Sedomocha Middle School (ME)

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RURAL YOUTH FUTURES: SEDOMOCHA MIDDLE SCHOOL
SURVEY RESULTS • SUMMER 2020

As rural communities face changes in local economies, populations, and workforce needs, what does the next generation of residents and workers value and want? That question was the motivation for the Rural Youth Futures project. Researchers and extension agents from several universities joined forces with local non-profits to find out what middle and high schoolers think in two forest-dependent regions: Piscataquis/Northern Somerset County in Maine and Coos County in Oregon. This is one in a series of fact sheets designed to present summary information to each participating school and county about the perceptions and aspirations of local youth.

APPROACH

With permission from the school principal, students in grades 6–8 in SeDoMoCha Middle School were given a link to an anonymous, electronic survey in February 2019. Participation was voluntary. SeDoMoCha Middle School had 242 students during 2018-2019, 199 of which took the survey for a participation rate of 82%. Every question was optional, so the number of responses varies by question; middle schoolers had fewer questions to answer. Fact sheets for all schools and each county are available online at: http://ewp.uoregon.edu/RuralYouth.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Describe the family structure you live with:

- 2-parent, biological parents (50%)
- 2-parent, step family (15%)
- Single parent, mom (7%)
- Live with grandparents (3%)
- Couch surf or other (21%)

What level of education did your parents or guardians, whom you live with, complete?

Mom, dad, or guardian:

- Did not finish high school (6%)
- Went to school, don't know how far (18%)
- Graduated from college or more (39%)
- Don't know or NA (8%)

Second mom, dad, or guardian:

- Single mom (15%)
- Single dad (14%)
- Step family (23%)
- Don't know or NA (9%)

Do your parents or guardians work for pay?

Mom, dad, or guardian:

- Yes, one full-time job (65%)
- Yes, part-time job (11%)
- Does not have a job (8%)
- Retired (3%)
- Don't know or NA (1%)

Second mom, dad, guardian:

- Yes, one full-time job (65%)
- Yes, part-time job (11%)
- Does not have a job (6%)
- Retired (5%)
- Don't know or NA (34%)
Schools in rural communities are critical. They bring families together, support civic interaction, and foster workforce development. Schools also influence youth aspirations for future education. To learn more about these things in Piscataquis and Northern Somerset County schools, we asked students to tell us about their school experience and future goals, what they felt were barriers to those goals, and the extracurricular activities they participated in.

**TOP 5 BARRIERS**

- **It costs too much (27%)**
- **I'm not smart enough (18%)**
- **I don't have good enough grades (17%)**
- **I'd need to move away to go to school (14%)**
- **I need to work after school (14%)**

**TOP 5 ACTIVITIES**

- **Sports team (60%)**
- **Band or orchestra (41%)**
- **After-school or summer program (28%)**
- **Attend community events (21%)**
- **Other school clubs (science/math, computer, debate, foreign language, etc.) (21%)**

On average, how many hours per week do you spend participating in all the above activities combined?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 hours</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 hours</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 hours</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6 hours</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-9 hours</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 or more</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Increasing the number of young people and working families is a critical issue in many rural towns. Natural amenities and attachment to community can retain young people or attract in-migration. We asked students to tell us about their community to better understand what the community has to offer. We also asked them where they want to live in the future to see if there’s an interest in living in these places among young people.

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your community:

- **This is a good place to grow up:**
  - Agree: 79%
  - Neither agree nor disagree: 14%
  - Disagree: 5%
  - Don’t know: 2%

- **I care about my community:**
  - Agree: 81%
  - Neither agree nor disagree: 12%
  - Disagree: 5%
  - Don’t know: 2%

- **I feel like I am part of my community:**
  - Agree: 63%
  - Neither agree nor disagree: 21%
  - Disagree: 12%
  - Don’t know: 4%

Where do you want to live and expect to live when you are 30 years old?

- **Want**
  - Same or nearby town as now: 34%
  - Other rural area in Maine: 9%
  - A city in Maine: 17%
  - Rural area in another state: 15%
  - City in another state: 26%
  - Another country: 8%

- **Expect**
  - Same or nearby town as now: 20%
  - Other rural area in Maine: 9%
  - A city in Maine: 38%
  - Rural area in another state: 15%
  - City in another state: 26%
  - Another country: 7%

What would you like to see more of in your community?

**TOP 5 WISHES**

- More indoor recreation (hockey rinks, gyms) (63%)
- More restaurants (62%)
- More shops and retail stores (60%)
- More outdoor recreation (49%)
- More medical care and hospitals (39%)

Do you think the following are important problems facing your community?

- Not enough things to do in town: SeDoMoCha Middle School “yes” responses = 42%, All Piscataquis & N. Somerset County “yes” responses = 55%
- Lack of public transportation: SeDoMoCha Middle School “yes” responses = 41%, All Piscataquis & N. Somerset County “yes” responses = 47%
- People not having enough money: SeDoMoCha Middle School “yes” responses = 38%, All Piscataquis & N. Somerset County “yes” responses = 55%
- Not enough jobs: SeDoMoCha Middle School “yes” responses = 37%, All Piscataquis & N. Somerset County “yes” responses = 50%
- Drug or alcohol abuse: SeDoMoCha Middle School “yes” responses = 92%, All Piscataquis & N. Somerset County “yes” responses = 45%
- Not enough outdoor activities: SeDoMoCha Middle School “yes” responses = 30%, All Piscataquis & N. Somerset County “yes” responses = 29%
- People moving away: SeDoMoCha Middle School “yes” responses = 22%, All Piscataquis & N. Somerset County “yes” responses = 42%
- Not enough healthcare or doctors: SeDoMoCha Middle School “yes” responses = 22%, All Piscataquis & N. Somerset County “yes” responses = 33%
- Not enough affordable or good housing: SeDoMoCha Middle School “yes” responses = 20%, All Piscataquis & N. Somerset County “yes” responses = 30%
- Crime: SeDoMoCha Middle School “yes” responses = 16%, All Piscataquis & N. Somerset County “yes” responses = 17%
- Poor school quality: SeDoMoCha Middle School “yes” responses = 16%, All Piscataquis & N. Somerset County “yes” responses = 32%
- Homelessness: SeDoMoCha Middle School “yes” responses = 14%, All Piscataquis & N. Somerset County “yes” responses = 16%
YOUTH PROGRAMMING

Youth today are the community’s future labor force. How prepared they feel, and how willing they are to work in local industries, influences their success in the workforce. We asked students to tell us about their career plans, including what barriers they may face and what training support they need. Because the outdoors is so important to our community, we also asked them about outdoor recreation activities that they participated in.

What would be your dream job when you are 30?

For this question, students could type in any answer to the question of what their dream job would be. We wanted to get a sense of their ideal career aspirations. All responses were entered into a program that generated this word cloud, where the larger and darker an entry is, the more times it was mentioned by students. Some students didn’t name a particular job, but described in general what they hoped they’d be doing.

Would you want to work in one of the following industries in this county?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What sort of help would you like preparing for a job?

Percentage of students who agree or strongly agree with statements about their attachment to the outdoors (top two):

- 77% of students said they can be themselves in the outdoors here
- 57% of students said they feel safe in the outdoors here