



The Paterson Youth Survey 2006: Findings and Implications

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Coalition for Juvenile Justice Conference

Sunday April 27, 2008



Paterson Youth Survey

Adopts a risk and protective factor framework by asking students questions that pertain to the following five life domains:

- Individual
- Peer relationships
- Family
- School
- Community

Outcome data also focused on:

- Substance use
- Violence-related attitudes and behaviors
- Sexual risk



Survey Development

- Data-gathering instrument was developed through an extensive literature search.
- Reliable and valid measures procured from U.S. government and other published sources – e.g., Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP).
- These instruments have been shown to be valuable in assessing risk and protective factors.

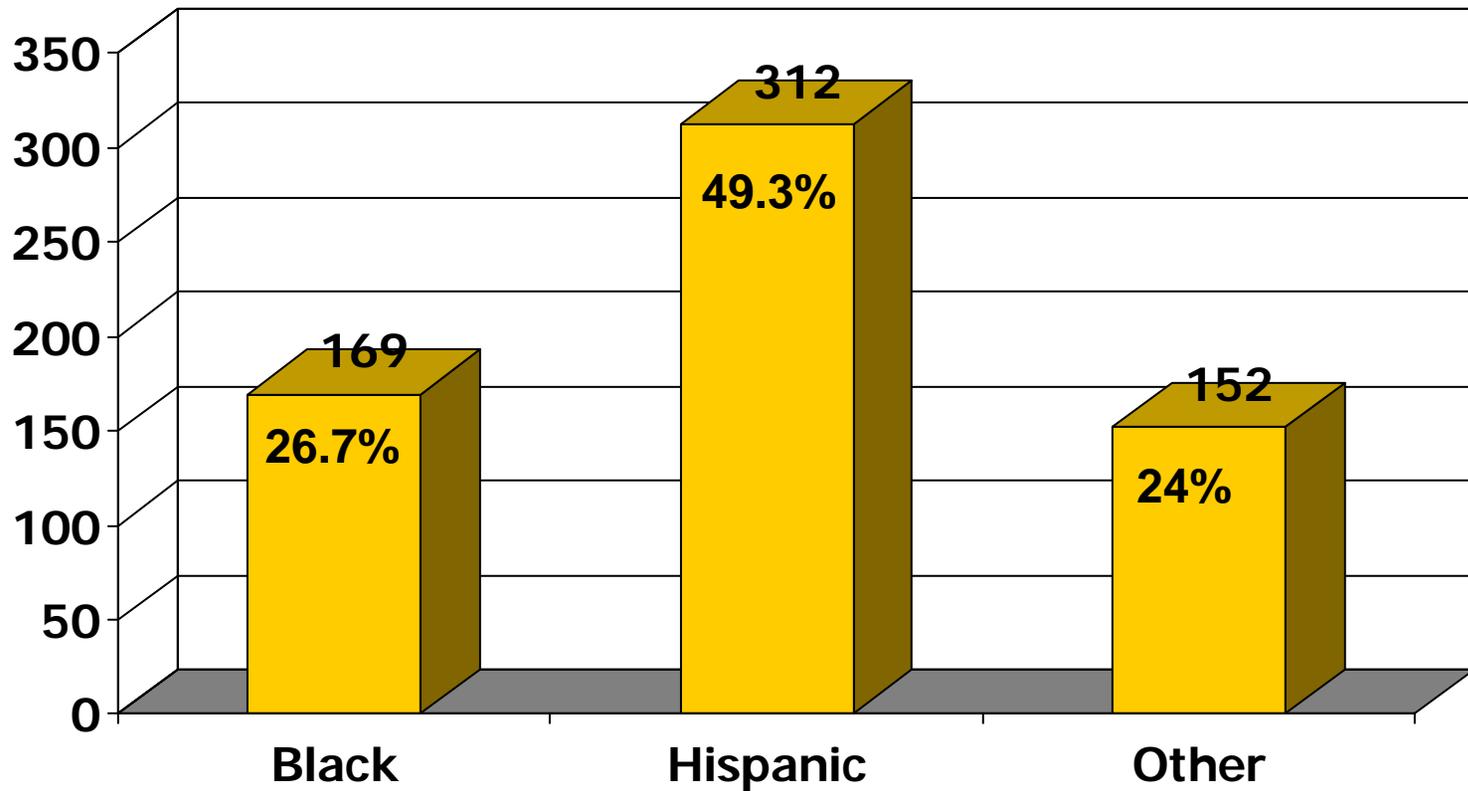


Data Collection Methods

- Paterson School District obtained active parental consent
- Self administered
- Targeted 5,000 students from 9th-12th grades
- Received 648 completed surveys (Response rate of 13%)
- Surveys were collected from 8 Paterson high schools

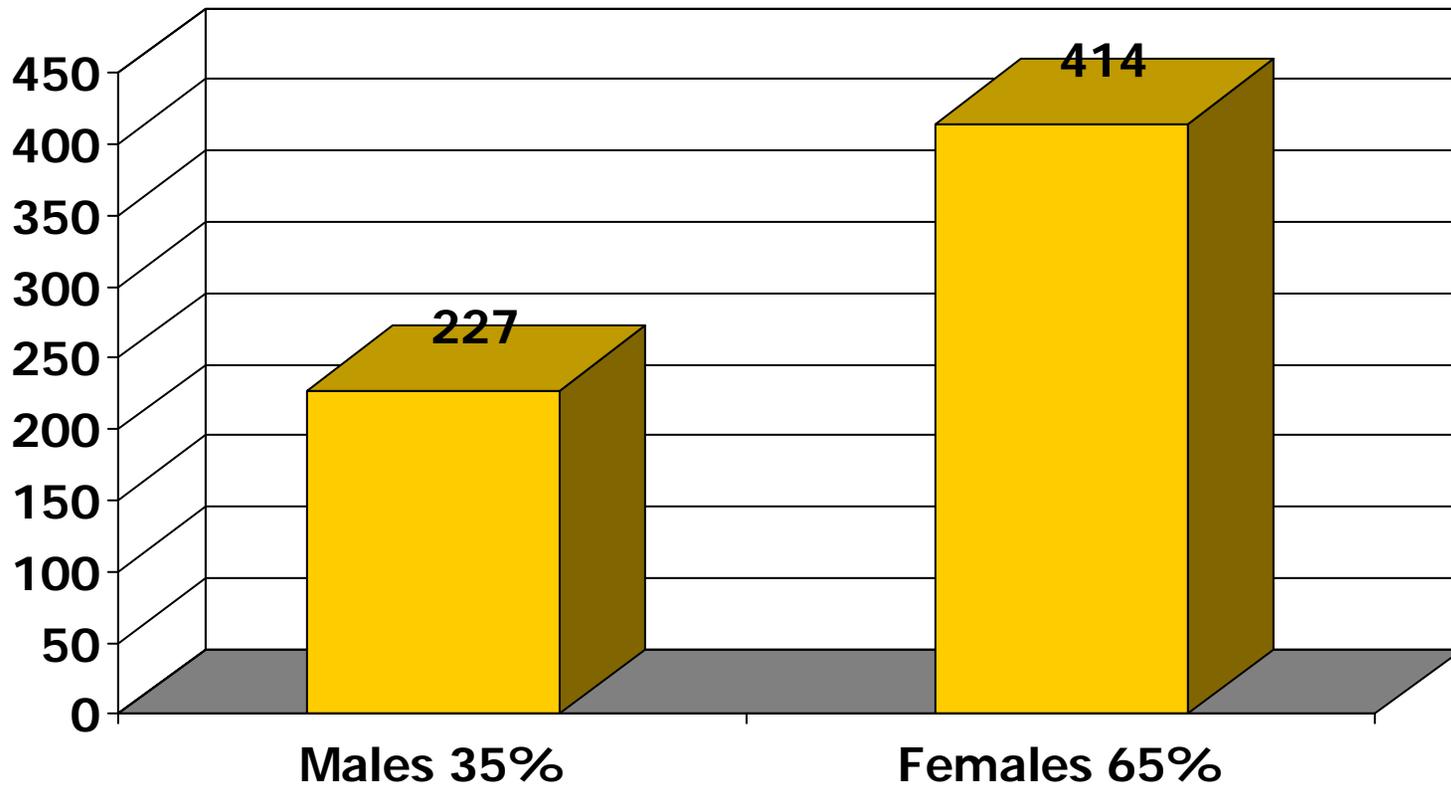


Breakdown of Survey Participants by Race/Ethnicity



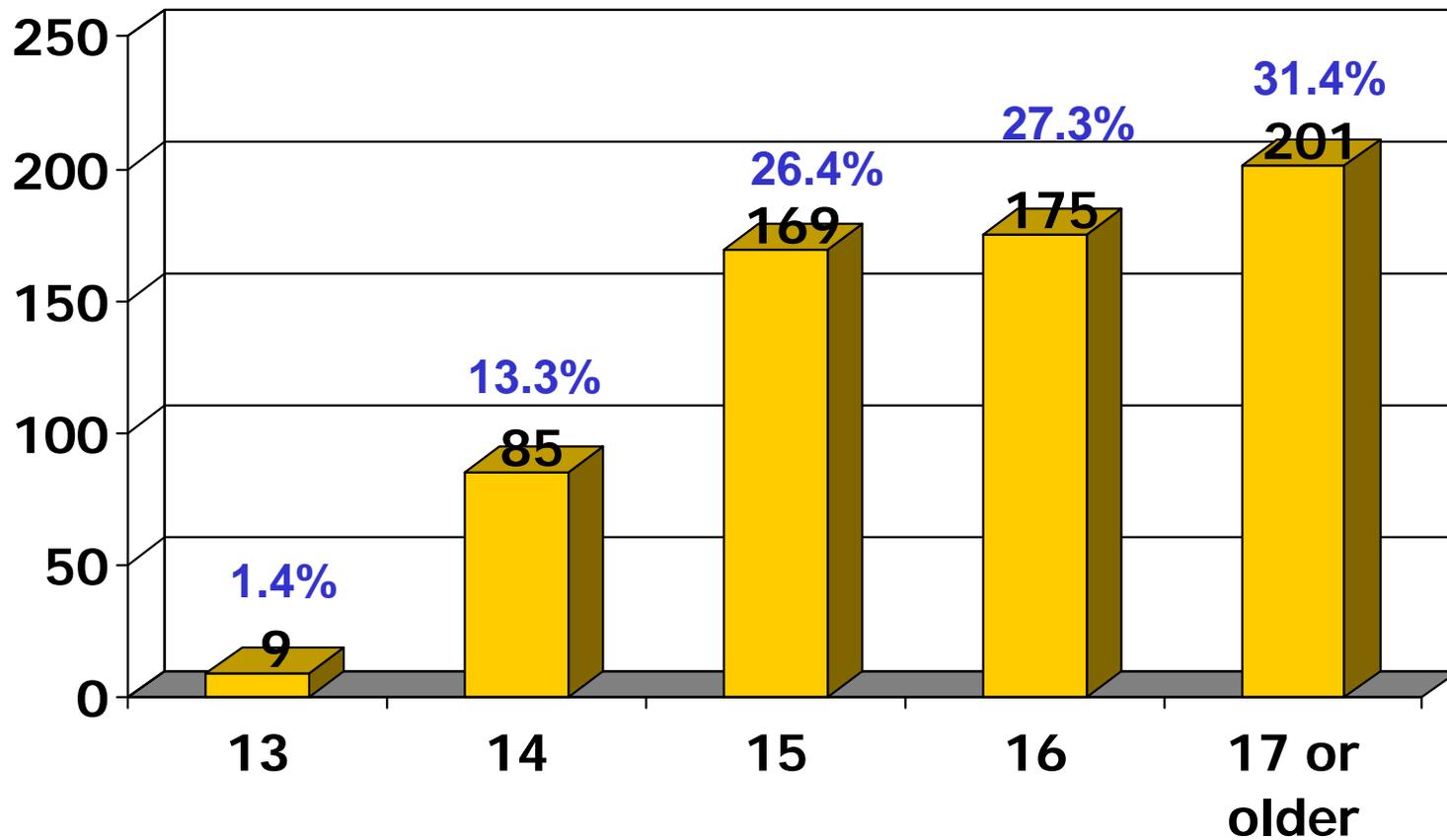


Breakdown of Survey Participants by Gender





Breakdown of Survey Participants by Age





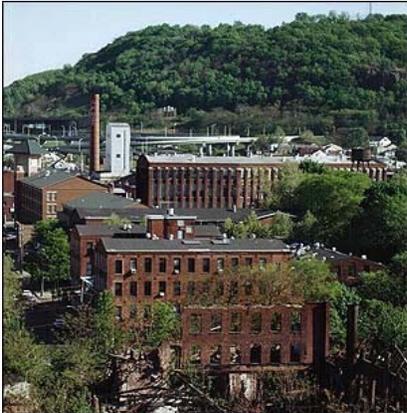
Survey Results



Community Domain

■ Risk factors

- Lack of community support network (i.e., More than 50% of respondents felt that their neighborhood cannot help them fulfill their needs, over 50% had no sense of belonging or connection to their neighborhoods.)
- Prevalence of crime and drug selling (i.e., More than 50% of respondents acknowledged drug selling and crime in their neighborhoods.)
- Lack of safety (i.e., More than 50% felt unsafe in their neighborhoods.)
- Lack of community activities (i.e., More than 50% of the students do not partake in any programs or activities in their neighborhoods.)



■ Protective factors

- No identifiable protective factors



School Domain

■ Risk factors

- Lack of support network from school staff (i.e., Students felt there was little support from individuals such as guidance counselors, teachers, and principals.)
- Feelings of inadequacy and lack of importance in school (i.e., Students did not feel they were that important in class and felt worthless in school.)
- Prevalence of victimization in school (i.e., Students reported being physically threatened and harmed by other students.)
- Students also reported that weapons such as knives and guns were being brought onto school property.

■ Protective factors

- Finishing school was important to more than 80% of the students and their parents.
- More than 50% of the students reported mostly A's and B's as their grades.
- More than 75% of the students felt college was important in attaining life goals.



Family Domain

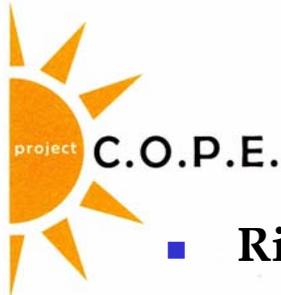


Risk factors

- Paternal involvement (fathers play a less active role in their children's lives as over one-third of the adolescents felt that their fathers were not a good source of support.)
- Verbal conflict among family members (more than half of respondents (56%) felt that their families consistently argued about the same things, 57% felt that family members lost their tempers for no reason.)
- Physical conflicts among family members (23% reported physical fights in the household)
- Feelings of inadequacy within the household (20% of the youth felt that no one paid attention to them and that no one wanted them at home.)

■ Protective factors

- Maternal involvement (more than 80% of the adolescents found their mothers to be an important source of help and support.)
- A sense of self worth from family members (more than 80% reported that their parents are "proud of the kind of person they are.")
- Family members feel very close to, like to spend time with and seek help from each other (more than 60% of the adolescents said that their family members ask each other for help.)



Peer Relationships

■ Risk Factors

- Views of popularity (as much as 38% of the youth do not feel they are as popular as others their age.)
- Views of self-personality (20% of the youth wished they could be a different kind of person so they would have more friends.)
- Views of support network (more than 30% of the adolescents felt that their close friends were not very helpful as a social support network.)



■ Protective Factors

- Peer support (45% of the respondents felt that their friends can provide them support and material needs.)
- Active educators with peers (More than 50% reported trying to convince other students, family members, or friends to be more concerned about illegal drug and alcohol use at least once in the past year.)
- Positive peer relationships (More than 70% reported having the most fun with friends and 84% reported their friends are fun to be with.)



Individual Domain

Self-Esteem

■ Risk Factors

- Worthlessness/inferiority (More than 25% of the respondents had felt worthless or inferior during the 6 months prior to taking the survey.)
- Lack of love (30% of the adolescents reported feelings that no one loves him/her within the past 6 months.)
- Self-consciousness (More than one-third of the youth reported feeling self-conscious or embarrassed.)

■ Protective Factors

- Leadership skills (More than 50% of respondents reported often being leaders.)
- Problem solving skills (65% of the respondents reported working on solving problems themselves rather than waiting to see if someone else would deal with it.)
- Organizational skills (More than 60% of respondents reported being able to organize people to get things done.)



Individual Domain

DEPRESSION

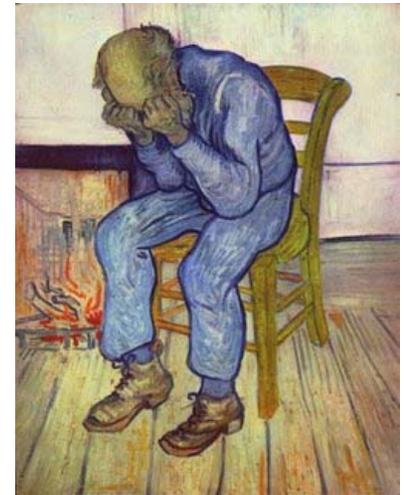
■ Risk Factors

- Loneliness (More than 33% of the adolescents reported feeling lonely and crying a lot within the past 6 months prior to the survey.)
- Feelings of sadness or unhappiness (More than 33% of the youth reported feeling unhappy, sad, or depressed within the past 6 months prior to the survey.)

ANXIETY

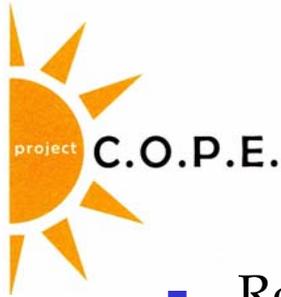
■ Risk Factors

- Need for perfection (More than 33% of the adolescents reported feeling that they had to be perfect, that they might do something bad, felt nervous, high-strung, tense, suspicious.)
- Excessive worrying (More than 50% of the adolescents reported worrying within the past 6 months prior to the survey.)
- Paranoia (29% of the adolescents reported feeling that others are out to get them.)





Survey Statistics Safety Risk Factors



Overall Safety Risk Factors

- Respondents reported various areas in the community which they felt unsafe including:
 - Going to and from school (34%)
 - On school grounds before and after class (37%), in class (35%) and during lunch (36%)
 - At the park (36%)
 - Outside the home (31%)
 - In the neighborhood (38%)
- More than 50% of the youth also reported the prevalence of:
 - Fights
 - Crime and/or drug selling
 - Abandoned/empty buildings



Gangs Involvement and Other Risk Factors

- A gang presence was identified in neighborhoods and school by more than 60% of respondents.
- Half of the respondents acknowledged gang members as troublemakers
- Half of respondents had friends who were gang members.

Alarming fact:

- Almost 10% of respondents identified that they wanted to be a gang member
- More than 10% of respondents identified themselves as gang members





Implications

- Family involvement
- Focus on building community services and activities for youth and teens (i.e., Youth Center)
- Focus on early intervention for younger children
- Foster relationships between educators and students
- Build peer leadership and mentoring programs
 - Gang awareness
 - Drug and alcohol awareness
 - Volunteer opportunities
 - Community pride and involvement
- Promotion of “mental well-being”
 - Community awareness
 - Counseling
 - Leadership, Efficacy and Self-Esteem building workshops
 - Assistance coping with individual, family member or peer depression & anxiety