

PAYS Task Force

Update – June 16, 2015

WHO: The Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS) Task Force is a group of dedicated Boyertown students, parents, law enforcement officials, agency representatives, BASD staff and community members.

WHAT: The PAYS Task Force is committed to using the results from the PAYS survey to improve programs and services for the Boyertown community.

WHEN: 2013 survey results were received in May 2014. The PAYS Task Force started to work in May 2014 and is committed to continuing these efforts moving forward.

HOW: The PAYS Task Force studied the needs of the Boyertown community and identified tasks for completion. The following are some highlights of the work done by the PAYS Task Force:

Law Enforcement

- Four medication drop boxes in place in community, aggressive communication plan in place which has resulted in the safe removal of hundreds of pounds of excess medication from our community
- Public service video completed by BASH staff and students to educate community members on dangers of prescription medication and strategies to increase community safety
- Police presence in BASD schools and monthly collaboration meetings between community police departments and BASD Administration

K-12 Education

- Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) group established at BASH in 2014-15. This student group has lead numerous initiatives to help our students make good decisions and stay safe.
- All 7th grade students in BASD will receive the Life Skills training lessons starting in 2015-16 in conjunction with the Council on Chemical Abuse (COCA).
- A pilot elementary Student Assistance Program (SAP) will be in place at Gilbertsville Elementary School in 2015-2016. \$10,000 in grant funds has been secured to implement this program. Program will be evaluated for possible inclusion at all BASD elementary schools in 2016-2017 school year.
- Grant application for \$10,000 has been submitted to provide educational lessons to all BASD grade 3 students in 2015-2016. If grant funds are received, lessons will center on developing better thinking skills and encouraging responsible behaviors.

- Staff development sessions provided on Resiliency (entire BASD teaching staff), “Talking to Grieving Students” (faculty and staff), and Youth Mental Health First Aid (Summer 2015).
- Ongoing partnerships with the Weller Center for lessons for our grade 8 students and the Anti-Defamation League for ongoing professional development.

Communication/ Access to Services

- “Bear Essentials” window decal initiative for community in partnership with the Wellness Council of Boyertown
- Positive messaging initiative – Using survey to show most students are making good decisions
- Community education sessions – “A Mother’s Voice”, Prescription drug abuse information at school parent nights
- Use of BASD website and cable TV channel, township websites and communications

Safe Opportunities for Youth

- Secured \$10,000 in grant funds to provide free transportation for JHE & JHW students to exercise at the Boyertown YMCA after school starting in 2015-2016
- Collaborated with Boyertown YMCA to provide a free membership for all grade 7 students, also exploring after-school intermural program hosted at our schools
- Developing a parent survey to learn more about ways we can partner for after school activities
- Continued discussion with community organizations and businesses to provide after school opportunities for youth – bowling, Boy/Girl Scouts, Salvation Army, Bally Community Center

Next Steps: The PAYS Task Force will continue to work to complete the objectives identified to improve BASD community and assess the impact of new programs. BASD students in grades 8, 10 and 12 will take the PAYS survey in fall 2015 so we will have additional data to guide these efforts.