



Pennsylvania Area Youth Survey (PAYS) 2019

What is PAYS?

The Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS) is a student survey given in odd-numbered years (e.g., 2015, 2017, 2019) to youth in 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th throughout the state.

The questions asked in the survey cover many types of **attitudes, knowledge, behaviors, and experiences**. Youth respond to questions on topics such as:

- Use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs (ATOD)
- Violence and drugs on school property
- Being bullied and internet safety
- Involvement in gangs
- Depression
- Gambling



PAYS continued

Youth also answer questions related to **risk and protective factors** (RPF) in the

- Community
- School
- Family
- Peer
- Individual

The PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) sponsored the administration of the PAYS since 1989. In 2013, the PA Dept. of Education (PDE) and PA Dept. of Drug and Alcohol Prevention (DDAP) joined PCCD in sponsoring school-district participation in the survey.

Goal of the PAYS Data is to Identify the Strengths and Challenges in our Community that impact youth

PAYS is...

- a primary tool to drive decision making in supporting the health of our children,
- a direct report from our students.
- not only a snapshot of problem behaviors but also illuminates root causes

By looking not just at rates of problem behaviors but also at the root causes of those behaviors, PAYS allows schools and communities to address reasons (such as a lack of commitment to school) rather than only looking at the symptoms after the fact (like poor grades).

This approach has been repeatedly shown in national research studies to be the most effective in helping youth develop to their full potential.

Positive Trends 2019

- Big declines in vaping
- Decreases in lifetime prescription drug use
- Bullying below the state average in all/most categories
- Involvement in Prosocial Activities (School and Family)
- Students feel Safe at school
- Opportunities to participate in class discussions
- Opportunities for students to talk with a teacher
- Adults at school stop bullying when they see or hear (PAGE 43)



Community Concerns

Defined as priority areas where DASD had worse results than the county or state average in at least one grade level

- Early initiation and Higher Prevalence Drugs (inhalants, alcohol use, marijuana use, vaping of marijuana oil)
- Risky Substance-Use Related Behavior (binge-drinking and driving under the influence of marijuana)
- Sources of Alcohol by students who reported use (parents providing, siblings providing, took alcohol without permission from home or friend's home)
- Access and willingness to use (alcohol, marijuana, ease of access to prescription drugs)
- Anti-social behavior (drunk or high at school, gambling)
- Violence and Drugs on School Property (offered drugs, threatened, attacked, threatened/ attacked with a weapon, inappropriate sexual contact through technology)
- Mental Health Concerns and Suicide (depression, self-harm, suicide, self-worth)
- Community Risk associated with availability (ease of acquiring alcohol and firearms)
- Rules and Antisocial Behavior (knowing an adult who has gotten drunk or high and used alcohol, marijuana, cocaine or other drugs)
- Perceived Importance of School
- Transitions and Mobility, sleep, grief and stressful events



Trend Concerns

- Decreases in feeling school is going to be important later in life, meaningful work, enjoyed being in school
- Increases in responses of sad or depressed, think I'm no good
- Seriously considered/planned suicide- increases, 10th and 12th
- Though vaping has decreased, vaping THC has significantly increased
- Decreases in perception of risk for marijuana
- Peer perception- "It is not wrong or not very wrong for someone my age to use marijuana once a month or more" (Grades 8, 10, 12)
- Try marijuana once or twice (Grades 8, 10, 12)



Protective Factors

exert a positive influence and buffer against the negative influence of risk, thus reducing the likelihood that adolescents will engage in problem behaviors.

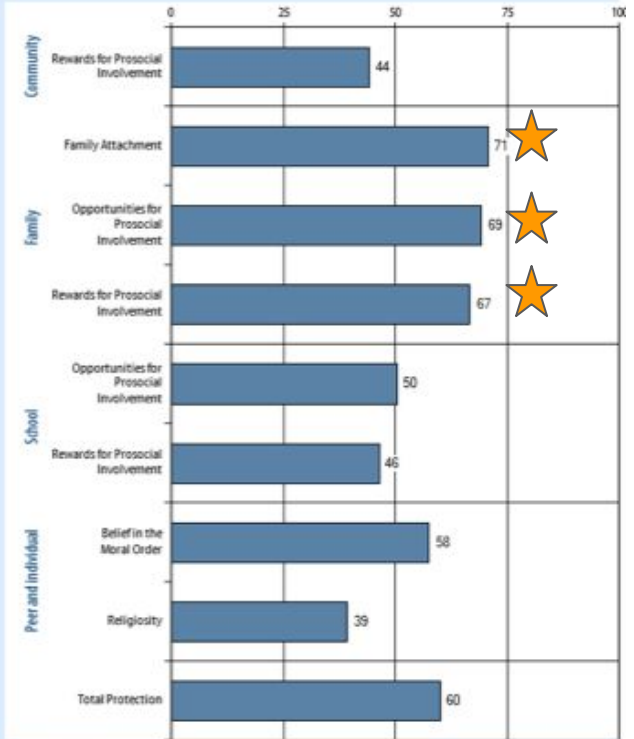
Three highest protective factors for Downingtown community:

Family Attachment (71%) – Young people feel they are a valued part of their family.

Family Rewards for Prosocial Involvement (69%) – When parents, siblings, and other family members praise, encourage, and attend to things done well by their child.

Family Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement (67%) – Young people are exposed to more opportunities to participate meaningfully in the responsibilities and activities of the family.

Downingtown Area School District Protective Factors, 2019 Pennsylvania Youth Survey



Protective Factors

Protective factors are also known as assets.

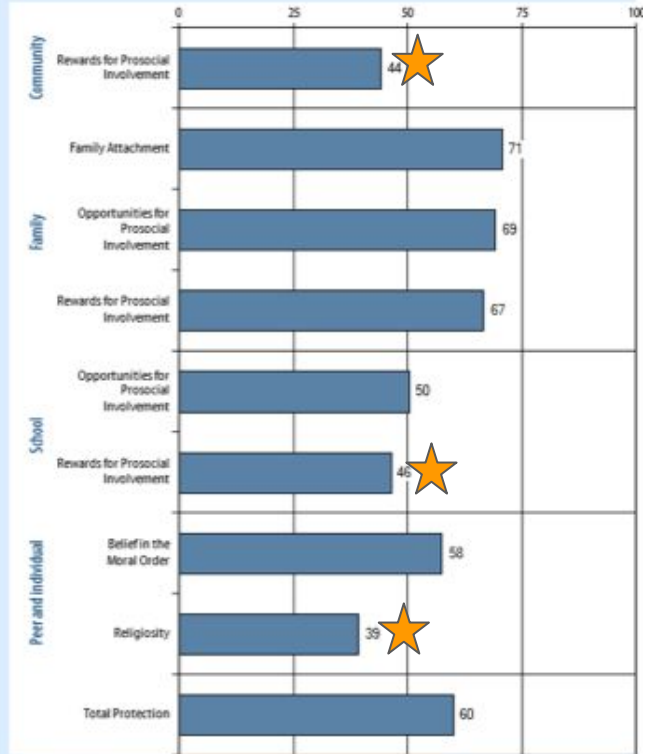
Three lowest protective factors for Downingtown community:

Religiosity (39%) – In communities where young people attend religious programs, services, or groups regularly, there is a lower percentage of anti-social behaviors and ATOD use.

Community Rewards for Pro-Social Involvement (44%) – Rewards for positive participation in community activities that help students bond to the community and increase self-respect as well as respect for community.

Rewards for Prosocial School Involvement (46%) – When young people are recognized and rewarded for their contributions at school, they are less likely to be involved in substance use and other problem behaviors.

Downingtown Area School District Protective Factors, 2019 Pennsylvania Youth Survey



Risk Factors

are characteristics in the community, family, school and individual's environment known to increase the likelihood that a youth will engage in more than one problem behavior.

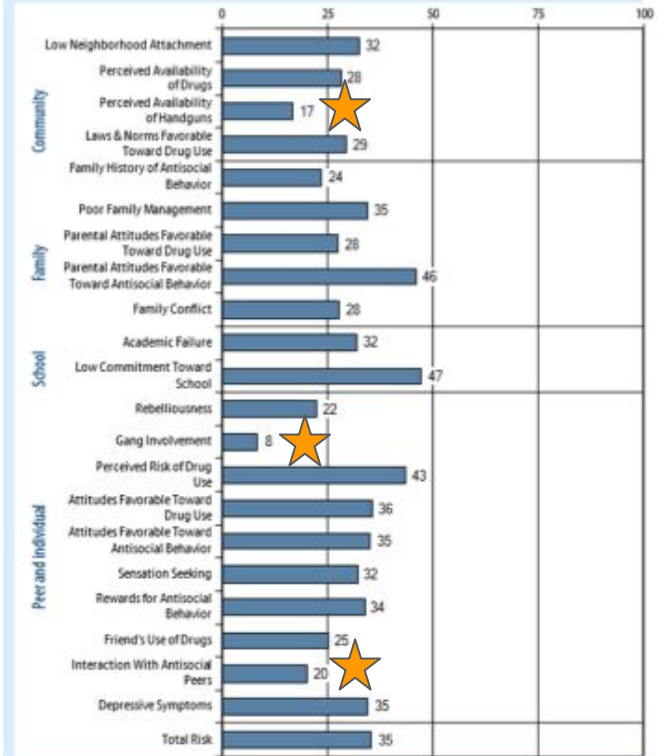
Three lowest RISK factors for Downingtown community:

Gang Involvement (8.4 risk)

Perceived Availability of Handguns in the Community (16.8% risk)

Interaction with Antisocial Peers (20.1% risk)

Downingtown Area School District Risk Factors, 2019 Pennsylvania Youth Survey



Risk Factors

In a community where there is acceptance and tolerance of these risk factors, students are more likely to engage in problem behaviors.

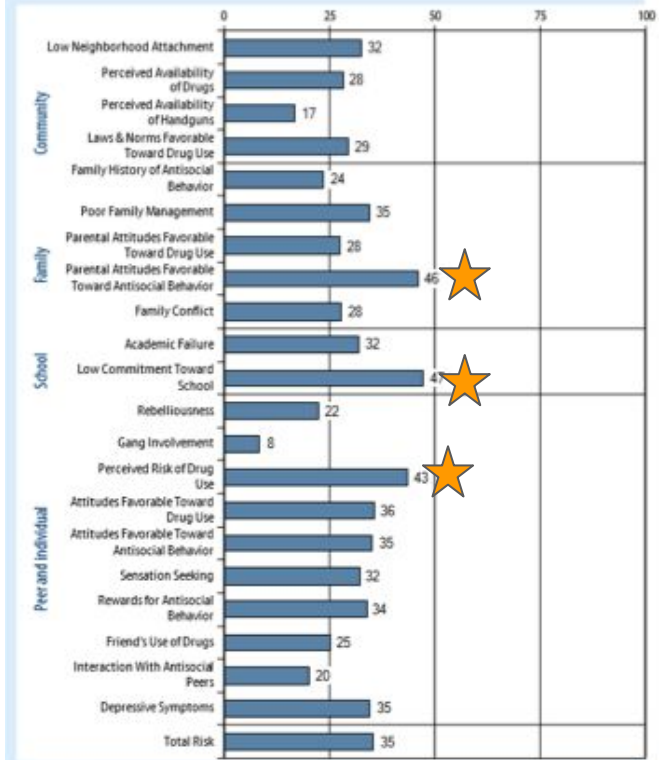
Three highest RISK factors for Downingtown community: *Areas of Concern*

Parental Attitudes Favorable Toward Drugs and Antisocial Behavior (46%) – In families where parents use illegal drugs, are heavy drug users of alcohol, are tolerant of children’s use, children are more likely to become drug users in adolescence. Risk is further increased if parents involve children in their own drug / alcohol using behavior.

Low Commitment toward School (47%) – Liking school, spending time on homework, and perceiving the coursework as relevant

Perceived Risk of Drug use (43%) – Do not perceive drug use to be risky.

Downingtown Area School District Risk Factors, 2019 Pennsylvania Youth Survey



Students report....about mental health

On average sleeping less than 7 hours/night (Gr 6- 7% Gr 8 – 29.6% Grade 10 – 51.8% Grade 12 – 58%)

Felt tired or sleepy during the day “ every day” or “several times” during the past (2) weeks
(Grade 6- 38% Grade 8 – 66% Grade 10- 83% Grade 12- 86%)

Felt depressed or sad MOST days in the past (12) mos
(Gr 6- 24% Gr 8 - 32% Grade 10 – 40.2% Grade 12- 42.5%)

Seriously considered suicide (Grade 6- 8% Grade 8- 11% Grade 10 – 20% Grade 12- 21%)

Self-Harm in past (12) mos (Grade 6- 8% Grade 8- 11% Grade 10 – 19% and Grade 12- 13%);

Students report...about alcohol

Early initiation, current use of alcohol: Grade 6- **1.3 %** Grade 8 - **8%** Grade 10- **27%**
Grade 12- **38%**

Binge drinking (5+ drinks) during the past two weeks: Grade 10 – **8.9%** Grade 12 – **18.4%**;

Been drunk or high at school: Grade 10 – **8.9%** and Grade 12 – **15.9%**

Source of alcohol:

Parents provided alcohol to me: (Grade 6 – **44%**, Grade 8 - **43%** Grade 10 – **23.4%** Grade 12 – **24.8%**);

Friends or siblings under 21 provided: (Grade 6 – **6%** Grade 8- **13%** Grade 10 – **23.4%** Grade 12 – **25.7%**);

Took without permission from home: (Grade 8 – **46%** Grade 10 – **55.1%** and Grade 12 – **38.5%**)

Students report....about marijuana

Early Initiation, current use of Marijuana: Gr 6 - .01% Gr 8-5% Grade 10-14.7% Grade 12 – 25.3%

Vaping with marijuana or hash oil: Gr 6- 3.4% Gr 8- 30% Grade 10 – 54% and Grade 12 – 44.2%
(From % of those reporting vaping)

Driving after marijuana use in the past year: Grade 12 – 12.5%
(half of those who use marijuana)

Students report....about vaping

Early Initiation, current use: Grade 6- **1%** Grade 8- **11%** Grade 10- **19%** Grade 12- **30%**
(Decrease in 10th and 12th grades)

Vaping with nicotine: Grade 6- **7%** Grade 8 – **49%** Grade 10- **62%** Grade 12- **65%**

Vaping with Marijuana: Grade 6 - **3.4%** Grade 8 – **30%** Grade 10-**48%** Grade 12- **54%**

Students report...about bullying

Bullying behavior contributes to lower attendance rates, lower student achievement, low self-esteem, and depression, as well as higher rates of both juvenile and adult crime.

A teen's social sphere is deeply intertwined with texting, social media, and the Internet. Invaded by bullying behavior, the harassment can feel inescapable, and traditional places of refuge such as the home no longer apply. The resulting isolation from simply "turning of the phone" has the unfortunate effect of further punishing the victim.

Overall, **26.1% of students in DASD** experienced bullying in the past 12 months (compared to 25.1% of students at the state level). Students cited the most frequent reasons they were bullied:

- the way I look [clothing, hairstyle, etc.]
- my size [height, weight, etc.]
- my grades or school achievement
- my sexual orientation
- the country my parents, grandparents were born in
- how much money my family has or does not have

Correlations from the PAYS report ...

DEPRESSION and SUBSTANCE USE

The substance use rate of youth who reported depressive symptoms is much greater than those who have a much more positive outlook on life. When compared to the non-depressed group, youth in the state of Pennsylvania with high depressive symptoms indicate 30-day alcohol use rates that are four times higher than non-depressed students. (Pg 62 PAYS 2019)

BULLYING and DEPRESSION

PAYS data show a strong relationship between being bullied and depression and suicidal behaviors. Of students who indicated they *had* been cyberbullied, 54.0% indicated feeling so sad or hopeless almost every day for at least two weeks in past year that they stopped doing usual activities. In the past year, 39.5% of those students had seriously considered suicide, 30.9% had made a suicide plan, and 28.2% had attempted suicide. (Pg 63 PAYS 2019)

Takeaways

Good News...

The majority of Downtontown students are not using marijuana or alcohol on a regular basis.

Students feel adults respond to complaints of bullying.

Vaping has slightly decreased.

Students report strong family ties and opportunities for prosocial involvement.

Concerns...

Almost half of high school students have felt sad or depressed for long periods of time; 20% have considered suicide.

Parents and/or home is the main source of alcohol for underage drinkers.

Students see little harm in driving under the influence of marijuana.

Strong correlation between depression and substance use.

CTC ACTION PLAN

To Address These Factors:

- 1 Low Perceived Risk of Harm from Drug Use
- 2 Low Commitment Toward School
- 3 Parental attitudes favorable toward anti-social behaviours including drug & alcohol use.
- 4 Opportunities & Rewards for youth for positive community engagement

We Implement These Strategies:

Engage Youth in Prevention

- Youth (HYPE Clubs Grades 6-12)
- Peer Mentoring
- Advocacy
- Leadership Strategies
- Parents Who Host Lose the Most Campaign
- Red Ribbon Week
- Virtual Social Media Campaigns

Support Parents & Strengthen Families

- Parent Speaker Series
- Virtual Programs
- Support Groups
- Resources
- Newsletters
- Webinars
- Podcasts
- Parent Cafes

Educational & Public Awareness

- Parent Speaker Series
- Social Media Campaign
- (Pennsylvania Youth Survey)
- Evidence-Based Mental Health
- Substance Use Prevention
- Programs Grades 6-12
- Virtual Programs

Opportunities for Youth Community Involvement

- HYPE (Healthy Youth Positive Energy Clubs)
- Community Youth Activities
- Rewards for Pro-Social Actions
- Mentorships
- Internships

To Achieve These Outcomes

- ✓ Increase prevention strategies to promote positive mental health in youth.
- ✓ Enhance prevention strategies to increase protective factors and decrease risk factors related to substance use and abuse.
- ✓ Promote community collaboration to provide youth with support in making healthy decisions.





Empowering youth to make positive choices

For more information or to talk with someone,
feel free to contact us at dtownctc@gmail.com
or check out our website www.dtownctc.org