

SCHOOL HEALTH DATA AND ITS USEFULNESS

Why should I be concerned with school health data?

Research shows that data-driven decision-making leads to improved student outcomes. Data-driven decision making is the process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting meaningful school improvement data and using it to guide decisions about curriculum, instruction, teacher training, and resource allocation to make a positive impact on student learning. Data must be aligned and tied to student performance goals at the classroom, school, and district level.

Data can help school leaders assess a myriad of student, family, and community health needs. Data helps to paint a broad picture of the school community and can be used to initiate discussions about health concerns locally.

What school health data is available?

Youth Risk Behavior Survey - The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is a nationwide survey produced by the CDC Division of Adolescent and School Health to monitor the prevalence of six priority health-risk behaviors among samples of high school students. These are: alcohol and other drug use, behaviors that contribute to unintentional injuries and violence (including suicide), tobacco use, unhealthy dietary behaviors, physical inactivity and sexual behaviors that contribute to unintended teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. Kentucky also includes questions on oral health, additional asthma related questions, and a few other topics.



This survey is comprehensive and provides very useful state-wide data. The YRBS is further discussed in the section called “Priority Health-Risk Behaviors of Youth and Adolescents”.

School Health Profiles (Profiles) - The School Health Profiles (Profiles) is a system of surveys assessing school health policies and practices in states. This was developed by the CDC- Division of Adolescent and School Health. Profiles is conducted biennially from a random sample of Kentucky schools by the Kentucky Department of Education Coordinated School Health and HIV Prevention Initiatives among middle and high school principals and lead health education teachers. Profiles monitors the current status of:

- School health education requirements and content,
- Physical education requirements,
- School health policies related to HIV infection/AIDS, tobacco-use prevention, and nutrition
- Asthma management activities, and
- Family and community involvement in school health programs
- Professional development received by lead health education teachers

What can be done with Profiles data?

State and local education and health officials can use Profiles data to:

- Compare school health policies and programs across states, large urban school districts, and territories
- Advocate for required health education
- Identify health education topics and skills that are taught
- Identify family and community involvement in school health programs
- Identify topics for professional development
- Improve school health programs and policies
- Determine how well schools address the health needs of their students
- Guide professional development
- Plan and allocate resources
- Advocate for policy, program, and resource development or revision

School Health Policies and Programs Study (SHPPS)

SHPPS is a national survey periodically conducted (approximately every five years) by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to assess school health policies and practices at the state, district, school, and classroom levels. SHPPS was most recently conducted in 2006. SHPPS covers all eight school health program components:

- Health education
- Physical education and activity
- Health services
- Mental health and social services
- Nutrition services
- Healthy and safe school environment
- Faculty and staff health promotion
- Family and community involvement

<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/shpps/index.htm>

CDC-DASH

Surveillance is the ongoing collection, analysis, and interpretation of data from generalizable samples. CDC's Division of Adolescent and School Health (DASH) collects data on youth and school health policies and programs.

<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/data/index.htm>

Kentucky Public Health Data Resource Guide 2007

A variety of health-related surveys that collect statewide data are described in this guide, as well as Kentucky-specific surveillance systems and registries. The types of data collected are included as well as strengths and limitations of each data source. Contact information is provided for every source and most contain web links for easy access to available data. <http://chfs.ky.gov/NR/rdonlyres/3A312763-BE9E-483E-8A8D-69ECA825EE8/0/DataResourceGuide2007.pdf> Surveillance and health data on Kentucky by the Kentucky Department for Public Health: <http://chfs.ky.gov/dph/surv.htm>

Kentucky Incentives for Prevention (KIP) Survey

The purpose of the KIP survey is to assess student use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, as well as a number of factors related to potential substance abuse. The survey provides information about self-reported use of substances, and perceived accessibility of substances in the community. 111 of the 120 counties in Kentucky did participate in the 2008 KIP survey. District results are reported only to the school district and not released in a public report. <http://www.reachoflouisville.com/kip/index.htm>



Safe Schools Data

Kentucky schools and districts are required to report to the Kentucky Department of Education their discipline/behavior data on an annual basis through the statewide data collection system. The data is reported by sex, race, and grade level for:

1. All instances of violence and assault against school employees and students; incidences of possession of guns and deadly weapons on school property or at school functions; all incidences of the possession of alcohol, prescription drugs, or controlled substances on school property or at school functions.
2. The number of arrests, charges, and whether civil charges were pursued by the injured party.
3. The number of suspensions, expulsions, and corporal punishments for these incidences. <http://www.kysafeschools.org/data09.html>

General Information on Using Data

Reasons to Use Data

There are many different reasons people need and/or decide to use data. Presenting written or spoken data can have a profound result if done effectively.

The most common reasons for using data are to:

- create awareness about an issue;
- develop programs and policies;
- assess and improve programs and policies;
- seek funding;
- gather support

Guiding Questions when presenting data either written or orally

Why do you want to present this data? What is your goal?

Knowing why you want to share this data will allow you to select the data that makes your case most effectively.

Data is most compelling when presented with a clear purpose. Some tips to remember when:²⁵

- Increasing general awareness – keep the information simple
- Generating support – demonstrate the need for the activity and also how it will alleviate the problem
- Influencing administrators and public officials – show how the initiative is beneficial to them

To whom are you presenting the data?

Your target audience at the local level could include: program staff and volunteers, students, school board members and administrators, parents and parent-teacher groups, funders, business leaders, local government officials, members of community organizations, members of faith-based organizations, members of the local press and other local and state organizations.

Determine the information your audience will need and why they need it. Different audiences need different pieces of information in different formats. Always keep your reason for making the presentation to this particular audience in the forefront of your mind and use this knowledge to shape your discussion.

How are you going to present the data?

Don't feel you have to present everything; you don't want to overwhelm the audience with too much data. You do want to always explain why you are sharing the data. Focus on the big picture. Always remember that the audience is interested in the story that you have to tell. Only include those details that move your story forward.

