# Index of Popularity

This memo describes the index of popularity indicator (variable 'nfrnd'). Peer groups and peer influences play an important role in the lives of adolescents. In an attempt to capture the role of peer groups the UWBHS senior survey included a host of questions about peers, one of which can be used to create a crude proxy for the extent to which a student is popular, with popular being defined as being nominated by another senior, who took the survey, as one of their three best friends. The variable was created from question 199 of the student survey, which asked students to name their best friends in their school. The nominations of friends are gender neutral, and do not encourage or restrict nominations of romantic friends. This memo reviews the questions used to make the index of popularity, a discussion of how the variable was created, some basic descriptive statistics for the measure and it briefly discusses some of the limitations of the measures.

## Questions to make Index of Popularity:

199) Please give us the first and last names of your three best friends in this school who are seniors? If you do not have three close senior friends, write the names of three people you like to spend time with who are seniors.

Name of Friend #1 (a)_____ (b)_____
                                FIRST NAME                      LAST NAME

Name of Friend #2 (a)_____ (b)_____
                                FIRST NAME                      LAST NAME

Name of Friend #3 (a)_____ (b)_____
                                FIRST NAME                      LAST NAME

## Creation of the Index of Popularity:

Every survey respondent was assigned an anonymous identification number.  The names of best friends listed in question 199 were coded to the anonymous ID and were assigned to variables: FRIEND1, FRIEND2, and FRIEND3.  From these variables, it was possible to determine the number of times each student was nominated as a best friend by other students who took the survey. The variable name for the index of popularity is 'NFRND'. Also three additional variables were created: FRIEND1, FRIEND2, and FRIEND3 which note the anonymous ID of Friend 1, 2, and 3.

## Descriptive Statistics for the Index of Popularity:
 The variable "NFRND" has values ranging from 0 to 10, with a mean of 1.69 and a standard deviation of 1.59.

The distribution of the variable is:

| Value | Frequency | Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|
| 0     | 2,662     | 27.6    |
| 1     | 2,464     | 25.5    |
| 2     | 1,931     | 20.0    |
| 3     | 1,333     | 13.8    |
| 4     | 709       | 7.3     |
| 5     | 333       | 3.5     |
| 6     | 140       | 1.5     |
| 7     | 48        | .5      |
| 8     | 22        | .2      |
| 9     | 9         | .1      |
| 10    | 1         | .0      |
| Total | 9,652     |         |

## Limitations of the Popularity Index Indicator

1. Sometimes entries were not legible or were incomplete. In these cases, we were not able to determine who was nominated as a best friend.
2. This question came near the end of the survey. There are a higher number of missing values on questions toward the end of the survey. We cannot tell if a student didn't answer this question because they were tired, or because they didn't have any best friends.
3. We have information only from the people who took the survey. It is possible that individuals would have been nominated by people who did not take the survey.