

Springfield Youth Health Survey (YHS) & Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) 2024-2025

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is the survey being done? How will the results be used?

Survey results will be used to inform programs, policies, and initiatives to improve health and wellbeing of Springfield's teens. The information allows us to see health risk behaviors overtime as well as check the impact of local interventions and programming on these behaviors.

Are sensitive questions asked?

Some questions may be sensitive. Drug, alcohol and tobacco use, suicide, bullying, physical fighting, sexual activity, and weapon-carrying pose a threat to students' health and lives. The only way to determine the extent to which adolescents are at-risk is to ask questions about these behaviors. Questions are written in a straightforward and careful manner, in recognition that these are sensitive issues. School counseling staff are aware of survey administration and will be available to meet with students if needed. A copy of both questionnaires will be available at least 2 weeks prior to administration by visiting www.springfieldpublicschools.com or by contacting the central office at 413.787.7100.

When will the survey administration take place?

Survey administration will take place between October 15, 2024 and October 25, 2024.

How were students selected to be in the survey?

All 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students enrolled in Springfield Public Schools are being asked to take part in the survey. Eighth grade students will take the Springfield Youth Health Survey (YHS), and 10th and 12th grade students will take the Springfield Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS).

How will students take the survey?

A teacher or student proctor will read directions to the class and then students will silently complete the survey on their computer. A teacher will be present in each room to provide support and troubleshoot any issues that may arise.

What is the survey format and length?

The survey will take about 30 minutes. Students will take the survey on their computer.

Is student participation voluntary?

Yes. Students do not have to take the survey, they can skip any questions, and they can stop the survey at any time. Students do not need written parent permission to take part; however, parents/guardians will have the opportunity to opt their children out by returning an opt-out form sent home prior to administration, or by telling their child's homeroom teacher. There are no repercussions against the school, student, or parent/guardian if a student does not participate in the survey.

Will student participation be anonymous?

Yes. The survey has been designed to protect student privacy and allow for anonymous participation. Students do not identify themselves on the survey and no personal identifiers or IP addresses are collected. Neither students' nor schools' names are ever used in reporting survey results.

Will schools or students be identified in the results?

The survey is confidential at the student-level and does not have any questions that could be used to identify individual students. School-level data will not be publicly available; however, the participating schools will receive a copy of their results. The results will combine all student responses together.

Is the Springfield youth health survey initiative different from the Massachusetts initiative?

Yes, the Springfield YHS/YRBS is separate from the statewide surveying. The MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the MA Department of Public Health complete a statewide random sample of the YHS and YRBS. Only 3-4 classrooms of students in 5-6 schools will be selected into the statewide sample. The statewide survey does not provide Springfield-specific data. We modified the questionnaires used by the state for our local initiative to reduce the length and ensure the surveys address local interests and concerns.

Where can I get more information?

For more information about the Springfield Youth Health Survey Initiative, please visit

<https://www.publichealthwm.org/youth-health-survey-initiative>

Whom can I contact about the survey?

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