

# **YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY (YRBS)**

## **Parent and Student Information**

**Q: What is the Youth Behavior Risk Survey?**

A: Also referred to as the YRBS, this survey is designed for students in grades 6-12. The survey is conducted throughout the United States every two years.

The YRBS covers many different areas broadly related to health and wellness. The YRBS focuses on health-related behaviors that contribute to the leading cause of death, disability, and social problems during both adolescence and adulthood. These include many topics, such as: diet and physical activity; alcohol, tobacco and other drug use; sexual activity; access to food and housing; bullying and school safety; anxiety, stress, and suicidality. In addition, the YRBS measures assets--such as a sense of belonging and healthy relationships--which have the power to protect youth from engaging in risk behaviors and help keep them safe, healthy, and successful.

**Q: Why is the survey being done?**

A: The survey helps the state and local communities monitor trends in youth health and risk behaviors. Knowing which risk behaviors are on the rise--as well as which are not--helps schools and communities create smarter, more effective programs to help reduce these risk behaviors and promote health enhancing behaviors. In Wisconsin, results from the YRBS help many communities apply for grant money to fund more services for youth in areas such as drug and alcohol prevention, school safety, or mental health services.

**Q: What does the YRBS measure and why are these things important?**

A: The YRBS focuses on health-related behaviors that result in the most significant mortality, morbidity, and social problems during both adolescence and adulthood. These include many topics, such as: diet and physical activity; alcohol, tobacco and other drug use; sexual activity; access to food and housing; bullying and school safety; anxiety, stress, and suicidality. In addition, the YRBS measures assets--such as a sense of belonging and healthy relationships--which have the power to protect youth from engaging in risk behaviors and help keep them safe, healthy, and successful. In most cases, the YRBS is the only source of information for these important topics.

**Q: Will student names be used or linked to the surveys?**

A: No. Survey administration procedures have been designed to protect student privacy and allow for anonymous participation. Students will not put their names or other identifying information on the questionnaires and no one at the school sees any individual students' responses. Schools only get a summary report of their overall percentages.

**Q: How was my child picked to be in the survey?**

A: Students were selected randomly to participate (or) all students in the school/grade were selected to participate.

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**Q: Does my child have to participate?**

A: No. Participation in this survey is voluntary and your child's grade in this class will not be affected by whether they answer the questions. Students also have the option of leaving a question blank if they are not comfortable answering.

**Q: How long does it take to fill out the survey? Does the survey include a physical test?**

A: Most students take 30-40 minutes to fill out the web-based survey. The survey does not include a physical test or exam.

**Q: Do students answer the question truthfully?**

A: Generally, yes. Research from other sources backs up the trends students report through this survey. Research also indicates that data of this nature may be gathered as reliably from adolescents as from adults. To obtain truthful answers, students must perceive the survey as important and know that procedures have been developed to protect their privacy and allow for anonymous participation.

**Q: Can I review a copy of the survey?**

A: Yes, the main survey is available on the [DPI website](#). In addition, schools may add up to two additional modules. The questions asked through the optional modules are also available on the [DPI website](#). Check with your child's school to see which version of the survey is being used.

**Q: Who supports this survey?**

A: The survey is widely supported by many national, state, and local education organizations, health care providers, parent groups, and youth organizations. In Wisconsin, the survey is voluntarily conducted by hundreds of schools across the state because it helps answer some of our most important questions about what young people today are experiencing and feeling.

**Q: What will be done with the results?**

A: Results are combined and summarized to provide meaningful information while protecting students' privacy and anonymity. A report summarizing the results will be made available for the school to track its trends over time and make improvements to school health and wellness programs as needed. Results across several schools can be combined to produce county-level statistics, without identifying the schools. Such results are used to track health behaviors and risks in a county and help communities apply for funds in areas of greatest need. State-level results help policymakers assess how well Wisconsin is doing in the areas of youth wellness and to develop or enhance programming to meet today's needs.

**Q: Whom can I contact if I have questions about the survey?**

A: Contact your school's counselor or your child's teacher. If they cannot immediately answer your questions, they can provide the appropriate contact information.