



ILLINOIS YOUTH SURVEY

Frequently Asked Questions

What is IYS?

The Illinois Youth Survey (IYS) is a self-report survey administered in Illinois schools with 8th, 10th, and 12th grades, funded by the Illinois Department of Human Services. It gathers information about a variety of health and social indicators, including drug use and perceptions, violence, bullying, depression, school climate, nutrition, and fitness. It provides aggregate data for local schools, communities, counties, and state agencies.

Why is the IYS administered in schools?

Administering the survey in schools makes it possible for data collection to reach all areas of the state while maintaining student anonymity.

How can IYS data help schools?

IYS data allows for comprehensive prevention program planning and evaluation across all geographic areas of the state. Individual school data can be valuable to communities and schools in targeting local prevention initiatives.

What is the cost to the school for participating in the IYS survey?

There is no cost to participate or to receive a report. The survey is funded by substance use prevention grants.

How much time should be allowed to administer the IYS?

One class period of 40 to 45 minutes should be allowed to administer the IYS.

How can we feel confident that IYS survey results are valid?

Research indicates that well-monitored self-report surveys produce valid responses. Results from IYS and comparable surveys show similar patterns and levels of drug use (with variation based on locale and survey year), which also indicates validity in responses. Safeguards are built into the survey analysis to identify over-reporting of drug use. Under-reporting of drug use is minimized by assuring that survey participants are not linked with their responses.

What do the IYS questions cover?

In addition to substance use and demographic questions, the survey covers some risk and protective factors for youth drug use and other youth risk behaviors. Questions about activities, home environment, violence/safety, school experiences, and nutrition are also included.

Is the IYS customized by grade level?

Yes. The high school form covers the broadest set of behaviors, and the eighth grade form covers a narrower set of behaviors.

What results are available?

- An individual school report will be sent to the school principal via a secure login approximately 4 to 6 weeks after surveying is completed. If there are less than 10 students at any participating grade, no school results will be generated for that grade.
- A statewide aggregate report, based on a random sample of Illinois public schools, is generated approximately 8 to 12 months after survey administration. This report analyzes the results across Illinois and compares results from previous survey cycles.
- County reports and Chicago Community Area reports are made available if enough schools participate within a given county.

Does the survey lead students to experiment with new negative behaviors?

Questions on a survey do not pose a threat beyond the risks or hazards already in a student's life.

What concerns will parents have about the survey?

As with any discussion of social problems, parental responses will likely vary.

- Questions about substance use, school violence, and mental health issues may be sensitive topics for some parents. But the only way to assess youth perception, attitudes, and behaviors in these areas is to ask about them.
- Some demographic topics may also be sensitive. Each individual school can decide if gender identity and sexual identity will be asked.
- Participating in the IYS can provide guidance on questions that some parents, school personnel, and community members may have, including: How much of a problem do we have? What is the nature of that problem? How can we address it?
- Parents should be assured that IYS questions are age-appropriate, students can choose to not answer any question, and can opt out of participating if they wish.
- Data is collected securely and without identifiers. School- and district-level data is not shared with the state of Illinois, IDHS, CPS, or ISBE.

What if the IYS shows negative results for the school?

There is a tendency to doubt results when they are not as expected. However, it is important to focus on how to address problems and monitor progress by tracking all indicators related to the issues specific to your school. Accurate data is a first step in taking action and is a critical element when applying for funding.

*For more information, please visit the Illinois Youth Survey website at **iys.cprd.illinois.edu***