

Asset Survey Information

April 11, 2014

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Over the past several days, I have spoken to a number of parents regarding the asset survey, *Search Institute Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors*, that was administered to the 7th and 8th grades last week. While many parents have shared their support for our continued efforts to better know our students, a few have expressed concern over specific survey items. Additionally, at the April 7th school board meeting, three parents and one community member questioned our administration of the survey. In light of these questions, I want to take this opportunity to further clarify some misunderstandings and the rationale for and usefulness of this survey.

We have used this anonymous survey for sixteen years to assess our middle school students' positive developmental assets as well as their possible risky behaviors. The survey is completely optional. In the March 21 and 28 issues of the Lurgio News email, parents were informed of the nature of the survey and the process for its administration.

Parents were invited to review the complete survey prior to its administration if they had any questions. Students were informed that their participation was not required and that they could skip any questions they were not comfortable answering. We have received feedback that we should have been more specific in our notification letter that certain survey items on the survey concerned sex. That is good feedback, which will be incorporated into future letters of notice to parents. Additionally, we have heard a concern that some students may have made up answers.

To address this, the Search Institute designed the survey in a way that they are able to reject any individual survey that indicates inconsistent responses. We have posted all the communication to parents and the surveys on the district website at <http://www.sau25.net/curriculum.cfm?subpage=1849218>.

In an ideal world, all of our students would possess the positive assets needed to decide not to engage in any risky behaviors. However, based on the past results of the survey and our own experience with adolescent children, we know that some of Bedford's middle school aged children have engaged in sex, used drugs, consumed alcohol, and used tobacco products. As a principal and a parent of four school-age children, I understand that information is an important tool to help us protect our students from engaging in at-risk behavior. The information from this survey helps us refine Lurgio's health curriculum and other school programs such as Stand by Me. The information also supports community groups such as the Coalition for Bedford Youth (CBY). For example, CBY shares the aggregate survey results to the community through BCTV shows, presentations, and brochures.

The administration, teachers and staff of the Ross A. Lurgio Middle School are invested in partnering with parents and the community in our efforts to raise positive and productive children. All the results of this survey will be shared with parents and the community so that we can better understand and support our students. We look forward to working with you on supporting our students' social and emotional needs as they navigate this important period of growth and change.

Sincerely,

Ed Joyce
Principal