



Frequently Asked Questions

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What is Smart Source?

Smart Source is a comprehensive school-level inventory of health policies and practices with items that focus on the following nine content areas associated with the [Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model](#):

- General Health Policies and Practices
- Nutrition
- Physical Education/Physical Activity
- Health Education
- Health Services
- Counseling, Psychological, and Social Services
- Healthy and Safe School Environment
- Family, Community, and Student Involvement
- Staff Health Promotion

Smart Source provides schools with a tool that inventories best practices related to school health in order to inform school and district policies and practices. Healthy students perform better academically and Smart Source provides schools with specific guidance they can use to improve their school health efforts and ultimately impact the health of their students. Additionally, Smart Source serves as a statewide data collection effort that yields state and regional data to identify strengths and gaps related to health and inform how resources, such as funding and professional development, are allocated.

How was Smart Source developed?

The Smart Source tool and methodology have been developed by numerous stakeholders including school and district representatives, researchers, evaluators, funders, state agency representatives and other school health and safety experts. This diverse group informed how Smart Source might best fulfill its purpose, which includes: 1) to serve as an inventory for schools of their health and wellness practices and policies, 2) to reduce the burden on schools by streamlining multiple school health tools into one effort, 3) to improve the quality of school-level health policy and practice data collected, and 4) to increase the number of schools assessing their health policies and practices. Read more about the validity and reliability of this tool in the [Summary of Validity and Reliability Evidence](#).

How is Smart Source funded?

Smart Source is funded by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE). Currently, the Colorado School of Public Health is contracted by CDPHE to administer Smart Source.

How much time is involved in being a Smart Source participant?

Most survey coordinators spend 2 hours or less completing the Smart Source tool. This includes time spent [meeting with other school staff](#) as a team to gather responses and inputting responses into the online survey.

We also recommend that school teams [spend time using data from the Smart Source](#) to inform action around improving school health efforts. This may include reviewing your immediate school-level report available within one week of submission, your final report which summarizes school results alongside comparison data

from the state, region, and district (when available), attending free data use trainings to learn how to interpret and take action with your results, and working with your team to develop an action plan for addressing gaps in health policies and practices.

Who at my school should complete it?

Anyone who is interested should provide input! While we ask you to designate one [survey coordinator](#), schools that complete the survey *as a team* achieve higher accuracy on their responses and more meaningful results.

We strongly recommend that the survey coordinator convene or, at a minimum, gather input from:

- administrators
- PE teachers
- health educators
- school nurses/school nurse consultants
- school counselors
- mental health support staff
- food service staff
- members of the school wellness team
- students, parents, and community partners (bonus!)

If you're able to hold a 1 to 2-hour meeting with these members of your school community, you can fill out a paper version of the survey together and, as an added bonus, start a conversation about your health and wellness practices. The survey coordinator should then input responses into the online survey for submission.

What is a survey coordinator?

The survey coordinator is the “team lead” for the Smart Source survey. This person agrees to:

1. Ensure the online survey is completed and submitted by the deadline.
2. Hold a 1 to 2-hour meeting with the wellness team. (Don't have a wellness team? Meet with [these suggested staff members](#).) Be sure to invite students, families, and community partners to this meeting as well!
3. If a meeting is not possible, coordinate with staff members to provide responses to survey items in their areas of expertise.
4. Receive your school's immediate report within one week of submission to help prioritize health efforts.
5. Receive your school's final report and disseminate to your school and district community.

What are the benefits of participating?

The survey coordinator will receive the school-level immediate report within one week of their Smart Source submission to help prioritize health efforts. Final reports, which summarize the school results alongside comparison data from the state, region, and district (when available) will be returned following administration.

Additionally, school staff will also have an opportunity to attend data use trainings and learn strategies for interpreting their Smart Source data and using those together with other complementary data sources, such as the Healthy Kids Colorado Survey (HKCS).

Since responses to questions are not scored in any way, the process of completing Smart Source and reviewing your results allows your school an opportunity to take an objective look at gaps in school health and wellness to inform and motivate improvements.

[We focus on academics, not health and wellness. Why should we participate?](#)

It's not only a great way to see what other schools are doing in Colorado and your region, but also to begin a conversation about what is possible in your school. You will be able to use your results as a baseline, so that when you complete the inventory in future years, you can see change and growth in your health and wellness efforts. Participating in Smart Source can help you start to build mindsets and cultivate a culture that aligns with the broader shift toward valuing and measuring non-academic outcomes and how those lead to gains in academic outcomes as referenced in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Finally, participating in Smart Source meets the federal requirement for assessing implementation of your district local wellness policy.

[What is the time frame to complete Smart Source?](#)

The administration will occur in the **fall of the odd year**, between September and December. If you are interested in signing up, please email CSPHSurveyTeam@CUAnschutz.edu.

[Do we have to complete it all at once?](#)

No. The survey link you receive will be unique to your school, so you can stop at any point, close your internet browser, and all the answers will be saved. Simply click on the survey link again to open the survey where you left off.

[What if I don't know how to answer some of the survey items?](#)

Ask a colleague! All the items are made to be answerable by school-level personnel. We provide recommendations on various school staff members who can support completion of Smart Source, noted in the descriptions under each section header throughout the tool. Even better, **invite everyone to a 1 to 2-hour meeting** where you can fill out the paper version of the survey together.

[We already do Healthy Kids Colorado Survey. How is this different?](#)

Both Smart Source and the Healthy Kids Colorado Survey (HKCS) are administered by the Colorado School of Public Health School & Youth Survey Team. Smart Source measures the policies and practices in place at the school level and is completed once per school by staff members. The HKCS measures student level attitudes

and behaviors about their health and is completed by students. The HKCS is administered during the fall of the odd years, the same survey window as Smart Source. While they are distinctly different surveys, Smart Source and HKCS results are often used together by schools to understand how their school-level efforts affect their students' behaviors. Schools that participate in both surveys will receive a [Paired Indicator Report](#). By combining the power of school-level and student-level data, schools can more accurately identify gaps and priorities in their health efforts. We recommend that schools administer the HKCS in tandem with Smart Source for a robust picture of how their current efforts are impacting the health of their students. Visit the [Healthy Kids Colorado website](#) or [email the team](#) to learn more about their next administration.

[We already do other health surveys. How is this different?](#)

Smart Source is unique to Colorado and serves as the standardized tool for assessing school health policies and practices. While it is completely voluntary, the more schools and districts that commit to this one tool, the more consistency in school health data statewide, allowing for more meaningful comparisons for all. Having statewide support and participation will allow educators, funders, and agencies to all work from the same “play book.”

[Who will see my school's data?](#)

The school-level immediate and final reports will be sent to your school's [survey coordinator](#). We encourage the survey coordinator to share reports and data with various staff at your school and district including, but not limited to, administration, health and wellness staff, and classroom teachers.

If your district has staff interested in supporting schools to understand and implement best practices related to school health, school data may also be shared with those district staff, if requested by the district.

The Colorado School of Public Health (CSPH) will ensure that your school and district data will be kept confidential and data identifying your school or district will not be released publicly. The following are our guidelines for releasing school-level data to an outside organization (i.e., state and local agencies, universities, nonprofits, program providers, or any other entity):

1. If an outside organization requests access to data for a specific school or district, sharing of that identifiable data outside of the school and district is at the discretion of the school. If an existing data sharing agreement is in place between that outside organization and the school/district, CSPH can securely share data in accordance with the data sharing agreement at the request of schools or districts.
2. If outside organizations request access to multiple schools' data, they will be encouraged to access the aggregate results of all Smart Source participants. We hope that these entities will use aggregate data to better allocate resources and to start conversations with the schools they support. From there, schools can determine whether to share their school-level data with their partner entities.
3. If an outside organization requests data to inform research such as about public health or K-12 education, and the outside organization provides strong justification for the research and agrees to all confidentiality assurances, the requesting party will be provided access to individual schools' results as

long as that organization signs the CSPH data sharing agreement and specifically agrees to exclude any school identifiers in any reports or shared materials.

Lastly, keep in mind that no student-level data or personally identifiable information is collected by Smart Source. These data privacy considerations are determined by CSPH and informed by current best practices.

How does Smart Source streamline multiple data collection efforts?

Smart Source streamlines multiple efforts into one system so that all schools assess 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 coordinates with other efforts, such as the School Health Profiles and the School Health Index 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. Additionally, Smart Source meets the federal requirement for assessing implementation of your district local wellness policy.

Lastly, many indicators assessed with Smart Source have been identified for shared measurement by various stakeholders in the Colorado Healthy Schools Collaborative that aim to systematically support schools in their health and wellness efforts, including consistent data collection across schools.

Has Smart Source undergone a third-party review?

The Smart Source tool and methodology received formal IRB approval. Additionally, the Educational Data Advisory Committee (EDAC) reviewed the tool in methodology and approved its administration in Colorado schools. Read more about the validity and reliability of this tool in the [Summary of Validity and Reliability Evidence](#).