

# **Leander ISD School Health Advisory Council's School Board Report and Recommendations 2013**

## **SCHOOL HEALTH ADVISORY COUNCIL OVERVIEW**

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 are 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 is also required to submit to the board of trustees, annually, a written report. This current SHAC is composed of 30 members, in which 19 are parent or community members. The SHAC has met four times this year.

Throughout this year, the LISD SHAC has proceeded to work on improving the establishment of the education of the "Whole Child" by focusing on assisting our schools with a plan to help students be healthy, safe, engaged, supported and challenged. The SHAC explored the opportunities for student health and school health programs to influence academic achievement. The focus was on the areas of parental engagement, nutrition and social-emotional wellness.

## **PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT:**

Recent research released from the Centers of Disease Control (CDC), has focused on parent engagement and has targeted strategies for involving parents in school health. Over the last two years, SHAC had begun the process of developing an action plan related to parent engagement in the three areas of focus: connection, engagement, and sustainability. After exploring many resources, the SHAC found the PTA Healthy Lifestyles program to be one of the most effect parent engagement opportunities in our district. With evidence on many campuses such as River Place, Westside, Pleasant Hill and Leander Middle School, the healthy lifestyles program has formed a natural partnership between the school and parents. The SHAC has met with Texas PTA and the local Executive Council to look at a position called Healthy Lifestyles Chair. The SHAC and Executive Council both affirmed that pursuit of this position would have numerous benefits for the district.

## **Leander ISD PTA Healthy Lifestyles Chair**

The goal for PTAs Healthy Lifestyles programming is to promote school and home environments that make the healthy choice the easy choice. The Leander ISD PTA Healthy Lifestyles Chair is a position that can add leadership and advocacy to creating healthy lifestyles.

### **Healthy Lifestyles activities should include:**

- \_ Promotion of healthy lifestyles in the home, school, and community
- \_ Emphasis of the connection between healthy lifestyles, behavior, and learning
- \_ Promotion of family and community involvement in helping develop healthier schools
- \_ Involving PTA with policy development to support healthy school environments at both local and district levels

### **MISSION:**

By advocating for nutritious school meals and quality physical education, ensuring healthy options are available at home, and modeling healthy behaviors, parents can create lifelong healthy habits within their families and school communities and foster their children's academic, social, emotional and physical growth.

### **DUTIES:**

Leander ISD PTA Healthy Lifestyles Chair will strive to:

- Elevate importance of healthy lifestyles in local and executive PTA councils
- Work on health and wellness issues in PTA council and at schools
- Advocate healthy lifestyles with school board/admin, principals, students, parents, and community
- Be the contact person for health-wellness info, resources, and requirements
- Recruit new members/new leaders
- Assist in communication/implementation wellness policies
- Collaborate with campus administration, food service, parents, and staff on health and wellness goals

### **NEXT STEPS**

This spring through next fall, the district will launch efforts to recruit parents to participate on their school's healthy lifestyles committees.

## **NUTRITION:**

In the past, LISD has always had a Nutritional Advisory Committee (NAC) which advised and made recommendation on how the district implemented the wellness policy based on the nutritional needs of the students. This year was particularly unique because of two significant changes in LISD child nutrition department. First, there were sweeping changes in the National School Lunch Program which came on the heels of nutritional educational information changing from the food pyramid to [choosemyplate.gov](http://choosemyplate.gov). The changes in the reimbursable meals patterns and in the nutritional standards for school meals became quite challenging to child nutrition departments and parents alike. Second, LISD changed food service vendors to a new company - Southwest Foodservice Excellence, LLC, whose goal is to serve both nutritious and delicious food at an affordable cost. Because of these two significant changes the NAC found it important to re-prioritize the current issues related to meeting the district goals of addressing the students' nutritional needs.

### **Nutritional Advisory Council (NAC) Prioritization Tool**

After obtaining much feedback from council members, the NAC narrowed down the key issues to the following points:

- EDUCATION – nutritional education for students, parents, teachers, administrators, staff, community; cooking classes – demos, samplings
- OPTIONAL FOODS – al a carte menus, snack lines, parent snacks, food for meetings, events, athletic events, clubs, foods of minimal nutritional value (FMNV)
- PARTICIPATION – pricing, menus, communication, marketing, tastings, focus groups, choices
- PERCEPTION – improved communication, menus, newsletters, email, websites
- TASTE – improved taste of all foods while complying with meal pattern guidelines
- Time – school lunch schedules, recess after lunch

After completing a ranking process, “education” and “optional foods” came out as the highest priority for the NAC and the Child Nutrition Service to focus on. This recommendation was then brought to SHAC.

## **NEXT STEPS**

The result will be to create a plan for increasing awareness of the new food and nutritional standards outlined by the USDA. The NAC has already begun to look at the optional foods served in the cafeterias as well as the snack permission process and form.

## **SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL WELLNESS:**

The mission of the Developmental Assets Team (DAT) has been to focus on the “whole child” to fully prepare students for college, career and citizenship. Research, practice and common sense tell us that when focusing on the internal and external assets that surround a student, they will be better prepared for the challenges and opportunities of today and tomorrow. The Search Institute reveals that the best results for student success will occur when asset building becomes a shared responsibility among students, parents, families and communities.

### **Resilience Theory**

Definition: The process of, capacity for or the outcome of a successful adaptation in situations that are challenging or have threatening circumstances (Toomey, Brennan, and Friesen - circa 1994)

Goal: To build community resilience by focusing on conditions and policies that supports the emergence of the 40 Developmental Assets

Purpose: Building community assets will strengthen the protective factors and mitigate the risk factors involved in developing a community resilience framework

Why: Using a multifaceted approach to developing resiliency in individuals and community should strengthen the overall asset environment

How: By designing and being part of a community level prevention system, LISD will assist in reducing the risk factors and enhancing the protective factors of our youth

### **COMMUNITY LEVEL PREVENTION SYSTEM**

In order for LISD to be part of a community level prevention system that will address numerous risky behaviors of our youth (such as substance abuse, truancy, bullying, criminal behavior, etc.), we must focus on four areas that impact its health needs:

- Forces of Change – What is occurring that might affect student health and what challenges and opportunities are generated by these occurrences?
- Assets and Strengths – What is important to the health of our students? How do others perceive the quality of health? What health assets can we use to improve our district?
- Health of the District – What is the health status of our students? What is the health status of our employees?

- Internal and External Resources – What are the components, competencies, activities, resources and capacity of our community (Leander, Cedar Park, and other cities as well as Travis and Williamson County)? How we can utilize these internal and external resources to reduce the risk factors and enhance the protective factors of our students?

### **NEXT STEPS**

The district will begin to work with area prevention coalitions to assist in designing and implementing a systemic process of assessing, prioritizing and strategically planning to address the health needs of our students.