



DERBY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Dr. Matthew Conway, Jr.
Superintendent of Schools

February 1, 2017

David L. Katz, MD, MPH, FACPM, FACP
Center Director
Yale-Griffin Prevention Research Center
130 Division Street
Derby, CT 06418

Dear Dr. Katz:

As the Superintendent of the Derby School System, I am pleased to write a letter to support and commit to the Yale-Griffin Prevention Research Center's proposed evaluation of the effectiveness of school-based health services interventions on student outcomes.

Derby Public School staff members have played an invaluable role in the success of the goal attainment set forth by Valley Initiative to Advance Health and Learning in Schools. The implementation of health programs that focus on the priority areas designated by the committee have proven to be vital district wide. The elementary schools have adopted various curriculums that aid in the reduction of chronic health concerns such as obesity. ABC Fitness and Nutrition Detectives were introduced at the elementary level and assist with the development of routines, healthy choices and autonomous decision making for middle school aged children. Additionally, Body Mass Index data collection is conducted annually at the elementary level in order to assess the progress of the interventions in place. The integration of nutrition, as part of the health and wellness objectives, is modeled in the district-wide cooking competition. This serves as a platform for middle school students to experiment with health conscious recipes and expand their culinary abilities. Derby Public High School expands on the significance of physical education by utilizing the health and wellness stipend on efficient and accessible equipment. In addition, an immense transformation of the school cafeteria has supported the consistent improvement of student-selected healthier food options.

Obesity is a chronic health concern within the community, as the gaps of inequities are challenging to close. Resources that assist with the dissemination of public health programs are vital to the reduction of the obesity epidemic. As obesity often co-exists with other chronic health concerns such as asthma, it is imperative that our community continues to utilize evidence-based practices including school-based health services to combat the poor student outcomes. To promote an effective public health outcome, the development of an action plan in collaboration with community stakeholders, conduction of a health assessment of the target population and identification of strategies to adequately reduce the prevalence of chronic disease is imperative. The proposed project will indefinitely assist in the improvement of managing chronic health concerns via school-based interventions and reducing barriers to accessing the essential resources for successful outcomes.

If this project is funded, I agree to sign any necessary letters of approval for the PRC to obtain permission from the Griffin Hospital Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct data collection in our schools as it relates to this project, to have at least one nursing staff representative serve on the project's working group, to have our nursing or other staff implement intervention strategies decided on by the working group and to assist with student data collection as needed.

The Derby Public Schools is in full support of your efforts and we are looking forward to working with school and community partners to improve health and academic outcomes for our students.

Sincerely,

Dr. Matthew J. Conway, Jr.
Superintendent of Schools

**2017 Yale-Griffin Prevention Research Center (PRC) Proposal
to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
for Special Interest Project (SIP) Funding:
Background Information for Letters of Support**

TOPIC

- School-based health services for improving chronic disease outcomes

SCHOOL DISTRICT PARTNERS

- Ansonia, Derby, Shelton

GOAL

- Improve the ability of schools to identify, track, and manage students with chronic health conditions. We will likely focus primarily on obesity, but may also target other conditions (e.g., asthma), depending on prevalence.
- Using the description from the Funding Opportunity Announcement, the project will “identify the barriers, facilitators to implementation of school health services policies, protocols, and practices; identify staffing and training needs of school health services’ staff...; and identify strategies that can be used to create and foster external partnerships as well as referral networks for students.”

SPECIFIC AIMS

1. **Develop an action plan, in collaboration with school and community partners, to use school-based and/or school-linked health services to improve health and academic outcomes for middle school students with chronic health conditions (CHCs).**
 - Establish a working group of diverse stakeholders from the target communities to develop assessment, implementation, and evaluation plans for the project.
 - Conduct a comprehensive assessment of current practices, needs, and resources related to management of CHCs in middle school students in the target communities.
 - Identify strategies for screening students for CHCs, expanding school-based services to manage CHCs, and collaborating with community-based providers to ensure adequate treatment and tracking of students with CHCs.
 - Develop interim and final project evaluation and improvement plans.
2. **Demonstrate the feasibility and impact of a school-community partnership to improve outcomes for middle school students with CHCs.**
 - Implement strategies identified in year 1 and ensure fidelity to the planned intervention with regular monitoring, communication with all partners, and training as needed.
 - Conduct process, implementation, and impact evaluations using both quantitative and qualitative methods.

PLANS (brief preliminary summary)

Year 1:

- **Conduct an initial assessment of current practices related to education, screening, treatment, and monitoring of chronic health conditions in middle school students**
- **Conduct an inventory of community resources for management of chronic health conditions**
- **Assess the capacity of schools and community organizations to expand services through school-based or school-linked programs (e.g., clinicians partnering with schools to provide services)**
- **Establish a working group that will make decisions about strategies to implement**

Year 2:

- **Implement strategies identified by the working group**
- **Assess the effects on student outcomes (academic and health measures)**
- **Conduct additional quantitative and qualitative evaluation related to process and implementation outcomes**