

Health Education is one of the ten components represented in the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child model. The goal of health education is to help students adopt and maintain healthy behaviors. Research overwhelmingly shows health education can 1) positively impact academic achievement, 2) decrease student absenteeism, 3) increase graduation rates, 4) reduce and avoid personal health risks, and 5) prevent disease and injury.



Formal, structured health education consists of any combination of planned learning experiences that provide the opportunity to acquire information and the skills students need to make quality health decisions. 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. Comprehensive school health education includes curricula and instruction for students in pre-K through grade 12 that address a variety of topics such as alcohol and other drug use and abuse, healthy eating/nutrition, mental and emotional health, personal health and wellness, physical activity, safety and injury prevention, sexual health, tobacco use, and violence prevention. Health education curricula and instruction should address the National Health Education Standards (NHES) and incorporate the characteristics of an effective health education curriculum. Health education, based on an assessment of student health needs and planned in collaboration with the community, ensures reinforcement of health messages that are relevant for students and meet community needs.

~ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



A whole child approach, which ensures each student is healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged, sets the standard for comprehensive, sustainable school improvement and provides for long-term student success.

HEALTH EDUCATION

Ways the **WHOLE SCHOOL, WHOLE COMMUNITY, WHOLE CHILD** components can support health education in your school

1 HEALTH EDUCATION

- Use an age-appropriate sequential health education curriculum, consistent with the Colorado Comprehensive Health and Physical Education Standards focused on skill development and practice
- Develop cross content integration of health education topics and skill practice
- Use student-centered, culturally responsive, engaging instructional strategies based on student needs

2 PHYSICAL EDUCATION & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- Infuse health education standards into physical education classes
- Support implementation of the Colorado Comprehensive Health and Physical Education Standards and designated curriculum
- Support the development and practice of health skills in the physical activity setting

3 NUTRITION ENVIRONMENT & SERVICES

- Post signs about health skills and the impact of good nutrition on overall health
- Conduct taste tests and cooking demonstrations to complement health education lessons
- Align cafeteria messaging with health education lessons and skills

4 HEALTH SERVICES

- Educate students and families on chronic disease management and develop appropriate individual health plans (e.g., asthma management plan)
- Reinforce classroom health messages through posters, written materials, and other resources

5 COUNSELING, PSYCHOLOGICAL & SOCIAL SERVICES

- Support health education through small group discussion based on the Colorado Comprehensive Health and Physical Education Standards (e.g., healthy eating, tobacco use)
- Align counseling interventions and supports with health education curriculum and skills (e.g., decision-making, goal setting models)
- Provide opportunities for students to practice health skills to manage behavior

6 SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL CLIMATE

- Create safe, welcoming, and supportive school environments
- Educate students on diversity, communication, bullying prevention, and cultural differences
- Reinforce health education topics and skills through Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support (PBIS) initiatives or other school wide social emotional learning curriculum

7 PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- Use the physical environment to encourage healthy choices (e.g., Smarter Lunchroom Techniques, signage supporting health topics and skills)
- Ensure secluded areas are sealed off or supervised for students, staff, and visitors to feel safe on school grounds

8 EMPLOYEE WELLNESS

- Link staff wellness initiatives to student classroom activities
- Develop a staff-mentoring program to support the health needs of students
- Encourage staff modeling of health skills such as goal setting, advocacy, decision-making, and positive interpersonal communication

9 FAMILY ENGAGEMENT





- Use assignments that encourage student interaction with family members
- Engage families in development or modification of health education curriculum
- Inform families of community health education classes or activities

10 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Seek out community experts to provide presentations on health education topics
- Assign projects that encourage student interaction with community organizations

HEALTH EDUCATION

Maintaining Administrator Support for Health Education in the School

-  Require health education as a core class, or provide time for elementary school teachers to teach health education to all students
-  Mandate all health education classes be taught by certified or licensed health education teachers. Require teachers to participate in annual professional development in health education, which includes training on the delivery of the school's health curriculum and characteristics of effective health education
-  Use the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Health Education Curriculum Analysis Tool (HECAT) to conduct a clear, complete, and consistent analysis of written health education curriculum
-  Support earning grades for required health education courses to carry the same weight as grades do for other subjects toward academic recognition (e.g., honor roll, class rank, graduation)

Ways to Engage Students

- Use active learning strategies students find enjoyable and personally relevant
- Work with students to incorporate a variety of culturally-appropriate activities and examples that reflect the community's cultural diversity
- Provide opportunities for students to practice and rehearse skills taught in health education classes to maintain and improve their health



- ✓ Don't try to take on everything at once!
- ✓ The focus of the School Health Improvement Plan should be on the health needs/highest priorities identified through the assessment (School Health Index or Smart Source).
- ✓ Get input from other individuals in your school on how to best address your school's health needs.
- ✓ Meet regularly with your school health team and monitor School Health Improvement Plan implementation progress.
- ✓ A final consideration: If you shared the School Health Improvement Plan with someone unfamiliar with it, would they understand the purpose, SMART objective, and action steps necessary to achieve the objective? Would they understand what the school health team is trying to accomplish? If not, add more details!

Writing a SMART School Health Improvement Plan (SHIP)

Sample SMART Objective

- By May 15, 20XX, ABC Middle School will implement a semester long Health Education course using a sequential curriculum and assessments in each grade.
- By May 15, 20XX, each grade at Brick Elementary will conduct two health education units and assessments aligned with standards during the school year.



SMARTness

To ensure your SHIP is SMART, be sure it includes:

- A SMART objective based on the priority identified from a school health assessment tool
- Action steps that are clear, complete, and in chronological order
- Action steps on data collection, team and grant responsibilities, and sustainability efforts
- A realistic budget aligned with the SMART objective
- Shared responsibility among all team members

For more information on School Health Improvement Plans, refer to the Destination <http://tinyurl.com/orq4pyu>

HEALTH EDUCATION



Health Education: Implement an age-appropriate sequential health education curriculum that is consistent with the Colorado Comprehensive Health and Physical Education Standards

Suggested action steps for your School Health Improvement Plan:

- Determine dedicated time to teach health education
- Identify certified/licensed staff to teach health education
- Convene appropriate staff, such as subject teams, grade level teams, specials teachers (PE, Art, Music), etc. to identify the extent health education is being implemented based on standards and best practices in health education [the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Health Education Curriculum Analysis Tool (HECAT) and state standards survey can be used to guide this process]
- Examine Healthy Kids Colorado data to prioritize curriculum needs based on student data
- Use the HECAT and state standards to conduct a clear, complete, and consistent analysis of potential health education curriculum
- Identify an age-appropriate sequential health education curriculum that is high quality and best meets the school's needs
- Identify or create grade level units or lesson plans
- Present the identified health education curriculum to school administrators for approval
- Develop engaging formative and summative student assessments to track and monitor student growth in health education skills and knowledge
- Develop a system for student grading that aligns with other content areas
- Provide professional development for health education teachers on the newly adopted curriculum and/or grade level units and lessons
- Develop a communication plan for students, staff, families, and community members announcing the new curriculum (e.g., newsletter, website)
- Identify ways to integrate health concepts and skills for reinforcement across the curriculum
- Identify opportunities to integrate health concepts and skills across content areas and throughout the school day
- Discuss feedback on success and challenges of curriculum implementation throughout the year

Resources



- [Alliance for a Healthier Generation, Schools](http://tinyurl.com/qa4d4s4)
<http://tinyurl.com/qa4d4s4>
- [American Cancer Society](http://www.cancer.org)
<http://www.cancer.org>
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Characteristics of an Effective Health Education Curriculum](http://tinyurl.com/hjkname)
<http://tinyurl.com/hjkname>
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Health Education Curriculum Analysis Tool \(HECAT\)](http://tinyurl.com/gnxwtsb)
<http://tinyurl.com/gnxwtsb>
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: National Health Education Standards](http://tinyurl.com/jqwk5ad)
<http://tinyurl.com/jqwk5ad>
- [Colorado Department of Education: Colorado Comprehensive Health and Physical Education Standards](https://www.cde.state.co.us/cohealth)
<https://www.cde.state.co.us/cohealth>
- [RMC Health: Health Education and Standards](http://rmc.org/what-we-do/health-education-and-standards/)
<http://rmc.org/what-we-do/health-education-and-standards/>
- [RMC Health: Health Education Skills Models](http://www.my.rmc.org/content/health-education-skills-models)
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