The Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS): An Update on the 2013 Administration

Webinar for Coalitions and Prevention Partners
August 19, 2013
Who is PCCD?

Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD)
- Legislatively created in 1978
- Responsible for justice policy, planning and coordination

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention at PCCD
- Develops policy recommendations
- Oversees federal and state funds to improve PA’s juvenile justice system
- Works to prevent violence, delinquency, substance abuse and other adolescent problem behaviors using proven, evidence-based approaches
- Coordinates the State’s Pennsylvania Youth Survey - “PAYS”
The Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS)

• A voluntary survey conducted in schools every other year since 1989 for youth in 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th grades

• Adopted from the Communities That Care Youth Survey developed by the University of Washington’s Social Development Research Group (Drs. Hawkins and Catalano), and the Generation at Risk National Survey

  • Over the years, Pennsylvania added additional questions to gather data on areas such as gambling, prescription drug abuse, mental health issues and other anti-social behaviors

  • Assesses youth behaviors, attitudes, and knowledge on these areas
    • Primary source of information about what our youth know, think and believe about anti-social behaviors

  • Survey is anonymous and confidential ~ No individual student information can be obtained from the data set

  • Collects data across multiple domains that impact students – Community, School, Family and Peer/Individual.
PAYS, continued

• Assesses **Risk Factors** that are related to these behaviors and the **Protective Factors** that guard against them
  
  • **Risk Factors** – Those conditions that increase the likelihood that a child will develop problem behaviors later in life
  
  • **Protective Factors** – Those people or conditions in a community that buffer youth from risk or assist in determining how they respond to risk

• Allows community leaders and school administrators to direct scarce prevention resources towards areas where they are likely to have the greatest impact

• Provides benchmarks for alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, anti-social and delinquent behaviors
PAYS Validity – How?

• Student surveys are removed if...
  • Report exaggerated drug use
  • Report unrealistically high frequency of antisocial behaviors
  • Report using fictitious drug (in 2011, Derbisol)
  • Report inconsistencies in drug use
  • Answered less than 25% of questions

• For 2011 survey, only 6.6% of responses had questionable validity and were removed from analysis
Changes for 2013

• PCCD and the Departments of Drug and Alcohol Programs and Education have partnered to offer PAYS FREE OF CHARGE.
  – This includes all public, private, parochial and charter schools in the Commonwealth.

• A new vendor, Bach Harrison, has been selected through a competitive process.

• As part of their contract, all local summary reports must be delivered to the field no later than April 30, 2014.
Changes for 2013, Continued

• We have moved to a “Three-Form Design” to ensure that all questions have adequate response rates.

• A Spanish Language version of PAYS will be available upon request.

• County-Level reports will automatically be prepared (as long as there are at least two districts participating) and will be placed on the PAYS website.
  – Local summary reports are considered to be in the public domain.
2013 Changes, continued

• Layout of survey instrument has been improved for readability.
  – Focus groups of students (6th/8th in one; 10th/12th in second) completed the survey in less than 40 minutes.

• The survey process will be run through the Penn State Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure data confidentiality and protection.

• PCCD has confirmed that the 2013 PAYS will meet the reporting requirements for DFC/STOP.
New Topics/Questions Added for ‘13

• Family Food Security
  – “How many times have you skipped a meal b/c your family did not have enough money to buy food?”

• Synthetic Drug Use
  – (Examples listed: Bath Salts, K2, Spice, Mr. Smiley, Blaze)

• New “Fake” Drug for validation
  – (No more Derbisol!)

• New Community Activities
  – Listed individually, rather than “select all that apply”

• Military Deployment by Family Member
  – “Have any family members been deployed to serve 6 months or more?”
New Questions for ‘13, continued

• Loss of Friends/Family Members
  – “In the past 12 months, have any of your friends or family members close to you died?”

• Clarification of Bullying Questions
  – Includes definition of what is meant by Bullying

• Parental Incarceration
  – “In the last 12 months, was a parent or parent figure in jail or prison for more than one week?”

• Suicidal Ideation
  – “Did you ever seriously consider attempting suicide?”

• Texting and Driving
  – “Over the last two months, how many times have you texted while driving and the vehicle was moving?”
Logistics for 2013

• Survey can be administered anytime between September 16 and November 27, based on the preferences of the school district.

• To participate, the Superintendent must sign the Participation Agreement, nominate their point of contact for Bach Harrison, and indicate which grades they would like to survey.
  – The point of contact can be within the school or from the community.
  – If the superintendent wishes to change their point of contact, please have them send an email to Geoff Kolchin or Bach Harrison indicating the new contact person information.
Logistics for 2013

• To assist with recruitment, please contact Geoff Kolchin or EPISCenter to get an update on which of the districts in your county have registered.
  – The sample school/grades are the same as in 2011 so that we can measure the impact of the survey revision and crosswalk the 2013 results with the past administrations.
  – Some charter schools may not have received the introductory letter, but all are eligible to participate.

• A point of concern that has been raised by some districts is the lack of a “without family” version.
  – Remind your superintendents that PAYS is a survey of how youth view their community and the behaviors they engage in.
  – Questions cross four domains and allow for other stakeholders to be brought to the table to assist in impacting the youth and families they serve.
Logistics for 2013

• Local summary reports will be sent directly to the Superintendents, not the point of contact, to ensure they are aware of the results.

• The Spanish version will be sent electronically to any districts that request it so that they can run as many copies as they need.

• An initial version of the PAYS Follow-Up Guide will be rolled out for the Safe Schools Conference in October, with a more comprehensive, interactive version available by April.
For More Information or Assistance with Recruitment

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