

TO: PARENT/GUARDIAN

FROM: Nebraska Department of Education and Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services

SUBJECT: PASSIVE CONSENT FORM for the Nebraska Risk and Protective Factor Student Survey (NRPFSS)

Your son/daughter's school is participating in the 2014 Nebraska Risk and Protective Factor Student Survey (NRPFSS). **This survey is endorsed by the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (NDHHS).** The NRPFSS is a substance abuse related survey of students in grades 8, 10, and 12 which is conducted once every two years. At this time, the NRPFSS is the only school-based public health survey that generates local and regional estimates for health planning and evaluation.

Your son/daughter is in an 8th, 10th, or 12th grade class and since the NRPFSS is a census survey, all students in those grade levels are invited to participate. Students will take the survey during a regular class period. Completing this survey poses no risk to your child. Survey procedures have been designed to protect your child's privacy. Students do not put their names on the survey and no student will be mentioned by name in a report of the results. On the following page, a consent form has been included for you to read and complete regarding your child's participation in the NRPFSS.

The NRPFSS is made up of multiple-choice questions. Topics covered include alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drug use, gambling, and anti-social behavior. In addition, information is collected related to risk factors that place youth at increased risk for substance abuse, delinquency, school dropout, and other problem behaviors and protective factors that exert a positive influence or buffer against the likelihood that students will engage in problem behaviors. Some sample questions from the survey are included with this letter.

The NRPFSS has been approved by state and local school officials and has the support of many community health-related organizations. In completing this survey your child will have an opportunity to evaluate some of his/her choices relating to health and wellness. Some parents have chosen to use the survey (questionnaire is available at <http://bosr.unl.edu/sharp>) as an opportunity to create dialogue related to health topics with their son/daughter following completion of the survey.

Student participation is encouraged and appreciated. The data collected is extremely useful in the development of programs related to improving the health of our youth. However, participation is voluntary and there are no consequences if a student does not participate.

The Bureau of Sociological Research (BOSR) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln will be managing the survey administration for NDE and NDHHS. Attached to this letter is a fact sheet containing frequently asked questions about the NRPFSS, as well as a few sample questions from the survey questionnaire. If there is any additional information you would find helpful, please contact Kimberly Meiergerd at kmeiergerd2@unl.edu, or call 402-472-3692, and she will be happy to assist you.

2014 Nebraska Risk and Protective Factor Student Survey Passive Consent Form

I have read the information about the **Nebraska Risk and Protective Factor Student Survey** being conducted by the Nebraska Department of Education, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Please check the box below **only if you do not** want your son/daughter to take part in the survey.

<input type="checkbox"/>	My child does not have my permission to participate.
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Name of student _____ Grade _____

Signature of parent/guardian _____ Date _____

Please have your son/daughter return this form to his/her teacher within the next three days ONLY if you do not want them to participate.

Thank you so much for your assistance with this important project.

Frequently Asked Questions about the NRPFSS Survey

Q. Why should my child participate?

A. At this time the NRPFSS is the only school-based public health survey that generates local and regional estimates for health planning and evaluation in regard to substance abuse.

Q. Why is this survey being done?

A. The NRPFSS is available to all public and non-public schools with students in grades 8, 10, and 12. It is used primarily for generating local and regional estimates for substance abuse and risk and protective factors related to substance abuse and problem behaviors. **The NRPFSS is the ONLY state survey that allows the opportunity for schools to receive school-specific, school district, and/or community reports.** The data has enabled schools, communities, and health districts to access federal funds to assist in the development of health-enhancing policies and programs for youth. In addition, this information has proven to be invaluable to schools and communities in addressing the health behaviors of their youth.

Q. Are sensitive questions asked?

A. Yes. Often, any questions related to a health behavior are considered sensitive. To help solve health problems among our youth, we must first understand them. The only way to learn if youth are at risk is to ask questions about health-related behaviors. Care has been taken to write survey questions in a direct, but sensitive way.

*Survey questions are posted at <http://bosr.unl.edu/sharp> for viewing.

Q. Does asking a student about a risky health behavior (ie; tobacco use) increase the likelihood that he or she will practice that behavior?

A. No. There is no scientific evidence that health-risk behaviors can be changed simply by reading a question about them.

Q. Will students' names be used or linked to the survey?

A. No. The survey has been designed to protect your child's privacy. Students do not put their name on the survey. No one from the school will see their responses.

Q. Are students tracked over time to see how their behavior changes?

A. No. Students who take part cannot be tracked because their names are not on the surveys. But, you and your son/daughter could discuss the survey and answers given. And, if there was an interest/need in changing a behavior, you could track progress over time.

Q. How was my child selected?

A. The NRPFSS is a census survey. All students in grades 8, 10, and 12 are invited to participate.

Q. How long will it take to fill out the survey?

A. Approximately thirty minutes are needed to complete the written survey.

A few **sample** questions from the questionnaire are shown below:

How important do you think the things you are learning in school are going to be for your later life?

- Very important
- Quite important
- Fairly important
- Slightly important
- Not at all important

How wrong would most adults in your neighborhood, or the area around where you live, think it is for kids your age:

- to use marijuana?
Very Wrong Wrong
A Little Bit Wrong Not Wrong at All
- to drink alcohol?
Very Wrong Wrong
A Little Bit Wrong Not Wrong at All
- to smoke cigarettes?
Very Wrong Wrong
A Little Bit Wrong Not Wrong at All
- to drive after drinking alcohol?
Very Wrong Wrong
A Little Bit Wrong Not Wrong at All

During the past 12 months, have you ever spent more money than you meant to on gambling?

- I have not gambled.
- Yes
- No

How interesting are most of your courses to you?

- Very interesting and stimulating
- Quite interesting
- Fairly interesting
- Slightly dull
- Very dull

I think it is okay to take something without asking if you can get away with it.

- NO!
- no
- yes
- YES!

Which of the following activities for people your age are available in your community?

- Sports teams? Yes No
- Scouting? Yes No
- Boys and girls clubs? Yes No
- 4-H clubs? Yes No
- Service clubs? Yes No

During the past 30 days, what type of alcohol did you usually drink? (Mark the one best answer.)

- I did not drink alcohol during the 30 days.
- I did not have a usual type.
- Beer
- Flavored malt beverages, such as Smirnoff Ice, Bacardi Silver, or Hard Lemonade
- Wine coolers, such as Bartles and James or Seagrams
- Wine
- Liquor, such as vodka, rum, scotch, bourbon, or whiskey
- Some other type