

November 8, 2011

**IMPORTANT Information about an upcoming survey**

Dear Parents of Students in Grades 7 through 12,

The Darien Public Schools has had a long and positive relationship with the Thriving Youth Task Force, an organization available both to the school community and the wider community in providing programs and services aimed at addressing at-risk behaviors of youth.

In the fall of 2008, approximately 1,800 Darien Public School students from grades 7 through 12 took a survey created by the Search Institute, a non-profit organization devoted to improving the lives of youth and the communities in which they live. The results were shared with constituencies throughout the community. In the past three years efforts have been made to work toward increasing the assets of our youth with the hope of providing our young people with the resources needed to make healthy and informed decisions. Among the desired results is that students avoid at-risk behaviors.

The Darien Board of Education has approved a re-administration of the survey which is scheduled to occur on November 17, 2011 at Darien High School and November 22, 2011 at Middlesex Middle School. *The Survey of Student Resources and Assets* has been utilized by a number of Southern Fairfield County Communities and looks globally at adolescent experiences, including many positive experiences. This survey will also be supplemented with additional questions on the topic of alcohol and drug use.

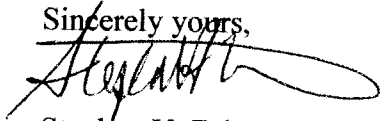
The Darien Public Schools and the Thriving Youth Task Force intend to administer the survey during a single class period (in homeroom or social studies classes) for grades 7 through 12 at the middle school and high school. The survey questions are completed anonymously, placed into a sealed envelope, and no one in our schools will review them. We will receive back a report of findings organized by grade, by gender, and for the entire school district. No individual student data is reported back to us.

Please give serious consideration for your child to participate in this study, as it will provide Darien with important information on the developmental needs of our youth. A complete copy of the exact survey is available for your viewing by contacting our district office. Ideally, to obtain the most credible data, it will be important to have all students participate in grades 7 through 12.

If you do not want your child to participate, you **must** return the form at the bottom of this letter to Mr. Dan Haron (Darien High School Principal) or Dr. Debi Boccanfuso (Middlesex Middle School Principal) by **November 16, 2011**. If no form is received, your child will be asked to participate in completing the survey when it is scheduled for his or her school. We anticipate the survey results will be available in March, 2012.

If you have questions about the logistics of the administration of the survey, please call Mr. Haron at 655-3981 or Dr. Boccanfuso at 655-2518. If you have questions about the content of the survey, please contact Martha Rhein, Thriving Youth Coordinator at The Community Fund of Darien, 203-655-8775.

Sincerely yours,



Stephen V. Falcone  
Superintendent of Schools

SVF:nv

If you do not want your child to participate in the survey, please fill out and return the following non-consent form to the school principal of your child's grade level.

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Please withdraw my child from participation in the *Survey of Student Resources and Assets* that is being co-administered by the Darien Public Schools and the Thriving Youth Task Force in November, 2011.

Child's Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Grade Level \_\_\_\_\_