

In September 2009, Franklin City School District students in grades 7 and 9 participated in the Ohio Youth Survey, a comprehensive survey of Ohio youth in regards to students' attitudes, habits, behaviors and values. The results of this survey indicate that school and community collaborative efforts appear to be working to curb adolescent substance abuse.

For example, if a student is involved in extracurricular activities, has high expectations, and sets goals for the future, there is over a 75% chance that he/she will never be in trouble at school.

In future school newsletters, we plan to share more information to assist parents in understanding how to better protect their children from at-risk behaviors.

1. 86% of Franklin youth surveyed reported that they are happy with their neighborhood, community and town.

According to the Search Institute, communities and towns that use the concept of neighborhood picnics and block parties have the potential to act as a springboard for future interaction and opportunities that could grow assets for children, as neighbors come to know and appreciate each other. Further evidence shows, that children, youth and adults are building neighborhood communities making connections and enjoying the bond that everyone can be an asset builder in their own home town.

2. 94% of Franklin youth surveyed reported that they felt safe going to school, being at school and going home from school.

The Search Institute offers insight by example when looking at school safety issues. Here is an excerpt from a S.D.F.S. state conference.

"We focused on how they wanted to work in their schools to provide a wider definition of 'safety' than just violence or other issues of school-readiness. They instead focused on issues such as equality, personal boundaries, justice, and the ability to 'just be me' at school. It was an awesome discussion.

They portrayed a school where people, adults and students alike, were respectful to each other and engaged in learning. They wanted schools where popularity wasn't so important and religious and socio-economic issues weren't so pervasive. Their image of a perfect school was both inspiring and also readily available by heightening the experience of adults and youth working together towards a common vision.

The session ended with them presenting to the adults their own visions and actions towards creating this reality. The adults were completely engaged in their presentation and we were

all reminded of the power of asking young people good questions instead of always focusing on giving them the right answers.”

3. 84% of 9th graders and 82% of 7th graders surveyed reported that their parents establish clear rules about what they can and cannot do.
A parent’s goal is to help their children and teens become successful adults who think and act for themselves. Some tips for parents to remember:

Be prepared to say no. Not every request is reasonable.

Be ready for a test. Children sometimes break rules to see how serious you are.

Don’t Retreat. Let kids learn by experiencing the consequences of their actions while making sure their actions don’t cause harm to themselves or cause damage.

Stay Positive. Show that you value them and are proud that they are learning to make good choices.

(For more information go to http://family.samhsa.gov/set/breaking_rules)

4. 57% of 9th graders and 36% of 7th graders surveyed reported that they get 7 or less hours of sleep each night.

Sleep-deprived students tend to be more restless, irritable, and impulsive than other students (Bates, Viken, Alexander, Beyers, & Stockton, 2002). They also may be more depressed and have lower self-esteem than their classmates who sleep more (Fredriksen, Rhodes, Reddy, & Way, 2004).

Poor sleepers are more likely to fail a grade than other students are, even when they do similar amounts of homework (Kahn et al., 1989). Third graders who have good sleep habits have higher grades in 5th grade than other students, after controlling statistically for earlier test scores (Buckhalt, El-Sheikh, Keller, & Kelly, 2009).

Note that students do not have to feel sleepy to experience these negative effects. People who are sleep deprived adapt; they may not report feeling sleepy even though their functioning has diminished (Beatty, 2001; Horowitz, Cade, Wolfe, & Czeisler, 2003).

Most of these studies are correlational, so you might wonder whether the positive outcomes linked to more sleep are really due to something else, such as healthy family routines. To test whether sleep causes these outcomes, researchers asked parents of students in grades 4 and 6 to put their children to bed earlier or later than usual for three nights in a row (Sadeh, Gruber, & Raviv, 2003). They found that students who went to bed an average of 30–40 minutes earlier improved in memory, motor speed, attention, and other abilities associated with math and reading test scores.

Adolescents often get less sleep on school nights and then sleep excessively on weekends (Ohayon, Carskadon, Guilleminault, & Vitiello, 2004). When they go to bed later on weekends than on school nights, they experience a "jet-lag" effect each week, and their school achievement may suffer. Research has shown that high school students who earn *As* or *Bs* tend to have a small discrepancy between school-night and

weekend bedtimes. In contrast, students with a discrepancy of two hours or more are more likely to earn lower grades (Wolfson & Carskadon, 1998).

They can prevent sleep problems by eliminating conditions that disturb sleep—such as noise, stress, light, lack of exposure to daylight, and some medicines— and ensuring that children avoid large meals, exercise, TV viewing, computer use and caffeine consumption in the hour before bedtime (Roehrs & Roth, 2008).

5. 23% of Franklin youth reported that they felt hopeless.

The teen years can be tough for both parent and child. Adolescents are under stress to be liked, do well in school, get along with their family and make important life decisions. Most of these pressures are unavoidable and worrying about them is natural. If your teen is feeling extremely sad, hopeless or worthless, these could be warning signs of a mental health problem. Mental health problems are real and can lead to school failure, loss of friends, or family conflict.

If you are a Parent or other caregiver of a teenager, pay attention if your teen:

Is troubled by feeling:

- very angry most of the time, cries a lot or overreacts;
- grief for a long time after a loss or death;
- concerned about physical problems or appearance;

Experiences big changes, for example:

- loses interest in things usually enjoyed;
- avoids friends or family and wants to be alone all the time;
- has unexplained changes in sleeping or eating habits;

Is limited by:

- inability to sit still or focus attention;
- the need to wash, clean things, or perform certain routines dozens of times a day;
- persistent nightmares;

Behaves in ways that cause problems, for example;

- uses alcohol or other drugs;
- continues to diet or exercise obsessively although bone thin;
- often hurts other people, destroys property, or breaks the law;

(For more information go to <http://family.samhsa.gov/talk/teenmh>.)

6. 66% of Franklin youth surveyed reported that they sometimes, frequently or always liked school.

According to The Search Institute, community service projects help students like their school environment and bring purpose to what they are learning.

“With every student that enrolls at the Charles F. Fernandez Center for Alternative Learning, Principal Liz Fulton goes over the Developmental Assets, provides the students and parents

with written information, and meets with all of the parents individually. The school's goals are rooted in the Developmental Assets, as it tries to support students, meet social and emotional needs, and work with parents and the community.

The Fernandez Center has three educational programs, and students in all of them get involved in the community. The first program is a credit-based program with a small teacher-to-student ratio where students earn a regular high school diploma. The second is a competency based program that offers an alternative high school diploma. The program is only available for 11th and 12th grade students, and students are required to have a job and work at least one thousand hours over the course of the program. The third program is a special education program for junior high and high school students with emotional and behavioral disabilities.

Giving back to the community is important to the students and staff at the Fernandez Center. The community has supported their unique learning environment and the students see that, feel fortunate, and enjoy giving back.

The students at the Fernandez Center have many opportunities to build positive relationships intergenerationally. They can mentor students at area elementary schools, and they often help out at events such as track and field days. There is also a daycare on the school site, and many students are paired up with elderly residents at a local care center.

Students have planted flowers for the community, helped build a greenhouse, done cataloging at the Portage County Historical Society, participated in environmental cleaning projects, volunteered at school district events, and made scarves for homeless families.”

7. 95% of Franklin youth surveyed reported that they did not use tobacco, alcohol, marijuana in the past 30 days. However, 48% surveyed reported that they did not talk to their parents about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco or drug use in the past year.

What To Know: Your children need information to make good decisions. Learn about the facts and consequences of underage drinking and other drug abuse.

What To Say: Your children benefit from talking with you every day about what's going on in their lives. Don't wait until a problem arises to talk with them about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco, or other drug use.

What To Do: Take steps to build strong relationships with your children. Your ongoing involvement, care, and concern will help your children stay safe.

(For more information <http://www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/multimedia/starttalking>)

8. 93% of Franklin youth surveyed reported they felt their parents were there to help them if they had a problem and 95% reported that their teachers were there to help them if they had a problem.

According to The Search Institute, parents and teachers who visibly show students they care about them, see positive results.

“Parents and/or primary caregivers provide the child with high levels of consistent and predictable love, physical care, and positive attention in ways that are responsive to the child’s individuality. Parents and/or primary caregivers express themselves positively and respectfully, engaging young children in conversations that invite their input.”