

# 2025 PAYS

## Pennsylvania Youth Survey

**Survey Coordinator Training  
Packet**

**Instructions for use by coordinators  
administering the survey in Online  
format.**

# PLANNING STEPS AND PRELIMINARY NOTES

This training packet contains information related to the following steps:

1. Prepare Schools and Set Survey Dates
2. Establish a Process for Surveying Appropriate Students in the 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th Grades in Your School/District
3. Prepare Proctors for the Survey
4. Establish a Process for Distributing Passive Parent Consent Forms and Tracking Parent or Caregiver Refusals
5. Online Survey Preparation
6. Survey Day Instructions/Final Steps

The materials mentioned at the end of each step are included with this manual as separate attachments. Each file is also referenced in your Planning Portal. This will help you easily access and utilize them during the survey planning and administration.

**Note:** *If you are in charge of a large district, you can assign one person at each school to assist with survey planning and administration. This manual provides instructions for district-level planning and administration, but you can delegate these tasks as needed.*

Your Bach Harrison Support Team can be reached by contacting us at [PAYSsupport@bach-harrison.com](mailto:PAYSsupport@bach-harrison.com)

## 1

# Prepare Schools and Set Survey Date(s)

**1. Notify school principals about the survey** through various means like phone, letter, memo, personal contact, or email. Provide them with web links and copies of the survey materials.

**2. Contact your local prevention coalition or county drug and alcohol office** to learn what support they can provide in preparing for the survey and using your survey data.

**3. Discuss with school staff to determine a suitable survey date (or dates for each school) between September 15th and November 25th** (note that the survey can be scheduled through December 22<sup>nd</sup> if necessary).

**4. Once your survey window has been chosen, notify school principals and enter that window in your district's/school's online Survey Coordinator Planning Portal.**

Bookmark the PAYS webpage:

[www.pays.pa.gov](http://www.pays.pa.gov)

Check out [http://www.pays.pa.gov/](http://www.pays.pa.gov) to find many PAYS resources including videos, webinars, and materials to assist you on your PAYS journey!

*If you are unsure who your local prevention coalition or county drug and alcohol office would be, contact Alise Barr, PAYS Support & Development Specialist, Evidence-based Prevention and Intervention Support (EPIS), Edna Bennett Pierce Prevention Research Center Penn State University, (814)553-0635, [arh184@psu.edu](mailto:arh184@psu.edu)*

**Best practices for setting your survey date(s):**

Avoid scheduling on days when many students are absent, such as:

- Mondays or Fridays
- Standardized testing days
- Partial days
- Release/job periods for seniors
- Days with high student absence rates
- After or before a holiday or school-event

Refer to this "Survey Coordinator Training Packet" for more detailed planning tips.

**Materials for Step 1** (Can be found in your Planning Portal):

- This Survey Coordinator Training Packet
- Pennsylvania Youth Survey 2025 Frequently Asked Questions



# 2

## Establish a Process for Surveying Appropriate Students in the 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th Grades in Your School/District

1. The 2025 PAYS is offered at no cost to all 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th-grade students (public or private) in the Commonwealth.

**In this step, you will determine which classes to involve in the survey to get all 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th-grade students surveyed.**

A primary goal of the survey is to survey all students in only ONE or TWO school days. This helps to prevent students from talking about the survey outside of school, inadvertently biasing the results.



**Determine which classes could be surveyed to get the maximum completion of ALL students in pertinent grades.** Some options for conducting a survey for all 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students at a school include:

- Select **core classes** (English, History, Government, Health, or Homeroom) to take the survey.
- Select **one designated period during the day** in which all classes with students in grades 6, 8, 10, and 12 will take the survey.
- Consider using an **assembly schedule** on each school's survey date to minimize class time lost by any one teacher.

2. If you will be administering the survey online, engage your district's/school's IT staff at this point to discuss the devices to be used (i.e., 1-to-1 devices, student laptops, notebooks/iPads, etc.).

3. Once you have identified how to survey your student population, move on to Step 3.

# 3

## Prepare Proctors for the Survey

Once the survey date(s) is (are) set and you know how the school will be taking the survey, **begin preparing proctors for the survey**. Ensure that there are enough staff and leadership to proctor/monitor the survey to ensure easy and effective administration.

Notify proctors of when the survey is scheduled and what they will be expected to do on the survey date. A Sample Introductory Proctor Letter is available for you to use to share this information with proctors/teachers.

### Key information to share with proctors/teachers:

- Which classes the survey will be conducted in
- (Online Only) How the survey will be conducted using school technology
- (Online Only) The URLs for administration (if available at the time)
- What they will be expected to do
- Survey day schedule (if it is different from the usual bell schedule)
- A link to the PAYS Website ([www.pays.pa.gov](http://www.pays.pa.gov)) where they can find more information on PAYS and access past PAYS reports at the county and state level. Consider sharing some past PAYS data for your district/school with teachers as well!



**Materials for Step 3** (Can be found in your Planning Portal):

- Sample Introductory Proctor Letter

# 4

## Establish a Process for Distributing Passive Parent Consent Forms and Tracking Parent Refusals

1. **Establish a process for schools to distribute passive parent permission forms/letters** using whatever means the district/schools are most accustomed to (e.g., sending the forms home with students, sending the forms via email or text, sending the forms online to parent portals). A best practice is to pick at least two methods for sharing these letters with parents.

- Please use our sample Passive Parental/Caregiver Permission Letter (in English and Spanish), which fully explains parent and student rights.

2. **Parent/Caregiver refusals** (i.e., parents or caregivers who indicate that they do not want their children to participate) **will need to be tracked**, and the information distributed to appropriate proctors/teachers before the survey date to ensure that students who do not have consent do not take the survey.

**Have questions about parent consent? Contact [payssupport@bach-harrison.com](mailto:payssupport@bach-harrison.com) for additional information!**

### Parent Consent FAQs:

#### What is passive parent consent?

Passive parental consent informs parents about the survey, their right to see a list of the survey's questions, their child's rights in the survey process, and their right to refuse to allow their child to participate if they wish. Students whose parents refuse permission are not allowed to take the survey. Students whose parents do not refuse permission are allowed to take the survey. The Pennsylvania Youth Survey is a strictly anonymous and voluntary survey. The project requires that you distribute passive consent information and a means for parents to opt their child/children out of the survey.

#### Can parents see the survey form?

Yes! A copy of the list of survey questions can be requested by parents who want to view them. This can be done by filling out the following request form:

<https://www.epis.psu.edu/PAYS/questions>

#### What if our district/school wants to use an active consent/opt-in process?

Only passive/opt-out consent is required/necessary for PAYS, but if your district/school would like to use an active consent/opt-in process instead, you may do so. Please reach out to [payssupport@bach-harrison.com](mailto:payssupport@bach-harrison.com) to access a sample active consent form.

### Materials for Step 4 (Can be found in your **Planning Portal**):

- Sample Passive Parental/Caregiver Permission Letter (English)
- Sample Passive Parental/Caregiver Permission Letter (Spanish)
- Sample Passive Parental/Caregiver Request Tracking Form

# 5

## Survey Preparation (Online)

1. Approximately two weeks (or more) before your scheduled survey date, Bach Harrison will email you **one survey weblink/URL per school**. These web links point to the **bilingual (English/Spanish)** online Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS). In addition to the school-level survey URLs, the email will also contain the following attachments:

- **Instructions** on how to prepare for your online survey.
- A link to our **new PAYS Proctor Video**, which will share key information and instructions with students.
  - **NOTE:** If proctors/teachers are unable to play this video for students, please contact Bach Harrison immediately so that you can receive a Proctor Script to be read aloud instead.

### The next steps are very important:

2. Examine the attached materials of that email to ensure instructions are clear.
3. Check to make certain each of your Survey URLs works and directs you to a survey with a blue background. Each survey will get one unique URL for all students in each school building. Work with your IT to make sure there are no filters that will block pages of the survey that ask questions about tobacco, alcohol and other drugs.
4. Figure out the best way to distribute the URLs to each school and to each teacher/survey proctor.
5. Please also remind proctors/teachers of the following:
  - the technology they are to use on the day of the survey
  - the survey date(s)
  - that students without parent permission are not to receive the survey

### Some ideas for preparing each school for their survey are as follows:

- Consider bringing all proctors together for a training session on how you would like the survey to be administered.
- Forward the URLs and online survey plan to your school-level contacts or proctors via email.
- Supply the URLs to school-level IT staff and bring them into the planning process.

### Materials for Step 5 - Online (Can be found in your Planning Portal):

- This Survey Coordinator Training Packet
- PAYS Proctor [Video](#) (teachers will play a video for students to watch)



# 6

## Survey Day Instructions/ Final Steps (Online)

### 1. On each school's survey date:

- On the day of the survey, **each school will use its unique online survey URL**. Students can either type the URL into their browser or refer to the clickable link. Contact Bach Harrison and/or your IT staff if you need technical support.
- The last screen of the survey will read, "Thank you for completing the survey. On behalf of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, we would like to thank you for your participation in this important survey." Students should click the "Done" button/option and close their web browser or screen.
- These instructions are also located in the instructions/scripts for survey proctors and are described in the Proctor Video shown to students.

**2. Check with each school after the survey to make sure they completed the survey as planned.** Assess whether or not the school needs more time to get all students surveyed and if they have a plan for doing so.

**3. Check your District's Survey Coordinator Planning Portal to see updates on your schools' participation.** Participation numbers will be manually pulled and updated every weekday evening. When a school is done with its survey administration, you can indicate this by checking the "Survey is Complete" box in your planning portal. Please note that if your school includes students in grades 6 or higher, you will have two boxes to check.

**4. When the survey is completed, please send thank you letters and/or emails** to superintendents, principals, proctors, and individuals within the school (i.e., teachers, aides, office staff, etc.) who helped with the survey process.

**Materials for Step 6 - Online** (Can be found in your Planning Portal):

- This Survey Coordinator Training Packet



# THANK YOU!

We wouldn't be able to do this without your time and attention. We are very appreciative of your efforts!

*We are excited to provide your school with data that they can use to plan prevention services and better your community!*