



Keys to High Quality Survey Data

Do students tell the truth on surveys? That depends in part on you!
Like anything in the classroom, the adult in the room has influence.
Here are the keys to getting good data.

✓ IMPORTANT!

- Set a tone that this is serious and important.
- In case you need convincing: data from the YRBS is often used for federal, state, and local grants and initiatives related to student wellbeing. It also influences lawmakers.
- Show that your school takes the survey seriously by allowing ample time.
- Avoid creating any incentives to rush or finish early (e.g., ability to do something fun, ability to finish an important academic task).
- Make allowances for any students who need more than the allotted time to finish the survey.
- Have quiet, offline, low-key activities that students can do if they finish early.

✓ PRIVATE!

- Create a test-like environment that maximizes student privacy.
- If possible, use someone other than the classroom teacher to proctor the survey.
- Use the DPI Introduction video and the Student FAQs to answer any questions students may have about their privacy.
- Recognize that, unlike with tests, in this case students also need privacy from the teachers or proctors. Avoid looking at their screens.
- Privacy relies on trust. Always avoid speculating about student answers or discussing any answers that you may see incidentally. Students are much less likely to be honest if they distrust the adult in the room.

✓ REAL!

- Most students complete the survey without a problem. However, it is possible that questions around topics such as suicide or past experiences of violence or bullying could bring up big feelings for some students. Make sure that you provide resources and are sensitive to students who may need to meet with a counselor after the survey.
- Because the survey asks about sensitive topics, it is natural for students to want to joke about it afterwards. However, in order to avoid inadvertently shaming students, staff should avoid joking about the survey and intervene if students tease one another about it.
- If students are joking about outdated wording or something else that might be useful for improving the survey, that information can be passed on to the YRBS School Contact.