

# Spotlight on Success: Frisco Independent School District

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**T**he Frisco Independent School District (Frisco ISD) is a large school district in the suburbs of Dallas, Texas. The district has over 56,000 students of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, serving families speaking 70 different languages, and eleven percent of students are considered economically disadvantaged. Over the last 10 years, Frisco ISD has been one of the fastest growing school districts in the country, typically adding 2,500-3,500 students each year. Amidst this rapid expansion, the mission of Frisco ISD is “To know every student by name and need.” As a part of this mission, the district leadership has adopted a strong focus on the whole child, embracing the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model as a guiding framework at both the district and school level.

While Frisco ISD always has prioritized the health and wellness of students and staff, the district formalized its commitment in 2015 with a new five-

year strategic plan that included an objective related to the whole child, along with strategies and specific expected results and action steps (Figure 1). In a fast-growing district, this step helped to provide needed structure and clarity for whole child associated programs and actions, along with accountability at the school and district level. Around the same time, the district hired a Director of Coordinated School Health to oversee the whole child efforts. In addition, the leadership reconfigured the district-level School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) to ensure that membership reflect the ten components of the WSCC model. Under Texas law, each district must have a SHAC, and the majority of members must be persons who are parents of students enrolled in the district who are not employed by the district. Frisco ISD went beyond the requirements, building a SHAC that includes broad representation from parents, students, staff, community agencies and local businesses. In addition, standing sub-committees were created, grouping components of the model together under four umbrellas: 1) Health Education, Physical Education & Physical Activity, Nutrition Environment & Services, Physical Environment, 2) Family Engagement/Community Involvement, 3) Health Services/Employee Wellness, 4) Counseling & Psychological Services, Social & Emotional Climate. The SHAC meets quarterly (with sub-committees meeting more frequently) and uses the objective and actions outlined in the strategic plan to guide their work and report back to the Assistant Superintendent and Superintendent on progress made.

At the campus level, the whole child programming is overseen by a building-level Whole Child Committee (WCC) in each school, with membership reflecting the components of the WSCC model. The WCC meets once a month and is charged with developing

and implementing health, wellness and safe schools prevention efforts on their campus, and uses an assessment process to identify strengths, gaps and school-level priorities. Each WCC has two subcommittees (Health and Wellness, Safe Schools) and a site coordinator who is usually an assistant principal or counselor. In 2016, all schools completed the Healthy Schools Program assessment from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, and identified a plan to strengthen aspects of the WSCC model on the campus. Members of the each school's WCC include parents, teachers, administrators, counselors and other school staff. At the high school level, students are selected by school staff to be School Ambassadors to the WCC. They work to bring the student voice into efforts to positively change the school climate and address mental health issues, bullying, suicide and drug abuse prevention.

Although only a few years has passed since Frisco ISD began to strategically incorporate the WSCC model into the priorities and strategic planning of the district, significant progress has already been made. First, school leaders note that the district's culture has gradually changed to truly embrace the philosophy behind the whole child approach. Teachers and staff recognize that students who

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## Example from Frisco ISD's Strategic Plan

**Strategic Objective:** Create and maintain an organization that engages, empowers, and enlightens the whole child and the family.

**Strategy -** Develop a comprehensive program to meet the needs of the Whole Child philosophy. (see ASCD model for more information)

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**Specific Result -** Maximize the effectiveness of health and wellness programs for students.

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### ACTION STEPS

- Develop an inventory of all practices occurring across the District regarding student health and wellness.
- Evaluate the inventory to determine the best practices for student health and wellness already occurring across the District.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive plan for student health and wellness based on a systematic analysis of present practices.
  - › Research and recommend options not currently used based on identified needs of campuses and the district.
  - › Build greater community involvement by establishing and enhancing public and private partnerships related to health & wellness.

For more strategies and action steps from the strategic plan, see: <http://www.friscoisd.org/about/strategic-planning/home>

are healthy and active are better learners, and demonstrate their support for the overall efforts at the district, school and classroom level. In addition, surrounding community has also caught the vision, and the district has leveraged resources to support the whole child efforts from numerous local businesses, foundations and community agencies. This has included new grants to support healthy school initiatives, and partnerships with Southern Methodist University, The Dallas Cowboys, Baylor Medical Center, Sanford Health, First Tee (local golf instruction company), and even the local movie theater. These partnerships have enabled Frisco ISD

to strengthen efforts related to many aspects of the WSCC model, including employee health, family involvement, physical education and activity, and counseling and psychological services. Through all of these efforts, the district has made significant strides towards meeting its objective of engaging, empowering and enlightening the whole child and the family.

For more information on the WSCC model:

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/wsc/index.htm>

**FIGURE 1**  
**Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model**  
 A Collaborative Approach to Learning and Health

