The 2004 WIC Reauthorization Act requires every school to adopt a local school wellness policy. Each school health council is required to conduct a school health needs assessment, develop a wellness policy, and then evaluate the policy.

Section 37-13-134, Mississippi Code of 1972 annotated, requires school health councils to base policies and recommendations on the eight component model of a coordinated approach to school health.

Under the 2007 Healthy Students Act, grades K-8 students must participate in 45 minutes of health education per week. In Grades 9-12, students must complete one-half Carnegie Unit in Comprehensive Health Education for graduation.

HEALTH IS WEALTH: HOLD ON TO IT

The Office of Healthy Schools (OHS) is committed to providing resources for implementing the Healthy Students Act. For students to gain the knowledge and skills needed to adopt healthy lifestyles, OHS, through the 2006 Mississippi Comprehensive Health Education Framework, sets competencies for providing instruction that is age-appropriate and sequentially planned.

There are many ways to integrate health education into the school day. It can be taught in separate classes by certified health instructors; it can be woven into regular academic course instruction; and it can be enriched by resource speakers, materials, and experiences.

As part of their comprehensive health education program, fifty schools in eleven Mississippi school districts are boosting disease prevention education through grants and technical assistance from OHS and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

As they help their students, teachers at all grade levels review how their personal daily decisions and behaviors affect their own health.
The number of new STD and HIV cases diagnosed annually shows the urgent need to educate adolescents about prevention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE GROUP</th>
<th>STDs</th>
<th>HIV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>05-09</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>9,773</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The tried-and-true suggestion box has become a “Question Box,” allowing students to remain anonymous by noting the class period in which they would like their teacher to answer questions they place into the box. Students who want questions answered personally include their names. Their teacher provides them answers discreetly and individually.

2006 MISSISSIPPI STD/HIV REPORT

The Question Box resulted in one student realizing her eating disorder should be treated, several students being tested/treated for STDs, one student getting hypertension treatment, and several students finding help for neglect and abuse. The Question Box helps students avoid the embarrassment of personally asking their questions. The school also is experiencing a significant drop in pregnancies due to its heavy focus on abstinence and STD prevention.

A Great Tool That's There For The Using

Schools value free Discovery Education streaming videos as great resources. Many provide teachers’ guides and all align with the state's Comprehensive Health Education Framework.