




**Wilder
Research**

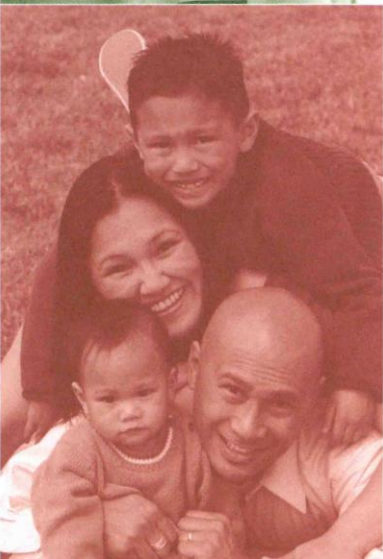


Reconnecting Youth: Evaluation results for an intensive prevention curriculum

*Prepared for the Minnesota Department of
Human Services*



J U N E 2 0 1 1



Reconnecting Youth: Evaluation results for an intensive prevention curriculum

*Prepared for Minnesota Department of Human
Services*

June 2011

Prepared by:

Amy Leite, Kristin Dillon, Monica Idzelis, and Rachel Hardeman

Wilder Research
451 Lexington Parkway North
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104
651-280-2700
www.wilderresearch.org

Contents

Background	1
Methods.....	2
Consent procedures	2
Key outcome measures	2
Participation	3
Limitations	5
Description of respondents	7
Student characteristics	7
Parent and family characteristics	9
Key findings: Before and following student enrollment in Reconnecting Youth	11
Alcohol and drug involvement.....	11
Moods and experiences.....	14
Academic achievement and attendance	15
School connectedness	18
Family connectedness	20
Key findings: Follow-up interviews	22
Alcohol and drug involvement.....	22
Moods and experiences.....	25
Academic achievement and attendance	26
School connectedness	28
Family connectedness	29
Participant feedback.....	31
Student feedback.....	31
Parent feedback.....	33
Conclusions and recommendations.....	38
Recommendations.....	39
Appendix.....	41
Student connectedness survey (pretest)	43
Student connectedness survey (posttest).....	45
Student follow-up interview	47
Parent follow-up interview	52
Student 30-day checklists (School Achievement, Drug Involvement, and Moods and Experiences).....	56

Figures

1. Number of respondents for evaluation components by school	4
2. Gender, age, ethnicity of student respondents	8
3. Gender, age, ethnicity of parent respondents	9
4. Household characteristics	10
5. Changes in reported drug and alcohol behavior in past 30 days from pretest to posttest	12
6. Changes in reported 30-day drug and alcohol use from pretest to posttest	13
7. Behaviors associated substance abuse experienced in the past 30 days	14
8. Changes in moods and experiences in last 30 days from pretest to posttest.....	15
9. Student self-report school achievement and attendance	16
10. Grade point average by academic term.....	16
11. Changes in grade point average between academic terms.....	17
12. Changes in student attendance between academic terms.....	18
13. Student reported connectedness to school	19
14. Student reported connectedness with peers	20
15. Student reported connectedness with family	21
16. Student-reported drug and alcohol use in past 30 days.....	23
17. Student-reported change in use of substances	23
18. Parent perception of child's substance use	24
19. Student-reported relationship issues as a result of substance abuse	24
20. Student-reported moods and experiences in last 30 days	25
21. Parent perception of changes in child's moods since participating in RY	26
22. Parent perception of changes in child's school performance and attendance since participating in RY	27
23. Changes in students' school performance and attendance based on school records for children of interviewed parents	27
24. Student-reported connectedness to RY class	28
25. Parent perception of changes in child's social skills	29
26. Student-reported connectedness to family	29
27. Parent perception of child's interaction with family.....	30
28. Student satisfaction with Reconnecting Youth	31

Acknowledgments

The following Wilder Research staff contributed to the completion of this report:

Mark Anton
Walker Bosch
Jackie Campeau
Rena Cleveland
Louann Graham
Brittney Wagner

Special appreciation is extended to the Minnesota Department of Human Services staff, the Planning and Implementation grantees, and members of the Wilder Research consultant team who have assisted with the broader ATOD prevention project.

Funding for this evaluation and report was provided by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division.

Background

As part of the Minnesota Department of Human Services Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division's statewide youth alcohol, tobacco, and other drug (ATOD) prevention initiative, three Planning and Implementation (P&I) grantees from across Minnesota are working with school districts to implement Reconnecting Youth (RY). RY is a semester-long high-school ATOD prevention program that targets youth who show signs of poor school achievement and potential for dropping out of high school. The program aims to build resiliency by decreasing risk factors and moderating the early signs of substance abuse. Youth are individually selected and invited to participate in a class of between 8 and 12 students. The program incorporates social support and life skills training with the following components: social activities and school bonding, school system crisis response planning, and parental involvement. The class integrates small-group work and life-skills training models to enhance personal and social protective factors of high-risk youth. If implemented with fidelity, this curriculum has been shown to: increase personal control, decrease suicide risk, decrease drug involvement and depression, and increase school achievement (Eggert, Thompson, Herting, & Randell, 2001; Eggert, Thompson, Herting, & Nicholas, 1995; Eggert, & Nicholas, 2004; Thompson, Eggert, & Herting, 2000).

The evaluation summarizes findings from the implementation of this curriculum in three P&I communities and five schools (Chisholm High School, Mora High School and Ogilvie High School in Kanabec County, South Saint Paul High School, and South Saint Paul Community Learning Center) during the 2009-2010 school year.

Methods

In order to address each of the goals and elements of the RY curriculum, a mixed-methods evaluation was implemented, which included collecting student surveys and school records, and conducting student and parent interviews. These methods were used to assess the main goals of the curriculum, which include: a) reduced student substance use, b) improved student moods and experiences, c) increased academic performance, d) increased student connectedness to school and community, and e) increased student connectedness to family and peers. In addition, the evaluation gathered feedback from students and parents about their satisfaction with the curriculum and their perceptions of its impact on students.

Consent procedures

Each parent of a Reconnecting Youth student was sent a letter introducing the course and the evaluation and requesting consent for participation in the evaluation. Communities had different standards pertaining to the consent process and the need for active, signed parental consent. Kanabec County and Chisholm Schools required signed parental consent for the use of school records, student interviews, and parent interviews. South Saint Paul schools required signed parental consent for the student and parent interviews. Passive consent, in which a parent could call Wilder Research or the Reconnecting Youth instructor to opt their child out of the evaluation, was used for all evaluation components not requiring signed consent.

In addition to the active and passive parental consent procedures, all students were asked to give assent prior to completing each evaluation component. For the surveys, there was an assent sheet attached to the top of the survey that described the evaluation and process for maintaining confidentiality. Students were asked to “sign” the form using their birth date and/or student ID number. For the interview component, students were asked at the start of the interview whether or not they would like to participate.

Key outcome measures

Student surveys

Students self-reported on key outcomes using three checklists available through the Reconnecting Youth curriculum: the School Achievement Checklist, the Drug Involvement Checklist, and the Moods and Experiences Checklist (see appendix). These checklists assessed student self-report of grades and attendance, substance use within the past 30 days, and moods and experiences within the past 30 days.

To supplement the tools available through the RY curriculum, Wilder developed additional measures to assess students' connectedness to their schools, families, and peers.

Each of these tools was completed by students within the first week (pretest) and last week (posttest) of each term. Student satisfaction with the curriculum was also assessed at posttest.

School records

In addition to student self-report of grades and attendance, Wilder gathered attendance and grade information directly from schools. Wilder specifically requested enrolled students' GPAs and numbers of excused absences, unexcused absences, and tardies (although information on tardies was not ultimately analyzed because it was only available from two of the five schools). Data were requested for the term that the student was enrolled in the Reconnecting Youth class, and, when possible, for the terms preceding and following the student's involvement in RY in order to assess change.

Six-month follow-up interviews

The goals of Reconnecting Youth include long-term improvements in student academic achievement, substance use, relationships, and mental health. A follow-up evaluation was designed to assess longer-term behavior change through interviews with both students and parents.

Students who completed the RY class were invited to participate in a brief telephone interview six months after exiting RY. These follow-up interviews assessed students' self-reported changes in substance use; moods and experiences; and connection to family, peers, and school. Satisfaction with their experience in the class was also assessed.

The parents or guardians of students who completed the RY class were also invited to participate in six-month follow-up telephone interviews. The interviews with parents assessed the degree to which they felt RY improved their child's behaviors and their connectedness to their child, as well their satisfaction with their child's class.

Participation

A total of 155 students completed the Reconnecting Youth class across the five participating schools during the 2009-10 school year. Each of these students was eligible to complete the surveys at both the beginning and the end of the term in which they took the class. About 90 percent of these students completed the pretest surveys, 85 percent completed the posttest surveys, and 69 percent completed both a pretest and posttest

survey. In order to assess change among students, the current report focuses only on the 107 students who completed both a pretest and posttest survey.

Because active parental consent was required for accessing student records in three of the five schools, records could be accessed for just over half (57%) of the total number of students who completed the class. Of the students for whom school records could be accessed, Wilder was able to obtain 85 percent of the records.

All five schools required signed parental consent for both student and parent six-month follow-up interviews. Only 16 percent of parents provided active consent for their child to be interviewed, and 14 percent of youth assented to being interviewed. Of the 24 students eligible to be interviewed six months after completing the Reconnecting Youth class, half (50%) completed the interview. Of the 22 parents who consented to be interviewed, 73 percent completed the interview (Figure 1).

1. Number of respondents for evaluation components by school

The number of students or parents who...	Chisholm High School	Mora High School (Kanabec County)	Ogilvie High School (Kanabec County)	South St. Paul Community Learning Center	South St. Paul High School	Total
Completed RY	10	52	36	7	50	155
Student surveys						
Completed pretest surveys	10	46	33	5	45	139
Completed posttest surveys	10	40	32	7	43	132
Completed pre- and posttest surveys	6	34	29	5	33	107
School records						
Were eligible	10	15	7	7	50	89
Had school records accessed	10	14	7	5	40	76
Student interviews						
Were eligible	2	14	7	0	1	24
Completed follow-up interviews	1	7	4	0	0	12
Parent interviews						
Were eligible	2	14	6	0	0	22
Completed follow-up interviews	1	10	5	0	0	16

Note: Students and parents were eligible to complete an evaluation component if the appropriate parental consent was obtained based on the student's school district requirements related to obtaining consent.

Limitations

There are some important limitations to the data collected for this evaluation that should be considered when interpreting the results described in this report. The primary limitations were small sample sizes and inconsistent information. These limitations were linked to the following issues: difficulty obtaining parental consent, missing data, complicated tools, student self-report of behaviors, and variations between schools.

Parental consent

According to the Reconnecting Youth curriculum developers, one of the factors that puts youth at risk for dropping out of school, and thus eligible for the class, is poor parental engagement. Therefore, obtaining active parental consent was expected to be difficult. The low rate of active parental consent limited the data that could be accessed and analyzed. Also, the parents that provided active consent may be a unique subset of parents who are generally more engaged in what their children are doing in school.

Missing data

In addition to the data that were unavailable due to a lack of parental consent, a great deal of other data were missing. Surveys were not available from all youth because some chose not to participate, entered the class late in the term, left the class early in the term, or were absent on the survey days. Youth surveys were also not available from South Saint Paul during the first term, due to a series of events which led to a shorter term and inadequate time to devote to the evaluation.

There were also many missing school records. Only 46 percent of the students had records available for the academic term prior to Reconnecting Youth enrollment, and 35 percent of students had records available for the academic term following enrollment. Some schools provided explanations for the missing data, including students transferring schools, dropping out of school, or graduating, but these explanations were not available from all schools and therefore the data could not be used for analysis.

Finally, about half of the students and one-quarter of the parents for whom six-month follow-up interviews were attempted were unable to complete the interview for various reasons including difficulty reaching them after numerous attempts, inaccurate contact information, and refusals at the time of the interviews. Youth were especially difficult to reach, particularly those who were over age 18 and no longer living with their parents.

Because there was a large amount of missing data, these results should be interpreted with caution. Students and parents who did not participate in different components of the evaluation may be different from those who chose to participate.

Complicated tools

The tools that accompanied the Reconnecting Youth curriculum were designed to be used by students to track their progress during the class primarily, and to evaluate the impact of the curriculum secondarily. Because of this dual use, the tools tended to be dense and complicated. Many of the questions and response options were open to broad interpretation and involved nuanced seven-point Likert type scales with little distinction between categories. These questions may have been designed to allow even small changes in attitudes or behaviors over time to be detected, but the questions and response categories made it difficult to compare students' responses to one another. For the analysis in this report, response categories were combined to the extent possible to allow for clearer comparisons between students.

Student self-report

Another limitation to the data collected includes the reliance on students' self-report of their own high-risk behavior. There may be a bias in students' reports of their academic achievement, substance use, moods, and relationships at any given point in time. This bias may be intentional due to social desirability or privacy concerns, or unintentional due to their current mood, difficulty remembering, or misinterpretation of the question. The multi-method approach to this evaluation helps to compensate for some of reliability risks of student self-report data.

Variations between schools

There was variation between schools in how the Reconnecting Youth curriculum was implemented, the levels of parental consent required, and in the extent to which school record data were available. For example, in one high school, several students were enrolled in Reconnecting Youth for two consecutive terms during the 2009-10 school year due to some irregularities in classroom instruction, despite the recommendation of curriculum developers to limit students to one term of enrollment. All of these variations led to some inconsistencies in the data collected across schools, which was addressed to the extent possible through aggregation and analysis. However, some caution should be used when interpreting the results due to these limitations.

Description of respondents

Student characteristics

Students were asked key demographic questions at pretest, posttest, and follow-up. Demographic information is presented below for students who completed both a pretest and posttest survey, and for students who participated in the six-month follow-up interview. Of the students who completed pretest and posttest surveys, half were male, and half were female. Most students (90%) were between 14 and 17 years of age, and either in 9th (33%), 10th (30%), or 11th (22%) grade. More than three-quarters of students (78%) identified as White or Caucasian, and nearly one-quarter (23%) identified as Hispanic or Latino. Ten students (9%) identified as Native American (Figure 2).

Twelve students completed a follow-up telephone interview. Although small in number, these 12 students appear to represent the larger group of survey respondents relatively well. Similar to the survey sample, half of the interviewed students were male, and half were female. Interview respondents tended to be slightly older than survey respondents with 75 percent age 16 and older, although this may be due to the six-month gap between assessments. Students completing both the follow-up interview and the survey were predominantly Caucasian; however, interview respondents were more somewhat likely to identify as Caucasian (92% compared to 78%). Of the interview participants, two students (17%) also identified as Native American, and one student (8%) identified as Hispanic (Figure 2).

2. Gender, age, ethnicity of student respondents

	Pretest/posttest respondents (N=107)		Follow-up respondents (N=12)	
	N	%	N	%
Gender				
Male	53	50%	6	50%
Female	53	50%	6	50%
<i>Missing</i>	1	1%	0	0%
Age				
13 or younger	1	1%	0	0%
14-15	50	47%	3	25%
16-17	46	43%	6	50%
18+	7	7%	3	25%
<i>Missing</i>	3	1%	0	0%
Grade				
9 th	35	33%	4	33%
10 th	32	30%	3	25%
11 th	24	22%	2	17%
12 th	16	15%	3	25%
Race/ethnicity				
American Indian or Alaska Native	10	9%	2	17%
Asian	1	1%	0	0%
Black or African American	6	6%	0	0%
White or Caucasian	83	78%	11	92%
Hispanic or Latino	25	23%	1	8%
Other (African/Eritrean)	1	1%	0	0%

Note: Respondents were asked to check all racial or ethnic categories that apply; percentages may not equal 100 percent due to multiple responses or due to rounding.

Parent and family characteristics

Sixteen parents of students who participated in Reconnecting Youth completed a six-month follow-up telephone interview. All participating parents identified as White and most were female (81%) and between 35 and 54 years of age (76%) (Figure 3). Nearly all (94%) of the parents who completed the follow-up interview were living in a two-adult household, and most (80%) had at least one child under the age of 18 living in their household. Half (50%) of the parents reported an annual household income of less than \$50,000; the remaining half reported an income of between \$50,000 and \$75,000 (Figure 4).

3. Gender, age, ethnicity of parent respondents (N=16)

	Parent respondents	
	N	%
Gender		
Male	3	19%
Female	13	81%
Age		
35 – 44	6	38%
45 – 54	6	38%
55 – 64	3	19%
65 or older	1	6%
Race/Ethnicity		
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0%
Asian	0	0%
Black or African American	0	0%
White or Caucasian	16	100%
Hispanic or Latino	0	0%
Other	0	0%

4. Household characteristics (N=15-16)

	Parent respondents	
	N	%
Household size		
No children under age 18	3	20%
1 child under age 18	5	33%
2 child under age 18	4	27%
3 child under age 18	1	7%
4 child under age 18	2	13%
Household structure		
Single parent household	1	6%
Two parent household	15	94%
Household income		
Under \$25,000	2	13%
\$25,000 to less than \$50,000	6	38%
\$50,000 to less than \$75,000	8	50%
\$75,000 or more	0	0%

Key findings: Before and following student enrollment in Reconnecting Youth

Reconnecting Youth (RY) is designed to reduce drug and alcohol use and abuse among students, and improve their academic achievement and attendance. Additionally, RY aims to increase school, peer, and family connectedness and to promote mental and emotional health and wellness. The following summary describes progress toward these outcomes for students participating in the evaluation, based upon matched data collected at pretest (enrollment into Reconnecting Youth class) and posttest (completion of Reconnecting Youth class).

Alcohol and drug involvement

In order to understand alcohol and drug involvement for participants in RY, students were asked to rate their level of substance use during the 30 days prior to completing the survey. The data described below are reported only for students with both pretest and posttest data.

Changes in substance use

Students self-reported the frequency with which they used specific substances at the start of the class, and again at the end of the class. Three in 10 students (29%) said that they never used alcohol or drugs in the 30 days prior to completing both the pretest and posttest survey. However, drug or alcohol use remained a concern for 40 percent of students, who used in the 30 days prior to both the pretest and posttest, and use got worse for 12 percent of students who reported using alcohol or drugs at the end of class, but not at the beginning.

Most students remained healthy and refrained from using alcohol or drugs before or during school (86%) or on weeknights (69%) in the 30 days prior to both the pretest and the posttest. However, 35 percent of students used alcohol or drugs on weekends both before and after taking the RY class, and 19 percent used alcohol or drugs on weekends only after taking the RY class. Students' use of alcohol or drugs while partying with friends was just as likely to improve (15%) from pretest to posttest as it was to get worse (14%) (Figure 5).

5. Changes in reported drug and alcohol behavior in past 30 days from pretest to posttest (N=101-105)

In the past 30 days...	Number of respondents, from pretest to posttest, whose substance use behavior...			
	Improved	Remained healthy	Remained a concern	Got worse
I never used alcohol and/or drugs	18%	29%	40%	12%
I used alcohol and/or drugs on weekends	10%	37%	35%	19%
I used alcohol and/or drugs when partying with my friends	15%	43%	29%	14%
I used alcohol and/or drugs in the evenings during the week (Monday through Thursday)	6%	69%	11%	13%
I used alcohol and/or drugs at (or before) school	3%	86%	3%	8%
I was drunk or high so I missed school or work	3%	82%	3%	12%

Note: Scale was: "true" and "not true." "Improved" behavior includes students who reported using substances at pretest and not using at posttest; "remained healthy" behavior includes students who reported not using substances at either pretest or posttest; "remained a concern" behavior includes students who reported using substances at both pretest and posttest; and "got worse" behavior includes students who reporting not using substances at pretest but using at posttest.

Changes in use of specific substances

Alcohol was the most common substance used by students in the last 30 days. Over half (56%) used beer, wine, or hard liquor in the previous 30 days at either pre- or posttest. Of those who used alcohol, about one-quarter (23-26%) reported less frequent use, 10 to 15 percent reported the same frequency of use, and nearly 20 percent (17-19%) reported more frequent use at posttest.

More than half (51%) of all students had not used marijuana at either pre- or posttest. Of those who did report using marijuana, 15 percent decreased their use, while 23 percent increased their use at posttest. Similarly, 55 percent of students avoided using tobacco at both pretest and posttest, but of those who did use tobacco, 13 percent of students said that they used it less often at posttest, while 20 percent reported using it more often.

Rates of use for other substances, including cocaine, opiates, and depressants remained quite low and students were more likely to report a decrease in use (1-5%) than an increase (0-2%) at posttest (Figure 6).

6. Changes in reported 30-day drug and alcohol use from pretest to posttest (N=100-106)

During the last 30 days I have used...	Never used	Use decreased	Use stayed the same	Use increased
Beer or wine	44%	26%	10%	19%
Hard liquor	44%	23%	15%	17%
Marijuana	51%	15%	11%	23%
Cigarettes/smoking tobacco	55%	13%	13%	20%
Over the counter drugs	80%	11%	2%	7%
Depressants	94%	5%	1%	0%
Stimulants	94%	3%	1%	2%
Hallucinogens	96%	3%	1%	0%
Inhaled substances	96%	2%	2%	0%
Cocaine	97%	2%	1%	0%
Opiates	98%	1%	1%	0%
Tranquilizers	98%	2%	0%	0%

Note: Scale was: not at all, once, two or three times, once a week, several times a week, almost every day, and every day.

Behaviors associated with substance use

In addition to describing their use of substances, students also reported on behaviors that were related to this substance use. At both pretest and posttest, at least 20 percent of students reported that they usually drank more than two drinks (28-30%), kept drinking when they had already had enough (21-23%), and/or used more than one substance at a time (22-24%) in the past 30 days. However, few students (8-9%) indicated that they were late for class or missed school or work because of their alcohol or drug use.

About half of the students (49-57%) felt that their parents were supportive of them not using alcohol or drugs at both pretest and posttest. Additionally, most students (87-90%) noted that they never had problems with family and friends because of their substance use, although about 1 in 5 students (18-21%) lied to their family or friends about their substance use in the past 30 days at both time points.

The percentage of students who reported these behaviors or experiences remained fairly stable, and no statistically significant differences were identified between pretest and posttest (Figure 7).

7. Behaviors associated substance abuse experienced in the past 30 days (N=100-106)

During the last 30 days...	Percentage of respondents who reported experiencing the following at least "once"	
	Pretest	Posttest
I usually didn't stop with just one or two drinks	30%	28%
I kept drinking/using even though I'd had plenty already	23%	21%
I used more than one drug (for example, alcohol and another drug) at the same time.	22%	24%
I lied to my family or friends because I was using.	21%	18%
I felt guilty about how much alcohol and/or how many drugs I used.	16%	14%
I felt sick from drinking or 'drugging' too much.	15%	15%
There were conflicts between my family and me because I was using substances.	13%	10%
There were problems between my friends and me because of my drug use	12%	10%
Due to my drinking/using I was late for class, missed school, appointments, or work	8%	9%
I felt supported by my parents for NOT using alcohol or drugs.	57%	49%

Note: Scale was "not at all=0," "once=1," "2 or 3 times=2," "about once/week=3," "several times/week=4," "almost everyday=5," "everyday=6."

Significance tests were conducted using chi-square tests. There were no statistically significant differences ($p < .05$) between pretest and posttest for items in the above figure.

Moods and experiences

Closely related to the issues of drug and alcohol abuse and suicide that Reconnecting Youth aims to prevent are student moods and experiences, such as feelings of depression, satisfaction with life, and loneliness. Given the role of mood in substance use, students were asked to also report on their moods and various experiences for the 30 day-period prior to completing each survey. The majority (51-78%) of students' moods remained unchanged from pretest to posttest. When students did note a change in their moods, they were just as likely to report experiencing a particular mood more often as they were to report experiencing it less often. None of the changes between pretest and posttest was statistically significant. However, a notable percentage of students (29%) reported that they felt overwhelmed by everything going on their life more often at posttest (Figure 8).

8. Changes in moods and experiences in last 30 days from pretest to posttest (N=100-106)

During the last month (30 days)...	Proportion of respondents, from pretest to posttest, who experienced each of the following...		
	More often	Stayed the same	Less often
I took a positive attitude toward myself.	21%	58%	21%
I felt capable and in control of my life.	19%	67%	15%
I felt confident that I could handle my personal problems.	18%	61%	22%
I felt satisfied with my life.	18%	64%	18%
My parents cared (praised me, patted me on the back).	14%	70%	15%
I felt overwhelmed by all the things going on in my life.	29%	51%	20%
I got so angry, I shouted and yelled at others.	22%	63%	15%
I got easily annoyed or irritated.	18%	64%	17%
I felt sad.	18%	65%	16%
I felt that people dislike me.	16%	65%	19%
When I get really mad, I felt like I might lose control.	15%	69%	15%
I felt lonely.	15%	67%	18%
I felt that nobody truly cares about me.	14%	70%	15%
I felt uneasy and/or anxious.	13%	74%	12%
I felt depressed.	12%	73%	12%
I felt hopeless about my life.	12%	78%	10%
Things at home were so bad that I thought about running away.	9%	75%	16%

Note: Scale was “never=0,” “sometimes=2,” “usually=4,” and “almost always=6.” Significance tests on means were conducted using t- tests. There were no statistically significant ($p<.05$) differences between pretest and posttest for items in the above figure.

Academic achievement and attendance

Improved academic achievement and attendance are core goals of the Reconnecting Youth curriculum. In order to measure progress on these goals, students were asked about their overall performance in school. School records for student grade point averages and absences were also collected to supplement student perceptions of academic achievement and attendance.

Student report

The proportion of students who rated their class performance as “average” or better increased significantly between pretest (83%) and posttest (86%). There were no significant changes in the number of students reporting getting at least “Cs” or attending class at least “half time,” although most students reported adequate performance in both of these areas at pretest and posttest (Figure 9).

9. Student self-report school achievement and attendance (N=105-106)

Percentage of students reporting...	Pretest	Posttest
Performing “average” or better overall (grades, turning in assignments) in all classes	83%*	86%*
Getting “C’s” or better in all of their classes	77%	72%
Attending all of their classes at least “attended half time”	92%	90%

Note: Scale for overall performance was “very poor=0,” “average=3,” and “outstanding=6.” Scale for grades was “A’s and B’s=1,” “B’s and C’s=2,” “C’s=3,” “C’s and D’s=4,” “D’s=5,” and “failing=6.” Scale for attendance was “rarely attending=0,” “attend ½ time=3,” and “rarely missed=6.” Significance tests on means were conducted using t- tests. Differences in means are significant at * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, and *** $p < .001$.

School records

Grade Point Average

Before, during, and after enrollment in the Reconnecting Youth class, students’ grade point averages (GPA) ranged from the lowest possible of 0.0, which indicates that every “for credit” class was failed during a term, to at or nearly 4.0, which indicates that the highest grade possible was achieved for each class during a term. The average GPA was around 2.0 before, during, and following RY enrollment, which represents approximately a “C” average on the traditional A through F grading scale (Figure 10).

10. Grade point average by academic term

	Range of GPAs	Average GPAs
Term prior to Reconnecting Youth enrollment (N=74)	0.0 – 4.0	1.92
Term during Reconnecting Youth enrollment (N=74)	0.0 – 4.0	2.11
Term following Reconnecting Youth enrollment (N=56)	0.0 – 3.98	1.96

To detect meaningful changes in student grade point averages over time, only changes large enough to move a student's average letter grade at least one level (e.g., from a "C" to a "C+" or from a "B-" to a "C+") were counted as an "increase" or "decrease." Based on this analysis, 41 percent of students improved their grade point average by at least one level during their enrollment in the Reconnecting Youth class. After the Reconnecting Youth class, about three-quarters of students (76%) either maintained their GPA or continued to increase it. However, it is notable that GPAs for about one-quarter of students decreased during both time periods (from before RY to during RY and from during RY to after RY) (Figure 11).

11. Changes in grade point average between academic terms

	Percentage of students who's GPAs...		
	Increased by one grade level	Stayed at the same grade level	Decreased by one grade level
From before to during Reconnecting Youth enrollment (N=70)	41%	36%	23%
From during to after Reconnecting Youth enrollment (N=53)	34%	42%	25%

Attendance

In school districts throughout Minnesota, including Saint Paul Public Schools, students who are absent from school 11 or more days during a school year are considered chronically absent. In order to determine whether students were on track for chronic absenteeism during any particular academic term, the number of absences recorded during the term was multiplied by the number of terms in an academic year for that school. Using these calculations, over half (56% to 58%) of the students with attendance data available were on track for being chronically absent in each of the terms before, during, and after their enrollment in Reconnecting Youth.

For the majority of students (75-80%), there were no changes in their pattern of absenteeism. Nearly half of the students (43-47%) maintained their chronic absenteeism, while one-third of students (32-33%) maintained their good attendance. Attendance improved for some students (8-10%), and it declined for several others (11-14%). However, there was a large amount of missing school record data for the term following the Reconnecting Youth class, and a substantial proportion of students (over 40 percent) had relatively good grades and attendance prior to RY; as a result, it was difficult for students to demonstrate improvements in academic achievement and attendance (Figure 12).

12. Changes in student attendance between academic terms

	Percentage of students whose attendance...			
	Improved (<i>no longer chronically absent</i>)	Remained good (<i>never chronically absent</i>)	Remained poor (<i>maintained chronic absenteeism</i>)	Declined (<i>became chronically absent</i>)
From before to during Reconnecting Youth enrollment (N=69)	10%	32%	43%	14%
From during to after Reconnecting Youth enrollment (N=36)	8%	33%	47%	11%

School connectedness

One of the aims of Reconnecting Youth that supports changes in school achievement and attendance is building connectedness to one's school. According to the developers of the RY curriculum, students are more likely to be successful if they feel connected to their school. In this study, school connectedness provides insight into how students feel about their experience at school as well as how they relate to their teachers and peers.

Connectedness to school

Students generally “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that they felt connected to their school and teachers at both pre- and posttest. Specifically, most students reported that they make others feel welcome at school (94-95%), that teachers trust them to make good decisions (90-93%), and that they respect the opinions of teachers and other adults at school (92-93%), at both time points.

Perceptions of school connectedness remained relatively stable between pretest and posttest in most areas. However, students were significantly more likely to “agree” or “strongly agree” that they felt welcome at school at posttest (91%) than at pretest (83%) (Figure 13).

13. Student reported connectedness to school (N=107)

	Percentage of respondents who “agree” or “strongly agree”	
	Pretest	Posttest
I make others feel welcome at school.	94%	95%
Teachers and other adults at school trust me to make good decisions.	93%	90%
I respect the opinions of teachers and other adults at school.	92%	93%
I feel supported and encouraged by teachers and other adults at school.	87%	85%
There are teachers and other adults at school that I can trust.	86%	85%
I feel welcome at school.	83%*	91%*
I feel like teachers and school staff respect me and my opinions.	81%	86%

Note: Scale used was “strongly agree=1,” “agree=2,” “disagree=3,” and “strongly disagree=4.” Significance tests on means were conducted using t- tests. Differences in means are significant at * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, and *** $p < .001$.

Connectedness to peers

Most students “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that there are other students at school that trust them (95-96%), that they respect the opinions of other students (95-96%), and that they listen when other students share their feelings (95-99%), at both pretest and posttest. Most students also “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that they feel supported and encouraged by at least one other student at school (93%), and that other students at school respect them and their opinions (90-92%).

Student reports of their connectedness to peers were similar between pretest and posttest with two exceptions. At posttest, students were significantly more likely to “agree” or “strongly agree” that they helped other students solve problems and felt like they could share their feelings with other students (Figure 14). It should be noted that both of these areas of peer connectedness directly relate to the goals of peer sharing activities that take place during the Reconnecting Youth class.

14. Student reported connectedness with peers (N=107)

	Percentage of respondents who “agree” or “strongly agree”	
	Pretest	Posttest
There are other students at school that trust me.	96%	95%
I respect the opinions of other students.	96%	95%
I listen when others students share their feelings with me.	95%	99%
I feel supported and encouraged by at least one other student at school.	93%	93%
There are other students at school that respect me and my opinions.	92%	90%
I encourage and support my classmates.	90%	94%
I help other students solve problems.	87%*	94%*
There are other students at school that I can trust.	86%	90%
I feel like I can share my feelings with other students.	72%**	84%**

Note: Scale used was “strongly agree=1,” “agree=2,” “disagree=3,” and “strongly disagree =1.” Significance tests on means were conducted using t- tests. Differences in means are significant at * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, and *** $p < .001$.

Family connectedness

Family connectedness is another aim of the Reconnecting Youth curriculum that the developers cite as important to achieving the broader goals of increased academic achievement, decreased suicide risk, and decreased substance use. In this study, questions about family connectedness address how much students feel supported by their families as well as how open, comfortable, and respected they feel within their family.

Student report

Students generally reported that they felt connected to their families at pretest and posttest. Many “agreed” or “strongly agreed” at both time points that their parents were willing to help them or share advice (80-82%) and that their parents trusted them to make good decisions (80-86%). Slightly fewer “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that they could go to their parents when they had a problem and their parent would help (69-72%) or that they felt they could share their feelings with their parents (62-70%). There were no statistically significant differences in student reports of family connectedness between pretest and posttest (Figure 15).

15. Student reported connectedness with family (N=104-107)

	Percentage of respondents who “agree” or “strongly agree”	
	Pretest	Posttest
My parent(s) are willing to help me or share advice.	82%	80%
My parent(s) trust me to make good decisions.	80%	86%
I feel supported and encouraged by my parent(s).	81%	71%
My parent(s) respect me and my opinions.	75%	80%
I feel like I can go to my parent(s) when I have a problem and they will help me.	69%	72%
I feel like I can share my feelings with my parent(s).	62%	70%

Note: Scale used was “strongly agree=1,” “agree=2,” “disagree=3,” and “strongly disagree =1.” Significance tests on means were conducted using t- tests. There were no statistically significant differences ($p < .05$) between pretest and posttest for the items above.

Key findings: Follow-up interviews

In addition to collecting information about students at the time of enrollment and immediately following the Reconnecting Youth class, information was collected from both students and parents by telephone approximately six months after the students completed RY. The following describes student and parent perceptions of student attitudes and behaviors at follow-up. Because the follow-up interviews were conducted with a relatively small number of students (N=12) and parents (N=16), the results may not be representative of the experiences of all Reconnecting Youth families and should be interpreted with caution. For this reason, these results are presented separately from the previous set of findings.

Alcohol and drug involvement

Substance use

At the six-month follow-up interview, students were asked to report on their use of various substances in the last 30 days, while parents were asked to note any changes they observed in their child's use of alcohol, tobacco, and other substances since he or she had participated in the Reconnecting Youth class.

Student report

At follow-up, nearly half of the interviewed students (42%) had used cigarettes within the past 30 days. A couple of students reported using beer or wine (17%), marijuana (17%), and over-the-counter drugs (17%) in the past month, while one student had used hard liquor during this period (Figure 16). No students said they had recently used "hard" drugs such as cocaine, heroin, hallucinogens, or stimulants.

Most students (73%) reported using substances "less now," as compared to before their participation in Reconnecting Youth, while three (27%) said that they were using substances the "same as before." No students reported using substances "more than before" they had participated in RY (Figure 17).

16. Student-reported drug and alcohol use in past 30 days (N=12)

In the last 30 days, have you used...	Percentage of respondents reporting "yes"
Cigarettes	42%
Beer or wine	17%
Marijuana	17%
Over-the-counter drugs (dexatrim, NoDoz, Nyquil)	17%
Hard liquor (whiskey, vodka, rum)	8%
Cocaine	0%
Heroin, codeine, etc.	0%
Hallucinogens (LSD, PCP, mushrooms)	0%
Stimulants (meth, crystal, speed)	0%
Prescription drugs, other than what they were prescribed for	0%

17. Student-reported change in use of substances (N=11)

Since participating in RY, do you think you are using substances less, about the same, or more than you did before the class? Would you say...	Percentage of respondents reporting "yes"
Less now	73%
Same as before	27%
More than before	0%

Parent report

Parents were asked about changes in their child's substance use since participating in Reconnecting Youth. Nearly half of the parents (44%) reported that their child's tobacco use was "not an issue;" however, one-quarter of parents (25%) felt that their child's tobacco use "got worse," and only 13 percent thought it had "got[ten] better."

Most parents reported that alcohol use (67%) and other substance use (73%) was "not an issue" for their child. About one-quarter (27%) felt their child's alcohol use had "got[ten] better," while 13 percent said their child's tobacco and other substance use had improved since Reconnecting Youth. However, one-quarter of parents thought their child's tobacco use had actually "got[ten] worse" since RY (Figure 18).

18. Parent perception of child's substance use (N=15-16)

Have you noticed any changes in your child's behavior since he/she was in the RY class? How about in his/her...	Percentage of parent respondents who reported use...			
	Got better	Stayed the same	Got worse	Not an issue
Alcohol use	27%	7%	0%	67%
Tobacco use	13%	19%	25%	44%
Other substance use	13%	7%	7%	73%

Note: Scale was "not an issue=1," "got worse=2," "stayed the same=3," and "got better=4."

Behaviors associated with substance use

Students were also asked to indicate if they had experienced any specific behaviors or issues in the past 30 days as a result of substance use.

Student report

The majority of students (91%) felt supported by their parents for not using substances. A couple of students (17%) felt guilty about the amount of alcohol and/or drugs they had used in the past 30 days. One student had experienced problems with friends due to drug use, and one student experienced conflicts with family due to substance use in the past month. No students reported feeling sick from substance use, having lied to friends or family because of substance use, or having used more than one substance at a time in the past 30 days (Figure 19).

19. Student-reported relationship issues as a result of substance abuse (N=11-12)

During the last 30 days...	Percentage of respondents who reported "ever" experiencing these issues
There were problems between my friends and me because of my drug use.	8%
There were conflicts between my family and me because I was using substances.	8%
I felt sick from drinking or 'drugging' too much.	0%
I felt guilty about how much alcohol and/or how many drugs I used.	17%
I lied to my family or friends because I was using.	0%
I used more than one drug (for example, alcohol and another drug) at the same time.	0%
I felt supported by my parents for NOT using alcohol or drugs.	91%

Note: The scale was 4="almost always," 3="usually," 2="sometimes," and 1="never." Respondents who reported "ever" experiencing these issues in the last 30 days said they had either "almost always," "usually," or "sometimes" experienced the issue.

Moods and experiences

At the six-month follow-up interview, both students and parents were asked to report on students' moods and attitudes, either over the last month (student-report), or since their child had participated in Reconnecting Youth (parent-report).

Student report

Students were asked about the frequency with which they experienced various moods and experiences. Two-thirds (67%) of the students at follow-up indicated that they “usually” or “almost always” felt confident that they could handle their personal problems and felt satisfied with their lives. Half felt capable and in control of their lives, while nearly half (42%) “usually” or “almost always” got easily annoyed or irritated. Fewer (17%) reported that they “usually” or “almost always” felt lonely, felt that they might lose control when angry, or felt overwhelmed by all that was going on in their lives (Figure 20).

20. Student-reported moods and experiences in last 30 days (N=12)

During the last 30 days...	Percentage of respondents who reported “almost always” or “usually”
I felt confident that I could handle my personal problems.	67%
I felt satisfied with my life.	67%
I felt capable and in control of my life	50%
I got easily annoyed or irritated.	42%
I felt uneasy and/or anxious.	25%
I felt lonely.	17%
When I get really mad, I felt like I might lose control.	17%
I felt overwhelmed by all the things going on in my life.	17%
I felt depressed.	8%
I felt sad.	8%
I got so angry, I shouted and yelled at others.	8%
I felt hopeless about my life.	8%
I felt that nobody truly cares about me.	8%
Things at home were so bad that I thought about running away.	0%

Note: Scale was “never=1,” “sometimes=2,” “usually=3,” and “almost always=4.”

Parent report

Parents were asked about changes in their child's moods since participating in Reconnecting Youth. Nearly half or more reported that their child's confidence (69%), control over his/her direction in life (50%), satisfaction with life (44%), and appearance of anger (44%) "got better" since participating in RY. A few parents (13%) felt that their child appeared to get easily annoyed or irritated, uneasy or anxious, or angry more often since participating in RY (Figure 21).

21. Parent perception of changes in child's moods since participating in RY (N=16)

Have you noticed any changes in your child's behavior since he/she was in the RY class? How about in his/her...	Percentage of parent respondents who reported child's mood...			
	Got better	Stayed the same	Got worse	Not an issue
Satisfaction with life	44%	38%	13%	6%
Confidence	69%	31%	0%	0%
Control over his/her direction in life	50%	38%	6%	6%
Appearing to be sad or lonely	31%	25%	6%	38%
Becoming easily annoyed or irritated	19%	69%	13%	0%
Appearing to be uneasy or anxious	25%	31%	13%	31%
Appearing to be angry	44%	25%	13%	19%

Note: Scale was "not an issue=1," "got worse=2," "stayed the same=3," and "got better=4."

Academic achievement and attendance

Parent report

Parents were asked about changes in their child's school attendance and grades since participating in Reconnecting Youth. Half (50%) reported that their child's grades had improved, while about one-third (31%) said that they "stayed the same" after participating in RY. Fewer parents (19%) reported that their child's attendance had improved; 44 percent thought that it "stayed the same," and 13 percent said it had "got(ten) worse" (Figure 22).

22. Parent perception of changes in child's school performance and attendance since participating in RY (N=16)

Have you noticed any changes in your child's behavior since he/she was in the RY class? How about in his/her...	Percentage of parent respondents who said performance/attendance...			
	Got better	Stayed the same	Got worse	Not an issue
School attendance	19%	44%	13%	25%
Grades	50%	31%	13%	6%

Note: Scale was "not an issue=1," "got worse=2," "stayed the same=3," and "got better=4."

School records

According to school records for the 16 students whose parents were interviewed, fewer students had issues with attendance (42%) and grades (69%) than their parents reported. Similar to parent reports, though, most of the students who had issues with grades improved their grades over time, while similar numbers of students had grades either stay the same or get worse. Of the students who had issues with attendance, all improved their attendance by at least four days per term, which was a greater improvement than parents perceived (Figure 23).

23. Changes in students' school performance and attendance based on school records for children of interviewed parents (N=16)

	Percentage of students whose performance/attendance...			
	Got better	Stayed the same	Got worse	Not an issue
School attendance	42%	0%	0%	58%
Grades	39%	15%	15%	31%

Note: Grades were considered "not an issue" if the GPA was above 2.0, or "C" level. Attendance was considered "not an issue" if students were not on track for being chronically absent.

School connectedness

Both students and parents were asked to describe the students' level of connection to his/her school, RY teacher, and other students at the six-month follow-up interview.

Student report

At follow-up, all 12 students “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that they felt supported and encouraged by other students in RY and they felt they could talk to other students in the class. Additionally, all students “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that they felt supported and encouraged by their RY teacher, trusted their RY teacher, and felt their RY teacher respected them and their opinions and helped them to make good decisions (Figure 24).

24. Student-reported connectedness to RY class (N=12)

	Percentage of respondents who “agree” or “strongly agree”
I felt supported and encouraged by other students in the Reconnecting Youth class.	100%
I felt like I could talk to other students in the RY class.	100%
I felt supported and encouraged by my RY teacher.	100%
I trusted my RY teacher.	100%
I felt my RY teacher respected me and my opinions.	100%
My RY teacher helped me to make good decisions.	100%
I felt welcome in the RY class.	100%
Other students in the RY class respected me and my opinions.	92%

Note: Scale was “strongly disagree=1,” “disagree=2,” “agree=3,” and “strongly agree=4.”

Parent report

As a result of Reconnecting Youth, most parents reported that their child's peer relationships “got better” (56%) or “stayed the same” (44%), as did their level of communication in general (40% “got better” while 47% “stayed the same”) (Figure 25).

25. Parent perception of changes in child's social skills (N=16)

Have you noticed any changes in your child's behavior since he/she was in the RY class? How about in his/her...	Percentage of parent respondents who reported child's social skills...			
	Got better	Stayed the same	Got worse	Not an issue
Peer relationships	56%	44%	0%	0%
Level of communication in general (teachers, friends, etc.)	40%	47%	13%	0%

Note: Scale was "not an issue=1," "got worse=2," "stayed the same=3," and "got better=4."

Family connectedness

In addition to assessing student connection to school and peers, students and parents were asked to describe the extent to which students felt connected to and supported by their parent(s) at the six-month follow-up interview.

Student report

At follow-up, all or nearly all students reported strong connections to their family and parents (Figure 26). All 12 students said their parents gave them advice and respected them and their opinions. All students felt like they can share their feelings with their parents, were supported by their parents, and that they can go to their parents when they have a problem.

26. Student-reported connectedness to family (N=12)

	Percentage of respondents who "agree" or "strongly agree"
My parent(s) are willing to help me or share advice.	100%
My parent(s) trust me to make good decisions.	92%
I feel supported and encouraged by my parent(s).	100%
My parent(s) respect me and my opinions.	100%
I feel like I can go to my parent(s) when I have a problem and they will help me.	100%
I feel like I can share my feelings with my parent(s).	100%

Note: Scale was "strongly disagree=1," "disagree=2," "agree=3," and "strongly agree=4."

Parent report

Nearly half of the parents (44%) reported that their child's level of communication with them or other parents had "got(ten) better" since their child had participated in Reconnecting Youth; the same proportion (44%) reported that communication "stayed the same." Fewer (20%) reported that their child's time spent with family "got better," while one-third (33%) reported that it "got worse" (Figure 27).

27. Parent perception of child's interaction with family (N=16)

Have you noticed any changes in your child's behavior since he/she was in the RY class? How about in his/her...	Percentage of parent respondents who reported that the child's interaction with family...			
	Got better	Stayed the same	Got worse	Not an issue
Level of communication with you and other parents	44%	44%	13%	0%
Time spent with family	20%	47%	33%	0%

Participant feedback

Both students and parents were asked to provide feedback about their satisfaction with the class and their perceptions of the benefits of Reconnecting Youth for students, and offer their suggestions for improving the curriculum.

Student feedback

Student satisfaction and perceptions of impact

Students were asked at both posttest and the six-month follow-up about their satisfaction with Reconnecting Youth. Students were generally quite satisfied with the class. Specifically, at the conclusion of the class, most reported that they understood the information presented in the lessons (99%), the activities and discussions were interesting (94%), and they learned something new from the class (93%). Additionally, most (97%) felt other students would benefit from a class like RY.

At follow-up, students identified several benefits as a result of their participation in the class. Most (92%) felt that RY had a positive impact on their lives, and that they learned how to avoid using drugs and alcohol. Many (83%) also reported that RY helped them form better relationships with their parents and friends (Figure 28).

28. Student satisfaction with Reconnecting Youth

	Percentage of respondents who “agree” or “strongly agree” (N=98-100)
Items asked at posttest	
I understood the information presented in the lessons.	99%
Overall, I found this class helpful.	98%
Other students would benefit from a class like this.	97%
The activities and discussions were interesting.	96%
I felt comfortable participating in the class.	96%
I learned something new from the class.	93%
I was able to ask questions when I needed to.	94%
Items asked at six-month follow-up (N=12)	
The RY class had a positive impact on my life.	92%
I learned how to avoid using drugs and alcohol.	92%
The RY class helped me form a better relationship with my parents.	83%
The RY class helped me form better relationships with my friends.	83%

Note: Scale was “strongly disagree=1,” “disagree=2,” “agree=3,” and “strongly agree=4.”

These benefits were echoed in the comments of students when they described the most important thing they learned in the Reconnecting Youth class. The majority said that their current relationships and/or relational skills had improved because of the class. For example, students noted how the class helped them to connect better with their parents and to have healthier relationships with their friends. One student mentioned that the class taught him how to make new friends. Students also felt that they had learned specific skills that helped them to better relate to others, such as how to trust others, how to understand different perspectives, and how to be polite.

[The most important thing I learned from the class was] probably connecting with others. I was connected better with my parents going through the class and after the class than before. That's probably what I got most out of it.

[It helped me with] the view of everyone else's life: being able to see and understand other people's lives and understanding the relationship between them.

[The class] just helped me in relationships with friends and stuff. It helped me not get into their drama and stuff and stay away.

Three students described how the class had helped them to learn to control their emotions, especially anger. Individual students also mentioned learning other life skills including how to control drug use, set goals, and get to class on time.

Student suggestions for improvement

When asked for suggestions to improve the class, the vast majority of student respondents said they were very satisfied with the class in its current form. There were, however, a few suggestions to consider for future improvement. It is important to keep in mind that these suggestions may apply to specific classrooms rather than the curriculum overall.

Two students suggested having a bigger class that included more students. They thought that it might help to have a greater variety of peers to talk to about their problems, increasing the chance that there would be other students to whom they could relate.

...maybe if you had a bigger class – more people in the class [because] with a small group of kids, there aren't as many kids who have the same situation that you have. Sometimes it's easier to relate to someone in the same situation and easier to talk to them.

There were various other suggestions recommended by individual students. These included more field trips, spending more time having in-depth discussions of the topics, and having students listen more to the instructor. One student felt that his/her particular

instructor did not lead discussions well and would have liked the teacher to have allowed more sharing time and opportunities for students to give advice to their peers.

Parent feedback

Parent expectations for class

When asked about their initial expectations for the Reconnecting Youth class and its impact on their children, seven parents and/or guardians hoped for social benefits, another five parents cited personal development, three named the development of specific life skills, and three identified changes in behavior.

Most parents said that they hoped that the RY class would help improve their child's ability to relate to peers. Along with improved social skills, parents hoped that their children would meet new people, become more outgoing, and enhance relationships. One parent expected their child to have a peer group with whom he/she could discuss problems.

[I hoped my child would gain] just the ability to meet new people. She is a bit of a loner – the ability to gain friendships.

My hope was that it would help with her social skills and interactions with her peers. She has had ongoing difficulties with peer relationships throughout her life.

Many parents also expected that the class would help their child in certain areas of personal growth. One parent hoped his/her child would emerge from the class more open. Others mentioned wanting their child to become more independent, more open-minded, more self-aware, and a “better person.”

[I hoped my child would] discover a bit more about herself and what is going on around her.

Some of the other life skills that parents hoped their children would learn in the Reconnecting Youth class included problem solving, following-through, and a greater awareness of different options and opportunities. A few parents hoped that the class would help improve certain behavioral issues, including anger management problems.

While the majority of parents had some knowledge of the class and had expectations related to what their child would learn, three respondents said that they did not know enough about the class initially and, therefore, had no expectations.

Parent satisfaction and perceptions of impact

Extent to which class met expectations

The vast majority of parents said that the Reconnecting Youth class met their expectations because of the positive personal and relationship changes they had noticed in their child since the class ended. In particular, some parents noted how their child's relationship with peers, teachers, and/or with the parent themselves had improved.

I think it just opened communication [between parent and child] because she would talk about things that happened from the class.

Other parents said that the class met their expectations because their child enjoyed the class and would talk about it at home. Several pointed to an improvement in academics, motivation, and involvement in school activities. While unsure of how much was due to Reconnecting Youth, two parents talked about a “turn-around” in behavior and attitude.

He has opened up quite a bit more. He has really done a 180 since last year. I'm not sure if it was because of the class but his grades, homework, etc., have changed for the better.

Additional improvements that parents saw in their children included control over emotions, the ability to walk away from negative situations and to manage anger, and less judgment. One parent was grateful for the class because students seem to have benefited from opening up and talking.

Only one parent said that the class had not met her expectations; this was primarily because of instructor turnover. The parent also knew one of the teachers personally, making her child less comfortable opening up in class.

Other perceived benefits of class

Throughout the interviews, parents discussed how the Reconnecting Youth class had improved their child's communication skills, built their child's confidence, improved their child's academic discipline, and had other benefits. When asked about the biggest benefit of the Reconnecting Youth class for their child, the most frequent response related to communication. Many parents described how their child had a place where they could talk with peers about their problems and other life issues, such as bullying or drinking and driving. Several parents mentioned that the biggest benefit was improving their child's relationships with peers, family, and authority figures such as teachers.

[The biggest benefit was] probably that he knew that it was a comfortable place to go. If he had a problem with something, he could go to them and talk to them and it built his confidence. It was a safe place.

He has gotten quite a few [benefits]. He has buckled down on his work and is getting along with his younger brother a lot better. Before he couldn't stand to be in the same room as him.

Other benefits included doing better in school and an improved attitude. Another parent said they were “not sure how to explain it” but everything “got better.” Just two parents said that they could not think of any specific ways their child had benefited from the RY class.

Parents and guardians were also asked if they would recommend that other students take the Reconnecting Youth class. Nearly all of the parents said that they would; one parent was unsure. One parent who did not recommend the class said that he/she did not have enough information about the class and was not informed about it along the way.

The 14 parents who said that they would recommend that other students participate in the Reconnecting Youth class reiterated the benefits that their children had received from the class, particularly regarding improved communication and social skills. Many of the respondents emphasized how important it was for the children to have a place to talk with their peers. They also mentioned how the class helps to build confidence and self-esteem.

[I would recommend the class] because I think it's very helpful. [It] gives kids more confidence in themselves and how to speak out instead of holding it in.

I think it's good for all the kids to express their feelings and [it] helps to build their self-esteem. I think it helps them build relationships and realize that there are others who feel the same way they do so they aren't feeling alone and depressed.

One parent described how, following the departure of the child's other parent, the class gave the child a place to “open up and talk about it.” Another parent recommended that the class be offered at the middle school as well because of the pressures and changes that youth face at that age. Others stressed that the class could be particularly beneficial to students who have gone through difficult situations and/or who have difficulty connecting with their peers.

It would be a good class for any kids who are struggling socially with peers or kids having a difficult time having success in school. [It would be] good for both of these situations.

For some kids, it would just be good to be able to talk to other kids if you have problems and stuff.

A few parents mentioned that the class helped students learn life skills and how to deal with anger and other behavioral issues. The potential of the class to help children achieve greater academic success was also highlighted.

Many parents said the class was a positive experience for their child, and one said that he/she had already encouraged other students to participate. Several said they hoped that the class would continue and wished it had been available to their child throughout high school. One parent went so far as to suggest it be a required class for all students.

[I would recommend the class] because it helps them with their social skills and their ability to perform. It helped him to feel more confident and his grades are better this year. I feel that the RY class was the one class that did that because that was the class that he talked the most about.

Parent communication with instructor

When asked about what the Reconnecting Youth instructor told them about their child's experience in the class, the majority of parents said that they do not remember having any, or very little, communication with the instructor. Two parents said that they had received information through a newsletter or school records but had not received specific feedback.

Actually, I didn't hear anything from the teacher, just through the newsletter. Nothing specific, never bad reports, just the monthly newsletter. I did go in for donuts a couple of times. That went very well.

To be honest, [I] never spoke to anybody. [I] got some records on it [but] never communicated with anybody.

Of the five parents that had communicated with the RY instructor, three had received feedback about changes in participation level (i.e., participation in class increased over time) and two received information about attendance. Parents also mentioned hearing the following types of feedback: the student is fun to have in class, the student's confidence level increased, and a general evaluation of student performance (i.e., satisfactory to good).

They said that [the student] went to the class and they appreciated and liked having him in class. For the most part he is a kid who is fun to have around. They said he was fun to have in class.

I think [they said she had] more confidence, more confidence than what she had before.

Parent suggestions for improvement

While the vast majority of parents were very positive about the structure and content of the Reconnecting Youth class, there were suggestions for future improvement. In particular, several parents wanted more information about the curriculum, noting that they did not know very much about the class or felt that parents were not kept well-informed throughout the course.

Conclusions and recommendations

Positive perceptions of the program

Students and parents generally provided positive feedback about their experiences with Reconnecting Youth. Students felt they learned something new from the class and that other students would benefit from the class. The small number of parents who provided feedback noted various benefits as a result of their child's participation in the curriculum, including improved relationships with family and peers, improved academic performance, improved communication skills, and increased confidence.

High and stable levels of connectedness

Students generally felt connected to their school, peers, and families at the start and end of the RY class. Likewise, students generally felt connected to their families to the same degree at the start and end of the class. More students indicated that they felt welcome at school, that they helped other students solve problems, and felt like they could share their feelings with other students after participating in RY.

Limited impact on behavior, mood, and academic performance and attendance

Despite positive perceptions of the program, this study demonstrated limited impact on the behaviors of participating students. In particular, although some students decreased their use of substances after enrollment in the class, a similar proportion of students said they used alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana more often following the class. Additionally, approximately 2 in 10 students continued to report experiencing negative consequences as a result of their substance use. Students experienced little change in moods and experiences while enrolled in the class. Among those whose moods did change over time, about the same number of students experienced negative mood states more often as those who experienced negative moods less often.

The data did not demonstrate significant improvement in academics or school attendance during or after enrollment in RY. In fact, nearly half of students maintained chronic absenteeism before and after participation in RY, while only one-third of students maintained good attendance.

Limited data available

Because there was a large proportion of missing data, results from this study should be interpreted with caution. Students and parents who did not participate in any given

component of the evaluation may be different from those who chose to participate. Additionally, there may be a bias in students' self-reports of their academic achievement, substance use, moods, and relationships at either pre- or post-test. This bias may be intentional due to social desirability or privacy concerns, or unintentional due to their current mood, difficulty remembering, or misinterpretation of the question.

Recommendations

The following recommendations should be considered when implementing the Reconnecting Youth curriculum in the future. Additionally, recommendations are offered for further evaluation of the curriculum.

- **Ensure that peer interactions are beneficial for students and enhance their ability to make safe choices.** There was a notable increase in tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana use from pretest to posttest. While one of the goals of the class is to decrease substance use, the influence of other high-risk peers may have normalized substance use for students. It should be noted that there is the potential that many students turned 18 while in the class, and they could therefore legally buy tobacco products.
- **Continue to encourage the social benefits of the class while monitoring peer influence to ensure it is positive and not harmful.** Students felt like they could talk to their peers about problems and that they were able to help their peers more after the class. In addition, students and parents both emphasized the social benefits of the class. However, it is important to ensure that the social connections made between high-risk peers are positive and safe.
- **Identify additional methods for motivating students to attend school.** There were few significant gains in academic achievement, particularly attendance. However, students had high levels of perceived school connectedness both before and after the class, so schools may want to leverage students' sense of connectedness to school and peers in order to increase attendance.
- **Consider increasing communication with parents and guardians as appropriate.** The difficulty in reaching parents to obtain signed, active consent demonstrates that communication with parents may be challenging. It may be that parents do not receive, read, or retain information if it is only provided once or twice. Continued communication, using a variety of modes of communication, may be necessary to help parents feel invested and connected to the class.

- **Continue to evaluate the impact of the curriculum for high-risk students.** While students and parents were generally satisfied with their experience in the class, results demonstrate limited positive impact of the curriculum on key high-risk behaviors, including substance use, emotional health, school academics, attendance, and connectedness. Especially given the limited follow-up data available for this study, the impact of future RY classes should be assessed, with an emphasis on long-term impacts for students. Future research may also want to incorporate additional evaluation tools, beyond those included with the curriculum.

Appendix

Student connectedness survey (pretest)

Student connectedness survey (posttest)

Student follow-up interview

Parent follow-up interview

Student 30-day checklists (School Achievement, Drug Involvement, and Moods and Experiences)

Student connectedness survey (pretest)

Please tell us your birth date

____/____/____
Month Day Year

And today's date

____/____/____
Month Day Year

Reconnecting Youth Pre-survey

We would like to learn about your experiences with other students, teachers and other adults at school, and your family. Please use a ☒ to clearly mark only one response for each question - the response that you feel comes closest to what you think about the statement. Your answers will be combined with other students' answers and your individual answers will never be shared with your parents, anyone in your class, or anyone at your school.

Peer connectedness

Please think about your interactions with other students at school. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. I feel like I can share my feelings with other students.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
2. There are other students at school that I can trust.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
3. There are other students at school that trust me.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
4. I feel supported and encouraged by at least one other student at school.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
5. There are other students at school that respect me and my opinions.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
6. I listen when others students share their feelings with me.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
7. I encourage and support my classmates.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
8. I help other students solve problems.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
9. I respect the opinions of other students.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴

School connectedness

Please think about how you feel about your school, your teachers, and other adults at your school. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
10. I feel welcome at school.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
11. I make others feel welcome at school.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
12. I feel supported and encouraged by teachers and other adults at school.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
13. I feel like teachers and school staff respect me and my opinions.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
14. There are teachers and other adults at school that I can trust.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
15. I respect the opinions of teachers and other adults at school.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
16. Teachers and other adults at school trust me to make good decisions.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴

Family connectedness

Please answer these questions about how you feel about your relationships with your parent or parents. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
17. I feel like I can go to my parent(s) when I have a problem and they will help me.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
18. I feel like I can share my feelings with my parent(s).	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
19. I feel supported and encouraged by my parent(s).	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
20. My parent(s) are willing to help me or share advice.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
21. My parent(s) respect me and my opinions.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
22. My parent(s) trust me to make good decisions.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴

Now we would like to learn a little about who you are. Your answers to these questions will only be used to help us better understand how the Reconnecting Youth class works for different students. These answers will not be used to link your responses to you personally.

23. What is your gender?

☐¹ Male

☐² Female

24. How old are you? _____

25. What grade are you in?

☐¹ 9

☐² 10

☐³ 11

☐⁴ 12

26. What is your ethnicity?

☐¹ Hispanic or Latino

☐² **NOT** Hispanic or Latino

27. What is your race?

☐¹ American Indian or Alaska Native

☐² Asian

☐³ Black or African American

☐⁴ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

☐⁵ White

☐⁶ Other (Specify: _____)

☐⁷ I would rather not answer

Thank you!

Please return the packet to your RY teacher.

Student connectedness survey (posttest)

Please tell us your birth date

____/____/____
Month Day Year

And today's date

____/____/____
Month Day Year

Reconnecting Youth Post-survey

We would like to learn about your experiences with and opinions of Reconnecting Youth. Please use a ☒ to clearly mark only one response for each question - the response that you feel comes closest to what you think about the statement. Your answers will be combined with other students' answers and your individual answers will never be shared with your parents, anyone in your class, or anyone at your school.

Peer connectedness

Please think about your interactions with other students at school. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. I feel like I can share my feelings with other students.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
2. There are other students at school that I can trust.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
3. There are other students at school that trust me.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
4. I feel supported and encouraged by at least one other student at school.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
5. There are other students at school that respect me and my opinions.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
6. I listen when others students share their feelings with me.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
7. I encourage and support my classmates.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
8. I help other students solve problems.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
9. I respect the opinions of other students.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴

School connectedness

Please think about how you feel about your school, your teachers, and other adults at your school. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
10. I feel welcome at school.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
11. I make others feel welcome at school.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
12. I feel supported and encouraged by teachers and other adults at school.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
13. I feel like teachers and school staff respect me and my opinions.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
14. There are teachers or other adults at school that I can trust.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
15. I respect the opinions of teachers and other adults at school.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
16. Teachers and other adults at school trust me to make good decisions.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴

Family connectedness

Please answer these questions about how you feel about your relationships with your parent or parents. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
17. I feel like I can go to my parent(s) when I have a problem and they will help me.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
18. I feel like I can share my feelings with my parent(s).	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
19. I feel supported and encouraged by my parent(s).	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
20. My parent(s) are willing to help me or share advice.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
21. My parent(s) respect me and my opinions.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
22. My parent(s) trust me to make good decisions.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴

Satisfaction

Please share your opinion of the class.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
23. I understood the information presented in the lessons.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
24. The activities and discussions were interesting.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
25. I felt comfortable participating in the class.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
26. I learned something new from the class.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
27. I was able to ask questions when I needed to.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
28. Overall, I found this class helpful.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴
29. Other students would benefit from a class like this.	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴

30. What was the most helpful thing that you learned in this class?

31. Do you have any suggestions for improving this class in the future?

Thank you!

Please return the packet to your RY teacher.

Student follow-up interview

Project code: 70896

ID: _____

ATOD – P&I grantees Reconnecting Youth Student Key informant interview

Hello, my name is _____ and I am calling from Wilder Research in Saint Paul. [SCHOOL NAME] has asked us to contact you. As you might remember, Wilder Research is helping your school understand what is working well about the Reconnecting Youth class and what can be improved. You received some information at the beginning of the class about answering some questions on the phone about 6 months after the end of the class. This interview will ask how the class affected you and your relationship with your parents. Participation in this interview is completely voluntary. Your answers will be combined with other students' answers and your individual answers will never be shared with your parents, anyone in your class, or anyone at your school. As a thank you for completing this phone interview, you will receive X. If there are any questions you would rather not answer, just let me know and we will skip them. The interview will take approximately 15 minutes.

RY class connectedness

1. Think about the time you were in the Reconnecting Youth class. Please tell me if you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following.

	Would you say...					
	Strongly agree,	Agree,	Disagree, or	Strongly disagree?	REF	DK
a. I felt supported and encouraged by other students in the Reconnecting Youth class.	4	3	2	1	7	8
b. I felt like I could talk to other students in the RY class.	4	3	2	1	7	8
c. Other students in the RY class respected me and my opinions.	4	3	2	1	7	8
d. I felt supported and encouraged by my RY teacher.	4	3	2	1	7	8
e. I trusted my RY teacher.	4	3	2	1	7	8
f. I felt my RY teacher respected me and my opinions.	4	3	2	1	7	8
g. My RY teacher helped me to make good decisions.	4	3	2	1	7	8
h. I felt welcome in the RY class.	4	3	2	1	7	8

Family connectedness

2. Please answer these questions about how you currently feel about your relationship with your parent or parents. Please tell me if you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements.

	Would you say...					
	Strongly agree,	Agree,	Disagree, or	Strongly disagree?	REF	DK
a. I feel like I can go to my parent(s) when I have a problem and they will help me.	4	3	2	1	7	8
b. I feel like I can share my feelings with my parent(s).	4	3	2	1	7	8
c. I feel supported and encouraged by my parent(s).	4	3	2	1	7	8
d. My parent(s) are willing to help me or share advice.	4	3	2	1	7	8
e. My parent(s) respect me and my opinions.	4	3	2	1	7	8
f. My parent(s) trust me to make good decisions.	4	3	2	1	7	8

Substance use

The next set of questions asks about whether or not you have used drugs or alcohol in the last 30 days.

3. In the last 30 days, have you used any of the following substances? If yes, did you use almost every day, a few times per week, once a week, or once or twice a month? [INTERVIEWER: remind student about confidentiality]

(In the last 30 days, have you used...)	IF YES ASK → → →				Would you say...					
	Yes	No	REF	DK	Almost every day,	A few times per week,	Once a week, or	Once or twice a month?	REF	DK
a. Cigarettes	1	2	7	8	4	3	2	1	7	8
b. Beer or wine	1	2	7	8	4	3	2	1	7	8
c. Hard liquor (whiskey, vodka, rum)	1	2	7	8	4	3	2	1	7	8
d. Marijuana	1	2	7	8	4	3	2	1	7	8
e. Cocaine	1	2	7	8	4	3	2	1	7	8
f. Heroin, codeine, etc.	1	2	7	8	4	3	2	1	7	8
g. Hallucinogens (LSD, PCP, mushrooms)										
h. Stimulants (meth, crystal, speed)	1	2	7	8	4	3	2	1	7	8
i. Over the counter drugs (dexatrim, NoDoz, Nyquil)	1	2	7	8	4	3	2	1	7	8
j. Prescription drugs, other than what they were prescribed for	1	2	7	8	4	3	2	1	7	8

The next questions ask about different issues you may have experienced in the last 30 days.

4. Please tell me if you experienced these issues almost always, usually, sometimes, or never during the last 30 days...

	Would you say...					
	Almost always,	Usually,	Sometimes, or	Never?	REF	DK
a. There were problems between my friends and me because of my substance use.	4	3	2	1	7	8
b. There were conflicts between my family and me because I was using substances.	4	3	2	1	7	8
c. I felt guilty about how much alcohol and/or how many drugs I used.	4	3	2	1	7	8
d. I felt supported by my parents for NOT using alcohol or drugs.	4	3	2	1	7	8
f. I used more than one drug (for example, alcohol and another drug) at the same time.	4	3	2	1	7	8
g. I felt sick from drinking or 'drugging' too much.	4	3	2	1	7	8
h. I lied to my family or friends because I was using.	4	3	2	1	7	8

Moods and experiences

5. The next set of questions asks about how you have felt over the last month. Please tell me if you have felt the following almost always, usually, sometimes, or never in the past 30 days...

(During the last 30 days...)	Would you say...					
	Almost always,	Usually,	Sometimes, or	Never?	REF	DK
a. When I got really mad, I felt like I might lose control.	4	3	2	1	7	8
b. I felt confident that I could handle my problems.	4	3	2	1	7	8
c. I felt that nobody truly cared about me.	4	3	2	1	7	8
d. I got easily annoyed or irritated.	4	3	2	1	7	8
d. I got so angry I shouted and yelled at others.	4	3	2	1	7	8
f. I felt satisfied with my life.	4	3	2	1	7	8
g. I felt uneasy and/or anxious.	4	3	2	1	7	8
h. I felt depressed.	4	3	2	1	7	8
i. I felt sad.	4	3	2	1	7	8
j. Things at home were so bad, I thought about running away.	4	3	2	1	7	8
k. I felt lonely.	4	3	2	1	7	8
l. I felt hopeless about my life.	4	3	2	1	7	8
m. I felt overwhelmed by all the things going on in my life.	4	3	2	1	7	8
n. I felt capable and in control of my life.	4	3	2	1	7	8

6. Since participating in RY, do you think you are using substances less, about the same, or more than you did before the class? Would you say...

Less now, 1
 Same as before, or 2
 More than before? 3
 Refused 7
 Don't know 8

Satisfaction

7. Please share your opinion of the Reconnecting Youth class. Please tell me if you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with each statement.

	Would you say...					
	Strongly agree,	Agree,	Disagree, or	Strongly disagree?	REF	DK
a. The RY class had a positive impact on my life.	4	3	2	1	7	8
b. I learned how to avoid using drugs and alcohol.	4	3	2	1	7	8
c. The RY class helped me form a better relationship with my parents.	4	3	2	1	7	8
d. The RY class helped me form better relationships with my friends.	4	3	2	1	7	8
e. Overall, I found this class helpful.	4	3	2	1	7	8
f. Other students would benefit from a class like this.	4	3	2	1	7	8

8. What was the most important thing that you learned in this class?

9. What suggestions do you have for improving this class in the future?

Finally, I have just a couple of questions about your background.

10. What is your age?

_____ Years

Refused.....-7

Don't know-8

11. Are you... (ONLY ASK IF UNSURE)

Male 1

Female 2

Refused..... 7

Don't know 8

12. How would you describe your race/ethnicity? [NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: DO NOT READ RESPONSE OPTIONS AT FIRST. IF RESPONSE GIVEN DOES NOT FIT INTO ONE OF THE OPTIONS BELOW, PLEASE FOLLOW-UP TO IDENTIFY A CATEGORY].

Black, African-American, or African 1
Latino, Hispanic or Chicano 2
Asian or Pacific Islander 3
American Indian or Native American 4
White or Caucasian..... 5
Biracial or multicultural 6
Other (please describe: _____)..... 7
Refused.....-7
Don't know-8

Thank you. That is all of the questions I have for you today.

Your gift certificate will be sent by certified mail within the next week or two. This means that the mail carrier will bring it to your door for someone to sign for it so we know that it isn't lost or stolen. INTERVIEWER; IF CERTIFIED MAIL IS A PROBLEM, GIVE R A CHOICE OF HAVING IT SENT ELSEWHERE OR HAVING IT SENT BY REGULAR MAIL AT HIS/HER OWN RISK. THIS MEANS THAT IF THEY DON'T RECEIVE IT, WE WILL NOT REPLACE IT.

Certified..... 1
Regular mail..... 2

What name and address should we send the gift card to?

Name: _____

Address: _____

Parent follow-up interview

Project code: 70896

ID: _____

ATOD – P&I grantees Reconnecting Youth Parent Key informant interview

Hello, my name is _____ and I am calling from Wilder Research in Saint Paul. We are contacting you on behalf of [SCHOOL NAME]. As you might remember, your school has partnered with Wilder Research to evaluate the Reconnecting Youth class. The consent form you received before your son or daughter began the Reconnecting Youth class mentioned potential participation in a brief, telephone follow-up interview approximately 6 months after the end of the class. This interview will assess the impact that the Reconnecting Youth class has had on your child and your relationship with him or her. Participation in this interview is completely voluntary. As a thank you for completion of this phone interview, you will receive X. If there are any questions you would rather not answer, just let me know and we will skip the questions. The interview will take approximately 10 minutes.

1. When your child first became involved in the Reconnecting Youth class, what were your expectations (**PROBE:** What were you hoping that your child would learn from participating in RY)?

2. Did Reconnecting Youth meet your expectations?

Yes (Why: _____)
_____) ... 1

No (Why not: _____)
_____) ... 2

Refused..... 7

Don't know 8

We would like to get your perceptions of how Reconnecting Youth has influenced your child.

3. Please think about your interactions with your child since his/her participation in Reconnecting Youth. Would you say..

	Would you say...					
	Often,	Sometimes,	Rarely, or	Never?	REF	DK
a. your child comes to you when he/she has a problem?	4	3	2	1	7	8
b. your child shares his/her feelings with you?	4	3	2	1	7	8
c. your child comes to you for advice?	4	3	2	1	7	8
d. your child listens to your advice?	4	3	2	1	7	8
e. your child respects you and your opinions?	4	3	2	1	7	8
f. you respect your child and his/her opinions	4	3	2	1	7	8
g. you trust your child to make good decisions	4	3	2	1	7	8

4. Have you noticed any changes in your child's behavior since he/she was in the Reconnecting Youth class (got better, got worse, stayed the same)? [NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: DO NOT READ RESPONSE OPTIONS FOR "NOT AN ISSUE" AND "DON'T KNOW." WAIT UNTIL RESPONDENT OFFERS ONE OF THESE ANSWERS AS HIS/HER RESPONSE OR ISN'T SURE HOW TO ANSWER THE QUESTION].

How about in his/her...	Got better,	Stayed the same, or	Got worse?	Not an issue	REF	DK
a. School attendance	4	3	2	1	7	8
b. Grades	4	3	2	1	7	8
c. Peer relationships	4	3	2	1	7	8
d. Level of communication with you and other parents	4	3	2	1	7	8
e. Level of communication in general (teachers, friends, etc.)	4	3	2	1	7	8
f. Time spent with family	4	3	2	1	7	8
g. Alcohol use	4	3	2	1	7	8
h. Tobacco use	4	3	2	1	7	8
i. Other substance use	4	3	2	1	7	8
j. Satisfaction with life	4	3	2	1	7	8
k. Confidence	4	3	2	1	7	8
l. Control over his/her direction in life	4	3	2	1	7	8
m. Appearing to be sad or lonely	4	3	2	1	7	8
n. Becoming easily annoyed or irritated	4	3	2	1	7	8
o. Appearing to be uneasy or anxious	4	3	2	1	7	8
p. Appearing to be angry	4	3	2	1	7	8

Now we have a few questions about your experience with the Reconnecting Youth class.

5. What did the RY instructor tell you about your child's experience in the class? (Probe for content of communication, e.g., info on attendance, performance, grades, behavior, etc.)

6. What do you think of the number of opportunities you had for involvement in your child's Reconnecting Youth class. Were there...

Too many opportunities, 3
 Enough opportunities, or 2
 Too few opportunities? 1
 Refused 7
 Don't know 8

7. What do you feel was the biggest benefit of the Reconnecting Youth class to your child?

8. Would you recommend that other kids take the Reconnecting Youth class?
- Yes (Why: _____)
 _____) ... 1
- No (Why not: _____)
 _____) ... 2
- Refused..... 7
- Don't know 8

Before we finish, we would like to learn a little bit about you in order to gain a picture of the range of people interviewed.

9. How do **you** describe your race or ethnicity? [NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: DO NOT READ RESPONSE OPTIONS AT FIRST. IF RESPONSE GIVEN DOES NOT FIT INTO ONE OF THE OPTIONS BELOW, PLEASE FOLLOW-UP TO IDENTIFY A CATEGORY].
- African-American or Black 1
- American Indian or Native American 2
- Asian or Pacific Islander 3
- Hispanic or Latino 4
- White or Caucasian 5
- More than one race 6
- Other (Please describe: _____) .. 7
- Refused..... -8
- Don't know -9
10. Are you... (ONLY ASK IF UNSURE)
- Male 1
- Female 2
- Refused..... 7
- Don't know 8
11. What is your household size...
- 11A. How many adults, 18 or older live in your household: _____
- 11B. How many children age 17 or younger live in your household: _____
12. How would you describe your household structure. Is it a...
- Single parent household, 1
- Two parent household, or 2
- Extended household? 3
- Refused..... 7
- Don't know 8

13. The income data we are asking about is simply used to group survey respondents. I have a list of income ranges to read and you can stop me when I get to yours....

Under \$25,000, 1
\$25,000 to less than \$50,000,..... 2
\$50,000 to less than \$75,000,..... 3
\$75,000 to less than \$100,000, or 4
\$100,000 or more?..... 5
Refused..... 7
Don't know 8

14. What is your age? _____

Refused..... 7
Don't know 8

15. What else you would like to share about the Reconnecting Youth class your child participated in?

Your gift certificate will be sent by certified mail within the next week or two. This means that the mail carrier will bring it to your door for someone to sign for it so we know that it isn't lost or stolen. INTERVIEWER; IF CERTIFIED MAIL IS A PROBLEM, GIVE R A CHOICE OF HAVING IT SENT ELSEWHERE OR HAVING IT SENT BY REGULAR MAIL AT HIS/HER OWN RISK. THIS MEANS THAT IF THEY DON'T RECEIVE IT, WE WILL NOT REPLACE IT.

Certified..... 1
Regular mail..... 2

What name and address should we send the gift card to?

Name: _____

Address: _____

Thank you again for your time!

Student 30-day checklists (School Achievement, Drug Involvement, and Moods and Experiences)

Your CODE number:

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9

I. School Achievement Checklist

SAMPLE
not for distribution

This set of questions helps us know how you are doing in school and how you are feeling about your experiences at school. Please answer these questions thoughtfully and honestly. Your answers will be kept strictly confidential. No one at school will ever see how you have answered. (There is an answer even if you are not currently in school.)

CORRECT MARK ● INCORRECT MARK ✗

For all your classes, mark the answer which best describes your school experience in the last 30 days.

1. My overall performance (grades, turning in assignments) in my classes has been ...

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 9
Very Poor Average Outstanding not in school

2. The overall atmosphere at school ...

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 9
Very Poor Average Outstanding not in school

3. My overall attitude about school has been ...

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 9
Very Poor Average Outstanding not in school

6. How many classes did you have at the beginning of the semester?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6+ 9 not in school

7. Have you dropped any of these classes?

No Yes not in school
If yes, how many? 1 2 3 4 5 6+

8. Fill in the bubble of the statement that best describes your thinking about school:

- ☐ I am still in school and will stay in school
☐ I still go to school, but am thinking of dropping out
☐ I haven't been going anymore, but will next semester
☐ I have dropped out of school and don't plan to come back

4. For grades on assignments and tests, I'm getting ...

A's and B's B's and C's C's and D's D's Failing not in school

a. in all my classes 1 2 3 4 5 6 9
b. in my favorite class 1 2 3 4 5 6 9
c. in my least favorite class..... 1 2 3 4 5 6 9

5. My attendance has been ...

Rarely attended Attend 1/2 time Rarely Missed not in school

a. in all my classes 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 9
b. in my favorite class 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 9
c. in my least favorite class..... 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 9

III. Drug Involvement Checklist

This set of questions helps keep track of how you are doing with alcohol and drug use. There is an appropriate response for you to choose even if you do not use alcohol and/or drugs. Please answer these questions thoughtfully and honestly. Remember, your answers will be kept strictly confidential. No one at school will ever see your responses to this questionnaire.

A. Which of the following describes your drug use during the last month (30 days)? Mark either TRUE or NOT TRUE after each statement.

MARK either TRUE or NOT TRUE after each statement.

In the past 30 days . . .

- | | True | Not True |
|---|------|----------|
| 1. I never used alcohol and/or drugs | 1 | 0 |
| 2. I was drunk or high so I missed school or work | 1 | 0 |
| 3. I used alcohol and/or drugs on weekends | 1 | 0 |

In the past 30 days . . .

- | | True | Not True |
|--|------|----------|
| 4. I used alcohol and/or drugs in the evenings during the week (Monday through Thursday) | 1 | 0 |
| 5. I used alcohol and/or drugs at (or before) school | 1 | 0 |
| 6. I used alcohol and/or drugs when partying with my friends | 1 | 0 |

B. Indicate how often you used each substance during the last month (30 days). Choose your response using the scale below:

MARK the number on the scale that best describes your experiences.

	Every Day
Almost Every Day	
Several Times/Week	
About Once/Week	
2 or 3 Times	
Once	
Not At All	

During the last month (30 days) I have used . . .

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| 1. Smoking tobacco | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 2. Beer or wine | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 3. Hard liquor (whiskey, gin, vodka, mixed drinks) | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 4. Marijuana (weed, pot, grass) | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 5. Cocaine (coke, crack) | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 6. Opiates (heroin, morphine, codeine) | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 7. Depressants (downers, reds, barbs, etc.) | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 |

	Every Day
Almost Every Day	
Several Times/Week	
About Once/Week	
2 or 3 Times	
Once	
Not At All	

During the last month (30 days) I have used . . .

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| 8. Tranquilizers (Valium, Librium) | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 9. Hallucinogens (angel dust, LSD, PCP, magic mushrooms) | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 10. Inhaled substances (glue, gasoline, paint thinner, spray cans, white-out) | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 11. Stimulants (amphetamines, crystal, speed, etc.) | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 12. Over the counter drugs (Dexatrim or other diet pills, NoDoz, Nyquil) | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 |

III. Moods and Experiences Checklist

Mark the number that best describes your mood, how you felt, or what you experienced in the last 30 days . . . Please answer these questions thoughtfully and honestly. Your answers will be kept strictly confidential.

Always
Usually
Sometimes
Never

*During the last month
(30 days) . . .*

1. When I got really mad, I felt like I might lose control 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
2. I felt lonely 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
3. My parent(s) cared (praised me, "patted me on the back") for my efforts 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
4. I felt that nobody truly cares about me 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
5. I got easily annoyed or irritated 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
6. I got so angry, I shouted and yelled at others 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
7. I felt sad. 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
8. I felt uneasy and/or anxious 0 1 2 3 4 5 6

Always
Usually
Sometimes
Never

*During the last month
(30 days) . . .*

9. I felt depressed 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
10. I took a positive attitude toward myself 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
11. I felt satisfied with my life 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
12. Things at home were so bad I thought about running away. . . 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
13. I felt confident that I could handle my personal problems . . . 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
14. I felt hopeless about my life 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
15. I felt overwhelmed by all the things going on in my life. 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
16. I felt that people dislike me 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
17. I felt capable and in control of my life. 0 1 2 3 4 5 6

SAMPLE
not for distribution

C. Indicate how often the following statements were true for you during the last month (30 days).

MARK the number on the scale that best describes your experiences.

Every Day
Almost Every Day
Several Times/Week
About Once/Week
2 or 3 Times
Once
Not At All

During the last month (30 days) . . .

1. There were problems between my friends and me because of my using substances. 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
2. There were conflicts between my family and me because of my using substances. 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
3. I usually didn't stop with just one or two drinks 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
4. I felt guilty about how much alcohol and/or drugs I used 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
5. Due to my drinking/using I was late for class, missed school, appointments, or work . . 0 1 2 3 4 5 6

MARK the number on the scale that best describes your experiences.

Every Day
Almost Every Day
Several Times/Week
About Once/Week
2 or 3 Times
Once
Not At All

During the last month (30 days) . . .

6. I felt supported by my parents for NOT using alcohol or drugs 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
7. I kept drinking/using even though I'd plenty already. 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
8. I used more than one drug (for example, alcohol and another drug) at the same time 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
9. I felt sick from drinking or "drugging" too much 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
10. I lied to my family or friends because I was using 0 1 2 3 4 5 6

D. How has your alcohol and/or drug use changed in the last month (30 days)? Are you using more or less? Choose the responses that best describe how you are doing. There is a possible answer even if you haven't ever used.

using
much
less

No Different,
using about
the same

using
much
more Never
have
used

-10 -9 -8 -7 -6 -5 -4 -3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 99

SAMPLE
not for distribution