

Nevada Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the focus of the YRBS?

The YRBS focuses on health-risk behaviors established during youth that contribute to the leading causes of death, disability, and social problems among youth and adults. These include behaviors that result in unintentional and intentional injuries; tobacco use; alcohol and other drug use; sexual behaviors that contribute to HIV infection, other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and unintended pregnancies; unhealthy dietary behaviors; and physical inactivity.

Why is the survey being done?

The YRBS data is invaluable for use in planning and grant writing, Safe & Drug Free Schools, and school improvement planning. The YRBS monitors priority health-risk behaviors among youth to create school health programs to help reduce these behaviors.

What does your school receive for participating in the YRBS?

Your school will receive a copy of the published state report. A local report will also be provided if your school meets the state guidelines for reporting.

Are sensitive questions asked?

Yes. Some questions are sensitive. To help solve health problems among our youth, we must ask questions about health-risk behaviors. Attempted suicide, tobacco use, alcohol and other drug use, weapon carrying and sexual behavior are sensitive issues. Questions are presented in a straightforward and sensitive manner. Does the YRBS track specific students over time?

Will student names be used or linked to the surveys?

No. The survey has been designed to protect student privacy. Students do not put their names on the survey. When a student finishes the survey, he or she places it in a self sealing envelope. The envelopes are then forwarded to NDE

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

No. A new sample of schools and students is drawn each time the survey is administered. Students who take part cannot be tracked because their names are not on the survey and no identifying information is collected.

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

Participation in the YRBS is voluntary. However, to develop accurate state and national estimates of priority health-risk behaviors among adolescents, participation rates must be high. Selected schools and students cannot be replaced. The goal is to achieve 90-95% participation by selected schools and students.

What grade levels are included?

The YRBS is administered to students in grades seven through twelve. Two separate surveys are used for middle and high school students. No sexual behavior questions are asked on the grades seven and eight survey.

How many students are involved from each school?

One or two classes (approximately 25-50 students) in each grade (7-12) are selected randomly to participate in each school. Approximately 100-200 students are asked to participate in each school.

How are schools selected to be in the survey?

A stratified, random sample of schools is selected. The probability of a school being selected is based on enrollment.

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

One class period is needed to fill out the written survey. The survey does not include a physical test or exam.

Do students answer questions truthfully?

Research indicates data of this nature may be gathered as reliably from adolescents as from adults. Internal reliability checks help identify the small percentage of students who falsify their answers. 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. This is accomplished by providing individual, self-sealing envelopes for answer sheets and having an adult present during survey administration.

When is the survey conducted? When are results available?

Data collection occurs during March and April on odd-numbered years. Results are published the following year. All participating states and schools receive a copy of the results.

What kind of parent permission is needed?

Local parental permission procedures are followed prior to administration of the YRBS.

What does it mean for data to be “weighted?”

Weighting is a mathematical procedure that makes data representative of the population from which it was drawn. Only surveys with a scientifically drawn sample, appropriate documentation, and an overall response rate of at least 60% are weighted.

How are YRBS data weighted?

YRBS data are weighted to adjust for school and student non-responses and to make the data representative of the population of students from which the sample was drawn. Generally, these adjustments are made by applying a weight based on student sex, grade, and race/ethnicity.

How can I get the data file for a specific district?

District data files and documentation are owned and controlled by the jurisdictions that conducted the survey. Please contact the specific district to request data files or district specific information.

Where can additional information be obtained?

To obtain additional information about the Nevada YRBS, contact:

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