HEALTHY YOUTH SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY 4-1-13

BACKGROUND:
The Healthy Youth Survey (HYS) 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 200,000 students from 1000 public schools, including 5100 students 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 HYS provides one source of valuable information for schools, parents and communities to address both academic and non-academic barriers to learning and provides our local and national partners with data to bring resources to our area. Since 2002 our schools have used the survey data to target risk and protective factors with measured success. The small costs to administer the survey were underwritten by a Northshore Schools Foundation grant.

The University of Washington Social Development Research Group reports on risk behaviors associated with school achievement. Early cigarette and alcohol use is associated with lower test scores.1 Higher alcohol and drug use was related to lower likelihood of passing standardized testing.2 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.3

DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS: (See Appendix A)

Tobacco, Alcohol, Drug Use
- 6th grade students report almost no use of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs.
- Cigarette use is at the lowest level since 2002 in all grades, however many students report using other tobacco products.
- Students report easier access to alcohol than to tobacco products.
- Alcohol use, binge drinking and being drunk or high at school for teens have decreased at 8th and 10th grades to the lowest levels since 2002, however the overall perceived risk of harm and favorable attitudes toward future use have increased.
- Alcohol use by 12th graders is unchanged from 2010 and remains higher than the state average.
- Use of prescription narcotics e.g. OxyContin, Percocet is down at all grade levels; more health care provider awareness, safer use/storage of prescriptions at home and change in pill manufacture (no longer crushable).
- 4.3% of 10th graders report using an illegal drug (last 30 days) other than alcohol/marijuana; down 2% from 2010.
- Research shows that parents are the primary influence on their children’s decision to use tobacco, alcohol and other drugs. www.starttalkingnow.

School Safety/Engagement
- Report of Bullying in the last 30 days remains the same; nearly a third of students in 6th, 8th grade report bullying and drops to 16% by 12th grade. Bullying reports by girls is significantly higher than boys in 8th and 10th grade.
- Students continue to report feeling safe in our schools, and statistically higher than state levels since 2002.
- Students report increasing commitment to school with large improvements since 2006. (See Appendix A)
- Risk for academic failure is significantly lower for all grades since 2008 with an average decrease of 6.5%.