Advancing the Whole Child Approach to Education at the Local Level
ASCD is dedicated to promoting the success of every child, and we look well beyond test scores to define that success. We believe that children need to be healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged and that they will flourish when entire communities attend to both the in-school factors and out-of-school influences that affect learning. It’s what we call the ASCD Whole Child approach.

To gauge how well each state and the United States as a whole are supporting the whole child, we created the Whole Child Snapshots. These snapshots provide a picture of students’ performance and well-being, featuring data that align with the ASCD Whole Child tenets.

We invite you to look at your state’s snapshot and then to determine how your own school’s or district’s statistics compare. How well are you supporting the whole child? Where can you improve? And what strategies can help you meet the comprehensive needs of your students?

Each of us can take action in our own communities, schools, and classrooms to improve students’ learning.

To help you get started, we’ve identified a few articles and podcasts about five key areas—poverty, obesity, bullying, student-to-counselor ratios, and graduation rates—that we hope will inspire you to act at the local level.

Thank you for all you do to support students everywhere and for working with ASCD to advance a whole child approach to education.

Sean Slade  
ASCD Outreach Director

David Griffith  
ASCD Sr. Director, Public Policy
How well is your state supporting the whole child?
How far do you have to go?

View the national snapshot and all 50 state snapshots online at www.ascd.org/wholechildsnapshots.
How Poverty Affects Classroom Engagement

Eric Jensen outlines seven reasons students living in poverty struggle with engagement—and seven things you can do immediately to address them.

READ THE ARTICLE >

The New Poverty: Dealing with Economic Change

In this episode of the Whole Child Podcast, guests discuss the implications of poverty on schools. Those who are new to dealing with large populations of students living in poverty will find this especially useful.

LISTEN TO THE PODCAST >

Poverty and Education

Hear classroom stories and insights on how to mitigate the effects of poverty on students’ lives in this recording from the 2015 Whole Child Symposium. Panelists include Kathleen Budge, coauthor of the ASCD book Turning High-Poverty Schools into High-Performing Schools; Luis Torres, principal of P.S. 55 in the Bronx, N.Y.; and Brittney Maness, a teacher at Clinch School in Tennessee.

WATCH THE SYMPOSIUM >
In addition to suffering from poor physical health, children who struggle with their weight are often targets of early social discrimination, which, in turn, can hinder self-esteem and academic and social functioning. In contrast, recent studies have linked physical fitness with higher achievement.4

Thirty percent of the nation’s high school students are overweight or obese.5

Finding Our Way Back to Healthy Eating

Author and pediatrician David Kessler talks about our obsession with fat, sugar, and salt—and what it’s doing to our kids.

Working Together to Improve Learning and Health

In these episodes of the Whole Child Podcast, guests talk about the benefits of a healthy learning environment and introduce the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child model to integrate health services and programs into schools.

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How We Treat One Another in School
Students want adults to take more action to intervene when they see bullying and keep students safe. This article recommends strategies for a schoolwide approach to bullying prevention, and it underscores educators’ influence on the climate of schools.

READ THE ARTICLE >

A Whole Child Approach to Addressing Bullying
In this episode of the Whole Child Podcast, guests discuss how to address bullying locally and nationally so that all students learn in a positive school climate that helps ensure they are healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged.

LISTEN TO THE PODCAST >

A Visit to One School’s Bullying Prevention Program
See how one school tackles the problem of bullying using a variety of tactics—including safety committees, prevention programs, and rule changes—to create a safe program that reduces bullying incidents and improves the school environment.

WATCH THE PROGRAM >

Youth who are bullied can experience negative physical, academic, and mental health issues. They are more likely to experience depression and anxiety and exhibit decreased school participation and performance.6

One in five high school students are bullied at school.7

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Why Guidance Counseling Needs to Change

Based on the results of multiple surveys of students and young adults, this article makes the case for innovating and reforming the guidance counseling system.

READ THE ARTICLE >

What Does It Take for Children to Be Mentally Healthy?

In this episode of the Whole Child Podcast, guests discuss the importance of each child, in each school, and in each community being socially, emotionally, and mentally healthy.

LISTEN TO THE PODCAST >

Effective counseling programs are a crucial element in improving both school climate and student achievement. School counselors can help students resolve emotional, social, and behavioral problems; contribute to improved classroom success; and provide students with career guidance and development.8

The nation’s student-to-counselor ratio is 482 to 1. Only three states meet or surpass the recommended 250 to 1 student-to-counselor ratio.9

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Getting to Graduation: Can Blended Learning Curtail the Dropout Crisis?

This article proposes blended learning as a strategy to improve graduation rates for students who need increased flexibility or more course options to keep them engaged and focused academically.

READ THE ARTICLE >

Ready and Able: College, Career, and Citizenship in the 21st Century

In this episode of the Whole Child Podcast, guests discuss strategies for preparing students for college, careers, and citizenship.

LISTEN TO THE PODCAST >

Increasing Students’ Success with Long-Term Goal Development

In this free, on-demand webinar, neurologist and teacher Judy Willis describes ways educators can help students learn to resist immediate gratification and promote goal-directed habits. The ability to delay gratification has been correlated with academic and career success after high school.

WATCH THE WEBINAR >

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DO YOU WANT TO DO MORE?

Implementing Whole Child Success

1. Start a Conversation About the Whole Child
   Discuss the information in your state’s snapshot with your friends, colleagues, community members, and policymakers.
   Get ideas about how to prompt conversations in the “Whole Child Across the States: How Are We Doing?” podcast episode.
   LISTEN TO OR DOWNLOAD THE EPISODE >

2. Measure Your School’s or District’s Performance on Whole Child Indicators
   Now that you’ve seen how well the nation and your state are supporting the whole child, take a look closer to home.
   Measure your school’s or district’s performance on the whole child indicators and components with ASCD’s School Improvement Tool, a free online needs assessment survey.
   VISIT THE TOOL TO GET STARTED >

3. Join ASCD’s Educator Advocates
   Educator Advocates receive timely e-mail alerts on issues where your input can make a decisive difference.
   You’ll also receive a weekly e-newsletter, Capitol Connection, that provides the inside scoop on key education issues; the latest national reports and research; and federal education developments from Congress, the U.S. Department of Education, and the White House.
   SIGN UP TODAY >

4. Get a Whole Child Resolution Introduced in Your State
   Watch ASCD’s webinar about how to get a Whole Child Resolution introduced by your own state policymakers.
   WATCH THE WEBINAR >

5. Learn More About the ASCD Whole Child Approach
   ASCD offers additional resources, including examples of schools that support the whole child approach and podcasts on whole child topics on the website.
   ACCESS ADDITIONAL RESOURCES >

6. Learn How Multimetric Accountability Can Complement a Whole Child Approach
   Some states and districts are developing and using next-generation accountability systems with multiple metrics that complement a whole child approach to education.
   DOWNLOAD A WHITE PAPER AND ACCESS RESOURCES >