

# Healthy Youth Survey

## HCA agency request legislation

Amends the Public Records Act (RCW 42.56.320) to exempt student survey responses to the Healthy Youth Survey from public disclosure.

## What we're proposing

HCA and our partners in the Healthy Youth Survey (HYS) propose this legislation as a step to protect the privacy of middle and high school students who participate in the HYS, while preserving the survey's integrity and the value that responses provide to the state, schools, and school districts.

The proposal would add an exemption to the public records act for individual responses to the HYS. This approach involves minimal administrative burden for HCA and the other HYS partners while enhancing legal protection for all.

## Background

The HYS provides important data on the health of Washington middle and high school students. The four state agencies who collaborate to administer the Healthy Youth Survey include:

- Health Care Authority
- Department of Health
- Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Liquor and Cannabis Board

State agencies, local health jurisdictions, and other approved users utilize the data to inform planning and programming (e.g., Department of Children Youth and Families, Washington Traffic Safety Commission, Department of Social and Health Services, Department of Transportation). Local partners help implement the survey in schools and use results to guide youth-serving policy and programs.

The survey does not collect student names, but it contains sensitive questions about demographics and health behaviors. There is growing concern that individual responses to the survey could be used to speculate on the identity of respondents, especially in small districts.

This legislation would allow the HYS to continue to collect data to inform policy and program development in schools, while also providing safeguards to protect students from bad actors.

## Fiscal impact

None