

## **Guiding Questions to Help Principals and SBHCs Develop Letters of Agreement**

**A letter of agreement (LOA) is an important tool to establish clear and mutual expectations between the school administration and SBHC lead agencies. Also, as staff of the school or SBHC change, this can help to retain institutional memory about the nature and logistics of the partnerships. The following is a list of questions that site administrators and SBHCs may ask themselves when developing an LOA. LOAs should be revisited at least annually, to ensure that they truly reflect the partnership and include strategies to mitigate any challenges and sustain successes.**

### **I. Alignment between school and lead agency vision, goals, priorities:**

- What are the primary goals and expected outcomes that the school administration has for the school? What are the primary goals and expected outcomes that the SBHC leadership has for the SBHC? How do they align?
- What are the SBHC's strategies to support student achievement through the delivery of health services and programs? Examples might include:
  - ✓ Delivery of health services to remove identified barriers to learning
  - ✓ Regular screening for academic/attendance struggles
  - ✓ Avoiding pull-out from core classes or during testing
  - ✓ Academic case management
  - ✓ Participation in tardy sweeps
  - ✓ Alternatives to suspension programs
- What are the school's strategies to support the goals of the SBHC?
  - ✓ Educating staff, families and students about the services provided by the SBHC through school meetings, events and marketing materials.
  - ✓ Supporting the development of Coordination of Services Teams (COST), or including health providers in an existing COST and other coordination structures.
  - ✓ Participation in health needs assessment and planning with SBHC partners to identify health issues experienced by students and their families.
- Will the SBHC be sub-contracting any health services with other providers? If so, what level of accountability will the SBHC have over their staffing and programming? How will the SBHC ensure that the services of these subcontracts are high quality and in alignment with the school's goals and culture?

**We often take for granted that schools and SBHCs are working toward the same end. While schools certainly want children to be healthy and SBHCs want children to be successful in school, being specific about how each entity can support the goals of the other will help ensure that all are working toward the same end effectively.**

### **II. Collaboration, shared communication, and decision making:**

- What kind of communication structures are or will be in place between the SBHC and school administration (e.g. regular meetings/check-ins, etc.)?
- How will the school and SBHC work together to identify and address school-wide health needs that arise (e.g. violence, positive school climate, crisis response, etc.)?
- What kind of decisions will be made collaboratively between school leadership and the SBHC? What kind of decisions will the school and SBHC need to make independently?

- Through what structures does shared decision-making happen? For example, is the school represented on any SBHC advisory body and is the SBHC represented in any of the school's leadership structures?
- Are school staff oriented annually to the work of the SBHC? Is the SBHC staff oriented annually to the work of the school?
- What kind of training and support will the SBHC provide for school staff and faculty? What kind of training and support will the school provide for SBHC staff?
- Is the SBHC invited to participate in school staff meetings/retreats, mandatory registration, back to school night, etc.?
- Is the SBHC represented in the school site plan, website, newsletter, etc.?
- Does the school share aggregate assessment data regularly with the SBHC? Does the SBHC share aggregate evaluation data with the school administration and staff?
- How does the SBHC currently or plan to include school staff in the SBHC model (e.g. school nurse, school social worker, etc.)?
- What are the key factors that make or break collaboration between support service providers who are not employed by the same agency?
  - ✓ Are there referral mechanisms in place?
  - ✓ Is there a Coordination of Services Team or some other mechanism to ensure regular communication between providers?
  - ✓ Have clear roles and responsibilities been articulated?

**Consider both the things that are working well about the existing collaboration and the challenges that you have experienced or anticipate due to internal/external forces.**

#### **IV. Services, staffing and facilities:**

- What hours will the SBHC operate? What services will be provided, by who and when? Are there any limitations around eligibility that the school should be aware of (e.g. insurance status)?
- Beyond the designated clinic facility, what space will be needed/ provided for health services and programs (e.g. classrooms for groups/youth development programs, meeting space, etc.)?
- Does the SBHC have keys to access the identified spaces?

**As simple as it seems, day-to-day issues like keys, space, service hours and service eligibility can create frustration and get in the way of collaboration. Use the LOA to set expectations around the big issues in collaboration, as well as smaller logistical issues.**

#### **V. Resources:**

- What direct or in-kind resources does the school provide to the SBHC (e.g. space, school nursing, use of equipment, custodial, etc.)?
- Outline all of the resources that are shared between the school and SBHC.
- How can the school and SBHC support each other's fundraising efforts? Does joint fundraising occur and for what?

**Fundraising can be essential to sustaining or expanding existing programming, as well as funding new programs to serve students and families. Schools and SBHCs should establish how they can be supportive of each other's fundraising efforts, as well as identify key services and programs that each will be working to fund or sustain.**