

Essential Components of Effective Tobacco Prevention for Schools

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Rationale

To be effective in preventing youth tobacco use, school districts and schools need to look beyond classroom instruction and toward developing a more comprehensive approach. This document outlines five essential components for effective school tobacco use prevention, along with examples and suggested staff development for each component. To ensure successful implementation, ongoing program evaluation should be used to guide improvements and determine impact.

The components and associated examples are based on earlier research cited by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, best practice within the school health field, and the Surgeon General's 2012 report on *Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults*. As stated in the Surgeon General's report,

Importantly, school-based programs produce larger and more sustained effects when they are implemented in combination with supplementary or complementary family-, mass media-, or community-based programs. All of these data support the conclusion that a comprehensive, multicomponent approach to tobacco use prevention is more efficacious than a single strategy. (p. 792)

School District Level Component

Component 1. School districts will adopt comprehensive tobacco prevention policies that include the following.

- Prohibitions against tobacco use by students, staff, and visitors on school property, including school vehicles, or at any school-sponsored off-campus event.
- Training for school staff regarding tobacco prevention policies and effective enforcement strategies.
- Procedures for communicating the tobacco policy to students, school staff, families, and visitors and ensuring that students perceive that the policies are enforced.
- Tobacco policy violations consequences that are not solely punitive and provide education or counseling rather than a discipline-only approach.
- Requirement that all students receive tobacco use prevention education starting in the middle grades with booster sessions in later grades.
- Provisions for students to have access to programs to help them quit using tobacco.
- Prohibitions against tobacco advertising in school buildings and at school functions.
- Prohibitions against accepting tobacco industry funds.
- Prohibitions against student's possessing/exhibiting tobacco-related paraphernalia or gear (e.g., cigarette lighters, clothing with tobacco company logos).
- Information about cessation programs for school staff who want to quit using tobacco products.

School Level Components

Component 2. Schools will implement effective tobacco prevention classroom instruction, starting in the middle grades with booster sessions in later grades.

- Full implementation of a developmentally appropriate multi-lesson curriculum that:
 - Includes instruction about the short-term and long-term negative physiological and social consequences of tobacco use, social influences on tobacco use, and peer norms regarding tobacco use;
 - Contains content that is culturally relevant to the student population;
 - Involves peer leaders rather than relying totally on adult instructors;
 - Provides students training and practice in the use of refusal and other life skills;
 - Uses interactive delivery methods;
 - Addresses both smoking and the use of smokeless tobacco; and
 - Aligns with health education standards.
- In-person training for school staff on effective tobacco use prevention curricula, including a review of the program content, modeling of program activities by skilled trainers, and opportunities for teacher practice.
- Tobacco use prevention instruction integrated as part of comprehensive school health education within the broader school health program.
- Classroom assessments tailored directly to instruction and to health education standards.
- Integration of effective tobacco prevention strategies into core curricular areas, where possible.
- Training for school staff on assessment of health education standards as they pertain to tobacco prevention.

Component 3. Schools will provide assistance to students who want to quit using other tobacco products.

- Identification and referral of students to on-site school-based cessation programs.
- Implementation of research-based cessation programs designed for adolescents.
- Cessation programs that are classroom-based educational programs, that occur in school-based clinics, or that use computer-based programming.
- Interpersonal contact of the cessation instructor with potential participants and recruitment in school contexts (e.g., classrooms).
- Programs offered during school hours and conducted by school staff.
- Cessation programs that focus on immediate consequences of tobacco use, have specific attainable goals, and use contracts that include rewards.
- A smokeless tobacco cessation program specific to smokeless tobacco and designed for high-use student groups.
- Training for school staff on tobacco cessation programs that have been shown to be effective with adolescents.
- Referrals to the Colorado QuitLine (1-800-QUIT NOW) or coquitline.org for school staff who want to quit using tobacco products.

Family & Community Level Components

Component 4. Schools will engage parents and families in support of school-based tobacco prevention programs.

- Communication with families to explain district tobacco policies, enforcement strategies, and prevention goals.
- Request family volunteers for school and/or classroom tobacco prevention activities.
- Recruitment of family support for tobacco-free events on school property.
- Promotion of family involvement on planning committees to update tobacco-free school policies and select curricula.
- Homework assignments that encourage parental involvement in student learning about tobacco prevention concepts and skills.
- In-person, video-based, or on-line skills training for families that address:
 - Parental monitoring of their children's activities, whereabouts, and friends;
 - Parent-child communication about tobacco use; and
 - Tobacco-free home policies.
- Information about cessation programs for family members who want to quit using tobacco products.

Component 5. Districts and schools will create and maintain linkages to state and community tobacco prevention policies and programs that target children/youth.

- Designation of a district-level staff person to serve as a liaison to the local tobacco prevention coalition or similar community organization, if one exists.
- Participation in planning and implementing community programs through the local coalition.
- Support for community efforts that encourage policy makers to support tobacco prevention policies that target children and youth.
- Coordination with local media to obtain coverage of school-based tobacco prevention events.
- Training for school staff and community members on fostering school/community partnerships to prevent tobacco use among youth.
- Collaboration with communities to prohibit tobacco advertising and to structure the physical environment to make it inconvenient for youth to use tobacco.
- Support and reinforcement of mass media messages aimed at reducing tobacco use among youth and young adults.
- Encouragement for youth participation in and leadership of a network committed to reducing tobacco use and advocating for policy change and improvements in the enforcement of laws governing youth access.
- Coordination of school programs with community activities to maximize the reach to all community members and to provide widespread support for tobacco-free behavior.

Sources

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