

Introduction

To whom it may concern,

Education reform calls on schools to offer improved academic programs and to change the way they function. Good health is essential for effective learning. It is an asset for students facing intense competition, peer pressure, stress due to testing, and a full program of intellectual and physical activities. A coordinated approach to addressing students' health can become one of the means to meet a shared outcome; productive and capable students.

While remaining committed, first, to the academic achievement of each student, the focus of the school should be on the whole child. Schools, while providing routine health care, should focus primarily on prevention. The goal is to help young students learn to respect and care for their own bodies. It is imperative to interrupt the cycle of ignorance about good health that diminishes the quality of life for so many children, and also has such tragic consequences for the nation.

Today hundreds of thousands of children and adolescents across the United States are becoming health literate through regular participation in school-based comprehensive health education. Schools have an enormous potential for helping students develop the knowledge and skills they need to be healthy and achieve academically. Since comprehensive school health education occurs within the context of education and learning, it contributes to the broader mission of schools. Moreover, there is broad agreement that schools should accept responsibility for the health education of our young people.

The intent of comprehensive school health education is to motivate students to maintain and improve their health, prevent disease, and avoid or reduce health-related risk behaviors. It is also provides students with the knowledge and skills they need to healthy for a lifetime.

Curriculum selection or development involves delineation of the content and skills that students must learn at each grade level and how often and for what duration the curriculum will be delivered. Implementation requires acceptance of the curriculum by the school community; teacher training accompanied by on-going follow-up support; distribution of materials; and management of family and community linkages.

Respectfully,

Elementary Health Teachers
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