

Maine Coordinated School Health Program

“When policy makers use a Coordinated School Health approach in decision-making, and place prevention and early intervention as primary strategies to improve health and education of Maine children and youth. . .

THEN

the local school community can more effectively address the physical, social and emotional developmental needs of their children as learners, increase assets in the lives of children and address the health and education gap created by poverty. . .

SO THAT

all children and youth have equal access to a quality school program, succeed in school and improve academic performance, reduce common threats to their health and increase aspirations.¹”

The Coordinating School Health Programs (CSHP) initiative is a joint collaboration between the Maine Department of Education and the Maine Department of Health and Human Services. Across Maine, a number of districts work within a ‘coordinated school health program’, which is an effective system designed to connect health with education. This coordinated approach to school health improves students' health and their capacity to learn through the support of families, communities and schools working together through prevention and intervention.

A Coordinated School Health Program can . . .

- reduce absenteeism and classroom behavior problems
- improve classroom performance
- better prepare students to be productive members of their communities

THE EIGHT COMPONENTS OF MAINE COORDINATED SCHOOL HEALTH PROGRAM

- **School Climate:** A school atmosphere supported by programs and policies that nurture positive behavior, assure safety and promote a feeling of belonging and respect for all students, staff, and families.
- **School Counseling, Physical & Behavioral Health Services:** Physical health and behavioral health services, including substance abuse services that meet the needs of all students.
- **Comprehensive School Health Education:** Kindergarten through high school health education curriculum that is sequential, developmentally appropriate and includes instruction and assessment.

¹ Maine Dept. of Education & Maine Dept. of Health and Human Services. (n.d.). *Coordinated School Health Program*. Website.

- **Physical Environment:** Safe and aesthetic physical structure, school grounds and transportation.
- **Health Promotion & Wellness:** Work-site health promotion programs that encourage and support staff in pursuing healthy behaviors and lifestyles.
- **Physical Education & Physical Activity:** Physical education classes that promote physical fitness, motor skills, social and personal interaction and life-long physical activity.
- **Youth, Parent, Family, Community Involvement:** Participation of these groups in policy and program development and integration of community providers with schools.
- **School Nutrition and Food Services:** A before, during, and after school nutrition environment that promotes and provides balanced and nutritious meals and snacks in the cafeteria, classroom, and at school events.

The CSHP approach intends that programs or initiatives, such as bullying, drug and alcohol awareness, and sexual violence prevention, are addressed across all “components” of health, so that they are addressed in a comprehensive manner that is integrated into all spheres of a student’s educational experience. On the next page, you’ll find the “A Coordinated School Health Approach to Promoting Healthy Sexuality,” a model for integrating this topic into all eight health components.

Opportunities for Collaboration:

Coordinated school health programs (and school health coordinators) exist in every county in Maine. Coordinators can be great allies in planning how to integrate sexual violence prevention programming across a variety of sectors, including non-traditional programs within the school community. Educators are encouraged to develop their own version of the “Coordinated School Health Approach to Promoting...” for sexual violence, as a means of brainstorming new programming and promoting programming within coordinated school health districts.

More information about the Coordinated School Health Program, as well as a map of programs and coordinators, is available at www.mainecshp.com.