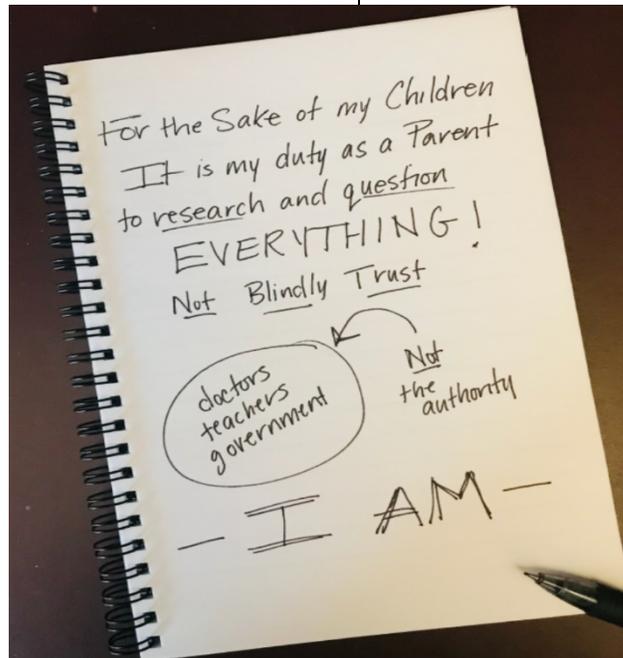


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**Not Gone, but (Almost) Forgotten-  
Our Kids, Our Responsibility**

This article is not to imply that we have run out of new topics to talk about or that the now standard and extremely pertinent topics of protocols, mandates, poor education, lack of transparency and unequal treatment to name a few, are less important at this moment. This is actually a reminder to us that other issues continue to brew despite the apparent lull brought on by Thanksgiving goodwill and our gratitude for the removal of close contact tracing, its quarantining, and differentiation between Covid vaccination status within SDR schools. We need to always remember that the responsibility for our kids is ours.



In October, the administration mailed a letter to parents to let us know that the annual Youth at Risk Behavior Survey was soon to be given and to give us an opt out form. (As an aside, this is notably one of the few times for which *actual paper and the USPS* is used - but that is a discussion for another time.) Discussions ensued in the community, some parents advocating opting out on principle while others advocating that all kids take the survey because it can be a safety net for some. Despite being polar opposites, it was clear that there was a shared basis - none of us knew the contents of the survey let alone the specific wording of the questions. The schools could have provided the link to the surveys but did not, as [discussed previously](#).

How can we make informed decisions and determinations about what is appropriate without examining the materials ourselves while keeping *each* of our children in mind? The only basis on which we can then rely is to trust that the institutions and the governing bodies that rule those institutions have made the best decisions, all the while knowing that those decisions cannot be based on consideration of each individual child, but on either a one-size-fits-all or a "support the few at the risk of the many" mentality. Despite all the reassurances that the institutions and governing bodies

are looking out for the best interests of each of our children equally, the responsibility for our kids is ours; it always was and always will be. After our kids have left school, they are still our kids. We will share in their fulfillment and failures, successes and struggles, joys and despairs for the rest of our lives. Where will the institutions and governing bodies be then?

Deferring to others is a delegation of duty that can take us parents only so far. We should not accept on faith that the people involved in our children's lives share our values, as well-intentioned as they may be. The responsibility for all components of our children's lives is our responsibility. How we discharge that responsibility is ours.

To that end we need to take the time to actively examine the environments in which we place our children, the books to which our children have access, what and how

our children are being taught, even down to the actual survey questions of YRBS. Although it is after the fact, *every* parent should go to the survey NOW and read *every* question as if we were each one of our high school or middle school children. If we do not yet have children in those grades, we do it to be informed. Whatever we ultimately decide about the appropriateness of this survey for each of our children, we will have done our due diligence. We are responsible for our children in every aspect of their lives. Remember, when we aren't speaking for our children, someone else is.

Go to <https://dpi.wi.gov/sspw/yrbs/online>>"YRBS 2021 Administration Webinars and Q&A Sessions">"Survey and Optional Modules">"WI 2021 Standard High School YRBS"/" Standard Middle School YRBS/ Optional Modules and Pilot Questions.

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