HEALTHY YOUTH SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY 4-18-11

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 198,000 students in 234 school districts, including 5247 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 Healthy Youth Survey 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. Multiple and varied strategies are required to create a positive learning environment that is developmentally appropriate and addresses needs of a changing population.

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. Higher alcohol and drug use was related to lower likelihood of passing standardized testing. 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.

DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS:
• 6th grade students report almost no use of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs.
• Alcohol use, binge drinking and being drunk or high at school for teens has decreased, however only 41% of 10th graders say there is great risk from teens having 1-2 drinks every day.
• Students report easier access to alcohol than to tobacco products.
• Bullying remains the same; nearly a third of students in 6th, 8th and 10th grade report bullying in the past 30 days.
• Aerobic-type activity levels decrease from 76% at 6th grade to 46% at 12th grade, but 12th graders reports a 5% increase over the last survey. Participation in PE drops significantly at 10th and 12th 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%.