



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

EDUCATION

DC Youth Risk Behavior Survey Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Why is the survey being conducted?

A. The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) and various District agencies, including the Department of Health, will use the survey results to determine the health risk behaviors of District youth. Successful survey sampling results will also be used to direct funding, develop policy and research initiatives, and assist youth programming for participating LEAs, District agencies and non-profit organizations. For the first time, DC would have citywide data that includes all eligible DC public and public charter school students.

Q. When is the survey being conducted?

A. The YRBS will be conducted every two years in the fall from the mid of September through the end of November.

Q. What will be required of schools that participate?

A. School leaders will designate a school liaison that will work with the OSSE contractor. The school liaison will coordinate with the contractor to determine the preferred date and time of the survey(s) and coordinate all logistics. Survey data for your LEA will be available to you in late spring or early summer. **Note: Teachers will be given a script and all materials necessary to easily give classroom students the survey in one class period.**

Q. Is parental permission required?

A. DC allows for passive parental permission. Each eligible student must receive a parent permission slip and FAQ sheet. Schools may choose to mail permission to a home address or distribute it in class. Only students who return an opt-out slip, signed by a parent or guardian, will not participate in the survey.

Q. Are sensitive questions asked?

A. Yes. Some questions are sensitive. Obesity, HIV infection, and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are major health problems. Sexual intercourse and intravenous drug use are behaviors that increase the risk of contracting HIV. Bullying, suicide ideation, experiencing violence, 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. The survey is designed to protect student's identity. Students do not provide their names.

Q. Can students refuse to participate?

A. Yes, at any point during the survey administration students may choose to not participate.

Q. How many students will participate in the survey?

A. Overall roughly 31,000 DCPS and charter school students will be requested to participate from grades 6-12.

Q. How long does it take to fill out the survey?

A. One class period is needed to fill out the survey. The survey has 99 questions for high school students and 55 questions for middle school students.

Q. Who supports this survey?

A. The survey is supported by both local and national leaders invested in the health of DC youth. Professionals from state and local health and education agencies and federal agencies helped develop the national survey. Questions in the local survey were also approved by the District's YRBS Advisory Committee.