

2018 RCAS Youth Survey FAQ's for Parents and Teachers

What is the RCAS Youth Survey?

It is comprised of 2 surveys: 1 for 4th & 5th grade students and 1 for Middle and High School Students. It is conducted through the schools and asks questions regarding health, substance abuse and related issues.

Can I see what's on the survey?

Yes, a PDF copy of the survey can be downloaded from www.chiesman.org/surveys or have your school print a copy for you.

How long has the RCAS Youth Survey been conducted?

The RCAS Youth Survey(s) has been conducted for nearly 20 years.

What is the data collected used for?

The data collected provides critical information to school administrators, prevention professionals and out of school time partners as they work to address substance abuse and other issues in our community. In addition, the data provides a scientific estimate of health and social indicators for the Rapid City Area School District. Lastly, it serves to measure the effectiveness of various programs as well as an accountability and decision-making tool for both in school and out of school programs.

Are students required to take the Youth Survey?

No. Students and their parents received a Consent Form to sign and return to their school allowing their student to participate in the survey (a "yes" on the form). If the Consent Form was returned indicating "no", then that student will not participate. Also, if a student did not return a Consent Form, that student will be excluded from participating.

What questions are asked on the survey?

Each survey asks general questions regarding demographics, community, safety, health/nutrition/fitness and school. The Middle/High School survey asks additional questions concerning substance use and mental health.

Will a student's answers be identified to their teachers or peers?

Absolutely not. Individual student confidentiality is a core principle of the Youth Survey. The identity of the students who participate is not collected. Full instructions accompany the survey to help educators create an environment that protects privacy and promotes truthful responses.

How much class time will be used to administer the survey?

For 4th & 5th grade students, the survey should take less than 10 minutes. For Middle & High School students, it should take 10-15 minutes at the most.

Can a student participate but skip questions or sections on the survey?

Yes. Students can skip any question or section on the survey they do not wish to answer.

How will you know if students are being honest?

There are safeguards in our analysis of the survey that tend to eliminate any over-reporting. Under-reporting has not been a major problem so long as youth are assured that their responses cannot and will not be tracked back to them, and that adults conducting the survey present it seriously and in a manner conducive to student cooperation. Some students enjoy completing the survey, but even those who don't will usually be truthful if the survey is administered as suggested.

My student participated in the Youth Survey, what should I do now?

It is recommended that parents use the administration of the Youth Survey(s) to open a dialogue with their student regarding substance use and other issues on the survey.