Educating the Whole Child

Recommendations for HPE Professionals
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The Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model is a collaborative, holistic approach to strengthening learning and health in our nation’s schools. The model — developed by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and ASCD, formerly the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development — establishes a safe, protective and challenging environment for students to thrive in.

The WSCC model allows for greater integration of and collaboration between education and health for the purposes of improving each child’s cognitive, physical, social and emotional development. It expands upon the components of a coordinated school health program, built around the whole child approach to education, and provides a more collaborative framework for addressing the relationship between health and learning.

SHAPE America recommends that health and physical educators support schools’ use of the WSCC model as a framework to ensure students are healthy and successful academically.

Components of the WSCC Model

1. **Health Education** — Schools play a vital role in promoting students’ health and well-being. A comprehensive health education curriculum helps students recognize how personal choice affects their short-term and long-term goals, and how responsible decision making can lead to risk reduction and an improved quality of life.

2. **Physical Education and Physical Activity** — Physical education provides students with a planned, sequential, standards-based program of curriculum and instruction designed to develop motor skills, knowledge and behaviors for active living, physical fitness, sportsmanship, self-efficacy and emotional intelligence. A comprehensive school physical activity program (CSPAP) is the national framework for physical education and physical activity in schools. It includes high-quality physical education as the foundation of a program that offers physical activity before, during and after school, and that promotes staff involvement as well as family and community engagement.

3. **Nutrition Environment and Services** — Students should have opportunities to learn about and practice eating healthy foods based on the foods that are provided in schools. Schools should provide messages about healthy eating, including how proper nutrition plays a critical role in health and academic achievement.
4. **Health Services** — School-based health services are designed to ensure access to and promote appropriate use of primary health care services, and to prevent and control communicable diseases and other health problems. They also provide emergency care, promote and provide the best possible sanitary conditions, and provide education-based opportunities for promoting healthy children, families and communities.

5. **Social and Emotional Climate** — A positive social and emotional environment is one that provides a supportive culture of learning that is inclusive and allows all students, families and staff members to feel safe, secure, accepted and valued.

6. **Counseling, Psychological and Social Services** — These services support students’ social and emotional development and promote success in the learning process.

7. **Physical Environment** — Schools promote learning by ensuring the health and safety of students and staff across the physical environment, which encompasses the school building and the areas surrounding it.

8. **Employee Wellness** — Supporting the physical, emotional and social health and **wellness of employees** who work with students contributes to greater productivity in schools. Healthy school employees help foster an environment in which students can be healthy.

9. **Family Engagement** — Family engagement within the school setting plays a powerful role in supporting the whole child. Engaging families is a shared responsibility, in which schools provide opportunities for families to engage with purpose and intent, and families commit to participating in their children’s learning and development.

10. **Community Involvement** — Schools, by themselves, cannot solve the health and social problems that plague children and families. Families, health care workers, religious organizations, organizations that serve children and adolescents, and young people themselves also must participate in the process.
WSCC Best Practices

SHAPE America recommends that health and physical educators take the lead in promoting schoolwide wellness using the WSCC model, which includes adopting best practices such as:

**Health Education**

- Implement a skills-based curriculum (aligned with the [National Health Education Standards](https://www.shapeamerica.org/standards/)) that fosters development of self-efficacy, personal and social competence, and health literacy.
- Link the six risk behaviors that CDC has identified as important tenets of instruction within the curriculum (alcohol and/or other drug use; physical inactivity; sexual behaviors that contribute to unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections; tobacco use; unhealthy dietary behaviors; and behaviors that contribute to unintentional and intentional injuries and violence).
- Update curriculum and programming decisions based on local needs-assessment data and current national data such as YRBS on a regular basis.

**Physical Education**

- Establish a positive learning environment in the gym and classroom which promotes options for pursuing lifelong physical activity. Employ effective and efficient instructional strategies, along with adequate assessment strategies.
- Use a curriculum based on SHAPE America’s [National Standards and Grade-Level Outcomes for K-12 Physical Education](https://www.shapeamerica.org/standards/index.cfm), with instruction that follows appropriate practices.

**Physical Activity**

- Adopt the [CSPAP](https://www.shapeamerica.org/standards/index.cfm) model for providing students with opportunities for daily physical activity before, during and after the school day.
- Provide all students with daily recess or physical activity breaks of at least 20 minutes.

**Nutrition Environment and Services**

- Develop a healthy snack policy, as well as policies for classroom/school rewards, celebrations and fundraisers that promote compliance with federal nutrition guidelines.
- Use the school cafeteria as a learning laboratory to encourage and reinforce nutrition concepts that are covered in the classroom.
- Offer a daily schedule that makes it convenient for students to eat breakfast at school.
- Promote the health benefits of and strategies for healthy eating, through messaging to students, families and the community.
Social and Emotional Climate

- Adopt a **culturally responsive curriculum** that fosters the development of respect and appreciation for all.
- Enact a comprehensive bullying-prevention program as well as school policies that reflect a zero-tolerance approach to weapons, discrimination, hazing, harassment and gang activity.
- Offer activities that help students reduce and control stress during the school day.

Counseling, Psychological, Social Services and Health Services

- Train guidance counselors, school psychologists, social workers and nurses to recognize the connection between depression and anxiety and attendance and success in school.
- Adopt or create suicide awareness/prevention policies and offer ongoing professional development for school faculty and staff.
- Enact protocols for the early identification of students who are facing challenges and crises.

Physical Environment

- Create safe, clean and appropriately designated spaces for physical activity and learning. Ensure access to water during the school day so students and faculty can remain hydrated.
- Offer a physical environment that provides adequate heating and cooling, clean air, ventilation and noise control, and is free of hazards, including tobacco smoke and vapor.

Employee Wellness

- Adopt a systematic process for establishing an employee wellness program in school. Assess existing programs and resources to help facilitate employee wellness programs.
- Establish a planning committee to oversee programs and policies that promote employee wellness and undertake ongoing evaluation to measure program success.

Community Involvement

- Provide families and community stakeholders with information about health policies, programs and events through school newsletter, website, social media.
- Involve parents and community stakeholders in ongoing health initiatives and provide opportunities to be part of the decision-making process regarding health initiatives.
- Help families provide opportunities for students to learn at home.

To learn more about WSCC, **download SHAPE America’s free position statement**