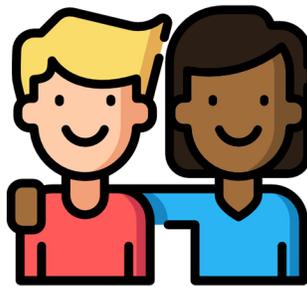


2021 PENNSYLVANIA YOUTH SURVEY (PAYS)



BUCKS COUNTY DATA OVERVIEW



Bucks County

PENNSYLVANIA YOUTH SURVEY (PAYS)

The Pennsylvania Youth Survey, or PAYS, is a primary tool in Pennsylvania's prevention approach of using data to drive decision making. 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 into healthy, productive members of their society.

PAYS is conducted every other year, in the fall of odd-numbered years. Questions are asked across four domains - community, school, family, and peer/individual - to help determine where the strengths of a community are, which can be promoted to assist students. The questions also help determine where potential problems may exist outside of school that can have an impact on a student's readiness to learn when they arrive at their school each morning.

Over the last several survey administrations, PAYS has added additional questions about problem behaviors based on areas of interest to state and local leaders:



- illegal prescription drug use
- vaping and e-cigarette use
- gambling
- depression and suicidal ideation
- violence on school property
- causes and effects of bullying and abuse (physical and online)
- Internet safety
- transitions and mobility
- involvement in after-school activities in the community or workplace
- special report on COVID-19 impact (2021 survey only)

2021 PAYS PARTICIPATION

60

OUT OF 85



Bucks County schools participated
(13 out of 13 public school districts)

77.4%



STUDENT PARTICIPATION RATE

Grades 6, 8, 10 and 12

VALIDITY OF PAYS DATA

In order to ensure the highest level of confidence in the survey results, measures are implemented to retain only those surveys that are deemed to be most honest and to remove surveys determined to contain possible dishonest or exaggerated responses. Dishonest surveys were identified using five validity checks:

- 1** The student indicated that they had used a fictitious drug (statewide, 622 surveys were identified as dishonest with this check)
- 2** The student reported an improbably high level of multiple drug use (450 surveys statewide)
- 3** The student indicated past-month use rates that were higher than lifetime use rates (206 surveys)
- 4** The student reported an age that was inconsistent with their grade or the grades served by their school (311 surveys)
- 5** The student reported an age for joining a gang that was older than their reported age (29 surveys)

The results within this county report are based on 19,227 honest responses (out of 19,284 surveys submitted).

HIGHEST LIFETIME USAGE RATES - ALL GRADES



34.2%

ALCOHOL

State level: 34.8%

30 day and lifetime use
down from 2019



13.1%

MARIJUANA

State level: 13.1%

30 day and lifetime use
down from 2019



10.6%

VAPING

State level: 13.0%

30 day use down
from 2019

Cigarette use - both lifetime and 30-day use - is down in all grades from 2019
30 day use went from 1.9% to **1.2%** | All grades for lifetime use went from 7.2% to **5.1%**

FREQUENTLY USED SUBSTANCES AND RISKY BEHAVIORS

Perceived availability of substances - even when unwarranted - is associated with increased drug use. The perceived availability of prescription drugs is of particular concern, because their availability may be independent of usual illicit avenues of obtaining substances. (Note that perceived availability of ATODs in general is also measured as a single scale in the Risk Factor section of this report.)



PRESCRIPTION PAIN RELIEVERS

2.4% of students indicating lifetime use, compared to 3.1% at the state level

Slight increase in 2021 for 6th graders' lifetime use of prescription pain relievers



OVER-THE-COUNTER DRUGS

2.3% of students indicating lifetime use, compared to 3.9% at the state level



BINGE DRINKING

5.5% of students in the past two weeks, compared to 5.0% at the state level

Percentages for binge drinking decreased in 2021 from 2019 in all grades, except for a slight increase in 6th graders



DRINKING & DRIVING

0.7% of students reported driving while - or shortly after - drinking (state level: 0.8%)

Decreased percentages across all grades for driving after drinking and driving after marijuana use

AVAILABILITY OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

49.5%

“Took them from a family member living in my home” - most frequent source/ method of obtaining the prescription drugs they used without a doctor's prescription, compared to 47.8% at the state level.

36.5%

“A friend or family member gave them to me” - most frequently reported source of prescription drugs, compared to 40.8% at the state level.

Students reported they have personally known someone over 21 who has:

- **gotten high or drunk (47.2%**, compared to 48.6% at the state level);
- **used marijuana, crack, cocaine, or other drugs (21.5%**, compared to 22.8% at the state level); or
- **has done other antisocial behaviors (9.0%**, compared to 10.1% at the state level).

4.0% of Bucks County students reported they have **“been drunk or high at school”** in the past 12 months (state level: 4.4%).

All grade decreases in 2021 for being drunk or high at school.

ACCESS AND WILLINGNESS TO USE

ALCOHOL

33.1%

“Took it without permission [from my home, friend’s home, store, etc.]” - most frequent source/method of obtaining the alcohol they used, compared to 31.3% at the state level.

30.5%

“Friends, brothers, or sisters over 21 provided it to me,” - next most frequently reported source of alcohol compared to 27.0% at the state level.

24.0%

“Gave someone money to buy it for me,” compared to 22.0% at the state level.

20.4%

“Would like to try it or use it” or “would use it any chance I got” - willingness to use alcohol, compared to 19.9% at the state level.

“Parents gave it to me” went up in 2021 in all grades (**30.0%**).

 **51.6%** of 6th graders state that their parents provided them with alcohol.

“Friends’ parents gave it to me” increased in 2021 in all grades (**21.2%**).

59.2% of 12th grade students report it would be **very easy to get beer, wine or hard liquor.**

Decreases in all grades for “Took it from parent’s home without permission.”

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Increased percentages in 2021 from 2019 that students reported, “Taking prescription drugs from a family member living in my home” (except for 12th graders) and “Took them from other relatives not living in my home” (except for 6th and 8th graders).

 **67.7%** of 6th graders state that they took prescription drugs from a family member living in their home.

93.8% of students reported they thought their parents would think it’s **wrong or very wrong to use prescription drugs not prescribed to you.**

WEAPONS

7.8% of students reported that a handgun would be “**sort of easy**” or “**very easy**” to get (state rate: 12.3%).

MARIJUANA

79.2% of 12th grade students reported they think their parents would think it’s **wrong or very wrong to smoke marijuana.**

PARENTS & CAREGIVERS...

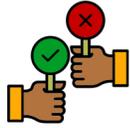
Talk to your child about underage drinking: visit [knowwhenknowhow.org](https://www.knowwhenknowhow.org) for tips to start the conversation.

Keep your medicines up and away and out of sight: visit [upandaway.org](https://www.upandaway.org) for details.

ALCOHOL

59.7% 

think that if a kid drank alcohol, he or she **would not be caught by the police** (state rate: 61.9%).



19.1%

report that most adults in their neighborhood would think it was **“a little bit wrong”** or **“not at all wrong”** for kids their age to drink alcohol (state rate: 20.8%).

37.9% 

reported that alcohol would be **“sort of easy”** or **“very easy”** to get (state rate: 37.7%).



87.7%

say the rules in their family are clear (compared to 86.4% at the state level), with **85.9%** reporting their families have **clear rules about drugs and alcohol** (state rate: 85.7%).

9.8% 

stated their **parents** felt it was **“a little bit wrong”** or **“not at all wrong”** to drink alcohol (state rate: 10.2%).



15.4%

thought it was **“a little bit wrong”** or **“not at all wrong”** for someone their age to use alcohol (state rate: 15.6%).

VAPING

Although lifetime vaping statistics are not gathered, the 30-day use rate of e-cigarettes and other vapor products in Bucks County was **10.6%**.

30-day vaping/e-cigarette use went down in 2021 from 2019.

Vaping/e-cigarette use in the past year (vaping marijuana or hash oil) decreased in 2021 from 37.8% in 2019 to **36.5%**.

 Increases in all grades except 10th grade for vaping marijuana in the past year.

Vaping nicotine rates went down in 2021 from 2019 for all grades (62.9% in 2019 to **56.4%** in 2019).

In all grades, the percentage increased from 12.8% to **20.8%** reporting they **did not know what they were vaping** 

 **73.2%** of 6th graders indicated they did not know what they were vaping.

MARIJUANA

13.5% report that **adults** would think it was **“a little bit wrong”** or **“not at all wrong”** for kids their age to use marijuana (state level: 15.0%).

10.1% stated that their **parents** felt it was **“a little bit wrong”** or **“not at all wrong”** to use marijuana (state rate: 10.8%).

25.8% thought it was **“a little bit wrong”** or **“not at all wrong”** for someone their age to use marijuana (state rate: 25.6%). 

SCHOOL



Overall decreases related to commitment to school: feel school is going to be important later in life; feel assigned schoolwork is meaningful and important; enjoyed being in school during the past year.



41.3% of students in Bucks County viewed **the things they are learning in school as going to be important later in life** (compared to 41.8% at the state level).



School work was viewed as **meaningful and important** by **31.8%** of students (state rate: 32.4%) and **36.5%** enjoyed being in school during the past year (state rate: 37.6%).



A **feeling of safety** was reported by **84.0%** of students (state rate: 82.0%).



80.4% of students reported **opportunities to talk with a teacher one-on-one** (state rate: 78.5%) and **88.4%** reported **chances to be part of class discussions or activities** (state rate: 86.5%).



52.5% of students reported that **teachers praise them when they work hard in school** (state rate: 51.8%).

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES



86.0%

reported participating in **at least one pro-social activity**. State level: 84.3%

Students most frequently participated in **school-sponsored activities** (**56.2%**).



49.8%

family-supported activities or hobbies

28.0%

other activities

When the students are not home, **93.9%** of students stated **their parents know where they are and who they are with**.

COVID-19 IMPACT*



52.6%

Family shared more quality time together

55.2%

Student learned a new hobby



REMOTE LEARNING*



- Stayed focused when learning online - **NO (60.8%)**
- Learning improved when online - **NO (77.6%)**
- Missed learning with teachers in person - **YES (72.6%)**
- Missed learning with other students in person - **YES (75.7%)**

*Based on 11 out of 13 districts. Average taken from all grades surveyed.

BULLYING AND VIOLENCE AT SCHOOL



- In the past twelve months, **13.7%** of students in Bucks County reported **being threatened with violent behavior on school property** (16.7% at the state level).
- **5.6%** of students reported **having actually been attacked on school property** (state rate: 7.6%). 1.1% reported being attacked with weapons both in Bucks County and at the state level. **3.0%** of students reported **they had been threatened by someone with a weapon**, compared to a state rate of 3.5%. **0.6%** of students had **brought a weapon to school in the past 30 days** (state rate: 0.8%).
- Overall, **20.9%** of students in Bucks County indicated **experiencing bullying in the past 12 months** (compared to 23.2% of students at the state level).
- Students who indicated experiencing bullying in the past 12 months reported that **“the way I look [clothing, hairstyle, etc.]”** (**45.3%** of students), **“some other reason”** (**37.1%** of students) and **“my size [height, weight, etc.]”** (**35.4%** of students) were the **most frequent reasons they were bullied**.

PAYS includes one question about self-harm and four questions that ask students about feelings - sadness, hopelessness, and worthlessness - that can be symptoms of depression. PAYS also asks five questions specific to suicide, measuring depressed behavior, suicidal intention, actual suicide attempts, and the seriousness of those attempts (by asking about resulting medical intervention).

BULLYING AND DEPRESSED BEHAVIOR



“At times I think I am no good at all.”

- **35.7%** of students

37.4%

students reported they felt **sad or depressed MOST days** in the past 12 months.

OVERALL, 15.9%

of students had seriously considered attempting suicide (state level: 18.6%).

Of students at the state level who indicated they *hadn't* been bullied through texting or social media in the past year, **27.9%** reported that **they felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that they stopped doing some usual activities**.

Of students who indicated they *had* been cyberbullied, **57.4%** 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, **37.1%** of those students had **seriously considered suicide**, **29.0%** had **made a suicide plan**, and **23.3%** had **attempted suicide**.

MORE STATS...

Similar relationships exist for students who indicated they had skipped school due to bullying fears in the past year. Of those students:

- **70.1%** had felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for at least two weeks in past year that they stopped doing usual activities.
- **51.3%** had seriously considered suicide.
- **41.3%** had made a suicide plan.
- **39.6%** had attempted suicide.

-
- **34.0%** of students reported the death of close friend or family member in the past twelve months (state level: 37.9%).
 - **9.3%** reported changing homes once or twice within the past 12 months.
 - **3.3%** reported having changed homes three or more times in the past three years.
 - **7.6%** said "they were worried they would run out of food at home due to money issues."
 - **3.9%** said "they had skipped a meal because their family didn't have enough money for food."
 - **3.8%** said "they had lived away from parents or guardians because you were kicked out, ran away, or were abandoned."

-
- **39.3%** of students in all grades average sleeping less than 7 hours a night on school nights.
 - **49.9%** of 10th graders and **57.4%** of 12th graders reported getting less than 7 hours a night on school nights.
 - **81.1%** of 12th grade students reported they felt tired or sleepy during the day "every day" or "several times" during the past two weeks; all grades averaged **67.4%**.



PAYS data shows a strong relationship between being bullied and depression and suicidal behaviors.

- **Less than 1 in 5 depressed and suicidal youth is receiving help.** There are long gaps between first symptoms and treatment.
- **17%** of youth 6-17 years old experience a mental health disorder.
- **50%** of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14, and **75%** by age 24.
- **Suicide is the second leading cause of death for 10 to 24 year olds. The leading cause of death among young people is drug overdoses.**
- Pennsylvania Safe to Say data shows that youth are primarily concerned about teen mental illness, reporting concerns about other students who seemed depressed. **16%** of reports were about potential suicide.
- Asking about suicide does not increase the risk of suicide. It is silence that is dangerous.

INFO FROM DUCKS COUNTY COURIER TIMES (WHY KIDS SUFFER MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS - JAN. 16, 2020) AND NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS (NAMI)



WARNING SIGNS OF YOUTH MENTAL ILLNESS

- 1** Feeling very sad or withdrawn for more than two weeks
- 2** Seriously trying to harm or kill oneself or making plans to do so
- 3** Severe out-of-control, risk-taking behaviors
- 4** Sudden, overwhelming fear for no reason
- 5** Not eating, throwing up or using laxatives to lose weight; significant weight loss or weight gain
- 6** Seeing, hearing or believing things that are not real
- 7** Repeatedly using drugs or alcohol
- 8** Drastic changes in mood, behavior, personality or sleeping habits
- 9** Extreme difficulty in concentrating or staying still
- 10** Intense worries or fears that get in the way of daily activities



THE LINK BETWEEN MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE



The substance use rate of youth who reported depressive symptoms is much greater than those who have a 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. Statewide, depressed students indicate use rates that are **seven times higher** for past-month cigarette use and **three times higher** for past month marijuana use in comparison to non-depressed students.

	No Depressive Symptoms		Moderate Depressive Symptoms		High Depressive Symptoms	
	County 2021	State 2021	County 2021	State 2021	County 2021	State 2021
Depressive symptom alone	30.4	28.4	62.8	63.8	6.8	7.8
Alcohol Lifetime	19.6	19.8	39.4	39.7	57.5	57.3
Alcohol 30-Day	7.5	6.6	16.3	15.0	26.2	25.9
Cigarettes Lifetime	2.0	2.9	5.2	8.5	16.7	23.4
Cigarettes 30-Day	0.4	0.8	1.1	2.2	5.2	7.9
Marijuana Lifetime	6.4	5.4	14.6	14.4	30.3	30.6
Marijuana 30-Day	3.4	2.5	8.5	7.5	20.9	18.8

COVID-19 IMPACT*

Felt more anxious, nervous, worried or angry than usual during the COVID-19 Pandemic:



37.9% 6TH GRADE

37.4% 10TH GRADE

36.4% 8TH GRADE

42.6% 12TH GRADE

*Based on 11 out of 13 districts.



GAMBLING

Overall, **31.3%** of students in Bucks County engaged in gambling for money or anything of value in their lifetime (compared to 30.4% at the state level).

The most frequently reported form of gambling was **“lottery [scratch cards, numbers, etc.]”** reported by **16.0%** of students who had gambled in the past 12 months (compared to 18.3% at the state level). The second most frequently reported form was **“personal skills [pool, darts, coin tossing, video games.]”**



e Decreases in 2021 from 2019 related to lifetime and 30-day gambling; all grade increase in 2021 for online internet gambling except 8th and 10th grade.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The goal of this collaborative effort between the PA Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs and the Penn State University EPISCenter is to develop and implement a systematic process for Single County Authorities (SCAs) to identify high-risk drug and alcohol consumption behaviors in their counties, as well as the social, economic, and health consequences associated with the use of these substances.

Through the utilization and analysis of county-level and comparative data sources, SCAs will then work to identify the underlying risk/protective factors and other indicators influencing substance use and abuse within their county. Collecting and analyzing county and state level quantitative data will provide a foundation to engage local stakeholders in data-driven qualitative discussion around the localized contributing factors that are most influencing the problem areas within their communities.

The Bucks County needs assessment was conducted in 5 phases:

- ➔ **Phase A**
Collect & Analyze County Consumption Data
Consumptions – The overall use of alcohol, tobacco and other substance use/abuse within a county (example: Past 30-day alcohol use rates)

- ➔ **Phase B**
Collect & Analyze County Consequence Data
Consequences – The social, economic and health problems associated with the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs (example: DUI Arrest Rate Per 100,000)

- ➔ **Phase C**
Identify Risk & Protective Factors and Other Indicators

- ➔ **Phase D**
Identify Contributing Factors via Community Conversations

- ➔ **Phase E**
Assessing County/Community Resources

HIGHEST RISK FACTORS

Students in Bucks County reported the three highest overall scores (all grades combined) for the following risk factor scales:

- 55.7%** Low Commitment Toward School
- 50.2%** Parental Attitudes Favorable Toward Antisocial Behavior
- 46.8%** Perceived Risk of Drug Use

HIGHEST PROTECTIVE FACTORS

The highest scores in the overall sample of students in this county were reported for:

- 65.1%** Family Attachment
- 64.5%** Family Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement
- 61.6%** Family Rewards for Prosocial Involvement

LOWEST PROTECTIVE FACTORS

The lowest protective factor scales in the overall sample were:

- 28.4%** Religiosity
- 37.8%** Community, Rewards for Prosocial Involvement
- 44.3%** School Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement

PROBLEMS

- 1** We are concerned about the **30-day use and lifetime use of alcohol** and **perception of risk** among youth in Bucks County.
- 2** We are concerned that the **30-day use and lifetime use of marijuana** in our county continues to be **higher than the state average**.
- 3** We are concerned about the **increasing vaping/e-cigarette** use in Bucks County.

IDENTIFIED RISK FACTORS

- ➔ Favorable attitudes towards ATOD use
- ➔ Perceived availability of drugs
- ➔ Parental attitudes favorable towards ATOD use
- ➔ Social access and availability

HOW WE'RE ADDRESSING THE PROBLEMS...



School-based and community education – evidenced-based programming in schools and community settings (after school) for both youth and parents/caregivers. These programs include **Too Good For Drugs, Life Skills, Strengthening Families 10-14, Signs of Suicide** and other programming such as **Catch My Breath (vaping prevention)**.



Informational presentations on a variety of topics (current drug trends, marijuana prevention, youth substance use, opioids, and more). Presentations are designed for many audiences – school faculty/staff, students, parents/caregivers, community members, and professionals.



Youth Marijuana Prevention Task Force – establish a countywide youth marijuana prevention task force which will focus on gathering data, identifying trends, developing educational and awareness materials, and more.

➔ **Marijuana Survey for Parents & Caregivers**

<https://tinyurl.com/muyrwann>

Received 2,000+ responses from Bucks County residents. 78.8% are parents/caregivers of at least one child aged 10-21.

- **80.7%** agree/strongly agree that they understand the risks associated with adolescent marijuana use
- **43.8%** responded that they rarely have observed or heard education campaigns, public health or safety messages regarding adolescent marijuana use in their community
- When given the choice between alcohol, tobacco or marijuana being the “least harmful” for a young person to be exposed to, **42.3%** responded marijuana is the least harmful
- **46.4%** responded marijuana use among young people increases the likelihood of trying other substances such as alcohol, tobacco and other drugs



Educational and awareness campaigns for youth and parents and caregivers.

PROBLEM

4

We continue to see **high rates among adults for alcohol-related crashes and DUIs.**

PROBLEM

5

Among adults, we continue to see **opioid medication misuses/abuse resulting in increased rates of overdose and overdose deaths in adults.**

IDENTIFIED RISK FACTORS

- ➔ Favorable attitudes towards ATOD use
- ➔ Perceived availability of drugs
- ➔ Laws and norms favorable to drug use

HOW WE'RE ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM...



Increase **education and awareness efforts on college campuses** – this includes awareness campaigns, informative presentations, and implementing programs such as **Alcohol Literacy Challenge** and informative presentations.



Increase **data collection** – we want to explore ways to gather more data about adults' consequences and consumption which will help to inform future programming and initiatives.



Informative presentations targeted to **community members and parents and caregivers of adult children to increase education and awareness regarding dangerous drinking.**



Adult Survey on Alcohol Consumption
<https://tinyurl.com/yc4k7fj5>

HOW WE'RE ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM...



Continue to expand the very successful **countywide medication collection program** – emphasizing the importance of safe disposal, safe storage of medicines in the home, and disposing of vaping/e-cigarette products.



Continue **informational presentations to community members**, increasing education and awareness about the risks of prescription opioids, the correlation to heroin use, and empowering patients to talk with their doctors about opioids.



Continue education **specific to older adults through Project MEDS**, an informative session aimed to provide education to older adults about medication safety.



Opioid Survey
<https://tinyurl.com/2s39fm4d>