

Utah School Health Profiles Highlights 2016

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What are the School Health Profiles?

School Health Profiles provide a snapshot of health-related education, policies, and programs in Utah schools. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in collaboration with the Utah Department of Health developed a questionnaire and conducts a survey of secondary schools every other year. The profiles help state and local education and health agencies monitor and assess characteristics of school health programs. They include information on policies related to physical education, tobacco-use prevention, nutrition, asthma management, health services, and violence and injury prevention.

How are the data collected?

Two questionnaires were mailed to 258 secondary public schools containing any of grades 6 through 12 in Utah during the spring of 2016. One questionnaire was for school principals and one for lead health education teachers. Findings from the survey are highlighted in this report.

How can this help my school?

Data from School Health Profiles can be used to plan and enhance school health programs. The Utah Department of Health has compiled key findings and recommendations schools can use to guide their efforts to improve health programs.

School Health Index

The School Health Index (SHI) is an online self-assessment and planning tool. It helps school administrators identify the strengths and weaknesses of their health and safety policies and programs; develop an action plan to improve student health; and engage teachers, students, and the community in promoting healthy behaviors. It is recommended that school administrators use the SHI (available at <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/shi/index.htm>) to strengthen their policies and programs. The Utah Department of Health offers a free training to help schools complete the SHI. Please contact Sarah Roundy at saroundy@utah.gov for more information.

The percent of schools that have used the SHI to assess policies, activities, and programs in the following areas are:

- 33.9% physical activity
- 37.5% nutrition
- 37.1% tobacco-use prevention
- 22.5% asthma
- 29.5% violence and injury prevention
- 22.5% HIV, STD, and teen pregnancy prevention



Physical Activity



80.8% of physical education teachers or specialists received professional development on physical education or physical activity in the past year

33.9% of schools have used the School Health Index or other tool to assess policies, activities, and programs for physical activity

24.6% of schools have a written plan that provides opportunities for students to be physically active before, during, and after school

70.3% of schools provide the opportunity for students to be physically active at least 60 minutes during, before, and after school

Recommendations:

- The health of students is linked to their academic success. Create environments that support the recommended 60 minutes or more of physical activity each day for children and adolescents aged 6-17.
- Continue to provide professional development for physical education teachers and specialists so they can become aware of updates in national standards.
- Consider using the *School Health Index: Self-Assessment and Planning Guide* to identify strengths and weaknesses of school health policies and programs, create an action plan, and encourage the community in promoting better health.
- Increase opportunities for students to be physically active during, before, and after school. Opportunities can include physical education classes, recess, and walking and biking to school.
- Implement the *School Health Guidelines to Promote Healthy Eating and Physical Activity* guidelines. These guidelines can be used as a foundation for developing, implementing, and evaluating school-based healthy eating and physical activity policies and practices for students.

Resources:

- The *School Health Guidelines* serve as the foundation to create school-based healthy eating and physical activity policies and practices for students. For more information visit <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/npao/strategies.htm>.
- The *Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program* enables students to participate in daily physical activity. Find the step-by-step guide at <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/physicalactivity/cspap.htm>.
- Ensure that your school district has a comprehensive wellness policy. For policy requirements, resources, and help, visit <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/local-school-wellness-policy>.
- The Alliance for a Healthier Generation's Healthy Schools Program is an evidence-based initiative that will help create and sustain healthy environments. To see how your school can adopt this framework, visit <https://schools.healthiergeneration.org>.

Nutrition



80.9% of schools place fruits and vegetables near the cafeteria cashier, where they are easy to access

71.7% of schools encourage students to drink plain water

46.7% of schools offer a self-serve salad bar to students

14.4% of schools have planted a school food or vegetable garden

37.5% of schools have used the School Health Index or other tool to assess policies, activities, and programs in nutrition

63.4% of schools have implemented policies that establish standards for competitive foods to be available during the school day

Recommendations:

- Implement the *School Health Guidelines to Promote Healthy Eating and Physical Activity*. These guidelines can be used as a foundation for developing, implementing, and evaluating school-based healthy eating policies and practices for students.
- Adhere to the required nutrition guidelines and required standards for competitive foods (foods sold outside of school meals). This includes foods sold in vending machines, school stores, à la carte, or at fundraisers.
- Consider using the *School Health Index: Self-Assessment and Planning Guide* to identify strengths and weaknesses of school health policies and programs, create an action plan, and encourage the community in promoting better health.

Resources:

- The *School Health Guidelines* serve as the foundation to create school-based healthy eating and physical activity policies and practices for students. For more information, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/npao/strategies.htm>.
- Find resources and tools to help your school meet nutrition standards at <https://healthymeals.fns.usda.gov/smartsnacks>.
- Ensure that your school district has a comprehensive wellness policy. For policy requirements, resources, and help, visit <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/local-school-wellness-policy>.
- The Alliance for a Healthier Generation's Healthy Schools Program is an evidence-based initiative that will help create and sustain healthy environments. To see how your school can adopt this framework, visit <https://schools.healthiergeneration.org>.
- The *Competitive Foods and Beverages in U.S. Schools: A State Policy Analysis* shows how state policies align with the Institute of Medicine's food standards for schools. For more information, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/nutrition/pdf/compfoodsbooklet.pdf>.



Asthma



96.5% of schools routinely use school records to identify and track students with asthma

26.0% of schools provide referrals to any provider for students diagnosed with or suspected to have asthma

80.1% of schools report that all or most students with known asthma have an asthma action plan on file

22.5% of schools have used the School Health Index to assess their asthma policies and programs

Recommendations:

- Assign school office staff to keep a list of students with asthma on file. Track absenteeism for all students with asthma and refer to primary care providers when students with asthma have excess absences.
- Work with school nurses to have an asthma action plan completed yearly by parents of children with asthma.
- Periodically assess your school using the School Health Index for asthma related policies and programs.



Resources:

- Utah law allows students to carry and self-administer their asthma medications. Read and implement a school policy in accordance to Utah Code 53A-11-602, available at <http://le.utah.gov/xcode/Title53A/Chapter11/53A-11-S602.html>.
- Access the self-carry and administration form available at http://health.utah.gov/asthma/pdfs/schools/SelfAdministration_English.pdf.
- The *Utah Asthma School Form* combines all of the forms a student needs to manage asthma at school. It serves as an asthma action plan, medication authorization, and self-administration form. This form can be found at <http://health.utah.gov/asthma/pdfs/schools/AsthmaSchoolForm.pdf>.
- The *Winning With Asthma* program provides free training for coaches at <http://www.winningwithasthma.org>. Have your staff and coaches trained yearly.

Tobacco Prevention



97.8% of schools prohibit use of electronic vapor products as part of their tobacco policy

50.0% of schools require participation in a cessation program for students caught using regular cigarettes and 47.0% require participation for students caught using e-cigarettes

58.9% of schools have a tobacco-free school environment and 81.7% of schools post signs marking a tobacco-free zone

42.9% of schools teach 19 key tobacco-use prevention topics in a required course

Recommendations:

- Develop and enforce comprehensive tobacco-free policy which includes prohibiting electronic vape products (i.e. e-cigarettes, vape pens, mods) at your school or district by anyone at any time.
- A key part of enforcement is signage; it is an easy, non-threatening way to inform parents and visitors that school property is a tobacco-free zone. For free signage, contact your local health department.
- Ensure students and staff have access to cessation programs either on-site or through referrals to other health agencies. In addition, those violating the policy should be encouraged to participate in a cessation program.
- Provide instruction on avoiding tobacco use to all students. Encourage teachers to teach the Prevention Dimensions curriculum. These lessons teach important tobacco prevention topics and meet core curriculum requirements for health.

Resources:

- Contact your local health department for information and guidance on creating a comprehensive tobacco policy.
- Free phone-based and online-counseling cessation services are available at <https://waytoquit.org/quit-your-way>.
- A cessation class for youth, called Ending Nicotine Dependence (END), is available through local health departments, is generally free of charge, and gives youth the tools they need to quit tobacco and e-cigarettes. For more information, visit <https://waytoquit.org/quit-your-way>.
- For more information and free online training on the Prevention Dimensions curriculum, visit <http://www.uen.org/preventiondimensions>.

Violence and Injury Prevention



58.2% of schools have a policy requiring information on sexual abuse prevention be distributed to teachers and staff

60.5% of schools have a policy requiring information on suicide to be distributed to parents

75.6% of schools use the Student Injury Reporting System (SIRS) to collect data on injuries that occur during school

Approximately 80% of schools have procedures to inform coaches about the school's concussion policy and are provided professional development opportunities in this area

Recommendations

- Require school staff to receive training and instruction on child sexual abuse prevention and awareness, responding to a disclosure of child sexual abuse, and mandatory reporting requirements according to the Utah Child Sexual Abuse Prevention law (53A-13-112).
- Require all school staff, and create opportunities for parents, to receive evidence-based training in suicide prevention (e.g., QPR, Mental Health First Aid, etc.) every year.
- Require schools to offer yearly parent seminars on substance abuse, bullying, mental health, depression, suicide awareness, suicide prevention, internet safety, and the School Safety and Crisis Line according to the Utah Parent Education law (53A-15-1301).
- Participate in the Student Injury Reporting System (SIRS). The SIRS allows schools to track injuries that happen on school grounds during school hours or school-sponsored activities.
- Require coaches, trainers, officials, and student athletes to be trained on recognizing and responding to concussions.

Resources:

- Approved instructional materials for child sexual abuse prevention for youth, youth-serving adults, and parents/caregivers can be found at <https://pcautah.org/programs/school-based.php>.
- Funding from the State Board of Education is available to implement evidence-based and best practice suicide prevention programs. Visit <https://www.schools.utah.gov/sas/scep/prevention> for more information.
- HEADS UP concussion management training and educational materials for parents, coaches, youth athletes, and schools are available at <http://www.cdc.gov/headsup/youthsports/training/index.html>.
- To enroll your school in the SIRS, visit <https://sir.health.utah.gov>.

School Health Services



Less than two percent (1.9%) of schools have a full-time registered nurse

18.6% of schools include health services in their written School Improvement Plan

51.6% of schools have an asthma action plan for all students known to have asthma

Recommendations:

- Improve your school nurse-to-student ratio. A school nurse is essential for a healthy school. Healthy People 2020 aims for a nurse-to-student ratio of 1:750 students.
- Consider developing a School Improvement Plan if your school doesn't already have one. A School Improvement Plan is a document that specifies concrete objectives for improving the health of students along with a list of activities for meeting those objectives.
- Schools can help students with chronic health issues by assisting them with access to care and referrals. They can also help make sure uninsured students are enrolled in a private, state, or federally funded health insurance programs if they are eligible.
- Make sure all students with a chronic health issue, such as asthma, diabetes, seizures, or severe food allergies, have a written care plan on file. Written care plans can include:
 - Individualized Healthcare Plan (IHP)
 - Emergency Action Plan (EAP)
 - Individual Education Plan (IEP)
 - Section 504 Plan

Resources:

- *Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child: A Collaborative Approach to Learning* can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/wsc/index.htm>.
- The Healthy People 2020 school nurse ratio goal can be found at http://www.healthypeople.gov/node/4258/data_details.
- *H.R. 1857 (113th) Student to School Nurse Ratio Improvement Act of 2013*, if passed, will help schools reduce their nurse to student ratio. Read more at <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/hr1857>.
- See <http://nursingworld.org/DocumentVault/GOVA/Ruler-FAQ.pdf> for FAQs about and benefits to hiring school nurses.
- Attendance Works is a national and state initiative that promotes better policy and practice around school attendance. For more information, visit <http://www.attendanceworks.org>.