

Evaluation protocol:

Minnesota Student Survey Trend Line Databases

Overview

The goal of this database is to provide a simple way to examine trends in Minnesota Student Survey data for individual communities and the overall state. The trend lines created with the database provide a visual depiction of how substance use has changed over time and how community changes compare to statewide changes. This information can be useful in year-end reporting and reporting to broader community stakeholders.

Data entry

All P&Is will be responsible for entering information from both local and statewide 2001, 2004, 2007, and 2010 Minnesota Student Survey reports. RPCs may wish to use this information with communities in their region who are interested in examining Minnesota Student Survey data. Wilder has created an Excel spreadsheet for completing data entry and two additional spreadsheets in the same workbook that will automatically draw trend lines from the summary data you enter. Wilder will not be collecting this data or providing any reports from this information. If you have any questions about additional data analysis or reporting, please contact your identified Wilder consultants.

Before getting started, please note the following:

- Be sure to fill in the table at the top of each section that asks for the number of students participating. None of the calculations for the trend lines will work without that information.
- Take note of which response option from each indicator you are being asked to report. In some cases, you will need to do a simple calculation (100% - “response option”) to determine what percentage you should enter into the Excel spreadsheet.
- If your local summary does not break students into gender groupings (male and female), simply enter all of the data either in the “Male” or “Female” columns in the database. Just be sure that you are consistent about whether you are entering the data in the “Male” or “Female” columns in both the indicator tables and in the number surveyed table.

The following provides a guide for where to find the data that you will be entering into Excel in either the state-level or local-level summaries.

Information	2001	2004	2007	2010
Number of students who took the survey	Table 1	Table 1	Table 1	Table 1
10 or more binges in the past year	Table 27	Table 27	Table 25	Table 25
Binged in the last two weeks	Table 31	Table 31	Table 29	Table 29
Alcohol use in the last 30 days	Table 31	Table 31	Table 29	Table 29
Cigarette use in the last 30 days	Table 28	Table 28	Table 26	Table 26
Driving after using alcohol/drugs 3 or more times last year	Table 33	Table 33	Table 32	Table 32
Often ride with friends who have used alcohol/drugs	Table 33	Table 33	Table 32	Table 32
Marijuana use in the last 30 days	Table 34	Table 34	Table 33	Table 33
Methamphetamine use in the last 12 months	Table 35	Table 35	Table 35	Table 35

Once the data have been entered, you can view the trend lines of the aggregated total information for each indicator by clicking on the “Trend Lines” tab at the bottom of the screen. The trend lines for 9th and 12th grade separated out for each indicator can be found on the “Trend Lines by Grade” tab.

Reporting

In year-end reporting, the P&I grantees will be required to submit a table similar to the community-level table included in the database. However, the state-level table will not be required for submission. RPCs are not required to submit any of this information to ADAD, though they may choose to provide support to communities in their region wishing to report this information.

It may be helpful for your coalition members and other important stakeholders to receive this information as well. This can be a simple way to demonstrate overall changes that have occurred in your community since the ATOD prevention initiative started.

When reporting these results, there are some important limitations to be aware of and to explain to your audience. These include:

- The information in this database only represents the youth who attended school on the survey date and chose to take the survey. It may not represent all of the youth in 6th, 9th, and 12th grade in your community and it does not represent all youth in the state.
- When combining data from different grades or genders, remember the result is an estimated, not actual, percentage. This is because there is no way to account for data that may be missing for any specific question or group. It is a strong estimate, but it is not exact.

- When looking across years using the Minnesota Student Survey data, it is important to remember that it may or may not be the same students responding to the survey each year. You are not able to make statements about changes in individuals, just changes in groups.
- Remember that looking at any individual question alone may not provide a full picture of respondent behaviors. It may be that there is something unique about the students who participated, the timing of the survey, the context of the participation, or the overall environment that could influence results at any given time. Looking at patterns between multiple indicators can be helpful in sorting out some of these contextual issues.
- These results are visual depictions of overall trends in substance use over time. They do not include information about statistical differences between time points or the “significance” of these changes. If you would like additional assistance with analysis, please contact your Wilder Research consultant.

When comparing your community’s results to the state-level results, remember the following:

- Your community is included in the statewide results, so it is not a distinct comparison between your community and other communities.
- The statewide results also include a mixture of communities that are doing prevention work and communities that are not doing prevention work. Therefore, you cannot compare whether implementing prevention efforts in general creates unique changes in communities.
- Finally, the P&I communities and many communities assisted by the RPCs are unique, as they often have disproportionately higher rates of substance use at baseline, as well as other community-specific attributes and concerns. These unique qualities may impact how your community changes over time compared to others, and they should be considered in interpreting your results.

For more information on interpreting these results and reporting, please see the Reporting section of this binder.