HEALTHY YOUTH SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY 3-30-09

BACKGROUND:
The Healthy Youth Survey is an anonymous, voluntary survey taken by thousands of public school students in 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th grades every two years. The survey covers a variety of topics related to individual and peer behavior in school and in the community. Topic areas include alcohol and drug use, nutrition, fitness, mental health, school-related items and quality of life. The questions are referenced as “risk” or “protective” factors and help us understand how to better support our youth to be academically successful and to develop positive life-long health habits.

This past fall, over 211,000 in 247 school districts, including 5300 from Northshore completed the survey. While state and local efforts are making progress in preventing most youth from using alcohol and drugs, many youth continue to risk their health and future success.

The Healthy Youth Survey provides one source of valuable information for schools, parents and communities to address the non-academic barriers to learning and provides our local and national partners with data to bring resources to our area. Many of our schools use this the data to create measurable school improvement goals.

The Social Development Research Group from the University of Washington reports on risk behaviors associated with school achievement. Early cigarette and alcohol use is associated with lower test scores. Higher alcohol and drug use was related to lower likelihood of passing the WASL. Schools offer protective factors by providing opportunities and recognition for involvement, bonding, and articulating healthy beliefs and clear standards that are associated with increased test scores.

SOME DISTRICT LEVEL FINDINGS:

- Our 6th grade students report almost no use of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs. Our elementary schools are using comprehensive health curriculum in grades two though 6 with an emphasis on tobacco prevention.
- Nearly one in eight 8th graders and one in three 10th graders and 50% of 12th graders reported alcohol use in the past 30 days. Students report much easier access to alcohol than to tobacco products.
- Nearly one in five 12th graders report being “drunk” or “high” at school in the past 12 months and 30% report riding in a vehicle driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol.
- Reports of bullying remain the same with nearly a third of students reporting bullying in the past 30 days. 10th graders reported significantly more bullying this survey.
- Breakfast consumption decreases over the grades from 85% at 6th grade to 62% at 12th grade.
- Aerobic-type activity levels decrease over the grades from 77% at 6th grade to 41% at 12th grade.
- Students continue to report feeling safe at our schools, and statistically higher than state levels.


Commitment to school has improved over all of our grade levels.