

Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Districts and Schools

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) was established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and was first implemented in Alaska in 1995. The Alaska YRBS is an **anonymous** and **voluntary** survey of students in grades 9–12 in public schools, including schools that teach students facing higher risks. It is administered throughout the state in odd-numbered years. The survey requires parental consent.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SURVEY

What if districts, schools, or students choose not to participate?

YRBS results for the entire state may be affected. We cannot replace or substitute a selected classroom, school, or district that chooses not to participate.

Why is the survey administered at school?

A school-based survey provides a controlled setting under strict standardized guidelines, which is the best way to protect student privacy, ensure anonymity, and collect credible data.

Do students answer questions truthfully?

Research has shown that data of this nature gathered from adolescents are as reliable as data gathered from adults. Data obtained from the YRBS are checked for conflicting and invalid responses. You can help us ensure students answer truthfully by informing parents and students that the survey is important, procedures are in place to protect their privacy, and their participation is anonymous.

ADMINISTERING THE YRBS

What information can you provide to schools and parents concerned about the YRBS?

The Alaska YRBS Program provides materials and videos on our website, yrbs.dhss.alaska.gov, that may be helpful, including:

- Videos and other materials for students, parents, and schools: dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Pages/yrbs/resources.aspx
- FAQs: dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Pages/yrbs/FAQs.aspx
- Questionnaires: dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Pages/yrbs/questionnaires.aspx
- Alaska YRBS sample parental permission form: dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Documents/yrbs/2021YRBS_SampleParentalPermissionForm.pdf
- Questionnaires: dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Pages/yrbs/results.aspx#results

Is assistance available to administer the YRBS?

Yes. We provide survey materials at no cost to schools and districts. Participating schools receive funding to help cover costs associated with survey administration. Organizations that use YRBS data are often interested in assisting school districts and schools with YRBS promotion and/or administration. You may contact us at YRBS@alaska.gov to find out if there is a community partner in your area willing to help.

What should we know about scheduling the YRBS with participating schools?

The YRBS is administered in February and March of odd-numbered years. **Due to recent events, the YRBS will be administered in October and November of 2021.** Districts have flexibility to schedule the survey during a one- to two-week survey window. However, each school must administer the survey on a single day, preferably during a single class period, to ensure students are surveyed only once. We recommend conducting the survey during second period to avoid missing students who arrive late or leave early. We ask every school to select a make-up survey date within one to two weeks of their primary administration date to survey students who have permission and were absent on the primary administration day. The YRBS is completed in one 45-minute class period.

Is Alaska considering an online YRBS survey, and will students' anonymity be protected?

Alaska is considering moving to a web-based survey to improve the efficiency of our survey administration process. We recognize that Alaska schools conduct academic assessments and other surveys online, and youth are more receptive to online platforms. The methods for administering the YRBS today and in the future will assure responses are anonymous and the resulting information is representative of Alaska's entire youth population.

Can we obtain district-level YRBS results?

We provide districts in Alaska the option of conducting a district-level survey. District-level results are only released if there are enough student responses to protect student anonymity and ensure high data quality.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Visit the YRBS web site at yrbs.dhss.alaska.gov, or email the YRBS program at YRBS@alaska.gov.

