

The Student Stressors and Assets Survey: An Assessment of the Developmental Assets™ of Students in the Bernards Township School District

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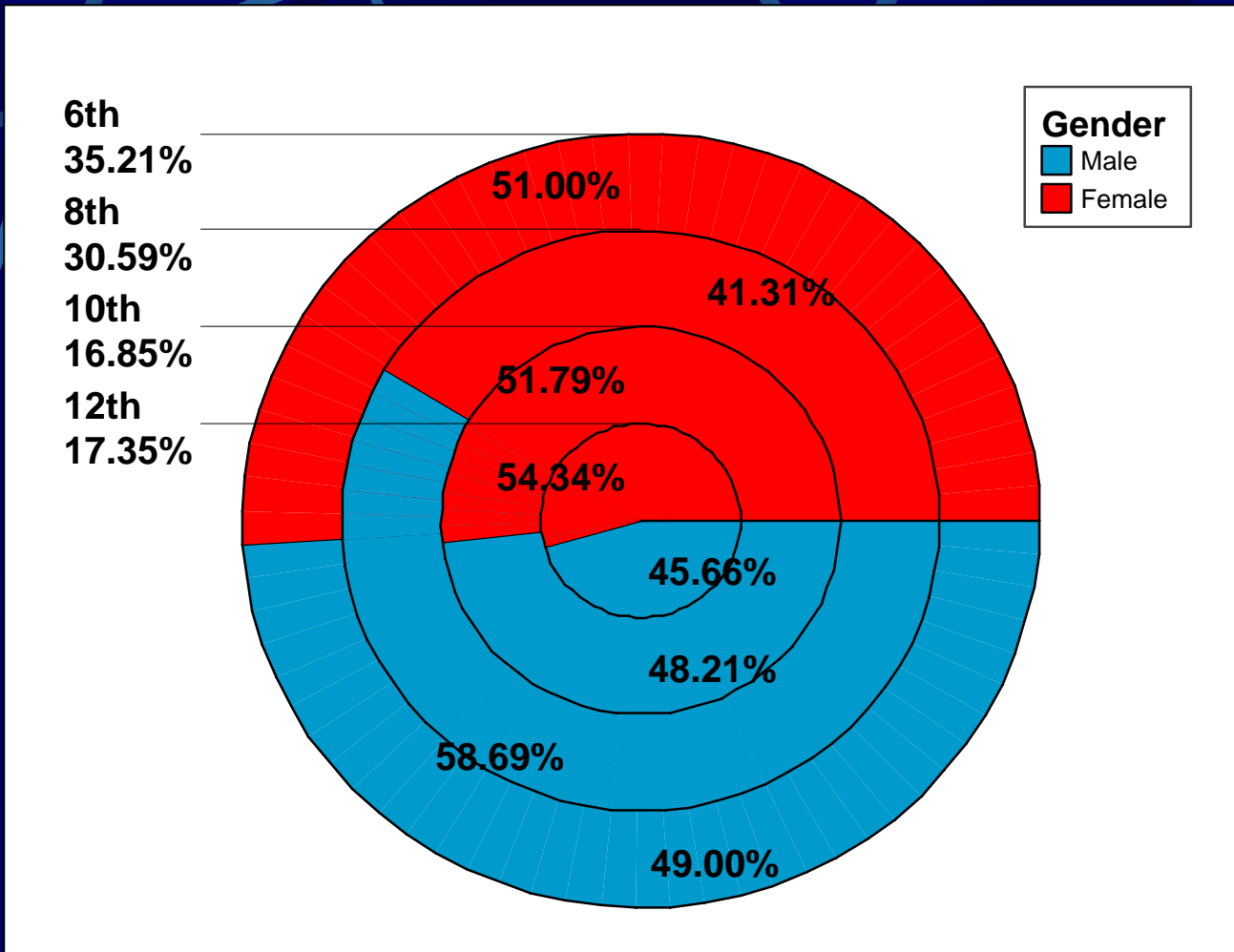
Study Process

- Focus on developmental assets from the Search Institute:
 - **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

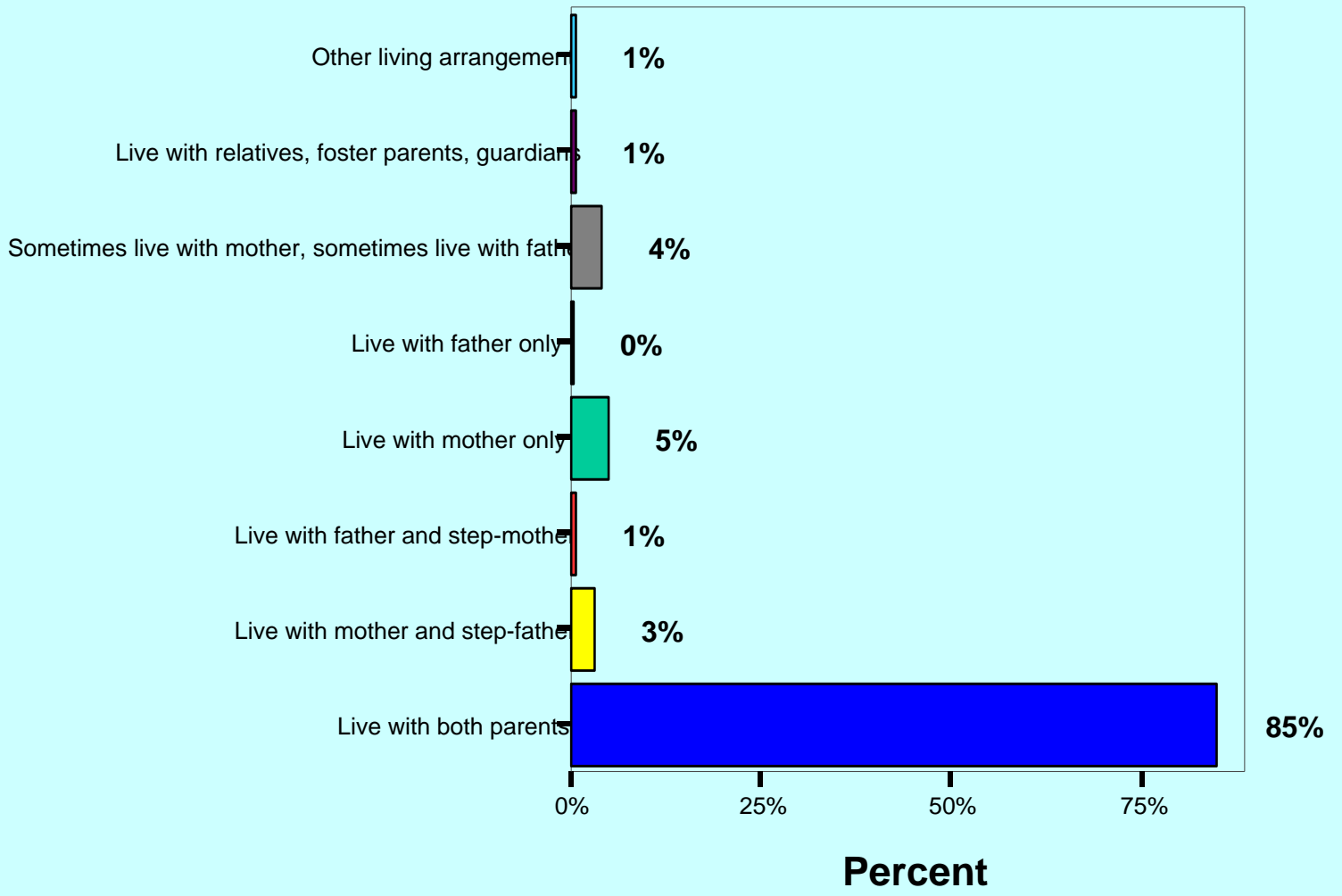
- 25 questions drawn from Search Institute
- Remaining questions developed specifically for project
- Parental permission gotten for each student completing questionnaire
- Distributed in classrooms
- Response rates by grade level were 87 percent-6th, 74 percent -8th, 44 percent-10th, and 55 percent-12th

Grade by Gender



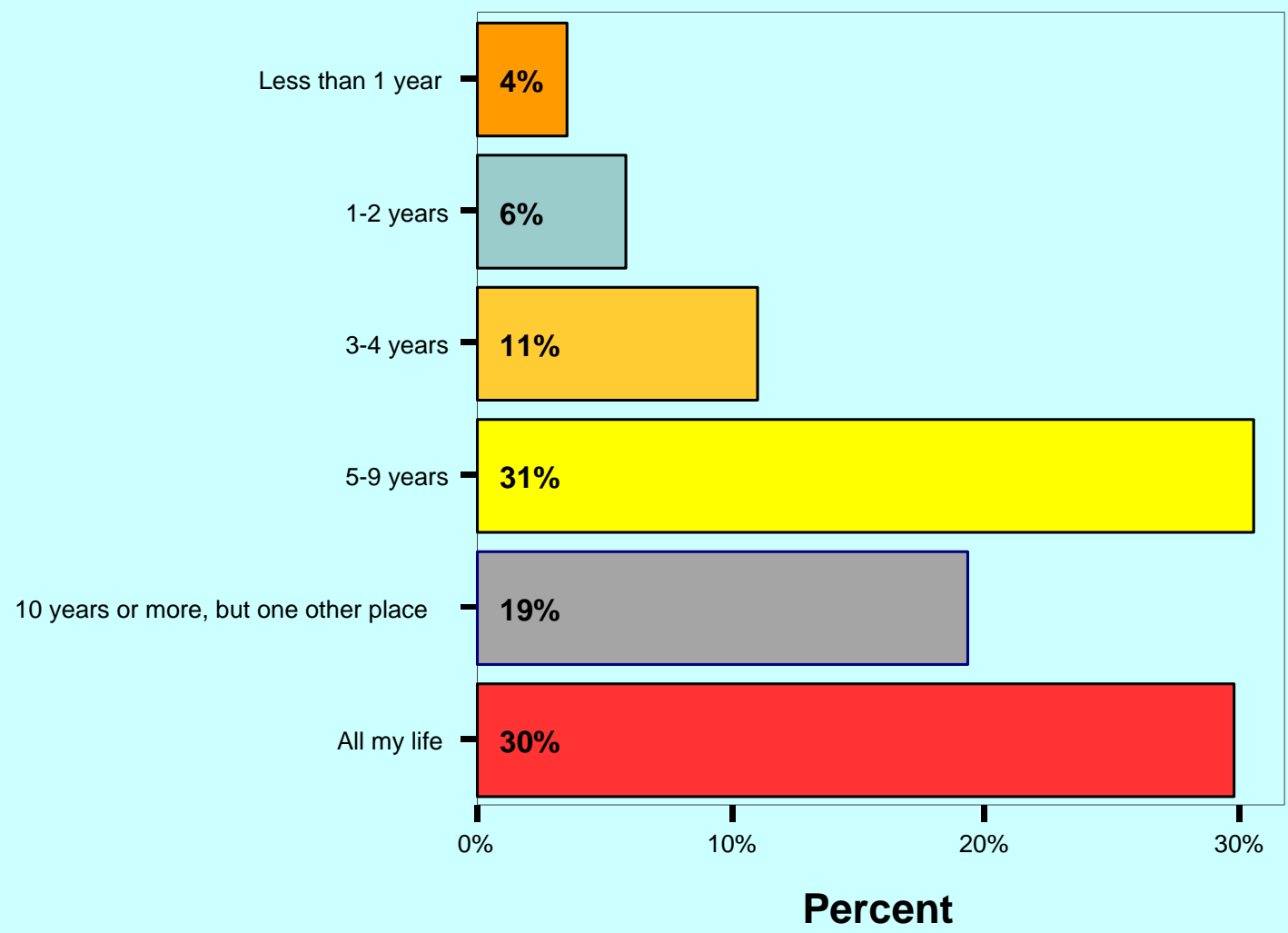
Living Situation

Current living arrangement

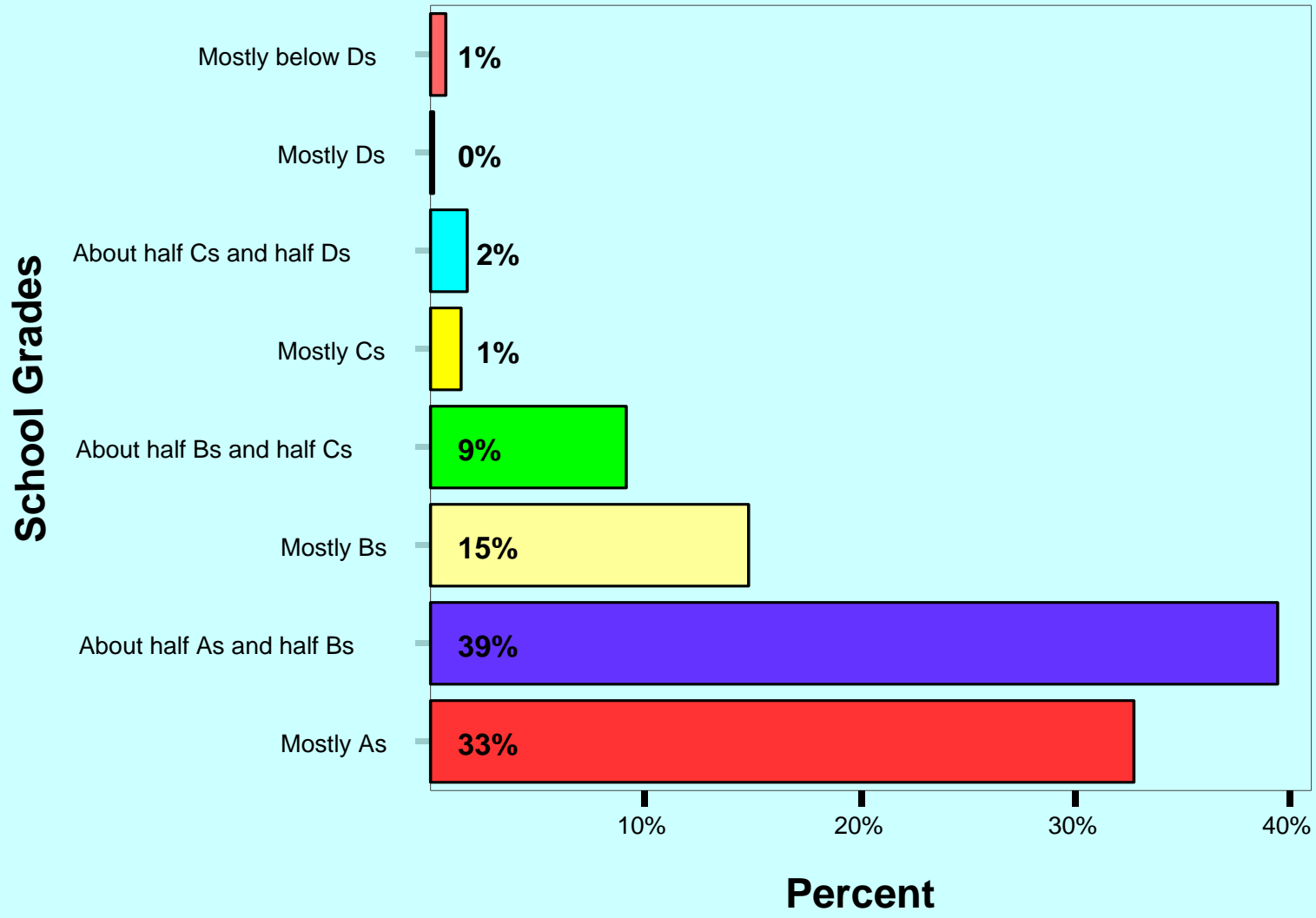


Years in Community

How long have you lived in the city?



Grades in School



Have a Job?

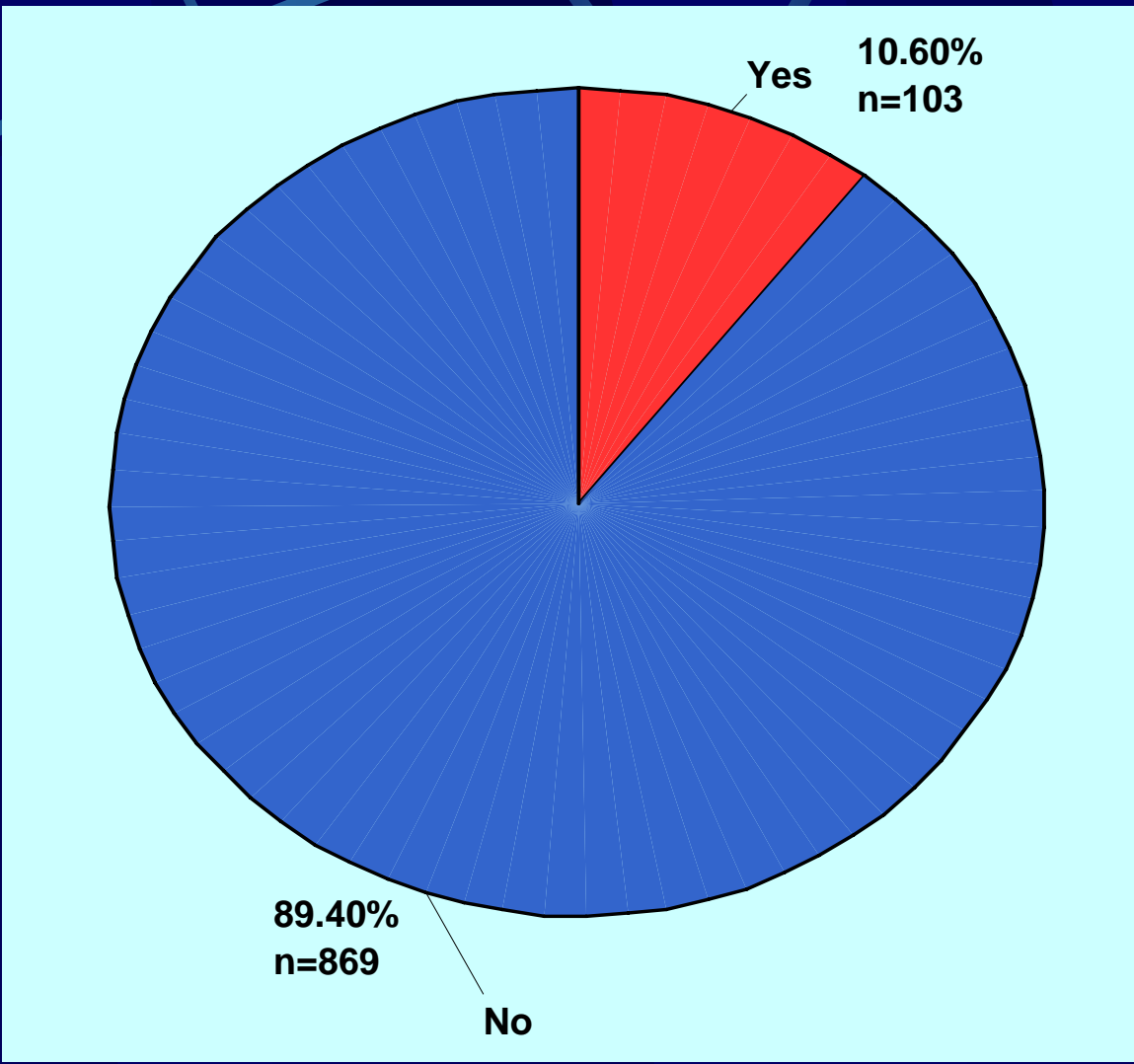


Table 1. Summary Mean Score for Developmental Asset Categories

	Grade			
	6th	8th	10th	12th
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
Support Summary (11, 10, 46)*	4.23	3.94	3.98	3.99
Boundaries Summary (13, 15)	3.90	3.75	3.47	3.58
Commitment to Learning Summary (44, 47)	4.11	4.09	4.16	4.21
Positive Identity Summary (19, 42)	4.02	3.87	3.68	3.64
Social Competence Summary (29,30)	3.96	3.65	3.69	3.86
Positive Values Summary (50)	3.12	2.77	2.75	2.65
Empowerment Summary (21, 22)	3.28	2.97	3.04	3.03

* Numbers in parentheses are the survey items used to calculate means. Means are calculated from survey items with a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is lowest and 5 is highest.

Table 2. Participation in extra-curricular activities 2 or more hours per week

	Grade			
	6th	8th	10th	12th
	Column N %	Column N %	Column N %	Column N %
Yes	88.9%	87.9%	88.7%	85.0%
No	11.1%	12.1%	11.3%	15.0%

Table 3. Use of Alcohol and Drugs by Grade Level

		Grade			
		6th	8th	10th	12th
		Column N %	Column N %	Column N %	Column N %
36. How often Drank alcohol without parents' permission?	Never	98.3%	85.6%	41.8%	30.1%
	1 or 2 times	1.1%	8.9%	12.1%	9.8%
	3 or 4 times	.0%	2.6%	6.7%	10.4%
	5 or 6 times	.3%	.7%	6.7%	4.6%
	More than 6 times	.3%	2.3%	32.7%	45.1%
38. How often used a drug other than alcohol to get high?	Never	99.4%	96.4%	64.8%	61.6%
	1 or 2 times	.0%	1.3%	14.5%	9.3%
	3 or 4 times	.3%	.7%	6.7%	5.8%
	5 or 6 times	.3%	.3%	2.4%	4.1%
	More than 6 times	.0%	1.3%	11.5%	19.2%

Regression Analysis Selected Variables

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.289	.408		3.160	.002
Support Summary	.009	.069	.004	.133	.894
Boundaries Summary	-.120	.052	-.062	-2.319	.021
Commitment to Learning Summary	-.059	.061	-.028	-.959	.338
Positive Identity Summary	.027	.048	.017	.571	.568
Social Competence Summary	.025	.047	.016	.532	.595
Empowerment Summary	.045	.048	.026	.927	.354
Positive Values Summary	-.061	.033	-.050	-1.841	.066
Social Competence Summary	-.287	.048	-.177	-6.024	.000
Grade	.767	.034	.582	22.255	.000
53. Playing in sports/helping with sports teams	.107	.022	.125	4.940	.000

Table 47. Proportion of Students Bullied by Gender

	Gender											
	Male				Female				Total			
	Yes		No		Yes		No		Yes		No	
	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Bullied in some way 5 or more times per week *	19	3.7%	494	96.3%	6	1.2%	481	98.8%	25	2.5%	975	97.5%
Bullied in some way 1 or more times per week **	81	15.8%	432	84.2%	32	6.6%	455	93.4%	113	11.3%	887	88.7%

* Chi-square = 6.21, p < .05

** Chi-square = 21.18, p < .01

Factors Associated with Bullying

- Bullied students feel:
 - Sad more frequently than others
 - Less supported by their parents
 - Less safe in school

Other Results

- While parental support is high, about one-fourth of the students did indicate feeling too much pressure from parents to do well.
- Other than parents, students were most likely to seek support from a close friend or relative if they needed it as opposed to other possible sources of support.
- Students indicated feeling that school rules were clear, but not necessarily family rules. In addition, it appeared that punishment for breaking a family rule was not consistent.
- Female students in the 10th and 12th grades tended to indicate the greatest degree of dissatisfaction with their weight. Over 35 percent indicated they were not satisfied with their weight.
- Students indicated knowing how to set limits, but they also indicated acting without thinking..
- There is a clear transition point between 6th and 8th grade that the results indicated. This is consistent with the shift from pre-adolescence to adolescence.

Implications

- The relatively high proportions of students with positive levels of Developmental Assets will make the identification of positive change in the future difficult.
- There appears to be a fair amount of alcohol use that may be occurring among students participating in athletic programs. This should be examined further, and if confirmed, programs targeting this group may be worthwhile.
- There was an identified relationship between thrill seeking and impulse control, and high-risk behavior. While students indicated being able to say “no,” they also indicated that impulses could reduce resistance. Developing programs that focus not only on resistance, but impulse control, may be worthwhile.
- The willingness of students to use school resources for support was relatively low, and diminished in the older grades. If additional outreach efforts are possible, they should be considered.
- A variation of the survey instrument may be a useful tool to create a dialogue between students and their parents. As a part of the pilot testing, it was found that discussion of the responses with students after completion created a structure framework for exploring their feelings about issues examined in the survey.
- The results of the survey in an appropriate format should be made available not only to adults, but also the students. Giving back the results is empowering, and an opportunity to open discussion about the issues examined in the survey. The results may also be applicable in a number of classes as illustrations of concepts.