

**2014-15 York County Youth Commission (YCYC)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Quarterly Report to the Board of Supervisors  
Dec. 16, 2014**

*Connor Pittman, Vice Chairman*

**(Title Slide-1)** Good evening Chairman Wiggins, members of the Board, Mr. Carter and my fellow citizens, especially the youth of York County. I am sorry that our Chairman Kristyn Gatling could not present tonight due to a very bad cold. But I will do my best to give you the Youth Commission's second update of the year since we last reported to you.

**(Slide 2: Survey Title)** In our October report we shared our goal of continuing the high school mini surveys that the Commission began co-sponsoring with the respective National Honor Societies in the high school cafeterias during lunch. These short, 4-question surveys on half-sheets of paper include both county and school related items. Unlike larger and very costly surveys administered in the classrooms years ago, these mini surveys are inexpensive, provide quick results and do not interfere with any classroom instructional time.

**(Slide 3: Dec. 2014 Survey Form)** The first challenge is designing the survey questions and their respective response options. The commission's Student Relations Committee met several times to arrive at the questions for our 1<sup>st</sup> Semester survey and the entire commission discussed them and gave input as well. We also received very helpful follow-up suggestions from the high school principals for the first two questions.

**(Slide 4: 2011-14 Sample Size)** In addition to survey design, we were also concerned with the survey's effective administration in the lunch blocks. Our goal at each school is to offer the opportunity to take the survey to *as many* students as possible during their lunch. Many are just not interested or don't feel they have the time during lunch to take the survey. Aside from wanting to give **all** students the opportunity to be heard, we also want to achieve as high a participation number in the survey to increase the reliability of the results. Years ago, local survey experts advised the Youth Commission that since the survey was not randomly administered, for reliability's sake the goal should always be to achieve a minimum participation rate of at least 15-18% of the students. As this slide shows, the 9 cafeteria mini surveys

conducted prior to this school year had an average participation rate of 30% of the high school student population in the county's public high schools.

**(Slide 5: 2014-15 CMS-1 Sample)** We are pleased with the sample size of our first cafeteria mini survey of the year, which was administered in each high school during the three lunch blocks on December the 8<sup>th</sup>. This survey was taken by more than 1,800 students across the county or roughly 44% of the student population. That is the Youth Commission's second largest sample size on a mini survey to date. We hope we can improve on this even more for our 2<sup>nd</sup> semester survey in the spring.

**(Slide 6: Principals & NHS Sponsors)** With only 15 members, the Youth Commission is not large enough to simultaneously administer a survey effectively in each high school during every lunch block. But as mentioned earlier, we are very fortunate to partner in this with the respective National Honor Societies at each school. We want to acknowledge and thank the respective principals, NHS students and faculty sponsors for their tremendous assistance and support. We know that the high sample size for this survey is a direct result of their help in this partnership, and we are very grateful for all their work!

**(Slide 7: Question #1)** Our first two questions were school related items that had to do with school subject areas. This one asked students to identify the subject area in which they felt they needed the most extra help outside of school. **(Slide 8: Question #2)** The second question asked students to rate how prepared they felt in four subject areas when taking a test, exam or SOL test. One possible benefit that may come from these questions is to help the schools in their advertising for and/or placing of volunteer tutors. For the past two years, the Youth Commission has been invited to present before the School Board at one of its meetings, and we believe that is being planned again this year. As a result, we will report these particular results at that time.

**(Title Slide 9: Bullying)** I would now like to focus on the survey's final two questions, which dealt with the issue of bullying. This has been a major concern of the Youth Commission's since last December's survey about this topic. So, before presenting this year's questions and results, I want to begin by reviewing the results from last December for the benefit of anyone watching who might be interested in this issue, as we on the Youth Commission hope all citizens will be.

**(Slide 10: Bullying Question #1, Dec. 2013)** Last December's cafeteria mini survey asked students about their personal experience with bullying in this way: **“What type of bullying do you experience most living here?”** The response options included Cyberbullying, Verbal Harassment and Physical abuse which were all further described. A student could also indicate that they did not personally experience any bullying living here. Perhaps the most important finding of the survey was item “d” at the bottom. Some 58% of the students reported that they had not experienced any bullying living here. That is certainly encouraging news. But, unfortunately, it also means that 42% of the high school students surveyed had experienced some type of bullying. Most of them indicated it was some form of verbal abuse or cyberbullying. A comparatively small 5% of students for item “c” indicated they had experienced physical abuse, aggression and/or intimidation. But that represented about 95 total students among those surveyed, or an estimated 200 or so high school students throughout the County's public high schools.

**(Slide 11: Bullying Question #2, Dec. 2013)** The final question on last December's survey asked students, **“How widespread is the problem of bullying in our community?”** Combining the bottom two responses first, 63% of the students surveyed said that it was not that bad of a problem or it was no problem at all. On the other hand, adding together the top two response choices for this question, a total of 37% of the students indicated that bullying was at least a fairly bad problem if not a serious one. So, having learned about last December's results and being encouraged by last year's commission to continue follow-up about this important community and school issue, this year's Youth Commission addressed it in our first mini survey of the year.

**(Slide 12: Bullying Definition)** First, the term “bullying” was defined on the survey similar to what was done last year. The intent was to be sure all survey participants knew at least some of the breadth and depth of what was meant by the survey's use of the word “bullying.” Expanding slightly on last year's Wikipedia definition to illustrate various examples of bullying, this was what was written on the surveys above the last two questions: **“‘Bullying’ can take place in different ways, but always tries to hurt or dominate another. It is often repeated. It can include: cyberbullying (thru social media), verbal harassment (aggressive put downs, threats, sexual comments), or physical abuse, aggression and intimidation.”**

**(Slide 13: Tallying Results)** Please keep in mind that the surveys were taken in the schools last Monday and all raw score tallies not completed by the Youth Commission until just a week ago. Percentages were then compiled late last week and we will not have another Commission meeting until January. So, any brief comments I make on the results are my own initial impressions after looking at the data. But the entire Commission will be discussing these results at length at our January meeting. Our intent is to follow-up these results with some type of meaningful initiative of our own and/or recommendations for the Board of Supervisors or schools to consider. We will report on all of that during our next report to you in March.

**(Slide 14: Question #3, this Year's Survey)** So, looking at last week's first question about bullying, which was survey question #3 shown here, students were asked, "What would you normally do if you witnessed or experienced bullying? (Read all choices first; then circle *as many* as you would *normally* do):"

These results show the incidence for the various responses mentioned by students taking the survey. In other words, of all the responses tallied for this potentially multi-answered question, the highest response percentage at 36% was item "a" and so forth.

First of all, I am concerned that for item "d," 23% or almost a quarter of the total responses recorded indicated that they would probably ignore the problem if they saw it. And I imagine most parents would be very concerned that only 14% of all responses included informing them. Even combining items "b" and "c" together means that only 41% of the total responses included telling a parent OR a school staff member if the incident took place in the school. Needless to say, I think we'll have a lot to discuss and plan at our meeting next month to try to do our best in making a positive difference with this issue.

**(Slide 15: Question #4, this Year's Survey)** Finally, Question 4 asked students, "How well does administration handle bullying in the school? (Circle one)" Clearly all bullying does not take place in our schools. In fact, with social media it can unfortunately be 24/7 for some. It is much more than a 5 day a week, 180 day a year school problem. But this particular question does focus on the perceived handling of bullying issues in the schools by the respective school administrations. Though a school-related question, since it concerns bullying, we wanted to at least show you the results tonight.

When combining the first two items, 52% of students feel school administration is handling bullying at least okay if not very well. And, item “d” shows over a fifth of the students having no opinion about this particular question. Item “c” shows just over a fourth of the students perceiving a real need for improvement. We’ll be formally reporting these results to the School Board too when that meeting is scheduled.

**(Slide 16: OYA Title)** Before closing, I would also like to mention that it’s time to nominate deserving high school students living in the county for one of the 2015 Outstanding Youth Award Scholarships. These are sponsored each year by the Board of Supervisors and the Youth Commission. They recognize exceptional character and achievement in four different categories: Community Service, Compassion, Courage and Overall Achievement. Family members, friends, teachers, coaches, club sponsors, counselors and youth workers can nominate someone they respect for one of these awards. Nominations must be received at Parks, Recreation and Tourism by February 11th. One recipient will be named for each category. Each of the four recipients will receive a \$500 educational scholarship once they graduate from high school and enroll in either a college or trade school. A dinner reception for the recipients, their families and nominators will be held in May. Afterwards, recipients will be recognized at a Board of Supervisors meeting. ALL nominees will receive a letter and certificate from the Board congratulating them on their nomination and informing them of their nominator.

**(Slide 17: Applications Title)** We also want to encourage any current 8<sup>th</sup> thru 11<sup>th</sup> grade students living in the county to consider applying for next year’s Youth Commission. Those applications are due at Parks, Recreation and Tourism by no later than March 4.

**(Title Slide-18)** Finally, anyone interested in either of the items I just mentioned can find the details and forms they need online at the York County Youth Commission’s website at [www.ycyc.info](http://www.ycyc.info). If anyone has a question, please call the Parks, Recreation and Tourism office at 890-3500.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, on behalf of my colleagues on the Youth Commission, we would like to again thank you and the Board for this opportunity to report to you and our fellow students tonight.