



The Survey Research Center
St. Clair County Regional Educational Service Agency

2007 Survey of High School Students

For the Community Foundation of St. Clair County
Youth Advisory Council

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About this report:

In 2007, the Community Foundation's Youth Advisory Council requested a survey of their fellow St. Clair County students to gather their views of issues affecting young people today. The survey is done every three years as requested by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The following analysis of the 5,181 responses was done by the Survey Research Center at the St. Clair County Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA).

The survey instrument was based on previous student attitude surveys conducted on behalf of the Community Foundation. Copies of the survey were distributed to each of the county's 11 public high schools. Of the approximately 9,000 high school students in the county, 5,181 completed the forms, representing nearly 60% of all potential respondents. The survey forms were returned to the RESA where they were scanned using Remark OMR software, and analyzed using SurveyPro software.

The following report includes a brief analysis of each question's results. Accompanying this report is a series of tables and charts giving greater detail about the responses by grade level, gender and high school. Also included is a copy of the survey instrument.

— *Garth Kriewall*

Question 1: Your grade

9th grade: 1408
10th grade: 1408
11th grade: 1288
12th grade: 1057

Question 2: Your gender

Male: 2576
Female: 2488

Question 3: Your high school

Port Huron Northern: 1074
Port Huron High: 901
St. Clair: 715
Marine City: 511
Marysville: 491
Yale: 437
Memphis: 350
Capac: 313
Algonac: 179
Riverview East: 124
Port Huron South: 85

Question 4: Think of your family, friends and the people you know. How much of a concern are the following issues when you think of the people you know?

The following chart reflects their responses. Students were asked to rate each issue on a 5-point scale, with 1 being of little concern and 5 being of major concern.

Students' views of key issues 2007				
Issue (ranked in order of response by students)	Percentage rating issue 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale with 5 = major concern	Percentage rating issue 1 or 2 on a 5-point scale with 1 = little concern	Rank in 2002 survey	Number listing issue as high concern/Total number responding
1. Stress	46%	31%	2	2386 / 5142
2. Smoking	43%	37%	Not surveyed in '02	2206 / 5150
3. Drug Use	38%	43%	1	1948 / 5143
4. Drunk Driving	35%	46%	3	1805 / 5139
5. Peer Pressure	31%	45%	6	1605 / 5135
6. Teen Sexuality	29%	52%	9	1513 / 5141
7. Lack of Self-Esteem	29%	49%	10	1500 / 5143
8. Racism	28%	55%	11	1454 / 5139
9. Alcohol Abuse	28%	49%	4	1446 / 5151
10. Teen Pregnancy	27%	55%	5	1381 / 5136
11. Date Rape/Sexual Violence	23%	66%	16	1202 / 5125
12. Crime	23%	57%	Not surveyed in '02	1198 / 5142
13. Suicide	23%	64%	14	1188 / 5125
14. Child Abuse/Neglect	22%	67%	15	1148 / 5138
15. Gangs	19%	64%	18	980 / 5136
16. Homelessness	16%	74%	19	806 / 5141

In Question 4, gender analysis found females express more concern about issues in general than do males. A higher percentage of females and males labeled each of the 16 issues as a major concern than did males. The two issues with the biggest differences by gender were stress and lack of self-esteem. The percentages of females vs. males who listed stress as a major concern: 58% / 36%. For lack of self-esteem, the comparison is 39% / 20%.

While there are variations by high school in how students rated these 16 issues, the differences were relatively minor from school to school.

Question 5: The Youth Advisory Council sets priorities in terms of how it spends its money. Mark five issues that you think should get top priority.

Students were asked to choose 5 from the list of 16 issues enumerated in Question No. 4.

Following are the top 5 issues, as determined by percentages of respondents who chose them:

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| 1. Drug use | 51% |
| 2. Alcohol abuse | 41% |
| 3. Drunk Driving | 40% |
| 4. Smoking | 36% |
| 5. Stress | 36% |

Interestingly, students rated peer pressure among their top five issues in Question No. 4, but it fell to No. 14 when students were asked to rate that same list in terms of spending priorities. Moreover, alcohol abuse ranked only No. 9 on the overall concern list, but came in at No. 2 among spending priorities.

It also is worth noting that interest in spending money on the issues of drunk driving and teen pregnancy rises linearly by age, with seniors putting a higher priority on each than do freshmen. The reverse is true for concerns about gangs and student violence: freshmen see that as more worthy of attention than do seniors.

Among spending priorities, the biggest differences by gender:

- Smoking: Males 41% / Females 31%
- Teen pregnancy: Males 30% / Females 42%
- Child abuse: Males 30% / Females 40%
- Crime: Males 31% / Females 16%

Question 6: Think of the community where you live. Rate the importance of these possible projects in your community.

Students were asked to rank the following topics on a 5-point scale, with 1 being least important and 5 being most important. Following are the percentages of respondents rating these issues of high importance (either a 4 or 5):

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| 1. Better athletic fields | 61% |
| 2. Movie theater | 59% |
| 3. Water park | 44% |
| 4. Teen center | 42% |
| 5. Indoor swimming pool | 40% |
| 6. Youth recreation center | 40% |
| 7. Teen counseling/
health center | 38% |

Better athletic fields and a movie theater rank significantly higher than the remaining five issues. The rankings are relatively consistent across grade level, gender and high school.

Question 7: If your school could support a special program or project, what would you vote for?

Students were asked to rank the following topics on a 5-point scale, with 1 being least valuable and 5 being most valuable. Following are the percentages of respondents rating these issues of high value (either a 4 or 5):

1. More or better after-school activities	59%
2. College prep assistance/guidance	56%
3. Free health clinic	47%
4. More or better programs teaching computers, the Internet and new technology	46%
5. More academic tutoring or mentoring	42%
6. More or better alcohol or drug abuse counseling	40%
7. Substance abuse counseling	39%
8. Free counseling sessions	38%
9. More or better sex education	37%
10. Tolerance of other races/ethnicities	36%
11. Anger management classes	36%
12. Stress management	33%

Respondents did not have to choose among these 12 items; they could (and some did) rate each of the 12 at the same level of perceived value. However, the top two issues — after-school activities and college prep support — were ranked significantly higher by more students. The issue of college prep rated higher grade by grade, with 50% of freshman saying such a program would be of most value, rising to 62% of seniors.

There also were wide differences in how males and females rated each potential program or project. In all but one category, females rated each issue of higher value than did males. The greatest spreads in female/male evaluation of value were in the areas of stress management (24% males vs. 41% females), health clinics (35/59), substance abuse counseling (32/46), academic tutoring (34/50) and college prep support (48/67).

The sole exception: 49% of males rated more or better programs teaching computers, the Internet and new technology, compared to 42% of females.

Question 8: As you think about your school, your community and your future, what are the 'big picture' issues that the Youth Advisory Council should spend its money on?

Students were asked to rank the following five issues on a 5-point scale, with 1 being least important and 5 being most important. Following are the percentages of respondents rating these issues of high importance (either a 4 or 5):

1. COLLEGE: Making higher education more affordable so more young adults can earn a college degree	80%
2. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: More and better-paying jobs	73%
3. EDUCATION: Helping kids do better in school, and providing support to help them stay in school	67%
4. BASIC NEEDS: Helping the unemployed or low-income families with such basic needs as food, clothing	62%
5. RECREATION: More or better recreation facilities and programs	56%

These rankings were relatively consistent by grade level, gender and high school. The No. 1 issues, making college more affordable, was ranked either No. 1 or No. 2 at each high school, and ranked No. 1 by grade level and gender.