



At the September 24<sup>th</sup> working group meeting, three survey options were discussed. The result of the discussion was the identification of two potential use scenarios to fulfill the statutory mandate set forth in Section 20-15(a-5) of the [Data Governance and Organization to Support Equity and Racial Justice Act](#). ISBE will either:

**Option 1:** Post the results of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) in odd years when publicly available.

Advantages:

- The YRBS is truly anonymous, and collects data on sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity.
- The YRBS is a representative sample determined by Centers for Disease Control.
- SOGI questions were first introduced in 2015 providing longitudinal data.
- Providing data from a single survey allows users to appropriately compare results over time and make inferences geographically.

Disadvantages:

- The YRBS is only administered in odd years; thus, new data would only be posted every other year.

**Option 2:** Post the results of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) in odd years and the Illinois Youth Survey (IYS) in even years when publicly available, with a set of detailed caveats about the limitations of comparing the two data sets.

Advantages:

- Both the YRBS and IYS are truly anonymous, and collect data on sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity.
- Providing data from two surveys ensures new data will be posted annually, although those data are not necessarily comparable.

Disadvantages:

- Although both the YRBS and IYS collect data on sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity, they do so in different ways, and from different populations of students, making the data more difficult to compare.
- While the YRBS is a representative sample, the IYS is not. The IYS is a voluntary sample.
- IYS SOGI questions can be excluded by the district, making the data even less representative of the total population.
- Having two very different types of data posted in the same location will require substantial caveats and limitations on the appropriate inferences, uses and comparisons of those data. Even with those caveats and limitations, misunderstanding and misuse of the data are possible and probable.

Either option could be paired with a plan to reconvene the group at some future date to consider any new survey options during the intervening years that may have more advantages/fewer disadvantages than the current options.

ISBE seeks the group's recommendation on the preferred method to fulfill its reporting mandate.

**Meeting Notes: Equity and Racial Justice Act Amendment Discussion**  
**Student Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Reporting**  
**September 24, 2024**  
**3 p.m. - Microsoft Teams**

Attendance:

- Julia Strehlow, ISBE
- Jennifer Saba, ISBE
- Rae Clementz, ISBE
- Mike Montgomery, ISBE
- Tiffany Burnett, ISBE
- Jeremy Duffy (IASB)
- Carolyn Wahlskog (she/they) - Youth Outlook
- Kevin Ross (Superintendent)
- Maryam Brotine (IASB)
- Alison Stanton (she/her/hers) (Pride Action Tank)
- SHWETA (GLSEN)
- Lauren Brittany Beach (Northwestern University)
- Mike Ziri He/him (Equity Illinois)
- Adrian Talley (Superintendent)
- Kendall Matias (she/her) CPS )
- Molly Leanne Erin (Superintendent)
- Julio Flores (he/him) (ISSA)
- Frank Kuzniewski (IPA)
- Sinkule, Maria (ISSWA)
- Dr. Careyana Brenham, (she/her) (SIU School of Medicine)
- Brenda Huber (ISPA)

Meeting notes:

- I. Welcome and Introductions
  - a. ISBE team members introduced themselves aloud, and other participants introduced themselves in the chat.
- II. Purpose of Meeting and Relevant Background
  - a. Ms. Saba said that pursuant to Section 20-15(a) of the Data Governance and Organization to Support Equity and Racial Justice Act (20 ILCS 65/20-1), ISBE is required to report statistical data related to the racial, ethnic, age, sex, disability status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and primary or preferred language demographics of program participants for each major program ISBE administers.

- b. She reminded the group that ISBE convened this group in 2022, and it agreed that collecting data directly from children about sexual orientation and gender identity should be handled carefully and sensitively in a developmentally appropriate manner.
- c. An amendment to the Act was filed and passed in response to these concerns.
  - i. “(a-5) In relation to major program participants, the Board shall not be required to collect personally identifiable information and report statistical data on the categories of sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity unless required for federal reporting. The Board shall make available reports on its Internet website, posted where other mandated reports are posted, of statistical data on sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity demographics through anonymous surveys or other methods as age and developmentally appropriate.”
- d. ISBE would like a recommendation on whether or not one or two of its existing surveys will fulfill the requirements set forth in the law related to sexual orientation and gender identity data. Giving visibility to these populations while also protecting student privacy and safety is a priority.
- e. ISBE would like this group’s support and guidance on next steps for selecting the best instrument to carry out the requirements set forth in the law if the two existing surveys will not suffice.
- f. Pause for questions:
  - i. Is the committee going to go over the same three surveys in this meeting that it went through last time it met?
    - 1. Answer: Yes.
  - ii. Is this a decision-making meeting today?
    - 1. Answer: No final decisions will be made today; however, the committee is looking for recommendations on next steps and robust discussion today.

### III. Discussion about Survey Options

- a. Ms. Clementz presented a chart on Slide 7 of the deck comparing three surveys and five components of each survey.
  - i. Pause for questions. There were no questions.
- b. 5Essentials Survey
  - i. Ms. Clementz covered challenges and opportunities related to the 5Essentials Survey.
  - ii. Strengths:
    - 1. Widely administered by ISBE.
  - iii. Challenges:
    - 1. Responses are tracked and attributed to individual students, meaning it is NOT anonymous.

- a. The 5Essentials Survey will not be used for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) data collection because it is not anonymous.
  - 2. The survey is not given statewide as some districts use approved alternate surveys.
  - 3. It is a narrowly focused instrument used to examine culture and climate in a school.
  - 4. The survey primarily collects data about student perceptions, not student identity.
- c. Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)
  - i. Strengths:
    - 1. Responses are not tracked – they are truly anonymous.
  - ii. Challenges:
    - 1. Funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and administered by ISBE and Chicago Public Schools (CPS) separately.
    - 2. Cook County Department of Public Health administered a version of this in in 2020 and 2022. The varying administrations across the state makes it difficult to use this data for ISBE's SOGI reporting.
    - 3. Small number of students participate.
  - iii. Dr. Burnett covered more information.
- d. Illinois Youth Survey (IYS)
  - i. Concerns were expressed about the number of schools that opt into SOGI questions. This lowered confidence in the survey as an option because of recent trends.

#### IV. Plan for December Discussion

- a. The committee will exclude 5Essentials Survey as option as it doesn't include SOGI questions now and it is not anonymous.
- b. Ms. Clementz asked if either of the two remaining surveys are an option.
  - i. Question: If they are not an option, would that mean adding a new survey? Answer: Yes.
  - ii. Comment: It is not a good idea to add another mandate on school districts. The committee needs to incorporate this into something else.
  - iii. Is it an issue that neither of these surveys is owned by ISBE? Answer: No, ISBE can get the data and can work with the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) if IYS is chosen.
  - iv. Would it be a bad idea to report them both?
    - 1. Possibly this would be confusing because their data is not comparable, but the law does not require that it is comparable year over year, nor does it require that it is done annually.

2. IYS is experiencing some rejection given the climate but is worth looking at because of how well it can give data about what the population is experiencing related to mental health, suicidality, etc.

c. YRBS

- i. School districts are not able to opt out of SOGI questions in high school.
  - ii. Some group members believe that YRBS is sufficient in the years it is administered.
  - iii. This survey data can be weighted; therefore, it is representative of the population.
  - iv. Could ISBE report statewide and CPS at the same time?  
Answer: Yes.
  - v. Dr. Beach had several comments about sample size and YRBS – weighting. Not impossible to weight IYS data but it is extra work.
- d. Concerns with the gender x data that ISBE has and why numbers went down in 2023. Did this only come from CPS?
- e. Ms. Clementz summarized the discussion. There is support for YRBS and not as much for IYS. No one is speaking against using both.
- i. Question on the data being used in the wrong ways by “bad actors.”
  - ii. Biggest issue in SOGI data is that bad actors don’t want to collect data to erase the population of LGBTQ+ people.
- f. Pediatrician perspective: SOGI data is collected more by physicians now and numbers reported are going up for adolescents.
- g. Does the law require ANNUAL publishing of data? The group did not reach a conclusion on this answer.
- h. ISBE will draft recommendations that were discussed today so that members can share with their organizations to get reactions before the next meeting on Dec. 3, 2024.

**Meeting chat notes**

- Question: Would it make sense to invite someone from IDHS who is in charge of IYS to join this committee so they can hear how this group is proposing to use the data?
- Discussion of district-level data from the YRBS.
- Question: Is there any “encouragement” that ISBE can give to schools to include the SOGI questions when doing IYS?
  - Response: ISBE is not able to do so at this time.
- Fun fact: Hawaii mandates SOGI collection through YRBS in law.
- YRBS has a [public portal](#) where there is information about weighted percentages by sexual identity and sexual behavior -- at least for all the questions in the YRBS.