



2019 Minnesota Student Survey (MSS)

Survey Administration Instructions

Public School Districts

Charter Schools

Nonpublic Schools

Reminder: Do not administer the Minnesota Student Survey until you have completed all of your legally required Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) notifications.

These instructions contain the following:

- Minnesota Student Survey Overview – page 2
- Minnesota Student Survey Frequently Asked Questions – page 3
- Directions for School Coordinators – page 6
- Directions for Staff Administering the Survey – page 8

Minnesota Student Survey Overview

The Minnesota Student Survey (MSS) is one of the longest running youth surveys in the nation. It is a triennial survey that began in 1989. The survey is an anonymous statewide school-based survey conducted to gain insights into the world of students and their experiences.

The survey asks students about their activities, opinions, behaviors and experiences. Students answer questions on school climate, bullying, out-of-school activities, health and nutrition, emotional and mental health, relationships, substance use and more. Questions about sexual behaviors are asked only of 9th- and 11th-grade students. All responses are anonymous.

The MSS is administered to 5th-, 8th-, 9th-, and 11th-grade students in public schools, charter schools, Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) tribal schools and non-public schools. It is also offered to students in alternative learning centers and juvenile correctional facilities. In 2016, 282 of 330 school districts (85.5 percent) participated in the survey—nearly 169,000 students.

The survey is voluntary for schools and students. Schools have the option of not participating in the survey. If a school chooses to participate, it must notify parents and inform them of their right to review the survey questions and opt out their child. This notification requirement is an obligation under the federal Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA). Students also can decide not to take the survey or stop at any point while taking it.

State, county and district-level data are available on the Minnesota Department of Education website in an interactive format. PDF tables are distributed to participating districts and schools, as well as by request. Individual level data files can be requested by those who want to do their own analysis.

If you have questions, please contact Jill Carle at jcarle@gibsonconsult.com or (877) 328-0884, ext. 105.



Minnesota Student Survey (MSS)

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Minnesota Student Survey?

Administered since 1989, the MSS is an anonymous statewide school-based survey conducted to gain insights into the world of students and their experiences. It is one of the longest running youth surveys in the nation and is a comprehensive source of data on the health and well-being of youth across the state. As the only consistent source of statewide data in a variety of areas, it provides valuable insight into the health, safety and academic success of young people.

Who should take the survey?

The Minnesota Student Survey is a population-based survey. All students in 5th, 8th, 9th, and 11th grades may participate in the survey. If these grades participate, schools may also choose to include students in 6th, 7th, 10th and 12th grades.

All students in 7th through 12th grades who are enrolled in area learning centers (ALC) or juvenile correction facilities (JCFs) may participate in the survey. If you have students who are concurrently enrolled in an ALC and traditional school, please ensure that these students only take the survey in their traditional school.

Is the survey mandatory?

Your school has chosen to participate in the Minnesota Student Survey. However, parents/guardians can opt their child out, and students may choose whether or not to participate. The survey is entirely voluntary and anonymous. Students may choose to complete the survey, complete part of the survey or not to take the survey at all.

Do we need to notify parents/guardians before the students take the survey?

Yes. All school districts are required by law to notify parents/guardians of the school's participation in the Minnesota Student Survey. According to the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA), school districts must inform parents/guardians of surveys containing sensitive questions. (JCFs are exempt from this requirement.)

PPRA **requires** that parents/guardians are informed at the beginning of the school year regarding the content and approximate schedule of the surveys. If you have not already notified parents/guardians, you may still participate in the survey, but please notify them as soon as possible.

A **second** notification is required prior to the survey administration for the parents/guardians of students who are eligible to participate in the survey. The second notification must include the specific survey schedule, the content of the survey, and the process for reviewing the survey instrument. It must also inform parents/guardians of their right to exclude their child(ren) from participating in the survey.

Information about PPRA and sample parental notification letters are available on the 2019 MSS website: <https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/health/mss/index.htm>

It is extremely important to complete the PPRA notification procedures. Surveys from any school in which a single student was surveyed without permission may be excluded from analysis and their results may not be released in any format.

How long does it take students to complete the survey?

The survey typically takes 35-50 minutes, or one regular class period, to complete. Students should be under no time constraints to complete the survey. Students should complete the survey in one sitting.

When should we administer the survey?

The administration of the 2019 Minnesota Student Survey will take place from January through May 2019.

Districts that administer all surveys **by March 15, 2019** will be eligible to receive district-level results by the end of the 2018-19 school year. All participating schools in the district must abide by these requirements to receive data by the end of the school year. All other districts will receive results by the beginning of the 2019-20 school year.

All surveys must be completed **by May 31, 2019**.

Which web browsers can I use for the survey?

We recommend using the current versions of Mozilla Firefox, Safari or Google Chrome. Several older versions of these browsers are also compatible. Below is a list of all browsers that are compatible with the 2019 MSS survey:

- Mozilla Firefox 38-62
- Chrome 43-69
- Internet Explorer 9-11
- Safari 5-12

Which computer or tablet operating systems can I use for the survey?

The survey is compatible with many operating systems. Please ensure that the computers, laptops, and tablets you are using have one of the following operating systems:

- Windows XP, Vista, 7, 8 or 10
- Apple OS X 10.6 - 10.14
- iPad tablets up to 4 years old, but not older

How can I test the survey link prior to administering the survey?

Before administering the survey, be sure to visit each of the relevant survey links for your school to make sure students can access the survey on school computers.

Can students resume their survey if they have to stop before finishing?

While the survey is designed to be completed in one sitting, students can re-enter the survey in the case of unforeseen circumstances as long as they have the token number they received at the beginning of the survey. If a student needs to stop taking the survey, ask them to close the web browser. When the student is ready to begin again, have the student reopen the browser, enter the same web link for the survey, select that they are continuing a survey they already started, and then enter their token number. This should bring them back to the last question they completed.

Are student data stored in a secure way?

All student data collected as a part of this survey are stored in a secure, external survey database. All files are password protected and available only to key survey personnel. Additionally, all student responses are anonymous. Names and student identification numbers are NOT collected.

Who should I contact if I have questions?

If you have any further questions about anything related to the survey administration process, or the survey itself, please contact Jill Carle at jcarle@gibsonconsult.com or (877) 328-0884, ext. 105.



Minnesota Student Survey (MSS)

Directions for School Coordinators

Please take the following actions:

- Read through all instructions prior to survey administration, including directions for staff administering the survey.
- For the survey administration date you have selected for your school, identify the specific time/class period in which students will complete the survey. The survey should take students roughly 35 to 50 minutes to complete including time for delivering instructions. Students should take the survey in one, uninterrupted sitting.
- Disseminate packets of directions for staff administering the survey **at least one week** prior to your selected survey administration date. Packets include survey administration instructions, a script to be read **every time** the survey is administered, and tips for troubleshooting, if necessary.
- Communicate with staff administering the survey. Be sure to answer any questions they might have and facilitate scheduling of computer lab space/mobile labs, where necessary. Remind them that the survey has an audio option, so they should plan to make headphones available or remind students to bring them the day of the survey.
- The survey may address sensitive subjects for some students. Make a school plan for distributing the Student Resource Handout immediately following the survey. A Word version of the document is available on the [Documents](#) page of the MSS Registration and Administration Portal. The handout may be modified to include local resources, if desired. (Note: The survey for grade 5 students does not include the same sensitive items asked of older students. Your school may modify the Student Resource Handout based on what you determine to be appropriate.) It is critical that all students have access to resources immediately after completing the survey.

Please note the following important points:

- Your attitude towards this survey is extremely important. If students see you taking this seriously and sense its importance, they will take the survey more seriously.
- The survey is voluntary for students. They may choose not to participate in the survey or not to answer specific questions.
- The survey is anonymous. To ensure student privacy, please remember:

- Students should be spaced apart while completing the survey so that individual responses cannot be viewed by others.
- Try to keep students as quiet as possible throughout the survey. If students are allowed to talk about the contents of the survey, peer influence could cause them to change answers.
- Please be sure all browsers are closed after students complete the survey.
- The survey will time out after 5 minutes of inactivity. Once it has timed out, students will need to enter the token number they were given at the beginning of the survey. To be able to enter the token number the student will have to re-enter the URL and select 'RESUME'. The token number is a computer generated number and is a way for students to continue the survey. It is not linked to any student identification. Ask students to destroy the token number upon completion of the survey.



Minnesota Student Survey (MSS)

Directions for Staff Administering the Survey

These instructions contain the following:

- Action items for administering the survey
- Script for administering the survey
- Tips for troubleshooting the survey

Please take the following actions:

- Read through all instructions prior to survey administration.
- Find out from the school coordinator when the survey should be administered. The survey should take students roughly 35 to 50 minutes to complete, including time for delivering instructions. Students should take the survey in one uninterrupted sitting.
- Communicate with your school coordinator about scheduling the computer lab/mobile lab, where necessary.
- On your survey date, provide students access to a computer, and a small piece of paper, and a pencil/pen to write down the token number provided at the beginning of the survey. The survey has an audio option, so plan to make headphones available or remind students to bring them on that day. **Provide students with the grade appropriate survey URL.**
 - For students in Grade 5, the survey URL is: <https://minss.org>
 - For students in Grade 8, the survey URL is: <https://studentsurvey.org>
 - For students in Grades 9 and 11, ALCs, and JCFs, the survey URL is: <https://mschoolsurvey.org>

Please note the following important points:

- Your attitude towards this survey is extremely important. If students see you taking this seriously and sense its importance, they will take the survey more seriously.
- The survey is voluntary on the part of students. They may choose not to participate in the survey or not to answer specific questions.

- Some students may complete the survey earlier than their peers. Please be sure to provide a quiet activity to students who finish early or who choose not to participate in the survey.
- The survey may address sensitive subjects for some students. **It is critical that students have access to counseling resources and information in some form immediately after completing the survey.** Please work with your school coordinator to ensure that all students have access to these resources, including the MSS Student Resource Handout.
- The survey is anonymous. To ensure student privacy, please remember:
 - Your physical position in the classroom/computer lab may influence the way students answer questions. While students are taking the survey, please ensure you cannot see their responses. Do not walk around the room. Please sit or stand away from computer monitors. You can tell students you are doing this intentionally so they are aware of the anonymity they are being offered.
 - **If a student asks for help answering questions, remind them that you cannot help them answer and to do their best to complete the question.**
 - Try to keep students as quiet as possible throughout the survey. If students are allowed to talk about the contents of the survey, peer influence could cause them to change answers.
 - Please be sure all browsers are closed after students complete the survey.
 - The survey will time out after 5 minutes of inactivity. Once it has timed out, students will need to enter the token number they are given at the beginning of the survey. To be able to enter the token number the student will have to re-enter the URL and select 'RESUME'. The token number is a computer generated number and is a way for students to continue the survey. It is not linked to any student identification. Ask students to destroy the token number upon completion of the survey.
 - Assure students that their responses are anonymous and not being tracked by anyone in the school. The survey site is secure, and no data is stored on the computer.
- Before administering the survey, read the script below to students.
- **Be sure to exclude any students whose parents/guardians opted them out of the survey.**

Script for Administering the Survey

Read aloud to students:

“As a Minnesota student, you are being asked to complete an important survey. You will be asked questions about how well school is going, your out-of-school activities, your physical and mental health, substance use, and more. Your answers will help others understand the experiences and concerns of people your age.

Some of the questions may make you feel uncomfortable. School counselors are always available to talk with you about any concerns you have, and the school will provide a handout with more resources for getting help.

The survey is voluntary, which means you do not have to answer any questions you are not comfortable answering. You can skip any questions you want, and you can stop taking the survey at any time. The survey should take about 35 to 50 minutes to finish.

The survey is anonymous, which means no one will know your specific answers. The survey does not ask for your name and will never be connected back to you. **No one else will know how you answered, including me, your other teachers, our principal, your parents, or your friends.**

Each question will have a play button to read the question and answer options aloud. Please be sure to wear your headphones if you want to listen to the questions and answers.

We'll do the next few steps together:

1. You should see a screen welcoming you to the 2019 Student Survey. The question on the screen asks if you are starting a new survey or resuming your survey. Please select "START NEW".
2. At the top of the next screen, you will see a dropdown menu for district/organization. Select your district, which is [name of district]. Then select your school, which is [name of school]. Click "NEXT". Confirm that you selected the right district and school. Click "GO BACK" if you need to make a change, and "NEXT" if everything looks right.
3. At the top of the next screen you will see a token number in red. Write down this token number. You are the only one who will see this number, which is completely random. You may need to use this number in case your survey shuts down unexpectedly. When you re-enter the survey using the token, you will automatically return to the last question you answered. Also, if you need to pause your survey for any reason, close your browser window. When you are ready to restart your survey, let me know, and I will help you get back to the survey website. You will have to enter your token to restart the survey.

Remember, there are no right or wrong answers. This survey is about your own experiences and opinions. Be as honest as possible and take your time in answering the questions.

I am not allowed to answer any questions. Simply do the best you can. You can leave a question blank if you do not understand it.

When you are done with the survey, please stay in your seat and [explain the activity they should do – e.g., read a book]."

Tips for Troubleshooting the Survey

I'm having trouble accessing the website for the survey.

- Double check the link that you were provided and make sure it is correct.
- Make sure you are typing the link in the address section of your browser, not in the search engine.

- Check with your school's network administrator and make sure your school's network is allowing access to the site.

My student had to stop/pause the survey or got timed out of the survey and the token number is not working.

- Double check the number and make sure they are entering it correctly, using the appropriate case.
- Have them close their browser, reopen it, and try the number again.
- If it is still not working, the student will have to start the survey from the beginning and get a new token number.

The power went out and everyone got kicked out of the survey.

- Ask everyone to completely close any web browsers that may pop up again upon start-up. Reopen the browser and enter the same web link. Have all the students select that they are continuing a survey they already started and then enter their token number.
- This should bring them to the point at which they left the survey.

My students are entering answers, but it does not appear to save them.

- Make sure the student is using the "PREVIOUS" and "NEXT" buttons at the bottom of the screen.
- They should NOT be using the browser's back or forward buttons.
- You need to click the "NEXT" button on each screen to save the answers. If you hit "PREVIOUS" before moving forward, it will not save the answers.

If you are still having trouble, contact Gibson Consulting Group at 877-328-0884 ext. 105. Live technical support is available between 6:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. CST.

Thank you in advance for your assistance in administering the Minnesota Student Survey!

Hurting, struggling?

It's OK to ask for help

By participating in the Minnesota Student Survey, you and your peers have used your powerful voices to tell us what challenging issues high school students face today and what's important to you. Your feedback will be used to create programs that will ensure Minnesota teenagers get the support they need.

Thank you for taking the survey. Some survey questions dealt with difficult issues and this might prompt you or a friend to experience anxiety, stress, hurt, anger, shame, loneliness, despair or other strong emotions. If you or a friend need help, you can talk to your parents or guardians or go to a teacher, a guidance counselor, your school nurse, your school social worker or another adult who you trust at your school. You can also find help by texting or calling one of the numbers below or by visiting one of the following websites.

Text, call or click for immediate help

National Suicide Hotline

www.imalive.org

1-800-442-HOPE (4673)
1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433)

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Crisis Call Center

www.crisiscallcenter.org

1-800-273-8255
Text ANSWER to 839863

Crisis Text Line

www.crisistextline.org

Text MN to 741741

The Trevor Lifeline (LGBTQ)

www.thetrevorproject.org/get-help-now

1-866-488-7386
Text START to 678678 (M-F 2-9pm)

Mental Illness

www.ok2talk.org/gethelp

1-800-950-NAMI (6264) (M-F 9am-5pm)

Addiction/Drug Abuse

<https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov>

1-800-662-HELP (4357)

Sexual Abuse, Assault, Rape

www.online.rainn.org

1-800-656-HOPE (4673)

For more helpful resources, visit <https://bit.ly/2KSRyje>.