

Teen Opportunities Assessment Survey

- Sample Summary Report -

Introduction:

A total of 164, 7th to 12th grade students participated in the survey to measure perceptions of their community, future education and career plans, and living in the local area in the future. The survey was conducted in classroom environments with teacher supervision.

37% of survey respondents were 7th and 8th grade students, and 63% were 9th through 12th grade students. Overall, females represented 55% and males 45% of survey participants. 17% of respondents were involved in FFA, 10% participated in FBLA, 9% in church activities and 5% in Youth Group.

Highlights Summary:

Results were mixed regarding the community being a good place for teens to live.

28% of survey respondents rate their community as an above average to excellent place to live as a teen. Conversely, 25% rated their community as below average.

Teens seek more job opportunities, entertainment, recreation, and shopping options.

Participants were asked to rank changes they would like to see that would make their community a better place to live. More local job opportunities for youth received the highest first place ranking at 36%, followed by more entertainment and recreation options at 32.5%. More local shopping and restaurant options was ranked third at 19.5%, and additional opportunities to be involved in community events and projects came in fourth at 12%.

Most students plan to attend college after high school.

70% of respondents plan to attend college or technical school, 11% anticipate joining the military, 3% expect to enter the workforce and 1% plan to be self-employed after high school graduation.

Many teens do not expect to stay or return to their hometown in the future.

46% of respondents said it was unlikely to very unlikely that they would stay in their community after high school graduation, and 41% said it was unlikely to very unlikely they would return in the future. Conversely, 19% indicated it was likely to very likely that they would stay after graduation, and 27% felt it was likely to very likely they would return to their hometown to live in the future.

Teens are interested in a spectrum of career opportunities.

Survey participants indicated interest in a variety of career fields with the most popular options being: Medical, Firefighter or Police Officer (31%); Agriculture, Food or Natural Resources (28%); Arts, Broadcasting, Film, Print or Journalism (28%); Early Childhood Development, Family Counseling or Care Services (21%); and Education or Training (21%).

Many teens have a business and are interested in owning a business in the future.

20% of teens surveyed have a business now and 50% are interested in owning their own business in the future. 60% of students indicated that they would like to learn about entrepreneurship through a class with hands-on experience.

Under half of teens picture themselves living in the local area in the future.

41% of teens surveyed picture themselves living in their hometown area in the future. Among reasons given: 62% noted family ties in the community, 48% selected their community as a good place to raise a family, 42% marked cost of living is less, 27.5% indicated quality schools, and 22% marked a job or business opportunity.

In regard to not choosing to live in their hometown area in the future: 70% marked career opportunity elsewhere, 64% selected make more money elsewhere, 48% noted lack of entertainment, and 40% marked too few shopping options as reasons.

Most teens have not been asked for their input, but many would volunteer.

12% of teens surveyed indicated that adults have asked for their input on what would make their community a better place to live for teens. 69% stated they would volunteer if asked by an adult community leader to become involved in making their community better.

Teens see their community as above average as safe place to live and raise children.

Among survey respondents, 30% gave their community a high score as a safe place to live, 18% as a good place to retire, and 17% saw it as a good place to raise children. Respondents gave their community low scores as a place to work (37%) and visit (29.5%).

Teens have specific ideas for making their community a better place to live.

Common themes among the survey participants were that young people want more local job opportunities to increase incomes, and more jobs for teens to help them develop a work ethic and stay away from drugs. A number of respondents suggested the need for a teen hangout and entertainment such as movies, bowling ally, laser tag and sports, and that these amenities would create jobs for young people. Other suggestions included restaurants, grocery store and more shopping options.

Several respondents felt that more emphasis should be placed on education and less on sports. Others were concerned about water restrictions on agriculture and the impact on farm incomes, the condition of buildings, houses, streets and sidewalks in the community. A few respondents suggested increased law enforcement, reducing drug use and crime, and keeping children and teens safe. Several participants suggested trash cleanup, grass planting, recycling and removal of old buildings to enhance the community's appearance and to create opportunities for new businesses locations.

Most Teens view lack of jobs as the worst problem facing their community.

58% of survey participants marked lack of jobs as the worst problem facing their community and county. 11% felt low wages and income, 10% drugs and crime, and 8% saw teen pregnancy as the greatest concern. 53% felt the local standard of living would remain the same over the coming decade, 25% expected it to decrease and 21.5% felt it would increase. With regard to population of their community and county over the next ten years, 48% would prefer it to increase, 37% would like it to stay the same and 15% would prefer the population to decrease.

Please e-mail questions regarding the teen opportunities survey and summary report to:

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