



July 2, 2024

Dear School Trustee:

The ways we support families and students in their academic achievement take many forms. For the last few years, more and more districts have explored new methods to better understand the needs of their educational communities, especially the students that they serve daily.

With this goal in mind, I'd like to encourage your district to participate in the upcoming Youth Well-Being Assessment. In partnership with the Idaho Department of Education, your district will have the opportunity to add to your understanding of how middle and high school students perceive and interact with the communities they live and learn in. The assessment is 100 percent voluntary and confidential data from answers will be used to help you create environments in which Idaho's young people can achieve their healthy full potential. [Parental permission is required](#) for participation and parents are encouraged to [review assessment questions](#) in advance of making a decision.

You may have parents and guardians in your districts who are hesitant to have their student participate in an assessment for a variety of reasons. I would encourage you to share with them that this assessment is in no way required and that it is not like other surveys or assessments they may have known in the past. ALL responses are both confidential and anonymous. Students may choose to take the assessment in whole, in part or not at all. That choice is left to parents and guardians and to the individual student.

What's on the assessment? Students will find age-appropriate questions related to mental health, lifestyle and general well-being designed to help your district understand how to best and appropriately support students and families. This assessment didn't come from the federal government and the responses aren't being sent out of state. It has been vetted by Idaho legislators and Idaho Department of Education administrators, as well as our educators, counselors and more. I was at the table when this tool was created and I can personally assure you that it was designed to help you help your students and your communities.

Any trustee, parent, student or member of the public that would like to learn more or view the assessment questions themselves can go to <https://www.sde.idaho.gov/student-engagement/ywba/> and scroll down to "resource files" to access the complete question list. As a mother of four public school students and a

grandmother to three future students, I can't think of anything more important than protecting our youth, and I hope you'll join me in making strides towards that goal.

Please direct questions to the Idaho Department of Education's Healthy Students and Schools Coordinator Katie Watkins at [kwatkins@sde.idaho.gov](mailto:kwatkins@sde.idaho.gov).

There are many ways we can help our schools and communities, and this is a simple yet important one. Achieving goals around student learning and well-being most often takes a team, and I hope that you'll consider including your district's valuable information to this important project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Debbie Critchfield". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Debbie Critchfield

*(To learn more about the project and read the full informed consent, please see the following page).*



## BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY

### Informed Consent - Parent

**Study Title:** Community Engaged Prevention for Idaho Youth

**Principal Investigator:** Megan L. Smith    **Co-Principal Investigator:** Matt Isbell

Dear Parent/Guardian:

My name is Megan Smith and I am an associate professor for Boise State University. I am also the director for Communities for Youth, an Idaho-based organization focused on community-based prevention for youth health. Your child/ren is a student in the \_\_\_\_\_ District. They have decided to partner with us on a project that aims to help us work together as a community to prevent potential challenges to youth health. The model we use focuses on using information provided by students to learn about their perceptions of the communities they live and learn in, and then uses that information to create an environment in which young people can grow to their healthy and full potential. I am asking for your permission to include your child in my project.

This consent form will give you the information you will need to understand why this study is being done and why your child is being invited to participate. I encourage you to ask questions at any time. If you decide to allow your child to participate, you will be asked to sign this form and it will be a record of your agreement to participate. You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

#### **PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND**

As part of this effort, we will survey middle and high school students in your community in order to better understand what issues youth are facing and what things are helping or hurting their health. The results of this study will help adults come together to create safe and supportive environments for young people in your community.

#### **PROCEDURES, RISKS & DISCOMFORTS**

In order to complete this study, we will give your middle or high school student a survey. Questions on the survey include collecting young people's feelings and thoughts across several important environments; at school, at home, in their community, and with peers. Sometimes students have a hard time with their health because of things that are sensitive. As a result, some of the questions in the assessment are somewhat sensitive. They include questions about using cigarettes, alcohol, or other drugs or experiencing mental health challenges such as depression or anxiety. The survey takes about one class period to complete (~45-55 minutes).

Participation in the survey is voluntary, and participants can skip any question or choose not to participate at any time without any penalties. All responses are confidential. No one at the school, on our team, or anyone else will ever know how your individual student responds to the questions.



## BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY

Although we do not intend to cause any stress, we know it is possible and will do several things to help your child be safe and feel comfortable. We will ask as few sensitive questions as possible and let students skip any questions they do not want to answer or quit taking the assessment whenever they want. We will also let them know that if they choose to skip a question or quit they will not get in any trouble. We will let them know that their responses will be anonymous, their participation confidential, and that their names will never appear on any survey they complete. Finally, we will make sure school counselors, or similarly prepared adults, are available in case anyone has something they want to discuss after the assessment. All school professionals will be alerted that the survey is taking place and to pay extra attention to student behaviors/feelings.

### **EXTENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY**

No personal information will be collected and all data records will be kept private and confidential. Only the Communities for Youth data analysis team will have access to the data. The Boise State Office of Research Compliance (ORC) monitors research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research participants. Data will be kept for three years (per federal regulations) after the study is complete and then destroyed.

### **BENEFITS**

The information gained from this study will help our society to better understand what specific risks (and strengths) are associated with key health outcomes for youth in our community.

### **QUESTIONS**

If you have any questions or concerns about participation in this study, you should first talk with the investigators Dr. Megan L. Smith ([mksmith@boisestate.edu](mailto:mksmith@boisestate.edu) ; (208) 426-3335) or Dr. Matt Isbell ([matthewisbell@boisestate.edu](mailto:matthewisbell@boisestate.edu) ; (208) 426-3332).

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Boise State University Institutional Review Board (IRB), which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. You may reach the board office between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday, by calling (208) 426-5401 or by writing: Institutional Review Board, Office of Research Compliance, Boise State University, 1910 University Dr., Boise, ID

### **DOCUMENTATION OF CONSENT**

I have read this form and decided that my child will participate in the project described above. Its general purposes, the particulars of involvement and possible risks have been explained to my satisfaction. I will discuss this research study with my child and explain the procedures that will take place. I understand I can withdraw my child at any time. Please initial in the appropriate box below.