

Comprehensive school health is an internationally recognized framework for supporting improvements in students' educational outcomes while addressing school health in a planned, integrated and holistic way. Dr. Kate Storey, a researcher from the University of Alberta, has compiled a list of the essential conditions to successfully implement a comprehensive school health approach. Use this list to build your school's capacity to implement comprehensive school health and create healthy changes for your school community.

Thanks to DASH – Dedicated Action for School Health ([dashbc.ca](http://dashbc.ca)) for this content.

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## ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS FOR TAKING A COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL HEALTH APPROACH

**Core Conditions** are the conditions necessary for a CSH approach to be successfully implemented. **Contextual Conditions** have a great degree of influence on the ability for the core conditions to be obtained.

### THE CORE CONDITIONS

#### STUDENTS AS CHANGE AGENTS



Students are the heart of taking a CSH approach and their voices, leadership, and enthusiasm creates increased engagement. Students serve as change agents through peer-to-peer interactions. In the home environment, students are the drivers of change and help engage family through their buy-in.



#### SCHOOL-SPECIFIC AUTONOMY



When taking a CSH approach, activities need to be customized to meet the needs of the school. They should be flexible, build on the school's strengths and assets, be tailored based on school-specific evidence, and provide a sense of school ownership. Cultural considerations and diverse needs (geographical, historical and sociocultural) should be integrated.

#### DEMONSTRATED ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP



School principals are seen to play an invaluable role throughout the process of taking a CSH approach and are a key stakeholder in facilitating a culture shift within a school community. The key is that principals are actively engaged, rather than merely supporters of school health champions and offering passive buy-in.

#### HIGHER-LEVEL SUPPORT



Leadership and support at district and/or provincial/territorial levels sets the tone in order to prioritize CSH on the school agenda and provides opportunities for resources (time/funding) to be allocated.



## DEDICATED CHAMPION(S) TO ENGAGE SCHOOL COMMUNITY



School health champions are imperative from a leadership perspective and for getting projects up and running and on-going integration of CSH in schools. However, school health champions can sometimes become a barrier as buy-in from all school staff is crucial for sustainability.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT



Establishing strong internal and external relationships and building partnerships with the community play a key role in the success of taking a CSH approach, especially before and during implementation. Community connections (including parents/families) can help strengthen the type of programs schools can offer.

## QUALITY AND USE OF EVIDENCE



Evidence in the form of school-based process and outcome data, individualized school reports, and research findings are essential for planning, refining, and supporting school communities taking a CSH approach.



## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Professional development and training prior to implementation is key for understanding the project and building self-efficacy. Ongoing PD is essential for strengthening knowledge and skills needed to support the success of taking a CSH approach.

## THE CONTEXTUAL CONDITIONS



### TIME



Enough time needs to be dedicated for implementation and success. Allotting time allows for CSH to be viewed as an embedded part of the school's culture.



### PRIOR COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY

Trusting relationships help stakeholders build competency, enthusiasm, and ownership, which can lead to a more natural implementation.



### READINESS & UNDERSTANDING

A clear understanding of CSH and why it's important can support readiness, which creates a willingness for implementation.



### FUNDING AND PROJECT SUPPORT

Sustainable funding and support from CSH project staff greatly contribute to the facilitation of implementation.

### Source:

Storey, K. E., Montemurro, G., Flynn, J., Schwartz, M., Wright, E., Osler, J., Veugelers, P. J., & Roberts, E. (2016). Essential conditions for the implementation of comprehensive school health to achieve changes in school culture and improvements in health behaviours of students. *BMC Public Health*, 16, 1133.

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