



# ILLINOIS YOUTH SURVEY

## 2026 Illinois Youth Survey School Frequently Asked Questions

### How can IYS data help schools?

The IYS is a key part of a statewide effort to inform local schools and communities about youth attitudes and behaviors regarding substance use, school violence, school climate, and other health and mental health topics. The data obtained through the IYS allows schools, communities, and state administrators to develop strategic plans for promoting health behaviors among their youth. Often, schools and communities, and state administrators to develop strategic plans for promoting healthy behaviors among their youth. Often, schools and communities use this data to apply for funding to provide prevention programs.



### What do the IYS questions cover?



The survey asks about substance use, as well as risk and protective factors for youth substance use and other risk behaviors. Questions about activities, safety, school experiences, nutrition, physical activity, and demographics are also included.

### 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.



### Why must the IYS be administered in the spring?



The IYS is administered in the spring to match the timeframe of other national youth surveys, which allows for accurate comparisons between Illinois schools and national data.

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

Research indicates that well-monitored self-report surveys produce valid responses. Results from the IYS and comparable surveys show similar patterns and levels of drug use (with variations based on locale and survey year). In addition, safeguards are built into the data cleaning process to assess the accuracy of survey responses.



### When will our school receive results?



Most school frequency reports are prepared within 6 weeks after survey administration. If there are less than 10 valid surveys in any participating grade. No results will be generated for that grade. To ensure the confidentiality of your school's data, the report login and password are sent only to the principal of your school.

## How can we address parents' concerns about the survey?

As with any discussion of social problems, parental responses will likely vary. Parents should know that the IYS questions are age-appropriate, and students can choose not to answer any questions or opt out of participating if they wish. Participating in the IYS is important because it provides guidance on questions that parents and school personnel may have, including: How much of a problem do we have? What is the nature of that problem? How can we address it?



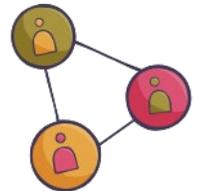
## What if I don't understand the results or the IYS shows negative results for the school?



CPRD is here to help! We provide guidance about understanding your data and using comparison data to assess the issues in your school accurately. In addition, we may be able to refer you to agencies in your community that provide prevention programming to help address topics of concern or recommend resources such as an evidence-based prevention curriculum.

## Can data be linked to individual students?

There are multiple safeguards in place to ensure that student anonymity is maintained, both during collection and in reporting. IYS reports follow established rules that offer additional protection for individual schools and districts. All IYS data collection and reporting procedures have been reviewed and approved by the University of Illinois' Institutional Review Board.



## What are the IYS statewide reports?



The IYS statewide reports provide a scientific estimate of health and social indicators for the state of Illinois. The reports—an overall report and four smaller reports representing the state's diverse community types—are created from a subset of participating students in a random sample of Illinois public schools. Individual schools are not identified in these reports.

## How will you know if students are being honest?

There are checks built into the survey to identify conflicting answers of us. When this happens, surveys are not valid and not included in the report. Teacher/Proctors administering the survey must clearly explain the survey's purpose and address concerns students may have regarding anonymity and survey content.



Sample School  
Sample



*For more information, please visit the Illinois Youth Survey website at [iys.cprd.illinois.edu](https://iys.cprd.illinois.edu)*

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