

**Washington State Survey of Adolescent Health Behaviors
Results of the Fall 2000 Administration
◆◆County and State Profiles◆◆**

INTRODUCTION

In January you received county level archival data to assist you in a county Needs Assessment for Substance Abuse Prevention. As a companion to that data you received a workbook that offered guidelines for using data in the needs assessment. You are now receiving results from the Fall 2000 administration of the Washington State Survey of Adolescent Health Behaviors (WSSAHB) to complete your needs assessment. **This document is an addendum to the earlier workbook, and covers only the analysis of student survey data.**

AVAILABILITY OF DATA

Who took the WSSAHB?

In Fall 2000, over 100,000 6th, 8th, 10th and 12th grade students in 629 schools successfully completed the Washington State Survey of Adolescent Health Behaviors. The goal of this survey is to learn how Washington youth respond to questions about substance use and other problem behaviors, and to assess their levels of risk and protective factors that relate to substance use and other problem behaviors.

Who Receives Survey Data?

- Counties that had either survey participation by more than 50% of students in each grade (6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th), and more than half of the school buildings, or that successfully followed a random sampling plan, will receive county-level results. [NOTE: Participation by all or part of your county in a survey administration that was particular to one of Washington's research grants (Diffusion or SIG) may affect your county data. See the note on page 7.]
- Superintendents of school districts with more than 50% participation will receive district-level reports.
- Superintendents will receive school building results for all of the buildings in the district that participated in the survey.

INTERPRETATION

How can a county without county-level data use WSSAHB data in their needs assessment?

- Every county receives a report that includes results of the state-wide sample. Counties that do not have county-level data can use state results to inform their needs assessment.
- When there are no county results but some school district results are available, county people should work with their school partners to complete a needs assessment for a geographic area that corresponds to the school district. This workbook gives guidelines on how to interpret survey results based on the percentage and distribution of students who participated in the survey.

What is the relationship between survey data and archival data?

Research on the relationship between archival and survey data is on-going. It is probably most useful to consider these as two ways of looking at the same thing. Other perspectives

exist, for instance the perspective of local service providers and law enforcement personnel, many of whom have data to support their analyses.

With the addition of survey data to your needs assessment process, you are in a position to weigh all the evidence you have gathered. Where all the evidence points in the same direction, your choice is clear. Where there are contradictions that you cannot resolve with the evidence on hand, you may need to look for additional information. Remember, your goal is to find and use measures for your needs assessment that

- are reliable (or replicable), verifiable, and stable; and that
- you can later use to monitor your prevention efforts.

◆◆Important!---READ THIS◆◆

How should we analyze survey data?

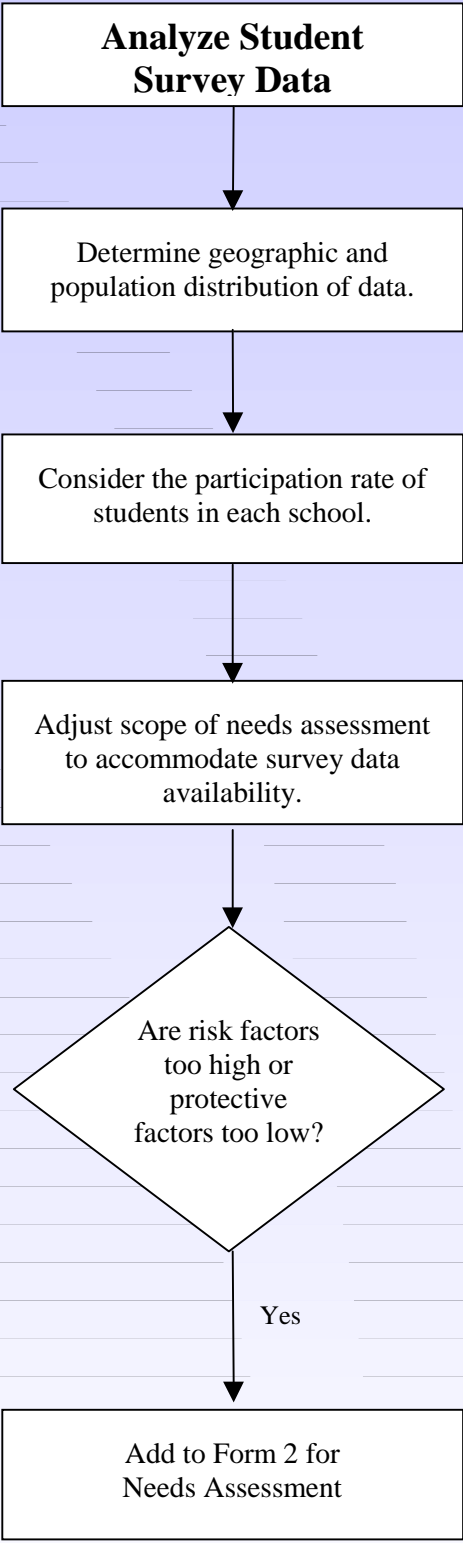
The bars on the profiles in this report represent the percentage of students who are resilient (with protection), at risk, and who have engaged in the problem behaviors (substance use and antisocial behavior). Some counties have data with which to compare county to state results, and 1998 county to 2000 county data. There are a number of changes between the two surveys that will affect these comparisons. Those changes are discussed on page 8.

In addition to changes in survey questions, the “percent at risk” and “percent with protection” is based on a new analysis of the cut-points that define risk and resiliency. An explanation of that cut-point analysis will be in the glossary of the print version of the County Profiles. (If you need that sooner, contact Linda Becker at RDA.) This change in analysis means that **you should not compare the risk and protective factor results of the 2000 survey to previously published 1998 reports.** The 1998 numbers reported here are adjusted to reflect the new analysis, and the school districts have received new district and building analyses.

Why was the survey changed?

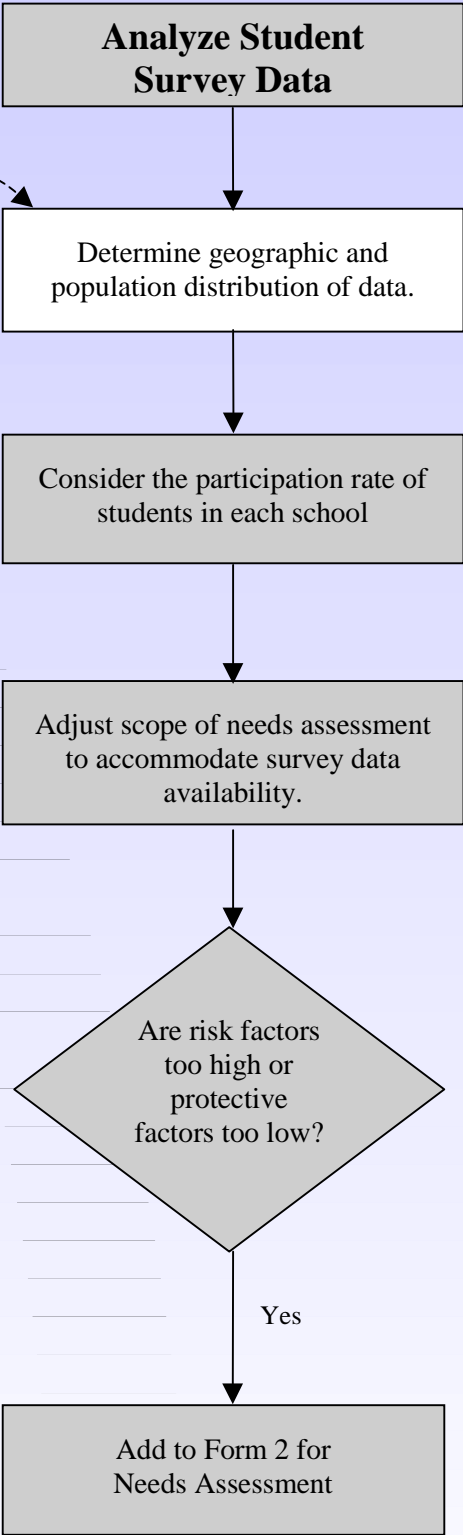
Changes in the survey come from several different directions.

- Some items were dropped from this survey because of the length of the survey. However, **risk factors for which we have no data are still important for prevention programs.** Some of the missing items will be included in the 2002 survey.
- Many items that are required for monitoring and evaluating our tobacco prevention efforts were added to the survey, making it longer than optimal. This length problem will be partly resolved with the 2002 survey when a joint administration of the WSSAHB and the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) will allow the new tobacco questions to be included in the YRBS.
- Research with our partners at the University of Washington led to the development of the cut-points, and some of the changes in risk and protective factors. This research is on-going, and we will benefit from advances in the field of prevention. In Washington State we have enough statewide and school district data that we will be able to deepen our research agenda, and this may lead to more changes in the survey items. The cut-points will stay the same, so that we can use risk and protective factor data in our monitoring and evaluation efforts.
- The change from Spring to Fall administration was based on an effort to find the optimal time in the schools’ academic calendars, and to find a way to meet the needs of the planning efforts based on the WSSAHB and the YRBS.

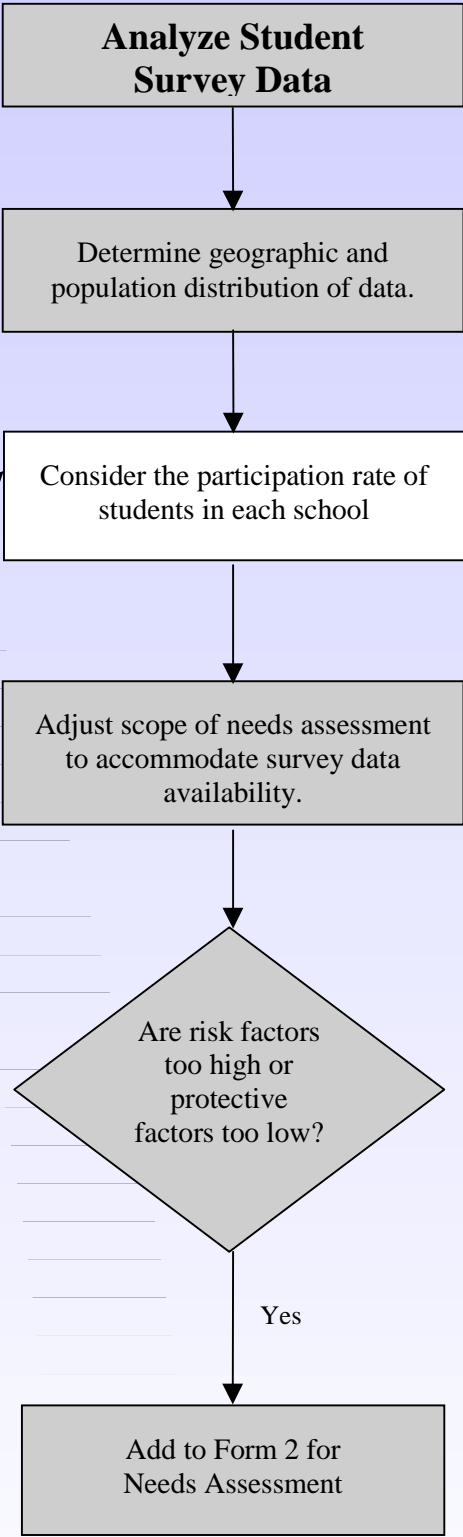


Compare school building participation in the survey to the number and geographic distribution of buildings in each school district in your county, and the school district participation to the districts in your county.

- ❖ If no school districts in your county participated in the survey, you can still use the statewide data for your Needs Assessment.
- ❖ If your school building participation is spotty, concentrated in only one part of the county, or in only one type of school (for instance, only large urban schools), you should rely on state data for your county assessment.
- ❖ If only one of three elementary schools in a town or community participated, be cautious of applying these results to the whole community. The population of each school building may be very different.



What percentage of students in each building, district or county participated in the survey? Any participation rate over 80% is good. However, if the rate is 80%, that still means that 20% of students did not participate. While those who did not participate were absent from school for a variety of reasons, in some cases there may be important differences between students who took the survey and students who did not.



DASA and Community Mobilization needs assessments can be successfully completed with county data if you have it, and state data if you do not. In addition, you can complete a needs assessment for any other geographic boundary for which you have adequate data.

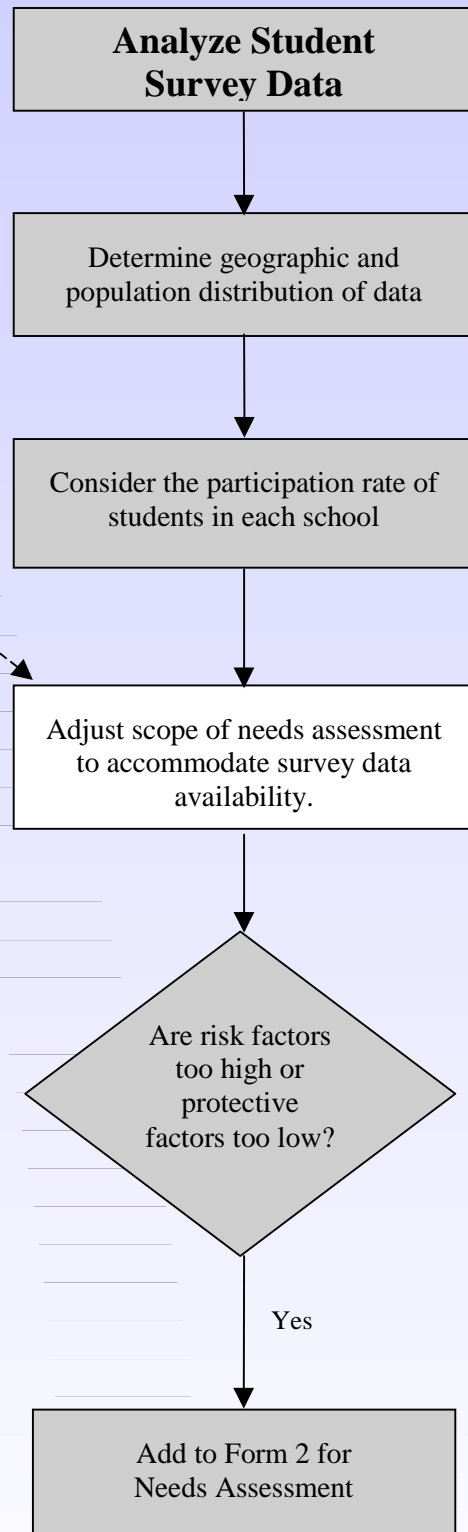
No county data?

For instance, if you do not have countywide survey data, you can do a county needs assessment based on archival data and state student survey data. If you have survey data for some of your county's school districts (say, two out of five of the county's school districts), you can complete a more precise needs assessment for the communities that most closely correspond to those school districts. In that case you may want to collect additional archival data that matches the school district or community boundaries.

NOTE

Counties with research projects (SIG and Diffusion)

If a significant part of your county has participated in other administrations of the student survey, you may not have county results in this report, or you may not have county comparison data from 1998/99. This is because the surveys are not precisely comparable. Additional analytic work will be required to adjust those data for new cut-points and differences in wording.



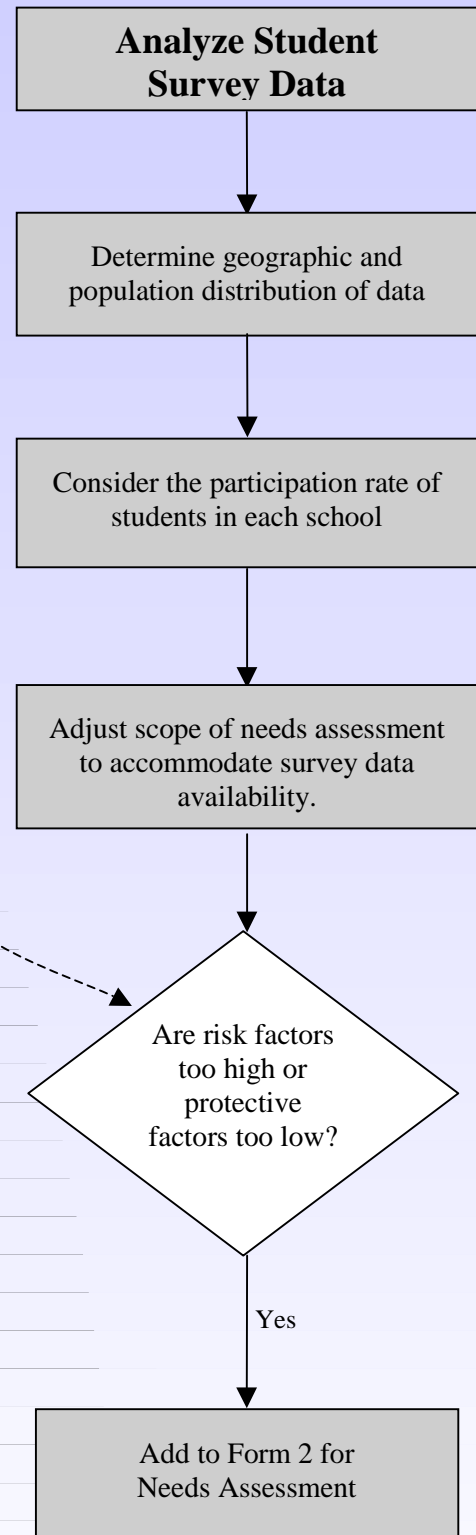
Select the risk factors that are too high, protective factors that are too low, and prevalence indicators that are unacceptably high.

Tips on Analysis

There have been a number of changes between the 1998 survey and Fall 2000. (See the next page for a list and discussion of those changes.) It is essential that you consider these changes when comparing the new data to survey data in previous reports.

Compare local results to state results, and 1998 data to Fall 2000 data.

- The findings in this survey give a general picture of students' perceptions and behaviors. These are estimates, not exact measures.
- Differences in results can be considered from both a statistical and a practical point of view. In this case, **statistical significance** is influenced primarily by the number of students who participated in the survey. In general, the more students who participate, the more precise are these estimates. In small counties and school districts, differences of less than 5% are probably not important.
- Differences in results are **practically significant** if the differences are programmatically meaningful.



Changes Between the 1998 and 2000 Survey

- ❖ If you have county-level survey data for 1998, you will notice that the figures presented here for **1998 “percent at risk” and “percent with protection” are different from those published in the 1999 County Profiles**. These changes are based on research that established a new set of “cut-points”---the point on a risk factor scale at which a student was determined to be at risk, or on a protective factor scale that indicated “with protection”, or resilient. In the current report we have adjusted the 1998 data so that you can compare 1998 to 2000. The 1995 survey will be run with new cut-points later this year.

Keep this in mind when you look at previous needs assessments, grant applications, or any other reference to survey data. Also, inform your partners and other people with whom you have shared survey data.

- ❖ There were some **changes in the survey items** that affect the way survey results can be interpreted:
 - Two scales were dropped from the survey: **Transitions and Mobility**, and **Rebelliousness**. Transitions and Mobility is still an important risk factor. Evidence for this risk factor can be collected from schools (or perhaps more conveniently from the ESD) as school building “turnover” rate.
 - The scale for **Community Disorganization** is not complete---there is only a single item from the scale. More analysis will be needed to determine if that single item reflects the risk factor with any precision. That item is not reported here, but is available in the item details from the school district reports.
 - The question for **30-day use of alcohol** changed so much from 1998 to 2000 that they are not comparable. In 1998 the questions was phrased “how many times have you used alcohol (beer, wine, wine coolers, hard liquor)?” In 2000 the questions was “On how many days did you drink a glass, can or bottle of alcohol (beer, wine, wine coolers, hard liquor)?” Initial evidence suggests that the difference in wording has had a significant impact on student responses.
 - **Anti-Social Behavior** scale has been changed from a risk factor to a series of prevalence indicators.
 - Some buildings elected to include **Poor Family Management**, plus two **protective factors in the family domain**. Those are not reflected in the county report but may be available from individual school districts.
- ❖ The 1998 survey was administered in the Spring, the 2000 survey in the Fall. Most researchers expect that there are **seasonal effects** in student surveys, but there is no research that clarifies this effect. Bear this in mind if you see unexpected changes from Spring 1998 to Fall 2000.

Select the risk factors that are too high, protective factors that are too low, and prevalence indicators that are unacceptably high.

- ❖ Here are a number of reasons why you may choose to prioritize a particular risk factor, protective factor or prevalence indicator:
 - One factor or one group of factors may stand out among all the other factors in your profile.
 - Certain risk factors may be higher than the state average, or protective factors much lower.
 - You may see a big change from 1998 to 2000, which you can corroborate from other evidence that represents a trend in the wrong direction.
 - Strongly held values in your community may lead to the selection of a risk factor or a protective factor despite a positive comparison with state data. In other words, being better off than the state does not necessarily mean being fine.

