

Friday Beat

January 10, 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. It is edited and compiled by the [School Health Program](#).

Announcements

Happy New Year

We at the School Health Program (SHP) hope everyone had a great winter break and a happy new year! Our team is looking forward to continuing our efforts to support the health and well-being of Texas students.

Guidance for Preventing Spread of Infections in K-12 Schools

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) provided [guidance to help prevent the spread of infections in K-12 schools](#). The guidance includes simple actions schools can take to stop the spread of respiratory and stomach viruses, like influenza and norovirus, as well as bacterial infections like strep throat. This guidance is designed to maximize school attendance and its benefits for all students while reducing the spread of disease. Please share this information with parents, teachers, and school staff as we start the new year and return from winter break.

Vision, Hearing, and Spinal Screening Program Feedback

The [DSHS Vision, Hearing and Spinal Screening Program](#) (the Program) is making amendments to Chapter 37 subchapter C regarding [House Bill 1297](#), 88th Regular Legislative Session. The Program is seeking stakeholder feedback regarding any revisions. Please see the announcement on the program website for additional information and useful links. Stakeholders may send feedback to VHSSProgram@dshs.texas.gov by January 21, 2025. After this date stakeholder feedback will no longer be accepted, and public comment will be received at a later time on this rule.

January is National Radon Action Month

The [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#) recognizes January as National Radon Action Month. According to a nationwide survey, one in five schools have at least one room with 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](#) offers the [Texas Health Steps Motivational Interviewing course](#) online. This course is available at no cost and provides free continuing education credits. It helps providers and other professionals learn

communication skills to motivate children, teens, and families to make positive health changes, better manage chronic conditions, and avoid high-risk behaviors.

Funding Opportunities

Oliver Foundation 19th Annual Rodeo Contest

The [Oliver Foundation](#) is hosting the [19th Annual Rodeo Contest](#), asking Texas schools what types of healthy activities are occurring on their campuses. Entries will be judged on creativity, excitement, and success. The winning entries will receive four (4) tickets to a Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo performance and a parking pass. Submit activities by February 14, 2025, at 4:00 p.m.

Health Education

Smokefree Teen Resources

The [National Cancer Institute's Tobacco Control Research Branch](#) created [Smokefree Teen](#) to help reduce tobacco use among young people. This program is part of the [Smokefree.gov Initiative](#) and offers free resources. You can access a text messaging program, the quitSTART app, personalized quit plans, and other tools to help manage cravings, improve your mood, and handle situations in which teens might want to smoke.

Helping Teens Quit Smoking

The [American Lung Association](#) has created [tips to help teens understand the dangers of smoking and vaping](#). They also provide support for those who want to quit if they are already addicted. You can find helpful information in the [Helping Quit Resource Library](#), available in both English and Spanish.

Nutrition Environment and Services

Seeds of Success Toolkit

[KidsGardening](#) created a [Seeds of Success Toolkit](#) to help schools start and maintain edible gardens. This toolkit is based on the experience of school gardeners from across the country. It provides the resources needed to set up and run a successful school food garden. Topics include planning, designing, funding, safety, and more. Resources include downloadable chapters and recorded webinars.

Staying Safe: School Safety Response Training

The [Texas School Safety Center](#) is offering a [training](#) program created with [Safe and Sound Schools](#) and [Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training \(ALERT\)](#). This program provides school safety options for different ages and abilities that students can use during an active event. Throughout the spring, Safe and Sound Schools' curriculum and ALERT's Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events (CRASE) will be available as a six-hour training session for all regional Education Service Centers. To find out more about the training location and to register, please visit the [Staying Safe training webpage](#).

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

Student Mental Health Action Guide

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) has released a guide called "[Promoting Mental Health and Well-Being in Schools: An Action Guide for School and District Leaders](#)." The guide presents six effective strategies that schools can use to support the mental health and well-being of students. It provides clear methods for implementing each strategy and shares examples of successful policies, programs, and practices. Using these strategies can help improve the mental health of both students and staff.

Family Engagement

Restorative Practices Made Simple: Families as Partners

The [Texas Education Agency](#) developed the [Families as Partners video series](#) to help parents communicate better and use restorative practices at home. This series connects home life with the restorative methods taught in schools, helping create a consistent and supportive experience for children. It gives parents tools and strategies to improve their understanding and relationships with their children. The series stresses the importance of families and schools working together.

High-Impact Obesity Prevention Standards (HIOPS) for Screen Time Limits

The [CDC](#) shares ways to embed [high-impact obesity prevention standards \(HIOPS\)](#) into policies and activities in school settings that can affect the health and well-being of students. Among the 47 HIOPS, four support screen time limits. Learn more on the [CDC webpage](#).

Quote to Note

"And now we welcome the New Year. Full of things that have never been." - Rainer Maria Rilke

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