



Prioritize >>>>

Improving SHAC Performance

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;
- Write-up the minutes for each meeting and review minutes from the previous meeting;
- 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 [**iCHAMPSS Needs Assessments**];
- 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/>);
- 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;
- 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;
- Follow principles of democratic deliberation to reach consensus:



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- Mutuality – allow everyone the opportunity to voice their opinions and positions on issues;
- Accountability – people should justify their positions and votes if questioned;
- Transparency – deliberations should be open for the public to observe, and agendas and minutes posted on SHAC/district website.

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 coordinated school health, and to address other complex school health issues such as sex education or the local wellness policy (see <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/CSHP/> for details of coordinated school health).

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;
 - District website;
 - School events (parent-teacher organization meetings);
 - Newsletters, brochures, and flyers;
 - 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>