

Dane County Youth Assessment

Dear Parent/Guardian:

This letter is to inform you that Dane County school districts will be administering the Dane County Youth Assessment between January 8 – March 1, 2021.

Since 1980, every three years over 20,000 Dane County youth in grades 7-12 are surveyed regarding their opinions, concerns, attitudes, behaviors and experiences to provide educators, community agencies, parents, policy-makers and funding bodies the data needed to inform grant writing, program development and public policy. The last survey was administered in 2018. Results are available at https://www.dcdhs.com/yth/yth_asmt_2018.aspx

Surveying our students is more important this year given the prolonged pandemic and the concerns about the impact on student well being and mental health.

DCYA has been used to inform the following community efforts:

- School districts throughout the county use the data in classroom discussions, to track youth trends and to add counseling resources to address student mental health needs.
- Dane County Human Services expanded mental health support to community centers.
- The Dane County Homeless Coalition launched a homeless shelter for youth.
- United Way of Dane County developed the Achievement Connections initiative with partner school districts to improve high school achievement and graduation rates.
- The City of Madison uses the data to set funding priorities and launched an Out-of-School Time service initiative.
- Dane County uses the data to inform resource allocation and funding priorities.

A committee led by the Dane County Youth Commission in partnership with United Way of Dane County, the City of Madison, Public Health Madison & Dane County and every Dane county school districts develop and fund the survey that collects information on the life factors impacting youth including:

- How youth spend their time
- Parents and family
- Health, nutrition and safety behavior
- Emotional and mental health
- Sexual activity (Students who are not sexually active skip these sections)
- Drug and alcohol use
- School experience
- Peer relations & bullying
- Community relations and support

In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and district policy, please be advised that:

- The survey will be conducted in MMSD schools during the month of February 2021.
- No student names will be collected. The survey is completely anonymous and confidential.

- Participation is voluntary. The participation of every student is greatly appreciated. *However, if you prefer that your child not participate, you may opt them out of participating by contacting Natalie at nkloranger@madison.k12.wi.us.*
- Your child has the option to opt out of the survey the day of administration or to skip questions while taking it.
- Parents/Guardians may review the 2021 survey on the Office of Assessment Administration website: <https://assessment.madison.k12.wi.us/dcy-a-information-families>
- School personnel will oversee survey administration.
- The survey will be administered electronically. No one in the school or district will see any individual student responses.
- Survey results will be tabulated by project vendor K12 Associates.

If you have questions about the survey, please contact the school representative listed below, Connie Bettin, Dane County Division Administrator of Prevention & Early Intervention at bettin@countyofdane.com or 242-6422, or Meghan Benson, chair of the Dane County Youth Commission at meghan.benson@ppwi.org

Sincerely,

Melanie Thiel

Assistant Principal, Ash SLC

mmthiel@madison.k12.wi.us