

A Few Suggestions for Persuading Administrators to Attend to Health and Physical Education Priorities in the Current Educational Climate

- 1. Give Value-Added Meaning to the Phrase “Leave No Child Behind.”**
We owe it to our children to expand the meaning of this buzzword to include leaving no child behind in terms of his or her physical, emotional, and social health as well as his or her abilities to read and write.
- 2. Make Links Between Health, Physical Education and Learning.**
Show how health education and school health programs and services support academic achievement, personal/social development, and life success.
- 3. Remind School Leaders of the Pendulum Swings in Education.** Encourage balance in curriculum and instructional practice. Test scores in reading and math are not the only, or even most important, measure of school success. Administrators know this, but appreciate hearing others acknowledge it.
- 4. Redouble Efforts to Get Health Promotion/Prevention Messages to Parents.** The Leave No Child Behind legislation places a heavy emphasis on parent involvement. Involve parents in dialogue about their greatest hopes, fears and wishes for their children. Ask them how school programs can support their children’s health and learning.
- 5. Leverage Hot Topics with a Comprehensive Vision of Health in Mind.** This year it may be terrorism, depression, body piercing, or abstinence. Next year it may be disaster preparedness, smallpox vaccines, or the effects of cell phone use on brain development. Use current health and safety concerns to garner support for a long-term commitment to health education and services.
- 6. Embrace the Reality That Health Matters Are Value-Laden.** Highlight the moral and ethical dimensions of health decision-making and the need for emphasis on this in the curriculum. Promote discussion about what is best, optimal, safest, healthiest, and most life-enhancing, in both the short and long-term.
- 7. Connect Health Data and Action Steps to Your School Action Plan.** Let data drive the discussion about health education and physical education and the need to coordinate health related programs and services in schools. Use local data on alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, teen pregnancy, dropout rates, and national data such as the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, resiliency research, asset development data, or other sources in the local or state action planning process. Emphasize the need to address these issues by implementing strategies that coordinate school health programs and services.
- 8. Face Forward Into the Future and Help Others To Do So.** Utilize tools of environmental scanning, trend analysis, cost projections, change theory, and defining optimal futures to enhance data-driven health and physical education program planning and to underscore the need for a well-coordinated approach to promoting both health and learning.