

# The Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS)

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## User Guide and Worksheets for School Professionals

"IT PAYS TO ASK...IT PAYS TO KNOW"

[www.episcenter.org/paysguide](http://www.episcenter.org/paysguide)



For assistance with analyzing your  
PAYS data, please contact:



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## Getting Started:

# What is the Pennsylvania Youth Survey?

The Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS) is a student survey administered in odd-numbered years (e.g., 2013, 2015, 2017) to youth in 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grades in participating schools throughout the Commonwealth.

The survey is **anonymous, voluntary and confidential**. Youth are never required to complete the survey and their identity is not connected to their answers.

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

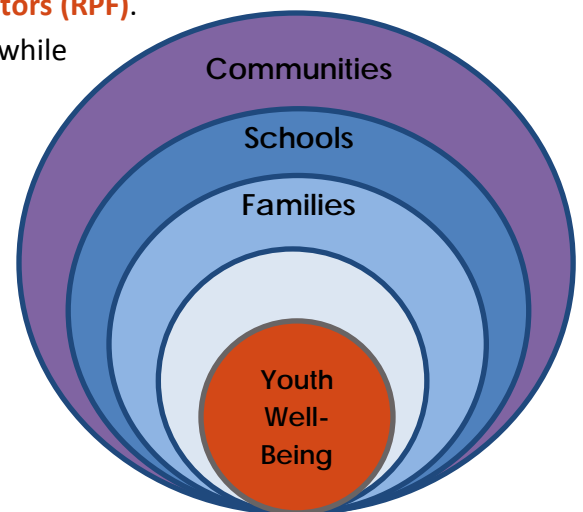
- Violence and drugs on school property;
- Being bullied;
- Involvement in gangs;
- Use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs (ATOD);
- Depression; and
- Gambling.

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

**Risk Factors** increase the chances of a youth having problems while **Protective Factors** decrease those chances.

RPF questions in the PAYS cover many areas of a youth's life including their experiences in:

- 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.

## Getting Started:

# What makes PAYS data valuable to Schools?

### Finding root causes of problems

- PAYS reports include data on risk and protective factors. These factors can be viewed as the root cause of youth problems and of youth well-being. PAYS data enables us to find and address these root causes, like commitment to school, **instead of only looking at the symptoms**, like poor grades.

### Youth reporting on their own experiences

- This survey asks youth to share their personal experiences across many areas of their lives. It provides an opportunity for youth to directly and confidentially share their experiences of violence, drugs, bullying, depression, and more. Research has found that youth typically respond honestly to confidential surveys, so this data can provide very **valuable insight** into the lives of our young people.

### Looking across many areas of their lives

- In order to understand our youth, we must understand the many parts of their lives. The PAYS does this by asking questions about the **youth's community, school, family, and peers**, as well as questions about the youth **themselves**.

### Setting School-wide Priorities

- The PAYS data can shed a light on areas that need to be addressed by your school or school district, enabling you to make better data-driven decisions.
- Use your PAYS data to:
  - **pick prevention programming,**
  - **set goals for your school year,**
  - **and improve the overall student experience**



## Getting Started:

# In this guide, you will learn how to...

- Develop your PAYS team and analyze your data
- Identify your strengths and challenges
- Determine your priorities
- Review existing resources related to your priorities
- Explore evidence-based programming
- Develop a comprehensive school prevention plan
- Share your PAYS data
- Weave your plan into the larger community prevention framework



...and  
ultimately map  
your path to  
success!

## Getting Started:

# What you need to know...

If you are just starting this process, going through your PAYS report can be a daunting, but very important, task. This guide is meant to walk you through the steps to understand and utilize your PAYS data. Using your PAYS data and this guide you will be able to better understand what is happening in your school and your community, and how best to help your students.

Worksheets and additional supplementary resources can also be viewed at [www.episcenter.org/paysguide](http://www.episcenter.org/paysguide).

## Acronym Guide:

- **ATOD:** Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs
- **CTC:** Communities That Care
- **DDAP:** Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs
- **EBP:** Evidence-based Programs
- **PAYS:** Pennsylvania Youth Survey
- **PBIS:** Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports
- **PCCD:** Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency
- **PDE:** Pennsylvania Department of Education
- **RPF:** Risk and Protective Factors
- **SAP:** Student Assistance Program

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*The PAYS survey has been invaluable to our District. [...] With the ever-changing risk factors affecting academic achievement and influencing our youth, this is truly one of the most comprehensive surveys and cost-effective means of gathering comparative data to drive prevention efforts for our District.*

*- Lisa M. Sviben Miller, Derry Township School District*

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## Section One:

# Develop your PAYS team and analyze your data

## Step One: Who should be on your team?

### Look for diversity on your team

The more diverse your team is, the more in-depth your analysis can be. No one expects one person to be able to do all of this!

### Examples of potential team members:

- School Counselors
- SAP team members
- Administrators (Principal/Asst. Principals/Deans)
- Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent
- School/community program providers
- Family Liaison/Specialist
- School District Data Analyst/Research Specialist
- Interested Community Members (coalition members, etc.)
- Student Services Director

### Tips for Reading Your Report

- Look for highs and lows that really catch your eye on first read.
- Make notes of how your local data compares with county, state and national data.

## Step Two: How will the work get done?

Each team member should read through this guide, review the PAYS Workbook, and explore the supplemental materials found at [www.episcenter.psu.edu/paysguide](http://www.episcenter.psu.edu/paysguide).

- **Read the report**  
Each team member should read the report and plan to spend time discussing the results they found.
- **Divide and conquer**  
To save time, consider dividing the portion of the PAYS report on behaviors into sections and have two people read each section. Be sure to have everyone read the risk and protective factors section.



- **Set completion goals**  
Determine dates for several meetings to discuss the results of your PAYS report; set goals for completing the tasks.
- **Elect team leader(s)**  
Identify one or more team leaders who will help organize the remaining steps in your analysis process.

### Step Three: Familiarize yourself with PAYS materials and resources

View the worksheets and handouts that will assist you throughout your process:

[www.episcenter.org/paysguide](http://www.episcenter.org/paysguide).

- **Understand Risk and Protective Factors**  
While it can be appealing to only identify and address problem behaviors, this should only be a way to start your PAYS conversation. It is important to review the PA Risk and Protective Factor Matrices to help you better understand how risk and protective factors are developed and how they related to youth behaviors. Reduction of risk factors and increasing protective factors should be the priority targets when addressing your youth behavior issues. Once you have selected your priorities, you will then want to utilize your PAYS data and other archival data that you have collected to support the risk and protective factor priorities that you selected for your school district.
- **Determine your interests**  
Identify areas of the report that you find most intriguing and where you would like to provide more in-depth analysis; this will be helpful if your team decides to “divide and conquer” the work.

**Special Note:** For most PAYS data points, you will have access to 4 levels of comparison for your school report: **local, county, state, and national** with all of those comparisons being found in your report except for county-level data. When a county had more than 2 school districts/private/parochial schools participate in the PAYS a county report was generated.

**Check to see if your county has a report at [www.pays.pa.gov](http://www.pays.pa.gov).**

Additional Section One Resources Available at [www.episcenter.psu.edu](http://www.episcenter.psu.edu)

- [Understanding Your PAYS Data](#)
- [PA Protective Factor Profile Matrix](#)
- [PA Risk Factor Profile Matrix](#)

## Section Two:

# Identify your strengths and challenges

### Step One: Identify the positive and concerning behaviors that you are seeing reported by your students in your PAYS report

- **What behaviors are students doing well with?**  
Look for **low percentages** of students reporting behaviors such as drug use, bullying, anxiety and/or depression.
- **What behaviors are students struggling with?**  
Look for **high percentages** of students reporting behaviors like drug use, bullying, anxiety and/or depression.
- **Think about how this data relates to what behaviors you are seeing in your school as shown in your school records.**  
Comparing your PAYS data to office referrals, counseling reports, and/or SAP team data can help you round out and better understand what is happening in your schools.

Look for patterns in your data. Certain behaviors can co-occur or influence one another. (e.g.- high availability of drugs can lead to more use).  
**What do you see?**

### Step Two: Identify and list the strengths and challenges in your PAYS report

Behavioral data tells you what is occurring, but it is the risk and protective factors that can tell you **WHY** the behaviors are occurring. Each of the risk and protective factors in the PAYS has been shown to influence the likelihood of engaging in problem behaviors.

- **What protective factors are strengths?**  
Look for protective factors where there is a **high percentage** of youth reporting protection (look for rates that are the same as or above county, state, and national norms).
- **What risk factors are strengths?**  
Look for risk factors where there is a **low percentage** of youth at risk – look for rates that are lower than the county, state, and national norms.



- **What protective factors are challenges?**  
Look for protective factors where there is a **low percentage** of youth reporting protection (rates lower than the county, state, and national norms).
- **What risk factors are challenges?**  
Look for risk factors where there is a **high percentage** of youth at risk (rates higher than county, state, and national norms).

### Step Three: Summarize your results

After you have identified the strengths and challenges related to your students' behaviors and the risk and protective factors, ask yourself if there are areas where youth are experiencing more or less success. For example:

- Are strengths or challenges clustered in specific domains (individual/peer, family, school, community)?
- Are there strengths or challenges in pro-social involvement for the family, school, and community?
- Is there a specific grade that is more at risk than others?
- What protective factors were the lowest or highest?



*What is the combined effect of risk factors and preventative factors?*

#### Important Note:

- It is important during this phase of the analysis to begin to think about how and with whom your team plans to share your PAYS data and analysis. Turn to page 16 of this guide to quickly review the section on sharing your PAYS data.

#### Additional Section Two Resources Available at [www.episcenter.psu.edu](http://www.episcenter.psu.edu)

- [School and Community Health Check-Up Profile Template](#)
- [PAYS Executive Summary Report Template](#)
- ["Focus on our High School Seniors" Report Template](#)

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## Section Two:

# Worksheet: PAYS Survey Analysis & Report-Out Guide

### Directions:

Use your **PAYS report** to answer the questions below about each section of your report. Your team may opt to divide into small groups to analyze each section or choose to analyze the whole report as a group.

**Here are some important points to consider when analyzing, be sure to review:**

- Both the total scores as well as the grade-level scores;
- Trends; and
- Comparisons to county, state, and the Bach Harrison Norm.

**The information that you will gather and report out will include:**

- Important findings in the survey results as seen through strength and challenge assessment;
  - Questions that may arise about the results; and
  - Recommended follow-up actions.
- 

### PAYS Report Sections 2-6: Miscellaneous Topics

1. What behaviors are students doing well with? Where do you see low percentages in total scores and by grade level?
2. What behaviors are students struggling with? Where do you see high percentages in total scores and by grade level?
3. How do these results relate to your school data/records?
4. Where do you see trends?
5. How does your data compare to the county, state, and the Bach Harrison norm?

## **PAYS Report Section 7: Risk & Protective Factors**

1. What overall risk factors are strengths? Where do you see low percentages in total scores and by grade level?
2. What overall risk factors are challenges? Where do you see high percentages in total scores and by grade level?
3. What overall protective factors are strengths? Where do you see high percentages in total scores and by grade level?
4. What overall protective factors are challenges? Where do you see low percentages in total scores and by grade level?
5. Where do you see trends?
6. How does your data compare to the county, state, and the Bach Harrison norm?

### **Report Your Results**

This section will help you pull all your information together and be able to share your strengths and challenges with others. We suggest you report out your data in a way that will be appealing for your audience and have prepared several templates for you to use to report out your data in an engaging and informative way. Please refer to your guide for a list of useful templates that can help you get the word out about your data.

### **Demographics/Methodology**

1. What schools/grade levels participated?
2. What was the gender breakdown of respondents? Is this representative of your school/district?
3. What was the ethnicity breakdown of respondents? Is this representative of your school/district?
4. How many surveys were completed? What percentage of surveys were identified as invalid or excluded?

### Questions to Consider:

1. Considering all behaviors, what strengths and challenges does your school/district see?
2. Considering all risk and protective factors, what strengths and challenges does your school/district see? *(Note: The **School Health Check-up Profile** is an excellent tool to report out risk and protection data. It can be found in your supplemental material.)*
3. Considering your risk and protective factors, are there strengths and/or challenges clustered in a specific domain(s) (Community, Family, School, Peer/Individual)? If yes, what are they?
4. What are some strengths and/or challenges to pro-social involvement for the family, school, and community?
5. Considering behaviors, risk and protection, are there specific grade(s) that appear to be more at risk than others?
6. Please list any follow up actions and/or questions that the team might have?

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## Section Three:

# Determine your priorities

### Step One: Determine RPF priorities to be addressed by your school district

Based on the information you collected and your understanding of risk and protective factors, your team should now have a clearer understanding of the areas that need to be addressed.

Make a list of all possible targeted areas; select **one – three risk and/or protective** factors to be your school's priorities.

There are several questions that your team needs to ask when selecting priorities:

- Who will be responsible for determining the priorities? Will it be your group? Are you making recommendations to others for final decision?
- What is your ability to influence the risk and protective factors on your list?
- Can programs or processes be put in place in your schools to address them?
- Do you have the resources to do so?
- Do you need to consider involving other community members (perhaps your local prevention coalition, SCA, or mental health agency)?
- Are there other political/social/economic considerations that the team should consider?

### Need more information to support your data?

Look at local data sources such as:

- school reports, for suspensions, eligible students for free and reduced meals,
- county health department numbers on teen pregnancy,
- local law enforcement for underage drinking, drug use apprehensions, and
- Youth Level of Service Inventory (YLS) information from your county juvenile probation office.

Find direct links to a vast array of data sources at <http://www.episcenter.psu.edu/dataresources>.

*The PAYS is just one data source that gives you information about your school and community.*

*Consider using other forms of data to confirm the results of your PAYS. (e.g.- attendance records or elementary reading scores may help shed light on low school commitment)*

## Step Two: Establish measurable short- and long-term goals

It is important to develop measurable short- and long-term goals for each of your priority risk and/or protective factors. Additionally, your team might want to establish goals for problem behaviors identified with your PAYS data. These goals will help you track your progress in both the short and long terms.

### Measurable goals should include:

- A specific behavior, risk factor, or protective factor – the more specific, the easier it is to stay on target.
- How the goal will be measured – what tool will you use to measure your progress?
- A baseline data point – this shows where you currently are.
- How much of a change you are expecting to see and by when?

**Goals can also be established for your process too!**

Here are two general examples:

- Present your data & prevention plan to school board by August 30, 2018
- Implement targeted evidence-based program to 50% of families with 6<sup>th</sup> grade students

Short-term goals established for items found on the PAYS can be tracked from one PAYS administration to the next (**Remember: the PAYS survey is administered every other year, in the odd years**).

Long-term goals are generally set for five to ten years and can also be written for both PAYS data points and process as well. There is no exact right or wrong amount of time, you just need to be sure that you select an amount of time that you will commit to tracking and will be relevant to your school and community.

## Here are some examples of well-written goals:

### Behavior Goal

To decrease youth anti-social behaviors as measured by 6<sup>th</sup>-grade students reporting having been hit, kicked, pushed, or shoved around within the past year on the 2015 PA Youth Survey (PAYS) from the current baseline of 35 percent to 25 percent by 2021.

**2015 Baseline:** 35%

**2017 Desired Outcome:** 32%

**2019 Desired Outcome:** 29%

**2021 Desired Outcome:** 25%

### Priority Protective Factor Goal

To increase bonding to family as measured by 10<sup>th</sup>-grade students reporting poor family attachment on the 2015 PA Youth Survey (PAYS) from the current baseline protective factor percentage of 40 percent to 55 percent by 2021.

**2015 Baseline:** 40%

**2017 Desired Outcome:** 45%

**2019 Desired Outcome:** 50%

**2021 Desired Outcome:** 55%

### Priority Risk Factor Goal

To decrease family conflict as measured by 8<sup>th</sup>-grade students reporting high levels of family conflict on the 2015 PA Youth Survey (PAYS) from the current baseline risk factor percentage of 75 percent to 60 percent by 2021.

**2015 Baseline:** 75%

**2017 Desired Outcome:** 70%

**2019 Desired Outcome:** 65%

**2021 Desired Outcome:** 60%

Additional Section Three Resources Available at [www.episcenter.psu.edu](http://www.episcenter.psu.edu)

- [Archival Data Resources](#)

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## Section Three:

# Worksheet: Targeted Risk & Protective Factor Priorities

### Directions:

Your team has analyzed your data so now it's time to decide on 1-3 Risk and/or Protective Factor priorities that your school/district can focus on in the coming years. These priorities will help ensure that you are selecting the most appropriate programming/activities to reduce your students' antisocial behaviors.

#### 1. Who will determine priority?

Are there others who need to be brought to the team for determining your priorities? Will the team only be making recommendations for others to consider for a final decision? What actions need to take place for a final decision can be made?

#### 2. What do the numbers show?

List three to five risk/protective factors that your team has found to be the most challenging. You will pare this number down to 1-3 priorities once your team has considered a few questions around this list. Remember: challenges are represented by **high percentages for risk factors and low percentages for protective factors** and grade level analysis is important to consider because the closer your priority is to your target population the better.

**3. Use this chart to consider the following questions:**

Possible Prioritized Risk/Protective Factor	What is the ability of the school/district to make a change in these potential priorities?	What programs/processes could possibly be implemented to address each of these potential priorities?	What resources might be needed for implementation?	Can the school/district implement this possible program/activity internally or is there a need to involve other outside agencies?	What are other political/social/economic considerations that the team should be aware of when making the final determination or your school/district priority?

**4. Select Your Priorities**

Considering answers to the questions above, list one to three priority risk/protective factors that your school/district will focus on in the coming years.

### Section Three:

## Worksheet: Goal Writing

Remember to be realistic when writing your goals. Nothing changes overnight! Also, keep in mind where you are at in relation to your county, state, and national norms; this can give perspective about where your community is at and where it needs to go.

Priority #\_\_\_

Risk Factor    Protective Factor    Behavior

Name of Priority: \_\_\_\_\_

Current percentage of students at risk in district : \_\_\_\_\_%

Current percentage of students at risk in county : \_\_\_\_\_%

Current percentage of students at risk in state: \_\_\_\_\_%

Current percentage of students at risk nationally (BH Norm/MTF): \_\_\_\_\_%

Goal for this priority:

2017 Desired Outcome \_\_\_\_\_%   2019 Desired Outcome \_\_\_\_\_%   2021 Desired Outcome \_\_\_\_\_%

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Priority #\_\_\_

Risk Factor    Protective Factor    Behavior

Name of Priority: \_\_\_\_\_

Current percentage of students at risk in district : \_\_\_\_\_%

Current percentage of students at risk in county : \_\_\_\_\_%

Current percentage of students at risk in state: \_\_\_\_\_%

Current percentage of students at risk nationally (BH Norm/MTF): \_\_\_\_\_%

Goal for this priority:

2017 Desired Outcome \_\_\_\_\_%   2019 Desired Outcome \_\_\_\_\_%   2021 Desired Outcome \_\_\_\_\_%

**Bonus: This information can be used on the “needs assessment” section of grant applications!**

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## Section Four:

# Review existing resources related to your priorities

Using PAYS information will allow you to use a data-driven approach to decision making in your school. You will be able to get a clear snapshot of what types of problems students in your school are having which can aid in intervention planning. The data can also be used for selecting targeted prevention programs that align with the problems your students are experiencing.

## Step One: Determine who would best be able to assist with your resource assessment

This part of the process may be done by the same team members as those who worked on the data collection part of your process or you may need expand your team to include those who are knowledgeable of the programs, policies, and practices that are currently in place to address your prevention needs.

Here are some examples of good team members:

- School Counselors
- SAP team members
- Administrators (AP, Principal)
- Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent
- School Resource Officer
- School/community program providers
- Family Liaison/Specialist
- School District Data Analyst/Research Specialist
- Interested community members (Coalition members, etc.)

## Step Two: Explore existing programs, policies and practices available to address the priorities determined

Using the Resource Assessment Survey Template, you will explore existing programs and practices that your school district and community have in place to address your priorities. It is important that you find out as much as you can about each program and practice as it relates to your priority in both your school setting and out in the community. Very generally, you will ask yourself the following questions:

- Does your school/district already have programs, policies, and/or practices in place to address the priorities chosen?
- Are there programs, policies and/or practices in your community that are being implemented that are addressing your needs?

### Step Three: Conduct a gap analysis

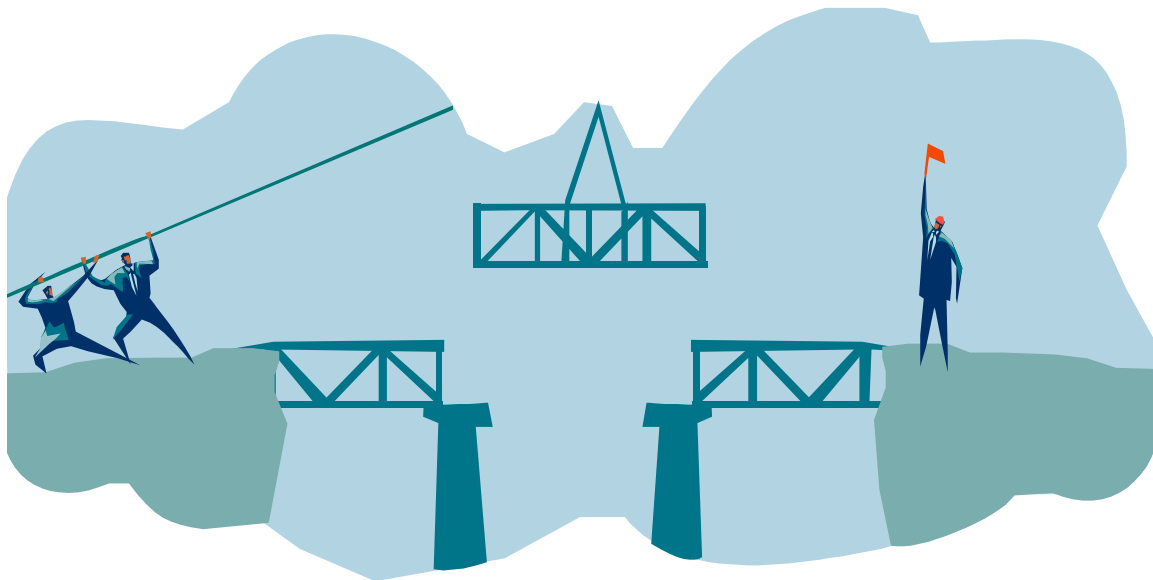
Using the “School Program Analysis” Worksheet, you will be able to focus on gaps not only in types of programs and practices available to address your priorities, but also gaps related to the following areas:

- Effectiveness of programs;
- Funding for programs;
- Developmental (ages, stages, etc.) being served;
- Demographic (cultural, ethnic, gender, etc.) served;
- Schools/Areas served; and
- Implementation challenges (fidelity, dosage, etc.) being encountered.

### Step Four: Summarize information gathered through this process

All of the information gathered here will allow you to make more informed decisions on how to spend your district’s limited resources to address RPFs that are targeted. Using the resource summary worksheet you will be able to identify:

- The effective programs, policies and practices;
- What areas these programs policies and practices target;
- What needs to be expanded, modified and/or implemented to address the RPF priorities; and
- Any duplicate or overlapping services.



## Section Four:

# Worksheet: Resource Assessment

**Instructions:** Complete a separate Gaps Analysis Worksheet for each of your priorities. Check to see what, where, and how programs are being implemented to address the problems that you have identified.

### 1. Identify your priority

What grade level shows the highest risk? \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. List all programs addressing that priority that are currently in place:

It is not always enough to just have a program; you also want to make sure that the program is effective. In order to be the most effective, they should be based in research, monitored for quality, and serving the right population.

Program Name	Research or Evidence-based*	Monitored for quality**	Grade-Level/ School Served	Approx. cost of program

\* **Research or Evidence-Based:** Research or evidence-based programs are programs that have been designed for the school context by developers and will normally have a manual or standard way that the curriculum is to be delivered to be effective.

\*\***Monitored for Quality:** In order to be sure that a program is effective, there should be some way to monitor the delivery of the program. Often times, this can include observations of lessons as they are delivered, collecting surveys before and after the program is delivered, etc.

### 3. Think about the following questions:

- Do you have the right programs in place at the right grade levels and in the right schools to address this priority?
- Do you have the appropriate staff and classroom time to implement the right program as intended?
- What resources do you have available to put toward programs (**Hint: think about re-appropriation of resources from non-evidence-based programs**)?
- What organization, agency or community contact could provide assistance in selecting, implementing, and funding your needed prevention program or programs?

## Section Five:

# Putting PAYS into action

## Step One: Explore evidence-based programming at your school

When exploring evidence-based programs, there are several things to consider, including:

- How confident are you that your current programs are addressing your prioritized risk and protective factors?
- How confident are you that these programs will address the long-term outcomes you would like to see for your students?
- What information is out there to help you find other programs?
- How well do the programs you are implementing or are interested in implementing fit with your school, and how feasible are they to implement with your current resources?

Did you know? There are evidence-based prevention programs that can be delivered as part of the regular school day curriculum that meet PA Common Core Standards.

Think about the programs and practices that you identified in your resource assessment.

How confident are you in those programs?

- Are your current programs evidence-based programs?
- Are you sure they are working? How do you know?
- Do you have a way to measure their effectiveness in your schools?
- If you have programs in place that already address your needs, how do you strengthen your confidence in those programs?

Collecting systematic data to measure program fidelity and success increase the likelihood the program will have the desired results.

### Continuum of Confidence\*

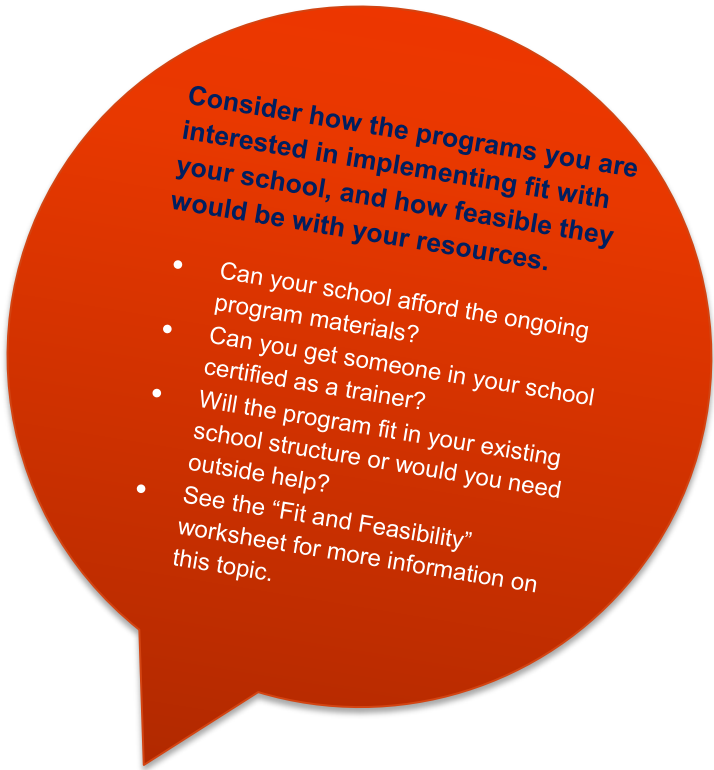


\*Bumbarger, B. K., Moore, J. E., & Cooper, B. R. (2013). Examining adaptations of evidence-based programs in natural contexts. *The Journal of Primary Prevention*, 34(3), 147-161. Retrieved from <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs10935-013-0303-6>

If needed, find other programs that align with your prioritized risk and protective factors. There are many websites, lists, and directories of evidence-based programs and practices. When looking at these websites, be sure to understand how each one rate the programs included in the list. Not all programs are as effective as others – just because they are on a list does not mean they are the best option. Ratings also vary by website, make sure to read their selection criteria closely.

See these websites for more information on evidence-based programs:

- **Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development**  
[www.blueprintsprograms.com](http://www.blueprintsprograms.com)
- **SAMHSA’s National Registry of Evidence Based Programs and Practices (NREPP)**  
[www.nrepp.samhsa.gov](http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov)
- **Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Model Programs Guide**  
[www.ojjdp.gov/mpg](http://www.ojjdp.gov/mpg)
- **National Institute of Justice (NIJ)**  
[www.crimesolutions.gov](http://www.crimesolutions.gov)
- **EPISCenter Website**  
[www.episcenter.psu.edu](http://www.episcenter.psu.edu)



**Additional Section Five Resources Available at [www.episcenter.psu.edu](http://www.episcenter.psu.edu)**

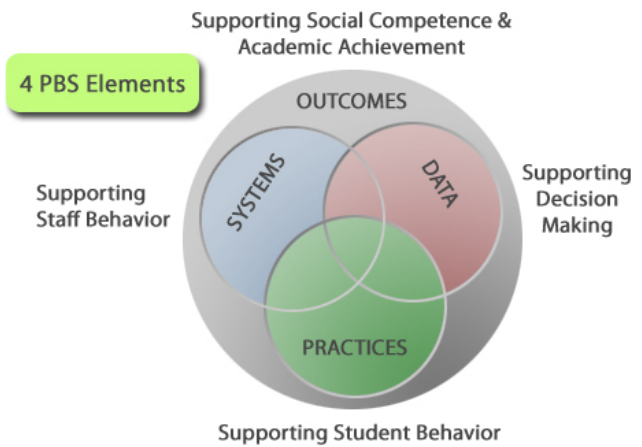
- [Questions to Ask When Selecting Evidence-Based Programs](#)
- [Evidence-based Program Guide](#)
- [Understanding the Research Lingo](#)
- [Program Fit and Feasibility Worksheet](#)

## Step Two: Develop a comprehensive school prevention plan

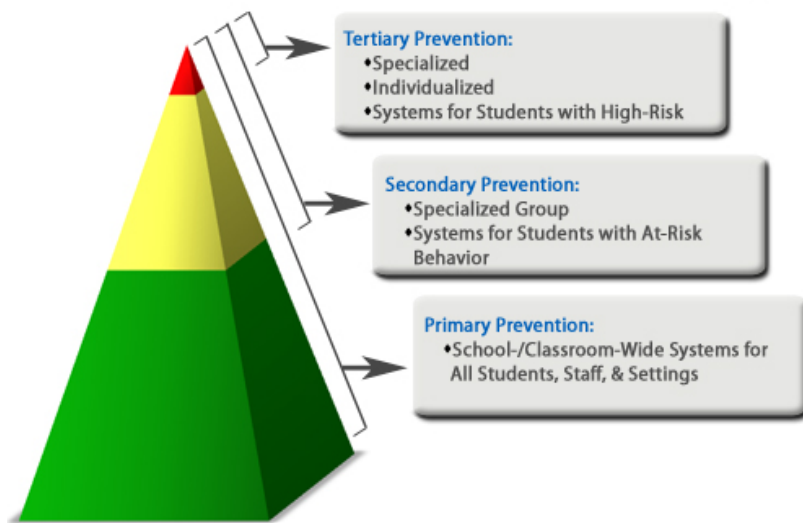
One of the most important functions of the PAYS is to provide another source of data for developing a comprehensive school prevention plan. PAYS supports data-driven decision making by providing your school another way to identify antisocial behaviors that your students might be experiencing.

PAYS helps to determine the underlying risk factors that contribute to these problems as well as the areas of protection that can serve to buffer students from negative behaviors.

Using this data in conjunction with the other local data (attendance, referrals, etc.) will allow you to be more exact in selecting programs to address problems that are occurring. PAYS data allows you not only to identify areas for improvement, it also can serve as a progress monitoring tool to track how things are going on an ongoing basis.



### Continuum of School-Wide Instructional & Positive Behavior Support



**Tertiary Prevention:**

- Specialized
- Individualized
- Systems for Students with High-Risk

**Secondary Prevention:**

- Specialized Group
- Systems for Students with At-Risk Behavior

**Primary Prevention:**

- School-/Classroom-Wide Systems for All Students, Staff, & Settings

Using the risk and protective factor scores from the PAYS, you will be able understand what universal prevention programs need to be put in place to address your Primary Prevention needs. You will also be able to track how programs are working in your school by looking at PAYS data over time.

In addition, specific problems can be identified (ATOD use, depression, etc.) through the PAYS which can demonstrate a need for certain secondary prevention or

intervention services. While the PAYS cannot tell you what students need the program, it can indicate the types of programs that should be made available to address the overall needs in the school.

Many schools have prevention plans with Student Assistance Programs (SAP) or other school agreements related to intervention or prevention. We encourage the integration of these plans into a larger comprehensive school-wide plan. Sometimes, these plans exist in silos; what happens in one area of the school or district may not be coordinated with other areas. Doing a school-wide plan allows coordination of time and resources for a larger effort.

## Prevention plans should include:

- Long- and short-term goals related to program implementation
- Long- and short-term goals related to student behavior change

Utilize the **PAYS Workbook and Supplemental Materials** to assist in creating your school-wide prevention plan.

## Step Three: Share your PAYS data

### Use the data in your school to create the environment you want

One of the most important things you can do with your PAYS data is to share it with your students. They need to know that the information they are providing is important and useful. Data on risk factors such as depression or bullying can give you a platform from which you can open a discussion about these issues with the youth. Because this data comes directly from them, it is more meaningful than other any other statistics that could be shared.

You can also find simple ways to embed collected data through the PAYS into the school environment. Using positive messages about peer use norms (e.g. - **most kids at your school DO NOT drink/smoke**) is one example of how to help to reframe problem behaviors for students.

### Sharing data with community stakeholders

Data provided through this PAYS report contains information that is pertinent to all areas of students' lives--community, family, school, peer and individual. Sometimes, the risk factors identified with the PAYS influence a student's ability to be successful but are not able to be addressed within the school context. By sharing the information in your report, you can partner with community stakeholders and have a bigger impact on your students.

Here are a few examples of the types of data you may share with different audiences.

Highlight information that tells the best story about your strengths and your needs!

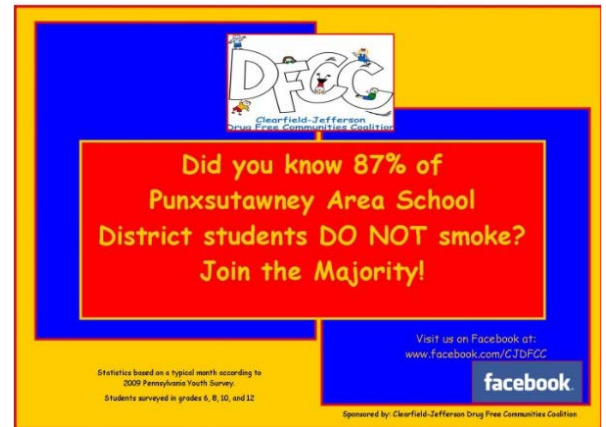
Audience	Data Examples	Method
Parents, Community	30-day ATOD use	By grade, gateway drugs vs. other
PTAs	Prosocial opportunities	By grade, change over time
Policymakers/ Funders	Risk & protective factors (Section 5)	Comparisons to state, national norms
Prevention Boards	Risk & protective factors (Section 5)	Highs & lows, change over time
School Administrators	School climate & safety (Section 2)	Comparisons to state, change over time
Youth	Prosocial opportunities, Bullying	By grade, by bullying type
County Officials	Risk & protective factors, Gambling, DUI, other illicit drugs	Youth overall, change over time
Media	ATOD prevalence, lifetime use	Comparisons to state, national norms



## Find positive ways to share your PAYS data!

When it comes to sharing messages from the PAYS in your schools and communities, positive messaging enables students to hear all the positive news about young people. Social norming research has shown that sharing positive messages also leads to an increase in positive behaviors and attitudes about students.

Messages with a “scare-tactic” focus have been proven to have negative and harmful effects on youth. This is an example of a strong positive messaging campaign:



Note: From Clearfield-Jefferson Drug Free Communities Coalition

## Step Four: Weave your plan into the larger community prevention network

### Seek out partnerships with coalitions and key stakeholders in your community

Partnerships throughout the community can be a key to your success. Many communities have people in areas outside of the school that can provide resources (funding, expertise, manpower, etc.). Identifying these key stakeholders for partnerships will allow you to broaden your resource base beyond what only the school district can provide.

One partnership we encourage is with local prevention coalitions. Drug Free Communities (DFC), Single County Authorities (SCA), and Communities That Care (CTC) coalitions are all actively engaged in prevention planning at the community level. If you have a prevention coalition in your community, they may be able to help with additional ideas, resources, and partnerships. These coalitions can be engaged at any time during the prevention planning process. They can often help you develop your school prevention strategy as well.

The EPISCenter is a technical assistance provider for coalitions in the state of Pennsylvania. They maintain a website that contains a directory of coalitions to enable you to see who you could partner with in your area: <http://www.episcenter.psu.edu/ctcresources>.

**Please note:** Although we do our best to list all coalitions, there may be some we are not aware of. If you do not see one listed for your local area, please contact the EPISCenter for more information at [episcenter@psu.edu](mailto:episcenter@psu.edu).



## Resource Development

PAYS data can be used to provide the necessary data on your grant applications to demonstrate need in your schools. Using this data along with other school or community archival data, you will be able to create a full picture of the need for prevention programs in your school and community.

See these websites for more information on grants available for these programs:

- **Pennsylvania Department of Education**  
[www.education.state.pa.us](http://www.education.state.pa.us)
- **Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency**  
[www.pccd.state.pa.us](http://www.pccd.state.pa.us)



## Section Five:

# Worksheet: School Program Analysis

Use the results from your [Resource Assessment Worksheet](#) to answer the following questions:

What programs do you have that you believe are working well (if there is data to support that the program is working, list it here)? Where does the program fall on the “Continuum of Confidence” shown on page 29?

What programs that are currently running should be looked at for potential removal or replacement?

What problem areas did you discover that need additional resources (based on your PAYS report and your school data)?

Using the websites referred to on page 14 in the PAYS Guide (NREPP, Blueprints, etc.), what programs do you think might address the problem areas listed above?

What resources do you have to devote to starting a new program? (**Note:** While it is easy to answer this question with “NONE!” remember, we are not just talking about money. Consider staff time, potential community partnerships, area coalition resources, etc. These resources do not have to just come from the school.)

## Section Five:

# Worksheet: Sharing your data

One of the most important things you can do with this report is to share the data from it with others. Use this form to help identify who and what you would like to share. You do not have to stop with what you write down here. This is just an exercise. See the example for ideas!

**Example Audience:** Students, Parents, PTA, School Board

**Example Data to Share:** 30-day Marijuana Use, Depression, High Risk Factors

**Method to Share:** By Grade, School Average, Change over time, Comparison to National Norms

**How will it be shared:** Presentation, Include in School Curriculum, Handout

**Purpose of sharing:** To show school need, to share with students what data they provided

Audience: \_\_\_\_\_

Data to Share: \_\_\_\_\_

Method to share: \_\_\_\_\_

How will it be shared? \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose of sharing: \_\_\_\_\_

Audience: \_\_\_\_\_

Data to Share: \_\_\_\_\_

Method to share: \_\_\_\_\_

How will it be shared? \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose of sharing: \_\_\_\_\_

**Remember, this data is as powerful as the people who are able to use it!  
Share it widely and often!**

## Section Five:

# Worksheet: Practicing the Positive

Data reporting does not always have to be framed as “**what is going wrong**”. As a matter of fact, sometimes that is exactly what you do not want. This form will give you practice reframing data in a “**positive**” light, or by saying what we want, instead of what we don’t.

Come up with at least three statements that you can share with students, parents, staff, etc. that reframe “Problem Behavior” information provided by the PAYS.

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### Example:

**PAYS Data Reported:** 11% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders reported lifetime use of Marijuana.

**Positive Reframe:** 89% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders have NEVER used Marijuana.

---

Now it is your turn:

PAYS Data Reported:

Positive Reframe:

PAYS Data Reported

Positive Reframe:

PAYS Data Reported:

Positive Reframe:

Keeping your message positive helps **focus on what you want**, rather than what you don’t!

## In closing...

This guide has provided a variety of information and tips on how to fully utilize your PAYS data to improve your school and community. While this may seem overwhelming, working to understand the data and responses your students provided in the PAYS can lead to rewarding improvements and goals within your school.

For more information about the materials presented in this guide, please visit [www.episcenter.psu.edu/paysguide](http://www.episcenter.psu.edu/paysguide). Online versions of the Guide, Worksheets, and Supplemental Materials are available on the website.

**Have questions?** Contact EPISCenter at [episcenter@psu.edu](mailto:episcenter@psu.edu).

### Access PAYS Data Online

PAYS data from 1989 on can be accessed at [www.pays.pa.gov](http://www.pays.pa.gov). If you're reading a printed version of this guide, the following QR code can be used to access the site via a smartphone.

