

Trends in the West Virginia Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2017

West Virginia middle school students' wellness behaviors



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The results of the 2017 West Virginia Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), conducted in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), have many stories to tell about our middle school students' life experiences. The survey monitors five types of health-risk behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death and disability among youth and adults. We look here at two of those categories related to student wellness: weight management/dietary behaviors and physical activity. Risk-taking behaviors, especially injury and violence, tobacco use, and alcohol and other drug use are reported separately. The survey results presented here reveal how wellness behaviors have changed over time and how they are reflected in the lives of students at various academic achievement levels.

The 2017 YRBS middle school survey was completed by 2,089 students in randomly selected classrooms within 49 randomly selected public middle schools in West Virginia during the spring of 2017. The school response rate was 98% and the student response rate was 78%. Students completed an anonymous, 47-item questionnaire. Survey procedures protected the privacy of students by allowing for anonymous and voluntary participation.

For detailed reports based on this survey produced by the CDC and the West Virginia Department of Education, visit wvde.us/data-management-information-systems/data-analysis-research-and-program-evaluation/ and click on the "CDC youth risk behavior surveillance" menu button.

Wellness behaviors over time

Most of the trends reported here span the 16 years from 2001 to 2017, with exceptions as noted. The first category of wellness behaviors is "Weight management and dietary behaviors." This section is followed by "Physical activity."

Weight management and dietary behaviors

The rates for **two behaviors remained about the same:**

Described themselves as slightly or very overweight	30% (2001)	28% (2017)
Were trying to lose weight	48% (2001)	47% (2017)

The percentage of students who **ate breakfast all seven days before the survey increased slightly** during the four years that the CDC asked the question.

43% (2013)	49% (2017)
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¹ See Hammer, P. C. (2018). *West Virginia middle school students' risk-taking behaviors: Trends in the West Virginia middle school Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2017*. Charleston, WV: West Virginia Department of Education, Office of Data Management and Information Systems. Available at wvde.us/data-management-information-systems/data-analysis-research-and-program-evaluation/

Physical activity

Two physical activity-related behaviors improved among W.Va. middle school students:

Watched television for three or more hours on an average school day	35% (2007)	26% (2017)
Attended physical education classes on all 5 days in an average week when they were in school	41% (1993)	53% (2017)

Some physical activity behaviors remained about the same:

Participation in at least one community or school sports team in the 12 months before the survey	64% (2007)	61% (2017)
Were physically active at least 60 minutes per day on at least five of the seven days before the survey	65% (2007)	64% (2017)

One physical activity behavior worsened.

Played video or computer games or used a computer for non-school related activities three or more hours a day on an average school day	26% (2007)	48% (2017)
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Screen time: A decade of change

While the percentage of W.Va. middle school students who watched television for three or more hours a day on an average school day decreased from 35% to 26% during the decade from 2007 to 2017, the percentage of students who devoted the same amount of time to playing video or computer games (or otherwise using a computer for non-school related purposes) greatly increased from 26% to 48% during that same decade. These two comparisons show changes in which types of media students spend their time. They also show, when added together, an overall increase in the percentage of students engaged for three or more hours a day in “screen time,” from 61% to 74%.

Wellness behaviors by levels of academic achievement

In addition to reporting student behaviors over time, the YRBS also reports differences in wellness behaviors by students’ self-reported level of academic performance. The numbers shown below – from the 2017 survey – indicate the percentage of students *within* (not *across*) each academic achievement level who indicated agreement with the item.

Weight management and dietary behaviors

Higher-achieving W.Va. middle school students were less likely to describe themselves as slightly or very overweight than lower-achieving students.

25% (A’s) 29% (B’s) 37% (C’s) 38% (D’s/F’s)

There was no significant association between academic achievement and

trying to lose weight	47% (A’s)	47% (B’s)	49% (C’s)	41% (D’s/F’s)
eating breakfast on all seven days before the survey	51% (A’s)	49% (B’s)	44% (C’s)	43% (D’s/F’s)

Physical activity

Higher-achieving students were **more** likely to have

been physically active at least 60 minutes per day on at least 5 of the seven days before the survey	70% (A's)	61% (B's)	55% (C's)	56% (D's/F's)
played on a sports team during the 12 months before the survey	68% (A's)	61% (B's)	49% (C's)	31% (D's/F's)
gotten eight or more hours of sleep on an average school night	57% (A's)	48% (B's)	38% (C's)	42% (D's/F's)

Higher-achieving students were **less** likely to

watch three or more hours of television on an average school day.	23% (A's)	27% (B's)	31% (C's)	35% (D's/F's)
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There was no significant association* between academic achievement and

spending three or more hours a day playing video or computer games	43% (A's)	51% (B's)	49% (C's)	57% (D's/F's)
attending physical education classes on all 5 days in an average week when they were in school	57% (A's)	51% (B's)	46% (C's)	40% (D's/F's)

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