

Utah PNA/SHARP Survey 2021 Frequently Asked Questions

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From February 1, 2021 to May 28, 2021, the Utah Prevention Needs Assessment (PNA) Survey Statewide Survey will be conducted throughout the state as part of the Utah Student Health and Risk Prevention (SHARP) Survey Project. The Utah PNA has been conducted every other year since 2003. In the most recent administration, 39 school districts and charter schools in 323 counties participated in PNA. In 2021, PNA will again be offered to all public, private, and charter schools in the state at **NO COST** thanks to the sponsorship of the state agency partners. This fact sheet provides answers to important questions you may have about the 2021 PNA.

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[What is the Prevention Needs Assessment \(PNA\) Survey?](#)

The Utah Prevention Needs Assessment (PNA) Survey is a biennial survey of youth in the 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th grades. PNA asks questions about students' perspectives of their school environment, as well as attitudes, knowledge and behaviors concerning alcohol, tobacco, other drugs (ATOD), violence, depression, and other problem behaviors. The survey also collects information about risk factors which are the conditions that increase the likelihood that a child will develop problem behaviors later in life, and it also collects information about protective factors – people or conditions in a community that can buffer a youth from risk.

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What is the purpose of PNA?

PNA serves to gather local data and information needed to select appropriate prevention and intervention programs to address such problems as alcohol, tobacco, other drug use, and violence in our schools and communities. Schools, government agencies, local stakeholders, and community prevention coalitions use PNA data to assess issues facing youth in a community, benchmarking the levels of use of various ATODs, identifying programming that can be used to address locally identified issues, selecting curricula, and demonstrating the need for funding through grant submissions and presentations to potential funders. It also helps schools, districts, and counties to judge the effectiveness of current prevention and intervention efforts and to make appropriate corrections. PNA seeks youth input on protective factors or supports in their communities, family lives, and interpersonal relationships that help them to succeed in life. Through the use of local PNA data, especially the risks faced by and protections available to youth, communities can utilize a data-driven decision-making process to make the best use of limited prevention resources.

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What schools are eligible to participate?

In 2021, PNA is again being offered to all schools including public, private, parochial, cyber, and charter schools in Utah at no charge.

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Why should my school district participate?

PNA is the **only survey** offered in Utah that collects the level of detailed risk and protective factor data used to identify individual community needs. Schools, school districts, and counties can then work with local prevention partners to select and implement appropriate services to address the specific risk and protective factors identified by PNA data. Reports (generated at state, county, and school district levels) produced from the survey results will provide information regarding health-related behaviors; alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use; antisocial behavior; the factors that place students at risk for problem behaviors; and those that protect them from high-risk behaviors. PNA gives youth a voice in the decisions being made on their behalf, a perspective that is often missing from prevention planning discussions.

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Furthermore, PNA results can be used to help ensure that the state and participating counties continue to make available important prevention funding which directly or indirectly benefits area school districts, schools, and the community at large. Information gathered through PNA can be used to inform local funding decisions, can be included in grant applications to state and federal government, and can be included in requests for funding from foundations and private sector funders.

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Is student participation anonymous?

Yes, completely anonymous and confidential.

Students who complete the paper-based survey are given a survey booklet that contains the question items and a place for them to record responses. Students who complete the online-based survey are given a link that directs them to an online survey that contains identical question items and a place for them to record responses. The questions are formatted in multiple choice, write-in, and single answer depending on the appropriateness of each question. Either format will not contain the student's name, or any other identifying information. Before they begin, students are to be reminded that they should not write their name or other identifying information on the booklet or in the online survey. When completing the survey, students will be arranged in the classroom so their responses cannot be seen by the proctor administering the survey or by any of the students' peers. At the end of the class period, the survey booklets will immediately be placed in an envelope by each student. The envelope will be sealed. Contacts at each school will pick up the completed surveys in the sealed envelopes and ship them directly to the PNA vendor, Bach Harrison, L.L.C., in Salt Lake City, Utah, using a prepaid FedEx Ground label. For an online administration, the student will be directed to a Thank You page at the end of the survey which will automatically record their responses.

Students who complete the survey online are given an anonymous link. Online responses do not include the student's name or other identifying information.

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Are sensitive questions asked?

The survey includes questions related to alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use; violent behaviors; mental health; other health risk behaviors; and related risk and protective factors. The survey questions have been designed to measure knowledge and behaviors. Unless questions in these topic areas are asked directly, prevention planners cannot know the degree to which the youth in Utah engage in these health risk behaviors. It is important to remember

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the survey is anonymous and confidential, so no student's responses will ever be able to be connected with that student. Students are informed that they may also skip any questions that they do not feel comfortable answering or that they do not understand. They are also informed that if they have any questions or concerns after taking the survey, they can talk with their school counselor or a trusted adult.

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What if a participant does not wish to participate?

Each participant's participation in this study is completely voluntary. Participants are notified that their participation is voluntary. The participants will be given the option to decline to participate, or to skip any question they prefer not to answer.

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Can I see the 2021 PNA survey questions?

A copy of the questions on the 2021 PNA can be requested on this website:
<http://www.bach-harrison.com/surveyforms.aspx?index=2>.

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What if a parent does not wish their child to participate?

District PNA Coordinators will be working with schools to distribute active parental consent forms. Active parental consent forms will inform parents and caregivers about the survey, instruct them as to where they can view the surveys, and ask for them to opt their child in or out of the survey. The District PNA Coordinator will ensure that students who do not have parental or caregiver permission will not take the survey.

If a parent does decline (or does not return a signed form), their son or daughter will be allowed to read or participate in some other alternate activity while his or her classmates are taking the survey.

Contact your local school district or school for more information about specific consent policies and procedures.

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What will students be asked to do?

The students will be asked to complete a self-administered survey questionnaire during one class period at school, either via paper and pencil or electronically online as chosen by their school. The student will be asked to read each question and select the answer in the survey that most closely matches the way he/she feels. All questions are self-reported, and no individual student information can be identified from the completed surveys. PNA is also available in a Spanish language version. Schools can request copies of the Spanish version from the vendor, Bach-Harrison.

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How long does it take to complete PNA?

The survey will take approximately 45 minutes to complete in paper format and roughly 30 minutes to complete online. It is designed to be administered during a single class period. Although it is expected that the students will have sufficient time to complete the entire survey, they will be informed they should answer as many questions as possible during the class but not be concerned if they are not able to finish all of them.

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When will PNA be conducted?

The survey will be administered during February to May 2021, at a time chosen by each local school district and/or school. Within a given school, the survey should be administered to all participating classes during the same class period when possible. This will help avoid students discussing the questions with classmates who have not yet completed the survey and biasing the results.

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How does the District PNA Coordinator help with the survey?

The District PNA Coordinator, who is selected by each district's superintendent, will work with school principals to set an appropriate and convenient survey date, develop an active parental consent process, and distribute and then collect survey materials. The Coordinator can be a school official or a community prevention partner. Districts who have worked with a community or county partner to facilitate PNA in past administrations are strongly encouraged to do so again.

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What will schools be asked to do?

The survey will be administered in the classroom setting by school district staff or a community prevention partner. Administration protocol will be decided by each individual School District. Bach Harrison will provide each school with the necessary materials for completing the survey, including proctoring instructions for administering the survey and a written script that will be read to the students at the beginning of the class that explains the purpose and voluntary nature of the survey.

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How will the results be made available?

Summary Reports containing local data will be generated at the state, county, and school district levels. The reports will provide levels of health-related behaviors; alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use; antisocial behavior; the factors that place students at risk for problem behaviors and protect them from problem behaviors. School district and school-level reports will be provided to school district superintendents in both hard copy and electronic formats no later than September 2021. The statewide and region-level reports will contain only aggregate information; individual district results will not be listed separately in these reports.

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How can my school district and community benefit from this survey?

PNA is a holistic approach to learning about students' attitudes and behaviors that represents the entirety of a student's environment – the community, their school, their family, and their peers/self. Information gained from participating in the Utah Student Health and Risk Prevention (PNA) Statewide Survey allows schools, districts, and communities to receive detailed reports (as described above), and also provide the community with a wealth of data to be used for grant writing, program and school safety planning, as well as targeting interventions to meet a school's and community's specific needs. The survey provides information that can be used to identify the incidence of various problem behaviors. Additionally, by tracking data over multiple PNA administrations, prevention planners can assess the impact of programs and services over time. Results of the survey are used to determine the need for prevention services and services to support their work toward achieving academic and personal goals.

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QUESTIONS AND REGISTRATION

If you have further questions about PNA, please contact:

**Ryan Carrier 801-889-8710 rcarrier@utah.gov
Utah Department of Human Services,
Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health**

To register to participate in the 2021 PNA, please contact:

**Mary Johnstun, Bach Harrison Project Coordinator, at (801) 842-2682
or by e-mail at mary@bach-harrison.com**

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