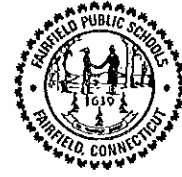


# Tomlinson Middle School

200 Unquowa Road  
Fairfield, CT 06824-5010  
Phone (203) 255-8336  
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Sally Bonina, Principal

Amanda Kirik, Assistant Principal

Joshua Marko, Dean of Students

April 21, 2014

Dear Parent or Guardian:

During the week of April 28 to May 2, 2014, our school will conduct a very important study on the needs, attitudes, and behaviors of our students in grades seven and eight.

The survey is titled *Search Institute Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors*. It will provide our school and community with a wide range of information, such as how students spend their time, their perceptions of school and community life, and their participation in a wide range of risk behaviors. Most important, the survey will tell us the extent to which our students are experiencing Developmental Assets. Developmental Assets are the "building blocks" of positive relationships, opportunities, skills and values that young people need to grow into healthy, caring, and responsible adults. The survey results will help all of us as we seek to address the developmental needs of our youth.

#### Additional information

- Students will be given one full Health class period in which to complete the survey. The surveys are completed anonymously. No one will know how individual students respond to the questions.
- All students within each classroom place their completed surveys into one envelope. The envelope is then sealed. All envelopes from our school are sent directly to Search Institute (Minneapolis) for processing. No one at our school will review any of the completed surveys. Survey forms will be securely stored in Minneapolis for 90 days, at which point they will be destroyed.
- The final research report will present findings by the total group, by grade, and by gender. No individual student data are reported.
- Students are told that their participation is voluntary and that they may skip items or withdraw their participation at any time if they so choose.
- The survey is not a test they take for school grades, and their grades will not be affected if they choose not to participate.

Please give serious consideration for your child to participate in this study. A copy of the survey is available for your review in the Deputy Superintendent's Office. The value of a study of this kind depends upon the participation of every student.

If you do not want your child to participate, you **must** return the form at the bottom of this letter by Friday, April 25, 2014. If no form is received, your child may be asked to participate in the study.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Sally Bonina  
Principal

Please withdraw my child from participation in the *Attitudes and Behaviors* survey.

Child's name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_ Grade level \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Fact Sheet for Parents Regarding**

### *Search Institute Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors*

#### **Search Institute**

Search Institute is an independent nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide catalytic leadership, breakthrough knowledge, and innovative resources to advance the health of children, youth, families, and communities. To accomplish this mission, Search Institute conducts research, develops publications and practical tools, and provides training and technical assistance. Search Institute collaborates with others to promote long-term organizational and cultural change that supports the healthy development of all children and adolescents.

#### ***Search Institute Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors Survey (A&B)***

The A&B survey provides schools and communities with a portrait of the attitudes, behaviors, and needs of its youth. The survey has been administered in over 3000 communities and to well over 3 million students in urban, suburban, and rural settings. The survey contains 160 questions about school climate, parent and school boundaries and expectations, structured time use, and a wide range of risk behaviors.

#### **Common Concerns**

Some of the questions parents may ask are these:

#### ***By taking the survey, will my child be encouraged to try some of the risk behaviors it addresses?***

There is no evidence to indicate that asking questions about risk behaviors encourages young people to become involved in those behaviors. Also, there are many federal regulations specifically addressing the protection of people involved in research of all types, including survey research conducted in public school settings. Protection of parent and student rights is very important to Search Institute and we comply with all appropriate federal regulations. We also take great care to provide information about applicable federal regulations to any organization using our survey service.

#### ***How do you know whether students are answering truthfully?***

Search Institute uses several methods for looking at each survey to determine whether students are answering truthfully. For example, the computer looks for inconsistencies in the way students respond to similar questions, unrealistically high substance use, and too many unanswered items. Surveys with these kinds of problems are not used in the report findings. The percentage of surveys removed from individual school or community studies has remained consistent over time and generally falls into the 5 to 8 percent range. When too many surveys are being eliminated, the resulting data may not be of good quality, and Search Institute may make the decision that a report cannot be generated.

#### ***Will anyone know how my child answers the questions?***

Anonymity is a very important issue for surveys like this. In its 40 years of work in this area, Search Institute has created careful procedures to ensure that no student's results can be traced back to an individual student. Students do not put their names on the surveys and there are no hidden identification marks on the surveys. Thus, the surveys are completed anonymously.

As students complete their surveys, they place them in one envelope that is sealed at the end of the class period. The survey coordinator collects the envelopes from each class and ships them to Search Institute for analysis.

All findings are reported in aggregate form only by combining student responses by grade and by gender. No individual student responses are reported.