



Department of Education Announces Results of the New Jersey Student Health Survey Showing Positive Trends in Student Health and Well-Being

Department of Education continues to provide support and professional development to schools in areas such as nutrition, physical activity, and anti-bullying measures

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Trenton, NJ - The Department of Education today announced the results of the 2011 New Jersey Student Health Survey (NJSHS) showing overall positive trends in student health and well-being. The 2011 survey, taken by 1,657 students in 31 high schools across the state between March and June, provides information for families, school staff, administrators, community members and policy makers about adolescent behaviors and trends.

"The health, safety and emotional well-being of our students is of the utmost importance and the information collected through this survey is critical because it provides us with a greater awareness of trends in adolescent behavior," said Acting Commissioner Chris Cerf. "We will continue to provide as much support and professional development to districts as possible to ensure that our students are physically and emotionally healthy and ready to learn."

The Department of Education has taken a number of steps to improve the health and well-being of students over the past several years in partnership with other state agencies. With the support of funding from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Department provided professional development to physical education teachers, food service directors, and school wellness teams to support increased physical activity and healthy eating in schools. The Department of Education has also partnered with the Department of Agriculture to support the expansion of the School Breakfast Program to increase students' access to a healthy breakfast.

Through implementation of the *Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights* (2011), the Department has provided training to thousands of school staff across the state, a model anti-bullying policy, and several guidance documents to help schools better identify and intervene in instances of harassment, intimidation, and bullying.

The NJSHS is comprised of 88 questions addressing a wide variety of behaviors including, but not limited to, physical activity and nutrition, emotional health, sexual behavior, use of tobacco and drugs, and violence. Summaries of the results are provided to all public middle school and high school principals, superintendents, public charter school leaders, and local health officials in the state in order to help guide decision making when developing policies and programs that address adolescent behaviors.

The survey, administered biennially since 1993, was conducted with funding from the New Jersey Department of Education through a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the US Department of Education under Title IV, Part A of the No Child Left Behind Act, and the New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

Key Findings

Physical Activity and Nutrition:

- 50% of high school students reported participation in physical activity for at least 60 minutes per day on five or more days of the past week — up from 42% in 2009.
- 59% of high school students rated their health in general as either excellent or very good, and another 32% rated their health as good.*
- 64% of high school students reported not eating breakfast on each of the preceding seven days.*

**Note: This question was asked for the first time in 2011, therefore comparison data is unavailable.*

Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs

- 69% of high school students reported having at least one drink of alcohol in their lifetime—down from 75% in 2009.
- 41% of high school students reported having at least one cigarette in their lifetime—down slightly from 43% in 2009.
- 15% of high school students reported using prescription drugs without a prescription.*

**Note: This question was asked for the first time in 2011, therefore comparison data is unavailable*

Suicide:*

- 13% of high school students reported considering suicide—down from 17% in 2001.
- 11% of high school students reported making a plan for suicide—down from 13% in 2001.
- 6% of high school students reported attempting suicide—down from 8% in 2001.

**Note: Questions on suicide are asked every four years.*

Bullying:*

- 20% of high school students reported being bullied on school property during the 12 months prior to taking the survey which is down slightly from 21% in 2009.
- 16% of high school students reported being electronically bullied through email, chat rooms, instant messages, websites or text messages—a decrease from 17% in 2009.

**Note: The Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act (P.L. 2010, c. 122) was signed into law on January 5, 2011 and was not fully in effect at the time of the survey.*

Motor-Vehicle Safety:

- 6% of students reported driving after drinking alcohol, down slightly from 8% in 2009.
- 48% of high school students who drove reported texting or emailing while driving.*
- 46% of high school students who drove reported talking on their cell phones while driving.*

**Note: This question was asked for the first time in 2011, therefore comparison data is unavailable.*

Weapons and Violence:

- 24% of high school students reported being in a physical fight during the past 12 months—a decrease of 4 percentage points from 2009.
- 10% of high school students reported carrying a weapon during the past 30 days, showing no change from 2009.

Sexual Behaviors:

- 45% of the high school students reported having sexual intercourse at least once in their lifetime, down slightly from 46% in 2009.
- 15% of high school students who were sexually active in the previous three months reported that they used no form of birth control the last time they had sex which is up from 10% in 2009.

For complete results, the summary report and the full length detailed report are available on the NJDOE website: <http://www.nj.gov/education/students/yrbs/>.