

Naperville Community Unit School District 203

Naperville, Illinois

Social Norms Marketing Study

In August of 2005, parents were asked to complete an important survey included in student registration packets. In response, an impressive 5,526 surveys were completed and returned from households with students attending Naperville Central, Naperville North, Neuqua Valley and Waubonsie Valley high schools. Local parents are to be congratulated for participating at such a statistically significant level - a 48% return!

In Districts 203 and 204, the project based on this Social Norms Marketing model is called "The Power of Choice." The Social Norms marketing campaign is designed to correct misperceptions, support the majority of students who are making healthy choices, reduce underage drinking and tobacco use, and reinforces positive parenting habits.

According to the 11,205 youth surveys analyzed from data gathered in April 2005, parents and students alike should be pleased to learn that most high school students in Districts 203 and 204 ARE making healthy choices regarding tobacco, alcohol and other drug use. Data from these surveys is displayed at schools and around town on posters designed by students, as well as in high school restrooms in the form of "Stall Street Journals."

Data gathered from the parent surveys collected in August 2005 has been released to the project's partners, and will be distributed to the community in the form of brochures and media releases, based on parent recommendations gathered through focus group meetings. A Power of Choice website is also under construction.

The survey questions covered topics relating to the ways that parents supervise their teens, as well as parents' perceptions of how other parents tackle these tasks. Among the subjects covered were family expectations and practices concerning underage alcohol consumption, family methods of reinforcing responsible teen behavior choices when teens go out, and parent-teen communication patterns. Anonymously collected, the data becomes part of a five year Social Norms Marketing Study. Both students and parents are being surveyed over this period. The study is currently in its third year.

Data gathered from these surveys is sent to the University of Illinois Center for Prevention Research and Development, which has been contracted by the Illinois Department of Human Services to do the research study. NCO Youth and Family Services acts as the local project manager, coordinating participation among a large number of groups. These include: Naperville School District 203; Indian Prairie School District 204; Breaking Free, Inc.; the Naperville Police Department; the DuPage County Health Department; Linden Oaks Hospital at Edward; Lisle Township Youth and Family Services; the Heritage YMCA Group; KidsMatter; and District 203 and 204 parents.

The premise of Social Norms marketing is that by providing teens and families with

accurate facts from local surveys, teens and parents will be empowered to make choices based on real data rather than on suppositions or perceptions, which often prove to be inaccurate and can lead to poor decision-making. Local data will be analyzed as the study progresses to look for changes in perceptions and behaviors.

The research project is the first in the nation to study the effectiveness of Social Norms marketing at the high school level utilizing control groups. Districts 203 and 204 have been matched with up to two other "control" school communities, which also are being surveyed as part of the study. The "control" schools will continue to provide the drug prevention programs they have in place but will do no social norms marketing. At the completion of the study our local data will be analyzed in relation to that of the control groups.

Researchers at the University of Illinois hope to determine if providing accurate information through Social Norms marketing positively impacts parent and teen perceptions, behavior and healthy decision making. Notably, according to the local data, 67% of high school students choose not to drink because they don't want to disappoint their parents.

So parents, take heart, and continue to talk with your teens. Your teen's "Power of Choice" is truly influenced by your voice.

To access the Power of Choice parent brochure, [click here](#).