

# ADMINISTERING THE YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY (YRBS) WHILE PROTECTING STUDENT CONFIDENTIALITY

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q. What are the differences between passive and active parent permission?**

**A.** See the chart below.

### Passive & Active Parent Permission

	Passive Parent Permission	Active Parent Permission
<b>This type of permission...</b>	informs parents about the survey and gives them the opportunity to decline their child's participation.	informs parents about the survey and gives them the opportunity to decline their child's participation.
<b>Parents are notified when...</b>	a letter is sent to parents that describes the survey's purpose, its procedures, and its voluntary nature.	a letter is sent to parents that describes the survey's purpose, its procedures, and its voluntary nature.
<b>In order for a child to participate in the survey, ...</b>	parents do <b>not</b> have to return any forms.	parents return a permission form indicating whether they give permission for their child to participate.
<b>If a form is not returned, then...</b>	permission is assumed.	it is assumed that permission is <b>not</b> granted and the child may not participate. However, children with a signed permission form that indicates approval to participate in the survey will be asked to complete the survey.

**Q. Does my school/district need active parent permission in order to conduct the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)?**

**A.** No. There are **no** new federal or state laws or regulations that require active permission for students who participate in the YRBS.

**Q. What type of parental permission should our school/district use to conduct the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)?**

**A.** Since 1995, the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction has recommended that schools use passive parental permission. Copies of passive permission forms will be distributed along with YRBS survey materials when the survey is administered in the spring.

**Q. Does Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) apply to the YRBS?**

**A.** No. FERPA applies to educational records, and the YRBS is not an educational record.

**Q. How does No Child Left Behind (NCLB) affect the YRBS?**

**A.** NCLB **does not** change the way the YRBS has been conducted in North Dakota. NCLB, enacted in 2002, added a requirement through the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA). The PPRA states that schools and contractors obtain written parental consent before minor students are **required** to participate in any Department of Education-funded survey, analysis, or evaluation that reveals information concerning any of the following eight protected areas described in the law. These eight areas include:

1. Political affiliation;
2. Mental and psychological problems potentially embarrassing to the student and his/her family;
3. Sex behavior and attitudes;
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, and demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers; or
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student's parent; or
8. Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program).

The YRBS survey does ask questions regarding some of these areas. However it is **not required** and it is **not funded** in whole or in part by the Department of Education. Therefore, the PPRA does not apply to the YRBS. The YRBS is conducted using funds from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

NCLB also requires that schools that receive funds from the U.S. Department of Education develop and adopt local policies, in consultation with parents, to protect student privacy, including the right of parents to inspect, upon request, the survey, if the survey contains any of the personal issues listed above. Allowing parents to review the YRBS questionnaire at the school is consistent with standard YRBS practice in North Dakota.

**Q. Can the YRBS help my school fulfill its NCLB requirements?**

**A.** Yes. NCLB requires states to provide information on a school-by-school basis on: incidence, prevalence, age of onset, perception of health risk and perception of social disapproval of drug use and violence by youth in school and communities. The YRBS addresses these issues.

**REFERENCES:**

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division of Adolescent School Health, (2002). Parental Permission: Conducting a

Successful Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) with Active Parental Permission,  
Atlanta, GA.

- Forum Guide to Protecting the Privacy of Student Information  
<http://www.nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2004330>

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

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