



EMPOWER SCHOOLS

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Empower Schools - October Update

Here are the updates for this month:

- The Surgeon General's Call to Action "Step It Up" on page 2
- An interesting look into student absences and identifying patterns
- The Resources section on page 2 has updated websites from the CDC and SHAPE America.
- Don't forget to enroll your school in *Let's Move! Active Schools*: <http://www.letsmoveschools.org/>. – a national initiative for ensuring 60 minutes of physical activity a day is the new norm for schools.
- Empower Schools Guidebook and this year's newsletters can be found at: <http://www.azdhs.gov/empower-program/partners.htm>

Contact Matthew.Leversee@azdhs.gov with questions, suggestions or requests.

Tracking School Absences

Schools are in the business of ensuring that they are properly staffed and skilled to be ready to provide the best educational environment for students on a daily basis. Unfortunately, classrooms usually have less than a 100% student attendance rate on any given day for various reasons: appointments, illness, travel, etc. Teachers may even notice that some students tend to miss school more often than others, which can cause them to fall behind other students who regularly attend. Not only is having students attend school important for school reimbursement, but it is vital for making sure students are set on a proper academic path going into the next school year and beyond. Recently, Attendance Works and the Healthy Schools Campaign published a report showing the disparities in school attendance, starting as early as preschool and kindergarten, contributing to long-term achievement gaps and even high school drop-out rates. The website provides the report as well as many other resources and research on the topic of school attendance: <http://www.attendanceworks.org/research/mapping-the-gap/>

Physical Activity / Physical Education and Nutrition Updates

The U.S. Surgeon General just released a report on physical activity, which is the first comprehensive report since 1996. The “Step It Up” Call to Action is to promote walking and walkable communities. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy is quoted as saying, “We know that an average of 22 minutes a day of physical activity - such as brisk walking - can significantly reduce the risk of heart disease and diabetes.” The report also highlights the importance of safe, planned, walkable, and rollable communities to allow people the ability to walk or roll if they choose. The report also highlighted schools as a community that contributes to walkability strategies. Things like walking school buses, reduced traffic flow for drop-off and pick-up, and shared use agreements can all help adults and students “Step It Up.” Check out the Executive Summary of the full report here:

<http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/calls/walking-and-walkable-communities/exec-summary.html>

Fun Fact: The first U.S. Surgeon General’s report was in 1964 on ‘Smoking and Health.’ A year after the report’s release, 24% of smokers reported quitting. <http://www.mdanderson.org/about-us/facts-and-history/surgeon-general-s-50th-anniversary/smokingdecline-infographic-2013.pdf>

Resources

Serving Healthy School Meals - Staff Development and Training Needs:

<http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/reports/2015/08/serving-healthy-school-meals>

Health barriers to learning and the education opportunity gap:

<http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/20/90/12090.pdf>

Two updated websites with new content:

Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE) website:

<http://www.shapeamerica.org/cspap/index.cfm>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - Adolescent and School Health website:

http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/index.htm?s_cid=dash-govd-wslaunch-002

Trainings / Webinars

Action for Healthy Kids (AFHK)

[Wellness Wednesday: Having Fun with Healthy Classroom Parties](#)

Wednesday, October 14, 3:00 P.M. - 3:30 P.M. (CT)

AFHK will share various ideas and resources for parents, teachers, and students to incorporate into any healthy classroom celebration. Examples of successful classroom parties for holidays, birthdays, or for any school celebration will be highlighted.

