

# WSCC Component: Physical Environment

- Physical Environment..... 1
  - Cafeteria..... 1
    - Clock..... 1
    - Water Station..... 1
  - Gymnasium ..... 2
    - Water Station..... 2
  - Grades K-2..... 3
    - Sink..... 3
  - Grades 6-8..... 4
    - Teacher Workstation ..... 4
    - Emergency Plans ..... 5
  - Playground ..... 6
    - Adaptive Swing..... 7
    - Bike Rack..... 7
    - Walking Trail ..... 8
    - Rules List ..... 9
    - Buddy Bench ..... 10
  - Counselor’s Office ..... 10
    - Phone ..... 10
    - Door Sign..... 11
  - Principal’s Office ..... 12
    - Facility Schedule..... 12
    - Emergency Toolkit..... 12
    - Standing Desk..... 13
    - Clock..... 14
  - Community Map ..... 14
    - Parks and Recreation Department..... 14

## Physical Environment

### Cafeteria

#### Clock

Mr. Baker noticed long lines in the cafeteria, so he reorganized the cafeteria in order to serve students more efficiently. Now, students can move through the lines with minimal wait time. They can socialize while they eat their meals, rather than feeling rushed to finish eating. Once they are seated, they have at least 10 minutes for eating breakfast and 20 minutes for eating lunch.

Mr. Baker promotes menu options during the morning announcements and on signs displayed around the school so everyone is informed about the nutritious choices. The school publishes a monthly menu and provides it online to all students, families, teachers, and administrators. Parents can view the menus in advance and help their children with food choices. Students invite their parents to join them for breakfast or lunch meals occasionally.

You can:

- Make your cafeteria a social center by implementing a staggered schedule for the different classes and setting up conveniently placed serving areas to minimize the time students spend in line.
- Encourage cafeteria staff to greet students with smiles and ask teachers and administrators to spend mealtimes with students.
- Use a variety of communication channels to publicize menus.

#### ***Learn More***

- [School Meals](#)

### Water Station

At Jefferson School, students and school staff are encouraged to drink plenty of water every day. They have access to the free water filling station in the cafeteria during breakfast and lunch. There are also water fountains and filling stations placed throughout the school. The cafeteria's water filling station provides cups, and students and staff can fill their own water bottles and drink water while in the classroom.

School staff conducts regular maintenance to ensure cleanliness and safety. Recently a water quality specialist came to Jefferson School to test the water. Staff clean up water spills promptly, and the area is kept free of clutter.

You can:

- Provide drinking water in the cafeteria in accordance with federal requirements to help ensure your students have plenty of safe drinking water.
- Operate within the state and local plumbing and sanitation codes.
- Follow all standard operating procedures and water quality testing protocols to ensure regular maintenance of water filling stations and other water dispensers to guard against debris, bacteria, or other contaminants.
- Show students how to develop a lifelong habit of choosing water instead of sugary beverages by promoting drinking water.

### ***Learn More***

- [Water Access](#)
- [Water & Nutrition](#)

## **Gymnasium**

### **Water Station**

Mr. Rodriguez ensures all his students drink plenty of water before, during, and after strenuous physical activity so they maintain adequate hydration.

All students have access to safe, free drinking water at the water filling station. Recyclable cups are available, or the students can fill their own reusable water bottles. Mr. Rodriguez ensures that names are on the students' bottles, and he encourages them to wash the bottles at home every day.

Colorful posters near the filling station promote messages about the health benefits of water, including prevention of tooth decay, the caloric differences between sweetened beverages and water, and water as the optimal beverage to quench thirst.

Mr. Rodriguez often runs promotion campaigns where he invites his students to create posters describing the health benefits and why they like to drink water.

You can:

- Promote the habit of drinking water while exercising by installing a water filling station in the gymnasium.
- Place eye-catching posters near water dispensers to remind students to drink plenty of water.
- Engage students in water promotion activities to explain why hydrated bodies are healthier bodies.

### ***Learn More***

- [Water Access](#)

## **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]

## **Grades 6-8**

### **Teacher Workstation**

Sometimes, Mr. Wu felt disorganized because his desk held stacks of papers. He changed his work habits and now uses a laptop computer at his workstation to complete most tasks, resulting in less paper and better organization. He takes roll, enters grades, fills out assessment forms, and completes lesson plans in an electronic format.

Mr. Wu encourages students and parents to visit the class Web page regularly, where he enters test dates and assignment due dates. He always puts health messages and the lunch menu on the Web page so students can share this information with their parents. He also suggests ways parents can support learning at home.

Mr. Wu communicates with parents via e-mail. If a conversation is more helpful, he will use his phone or have a person-to-person conference at school. Sometimes he sends written notes for parents home with his students. He wants to encourage parental involvement in students' learning so he uses the most appropriate means of communication and strives to be culturally sensitive in all his communications.

You can:

- Set up a workstation to handle administrative duties. Laptop and desktop computers and phones are essential for organizing tasks and communications.
- Find the most effective way to engage parents and work toward students' academic success by supporting learning at home.

### ***Learn More***

- [Family and Community Engagement](#)

## **Emergency Plans**

Mr. Wu serves on Principal Paul's emergency management team. He coordinates the response for the middle school grades in the event of a fire or weather emergency and makes sure every teacher knows how to handle their students responsibly in such situations.

Last year when the National Weather Service issued a tornado warning, Mr. Wu led his students into designated interior shelter areas in a calm and orderly manner. Everyone was instructed to crouch low, head down, protecting the back of their heads with the arms. Once the storm subsided, he led his students back to his classroom. Many students needed reassuring that the danger had passed. He called on Nurse Okonjo and the school counselor, Ms. Kowalski, to assist him in calming students' fears.

At least once a year, Mr. Wu coordinates a practice drill for the whole school so students know what actions to take if another tornado comes into the area. He posted easy-to-read signs in hallways to direct everyone to interior shelter areas. Also, he organizes fire drills to practice evacuating the building quickly and safely. Mr. Wu talks to his students about all types of emergencies and shows how they can protect themselves from harm.

Last year, Mr. Wu took training classes to learn appropriate actions to take if he is involved with a volatile student. Mr. Wu learned techniques for diffusing an escalating situation and devised a plan to protect himself and others in a crisis situation.

You can:

- Work with the emergency management team at your school to practice action plans.
- Ask mental health professionals to offer training so teachers and counselors can help students feel safe and secure if an event occurs.

### ***Learn More***

- [Fire Drills at School](#)
- [Make a Plan](#)
- [Ready](#)

## **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](#)

### **Adaptive Swing**

Ms. Antonelli noticed a pair of adaptive swings in an equipment catalog for use by students with physical disabilities. She knew several Jefferson School students would benefit from these swings with harnesses and high backs. Ms. Antonelli applied for and received a grant to purchase the adaptive swings and other accessible playground equipment. Then, she organized a community campaign to raise funds to install ramps for easy access to the play area.

After much fund-raising and planning, the playground is now an area where students of different abilities have valuable interaction with one another. The swings allow students with physical disabilities to play with their able-bodied peers. Students who use wheelchairs can play with sand by using hand-operated digger tools; they can strengthen their arms in an arcade of pull-up bars. A sensory panel provides engagement for visually challenged children. Ms. Antonelli discovered ways to modify games so students with limited movement could participate, including turning a long jump rope for jumping children or throwing and catching objects.

You can:

- Organize a campaign to install adaptive equipment to ensure all children can have fun together.
- Raise funds to purchase equipment and cover installation costs.
- Install wheelchair-friendly ramps and flooring, and incorporate features, such as raised sand tables and adaptive swings, both suitable for children in wheelchairs or with restricted mobility.

### **Bike Rack**

Some students did not want to participate in the bike-to-school program because they were concerned about leaving their bikes unattended during the school day. Ms. Antonelli requested to move the bike

rack within the fenced playground area and asked local merchants to donate locks so every bike rider had one to use.

Now the bicycles are in a secure area. Ms. Antonelli wanted to enforce safety, so she put up a sign with safety rules to remind bike riders to wear bike helmets, ride on the right side with the traffic, and stop at all stop signs.

You can:

- Install a bike rack at your school as a way to support a bike-to-school program.
- Ask parent support groups and local merchants to donate equipment.

### ***Learn More***

- [Bicycle Safety](#)
- [Physical Activity Before and After School](#)

### **Walking Trail**

Jefferson School installed a walking track along the perimeter of the playground as another option for physical activity. Students and staff who participate in the school's walking challenge or wear pedometers want to accumulate a lot of steps every day. Others choose the walking track as a way to energize and socialize. Walking makes the lungs and heart stronger, thus building endurance. The walking path helps spread children across the entire play area and makes use of all the space on the playground.

Ms. Antonelli encourages students with physical and developmental disabilities to be part of the physical and social activities as much as they are able. Some students who use wheelchairs can strengthen their arm muscles by moving around the walking trail. This mobility gives them a sense of independence, and they can socialize while joining their jogging or walking friends.

You can:

- Encourage walking by building a walking trail or marking a walking route within the fenced playground.

### ***Learn More***

- [Staff Involvement](#)

## **Rules List**

Ms. Antonelli greets students with a wave and a smile when they enter the playground area. For many, the playground is their favorite place!

In addition to a big welcome sign, Ms. Antonelli positioned a sign with rules about safety and appropriate behavior. The sign includes picture messages for students who are too young to read. She explains to students how these rules prevent injuries and why courteous behavior is important. She and other recess supervisors enforce rules of conduct with consistency and they respond to bullying and other harmful behaviors with fair, appropriate consequences.

Ms. Antonelli created a rules list to inform parent volunteers and school staff about the rules. She developed strategies to positively reinforce or reward students who follow rules. Student recess leaders rotate each month to help Ms. Antonelli identify students who are engaging in safe play and including others in their games.

Also, Ms. Antonelli gave guidance about handling misbehaviors such as name calling, teasing, hitting, bullying, or other forms of strife. She suggested ways to keep playground disagreements from escalating into conflicts.

You can:

- Create a rules list to create awareness about safety and appropriate behavior.
- Encourage supervisors to set a goal of having four positive interactions for every corrective interaction.
- Assign student leaders to promote student involvement.
- Find ways for students to play in harmony so they can work cooperatively when they return to the classroom.

## ***Learn More***

- [National Program for Playground Safety](#)
- [Conflict Resolution at School & on the Playground](#)
- [Violence Prevention: Bullying Research](#)

## **Buddy Bench**

Ms. Antonelli realized some students had difficulty socializing with others. Perhaps they felt shy or awkward, or they had language barriers. At her request, the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) installed a Buddy Bench, a seating area where students could take rest breaks, regroup, and talk or play with others. In a short time, this gathering spot fostered new friendships among students. When playgroups needed extra people to round out teams, they looked to the Buddy Bench to find someone ready to play.

Ms. Antonelli promotes a positive, respectful social climate on the playground. She finds ways to engage everyone in positive peer groups. Students who use wheelchairs like the supportive interaction at the Buddy Bench. They are part of the activity going on around them. Ms. Antonelli and her staff, volunteers, and student recess leaders adapt or devise games so all students can participate to the best of their abilities.

You can:

- Install a Buddy Bench or other gathering place to help students socialize and connect with each other.
- Be creative and invent games and activities so students with different abilities and disabilities can interact with others.
- Encourage all students to set personal goals and focus on their abilities, not their limitations or disabilities.
- Check out the School Health Team's discussion about recommendations to improve Counseling, Psychological, and Social Services at Jefferson School.

## **Counselor's Office**

### **Phone**

After counseling a sixth-grader with emotional problems, Ms. Kowalski determined the student should seek counseling outside of school. She spoke with the parents and provided information for a social services agency that was well-suited to meet the student's needs.

Ms. Kowalski checks in with the student periodically and contacts the parents as additional school concerns arise and works with them to ensure the student can be successful in school. She meets with parents in person, or she e-mails or phones them if they are not able to come to her office.

You can:

- Support the efforts of school counselors by making sure they have adequate resources and equipment to serve the needs of students and implement comprehensive school counseling programs. School counselors may need some flexibility in their schedules.
- Check out the School Health Team's discussion about recommendations to improve Counseling, Psychological and Social Services at Jefferson School.

### ***Learn More***

- [Family Engagement](#)

### **Door Sign**

Ms. Kowalski found out students sometimes felt uncomfortable when they entered the Counselor's Office because of fear that others would think they were in trouble or had serious issues. She requested a less noticeable location for her office. Now students have a certain level of privacy because they do not have to pass in front of teachers and other students when they come to meet with the counselor.

Ms. Kowalski provides a quiet, comfortable environment and ensures uninterrupted conversations by hanging a sign on the window of her door: "Counseling in Progress — Please Do Not Disturb."

You can:

- Select a location for the Counselor's Office that affords a level of privacy. The space should be large enough so parents or small groups of students can gather.
- Create a relaxing setting so participants feel at ease.
- Check out the School Health Team's discussion about recommendations to improve Counseling, Psychological and Social Services at Jefferson School.

## **Principal's Office**

### **Facility Schedule**

Principal Paul sought more engagement among families, community members, and Jefferson School, so he announced the availability of school facilities in community bulletins and social media networks. Now, the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) has regular meetings at the school, and it sponsors special events such as Career Day. Youth clubs and athletic associations now use the gymnasium for youth leagues. Civic organizations book the conference room for their meetings. Principal Paul has collaborated with the community to sponsor several community events, including 5K runs and health fairs. The school has become a community hub by allowing others to use the facilities.

You can:

- Generate community-wide interest in your school by allowing civic organizations to use your facilities.
- Support the PTA by offering to host events.
- Consult with school principals and superintendents about their experiences with community meetings and best practices for engagement with families and civic organizations.
- Ask the local school board administrators about policies regarding facility use.

### ***Learn More***

- [Family and Community Engagement](#)

### **Emergency Toolkit**

Principal Paul ensures Jefferson School has action plans in case of an emergency. Public health emergencies include such things as flu epidemics. Environmental emergencies include natural disasters, such as a tornado or flash flood. Also, Principal Paul has action plans for workplace safety emergencies. The step-by-step action plans are kept in notebooks in his office and are distributed to staff.

Principal Paul realized any emergency requires coordination of all staff. He established training classes and drills so the staff knows what to do in an emergency. Emergency management leaders in the community staged training exercises at the school and explained how, during an emergency, staff can find the most up-to-date information via emergency notification systems and social media channels, such as Twitter and Facebook.

Principal Paul prepares for emergencies in other ways. He and other staff members know how to use the automated external defibrillator (AED) located near his office. Principal Paul has assigned handheld transceivers, also called walkie-talkies, to key staff. He uses his walkie-talkie during fire drills and shelter-in-place practice exercises. In these situations, he can communicate with school administrators and teachers to account for all students and ensure everyone is safe. On a routine basis, Principal Paul and the building manager use walkie-talkies to stay in touch with the front office when they are moving about the buildings and school grounds.

You can:

- Contact emergency management officials in your area to assist with developing action plans to handle a full range of emergencies. Training exercises will help staff members gain confidence in their actions and solidify their knowledge of protocols.
- Encourage staff to sign up for announcements from emergency notification systems and social media.

### ***Learn More***

- [Defibrillators](#)
- [School Crisis Guide](#)

### **Standing Desk**

Principal Paul realized he was spending too much time sitting when he was in his office. At the start of the school year, he installed a height-adjustable desk in his office and approved the purchase of height-adjustable desks for staff and teachers. Now, he and others alternate between sitting and standing at their desks. Standing at the desk causes the heart to beat faster than sitting does, so they are burning extra calories. Also, changing positions has many health benefits. It improves blood circulation and alertness, and it decreases shoulder and back pain. Principal Paul paces purposefully in his office while talking on his telephone as a way to get a few more minutes of exercise.

Principal Paul keeps reusable water bottles and nutritious snacks at his desk and maintains his weight at a healthy range. He asked the cafeteria staff to place fruit and water bottles in the conference room, staff lounge, and other work areas for staff. He knows he is a role model and is setting a good example for everyone at the school—students and staff alike. When he went to the doctor recently for a physical exam, tests showed he has improved his cholesterol levels.

You can:

- Avoid sedentary work habits by using a desk with standing options.
- Find innovative ways to move about the office, classroom, or work areas.
- Make sure everyone has access to water and healthy snacks.

## **Clock**

When the clock shows 8 a.m., Principal Paul starts the day with announcements. He runs a smooth operation by keeping classes and breaks on an efficient schedule. Before school, many students participate in the School Meal Breakfast Program. Students are encouraged to go to the cafeteria for breakfast or a snack before classes start or participate in Grab and Go options. Principal Paul ensures students have at least 20 minutes to eat breakfast. He schedules at least one hour of physical activity every day for students and makes sure there is time for physical activity outside of PE class.

You can:

- Structure your school day around an efficient schedule.
- Keep in mind recommended guidelines for physical activity, meals, and social breaks between classes.

## ***Learn More***

- [School Breakfast Program](#)

## **Community Map**

### **Parks and Recreation Department**

The Kolbe Parks and Recreation Department plays an important role in creating an environment in which residents have the access and encouragement needed to live active lifestyles. The Parks and Recreation Department director is careful to ensure the facilities and programs offered serve the wide range of ages, schedules, health status/fitness levels, and interests of Kolbe residents.

The Parks and Recreation Department provides free and low-cost physical activity opportunities including recreational sports leagues, dance classes, and community races. There are activities offered across the city in convenient locations for participants. The department ensures that all physical activity opportunities include appropriate safety measures. For example, bike race participants are required to

wear helmets; swim lesson instructors discuss water safety; and sports league coaches receive training on first aid.

Beyond just increased physical activity in the community, the Parks and Recreation Department plays an important role in helping to reduce stress and promote togetherness for many families. When school is not in session, many working parents depend on the camps and after-school care programs run by the department. The low-cost, family fun events sponsored by the department (such as family game nights, cultural events, and dances) help families connect and create positive memories together.

The Jefferson School Health Team promotes upcoming parks and recreation opportunities to staff, students, and parents. The school district and the Parks and Recreation Department have a shared use agreement regarding facilities such as playing fields and gyms.

***Learn More***

- [Model Joint Use Agreement Resources](#)