



Fall 2014

Dear Parent or Guardian,

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is given to middle and high school students to gather data about behaviors that may affect their health. Part of a national effort by the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the survey asks questions about topics such as nutrition, physical activity, injuries, tobacco, alcohol, and other drug use. It also has questions about sexual behaviors that may lead to HIV, other sexually transmitted diseases, and pregnancy. This data will help the District plan policies and programs that meet the needs of our students and families. The results will also be part of a national data set that will be released by CDC. The survey takes about 35 minutes to complete.

Surveys will be anonymous so students should feel free to answer all questions honestly.

The survey is completely voluntary, but participation is strongly encouraged as it will give us a more complete picture of what our students face. However, students will not be penalized for not completing the survey. More information can be found on the other side of this page. A copy of the 2014 YRBS questions can be seen on OSSE's website at <http://osse.dc.gov/service/youth-risk-behavior-survey> and a copy of the 2014 YRBS survey will be available at your child's school office by September 15, 2014.

If your child will take this survey, you do not need to do anything. If you do NOT want your child to take this anonymous survey, please fill out the section below, sign, and return to your child's school main office before October 1, 2014. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask your child's teachers or principal(s). You can also call or email Ms. Julie Ost at (202) 481-3939 or julie.ost@dc.gov Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jesús Aguirre
State Superintendent of Education

STUDENT'S NAME: _____

School: _____ Grade: _____

I have read this form and know what the survey is about.

[] NO, my child may not take this survey.

Parent/Guardian signature: _____ Date: _____

Phone number: _____





Youth Risk Behavior Survey Fact Sheet

Q. Why is the survey being done?

A. The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), other DC government agencies and community based organizations will use the survey results to measure how many youth practice behaviors that pose health risks. The survey also will be used to create school health policy and community programs to help reduce these behaviors.

Q. Are sensitive questions asked?

A. Yes. Some questions are sensitive. Obesity, nutrition, mental health, HIV/AIDS infection, and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are major health problems. Sexual intercourse and intravenous drug use are behaviors that increase the risk of contracting HIV and STIs. The only way to learn if youth are at risk is to ask questions about these behaviors. Attempted suicide, tobacco use, alcohol and other drug use, and weapon-carrying also may be sensitive topics. Questions are written in a direct but sensitive way.

Q. Will students' names be used or linked to the surveys?

A. No. Surveys are anonymous. The survey has been designed to protect your child's privacy. Students do not put their name or any other identifying information on the survey.

Q. Do students take the survey more than once to see how their behaviors change?

A. No, as students are not identified on the survey, their individual change in health behavior cannot be measured.

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

A. All grades 6 through 12 students in DC public schools and public charter schools are asked to take the survey.

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

A. One class period is needed to fill out the survey, which has 99 questions for the high school survey and 57 questions for the middle school survey. The survey does not include a physical test or exam.

Q. Can I see the questions my student will be asked?

A. Yes, a copy of the survey will be at your child's school by September 15, 2014. In addition, previous surveys can be found online here: <http://osse.dc.gov/service/youth-risk-behavior-survey>

Q. What if my child or I would like to learn more about resources for youth around these topics?

A. After taking the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, every child that participates will receive a resource guide that lists school personnel, city agencies, and community based organizations that can provide information and support to both youth and their caregivers. A copy of this resource guide will be at your child's school for your review as well.

Q. Who supports this survey?

A. The survey is supported by both local and national leaders who work to improve the health of youth. Professionals from state and local health and education agencies and federal agencies helped create the national survey. Questions in the survey were also reviewed by the District of Columbia's YRBS Advisory Committee.

Q. How will the information from the surveys be used?

A. This combined information will be used to set policy priorities and direct funding locally and nationally. Combined results from past YRBS surveys can be viewed in the at OSSE's website: www.osse.dc.gov. Nationally, the combined information will be used by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and when 2014 data is released can be seen at www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/index.htm.

