

**The YRBS gives students an opportunity to share their voice anonymously and voluntarily.** Participation brings students' experiences to light so that parents, districts, and schools can provide the most appropriate resources for any challenges students may face.

## Q&A

### ▶ **Are sensitive questions asked?**

**YES.** Some questions may be considered sensitive. The questionnaire asks about attempted suicide, tobacco, alcohol and other drug use, and behaviors related to violence. Topics also include sexual intercourse and injection drug use, as these are among the behaviors known to increase the risk of HIV and other STDs. Questions are presented in a straightforward manner and the survey is anonymous, thus reducing any uneasiness about answering questions considered sensitive. If students are not comfortable answering a question, they may leave it blank.

### ▶ **Will student names be used or linked to the surveys?**

**NO.** The survey is anonymous. Teachers are not involved directly in the administration of the survey. Specially trained staff will administer the survey in each selected school. Students are not asked to provide their names when completing the survey.

### ▶ **Do students take the survey more than once to see how their behaviors change?**

**NO.** Each year a new random sample of schools and students is selected. Students who take part one year cannot be tracked because their names are not recorded.

### ▶ **How are students selected to be in the survey?**

About 3,000 students from approximately 40 schools are selected to take part across the state. Two to four classes (about 75 students) are picked randomly to take part in each school.

“YRBS results are critical to understand the health status and needs of our youth. The results of this comprehensive survey add great insight into the world of our youth and the environment in which our young people spend the majority of their time.”

**Nathan R. Monell, CAE,**  
Executive Director, National PTA



“CDC’s dedication to maintaining the YRBS system at all levels (local, state and national) is important in raising awareness of the kinds of risky behaviors in which adolescents engage, and the role of pediatricians and other health care providers in reducing these unhealthy and risky behaviors. The issues identified in the YRBS impact many facets of adolescents’ lives that can result in long-term consequences, ranging for example from unintended pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections, poorer school performance, and unhealthy lifestyle choices.”

**Debra B. Waldron, MD, MPH, FAAP,**  
American Academy of Pediatrics



# You're Crucial to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Participating in the YRBS is easy and important: It helps schools and communities improve the health and wellbeing of our youth

## ► Why is it valuable to collect health-related data about our youth?

- The YRBS collects data from students in grades 9 – 12 on key health behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death and illness during both youth and adulthood.
- Results help monitor changes over time, identify emerging issues, and plan and evaluate programs to support the health of youth. YRBS data are used by health departments, educators, lawmakers, doctors, and community organizations to inform school and community programs, communications campaigns, and other efforts.
- These efforts ultimately help improve youth health both in the short term (reducing screen time, receiving mental health support) and in the future (reducing the risk of cancer, addiction, or sexually transmitted diseases). Healthy students are better learners and more likely to become healthy adults.

## ► Why should districts and schools participate?

- Districts, schools, and students are randomly selected and cannot be replaced; each school's participation is critical to ensure results are representative of youth statewide.
- The YRBS gives your students an opportunity to share their voice, anonymously and voluntarily.
- Participation brings students' experiences to light so that parents, districts, and schools can provide the most appropriate resources for any challenges students may face.

“There were minimal disruptions to my school day, classroom, and teachers' [day] due to clear communication and organized effort [of your team and data collector]. I don't know why I was so hesitant and didn't respond sooner.”

Texas Public  
High School Principal

“Thank you...for working with me to survey our diverse population about their health behaviors. It's important we ask them [students] how they're doing.”

Indiana Public  
High School Principal

“[YRBS] results are critical to understand the health status and needs of our youth ... [and] add great insight into the world of our youth and the environment in which our young people spend the majority of their time.”

Nathan R. Monell, CAE,  
Executive Director, National PTA

The YRBS helps us understand many health-related topics affecting high school students, including mental health. National YRBS data tells us that during the past year...



**37%**  
felt **sad** or **hopeless**



**19%**  
seriously **considered** **suicide**



**16%**  
were **electronically** **bullied**



**20%**  
were **bullied** **on school property**