

PROGRAM STRATEGIC PLANNING KIT EVALUATION for school health programs

STEP 2: ASSESS

In the Assess step, you review and analyze internal and external data related to your program. At the end of the Assess step, you should have completed an analysis of the internal and external environment of your program by conducting an analysis of your agency's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOTs). This SWOT analysis will help you develop the strategies that your program will implement to achieve its goals.

A SWOT analysis is a scan of the internal and external environment of a program identifying strengths and weaknesses that are internal to your program, and opportunities and threats external to your program in the environment in which it operates. It is a useful tool for reducing a large amount of data into a more manageable profile of your school health program, and it provides a framework for identifying the issues that affect your strategic plan. (Source: NetMBA Business Knowledge Center, <http://www.netmba.com/strategy/swot/>)

- Program strengths are elements internal to your school health program that facilitate reaching your program goals. For example, a fully staffed team for your school health program is a strength.
- Program weaknesses are elements internal to your school health program that are barriers to reaching your program goals. An example of a program weakness is a training cadre that is not large enough to

At the end of the ASSESS step, you should have:

- ✓ Completed an analysis of the internal and external environment of your program by conducting an analysis of your agency's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOTs).

train all physical education (PE) educators on the PE curricula used in the state.

- Program opportunities are aspects of the external environment in which your school health program operates that facilitate reaching program goals. Opportunities are not just positive aspects of the environment, but they can also be the chance to address program gaps and initiate new activities. For example, an opportunity might be that most school districts in your state have at least a part-time position dedicated to coordinated school health programs, providing the opportunity to implement nutrition programs. Another example is that less than 50% of districts and schools in your state use HIV prevention materials that are aligned with state or national standards, suggesting the need for technical assistance and an opportunity for curriculum improvement.

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- Program threats are aspects of the external environment in which your school health program operates that are (or could be) barriers to reaching program goals. For example, a threat might be unfavorable parental attitudes toward required physical education and health education courses for secondary school students as documented in a statewide questionnaire.

A SWOT analysis depends on thorough internal and external assessments related to your program. With an internal assessment, you analyze your program's position, performance, problems, and potential. With an external assessment, you analyze the forces that affect the environment in which your program functions. With your program staff and others in your strategic planning workgroup, review the internal and external program data you gathered as part of the strategic planning Prepare step.

- Use the data from your DASH Program Inventory, other internal data, and the experiences of program staff and your strategic planning workgroup to generate a list of program strengths and weaknesses for the following components: (1) program management and staffing, (2) program planning and monitoring, (3) professional development and technical assistance, and (4) partnerships. You can use an “other”

category to list strengths and weaknesses that do not relate directly to one of the four program components (e.g., funding diversification). You should consider both program resources and program processes, such as service delivery.



You can use the **SWOT Worksheet for School Health Programs** to record your work.

- Use your external data and the experiences of program staff and your strategic planning workgroup to generate a list of opportunities that your program can build upon to influence the health and educational outcomes of young people. Also identify the external threats to your program work based on the external data. You can use the SWOT Worksheet for School Health Programs to record your work.

After you conduct your SWOT analysis, the next step is to use your findings to identify program strategies. This process occurs in the Create step of strategic planning.