

# Executive Summary

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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, 3727 were deemed usable after the screening processes.

The University of Wisconsin-Extension Teen Assessment Program survey was adapted to assess teens' perception of self, family, school and community; their future aspirations, worries and concerns; financial practices; and their activities, both positive and problematic. What follows is an executive summary of the results contained in this document.

## TOBACCO USE

- One in four teens have tried smoking, 18% of teens report having had at least one cigarette in the past 30 days.
- One in five males and one in ten females who tried smoking did so before reaching the age of 10.
- Half of all teens associate a moderate to great risk with smoking even one or two cigarettes per day.
- Six percent (6%) of females and 23% of males have tried chewing tobacco, 26% of 12<sup>th</sup> grade males report chewing tobacco in the past 30 days.
- Eight percent of teens report that their parents think it is okay for teens their age to smoke cigarettes, and these teens are more likely to have experimented with tobacco.

## ALCOHOL USE

- Just under half of the teens surveyed report having tried alcohol and of the teens that drink 17% of males and 11% of females report having tried alcohol prior to age 12.
- Thirty-six percent (36%) of all students have used alcohol in the past 30 days, and 20% engaged in binge drinking (five or more drinks in a row in a couple hours time) at least once in the past 30 days.
- One out of four 12<sup>th</sup> grade males report driving after drinking alcohol in the past 30 days and one of four teens report riding with a driver who has been drinking in the past 30 days.
- Overall 61% of teens say it is against their values to drink alcohol as a teen.
- Teens who believe their parents think it is wrong for teens their age to drink alcohol report lower rates of alcohol use but 12% of teens are unsure if their parents think it is wrong for teens their age to drink alcohol.

## OTHER DRUG USE

- Fifteen percent (15%) of teens have tried marijuana.
- Half of all teens associate a moderate to great risk with using marijuana.
- Nine out of ten males and 19 of 20 females think that is at least a little wrong for teens their age to use marijuana.
- One in ten teens have used prescription drugs that belong to someone else, 7% have used inhalants, smaller percentages of teens report experimentation with ecstasy, methamphetamine and cocaine.
- A significant percentage of teens lack knowledge about date rape drugs.
- School satisfaction and consistent communication and enforcement of family rules is linked to lower levels of drug use.

## **TEEN SEXUALITY**

- Twenty-one percent (21%) of teens surveyed report having had sexual intercourse. Seventy percent (70%) of teens feel that sexual intercourse is inappropriate for teens their age.
- Eight percent (8%) of teens think that oral sex without intercourse is appropriate for teens their age.
- Sexually active teens that report “significant parental monitoring” are more likely to say they “always” use birth control.
- Eighteen percent (18%) of sexually active teens have had five or more partners.
- Teens who report parents have clear rules with consequences that are consistently enforced are less likely to report having had sexual intercourse than those youth who do not report this.
- The more community attachment teens feel, the less likely they are to engage in sexual intercourse.

## **SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES**

- Twenty-nine percent (29%) of teens who worry about contracting an STD report “rarely” having good talks with their mothers, and 42% report “rarely” having good talks with their fathers.
- In looking at HIV risk factors present among southwest Wisconsin teens, 22% of all teens surveyed have engaged in sexual intercourse, 4% have shared needles, 14% have had multiple partners, 25% have engaged in oral sex, and 2% report having an STD in the past.
- About 16% of sexually active teens report never using any form of birth control.

## **MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES**

- Overall, more than 86% of students report being satisfied with themselves and having a positive attitude toward themselves.
- Three in five of the students reported being depressed or very sad at least once in a while in the month previous to the survey, and 10% of teens report having these feelings most or all of the time.
- Fifteen percent (15%) of teens surveyed reported having had suicidal thoughts in the past month.
- Fourteen percent (14%) of students report making a plan to kill themselves at some point in their lives.
- Eight percent (8%) of all students report attempting suicide at some point in their lives.

## **PERSONAL SAFETY**

- Seven percent (7%) of students report being threatened or injured on school property with a weapon in the past year.
- Eleven percent (11%) of all teens have been a victim of cyber bullying, while 13% report they have engaged in cyber bullying.
- Thirty-nine (39%) of 10th grade girls report being victims of sexual harassment by another teen at school in the past year and 21% of all teens report being victims of sexual harassment by an adult at school in the past year.
- Sixteen percent (16%) of females and 6% of males report being victims of sexual abuse by another teen.
- Overall, 8% of females and 3% of males report being victims of forced sexual activity by an adult. Fifty-seven percent (57%) of male sexual abuse victims and 36% of female sexual abuse victims report their abuse first occurred at age 12.
- Males and females who report being force to do something sexual they did not want to do also report higher rates of tobacco experimentation and alcohol use.

## **SCHOOL**

- Sixty-seven percent (67%) of teens report getting “*mostly B’s*” or better in school.
- A significant majority of teens report that rules in their school are fairly enforced, that they enjoy going to school, that teachers respect, listen, really care about them and that teachers have high expectations of them. A higher percentage of these teens report getting mostly B’s or higher.
- Only 43% of teens report that parents would turn them in to school officials if their parents had knowledge that the teen violated a school code.
- In general, if teens feel their parents will report a school code violation to school officials, they also report higher grades in their course work at school.

## **COMMUNITY**

- Overall, about 88% of the teens surveyed feel safe at home, school, and in their community.
- About three fourths of teens agree that they can count on police if they are having a problem or need help.
- Eighty-four percent (84%) of teens report adults in town would tell their parents if they saw the teen involved in a negative behavior.
- Seventy-two percent (72%) of teens say the adults in the community respect and listen to their opinions, values and ideas.
- Nearly all teens report that it is important to help other people and indicate they also care about other people’s feelings.
- Seventy-eight percent (78%) of teens are significantly or somewhat attached to their communities. Teens who are significantly attached to their communities are far less likely to engage in negative behaviors.

## **PEERS AND TIME USE**

- Five percent (5%) of teens report they are left out and 4% say they choose to be alone. Fourteen percent (14%) of teens say they don’t know where they fit in.
- Thirty-three (33%) of males and 50% of females would go to a friend to discuss a personal problem.
- Eighty-five percent (85%) of all teens report they can stand up for their beliefs and resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.
- Eighty-eight percent (88%) of teens that spend one or more hours per week in activities outside of the classroom are satisfied with themselves and take a positive attitude toward themselves.
- Fifty-nine percent (59%) of males and 70% of females spend one or more hours per day doing homework.
- Forty-nine percent (49%) of males and 54% of females spend over three hours per week on the Internet and 7% of males and 5% of females report spending over 15 hours per week on the Internet.

## **FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS**

- Fifty-four percent (54%) of teens “*strongly agree*” that their family loves them and gives support when they need it and when compared to other teens, these teens are least likely to engage in negative behaviors like substance use and experimentation with sexual intercourse.
- Sixty-eight percent (68%) of teens have parent(s) that practice very high levels of parental monitoring and when compared to other teens, these teens report low levels of negative behaviors.
- Based on teens’ perceptions, 70% of teens report their parents level of communicating and enforcing consequences for violating house rules is “*very consistent*”, or “*consistent*”. Greater consistency with family rules is linked to lower levels of negative behaviors.

### **FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS (continued)**

- Only 43% of teens report that parents would turn them in to school officials if their parents had knowledge that the teen violated a school code. These teens reported lower levels of substance use and sexual intercourse than teens who said their parents would not report them to school officials, regardless of whether the teens expected to be punished by their parents or not.
- Eating 3 or more meals a week as a family also factors into reducing levels of negative behaviors in teens.

### **INDICATORS OF POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

- Sixty-nine percent (69%) of teens report the presence of 26 or more of the 40 Positive Youth Development Indicators identified in the survey - these indicators approximate the 40 developmental assets identified by the Search Institute.
- Nearly half (49%) of females have more than 30 Positive Youth Development Indicators, while only 37% of males report the same. Younger teens report more Positive Youth Development Indicators than do older teens.
- Ninety-two percent (92%) of teens with more than 31 indicators report having never tried smoking cigarettes, whereas 68% of teens with 0-10 indicators report smoking a cigarette in the past 30 days.
- Only 18% of teens with more than 31 indicators report drinking alcohol in the past 30 days, whereas 71% of teens with 0-10 Positive Youth Development Indicators report drinking alcohol in the past 30 days.
- The findings show that the more indicators, the higher the grades, the higher the self-esteem and the higher the parental monitoring.