

Louisiana
HEALTHY SCHOOLS

**School Health Advisory Council
Guidebook**

*An Interactive Guidebook for Improving
Academic Achievement Through School Health*



MAY 2019

“Schools by themselves cannot and should not be expected to solve the nation’s most serious health and social problems. Families, health care workers, the media, religious organizations, community organizations that serve youth, and young people themselves also must be systematically involved. However, schools could provide a critical facility in which many agencies might work together to maintain the well-being of young people.”

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Adolescent and School Health

PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

Assist Local Education Agencies (referred to as “districts”) and schools with creating an effective and efficient school health team –representing all ten components of the [Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child \(WSCC\) model](#), that focuses on the improvement and sustainment of a healthy school culture.

This guide is aimed at ensuring districts and schools are aligning their team’s efforts to the **WSCC model** as well as federal and state school health guidelines and laws.

Recognizing that integrating school health into academics can be overwhelming and schools in general are overloaded, this guide is intended to provide you the simple yet necessary steps and resources to reduce the challenge of creating a healthier school culture.

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The members of the LA SHAC represent each of the ten components of the WSCC Model, and support WSCC model implementation in Louisiana districts and schools.

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CONTENTS

THE WHOLE SCHOOL, WHOLE COMMUNITY, WHOLE CHILD MODEL.....	1
LOUISIANA’S EFFORTS AND LAWS IMPACTING SCHOOL HEALTH	2
WHY SCHOOL HEALTH AND WELLNESS?	3
Linking Health to Academics & Overall Well-Being	3
LOCAL SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICY.....	4
WHAT IS A SCHOOL HEALTH ADVISORY COUNCIL?	4
District-Level Health Advisory Committee	4
School-Level Health Advisory Council.....	5
Ideal SHAC	6
SIX STEPS TO IMPACTFUL CHANGE.....	8
CALL TO ACTION	8
RESOURCES	9

THE WHOLE SCHOOL, WHOLE COMMUNITY, WHOLE CHILD MODEL

The Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) **model** is an expansion and update of the Coordinated School Health (CSH) **approach**. The WSCC incorporates the components of CSH and the tenets of the ASCD's* whole child approach to strengthen a unified and collaborative approach to learning and health.

The WSCC model focuses its attention on the child, emphasizes a school-wide approach, and acknowledges learning, health, and the school as being a part and reflection of the local community.

WSCC: THE MODEL

Schools, health agencies, parents, and communities share a common goal of supporting the health and academic achievement of adolescents. Research shows that the health of students is linked to their academic achievement. By working together, the various sectors can ensure that *every young person* in every school in every community is healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged.

The WSCC model accomplishes a number of important objectives:

- It combines the “Whole Child” model from ASCD with the CSH approach used by many in the adolescent and school health field.
- It emphasizes the relationship between educational attainment and health, by putting the child at the center of a system designed to support both.
- It provides an update to the CSH approach to better align with the way schools function.

WHOLE SCHOOL, WHOLE COMMUNITY, WHOLE CHILD MODEL



- The child in the center is at the focal point of the model; the child is encircled by the “whole child” tenets in green: being “healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged.”
- The white band emphasizes the alignment, integration, and collaboration needed among the school, health, and community sectors to improve each child’s learning and health.
- Represented in the blue, the multiple school components surround the child, acting as the hub that provides the full range of learning and health support systems to each child, in each school, in each community.
- The community, represented in yellow, demonstrates that while the school may be a hub, it remains a focal reflection of its community and requires community input, resources, and collaboration in order to support its students.

*Formerly known as the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

LOUISIANA'S EFFORTS AND LAWS IMPACTING SCHOOL HEALTH

LOUISIANA'S IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR HEALTH UNDER THE FEDERAL EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT

According to [SHAPE America](#), “the passage of the *Every Student Succeeds Act* was a major victory for the health and physical education profession and the 50 million students in schools across the country. School health and physical education are identified as part of a student’s “**well-rounded education**”. This term replaces the term “core academic subjects” from previous versions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, like “*No Child Left Behind*.”

[Louisiana's Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\) plan](#), as endorsed by BESE and approved by the U.S. Department of Education in 2017, includes an Interests and Opportunities indicator making up 5% of the school performance score (SPS) formula that will measure whether schools are providing students with access to a **well-rounded education**, exposing students to diverse areas of learning in which students can develop their skills and talents. The resulting Interests and Opportunities measure will be the first of its kind nationwide. Assistant Superintendent Jessica Baghian recently wrote about this work for the [Thomas B. Fordham Institute](#).

CURRENT LOUISIANA SCHOOL HEALTH LAWS

The Louisiana State Legislature has laws around school health, including physical activity, physical education, nutrition, school health advisory councils and more. You can do a complete search at <http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/LawSearch.aspx>.

The law most relevant to this guidebook is RS 17:17.1: Required physical activity in schools. Section D of this law states: “Each city, parish, and other local public school board shall *establish a school health advisory council to advise the board on physical activity for students, physical and health education, nutrition, and overall student health.* The council may advise the board on issues relative to compliance with school vending machine restrictions, use of physical fitness assessment results, and school recess policies. The council members shall be appointed by the school board and shall include parents of students and individuals representing the community. All council members shall serve without compensation.”

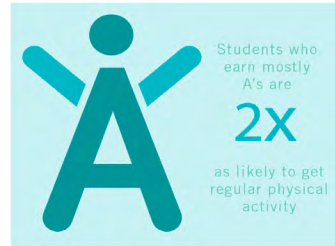
The remaining sections of this guidebook, including the Resources section, will provide you with the information needed to develop an effective and efficient School Health Advisory Council.



WHY SCHOOL HEALTH AND WELLNESS?

Research shows a strong connection between healthy behaviors and academic achievement (e.g., grades, standardized tests, graduation rates, attendance). Healthy students are better learners, and academic achievement bears a lifetime of benefits for health. However, **youth risk behaviors**, such as physical inactivity, unhealthy dietary behaviors, tobacco use, alcohol use, and other drug use are consistently linked to poor grades and test scores and lower educational attainment. (From https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/health_and_academics/index.htm)

Did you know?



To read what Louisiana High School students said about physical activity and nutrition please see the [2017 CDC Youth Risk Behavior Survey Physical Activity and Nutrition Fact Sheet](#).

LINKING HEALTH TO ACADEMICS & OVERALL WELL-BEING

While children are eating more, they are also exercising less. This can affect not only their weight but their attitude, academic performance and overall well-being. Research shows that when school districts and schools have effective policies and practices that support the health of their students and staff:

- ✓ Student and staff absenteeism decreases.
- ✓ Student concentration improves.
- ✓ Student behavior problems are reduced.
- ✓ Children and adolescents establish life-long health-promoting behaviors.

The positive outcomes listed below are why many of the nation's

leading educational organizations recognize the need to address health and well-being within the educational environment.

- When students' nutritional and physical activity needs are met, they are able to attain higher academic achievement levels;
- Providing students access to physical, mental, and oral health care improves attendance, behavior, and achievement;
- The development of connected and supportive school environments benefits teaching and learning, helps engage students, and enhances positive learning outcomes; and,
- A positive **social and emotional climate** increases academic achievement, reduces stress, and improves positive attitudes towards one's self and others.

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

SEL Works

More than two decades of research shows that SEL leads to:



Increased Academic Achievement

According to a 2011 meta-analysis of 213 studies involving more than 270,000 students, those who participated in evidence-based SEL programs showed an 11% point gain in academic achievement.



Improved Behavior

Studies show decreased dropout rates, school and classroom behavior issues, drug use, teen pregnancy, mental health problems, and criminal behavior.



Strong Return on Investment

A review of six SEL interventions in evidence-based SEL programs showed that for every dollar invested there was an economic return of 11 dollars.

LOCAL SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICY

A local school wellness policy is a written document that guides a **school district's** efforts to create supportive and healthy environments (i.e. child nutrition, physical activity, tobacco, etc.) and can address policies and practices for before-, during-, and **after-school**. (From <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/npao/wellness.htm>)

Each school district participating in federal Child Nutrition Programs, including the [National School Lunch Program](#) or the [School Breakfast Program](#), is required to develop, promote, implement and re-assess a wellness policy as established by the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, and recently enhanced by the [Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 \(HHFKA\)](#).

Wellness policies can be integrated into the [Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child \(WSCC\) model](#) for school health, and can help put into action several provisions of the [Every Student Succeeds Act](#), as Louisiana is currently working to implement through its local ESSA plan as previously referenced.

The [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#) has developed a [Model Wellness Policy](#) that aligns with the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act. This model policy is in Microsoft Word format so a district can make the necessary changes.

WHAT IS A SCHOOL HEALTH ADVISORY COUNCIL?

The school health advisory council acts collectively to lead, coordinate, and implement all aspects of the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model. The council provides a way to inform the community, teachers, staff, students and families about the work the school and district is doing to improve the health and academic success of its students. These councils use the **District's Local School Wellness Policy** and **School Health Index** (see section titled [Six Steps to Impactful Change](#) for more information) as their roadmaps for ensuring the health priorities and needs are put in place to represent the unique perspective of the district and school communities.

The [Alliance for a Healthier Generation's](#) School Wellness Toolkit is a recommended resource providing you more detailed information as to what is provided in this section of this guidebook.

DISTRICT-LEVEL HEALTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A major component of the Local School Wellness Policy is the required formation of a District-Level Health Advisory Committee. Furthermore, as stated above with LA RS 17:17.1, *school districts must develop a district-level school health advisory committee (SHAC)*.

Some of the roles and responsibilities of a district-level school health advisory council are:

- Ensure district's local school wellness policy is updated to meet current guidelines, and stays up-to-date on any changes made by the federal and state governments
- Ensure schools, parents and the community are aware of district-level health policies, specifically the district's local school wellness policy
- Ensure schools are meeting the district's wellness policy and make this information available to the public
- Identify gaps in the district's health policies, programs and processes and locate resources to address gaps
- Assist schools with challenges and resources to creating a culture of school health, and helping them celebrate the successes they achieve
- Communicate with the school board on the progress of district and school health improvements

"If it takes a village to raise a child, according to the African Proverb, then it takes a community to raise a school. The district wellness committee is the perfect group that can lead this journey. This dedicated group of people represent community organizations and school district leader partnerships that create policy and standards focused on a child's health and well-being. Healthy children pave the way for healthy communities and sustainable success."

- Paraphrased from *5 Steps to Better School/Community Collaboration* by Brendan O'Keefe

SCHOOL-LEVEL HEALTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

In order to implement sustainable, healthy changes, each school within a school district should develop a school health advisory council whose focus is on implementing programs and activities that meet the needs of their students and staff.

Some of the roles and responsibilities of a school-level school health advisory council are:

- Support the school in developing a healthier school environment
- Complete the School Health Index and update on a regular and annual basis
- Create the vision and goals for a healthy school
- Promote student, parent, and community involvement in developing a healthier school environment
- Plan and implement program and policy efforts
- Evaluate program and policy efforts
- Celebrate your team's successes
- Provide feedback to the district SHAC regarding progress on the implementation of the district's wellness policy

Often times, all it takes is one champion to create the momentum and excitement around school health. For ideas on how to be that "School Wellness Champion" we encourage you to read the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's [Start-Up Kit](#).



REPRESENTATION FROM ALL 10 WSCC COMPONENTS IS IDEAL FOR THE SHAC



the school campus. Students may have access to foods and beverages in a variety of venues at school including the cafeteria, vending machines, grab ‘n’ go kiosks, school stores, concession stands, classroom rewards, classroom parties, school celebrations, and fundraisers.

4. Health Services

Health services connect school staff, students, families, community and healthcare providers to promote the health care of students and a healthy and safe school environment. School health services actively collaborate with school and community support services to increase the ability of students and families to adapt to health and social stressors, such as chronic health conditions or social and economic barriers to health, and to be able to manage these stressors and advocate for their own health and learning needs. Qualified professionals such as school nurses, nurse practitioners, dentists, health educators, physicians, physician assistants and allied health personnel provide these services.

5. Social and Emotional Climate

Social and Emotional School Climate refers to the psychosocial aspects of students’ educational experience that influence their social and emotional development. The social and emotional climate of a school can impact student engagement in school activities; relationships with other students, staff, family, and community; and academic performance. A positive social and emotional school climate is conducive to effective teaching and learning. Such climates promote health, growth, and development by providing a safe and supportive learning environment.

6. Counseling, Psychological and Social Services

These prevention and intervention services support the mental, behavioral, and social-emotional health of students and promote success in the learning process. Services include psychological, psychoeducational, and psychosocial assessments; direct and indirect interventions to address psychological, academic, and social barriers to learning, such as individual or group counseling and consultation; and referrals to school and community support services as needed.

7. Physical Environment

A healthy and safe physical school environment promotes learning by ensuring the health and safety of students and staff. The physical school environment encompasses the school building and its contents, the land on which the school is located, and the area surrounding it. A healthy

1. Health Education

When provided by qualified, trained teachers, health education helps students acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they need for making health-promoting decisions, achieving health literacy, adopting health-enhancing behaviors, and promoting the health of others.

2. Physical Education & Physical Activity

A comprehensive school physical activity program (CSPAP) is the national framework for physical education and youth physical activity. A CSPAP reflects strong coordination across five components: physical education, physical activity during school, physical activity before and after school, staff involvement, and family and community engagement. Physical education serves as the foundation of a CSPAP and is an academic subject characterized by a planned, sequential K-12 curriculum (course of study) that is based on the national standards for physical education.

3. Nutrition Environment and Services

The school nutrition environment provides students with opportunities to learn about and practice healthy eating through available foods and beverages, nutrition education, and messages about food in the cafeteria and throughout

school environment will address a school’s physical condition during normal operation as well as during renovation (e.g., ventilation, moisture, temperature, noise, and natural and artificial lighting), and protect occupants from physical threats (e.g., crime, violence, traffic, and injuries) and biological and chemical agents in the air, water, or soil as well as those purposefully brought into the school (e.g., pollution, mold, hazardous materials, pesticides, and cleaning agents).

8. Employee Wellness

A comprehensive school employee wellness approach is a coordinated set of programs, policies, benefits, and environmental supports designed to address multiple risk factors (e.g., lack of physical activity, tobacco use) and health conditions (e.g., diabetes, depression) to meet the health and safety needs of all employees. Partnerships between school districts and their health insurance providers can help offer resources, including personalized health assessments and flu vaccinations. Employee wellness programs and healthy work environments can improve a district’s bottom line by decreasing employee health insurance premiums, reducing employee turnover, and cutting costs of substitutes.

9. Family Engagement

Families are committed to actively supporting their child’s learning and development. This relationship between school staff and families cuts across and reinforces student health and learning in multiple settings—at home, in school, in out-of-school programs, and in the community. Family engagement should be continuous across a child’s life and requires an ongoing commitment as children mature into young adulthood.

10. Community Involvement

The school, its students, and their families benefit when leaders and staff at the district or school solicits and coordinates information, resources, and services available from community-based organizations, businesses, cultural and civic organizations, social service agencies, faith-based organizations, health clinics, colleges and universities, and other community groups. Schools, students, and their families can contribute to the community through service-learning opportunities and by sharing school facilities with community members (e.g., school-based community health centers and fitness facilities).

Detailed information for each component can be found on the [CDC’s Healthy Schools website](#).



SIX STEPS TO IMPACTFUL CHANGE

Creating a “culture of school health and wellness” can be a daunting task; however, now that your School Health Advisory Council is established you can get on the right path by following these continuous improvement steps below, as well as this [one-page guide](#):



STEP 1: Build Support

If you are venturing on this path alone, the likelihood of sustainable change is minimal. Having a team is crucial. We touched on some possible roles and having representation from the 10 WSCC components in the sections above, but we also recommend some key resources at the end of this guide such as sample agendas and invitations to join your council.



STEP 2: Assess Your School

If you don't know where you are, how do you know where to go? It's likely that your school is doing great things to make your school healthier, so let's capture those things, as well as determine areas where you can improve. We recommend that each School Health Advisory Council complete the **School Health Index (SHI)** and update at least every school year as progress is made. We like to refer to the SHI as your *roadmap*.

The CDC's [School Health Index \(SHI\)](#) is an online self-assessment and planning tool (also available in a downloadable, printable version) that schools can use to improve their health and safety policies and programs. [Action for Healthy Kids](#) and [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#) have adopted modules of CDC's School Health Index as its assessment tool for schools to implement policies and practices that can help students stay healthy and ready to learn.



STEP 3: Develop an Action Plan

Once you have a baseline SHI completed, your team should choose a few areas of improvement that align with your schools' health and wellness vision and district's local wellness policy. We recommend that you choose 1-4 action items to work on each year. When selecting action items, consider selecting items that are easy to improve because this creates excitement and momentum for other items that may take a while to improve. TIP: The Alliance for a Healthier Generation allows you to create an online action plan as you complete your assessment on their website.



STEP 4: Explore Resources

Your team has determined 1-4 items to focus on improving and implementing so now you need the resources to help you begin making changes. At the end of this guidebook are many resources we recommend. TIP: The Alliance for a Healthier Generation has resources connected to each item on your action plan, and a separate [database](#) is available to search for resources by topic.



STEP 5: Take Action

Once your council has found resources to implement your action plan, it's only natural to take action! Some action steps take a while to implement and require all-hands-on-deck so delegate responsibilities to your council members and remember to provide a follow-up date to check in on progress.



STEP 6: Celebrate

As your team makes positive changes, celebrate them! Celebrations are fun and who doesn't like fun! Often times, this is where you continue momentum for Step 1: Building Support, creating that continuous improvement.

CALL TO ACTION

On behalf of the Louisiana Department of Education, Healthy Communities Section, thank you for your interest in improving the health of your school or school district. We hope this guidebook provides you with the essential information, steps and resources to articulate the value and importance of ensuring school health is used as an avenue to improve academic achievement.

As you've learned, the WSCC model places the child at the center, allowing all the necessary components to positively impact our students for today and for their future. No matter the role you play in your school or district, it is critical to the healthy success of our students. If we want to change the trajectory of school health we need School Wellness Champions like you! We applaud your efforts and we are here to support you.

RESOURCES

RESOURCES FOR SCHOOL HEALTH COUNCILS FROM THE ALLIANCE FOR A HEALTHIER GENERATION:

- [School Wellness Council Toolkit](#)
- [School Health Council Sample Agenda](#)
- [3 Steps to Forming a School Health Council](#)
- [School Wellness Champion Start-Up Kit](#)

RESOURCES FOR LOCAL SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICIES:

- [5 Steps to Revise Your Wellness Policy \(Alliance for a Healthier Generation\)](#)
- [4 Steps to Put a Policy into Practice \(Alliance for a Healthier Generation\)](#)
- [Model Wellness Policy \(Alliance for a Healthier Generation\)](#)
- [USDA Wellness Policy Outreach Toolkit](#)
- [CDC Local Wellness Policy Resources](#)
- [CDC Putting Local School Wellness Policies Into Action: Stories from School Districts and Schools](#)

RESOURCES FOR SCHOOL HEALTH INDEX:

- [School Health Index \(CDC\)](#)
- [E-Course on School Health Index](#)
- [Healthy Schools Program \(Alliance for a Healthier Generation\)](#)
- [Action for Healthy Kids](#)

RESOURCES FROM STATE AGENCIES:

- [Well-Ahead Louisiana School Health](#): Well-Ahead Louisiana provides professional development through the Healthy Schools Training Krewe and resources through School WellSpot Designation
- [Louisiana Department of Education School Health](#): provides information on current school health grants and resources
- [Louisiana School Based Health Centers](#): A SBHC provides convenient access to comprehensive, primary and preventive physical and mental health services for public school students at the school site

RESOURCES FROM FEDERAL, STATE AND NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS:

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) Healthy Schools website](#) with links to:
 - » Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model
 - » Health and Academics Research
 - » School Wellness Policy
 - » School Health Index (SHI) and more.
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) Managing Chronic Health Conditions in Schools](#)
- [United States Department of Agriculture \(USDA\) Tools for Schools website](#) with links to:
 - » Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010
 - » Smart Snacks in School, and more School Meals-related resources and information.
- [Louisiana Fit Kids Smart Snacks](#): Provides guidance on Louisiana's competitive food and beverage guidelines (i.e. Smart Snacks in School)
- [CASEL Social and Emotional Learning](#)
- [Alliance for a Healthier Generation Schools Website](#).
In addition to what is listed above:
 - » Online Assessment (SHI)
 - » 6 Step Process
 - » Wellness Topics
 - » Training Center for virtual webinars and trainings

