



GUIDELINE 11

Schools use data to develop, structure and support their wellness plans.

BEST PRACTICES

- ★ Guide to Healthy School Wellness Policies, State of Alabama
- ★ Arizona Healthy School Environment Model Policy, State of Arizona
- ★ Old Orchard Beach School District, Orchard Beach, Maine
- ★ What's Working, Action for Healthy Kids
- ★ Healthy Children Ready to Learn, State of California
- ★ Linkages between student health and academic achievement, State of California

“People often expect policy makers to fix society’s problems. As childhood obesity problems continue to escalate, the School Physical Fitness and Wellness Advisory Council was formed to develop best-practice guidelines to reverse this trend.”

John White, Ohio House, Health Committee Chairman



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Schools will collect and analyze data to make decisions about the types of policies and plans to put in place. Before finalizing a wellness policy, schools can determine their priorities for policy and action by assessing the current nutrition offerings, the way they are presented, the environment in the cafeteria, the school environment related to health and wellness, and the physical activity and education opportunities available to students and school staff. Through an initial assessment, a school can not only determine where the gaps, needs and resources are, but also set a baseline to measure how a policy and its subsequent implementation has improved the school's wellness.

OBJECTIVE

Schools will conduct an assessment to understand what they are doing well regarding wellness policies and how they can improve.

Because multiple stakeholders may be involved in building a policy that can be embraced by the school community, it is important that such a policy be supported with data collected through assessing the school's wellness conditions. Multiple tools and instruments are available that can easily be tailored to a school's environment so administrators do not have to create an evaluation tool from scratch. The following section offers evaluation tools and strategies that might help schools begin.

BEST PRACTICES

★ 1. Guide to Healthy School Wellness Policies, Action for Healthy Kids of Alabama

Background: The purpose for the Guide to Healthy School Wellness Policies was to help schools set standards for developing wellness policies within Alabama's school districts. Among the guidelines that Alabama adapted from those produced by the School Nutrition Association (SNA) include:

- Nutrition education will be integrated into other areas of the curriculum, such as math, science, language arts and social studies;
- Physical activity will be integrated across curricula and throughout the day, considering the "balancing equation" of food intake and physical activity; and
- After-school programs will encourage physical activity and healthy habit information.

For more information:

http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/filelib/toolsforteam/recom/AL_AL-%20Guide%20to%20Wellness%20Policies.pdf



✦ 2. Arizona Healthy School Environment Model Policy, State of Arizona

Background: This document supports school districts in Arizona that are developing wellness policies. Arizona provides detailed descriptions of ways in which a school district might consider improving its ability to promote healthy habits. Among these recommendations, a few examples are:

- Recognizing obesity, eating disorders and other health problems that may affect a student's eating habits;
- Complying with USDA nutrition requirements;
- Advertising appropriate foods and beverages in areas where students are likely to eat during mealtime;
- Offering physical education courses where students can learn, practice and assess their motor skills, social skills and knowledge; and
- Discouraging physical inactivity.

For more information:

<http://www.actionforhealthykids.org>

✦ 3. Old Orchard Beach School District, Old Orchard Beach, Maine

Background: The Old Orchard Beach School district has started to measure students' body mass indexes by collecting the height and weight of students in kindergarten through grade five and in grade seven. By collecting this data, the district can properly plan health programs and track student measurement data to determine whether implementing a program has been beneficial to the students.

For more information:

Food and Nutrition Services, U.S. Department of Agriculture; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; and U.S. Department of Education. FNS-374, Making it Happen! School Nutrition Success Stories. Alexandria, VA, January 2005.

✦ 4. What's Working, Action for Healthy Kids

Background: Action for Healthy Kids has put together a number of best-practice profiles on its Web site, including school-based interventions, programs and practices. These can serve as helpful and specific examples of how various schools choose to implement a wellness plan.

For more information:

http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/resources_topic.php?topic=14



★ 5. **Healthy Children Ready to Learn, a White Paper on Health, Nutrition and Physical Education, California Department of Education (CDE)**

Background: Through recommendations from various key stakeholders on wellness in California, the CDE has established a comprehensive approach to ensure that students are healthy and ready to learn. California schools are focusing on supplying high-quality physical education to support students in developing fundamental and advanced motor skills; improving self-confidence, self-esteem and self-control; and providing more opportunities for physical fitness. The CDE also has encouraged schools to set higher nutrition standards for food and beverages served or sold on campuses. Some of the recommendations include serving every student a school meal, thus ensuring that no child goes hungry; replacing high-sugar drinks and snacks with milk and snacks with higher nutritional values; and offering breakfast programs.

To ensure the success of nutrition and physical activity programs, the schools must provide an environment supporting the development of these habits. For this to happen, the CDE suggests that schools form a school health board with members including school staff, students, parents, administrators, health care professionals and other interested community members.

Success: Research has shown that schools offering high-quality physical education have shown higher achievement in both mathematics and reading. Schools offering breakfast programs along with physical activity see positive changes in student attendance and classroom behavior.

For more information:

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/se/yr05healthychildrenwp.asp?print=yes>

★ 6. **Linkages between student health and academic achievement, California School Boards Association (CSBA)**

Background: In making the case for a wellness agenda, school districts will need to utilize the best research to demonstrate to their school boards that this issue directly promotes student success. The CSBA recognizes that children need to be in good physical and mental health if they are to fully participate and learn in school. It cites helpful research on the links between academic performance and student health and well-being.

For more information:

<http://www.csba.org/is/ch/linkages.htm>

For another article that synthesizes similar research:

http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/filelib/facts_and_findings/fs_npaa.pdf



RESOURCES

USDA Team Nutrition

This Web site, set up by the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, provides many resources. One link provides sample legislation, outlines local wellness policy requirements, discusses the components of a wellness policy and gives several examples of wellness policies established in various states. The site also walks through, step by step, the process of developing a local wellness policy and then gives examples. Another link on implementing a local wellness policy includes topic-specific resources, organizations, programs, curricula and research. The resources cover topics like nutrition education, physical activity, guidelines for all foods served on campus, other school-based activities and a combination of those topics. Other sections list useful Web sites on funding a wellness policy and answer frequently asked questions.
<http://teamnnutrition.usda.gov/Healthy/wellnesspolicy.html>

Helping Kids Succeed, Ohio School Boards Association

The Ohio School Boards Association compiled this resources kit, which outlines the steps and components of developing a wellness plan, sample policies for wellness and ways that board members can help establish a wellness plan.
<http://www.osba-ohio.org/Files/SALTkit11.pdf>

Food and Nutrition Information Center

This site from the USDA's Food and Nutrition Information Center serves as a directory listing credible, accurate and practical resources targeting consumers, nutrition and health professionals, and educators. The site provides easy-to-use educational materials, government reports, research papers and other resources.
<http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic>

Model School Wellness Policies

Both the School Nutrition Association and the National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity (NANA) provide model policies that promote healthy eating and opportunities for physical activities that reduce the risks of illness and associated societal costs.
<http://www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/nana.html>
<http://www.schoolnutrition.org>

HealthierUS School Challenge

Many schools already have made changes to their school nutrition environments, improved the quality of the foods served and provided students with more nutritious, healthy choices. USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) wants to encourage schools to achieve such results. It has established the HealthierUS School Challenge to encourage schools to go further in their wellness efforts and to recognize excellence for those schools that do.
<http://teamnnutrition.usda.gov/HealthierUS/index.html>



Grant information sites

These sites tell where to look for available funding as well as how to apply.

<http://www.grants.gov/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/funding/index.htm>

<http://www.healthinschools.org/grants>

<http://www.fipse.aed.org>

<http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/HYFund/>

Ohio Department of Education — Wellness Policy Guidance and Training

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) released a memorandum to all superintendents and food service directors to clarify the Child Nutrition Act of 2004, Section 204 Local Wellness Policy, and to introduce the ODE Safety, Health and Nutrition staff members who can provide technical assistance with developing a wellness policy and plan. The document also addresses the school wellness policy minimum legal requirements. Additionally, it offers wellness trainers as a resource who may visit a region and provide training support.

<http://www.ode.state.oh.us> (Search: Wellness)



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