



Board of Education

ACTION

TITLE: Arkansas Prevention Needs Assessment (APNA) Survey

DATE: October 27, 2025

RESPONSIBLE ADMINISTRATOR: Dr. Michael Farrell
Executive Director of Student Services

BACKGROUND/CONSIDERATIONS: The APNA Survey is a tool used in Arkansas to assess the prevention needs of youth, including substance use, mental health, and other social behaviors. It is managed by the Arkansas Department of Human Services' substance abuse prevention division and administered by International Survey Associates (ISA). The survey provides essential data for the district to identify potential areas of concern and need, and following the data over grade level cohorts helps reveal trends.

The Fort Smith School District has seen a significant decline in the number of students taking the APNA Survey, which has impacted the usefulness of the data. For the 2021-2022 school year, 2,722 students in grades 6, 8, 10, and 12 participated. In contrast, the 2023-2024 school year saw 51 students participate across grades 8, 10, and 12, and the 2024-2025 school year had 68 participants in those same grades.

Increased participation and more reliable data from the APNA Survey will allow the district to secure funding for essential programs and meet state and federal reporting requirements. For example, data from a previous APNA survey helped support a grant application for a School Based Health Center (SBHC) by substantiating the lack of access to care in certain zip codes. The data also helped with the application for a Drug Free Communities Grant, which has funded a prevention specialist working from the School Based Health Center.

The Fort Smith School District has also used APNA data to inform other initiatives, such as providing school calming kits and suicide prevention brochures, and implementing professional development programs. Furthermore, the district's partnerships with community organizations, like the Community Health Council and local hospitals, benefit from this data to help with community health improvement plans.

By returning to an opt-out model, the district could gather the necessary data to effectively support student well-being and continue securing vital resources for the community.

RECOMMENDATION: The administration recommends that the Fort Smith School Board approve the use of the opt-out consent model for administering the Arkansas Prevention Needs Assessment (APNA) Survey beginning with the 2025–2026 school year.

*If the Board agrees, the motion would read: **Move to approve the use of the opt-out consent model for the administration of the Arkansas Prevention Needs Assessment (APNA) Survey beginning in the 2025–2026 school year, as recommended by district administration.***