

## About CCSSO

The Council of Chief State School Officers (**CCSSO**) is a nonpartisan, nationwide, nonprofit organization of public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and five U.S. extra-state jurisdictions. CCSSO provides leadership, advocacy, and technical assistance on major educational issues. The Council seeks member consensus on major educational issues and expresses their views to civic and professional organizations, federal agencies, Congress, and the public.

## About SCASS

CCSSO created the State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (**SCASS**) in 1991 to encourage and assist states in working collaboratively on assessment design and development across the curriculum.

## About HEAP

The Health Education Assessment Project (**HEAP**) is a project of CCSSO~SCASS. The HEAP works to develop resources to help members align curriculum, instruction, and assessment in health education to improve student health literacy.



**SCASS**



**Health  
Education  
Assessment  
Project**

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# FACT SHEET

## How the CCSSO~SCASS HEAP Supports the Intent of the *No Child Left Behind Act*

The *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001 (NCLB) redefines the federal role in K–12 education and strives to close the achievement gap between our neediest students and their peers. In brief, the NCLB legislation requires strong state and school district accountability for results, increases flexibility and local control, expands options for parents, and emphasizes research-based methods that have been proven to work. Although the NCLB does not directly address health education, the CCSSO~SCASS Health Education Assessment Project (HEAP) supports the intent of the NCLB in a number of ways.

In the broadest sense, connecting health and education is essential if we are to support educational achievement for all children and truly leave no child behind. Why is the health-education connection essential? Because physical health, mental health, and emotional health are critical components of a student's ability to learn, achieve, and succeed. The HEAP helps students develop the knowledge and life-long skills needed to maintain and enhance their health. The HEAP also supports the intent of the NCLB by increasing school accountability through the use of standards-based education and assessment, helping prepare and train high-quality teachers, and promoting the development of resiliency skills and providing a forum where character development can be taught.

### Increasing School Accountability through Standards-based Education and Assessment

Among other stipulations, the NCLB requires that states adopt challenging academic standards and assess student achievement based on those standards. In keeping with this provision, the HEAP uses the National Health Education Standards (NHES) as a framework to provide resources. The NHES are based on the current science driving what students need to know to maintain and promote health. The Joint Committee on Health Education Standards established the NHES to provide state and district education professionals with a blueprint to help them determine the content of the health curriculum in their communities.

The HEAP assessment items provide teachers with both the means to align curriculum and instruction with standards and the ability to gauge how well students are achieving set goals. In other words, the HEAP assessment items offer educators tools to help them ensure accountability and drive policy to align the system. Moreover, the principles the HEAP employs—providing standards-based education and accountability through assessment—can be applied to the full range of academic subjects.

## Helping Prepare and Train High-Quality Teachers

The NCLB also calls for increasing student achievement through “preparing, training, and recruiting high quality teachers and principals.” Classroom teachers in elementary and middle schools are expected to teach health as a curricular area. At the high school level, most states require that health education instructors be certified to teach health education. Yet many teachers avoid health subjects because they receive inadequate undergraduate training in health education. What’s more, some teachers do not receive training in assessment as part of their professional education.

Through numerous training activities and professional development materials, the HEAP provides teachers with the tools and expertise they need to align curriculum with education standards and to assess students’ knowledge and skills related to classroom instruction. In addition, the HEAP materials and trainings help equip teachers with the skills they need to meet the challenges and maximize the opportunities the NCLB presents.

## Providing a Forum for Character Development

The Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act, a provision within the NCLB, addresses topics such as drug and violence prevention programs, character development, and peer pressure. The skills taught in health education and supported by the HEAP encourage students to think critically, solve complex problems, and communicate effectively. The HEAP assessment items help students develop the skills to analyze the influence of culture, media, technology, and other factors on behaviors that affect health. The HEAP assessment items also provide students with opportunities to set goals; hone their decision-making skills; and develop the ability to advocate for personal, family, and community health and safety. In particular, the HEAP supports the NCLB’s Safe and Drug-free Schools and Communities Act through offering multiple and varied tasks in which students can develop in-depth knowledge about abstaining from alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use; preventing unintended injury and violence; and promoting mental health.

## Furthering the Vision of State School Officers

The mission of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is to assist chief state school officers and their organizations—through leadership, advocacy, and service—in achieving the vision of an American education system that enables all children to succeed in school, work, and life. CCSSO is committed to supporting state education agencies in implementing the provisions of the *No Child Left Behind Act*.

## HEAP Mission Statement

The mission of the project is to develop effective health education assessment resources through a collaborative process, and to increase members’ capacity to align curriculum, instruction, and assessment to improve student health literacy through improved health education instruction.

**For more information,  
contact the HEAP  
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