

ILD – Non -Educational/Non-Academic Questionnaires, Surveys & Research

Separate federal and state laws require that written consent be obtained from a parent or guardian before a student participates in a non-educational survey or questionnaire that asks about information not directly related to a student's academics. While similar, the two laws are not coextensive, with slightly different scope, procedures and exceptions.

A. General.

1. For the purpose of this policy, "non-academic survey" shall include a survey, questionnaire, analysis, evaluation or any other document which seeks any information in the categories listed in sections B (as to state law) or C (as to federal law), below. However, non-academic surveys should not be deemed to include questions directed to an individual student by a school counselor, nurse or appropriate personnel under circumstances indicating such questions are reasonably necessary for such person's compliance with applicable laws or regulations, and the discharge of his or her duties.
2. All non-academic surveys must have the prior approval of the Superintendent or his/her designee.
3. Non-academic surveys conducted for other agencies, organizations or individuals must have both the recommendation of the Superintendent and the approval of the School Board as to content and purpose. The results of such approved non-academic surveys must be shared with the School Board.
4. As used below, the consent and notification provisions apply to a child's parent/legal guardian(s), unless the student is an adult or an emancipated minor who consents.

B. New Hampshire Law.

Under RSA 186:11, IX-d, prior notice and prior consent (opt-in) is required for any non-academic survey designed to elicit information about:

1. A student's social behavior;
2. family life;
3. religion;
4. politics;
5. sexual orientation;
6. sexual activity;
7. drug use;
8. or any other information not related to a student's academics.

C. Notification and Inspection.

When school personnel intend on administering a non-academic survey, the school shall provide a ten (10) day notice to parents/guardians. Included in the notice will be information regarding the purpose of the non-academic survey; how the survey will be administered; how it will be utilized; and the persons or entities that will have access to the results of the completed survey. Parents or guardians wishing to inspect a non-academic survey will be able to do so in the school's administrative office. Parents/guardians may refuse to give consent for their student to participate, with or without first reviewing the non-academic survey. The school will not penalize students whose parents/guardians decline to provide written consent. The school will take reasonable precautions to protect student privacy during their participation in any non-academic survey.

D. Consent Exception for Youth Risk Behavior Survey Developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Neither state nor federal law requires prior written consent for administration of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Guidance issued by the Centers for Disease Control, United States Department of Health and Human Services, concludes that federal law, including the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment, also does not require prior written consent from parents or guardians because students are not required to participate, and the survey is not paid for by the United States Department of Education.

However, New Hampshire law nonetheless requires the District to provide parents/guardians with a notice of at least ten (10) days before the Youth Risk Behavior Survey is administered. Parents may inspect the Youth Risk Behavior Survey at the school's administrative office. Parents or guardians may opt their student out of participating in the Youth Risk Behavior Survey by providing the Principal with written notice. District staff administering the Youth Risk Behavior Survey shall ensure students understand that participation is voluntary and that students who opt-out will not be penalized.

Legal References:

20 U.S.C. § 1232h; 34 CFR Part 98, Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment

RSA 186:11, IX-d

2017 CDC YRBS Guidance Manual

APPROVED/REVISED: June 15, 2023

Replaces - ILDA