

2010 grads grade Joel Barlow High School

A report on the results of a survey of the JBHS class of 2010

17 November 2011

Acknowledgement

We acknowledge with thanks the contributions of Assistant Professor Lesley DeNardis at the Department of Government and Politics, Sacred Heart University. Dr. DeNardis designed the survey, analyzed the survey results and helped in reporting. Lesley DeNardis, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor of Government and Politics at Sacred Heart University. She has published several articles in scholarly journals on education policy and state and local government. In addition, Dr. DeNardis is an elected member of the Board of Education in Hamden where she serves as chairperson of the Goals and Evaluation Committee.

The survey respondents made the survey a success. We thank you.

Methodology summary

The postal addresses of the approximately 200 Easton and Redding graduates of the JBHS class of 2010 were obtained and used to mail a NABR cover letter and a two-page survey designed by Dr. Lesley DeNardis.

The survey recipients were asked to respond to the survey's eight questions within 30 days via postal mail or on the NABR website. To protect the anonymity of the 45 respondents all responses were sent directly to Dr. DeNardis and no one else handled the responses. One week before the due date, all were postal mailed a reminder post card .

To help promote a meaningful response rate, the graduates were advised that two respondents would be randomly selected to receive \$100 each. Two respondents' names were randomly selected. The winners were notified and sent their prize.

The result of the survey (this report) was posted on the NABR website at www.betterredding.org and on 15 November 2011 also conveyed to the Chairman of the Redding 9 Board of Education, the Superintendent of Schools and JBHS' Principal. Just before the surveys were mailed, and after the completion of the survey, the Editor of *The Redding Pilot* was informed.

An email message was sent to respondents, who checked a box on the survey requesting a copy of the results, advising them of the completion of the survey and directed their attention to NABR's website to see the results.

2010 grads grade Joel Barlow High School

A report on the results of a survey of the JBHS class of 2010

A survey of 2010 Joel Barlow High School graduates was conducted during July of 2011. The purpose of the survey was to capture the attitudes and perceptions of JBHS graduates from the class of 2010 regarding the adequacy of the preparation for post –high school experiences. The surveys containing several questions regarding key aspects of their high school experience and were mailed to all 200 JBHS graduates. A total forty five completed surveys were received for a 23% response rate.

Of those completed surveys, the following questionnaire responses were received:

The vast majority of JBHS graduates (**93%**) went on to further their education at a four year university. The remaining number went to either a two year college (**2%**) or entered the military (**2%**).

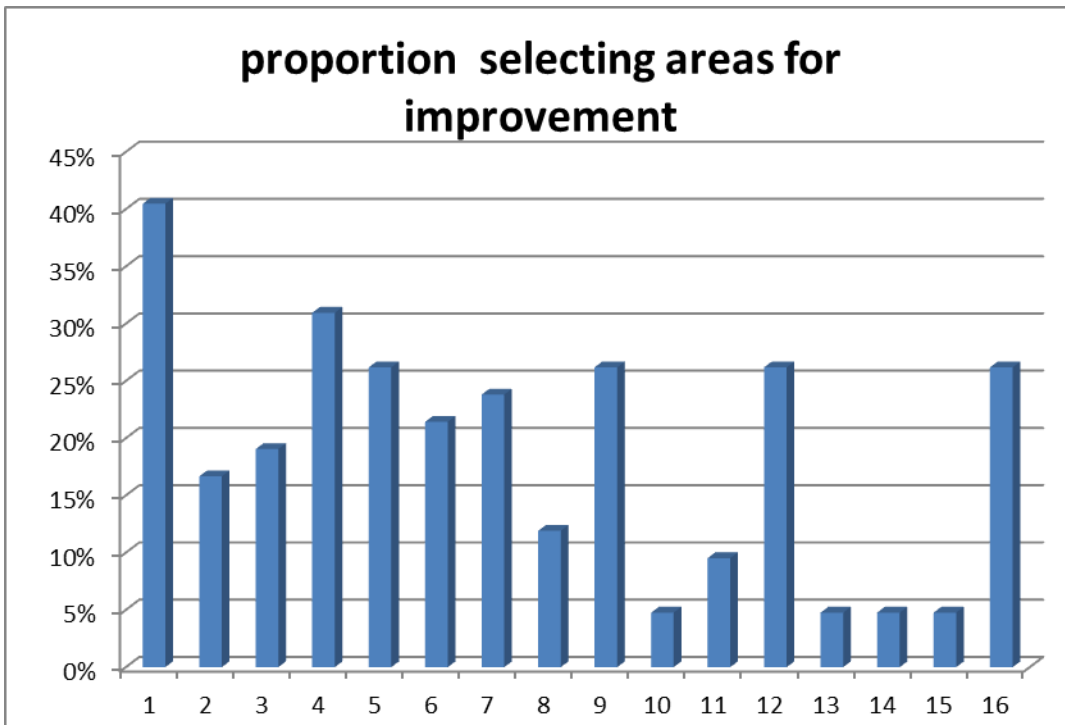
Overall, the majority of survey respondents viewed their overall experience at JBHS as preparing them for success in their post-Barlow experiences with **78%** responding that the school prepared them moderately well or very well while **16%** felt their preparation was adequate and **6%** percent viewed their preparation poorly.

Question 3 (see the survey in Appendix C) asked for specific ways that JBHS graduates thought the school could have better prepared them for post-high school experiences: about one-third of survey respondents listed more electives (**30%**), a little more (**31%**) listed time management, (**20%**) listed study skills while the remainder thought that more rigorous courses (**11%**) and more rigorous grading (**8%**) could have better prepared them for post-high school experiences.

The majority (**67%**) of survey respondents took a math course after high school and the majority (**66%**) thought that JBHS prepared them well or very well while **23%** viewed their preparation as adequate. The remaining **10%** viewed their math preparation as poor.

English classes at JBHS were viewed favorably in terms of post-high school preparation. The majority (**79%**) responded that they were very well or well prepared for college or career. **19%** viewed the preparation as adequate while **2%** viewed it poorly.

Respondents were given 16 areas for potential improvement the results of which are displayed in the graph below:



1 = administration

2= English

3 = Social studies

4 = Mathematics

5 = World Language

6 = Science

7 = Engineering

8 = Family and consumer science

9 = Guidance

10 = Art

11= Music

12 = Technology

13 = Physical Education

14 = Health

15 = Special education services

16 = Research/ library science

APPENDIX A

The last item of the survey asked:

What helped you most at Joel Barlow High School to prepare for post-secondary education and/or for future employment?

The responses, sorted by general topic, are listed here:

Art: 2

AP Studio Art
Art

English and writing: 19

English program
English
English writing
English
English classes
Writing
Writing
Writing
English
Writing in English classes
English classes
English classes at Barlow were more rigorous and challenging than college
English courses
Writing
AP Composition Class
English
Writing skills
Writing
English

Extracurricular/electives: 2

Extracurricular activities
Electives

Math related: 5

Calculus
Economics course
Calculus
Personal finance class
Math

Misc. (stand alone items): 3

Philosophy
Coaches
Science department

Organizational skills: 10

Study habits
Time management
Analytical skills
Time management
Time management
Study skills
Guidance Department
Guidance Counselors
Guidance department
Guidance counselor

Process and curriculum: 5

Rigorous courses and grading
Work load
Curriculum
Group activities
Communication

Teaching staff: 5

Teachers were involved in my educational well-being
Teachers were accessible for extra help
Teachers
Teachers

APPENDIX B

The cover letter which accompanied the mailed survey:

July 5, 2011

Dear Barlow Graduate,

You and the other members of Barlow's 2010 class have been selected to participate in a unique survey. The purpose is to assess the strengths and weaknesses of your preparation for college at Barlow, so that we can provide the school and the Redding/Easton communities with helpful feedback to improve the curriculum.

As far as we know, this is the first-ever survey of its kind, not only here, but in the entire country.

The survey was designed by Professor Lesley DeNardis, at Sacred Heart University who specializes in education research. The survey is being conducted totally independent of JBHS.

You can take the attached survey in one of two easy ways: either fill out the one-sheet form and return it in the enclosed envelope or go online to

www.betterredding.org/survey

and then submit it electronically.

Please feel free to be as open and as honest as you can. We have negotiated an arm's length relationship with Dr. DeNardis, such that no one in Easton or Redding (including ourselves) will know who or how any particular individual responded. All the survey responses will go directly to Dr. DeNardis, and she will tabulate the results.

As an added inducement to participate, two respondents will be selected by lottery to each receive \$100. Everyone who completes a survey before July 29 will have his or her name thrown into a lottery jar. Two names will be selected and each will win \$100. Since the survey is confined just to the graduating class of 2010, you have a good chance of being a winner!

Thanks for taking a few minutes to respond and for your help in making Barlow better.

Dr. Lewis Andrews, President
NABR
Box 177
West Redding CT 06896

APPENDIX C

The following two pages show the mailed survey questionnaire

Joel Barlow Class of 2010 Survey

You can also take this survey, and enter the lottery to win \$100, online at www.betterredding.org/survey

Upon high school graduation, I: (select one)

- Attended a technical college name of college _____ field of study: _____
- Attended a 2-year college name of college _____ planned major: _____
- Attended a four year university name of university _____ planned major: _____
- Joined the military
- Entered the workforce
- Other _____

My experience at Joel Barlow High School prepared me for success in my post-Barlow experiences

(select one)

- very well moderately well adequately not well poorly

In what ways could JBHS have better prepared you for post high school plans?

(select all that apply)

- time management study skills more rigorous courses more rigorous grading more electives

Areas of Joel Barlow High School that could be improved to better prepare you for your post high school life: (select all that apply)

- Administration
- English
- Social studies
- Mathematics
- World Language
- Science
- Engineering
- Family and consumer science
- Guidance
- Art
- Music
- Technology
- Physical Education
- Health
- Special education services
- Research/library science

Have you taken a mathematics course in your post high school experience?

No

Yes, and for the kind of math I was expected to do, my JBHS classes prepared me: (select one)

very poorly

adequately

well

very well

Comments:

How well do you feel your English classes prepared you for the writing you have to do in college or your career? (select one)

very poorly

adequately

well

very well

Comments:

What helped you most at Joel Barlow High School to prepare for post-secondary education and/or future employment?

My name is: _____

If I win the lottery, mail the check to:

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please email a summary of the survey result to me at _____@_____

Dr. DeNardis is the only person handling your responses in this survey which she will treat to assure your anonymity.

Thank you very much!

Please mail this survey - before July 29 - in the enclosed envelope to

Dr. Lesley DeNardis, Department of Government and Politics

Administration Building, Room 206

Sacred Heart University

5151 Park Avenue

Fairfield CT 06825-1000

and you will be automatically entered in the lottery to win \$ 100!

APPENDIX D

Questions?

or for more information, contact:

Dr. Lewis Andrews
NABR
Box 177
West Redding CT 06896
lew@lewsandrews.com

This survey is

An initiative of **NABR—Nonpartisan Action for a Better Redding**

NABR, Inc. is a not-for-profit Connecticut Corporation, designated by the IRS as a tax-exempt, 501(c)(3) organization. We are non-partisan, conservative. We are volunteers. We welcome your thoughtful comments; to conveniently convey your comments, please email or phone any of us.

Dr. Lew Andrews, President
PO Box 459
Redding Ridge CT 06876
203 938 3661
lew@betterredding.org

Frank Scott, Treasurer
284 Umpawaug Road, Box 88
West Redding CT 06896-0088
203 938 3738
frank@betterredding.org

Philip Gagliano, Secretary
20 Dorethy Road
Redding CT 06896
203 938 3225
phil@betterredding.org

Our President is Lewis Andrews. Lew is Senior Policy Analyst at the Yankee Institute for Public Policy Research. He earned a Ph.D. in psychology and is a nationally known lecturer on the connection between values and emotional health. He has two school-aged children and is Chairman of CEO of Connecticut, a charity that raises money to send poor inner-city children to schools of their parents' choice.

Our Treasurer is Frank Scott. Frank is President of Scott American Corporation, a publishing firm. He is a former member of the Region 9 Board of Education.

Our Secretary is Phil Gagliano. Phil worked for the NY City Board of Education, Division of School Facilities, for 25 years, retiring when he was Assistant Deputy Director of Engineering and Maintenance. The City's BOE operated eleven hundred buildings. Phil and his wife Vivian have lived in Redding since 1989.