

South Dakota Schools Height & Weight Report Summary

**South Dakota Students
2022-2023
School Year**

**South Dakota Department of Health
February 2024**



For additional data, go to doh.sd.gov/a-z-reports/
For additional information, visit HealthySD.gov



The **Department of Health** (DOH) completed its twenty-fifth year of collecting data on the height and weight of students in South Dakota schools. This report summarizes obesity data collected on 20.3 percent (32,984 students) of the state's students from 100 schools during the 2022–2023 school year.

Although slightly different age group categories are used for analysis, South Dakota's school-age obesity prevalence is currently lower than national trends. Approximately 19.7 percent of children and adolescents aged 2 to 19 years are obese in the United States. In comparison, 18.7 percent of South Dakota children and adolescents aged 5 to 19 years are obese. Since 1980, however, the obesity prevalence for children and adolescents has nearly tripled. While obesity trends in recent years have leveled off, they remain high for school-age children and are not returning to the lower levels seen in the 1970s and 1980s.

There are significant racial disparities in obesity prevalence. For American Indian children and adolescents in South Dakota, the obese percent is 31.8 compared to 16.9 percent for whites. While American Indian students comprise 13.3 percent of the South Dakota enrollment population, they represent 5.2 percent of the students surveyed.

The DOH is able to provide school-specific data, aggregate data in this report, and county-specific data to schools who participate. Schools submitting data on less than 100 students are given the aggregate data in this report and county-specific data, provided there are 100 or more student measurements from all schools in that county.

Data is analyzed for short stature, underweight, overweight and obesity using the current national standards. This document focuses on excess weight, as South Dakota students as a whole are neither short nor underweight.

The DOH began using the definitions of overweight and obesity beginning with the 2006–2007 report to describe elevated body mass index (BMI)-for-age for children and adolescents. BMI-for-age is the preferred term to describe the weight status of children and adolescents.

Children with a BMI-for-age between the 85th and 94th percentile are described as “overweight”. If a child is at or above the 95th percentile, the term to describe the child is “obese”.

Obesity in children and adolescents is associated with increased risk of anxiety, depression, cardiovascular risk factors such as high blood pressure and high cholesterol, diabetes, and asthma. Excess weight in childhood and adolescence usually persists into adulthood. The higher the BMI in childhood, the greater the chance the child will be obese as an adult.

One of the objectives of the national Healthy People 2030 initiative is to “reduce the percentage of children and adolescents aged 2 to 19 years who are considered obese.”

The DOH has a goal to reverse the national trend and reduce the percent of overweight and obese school-age children and adolescents in South Dakota. Our state is still working toward the South Dakota Department of Health 2020–2025 goal to reduce the percentage of school-aged children who are obese from 16.4% during the 2018–2019 school year to 14.5% by the 2024–2025 school year.

Childhood overweight and obesity is a multi-faceted problem that should be addressed by promoting healthy eating, increasing physical activity, and reducing food insecurity. While it will take all South Dakotans working together to overcome this increasing problem, schools can play a key role in providing education and healthy environments.

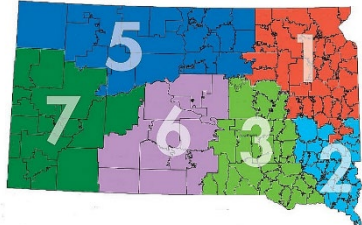
Overweight and Obese Body Mass Index, by Age School Year 2022-2023				
Age	Number of Students	Overweight	Obese	Overweight and Obese Combined
5-8 years	12,482	15.1	15.6	30.7
9-11 years	10,328	17.0	20.9	37.9
12-14 years	7,690	16.5	20.4	36.9
15-19 years	2,484	17.2	19.9	37.1
Total	32,984	16.2	18.7	34.9

Overweight and Obese Body Mass Index, by Race School Year 2022-2023				
Race	Number of Students	Overweight	Obese	Overweight and Obese Combined
White	13,613	16.0	16.9	32.9
American Indian	1,728	19.7	31.8	51.5
Other Races	2,602	18.7	28.8	47.5
Multi-race/Unspecified	15,041	15.5	17.1	32.6
Total	32,984	16.2	18.7	34.9

Overweight and Obese Body Mass Index, by Gender School Year 2022-2023				
Gender	Number of Students	Overweight	Obese	Overweight and Obese Combined
Female	15,799	17.1	17.3	34.4
Male	17,185	15.4	20.0	35.4

Regional Data

As in previous years, the data was analyzed by Education Service Agency (ESA) regions. These educational regions reflect public, private and tribal schools located in the geographic areas in the map to the right. Region 2 is the only region that is significantly below the state low confidence interval rate of 18.2 percent. Regions 1, 3, and 5 are significantly higher than the state rate. Regions 6 and 7 are not significantly different as it falls into the statewide range of 18.2 to 19.2 percent.



Overweight and Obese Body Mass Index, by Region School Year 2022-2023				
Region	Number of Students	Overweight	Obese	Overweight and Obese Combined
1	7,768	16.4	20.7	37.1
2	18,496	15.6	16.8	32.4
3	3,708	19.3	24.2	43.5
5	128	18.8	32.0	50.8
6	1,537	16.1	17.6	33.7
7	1,347	14.4	18.8	33.2
Total	32,984	16.2	18.7	34.9

Healthy South Dakota
South Dakota Department of Health
615 E 4th Street
Pierre, SD 57501
605.773.3737

