

Asthma Management in Schools

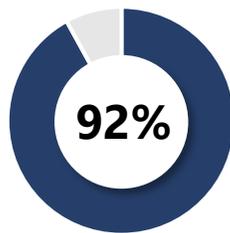
December 2022



School personnel play a critical role in the management of asthma for school age children. To gather insight on specific barriers and opportunities in Vermont, two surveys were conducted in September 2022. Specific questions were asked about implementing evidence-based asthma self-management education (AS-ME) and resources needed to care for students with asthma.

Survey of school personnel's experience with AS-ME

The survey of school personnel received 76 full responses, most of whom indicated that they are school nurses. Most respondents had never been trained to provide AS-ME (88%) and never implemented an AS-ME curriculum in their school (95%).



of respondents were school nurses



What is AS-ME?

AS-ME, or asthma self-management education, involves educating people with asthma and their families to use asthma medication correctly, reduce exposures to asthma triggers, and manage their condition when asthma symptoms worsen. It can be delivered in various settings, including clinics, emergency departments, hospitals, pharmacies, schools, and homes.



Learn more at www.cdc.gov/asthma/exhale/as-me.htm

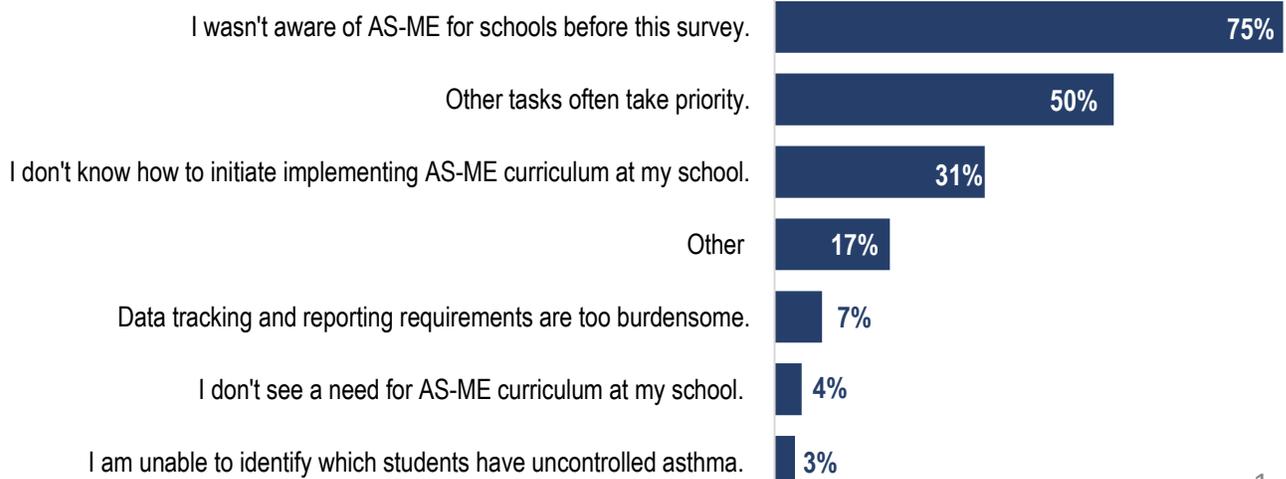


Barriers to implementing AS-ME curriculum in schools

Most respondents were not aware of AS-ME for schools before this survey, showing that there is a need for increased awareness among school personnel of the benefits of AS-ME and how to deliver it in schools. Respondents selected up to three options.

Barriers to implementing AS-ME

among those who have never implemented an AS-ME curriculum (n = 72)



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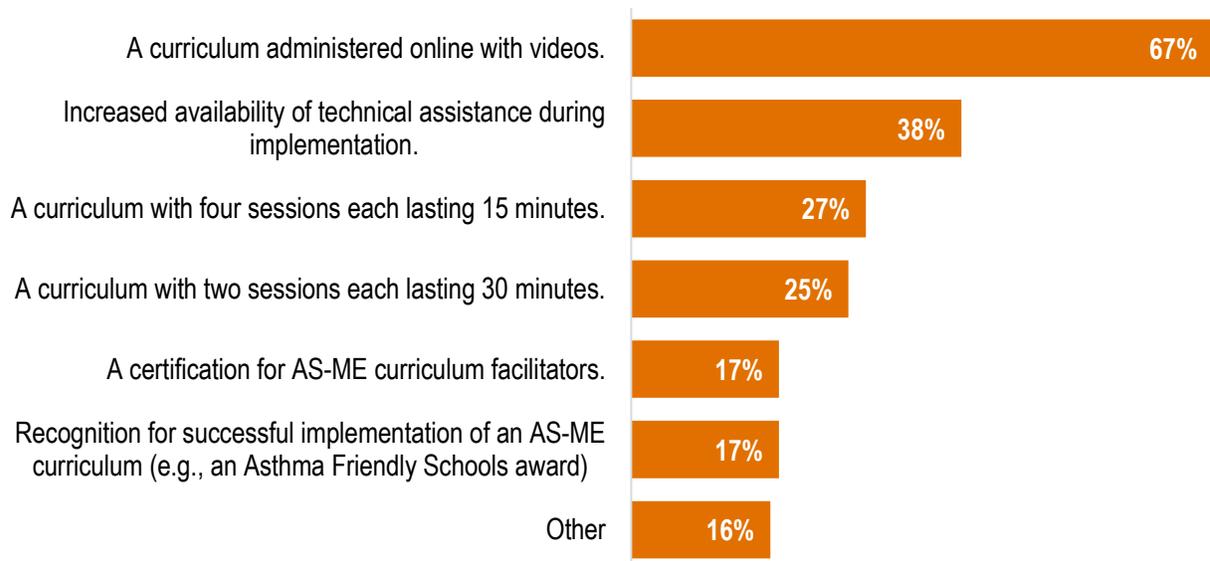


Tools and incentives for implementing AS-ME curriculum in schools

Most of respondents selected that a curriculum administered online with videos would be most helpful in implementing AS-ME curriculum in their school. Respondents selected up to three options.

Facilitators to implementing AS-ME curriculum in schools

among all respondents (n = 76)

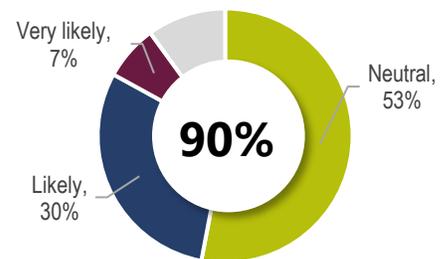


Interest in learning more

Most respondents said that they are neutral, likely, or very likely to implement AS-ME curriculum in their school in the future. The results of the survey show that there is a need and desire for more outreach and education about AS-ME curriculum for schools.

Many respondents (83%) were also interested in receiving materials about other asthma-friendly best practices and related opportunities.

Respondents also had space within the survey to comment on additional barriers and other tools and resources that would support them in caring for students with asthma. Many of the responses indicated that school personnel have little time to implement AS-ME curriculum in their schools, despite the interest in learning and receiving more materials related to asthma.



90% of respondents said they are neutral, likely, or very likely to implement AS-ME in the future

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2022 – 2023 School Year Vermont School Nurse Survey

A 10 question, optional survey was sent to school nurses to evaluate the needs of Vermont school nurses for the 2022-2023 school year via the state school nurse consultant. The survey was sent to approximately 340 schools nurses and had an overall response rate of 40%. Over half of the survey respondents (53%) provided an answer besides no or unsure to the survey question about asthma resources.

The Asthma Program at the Vermont Department of Health is interested in hearing from school nurses about their needs to support students with asthma. Are there any tools, resources, or trainings that would better support you in caring for students with asthma?

4 Overarching themes

1. School nurses are interested in receiving general trainings or resources about asthma.
2. Enhanced education on inhaler technique is needed for students.
3. There is need for improvement to asthma action plans (AAP), in addition to easier, more timely ways to obtain updated plans from providers.
4. School nurses are already undergoing efforts to make their school more asthma friendly.

"**Updated teaching tools** to have on hand are always appreciated."

"...students are being **taught different techniques** for taking inhaled medications."

"A **stock emergency inhaler program** (similar to the stock epinephrine) for asthmatic emergencies at school."

"The one most challenging aspect of caring for students with asthma is having **to chase down AAP...**"

"I was just contacted by "**Green Solutions**" about the VT Asthma and environmental health program. This seems like a good place to start."

"I'm always open to more info about asthma management and have been working towards gold status for **asthma friendliness** for my school."

"I'd like to continue the **asthma educator certification**. A while back they offered this in the state, and I'd like to have a refresher so I can take the certification exam."

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Summary

The results of these surveys demonstrate that there is a lack of awareness about AS-ME and that school personnel are balancing many different tasks and priorities. With the right resources, such as a brief, online curriculum administered with videos, school personnel may be more likely to implement programs, such as asthma self-management education, that will help students keep their asthma controlled. There is also a need for increased linkages between schools and providers, to ensure coordinated and consistent care for students with asthma.

Lastly, both surveys show that there is a desire for asthma related tools, resources, and trainings for school personnel, particularly school nurses. There may be opportunities to further engage with schools to ensure they have the training and tools to continue to care for students with asthma.

Continuous training and resource-sharing, implementation of AS-ME curriculums in schools, and increased care coordination has the potential to reduce missed school days, and even asthma-related emergencies.

Thank you to everyone who responded to the surveys! Your input and perspective is essential to reducing the burden of asthma for Vermonters.

In response to the input and findings in these surveys, an AS-ME group will be launched in the new year to address asthma best practices and challenges. Details will be distributed shortly. Contact the Asthma Program Manager at Karen.Casper@vermont.gov with questions.



Apply to be a recognized as an asthma friendly school

Asthma-friendly schools are ones that take steps to create environments that help students with asthma grow, learn, and succeed, and prevent asthma attacks and missed school days. The asthma-friendly school designation gives recognition for implementing AS-ME in schools and other best practice initiatives, many of which schools are already doing. Becoming an asthma-friendly school is simple to do and benefits all students and staff – especially those who have been diagnosed with asthma.

Apply at <https://www.healthvermont.gov/wellness/asthma/apply-be-recognized-asthma-friendly-school>

Prepared for: Vermont Asthma Program

Prepared by: Professional Data Analysts

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Learn more at <https://www.healthvermont.gov/wellness/asthma>

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