Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Surveys 2011 & School Health Profiles Comparison 2010:

Violence Among Louisiana Public School Students
Introduction

The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey (YRBSS) is a national school-based survey supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and implemented by Louisiana state agencies to monitor priority health-risk behaviors among youth. In 2011, the YRBSS was administered to a total of 1,160 students at a random sample of 24 public high schools in Louisiana. Results from the YRBSS are used to guide programs and policies that support health as well as set and track progress towards health goals. For more information on the CDC’s YRBSS, please visit http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm.

In 2010, the School Health Profiles Survey (Profiles) was completed by 231 principals and 225 lead health teachers (as designated by the principal) in Louisiana, representing approximately 74% and 72% of Louisiana public high school principals and lead health teachers, respectively. School Health Profiles is a system of surveys that assess school health policies and practices.

A comparison of results from the 2011 YRBSS and the 2010 School Health Profiles Survey provides useful insight into how well policies and student health practices are aligned, as well as how accurately school personnel perceive student behavior related to health-risk behaviors. Implications and recommendations are presented herein based on these perceptions and practices. For more information on the background, content, results and trends from the 2010 School Health Profiles Survey, please visit http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/profiles/2010/profiles_report.pdf.

Figures 1 – 13 represent findings from the 2011 YRBSS. Figures 14 and 15 display findings from the 2010 School Health Profiles, and reference relevant questions from the YRBSS in the same figure.
Violence in Louisiana: What are the Students Saying?

Figure 1. 2011: Carried a Weapon

- 22% of Louisiana students carried a weapon at least one time during the 30 days prior to survey administration, compared to a national rate of 17% (Carried a Weapon).
- More males (33%) reported carrying a weapon than females (12%).
- 27% of Caucasian students reported carrying a weapon and 16% of African-American students reported carrying a weapon.
- 12th graders reported the highest rate of carrying a weapon (27%) among high school students.

Figure 2. 2011: Carried a Weapon to School

- 4% of Louisiana students reported that they carried a weapon to school on one or more of the 30 days before the survey (Carried a Weapon to School).
- More males (6%) than females (2%) reported having carried a weapon to school.
- 4% of Caucasian students and 3% of African-American students reported having carried a weapon to school.
- 9th graders reported carrying a weapon to school at the lowest rate (3%). 10th, 11th, and 12th graders carried a weapon to school at similar rates (4%-5%).
**Figure 3. 2011: Carried a Gun**

- 10% of Louisiana students reported having carried a gun in the last 30 days. This is higher than the national rate of 5% (Carried a Gun).
- More males (18%) reported carrying a gun than females (3%).
- Reports of carrying a gun are higher for Caucasian students (13%) than African-American students (6%).
- 12th graders reported the highest rate of carrying a gun (14%) among high school students.

**Figure 4. 2011: Threatened or Injured with a Weapon at School**

- 22% of Louisiana students reported being threatened or injured with a weapon at school one or more times in the 12 months preceding the survey (Threatened or Injured with a Weapon at School).
- Males reported being threatened or injured with a weapon at school at a higher rate (33%) than females (12%).
- Caucasian students reported being threatened or injured with a weapon at school at a higher rate (36%) than African-American students (16%).
- 12th grade students reported the highest rate (27%) of being threatened or injured with a weapon at school, while 10th graders were threatened or injured at the lowest rate (19%).
Figure 5. 2011: In a Physical Fight

- 36% of Louisiana students reported having been in a physical fight one or more times in the 12 months preceding the survey, compared to the national rate of 17% (In a Physical Fight).
- Males reported having been in a fight at a higher rate (45%) than females (28%).
- African-American students reported having been in a fight at a higher rate (39%) than Caucasian students (22%).
- Compared to 10th, 11th and 12th graders, 9th grade students reported that they were in at least one physical fight at the highest rate (41%).

Figure 6. 2011: Injured in a Physical Fight

- 5% of Louisiana students reported that were in a physical fight in which they were injured and treated by a doctor or nurse (Injured in a Physical Fight).
- 7% of males reported having been injured in a physical fight, and 3% of females reported having been injured in a physical fight.
- Caucasian students were injured in a physical fight at a higher rate (5%) than African-American students (2%).
- 11th grade students reported that they were injured in a physical fight at the lowest rate (3%).
Figure 7. 2011: In a Physical Fight at School

- 16% of Louisiana students reported having been in a physical fight one or more times on school property in the 12 months preceding the survey, compared to the national rate of 12% (In a Physical Fight at School).
- Males reported having been in a fight at school at a higher rate (20%) than females (12%).
- African-American students reported having been in a fight at school at a higher rate (20%) than Caucasian students (10%).
- 9th grade students reported that they were in at least one physical fight at school at a substantially higher rate (21%) than 10th, 11th, and 12th graders (12%-15%).

Figure 8. 2011: Bullied at School

- 19% of Louisiana students were bullied on school property in the 12 months preceding the survey (Bullied at School). This is similar to the average national rate of 20%.
- Females reported having been bullied at a higher rate (22%) than males (16%).
- Caucasian students were bullied at a higher rate (21) than African-American students (14%).
- 9th grade students reported that they were bullied at school at the highest rate (24%).
Figure 9. 2011: Bullied Someone at School

- 20% of Louisiana students bullied someone on school property in the 12 months preceding the survey (Bullied Someone at School).*
- 22% of females and 18% of males have bullied someone at school.
- 19% of Caucasian students and 22% of African-American students reported that they have bullied someone at school.
- 9th grade students reported that they have bullied someone at school at the highest rate (27%).

Figure 10. 2011: Bullied Electronically

- 18% of Louisiana students were bullied electronically in the 12 months preceding the survey (Bullied Electronically).
- Females were bullied electronically at a higher rate (25%) than males (11%).
- 20% of Caucasian students and 17% of African-American students reported that they were bullied electronically.
- 12th grade students reported that they were bullied electronically at the highest rate (23%).
Figure 11. 2011: Missed School Because Unsafe

- 7% of Louisiana students did not go to school due to feeling unsafe at school or on their way to or from school (Missed School Because Unsafe).
- 8% of females and 7% of males reported missing school due to feeling unsafe.
- 6% of Caucasian students and 7% of African-American students reported that they missed school due to feeling unsafe.
- 2% of 12th grade students and 6% of 11th graders reported that they missed school because they felt unsafe, while 10% of both 9th and 10th graders missed school due to feeling unsafe.

Figure 11. Percentage of public school students in LA (n= 1,156) who did not go to school on one or more of the 30 days prior to the survey because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school.

National Total  Louisiana Total  Females Male Caucasian African-American 9th 10th 11th 12th

Figure 12. 2011: Physically Hurt by a Boyfriend or Girlfriend

- 14% of Louisiana students reported being physically harmed by their boyfriend or girlfriend, compared to the national rate of 9% (Physically Hurt by a Boyfriend or Girlfriend).
- 13% of females and 15% of males reported being physically hurt by their boyfriend or girlfriend.
- 13% of Caucasian students and 16% of African-American students reported that they were physically harmed by their boyfriend or girlfriend.
- 9th grade students reported that they were physically harmed by a boyfriend or girlfriend at the highest rate (17%).

Figure 12. Percentage of public school students in LA (n= 1,142) who were ever hit, slapped or physically hurt on purpose by their boyfriend or girlfriend during the 12 months prior to the survey.
Figure 13. 2011: Can Resist Negative Peer Pressure

- 84% of Louisiana students agree that they can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.

- Females and males equally agree (84%) that can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.

- 86% of Caucasian students and 84% of African-American students reported that they can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.

- 9th grade students reported that they can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations at the lowest rate (79%).

![Graph showing the percentage of public school students in LA (n=1,128) who agree or strongly agree that they can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.](image-url)
### Figure 14. School Bullying: Prevention Efforts vs. Student Experience

Figure 14. Suggests that surveyed schools may not be successfully implementing bullying interventions, as the rates of being bullied at school and bullying someone else at school (19% and 20%, respectively) do not significantly differ from the rate of students who were bullied electronically, which may take place outside of school property (18%). Although this comparison implies that rates of bullying on and off school grounds are similar, further research is needed regarding access to and usage of social media on school grounds.

### Figure 15. School Violence: Prevention Efforts vs. Student Experience

Figure 15. Suggests that student behavior is consistent with the surveyed schools’ implementation of physical violence interventions. For instance, 22% of students were reportedly in a physical fight, while only 4% were in a fight on school property. Similarly, 36% of LA students carried a weapon, while only 16% carried a weapon to school.
Limitations

• YRBSS and Profiles are both based on self-reported responses, potentially leading to some response bias by students and school administrators while completing their surveys. For students, this could be due to both the inability to recall all risk behaviors and the conscious decision to not report all risk behaviors accurately due to fear or discomfort. For school health leaders, this could be due to both the inability to recall policies and practices and the conscious decision not to report on said policies and practices accurately.

• The School Health Profiles were conducted one year prior to the 2011 YRBSS surveys, and differ in the methodology, and sampling. Therefore, the relationship between the results of the two reports should be interpreted with caution.

• The current findings do not capture risk behaviors of Louisiana youth that are not enrolled in the public school system. Approximately 14% of Louisiana students (k-12) are enrolled in private schools.

• The sample size for 12th grade students was less than 100, which may affect generalizability.

Conclusions & Recommendations

Results from the Louisiana 2011 YRBSS suggest that physical violence prevention programming may be particularly useful if specific attention is given to males. Rates of carrying weapons, feeling threatened or getting injured at school and physical fighting were all higher for males than females (see figures 1-7). Physical violence prevention programming may also be useful when targeted at African-American students, as African-American students reported higher rates of physical fighting both in and outside of school (see figures 5 and 7). However, physical violence interventions should be viewed independently of bullying interventions, and bullying interventions should be targeted at females due to their high reports of being bullied and bullying others (see figures 8-10). Weapon control programming may be useful if targeted at Caucasian students, as rates were higher for Caucasians than African-American students for all questions regarding carrying weapons (see figures 1-3).

This data suggests that student behaviors are consistent with violence prevention policies implemented by Louisiana public schools during 2010 and 2011, as reports of carrying weapons and getting in physical fights were lower on school properties than overall. However, student behavior with regards to bullying do not support the reports of bullying prevention policies implemented by Louisiana public schools, as students reported similar rates of what they consider bullying both on and off school property. Future efforts in school violence prevention should focus on expanding bullying prevention efforts and weapon-free school policies. Violence prevention policies are also important outside of the school system, as not all of Louisiana’s youth are enrolled in school. Moreover, an expansion of these services outside of the school system as well as efforts towards more parental and community education will also lead to enhanced exposure and reinforced messaging of violence prevention efforts for students who are enrolled in school.