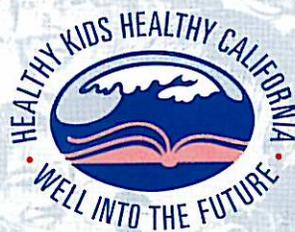


*Toward
Healthy
Schools:
The Future
Is Now*



*California Department of Education
Sacramento, 1992*



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Schools that emphasize children's health often reallocate existing resources to meet the need.

Healthy Schools Are an Achievable Goal

Does the preceding description of a healthy school seem impossibly idealistic? While reading it, did you begin to think, "That sounds nice, but in our district we could never afford all those extras"?

In fact, growing numbers of schools have found ways to implement many or all of the components of a comprehensive school health program. Although special expenditures for staffing and other resources may be required, schools that emphasize children's health often decide to reallocate existing resources in order to meet the need.

Here are some of the elements in healthy schools that make the difference:

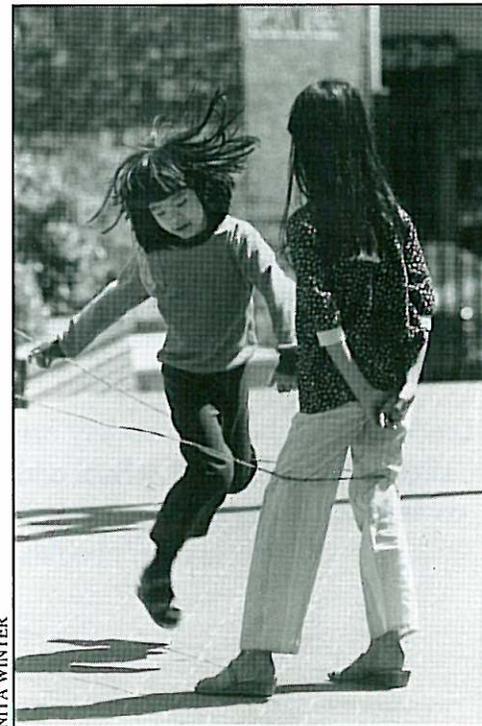
- *A "champion."* At least one person is passionately committed to the idea of a healthy school and willing to carry the ball to make it happen. This person cannot do everything alone, but at least one advocate of children's health who understands what is needed and is willing to go the extra distance to create a healthy school plays a vitally important role in the school.
- *A shared vision.* Many people at the school share the vision of a healthy school, believe in it, and are committed to achieving it. They can tell you what a healthy school should be, and they can show you many different ways in which their school is working toward its goals.
- *Shared responsibility.* The "champions" cannot do it alone. They enlist the support and participation of others, broaden-



ing the responsibility for school health programs as quickly and meaningfully as possible. At the beginning only two or three people may take the lead. Over time the numbers will grow, and the sense of shared responsibility and commitment to health for everyone will evolve.

- *Leadership at all levels.* The school health program offers many different opportunities to be a leader. Leadership isn't restricted just to administrators or a few key people. Family members and community representatives also take leadership roles. At the same time a few program initiators and organizers—teachers, administrators, parents, and students—keep the light of the vision burning brightly.
- *Planning for the long term.* A healthy school doesn't happen overnight. To develop a wide range of programs and strategies that address children's health needs may take five years or more. Therefore, the healthy school has a workable long-range plan with measurable short-term outcomes and benchmarks, including frequent opportunities to celebrate success.
- *Coordination of existing programs and resources.* The initiators and leaders of successful school health programs recognize that many of the resources they need already exist in their schools. What makes the difference in a healthy school is that all the people who can have an impact on children's health—administrators, teachers, physical educators, nurses, counselors, support staff, food services staff, family members, community service providers, law enforcement representatives—take time to sit down together and talk about how they can work cooperatively and collaboratively to make the most of the resources available to them.

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