

Creating the Wellness Opportunity Workshop Resource Manual: A Model for School Wellness Teams

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Abstract

The Asheville-Buncombe NC School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) is a committee made up of teachers, administrators, parents, students, and other community members. SHAC's mission is to identify concerns, set priorities, make recommendations and report outcomes to local school boards. The SHAC supports wellness teams in each of the 49 schools within Asheville City and Buncombe County Schools and encourages all the wellness teams to adopt the CDC's new Whole School, Whole Child, Whole Community Model as the foundation of their health and wellness programs. In addition, the SHAC hosts the Wellness Opportunity Workshop or W.O.W. for school wellness teams. The purpose of the workshop is to support the wellness teams and provide them with new information and skills on how to foster a culture of wellness within their schools. The goal of this public service project was to create a Wellness Opportunity Workshop resource manual that will help for planning the annual W.O.W. In addition, the project involved evaluation of the workshop itself, in order to make improvements. The manual will be a resource that teachers, administrators, parents, students, and other community organizations can use to improve wellness policies. Through creation of this resource manual I have learned the importance of School Health Advisory Councils and their role in providing support to school wellness teams in order for them to discover the best effective health and wellness practices for their students. This project and SHAC's W.O.W. will help to spark better health outcomes for our students locally and beyond.

Key Words: Wellness Opportunity Workshop, Resource Manual, Wellness, Asheville City Schools, and Buncombe County Schools

Origins of the Project

In 2003, the North Carolina State Board of Education required that all local school systems follow the federal Healthy Active Children Policy (HACP). The policy required that each school district establish a School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) that would help each district to plan, monitor, and implement their district wellness policy. Each School Health Advisory Council involves community and school members, representing the components of a coordinated school health program. The coordinated health program is “designed to address health issues of children. The program must provide for coordinating the eight components: safe environment, physical education, health education, staff wellness, health services, mental and social health, nutrition services, and parental/family involvement” (NC State Board of Education, 2014). Another implication of the HACP is that “schools are increasingly encouraged to provide opportunities for physical activity outside of PE classes” (Hood, et. al., 2014). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and related research indicate that establishing a School Health Advisory Council is an “effective way to achieve an enduring focus on promoting physical activity and healthy eating.” Studies also indicate an “ongoing advisory council responsible for implementation and oversight” increases chances for successful wellness policies (Chriqui & Chaloupka, 2011).

Research conducted by the North Carolina State Board of Education specifies that “schools alone cannot be responsible for the health and well-being of children and youth in their communities, but they play an important role” (Public Schools of NC, 2003). Charles Baasch, a professor of Health and Education at Columbia University, agrees that schools do play an essential role but says that “It is neither reasonable nor realistic to expect that, on their own, schools can close the gaps in education or eliminate health disparities among the nation’s youth... There are essential roles to be played by families communities, health care systems, legislators, media, and by economic policy.” Researchers from a study entitled, *School Wellness Policies: Perceptions, Barriers, and Needs Among School Leaders and Wellness Advocates* found that “schools play a critical role in feeding students, providing opportunities for physical activity, and contributing to lifetime health habits.”

Recently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention partnered with the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development to create the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model, the model is depicted in Figure 1. This model recognizes that schools need collaborations in order to help children reach their ultimate potential. The model encourages “integrating health services and programs more deeply into the day-to-day life of schools and students represents an untapped tool for raising academic achievement” (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, n.d.).



Figure 1: Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model
 Source: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/wsc/>

The Asheville-Buncombe North Carolina School Health Advisory Council (A-B SHAC) has aligned its mission with the requirements from the North Carolina State Board of Education along with the Centers for Disease Control when planning and monitoring of both Asheville City Schools and Buncombe County Schools wellness teams. In order to support the wellness teams, the SHAC meets monthly to discuss what the schools are doing and what they need to improve their current wellness policies and practices. Each year the SHAC plans a symposium for the wellness teams. Hosting events such as a Wellness symposium for the wellness teams is a crucial way of “documenting how many people attended a professional development workshop... [and] can demonstrate progress” (Brener, et. al., 2014). Last year, they held the Wellness Team Symposium at Asheville High School for each of the wellness teams. At each of the symposia A-B SHAC is able

to acquire information from the participants on what to do better at the next annual Wellness Team Symposium. Through use of surveys they acquire information that helps them to plan events such as the Wellness Opportunity Workshop.

In 2013, AB-SHAC created the Wellness Team Symposium survey that was distributed to the wellness teams by each district's wellness director, Debbie Bryant for Buncombe County Schools and Michele Lemell for Asheville City Schools. The results of the survey indicated several activities that the wellness team members wanted for at Wellness Team Symposium. Wellness team members were interested in working with other wellness teams to brainstorm new wellness ideas and initiatives. Respondents wanted to be able to create new strategies to reach their wellness priorities for their schools. The members were also interested in compiling a yearly wellness team meeting agenda in order to create effective wellness teams. Those who responded wanted to have time to voice healthy and productive school changes for teachers and students. Members also wanted to discover how to get parents and others involved with their wellness initiatives. They also wanted to find more ways for community wellness collaboration and exposure to area wellness resources. Wellness team members showed interest in having a forum to collaborate with other wellness teams and individuals after the workshop. Last, wellness team members wanted break-out sessions in order to help wellness teams to increase their wellness knowledge through sessions led by experienced school wellness experts.

A-B SHAC wanted to discover what wellness activities and ideas the wellness teams were already involved in and what challenges the wellness teams were facing in implementing wellness in their schools. A few activities included:

- Rainy Day Activities,
- Active Afternoons (hip hop dancing, and kickboxing),
- and Faculty Hikes.

Some of the challenges included:

- Cupcakes for birthday celebrations,
- Cafeteria,
- and Time.

From the information received the A-B SHAC decided to start planning an event for the wellness teams which would be called the Wellness Opportunity Workshop. My role in the workshop was to create a Wellness Opportunity Workshop resource manual to serve as an evaluation report along with a planning manual for future W.O.W.s.

Methods and Work Undertaken

Pre-W.O.W. Planning

One month before the Wellness Opportunity Workshop, I joined the planning process. The SHAC had already found over ten vendors for the event, three sponsors, and had brainstormed some possible "breakout" sessions upon the request of the wellness team members and school administrators, but there was still a lot of work to be done. I started my involvement by meeting with Meg Hanshaw, a co-Chair of SHAC, in order to get up

to date on the purpose of the workshop, and to discover what needed to be done. Together we decided that I would attend SHAC meetings and I would write up a press release for the event, and help to create the event brochure, be in charge of this year's evaluation survey and create the Wellness Opportunity Workshop resource manual.

I attended the monthly A-B SHAC meeting, which helped me to gain an understanding of all the community members and organizations involved in planning wellness policies for Asheville-City and Buncombe County Schools. Before attending this meeting I created a rough draft of a press release for the event. This was the first time I had created a press release. The A-B SHAC reviewed the press release I created and made a few edits so it would be ready to be sent out. Following the meeting, I contacted several radio stations, and a few newspapers. In the end, the *Asheville Citizen-Times* was the only news outlet that confirmed to share the press release in the community calendar section. Additionally, I helped to create the brochure for the event although Meg Hanshaw ended up having to make a lot of edits to the brochure I created because the formatting changed when I sent her my copy. The final brochure was sent out a few days before the event.

Day of the W.O.W.

At the W.O.W. I engaged with each person by checking in everyone who registered and giving each person an evaluation survey to be filled out at the end of the event. Following check-in each participant had the opportunity to network with community vendors who are interested in promoting students wellness. From networking with all of the vendors, participants were able to fill out a questionnaire to have the chance to win a prize at the end of the symposium. The participants also had the opportunity to hear from many community organizations through attending the keynote speaker presentation along with three separate break-out sessions. The keynote speaker presentation entitled, "How does Trauma Effect health? A Brief Update on the ACE study and its implication to School Wellness and Health," was presented by Kristen S. Smith, the Clinical Director Asheville Region for Family Preservation Services of North Carolina. This presentation focused on the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study which observes "The relationship of health risk behavior and disease in adulthood to the breadth of exposure to childhood emotional, physical or sexual abuse and household dysfunction during childhood" (Felitti, et. al., 1998). The break-out sessions included:

- BCS and ACS 2013-2014 Zone Health Winners-Panel Discussion of Wellness Successes
- Best Practices in Positive Youth Development: Developmental Assets
- Creating Nutrition Initiatives Around Your School's Nutrition Program
- Ideas for Increasing Physical Activity in the Classroom & A Brief Update on Your District Student Wellness Policy
- Youth Empowerment and Successful Youth-Adult Partnerships: Achieve Healthier Outcomes in Your School
- What to do if I am feeling Blue? Supporting Youth Mental Health
- Habits for Personal Health
- Empowering Behavioral Management Techniques- "A Missing Link to a Healthy and Well School"

Unfortunately, many of the vendors left after the vendor time which limited the amount of responses from community members outside of the school setting. Some teachers also had to leave to get back to their classrooms. Since many participants had to leave before the end of the symposium, only 42 of the 100 participants completed a survey for the event, but it is still valuable information that can be used to plan the next year's workshop. In order to receive more feedback I will send the Survey Monkey form out to all who attended and to each school districts wellness coordinator.

Post-W.O.W.

There were almost 100 people that attended the W.O.W., including vendors, teachers, school staff and administrators, and speakers for the break-out sessions. To evaluate the information received from participants I created a Survey Monkey form with all of the questions included from the evaluation form. From this information I began to create the W.O.W. evaluation summary report to include in the resource manual. In the resource manual I will also include all of the W.O.W. planning materials.

A week after the event I met with Meg Hanshaw to discuss the components of what should be included in the resource manual. Together we decided that the purpose of the W.O.W. resource manual would help to plan each annual W.O.W. The SHAC will use this resource manual when they plan for each year's workshop. The manual will serve to help implement a more effective workshop in the future. School administrators, staff, and teachers will have access to this manual in order to draw from important topics that were discussed at the W.O.W.

Wellness Opportunity Workshop Resource Manual

Shortly after the W.O.W. was completed I began compiling the resource manual including the following sections:

1. About School Health Advisory Council

The first section of the W.O.W. resource manual will start by explaining how and why School Health Advisory Councils started being established for local school districts. There will also be an explanation of the Healthy Active Child Policy, which was passed by the North Carolina Board of Education and its requirement of all local school districts to establish School Health Advisory Councils. On the same page I will include information about the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child model. Then I will provide information on the mission and vision of A-B SHAC. Following the information provided about A-B SHAC, I will include the school health policies of both Asheville City Schools and Buncombe County Schools.

2. Asheville-Buncombe North Carolina School Health Advisory Council Progress

In this section I will include the A-B SHAC Annual Report to demonstrate the progress they have made up to the W.O.W. The report will serve as a working document meaning that it will be updated every year. This section will also include information on last year's Wellness Celebration that took place for the wellness team members.

3. About the Wellness Opportunity Workshop (W.O.W.)

This section will talk about the purpose of the W.O.W. and what it means for school wellness teams. It will include:

- Action Plan: W.O.W. 2014
 - Wellness Team Symposium survey data
 - Summary Report of the Wellness Team Symposium survey
 - Vendors
 - Vendor Form
 - Speakers
 - Policy Form for Speakers
 - Participants: Wellness Team Members
 - Pre-W.O.W. Master Checklist
 - Detailed Timeline with dates
 - W.O.W. 2014 Materials
 - Press Release, Save the Date card, Brochure
- Action Plan: W.O.W. 2015
 - W.O.W. survey data
 - Summary Report of the W.O.W. survey data
 - Vendors
 - Updated Vendor Form
 - How to contact vendors
 - List of Vendors from W.O.W. 2014
 - Speakers
 - How to find keynote speaker
 - List of speakers from W.O.W. 2014 to bring back
 - UNCA Policy for Minors on Campus
 - Participants: Wellness Team Members
 - Updated Pre-W.O.W. Master Checklist
 - Inclusion of Key Contact People
 - Media Contacts: *Asheville Citizen-Times*
 - W.O.W. Updated Materials

4. Evaluation

This section will include the W.O.W. evaluation surveys from a Survey Monkey form and a summary of the responses. It will discuss what participants gained from attending the W.O.W.

Ties to Academia

Since I am a Health and Wellness Promotion major, this public service project connected with my academic learning through providing me with real-life experiences to gain an understanding of school wellness. One of the required course for this major is Community Outreach. In this course, each person in the class was assigned to a group along with a local church to help each church develop a health policy for their members. The church I worked with was very eager to gain the knowledge but before working with my group they did not have a health foundation. This experience led me to the understanding that many other local organizations such as churches and schools need guidance when implementing health and wellness policies.

Working with the SHAC has enhanced my understanding of how much support schools need in promoting health and wellness policies to their students. Not only do they have to consider students, teachers, and staff who are unaware of health and wellness policy requirements but also having “adequate funding is the number one barrier to effective school wellness policy, development, and monitoring” (Agron, et. al., 2010). I now understand the role of SHAC in helping to support wellness teams through barriers such as “competing priorities/lack of time... support from students, parents and the community” (Agron, et. al., 2010). The A-B SHAC also demonstrates how important it is for school districts to have a SHAC that is composed of various representatives of the community who care about student health and well-being. It is mandated that each SHAC “shall make available to each school district a coordinated school health model designed to address health issues of children” (NC State Board of Education, 2014). As previously mentioned, A-B SHAC is now encouraging Asheville City and Buncombe County Schools to incorporate the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child model which is the new coordinated school health model and is more comprehensive.

Another required Health and Wellness Promotion course was Health Communications. In this course we learned about writing press releases and read through many examples. The examples I read in class provided me with key knowledge on how to write a press release for an event. Health Communications provided me with the foundation to be able write a successful press release for the W.O.W.

The W.O.W.’s purpose was partially to monitor the progress of the schools and their current health and wellness policies. The workshop reminded me of when I interned with the Buncombe County Department of Health and Human Services. When interning there I gained an understanding of the difficult nature of creating policies. I learned a lot about the Community Health Improvement Project, and I observed the evaluation of this project. This helped me to understand that it can be very difficult to implement policies because there is great need for monitoring, evaluating, and implementing. In order to have a successful project there must be key people who are willing to monitor the progress of the project and to evaluate objectives. In this project, I was able to conduct a hands-on evaluation process to assist the SHAC with getting feedback on the W.O.W.

Challenges Faced and Responses to those Challenges

The initial challenge faced with this project was scheduling. In order to first meet with Meg Hanshaw and the SHAC members I had to change around my work schedule because both of these meetings typically occur on Mondays. Once I met the A-B SHAC members I found that I was pressed for time to finish the brochure for the event, which did not get completed until the day before it was supposed to be sent. Writing the press release was a little challenging because it was the first time I had written a press release. Once the press release was reviewed by the A-B SHAC members there were only a few suggested revisions to be made before it was sent out. Reviewing examples of press releases and reviewing the press release before showing it to the A-B SHAC members helped to reduce errors.

Aside from completing materials for the event, working with my community partner, Meg Hanshaw, could be challenging at times. She also has a busy schedule which caused our meetings to lack focus at times. I responded to this challenge through creating agendas for our meetings so that I could help us to stay on task and get things done on time.

In writing papers in general, I have a continual issue with using passive voice when I write but in order to alleviate this problem I worked with my faculty advisor along with going to the writing center. But through writing the press release and now writing this paper I started to trust my ability to write a good paper.

Aside from issues with the written materials, another challenge that occurred was related to the evaluation surveys because less than half of the people who attended the W.O.W. filled out a survey and this has led to limited results. But I will be sending out a link to the Survey Monkey form two weeks after the event in order to get even more feedback from the participants.

Results

At the time of writing this report, there were only 42 surveys completed. This section contains a summary of the responses thus far. There were 21 questions included on the form designed to evaluate the W.O.W. The purpose of the evaluation form was to find:

- what participants found to be beneficial about the W.O.W.
- whether or not they would use the concepts from W.O.W. in their classrooms and how often
- what they thought of the keynote speaker
- their thoughts on the break-out sessions
- topics to be discussed at future W.O.W.s
- how to improve.

These results have helped to design the resource manual to the specifications of what participants will be looking for the next W.O.W.

The first question discussed how the W.O.W. was beneficial to those who attended. Most participants responded saying the W.O.W. was beneficial “To hear how other schools are using their wellness teams” and another responded saying it was beneficial because “Resources to connect with providing support in wellness teams/activities.” These responses were the most common responses from participants.

The second question asked for participants to list the top two or three new ideas or pertinent information you learned from W.O.W. One person responded saying “1) helping kids with trauma 2)Bringing exercise into the classroom 3) Listening to where Buncombe County is coming from in their policies for nutrition.” Another participant responded saying “The need for youth empowerment and how to engage them in our

partnership. I need and want training in these programs now I know who to contact.” These responses were common among all of the participants.

Question three was “How often will you use this information?” Almost a quarter of participants who responded to this question said they would use the information gained at the W.O.W. everyday and over two thirds said they would use it often. The results to this question are featured in Figure 2.

Q3 How often will you use this information

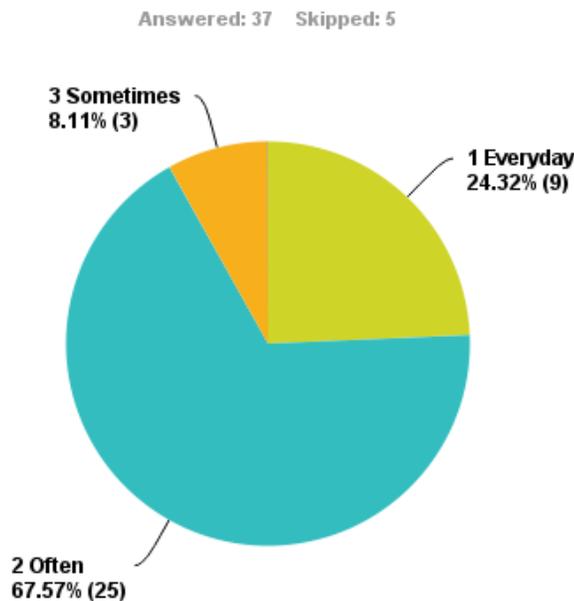


Figure 2: Question 3 Results
Source: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/analyze/>

The fourth question asked for the participants to provide one example of how they plan to use the information you learned from today. One person responded saying “I’m going to share with my wellness committee. Also plan to use some of the connections and info to benefit my PE classes and our school during SMART lunch.” Another person responded saying they will “share brain breaks with other teachers.

The fifth question asked participants to rate the keynote speaker and over a quarter of the respondents rated the keynote speaker at a 10 meaning excellent. A little over a quarter of the participants responded with a 9 rating. Only 13.51% of participants responded with a rating of 8. Almost twenty percent of participants responded giving the keynote speaker a rating of 7. Less than ten percent responded with a rating of 6. Last, less than five percent responded with a rating of 5. The results from this question are depicted in Figure 3.

Q5 Keynote Speaker: How does Trauma Affect Health? A Brief Update on the ACE Study and Its Implication to School Wellness and Health

Answered: 37 Skipped: 5

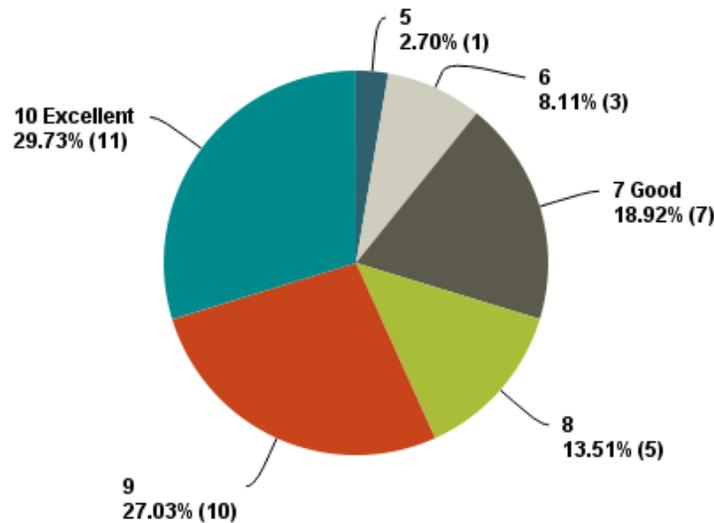


Figure 3: Question 5 Results

Source: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/analyze/>

The sixth question asked participants to comment on what they thought of the presentation. One person commented saying “I learned much. The speaker made things relative and comprehensible” and another person responded saying “All school personnel need this training”. Unfortunately, many people chose to skip this question and these were common answers from those who did respond.

The seventh question was “Would you like more information on this topic?” Over half of those who responded saying that they would like more information on this topic. A little over thirty percent of respondents said “No” they would not like more information on this topic. This question exhibits non-response bias which means it is possible that the results would be different if more participants had answered this question. The results from question seven are depicted in Figure 4.

Q7 Would you like more information on this topic?

Answered: 16 Skipped: 26

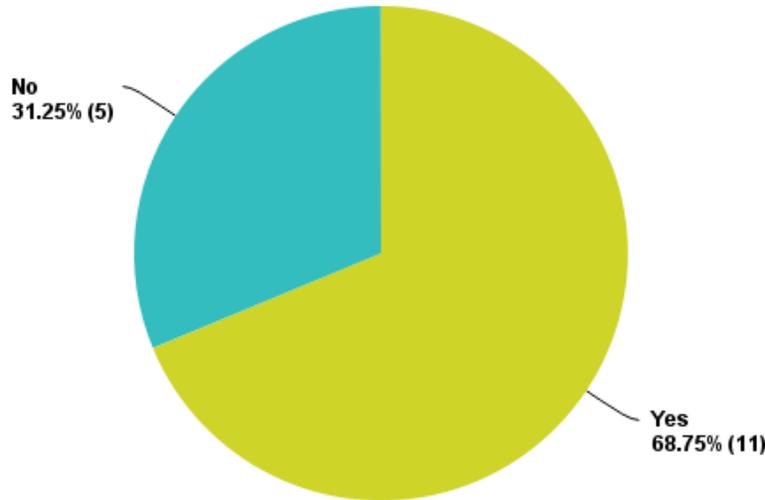


Figure 4: Question 4 Results
Source: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/analyze/>

The next questions after this one vary because participants chose to go to different break-out sessions. But overall the participants enjoyed the break-out sessions they attended although many thought that the break-out sessions should be longer so that the presentations would not be rushed. From participant responses over half of the participants wanted more information on all of the sessions. These results will be included in the W.O.W. resource manual so that SHAC members will know which break-out sessions were most beneficial to those who attended.

The W.O.W. resource manual will serve a dual role as a planning manual and an evaluation report. By referencing the W.O.W. resource manual anyone from the SHAC will know how to plan each annual W.O.W. In terms of serving as an evaluation tool, it will compile all of the surveys from past W.O.W.s and it will include the SHAC annual reports.

For me I have improved in my health communication skills through writing the press release. Through revising this press release with the SHAC I know key elements to look for when writing a press release such as the appropriate wording of phrases and writing in active voice. From creating the resource manual I have gained an understanding of the actual process of creating a manual. It was a long process because it is important to have sufficient time for revision and sharing the material with others to help with the revisions. I am proud to have gained this knowledge because I will be able to use this when working on future community projects.

Sustainability

The creation of the W.O.W. resource contributes to the sustainability of the event on an annual basis because it will be used to plan each annual W.O.W. It will help the SHAC members implement more effective ways of supporting the wellness teams in order to help them create new health action plans for their schools. Based on the results of the survey, wellness teams really enjoyed the W.O.W., which means the SHAC will continue to host the event as long as it is effective. It will help them to save time because all of the planning materials will be included in the manual. Once the follow-up email is sent including the Survey Monkey questionnaire hopefully more people who participated can provide even more feedback to include in the resource manual. In the future, students from the local schools can use this manual to help A-B SHAC develop new wellness activities and ideas. They can use this manual to help with the W.O.W. planning activities so that they can play an active role in what happens at the workshop.

Conclusion

The project was successful in creating a material to aid the A-B SHAC in planning the annual W.O.W.s. It also allows for the A-B SHAC to further provide effective support to the school wellness teams to encourage them to continue to adopt health and wellness policies and programs to promote to their students. I am optimistic that once the A-B SHAC begins planning next year's W.O.W. that this resource manual will save them planning time so that they can focus on providing the schools with even more helpful techniques for fostering a culture of wellness in each school.

This project allowed me to use tools I have learned from courses and from working with other community partners. It truly allowed me to discover the importance of providing support to school districts. I realize from my coursework that schools are a great place to learn healthy lifestyle habits, but they need support from organizations such as a local SHAC, who can provide beneficial materials such as the resource manual. SHACs beyond Asheville-Buncombe counties can use this manual to model their own wellness workshop for their own local school districts.

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