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## **2010 Minnesota Student Survey Data Shows Modest Improvements in Behavior**

*~ More Minnesota students planning to attend college ~*

Roseville, MN – More Minnesota students are planning to attend college, are wearing their seat belts more often, and are drinking less alcohol and smoking fewer cigarettes, according to the Minnesota Student Survey data released today.

An interagency team from the Minnesota Departments of Education, Health, Human Services and Public Safety today released results from the 2010 Minnesota Student Survey, which is a voluntary and anonymous survey taken by Minnesota students in grades six, nine and 12.

"I am encouraged there are five percent more students planning to go to college than there were six years ago," said Education Commissioner Alice Seagren. "To be competitive in today's society, more students need to see themselves not only attending a post-secondary institution but completing their studies. Minnesota students can and will succeed with high expectations."

The 2010 Student Survey was administered during the spring of 2010. All public school districts in Minnesota were invited to participate. Of the 335 public operating districts, 295 agreed to participate (88 percent of public operating school districts).

Across the state, approximately 79 percent of public school sixth-graders, 75 percent of public school ninth-graders, and 59 percent of public school 12th-graders participated in the 2010 Minnesota Student Survey. Overall participation across the three grades was approximately 71 percent of total enrollment.

The voluntary survey asked students questions about tobacco, alcohol and other drug use and attitudes, sexual behaviors, dietary behaviors, physical activity and unintentional injuries, violence, and other topics.

Before the survey was administered, parents were provided with an opportunity to view the survey and determine their child's participation. Students could also decline to take the survey, or could skip questions or stop taking the survey at any point. The surveys are anonymous and answers cannot be traced back to an individual student.

Statewide results are available at [www.education.state.mn.us](http://www.education.state.mn.us). These results should not be compared to results from previous years because the districts taking part in the survey vary from year to year. Data should be reviewed with the understanding that it is self-reported by students. The state also released trend data, which only includes districts that have participated in the survey every year since 1992.

Commenting on seat belt use among teens, Commissioner Michael Campion of the Department of Public Safety said, "The leading killer of Minnesota teens is traffic crashes, and this will continue to be the case until seatbelt use among this age group improves. A wave of unbelted teen deaths this past spring was a tragic reminder for parents to be a positive role model behind the wheel by wearing a seat belt, and to reinforce Minnesota's seat belt law to their teens."

Campion stressed the continuing role of parents after teens are licensed, to monitor and train them in a variety of driving conditions and environments. He reminded parents to encourage teens to observe traffic laws, such as the ban on texting while driving, and to “speak up” and insist their passengers are belted. Campion also encouraged parents to set rules and limitations, such as curfew and number of passengers.

Along with the overall downward trend of substance use among youth, including smoking, drinking and using various illicit drugs, Human Services Commissioner Cal Ludeman noted some opportunities for further improvement, such as reducing marijuana use and binge drinking, especially among high school seniors.

“Because studies show that adolescents who started using a substance at younger ages are more likely to become dependent users,” Ludeman said, “we need to pay more attention to when our youth start using a substance and continue our efforts for an early intervention.”

**Survey trends included:**

- Twelfth-graders reporting they plan to attend college increased to 88.9 percent, compared to 85.8 percent in 2007. Ninth-graders planning to attend college increased to 90.5 percent from 88.9 percent.
- Students reporting they feel safe at school remained high at 93.9 percent of 12th-graders and 92.8 percent of ninth-graders.
- Twelfth-graders reporting they were physically active on five or more days in the past week increased from 41.4 percent in 2007 to 43.4 percent in 2010.
- Students reporting across all grades that they always used seatbelts increased between 2007 and 2010 -- from 66.5 percent to 72.1 percent for sixth-graders; from 58.3 percent to 66.5 percent for ninth-graders and from 62 percent to 71.3 percent for 12th-graders.
- Twelfth-graders reporting they used alcohol in the past year decreased from 62.5 percent in 2007 to 55.3 percent in 2010. Ninth-graders reporting they used alcohol dropped to 31.1 percent, down from 37.2 percent in 2007.
- Twelfth-graders reporting they binge drink (five or more drinks in a row during the past 2 weeks) decreased to 23.4 percent from 29 percent. Ninth-graders reporting they binge drink dropped from 12.5 percent to 9.5 percent.
- Twelfth-graders reporting they drove a motor vehicle after using alcohol or drugs one or more times in the past year dropped to 18 percent in 2010, compared to 23.9 percent in 2007.
- Twelfth-graders reporting they ride with friends after they have been using alcohol or drugs dropped to 32.1 percent in 2010, compared to 36.7 percent in 2007.
- Students reporting they have smoked in the past 30 days declined to 19.2 percent of 12th-graders from 22.8 percent in 2007. Ninth-graders smoking cigarettes in the past 30 days declined to 8.8 percent from 10.3 percent in 2007.
- Twelfth-graders reporting they used marijuana in the past year decreased to 30.6 percent, compared to 30.8 percent in 2007.
- Ninth- and 12th-graders reporting they used methamphetamine in the past year dropped between 2007 and 2010, from 2.2 percent to 1.4 percent for 12th-graders and from 1.5 percent to 1.1 percent for ninth-graders.

“Although we are encouraged by the continued drop in cigarette smoking and alcohol use, we know how quickly these trends can reverse,” said Minnesota Commissioner of Health Dr. Sanne Magnan. “We need to remain focused on interventions that will help our teens enter adulthood being healthy and productive.”

Magnan noted that the Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) is enabling communities across the state to implement strategies and policies that can improve the health of young people. “SHIP is addressing tobacco use and obesity, the leading preventable causes of illnesses and death. We need to sustain this kind of important work if we want to see future positive trends in student health,” said Magnan.

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**Editor's Note:** Additional trend data can be found on the [Minnesota Student Survey](#) and Minnesota Student Survey [Statewide Tables and Reports](#) pages on the Minnesota Department of Education website.

View the 2010 Minnesota Student Survey Results: [State Survey Tables](#). [Alternative Learning Settings Tables](#). [Juvenile Correctional Facilities Tables](#).

Note: The Department of Education has provided districts with their survey results and encourages members of the media to contact local district officials for that data.