

# Triumphs and Challenges:

## Quick Facts on the Status of Strengths and Needs of Girls in San Francisco 2014

### Some Considerations

The following data was compiled to create a better understanding of the areas in which girls from San Francisco County need more support. While San Francisco girls excel over boys in some areas, including enrolling in STEM courses at a higher rate than boys, feel safer at school than boys, graduate from high school at a higher rate than boys, there are a number of critical areas in which the disparities between girls and boys are troublesome. Some areas include higher rates of depression, poorer performance on STAR tests, doing less physical activities than boys, and being coerced into sex more frequently than boys. Even in areas where girls are doing better compared to boys, many of these numbers are still concerning. For example, though girls are graduating high school at a higher rate than boys, it is unacceptable that the graduation rate for girls is 68% (www.kidsdata.org). In addition this data indicates not only that girls are generally faring worse than boys in San Francisco, but that their struggles are different from boys' and need to be targeted with gender-responsive practices.

### Some Demographics of Girls under 18 in San Francisco

- According to the San Francisco Commission and Department on the Status of Women (SFCDSW) report *An Update on Girls in San Francisco: A Decade of Successes and Challenges* (2012), in 2010 the largest population of girls in terms of race was the Asian population, which amounted to 34% (p. 10)
- This population was followed by white girls at a rate of 27% and Latina/Hispanic girls at 22% (p. 10)
- Girls of a mixed ethnic background made up 8% of the population, followed by African American girls at 7%. Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander girls made up 1% of the population, while American Indians and/or Alaska Natives made up less than 1% Girls of any other race made up less than 1% of the population (p. 10)
- Approximately 89% of the students reported identifying as heterosexual, 2% identified as gay or lesbian, 4% identified as bisexual, and 6% were questioning/exploring their sexual identity (p. 11). Of the students surveyed 50% were female and 2% were transgender individuals (p. 11)
- In 2010, 12% of the girl population (SFCDSW, p. 12) was living in poverty
- Larkin Street Youth Services (an emergency shelter) reported to the SFCDSW that out of the 3,400 youth they served from June 2009 to July 2010, 1,034 of those clients (31%) were girls (p. 14)
- In 2010 there were 605 girls in foster care (p. 15) in San Francisco County.

### Incidents of Child Abuse

- According to the San Francisco Department of Children and their Families 2011 Needs Assessment, there had been an average of 432 children under the age of five experiencing child abuse annually from 2005 to 2011 (p. 13)
- Of those children, approximately 50% were female
- During the same time period, an annual average of 457 children ages six to thirteen were victims of substantiated child abuse (p. 80)
- Approximately 49% of victims ages six to ten were female (p. 31)
- 55% of substantiated victims of child abuse ages 11-15 were female (p.31)
- 60% of substantiated victims of child abuse ages 16-17 were female (p. 31)

### Mental Health

- In 2009 the Center for Disease Control and Prevention conducted a survey amongst students in the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) regarding suicidal ideation and revealed that 14% of girls had seriously considered committing suicide (p. SFCDSW, p. 26)
- The same year 9% of girls reported attempting suicide (p. 26)

- According to [www.kidsdata.org](http://www.kidsdata.org), from 2008-2010 27.2% of 7<sup>th</sup> grade girls, 30.8% of 9<sup>th</sup> grade girls, 28.5% of 11<sup>th</sup> grade girls, and 36.4% of non-traditionally educated girls reported experiencing depression-related feelings. These numbers are significantly higher than boys' reports of depression: 21.6% of 7<sup>th</sup> grade boys, 23.1% of 9<sup>th</sup> grade boys, and 26.5% of 11<sup>th</sup> grade boys reported having depression-related feelings. Numbers were not available for non-traditionally educated boys.

### Enrollment in STEM

- Girls' enrollment in computer education classes dropped by 77% between 2000 and 2010 (SFCDSW, p. 39)
- Girls in San Francisco are enrolling in STEM courses, including intermediate algebra, advanced math, first year chemistry, and first year physics, at a higher rate than girls in California and at higher rates than boys in San Francisco (p. 42)
- Girls' scores on the STAR test are close to or lower than boys' test scores (p. 42)

### Alcohol and Drug Use

- In 2009 53% of girls reported drinking alcohol ((SFCDSW, p. 28)
- There has also been a drop in the amount of drug use reported amongst girls. The following chart describes the pattern of drug use among girls between 2001 and 2009:

	Girls		Boys	
	2001 (%)	2009 (%)	2001 (%)	2009 (%)
Marijuana	34	25	33	28
Inhalants	--	8	--	7
Cocaine	5	4	7	5
Methamphetamines	5	3	4	4
Heroin	1	2	2	3

(SFCDSW, p 28)

### Teen Birth Rate

- In 2010 there were 229 teen births in San Francisco, which is a 51% decrease from 2000, when there were 464 teen births (p. 29)<sup>1</sup>

### Teen Dating Violence, Sexual Assault

- In 2009 7% of girls and 5% of boys surveyed by SFUSD reported being forced into sexual intercourse (SFCDSW, p. 34). These numbers do not include girls who are not part of the public school system and do not take into account girls who did not feel comfortable disclosing sexual assault
- In 2009 7% of girls and 9% of boys reported experiencing dating violence (p. 33). These numbers also do not include youth who are not part of the public school system and do not take into account youth who did not feel comfortable disclosing sexual assault

### Sexually Transmitted Disease Rate

- The most common STDs among girls in San Francisco are Chlamydia and Gonorrhea. In 2010 530 girls were known to be infected with Chlamydia and 84 were infected with Gonorrhea (SFCDSW, p. 30)
- "The number of reported cases of both STDs has not changed dramatically over the past 10 years for either boys or girls ages 15-19, which means that the incidence rate has increased because the total youth population has decreased" (p. 30)

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<sup>1</sup> These numbers include births to teen mothers; they do not include miscarriage or abortion rates

## Safety at School

- The following chart displays percentages of safety concerns at school by gender:

	All Girls (%)	All Boys (%)
Bullied at school	10	15
Physical fight at school	6	14
Threatened or injured with a weapon at school	3	11
Carried a weapon on school property	4	9
Missed school because felt unsafe	5	9

(SFCDSW, p 34)

## Physical Fitness/Body Image

- In 2011 43% of 5<sup>th</sup> grade girls did not meet the criteria for being in the Healthy Fitness Zone put forward by the California Physical Fitness Test, which is a 25% increase from 2001 (SFCDSW, p. 22)
- In 2009 only 12% of girls reported getting one hour of physical activity on a daily basis. However, 19% of boys are getting the recommended hour of daily physical activity (p. 20)
- In 2009 39% of girls surveyed considered themselves to be overweight, however, only 18% were actually overweight (p. 24)
- In 2011 “While a larger proportion of 5th grade girls than boys passed at least 5 of 6 PFT standards... 7th and 9th grade boys passed at least 5 standards at a higher rate than did girls in the same grades” (p. 22)

## Girls in the Juvenile Justice System

- Girls are more likely to have previously experience “physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse”, (SFCDSW, p. 16) prior to entering the juvenile justice system than boys
- Girls are generally arrested for less serious crimes than boys and are more likely to have mental health needs (p. 16)
- Girls are more likely to be chronically involved in the juvenile justice system and age out than boys (p. 16)

## Drop Out Rates/Tuancy

- According to [www.kidsdata.org](http://www.kidsdata.org), the 2012 state of California graduation rate for girls was 83% and for boys it was 74.9%. In San Francisco the graduation rate for girls was 68.4% and 46.1% for boys
- From 2008-2010 10.4% of 7<sup>th</sup> grade, 21.9% of 9<sup>th</sup> grade, 31.7% of 11<sup>th</sup> grade, and 14.8% of non-traditional school girls self-reported being truant from school ([www.kidsdata.org](http://www.kidsdata.org)). The numbers were similar for boys: from 2008-2010 10.8% of 7<sup>th</sup> grade, 19.6% of 9<sup>th</sup> grade, and 32.2% of 11<sup>th</sup> grade boys self-reported being truant. Data was not available for non-traditionally educated boys.

## References

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