

Executive Summary of 2021 PA Youth Survey (“PAYS”) for the Wyomissing Area Community

PAYS – What is it?

- Biennial survey of youth in grades 6, 8, 10 and 12
- Gathers information about their knowledge, attitudes and behaviors towards alcohol, tobacco and other drug use
- Overall purpose is to help communities address root causes of antisocial behavior
- Validity and reliability measures are built into survey

WASD Community Results – What did we learn?

Content Area 1 – Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Use and Access

Strengths:

- Students report their average lifetime substance abuse to be less than the state average.
- Students report very low use of cocaine, crack and methamphetamines.

Challenges:

- Students reporting an increased use of substances at a younger age than in 2019.
- Students report vaping use higher than the county and state averages.
- Students report they are provided alcohol in their home.

Content Area 2 – Antisocial Behavior

Strengths:

- Students report less gambling than in 2019; additionally, average is below the state.
- Students report less selling of drugs than in 2019.
- Students report less suspensions for inappropriate behaviors in schools than in 2019.

Challenges:

- 8th graders reported more perceived acts of violence than in 2019.
- 27% of students overall reported gambling of some type.
- 10th graders reported being drunk or high at school significantly more than in 2019; additionally, average is higher than the state.

Content Area 3 – Social and Emotional Health

Strengths:

- Students report less food insecurity than in 2019.

- Students in 6th grade report less needs when compared to the county, state and older cohorts.

Challenges:

- 10th graders report more needs when compared to the county, state and older cohorts.
- 12th graders reported a higher incidence of suicide attempts, with a low incidence of reporting for medical treatment and professional follow-up.

Content Area 4 – Community and School Climate and Safety

Strengths:

- Students report feeling connected to school environment and school sponsored events.
- Threats and bullying are reportedly more prevalent in the community/home setting than in school; additionally, students report feeling safe at school and that teachers will intervene to ensure their safety.

Challenges:

- Students reported teacher praise when they work hard decreases from elementary school into high school.
- 8th graders report feeling threatened at school more than the county average.
- Students report an increase in social conflict and social interactions related to bullying since 2019.

Content Area 5 – Systemic Factors

Strengths:

- Students understand the risk of using prescription drugs not prescribed to them by a medical provider.
- Students understand the risk of smoking 1+ pack(s) of cigarettes per day.
- 91.9% of students say parents know where they are/who they are with when they're not home.
- 85% of students say family rules about drug/alcohol use are clear.

Challenges:

- Students do not perceive a significant risk of marijuana use.
- 35.8% of students report easy access to alcohol.
- Students feel parents and peers would not disapprove of marijuana use.
- Students report alcohol is more easily accessible to them by their parents.

Content Area 6 – Risk and Protective Factors

Strengths:

- Students endorsed protective factors higher than county levels.

- Students reported low endorsements of gang involvement, perceived availability of handguns and interaction with antisocial peers.
- Students reported high endorsements of family opportunities/rewards for prosocial involvement and family attachment.

Challenges:

- Students endorsed risk factors at a higher rate than county levels (perceived availability of drugs, friends use of drugs, attitudes favorable toward drugs and rebelliousness).
- Students reported low opportunities for religiosity, community rewards for prosocial involvement and social opportunities for prosocial involvement.
- Students reported positive perceptions related to substance use and availability.