

Manchester School Survey: Junior High

The Rotary Manchester Junior and Senior High School surveys are based primarily on “40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents,” created by Search Institute. The Developmental Assets can be used to assess building blocks of healthy development, toward becoming caring and responsible adults. This particular list is intended for adolescents, age 12-18. This survey is based on 141 responses. “Junior High” and “Senior High” may be abbreviated as JH and SH respectively.

Of the nine questions that are asked, only the first question is not directly related to this assessment tool. Nevertheless, it is informative to learn what teenagers are concerned about at this stage in their lives. This question will also be instructive regarding a number of the questions that follow.

Question 1: What are the biggest problems you face in life?

TOP 10 RESPONSES

45 Schoolwork/good grades

21 Relationships

15 Family problems

14 No/minor problems

11 Bullying

10 Time management

6 Finances

6 Expectations of others/self

5 Uncertain

5 Future/plans

5 Physical appearance/condition

The greatest concern for junior high youth relates to completing their schoolwork and doing well in school, although 68% did not list school as a major concern. Relationships, in general, and family relationships, are their second and third greatest responses. A surprising number of students (fourteen) had difficulty thinking of any significant problems in their lives. Bullying is a greater problem with junior high youth, than with their older counterparts. However, bullying, having received responses from only 6% of the students, may be receiving more attention than is warranted by these results. Time management is much less of an issue with JH students than with SH students.

Other problems that scored lower than one might expect are drugs (3 responses), absentee parents (2), and depression and hopelessness (1). North Manchester students are simply scoring much better than the national averages, or these trends have possibly become so normalized, they are viewed merely as

an aspect of everyday life. JH youth spend much of their time in school and around fellow students. Most of their anxiety is focused on these realities.

EXTERNAL ASSETS



SUPPORT (Question #2)

1. **Family Support** | Family life provides high levels of love and support.
2. **Positive Family Communication** | Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parents.
3. **Other Adult Relationships** | Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults.
4. **Caring Neighborhood** | Young person experiences caring neighbors.
5. **Caring School Climate** | School provides a caring, encouraging environment.
6. **Parent Involvement in Schooling** | Parent(s) are actively involved in helping the child succeed in school.

Question 2: Do you have adults in your life, including your parents, who provide the care and support you feel you need? If no, what kind of support do you lack?

TOP RESPONSES

136 Yes

2 No

2 Sometimes

Ninety-six percent of respondents say that have adults in their lives that provide care and support. Of the teens that identified the adults, a majority listed their parents or guardians. Teens that stated who it is that provided care and support listed them as follows:

TOP RESPONSES

41 Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

12 Grandparents/other relatives

2 Friends

When combined with the lack of concern for absentee parents, these responses generally speak well to the strength of the family in North Manchester.



EMPOWERMENT (Question #3)

- 7. **Community Values Youth** | Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.
- 8. **Youth as Resources** | Young people are given useful roles in the community.
- 9. **Service to Others** | Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.
- Safety** | Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.

Question 3: Do you have opportunities to help others? If yes, what are some examples?

TOP RESPONSES

125	Yes
13	No
1	Sometimes

The large majority of youth, 89%, believe they have opportunities to help others. Examples of opportunities to help others are recorded as follows:

TOP RESPONSES

40	Home/Family
38	School/schoolwork
25	Service activities
23	People in need
19	Church/youth group
8	Friends
7	Work
6	Clubs/groups
5	Sports

Many of the youth find meaning in helping around the house. Others help their fellow students with school work or mentor them in relation to athletic skills. Church and youth groups are often connected with service activities, although some mentioned service opportunities, without referring to church. A number of teens consider their job as a means to help others. For some, family arrangements, such as farming families, work and home life are closely intertwined. Clubs, such as 4-H and Scouts, elicited surprisingly few responses, in terms of providing an opportunity to help others. The fact that only 18% of JH teenagers stated that they help others through service projects indicates a need for more opportunities in this area.



BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS (Question #4)

- 10. **Family Boundaries** | Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person’s whereabouts.
- 11. **School Boundaries** | School provides clear rules and consequences.
- 12. **Neighborhood Boundaries** | Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people’s behavior.
- 13. **Adult Role Models** | Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.
- 14. **Positive Peer Influence** | Young person’s best friends model responsible behavior.
- 15. **High Expectations** | Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.

Question 4: Are there people in your life who help set boundaries and have expectations of you?

TOP RESPONSES

136	Yes
3	No
1	Sometimes

Ninety-six percent of the youth say they have someone in their life that helps set boundaries. Those identified as setting boundaries are as follows:

TOP RESPONSES

67	Parent(s)/Guardian(s)
12	Grandparents/other relatives
7	Friends
5	Teachers/School staff

3	One's self
2	Sibling
1	Other adults

Forty-eight percent of youth identify their parents or guardians as providing boundaries in their lives. Another 10% identify a family member as meeting that need. Of some concern, 40% of JH students do not have an adult they identify as providing boundaries, although the low response rate can be credited, to a certain extent, to students responding with a simple “yes” and “no” answer, without going into details.



CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME (Question #5)

- 16. **Creative Activities** | Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.
- 17. **Youth Programs** | Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in community organizations.
- 18. **Religious Community** | Young person spends one hour or more per week in activities in a religious institution.
- 19. **Time at Home** | Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.

Question 5: Do you have a place to go outside of regular school hours? If so, what do you like to do there?

TOP RESPONSES

126	Yes
14	No
1	Sometimes/other

Ninety percent of the youth say they have somewhere to go after school. However, where they spend their time is quite revealing.

TOP 10 RESPONSES

48	Home
32	Sports
29	Hobbies
22	Hang/chill out

9	Friends house
6	Clubs/groups
6	Library
4	The pool/fitness center
3	Relative
2	Work

Responses in relation to the constructive use of time are the most difficult to evaluate. For example, when teens are at home, they often stated they were by themselves playing video games. Thirty two youth indicated that they play sports, but in many instances, they were referring to informal games at the park, etc. Another 33 teens spend time at a friend’s house, or out hanging out. Most of the 29 youth who mentioned time spent with a hobby seemed to be involved in constructive activity. However, surprisingly few teens listed youth clubs or church activities as a place to go after school (6 and 1 responses respectively). Overall, there seems to be a need for a place for youth to go outside of school, where they can more constructively spend their time.

INTERNAL ASSETS



COMMITMENT TO LEARNING (Question #6)

- 21. **Achievement Motivation** | Young person is motivated to do well in school.
- 22. **School Engagement** | Young person is actively engaged in learning.
- 23. **Homework** | Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.
- 24. **Bonding to School** | Young person cares about her or his school.
- 25. **Reading for Pleasure** | Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.

Question 6: Do you receive the help you need with your schoolwork?

In answering this question, it should first be noted that 45 youth indicated that they are more concerned about their school work than anything else. On the other hand, 68% of junior high youth have issues that are of a greater concert to them. On a positive note, in response to question five, quite a few youth indicated they liked to read as a hobby, and six like to go to the library after school.

TOP RESPONSES	
116	Yes
10	Sometimes
8	No

7 Does not need help

Eighty-two percent of the students feel they receive all the help they need all of the time, with an additional 7% receiving the help they need some of the time. Seven students said they didn't need help, while others said they had the help they needed, if they asked for it.

A relatively few students specified who provided them help with their schoolwork. Of those who responded, parents were listed as the primary helper.

TOP RESPONSES

14 Parents

5 Teacher

2 Other relative

1 Tutor



POSITIVE VALUES (Question #7)

- 26. **Caring** | Young Person places high value on helping other people.
- 27. **Equality and Social Justice** | Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.
- 28. **Integrity** | Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.
- 29. **Honesty** | Young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy."
- 30. **Responsibility** | Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.
- 31. **Restraint** | Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.

Question 7: Who is your greatest role model? What do you admire about that person?

In order to determine teenager values, the question was asked, "Who is your greatest role model?" The second half of the question, "What do you admire about that person?" is more revealing regarding their values. Below are the responses to the first half of the question:

TOP RESPONSES

53 Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

28 Celebrity/famous person

23	Grandparents/other relative
15	Sibling
5	Teacher/school staff
2	No role model
2	God/Jesus
2	One's self
2	Pastor/youth leader
1	Professional/career person

It is heartening to learn that 38% of youth consider their parents to be their role model. Another 27% list other family members as their role model. Celebrities and other famous persons scored second as their role model, higher than with the senior high youth. Here are the responses regarding what they admire about the person:

QUALITIES WITH 3+ RESPONSES

27	Compassionate/kind/loving
20	Helps others/me
17	Determination
17	Athletic
16	Strong/courageous
16	Smart/wise
14	Works hard/likes job
13	Successful
12	Teaches me
7	Encourages/supports
5	Funny
4	Positive attitude
4	Spiritual/faith
3	Attended college
3	Independent
3	Ethical/trustworthy

Teens that listed people that they know as their role model, as opposed to famous people, greatly valued how the person cared for them. Fifty four teens valued qualities of compassion, helping and encouraging. Values of equality and social justice rated low with most youth. Only some of the twenty

youth who valued helping others/me mentioned helping other people, in contrast to themselves. In regards to “integrity,” only three students listed “ethical and trustworthy” as admirable qualities. “Honesty” and “responsibility” garnered only one response. Instead, most of the youth admired traits such as determination, strength, working hard and success. The fact that positive values, as identified by Search Institute, scored so poorly, indicates a need for values training.



SOCIAL COMPETENCIES (Question #8)

- 32. **Planning and Decision Making** | Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.
- 33. **Interpersonal Competence** | Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.
- 34. **Cultural Competence** | Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.
- 35. **Resistance Skills** | Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.
- 36. **Peaceful Conflict Resolution** | Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.

Question 8: How do you get along with other people?

One of the aspects of social competence, “planning and decision making,” is related to question #1. Most of the teens are focused on immediate concerns, while only five students indicated they are most anxious about future plans. Of the 141 respondents, only 5, or 4%, stated that they are seriously concerned about their future plans. This is an area that needs attention.

TOP RESPONSES

113 Yes

24 Sometimes

1 No

All but one teen responded favorably to getting along with others all or some of the time. Of those who got along with others only sometimes, many of the youth described themselves as shy, and practiced limiting the number of friends. Others indicated that they get along with others, just as long as they are treated nicely by that person.

A relatively small percentage of teens specified how that got along with others. For those who addressed the subject, their responses are as follows:

TOP RESPONSES

19 Friendly

6 Like people/likeable

5 Learn their perspective

3 Mutual respect

2 Have fun

2 Good listener

1 Humor

1 By helping them



POSITIVE IDENTITY (Question #9)

- 37. **Personal Power** | Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me."
- 38. **Self-Esteem** | Young person reports having a high self-esteem.
- 39. **Sense of Purpose** | Young person reports that "my life has a purpose."
- 40. **Positive View of Personal Future** | Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.

Question 9: How do you feel about yourself and your purpose in life?

Teens responded to the question of "feelings about yourself" and "your purpose" almost independently. In regards to feelings about themselves, they responded:

TOP RESPONSES

100 Positive

9 Sometimes

7 Negative

A clear majority, 71%, feel positive about themselves some or all the time. Twenty-five youth avoided the question altogether.

TOP RESPONSES

87 I have a purpose

21 Uncertain

2 No purpose/negative

Eighty-seven teens said they had purpose in life, but an additional 54 students listed it as “uncertain,” “no purpose,” or did not respond at all.

TOP RESPONSES

9 Help others

6 Achievement/success

6 Pursuing goals/career

4 To exist/live

3 Related to God

2 Relationships

2 Sports

1 Change the world

1 College

1 Rich/wealthy

Many more teens stated they had purpose in life than could or chose to state specifics regarding their purpose. Almost all of the youth pointed to a functional purpose, in contrast to any ultimate, transcendent purpose in life.

Concerns to Address with Junior High Youth at North Manchester

1. Students need to be offered more service projects for the purpose of helping other in constructive and substantive ways.
2. Many teenagers need a place to go outside of school where they can spend their time more constructively and productively.
3. Youth can use more guidance with long-range planning.
4. Teens have a need for values training.