

School Health Council

What is it?

A school health council (also referred to as a school health team or a school health advisory council) is a group of individuals representing different segments of the community, who collectively act to provide advice to a school on aspects of the school health program. These teams can work with schools to help identify health problems and concerns, set priorities, and design solutions.

Who can be involved?

Everyone can be involved, but most teams have the following key school and non-school representatives on their school health councils.

- Students
- Administrators
- Health Coordinators
- Health Education Teachers
- Physical Education Teachers
- Teachers from a variety of levels and disciplines
- Counseling, psychological and social services providers
- Health service providers
- Food services staff
- School site health promotion staff
- Related committees
- Other school staff

- School boards
- Parents
- Faith community
- Business
- Voluntary health organizations
- Youth-serving organizations
- Health care
- Mental health
- Social services
- Local and county government
- Recreation
- Law enforcement
- Pre-school programs
- Elderly
- Media



What are characteristics of a potential member of a school health council?

- **Have an interest in youth.** People who work with youth groups, PTAs, Boy and Girls Clubs, Scouts, and other youth organizations.
- **Understand the community.** Those who have an understanding of the cultural, political, geographic, and economic structure of the community.
- **Have professional ability.** Individuals with professional training in youth-related disciplines.
- **Are willing to devote time.** Make sure to communicate to members of the team what time commitment is involved. No matter what a person's qualifications and interest in youth, if she or he will not attend meetings and participate in the work of the team, it is usually better not to have that person as a member.
- **Have credibility.** Select people who are respected by their peers. The credibility of the team is enhanced considerably by the personal characteristics of its members.
- **Are representative of the population.** Membership should be as broad and diverse as possible. Representation of as many segments of the community as possible can enrich the level of discussion and acceptance of proposed activities.



Adapted from:

Improving School Health: A Guide to School Health Councils, Atlanta, GA: American Cancer Society, 1999, www.schoolhealth.info (Click on “Community,” then “Advisory Councils”)

Promoting Healthy Youth, Schools, and Communities: A Guide to Community-School Health Advisory Councils, Iowa Department of Public Health, 2000, www.idph.state.ia.us/common/family_health/covers.pdf