

GUIDELINE 8

School community leadership demonstrates a commitment to wellness through policies, plans and actions.

BEST PRACTICES

- Healthy Ohioans Small Steps, Big Strides, State of Ohio
- Painesville Township Schools, Painesville, Ohio
- Richland One School District, Columbia, South Carolina
- Cortland Enlarged City School District, Cortland, New York
- O Virginia's Nutrition and Physical Activity Scoreboard and Awards Program, State of Virginia
- ② Los Angeles Unified School District Nutrition Network, Los Angeles, California
- **☼** International Walk to School Initiative in USA, Chapel Hill, North Carolina
- Food on the Run (FOR), State of California
- Newark High School Wellness Center, Newark, Delaware

"We plan more structured physical activities with our two young girls — such as biking, tennis and hiking — but we have lots of informal activity too.

We throw the Frisbee, play with our dog, and have contests to see who can do the most jumping jacks or stand on their head the longest. It's important to keep it fun!"

Tom Cousineau, former OSU All-American linebacker, NFL player







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The research on school change is clear. Leadership must clearly articulate commitment through policies, plans and actions if a wellness initiative is to succeed. Partnership at the highest administrative levels will demonstrate the value of moving toward a healthier school environment.

OBJECTIVE

School community leadership will demonstrate a commitment to wellness by addressing the health and wellness climate of the school and by developing and implementing an effective comprehensive wellness policy.

Schools need to assess their current culture and climate to determine their readiness for implementing a wellness program. Does the school cafeteria provide healthy and fresh food selections, and are they visible? Do students have opportunities for physical activity outside of gym class? Such findings will provide needed information for decision-making about the school's needs and priorities. Establishing a healthy climate is a necessary condition for learning.

BEST PRACTICES

1. Healthy Ohioans — Small Steps, Big Strides; State of Ohio

Background: Healthy Ohioans is a statewide health and wellness initiative under the direction of Ohio Governor Bob Taft and the Ohio Department of Health that encourages Ohioans to adopt healthier behaviors and lifestyles. The long-term goal of Healthy Ohioans is to reduce chronic disease by motivating Ohioans to change their unhealthy habits into healthy ones. The program provides information, resources and programs for Ohioans to improve nutrition, increase physical activity, prevent tobacco use or increase tobacco-use cessation. The program has four components: schools, businesses, state employees and the community. These four areas are addressed through the Governor's Buckeye Best Healthy Schools Awards program, the Governor's Healthy Ohioans Business Council, the State Agency Wellness Committee, the State Employee Health and Fitness Task Force, and the Healthy Ohioans-Healthy Community award program and community heart health programs. The program also partners with other organizations that share Healthy Ohioans' goals. Some tangible results of various Healthy Ohioans efforts include funding for population-based public health programming in 24 Ohio counties, developing agency wellness plans for all Ohio state government cabinet agencies, and enhanced assessment and wellness efforts within schools.

Duration: Ongoing since 2001.

Success: This program has been instrumental in establishing programming and making changes in state agencies, schools, businesses and communities. A fitness challenge event is held each May on the Statehouse lawn. Health and wellness plans have been adopted by state agencies offering education and



events to increase awareness about the importance of healthy lifestyle choices. Schools have been encouraged to complete self-assessments covering the areas of tobacco-use prevention, nutrition and physical activity. In addition the business council sponsored workplace wellness conferences in 2004 and 2005, added five regional business councils in 2005, and released a publication called Doing Well by Being Well: Designing Win-Win Employee Wellness Programs.

For more information:

http://www.healthyohioans.org

2. Painesville Township Schools, Painesville, Ohio

Background: The Painesville Township school district started to serve breakfast in its six elementary schools after success at the secondary school level. A la carte and vending options also were updated to meet specific nutritional criteria. Recess already had been scheduled before lunch. The staff was offered training and in-service programs at least four times per year. The district also focused on marketing the new program and organizing games, activities and cafeteria promotions. Healthy choices such as juice or bottled water were emphasized throughout the school, and a soda vending machine was replaced with a milk vendor. Fryers were eliminated at secondary schools, and elementary school students were limited to only one "extra" snack per day.

Duration: Ongoing

Success: The principal and school health team is credited with implementing and supporting the program. Both were essential in making sure the food service staff was well trained, and that parents were informed about the program through menus, newsletters, a Web site and open houses.

3. Richland One School District, Columbia, South Carolina

Background: Richland One School District established a nutrition policy prohibiting the sale of foods and beverages with minimal nutritional value throughout the entire district. Students, school administrators and school board members worked together throughout the process of implementing the nutrition policy. The students were encouraged to provide suggestions, which resulted in increasing the variety of choices offered in the cafeteria and asking for foods that not only looked good, but also tasted good.

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. Cortland Enlarged City School District, Cortland, New York

Background: Cortland established an all-inclusive nutrition policy that addressed the entire nutrition spectrum, including improving the vending machine selections. The policy addresses nutrition education, creating a healthy school environment, staff professional development for nutrition, referrals, counseling and screening for nutrition-related problems, while incorporating parent and community participation. Cortland Schools firmly believed that nutrition programs shouldn't stand alone; therefore, they implemented programs to expand opportunities for physical fitness and provided staff with weight management programs. As part of the elementary schools' nutrition activities, students were offered fruit and vegetable sampling days. To further their nutritional experience, the students created a color code system to distinguish healthy foods and snacks from those that are not so healthy.

Duration: The policy was implemented in 2001.

Success: The school district was awarded the Eat Well and Play Hard Award for increasing consumption of 1 percent milk, fruits and vegetables and for increasing physical activity opportunities. This is an award presented by the New York State Department of Health.

3. Virginia's Nutrition and Physical Activity Scorecard and Awards Program, Virginia Department of Education

This incentive-based program rewards schools for promoting good nutrition, increasing physical activity, and improving student health and academic performance. Schools are awarded points for the best practices they implement and maintain. The points are added up, and then schools are presented with gold, silver or bronze awards based on their points. The program is intended to increase academic performance, promote practice and policy changes at the school and division levels, and enhance student health and wellness.

3 6. Los Angeles Unified School District Nutrition Network, Los Angeles, California

Background: This program targets low-income students in kindergarten through twelfth grade. The entire school community works together to promote nutrition and physical activity within the classrooms, homes and the cafeteria.

Success: The program has touched more than 150,000 students and their families. Administrators and school staff have spent more than 30 hours educating students on nutrition.

For more information:

http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/resources_profile.php?id=232



3. International Walk to School Initiative in USA, Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Background: Each year, students, teachers, parents and community members walk to school together one day in October. The walk is used to promote community involvement and participation in physical activity. It also enables parents and officials to examine the routes to help ensure safer walking to school for children.

Duration: In 1997, only two cities in the U.S. participated in the International Walk to School Initiative. In 2001, 3 million walkers from nearly all 50 states participated.

For more information:

http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/resources_profile.php?id=225

3 8. Food on the Run (FOR), State of California

Background: FOR works with communities to address and advocate policies within high schools that promote wellness and educate school boards and administrators on nutrition policies and practices. Materials and training are provided for understanding, creating and implementing wellness policies. Students are then trained to become peer advocates for wellness within their school systems.

For more information:

http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/resources_profile.php?id=201

3 9. Newark High School Wellness Center, Newark, Delaware

Background: Newark High School has partnered with Christina's Care, Department of Health and Social Services and the Delaware Division of Public Health to establish a school wellness center. The center, located within the high school, is NOT to take the place of a hospital or personal healthcare provider but is intended to help teens get the medical help and attention they need without contending with external barriers to service such as cost, transportation, confidentiality and inconvenient appointment times. Some of the services the wellness center offers include:

- Physical examinations;
- Health screenings;
- Nutrition and weight management;
- Crisis intervention and suicide prevention;
- Tobacco cessation counseling; and
- Health and nutrition education.



It is important to note that the wellness center has limits to the services it provides. As previously stated, it is not a hospital, and does not provide x-rays, complex laboratory tests, birth control prescriptions, hospitalization or ongoing treatments for complex medical conditions such as medical or psychiatric problems. The wellness center encourages the active participation of the students' parents or guardians.

For more information:

http://www.christina.k12.de.us/newark/wellness

RESOURCES

Ohio Department of Education wellness policy guidance and training

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) sent a memorandum to all superintendents and food service directors to provide clarification on the Child Nutrition Act of 2004, Section 204 Local Wellness Policy, and introduced the ODE Safety, Health and Nutrition staff members who can provide technical assistance in developing a wellness policy and plan. The document addresses the school wellness policy minimum legal requirements. Additionally, it offers the resource of wellness trainers who may be invited to a region to provide training support. http://www.ode.state.oh.us (Search: Wellness.)

USDA Team Nutrition, Local Wellness Policy

The United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service initiative that features tools to help schools develop and implement their local wellness policies. http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Healthy/wellnesspolicy.html

National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity, Model Wellness Policies

The National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity (NANA) advocates national policies and programs to promote healthy eating and physical activity to help reduce the illnesses, disabilities, premature deaths and costs caused by diet- and inactivity-related diseases such as heart disease, cancer, high blood pressure, diabetes and obesity.

http://www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/nana.html

National Association of School Boards of Education (NASBE)

The NASBE's Safe and Healthy Schools Project aims to assist policymakers and practitioners in creating safe, healthy and nurturing school environments for all the nation's children and youth. The NASBE has developed an array of landmark policy guides on a variety of issues concerning children, youth and school health that have helped inform the development of education policies across the country. The site provides various activities and services assisting with school wellness policies, physical health and activity concerns.

http://www.nasbe.org/healthyschools/

School Nutrition Association

The School Nutrition Association offers a model for developing wellness policies and other supporting information related to healthy, nutritious school meals, as well as a support link for



food service professionals, administrators, teachers and students. 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 now provide students with more nutritious, healthy food choices. USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) wants to encourage schools to achieve such results, and has established the *HealthierUS* School Challenge to encourage schools to go further and to recognize those who choose to do so.

http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/HealthierUS/index.html

Government leadership in preventing childhood obesity

The Institute of Medicine develops the role of government leadership in addressing childhood obesity. The document speaks about the federal commitment, state and local initiatives and support, as well as evaluating of efforts addressing the problem of obesity. http://www.iom.edu

Center for Health and Health Care in Schools

Information, news, resources and grant alerts on topics related to health in schools. The site provides several fact sheets, including one on childhood obesity and a parents' resource link. http://www.healthinschools.org/home.asp

South Carolina Department of Education Recommendations for Improving Student Nutrition and Physical Activity

South Carolina Department of Education Task Force on Student Nutrition and Physical Activity. (2004). South Carolina Department of Education recommendations for improving student nutrition and physical activity. South Carolina Department of Education.

A report written by the South Carolina Department of Education Task Force on Student Nutrition and Physical Activity, with guidelines and recommendations to schools to facilitate developing and improving student nutrition and physical activity. The report gives a list of recommendations for school nutrition environment, school meals, school nutrition, competitive foods and beverages, school assessment of physical activity, school opportunities for physical activity, as well as student physical activity requirements. A list of Internet resources is also available.

Healthy Ohioans

Ohio Department of Health. (2001, September). Healthy Ohioans. Healthy communities. Exploratory research report. Gerbig, Snell/Weisheimer & Associates.

This reference is an Adobe pdf file reviewing the governor's initiative to improve the health and wellness of Ohioans and Ohio's communities. The document reviews various attributes that affect health in school-aged children and company employees. The site also includes the criteria for applying for Buckeye Best School awards.

http://www.healthyohioans.org/schools/schools.aspx