



Rural Youth Education Study

PENNSSTATE



College of
Agricultural
Sciences

FACT SHEET #2 FOR EDUCATORS - FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS

Fall 2006

What Is The Rural Youth Education Study?

The Pennsylvania State University is conducting a longitudinal study on approximately 1,500 rural Pennsylvanian students asking about their educational, occupational, and residential aspirations. For more information on the study, please see the project's website. Using the first wave of data from 2004, this fact sheet focuses on student educational aspirations and the barriers they believe will keep them from attaining their educational goals.

What Are The Student's Educational Aspirations?

Figure 1. Percentage of 7th and 11th Grade Students Reporting Educational Goals.

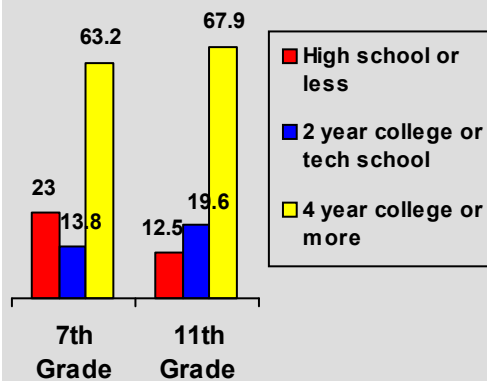
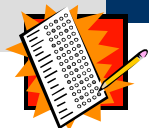


Figure 1 describes the educational aspirations of the 7th and 11th grade students in the study. The majority of students in both grades report that they hope to get a four year college education or more. A greater percentage of students in the 11th than 7th grade would like to attend a 2 year community college, technical or trade school. In addition, a smaller percentage of students in the 11th than in 7th grade want a high school education or less. The difference between 7th and 11th grade aspirations may reflect that by 11th grade students who wanted to drop out have done so. It may also reflect that students have changed their goals as they have matured and now recognize the importance of obtaining higher education in order to achieve career goals.

RYE Study - Wave Two

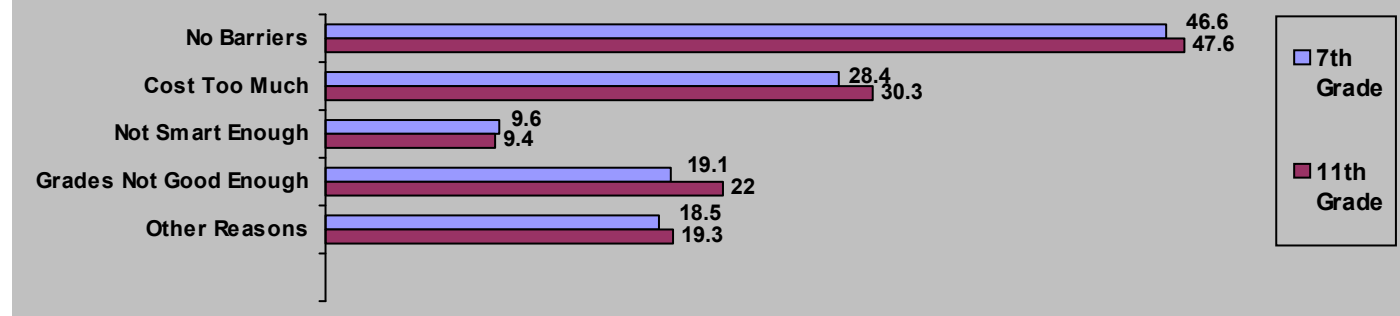
- ◆ Second wave of data collection is scheduled for the 2006/2007 school year
- ◆ Students in the 7th grade during the first wave are now in the 9th grade and will receive a follow-up in-school survey soon
- ◆ Students in the 11th grade are now out of high school and will receive follow up surveys through the mail and over the internet
- ◆ The second wave of data will be used to study how youth aspirations change over time, whether they have been able to achieve their aspirations, and the factors that contribute to or act as barriers to achievement of goals.
- ◆ Additional waves of data will be collected in 2008/2009 and 2010/2011.

What Do Students Believe Are The Barriers To Their Educational Goals?

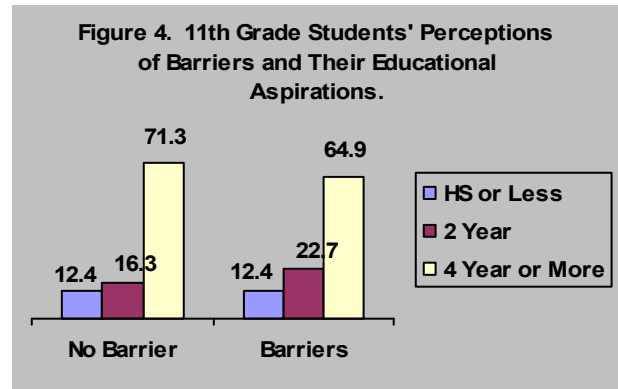
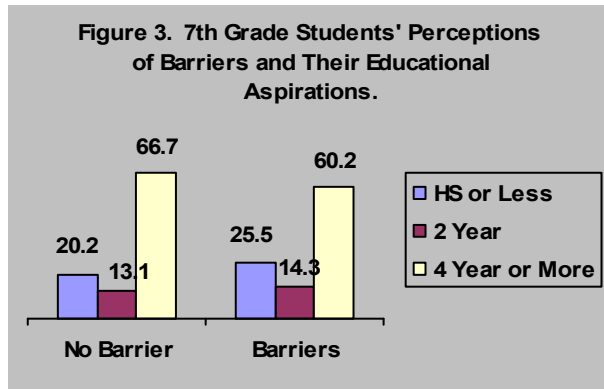


Students in both 7th and 11th grade were asked what could prevent them from going as far as they would like in school. Figure 2 describes the percentage of students who identified specific barriers. A greater percentage of students in 11th than 7th grade perceive "cost" and "not having good enough grades" as barriers. These are the two most often identified barriers, however, almost fifty percent of students see no barriers

Figure 2. Percentage of Students Who Perceive Specific Barriers to Getting Desired Education



When students in both grades report there are no barriers to their education, a greater percentage aspire to four years of college or more, as shown in Figures 3 and 4. However, when students report that their grades aren't good enough, they are not smart enough or believe they have other barriers, a smaller percentage aspires to four years of college or more. Cost of education was a barrier reported by more than a quarter of the students in both grades. However, cost of education as a barrier is not related to lower educational goals. This might be because students who perceive this barrier are those that are serious about their intentions to go to college and have identified loans and grants and so identify this as a barrier that can be overcome.



Students, especially those in high school, are often told that in order to succeed in today's economic environment they will need some type of post-secondary education. Although many students (46.6% in 7th grade and 47.6% in 11th grade) believe that they do not have any barriers to the education they want, these are less than half of the students in both grades. This speaks to the importance of schools reaching out to students and parents to provide the guidance and support students need to help understand and negotiate higher education admissions and funding. These processes can be intimidating for many students and their families. Helping students and families understand the barriers to higher education and how to overcome them will help more youth achieve higher education. Vocational training and community colleges can provide important options for students not interested in a four-year college degree.

Resources On Overcoming Barriers To College

- According to the article "Participation of Rural Youth in Higher Education: Factors, Strategies, and Innovations" some approaches to remove barriers to higher education for rural youth, which can be implemented by educators, include workshops for school personnel, campus visits, college and career information, and support services. A complete version of the article can be viewed at: http://www.texasrural.org/docs/rural_education_report.pdf
- The following website provided by the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education has over 170 resources about partnership techniques for educators, the community, and parents to overcome the barriers to higher educational attainment facing students. <http://www.ncpie.org/Resources/Educators.cfm>
- The article entitled "Barriers to College Success" discusses student, parent, and K-12 educator understandings—and misunderstandings—about college and how this affects knowledge of college and preparatory opportunities for students. The full findings and research can be found at: <http://www.stanford.edu/group/ncpi/documents/pdfs/pftwk161.pdf>

Rural Youth Education Study

Study Contact

Dr. Anastasia Snyder

The Pennsylvania State University

Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology

814-865-6223

tbs105@psu.edu

More information about the RYE Study can be found at the following website:

<http://fipa.aers.psu.edu/RuralYouthEdProject.htm>

Funding provided by:

The Center for Rural Pennsylvania

Penn State's Children, Youth and Families Consortium

Penn State Agricultural Experiment Station Project #4001