

Community Involvement is one of the ten components represented in the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child model. Research shows that students have higher grades and academic achievement as a result of parent and community involvement that supports learning. In particular, school dropout and student education aspirations and motivation are positively impacted by school, family, and community partnerships. Coordination among schools and community organizations to meet student needs is crucial to closing the achievement gap.



Community groups, organizations, and local businesses create partnerships with schools, share resources, and volunteer to support student learning, development, and health-related activities. 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).

~ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

### Six Types of Involvement: Keys to Successful Partnerships



#### Parenting

Assist families with parenting skills and setting home conditions to support children as students. Also, assist schools to better understand families.



#### Learning at Home

Involve families with their children on homework and other curriculum-related activities and decisions.



#### Communicating

Conduct effective communications from school-to-home and from home-to-school about school programs and student progress.



#### Decision Making

Include families as participants in school decisions, and develop parent leaders and representatives.



#### Volunteering

Organize volunteers and audiences to support the school and students. Provide volunteer opportunities in various locations and at various times.



#### Collaborating with the Community

Coordinate resources and services from the community for families, students, and the school, and provide services to the community.

Developed by Joyce Epstein, identified 6 types of involvement to guide the development to of school, family, and community partnerships.  
Source: Epstein, et al. 2009. *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action, Third Edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

*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.*

# COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Ways the **WHOLE SCHOOL, WHOLE COMMUNITY, WHOLE CHILD** components can support community involvement in your school

## 1 HEALTH EDUCATION

- Provide opportunities for students to identify healthy role models and available resources in the community
- Engage students to identify and find solutions for a health issue in the community
- Invite appropriate guest speakers from the community to provide lessons or presentations

## 2 PHYSICAL EDUCATION & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- Engage local university students or health and wellness experts in implementing active recess activities for students
- Recruit a team of students, staff, and family members to participate in a community event such as a fun run/walk, pedometer challenge, or physical activity fund raising challenge
- Make the indoor and outdoor school facilities available for community use outside of school hours

## 3 NUTRITION ENVIRONMENT & SERVICES

- Partner with local grocery stores and/or restaurants to offer discounts on healthy food items
- Invite a Registered Dietitian from the local health agency to speak to students and staff about healthy eating
- Invite a local chef to show students and parents how to prepare healthy, budget friendly meals and/or afterschool snacks

## 4 HEALTH SERVICES

- Partner with local providers to offer annual flu shots or screenings for students and families
- Promote community-based health and safety programs to students and families
- Partner to operate a school or community-based health center for students, staff, and families

## 5 COUNSELING, PSYCHOLOGICAL & SOCIAL SERVICES

- Provide a list of community providers that offer counseling services for students and families
- Partner with a local non-profit organization or food bank to implement a backpack program (weekend food program for students).

## 6 SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL CLIMATE

- Partner with community organizations or businesses to provide opportunities for service learning activities or internships
- Partner with community recreation centers, movie theaters, etc. to provide activities or coupons for students in a safe, alcohol and drug-free setting

## 7 PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- Solicit donations from local businesses to enhance healthy eating and active living environments (e.g., playgrounds, fitness courses, and school gardens)
- Engage community members to create school environments that support physical activity

## 8 EMPLOYEE WELLNESS

- Recruit local experts to assist with staff wellness programs (guest speakers, fitness breaks, etc.)
- Solicit donations from local organizations to offer as incentives for staff wellness programs
- Partner with local organizations to offer discounts on health-related equipment and/or activities

## 9 FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

- Invite community members to participate in staff wellness activities
- Partner with community experts to enhance your school family education program to provide parenting strategies to parents or guardians

## 10 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Invite community members to be a part of the school decision-making process
- Develop a formal process to recruit, train, and involve community members as volunteers to enrich school health and safety programs

# COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

## Maintaining Administrator Support for Community Involvement in the School



Collaborate with community organizations to ensure increased efficiency and reduced duplication of services, staff, expertise, resources, space, etc.



Develop a formal process to recruit, train, and involve community members as volunteers to enrich school health and safety programs



Communicate the benefits of school-community collaboration to teachers, staff, and parents

## Ways to Engage Students

- Seek out opportunities for students to be involved in service learning activities or internships in the community that meet their goals and interests
- Involve students in planning healthy, safe, and fun activities/events for the community to be held afterschool or on weekends



- ✓ 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 best to address community involvement.
- ✓ 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, establish a recruitment and training program for parents and community members volunteering in the school.

By May 15, 20XX, partner with four local health and wellness organizations or businesses to offer quarterly staff wellness opportunities.



## 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>

# COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT



## Joint Use or Shared Use Agreements: Provide family and community members access to indoor and outdoor school facilities outside school hours

It is sometimes difficult for students, parents, and community members to access facilities for play, physical activity, and health promotion programs. Joint use agreements, or shared use agreements, are a formal agreement between two separate government entities—often a school and a city or county setting forth the terms and conditions for shared use of public property or facilities. These agreements allow for sharing of funding and liability associated with the development, operation, and maintenance of a recreational facility.

### Suggested action steps for your School Health Improvement Plan:

- Research various types of [joint use agreements](http://tinyurl.com/hwsucso) (outdoor and indoor facilities, during school and non- school hours, third parties joint use of district and city recreation facilities) <http://tinyurl.com/hwsucso>
- Find out how joint use agreements are adopted and/or revised in your district
- Gather existing district or school joint use agreements
- Invite stakeholders to participate in discussions about joint use agreements and what the group would like their agreement to include
- Draft or make revisions to existing joint use agreement
- Obtain approval of joint use agreement from school and district administration
- Communicate adoption or changes to joint use agreement with appropriate stakeholders
- Promote school facilities and hours they are available to students, parents and community members
- Evaluate usage of school facilities and make improvements as needed
- Share progress and outcomes of implementing these procedures within the school community

## School Gardens: Recruit, train, and involve family and community members as volunteers to enrich school health and safety programs

School gardens are an excellent opportunity for physical activity, nutrition education, academic enrichment, and family engagement. School gardens can provide a fun and active opportunity to connect with schools. Family and community members can take on many roles (see below) when they volunteer in the school garden.

### Suggested action steps for your School Health Improvement Plan:

- Create a school garden committee and invite parents, students and community members to join
- Work with school garden committee members to determine school garden logistics (where to plant, what to plant, when to plant, what supplies are needed, where to store supplies, how to secure crops, who will maintain garden, how can teachers use the garden, how to fund garden, etc.)
- Determine the roles needed to run the garden such as a purchasing supplies; maintaining garden budget; communicating with school staff, parents, and community about the garden; maintaining garden on weekends, holidays or breaks; coordinating garden schedule for classes; teaching gardening lessons to classes; monitoring classes in the garden; documenting and tracking progress of the garden; taking pictures; and sharing successes with others
- Solicit school garden donations from local organizations and businesses
- Contact your local Master Gardeners Program to schedule a class for your school garden committee and others who are interested in the school and community
- Organize time to build beds and plant the seeds
- Develop a volunteer schedule for maintenance of the garden, especially during breaks, including harvesting, watering, weeding, and organizing produce to send home with students
- Share progress and outcomes of the school garden with the school community

## Resources



[Coalition for Community Schools](http://www.communityschools.org/)  
<http://www.communityschools.org/>

[National Network of Partnership Schools, John Hopkins University](http://nnps.jhucsos.com/)  
<http://nnps.jhucsos.com/>