

**TO: PARENT/GUARDIAN**

**FROM:** Nebraska Department of Education and Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services  
**SUBJECT: ACTIVE CONSENT FORM** for the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)

Your son/daughter's school is participating in the 2016 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). **This survey is endorsed by the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (NDHHS).** It is conducted once every two years. The data gathered from this survey has been and will continue to be influential in bringing millions of dollars into Nebraska for the development of school health policies and health programs for youth.

Your son/daughter is in a class that was randomly selected to participate in the YRBS. Students will take the survey during a regular class period. Completing this survey poses no risk to your child. Survey procedures have been designed to protect your child's privacy. Students do not put their names on the survey and no student or school will be mentioned by name in a report of the results. On the following page, a consent form has been included for you to read and complete regarding your child's participation in the YRBS.

The Nebraska YRBS is part of the National Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System created and managed by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). This statewide survey identifies and monitors priority health risk behaviors that are established during youth and result in sickness, disability, death, and social problems among youth and adults.

The YRBS is made up of multiple-choice questions. Topics covered include nutrition, physical activity, injuries, tobacco, alcohol and other drug use, sexual behaviors, bullying, confrontation, and attempted suicide. Some sample questions from the survey are included with this letter. To view the entire questionnaire and additional information about the project, please visit <http://bosr.unl.edu/sharp>.

The YRBS has been approved by state and local school officials and has the support of many national organizations, including the National Parent-Teacher Association and the American Medical Association. Student participation is encouraged and appreciated. The data collected becomes a part of the State database and is extremely useful in the development of programs related to improving the health of our youth. However, participation is voluntary and there are no consequences if a student does not participate.

The Bureau of Sociological Research (BOSR) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln will be managing the survey administration for NDE and NDHHS. Attached to this letter is a fact sheet containing frequently asked questions about the YRBS, as well as a few sample questions from the survey questionnaire. If there is any additional information you would find helpful, please contact Kim Meiergerd at [kmeiergerd2@unl.edu](mailto:kmeiergerd2@unl.edu), or call 402-472-3692, and she will be happy to assist you.

## 2016 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Active Consent Form

Please read the section below and check the appropriate box.

I have read the information about the Youth Risk Behavior Survey being conducted by the Nebraska Department of Education, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

<input type="checkbox"/>	YES - My child has my permission to participate.
<input type="checkbox"/>	NO - My child does not have my permission to participate.

Name of student \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent/guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Please have your son/daughter return this form to his/her teacher within the next three days.**

Thank you so much for your assistance with this important project.

## Frequently Asked Questions about the YRBS

**Q. Why should my child participate?**

**A.** The YRBS is the only representative statewide survey of Nebraska youth that covers a variety of important health topics in one survey. It provides information to help communities plan effective health prevention strategies for school-aged youth. In addition, the national coordination of the survey allows for Nebraska to compare its survey results to results from other states and the nation as a whole.

**Q. Why is this survey being done?**

**A.** The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (NDHHS) have utilized the YRBS data to monitor changes over time in health risk behavior, to strengthen state and local grant applications, to plan more effective youth prevention programs at the state level, and to provide a standardized long-term mechanism to chart progress in reducing youth health risk behaviors. The data has enabled NDE and NDHHS to access federal grants in excess of millions of dollars to assist local schools and communities in developing health-enhancing policies and programs for youth, to provide funding to schools and communities to address health initiatives in their communities, and to provide statewide professional development opportunities on health-enhancing programs for youth.

**Q. Are sensitive questions asked?**

**A.** Yes. Some questions are related to sensitive issues. To help solve health problems among our youth, we must first understand them. The only way to learn if youth are at risk is to ask questions about all health-related behaviors. Care has been taken to write survey questions in a direct, but sensitive way.

\*Survey questions are posted at <http://bosr.unl.edu/sharp> for viewing.

**Q. Does asking a student about a risky health behavior (ie; tobacco use) increase the likelihood that he or she will practice that behavior?**

**A.** No. There is no scientific evidence that health-risk behaviors can be changed simply by reading a question about them.

**Q. Will students' names be used or linked to the survey?**

**A.** No. The survey has been designed to protect your child's privacy. Students do not put their name on the survey and when finished, seal their survey and answer sheet in an envelope to guarantee confidentiality. No one from the school will see their responses.

**Q. Are students tracked over time to see how their behavior changes?**

**A.** No. Students who take part cannot be tracked because their names are not on the surveys.

**Q. How was my child selected?**

**A.** A scientific sampling process (random sampling) was used to select both schools and the classrooms within schools to participate in the statewide survey. Entire classes were selected rather than specific students.

Q. **How long will it take to fill out the survey?**

A. Approximately thirty minutes are needed to complete the written survey.

Q. **Who supports this survey?**

A. This survey is supported by many major, national, state, and local organizations interested in the health of youth. People from over 100 state and local health and education agencies and 19 federal agencies helped develop the survey. The National PTA, National School Boards Association, American Association of School Administrators, American Medical Association, American School Health Association, American Association for Health Education, Association of State and Territorial Directors of Health Promotion and Public Health Education, Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, Council of Chief State School Officers, National Association of State Boards of Education, National Education Association, National Education Goals Panel, and the Society of State Directors of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation have all provided letters of support.

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A few **sample** questions from the questionnaire are shown below:

During the past 7 days, how many times did you eat fruit? (Do not count fruit juice)

- A. I did not eat fruit during the past 7 days
- B. 1 to 3 times during the past 7 days
- C. 4 to 6 times during the past 7 days
- D. 1 time per day
- E. 2 times per day
- F. 3 times per day
- G. 4 or more times per day

During the past 30 days, on how many days did you have at least one drink of alcohol?

- A. 0 days
- B. 1 or 2 days
- C. 3 to 5 days
- D. 6 to 9 days
- E. 10 to 19 days
- F. 20 to 29 days
- G. All 30 days

When you rode a bicycle during the past 12 months, how often did you wear a helmet?

- A. I did not ride a bicycle during the past 12 months
- B. Never wore a helmet
- C. Rarely wore a helmet
- D. Sometimes wore a helmet
- E. Most of the time wore a helmet
- F. Always wore a helmet

Have you ever had sexual intercourse?

- A. Yes
- B. No

During the past 12 months, how many times has someone threatened or injured you with a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club on school property?

- A. 0 times
- B. 1 time
- C. 2 or 3 times
- D. 4 or 5 times
- E. 6 or 7 times
- F. 8 or 9 times
- G. 10 or 11 times
- H. 12 or more times