



Rural Youth Education Study

PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY



College of Agricultural Sciences

PARENT FACT SHEET - EDUCATIONAL GOALS

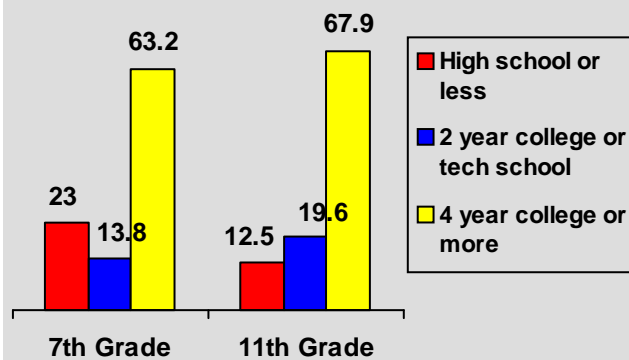
Spring 2006

What Are Rural Pennsylvania Students' Educational Aspirations?

Whether or not to attend college is an important decision for Pennsylvania youth. Youth who participated in the Pennsylvania Rural Youth Education Study (RYE) were in 7th and 11th grades during the 2004/2005. As shown in figure 1, approximately two-thirds of both 7th and 11th grade students aspire to go to a four year college. Just under twenty percent of 11th grades students report wanting to attend a 2 year college or technical school after high school. Even fewer students aspire to finishing their education at the high school level or less. Slightly fewer 7th than 11th grade students aspire to either a 2 or a 4 year college degree, the difference could be that these younger students are unsure of the educational requirements needed to match their career interests. By 11th grade, students have had

more career exploration opportunities.

Figure 1.
Percent of students reporting these educational goals



These student aspirations are good news! For young adults to be competitive in today's work environment, education or technical training beyond high school are often necessary. Have you talked to your child about their career and educational goals?

Career Aspirations 7th Grade

- ◆ 67% of the students in the study aspire to professional or managerial careers

11TH GRADE

- ◆ 60% of the students in the study aspire to professional or managerial careers

These career aspirations will require students obtain more than a high school diploma.

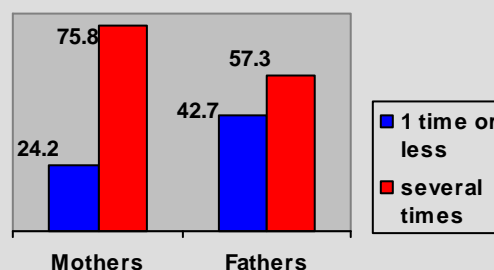


What Influences Youth Educational Goals?

◆ Talking About Future Goals

The time you spend talking with your child about their future goals pays off. Eleventh grade students in the RYE study were asked how often they talked to their mothers and fathers about their educational and career goals. Those students who reported talking to parents were more likely to say that they planned to attend a community college, trade/technical school, or four year college. It is important for parents to be a part of the conversation about educational and career plans.

Figure 2.
Percent of 11th grade students who talk to their mothers and fathers about their goals

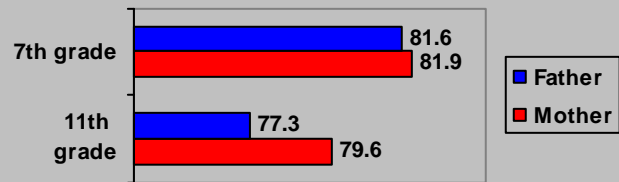


What Influences Youth Educational Goals Continued ...

◆ Parental Expectations

As a parent, the expectations that you have for your child's education after high school matters when you share those expectations with your child. Both 7th and 11th grade students were asked if their parents would be disappointed if they did not attend college. Students in both grades who reported that their parents would be disappointed were more likely to report higher educational goals.

Figure 3.
Percent of students who believe their mothers and fathers who would be disappointed if they did not go to college.



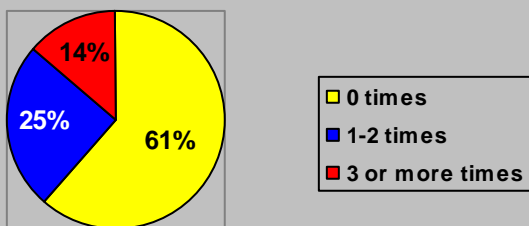
◆ Parental Involvement

Have you wondered whether the time you spend talking with your child about their grades, the work they are doing in school, and other school related activities is important? Then wonder no more! It is important. Students who report that their parents talk to them about their school experiences have higher expectations for their future education. Being involved in your child's school also is time well spent. Students who report their parents are involved in their schools have higher educational goals.

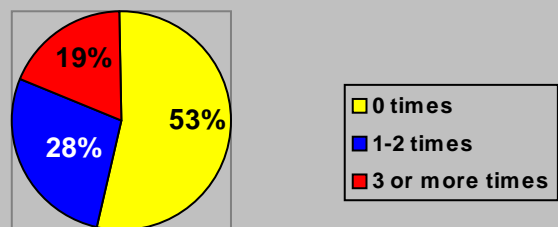
◆ Adult Supervision

A common concern for parents of older high school students is when to allow students to be with friends without an adult present. Eleventh grade students who said they had friends over three or more times without an adult present or who had been to a friends house three or more times when an adult was not present were less likely to have college goals than students who said they had never or only one or two times participated in these behaviors. Adult Supervision in the 11th grade continues to be important.

of times 11th grade students had friends to their house without parents knowing



of times 11th grade students were at friend's house without an adult present



◆ Student Activities

Did you know that the effort you put into getting your child to and from school activities and showing support for their involvement also is important to their educational goals? Students who reported being involved in school and community sports, music, religious and volunteer activities have higher educational goals. In fact, the more activities in which students are involved, the more likely they are to have higher educational goals.

A barrier to participating in these school and community activities is student interest in the activities. Youth reporting this barrier are less likely to have higher educational goals. Encouraging your child to become involved and helping them to select an activity that matches their interests may be beneficial to helping them identify and develop their special skills, abilities and interests.

What Do Students Perceive as Barriers to Their Educational Goals?

Students were asked questions about the barriers they saw to reaching their educational goals. One of the most important was the cost of higher education. Concerns regarding the cost of college are very real. If you and your child have concerns about the cost of education talking to your child's guidance counselor may provide you with some information about grants and loans to help pay for college or technical schools.

Other barriers frequently reported by both the 7th and 11th grade students included being smart enough and not having good enough grades. These concerns also are very real to students. Although not every student has the academic potential or interest to attend college, many times students don't recognize their ability or they suffer from low self esteem. Talking to your child about their educational goals, offering support and praise for their learning, and being involved may help them. In addition, guidance counselors can help students match their areas of strengths with realistic educational and career goals.

Are Students Happy?

In the 7th grade, 78 percent of the students reported feeling happy most or all of the time. Twelve percent of the students reported being downhearted and blue most or all of the time, and 8 percent of students report that they were so blue that nothing could cheer them up. In the 11th grade, 72 percent of the students reported feeling happy most or all of the time. Thirteen percent of the students reported being downhearted and blue most or all of the time, and 5 percent of the reported being so blue that nothing could cheer them up.

For both 7th and 11th grade students feeling happy most or all of the time seems to be the norm. This is good news since feeling happy is often associated with positive outcomes for youth including educational attainment. Feeling downhearted or blue most or all of the time may indicate that your child may need special attention and counseling. If your child seems downhearted and blue most or all of the time you should talk to your child's doctor or guidance counselor.

Thank You!

The Rural Youth Education Study provides information that is essential gain better understanding of the factors that contribute to rural youth developing and attaining educational, career, and residential goals. What we learn from the study will help you, schools, and policy makers better understand how to help students as they explore and make these important decisions. We appreciate the time the students take to complete the surveys and your support of the study. We also thank the schools for collaborating with us to administer the surveys.

Rural Youth Education — Next Steps

- ◆ If your child was in the 7th grade during the 2004/2005 school year, we will be visiting the students during the 2006/2007 school year to find out how their goals have changed.
- ◆ If your child was in the 11th grade during the 2004/2005 school year, we will be making contact with them to find out what they are doing, whether their goals have changed and whether they are meeting their goals This will occur sometime during the Fall of 2006 through the Spring 2007. We may need your help in locating them.

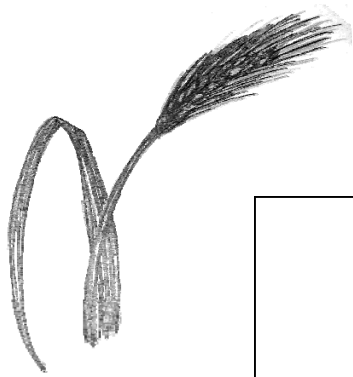
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More information about the RYE Study can be found at the following website:

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

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Rural Youth Education Study

See Inside for Information Regarding:
The RYE Study
Student Educational and Career Goals
Factors That Promote Student Goals
Contact Information

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College of
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Department of Rural Sociology and Agricultural Economics