

Overview of Local School Wellness Policy Development Tools

The tools in this section (Section III) provide more detailed information on each of the required components of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 and are designed for use by school board members, administrators, and policy development team members involved in wellness policy development. While the Reauthorization Act of 2004 lists the components that the wellness policy should address, each district is responsible for designing specific policy content. Many details will need to be considered when addressing each policy component. The component addressing nutrition guidelines for foods available in school, for example, will need to incorporate standards for nutrition as well as specific details on the hours and locations covered by the policy.

Section III begins with a discussion of what to consider when developing a wellness policy. The remainder of the section is organized by policy component, with specific subtopics for each component. For each subtopic, the key elements to consider when developing policy are summarized, and optional policy language is provided. Districts are under no obligation to adopt the policy language included in this section. The optional language is intended to give information on national recommendations and to provide a starting point for policy discussion. Section III also contains checklists and other tools that may be useful for the individuals and teams working on policy development.



What to Consider When Developing a Local School Wellness Policy

Creating a Policy Development Team

The reauthorization act requires that parents, students, school food authority representatives, administrators, and the public be involved in local wellness policy development. One way of complying with this requirement is to convene a policy development team and appoint a coordinator. The team should include representatives of all the groups whose involvement is required, as well as other individuals who may play a role in implementing or supporting the local wellness policy. These could include school or community health professionals such as WIC dietitians, public health nurses, and community wellness advocates. Other individuals who would provide valuable input into the policy development process include health, physical education, or other teachers, principals, school board members, and parent-teacher association representatives. Additional members may be selected as appropriate. Policy development team members should receive an overview of the process used to establish policy in their district. The scope of the work of the team should also be clarified. In some districts teams may be tasked with drafting policy language for consideration by the school board, while in others the team may be asked to provide policy recommendations. The team can then complete their tasks and share their results with the school board.

Role of Schools in Promoting Physical Activity and Nutrition

Once the policy development team has been established the group should be provided with background information on the requirements of the reauthorization act and the role schools can play in promoting physical activity and good nutrition. Whether a child is at school only during the academic school day or involved in extracurricular activities, the school environment provides numerous

opportunities for students to learn about and participate in healthy eating and physical activity. A statement affirming the school's commitment to student health could be drafted for inclusion in the policy.

Optional Policy Language: Leading Statement for Nutrition and Physical Activity Policy

The School Board recognizes that schools are in a position to promote healthy lifestyle choices by students that can affect their lifelong wellness. Therefore they will commit the School District to providing environments that promote and protect children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity.

Schools will provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity, and will establish linkages between health education and school meal programs, and with related community services.

Establishing a Commitment to Local School Wellness Policies

The board may wish to clarify the school district's commitment to improving the nutrition and physical activity environment by passing a resolution. The resolution should address national and state health statistics, related health concerns, and any available local or district information. The resolution should also clearly state the intent and goals of the wellness policy. A sample resolution is included in Section IV (page 65).



Policy Content

The reauthorization act requires that the local wellness policy address six primary components, which are:

Component 1: Nutrition Guidelines for All Foods Available in Schools

Component 2: Assurances that School Meal Guidelines are Not Less Restrictive than Federal Requirements

Component 3: Goals for Nutrition Education

Component 4: Goals for Physical Activity

Component 5: Other School-based Activities that are Designed to Promote Student Wellness

Component 6: A Plan for Monitoring Policy Implementation

The act does not provide specific details on what areas should be covered by each component, however. Policy development teams or board members will therefore be tasked with drafting specific policy language for each of the six components. Policy decisions will need to be made about: how to improve the school food environment, increase nutritious choices while limiting less nutritious choices, enhance the nutrition education curriculum, and ensure that all foods and beverages served in school coincide with educational instruction and health goals. It is also important to explore ways to increase opportunities for students to participate in physical activity during the school day. Physical activity options that should be considered include increasing physical education, expanding extracurricular sports programs, providing or increasing recess time, and integrating physical activity into traditional academic subjects.

Policy Implementation

The adoption of a comprehensive, specific wellness policy will result in guidelines schools can use to improve student health and nutrition. However, implementing a comprehensive policy immediately may be challenging for schools and districts. Therefore, administrators or policy development team members may wish to design an implementation plan that incorporates policy changes over the course of several years. Section IV includes a sample template that could be used to draft an implementation plan (page 61).

Planning and Periodic Review by Stakeholders

The reauthorization act requires that certain stakeholders be involved in wellness policy development, and districts that create a policy development team will be in compliance with that requirement. After the policy is implemented it will also be important to review, and if necessary, revise, the policy. The policy could include language that specifies the intervals at which the policy will be reviewed. The original policy development team members would be well suited to participate in policy review.

Optional Policy Language: Planning and Periodic Review by Stakeholders

The school district and/or individual schools within the district will create or work with appropriate existing advisory groups to assist in developing, implementing, monitoring, reviewing, and as necessary, revising school nutrition and physical activity policies. These advisory groups should reflect the perspectives of students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals and other interested community members.



Communication with Parents

Including parents in the development of school policy and informing parents of why such a policy was selected is an important way to ensure endorsement and support of the policy at home. Informed parents can help support compliance with the policy by explaining its importance to their children.

Once the policy has been adopted it will be necessary to share it with all parents. An example of a letter to parents is included in Section IV (page 69) of this document. Districts may also want to consider incorporating parent outreach into their wellness policy development process. Parent-teacher associations can be valuable partners in outreach efforts.



Optional Policy Language: Communication with Parents

The district/school will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. The district/school will send home nutrition information and post nutrition tips on school websites. Schools will encourage parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks and to refrain from including beverages and foods that do not meet good nutrition guidelines. The district will provide parents a list of food and beverages that meet the district's food and beverage regulations and ideas for healthy celebrations/parties, rewards and fundraising activities.



Component 1: Nutrition Guidelines for All Foods Available in Schools

Introduction to Nutrition Guidelines

The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 Sec. 204 (a)(2) [42 U.S.C. 1751 note] requires that the Wellness Policy:

“includes nutrition guidelines selected by the local educational agency for all foods available on each school campus under the local educational agency during the school day with the objectives of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity”

To meet this requirement, school boards will need to adopt nutrition guidelines, determine which foods available on the school campus will be affected, and the times during which the policy will apply. If the nutrition guidelines apply to foods served “during the school day”, the hours considered part of the school day should be specified. The following sections will address each of these areas.

Sample nutrition guidelines are provided in the Food and Beverage Standards Section (pages 24-25).

To help determine which foods and beverages will be affected by the Food and Beverage Standards, food and beverages available on the school campus can be divided into four main categories with subcategories within each. The four categories are:

1. Federally reimbursed National School Meal programs providing free and reduced price meals;
2. Food and beverages sold (a) by the school nutrition program outside the free and reduced meals program as ala carte; (b) in vending machines, school stores, coffee carts,

concessions stands, or other locations on the school campus; and (c) for fundraising purposes. Foods falling into these categories are often referred to as competitive foods.

3. Food and beverages served at school for snacks, rewards, celebrations, incentives etc.; and
4. Food and beverages served and sold at school but not during school hours.

Each district can determine a definition of “during the school day” that is applicable to their schools, programs, and communities. Districts can then decide whether to apply the standards to foods and beverages served “during the school day” or “outside of the school day.” School boards will also want to determine how and where to apply the food and beverage standards during the school day. For example, school boards may or may not wish to adopt standards for classroom parties but may feel strongly about a policy addressing vending machine food and beverages. Table 1 (page 30) is an example chart that could be used to record decisions on when and where to apply the guidelines. It provides a sample list of where food and beverages are served and/or sold in schools and the generic terms “during the school day” and “outside of the school day.” This table is only a sample and should be revised to meet the needs of each individual district.

The material in each of the following sections contains sample food and beverage standards, what to consider when determining the settings in which the standards will apply, and information about the school lunch program.



Providing a healthy school nutrition environment is one way to ensure that children are encouraged to make healthy food choices. "Changing the Scene", a publication from the United States Department of Agriculture, is an action kit to help parents, teachers, school administrators and school foodservice professionals and the community look at their school nutrition environment and identify areas need improvement. More information on Changing the Scene is available at: <http://teammnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/changing.html>

Food and Beverage Standards

Although the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the Food Guide Pyramid provide guidance regarding what foods are healthy, there is no generally accepted definition for "junk food", which makes it difficult to identify foods and beverages that should not be served in schools. Thus, the language for the recommended food and beverage standards in this document is specific. This specificity will allow schools to determine which foods and beverages can and cannot be served at school outside the National School Meal program

Food and beverage that is served as part of the National School Meals program is required to follow the extensive requirements set by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The USDA requirements are based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the Food Guide Pyramid. The food service manager for the school district can provide specific information regarding the requirements for the National School Meals programs. Additional information can be located at: www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/

Dietary Guidelines for Americans:
www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines/

Food Guide Pyramid:
<http://www.mypyramid.gov/>



"At the end of the day, the money that goes into the [vending] machine should NOT be more important than the nutritional value of what comes out of it"

*- Robert Doyle, Chief School Administrator
Mat-Su School District*

Anchorage Daily News: Sunday May 29, 2005

Implementation of a policy around food and beverage standards may require substantial changes to existing food policies and practices. To transition effectively to a new policy, districts may wish to phase in changes over time. Schools may wish to develop a one, two, or five year plan to implement some of these recommendations. See Section IV for a sample implementation plan (page 61).

Another consideration for those developing wellness policies is that districts and schools may not be able to secure the approved food and beverages immediately due to contracts with vendors and supply issues in Alaska. Therefore, the policy may need to include exemptions that cover food and beverage orders already made, supplies of products already in stock that do not meet the Food and Beverage Standards, and transportation issues affecting the availability of healthy foods and beverages.

Schools or districts should also establish a system for handling requests for policy exemptions. The superintendent may wish to appoint a designee to review requests and grant exemptions.



**Optional Policy Language:
Food and Beverage Standards**

All food and beverage served/sold, outside the School Lunch and Breakfast Program, during the school day*, must meet the food and beverage content standards.

Exceptions to the food and beverage content standards may be made:

- For cultural events with educational and academic value and/or special school events
- Through the established appeal process when an exception is granted by the superintendent's designee
- For individual products which have sufficient nutritional value to offset sugar or fat content or other requirements, or to prohibit the sale of individual products which are deemed inappropriate for sale to students despite meeting the Food and Beverage Content Standards. Requests will be made to the superintendent's designee before products are placed in schools.

* as defined by each district



**Optional Policy Language (continued):
Food Content Standards**

Foods approved for sale must:

1. Have 30 percent or less of total calories from fat (excluding tofu, nuts, nut butters, seeds, eggs, legumes, fruits and vegetables that have not been deep fried, and cream cheese, low-fat salad dressings, cheese and butter packaged for individual sale);

To calculate percent of calories coming from fat use the Nutrition Facts label.

$$\frac{(\text{Calories from fat})}{(\text{Calories})} \times 100 = \% \text{ of total calories from fat}$$

2. Have 10 percent or less of total calories from saturated plus trans fat (excluding tofu, nuts, nut butters, seeds, eggs, legumes, fruits and vegetables that have not been deep fried, and cream cheese, low-fat salad dressings, cheese and butter packaged for individual sale);

To calculate percent of saturated fat plus trans fat use the Nutrition Facts label.

$$\frac{(\text{Saturated Fat [g]} + \text{Trans fat [g]})(9 \text{ Calories per gram})}{(\text{Calories})} \times 100 = \% \text{ of total calories from saturated and trans fat}$$

3. Have no more than 35% total sugar by weight (except for sugars that occur naturally in a dairy product, fruit, or vegetable);

To calculate the percent total sugar by weight use the Nutrition Facts label.

$$\frac{(\text{Grams of sugar})}{(\text{Grams in serving size})} \times 100 = \% \text{ of sugar weight}$$

4. Be limited to the following maximum portion sizes:
 - a. One and one-quarter ounces for chips, crackers, popcorn, cereal, or jerky;
 - b. Two and one half ounces for trail mix, nuts, seeds, or dried fruit;
 - c. Two ounces for cookies or cereal bars;
 - d. Three ounces for bakery items;
 - e. Three fluid ounces for frozen desserts, including, but not limited to, ice cream;
 - f. Eight ounces for non-frozen yogurt;

Limits for portion sizes of snack foods are provided to moderate caloric intake.

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1/2 Cup (124 g)
Servings Per Container approx. 3 1/2

Amount Per Serving		% Daily Value*
Calories 60	Calories from Fat 0	
		% Daily Value*
Total Fat 0g		0%
Saturated Fat 0g		0%
Trans Fat 0g		
Cholesterol 0mg		0%
Sodium 10mg		0%
Total Carbohydrate 15g		5%
Dietary Fiber 1g		4%
Sugars 14g		
Protein 0g		

Vitamin A 6% Vitamin C 8%
Calcium 0% Iron 2%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.



Optional Policy Language (continued): Beverage Content Standards

Water approved for sale is:

1. Plain or carbonated water that does not contain added sweeteners (natural or artificial, including sucralose and aspartame); vitamins/minerals; caffeine; or herbal supplements. Water may be sold in any size.

Juice approved for sale is:

1. 100% fruit or vegetable juice, plain or carbonated, that does not contain added sweeteners (natural or artificial); caffeine; or herbal supplements. Maximum size allowed for sale is (8 oz. for Elementary, 10 oz. for Junior High/Middle School and 12 or 16 oz. for High School).*

Juice/Water blends approved for sale are:

1. Juice and water blends that do not contain added sweeteners (natural or artificial); caffeine; or herbal supplements. Maximum size allowed for sale is (not permitted for Elementary, 10 oz. for Junior High/Middle School and 12 oz. for High School).*

Milk Drinks** approved for sale are:

1. 1% (low-fat) or fat free (skim, non-fat) milk. Maximum size allowed for sale is (8 oz. for Elementary, 10 oz. for Junior High/Middle School and 12 or 16 oz. for High School).*
2. Flavored low-fat or fat free milk drinks may contain no more than 27 grams of sugar total per 8 oz. (150 calories per 8 oz). Maximum size allowed for sale is 16 oz (8 oz. for Elementary, 10 oz. for Junior High/Middle School and 12 or 16 oz. for High School).*

Sports Drinks approved for sale are: Beverages that contain less than 15 grams of sugars per 8 oz. (66 calories per 8 oz.) and do not contain caffeine, artificial sweeteners, and/or herbal supplements. Maximum size allowed for sale is (not permitted for Elementary, 10 oz. for Junior High/Middle School and 12 oz. for High School).*

Milkshakes and smoothies will follow the Food Policy.

Other Beverages are not approved for sale.

**As a practical matter, if elementary and secondary students have shared access to areas on a common campus or in common buildings, then the district should adopt a policy to meet the needs of all students.*

***Milk includes nutritionally equivalent milk alternatives (per USDA), such as soy milk.*



Why is 100% fruit juice allowed, even though it contains as much sugar as soda?

Although fruit juice does contain sugar, all of the sugar in juices approved for sale is “naturally-occurring” – meaning the sugar was contained in the fruit which yielded the juice. Juice drinks which also contain added sweetener are

not allowed. Soda contains only empty calories, while 100% fruit juice contains nutrients beyond the calories themselves. Orange juice contains vitamins A and C, thiamin, niacin, riboflavin, and may also be enriched with calcium. Soda contains no nutrients other than its calories. Limiting the size of the juice to 10 or 12 ounces or less helps moderate calorie intake.



Food and Beverages Sold During the School Day

Food and beverage sales that occur outside of federally reimbursed school meal programs but during the school day have become routine in many districts and schools. Policy development teams and board members will need to consider whether and how to apply the food and beverage standards to these food and beverage sales.

Ala carte school meals, school stores, concession stands, vending machines, and fundraising events are often organized to provide students with opportunities to learn about customer service, sales, and responsibility. Allowing the continuation of these activities but applying the Food and Beverage Standards to the foods and beverages sold is one way to ensure that students are provided with a consistent health and nutrition message while

still participating in valuable learning experiences.

Food and beverage sales have also become a source of discretionary funds for many schools. Unfortunately, these funds are traditionally earned by selling candy, soda, and other high fat, high sugar foods and beverages with low nutritional value. The United States Department of Agriculture does have a list of prohibited foods and beverages called Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value (FMNV). Sales of FMNV, however, are only prohibited in the food service area during meal service periods. Therefore, sales of the FMNV items in school stores, concession stands, vending machines, and fundraising events would only be prohibited if those sales occurred in the food service area during meal times. The food service manager for the school district can provide specific information regarding FMNV. Additional information can also be located at:

www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/menu/fmnav.htm



Diet Soft Drinks and Coffee

Although it may appear that offering diet soft drinks instead of regular soft drinks is a reasonable substitution, health professionals have concerns about diet soft drink intake in children. Soft drinks tend to displace calcium-rich beverages in the diets of many children and adolescents. Inadequate calcium intake can result in reductions in bone mass, increasing the risk of osteoporosis and bone fractures. Dental health professionals are concerned about children drinking diet soda because of increased enamel erosion and cavities due to the acidity of the soft drink. Additionally, children drinking diet soda at school may be affected by caffeine in the beverages and exhibit disruptive classroom behaviors.

Many diet soft drinks and coffee both contain caffeine. Due to lower body weight of children, small amounts of caffeine can stimulate the central nervous system and produce some of the following effects that could affect classroom behavior: jitteriness and nervousness, upset stomach, headaches, difficulty concentrating, difficulty sleeping, increased heart rate, and increased blood pressure.

Not only does the caffeine in diet soda and coffee have the potential to affect classroom behaviors but diet soda and coffee contain empty calories (calories that do not provide any nutrients). Children filling up on caffeinated beverages may not get the vitamins and minerals needed from healthy sources. Lastly, caffeine is a diuretic causing the body to eliminate water (through urinating), which may contribute to dehydration. It is not recommended that schools offer diet soft drinks or coffee to students based on the potential for these adverse health effects.





Why prohibit vitamin drinks and nutrient-infused drinks with no calories?

Vitamin drinks and nutrient-infused drinks are prohibited because there is no scientific evidence that indicates these products are necessary for the average individual. Health professionals are also concerned that these products will foster bad habits and poor food choices because individuals may feel that the vitamin water or nutrient-infused drinks provide all the nutrients needed for the day. To promote healthy lifestyle choices by students and to promote and protect children's health vitamin waters and nutrient-infused drinks should be prohibited.

The innovation of districts and schools will be crucial for designing solutions that provide healthier food choices and continue to generate income. Innovative ideas include partnering with vendors to introduce milk in vending machines; offering bagels and cream cheese, yogurt, nuts, cheese and crackers, and fresh fruit; controlling pricing and keeping prices lower than local stores; replacing soft drinks and non-nutritious snacks sold in vending machines with lower-fat foods and 100% fruit juice; and selling low-fat and non-fat milk in colorful and re-sealable bottles.

"Making it Happen! School Nutrition Success Stories" is a publication describing how schools throughout the United States have successfully implemented innovative solutions-maintaining or increasing revenue levels with more healthful options. This document is available at: www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/makingithappen.html

Optional Policy Language: Food and Beverages Sold During the School Day

During the school day, the superintendent or designee may permit foods and beverages (including but not limited to vending, concessions, a la carte, student stores, parties, and fundraising) to be sold outside the School Lunch and Breakfast Program as long as they are consistent with the Food and Beverage Standards, do not impair the food service's ability to be financially sound, and observe appropriate sanitation and safety procedures.



Success stories show that children will buy healthy foods.

- Students will buy and consume healthful foods and beverages when these options are tasty, easily accessible, and priced right.
- School foodservice and vending programs can continue to make money while offering healthful food and beverage options to students.
- Some schools have actually made more money from healthful options than from their usual offerings.
- Students, parents, and communities support healthy school nutrition environments, and are willing to get involved in making changes.

www.ActionForHealthyKids.org

© 2003 Action for Healthy Kids



Food and Beverages Served During the School Day

In addition to food and beverages sold at school, the wellness policy should address other foods and beverages provided to students during the school day. To reinforce a consistent message about the value of eating healthy foods, the nutritional content of food and beverages served during the school day, such as: snacks, rewards, celebrations, incentives, parties, events, candy bowls should be in compliance with the Food and Beverage Standards established by the school.

School boards may wish to include an exception to the Food and Beverage Standards for traditional cultural foods or for cultural events with academic or educational value.

It may be difficult for schools to determine the fat or sugar content of homemade foods (e.g. cupcakes made from apple sauce). The board may wish to include a clause in the local wellness policy allowing a specific number of events a year that are exempt from the food section of the policy. The beverage section of the policy should remain in effect for these events as it is simple to understand.

See Section IV for ideas for Celebrations, Parties, Events and Fundraising (page 85).

Optional Policy Language: Food and Beverages Served During the School Day

Parties/celebrations not following the food section of the food and beverage standards are limited to no more than three times per year.

Or

Parties/celebrations not following the food and beverage standards are limited to no more than three times per year.

Food and Beverages Served and Sold Outside of the School Day

Although the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 does not require schools to establish nutrition guidelines for events held outside of the school day, some districts may wish to set a precedent by expanding the policy to include non-school hours.

In general, schools are used for many non-school affiliated community events such as recreational and sporting events, plays, musicals, dances, classes, community-school events, or fairs. The sponsors of these events often wish to serve or sell food and beverages as a way of providing refreshments at intermissions or generating income.

Monitoring the nutritional contents of foods served at these events would be difficult. However, districts may wish to require that outside of the school day events follow the easily interpreted beverage section of the Food and Beverage Standards.



Optional Policy Language: Food and Beverages Served and Sold Outside of the School Day

Outside of the school day the Superintendent or designee may permit food and beverage sales by student or adult entities or organizations provided that these sales comply with state and federal regulations and observe appropriate sanitation and safety procedures.

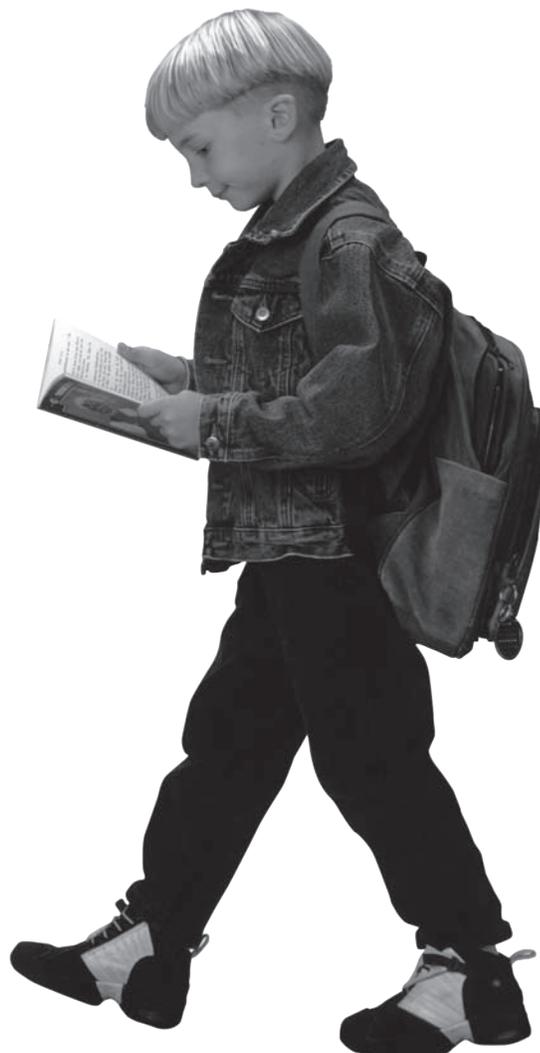
Foods and beverages served/sold at events on the school campus outside of the school day will adhere to the food and beverage content standards adopted by the district.

Or

Beverages served/sold at events on the school campus outside of the school day will adhere to the food and beverage content standards adopted by the district.



A small but growing number of students have severe peanut and /or tree nut allergies. Before providing foods made with peanuts, peanut butter, or other nuts as a snack, make sure there are no food allergy restrictions.



Section III: Tools for Policy Development, Nutrition Guidelines

Table 1: Framework to Determine Where to Apply Food & Beverage Standards

Policy development team facilitators may wish to consider each of these scenarios with their committee and allow time for discussion. The team can then determine if the foods and beverages served/sold in each location should follow the food and beverage standards.

	Food & Beverage Standards Apply	
	During the School Day*	Outside of the School Day*
1. Federally reimbursed Free and Reduced meals	The food service manager for the local school district can provide specific information regarding the requirements for the National School Meals programs.	
2. Food from home for a child's individual consumption		
3. Food and beverages sold outside the free and reduced school meals program		
• Competitive foods, ala Carte, outside food vendors		
• Vending machines		
• School Stores, coffee cart, etc.		
• Bake sales/ fundraisers for immediate consumption		
• Fundraising for later consumption		
• Concessions at extracurricular events		
• Intramural events		
4. Food and beverages served at school		
• Birthday celebrations, class parties		
• Candy bowls in school office or on teacher's desk		
• Class snack provide by parent/teacher for entire class		
• Concessions at extracurricular events		
• Cultural events with educational and academic value		
• Food and beverage coupons contributed by school business partners for later consumption given away		
• Incentives (if food and beverages are allowed)		
• Intramural events		
• PTA sponsored events		
• School clubs		
• School day care (before or after school)		
5. Teacher's Lounge for foods served		

*For purposes of this example, "during the school day" and "outside the school day" are not defined. Districts may wish to address elementary and secondary schools differently.



Providing and Promoting Healthier Food and Beverage Choices

Providing Nutritious and Appealing Food and Beverages

Provision of affordable and appealing nutritious food and beverages will encourage students to participate in the school nutrition programs whether it be through ala carte options or the National School Meal Programs. Increased participation may result in increased revenues and the ability to expand the student nutrition services program to provide a wider variety of nutritious offerings.

School nutrition program staff can improve menu choices by increasing access to food and beverages that students like based upon feedback from student advisory groups and student surveys.

Schools can explore the feasibility of implementing salad bars, fresh made sandwich bars, grilled chicken sandwiches, baked potato bars, pasta bars with low fat sauces, etc.

Optional Policy Language: Providing Nutritious and Appealing Food and Beverages

Student nutrition services and all other food and beverage venues will provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious and appealing food and beverages that meet the preference, health and nutrition needs of students.

Foods and beverages will be prepared in ways which will appeal to students while retaining nutritive quality.



Schools wishing to take an extra step can also set standards to minimize the use of processed foods by setting limitations on sodium content and the use of ingredients such as high fructose corn syrup and monosodium glutamate (MSG).

Schedule of Meals and Meal Environment

Providing a clean and pleasant eating environment with at least twenty minutes for students to eat will improve student attitudes toward lunch and encourage students to eat. Scheduling lunch in the middle of the school day addresses the natural cycle of hunger and helps promote healthy eating habits. Children who participate in recess before lunch tend to waste less food and have improved lunch room behavior. Information on the benefits of scheduling recess before lunch is available at:

www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfood/recessBL.html

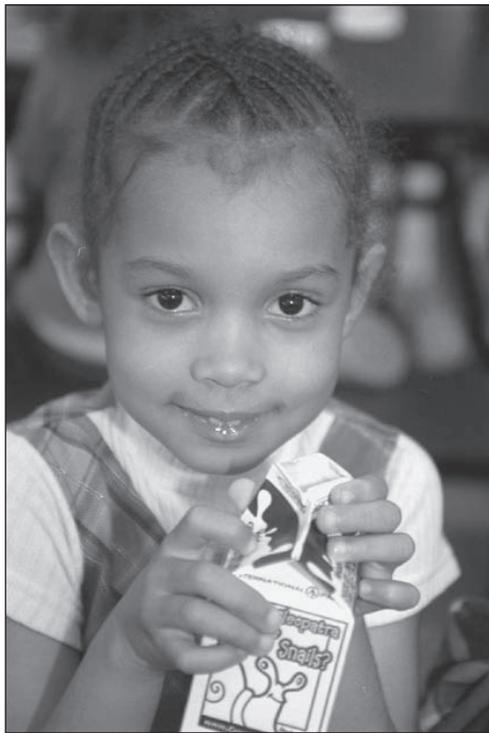
Generally, each school is given the autonomy to determine its daily schedule. Larger schools may need to stagger lunches based on the capacity of the cafeteria and lunchroom. The cafeterias of smaller schools may also function as the gym or gross motor area, and these factors will need to be taken into consideration in scheduling decisions.



Section III: *Tools for Policy Development, Nutrition Guidelines*

To promote a clean and safe eating environment, schools should consider the visual appearance of the eating area, facility design, ability to socialize, noise level, accessibility to safe drinking water, the location of facilities for hand washing and facilities for oral hygiene during all meal periods.

School administrators, food service staff, teachers, and parents should meet to consider these issues and help set the daily schedule.



Optional Policy Language: Schedule of Meals and Meal Environment

Student nutrition services will provide: a clean, safe and pleasant eating environment that allows students adequate space for children to sit at a table to eat and a minimum of twenty minutes for students to eat lunch and a minimum of ten minutes for students to eat breakfast, not including transition time.

Each school will schedule the lunch period as near to the middle of the school day as possible. For elementary school children, lunch and recess will be two independent blocks of time with recess preceding lunch when possible.

Student activities (tutoring, club or organization meetings, detention, etc) that are scheduled during meal times must provide an opportunity for students to eat.



Providing Healthy Choices Promoting 1% (Low-fat) and Non-Fat Milk

Milk is an important source of calcium and vitamin D for strong bones. However, whole and 2% (reduced fat) milk also are among the biggest contributors of saturated fat to the diets of Americans. Switching to 1% (low-fat) or non-fat (fat-free, skim) milk is one of the easiest ways for Americans to get the calcium they need while reducing their saturated-fat intake and heart-disease risk.

Schools and districts will need to work with vendors to accomplish this goal. Challenges to supplying low-fat milk may include availability, shelf life, and delivery options. School nutrition service staff may need time to secure a consistent source of low-fat and non-fat milk from vendors, thus this policy may need to be phased in over a year or two and contain exceptions when supply or delivery issues arise.

Further information on 1% or Less Campaigns is available at:
www.cspinet.org/nutrition/1less.htm

Optional Policy Language: Promoting 1% (Low-fat) and Non-fat Milk

All non-flavored fluid milk sold will be low-fat (1%) or less.

All flavored fluid milk sold will be non-fat (fat-free, skim).



A child who switches from whole milk to non-fat milk during a typical 180 day school year would consume 21,600 fewer calories, 1,440 fewer grams of fat, and 900 fewer grams of saturated fat. The decrease in caloric intake would be equivalent to six pounds of weight over the year.

What one expert says about 1% or less:

“ a simple, successful, and relatively inexpensive undertaking to reduce one of the major sources of saturated fat. Milk is a healthy drink provided that the fat is removed. This approach has the potential to save many lives.”

*Basil Rifkind, M.D.
Senior Scientific Advisor of Vascular Residency Programs
National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
National Institutes of Health
<http://cspinet.org/nutrition/1less.htm>*



Providing Healthy Choices Promoting Fruits and Vegetables

Offering fruits and vegetables at a low cost can result in increased sales and consumption. Such environmental and policy approaches designed to make it easier for students to make healthy food choices are a critical component of population wide behavior change.

The 2004 Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act made funding for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program permanent. States participating in the program receive funds to make fruits and vegetables more affordable or free to students. Unfortunately, Alaska is not currently a recipient of the funding. School boards or policy development teams may wish to advocate for the expansion of the USDA Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program to Alaska. Until the Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program is available in Alaska, the cost of increasing the fruit and vegetable (canned, frozen or fresh) offerings may be offset by increasing the cost of non-fruit and vegetable snack foods. More information on the program is available at:

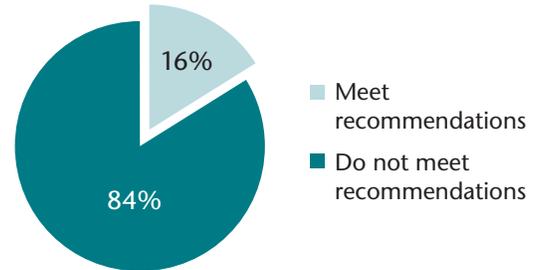
www.uffva.org/fvpilotprogram.htm

www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/ChildNutrition/fruitandvegetablepilot.htm

Optional Policy Language: Promoting Fruits and Vegetables

Student nutrition services and all other food and beverage venues will to the greatest extent possible adjust the pricing structure so that fruit and vegetable options are less expensive than other snack type foods.

Percentage of Alaska high school students who meet fruit and vegetable recommendations*, Alaska YRBS 2003



*Consumed at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables on each of the past 7 days



Fried potatoes, including french fries, make up 46% of vegetable servings for children 2 to 19 years old.⁹

On any given day, 45% of children eat no fruit, and 20% eat less than one serving of vegetables.¹⁰

Promoting Alaska Grown and Produced

Providing students with Alaskan grown and produced food and beverages from partnerships with local farms and farmers, fisheries, manufacturers, and small processors will: (1) provide more nutrient dense fresh fruits and vegetables; (2) provide fruits, vegetables and seafood that tastes better; and (3) support Alaskan businesses, strengthen Alaska's economy, and increase food security. Foodservice staff can share information about Alaska Statute 36.15.050 Use of Local Agricultural and Fishery Products required in purchases with state money.



Optional Policy Language: Promotion of Alaskan Grown and Produced

The food service program and other school associated vendors will, to the greatest extent possible, include Alaskan grown and produced food and beverage in the development of purchasing bids or procedures. All purchases of Alaska grown and produced food and beverages will comply with federal and state regulations.



Ways to promote the purchase of Alaskan grown and produced food and beverage may include:

Pursuing partnerships with local farms and farmers, manufacturers, and small processors

Taking advantage, where possible, of existing products that are already available, such as eggs, milk and dairy products, Alaskan water products, wild salmon, and other Alaskan seafood

Requesting local distributors carry Alaskan grown or produced food and beverage in their inventory to allow for easier availability to school districts

Writing bid contracts that allow school districts to buy Alaskan grown and produced food and beverage "off bid" if primary vendors cannot or will not sell Alaskan products

Marketing of Food and Beverages

To ensure a consistent health promotion and nutrition education message, the use of logos, slogans, and advertising of products should remain consistent with the foods and beverages approved by the food and beverage standards.

Districts and schools may need to make allowances for contracts, capital items and equipment not currently needing replacement and pending contract obligations.

Optional Policy Language: Marketing of Food and Beverages

School-based marketing of foods and beverages will be consistent with nutrition education and health promotion. As such, schools will limit food and beverage marketing to the promotion of foods and beverages that meet the Food and Beverage standards.



Examples of areas affected by the marketing policy are: (1) contracts committing schools to marketing certain products; (2) signs, posters, or advertising of products in classrooms and hallways; (3) scoreboards, banners, uniforms, sports equipment etc; (4) publication such as newspapers and year books; (5) promotional coupons of products distributed through school promotion or recruiting agents; and (6) sponsorship of events such as sporting events, and theater events.



Providing Healthy Choices Food and Beverages as Punishment or Reward

The use of food or beverage as a reward or incentive can undermine the health of students and/or reinforce unhealthy eating habits. Withholding food or beverage at scheduled meal times interferes with access to the nutrients students require for health. There are many creative ways to provide rewards to students that do not include food and beverages. Therefore, parents, teachers and staff need to think outside the candy box to offer fun activities and creative incentives if they choose to use rewards.

Districts and schools will need to make the reward policy clear to all school staff.

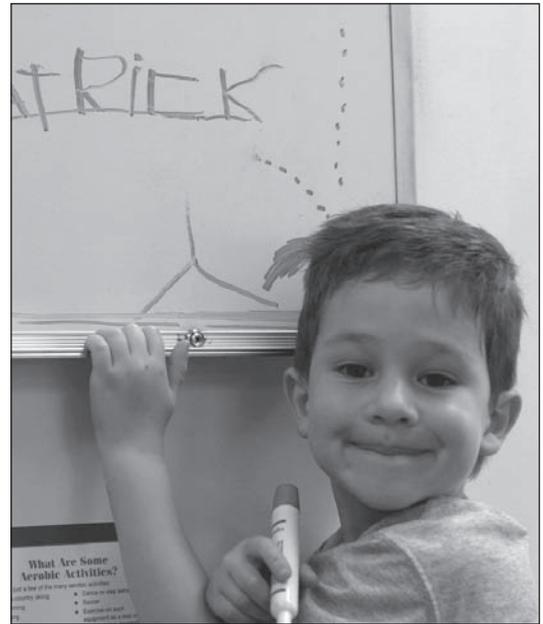


Teachers and staff wishing to reward students for academic performance or good behavior can offer students lunch with the teacher, principal or superintendent at a regularly scheduled meal time and serve food in accordance with the food and beverage standards.

Optional Policy Language: Food and Beverage as Punish- ment or Reward

Schools will not use foods or beverages as an incentive or reward for academic performance or good behavior except during regular meal times and in accordance with the food and beverage standards. An exception will be made for those food and beverages stated in an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Schools will not withhold foods or beverages at meal times as a punishment.



Component 2: Assurances that Guidelines for Reimbursable School Meals are Not Less Restrictive than Federal Requirements

Assurances that School Meal Guidelines Meet Federal Requirements

One component of the wellness policy requirement in the 2004 WIC and Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act is to ensure that local guidelines for reimbursable school meals meet and/or exceed (“not be less restrictive than”) the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) regulations and guidance for the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs. The following excerpt specifies that requirement:

[The Wellness Policy] provides an assurance that guidelines for reimbursable school meals shall not be less restrictive than regulations and guidance issued by the Secretary of Agriculture pursuant to subsections (a) and (b) of section 10 of the Child Nutrition Act (42 U.S.C. 1779) and section 9(f)(1) and 17(a) of the Richard B Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1758(f)(1), 1766(a)0, as those regulations and guidance apply to schools.

Therefore, before a wellness policy is adopted by the school board, food service personnel should ensure that any elements of the policy or administrative regulations related to school meal programs are consistent with the requirements of the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs. An example of local guidelines that are “not less restrictive” than federal standards is provided below:

The SMI requires that cholesterol and sodium levels decrease over time and that dietary fiber levels increase over time, but does not specify minimum or maximum levels of cholesterol,

sodium, or dietary fiber. Therefore, a district may use an SMI report to determine how much fiber, cholesterol, and sodium is currently served and set new targets for each component. As long as the new cholesterol and sodium targets are lower, and the dietary fiber requirements are higher, the district would be in compliance with the requirement.

These assurances would only apply to food and beverage that are part of the federally reimbursed free and reduced meal programs and would NOT apply to food and beverages sold/served (1) by the school nutrition program outside the free and reduced meals program as ala carte; (2) in vending machines, school stores, coffee carts, concessions stands, or other locations on the school campus; (3) for fundraising purposes; (4) for snacks, rewards, celebrations, incentives etc.; and (5) at school but not during school hours.

Basic information on federally reimbursed school meal programs follows. In order to ensure that the local wellness policy is in compliance with federal guidelines, however, it is important that the food service manager or someone familiar with federal school meal program regulations review any segments of the policy addressing school meal programs.



Reimbursable School Meal Programs

National School Lunch, School Breakfast, Severe Need Breakfast, Special Milk, and After School Snack Programs

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Services school meal programs are key components of a national policy designed to safeguard and promote the nutritional well-being of the nation's children. Through the federal school meal programs, schools may be eligible for funding for the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast, and/or Special Milk, Severe Need Breakfast, and After School Snack Programs. The State of Alaska Department of Education & Early Development administers the Federal Meals Program in Alaska.

While a school district may participate in federal school meal programs, not all schools in the district necessarily participate. For example, all elementary and middle schools could participate in the National School Lunch program, while the high schools in the district do not. Several small schools in rural communities do not participate in the School Meal Programs because the reimbursement for the small student numbers does not financially support the programs. However, other schools in their districts may participate in one or more of the federally funded school meal programs.

The federally funded school meal programs are regulated. They must include specific food groups, age appropriate serving sizes, and must provide $\frac{1}{4}$ (breakfast) to $\frac{1}{3}$ (lunch) of a student's calorie and nutrient needs. The food service manager for the local school district can provide specific information regarding the requirements for the federal school meals programs.

School Meals Initiative for Healthy Children

In 1995, the USDA Food and Nutrition Services launched the School Meals Initiative for Healthy Children (SMI) to improve the nutritional quality of the school meal programs. SMI guidelines require that menu and production records be maintained to show that the necessary number of food components, food items, and menu items are offered, and that nutrition standards are met for specific age and grade groupings when averaged over each school week (a school week is defined as a minimum of three consecutive days and a maximum of seven consecutive days). SMI review records are kept with the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development.

The SMI is designed to ensure the provision of adequate calories and healthy meals to students. Because the SMI nutritional criteria are based on an entire week's offerings, it is possible that not all items offered on a given day may be the healthiest choices. As stated in the guidance for the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, local nutrition policy must provide assurances that school meal guidelines are not less restrictive than federal requirements.

The food service manager for the local school district can provide specific information regarding the requirements for the School Meals Initiative. Additional information about the School Meals Initiative can be found at:

www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/roadtosuccess.html

Optional Policy Language: School Meals Initiative

Food and beverage provided through the National School Lunch or School Breakfast Programs shall comply with federal nutrition standards under the School Meals Initiative (SMI).





SMI nutrition standards require school meals to:

- (1) contain less than 30 percent calories from fat and 10 percent calories from saturated fat over the course of a week;
- (2) meet one-third of the Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDA) for protein, calcium, iron, vitamin A, vitamin C, and specific levels of calories for specified age groups;
- (3) comply with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans for children over the age of two; include decreased levels of sodium and cholesterol; and
- (4) include increased amounts of dietary fiber.

Participation in School Meal Programs

Schools receive federal funding based on the number of students enrolled in the USDA school meal programs. Meal participation counts also help determine individual school eligibility for Federal Title 1 funding. Occasionally, supplemental grant opportunities are made available to Title 1 grant recipients. The greater the number of students enrolled in the USDA school meal programs, the more money school districts will have available to order and offer healthier, more appealing food.

The San Francisco Unified School District was able to increase participation rates using several strategies that can be found at http://sfusd_foods.tripod.com/pdfs/ror.pdf

Federal funds reimbursed to school districts for student meals flow through the State of Alaska Department of Education & Early Development. Schools are reimbursed for meals according to student eligibility status based on a student's household income. The three meal reimbursement categories are free, reduced price, and full paid. Schools are required to use meal reimbursements to support the school meals programs. In Alaska, schools districts also must use a portion of their general

fund to pay for the costs of school meal programs not covered by federal meal reimbursements. Board members and policy development teams will want to talk with school district food service/child nutrition directors before changing food and beverage standards.

An increased number of Alaska's children are participating in the free school meals programs as a result of the 2004 Reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act. New federal law requires state agencies administering the Child Nutrition Program and the Food Stamp Program to share data on school-aged children in order to "directly certify" low income students for free school meals. Direct certification allows children to automatically receive free school meals without the household application process once required by the federal government and school districts. The law also prohibits schools or school associated programs from requiring these households to submit an application for participation in school meals programs. Lastly, federal law in 2004 also made changes to the eligibility period that low-income children may participate in and benefit from free meals if they are identified through direct certification. Schools are now allowed to serve free school meals to children throughout the school year once a student is identified through the direct certification process. Changes in student household incomes no longer prevent them from participating in nutritious school meal programs as in years past.

For information on the percentage of free and reduced price eligible students in 48 of 53 Alaska school districts, go to: <http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/cns/NSLP.html>

Optional Policy Language: Participation in the School Meal Programs

To the maximum extent practicable, all schools in the district will participate in available federal school meal programs.





The School Meal Programs administered by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), operating through state agencies (SAs) are the

- (1) National School Lunch Program which provides nutritious lunches and the opportunity to practice skills learned in classroom nutrition education. This program also offers after school snacks in sites that meet eligibility requirements;
- (2) School Breakfast Program provides nutritious breakfasts to promote learning readiness and healthy eating behaviors; and
- (3) Special Milk Program which offers milk to children who do not have access to other meal programs.

Protecting Confidentiality of Free and Reduced Meal Participants

Avoiding overt identification of children receiving free and reduced meals prevents social stigmatism of any one child.

To avoid identifying any one child as a recipient of free and reduced priced meals, all children should pick up their lunch or breakfast from the same location, in the same package (container or tray), using the same mechanism of payment (other than cash). To further increase confidentiality, districts may wish to require all families to complete applications for the free and reduced priced meals; those not wishing to participate would write in or check 'not interested'.

Districts wishing to upgrade the food and beverage delivery system may consider implementing a computerized card system to allow students to purchase meals and receive their free or reduced price meal incognito.

Optional Policy Language: Protecting Confidentiality of Free/ Reduced Meal Participants

There will be no overt identification of any of the children receiving free or reduced priced meals by the use of special tokens or tickets or by any other means. The children will not use a separate dining area or entrance, or consume their meals or milk at a different time.



Component 3: Goals for Nutrition Education

Nutrition Education

To ensure quality nutrition education, nutrition instruction should be based on theories and methods proven effective by published research, and be consistent with the state and district health education standards. Hiring qualified teaching staff ensures accurate dissemination of the information.

It may be difficult to hire teaching staff who hold a current endorsement in health education, particularly in schools where staff teach multiple subjects. If efforts to recruit certified health educators are not successful, districts should explore supplemental training opportunities for staff.



“It is not enough to teach computation and academic skills, schools must teach life skills as well.”

- Brenda Lilienthal Welburn, Executive Director
National Association of State Boards of
Education¹¹

Ideally, nutrition education will be integrated into a sequential, comprehensive health education program taught at every grade level, pre-kindergarten through twelfth. The nutrition topics selected should help students learn about:

1. The benefits of healthy eating behaviors;
2. The risks of unhealthy weight control practices (eating disorders, fad diets);
3. The role of nutrition in the prevention of chronic disease;
4. How to read food labels and nutrition facts;
5. How to balance food intake and physical activity to maintain a healthy weight;

Optional Policy Language: Nutrition Education

Health curricula will include instruction on the benefits of good nutrition and the role nutrition plays in preventing chronic diseases and maintaining a healthy weight.

Staff providing nutrition education will hold a current teaching license, certificate, or endorsement in health education recognized by the State of Alaska Department of Education & Early Development.

6. The recommendations included in the Food Guide Pyramid and Dietary Guidelines for Americans for: selecting daily grain intake, especially whole grains; choosing a variety of fruits and vegetables daily; choosing a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol and moderating total fat and trans-fatty acids; moderating intake of sugar; selecting and preparing foods with less salt (sodium); choosing more calcium rich foods; keeping food safe; and
7. How cavity-causing carbohydrates affect dental and oral health



Component 4: Goals for Physical Activity

Introduction: Physical Activity

The United States Department of Health and Human Services recommends that children and adolescents participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity most days of the week.¹² A recent report from the Institute of Medicine notes that it is reasonable to expect that students get half (30) of those recommended minutes during the school day.¹

Schools can provide opportunities for physical activity and contribute to the development of motor skills through the implementation of a physical education curriculum. In addition, schools can offer opportunities for physical activity through intramural and interscholastic sports

programs, fitness clubs, recess, and the incorporation of physical activity into the classroom.

Many schools or districts may wonder whether providing time for physical activity will take away from classroom instruction time and have a negative impact on academic achievement. Research shows, however, that school-based physical activity has a positive effect on academic performance and achievement.¹³

To meet the Institute of Medicine's recommendation of providing students with 30 minutes of physical activity each school day, schools will need to consider multiple approaches. Schools can explore opportunities for physical activity before, during, and after the school day.



Physical Activity terms defined

Physical Activity:

Physical activity includes any movement caused by your skeletal muscles that uses energy. There are countless ways to be physically active including walking, jumping, dancing, or running.

Exercise:

Exercise is a more structured form of physical activity. It is designed to enhance fitness and can include physical activities like jogging, swimming, hiking, or weight lifting.

Fitness:

Your fitness level is a measure of how proficient you are at performing certain types of physical activity, and is indicative of overall health.

Physical Education:

A physical education program includes instruction on movement skills, health and fitness concepts, and social skills. It is designed to prepare participants for a lifetime of physical activity and fitness.



School Site Selection

The capacity of a school to provide students with optimal amounts of physical activity really begins even before the school is built. Decisions on whether a school has facilities like gyms, fields, tracks, and multi-purpose rooms are all made well before school construction begins. Decisions on the location of the school can also affect student physical activity levels. For instance, locating a school on a multi-acre rural site discourages student physical activity because it is harder for students to walk or bike to school. When designing and building new schools it is important for school districts to consider how the location and floor plan of each school will affect the physical activity levels of students.

Optional Policy Language: School Site Selection

When evaluating sites for the location of a new school the school district will consider the following:

The size of the lot, current and future parking needs, and outdoor facilities such as tracks and fields

Possible conflicts with existing traffic patterns and the relationship of the school site to neighborhoods and major traffic routes;

Proximity of the proposed site to residential neighborhoods so that:

Students can walk or bicycle to school

– and –

Community members can easily access physical activity facilities

Physical Activity Before School

How children prepare for school can affect their performance during the school day. Eating a nutritious breakfast and participating in moderate physical activity will help assure that when instruction begins students are ready to learn. Both walk-to-school programs and before school physical activity programs give students a chance to jump start their body and mind.



Walking or biking to school helps students accumulate more physical activity time and helps them arrive at school alert, invigorated, and ready to learn.

Schools that provide access to physical activity facilities and sponsor physical activity challenges before school help students stay warm, safe, and active.

Starting a “Safe Routes to School Program” is relatively easy. Go to www.saferoutesinfo.org/getting_started.cfm for step by step instructions and a start-up toolkit. The usual time for kicking off a new Safe Routes to School program is during Walk to School Week, usually held during the first week of October.



Optional Policy Language: Physical Activity Before School

The school district will assess and, if necessary and to the extent possible, make needed improvements to make it safer and easier for students to walk and bike to school.

When appropriate, the district will work together with local public works, public safety, and/or police departments in those efforts.

The school district will explore the availability of federal “safe routes to school” funds, administered by the state Department of Transportation, to finance such improvements.

Schools shall negotiate mutually acceptable, fiscally responsible arrangements with community agencies and organizations to keep school spaces and facilities available to students, staff, and community members before, during, and after the school day, on weekends, and during school vacations.

Schools should provide dry and secure facilities for storing bicycles.

Schools should help students walk/ bicycle to school by providing crossing guards at roads near schools both before and after school.

Physical Activity During the School Day

Schools should provide information on the benefits of physical activity and as many opportunities for students to engage in physical activity as possible. Suggestions on incorporating physical activity into the school day follow.

Education on the Benefits of Physical Activity

Opportunities exist during the school day to incorporate lessons on the importance of physical activity to health and well-being. Preferably, these lessons would be part of a comprehensive health education program that is age appropriate and taught at every grade level, pre-kindergarten through twelfth.

Some physical activity topics to cover include:

- Examples of physical activity
- Health benefits of physical activity
- Ways to increase daily physical activity
- Opportunities for physical activity at school and in the community
- The role of physical activity in maintaining a healthy weight
- The influence of culture and media on physical activity
- Goal-setting and decision making skills for physical activity
- Basic safety precautions during physical activity
- The importance of drinking water before, during, and after physical activity
- The meaning of physical activity, exercise and health-related fitness
- The development of a personal physical activity program



Physical Activity During the School Day **Physical Education Curriculum**

Implementing a physical education curriculum is one vehicle for increasing physical activity levels among students and will also provide students with the skills they need for lifetime physical fitness. The physical education curriculum should be based on proven content standards and methodologies. New standards developed by nationally recognized professional organizations like the National Association for Sport and Physical Activity (NASPE) call for a shift from traditional physical education programs focusing on team sports to programs emphasizing individual fitness and the promotion of a lifetime of physical activity for health. According to the standards, students who receive quality physical education instruction should be able to meet the following standards.

Standard 1: Demonstrates competency in motor skills and movement patterns needed to perform a variety of physical activities.

Standard 2: Demonstrates understanding of movement concepts, principles, strategies, and tactics as they apply to the learning and performance of physical activities.

Standard 3: Participates regularly in physical activity.

Standard 4: Achieves and maintains a health-enhancing level of physical fitness.

Standard 5: Exhibits responsible personal and social behavior that respects self and others in physical activity settings.

Standard 6: Values physical activity for health, enjoyment, challenge, self-expression, and/or social interaction.

To ensure that students can achieve the outcomes recommended above, NASPE recommends that schools develop a physical education program that includes the following components.

1. Opportunity to Learn

- Instructional periods totaling 150 minutes per week for elementary schools and 225 minutes per week for middle and secondary schools
- Qualified physical education specialists providing a developmentally appropriate program
- Adequate equipment and facilities

2. Meaningful Content

- Instruction in a variety of motor skills that are designed to enhance the physical, mental, and social/emotional development of every child
- Fitness education and assessment to help children understand, improve and/or maintain their physical well-being
- Development of cognitive concepts about motor skill and fitness
- Opportunities to improve emerging social and cooperative skills and gain a multi-cultural perspective
- Promotion of regular amounts of appropriate physical activity now and throughout life

3. Appropriate Instruction

- Full inclusion of all students
- Maximum practice opportunities for class activities
- Well-designed lessons that facilitate student learning
- Out of school assignments that support learning and practice
- Physical activity not used for punishment
- Regular assessment used to monitor and reinforce student learning

Alaskan schools may face challenges in meeting all of the NASPE standards for physical education. Availability of gym time and space may constrain a school or district's ability to offer the recommended minutes of physical education each week. Schools may also have difficulty finding or retaining certified instructors, and may lack the funds to adequately equip



Section III: *Tools for Policy Development, Physical Activity*

physical education classes. As is the case with nutrition, a comprehensive physical education curriculum can be phased in over time.

It may be possible to find creative solutions to some of the challenges involved in implementing school-based physical education programs. If possible, the school day could be extended to create additional time for physical activity classes. To address the issue of space, schools could consider partnering with local governments to arrange for use of community facilities by physical education classes. If lack of equipment is an issue, schools in urban areas could ask local fitness clubs to donate used equipment when upgrading their facilities. Schools could also explore opportunities for sharing sports equipment that is only used periodically with other districts. Teachers who do not

hold a physical education certification or endorsement can participate in a variety of national skill development trainings, including the Physical Education for Life training (www.pe4life.org/academies.php). Certain curricula are also designed to be taught by educators who are not certified in physical education. High school upperclassmen could also be trained as peer educators and assist with physical education program activities. Additional support for physical education programs are available through Physical Education for Progress (PEP) Grants offered through the United States Department of Education. Information about these grants can be found at: www.ed.gov/programs/whitephysed/index.html

Optional Policy Language: Physical Education

All students in grades K-12, including students with disabilities, special health-care needs, and in alternative educational settings, should receive daily physical education (or its equivalent of 150 minutes/week at the elementary level and 225 minutes/week at the secondary level) for the entire school year.

All physical education teachers shall regularly participate in professional development activities to effectively deliver the physical education program.

Students will spend at least 50% of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

Instruction in physical education shall include:

- A variety of motor skills that are designed to enhance the physical, mental, and social/emotional development of every child;
- Knowledge and skills for a lifetime of regular physical activity;
- A wide variety of cooperative as well as competitive games;
- Assessment to help children understand, improve and/or maintain their physical well-being;
- Cognitive concepts about motor skills and fitness;
- Opportunities to improve their emerging social and cooperative skills and gain a multi-cultural perspective
- Promotion of regular amounts of appropriate physical activity now and throughout life



Optional Policy Language: Physical Education (continued)

Health-related physical fitness testing that incorporates measures of strength, endurance, flexibility, aerobic capacity, and body composition, shall be integrated into the curriculum as an instructional tool. Such testing shall be used to teach students how to assess their fitness levels, set goals for improvement, and monitor progress in reaching their goals. Tests shall be appropriate to students' developmental levels and physical abilities. Any body composition information collected will remain confidential, with individual results made available only to students and their parents/guardians.

Course grades shall be awarded in the same way grades are awarded in other subject areas and shall be included in calculations of grade point average, class rank, and academic recognition programs such as honor roll.

Student/teacher ratios in physical education shall be comparable to those in other curricular areas.

School leaders shall endeavor to ensure the provision of adequate spaces, facilities, equipment, supplies, and operational budgets that are necessary to achieve the objectives of the physical education program.

Student involvement in other activities involving physical activity (e.g., interscholastic or intramural sports) will not be substituted for meeting the physical education requirement.

Physical education teachers shall aim to develop students' self-confidence and maintain a safe psychological environment free of embarrassment, humiliation, shaming, taunting, or harassment of any kind.

Suitably adapted physical education shall be included as part of individual education plans (I-E-P's) for students with chronic health problems, other disabling conditions, or other special needs that preclude such students' participation in regular physical education instruction or activities.

School authorities shall minimize the use of physical education facilities for non-instructional purposes, such as using the gymnasium for school assemblies during times scheduled for physical education classes.





Why prohibit physical education class waivers?

Many schools or districts have policies that allow students who participate in interscholastic sports, ROTC, marching band, or other organized physical activity programs to bypass physical education class. Although students may participate in high levels of physical activity outside of school courses, allowing them to waive out of physical education class deprives them of the benefits of a comprehensive, sequential curriculum.

A quality physical education program will prepare students for a lifetime of physical activity. Physical education courses teach a variety of movement skills, health and fitness concepts, and social skills that students can apply to a wide variety of sport and fitness settings. Many of these concepts are not addressed in a recreational or competitive sport situation. Therefore, it is recommended that students are not allowed to substitute extracurricular activities for physical education courses.

Schools should aim to provide as many opportunities for students to engage in physical activity as possible. Physical education class is one primary mechanism for promoting physical activity. Opportunities for physical activity do not need to be limited just to physical education class, however. Recess and classroom-based movement are also ways to help students achieve 30 minutes of active time each school day.

Physical Activity During the School Day Recess

The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) guidelines for childhood physical activity include a provision for limiting extended (2 hours or more) periods of inactivity during the day. At the elementary level, planned breaks from classroom instruction (recess) are valuable to students and teachers alike because they provide children with opportunities to engage in activities that help them develop healthy bodies and an enjoyment of movement. Recess also allows elementary children to practice life skills such as conflict resolution, cooperation, respect for rules, taking turns, sharing, using language to communicate, and problem solving in real situations. Furthermore, it may facilitate improved attention and focus on learning in the academic program.

If your district or school already offers recess to elementary students, the following suggestions can be used to ensure that recess is a good experience for students and staff supervisors.

- Make sure that there are enough staff on hand to properly supervise the recess grounds;
- Develop a protocol for conflict resolution during recess. Teach this method in the classroom and implement it on the recess grounds with recess staff acting as moderators;
- Make sure that the amount of equipment (balls, jump ropes, etc.) on hand matches demand;
- Encourage purposeful activity by providing as many options to kids as possible. The website www.peacefulplaygrounds.com contains ideas and assistance on designing a play area that will maximize movement and minimize conflict.



Optional Policy Language: Recess

All elementary school students shall have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which schools shall actively encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity by providing adequate space and equipment as well as a wide variety of activities.

Schools shall discourage extended periods (i.e. periods of two or more hours) of inactivity. When activities such as mandatory school-wide testing or inclement weather make it necessary for students to remain indoors for long periods of time, schools should give students periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.

Schools shall develop schedules that provide for supervised, daily recess in grades pre-kindergarten through grades five or six. The use of facilities for recess activities will not interfere with instructional classes (separate locations for each activity). If possible recess will not be scheduled back to back with physical education classes.

Schools shall provide the facilities, equipment and supervision necessary to ensure that the recess experience is productive, safe and enjoyable. Developmentally appropriate equipment, as outlined in the National Association of Sport and Physical Education Guidelines for facilities, equipment and instructional materials, will be made available. Adults shall regularly check equipment and facilities for safety.

Physical Activity During the School Day Classroom-Based Physical Activity

Opportunities for movement must not be limited to the gym if schools truly expect students to adopt physically active lifestyles. In most cases, participation in recess and physical education class will not provide students with the recommended 30 minutes of daily school-based physical activity. Schools looking to incorporate more activity time for students should explore integrating physical activity into the classroom. By using physical activity to teach concepts in core subjects, classroom teachers can increase the level of student participation in physical activity during the school day, as well as reinforcing the material taught in core content areas. Student physical activity can also be encouraged by providing physical activity breaks between lessons.

Physical activity can be incorporated into instruction in core subjects like math, science, language arts, social studies, and health. The following website(s) contain ideas on how to incorporate physical activity concepts into core curriculum instruction:

P.E. Central
www.pecentral.org/lessonideas/classroom/classroom.asp

Take 10
www.take10.net/

Energizers
www.ncpe4me.com/energizers.html

Brain Breaks
www.emc.cmich.edu/BrainBreaks/default.htm



Optional Policy Language: Classroom-based Physical Activity

Physical education will be closely coordinated with the overall school health program so that students thoroughly understand the benefits of being physically active and master the self-management skills needed to stay active for a lifetime

Physical education topics will be infused into other subject areas such as math, science, and social studies

Classroom health education will complement physical education by reinforcing the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically active lifestyle and to reduce time spent on sedentary activities, such as watching television

Opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into other subject lessons

Classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

Physical Activity During the School Day Physical Activity as Punishment

The key to promoting physical activity and encouraging students to lead active lifestyles is making physical activity a positive and fun experience. Some school teachers and staff use physical activities such as push-ups or running as punishment. Using physical activity as a form of punishment increases the likelihood that students will develop a negative attitude about physical activity. Not only does punishment take the fun out of physical activity, it may make students less interested in participating in physical activity in the future.

Optional Policy Language: Physical Activity as Punishment

Teachers and other school personnel will not use physical activity (e.g., running laps, pushups) or withhold opportunities for physical activity (e.g., recess, physical education, physical activity breaks) as punishment.

Physical Activity After School

The hours immediately after school are ideal for youth physical activity. Students who have been sitting in classrooms for a good part of the day are probably ready to engage in movement of some kind if they have the opportunity.

Many Alaskan schools sponsor after-school interscholastic sports teams. Sports teams are usually excellent ways for students to stay active, learn new skills, and grow socially. Unfortunately, only a fraction of the student body is typically able to benefit from organized school sports. Travel and equipment budgets often limit the number of students able to be a part of an interscholastic sports team. As a result, schools should offer after school physical activity clubs (jump rope, dance, etc.) and intramural sports programs that are less competitive, open to all, and available year round.

After-school physical activities could include sports, clubs, self-directed activities, open gym, special events, or field trips. Sponsored activities should provide opportunities for male, female, and co-educational participation and encourage all students to fully participate in all activities. The activities selected should meet the needs of students of all skill levels and physical abilities, including students with disabilities. In some instances, activities may need to be modified to be appropriate to the age, physical development and skill levels of individual participants.



If necessary, leagues may be established based on skill level or interest in competition. Rules and regulations should be established that assure equal opportunity, fair play, and safe participation.

Optional Policy Language: Physical Activity After School

All elementary, middle, and high schools shall offer extracurricular physical activity programs, such as physical activity clubs or intramural programs.

All high schools, and middle schools as appropriate, will offer interscholastic sports programs.

Schools will offer a range of activities that meet the needs, interests, and abilities of all students, including boys, girls, students with disabilities, and students with special health-care needs.

A diverse selection of competitive and noncompetitive, structured and unstructured activities will be offered to the extent that staffing permits.

School leaders shall endeavor to accommodate home-schooled children in extracurricular activities.

All intramural programs, physical activity clubs, and athletic teams shall be supervised by qualified staff, who may or may not be certified teachers.

Other Considerations for Promoting Physical Activity in Schools

Schools can also use some of the following strategies to encourage and support physical activity.

Walking Programs

One inexpensive way for schools to promote student wellness is to promote walking at school. Walking is safe, doesn't require equipment, and can be done by students and staff alike. Districts or schools could start a walking challenge where students and staff all work toward a common walking goal (ex. Walk the Iditarod Trail). Students can accumulate miles by walking to school, walking around the gym before school, or walking around the playground during recess and at after school programs. Prizes can be awarded to the individuals or classes who accumulate the most walking miles.

The following websites have examples of successful walking/running programs:

www.kidsrunning.com/news/westside04.html

www.kidsrunning.com/school/parentsday.html

Special Events

Another way for schools to promote active lifestyles is to hold events such as fun runs/walks, track and field days, and/or family fitness nights. These events get kids excited about physical activity and often include parents and community groups in the fun.

The websites listed below provide additional examples of running events.

www.kidsrunning.com/school/runspotrun2001.html

www.kidsrunning.com/school/krschool1030pumpkinrun.html

www.kidsrunning.com/news/pent081803.html



Other Physical Activity Considerations School Infrastructure

In many Alaskan communities the school is the only facility capable of providing recreation opportunities for children and adults. For that reason, school facilities should be built, maintained, and operated to provide students and community members with as many opportunities for physical activity as possible. Assuring that schools contain facilities for physical activity is important, as is making those facilities available to the public during non-school hours.

Optional Policy Language: School Infrastructure

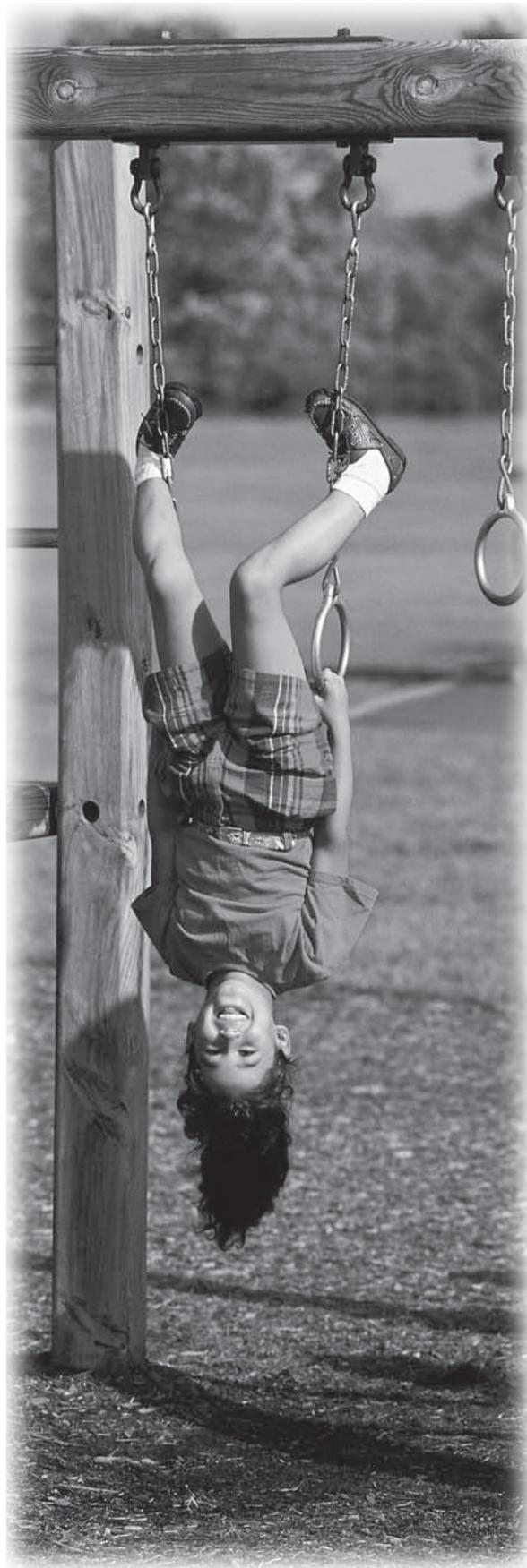
Schools will provide, at a minimum, one indoor and one outdoor facility for physical activity.

Schools will negotiate mutually acceptable, fiscally responsible arrangements with community agencies and organizations to keep school spaces and facilities available to students, staff, and community members before, during, and after the school day, on weekends, and during school vacations.

School spaces and facilities also will be available to community agencies and organizations offering physical activity and nutrition programs.

School policies concerning safety will apply at all times.

Schools will work with recreation agencies and other community organizations to coordinate and enhance opportunities available to students and staff for physical activity during their out of school time.



Component 5: Other Activities Designed to Promote Student Wellness

Other Activities Designed to Promote Student Wellness

In addition to poor nutrition and inadequate physical activity, there are other health risk behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death, disability, and social problems in the United States and Alaska. Like physical activity and nutrition, many of these health behaviors are established during childhood and adolescence. As districts develop local school wellness policies that incorporate physical activity and nutrition, they may want to consider addressing additional health behaviors as well. One way of promoting a wide variety of positive health behaviors is through a Coordinated School Health Program.

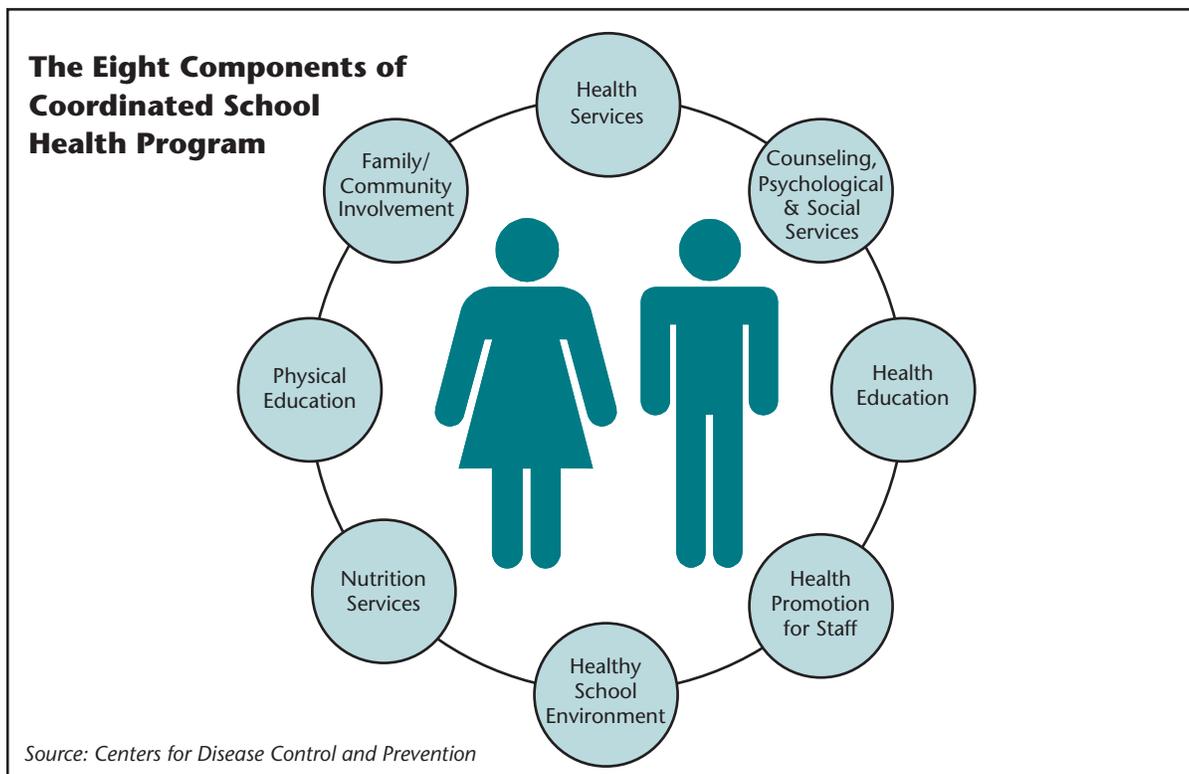
Coordinated School Health Programs

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) promotes the

implementation of the Coordinated School Health Program as a way of supporting healthy schools and students. A Coordinated School Health Program has eight components, which are illustrated below and include: health education, health promotion for staff, the creation of a healthy school environment, nutrition services, physical education, family/community involvement, health services, and counseling, psychological and social services.

The development of a wellness policy that is in compliance with the Reauthorization Act of 2004 will focus primarily on the nutrition services and physical education components of the model. These components have been discussed in greater detail in previous sections of the toolkit. Additional information on health education and health promotion for staff follows. More details on the remaining components of the model are available at:

www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/CSHP/



Coordinated School Health Programs

Health Education

Opportunities exist to include essential topics on healthy eating and physical activity in the school's health curriculum at both the elementary and secondary school level. Preferably, these lessons are taught as part of a comprehensive health education curriculum and are consistent with the National Health Education Standards developed by the Joint Committee on National Health Education Standards.



Comprehensive health education refers to a planned, sequential, K-12 curriculum that addresses the physical, mental, emotional and social dimensions of health. Comprehensive health education includes a variety of topics taught by qualified, trained teachers. In addition to nutrition, health topics include personal health, family health, community health, consumer health, environmental health, sexuality education, mental and emotional health, injury prevention and safety, prevention and control of disease, and substance use and abuse.

Implementation of a comprehensive health education curriculum incorporating nutrition and physical education would also enable schools to meet the Alaska Skills for a Healthy Life standards. The standards, established by the State of Alaska Department of Education & Early Development, state that students should:

- Be able to acquire a core knowledge related to well-being
- Be able to demonstrate responsibility of the student's well-being
- Understand how well-being is affected by relationships with others
- Be able to contribute to the well-being of families and communities

Health Promotion for Staff

Staff health promotion involves providing opportunities for school staff to improve their own health. Health promotion activities can include health assessments, health education, and health-related fitness activities. Making school fitness equipment and facilities available for staff use and organizing walking clubs or nutrition education classes are a few specific examples of health promotion activities. The implementation of such activities can motivate school staff to pursue a healthy lifestyle, improve morale, and create a greater personal commitment to school health programs. In addition, healthy school employees serve as positive role models for students. Health promotion activities for staff can also improve productivity, decrease absenteeism, and reduce health insurance costs.

Optional Policy Language: Health Promotion for Staff

Schools/Districts shall plan, establish, and implement activities to promote physical activity among staff and provide opportunities for staff to conveniently engage in regular physical activity.



Component 6: Monitoring Policy Implementation

Monitoring, Compliance, and Evaluation

Evaluation and monitoring of your school's wellness policy is important for a couple of reasons. First, each school district is required by law to establish a plan for measuring implementation of its local wellness policy. This includes the designation of one or more persons with operational responsibility for ensuring that the school is meeting the policy.

Beyond any legal requirements, evaluation and feedback are essential for accountability. You and your stakeholders are invested in knowing (a) whether your wellness policies were implemented as planned, and (b) what the impacts of those policies are.

To assess the implementation of your wellness policies, you will need to monitor changes in those areas addressed by your policy. These may include changes in:

- Nutrition and physical activity topics covered in health and other courses
- Physical education requirements
- Availability of other options for physical activity
- The nutritional quality of foods available to students

It will also be valuable to assess the wellness policy's impact on:

- Revenues from the school foodservice program, school stores, vending machines, or other food sales.
- Student, parent, teacher, and administrator satisfaction
- Student behavior (e.g., physical activity, fruit and vegetable consumption, soda consumption, etc.)
- Participation in the National School Breakfast or Lunch Program
- Rates of student overweight

A good evaluation plan does not need to be extensive or formal. By matching evaluation needs with current staff roles to the extent possible, you can avoid placing additional undue burdens on staff.

For example, the school food service staff are probably best positioned to monitor and report on compliance with nutrition policies, as well as the financial impact on the school food service program, school stores, or vending machine revenues. The school food service department can also provide a report on the eligibility and participation rates in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program.

Physical educators are good sources of information on minimum PE requirements and the number of minutes kids spend being active during physical education class.

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) can be conducted locally and provide school district-level data on high school student behaviors including: minutes spent in physical education, levels of physical activity, fruit, vegetable, and milk consumption, and hours spent watching television. The YRBS also provides an assessment of (self-reported) student weight status. To assist in the collection of the active parental consent needed for the YRBS, the parent permission forms can be included in the school registration packet.

Some school districts take height and weight measures of students as part of their routine health services or physical education programs. If the measures are collected properly as well as compiled and reviewed regularly, they may be used to assess changes in the weight status of the student population over time.

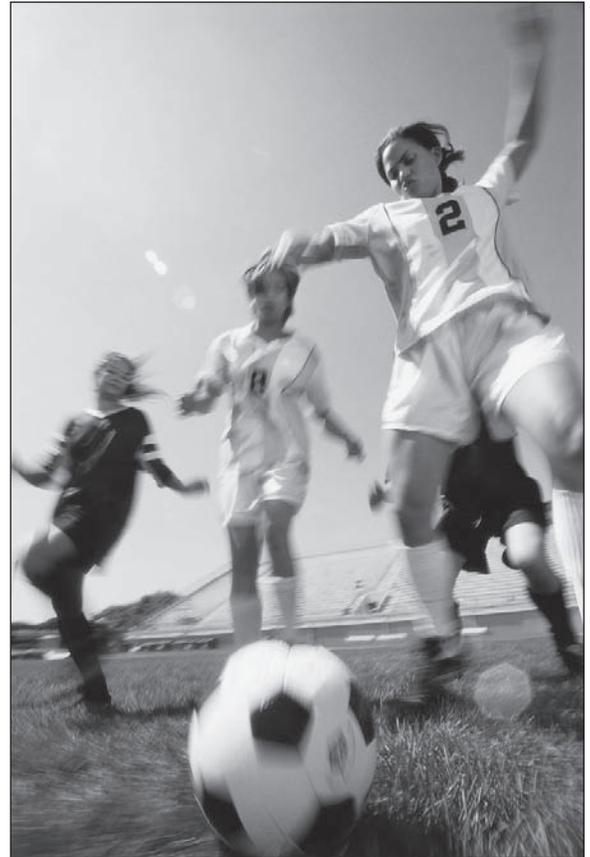
The findings from your evaluation should be used to update or amend the wellness policies as necessary. The school district or individual schools should also celebrate policy success milestones.



Optional Policy Language: Monitoring, Compliance and Evaluation

The superintendent or designee will ensure compliance with established district-wide nutrition and physical activity wellness policies and administrative regulations. Administrative regulations will be developed to ensure that assessment information will be gathered to assist the Board and district in evaluating implementation of these policies.

The school board will receive a summary report every three years on district-wide compliance with the established nutrition and physical activity policies, based on input from the schools within the district. The report will also be distributed to advisory councils, parent/teacher organizations, school principals, and school health services personnel in the district.



References

- ¹ Koplan JP, Liverman CT, Kraak VA, eds. Committee on Prevention of Obesity in Children and Youth. Food and Nutrition Board. Board on Health Promotion and Disease Prevention. Institute of Medicine. *Preventing Childhood Obesity: Health in the Balance*. Washington D.C.: The National Academies Press; 2004.
- ² Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Alaska Education and Early Development. Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2003.
- ³ Freedman DS, Dietz WH, Srinivasan SR, Berenson GS. 1999. The relation of overweight to cardiovascular risk factors among children and adolescents: The Bogalusa Heart Study. *Pediatrics* 103(6):1175-1182.
- ⁴ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity. Rockville, MD: HHS, Public Health Service, Office of the Surgeon General, 2001.
- ⁵ Narayan KM, Boyle JP, Thompson TJ, Sorensen SW, Williamson DF. 2003. Lifetime risk for diabetes mellitus in the United States. *J Am Med Assoc* 290(14):1884-1890.
- ⁶ Olshansky, SJ, et al. A Potential Decline in Life Expectancy in the United States in the 21st Century. *NEJM* 2005;352:11.
- ⁷ Anchorage School District, Alaska Department of Health and Social Services. Prevalence of Overweight Among Anchorage Children: A Study of Anchorage School District Data: 1998-2003. November, 2005. Available at: http://www.epi.hss.state.ak.us/bulletins/docs/rr2004_09.pdf.
- ⁸ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2010. 2nd ed. With Understanding and Improving Health and Objectives for Improving Health. 2 vols. Washington, DC, U.S. Government Printing Office, November 2000.
- ⁹ National Center for Health Statistics, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey. Washington, D.C.: 1999-2000 data.
- ¹⁰ National Center for Health Statistics, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey III. Washington, D.C.: 1994.
- ¹¹ Executive Summary, December 2004 The State Education Standard- The Journal of the National Association of State Boards of Education. Volume 5, Number 2.
- ¹² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2005. 6th Edition, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- ¹³ Symons, CW. Bridging Student Health Risks and Academic Achievement through Comprehensive School Health Programs. *Journal of School Health*. August 1997;224.



