

The 2012 Prevention Needs Assessment (PNA) Frequently Asked Questions*

*Wyoming Survey & Analysis Center
University of Wyoming*

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* This document is modeled after a similar document written by the Wyoming Department of Education, titled “Wyoming High School and Middle School Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) 2005 Frequently Asked Questions”.

Q. Why is the survey being done?

A. The Wyoming Department of Health, Behavioral Health Division will use 2012 Prevention Needs Assessment (PNA) survey results to measure youth substance use and student participation in anti-social behaviors. The survey results will be used by communities and the state to help understand the factors that might influence whether or not students use substances or participate in anti-social behavior. Information from this survey will help plan and evaluate substance abuse prevention efforts at both the local and state levels.

Q. How long does it take to fill out the survey? Does the survey include a physical exam?

A. The survey takes about 45 minutes for most students, but about 60 minutes for 6th grade students. In past years, most if not all the students were able to finish the survey in the allotted time.

The survey does not require a physical test or exam.

Q. Is this going to be a lot of work for me?

A. No. We are trying to make sure that the survey administration is as easy and simple as possible. We will be doing the work of sorting, organizing and preparing the surveys for all the classrooms and schools where it will be administered. We will be as accommodating as possible to make this process easy for you and will strive to come up with solutions to any concerns.

Q. Who supports this survey?

A. The original core survey items were developed, tested, and normed using a grant from the National Institutes of Health. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, through the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, encourages the use of this survey for community and state level planning as part of many grants sponsored by that agency. These federal grants include the Prevention Framework—State Incentive Grants, the Federal Prevention Block Grants, and the Safe and Drug Free Communities Grants.

State level support for the PNA comes from the Wyoming Department of Health, Behavioral Health Division, which has sponsored the survey every biennium since the 2001-2002 school year. Additional support comes from the Wyoming Department of Education, Health and Safety Unit and the Wyoming State Board of Education. These state agencies have used information from the PNA to help plan and evaluate a variety of substance abuse prevention projects, including the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grants. Many local communities, school districts, and schools also support the PNA because it provides them with local level information that is not available from any other source to help them design and implement their own substance abuse and violence prevention systems.

Q. Are sensitive questions asked?

A. Yes, some questions on the PNA are sensitive. The primary purpose of this survey is to measure substance use by our youth and related attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that have been shown to be related to youth use substances. These topics can be considered sensitive. As a result, the questions are written in a direct but non-threatening way. Additionally, the students are informed that their participation in the survey is voluntary and anonymous. The students may skip any questions that they do not feel comfortable answering and their responses are not individually identifiable. Consequently, the risk of responding to the survey is minimal, and is no greater than what the students might experience as they complete their typical school work.

Q. Do students tell the truth?

A. Yes. (See "[Do Students Tell the Truth on the Prevention Need Assessment \(PNA\)?](#)")
handout.) To summarize this handout:

Reliability and validity. Based on published studies of the psychometric properties of these survey items, the reliability and validity of these measures do not seem to be compromised because the students are not telling the truth. If you would like to read more, WYSAC can give you copies of these published papers.

Survey environment. The survey is conducted in a way that reassures the students to feel that they can answer the questions openly and honestly because their survey responses are anonymous.

Questionnaire design and content. The questionnaire was designed with some honesty checks to help identify those surveys in which the student may not have responded truthfully. These honesty checks typically only affect a very small percentage of the surveys. If a survey is identified as not being honest, then that survey is removed from the dataset prior to analysis to minimize the effect of potential dishonesty.

Consistency across time and with other survey results. The PNA results in the past have generally been consistent with other national, state and local surveys. The previous times that the PNA has been administered have produced similar results, both at the state, and local levels. Subgroup differences also remain consistent across time. Thus, the results seem to be consistent and comparable both across time and across surveys.

Q. How do parents find out about the survey?

A. The primary means of informing parents about the survey will be through a letter sent to parents. The letter will be distributed approximately two weeks before the school's survey administration date. WYSAC will provide the letter that will be sent to the parents at each school. If so desired, schools may also inform parents about the survey in other ways, such as newsletters. WYSAC will work with the schools to ensure that all parents are informed of the survey prior to the survey administration date.

Q. What if some parents do not want their children to complete the survey?

A. All parents have the option to request that their child not take the survey. This process will be explained during the survey administrators' training.

Q. Will students' names be used or linked to the surveys?

A. No. The survey has been designed to protect the students' privacy. Students do not put their name on the survey. When students finish the survey, they place their questionnaires in a collection box or envelope with all the other students' questionnaires. The surveys will not be individually identifiable after they are placed in the collection box.

Q. What data do we receive if we participate in the 2012 PNA?

A. Reports based on the responses provided by your students will be written for the state, sub-state regions, counties, and school districts. Individual schools may also request a report if they so desire. If a school requests a report, then a report will only be written if a sufficient number of students at that school participated in the survey to ensure that the students' anonymity and confidentiality are not breached.

WYSAC may compare results from county, school district, and school reports with the state and, when appropriate, national results. Additionally, data will be presented to compare results across time. WYSAC will consult with a wide variety of communities, schools, and school districts, along with people from the state to determine what and how the information should be presented to make the data analysis clear, understandable, and approachable.

Please see the next question to find out what information will be released to the public.

Q. What data will be available to the public?

A. Data reports for the counties, sub-state regions, and state will be released to the public. These reports will combine student responses across schools and school districts to ensure that a school district or school will not be singled out. School district reports will only be released to the school district superintendent. If a school requests a report, and it is appropriate to write one, then that school level report will only be released to the principal of that school. We will only release a local school district's or school's data to other parties with written permission from the established authority within the respective school district or school.

Q. How were our students chosen to be in the survey?

A. The goal of this project is to survey all 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students in Wyoming or, in other words, to conduct a complete statewide census of all students within those grade levels. Your school was chosen because you teach students who are in one or more of those grade levels.

Q. Which of my students should I administer the survey to?

A. The survey was designed to be administered to all students in the 6th, 8th, 10th or 12th grades. Much of the PNA analysis depends upon having the correct grade levels represented in the dataset. If the survey is administered to other grade levels, that data will be removed from the dataset to prevent invalidating the results.

Q. When will the survey be administered?

A. The survey can be administered beginning January 9, 2012 and end on or before May 18, 2012. The survey can be administered on a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday. We will work with schools to choose the class period on the chosen day for survey administration.

Q. Who can serve as survey administrators?

A. In most schools the classroom teachers will serve as survey administrators. They will be charged with sending the parental consent letters home two weeks prior to the survey administration date, along with administering the surveys to their own students using the prepared survey packets for each classroom. Each school principal will designate a school survey coordinator to aid the teachers and help assure that the survey process goes smoothly. The school survey coordinator will be responsible for:

1. Distributing the parental consent letters to the classroom teachers so that the teachers can send the letters home with the students.
2. Distributing the classroom survey packets to the teachers prior to the survey administration date.
3. Collecting the completed classroom survey packets and returning them to WYSAC using the prepaid mailing label.

Q. What is the survey administrator training, and when will it take place?

A. The survey administrator training is an hour long internet web conference (webinar). Survey administrators can participate in the webinar using any internet-connected computer with high-speed service. WYSAC will provide the live webinar training on various dates in December, January and April of 2012. WYSAC will notify schools and school districts when the training dates and locations have been established, along with information about how to participate.

If a school survey coordinator cannot attend one of the live webinar trainings, WYSAC will provide self-training materials and answer any questions via email or telephone.

Q. Where can I get more information about the PNA?

A. The PNA website contains a large number of informational resources about the current and past PNA surveys. The website address is <http://www.pnasurvey.org/>.

Q. Where can I get access to the previous year's results?

A. State and County reports for the 2006, 2008 and 2010 PNA surveys are available from the PNA website (<http://www.pnasurvey.org/>). School district and school reports are confidential and WYSAC will only release these results directly to the school or school district.

If you are a Wyoming School District Superintendent, please contact Eric Canen, (307-760-0307, ecanen@uwyo.edu) and he will arrange for you to receive your school district's report.