



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

DATE: September 6, 2019
TO: Division Superintendents
FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction
SUBJECT: **Virginia Youth Survey to Monitor Health Risk Behaviors**

In the fall of 2019, the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), in collaboration with the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth (VFHY), will administer the biennial Virginia Youth Survey. The Virginia Youth Survey is conducted to monitor the health risks and health promoting behaviors of 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. Each survey is designed to be completed in approximately 40 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 support of these surveys 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 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. Questions can be directed to Freda Williams, coordinator for the youth surveys, by email, at Freda.Williams@vdh.virginia.gov, or by telephone, at (804) 864-7863.

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