

## **Tips for Survey Administrators**

### **Approaching District Administrators, School Boards and Teachers**

Gaining support of building and district administrators, school boards and teachers for conducting the *Wisconsin Online Youth Risk Behavior Survey* is essential, but sometimes challenging. There may be concerns about a lack of resources, the sensitivity of some survey questions, parent resistance, and disruption of class time. School board members, administrators and teachers need information that quickly helps them recognize the value of the survey for the school and district. The following are some ideas for approaching school officials and teachers, as well as ways you can better inform all those involved in an effort to gain their support.

- **Gaining Approval for the Survey:** Sometimes school board members and district officials are more receptive to requests from other school officials. You may want to recruit your principal or building administrator for help in gaining approval for conducting the survey.
- **Designing the Questionnaire:** The online system is designed so that the default option (selecting all core clusters) mimics the State's official YRBS, which allows for comparisons with the State at the high school level. However, OYRBS users do not have to select these questions. They can pick and choose from an existing question bank. The final decision on what questions are in the OYRBS questionnaire may be the responsibility of building or district administrators, or even school boards. To help them make a more informed choice, prepare a short, written summary that provides the rationale for selecting the survey questions. Even if district administrators or school boards are not involved in the survey selection, a summary document is still a good idea for soliciting any objections before the survey starts. Informing district officials will also better prepare them for answering questions that may come from staff, parents, and concerned community members.
- **Highlight the Benefits of Conducting the Survey:** Not only will the results of the online OYRBS help schools plan health risk programs more strategically, the data can be used in the development of grant proposals, to meet reporting requirements, and educate staff, parents and the community. Pointing out the survey's benefits to school officials at the very beginning of the process may help convince them of the survey's value to the district.
- **Emphasize Methods for Parent Communication:** A perception that parents may object to some of the survey questions could make school officials apprehensive about conducting the survey. Approach school officials with a clear plan for parent contact that includes the location where parents will be able to view the survey, copies of the parent permission form and fact sheet explaining the survey, and name of the person(s) parents will be able to call with questions or comments.
- **Earning the Support of Teachers:** Teachers are understandably reluctant to use class time for non-academic activities, yet their help in the survey is essential. Securing their support for the survey should be a top priority. Gain buy-in from teachers whose classes will be affected by approaching them very early in the process. Involve them in the planning stage as much as possible so disruption of their classes can be minimized. In addition to soliciting their feedback on planning, explain to teachers that the results will have a direct affect on programming designed to positively impact their students' health behaviors. If possible, plan to have participating teachers receive results from the survey directly and in a timely manner.

Further technical assistance documents are available online at <https://dpi.wi.gov/sspw/YRBS/online>.

For user support questions about how to access and use the OYRBS system, contact Mariah Geiger at Mariah. [Geiger@dhs.wisconsin.gov](mailto:Geiger@dhs.wisconsin.gov).

For questions about survey methodology and/or how to use your data, contact Dr. Kate McCoy at [Kate.McCoy@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:Kate.McCoy@dpi.wi.gov).