

CHAPTER V

Stage 5 - Creating the School Health Plan

Objective: Using the School Health Profile, prepare a School Health Plan with short, medium and long term objectives and strategies that will address the expressed student needs in each of the paths to school and student health and well-being.

The School Health Plan is a very important blueprint.

The School Health Committee is responsible for creating the direction of the School Health Plan and for planning program strategies. To prepare the School Health Plan, your committee will use the School Health Profile as a basis for its recommendations. These recommendations are submitted to administration, student council, and the school/parent council for approval. Their response provides your committee with a general direction and resources to proceed with programs.

5.1 Charting the Course

The plan charts the programming direction for the future and acts on the major needs as identified by the School Health Committee. It contains strategies that respond to identified needs, and sets out a time frame for enacting these strategies relative to the other priorities identified. Since this is the document that administration and school council uses to take action, it may include an estimate of the cost of implementing the programs.

The School Health Plan is a living document and should be treated as such. In fact, it should be reviewed continually and revised to reflect new or changing school and student needs.

The School Health Plan should address the eight guiding principles and the five paths to school and student health and well-being. For example:

- ✓ The School Health Plan should become a framework that is considered when making other school organizational, staffing and financial decisions, and it should be considered as an important part of the education process within the school.
- ✓ Recommendations must address the five paths to school and student health and well-being.
- ✓ The program direction should reflect the needs of all students, including students at all levels of health.
- ✓ In considering how to implement programs, the School Health Plan must address the challenges of reaching all population sub-groups within the school, such as ESL students, students with disabilities, students with cultural differences, and students with a variety of social and skill backgrounds.
- ✓ The programs recommended in the School Health Plan should not be considered in isolation of each other. There may be links between specific programs that maximize the programs' impact

and success.

- ✓ Programs should be designed with the intention of taking action to generate change in a socially responsible manner. They should provide the necessary support through a healthy social, physical and emotional environment to assist students in developing their leadership skills and empowering them to take action through democratic processes.
- ✓ Programs need to be designed so that they support the development and application of knowledge and skills that students can use throughout their lives to improve and maintain their health and well-being.
- ✓ Program requirements should recognize that health is a result of the fit between individuals and their environments. *For example, a physical activity program needs to take into account that one student may prefer to participate in team sports while another student may prefer individual activities, or that one student may be participating in a number of activities outside of school, while another student may only have the opportunity to participate at school.*

A sample framework (Appendix 5 - B) and outline (Appendix 5 - C) of the content of a School Health Plan are contained in the appendices.

5.2 Starting on the Plan

As your committee reviews the profile and hears the reports presented by sub-committees or individual members, it may be useful to keep in mind a few of general questions to guide you through the process of arriving at a plan.

1. What changes to the **Psycho-social Environment** will help students feel that they have more influence over their work, are more respected, supported, and valued?
2. What changes to the **Physical Environment** will help students feel safe and secure?
3. What changes to **Support Services** will help students feel safe, secure, and healthy?
4. What kind of **Strategies, Programs and Activities** will help students and the school community gain or regain a sense of control over their own health and draw on whatever social support is required to achieve their goals?
5. What kind of **Strategies, Programs and Activities** will help students and the school community gain or regain a sense of safety and control?

5.3 Measuring Success

1. The success of the School Health Plan hinges on the extent to which it manages to reinforce the democratic principles and provide an opportunity for students and the school community to influence change through leadership, empowerment, and social responsibility.
2. The success of the School Health Plan hinges on the extent to which it manages to reinforce *Personal Resources* and build a sense of personal efficacy and competence among of students.
3. The success of the School Health Plan hinges on the extent to which it manages to reinforce the knowledge and skills needed by students in order to foster the development and maintenance of positive, health promoting *Personal Health Behaviours*.

The School Health Plan will more likely lead to success if it balances strategies to help individuals help themselves and to make the school environment itself more health promoting.

5.4 What about *Your Health and Your Personal Resources*?

The School Health Committee is a dedicated group of people who give of their time and energy to advance the health and well-being of all students. If this time and energy starts to draw heavily on your personal resources, even after taking our advice to divide up the tasks involved, remember:

- ◆ *You* know your school best. The **School Health Profile** is just there to guide you.
- ◆ *You* direct the show. The **School Health Profile** just provides you and potential service providers with valuable information, possible scenarios, and possible scripts.
- ◆ *You* control the pace at which the show unfolds.

It is important that you feel good about yourselves and take it easy. If something in the **School Health Profile** strikes you as wrong or too complicated, move on to something that makes more sense. Discuss your concern with others and share the load. In particular, talk to people who are *not* on your committee to share ideas. Have fun. A plan cannot be health promoting if it saps the strength out of those it involves.

5.5 Setting Priorities

In setting priorities, your committee needs to consider the **connections** and **balance** among the paths, and the balance between what the individual and the school can do. Remember, the environments have great impact on the individual. Finally, 'communication' tools must foster the participation of the whole school in developing the School Health Plan.

Connections to consider are the many *links between individual health practices* that students bring with them to school (eating, smoking, drinking, exercising, etc.) *and the environments* into which they bring them. Regularly consider the interplay between students and their working environments (review the commentary in the profile that discusses this.) Ask yourselves whether, or to what extent, the school supports people in their efforts to maintain or improve their health and to participate in safe, healthy and supportive environments.

Balance refers to keeping a sense of proportion between things that individual students can do to help themselves, and the things the school can do to make it a healthier, safer place. For instance, when you read about students concerns regarding exercise, weight, drinking, smoking or stress, you also think about ways in which the school can help people address these concerns, such as creating a study environment that does not stretch or strain them to the point where they feel they have little control over their personal health practices or indeed over their lives in general. Balance is also needed among the paths and between short and long term strategies within each of the paths.

Communication refers to keeping students involved in the committee's decision-making process as you go through the profile and work on a plan. Whenever possible, share your committee's ideas with students before incorporating them in your plan. Try to be sensitive to differences between groups of students in terms of grade, gender, ethnicity, academic, or vocational stream. Try to plan with students, not for them.

Communication is at the heart of participation. This means having input into and influence over the things that happen around you – in this case, at school. Communication and participation are health promoting

activities in themselves. The more students are involved in developing the plan, the more beneficial it will be for their well-being!

5.6 Balance is a Policy

If your committee is able to come up with a balanced plan for review by the school administration, you are in effect recommending a comprehensive health policy. It may be that the plan will unfold gradually over years, rather than months, but if you start with balance and sustain it, you will be doing great things for all students as well as the staff and faculty. You will be making progress toward the goal of "healthy students in health promoting schools".

Because *'balance'* is essential to the ultimate success of the School Health Plan, direct your thoughts and energy toward both individual and environmental strategies that focus on the short, medium and long term. If you can plan to take some action on short, medium and long term strategies at the same time, this will improve the viability of the School Health Plan. Within each path priorities will be suggested. Don't forget the issues that only a few people expressed as concerns. These may be very serious. Nevertheless, it is suggested that some *broad guidelines* be kept in mind when considering the following priorities:

- ◆ With **Health Practices**, start with a strategy directed at the behaviour that most students in the survey say they would like to do something about. In the planning process, consider ways to help students with regard to:
 1. Their need to feel capable of making necessary changes in ways that make sense to them. Adapt programs to the needs of participants, not the other way around.
 2. Their need to appreciate how health practices interconnect and depend on each other (e.g. smoking, drinking, and medication use; physical activity, nutrition, and healthy weights, stress management and sleeping patterns).

In the area of the **School Environment**, look for ways that students can be involved in planning and implementing changes to various aspects of the physical and social organization of the school. In the end, it is their participation and communication that will make the difference. These are health-promoting processes in themselves, as well as good bets for arriving at better solutions to problems. But remember that for many people, participation means more than simply giving input. It means feeling that one's views are being respected and taken seriously, and that one can exert some influence over decisions impacting on one's daily life, well-being and safety.

Although the school is not responsible for the **Home Environment** (no one would want this), there may be things that it can do to support students in their efforts to balance home and school life.

Environmental changes, just like individual changes, do not have to be sweeping or expensive in order to be health promoting. Well thought-out, modest changes that are lasting, are more important than great plans that never get implemented. The School Health Profile contains many ideas to help you identify practical ideas to make the working environment and even the home environment more health-promoting.

Please refer to the Framework For Examining the School Health Profile (Appendix 4 - B) for a series of questions to guide the School Health Committee in analysing the School Health Profile.

5.7 Tips for Success

The School Health Plan should refer to and use existing programs and resources that have been

effectively meeting student needs (as expressed in the Needs Assessment).

Once a School Health Plan has been submitted to the administration and school council, they decide what resources will be allocated, and for what purpose, in each year of the plan. The administration relates the health-related priorities to the reality of existing and projected resources. Their decisions provide your committee with a resource framework to carry out actual programs.

After the administration and school council have responded to the School Health Plan, inform students and tell them what the next step (Stage 6) will entail and how they can take part.

5.8 Evaluation

The School Health Plan presents your school's vision of what a safe, caring, health promoting school is to you. This vision forms the ultimate goal for your committee. It provides the roadmap of how the committee and all key players or partners are going to achieve this vision.

Are the stated goals and recommendations appropriate and achievable?

The goals and recommendations in the School Health Plan will guide the rest of the implementation process and the future of the school. The School Health Plan and the Voices and Choices initiative as a whole will be judged according to your committee's success in implementing its recommendations, achieving its goals and positively affecting the health of the students and the school as a whole. It is therefore vital that the goals and recommendations be appropriate (based on the identified needs and preferences) and realistic (taking into account the resources available).

Is the School Health Plan well organized and written?

The written plan should allow readers to see the connections quickly and clearly. Acceptance of the plan may depend, in part on the ease with which it can be read.

- ✓ Use short, simple sentences.
- ✓ Use point form whenever possible.
- ✓ Provide examples, preferably in boxes, to help distinguish them from the text.
- ✓ Use charts and graphs to highlight important ideas, issues or data.

Does the School Health Plan address the underlying causes of good health and well-being?

The Plan needs to address the 'balance' and 'connections' among the:

- ✓ eight principles,
- ✓ five paths,
- ✓ balance of what the individual can do and what the school can do, and
- ✓ considerations for each grade and gender and other groups within the school.

Are the goals and recommendations clear and justifiable?

- ✓ Are the recommendations and goals based on identified needs?
- ✓ Do the goals describe the anticipated results?
- ✓ Do the goals identify evidence of success?
- ✓ Are the goals achievable?

Have we communicated with and secured the support of all key players?

It is a good idea to communicate regularly with all key players or partners in your school community throughout the process in order to build support for the School Health Plan and the Program Action Plans (Stage 6). None of these groups should be surprised by the recommendations and goals in the plan. They should be ready to support the implementation of the School Health Plan with the necessary resources.

Have we developed an implementation plan?

In developing the implementation plan, consider the following:

- ✓ the most important priorities for the school population;
- ✓ the most important priorities of the administration, school/parent council;
- ✓ the resources and partners available;
- ✓ a balance among the paths and strategies that address both the individual and environment; and
- ✓ a balance among the short, medium and long term strategies.

Have we distributed and communicated the School Health Plan effectively?

Stage 5 - Creating the School Health Plan

Review your School Health Plan by answering the following questions:

- Have we developed a realistic and viable School Health Plan? Have we:
 - developed appropriate and achievable goals and recommendations,
 - organized and written the plan in a way that makes it easy for the reader to see the goals and priorities and understand the recommendations,
 - have we identified evaluation indicators and measures,
 - ensured that the plan is comprehensive and balanced,
 - confirmed the commitment of the administration and other key partners,
 - developed an implementation plan and schedule based on identified priorities, and
 - developed a communication and distribution plan?

- Does the plan address all five paths to school and student health and well-being?

- Is the plan based on the actual results of the Needs Assessment described in the School Health Profile?

- Does the plan include activities that will be initiated immediately and ones that will be phased-in over the next few years?

- Has the plan been approved by all members of the School Health Committee?

- Did administration and school council approve the School Health Plan and have they committed time and resources?

- Is there still evidence of administration's and school council's open and consistent commitment and support of the School Health Program? (If not, take action to make it happen.)

- Did you communicate the approval of the School Health Plan to students, parents, and teachers?

School Health Plan - Framework Sample

1. Theme	Develop a theme that can be threaded throughout the process over the long and short term. Some themes that have been used are: "The Health Promoting School", "The Safe School", "The Comprehensive Approach to School Health" and "Investing in Student Health for Learning". Themes help maintain continuity among the different programs and lend a focus to student, parent, and teacher communication (e.g., a logo designed to represent school health, a catchy phrase that can be used with each program activity).
2. Table of Contents	Since the School Health Plan will be a reference tool and will be submitted to administration, teachers, school council, and others for review, it should be as organized as possible. A table of contents will help increase its readability.
3. Executive Summary	The School Health Plan is the document that the School Health Committee will gain the approval on to proceed with program implementation. As a result, a summary of the "bottom lines" will facilitate decision-making by administration.
4. Committee Members	The names of the School Health Committee Members and a place for their signatures authorizing the School Health Plan should be included.

Appendix 5 - B - Framework Sample (Cont'd)

<p>5. Purpose and philosophy of the School Health Committee</p>	<p>Although the School Health Committee is made up of individuals, it functions as a united group with a firm, clearly defined purpose, and philosophy. The School Health Plan should state the philosophy of the committee in terms of the five paths to school and student health and well-being - Psycho-social Environment, Physical Environment, Health Practices, Personal Resources and Support Services. The overall objectives (medium and long term) and priorities of the committee should also be stated.</p>
<p>6. School Health Profile</p>	<p>This Profile is the source from which the program design objectives are set. Your committee may want to include a summary of the School Health Profile within the School Health Plan. The graphs and tables for the key questions and primary needs identified would be important additions.</p>
<p>7. Program Contents</p>	<p>The programs recommended by the committee should be described in terms of how these programs reflect the Psycho-social Environment, Physical Environment, Health Practices, Personal Resources and Support Services. Your committee may want to establish a format for discussing each program.</p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Type of Program - Physical Activity ✓ School Health Profile Results: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 65% of students consider more physical activity as the most important health improvement needed; - 48% of students say physical activity would help them cope better with worry, nerves or stress; and <p>Recommandations : - 55% of students would like to have physical activity or sport facilities more available, and accessible.</p>

Appendix 5 - B - Framework Sample (Cont'd)

<p>7. Program Contents (Cont'd)</p>	<p>RECOMMENDATION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Investigate the possibilities for having the facilities more accessible to students (after school, weekends, and/or before school).✓ Do a more in-depth assessment of the types of physical activity and sport programs that would interest the students and teachers.✓ Encourage students to participate in the available programs by publicizing them and featuring them. <p>✓ This program addresses: (a) the psycho-social environment by reducing stress thereby improving students' ability to cope, and by supporting interpersonal relationships among students; b) health practices in that it will improve student fitness and cardiovascular health and assist in developing healthy weights; c) the personal resources as students learn new skills and gain a greater sense of control in relation to school, work, and health.</p> <p>RESOURCES:</p> <p>Human</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ School Health Committee✓ Physical education teachers, other teachers✓ Community Parks and Recreation Professionals✓ Public Health Nurse <p>Financial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Participation Fee
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Appendix 5 - B - Framework Sample (Cont'd)

7. Program Contents (Cont'd)	<p>Material</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Sports and audio-visual equipment ✓ Gymnasium ✓ Cafeteria ✓ School property ✓ Community facilities (parks, trails, rinks, pools, tracks, ball fields, soccer pitches, and gyms)
8. Scheduling	A preliminary timetable concerning program implementation should be included.
9. Concluding Remarks	Your committee may want to summarize the overall objectives, philosophy and purpose of the School Health Plan.
10. Appendices	Attach relevant documents or materials mentioned in the School Health Plan. This may include a summary of current programs and resources already in existence, the Student Needs Assessment Questionnaire, and so forth.

Keep in mind that the School Health Plan should be kept short and simple. (Administration, teachers, parents, and students won't read a 100-page document. Include a reference that other documents are available if they want to refer to them.)

School Health Plan

- A. Letters of Endorsement
(Obtained from decision-makers during Stage 1)
- B. Mission Statement
(Clearly state the purpose of implementing the project in your school)
- C. Vision Statement and School Health Committee Goals
(Clearly state the vision of what a safe, caring, and health promoting school means to the School Health Committee and the student population, as well as to other key partners or players. State goals clearly.)
- D. Table of Contents
- E. Executive Summary
- F. Names of Committee Members, Sponsoring Organizations, Acknowledgements
- G. Summary of Planning and Implementation Process
- H. Summary of School Health Profile
(School Overview and brief summary outlining the major findings from the School Health Profile)
- I. Overall Strategy and Priorities
- J. Program Recommendations
 - Psycho-Social Environment
 - Physical Environment
 - Personal Resources
 - Personal Health Behaviours
 - Support Services

(For each program area, list the recommendations, goals, type of program(s), why the program should work, anticipated results, resources required, and evaluation indicators or measures.)
- K. Implementation Schedule
- L. Appendices (with relevant documentation)

School Health Plan

Fill out each line with your chosen recommendation. Then, mark an 'X' in the path that is represented within each one.

Recommendation	Physical Environment	Psychosocial Environment	Personal Health Practices	Personal Resources	Social Services
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					
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11.					
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18.					
19.					
20.					

School Health Plan - Identifying Goals

PATH	RECOMMENDATION	SHORT-TERM GOALS	MEDIUM-TERM GOALS	LONG-TERM GOALS
<i>Physical Environment</i>				
<i>Psycho-Social Environment</i>				
<i>Personal Health Practices</i>				
<i>Personal Resources</i>				
<i>Support Services</i>				

School Health Plan Identifying Evaluation Indicators

PATH	RECOMMENDATION	SHORT-TERM GOALS	MEDIUM-TERM GOALS	LONG-TERM GOALS	EVALUATION INDICATOR MEASURES
<i>Physical Environment</i>					
<i>Psycho-Social Environment</i>					
<i>Personal Health Resources</i>					
<i>Personal Resources</i>					
<i>Support Services</i>					