

# Talking About Health Is Academic

SIX WORKSHOP MODULES FOR  
PROMOTING A COORDINATED APPROACH  
TO SCHOOL HEALTH

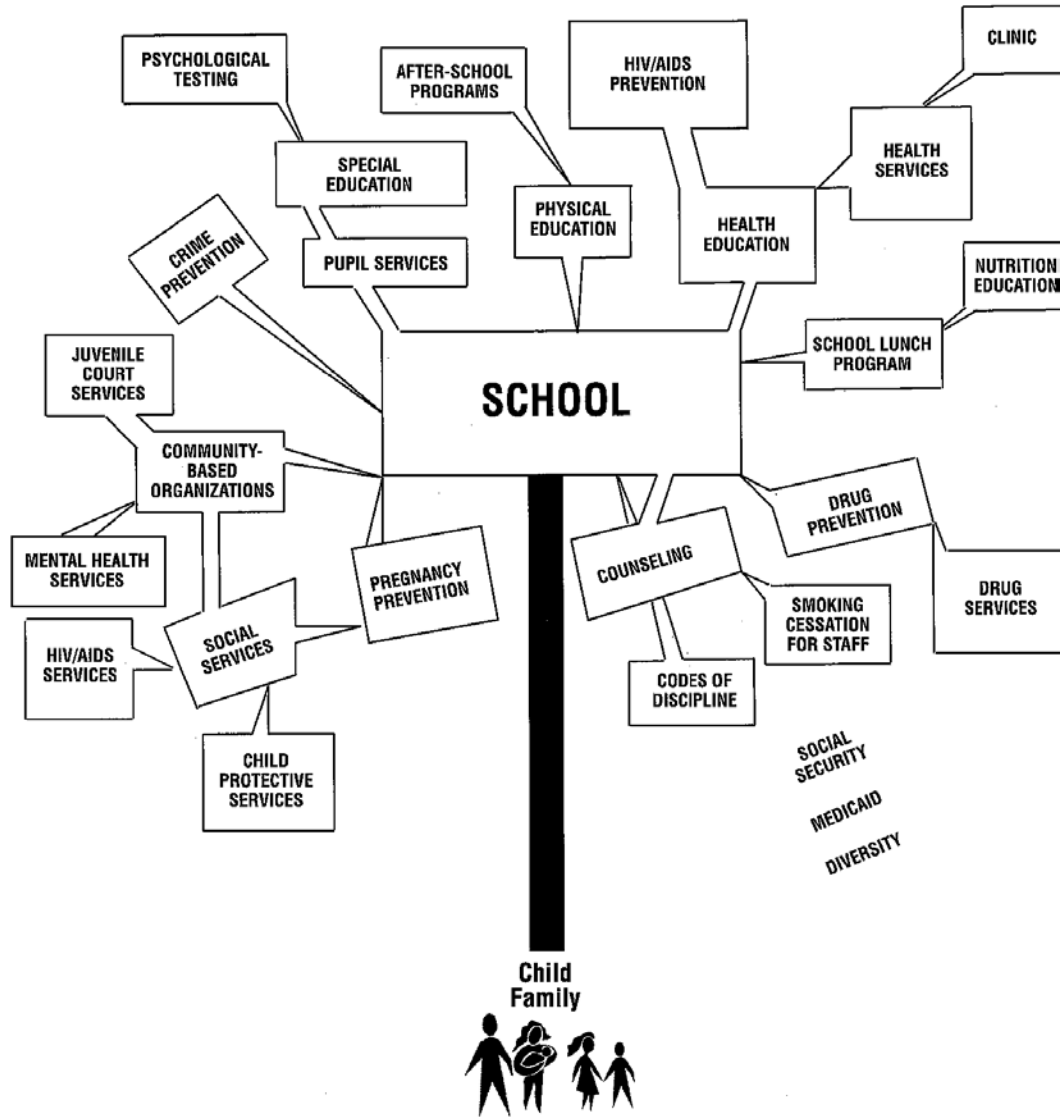
Developed by:

Education Development Center, Inc.  
Center for School Health Programs  
55 Chapel Street  
Newton, MA 02458-1060  
(617) 969-7100  
[www.edc.org/HealthIsAcademic](http://www.edc.org/HealthIsAcademic)

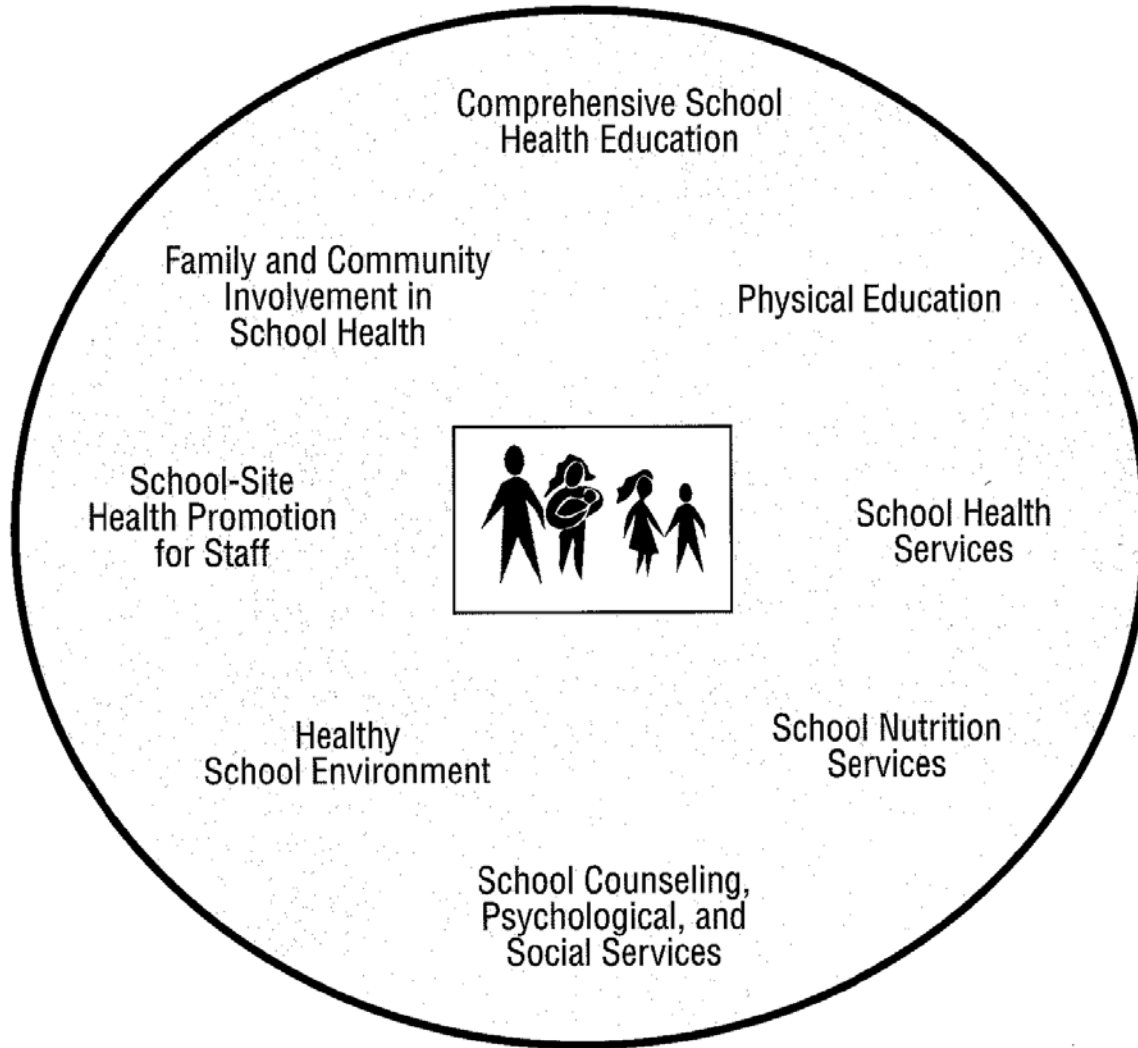
## Preventable Risk Behaviors

- Tobacco use
- Poor eating habits
- Abuse of alcohol and other drugs
- Behaviors that result in intentional or unintentional injury
- Physical inactivity
- Sexual behaviors that result in HIV infection, other sexually transmitted diseases, or unintended pregnancy

# An Example of an Uncoordinated System



# A Coordinated School Health Program



Adapted with permission from the  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

# **A Coordinated Approach to School Health Includes**

- Comprehensive school health education
- Physical education
- School health services
- School nutrition services
- School counseling, psychological, and social services
- Healthy school environment
- School-site health promotion for staff
- Family and community involvement in schools

# Coordinated School Health Program Components

**Comprehensive school health education:** Classroom instruction that addresses physical, emotional, and social dimensions of health; develops health knowledge, attitudes, and skills and is tailored to each age level. Designed to motivate and assist students to maintain and improve their health, prevent disease, and reduce health-related risk behaviors.

**Physical education:** Instruction that promotes lifelong, safe physical activity. Designed to develop basic movement skills, sports skills, and physical fitness, as well as to enhance social and emotional abilities.

**School health services:** Preventive services, education, emergency care, referral, and management of acute and chronic health conditions. Designed to promote the health of students, identify and prevent health problems and injuries, and ensure care for students.

**School nutrition services:** Integration of nutrition education, nutritious and appealing meals, and an environment that promotes healthy dietary behaviors for all children. Designed to maximize each child's education and health potential for a lifetime.

**School counseling, psychological, and social services:** Activities that focus on cognitive, emotional, behavioral and social needs of individuals, groups, and families. Designed to prevent and address problems and facilitate learning and healthy behavior and development.

**Healthy school environment:** The physical, emotional, and social climate of the school. Designed to provide a safe physical plant, as well as a healthy and supportive environment that fosters learning.

**School-site health promotion for staff:** Assessment, education, and fitness activities for school faculty and staff. Designed to maintain and improve health and well-being of school staff who serve as role models for students.

**Family and community involvement in schools:** Partnerships among schools, families, and community groups and individuals. Designed to share and maximize resources and expertise in addressing the healthy development of children, youth, and their families.

*Source: Marx, E., Wooley, S., Northrop, D. (Eds.) (1998). Health Is Academic: A Guide to Coordinated School Health Programs. New York: Teachers College Press.*

# Effects of School Health Activities

- Improved attendance
- Less smoking among students and staff
- Lower rates of teenage pregnancy
- Increased participation in physical fitness activities
- Greater interest in healthier diets
- Increased use of school health and counseling services
- Decreased disciplinary problems
- Delayed onset of certain health-risk behaviors

# Benefits for All

- Students learn to make healthy decisions.
- When nutritious food is available at school, students are not hungry and can learn better.
- More students have access to health care.
- Students and families get emotional support during critical times.
- Physically active students are more alert and concentrate better in the classroom.
- Teachers and staff can be role models for physical fitness and health.
- With family involvement in schools, programs reflect the needs, priorities, and values of the community.
- Students who feel secure and cared for can focus on learning.



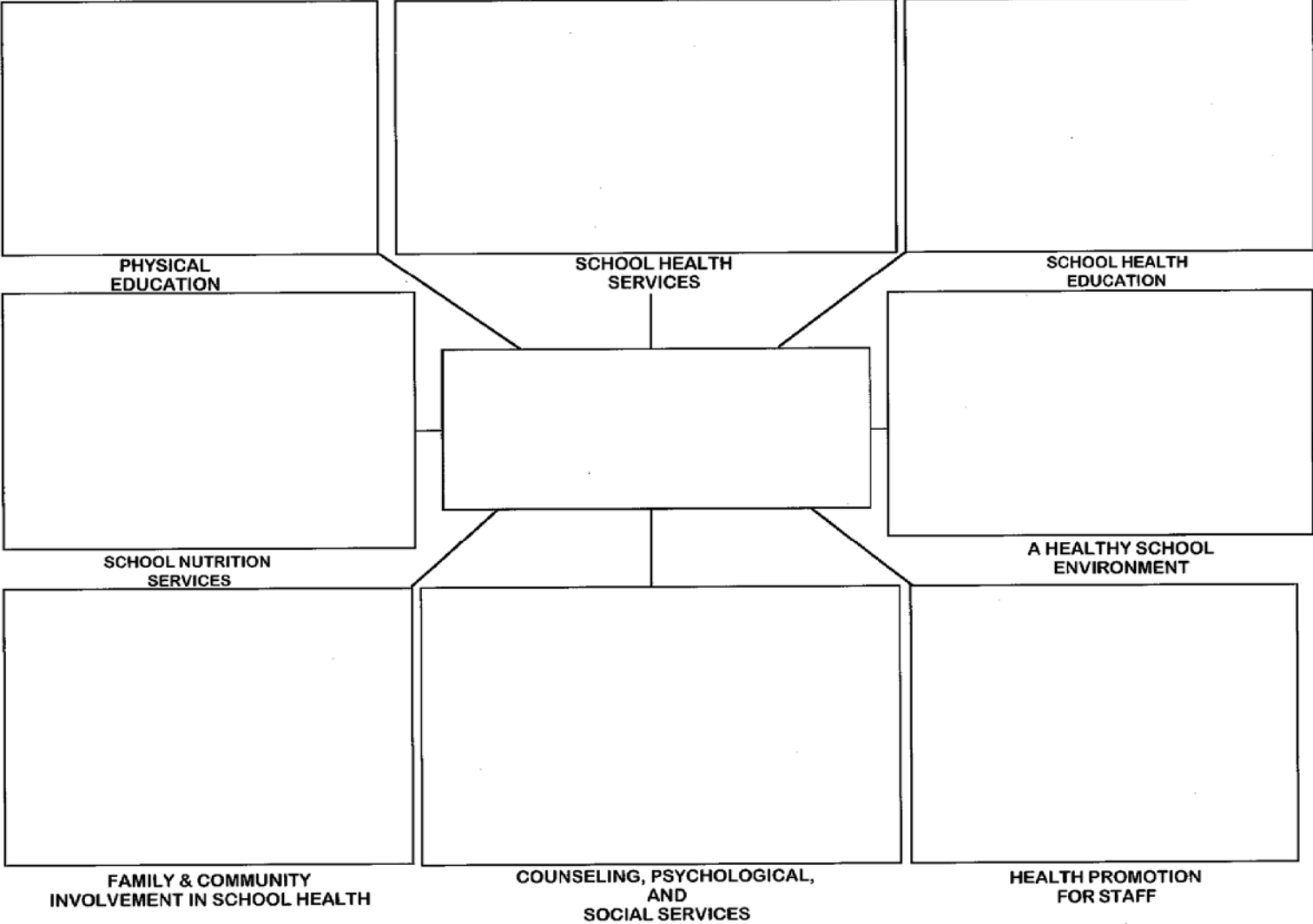
# Evaluation Data

- **Comprehensive school health education** not only can positively change students' health behaviors and attitudes but is also a cost-effective public health measure.
- **School-based health centers** can increase student attendance at school and reduce suspensions and dropout rates.
- The quality of the **school environment** can either enhance or undermine the quality of a school health program.
- Teachers participating in **school-site health promotion** programs have higher morale and fewer absences.
- **School nutrition services** can relieve short-term hunger and improve students' scores on standardized tests.
- **Family involvement** can increase students' and their families' adoption of health-enhancing behaviors.

# Education Reform and School Health

- Improved school performance
- Consolidation of resources
- Productive and capable students
- Programs that respond to the causes of under-achievement
- Community and family involvement
- Empowerment and enhanced preparation for teachers
- Locally determined programs and policies

# Sample Scenario



# SAMPLE MAP OF HEALTH ACTIVITIES, SERVICES, AND POLICIES

## Coordinated School Health Program Component

Activity, Service, or Policy	HED	PE	HS	NS	HPS	CPSS	HSE	FCI
Skills-based health education curriculum (preK-12)	x	x					x	
District-wide health services/screenings			x			x	x	x
Policy: use of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs	x		x		x	x	x	x
CPR training	x	x						
Support services for substance-abusing youth	x		x			x	x	x
Family peer educators	x		x	x		x	x	x
Breakfast and lunch program	x			x				
Employee assistance program	x				x			

HED = health education, PE = physical education, HS = health services, NS = nutrition services, HPS = health promotion for staff (staff wellness), CPSS = counseling, psychological, and social services, HSE = healthy school environment, FCI = family and community involvement

Source: Adapted from San Francisco Unified School District.

# Concerns

- “We have no money, no training, and no facilities.”
- “There’s not enough time. I can’t do one more thing.”
- “We’ve always done it this way.”
- “When I was in school, we didn’t have a coordinated school program, and I still made it.”
- “We’re in the business of education, not in the business of health.”
- “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.”
- “What’s in it for me?”