

BRIEFING POINTS

Highlights of the *Community Alcohol Readiness Study: 2006 Student Survey Results, February 2008*

STUDY DESIGN AND PURPOSE

- The Community Alcohol Readiness (CAR) study is designed to examine attitudes and perceptions of students regarding alcohol use, provide objective data to help explore strategies to combat underage drinking, and help decision makers evaluate strategies that have been implemented. The 2006 survey of Fargo students is a follow-up to a 2001 baseline study of students in the Fargo/Moorhead Metropolitan Area. The results of a similar survey of adults in households in Fargo are presented in a separate, companion report, *Community Alcohol Readiness Study: 2006 Adult Survey Results*. For detailed results of both studies, see www.ndsu.edu/sdc/publications.htm.
- A total of 12 classes from six Fargo schools were surveyed, with a total of 278 students who completed the survey. A stratified cluster sample of students in grades 7 through 12 in the Fargo Public School District was used for the 2006 survey, producing results with an error rate below 5% and a 95% confidence level.
- References to significant differences are included when significance was found between characteristics. Characteristics tested for significant differences include year of survey, use of alcohol, gender, and age. Throughout the briefing points and the report, regarding references to age, the term “younger” represents students younger than 15 years old and the term “older” represents students 15-18 years old. Regarding references to use of alcohol, the term “user” represents students who have ever used alcohol and the term “non-user” represents students who have never used alcohol.

KEY FINDINGS OF STUDENTS

Alcohol Use as a Problem

- Students were asked their perceptions regarding how problematic teenage and adult alcohol use are in the community.
 - 54% of students see *teenage alcohol use* as, at least, a moderate problem. Females and older students see it as more of a problem than males and younger students do.
 - 62% of students see *adult alcohol use* as a minor problem, at worst. However, larger proportions of alcohol non-users and females see it as, at least, a minor problem than users and males do.
 - Overall, students see *teenage alcohol use* as somewhat more problematic than *adult alcohol use* in the community.
- Students were asked how much they agree or disagree that kids who experiment with alcohol almost always grow out of it (on a 5-point scale with 1 being “strongly disagree” and 5 being “strongly agree”).
 - On average, students disagree that kids who experiment with alcohol almost always grow out of it (mean=2.10). Alcohol non-users, females, and younger students disagree more than users, males, and older students do.
- Students were asked how often they see someone drunk in public in their community.
 - 55% of students never/rarely see someone drunk in public in the community. Alcohol users and older students see someone drunk in public more than non-users and younger students do.
- Students were asked the extent to which alcohol use contributes to crashes/injuries (automobile, hunting, boating, snowmobiling) and violent crimes in their community (on a 5-point scale with 1 being “contributes not at all” and 5 being “contributes a great deal”).
 - 46% of students think that alcohol contributes quite a bit/a great deal to *crashes/injuries*.
 - 25% of students think that alcohol contributes quite a bit/a great deal to *violent crimes*.
 - Overall, on average, students think alcohol contributes a bit more to *crashes/injuries* than to *violent crimes* in the community (mean=3.35 and mean=2.79, respectively)

Appropriateness of Actions

- Students were asked if they think it is okay for parents to offer their teenagers alcoholic beverages in their home.
 - 47% of students think it is okay for parents to offer their teenagers alcoholic beverages in their home, but only on special occasions. Much larger proportions of alcohol users and older students than non-users and younger students think it is okay. However, acceptance of this has decreased since 2001.
- Students were asked to rate two different parents' actions (on a 5-point scale with 1 being "not at all acceptable" and 5 being "very acceptable"):
 - 37% of students think that *parents offering their teenager an alcoholic beverage to drink with them saying they prefer he or she drink with them rather than drink elsewhere* is not at all acceptable. Much larger proportions of alcohol non-users and younger students than users and older students think it is not at all acceptable.
 - 58% of students think that *parents telling their teenager to use alcohol carefully and not let it interfere with schoolwork after finding out he or she had been drinking alcohol* is not at all acceptable. Much larger proportions of alcohol non-users and younger students than users and older students think this action is not at all acceptable. Acceptance of this action has decreased slightly since 2001.
 - While still indicating overall disapproval, on average, students are more accepting of *parents offering their teenager alcohol saying they prefer he or she drink with them rather than elsewhere* (mean=2.33) than of *parents telling their teenager to use alcohol carefully and not let it interfere with schoolwork after finding out he or she had been drinking alcohol* (mean=1.77).
- Students were asked how much they agree or disagree with two statements regarding teenagers' actions (on a 5-point scale with 1 being "strongly disagree" and 5 being "strongly agree"):
 - 64% of students disagree that *teenagers should be able to drink as long as they do not drive afterwards*. Alcohol non-users and younger students disagree more with this statement than do users and older students. Agreement with this statement has decreased since 2001.
 - 62% of students disagree that *it is okay for teenagers to drink at parties if they do not get drunk*. Alcohol non-users and younger students disagree more with this statement than do users and older students. Agreement with this statement has decreased since 2001.
 - While indicating overall disagreement, on average, students disagree slightly more with the statement that *it is okay for teenagers to drink at parties if they do not get drunk* (mean=2.21) than with the statement that *teenagers should be able to drink as long as they do not drive afterwards* (mean=2.27).

Alcohol Use, Access, and Consequences

- Students were asked if they have ever used alcohol.
 - 47% of students have ever used alcohol. A much larger proportion of older students than younger students are alcohol users. The proportion of alcohol users decreased between 2001 and 2006 (from 63% to 47%). The decline in the proportion of alcohol users is most notable among younger students, where the proportion of students who have used alcohol was cut in half between 2001 and 2006 (from 53% to 27%). The proportion of alcohol users among older students who have used alcohol has declined between 2001 and 2006 as well (from 69% to 57%).
- Students were asked how often over a two week period of time they think the typical teenager in their community has five or more drinks in a row (a "drink" is defined as a glass of wine, a bottle of beer, or a mixed drink).
 - 64% of students think that the typical teenager in the community binge drinks at least twice in a two week period. Much larger proportions of alcohol users and older students than non-users and younger students think the typical teenager binge drinks at least twice in a two week period.
- Students were asked how difficult it is for teenagers in their community to obtain alcohol in the following ways (on a 5-point scale with 1 being "not at all difficult" and 5 being "very difficult"):
 - 75% of students think that it is not at all/a little difficult for teenagers in the community to *sneak alcohol from their home or a friend's home*. Larger proportions of alcohol users and older students than non-users and younger students think it is not difficult.
 - 56% of students think that it is not at all/a little difficult for teenagers in the community to *get an older person to buy alcohol for them*. Larger proportions of alcohol users and older students than non-users and younger students think it is not difficult.
 - 58% of students think that it is quite/very difficult for teenagers in the community to *get their parents to give alcohol to them*.
 - 66% of students think that it is quite/very difficult for teenagers in the community to *buy beer, wine, or hard liquor at a store themselves*.

- 78% of students think that it is quite/very difficult for teenagers in the community to *order a drink in a bar*.
- Overall, students perceive that it is more difficult for teenagers to obtain alcohol directly (e.g., ordering a drink at a bar) than indirectly (e.g., sneaking alcohol from their home). On average, students think that *sneaking alcohol from their home or a friend's home* is the easiest way to obtain alcohol (mean=2.04), followed by *getting an older person to buy alcohol for them* (mean=2.38), *getting their parents to give them alcohol* (mean=3.62), *buying alcohol at a store* (mean=3.77), and *ordering a drink in a bar* (mean=4.06).
- Students were asked how strongly they would oppose or favor penalizing liquor stores or businesses caught selling alcohol to teenagers; penalizing adults, 21 or older, who provide alcohol to teenagers; and penalizing teenagers caught using alcohol (on a 5-point scale with 1 being “strongly oppose” and 5 being “strongly favor”).
 - 73% of students favor *penalizing liquor stores/businesses caught selling alcohol to teenagers*. Alcohol non-users are more in favor of this penalty than users. Support for this penalty has increased since 2001.
 - 69% of students favor *penalizing adults, 21 or older, who provide alcohol to teenagers*. Alcohol non-users are more in favor of this penalty than users.
 - 62% of students favor *penalizing teenagers caught using alcohol*. Alcohol non-users are more in favor of this penalty than users. Support for this penalty has increased since 2001.
 - On average, students are more in favor of *penalizing liquor stores/businesses caught selling alcohol to teenagers* (mean=4.06) than *penalizing adults who provide alcohol to teenagers* (mean=3.83) and *penalizing teenagers caught using alcohol* (mean=3.70).

Community Readiness

- Students were asked how strongly they would oppose or favor having cops spend more time enforcing the minimum drinking age (on a 5-point scale with 1 being “strongly oppose” and 5 being “strongly favor”).
 - On average, students somewhat favor having cops spend more time enforcing the minimum drinking age (mean=3.31). Alcohol non-users and younger students are more in favor of having cops spend more time enforcing the minimum drinking age than users and older students are, and students in 2006 are more in favor than students in 2001 were.
- Students were asked how much they agree or disagree that schools need to be more active in dealing with alcohol problems (on a 5-point scale with 1 being “strongly disagree” and 5 being “strongly agree”).
 - On average, students agree that schools need to be more active in dealing with alcohol problems (mean=3.25). Alcohol non-users agree more than users, and students in 2006 agree more than students in 2001 did.
- Students were asked how much they agree or disagree that public service announcements are a good way to change attitudes about alcohol use (on a 5-point scale with 1 being “strongly disagree” and 5 being “strongly agree”).
 - On average, students responded neutrally regarding whether public service announcements are a good way to change attitudes about alcohol use (mean=3.07). Alcohol non-users, females, and younger students agree more than users, males, and older students do.
- Students were asked how much they agree or disagree with three statements about alcohol use prevention (on a 5-point scale with 1 being “strongly disagree” and 5 being “strongly agree”):
 - 52% of students agree that *alcohol prevention programs are a good idea because they save lives and money*. Alcohol non-users, females, and younger students agree more than users, males, and older students do.
 - 51% of students agree that *it is possible to reduce alcohol problems through prevention*. Alcohol non-users and younger students agree more than users and older students do.
 - 48% of students agree that *the community has a responsibility to set up alcohol prevention programs*. Alcohol non-users agree more than users do.
 - On average, students agree but nearly equally with each of the three statements: *alcohol prevention programs are a good idea because they save lives and money* (mean=3.45), *it is possible to reduce alcohol problems through prevention* (mean=3.43), and *the community has the responsibility to set up alcohol prevention programs* (mean=3.42).

Demographics

- Students surveyed are in grades 7 through 12. 67% of students who participated in the study are 15-18 years old and 32% are younger than 15 years old.
- The gender distribution of students is 55% males and 45% females.