



Prioritize >>>>

Understanding and Improving SHACs

Tips for Improving SHAC Performance

A. Conduct productive meetings

- Set meeting dates, times, and location(s) that are most convenient for the greatest number of members;
- Ensure that meeting notices are posted at the central bulletin board of **each campus**, at the district central administration office, and online, as required by state law;
- Consider having virtual attendance options, which are helpful for allowing community members to observe meetings;
- Write up the minutes for each meeting and review minutes from the previous meeting, ensuring that meeting minutes are posted to the district website as required by state law;
- Ensure that audio or video recording functions smoothly and that the recording is promptly posted on the district website as required by state law; Ensure that breakout and work group sessions are also recorded;
- Compose an agenda that allows sufficient time for presentations and deliberation of issues – and stick to the time allotted for each topic;
- Present reports from (sub-)committees;
- Recognize innovative and model programs for school health in the district;
- Plan the agendas for future meetings;
- Send email reminders before each meeting or call members;
- Provide maps and parking instructions for meeting sites;
- Use a seating arrangement (circular table or semi-circular seating) to promote face-to-face discussion.

B. Promote effective policymaking structure and dynamics in the SHAC

- Ensure common understanding of SHAC purpose and procedures; review bylaws and expectations regularly (i.e., at the beginning of each school year, or when discussions go “off course”);
- Review district health policies and procedures at SHAC meetings to evaluate if any require changes or amendments;
- Conduct a needs assessment to identify and prioritize school health requirements and shortfalls within the district [**CHAMPSS Needs Assessment-Short Form**];
- Monitor school health programs and policies at each of the district’s campuses – the School Health Index (SHI) is a useful tool for campus assessment (see <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/shi/>);



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- At the beginning of each school year, identify one or two issues for the SHAC to address during the year and set measurable goals – create sub-committee(s) to pursue these goals and to report regularly to SHAC on progress;
- Identify available sources of data to support SHAC activities and goals – examples include local data around youth mental health, teen birth rates, childhood obesity and other health topics;
- Invite other decision-makers from the school board and central administrative office to attend SHAC meetings and provide input on complex and/or controversial issues;
- To encourage input from students who will be impacted by SHAC decisions, consider inviting student leadership to attend SHAC meetings or creating a SHAC seat held by a student;
- Follow principles of democratic deliberation to reach consensus:
 - Mutuality – allow everyone the opportunity to voice their opinions and positions on issues;
 - Accountability – people should justify their positions and votes if questioned;
 - Transparency – agendas, recordings, and minutes must be posted on SHAC/district website; though not required by state law, consider making deliberations open for the public to observe.

C. Build partnerships with other community organizations

- Identify existing groups (non-profit organizations, universities, clinics) working on issues of child/adolescent and school health who are able and willing to contribute to SHAC activities;
- Invite local groups involved in child or school health issues to present to the SHAC;
- Form partnerships with local businesses and organizations that offer health services for children and youth – these partnerships can be at different levels depending on mutual willingness and capabilities: networking, consultative, or collaborative;
- Form subcommittees to address each of the components of Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model, and to address other complex school health issues such as sex education or the local wellness policy [see <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/wscs/index.htm> for the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model].

D. Increase public visibility of, and support for, your SHAC

- Use a variety of media channels to inform public about SHAC meetings, school health issues and policies, including:
 - Email;
 - Social media;
 - District website;
 - Campus bulletin boards;
 - School events (parent-teacher organization meetings, school open houses);
 - Newsletters, brochures, and flyers;



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- Local radio and newspaper announcements;
- Community events, especially those related to health (health fairs, blood drives, and back-to-school events);
- Direct communication (phone, face-to-face) with friends and neighbors;
- Develop collaborative networks with:
 - Local health professionals;
 - Government officials;
 - Journalists, especially those covering local health and educational issues;
 - Business leaders;
 - Professional associations, civic groups, service organizations, and religious groups.

E. Evaluate SHAC performance and procedures

- Use a SHAC self-assessment tool to evaluate your SHAC's effectiveness – the Texas School Health Advisory Committee (TSHAC) has a useful assessment tool at <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/schoolhealth/shadviseresources.shtm>