

Administration of the Southwest Wisconsin Youth Survey

This report is a joint effort between the school districts of Argyle, Benton, Belmont, Black Hawk, Cassville, Cuba City, Darlington, Fennimore, Iowa-Grant, Ithaca, Lancaster, Platteville, Potosi, River Ridge and Seneca, the University of Wisconsin- Extension Offices in Crawford, Grant, Lafayette and Richland Counties and UW-Platteville's Department of Psychology. A total of 3,828 students in grades 7-12 participated in the Southwest Wisconsin Youth Survey.

A 160-item survey, developed by Dr. Stephen Small, University of Wisconsin-Madison and University of Wisconsin-Extension was adapted to assess teen perceptions of the community and school; teen aspirations, concerns and attitudes about various aspects of their lives; teen mental and physical health; and the frequency with which teens reported engaging in dangerous and/or desirable behaviors.

UW-Extension's Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects approved the survey and its administrative procedures. A copy of the Human Subjects Protection Approval Form is on file in the UW-Extension Provost and Vice Chancellor's Office, 432 N. Lake St., Madison, WI 53706. Tom Schmitz, Professor UW-Extension served as Principal Investigator.

The school districts administered the survey and UW-Extension in Crawford, Grant, Lafayette and Richland Counties provided logistical support to the project. The data collected by local school districts was delivered to UW-Platteville Department of Psychology for analysis under the direction of Theron E. Parsons, IV, Professor.

In order to have a representative youth sample and to provide each school district with individualized data, the decision was made to survey all students in grades 7-12. With the exception of Cuba City, which surveyed only their 7th and 8th grade classes, all participating schools surveyed grades 7-12.

One staff member from each school district was trained to train survey administrators in their school. This was done to ensure consistency and maximum participation and cooperation of students. Surveys were administered in the 15 school districts during the weeks of September 12-23, 2005.

In order to ensure accurate and honest responses, the surveys were anonymous. Students were told not to put their names on them, and students were asked to place their computer answer forms in an envelope. Students were assured that no one would look at individual responses. They were also informed that the survey was voluntary and that they did not have to participate.

After collection of the computer answer sheets, the sheets were examined for obvious patterns, scribbling, etc. Forty-eight answer sheets were removed through this visual inspection and another 53 were deemed unusable through the scanning process forms.

Results from a total of 3,727 respondent forms analyzed at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville make up this report.

