

Texas SPAN



Project Overview

The Texas School Physical Activity and Nutrition (Texas SPAN) Project is a Texas-wide surveillance system which measures child health and related behaviors of school-aged children in the 2nd, 4th, 8th, and 11th grades within racial/ethnic, gender, and geographic subpopulations. Funded by the Texas Department of State Health Services and conducted by the Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living at UTHealth Houston School of Public Health, Texas SPAN survey data have been collected in Texas at six time points using a cross-sectional questionnaire (years 2000-2002, 2004-2005, 2009-2011, 2015-2016, 2019-2020, 2021-2023). In addition to monitoring the prevalence of school-aged children with overweight and obesity in Texas, SPAN identifies factors in Texas students that are associated with obesity, cardiovascular disease, cancer, and diabetes, including dietary behaviors, nutrition knowledge and attitudes, and physical activity.

Project Details

Texas SPAN is a surveillance system to monitor the prevalence of overweight/obesity in school-aged children in Texas. This surveillance system allows researchers to identify and track trends in child health. The current Texas SPAN includes probability-based sampling of students in 4th, 8th, and 11th grade, with a concurrent sampling of 2nd grade students' parents, and a Texas-Mexico border-specific sample.

Data Collected

Height & Weight

Objectively measured height & weight data are collected for students in all four grades: 2nd, 4th, 8th, and 11th.

Self-Reported Survey Data

Validated surveys (in either a paper or digital format) are administered to students in the 4th, 8th, and 11th grades and collect information on demographics, diet, physical activity practices, knowledge, and oral health.

Parent-Reported Survey Data

Validated surveys (in either a paper or digital format) are sent home with 2nd grade students for their parents to complete, and these surveys collect information on their child's demographics, diet, physical activity practices, knowledge, and oral health.

School Policies & Practices

School-level information about policies and practices is collected via School Health Policy Questionnaires (HPQs), Campus Improvement Plans (CIPs), Vending Machine Inventories (VMIs), and Health Signage Indexes.



Partner Organizations

- Texas Department of State Health Services (Texas DSHS)
- Area Health Education Centers (AHEC): Desert Mountain, Greater Houston, Lower Rio Grande, Panhandle, West Texas, and the Mid Rio Grande Border Area
- DSHS Region 4/5 Community Outreach Division
- Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Department of Border Health
- City of El Paso Health Department Office of Border Public Health (OBPH), Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS)
- UTHealth Houston Cizik School of Nursing
- UTHealth Houston School of Public Health in Austin, Brownsville, Dallas, El Paso, Houston, and San Antonio

Project Resources



Texas SPAN Website



SPAN Data Explorer

Contact Information

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2nd Grade Survey (ENG)



4th Grade Survey (ENG)



8th/11th Grade Survey (ENG)



2nd Grade Survey (SPN)



4th Grade Survey (SPN)



8th/11th Grade Survey (SPN)