Risky Behaviors and Bullying

A Learning Supports Data Tool

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Related Web-Sites:

Iowa Department of Education / www.iowa.gov/educate

Iowa Youth Survey / www.iowayouthsurvey.org

Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development / www.icyd.org

Table of Contents

What?

What is the problem with risky behaviors and bullying?

What do we mean by Risky Behaviors?

Experimenting with new behaviors and activities is a normal part of child and youth development. Testing limits and finding new interests move young people toward independence and self-sufficiency. So when does normal "experimenting" cross the line into "risky behaviors"? When a behavior puts the health, physical well-being, or relationships with anyone in jeopardy, the term "risky behavior" applies.

Current Thoughts About Risky Behaviors

Two frameworks currently dominate the risky behavior literature. Both approaches share the same philosophy - to prevent risky behaviors, caring adults must create positive environments and experiences for youth.

Hawkins & Catalano	Seach Institute
Doctors David Hawkins and Robert Catalano have done extensive research in this area. Based on their research, specific "risk and protective" factors can be correlated to specific risky behaviors. *Risk factors* are those circumstances that may increase youths' likelihood of engaging in risky behaviors. Conversely, *protective factors* are any circumstances that promote healthy youth behaviors and decrease the chance that youth will engage in risky behaviors.	Based on research, a 40 developmental asset framework has been created as a common sense approach to supporting positive youth development. This framework categorizes 40 assets into two groups: 20 external assets and 20 internal assets. External assets are the positive experiences young people receive from the world around them and include roles of families, schools, and neighborhoods. Internal assets identify those characteristics and behaviors that help youth make thoughtful, positive choices such as positive values, social competencies, and commitment to learning.

A Case for Addressing Risky Behaviors

Regardless of the approach taken, there is strong and consistent evidence that disruptive and anti-social behavior at school, whether reported by teachers or students, is related to academic achievement. In fact, Hawkins & Catalano offer a predictable pattern of behavior for youth with specific risk factors.

Students who have specific risk factors (in the first column) are very likely to become at-risk for the risky behaviors in the remaining columns of the table.

RISK FACTORS	RISKY BEHAVIORS				
	Substance Use	Delinquency	Teen Pregnancy	School Dropout	Violence
School Domain					
Academic failure begining in late elementary school	X	X	X	X	X
Lack of commitment to school	X	X	X	X	X
Individual/Peer Domain					
Early and persistent anti-social behavior	X	X	X	X	X
Rebelliousness	X	X		X	
Friends who engage in problem behaviors	X	X	X	X	
Favorable attitudes towards problem behaviors	X	X	X	X	
Early initiation of problem behaviors	X	X	X	X	X
Constitutional factors	X	X			X

Protective factors, on the other hand, can be described as the "buffers" for risk factors. The most effective approach for improving young people's lives is to reduce risk factors while increasing protective factors in all of the areas in their lives.

Protective factors related to school include:

1. **Caring and Support** - Nuturing staff and positive role models, peer support, personal attention and interest from teachers, and warm and responsive climates.

2. **High Expectations** - Minimum mastery to basic skills, emphasis on higher order academics, and avoidance of negative labeling and tracking.

3. **Opportunities for Meaningful Participation** - Leadership and decision-making by students, student participation in extra-curricular activities, parent and community participation in instruction, and culturally diverse curricula and experiences.

What do We Mean by Bullying?

Bullying is a specific type of risky behavior that (1) is intended to harm or disturb another person, (2) occurs repeatedly over time, and (3) is an imbalance of power, with a more powerful person or group attacking a less powerful one.

Bullying is also a risk factor for serious violence. In an analysis of school shootings in the United States, the Secret Service found that over two-thirds of those students who had engaged in a shooting considered their act to be one of revenge for on-going and long-term harassment and intimidation by peers. Additionally, many of these students reported that they didn't have even one adult in their lives they could go to for help.

Despite these potentially serious consequences, bullying is as prevalent in Iowa schools as it is across the nation. Based on the most recent Iowa Youth Survey, about half of all the 6th, 8th, and 11th grade students reported that they believe that adults in their school do nothing to stop bullying when it occurs. This discrepancy between student and adult beliefs about intervening in bullying incidents suggests that teachers only detect a small proportion of incidences that occur.

A Case for Addressing Bullying

Bullying and harassing behaviors are associated with negative school outcomes such as absenteeism and poor academic performance. Additionally, excessive teasing has been related to depression, social anxiety, decreased self-esteem, anger, and sadness.

Increasing awareness of the problem and sending a clear message that "bullying will not be tolerated" is the first step. That should be followed by a coordinated school/community effort that reinforces clear rules and policies, offers supports for victims and bystanders, and provides supports (protective factors and assets) for bullies.

So What?

What does your data say about risky behaviors and bullying?

Where to Find Your Data - The Iowa Youth Survey

The Iowa Youth Survey (IYS) is a voluntary survey given to 6th, 8th, and 11th graders on a three-year cycle, most recently in the fall of 2005. Most school districts (359) and students (98,246) in the state participated in the survey in 2005. The survey relies on students to read and honestly answer each question, but the data from 1999, 2002, and 2005 is quite consistent. Also, to safeguard the validity of the survey results, each survey proceeds through a series of validity checks and is not included in the analysis if it fails these checks. So, the IYS is considered to be a comprehensive, reliable, and valid data source in the state of Iowa.

Constructs Represented in The IYS

The 2005 IYS is comprised of 190 questions and contains information about students' environment, behaviors, attitudes, and perceptions of others. Many of the questions are grouped together to form constructs that summarize important concepts in the data. Below is a list of the 34 constructs covered in the 2005 survey. Constructs that are **bold and italic** contain questions related to risky behaviors and bullying.

Positive family relationships	*Suicide risk*
Family involvement and support	*Current alcohol use*
Parental/guardian boundaries	*Current tobacco use*
Positive parental/guardian norms	*Current illegal drug use*
School expectations/boundaries	Substance use risk awareness
Safe school environment	*Violent/aggressive behavior*
School perceived to be safe*	*Gambling*
School staff/student support	Helping others*
Positive student norms	Empathy
Social pressure to use substances	Self-confidence
Positive community adult norms	Self-esteem*
Positive community peer norms	Acceptance of diversity
Youth access to substances limited	Positive values
Safe neighborhood	Peer pressure resistance*
Supportive neighborhood	Commitment to school/learning
Alcohol/drug free places available*	Positive work ethic*
Bullying	*Adults stop bullying**

*Construct contains only one item.

Risky Behaviors and Bullying Questions on the IYS

There are 28 questions on the IYS that are related to risky behaviors and bullying. They will be broken down into five different categories based on their content.

Questions Related to Current Substance Use

- ❖ During the last 30 days, on how many days did you have 5 or more drinks of alcohol in a row?
- ❖ In the past 30 days, on how many days have you had at least one drink of alcohol?
- ❖ In the past 30 days, on how many days have you smoked cigarettes?
- ❖ In the past 30 days, on how many days have you smoked cigars?
- ❖ On how many of the last 30 days have you used smokeless tobacco?
- ❖ In the past 30 days, on how many days have you used marijuana?

Questions Related to Violent/Aggressive Behavior

- ❖ In the past 12 months, how often have you carried a gun, knife, club or other weapon the school?
- ❖ In the past 12 months, how often have you used alcohol or other illegal drugs on school property?
- ❖ In the past 12 months, how often have you been disciplined at school for fighting, theft, or damaging property?
- ❖ In the past 12 months, how often have you been involved in a physical fight on school property?
- ❖ In the past 12 months, how often have you been offered, sold, or given illegal drugs on school property?
- ❖ In the past 12 months, how often have you damaged property just for fun?
- ❖ In the past 12 months, how often have you beaten up on or fought someone because they made you angry?
- ❖ In the past 12 months, how often have you used a weapon, force, or threats to get money or things from someone?
- ❖ In the past 12 months, how often have you verbally threatened to physically harm someone?
- ❖ In the past 12 months, how often have you stolen something?

Questions Related to Gambling

❖ If you have gambled in the past 12 months, how much money did you usually bet?

Questions Related to Suicide

❖ In the last 12 months, did you make a plan about how you would attempt suicide?

❖ Have you ever tried to kill yourself?

Questions Related to Bullying

❖ In the last 30 days, how many times have you been bullied in this way:

- I was called names, was made fun of, or teased in a hurtful way.

- Other students left me out of things on purpose, excluded me from their group of friends, or completely ignored me.

- I was hit, kicked, pushed, shoved around, or locked indoors.

- Other students told lies, spread false rumors about me, and tried to make others dislike me.

- I was made fun of because of my race or color.

- I was made fun of because of my religion.

- Other students made sexual jokes, comments, or gestures that hurt my feelings.

- I have received a threatening or hurtful message from another student in an email, on a website, on a cell phone, from a pager text message, in an internet chat room, or in instant messaging.

❖ When a student is bullied at school, how often do the teachers or other adults at school try to put a stop to it?

Areas of Concern in State-Level Data

When considering the state-level IYS risky behaviors and bullying data, some important areas of concern emerge. The table below displays the questions where at least 25% of participants in the state gave undesirable responses. After you have analyzed your local data, use the final column in the table to write your own local results related to these questions. Are these areas of concern to you at the local level also?

Questions Where 25% or More of 2005 Statewide Participants Gave an Undesirable Response
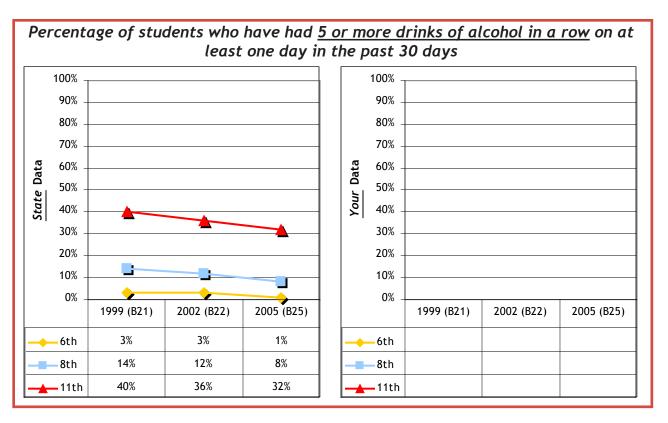
Question	Grade	2005 State Level Result	2005 Local Level Result
Percentage of students who have had 5 or more drinks of alcohol in a row at least one day in the past 30 days (B25) - Current Substance Use	11th	32%	
Percentage of students who have had at least one drink of alcohol on at least one day during the past 30 days (B29) - Current Substance Use	11th	41%	
Percentage of students who have verbally threatened to physically harm someone at least once in the past 12 months (B57) - Violent/Aggressive Behavior	11th	25%	
Percentage of students who were called names, made fun of, or teased in a hurtful way at least once in the last 30 days (B59) - Bullying	6th 8th 11th	36% 37% 29%	
Percentage of students who were left out of things on purpose, excluded from a group of friends, or completely ignored at least once in the last 30 days (B60) - Bullying	6th 8th	27% 26%	
Percentage of students who had other students tell lies, spread false rumors, and try to make others dislike them at least once in the last 30 days (B62) - Bullying	6th 8th 11th	29% 32% 28%	

All data is from the State Iowa Youth Survey Report, Revised 12/14/2006.
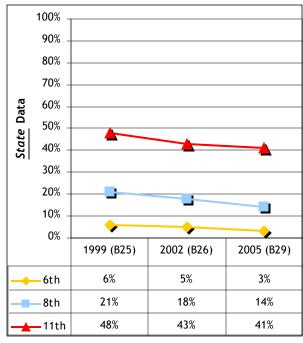
State and Local Trend Data
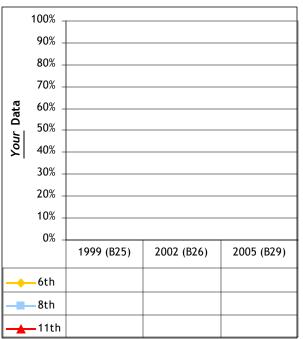
The following charts display state level trend data for all of the questions on the IYS related to risky behaviors. Next to the state results, use the blank charts to insert your local data. If local results for any particular question at any grade level are different (more than 5 percentage points higher or lower) than the state average, this may be an area that warrants further investigation.

Results Related to Current Substance Use
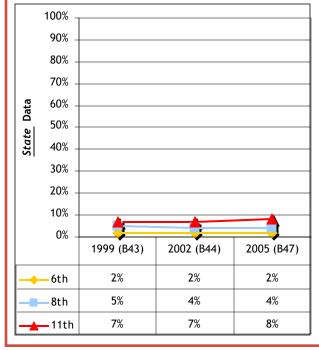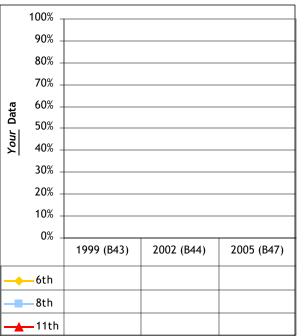
Percentage of students who have had _5 or more drinks of alcohol in a row_ on at least one day in the past 30 days

State Data

	1999 (B21)	2002 (B22)	2005 (B25)
6th	3%	3%	1%
8th	14%	12%	8%
11th	40%	36%	32%

Your Data

	1999 (B21)	2002 (B22)	2005 (B25)
6th			
8th			
11th			

Percentage of students who have had <u>at least one drink of alcohol</u> on at least one day during the past 30 days

State Data

	1999 (B25)	2002 (B26)	2005 (B29)
◆ 6th	6%	5%	3%
■ 8th	21%	18%	14%
▲ 11th	48%	43%	41%

Your Data

	1999 (B25)	2002 (B26)	2005 (B29)
◆ 6th			
■ 8th			
▲ 11th			
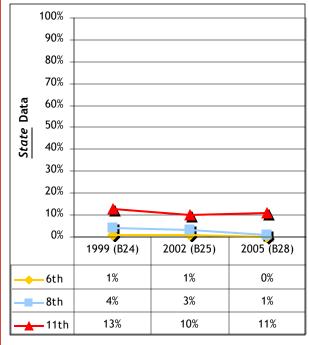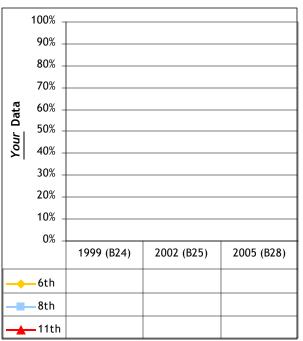
Percentage of students who have <u>smoked cigarettes</u> on at least one day during the past 30 days

State Data

	1999 (B43)	2002 (B44)	2005 (B47)
◆ 6th	2%	2%	2%
■ 8th	5%	4%	4%
▲ 11th	7%	7%	8%

Your Data

	1999 (B43)	2002 (B44)	2005 (B47)
◆ 6th			
■ 8th			
▲ 11th			
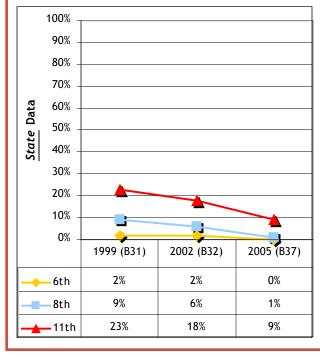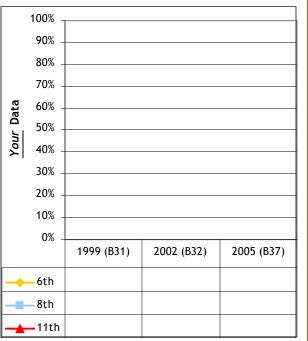
Percentage of students who have _smoked cigars_ at least one day during the past 30 days

State Data	1999 (B24)	2002 (B25)	2005 (B28)
6th	1%	1%	0%
8th	4%	3%	1%
11th	13%	10%	11%

Your Data	1999 (B24)	2002 (B25)	2005 (B28)
6th			
8th			
11th			
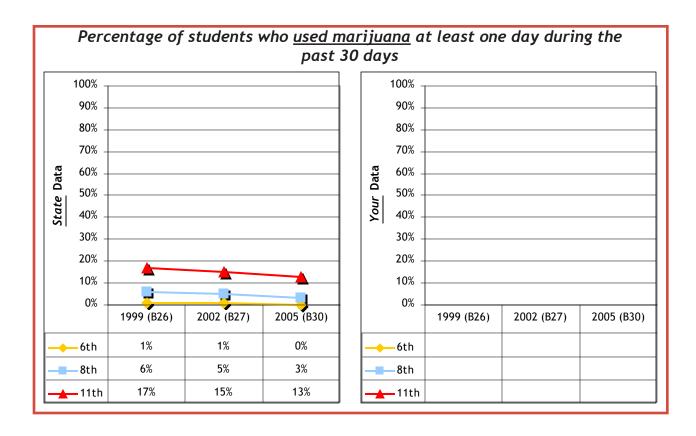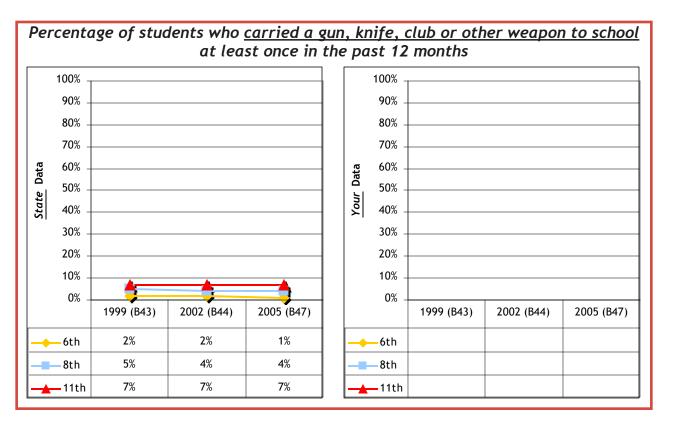
Percentage of students who have used _smokeless tobacco_ at least one day during the past 30 days

State Data	1999 (B31)	2002 (B32)	2005 (B37)
6th	2%	2%	0%
8th	9%	6%	1%
11th	23%	18%	9%

Your Data	1999 (B31)	2002 (B32)	2005 (B37)
6th			
8th			
11th			

Percentage of students who <u>used marijuana</u> at least one day during the past 30 days

State Data

	1999 (B26)	2002 (B27)	2005 (B30)
◆ 6th	1%	1%	0%
■ 8th	6%	5%	3%
▲ 11th	17%	15%	13%

Your Data

	1999 (B26)	2002 (B27)	2005 (B30)
◆ 6th			
■ 8th			
▲ 11th			
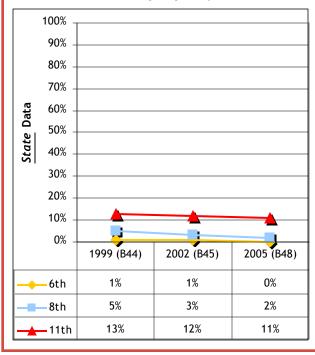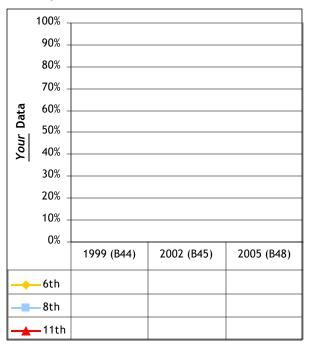
Results Related to Violent/Aggressive Behavior

Percentage of students who <u>carried a gun, knife, club or other weapon to school</u> at least once in the past 12 months

State Data

	1999 (B43)	2002 (B44)	2005 (B47)
◆ 6th	2%	2%	1%
■ 8th	5%	4%	4%
▲ 11th	7%	7%	7%

Your Data

	1999 (B43)	2002 (B44)	2005 (B47)
◆ 6th			
■ 8th			
▲ 11th			

Percentage of students who have <u>used alcohol or other illegal drugs on school property</u> at least once in the past 12 months

	1999 (B44)	2002 (B45)	2005 (B48)
◆ 6th	1%	1%	0%
■ 8th	5%	3%	2%
▲ 11th	13%	12%	11%

State Data

	1999 (B44)	2002 (B45)	2005 (B48)
◆ 6th			
■ 8th			
▲ 11th			

Your Data
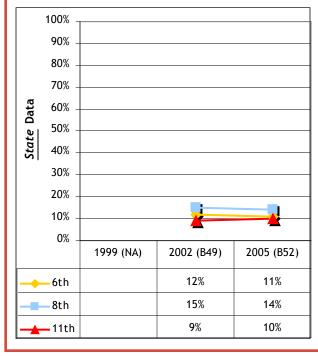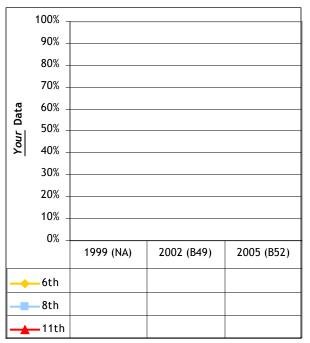
Percentage of students who were <u>disciplined at school for fighting, theft or damaging property</u> at least once in the past 12 months

	1999 (B46)	2002 (B47)	2005 (B50)
◆ 6th	9%	7%	7%
■ 8th	12%	10%	10%
▲ 11th	7%	7%	7%

State Data

	1999 (B46)	2002 (B47)	2005 (B50)
◆ 6th			
■ 8th			
▲ 11th			

Your Data
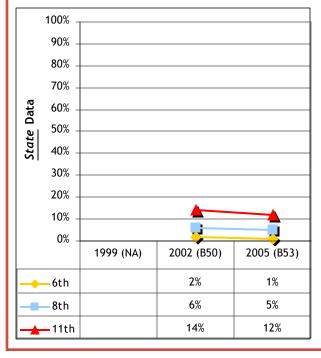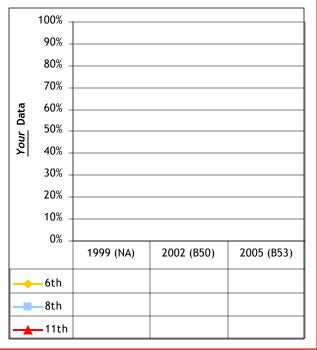
Percentage of students who have been <u>involved in a physical fight on school property</u> at least once in the past 12 months

State Data

	1999 (NA)	2002 (B49)	2005 (B52)
◆ 6th		12%	11%
■ 8th		15%	14%
▲ 11th		9%	10%

Your Data

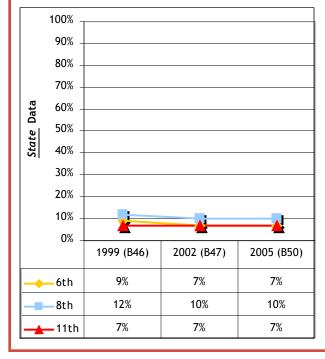|	1999 (NA)	2002 (B49)	2005 (B52)
◆ 6th			
■ 8th			
▲ 11th			
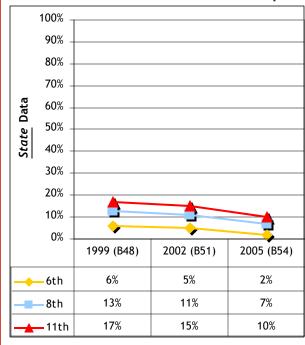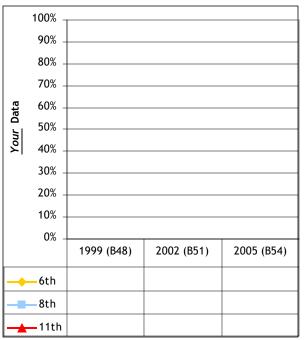
Percentage of students who have been <u>offered, sold or given illegal drugs on school property</u> at least once in the past 12 months

State Data

	1999 (NA)	2002 (B50)	2005 (B53)
◆ 6th		2%	1%
■ 8th		6%	5%
▲ 11th		14%	12%

Your Data

	1999 (NA)	2002 (B50)	2005 (B53)
◆ 6th			
■ 8th			
▲ 11th			
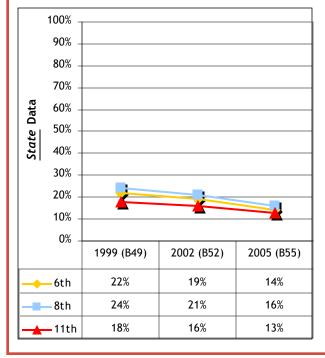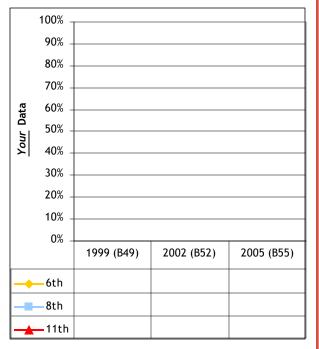
Percentage of students who have <u>damaged property just for fun</u> at least once in the past 12 montsh

State Data

	1999 (B48)	2002 (B51)	2005 (B54)
6th	6%	5%	2%
8th	13%	11%	7%
11th	17%	15%	10%

Your Data

	1999 (B48)	2002 (B51)	2005 (B54)
6th			
8th			
11th			
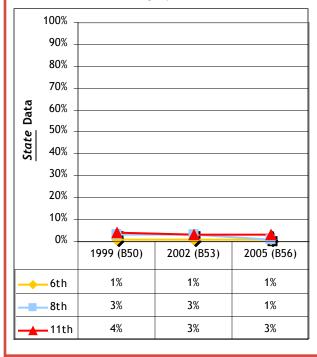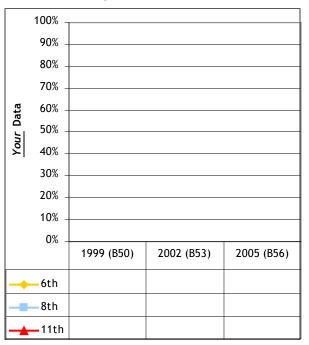
Percentage of students who have <u>beaten up on or fought someone because they made them angry</u> at least once in the past 12 months

State Data

	1999 (B49)	2002 (B52)	2005 (B55)
6th	22%	19%	14%
8th	24%	21%	16%
11th	18%	16%	13%

Your Data

	1999 (B49)	2002 (B52)	2005 (B55)
6th			
8th			
11th			
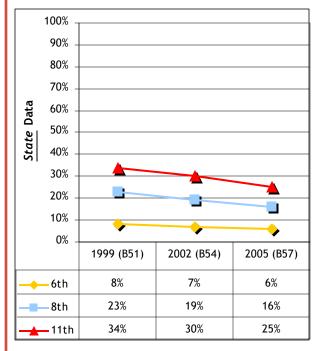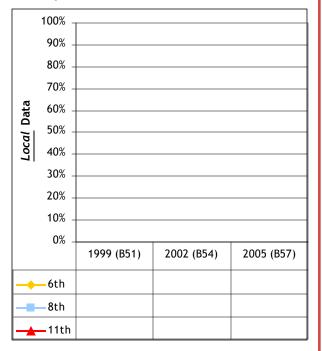
Percentage of students who have <u>used a weapon, force or threats to get money or things from someone</u> at least once in the past 12 months

	1999 (B50)	2002 (B53)	2005 (B56)
6th	1%	1%	1%
8th	3%	3%	1%
11th	4%	3%	3%

State Data

	1999 (B50)	2002 (B53)	2005 (B56)
6th			
8th			
11th			

Your Data

Percentage of students who have <u>verbally threatened to physically harm someone</u> at least once in the past 12 months

	1999 (B51)	2002 (B54)	2005 (B57)
6th	8%	7%	6%
8th	23%	19%	16%
11th	34%	30%	25%

State Data

	1999 (B51)	2002 (B54)	2005 (B57)
6th			
8th			
11th			

Local Data

Percentage of students who have <u>stolen something</u> at least once in the past 12 months

State Data

	1999 (B52)	2002 (B55)	2005 (B58)
6th	10%	10%	9%
8th	19%	17%	16%
11th	24%	22%	18%

Your Data

	1999 (B52)	2002 (B55)	2005 (B58)
6th			
8th			
11th			

Results Related to Gambling

Percentage of students who have <u>gambled at least 5 dollars</u> during the past 12 months

State Data

	1999 (B36)	2002 (B37)	2005 (B42)
6th	7%	7%	6%
8th	14%	14%	12%
11th	18%	18%	20%

Your Data

	1999 (B36)	2002 (B37)	2005 (B42)
6th			
8th			
11th			

Results Related to Suicide

Percentage of students who have <u>made a plan about how they would attempt suicide</u> during the past 12 months

	1999 (B41)	2002 (B42)	2005 (B45)
6th	5%	4%	4%
8th	11%	10%	10%
11th	15%	15%	14%

State Data

	1999 (B41)	2002 (B42)	2005 (B45)
6th			
8th			
11th			

Your Data

Percentage of students who have ever tried to kill themselves

	1999 (B42)	2002 (B43)	2005 (B46)
6th	6%	6%	6%
8th	11%	11%	10%
11th	14%	16%	15%

State Data

	1999 (B42)	2002 (B43)	2005 (B46)
6th			
8th			
11th			

Your Data

Results Related to Bullying

The following table displays state level results for all of the questions on the IYS related to bullying. Since trend data is not yet available for these questions, we encourage you to compare your local data to this state data. Again, if your local results for any particular question at any grade level are different (more than 5 percentage points higher or lower) than the state average, this may be an area that warrants further investigation.

Question	Grade	2005 State Level Result	2005 Local Level Result
Percentage of students who were called names, made fun of, or teased in a hurtful way at least once in the last 30 days (B59)	6th	36%	
	8th	38%	
	11th	29%	
Percentage of students who were left out of things on purpose, excluded from a group of friends, or completely ignored at least once in the last 30 days (B60)	6th	26%	
	8th	27%	
	11th	21%	
Percentage of students who were hit, kicked, pushed, shoved around, or locked indoors at least once in the last 30 days (B61)	6th	18%	
	8th	16%	
	11th	11%	
Percentage of students who had other students tell lies, spread false rumors, and try to make others dislike them at least once in the last 30 days (B62)	6th	29%	
	8th	32%	
	11th	28%	
Percentage of students who were made fun of because of their race or color at least once in the last 30 days (B63)	6th	6%	
	8th	6%	
	11th	6%	
Percentage of students who were made fun of because of their religion at least once in the last 30 days (B64)	6th	3%	
	8th	5%	
	11th	6%	
Percentage of students who had other students make sexual jokes, comments, or gesture that hurt their feelings at least once in the last 30 days (B65)	6th	14%	
	8th	15%	
	11th	14%	
Percentage of students who received a threatening or hurtful message from another student in an email, on a website, on a cell phone, from a pager text message, in an internet chat room, or in an instant message at least once in the last 30 days (B66)	6th	6%	
	8th	8%	
	11th	7%	
Percentage of students who report that when a student in being bullied at school, teachers or other adults at school almost never try to put a stop to it (E6)	6th	7%	
	8th	10%	
	11th	11%	

Guide for Discussion about IYS Trend Data

The following questions are designed to facilitate a broad discussion with stakeholders about local risky behaviors and bullying data.

1. What additional data sources may be useful in helping you understand your local IYS risky behaviors and bullying data?

2. What in particular concerns you about your trend data? How will the trendline continue in the future if you maintain current programming? Is this trend acceptable? If not, how would you prefer it to look in the future?

3. What have you already done to address risky behaviors and bullying issues in your area?

4. What does the research say will improve risky behaviors and bullying issues?

5. Based on your data, what do you propose to do in the future to address risky behaviors and bullying issues in your area? (Include at least one low-cost/no-cost idea). See the following "Now What?" section for ideas.

6. Who will your partners be? Who else is concerned about these issues? What resources do you need? How could you spend existing resources more effectively?

7. How will you know that the youth in your area are better off?

8. Is there additional information you will need to collect to monitor your progress and verify that your plan is effective?

Now What?

What can <u>school board members</u> do to help improve risky behaviors and bullying?

Consider the Following Action Steps...

❖ Review your district's student conduct code, discipline policies, and other related policies to make sure that they are current, accurate, and being implemented appropriately.

❖ Ask to see aggregate data on office referrals, suspensions, attendance and other data for students who display risky behaviors in your district.

❖ Talk with administrators, teachers, and experts in your community about "the story" behind that data - why do your students display these behaviors and what has been done in the past to address these issues?

❖ Ask what your district is currently doing to support students who have behavior and bullying issues? Does your current programming have an evidence-base? Is it likely to make a change in student behaviors and bullying?

❖ Determine what gaps in current programming exist to promote a healthy life style and social adjustment.

❖ Support implementation of evidence-based efforts that address identified gaps.

❖ Ask that district staff become proactive in providing fair and consistent discipline along with positive behavioral supports to help students with behavior and bullying issues.

❖ Ask for regular data reports on how student behavior and bullying is changing. Request that this report become a part of your district's ongoing school improvement efforts.

❖ Support parents that may contact you with concerns about bullying or other risky behaviors. Ask that the problems be investigated and solutions reported back to you to ensure that they are addressed.

❖ Remember, the things that get reported are the things that get changed. Research has clearly shown that students who feel safe in their environment, connected to school, and who are socially well adjusted do better academically and also are less likely to be involved in risky behaviors.

Now What?

What can students do to help improve risky behaviors and bullying?

Consider the Following Action Steps...

If you have social problems, relationships problems, or problems that place you or others in danger:

❖ Find an adult you trust and ask for help. Continue to ask until someone hears you and takes action.

❖ Seek help from a professional or talk with a spiritual leader in your community.

❖ Evaluate your current friendships and determine whether the friends you have are a positive or negative influence on you. Act accordingly.

When you are being bullied:

❖ If you feel safe, tell the person to stop the bullying behavior. Say you don't like it and that it isn't funny. Then tell an adult at school. When bullying does not get reported, it is allowed to continue.

❖ Don't bully back. It won't help -- and it could make things worse.

❖ If you need help talking to an adult at school, take a friend along.

When you have friends or classmates with social problems, relationships problems, or problems that place them or others in danger:

❖ Never think you can solve such problems on your own! Help your friend or classmate by getting help from an adult. Support them by going with them to seek help.

❖ Ask your parent for support as you try help. Make sure your family understands your desire to help and they approve of your plan.

❖ Work with other students in your school to reach out to those that are isolated or loners. Ask them to get involved in school activities.

When you see someone being bullied:

❖ Think about how you might feel if the bullying was happening to you. You and other students can help by saying something, even when you aren't close friends with the student who is bullied.

❖ Say kind words to the student who is being bullied. Help him/her understand that it's not his/her fault. Be a friend.

❖ Tell the student who is being bullied to talk to someone about what happened. Offer to help by going along.

❖ Pay attention to the others who see the bullying (bystanders). Encourage them to join in helping.

Now What?

What can parents do to help improve risky behaviors and bullying?

Consider the following action steps...

❖ Always maintain open lines of communication with your child.

What to do if your child/youth engages in risky behaviors:

❖ Seek help from someone at the school or a professional. Don't assume that the behavior will go away or that your child/youth is "going through a phase." If the behavior causes you concern, ask someone who has expertise in that area.

❖ Develop a plan with your child/youth to correct the behavior. Be consistent and follow through with the plan. Get support for yourself if needed.

❖ Work with your son/daughter to understand the consequences of their actions. Help them make restitution for any damage or emotional trauma they may have caused others.

What to do if your child is being bullied:

❖ First, focus on your child/youth. Be supportive and gather information. Ask him/her to describe who was involved and how, where the bullying took place, and who may have been a witness.

❖ Never tell your child/youth to ignore the bullying. Often, trying to ignore bullying allows it to become more serious.

❖ Empathize with your child. Tell him/her that bullying is wrong and that you are glad s/he had the courage to tell you about it. Ask your child what s/he thinks can be done to help.

❖ Do not encourage retaliation ("Just hit them back") as a solution. This is not likely to end the problem, and it could get your child/youth suspended or escalate the situation.

How to engage school staff:

❖ Parents are often reluctant to report bullying to school officials, but bullying may not stop without the help of adults.

❖ Keep your emotions in check. Give factual information about the situation including who, what, when, where, and how. Emphasize that you want to work with the staff at school to find a solution for the sake of your child as well as other students.

❖ Keep records of your actions, who you have contacted, and what resulted from your efforts. Expect the bullying to stop and continue to work with the school until it does.

Risky Behaviors and Bullying: A Learning Supports Data Tool

Now What?

What can <u>teachers</u> do to help improve risky behaviors and bullying?

Consider the Following Action Steps...

- ❖ Act to stop the behaviors immediately. Make certain that you are familiar with school policies and act accordingly to deal with, record and/or report the situation. Make a referral if needed.

- ❖ Support any victims of the risky behavior in a way that allows them to regain self-control, to "save face," and to feel supported and safe from retaliation. Include bystanders in the conversation and give them guidance about how they might appropriately intervene or get help next time something like this happens.

- ❖ When appropriate, impose immediate consequences for students who bully others or behave in ways that place other students at-risk. Then, provide follow-up interventions as needed.

- ❖ Don't force a meeting between the student who is victimized and the student who inflicted the harm. Such meetings can cause much further damage and forced apologies don't help.

- ❖ Don't assume that you must have all the details before you act. You may not be able to employ the policies of the conduct code based on the information you have, but you can certainly have a conversation with those involved. Err on the side of offering more services, rather than fewer.

- ❖ Notify parents as appropriate. Keep records of all communications and the results of those communications.

- ❖ Remember to be professional with all involved. Confidentiality is important. Equally important is the need to be supportive of all involved.

- ❖ Be proactive. Students with social and emotional problems are not difficult to spot in your classroom or work area. Pay attention and/or spend time with them. Work to connect them with school activities and other students that will have a positive effect on their attitudes and behaviors.

- ❖ Above all, make certain that each at-risk student has at least one positive relationship with an adult in your school. If you are not the right person, find someone!

Now What?

What can <u>school administrators</u> do to help improve risky behaviors and bullying?

Consider the Following Action Steps...

❖ Collect data. Analyze it in various ways to determine whether specific barriers exist in your school or community environment that contribute to these behaviors.

❖ Consult with staff to gain specific information on such barriers and what is currently being done to address them. Include instructional staff as well as support services in this dialogue to ensure that all perspectives are represented.

❖ Talk with students about the behaviors that concern you the most. Never forget that they have a unique perspective and can offer support to help alleviate the problem.

❖ Don't assume that stronger discipline policies or "zero tolerance" will make the changes you desire. Students need fair and consistent discipline along with positive supports to make the changes needed.

❖ Ask an existing group of staff, students, and parents to take on the coordination of efforts to improve these behaviors. Provide them with data, research, and supports needed to study the problem and make recommendations for change. (Keep in mind that this group will work with aggregate data and should never have confidential or personal information on individual students.)

❖ Learn about proven practices and carefully select the programs and practices that best fit the needs of your school. Consider cost as well as the time needed for adequate professional development and quality implementation.

❖ Always think about the resources that the community can bring to bear. Think about the expertise of various agencies, supports from local groups, potential mentors and/or tutors, etc. Engage the appropriate individuals and groups to help.

❖ Evaluate your efforts to make sure that barriers are eliminated and changes are positive. As student behavior improves, so will student performance. Assume that these efforts are part of your school's continuous improvement plan so that the focus remains on learning, eliminating barriers to learning, and supporting learning in whatever way is required.

Now What?

What can community members do to help improve risky behaviors and bullying?

Consider the Following Action Steps...

As an individual consider:

❖ Learning about the school. Find out how well students are doing, what your school is trying to do to improve, etc. You may find a niche for your skills or expertise. Ask if you can help.

❖ Volunteering. Schools often need tutors and mentors – especially for students with social/emotional problems. Know how much time you have to offer, find an area that interests you, and make sure that you can keep your commitment. A volunteer who doesn't show is always bad. A volunteer who shows but gives a half-hearted effort is equally bad.

❖ Getting to know the youth in your neighborhood. If you don't already know them by name, find a way to connect with them and their family. Allow them the opportunity to get to know you and let them know that you're interested in seeing them from time to time.

❖ Asking the school how you can help make sure that all students have the supplies they need for daily assignments.

❖ Supporting students who may not have the clothing, instruments, rentals, etc. that are needed to participate in extra-curricular activities on an equal footing with other students.

As a business leader consider:

❖ Developing school-business relationships by supporting job fairs, career days, creating job shadowing opportunities for students, and allowing students to visit your business to learn more about the skills needed for successful employment.

❖ Participating in or providing opportunities for community service or supporting service learning activities.

As a local service provider consider:

❖ Supporting school/community relationships by providing information on the services available for students and their families.

❖ Sharing information on educational programs in the community as well as internship work opportunities.