

Leander ISD School Health Advisory Council's School Board Report and Recommendations 2011

Texas Education Code 28.004 states that each school district will establish a school health advisory council (SHAC) and that it will meet on a regular basis. The duties of the SHAC is to provide advice on the district's coordinated school health program and its impact on student health and learning and to provide recommendations to specific changes to school's health education curriculum and instruction. SHAC was also required to submit to the board of trustees, annually, a written report.

Throughout this year, the SHAC has proceeded to work on improving the establishment of a "Culture of Wellness" in Leander ISD. This current SHAC is composed of 22 members, in which 15 are parent or community members. The SHAC has met six times this year.

The focus of SHAC this year was in the following areas of physical activity, child nutrition, social/emotional wellness and human sexuality curriculum. Physical activity and child nutrition focus is a direct result of the data collected through student fitness assessments and it's associations with economic, attendance and discipline data. Social/emotional wellness is an area of overall district focus as reflected from the LISD 10 Ethical Principles and the use of the Developmental Assets curriculum. Austin Lifeguard was approved 5 years ago to deliver their research based, abstinence curriculum to grades 7-9. It was time to review this curriculum and seek approval for its use.

Physical Activity

Premise: Physical Education, recess and movement support learning and are critical to education. Through movement and because of a process called neurogenesis, we now know that we can grow new neurons through our lifetime and that they are highly correlated with memory, mood and learning. – Eric Jensen, “Teaching with Poverty in Mind”, 2009

Physically fit children do better in school. – Darla Castelli, “Physical Fitness and Academic Achievement in Third- and Fifth-Grade Students”, 2007

Activity breaks can improve cognitive performance and classroom behavior. – Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, “Active Education”, 2009

Recommendation for consideration:

- Recess is an important venue through which students can be can be physically active at school. The LISD SHAC opposes administering or withholding physical activity as a form of punishment and/or behavior management. SHAC would like a district policy to be created that would protect recess time for being used as behavior and academic consequences. The SHAC thinks that recess should be expanded to include structured and unstructured time. Improvements to physical activity in recess could be addressed in the campus improvement plan on coordinated school health.
- In order to enhance academic performance, academic focus and/or behavior in the classroom, regular physical activity breaks be planned throughout the school day.

NUTRITION

Premise: Serving healthy, age appropriate snacks play a major role student’s diet. The Texas PTA Healthy Lifestyle Program recognizes the following:

- Properly nourished children perform better in school-both academically and behaviorally.
- Healthy habits are best formed during childhood.

Recommendation for consideration:

- In order to accomplish healthy snack environment, the district would need to expand its Nutritional Advisory Council (NAC) to include all stakeholders to get input on new snack guidelines. These guidelines could then be taken to the school board for approval to be added to the district wellness policy, FFA (Legal).

- The LISD SHAC would like for the district consider adopting consistent guidelines for snacks in the following areas:
 - Food and/or beverages served during classroom parties, birthdays, or school celebrations or events
 - Foods and/or beverages that are used as rewards for academic performances
 - Foods and/or beverages that are used for any fund-raising activity during the school day

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

Premise: A sustainable, positive school climate fosters youth development and learning necessary for a productive, contributive, and satisfying life in a democratic society. - National School Climate Center (2007)

The Five Promises, from Americas Promise Alliance, are those developmental resources — wrap-around supports — that young people need for success in life. – Colin Powell, Retired General

Caring Adults

Safe Places

A Healthy Start

Effective Education

Opportunities to Help Others

Emotional Wellness involves the awareness and acceptance of personal feelings while being sensitive and responsive to the emotional state of others. Social Wellness encourages one’s human environment to the common welfare of one’s community. – LISD Wellness Goals

Recommendation for consideration:

- The Search Institute has identified internal and external building blocks of healthy development known as developmental assets. These assets help young children grow up healthy, caring, and responsible. The LISD SHAC would like for the district to create a District Improvement Team made up of all stakeholders to establish systemic approach to embedding the 40 Developmental Assets into the school day and making all schools a place for kindness, caring and acceptance.

HUMAN SEXUALITY CURRICULUM

Premise: There are many sexual influences in a teen's world. Friends, media, etc. all have influence over a teen's perception, attitude and behavior regarding sex and sexual activity. Austin LifeGuard program provides teens with credible, factual data about the risks, potential consequences and options regarding their sexual activity. The curriculum incorporates facts with practical tools to help teens build healthy relationships and make informed decisions through high school, and fully experience the benefits of saving sex for marriage.

Recommendation for consideration:

- The LISD SHAC would like to recommend that LISD continue using Austin Lifeguard presentations as a deliverer of Human Sexuality Curriculum to grades 7-9. Austin Lifeguard Character and Sexuality Education goal is to empower teens with accurate information and practical tools to help them make healthy decisions, build strong relationships, and fully experience the benefits of saving sex for marriage.

Classroom Presentations

The classroom curriculum is an abstinence-based, comprehensive sex education program - abstinence-based because abstinence is the only 100% safe lifestyle; and comprehensive because we cover all aspects of teen sexual health, including sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy, contraceptives, boundaries in dating and relationship building skills. LifeGuard's approach has an emphasis on character and healthy relationship development.

The LifeGuard curriculum is presented by a staff and volunteer educators. Their educators are college graduates who have a passion for assisting teens in realizing their greatest potential. Teachers and coaches have found that having a new face in the classroom presenting this material is highly effective. Over the course of the Austin LifeGuard presentation, their educators develop relationships and trust with the teens resulting in a confidential atmosphere where sincere and personal questions can be answered. This is critical for teens because their exposure to sex is high but their actual comprehension of that exposure is quite low.

For High School presentations, the full curriculum is 4.5 hours long and is divided over three days in 1.5 hour segments. For Middle School presentations, the full curriculum is 4 hours long and is more effective over four days in 1 hour segments. LifeGuard is very flexible with scheduling. They also host 3 parent workshops per year in or district.