



*Improving Our Lives Through Education*

From a presentation to SFPS Board Study Session  
– November 5, 2009

“any stressor we lift off makes us more resilient”...



# Gang Joining and Implications for Prevention – from OSDDFS Conference, 2009

## **Youth are “Pushed” and “Pulled” into Gangs from research by Dr. Phelan Wyrick**

- “Pushes” are the negative conditions in the environment that make a gang-free, crime-free life seem unattractive or inaccessible.
- “Pulls” are the aspects of gang involvement that young people perceive as positive or attractive.



# Forces that “Push” Youth toward Gangs

- Community Risk Factors
- Individual Risk Factor
- School Risk Factors
- Peer Risk Factors
- Family Risk Factors



# To understand “Pulls”, ask young people

- Why do young people say they join gangs?
  - Status/identity
  - Fun/excitement
  - Peer group/”family”
  - Protection/strength
  - Money



# Community Risk Factors

- Resident in a disadvantaged or disorganized community (concentration of population in low income housing/trailer parks, etc)
- Availability/perceived access to drugs
- Feeling unsafe in a neighborhood
- Low neighborhood attachment
- High crime neighborhood
- Availability of firearms
- Neighborhood youth in trouble



# Individual Risk Factors

- Violent victimization
- Early onset of aggression/ violence
- Antisocial/delinquent beliefs
- General delinquency involvement
- Aggression/fighting
- Early dating, sexual activity
- Substance use
- Life stressors
- Hyperactive
- Poor refusal skills
- Illegal gun ownership/carrying
- Mental health or conduct problems



# School Risk Factors

- Low achievement in elementary school
- Frequent truancy, suspensions, expulsions
- Low Academic aspirations
- Poor schools attitude and performance
- Low school attachment or commitment
- Low attachment to teachers
- Low parent college expectations for child
- Poorly functioning schools
- Identified as learning disabled



# Peer Risk Factors

- Association with deviant peers
- Association with aggressive peers



# Family Risk Factors

- Broken home/changes in caregiver
- Family poverty and financial stress
- Family history of problem behavior/ criminal involvement
- Sibling antisocial behavior/ gang involvement
- Child maltreatment, abuse or neglect
- Low parent education level
- Parental pro-violence attitudes
- Poor parental supervision and control
- Having a young mother
- Low attachment to the child



# ***DISCUSSION***



# SSHS Health and Wellness Survey Results

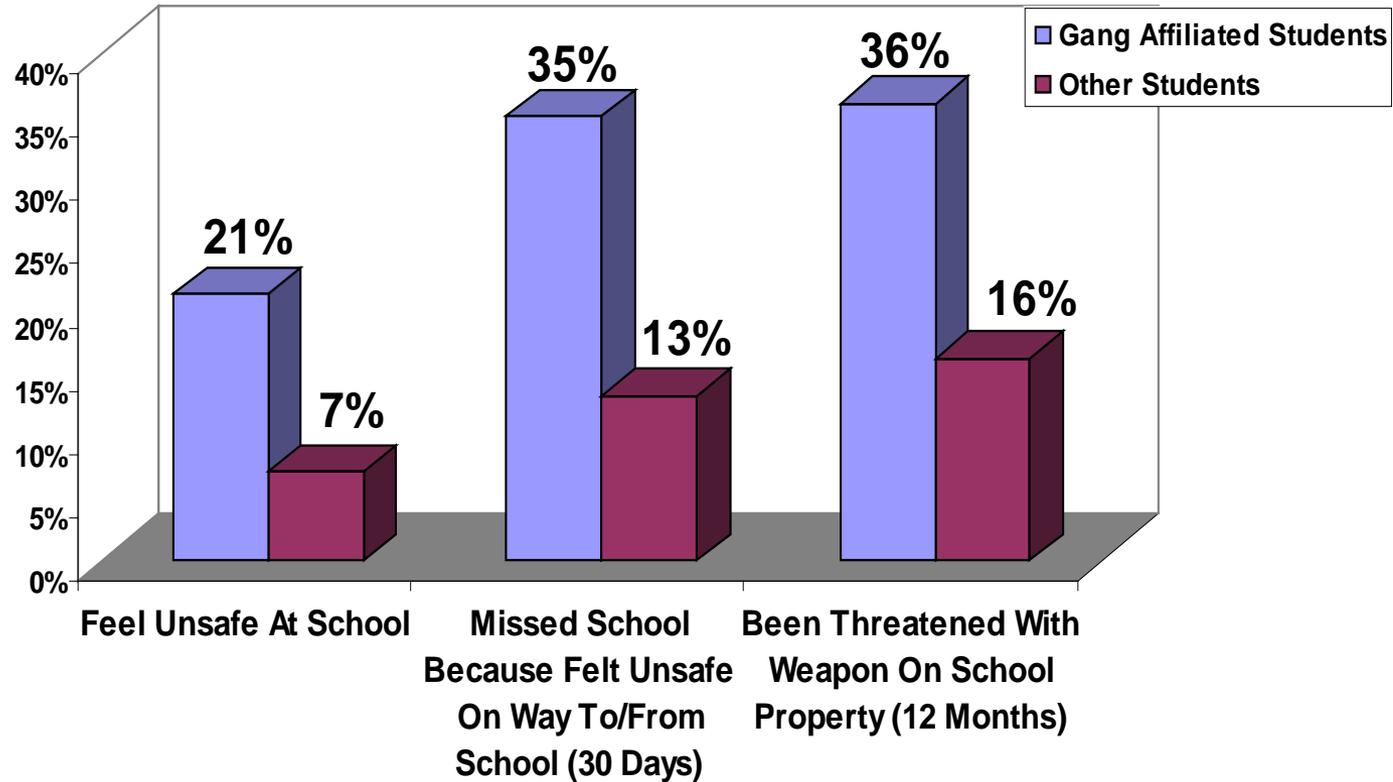
**In our schools students report gang affiliation**

**Survey Question:**

**Do you consider yourself a member of a gang?**

- 10% of Middle School students reported they considered themselves gang members
- 9% of Capital High School students reported they considered themselves gang members
- 11% of Santa Fe High School students reported they considered themselves gang members

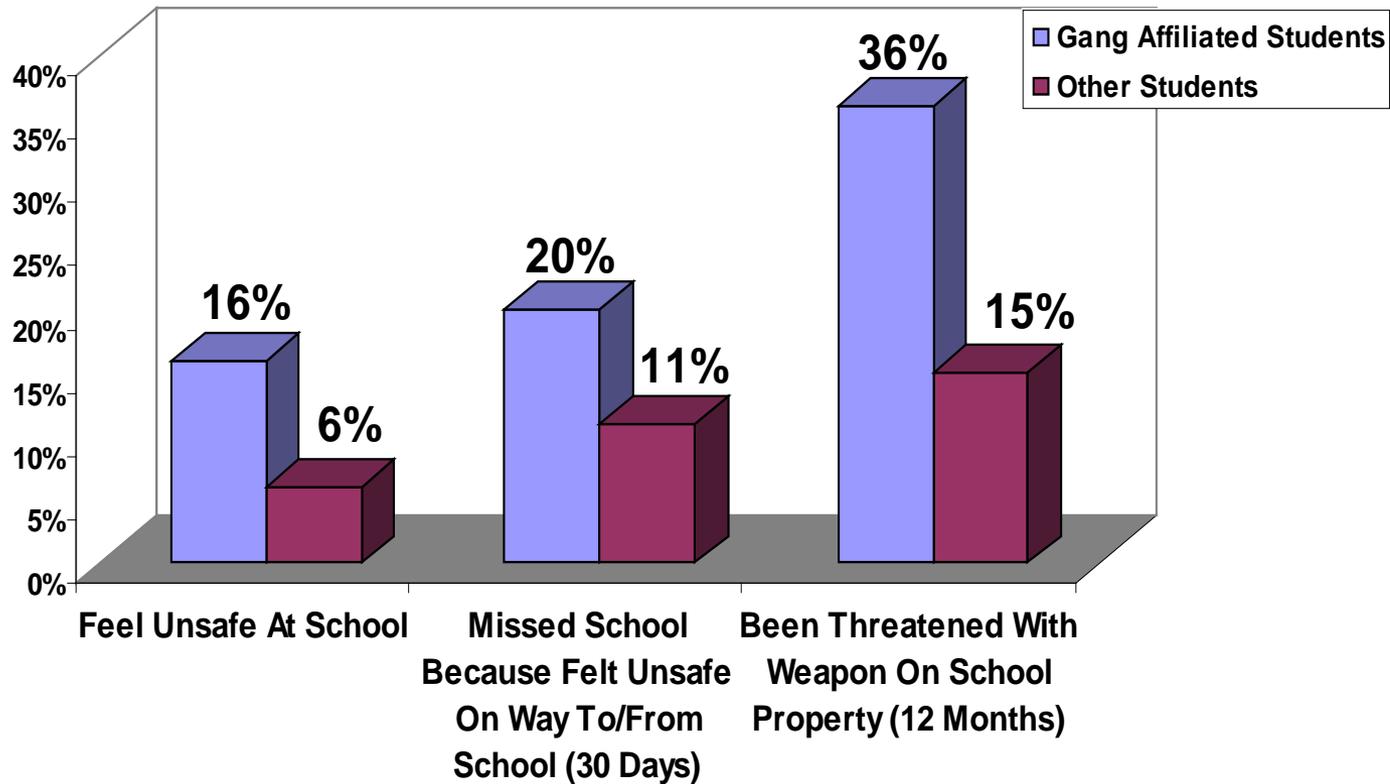
# Perceived School Safety: Middle School Gang Affiliated and Other Students



**Gang affiliated Middle School students are:**

- Three times more likely to report feeling unsafe at school
- More than 2X as likely to report absence because they felt unsafe
- 2X as likely to report having been threatened with a weapon on school property

# Perceived School Safety: High School Gang Affiliated and Other Students



**Gang affiliated High School students are:**

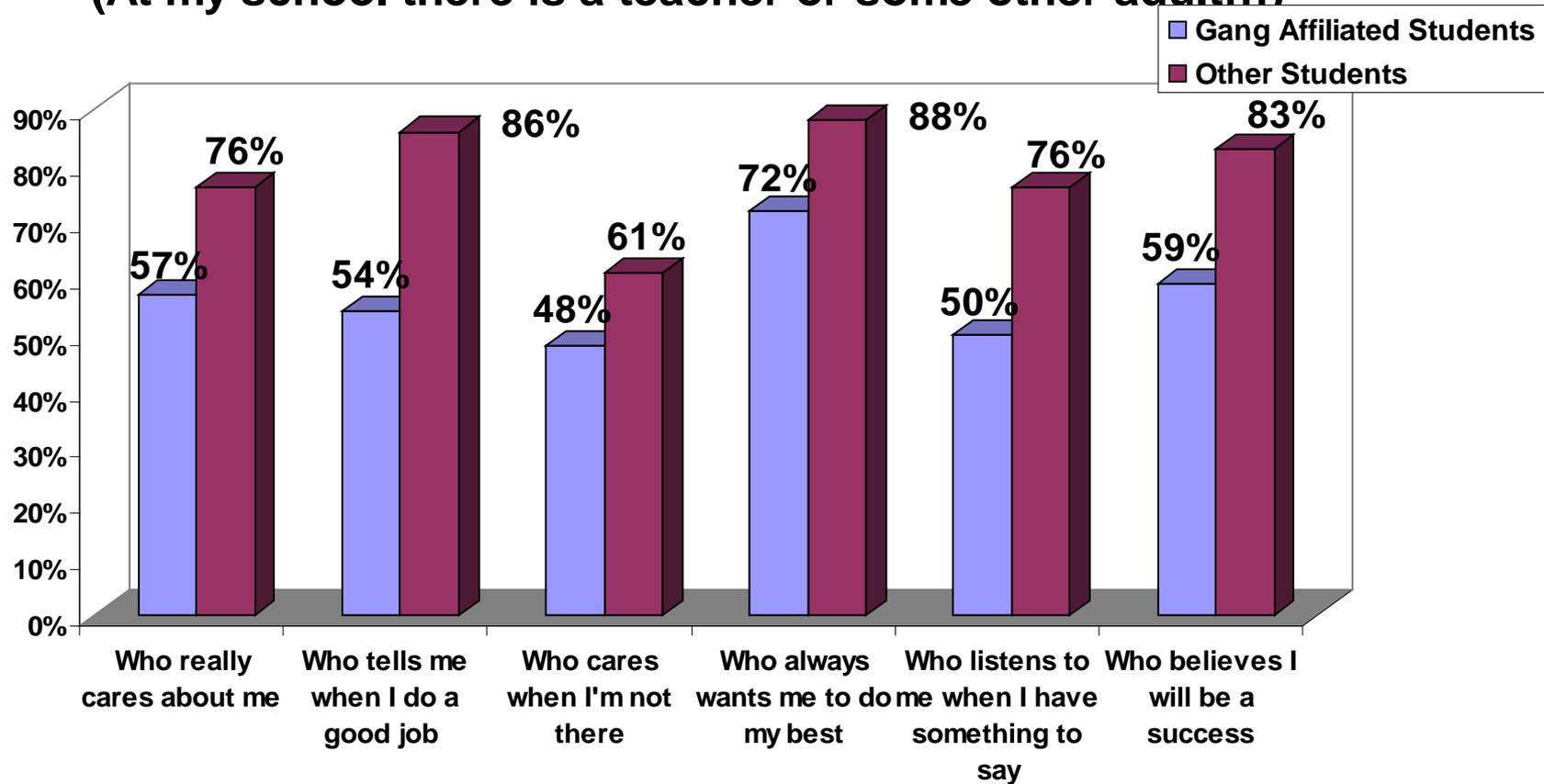
- Almost 3X more likely to report feeling unsafe at school
- Almost 2X as likely to report having missed school because they felt unsafe
- More than 2X as likely to report having been threatened with a weapon on school property



## Additional Risk and Protective Factors: Middle and High School

Risk and Protective Factors	Middle School		High School	
	Gang Affiliated	Other Students	Gang Affiliated	Other Students
Alcohol use past 30 days	60%	15%	64%	36%
Binge drinking past 30 days	39%	7%	38%	21%
Marijuana use past 30 days	51%	12%	80%	24%
Seriously thought about killing themselves	37%	23%	38%	18%
Skipped or ditched school past 4 weeks	56%	19%	75%	41%
Parents disapprove of their alcohol use	60%	77%	NA	NA

## Perceived School Support: Middle School Gang Affiliated and Other Students (At my school there is a teacher or some other adult...)

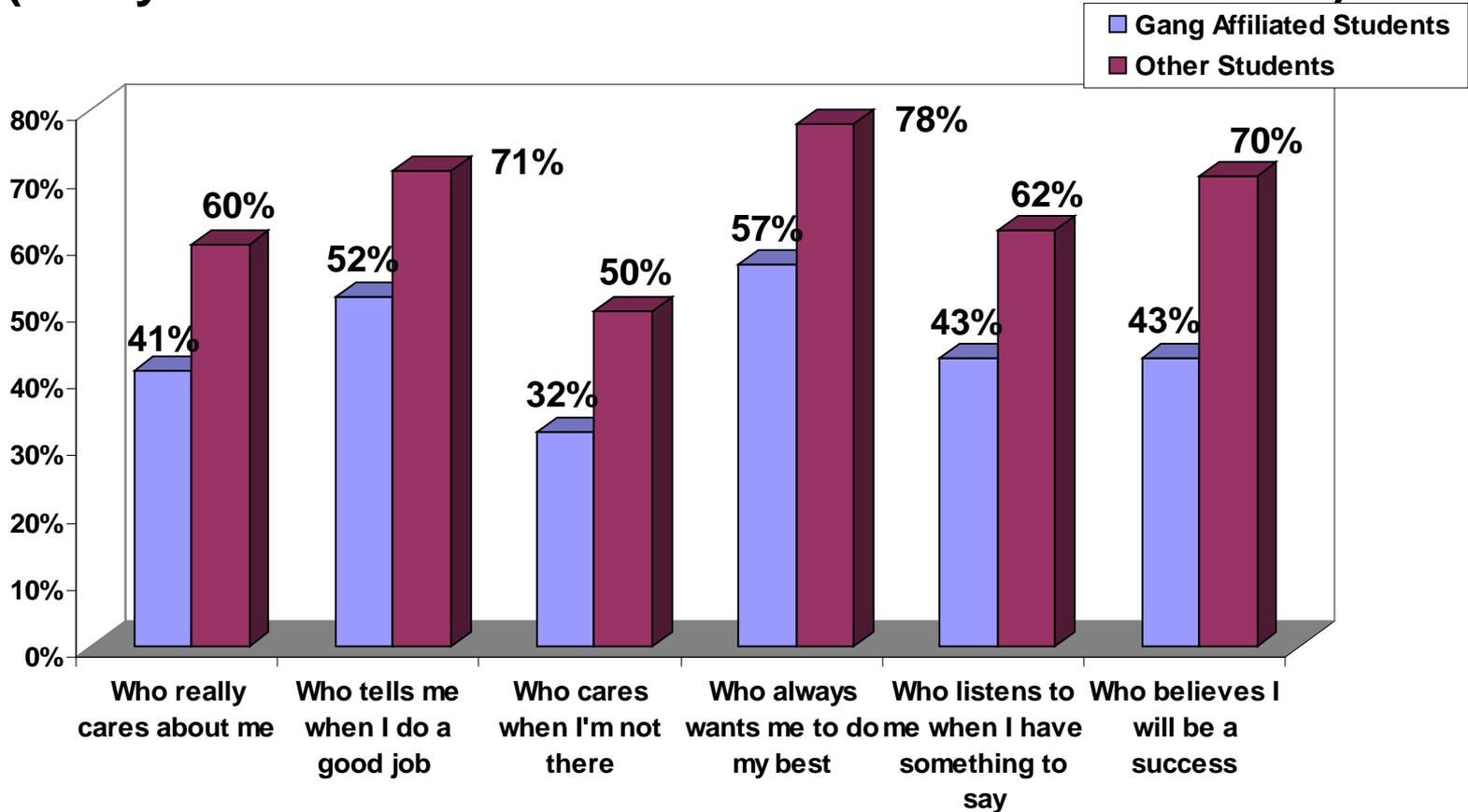


**Gang affiliated Middle School students are:**

- Significantly less likely to perceive support by teachers or other adults, across all 6 categories, than their non-gang affiliated peers

# Perceived School Support: High School Gang Affiliated and Other Students

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# What efforts are being made in our schools?

- Added Wellness Programs from SSHS project
  - Second Step Grades 7-8 – violence prevention
  - Project Success – EAP Program to address individual risk factors
  - Reconnecting Youth – Class for high drop out risk youth
  - Restorative Justice program for dealing with conflicts – middle and high schools
  - Education for adults to know how to identify risks
  - Added Mental Health Services – Clinical mental health services in all schools
  - Rewrite Code of Conduct to eliminate Zero Tolerance