



## BACKGROUND

In 2011, the state combined various youth health surveys conducted in schools around the state to streamline efforts and enhance youth health data collection. Colorado formed this unified youth health survey to reduce burden on schools and to better meet the data needs of schools, local communities, and government agencies. These partners use the data to improve the health and well-being of young people to inform programming, policy development and funding.

In 2013, the sample size of the Healthy Kids Colorado Survey increased significantly compared to previous years. This large sample size provides the state with a more precise picture of youth health in Colorado.

## VOLUNTARY

The Healthy Kids Colorado Survey is completely voluntary. In fact, the survey goes through various layers of permission before a student even sees it. School district superintendents decide whether or not their district will participate. If yes, a principal decides whether or not their school will participate. Schools notify students and their parents in advance of the survey that their participation is completely voluntary. Parents can choose to have or not have their child participate and a young person can choose whether to participate or not.

## METHODOLOGY

The Healthy Kids Colorado Survey is aligned with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) that has been conducted on a two-year cycle since 1991. Professional researchers use a random sample of Colorado students to represent students in grades 6-12. A random sample is an unbiased representation of a larger group. Randomly selected schools are based on the state's student enrollment in grades 6-12. Within those schools, researchers randomly select classrooms.

The reliable sample design and large sample size provide a realistic representation of the health of students in Colorado.

**Weighting:** Weighting means data is adjusted to represent the population from which the sample was drawn. In this case, the data is weighted by researchers to represent the health of young people in a school, district, region, or statewide. The researchers weight the results to represent student enrollment in all Colorado public middle and high schools. The weights

account for sampling design, school and student nonparticipation and nonresponse, and differences in grade, sex and ethnicity between the sample and the population.

Since 1991, Colorado has administered the survey using this methodology. This provides accurate data that can be compared to previous years and a consistent estimate to measure changes over time.



## HEALTH STATISTICS REGIONS

In an effort to provide localized high school data, the state is divided into 21 Health Statistics Regions. The middle school sample is statewide. Some regions may be one county and one school district, some regions may be one county and multiple school districts, and some regions may be multiple counties and multiple school districts.

**Reporting at the regional level:** When a region has low participation, it is represented in the statewide sample, however, a regional report is not generated. This is to maintain the confidentiality of the districts, schools, and students within that region.

## DATA COLLECTION

The Healthy Kids Colorado Survey is administered in schools statewide. Districts and schools can voluntarily participate in two ways:

- **State Sample:** Schools and classrooms are selected at random to represent the state and each of the health statistics regions (high school only) in Colorado.
- **Opt-in:** For those schools not selected for the random sample, schools and districts can elect to participate, for no cost! Many schools all across Colorado take advantage of this survey.

Any participating school will have access to its data and will receive a school-level report with comparisons to state data. School data is provided only to the school and is not publicly released. This is to ensure an additional layer of privacy protection for students, schools, and districts. State and regional-level data are available to the public.

