

# Oklahoma Prevention Needs Assessment Survey School Year 2023-2024

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### Conducted by

Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

### **What is the Oklahoma Prevention Needs Assessment survey?**

Known as the “OPNA”, the Oklahoma Prevention Needs Assessment is a biennial survey of public, private, and charter school students in the 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grades provided at no cost to schools. The survey is a project of the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (ODMHSAS) and has been conducted in Oklahoma since 2004. The OPNA is a robust tool for providing direction to schools, districts, and communities to effectively improve the lives of students across a variety of issues, with a focus on alcohol, tobacco, other drug use, mental health, academic failure, and violence. The OPNA measures problem behaviors and risk and protective factors, which are attitudes, behaviors, and opinions that research has shown to be highly correlated with these health risk behaviors.

### **Is my district required to administer the OPNA?**

State of Oklahoma Statute {§70-24-158} requires that all public schools administer either the OPNA or an ODMHSAS-approved alternative survey. The survey is voluntary for non-public schools.

### **When can my district/school administer the OPNA?**

The OPNA can be administered during the months of October – December 2023 or February 2024. Within a given school, the survey will be administered to all participating classes during the same class period when possible. This will help avoid students discussing the questions with classmates who have not yet completed the survey and biasing the results.

### **How does my district register for the OPNA?**

Districts/charter/private schools can register to participate in the school year 2023-2034 OPNA by completing the online registration form available [here](#) or on the ODMHSAS OPNA webpage.

### **How can the OPNA data be used?**

The OPNA collects data on research-based factors that are shown to not only contribute to student success on standardized tests and academic performance but also to aid in the prevention of substance use and mental health problems. It is the only survey that provides a risk and protective factor profile across four domains: individual/peer, family, school, and community. Examples of

questions that are used to develop the risk and protective profile include: “If you wanted to get some beer, wine, or hard liquor (for example, vodka, whiskey, or gin), how easy would it be for you to get some?” and “How often do you feel that the schoolwork you are assigned is meaningful and important?” When administrators understand student challenges and opportunities, they can most effectively plan for success. Survey results can help your district/school be more competitive in applying for grants, and can be used to secure funding through other sources by demonstrating need. Data from the OPNA will allow your school district to assess the need for specific types of prevention and intervention services and develop a strategic plan in implementing those services. When school administrators understand their students’ challenges and opportunities, they can most effectively plan for their success.

### **What questions are asked?**

The survey includes questions related to mental health; alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use; violent behaviors; other health risk behaviors; and related risk and protective factors. The survey questions have been designed to measure key behaviors without asking sensitive questions, although it is possible that some questions may be considered sensitive by some schools or school districts. Questions in these topic areas are asked honestly and directly, to help ensure clarity with students and accuracy in reporting. The survey is anonymous, so no student’s response will ever be able to be connected with that student.

A copy of the survey instrument will be available for review, and an online demonstration of the electronic survey can be provided at your request. The electronic copy of the instrument will be provided to District Survey Coordinators after the agreement form is received.

### **What if a parent/guardian does not wish their child to participate?**

District Survey Coordinators will work with schools to distribute passive parental consent forms (or active consent forms in schools choosing to use them). Passive parental consent forms will inform parents of the study and instruct them to contact the principal’s office if they do not wish their child to take the survey. A District Survey Coordinator for each district will work with schools to ensure students whose parents decline consent do not take the survey. If a parent declines, their child will be allowed to read or participate in an alternate activity while his or her classmates are taking the survey.

### **What if a student does not wish to participate?**

The student’s participation in this study is completely voluntary. At the beginning of the class period when the survey will be administered, the teacher will read a prepared statement that informs the students their participation is voluntary. The students will be given the option to decline to participate, or to skip any question they prefer not to answer. Any students who decline the survey will be provided with an alternative activity while the survey is being administered.

## **Is student participation anonymous?**

Yes, student participation is anonymous. The OPNA survey does not ask for the student's name or any identifying information. Students who complete the survey online are given an anonymous link. For those taking the survey by paper/pencil, at the end of the class period, the survey booklets will immediately be gathered and placed in a sealed envelope or box. Contacts at each school will pick up the completed surveys and ship them to the ODMHSAS Central Office in Oklahoma City using a pre-paid label.

## **What will students be asked to do?**

The students will be asked to complete a self-administered survey questionnaire during one class period at school, either electronically or via paper/pencil as chosen by their school. Students will access the survey online by clicking on a secure link specific to their school. For the paper/pencil version, the student will be given a survey booklet that contains the survey questions. The student will be asked to read each question and select the answer that most closely matches their response. Students may experience stress from the personal nature of some questions; however, any stress is expected to be minimal given the anonymous, voluntary nature of the survey participation. All questions are self-reported, and no physical tests or exams are involved.

## **How long does it take to complete the survey?**

The paper survey takes approximately 45 minutes to complete while the online survey typically takes less time to complete. Sixth grade students are given a shortened survey version. The survey is administered during a single class period. Although it is expected that the students will have sufficient time to complete the entire survey, they will be informed they should answer as many questions as possible during the class but not be concerned if they are not able to finish all of them. Students who finish before the end of class will be asked to work quietly at their desks while their classmates finish.

## **How does the District Survey Coordinator help with the survey?**

The ODMHSAS will work with District Survey Coordinators to ensure they are trained and adequately prepared to successfully coordinate the OPNA survey for their district, charter, or private school. The District Survey Coordinator will work with school principals to set an appropriate and convenient survey date, develop a parental consent process, train teachers/proctors, and distribute and gather survey materials.

## **What will schools be asked to do?**

Schools will be asked to distribute the passive or active parental consent forms to parents/guardians at least two weeks before the survey date, track students whose parent/guardian do not want them to take the survey, and administer the survey. The survey should be administered by a teacher or other proctor to all participating classes during one class period. Ideally, all students will be administered the survey during the same class period. For electronic administration, schools will administer the survey via an online survey link using desktop

computers or other school-owned devices such as iPads or Chromebooks. Nothing has to be downloaded or installed on computers or other devices. Students are not allowed to take the survey on their personal phones or other devices, unless they attend an online only school. Survey links for all schools and proctor instructions will be sent to the District Survey Coordinator, who will then distribute the appropriate survey link and instructions to each school, and also work with the district and/or school's IT staff to ensure the links are set up properly on the computers or other devices. Survey booklets along with proctor instructions and scripts will be sent to the District Survey Coordinator for districts administering the survey via paper/pencil. District Coordinators will work with each school to distribute survey materials to each site.

### **How will online schools participate in the OPNA?**

Online schools will administer the survey during a normal class period. Teachers/proctors must be able to see the students and proctor the survey just like the survey is proctored in a classroom setting. Teachers/proctors must not view students' responses, however.

### **How will the results be made available?**

Data will be generated on several levels, including state, county, school district, and school, provided minimum thresholds are met to protect student confidentiality. The results will provide levels of health-related behaviors; alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use; antisocial behavior; mental health, and the factors that place students at risk for problem behaviors and protect them from problem behaviors. All results show aggregated data and not individual student responses. Results will be made available via interactive electronic dashboards. District and school specific data will be readily available to public school superintendents and private/charter school lead administrators via a secure, private online portal. County and state level data will be housed in an online dashboard available to the public.

**If you have any additional questions about the OPNA, please contact the OPNA Technical Assistance Team at [OPNA@odmhsas.org](mailto:OPNA@odmhsas.org).**