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Health Education

Grades K-2

Sink

Mr. Gupta teaches his students how to prevent the spread of germs. At the beginning of the school year, he noticed some students coughed into their hands. Mr. Gupta taught them to cough into their upper sleeves or use tissues to cover their nose and mouth when they cough or sneeze. To avoid the spread of germs and an untidy classroom, he also asked them to dispose of used tissues in the trash can.

Mr. Gupta reminded the boys and girls to rub on alcohol-based hand sanitizer before sharing supplies, and he showed them how to wash their hands properly with soap and warm water. Now all the children clean their hands before eating snacks or lunch and after messy activities. They get lots of practice washing hands after finger-painting sessions!

Mr. Gupta gives lessons on personal hygiene, particularly if he senses the students do not learn these health habits at home. He explains the many ways infections pass from person to person and shows them how to use disinfecting wipes to kill germs on toys, keyboards, doorknobs, and tabletops.

You can:

- Demonstrate proper hand hygiene and keep soap and alcohol-based hand sanitizer in easy reach.
- Help students establish personal hygiene habits by modeling cough and sneeze etiquette and frequent hand washing.

Learn More

- [Handwashing: Clean Hands Save Lives](#)
- [Wash Your Hands](#)
- [Cover Your Cough](#) [PDF – 181.19 KB]

Artwork

Students in Mr. Gupta's class completed a healthy habits drawing assignment. Their artwork shows ways to eat nutritious meals, maintain fitness, enjoy physical activity, manage chronic health conditions, and engage family members in healthy lifestyles.

Mr. Gupta asks each student to make a short presentation about the selected topic, and then he hangs the artwork on the bulletin board. Every month, he puts up new artwork they have created. During parent/teacher conferences, he calls attention to the artistic efforts of his students.

You can:

- Assign drawing projects to your students and let them pick a health topic of interest.
- Ask them to prepare a short presentation for classmates.
- Display their artwork around the classroom; and, after a month, send it home for display in the family home.

Grades 3-5

Laptop

Ms. Lewis has noticed that her students seem more ready to learn after they take physical activity breaks. She tries to reinforce the importance of physical activity and other healthy behaviors by educating her students about the benefits of good nutrition and of being physically active. She has introduced them to educational websites and fun games with a health message.

This week, her class is spending time exploring the games and tools available on CDC's Healthy Schools website. The BAM! Body and Mind interactive website is a class favorite!

You can:

- Learn about the basics for establishing healthy behaviors by going to CDC's Healthy Schools website and directing your students to games and other interesting activities.

Learn More

- [BAM! Body and Mind](#)
- [BAM! Body and Mind Game Room](#)

Bulletin Board

Ms. Lewis is committed to making her classroom environment portray healthy attitudes and behaviors and incorporate themes from the new health education curriculum. She has dedicated a large bulletin board to include posters that reflect topics such as physical activity, nutrition, safe behaviors, emotional well-being, community engagement, and positive social interactions.

Ms. Lewis has asked older students who serve on the School Health Team to contribute their ideas and time to selecting posters that promote health and safety to her students. She works with the older students to choose messages that are age-appropriate for her class.

Ms. Lewis changes the bulletin board each month so that her students will be exposed to a variety of messages that are relevant to the season and to current school events. For example, she included a poster this month that announces recent changes to the School Breakfast Program. Last month, there was a "Bring Your Parent to PE Week" poster. Each month, Ms. Lewis draws attention to the new posters and incorporates similar themes into classroom activities to reinforce the messages.

You can:

- Implement a bulletin board in your classroom to include messages that portray healthy attitudes and behaviors about various health-related topics.
- Incorporate themes used on posters into classroom activities so that health education messages are reinforced with repetition.

National Health Education Standards

Ms. Lewis met with the School Health Team and Ms. O'Ryan, a health educator at the local public health department, to talk about ways to incorporate health education into her class. Ms. Lewis was interested to learn that an effective health education curriculum doesn't just focus on students learning new scientific facts – it works best when the curriculum:

- teaches health information that can be applied in students' lives;
- shapes personal values and beliefs that support healthy behaviors;
- shapes group norms that value a healthy lifestyle; and
- develops health skills necessary to adopt, practice, and maintain behaviors that enhance health.

Jefferson School has been using the National Health Education Standards (NHES) to design and select curricula promoting and supporting behaviors that enhance health. Ms. Lewis likes how the NHES standards describe what students should know and be able to do by their grade. She has started using the standards to design activities for her students.

For example, her students demonstrate the ability to use decision-making skills for enhancing health when they:

- identify situations that might require a thoughtful decision about health;
- list healthy options to health-related problems;
- predict the potential outcome of each option; and
- choose a healthy option.

They recently talked about the problem of not eating breakfast, which can make students not ready to learn. Students listed the School Breakfast Program as a way students can eat breakfast when they arrive at school, and many students have made the connection that they feel better at school after they have eaten breakfast.

You can:

- Use the NHES to design or select a curriculum that promotes behaviors to enhance health and to assess related student achievement and progress.

Learn More

- [National Health Education Standards](#)
- [Characteristics of an Effective Health Education Curriculum](#)

Grades 6-8

Clothes Locker

One of the lessons of health education class is maintaining personal hygiene so there is no offensive body odor. All students must change out of their sweaty garments after physical education class to take soiled clothes home for washing.

Occasionally students forgot to bring clean gym clothes back to school, so Mr. Wu established a lending program. Now, Mr. Wu keeps clean gym clothes of various sizes in a locker so students can borrow the

clothes and participate in physical education classes. The borrowers are responsible for washing the clothes and returning them to the locker.

You can:

- Keep clean gym clothes in various sizes in your classroom so everyone can participate in physical education class, even if students leave clothes at home.
- Support a comprehensive school physical activity program with physical education as the foundation at your school by helping students to achieve at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day.

Student Agenda

Mr. Wu kept looking for better ways to communicate with students and parents. He decided to disseminate the student agenda via e-mail and post it on the class Web page to provide more opportunities to engage parents in their children's school activities. This planner helps students and parents organize activities and tasks. Mr. Wu incorporated graphics, quizzes, and puzzles to make it more enticing to read. He added reminders about health practices, such as getting plenty of exercise, staying hydrated, and eating a healthy diet.

The student agenda also promotes school events, such as the talent show and a track meet. It lists the contact information of event organizers so parents and students can sign up to volunteer and participate. Mr. Wu includes school rules on the student agenda, and he reminds everyone about services available in the Nurse's Office, the Counselor's Office, and the Health Center.

You can:

- Promote student and family engagement by producing an online or paper-based weekly or monthly student agenda. It can have a wellness theme and promote good nutrition and physical activity. Also, it can inform parents about school events, services, and policies.
- Check out the School Health Team's discussion about recommendations to improve Health Education at Jefferson School.

Learn More

- [Parent Engagement: Strategies for Involving Parents in School Health](#) [PDF – 1.74 MB]

Grades 9-12

Teaching Aids

Ms. Dubois serves on district- and state-level committees that are involved in developing curriculum frameworks and selecting health education instructional materials for the classroom. Her committees use the National Health Education Standards when selecting curricula, allocating instructional resources, and assessing student achievement and progress. They also have used the CDC's Health Education Curriculum Assessment Tool (HECAT) to select effective health education curricula and improve the delivery of health education.

Once there are district- and state-level decisions regarding the health education curriculum, it is up to Ms. Dubois to think of creative ways to engage her students. She often designs her lesson plans based on class discussions, teamwork, and class projects to promote learning and collaboration. She keeps an array of tangible teaching aids handy to reinforce the quality instruction she provides.

Ms. Dubois also served as an advisor for Mr. Rodriguez, the physical education teacher, when he led the district's elementary physical education teachers in assessing their curricula using CDC's Physical Education Curriculum Analysis Tool (PECAT).

You can:

- Review credible resources available to your school or district when you evaluate your current health education curriculum or select new curriculum.
- Set high standards in health education to provide your students with the knowledge and skills they need to become successful learners and healthy and productive adults.

Learn More

- [Health Education Curriculum Analysis Tool \(HECAT\)](#)
- [HECAT Health Education Analysis Tool](#) [PDF – 246KB]
- [National Health Education Standards](#)
- [Physical Education Curriculum Analysis Tool \(PECAT\)](#)

Interactive Whiteboard

Ms. Dubois has been teaching for more than 20 years. Over the past few years, she has worked hard to integrate new classroom technology into her teaching style. She uses her interactive whiteboard on a daily basis. An interactive whiteboard is a large display that connects with a computer where users apply a pen, finger, or other device to manipulate content on the screen. Everyone can be included in class collaboration and group projects using the interactive whiteboard, including those with special learning needs. Ms. Dubois has also found helpful templates and activities she can adapt for her class on websites where teachers exchange lessons they have created for their interactive whiteboards. Some lessons and activities already align with her state's health education standards.

The interactive whiteboard also provides service during non-school hours. Jefferson School administrators have agreed to let health educators from the Kolbe public health department and hospital offer educational programs for students and families in the evenings. Offering the programs at the school allows the health educators to take advantage of the available teaching technology as well as increasing attendance by holding the classes at a familiar and easily accessible location. This type of partnership has helped coordinate the efforts of many organizations that share common health and wellness goals for the community. Health program topics have included First Aid/CPR, Diabetes Prevention and Control, and Mental Health First Aid.

You can:

- Consider ways to leverage whatever technology and resources are currently available on your campus. Your school may have facilities or technology resources that other community organizations represented on your School Health Team can use.
- Promote a community-wide sense of collaboration by sharing resources that can potentially benefit your school as other organizations find ways to support you in return.

Learn More

- [Model Joint Use Agreement Resources](#)

Formative Assessment Tool

The staff at Jefferson School has found many ways to incorporate formative assessment tools into their classrooms. Ms. Dubois often starts each class with a quick review of yesterday's lesson, using a formative assessment mobile app to engage the students in recalling the discussion. Today, she is asking the students if they have participated in any of the healthy behaviors they discussed last time.

School district trainers have also begun using formative assessment tools to enhance their professional development presentations. The trainers have found using the technology helps keep teachers more focused and engaged. As the teachers are required to participate in professional development trainings that cover a lot of material in a relatively short amount of time, it has been a helpful way for the trainers to increase the efficiency and uptake of their presentations. Jefferson School ensures its staff receives professional development on a variety of health topics, including mental health first aid; meeting the diverse cognitive, emotional, and social needs of students; sexually transmitted disease and pregnancy prevention; and preventing unintentional injuries, violence, and suicide. During one session, Ms. Dubois was able to present research findings to her colleagues about the link between health and academic achievement. Many staff members did not realize there is evidence that physically active students tend to have better grades, school attendance, cognitive performance, and classroom behaviors. After that training, Jefferson School staff were much more motivated to find ways to incorporate physical activity into the school day.

You can:

- Ensure professional development sessions include up-to-date information on student and staff wellness that emphasizes the link between health and academic achievement.
- Provide creative ways to engage your staff in the sessions through discussion or formative assessment tools that can aid teacher learning.
- Check out the School Health Team's discussion about recommendations to improve Health and Academics at Jefferson School.

Learn More

- [Health and Academic Achievement](#) [PDF – 2.13 MB]

Staff Lounge

Bulletin Board

Jefferson School makes it convenient for staff to learn about employee wellness and health by providing information in various formats, including the staff portal of the school's website, regular e-mail updates, and the bulletin board in the staff lounge.

Staff gathers around the bulletin board to discuss the frequently updated content. There are flyers, schedules, and sign-up sheets for school and community wellness events such as potlucks, fitness

competitions, educational programs, and wellness celebrations. There is often general information on healthy behaviors, such as fitness, nutrition, and aging tips.

The Staff Wellness Work Group members, District Employee Wellness Program staff, Parent Teacher Association (PTA), and the school district's health care insurance provider often provide the bulletin board content. It has covered a range of topics such as stress reduction, mindfulness, hiking opportunities, community sports leagues, tennis lessons, 5K races, healthy cooking classes, yoga workshops, the local farmers' market schedule, and professional development opportunities related to school health. At the end of the school year, there will be a sign-up sheet for those who want to take advantage of a free chair massage offered as part of Teacher Recognition Day. The shelves below the bulletin board store a detailed District Employee Wellness Program notebook as well as bins with supplies for holiday and staff celebrations.

You can:

- Place a health and wellness bulletin board in the staff lounge.
- Gather and post promotional flyers, posters, and sign-up sheets related to health and wellness events in your school and community in a convenient location.

Playground

Supervisor Guidance

Ms. Antonelli supervises playground activity to ensure safety and the proper use of equipment. Signs with picture messages show age limits and simple rules at the separate play areas. She and other recess supervisors keep young, smaller students away from the play areas meant for older, bigger students.

Ms. Antonelli and her staff and volunteers keep all students in sight at all times.

Many factors determine the appropriate ratio of supervisors to students, including age of students, mental and physical abilities of students, and configuration of the playground. The Supervisor Guidance outlines job responsibilities. In addition to having this Guidance, Ms. Antonelli and other recess supervisors have completed training on effective recess supervision techniques, injury prevention strategies, and developmentally appropriate play.

Ms. Antonelli uses a checklist to inspect play equipment and playground structures regularly for possible damage and calls the school maintenance supervisor for repairs. Together with maintenance workers, Ms. Antonelli and others keep the playground free of litter and hazards.

Ms. Antonelli sets out equipment in activity zones so that students have some planned activities to choose from if they cannot decide what they would like to play. The activity zones are set up around the painted grid markings, such as four square or geometric shapes, on the playground hard surface area.

Recess supervisors actively move around the play area to observe, monitor, coach, and reinforce positive behaviors. They also engage in the activities with children to encourage their participation and follow a schoolwide recess schedule that ensures a safe number of students on the playground at all times. The recess supervisors help students apply sunscreen, with parental permission. Students must wear weather-appropriate clothes and clothes without drawstrings on the playground. Students have easy access to water fountains so they can stay hydrated during playtime.

You can:

- Create a safe environment by posting playground safety rules and following supervisor guidance.
- Share playground safety rules with parents and ask them to volunteer for games and other play activities.
- Make sure all supervising staff and volunteers receive training on safety and supervision techniques.
- Repair any equipment with broken, loose, projecting, or missing parts.

Learn More

- [Playgrounds](#)
- [Recess](#)

Nurse's Office

Health Poster

Nurse Okonjo keeps a supply of epinephrine autoinjectors handy for emergencies, such as allergic reactions to bee stings or food. Some middle and high school students carry their own epinephrine autoinjectors, or they bring them to Nurse Okonjo for safekeeping. She keeps a spare in the Nurse's Office in case a student has an unexpected reaction.

Generally, some of the younger students who have known allergies are comfortable using their epinephrine autoinjectors, sometimes referred to as EpiPens®. Some are afraid, so Nurse Okonjo calms their fears and helps them learn the best way to inject themselves.

She keeps in touch with their parents for the latest information about the students' allergies and other health conditions. To help parents learn more about allergies, Nurse Okonjo hands out brochures and makes referrals to allergy specialists.

To help classmates understand about allergic reactions to all kinds of things like peanut butter and pollen, Nurse Okonjo made allergic reactions the topic of a recent health class. She worked with the health education teacher, Ms. Dubois, and also contacted a local allergy specialist and invited parents to attend the health class. The parents and students had a lot of questions. They watched demonstrations on using epinephrine autoinjectors and learned ways to avoid certain foods or unhealthy situations. Nurse Okonjo explained why they should never share food with others.

You can:

- Organize a health class for your school and community by contacting allergy clinics in your area and asking for speakers to answer questions and provide brochures and posters.

Learn More

- [Food Allergies in Schools](#)
- [Medical Emergencies Occurring at School](#) [PDF – 285.34 KB]

Glucometer

Diabetes is a big health issue. Several Jefferson School students suffer from Type 1 diabetes, and Nurse Okonjo has noticed a trend where Type 2 diabetes is affecting some students. Type 2 diabetes is a growing problem not only at this school, but also across the country, because it is appearing at younger ages than ever before.

Nurse Okonjo wants to turn around the trend. She tells students how to prevent diabetes and connects with their families and others in the community too. She helps students diagnosed with diabetes to manage their condition. She does this for other diseases too, but diabetes education is a priority.

Nurse Okonjo uses the glucometer to test blood glucose levels because students with diabetes need to stay within the doctor-recommended target range. If an emergency like very low blood sugar occurs, Nurse Okonjo has special training and knows how to handle it.

Also, she helps students with their injections and pumps. She advises students about their eating habits and encourages plenty of exercise. She asked doctors for handouts and nutritionists for lists of helpful hints for balancing food intake, monitoring carbohydrates, and selecting sugar-free foods so she could provide these to parents.

You can:

- Ask your school nutritionist to set up one-on-one learning sessions with students.
- Organize a nutrition fair for students, parents, and community members. Everybody needs to know about healthy eating!
- Check out the School Health Team's discussion about recommendations to improve School Health Services at Jefferson School.

Learn More

- [Diabetes in Schools](#)
- [Addressing the Needs of Students with Chronic Health Conditions: Strategies for Schools](#) [PDF – 815.21 KB]

Teeth Model

Nurse Okonjo likes to flash a bright smile when she demonstrates how to brush teeth correctly. She talks about the importance of oral health and conducts dental screenings, just as she does vision and hearing screenings.

Nurse Okonjo urges students to visit a dentist twice a year for checkups and suggests getting dental sealants as a way to prevent tooth decay. Dental sealants are a plastic resin painted onto tooth enamel. The sealants bond to teeth and harden. They protect enamel from plaque and the acids found in foods and beverages.

Nurse Okonjo recommends wearing mouth guards during physical activity, such as football, basketball, and field hockey. She encourages students to avoid soft drinks and sugary snacks.

You can:

- Help students maintain healthy teeth by recommending a ban on soft drinks and sugary snacks from vending machines and food stands.

- Help students protect their teeth by encouraging them to wear mouth guards during strenuous physical activity.

Learn More

- [Oral Health in Schools](#)

Nebulizer

Today, Nurse Okonjo helped a sixth-grade boy who had an asthma attack. He forgot his backpack this morning, and unfortunately, he needed the inhaler kept in the backpack. Following orders from his health care provider, Nurse Okonjo gave him a breathing treatment with a nebulizer. This device allowed her to administer medication in the form of a mist inhaled into the lungs. Before the student returned to the classroom, she reminded him of ways to avoid the triggers that cause an attack. Common triggers are tobacco smoke, dust, mold, and outdoor pollution.

Nurse Okonjo knows the importance of connecting with students individually to help them establish healthy lifestyles. She also engages their families and others to work together and build a community focused on fitness and health. Also, Nurse Okonjo has inhalers in stock in case of emergencies.

You can:

- Establish a goal to provide a safe and healthy environment at your school, too.
- Engage families and the community to work together and build a community focused on fitness and health.

Learn More

- [Asthma in Schools](#)

Community Poster

Nurse Okonjo wanted to spread the word about healthy lifestyles, so she worked with the Health Center staff to organize a health fair at the school recently. It was for everyone: students, teachers, parents, grandparents, neighbors, and friends.

She sent invitations to Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA, and a lot of other groups to ensure community members knew of the event. She lined up programs about asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and other chronic diseases. She invited doctors, dentists, public health leaders, and nutritionists to give talks and

demonstrations on these topics. They answered questions and handed out materials for people to take home.

Leaders from Kolbe’s Parks and Recreation Department promoted the use of exercise paths and fitness equipment at recreation centers. They suggested ways to spend family time at community parks, sports fields, and swimming pools. The health fair was a big success, so they plan to hold it again next year.

You can:

- Organize an event in your community with the help of volunteers to create a better environment for health and physical activity.

Learn More

- [Parents for Healthy Schools](#)

Locked Cabinet

Nurse Okonjo has a record of all students with chronic health conditions, including epilepsy. If a seizure occurs at the school, she can act immediately. She has special training and remains calm and confident in these situations, which may be frightening to classmates.

To help everyone at Jefferson School understand the disorder, Nurse Okonjo hosted a discussion about epilepsy and asked the parents of students with epilepsy to share what they do in their homes to treat and manage their child's condition. She invited a neurologist to visit the school and explain what triggers seizures and what medicines are used to treat epilepsy and side effects. The session was very helpful to students, school staff, and parents.

On a more individual level, Nurse Okonjo provides guidance to each student with epilepsy about managing the disorder and making good lifestyle choices, such as getting enough sleep and lowering stress. She encourages students with epilepsy to participate in sports because exercise and physical fitness may lessen risks of seizures.

You can:

- Learn more about epilepsy and work to ensure the school nurses in your community have proper training.
- Involve parents in discussion sessions to share about their experiences in managing their children’s chronic health conditions at home.

Learn More

- [Epilepsy in Schools](#)

Health Center

Educational Videos

The staff at the Jefferson School-Based Health Center (SBHC) does their best to minimize wait times for patients; nonetheless, short waits do occur and the staff would like to use that time for additional health communication and promotion.

The office has a video screen designated for patient education about health topics. The staff select short videos on a variety of topics that are especially relevant to their patients and accompanying parents. They have found free online videos available from credible sources, such as the CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics. The videos play on a loop but are updated frequently.

Video selections have featured topics such as how to make fun and healthy after-school snacks; how to apply sunscreen and insect repellent correctly; why vaccines are beneficial and effective; and concussion and sports safety. Although Dr. Kostas and the rest of the staff at the SBHC realize that nothing can replace the importance of clinical conversation and guidance directly from health care providers and educators, they also recognize that educational videos can be an effective way to raise patients' awareness and understanding of healthy behaviors.

You can:

- Think about where your school has video monitors for communicating with students.
 - Can health topics and wellness public service announcements (PSAs) be integrated into the programming?
 - Where do your students spend time waiting? Even 30 seconds can be enough time to communicate powerful health messages to students using free and available online videos.

Services Directory

The Jefferson School-Based Health Center (SBHC) is proud to provide comprehensive care to its patients with an array of services that address many components of health. It offers patients:

- **Primary Care Services** such as well-child visits, preventive screenings (including vision), immunizations, and chronic disease management. When applicable, the center also provides

sexual abstinence counseling, pregnancy testing, and sexually transmitted infection (STI) diagnosis and treatment. Like half of SBHCs, the Jefferson SBHC also offers a full range of reproductive health services, including birth control, to its patients.

- **Dental Care** that includes screenings, cleanings, fluoride supplements/treatments, and sealants.
- **Behavioral Health Counseling** to address issues such as depression, anxiety, and attention disorders.
- **Health Education** on topics like healthy eating, active living, smoking cessation, and weight management.

The SBHC staff includes a licensed social worker (LSW) who is in charge of behavioral health. He collaborates with the school counselor and the health center's certified health education specialist (CHES) to offer support groups for students. These groups leverage positive peer influence to help students who are facing a variety of physical, social, and emotional health issues. The CHES, trained in behavior change theory, also works individually with students interested in making changes, such as decreasing substance use or improving nutrition.

You can:

- Support efforts in your school district to identify community health care providers who may be interested in various levels of partnership with your schools.
- Be sure to consider the spectrum of health and well-being services that your students may need.

Counselor's Office

Art Easel

Art easels, paints, crayons, chalk, and markers may seem like they belong in the art room, but they can fill an important function in the Counselor's Office. Students can create art works to convey their feelings and emotions. Painting and drawing can be effective communication methods, especially for students who have difficulty with verbal communication because of physical, cognitive, or mental challenges.

Ms. Kowalski learned about art as a school counseling tool at a professional development conference and began using it at Jefferson School. She engages students in art activities to help them express concerns that they may have difficulty communicating verbally.

You can:

- Introduce art as a form of self-expression in individual or small group sessions, or in classroom guidance lessons.
- Provide opportunities for counselors to pursue school counseling-specific professional development training so they have updated and well-rounded skills for implementing comprehensive school counseling programs that benefit all students.

Learn More

- [American School Counselor Association](#)
- [School Health Index \(Module 6\): School Counseling, Psychological, and Social Services](#)

Bookshelf

Ms. Kowalski maintains a well-stocked lending library of books, movies, and audio media on topics related to academic, career, and social and emotional development. These resources provide guidance on advancing academically, establishing personal goals, and developing plans. The resources also address the behavioral, mental, and emotional health of students.

The bookshelf has plenty of "how to" guides on setting goals, nurturing special talents, and establishing healthy lifestyles. Topics also include anger management, personal safety, violence prevention, and substance abuse. The books and audio media offer guidance to Ms. Kowalski and all educational staff members.

Students, parents, and staff borrow these resources to help them address problems or barriers to learning and general well-being. The books and audio media can suggest ways to promote student achievement and solve behavioral issues in the classroom.

You can:

- Build a resource center to reinforce student well-being and learning. Many materials are available from publishers that specialize in school counseling. Some community organizations may have resources to donate that can help stock the lending library.
- Check out the School Health Team's discussion about recommendations to improve Health and Academics at Jefferson School.

Conference Room

Conference Room Conversation 1: Health Education

Mrs. Ahmed: Good morning, everyone. The School Health Team completed the *School Health Index* (SHI) module on Health Education. The team identified strengths and weaknesses in Jefferson School's health education program based on the results of the module score card, and then they developed an action plan to recommend improvements. The team lead, Ms. Dubois, was not able to attend today's meeting. Nurse Okonjo, Mr. Rodriguez, and Ms. O'Ryan, would you share with the group the team's recommendations to promote health education?

Nurse Okonjo: Thank you, Mrs. Ahmed. The results of our assessment of the health education program show that we have room for improvement. We have been working with Ms. Dubois, the Grades 9-12 health education teacher, to develop a new health education curriculum for Jefferson School's K-8 classes.

Mrs. Chen: That sounds like a big job!

Ms. O'Ryan: It has been challenging, but we have had resources available to help us develop the curriculum. We used the *National Health Education Standards*, *CDC's Health Education Curriculum Analysis Tool (HECAT)*, *CDC's School Health Guidelines (SHG) to Improve Healthy Eating and Physical Activity*, and curriculum frameworks from neighboring school districts to help shape our work. Also, Ms. Dubois has gone through this process for developing the grades 9-12 curriculum, so we will look to her for guidance along the way.

Mr. Rodriguez: In addition to offering health education at the high school level, we will incorporate elements of the new curriculum for nine weeks in each grade K-7 and for one semester in grade 8. We will ensure the curriculum addresses the major health problems and risks that students at Jefferson School face and that it is developmentally and culturally appropriate.

Mrs. Chen: What information does the health education curriculum include?

Nurse Okonjo: The curriculum includes information on healthy eating and nutrition, physical activity, safety and injury prevention, personal health and wellness, mental and emotional health, drug and alcohol use, tobacco use, and violence prevention. In grade 8, the curriculum will also include sexual health education, as it does at the high school level.

Mrs. Chen: This sounds like an ambitious plan of action! How can you be certain the curriculum will meet our students' needs?

Mr. Rodriguez: Good question! We will develop the curriculum using CDC's *Health Education Curriculum Analysis Tool* (HECAT), which will help ensure we are focusing on the right information and skills. The HECAT also helps us ensure we are using science-based principles to improve health practices and are flexible in accommodating different values, cultures, and priorities. We will also engage school staff, parents, and community members in the review and approval of the new K-8 curriculum. The curriculum will be approved by our school board before health instruction begins.

Principal Paul: We have gotten positive evaluations about the new 9-12 curriculum, and I'm confident the curriculum for grades K-8 will have a positive impact on the health and well-being of Jefferson School students.

If you want to learn more about the *School Health Index*, visit the [Healthy Schools website](#). For training, visit the [Professional Development & Training page](#).

Learn More

- [Health Education Curriculum Analysis Tool \(HECAT\)](#)
- [National Health Education Standards \(NHES\)](#)
- [Characteristics of an Effective Health Education Curriculum](#)

Conference Room Conversation 8: Health and Academics

Principal Paul: The superintendent has asked me to speak to the school board and to other administrators on what schools can do to encourage students to be healthy and academically successful. I'd like this group to help me prepare for that presentation.

Ms. Dubois, our 9-12 health education teacher, and Ms. O'Ryan, a health educator at the public health department, have shared some [fact sheets](#) and a [presentation \[PDF – 1.54 MB\]](#) from the CDC about links between health and academic achievement. The key messages from the CDC presentation are:

- "Know the Evidence,"
- "Share the Message," and
- "Take Action."

Let's first discuss knowing the evidence. What evidence about connections between healthy eating, physical activity, and improved academic achievement should I convey?

Ms. O'Ryan: First, the three aspects of academic achievement as related to health are:

- Academic performance includes class grades, standardized tests, and graduation rates.
- Education behavior includes attendance, dropout rates, and behavioral problems at schools.
- Students' cognitive skills and attitudes include concentration, memory, and mood.

Make sure to convey that *healthy students are better learners*. Schools that provide opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity can see benefits such as:

- Improved attention and concentration,
- Decreased rates of student absenteeism,
- Fewer behavioral problems
- Higher school-wide test scores and grades,
- Meeting educational goals

Nurse Okonjo: *All students deserve the opportunity to be healthy and academically successful.* There's a strong connection between student absenteeism and chronic health conditions like asthma and diabetes. When we help students manage their chronic conditions, we help reduce their absences and improve their academic achievement. It's also important to mention staff absences because supporting staff wellness can mean that healthy staff will be absent less, which can also support students' academic outcomes.

Mr. Rodriguez: *Schools can influence physical activity behaviors.* Students who are physically active have better grades, better school attendance, higher standardized test scores, and better classroom behaviors.

Mr. Baker: *Schools can influence healthy eating.* Participation in the school breakfast program is associated with increased academic grades and standardized test scores, reduced absenteeism, and improved cognitive performance, which includes better concentration, memory, and mood. Skipping breakfast is linked to lower cognitive performance. Not getting enough nutrients is related to lower grades.

Principal Paul: According to the CDC presentation, it's important to "Share the Message" about the importance of addressing student health to improve academic achievement. How have we have shared the message with school staff, parents, and students?

Mr. Rodriguez: We presented at a PTA meeting and wrote an article in the newsletter asking parents to promote healthy eating and physical activity as a way to improve academic achievement.

Nurse Okonjo: We have included professional development for district and school staff on addressing health in school to improve academic achievement. Also, we have written articles for parents in the newsletter about helping their children manage various chronic health conditions.

Christine Brighton: My health education class has talked about how healthy eating and physical activity can help concentration and mood. We've also learned that if a person has diabetes and their blood sugar level isn't controlled, that can affect their ability to think clearly.

Principal Paul: Great examples of ways we've shared the message! Let's now talk about "Taking Action." What have we done?

Nurse Okonjo: We have a School-Based Health Center (SBHC) onsite that includes primary care services, dental care, behavioral health counseling, and health education for students.

Ms. O'Ryan: Evidence shows that schools can also promote health by establishing a school health team or wellness committee, providing healthy food options, and providing health and physical education programs.

Mrs. Ahmed: Our School Health Team has used the School Health Index (SHI) to identify strengths and weaknesses of our health and safety policies and programs and to build a school health improvement plan.

Christine Brighton: I like serving as the liaison to the School Health Team and being a voice for students, because I'm an officer in the Student Government Association (SGA). I think it's great that students can be involved in the School Health Team. Also, I've been involved with other students in leading school activities that promote eating healthy and being physically active. I participated in the fruit basket fundraiser and helped organize a team of Jefferson students in the community 5K walk or roll race this past year and had fun doing both.

Ms. O'Ryan: Christine, it's great that you and your classmates can stay connected to the school through programs that can positively influence healthy eating and physical activity. Jefferson School is a great leader of providing healthy food and an engaging health and physical education program!

Mr. Baker: We do have many campus nutrition success stories. We provide appealing meals that meet the federal nutrition standards for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program.

We've implemented different options for providing breakfast to students, including Breakfast in the Classroom, Grab and Go meals, and breakfast after first period. These have all been big hits.

Mr. Rodriguez: We are proud of all the opportunities we provide for physical activity. To name a few, students in my physical education classes can grab step counters from the pedometer station to track their active steps during class. I also post daily challenges to encourage students to elevate their heart rates and build their muscles. Students can also participate in physical activity in their classrooms.

Principal Paul: We have many examples of ways we have taken action to make our school a healthier place. I'm proud to share what we've done with administrators in the school district!

If you want to learn more about the *School Health Index*, visit the [Healthy Schools website](#). For training, visit the [Professional Development & Training page](#).

Learn More

- [Attendance Works](#)
- [Research Brief: Chronic Health Conditions and Academic Achievement](#) [PDF - 834.34 KB]
- [Health and Academics](#)
 - [Making the Connection: Health Risk Behaviors and Academic Grades](#) [PDF - 503.94 KB]
 - [Making the Connection: Dietary Behaviors and Academic Grades](#) [PDF - 480.30 KB]
 - [Making the Connection: Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviors and Academic Grades](#) [PDF - 474.08 KB]
- [Healthy Kids. Successful Students. Stronger Communities: Improving Academic Achievement through Healthy Eating and Physical Activity](#) [PDF - 1.55 MB]
- [Thriving Schools](#)

Community Map

Public Health Department

The Kolbe Public Health Department interacts with Jefferson School in a variety of ways. A public health department liaison is an active part of the School Health Team. Ms. O'Ryan, a health educator, helps the team find local data about health issues that impact students. She also helps the school create an effective plan for communicating with students about health and wellness. Public health department

personnel routinely inspect the Jefferson School cafeteria, which regularly receives high marks for its food safety policies and procedures.

The Kolbe Public Health Department provides many direct services to students and their families. It serves as the administrator of several assistance programs, including Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) which provides vouchers. It also offers vaccinations for babies and children that are required by the Jefferson School District. The public health department coordinates vaccine records through the state Immunization Information System. The system keeps a confidential, centralized database of a child's vaccine records, even when a child receives immunizations from multiple health care providers.

As needed, the Jefferson School-Based Health Center can refer students and families to the Kolbe Public Health Department for family planning, prenatal care, and concerns about sexually transmitted diseases.

The health educators at the health center and the public health department frequently collaborate on activities and training for children and adolescents in the community. Many students participate in the CPR and first-aid trainings that are offered.

You can:

- Check out the School Health Team's discussion of [Health and Academics at Jefferson School](#)

Learn More

- [About Immunization Information Systems \(IIS\)](#)