

Introduction

“If schools do not deal with children’s health by design, they deal with it by default.”

~Marx and Wooley, 1998.

Good health is necessary for effective learning. When students are sick, distracted, or absent due to health or social problems, schools become inefficient and unable to fulfill their missions of academic excellence and student success. Some ways this connection is expressed within a school system or school building is through policy, content of the curriculum, and staff dedicated to meeting the health needs of students. To better understand how schools approach the health issues and needs their students face daily, these School Health (Profiles) fact sheets detail some of the statewide findings on school health programs.

The Profiles is a biennial survey of school principals and lead health educators in secondary schools developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Profiles captures current information on school health policies and activities to illustrate whether or not school buildings are dealing with student health by design. The purpose of Profiles is to assist in monitoring and assessing characteristics and trends in school health education components including:

- Health education
- Physical education and physical activity
- Nutrition and food service
- Tobacco-use prevention
- Asthma management activities
- Violence and suicide prevention
- HIV/AIDS prevention/sexual health
- Infectious disease prevention

Washington State has participated in Profiles since its beginning in 1996.

The School Health Profiles fact sheets represent an initial step in the process of providing districts, schools, and policy makers with information on school health policy and the content of health education. In these pages the reader will find the responses to many of the Profiles survey items. Where the authors thought it might be helpful, other data sources were referenced to provide a context for the information contained in the Profiles survey.

We hope these fact sheets will be utilized to plan and allocate resources, guide professional development offerings, and describe more fully the status of school health programs. Future administrations of Profiles will allow us to evaluate new efforts over time. We are also beginning to link Healthy Youth Survey data and Profiles data to identify correlations between student reported health behaviors, risk and protective factors, and health policies and practices.

More information about Profiles can be found on CDC’s Web site: <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/profiles>.