



Including Health-Related Goals in Your School Improvement Plan

Information provided by the Office of Family Health, Oregon Public Health Division

The Issue

Schools are under a lot of pressure to make sure students meet required benchmarks in core academic subjects. However, emotional, social and physical health problems can become barriers to learning, making it difficult for youth to be successful learners. School-based efforts to address the mental, social, emotional and physical health-related barriers to learning have led to positive outcomes such as improved test scores, increased staff satisfaction, and increased connectedness and engagement. Including health-related goals and objectives in the School Improvement Plan is one way schools can integrate health into what schools measure and pay attention to, and reflect that health is a learning support that contributes to the success of the whole child.

All schools in Oregon are required to complete School Improvement Plans. Results from the 2010 School Health Profiles Survey, a bi-annual survey from the Centers for Disease Control Prevention, indicate that in Oregon over 70% of the middle and high school principals surveyed included health related goals and objectives in their School Improvement Plans. The decision to include health-related goals in a School Improvement Plan can come from state mandate, district requirements, or school level initiatives. For samples of state mandates, district requirements and School Improvement Plans that incorporate health-related objectives, visit healthoregon.org/hklb.

How Administrators, Teachers and Parents Can Help

Strong leadership from school administrators is an important piece to addressing health related barriers to learning. Administrators can:

- Include a statement in the mission of the school concerning the health and well-being of students and staff as a foundation for school improvement and academic success.
- Dedicate time at each site council meeting to health-related objectives.
- Support school participation in statewide health surveys (like the Oregon Healthy Teens Survey www.oregonhealthyteens.org)

- Support and promote use of data to drive decisions by dedicating staff time to complete school-level assessments such as the School Health Index (<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/SHI/index.htm>) or the Healthy Schools Builder (www.healthiergeneration.org).
- Promote and participate in diverse planning groups to develop health-related goals and objectives with measurable outcomes.

Parents and teachers can be strong champions for including health-related goals in School Improvement Plans too. Parents and teachers can:

- Ask what goals are included in the school's improvement plan, and what goals address health.
- Go to the school's site council or school health advisory council meetings to see what activities are being done to address health.
- Involve other parents and community members in the planning process. Connect with other organizations or colleagues that have expertise (and possibly resources) to help create health-related goals that are measurable and achievable.

If you have information about schools and school districts in Oregon that are including health in school or district improvement planning, please let us know (hklb.program@state.or.us)!

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