

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS)?

The PAYS is a statewide survey of school students in grades 6, 8, 10, and 12 conducted in alternate years by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD). PAYS data provides statewide estimates on substance use, violence, school and community climate, etc.

Who uses PAYS data and for what purposes?

Schools and community organizations use PAYS data for assessment, benchmarking, accountability, tracking, curriculum and program planning, community engagement, grant submissions, and presentations.

Which schools participate in PAYS?

All schools in Pennsylvania are encouraged to participate. In addition, a random sample of Pennsylvania schools is selected and invited to participate at no cost. Survey data from students in these sampled schools comprise a statewide dataset that individual schools can use for benchmarking.

How does a school know if it is selected into the random sample?

Schools selected into the random sample receive notification from PCCD and participation for these schools is free.

How does survey administration work?

Administering the PAYS in schools is easy. PAYS is administered to students by teachers in a regular class period. Both “paper and pencil” and online versions are available.

How much does PAYS cost?

There is no cost for schools that have grades selected into the random sample; the selected grade within that school is free as is one additional grade within that school. In addition, sampled schools receive a free detailed school-level results report. For schools that are not selected into the random sample, the cost for paper surveys is \$1.25 per student survey booklet ordered; the cost for online administration is \$1.00 per student. In addition, for those schools not selected into the random sample there is an optional \$595 charge for a detailed school-level results report.

What deliverables can PAYS participants receive?

Schools participating in PAYS can receive a detailed school-level results report (broken out by grade), comparative statewide results, and online access to their survey data.

Are school-level PAYS results made public?

No. Aggregate statewide survey results are made publicly available but local school data are shared only with the participating school and they determine to whom data is released.

When is the next PAYS administration?

PAYS will be administered in the fall of 2011. Registration for participation is open now. For more information and to register, see www.PAYS.state.pa.us.

For more information: Contact Geoffrey Kolchin at PCCD at 717-265-8483 or gkolchin@state.pa.us. You can also visit www.PAYS.state.pa.us.