



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

July 2, 2015

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: Middle and High School Youth Surveys to Assess Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behaviors Regarding Health Behaviors

In the fall of 2015, the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) in collaboration with the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth (VFHY) will administer the Virginia Youth Survey to assess knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors regarding health indicators among middle and high school students. The random survey sample, determined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, will include approximately 160 middle and high schools from five health planning regions. Each survey is designed to be completed in 45 minutes. All surveys will be anonymous and schools and divisions will not be identified in the subsequent reports. A classroom teacher or other school personnel may administer the surveys, or a survey administrator will be provided.

Your assistance in allowing the surveys to be administered in your school division is appreciated. The data obtained will:

- Provide a comparative data set to monitor trends established in prior surveys;
- Offer data to organizations for use in obtaining grant funding;
- Support the planning efforts of other state agencies, including the Governor's Office for Substance Abuse Prevention;
- Support community prevention coalitions in determining targeted risk factors for selection of appropriate evidence-based tobacco use, substance abuse and obesity prevention programs;
- Assist in determining the need for technical assistance and direction for future efforts; and
- Support evaluation of the effectiveness of the Commonwealth's prevention programs aimed at improving health.

The staff from VDH and VFHY will contact the school division's superintendent if a school is selected as part of the statewide random sample. As an added service, school divisions may also elect to expand the size of the sample to collect their own separate division-level data. To request a sample of the surveys, or to obtain additional information, please contact Dev Nair, coordinator for the youth surveys, by e-mail at Dev.Nair@vdh.virginia.gov, or by telephone at (804) 864-7662.

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