



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION



Why Use the School Health Index?



The Situation

- Prevalence of youth risk behaviors is **high**, with **unfavorable trends**
- Promoting health and safety behaviors for youth is a **critical public health priority**
- Promoting health and safety behaviors for youth is an **educational priority**

Opinions of U.S. Adults About School Health Programs

- 65% believe schools should play a major role in fighting the obesity problem
- Adults strongly support:
 - Healthier school lunches: 84%
 - Health classes: 82%
 - More physical education: 76%
 - Prohibiting sale of unhealthy foods in school vending machines: 42%

Source: Survey by Lake Snell Perry and Associates for Harvard University, based on interviews with a nationally representative sample of 1,002 adults, May-June 2003

Opinions of Parents of Adolescents About Health Education

- **82%** said that health education is either more important than or as important as other subjects taught in school.
- **74%** said schools should spend more time or the same amount of time teaching health education as they do teaching other subjects.

Source: Gallup Organization for the American Cancer Society, national telephone survey of 1,003 parents of adolescents enrolled in U.S. public schools, 1993

Opinions of Parents of Children in K-12 About Physical Education

- **81%** want their kids to receive daily physical education.
- **15%** believe that children should concentrate on academic subjects at school and leave the physical activities for after school.

Source: Survey by Opinion Research Corp. based on interviews with a nationally representative sample of 1,017 adults, February 2000 (margin of error = $\pm 6\%$)

How School Health Programs Benefit Businesses

- Now:
 - Improved health of employees' children
 - Lower employee absenteeism and stress, higher productivity
- In the future:
 - A healthy and productive workforce
 - Lower health care costs

School Health Programs

- ✓ Increase students' capacity to learn
- ✓ Reduce absences
- ✓ Improve physical fitness and mental alertness