

## Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS)

**Coordinator:**

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**State Web Site:**

[https://education.ky.gov/curriculum/CSH/data/Pages/Youth-Risk-Behavior-Survey-\(YRBS\).aspx](https://education.ky.gov/curriculum/CSH/data/Pages/Youth-Risk-Behavior-Survey-(YRBS).aspx)

**National Web Site:**

[https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/index.htm?s\\_cid=hy-homepage-002](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/index.htm?s_cid=hy-homepage-002)

### **Source of Information for the Database**

The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) is a questionnaire administered to students and is made possible by a cooperative agreement between the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Schools participating in the survey are selected randomly and participation is voluntary. Personal identifying information, such as name or address, is not collected. The YRBSS has been conducted in Kentucky since 1989. In 2009-2017, the Kentucky Department of Education collaborated with the Family Resource and Youth Services Centers (FRYSC) to administer the YRBSS. There is no federal or Kentucky mandate that requires data collection.

### **Description of the Data Collected**

The YRBSS collects data on prevalence of health-risk behaviors among middle and high school students, which are used to assess whether or not behaviors increase, decrease, or stay the same over time and if co-occurrences exist. To examine students' behaviors, the survey contains items related to unintentional injury and violence, suicide, tobacco use, alcohol and other drug use, sexual behavior, dietary behavior, asthma, and physical activity. YRBSS data are used to monitor priority health-risk behaviors of youth that contribute substantially to the leading causes of death, disability, and social problems among youth and adults in the United States. YRBSS includes biennial national, state, and local school-based surveys of representative samples of students in grades 9-12. In addition to the high school Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) for grades 9-12, Kentucky administers a middle school YRBS for grades 6-8. This biennial data is also collected during the spring of odd-numbered years.

### **Strengths of the Data**

The schools taking the YRBSS are selected with double random sample selection. In two test-retest reliability studies of the YRBSS questionnaire done by the CDC, a majority of the prevalence estimates were not significantly different. The 2003 and 2007-2015 YRBSS had an overall combined school and classroom response rate of over 70 percent, making this data statistically representative of students in typical public high schools throughout Kentucky. The middle school data was statistically representative in 2009–2015.

### **Data Limitations**

YRBSS data are self-reported, and the extent of over-reporting or underreporting behaviors cannot be determined. Also, the data apply only to youth who attend school and, therefore, are not representative of all persons in this age group. Another limitation of the YRBSS is that parental permission procedures are not consistent throughout the state. However, a 2004 study by the CDC revealed that inconsistency in parental permission does not affect prevalence estimates as long as student response rates are high.

### **Specific Uses of Information**

- Determine the prevalence of health risk behaviors.
- Assess whether health risk behaviors increase, decrease, or stay the same over time.
- Examine the co-occurrence of health risk behaviors.
- Provide comparable data among subpopulations of youth.
- Monitor progress toward achieving the Healthy People 2020 objectives and other program indicators.

### **System Evaluation**

Before each biennial survey, sites (states and districts) and the CDC work together to revise the YRBSS questionnaire to reflect site and national priorities.

### **Data Set Availability**

YRBSS data from 2005–2015 for high schools, and 2009–2015 data for middle schools are available to the public. The data are available in both SPSS and comma delimited formats. Contact the YRBSS coordinator if requesting the raw data sets. Visit the state web site for data reports and data request forms.

- **2015 Sample Size:** *High School Students:* 2,577  
*Middle School Students:* 1,640
- **Smallest Geographic Level Released:** State
- **Cost of Data Set:** Free

### **Data Release Policy**

Due to confidentiality, the names of participating schools are not available.

### **Data Publications**

Once surveys are complete, the CDC includes results of all states that conduct the YRBSS in the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. The 2015 Kentucky YRBSS results are highlighted in the latest report and can be found on the YRBSS website: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/yrbss/index.htm>.

## YRBSS

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The website also includes a tool called Youth Online, that can analyze and create tables and graphs and perform statistical tests on high school and middle school results from 2001-2015 by site and health topic.

### **Suggested Data Citation**

Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), Kentucky Department for Public Health (KDPH), and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). *Kentucky Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System*. Frankfort, Kentucky: Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Kentucky Department of Education, [survey year].

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Contributing Author</b></p>
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