

School District of Lancaster 2007-2008 Student Survey

Overview

This document provides a summary of data collected from School District of Lancaster students in May 2008. Baseline data collected in November 2006 is also presented to identify changes that have taken place. The survey was administered to students in grades 3 through 12. In Spring 2008, 5,433 out of 7,774 students took the survey, a 70% response rate. The survey data can be compared to identify changes that result from participation in SDoL programs and activities during the school year, and can be analyzed at the district and school level. This summary presents findings on school climate, academic aspirations, bullying and violence, and drug and alcohol use. A full report including school-level results has been submitted to the District under separate cover.

This survey was designed to help the School District of Lancaster evaluate several programs, including: Safe Schools/Healthy Students, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, GEAR UP, and Title I. Student survey data related to these programs will be included in each program's evaluation report as they are developed.

School Climate

The survey asks a series of questions about school climate, specifically about the school facility and student safety, the learning environment, student behavior, and student-teacher relationships. Responses to these items tend to differ between school levels, with elementary students generally being most positive and middle school students generally being most negative (see next page). At all school levels, students have a less favorable perception of their school facility and student behavior, with middle school students showing the largest decline. Perceptions of learning environment increased slightly among high school students, decreased slightly among elementary students, and decreased substantially among middle school students. Ratings of student-teacher relations showed an increase among elementary and high school students and a decrease among middle school students.

Student perception of safety is one of the survey's key climate indicators. Most students feel safe in school, but fewer middle school students felt safe in May 2008 than felt safe in November 2006. In fact, when it comes to safety perceptions, middle school students are the least likely to feel safe compared to elementary and high school students. No other differences are found in feelings of safety when comparing groups based on gender, race, PSSA and school attendance.

Spring 2008 Student Survey School Climate by School Level	Percent "Agree" ("Really Agree" and "Kind of Agree")		
	n=2205	n=1700	n=1528
	Elementary	Middle	High
I feel safe at this school.	85% (89%)	71% (82%)	81% (84%)
I feel safe going to and from school.	84% (86%)	77% (83%)	83% (85%)
The school is clean.	70% (79%)	36% (52%)	58% (72%)
Sometimes it is too hot or too cold in my school.	83% (82%)	85% (85%)	85% (81%)
There are a lot of broken windows, door, or desks at my school.	13% (17%)	44% (32%)	25% (19%)
I learn a lot at school.	94% (93%)	81% (86%)	81% (79%)
I like my school.	78% (85%)	62% (74%)	76% (74%)
I like my teachers.	87% (91%)	67% (81%)	80% (77%)
I would rather go to this school than another school.	65% (74%)	54% (68%)	68% (68%)
My classes are fun.	80% (84%)	49% (64%)	61% (57%)
Most teachers make learning interesting.	85% (87%)	55% (72%)	58% (54%)
This school is always getting better.	68% (75%)	34% (53%)	50% (46%)
My school has clear rules about how students should act.	91% (94%)	80% (87%)	81% (87%)
Students are rewarded for being good.	85% (91%)	51% (68%)	56% (59%)
Students get along well with each other.	47% (55%)	37% (44%)	55% (53%)
Students get along well with teachers.	66% (74%)	39% (53%)	54% (57%)
Most of the teachers know my name.	86% (84%)	90% (89%)	85% (85%)
There is a teacher or some other adult at this school who really cares about me.	88% (88%)	72% (76%)	75% (67%)
There is a teacher or some other adult at this school who cares when I am not here.	70% (70%)	56% (56%)	67% (56%)
There is a teacher or some other adult at this school who listens to me when I have something to say.	88% (88%)	72% (80%)	79% (77%)
There is a teacher or some other adult at this school who tells me when I do a good job.	94% (94%)	78% (87%)	83% (83%)
There is a teacher or some other adult at this school who always wants me to do my best.	97% (96%)	86% (94%)	86% (89%)
There is a teacher or some other adult at this school who believes that I will be a success.	93% (90%)	81% (86%)	83% (84%)
Students in this school really listen to teachers.	47% (57%)	25% (32%)	37% (34%)
Teachers in this school really listen to students.	81% (82%)	54% (68%)	59% (56%)

Values in parentheses represent baseline responses collected in Fall 2006.

Academic Aspirations

Students were asked about their educational goals. Among all students, not much has changed from baseline to Spring 2008. Students are as likely or slightly more likely to say they want to pursue postsecondary education, including vocational or technical school, a two-year or four-year college, or graduate school (see facing page). When asked about the importance of a college education to their future success, very little has changed from baseline. Slightly more elementary students say a college education is important to their future success, while slightly fewer high school students believe so.

More female (66%) than male (57%) students aspire to attend a four-year college. This ten point gap exists among white females (69%) and males (59%), and among Hispanic females (63%) and males (53%). Three in four (76%) Asian students plan on attending college, and fewer black (66%), white (65%), or Hispanic (58%) students plan to do so. Most 10th (64%), 11th (66%) and 12th (70%) grade students plan to complete college.

Spring 2008 Student Survey <i>Academic Aspirations by School Level</i>		n=2205	n=1700	n=1528
		Elementary	Middle	High
How far in school do you want to go? Do you want to...	Complete high school	20% (22%)	12% (14%)	12% (13%)
	Attend vocational or tech school	5% (5%)	4% (4%)	6% (8%)
	Attend 2 year college	16% (13%)	20% (17%)	21% (18%)
	Attend 4 year college	22% (20%)	32% (29%)	35% (34%)
	Attend 4 year college plus grad school	37% (40%)	33% (37%)	27% (27%)
How important do YOU believe getting a college education is to your future success?	Very important	90% (88%)	85% (86%)	79% (82%)
	Somewhat important	8% (8%)	12% (11%)	16% (15%)
	Not very important	1% (2%)	1% (2%)	3% (2%)
	Not important at all	1% (2%)	2% (1%)	2% (1%)
How important would your PARENT/GUARDIAN say getting a college education is to your future success?	Very important	92% (90%)	89% (90%)	82% (85%)
	Somewhat important	6% (7%)	7% (8%)	14% (13%)
	Not very important	1% (2%)	2% (1%)	3% (2%)
	Not important at all	1% (2%)	2% (1%)	1% (0%)
How important would your TEACHERS say getting a college education is to your future success?	Very important	92% (91%)	87% (88%)	85% (88%)
	Somewhat important	6% (5%)	10% (10%)	11% (10%)
	Not very important	1% (1%)	1% (1%)	2% (1%)
	Not important at all	2% (2%)	2% (1%)	2% (1%)

Values in parentheses represent baseline responses collected in Fall 2006.

Bullying & Violence

Middle school and high school students were asked four questions about their exposure to bullying and violence at school. Compared to the baseline, fewer middle school students were threatened on school property, although little has changed in terms of experiencing actual attacks. High school students report more bullying and violence compared to baseline. Compared to students across Pennsylvania, School District of Lancaster middle and high school students experience more bullying than average and significantly more violence.

Spring 2008 Student Survey <i>Bullying and Violence by School Level (With Comparison Statewide Data Presented)</i>	Percent "One or more times"		
	Middle School (n=1700)	High School (n=1528)	2005 Statewide (Grades 6, 8, 10, 12)
In the past 12 months, how often have you...			
Been threatened to be hit or beaten up on school property?	31% (35%)	23% (22%)	25%
Been attacked and hit by someone, or beaten up, on school property?	17% (17%)	14% (10%)	9%
Been threatened by someone with a weapon on school property?	12% (12%)	12% (7%)	5%
Been attacked by someone with a weapon on school property?	9% (7%)	9% (5%)	2%

Values in parentheses represent baseline responses collected in Fall 2006.

Male students are much more likely than females to have been attacked on school property, regardless of race. The consequences of violence are tangible – students who were attacked or assaulted had more unexcused absences, less frequent school attendance, and lower PSSA performance.

Drug & Alcohol Use

Middle and high school students were asked about drug and alcohol use during the previous 30 days. Lancaster middle school students are less likely and high school students are more likely than students in the rest of the state to have used alcohol. Middle school students in Lancaster are about as likely to have used marijuana as students in the rest of the state, while Lancaster high school students are more likely to have used marijuana compared to statewide use.

Spring 2008 Student Survey <i>Drug & Alcohol Use by School Level (With Comparison Statewide Data Presented)</i>	Percent "One or more times"		
	Middle School (n=1700)	High School (n=1528)	2005 Statewide (Grades 6, 8, 10, 12)
On how many occasions (if any) have you...			
had beer, wine, or hard liquor during the past 30 days?	19% (12%)	34% (23%)	26%
used marijuana during the past 30 days?	10% (6%)	19% (10%)	9%

Values in parentheses represent baseline responses collected in Fall 2006.

There are no differences in alcohol use by race or gender. More males than females report recent marijuana use. Students who use alcohol or marijuana have lower attendance and PSSA scores than those who are not recent users.

Among all respondents, one-third (32%) used both alcohol and marijuana in the past 30 days, while over half (56%) used neither. Students who used both alcohol and marijuana have lower attendance rates, lower PSSA scores, and more unexcused absences compared to students who used neither.

Spring 2008 Student Survey <i>Past 30-day Alcohol & Marijuana Use by School Performance</i>	Attendance	PSSA Math	PSSA Reading	Unexcused Absences
Used NEITHER Alcohol or Marijuana	93.5%	1348	1295	6.1 days
Used BOTH Alcohol and Marijuana	91.0%	1238	1181	9.4 days

Conclusions

- Perceptions of school climate are generally positive and have for the most part stayed constant. There have been some positive increases in climate indicators among high school students, but these same indicators have declined among middle school students.
- Student aspirations for continued education are high.
- Incidents of student violence have increased a bit since 2006.
- Substance abuse among students appears to have increased since baseline. Both violence and substance use affect student academic performance.