

**Waterbury S.A.F.E. Program
Connecticut Junior Republic
Waterbury, CT**

**Progress Report
2014-2015**

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Introduction

The Connecticut Junior Republic's S.A.F.E. Program located in Waterbury, Connecticut is one of several teen pregnancy prevention programs funded by the State of Connecticut Department of Social Services. The Waterbury program is based on the model originally developed by Dr. Michael Carrera for the Children's Aid Society and offers multiple services to young people, beginning at the end of fifth grade and lasting through high school and into post-secondary education. The program is intensive and includes education, career and job experiences, family life, sex and health education, and recreational activities, as well as sports and arts opportunities. The program also offers its participants case management and referrals for dental, health and mental health services.

This report presents a picture of the 2014-15 Waterbury S.A.F.E. participants including changes in key behaviors, their knowledge about sexuality and pregnancy, their characteristics and their satisfaction with the program. Sixty-one youth attended the program at some point during the 2014-15 program year, all of whom completed at least one assessment. Thirty-eight students had taken more than one assessment, the most recent during the 2014-15 program year, and those data were used to measure change over time.¹ The average interval between assessments for these 38 young people was 2.8 years, with a range of five months to 4.7 years between assessments.

Throughout this report asterisks (*) indicate whether or not a difference or change is statistically significant. The reader should know that statistical significance is affected by sample size. In very small samples, differences must be very large to be statistically significant, whereas in very large samples, even small differences can be statistically significant, even if they are not practically very important. So a difference of 5% from baseline to follow-up will not be statistically significant in small groups or samples but may be in larger ones. Even in the same sample, the same percentage difference may be significant in one place but not in another depending on the variables being measured and missing data.

¹ Surveys were changed in Fall, 2010 so sample sizes vary by items as many did not have newer items on baseline surveys. Furthermore, many surveys were missing a page when submitted and the program reported an inability to provide those data.

Program Outcomes

The following outcomes are based on the data received from the 38 youth who have completed two or more assessments.²

Sexuality Knowledge

Students were asked 12 questions to gauge their knowledge about sexuality and contraception. Overall, knowledge scores increased significantly from an average of 30% correct at intake to 78% correct at post-test. From first to last assessment, scores increased dramatically on all 12 of the items. Those increases are statistically significant on all but one item. At last assessment, virtually all knew that a girl can get pregnant during her period, up from only about half at baseline. Of concern is that, at last assessment, over two-thirds of these young people still incorrectly believed that most 15-year-olds around the country are having sexual intercourse, even though this was a significant improvement from baseline.

Knowledge Questions (n = 38 unless otherwise noted)	First # who answered correctly	Last
A girl can get pregnant even before she has her first menstrual period.	26%	76%***
The birth control pill protects from STDs, including HIV.	24%	95%***
During their periods, girls can have sex without worrying about getting pregnant. (n = 37)	54%	97%***
Abstinence is the only 100% way not to get HIV, other STIs or become pregnant.	21%	84%***
A person can have a sexually transmitted disease without having any symptoms.	24%	74%***
It is impossible to get HIV or sexually transmitted diseases from having oral sex. (n = 36)	22%	64%***
Pulling out is an effective form of birth control. (n = 36)	6%	75%***
You can tell if a person has HIV or AIDS by looking at the person. (n = 37)	35%	86%***
Around the country, most 15-year-old girls and boys are having sexual intercourse.	8%	29%*
Many teen parents drop out of school before they graduate.	74%	89%
Girls usually start puberty before boys.	50%	92%***
Teenagers do not need their parents' or guardians' permission to get birth control from clinics. (n = 36)	11%	75%***
Summary Score (mean)(n = 38)³	30%	78%***

* Difference is statistically significant at $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$.

² Surveys were changed in Fall, 2010 so sample sizes vary by items as many did not have newer items on baseline surveys.

³ Included in the summary score are those who answered 11 or more knowledge questions from the newer surveys at both baseline and follow-up.

Program youth were asked to rate their agreement with two statements on a scale of 1 to 4 (“Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”; coded so that higher ratings indicate more positive responses). At last assessment, about three-quarters of these youth agree that males and females have the same responsibilities for using birth control and almost none think that it is okay for people their age to have occasional unprotected sex. Neither of these, however, were significant increases from the first assessment.

Attitude Questions	First mean (1 to 4 scale)	Last
Males and females have the same responsibilities for using birth control. (n = 38)	2.84	3.08
Average percent agreeing --	71%	74%
It is okay for people my age to have unprotected sex once in a while. (n = 37)	3.41	3.38
Average percent disagreeing --	86%	89%

Preventing Pregnancy

By last assessment, eight of these 38 (21%) young people had been sexually active (six males and two females). This increase in sexual activity might be expected as these youth age. Six of the eight sexually active youth reported using condoms at last intercourse and no pregnancies or births were reported.

Sexual Behavior	First	Last
Have had sexual intercourse (n = 38)	0 (0%)	8 (21%)
<i>Among those who were sexually active:</i>	(n = 0)	(n = 8)
Female	-	2
Ethnic minority	-	8
Used condom at last intercourse	-	6
Used some form of contraception at last intercourse	-	6
Ever pregnant or caused a pregnancy	-	0
Ever gave birth or fathered a baby	-	0

The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance data indicate that 17% of black and Hispanic middle school youth and 56% of black and Hispanic high school youth nationally have had sexual intercourse;^{4,5} thus, the percentages of Waterbury program youth who are sexually experienced appears to be lower than the rate for similar high school youth nationally. However, the number of program youth is very small so this comparison must be viewed with caution.

Comparison Data on Sexual Behavior	Middle School Youth		High School Youth	
	Waterbury n = 19	National	Waterbury n = 19	National
Have had sexual intercourse	16%	17%	26%	56%

Risk Indicators

Overall risk factor involvement is quite low for this group of young people at last assessment (see table below). At last assessment, about a quarter (24%) reported being involved in a recent physical fight, down considerably from 45% at baseline. Eighteen percent reported stealing in the past year while less than a fifth reported carrying or using a weapon, damaging school property on purpose, being arrested, or being a member of a gang. None of these results are significantly different than first assessment.

Risk Indicators (During the last year, have you...) (n = 38 unless otherwise noted)	First	Last
Been involved in a physical fight?	45%	24%
Taken something from a store without paying for it <i>or</i> took something that didn't belong to you?	16%	18%
Carried a weapon?	5%	16%
Damaged school property on purpose?	13%	11%
Been arrested? (n = 37)	14%	8%
Been a member of a gang? (n = 37)	8%	5%
Used a weapon?	3%	5%
Average number of risk behaviors reported	1.0	0.9

⁴ CDC-Youth-Online-Middle School YRBS 2013 Results. <http://nccd.cdc.gov/youthonline/App/Default.aspx>. Accessed 7/24/2014. The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance data from middle school youth includes information from young people in numerous states: Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wyoming. Additionally, youth were included from the following locations: Boston, MA; Broward County, FL; Charlotte-Mecklenburg County, NC; Chicago, IL; District of Columbia; Duval County, FL; Houston, TX; Los Angeles, CA; Memphis, TN; Miami-Dade County, FL; Milwaukee, WI; Orange County, FL; San Francisco, CA; and Guam. Not all comparison statistics include youth from all of these locations. The YRBS did not include data from certain locations when sample sizes were low or items were not measured.

⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2013 High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/yrbs>. Accessed on 7/9/2014.

For comparison, the 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance data indicate that, nationally, 62% of black and Hispanic middle school youth have *ever* been in a physical fight and 32% of black and Hispanic high school youth have been in a physical fight in the *past year*. YRBS data also indicate that 23% of black and Hispanic middle school youth have carried a weapon in their *lifetimes* and 14% of black and Hispanic high school youth have carried a weapon in the *past month*.^{6,7} Thus, the rate of involvement in fighting and carrying a weapon for middle school youth in the Waterbury program appears to be considerably lower than the rate for similar youth nationally. The rate of fighting among high school youth also appears to be lower than their national peers while Waterbury high school youth appear to carry weapons at a slightly higher rate than their peers nationally.⁸ Again, the number of program participants is very small so this comparison must be viewed with caution.

Comparison Data on Risk Indicators	Middle School Youth		High School Youth	
	Waterbury n = 19	National	Waterbury n = 19	National
Physical fight	26%	62%	21%	32%
Carried a weapon	16%	23%	16%	14%

Virtually all of these young people have had a regular check-up in the past year and all have somewhere to go for health care. At last assessment, nearly a third (31%) reported using a private doctor's office for health care, 26% reported using a hospital emergency room, a fifth have used a hospital clinic, and 23% have used another type of clinic.

Health Risk Indicators (n = 35 unless otherwise specified)	First	Last
Last regular check-up over a year ago (n = 33)	9%	3%
No place to go for health care	3%	0%
Where they go for health care:⁹		
Private doctor's office	23%	31%
Hospital emergency room	34%	26%
Another clinic	20%	23%
Hospital clinic	31%	20%

⁶ CDC-Youth-Online-Middle School YRBS 2013 Results. <http://nccd.cdc.gov/youthonline/App/Default.aspx>. Accessed 7/24/2014.

⁷ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2013 High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/yrbs>. Accessed on 7/9/2014.

⁸ The YRBS middle school survey asks about *ever* being in a physical fight and *ever* carrying a weapon; the YRBS high school survey asks about being in a physical fight in the *past year* and carrying a weapon in the *past 30 days* while the Waterbury survey asks about these activities in the *past year*.

⁹ May total more than 100% as respondents could choose more than one response.

At baseline, one of these young people reported recent tobacco, alcohol, or marijuana use. At last assessment, two youth reported recent alcohol and/or marijuana use.

Recent Substance Use (During the last month, have you...) (n = 37 unless otherwise specified)	First	Last
Used cigarettes/tobacco? (n = 36)	3%	3%
Used alcohol?	3%	5%
Used marijuana?	3%	5%

Nationally, 4% of black and Hispanic middle school youth and 11% of black and Hispanic high school youth have used cigarettes in the past month.^{10,11} Waterbury middle school smoked at rates comparable to their peers nationally while Waterbury high school youth reported no recent cigarette use at all.

Comparison Data on Substance Use	Middle School Youth		High School Youth	
	Waterbury n = 19	National	Waterbury n = 19	National
Recent cigarette use	5%	4%	0%	11%

Academic Performance

There were slight increases in the numbers of young people who reported failing courses for the entire year, getting at least one "F", and cutting classes from first to last assessment. There was a very slight decrease in the number of youth who reported recent school suspensions from first to last assessment. None of these changes were statistically significant.

Academic Risk Indicators (During the last year, have you...) (n = 38 unless otherwise specified)	First	Last
Fail any courses for the whole year? Average # of courses:	5% 1.5	13% 1.0
Get any "F's" or failing grades on your report card? Average # of failing grades:	29% 1.1	39% 1.6
Get suspended from school? Average # of times suspended:	32% 2.6	29% -
Cut classes without permission? (n = 36) Average # of classes:	11% 1.7	17% 7.0

¹⁰ CDC-Youth-Online-Middle School YRBS 2013 Results. <http://nccd.cdc.gov/youthonline/App/Default.aspx>. Accessed 8/25/2015.

¹¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2013 High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/yrbs>. Accessed on 8/25/2015.

At last assessment, about three-quarters (74%) of these young people reported receiving some kind of award in the past year which was up slightly from 71% who had reported an award at first assessment. Over two-thirds (68%) of these young people have been involved in recent volunteer work, a significant increase from 37% at baseline.

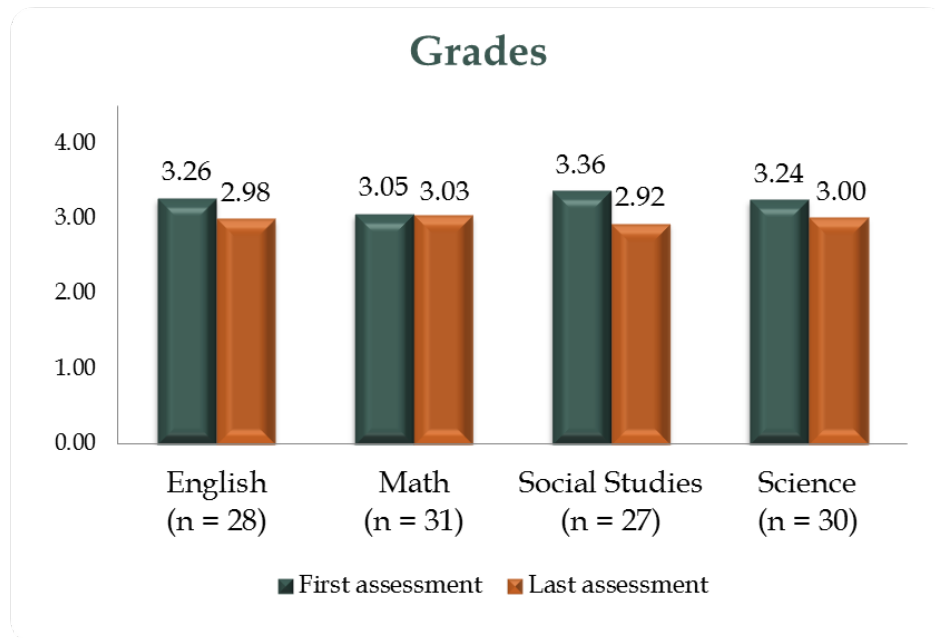
Academic Positives (During the last year, have you...) (n = 38)	First	Last
Been given an award?	71%	74%
Done any volunteer work?	37%	68%**

** Difference is statistically significant at $p < .01$

Nearly half (46%) of these young people now have a bank account, up somewhat from 23% at baseline. Seven students (20%) report being currently employed, one more than at baseline.

Work and money (n = 35)	First	Last
Have a bank account	23%	46%
Have a paid job <i>now</i>	17%	20%

The figure below shows changes in self-reported grades from first to last assessment.¹² Grades decreased slightly but not significantly in all four core areas. Many of these young people begin the program in the middle school and are at the high school level by last assessment so academic expectations may be different from first to last assessment.



Note: grades are changed from letter grades to numbers for analysis.

To convert the average grades shown on previous page back to approximate letter grades, please use this table.

A+ = 4.5	B+ = 3.5	C+ = 2.5	D+ = 1.5	
A = 4.0	B = 3.0	C = 2.0	D = 1.0	F = 0.0
A- = 3.7	B- = 2.7	C- = 1.7	D- = 0.7	

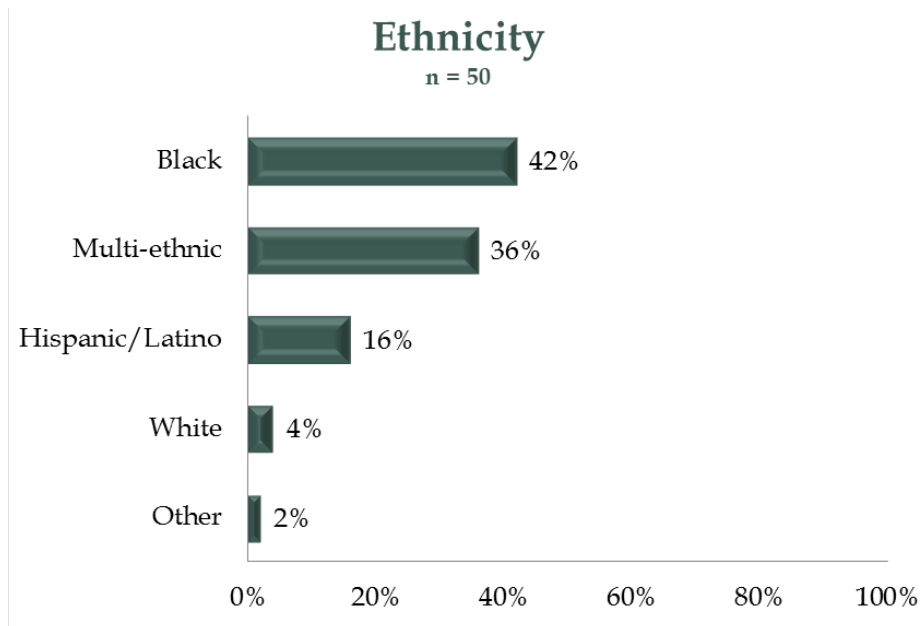
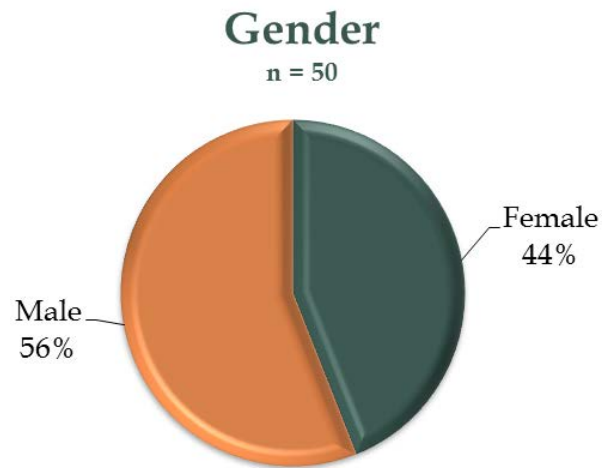
Based on these self-reports, about a third of program youth improved their English, math, and science grades from first to last assessment and 22% improved their grades in social studies.

Change in Academic Performance	
	Students showing improvement from first to last assessment
English	10 of 28 (36%)
Math	11 of 31 (35%)
Science	9 of 30 (30%)
Social Studies	6 of 27 (22%)

¹² Only those youth who reported letter grades ('A' through 'F'), or grades which could be translated to such, are included in this part of the analysis.

Student Characteristics

Over half (56%) of the 2014-15 students were male. At intake, students were in grades six through 9, with over three-quarters (79%) in the 6th grade. Program youth were, on average, 12.1 years old and ranged in age from 10 to 14-years-old at intake. Forty-two percent of these youth were black and 36% identified as multiethnic.



Two-thirds of the mothers of these young people have graduated from high school and 44% of these youth said their mothers have attended at least some college. Over half (55%) reported their fathers have completed high school and about a quarter (24%) reported their fathers have attended college. However, 26% of these young people do not know the educational status of their mothers and 36% do not know their fathers' educational status.

Parent's Education	First Assessment
What is the highest grade in school that your <i>mother</i> completed?	(n = 50)
...less than high school	8%
...high school graduate	22%
...some college	14%
...college graduate	30%
...I can't even guess	26%
What is the highest grade in school that your <i>father</i> completed?	(n = 45)
...less than high school	9%
...high school graduate	31%
...some college	4%
...college graduate	20%
...I can't even guess	36%

Over two-fifths (44%) of these young people came from two-parent homes, while over half (51%) lived with one parent. Most of these young people (86%) received free or reduced-price lunch at school.

Family Status at Intake	First Assessment
Living situation (n = 61)	
Two parents	44%
Single parent	51%
No parent	5%
Receive free or reduced-price lunch at school (n = 59)	86%

These demographic data suggest that during 2014-15 this program worked with a group of youth at high risk for teen pregnancy. Virtually all were from ethnic minority groups, most received free or reduced-price lunch at school, over half were from single-parent homes, and many had experienced some degree of academic failure.

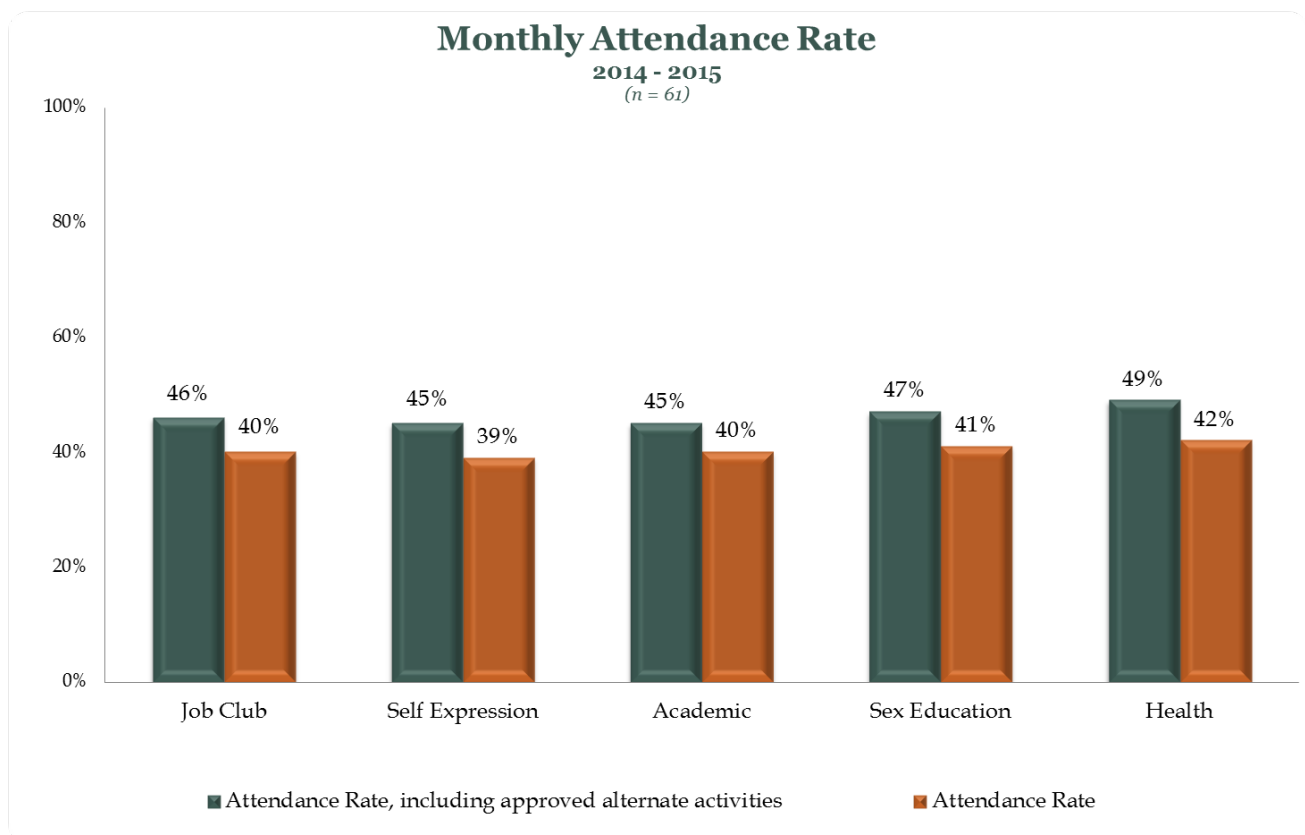
Program Activity

The S.A.F.E. program in Waterbury was offered during after school hours. A total of 136 sessions were held and the sessions were 45 minutes long, on average. Program components included:

- Job Club,
- Family Life and Sexuality Education,
- Self-Expression/ Arts classes,
- Individual Sports and Recreation,
- Academic Assistance/Tutoring, and
- Mental/Physical Health services as needed.

Students were also able to attend field trips and special events. Youth did not receive academic credit for their participation.

Component attendance was below 50% for all components. This could, in part, be due to a staff change during the program year as the new staff member had to collect attendance data retrospectively.



Program Satisfaction

On their last assessments, program youth were asked three questions about their experience in the program. Most program youth gave high ratings to their facilitators and virtually all (95%) of the young people rated the program overall as “good” or “excellent”. In spite of this, about a quarter (24%) did not feel that talking about things like feeling upset or sad was okay.

Program Satisfaction	Last Assessment
How much did you feel like your facilitator or program leader really liked <i>you</i> a lot? (n = 38)	mean = 3.37
Not at all	13%
A little	0%
Somewhat	24%
Very much	63%
How much did you feel like it was OK to talk about things like feeling upset or sad? (n = 38)	mean = 2.97
Not at all	13%
A little	11%
Somewhat	42%
Very much	34%
Overall, how would you rate this program? (n = 38)	mean = 3.53
Poor	0%
Fair	5%
Good	37%
Excellent	58%

Conclusions

During the 2014-15 program year, 61 youth attended the Connecticut Junior Republic's S.A.F.E. Program located in Waterbury. Sixty-one of these students completed at least one assessment and those data were used to document the characteristics of the program youth. Thirty-eight students had taken more than one assessment, the most recent during the 2014-15 program year, and those data were used to measure change over time.

Just about half of the 2014-15 participants in the Waterbury S.A.F.E. program were in middle school (51%) while the rest were in high school. Just over half (56%) of the program participants were male and virtually all were ethnic minorities. Many had experienced some degree of academic failure. Most received free or reduced-price lunch and over half were from single- or no-parent households. These demographic data suggest that during 2014-15 this program worked with a group of youth at high risk for teen pregnancy.

There were both **positive indicators** as well as some **findings of concern**:

- ◆ The vast majority (95%) of the youth rated the program overall as “good” or “excellent”.
- ◆ On average, participants answered 78% of the sexuality knowledge questions correctly at last assessment, a dramatic and statistically significant increase from 30% at baseline.
- ◆ At last assessment, significantly more youth reported recent volunteer experience compared to baseline.
- ◆ Over two-fifths (21%) of the program youth reported having been sexually active. Of the sexually active youth, three-quarters had used a condom at last intercourse and no pregnancies were reported.

In comparison to black and Hispanic middle school youth nationally, Waterbury S.A.F.E. program youth:¹³

- ◆ had slightly lower rates of sexual intercourse;
- ◆ were less likely to have been in a physical fight;
- ◆ were less likely to have carried a weapon;
- ◆ yet had slightly higher rates of recent cigarette/tobacco use.

In comparison to Black and Hispanic high school youth nationally, Waterbury S.A.F.E. program youth:¹⁴

- ◆ had lower rates of sexual intercourse;
- ◆ had lower rates of recent cigarette/tobacco use
- ◆ were less likely to have been in a physical fight;
- ◆ yet were slightly more likely to have carried a weapon recently.

¹³ The YRBS middle school survey asks about *ever* being in a physical fight and *ever* carrying a weapon; the YRBS high school survey asks about being in a physical fight in the *past year* and carrying a weapon in the *past 30 days* while the Waterbury survey asks about these activities in the past year.

¹⁴ *ibid.*