



CASE STUDY

DETROIT EDISON PUBLIC SCHOOL ACADEMY, DETROIT, MICHIGAN

STUDENT-LED TEAM

While writing a grant for a school-based clinic, the coordinated school health team at Detroit Edison Public School Academy recognized the need for student leader involvement. To fulfill that need, school nurse Maureen Murphy created a Student Health Advisory Council (SHAC) in 2010.

“Those involved in the SHAC are well-spoken, very serious about the health of our students and they realize that they have a big influence on younger students,” said Murphy. “This group has been so important to the peer buy-in and acceptance of healthier changes.” Darlene Ice, first grade teacher and mother of a fifth grader, agrees. “The SHAC created exciting things within the school. My students want to be just like the older students—my students just light up when the older students come to the classroom with news or to teach them things.”

For the most parts, students at Detroit Edison Public School Academy have embraced the changes with enthusiasm. “The great thing about the SHAC is that they tell you what’s not working,” said Murphy.

The efforts of the SHAC are also reinforced by teachers who have begun a cross-curriculum approach to include health in every subject. As a result of the many health initiatives, Murphy has seen a complete cultural shift toward healthier students. “Staff is trying to get healthier, too!” Murphy added.

“This group changes lives because peers look to each other for answers and the Student Health Advisory Council is role modeling positive healthy behaviors that the students assimilate.”
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CATHERINE SANDERS, A PARENT AND MEMBER OF THE COORDINATED SCHOOL HEALTH TEAM

The SHAC is a group of highly motivated 6th, 7th and 8th graders who volunteer to act as representatives for their fellow students. The SHAC members take their position seriously and consider their opinions to be the voice of the typical student. “The excitement of this group is growing,” said Murphy. “Students constantly want to join and so I have to limit how many can do so.”

The SHAC holds formal meetings during lunch on a weekly basis to discuss which health topics they would like to work on. Meetings are facilitated by the school nurse and the student president of the council; and the council is mentored and monitored by the Coordinated School Health Team.

The SHAC relies on fundraising to support its initiatives and utilizes health and nutrition information and resources from grant programs such as the Fuel Up to Play 60 grant through United Dairy Industry of Michigan and the Building Healthier Communities grant through Blue Cross/Blue Shield.

- Since its inception in 2010, the SHAC helped develop and assist with the following initiatives:
- Taste tests
 - Nutrition counseling
 - Anti-bullying videos
 - Swine flu video
 - School-based health clinic video
 - Fruit salad videos
 - Obstacle courses for younger students
 - Health fairs
 - Presentation at the Green Day Fair
 - Health pep rally
 - Bed bug awareness
 - Health bill debates: Advocacy Health Day at the Lansing State Capital