

Sacramento County Youth Commission
Survey 2001:

Report on
“Important Youth Issues”



July 2001

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**Sacramento County Youth Commission
Survey 2001: Important Youth Issues**

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Sacramento County Youth Commission Survey 2001: Important Youth Issues

Section I: Introduction

The issues that are faced by today's youth are numerous and complex. This can make it difficult to know where to place the primary focus when one is faced with addressing these issues.

The Sacramento County Youth Commission is a body of twenty Sacramento County youth appointed by the County Board of Supervisors to be a voice for youth in local government. Their mission is to 1) collectively identify issues facing Sacramento County youth, 2) effectively voice the concerns of youth in Sacramento County, 3) plan events that help youth in a positive way, 4) bring ideas of improving and solving problems facing today's youth, and most of all, 5) connect Sacramento youth with the Board of Supervisors to collaborate efforts to build a better community for Sacramento's youth.

In the beginning of 2001, the Sacramento County Youth Commission, working with the assistance of Plan4future Inc., researched what issues the youth of Sacramento County feel needs the most attention. This was accomplished through a survey that was distributed to 16 schools within 5 major Sacramento County Unified School Districts covering a representative region of Sacramento County. The survey presented a list of possible issues and asked the youth to rate how much attention they believe each issue needs. A total of 591 surveys were completed and returned from youth ranging from 12-19 years of age (*see Section III for details on distribution*).

The survey asked youth to rate, on a scale of 1 to 7, how much attention they believe the following issues need:

Issues

- **Not knowing about fun activities or places to go**
- **Fun activities for young people cost too much**
- **Difficult to get to and from places**
- **Adults not understanding teens**
- **Lack of support by adults**
- **Wanting to fit in with the crowd**
- **Pressure by friends to do things (that you might not do otherwise)**
- **Schools being in poor physical condition**
- **Dealing with stress caused by school**
- **Things that can happen because of sexual activity (i.e. pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases)**
- **Young people disliking or disrespecting others because they are different (due to race, religion, gender, etc.)**
- **Teens not getting along with each other (i.e. verbal or physical violence between youth, verbal or physical fighting between youth who are dating)**
- **The use of drugs and alcohol by youth**

Section II: Survey Results

Top Issue: Adults Not Understanding Teens

The results of the survey indicated that the Sacramento County Youth issue needing the most attention is: **Adults not understanding teens**. This highest reported issue related to a concern by the youth that they are not being understood by adults.

Very Close to the Top Issue

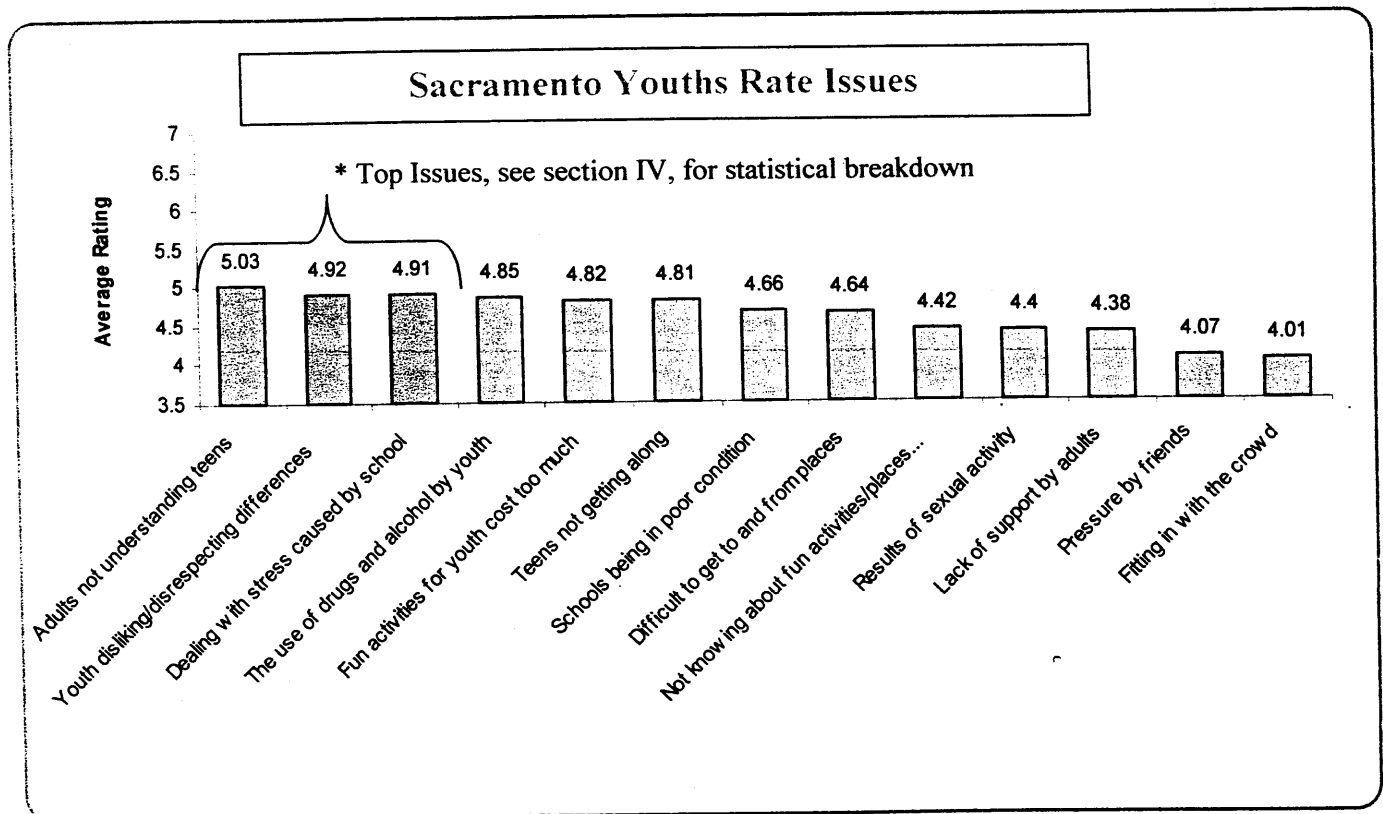
Two issues that had results almost as high as the top issue were:

- **Young people disliking or disrespecting others because they are different:** The second highest reported issue is related to dislike and disrespect that occurs within their peers based on race, religion, gender, and other prejudices.
- **Dealing with stress caused by school:** Another top issue needing attention is associated with the school-related stress that the youth have to deal with.

Other Important Issues

Although these issues were not indicated as those requiring the most attention, they did rate high enough to be important issues to consider:

- **The use of drugs and alcohol by youth**
- **Fun activities for young people cost too much**
- **Teens not getting along with each other** (i.e. verbal or physical violence between youth, verbal or physical fighting between youth who are dating)



Section III: Survey Distribution

The majority of surveys were distributed during the months of May and June 2001, by Joelle Orrock, Project Specialist within the Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE). Some surveys were distributed by Youth Commission members. A total of 591 surveys were completed and returned with a nearly equal number of each gender, as 48.3% were males and 51.7% females.

Table: Surveys from each School

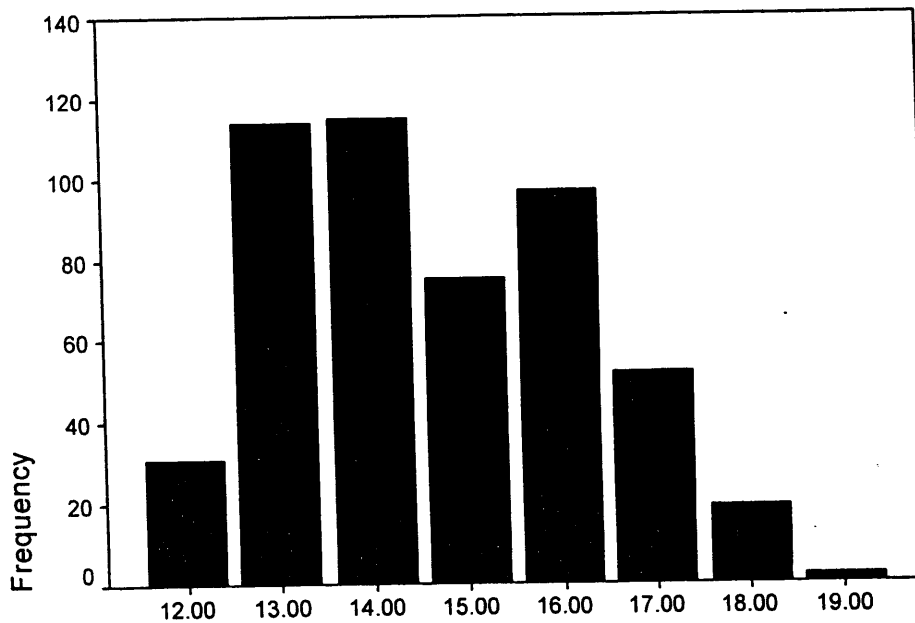
School	Number of Surveys from each school
Mills Middle School	9
Hiram Johnson High School	24
Smedberg Middle School	19
Grant High School	52
Mira Loma High School	5
Sheldon High School	31
Joseph Kerr Middle School	4
Highlands High School	7
Rio Linda High School	85
John Still School	48
Pacific High School	10
Del Campo High School	87
Folsom Middle School	87
C. K. McClatchy High School	2
Arden Middle School	33
James Rutter Middle School	50
No school name given	38
<u>TOTAL SURVEYS</u>	<u>591</u>

Table: Surveys by Unified School District

Unified School District	Number of Surveys from each District
Elk Grove	104
Folsom-Cordova	96
Grant	154
Sacramento City	74
San Juan	125
No school name given	38
<u>TOTAL SURVEYS</u>	<u>591</u>

Distribution of Ages

Surveys were completed from youth ranging from 12-19 years of age, with an average age of 14.66. The most commonly reported age is 14 years.



Ages of Youth Responding to Survey

Section IV: Statistical Analysis

Confidence Interval

A confidence interval indicates how well you can generalize these findings to the overall population. In other words, "This is how sure you can be that the rest of the Sacramento youth would answer the questions in the same way as what was reported in these findings". With 591 surveys returned out of an estimated potential population of 97,021*, there is a confidence interval of 4.02 at a 95% confidence level. This means that one can be 95% certain that the findings are accurate to a degree of +/- 4.02%. Generally, 3 to 5% is considered satisfactory, which means the survey results are reflective of the views of Sacramento County youth.

Survey Reliability

Reliability refers to how consistent survey participants were with their answers. Inconsistency can result if participants take the survey carelessly, become confused, or do not understand the questions being asked. Consistency is reported in a reliability figure that can range from 0 to 1.00, with those that are more reliable being closer to 1.00. Generally, a good or acceptable reliability figure runs in the .70 or above range. This Youth Commission survey had a reliability coefficient of .83, indicating a very decent reliability.

Test for Significance

The top issue, "Adults not understanding teens", was analyzed to investigate if its mean rating is significantly higher than the others with a One-Sample T-Test. Findings indicated that this issue was significantly higher than all others except, "Young people disliking or disrespecting others because they are different", and "Dealing with stress caused by school."

* Based on Sacramento County school enrollment for grades 7-12 in the 2000-2001 school year

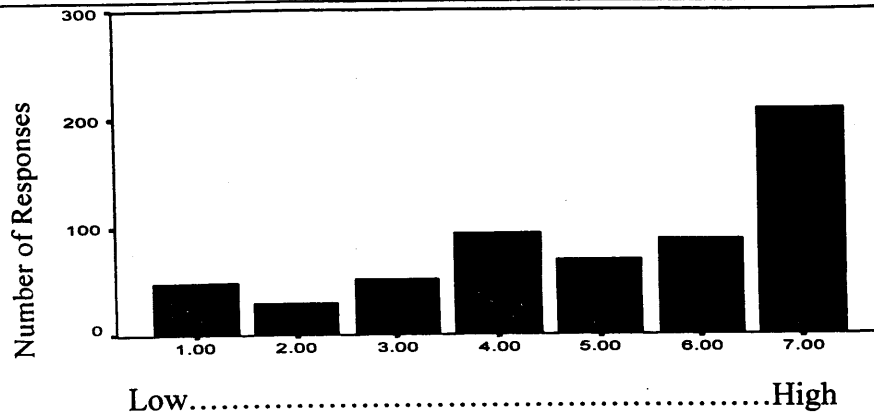
One-Sample Test

YOUTH ISSUES	Test Value = 5.0339					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
1. Not knowing about fun activities...	-8.059	588	.000	-.6111	-.7601	-.4622
2. Fun activities ... cost too much	-2.804	589	.005	-.2170	-.3689	-6.4996E-02
3. Difficult to get to and from places	-4.925	588	.000	-.3921	-.5485	-.2358
4. Adults not understanding teens	.000	589	1.000	-1.6949E-06	-.1589	.1589
5. Lack of support by adults	-8.226	589	.000	-.6508	-.8062	-.4955
6. Wanting to fit in with the crowd	-12.702	586	.000	-1.0220	-1.1800	-.8639
7. Pressure by friends to do things	-11.391	587	.000	-.9676	-1.1344	-.8007
8. Schools being in poor... condition	-4.461	589	.000	-.3763	-.5419	-.2106
9. Dealing with stress caused by school	-1.602	585	.110	-.1261	-.2806	2.851E-02
10. Things that can happen w/ sexual activity	-7.324	589	.000	-.6381	-.8092	-.4670
11. Young people disliking other because of differences	-1.400	590	.162	-.1134	-.2726	4.571E-02
12. Teens not getting along w/ each other	-2.940	589	.003	-.2203	-.3675	-7.3163E-02
13. The use of drugs and alcohol by youth	-2.148	590	.032	-.1845	-.3532	-1.5829E-02

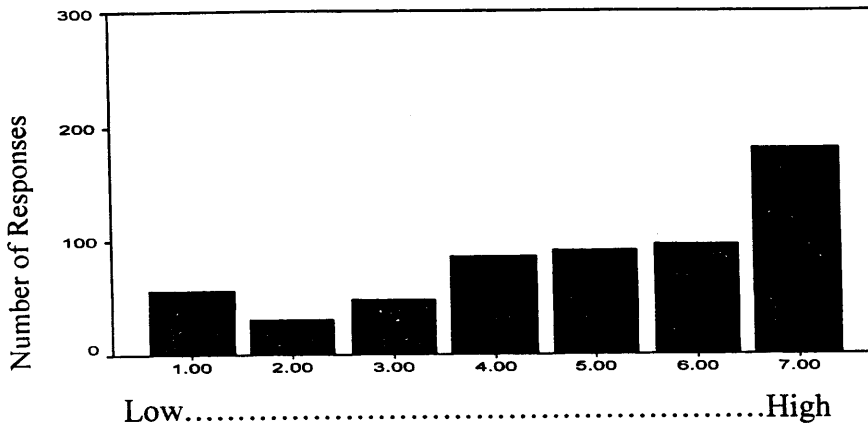
Frequency Distribution of Top Three Issues

The following graphs show the frequency distributions of the top three issues. It tells you how many individuals responded in each rating.

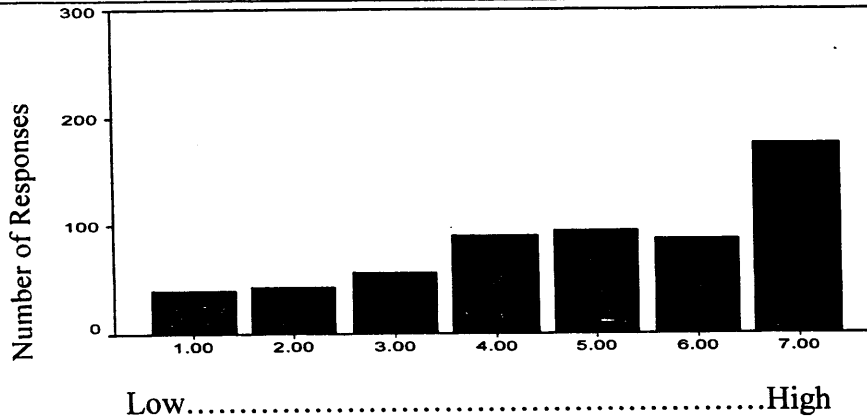
1. Adults Not Understanding Teens



2. Young people disliking or disrespecting others because they are different



3. Dealing with Stress Caused by School



Acknowledgements

**2000-2001 Sacramento County
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