June 17, 2014

TO: Chiefs School Administrators
Charter School Lead Persons

FROM: Susan Martz, Assistant Commissioner
Division of Student Services and Career Readiness

SUBJECT: Results of the 2013 New Jersey Student Health Survey

In 2013, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) contracted with the Bloustein Center for Survey Research (BCSR) at Rutgers University to administer the 2013 New Jersey Student Health Survey (NJSHS), analyze the results and prepare a summary report. A random sample of 1,701 New Jersey high school students participated in the survey. Funding for this biennial survey was provided by the NJDOE through a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the New Jersey Department of Health, Division of Family Health Services and the New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

The NJSHS provides information about the self-reported prevalence of risky behaviors among youth and young adults. Included on the survey are questions to measure the prevalence obesity, asthma, and bullying, as well as:

- Alcohol, cigarette, and drug use;
- Sexual risk behaviors;
- Behaviors related to violence, bullying, and suicide;
- Student health behaviors related to diet, physical activity, and sleep; and
- Vehicle safety.

The findings help parents, schools and youth-serving agencies to maintain awareness of current trends among teens and provide feedback on the impact of large-scale programs designed to influence student behavior.

We are pleased to announce that a downloadable version is available for duplication on the NJDOE website at http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/yrbs/index.html. Paper copies of the NJSHS will be mailed to principals. We urge you to disseminate this report among both school and community members that play a role in promoting healthy adolescent development.

The results of this survey may be used to:
• Recognize program successes influencing adolescent behaviors;
• Identify priority areas for changes in school policy, programs and collaboration with community agencies;
• Establish district, school and community benchmarks for reducing adolescent risks and increasing pro-social behaviors;
• Provide teens with fact-based, peer norms rather than inaccurate perceptions of their peers behavior; and
• Provide teachers with a basis for allocating instructional time in the health and physical education curriculum.

The academic success of America’s youth is strongly linked with their health. Thank you for your role in reducing the prevalence of health risk behaviors among our students. If you have questions on the survey items or findings, please call the NJDOE, Office of Student Support Services at 609-292-5935.

SM/NC/s/shss unit/cdc-yrbs\2013 njshs and yrbss\2013 njshs\memoranda\2013 survey results memo to csas-cslps6-11.docx

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