

What Are School Health Advisory Councils (SHACS)?

A SHAC is a group of individuals appointed by the school district to represent their community in many coordinated school health areas. They provide advice on school health programming and its impact on student health and learning. SHACs provide recommendations specific to changes and/or additions to the school's health education curriculum or instruction that impact the entire school district, not just individual school campuses.

Requirements

- Every independent school district is required by law to have a School Health Advisory Council
 - The board of trustees of each school district shall establish a local school health advisory council to assist the district in ensuring that local community values are reflected in the district's health education instruction.
 - A school district must consider the recommendations of the local school health advisory council before changing the district's health education curriculum or instruction.

Recommended Duties:

- The local school health advisory council's duties include recommending:
 - the number of hours of instruction to be provided in health education
 - curriculum appropriate for specific grade levels designed to prevent obesity, cardiovascular disease, and Type 2 diabetes
 - health education; physical education and physical activity; and nutrition services
 - parental involvement; and instruction to prevent the use of tobacco
 - appropriate grade levels and methods of instruction for human sexuality instruction
 - Any course materials and instruction relating to human sexuality, sexually transmitted diseases, or human immunodeficiency virus or acquired immune deficiency syndrome shall be selected by the board of trustees with the advice of the local school health advisory council.
 - a statement of the policies adopted to ensure that elementary school, middle school, and junior high school students engage in at least 30 minutes per school day or 135 minutes per school week of physical activity
- Effective SHACs can be instrumental in improving student health and creating healthy schools by:
 - helping schools meet community involvement mandates and community expectations
 - providing a way for community members to work together with school personnel to accomplish district goals
 - utilizing community resources and assets
 - influencing people within a community to be a credible, collective voice for healthy children and youth
 - providing a forum for sharing youth health information, resources, perspectives and a range of advice
 - fostering member's personal satisfaction and understanding of their role in strengthening their community by supporting CSH and fostering cooperation by building trust and consensus among grassroots organizations, community segments, and diverse citizens

What Do SHACs Do?

The most effective SHACS develop plans that address all eight components of a coordinated school health program.

- Health instruction
- Healthy school environment
- Health services
- Physical education
- School counseling
- Food services
- School site health promotion for faculty and staff
- Parental involvement

Responsibilities

- Program Planning
 - Share strategies and problem solve
 - Assess district and community health issues/concerns
 - Facilitate innovation in health education
 - Provide in-service training programs
- Advocating and Promoting School Health
 - Spotlight your SHACS efforts and successes
 - Facilitate understanding between school and community
 - Encourage local business, media, etc. to provide resources
- Fiscal Impact
 - Provide support when making recommendation that have a fiscal impact
 - Consider how to assist schools in raising funds for health education programs
- District Interaction
 - How well does your district address health issues
 - ✓ Observe health education classes
 - ✓ Examine school lunch menus
 - Meet with appropriate district personnel to discuss issues and brainstorm solutions