

TOWARD THE BEST LEARNING IN PLEASANT PLACE: HEALTHIER STUDENT IN HEALTHY SCHOOL

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Abstract

Schools are institutions that lay the foundation of a child's development. They play a key role in developing children into responsible citizens and good human beings. The schools are as a educational organization and Organizational health of the school will be importance. This paper introduces the concept of healthy school, its characteristics, dimensions of health, concept of positive mental health in schools. Also, comprehensive healthy school framework is presented. A healthy school improves pupils' life-choices, achievement and opportunities by health education, drug education, emotional health, healthy eating, physical activity, The results indicate that healthy students are better students and healthier students are better learners. Also, there is positive correlation between health and learning.

Keywords: *Healty, School, Healthy School, Learning*

Introduction

Education from the distant past has played a key role in continuance and survival of human communities. Customs, beliefs, values, attitudes, behaviors, knowledge and skills of community through education and training processes have been Transferable and permanence. Today, school education, especially in advanced societies, is Important because without school education, social progress and development is not possibl (Alagheband, 2013).

The first time we are introduced to formal education is in school. The school years are the grounding years of one's education. Schools are institutions that lay the foundation of a child's development. They play a key role in developing children into responsible citizens and good human beings. It's a school where young talent is recognized and nurtured. Education provides us with knowledge about the world. It paves the way for a good career. It helps build character. It leads to enlightenment. It lays the foundation of a stronger nation (Oak,

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The schools are as a educational organization and Organizational health of the school will be importance. It is clear that schools have an important role in the future of the country and population health. It illuminates the vital importance of improved nutrition and increased physical activity in creating an environment that enriches students' readiness to learn. Schools have an indisputable role in ensuring the healthy environment that learning requires. A wide variety of research continues to demonstrate the positive correlation between health and learning *and* that they are mutually reinforcing. The benefits that can arise from proper nutrition and physical activity are a prerequisite to optimal learning and to avoiding and preventing chronic diseases(ASHA⁴, 2013).

What is a Healthy School?

Schools play a key role in supporting the health and well-being of children and young people. Recent education and health papers, recognise how schools can help children to become happier, healthier, and more ready to learn and achieve their full potential. Healthy Schools enables and supports schools to plan and implement health and well-being improvements for their children and young people. A healthy school promotes physical and emotional health by providing accessible and relevant information and equips pupils and staff with the understanding, skills and attitudes to make informed decisions about their health. Pupils flourish in a positive environment and are given a voice to influence whole-school decisions. A healthy school understands the importance of investing in health to help pupils do their best, raise levels of achievement, improve standards and develop policies and practices to promote health(Hantsweb, 2013).

A healthy school promotes the health and wellbeing of its pupils and staff both by what is taught in the school and through the wider school environment. A healthy school improves pupils' life-choices, achievement and opportunities by providing a comprehensive programme of: Personal, Social and Health Education, drug education, emotional health, healthy eating, physical activity and relationship education all within an emotionally supportive environment that enables pupils to learn(DH⁵, 2004).



Figure1: five outcomes of Every Child for wellbeing in childhood and later on in life

⁴ . American School Health Association

⁵ . Department of Health

Characteristics Of A Healthy School

Hoy and Tarter (1992) summarise the characteristics of a healthy school as follows: A healthy school is a pleasant place. Teachers like the school, the students, and each other. They see the students as diligent in their learning . They see the principal as their ally in the improvement of instruction; the principal is approachable, supportive and considerate, yet establishes high standards of teacher performance. Teachers rely upon the principal to foster a structure in which learning can take place and, at the same time, to be a leader who is sensitive to the social and emotional needs of the group. The principal has influence with organisational superiors and is seen by the teachers as someone who delivers the teaching resources they need. A healthy school has no need for forced cooperation; because committed professionals cooperate naturally and are in basic agreement about the task at hand. According to Hoy and Miskel (1987) an unhealthy school, by way of contrast, is a sad place. The school is an arena for various pressure groups to work out their own agendas . The principal is inactive and ineffective in moving the school towards its goals or in building a sense of community among the teachers. The principal has no influence with superiors, and teachers see themselves on the short end of supplies. They feel they do not have what they need to teach. The teachers do not like one another, or the school, or the students(Pretorius & Villiers, 2009).

They see the students as academically unworthy; in their view they are reluctant, do not work hard, neglect homework, are unco-operative in the class, and are not serious about learning . The unhealthy school cannot adapt to the environment because there is no central leadership. The school is turned into a political arena as it loses institutional integrity. The teachers lose a sense of integration with the school and its mission and see the students as unwilling learners. A strong correlation was found between the openness and health of schools; healthy schools have high trust, high esprit, and low disengagement. Open schools are healthy schools, and healthy schools are open(Pretorius & Villiers. 2009).

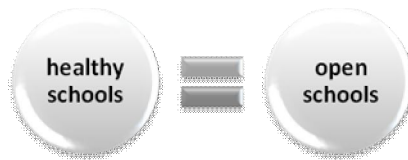


Figure2. Open schools are healthy schools, and healthy schools are

Dimensions Of Health

Healthy school can play important role to provide a healthy lifestyle for students. Healthy School and healthy student are two concepts complementary.

Over 50 years ago, the World Health Organization defined health as being more than freedom from illness, disease, and debilitating conditions. Health is optimal well-being that contributes to quality of life. It is more than freedom from disease and illness, though freedom from disease is important to good health. Optimal health includes high-level mental, social, emotional, spiritual, and physical wellness within the limits of one's heredity and personal abilities.

Health and wellness are multidimensional.

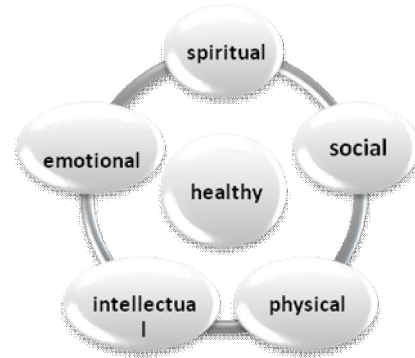


Figure 3. The dimensions of health and wellness.

A person with **emotional health** is free from emotional-mental illnesses or debilitating conditions such as clinical depression and possesses emotional wellness. Emotional wellness is a person's ability to cope with daily circumstances and to deal with personal feelings in a positive, optimistic, and constructive manner. A person with emotional wellness is generally characterized as happy, as opposed to depressed.

A person with **intellectual health** is free from illnesses that invade the brain and other systems that allow learning. A person with intellectual health also possesses intellectual wellness. Intellectual wellness is a person's ability to learn and to use information to enhance the quality of daily living and optimal functioning.

A person with **physical health** is free from illnesses that affect the physiological systems of the body such as the heart, the nervous system, etc. A person with physical health possesses an adequate level of physical fitness and physical wellness. Physical wellness is a person's ability to function effectively in meeting the demands of the day's work and to use free time effectively.

A person with **social health** is free from illnesses or conditions that severely limit functioning in society. Social wellness is a person's ability to successfully interact with others and to establish meaningful relationships that enhance the quality of life for all people involved in the interaction .

spiritual health is considered to be synonymous with spiritual wellness. A person's ability to establish a values system and act on the system of beliefs, as well as to establish and carry out meaningful and constructive lifetime goals. than the individual that helps one contribute to an improved quality of life for all people(WHO⁶, 2010).

Positive Mental Health in Schools

The literature on positive mental health approaches includes a wide array of key concepts that describe the nature and characteristics of promising perspectives and practices for the promotion of psychological wellness among children and youth. These positive mental health themes include: social-emotional learning; positive (strength-focused) youth development; resiliency; protective factors; diversity; acceptance and understanding of

⁶ . World Health Organization

student mental health needs; connectedness; strength-based perspectives; mental fitness; and self-efficacy(JCSH⁷, 2010).

Some potential implications for contributing to mental health are include: empowering children and youth to collaborate with their peers to develop their own solutions for specific problems; suspending judgment and encouraging children and youths to express their thoughts and feelings in classroom and home discussions ; providing opportunities for children and youth to identify and use their strengths in academic work ; encouraging children and youth to be involved in a wide range of activities that include emphasis on their interests and preferences; emphasizing fairness and social inclusion in small group, school-wide and community learning activities; reaching out and involving specific groups of children and youth who do not feel part of the school or community; and focusing on developing positive working relationships with parents and members of the community (HERG⁸, 2007).

According to Stewart, Sun, Patterson, Lemerle and Hardie (2004) the role of the school has been regarded, as an important environment for promoting the mental health of children and youth. Schools provide a critical context for shaping children's self-esteem, self-efficacy and sense of control over their lives. Given that children and youth spend more than six hours daily in school, the educational context provides key opportunities for delivering activities and comprehensive initiatives related to positive mental health (JCSH, 2010).

Comprehensive Healthy School Framework

The Comprehensive Healthy School framework has been recognized internationally as a better practice framework for supporting children and youths' academic development concurrently with addressing school health areas in an intentional, multifaceted and integrative manner. Comprehensive school health: affirms that physically and emotionally healthy children and youth are more likely to reach their academic potential; recognises that the school setting has the potential to contribute positively to students' positive mental health; promotes the belief that healthy lifestyle choices positively impact children's and youths' physical health and emotional well-being; integrates health into all aspects of school and learning; bridges health and education concerns and systems; and requires the support and collaboration of families, community member and services providers (JCSH, 2009). The comprehensive school health framework involves a whole school approach that includes four inter-related pillars that provide the foundation for this model. They include:



- *social and physical environment*
- *teaching and learning*
- *healthy school policy*
- *partnerships and services*

Figure 4: Comprehensive School Health Framework, Joint Consortium for School Health(2009)

⁷ . Joint Consortium For School Health

⁸ . Health And Education Research Group



Social and Physical Environment: the social environment is defined as the quality of the relationships among staff and students in the school, and the emotional well-being of students, as well as the attachments that students have with their families and members of the wider community. Physical environments include the buildings, grounds, play spaces and equipment within and surrounding the school. This pillar of comprehensive school health challenges educators and administrators to attend to all aspects of the learning environment in order to meet the emotional, physical and academic needs of a diverse population of children and youth. three specific theme categories, are organized for this pillar:

- *physical and emotional safety*
- *school and classroom climate*
- *use of physical spaces*

Teaching and Learning: This pillar includes learning activities and curriculum approaches through which children and youth acquire developmentally appropriate knowledge, attitudes and skills that contribute to their social and emotional growth and overall psychological well-being. Each of the approaches outlined underscores the importance of the existence of positive working relationships among students, teachers, educational support staff and school administration. Six specific theme categories, are organized for this pillar:

- *differences and diversity in the classroom;*
- *culturally relevant practices;*
- *cooperative methods;*
- *autonomy-supportive practices;*
- *strength-focused applications; and*
- *social skill development.*

Partnerships and Services

This pillar underscores the importance of building strong relationships between the school, students' families and members of the wider community. In addition, this foundation component also includes the formation of partnerships among district and school educational authorities, departmental services, non-government agencies and other community stakeholders. The approaches outlined in this pillar emphasize the importance of implementing collaborative and integrative efforts for positive mental health promotion. four specific theme categories, are organized for this pillar:

sustained family contact and communication

adult-student mentorship programs

partnerships with family and youth-serving agencies

school and community-wide mobilization activities

Healthy School Policies

Healthy school policies include leadership practices and decision-making processes, as well as guidelines, rules and procedures that affect how programs, services and relationships are negotiated in school and community settings. Effective leadership and enabling policies are critical for supporting the application of positive mental health practices at all system levels. The key perspectives and practices outlined in this area include:

effective leadership

policies that promote safe and caring environments

policies for inclusion

discipline policies that restore and reconnect policies for

professional development and training

student services policies that provide timely support

shared policies that ensure system collaboration

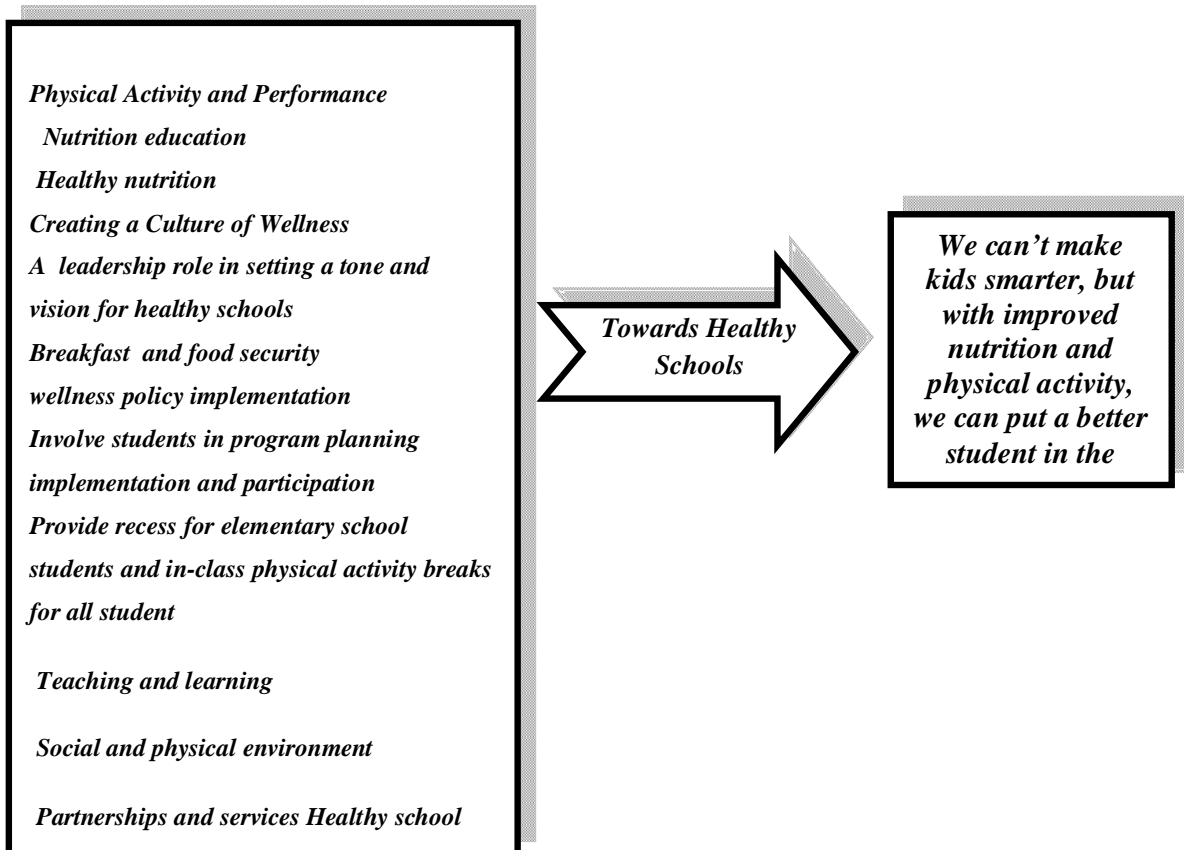
Results and Discussion

Healthier students are better learners. If children can't see well, if their eyes do not integrate properly with their brain and motor systems, they will have difficulty acquiring the basic and essential academic skills associated with reading, writing, spelling and mathematics. If their ability to concentrate, use memory, and make decisions is impeded by ill-nourishment or sedentary lifestyle, if they are distracted by negative feelings, it will be more difficult for them to learn and succeed in school.

If their relationships at school with peers and teachers are negative, they will be less likely to be connected with and engaged in school, and therefore less motivated and able to learn. If they cannot focus attention and succeed socially, it is unlikely that they will succeed academically. Even if health factors had no effect on educational outcomes, they clearly influence the quality of life for youth and their ability to contribute and live productively in a democratic society. These are worthy goals for elementary and secondary education. Indeed, pursuing these goals is a moral imperative (Basch, 2010). A wide variety of research has demonstrated the positive correlation between health and learning, and that those two things are mutually reinforcing. Healthy students are better students. The benefits that can arise from proper nutrition and physical activity are a prerequisite to optimal learning and to avoiding and preventing chronic diseases. Neuroscience illuminates the effects of nutrition and physical activity on learning. The brain is malleable when responding to biological and

environmental factors, which proves an important attribute for learning. Research indicates the quality of foods children eat impacts cognition with poor nutrition linked with absenteeism, hunger symptoms and psychosocial problems. Serving school breakfast especially through alternative options such as breakfast in the classroom; is possibly the easiest, most cost-effective and most directly helpful step schools can take to improve school and student wellness. There is a positive correlation between amount of time spent being physically active and academic performance. Students who were more active during school and on weekends performed better on standardized tests for reading, math and spelling (ASHA, 2013).

Between all the steps for creating healthy school, healthier students, higher-achieving and a culture of wellness in schools; implementing school breakfast is perhaps the simplest and most cost-effective, with very possibly the most direct impact. These benefits would be possible in healthy school.



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