



OHA's 2020 Student Health Survey Findings & Considerations for Schools

The Oregon Health Authority's [Student Health Survey \(SHS\)](#) is a collaborative effort with the Oregon Department of Education to improve the health and well-being of all Oregon students to help them succeed. The SHS is a comprehensive, school-based, anonymous and voluntary health survey of 6th, 8th and 11th graders. Districts who participated in the survey can review their data in the [Data Portal](#) to better understand the responses from students in their schools. Aggregated [county-level reports](#) are available to the public. It is a key part of statewide efforts to help local schools and communities ensure that all Oregon youth are healthy and successful learners.

The results from the [2020 Oregon Student Health Survey](#) point to some areas for consideration as schools develop strategies to support student mental health and well-being, alongside the input of families and community.

Office of Education Innovation & Improvement's Highlights & Questions for consideration:

A team at the Office of Education Innovation and Improvement have gathered some highlights from this report that spark questions for further consideration. These questions illustrate ways that school leaders and communities can explore these findings to continue to develop and deepen practices. This is an effort to support applying OHA's overall findings in a way that can be most actionable for districts at this time in their planning under the Integrated Guidance.

1) Unmet Mental Health Needs: Between the Covid-19 and Positive Youth Development sections, a concerning number of students (23.2% 8th graders and 42.6% 11th graders) reported mental health impacts; in many cases these mental health needs went unmet as a result of the pandemic. Reinforcing this, only 51.4% of 11th graders and 61.7% of 8th graders said their emotional or mental health was "Excellent, Very Good, or Good".

- What partnerships within the school and with the community can be strengthened to expand mental health and student well-being, including partnerships with culturally specific organizations and wraparound programs?

2) Basic Needs Unmet: One in four 6th and 11th graders reported having to wear dirty clothes to school. 16% of 6th and 11th graders responded that they have experienced not having

enough food to eat.

- How can schools partner to connect children and families with health services and other supports such as food, health insurance navigation, clothing and other community resources?

3) Anxiety, Depression, & Thoughts of Suicide: 57.1% of 8th graders and 72.3% of 11th graders reported some level of nervousness or anxiety in the last 30 days, with 14.3% of 8th graders and 19.1% of 11th graders saying those feelings were present nearly every day. 28.6% of 6th graders, 1/3 of 8th graders, and 42% of 11th graders responded that they felt sad or hopeless almost every day for more than 2 weeks in a row. Increasing from 9.8% in 6th grade to 16.5% by 11th grade, students reported seriously considered attempting suicide.

- How do schools message about anxiety, depression, and suicide? What mindsets do staff hold on these topics, and what training is available to them?
- What resources and supports do schools offer to parents and families about supporting student and family mental health?

4) A Trusting Adult: 8th graders were least likely to say “At least one adult in my school really cares about me.” “Nearly four in ten 11th graders are unsure if there is an adult at school they can turn to if they need help because of sexual or dating violence” and 17.2% of 11th graders didn't think a teacher or adult at their school would notice their absence.

- What data system, protocols, and teaming structures are in place to quickly identify when students are absent?
- How are barriers students experience, within and outside of school, identified to individualize supports and interventions? How are students and families involved in the identification of needed supports?
- How can schools ensure students feel there is an adult at school who cares about them?
- How are the policies, practices, and values of the school modeled in the day-to-day between staff, staff and students, and with families?

5) Access to Drugs & Alcohol: 62.8% of 11th graders said it would be “easy” or “very easy” to access alcohol. 1 in 4 8th graders and almost 1 in 3 11th graders said it would be “sort of easy” or “very easy” to get prescription drugs that are not prescribed to them.

- How do schools coordinate and communicate with families about access to alcohol and drugs in the home? Do parents, caregivers and families have the resources needed to have conversations with their children about alcohol and drugs?
- How do schools coordinate awareness and messaging campaigns about the risks of drug use and alcohol consumption with community partners?

6) Sources of Information on Health: Parents are the main source of health information for 6th graders, followed by medical professionals and school health classes.

- Who are the main sources of health information for students in your community? How can you partner with these sources and health leaders to communicate supportive, culturally responsive/specific health practices within schools, homes and communities?

Looking Forward:

The 2022 Student Health Survey is already underway. The data portal and report will be released in Spring 2023. The next opportunity to participate in the SHS will be in 2024.

Recommended Resources for Further Connections:

[The Centering Health & Well-being Document](#) from the Oregon Health Authority and Oregon Department of Education is a resource and planning tool in support of Oregon school district budgeting and alignment for student success. This resource and corresponding [webinar](#) offer strong examples of districts funding strategies to support the health and well-being of students and community.