



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION ON CRIME AND DELINQUENCY

July 12, 2013

Dear Superintendent:

On behalf of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, we are pleased to announce the upcoming administration of the Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS). PAYS is a survey of youth in 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th grades that assesses their behaviors, attitudes and knowledge concerning alcohol, tobacco, other drugs, violence and other problem behaviors. The administration of the 2013 PAYS is being made possible through the combined financial contribution of the Pennsylvania Departments of Education and Drug and Alcohol Programs (PDE and DDAP) and the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD). In preparation for the 2013-2014 school year, we are excited to unveil important changes to PAYS that will improve the facilitation of the survey, provide for more timely delivery of the local PAYS results, and make the survey more useful for the planning needs of Pennsylvania's schools and prevention partners.

Changes include:

- The 2013 PAYS will be provided to all Pennsylvania schools **FREE** of charge. Recognizing the value of the data received through the PAYS, PDE, DDAP, and PCCD have agreed to share the costs of the administration of this important survey in 2013 as well as in future PAYS cycles. This includes the cost of surveying (online or paper/pencil) and Local Summary Reports at both the school district and county level.
- A new vendor, Bach Harrison, was selected to administer the survey for Pennsylvania. Bach Harrison has a great deal of experience with school-based surveying and has the capacity to handle the large volume of surveys that are expected in 2013.
- Local Summary Reports will be required to be delivered to the field by Bach Harrison no later than April 30, 2014.
- A Spanish language version of PAYS has been developed and will be available for use in 2013 upon request by a school district.

- Informational summary documents (“One-Pagers”) will be prepared by PCCD to assist Superintendents in sharing the value of PAYS with their school boards, parents, students, and community partners, both public and private.
- PCCD will be providing additional logistical support and proctoring information for ease of facilitation. PAYS will comply with the Penn State Institutional Review Board (IRB) process to ensure the security of the data.
- A **NEW** Guide to assist schools and communities in utilizing their PAYS data will be created and made available for all of Pennsylvania’s school districts.
- Further enhancements to the 2013 PAYS include additional questions around school climate and safety, questions to meet the Federal Drug Free Communities (DFC) reporting requirements, questions regarding use of synthetic drugs, and questions about whether students have lost members of their family or had family members deployed in the military or incarcerated during the past year.

PAYS will continue to focus on a multi-domain risk and protective factor framework, helping stakeholders understand that while PAYS is administered in the schools, the information garnered through PAYS is holistic and is representative of the students’ environment including their communities, their schools, their families, and their peers. As in past years, the survey is voluntary, and student responses will remain anonymous and confidential.

We look forward to a successful and timely administration of the 2013 PAYS. In the near future we will be providing you with greater detail on the process you will follow to register your district’s desire to participate in PAYS, as well as contacting those schools who were selected as part of the statewide random sample. In past administrations of PAYS, many school districts have worked closely with local community prevention collaboratives, and we would encourage you to continue to do so in 2013. For further information on PAYS, please visit www.pays.state.pa.us or contact Geoff Kolchin, PAYS Project Leader at PCCD at gkolchin@pa.gov or 717.265.8483.

In partnership,



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