

Colorado Healthy Schools Smart Source Frequently Asked Questions

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Smart Source Overview

What is Smart Source and why do we need it?

Smart Source is a school-level measurement tool that assesses health policy and practices across nine content areas: general health policies and practices, nutrition, physical education/activity, health education, health services, counseling/psychological/social services, healthy and safe school environment,

family/community/student involvement, and staff wellness. The purpose of Smart Source is to streamline multiple school health tools in order to reduce the burden on schools, improve the quality of school-level health policy and practice data, and increase the number of schools assessing their health policies and practices. We know that healthy students learn better, and schools are asking for better data to help drive decisions to meet the needs of their students and, in turn, positively affect academic achievement. State-level partners are also interested in identifying gaps in the implementation of best practices related to school health in order to provide resources.

How will Smart Source streamline multiple health policy and practice data collection efforts?

Smart Source will streamline multiple efforts into one system so that all schools are assessing the same best practice strategies that have the greatest impact on health and wellness. There are multiple efforts to collect school health policy and practice data, and many Colorado schools and districts have experienced “data measurement overload.” Other schools and districts do not assess health policies and practices and lack access to a reliable tool to do so. Smart Source has replaced the Healthy School Champions Score Card as the school health assessment tool for Colorado. Additionally, Smart Source is working with other efforts, such as the School Health Profiles out of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), to integrate key items so schools aren’t approached separately to participate in that effort.

How is Smart Source funded?

Smart Source is funded through a five year grant from Kaiser Permanente and is a collaborative effort between the Colorado Education Initiative (CEI), the Colorado Department of Education (CDE), and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE).

What is the timeline for Smart Source?

Year 1 (2013): Conduct a scan of current data collection tools and identify key areas to measure.

Year 2 (2014): Seek stakeholder feedback about tool and process, develop items for Smart Source, and conduct first pilot in schools throughout Colorado.

Year 3 (2015): Analyze initial results, provide reports back to schools, and conduct second pilot in at least 350 schools statewide.

Year 4 (2016): Analyze results, provide improved reports back to schools, pilot district-level tool, and determine process for expanding the number of participating schools.

Year 5 (2017): Launch Smart Source statewide, leverage results to promote and sustain healthy school programming, and evaluate the impact of Smart Source.

Pilot

What is the Smart Source pilot?

CEI conducted the first pilot of the Smart Source tool between October 2014 and January 2015 with 77 total participating schools from rural, urban, and suburban communities across the state, including 40 elementary schools, 32 secondary schools, and 5 schools that have both elementary and secondary grades. CEI staff are currently conducting analyses on Smart Source items and compiling feedback from pilot participants and content experts to inform refinements to the tool and the overall process. The second pilot of the Smart Source tool will take place in the fall of 2015. CEI is requesting participation from the original 77 schools and aiming to increase participation in this second pilot to 350 schools. Schools will be contacted in early fall to secure participation in the second pilot.

What are the benefits to participating in the Smart Source pilot?

The plan is for Smart Source to be “the” school health policy and practice tool by the end of 2017. By participating in the pilot now, schools will:

- Earn the following incentives:
 - \$25 Visa gift card for site coordinator
 - \$300 per school
 - School-level report summarizing Smart Source results
- Receive one-on-one technical assistance and resources
- Inform the fine-tuning of the Smart Source tool and process

How should the Smart Source tool be completed by schools?

The principal of each pilot school will be asked to designate a site coordinator, who will oversee the pilot at their school. He or she will serve as the main Smart Source contact and enter data into the online platform. If the site coordinator does not know the answer to a question, he or she will identify the appropriate staff person who can provide that information. The following positions are examples of staff that can serve as the site coordinator:

- principal
- vice principal
- school health and wellness team/advisory council leader(s)
- physical education teacher
- health education teacher
- food-service manager
- school nurse
- school counselor

Additionally, schools can choose to complete the tool as a team to ensure alignment on responses and to facilitate discussion of school health efforts. The site coordinator will still be responsible for entering data into the online platform.

How much time is involved in being a Smart Source pilot site?

We estimate that a site coordinator will spend between 3 to 10 hours participating in the pilot, including potential follow-up opportunities to provide feedback about the process and to learn about data use.

The process will entail:

1. October – December 2015: Complete the Smart Source instrument.
2. February 2016: Receive reports and register for trainings on how to use data.
3. March – May 2016: Provide input about Smart Source tool and process and attend regional trainings about how to use data.

How will Smart Source differentiate between the health policies and practices that occur at the district level from those that occur at the school level?

All items on the Smart Source tool can be answered by school-level personnel. Our team is currently working to develop a district-level tool that contains health policy and practice questions that are specific to district data collection. Developing content for the district-level tool and the process for data collection is underway. More information about a district pilot will be shared as details are finalized.

How will data for Smart Source be collected?

The Smart Source tool will be administered through Qualtrics, an online survey platform. Each designated site coordinator will receive a link to the online Smart Source tool via email. This online tool will allow site coordinators to stop and restart the tool as necessary. A paper version of the tool will also be available to facilitate completion of the tool by multiple individuals.

How do schools volunteer to be a part of the Smart Source pilot?

Any Colorado public elementary, middle, or high school can be a pilot participant. Schools volunteering to pilot Smart Source must complete the survey between October 1 and December 31 2015. Please contact Andrea Pulskamp at 720.502.4749 or apulskamp@coloradoedinitiative.org to volunteer to participate in the pilot.

Comparison to Other Tools

How are data collected through Smart Source reported back to schools?

Many efforts assessing school health policy and practice do not provide data back to schools, and those that do often do not offer meaningful comparisons or highlight strengths or gaps in school health efforts. Schools that participate in Smart Source will

receive a report that provides actionable data by offering comparisons to the aggregated results from all respondents, as well as recommendations for implementing best practices related to health and wellness. As part of the initial pilot process, Smart Source staff sought feedback from participants about ways to make these reports most useful for schools and incorporated that feedback into the second pilot.

Our school plans to apply for Healthy School Champions Recognition. What is that process now that the Score Card has been replaced by Smart Source?

Completion of the Smart Source tool will serve as the assessment component for the Healthy School Champion Recognition program. In addition to this assessment, Smart Source participants will still need to submit a narrative and letters of support to be considered for a Champions award. More information about applying for recognition will be available in the fall of 2015.

Approvals and Data Sharing

How will data collected from Smart Source be shared?

It is important to note that **no student-level data or personally identifiable information will be collected** during the Smart Source pilot. Data from each school will be kept confidential. Schools that participate in Smart Source will be provided a report that includes comparisons to the aggregated results of all participants. Each school's results will not be shared outside of the school by CEI. It is at the school's discretion whether to share their results with a district wellness coordinator or any third party. Aggregated results from all Smart Source participants will likely be shared more broadly in order to inform where more resources or support are needed to improve school health and wellness at the state level.

Will our school or district be required to use Smart Source?

No, Smart Source is completely voluntary. However, the more schools and districts that commit to one tool, the more consistency in school health data statewide, allowing for more meaningful comparisons. Having statewide support and participation will allow educators, funders, and agencies to all work from the same "play book."

Has the Smart Source tool and methodology undergone a formal third party review?

The 2014 tool and process was reviewed and approved by the CDE's Educational Data Advisory Committee (EDAC). The refined 2015 tool and process will be reviewed by EDAC in September. Notice of EDAC's decision will be shared with potential participants.