

## **2017 Isabella County Youth Needs Assessment Results and Talking Points**

**Youth Advisory Committee:** The Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) is comprised of 7th-12th grade students from all schools in Isabella County, and serves as a pivotal agent in the empowerment of youth and in the development of young leaders. The YAC advises the Mt. Pleasant Area Community Foundation's Board of Trustees on the awarding of grants from the Kellogg Youth Fund, an endowment that supports charitable projects and events that benefit the young people of Isabella County. YAC student leaders spend time positively influencing their community while learning about service and civic engagement. The YAC meets at least once per month to review grant applications, to receive leadership and philanthropy training, and to plan community service projects.

**Youth Needs Assessment:** Every 2-3 years, the YAC surveys 8th and 10th graders of Isabella County to help identify what they see as the greatest needs and problems facing the community. The Youth Needs Assessment Survey helps the YAC determine funding priorities as they review grant applications. The students want to fund programs and services that will best meet the needs identified by youth in Isabella County.

### **Schools Participating in YAC and in the Youth Needs Assessment:**

- Beal City Public Schools
- Mt. Pleasant Public Schools
- Sacred Heart Academy
- Shepherd Public Schools

### **Respondents:**

- 630 students completed online survey
- Ages 12-18, mostly 8th and 10th graders
- 51% Male; 49% Female

### **Most Important Issues Facing Youth Today:**

- Overall:
  1. Bullying - 57%
  2. Stress/School Pressure - 52%
  3. Depression/Suicide/Loss - 46%
  4. Alcohol and Drug Abuse - 46%
  5. Self-Esteem/Respect for Yourself and Others - 43%
- Gender Differences:
  - 8th grade girls ranked Cliques/Peer Pressure as the 7th most important issue while boys ranked it as 13th.
  - At the high school level, girls placed Depression/Suicide/Loss as the 2nd most important issue and Bullying as 5th. For boys, it was the exact opposite with Bullying in 2nd and Depression/Suicide/Loss as 5th.

### **Student Participation in School Related Activities:**

- Middle School Students:
  1. School Team Sports - 66%
  2. Fine Arts - 30%
  3. Study/Homework/Tutoring - 18%
- High School Students:
  1. School Team Sports - 64%
  2. Study/Homework/Tutoring - 30%
  3. Fine Arts - 26%

### **Student Participation in Non-School Related Activities:**

- Overall:
  1. Spend Time with Friends - 72%
  2. Family Activities - 62%
  3. Exercise - 61%
  4. Computer/TV/Video Games - 50%
  5. Sports (club teams, individual athletics, etc.) - 47%

### **Student Time Commitments:**

- More than half of all students (51%) said that lack of time limits them from engaging in more after-school or weekend activities. However, 44% of all students said that they were not interested in participating in other after-school or weekend activities. How can these students be engaged?
- Overall, there seems to be a shift toward greater involvement and diversity of involvement from middle school to high school (i.e. more time spent on school-related activities, fewer students playing computer/video games/watching TV). But, student volunteering and community service at both levels have dropped since the survey was conducted in 2014.
- Approximately 80% of students overall said they were busy enough and content with their current level of participation.

### **What activities should the Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) fund?**

- Overall
  1. Personal Development Programs
  2. After-School Recreation/Social Activities
  3. Job Development and Opportunities
  4. Community Youth Organizations
  5. Volunteer Programs
- Though not in the top five, 28% of 8th graders and 34% of 10th graders noted counseling services as something the YAC should help fund.
- 24% of 10th graders expressed interest in gaining more information about educational opportunities.