



ASHA Position Statement: A Coordinated Approach to Support Health and Learning

The American School Health Association (ASHA) believes that a multidisciplinary, coordinated school health (CSH) approach is the most effective and efficient means of promoting healthy citizens. To this end, ASHA supports the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model which combines and builds on elements of the traditional coordinated school health approach and ASCD's Whole Child Framework. ASHA believes that the WSCC model makes visible the commitment of education and health to collaboratively prepare today's students to become successful and healthy citizens.

BACKGROUND

Students come to school with a myriad of health and social issues that may impact learning and healthy development. Academic and non-academic barriers must be removed in order for students to achieve academic success. The **WSCC model** creates a system that supports student health and academic achievement while eliminating gaps and reducing redundancies across initiatives and funding streams. This multidisciplinary system is synergistic, connecting school and community support systems to ensure that every school is a place where students learn and thrive. Evidence supports a direct correlation between health and learning that is essential to academic success, school completion, and the development of healthy, resilient, and productive citizens.

The health of young people, and the adults they will become, is critically linked to the health-related behaviors they choose to adopt as children. A coordinated approach, such as WSCC, must be fully integrated into the work of the school. Critical to this work is a multidisciplinary team consisting of highly qualified and trained professionals such as school nurses, health educators, physical educators, counselors, social workers, physicians and other health professionals who work with educators and administrators, parents, students and community members to develop, implement and evaluate policies and programs based on student and community needs, interests, data and demographics. Lead by a school health coordinator, a school health coordinating council connects the school to community-based programs and services to maximize the health and learning potential for every student.

The updated WSCC approach combines the [ten components of coordinated school health](#) with the original Whole Child Tenets:

- Each student enters school **healthy** and learns about and practices a healthy lifestyle.

- Each student learns in an environment that is physically and emotionally **safe** for students and adults.
- Each student is actively **engaged** in learning and is connected to the school and broader community.
- Each student has access to personalized learning and is **supported** by qualified, caring adults.
- Each student is **challenged** academically and prepared for success in college or further study and for employment and participation in a global environment.

The updated Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model builds on the traditional coordinated school health approach by providing greater alignment, integration and collaboration between education and health to improve each child's cognitive, physical, social and emotional development. School health programs have traditionally been driven by federal, state, and local mandates and funding streams, resulting in an array of programs and services that lack consistency and sustainability. This coordinated school health approach creates a streamlined system of communication and action. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend [eight strategies](#) to implement a coordinated approach to improve school health policies and programs.

CONCLUSION

ASHA believes that a coordinated school health approach, as embodied in the WSCC model, provides schools with focus and structure, maximizes resources, and enables the school community to provide students and their families with the support needed to be healthy and successful. States and local school districts are the experts in the educational and health needs of their students and accordingly, many have adapted the original coordinated school health model to meet those needs. The WSCC approach is simply a refinement of the original CSH model. However, ASHA believes that the strength of the WSCC approach is the synergistic relationship between health and education, the alignment of policy and programs, and the focus on connecting student health and learning.

ABOUT ASHA

The mission of the American School Health Association is to transform all schools into places where every student learns and thrives. ASHA is a unique multidisciplinary organization that provides a means for those employed by local, state and national education and health organizations to work collaboratively and synergistically with concerned parents and community members and with colleagues in higher education to meet ASHA's mission. ASHA members represent the ten components of the coordinated school health model. ASHA helped build the foundation for such a collaborative approach and today, the organization continues to define and strengthen our nation's efforts to improve the lives of children, families, and communities.

References:

- <http://www.ascd.org/programs/learning-and-health/wsc-model.aspx> Retrieved: April 30, 2015
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- Kolbe, L. On National Strategies to Improve Both Education and Health – An Open Letter. *Journal of School Health*, 2015 85(1):1-7.