

APHA Center for School, Health and Education



Dear APHA Supporter,

As students around the country return to school, we are reminded of the vital role schools play in the health and well-being of children and adolescents. Adults in schools are the second-most influential people in the lives of school-aged children; the importance of positive connections with students should not be underestimated. When students believe the adults and peers in their school care about their learning and them as individuals — school connectedness — they are more likely to have better health and academic performance. Students who feel connected to school have higher rates of attendance and school completion, and lower rates of violence, alcohol and drug use and sexual intercourse. School connectedness is fostered by adult support, positive peer relationships and a positive school climate. School connectedness becomes even more important for low-income students as it can buffer the impact of living in communities with fewer opportunities and resources and higher rates of violence.

The APHA Center for School, Health and Education views school connectedness as essential to achieving our primary goals of preventing dropout and improving graduation rates for K-12 students. We work with schools and school-based health centers to develop and implement public health strategies school-wide to improve the well-being and educational success of all students.

CSHE recently released [School Connectedness: A Digital Story](#), which captures how a science teacher at a Washington, D.C., school found a way to make a difference in the lives of his students. With a dedicated team of teachers, parents and community partners supporting his vision, he created an environment that motivated students to improve academically, work together as a team and graduate high school.

This story is an example of the power of positive connections between the adults and students within a school and how a seemingly simple idea can have a lasting impact on individual students and school-wide.

We hope this digital story inspires you to use your creativity and passion and leverage partnerships to advance health and equity in the young people you serve.

Learn more about the Center for School, Health and Education's work by visiting our [website](#), and stay connected with us: [@StopDropOut](#).

Sincerely,



Tia T. Williams

Tia Taylor Williams, MPH, CNS
Director
Center for School, Health and Education
Center for Public Health Policy
CSHE@apha.org