

MARATHON COUNTY STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF RETURNING TO SCHOOL IN FALL 2020

WIPPS Research Partners is seeking Marathon County students in grades 6 to 12 who are interested in participating in focus group discussions of school reopening and returning to school this fall.

PROJECT GOALS

In the next few weeks, WIPPS Research Partners is conducting a series of five (5) focus groups with Marathon County middle and high school students to gather in-depth information on about the topic of returning to school this fall and to obtain a greater understanding of the student perspectives and concerns. For example, we will talk with students about:

- What concerns and questions do students have about returning to school in the fall?
- What kinds of information and support do students say they need?
- What do students want parents, teachers and administrators to know about how they feel about school this fall?

School districts are weighing policies and approaches to returning children to school. In some areas, this may mean virtual learning; in others, it may mean being physically on site at school. Or it may be a blend of both. To date, there has been little information about local students' thoughts and feelings about the broader topic of returning to school. This project will fill this information gap. Through small group discussions, the focus groups will gather a more in-depth understanding of students' perspectives. By compiling and sharing this information with school boards, administrators, teachers, and the public-at-large, the "voices" of students can help inform larger policy discussions and decisions.

HOW WILL THE FOCUS GROUPS BE CONDUCTED AND HOW WILL THE INFORMATION BE USED?

- A total of five (5) focus groups will be conducted consisting of 8 to 10 students each. Middle school and high school students from across Marathon County can participate with parent consent. Each focus group will last two (2) hours. A trained focus group facilitator from WIPPS Research Partners will host discussions on:
 - Thursday, August 6 – 3 to 5 pm (students in grades 6 and 8)
 - Thursday, August 6 – 6 to 8 pm (students in grades 9 to 12)
 - Friday, August 7 – 9 to 11 am (students in grades 6 and 8)
 - Friday, August 7 – 1 to 3 pm (students in grades 9 to 12)
 - Monday, August 10 – 3 to 5 pm (students in grades 9 to 12)
- Students will receive a \$10 gift card in appreciation for their participation.
- Students participate virtually using Webex. The sessions will be recorded and transcribed only for research purposes; the recordings and transcripts will not be shared with anyone outside of the research staff.
- After the focus groups are completed, research staff will analyze the information and identify common themes and insights. Findings will be compiled in a summary report and shared publically. Students will NOT be personally identified in the report. Any quotes or comments included in the report will NOT be attributed to students by name or school. Student names or other identifiable information will NOT used in the report.

INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING OR KNOW A STUDENT WHO MIGHT BE INTERESTED? OR HAVE QUESTIONS?

If you are a student interested in participating or know of a student(s) who might be interested, please contact Sharon Belton, Ph.D., Director of WIPPS Research Partners, at sbelton@uwsa.edu or at 715-302-8483. WIPPS Research Partners is a unit of the Wisconsin Institute for Public Policy and Service located at the UW Stevens Point at Wausau campus. See: www.wipps.org/research-partners

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