

# Healthy Kids Colorado Survey – How do schools across the state use the survey results?

## BACKGROUND

The [Healthy Kids Colorado Survey](#) (HKCS) is a **voluntary** survey that collects **anonymous**, self-reported health information from middle and high school students across Colorado. Over 40,000 randomly-selected youth in 224 middle and high schools throughout the state participated in the 2013 survey. The survey asks questions related to various health topics: physical activity, nutrition, health care, suicide, bullying, mental health, alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, other drugs, and sexual health (high school only). HKCS is conducted every two years and is supported by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), Colorado Department of Education (CDE), and Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS).

In March 2015, schools and districts across the state were asked to share examples of why the HKCS results are important to them and how they use the data to inform their work to improve the health and wellness of their students. This document is a compilation of the responses we received and emphasize the **wide-spread need for and impact of the survey results** across Colorado.

## SCHOOLS AND DISTRICTS

**Archuleta School District** has conducted the survey since 2007; each year, only 5-10% of parents decline their child's participation in the survey. The school district is "a data-driven decision making organization...We use the data from the Healthy Kids Colorado Survey to **identify overall needs** of our student population and are then able to **provide necessary support programs** for our students to be able to reach their full potential. We have applied for and received multiple grants that fund programs for our most at-risk students. **Without data from this survey, all we would have are hunches and anecdotal information**".

**Pagosa Springs Middle School** has participated in the HKCS since 2007 and "depends on this data to inform our improvement efforts in the areas of health and wellness...We serve a predominantly conservative population and have worked hard to communicate the importance of this survey and having healthy schools...The HKCS data has been very helpful for our **improvement efforts** as well as **securing vitally important grant funding**."

### **Denver Public Schools**

The HKCS provides us with a **reliable** way to understand how students feel, the choices they're making and **how this impacts their success in school**. This data gives them important insight into the collective student experience so that they can work to better **meet student needs**. We use the survey results to:

- **Inform their student services** program planning and help them understand how to best serve students. Without this type of data, they would be blindly making decisions in the absence of understanding the experiences lived by their students.
- An important focus of HKCS is the **social and emotional health** of students. This focus helps us understand important factors such as **bullying, mental health and social supports** experienced by students.
- The world that our students live in is changing rapidly. HKCS data allows us to look at student behavioral **trends overtime** to see how environmental changes, such as legalization of recreational marijuana, are impacting student perceptions and choices.

### **Manitou Springs School District 14**

“Manitou Springs School District uses HKCS survey data **to create strategic plans for their prevention programming** in our district. Due to our administration, we are able to **implement evidence-based programming** and receive grant money to do this work. It allows us to **prioritize the risk factors** that are in play for us (and **not guess what the "problems" are** - especially as we are **getting youth perspective and voice** on their lives!) It also allows us to **understand the strengths of our community** and **celebrate the many positive and healthy choices** that our students make!”

**Sheridan School District 2** is a small school district with approximately 1600 students. We were fortunate enough to utilize data from the Healthy Kids Colorado Survey when we were one of the school districts within the Tri-County Health Department’s jurisdiction to receive the Communities Putting Prevention to Work and the Tobacco Prevention Grants. With the data from the survey we were able to **develop a wellness policy** that has immensely improved our **school menus, increased physical activity, and opened up discussions with families** about making healthy choices. The Healthy Kids Colorado Survey also provided us with data regarding **tobacco use** among our adolescents as well as other Tri-County schools. Through this grant our district worked with parents, staff, school district leadership and Tri-County Health Department to enhance our school district policy, aiding in the effort to ensure that smoking or using tobacco products are not the social norm. The new tobacco policy supports family efforts to keep their children off tobacco and nicotine.

### **Boulder County School District**

The Late Start Initiative addresses weight, physical activity, and dietary behavior. Late-to-bed sleeping patterns are linked to more screen time (i.e. TV, video and computer games), less physical activity, higher body mass index, and obesity. HKCS results show that only 42% of Boulder County high school students got sufficient sleep on an average school night. Boulder Valley School District launched the late start initiative, in which participants have conducted literature review, surveyed Boulder and Fairview High School students, and applied knowledge to a nascent late start policy aimed at getting youth sufficient and quality sleep.