

FORMING A SCHOOL HEALTH TEAM

What is a school health team?

A school health team (also sometimes referred to as a school health council or a school health advisory council) is a group of individuals representing different segments of the community, who collectively act to provide advice to a school on aspects of the school health program.

These teams can work with schools to help identify health problems and concerns, set priorities, and design solutions.

Who are potential members of a school health team? People who:

- **Have an interest in youth.** People who work with youth groups, PTAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, Scouts, and other youth organizations.
- **Understand the community.** Those who have an understanding of the cultural, political, geographic, and economic structure of the community.
- **Have professional ability.** Individuals with professional training in youth-related disciplines.
- **Are willing to devote time.** Make sure to communicate to members of the team what time commitment is involved. No matter what a person's qualifications and interest in youth, if she or he will not attend meetings and participate in the work of the team, it is usually better not to have that person as a member.
- **Have credibility.** Select people who are respected by their peers. The credibility of the team is enhanced considerably by the personal characteristics of its members.
- **Are representative of the population.** Membership should be as broad and diverse as possible. Representation of as many segments of the community as possible can enrich the level of discussion and acceptance of proposed activities.

Key School Representatives

- Students
- Administrators (e.g., principals, superintendent, directors of special education or instruction)
- Health coordinators
- Health education teachers
- Physical education teachers
- Teachers from a variety of levels and disciplines
- Counseling, psychological and social services providers
- Health service providers (e.g., nurses, school clinic staff)
- Nutrition services staff
- School site health promotion staff
- Related committees (e.g., school improvement team, health curriculum committee)
- Other school staff (e.g., custodian, bus driver, media specialist, aides)

**Key Community
Representatives**
(non-school)

- School boards
- Parents (e.g., representatives of parent-teacher-student groups)
- Faith community
- Business (e.g., Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, major employers, agriculture and industry)
- Voluntary health organizations (e.g., American Cancer Society, American Lung Association, American Heart Association)
- Youth-serving organizations (e.g., Boys and Girls Club)
- Health care (e.g., hospitals, clinics, public health, physicians, nurse practitioners)
- Mental health (e.g., counseling centers, substance abuse, social workers)
- Social Services (e.g., welfare, housing)
- Local and county government
- Recreation (e.g., Parks Department, YMCA, health clubs)
- Law enforcement (e.g., community policing, school safety officers)
- Pre-school programs (e.g., Head Start, nursery schools)
- Elderly (e.g., senior citizens centers)
- Media

Remember: Leadership takes many forms!

It comes from:

Charisma
Connections
Expertise
Fame and visibility
Integrity and credibility
Life experiences
Persuasive ability
Position
Resources

Adapted from:

Improving School Health: A Guide to School Health Councils, Atlanta, GA: American Cancer Society, 1998,
http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/healthy/Ntl_Guide_to_SHAC.pdf. Accessed March 29, 2012.

Promoting Healthy Youth, Schools, and Communities: A Guide to Community-School Health Advisory Councils,
Iowa Department of Public Health, 2000,
http://www.idph.state.ia.us/hpcdp/common/pdf/family_health/Covers.pdf. Accessed March 29, 2012.