

SCHOOL HEALTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

A GUIDE FOR TEXAS SCHOOL DISTRICTS

This guide is intended for school district personnel and community members to assist them in developing and sustaining local school health advisory councils.

Revised January 2021



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Texas Department of State
Health Services

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Resources

Action for Healthy Kids

actionforhealthykids.org

Alliance for Healthier Generation

schools.healthiergeneration.org

American Academy of Pediatrics Council on School Health

services.aap.org/en/community/aap-councils/council-on-school-health

American School Health Association

ashaweb.org

CDC: School Health Index

cdc.gov/healthyyouth/shi/index.htm

CDC: School Health

cdc.gov/healthyyouth/schoolhealth

Let's Move Initiative

letsmove.obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/create-school-health-advisory-council

National Parent Teacher Association

www.pta.org

SHAPE (Society of Health and Physical Educators) America

shapeamerica.org

Texas Action for Healthy Kids

actionforhealthykids.org/texas-news-and-resources/

Texas Department of Agriculture: Square Meals

squaremeals.org

Texas Education Agency: Health

tea.texas.gov/academics/subject-areas/health-and-physical-education/health-education

Texas Education Agency: Physical Education

tea.texas.gov/academics/subject-areas/health-and-physical-education/physical-education

Texas School Health Advisory Committee

dshs.texas.gov/schoolhealth/shadvise/

Texas School Health Program

dshs.texas.gov/schoolhealth/

Texas Parent Teacher Association

txpta.org

Texas Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBS)

dshs.texas.gov/chs/yrbs/

Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS)

cdc.gov/healthyyouth/yrbs/index.htm

About this Guide

School Health Advisory Council: A Guide for Texas School Districts helps school district personnel and community members understand the basics of local school health advisory councils (SHACs) and their importance in creating a healthy school environment.

Acknowledgement

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) expresses its gratitude to the American Cancer Society for allowing DSHS to adapt the original guide for Texas.

Texas Department of State Health Services. (2021, January 14).

School Health Advisory Council: A Guide for Texas School Districts.

Retrieved from dshs.texas.gov/schoolhealth/sdhac.shtm.



Introduction

Healthier Students are Better Learners

Teaching children and young people how to live a healthy lifestyle is a good way to help them grow into healthy adults. Many studies show that a healthy active child is more likely to be successful in school and have healthy habits their entire life (CDC, 2011; Basch, 2011). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2011) states, “six types of health risk behaviors contribute to the leading causes of death, disability and social problems in the United States: (1) tobacco use; (2) unhealthy eating; (3) inadequate physical activity; (4) alcohol and other drug use; (5) sexual behaviors that may result in HIV infection, other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and unintended pregnancy; and (6) violence.”

These six health behaviors have a direct impact on student academics and attendance and schools are an important place to increase understanding, form attitudes and develop skills that affect lifelong healthy behaviors. Additional research shows that schools can deal with the health needs of students and still meet performance goals and lessen financial costs (Action for Healthy Kids, 2013).

While schools are an important place to make a difference in the long-term health risks of its students, they cannot deal with these complex problems on their own. Schools, parents and community members can join forces to support the knowledge and skills young people need to be healthy. One way for everyone to come together is through the local school health advisory council (SHAC). Local SHACs provide a way to get involved with school health-related issues.

Texas law (Texas Education Code, Title 2, Chapter 28, §28.004) requires the establishment of a SHAC for every school district. A SHAC is a school district created advisory group, consisting of members from different areas of the community and school district. The job of the SHAC is to make sure that the school district’s school health programs reflect local community values.

Background

Senate Bill 1, 74th Legislature, Regular Session, 1995, amended Chapter 28 of the Texas Education Code (TEC) by adding §28.004. This section requires the establishment of a local health education advisory council.

Since 2001, the Texas legislature has passed bills to amend this chapter of the TEC. Under TEC 28.004, local school health education councils are now known as local SHACs and their duties have expanded to include recommending policies, procedures, strategies, and curriculum appropriate for specific grade levels designed to prevent physical health concerns, including obesity, cardiovascular disease, Type 2 diabetes, mental health concerns, including suicide and the usage of e-cigarettes.

Recent legislative changes require SHACs to include age appropriate opioid addiction awareness training. See the **Appendix: Legislative history of school health advisory councils** later in this guide.

This guide is intended to assist the school district personnel and community members in continuing to meet the requirements of the TEC, Title 2, Chapter 28, §28.004 for developing and sustaining local SHACs.



Roles of School Health Advisory Councils

A SHAC has many roles. At minimum, Texas SHACs must do the job that is outlined in the TEC, Title 1, Chapter 28, Class §28.004. The most effective SHACs create recommendations that speak to the *Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child* (WSCC) approach to health and learning.¹ SHACS may be given the following roles:

Program Planning

SHACs work together with schools to carefully plan school health programming and the impact on student health. Sharing teaching methods, working through obstacles and helping with assessment activities may be a part of a SHAC's work. Talking over health issues, selecting programs and having training time for members are also ways to use a SHAC's time. The most effective SHACs create recommendations that speak to the *Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child* approach to health and learning.

Promotion

SHACs assist in promoting school health. School health promotion allows the school district and community to see what the SHAC has to offer. Shining a spotlight on the work of a SHAC is one way to promote school health. This work also includes promoting school health coordination within the school district and in the community. The benefits can range from receiving more resources to building better understanding between the school and community.

Fiscal Impact

One of the main roles of any SHAC is to make school health recommendations to the school board. The SHAC should work with school personnel to figure out if a school health recommendation will bring any cost to the school district. Helping the school district raise money for suggested programs and preparing grant requests are some of the ways a SHAC can offset costs.

Collaboration with District and State Agencies

SHACs work with school district and state agency personnel in many ways. Sometimes they work together to recommend health programs, locate health services, create food service programs, share federal and state funds, and make policy.

Liaise with District School Board

Texas SHACs must give a written report to their school board every year (TEC, Title 2, Chapter 28, §28.004). This report is a way to create a better understanding of SHAC's value and bring SHAC activities recognition from the school board.

Another SHAC link to the school board is through recommendations. It is important that SHACs look over and recommend policies, procedures, strategies and curriculum options with care. Recommendations to the school board are based on (1) an understanding of the community's values, (2) evidence of effectiveness, (3) consideration of the fiscal impact to the district and (4) the school-community's needs.

Evaluation, Accountability and Quality Control

SHACs may take part in many evaluation, accountability and quality control projects.

- ❖ *Evaluation Projects:* If the district wants to teach new health education lessons, the SHAC can bring together groups of parents, teachers, students and principals for input.
- ❖ *Accountability Projects:* If the district has decided to increase healthy eating and physical activity during the school day, the SHAC can review the wellness policy and suggest opportunities to promote healthy eating and physical activity.
- ❖ *Quality Control Projects:* If the district has an influx of funding dedicated to school health, the SHAC can review the budget and make recommendations to help make sure the money is wisely spent.



Starting or Reviving a School Health Advisory Council

There are a few important action steps to take when starting or reviving a SHAC.

Read and review. The district may have policies and procedures for advisory councils or groups similar to the SHAC. In addition to reviewing district policies and procedures, reading and understanding current Texas laws about SHACs is important.

Get together. Community, school and parent involvement is important for a successful SHAC. It is best to find people the community finds trustworthy.

Build awareness and support. Write a short proposal on the need to establish a SHAC. Think about including some of the broader roles of the SHAC that go beyond the minimum requirements of Texas law. Make sure that the proposal always complements the district's needs.

Establish relationships. Gain administrative and school board support of the school district for the SHAC. This is a key step to setting the foundation for a successful working relationship.

Qualities of School Health Advisory Council Members

One of the most desired qualities SHAC members should have is the commitment for quality school health programs. Other qualities of SHAC members should include:

Demonstrated Interest in Youth

People who show an interest in youth are good nominees for SHAC membership. Consider checking with local church youth groups, human services agencies, civic clubs, parent teacher associations, or youth-related business projects to find members.

Awareness of the Community

An effective SHAC must have members who are aware of their community. People who have lived in the community a long time are more familiar with the local culture, politics, geography and economic aspects. This knowledge makes them important to decision making and may help the SHAC achieve its goals more easily. On the other hand, a new person in the community may bring different experiences and a fresh viewpoint. More importantly, the key to building community awareness within SHAC is to select people that are active and truly reflect the diversity of the community.

Professional Ability

SHAC members should have a commitment for quality school health programs. They should be able to work within the group to offer suggestions, give insight and conduct themselves appropriately within the bylaws and the procedures put out by the SHAC.

Commitment of Time

Being a SHAC member requires commitment of time. Always talk about the amount of time needed with the person you are trying to recruit to make sure he or she has the time for the SHAC. Occasionally, this rule can be adjusted because the person may add to the SHAC's credibility or have specific expertise that will help the SHAC.

Diverse Representation

A diverse, multi-sector SHAC membership can enrich the level of discussion, which can bring forth better decision-making (Goldman & Peters, 2010) and acceptance of the proposed activities. Age, sex, race, ethnicity, income, geography, culture, career type, or religion define parts of the community. Also, think about searching for members in the key parts of the community (i.e., schools, churches, businesses, media and government). Finding would-be members from various groups will ensure that the SHAC serves the entire community.



Credibility of Individual Members

Choosing members with a wide range of characteristics is recommended to enhance the SHAC's credibility. Some characteristics to consider include honesty, trustworthiness, dependability, commitment and ethical behavior.

Sources of SHAC Members (as stated in TEC, Title I, Chapter 28, §28.004)

- Parents of students in the district who are not employed by the district (majority of the members-required by law)
- District Students
- Public School Teachers
- Public School Administrators
- Health Care Professionals
- Business Community Members
- Law Enforcement Personnel
- Senior Citizens
- Clergy Members
- Nonprofit Health Organizations
- Local Domestic Violence Programs

Other Sources of SHAC Members

- Media (e.g., local newspapers, local radio/TV stations and local print media)
- Social Service Agencies
- Public Health Agencies
- Hospitals and Clinics
- Civic and Service Organizations
- Colleges and Universities
- Youth Groups
- Professional Societies
- Housing Authorities
- Before and After School Organizations
- Other Faith Community Leaders

School Health Advisory Council Members

In Texas, the school board of a district is required to appoint at least five members of the SHAC (TEC, Title 2, Chapter 28, §28.004). The law also requires that a parent member serve as the chair or co-chair of the SHAC. Primarily, there are three methods for selecting SHAC members: appointment, election, or volunteer. SHACs may use only one method or mix and match the methods.

Appointment

Most Texas SHACs consist of individuals appointed by school board members to represent them in making recommendations on school health programs.

Election

Voters, school board members, or school administrators elect members to some SHACs. Election membership selection is not common in Texas.

Volunteers

Some SHACs consist of people who volunteer to serve on the SHAC.

Most Texas SHACs use the appointment method along with one of the other methods. The most successful SHACs take time to plan and implement a recruitment process. These SHACs use a small group to find and select people that (1) have the desired qualities of membership, (2) come from various parts of the community and (3) reflect the diversity of the community.

The following are common considerations:

- Set membership categories and the overall SHAC size early in the process and write them in the bylaws. SHACs typically have ten to twenty members.
- Assign a diverse group of three to five individuals to find and pick potential members for each membership category.
- Assign new members staggered term lengths of 1, 2, or 3 years to maintain a balance of new and tenured members. This ensures the SHAC will have stability and consistency in its operations.
- Explain the SHAC purpose, setup, membership rules and time commitment to likely members before asking them to join.

The superintendent and/or school board should send selection letters to new members. It should also include the SHAC's name, the membership period, the name

of the school district contact person and the name of the SHAC chair and/or co-chair. Finally, the letter should inform the person about the next steps (e.g., the date, time and place of the first SHAC meeting). **See Tools for a sample letter.**

School Health Advisory Council Bylaws

During early planning, it is important to lay out how a SHAC will operate. Thought must be given to how the SHAC will be formed and how it will work. Setting the foundation early will give members clear ways to move forward and keep an identity that best fits the SHAC.

Bylaws

According to *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (RONR)*, bylaws are the rules a group makes that controls its setup and how it works. Bylaws reduce confusion among members because they spell out how to carry out the business of the SHAC. They should be reviewed annually, and all members should know about them.

At minimum, SHAC bylaws should include:

- The formal name of the SHAC, which usually contains the school district's name (e.g., Liverpool ISD School Health Advisory Council).
- A purpose statement that expresses the advisory spirit of the SHAC and includes the definition of school health.
- The legal purpose as written in state law (TEC, Title 2, Chapter 28, §28.004) and in district policy to help the SHAC keep its focus.

Membership

Write bylaws defining the composition of the SHAC. Spell out membership criteria, number of members, selection method, membership period, attendance rules and voting rights. Also, address member termination, resignation, and how to fill an incomplete term. Describe the role of ex-officio (non-voting) members in this section too. Most SHACs assign a school board member this designation and state they do not have voting rights.

Officers

Describe the duties of officers, their titles and their term of office. Also, detail how officers come into office, their removal and what happens when they resign. In Texas, the chair and/or co-chair must be a parent of a student enrolled in the school district

and cannot be an employee of the school district (TEC, Title 2, Chapter 28, §28.004). Generally, officers also include a secretary, past chair, chair-elect and co-chair elect.

Meetings

In this section, the frequency of meetings should be stated. Keep in mind that Texas SHACs are required to meet at least four times each year (TEC, Title 2, Chapter 28, §28.004). State who can call a special meeting and how to call the meeting. Also, give ways for setting the agenda, notification of meetings, and sharing the agenda and minutes.



It is important to note that Texas open meetings laws do not apply to local SHACs because they serve an advisory role and not a decision-making or fiscal role. In addition, they do not meet the Texas definition of a governmental body (Texas Government Code, Title 5, Chapter 551, §551.001) that binds groups to open meeting laws.

Regardless, it is always a good idea to post minutes and agendas on the district's website. Doing so allows for public feedback and offers an "open door" to the SHAC.

Reporting

As mentioned previously, Texas SHACs are required by law (TEC, Title 2, Chapter 28, §28.004) to submit to their school board, at least annually, a written report that includes:

- Any SHAC recommendation concerning the school district's health education curriculum and instruction or related matters that the SHAC has not previously submitted to the school board;
- Any suggested modification to a SHAC recommendation previously submitted to the school board;
- A detailed explanation of the SHAC's activities during the period between the date of the current report and the date of the last written report; and
- Any recommendations made by the physical activity and fitness planning subcommittee.

Committees

Many SHACs appoint committees to carry out specific actions. In the bylaws, be sure to give the names of all permanent committees and short descriptions of their purpose and membership requirements. Also, describe the process for forming special committees.

Parliamentary Authority

Parliamentary authority contains the rules for running SHAC meetings, conducting business, and resolving operating issues. Adopting parliamentary authority (e.g., Ranking of Rules of Order) into bylaws is the simplest and easiest way to give binding rules of order to a SHAC.

Be sure the statement of adoption defines any rules that override the parliamentary authority. “Ranking Rules of Order” is the official name. For example, if RONR is the parliamentary authority; it is binding only to the extent that it is not in conflict with the SHAC bylaws and Texas law. The Ranking Rules of Order would be Texas law, SHAC bylaws, and then RONR.

Amendments

In this section, indicate the procedures to amend the bylaws. If using RONR, previous notice and two-thirds vote is required to amend bylaws (Robert, Evans, Honemann, & Balch, 2004). After amending a bylaw, date and give copies to all members and appropriate school personnel.

Voting Procedures

A voting procedure determines how members cast their vote on issues. In this section, describe the voting process and the quorum required at regular meetings. In most cases, when majority of the members attend there will be a quorum. Some SHACs require that a quorum must be present, and a majority vote is required to adopt a motion.

Communication

The communication section of the bylaws should clearly state the reporting procedures with people inside and outside of the SHAC. Consider including who needs to receive reports from the SHAC. Then specify the required process to develop and deliver them. State how the community will stay informed about SHAC activities.

Strategic Planning Process

SHACs and other groups often use the strategic planning process to decide what they want to do and how to do it. Vision, Mission, Objectives, Strategies, and Action Plans (VMOSA) is the process that most groups use for strategic planning (Kansas, 2013). Once the VMOSA process is complete, a SHAC will be able to focus its energy and ensure that members are working toward the same goals. The strategic plan also will help the SHAC assess and adjust direction in response to the changing environment.

The following is a brief overview of what is included in the VMOSA process:

Vision (The dream)

Some SHACs have written statements about their school district's philosophy as it relates to the principles of the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child model (WSCC) in ideal conditions. By developing a vision statement, a SHAC makes clear its collective view on what school health means to the school community. It also offers the SHAC a framework to use when making policy recommendations. SHAC members can ask themselves: Does this new policy, practice or program fit into our philosophy of school health?

Writing a vision statement can be a challenge. The following are qualities that most SHAC vision statements have in common:

- *Clarity:* The community and the SHAC can easily understand.
- *Shareable:* The community and the SHAC freely share the vision.
- *Broad:* The vision is broad enough to include a variety of local views.
- *Inspiring:* The vision inspires everyone involved in the school community and the SHAC.
- *Brevity:* The vision is easy to communicate; for example, one sentence.

An example of a vision statement that meets the qualities mentioned above is: "The Liverpool ISD SHAC envisions health and education for all children."

Mission (The what and the why)

The mission statement describes what the SHAC is going to do and why the SHAC is going to do it. The mission statement should provide the ideal outcome of the SHAC's efforts in coordinating school health. In addition, it should align with the mission of the school district and be more action-oriented than the vision statement.

An example of a mission statement as described above is:

“The mission of the Liverpool ISD SHAC is to build a healthy school community through a WSCC approach that ensures all children will graduate with the knowledge and skills to maintain a healthy lifestyle.”

Objectives (How much of what will be accomplished by when)

Objectives provide a practical way for SHACs to describe carrying out the mission. The best objectives share common qualities. These qualities are “S.M.A.R.T +C” (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time bound, plus Challenging). See **Creating “SMART +C” Objectives** later in this guide.

- **Specific:** How much of what is to be achieved, by when and for whom?
- **Measurable:** Is the information concerning the objective quantifiable?
- **Achievable:** Can the SHAC do it in the proposed time frame with the resources and support available?
- **Relevant:** Will this objective affect the SHAC’s desired vision and mission?
- **Time bound:** When will this objective be complete?
- **+Challenging:** Does this objective stretch the SHAC to set its aims on significant improvements that are important to the school community?

An example of an objective that meets the characteristics described above is: “By September 1, 20--, a Texas Education Agency (TEA) approved coordinated school health program will be utilized by 100% of the schools in the district.”

Strategies (The how)

The strategies developed by a SHAC describe how it will reach its objectives. Well written strategies focus the SHAC’s efforts and outline how things will be done. The following are criteria the best strategies possess:

- *Give overall direction* by providing a path to achieve the objective.
- *Align resources and opportunities* by taking advantage of available resources, assets and current opportunities.
- *Minimize resistance and barriers* by attracting supporters and deterring opponents.
- *Reach those affected* by linking to the targeted school population.
- *Advance the mission* by making a difference on the SHAC’s mission and objectives.

Action Plans (The specifics)

The action plan provides specifics to how a SHAC will use its strategies to accomplish its objectives. In other words, it provides the details to the SHAC's work. Action plans state what will be done: by whom, by when, at what cost and who should know the outcome. The following are criteria that good action plans possess:

Evidence of commitment from the school administration and school board. Is there buy-in and participation of leadership in the action plan?

Comprehensive in identifying all the action steps or changes sought by the SHAC.

Concrete when it comes to identifying who will do what and by when.

Reflective of current work, considering newly emerging opportunities and barriers.

View an example of a work plan at:

https://www.dshs.texas.gov/schoolhealth/tshac/files/2012-2013_Work_Plan_Final.xls

Effective School Health Advisory Council Meetings

Texas law requires SHACs to meet four times each year (TEC, Title 2, Chapter 28, §28.004). Effective meeting management is essential for the SHAC to get work done during this time. The meeting chair or co-chair should think about the following things for well-organized and focused meetings:

Regular Meeting Schedule

There should be a yearly calendar of dates, times and locations for meetings. It is helpful to have a consistent meeting date for members and others to save each date. For example, the Texas School Health Advisory Committee's (TSHAC) regular meetings occur on Mondays at 10:00 a.m. in the planned month.

Agenda

Think about creating the agenda with other SHAC members. Two weeks before the meeting, send a draft agenda to members asking for more agenda topics. Set a due date for all suggestions at least one week before the meeting. This ensures enough time to include the suggestions in the final agenda. Then, one week before the meeting, send a final agenda along with the minutes of the last meeting. Members should be able to understand the agenda with ease. For every agenda item, clearly list the type of needed action, the expected output and the time estimates. **See Tools for a template agenda.**

This is also the time to consider inviting people who are not a part of the SHAC to the meeting. It is important to be purposeful with meeting invitations. Consider individuals who:

- Have knowledge that can contribute to completing the SHAC's meeting objectives;
- Have the responsibility for implementing the decisions made at the SHAC meeting or
- Represent a group affected by the decisions made at the SHAC meeting.

Email and Phone Communication

Two days prior to the meeting, email and/or call members as a reminder. Start an email list and phone tree to quickly communicate and give procedures for dealing with bad weather. Make sure to designate a main phone number for members to call for information.

Refreshments and Childcare

More people attend meetings when there are refreshments and childcare. Offering both makes the SHAC more inviting to everyone. Light snacks and drinks get people to mingle and feel more comfortable at the meeting. However, most school districts do not have funding for refreshments and/or childcare. SHACs usually find another source to provide these things. Be sure to remind SHAC members if they have been asked to provide refreshments and/or childcare at the beginning of the year. Also, be sure to include on the agenda if refreshments and/or childcare are available.

Resources

At the meeting, be sure to have adequate copies of the agenda, minutes, supplies and other information for each member. It is helpful to have flip-charts, markers and sticky notes available.

Punctuality

Meetings should start and end on time. Waiting for latecomers before starting a meeting or allowing discussion to drift past a specific time promotes continuation of these behaviors. The SHAC may need to set a new meeting time if people arrive late or do not attend.

Environment and Atmosphere

Hold the SHAC meeting in a comfortable room with seating that allows members to easily see and hear each other. Semi-circular or U-shaped seating arrangements work well to encourage collaboration (Fulton-Calkins & Stulz, 2009). The SHAC chair and/or co-chair should always warmly greet members as they arrive and introduce them to one another. They should take time to involve all members in discussions and acknowledge them for their contributions. It is also important that the SHAC chair and/or co-chair periodically summarize the discussion for the group to ensure everyone is on the same page.

Follow-up

Before moving onto a new topic in a meeting, be sure to assign a SHAC member tasks that need follow-up or finishing. At the end of the meeting, the SHAC chair and/or co-chair should review the items for follow-up. Also, save enough time to set agenda topics for the next meeting.

School Health Advisory Council Self-Assessment

It is important for a SHAC to periodically assess how well it works. SHAC members should ask themselves if the SHAC is doing its job. Is it meeting its objectives? If the SHAC is meeting its objectives, then to what level will they be complete by the target date?

The SHAC should use the results of the self-assessment to identify recommended actions it should take to make itself better.

See appendix for a tool created by the Texas School Health Advisory Committee to help SHACs do a self-assessment².

Writing School Health Advisory Council Success Stories

What is a Success Story? Why Do School Health Advisory Councils Need Success Stories?

Success stories are simple descriptions of the progress, lessons learned or triumphs of the SHAC. They help the SHAC raise its profile and credibility by showcasing its value and impact. The key to getting support from district decision makers and the school community is through promotion of the SHAC's work. In addition, success stories are important because they also provide a way to share 'best practices' with other SHACs (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2008).

Success Story Formats for School Health Advisory Councils

- Elevator Story – This is a 10-second (or less) story told in a moment of opportunity. For example, use this type of format when there is a chance meeting with a superintendent or a school board member. It should grab his/her attention and briefly highlight the SHAC's most recent shining accomplishment.
- One Pager – This is the most common format for a success story. It is easy to create when the right information is available. One-pagers are most successful when they are short and to the point. They allow the reader to connect to the story and include how the reader can make contact.

Common Characteristics of the Success Stories

Success stories:

- Describe outcomes that have value to district decision-makers and the community.
- Contain gripping and noteworthy facts that grab the reader's attention.
- Relay who benefits from the success.
- Answer the question, "So what?"
- Get across the SHAC's role in achieving the outcome.
- Are easy to read and convey.

See Tools for a Creating a SHAC Success Story.

Conclusion

Although SHACs are similar in their general purpose and functioning, no two SHACs are alike. People from all walks of life make up SHACs. This is perhaps the most important element of a SHAC. It is diversity that guarantees SHAC recommendations reflect the



individual needs and values of the community. However, unless community members get involved, SHACs do not work. It is essential that every concerned citizen and agency remember its obligation to their SHAC, their school district, and most importantly, to their community's children.

Appendix

SHAC Self-Assessment

Organization of the SHAC	Yes	Partially/ Maybe	No	Comments/ Notes
Does SHAC membership represent key segments of the community? Are ethnic and economic groups adequately represented?				
Are SHAC member roles and responsibilities clearly defined?				
Have members received sufficient orientation?				
Are members willing to devote the necessary time?				
Do SHAC members understand the availability of resources for the SHAC?				
Is the structure of the SHAC clearly defined (for example, leadership roles and responsibilities, subcommittees, etc.)?				
Is an elected chairperson providing positive and productive leadership?				
Are procedures established and utilized for conducting business?				
Have bylaws been established?				
Are regular meetings occurring? Is the SHAC meeting at least four times per year? Are 50 to 75 percent of members attending?				

Does the SHAC have knowledge of the techniques for managing controversy and how to utilize them?				
Goals and Activities	Yes	Partially/ Maybe	No	Comments/ Notes
Did the SHAC write a Vision Statement? A Mission Statement?				
Has the SHAC conducted an assessment with the district staff? Were needs identified? Were goals set based on those needs?				
Do SHAC plans and activities focus on the goals and objectives set by the SHAC? Have completion dates been set?				
Are efforts made to reach goals and objectives by the targeted completion dates?				
Does the SHAC implement activities to support coordinated school health programming?				
Does the SHAC address all ten components of a coordinated school health model?				
Do SHAC members understand the results and value SHAC activities bring to the community?				
Are regular reports made to the district staff or school board? Was the state-required annual report made to the board?				
The SHAC's Role	Yes	Partially/ Maybe	No	Comments/ Notes
Does the school board and school administration recognize and support the SHAC's role in improving/promoting school				

health? For example, do district personnel or board members seek advice from the SHAC and act on SHAC recommendations?				
Do schools and the community recognize the SHAC as a valuable asset in promoting the health of students and school personnel?				
Does the SHAC and its members receive recognition for their contributions in school publications, news releases or other communication channels?				
Communication Do SHAC members have an awareness of:	Yes	Partially/ Maybe	No	Comments/ Notes
The role of the school district liaison?				
The status of school health programs in the schools in their district?				
The school board's and school administration's knowledge about and support of school health?				
The values and attitudes of the school/community including special interest groups?				
The processes available for community and student input on school health issues and SHAC activities, as well as, processes for communication to the community from the SHAC?				
The current local and state legislative mandates and historical perspectives?				
State and national developments in school health?				

Tools

The following is a set of sample tools designed to carry out necessary actions. The Texas Department of State Health Services encourages local SHACs to adapt these tools as needed.

1. Texas Legislation: School Health Advisory Councils
2. Creating SMART +C Objectives
3. Sample SHAC Meeting Agenda
4. Sample Letter of Invitation
5. Sample Thank You Letter for Joining a SHAC
6. Creating a SHAC Success Story
7. Worksheets

Worksheet 1: Community Partners to Invite

Worksheet 2: Creating a Vision for Your Community and Schools

Worksheet 3: Our Vision of the Future

Worksheet 4: What's needed for change to occur?

Worksheet 5: A Process for Change

Worksheet 6: The Wellness Policy Process

Texas Legislation: School Health Advisory Council

Year and Session	Bill Number and Description
1995, 74th Legislative Session	Senate Bill 1 Amended Chapter 28 of the Texas Education Code (TEC) by adding §28.004 Human Sexuality Instruction Established local health education advisory councils.
2001, 77th Legislative Session	Senate Bill 19 Amended the heading of §28.004 of the TEC to read, “Local School Health Education Advisory Council and Health Education Instruction.” Requires a school district to consider the recommendations of the local school health education advisory council before changing the district’s health education curriculum/instruction. Set forth recommendations which are included in the duties of the local school health education advisory council. Requires local board of trustees to appoint members to the local school health education advisory council. Also, allows local board to appoint one or more persons from certain groups, including teachers and law enforcement. Requires a majority of the members to be parents of students enrolled in the district.

Year and Session	Bill Number and Description
2005, 79th Legislative Session	
2007, 80th Legislative Session	Senate Bill 530 Amended §28.004 (k) of the TEC to require a school district to publish certain statements in the student handbook and on the district’s Internet website, including a statement related to parental access to their child’s physical fitness results. Requires the local SHAC to consider and make recommendations to the district concerning the importance of daily recess for elementary school students.

Year and Session	Bill Number and Description
2009, 81st Legislative Session	Senate Bill 283 Amended §28.004 of the TEC by establishing that five members of the SHAC will be appointed by the board of trustees. Requires a parent member to serve as a chair or co-chair of the SHAC. Requires SHACs to meet four times each year. Requires the SHAC to submit an annual written report to the board of trustees.
2011, 82nd Legislative Session	Senate Bill 736 Amended §28.004 of the TEC to include local domestic violence programs among the groups from which a school district's board of trustees is authorized to appoint one or more persons to service on the district's local SHAC.
2013, 83rd Legislative Session	Senate Bill 1018 Amended §28.004 (k) of the TEC to require a school district to publish certain statements in the student handbook and on the district's Internet website, including a statement related to parental access to their child's physical fitness results. Requires each district's local SHAC to establish a physical activity and fitness planning subcommittee to consider issues relating to student physical activity and fitness and to make policy recommendations to increase physical activity and improve fitness among students.

Year and Session	Bill Number and Description
2013, 83rd Legislative Session	Senate Bill 460 Amended §28.004 of the TEC to expand the duties of each school district’s local SHAC to include recommending grade level-appropriate policies, procedures, and strategies, as well as curriculum, designed to prevent cardiovascular diseases and Type 2 diabetes and expands the scope of such measures to include prevention of mental disorders.
2017, 85th Legislative Session	

Year and Session	Bill Number and Description
2019, 86th Legislative Session	Senate Bill 435 Amended §28.004 of the TEC to expand the duties of each school district's local SHAC to include recommending grade-level appropriate education regarding opioid addiction and abuse, and methods of administering an opioid antagonist, as defined by §483.101, Health and Safety Code.

Creating SMART +C Objectives³

Objectives describe how much of what will be accomplished by when. The best objectives share common characteristics that include SMART +C (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, **T**ime Bound, plus **C**hallenging) principles.

Specific — *How much of what is to be achieved by when and for whom?*

The “specific” part of an objective tells us what will change for whom in concrete terms. In other words, it answers six basic questions:

Who: Who is involved? (Required)

What: What needs to be accomplished? (Required)

Where: Identify a location.

When: Establish a time frame. (Required)

Which: Identify requirements and constraints.

Why: Specific reasons, purpose or benefits of accomplishing the goal.

Verbs to **use** in objectives: provide, train, publish, increase, decrease, schedule or purchase.

Verbs to **avoid** in objectives: coordinate, partner, support, facilitate and enhance.

Measurable — *Is it quantifiable and can the SHAC measure it?*

Measurable implies the ability to count an activity or its results. Establish concrete criteria for measuring progress towards completion of each objective. Make sure to identify the source and mechanism for collecting measurement data and take in consideration whether the collection of these data is feasible for your SHAC and/or partners.

Achievable — *Can the SHAC do it in the proposed time frame with the resources and support it has available?*

The objective must be possible with the available resources, be practical and within the SHAC’s control and influence. Make sure that every objective represents an opportunity for ample progress.

Relevant — *Will this objective influence the desired mission and vision of the SHAC?*

To be relevant, an objective must represent a goal the SHAC is willing and able to accomplish. It should align with what the SHAC is trying to achieve.

Time bound — *When will this objective be accomplished?*

A specified and reasonable time frame should be incorporated into the objective statement. Identifying a time frame for an objective elevates the sense of importance.

Examples of phrases to indicate time frame: “By December 2025, the SHAC will...” or “Within 6 months of receiving the grant, ...”

+ Challenging — *Does this objective stretch the SHAC to set its aims on significant improvements?*

Objectives need to be challenging, but realistic for a SHAC to transform. Setting a challenging goal (that is achievable) is much easier to reach than a simple one. Because a simple goal exerts low motivational force, it is safe and keeps the SHAC stagnant. On the other hand, remember that too much challenge and not enough support will create stress and burnout. So, aim high, but make sure that the SHAC has the resources to achieve the objective.

Example SMART +C Objective

“By March 3, 2020, the Texas School Health Advisory Committee will develop recommendations about diet sodas in schools for the Texas Department of Agriculture. The goal is to assist in implementing Texas public school policy regulations to create a healthy school environment.”

SMART +C Objective Template

Specific Measurable Attainable Relevant Time-Based + Challenging

To develop SMART +C objectives, use the template below and fill in the blanks:

By _____ / _____ / _____, _____

[WHO/WHAT—Specific] [WHEN—Time bound]

from _____ to _____

[MEASURE (number, rate, percentage of change and baseline)—Measurable]

Insert Your District Logo
Here

Sample SHAC Meeting Agenda

<Insert the Name of Your School Health Advisory Council>

Insert the Date of the Meeting

Insert the Time

Insert the Location

Meeting Agenda

Time	Agenda Topic	Topic Lead
	Welcome and Opening Remarks A. Call to order B. Welcome and introductions of members and guests C. Approval of agenda D. Approval of minutes from the last meeting Expected outcome: Informational and approval of the last meeting minutes	Insert Name of SHAC Chair
	Agenda Item #1 Provide a short description (1-2 sentences) of the agenda item. Expected outcome: E.g., Informational and feedback	Insert Name of Person Leading Agenda Item
	Agenda Item #2 Provide a short description (1-2 sentences) of the agenda item. Expected outcome: E.g., Informational and feedback	Insert Name of Person Leading Agenda Item
	Next Meeting A. Set next meeting date B. Call for agenda topics for the next meeting Expected outcome: Determine agenda topics for the next meeting	Insert Name of SHAC Chair
	Adjourn	Insert Name of SHAC Chair

Sample Letter of Invitation⁴

Date

Recipient Name

Job Title

Agency/Organization

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Dear **<Insert Name>**:

Children and youth who begin each day as healthy individuals can learn more effectively and are more likely to complete their formal education. Responsibility for the physical, emotional, social, mental and intellectual health of our youth belongs to their families and the entire community. Effective coordinated school health programs can contribute to helping young people avoid health risks by increasing their skills to make responsible choices about behaviors that can affect their health.

The **<insert name of school district>** is establishing an advisory council to advise the school board. It will assist the district in ensuring that local community values are reflected in the district's health education plan. The advisory council will advise and support the school's efforts to assess their needs. It also will design programs to help children develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need to become healthy, productive citizens.

As someone interested in the welfare of our children, you are invited to join the district's advisory council. The advisory council will include parents, students, teachers, school administrators, voluntary organizations, business representatives, health professionals and other interested, concerned citizens.

We hope that you can attend an organizational meeting on **<insert day>** at **<insert time>** at **<insert location>** to consider ways for addressing the health needs of our community's youth. **<Insert SHAC Chair Name>** will call you next week to discuss participation and answer any questions you may have. If you wish to speak to someone before that time, please call **<insert phone number>**.

We look forward to working with you to promote better health among our district's students.

Sincerely,

Name

Title

Name of SHAC

Sample Thank You Letter for Joining the SHAC⁵

Date

Recipient Name

Job Title

Agency/Organization

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Dear **<Insert Name>**:

Thank you for accepting the invitation to be a member of the School Health Advisory Council. This will be an exciting opportunity to improve the overall health of our children and our community. I am sure the team that has been assembled will meet the challenge.

Our first meeting has been scheduled for **< insert date, time, and place>**. Snacks and daycare will be provided, and it should not last more than **<insert time length>**. At the meeting, the council will discuss **<insert objective for the next meeting>** and how to best involve the community. The council will also be setting the schedule for future meetings. Please bring your calendar to schedule these. I look forward to seeing you at the meeting. If you have additional questions, please contact me at **<insert phone number>** at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Name

Title

Name of SHAC

Creating a SHAC Success Story

Gathering and organizing the most important facts is essential when creating a SHAC success story. The questions below will help shape the specific story you want to create about your SHAC. It is organized by the major sections of a one-pager success story.

The last page provides a sample layout and example of a fictional SHAC success story. If you get stuck while you're writing and thinking about any of the specific sections below, you can refer to the sample story as a helpful inspiration. Also, feel free to use the sample layout as the format for your SHAC's success story.

Title

The title tells the audience what the story will be about. It captures the overall message of the story and should capture the audience's attention.

1. What is your story about?
2. What are the most important facts in your story? For example, did the SHAC reach an audience in the district that is hard to reach? Or, does the SHAC's strategy have a new and innovative way to address a school health issue?
3. Try to combine #1 and #2 answers above into one sentence. Make sure the most important fact of your story is as close to the beginning of the sentence as possible.
4. Now, look at your response in #3. Can you shorten the sentence but still have enough detail that the audience knows what the story is about? Please write the new sentence here:

Finally, is there an interesting way to say the sentence in #4 that will grab an audience's attention? Write as many options as you can imagine. When you write your story, you may use one of these as your title.

School Health Issue

This section is about the school health issue that is being addressed and why it's important. Be sure to use data to frame the issue, consider including health burden and financial cost to the district.

1. What is the school health issue within your district which the SHAC's plan of action is designed to change?
2. How does the school health issue affect your district negatively?

3. What might happen if the school health issue is not addressed? How might it affect your district in the short-term? The long-term?
4. Were there any barriers encountered during development or implementation of the SHAC's plan of action? What were they and how did the SHAC overcome them?

Solution

This section tells what is being done to address the school health issue. Describe which partners collaborated with the SHAC and the specific funding source (if any) that was used to address the specific school health issue or target population.

1. How does the SHAC's plan of action address the school health issue?
2. What is innovative about how the SHAC is addressing the school health issue? Include this information in the final success story, so please write it here.
3. How did the SHAC come up with a solution to address the school health issue?
4. What partners collaborated with the SHAC in addressing the school health issue?
5. Was the solution funded? If so, what are the funding sources? List the funding sources here. SHAC Success Story Example

Title: Student Voice Provides Health and Wellness Support for District SHAC

The School Health Issue: A unique partnership has emerged between the North East ISD (NEISD) School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) in San Antonio and the district's students. The district SHAC realized that student voices were missing in identifying and recommending health and wellness issues directly impacting the students themselves.

The Solution: The SHAC wanted to give students an opportunity to make a difference by lending their unique perspectives to district decision makers. Students were first surveyed to get their feedback on developing a student advisory board. The interest in the project was overwhelming. As a result, the SHAC created the Kids School Health Advisory Council or KSHAC. Students were identified for the KSHAC through applications to the Mayor's Fitness Council Student Ambassador Program. Because of the cultivated partnership with the Mayor's Council, the SHAC acquired the applications to select students who demonstrated a passion for health and wellness.

The KSHAC's purpose is to provide feedback to the district SHAC on appropriate student population health and wellness issues. They will also plan and implement district-wide wellness initiatives with the help and guidance of the district SHAC.

Another objective of the KSHAC is to build student leadership skills through team-building trainings and leadership experiences.

KSHAC is comprised of middle school and high school students. To gain a broad view of the issues that need to be addressed, students from each area of the district were selected. A minimum of 25 percent of the secondary campuses are represented to include at least one representative from each high school cluster. The goal is to have KSHAC members at each NEISD campus. The KSHAC developed their own bylaws, elected officers, set goals and created projects for the group.

KSHAC members attend SHAC meetings to provide feedback on health and wellness issues within the district. KSHAC recommendations are developed and presented to the SHAC only after receiving 100 percent agreement of the KSHAC members. Recommendations that emerged through the SHACs' work with the School Health Index were presented to the KSHAC for feedback. This feedback will be used to develop recommendations to the Executive Staff and Board of Trustees.

Northeast ISD won an Award for Excellence in Texas School Health grant from the Texas Health Institute in 2021. They plan to use the money to fund leadership trainings, motivational speakers and any training materials needed.

The SHAC will conduct a pre and post survey with the KSHAC to measure their impact on the SHAC on a scale of 1 to 5. The program will be deemed successful if a score above 3 on the post survey is achieved by the end of the school year.

The KSHAC will continue to be a powerful voice for the student population each year. The SHAC aims to use student recommendations to create a healthier environment and lifestyle for all NEISD students.

Worksheets

On the following pages, you will find a series of helpful worksheets. Each of these worksheets have been taken from a more extensive guide to SHACs. It has been specifically designed to assist either the chair of a SHAC or other school personnel responsible for providing support.

Worksheet 1: Community Partners to Invite

A helpful tool to:

- Use in identifying prospective members for a local SHAC
- Ensure that you have balanced representation

Worksheets 2 and 3: Creating a Vision for Your Community and Schools and Our Vision for the Future

A helpful tool to:

- Assist you in thinking through your values related to school health
- Use in creating a collective philosophy or vision for your SHAC

Worksheet 4 and 5: What's Needed for Change? And a Process for Change

A helpful tool to:

- Consider the components required for change to occur
- Think through the steps for facilitating change

Worksheet 6: The Wellness Policy Process

A helpful tool to:

- Illustrate the process of wellness policy development and implementation
- Understand how to provide for continuous quality improvement

Worksheet 1: Community Partners to Invite

Membership on your school health council should be as representative of your community as possible. Involve people with a broad variety of education, experience, opinion, economic level, gender, race, age and ethnic background. Who are the key players in your community and school?

Community Members: Name, Affiliation	Invited	Accepted	Attended
Attorneys:			
Business and Industry Leaders:			
Civic, Service, and Professional Organization:			
Clergy:			
Clients and Customers of Community Services:			
Community Leaders:			
Community Government Officials:			
Healthcare Providers: Clinical Dental Dietician Emergency Services Medical Services Hospitals Mental Health			
Human Service Agencies: Public Health Drug and Alcohol Treatment Child Protective Services			

Community Members: Name, Affiliation	Invited	Accepted	Attended
Juvenile Justice System: Judge Probation Officers Police or Sherriff			
Non-Profit Service Organizations:			
Parents:			
Parent Teacher Organization:			
Media:			
School Personnel:			

Worksheet 2: Creating a Vision for Your Community and Schools⁶

1. What three things do you like best about our schools?
2. If you could change one thing about our schools, what would it be?
3. What worries you most about your children (or the children of our community) and their lives now?
4. What is one wish that you have for your children (or the children of our community)?
5. What could the schools do to make this community a better place to live?
6. What could our community do to make this a better place to live?
7. What could families do to make this community a better place to live?
8. What could this SHAC do to make this community a better place to live?

Worksheet 3: Our Vision of the Future⁷

Task I: Write three sentences that express your aspirations (hopes) for the children, youth and families living in our community.

1. Sample text
2. Sample text
3. Sample text

Task II: Write four sentences that describe the role of schools, families, our community and this SHAC in helping children and youth grow up healthy, safe and happy.

1. Sample text
2. Sample text
3. Sample text

Worksheet 4: What's needed for change to occur?⁸

Vision	Skills	Incentives	Resources	Action Plan	= Change
---------------	---------------	-------------------	------------------	--------------------	-----------------

What happens when critical pieces are missing?

Vision Missing	Skills	Incentives	Resources	Action Plan	Confusion
Vision	Skills Missing	Incentives	Resources	Action Plan	Anxiety
Vision	Skills	Incentives Missing	Resources	Action Plan	Slow Change
Vision	Skills	Incentives	Resources Missing	Action Plan	Frustration
Vision	Skills	Incentives	Resources	Action Plan Missing	False Starts

Worksheet 5: A Process for Change⁹

Step 1: Get together

- Commit to work together on school health
- Involve the right people
- Hold the first meeting
- Decide to act *Reflect and celebrate*

Step 2: Create a vision

- Develop a base of common knowledge
- About school health
- Define a shared vision *Reflect and celebrate*

Step 3: Develop a plan

- Identify priorities
- Design an action plan *Reflect and celebrate*

Step 4: Take action

- Implement plan
- Celebrate achievements
- Recognize contributions
- Evaluate progress *Reflect and celebrate*

Step 5: Review commitment

- Build community reputation
- Deepen commitment to vision
- Recruit new members and develop new leaders
- Adapt and expand action plan

Repeat the process beginning with Step 1: Get together.

Worksheet 6: The Wellness Policy Process

Successful creation of a local wellness policy consists of eight steps. This graphic will be helpful in outlining the process for developing, implementing, and evaluating wellness policies. By following this process, you can provide continuous quality improvement to your school's efforts in having a positive impact on students and staff health and well-being.

The *2004 Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act* makes it mandatory for all local school districts participating in the Federal School Meal Programs to create a local wellness policy by July 2006. Because of this law, school districts in most cases have adopted a wellness policy.

However, a local SHAC should:

1. Obtain and review the policy
2. Determine if there are gaps
3. Determine if administrative guidelines to ensure implementation have been developed



Make an effort to commend the school district for its policy's strengths and help develop recommendations for addressing additional needs and gaps. Policies should be broad in scope. Details regarding implementation and evaluation are most often addressed in administrative guidelines. Action for Healthy Kids has developed an excellent online wellness policy tool to help develop policies. It can be found at: actionforhealthykids.org.

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About the DSHS School Health Program

The Department of State Health Services (DSHS) School Health Program provides leadership, support, and guidance to Texas school districts on comprehensive school health and health services utilizing the Whole School, Whole Community and Whole Child school health model. The School Health Program utilizes the following strategies:

- Serves as the central source for resources and tools in support of school health evidence-based programs, practices, policies and guidelines;
- Maintains linkages between DSHS and school districts as it relates to health promotion, school health services, and chronic disease prevention;
- Engages in collaborative efforts with internal and external partners and stakeholders; and
- Disseminates timely school health-related information and data.

Our Initiatives

- *Resource development* - Develops and publishes resources to assist school personnel, develop rules and publications to address legislative and public health priorities such as rules related to epinephrine and asthma medication, develop Guidelines for the Care of Students with Food Allergies At-Risk for Anaphylaxis, and disseminates timely school health-related information and data through various forms of communication.
- *Grant and Awards Projects* - Coordinates the School-Based Health Center (SBHC) grant project and administers the Awards for Excellence in Texas School Health project.
- *Trainings* - Provides training, technical assistance and information to the school personnel about school health services and school nursing practice.
- *Facilitates and supports the Texas School Health Advisory Council (TSHAC)*
- *Facilitates and supports the Stock Epinephrine Advisory Committee*
- *Facilitates and supports the Food Allergy Ad Hoc Committee*

Contact Information

School Health Program

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