


## Tips for a Successful Survey Administration *the Colorado Youth Survey*



### Preparing for the Administration -*Advance preparation is the key!*

- **Support:** Buy-in from superintendents, principals, teachers, and partnering organizations will help to ensure a successful school-wide survey effort. Gaining this support requires time and planning. It often means meeting with school and community personnel, making presentations and managing ongoing communication to plan for the administration day. \*
- **Selecting a survey date:**
  - Choose a date early. Setting a date early gets it on everyone's calendar with plenty of notice. Remember that the date may have to be delayed due to unforeseen circumstances at the schools.
  - When setting this date, keep school breaks and special events in mind. Scheduling a survey right before or after could potentially affect how your data look. Prior to a holiday, spring break or other major recess, students are restless and may have a more difficult time focusing on survey questions. Following a holiday period, students may report higher than normal ATOD use and risk behaviors.
  - All students should be surveyed on the same day, preferably at the same time. If surveys are administered over several days, students can talk to each other about the survey and potentially influence each other's responses. Also, events may occur at school that may affect how students respond.
- **Survey length:** Plan for enough class time to complete the entire survey. The *CYS* takes about 45 minutes to complete; however, students' reading levels vary between and among grades. It may be a good idea to read the survey questions and response choices for students with learning disabilities or in lower grade levels. The key is to begin on time.
- **Timing of Consent Forms:** Be sure to distribute consent forms well in advance, in particular, if your school and/or district require active consent. It would not be too early to distribute and collect these forms at the beginning of the school year. Follow-up may be necessary if active consent is used.
- **Survey Sample Size:** Full census, which means all students in attendance, is preferred, and is often easier on the survey coordinators and administrators. To obtain a full census, schools sometimes hold school assemblies, select one class period during the day, or select classrooms throughout the day to administer the survey. If full census is not possible, a random sampling plan will need to be developed with OMNI to determine the most representative set of students.



- **Materials:** Materials include surveys, survey envelopes, pencils, survey summary forms, and any translated materials. Check the survey packets to be sure all instructions and the appropriate number of surveys were included in your survey material packet. Make sure all information is in order and legible. It is a good idea to have extra copies of the surveys on hand. 
- **Survey Procedures:** Review the survey administration process with survey administrator(s) at least one week prior to the survey date. Contact OMNI immediately with any questions or concerns.

### The Day of the Administration

- **Ready!** Survey materials should be organized and bundled, distributed to each administrator prior to the survey day, or in a mobile cart that can be moved from class to class, depending on how you are structuring your survey administration.
- **Set!** Have a coordinated plan with all administrators in terms of location for extra materials, collecting completed surveys, and wrapping up the day.
- **Go!** Start the survey on time! Every minute wasted means survey items will be left blank.
  - 1) Read the entire survey instruction sheet to the class.
  - 2) Check the time periodically and announce the time left in the class. Also, allow 3-5 minutes to collect the surveys before students move to their next classroom.
  - 3) Survey administrators **MUST FILL OUT A SURVEY SUMMARY FORM!** This form includes: School name, classroom, teacher, grade, number absent, number refused, and number participating. One survey summary form per class per grade.

### After the Administration

- **Check the survey summary sheets for completion.** If it is not fully completed, contact that teacher and record the missing information.
- **Mail all completed surveys** and any extra survey materials to OMNI. Be sure that the completed surveys are separated by grade and/or class and packaged into envelopes before sending.



\*If you are experiencing a particularly challenging situation with a school (i.e., getting support to administer the survey- few school staff willing to help administer it), there are solutions. OMNI can provide some support to survey administration coordinators who face this challenge. Please contact Christina Pestana (x. 12) or Carsten Baumann (x.21) at 303-839-9422 or 1-800-279-2070.