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For Immediate Release

## EYE-OPENING RESULTS FROM THE 2019 DUVAL COUNTY YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY RELEASED TODAY



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**Jacksonville, FL** - Tobacco use, sexual activity, bullying, and suicide are just a few of the areas measured in the 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey - taken by Duval County middle and high schoolers and administered by the Duval County Public Schools and Duval County Health Department.

"Today's youth are making better decisions about their health than just a decade ago. We have made strides in the behaviors that put students most at risk for HIV and sexually transmitted diseases. Still, there is work to be done in other areas by recognizing and creating healthier environments for our children," said Dr. Pauline Rolle, Interim Director and Medical Director of DOH-Duval. "Armed with this new information, we can work together to develop solutions and strategies that will result in better health and wellness outcomes for our youth. Schools, families, and communities must work together to make sure Duval County's youth stay healthy now and into their adulthood."

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is a school-based, self-administered, confidential, and anonymous survey that is part of a national effort implemented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The purpose of the survey is to monitor health-related behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death or disability among youth and adults. In Duval County, YRBS data has been collected in all standard public middle and high schools since 2009.

**The 2019 Duval County YRBS survey provides key insights into teen health, including the following data:**

- 17.5% of high school students reported being bullied on school property during the 12 months before the survey, and 40.1% of middle school students reported ever being bullied on school property.
- Suicide risk behaviors have significantly increased among middle and high school students since 2009. In 2019, about 1 in 5 students reported making a plan to commit suicide.
- Since 2009, Duval County has seen a decline in sexual activity among adolescents. Still, many students engage in sexual risk behaviors that contribute to unintended pregnancies and STIs, including HIV infection. In 2019, approximately 1 in 4 high school students (23.5%) were currently sexually active.

- Use of electronic vapor products is an emerging health concern, with 13.7% of middle school and 16.5% of high school students reporting current electronic vapor product use.
- 6.7% of middle school students most of time or always went hungry and 16.3% did not eat breakfast during the seven days before the survey

Duval County Public Schools continues to use the YRBS data to monitor and address issues related to adolescent and school health. Heather Albritton, Director of Health & Physical Education, states “We continually look for ways to innovatively use the survey data in partnering with local agencies to mitigate the high-risk behaviors of our youth. While it is also crucial to continue the more fundamental uses of the survey data, we know that we must press forward to find new, broader ways to connect our students with programming, services, and educational experiences that can help shape their habits into life-long beneficial, positive behaviors.”

For more information or to access the YRBS reports online, visit [duval.floridahealth.gov](http://duval.floridahealth.gov) or <https://dcps.duvalschools.org/Page/19102>. To obtain a hard copy of the YRBS report, please contact Tiffany Wells at [wellst2@duvalschools.org](mailto:wellst2@duvalschools.org).

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