



Friday Beat

February 21, 2025, 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 (DSHS). It is edited and compiled by the [School Health Program](#).

Announcements

Updated Medication for Respiratory Distress Rules

DSHS amended [25 Texas Administrative Code, Part 1, Chapter 40, Subchapter D](#) which allows schools to adopt an unassigned medication for respiratory distress policy. The rule amendments implement changes required by [Senate Bill 294](#), 88th Regular Legislative Session, and became effective February 19, 2025. For more information about the rules and medications for respiratory distress in schools, visit the [DSHS Allergies and Anaphylaxis webpage](#), or contact the DSHS School Health Program at SchoolHealth@dshs.texas.gov or 512-776-7279.

February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month

Teen dating violence is an issue that impacts everyone. Parents, teachers, friends, and communities can help prevent violence and promote safe, healthy relationships. Visit the [Love is Respect webpage](#) for programs, resources, and planning guides for young people, educators, and families.

Vision, Hearing, and Spinal Screening Reporting Period is Now Open

The reporting period for vision, hearing, and spinal screening (VHSS) opened on January 15, 2025. Results must be submitted to DSHS online through the [Child Health Reporting System](#) by June 30 of each year. If you have any questions, please email VHSSProgram@dshs.texas.gov or call the VHSS Customer Service Line at 1-800-252-8023 or 512-776-7420.

School Safety Youth Art Contest

The Texas School Safety Center (TxSSC) announced this year's [Art in Action: Imagining Safe Schools for All](#). The contest invites middle school and high school students to submit original artwork that highlights their perspectives of safety in school. Pictures of the artwork will also be posted on the [School Safety Teen Ambassadors](#) website, and the top entries will be featured as part of an art exhibit at the [2025 Texas School Safety Conference](#) in June. Winners will receive a signed letter and certificate from the director of the TxSSC as well as a foamboard version of their submission that can be displayed at their school. [Download the contest flyer](#) to share with students who may be interested. Submissions are due on May 25, 2024.

Professional Development

Texas School Safety Center (TxSSC) Conference

TxSSC is hosting their [in-person conference](#) June 22-26, 2025, in San Antonio. Conference sessions will dive into current trends, best practices, and innovative, evidence-based approaches to school safety and security. Nationally recognized keynote speakers and relevant breakout sessions based on best practices will equip participants to improve the school safety posture of districts and communities. [Register](#) by June 13.

Funding Opportunities

American Lung Association Program Facilitation Scholarships

The American Lung Association is offering scholarships for school and community professionals to become facilitators in their evidence-based [Open Airways for Schools](#) and [Kickin' Asthma](#) management programs. The Open Airways for Schools (OAS) Facilitator Training prepares school and community professionals to lead the OAS program, teaching children ages 8 to 11 how to detect warning signs of asthma, avoid their triggers, and make decisions about their health. The Kickin' Asthma Facilitator Training prepares school and community professionals to lead the Kickin' Asthma program, teaching children ages 11 to 16 practical self-management skills to reduce asthma symptoms and illness. Scholarships are limited and will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. To express your interest, [submit an interest form](#).

Health Education

Vanquishing Vaping Toolkit

National Association of School Nurses (NASN) has assembled a free [toolkit](#) to support school nurses in implementing evidence-based vaping cessation programs in their schools. Resources include planning for sustainability and building collaborations with key stakeholders to successfully engage their school communities in tackling the topic of vaping head on. Topics include accessing the evidence regarding the risks of e-cigarette use; creating a plan for schools; developing, implementing, and enforcing tobacco-free school policies that include e-cigarettes; prevention and cessation support programs; and communicating with parents and students. There is no cost for this toolkit, but you must sign in to access it.

Nutrition Environment and Services

Basics of Composting

Take Care of Texas published [information](#) on how to properly compost to recycle organic waste generated at home and reduce the amount of waste sent to landfills. Compost can be used to fertilize plants, prevent soil erosion, conserve water, and build healthier soil. Learn more about what composting is, the requirements for composting, what can and can't be composted, and the different types of composting systems. Teachers can share this information in the classroom setting when discussing environmental health or nutrition in their lesson plans.

Health Services

Navigating the Health Care System

Nemours Children's Health developed [Navigating the Health Care System](#), a free, four-unit health literacy curriculum for use with young adults. The curriculum is designed to prepare high school and college-age teens to be responsible for

managing their own health care as they transition into adulthood. Lesson plan materials are suitable for in-class, in-home, after-school, and community settings, and can be taught virtually.

Updated Guidelines for Training School Employees Who Are Not Licensed Health Care Professionals

DSHS and the Texas Diabetes Council published the updated [Guidelines for Training School Employees Who Are Not Licensed Health Care Professionals](#) in January 2025. The [Texas Health and Safety Code, Section 168.004](#) requires school principals to seek and make efforts to designate staff who are not health care professionals to serve as unlicensed diabetes care assistants (UDCAs) when students with diabetes are enrolled in their school.

Counseling, Psychological and Social Services Utilizing Resources from the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to Support School Mental Health

The Texas Education Agency's Safe and Supportive Schools Division and [Project AWARE Texas](#) are hosting a series of [monthly webinars](#) to highlight resources and best practice strategies on timely and relevant safe and supportive school topics. Sessions will cover topics such as supporting school mental health, substance use prevention, school discipline, early mental health interventions, approaches to whole child student support, and building community partnerships to increase capacity. The [next session](#), focusing on Resources from HHSC, will be held on March 13, 2025 from 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Physical Environment

Rabies Awareness & Prevention Poster Contest

The DSHS Zoonosis Control Branch is hosting its annual statewide [Rabies Awareness & Prevention Poster Contest](#) for K-12. Participating students will learn about rabies, the importance of pet vaccinations, and respecting wildlife from a distance. Students will also learn the importance of telling adults if they may have been in contact with an animal that has rabies. There are prizes for winners in each age group. The poster contest can be used as a how-to-guide assignment or as an extra credit project. The deadline for poster submission is April 4, 2025.

Quote to Note

"In order to carry a positive action we must develop here a positive vision." –Dalai Lama

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