Federal investments in education are crucial to provide a health-literate populace, ensure student academic success, and strengthen the U.S. economy.

The health and well-being of today’s students is directly connected to their academic success, school completion, and their development into healthy, resilient, and productive citizens. Schools are uniquely positioned to help children and youth acquire life-long, health-promoting knowledge, skills and behaviors. Providing access to quality health education and physical education, qualified counselors and nurses, health services, and nutritious school foods will ensure that students develop these life-long skills in a safe and engaging school environment and become adults who contribute to, rather than become a burden upon the US health and welfare systems.

Invest in education to:

- Reduce the burden on and cost to federal health programs
  - Federal outlays for health care go disproportionately to the care of people with limited education, who tend to be sicker and require more intensive care.
  - The average annual healthcare costs of those with low health literacy levels are four times greater than that of the general population.¹
  - Individuals with low health literacy are less likely to participate actively in health care decision making and more likely to struggle with health management tasks and to face significant challenges navigating the health system.²

- Improve student academic achievement
  - Students who are physically active tend to have better grades, school attendance, cognitive performance, and classroom behavior.³
  - Student participation in the USDA School Breakfast Program is associated with increased academic grades and standardized test scores, reduced absenteeism, and improved cognitive performance.⁴

- Strengthen the economy by increasing the productivity of the workforce, lowering unemployment rates, improving earnings and tax revenue
  - Education is important for obtaining jobs that include health benefits, such as health insurance coverage, and the income to not only live a healthier lifestyle but also live in neighborhoods that promote good health.⁵
  - If the health status of less-educated Americans were the same as that of their college-educated peers, the related improvements in health would save more than a trillion dollars annually.⁶

---

Source: Center on Society and Health, Investments in Education are Investments in Health: The Federal Perspective. Virginia Commonwealth University

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Health and Academics Web site

For additional information, please contact Joel Packer, Executive Director of the Committee for Education Funding at JPacker@cef.org, or Megan Wolfe, Advocacy Manager for ASCD at megan.wolfe@ascd.org