



## **ASHA Position Statement**

### **Whole School, Whole Community Whole Child: A Coordinated Approach to Student Health and Learning**

The [American School Health Association](#) (ASHA) believes that a multidisciplinary, coordinated and collaborative approach to health and learning is the most effective and efficient means of promoting the health and development of young people. To this end, ASHA supports the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model which combines and builds on elements of the Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) coordinated school health model 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 healthy and productive citizens.

#### **BACKGROUND**

Child health and academic outcomes are interdependent. Students come to school with many health and social issues that impact learning and healthy development. According to the World Health Organization, the single most effective way to improve health and reduce disparities is to invest in helping young people reach their full academic potential. Integrating health and education is a critical, but currently underutilized, way to improve both health and educational outcomes. The WSCC model creates a system that supports student health and academic achievement while eliminating gaps and reducing redundancies across programs, services, and funding streams. This collaborative approach is synergistic, connecting school and community support systems to ensure that every school is a place where students learn and thrive. Studies demonstrate that student attendance, behavior, and achievement improve when basic nutrition, fitness, and health care needs are met and when learning environments are connected and supportive.

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 collaborative approach, such as WSCC, must be fully integrated into the work of the school. A [school health coordinator](#) is critical to this work. The school health coordinator will lead a multidisciplinary team including highly qualified and trained 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.

The WSCC approach (illustrated below) combines the traditional components of coordinated school health (health education, physical education, school health services, healthy and safe school environment, counseling, psychological, and social services, family and community involvement, health promotion for staff, nutrition services) 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 Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) Model



The WSCC model places students at the center of an approach that aims to align and integrate the collaborations between education and health to improve each child’s cognitive, physical, social and emotional development.

### **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, local school districts, schools, and communities 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 provides a common framework to align the fields of health and education to foster greater collaboration. 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**

ASHA's mission 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**

- ASCD. The Whole Child Initiative. Available from: <http://www.ascd.org/programs/The-Whole-Child/Healthy.aspx>.
- Basch CE. Healthier Students Are Better Learners: A Missing Link in School Reforms to Close the Achievement Gap. *Journal of School Health*. 2011;81(10):593-8.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Components of the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC). Available from: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/wscs/components.htm>.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Parent Engagement: Strategies for Involving Parents in School Health. Atlanta (GA): US Department of Health and Human Services; 2012.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. School Connectedness: Strategies for Increasing Protective Factors Among Youth. Atlanta (GA): US Department of Health and Human Services; 2009.
- Durlak J, Weissberg RP, Dymnicki AB, Taylor RD, Schellinger KB. The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school based universal interventions. *Child Development* 2011; 82(1): 405–32.
- The Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model: A New Approach for Improving Educational Attainment and Healthy Development for Students, Volume: 85, Issue: 11, Pages: 729-739, First published: 06 October 2015, DOI: (10.1111/josh.12310)

Approved: September 2015  
Revised: December 2018