

## How to Collaborate with Health and Wellness Providers

### Definition:

- **What:** Health and Wellness partnerships/ collaborations support students' physical, mental, social, environmental, spiritual, and academic health and wellness, with a focus on health promotion for individuals and communities through:
  - Physical Education/Activity and Wellness
  - Nutrition
  - Health Education and Services
  - School Staff Wellness
  - School Counseling, Psychological and Social Services
  - Healthy School Environment
- **Why:** Healthy kids make better students and better students make healthy communities! This belief is the cornerstone to coordinated school health and the reason why organizations and agencies representing public health, higher education, school districts, parents, and other groups join together to support health and wellness initiatives. Under-resourced communities often face significant disparities in health outcomes and available health care resources. Children with personal or family health needs related to nutrition, dental care, vision, asthma, trauma, and many other challenges are less likely to attend school regularly and less able to focus when they are in school. School partnerships with health care providers can address or mitigate many of these needs to help youth reach their full potential. Health and wellness initiatives can also address the critical adolescent health behaviors linked to leading causes of death and disability among adults and youth, such as alcohol and drug use, tobacco use, lack of physical activity, violence, and risky sexual behavior.
- **How:**
  - Engage a team of stakeholders that represent the diversity of the community. Invest the time necessary to build relationships and establish trust.
  - Develop a common language and knowledge base around issues of health, wellness, and equity.
  - Identify a school- or community-based coordinator for the health collaboration initiative.
  - Create a vision, values, and mission statement for the collaborative effort, as well as other formal agreements on expectations, partners' responsibilities, data-sharing, and other areas as necessary.
  - Carry out a data-based community health assessment to identify available resources and needs.
  - Prioritize measurable and attainable community/school health goals and develop agreed-upon measures to evaluate program effectiveness.

- Develop a collaborative plan and define partners' commitments and contributions.
- Maintain regular communications among partners and with the community.
- Invest in leadership capacity and development to ensure sustainability.
- Engage in ongoing data-based reflective evaluation of program implementation and effectiveness, and adjust practices as necessary.

#### Exemplars in Practice:

- **The Children's Health Fund**  
The Children's Health Fund has provided care to disadvantaged children since 1987 and currently provides care through 24 pediatric units in urban and rural communities across the nation.  
<https://www.childrenshealthfund.org/>
- **Community Health Navigation**, CIGNA Foundation, 2017.  
Community health projects supported by corporate responsibility foundation.  
<https://www.cigna.com/about-us/corporate-responsibility/cigna-foundation>

#### Training Materials:

- **Work Together, County Health Rankings and Roadmaps.**  
Specific steps to building a team to support community health. Very practical, multiple links to other tools.  
<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/take-action-improve-health/action-center/work-together>  
Also see parent website for guidance on other facets of improving community health:  
<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/take-action-to-improve-health/action-center>
- **Working Together for Healthier Communities: A Framework for Collaboration Among Community Partnerships, Support Organizations, and Funders.** Community Tool Box-section 7  
This is a high-level discussion of ways that state and community partnerships, support organizations, and grantmakers can collaborate to foster systemic change.  
<https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/overview/model-for-community-change-and-improvement/framework-for-collaboration/main>
- **Community Health Assessment and Group Evaluation (CHANGE) Tool**  
How to create a team to assess community health strengths and needs, plan action steps, and evaluate outcomes.  
<https://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/state-local-programs/change-tool/index.html>

- **ASCD/CDC Whole Child Initiative Overview.**

This publication is more general than practical; however, page 13 provides a helpful graphic on the components of child wellness, and the introduction offers an excellent rationale for the interrelatedness of health and learning.

<http://www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/siteASCD/publications/wholechild/wsc-a-collaborative-approach.pdf>

**Resources:**

- **Aetna Foundation**

Health-focused funding opportunities.

<https://www.aetna-foundation.org/>

**Research:**

- **“How the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model Works: Creating Greater Alignment, Integration, and Collaboration between Health and Education,”** The Journal of School Health, 85(11)775-784, Nov. 2015. Chiang, Meagher, & Slade.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4606771/>

- **“Healthier Students Are Better Learners: A Missing Link in School Reforms to Close the Achievement Gap.”** Journal of School Health, 81(10)593-598, Oct. 2011 (Basch).

<https://healthyschoolscampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/A-Missing-Link-in-School-Reforms-to-Close-the-Achievement-Gap.pdf>

- **“Building Sustainable Health and Education Partnerships/Stories from Local Communities.”** *Journal of School Health*, 85(11):810–816, Nov. 2015

Study of health-focused community school partnerships in Oregon; Oakland, CA; and Cincinnati, OH

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4606780/>