



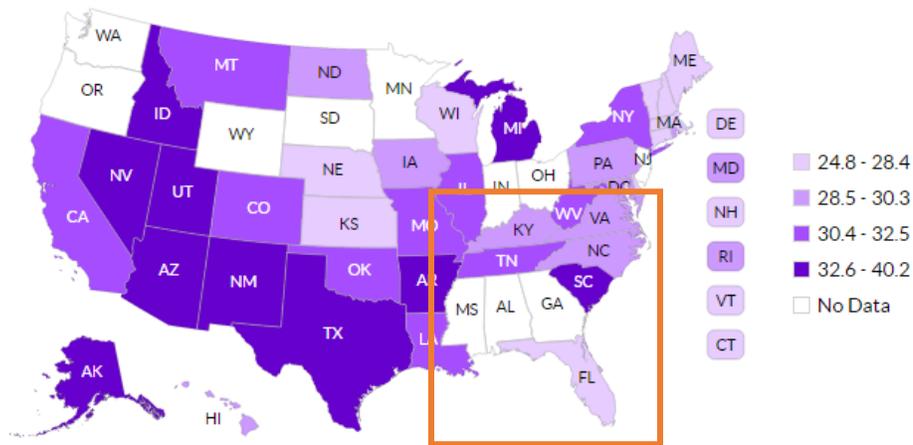
## Factors Related to Need for Mental Health Services among School-Age Children: Data from the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System

The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, YRBSS, consists of a national school-based survey conducted by CDC and state, territorial, tribal and local surveys. The survey monitors six categories of health-related behaviors among samples of 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade public and private school students including: behaviors that contribute to unintentional injuries and violence, sexual behaviors related to unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases including HIV infection, alcohol and other drug use, tobacco use, dietary behaviors, and physical activity. These surveys are conducted every two years, usually during the spring semester, by student self-report.

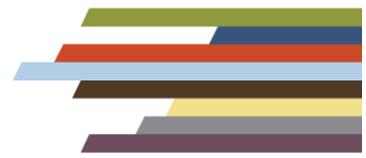
Among states in the Southeast Region, in 2017, YRBSS collected data in **Florida (FL), Kentucky (KY), North Carolina (NC), South Carolina (SC), and Tennessee (TN)** that has been weighted to represent all 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders in the state. Response rates were too low in **Georgia (GA), Mississippi (MS), and Alabama (AL)** to calculate weighted prevalence estimates and therefore data for these states were not made available by the CDC.<sup>1</sup>

1. YRBS has weighted estimates from Alabama and Mississippi in 2015 and from Georgia in 2013. There is also weighted data available from DeKalb County, Georgia from large urban school district sampling in 2017.

### Feelings of Sadness or Hopelessness

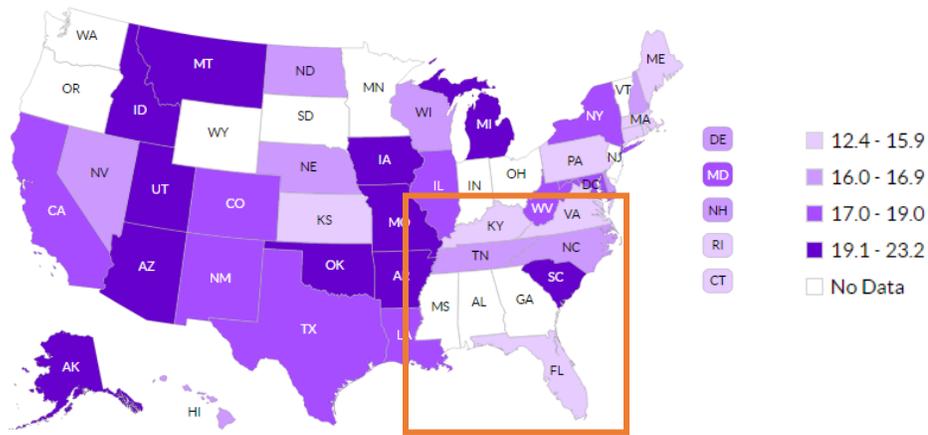


- Nationally, 31.5% reported feeling sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row so that they stopped doing some usual activities during the 12 months before the survey.
- **South Carolina (33.2%) and Tennessee (31.1%)** fall close to the national average with **South Carolina** reporting the highest prevalence in the region.
  - **North Carolina (29.4%) and Kentucky (29.2%)** reported findings similar to one another.
  - **Florida (27.8%)** presents the lowest rate in the Southeast region with still more than 1 in 4 students reporting feeling this way.



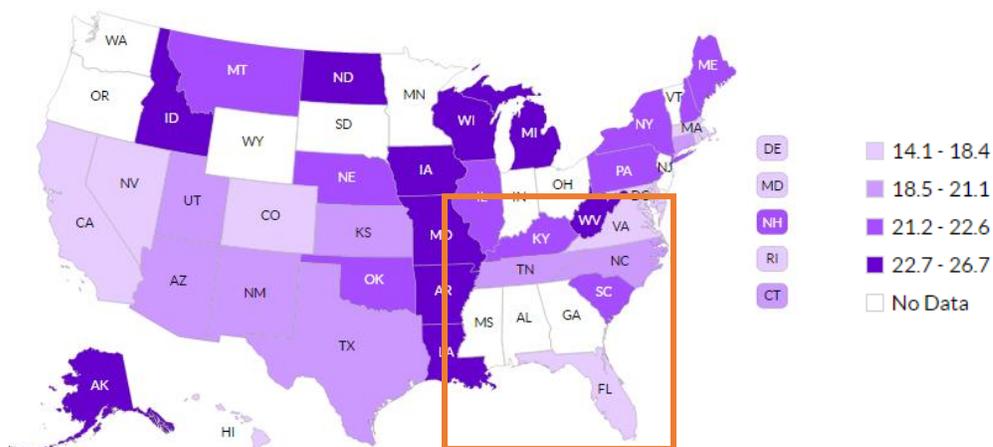


## Suicidal Ideation

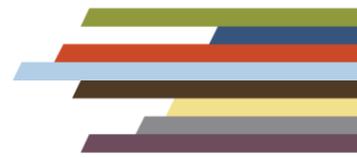


- Nationally, 17.2% seriously considered attempting suicide within the past 12 months.
- **Florida** (13.8%) reported one of the lowest prevalences in the country, close to that of Connecticut (13.5%) and Maine (13.9%). **Kentucky** (14.8%) also reported a rate below the national average.
- **South Carolina** (19.2%) has the highest prevalence of suicidal ideation in the Southeast region with almost 1 in 5 high school students recently considering suicide.
- **North Carolina** (16.2%) and **Tennessee** (16.5%) reported similar values for this measure.

## Bullying



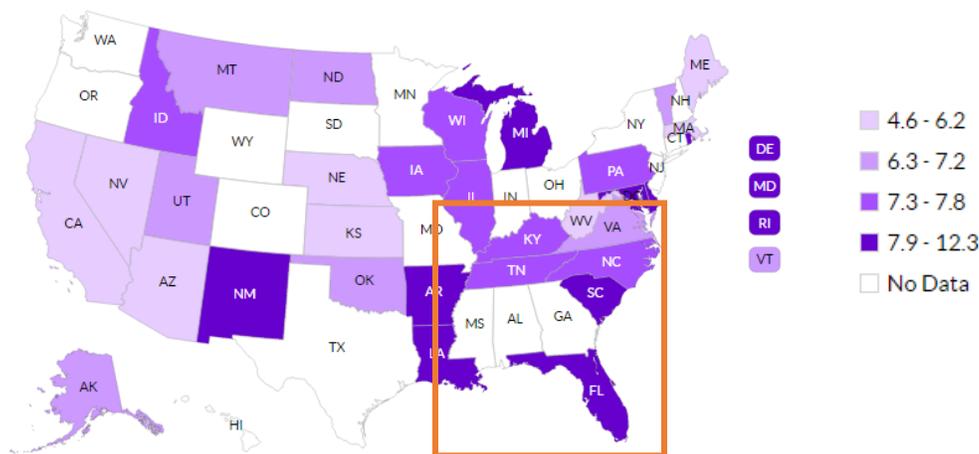
- Bullying was defined as “when 1 or more students tease, threaten, spread rumors about, hit, shove, or hurt another student over and over again. It is not bullying when 2 students of about the same strength or power argue or fight or tease each other in a friendly way.”





- Nationally, 19% of high school students report being bullied on school property during the last 12 months.
- The **Southeast region** reports fairly low prevalence of bullying in school compared to other areas of the country, especially compared to neighboring states like Arkansas (26.7%) and Louisiana (23.8%).
- Nonetheless, two states in the region, **South Carolina** (21.5%) and **Kentucky** (21.2%) report prevalence of bullying above the national average.
- **Florida** (14.3%) again reports one of the lowest rates in the country, only higher than Delaware (14.1%).

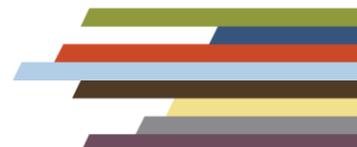
### Fighting



- Nationally, 8.5% of high school students report being in a physical fight on school property one or more times within the last 12 months.
- **South Carolina** (8.6%) and **Florida** (7.9%) both show high prevalence of fighting at school compared to the rest of the **Southeast region** and country.
- **Kentucky** (7.7%), **North Carolina** (7.6%) and **Tennessee** (7.3%) fall below the national average.

In 2017, all over the United States, high school students struggled with feelings of sadness, suicidal ideation, being bullied and fighting in school. For example, one in three students reported feeling sad or hopeless for two weeks or more, so much so that they stop participating in some of their usual activities. Nationally, more female students report being affected by sadness, suicidal ideation, and bullying than male students while the male students are getting into more physical fights at school. Due to the self-reporting methodology used by YRBSS, it is important to be aware of the potential for under reporting and therefore underestimates of the prevalence of stigmatized behaviors.

In the **Southeast region**, **South Carolina** has the highest rates of sadness, suicidal ideation, bullying at school and fighting at school compared to the other states in the region. **Florida** has the lowest prevalence of sadness, suicidal ideation, and bullying in the region yet still reports high rates of fighting. **North Carolina**, **Kentucky**, and **Tennessee** exhibit similar patterns in regards to these mental health and school-based indicators.



Additional information about YRBSS

Since 1991, the YRBSS has collected data from more than 4.4 million high school students in more than 1,900 separate surveys.

The YRBSS is designed to:

- Determine the prevalence of health behaviors
- Assess whether health behaviors increase, decrease or stay the same over time
- Examine the co-occurrence of health behaviors
- Provide comparable national, state, territorial, tribal and local data
- Provide comparable data among subpopulations of youth
- Monitor progress toward achieving the Health People objectives and other program indicators

The YRBSS also includes additional surveys conducted by CDC including the National College Health Risk Behavior Survey that was conducted in 1995 among undergraduate students and the National Alternative High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey conducted in 1998 among students in alternative high schools.

