

The Student Stressors and Assets Survey:

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

*Bernards Township Board of Education -
October 29, 2018*

Lucy A. Forgione, MS, MCHES

Kaitlin V. Cartoccio, MPH, CHES

Based on a Report Prepared By:
Kirk C. Harlow, Dr.P.H.
kcharlow@gmail.com

Study Process

- Focus on assessing the presence among students of the Search Institute's eight developmental assets :
 - Support—support from family, school, and community;
 - Empowerment—valuing of young people by the community;
 - Boundaries and expectations—clear expectations and limits;
 - Constructive use of time—enriching activities in which young people can participate;
 - Commitment to learning—lifelong commitment to learning and education;
 - Positive values—guiding values for choices;
 - Social competencies—Skills equipping young people to make effective choices; and
 - Positive identity—Sense of purpose and worth.

Questionnaire Design

- 25 questions drawn from Search Institute
- Remaining questions developed specifically for project
- Parental permission gotten for each student completing questionnaire
- Distributed to all 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th graders in classrooms



Response Rates

- 1,314 completed surveys

Table 1. Response Rates by Grade and Gender

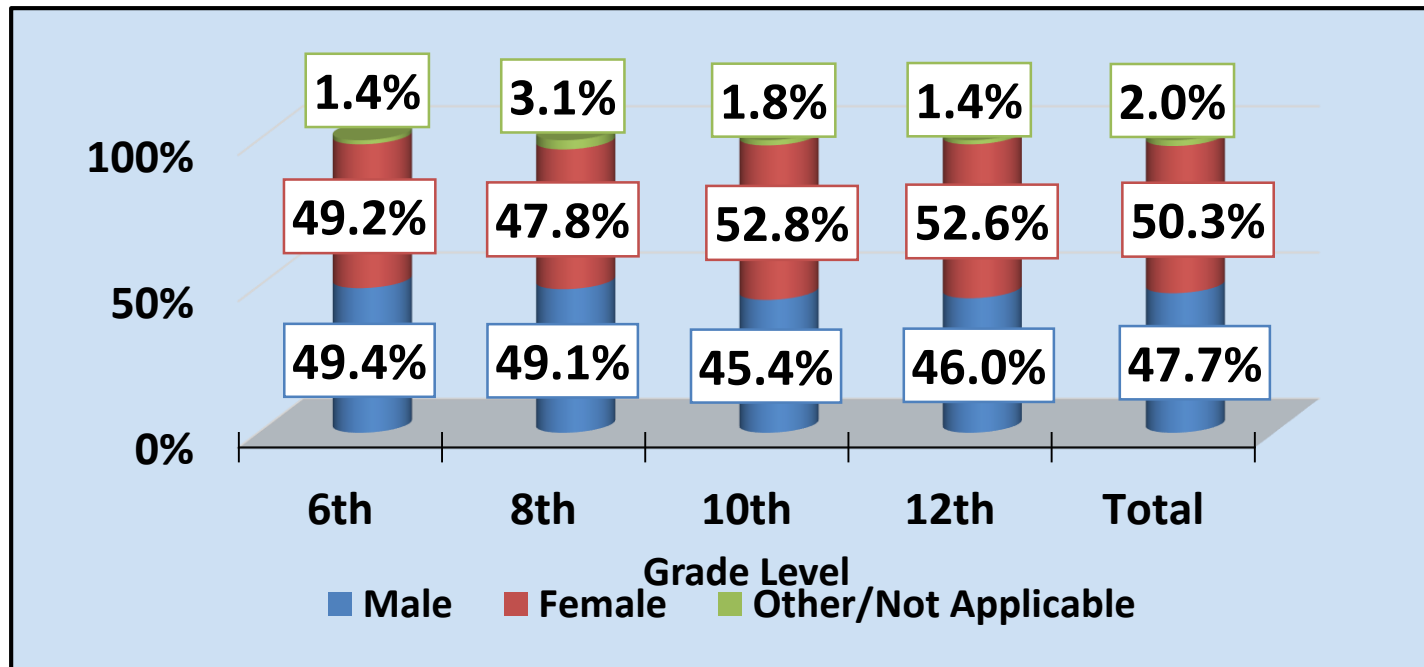
| Grade | Males | Females | Total |
|--------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| 6th | 81% | 82% | 82% |
| 8th | 86% | 85% | 85% |
| 10th | 59% | 69% | 64% |
| 12th | 60% | 70% | 65% |
| Total | 67% | 74% | 70% |

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents



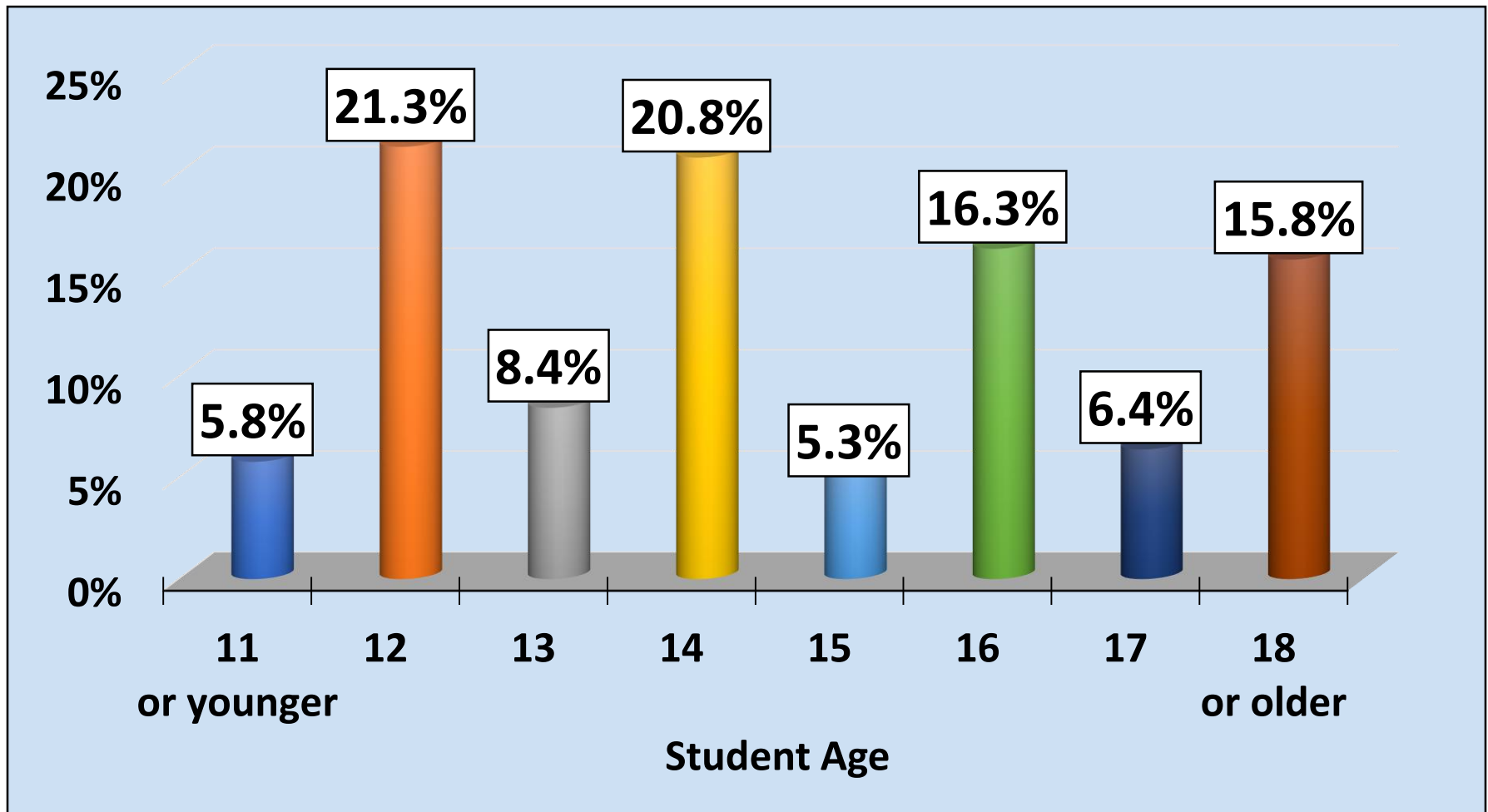
Respondent Class Grade by Gender

- Response rates by gender were similar across grades, with slightly more females than males responding in 10th and 12th grades.



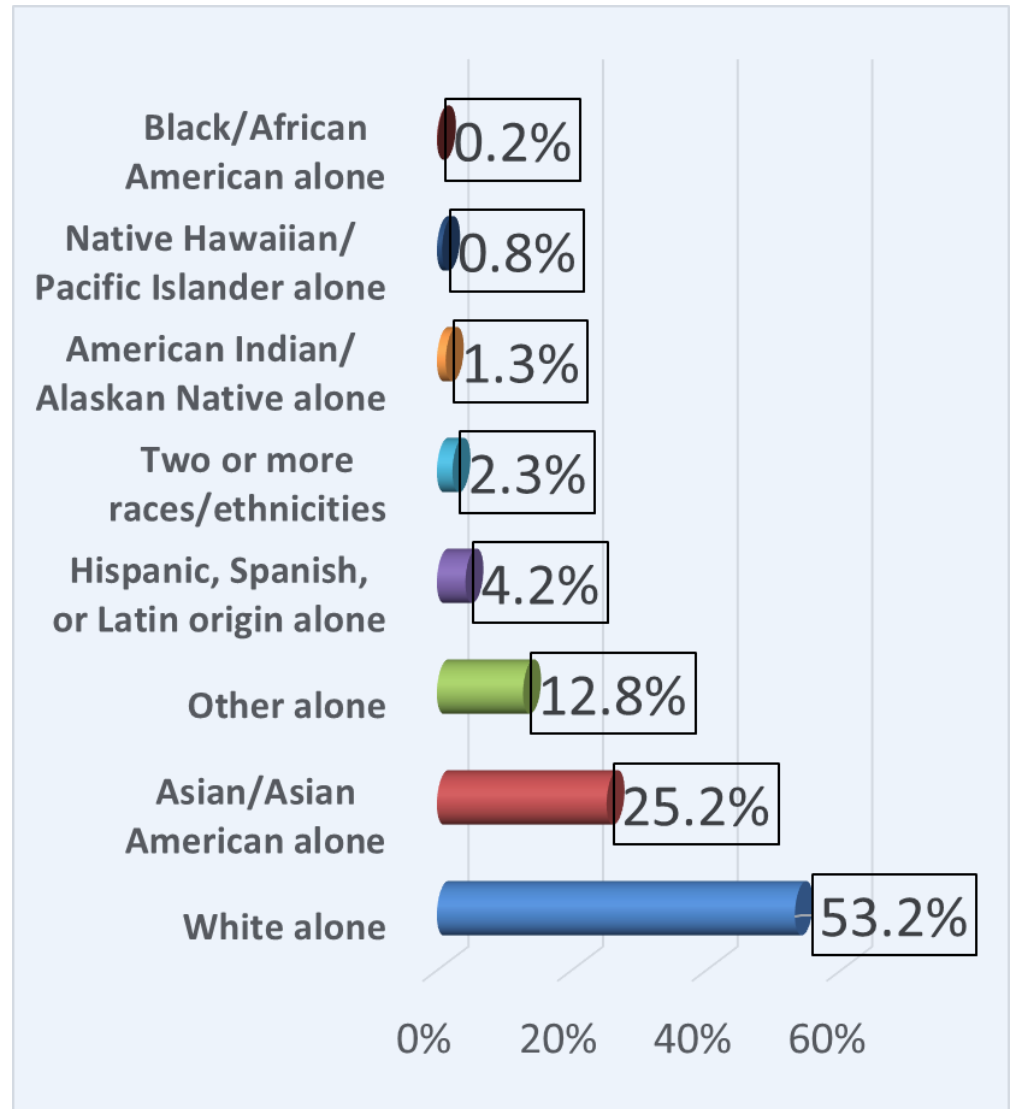
Student Age

- Student ages corresponded to the class grades



Student Ethnicity

- The majority of respondents were White
- The second largest group students identified as Asian/Asian Americans



Other Demographic Information

- 77% had grades of As and Bs or better
- 85% lived with both parents
- 63% lived in current household ten or more years



Survey Results



**** Reporting 2018 results and comparing to 2005 and 2012 survey results ****

Summary Mean Scores for Developmental Asset Categories by Grade

| Asset Categories | Grade | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------|------|------|------|
| | 6th | 8th | 10th | 12th |
| | Mean | Mean | Mean | Mean |
| Support | | | | |
| 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 |
| Boundaries and Expectations | | | | |
| Family/School Rules Summary | 3.85 | 3.86 | 3.71 | 3.60 |
| Commitment to Learning | | | | |
| Commitment to School Summary | 4.20 | 4.10 | 4.09 | 4.18 |

Scores are based on a 1 to 5 point scale in which 5 is highest.

Summary Mean Scores for Developmental Asset Categories by Grade Continued

| Asset Categories | Grade | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|------|------|------|
| | 6th | 8th | 10th | 12th |
| | Mean | Mean | Mean | Mean |
| Positive Identity | | | | |
| Emotional Wellbeing Summary | 4.18 | 3.97 | 3.97 | 3.94 |
| Social Competencies | | | | |
| Resistance Summary | 4.04 | 3.73 | 3.47 | 3.47 |
| People Relationships Summary | 3.98 | 3.87 | 3.92 | 3.96 |
| Positive Values | | | | |
| Work Ethic/Responsibility Summary | 3.55 | 3.33 | 3.40 | 3.37 |
| Empowerment | | | | |
| Empowerment and Safety Summary | 3.41 | 3.06 | 3.12 | 3.28 |

Scores are based on a 1 to 5 point scale in which 5 is highest.

Percent of Students Participating in Athletics/Intramural Sports

| Grade | % Yes |
|-------|-------|
| 6th | 89.5% |
| 8th | 82.4% |
| 10th | 82.8% |
| 12th | 80.1% |

Additional Results - Support

- About one-fourth of all students indicated feeling too much pressure to do well from parents.
- These students 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.
 - About 40% of all students indicated feeling that teachers really cared about them.

Additional Results - Support

| Asset Categories | | Grade | | |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| | | 2005 | 2012 | 2018 |
| There is always someone I can turn to for help | Strongly Disagree | 1.6% | 3.1% | 2.4% |
| | Disagree | 4.0% | 7.4% | 7.5% |
| | Neutral | 14.1% | 16.2% | 16.3% |
| | Agree | 37.7% | 38.6% | 43.6% |
| | Strongly Agree | 42.6% | 34.8% | 30.2% |

Additional Results - Support

- Most students identified a “Close relative or family friend as their most likely confidant or support system.
- About half said they would be at least “Somewhat likely” to consider a teacher or coach as a confidant.



Additional Results - Support

| | | 2005 | 2012 | 2018 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Guidance/school counselor | Not Likely at all | 47.3% | 42.9% | 43.8% |
| | Somewhat Likely | 37.5% | 38.7% | 39.1% |
| | Very Likely | 15.2% | 18.5% | 17.1% |
| School nurse | Not Likely at all | 71.6% | 79.9% | 77.9% |
| | Somewhat Likely | 21.9% | 18.1% | 19.2% |
| | Very Likely | 6.6% | 7.5% | 8.5% |
| Doctor, nurse (other than school nurse) or other health professional | Not Likely at all | 53.1% | 56.1% | 51.6% |
| | Somewhat Likely | 35.2% | 31.5% | 34.3% |
| | Very Likely | 11.7% | 12.3% | 14.1% |
| An adult in your neighborhood | Not Likely at all | 62.1% | 66.4% | 63.9% |
| | Somewhat Likely | 32.1% | 28.2% | 30.4% |
| | Very Likely | 5.8% | 5.4% | 5.7% |

Additional Results - Support

| | | 2005 | 2012 | 2018 |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| A Teacher | Not Likely at all | 44.9% | 44.9% | 41.5% |
| | Somewhat Likely | 46.2% | 45.2% | 48.3% |
| | Very Likely | 8.9% | 10.0% | 10.2% |
| A Coach | Not Likely at all | 54.5% | 51.3% | 48.3% |
| | Somewhat Likely | 34.0% | 36.2% | 35.3% |
| | Very Likely | 11.5% | 12.5% | 16.4% |
| A close relative or family member | Not Likely at all | 16.5% | 15.6% | 12.4% |
| | Somewhat Likely | 34.3% | 34.6% | 30.3% |
| | Very Likely | 49.2% | 49.8% | 57.3% |
| Student assistance counselor | Not Likely at all | 64.2% | 63.4% | 59.0% |
| | Somewhat Likely | 29.2% | 29.1% | 32.5% |
| | Very Likely | 6.6% | 7.5% | 8.5% |

Additional Results - School work

- Most students indicated high levels of achievement motivation.
- There was a small segment of students who did not expect to succeed with hard work.
- By 10th grade, over half of the students reported copying homework two or more times in the past year.
- About one quarter of 10th and 12th graders reported copying an Internet document for a classroom assignment two or more times.
 - Students who cheat in one way are more likely to cheat in other ways.

Additional Results - Mental Health

- Most students indicated they felt good about themselves and did not experience frequent sadness or loneliness.
- About 25% of 10th and 12th graders, however, reported feeling sad a lot of the time.
- 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.
 - Not expecting to succeed.

Additional Results - Mental Health

| | | 2005 | 2012 | 2018 |
|------------------------------|-------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| I feel sad a lot of the time | Strongly Disagree | 28.2% | 30.5% | 25.3% |
| | Disagree | 39.5% | 34.8% | 35.3% |
| | Neutral | 20.6% | 21.1% | 22.0% |
| | Agree | 8.8% | 9.2% | 10.4% |
| | Strongly Agree | 2.9% | 4.3% | 7.1% |
| I often feel lonely | Strongly Disagree | 30.7% | 25.7% | 23.3% |
| | Disagree | 31.7% | 30.2% | 30.4% |
| | Neutral | 21.3% | 21.9% | 20.4% |
| | Agree | 12.2% | 15.5% | 16.2% |
| | Strongly Agree | 4.1% | 6.7% | 9.7% |

Additional Results - Decision Making

- Most students indicated they thought things through before acting, although about 25% students of indicated a tendency toward acting impulsively.
- Students who reported doing things they regret afterwards were more likely to respond that they did not think things through before acting.
- About 12% of 12th graders reported riding with someone their own age who had been drinking. They indicated they believed 30% of these same 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 that they thought 19% of those drivers were drunk.

Additional Results - Bullying

- 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 were more likely to report feeling sad and lonely.



Additional Results - Rules

| | | 2005 | 2012 | 2018 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| My school has clear rules about what students can and cannot do | Strongly Disagree | 3.1% | 2.7% | 2.5% |
| | Disagree | 6.4% | 7.6% | 8.3% |
| | Neutral | 13.2% | 17.1% | 16.7% |
| | Agree | 41.9% | 46.8% | 49.5% |
| | Strongly Agree | 35.4% | 25.8% | 22.9% |
| My family has clear rules about what I can and cannot do | Strongly Disagree | 2.9% | 2.9% | 1.2% |
| | Disagree | 9.0% | 12.4% | 8.9% |
| | Neutral | 29.0% | 27.3% | 21.6% |
| | Agree | 38.8% | 36.2% | 43.6% |
| | Strongly Agree | 20.3% | 21.1% | 24.6% |

Additional Results - Social Competencies

| | | 2005 | 2012 | 2018 |
|------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| I care about other people's feelings | Not at all like me | 2.3% | 2.5% | 1.8% |
| | A little like me | 2.8% | 4.45 | 5.2% |
| | Somewhat like me | 14.6% | 13.8% | 14.4% |
| | Quite like me | 39.0% | 45.8% | 40.1% |
| | Very much like me | 41.4% | 33.5% | 38.5% |
| Helping other people | Not Important | 2.0% | 2.3% | 1.2% |
| | Somewhat Important | 6.8% | 7.0% | 7.8% |
| | Not Sure | 9.3% | 7.0% | 4.9% |
| | Quite Important | 51.85 | 55.2% | 49.6% |
| | Extremely Important | 30.1% | 28.4% | 36.6% |
| Getting to know people of different races or ethnic groups | Not Important | 5.6% | 8.2% | 5.6% |
| | Somewhat Important | 12.1% | 14.2% | 13.0% |
| | Not Sure | 25.8% | 28.4% | 20.2% |
| | Quite Important | 36.8% | 35.15 | 41.2% |
| | Extremely Important | 19.8% | 14.1% | 20.0% |

Additional Results - Social Competencies

| | | 2005 | 2012 | 2018 |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Adults in my town or city make me feel useful | Strongly Disagree | 6.1% | 7.9% | 5.45 |
| | Disagree | 16.1% | 14.6% | 18.2% |
| | Neutral | 37.3% | 43.7% | 40.3% |
| | Agree | 33.1% | 27.2% | 29.5% |
| | Strongly Agree | 7.4% | 6.6% | 6.6% |
| Students help decide what goes on in school | Strongly Disagree | 12.65 | 13.1% | 13.0% |
| | Disagree | 17.3% | 23.8% | 23.5% |
| | Neutral | 33.2% | 29.3% | 28.2% |
| | Agree | 29.8% | 28.5 | 29.7% |
| | Strongly Agree | 7.1% | 5.3% | 5.6% |
| I feel safe in my school | Strongly Disagree | 2.2% | 2.6% | 5.8% |
| | Disagree | 4.7% | 3.1% | 12.1% |
| | Neutral | 15.1% | 15.4% | 20.5% |
| | Agree | 42.8% | 42.5% | 39.3% |
| | Strongly Agree | 35.2% | 36.35 | 22.3% |

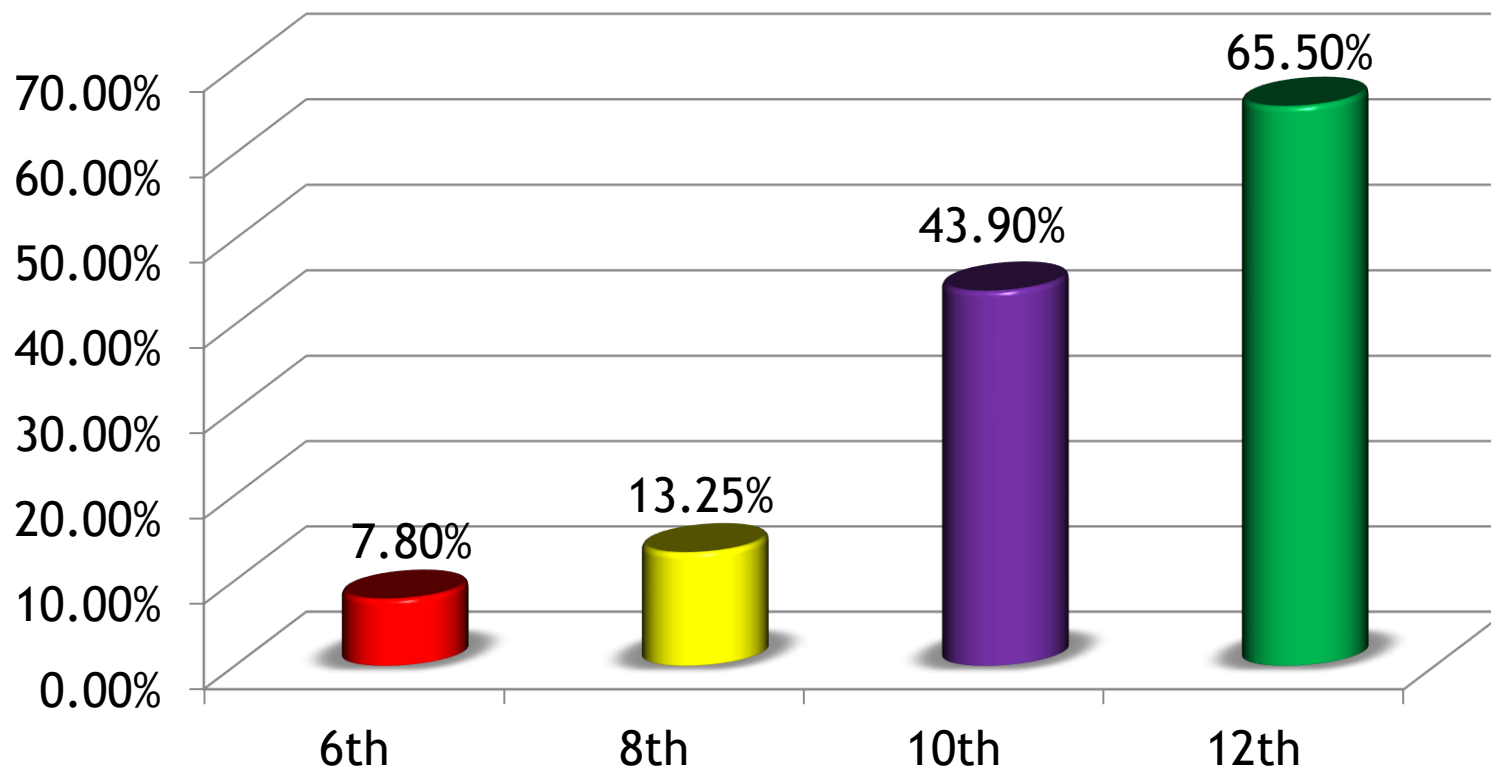
Additional Results - Electronic Cigarettes



| | | 6 th | 8 th | 10 th | 12 th | Total |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|-------|
| Used electronic cigarettes for tobacco in the past 30 days | Not at all | 98.5% | 93.8% | 84.4% | 72.6% | 88.4% |
| | 1-9 Days | .3% | 3.8% | 8.7% | 15.7% | 6.5% |
| | 10 or more days | 1.2% | 2.4% | 6.9% | 11.7% | 5.1% |
| Used electronic cigarettes for marijuana/THC oil in the past 30 days | Not at all | 99.7% | 97.0% | 90.3% | 77.3% | 92% |
| | 1-9 Days | 0% | 1.6% | 7.2% | 12.8% | 4.9% |
| | 10 or more days | .3% | 1.3% | 2.5% | 9.9% | 3.2% |

Additional Results - Alcohol Use

**Percent of Students Indicating "Mostly True" to
Parents' Approval to Drink Beer Once in a
While**



Additional Results - Alcohol Use

- 68.6% of 10th graders and 77.1% of 12th graders believe half or more of the students their age get drunk at least once a month.
- Over half of 10th graders and three-fourths of 12th graders believe their peers would approve of them drinking alcohol sometimes.
- Although these are not actual measures of frequency of alcohol consumption, the perceptions are indicative of students' beliefs that suggest a culture in which there is substantial underage drinking.

Implications of Findings

- Like the results from the 2005 and 2012 surveys, most students possess high levels of developmental assets.
- One important step is for the School District and community to sustain the positive results into the future.



Implications of Findings

- Given about 25% of 10th and 12th graders indicated some emotional difficulty, additional attention to students' emotional wellbeing may be worthwhile.
- Students experiencing emotional difficulties also reported feeling less support from parents and teachers and less willingness to reach out to a confidant.
- A challenge is to find ways to engage these students since they may not seek out available assistance.

Implications of Findings

- 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.
- Communication about designated drivers, approaches for taking away the keys of a potential drunk driver, and arrangements with local taxi companies are among potential responses to the issue.
- Students also are riding with nonpeers who may be drunk. It may be useful to help students find ways to respond to a parent or other adult who should not be driving.

Implications of Findings

- Cheating is quite common among the students. Some students believe 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.

Implications of Findings

- About 25% of students responded they did not think things through before acting, and those students were more likely to do things they regret.
- These students are aware of their behavior and may be receptive to learning ways to strengthen their ability to “look before they leap.”



Next Steps

- Collaboration between the school, Health Department, and other organizations to work on initiatives and programs moving forward
- Standing meetings to review current data and strategic planning
- Priority - for kids to know how to access their supports at school and to understand roles of supports.
- Continue educational presentations, attempt to reach parents through other media
- Continue educating young people with up to date information and trends as they become available
- Health Department and Municipal Alliance will continue efforts to destigmatize mental health - including Youth Mental Health First Aid
- Future Survey - PRIDE

THANK YOU!!!

- Bernards Township Board of Education - Nick Markarian
- Ridge High School - Drew Krause, Ann Sobine
- William Annin Middle School - Karen Hudock, Amy Stem
- Bernards Township Health Department
- Dr. Kirk Harlow - DecisionStat



Promoting Public Health

Bernards Township **Health** Department

Lucy A. Forgione, MS, MCHES

Health Officer/Director of Health

Registrar of Vital Statistics

Health Educator/Youth Services Coordinator

908-204-2520

lforgione@bernards.org

Kaitlin V. Cartoccio , MPH, CHES

Health Educator - Community Program Coordinator

Alliance Grant Coordinator

908-204-2523

kkordusky@bernards.org