

Using the Georgia Student Health Survey to Understand Student Trends

The **Georgia Student Health Survey (GSHS)** is an anonymous, statewide survey that offers a **primary source of middle and high school student data** on topics related to school safety and wellbeing, including school climate, graduation, school dropouts, alcohol and drug use, bullying and harassment, suicide, nutrition, and sedentary behaviors. All Georgia public schools were required to participate in the GSHS. The statewide participation rate (grades 6-12) for the FY20 GSHS is 84.9%.

The shorter **Student Wellness Survey**, replacing the GSHS during the 2020-2021 school year in response to COVID-19, focuses exclusively on student mental and physical wellbeing. The Student Wellness Survey was sent to middle and high schools only. Participation in the Student Wellness Survey was optional. The statewide participation rate (grades 6-12) for the FY21 Student Wellness Survey is 24.9%.

Both surveys **offer a channel for students to lift up their voices** to teachers, administrators, and district leaders. These personnel can use this information to **implement school-based changes that benefit the whole child.**

Value of the GSHS

- **Track Students Across Years:** Cohorts of students can be tracked across grade levels dating back to 2008, allowing schools to monitor changes or consistencies in a defined group of students.
- **Compare to Local and State Trends:** Schools can compare student data to peer institutions and district and statewide trends, identifying similarities and differences across regions.
- **Understand Unique Student Challenges:** Schools and districts can gain a holistic view of obstacles facing their students and tailor response measures to these specific issues.

How to Access the GSHS Data

1. Log on to the Georgia Department of Education's Office of Whole Child Supports GSHS [webpage](#).
2. Select the year of interest, and use the dropdown buttons to select the state, system, or school-level file. GSHS data is available for 2008-2020, and 2021 Student Wellness Data will be available in late June.
3. Once you have downloaded the Excel file, the data will be found on the tab labeled "survey results." The responses for each question are broken down by gender and grade level.

History of the GSHS

- The GSHS was developed to comply with data requirements in the No Child Left Behind Act.
- The survey is required for all GA Public Schools and is used to calculate School Climate Star Ratings.
- In 2021, the GSHS was shortened to the voluntary [Student Wellness Survey](#).
- The Wellness Survey will replace the GSHS for the next 2 years, after which a revised Wellness Survey will be used.
- A comparison of questions asked in the Wellness Survey to the original GSHS is in the below **Appendix**.

Note: Authorized school district staff can request the raw data using the [GaDOE](#) portal. Those not employed by a GA public school system must submit a request through the [online Data Request Form](#). Access to the raw data can allow for a more nuanced analysis of student subgroups, such as by race or disability status.

Appendix: Corresponding Survey Questions Across the Student Wellness Survey and GSHS

This table can be used to compare student data in the both the Student Wellness Survey and GSHS.

Survey Question	Student Wellness Survey Question	GSHS Question
I know a student at my school that I can talk to if I need help (e.g., homework, class assignments, projects).	#1	#7
I know an adult at school that I can talk to if I need help.	#2	#70
In the past 30 days I have been bullied or threatened by other students.	#3	#33
In the past 30 days I have received threatening or harassing text messages from other students (IM).	#4	#35
In the past 30 days I have been mocked or harassed on a social networking site (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram) by other students.	#5	#36
In the past 30 days someone has bullied me by making fun of me or spreading rumors about me.	#6	#38
How often do you feel stressed?	#7	N/A
What causes you stress?	#8	N/A
In the past 30 days, on how many days have you felt depressed, sad, or withdrawn?	#9	#84
In the past 30 days, on how many days have you felt suddenly overwhelmed with fear for no reason, sometimes including a racing heart or fast breathing?	#10	#85
In the past 30 days, on how many days have you experienced severely out-of-control behavior that could hurt yourself or others?	#11	#86
In the past 30 days, on how many days have you avoided food, thrown up, or used laxatives to make yourself lose weight?	#12	#87
In the past 30 days, on how many days have you experienced intense anxiety, worries or fears that get in the way of your daily activities?	#13	#88
In the past 30 days, on how many days have you experienced extreme difficulty concentrating or staying still, which has put you in physical danger and/or caused school failure?	#14	#89

In the past 30 days, on how many days have you experienced severe mood swings that have caused problems in relationships?	#15	#90
In the past 30 days, on how many days have you experienced drastic changes in your behavior and/or personality?	#16	#91
During the past 12 months, on how many occasions have you seriously considered harming yourself on purpose?	#17	#58
During the past 12 months, if you have seriously considering harming yourself on purpose, what was the most likely reason?	#18	#59
During the past 12 months, on how many occasions have you harmed yourself on purpose?	#19	#60
During the past 12 months, if you have harmed yourself on purpose, what was the most likely reason?	#20	#61
During the past 12 months, on how many occasions have you seriously considered attempting suicide?	#21	#62
During the past 12 months, if you have seriously considered attempting suicide, what was the most likely reason?	#22	#63
During the past 12 months, on how many occasions have you attempted suicide?	#23	#64
During the past 12 months, if you have attempted suicide, what was the most likely reason?	#24	#65
During the past 30 days, on how many days did you have at least one drink of alcohol?	#25	#39
During the past 30 days, on how many days did you smoke cigarettes?	#26	#40
During the past 30 days, on how many days did you use any other tobacco products?	#27	#41
During the past 30 days, on how many days did you smoke an electronic vapor product (such as Juul, e-cigars, e-pipes, vape pipes, vaping pens, e-hookahs, or hookah pens)?	#28	#42
During the past 30 days, on how many days did you use marijuana (also called pot, weed) or hashish?	#29	#43

During the past 30 days, on how many days did you use methamphetamines (also called speed, crystal/crystal meth, crank, ice, or uppers)?	#30	#44
During the past 30 days, on how many days did you use heroin (also called dope, crack, smack, junk, or snow)?	#31	#45
During the past 30 days, on how many days did you drink 5 or more drinks of alcohol in a row, that is, within a couple of hours?	#32	#48
*During the past 30 days, on how many days did you use any prescription drug that was not prescribed to you (such as Ritalin, Adderall, Benzos, Xanax/Xans, Klonopin, Ativan, Hydrocodone/Hydros, Oxycodone/Oxy, Gabapentin/Gabbies or Tramadol/Trammies)?	#33	#50

*Prescription drug examples were not included on the GSHS for question #50.