



## Board of Education

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### INFORMATION

**TITLE:** Arkansas Prevention Needs Assessment (APNA) Survey

**DATE:** September 22, 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.

In October 2025 an action item will be placed before the board for consideration to use an opt-out format regarding the Arkansas Prevention Needs Assessment (APNA) Survey.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

This update is intended to provide the School Board with information about the current state of information gathering regarding student participation and information gathering from the APNA survey to support students' well-being and to secure vital community resources.

This is an information item. No action is needed.