

Building a School Wellness Committee



Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) vision is that “All JCPS students graduate prepared to reach their full potential and contribute to our society throughout life”. In order to achieve this we have a mission, “to provide relevant, comprehensive, quality instruction in order to educate, prepare, and inspire our students to learn”. Therefore, we need to address all barriers that hinder the learning process. Health risk factors can not only alter lifelong success, but they also limit effective learning in the classroom. Implementing Coordinated School Health (CSH) process we will remove barriers to ensure students are physically and emotionally ready to learn. The Coordinated School Health (CSH) committee is an essential advisory group concerned with the health and well being of students and staff. In an ideal school setting, experts in the eight components meet regularly and bring their unique skills, knowledge and resources to the table to address any health related issues within the school environment. Examples to address might include bullying, safety, health issues such as poor nutrition or asthma, health education, staff’s physical and emotional health, or other challenges identified by the committee. When the right members are included on the committee, high-impact policy and environmental change in all aspects of student and staff health are possible.

Here are the basic steps to the committee’s success:

1. Identify committee members that represent all 8 areas of CSH
2. Designate a School Health Coordinator
3. Educate members about the CSH approach
4. Develop mechanisms to create a school-wide understanding of CSH
5. Develop and Implement a Local School Wellness Policy
6. Identify school needs
7. Implement programs, activities and policies that meet these needs
8. Manage and monitor implementation
9. Market successes

Identifying Committee Members

There are many different ways schools may start a CSH Committee. Each school should determine who the key stakeholders are to ensure that they have a sustainable and comprehensive committee. The committee should have anywhere from 5 to 20 members. School sites can acquire more participation by making the CSH Committee part of a committee that is required by schools (e.g., FRYSC, Safety committee, School Based Decision Making (SBDM), Culture and Climate, Learning and Environment Committee, Practical Living/Program Review or HPSE). Consider an open invitation to all faculty and staff at your school. One of the most important participants will be an administrator, a valuable resource and asset to your committee. An administrator is also vital to the committee success because he or she provides permission to follow through on initiatives and may provide the time to meet during regularly scheduled meetings. If at all possible, have your committee made up of volunteers who have a commitment to the cause rather than those who are appointed.

Suggestions for committee members include:

- Principal/Assistant Principal
- School Counselor
- School Nurse
- FRYSC Coordinator
- PTA Representative
- Health Educator
- Physical Educator
- Teachers
- SBDM Council member
- School Social Worker
- School Psychologist
- Nutrition Services staff
- School Custodian
- Community Members
- Support Staff
- Parents/guardians
- Students