**Letter Templates for School Principals re: Dental Sealants**

***Objective:* Raise awareness of school principals to educate them about importance of dental sealants and school-based/school-linked oral health programs at their school**

***Notes:* This template requires you to customize by entering the name of your County and school(s) that have school-based vs. school-linked oral health services. Review and adjust all the highlighted sections to incorporate relevant county and audience information.**

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Dear [Principal XX],

I am writing to share our oral health community improvement plan [insert hyperlink if available] for [XX County] that seeks to ensure the students at [XX School] have healthy smiles and mouths and stay in school ready to learn. I wanted to make sure you and your team are aware of preventive dental services that the County’s local oral health program is working to strengthen and expand for students and to share resources for parents to make informed decisions about their child(ren)’s oral and overall health.

Oral health affects students' academic performance. A study of students in one California school district found that students with toothaches were almost 4 times more likely to have a low grade point average. About 11% of students with inaccessible needed dental care missed school compared with 4% of those with access. For every 100 elementary and high school-aged children, 58 and 80 school hours, respectively, are missed annually, resulting in tens of millions of average daily attendance funding lost statewide.[[1]](#footnote-1) It is critical to ensure that students are in good oral health to stay in school ready to learn.

Starting around age 6, a proven way to keep student’s teeth strong and protected from cavities is to receive dental sealants, a thin coating applied to a child’s permanent molars. More information about sealants, including resources to share with parents about this evidence-based preventive service is below.

*[This next paragraph is for you to customize depending on if your local oral health program has plans or wants to make plans to promote school-based or school-linked services to dental sealants for students. Select and customize what is most appropriate given the school you are addressing this letter to.]*

***If the school has school-based/school-linked services, use/customize below:***

We understand that at [XX School] there are [school-based/school-linked, *choose which one applies*] oral health services for dental sealants available to students with parental consent. We would appreciate the opportunity to work with your staff to promote these services to parents so they can make informed decisions about their child’s oral health and the services your school provides.

***If the school does NOT have/offer school-based/school-linked services, use/customize below:***

The local oral health program is identifying dental providers who are available to apply dental sealants to recommended students. We would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and your staff to determine how best to communicate these services to parents of students who could consider receiving this preventive dental service, especially for students who do not already have a regular dentist.

Thank you for your commitment to student achievement and their health. If you have any questions about the oral health community improvement plan and our [school-based/school-linked, choose which is applicable] strategies, please contact [XX] at [insert email and/or phone]. We will follow-up with you and your team to schedule a time to meet about how best to promote these services to your students.

Sincerely,

[Determine who is the best messenger for this letter. Is it your county health executive and/or county superintendent? If possible, perhaps add logos from any additional signatories like the County Office of Education, as applicable. Also, consider other messengers like a school nurse or other champion.]

Resources:

* Seal Today to Prevent Decay, <https://smilecalifornia.org/msm/>
* What is a dental sealant? <https://smilecalifornia.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Molar-Sealant-Infographic-Eng.pdf>
* If a child is enrolled in Medi-Cal and the parent/caregiver needs help finding a dentist: Medi-Cal Telephone Service Center, 800-322-6384 (toll-free)
* For families enrolled in Medi-Cal looking for information about dental benefits: Smile, CA, <https://smilecalifornia.org/>
1. #  Seirawan, Hazem et al. “The impact of oral health on the academic performance of disadvantaged children,” accessed at <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/22813093/> on 2/1/2023.

 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)