

School-Based Health Centers and Academic Success

Poor academic outcomes and high dropout rates are major concerns of educators, policy makers, and parents alike – and poor health severely limits a child’s motivation and ability to learn. Recent research confirms that **health disparities affect educational achievement**.¹ Improving students’ health is integral to education reform.

Why School-Based Health Centers?

School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs)—the convergence of public health, primary care, and mental health—provide an optimal setting to **foster learning readiness and academic achievement** while giving children the resources they need to improve their health.

The Facts:

- High school SBHC users in one 2000 study had a **50% decrease in absenteeism** and **25% decrease in tardiness** two months after receiving school-based mental health and counseling.²
- A study of SBHC users in Seattle found that those who use the clinic for medical purposes had a **significant increase in attendance** over nonusers.³
- A 2007 study found that SBHC users for mental health purposes **increased their Grade Point Averages** over time compared to nonusers.³
- African-American male SBHC users were **three times more likely to stay in school** than their peers who did not use the SBHC.⁴
- Students, teachers, and parents who have a SBHC **rated academic expectations, school engagement, and safety and respect significantly higher** than in schools without a SBHC.⁵
- SBHCs in The Bronx, NY **reduced hospitalization** and increased school attendance among **school children with asthma**.⁶
- A quasi-experimental study in New York observed that students not enrolled in a SBHC lost three times as much seat time as students enrolled in a SBHC.⁷

1. Basch CE. Healthier Students Are Better Learners: A Missing Link in School Reforms to Close the Achievement Gap. 2010.

2. Gall G, Pagano ME, Desmond MS, Perrin JM, Murphy JM. Utility of Psychosocial Screening at a School-Based Health Center. *Journal of School Health*. Sep 2000;70(7):292-298.

3. Walker SC, Kerns SE, Lyon AR, Bruns EJ, Cosgrove TJ. Impact of School-Based Health Center Use on Academic Outcomes. *The Journal of adolescent health : official publication of the Society for Adolescent Medicine*. Mar 2010;46(3):251-257.

4. McCord MT, Klein JD, Foy JM, Fothergill K. School-Based Clinic Use and School Performance. *Journal of Adolescent Health*. 1993;14(2):91-98.

5. Strolin-Goltzman J. The Relationship Between School-Based Health Centers and the Learning Environment. *Journal of School Health*. 2010;80(3):153-159.

6. Webber MP, Carpiello KE, Oruwariye T, Lo Y, Burton WB, Appel DK. Burden of Asthma in Inner-City Elementary Schoolchildren: Do School-Based Health Centers Make a Difference? *Archives of pediatrics & adolescent medicine*. Feb 2003;157(2):125-129.

7. Van Cura M. The Relationship Between School-Based Health Centers, Rates of Early Dismissal from School, and Loss of Seat Time. *J Sch Health*. 2010;80(8):371-377.