

BUILDING RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS WITH WV SCHOOLS TO ENHANCE TEEN HEALTH



SPOTLIGHT ON RESULTS

- High school personnel from 43 WV counties responded to the survey. 8.7% were superintendents, <1% other administrators, 8.7% principals, 18.3% assistant principals, 18.3% nurses, 4% school based health personnel and 27.5% other (including mental health counselors and school therapists). All eight RESAs are represented.
- 52 respondents reported that they participated in research projects for their schools, and of those, most reported either a positive or very positive experience.
- When asked to what extent they were interested in partnering with researchers (on a scale of 1=not at all interested to 10=very interested) to test new ideas, the average answer was 6.3, to participate in health surveys was 6.4, and to implement evidence-based programs was 7.1.
- The factors most important to health program implementation are the potential health benefits to students, proven effectiveness through research, total amount of time required for implementation, ability for the program to be modified for the needs of the students/school, and ensuring the program is consistent with the academic mission.

OVERVIEW:

The West Virginia Prevention Research Center at WVU and WV schools share the goal of creating environments for teens that facilitate lifelong health. However, it is often hard to test and implement evidence-based health promotion and risk reduction programs in schools.

MAIN QUESTION:

What are the factors that contribute to successful research partnerships between high schools and research institutions?

STUDY:

We asked WV superintendents, high school principals and assistant principals, school nurses and other high school personnel to complete a short survey in order to better understand the health needs of WV's high school students and to learn more about how to partner with schools to deliver innovative and evidence-based health and risk reduction programs to teens. 120 respondents from 43 counties completed the survey.

THE BOTTOM LINE:

Respondents are willing to implement evidence-based health programs in schools, especially those that were easily modified to meet the needs of the students and that had demonstrable effects on issues for which schools are accountable (academic achievement, dropout and graduation rates, and suspension/expulsion rates). Of the school personnel that partner with researchers, most find the experience to be positive.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Communicate with those who conduct adolescent health research about the needs of your students. You are on the front line and have a wealth of experience and knowledge that can help researchers test and implement programs that are important for your students, their families, your schools and the community. A first step is providing feedback about these results. Do they reflect your experience?

Need assistance finding an adolescent health researcher?

Please contact either:

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