

Friday Beat

January 12, 2024, Edition

The newsletter that takes a [Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child](#) approach. The *Friday Beat* is a free publication of the Texas Department of State Health Services. It is edited and compiled by the [School Health Program](#).

Announcements

School Health Program Website Updates

We at the School Health Program (SHP) hope everyone had a great winter break and a happy new year! SHP website updates are below:

- The School Health Advisory Council Guide for Texas School Districts is now available in [Spanish](#). Both the English and Spanish versions can be found on the [School Health Advisory Councils webpage](#).
- The [Guidelines for Schools Reporting Opioid Antagonists Administration](#) is now published. Additional opioid antagonist resources have been added to the [DSHS Required Reporting Forms webpage](#). These resources include links to prevention toolkits, standing orders, and more.

January is National Radon Action Month

The [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#) recognizes January as National Radon Action Month. A nationwide survey of radon levels in schools estimates that one in five schools have at least one room with short-term radon levels above the recommended action level. [Read more about radon](#) and how to test schools on the EPA website.

Professional Development

Motivational Interviewing Course

[Texas Health and Human Services](#) has updated its Texas Health Steps [Motivational Interviewing course](#). This course provides free continuing education credits and can help providers and other professionals gain communication skills that can be used to motivate children, adolescents, and families to make positive health changes, improve self-care for chronic conditions, and avoid high-risk behaviors.

Staying Safe: School Safety Response Training

The [Texas School Safety Center](#) is offering a new [curriculum](#) developed in partnership with [Safe and Sound Schools](#) and [Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training \(ALERT\)](#). The curriculum includes a variety of age-level and ability-level school safety options learners can use during an active event. Safe and Sound Schools' curriculum and ALERT's Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events (CRASE) will be offered throughout the spring as a six-hour train-the-trainer session for all regional Education Service Centers. To see full details about each training location and register, visit the [Staying Safe training webpage](#).

Funding Opportunities

Reaching for Excellence Grant

[Texas DSHS](#) invites public and charter schools to apply for the [Reaching for Excellence \(RFE\) in Texas School Health Grant](#). Two \$10,000 grants will be awarded for the 2024-2025 school year. The goal of the RFE grant is to fund projects that inspire students to live healthier lives. Projects must focus on at least one key component of the [Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child model](#). A recording of the RFE webinar is now available on the [GoToWebinar website](#). Applications will be accepted until 11:59pm CT on January 22, 2024. Email schoolhealthawards@dshs.texas.gov or call 512-776-7279 for questions.

Oliver Foundation Healthy Choices Grants

The [Oliver Foundation's](#) goal is to encourage children, families, and communities in Texas to improve eating and physical activity patterns. The Oliver Foundation has several Healthy Choices grants available for schools ranging from \$750 to \$5,000. Physical activity and nutrition education components are required for the grants. The grants have rolling deadlines up to April 15, 2024. [Learn about eligibility for the Oliver Foundation's grants and how to apply.](#)

Supporting Community Agriculture and Local Education Systems (Project SCALES)

The [U.S Department of Agriculture](#) and the [Center for School and Community Partnerships at Boise State University](#) are requesting applications for [Supporting Community Agriculture and Local Education Systems \(Project SCALES\)](#) with a goal to support innovation to increase the use of locally sourced foods and beverages in school meals. SCALES will be issuing up to 70 grants to School Food Authorities across the United States. Grants will last for two years and provide up to \$150,000 for each SFA to engage in projects to increase local procurement. Applications are due by January 26, 2024, at 11:59pm ET. More information can be found on the [application webpage](#).

Health Education

Texas Say What! Action Summit Registration

The [Texas School Safety Center](#) is hosting several Say What! Action summits during the spring. Summits utilize service learning to train 6th grade through 12th grade students in effective tobacco prevention activities aimed at reducing the harmful effects of tobacco, nicotine, and e-cigarette use in Texas. Each summit also includes a local community action event which each participant receives community services hours for. [View summit dates and register.](#)

Nutrition Environment and Services

Seeds of Success Toolkit

[KidsGardening](#) has compiled a [Seeds of Success](#) toolkit to support edible school gardens. The toolkit was created from a wealth of knowledge from school gardeners across the country to provide the necessary resources to initiate and sustain a successful school food garden. Topics include planning, designing, funding, safety, and more. Resources include downloadable chapters and recorded webinars.

Health Services

Texas A&M Health Opioid Task Force Resources

The [Texas A&M Health Opioid Task Force](#) aims to improve the health and well-being of all Texans by reducing burdens from the current opioid epidemic through collaborative action across the health sciences. The Task Force created a [webpage](#) highlighting information on opioids, how to identify an overdose, how to obtain rescue kits, and other internal and external resources.

Counseling, Psychological and Social Services

Texas School Mental Health Webinar Series

The Texas Education Agency's [Texas School Mental Health Program](#) is hosting their [2024 Mental and Behavioral Health Webinar Series](#) every second Thursday of each month from January to June at 11:00am – 12:30pm via Zoom webinar. Topics for the webinar series include school mental health, substance abuse prevention, school discipline, early mental health interventions, approaches to whole child student support, and building community partnerships to increase capacity. Register for each webinar on the [series event page](#).

Student Mental Health Action Guide

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) published [Promoting Mental Health and Well-Being in Schools: An Action Guide for School and District Leaders](#). The action guide describes six in-school strategies proven to promote and support student mental health and well-being. Readers will learn specific approaches to put each strategy into action and examples of evidence-based policies, programs, and practices. Use of these strategies and approaches can improve the mental health of students and staff.

Employee Wellness

Prioritizing Well-Being Among School and District Staff, Educators, and Administrators Webinar Series

[Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#) and [Kaiser Permanente Thriving Schools](#) are co-hosting a [four-part, no-cost, learning series that prioritizes staff well-being](#). Topics covered will include relationship building, gratitude systems, operationalizing staff breaks, as well as a bonus session determined by participants. All school and district staff, regardless of position or title, are encouraged to [register](#).

Quote to Note

“Approach the new year with resolve to find the opportunities hidden in each new day.” –Michael Josephson

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