

WISCONSIN YOUTH FUTURES

Technical Report #18

Community Self-Assessment Tools

Youth Support Inventory For Preventing Academic Failure



University of Wisconsin-Madison/Extension
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Technical Report #18 Community Self Assessment Tools:

Youth Support Inventory For Preventing Academic Failure

Instructions

The purpose of the inventory is to identify areas where support for youth in this community is strong as well as areas where it could improve. Each item has been selected because scientific studies have found it to be related to academic failure among young people. While no community has all of the supports listed, it is often possible to develop supports when citizens like you think they are important.

In order to begin thinking about the resources available in your community, please rate each item to the best of your knowledge; leave blank any questions you do not have enough information to complete on your own. Several items of the inventory labeled *community data* are completed with the data from the TAP survey or other local information sources. For those items labeled *citizen rating*, fill in the blanks by marking "Extensive", "Limited", "Does Not Exist", or "?". Also note by each statement the specific supports or resources available in the community.

The inventory is usually completed by a committee or coalition, first in small groups and then in the large group. After you have rated the items in the assigned section, discuss each item with your small group. Agree on a small group rating of "Extensive", "Limited", "Does Not Exist", or "?". The "?" means you are not sure whether this support is present or available and your group will need to gather further information to find out. Ratings of "Limited" or "Does Not Exist" are gaps that exist in your community and are areas that may need attention. Select a spokesperson from the small group to report back your ratings to the large group. The members of the large group can accept the ratings of the small group or make changes. The consensus reached by the group assesses the community's strengths and shortcomings in preventing academic failure.

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Individual Factors

- _____ % 1. Percent of youth who agree or strongly agree that they are satisfied with themselves
- _____ % 2. Percent of youth agree or strongly agree that they are able to do things as well as most other people
- _____ % 3. Percent of youth who report drinking beer, wine or hard liquor once a week or more
- _____ % 4. Percent of youth who report having 5 or more drinks in a row in the past month
- _____ % 5. Percent of youth who report using marijuana once a week or more
- _____ % 6. Juvenile arrest rate
- _____ % 7. Percent of youth belonging to ethnic or racial minority groups

_____	_____	_____	_____	
Exten- -sive	Lim- -ited	Does Not Exist	?	
_____	_____	_____	_____	8. Teens in this community feel they are capable
_____	_____	_____	_____	9. Teens in this community feel good about themselves
_____	_____	_____	_____	10. Teens in this community refrain from excessive alcohol and other drug use
_____	_____	_____	_____	11. Teens in this community do not engage in criminal or delinquent behaviors
_____	_____	_____	_____	12. Teen pregnancy is not a problem in this community

Family Support

Parenting Practices

- _____ % 13. Percent of youth who agree or strongly agree that their parents are interested in what they learn and how well they do in school
- _____ % 14. Percent of youth who report that their mother never explains the reasons for certain rules they must follow

- _____ % 15. Percent of youth who report that their father never explains the reasons for certain rules they must follow
- _____ % 16. Percent of youth who report never or rarely having a good talk in the past year with their mother about job or education plans after high school
- _____ % 17. Percent of youth who report never or rarely having a good talk in the past year with their father about job or education plans after high school
- _____ % 18. Percent of youth who report their mother cares about them
- _____ % 19. Percent of youth who report that their father cares about them

Exten- sive	Lim- ited	Does Not Exist	?	
_____	_____	_____	_____	20. Parents explain the reasons for rules their teens must follow
_____	_____	_____	_____	21. Parents have high standards for their child's school achievement
_____	_____	_____	_____	22. Parents show interest and encourage their teen's future education and job plans
_____	_____	_____	_____	23. Parents are involved in their children's school (i.e. help with homework when asked, know child's teachers, participate in parent-teacher conferences and attend child's activities)
_____	_____	_____	_____	24. Parents care about their children
_____	_____	_____	_____	25. Parents set clear, consistent rules for their teens regarding curfews, drug and alcohol use, and homework
_____	_____	_____	_____	26. Parent education classes are available and accessible
_____	_____	_____	_____	27. Books and pamphlets on parenting are available
_____	_____	_____	_____	28. Parents have opportunities to meet, share and talk with other parents

Support for Families in Transition

_____ % 29. Percent of single parent and step parent families

_____ % 30. Percent of youth whose mothers work full-time

Exten- -sive	Lim- -ited	Does Not Exist	?	
_____	_____	_____	_____	31. Programs are available to help people deal with stressful times (e.g. marriage, parenting, divorce, job loss)
_____	_____	_____	_____	32. The community provides opportunities for working parents to be involved in the lives of their children

School Support

Student Academic Performance

_____ % 33. Percent of students who report getting grades of C or below

_____ % 34. Percent of youth who are behind at least one grade level

_____	_____	_____	_____	35. Most students find their education relevant and high quality
_____	_____	_____	_____	36. Programs are available for students who are failing, especially in 4th, 5th and 6th grades
_____	_____	_____	_____	37. Schools and teachers work with students who find school irrelevant or experience academic difficulties
_____	_____	_____	_____	38. Summer programs are available for students experiencing academic difficulties

Student Commitment to School

_____ % 39. Percent of students who report they enjoy going to school

_____ % 40. Percent of youth who report they will probably drop out before finishing high school

_____ % 41. Percent of youth who report skipping at least one class in the past month

_____ % 42. Percent of youth who are involved in school extracurricular activities

Exten- -sive	Lim- -ited	Does Not Exist	?	
_____	_____	_____	_____	43. Students are involved in making decisions about school life (i.e. rules for behavior, extracurricular activities, school beautification)
_____	_____	_____	_____	44. Students are given the opportunity to learn skills necessary for successful involvement in school activities
_____	_____	_____	_____	45. Students are recognized and rewarded for their involvement in school

Teaching Practices

_____	_____	_____	_____	46. The school and teachers have clear rules and expectations for students
_____	_____	_____	_____	47. School rules are consistently enforced among students
_____	_____	_____	_____	48. Students have frequent opportunities to meet with advisors or teachers
_____	_____	_____	_____	49. Larger schools have programs and activities that provide interaction in smaller groups
_____	_____	_____	_____	50. The school takes special steps to welcome new students
_____	_____	_____	_____	51. Teachers respect the differing values and experiences of students from various ethnic backgrounds
_____	_____	_____	_____	52. Schools utilize a variety of teaching techniques that involve students in "learning by doing"
_____	_____	_____	_____	53. Teachers are interested in their students and enthusiastic about teaching
_____	_____	_____	_____	54. Efforts are made to challenge gifted students

Support During School Transitions

_____ % 55. Percent of 8th grade girls reporting grade point average of C or lower

_____ % 56. Percent of 8th grade boys reporting grade point average of C or lower

_____ % 57. Percent of 9th grade girls reporting grade point average of C or lower

_____ % 58. Percent of 9th grade boys reporting grade point average of C or lower

Exten- -sive	Lim- -ited	Does Not Exist	?	
_____	_____	_____	_____	59. Academic problems increase when students enter high school
_____	_____	_____	_____	60. The schools and community have formal means of supporting students during changes from one school building to another

School Environment

_____ % 61. Percent of youth who report not going to school at least one day over the past month because of feeling unsafe at school or on the way to school

_____ % 62. Percent of youth who report that someone has threatened or injured them with a weapon at least once in the past year while on school property

_____ % 63. Percent of youth who report someone has stolen or deliberately damaged their personal property at least once in the past year on school property

_____ _____ _____ _____ 64. Teens feel that there is someone they can talk to at school if they are having problems

_____ _____ _____ _____ 65. Children in all grades attend high quality schools

_____ _____ _____ _____ 66. Schools value academic activities as much as athletics and other extracurricular activities

_____ _____ _____ _____ 67. School administrators are supportive of teachers

_____ _____ _____ _____ 68. School administrators involve teachers in decisions and planning

_____ _____ _____ _____ 69. School staff has opportunities to upgrade their training

_____ _____ _____ _____ 70. Schools communicate with parents about school activities and encourage their participation

_____ _____ _____ _____ 71. Schools provide opportunities for parent involvement during nonwork hours

_____ _____ _____ _____ 72. The school environment is safe and orderly

Peer Climate

_____ % 73. Percent of youth who worry about not fitting in with other kids at school

Exten- -sive	Lim- -ited	Does Not Exist	?	
_____	_____	_____	_____	74. Students encourage each other to do well in school
_____	_____	_____	_____	75. School and community efforts attempt to change negative youth attitudes towards school
_____	_____	_____	_____	76. Dropouts who return to school and complete high school are visible, supported and rewarded

Community Support

_____ % 77. Percent of youth who worry quite a bit or very much about their family having enough money

_____ % 78. Percent of families with children living in poverty

_____ % 79. Percent economic growth in community over past year

_____ % 80. Unemployment rate in the community

_____ % 81. Percent of children eligible for Head Start who are not being served

_____ % 82. Percent of mothers who have finished high school

_____ % 83. Percent of fathers who have finished high school

_____ _____ _____ _____ 84. Opportunities are available for adults to earn a G.E.D.

_____ _____ _____ _____ 85. Families have adequate financial resources

_____ _____ _____ _____ 86. Programs exist that help families deal with limited financial resources

_____ _____ _____ _____ 87. The community supports education and high quality schools

_____ _____ _____ _____ 88. Local businesses and other organizations provide resources to the schools

Exten -sive	Lim- ited	Does Not Exist	?	
_____	_____	_____	_____	89. Youth receive equal encouragement to pursue a good job or higher education
_____	_____	_____	_____	90. Local businesses and community leaders contribute to school enrichment and dropout prevention programs

Meaningful Youth Roles

_____	%	91. Social skills training is available to students in all grade levels		
_____	%	92. Older youth interact with and serve as positive role models for youth (e.g. peer counseling, mentoring, or tutoring programs)		
_____	_____	_____	_____	93. Clubs or other after-school activities exist that encourage academic, athletic, artistic, or other interests

The Adolescent Work Place

_____	%	94. Percent of youth employed by age 16		
_____	%	95. Percent of youth who work more than 20 hours per week		
_____	_____	_____	_____	96. Youth refrain from working more than 20 hours per week
_____	_____	_____	_____	97. Teacher expectations remain high even when students are employed

Developed by Lynn Magdol, Youth Futures Project Assistant, Karen Bogenschneider, and Mary R. Huser, Youth Outreach Educator, UW-Madison/Extension, 1992; Revised 1994. To reprint, contact Professor Karen Bogenschneider at (608) 262-4070.

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University of Wisconsin-Madison/Extension
1300 Linden Drive, Room 130
Madison, WI 53706-1524
(608)262-0369
Fax: (608)262-5335