

PUBLIC SCHOOLS SURVEYS AMENDMENTS

2001 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Sponsor: Brad King

This act modifies provisions related to the State System of Public Education by providing for the creation of a State Student Survey Review Committee. The act provides for committee membership and duties, and for the review of surveys conducted to obtain data for the development or implementation of governmental policies or legislation, subject to meeting specified criteria. The act provides conditions for approval and use of the surveys.

This act affects sections of Utah Code Annotated 1953 as follows:

AMENDS:

53A-13-302, as last amended by Chapter 284, Laws of Utah 1999

ENACTS:

53A-13-303, Utah Code Annotated 1953

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:

Section 1. Section **53A-13-302** is amended to read:

53A-13-302. Activities prohibited without prior written consent -- Validity of consent -- Qualifications -- Training on implementation.

(1) [~~Policies~~] Except as otherwise provided in Section 53A-13-303, policies adopted by a local school [~~district~~] board under Section 53A-13-301 shall include prohibitions on the administration to a student of any psychological or psychiatric examination, test, or treatment, or any survey, analysis, or evaluation without the prior written consent of the student's parent or legal guardian, in which the purpose or evident intended effect is to cause the student to reveal information, whether the information is personally identifiable or not, concerning the student's or any family member's:

(a) political affiliations or, except as provided under Section 53A-13-101.1 or rules of the State Board of Education, political philosophies;



- 28 (b) mental or psychological problems;
- 29 (c) sexual behavior, orientation, or attitudes;
- 30 (d) illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
- 31 (e) critical appraisals of individuals with whom the student or family member has close
- 32 family relationships;
- 33 (f) religious affiliations or beliefs;
- 34 (g) legally recognized privileged and analogous relationships, such as those with lawyers,
- 35 medical personnel, or ministers; and
- 36 (h) income, except as required by law.
- 37 (2) Prior written consent under Subsection (1) is required in all grades, kindergarten
- 38 through grade 12.
- 39 (3) The prohibitions under Subsection (1) shall also apply within the curriculum and other
- 40 school activities unless prior written consent of the student's parent or legal guardian has been
- 41 obtained.
- 42 (4) Written parental consent is valid only if a parent or legal guardian has been first given
- 43 written notice, including notice that a copy of the educational or student survey questions to be
- 44 asked of the student in obtaining the desired information is made available at the school, and a
- 45 reasonable opportunity to obtain written information concerning:
 - 46 (a) records or information, including information about relationships, that may be
 - 47 examined or requested;
 - 48 (b) the means by which the records or information shall be examined or reviewed;
 - 49 (c) the means by which the information is to be obtained;
 - 50 (d) the purposes for which the records or information are needed;
 - 51 (e) the entities or persons, regardless of affiliation, who will have access to the personally
 - 52 identifiable information; and
 - 53 (f) a method by which a parent of a student can grant permission to access or examine the
 - 54 personally identifiable information.
- 55 (5) (a) Except in response to a situation which a school employee reasonably believes to
- 56 be an emergency, or as authorized under Title 62A, Chapter 4a, Part 4, Child Abuse or Neglect
- 57 Reporting Requirements, or by order of a court, disclosure to a parent or legal guardian must be
- 58 given at least two weeks before information protected under this section is sought.

59 (b) Following disclosure, a parent or guardian may waive the two week minimum
60 notification period.

61 (c) Unless otherwise agreed to by a student's parent or legal guardian and the person
62 requesting written consent, the authorization is valid only for the activity for which it was granted.

63 (d) A written withdrawal of authorization submitted to the school principal by the
64 authorizing parent or guardian terminates the authorization.

65 (e) A general consent used to approve admission to school or involvement in special
66 education, remedial education, or a school activity does not constitute written consent under this
67 section.

68 (6) (a) This section does not limit the ability of a student under Section 53A-13-101.3 to
69 spontaneously express sentiments or opinions otherwise protected against disclosure under this
70 section.

71 (b) (i) If a school employee or agent believes that a situation exists which presents a
72 serious threat to the well-being of a student, that employee or agent shall notify the student's parent
73 or guardian without delay.

74 (ii) If, however, the matter has been reported to the Division of Child and Family Services
75 within the Department of Human Services, it is the responsibility of the division to notify the
76 student's parent or guardian of any possible investigation, prior to the student's return home from
77 school.

78 (iii) The division may be exempted from the notification requirements described in this
79 Subsection (6)(b)(ii) only if it determines that the student would be endangered by notification of
80 his parent or guardian, or if that notification is otherwise prohibited by state or federal law.

81 (7) ~~[Local]~~ Each local school ~~[boards]~~ board shall provide inservice for teachers and
82 administrators within ~~[their respective school districts]~~ its district on the implementation of this
83 section.

84 (8) ~~[The]~~ Each local school board shall provide procedures for disciplinary action for
85 violations of this section under guidelines established by the State Board of Education.

86 Section 2. Section **53A-13-303** is enacted to read:

87 **53A-13-303. State Student Survey Review Committee -- Duties of the committee --**
88 **Review of surveys conducted to obtain data for development or implementation of**
89 **governmental policies or legislation -- Conditions for approval and use.**

90 (1) (a) There is created the State Student Survey Review Committee, hereafter referred to
91 in this section as the "committee."

92 (b) The committee shall be comprised of 13 members appointed by the governor.

93 (c) The committee shall consist of parents of students, teachers, and school administrators
94 who reflect or represent broad and diverse viewpoints on public education.

95 (d) (i) At least seven members of the committee shall be parents of children enrolled in
96 the state's public education system.

97 (ii) Neither any of these members nor any person residing in their households may be past
98 or current employees of the public education system while they serve on the committee as a parent
99 member.

100 (2) (a) At the request of the state superintendent, the committee shall review a survey:

101 (i) dealing with any of the matters listed in Subsection 53A-13-302(1); and

102 (ii) which is proposed to be conducted in a public school.

103 (b) The committee shall review the survey to determine whether the:

104 (i) subject of the survey and the nature of the questions to be asked are appropriate for the
105 proposed survey participants;

106 (ii) survey questions have been narrowly drawn to address only those matters which are
107 pertinent to the stated purpose of the survey; and

108 (iii) form of the survey and the manner of its administration will ensure the anonymity and
109 privacy of survey participants and their families.

110 (3) (a) At the request of an authorized representative of the federal government, the
111 governor, the Legislature, the State Board of Education, or a local board of education, the state
112 superintendent may ask and the committee shall review a survey subject to the following
113 conditions:

114 (i) the requesting authority advises the superintendent that the survey is necessary to
115 provide essential data required for the development and implementation of public policy, and that
116 other reasonable means for obtaining the data are not readily available; and

117 (ii) the superintendent determines that administering the survey would not be inappropriate
118 in a school setting or unduly burdensome to the schools.

119 (b) A survey proposed for administration under Subsection (3)(a) that addresses matters
120 related to youth violence or to the use of alcohol, drugs, or tobacco by students may be

121 administered without prior written parental consent as required under Section 53A-13-302 if:

122 (i) the survey has been:

123 (A) reviewed and recommended for administration by the committee, by a formal vote in
124 which a majority of the members voted for approval;

125 (B) approved by the state superintendent; and

126 (C) reviewed and approved for administration by each local school board in its own school
127 district;

128 (ii) (A) the parent or guardian of each student participant was sent notification by mail, at
129 least two weeks prior to the planned date of administration, of the survey and its purpose;

130 (B) a copy of the survey is available in the school office for review prior to its
131 administration; and

132 (C) the parent or guardian may deny the student's participation in the survey by completing
133 the enclosed form that is included in the mailing and returning the form in the attached
134 self-addressed envelope or otherwise notify the appropriate school official prior to the
135 administration of the survey;

136 (iii) no student is permitted to participate in the survey whose parent has denied
137 participation by notifying the school prior to its administration and the student is given the
138 opportunity to not participate in the survey the day the survey is administered;

139 (iv) the survey is administered by an unbiased, objective person who has been trained in
140 the proper administration of the survey instrument and who was awarded the administration of the
141 survey through a request for proposal (RFP) process;

142 (v) teachers, students, and other persons who may be familiar with the handwriting of
143 individual participants are not permitted to read the completed survey forms;

144 (vi) the survey form does not ask for the name of the participant or contain questions,
145 codes, or other means by which the identity of an individual would be disclosed; and

146 (vii) the responses are used for statistical purposes only, information on the completed
147 survey is aggregated, and the individual forms destroyed.

148 (4) The committee shall submit its recommendations concerning a survey reviewed under
149 Subsections (2) and (3) to the state superintendent in a timely manner.

150 (5) Each local school board shall adopt policies to:

151 (a) keep students who do not participate in a survey administered under Subsections (2)

152 and (3) from being singled out, harassed, or subject to ridicule because of their nonparticipation;
153 and

154 (b) ensure that those same students are not penalized in their academic or citizenship
155 grades or evaluations because of their nonparticipation.

156 (6) Participation in a survey administered under this section may be refused by:

157 (a) a local school board;

158 (b) a parent or guardian as to the parent's or guardian's child; or

159 (c) a student.

160 (7) A survey administered under this section may not include questions on sexual
161 orientation, behavior, or attitudes.

Legislative Review Note

as of 2-6-01 7:22 AM

A limited legal review of this legislation raises no obvious constitutional or statutory concerns.

Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel