



**PRINCIPAL**  
James G. Hickey, Ph.D. ■  
608-838-4565

**ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL**  
Sherry Holly  
608-838-4564

**SCHOOL COUNSELORS**  
■ John Feldner and Jackie Guenther ■  
608-838-4532 - 608-838-4531

**INTEGRATED STUDENT SERVICES**  
Penny Simmons, Ph.D.  
608-838-4514

**ATHLETIC DIR.**  
■ Brad Minter  
608-838-4568

December 7, 2011

Dear Parent/Guardian:

This letter is to inform you that Dane County school districts will be administering the Dane County Youth Assessment in January and February 2012.

Since 1980, every few years over 23,000 Dane County youth in grades 7-12 are surveyed regarding their opinions, concerns, attitudes, behaviors and experiences to provide educators, community agencies, parents, policy-makers and funding bodies the data needed to inform grant writing, program development and public policy.

The last survey was administered in 2009 and informed the following efforts:

- CESA 2 and district ATODA counselors invited a nationally known speaker and athletic code designer to an open forum to discuss policies and practices to reduce substance use among student athletes;
- Public Health Madison and Dane County used the data to assess health risks related to obesity, diet, physical activity and tobacco use targeting its interventions with local partners. One initiative focused on reducing youth access and use of tobacco through a partnership with Tobacco Free Dane County Coalition;
- Dane county launched the Coalition to Reduce Alcohol Abuse, an initiative that included legislative and environmental activities to reduce youth access to alcohol;
- United Way of Dane County continued its Achievement Connections initiative with partner school districts to improve high school achievement and graduation rates;
- The Madison Metropolitan School District used the data to select bullying prevention materials and to conduct parent forums on preventing underage drinking;
- School districts throughout the county used the data in classroom discussions and at town hall meetings to address underage drinking and many other target issues.

The 2009 report and results are available at

[http://www.danecountyhumanservices.org/Family/Youth/youth\\_assessment\\_2009.aspx](http://www.danecountyhumanservices.org/Family/Youth/youth_assessment_2009.aspx)

A committee of school personnel, parents and representatives of the Dane County Youth Commission, United Way, the City of Madison and Public Health Madison & Dane County developed the 2012 survey. The survey collects information on the issues, challenges and factors impacting youth every day. Specific topics include:

- Demographics and living situation
- How youth spend their time
- Parents and families
- Health, nutrition and safety behavior
- Emotional and mental health
- Sexual activity
- Drug and alcohol use
- School experience
- Peer relations & bullying
- Social networking (a new topic area in this survey)
- Community relations and support

5103 Farwell Street ■ McFarland, Wisconsin 53558-9206 ■ (608) 838-3166 FAX (608) 838-4562

The McFarland School District does not discriminate on the basis of sex, age, race, color, national origin, ancestry, creed pregnancy, religion, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, or disability.



Functions are built into the survey allowing students who are not sexually active or alcohol/drug involved to skip these sections of the survey.

In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and district policy, please be advised that:

- The survey will be conducted in Dane County schools January and February 2012.
- No student names will be collected. The survey is completely anonymous and confidential.
- School personnel will oversee survey administration.
- The survey will be administered electronically. No one in the school or district will see any individual student responses.
- Survey results will be tabulated by project vendor K12 Associates.
- Parents may inspect the survey in a hard copy form at the office of McFarland High School located at 5101 Farwell St. Penny Simmons can be contacted at penny\_simmons@mcfarland.k12.wi.us and 838-4514.
- Participation is voluntary. The participation of every student is greatly appreciated. However, if you prefer that your son or daughter not participate, please complete the form at the bottom of this page.
- If you have questions about the survey, please contact the school representative listed above, Connie Bettin, Dane County Prevention Manager at [bettin@countyofdane.com](mailto:bettin@countyofdane.com) or 242-6422, or Deborah Hobbins, chair of the Dane County Youth Commission at 608-235-9006.

Sincerely,

Connie Bettin  
Dane County  
Prevention Manager

Penny Simmons, Ph.D  
Integrated Student Services

James G. Hickey, Ph.D.  
Principal

Sherry Holly  
Associate Principal

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**(Please detach and return if you Do Not want your child to participate in the 2012 Dane County Youth Survey)**

I do not want my son/daughter (name) \_\_\_\_\_ who attends  
\_\_\_\_\_ school to participate in the Dane County Youth Assessment.

Parent Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

***Please Return by January 13, 2012 to: Guidance Office, 5101 Farwell St, McFarland, WI 53558***