

<<ON SCHOOL LETTERHEAD – GRADE 5 AND UP >>

<<DATE>>

Dear Parent:

In February, the 5th through <<INSERT GRADES>> grade students in our school will be taking part in an **anonymous** survey. An anonymous survey is when the students do not give us their names. About 96,000 Maine students have been asked to take the survey. The survey will take about one class period. Below are the answers to some questions you may have about this survey.

What questions are asked on the survey?

The survey asks questions about health and health related behaviors. Some of the topics included are:

- Asthma
- Drinking
- Fighting and bullying
- What the student eats
- Other drugs
- Sex (grades 7-12 only)
- Physical activity
- Preventing sunburn
- Depression and suicide (grades 7-12 only)
- Smoking
- Disabilities
- Gambling (grades 7-12 only)

It also asks about factors at school, in their community, in their family and among their friends which may support or threaten a student's healthy choices. These questions include topics such as:

- Whether a student is likely to get caught if they are using tobacco or drugs
- Whether they know adults who engage in different behaviors like drug use
- Whether their friends use drugs
- Whether they take part in clubs or community service
- What support and rules they have at school and at home

The questions vary by the grade level of the student. They are appropriate to the age of the students. For example, 5th and 6th grade students are not asked about sex, most drugs, suicide or gambling. **You can look at the questions that will be asked.**

What other data is being collected?

The height and weight of 5th grade students will be measured. School nurses will be assisting us in gathering this information.

Where does the survey come from?

The survey is the joint effort of the Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Maine Department of Education (DOE). This survey is research. This means that it will be used to learn more about all Maine students. The results may be used to get funding, to help decide what programs to offer, or to judge how well current efforts are working.

Why should my child take this survey?

Your child will get no direct benefit from taking the survey. However, the results of the survey will help state programs, community groups, and schools better serve your child.

How can I be sure that the survey will not harm my child?

- Taking the survey will cause little risk to your child.
- **Your child is free to do the survey or not.** If your child chooses to not take the survey, the teacher will give your child something else to do for the class period.
- Some students may find some questions to be sensitive. There is a risk that they may feel uncomfortable answering some questions.
- Any student can skip any question that he or she doesn't want to answer.
- There is no penalty for not doing the survey or not answering all questions.
- Your child can also refuse to be measured.
- **The survey is designed to protect your child's privacy.**
- Answers from all students are added together to create reports at the local school, county, and state levels.
- The answers from any one student are never reported individually. No student will ever be mentioned by name in any report.
- No information that connects your child to their own survey responses will be kept.

What if I have more questions about the survey?

- If you would like to see the survey, you may call the school office to set a meeting time before the survey date.
- If you have questions about this survey, you may also call Jessie Meisner Francis (DHHS) at 207-287-5084 or Stephen Corral (SAMHS) at 207-287-2964 or Jean Zimmerman (DOE) at 207-624-6687.
- If you have questions about your rights or your child's rights in being part of the survey, please call 207-287-8016 and ask to speak with the chair of the Institutional Review Board, Warren Bartlett. This board has reviewed this study to make sure your rights are protected.

If you do not wish your child to take the survey, please contact the school office. You may also refuse to have your child weighed and measured. If we do not hear from you, your consent to your child's participation is assumed. Your child can also decide not to take the survey on the day it is conducted.

Sincerely,

<<PRINCIPAL'S NAME>>

Principal