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**Rural Youth Futures** 

School of Forest Resources

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## **RURAL YOUTH FUTURES: PENQUIS VALLEY SCHOOL**

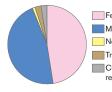
SURVEY RESULTS • SUMMER 2020

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

#### APPROACH

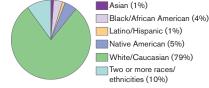
With permission from the school principal, students in grades 6–12 at Penquis Valley School were given a link to an anonymous, electronic survey in February 2019. Participation was voluntary. Penquis Valley School had 130 students in these grades during 2018-2019, 103 of which took the survey for a participation rate of 79%. Every question was optional, so the number of responses varies by question. Fact sheets for all schools and each county are available online at: http://ewp.uoregon.edu/RuralYouth.

Gender that you identify as:

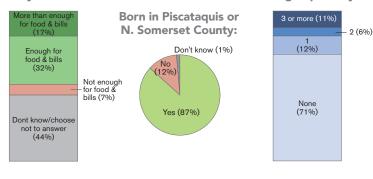




Category that best describes you:



Perception of family finances: School changes from moving in past 5 years:



## DEMOGRAPHICS

 43%
 23%
 9%
 4%
 16%

 2-parent, biological parents
 Live with grandparents

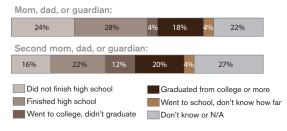
 2-parent, step family
 Live with foster family (1%)

 Single parent, mom
 Live with friend's family (1%)

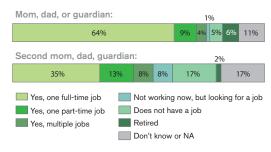
 Single parent, dad
 Couch surf or other

Describe the family structure you live with:

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



Do your parents or guardians work for pay?











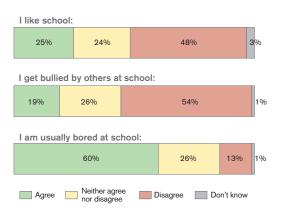
Oregon State University Extension Service



# SCHOOL RESULTS

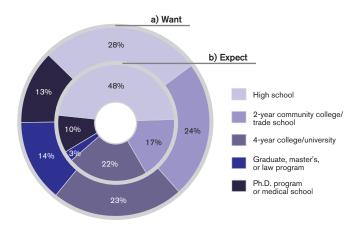
Schools in rural communities are critical. They bring families together, support civic interaction, and foster workforce development. Schools also influence youth aspirations for future education. To learn more about these things in Piscataquis and Northern Somerset County schools, we asked students to tell us about their school experience and future goals, what they felt were barriers to those goals, and the extracurricular activities they participated in.

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your school?

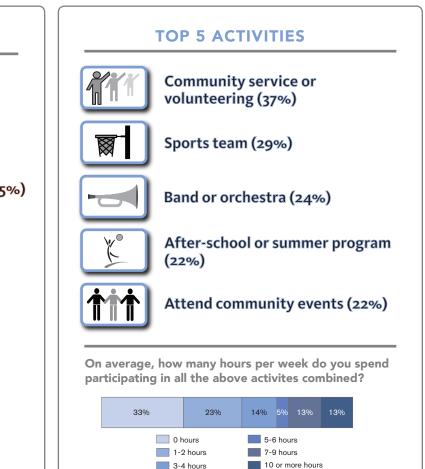


What could prevent you from going as far in school

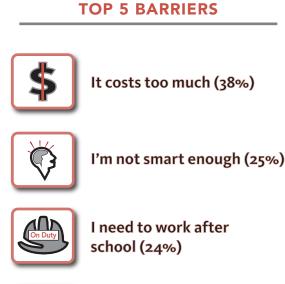
What is the highest level of education that you a) want, and b) expect to complete?



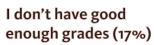
Which of the following activities have you participated in the last year?



as you would like?







I'd need to move away

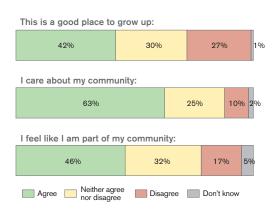
to go to school (8%)



# COMMUNITY RESULTS

Increasing the number of young people and working families is a critical issue in many rural towns. Natural amenities and attachment to community can retain young people or attract in-migration. We asked students to tell us about their community to better understand what the community has to offer. We also asked them where they want to live in the future to see if there's an interest in living in these places among young people.





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





More outdoor recreation (49%)

More indoor recreation (hockey rinks, gyms) (51%)



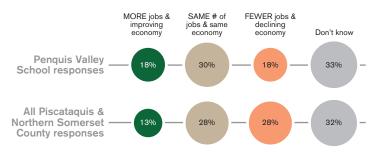
More shops and retail stores (48%)



More restaurants (48%)



More medical care and hospitals (41%) Where do you see your community in the future in terms of jobs and the economy?



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



#### Do you think the following are important problems facing your community? All Piscataquis & N.

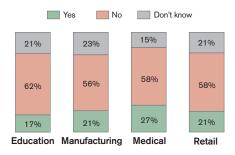
	Penquis Valley School "yes" responses	Somerset County "yes" responses
People not having enough money	76%	55%
Drug or alcohol abuse	68%	45%
Not enough things to do in town	59%	55%
Not enough jobs	58%	50%
Poor school quality	58%	32%
People moving away	40%	42%
Lack of public transportation	39%	47%
Not enough outdoor activities	38%	28%
Not enough affordable or good housing	36%	30%
Not enough healthcare or doctors	34%	33%
Crime	32%	17%
Homelessness	17%	16%

## YOUTH PROGRAMMING

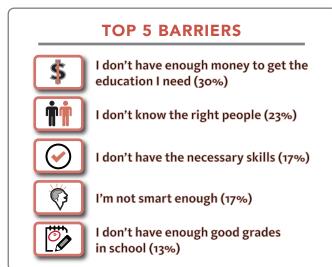
Youth today are the community's future labor force. How prepared they feel, and how willing they are to work in local industries, influences their success in the workforce. We asked students to tell us about their career plans, including what barriers they may face and what training support they need.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

What would be your dream job when you are 30?

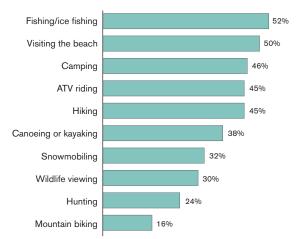
For this question, students could type in any answer to the question of what their dream job would be. We wanted to get a sense of their ideal career aspirations. All responses were entered into a program that generated this word cloud, where the larger and darker an entry is, the more times it was mentioned by students. Some students didn't name a particular job, but described in general what they hoped they'd be doing. cosmetology radiologist biologydoctordesigner outdoorsmUSIC field writerWritingmarine artistmechanic animal moneygameyoutuber teacherVideo medicalcertify scientistassistant photographer Would you want to work in one of the following industries in this county?



Do you think the following things will prevent you from getting the job you want?



Which of the following outdoor recreation activites have you done in the last year? (top ten):



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



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



The Rural Youth Futures project is funded by USDA National Institute for Food and Agriculture grant #2017-67023-26240. Project partners include: University of Maine, the University of Oregon's Ecosystem Workforce Program, Coos Watershed Association (Oregon), the Appalachian Mountain Club (Maine), and Oregon State University. Header photo credit: Mindy Crandall, Oregon State University.



For more information on the project, contact Mindy Crandall, Oregon State University, mindy.crandall@oregonstate.edu.