

SHARP Survey

Focus Group Report

June 2023

Prepared for

**Utah DHHS
and Bach-Harrison**



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SHARP Survey Focus Group Report

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Introduction

Lighthouse Research & Development, Inc. was contracted by Bach-Harrison to conduct six focus groups with parents of Utah students regarding their awareness and perceptions of the SHARP Survey.

Objectives

The main objective of this research project was to understand barriers that prevent parents from allowing their students to participate in the biennial SHARP Survey and identify motivators that would increase participation. To accomplish the project objectives, participants were guided through a discussion that encompassed the following topics and themes:

Evaluate Parent's Understanding of the SHARP Survey

- Determine if participants have heard of the SHARP Survey prior to the discussion
- Discover what participants know or have heard about the SHARP Survey
- Introduce the SHARP Survey to participants
- Identify questions or concerns participants have about the SHARP Survey
- Determine how likely participants are to allow students to participate in the SHARP Survey
- Determine why participants would or would not allow students to participate in the SHARP Survey

Gather Perceptions of the SHARP Survey

- Identify barriers that would prevent future participation in the SHARP Survey
- Determine how much impact various barriers have in preventing participation in the SHARP Survey
- Identify motivators that would encourage participation in the SHARP Survey

Evaluate SHARP Survey Messaging

- Identify preferred for communicating with parents
- Determine what the messaging should include to appeal to parents
- Evaluate proposed messaging

Project Overview

The specific scope of work for this research project is described below:

- Recruitment of participants for each group
- Confirmation emails and reminder calls/text messages to each participant
- Development of a moderator's guide, including specific discussion topics, questions, and ratings
- Facilitation of the focus groups
- Development of a written report of results

Research Methodology

The research methods used to complete the project are outlined in detail below.

Screening Design and Development

Lighthouse Research, in consultation with Bach-Harrison and DHHS, prepared the participant screener. The information collected during the screening process was used to verify participant eligibility and gather demographic information.

Sampling Procedures

Recruiting for the six general public focus groups was conducted using general public sample and Lighthouse Research database.

Recruiting

Experienced executive recruiters from the Lighthouse Research facility in Riverton, Utah, conducted the recruiting. Interviewers were briefed thoroughly on the screener before proceeding with recruiting. Calling hours for this recruit were between 9:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. on weekdays. Each participant received personal emails, phone calls, and text messages confirming their invitation to participate in the focus group and reminding them of their appointment.

Development of Moderator's Guide

Lighthouse Research, through consultation with the client, designed the moderator's guide for the focus groups. The guide encompassed the following topic areas:

- Evaluate Parent's Understanding of the SHARP Survey
- Gather Perceptions of the SHARP Survey
- Evaluate SHARP Survey messaging

Focus Group Fulfillment

A total of six focus groups were facilitated by Christie Leake, who guided participants through the topic areas outlined in the moderator's guide. Four in-person groups were held on June 14 and 15, 2023, at the Lighthouse Research facility in Salt Lake City, Utah. In addition, two online focus groups were held with rural Utah participants via Zoom on June 22, 2023.

Organization of the Report

Data collected during the focus groups was analyzed for reporting. The results were compiled and are presented in this report, organized by the following areas:

- Introduction
- Executive Summary
- Detailed Results
- Appendices

The Executive Summary section of this report provides an overview of the most pertinent findings of the focus groups.

The Detailed Results portion of this report presents the complete findings of the research organized by topic.

The Appendices section provides frequency of results for the participant screener and focus group questions, and verbatim open-ended responses provided by participants.

This report represents the deliverable for this contract and is presented respectfully to the project sponsors.

Executive Summary

The summary below presents the most pertinent findings of the focus group research.

Evaluate Parent's Understanding of the SHARP Survey

Only one-third of participants had heard of the SHARP Survey prior to the research.

- ✓ Most received emails from their children's schools about the survey.
- ✓ Most granted permission for their students to take the survey.
- ✓ None denied giving permission to take the survey.

Participants most frequently said they assume the SHARP Survey is used to:

- 1) *Identify and address areas of concern*
- 2) *Acquire funding and allocate resources*

Most participants indicated they are **likely to give permission** for their students to take the SHARP Survey in the future, though they want to **preview the survey** before granting permission.

- ✓ In general, participants said they want their students to be represented and felt the survey has the potential to yield beneficial results

Participants are highly motivated to discuss the SHARP Survey with their students, primarily because they are already having **open and direct conversations** with them.

Gather Perceptions of the SHARP Survey

Participants identified the following as potential barriers that would prevent parents from allowing their students to take the SHARP Survey:

- 1) *Not having access to the survey questions*
- 2) *Potential for questions to be age-inappropriate*
- 3) *Sensitivity of subjects*
- 4) *Potential of exposing students to risky behavior*
- 5) *Concerns about student privacy*
- 6) *Government or political suspicions*
- 7) *Sheltered family lifestyles*

Participants identified **transparency** and understanding the **purpose of the survey** as the biggest motivations for allowing their students to take the SHARP Survey.

Participants largely felt the survey could benefit students as families by acting as a **catalyst for communication**. Participants also felt the survey could help parents **understand and combat challenges** their students face.

Evaluate SHARP Survey Messaging

When discussing the most effective method of communication for reaching parents, participants most frequently mentioned:

- 1) *Postcards or letters mailed from their students' schools or districts*
- 2) *Text messages notifying parents to check their emails for information*

When rating how persuasive the various materials were, participants gave the highest average rating to the **student proctor video**, indicating they found this material to be the most persuasive.

- ✓ In general, participants liked that this video was **informative**, **answered their questions**, and highlighted **how the SHARP data is used**.
- ✓ Participants suggested **sharing the video with parents**, though they suggested **including an adult** in the video to present more information about the SHARP survey.
 - Specifically, participants suggested having school counselors, parents, mental health specialists, or DHHS participate in this presentation.

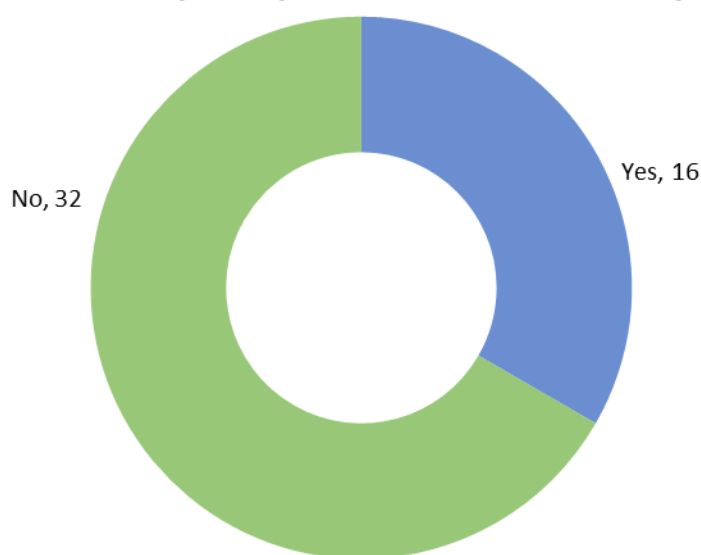
Detailed Results

Evaluate Parent's Understanding of the SHARP Survey

Awareness

When asked if they had heard of the SHARP Survey, only one-third of participants (16) answered **“yes.”** Please see Figure 1.

Figure 1
Prior to today, have you heard of the SHARP survey?



Of the 16 participants who have heard of the SHARP Survey:

- 12 recalled **receiving information** from their children's schools about the survey (mostly through email)
- 15 recalled **granting permission** for their children to participate in the survey
- None recalled denying permission for their students to take the survey

When asked to explain what the SHARP Survey is, participants with awareness of the survey provided the following descriptions:

- *“It's an anonymous survey about drug use and behavioral problems.”*
- *“It measures how many kids are drinking or doing drugs or different behavioral things so they can get a pulse of the students and how they can help.”*
- *“It's trying to assess mental health and the different stress levels they feel they have and how they cope with things to some degree.”*
- *“It's not so much to evaluate an individual kid to see if they need intervention, but it's to see how kids as a whole are doing statistically.”*

Purpose of the SHARP Survey

During this portion of the discussion participants were provided with the following description of the SHARP Survey:

Student Health and Risk Prevention survey, or the SHARP Survey, is administered in schools by the State of Utah every other year and is given to 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students. The survey measures students' physical and mental health, including alcohol, tobacco, and drug use, as well as other risky behaviors. Students may only participate in this survey if parental consent is given.

When asked what they perceive the purpose of the SHARP Survey to be, participants most frequently said they believe the survey is designed to **identify and address areas of concern** in Utah schools.

- *"They aggregate the data so they can see what they need to address."*
- *"I think they are using the survey as a tool to figure out ways to help the children and find out what all they are going through."*
- *"Maybe it's used to identify potential issues so they can remedy them before becoming really big issues."*
- *"It's used to identify what the peer pressures are and address some of the negative pressures they're having."*
- *"It's for schools to know where they need to focus on or where they need to have more preventive education."*
- *"Is low income struggling more in a certain area? By figuring out what is going on in the community, we know how to attack those [issues] and to come up with a solution."*

Participants also perceive the SHARP Survey is used to **acquire funding** and **allocate resources**.

- *"Unless you have that data to represent the need, you can't go in and get the funding to provide the services."*
- *"Unless you can show the need for it, you can't justify the funding to have these additional resources, such as additional counselors and therapists in the schools."*
- *"I would wonder if, based on the responses of those surveys, the school district would prioritize access to school counselors, maybe get more on staff."*
- *"I would hope it is to allocate resources to training or whatever areas they are seeing the biggest issues with."*
- *"I would hope they use it to get funding for the federal government to help with programs for kids that have higher rates of alcohol abuse."*

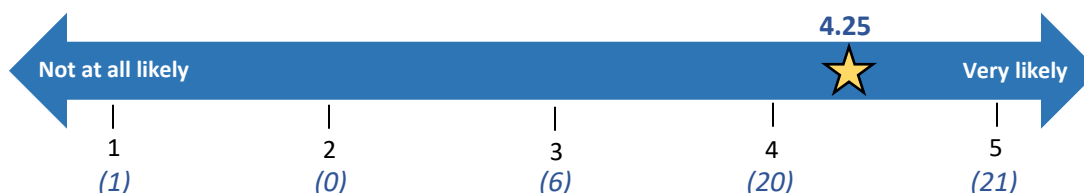
Participants, in general, felt it is important to know what the SHARP Survey data is used for:

- *"If we're going to cover topics with my kids that are that sensitive, I want to know the reason my children are [taking the survey]."*
- *"I'm a parent to my children. It's my sole responsibility first to understand what they're going through and the educational system is secondary. If they are asking these things of my children, I need to understand what they're talking about and what is going to be discussed in this survey."*

Likelihood of Granting Permission for Students to Take the Survey

When asked how likely they would be to allow their children to participate in the SHARP Survey, participants gave an average rating of **4.25** on a 5-point scale, indicating they are likely to grant permission.

How likely are you to allow your student to take the SHARP Survey in the future?



Participants who have already granted permission for their students to take the SHARP Survey indicated that they want their children to be **represented and included**.

- *"I didn't want things to get heavily skewed to one side so they think all kids are feeling this way or that way. I wanted that to be represented somehow."*
- *"I want my kid represented. If parents opt their obedient kids out, our state or district looks worse than it is."*
- *"You need the data. If you're trying to collect it from kids, I'd want my kid to be in there so you have a full spectrum of kids."*
- *"Having had a student who engaged in some of these behaviors, I would want that data reflected accurately, in addition to those students who aren't participating in those behaviors."*
- *"Why exclude them? If you're taking out the demographic of what some of the results are, you're really skewing the survey. If only the people that are in a rougher households are taking it, then it's going to show a larger percentage of those people in the district."*

Participants who indicated they would allow their students to take the SHARP Survey generally felt that participation would **yield a beneficial result**.

- *"Good data makes good decisions."*
- *"The school uses that information. I believe that's going to trickle down to you because the school's going to implement different programs that will affect the class."*
- *"I'm a firm advocate for more mental health in our society. Whatever we can do to drive that, I'm fully behind."*
- *"My wife and I talk a lot with our kids, especially around the topics of mental health, about how they're feeling. The idea of them taking a survey that reinforces that, I see that as a positive thing."*

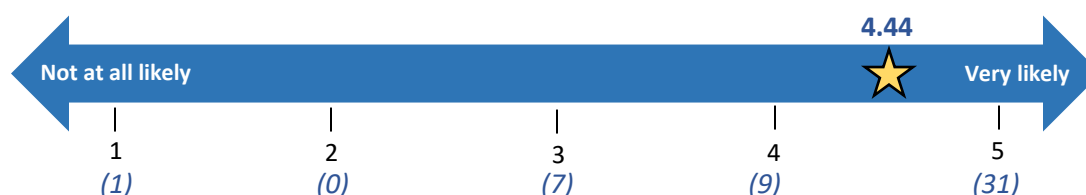
Some participants gave lower ratings when rating their likelihood of granting permission for their students to take the survey. These participants said that they don't necessarily oppose the survey, but that they would want to **preview the survey beforehand**.

- *"I don't know what I'm consenting to. What information am I given before I give that consent?"*
- *"I would want to take a look at it. My teen gets anxious, so he would benefit from a heads-up."*
- *"It says 'other risky behaviors,' and I would want to know what those other behaviors are."*
- *"I just want to know what the content is. My son is on the spectrum. He's a very literal young man. So I'm prepared as a mother and know how to prep him, I need to know what they're going to ask."*

Likelihood of Discussing the SHARP Survey with Students

Participants, in general, indicated they are likely to talk to their students about the SHARP Survey. On average, participants gave a rating of **4.44** on a 5-point scale to describe their likelihood of discussing the SHARP Survey with their children.

How likely are you to talk to your child about the SHARP Survey, either before they take it, or after?



Many participants indicated that they **already have open conversations** with their children.

- *“Those are conversations I have regularly with my kids.”*
- *“We’re pretty direct. We talk about anything and everything.”*
- *“I have those conversations with my children. I have enough of a relationship with my kids that I have a beat on what they’re doing.”*
- *“If I’m doing my job right, hopefully this isn’t the first discussion I’ve had with them, so it shouldn’t come as a surprise when I do have a discussion with them.”*
- *“I’m pretty open with my kids. We already talk about this kind of stuff. Living in Tooele County, there is a lot of alcohol, tobacco, drug use, and suicide. We’re already talking about it anyway.”*
- *“We try and have those difficult conversations with our kids all the time about sex and drugs and depression and mental health, all those challenging things they could be facing. So if that topic comes up and it’s on their mind and they’re thinking about it, my wife and I seize that opportunity to talk about it.”*

When asked what questions they have about the survey, participants mentioned having questions about the following:

Survey content

- *"I would like to see it, at least an outline, to know the contents of the survey."*
- *"I'd like to know the questions on the survey. I would like to prep [my kids] in case there is a topic they are not familiar with."*
- *"What risky behaviors are they going to talk about?"*
- *"Are the parents allowed to view the questions before they give consent?"*
- *"Do they use the same exact survey for a 6th grader as a senior?"*
- *"We're paranoid in my family, so we would want to know [what's in the survey]. There are a lot of agendas out there. I don't expect there to be an agenda, I just want to know."*

Survey administration, privacy, and anonymity

- *"Is it completely anonymous?"*
- *"How is it administered? In a group?"*
- *"Are they sitting where other kids can see things on their paper?"*
- *"Can everyone see each other's paper, or is it like a polling booth where you can answer your questions freely without worrying about your buddy next to you?"*
- *"Is it web-based or on paper? My kids are logging into their school database with their user name and password. Is that really anonymous?"*
- *"Is it a bubble sheet or a Chromebook? That could impact privacy. I feel like the likelihood of it being private is higher on the Chromebook, although I'm not entirely sure."*

The impact of the survey

- *"What do they use it for? What's the benefit of this?"*
- *"Is the data to weigh the efficacy of prevention programs?"*
- *"Will they influence legislation or will they influence district policy?"*
- *"Will they use it to get specialty counselors involved if they need more people to help kids in a certain area?"*
- *"If this survey showed my kid had an eating disorder, would they have an intervention?"*
- *"Are they looking for risky behavior? Like a guy brings a gun to school type thing? Are we profiling so we can identify risky individuals?"*

Accessibility of results

- *"Will the results be where we can see them?"*
- *"Do we have access to the results? Not necessarily our child's, but the district or state?"*
- *"Should alarming results be found at my kids' school, I would want to be aware so I could help protect my kids, to help prepare them to be exposed to certain things so they can say no."*

Gather Perceptions of the SHARP Survey

Barriers Preventing Participation

When identifying the concerns they have about the SHARP Survey or the barriers that would prevent parents from allowing their students to take the survey, participants mentioned the following:

Access to survey

- *"I'd love to see the survey and what it asks."*
- *"I just want to know what the schools are asking or introducing to my child. I do think parents should know what types of things their children are being introduced to in school."*
- *"I'm okay with different things being asked, as long as I know what they are so I can discuss it with [my kids]. It's not that I'm nervous that a topic will be broached; I just want to know what it is so if there are any questions that arise, I can be there for my child and discuss it with them."*

Age-appropriateness of questions

- *"I don't know if they're asking the same questions for 6th graders as they are for 12th."*
- *"I prefer my 6th grader not do it, but my 8th, 10th, and 12th graders know about those sensitive subjects."*
- *"My concern would be why they are giving 11 and 12 year olds a survey about drugs and alcohol and other risky behavior—I'm assuming sex. I don't think I would give approval to take the survey."*
- *"Some of those things can spur conversation sooner than I wanted to have with my kid. You're a 6th grader. When you're 17, I'm more comfortable talking about it with you."*
- *"I'm a lot more comfortable the older they get, but even now, I'm hesitant with my 15-year-old son on some things."*
- *"I would not want the gender question asked of them when they're younger. I think it is confusing and something they don't really understand."*
- *"I don't think they should ask sexual type questions to younger kids. That should be an older topic, for 17 year olds. They have more understanding."*

Sensitivity of subjects

- *"I would have concerns about questions surrounding sexual identity and gender. Right now, things are so politically charged."*
- *"When they start talking about sexual identity and orientation, I can see that being a big problem for a lot of people in Utah."*
- *"If it asks, 'Are you a man or a woman?' or whatever you want to call yourself, that's where I draw the line in the sand with my children. Why are we confusing them more at a younger age with these questions? I struggle with that if it's in the survey."*
- *"Anything transgender [is a concern for me]. Or where kids show up as animals. I'm not trying to hide it from my daughter, but there's a lot of media about crazy stuff going on in other schools."*
- *"[I would hesitate to give permission depending on the] current mental state of my child, if I think it might exacerbate something he is already dealing with."*
- *"Maybe [parents would deny permission if there are] triggers, if they know their kid has a hard time with something already. There could be difficult things for them to deal with."*
- *"Some kids are highly sensitive to suicide. When people bring that up, it may cause them to be unstable."*

Exposing students' to risky behaviors

- *"Kids are so vulnerable. Sometimes you give them ideas they haven't really had for themselves."*
- *"I probably wouldn't let my 8th grader do it unless I knew exactly what the questions were because it might spur thoughts that I don't want him to start thinking about. Do you really want the schools introducing that to your child?"*
- *"[I'm concerned about] introducing them to ideas. 'Do you drink a bottle of Robitussin to get high?' 'Well that's a great idea. I want to try that.'"*
- *"Part of me hesitates because don't want someone asking my daughter about marijuana, and then she becomes curious about it because someone was asking."*
- *"I'd be anxious if specific drugs or sexual practices were mentioned that maybe they have had no exposure to, and then they'd be curious and then look it up on their own or ask their friends."*
- *"I don't know if it talks about suicide, but I don't like things getting planted into [my child's] mind that he's never thought about before. I'm worried they'll ask questions and he'll start thinking about that thing."*
- *"If they ask your gender and they introduce questions like, 'Do you think you're transgender?' I may be hesitant to let my kid gets asked those questions because they may be introduced to information that they're not ready for."*

Student privacy

- *"My main issue would just be privacy, making sure everything is anonymous."*
- *"In general, I'm concerned about my students' privacy. I want to make sure their privacy is always protected."*
- *"I just want to make sure that anything that was talked about was confidential and that they're not giving out any personal information about my child. That would be my biggest concern."*
- *"I know, on the surface, it's anonymous, but I would still have concerns about my kids' privacy."*

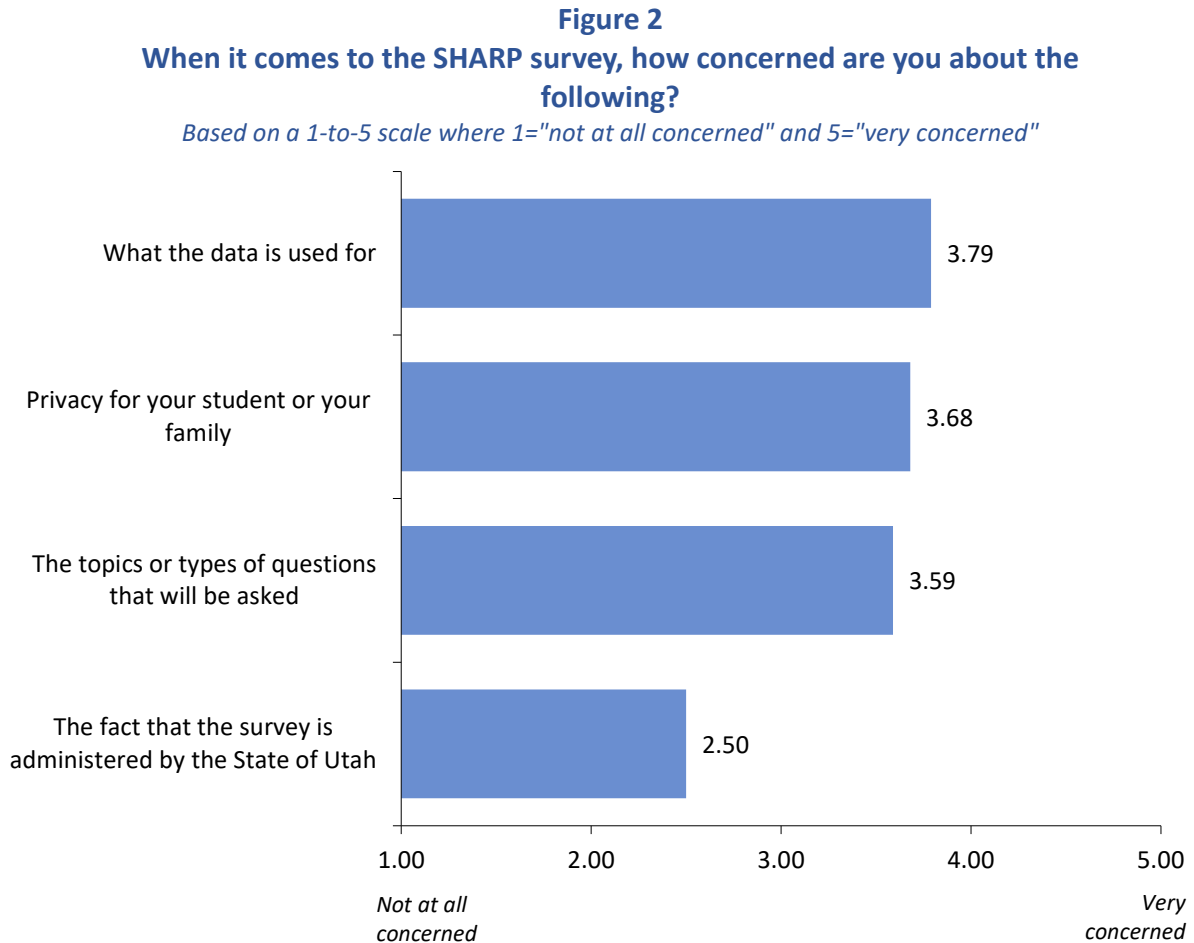
Government or political suspicions

- *"Maybe people are opposed to any type of government involvement. They may not want any additional data given to the government."*
- *"There is a lot of distrust in public institutions and government. I can see where people think any kind of information for the government is bad."*
- *"I think there's suspicion out there with what's being taught in public schools. This is one more thing we need to be suspicious of."*
- *"I just don't want this to be a feather in the hat of some politician so they can drive something or get resources allocated."*
- *"I know some people that politics play into everything they do or don't do, especially around their kids' education. Depending on the origin of the survey, how it's implemented, which group or party or legislator implemented it, that could sway decisions."*
- *"Sometimes people are more interested in infringements on their freedom than the safety of their children. Or they think the country is going in the wrong direction and they'll do whatever it takes to protect them."*

Sheltered lifestyles

- *"My son has a more innocent upbringing, and I don't mind that. I cherish that myself."*
- *"Those who are more sheltered or more conservative or faith-based may have a fear of those seeds being planted, or that they will have to answer questions they are uncomfortable answering with their kids."*
- *"Some parents aren't comfortable talking to their kids about those things."*
- *"I could see the people around me, in the weird bubble they like to live in, not wanting to expose their kids to things that they are afraid of, that if they find out about it, they're going to try it."*
- *"They may be concerned about their kids being exposed to things that are immoral or degenerate. It's a matter of ignorance that they don't believe their kids should have any discussions about these matters at all."*

When rating how concerned they are with various issues regarding the SHARP Survey, participants, on average, expressed the most concern with **what the data is used for**, **privacy for their students**, and **topics** of questions addressed in the survey. Participants were less concerned about the survey being administered by the State of Utah. For details, please refer to Figure 2.



Motivations for Participation

In general, participants said they would be more willing to let their children participate in the SHARP Survey if districts and schools were **transparent** about the survey and emphasized its **purpose**.

- *“Demonstrate transparency so we know what we’re getting into.”*
- *“I trust our district, but I also want to have confidence in them. If they’re completely transparent, I’ll feel a lot more confident moving forward. If they’re hiding something, that will make everyone uneasy. There will be a lot of conflict moving forward if they’re not transparent.”*
- *“Complete transparency. There’s some serious trust issues in the world right now. How it’s presented is going to affect my decision. If I feel the wool is being pulled over my eyes, I’m immediately going to shut down. But if they show me the survey and tell me their intentions, I’m on board. The minute I feel like something is not above board, I’m out.”*
- *“Share the results with parents. If it’s anonymous, tell us what the results are. Let us be a part of making decisions in our community to drive the results.”*
- *“Lead with what it’s going to accomplish. We won’t make it a priority if we don’t know what the end goal is. If it’s for funding, everybody wants their schools to be nice and their kids’ education to be good, so I’ll do what they say if we’re going to get money. Establish the need, the result, why this is good.”*

Potential Benefits of the SHARP Survey

When asked if the SHARP Survey has the potential to benefit students and their families, participants overwhelmingly said they perceive the survey being a **catalyst for communication**.

- *“Hopefully it creates a dialogue or discussion between the student and the parent.”*
- *“It may be a good way to open a conversation into topics they maybe haven’t thought of before or they were nervous to talk to me about. I think it could open good lines of communication.”*
- *“It can kind of break the ice on conversations that might not typically happen, especially if there are awkward talking points. It may present the opportunity for more open, neutral conversation.”*
- *“Even if you are discussing things on a general basis, it can trigger conversations that might not have otherwise happened. It opens up lines of communication. At these ages, any line of communication is good.”*
- *“You can sit down with your kids and talk about alcohol. ‘I know there’s alcohol at your school. You probably do too. Who are the kids that have it? How do they have it? How do they bring it in?’ You can’t start the conversation until you know what to talk about.”*
- *“They’re teenagers. Who knows what they’re watching, what their lives are like? Kids are going to find out about things one way or another. I would rather they find out about things in an educated, approved way, then they come and ask me questions and we figure it out together. I think the survey can be a catalyst for discussion.”*

Participants further indicated that the survey can help parents **understand and combat challenges** their students face.

- *“Knowledge is power. If you don’t know you have a problem, you can’t attack it.”*
- *“If you are going to send your kids to war, you want to know what battle they’re facing and what weapons they’ll need.”*
- *“A lot of the information is great for us as parents. We don’t always know what’s going on with our kids. It’s nice to know how much depression and drugs are going on.”*

Evaluate SHARP Survey Messaging

Preferred Methods of Communication

In general, participants said that sending flyers home with students is ineffective.

- *"My kids are never going to give me the flyer."*
- *"My daughter is constantly forgetting things in her backpack."*
- *"If you send a paper home with my son, I'll see it three months from now, crumpled up, and it won't do any good."*
- *"I open up my daughter's backpack, and it's like a portal to another place."*

Similarly, participants also indicated that an email about the SHARP Survey is likely to get lost in the shuffle.

- *"My email inbox is flooded."*
- *"I might not see an email."*
- *"It's easy for me to miss emails or assume my wife is getting the emails."*
- *"Email blasts don't work out. Parents don't read them half the time."*
- *"When you get emails from every teacher for every child, and they have seven teachers, it can get overwhelming."*

However, participants said they would be likely to notice a **postcard or letter** mailed from their children's schools.

- *"Mail a letter. That seems important."*
- *"If it comes in the mail, it's better."*
- *"I think a flyer in the mail, or a postcard, would work best from me."*
- *"I try to look at the postcards that come from the district for my kid."*
- *"If it doesn't look like junk mail, and it's a short little post card, yeah, I'll look at it."*

Participants also expressed interest in a **text message notifying parents to check their emails**.

- *"A text would be nice."*
- *"Texts don't get buried as quickly."*
- *"Everybody's got a cell phone in their pocket. Text is untapped. You pay more attention to text messages."*
- *"What does it for me is the text messages. I actually read them. Emails I don't read."*
- *"Maybe send a text message with a link to parents."*
- *"Our school district sends a text to check your email. That's helpful."*

In addition, participants suggested implementing the following methods of communicating with parents:

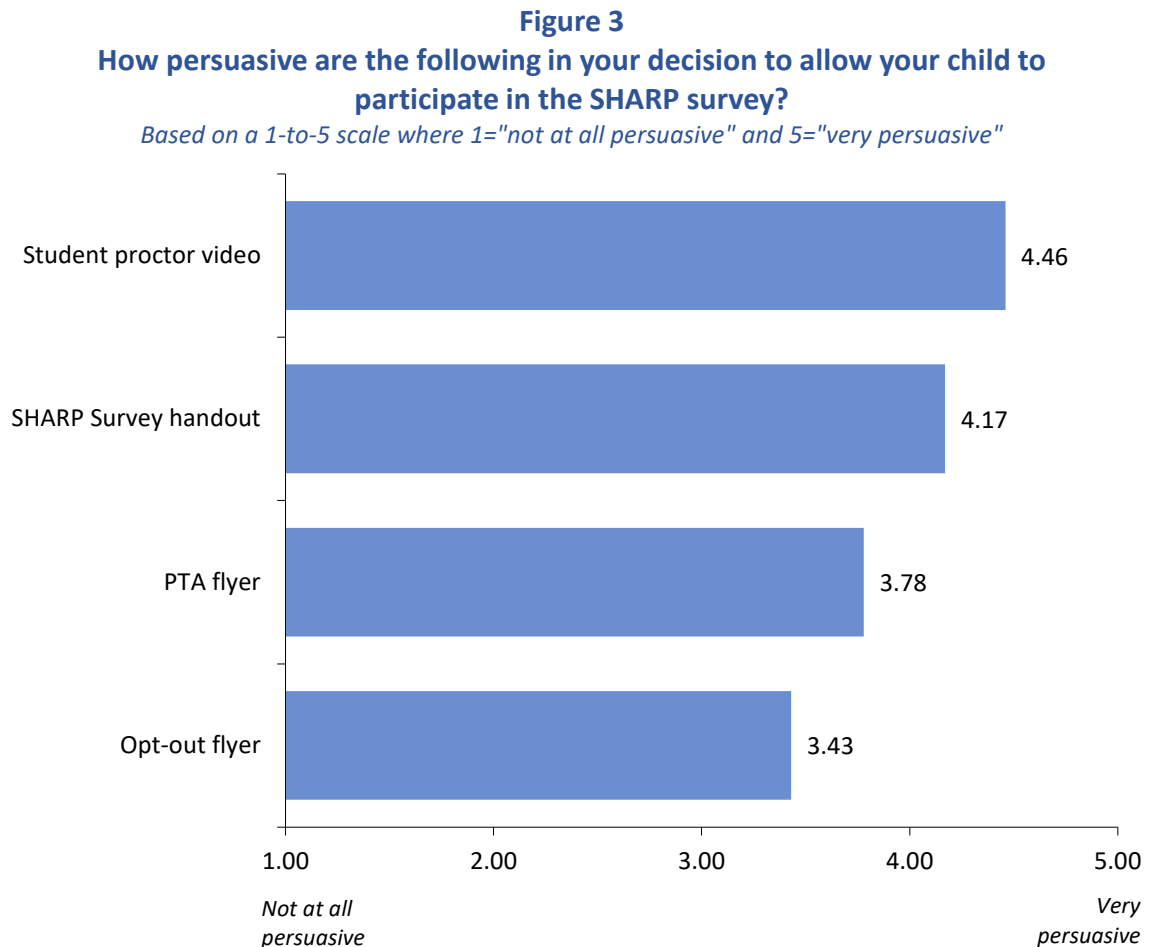
- *"When you go to registration, maybe have a page you have to sign, along with other permission slips. At that point, I just sign everything."*
- *"Create an ad campaign, whether through social media or YouTube, to say, 'It's that time of year, the SHARP Survey is coming up! Parents, find out if your district is doing it so you can decide if you want to participate or have a conversation with your child.'"*
- *"If we go the advertising route, that would lend more credibility of the state of Utah doing this. It would show their commitment to this, and it would probably dissuade me more from believing it is ideologically driven."*

Material Review

During this portion of the discussion, participants were shown the following materials:

- Urban and suburban groups → Student proctor video + SHARP Survey handout + PTA flyer
- Rural groups → Student proctor video + Opt-out flyer

When rating how persuasive the materials were, participants gave the highest average rating to the student proctor video, indicating they found this material to be the most persuasive. Please see Figure 3 for further details.

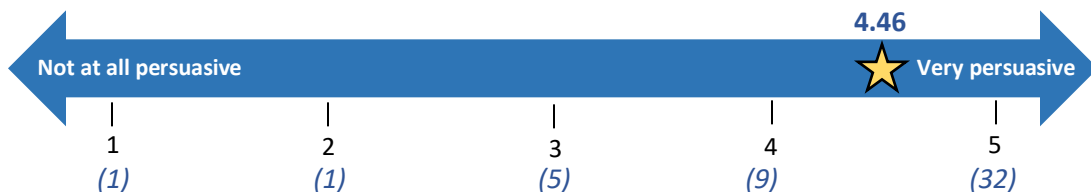


Student Proctor Video



On average participants gave a rating of **4.46** on a 5-point scale to describe the persuasiveness of the video.

How persuasive is the student proctor video in motivating you to allow your child to participate in the SHARP survey?



Participants, in general, liked this video. Specifically, they found it **informative**, and felt that it **answered questions** they had and alleviated some of their concerns.

- "I liked that it answered a lot of the questions I had."
- "I thought it touched on almost all of our questions."
- "I really appreciated they gave more detail about what was being asked. Some of my initial concerns were alleviated."
- "I thought it was very well done, very informative. It answered all the questions we have had in that video."

Participants also commented on the presentation of the video and liked how **students present the information** and that the students represent **diversity**.

- "I liked that it used kids."
- "I liked when the kids on screen talked about them as also being students. For me, it helps establish more trust."
- "I think they should just attach this video to an email and send it to all the parents. Kids explaining what kids are going to be doing is just great. Then we see what our kids are seeing."
- "I liked that they made an attempt at representation. Different ethnic and racial backgrounds have different experiences in testing. You want to encourage as much participation as possible."

Participants liked that the video emphasized **how the data has been used**.

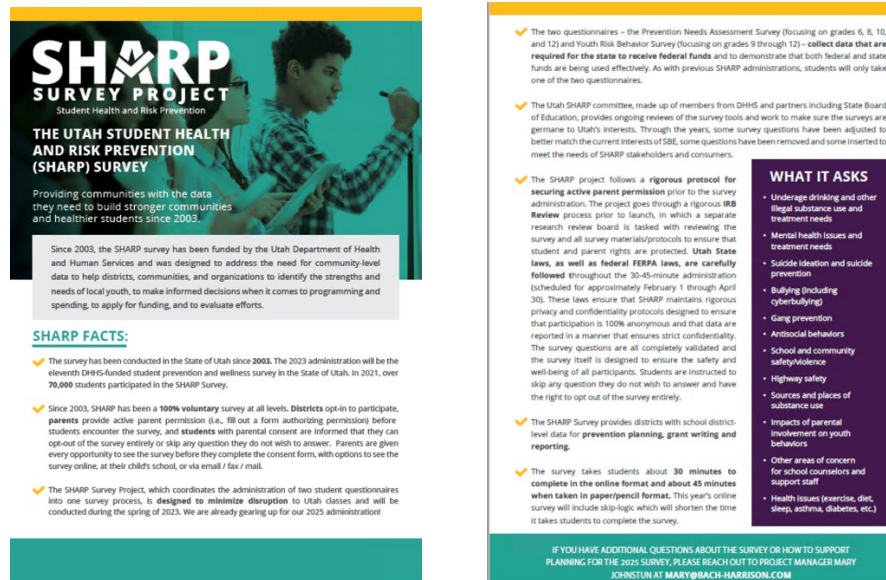
- "I think they did a good job explaining what they plan to use the information for."
- "I like that it said this survey has been used to create things like Parents Empowered."
- "I love they showed results, as far as creating the SafeUT app."

Participants also liked that the video emphasized the list of **resources** available for students at the conclusion of the SHARP Survey.

- *“I loved that they said there were resources available at the end of it if they need to talk to someone or need help. I would definitely say take it, what do you have to lose?”*
- *“The last page shows where you can get help if you need it. That’s valuable information. Kids struggle with mental health all the time. They just need the extra help.”*

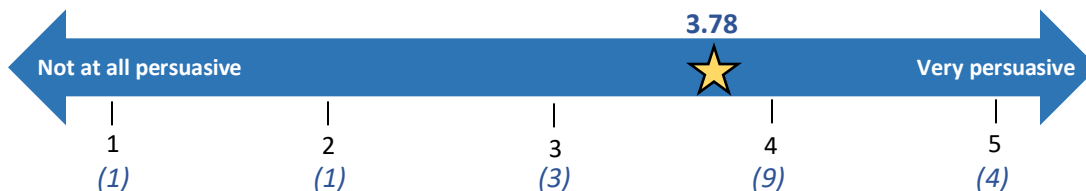
Participants, in general, felt the video would be a good resource for parents to learn more about the SHARP Survey, though some felt it should **include adults** and information on **where to view the survey**.

PTA Flyer



On average participants gave a rating of **3.78** on a 5-point scale to describe the persuasiveness of this flyer.

How persuasive is the PTA Flyer in motivating you to allow your child to participate in the SHARP survey?



Participants, in general, liked the information provided in the **“What It Asks”** box, though they felt this information should be **placed more prominently** in the flyer.

- *“I like this column [on the back] because it tells me exactly what they’re doing.”*
- *“I like that too, but I wish it was on the front page.”*
- *“All of the important stuff is so hard to get to.”*

Unfortunately, multiple participants found this flyer to be **too lengthy and unengaging**.

- *“It’s too long.”*
- *“It’s too wordy.”*
- *“I lost interest.”*
- *“I would only read this if I was sitting in a doctor’s office bored to tears.”*
- *“It has a lot of good information. It answers a lot of questions we’ve had. It just didn’t grab my attention.”*

SHARP Survey Handout

Utah Student Health and Risk Prevention (SHARP) Survey

What?

- The SHARP survey is a voluntary, anonymous survey for Utah students in grades 6-12.
- Parents and students must give consent.
- It's given in odd years in the Spring (the next survey will be given in 2025).
- Students take 1 of 2 surveys - Prevention Needs Assessment (PNA) or Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS).

Why?

- The SHARP survey tells who is hurting and why.
- It's an opportunity for students to tell us what challenges they face and the things that can protect them from harmful behaviors and health problems.

What students say about...	Results* (PNA, 2021)
Alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs	14% drank alcohol 15% vaped 10% used marijuana
Bullying	14% were bullied or picked on at school 27% were threatened or harassed online or by email/cell phone
Mental health	83% feel it's OK to ask for help 33% felt sad or hopeless for 2 weeks or more in a row

18% seriously considered suicide

79% spent 2+ hours each day playing video games, texting, watching YouTube, or using social media

37% got at least 8 hours of sleep each night

61% ate at least 1 meal with their family 5 times a week


89% feel safe in their neighborhood

4% were hit or injured on purpose by a dating partner

*More data from the SHARP survey can be found at <https://bit.ly/418ckAa> or <https://sumh.utah.gov/data-reports/sharp-survey>. You can also query data from the YRBS at <https://his.health.utah.gov/>.

Learn more

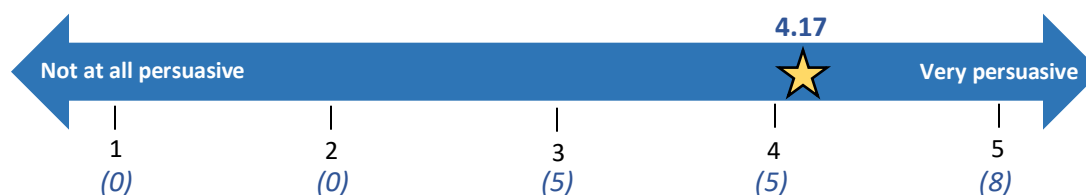
Contact your local prevention coordinator or scan the QR code to watch a short video on the SHARP survey.



Community driven
Parent focused
Prevention based

On average participants gave a rating of **4.17** on a 5-point scale to describe the persuasiveness of this handout.

How persuasive is the SHARP Survey handout in motivating you to allow your child to participate in the SHARP survey?



In general, participants liked that the handout provides **results of the survey**.

- "It gives you what kind of questions are going to be asked."
- "I like the results. It's interesting."
- "It makes you understand how prevalent it is."

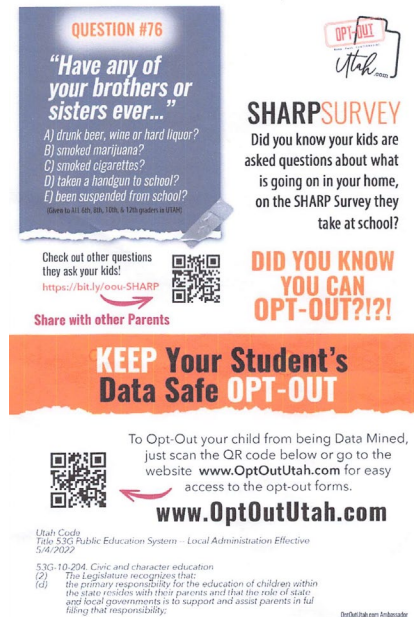
Though participants appreciated the brevity of this handout, some felt this handout was **sparse on information**.

- "This one doesn't mention any of the stuff about funding."
- "I think the PTA flyer was way too-info heavy, but I think this one isn't quite enough."

Furthermore, a handful of participants questioned the validity of the survey results.

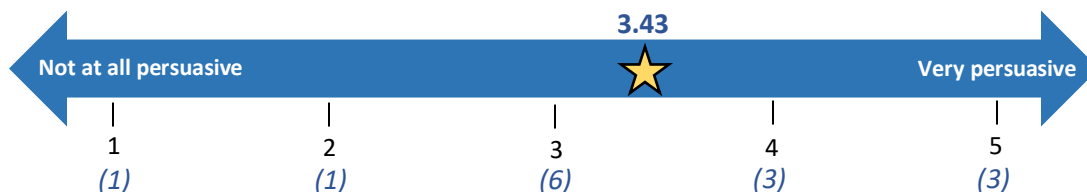
- "Is this saying only 14% in the entire state of Utah has ever tried alcohol?! I guarantee that's not true. And I guarantee more than 14% of them are being bullied."

Opt-out Flyer



On average participants gave a rating of **3.43** on a 5-point scale to describe the persuasiveness of this flyer.

How persuasive is the Opt-out flyer in your decision to allow your child to participate in the SHARP survey?



A couple of participants indicated that this flyer would cause them to have **concerns** about their children taking the SHARP Survey.

- "Reading the flyer, you think, 'This is not good, we need to opt-out.'"
- "It would persuade me to not allow my kids to take the survey. It plays on the suspicions parents have. There becomes very little upside to taking it. There is no downside to opting out."
- "I think it makes you feel like they're doing something to your child, it's something sneaky and they're doing it behind your back."
- "There are questions in there that dig into not just what your kids are doing, but what your parents are doing at your house. That's my private life. One question is about where I store my guns and ammo; that kind of stuck out to me. What does that have to do with the kid?"

Others said the flyer would cause them to **research** the SHARP Survey further.

- *“Because I don’t know anything about it, this has put my radar up. What are they talking about? Now it’s piqued my interest and I’m going to research it.”*
- *“If I saw this flyer, it definitely would make me do some research. Maybe I would opt out. It definitely would make me think about it.”*

Still, others were put off by the flyer and said it would **not impact** their decision to let their children take the survey.

- *“It would persuade me to let my child take it.”*
- *“I would want them to take it after reading that. I want to know those things. It’s persuasive, but in the opposite way they think.”*
- *“They seem to be on an agenda. The opt-out repetition bothers me. It plays on the paranoia of what’s going on in your home and with your family members.”*
- *“This kind of reads like my crazy father-in-law’s Facebook posts. My eyes kind of glaze over and it makes me think these people are idiots.”*

Participant Demographics

There was a fairly even distribution of male (23) and female (25) participants.

The majority of participants (33) fell between the ages of **40 and 49**.

Urban and suburban focus groups were comprised of **Davis County, Salt Lake County, Utah County, Tooele County, Weber County,** and **Park City** residents.

Rural focus groups were comprised of **Box Elder, Cache, Carbon, Garfield, Grand, Iron, Morgan, Summit, Wasatch,** and **Weber county** residents.

Participants all reported having children in grades **6 through 12**.

Do you have children who will be in the following grades during the 2023-2024 school year?

6 th Grade	7 th Grade	8 th Grade	9 th Grade	10 th Grade	11 th Grade	12 th Grade
12	10	13	12	7	13	9

Urban and suburban groups consisted of participants whose children attend school in the following districts:

- Alpine School District (5)
- Canyons School District
- Davis School District (6)
- Granite School District (4)
- Jordan School District (8)
- Park City School District
- Provo School District
- Salt Lake City School District (2)
- Tooele School District (4)
- Weber School District (2)

Rural groups consisted of participants whose children attend school in the following districts:

- Box Elder School District (2)
- Carbon County School District (3)
- Garfield County School District
- Grand County School District
- Iron County School District
- Logan City School District
- Morgan County School District
- South Summit School District
- Wasatch County School District
- Washington School District (2)

When it comes to registering their children for school and signing permission slips relating to the education of their students, more than one-half of participants (27) said they **share such responsibilities** equally with another parent, while nearly another one-half (21) said they typically **handle such responsibilities themselves**.

The majority of participants (43) reported being **married**.

More than two-thirds of participants (34) reported being employed **full time**.

One-half of participants (24) reported having a **bachelor's degree**.

The majority of participants (40) reported being **White or Caucasian**.

Approximately one-third of participants each reported having annual household incomes between **\$75,000 and \$99,000** (16) or **\$100,000 and \$149,999** (15).

APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT SCREENER WITH RESPONSES

Hello, this is _____ calling from Lighthouse Research. We're conducting a research discussion group with parents of middle school and high school students. If you qualify, you will be invited to attend a discussion group, which will last no more than **90 minutes**. In appreciation for your help, you will receive **\$100 Cash** as a thank you for your time. I assure you that we are only interested in your opinions and you will not be asked to purchase anything. Do you mind if I ask you a few questions to see if you qualify?

1. Record gender by observation. *[Recruit mix]*

	Count
	<i>n=48</i>
Male	23
Female	25

2. What is your age? *[Recruit a mix]*

	Count
	<i>n=48</i>
Under 30	0
30 to 39	9
40 to 49	33
50 to 59	6
<i>Average Mean</i>	<i>43.75</i>
<i>Median</i>	<i>43.50</i>

3. Have you or has anyone in your immediate family ever worked for a company in any of the following industries: marketing, research, advertising, media, K-12 education?

This question was asked for screening purposes only.

4. Have you participated in a focus group within the last 6 months?

This question was asked for screening purposes only.

5. In which county do you live? *[Recruit a mix]*

	Count
	<i>n=48</i>
Box Elder	2
Cache	1
Carbon	3
Davis	7
Garfield	1
Grand	1
Iron	1
Morgan	1
Salt Lake	14
Summit	2*
Tooele	4
Utah	6
Wasatch	1
Washington	2
Weber	2

**One participant reported living in Park City, while the other reported living in rural Summit County.*

6. Do you have children under the age of 18 that attend a public school in Utah that is NOT a charter school?

This question was asked for screening purposes only.

7. Do you have children who will be in the following grades during the 2023-2024 school year? Please say “yes” or “no” to each.

	Count
	<i>n=48</i>
6 th grade	12
7 th grade	10
8 th grade	13
9 th grade	12
10 th grade	7
11 th grade	13
12 th grade	9

8. In which district is your child’s school? (*Thank and terminate if Uintah, Juab, Kane, Piute, or Tintic districts are mentioned.*)

Urban/Suburban Participants

- Alpine School District (5)
- Canyons School District
- Davis School District (6)
- Granite School District (4)
- Jordan School District (8)
- Park City School District
- Provo School District
- Salt Lake City School District (2)
- Tooele School District (4)
- Weber School District (2)

Rural Participants

- Box Elder School District (2)
- Carbon County School District (3)
- Garfield County School District
- Grand County School District
- Iron County School District
- Logan City School District
- Morgan County School District
- South Summit School District
- Wasatch County School District
- Washington School District (2)

9. When it comes to registering your child for school and signing permission slips relating to the education of your student, which of the following best describes you?

	Count
	<i>n=48</i>
I am the parent or guardian that <i>typically</i> handles this responsibility.	21
I share this responsibility <i>equally</i> with another parent.	27

10. Using a 1-to-7 scale where 1 is “not at all likely” and 7 is “very likely,” please rate how likely you would be to allow your student to take an anonymous survey provided by the State of Utah that measures their physical and mental health, including alcohol, tobacco, and drug use, as well as other risky behaviors? [*Recruit a mix*]

	Count
	<i>n=48</i>
1 – Not at all likely	0
2	0
3	3
4	7
5	15
6	23
7 – Very likely → <i>Thank and terminate</i>	
<i>Average Mean</i>	5.21
<i>Median</i>	5.00

11. What is your marital status?

	Count
	<i>n=48</i>
Single, never married	2
Married	43
Divorced, separated	3

12. What is your current employment status?

	Count
	<i>n=48</i>
Full-time employed	34
Homemaker	7
Part-time employed	7

13. Which of the following categories best describes the highest level of education you have completed?

	Count
	<i>n=48</i>
Less than high school graduate	0
High school graduate	3
Some college	8
Technical training or trade school	2
Associate degree	3
Bachelor's degree	24
Post-college graduate	8

14. Which of the following best describes your ethnicity? *[Recruit a mix]*

	Count
	<i>n=48</i>
White, Caucasian	40
Hispanic, Latino	5
Other	3

Other specified

- Biracial
- Caucasian, Hispanic
- Caucasian, Hispanic, Native American

15. Which of the following ranges best describes your annual household income? *[Recruit a mix]*

	Count
	<i>n=48</i>
\$30,000 to \$49,999	4
\$50,000 to \$74,999	2
\$75,000 to \$99,999	16
\$100,000 to \$149,999	15
\$150,000 to \$200,000	7
More than \$200,000	4

16. *[ARTICULATION]* If you could live during any time period, what time period would it be and why?

This question was asked for screening purposes only.

SALT LAKE CITY INVITATION

We would like to invite you to participate in a group discussion that will take place on **[DATE]** at the **Lighthouse Research facility located at 375 East 500 South in Salt Lake City, Utah at:**

- ☐ Group 1 – Wed, June 14 @ 4:00 PM
- ☐ Group 2 – Wed, June 14 @ 5:30 PM
- ☐ Group 3 – Thurs, June 15 @ 4:00 PM
- ☐ Group 4 – Thurs, June 15 @ 5:30 PM

If you care for children, please do not bring them with you because we are unable to provide child-care at our facility. Please leave all pets at home.

ONLINE INVITATION

17. Have you participated in an online meeting using Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, or another virtual platform?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No → *Thank and Terminate*

18. Do you have a desktop computer, laptop, or tablet with a camera and microphone you can use to participate in an online focus group (not a Smartphone)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No → *Thank and Terminate*

19. We would like to invite you to participate in a group discussion that will take place via Zoom on:

- ☐ Group 5 – Thursday, June 22 @ 4:00 PM
- ☐ Group 6 – Thursday, June 22@ 5:30 PM

The focus group will last approximately 90 minutes. We will send you a link to participate in the group. Click the link from your desktop or laptop (if your computer is an Apple/Mac you will be required to download the Zoom app). Please sit in a quiet area, away from noise and distractions.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Again, I assure you we are not selling anything and you will not be asked to share any personal information, only your opinions and ideas. As we mentioned earlier, you will receive **\$100** at the conclusion of the first **90-minute** discussion group. Would you be willing to participate?

Great! We would like to be able to send you directions and a reminder before the group. Can you please confirm your name, address, and contact information?

NAME _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ ZIPCODE _____

HOME PHONE _____ ALT. PHONE _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

RECRUITED BY _____ DATE RECRUITED _____

SOURCE OF RECRUIT _____

If you have questions or are unable to attend, please call us at 801-446-4000 so we can find a replacement.

APPENDIX B: MODERATOR'S DISCUSSION GUIDE

Objectives

The main objective of this research project is to understand barriers that prevent parents from allowing their students to participate in the biennial SHARP survey and identify motivators that would increase participation. To accomplish the project objectives, participants will be guided through a discussion that encompasses the following topics and themes:

Evaluate Parent's Understanding of the SHARP Survey

- Determine if participants have heard of the SHARP survey prior to the discussion
- Discover what participants know or have heard about the SHARP survey
- Introduce the SHARP survey to participants
- Identify questions or concerns participants have about the SHARP survey
- Determine how likely participants are to allow students to participate in the SHARP survey
- Determine why participants would or would not allow students to participate in the SHARP survey

Gather Perceptions of the SHARP Survey

- Identify barriers that would prevent future participation in the SHARP survey
- Determine how much impact various barriers have in preventing participation in the SHARP survey
- Identify motivators that would encourage participation in the SHARP survey

Evaluate SHARP Survey Messaging

- Identify preferred for communicating with parents
- Determine what the messaging should include to appeal to parents
- Evaluate proposed messaging

Part One: Introduction and Greeting

10 Minutes

Moderator Introduction

- Moderator introduction
- Ask participants to turn off cell phones
- Advise participants of video and audio taping
- Inform participants there is someone viewing the group to take notes and ensure participant ideas and opinions are recorded correctly

Purpose of Focus Group

“We invited you to participate in today’s discussion because you have students in the public school system from 6th grade to 12th grade. I will be leading you through some discussion questions and activities to help us learn more about what you think. We are very interested in each of your personal thoughts and opinions.”

Moderator Role

- To introduce the discussion topics, ask probing questions, and guide the discussion through each of the relevant issues
- The moderator is not to guide the participants’ responses or give advice

Discussion Rules

- Speak one at a time; we want to hear all of your ideas.
- Everyone needs to participate; we need everyone’s ideas and comments.
- There are no wrong or right answers; we invited each of you here so we could understand what you know and how you feel about these topics.
- It is likely that your opinions will differ from someone else’s in the room; as such, please be respectful of others and their opinions.
- I am not an expert on the topic we will discuss. You are the experts, so please speak freely.

Participant Icebreaker

Participants will be asked to introduce themselves, including the following items in their introductions:

- Name
- Occupation
- Number of people in the family
- Ages of children
- Favorite hobby or activity

Part Two: Evaluate Parent's Understanding of the SHARP Survey

25 Minutes

The moderator will direct participants to [Page 1](#) of their handouts.

I mentioned you have been invited to participate in today's discussion because you have students from 6th grade to 12th grade. The remainder of our discussion will be about something called the SHARP survey, which is a survey for students.

Q1. Prior to today, have you heard of the SHARP survey?

- **Prompt:** Where did you hear about the SHARP survey?
- **Prompt:** Based on what you know, what is the SHARP survey?

The moderator will present the following statement to participants: "The Student Health and Risk Prevention survey, or the SHARP survey, is administered in schools by the State of Utah every other year and is given to 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students. The survey measures students' physical and mental health, including alcohol, tobacco, and drug use, as well as other risky behaviors. Students may only participate in this survey if parental consent is given."

Q2. Have you ever received information from your child's school about the SHARP survey?

Q3. What do you know or what have you heard about the SHARP survey?

- **Prompt:** Have you heard others talk about the SHARP survey? What are they saying?

Q4. Do you know what the SHARP survey data is used for?

- **Prompt:** Is it important for you to know how this data is used?

Q5. Have you ever given permission for your student to participate in the SHARP survey? Why or why not?

- **Prompt:** Have you ever denied permission for your student to participate? Why or why not?

Q6. Using a 1-to-5 rating scale where 1 is "not at all likely" and 5 is "very likely," how likely are you to allow your student to take the SHARP survey in the future? Explain.

Q7. As a parent, what questions or concerns do you have about the SHARP survey?

- **Prompt:** What do you need to know in order to allow your child to participate?

Q8. Using a 1-to-5 scale where 1 is "not at all likely" and 5 is "very likely," how likely are you to talk to your child about the SHARP survey, either before they take it, or after? Explain.

- **Prompt for those who have given permission:** Have you talked to your child about the SHARP survey?

Part Three:
Gather Perceptions of the SHARP Survey
20 Minutes

- Q9.** What barriers might prevent parents from allowing their children to participate in the SHARP survey? Explain.

The moderator will ask participants to complete [Page 2](#) of their handouts.

- Q10.** When it comes to the SHARP survey, how concerned are you about the following? Please use a 1-to-5 rating scale where 1 is “not at all concerned” and 5 is “very concerned.” Explain.
- Privacy for your student or your family
 - The topics or types of questions that will be asked
 - That fact that the survey is administered by the State of Utah
 - What the data is used for
- Q11.** Ultimately, what would motivate you to give permission for your child to participate in the SHARP survey?
- Q12.** Do you think the SHARP survey data can help parents and families? Explain.

Part Four: Evaluate SHARP Material

25 Minutes

Q13. What is the best way for the State to inform parents about the SHARP survey?

Q14. What should messaging to parents about the SHARP survey contain?

Student Proctor Video

The moderator will present the following video and ask participants to complete [Page 3](#) in their handouts.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mKXMMRzNUXw&list=PL2p_-9R9KltLk7Od0suV0n43JlLlbgCpJ&index=3&t=137s

Q15. What do you like about this message?

Q16. What do you *NOT* like about this message?

Q17. What would improve this message?

Q18. Did the video answer questions you may have had about the SHARP survey?

- **Prompt:** Did this video alleviate some of your concerns?
- **Prompt:** After watching the video, are you more or less likely to allow your student to participate in the SHARP survey?

Q19. Using a 1-to-5 scale where 1 is “not at all persuasive” and 5 is “very persuasive,” how persuasive is this message in motivating you to allow your child to participate in the SHARP survey? Explain.

Part Five: Conclusion

10 Minutes

The moderator will direct participants to [Page 4](#) of their handouts.

Q20. Imagine you are part of a team whose purpose is to increase participation in the SHARP survey. Together, consider the following:

- How would you inform parents about the SHARP survey?
- What message would you provide parents about the SHARP survey?

The moderator will use this time to briefly consult with the client.

Q21. Do you have any additional thoughts you would like to provide about the SHARP survey that we have not already discussed?

Moderator will ask participants if they have any additional comments. Moderator will also thank participants for their participation and remind them to pick up incentive envelopes.

APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT HANDOUT WITH RESPONSES

The Student Health and Risk Prevention survey, or the SHARP survey, is administered in schools by the State of Utah every other year and is given to 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students. The survey measures students' physical and mental health, including alcohol, tobacco, and drug use, as well as other risky behaviors. Students may only participate in this survey if parental consent is given.

1. Prior to today, have you heard of the SHARP survey?

	Overall Respondents
	<i>n=48</i>
Yes	16
No	32

2. Have you ever received information from your child's school about the SHARP survey?

	Overall Respondents
	<i>n=48</i>
Yes	12
No	36

3. Have you ever given permission for your student to participate in the SHARP survey?

	Overall Respondents
	<i>n=48</i>
Yes	15
No	33

4. Using a 1-to-5 rating scale where 1 is “not at all likely” and 5 is “very likely,” how likely are you to allow your student to take the SHARP survey in the future?

	Overall Respondents
	<i>n=48</i>
1 – Not at all likely	1
2	0
3	6
4	20
5 – Very likely	21
<i>Average Mean</i>	4.25
<i>Median</i>	4.00

5. Using a 1-to-5 scale where 1 is “not at all likely” and 5 is “very likely,” how likely are you to talk to your child about the SHARP survey, either before they take it, or after?

	Overall Respondents
	<i>n=48</i>
1 – Not at all likely	1
2	0
3	7
4	9
5 – Very likely	31
<i>Average Mean</i>	4.44
<i>Median</i>	5.00

6. When it comes to the SHARP survey, how concerned are you about the following? Please use a 1-to-5 rating scale where 1 is “not at all concerned” and 5 is “very concerned.”

Privacy for your student or your family

	Urban/Suburban Respondents
	<i>n=34</i>
1 – Not at all concerned	1
2	5
3	9
4	8
5 – Very concerned	11
<i>Average Mean</i>	<i>3.68</i>
<i>Median</i>	<i>4.00</i>

The topics or types of questions that will be asked

	Urban/Suburban Respondents
	<i>n=34</i>
1 – Not at all concerned	1
2	4
3	11
4	10
5 – Very concerned	8
<i>Average Mean</i>	<i>3.59</i>
<i>Median</i>	<i>4.00</i>

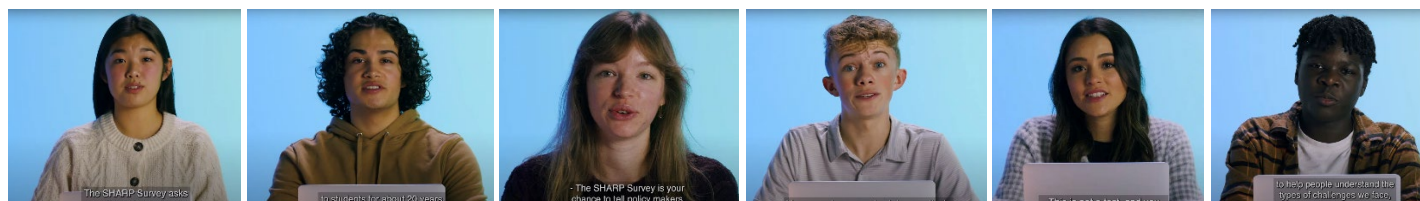
The fact that the survey is administered by the State of Utah

	Urban/Suburban Respondents
	<i>n=34</i>
1 – Not at all concerned	10
2	9
3	7
4	4
5 – Very concerned	4
<i>Average Mean</i>	<i>2.50</i>
<i>Median</i>	<i>2.00</i>

What the data is used for

	Urban/Suburban Respondents
	<i>n=34</i>
1 – Not at all concerned	3
2	2
3	6
4	11
5 – Very concerned	12
<i>Average Mean</i>	<i>3.79</i>
<i>Median</i>	<i>4.00</i>

7. Using a 1-to-5 scale where 1 is “not at all persuasive” and 5 is “very persuasive,” how persuasive is the **student proctor video** in motivating you to allow your child to participate in the SHARP survey?



	Overall Respondents
	<i>n=48</i>
1 – Not at persuasive	1
2	1
3	5
4	9
5 – Very persuasive	32
<i>Average Mean</i>	<i>4.46</i>
<i>Median</i>	<i>5.00</i>

8. Using a 1-to-5 scale where 1 is “not at all persuasive” and 5 is “very persuasive,” how persuasive is the **PTA flyer** in motivating you to allow your child to participate in the SHARP survey?



SHARP SURVEY PROJECT
Student Health and Risk Prevention

THE UTAH STUDENT HEALTH AND RISK PREVENTION (SHARP) SURVEY

Providing communities with the data they need to build stronger communities and healthier students since 2003.

Since 2003, the SHARP survey has been funded by the Utah Department of Health and Human Services and was designed to address the need for community-level data to help districts, communities, and organizations to identify the strengths and needs of local youth, to make informed decisions when it comes to programming and spending, to apply for funding, and to evaluate efforts.

SHARP FACTS:

- ✓ The survey has been conducted in the State of Utah since 2003. The 2023 administration will be the eleventh DHHS-funded student prevention and wellness survey in the State of Utah. In 2021, over 70,000 students participated in the SHARP Survey.
- ✓ Since 2003, SHARP has been a 100% voluntary survey at all levels. Districts opt-in to participate, parents provide active parent permission (i.e., fill out a form authorizing permission) before students encounter the survey, and students with parental consent are informed that they can opt-out of the survey entirely or skip any question they do not wish to answer. Parents are given every opportunity to see the survey before they complete the consent form, with options to see the survey online, at their child's school, or via email / fax / mail.
- ✓ The SHARP Survey Project, which coordinates the administration of two student questionnaires into one survey process, is designed to minimize disruption to Utah classes and will be conducted during the spring of 2023. We are already gearing up for our 2025 administration!

- ✓ The two questionnaires – the Prevention Needs Assessment Survey (focusing on grades 6, 8, 10, and 12) and Youth Risk Behavior Survey (focusing on grades 9 through 12) – collect data that are required for the state to receive federal funds and to demonstrate that both federal and state funds are being used effectively. As with previous SHARP administrations, students will only take one of the two questionnaires.
- ✓ The Utah SHARP committee, made up of members from DHHS and partners including State Board of Education, provides ongoing reviews of the survey tools and work to make sure the surveys are germane to Utah's interests. Through the years, some survey questions have been adjusted to better match the current interests of SBE, some questions have been removed and some inserted to meet the needs of SHARP stakeholders and consumers.
- ✓ The SHARP project follows a rigorous protocol for securing active parent permission prior to the survey administration. The project goes through a rigorous IRB Review process prior to launch, in which a separate research review board is tasked with reviewing the survey and all survey materials/protocols to ensure that student and parent rights are protected. Utah State laws, as well as federal FERPA laws, are carefully followed throughout the 30-45-minute administration (scheduled for approximately February 1 through April 30). These laws ensure that SHARP maintains rigorous privacy and confidentiality protocols designed to ensure that participation is 100% anonymous and that data are reported in a manner that ensures strict confidentiality. The survey questions are all completely validated and the survey itself is designed to ensure the safety and well-being of all participants. Students are instructed to skip any question they do not wish to answer and have the right to opt out of the survey entirely.
- ✓ The SHARP Survey provides districts with school district-level data for prevention planning, grant writing and reporting.
- ✓ The survey takes students about 30 minutes to complete in the online format and about 45 minutes when taken in paper/pencil format. This year's online survey will include skip logic which will shorten the time it takes students to complete the survey.

WHAT IT ASKS

- Underage drinking and other illegal substance use and treatment needs
- Mental health issues and treatment needs
- Suicide ideation and suicide prevention
- Bullying (including cyberbullying)
- Gang prevention
- Antisocial behaviors
- School and community safety/violence
- Highway safety
- Sources and places of substance use
- Impacts of parental involvement on youth behaviors
- Other areas of concern for school counselors and support staff
- Health issues (exercise, diet, sleep, asthma, diabetes, etc.)

IF YOU HAVE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SURVEY OR HOW TO SUPPORT PLANNING FOR THE 2025 SURVEY, PLEASE REACH OUT TO PROJECT MANAGER MARY JOHNSTUN AT MARY@BACH-HARRISON.COM

	Urban/Suburban Respondents
	<i>n=18</i>
1 – Not at persuasive	1
2	1
3	3
4	9
5 – Very persuasive	4
<i>Average Mean</i>	<i>3.78</i>
<i>Median</i>	<i>4.00</i>

9. Using a 1-to-5 scale where 1 is “not at all persuasive” and 5 is “very persuasive,” how persuasive is the **SHARP survey handout** in motivating you to allow your child to participate in the SHARP survey?

Utah Student Health and Risk Prevention (SHARP) Survey

What?

- The SHARP survey is a voluntary, anonymous survey for Utah students in grades 6–12.
- Parents and students must give consent.
- It's given in odd years in the Spring (the next survey will be given in 2025).
- Students take 1 of 2 surveys - Prevention Needs Assessment (PNA) or Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS).

Why?

- The SHARP survey tells who is hurting and why.
- It's an opportunity for students to tell us what challenges they face and the things that can protect them from harmful behaviors and health problems.

What students say about...	Results* (PNA, 2021)
Alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs	14% drank alcohol 15% vaped 10% used marijuana
Bullying	14% were bullied or picked on at school 27% were threatened or harassed online or by email/cell phone
Mental health	83% feel it's OK to ask for help 33% felt sad or hopeless for 2 weeks or more in a row

18% seriously considered suicide

79% spent 2+ hours each day playing video games, texting, watching YouTube, or using social media

37% got at least 8 hours of sleep each night

61% ate at least 1 meal with their family 5 times a week

89% feel safe in their neighborhood

4% were hit or injured on purpose by a dating partner

*More data from the SHARP survey can be found at <https://bit.ly/418z8An> or <https://sumh.utah.gov/data-reports/sharp-survey>. You can also query data from the YRBS at <https://bhs.health.utah.gov/>.

Learn more

Contact your local prevention coordinator or scan the QR code to watch a short video on the SHARP survey.

Community driven
Parent focused
Prevention based

	Urban/Suburban Respondents
	<i>n=18</i>
1 – Not at persuasive	0
2	0
3	5
4	5
5 – Very persuasive	8
<i>Average Mean</i>	<i>4.17</i>
<i>Median</i>	<i>4.00</i>

10. Using a 1-to-5 scale where 1 is “not at all persuasive” and 5 is “very persuasive,” how persuasive is the **Opt-out flyer** in motivating you to allow your child to participate in the SHARP survey?



	Rural Respondents
	<i>n=14</i>
1 – Not at persuasive	1
2	1
3	6
4	3
5 – Very persuasive	3
Average Mean	3.43
Median	3.00

11. Imagine you are part of a team whose purpose is to increase participation in the SHARP survey. Together, consider the following:
- ✓ How would you inform parents about the SHARP survey?
 - ✓ What message would you provide parents about the SHARP survey?

Urban/Suburban Participants

- Email, text, phone call, letter, handout, video, packet with link. Physical, electronic, telephone with a link to the video. FAQ and a website. Anonymous, not linked to your child, safe place to take the test, be honest, here is a link to the test questions.
- Link to something similar to that video. Include a parent intro. Link to website that includes this information. Ad campaign. Fit into a prevention week (i.e. Red Ribbon Week). Tie it to things they have to do (registration/permissions). Send reminders. Length of time to take it. Incentives to take it seriously.
- Make it an assignment for consent. Emails and flyers going home, more like the second flyer. QR code with information and scan in. Have info available at parent teacher conferences.
- The mailer with info on how to look at it, a QR code and send it on a day where junk mail is less. Visibly appealing and official looking. Postcard and a text. Send out multiple ways. Ad campaign: "Get engaged," "help our kids." Features other parents talking to parents and children. ID the top three most troubling topics from prior data. A question that asks: "Do you have these types of discussions?" Sending out a mailer with the results after the survey is taken.