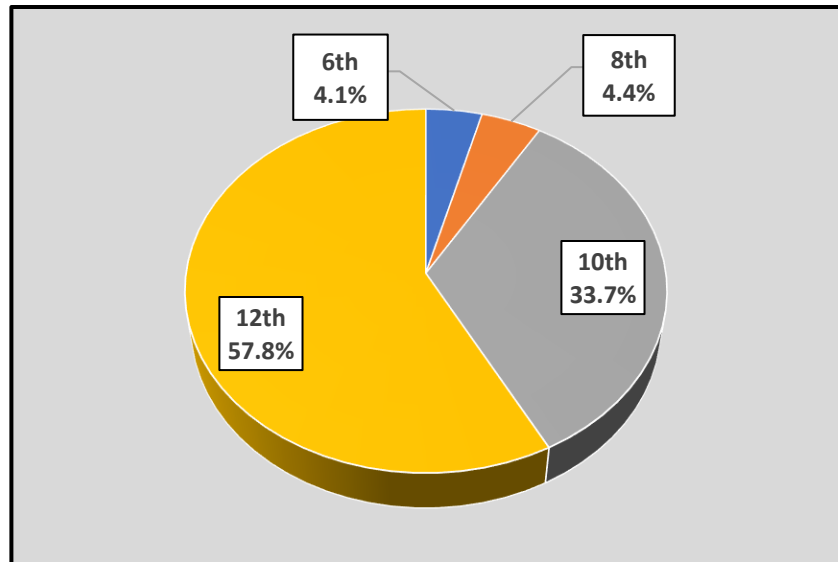
**Figure 7. Type of Allowance**



	Grade				
	6th	8th	10th	12th	Total
	Column %	Column %	Column %	Column %	Column %
<b>\$10.00 or less</b>	10.0%	7.0%	4.9%	5.2%	7.0%
<b>\$10.01 to \$15.00</b>	4.7%	5.5%	1.8%	3.8%	4.1%
<b>\$15.01 to \$20.00</b>	3.9%	3.1%	2.8%	3.8%	3.4%
<b>\$20.01 to \$25.00</b>	1.4%	0.8%	3.2%	2.1%	1.8%
<b>More than \$25.00</b>	1.4%	1.3%	0.7%	3.1%	1.6%
<b>I get money as needed</b>	61.0%	65.8%	77.8%	61.7%	66.2%
<b>N/A</b>	17.5%	16.4%	8.8%	20.2%	15.9%
<b>Count</b>	359	383	284	287	1313

As shown in Figure 8, very few 6th and 8th graders reported having a job. Among 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders, 33.7% and 57.8% respectively reported having a job.

**Figure 8. Percent of Students with a Job by Grade**



The student respondents have a similar gender and race/ethnicity makeup to the overall student population of the school district. Most respondents have lived in the community most of their school-aged lives, live with both parents, and tend to have grades that are above average. Slightly more of the student respondents were 14 or under than 15 or over. Many of the 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders have jobs.

## Developmental Assets

A primary aim of the survey was to assess the extent to which students in the school district have a set of attributes that may contribute to the prevention of high-risk or problem behaviors. The Search Institute's framework for assessing these attributes includes eight Developmental Asset categories and 40 corresponding Developmental Assets. Research has suggested that these assets may be protective factors and play a part in preventing high-risk and problem behaviors among youth.<sup>8</sup> Results for each of the eight Developmental Asset categories described above follow.

### ***Support***

The first major category of Developmental Assets identified by the Search Institute is Support. Research suggests that the presence of support from parents and others is one of the most important factors in the prevention of high-risk or problem behavior. The results of the survey items related to support are presented in this section of the report.

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<sup>8</sup> For more information on the Developmental Assets see: <https://www.search-institute.org/developmental-relationships/learning-developmental-relationships/> and <https://www.search-institute.org/our-research/developmental-assets/developmental-assets-framework/>



## Parental support

Parental Support is one subgroup within the larger Support asset category. Two questions were asked regarding parents' involvement with and interest in students' school work. As can be seen in Table 6, about three-fourths of the 6<sup>th</sup> graders indicated that parents help with homework at least "Sometimes." By 12<sup>th</sup> grade, only about 27% of students indicated their parents helped at least "Sometimes." Over 60% of 6<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> graders reported their parents spoke with them about school either "Often" or "Very often." About half of 12<sup>th</sup> graders responded that their parents spoke with them about school either "Often" or "Very often."

The results of these two questions suggest quite high parental support and involvement, although, as might be expected, parental support declined as the grade level increased. It is important to keep in mind that the extent of parental help with homework can be affected by many different factors. Given the class grades reported above, it is possible that many students may need help infrequently. The results of the second question, "Talking about school," indicate most parents are engaged with students regarding school.

<b>Table 6. Frequency of Parental School Involvement by Grade Level</b>						
		<b>Grade</b>				
		<b>6th</b>	<b>8th</b>	<b>10th</b>	<b>12th</b>	<b>Total</b>
		<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>
<b>Help you with your school work.</b>	<b>Very Often</b>	12.3%	5.8%	3.9%	1.4%	6.2%
	<b>Often</b>	19.6%	15.3%	8.2%	4.6%	12.6%
	<b>Sometimes</b>	39.8%	34.7%	28.1%	20.0%	31.5%
	<b>Seldom</b>	20.2%	31.8%	38.4%	34.4%	30.6%
	<b>Never</b>	8.1%	12.4%	21.4%	39.6%	19.1%
	<b>Count</b>	357	380	281	285	1303
<b>Talk to you about what you are doing in school.</b>	<b>Very Often</b>	37.8%	29.5%	26.9%	14.4%	27.9%
	<b>Often</b>	31.9%	40.0%	35.7%	35.8%	35.9%
	<b>Sometimes</b>	19.9%	19.7%	29.3%	30.2%	24.1%
	<b>Seldom</b>	8.4%	8.7%	6.4%	15.1%	9.5%
	<b>Never</b>	2.0%	2.1%	1.8%	4.6%	2.5%
	<b>Count</b>	357	380	283	285	1305

Parental support also was assessed using three additional survey items; "My parents give me help and support when I need it," "My parents push me to do the best that I can," and "My parents put too much pressure on me to do well." The first two items reflect slightly different forms of parental support. The third item was included to assess the extent students may feel too much pressure from parents, even if they also receive help and support.

As indicated in Table 7, 86.3% of the total students responded they "Agreed" or "Strongly agreed" with the statement, "My parents give me help and support when I need it." Only 3.7% of student respondents indicated they "Disagree" or "Strongly disagree" with the statement. The

results were very similar for the statement, “My parents push me to do the best that I can,” with 87.2% responding “Strongly agree” or “Agree” with the statement.

The results of the third question in Table 7, “My parents put too much pressure on me to do well,” need to be interpreted differently because of the question’s focus. As shown, 48.4% indicated they “Strongly disagreed” or “Disagreed” with the statement. In other words, nearly half of students did not indicate feeling too much pressure from parents. 24.9% of the students, however, reported they “Agreed” or “Strongly agreed” with the statement, suggesting a sizable group of students does feel too much pressure.

<b>Table 7. Parental Support-related Survey Items by Grade Level</b>						
		<b>Grade</b>				
		<b>6th</b>	<b>8th</b>	<b>10th</b>	<b>12th</b>	<b>Total</b>
		<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>
<b>My parents give me help and support when I need it.</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	0.3%	0.8%	0.7%	1.4%	0.8%
	<b>Disagree</b>	2.8%	1.1%	4.6%	3.9%	2.9%
	<b>Neutral</b>	7.0%	12.4%	11.3%	9.5%	10.0%
	<b>Agree</b>	25.1%	30.3%	35.2%	36.8%	31.4%
	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	64.8%	55.4%	48.2%	48.4%	54.9%
	<b>Count</b>	358	379	284	285	1306
<b>My parents push me to do the best that I can.</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	0.0%	0.8%	1.8%	0.3%	0.7%
	<b>Disagree</b>	1.7%	1.6%	1.1%	3.8%	2.0%
	<b>Neutral</b>	7.5%	9.8%	11.6%	12.2%	10.1%
	<b>Agree</b>	24.6%	30.0%	39.4%	44.8%	33.8%
	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	66.2%	57.8%	46.1%	38.8%	53.4%
	<b>Count</b>	358	377	284	286	1305
<b>My parents put too much pressure on me to do well.</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	26.5%	12.7%	8.8%	12.0%	15.5%
	<b>Disagree</b>	31.5%	34.3%	31.4%	34.2%	32.9%
	<b>Neutral</b>	22.6%	27.7%	28.3%	29.2%	26.7%
	<b>Agree</b>	13.6%	14.8%	19.8%	17.3%	16.1%
	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	5.8%	10.6%	11.7%	7.4%	8.8%
	<b>Count</b>	359	379	283	284	1305

Some differences among the grade levels on the two items related to parental support also are revealed in Table 7. The perceived level of parental support tended to be inversely related to grade level. This is not surprising since it may reflect a natural transition toward more independence among older students. Even though there was a decline in perceived support as grade level increased, the overall level of support remained high for all four grade groups.

There also are differences among the grade levels regarding parental pressure. The proportion of 6<sup>th</sup> graders indicating they feel pressure is lower than those of the three other grade levels. Although there are some differences in proportions among 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> graders, they are not pronounced.

Overall, the results of the survey suggest that parental support is high in the student population. Most students indicated their parents helped with homework and talked with them about school. Over 80% of the students reported getting support from parents and that their parents push them to do their best.

A somewhat less positive result was that 24.9% of students indicated getting too much pressure from parents. A statistical analysis was conducted to look at the relationship between the two survey items, “My parents give me help and support when I need it” and “My parents put too much pressure on me to do well.” The results indicated an inverse relationship between the two items (Tau b = -.315,  $p < .01$ ).<sup>9</sup> In other words, students who feel their parents put too much pressure on them feel they do not receive the help and support they need from their parents.

### ***School Support***

Several survey questions focused on support in school, and the results for these items are presented in Table 8. 52.3% of students in all four grades combined indicated “Strongly agree” or “Agree” with the statement, “I get a lot of encouragement at school,” and 61% responded “Strongly agree” or “Agree” with the statement, “Teachers at school push me to do the best I can.” Noticeably higher proportions of 6<sup>th</sup> graders, however, responded “Strongly agree” on the questions than student respondents in the other three grades.

Students’ views of the level of caring of teachers were a bit more tepid than those for the other two questions. “Agree” or “Strongly agree” was reported by 39.8% of all students for the statement, “My teachers really care about me.” The difference in results suggests students make a distinction between caring and providing encouragement or pushing to do the best they can.

<b>Table 8. School Support by Grade Level</b>						
		<b>Grade</b>				
		<b>6th</b>	<b>8th</b>	<b>10th</b>	<b>12th</b>	<b>Count</b>
		<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>
<b>I get a lot of encouragement at my school.</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	2.5%	5.2%	5.7%	4.5%	4.4%
	<b>Disagree</b>	5.6%	13.1%	19.8%	11.9%	12.2%
	<b>Neutral</b>	26.8%	33.1%	35.3%	25.5%	30.2%
	<b>Agree</b>	45.0%	35.7%	33.2%	45.1%	39.8%
	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	20.1%	12.9%	6.0%	12.9%	13.4%
	<b>Count</b>	358	381	283	286	1308
<b>Teachers at school push me to do the best that I can.</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	2.5%	2.9%	2.8%	2.8%	2.8%
	<b>Disagree</b>	3.9%	13.9%	15.5%	9.8%	10.6%
	<b>Neutral</b>	19.3%	24.7%	35.6%	24.8%	25.6%
	<b>Agree</b>	45.4%	41.5%	38.0%	46.5%	42.9%
	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	28.9%	17.1%	8.1%	16.1%	18.1%
	<b>Count</b>	357	381	284	286	1308
<b>My teachers really care about me.</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	5.9%	12.2%	11.3%	5.7%	8.9%
	<b>Disagree</b>	7.6%	15.9%	23.0%	11.3%	14.2%
	<b>Neutral</b>	35.6%	33.7%	41.3%	39.2%	37.1%
	<b>Agree</b>	35.0%	28.1%	20.8%	39.2%	30.8%
	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	15.8%	10.1%	3.5%	4.6%	9.0%
	<b>Count</b>	354	377	283	283	1297

<sup>9</sup> Tau b is a measure of correlation used for the type of data in these survey items. These results indicate a statistically significant inverse correlation.

### ***Other Support***

The third area of support examined through the questionnaire was support other than from parents and the school (See Table 9). Over two-thirds of the students in all four grade levels indicated "Strongly agree" or "Agree" with the statement, "There is always someone to turn to." "Strongly agree" or "Agree" with the statement, "There are a lot of people who care about them in their neighborhood," was indicated by 58.9% of 6<sup>th</sup> graders, 58.0% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders, 47.7% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and 46.3% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders. In addition, 68.1% of 6<sup>th</sup> graders, 60.4% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders, 61.3% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and 66.7% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders noted that they could make friends easily. In short, most students reported having outside support if needed.

<b>Table 9. Other Support Factors by Grade Level</b>						
		<b>Grade</b>				
		<b>6th</b>	<b>8th</b>	<b>10th</b>	<b>12th</b>	<b>Count</b>
		<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>
<b>There is always someone I can turn to if I need help.</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	1.1%	2.4%	3.2%	3.2%	2.4%
	<b>Disagree</b>	5.0%	7.1%	11.7%	7.1%	7.5%
	<b>Neutral</b>	13.4%	19.8%	18.0%	13.8%	16.3%
	<b>Agree</b>	37.7%	43.3%	43.5%	51.6%	43.6%
	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	42.7%	27.4%	23.7%	24.4%	30.2%
	<b>Count</b>	358	379	283	283	1303
<b>There are a lot of people who care about me in my neighborhood.</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	2.0%	4.5%	6.8%	6.0%	4.6%
	<b>Disagree</b>	10.8%	13.5%	18.5%	20.1%	15.3%
	<b>Neutral</b>	28.3%	24.0%	27.0%	27.6%	26.6%
	<b>Agree</b>	34.0%	39.8%	38.1%	33.6%	36.5%
	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	24.9%	18.2%	9.6%	12.7%	17.0%
	<b>Count</b>	353	379	281	283	1296
<b>I make friends easily.</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	3.1%	4.7%	4.2%	3.2%	3.8%
	<b>Disagree</b>	7.9%	10.0%	9.5%	7.1%	8.7%
	<b>Neutral</b>	20.8%	24.8%	25.1%	23.0%	23.4%
	<b>Agree</b>	36.6%	36.9%	42.8%	42.0%	39.2%
	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	31.5%	23.5%	18.4%	24.7%	24.8%
	<b>Count</b>	355	379	283	283	1300

### ***Sources of Support***

A final set of support questions examined potential student confidants other than parents. As shown in Table 10, a close relative or friend was identified as the most likely confidant by a large margin, with 87.6% of all students indicating "Somewhat likely" or "Very likely." There was some variation among the four grades in the intensity of likelihood. The proportion of students indicating "Very likely" declined from 68.7% for 6<sup>th</sup> graders to 47.6% for 12<sup>th</sup> graders.

Most students indicated they were at least "Somewhat likely" to confide in the other categories of confidants, with the exception of the school nurse. Of those, the Guidance/school

counselor had the highest proportion of students indicating they were “Very likely” to confide in them (22.4%).

<b>Table 10. Confidant Type by Grade Level</b>						
		<b>Grade</b>				
		<b>6th</b>	<b>8th</b>	<b>10th</b>	<b>12th</b>	<b>Count</b>
		<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>
<b>A teacher</b>	<b>Not Likely at All</b>	28.9%	45.5%	52.3%	41.4%	41.5%
	<b>Somewhat Likely</b>	59.4%	41.8%	41.3%	49.8%	48.3%
	<b>Very Likely</b>	11.8%	12.6%	6.4%	8.8%	10.2%
	<b>Count</b>	357	380	283	285	1305
<b>A coach</b>	<b>Not Likely at All</b>	45.4%	46.9%	51.5%	50.8%	48.3%
	<b>Somewhat Likely</b>	38.8%	37.2%	30.9%	32.4%	35.3%
	<b>Very Likely</b>	15.8%	15.9%	17.6%	16.8%	16.4%
	<b>Count</b>	348	371	272	256	1247
<b>A close relative or family friend</b>	<b>Not Likely at All</b>	5.3%	11.3%	15.9%	19.2%	12.4%
	<b>Somewhat Likely</b>	26.0%	29.5%	33.9%	33.2%	30.3%
	<b>Very Likely</b>	68.7%	59.2%	50.2%	47.6%	57.3%
	<b>Count</b>	358	380	283	286	1307
<b>Guidance/school counselor</b>	<b>Not Likely at All</b>	32.5%	49.3%	49.8%	44.7%	43.8%
	<b>Somewhat Likely</b>	45.1%	38.3%	33.2%	38.4%	39.1%
	<b>Very Likely</b>	22.4%	12.4%	17.0%	16.9%	17.1%
	<b>Count</b>	357	379	283	284	1303
<b>Student assistance counselor</b>	<b>Not Likely at All</b>	43.6%	63.6%	69.9%	61.5%	59.0%
	<b>Somewhat Likely</b>	46.4%	29.7%	22.5%	28.6%	32.5%
	<b>Very Likely</b>	10.0%	6.7%	7.6%	9.9%	8.5%
	<b>Count</b>	351	374	276	283	1284
<b>School nurse</b>	<b>Not Likely at All</b>	67.4%	76.8%	85.2%	85.3%	77.9%
	<b>Somewhat Likely</b>	28.9%	19.8%	13.1%	12.3%	19.2%
	<b>Very Likely</b>	3.7%	3.4%	1.8%	2.5%	2.9%
	<b>Count</b>	356	379	283	285	1303
<b>Doctor, nurse (other than school nurse), or other health professional</b>	<b>Not Likely at All</b>	43.1%	53.2%	55.8%	55.8%	51.6%
	<b>Somewhat Likely</b>	41.1%	31.0%	31.1%	33.6%	34.3%
	<b>Very Likely</b>	15.8%	15.9%	13.1%	10.6%	14.1%
	<b>Count</b>	355	378	283	283	1299
<b>An adult in your neighborhood</b>	<b>Not Likely at All</b>	51.9%	60.6%	71.4%	75.9%	63.9%
	<b>Somewhat Likely</b>	40.7%	34.1%	24.6%	18.4%	30.4%
	<b>Very Likely</b>	7.4%	5.3%	3.9%	5.7%	5.7%
	<b>Count</b>	351	378	280	282	1291

In summary, the results of the survey on the Developmental Asset category of Support suggest most students perceived themselves as having support from parents, the school, and others. Students considered family members and friends the most likely people to confide in if

needed. About one-fourth of students thought their parents pushed them too much, and this was inversely related to perceiving parents as supportive. Finally, most students indicated they received encouragement at school from teachers.

## ***Boundaries and Expectations***

A second major category of Developmental Assets identified by the Search Institute is Boundaries and Expectations. This category is comprised of Developmental Assets related to rules and expectations.

The results for three survey items on school and family rules are presented in Table 11. As shown, 60.7% of all students combined indicated "Strongly agree" or "Agree" with the statement, "If I break one of my family rules, I usually get punished." Although there were some differences among the four grade levels, over half of the students in all four grades responded "Strongly agree" or "Agree" to the statement. 72.4% of all the student respondents indicated "Strongly agree" or "Agree" with the statement that the school has clear rules, and 68.2% indicated their family had clear rules.

These results suggest most students believe the rules in school and at home are clear. There is, however, a small subset of 12<sup>th</sup> graders who responded differently. About 20% reported "Strongly disagree" or "Disagree" with the statement, "If I break one of my family rules, I usually get punished." In addition, 29.2% of the 12<sup>th</sup> graders responded "Strongly disagree" or "Disagree" with the statement, "My family has clear rules about what I can and cannot do."

<b>Table 11. Family and School Rules by Grade</b>						
		<b>Grade</b>				
		<b>6th</b>	<b>8th</b>	<b>10th</b>	<b>12th</b>	<b>Total</b>
		<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>
<b>If I break one of my family rules, I usually get punished.</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	2.0%	1.9%	2.5%	4.0%	2.5%
	<b>Disagree</b>	9.5%	6.8%	9.7%	15.8%	10.1%
	<b>Neutral</b>	29.7%	24.4%	26.3%	25.9%	26.6%
	<b>Agree</b>	41.5%	41.5%	42.4%	38.5%	41.0%
	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	17.3%	25.5%	19.1%	15.8%	19.7%
	<b>Count</b>	347	369	278	278	1272
<b>My school has clear rules about what students can and cannot do.</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	2.2%	2.6%	3.5%	1.7%	2.5%
	<b>Disagree</b>	5.0%	8.4%	9.5%	11.2%	8.3%
	<b>Neutral</b>	14.8%	18.1%	20.8%	13.3%	16.7%
	<b>Agree</b>	50.0%	42.4%	50.4%	57.7%	49.5%
	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	27.9%	28.5%	15.8%	16.1%	22.9%
	<b>Count</b>	358	382	284	286	1310
<b>My family has clear rules about what I can and cannot do.</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	0.8%	1.1%	1.4%	1.7%	1.2%
	<b>Disagree</b>	4.2%	5.8%	10.3%	17.5%	8.9%
	<b>Neutral</b>	21.6%	24.9%	18.8%	20.3%	21.6%
	<b>Agree</b>	46.2%	39.9%	44.3%	44.4%	43.6%
	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	27.2%	28.3%	25.2%	16.1%	24.6%
	<b>Count</b>	357	378	282	286	1303

## Constructive Use of Time

A third category of Developmental Assets is Constructive Use of Time. Constructive Use of Time is the extent a student participates in activities that may provide developmental value such as lessons or extracurricular activities. The underlying premise of this category is that participation in positive activities will prevent or reduce the likelihood of participating in high-risk or problem activities.

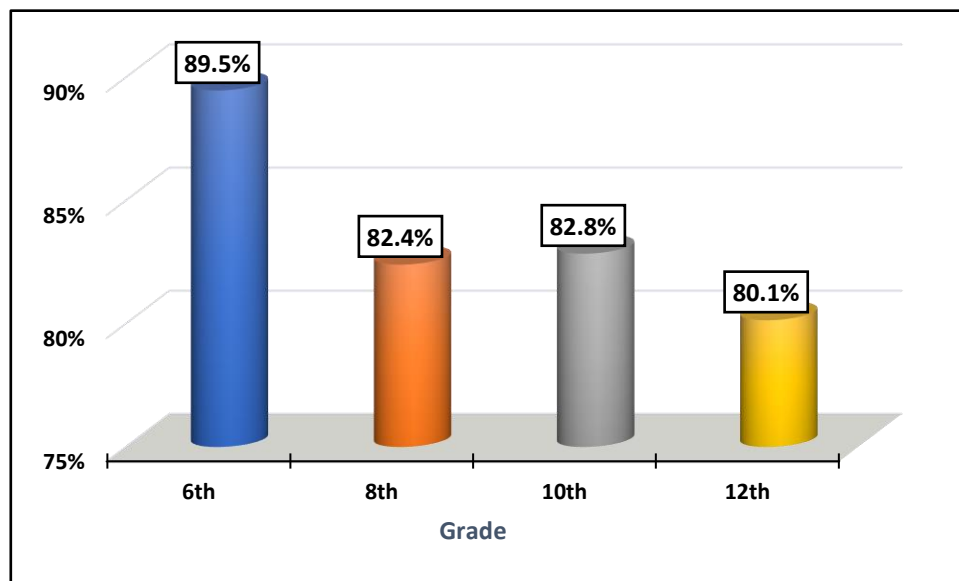
As shown in Table 12, 65.1% of all the students combined indicated participating in some sort of sports activity three or more hours per week. Participation in sports, however, was somewhat different among the grade levels. Sizable proportions of 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders reported participating in sports “11 or more hours per week,” 28.2% and 21.8% respectively. Also of note is the relatively large number of 12<sup>th</sup> graders (32.0%) who indicated no participation in sports.

Participation in other activities was less frequent than in sports. Over half of 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders and about a third of 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders indicated no participation in clubs or organizations at school. Participation in clubs or organizations outside of school was slightly higher, with 48.8% of 6<sup>th</sup> graders, 42.5% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders, 30.1% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and 33.6% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders indicating not participating. The results in Table 12 also suggest that the time commitment of students who do participate in clubs and organizations is much less than that for those participating in sports.

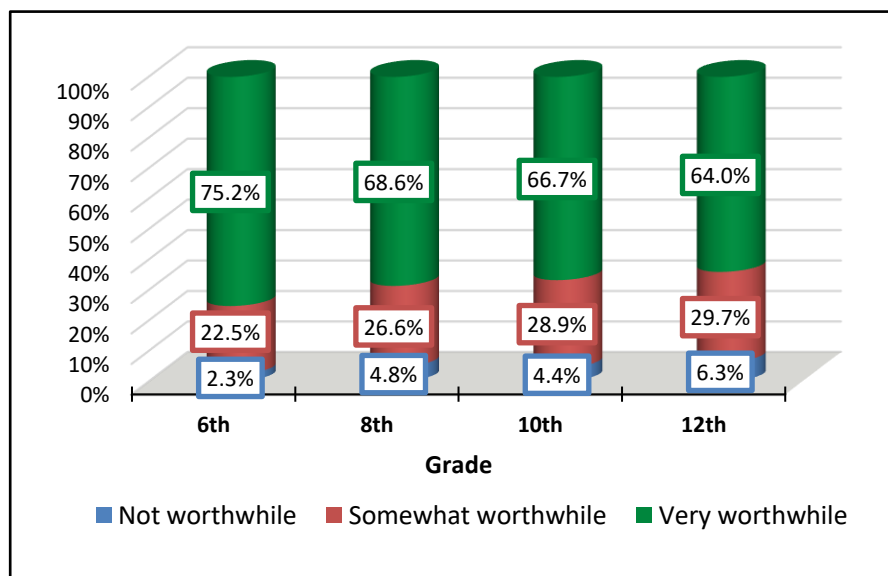
Table 12. Participation in Activities by Grade Level						
		Grade				
		6th	8th	10th	12th	Total
		Column %	Column %	Column %	Column %	Column %
Playing in sports or helping with sports teams at school or in the community.	0 hours	8.3%	11.8%	16.6%	32.0%	16.2%
	1 hour	8.9%	11.2%	4.7%	5.5%	7.9%
	2 hours	13.4%	12.3%	6.5%	9.5%	10.7%
	3 to 5 hours	28.3%	28.9%	21.7%	17.5%	24.7%
	6 to 10 hours	27.7%	26.2%	22.4%	13.8%	23.1%
	11 or more hours	13.4%	9.6%	28.2%	21.8%	17.3%
	Count	350	374	277	275	1276
In clubs or organizations (other than sports) at school	0 hours	56.4%	55.4%	34.2%	36.0%	46.7%
	1 hour	23.3%	19.7%	27.3%	17.6%	21.9%
	2 hours	11.0%	12.7%	19.6%	18.0%	14.9%
	3 to 5 hours	6.3%	8.1%	7.3%	16.2%	9.2%
	6 to 10 hours	2.4%	3.0%	4.0%	6.1%	3.7%
	11 or more hours	.6%	1.1%	7.6%	6.1%	3.5%
	Count	335	370	275	278	1258
In clubs or organizations (other than sports) outside of school	0 hours	48.8%	42.5%	30.1%	33.6%	39.5%
	1 hour	17.8%	21.7%	15.4%	13.4%	17.4%
	2 hours	16.3%	17.6%	21.9%	19.1%	18.5%
	3 to 5 hours	11.2%	13.3%	20.4%	18.4%	15.4%
	6 to 10 hours	3.3%	3.3%	7.5%	9.7%	5.6%
	11 or more hours	2.7%	1.6%	4.7%	5.8%	3.5%
	Count	338	369	279	277	1263

Additional information was gathered on participation in athletics or intramural sports (See Figure 9). Over 80% of the students in all four grades indicated participating in athletics or intramural sports. In addition, as shown in Figure 10, nearly all participants responded that it was “Somewhat worthwhile” or “Very worthwhile” to participate.

**Figure 9. Percent of Students Participating in Athletics/Intramural Sports**



**Figure 10. Satisfaction with Participation in Athletics Intermural Sports**





The results for Constructive Use of Time are quite positive. Most student respondents reported active involvement in a variety of activities in and outside of school. In addition, a majority of students who participated in Athletics/Intermural sports indicated they considered participation worthwhile.

### ***Commitment to Learning***

The fourth category of Developmental Assets examined through the questionnaire was Commitment to Learning. This construct encompasses achievement motivation and engagement in learning-related activities.

The three items related to Commitment to Learning are presented in Table 13. Over 80% of the students in all four grades indicated either “Strongly disagree” or “Disagree” with the statement, “I don’t care how well I do in school.” For the statement, “I will do well if I work hard,” over 80% of students in 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grades indicated “Strongly agree” or “Agree,” with 75% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders reporting “Strongly agree” or “Agree.”

The third item in Table 13, “I usually expect to succeed in things I do,” also was positive, although somewhat less than the other two items. In this case, about 60% of the students in the four grades indicated positive responses. Although the ratings are lower than the other two items, they may reflect a desirable realistic expectation of success. Less than 12% of the students indicated “Strongly disagree” or “Disagree with the statement on expectations to succeed, suggesting that only a small segment of the students do not believe they can succeed with hard work.

<b>Table 13. Commitment to School and Work Effort</b>						
		<b>Grade</b>				
		<b>6th</b>	<b>8th</b>	<b>10th</b>	<b>12th</b>	<b>Total</b>
		<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>
<b>I don't care how well I do in school.</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	62.3%	56.8%	68.3%	58.7%	61.2%
	<b>Disagree</b>	24.0%	30.5%	23.6%	31.8%	27.5%
	<b>Neutral</b>	8.4%	8.4%	5.3%	3.8%	6.7%
	<b>Agree</b>	4.7%	3.2%	2.1%	3.1%	3.4%
	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	0.6%	1.1%	0.7%	2.4%	1.1%
	<b>Count</b>	358	380	284	286	1308
<b>I will do well if I work hard.</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	.6%	2.1%	2.8%	1.4%	1.7%
	<b>Disagree</b>	1.4%	3.4%	8.1%	2.5%	3.7%
	<b>Neutral</b>	8.7%	11.5%	14.1%	8.5%	10.6%
	<b>Agree</b>	28.5%	30.9%	34.5%	32.7%	31.4%
	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	60.9%	52.1%	40.5%	54.9%	52.6%
	<b>Count</b>	358	382	284	284	1308
<b>I usually expect to succeed in things I do.</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	0.3%	1.3%	2.8%	2.5%	1.6%
	<b>Disagree</b>	8.4%	11.3%	10.9%	9.2%	9.9%
	<b>Neutral</b>	29.8%	29.1%	23.2%	23.0%	26.7%
	<b>Agree</b>	43.7%	40.4%	42.3%	45.2%	42.8%
	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	17.8%	17.8%	20.8%	20.1%	19.0%
	<b>Count</b>	359	381	284	283	1307

Taken together, these items represent high levels of achievement motivation among the student respondents. In other words, there is a desire to do well, there is the belief that hard work will lead to positive results, and there is a realistic expectation of success, three factors considered important to motivation.<sup>10</sup> Although the proportion of students who did not expect to succeed with hard work was small, this group may represent students who are at risk of difficulties in school.

The two items in Table 14 examine the importance students place on performing well. Over 80% of the students in all four grades noted it was either “Quite important” or “Extremely important” to get good grades. Over 70% of the students reported they believed it was “Quite important” or “Extremely important” to be good at “At least one thing.” Further analysis suggests that students who believe they will “Do well if they work hard” are more likely to view “Getting good grades” is important (Tau b = .247, p < .001). This is consistent with expectancy theory with students connecting hard work to success and success to a valued reward, good grades. The other side of this is that students who do not believe hard work results in success also attribute less value to good grades.

<b>Table 14. Importance of Grades and Activities</b>						
		Grade				
		6th	8th	10th	12th	Count
		Column %	Column %	Column %	Column %	Column %
<b>Getting good grades in school.</b>	<b>Not Important</b>	1.1%	1.6%	0.4%	2.1%	1.3%
	<b>Somewhat Important</b>	3.4%	5.2%	6.7%	6.3%	5.3%
	<b>Not Sure</b>	4.7%	5.2%	1.1%	5.6%	4.3%
	<b>Quite Important</b>	33.2%	39.8%	33.6%	47.5%	38.3%
	<b>Extremely Important</b>	57.5%	48.2%	58.3%	38.4%	50.8%
	<b>Count</b>	358	382	283	284	1307
<b>Being really good at least one thing.</b>	<b>Not Important</b>	1.7%	2.4%	2.1%	2.1%	2.1%
	<b>Somewhat Important</b>	11.9%	7.9%	12.0%	13.8%	11.2%
	<b>Not Sure</b>	13.6%	11.5%	9.2%	12.0%	11.7%
	<b>Quite Important</b>	34.4%	33.0%	33.6%	43.1%	35.7%
	<b>Extremely Important</b>	38.4%	45.3%	43.1%	29.0%	39.4%
	<b>Count</b>	352	382	283	283	1300

Overall, the results on the survey items examining Commitment to Learning were consistently positive. Student responses suggest that most students are motivated and perceive hard work as leading to success. They also view getting good grades and doing at least one thing well as important. While the results are very positive, a small segment of students indicated they

<sup>10</sup> In Expectancy theory of motivation, motivation results if effort leads to performance that is likely to bring about success that is valued. An explanation of the theory can be found at: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expectancy\\_theory](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expectancy_theory). There are, of course, a variety of other theories of motivation, but these results align well with Expectancy theory.

did not believe they expected to succeed. Expectations of success are important to motivation, and the students in this group may be at risk for problems in school.

## Positive Identity

Positive Identity is the degree to which the student has high self-esteem and a sense of purpose in life. While several survey items presented under the other Developmental Asset categories may also apply here, the items discussed in this section relate specifically to emotional wellbeing.

The first item in Table 15, “I feel good about myself,” is a typical measure of self-esteem. 75.1% of 6<sup>th</sup> graders, 62.4% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders, 54.3% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and 66.9% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders indicated they “Agree” or “Strongly agree” with the statement. There were, however, small but noteworthy segments of 8<sup>th</sup> (13.1%), 10<sup>th</sup> (18.7%), and 12<sup>th</sup> (14.1%) graders who indicated “Strongly disagree” or “Disagree” with the statement.

<b>Table 15. Self Esteem and Emotional Wellbeing</b>						
		<b>Grade</b>				
		<b>6th</b>	<b>8th</b>	<b>10th</b>	<b>12th</b>	<b>Total</b>
		<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>
<b>I feel good about myself.</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	2.2%	5.6%	6.7%	4.6%	4.7%
	<b>Disagree</b>	5.6%	7.5%	12.0%	9.5%	8.4%
	<b>Neutral</b>	17.1%	24.5%	27.1%	19.0%	21.8%
	<b>Agree</b>	31.1%	37.1%	34.9%	43.0%	36.2%
	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	44.0%	25.3%	19.4%	23.9%	28.8%
	<b>Count</b>	357	372	284	284	1297
<b>I feel sad a lot of the time.</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	42.4%	22.9%	15.9%	16.4%	25.3%
	<b>Disagree</b>	33.1%	36.7%	34.6%	36.7%	35.3%
	<b>Neutral</b>	16.4%	24.7%	26.1%	21.3%	22.0%
	<b>Agree</b>	5.1%	8.8%	12.0%	17.5%	10.4%
	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	3.1%	6.9%	11.3%	8.0%	7.1%
	<b>Count</b>	354	376	283	286	1299
<b>I often feel lonely.</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	41.1%	23.5%	12.0%	11.7%	23.3%
	<b>Disagree</b>	31.6%	29.9%	28.6%	31.2%	30.4%
	<b>Neutral</b>	14.5%	22.5%	23.0%	22.7%	20.4%
	<b>Agree</b>	8.4%	16.7%	19.1%	22.7%	16.2%
	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	4.5%	7.4%	17.3%	11.7%	9.7%
	<b>Count</b>	358	378	283	282	1301
<b>I don't have enough time to do everything I need to do.</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	7.5%	5.5%	1.1%	3.2%	4.6%
	<b>Disagree</b>	23.7%	18.1%	8.1%	13.3%	16.4%
	<b>Neutral</b>	37.0%	22.0%	11.3%	14.4%	22.2%
	<b>Agree</b>	23.4%	31.8%	33.8%	37.2%	31.1%
	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	8.4%	22.6%	45.8%	31.9%	25.7%
	<b>Count</b>	359	381	284	285	1309

The next two items in Table 15, “I feel sad a lot of the time” and “I often feel lonely,” are items commonly used in scales used to assess if someone may be experiencing emotional distress.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Although these items are found in some scales used to assess emotional distress, by themselves they are not sufficient for conclusions and should be viewed only as indicators of possible emotional problems.

For these two items, the proportion of students who “Agree” or “Strongly agree” is the group who may have some risk of emotional difficulty.

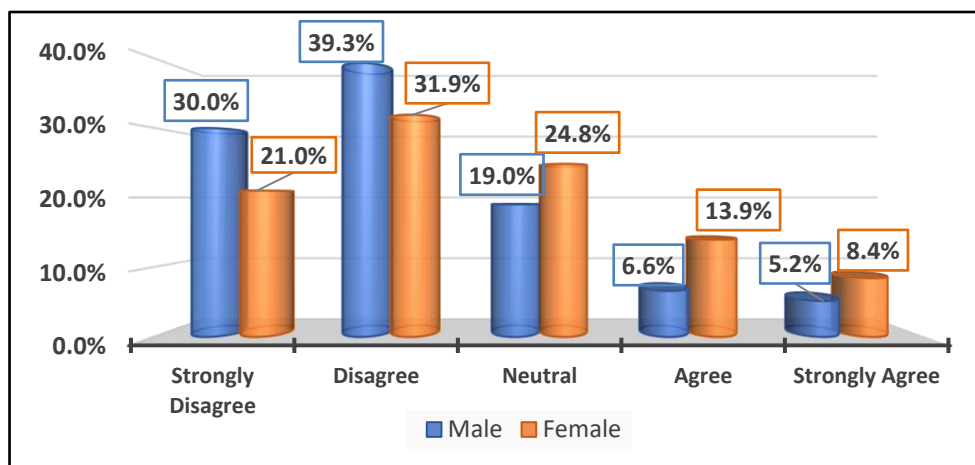
The proportion of students who indicated “Agree” or “Strongly agree” with the statement, “I feel sad a lot of the time,” increased with grade level from 8.2% of 6<sup>th</sup> graders, to 15.7% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders, 23.3% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and 25.5% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders. The proportion of students who noted “Strongly agree” or “Agree” with the statement, “I often feel lonely,” was somewhat higher, 12.9% of 6<sup>th</sup> graders, 24.1% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders, 36.4% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and 34.4% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders.

The most recent available data from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) for New Jersey from 2013 reported 31.6% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders and 26.8% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders surveyed felt sad or hopeless almost every day for 2 or more weeks in a row.<sup>12</sup> Although the questions are somewhat different, the results for the School District are similar to those for New Jersey.

The last item in Table 15, “I don’t have enough time to do everything I need to do,” was included as an indicator of the stress level students may be feeling. As can be seen in the table, the proportion of students indicating “Agree” or “Strongly agree” with this item jumps from 31.8% among 6<sup>th</sup> graders to 54.4% for 8<sup>th</sup> graders, 79.6% for 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and 69.1% for 12<sup>th</sup> graders.

A breakdown of the results for the survey item, “I feel sad a lot of the time,” by gender is presented in Figure 11. As shown, the proportions of young women expressing agreement with the statement are slightly higher than those for young men.

**Figure 11. Proportion of Students Reporting Feeling Sad by Gender**



Further statistical analyses of relationship of the statement, “I feel sad a lot of the time,” with selected other survey items are presented in Table 16. The results suggest that more agreement with the statement about feeling sadness is related to a student’s perception that they “Don’t have enough time to do everything I need to do.” To a lesser degree, this also is true with respect to the statement, “I don’t care how well I do in school.”

<sup>12</sup> Source: National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, <https://nccd.cdc.gov/youthonline/App/Results.aspx?TT=C&SID=HS&QID=H25&LID=NJ&LID2=SL&YID=2013&YID2=SY&SYID=&EYID=&HT=QQ&LCT=LL&COL=T&ROW1=N&ROW2=N&TST=false&C1=&C2=&SC=DEFAULT&SO=ASC&VA=CI&CS=Y&DP=1&QP=G&FG=G1&FA=A1&FR=R1&FS=S1&FSC=P1&FSI=I1>

In addition, the higher the level of agreement with feeling sadness, the less the agreement with the statements, “There is always someone I can turn to if I need help,” “My parents give me help and support when I need it,” “I get a lot of encouragement at my school,” “I will do well if I work hard,” and “I usually expect to succeed in the things I do.”

<b>Table 16. Relationships to Reported Level of Sadness</b>	
	<b>Tau b</b>
<b>There is always someone I can turn to if I need help.</b>	- .368
<b>I don't have enough time to do every-thing I need to do.</b>	.274
<b>I don't care how well I do in school.</b>	.106
<b>My parents give me help and support when I need it.</b>	- .289
<b>I get a lot of encouragement at my school.</b>	- .271
<b>I will do well if I work hard.</b>	- .209
<b>I usually expect to succeed in the things I do.</b>	- .148
Note: All coefficients are statistically significant, $p < .01$	

Statistical analyses were done to examine the relationship between agreement with feeling sad to the likelihood of using a confidant. As Table 17 indicates, the level of agreement with feeling sad a lot of the time is inversely related to the likelihood of seeking out the confidants listed.<sup>13</sup> Not only do some students who may be experiencing emotional difficulties indicate they have no one to turn to, these results suggest that they also may not be inclined to reach out.

<b>Table 17. Level of Agreement with Feeling Sad by Likelihood of Using a Confidant</b>					
		<b>Agreement with Feeling Sad a Lot of the Time</b>			<b>Tau b</b>
		<b>Disagree and Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree and Strongly Agree</b>	
		<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	
<b>A teacher</b>	<b>Not Likely at All</b>	35.1%	46.7%	58.4%	- .162
	<b>Somewhat Likely</b>	53.1%	43.5%	35.8%	
	<b>Very Likely</b>	11.8%	9.8%	5.8%	
<b>A coach</b>	<b>Not Likely at All</b>	41.8%	54.0%	63.5%	- .153
	<b>Somewhat Likely</b>	39.1%	31.9%	26.5%	
	<b>Very Likely</b>	19.1%	14.1%	10.0%	
<b>A close relative or family friend</b>	<b>Not Likely at All</b>	8.3%	15.1%	23.1%	- .180
	<b>Somewhat Likely</b>	28.1%	33.7%	35.6%	
	<b>Very Likely</b>	63.6%	51.2%	41.3%	

<sup>13</sup> Analyses were conducted for all eight confidants and the results were similar. There was more convergence among those confidants who were less likely to be used by students in general (Refer to Table 10 to review the results of student use of confidants).

It is important to keep in mind that these are associations, not causes. On the one hand, experience may contribute to feeling sadness. On the other hand, feeling sadness may color perceptions of experience.

The results of the ratings of the importance of being popular are presented in Table 18. As shown there was a slight change from 6<sup>th</sup> grade to the other grades, with 52.3% of 6<sup>th</sup> graders, 41.1% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders, 41.3% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and 44.3% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders indicated popularity was “Not important.” The proportions of students who indicated popularity was “Quite important” or “Extremely important” was highest among 10<sup>th</sup> graders at 17.3%.

<b>Table 18. Importance of Popularity</b>					
	<b>Grade</b>				
	<b>6th</b>	<b>8th</b>	<b>10th</b>	<b>12th</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>
<b>Not Important</b>	52.3%	41.1%	41.3%	44.3%	44.9%
<b>Somewhat Important</b>	18.1%	27.5%	27.9%	29.8%	25.5%
<b>Not Sure</b>	16.1%	17.0%	13.4%	14.5%	15.4%
<b>Quite Important</b>	9.9%	11.3%	14.8%	8.9%	11.1%
<b>Extremely Important</b>	3.7%	3.1%	2.5%	2.5%	3.0%
<b>Count</b>	354	382	283	282	1301

In summary, the responses of most student respondents to the questions indicate favorable Positive Identity. The majority of the students reported positive self-esteem and did not report issues of loneliness or sadness. In addition, most students did not assign much importance to popularity, an indirect indication of self-confidence.

Although the results suggest most students have a high degree of Positive Identity, the results also reveal a segment of students who may be having emotional difficulties. About one-quarter of 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders responded they were sad a lot of the time, and over one-third reported often being lonely. The results also suggest that these students are less likely to reach out to confidants than students not experiencing emotional difficulties. While the proportions for the School District’s students expressing experiencing sadness are similar to those reported for New Jersey in the 2013 results of the YRBS, consideration of ways to strengthen engaging students who may be experiencing emotional difficulties may be merited.

## ***Social Competencies***

Social competencies are the skills required to effectively make positive choices, resist negative influences, and build healthy relationships.

The extent to which students thought of themselves as able to think through their actions and resist pressure from other students was examined in one set of questions. The results presented in Table 19 suggest that most students see themselves as having personal limits. Over 85% of 6<sup>th</sup> graders responded that taking someone up on a dangerous dare was either “Not at all like me” or “A little like me.” This dropped to about two-thirds of the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> graders. Over

80% of 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> graders and 75% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders indicated knowing when to say “No” to something wrong or dangerous was either “Quite like me” or “Very much like me.”

As the table shows, however, the results on the survey item, “I think through the possible good and bad choices before decisions are slightly less positive. 54.5% of 6<sup>th</sup> graders, 53.6% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders, 61.1% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and 63.0% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders indicated “Quite like me” or “Very much like me” on the item. A small group of students in each class, 18.3% of 6<sup>th</sup> graders, 22.1% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders, 13.4% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and 14.9% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders, indicated “Not at all like me” or “A little bit like me” on the item.

<b>Table 19. Indicators of Resistance by Grade Level</b>						
		<b>Grade</b>				
		<b>6th</b>	<b>8th</b>	<b>10th</b>	<b>12th</b>	<b>Total</b>
		<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>
<b>I will take someone up on a dare even if it's dangerous or wrong.</b>	<b>Not at all like me</b>	64.5%	40.7%	41.9%	43.4%	48.0%
	<b>A little like me</b>	23.2%	29.4%	27.1%	23.1%	25.9%
	<b>Somewhat like me</b>	6.9%	16.9%	19.4%	18.9%	15.2%
	<b>Quite like me</b>	3.4%	8.7%	9.2%	9.6%	7.6%
	<b>Very much like me</b>	2.0%	4.2%	2.5%	5.0%	3.4%
	<b>Count</b>	349	378	284	281	1292
<b>I know how to say “no” when someone wants me to do things I know are wrong or dangerous.</b>	<b>Not at all like me</b>	2.5%	0.8%	2.1%	1.1%	1.6%
	<b>A little like me</b>	4.8%	5.6%	5.3%	7.5%	5.7%
	<b>Somewhat like me</b>	7.1%	11.4%	11.7%	16.5%	11.4%
	<b>Quite like me</b>	24.3%	28.0%	26.1%	33.0%	27.7%
	<b>Very much like me</b>	61.3%	54.2%	54.8%	41.9%	53.6%
	<b>Count</b>	354	378	283	279	1294
<b>I think through the possible good and bad choices before I make decisions.</b>	<b>Not at all like me</b>	5.1%	7.1%	4.2%	3.2%	5.1%
	<b>A little like me</b>	13.2%	15.0%	9.2%	11.7%	12.5%
	<b>Somewhat like me</b>	27.2%	24.3%	25.4%	22.1%	24.8%
	<b>Quite like me</b>	37.1%	35.1%	39.1%	34.5%	36.4%
	<b>Very much like me</b>	17.4%	18.5%	22.2%	28.5%	21.2%
	<b>Count</b>	356	379	284	281	1300
<b>I can calm myself when I feel stressed or upset without using drugs or alcohol</b>	<b>Not at all like me</b>	5.6%	6.3%	6.7%	3.9%	5.7%
	<b>A little like me</b>	3.0%	6.6%	9.2%	7.5%	6.4%
	<b>Somewhat like me</b>	6.8%	9.5%	13.8%	15.4%	11.0%
	<b>Quite like me</b>	21.9%	22.2%	27.9%	35.4%	26.3%
	<b>Very much like me</b>	62.7%	55.3%	42.4%	37.9%	50.6%
	<b>Count</b>	338	378	283	280	1279

Students were asked about their ability to calm themselves in a stressful situation in the last question in Table 19. As shown, 84.6% of 6<sup>th</sup> graders, 77.5% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders, 70.3% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and 77.3% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders indicated “Quite like me” or “Very much like me” on the item. It is

noteworthy, however, that the proportion of students choosing “Very much like me” declined from 6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. This may reflect more experience with stressful situations that were difficult among older students.

The results for two additional questions related to students’ resistance to inappropriate behavior are presented in Table 20. The first, “I am not interested in anything unless it is exciting,” is one way of examining students’ interest in thrill seeking. There was some variation from grade-to-grade, with 24.1% of 6<sup>th</sup> graders, 38.1% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders, 38.1% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and 39.3% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders indicating “Strongly agree” or “Agree” on the item.

The responses to the item, “I often act without stopping to think,” were slightly lower with 23.5% of 6<sup>th</sup> graders, 31.4% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders, 31.1% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and 30.9% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders indicating “Strongly agree” or “Agree.” On the other end of both survey items, over one-third of the respondents indicated “Strongly disagree” or “Disagree,” although less than 10% of students in any grade indicated “Strongly disagree.” As might be expected of young people, there is a group that acknowledges some likelihood of acting on impulse.

<b>Table 20. Impulsivity Related Items</b>						
		<b>Grade</b>				
		<b>6th</b>	<b>8th</b>	<b>10th</b>	<b>12th</b>	<b>Total</b>
		<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>
<b>I am not interested in anything unless it is exciting.</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	8.7%	4.3%	4.9%	4.2%	5.6%
	<b>Disagree</b>	29.1%	21.0%	33.5%	26.3%	27.1%
	<b>Neutral</b>	38.1%	36.7%	23.6%	30.2%	32.8%
	<b>Agree</b>	14.3%	24.5%	25.4%	26.0%	22.2%
	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	9.8%	13.6%	12.7%	13.3%	12.3%
	<b>Count</b>	357	376	284	285	1302
<b>I often act without stopping to think.</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	5.3%	5.0%	6.7%	8.5%	6.2%
	<b>Disagree</b>	33.1%	28.3%	39.2%	36.3%	33.7%
	<b>Neutral</b>	38.1%	35.3%	23.0%	24.3%	31.0%
	<b>Agree</b>	17.1%	21.7%	23.3%	23.2%	21.1%
	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	6.4%	9.7%	7.8%	7.7%	8.0%
	<b>Count</b>	357	382	283	284	1306

A second set of questions focused on students’ perceptions of their relationship to other people (See Table 21). Over three-fourths of students in each of the four grade levels noted that the statement, “I care about other people’s feelings,” was either “Quite like me” or “Very much like me.” In addition, more than 80% of the students in each of the four grades responded that “Helping other people” was either “Quite important” or “Extremely important.”

Students’ views about “Getting to know people of different races or ethnic groups” were somewhat different than those for the other two questions. The proportion of students reporting “Quite important” or “Extremely important” were 58.3% for 6<sup>th</sup> graders, 59.5% for 8<sup>th</sup> graders,



64.5% for 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and 61.2% for 12<sup>th</sup> graders. Although somewhat lower overall than the ratings for the other questions, less than 7% of students in any grade indicated that it was “Not important.”

<b>Table 21. Relationship to Other People</b>						
		<b>Grade</b>				
		<b>6th</b>	<b>8th</b>	<b>10th</b>	<b>12th</b>	<b>Total</b>
		<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>
<b>I care about other people's feelings.</b>	<b>Not at all like me</b>	2.2%	1.1%	2.1%	1.8%	1.8%
	<b>A little like me</b>	3.9%	7.4%	4.6%	4.6%	5.2%
	<b>Somewhat like me</b>	12.6%	17.4%	13.0%	14.1%	14.4%
	<b>Quite like me</b>	39.0%	38.5%	43.0%	40.6%	40.1%
	<b>Very much like me</b>	42.1%	35.6%	37.3%	38.9%	38.5%
	<b>Count</b>	356	379	284	283	1302
<b>Helping other people.</b>	<b>Not Important</b>	0.6%	0.5%	2.8%	1.1%	1.2%
	<b>Somewhat Important</b>	6.2%	9.4%	8.9%	6.4%	7.8%
	<b>Not Sure</b>	6.7%	5.5%	2.1%	4.6%	4.9%
	<b>Quite Important</b>	48.5%	51.6%	51.8%	46.1%	49.6%
	<b>Extremely Important</b>	38.1%	33.0%	34.4%	41.8%	36.6%
	<b>Count</b>	357	382	282	282	1303
<b>Getting to know people of different races or ethnic groups.</b>	<b>Not Important</b>	4.6%	6.4%	5.4%	6.1%	5.6%
	<b>Somewhat Important</b>	9.7%	13.1%	15.6%	14.4%	13.0%
	<b>Not Sure</b>	27.4%	21.1%	14.5%	15.5%	20.2%
	<b>Quite Important</b>	40.0%	40.0%	41.7%	43.9%	41.2%
	<b>Extremely Important</b>	18.3%	19.5%	22.8%	20.1%	20.0%
	<b>Count</b>	350	375	276	278	1279

In summary, the ratings suggest most students self-report positive Social Competencies. On balance, about three-fourths of the students provided responses that suggest some degree of resistance to social pressure. There were, however, about 25% of the students who might be characterized as impulsive or oriented toward thrill seeking, an attribute that is associated with risk behavior. In addition, most students saw themselves as caring about others' feelings and considered helping others important. Finally, most students responded that getting to know someone of a different ethnicity was important.

### ***Positive Values***

The category of Positive Values encompasses the degree to which the person has principles in place that affect positive choices. The questions focus on positive motivation, decision making, and responsibility.

The first item in Table 22 is an assessment of students' perceptions of their judgment. "Strongly agree" or "Agree" with the statement, "I do many things I regret afterward," was indicated by 22.7% of 6<sup>th</sup> graders, 29.3% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders, 24.3% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and 26.0% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders. In short, the results suggest that about one-fourth of students indicate frequently behaving in ways they regret.

Examination of the item, "I usually try to get by without doing any more work than I have to," provides additional insight into the perceptions of students. There is a decided jump from the proportion of 6<sup>th</sup> graders (27.1%) who "Agree" or "Strongly agree" with the statement compared to 38.0% for 8<sup>th</sup> graders, 46.8% for 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and 42.9% for 12<sup>th</sup> graders.

<b>Table 22. Extent of Regret and Work Ethic</b>						
		<b>Grade</b>				
		<b>6th</b>	<b>8th</b>	<b>10th</b>	<b>12th</b>	<b>Total</b>
		<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>
<b>I do many things I regret afterward.</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	13.3%	8.4%	9.2%	9.3%	10.1%
	<b>Disagree</b>	26.6%	34.4%	43.7%	35.2%	34.5%
	<b>Neutral</b>	37.4%	27.8%	22.9%	28.1%	29.4%
	<b>Agree</b>	17.3%	19.9%	17.3%	17.4%	18.1%
	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	5.4%	9.4%	7.0%	10.0%	7.9%
	<b>Count</b>	353	381	284	281	1299
<b>I usually try to get by without doing any more work than I have to.</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	12.1%	6.0%	10.6%	7.7%	9.1%
	<b>Disagree</b>	33.1%	23.1%	21.8%	22.5%	25.4%
	<b>Neutral</b>	27.7%	32.8%	20.8%	26.8%	27.5%
	<b>Agree</b>	20.3%	27.0%	33.8%	27.1%	26.7%
	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	6.8%	11.0%	13.0%	15.8%	11.4%
	<b>Count</b>	354	381	284	284	1303

The results for a question about students' perceived importance of accepting responsibility for their actions are presented in Table 23. Over 80% of students in all four grades indicated "Quite important" or "Extremely important" on the item, "How important to accept responsibility for actions?"

Table 23. Important to Accept responsibility						
		Grade				
		6th	8th	10th	12th	Total
		Column %	Column %	Column %	Column %	Column %
Accepting responsibility for my actions when I make a mistake or get in trouble.	Not Important	1.1%	1.3%	1.4%	0.7%	1.2%
	Somewhat Important	4.5%	9.2%	6.4%	6.0%	6.6%
	Not Sure	8.1%	9.2%	9.2%	9.9%	9.1%
	Quite Important	48.3%	46.6%	49.6%	43.1%	47.0%
	Extremely Important	37.9%	33.8%	33.3%	40.3%	36.2%
	Count	356	382	282	283	1303

Overall, the findings for the questions on Positive Values are positive. Most students indicated they considered accepting responsibility for actions important, a very positive result. The results also indicate that most students do not “Do many things they regret afterwards,” but about one-quarter indicated they do. Analysis indicated a strong correlation between the responses to “I do many things I regret afterward” and “I often act without stopping to think” ( $\tau_b = .430$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In other words, the students who indicate doing things they regret also see themselves as acting without stopping to think.

Finally, sizable groups of students, especially in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades, reported “Not doing more than they have to.” Interpretation of this item, however, is somewhat difficult. It is possible that the shift in attitude between the two lower grades and the two upper grades may have something to do with time commitment.

## Empowerment

Empowerment is the sense among students that they are valued by their community and feel safe. Three questions in the survey examined aspects of empowerment (See Table 24). The first, “Adults in my town/city make me feel useful,” was an assessment of the perceptions of students regarding how valued they are in their community. “Strongly agree” or “Agree” was reported for this item by 44.9% of 6<sup>th</sup> graders, 31.1% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders, 31.9% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and 36.1% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders. In addition, 16.9% of 6<sup>th</sup> graders, 23.7% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders, 26.2% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and 29.4% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders indicated “Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree” on the item. These results suggest that sizable segments of students have lukewarm beliefs about how useful adults make them feel.

The results for the second item, “Students help decide what goes on in the school,” are somewhat mixed as well. On the one hand, between 29% and 44% of 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> graders responded “Agree” or “Strongly agree” with the statement. On the other hand, considerable numbers of students; ranging from a low of 29.3% for 8<sup>th</sup> graders to a high of 44.0% for 12<sup>th</sup> graders, reported either “Disagree” or “Strongly disagree” with the statement.

The final item, “I feel safe in my school,” had positive results, with about 69.6% of 6<sup>th</sup> graders, 55.0% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders, 53.5% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and 68.6% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders indicating “Agree” or “Strongly agree,” with the statement.

<b>Table 24. Empowerment and Safety</b>						
		What grade are you currently in:				
		6th	8th	10th	12th	Total
		Column %	Column %	Column %	Column %	Column %
<b>Adults in my town or city make me feel useful.</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	3.5%	7.0%	4.7%	6.5%	5.4%
	<b>Disagree</b>	13.4%	16.7%	21.5%	22.9%	18.2%
	<b>Neutral</b>	38.2%	45.2%	41.9%	34.8%	40.3%
	<b>Agree</b>	32.9%	26.3%	27.2%	31.5%	29.5%
	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	12.0%	4.8%	4.7%	4.3%	6.6%
	<b>Count</b>	343	372	279	279	1273
<b>Students help decide what goes on in the school.</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	7.6%	21.0%	11.7%	10.5%	13.0%
	<b>Disagree</b>	20.4%	26.3%	28.1%	19.2%	23.5%
	<b>Neutral</b>	38.0%	23.4%	24.2%	26.2%	28.2%
	<b>Agree</b>	28.0%	25.3%	28.5%	38.8%	29.7%
	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	5.9%	4.0%	7.5%	5.2%	5.6%
	<b>Count</b>	353	376	281	286	1296
<b>I feel safe in my school.</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	3.7%	6.7%	7.8%	5.1%	5.8%
	<b>Disagree</b>	10.1%	14.3%	15.2%	8.7%	12.1%
	<b>Neutral</b>	16.6%	24.0%	23.4%	17.7%	20.5%
	<b>Agree</b>	37.9%	34.5%	38.3%	48.7%	39.3%
	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	31.7%	20.5%	15.2%	19.9%	22.3%
	<b>Count</b>	356	371	282	277	1286

The findings suggest most students feel safe in their school. The results specific to empowerment in both the community and schools, however, are more mixed. Most Students had somewhat moderate views of how useful adults make them feel in the community, and if they help decide what goes on in the school.

## Risk and Problem Behaviors

One focus of the survey was to assess different risk and problem behaviors in which students may be engaging. The results of those questions are presented in this section.

The results of a series of questions on Problem Behaviors in the past year are presented in Table 25. Nearly all students who responded indicated no involvement in “Physical fighting” in the past year. About 20% of students in 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grades indicated some involvement in the past year in “Taking something in excess of \$10.00 in value,” “Having been to the principal’s office,” and “Vandalizing property.” There was substantial variation in the proportions of students who were “Sent to the office” at least once, 18.7% for 6<sup>th</sup> graders, 28.1% for 8<sup>th</sup> graders, 11.7% for 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and 15.2% for 12<sup>th</sup> graders.

The proportion of students reporting “Skipping class” was markedly higher for 12<sup>th</sup> grade students than those in the three other groups. Half of the 12<sup>th</sup> graders indicated skipping school one or more times in the past year. In addition, 10.7% of the 12<sup>th</sup> graders reported skipping school “5 or more times” in the past year. In comparison, about one-quarter of 10<sup>th</sup> graders reported skipping one or more days of school in the past year.

There also was an increase in students reporting “Used a drug other than alcohol to get high” from 6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade, with less than 1% of 6<sup>th</sup> graders to 29% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders. Further, 14.9% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders reported using a drug other than alcohol “5 or more times” in the past year.

<b>Table 25. Problem Behavior Frequency in Past Year by Grade Level</b>						
		<b>Grade</b>				
		<b>6th</b>	<b>8th</b>	<b>10th</b>	<b>12th</b>	<b>Total</b>
		<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>
<b>Gotten into a serious physical fight at school.</b>	<b>Never</b>	95.5%	92.3%	97.5%	96.8%	95.3%
	<b>1 or 2 times</b>	4.2%	6.6%	1.4%	1.1%	3.6%
	<b>3 or 4 times</b>	0.0%	0.3%	0.4%	1.1%	0.4%
	<b>5 or more times</b>	0.3%	0.8%	0.7%	1.1%	0.7%
	<b>Count</b>	358	378	283	281	1300
<b>Taken something worth more than \$10.00 that did not belong to you.</b>	<b>Never</b>	91.3%	80.4%	84.3%	81.9%	84.6%
	<b>1 or 2 times</b>	7.6%	14.9%	11.0%	12.1%	11.4%
	<b>3 or 4 times</b>	0.3%	2.1%	2.8%	2.1%	1.8%
	<b>5 or more times</b>	0.8%	2.7%	1.8%	3.9%	2.2%
	<b>Count</b>	357	377	281	281	1296
<b>Vandalized or damaged property.</b>	<b>Never</b>	94.4%	83.9%	94.0%	89.0%	90.1%
	<b>1 or 2 times</b>	4.8%	12.7%	3.9%	7.8%	7.6%
	<b>3 or 4 times</b>	0.3%	2.4%	0.7%	1.8%	1.3%
	<b>5 or more times</b>	0.6%	1.1%	1.4%	1.4%	1.1%
	<b>Count</b>	355	378	283	281	1297
<b>Been sent to the “office” or “principal” for getting in trouble in school.</b>	<b>Never</b>	81.2%	71.9%	88.3%	84.7%	80.8%
	<b>1 or 2 times</b>	15.4%	18.6%	9.9%	11.0%	14.2%
	<b>3 or 4 times</b>	2.2%	4.2%	1.1%	2.8%	2.7%
	<b>5 or more times</b>	1.1%	5.3%	0.7%	1.4%	2.3%
	<b>Count</b>	356	377	283	281	1297
<b>Used a drug other than alcohol to get high.</b>	<b>Never</b>	99.7%	95.5%	87.2%	71.0%	89.6%
	<b>1 or 2 times</b>	0.3%	1.9%	4.6%	8.7%	3.5%
	<b>3 or 4 times</b>	0.0%	1.1%	2.5%	5.4%	2.0%
	<b>5 or more times</b>	0.0%	1.6%	5.7%	14.9%	4.9%
	<b>Count</b>	353	377	281	276	1287
<b>Skipped school or cut classes.</b>	<b>Never</b>	92.7%	84.1%	74.1%	49.8%	76.9%
	<b>1 or 2 times</b>	5.3%	11.9%	17.7%	31.0%	15.5%
	<b>3 or 4 times</b>	0.6%	2.4%	5.0%	8.5%	3.8%
	<b>5 or more times</b>	1.4%	1.6%	3.2%	10.7%	3.9%
	<b>Count</b>	356	377	282	281	1296

Information about student use of electronic cigarettes is presented in Table 26. The proportions of student reporting use of e-cigarettes for both tobacco and marijuana increased from 6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. By 12<sup>th</sup> grade, 11.7% of the students indicated use of e-cigarettes for tobacco “10 or more days” in the past month. In addition, 22.7% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders reported using e-cigarettes for marijuana/THC one or more days in the past month, and 9.9% reported use 10 or more days.

<b>Table 26. Use of Electronic Cigarettes by Grade</b>						
<b>N = 1255</b>						
		<b>Grade</b>				
		<b>6th</b>	<b>8th</b>	<b>10th</b>	<b>12th</b>	<b>Total</b>
		<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>
<b>Used electronic cigarettes for tobacco in past 30 days</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	98.5%	93.8%	84.4%	72.6%	88.4%
	<b>1 - 9 days</b>	.3%	3.8%	8.7%	15.7%	6.5%
	<b>10 or more days</b>	1.2%	2.4%	6.9%	11.7%	5.1%
<b>Used electronic cigarettes for marijuana/THC oil in past 30 days</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	99.7%	97.0%	90.3%	77.3%	92.0%
	<b>1 - 9 days</b>	.0%	1.6%	7.2%	12.8%	4.9%
	<b>10 or more days</b>	.3%	1.3%	2.5%	9.9%	3.2%

## Student Cheating

The results for three questions specific to cheating are reported in Table 27. An examination of the result reveals several patterns. First, the proportion of students who indicated some cheating on all three questions increases with grade in school. Second, regardless of grade, “Copied another’s homework,” is the most frequent form of cheating. By 12<sup>th</sup> grade, 58.3% of students responded they “Copied another’s homework” two or more times in the past year.

Sizable proportions of students also reported “Copying from the Internet” and “Cheating during a test.” The proportion of students indicating they copied from the Internet two or more times jumped sharply from the 6<sup>th</sup> (5.4%) and 8<sup>th</sup> (6.6%) grades to the 10<sup>th</sup> (22.4%) and 12<sup>th</sup> (25.2%) grades. The pattern for “Cheating on a test” was slightly mixed with 4.5% of 6<sup>th</sup>, 19.0% of 8<sup>th</sup>, 13.5% of 10<sup>th</sup>, and 22.3% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders responding they cheated “Two or more times.”

The proportions for are similar to the 2012 results of a national survey reported by the Josephson Institute in which 52% for 10<sup>th</sup> graders and 55% for 12<sup>th</sup> graders reported “Copying another’s homework.” The Josephson’s Institute’s results were somewhat higher than the School District’s for cheating on a test two or more times, 28% for 10<sup>th</sup> and 31% for 12<sup>th</sup> graders. Their results were slightly lower for copying from the Internet two or more times, 15% and 19% for 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders respectively.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup>.See the Josephson Institute: <http://charactercounts.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/ReportCard-2012-DataTables.pdf>. For additional information see: <https://charactercounts.org/>

<b>Table 27. Cheating Behavior Among Students</b>						
		What grade are you currently in:				
		6th	8th	10th	12th	Count
		Column %	Column %	Column %	Column %	Column %
<b>Copied an Internet document for a classroom assignment</b>	<b>Never</b>	86.0%	78.6%	65.4%	62.1%	74.1%
	<b>Only once</b>	8.6%	14.8%	12.1%	12.8%	12.1%
	<b>Two or more times</b>	5.4%	6.6%	22.5%	25.2%	13.8%
	<b>Count</b>	350	378	280	282	1290
<b>Cheated during a test at school</b>	<b>Never</b>	79.9%	62.6%	75.1%	65.6%	70.7%
	<b>Only once</b>	15.6%	18.4%	11.4%	12.1%	14.7%
	<b>Two or more times</b>	4.5%	19.0%	13.5%	22.3%	14.6%
	<b>Count</b>	353	374	281	282	1290
<b>Copied another's homework</b>	<b>Never</b>	66.3%	35.3%	22.2%	29.7%	39.7%
	<b>Only once</b>	24.9%	23.5%	20.4%	12.0%	20.7%
	<b>Two or more times</b>	8.9%	41.2%	57.3%	58.3%	39.7%
	<b>Count</b>	350	374	279	283	1286

In addition, to the three questions on cheating, a fourth question on perceptions that may affect the willingness to cheat was asked. As shown in Table 28, the proportion of students who indicated “Agree” or “Strongly agree” with the statement, “People who lie or break rules are more likely to succeed,” increases with grade level. By the 12<sup>th</sup> grade, 23.7% of the students indicated agreement with the statement.

<b>Table 28. People who are willing to lie, or break the rules are more likely to succeed than people who are not</b>					
	Grade				
	6th	8th	10th	12th	Count
	Column %	Column %	Column %	Column %	Column %
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	50.3%	27.4%	17.6%	14.5%	28.7%
<b>Disagree</b>	26.8%	34.3%	24.3%	35.7%	30.4%
<b>Neutral</b>	18.9%	25.5%	34.9%	26.1%	25.9%
<b>Agree</b>	2.5%	8.5%	17.6%	17.3%	10.8%
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	1.4%	4.3%	5.6%	6.4%	4.2%
<b>Count</b>	354	376	284	283	1297

The results of a correlation analysis for all four items are presented in Table 29. Statistically significant correlations were found among all items. The findings suggest that students who cheat in one way more likely to cheat in other ways. In addition, they indicate willingness to cheat is associated with the perception that “People who lie or break rules are more likely to succeed.”

<b>Table 29. Correlation of Cheating-Related Survey Items</b>				
		<b>Copied an Internet document for a classroom assignment</b>	<b>Cheated during a test at school</b>	<b>Copied another's homework</b>
<b>People who are willing to lie, or break the rules are more likely to succeed than people who are not.</b>	<b>Correlation Coefficient</b>	<b>.152**</b>	<b>.145**</b>	<b>.254**</b>
	<b>N</b>	1277	1276	1273
<b>Copied an Internet document for a classroom assignment</b>	<b>Correlation Coefficient</b>		<b>.357**</b>	<b>.392**</b>
	<b>N</b>		1278	1276
<b>Cheated during a test at school</b>	<b>Correlation Coefficient</b>			<b>.428**</b>
	<b>N</b>			1279
<b>**Spearman's Rho, <math>p \leq .01</math></b>				

## Bullying

The results for the questions on bullying are presented in Table 30. To address the low number of responses indicating experience with bullying, the 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades were combined into one group and the 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades were combined into a second group.

The results presented in Table 30 reveal relatively low proportions of students report being bullied "Once a week or more." The highest proportion was 7.1% among 6<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> graders for "Being hit or kicked." The table also shows a decline in the proportion of students who indicated experiencing bullying from the 6<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grades to the 10<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> grades.

<b>Table 30. Experience with Bullying</b>				
		<b>Grade Level</b>		
		<b>6th &amp; 8th</b>	<b>10th &amp; 12th</b>	<b>Total</b>
		<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>
<b>Forced you to give them something that belonged to you.</b>	<b>Never</b>	80.0%	92.3%	85.3%
	<b>Less than once a week</b>	16.3%	3.2%	10.6%
	<b>Once a week or more</b>	3.7%	4.5%	4.0%
	<b>Count</b>	729	561	1290
<b>Threatened to hurt you.</b>	<b>Never</b>	83.4%	91.5%	86.9%
	<b>Less than once a week</b>	10.1%	4.1%	7.5%
	<b>Once a week or more</b>	6.5%	4.4%	5.6%
	<b>Count</b>	733	563	1296
<b>Hit, pushed, or kicked you in a way that wasn't just fun.</b>	<b>Never</b>	82.8%	91.5%	86.6%
	<b>Less than once a week</b>	10.1%	4.4%	7.6%
	<b>Once a week or more</b>	7.1%	4.1%	5.8%
	<b>Count</b>	733	563	1296
<b>Used an electronic method like texting, social media, or e-mail to threaten, embarrass, reveal hurtful secrets, or hurt you in some way.</b>	<b>Never</b>	83.9%	87.5%	85.5%
	<b>Less than once a week</b>	10.5%	7.1%	9.0%
	<b>Once a week or more</b>	5.6%	5.3%	5.5%
	<b>Count</b>	731	562	1293



A statistical analysis was done to examine the relationship between the survey items, “I feel sad a lot of the time” and “I often feel lonely,” and experiencing some form of bullying one or more times a week. The results presented in Table 31 suggest that the stronger the agreement with either statement, the more likely the student experienced some form of bullying at least once per week. As noted previously, these are statistical associations and not causal.

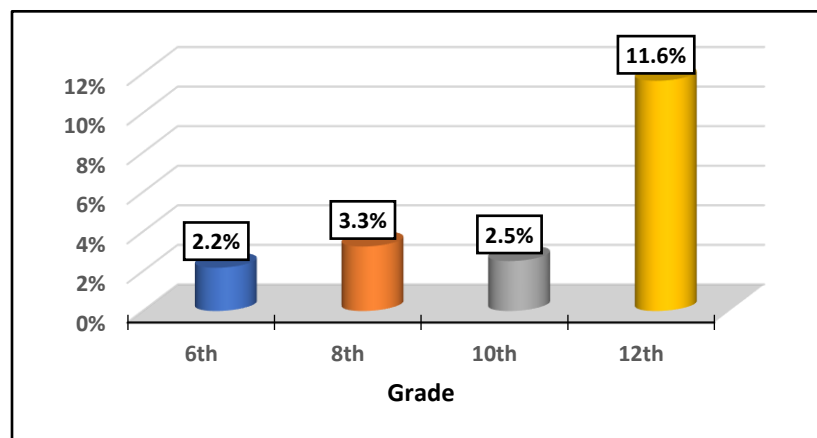
<b>Table 31. Association Between Ratings of Sadness and Loneliness and Experiencing Bullying at Least Once per Week.</b>	
	<b>Tau b</b>
<b>I feel sad a lot of the time</b>	.187 **
<b>I often feel lonely</b>	.145 **
** Statistically significant, $p < .001$	

Although the proportion of students who indicate experiencing some form of bullying at least once a week is low, the results suggest that students experiencing bullying also are at risk of emotional difficulties.<sup>15</sup>

### Alcohol-Related Information

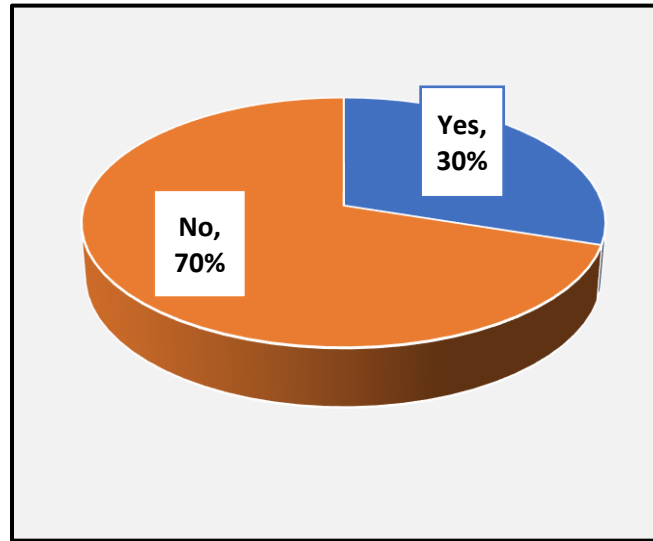
Several questions looking at student experiences with alcohol and riding in a vehicle in which someone may have used alcohol are examined in Figures 12 through 15. As shown in Figure 12, less than 5% of 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> graders indicated riding in a vehicle with someone their one age who had consumed alcohol. Given that most students in those grades do not have driver’s licenses, the low frequencies are to be expected. The proportion of 12<sup>th</sup> graders who have ridden with someone who has drunk alcohol, 11.6%, is high enough to merit concern. In addition, 30.0% of those students who rode with someone they knew who had drunk alcohol indicated they believed the person was drunk (See Figure 13).

**Figure 12. Percent of students indicating riding in vehicle with someone their Own Age who drank or was drunk**



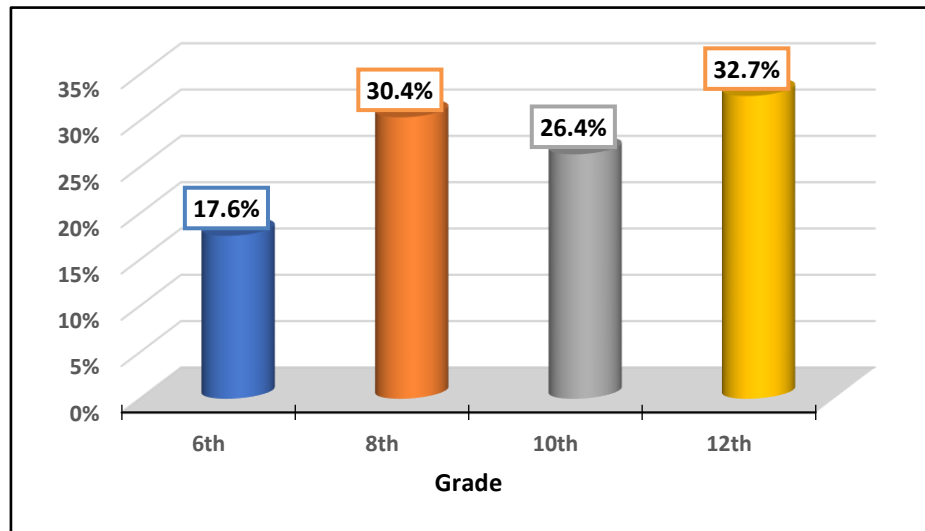
<sup>15</sup> A more extensive study of the relationship of Developmental Assets and bullying was published in 2010. Harlow, K. C. and Roberts, R. (2010). An exploration of the relationship between social and psychological factors and being bullied. *Children & Schools*, 32(1), 15-26.

**Figure 13. Percent who thought driver drunk**

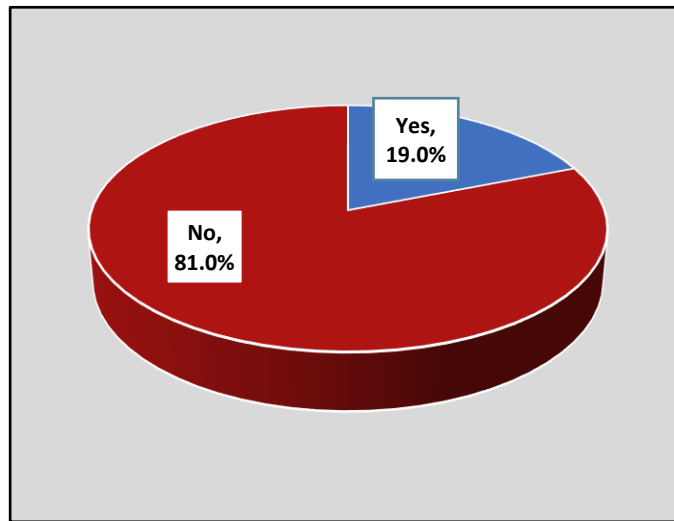


A similar question was asked about students' experiences riding in a vehicle with someone that was not their own age (See Figure 14). In this case, 17.6% of 6<sup>th</sup> graders, 30.4% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders, 26.4% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and 32.7% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders reported riding in a car with someone not their own age who had drunk alcohol. The proportion of drivers who were perceived as drunk was 19.0% (See Figure 15).

**Figure 14. Proportion of Students Who Indicate They Have Ridden in a Motor Vehicle Driven by Someone Not Their Age Who Drank Alcohol Before Driving**

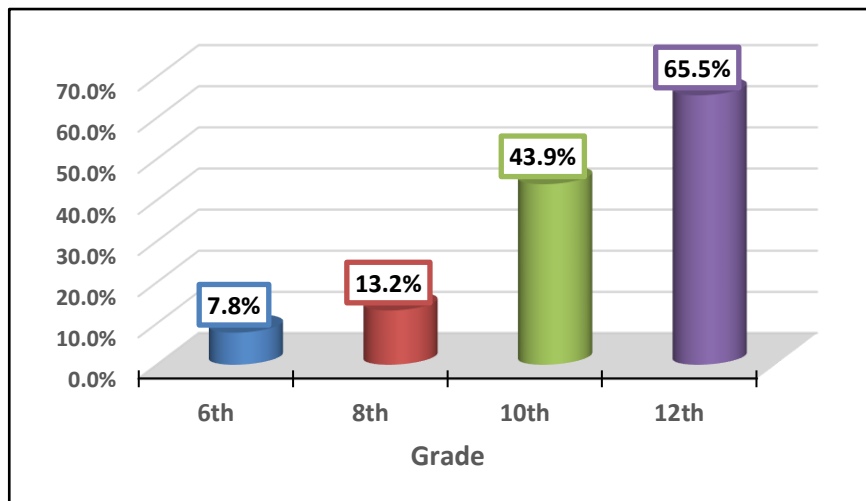


**Figure 15. Proportion of Students Who Thought the Driver Was Drunk**



The results of student responses to the question, “Is it OK with your parents to drink wine or beer once in a while, not counting religious occasions?” are presented in Figure 16. As might be expected, the proportion of students indicating “Mostly true” increased with grade level from 7.8% for 6<sup>th</sup> graders to 65.5% for 12<sup>th</sup> graders. Although the proportions appear quite high, especially by 10<sup>th</sup> grade, it should be added that the quantity and frequency of consumption is not assessed. It is possible that these numbers are nothing more than the occasional sip.

**Figure 16. Percent of Students Indicating “Mostly True” to Parents’ Approval to Drink Beer Once in a While**



Several questions exploring student perceptions of the use of alcohol are presented in Tables 32 and 33. The results presented represent the amount of alcohol use perceived by students. As shown in the Table 32, 68.6% 10<sup>th</sup> graders and 77.1% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders believe half or more of the students their age get drunk at least once a month. Similar results showing the perception among students that significant proportions of students are drinking and getting drunk are presented in Table 33. Although these are not actual measures of frequency of alcohol consumption, the perceptions are indicative of the students' beliefs that suggest a culture in which there is substantial under-age drinking.

<b>Table 32. How Many People Your Age Get Drunk at Least Once a Month?</b>						
<b>Grade</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Some</b>	<b>Half</b>	<b>Most</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>Row %</b>	<b>Row %</b>	<b>Row %</b>	<b>Row %</b>	<b>Row %</b>	<b>Count</b>
<b>6th</b>	66.9%	29.9%	2.7%	0.6%	0.0%	
<b>8th</b>	14.8%	65.5%	14.0%	4.9%	0.8%	
<b>10th</b>	2.9%	26.8%	35.0%	33.6%	1.8%	
<b>12th</b>	0.4%	12.9%	27.5%	49.6%	9.6%	
<b>Count</b>	287	450	235	253	35	1260

<b>Table 33. Perceptions of Frequency of Other Students' Use of Alcohol</b>						
		<b>Grade:</b>				
		<b>6th</b>	<b>8th</b>	<b>10th</b>	<b>12th</b>	<b>Total</b>
		<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>	<b>Column %</b>
<b>How many kids drunk beer, wine or "hard" liquor in past 3 months?</b>	<b>None</b>	67.3%	12.4%	1.1%	0.4%	21.9%
	<b>Some</b>	31.3%	73.9%	43.8%	17.9%	43.6%
	<b>Most</b>	1.5%	13.7%	55.2%	81.8%	34.6%
	<b>Count</b>	339	372	281	280	1272
<b>How many kids have gotten drunk at least once in a while</b>	<b>None</b>	77.2%	15.1%	1.8%	1.1%	25.6%
	<b>Some</b>	22.8%	73.9%	51.6%	28.5%	45.2%
	<b>Most</b>	0.0%	11.0%	46.6%	70.5%	29.2%
	<b>Count</b>	338	364	281	281	1264

One factor considered important in the use of alcohol among youth is the attitude of peers. The results in Table 34 indicate that over half of 10<sup>th</sup> graders and three-fourths of 12<sup>th</sup> graders believe their peers would approve of them drinking alcohol sometimes. In other words, drinking among 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders appears to be a norm among the students who responded.

**Table 34. If Your Friends Found Out That You Drank Alcohol Sometimes, How Do You Think They Would Feel?**

	Grade				
	6th	8th	10th	12th	Count
	Column %	Column %	Column %	Column %	Column %
<b>They would approve</b>	1.9%	10.7%	53.0%	75.2%	31.5%
<b>They would disapprove but still be my friends</b>	54.7%	69.3%	43.0%	22.0%	49.4%
<b>They would disapprove and stop being my friends</b>	43.4%	20.0%	4.0%	2.8%	19.1%
<b>Count</b>	309	345	249	250	1153

The results in this section indicate that sizable numbers of students are exposed to riding in a vehicle with someone who may be drunk. The results also suggest that many 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students believe the use of some alcohol is considered acceptable by their peers and their parents. Further, they also believe that many of the students they know are using alcohol. One interpretation of these results is that the use of alcohol is a norm for one segment of students.

## Summary and Conclusions

The purpose of this report was to present the results of a survey examining students' beliefs about the presence of a variety of Developmental Assets or factors that may play a role in preventing or reducing high-risk or problem behaviors. The mean scores for seven of the eight Developmental Asset categories are presented in Table 35 as a way of providing a summary of the results. Because the means are measures of central tendency, they are not a substitute for the detailed results presented in the body of the report. The mean scores were computed by combining the scores for selected survey items that represent a Developmental Asset category.

The category, "Constructive Use of Time," was not included in Table 35 because the survey scales for that category were assessments of activities rather than ratings. Results of the percentages of students by grade participating in Athletics/Intermural Sports are provided in Table 36.

The mean scores presented in Table 35 show the Developmental Asset categories all are above the midpoint score of 3; positive results consistent with the more detailed frequency scores noted in the full report. As Table 36 shows, about three-fourths of the students indicated participation in some athletic or intramural activities. The results of the survey also indicated that most students considered their participation in athletic or intramural activities at least worthwhile.

These results indicate that most students surveyed reported high levels of Developmental Assets. This suggests that most students had in place factors that contribute to reducing risk or problem behaviors. While the summary tables do not include the results of all survey items, the general results presented are consistent with those discussed in detail in the report.

<b>Table 35. Mean Scores for Selected Developmental Asset Categories</b>				
<b>Asset Categories</b>	<b>Grade</b>			
	<b>6th</b>	<b>8th</b>	<b>10th</b>	<b>12th</b>
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Mean</b>
<b>Support</b>				
Parent Support Summary	4.23	4.02	3.86	3.91
School Support Summary	3.72	3.34	3.10	3.47
Other Support Summary	3.90	3.68	3.53	3.65
<b>Boundaries and Expectations</b>				
Family/School Rules Summary	3.85	3.86	3.71	3.60
<b>Commitment to Learning</b>				
Commitment to School Summary	4.20	4.10	4.09	4.18
<b>Positive Identity</b>				
Emotional Wellbeing Summary	4.18	3.97	3.97	3.94
<b>Social Competencies</b>				
Resistance Summary	4.04	3.73	3.47	3.47
People Relationships Summary	3.98	3.87	3.92	3.96
<b>Positive Values</b>				
Work Ethic/Responsibility Summary	3.55	3.33	3.40	3.37
<b>Empowerment</b>				
Empowerment and Safety Summary	3.41	3.06	3.12	3.28

<b>Table 36. Percent of Students Participating in Athletics/Intramural Sports</b>	
<b>Grade</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>6th</b>	89.5%
<b>8th</b>	82.4%
<b>10th</b>	82.8%
<b>12th</b>	80.1%

The Developmental Asset categories are very broad constructs. The summary tables do not fully reflect some of the variations within the Developmental Asset categories. Even though the overall scores are positive, several findings deserve further comment. A brief list summarizing these findings follows.

- While parental support was high, about one-fourth of all students indicated feeling too much pressure to do well from parents. Students who felt too much pressure from parents were more likely to indicate feeling they did not get the support they need from parents.
- About half of the students indicated getting support from teachers, but only about 40% of all students indicated feeling that teachers really cared about them. Most students identified a “Close relative or family friend” as their most likely confidant if they need support. About half of the students indicated they would be at least “Somewhat likely” to consider a teacher or coach as a confidant.
- Students indicated feeling that school and family rules were clear. About 20% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders, however, indicated they would not get punished for breaking family rules.
- Most students indicated high levels of achievement motivation. They reported expecting to do well, that hard work would lead to positive results, and realistic expectations of success. There was, however, a small segment of students who did not expect to succeed with hard work.
- Most students indicated they felt good about themselves and did not experience frequent sadness or loneliness. About 25% of 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders, however, reported feeling sad a lot of the time. In addition, the results indicated feelings of sadness were associated with a variety of factors including feeling there is not someone to turn to, parents do not provide needed help and support, the school does not provide encouragement, and not expecting to succeed.
- Most students indicated they thought things through before acting, although about 25% of students reported a tendency toward acting impulsively. The results also suggested students who reported doing things they regret afterwards were more likely to respond that they did not think things through before acting.
- Copying another student’s homework was the most common form of cheating reported. By 10<sup>th</sup> grade, over half of the students indicated copying two or more times in the past year. About one quarter of 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders reported copying an Internet document for a classroom assignment two or more times. The findings also indicated students who cheat in one way are more likely to cheat in other ways. In addition, there was a positive correlation between belief that people who are willing to lie or break rules are more likely to succeed and cheating in school.
- Over 80% of the students reported never being bullied in any way. Around 5% of students, however, reported experiencing some form of bullying once a week or more. In addition, those students who experienced bullying once a week or more were more likely to report feeling sad and lonely.

- About 12% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders reported riding with someone their own age who had been drinking. They indicated they believed 30% of the drivers were drunk. Over one-quarter of students responded they had ridden in a car with someone not their age who had been drinking. They reported they thought 19% of those drivers were drunk.

## **Implications of the Results**

The results of the survey indicated that most students possess high levels of the Developmental Assets. These results are consistent with the positive results from the surveys conducted in 2005 and 2012.<sup>16</sup> As such, one of the most important steps for the School District and community is to continue to sustain the positive results into the future. While the overall results are positive, there are some findings that suggest further consideration.

First, there is a segment of about 25% of students who may be experiencing some form of emotional problems. The limited questions on the survey to identify that group are just broad indicators. It is not possible to determine the severity or even if these are temporary circumstances. These findings should be viewed as a signal that suggests additional attention to the emotional wellbeing of students may be worthwhile.

The findings also indicate that the students experiencing some form of emotional difficulty also are likely to experience other issues. The results suggest that students in this group are more likely to feel like they have no one to turn to, do not get the support they need from their parents, and feel they are not getting encouragement in school. Also, students reporting feeling sad a lot were less likely to reach out to a confidant than other students. In other words, students who are experiencing emotional difficulties not only feel they are not getting needed support, but may not reach out to someone. The challenge is to find approaches to engage students who may be experiencing emotional difficulties.

Second, the evidence that some students are riding in cars in which the driver is drunk suggests the need for increased efforts to prevent driving while drunk. It may not be possible to prevent drinking among young people, but communicating about designated drivers, approaches for taking the keys of a potential drunk driver, and arrangements with local taxi companies are among the possible responses to the issue.

Third, the results indicate that riding with someone who may be drunk is not just about peers riding together. It may be necessary to help students be able to address a situation in which a parent or other adult may be driving under the influence of alcohol.

Fourth, cheating in school is a national problem, and the survey's results reveal the problem is also present in these students. In addition, for some students there is the belief that it may be necessary to cheat to achieve success. It may be useful to explore approaches to reduce cheating such as software that identifies plagiarism in written work. A greater challenge will be to counter attitudes in which some cheating is viewed as an acceptable means to an end.

Finally, about 25% of students responded they did not think things through before acting, and those students were more likely to do things they regret. It is important to see these results as

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<sup>16</sup> More information comparing the results of surveys is available in the report, *Annual Comparisons of Developmental Assets Results, Bernards Township School District, 2005, 2012, and 2018*.



an indication that this segment of students is aware that they act without thinking and regret it afterward. It is possible these students may be receptive to learning ways to strengthen their ability to “look before they leap.” Making resources available to students to aid in this area may be a useful step.