



Health

Part I: Educate

Let's begin with some background information to provide foundational health knowledge to your team.

Directions:

PART I: Research and answer questions 1-5 within your team. Answer in **200 words or less** per question.

PART II: Contact your campus cafeteria and/or health staff and ask a representative questions 6-10. You may share the question list with them ahead of time so they can prepare. Answer in **200 words or less** per question. If the questions cannot be answered, fill in the answers with your own research.

After you have answered the primary question, use extra writing space to explore the *Student Considerations* question.

PART I:

1. How can a school provide a healthy environment to students? Is it important for a campus to have dedicated efforts to constantly improve nutrition, outdoor spaces, and mental health resources? Before researching what is on campus, score your campus with an A, B, C, D, or F on its health efforts based upon your current knowledge and explain why it earned that grade.

Student Considerations: Do you discuss nutrition, the need for outdoor spaces, or mental health with your close friends and family? What are the concerns of those in your personal circles?

2. Research Nature Deficit Disorder. What are some negative physical, mental, and behavioral impacts associated with a lack of time outside? Research the Revitalizing America's Schoolyards Act S-1538 and summarize some key benefits of the bill. Are there designated green spaces on your campus beyond sports fields?

Student Considerations: Do you spend dedicated time outside each week? Are you involved in an outdoor sport or set aside outdoor leisure time such as reading at a local park?

3. What prevents you from spending time outside? Has a teacher of yours ever hosted a class outside or assigned a nature-based project? Would you be interested in that sort of instructional style? What are the logistical challenges of teaching outdoors?

Student Considerations: Are there any classes you are currently taking that could benefit from an added outdoor assignment element?

4. Where do students go to decompress or regulate their nervous system? What spaces feel welcoming versus stressful on your campus?

Student Considerations: At home, what do you do to destress and unplug?

5. What would “healthy and sustainable” food look like on *this* campus? Could you imagine a scenario where food is grown onsite in a campus garden or greenhouse? What fruits and vegetables would your peers be most likely to eat? Ask your Waste Module team members how you might redirect organic waste to a campus garden as compost.

PART II:

6. How has your school worked to reduce the heat island effect? Are there any cool rooftops, reflective pavement coatings, etc.? Ask staff if they are familiar with what a Microclimate is.

Student Considerations: Research the connection between extreme weather and impacts on mood. Consider how interpersonal communication can become more difficult as climate change continues.

7. What mental health resources are currently available on campus, and how accessible are they (location, hours, wait times, stigma)? What forms of social connection help buffer stress (clubs, school psychologists, etc.)?

Student Considerations: Research other schools in your district. Do they have any initiatives for student wellness and mental health that could be replicated on your campus? Brainstorm some advisors that may be willing to support and consider how much a similar initiative would cost.

8. How do current campus food offerings align with student dietary needs, preferences, and cultural backgrounds? What percentage of campus meals are plant-based, locally sourced, or sustainable?

Student Considerations: Do you purchase food on campus or bring your own snacks and lunch items? What do you do if you start feeling hungry at school and do not bring your own food?

9. How does food pricing affect access to healthy options for students from different income levels? Work with your Waste Module team members to discover if you have a share table to provide needed items to your peers or a food recovery partner to provide needed items to your greater community.

10. How far does the food served on your campus have to travel to get to your school? Look at a typical lunch menu at your school. Do you and your team mates have more immediate concerns about the nutritional value of your options or the environmental impact associated with your options? Why?

Student Considerations: Sustainability is not about being perfect. Everyone needs to eat. That said, what are some swaps that could be made at your school or in your personal life to increase

your proximity to nutritious and environmentally friendly foods?

Part II: Assess

Welcome to the audit portion of the Health Module! This section will challenge you to consider how spaces on campus could be better utilized.

Directions: Obtain a map of your campus. Identify and label all outdoor areas on the map (fields, courtyards, trees, bike racks, parking, gardens, turf, etc.). When you complete this Module, include a copy of the map in your Submission.

Complete the below assessment for at least three identified areas. Try to answer as many aspects of the question as possible.

Space #1

a. How is the space used? Who is utilizing the area most often?
b. How long, on average, would someone spend in this space? Observe the area.
c. Does this area feel engaging, ignored, overused, or underused?

Observations:

Consider how this space could be upgraded or fully transformed to better serve the needs of the student body. Could additional shading or vegetation be added? Could underused areas be transformed into a campus farm, mindfulness garden, living lab, etc? What preexisting class or club may be interested in collaborating to revitalize this space?

Repeat for Space #2 and Space #3.

Part III: Survey

This last section of the Energy Module asks you to survey your peers with a set of questions related to food access and Nature Deficit Disorder. Teams should survey a minimum of 15 students and 5 campus staff although a greater sample size is encouraged. These questions are meant to challenge your peers' perceptions.

You can complete this portion by creating and distributing a survey submission link or by filming a "questions on campus" video, similar to what might be seen on TikTok, Reels, or YouTube. Feel free to be creative!

See the question list and submission form below. If you are quizzing your peers in a live format, feel free to share answers so everyone can learn!

QUESTION LIST:

1. Have you ever heard of a food desert? What is it?
 - A: A food desert is a geographic location where access to a consistent, healthy food selection is either extremely limited or nonexistent.
2. Have you ever heard of a food swamp? What do you think that is? How would it differ from a food desert?
 - A: A food swamp is a neighborhood with a high concentration of unhealthy food options, such as fast-food restaurants or convenience stores. Food swamps differ from food deserts because while there are food resources, they still don't provide proper nutrients to residents.
3. Have you ever visited a local farmers market? Where was it? What items did you purchase or consider purchasing there?
 - A: **Task: Within your group, research if your city hosts a farmers market, where it is located, and what kind of vendors are typically there.
4. Do you have any interest in visiting a community garden? Would you ever volunteer at a local farm if it meant improving access to food in your community or getting some free produce?
 - A: **Task: See if there are any community gardens in your neighborhood and if they accept volunteers. If there is a lack of local farms, look into UC Agriculture & Natural Resources and their work with the OC Food Bank.
5. Do you feel a shift in your mood or ability to focus after spending time outdoors? Do you ever make a conscious effort to go outside during the day to clear your head or help your workflow? Why or why not?
6. Have you ever heard of Nature Deficit Disorder? If so, what is it? If not, what phenomena would you guess it describes?
 - A: "Studies show time in nature reduces blood pressure, anxiety, stress and restores a sense of calm. And we're learning that too much time spent indoors and on screens is detrimental to health and mental health. Richard Louv's 2005 book, "Last Child in the Woods," argued that children's separation from the natural world was causing "nature deficit disorder," the root of a host of problems including ADHD, obesity and mental health issues such as anxiety" (UCI Health, 2024).