

A photograph of a paved path lined with trees in autumn. The trees have yellow and orange leaves, and the ground is covered in fallen leaves. A semi-transparent blue overlay is positioned in the center of the image, containing white text.

**2019 PA Youth Survey
(PAYS)
Statewide Report
Highlights**

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This report is brought to you by the PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) and was created by the PA Youth Survey Advisory Group (PAYSAG).

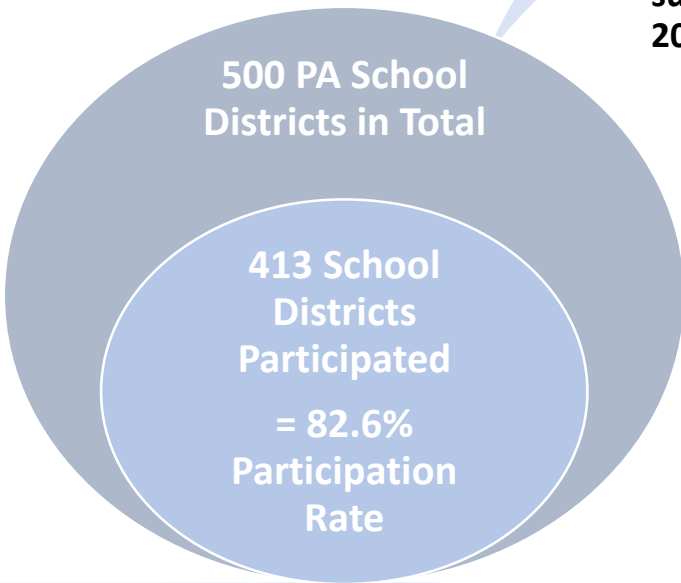
It was designed to showcase specific highlights from the full report in an attempt to further engage the reader to explore the wide range of data found in the full PA Youth Survey State Report.

The PAYS State Report and many other PAYS-related resources can be found at www.PAYS.pa.gov

Progress In Pennsylvania

Participation Rates

In 2019, there was a **9.6% increase in student participation!**



253,866 valid surveys in 2017

280,944 valid surveys in 2019

74.4% of all PA eligible students in grades 6, 8, 10, & 12 participated in the 2019 survey!

2017 = 379 school districts participated

2019 = 413 school districts participated

An 8.2% increase!

Protective Factors

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

In 2019, the highest levels of protection were found in the

Family Domain

- Family Attachment (62.3)
- Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement (61.9)
- Rewards for Prosocial Involvement (60.3)



Top Risk Factors of Concern - All Grades Combined

Risk Factor = "conditions that increase the likelihood of a young person becoming involved in drug use, delinquency, school dropout, and/or violence."	2015 PAYS	2017 PAYS	2019 PAYS	Bach Harrison (BH) Norm
Low Commitment to School	41.5%	44.7%	50.6%	50.3%
Perceived Risk of Drug Use	30.8%	49.1%	49.2%	51.4%
Parental Attitudes Favorable to Anti-Social Behavior	31.6%	46.2%	48.2%	33.3%
Low Neighborhood Attachment	41.7%	42.5%	43.5%	42.5%
Depressive Symptoms	36.7%	37.7%	38.5%	38.7%
Total Risk <i>(Defined as 5 or more risk factors for 6th and 8th graders and 7 or more risk factors for 10th and 12th graders)</i>	40%	40%	41%	n/a

Top Risk Factors of Concern - By Grade Level

6th Grade

- Parental Attitudes Favorable to Anti-Social Behavior (53.3 up from 50.1 in 2017)
- Perceived Risk of Drug Use (48.8 up from 47.2 in 2017 and 43.0 in 2015)
- Laws & Norms Favorable to Drug Use (45.8 up from 43.6 in 2017 and 39.8 in 2015)

8th Grade

- Low Commitment to School (52.7 up from 46.8 in 2017 and 41.7 in 2015)
- Perceived Risk of Drug Use (43.2 down from 43.8 in 2017)
- Parental Attitudes Favorable to Anti-Social Behavior (41.7 up from 40.9 in 2017)

10th Grade

- Low Commitment to School (55.3 up from 49.8 in 2017 and 45.5 in 2015)
- Parental Attitudes Favorable to Anti-Social Behavior (50.4 up from 47.3 in 2017)
- Perceived Risk of Drug Use (46.7 up from 46.3 in 2017 and 43.9 in 2015)

12th Grade

- Perceived Risk of Drug Use (58.2 down from 58.6 in 2017)
- Low Commitment to School (48.6 up from 43.8 in 2017)
- Parental Attitudes Favorable to Anti-Social Behavior (47.7 up from 47.1 in 2017)

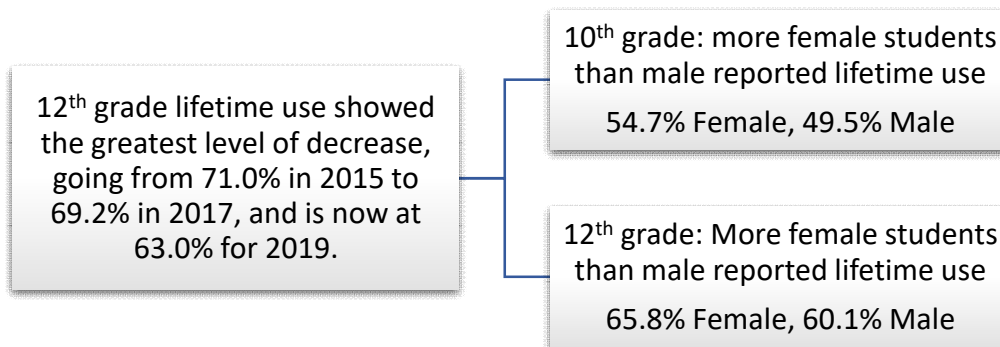
Alcohol



Usage Behaviors

Lifetime Use

- **PA is higher than the National Average in lifetime use** by grade: 8th (32.3% to 24.5%); 10th (52.0% to 43.1%); and 12th (63.0% to 58.5%).
- For the fourth straight administration, **lifetime use continued to decrease** in 8th, 10th, 12th, and including 6th grade in 2019 (now at 16.7% lifetime).



30-Day Use

- **30-Day use rates were slightly higher by PA 8th, 10th, and 12th graders than reported by their national peers.**
- The rate of 12th graders who reported **driving a vehicle after drinking alcohol during the past year continued to decline**, from 8.7% in 2013 to 5.5% in 2017, to 3.9% in 2019. However, the rate of 12th graders who reported **driving after using marijuana remains much higher** at 9.8%.
- **Binge Drinking rates increased in grade 12** (from 16.5% to 17.2%) but decreased slightly in 10th grade (from 8.7% to 8.4%).

Attitudes & Perceptions

12 th Grade Perceptions	2015	2017	2019
Willing to try alcohol before 21	53.1%	49.9%	46.9%
Would be easy or somewhat easy to obtain alcohol	69.0%	--	2.1%
Would not be caught by the police for underage drinking	--	--	81.5%



76.5% of 10th graders reported that **they would not be caught by the police for underage drinking.**

Alcohol (Continued)



Sources for Obtaining Alcohol

- 25.7% of students reported that their **parents gave them alcohol**.
- Over 40% of 8th graders (40.4%) and 10th graders (41.1%) reported their primary source for alcohol was **taking it without permission**. These rates have increased dramatically from 2015 (8th was 24.8% and 10th was 31.0%).
- Primary source for obtaining alcohol for 12th graders was **“Gave someone money to buy it for me”** (38.1%).

PAStart

Commonwealth Prevention Alliance 

www.PAStart.org

[Print Resource Materials](#)

[Digital/Social Media Ads](#)

[Web Video/PSAs](#)

What is PAStart?

The mission of the campaign is to build healthy, capable children. Currently, the parent- and caregiver-focused messages recognize that meeting adolescent developmental needs, while providing the right guidance, is a delicate and challenging balancing act. We want kids to grow in a safe environment and learn how to make good choices, but sometimes we are at a loss in knowing what works best.

PAStart is here to help by providing free, thought-provoking materials that pose a question about an important lesson or milestone then a positive action is suggested. Also included on this site are reliable resource links to help you learn more about topics such as: developmental stages, prevention of risk-taking behaviors, and positive discipline techniques.

Visit www.pastart.org to access these downloadable materials (posters, flyers, digital ads, and video public service announcements) that can be used for promoting your prevention activities and are a great brand to supplement your PAYS data presentations!

Tobacco and Marijuana

Tobacco:

Lifetime Use of Cigarettes Continues to Decline:	8 th	10 th	12 th	30-Day Use of Cigarettes is also Declining:	8 th	10 th	12 th
2015	11.0%	18.3%	32.7%	2015	3.5%	6.8%	14.6%
2017	9.4%	16.2%	29.0%	2017	2.5%	6.0%	13.2%
2019	6.9%	12.2%	21.9%	2019	1.9%	4.0%	7.5%

- 12th graders report higher 30-day use of cigarettes than their national peers* – 7.5% to 5.7%.
- 12th graders report using smokeless tobacco at a higher rate than their national peers (11.8% to 9.8% lifetime; 5.0% to 3.5% 30-day).
- Both of these rates continue to drop from 18.9% lifetime and 10.3% 30-day in 2013.



Marijuana:

Marijuana Use		8 th	10 th	12 th
Lifetime	PA	7.4%	22.4%	37.5%
	USA	15.2%	34.0%	43.7%
30-Day	PA	4.0%	12.9%	20.8%
	USA	6.6%	18.4%	22.3%

- Lifetime use by 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students has gone down or remained constant between 2017 and 2019; however, the national numbers have increased dramatically in 8th grade (15.2% in 2019, compared to 13.5% in 2017; and 10th grade (34.0% to 30.7%). This trend is comparable at the 30-day use level as well.
- More students in 10th and 12th grade report using marijuana than tobacco for both lifetime use and 30-day use.
- 31.7% of 12th graders reported a willingness to try marijuana, up from 30.8% in 2017.



Prescription Drugs

**PA students
are using Rx drugs
at very high rates!**



**30-day Rx drug use
rates are less than 1%
for grades 6, 8, 10,
& 12 combined!**

Most prevalent used Rx drug are prescription pain relievers

Lifetime Narcotic Pain Reliever Use in PA	12th Grade	30-Day Narcotic Pain Reliever Use in PA	12th Grade
2015	12.1%	2015	3.0%
2017	8.8%	2017	1.7%
2019	6.1%	2019	1.1%

- 12th grade 30-day narcotic use decreased from 1.7% to 1.1%.
- 40.1% of 12th graders who used prescription drugs reported that a friend or family member gave them to them.
- 45.2% of the 6th graders and 51.5% of the 8th graders who reported using prescription drugs during the past year took them from a family member in their home.
- The overall percentage of students reporting it would be easy for them to obtain prescription drugs decreased from 27.8% in 2015 to 25.5% in 2017 to 23.9% in 2019.
- The sharpest decrease for prescription drug use overall was among 12th graders whose rate dropped from 38.0% to 34.3%.
- 83.2% of 12th graders reported that their friends would think it was wrong or very wrong to use prescription drugs without a doctor's script. This is up from 77.4% in 2015 and 81.5% in 2017.
- Lifetime use of prescription stimulants among 12th graders continued to decrease from 9.7% in 2015 to 6.8% in 2017 to 4.2% in 2019. The national rate for 2019 was 7.7%.

Vaping/E-Cigs and Other Drugs

Vaping/E-Cigs:

- PA students are reporting 30-day e-cigarette use at higher rates than the national average (8th grade 12.5% to 12.2%; 10th grade 26.5% to 25.0%; 12th grade 33.1% to 30.9%). Use by both 10th and 12th graders has gone up since 2015.
- In past administrations, the national rate of vaping was much lower than in 2019.
- Both 8th and 10th graders also reported a sizable rise in this rate – 8th grade 7.2% to 13.6%; 10th grade 12.9% to 29.4%.

Vaping Nicotine use:	6 th	8 th	10 th	12 th
2017	3.5%	14.6%	32.2%	43.1%
2019	12.0%	38.2%	63.3%	69.3%

Vaping – 30-Day Use “smoked marijuana or hash oil”	12 th
2015	14.2%
2017	18.5%
2019	35.9%

Percentage of students who reported using “just flavoring”:	8 th	10 th	12 th
2017	74.8%	73.9%	67.2%
2019	63.0%	47.2%	38.0%



Other Drugs:

Inhalant

Lifetime inhalant use is lower than the national average, especially in 8th grade (5.7% to 9.5%). Lifetime inhalant use by 8th graders increased – from 5.2% in 2017 to 5.7% in 2019.

Synthetic

Lifetime use of synthetic drugs by 12th graders continues to drop from 6.9% in 2013 to 4.8% in 2015 to 2.0% in 2017 to 1.4% in 2019.

Heroin

Use for 12th graders – lifetime: 0.3%, 30-day: 0.1%.

Cocaine, crack, methamphetamine

30-day use of cocaine, crack, and methamphetamine = <1% for all students.

Perceptions of Risk and Approval



Perceptions of Substance Risk

- 68.6% of 12th graders reported moderate or great risk to **binge drink**.
- 53.5% of seniors reported that there was a moderate or great risk from **regular marijuana use**.
 - The perceived risk of **trying marijuana once or twice** drops dramatically from 6th grade, 60.0% (down from 62.1% in 2017) to 8th grade, 52.5% (down from 53.1% in 2017) to 10th grade, 34.2%, to 12th grade 24.6% (down from 25.1%).
- A lower percentage of 6th graders reported risk from **prescription drugs** (76.7%) than 12th graders (84.7%).

Perceptions of Parent Approval

- 91.2% of 12th graders reported their parents would feel it was wrong or very wrong to **smoke cigarettes**, up from 86.2% in 2015.
- 89.1% of students reported that their parents would think it was wrong or very wrong for them to **smoke marijuana**. This is lower than the rates for tobacco (94.5%), alcohol (89.0%), and prescription drugs (94.0%).

Perceptions of Friend Approval of Marijuana

- 91.0% of 6th graders and 81.4% of 8th graders reported that their friends would disapprove of smoking marijuana.
- 59.3% of 10th graders and 44.3% of 12th graders reported that their friends would think it was wrong or very wrong to use marijuana. This compares to alcohol at 67.8% and 61.6% respectively.

Perceptions of Peers

- 64.2% of seniors said that it would be wrong for someone their age to **drink nearly every day**. This is up from 57.9% and 60.1% in 2017.
- Overall, 88.9% of students reported it would be wrong for someone their age to **smoke one or more packs of cigarettes a day**. This figure continues to climb in all grades.
- In 2019, only 42.5% of seniors and 56.5% of 10th graders reported that they would somewhat or strongly disapprove of someone their age **using marijuana**. For 6th graders this figure was 90.2% and for 8th graders it was 80.4%.

Mental Health & Wellness



Feelings, Emotions, and Thoughts

- 11.5% of students **worried that food would run out before their family could buy more.**
 - 7.7% of seniors reported skipping a meal because of family finances.
- 38.0% of students **reported feeling sad or depressed most days**, including 41.9% of 10th and 43.8% of 12th graders (up from 40.8% in 2017).
 - 8th graders reported a reduction in this measure, from 36.9% to 33.9%.
- 41.2% of 12th graders and 40.1% of 10th graders reported that **“at times I think I am no good at all”**.
 - 27.0% of seniors and 26.7% of sophomores said that they are inclined to think they are a failure.
- 25% of students reported that **“Sometimes they think life is not worth it”**, including 29.4% of seniors.

Behaviors, Self-Harm, and Suicide

- 30.6% of 12th graders and 29.4% of 10th graders reported **being so sad they ceased doing their usual activities.**

Levels of Depressive Symptoms	30-Day Alcohol Use	30-Day Marijuana Use
High (7.1% of all participants)	29.7%	22.4%
Low	9.9%	4.7%

- 14.4% of students reported **self-harm (such as cutting)**, including 14.9% of 8th graders and 16.9% of 10th graders.
- 19.9% of 12th graders and 18.9% of 10th graders reported **considering suicide** and 11.4% and 11.2%, respectively, **attempted suicide.**
 - All these numbers decreased slightly from 2017.
- 39.5% of students who reported **being bullied through texting/social media** reported **seriously considering suicide in the past year.**

Mental Health & Wellness (Continued)

Energy and Sleep



37.9% of students

reported **sleeping less than 7 hours a night on school nights** including 46.6% of 10th graders and 56.7% of 12th graders.



64.7% of students

reported **feeling tired or sleepy during the day everyday or several times during the past two weeks**, including 75.5% of 10th graders and 78.7% of 12th graders.

Activities and Employment

- Nearly 60% (59.8%) of all students reported **engaging in school sponsored activities**.
- 61.6% of seniors reported **having a job or employment**, up from 60.1% in 2015; 40.0% reported **volunteering**.

Within the Family

- 92.5% of students in all grades reported that their parents knew where they were and who they were with. This increased in 8th, 10th, and 12th grades from 2017.
- 86.9% of students reported that there are clear family rules about alcohol and drug use. This ranges from 92.2% of 6th graders to 80.2% of 12th graders.



School Safety and Climate



Commitment and Involvement In School

Consistent drops
for the fourth
straight
administration:

Rate of students that felt **school would be important later in life** dropped in all grades.

- 39.8% of seniors agreed with this statement (down from 46.3% in 2017).
- 72.2% of 6th graders agreed (down from 80.3% in 2017).

33.6% of 12th graders and 31.7% of 10th graders reported they **enjoyed being in school during the past year**.

Overall, 80.0% of students reported they **felt safe in their school**.

- This is down from 86.5% in 2013, 84.1% in 2015, and 83.4% in 2017.

Overall, 35.9% of students felt that their **schoolwork was meaningful and important**.

- This is down from 43.9% in 2015 and 40.4% in 2017.
- This includes 37.0% of 8th graders, 25.1% of 10th graders, and 22.9% of 12th graders.

Violence and Drugs on School Property

• Offered Drugs While at School

- Reported by 13.8% of 10th graders and 13.1% of 12th graders.

• Threatened at School

- Reported by 18.9% of students over the last year.
- Down from 20.5% in 2017.
- This includes 21.8% of 6th graders and 21.2% of 8th graders.

• Attacked at School

- Reported by 11.1% of 6th graders.



Bullying

- 43.6% of students reported that **adults stop bullying when they see it or are told about it.**
 - This is down from 54.8% in 2015 and 52.5% in 2017.
 - 72.4% of 6th graders, 57.1% of 8th graders, 47.1% of 10th graders, and only 43.6% of 12th graders agree. All of these rates showed at least an eight percentage point drop from 2017.
- 28.6% of 10th graders and 26.3% of 12th graders **reported inappropriate sexual contact when using technology.**
 - 2017: 31.5% 10th and 28.1% 12th
- 25.1% of students reported having **suffered some bullying over the last year**, down from 28.2% in 2017. Highest among 6th graders at 28.3%
- 4.6% of students reported that they **stayed home from school because of fear of being bullied.**
- 14.0% of students reported being **bullied through texting/social media over the past year.**
 - This is down from 16.5% in 2017 and includes 15.0% of 8th graders and 14.9% of 10th graders.



The most common reasons reported for being bullied:

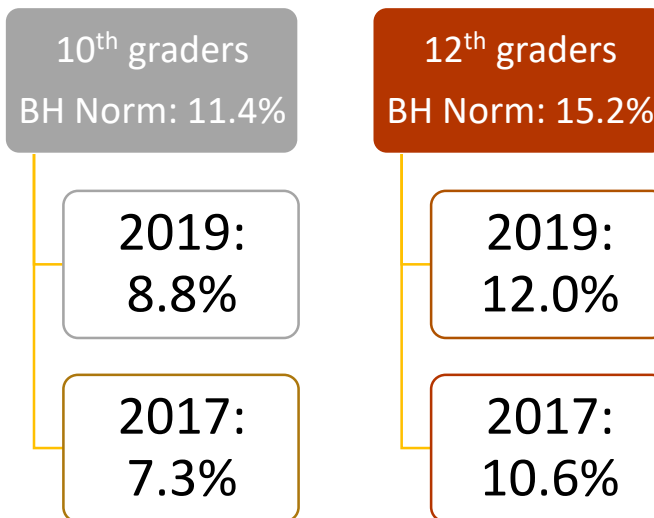
- 39.1% “The Way I Look (clothing, hairstyle, etc.); the highest rate among 8th graders at 42.5%.
- 33.5% “My Size (height/weight)”; the highest rate among 8th graders at 35.8%.
- 32.5% “I don’t know why” including 38.3% of 6th graders.

Means of Bullying	All grades	10 th	12 th
Emotionally abused through insults/name-calling	61.4%	65.7%	66.5%
Abused by being isolated from friends/family by another person	-	17.4%	18.2%



Anti-Social Behaviors

Percentage reporting being drunk or high at school over the last year.



More 8th graders (8.2%) than 12th graders (5.8%) reported being suspended from school during the last year.

Gambling – All Grades Combined

The most common form of gambling reported overall was Lottery/Scratch Cards at 20.2%. This is consistent across all grades: 19.0% in 6th; 19.2% in 8th; 21.4% in 10th; and 21.4% in 12th.



	2015	2017	2019
Lifetime Gambling	36.8%	36.0%	33.7%
Betting on Sports (2011- 20.6%)	14.7%	13.8%	12.7%