

TRACKING THE TRENDS:

Future Directions for Human Services in Edmonton and the Surrounding Region



Artwork by Susan Bischof

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Community Trends Working Group

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Alberta Health – Mental Health Services Branch

Alberta Justice

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Edmonton Catholic Schools

Edmonton Community and Family Services

Edmonton Interagency Youth Services Association

Edmonton Public Schools

Edmonton Social Planning Council

United Way of the Alberta Capital Region

Youth Employment Services Centre

Tracking the Trends: Future Directions for Human Services in Edmonton

Other editions:

1989 – Youth and Seniors

1990 – Special Feature on Families with Children

1991 – Immigrants

1993 – Aboriginal People

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PREFACE

Tracking the Trends: Future Directions for Human Services in Edmonton and Surrounding Communities is the product of the hard work and shared concerns of some major funders and providers of human services in the Edmonton area. The impetus for this study is the conviction that it is crucial for government departments and community agencies to monitor the significant trends likely to influence the need for human services in the coming decade, so that ultimately the community can be better served.

This is the fifth edition of *Tracking the Trends*, which we hope will be as widely distributed and as useful as the first four editions. We are particularly pleased that this collective community effort has proven to be so beneficial. While *Tracking the Trends* cannot be expected to provide immediate answers, it is a useful aid in the ongoing planning and development of programs and policy initiatives.

The fifth edition of *Tracking the Trends* differs from past issues in that we have included input not only from Edmonton but from the surrounding communities. For the first time we also have the opportunity to make comparisons with material from past editions. Five years ago, the first edition of *Tracking the Trends* focused on youth and seniors. The current edition will include a

comparison with the trends and implications facing youth at that time.

We would like to thank all the young people who provided input into this publication.

We are grateful to the staff of both school systems, alternative school programs, and the agencies which allowed us to distribute questionnaires and hold focus groups. They were most accommodating. Once again, community members have played a valuable role in providing their insight and experience through a series of focus group meetings arranged by our Working Group.

We are grateful to the people whose expertise is reflected in the special section on trends and service implications for youth. In particular, we would like to express our gratitude to Pat Bronsch and David Wollman of Alberta Health – Mental Health Services Branch, who developed the questionnaire used in this edition, and to Dr. Dwight Harley, of Edmonton Catholic Schools, for completing significance testing on the closed response questions and his generosity in assisting us in the interpretation of these results. We look forward to maintaining this excellent example of community participation as we continue to gain a better understanding of the important trends that will influence the development of human services in Edmonton and its surrounding communities.

Sponsoring Agencies

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Art Work

An art competition was held for the cover of this edition of *Tracking The Trends*. The theme of the contest was *Youth Depicting Youth in Their World*. A prize of \$250 was awarded to the youth whose submission was judged by the selection committee to be most representative of the contest theme.

The selection committee was very impressed with the artistic ability and individual effort evident in all of the artwork received. Due to the large number of quality submissions, the task of selecting artwork for the cover of this edition was very difficult. Therefore, with the artists' consent, in addition to the cover art several submissions were selected to appear on the inside of the publication.

The cover art work was done by:

Maril Staples
17 years old
Victoria School

The interior art work was done by:

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17 years old
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Pamela King
17 years old
M.E. LaZerte School

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INTRODUCTION

WHY TRACK THE TRENDS?

To those who provide programs and services in Edmonton and the surrounding communities, it is important to have timely information on major social and economic trends in Edmonton. This information not only helps us gain a better understanding of present social conditions and how they may have changed over time, but also helps us anticipate future changes. While there is no lack of relevant information, the challenge has been to select that which is most germane and then integrate it in a meaningful way.

Tracking the Trends looks at the major social and economic trends likely to influence human programs and services in the Edmonton area – now and in the future. This edition has a special focus on the trends and implications affecting youth.

HOW WAS IT DONE?

The Community Trends Working Group which prepared this fifth edition of *Tracking the Trends* included representatives from: Alberta Family and Social Services, Alberta Health – Mental Health Services Branch, Alberta Justice, Edmonton Board of Health, Edmonton Catholic Schools, Edmonton Community and Family Services, Edmonton Interagency Youth Services Association, Edmonton Public Schools, Edmonton Social Planning Council, United Way of Alberta Capital Region and Area and the Youth Employment Services Centre.

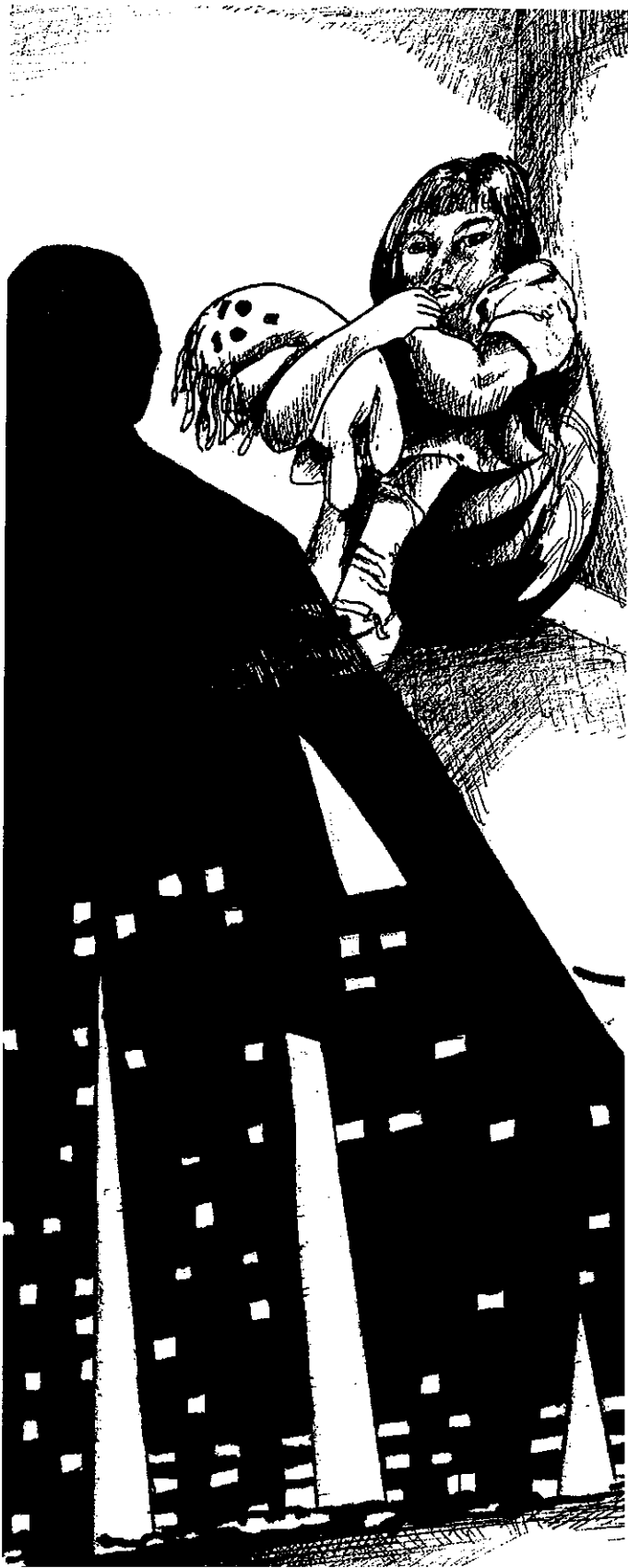
The Working Group undertook the following:

- expanded the current edition to include the communities surrounding Edmonton
- compiled relevant statistical information
- distributed a questionnaire to youth in Edmonton and surrounding communities
- held focus group sessions with youth in Edmonton and surrounding communities
- held focus group sessions with service providers from Edmonton and surrounding communities
- identified trends and implications through community consultations

PART ONE

MAJOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRENDS

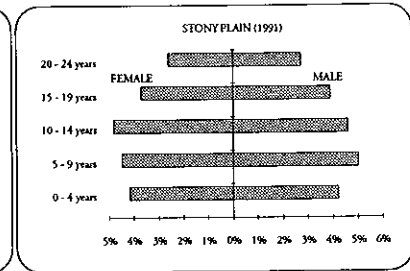
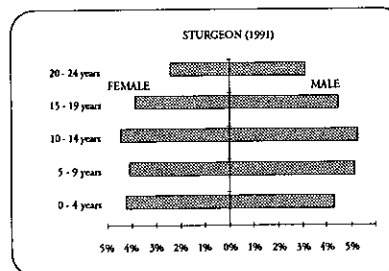
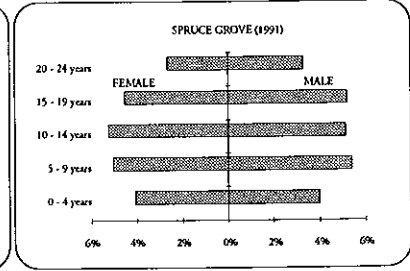
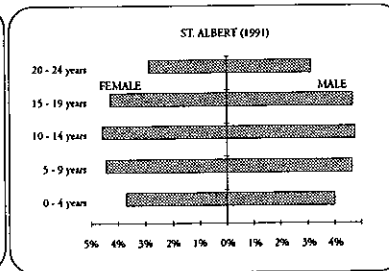
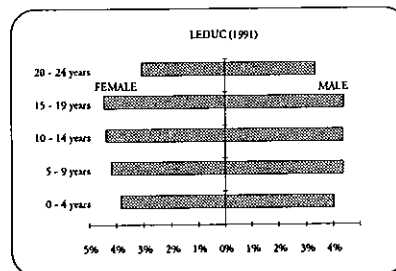
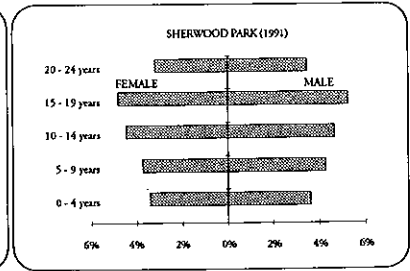
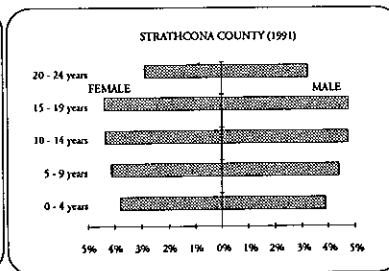
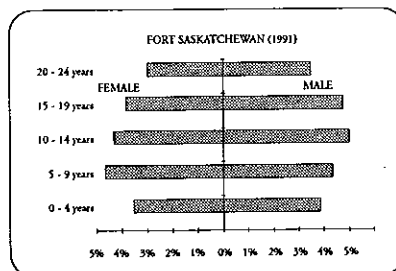
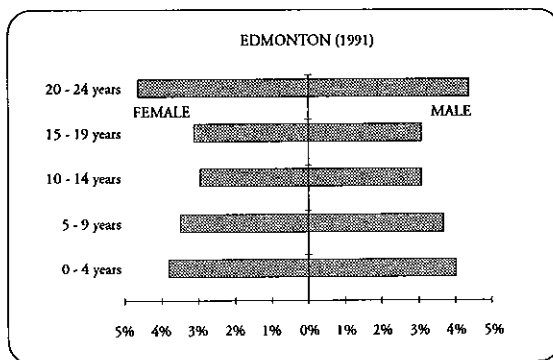
Artwork by Bill Leppky



This issue of **Tracking the Trends** attempts more ambitious coverage than that of previous years by looking at areas surrounding Edmonton, as well as the City of Edmonton itself. Information relating to Fort Saskatchewan, Leduc, Sherwood Park, Spruce Grove, St. Albert, Stony Plain as well as the Counties of Strathcona and Sturgeon has been collected and summarised. Since comprehensive comparative data on all these areas were difficult to obtain, what follows is necessarily limited, yet serves to put in context the questionnaire results and other information presented in Part Two of the publication. Note that the most recent detailed data are from the 1991 Federal Census, so these charts and descriptions refer to 1991 unless otherwise designated.

POPULATION

As shown in the accompanying population pyramids, the areas surrounding the City of Edmonton show a large degree of similarity to each other in their proportions of young people in the age groups 0-24. While there are minor differences among them, in general the percentage of each area's total population aged 0-4 and 5-9 is small, increasing in the 10-14 and 15-19 age groups and decreasing substantially in the 20-24 group. The City of Edmonton population shows substantial contrast to the surrounding areas. Percentages of children aged 0-4 and 5-9 are greater, decreasing in the 10-14 and 15-19 age groups and increasing substantially in the 20-24 group.



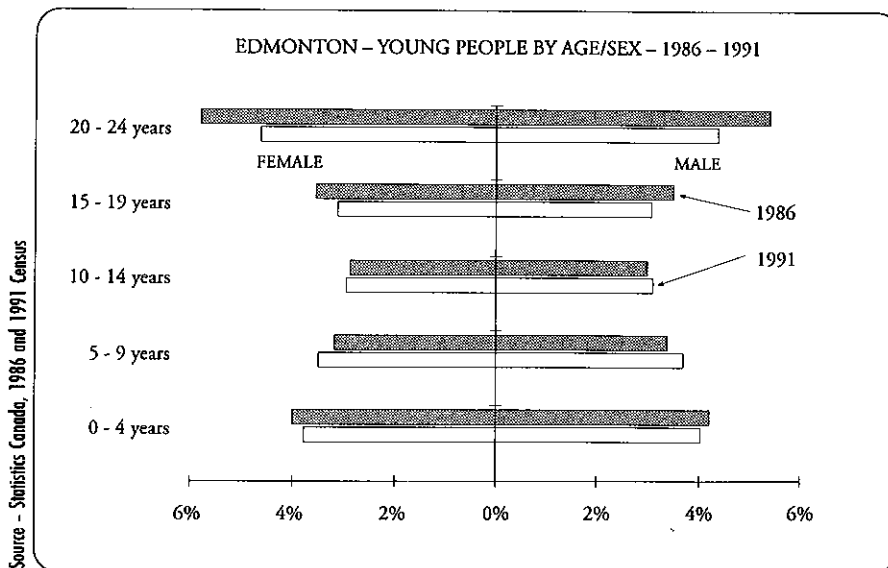
Source - Statistics Canada, 1991 Census of Canada

Among the surrounding areas, Spruce Grove stands out with both females and males in the 10-14 age group making up more than 5% of the population. Males aged 10-14 in Sturgeon and Fort Saskatchewan also make up over 5% of their respective populations as do males aged 15-19 in Spruce Grove and Sherwood Park.

In contrast, the 10-14 and 15-19 age groups make up only around 3% of Edmonton's much larger population. The other end of the age spectrum also differentiates Edmonton from its surroundings, but without the consistency shown in the

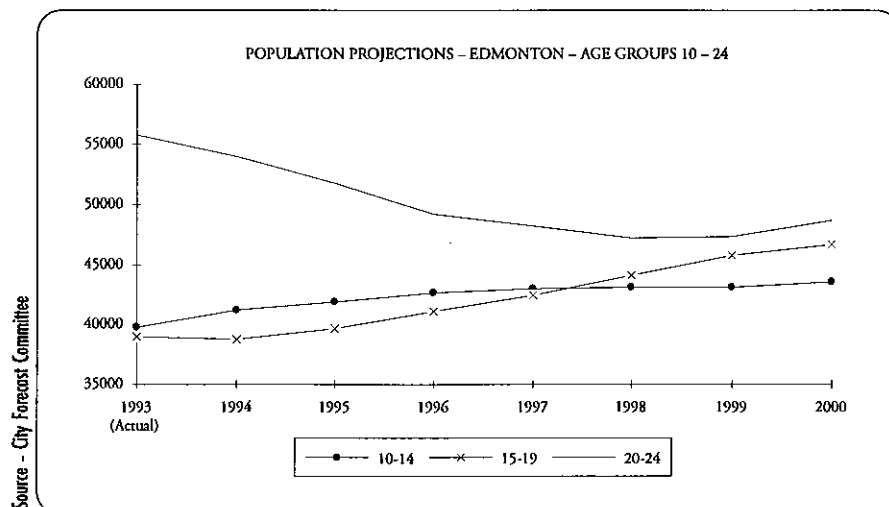
younger age groups. Those aged 65 years and over make up 9.52% of Edmonton's population, 11.21% in Stony Plain, 8.34% in Leduc, 7.33% in Fort Saskatchewan, 4.85% in the County of Sturgeon, 4.61% in Sherwood Park, 4.38 in Strathcona County, 4.34% in St. Albert and 3.57% in Spruce Grove.

Edmonton's population aged 0-24 has changed somewhat between the 1986 and the 1991 census. The 0-4 and 15-24 groups have decreased while the 5-14 age group has shown slight increase.



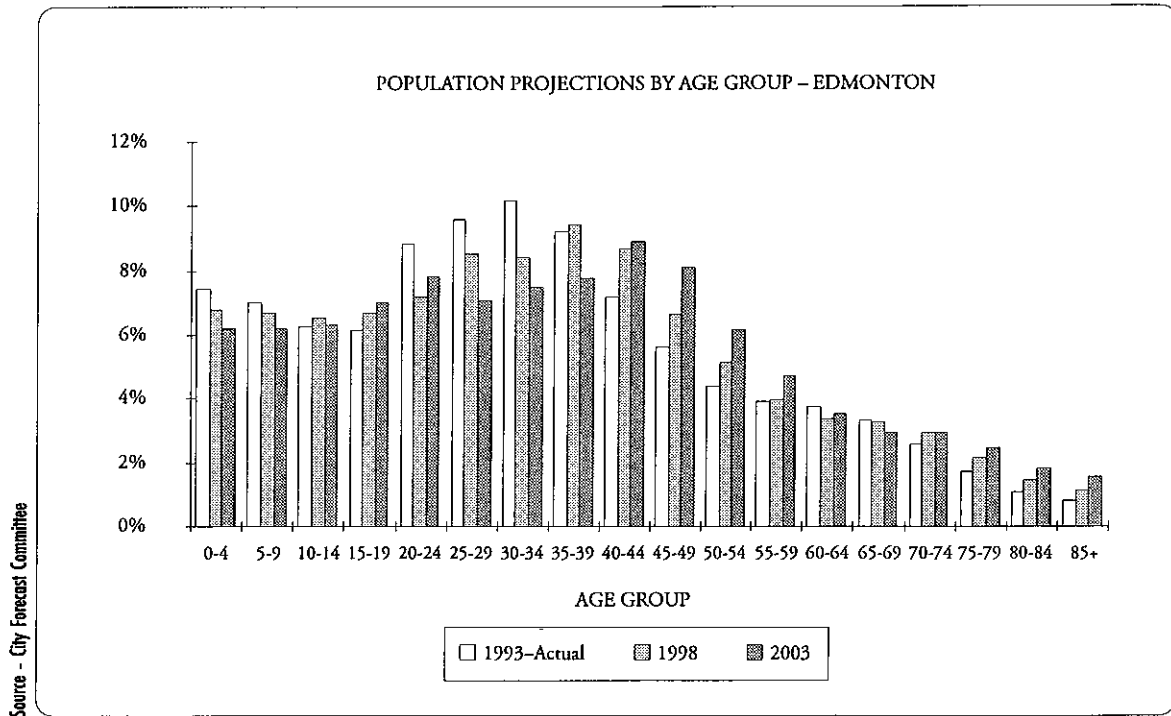
Edmonton's City Forecast Committee projects that the 20-24 age group will decrease further as a percentage of the population, (8.9% in 1993) and begin to show growth again near the end of the century (7.3% in the year 2000).

The 10-14 group is projected to remain largely unchanged at around 6.5% of the population while the 15-19 group is expected to increase from 6.2% in 1993 to over 7% by the year 2000.



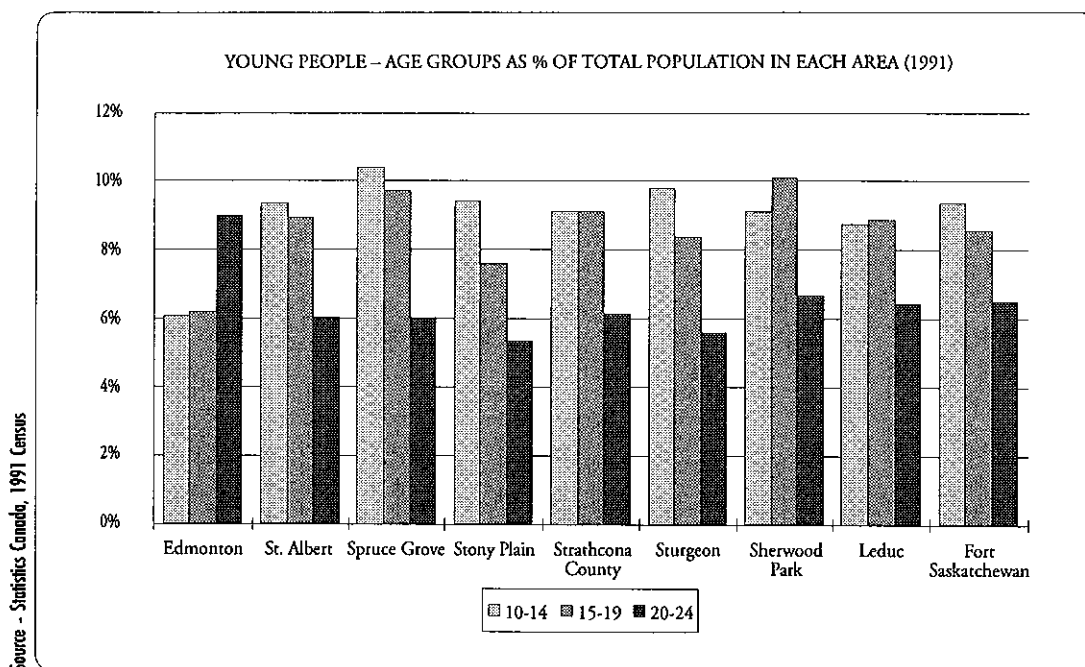
Projections for Edmonton's entire population in the next decade predict decreases in the 0-9 and 20-39 age

groups and increases in the older age ranges, especially those aged 40-59.



Comparing Edmonton to the eight surrounding areas on the proportions of their population made up by the 10-24 age groups without differentiating by sex makes the differences stand out more clearly. The age groups 10-19 each make up only about 6% of Edmonton's

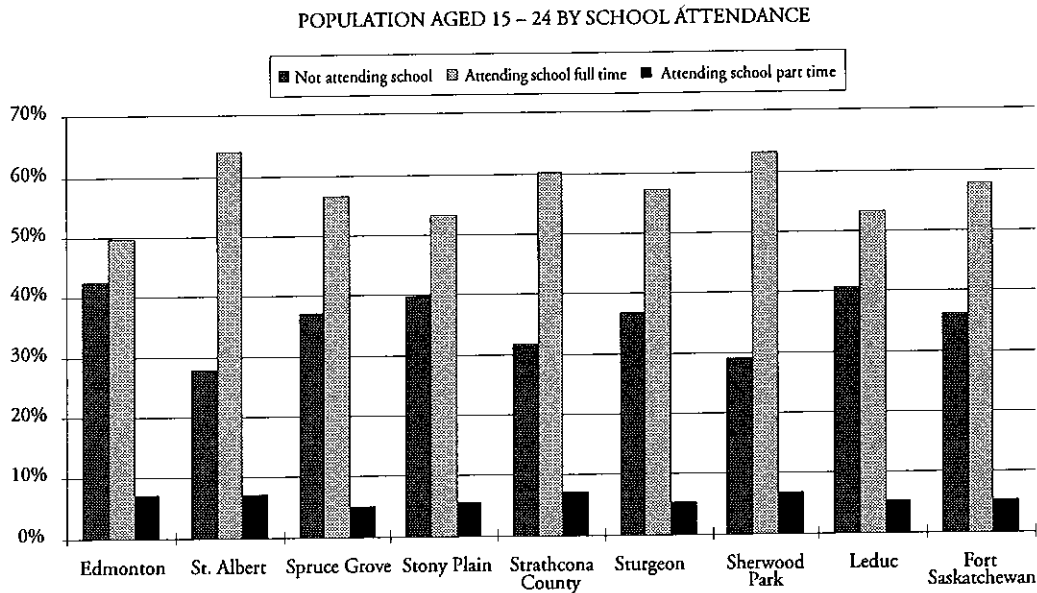
population while in the other areas they range from over 8% to over 10%. Conversely, 9% of Edmonton's population are aged 20-24 whereas this age group makes up about 6% of the totals in the other areas.



About fifty percent of Edmonton's young people aged 15-24 attend school full-time. Full-time school attendance by those in this age group is higher in all the

surrounding areas, ranging from 53% in Stony Plain to a high of 63% in St. Albert. Part-time attendance ranges between 5% and 8%.

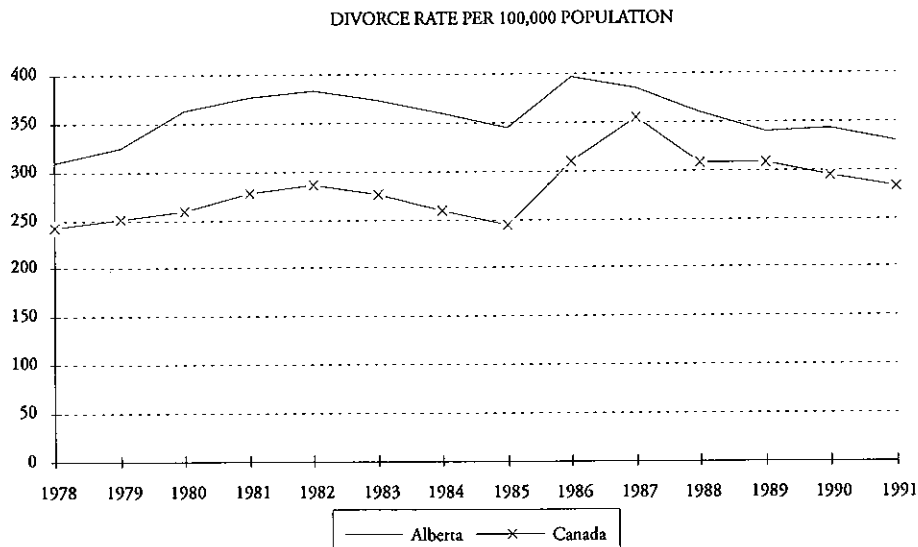
Source - Statistics Canada, 1991 Census



Alberta has been consistent over the years in having the highest divorce rate of all provinces in Canada. There have been year-to-year variations, due mostly to legislative changes which have liberalized grounds for

divorce. Recently overall divorce rates have shown a decrease but Alberta's rate continues to top the rest of Canada.

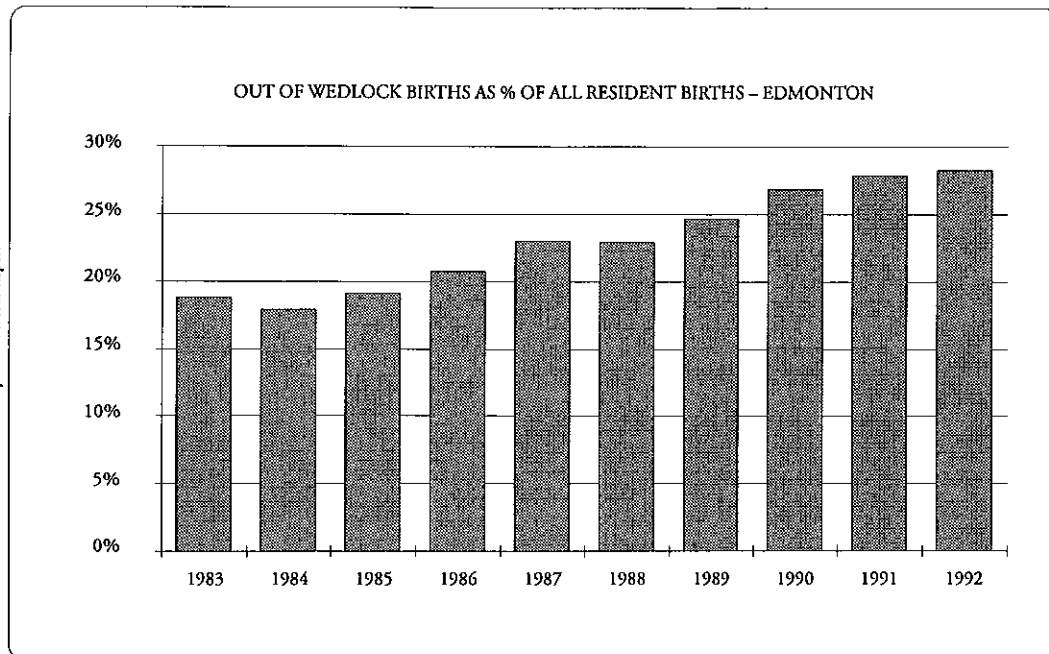
Source - Statistics Canada Daily



Changing social mores, greater acceptance of alternate lifestyles, as well as increased sexual activity among younger people have all contributed to a rising trend in births of children out of wedlock. The Edmonton Board

of Health 1992 Annual Report shows that out of wedlock births have increased from under 20% of all resident births a decade ago to nearly 30% in 1992.

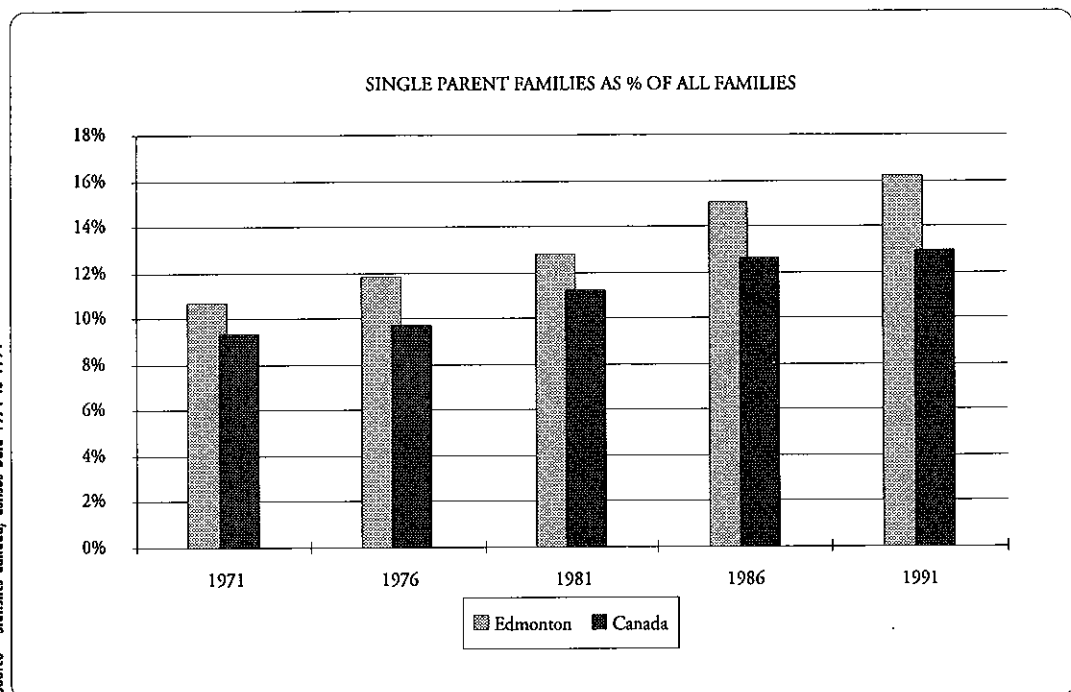
Source - Edmonton Local Board of Health, 1992 Annual Report



The high divorce rate combined with increasing incidence of births out of wedlock have contributed to Edmonton having a higher proportion of single parent families than the rest of Canada, a proportion which continues

to increase at a faster rate than that in the rest of the country. In 1991, female-headed single-parent families had incomes less than half that of two parent families.

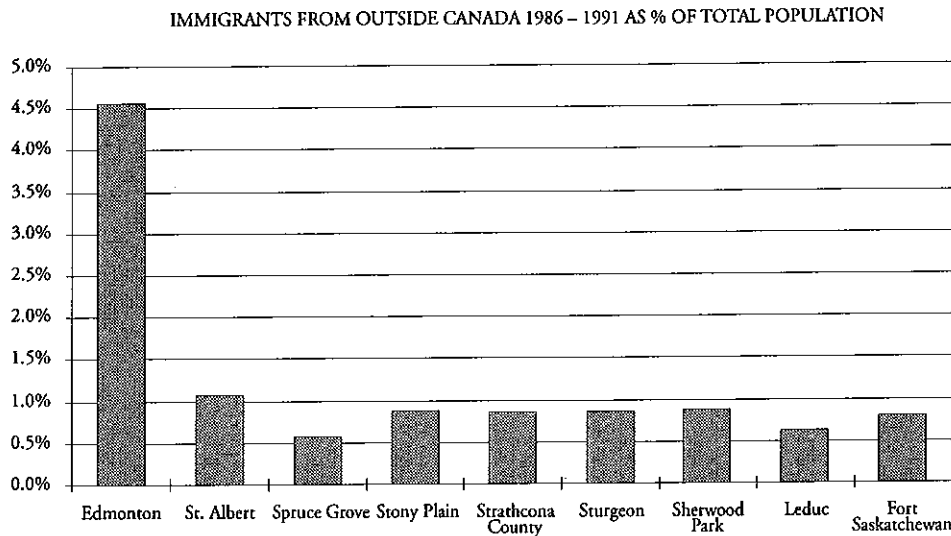
Source - Statistics Canada, Census Data 1971 to 1991



Immigration has added to the area's population and cultural diversity. The attraction of immigrants to larger urban areas is shown clearly in 1991 Federal Census

data with the proportion of Edmonton's population made up of newcomers from outside Canada being nearly five times that of the surrounding areas.

Source - Statistics Canada, 1991 Census

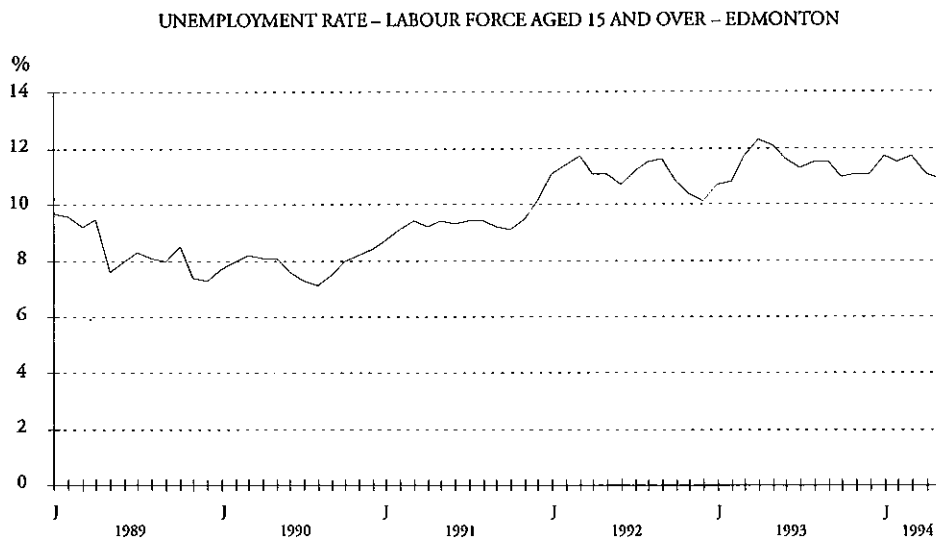


EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

The Edmonton area has not escaped the high unemployment levels experienced in Canada during the recent recession and these levels are decreasing only very

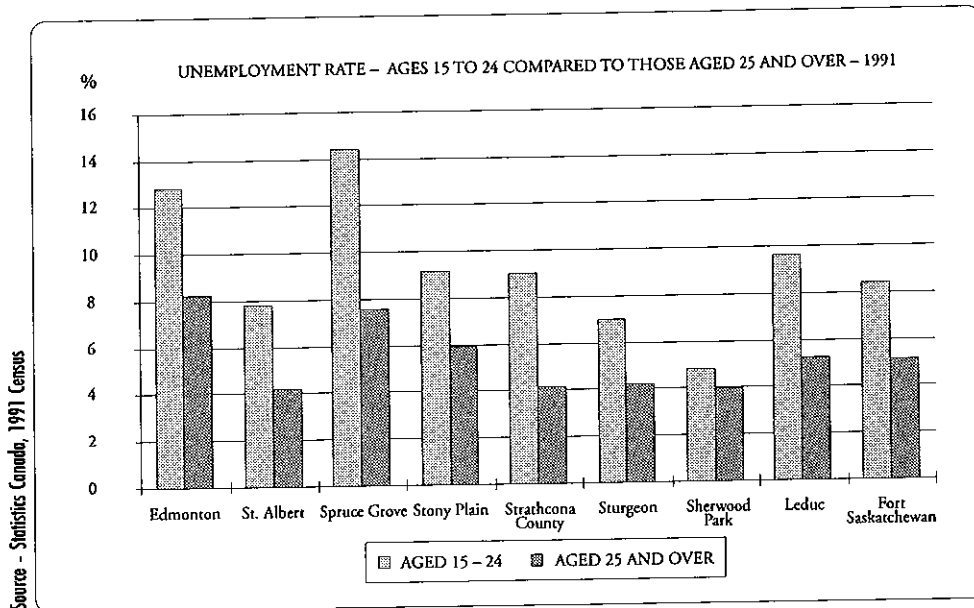
slowly. During the summer of 1994 Edmonton's unemployment rate was around 11% and no major lowering of the rate was anticipated in the near future.

Source - Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey



Young people aged 15-24 have experienced much higher rates of unemployment than those aged 25 years and over. While the following chart shows a comparison for the time of the 1991 Federal Census, the pattern has held true to the present. In most geographical areas and over many years in time, the unemployment rate of

those aged 15-24 who were actively seeking work has been close to double that reported for those aged 25 and over. With the exception of Sherwood Park, all the areas surveyed show the high levels of unemployment being experienced by young people.



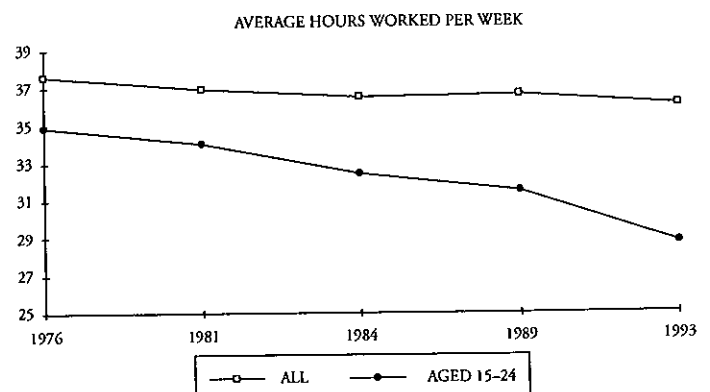
Women and young people are over-represented in service sector work, primarily in the lower-tier services (retail trades and other consumer services). These jobs are characterized by low skill requirements, repetitious work, less job autonomy and little or no chance of advancement.

Many young workers in these jobs say they are over-qualified for the work they are doing and feel that their earnings are poor. As well, this type of work often offers fewer hours, resulting in lower pay and few, if any, benefits.

In 1991, three quarters of workers aged 15-24 were part-time shift workers and 84% of these were students. Male students averaged 13 hours of work per week while females averaged 12. A Statistics Canada study showed male students working 20 or more hours per week had a probability of not completing high school, 60% higher than male students who were not working at all. In 1993, when the economy was beginning to

show some improvement and overall unemployment rates in Canada edged down to around 10%, the rate for young people showed little change, going no lower than 17.7%.

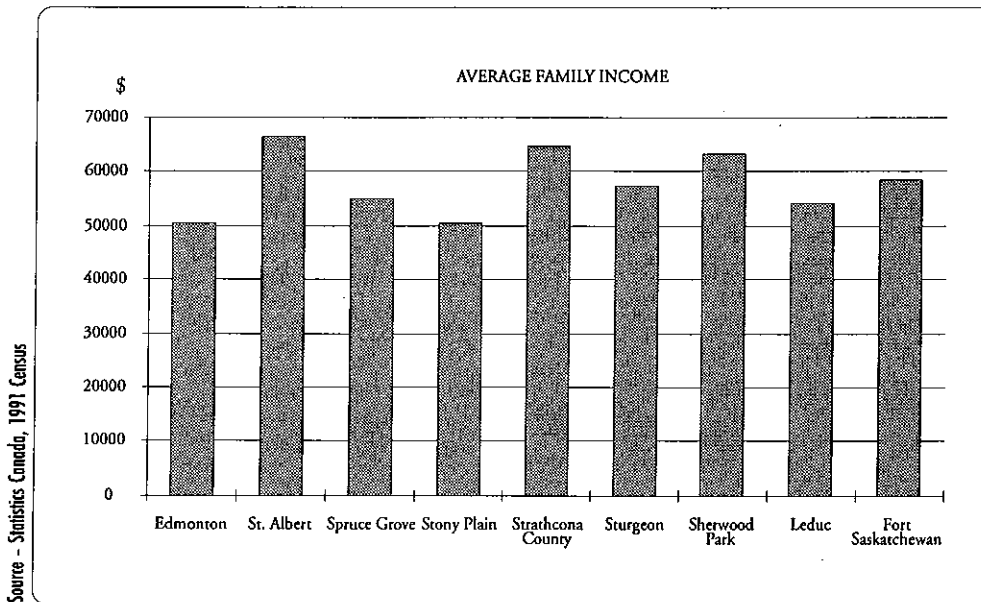
During the 1980s, earnings of those aged 17-24 decreased by 12% overall while earnings of those aged 55-64 increased by 10% (due at least partly to decreased hours worked by young and increased hours by older workers).



Source - Statistics Canada, Perspectives on Labour and Income, Autumn 1994.

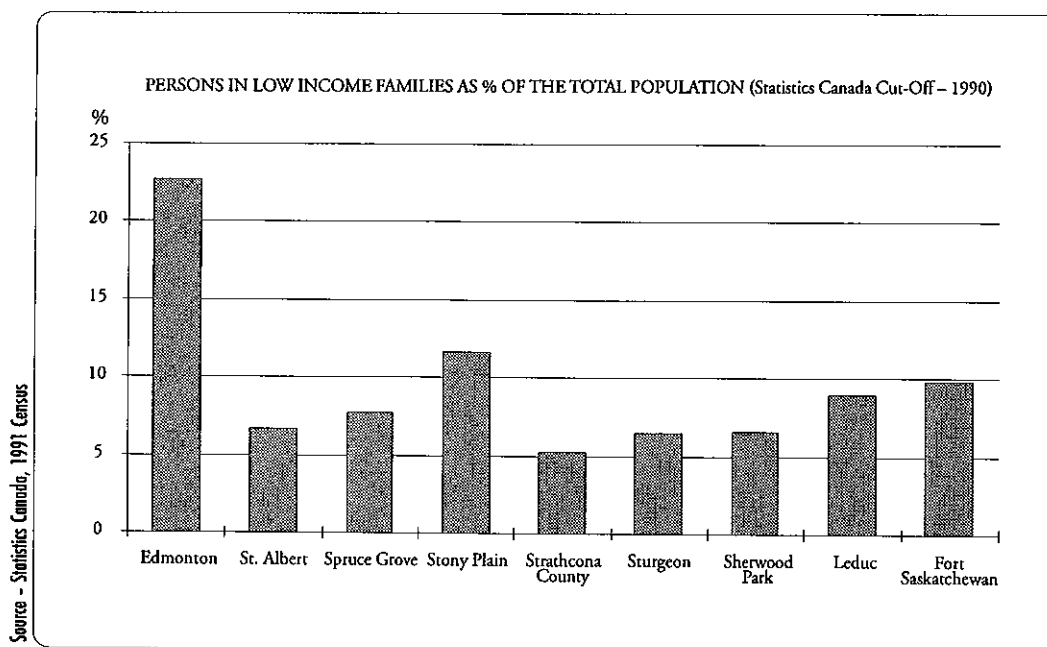
Questionnaire results presented in detail in Part Two show that most young people surveyed, while somewhat concerned about personal and family finances, felt they and their families had adequate incomes for their needs and that after school jobs were not necessary to "help out".

Nevertheless, 1991 Census data show that average family incomes vary substantially among the areas surveyed. Edmonton and Stony Plain were at the low end, with average family incomes around \$50,000. All the others were higher, with income in St. Albert highest at nearly \$67,000.



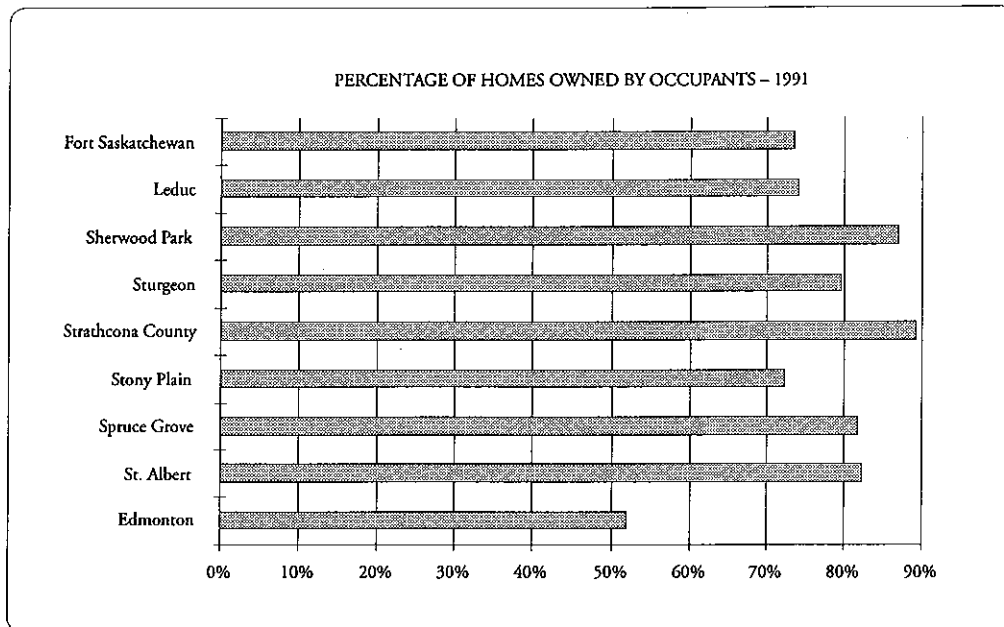
In 1991, 16.8% of all Canadians fell below the Statistics Canada low income cut-offs. This included 1.3 million children under age 18. In Alberta, the percentage was 20.2%. Among the areas studied, Edmonton was by far

the highest on this characteristic with 22.8% of the population falling under the low income cut-offs. The other areas came in at less than half the Edmonton incidence, with Strathcona County being the lowest at 5.3%.



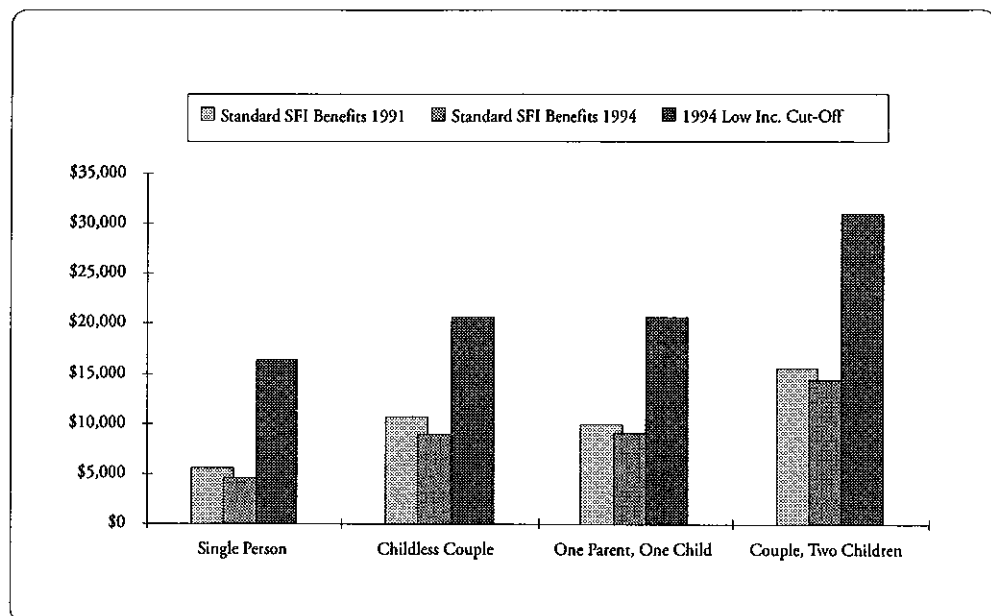
Home ownership figures in these nine areas closely parallel incomes and are inversely related to the incidence of poverty. The ownership rate is lowest in

Edmonton at 52% and highest in Strathcona County at 89%. In 1992, the rate of home ownership for all Alberta was 65.5%.



The "social safety net" designed to assist those with the lowest incomes and at risk of other family and individual problems has seen serious erosion. While living costs continued to increase, although more slowly of late, (3.8% in Edmonton - summer 1991 to summer 1994), support provided to those most in need has been cut substantially. Between 1991 and 1994 the Alberta

Government's Supports for Independence (SFI) program has lowered the amounts provided for basic essentials, to less than one third of the updated Statistics Canada Low Income Cut-offs in the case of a single person and less than half of the cut-off for couples with two children.



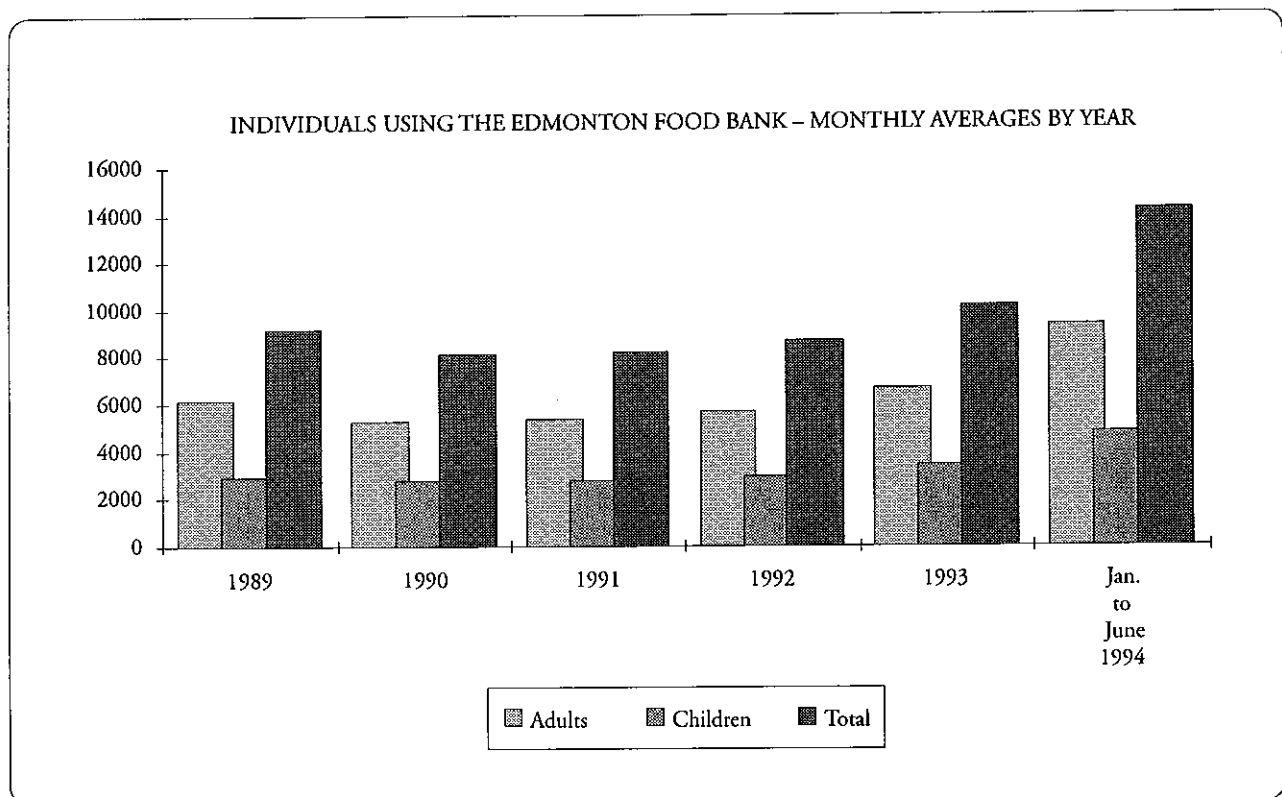
The Canadian Fact Book on Poverty - 1994, published by the Canadian Council on Social Development, includes descriptions of several methods used by various organizations to measure poverty. It also updates the Statistics Canada Low Income Cut-offs (base 1990) to 1994 by applying an estimated 2.6% adjustment for the increase in the Consumer Price

Index, between the end of 1992 and the end of 1994. While they provide cut-offs for areas of residence ranging from rural to urban, the following excerpt shows cut-offs only for individuals and families of different sizes living in large urban areas of 500,000 or more population, such as Edmonton:

Family Size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 or more
	\$16,609	\$20,762	\$25,821	\$31,256	\$34,939	\$38,622	\$42,305

Community agencies and organizations assisting those with low incomes have seen the effects of the support cut-backs reflected in increasing demand for their services. The Edmonton Food Bank reports an accelerat-

ing increase in total numbers of individuals needing help every year since 1990. The following chart shows monthly averages by year including the first six months of 1994.



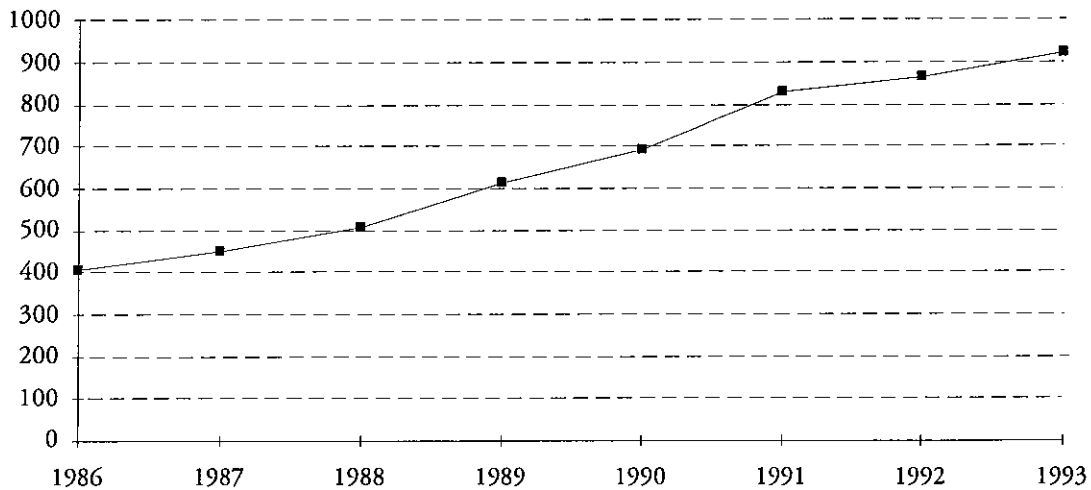
YOUTH AND CRIME

The August, 1994 issue of the Statistics Canada publication **Juristat** is devoted to Canadian Crime Statistics, 1993. One section examines crime statistics for young persons aged 12-17 for the period 1986-1993.

In 1993 17% of young people charged with Criminal Code offences were charged with violent crimes,

although half of these involved minor assault incidents. Between 1986 and 1993 the average annual increase in charges of youth involving violent crimes was 13% while the average annual increase in adults charged with violent incidents was 7%. During the last two years of this period, however, the increase in charges of youth involving violence has slowed.

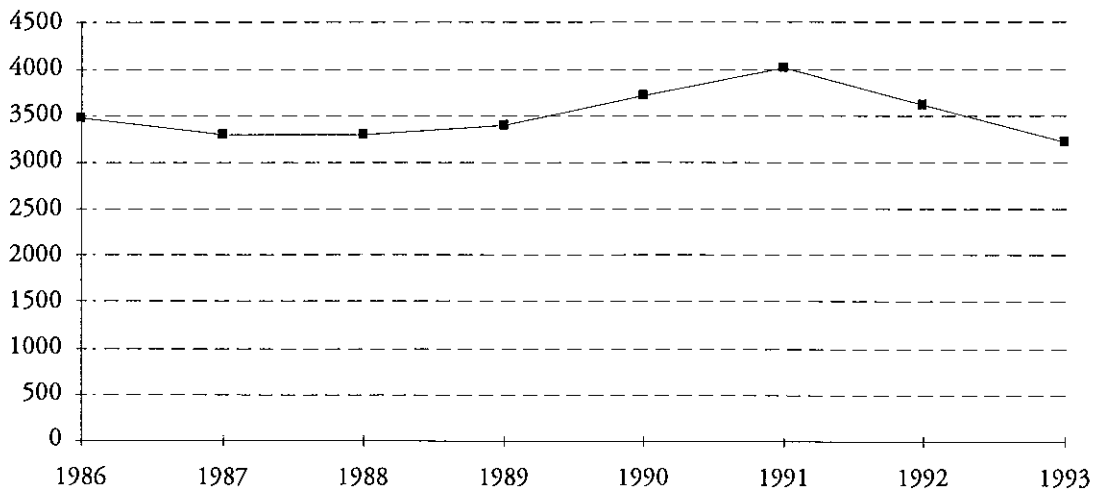
VIOLENT CRIMES – RATE PER 100,000 YOUTH



Four out of ten break and enter charges in 1993 for all Canada involved young people and youth were 46% of all those charged with car theft. Weapons were involved in 35% of all violent charges involving youth (firearms -

7%, knives - 12% and other - 15%). One of four robbery charges, 15% of all sexual assaults and 7% of fraud charges involved young people.

PROPERTY CRIMES – RATE PER 100,000 YOUTH



SELECTED STATISTICS

Population (1991)	Edmonton	St. Albert	Spruce Grove	Stony Plain	Strathcona County	Sturgeon	Sherwood Park	Leduc	Ft. Sask.
Totals	616740	42145	12885	7225	56575	15465	29710	13970	12080
Male									
0 - 4 years	25055	1700	520	305	2220	675	1085	565	470
5 - 9 years	22990	1965	700	365	2505	800	1275	615	530
10 - 14 years	19335	2015	665	335	2695	825	1390	615	610
15 - 19 years	19140	1975	670	285	2715	700	1565	620	580
20 - 24 years	27210	1325	430	200	1845	490	1040	475	425
25 - 29 years	32605	1250	360	290	1705	640	850	525	430
30 - 34 years	32875	1850	570	325	2370	715	1165	620	545
35 - 39 years	27450	1970	660	320	2665	715	1295	610	545
40 - 44 years	21630	2150	610	285	2710	680	1415	655	580
45 - 49 years	15345	1645	490	180	2480	550	1365	445	425
50 - 54 years	13180	1095	315	135	1685	375	925	295	270
55 - 59 years	12450	730	175	100	1145	350	570	245	220
60 - 64 years	11595	540	100	80	830	285	395	165	145
65 - 74 years	15770	545	150	175	820	305	385	255	225
75 and over	8530	235	55	160	325	110	175	210	145
Female									
0 - 4 years	23535	1575	530	305	2165	660	1030	540	430
5 - 9 years	21750	1890	655	325	2350	635	1120	590	565
10 - 14 years	18390	1950	680	350	2485	695	1345	615	525
15 - 19 years	19435	1815	590	270	2490	605	1445	625	465
20 - 24 years	28775	1230	350	190	1655	380	965	435	365
25 - 29 years	32185	1455	445	315	1875	610	925	570	415
30 - 34 years	31595	2015	645	350	2545	745	1210	580	555
35 - 39 years	26225	2185	715	350	2660	690	1370	660	610
40 - 44 years	20940	2285	655	270	2985	630	1660	645	545
45 - 49 years	15795	1500	450	170	2255	470	1280	455	330
50 - 54 years	13575	1000	205	130	1440	335	815	270	270
55 - 59 years	12700	705	145	85	960	275	485	200	195
60 - 64 years	12250	500	95	100	655	205	345	175	155
65 - 74 years	19735	625	170	215	870	225	485	335	260
75 and over	14705	425	85	260	465	110	325	365	255
Unemployment Rate									
25+over (%)	8.3	4.3	7.6	6.0	4.2	4.3	4.0	5.3	5.2
15-24 (%)	12.9	7.9	14.5	9.2	9.1	7.1	4.9	9.7	8.5
Avg. Family Income	\$50,794	\$66,712	\$55,206	\$50,859	\$64,810	\$57,685	\$63,715	\$54,389	\$58,857
Low Income (%)	22.8	6.8	7.8	11.7	5.3	6.6	6.7	9.1	9.9
% Seniors	9.52%	4.34%	3.57%	11.21%	4.38%	4.85%	4.61%	8.34%	7.33%
Home Ownership	52.16%	82.48%	81.98%	72.46%	89.48%	79.89%	87.23%	74.35%	73.76%
Food Bank Use -- Edmonton -- Annual Totals									
	Adults	Children	Total Indiv.						
1989	75283	36144	111427	6274	3012	9286			
1990	64092	33957	98049	5341	2830	8171			
1991	65295	33985	99280	5441	2832	8273			
1992	68791	36295	105086	5733	3025	8757			
1993	81258	41767	123030	6772	3481	10253			
Jan. to June 1994	56648	29315	85963	9441	4886	14327			
Monthly Averages by Year									
	Adults	Children	Total						



PART TWO

TRENDS AND SERVICE IMPLICATIONS FOR YOUTH

INTRODUCTION

PART TWO

The second section of this publication has two major components:

1. the results of a questionnaire and
2. input from focus groups.

The first component highlights the results of a questionnaire distributed to a non-random sampling of students in Edmonton and surrounding communities. While not representative of all youth in these areas, the results provide a snapshot of their concerns, interests and opinions, as well as suggesting areas for further exploration.

The questionnaire has two major elements. The first is a set of closed response questions and the second contains a set of open-ended questions. The element containing only the closed response questions was distributed much more widely than the complete set.

The questionnaires were completed by students in junior high, high school and alternative school programs. Alternative school programs are offered in a variety of

settings, they are less structured and formal than regular school programs, are generally available to 15-19 year olds and meet the needs of students who cannot access regular schools or are early school leavers.

While the major focus of this publication is youth aged 12 to 18, there were some respondents aged 11 years (.3%) and some older than 18 years (4.3%).

The second major component of this section contains information on trends and their implications, as gathered from focus groups.

There are several limitations inherent to this study due to the data collection methodology used. **Since no systematic representative sample was possible, the results of the survey are not generalizable to the entire youth population in a particular community. Results of this study, however, do indicate issues of concern for the youth who were surveyed and suggest directions for further investigation in the identified communities.**

INTRODUCTION

CLOSED RESPONSE QUESTIONS

The questionnaire forming the basis of this section was distributed in the following communities: County of Parkland, County of Strathcona, County of Sturgeon, Edmonton, Leduc, St. Albert, Sherwood Park, Spruce Grove and Stony Plain. In total 3,332 responses were received and used in this edition of *Tracking the Trends*. Organizations participating in the distribution of the questionnaire are listed in Appendix 1. Appendix 2 provides a demographic profile of those youth responding to the questionnaire.

The questionnaire consisted of 30 questions focusing on six factors: economics, school, parental relationships, peer relationships, self image and behavior. In completing this section of the questionnaire respondents selected the most appropriate of five responses: inaccurate, not very accurate, somewhat accurate, fairly accurate and very accurate. The statements used to assess each of these factors are listed in Appendix 3.

While the questionnaires were anonymous, respondents were asked to provide the following demographic information: age,

gender, grade, living arrangement (two parents, single parent, other), country of birth and countries where their parents were born. The connection between demographics and answers was lost in the case of Leduc. Therefore, these responses were not included in the analysis for the closed response questions. The responses from Leduc are included in the next section regarding the open-ended questions.

Significance testing was completed on the data gathered through this section of the questionnaire (see pages 28-30). This helped identify factors upon which identified subgroups of respondents differed in ways which could not be due to chance alone. Living arrangement, gender and age were found most significant in differentiating among responses weighing on the various factors.

When reviewing this information it is important to consider not only the relationships which proved to be significant but also to consider those which were not significant. For example, gender differences were not significant in the areas of economics and school.

SUMMARY

CLOSED RESPONSE QUESTIONS

The following is a general comment on the overall responses to the questionnaire, using mean scores on each question.

By standardizing the questions and responses to a positive format (or "phrasing"), we can compare the mean scores for all 30 questions (see Appendix 4 for complete listing).

Example:

The statement in the questionnaire read:
I don't feel close to my schoolmates.

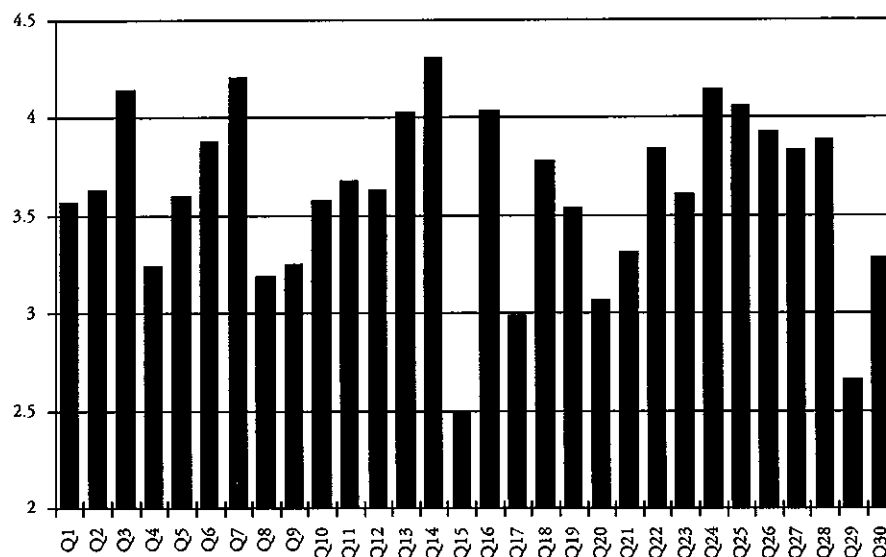
For the purposes of significance testing and an analysis of the means the question was restated:
I feel close to my schoolmates.

A score of 3.0 is mid-point in the five point scale used and represents "somewhat accurate". Twenty eight of the 30 questions had mean scores of 3.0 or more, and 21 were 3.5

or more, suggesting that youth feel relatively positive overall. The lowest mean score was 2.5, "I have no worries about my grades", suggesting a common theme of concern for marks.

The questions with the highest mean scores (4.0 and over), suggested that youth did not feel that their families were poor and did not need after school jobs to help their families. They also felt loved by their parents and were not lonely. They did not feel that they failed at most things they tried and did not feel inclined to do things they didn't like, just to fit in. Although youth felt strongly that they were loved by their parents (mean = 4.1), they felt less confident that they could talk with them about their problems (mean = 2.7).

MEANS - QUESTIONS ADJUSTED - "POSITIVE" RESPONSES ALL IN SAME SCALE DIRECTION



Based on significance testing.

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

The living arrangements of youth were explored to determine the impact of family structure on the lives of youth in the following areas: peer and family relationships; economics; self-image; school performance and behavior.

Categories of family structure (i.e. living arrangements) identified by youth included: two parent and single parent families and “other” situations. Those living arrangements specified as “other” included, but were not restricted to: independent living arrangements, foster care, government group homes and living with extended family members (for example, with grandparents).

Peers

Youth in “other living arrangements” reported feeling less positive about their peer relationships than those in single parent families. Those reporting they felt the most positive/confident about peer relationships were youth from two parent families.

Economics

Youth in two parent families reported considerably more satisfaction with their economic situations than those from single parent families or other living arrangements.

Self-image

Perceptions of self were reported to be more positive by youth in two parent families

compared to youth living in alternative settings. No significant difference in self-image was noted between youth in two parent and single parent families, or between those in single parent families and youth living in alternative situations.

Parents

Responses from youth in two parent families indicated stronger relationships with parents, or a higher degree of parental support than from youth in single parent families or other living arrangements. This is an issue where the responses of youth in other living arrangements differed considerably (more negative) from those in two parent families and from those in single parent families.

School

Questions regarding school centered on perceptions concerning performance in school. Significantly more positive performance in school was reported by youth in two parent families than by those in either single parent families or other living arrangements. There was no significant difference between youth living in one parent families or in other living arrangements.

Behavior

The behavior category focused on how youth perceived their behavior in home, school and community settings. Youth from two parent families identified themselves as being significantly better behaved than youth from single parent families or those in other living arrangements.

Summary of observations related to living arrangement

The significant differences in responses in the six key areas indicate that living arrangements, or family structure, has an impact on the lives of young people. A number of implications can be drawn from this regarding the needs of youth and the services required to address these needs. As the structure of family continues to change, these implications will require examination.

GENDER

Peers

Female respondents reported more satisfaction with their peer relationships, which suggests that they had friends who understood them, had closer relationships with their peers and were less likely to do things they didn't want to do just to please others.

Self-image

Male respondents reported stronger self-image than female respondents. Overall, the majority reported that they were not lonely and that they were not likely to be pressured into doing things just to fit in.

Parents

Overall, youth indicated a high degree of confidence that they were loved by their parents. Female respondents were generally more comfortable with the relationship with their parents than male respondents, feeling that their parents' expectations were appropriate and that they had enough of their parents' time.

priate and that they had enough of their parents' time.

Behavior

Female respondents were significantly more positive than male respondents about their behavior at school and in their families, feeling that they were well behaved and did not cause problems.

AGE

Peers

Overall, respondents felt close to their schoolmates, at ease with both males and females and had good friends who understood them. There is some suggestion (mean 3.8 on a five point scale) that they did not allow the need for peer approval to push them into doing things when they didn't want to do.

In terms of age comparisons, those respondents who were younger reported better peer relations than did 19 year old respondents.

Economics

Overall, respondents did not describe their families as being poor. They reported not needing a job after school to help their families and that their families had enough money. They did, however, report a slight tendency to worry about money.

As youth get older they became more concerned about finances. Concern about

• • • CLOSED RESPONSE QUESTIONS

economics became more obvious with increasing age, especially in responses by those aged 18 and 19 years.

School

Overall, respondents felt their grades were acceptable although they stated that they worried about them. More 12 year olds reported doing well in school than respondents aged 17 to 19 years.

INTRODUCTION

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Further exploration of some issues was obtained through open-ended questions. Of the 3,332 questionnaires completed, 792 contained these questions:

1. **What is the biggest issue you and your friends face today?**
2. **Who would you say is a positive role model for your generation and why?**
3. **What role should your parents take in your life?**
4. **What is the most positive part of your schooling? How could school be made more relevant to you?**
5. **Do you feel safe (at school & elsewhere)? If not, why?**
6. **If you have an after-school job, what do you do with the money you earn?**

For ease of interpretation, the results are displayed in graph form. The first graph displayed for each new question portrays the total number of responses. The graphs that follow portray the responses for different geographical areas. There were too few respondents from the County of Parkland to display their responses in graph form but their responses are included in the initial graph summarizing total responses. **When considering the information presented in the graphs please keep in mind the limited number of responses in some areas.**

In Edmonton the questionnaire with the

open-ended questions was distributed in two areas – North Central Edmonton and North East Edmonton. Fort Road divided these two areas. North East Edmonton was bounded by the North Saskatchewan River on the south and the neighborhood of Cromdale to the west. North Central Edmonton was bounded by St. Albert Trail on the west and the southern boundaries of the following neighborhoods: Sherbrooke, Prince Charles, Municipal Airport, Westwood, Delton and Eastwood.

The number of respondents from each area who completed the open-ended questions is listed in Appendix 2.

Some youth provided more than one response per question. No weighting of these responses was attempted, so where more than one answer was listed, each was counted. For example, if a respondent listed both substance use and sex in responding to the first question, each of these responses was recorded.

No attempt was made to use systematic sampling. As well, the proportion of responses is not relative to the population size of the community surveyed and youth of different grades/ages were surveyed in different communities. Thus, results of the survey are not generalizable to the entire youth population in a particular community, however, the results do indicate issues of concern for the youth who were surveyed and suggest directions for further investigation.

1. WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST ISSUES FACING YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS TODAY?

**Whether or not they
should smoke or drink.**

(13 year old male)

1. WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST ISSUES FACING YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS TODAY?

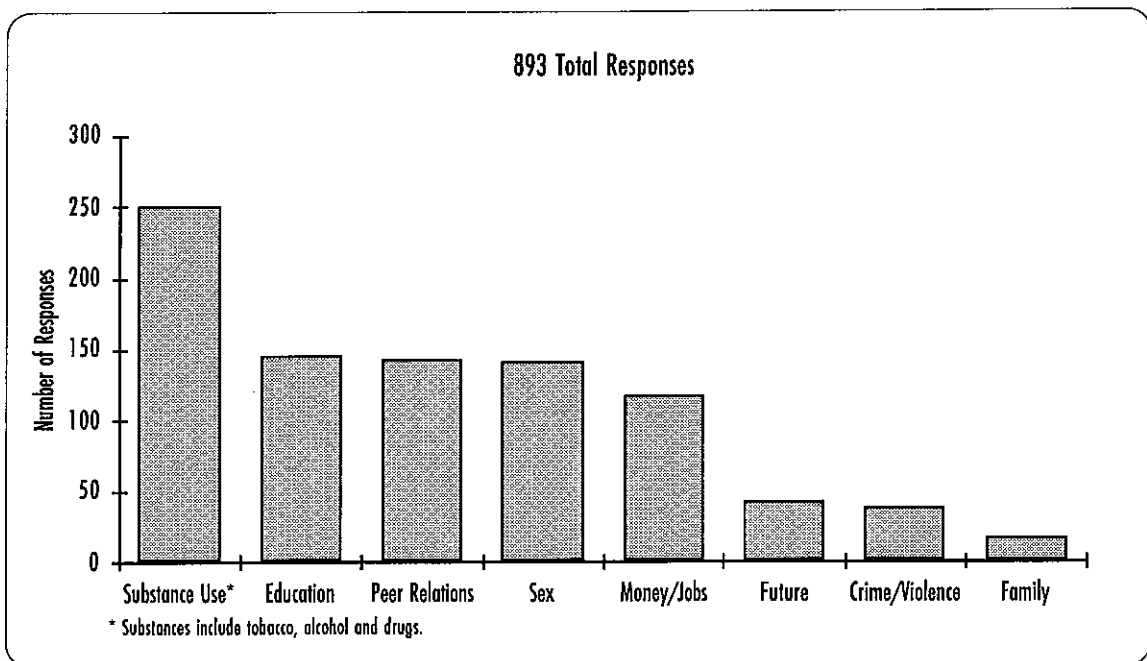
- The four biggest issues identified by youth responding to the questionnaire were: substance use, education (pressures centered around school and future education plans, cuts to education funding...), peer relationships (friends, dating, being accepted...) and sex (AIDS, pregnancy...).

The biggest issues for me are the economy, stress, problems. I see no future, I'm scared of the future.

(14 year old female)

Am I going to have a job when I'm older?

(19 year old male)

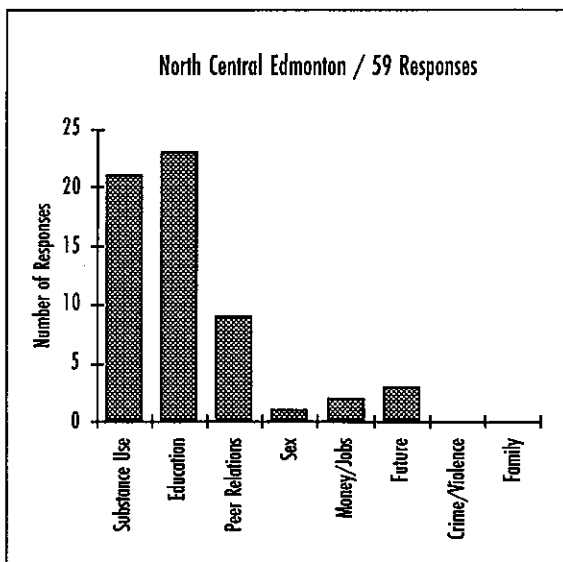
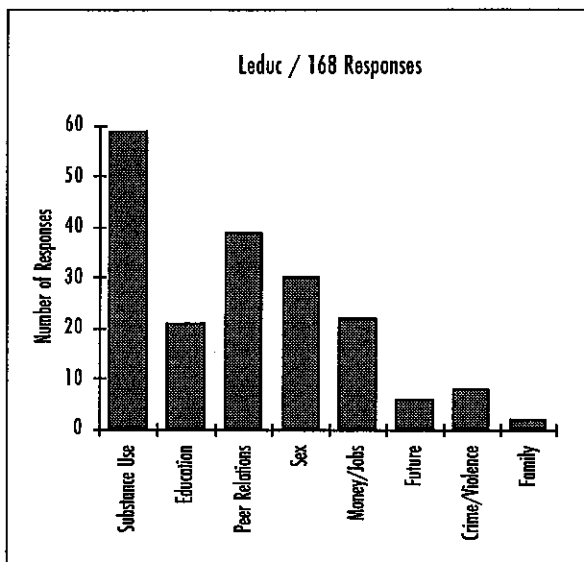
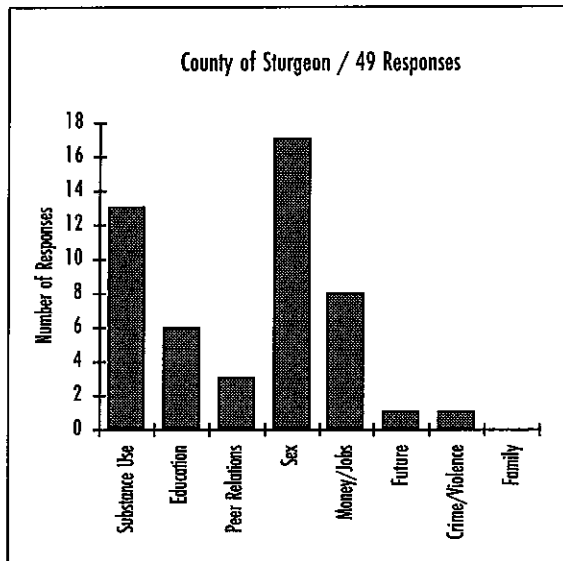
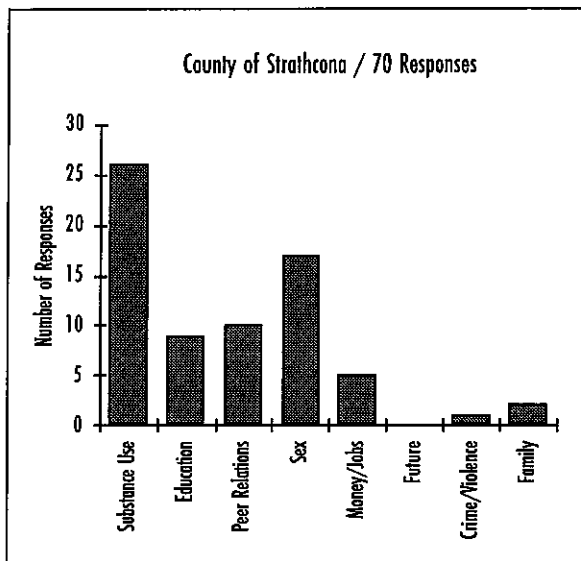
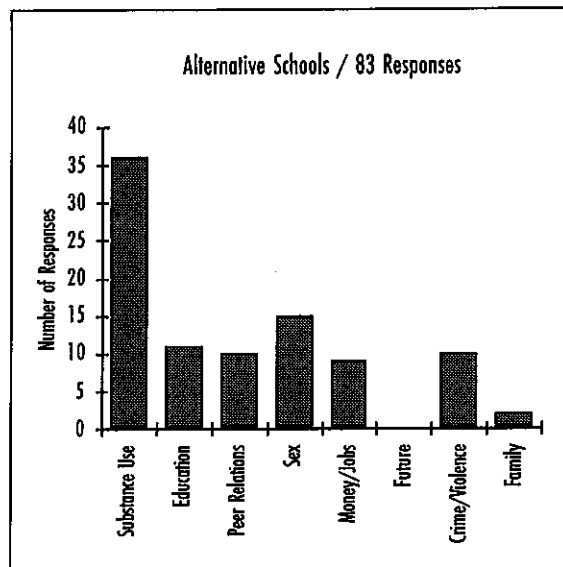


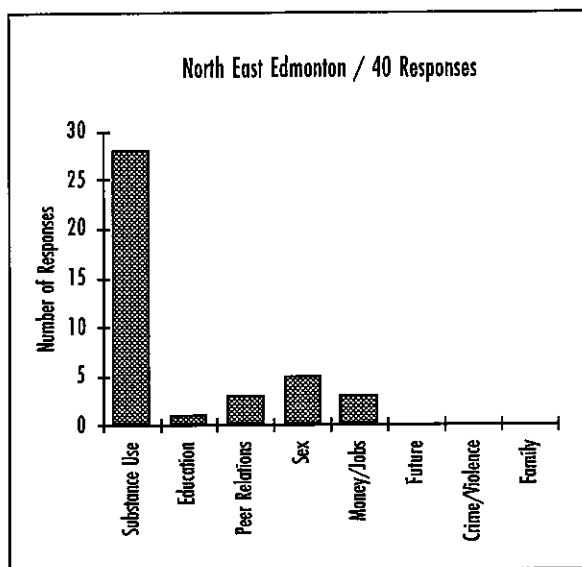
The biggest issues we face are staying out of trouble with the law and money.

(18 year old male)

1. WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST ISSUES FACING YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS TODAY?

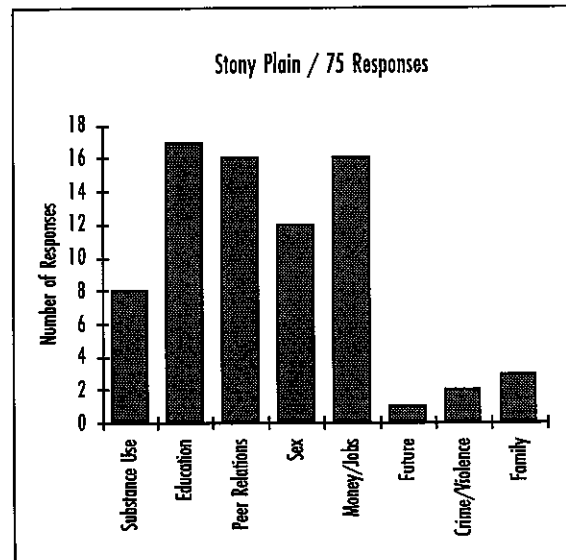
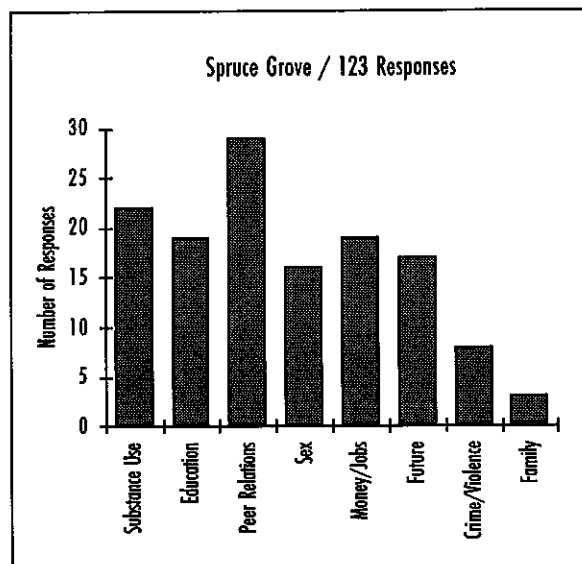
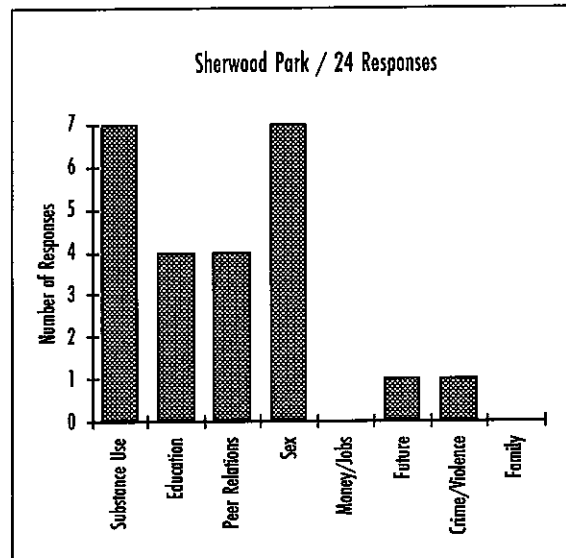
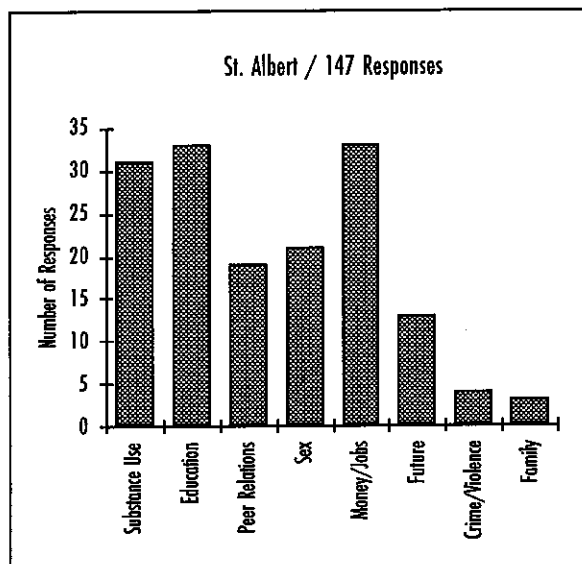
* Please keep in mind the limited number of responses in some areas





1. WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST ISSUES FACING YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS TODAY?

* Please keep in mind the limited number of responses in some areas



2. WHO WOULD YOU SAY IS A POSITIVE ROLE MODEL FOR YOUR GENERATION AND WHY?

**I think a positive role
model is a teenager
that's pretty average,
that can have a lot of
fun without drugs or
alcohol.**

(14 year old female)

2. WHO WOULD YOU SAY IS A POSITIVE ROLE MODEL FOR YOUR GENERATION AND WHY?

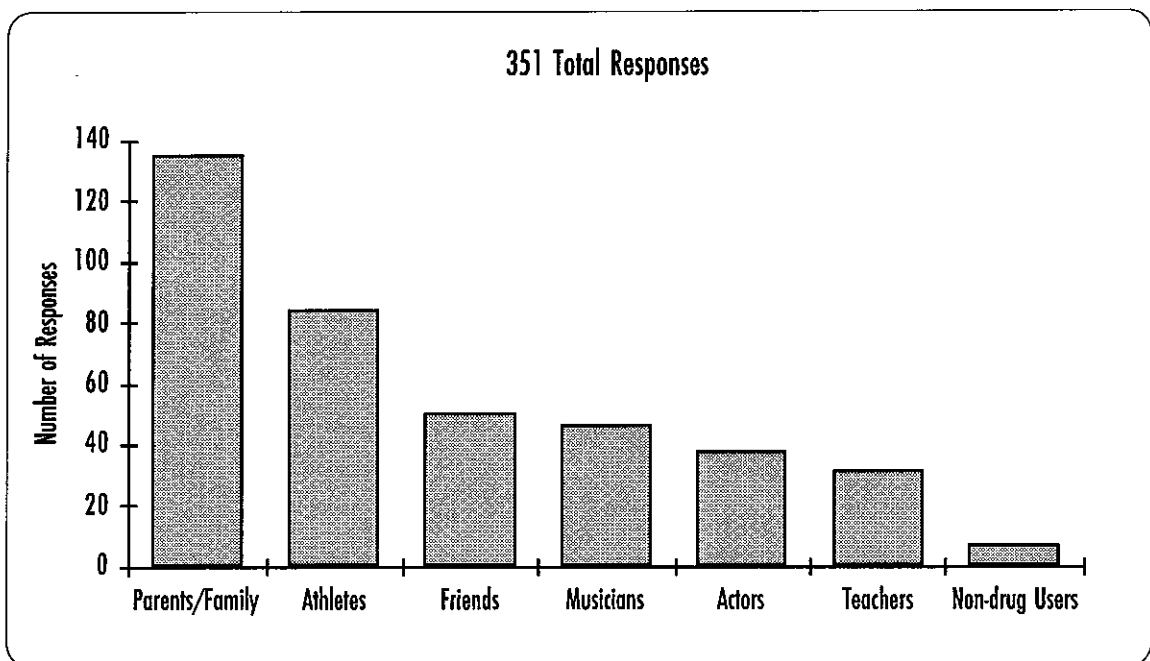
- The four top role models for youth identified by the respondents were: parents or family members, athletes, friends and musicians.
- There were some youth who thought there are no positive role models for their generation.

Wayne Gretzky. He wants everyone to try their hardest.

(14 year old male)

My parents because they're smart, (have) good personalities and they pass these good things on to me.

(12 year old male)

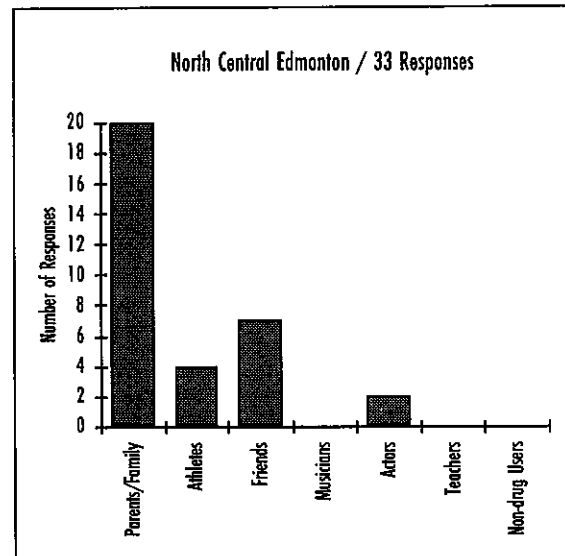
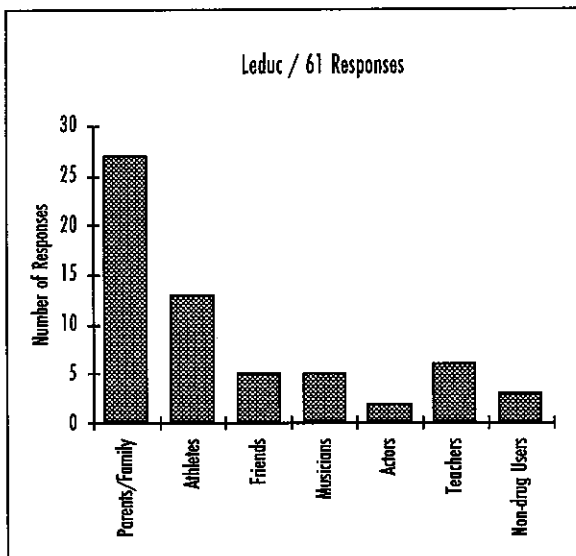
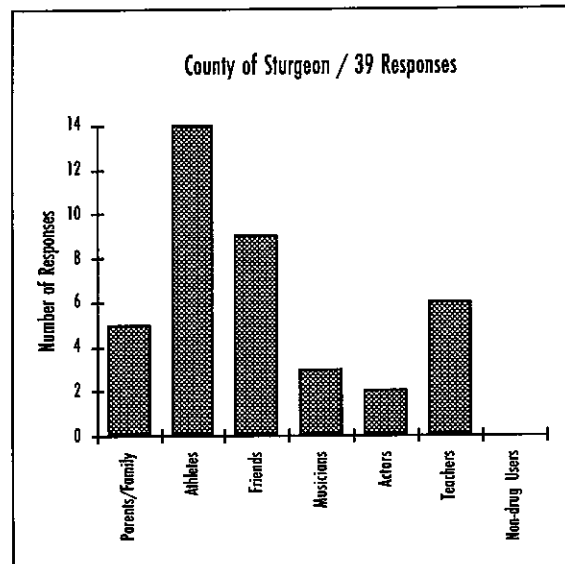
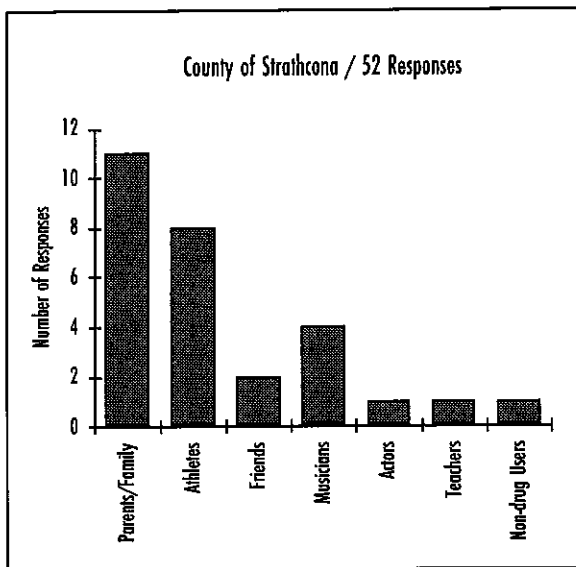
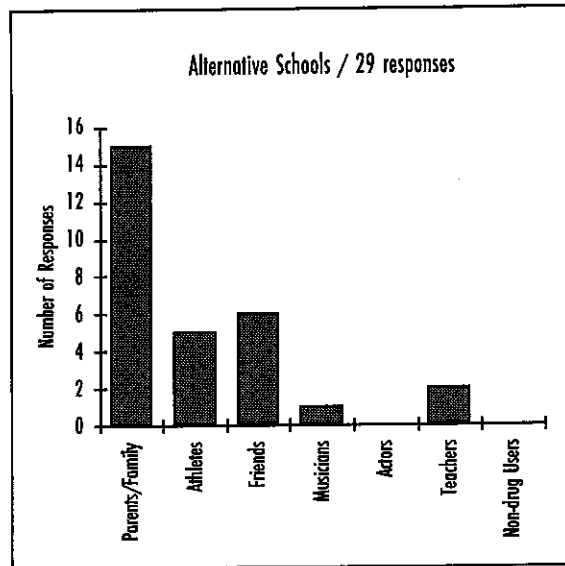


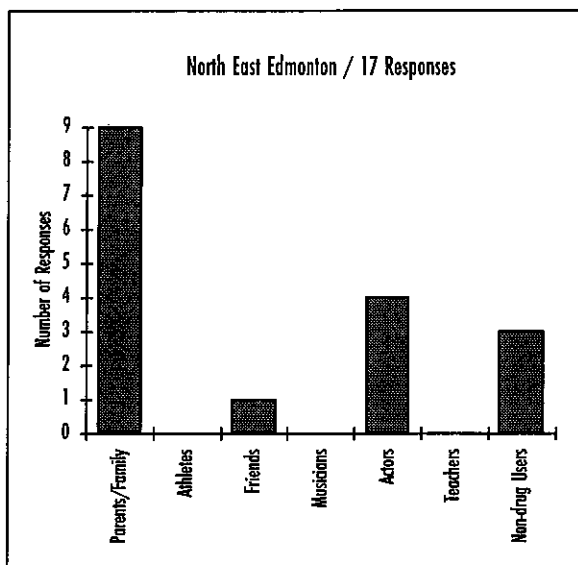
Nowadays there are no positive role models. Everybody tries to portray something they're not.

(15 year old female)

2. WHO WOULD YOU SAY IS A POSITIVE ROLE MODEL FOR YOUR GENERATION AND WHY?

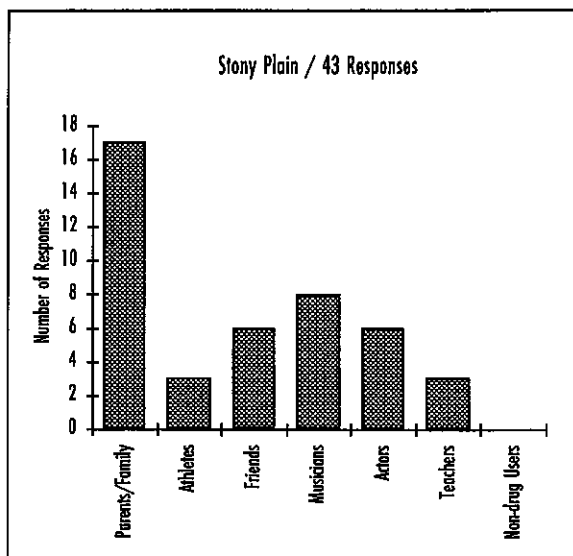
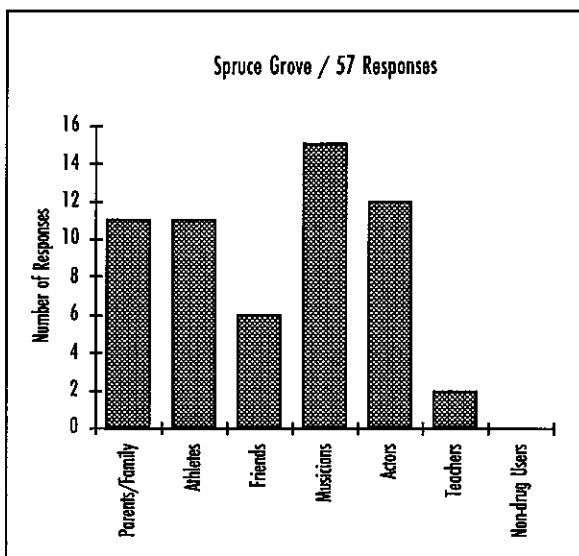
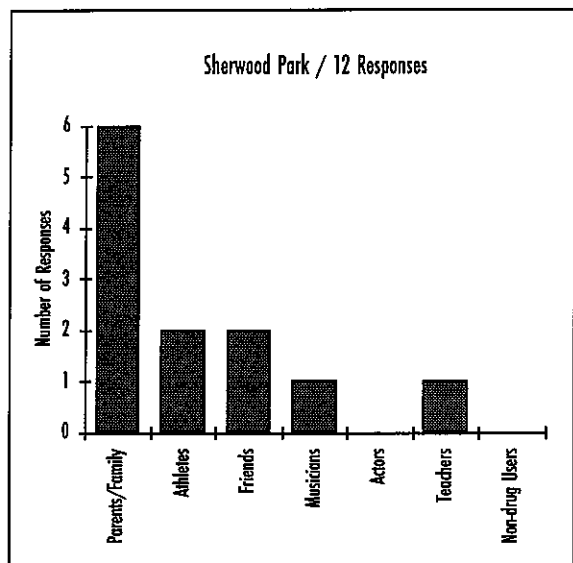
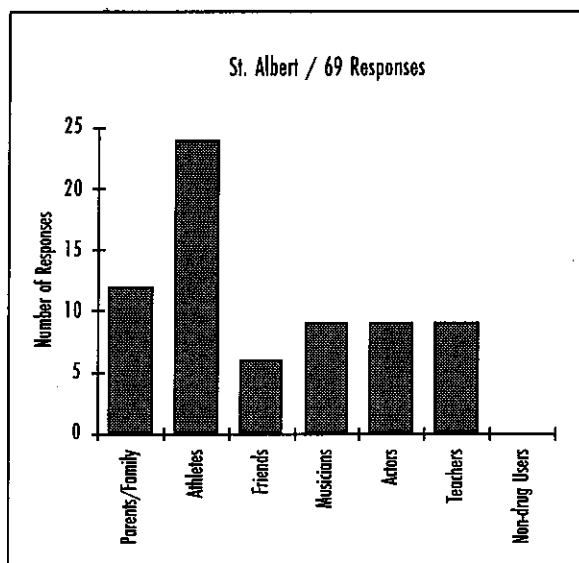
* Please keep in mind the limited number of responses in some areas





2. WHO WOULD YOU SAY IS A POSITIVE ROLE MODEL FOR YOUR GENERATION AND WHY?

* Please keep in mind the limited number of responses in some areas



3. WHAT ROLE SHOULD YOUR PARENTS TAKE IN YOUR LIFE?

**My parents should
guide me and disci-
pline me and try to
encourage me to do
my best.**

(15 year old female)

3. WHAT ROLE SHOULD YOUR PARENTS TAKE IN YOUR LIFE?

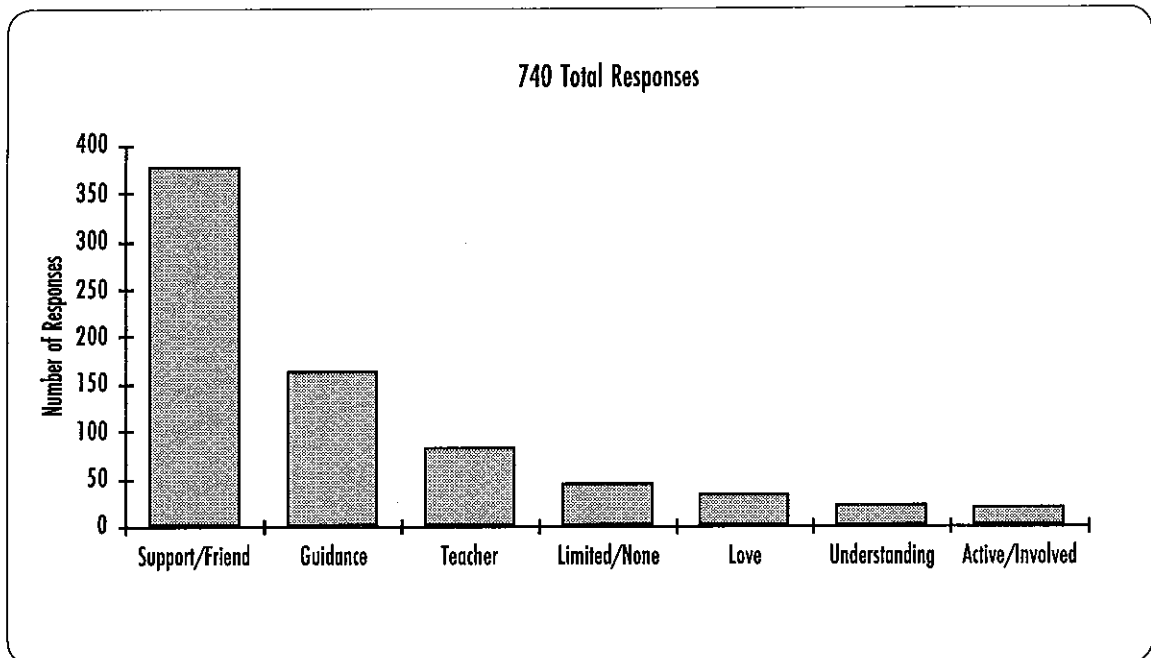
- Overall, comments from youth affirmed their desire for parents to be actively involved in their lives.
- By a significant margin, youth wanted their parents to be supportive and to be a friend. The roles of “guide” and “teacher” were the next most common answers.
- Forty-four (5.9%) responses called for a limited role or no parental involvement.

Guidance, not control.

(15 year old male)

Listen to me when I'm talking.

(15 year old male)

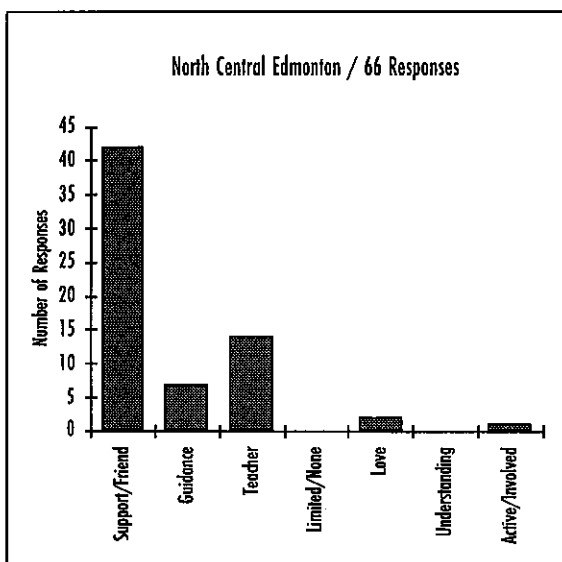
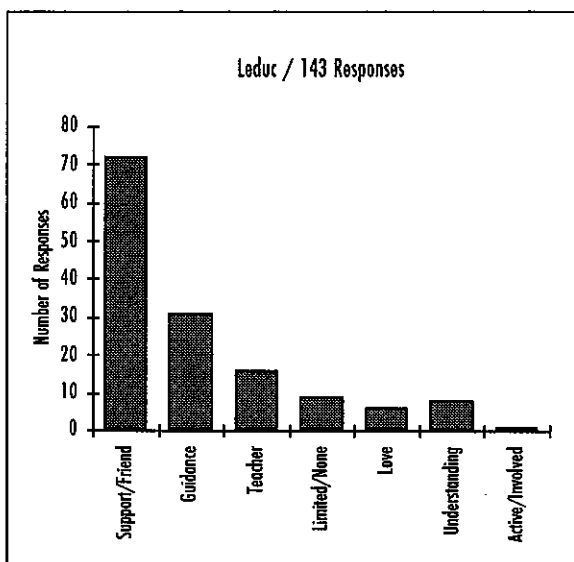
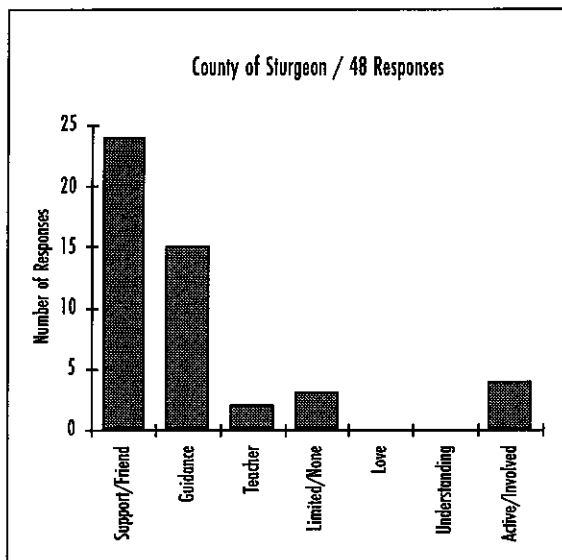
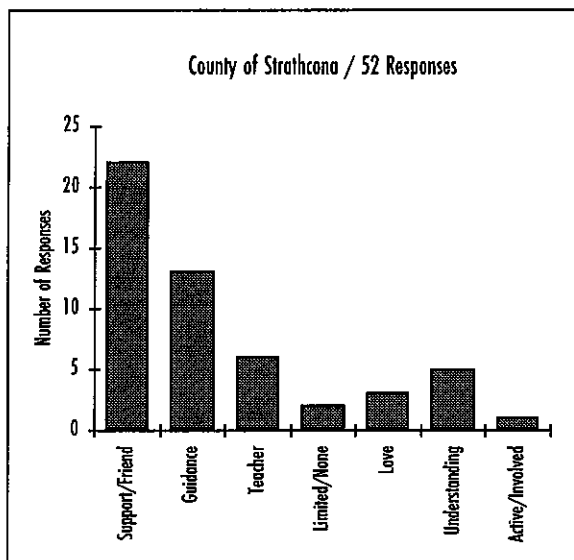
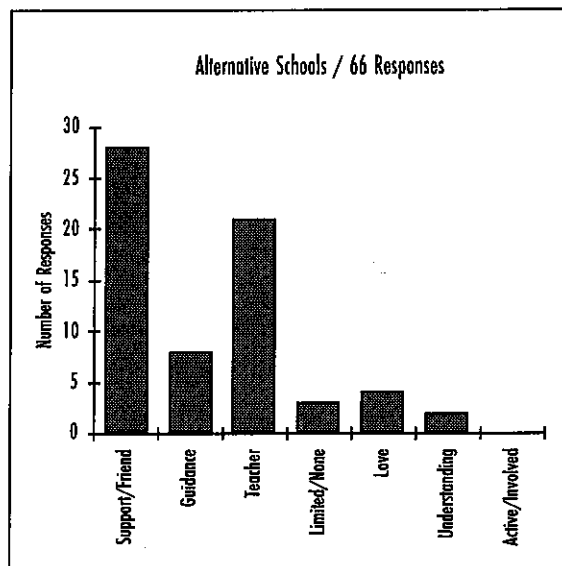


Supporters, because they should support you in whatever you want to do.

(14 year old male)

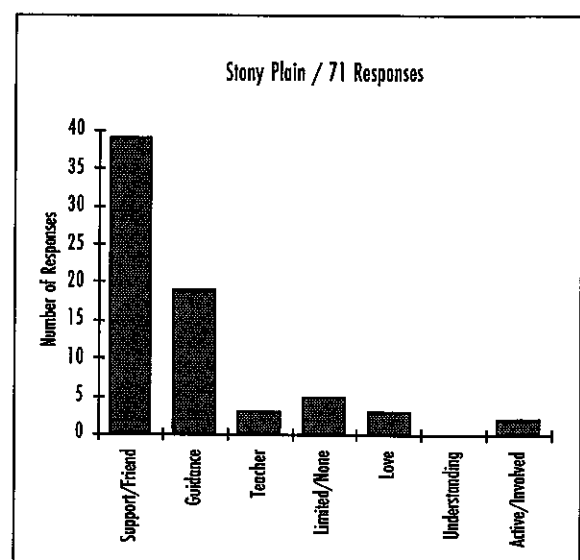
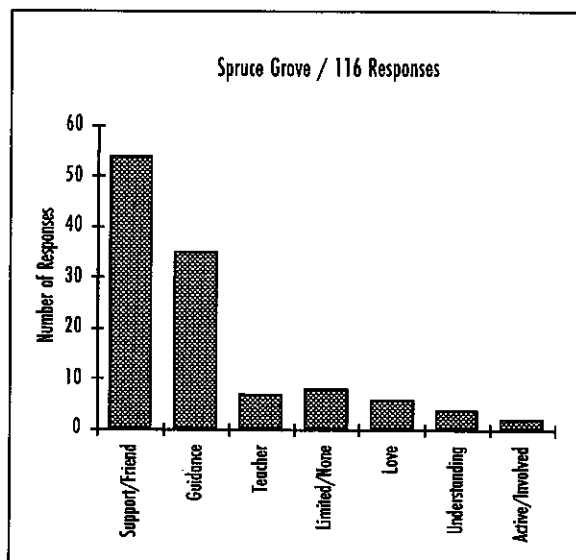
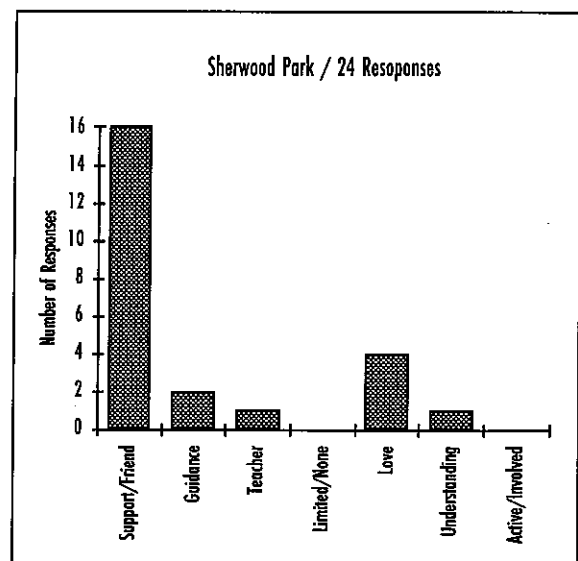
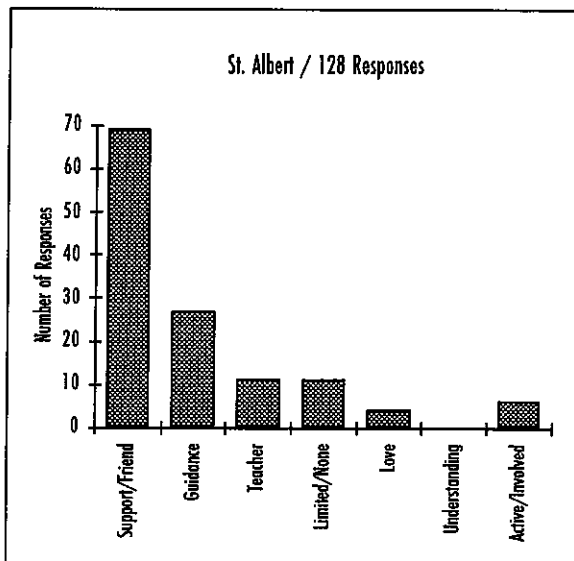
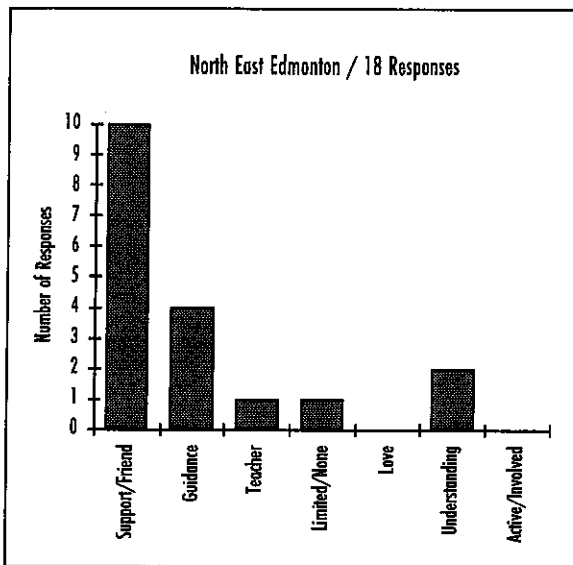
3. WHAT ROLE SHOULD YOUR PARENTS TAKE IN YOUR LIFE?

* Please keep in mind the limited number of responses in some areas



3. WHAT ROLE SHOULD YOUR PARENTS TAKE IN YOUR LIFE?

* Please keep in mind the limited number of responses in some areas



**4a. WHAT IS THE MOST
POSITIVE PART OF
SCHOOLING?**

**Learn to interact with
other people.**

(14 year old female)

4a. WHAT IS THE MOST POSITIVE PART OF SCHOOLING?

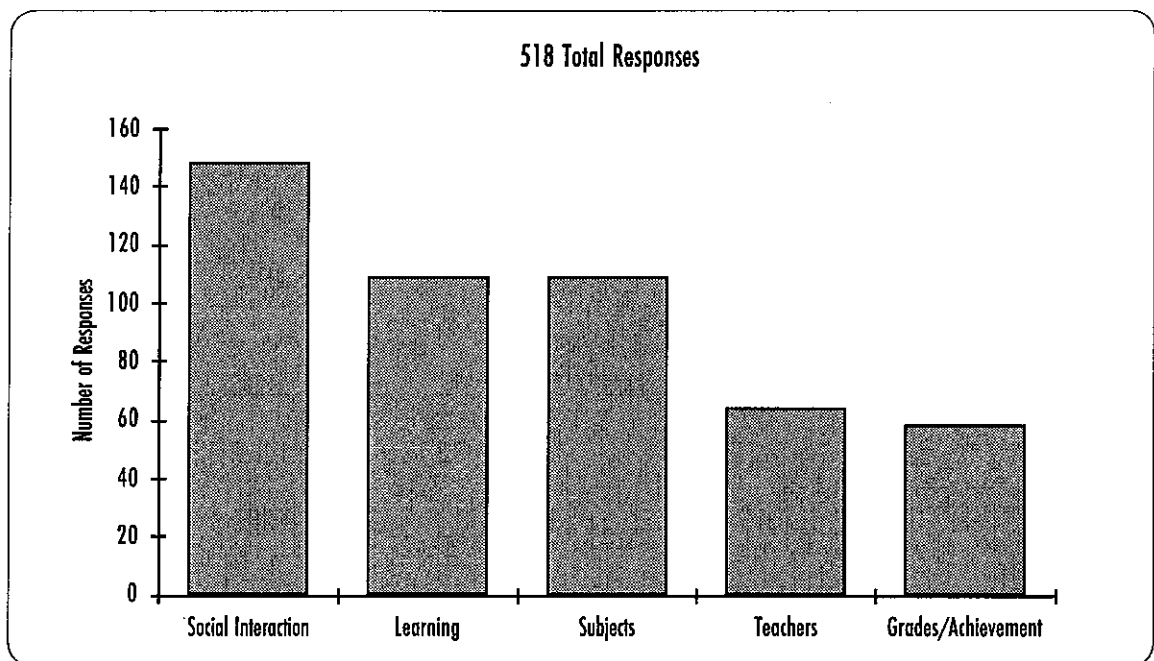
- Respondents identified social interaction as the most positive aspect of school. The learning which occurred in school and the subjects offered shared second place and teaching came next.
- Categories used to aggregate the data are mostly self explanatory but to ensure clarity, the term “teaching” includes responses like: “teachers” or “teachers who understand” and comments on teaching style such as provision of “extra help”.

The interaction with my teachers is the most positive part of schooling. If I’m friends with my teacher I learn twice as much and I enjoy my learning.

(18 year old female)

Learning to live in the real world.

(17 year old male)

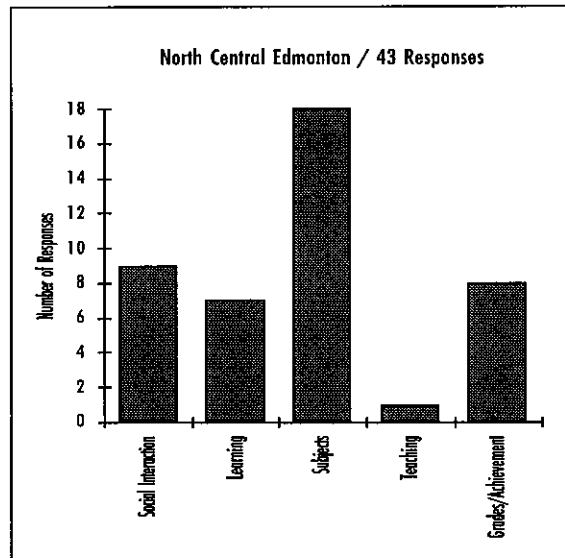
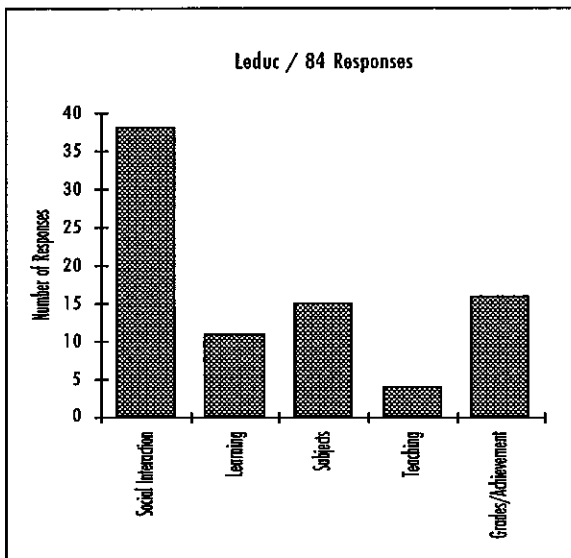
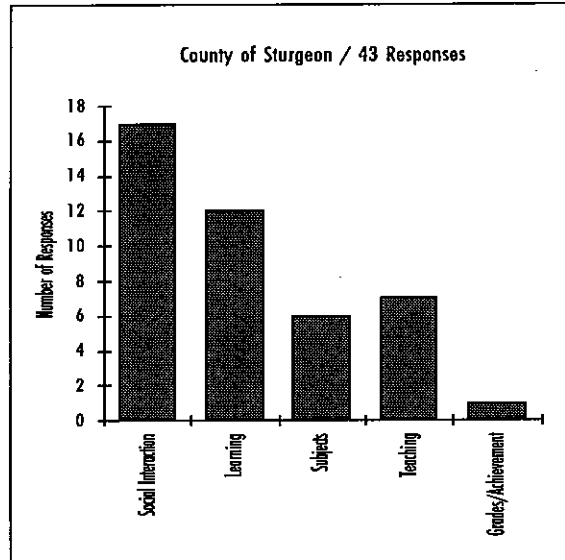
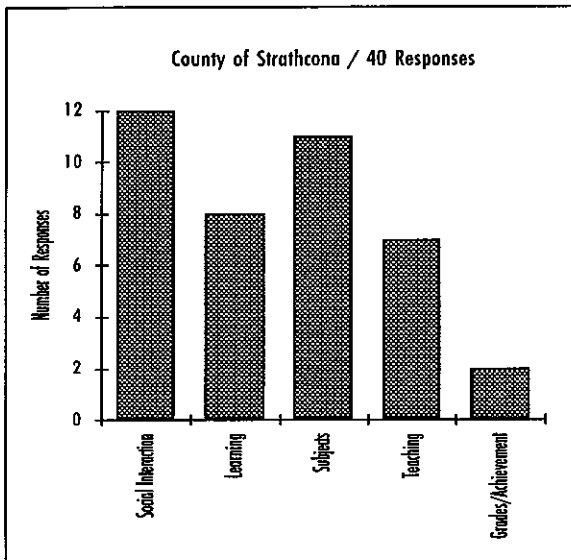
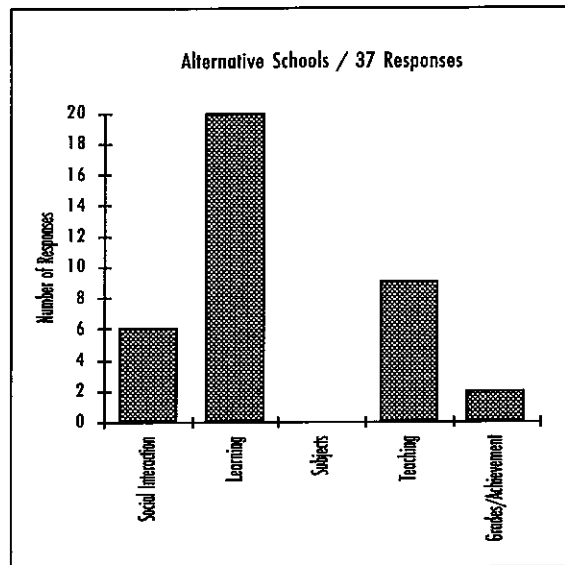


Knowing that I can become something some day because of what I’m learning.

(13 year old female)

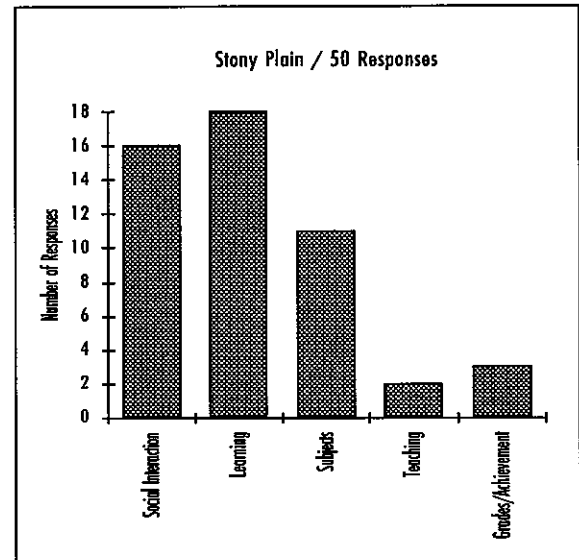
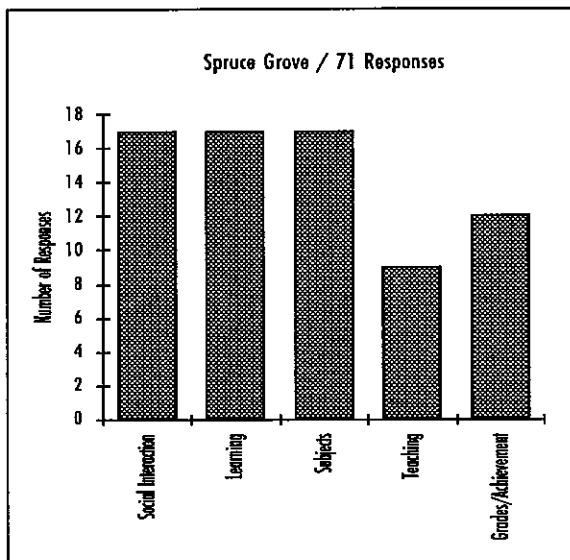
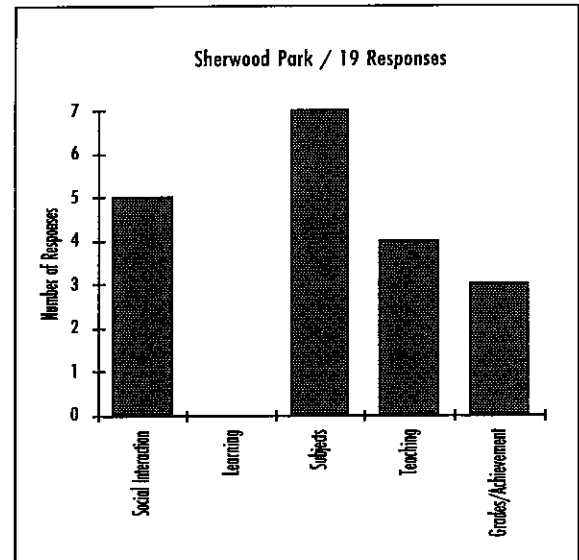
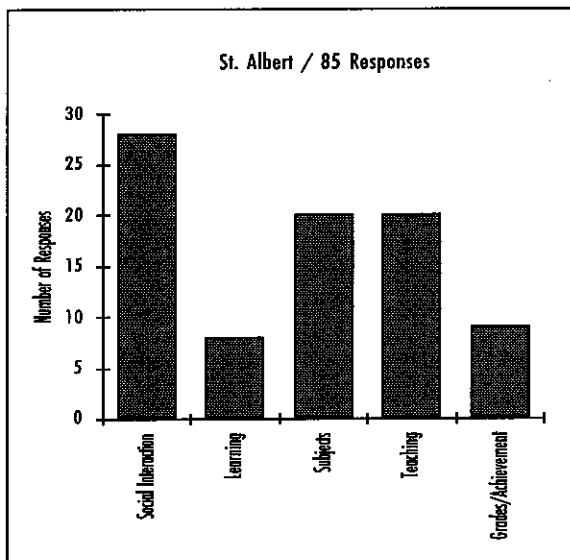
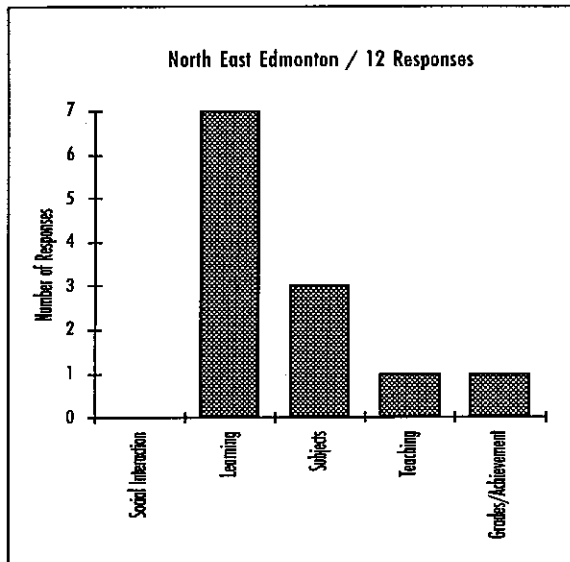
4a. WHAT IS THE MOST POSITIVE PART OF SCHOOLING?

* Please keep in mind the limited number of responses in some areas



4a. WHAT IS THE MOST POSITIVE PART OF SCHOOLING?

* Please keep in mind the limited number of responses in some areas



4b. HOW COULD SCHOOL BE MADE MORE RELEVANT TO YOU?

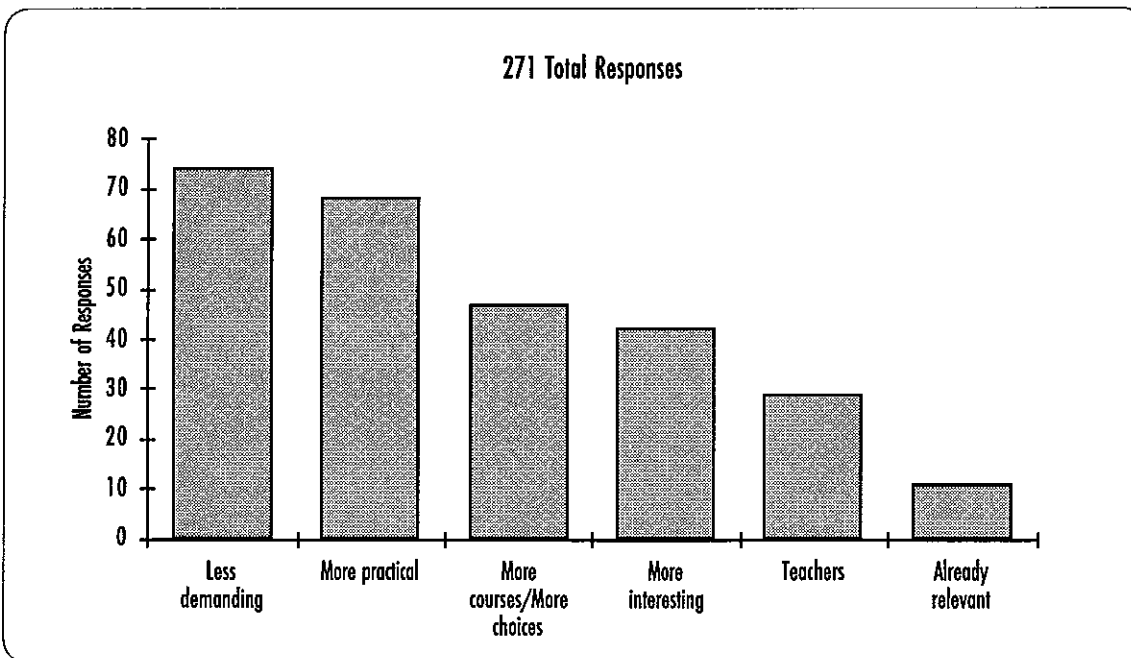
- Making school less demanding, more practical and offering more choice in courses were identified as the most common ways to make school more relevant.
- The responses for the second part of question #4 are not broken down on a geographical basis due to the limited number of responses from most of the areas surveyed.

Everything about going to school is positive because it helps in my future and I meet people here.

(15 year old female)

Focus less on facts and teach more practical skills.

(17 year old male)



Make it a little more exciting.

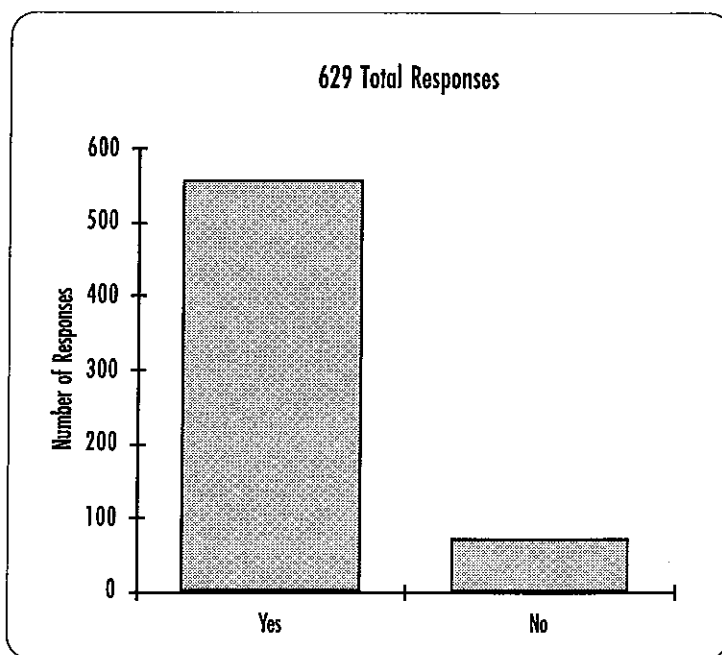
(15 year old female)

Not so much competition and comparison.

(17 year old female)

5. DO YOU FEEL SAFE (AT SCHOOL AND ELSEWHERE)?

- The vast majority of respondents (88.7%) indicated they felt safe at school and elsewhere.
- While a large majority of youth indicated they felt safe some of these respondents qualified their responses:



Yes, I know I can stick up for myself.
(16 year old male)

Yes, I have quite a few friends.
(16 year old male)

- Some youth made distinctions based on time or locale:
- Those youth who indicated they did not feel safe provided such comments as:

I feel safe except when my father is around.
(18 year old female)

No, there are many bad people out there.
(16 year old female)

Yes at home on the reserve, but not as safe in the city because I barely know any people and never know what could happen.
(16 year old male)

Not always. With the way things are going its hard to feel safe anywhere. I just keep to myself. That's the safest way to play it. I am choosy who I befriend.
(18 year old female)

6. IF YOU HAVE AN AFTER SCHOOL JOB WHAT DO YOU DO WITH THE MONEY YOU EARN?

- The data presented may represent overall spending patterns including other sources of income such as allowances.
- Of those responding to this question a significant number indicated that they save a portion of their money. Some of the items respondents were saving for included: education; travel; large items like a vehicle, stereo, computer and sports equipment; and moving out.
- Respondents indicated they spent their money on such items as: entertainment (including recreation), clothes, transportation (car, insurance, gas), substances (tobacco, alcohol and drugs), basic needs.



Artwork by Pamela King

FOCUS GROUPS

INTRODUCTION

FOCUS GROUPS

Focus groups provided the Tracking the Trends Working Committee with an invaluable means of gaining insight into the trends facing youth and the organizations and agencies attempting to meet their needs.

Twenty five focus groups with youth were held in Edmonton, Fort Saskatchewan, Leduc, St. Albert, Sherwood Park, Spruce Grove and Stony Plain.

The discussions within these focus groups centered on two questions:

What are the big issues facing youth today?

Tell me what you see for the future.

Focus groups were also held with members of agencies and organizations who work with youth. These were held in Edmonton but representatives from organizations and agencies in the surrounding communities were included. In addition, a separate focus group session was held with school district staff.

Agency representatives and teachers were asked to consider the following questions:

What are the trends affecting youth today?

Which of these trends are the most significant?

How are these trends affecting the services you provide?

What priorities in service and service delivery do you see (the what and the how)?

What would you offer if you could?

What kinds of services should be discontinued?

The focus groups with both youth and organizations and service providers allowed identification of the emerging and evolving trends which affect youth and consideration of the implications of these trends.

The trends and implications identified in this issue are drawn mainly from information provided by the focus groups, but it is also important to keep in mind the information gathered from questionnaires.

Even though the questionnaire responses were not used in this section, the trends and implications have been categorized using the questionnaire's same six main categories.

ECONOMIC ISSUES

TRENDS & IMPLICATIONS

TREND 1

Economic uncertainty, technological development and changing work requirements will continue, making it increasingly difficult for youth to compete in the job market.

IMPLICATIONS

YOUTH	ORGANIZATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• greater competition for jobs and higher education from older adults preparing for, seeking and maintaining a place in the workforce.• increased pressure on families to support youth who cannot support their own independence.• increased dependence of older youth.• increased numbers of frustrated youth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• increased need for more cooperation/collaboration between community agencies, business and government in program areas to ensure suitable opportunities are available to youth for meaningful experience and employment.• increased demand for alternative opportunities for youth to prepare for and participate in society.

"Used to be, if you got good marks, you got a job. This has changed: achievement does not guarantee success." (Service Provider)

TREND 2

Support systems at all levels—family, community, agency, institution—are being challenged by economic pressure as government cuts, redistribution and initiatives to privatize human services continue at a rapid pace.

IMPLICATIONS

YOUTH	ORGANIZATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• as the social safety net deteriorates, more youth will 'fall through the cracks'.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• doing more with less.• prioritizing services will increasingly become a necessity.• youth will receive support and service at a later stage of need, when a single issue has evolved into multiple problems.

"Support that used to be there is not there. Families that may have been doing fine five years ago are, with these economic and social trends, having more problems functioning." (Service Provider)

TREND 3

There is a growing disparity between the rich and the poor.

IMPLICATIONS

YOUTH	ORGANIZATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it will be difficult for youth to know what choices to make in education and career. There will be fewer winners and more losers in the socio-economic sweepstakes. • discouraged youth who see no place for themselves in the economy may give up in frustration and may lose the capacity to aspire. • youth who fall through the cracks in the social safety net may become alienated, without the resources to deal with the stresses they experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased numbers of youth seeking service will be turned away, or will not receive the kind or level of service required to sustain appropriate development into 'healthy' adulthood. • sources of funding to supplement dwindling government program dollars will be increasingly difficult to find. • cost recovery for service may become necessary for agency survival.

"The middle class will be phased out over time, leaving only the rich and the poor." (Youth)

TREND 1

Reduced funding for education will reduce the kinds of programs that support youth, especially those youth who have fewer financial resources.

IMPLICATIONS

YOUTH	ORGANIZATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> flexible programming to assist youth in completing high school will become increasingly necessary. greater numbers of "at risk" youth may leave school prior to graduation. increased pressure on marginalized youth who are trying to complete their education while having to support themselves. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> schools will be less able to offer support (remedial classes) and youth serving agencies will face increasing demands for their services. increased need for employers to educate their employees in such areas as basic literacy and socialization skills as more of these youth drop out of school.

"Most want to go on to post-secondary school...Who will be able to afford it?" (Youth)

"There is a shift from government support and more demands are placed on families and communities." (Service Provider)

TREND 2

The current system of education is increasingly seen as being unable to assure individuals that success in school secures success in an uncertain future.

IMPLICATIONS

YOUTH	ORGANIZATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increased demand for assistance and information in the development of a realistic personal plan for the future. increased demand for clearer connections between courses offered in school and future career plans. increased demand for career counselors who will assist youth to develop future plans and support them in achieving their goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increased need for schools to work collaboratively with future employers to find ways to ease the transition to work for those youth who will not attend post-secondary institutions. increased need for schools to offer programs for those youth who are not planning to attend post-secondary institutions. increased need to re-define "success" so what schools offer is relevant to youth and their future plans.

"There are no jobs. What's in store for us in the future?" (Youth)

"We won't be able to get as good an education as other people. Due to this we can't get good jobs." (Youth)

"It's changed. Achievement does not guarantee success." (Service Provider)

TREND 3

In certain pockets of Edmonton and surrounding areas there is a sense that youth are encountering more threats to personal safety.

IMPLICATIONS

YOUTH	ORGANIZATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased need to offer more programs that focus on the development of social skills and accepting cultural and life style differences, and conflict resolution. • increased need to involve youth in developing and implementing remedies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased need to respond to this trend pro-actively and work on programs of prevention. • increased need to work on a collaborative basis with a range of stakeholders, including youth and their families, to address issues of safety.

"Racism is a lot worse than people think." (Youth)

"Crime is increasing and peer pressure is part of it." (Youth)

"There is an increase in violent crime and a perception that it is racially motivated." (Service Provider)

TREND 4

As more cutbacks in the educational system occur youth will have fewer opportunities to pursue their educational interests through complementary courses and extra-curricular activities.

IMPLICATIONS

YOUTH	ORGANIZATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased need to expose youth to different experiences i.e. art, culture. • increased need for youth to be involved in planning school programs. • increased need for youth to take a leadership role. More classes should be offered in leadership, entrepreneurship, skills building, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased need for agencies to pool their resources and work with schools on a collaborative level. • increased need to offer school programs in non-traditional settings. • increased need to involve community as resources for schools (stay at home parents, clergy).

"We need to start empowering youth." (Service Provider)

"There needs to be more than the four basic subjects in school." (Youth)

PARENTAL RELATIONSHIPS

TRENDS & IMPLICATIONS

TREND 1

Family structure is changing, with increasing numbers of single parents, teen parents, blended and “non-traditional” families emerging. Less family support is available both within the family unit and from the community.

IMPLICATIONS

YOUTH	ORGANIZATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased instability in family structures can cause youth to seek other living arrangements such as independent living and “non-traditional” families. There will be an increased need for government and community services to give recognition and support to these alternatives and to expand options as a step toward reducing homelessness among youth. • youth increasingly look to peers and community services to compensate for lack of parental/family support. • increased need for approachable, accessible parenting education to build the skills of young parents and to evaluate options in parenting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased demand for new and innovative approaches to parenting education services, particularly for young/teen parents. • increased need for community services to assist families with changing roles and responsibilities in response to complex family dynamics. • need to encourage increased parental and extended family involvement with youth to balance decreased government and community support services. • increased demand for schools and community services to fill the “need-gaps” left by changing family structures and roles. • increased need to provide parents with various forms of support and opportunity to develop parenting skills.

“Support that used to be there is not there. Families have less support for youth, less guidance at an early age.” (Service Provider)

“Youth are showing the effects of not having parents available to them.” (Service Provider)

“Parents: lots of stress, abuse, harassment, no freedom.” (Youth)

“Parents need to get more involved.” (Youth)

TREND 2

Increasing pressure on the family due to economic and social conditions is eroding family (parent/child) relationships. Parental energy is being directed towards issues such as employment rather than family issues.

IMPLICATIONS

YOUTH	ORGANIZATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased need to collaborate with youth to develop services focused on the development of independence and self-sufficiency skills. • youth will increasingly seek out support, guidance and direction from sources outside the family: peers, teachers, community services. • youth are dealing with "adult" issues of unemployment, family income, and socio-economic status more frequently and at an earlier age. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased demand for innovation in providing the support services that youth and families need. • increased need to further develop and raise the profile of free/low-cost "family centered" recreational and community activities. • increased need to educate parents on techniques to balance work and family life, to assist in managing stress and remain involved with their children. • increased need for immediate family support services at the family and community level ... parent aides, parent support services.

"With increasing unemployment, skills that are developed when families are organized around 'having a job' don't get passed on."
(Service Provider)

"Parents are concerned about keeping their jobs... some can't get jobs." (Youth)

TREND 3

Youth increasingly feel parental pressure to achieve, particularly in school, which conflicts with their perception of future opportunities, creating stress and discouragement.

IMPLICATIONS

YOUTH	ORGANIZATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased need for self-management skills to cope with the pressure of parental expectations and discouragement regarding future opportunities. • increased collaboration among youth, schools and the community to develop youth leadership programs and community service programs to promote opportunities for personal achievement. • increased demand to involve youth in choosing their educational programs and settings to increase opportunities for a sense of success. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased demand for school curriculum to include greater emphasis on life management skills: handling stress, interpersonal skills, employment, goal setting and decision making. • fewer opportunities for success in the regular school system due to educational cut-backs and shrinking financial resources. • need to re-define success. Encourage achievement in a broader range of life areas through raising the profile of youth driven community leadership programs.

"...the push for achievement and status, kids are driven towards this ... if you get good marks it equals job." (Service Provider)

"Parents want [the future] to be better and then pressure kids to be high achievers." (Youth)

"Pressure from home, parent's expectations affect self-esteem." (Youth)

PEER RELATIONS

TRENDS & IMPLICATIONS

TREND 1

Peers are increasingly taking on the functions of helping with problem-solving and giving both advice and information to youth.

IMPLICATIONS

YOUTH	ORGANIZATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• youth will look increasingly to their peers for guidance and direction.• youth are likely to use services which involve peer helping.• youth will look for help and information from others who share common experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• increased need to expand peer support and youth-teaching-youth programs.• increased need to foster problem-solving methods/abilities/skills as a part of public education.• increased need for agencies to find creative and innovative ways to involve hard-to-reach youth in services and planning.

"If I needed to know about sex I would go to my older friends because they are more straight with me than my parents." (Youth)

"More kids are being left to fend for themselves with their problems because parents are occupied by conflicting demands between career and family." (Service Provider)

SELF-IMAGE

TRENDS & IMPLICATIONS

TREND 1

Increasing sense of stress in youth (centered around issues such as education, employment and family).

IMPLICATIONS

YOUTH	ORGANIZATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• greater need for youth to be able to make decisions both at home and regarding issues that affect their future.• greater need for parents to be more supportive of their children.• need for increased choices and equal opportunity for youth regardless of financial resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• greater need to promote training and facilitate participation of youth in the community; leadership opportunities.• increased demands by youth for empowerment—for a voice on issues that affect them, for recognition as stakeholders and not just as consumers.• greater need for parents to become more involved in raising their children—provide more support and positive feedback.

"Many youth are discouraged that their "best" is not going to be good enough." (Service Provider)

"What is there to look forward to?" (Youth)

TREND 2

Youth are being devalued by the community and perceived as trouble makers.

IMPLICATIONS

YOUTH	ORGANIZATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• increased need for media to focus on more positive aspects of youth. Not all youth are juvenile delinquents.• increased need for more drop-in centers for youth with planning shared collaboratively by youth and adults.• increased need for youth to help the less fortunate of their peers—demonstrate positive behavior—peer groups, buddy systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• increased need to develop more community programs (teen leadership programs, peer support). Draw on youth as a resource.• increased need to work with "at risk" youth to focus on positives; increase coping strategies and life-skills.

"Media take a negative perspective and frequently portray teens as dangerous." (Agency)

"Adults think that we are always going to steal something." (Youth)

BEHAVIOR

TRENDS & IMPLICATIONS

TREND 1

Society's popular image of youth remains less than positive: youth are seen as problems or liabilities rather than a resource in the community. This image of youth has led adults to become more reactionary in their responses to youth, and policy changes to be based on misconceptions.

IMPLICATIONS

YOUTH	ORGANIZATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• increased need for adults/society to recognize teen issues as important.• increased need to review adult's perception of teens. Teens see themselves as well behaved in school and having less involvement in crime than adults.• increased need for teens to be considered part of the solution to issues facing them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• increased need for service providers to consider the voice of youth when planning and implementing programs designed for their school and extra-curricular needs.• increased sense of pressure on service providers to "solve" problems and develop <i>quick fixes</i> to public perceptions of the main issues facing the community (i.e. young offenders, increase in juvenile crime...).• need to continue to network with an outlook for longer term solutions to real problems (i.e. increasing number of drop outs) even with the pressure of fewer dollars/resources for the provision of existing support/services to youth.

"We want to be treated like young adults...They shouldn't stereotype all teens just because some are a problem...the adults of the world seem to underestimate the understanding and knowledge of most teens." (Youth)

"We, in the business of working with young people, still unfortunately focus more attention on the minority of youth who typically cause problems, than on those who are silently struggling against great odds." (Teacher)

TREND 2

As young peoples' living arrangements diverge from two-parent and single parent families to "other living arrangements" the perceived and real difficulties accompanying their home, school and community participation will increase.

IMPLICATIONS

YOUTH	ORGANIZATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • greater need for supports to ease the often premature transition from adolescent to adult responsibilities (i.e. budgeting, parenting courses, career planning). • more youth experiencing difficulties <i>fitting in</i> at school and socially as more youth are living outside their home and see themselves at greater risk of getting into future difficulties in the community (i.e. early school leavers, involvement with police). • increased need for a spectrum of services and graduated support to provide youth a more realistic move towards independence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased need for change in programs/projects to accommodate new realities (i.e. youth do not have financial support for school) and enhance equal access to in-school or recreational opportunities. • increased need for services to take into consideration that youth are sometimes solely or largely responsible for taking care of their daily needs and extend appropriate authority and credibility to them. • increased number of youth living independently from their parents/family requiring government recognition and funding.

"Me and some friends cannot live at home anymore and so we are fending for ourselves and trying to stay in school...we have all these adult responsibilities now and we're just kids still, really!" (Youth, 15 years old)

"The youth that we see are coming in with needs far beyond what we are set up for (as a recreational centre)...I mean they are seeing us as a food bank and a safe place to stay until we have to close at night...these should not be the concerns of childhood." (Service Provider)

TREND 3

Media messages and technological advances continue to bombard youth with a multitude of mixed messages about lifestyle issues.

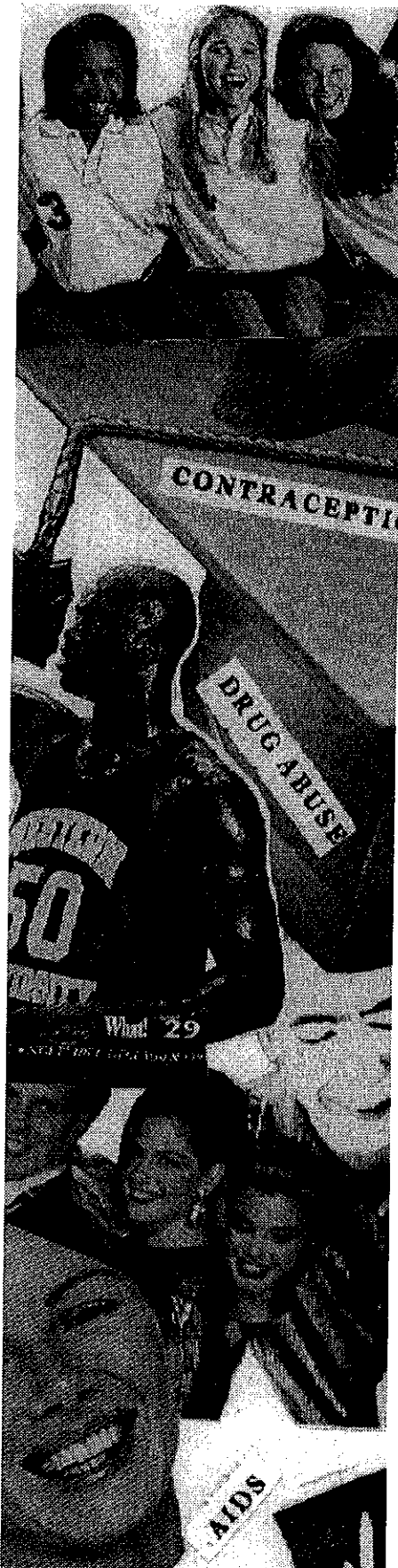
IMPLICATIONS

YOUTH	ORGANIZATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • youth are given quantities of information about health-related issues (i.e. STDs, HIV, pregnancy...) and need opportunities to discuss practical applications. • more relevant programs are needed to address adolescent substance use/abuse. • use of popular media (i.e. MTV, fashion and teen magazines, movies) must be maximized to carry messages regarding issues of importance to youth (relationships, sexuality, future plans). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • professionals, in particular teachers, feel that they are increasingly asked to be experts in a wider variety of matters outside the school curriculum. • increased need to provide those working with youth relevant training opportunities to update their information and increase their comfort level with these issues. • greater need for collaboration across sectors (health, education, justice, social services) in order to share and expand expertise and referral sources pertaining to youth.

"All around us are messages that being thin and rich with a drink in your hand is what success is all about...but having money, drinking...those things cause young people a lot more problems than they're worth." (Youth)

"We are trying to help youth sort through basics in life, including the dangers of drugs/alcohol, petty crime, the *fast life* and they think that they can have everything they see on TV...this causes a great disparity and frustration for them." (Police Officer)

Artwork by Sunila Master



COMPARISONS BETWEEN 1989 AND 1994 TRENDS AND IMPLICATIONS

COMPARISONS

The 1989 edition of *Tracking the Trends* focused on youth. Returning to this subject five years later allows us to make some comparisons. Note that the 1989 data presented as Trends and Implications was collected using focus groups of only agency personnel, while in 1994 the data presented as Trends and Implications was collected using focus groups made up of agency personnel, teachers and youth.

Several similarities emerge when comparing the Trends and Implications between the 1989 and 1994 editions of *Tracking The Trends*:

- There is a common trend toward more diversified family structures and non-traditional family types. Several implications of this trend include: a need for parenting courses for young parents; more parents working and families experiencing economic stress; more displaced (runaway/throwaway) youth; schools being asked to do more—take on responsibilities that were previously parental.
- There appears to be increased pessimism and doubt regarding the nature and status of adolescence in our society. Implications of this common trend include: the popular image of youth as problems, not resources; youth expected to behave as adults, but without having adult authority or credibility; the need for youth to be involved in planning services and activities for themselves.
- With regard to education and employment there appears to be agreement that: fewer opportunities

exist in mainstream secondary education for youth who are in special circumstances; in the education system the connection between school and career is not made apparent enough; more youth who are attending educational activities do not have access to enough income to meet their basic needs.

There is only one notable difference between the Trends and Implications identified in the 1989 edition and the 1994 edition.

- There is more emphasis in 1989 on treatment services for dealing with issues faced by youth while there is a change toward more preventive goals in 1994.

There is great similarity between the Trends and Implications identified in the 1989 and 1994 publications. This may suggest that the situation faced by youth and service providers has not changed significantly over the past five years. It should be noted, however, that the context has changed greatly between then and today.

In 1989 the focus group discussion occurred in an atmosphere of greater optimism than currently exists. There was confidence that positive action would result if solutions to the challenges facing youth were identified. During the recent focus groups this sense of optimism was lacking. There are differing views on the responsibility of the family to provide solutions. Since 1989 there has been a dissolution rather than an enhancement of policies which support youth.



LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS AND AGENCIES

LIST

TRACKING THE TRENDS: YOUTH 1994

Agencies	Treatment	Support	Recreation	Residential	Other
AADAC	✓	✓	✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • family & individual counseling • addictions education • assessment
Acadia House Association	✓			✓	
Alberta Bosco Homes	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • education
Alberta Family and Social Services	✓	✓		✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contact for more information
Alberta Mental Health Services	* see end of list	✓		✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • community program planning, funding and consultation • health promotion/ prevention programs
Alta Care Resources	✓	✓		✓	
Atonement Home Programs		✓		✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • volunteer program
Ben Calf Robe Society		✓			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consultation
Big Sisters and Brothers Society		✓			
Birth Control Clinic	✓	✓			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information • counseling • birth control supplies (at cost or free)
Bissell Centre		✓	✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • child care for young single mothers • vouchers for clothing
Boyle McCauley Health Centre	✓	✓			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lab/dental/testing
Boyle Street Community Services Cooperative		✓	✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advocacy • outreach and street work • drop-in centre • Needleworks • alternative school • support groups • pre-natal support
Boys and Girls Clubs of Edmonton		✓	✓	✓	
Catholic Social Services (Safehouse)		✓	✓	✓	
Catholic Social Services (Young Offender Program)	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • young offender day program
Centre for Child and Adolescent Development		✓			
Centrepont-Young Offender Outpatients' Services	✓				
Child and Adolescent Services Association	✓			✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assessment for emotional, behavioral and developmental disorders • individual, group and family therapy programs
Children's Advocate		✓			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advocacy
Chimo Youth Retreat Center				✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • life skills programs
Crisis Intervention Clinic		✓			
Crossroads Outreach/Crossroads House		✓		✓	
Dickensfield Amity House		✓	✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information and referral service for area residents
Edmonton Board of Health	✓				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • birth control clinics • STD clinic • school health • other public health programs
Edmonton Catholic Schools		✓			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • educational programs

TRACKING THE TRENDS: YOUTH 1994

Agencies	Treatment	Support	Recreation	Residential	Other
Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation		✓		✓	
Edmonton Community and Family Services	✓	✓			• volunteer and youth programming • contact for information
Edmonton Immigrant Services Association		✓	✓		• advocacy • social, cultural and educational programs • inner city school workshop
Edmonton Integrated Services	✓			✓	
Edmonton Public Schools		✓			• educational programs
Elizabeth Fry Society	✓	✓			
Family Centre		✓			• counseling: individual, family and group
Humanacare Counseling Inc.	✓	✓	✓	✓	• home building
Inner City High School		✓	✓	✓	• educational program • breakfast and lunch programs
Inner City Youth Housing Project		✓	✓ residents only	✓	• outreach and street work • advocacy • pre/post natal support • Aboriginal/cultural programming
Kara		✓			• programming for parents of pre-school children
Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council		✓	✓		
McMann Youth Services				✓	
Mennonite Centre for Newcomers		✓			• employment counseling • English language classes
Metis Child and Family Services		✓	✓		• advocacy • family support
Mountain Plains Community Services Society				✓	
Native Counseling Services		✓		✓	
Neighborhood Activity Centre of Belvedere		✓	✓		
Norwood Community Centre		✓	✓		• advocacy • referrals • food hampers • family intervention • clothing • bus tickets
Opportunity Zone		✓	✓		• educational and employment programs • lunch program • personal development programs
Planned Parenthood Association		✓			• pregnancy tests
Poundmaker's Lodge (Adolescent Treatment Program at St. Paul's)	✓				
Salvation Army		✓	✓		• camp programs
Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton	✓	✓			• public education • resource library (by appointment)
TERRA	✓	✓	✓		• educational • outreach

Agencies	Treatment	Support	Recreation	Residential	Other
Unity Centre			✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parents time out • drop in centre • information and referral
Yellowhead Youth Centre	✓	✓	✓	✓	
YMCA		✓	✓		
Youth Emergency Shelter Society		✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • community outreach • family mediation • advocacy • life skills
Youth Employment Services Centre		✓			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • programs and services regarding employment and training needs
YWCA		✓	✓		

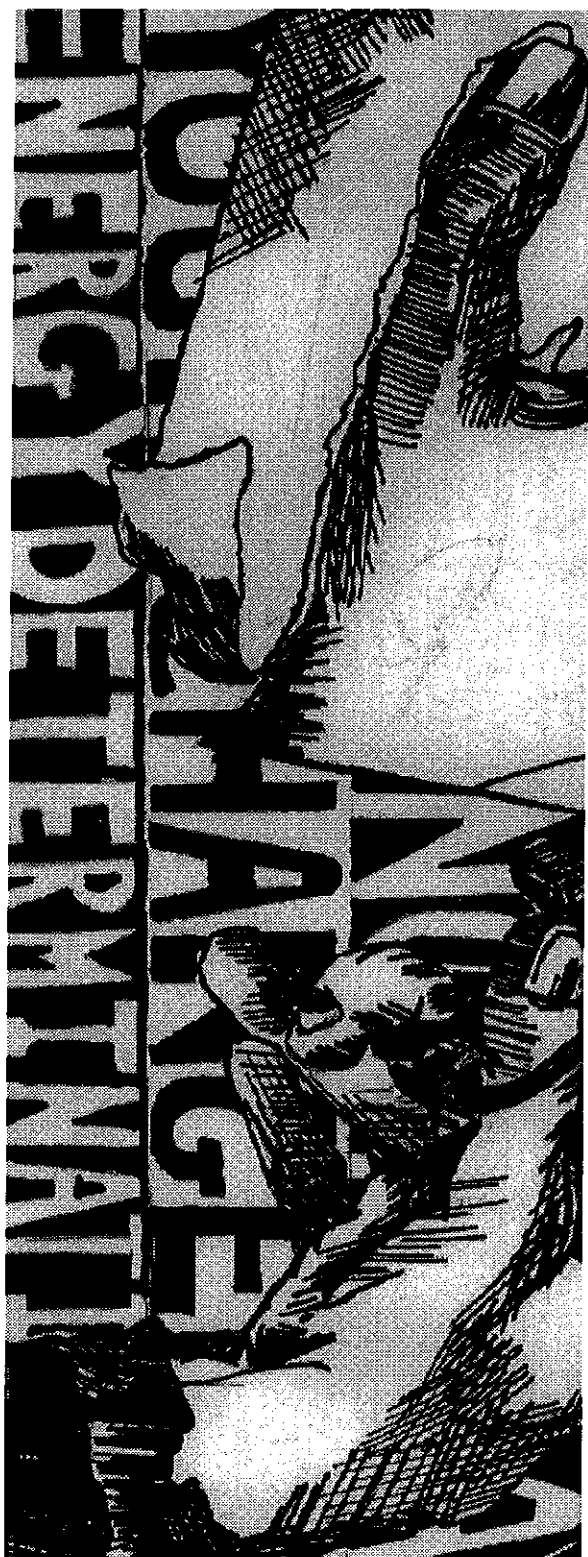
In the suburban areas included in this edition information regarding services can be obtained by contacting your local Family and Community Services Office.

Family and Community Service Offices:

	Address	Phone
County of Leduc	1101 - 5th Street, Nisku	955-3555
Fort Saskatchewan	10213 - 100 Avenue	992-6200
Leduc	1 Alexandra Drive	980-7152
County of Strathcona	205 Athabasca Avenue, Sherwood Park	464-4044
Spruce Grove	315 Jespersen Avenue	962-2611
St. Albert	5th St. Anne Street	459-1512
Stony Plain	4912 - 51 Avenue	963-9770

* Alberta Health, Mental Health Services Branch, Edmonton Region, does not provide direct treatment for youth within Edmonton proper (rather it funds agencies/programs which provide assessment/treatment services in this area). However, treatment is provided to children and adolescents at the following suburban/rural offices:

Drayton Valley	5108 - 51 Street	542-3140
Edson	111 - 54 Street	723-8294
Fort Saskatchewan	301, 9821 - 108 Street	998-5225
Hinton	131 Market St., Box 2659	865-8247
Leduc	4210 - 48 street	986-2660
Sherwood Park	340 Sioux Road	467-6562
St. Albert	30 Sir Winston Churchill Square	459-2820
Stony Plain	4709 - 44 Avenue	963-6151



APPENDICES

YOUTH PARTICIPANTS

APPENDIX 1

We would like to express appreciation to the youth who provided input into this edition of *Tracking the Trends* by completing the questionnaires and participating in focus groups. We value the time and care the youth took in helping us gather information. We would also like to thank the staff at each of the programs, schools or alternative educational programs who permitted us to distribute the questionnaire or hold focus groups.

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Boyle Street Community Services Cooperative

Catholic Social Services - Genesis Alternative Program

Edmonton Young Offender Centre

L.Y. Cairns Street Based Outreach Program

Opportunity Zone

Youth Employment Services Centre - The Ultimate Program

SCHOOLS AND AGENCIES

Archbishop O'Leary Catholic High School

Bellerose High School

Ben Calf Robe School

Boyle Street Co-op

Caledonia Park School

Dansation: Ellen's Academy of Dance

H. E. Beriault Catholic Junior High School

High Park Junior High School

Inner City Youth Housing Project

Fort Saskatchewan Senior High School

Jasper Place School

John Paul II Junior High School

Killarney School

Kitaskinaw

Leduc Composite High School

Leduc Junior High School

Louis St. Laurent Catholic Junior/Senior High School

McNally High School

Memorial Composite High School

Namoo School

Our Lady of Angels School

Ross Sheppard Composite High School

Sherwood Heights

Spruce Grove High School

St. Francis Xavier Catholic High School

St. Joseph Catholic High School

St. Rose Catholic Junior High School

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic High School

St. Thomas More Catholic Junior High School

Stratford School

Strathcona County Youth Council

Sturgeon Composite High School

Victoria School

Westlawn School

Woodhaven Junior High School

FOCUS GROUPS

APPENDIX 1

AGENCY AND ORGANIZATION FOCUS GROUPS

Over two hundred and fifty invitations to attend the agency focus groups were sent out to organizations providing services to youth. In compiling the invitation list for the focus groups we made an effort to ensure that a cross section of geographic and ethnic groups were invited to participate. We also sought to ensure that we invited service providers from a cross section of programming available to youth, including a wide range of athletic programming along with service organizations providing programs for youth facing difficulty in the community.

Since this edition has expanded to include the communities surrounding Edmonton, invitations were also extended to agencies from these communities.

More than ninety representatives from various agencies, organizations and the community attended one of four focus group sessions held over a two day period. In addition to these sessions, a fifth focus group session was held to enable teachers to participate in the process. Due to the amount of contact they have with youth we wanted to ensure that their voices were heard.

As some organizations and agencies have multiple programs or locations, a number of them had more than one representative participating in the focus groups. A limited number of private individuals active in the community also participated in the focus groups. While they have not been cited by

name we extend our thanks to them for their input into this process.

We would like to thank all program and service providers who assisted by participating in focus groups. As with the youth, your contribution to the current edition of *Tracking the Trends* is invaluable.

PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

Acadia House Association

Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission

Alberta Foster Parent Association

Alberta Health-Mental Health Services Branch

Alberta Indian Health Care Commission

Alta Care Resources

Ben Calf Robe Society

Big Sisters and Big Brothers Society of Edmonton

Bonnie Doon Composite High School

Boyle Street Community Services Cooperative

Boys and Girls Club (Fort Saskatchewan)

Boys and Girls Club (Leduc)

Canadian Foundation for the Love of Children

Canadian Mental Health Association

Canadian Native Friendship Centre

Child and Adolescent Services Association

Catholic Social Services	Independent Counseling Enterprises
Changes	Inner City Youth Housing Project
Changing Together	J. Percy Page Composite High School
Children's Health Centre	Leduc Strathcona Health Unit
Community Action Program	Legal Aid Youth Office
Connect Society	McDougall Junior High School
County of Leduc	McMann Youth Services Association
Edmonton and District Foster Family Association	Metis Child and Family Services Society
Edmonton Board of Health	Misericordia Adolescent Program
Edmonton Catholic Schools	Native Employment Services Association
Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation	Opportunity Zone
Edmonton Community and Family Services	Planned Parenthood Association
Edmonton Immigrant Services Association	Poundmaker's Lodge
Edmonton Native Healing Centre	Scouts Canada
Edmonton Parks and Recreation	Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton
Edmonton Police Services	T.D. Baker Junior High School
Edmonton Public Schools	TERRA
Edmonton Public Schools Consulting Services	Transitions
Edmonton Public Schools Teachers' Local #37	Unity Centre of Northeast Edmonton
Edmonton Young Offender Centre	Wecan Co-op
Edmonton Youth Orchestra	Youth Emergency Shelter Society
Family Centre	Youth Employment Services Centre
First Nations Freedom Network	YWCA
Grant MacEwan Community College	We regret if we have neglected to include any agency which had participants in the focus groups.
Humanacare Counseling Inc.	

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

APPENDIX 2

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THOSE COMPLETING THE CLOSED RESPONSE QUESTIONNAIRE

In the following list n = sample size. Sample sizes vary due to missing data.

- The gender ratio was 50.9% male and 49.1% female (n = 3026)
- 69.8% of the respondents lived with two parents, 21% with a single parent and 9.2% lived in some other situation. (n = 3024)
- 38.1% of the respondents were in junior high school and 61.9% were in senior high school. (n = 3118)
- 79.2% of the respondents were born in Canada, 20.8% were born elsewhere. (n = 3018)
- For 54.3% of the youth responding to the questionnaire, both parents were born in Canada. For 45.7% of the respondents, at least one parent was born outside Canada. (n = 2985)
- 81.1% (or 2703) of the responses were from Edmonton while 18.9% (or 629) were from surrounding communities.

GRADE

Missing = 205

Grade	Frequency	Per Cent
Seven	376	12.0
Eight	394	12.6
Nine	417	13.3
Ten	580	18.5
Eleven	707	22.6
Twelve	644	20.6
Unspecified*	9	.3
Total	3127	100

* Respondents from alternative school programs who did not always categorize themselves according to grade.

AGE

Missing = 319

Age	Frequency	Per Cent
Eleven	10	.3
Twelve	263	8.7
Thirteen	355	11.8
Fourteen	387	12.8
Fifteen	431	14.3
Sixteen	661	21.9
Seventeen	505	16.8
Eighteen	272	9.0
Nineteen plus	129	4.3
Total	3013	100

LOCATION

Response Areas	Number of Respondents
County of Sturgeon	68
County of Strathcona	45
County of Parkland	11
Edmonton	2703
Leduc	125
St. Albert	105
Sherwood Park	28
Spruce Grove	146
Stony Plain	101
Total	3332

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THOSE COMPLETING THE OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

- Gender: 56% male, 44% female, (n = 666).
- Living arrangement: 73.2% with two parents, 16.7% with single parent and 10% in other living situations (n = 657).
- Country of birth: 95.7% born in Canada, 4.3% born outside of Canada. (n = 661)
- Parents' place of birth: In the case of 77.6%, both parents were born in Canada, 22.4% of respondents had at least one parent born outside of Canada. (n = 664)
- Location

Response Areas	Number of Respondents	Per Cent of Total Responses
Alternative Schools	76	9.6
County of Parkland	11	1.4
County of Strathcona	45	5.7
County of Sturgeon	68	8.6
Leduc	125	15.8
North Central Edmonton	61	7.7
North East Edmonton	26	3.3
St. Albert	105	13.3
Sherwood Park	28	3.6
Spruce Grove	146	18.4
Stony Plain	101	12.8
Total	792	100

CLOSED RESPONSE

APPENDIX 3

CLOSED RESPONSE QUESTIONS

Respondents to the questionnaire chose from among the following responses:

Inaccurate	1
Not Very Accurate	2
Somewhat Accurate	3
Fairly Accurate	4
Very Accurate	5

Statements included in the questionnaire are grouped according to the factor addressed by the particular comment:

PEER

I don't feel close to my schoolmates.

I feel at ease being with girls.

I feel at ease being with boys.

I often do things to please others when I really don't want to do them.

I have friends who understand the way I feel and what things are important to me.

ECONOMICS

I have less money than my friends have.

My family is poor.

I need a job after school to help my family.

I worry about money.

My family has enough money.

SELF-IMAGE

I am popular with boys

I am popular with girls.

I am smart.

I am not attractive.

I often do things I don't like to do, just to fit in with everyone else.

I am lonely.

I am strong.

I fail at most things I try.

I am persuasive with people my own age.

PARENTS

I feel loved by my parents.

My parents expect too much of me.

My parents understand the way I feel about things.

My parents don't have enough time for me.

I can't talk about certain problems with my parents.

SCHOOL

My grades are low.

Because of my grades I can enter any educational program in high school.

I have no worries about my grades.

BEHAVIOR

I cause problems for my family.

I am well behaved at school.

I have been in trouble with the police.

CLOSED RESPONSE

APPENDIX 4

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR SIGNIFICANCE TESTING OF CLOSED RESPONSE QUESTIONS

By standardizing the questions and responses to a positive format (or “phrasing”), we can compare the mean scores for all 30 questions and do significance testing. The brackets in

the following statements indicate changes necessary to make the phrasing positive. The standard deviation is a measure of dispersion based on deviations from the mean.

Mean	Standard Deviation	Statement
PEER		
3.6	1.9	I feel close to my schoolmates.
3.8	1.2	I feel at ease being with girls.
3.6	1.2	I feel at ease being with boys.
3.8	1.1	I (do not) often do things to please others when I really don't want to do them.
3.8	1.2	I have friends who understand the way I feel and what things are important to me.
ECONOMICS		
3.6	1.1	I (do not) have less money than my friends have.
4.2	1.0	My family is (not) poor.
4.3	1.2	I (do not) need a job after school to help my family.
3.1	1.3	I (do not) worry about money.
3.9	1.1	My family has enough money.
SELF-IMAGE		
3.2	1.1	I am popular with boys.
3.3	1.1	I am popular with girls.
3.6	1.1	I am smart.
3.7	1.1	I am attractive.
4.0	1.0	I (do not) do things just to fit in with everyone else.
4.0	1.2	I am (not) lonely.
3.5	1.0	I am strong.
4.1	1.1	I (do not) fail at most things I try.
3.3	1.1	I am persuasive with people my own age.
PARENTS		
4.1	1.2	I feel loved by my parents.
3.3	1.3	My parents (do not) expect too much of me.
3.0	1.3	My parents understand the way I feel about things.
3.9	1.2	My parents have enough time for me.
2.7	1.4	I can talk about problems with my parents.
SCHOOL		
3.6	1.1	My grades are (not) low.
3.2	1.3	Because of my grades I can enter any educational program in high school.
2.5	1.3	I have no worries about my grades.
BEHAVIOR		
3.9	1.2	I (do not) cause problems for my family.
3.6	1.1	I am well behaved at school.
4.1	1.5	I have (not) been in trouble with the police.

