

For More Information
Jennifer Bierer, Director Communications
PreventionFIRST!

For Immediate Release

Office: 513-751-8000
Cell: 513-707-2926 (call or text)
jbierer@prevention-first.org

PreventionFIRST! to Release 2026 Student Survey Findings Second Student Survey Results Post-Pandemic

Cincinnati, OH (March 10, 2026)

The PreventionFIRST! (PF!) Student Survey is administered every other year. Results of the Student Survey provide comprehensive data on self-reported substance use and other factors associated with or contributing to substance use and mental well-being.

"The 2026 survey data continues to demonstrate the resiliency of youth, the positive impact of prevention, and the importance of protective factors," explains Nicole Schiesler, President and CEO of PreventionFIRST! "This survey data also identifies the ways students are still struggling, substance use trends, and the important influence school, family, peer, and community factors have on the mental wellness of youth. This is crucial in guiding our work and resources into programs and strategies that will continue to improve the health and wellness of our youth," continues Schiesler.

Key Mental Health Results & Trends

- When asked how often they felt depressed, sad, or hopeless in the last thirty days, 17.6 percent responded "all/most" of the time, and 31 percent responded "all/most" of the time when asked the same question regarding feeling nervous or anxious. Both decreased since the 2024 Survey.
- 41.7 percent of students identified stress as a factor in their mental health "often/a lot" of the time, and 48.7 percent identified screen time
- When asked how often they can pull themselves out of a bad mood, 47 percent responded "often/a lot"

Substance Use Results & Trends

- Most kids are NOT using alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.
- Past 30-day use of marijuana decreased from 6.3 percent in 2024 to 4.3 percent in 2026
- Past 30-day use for vaping is at the lowest level ever recorded, 6.1 percent in 2026

Parents and friends are key influences in a young person's life. A young person who believes their friends/parents disapprove of substance use is less likely to use substances. In 2026, the perception of both parental and peer disapproval increased across all substances.

"We know parental disapproval is one of the biggest protective factors contributing to less youth substance use. When parents consistently express their disapproval of substance use, kids are listening and making better choices. These are difficult conversations to have with our kids, but they are important," states Schiesler.

The PF! Student Survey is administered every two years. Every tri-state area school is invited to participate. Overall, 23,982 students completed the local version of the International Survey Associates (ISA) questionnaire. ISA is formerly known as PRIDE Surveys. The PF! Student Survey was disseminated from September 2025 - December 2025. Reported data comes from a census of seventh through twelfth-grade students from fifty-four public and private schools in Butler, Clermont, Hamilton, Highland, and Warren counties in Ohio.

###