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October 2021
Student Representative

Student Representative Report

Survey Description

I sent out a survey to Barrow High School, Meade River School, Kali School, Nunamiut School, Alak School, and Fred Ipalook Elementary School. My goal with this survey was to hear from students and staff about what they thought in response to the following questions:

- 1) What are some things you like about your school?
- 2) What is something you think needs to be changed in your school? Or, what is your biggest concern about your school?
- 3) What is one issue in your school, or in your community that you think causes mental health problems among students/youth?
- 4) What do you think can be done in order to fix that issue? (Either in your school, community, etc.)

I received about 50 responses, and feel that I have gotten very well-answered and useful responses from both the students and staff from each school.

Survey Responses

1) When asked “What are some things you like about your school?” the majority of responses from staff consisted of statements such as “The best thing about my school are the students, and great staff” and “the way students cooperate with each other” and statements similar to those.

The majority of student responses to this question consisted of statements such as “Free lunch and breakfast that is offered”, “Helpful and understanding teachers, and friendly peers”, “Art and PE classes” and a few student responses voiced that they liked a lot of things about their schools, and didn’t realize how much they liked being in school, until we were on shutdown.

2) When asked “What is something you think needs to be changed in your school? Or, what is your biggest concern about your school?” Much of the students and staff had similar concerns. There were a majority of responses with statements such as being concerned over losing resources (such as computers for all students), reaching students during distance learning, offering more fresh fruits and veggies for meals, implementing “mental health days”, having a trained therapist in schools, and worries regarding students not taking covid procedures seriously in school.

3) When asked “What is one issue in your school, or in your community that you think causes mental health problems among students/youth?” The responses from students consisted of statements saying that they feel mental health problems are caused by substance abuse in the community, students afraid to ask for help with their school work, not enough activities, very little conversation around what students can do after high school years, instability within the school and community due to COVID-19 shutdowns, lack of social interaction when schools are shutdown, lack of establishments or places where youth can hang out when they’re bored and more.

The responses from staff consisted of statements similar to those of students, saying they are concerned about the lack of access to mental health services in their community, closings and lockdowns, stresses students have around how to live after high school, classes not able to accommodate extreme absences, credit recovery being poorly organized, students being unprepared for the change from middle school to high school, lack of opportunities for youth, inability to imagine life beyond high school and more.

4) When asked “What do you think can be done in order to fix that issue? (Either in your school, community, etc.)” Responses from students consisted of statements saying that they think having more extracurricular activities such as theatre and cooking classes, help from adults on what to do after high school, more input from parents and students regarding mental health, getting everyone to take the pandemic seriously, attending school regularly in person, and having yearly mental health checkups in school, and having an additional counselor at schools, will help fix these issues caused by mental health problems.

Responses from staff consisted of statements saying that they think having students take a required life management or skills class that covers emotional health, having skilled counselors who specialize in mental health, having a class that teaches students how to apply for jobs, interviews, parenting etc., education on coping methods, having more mental health professionals in the North Slope, normalizing the conversation around mental health and more housing development in the communities, and more.

Ending statements/concerns

I left room at the end of my survey for students and staff to respond with anything else they’d like to say. Most were statements such as “Thank you for creating this survey” and some reiterated the points they made in the previous questions. A majority had concerns about the low number of teachers. While some voiced how students need to be back in school, and a few students expressed that they did not want their sports to be shut down for too long of a time.