



# An Ounce of Prevention

Fairfax County Neighborhood & Community Services  
Prevention Unit

Issue 5  
Dec 2015/Jan 2016

## Special Fairfax County Youth Survey Data Issue

### How Are Our Youth Doing? Highlights from the 2014-2015 Youth Survey

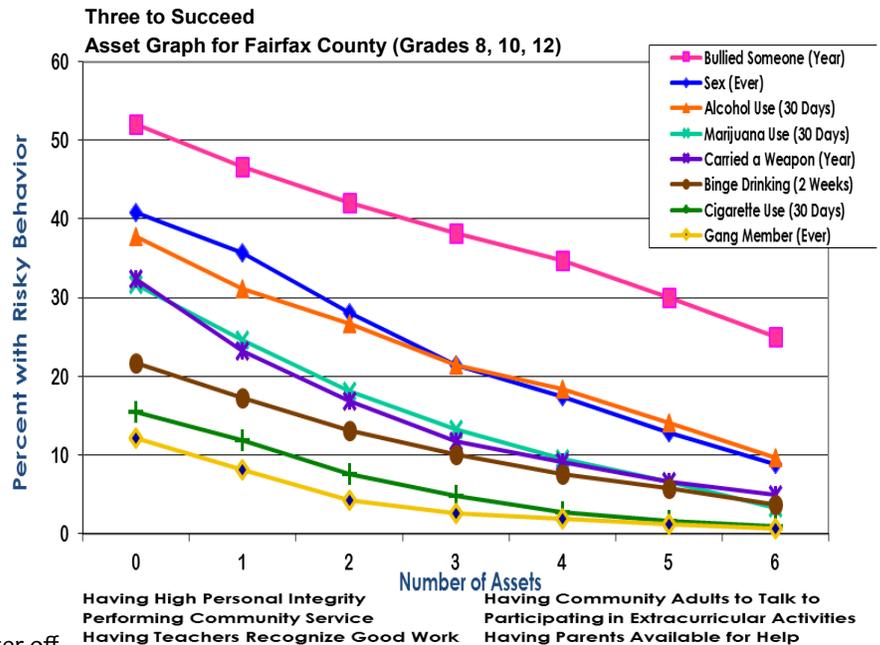
Jesse Ellis, Prevention Manager, Fairfax County Neighborhood & Community Services

Data from the 2014-2015 school year Fairfax County Youth Survey (the “2014 Youth Survey”) was released this past fall and can be found on the Youth Survey web site, [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/youthsurvey](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/youthsurvey). There is a wealth of information available in the reports (there are separate reports for the 6th grade and the 8th/10th/12th grade surveys), and I encourage you to explore them, along with the fact sheets, presentations, and Prevention Toolkit, which all can help you make sense of the numbers and take action based on them.

There are some key findings worth noting. First, the most important takeaway from the Youth Survey is always “**Three to Succeed.**” As the chart on the right shows, the presence of protective factors in youths’ lives is critical to their success and well-being. It is clear that, no matter the outcome of interest, the more assets (listed below the chart) a youth has, the better off he or she is. And outcomes aren’t limited to those in this chart. Among students with zero assets, 62% report signs of depression. Compare that to 37% of youth with three assets and 15% of those with six. These data underscore the importance of ensuring all youth have caring adults in their lives and are engaged in their schools and communities.

About one-third of youth report getting eight or more hours of **sleep** on an average school night. Girls in particular appear to be getting less sleep than before, as 26% reported 8+ hours, down from 30% in 2010. Over half of 8th graders reported 8+ hours, compared to only 14% of 12th graders. 2015 Youth Survey data, available next fall, will provide the first glimpse into the possible impact of FCPS bell schedule changes.

**Cigarette smoking** prevalence has continued to decline rapidly. Only 4% reported smoking in the past month, down from 25% in 2001. Nationally, though, increases in e-cigarette and smokeless tobacco use are alarming. The 2015 Youth Survey is our first to ask about e-cigarette use; next year’s data will help inform ongoing prevention efforts.



**DID YOU KNOW?**  
A dozen different fact sheets, each focused on a different topic or population (such as alcohol use or LGBQ youth), highlight key Youth Survey data. Fact sheets are available at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/youthsurvey](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/youthsurvey).

One area of continued concern is **mental health**. Nearly one-third of students reported depressive symptoms, defined as feeling “so sad or helpless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that they stopped doing some usual activities.” The disparities are striking: 28% of white students reported depressive symptoms, compared to 40% of Hispanic students. Girls (39%) were 80% more likely than boys (24%) to report depressive symptoms; half of all Hispanic girls did so. Culturally relevant and targeted strategies for prevention and treatment need to be prioritized.

Again, there is much more in the Youth Survey. Familiarize yourself with the data, share it with your colleagues and families. It can be a valuable discussion starter. And please reach out with questions you have about the survey by emailing us at [ncs-prevention@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:ncs-prevention@fairfaxcounty.gov).

- Inside this Edition:**
- How Schools Use Youth Survey Data
  - How the Survey is Administered
  - Messaging Tools: The Prevention Toolkit
  - Youth Survey Spotlight: Suicide Risk Factors
  - School Attendance Task Force



### Schools Use Youth Survey Data to Tailor Prevention Initiatives

Dede Bailer, School Psychological Services Coordinator, Fairfax County Public Schools

Many schools are now analyzing the 2014 Youth Survey data to understand the behaviors and experiences reported by youth county-wide and in their school community. Examples of behavior reported include but are not limited to civic behaviors, problem-solving, substance abuse, bullying, sexual activity, nutrition, and mental and physical health. Even more importantly, schools are learning about the risk and protective factors identified within their school community that are associated with youth being more or less likely to engage in risk taking behaviors. Essentially, the youth survey data help schools identify where to focus prevention efforts and which assets or protective factors to foster in order to promote resilience and healthy decision making in youth.

School communities have found it energizing to learn what assets are present in their community and where good decision making is occurring. They have also found it compelling to learn where their community may be at risk. Using the information from the youth survey, school teams, including students, work to develop realistic goals and plans to miti-

gate that risk and foster resilience.

Many Fairfax County Public Schools have been good consumers of the Fairfax County Youth Survey data for several years. Elementary, middle, and high schools have been meeting by pyramids with their communities to review the youth survey data and to look for trends and patterns in behavior. They also identify protective factors each stakeholder can provide. Other pyramids started with their school teams, analyzing the data to direct resources efficiently and to guide planning of professional development for staff and parents, and presentations for students. Students have become much more involved in looking at the results of the survey and have developed prevention and intervention activities that align with the highly indicated risk behaviors. One group of students even presents annually to a community coalition on their data and the student directed intervention efforts that evolved as a result of their data analysis.

### Nuts and Bolts: How the Youth Survey is Administered

Sophia Dutton, Youth Survey Program Manager, Fairfax County Neighborhood and Community Services

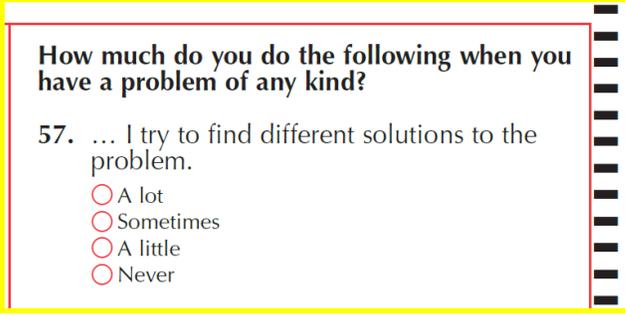
Every fall, the Fairfax County Youth Survey is administered in Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS). All 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students in class during the time the Youth Survey is administered at their school are invited to participate. Sixth-graders take a shorter modified survey.

Parents and/or guardians are notified of the survey at least 30 days before survey administration, letting them know the survey questions can be reviewed online or at the school. The notice also includes information on how to opt the student out of being surveyed. In addition, students are informed during the survey administration that the survey is voluntary and they can choose not to participate or to skip individual questions they do not want to answer.

Instructions from survey administrators and written instructions on the surveys tell students not to write their name on the survey and assure them that their answers will remain anonymous. Students enter their responses directly on a computer-scannable booklet and turn the booklets into a folder that is not in proximity to the survey administrator.

Hear Sophia Dutton and Jesse Ellis discuss the Youth Survey on the County Conversation podcast at [Lusa.gov/LXuxsif](http://Lusa.gov/LXuxsif).

Survey booklets are packed in boxes at each school and are delivered to the FCPS warehouse. FCPS Student Safety and Wellness Office staff count the surveys to determine if all completed surveys were returned by the schools for scanning, and track down any missing surveys. Once all the surveys are counted, placed on pallets, and shrink-wrapped for shipping, they are delivered to a facility where they are scanned and data files for analysis are created. See the Frequently Asked Questions page on the [Youth Survey website](#) for more information on how the survey is administered and analyzed.



Students complete the survey on computer-scannable booklets, filling in bubbles to select their responses.



## Messaging Tools

Every issue, we feature messaging that you can use to share prevention resources available in Fairfax County. Feel free to, without attribution, use these messages in your outreach efforts.

### This Month's Resource: The Prevention Toolkit

The Prevention Toolkit was developed as a resource for community groups, schools, families, and other stakeholders to explore and interpret Youth Survey data, then identify ways to act upon it to improve outcomes for children and youth.

## Newsletter Article

### Toolkit Focused on Strengthening County Youth

Substance abuse, bullying, dating abuse, depression and suicide are among the real risks that face Fairfax County youth today. The Prevention Toolkit was developed by the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS) to help schools, organizations and other groups to become better aware of current trends among county youth and point them to resources and services that can help in fostering healthy choices among young people.

The Prevention Toolkit includes topic-specific resources on information collected from the county's annual Youth Survey – an anonymous, voluntary survey given to students in grades 6, 8, 10 and 12. This survey is a joint project between Fairfax County Government and Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) and examines a variety of behaviors, experiences and other factors that influence the health and well-being of county youth. Survey results provide a snapshot of the risks facing county youth and are used by the county, FCPS and other community organizations to help prioritize needs and direct resources.

In addition to helping identify existing trends, the Prevention Toolkit also includes a discussion guide to help groups identify priorities and resources on existing services and ways to develop and implement local strategies such as programs, educational campaigns, and policy change.

The Toolkit is available online at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ncs/prevention/toolkit.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ncs/prevention/toolkit.htm). For more information, please email the NCS Prevention Unit at [NCS-Prevention@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:NCS-Prevention@fairfaxcounty.gov).

## Facebook Post

Our teens face real risks including substance abuse, bullying, dating abuse, depression and suicide. Get a look at current trends and available resources to promote healthy choices among young people with the county's Prevention Toolkit: [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ncs/prevention/toolkit.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ncs/prevention/toolkit.htm).

## Tweets

How can you support youth development in your community? See our Prevention Toolkit for ideas & resources: <http://bit.ly/PrevKit>

Interested in preventing mental health problems and suicide\*?: <http://bit.ly/PrevKit>

\*Can be interchanged with: substance use, bullying & cyberbullying, obesity and teen dating abuse.

#### Toolkit Presentations and Resources: Bullying and Cyberbullying

View the presentation, videos and Fact Sheets for highlights from the Fairfax County Youth Survey and specific results related to bullying and cyberbullying.

#### Fairfax County Youth Survey Results Bullying and Cyberbullying



Visit slideshare to view this and other county presentations.

#### Fairfax County Youth Survey Videos

View these videos to learn about how students responded to questions about bullying, the signs of being bullied and how you can help, and how supportive peers, families, and communities go hand-in-hand with positive youth behavior.

- School Year 2014-2015 Youth Survey Highlights Video (9M, 27:30 minutes)
- School Year 2013-2014 Youth Survey Highlights Video (9M, 27:33 minutes)
- School Year 2012-2013 Youth Survey Highlights Video (9M, 25:00 minutes)
- School Year 2011-2012 Youth Survey Highlights Video (9M, 24:17 minutes)
- Teens and Bullying/Cyberbullying Video (9M, 4:00 minutes)
  - Play Video in English (2:59 min.), Korean (5:21 min.), Spanish (4:30 min.), Vietnamese (4:52 min.)
- Bullying Resiliency in Youth Through Assets (9M, 10:30 minutes)
- Three to Succeed Video (9M, 4:31 minutes)
- Tres Para el Exito Video Spanish (9M, 5:10 minutes)

View Playlist of Youth Survey Videos on YouTube

#### Discussion Guide

Visit the Discussion Guide Web page for suggested questions to facilitate a productive conversation and guide a group toward taking action to promote healthy behavior.

#### Take Action

Visit the Take Action Web page for ideas of programs you can start in your community to promote healthy communities.

#### Resources

- Where To Go for Help and More Information
- Additional Resources for Data and Research
- Prevention Goal Reports
- Guides and Frequently Asked Questions

#### Fairfax County Youth Survey Fact Sheets

These Fact Sheets provide Fairfax County Youth Survey data, signs of concern, and suggestions of what parents can do to help, as well as contacts and resources for more information.

- Teens and Bullying/Cyberbullying Fact Sheet
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Questioning Fact Sheet
- Risk and Protective Factors Fact Sheet

Have a question or suggestion? Email the Prevention Staff for assistance.



**Contact Us:**

Prevention Unit  
Fairfax County Neighborhood &  
Community Services

**Email:**

[ncs-prevention@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:ncs-prevention@fairfaxcounty.gov)

**Website:**

[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ncs/prevention](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ncs/prevention)

**Twitter:**

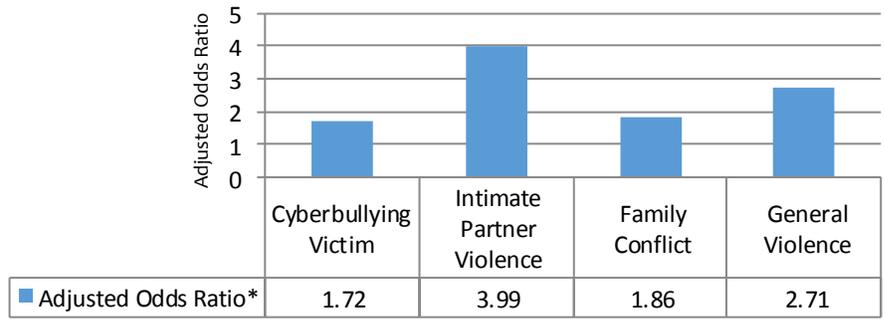
[@ffxyouththrive](https://twitter.com/ffxyouththrive)

**Subscribe to An Ounce of Prevention at:**

[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ncs/prevention](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ncs/prevention)

**Youth Survey Spotlight**

**Selected Risk Factors for Having Attempted Suicide**



\*All odds ratios shown are statistically significant at p<.05 level. Other than the cyberbullying measure, all measures are composite measures of multiple items. Odds ratios are shown for the highest levels of each composite measure (e.g., respondents who experienced “the most” family conflict).

A recent “Epi-Aid” study conducted by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention assessed risk factors for suicide among Fairfax County youth. Among other data sources, the CDC analyzed 2013 Youth Survey data to identify risk factors of key significance. Among the major findings is the level to which experience of violence (as a victim or a witness) is a risk factor for suicidal ideation and attempts. The chart above shows adjusted odds ratios for several risk factors. As shown by the chart, a victim of cyberbullying is 72% (or 1.72 times) more likely to have attempted suicide than someone who is not a victim of cyberbullying. The full Epi-Aid report can be accessed at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/suicide](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/suicide).

**Attendance Task Force Forming to Develop Work Plan**

On September 21, 2015, over 200 committed stakeholders participated in the [Community Dialogue on School Attendance](#), to hear about attendance-related issues and concerns in Fairfax County, and to share ideas on ways that we, as a community, can improve attendance and prevent chronic absenteeism. Those ideas, and an overview of evidence-based and other best practices from across the country, were compiled into a [report](#) that was presented to the [Fairfax County Successful Children and Youth Policy Team](#) (SCYPT). The SCYPT endorsed the report as a framework for the development of a specific, county-wide action plan.

An Attendance Task Force is now forming to create the action plan. The Task Force will be time-limited, with work to be completed by the end of April. To be as efficient as possible, the Task Force will be made up of three committees:

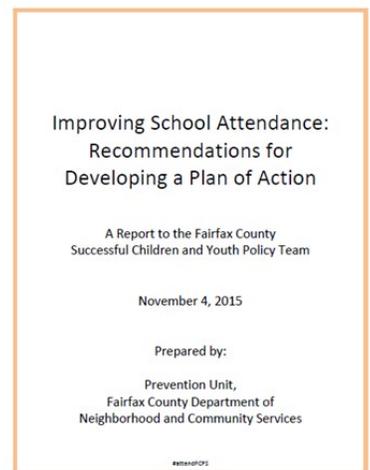
**Interventions:** How and when do we intervene with a youth and family when there are attendance problems?

**Connections to Resources:** What resources are available (at schools and in communities) and how do we connect people to them?

**Policies, Procedures, and Personnel:** This committee will focus on specific policies, procedures, and job duties, with a focus on consistency across the county.

Committees will begin meeting after the new year. Meeting times have not yet been established. Please email [ncs-prevention@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:ncs-prevention@fairfaxcounty.gov) if you are interested in joining; be sure to note which committee you’d like to work with. After the new year, the chair of your committee will contact you with more information.

In addition, webinars will provide updates on plan development and allow for questions and input. And Task Force members can share this work at coalition, organization, and other meetings to provide updates and receive input. Please email for more information.



Fairfax County is committed to nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in all county programs, services and activities. Reasonable accommodations will be provided upon request. For more information, call 703-324-4600, TTY 711.

