

Questions and Answers from the School Health Assessment: Healthier Schools Start Here! Webinar

Q: If schools are using the School Health Index (SHI) on the CDC's and Healthy School Program's (HSP) website, is there a way to import or export the data?

A: Currently, the Alliance does not have that functionality available. You can print out your answers in order to transpose the data from one tool to another. The Alliance encourages schools that are focused on physical activity, nutrition, and staff wellness to first upload the data on the Healthy School's Program Framework website. That way, you are able to access the action planning feature and tools and resources to help you implement any policy or programmatic change you would like to focus on in those areas. Afterwards, you can print out the answers and easily enter them into the School Health Index on the CDC's website program.

Q: Why should a Healthy School Program school sign up for Let's Move Active Schools?

A: There are a number of reasons a Healthy School Program school would want to register and complete the assessment on Let's Move Active Schools. First of all, the Let's Move impact is great, so schools can associate themselves with a visible brand. It gives them another opportunity to be nationally recognized. In fact, some Healthy Schools Program schools, if they are looking to earn an award but do not qualify for all the areas involved in receiving an Alliance award, they may be able to meet the criteria in Let's Move Active Schools for physical activity, education, and nutrition. Let's Move Active Schools receive priority for activation grants, such as those available from Fuel Up to Play 60 and Childhood Obesity 180.

Q: I am a parent and wondering what you suggest as the best way to gain support from a school administration? Support for forming a wellness council?

A: In our experience working with schools, data is the best way to gain administrator support. One of the best data sources you can use to prove to administrators that this is such an important topic and requires attention, is by completing all or part of a needs assessment in the content area you need to gain support. If it's physical activity or nutrition, start with those sections of the assessment to show your administrator what you are doing well and where you need improvement.

Also, you can use national level data, looking at childhood obesity across the country or state. This information is available at www.pennstatehershey.org/prowellness, <http://www.cdc.gov/>, and <https://www.healthiergeneration.org/>.

If you are looking for wellness council members, we encourage you to simply "make the ask." There are so many people in a school and the immediate community that would like to be involved in health and wellness, but are unsure of the best way to make an impact.

The Alliance also has Healthy School Program ambassadors. They are in a variety of roles such as superintendents, cafeteria managers, school nurses, and principals. You can find them on the Alliance website under school ambassadors. The Alliance has a school wellness council toolkit and a resource database for anyone in the school community that would like to get a council up and running.

Q: Can childcare centers not located on School District Buildings access and use these tools?

A: Yes. We encourage you to explore all the tools. Some may have specific questions for educators and school buildings, but others can help assess policies in places outside of the school setting. The Alliance for a Healthier Generation also has an assessment tool for out of school type settings. It is called the Healthy out of School time Framework and Assessment. It works the same way as the Healthy Schools Program Framework and is based on the National Afterschool Association's Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Standards, provides out-of-school time settings the tools and resources they need to build healthier places and engage youth in making healthy decisions.

You may also check out PA Nutrition and Physical Activity Self Assessment for Child Care website at <http://panapsacc.tiu11.org/>.

Q: How do you keep Wellness Committee Members at under-resourced schools from being discouraged by low assessments?

A: Every school is doing something well in terms of health and wellness. It can be discouraging to see that you need improvement in some areas when weighing your schools strengths. Doing these assessments annually or biannually can show progress over time and really increase morale in your school or organization. Focus on what you are doing well and share your successes with the school and community.

Q: Are there advantages in doing building level assessments vs district wide assessments?

A: Every school has unique priorities and needs. How they go about creating an action plan really depends on the school community as a whole. It varies depending on the level of support from the community, administration, and parents. Completing a district level assessment as a whole enables districts to identify where they need to devote resources to, where their greatest needs are, so they can have a greater impact on the population they serve.

District-wide assessments can give an all-encompassing look at what types of policies and programs will be most effective when implemented throughout the district, while highlighting needs for each school building.