



The Developmental Assets Survey: Young People Talk about Growing Up in Silicon Valley

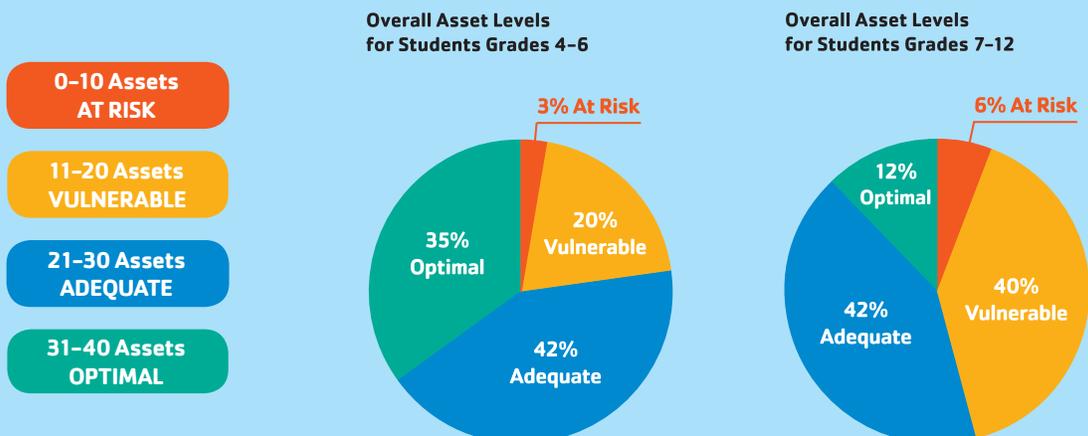
In Fall 2016, YMCA Project Cornerstone facilitated an on-line survey to over 43,000 students in more than 180 schools and 25 districts throughout Santa Clara County. The survey measures 40 developmental assets—the positive values, relationships, and experiences that youth need to thrive. The survey also measures risk behaviors and thriving indicators, and correlates them with the presence or absence of developmental assets. Research proves that the more assets youth possess, the more likely they are to choose healthy activities, succeed in school, and avoid risk behaviors. Conversely, youth with fewer assets are more likely to engage in risk behaviors and are less successful at school.

YMCA Project Cornerstone previously administered the developmental assets survey in 1999, 2004, and 2010. The 1999 report generated community interest to begin our countywide efforts to increase developmental asset levels and resulted in the creation of our School Partnerships Program, which now serves nearly 220 schools, 4,800 adult volunteers, and more than 80,000 students. The 2004 and 2010 reports resulted in additional community partnerships and increased school participation in asset-building programs and services.

We are pleased to release the 2017 Santa Clara County Developmental Assets Research Report to the community. The survey results provide current data about the developmental asset levels, risk behaviors, and thriving indicators of Silicon Valley youth. These help the community understand the ways that we are successful at raising healthy, responsible young people and where we must improve. Because developmental asset levels are directly correlated with academic achievement, school districts and schools are especially interested in better understanding their students' strengths and weaknesses so they can develop strategies to help all of their students succeed.

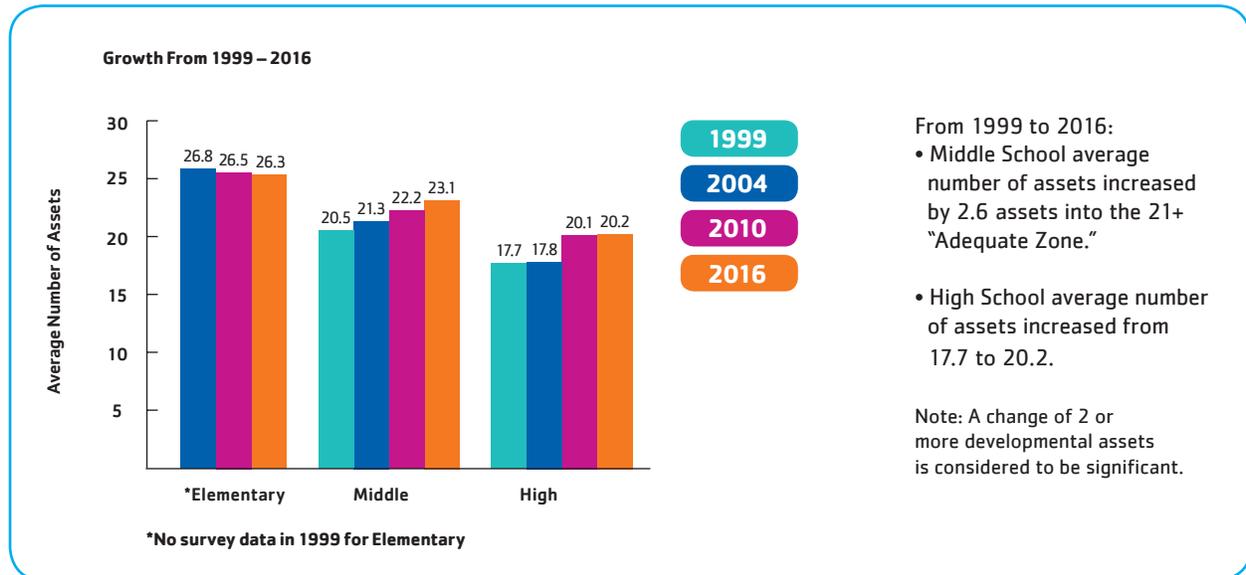
By providing current data about our youth throughout the community, we hope to renew and revitalize Silicon Valley's commitment to developing healthy, caring, and responsible children and youth. For more information about Project Cornerstone or to download an electronic version of the reports, visit: www.projectcornerstone.org.

The 2016 survey results showed the following asset levels for youth in Santa Clara County:



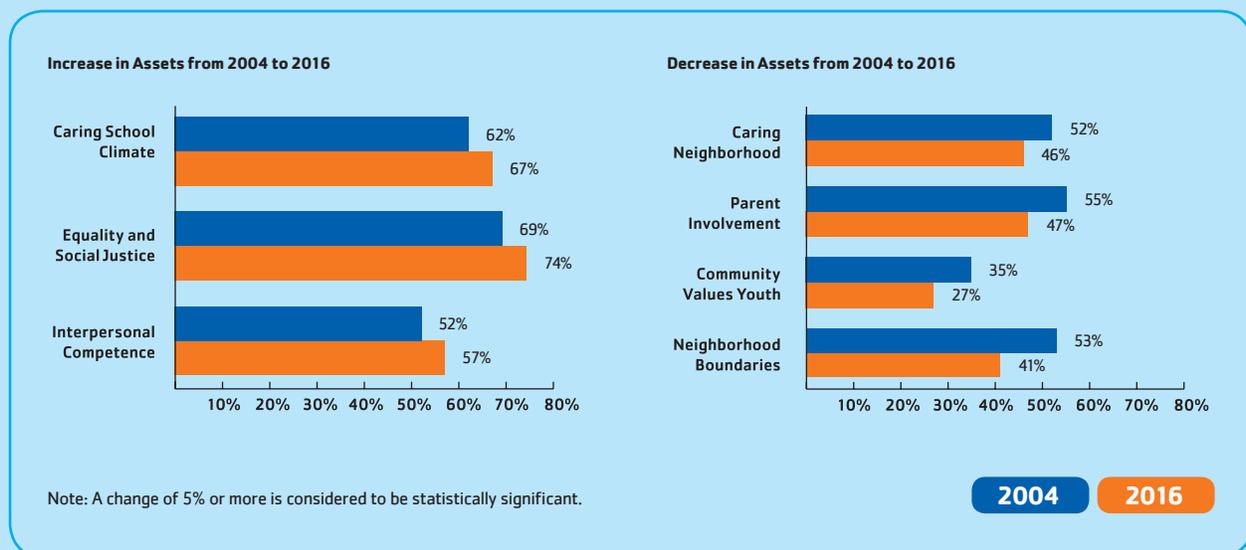
Growth of Youth Assets In Santa Clara County

While elementary school students continue to report more assets than middle and high school students, their average number of assets over the years have maintained while older students' numbers have steadily increased.



Highlights from Elementary School Data

13,120 students in 4th–6th grades took the Me and My World Survey created by the Search Institute in Fall 2016. While elementary school students' average number of assets places them in the adequate level, almost half of them don't have adult role models. Only 28% spend time each day off the screen and interacting with family.

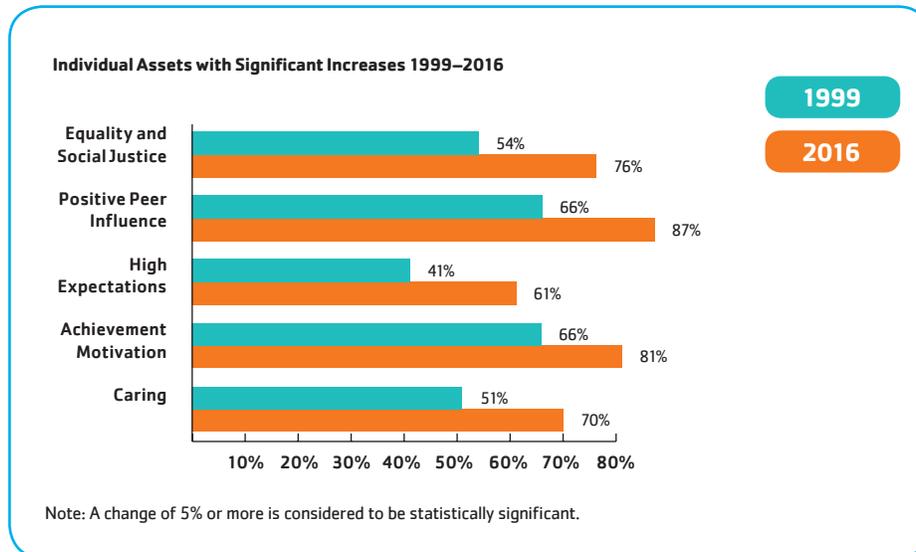


Risk Behaviors

From 2004 to 2016, all the risk behaviors have either stayed the same or decreased. The most significant change was in sadness—decreased from 58% to 40%. However, this is still four out of ten elementary school students.

Highlights from Middle School & High School Data

13,735 middle school students and 18,734 high school students took the Attitudes and Behaviors Survey created by the Search Institute in Fall 2016. From 1999 to 2016, the number of youth with 21 or more assets (Adequate & Thriving zones) increased from 38% to 54%.



While some of the following assets also had significant growth, the numbers are still not high enough.

The 2016 data reveals that:

- Only half of all youth (including elementary school students) feel their school is a caring place.
- Most high school students don't feel valued or appreciated by adults in the community.
- Nearly two-thirds of middle school students don't feel safe at home, school, or in their neighborhoods.
- More than half of middle and high school students don't have adult role models.
- Less than half of all youth are actively engaged in learning. (A decrease from 60% to 41%)
- More than half to nearly two-thirds of middle and high school student don't have a strong sense of personal power or high self-esteem.

Risk Behaviors

All 24 risk behaviors have decreased from 1999 to 2016 with a significant decline in alcohol/tobacco drug use. The numbers for sadness/depression or attempted suicide are slightly lower.

Highlights from LGBTQ Data for Middle and High School

For the first time in Fall 2016, the developmental asset survey administered to middle and high school youth allowed them to identify as transgender and included demographic questions about their sexual orientation. A report was generated including the 2,426 students who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer. This was 7% of the population surveyed.

Some alarming findings:

- LGBTQ youth average only 18 out of 40 assets as compared to 21.4 for all students surveyed.
- They are 3x more likely to attempt suicide.
- They are 1.5x more likely to use drugs and alcohol.
- Only 22% report positive family communication.
- Only 11% feel valued by the community.
- LGBTQ youth are higher in 23 out of 24 Risk Behaviors.
- LGBTQ youth are lower in 6 out of 7 Thriving Indicators.

Next Steps

We need to ask ourselves the following questions:

- What is the story here? What are our youth telling us?
- What questions do the results bring up? Are there any patterns or particular areas of concern? How do these connect to any other areas or issues in Silicon Valley?
- How can we use this information to inform our work as community members to help all youth thrive? What is one small thing we can start with today? What is our call to action?

All participating districts received local reports to help inform their strategies for creating caring and connected schools. (See Final Appendix)