

CDC Guidelines for School Health Programs

COMPONENT #1 – Develop and reinforce policies of no-tobacco use for students and employees in all school related activities. *ZERO tolerance for tobacco use!*

Tobacco free environments are critical in achieving physical, mental, and social health goals for students, staff, the school and the district. Policies not only deter use of tobacco by individuals they protect ALL students, staff and visitors to the school by reducing exposure to secondhand smoke.

Clearly stated policies, applied fairly and consistently and supported by program activities, can help students decide to not start using or to quit using tobacco products. Most effective in reducing tobacco use among students are policies that:

- Prohibit ALL tobacco use on ALL school property, including buildings, grounds, vehicles at ALL school events and ALL school sponsored events by students, employees, and visitors.
- Change norms regarding tobacco use.
- Provide positive adult role models for students.
- Offer positive reinforcements for following no-tobacco use policies, rather than only punishment for violations. All school districts should consider an in-house detention program that includes a tobacco education element.
- A definition of relevant terms (“tobacco” vs. “smoking”, school property, etc.)
- Prohibit tobacco advertising on or in school buildings, at school functions and in school publications.
- Prohibit all items of clothing, backpacks, etc., with tobacco logos.
- Provisions for communicating policies to students, all school staff, parents or families, visitors, vendors or contractors, and the community.
- Provisions for implementation, and timely review and updating of policies and procedures.
- Participation of students, parents, school staff and school board members in the development, implementation and updating of policies on a regular basis.

COMPONENT #2 – Establish and strengthen linkages to tobacco prevention activities in the community.

Linking school activities and plans for tobacco prevention with the community reinforces the goal of creating a comprehensive approach and local norms supportive of tobacco free environments. Local community and coalitions are linking with schools as part of their program plans. Schools must also reach out and link with the community. Only by working together in this way can we reinforce curriculum, support people who want to quit, give young people meaningful roles in tobacco control and advocacy and helps all people by reducing secondhand smoke.

Schools should identify all their partners in tobacco prevention, in the school and in the community at large, in the application. Specific agencies or groups may have particular roles or relationships with the school tobacco program and should be identified.

COMPONENT #3 – Implement effective tobacco prevention curriculum in Grades 3-9.

The planned curriculum is ONE element in a comprehensive approach to tobacco prevention. A planned approach of tobacco education and prevention builds knowledge and skill for youth to resist pressure to use tobacco, to quit if they are already using, and to value and maintain a tobacco free environment in the school and community. In and of itself, curriculum is not likely to bring about and sustain effective change in tobacco use behavior, but as a part of a total comprehensive program, curriculum can be a powerful tool. Research is clear that delaying the initiation of tobacco use is a highly successful predictor of reduced use or abstinence from tobacco products. A major component of tobacco prevention curriculum should be to avert regular tobacco use by students.

Some applicants may include peer leaders at high school and/or middle school as part of an instructional *strategy (Future Career and Community Leaders of American, Future Farmers of American)* Students in these programs must receive adequate training to ensure accurate presentation skills so these programs require additional time and effort to initiate and maintain. *Collaboration between the school and organizations such as 4-H and Drug Free Youth Organizations who are already conducting peer education programs is essential.*

Curriculum for tobacco prevention and education should be built on proven principles of effectiveness and have shown success to date in reducing student use of tobacco. The curriculum should provide instruction about the short and long term negative effects of tobacco use, social influences, peer norms and refusal skills. The two curriculum which meet the criteria include:

- Life Skills training
- Towards No Tobacco Use (TNT)

It is also important that tobacco-use prevention programs be implemented as an integral part of comprehensive school health education and be connected with or extended as much as possible into the community.

COMPONENT #4 – Demonstrate commitment to staff training and ongoing professional development, for teachers and other school employees on tobacco prevention and education.

This component area includes training to increase general awareness of tobacco issues as well as training on specific aspects of comprehensive programs (policy development, parent and community involvement). The nature and the extent of the training may vary. Funding may be used for:

- contracting with LifeSkills and Towards No Tobacco curriculum trainers.
- providing LifeSkills or Towards No Tobacco materials and resources.
- paying for release time.
- supporting incentives for staff development.

Curriculum training is only one part of a comprehensive school based program and should not have a disproportionate emphasis in the overall staff development plan for tobacco prevention.

COMPONENT #5 – Involve parents and families of youth in tobacco prevention and education.

Parents, families and other influential adults can play an important role in providing social and environmental support for tobacco education and prevention programs. Schools can harness this influence by involving parents or families in program planning, by soliciting community support for school programs and by developing ways to reinforce what students are learning and hearing in school with the community at large. By involving parents, families and other influential adults in the planning and by their modeling of no-use behavior a healthy example is set and reinforced for youth.

COMPONENT #6 – Support for cessation efforts for students.

Research continues to show a lack of definitive evidence about what works in the area of youth cessation. However, effective practices to help children and adolescents quit using tobacco typically includes self-help, peer support, positive options to school suspension when using tobacco on school property and cessation programs offered on site while students are in school.

Support for demonstrated youth cessation programs reinforces the vital connection between school-based and community programming. Cessation support includes collaboration with local health departments, voluntary agencies, churches, community organizations, local hospital and health care providers and others in the community at large. **Funds may not be used for the start up of a new cessation program. Schools who have demonstrated, effective cessation programs in place may use funds to enhance existing programs.**

COMPONENT #7 – Participate in evaluation activities designed to assess the effectiveness and impact of school based tobacco prevention and education activities and programs.

Schools are encouraged to participate in standard, statewide evaluations such as:

- Youth Tobacco Survey (YTS)
- Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)

Data will be needed from school districts to compile statewide evaluation data. If schools do not participate in standard, statewide surveys, schools will be required to collect this information individually (independently) for state reporting requirements.