

## **How School Administrators<sup>1</sup> Can Demonstrate Support for a Coordinated Approach to Enhance Student Learning and Health**

In order for students to reach their full potential, schools must address the physical, emotional, social, and environmental factors that can affect learning. Schools that adopt a coordinated approach to planning and problem-solving are more likely to position students for success in the classroom and throughout their lifetimes. The following indicators identify concrete actions that district and building administrators can take to demonstrate their support for this approach:

### **Essential Structures**

- The district's<sup>2</sup> vision/mission includes a statement concerning the health and well-being of students and school personnel as a foundation for school improvement and academic success.
- Administrators' criteria for hiring school personnel and management decisions take into consideration attitudes and behaviors that promote physical, mental, emotional, social, and environmental health.
- Administrators and the school board work together with school personnel and family and community partners to establish and communicate health promotion policies and plans that align with the district's vision/mission and to monitor progress toward achievement of health-related goals and objectives.
- The district has officially appointed at least one individual with dedicated time and authority to oversee and to manage a coordinated and multi-disciplinary approach for the district to support the health of students and school personnel including health education, health services, and a healthy environment. The designated coordinator(s)<sup>3</sup> should have written job description(s), distinct position(s) identifiable on the district's organizational chart, and be regularly involved in the district's decision-making processes.
- The district has an established school health advisory council<sup>4</sup> that meets regularly and works with the superintendent, school board, and designated coordinator(s) to determine district health priorities, support the development, implementation and evaluation of policies, programs and services, and foster community partnerships that promote health as a foundation for school success.

### **Data Driven Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation**

- Administrators promote and participate in multi-disciplinary planning to develop health-related goals and objectives, with measurable outcomes, that are included in the district's strategic plan and school improvement plan(s). Administrators recognize that effective programming requires a minimum three- to five- year commitment in order to begin to see and document positive outcomes.
- Administrators ensure that the planning and implementation of health-related programming is based on documented health needs of students and school personnel using local health and education data and current knowledge regarding school climate and evidence-based approaches.
- Administrators implement an established system for reporting progress, at least annually, on achieving health-related goals and objectives, revising strategies when needed, and collecting data that demonstrate links between academic achievement and health and well-being.
- Administrators include progress toward achievement of health-related goals and objectives in performance evaluation criteria of school personnel, as appropriate.

### **Resources**

- The district's budget includes dedicated line item support for at least a portion of cost of the designated coordinator(s),<sup>3</sup> rather than relying solely on grant or other temporary funding sources.
- Administrators allocate sufficient fiscal and human resources to support the designated coordinator(s) in facilitating measurable academic and health outcomes, with attention to:
  - collaborative planning time
  - physical space

- materials and supplies
- professional development
- technological support
- data collection and analysis, and
- communication systems.

### **Support for Innovation and Collaboration**

- Administrators encourage innovation and collaboration internally and with family and community partners that includes a willingness to blend funding and share district resources to achieve shared, mutual goals.

### **Advocacy**

- Administrators understand, model, and can articulate the inextricable link between academic achievement and the health and well-being of students and school personnel. They actively promote a coordinated approach to enhancing academic and health outcomes among school personnel, students, families, and the wider community.

### **Support for School Personnel as Healthy Models**

- Administrators provide opportunities for school personnel to practice and model healthy behaviors. Commitment to a healthy worksite might include:
  - Access to school fitness facilities and/or equipment
  - Time for physical activity, health education, or another health-related service during staff development days
  - Recognition for participation in individual health risk assessment and health promotion activities
  - Consideration of including a personal health objective as part of professional development plans

### **Definitions**

1. The term *administrator* is intended to include Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents, Principals and/or other mid-level administrators, including designated health coordinators, directors of departments/divisions/ component areas, depending on the size and governance structure of the school system.
2. The term *district* is intended to mean the local education agency (LEA), which might vary in size and governance by state. It might include one cluster of elementary, middle and high schools or several clusters spanning many miles. It might also include several clusters in a suburban or small city setting, or several regions in an extremely large urban setting.
3. The term *coordinator* refers to an individual's role, not necessarily their title, that includes dedicated time and authority to oversee and to manage a district-wide multi-disciplinary approach to supporting the health and well-being of students and school personnel. Ideally, this person has training and recognition as a district administrator.
4. Use of the term *school health advisory council* is intended to include any coordinating body (by any name), at the school district level that includes school personnel from all levels, school board members, students, parents, community agencies and organizations, school board members, and private businesses with a vested interest in supporting the health, safety, and well-being of school-age children and youth. Council members are engaged to contribute expertise, personal passion, time, and other kinds of support to the decision-making process and related activities. There could be several working committees (by any name) dedicated to specific focus areas that report regularly to this council to contribute to the council's "Big Picture."

### **References**

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