Create Student Investigators: Engaging Students with the School Health Index

Are students on your School Health Team? Get them involved with assessing your school environment. You don’t have to do it alone! Engage students in using the AFHK School Health Index (SHI) to help your school assess areas such as health education, physical activity and family and community involvement. Through this process, students will learn how to use a rigorous assessment tool and be involved in evaluating and tracking their own school health environment.

Use these strategies to get your students involved in the School Health Index:

• Work with students to review the School Health Index, discuss questions and determine who the appropriate person to interview is for category. For example, if the student is interested in physical activity, the appropriate person to interview may be a physical education (PE) teacher, athletic coaches, the Athletic Director or the head of the PE department.

• Ask a school staff member to partner with a student and work on certain School Health Index categories. For example, the PE teacher could help a student complete the physical activity section or a principal or vice principal could provide input on school wellness environment section.

• Meet and have students review each SHI question, answering questions as a group. Remind students to not feel discouraged if they cannot answer many questions. Ask students to identify the decision makers in their school and bring them together to discuss and answer each question.

• Ask teachers if completion of the School Health Index could be included as class work. For example, a social studies teacher could use the SHI as an example of how to use rigorous surveys, collect data and review reports.

• Once your School Health Team completes the SHI, you will receive a report that summarizes your school’s results. This report will showcase your areas of strength and the areas needing improvement. Ask students to present these results to the School Health Team during your quarterly meetings.

• Present SHI results to departments within the school. Ask students to communicate results from SHI reports and discuss how the School Health Team can partner with each department to improve the school health environment.

Learn more at ActionforHealthyKids.org/GameOn
Engage Students in Creating and Implementing Your Action Plan

When you complete the School Health Index, you’ll receive an auto-generated report that is tailored to your school based on your SHI results. This report highlights the questions where your school scored a 0 or 1, where improvement is needed. Focus on these opportunities for growth in your school health action plan. Including students in creating and implementing the action plan will help students understand their role in creating a healthier school environment.

- Brainstorm action items by asking students what areas are missing on their action plan. Consider reviewing **Step 4 of Game On** and the resources listed on your action plan to spark new ideas.
- Let students lead brainstorming discussions to incorporate more information and resources for each action item.
- Discuss priority goals for the year, anticipated challenges and solutions and sources of support and opposition.
- Assign action items to students. Divide students into small teams and ask them to be accountable for one part of the action plan. Have the teams provide brief updates on their assigned action items during quarterly meetings.
- Have the students divide the action plan into short, mid, and long-term goals. Guide them in determining what actions will be easy to implement versus the ones that need more time, money or support. **Use the table below to prioritize action items.**
- Communicate about your action plan to school administrators. Have a conversation with your principal or school board to discuss priorities for the school year. This will help engage school administrators and foster buy-in.
- Celebrate your action items when you achieve them! This will keep students and other School Health Team members excited and engaged.

List each of the actions your School Health Team brainstormed below. Use a five-point scale to rank each action. Add up the points for each action to get a total. The actions with the highest point totals are the ones your team should prioritize. Based on these totals, choose one, two or three important actions that the School Health Team can work on during the year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Action Item</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Commitment</th>
<th>Feasibility</th>
<th>Sustainability</th>
<th>Total Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 - very important</td>
<td>5 - not expensive</td>
<td>5 - little or no time</td>
<td>5 - very enthusiastic</td>
<td>5 - not difficult</td>
<td>5 - very sustainable</td>
<td>Rank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 - somewhat important</td>
<td>3 - moderately expensive</td>
<td>3 - moderate time</td>
<td>3 - moderately enthusiastic</td>
<td>3 - moderately difficult</td>
<td>3 - maybe sustainable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 - not important</td>
<td>1 - very expensive</td>
<td>1 - very great time</td>
<td>1 - not enthusiastic</td>
<td>1 - very difficult</td>
<td>1 - not likely to be sustainable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Description of Action Item**

**Importance**
- 5 - very important
- 3 - somewhat important
- 1 - not important

**Cost**
- 5 - not expensive
- 3 - moderately expensive
- 1 - very expensive

**Time**
- 5 - little or no time
- 3 - moderate time
- 1 - very great time

**Commitment**
- 5 - very enthusiastic
- 3 - moderately enthusiastic
- 1 - not enthusiastic

**Feasibility**
- 5 - not difficult
- 3 - moderately difficult
- 1 - very difficult

**Sustainability**
- 5 - very sustainable
- 3 - maybe sustainable
- 1 - not likely to be sustainable

**Total Points**

**Rank**