A Guide to Support the Implementation of a Coordinated Approach to School Health

Steps to Implementing a Coordinated Approach to School Health

Step 1- Gather data
Step 2- Conduct meeting at selected school site
Step 3- Establish school health council and meet
Step 4- Conduct district-wide meeting
Step 5- Formalize and empower community health council
Step 6- Conduct community health council meeting to plan and prepare for community-wide meeting
Step 7- Conduct community-wide meeting
Step 8- Develop implementation plan
The Office of Healthy Schools supports the belief that a quality physical education program is a crucial component of a student’s overall education. Every student in Mississippi will benefit from an educational process that utilizes the skills, attitudes and information needed to develop and maintain a healthy and physically active lifestyle.

- “Burst Breaks” (Being Ultimately Rewarded Sporadically Today) – Create activities that can be implemented throughout the day to allow children to be active. These activities can be aligned to reinforce the material covered that day.
- Implement curriculum to meet competencies outlined in the 2006 Mississippi Physical Education Framework
- Reward students by organizing walks with the principal rather than holding pizza parties
- Provide homework opportunities that require students to be active. Science – require students to bring four different types of leaves, rock, etc. Math – have students walk 1000 steps and determine distance traveled.
- Create an environment that promotes physical activity (conduct physical education classes in settings where they can be observed by all, encourage collaboration between regular classroom teachers and physical education teachers, etc.)
- Implement Take 10 curriculum into regular classroom setting
- Support and serve on School Health Council
- Do not punish students by eliminating physical activity opportunities
- Offer opportunities for students to participate in intramural activities and/or scavenger hunts in the after school setting
- Promote parental involvement in physical education classes through a fitness report card
- Invite parents to assist with teaching a unit on physical education
- Ensure all children participate in a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity during the school day. This can include expanded opportunities for physical activity through classes, sports programs, clubs, lessons, after-school and community use of school facilities and walking- and biking to- school program
- 30 minutes daily physical education in grades K-8
- Certified Physical education Teachers in grades K-8
- Participate in the development of the local school wellness policy and ensure implementation
- Implement biannually fitness testing for students
- Implement athletic safety requirements
- Refer students who exhibit symptoms of asthma to school nurse or other health service.
- Provide 45 minutes of daily physical activity for kindergarten student in accordance with the Kindergarten Guidelines.
Counseling/Psychological Services

In addition to a student’s physical well being, his or her mental health can be effectively addressed through a coordinated approach to school health. Today many students have the added stress of coping with emotional challenges stemming from problems such as parental divorce, alcoholism, abuse, and drug addiction. Counseling is a process of helping people by assisting them in making decisions and changing behavior. School counselors work with all students, school staff, families, and members of the community as an integral part of the education program. School counseling programs promote school success for students through a focus on academic achievement, prevention and intervention activities, advocacy, social/emotional issues, and career development. All areas lead to the development of the “whole person” where all students may be successful members of society upon exiting the school environment.

- Implement Mississippi Counselor’s Framework
- Participate on School Resource Team
- Serve on School Health Council
- Participate in the development of the local school wellness policy and ensure implementation
- Identify and refer students who are victims or perpetrators of violence
- Identify and refer students with health problems affected by lack of physical activity and/or nutrition
Comprehensive Health Education

Learning is an active process and individuals learn best from instruction that is hands-on and related to life experiences. All students should have the opportunity to learn. However, the capacity for success is diminished if students are absent or distracted by unhealthy behaviors or hazardous situations. Health Education must be a collaborative process between family, school and community. Health-literate students should have the capacity to obtain, interpret, and use basic health information and skills to enhance individual health. Health instruction focuses on the health and wellness of students and must become an integral and consistent part of the total school program. Instruction that begins while children are young and continues through youth reinforces the positive behaviors to be sustained throughout adulthood.

- Implement curriculum in grades K-8 to meet competencies outline in the 2006 Mississippi Comprehensive Health Framework
- Require Health education for students in grades K-8
- Provide professional development for staff on health education
- Participate in the development of the local school wellness policy and ensure implementation
- School Nurse assists with implementing Health Education
- Cafeteria can provide opportunities to try healthy foods and then discuss in class
- Posters displayed in halls and around vending areas
- Use of Title IV funds to address violence prevention and drug education
- Identify individuals in the community to invite as speakers
- Collaborate with other curriculum areas to provide cross curriculum learning opportunities
Health Services

The Health Services component of a Coordinated School Health Program includes services provided for students to appraise, protect, and promote health. These services are designed to ensure access or referral to primary health care services, or both, foster appropriate use of primary health care services, prevent and control communicable disease and other health problems, provide emergency care for illness or injury, promote and provide optimum sanitary conditions for a safe school facility and school environment, and provide educational and counseling opportunities for promoting and maintaining individual, family, and community health. Qualified professionals such as physicians, nurses, dentists, health educators, and other allied health personnel provide these services.

- Assist regular classroom teachers with implementing Health Education to students in grades K-8
- Serve on School Health Council
- Track students with known asthma or asthma related illnesses
- Assess extent of injuries on school campus
- Screen for tobacco use
- Establish emergency response plans
- Offer asthma management education to all students with asthma
- Participate in the development of the local school wellness policy and ensure implementation
- Begin EPSDT Nurse Program
- Conduct Health Fair
- Maintain Health Files for all students
- Track Body Mass Index for all students
Staff Wellness

Students are not the only ones who need good health. School personnel who want to encourage children and teens to live a healthy lifestyle will be more successful if they model healthy behaviors. In an employee wellness program, staff should be provided with information and experiences that promote an understanding of wellness and a commitment to its benefits. School districts should establish their own wellness programs based on the needs of their particular communities. Schools can consider a number of activities to make sure that teachers and staff feel their best and perform at peak levels. Such efforts can include:

- Seminars, established by the administration and health department staff, on topics such as stress reduction, smoking cessation, physical fitness, etc.
- Simple health screenings, such as blood pressure, so that staff can identify early symptoms of disease.

These opportunities encourage school staff to pursue a healthy lifestyle that contributes to their improved health status, improved morale, decreased insurance costs, and a greater personal commitment to the health of students and creates positive role modeling.

- Weigh Down Initiative
- Implement healthy choices for staff
- Program for first aid and CPR
- Smoking Cessation Programs
- Start a walking club for staff before or after school
- Simple health screenings, such as blood pressure, so that staff can identify early symptoms of disease
- Vending selections to include healthy choices
- Walking Program before/after school
- Invite a Yoga Instructor to offer classes
- Stress reduction programs
Environmental Services

This includes the physical and aesthetic surroundings and the psychosocial climate and culture of the school. Factors that influence the physical environment include the school building and the area surrounding it, any biological or chemical agents that are detrimental to health, and physical conditions such as temperature, noise, and lighting. The psychological environment includes the physical, emotional, and social conditions that affect the well being of students and staff.

- Sell fruit and gift wrap rather than candy or non-nutritious items as a fundraiser
- Switch from selling items from a candy cart to selling items from a breakfast cart to raise money
- Replace blown light bulbs immediately
- Add juice, water, cheese trays, and fresh fruit and vegetable trays to classroom parties, and remove soft drinks and chips
- Keep campus free of litter
- Keep buildings and hallways freshly painted
- Keep restroom facilities stocked with necessary supplies
- Keep restroom facilities free of graffiti
- Have community members, parents, students, staff, etc. engage in a project to repair an old building paint, update fixtures, replace physical education equipment, build a walking track, etc to help create a more stable learning environment.
- Repair/replace damaged and missing playground equipment, including landing zones
- Create a list of products that are safe to be used for cleaning
- Conduct workshops for staff and parents on conflict resolution skills, resisting peer pressure, how to say no etc. to assist with making schools a safer place
- Provide remarks during morning and afternoon announcements that promote healthy behaviors
- Provide age appropriate playground equipment
- Use bulletin boards to display educational materials promoting healthy lifestyles.
- Sponsor a family fitness night
- Provide separation of all bus and vehicular traffic
- Work with local media to inform the community about health problems facing Mississippi children, as well as the need for healthy school environments
- Provide inviting areas on the school campus through landscape
- Allow students to participate in the landscape through the use of outdoor classrooms
- Allow students to grow a vegetable garden
The foods that we eat give us the energy and the nutrients that our bodies need. Selecting the right foods to eat today can help us reduce the risk of chronic diseases, such as diabetes, heart disease, and certain cancers in later years. Healthy eating habits, along with daily exercise, are important to a healthy lifestyle. Learning about healthy eating habits can occur in many places: classrooms, school cafeterias, libraries, home and others.

- Remove soda machines from a school; only water, juice and milk can be sold at that school; and implement a policy allowing water in classrooms
- Low fat and skim milk available
- Hold 30 minutes of recess per day before lunch to help decrease plate waste and improve behavior in lunchroom and classroom
- Prohibit the use of “Foods of minimal nutritional value” (i.e. soft drinks, gum, and candy) in schools or as fundraisers
- Adopt a “fruits and vegetables only” snack policy for snacks brought from home
- Transfer the management of vending machines to the school food service program, giving it the opportunity to improve the nutritional quality and increase revenue without external contracts
- Participate in the development of the local school wellness policy and ensure implementation
- Write a request for proposals for vending that pays a higher commission to the district for healthful beverages, increases the percentage of healthful items available, charges a lower price for the healthier beverages, and uses machines with fronts that depict children being physically active
- Price healthful food lower than the less healthful items in vending machines
- Remove from vending machines items such as candy, soft drinks, sweetened drinks, fried chips, deep fried foods and snack cakes and replace with water, 100% fruit juices, milk, cheese, yogurt, fresh fruit and vegetables, trail mix, granola bars and air-popped popcorn
- Change in school menus to more baked and less fried items
- Provide daily salad bars
- Provide healthy choices in vending machines
- Institute a policy to not allow the use of food to discipline or reward students
- Switch from selling items from a candy cart to selling items from a breakfast cart to raise money
- Add juice, water, cheese trays, and fresh fruit and vegetable trays to classroom parties, and remove soft drinks and chips
- Sell fruit and gift wrap rather than candy or non-nutritious items as a fundraiser
- Allow students to have water in the classroom
Parental/Community Involvement

One of the biggest benefits of a coordinated approach to school health can be a closer working relationship between parents, businesses, local health officials, and other community groups, schools can form powerful coalitions to address the health needs of students. School health councils, coalitions, and broadly based constituencies for school health can build support for school health program efforts. Schools must more actively engage community resources and parental involvement services to respond more effectively to the health-related needs of students. For example,

- Parents should be encouraged to participate in coordinated school health planning and oversight committees (i.e. school health councils)
- Community members with special skills can be asked to teach certain health units (i.e. dieticians focusing on food choices)

School facilities can be opened to the public during non-school hours for physical activity, fitness sessions, as well as family health seminars and social and recreational functions

- Regularly scheduled health fairs
- Establish a School Health Council
- Establish a Community Health Council
- Update parents on successes relating to school health through monthly newsletter
- Parents should be encouraged to participate in coordinated school health planning and oversight committees (i.e. school health councils)
- Participate in the development of the local school wellness policy and ensure implementation
- Community members with special skills can be asked to teach certain health units (i.e. dieticians focusing on food choices)
- School facilities can be opened to the public during non-school hours for physical activity, fitness sessions, as well as family health seminars and social and recreational functions
- Appoint to serve on crisis response planning committee
- Sponsor a family fitness night
- Work with local media to inform the community about health problems facing Mississippi children, as well as the need for healthy school environments
- Increase PTO/PTA Membership
Implementation Plan

- Establish an action plan that identifies immediate successes and ensures sustainability of the program. (Local School Wellness Policy)
- Designate one or more persons to ensure the implementation of the action plan. (Local School Wellness Policy)
- Establish and support a School Health Council that addresses all aspects of a coordinated school health program, including a local school wellness policy.
- Conduct a review of the progress toward school wellness policy goals each year to identify areas of improvement.
- Prepare and submit a yearly report to the local school board regarding the progress toward implementation of the school wellness policy and recommendations for any revisions to the policy as necessary.
Marketing

- Provide positive, motivating messages, both verbal and non-verbal, about healthy lifestyle practices throughout the school setting. All school personnel will help reinforce these positive messages.
- Involve students in planning for a healthy school environment. Students will be asked for input and feedback through the use of student surveys, and attention will be given to their comments.
- Promote healthful eating, physical activity, and healthy lifestyles to students, parents, teachers, administrators, and the community at school events (e.g., school registration, parent-teacher conferences, PTA meetings, open houses, health fairs, teacher in-services, and other events).
- Eliminate advertising and other materials on the school campus that promote foods of minimal nutrition value.
- Work with local media, like newspaper, TV and radio, to inform the community about the health problems facing Mississippi children, as well as the need for and benefits of healthy school environments.