PARENTS IN ACTION!

A guide to engaging parents in local school wellness policy

CALIFORNIA PROJECT LEAN
LEADERS ENCOURAGING ACTIVITY AND NUTRITION

CALIFORNIA PROJECT LEAN

California Project LEAN (Leaders Encouraging Activity and Nutrition) (CPL), a joint program of the California Department of Public Health and the Public Health Institute, focuses on youth and parent empowerment, policy and environmental change strategies, and community-based solutions. CPL's mission is to increase healthy eating and physical activity to reduce the prevalence of obesity and chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, stroke, osteoporosis, and diabetes.

CPL works with state and local physical activity and nutrition leaders, and key school and community organizations, to conduct programs in communities throughout California. Through an infrastructure of regional coordinators, CPL implements local interventions that increase opportunities for Californians to eat healthfully and be physically active.

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INTRODUCTION

The landscape of the school food, beverage, and physical activity environment has improved over the past few years and is set for even more positive change. In response to rising rates of overweight and inactivity in America's youth, federal legislation was passed that required school districts to develop a local school wellness policy (LSWP) by the beginning of the 2006-2007 school year. The LSWP required school districts to set goals for nutrition education, physical activity, all foods and beverages available on campus, and school-based activities designed to promote student wellness. The federal mandate also required school districts to establish a plan for measuring implementation. Additionally, it required schools to involve the community and, specifically, parents in the development of the policy.

The success of the LSWP can be shaped by parents, through their involvement in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the policy. Parents have the potential to play a critical role in the quality of the policy and extent to which it is implemented. Parent involvement in LSWP implementation provides an important opportunity for parents to promote both the academic achievement and health and wellness of their own children as well as the entire student body.

California Project LEAN (CPL) conducted a literature review and key informant interviews with parents and stakeholders working with parents to determine why parents participate in school activities; what would get parents involved; obstacles to participation; gaps in parent knowledge about LSWP; ways parents are interested in becoming involved; and the best vehicles for communicating with parents. This formative research guided the development of this toolkit.*

This toolkit aims to support parent efforts to improve the school environment and increase healthy food and physical activity opportunities through the LSWP.

Who should use this toolkit?

- ❑ School stakeholders who want to work with parents to implement/improve LSWPs.
- ❑ Parents who want to advocate for strong LSWPs.

Purpose of the toolkit:

1) To provide tools and resources that help school stakeholders engage parents in LSWP implementation.
2) To educate and engage English- and Spanish-speaking parents about LSWP requirements and expected changes to the nutrition and physical activity environment in their child's school.
3) To give parents the tools to be proactive and advocate when LSWP changes are not occurring.
4) To expand parent awareness of advocacy opportunities in their communities.

**For a copy of the formative research report, please go to www.CaliforniaProjectLEAN.org*

ENGAGING PARENTS

Benefits of Engaging Parents

Across the nation, schools are challenged to improve the academic success of their students. We know that healthy, fit students are more successful students. It has been well-established that well-nourished children:

- Perform better in school and have increased concentration, improved mathematics, reading and writing test scores and less disruptive behavior.[1]
- Have better attendance.[2]

There are also numerous benefits to parent involvement in schools. Schools with involved parents become better schools. Students with involved parents, no matter what their income or background, are more likely to:

- ❑ Earn higher grades and test scores, and enroll in more advanced programs.[3]
- ❑ Be promoted to the next grade level, pass their classes, and earn credits. [3]
- ❑ Attend school regularly.[3]
- ❑ Have better social skills, show improved behavior, and adapt well to school.[3]
- ❑ Graduate and go on to advanced education.[3]

What is Parent Involvement/Engagement?

Parent involvement/engagement in schools can range from that of volunteer, fundraiser, and/or participant in parent groups to advocate for the improvement of school services.

For the purposes of this toolkit, CPL has defined parent engagement in schools as parents being involved in school activities which results in parents having an increased knowledge of what impacts students; seeing and being involved in positive school changes; feeling that their opinions and perspectives are valued; and parents becoming empowered.

[1]Symons, C.W., Cinelli, B., James, T.C., and Groff, P., (1997). Bridging student health risks and academic achievement through comprehensive school health programs. Journal of School Health, 67(6), 220-227.

[2]National Association for Sport and Physical Education; Council of physical education for children. (2001). Physical education is critical to a complete education.

[3]Epstein, J. L. (2001). School and family partnerships. Johns Hopkins University. Report No. 6 March 1992. Center on school, family, and community partnerships.

What is Policy?

A policy is a rule or set of rules that people must follow. Policies have the power to influence how you and others act. Policies can be set by government, schools, organizations, and other groups. In schools, school board members are responsible for adopting school policy. Once a practice is written into school district policy, the schools in that district are then obligated to follow the policy.

What is the Local School Wellness Policy (LSWP)?

The LSWP is a federal mandate that requires school districts to set goals for:

- Nutrition education.
- Physical activity.
- All foods and beverages available on campus.
- School-based activities designed to promote student wellness.

What is an Effective LSWP?

An effective LSWP has specific language that provides direction for schools on actions to improve nutrition and physical activity offerings, nutrition education, and other school-based activities that support student health. An effective LSWP also has specific information about how the policy will be monitored and evaluated.

An effective LSWP may state *"…beverages not allowed are soft drinks; sports drinks; iced teas; fruit-based drinks that contain less than 100 percent real fruit juice or that contain additional caloric sweeteners; beverages containing caffeine, excluding low-fat or fat-free chocolate milk (which contain trivial amounts of caffeine). The food director or designee at each school will monitor this biannually and develop a summary report annually."*

What is Advocacy?

Simply put, "advocacy" is an "ask." Advocacy is asking for something and making it happen through actions and efforts. "Advocates" speak on behalf of a group regarding an issue that affects people's lives. The result of successful advocacy is a change in a practice or policy.

With the LSWP, parents can speak on behalf of students to improve nutrition and physical activity practices/policies, and in turn, the nutrition and physical activity opportunities in their children's schools. Parent actions can result in schools changing their policies and practices around nutrition and physical activity, resulting in improved student health.

ENGAGING PARENTS

Strategies for Reaching Parents

Successful engagement of parents in LSWP activities requires understanding what motivates parents to participate, the barriers to participation, and the opportunities for participation. Appealing to parents and addressing barriers to their participation will be very important for recruiting and engaging parents as well as for maintaining parent involvement.

Crafting your Message

Once you have decided to reach out to parents, how can you make your message compelling so it motivates parents to respond? Your message to parents should provoke a response that moves them to act on LSWP implementation issues.

Think about things that will resonate with and be important to parents. Consider some of the facts below when crafting your message.

Student Health: The Facts

- ❖ Nearly 40 percent of California students are physically unfit.[4]
- ❖ Over one in four children in California is overweight: rates are higher for African American and Latino youth.[4]

It will be important to determine what the local statistics are for your students. To do this, you may need to check with your local health department, the school district (for Fitnessgram® results), or perhaps your school nurse.

Healthy Students are More Successful Students:

- ❖ Well-nourished, physically active students:
  - Have improved test scores.[5]
  - Have increased concentration.[5]
  - Have better attendance at school.[5]
- ❖ In California, schools with strong physical activity programs saw greater gains in math, reading, and writing scores than those schools with the lowest rates of students participating in physical activity and healthy eating.[6]

Childhood Overweight: The Consequences

- ❖ Sixty percent of overweight five- to-ten-year-old children already have at least one risk factor for heart disease or diabetes, high fats in the bloodstream, high blood pressure, or high insulin levels.[7]

[4]California Center for Public Health Advocacy. (2002). An epidemic: Overweight and unfit children in California assembly districts, p. 17.

[5]National Association for Sport and Physical Education; Council of physical education for children. (2001). Physical education is critical to a complete education.

[6]Hanson, T.L., & Austin, G.A., (2003). Are student health risks and low resilience an impediment to the academic progress of schools? California healthy kids survey fact sheet 3. CA: WestEd.

[7]Freedman D.S., Dietz WH, Srinivasan S.R., Berenson G.S. The relation of overweight to cardiovascular risk factors among children and adolescents: the Bogalusa Heart Study. Journal of Pediatrics 1999;103(6):1175-1182.

- Overweight adolescents have a 70 percent chance of becoming overweight adults.[7]
- Overweight children are prone to depression and isolation from their peers.[8]
- Children who are obese are at greater risk for bone and joint problems, sleep apnea, and social and psychological problems such as stigmatization and poor self-esteem.[9, 10]

Local School Wellness Policies: An Opportunity

- More than 95 percent of young people are enrolled in schools, which means that schools are a great place to reach many kids.
- LSWPs were mandated in response to the recognition that schools play a critical role in promoting student health, preventing childhood obesity, and combating problems associated with poor nutrition and physical inactivity.
- Since children spend a significant amount of time in school, students can consume up to two-thirds of their daily food intake at school. Students should be given the opportunity to eat well and be physically active in school.

Parent Engagement: The Facts

California Project LEAN's research indicated that parents participate in schools:

- Because it makes them feel good.
- In order to show they care (about their child's health and education).
- Because they feel it is their duty.

Parents indicated that they would get involved if there were:

- Incentives (such as food, childcare, gift cards, raffle prizes, and discounted trip tickets).
- If their input was valued and validated.
- If there was a caring, compassionate, warm, and welcoming environment.

Parents told us that the top three ways to communicate with them were:

- Phone calls.
- Teacher's notes and letters.
- Other printed materials sent home with their child.

[8]Loewy., M.I., (1998). Suggestions for working with fat children in schools. Professional school counseling. 1,4, 18-22.

[9]Daniels S.R., Arnett D.K., Eckel R.H., et al. Overweight in Children and Adolescents: Pathophysiology, Consequences, Prevention, and Treatment. Circulation. 2005;111;1999-2002.

[10]U.S. Surgeon General. Overweight and Obesity: Health Consequences [http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/obesity/calltoaction/fact_consequences.htm]. Rockville: MD. 2001.

When planning activities for parents, it is critical to identify and address barriers to their participation.

Additional ways to communicate with parents include through:

- ❖ School newsletters.
- ❖ Home mailings.
- ❖ Local newspapers.
- ❖ Parks and recreation facilities and bulletin boards.
- ❖ The school's announcement signs.
- ❖ Flyers/postcards.
- ❖ School website.
- ❖ Bulletin boards.
- ❖ Email.
- ❖ Parent nights/back to school/open house events.
- ❖ Other parents.
- ❖ Parent-teacher meetings.
- ❖ Students.
- ❖ Face-to-face (at school drop-off areas or through teachers, school staff, etc).
- ❖ Parent involvement coordinator.
- ❖ Home visits.
- ❖ School-appointed advisory committees.
- ❖ The community (churches, community events, etc.).
- ❖ Combining recruitment with other school-sponsored educational events (e.g., healthcare, dental information sessions, book fairs).

Please see ***Parent Handouts*** section for sample resources on communicating LSWP to parents.

Addressing Barriers to Parent Engagement

When planning activities for parents, it is critical to identify and address barriers to their participation. Different barriers may exist for different parents.

CPL's research revealed the following barriers to parent involvement in schools:

- ❖ Work and home schedules.
- ❖ Lack of childcare.
- ❖ Language/cultural barriers.
- ❖ Lack of interest/don't care.
- ❖ Lack of transportation.
- ❖ Feelings of inadequacy.
- ❖ Feeling disrespected or unwelcome.
- ❖ Opinions not valued.

Strategies for Addressing Barriers to Parent Involvement in Schools:

Work

- ❑ Ensure meetings are held at various times (such as in the evenings and on weekends).
- ❑ Send parents questionnaires with day/time options. Keep questions short and simple, and ensure they are available in different languages.

Lack of Childcare

- ❑ Plan activities with the whole family in mind.
- ❑ Provide childcare for young children and enrichment activities for school age children during meetings/events. Make sure that your childcare activities model what you are encouraging parents to advocate for (e.g., serve healthy snacks and provide physical activity opportunities).

Language/Cultural Barriers

- ❑ Ensure written communication addresses non-English speakers and parents with low-literacy.
- ❑ Have native-language speakers facilitate meetings/events when possible.
- ❑ Provide interpreting services at meetings.
- ❑ Utilize respected community members to relay your message.
- ❑ Have parents invite other parents.
- ❑ Consider personal invitations; both Latino and African American audiences value oral communication.
- ❑ Have a presence at community events to establish yourself in the community.
- ❑ Provide healthy refreshments at meetings; food is an important part of gatherings in many cultures.

Lack of Interest/Don't Care

- ❑ Educate parents about the link between health and academics.
- ❑ Personalize your message when possible; frame your message around parents' concerns for their children's future; identify activities as an opportunity to address health disparities or social justice issues.

Lack of Transportation

- ❑ Hold meetings in convenient locations close to where the parents live.
- ❑ Provide transportation and/or public transportation passes.

- ❑ Facilitate carpooling.
- ❑ Divide groups by neighborhood when you do an activity to encourage them to interact informally and talk about transportation.

Feelings of Inadequacy

- ❑ Begin with small, attainable goals.
- ❑ Provide parents success stories of parents making a difference at other schools.
- ❑ Ensure all meetings/events provide time for socialization; this allows parents to build relationships with one another.
- ❑ Educate parents about advocacy.
- ❑ Educate parents about the school system and their potential role in it.
- ❑ Provide opportunities for parents to develop leadership skills in a safe environment.
- ❑ Emphasize both individual and group strengths and be clear about how parents can help.

Feeling Disrespected/Unwelcome and/or Opinions Not Being Valued

- ❑ Plan meetings so parents can speak within the first few minutes of your meeting.
- ❑ Recognize and reward parent involvement (e.g., prizes, awards, certificates, verbal praise, and appreciation).

The use of incentives is another beneficial way to improve parent participation. Possible suggestions for incentives include:

- ❑ Gift certificates (grocery stores, sporting goods stores, local stores)
- ❑ Aprons.
- ❑ Cookbooks.
- ❑ Bike helmets.
- ❑ Memberships at community centers and fitness clubs.
- ❑ Movie passes.
- ❑ Tickets to local sporting events.
- ❑ Healthy and culturally appropriate food/refreshments at meetings.
- ❑ Passes to community activities that support physical activity.

Organize your agenda to facilitate conversation and dialogue that will lead to active participation and engagement.

Identifying Parent Participation Opportunities

Before recruiting parents, it will be useful to understand the potential roles they could play in LSWP advocacy.

The top seven activities that parents reported they would be interested in included:

- ❑ Conducting school/student surveys.
- ❑ Administering student taste tests of new foods/beverages.
- ❑ Educating teachers, school administration, and students about health.
- ❑ Helping the school provide healthier food options.
- ❑ Volunteering for after school physical activity programs.
- ❑ Attending school board meetings or speaking to school board members.
- ❑ Attending and discussing health-related topics in group meetings and workshops.

Additional ways parents could be involved include:

- ❑ Participating on local school wellness committees.
- ❑ Introducing healthy fundraising ideas.
- ❑ Inviting other parents to get involved (and translating for other parents when needed).

ENGAGING PARENTS

Facilitating Successful Parent Meetings

It is important that you set an atmosphere of trust and respect. Organize your agenda to facilitate conversation and dialogue that will lead to active participation and engagement. Foster a sense of purpose and belonging.

- ❏ Approach parents with a respectful tone.
- ❏ Listen actively and take notes.
- ❏ Create agendas that allow time for dialogue.
- ❏ Be respectful of time and negotiate time with parents.
- ❏ Develop group agreements.
- ❏ Provide early opportunities for parents to speak and facilitate opportunities for conversation and interaction with other parents they might not know.
- ❏ Allow parents to discuss their personal resources and assets.
- ❏ Allow time for socializing.
- ❏ Ensure time is set aside for small-group work.
- ❏ Ensure handouts are available in different languages.
- ❏ Provide name tags.
- ❏ Serve refreshments that are consistent with your message.
- ❏ Identify outcomes and develop small, attainable goals at the beginning in order to build confidence and see early successes.
- ❏ Identify successes that other parents have had.
- ❏ Allow parents to determine action items and who will do these. Record who is responsible for what and the due date.
- ❏ Personalize messages. Be knowledgeable about the rates of obesity, availability of unhealthy foods and lack of physical activity opportunities in your school/community.
- ❏ Identify issues that are relevant to parents. Highlight the link between student health and academics, the role schools should play in this, and why this should matter to them.
- ❏ Acknowledge parent efforts and celebrate successes.
- ❏ Ensure the room is set up to facilitate small group discussion (e.g., chairs set up in circles, position speaker at same level as parents).

ASSESSING YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT

How Are Parents Currently Involved in Your School District?

The Local School Wellness Policy (LSWP) is a district policy that should be implemented at each school within the district. It may be in different stages of implementation at different schools. Before you begin working with parents, it may be a good idea to assess what is happening at your district regarding parent involvement in LSWP.

The following checklist will provide you with a baseline for assessing current parent involvement in your school district.

1. Does your school district have a School Wellness Committee*?

   ❑ Yes ❑ No

2. If yes, how often does it meet?

   _____

3. If there is a School Wellness Committee, are there parents on it (parents should be a part of this committee)?

   ❑ Yes ❑ No

4. Has the LSWP been communicated to parents throughout the district?

   ❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Unsure

   a) If yes, how has it been communicated?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   b) If the policy has been communicated, was it done so in multiple languages and with consideration for low-literacy parents?

   ❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Unsure

   If yes, list languages:

   _____

   _____

** Some schools may refer to their School Wellness Committee as the School Health Council, Coordinated School Health Council, or a Wellness Council. These perform the same function as the School Wellness Committee referred to here.*

ASSESSING YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT

5. Where are parents currently involved in your school/school district (this information may be school-specific)?

❏ PTO/PTA

❏ Parent center

❏ After school groups

❏ In-class volunteers

❏ Parent booster club

❏ Advisory boards

❏ _____

❏ _____

❏ _____

The information gathered from this brief survey will assist you in planning your parent outreach and activities. Having this information will allow you to find out where and how to reach parents currently involved at the school district, let you know if you need to assist the district in communicating the LSWP to parents, and whether any efforts have been made to reach low-literacy or non-English speaking parents.

Assessing Your Schools' Nutrition and Physical Activity Environment

Each school within your district may be implementing the LSWP in different stages. You may be working with parents at the district level and/or at the school level. Regardless, parents are more likely to be compelled to become involved if they know what is happening at their child's school.

You may want to complete a brief survey of the school before you meet with your parents or have your parents complete a brief school survey with you to assess the nutrition and physical activity environment in some of your district's schools. The survey will provide you with information that may help identify areas within your school(s) that need work.

Please see ***Appendix A*** for a sample Campus Survey.

Photo by Tim Wagner for HEAC

PREPARING PARENTS FOR ACTION

Taking Action on Local School Wellness Policies (LSWP)

Finding Your District's LSWP

Parents may need to know where to find their district's LSWP. Schools may have the policy posted in the cafeteria or on the school's website. You may need to ask someone at the school, district superintendent's office, or a wellness committee member where to locate the policy.

Parent Education on LSWP

Strong, fully implemented LSWPs have the power to impact nutrition/physical activity choices and student health during the school years and into adulthood.

For parents to effectively become advocates for improved LSWPs, they must first understand why LSWPs are important to them and their children. Before pursuing projects at school, parents may need background information on some or all of the following (see ***Fact Sheets*** section of this toolkit for detailed fact sheets on each):

Fact Sheet Topics

- ❖ Health and Academics
- ❖ What is Policy?
- ❖ Working with Schools
- ❖ The School Environment
- ❖ Classroom Messages
- ❖ Marketing in Schools
- ❖ California's Nutrition Standards
- ❖ Physical Activity
- ❖ Physical Education
- ❖ School Lunch Program
- ❖ School Breakfast Program
- ❖ Fundraising

See ***Parent Handouts*** section for resources on healthy celebrations, alternative fundraising, and alternatives to food as a reward.

PREPARING PARENTS FOR ACTION

Parents Taking Action!

The **Parents Taking Action!** process outlines activities that drive the policy implementation process. It will serve as your guide for leading parents through the process of identifying problems in your school/district, establishing priorities, and taking action on LSWP.

Step 1: Pick a Problem and Find a Solution

Once you have gathered information about what LSWP components need work (e.g., by using the *Campus Survey* [see *Appendix A*] or information parents already have about their child's school), it is time to identify, with parents, areas of interest and potential solutions. As a group, brainstorm problems in the school and possible solutions. All ideas are important but to advance in the right direction, parents will need to set priorities. Once ideas are on paper, the next step is to pick just one problem and one solution to address. More in-depth assessments may need to be done once parents decide on the problem they are going to work on.

Step 2: Identify the Policy Players

After parents have picked a problem and solution, they will want to identify supporters and/or people that may not support, but need to know about, the work. Consider those associated with the school (administrators, teachers, students, staff, food service staff, school nurses, parents) in addition to community members, such as pediatricians or staff from public health departments or hospitals, community organizations, and non-profit agencies (i.e., the American Cancer Society, YMCA, or American Heart Association).

Consider:

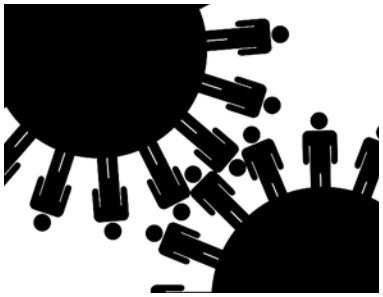
- ❖ Who can help you?
- ❖ Who may oppose your efforts?
- ❖ Who are the decision makers?

Step 3: Build Your Action Plan

Once parents have identified a problem, solution, and the policy players, it's time to make an action plan. For the action plan, figure out what needs to be done, who will do it, and when it should be done. Some steps needed in the action plan may include writing letters, making phone calls and presentations, working with the media, and administering surveys with students/parents/staff. (See *Appendix B* for sample letters, phone scripts and tips on presentations, surveys, and working with the media.)

Step 4: Evaluate How Your Group is Doing

Once parents put the plan into action, it's time to review. After completing items in the action plan, review the successes, progress, and challenges. Celebrate small achievements and keep in mind that change may take time.



STEP 1: PICK A PROBLEM AND FIND A SOLUTION

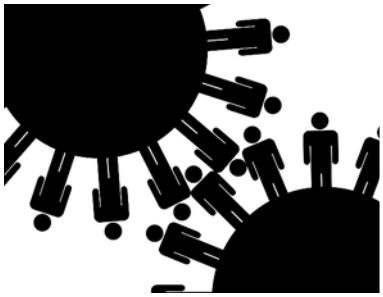
BRAINSTORMING WORKSHEET

Use this *Brainstorming Worksheet* to keep track of your ideas. Utilize your **Campus Survey** (***Appendix A***) information and resources in the ***Fact Sheets*** and ***Parent Handouts*** sections of the toolkit to assist with this step.

Problem:	Possible Solutions:
Problem:	Possible Solutions:
Problem:	Possible Solutions:

When picking your final problem and solution, consider:

- What will be different if we succeed?
- Which idea will help the most people?
- Which idea will make a lot of people healthier?
- Which idea has the best chance of working?
- Which idea will be the cheapest?
- Which idea can be done the quickest?
- Which idea do we like the best?



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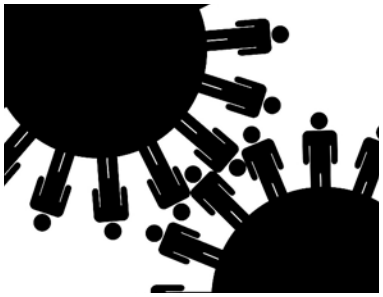
Use this *Brainstorming Worksheet* to keep track of your ideas. Utilize your **Campus Survey** (***Appendix A***) information and resources in the ***Fact Sheets*** and ***Parent Handouts*** sections of the toolkit to assist with this step.

Problem:	Possible Solutions:
Students get limited physical activity before, during, or after school	• Strengthen wellness policy language to support more physical activity opportunities • Keep the gym open on weekends • Coordinate with local gym to get free or reduced-cost memberships • Build a bike trail • Improve the school yard facilities (playground structure, grass, play areas) • Work with the local parks department to utilize local parks • Work with local afterschool programs to coordinate physical activity programs • Organize parent-led after school physical activities for students (e.g., dance, running, walking programs) • Get more students to walk or bike to school • Be sure all students get recess every day • Advocate for physical activity breaks during the school day

SAMPLE



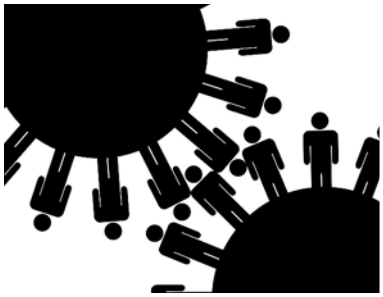
STEP 2: IDENTIFY THE POLICY PLAYERS

Who are the policy players? Who can help you? Who may oppose your efforts? Who are the decision-makers?

Problem: _____

Possible Solution: _____

Name/Title	Organization	Address	Phone Number/email	Notes



STEP 2: IDENTIFY THE POLICY PLAYERS

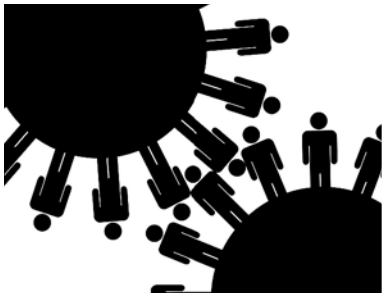
Who are the policy players? Who can help you? Who may oppose your efforts? Who are the decision-makers?

Problem: Students get limited physical activity before, during, or after school

Possible Solution: Get more students to walk or bike to school

Name/Title	Organization	Address	Phone Number/email	Notes
John Ramirez	PTA	12 Center St.	555-1212 jramirez01@yahoo.com	Walks sons to school every day, may support our work
Mrs. Beloney	Teacher, ABC School		555-1222	On wellness committee, allows kids to take PA breaks during day, may support our work
Derek Lee	Principal, ABC School		555-1333	Need buy-in, was not too supportive of LSWP
Cyndi Guerra	Athletic Director		555-1444	Has changed PE classes to improve PA in them, participates annually in walk-to-school week, may support our work
Arnell Grant	San Jose Bike Coalition	1 St Ave.	555-1555 agrant@bikesj.com	Will support efforts - can assist with safety issues, bike helmets, etc.
Barbara Fernandez	On School wellness committee (ABC District)		555-1234	Policy language states will try to support walk/bike to school efforts - follow-up with her on this
Sergeant Johnson	Local Police Agency, Community Development	- downtown office	555-1666	Can assist with safety issues (also is avid runner)

SAMPLE

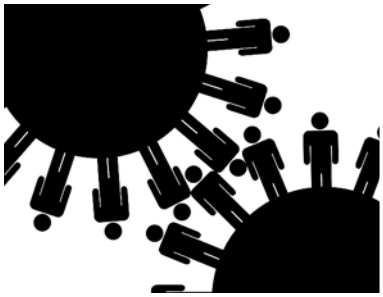


STEP 3: BUILD AN ACTION PLAN

Problem: _____

Possible Solution: _____

Steps	Who does it?	By when?



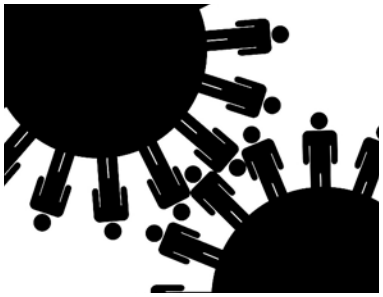
STEP 3: BUILD AN ACTION PLAN

Problem: Students get limited physical activity before, during, or after school

Possible Solution: Get more students to walk or bike to school

Steps	Who does it?	By when?
Find out what the LSWP says about walking/biking to school and what efforts have been done in the past	Joanne	October 1
Talk to the principal about desire to increase the number of students who walk/bike to school	Luz	October 15
Create survey to find out why parents/students don't walk/bike to school	Vicki	November 1
Find out about walk/bike to school resources (how to get efforts started, tools for process)	Nestor	October 10
Send letters to parents asking for help with efforts	Peggy	November 25
Give a presentation at a school board meeting; ask that the LSWP include walk/bike activities	Grace	December 15
Get in touch with local community walking/biking groups for assistance with safety, outreach, and planning activities	Mike	November 15
Contact local police regarding assistance with safety issues	David	November 15

SAMPLE



STEP 4: EVALUATE HOW YOU ARE DOING

At meetings, take time to review the project's progress.

What steps have been completed? What steps are still pending?

Which steps worked? What has not worked? Why didn't it work?

What should be done differently?

Photo by Tim Wagner for HEAC

CASE STUDIES

Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD)

Objective

Elizabeth Medrano is part of the Healthy School Food Coalition, a group of parents, teachers, students, and community organizers, who want to improve the cafeteria foods and environment in LAUSD. Since 2001, LAUSD has been on the cutting edge of improving the foods and beverages sold separately from the school breakfast and lunch programs. LAUSD was one of the first school districts in the nation to eliminate the sale of sodas and unhealthy snacks on school campus. The district instituted this change before California passed a law requiring its school districts to do this. While this effort was a positive step for the district, Elizabeth said that changes were needed in the school lunch program as well. Students had very little say about the types of foods that were offered to them in the school cafeteria and the cafeteria lines were long, which meant that students had little time to eat after getting their lunch. Because of this, Elizabeth said that action was needed to address the issues and improve access to healthy school meals for all students.

Motivation

As a parent, Elizabeth wanted to make sure her son, who attends an LAUSD school, ate his meals in the cafeteria. She felt the cafeteria meals were a healthier option than some of the "competitive foods"—foods sold outside the school meal program. She got involved in improving the cafeteria foods and environment in the district because she believes that all students should have access to healthy food, regardless of their income level.

Steps

In 2006 the LAUSD school board passed the Cafeteria Improvement Motion that called for improvements to the meal program and cafeteria environment. Elizabeth worked with the Healthy School Food Coalition to develop and implement a plan to improve the cafeteria. The committee identified some specific areas for improvement, such as creating a more varied menu, making the eating environment more attractive, improving the cafeteria equipment, addressing the long lines and limited time to eat lunch, and making sure nutrition education in the classroom was linked to the foods served in the cafeteria.

The Healthy School Food Coalition members felt it was important to make the meal service accessible to all students. The coalition learned that many students who qualified for free or reduced price meals did not eat in the cafeteria because there was a stigma associated with eating these meals. Students who get free or reduced price meals must use a

ticket system, which identifies them from students who pay for their lunch. Because of this, the district is working toward implementing a sophisticated computer payment system instead of the ticket system so all students get their meals using the same process. This way, no one will be able to identify which students get free or reduced price meals.

Elizabeth and other coalition members have brought the school and community together to make some significant improvements in the way the cafeterias serve their meals. They also have improved the kinds of foods served. Involving students in the process of improving the foods was critical to ensure success. LAUSD is currently conducting a pilot project to test some strategies aimed at improving student participation in the meal program. The coalition has worked with the school food service staff to change the way the food is presented to students, improve the layout and design of the cafeteria, and get student feedback about the cafeteria improvements through surveys and comment cards. Although this work is taking some time, Elizabeth said the end result of having healthier kids who are eating nutritious foods is well worth it.

"We want parents and young kids to pay attention and know what to expect from food at school," Elizabeth said. *"They should know their school food rights."*

Results

After working for one and a half years on this project, some of the major accomplishments include:

- Students are participating in the discussion groups to add their perspective and input to improving the school meals.
- New menus now offer three lunch items, including a vegetarian as well as hot and cold entrées.
- An executive chef has been hired to make further improvements to the school district menu.
- Increased number of salad bars in schools.
- Increased participation in the meal program.
- Nutrition education in the classroom connects to foods offered in the meal program.

Who helped?

Executive chefs, students, parents, district administrators, district food service staff, school board members

CASE STUDIES

Challenges and Solutions

Challenge: It takes money to make changes to the meal program.

Solution: Raise awareness of the connection between healthy eating and academic success to decision-makers so they are more likely to consider funding your effort.

Challenge: How do you keep people on the coalition engaged in the topic?

Solution: Keep the energy level high with the idea that all people deserve food that is good for them. Try not to overwhelm people but instead, give them short-term achievable goals.

Challenge: School personnel are often not aware of new policies.

Solution: Continue to provide updates and reminders to school staff about policy changes. Get buy-in from school administrators by sharing the connection between academic achievement and improved nutrition.

Future Plans

- Address the use of unhealthy foods for fundraisers.
- Train parents on how to provide nutritious foods at home.
- Help other parents become more aware of how companies market foods to kids.

Advice for Other Parents

- Talk to your kids about what is going on at school.
- Share ideas or concerns with other parents, teachers, and the principal, or things won't change.
- Organize a group of concerned people who can work with you to make changes.
- Get involved in school meetings so you know how the system works.
- Present your message in a positive way.

School District Demographics: Enrollment: 680,167	
73.7%	Hispanic
10.9%	African American
8.7%	Caucasian
3.7%	Asian
3.0%	Other

Celina's persistence paid off. A salad bar is now offered at lunch and there is more variety on the lunch menu.

Monterey Elementary School, San Bernardino Unified School District

Objective

After observing that many students did not eat foods offered in the school cafeteria, and noticing a lot of food ending up in the trash, parent Celina Sanchez began to investigate what was going on and search for a workable solution. Her child complained about the same foods offered all the time, a complaint she heard from other students as well.

One of Celina's friends told her about the foods offered at her own child's school—including a salad bar and a variety of foods on the menu. Celina approached the Monterey Elementary principal and shared her concerns. She presented the idea of having a salad bar at their school to the principal and also suggested the school offer more variety for breakfast and lunch.

Motivation

Celina said that *"seeing kids not eating the foods at breakfast and lunch and knowing that with an empty stomach, one can not learn,"* motivated her to take some action.

Steps

After Celina presented her ideas to the school principal, the principal asked her to fill out an application for her request to the Food Service department at the school district. Celina felt it was important to inform others about her suggestion to the school district in order to make sure the district would view the issue as a priority. She presented her ideas to other parents, including the PTA, to gain their support. Celina collected lunch menus for the past three years and used them to demonstrate there was not much variety in the food choices offered to students. It took a year to hear back from the district. However, Celina did not give up and kept visiting the principal to get updates and check on the progress of her suggested changes.

Results

Celina's persistence paid off. A salad bar is now offered at lunch and there is more variety on the lunch menu. The other positive change was that cereal was added to the breakfast menu. By observations, Celina has noticed that students are using the salad bar and more foods are being consumed at both breakfast and lunch.

CASE STUDIES

Who Helped?

School principal, other parents.

Challenges and Solutions

Challenge: The biggest barrier was the slow pace the district took to approve her request—a full year! While the original school principal was very supportive of her, when a new principal arrived, she did not have the same support.

Solution: Persistence and constant requests for updates on the progress of her suggestions from the principal kept the project moving forward.

Future Plans

Celina would like to propose a class that teaches students how to dance the traditional Mexican Baile Folklórico. She wants to extend this beyond just Cinco de Mayo and make it available year round. She is aware that this not only teaches traditional Mexican dance, but also serves as physical activity for students.

Advice for Other Parents

- Don't give up.
- Look for help from other parents and groups and engage them both.
- Advocate for better health for your children.
- Speak up and direct your concerns to the school administration.

School District Demographics: Enrollment: 784	
74.9%	Hispanic
13.1%	African American
6.2%	Caucasian
1.8%	Other
1.3%	Asian

After hearing so much about childhood obesity, Deirdre was motivated to change some of the food options at her daughter's middle school.

Lewis Middle School, San Diego Unified School District

Objective

After San Diego Unified School District passed its student wellness policy, parent Deirdre Kleske wanted to make sure that the principal and parents knew changes needed to be made to the foods served and sold on her daughter's campus, including at the student store. After some investigation, she learned that the student store was continuing to sell candy and chips to students even though that was prohibited by California law and the new district wellness policy.

Motivation

After hearing so much about childhood obesity, Deirdre was motivated to change some of the food options at her daughter's middle school. Based on research she has read, Deirdre believes that healthy eating and physical activity can help students achieve more academically, as well as feel better about themselves.

Steps

Deirdre learned that the student store, which was run by the Associated Student Body (ASB) class as a fundraiser for activities, had eliminated the sale of sodas, but was still selling snack foods like candy and chips that did not meet the nutrition standards in the district's wellness policy. The store was run out of a classroom and was open to students during lunch time.

Deirdre arranged a meeting with the ASB director to share her concerns and help him understand the new policy. She wanted to make sure the school was not in violation of the district policy and new California laws dictating which foods and beverages could be sold on campus, so she shared information on the nutrition standards and easy-to-use tools that could be used to determine whether a food was compliant or not. Deirdre worked hard to make sure the ASB director considered her as a resource rather than the "food police."

She also helped educate ASB student leaders on the types of foods that could be sold in the store and she conducted taste tests of new products and worked with the students to identify new items to sell for a higher profit.

Results

The entire store is now stocked with compliant items. Additionally, the school provided funding to fix-up the store and increase its visibility among the students. Some innovative items have been included in the product mix like soy-based ice cream sandwiches, soy chips, and 100 percent fruit leather. Plus, students have been involved in promoting the new items to their peers.

CASE STUDIES

Who helped?

ASB advisor, principal, vendors, students, school foundation.

Challenges and Solutions

Challenge: Reluctant staff.

Solution: Constant vigilance and serving as a resource rather than an "enforcer."

Future Plans

- Help the student store stock healthier snacks. While some snacks meet the nutrition standards, they are not as nutritious as others that are available.
- Work with school officials and vendors to supply smoothies on campus that meet the nutrition standards.

Advice for Other Parents

- Secure support from a principal or other champion within the school.
- Celebrate even small changes and don't expect big changes to happen overnight.
- Share your small victories with other parents as they can motivate them to tackle a similar issue in their schools.

School District Demographics: Enrollment: 1142	
44.1%	Caucasian
31.9%	Hispanic
11.4%	Other
9.5%	African American
3.1%	Asian

Each day had a color theme and students were encouraged to bring in their favorite fruits or vegetables to match.

Alamosa Park Elementary, Vista Unified School District

Objective

In 2006, Vista Unified School District passed its local school wellness policy. Each school in the district provided a representative for the district wellness policy committee. As her son's school representative, parent Kathi Keene was asked to help get the word out about the new wellness policy and changes that would be occurring on her son's campus.

Motivation

Kathi has always had a passion for health and fitness so her assignment to help communicate the new wellness policy to her son's school community provided her a great opportunity to put her passion into action. As a parent, Kathi made every effort to keep her own children healthy by providing healthy foods and making sure they had opportunities to be physically active. When her son's elementary school principal asked her to get involved on the district wellness policy committee, she was eager to help the entire school learn more about eating healthfully and being active in fun and non competitive ways.

Steps

Over the past two years, Kathi has focused on improving nutrition education and access to fresh fruits and vegetables on campus. She implemented healthy tips of the week and assisted the district in obtaining a grant to implement the Harvest of the Month program. She regularly conducts taste tests of healthy foods and nutrition talks in her son's 4th grade classroom.

The school's foundation wanted to conduct a jog-a-thon in order to raise money to bring the Sports Play and Recreation for Kids (SPARK) PE program to the school. Kathi felt that a fundraiser was a key way to introduce students to health and fitness.

Kathi and her partners at the school—the Wellness Council, the school district nutrition education coordinator, PTA, teachers, and community sponsors—put together a week of activities that culminated in a jog-a-thon fundraiser. "Healthy Hawk Week" was kicked off with the Healthy Hawk Chant and energizing activities. Each day had a color theme and students were encouraged to bring in their favorite fruits or vegetables to match. Other components of the week included a tour of the school garden, a "fear factor" taste testing of less common fruits and vegetables, Walk to School Day, Nutrition Olympics, and a SPARK assembly to get the students excited about getting pledges and to introduce the teachers to the SPARK program.

CASE STUDIES

Results

Healthy Hawk Week and the Jog-a-thon were a huge success. Here are some of the highlights:

- More than $19,000 was raised by students during the jog-a-thon.
- The community contributed a multitude of healthy prizes for students, including a custom BMX bike, free registration to a surf/karate camp, and bowling passes.
- Teachers pledged *not* to reward students with candy and were given lists of alternative rewards and incentives.
- The energy generated by this event rubbed off on teachers and parents, who have indicated they will use this information at home and in the classroom in the future.

Who Helped?

Wellness Council, Alamosa Park Elementary School Foundation, PTA, teachers, district nutrition education coordinator, and community sponsors

Challenges and Solutions

Challenge: School time is precious.

Solution: Most of the activities occurred during the lunch recess. Additionally, event organizers made sure to conduct the "Healthy Hawk Week" after state testing was completed.

Future Plans

- Continue Harvest of the Month.
- Conduct SPARK training.
- Implement an after school running or fitness club.

Advice for Other Parents

- Believe in the ultimate goal of decreasing the number of overweight kids.
- Find groups of similar minded parents to work with.
- Start small.
- Get involved in your school district's or your school's wellness committee.
- Get district support.

School District Demographics: Enrollment: 590	
41%	Caucasian
29.3%	Hispanic
19.7%	Other
6.1%	African American
3.9%	Asian

Photo by Tim Wagner for HEAC

Photo by Tim Wagner for HEAC

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Photo by Tim Wagner for HEAC

FACT SHEET

HEALTH AND ACADEMICS

What Is the Link Between Academic Achievement, Parent and Family Involvement, and the Local School Wellness Policy (LSWP)?

When parents are actively involved in their child's education and school, their children are more likely to:

- ❖ Earn better grades and achieve higher test scores.
- ❖ Participate in advanced academics.
- ❖ Attend school regularly.
- ❖ Develop better social skills.
- ❖ Graduate and go on to college.

Healthy, well-nourished, physically active students:

- ❖ Are more prepared to learn.
- ❖ Have increased concentration and improved test scores.
- ❖ Are more likely to attend school regularly.
- ❖ Show better attendance and a more positive attitude toward school.
- ❖ Are better able to take advantage of educational opportunities, such as attending college.

What are the Challenges?

- ❖ Parents not being informed about LSWPs and the role they can play.
- ❖ Parents not being included in LSWP implementation, monitoring, and evaluation on an on-going basis.
- ❖ LSWPs may not be implemented, monitored, or evaluated.

Strong LSWPs create healthy school environments and healthy students.

Healthy students are more successful students. Parent involvement, healthy eating, physical education, and regular opportunities for physical activity all contribute to healthier students.

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What is the Ideal Situation?

- ❖ Parents know about the LSWP and are involved in the implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and improvement of LSWPs.
- ❖ Parents are actively recruited and their participation is welcomed by schools and districts.

What Can Parents Do?

- ❖ Be involved in your child's school. Get to know the principal, teachers, cafeteria staff, and other staff.
- ❖ Visit the school office or website to get a copy of the LSWP.
- ❖ Learn what your district's LSWP says about nutrition, nutrition education, foods and beverages sold at school, physical activity, and physical education.
- ❖ Ask at your school office who is responsible for the implementation of the policy or check the school/district website.
- ❖ Ask your school to post the LSWP at the school and on the school's website.
- ❖ Talk to other parents about the link between health, parent involvement, and children's success in school.
- ❖ Join or form a team of interested parents. You may find support from such groups as the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), school health advisory council, school wellness council, school improvement team, or at your school parent center.
- ❖ Ask to join the committee or council responsible for implementing the LSWP.
- ❖ Request that a school representative speak to parents about the LSWP and the progress with its implementation.
- ❖ Work together with school leaders (principals, school nutrition staff, and physical education staff) to evaluate and improve the LSWP.

Additional Resources

Healthy Youth: Student Health and Academic Achievement, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

This web-based resource provides information on the connection between health and student achievement. It also provides links to pages on the connection between physical activity, coordinated school health, and student success.

www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/health_and_academics/index.htm

Health and Wellness, National Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

Web-based resources that contains individual sections of the PTA Healthy Lifestyles: A Parent's Guide. Topics include physical activity, nutrition, grocery shopping, school wellness policies, and vaccinations.

www.pta.org/pr_category_details_1117232379734.html

FACT SHEET

WHAT IS POLICY?

What is the Local School Wellness Policy (LSWP)

By the beginning of the 2006-2007 school year, schools participating in the National School Lunch or Breakfast Program were required to establish a local school wellness policy (LSWP) that set goals for:

- Nutrition education.
- Physical activity.
- All foods and beverages available on campus.
- School-based activities designed to promote student wellness.

Why is the LSWP Important to Parents?

- Healthy, fit students do better in school, are more likely to attend school, and perform better academically. Strong LSWPs can improve the nutrition and physical activity environment in schools and improve student health and welfare both in the short and long term.
- The rates of overweight and inactivity in America's youth are rising.
- Schools play a critical role in promoting student health, preventing childhood obesity, and combating problems associated with poor nutrition and physical inactivity. Youth spend the majority of their time in school.
- School environments should foster healthy eating and regular physical activity.
- Engaging parents in LSWP implementation and measuring the effectiveness of implementation is an important strategy to ensure strong LSWPs are implemented in schools.
- Parents bring a variety of experience and new perspectives to the school.

What is Policy?

A policy is a rule or set of rules that people must follow. Policies have the power to influence how you and others act. Policies can be set by government, schools, organizations, and other groups. In schools, school board members are responsible for adopting school policy. Once a practice is written into school policy, the school is then obligated to follow the policy.

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FACT SHEET

WORKING WITH SCHOOLS

Who's Who in the School System?

School Board

Elected officials that comprise the policy making body of the school district and are responsible for providing a quality public education program. The school board provides direction, oversight, and accountability for school policies.

Superintendent

Oversees and enhances educational programs, implements rules, regulations, policies and procedures.

District Administrators

Oversee specific areas such as curriculum and instructional development, student services, special needs, English language learners, athletics, transportation, food service/child nutrition directors, federal programs, testing and assessment, and finances.

School Principal

Chief administrator of a school – oversees school operations, provides staff with necessary skills to fulfill educational goals, and ensures that the rules, regulations, policies and procedures are enforced and fulfilled.

Food Service Director

Provides leadership and management functions for the food service operation in compliance with local, state, and federal requirements.

Where do parents fit in your school/school district?

Working with Schools

When advocating for changes in your local schools, it is important to know how schools work. Understanding how schools work will assist you in your efforts.

CALIFORNIA PROJECT LEAN
LEADERS ENCOURAGING ACTIVITY AND NUTRITION

FACT SHEET

THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

How can the local school wellness policy (LSWP) help create a healthier school environment?

There are a variety of ways that the schools can promote and support proper nutrition and physical activity. Strong LSWPs address each of the components below.

Time and Space for Eating

- ❖ Students have adequate time to eat meals, have pleasant surroundings, and time to relax and socialize at meals.
- ❖ Students have access to facilities for hand washing.

Classroom Activities

- ❖ Food is not used for individual rewards or for incentives for academic performance/good behavior.
- ❖ Foods used for celebrations support the school's health messages.

Staff Qualifications

- ❖ Staff teaching nutrition education and physical education are appropriately trained and regularly participate in professional development.
- ❖ Food service or child nutrition directors have specific training in areas related to complying with nutrient standards, menu planning, food purchasing and storage, food sanitation, and general nutrition.

Nutrition Education

- ❖ Nutrition education is integrated within the health education program.
- ❖ Curricula is evaluated for accuracy and completeness and is free of commercial messages.

The Nutrition and Physical Activity Environment in Schools

The school nutrition and physical activity environment impacts student food choices and levels of physical activity, thereby impacting the students' health and academic achievement. Youth spend half of their waking hours in school, and schools have a responsibility to create an environment that increases student access to nutritious foods and physical activity options.

CALIFORNIA PROJECT LEAN
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Coordination of Programs

- The food service program coordinates with classroom nutrition instruction.

Staff as Role Models

- School staff are encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity behaviors.
- Staff lounge vending machines sell the same foods and beverages as those accessible by students.

Marketing/Advertising on Campus

- Partnerships between schools and businesses should be encouraged but the integrity of the educational activities and materials should not be compromised for these relationships.
- Advertising messages are consistent with and reinforce the objectives of the educational and nutritional goals of the school.

Nutritious Food Choices

- Foods of good nutritional content, including fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy, whole grains, and lean protein foods are available wherever and whenever food is sold or served during the school day.
- Foods sold/served during the school day meet the federal, state, and local nutrition standards.
- Foods sold/served on school grounds or at school-sponsored events are consistent with school nutrition messages and standards.

Food Sales/Fundraising

- Foods sold outside of the school meal program, from vending machines, school stores, the cafeteria, or by student and parent organizations meet the state's nutrition standards. All other fundraisers should promote physical activity or be non-food items (see ***Parent Handouts*** section for resources on alternative fundraising ideas).

Physical Activity (PA)

- Schools provide daily recess before lunch and at a different time than lunch (in elementary schools).
- There are PA breaks during the day.
- Schools provide PA opportunities in afterschool programs.
- Schools promote and coordinate PA opportunities before and after school (such as walk/bike to school programs) and in partnership with community agencies.
- PA/recess is not withheld or used as punishment for bad behavior.

Physical Education (PE)

- PE is taught by certified PE teachers and/or those teachers who are teaching PE receive adequate and regular training.
- Students meet the minimum amount of PE minutes as required by law.
- Students are moderately-to-vigorously physically active (e.g., are breaking a sweat) for at least 50 percent of their PE class.
- Teacher to student ratios for PE classes are similar to those of other classes.

This fact sheet was adapted in part from Action for Healthy Kids, Arizona State Team, Arizona Healthy School Environment Model Policy

FACT SHEET

CLASSROOM MESSAGES

What are Classroom Messages?

A healthy school nutrition and physical activity environment is one where nutrition and physical activity (PA) are taught and supported in the classroom, the cafeteria, and throughout the school. Classroom education and classroom activities must provide consistent messages that help students develop healthy eating and PA habits. Important pieces of the classroom message include:

- Nutrition education.
- Physical Education (PE) and PA opportunities.
- Healthy classroom celebrations.
- Appropriate rewards for behavior and performance.
- Teachers being models for physically active lifestyles and nutritionally sound behaviors.

What are the Challenges around Classroom Messages?

- Students may not receive effective, standards-based nutrition education.
- Teachers may not be educated in nutrition and health.
- Foods served during classroom parties are frequently high in fat and sugar.
- Unhealthy food is often used as a reward for good behavior.
- Recess may be withheld as punishment for student misbehavior.
- Students may not receive recess or any break during the day (outside of lunch) for PA.
- Staff wellness may not be a high priority for schools.

What is the Ideal Situation?

- Food is not used as a reward.
- PA and/or PE are not withheld as punishment for bad behavior.
- Teachers receive specific training to develop skills to teach nutrition, PE, and health education.
- Schools have standards-based curricula for nutrition education and PE.

Additional Resources

Changing the Scene, Improving the School Nutrition Environment, *United States Department of Agriculture, Department of Food and Nutrition Service*
A toolkit that addresses the entire school nutrition environment from a commitment to nutrition and physical activity, pleasant eating experiences, quality school meals, other healthy food options, nutrition education and marketing.
http://www.fns.usda.gov/TN/Resources/changing.html

Healthy Classroom Celebrations, *Center for Science in the Public Interest*
Links to resources on healthy classroom celebrations.
*www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/policy_options_*

CALIFORNIA PROJECT LEAN
LEADERS ENCOURAGING ACTIVITY AND NUTRITION

- Nutrition education and skill-building activities are taught regularly in the classroom and are integrated with other subjects rather than taught as isolated activities.
- After school PA and nutrition is coordinated with the regular school day.
- Cafeteria and classroom education are coordinated and connected.
- Students have opportunities to practice healthy behaviors in the classroom, cafeteria, and playground.
- Foods/beverages served at classroom celebrations are consistent with the nutrition education that students receive in class and meet the State's nutrition standards (if your state has these).
- Teachers serve as role models by valuing healthy foods and physical activity.
- Students are given PA breaks during class time.

What Can Parents Do?

- Ask your child what foods are served in their classroom for celebrations; voice concerns about any foods being used as a reward.
- Ask your child's teacher what the policy/practice is for foods served during classroom celebrations.
- Work with your local school wellness committee, teachers, and other parents to set guidelines for foods/beverages served at parties, celebrations, and meetings during the school day.
- Work with your local school wellness committee, teachers, and other parents to set guidelines for PA during the school day.
- Ask if nutrition education is integrated into the health education curriculum; advocate for use of the Health Education Content Standards for California Public Schools (or for your state's health education standards).
- Working with the food service staff, mobilize parents to participate in cooking demonstrations or taste-testing with students that allow them to practice what they are learning about nutrition.
- Educate school administrators and other parents about the impact of classroom messages and behaviors on student behavior and health.
- Advocate for staff wellness programs.
- Play a supportive role; work with schools and other parents to make improvements.

Health Education Content Standards for California Public Schools, *2008, California Department of Education*
The content standards provide grade-specific goals for instruction that a school may offer in the curriculum area of health education.
www.cde.ca.gov/ci/he/he/

Take Action!
California Department of Public Health
A free, flexible, 10-week employee wellness program that encourages fruit and vegetable consumption and regular physical activity among employees while fostering teamwork and boosting morale.
www.takeactionca.com

A Child's Garden of Standards: Linking School Gardens to California Education Standards*, 2002, California Department of Education*
A tool that shows how garden-based education supports the State's academic content standards.
www.cde.ca.gov/re/pn/fd/documents/childsgarden.pdf

What does your LSWP say about classroom messages?

FACT SHEET

MARKETING IN SCHOOLS

Why is it Important to Limit Marketing in Schools?

Marketing and advertising of unhealthy foods and beverages influence children's attitudes, preferences, food purchase requests, diets, and health. Labeling and signage on school campuses affect students' food selections both at and away from school. Marketing and advertising of unhealthy products conflict with the educational mission of schools to teach children about good health and proper nutrition. Advertising unhealthy foods also creates mixed messages as it creates the appearance that the school supports students eating these foods/beverages.

What are the Challenges Around Marketing in Schools?

- Schools may be unaware of the influence of marketing on student health behaviors and health.
- Schools may have exclusive contracts with food/beverage companies that they are hesitant to break; some contracts allow these companies to market on campus.
- Schools may fear potential loss in revenues/products (such as free books, scoreboards, school supplies) if they do not allow companies to market on campus.

What is the Ideal Situation?

- No commercial influences on campus, at school events, in district curriculum, or in classroom materials that promote unhealthy foods and beverages.
- A school marketing policy that supports the above.

What does your LSWP say about marketing?

What is Marketing in Schools?

Marketing in schools takes many forms. Marketing in schools includes product sales (such as foods/beverages sold on campus or items sold through fundraising), direct advertising (such as signs, billboards, scoreboards, book covers, and buses), and indirect marketing (which includes corporate–sponsored curriculum and contests in return for funds/products). The majority of the foods and beverages marketed in schools are of poor nutritional quality.

CALIFORNIA PROJECT LEAN
LEADERS ENCOURAGING ACTIVITY AND NUTRITION

What Can Parents Do?

- Work with the School Wellness Committee and other concerned stakeholders to educate parents, community partners, school administration, students, and staff about the impact of food marketing on youth.
- Conduct a marketing assessment on your child's school campus.
- Determine if the foods/beverages that are marketed/advertised on the school campus meet your state's policy on foods/beverages that are allowable for sale on school campuses and that they are aligned with the LSWP.
- Draft a sample marketing policy to share with the school board, school wellness committee, or principal and consider adding it to the LSWP.
- Set guidelines for business partnerships that restrict marketing and advertising of unhealthy foods and beverages.
- If a school has exclusive food/beverage contracts, find out when the contracts expire and advocate for the school not to renew the contract to allow companies to market unhealthy foods and beverages at school.
- Conduct periodic evaluations of the marketing/advertising on campus.
- Ensure that fundraising practices are not selling/marketing unhealthy food/beverage choices.

Additional Resources

Captive Kids: Selling Obesity at Schools: An Action Guide to Stop the Marketing of Unhealthy Foods and Beverages in Schools, *California Project LEAN*
This toolkit addresses the issue of marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages on California school campuses and includes an easy-to-use marketing assessment tool.
www.CaliforniaProjectLEAN.org

Food Marketing to Children and Youth: Threat or Opportunity, *The National Academies of Science*
This report offers the most comprehensive review to date of the scientific evidence on the influence of food marketing on diets of children and youth.
www.nationalacademies.org

Raw Deal: School Beverage Contracts Less Lucrative than They Seem, *Center for Science in the Public Interest*
A report looking at school beverage contracts.
www.cspinet.org/beveragecontracts.pdf

FACT SHEET

CALIFORNIA'S NUTRITION STANDARDS

What are Nutrition Standards?

Nutrition standards regulate which "competitive" (also called "a la carte") foods and beverages can be sold to students. Competitive foods are items (main entrees and side dishes), snacks, and beverages that students can buy apart from the school breakfast and lunch program. Competitive foods may be sold in the cafeteria, vending machines, snack bars, concession stands, and school stores, and include foods sold through fundraisers or provided to students for classroom parties. California's nutrition standards—Senate Bills (SB) 12 and 965 (2005)—apply to the entire school day and one-half hour before and after school. Elementary school nutrition standards are stricter than those for middle/junior and high schools.

Competitive foods are often high in calories, fat, salt, and sugar. Students frequently choose these foods instead of the school breakfast or lunch, which are usually more balanced and lower in fat.

What are the Challenges to California's Nutrition Standards?

- Schools may not comply with the law regarding foods and beverages sold and served.
- Schools may not have a system in place to monitor the implementation of the nutrition standards.
- Non-compliant foods and beverages may be sold by students, teachers, parent groups, and other school groups for fundraising.
- Vendors stock non-compliant foods and beverages in vending machines.
- Street vendors sell unhealthy foods and beverages to students just outside school campuses.
- By restricting the sale of competitive foods, schools may reduce fundraising revenue, which often goes to extra-curricular activities such as sports or band.

What are Nutrition Standards?

Nutrition standards are meant to ensure that students have access to healthier foods and beverages by limiting fat, sugar, and calories, and the types of products that can be offered in schools. Districts may set stricter standards than the law in their local school wellness policy (LSWP).

CALIFORNIA PROJECT LEAN
LEADERS ENCOURAGING ACTIVITY AND NUTRITION

What is the Ideal Situation?

- ❖ Limited or no competitive foods or beverages are sold to students.
- ❖ Offer only the school breakfast and lunch in the cafeteria and ensure that these are comprised of healthy food choices.
- ❖ Students, teachers, and school administrators understand and follow the nutrition standards.
- ❖ Districts and schools set stricter standards than the law (perhaps lower fat standards or standards for sodium).
- ❖ Parents are actively involved in supporting the nutrition standards.
- ❖ Students are offered only foods and beverages that contribute to their health.
- ❖ Rules pertaining to street vendors are enforced (for example, in some cities, they need to be 500 feet away from the school).

What nutrition standards does your LSWP have?

What Can Parents Do?

- ❖ Learn about the laws addressing foods and beverages sold in schools.
- ❖ Learn about your district's LSWP.
- ❖ Talk with other parents about the laws and wellness policies.
- ❖ Find out who is in charge of the school's food service and wellness policy and who is responsible for monitoring nutrition standards.
- ❖ Get to know who can make decisions and let them know about your interest and concerns.
- ❖ Find out what competitive foods and beverages are being sold at your child's school.
- ❖ Talk with the principal, food service director, associated student body director, and teachers to find out how nutrition standards and LSWPs are monitored.
- ❖ Ask to serve on the school's council or committee that is responsible for wellness policies and foods served.

Additional Resources

Food Standards Calculator,
California Project LEAN
Tools and information on California's nutrition standards for elementary and middle/high schools, along with a calculator to determine if food items meet the standards.
www.CaliforniaProjectLEAN.org/calculator/

SB 12 and SB 965 Summaries,
California Project LEAN
Information that summarizes the requirements of SB 12 and SB 965.
www.CaliforniaProjectLEAN.org

FACT SHEET

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

What Are the Challenges Around Physical Activity (PA) in Schools?

- Fewer students walk or bike to school (it has dropped from 66% in 1974 to about 13% in 2000).
- Many schools have reduced or eliminated recess and have very short lunch breaks.
- Due to the emphasis on academic achievement, there may be no breaks during the school day that allow for PA.
- Schools may have low levels of supervision, poor or no equipment, and inadequate recreation areas.
- Schools may not have organized after school PA programs and youth may not have transportation to activity locations outside of school (such as organized sports or public parks).
- Neighborhood public play areas may be unsafe and inadequate.
- There is a lack of quality Physical Education in schools (see also Physical Education fact sheet).

What is the Ideal?

- Safe routes to and from school for walking/biking.
- Adequate and safe facilities and playground equipment.
- PA breaks during the school day.
- Daily recess for elementary school students.
- PA time before eating lunch instead of after eating lunch (elementary only).
- PA opportunities before/after school that are non-competitive, inclusive of all students, and accommodate all physical ability levels.
- Professional development for teachers and parent volunteers to effectively guide PA.

What does your LSWP say about PA?

Physical Activity (PA) Recommendations

It is recommended that young people (ages 6–19) engage in at least 60 minutes of PA on most, and preferably all, days of the week. PA can be defined as both structured and unstructured routines at home, school, work, transport (such as walking to school), leisure, and recreation. Fewer than 25 percent of children get at least 30 minutes of PA per day. PA decreases and levels off with age, especially among girls.

What Can Parents Do?

- ❖ Find out what kinds of PA your child's school offers (before, during or after school).
- ❖ Ask for daily recess in elementary schools.
- ❖ Ask for intramural physical activities.
- ❖ Start walking/running/biking clubs or other intramural PA groups.
- ❖ Work with teachers to start pedometer programs (integrated into classroom activities or outside school hours).
- ❖ Improve school yard facilities.
- ❖ Start a walk/bike to school program.
- ❖ Talk to teachers and the school principal about the importance of PA breaks during the school day.
- ❖ Work with local agencies (Parks and Recreation, YMCA, Boys and Girls Club) to provide local PA opportunities.
- ❖ Advocate for lunch periods to be structured to allow adequate time to eat and for PA.
- ❖ Assist in setting up PA opportunities in after school programs.
- ❖ Raise money to purchase PA equipment or curriculum/materials for afterschool PA programs.

Additional Resources

Walk to School
Find resources to encourage more adults and children to walk/bike to school together.
www.cawalktoschool.com

Peaceful Playgrounds
Resources that will assist groups to organize playgrounds and field areas into appealing game areas.
www.peacefulplaygrounds.com

SPARK
Curriculum and training for physical education and after school PA programs.
www.sparkpe.org

Take 10!
Resources for a classroom-based PA program for kindergarten to fifth grade students that integrates 10 minutes of physical activity into academics.
www.take10.net

CANFit (California Adolescent Nutrition and Fitness Program)
Resources for incorporating physical activity into afterschool programs.
www.canfit.org/programs.html

Project Fit America!
A national agency that works at the grassroots level with schools and front line educators to create new opportunities for kids to be active, fit, and healthy.
www.projectfitamerica.org

FACT SHEET

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

What Are the Challenges Around Physical Education (PE) in Schools?

- Required PE minutes (per law in many states) are not being met.
- There are too few certified PE teachers; in elementary schools, classroom teachers often teach PE; in middle/high schools, classes may be as big as 60-70 children per one teacher. PE teachers are most qualified to teach PE.
- Facilities and equipment are not adequate for each student to actively participate in PE.
- Students are active for a very small amount of time in PE class.
- Schools may not have PE curriculum.

What it the Ideal?

- Instructional periods that meet the state's PE laws.
- Qualified PE teachers teaching PE and providing training to classroom teachers who are teaching PE.
- A teacher-to-student ratio consistent with other subject areas and/or classrooms.
- Adequate equipment and facilities for each student to actively participate during PE class.
- Quality instruction that meets the state's PE content standards and supports lifelong physical activity.
- Students are physically active for a majority of the class period.
- Schools have PE curriculum that meets the state standards.
- Students have experiences in a variety of activity areas such as basic movement skills, physical fitness, rhythm and dance, games, team, dual and individual sports, tumbling and gymnastics, aquatics, etc.
- Students acquire skills and learn the benefits of being physically active throughout life.

What is Physical Education?

Physical Education (PE) is planned instruction that builds motor skills and teaches movement concepts and the health benefits of regular physical activity so that youth will be physically active throughout their lives. Physically fit students perform better in school.

PE requirements in California:

Elementary Schools: 200 minutes of PE per 10 day period.

Middle and High Schools: 400 minutes of PE per 10 day period.

What does your LSWP say about PE?

What Can Parents Do?

- ❖ Ask your children:
  - How many days a week they get PE and how long it is?
  - If they are physically active during PE (moving around versus sitting)?
  - If the PE activities include all students?
  - If they like PE?
  - How many students are in their PE class?
  - What waivers are granted to exempt students from PE (middle and high school level)?
- ❖ Find out who teaches PE in your child's school.
- ❖ Familiarize yourself with the PE standards for the grades in your school.
- ❖ Find out if the amount of PE your child receives meets the state's required minutes of instruction.
- ❖ Speak to school administrators about the link between fitness and academics.
- ❖ Raise funds for PE curriculum or athletic equipment.
- ❖ Inquire about professional development opportunities and certification of teachers.

Additional Resources

California Physical Education Model Content Standards, *California Department of Education*
Describes what students should know and be able to do in physical education based on *grade level.*
www.cde.ca.gov/re/pn/fd/documents/pestandards.pdf

Quality Physical Education: How Does Your Program Rate? *National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE)*
This brief tool allows you to evaluate your PE program's strengths and weaknesses and prepare a plan for improvement.
www.ncpe4me.com/pdf_files/PE_checklist_2006.pdf

Physical Education Curriculum Analysis Tool *(PECAT), Centers for* Disease Control and Prevention
A tool for assessing written PE curricula to assess quality of PE.
www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/pecat/

National Standards for Physical Education, *NASPE*
Information and resources on what students should know and be able to do as a result of a quality PE program.
www.aahperd.org

FACT SHEET

SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

The School Lunch Program Benefits Children, Parents, and Schools by:

- ❖ Providing children with meals that include the vitamins, minerals, and calories they need.
- ❖ Offering parents a convenient and affordable way to provide their children with a meal during the day.
- ❖ Improving learning ability and classroom behavior among students that eat school lunches.

What are the Challenges around the School Lunch Program?

- ❖ School meal programs must be self-supporting.
- ❖ Foods in the school lunch may vary in quality and be limited in variety.
- ❖ There may be a stigma attached to the lunch; in some schools, students who receive free and reduced priced meals are made to stand in different lines than those students paying full price. (This often results in fewer students choosing the free or reduced price lunch even though they are eligible.)
- ❖ Schools may have street vendors and/or local fast food establishments nearby that offer unhealthy, less expensive, and often times, more appealing foods.
- ❖ The school environment (such as long wait times for meals and unpleasant eating surroundings) may be a barrier to students eating in the cafeteria.
- ❖ There may be no cafeteria.
- ❖ Students and parents are unaware of what food offerings are in the school lunch.
- ❖ Competitive/a la carte offerings (foods and beverages sold outside of the school lunch) pull students away from choosing the school lunch.

What is the School Lunch Program?

The School Lunch Program is a Federal program that assists public schools and non-profit private schools in providing affordable meals to children. The program offers free or reduced price meals to children who qualify based on family size and income. It is administered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and, in California, by the California Department of Education (CDE).

CALIFORNIA PROJECT LEAN
LEADERS ENCOURAGING ACTIVITY AND NUTRITION

What is the Ideal Situation?

- ❖ Good quality, varied, and appealing foods which may require updates in food service equipment and staff training.
- ❖ Fast service and a pleasant eating environment.
- ❖ One payment system for all students; a system that does not discriminate.
- ❖ Adequate time for students to eat and socialize with friends.
- ❖ Appropriate marketing of the school lunch program to attract student participation.

What does your LSWP say about school lunch?

What Can Parents Do?

- ❖ Talk to your children about their school's meals to determine what is currently offered and how they feel about it.
- ❖ Promote the school lunch to other families.
- ❖ Arrange a visit to your child's cafeteria to see what foods are sold, how they are presented, and what the eating environment is like.
- ❖ Work with other parents, the school wellness committee, and food service staff to address facility challenges and barriers to improved food choices.
- ❖ Work with food service staff and school administration to ensure that students are not singled out in meal lines based on how they pay.
- ❖ Conduct student surveys to determine what would increase student participation in the school lunch program.
- ❖ Work with the food service staff to conduct taste tests of new, healthier foods. (Students are more likely to buy new foods if they have tasted them before).
- ❖ Assist food service with school lunch marketing efforts.
- ❖ Determine if street vendors are operating close to the school grounds, and if so, work with the principal or assistant principal and the city to eliminate street vendors around school property.
- ❖ Work with food service to arrange parent volunteer programs to support food changes in the cafeteria (e.g., assist in keeping salad bars clean and appealing for students).

Additional Resources

Changing the Scene, Improving the School Nutrition Environment, *USDA, Food and Nutrition Service*
A toolkit that addresses the entire school nutrition environment from a commitment to nutrition and physical activity to pleasant eating experiences, quality school meals, other healthy food options, nutrition education, and marketing the issue to the public.
www.fns.usda.gov/TN/Resources/changing.html

School Nutrition by Design, *CDE*
An overview and strategies for implementing a healthy nutrition environment.
www.cde.ca.gov/re/pn/fd/documents/schnutrtn071206.pdf

Feed More Kids for School Lunch Success, *CDE*
Provides guidance on how to get more students to eat the school lunch.
www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/he/feedmorekids.asp

Team Nutrition, *USDA, Food and Nutrition Service*
Provides resources that support child nutrition programs through training and technical assistance for food service, nutrition education for children and their caregivers, and school and community support for healthy eating and physical activity.
http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/

FACT SHEET

SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM

What is the School Breakfast Program?

The School Breakfast Program is a Federal program that assists public schools and non-profit private schools in providing affordable meals to children. The program offers free or reduced price meals to children who qualify based on family size and income. The program is administered by the United States Department of Agriculture and, in California, by the California Department of Education (CDE).

Studies show that children who eat school breakfast have better nutrition and academic performance than those who do not eat breakfast or who eat an unhealthy breakfast. Students who eat breakfast have a lower overall fat intake, snack less throughout the day, eat more fruits, drink more milk, and are less likely to be overweight than those who don't eat breakfast.

What Are the Challenges Around the School Breakfast Program?

- Not all schools offer school breakfast.
- Foods in the school breakfast program may vary in quality and be limited in variety.
- The cost of school food service providing breakfast to students is higher than the meal reimbursement received for breakfast.
- There may be a stigma attached to the breakfast program; students who receive free and reduced price meals are singled out based on their payment status.
- Breakfast may not be served at times or in locations convenient for students.

What is the Ideal Situation?

- All schools offer school breakfast.
- In schools serving a high percentage of low-income families, breakfast is provided free to all students (universal breakfast).
- Every school breakfast promotes health, serves quality food, and appeals to students.

Additional Resources

***School Breakfast**, Food Research and Action Center (FRAC)*
School breakfast program information and resources for stakeholders, schools, parents, and advocates.
www.frac.org/html/federal_food_programs/programs/sbp.html

***School Breakfast Scorecard 2007**, FRAC*
A report that assesses the status of school breakfast in the United States; includes strategies for starting/improving school breakfast and success stories.
www.frac.org/pdf/SBP_2007.pdf

CALIFORNIA PROJECT LEAN
LEADERS ENCOURAGING ACTIVITY AND NUTRITION

- The school breakfast program is appropriately marketed to attract student participation.
- There is no difference between how the free and reduced price students receive their food and how those paying full price receive their food.
- Breakfast is offered in a variety of ways (e.g., cafeteria food carts, second-chance breakfast mid-morning, grab-and-go, in the classroom).
- Class schedules are adjusted to allow adequate time for eating the school breakfast.

What does your LSWP say about school breakfast?

What Can Parents Do?

- Find out if your school participates in the school breakfast program and if so, ask the cafeteria manager if many students participate.
- Encourage school leaders (principals, assistant principals, cafeteria managers) to start a school breakfast program, if not currently offered.
- Ask your child what foods are served in the school breakfast program.
- Assess the foods being served at breakfast, the locations where they are served, and student interest in school breakfast.
- Work with the food service director to research alternative quick-serve options (e.g., breakfast on the bus, second-chance breakfast, grab-and-go, in the classroom) and find out if students are interested in these.
- Work with food service staff and school administration to ensure that students are not singled out in meal lines based on ability to pay.
- Talk with food service directors from other schools that have set up successful school breakfast programs.
- Take a team of parents and employees to visit another school that offers breakfast.
- Advocate for the elimination of the sale of all competitive foods during breakfast.

***Breakfast First: Healthy Food for Hungry Minds**, California Food Policy Advocates*

A comprehensive school breakfast website that has tools and resources for building a strong school breakfast program.

www.breakfastfirst.org/nutrition.html

***School Breakfast, Fast and Healthy Food for Thought, Nutrition Explorations**, National Dairy Council*

Background information on why school breakfast is important, nutrition education resources, and tips for creating successful school breakfast.

www.nutritionexplorations.org/parents/school-breakfast.asp

***Feed More Kids for School Breakfast Success**, CDE, Nutrition Services Division.*

Tips for creating a successful school breakfast program.

www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/he/documents/feedmorebrkfst.pdf

FACT SHEET

FUNDRAISING IN SCHOOLS

What is Fundraising?

Fundraising in schools brings in additional funds to support extra activities such as athletics and student clubs and is done by students, parent groups, volunteer groups, booster clubs, or other community groups/organizations. Food fundraisers at schools occur in two ways:

- ❖ Foods are sold during the school day through vending machines, student stores, and/or snack bars.
- ❖ Foods are sold outside of the school day at home, at concession stands, or at special events at school.

This fact sheet focuses on food fundraising that is sold outside of the school day such as at concession stands, bake sales, or at home. See California's Nutrition Standards fact sheet for more information on foods sold during the school day.

What are the Challenges around Food Fundraising?

- ❖ Some fundraisers involve the sale of foods such as candy bars, cookie dough, or sodas. These foods are unhealthy and send mixed messages to the students as schools and parents also support activities that aim to keep students healthy and help them achieve academic success.
- ❖ Schools rely on fundraising to preserve programs such as band, athletics, and even to provide classroom supplies.

What Are the Laws around Food Fundraising?

Some states, like California, have nutrition guidelines that must be followed for all foods and beverages sold on the school campus during the school day (see Nutrition Standards fact sheet for more information). Foods/beverages sold outside of the school day are not required to follow any nutrition standards by California law. However, some school districts have recognized the importance of healthy foods and have expanded the nutrition standards required for the school day to include all fundraisers.

Additional Resources

Sweet Deals: School Fundraising Can Be Healthy and Profitable, *Center for Science in the Public Interest*

This tool dispels a number of myths about the need to sell junk food in schools; provides contact information for companies that offer healthy fundraising options; and provides ideas for fundraisers that promote physical activity.

www.cspinet.org/schoolfundraising.pdf

CALIFORNIA PROJECT LEAN
LEADERS ENCOURAGING ACTIVITY AND NUTRITION

What Is the Ideal Fundraising Situation?

- ❖ Fundraisers use non-food items to raise money.
- ❖ Food fundraisers are limited to healthier food items.
- ❖ Local school wellness policies include language that addresses healthier fundraising.
- ❖ Fundraising activities promote health and physical activity (e.g., a jog- or bike-a-thon).

What does Your LSWP say about Fundraising?

What Can Parents Do?

- ❖ Advocate for non-food items, physical activity fundraisers (such as a jog-a-thon), or healthy food for fundraisers in your child's school.
- ❖ Identify what kinds of food fundraisers are used at the school.
- ❖ Identify who is involved with fundraising, including PTA, boosters, activities directors, teachers, student clubs, athletic programs, etc.
- ❖ Identify potential alternatives to food fundraisers that are proven to raise similar amounts of funds (see *Additional Resources*).
- ❖ Educate other parents, coaches, teachers, etc., about the negative consequences of unhealthy food fundraising and share ideas to eliminate the sale of foods and beverages to raise money.
- ❖ Advocate for a healthy food/beverage or non-food fundraising policy to the school board to include in the LSWP.

Dollars and Sense: The Financial Impact of Selling Healthier School Foods, *UC Berkeley Center for Weight and Health*
This resource examines the financial impact of implementing nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold on school campus outside of the school meal program.
www.cnr.berkeley.edu/cwh/PDFs/Dollars_and_Sense_FINAL_3.07.pdf

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Creative Fundraising, *California Project LEAN*
A handout that lists non-food and beverage fundraising ideas.
www.CaliforniaProjectLEAN.org

Captive Kids: Selling Obesity at Schools: A Guide to Stop the Marketing of Unhealthy Foods and Beverages in Schools, *California Project LEAN*
This toolkit addresses the issue of marketing unhealthy foods and beverages on school campuses and provides tools and resources to assist in assessing and addressing marketing on campus.
www.CaliforniaProjectLEAN.org

PARENT HANDOUTS

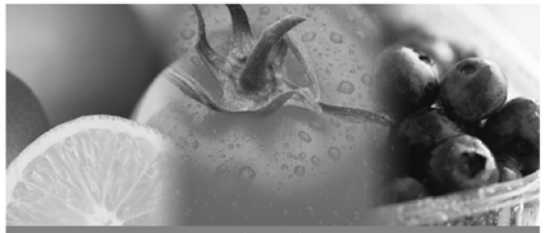
Sample Resources for Communicating Local School Wellness Policies to Parents **57**

Additional Resources **64**

CALIFORNIA PROJECT LEAN
LEADERS ENCOURAGING ACTIVITY AND NUTRITION

Sample Resources for Communicating Local School Wellness Policies to Parents

Chula Vista
Elementary School District



Wellness Policy

Parent Information

"Chula Vista Elementary School District recognizes the link between student health and learning and is committed to providing a school environment that promotes student wellness, proper nutrition, nutrition education, and regular physical activity for all District students."

CVESD
84 East J Street
Chula Vista, CA 91910

Contact:
Student, Family & Community Services
(619) 425-9600 ext. 1511

Board of Education
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Superintendent
LOWELL BILLINGS,Ed.D.

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Rev 6/08

Facts & Statistics

Elementary-age children are experiencing higher rates of obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease due to poor dietary practices and lack of physical activity.

Research shows us that higher physical fitness scores equal higher test scores.

Food and drink portions have increased drastically over the last 20 years. Most portions provide enough food for at least two people. Solution: share with someone else, or save it for tomorrow!

Health Tip

Calories in = Calories Out

Energy is measured as calories
Energy (calories) expended during physical activity equals a.....
Formula for Good Health!

Things You Can Do.....

- Encourage eating a healthy breakfast... it's the most important meal of the day!
- Read nutrition labels with your child.
- Substitute water for sodas and sugary beverages (like sport drinks).
- Reduce eating at fast food restaurants.
- Plan and participate in fun, physical, *family* activities with your child like walking or biking to school.
- Limit TV/computer/video time; or get up and exercise during the commercials!

This could be "...the first generation of children that is sicker and dies younger than their parents."
(*NIHCM Foundation, Expert Voices, Issue 6, 12/2004*)

Suggested Snacks and Classroom Party Ideas

Snacks

- Fresh fruit, dried fruits or veggies
- Low-fat yogurt or string cheese
- 100% frozen juice or fruit bars
- Low fat bakery items
- Pretzels, popcorn (air) or Goldfish crackers
- Bottled water or 100% fruit juice

Classroom Party Ideas.....

- Coloring books and/or crayons
- Jump ropes, mini-frisbees, balls
- Books, school supplies such as fun pencils, notepads, rulers or stickers
- Donate a book to the school library in your child's name
- Invite an interesting guest to speak to your child's classroom
- Child's choice for a fun game or classroom activity to celebrate birthday

What?

The Wellness Policy sets goals for...

Physical Education

• Providing a standards-based P.E. program emphasizing physical fitness, positive health practices, and skill development.

• Meeting or exceeding the state-mandated instructional minutes required at the elementary level (200 minutes within a 10-day period).

Physical Activity

• Providing all students opportunities to be physically active through moderate to vigorous physical activity during P.E., recess, intramurals, running clubs, special events, and before and after school programs (60-90 minutes per day).

Nutrition Education

• Integrating health education into K-6 core academic subjects and through before- and after-school programs.

• Providing professional development in health and physical education highlighting healthy behaviors.

• Encouraging consistent health messages between the school and home environment through District menus, school newsletters, flyers, District & school websites, meetings and special events.

It's All About Balance!

Why?

In 2004, Congress passed a law requiring every school district that uses federal dollars for school breakfast or lunch to create a local wellness policy by the start of the 2006-07 school year. (*CVESD BP5030*)

A CVESD Wellness Committee consisting of principals, teachers, nurses, community organizations, parents, students and school food service professionals, was created to assist and advise the District on health-related issues.

The District's local wellness policy applies to every school in the district. The policy will assist schools in improving the health of students by promoting physical activity and nutritious food.

The District plays a critical role in curbing the epidemic of childhood health issues like obesity, heart disease, and diabetes which are directly associated with poor nutrition and inactivity.

CVESD Nutritional Guidelines

The Board of Education believes...
foods and beverages sold to students on school campuses during the school day should promote student health and help reduce childhood obesity.

• Any food sales conducted outside the District's food service program shall meet nutritional standards specified by law, board policy, and administrative regulations.

• Food sales are prohibited during school hours, and within one hour before and after school hours, unless approved in accordance with Board Policy (CVESD BP3554 see conditions).

• School organizations shall be encouraged to use healthy food items or non-food items for fund-raising purposes.

• Schools shall discourage the use of non-nutritious food rewards for academic performance or classroom behavior.

• School staff shall encourage parents/guardians (or other volunteers) to support healthy snacks or non-food items for class parties.

• Class parties or celebrations shall be held after the lunch period when possible.

PARENTS

Join Your School Wellness Team

Support healthy food, quality physical education and hands-on nutrition education in your child's school, afterschool and summer programs.

Prepared by the Food Research & Action Center

WHAT IDEAS COULD WE INCLUDE IN OUR POLICY?

◊ Schools will start garden projects and serve the fruits and vegetables grown in school meals and afterschool snacks.

◊ Any school that does not offer afterschool and summer programs will create them and include time for outside play or gym time and hands-on nutrition education.

◊ Children will get healthy, federally-funded snacks and meals in all school-sponsored afterschool and summer programs.

◊ All schools will operate a School Breakfast Program offering a free breakfast to every child that wants it.

◊ All children in need will receive a free breakfast and lunch during the summer.

◊ Vending machines in schools will be required to offer healthy snacks and beverages.

For additional policy ideas, check out FRAC's wellness policy guide at www.frac.org

Additional Wellness Resources:

Food Research & Action Center
http://www.frac.org/pdf/wellness_guide2006.pdf

Action for Healthy Kids
http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/wellnesstool/index.html

Parents Action for Children
http://www.iamyourchild.org/learn/nutrition/schoolwellness/

School Nutrition Association
http://www.schoolnutrition.org/Index.aspx?id=1343

USDA Food and Nutrition Service
http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Healthy/wellnesspolicy.html

For more information, contact:
Alexis Bylander (abylander@frac.org)
Crystal FitzSimons (cfitzsimons@frac.org)

F·R·A·C
FOOD RESEARCH & ACTION CENTER

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Washington, DC 20009
Phone: 202-986-2200
www.frac.org

WHAT IS A WELLNESS POLICY?

In 2004, Congress passed a law requiring every school district that uses federal dollars for school lunch or breakfast, which includes most districts, to create a local wellness policy by the start of the 2006-2007 school year.

Each wellness policy will apply to every school in the district and can help schools improve the health of students by promoting nutritious food and physical activity through changes in school programs and environments.

WHAT ROLE CAN PARENTS PLAY?

The law requires school districts to involve a variety of groups in designing and carrying out their policy, including:

- ◊ Students
- ◊ Parents
- ◊ Community members
- ◊ School board members
- ◊ Administrators
- ◊ School food service providers

As a parent, you know your children and their needs better than anyone. By getting involved with your local wellness team you can help create, monitor and enhance school policies that will improve their school environment.

WHAT WILL THE POLICY INCLUDE?

Each wellness policy, at a minimum, must set rules for:

◊ **Nutrition standards for food served in schools**

Example: Limit the amount of soda and candy served on school grounds and reduce the amount of fat in school meals.

◊ **Nutrition education**

Example: Offer cooking lessons on how to make healthy snacks and meals.

◊ **Physical activity**

Example: Provide more opportunities for team sports, open gym and recess.

◊ **Other school-based activities designed to promote student wellness**

Example: Provide enough space and serving areas to ensure that all students have access to school meals with minimum wait time.

WHAT ABOUT AFTER SCHOOL & SUMMER?

Policies that encourage healthy food, nutrition education and physical fitness should not be limited to the traditional school day. Encourage your community to think outside the box and make afterschool and summer programs, including healthy food, physical activity and nutrition education, a part of your local wellness policy.

CAN I STILL GET INVOLVED?

Absolutely! It's never too late to get involved with your school's local wellness team.

1. Find out who is coordinating your school district's wellness policy.

Your PTA, school nurse, principal, school food service provider, school board members or superintendent should be able to help you get involved.

2. Let them know that you want to join the wellness committee.

Explain your interest in the wellness policy, ask about work the group has already done and what opportunities there are for you to get involved.

3. Ask when and where the next wellness meeting will be held.

Wellness teams may be holding open forums for the public, but most will be meeting as a small group.

4. Share your thoughts and ideas.

Discuss what you think the school could do to help promote healthy food, nutrition education and exercise opportunities for your children.

Your input will make a difference.

Parents + Schools = Healthy Kids

Support healthy food, quality physical education and hands-on nutrition education in your child's school.

North Dakota Department of Public Instruction
Dr. Wayne G. Sanstead, State Superintendent

What is a Wellness Policy?

In 2004, Congress passed a law requiring every school district that uses federal dollars for school lunch or breakfast to create a local wellness policy by the start of the 2006-2007 school year.

What will the policy include?

The law places the responsibility of developing a wellness policy at the local level so the individual needs of each school district can be addressed. Schools must set goals for nutrition education, physical activity and other school-based activities.

Each wellness policy, at a minimum, must include:

- Nutrition guidelines for food served in schools
- Nutrition education
- Physical activity
- Other school-based activities designed to promote student wellness

What role can parents play?

The law requires school districts to involve a variety of groups in designing and carrying out the policy, including:

- Students
- Parents
- Community Members
- School Board Members
- Administrators
- School Food Service Personnel

As a parent, you know your children and their needs better than anyone. By getting involved with your local wellness team you can help create, support and enhance school policies that will improve their school environment. Students are more likely to adopt healthy eating and activity habits if they see and experience them at home, as well as school.

Competitive Foods at School

Food items sold during meal periods outside the cafeteria—from vending machines, student stores, school fundraisers, food carts or food concessions—are known as "competitive foods." They compete with the school food program for student buyers. Ala carte foods are sold individually in the cafeteria, but outside of the regular school breakfast or lunch meal. None of the ala carte or competitive foods are bound by the nutrition guidelines that school breakfast and school lunch must follow.

Free and Reduced Price Meals

Any child at a participating school may purchase a meal through the School Breakfast and National School Lunch Programs. Children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the poverty level are eligible for free meals. Those with incomes between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty level are eligible for reduced-price meals, for which students can be charged no more than 40 cents.

Schools receive federal funds for meals served through the School Breakfast and National School Lunch Programs. School districts set their own prices for full-price (paid) meals, but must operate their meal services as non-profit programs.

Child Nutrition Programs
600 E. Boulevard, Dept. 210
Bismarck, ND 58501
1-888-338-3663

What are some things that might be included in the policy?

- ► Vending machines in schools will be required to offer healthy snacks and beverages.
- ► Fund-raising efforts will include non-food or healthy food items.
- ► Learning activities for a variety of subjects will include healthy eating examples and/or physical activity.
- ► Breakfast and lunch menus will include more fruits, vegetables and whole grain items.
- ► School meals will support healthy eating habits by showing normal portion sizes and appropriate food amounts.
- ► Schools may encourage breakfast program participation by offering breakfast in the classroom or a grab and go breakfast.
- ► To encourage better eating at lunch, schools may have recess before lunch.

How can I get involved?

- ☼ Find out what your school's wellness policy is. If you're not sure what the policy means, ask for specific examples of what will be done.
- ☼ Speak up at school board meetings. Voice your support about policy plans. Encourage other parents to do the same.
- ☼ Volunteer to serve on your school's policy committee. Now that the policy is adopted, extra help is needed to get it implemented.
- ☼ Help your school put the policy into action by supporting the policy at school and making similar changes at home.
- ☼ Talk to your child about changes that have happened at his school as a result of the policy.
- ☼ Maintain a positive attitude about the changes to support healthy habits.
- ☼ Have lunch or breakfast with your child at school. See for yourself how school meals look, smell and taste. If you go with an open mind, you may be surprised at how cafeteria offerings have changed since you were a student.

The Scoop on School Meals!

School meals are healthy meals. Children who eat meals at school through the USDA School Breakfast Program or the National School Lunch Program receive many benefits:

- ♦ School meals must meet guidelines for fat, saturated fat, calories, vitamins and minerals.
- ♦ Children who eat lunch at school consume twice the servings of fruits and vegetables, and more grains and dairy.
- ♦ No super-sizing here. School meals provide age-appropriate serving sizes.

What's in a meal?

The School Breakfast Program

Many schools in North Dakota serve breakfast every morning. Children who are too tired to eat or wake up late still have a chance to eat a nutritious meal before they sit down to learn.

School Breakfast must provide:

- 8 ounces of milk
- ½ cup of fruit or juice
- 2 servings of grain or bread products

or

- 1 serving of grain and one meat serving

A typical school breakfast menu could be:
1 cup Cold Cereal
1 slice Toast
½ cup Orange Juice
8 ounces Milk

The National School Lunch Program

Today's school lunches are quite different than the lunches many of us remember from when we went to school. School meals are planned to be tasty, fresh, colorful and kid friendly. Variety and choices are offered to meet different student preferences.

A School Lunch must provide:

- 2 ounces of Meat/Meat Alternate
- 2 different Fruits and/or Vegetables
- 1 serving of Grain or Bread
- 8 ounces of Milk

A typical school lunch could be:
Softshell Taco w/Ground Beef and Cheese
Lettuce and Tomato for topping
Tortilla Chips and Salsa
Fresh Grapes
Milk

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Closing the Achievement Gap: Using Parent Involvement to Increase Student Success and Academic Achievement (2008)
California Parent Center
http://parent.sdsu.edu

Make Positive Changes in your Schools: Parent Guide to Creating Nutrition and Physical Activity Changes in Schools (2006)
Ohio Action for Healthy Kids & Ohio Parent Teacher Association
www.ohioactionforhealthykids.org/news_resources/parent_guide.pdf

Parents Advocating for School Wellness Toolkit (2008)
Action for Healthy Kids
www.ActionForHealthyKids.org

Parents are the Power! Toolkit for Creating Change (2007)
Colorado Action for Healthy Kids
http://actionforhealthykids.org/filelib/toolsforteams/recom/CO_COAFHK%20Parents%20are%20the%20PowerToolkit%202007.pdf

California School Health Centers Association
www.schoolhealthcenters.org

Wisconsin
Action for Healthy Kids®

Guide to Healthy Classroom Choices

Single-serve, pre-wrapped portions provide a quick and easy option for classroom activities. Contact your foodservice director for ordering information.

FOOD IN SCHOOL SHOULD SUPPORT CLASSROOM LESSONS

Classroom lessons teach students about good nutrition and the value of healthy food choices. But, food served in the classroom is often low in nutrients and high in calories. This selection sends a potentially damaging message – that good nutrition is an academic exercise that is not practiced by school administration and is not important in the actual diet. To send a better message, administrators, teachers, parents and students need to promote and practice healthy lifestyle principles, replacing unhealthy food offerings with healthy ones.

Suggested foods for classroom activities:

- Low-fat milk/flavored milk
- 100% fruit juice
- Fresh fruit assortment
- Fruit and cheese kabobs
- Vegetable tray with dip
- Cheese-cubes and string cheese
- Popcorn
- Angel food cake with unsweetened fruit
- Graham crackers
- Low-fat pudding
- Yogurt parfaits
- Quesadillas with salsa
- Pizza
- Low sugar breakfast or granola bars
- Trail/Cereal Mixes

LOW-FAT VEGETABLE DIP
1 cup low-fat yogurt

Choose from these seasonings:

- **Ranch: 2 tablespoons dry dressing mix.**
- **Onion: 2 tablespoons dry onion soup mix.**
- **Garlic: 1/2 teaspoon powdered garlic.**
- **Parmesan: 2-4 tablespoons grated cheese.**

Mix all ingredients together and chill for 1 hour to let flavors blend. Serve with fresh vegetables.

Explore options beyond food when planning a classroom party and giving student rewards. For example, treat your students to:

- **Social awards**
- **Recognition programs**
- **Student privileges**
- **Outdoor activities**
- **Classroom games**
- **School supplies**
- **Sports equipment**

Pay attention to serving sizes. Ask children to take ***ONE*** *serving of each snack and beverage.*

FRUIT AND YOGURT PARFAIT

- 1 cup low-fat vanilla yogurt
- 1/2 cup crunchy low-fat cereal or granola, divided
- 1/2 cup sliced fresh fruit (i.e. strawberries, blueberries, pineapple) or unsweetened canned fruit

To assemble parfait, begin with yogurt in the bottom of a clear plastic glass. Add 2 tablespoons cereal and 1/4 cup fruit. Repeat. Top with the remaining 2 tablespoons of cereal.

For more information and to see guides on other topics, visit the Wisconsin section of the Action for Healthy Kids Website:

www.actionforhealthyKids.org

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Alternatives to Food as Reward

Promoting a Healthy School Environment

Food is commonly used to reward students for good behavior and academic performance. It's an easy, inexpensive and powerful tool to bring about immediate short-term behavior change. Yet, using food as reward has many negative consequences that go far beyond the short-term benefits of good behavior or performance.

Research clearly demonstrates that healthy kids learn better. To provide the best possible learning environment for children, schools must provide an environment that supports healthy behaviors. Students need to receive consistent, reliable health information and ample opportunity to use it. Finding alternatives to food rewards is an important part of providing a healthy school environment.

"Rewarding children with unhealthy foods in school undermines our efforts to teach them about good nutrition. It's like teaching children a lesson on the importance of not smoking, and then handing out ashtrays and lighters to the kids who did the best job listening."
Marlene Schwartz, PhD, Co-Director, Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity, Yale University

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Consequences of Using Food as Reward

Compromises Classroom Learning: Schools are institutions designed to teach and model appropriate behaviors and skills to children. Nutrition principles taught in the classroom are meaningless if they are contradicted by rewarding children with candy and other sweets. It's like saying, "You need to eat healthy foods to feel and do your best, but when you behave or perform your best, you will be rewarded with unhealthy food." Classroom learning about nutrition will remain strictly theoretical if schools regularly model unhealthy behaviors.

Contributes to Poor Health: Foods commonly used as rewards (like candy and cookies) can contribute to health problems for children, e.g., obesity, diabetes, hypertension and cavities. Food rewards provide unneeded calories and displace healthier food choices.

Encourages Overconsumption of Unhealthy Foods: Foods used as rewards are typically "empty calorie" foods — high in fat, sugar and salt with little nutritional value. Decreasing the availability of empty calorie foods is one strategy schools can use to address the current childhood obesity epidemic.

Contributes to Poor Eating Habits: Rewarding with food can interfere with children learning to eat in response to hunger and satiety cues. This teaches kids to eat when they are not hungry as a reward to themselves, and may contribute to the development of disordered eating.[2,3]

Increases Preference for Sweets: Food preferences for both sweet and non-sweet food increase significantly when foods are presented as rewards. This can teach children to prefer unhealthy foods.[3,4]

About 20 percent of children are overweight.[1] Over the past three decades, the childhood obesity rate has more than doubled for preschool children aged 2-5 years and adolescents aged 12-19 years, and it has more than tripled for children aged 6-11 years.

What Schools Can Do

Ideas for Alternatives to Using Food as a Reward [5,6]

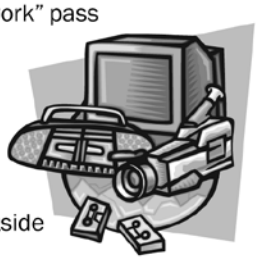
Schools can help promote a healthy learning environment by using nonfood rewards. The ideas below are just a beginning and can be modified for different ages. Be creative, and don't forget the simple motivation of recognizing students for good work or behavior.

Elementary School Students

- Make deliveries to office
- Teach class
- Sit by friends
- Eat lunch with teacher or principal
- Eat lunch outdoors with the class
- Have lunch or breakfast in the classroom
- Private lunch in classroom with a friend
- Be a helper in another classroom
- Play a favorite game or do puzzles
- Stickers, pencils, bookmarks
- Certificates
- Fun video
- Extra recess
- Walk with the principal or teacher
- Fun physical activity break
- School supplies
- Trip to treasure box filled with nonfood items (stickers, tattoos, pencils, erasers, bookmarks, desktop tents)
- Dance to favorite music in the classroom
- Paperback book
- Show-and-tell
- Bank system - Earn play money for privileges
- Teacher or volunteer reads special book to class
- Teacher performs special skill (singing, cart wheel, guitar playing, etc.)
- Read outdoors or enjoy class outdoors
- Have extra art time
- Have "free choice" time at end of the day or end of class period
- Listen with headset to a book on audiotape
- Items that can only be used on special occasions (special art supplies, computer games, toys)

Middle School Students

- Sit with friends
- Listen to music while working at desk
- Five-minute chat break at end of class
- Reduced homework or "no homework" pass
- Extra credit
- Fun video
- Fun brainteaser activities
- Computer time
- Assemblies
- Field trips
- Eat lunch outside or have class outside



High School Students

- Extra credit or bonus points
- Fun video
- Reduced homework
- Late homework pass
- Donated coupons to video stores, music stores or movies
- Drawings for donated prizes among students who meet certain grade standards

Share what works! Let us know your strategies to motivate students so we can share with others.

For more information on a healthy school environment, contact Susan Fiore, MS, RD, Nutrition Education Coordinator at susan.fiore@ct.gov or (860) 807-2075.

References

1 Ogden CL, Carroll MD, Curtin LR, McDowell MA, Tabak CJ, Flegal KM. Prevalence of overweight and obesity in the United States, 1999-2004. JAMA 295:1549-1555. 2006.

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4 Fisher J, Birch LL. Restricting access to palatable foods affects children's behavioral response, food selection and intake. Am J Clin Nutr 1999;69:1264-72

5 Alternatives to Using Food as a Reward. Michigan State University Extension, 2003. http://www.tn.fcs.msue.msu.edu/foodrewards.pdf

6 Non-Food Ways to Raise Funds and Reward a Job Well Done. Texas Department of Agriculture, 2004. http://www.squaremeals.org/vgn/tda/files/2348/3614_1034_NonFoodRewards.pdf

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Connecticut State Department of Education
Bureau of Health and Nutrition Services and Child/Family/School Partnerships

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Healthy Celebrations

Promoting a Healthy School Environment

Birthday parties and holiday celebrations at school provide a unique opportunity to help make healthful eating fun and exciting for children. Schools can take advantage of classroom celebrations to serve food that tastes good, is nutritious, and provides students with an opportunity for nutrition education experiences.

But It's Just a Cupcake...

Typically, foods for school celebrations include cupcakes, candy, cookies and soda. So what's the harm? There is nothing wrong with an occasional treat, but unhealthy choices have become the norm rather than the exception. Parties, treats used as classroom rewards, food fundraisers, vending machines, snacks and school stores constantly expose children to high-fat, high-sugar, low-nutrient choices.

Overall, our children's eating habits are poor. Only two percent of children meet all Food Pyramid recommendations. Most children do not eat enough fruits, vegetables or whole grains. Obesity rates among children are on the rise, with serious health consequences. Constant exposure to low-nutrient foods makes it difficult for children to learn how to make healthy food choices. By providing students with nutritious choices wherever food is available (including the classroom), schools can positively influence children's eating habits.

Benefits of Healthy Celebrations

Healthy Kids Learn Better: Research clearly demonstrates that good nutrition is linked to better behavior and academic performance. To provide the best possible learning environment for children, schools must also provide an environment that supports healthy behaviors.

Provides Consistent Messages: Providing healthy classroom celebrations demonstrates a school commitment to promoting healthy behaviors. It supports the classroom lessons students are learning about health, instead of contradicting them. Healthy celebrations promote positive lifestyle choices to reduce student health risks and improve learning.

Promotes a Healthy School Environment: In order to postively change eating behaviors, students need to receive consistent, reliable health information and ample opportunity to use it. Healthy celebrations are an important part of providing a healthy school environment.

Creates Excitement About Nutrition: Children are excited about new and different things, including fun party activities and healthy snacks (see back for ideas). School staff and parents need not worry that children will be disappointed if typical party foods aren't served in the classroom. Holiday treats and traditional birthday parties with cake will still be available at home.

Protects Children with Food Allergies: When parents send in food, it is difficult to ensure the safety of children with food allergies. Schools can protect food allergic children by providing nonfood celebrations or, if food is served, obtaining it from known sources such as the school food service program.

How-To's for Happy Healthy Parties[1]

- Variety is the "spice of life" and the "life of the party." Plan several contrasting activities – active and quiet, indoor and outdoor, individual and group.
- Try something new. Children like adventure. In addition to familiar games and foods, offer something different.
- Plan creative experiences such as art, music and cooking.
- Involve children in planning and preparing the party. Let them make decorations and favors.
- Put food in its proper place. Refreshments should compliment the fun, not become the "main event."
- Be sure that each child receives a prize or favor, if such awards are given.
- Don't use food as rewards or prizes.
- Choose foods for fun, good taste and health. Parties that feature healthful foods provide opportunities for children to practice making wise food choices.

[1] Printed with permission from *Let's Party: Party Ideas for School and Home.* West Virginia Department of Education, 1994. Ordering information at: http://wvde.state.wv.us/ctrc/materials.html.

What Schools Can Do

Ideas for Healthy Celebrations

Schools can help promote a positive learning environment by providing healthy celebrations that shift the focus from the food to the child. Choose a variety of activities, games and crafts that children enjoy. When food is served, make it count with healthy choices! Parties can even incorporate a fun nutrition lesson by involving children in the planning and preparation of healthy snacks. Try these ideas for fun activities and healthy foods at school parties and other celebrations.

Activities to Celebrate the Child

- Plan special party games and activities. Ask parents to provide game supplies, pencils, erasers, stickers and other small school supplies instead of food.
- Create a healthy party idea book. Ask school staff and parents to send in healthy recipes and ideas for activities, games and crafts. Compile these ideas into a book that staff and parents can use.
- Give children extra recess time instead of a class party. For birthdays, let the birthday child choose and lead an active game for everyone.
- Instead of food, ask parents to purchase a book for the classroom or school library in the birthday child's name. Read it to the class or invite the child's parents to come in and read it to the class.
- Instead of a party, organize a special community service project, e.g., invite Senior Citizens in for lunch, make "curechiefs" for chemotherapy patients, and blankets for rescue dogs. Involve parents in planning the project and providing needed materials.
- Create a "Celebrate Me" book. Have classmates write stories or poems and draw pictures to describe what is special about the birthday child.
- Provide special time with the principal or another adult, such as taking a walk around the school at recess.

- Create a special birthday package. The birthday child wears a sash and crown, sits in a special chair and visits the principal's office for a special birthday surprise (pencil, sticker, birthday card, etc.)
- The birthday child is the teacher's assistant for the day, and gets to do special tasks like make deliveries to office, lead the line, start an activity, and choose a game or story.

Additional Resources

Alternatives to Food Rewards. Connecticut State Department of Education, 2004. http://www.state.ct.us/sde/deps/Student/NutritionEd/index.htm

Classroom Party Ideas. University of California Cooperative Extension Ventura County. http://ucce.ucdavis.edu/files/filelibrary/2372/15801.pdf

Healthy Fundraising. Connecticut State Department of Education, 2005. http://www.state.ct.us/sde/deps/Student/NutritionEd/index.htm

Let's Party: Party Ideas for School and Home. West Virginia Department of Education, 1994. http://wvde.state.wv.us/ctrc/materials.html

Let's Play: Innovative Games and Activities for Kids. West Virginia Department of Education, 2002. http://wvde.state.wv.us/ctrc/materials.html

For more healthy snack resources, see the Connecticut Nutrition Resource Library catalog ("Cooking for Kids" section) at: http://www.state.ct.us/sde/deps/Student/NutritionEd/index.htm

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Healthy Food Ideas*

- Low-fat or nonfat plain or flavored milk, 100% juice, water, flavored/sparkling water (without added sugars or sweeteners), sparkling punch (seltzer and 100% fruit juice)
- Fruit smoothies (blend berries, bananas and pineapple)
- Fresh fruit assortment, fruit and cheese kabobs, fruit salad, fruit with low-fat whipped topping
- Dried fruit (raisins, cranberries, apricots, banana chips), 100% fruit snacks
- Vegetable trays with low-fat dip, celery and carrots with peanut butter and raisins
- Whole-grain crackers with cheese cubes, string cheese or hummus
- Waffles or pancakes topped with fruit
- Pretzels, low-fat popcorn, rice cakes, bread sticks, graham crackers and animal crackers
- Angel food cake, plain or topped with fruit
- Bagel slices with peanut butter or jam, fruit or grain muffin (low-fat), whole wheat English muffin, hot pretzels
- Pizza with low-fat toppings (vegetables, lean ham, Canadian bacon), pizza dippers with marinara sauce
- Ham, cheese or turkey sandwiches or wraps (with low-fat condiments)
- Low-fat pudding, low-fat yogurt, squeezable yogurt, yogurt smoothies, yogurt parfaits or banana splits (yogurt and fruit topped with cereal, granola or crushed graham crackers)
- Quesadillas or bean burrito with salsa
- Low-fat breakfast or granola bars
- Low-fat tortilla chips with salsa or bean dip
- Trail/cereal mix (whole-grain, low-sugar cereals mixed with dried fruit, pretzels, etc.)
- Nuts and seeds

**Check for food allergies before serving.*

For more information on a healthy school environment, contact Susan Fiore, MS, RD, Nutrition Education Coordinator at susan.fiore@po.state.ct.us or (860) 807-2075.

Connecticut State Department of Education
Bureau of Health and Nutrition Services and Child/Family/School Partnerships

May 2005

1

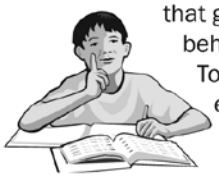
Healthy Fundraising

Promoting a Healthy School Environment

Candy, baked goods, soda and other foods with little nutritional value are commonly used for fundraising at school. Schools may make easy money selling these foods, but students pay the price. An environment that constantly provides children with sweets promotes unhealthy habits that can have lifelong impact. As we face a national epidemic of overweight children, many schools are turning to healthy fundraising alternatives.

Benefits of Healthy Fundraising

Healthy Kids Learn Better: Research clearly demonstrates that good nutrition is linked to better behavior and academic performance. To provide the best possible learning environment for children, schools must also provide an environment that supports healthy behaviors.



Provides Consistent Messages: Fundraising with healthy foods and non-food items demonstrates a school commitment to promoting healthy behaviors. It supports the classroom lessons students are learning about health, instead of contradicting them.

Promotes a Healthy School Environment: Students need to receive consistent, reliable health information and ample opportunity to use it. Finding healthy alternatives to fund-raising is an important part of providing a healthy school environment.

Almost 20 percent of children are overweight, a three-fold increase from the 1970's.[1] Poor eating habits and a sedentary lifestyle are just behind smoking as the leading cause of deaths per year in the United States, and the number of deaths related to poor diet and physical inactivity is increasing.[2,3]

Consequences of Unhealthy Fundraising

Compromises Classroom Learning: Selling unhealthy food items contradicts nutrition messages taught in the classroom. Schools are designed to teach and model appropriate skills and behaviors. Nutrition principles taught in the classroom are meaningless if they are contradicted by other activities that promote unhealthy choices, like selling candy and other sweets. It's like saying, *"You need to eat healthy foods to feel and do your best, but it is more important for us to make money than for you to be healthy and do well."* Classroom learning about nutrition remains strictly theoretical if the school environment regularly promotes unhealthy behaviors.

Promotes the Wrong Message: Selling unhealthy foods provides a message that schools care more about making money than student health. We would never think of raising money with anything else that increases student health risks, but food fundraisers are often overlooked. As schools promote healthy lifestyle choices to reduce student health risks and improve learning, school fundraisers must be included.

Contributes to Poor Health: Foods commonly used as fundraisers (like chocolate, candy, soda and baked goods) provide unneeded calories and displace healthier food choices. Skyrocketing obesity rates among children are resulting in serious health consequences, such as increased incidence of type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure.

Additional Resources

Clearinghouse for Fundraising Information: http://www.fundraising.com/

Creative Financing and Fundraising. California Project Lean, California Department of Health Services, 2002. http://www.co.shasta.ca.us/Departments/PublicHealth/newspublications/other%20publications/other.shtml

Guide to Healthy School Stores. Alabama Department of Public Health Nutrition & Physical Activity Unit, 2004. http://actionforhealthykids.org/filelib/toolsforteams/recom/N&PA%2035%20-%20school%20store.pdf

Healthy Finances: How Schools Are Making Nutrition Changes That Make Financial Sense. Action for Healthy Kids, 2003. http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/filelib/facts_and_findings/healthy%20foods,%20healthy%20finances.pdf

Healthy Fundraising: http://www.healthy-fundraising.org/index.htm

Healthy Fundraising & Vending Options. Produce for Better Health Foundation. http://www.5aday.com/html/educators/options.php

Non-Food Ways to Raise Funds and Reward a Job Well Done. Texas Department of Agriculture, 2004. http://www.squaremeals.org/vgn/tda/files/2348/3614_1034_NonFoodRewards.pdf

Sweet Deals: School Fundraising Can Be Healthy and Profitable. Center for Science in the Public Interest, 2007. http://www.cspinet.org/schoolfundraising.pdf

References

[1] Ogden CL, Carroll MD, Curtin LR, McDowell MA, Tabak CJ, Flegal KM. Prevalence of overweight and obesity in the United States, 1999-2004. JAMA 295:1549-1555. 2006.

[2] Mokdad AH, Marks JS, Stroup DF, Gerberding JL. Actual causes of death in the United States, 2000. JAMA. 2004;291(10):1238-1246

[3] Mokdad AH, Marks JS, Stroup DF, Gerberding JL. Correction: Actual causes of death in the United States, 2000. JAMA. 2005;293:293-294.

What Schools Can Do

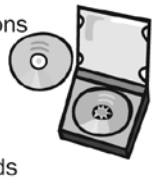
Ideas for Healthy Fundraising Alternatives*

*Adapted from: *Creative Financing and Fundraising.* California Project Lean, California Department of Health Services, 2002.

Schools can help promote a healthy learning environment by using healthy fundraising alternatives.

Items You Can Sell

- Activity theme bags
- Air fresheners
- Bath accessories
- Balloon bouquets
- Batteries
- Books, calendars
- Brick/stone/tile memorials
- Bumper stickers & decals
- Buttons, pins
- Candles
- Christmas trees
- Coffee cups, mugs
- Cookbooks
- Crafts
- Coupon books
- Customized stickers
- Emergency kits for cars
- First aid kits
- Flowers and bulbs
- Foot warmers
- Football seats
- Garage sale
- Giant coloring books
- Gift baskets
- Gift certificates
- Gift items
- Gift wrap, boxes and bags
- Graduation tickets
- Greeting cards
- Hats
- Holiday ornaments
- Holiday wreaths
- House decorations
- Hugging booth
- Jewelry
- Kissing on the cheek booth
- License plates or holders with school logo
- Lunch box auctions
- Magazine subscriptions
- Megaphones
- Mistletoe
- Monograms
- Music, videos, CDs
- Newspaper space, ads
- Parking spot (preferred location)
- Pet treats/toys/accessories
- Plants



Items You Can Sell, continued

- Pocket calendars
- Pre-paid phone cards
- Raffle donations
- Raffle extra graduation tickets
- Raffle front row seats at a special school event
- Rent a special parking space
- Scarves
- School art drawings
- School frisbees
- School spirit gear
- Scratch off cards
- Sell/rent wishes
- Souvenir cups
- Spirit/seasonal flags
- Stadium pillows
- Stationery
- Student directories
- Stuffed animals
- Temporary/henna tattoos
- T-shirts, sweatshirts
- Tupperware
- Valentine flowers
- Yearbook covers
- Yearbook graffiti

Healthy Foods

- Frozen bananas
- Fruit and nut baskets
- Fruit and yogurt parfaits
- Fruit smoothies
- Lunch box auctions
- Trail mix

Sell Custom Merchandise

- Bumper stickers/decal
- Calendars
- Cookbook made by school
- Logo air fresheners
- Scratch off cards
- T-shirts/sweatshirts

Items Supporting Academics

- Read-A-Thon
- Science Fair
- Spelling Bee

Things You Can Do

- Auction (teacher does something for kids)
- Bike-a-thons
- Bowling night/bowl-a-thon
- Car wash (pre-sell tickets as gifts)
- Carnivals (Halloween, Easter)
- Dances (kids, father/daughter, Sadie Hawkins)
- Family/glamour portraits
- Festivals
- Fun runs
- Gift wrapping
- Golf tournament
- Jump-rope-a-thons
- Magic show
- Raffle (movie passes, theme bags)
- Raffle (teachers do a silly activity)
- Read-a-thons
- Rent-a-teen helper (rake leaves, water gardens, mow lawns, wash dog)
- Recycling cans/bottles/paper
- Science fairs
- Singing telegrams
- Skate night/skate-a-thon
- Spelling bee
- Talent shows
- Tennis/horseshoe competition
- Treasure hunt/scavenger hunt
- Walk-a-thons
- Workshops/classes

Note: Section 10-215b-1 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies prohibits schools from selling or dispensing candy to students anywhere on school premises from 30 minutes before the start of any state or federally subsidized milk or meal program until 30 minutes after the end of the program. In addition, Section 10-215b-23 specifies that income from the sale or dispensing of any foods sold anywhere on school premises during this same timeframe must accrue to the food service account. Districts that participate in the healthy food certification under Public Act 06-63, An Act Concerning Healthy Food and Beverages in Schools, must ensure that all food and beverage fundraisers meet state requirements (see *Fundraising with Food and Beverages* at http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=320754#Standards).

For more information on a healthy school environment, contact Susan Fiore, MS, RD, Nutrition Education Coordinator at susan.fiore@ct.gov or (860) 807-2075.

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GLOSSARY

Administrative Regulations

An administrative regulation establishes specific requirements, such as the parameters or requirements of pertinent laws, step-by-step procedures and other details for carrying out a policy. They may describe how something is to be done, who is to do it and when it is to be done. The superintendent uses regulations to carry out the intentions as expressed in board policy.

Stakeholders

Stakeholders are persons who have an interest in or an involvement with the fulfillment of the school's vision and can include any and all school or district staff, parents, students, community members, health care professionals, etc.

Student Wellness Committee

A school wellness committee is a team of school educators and administrators, parents, community members, and student leaders working in partnership to improve the health and well-being of students. Wellness committees may also be called School Health Councils or Coordinated School Health Councils.

Coordinated School Health

Coordinated school health is an eight-component model for school health. It encourages schools to combine health education, health promotion and disease prevention, and access to health-related services in an integrated and systematic manner. The eight components of the model are: health education; health services; physical education; healthful school environment; counseling; psychological and social services; nutrition services; parent and community involvement; and health promotion for staff.

Competitive Foods

Foods sold in competition with the national school lunch/breakfast programs during a school's designated lunch or breakfast periods. Sometimes used interchangeably with "a la carte" foods.

A la Carte Foods

All foods and beverages sold to students on campus that are not provided as part of a reimbursable school lunch or breakfast program. This includes foods and beverages sold by school food service as well as items sold in vending machines, snack carts, student stores, etc., by various groups on campus.

National School Breakfast or Lunch Programs

Administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and designed to help safeguard the health and well-being of the nation's children by providing an adequate supply of foods for all children at moderate cost. The program is designed to subsidize funding for schools to provide students with lunches and breakfasts that meet specific nutrition standards.

California's Nutrition Standards
Senate Bill 12 (2005)

Legislated standards for competitive foods available in California's public schools. These food standards laws can be found in California Education Code (EC) Sections 49430, 49431, 49431.2. For specifics about allowable foods, please see www.CaliforniaProjectLEAN.org

SB 965 (2005)

Legislated beverage standards for California's public schools. This beverage standard law can be found in California EC section 49431.5.

Moderate-to-Vigorously Physical Activity (MVPA)

MVPA is physical activity at an energy expenditure level of a brisk walk (moderate) or greater (vigorous).

Fitnessgram®

The FITNESSGRAM® was created in 1982 by The Cooper Institute to provide an easy way for physical education teachers to report to parents on children's fitness levels. It sets standards for Healthy Fitness Zones (HFZs) based on age. There are five standards that are measured: aerobic capacity; body composition; muscular strength; endurance; and flexibility.

Appendix A: Campus Survey

Appendix A: Campus Survey: Assessing your Schools Nutrition and Physical Activity Environment

Conducting a brief assessment of the nutrition and physical activity environment at the school can guide your efforts and assist parents in determining projects to work on. You may complete this assessment with your parents or prior to your first gathering with parents. In order to complete this, you will need a copy of your school district's wellness policy and perhaps the administrative regulations, if there are any. Be sure to check with the school administration to find out what is required to walk onto campus to conduct the assessment. You may also need to talk to someone in charge to determine the answers to some of the questions below (e.g., is the school offering whole grain bread?).

Once parents have decided what their project will be, a more detailed assessment may be required.

Nutrition/Physical Activity Topic	What does your LSWP say about this?	Doing Well	Needs Work
A. School Meals Are the following readily available for students to eat/drink for the school meal (breakfast or lunch)? (These should be the majority of selections available to students.) ❑ Salads/fresh vegetables ❑ Low-fat dressing ❑ Fresh fruit ❑ Low fat entrees ❑ Low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk ❑ Vegetarian entrée options ❑ Whole grains (rice, bread, pasta, cereal)		❑	❑
What would you like to see at your school and in your LSWP regarding school meals?			

Nutrition/Physical Activity Topic	What does your LSWP say about this?	Doing Well	Needs Work
A. School Meals Are the following readily available for students to eat/drink for the school meal (breakfast or lunch)? (These should be the majority of selections available to students.) ☑ Salads/fresh vegetables ☑ Low-fat dressing ☐ Fresh fruit ☐ Low fat entrees ☑ Low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk ☐ Vegetarian entrée options ☑ Whole grains (rice, bread, pasta, cereal)	Students will have access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students	☐	☑

What would you like to see at your school and in your LSWP regarding school meals?

School meals will include one fresh fruit and vegetable option at every meal.
School meals will have zero grams of trans fat in them.
Entrees will be less than 35% total fat per serving.

SAMPLE

Nutrition/Physical Activity Topic	What does your LSWP say about this?	Doing Well	Needs Work
B. Competitive/A la Carte Foods (See *Fact Sheets* for specifics regarding California's Nutrition Standards). 1. What foods are students able to get on or surrounding the campus (e.g., fast food outlets or street vendors), during the school day, outside of the school meal (including at the snack bar, food cart, vending machines, student store, or other locations)? Healthier ❑ Bagels ❑ Fruits/vegetables ❑ Nuts and seeds ❑ Cheese ❑ Whole grain snacks ❑ Fat free or lowfat yogurt ❑ Lowfat entrees ❑ Other: _____ Less Healthy ❑ Pastries, cakes, cookie ❑ Candy ❑ Ice cream ❑ Burritos/tacos ❑ Pizza ❑ Chips ❑ Hamburgers/hot dogs ❑ Other: _____		❑	❑
2. What beverages are students able to get on or surrounding the campus (e.g., fast food outlets or street vendors), during the school day, outside of the school meal (including at the snack bar, food cart, vending machines, student store, or other locations)? Healthier ❑ Water (plain, fountain or bottled) ❑ Milk (nonfat or 1%) ❑ Milk alternative, lowfat (soy, rice) ❑ Smoothies (lowfat milk or yogurt and fruit) ❑ 100% fruit juice ❑ Other _____ Less Healthy ❑ Flavored or sweetened water ❑ Fruit drinks ❑ Sports/energy drinks ❑ Coffee-based drinks ❑ Milk (regular, whole) ❑ Soda (regular, diet) ❑ Other _____		❑	❑
What would you like to see at your school and in your LSWP regarding competitive foods and beverages?			

Nutrition/Physical Activity Topic	What does your LSWP say about this?	Doing Well	Needs Work
Marketing on Campus* 1. Does your school use any of the following items printed with food or beverage names/logos (ideally, schools should have no marketing of unhealthy foods/beverages)? ❑ Cups, napkins, plates (during meals or at events/games) ❑ Food or beverage coolers or displays ❑ Recycling bins or trash cans ❑ PE or gym equipment (balls, hoops, scoreboards, etc.) ❑ Sport bags or athletic equipment ❑ Book covers, pencils, notebooks, or other school supplies ❑ Other _____		❑	❑
2. As you walk around the school, do you see posters or signs with food/beverage company product pictures, names, or logos anywhere? If so, where? Ideally, schools should have no marketing of unhealthy foods/beverages ❑ Hallways ❑ Teacher's lounge ❑ Cafeteria ❑ Athletic area ❑ Snack bars ❑ Gym ❑ School store ❑ Locker rooms ❑ Clinic or nurse's area ❑ Scoreboards ❑ Classrooms ❑ Quads or courtyard ❑ Other _____		❑	❑
What would you like to see at your school and in your LSWP regarding marketing?			

* Please go to www.CaliforniaProjectLEAN.org to view our toolkit CAPTIVE KIDS: SELLING OBESITY AT SCHOOLS: An Action Guide to Stop the Marketing of Unhealthy Foods and Beverages in School for additional tools and resources on marketing in schools.

Nutrition/Physical Activity Topic	What does your LSWP say about this?	Doing Well	Needs Work
D. The Eating Environment 1. Are the school's eating areas set up to promote eating? Check all that apply. Healthier ❑ There is adequate space for students to eat. ❑ Tables are set up to encourage a relaxed, enjoyable, safe, and inviting area to eat. ❑ Food is displayed in an appealing manner. ❑ Students have adequate time to eat meals (at least 20 minutes for lunch from the time students are seated with their food). ❑ Meals are scheduled at reasonable hours around mid-day. ❑ Students do not have to wait long to get their food ❑ Students, regardless of their ability to pay, get their meals in the same lines (no separate lines for the free/ reduced-priced students). ❑ Drinking fountains are working, clean, and convenient for students throughout the day.		❑	❑
What would you like to see at your school and in your LSWP regarding the schools' eating environment?			

Nutrition/Physical Activity Topic	What does your LSWP say about this?	Doing Well	Needs Work
E. Physical Education (PE) 1. Do students in your school meet the State-required minutes for PE? ❑ 200 minutes per 10 days in elementary school ❑ 400 minutes per 10 days in middle school ❑ 400 minutes per 10 days in high school		❑	❑
2. Is PE taught by a certified PE teacher? ❑ Yes ❑ No		❑	❑
3. Are PE classes taught using the California Content Standards for Physical Education? ❑ Yes ❑ No		❑	❑
4. Are students moderately to vigorously physically active (breathing hard and fast with an increased heart rate) for at least 50% of PE class? ❑ Yes ❑ No		❑	❑
5. Is the teacher-to-student ratio in PE classes similar to those of other subject areas and/or classrooms? ❑ Yes ❑ No		❑	❑
What would you like to see at your school and in your LSWP regarding physical education?			

Nutrition/Physical Activity Topic	What does your LSWP say about this?	Doing Well	Needs Work
F. Physical Activity 1. In addition to PE, what physical activity options and facilities are available to students **DURING** the school day? ❑ Organized activity/sports ❑ Playing fields ❑ Gym/weight room ❑ Basketball court ❑ Equipment check-out ❑ Recess (elementary schools only) ❑ Lunch periods long enough to allow time to eat and play (elementary schools only)		❑	❑
2. What physical activity options, activities and facilities are available to students BEFORE/AFTER school hours at or close to the school campus? ❑ Sports/club teams ❑ Intramural programs ❑ Interscholastic athletics ❑ Walk/bike to school programs ❑ Community sports leagues ❑ Health clubs/gyms ❑ Playing fields ❑ Gym/weight room ❑ Basketball court ❑ YMCA/YWCA/Boys and Girls Club ❑ Other _____		❑	❑
3. Are playgrounds and field areas set up to encourage small-group play? ❑ Yes ❑ No		❑	❑
What would you like to see at your school and in your LSWP regarding physical activity?			

Nutrition/Physical Activity Topic	What does your LSWP say about this?	Doing Well	Needs Work
G. Classroom Messages 1. Is nutrition education taught in the classroom on a regular basis (consistently throughout the school year)? ❑ Yes ❑ No		❑	❑
2. Is the food that is served at classroom events/celebrations consistent with the health messages students are taught and do they meet the nutrition standards? ❑ Yes ❑ No		❑	❑
What would you like to see at your school and in your LSWP regarding classroom messages?			

Nutrition/Physical Activity Topic	What does your LSWP say about this?	Doing Well	Needs Work
H. Fundraising Practices 1. Do food/beverage fundraising products for sale during the school day and up to ½ hour before and after school follow the State's nutrition standards? (Please see *"California's Nutrition Standards"* fact sheet). ❑ Yes ❑ No		❑	❑
2. Do food/beverage products for sale outside of the school day use foods that meet the nutrition standards (such as at concession stands, door to door sales, catalogue sales, etc.)? Ideally they should. ❑ Yes ❑ No		❑	❑
3. Are all school groups (PTA, PTO, students, food services, associated student body, other athletic groups, booster club, etc.) aware of and selling food/beverage products that meet the nutrition standards? Ideally they should. ❑ Yes ❑ No		❑	❑
What would you like to see at your school and in your LSWP regarding fundraising?			

CALIFORNIA PROJECT LEAN
LEADERS ENCOURAGING ACTIVITY AND NUTRITION

Appendix B: Action Plan Resources

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE STUDENT SURVEY

Collecting information helps you find out how students feel about food and physical activity issues. You may use a paper survey or you could work with student groups on campus to administer an electronic one (such as Survey Monkey). Surveys may need to be administered during lunch or free time.

We want to know your thoughts and opinions about food and physical activity at your school. Please answer these questions to the best of your knowledge. Thank you for your time and please return your survey to _____ [list student or group] by _____ [due date].

I am: ❑ Male ❑ Female

My grade is: ❑ 6th ❑ 7th ❑ 8th ❑ 9th ❑ 10th ❑ 11th ❑ 12th

1. Do the cafeteria and lunch carts sell the types of foods you like to eat at school?

❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Sometimes

2. Do you think the types of foods sold at school are healthy?

❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Sometimes

3. What types of healthy foods and beverages would you like to see sold on campus (please list)?

4. If other after-school physical activities were available, what type of physical activities would you be interested in?

❑ dance class ❑ aerobics
❑ walking ❑ martial arts
❑ hiking ❑ other _____
❑ swimming

5. If after-school physical activities such as those selected above were available, would you participate?

❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Maybe

If no, why not?

❑ Transportation (no way to get home or to the activity if not on school campus)

❑ Work ❑ Not interested ❑ Other _____

6. a) Do you currently walk/bike to school?

❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Sometimes

b) If no, why not? _____

Your Name
Parent, [School Name]
[Organization or Club]
Phone Number

Date

Name of person you are writing to
Title of person you are writing to
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear [Name of person you are writing to]:

My name is [your name]. I am a parent of a child at [your school name] and am writing on behalf of a group of parents who are concerned about [explain why you are writing in one or two sentences.]

[Explain why you care about the problem. Use your most interesting facts and compelling statistics. This paragraph should be about three to five sentences.]

[Explain what you are asking for, such as support for adopting a policy regarding walking/biking to school activities in the district.]

Sincerely,

[Your signature]
[Your name]

Luz Trujillo
Parent, ABCD School
555-555-1212

October 11, 2008

Mr. Wagner, Superintendent
ABC School District
1234 8th Street
Any City, CA 95800

Dear Mr. Wagner,

My name is Luz Trujillo. I am a parent of a child at ABCD school and am writing on behalf of a group of parents who are concerned about the lack of physical activity opportunities in our schools.

In looking into this issue, I learned that over 40% of students in California are unfit based on two key indicators of health: fitness and body weight. In our school district, over 45% of the students are unfit and overweight. Experts recommend that youth get 60 minutes of physical activity a day; because youth spend so much time in school, it is important that they have opportunities throughout the day to be physically active.

I am writing to arrange a meeting with you to discuss incorporating specific language on physical activity into the local school wellness policy to ensure students have more opportunities to be active in our school district.

We have discussed this issue in our parent meetings, have talked to students to determine their interests and needs and have some possible solutions we would like to discuss. I can be reached at 555-555-1212. Thank you in advance for your time.

Sincerely,

Luz Trujillo

Luz Trujillo

A simple phone call can help you get information or it can give you the chance to tell your ideas and share your facts with someone who can influence the policies/practices in your school/school district. Fill out this phone guide before you make a call. Use the guide to help you stay on track and remember the key points of your conversation.

Contact Name: _____ Contact Title: _____

Contact Organization: _____ Contact Phone Number: _____

Contact Address: _____

Date: _____

Hello, may I please speak to [contact name] _____? My name is _____

and I am a parent at _____ school. I am calling to speak with you about

_____.

Why are you calling? What you want to say or ask:

- ❑ _____
- ❑ _____
- ❑ _____
- ❑ _____

Notes (write down what you contact tells you):

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you very much.

Your Information

Sometimes your contact will ask for more information about you. Fill out the section below so that you have the information handy.

Name of school your child attends: _____

School Address: _____

Your organization or work place: _____

Your contact information: Phone: _____ Email: _____

APPENDIX B: PRESENTATIONS

Making a presentation is another way you can tell people about your problem and solution. You can make a presentation to a large group of people, or you can talk at a small meeting with just one or two people.

When you make a presentation, follow these presentation tips:

1. Keep it short and simple. State your problem, a few facts, a description of the needed improvement, and your solution. Emphasize two to three points you want your audience to remember.
2. Write your presentation down on paper or on note cards and practice it until you feel comfortable. You can also practice in front of friends or family members.
3. Make your presentation interesting. Tell a story about why parents are concerned about their children eating healthier and being more physically active. Tell a personal story – for example, you want what you teach your children at home about healthy eating to be reflected at school or that you want your child to avoid getting diabetes or heart disease.
4. Talk about how your proposed solution will benefit students, members of the community and your audience, not just how it will benefit you or your child. Also, talk about how this will benefit teachers, staff, and the entire school.
5. You may be nervous but just be yourself and focus on the importance of your message.
6. To make a good impression, give your audience a fact sheet that lists the major points of your presentation.
7. Leave time for questions and answers after your presentation. Be prepared to answer difficult questions (such as cost, resources, student interest, liability, etc.).
8. If you are not comfortable responding to a question, assure your audience that you will collect the requested information and reply as soon as possible.

Sometimes you need to tell lots of people about your areas of concern and proposed solution(s). The media may be your answer. When possible, work with the school or district to publicize positive changes, or needs, at schools.

What is the media?

The media is where you get your news. Media includes newspapers, magazines, newsletters, radio, and TV. It can even include a poster hanging in your school or a morning bulletin announcement at school. Media can be a great way to reach a large number of people.

Will the media listen to your ideas?

Yes, especially if you include youth in your interactions with the media as they are the most impacted by your schools nutrition and physical activity practices and policies. The media love stories about youth. It may help to recruit a principal or school board member to your team. The media can inform the community about your issue and solution. The media can also report on the great changes you and your team make at your school.

How do you work with the media?

You can find the phone numbers and addresses in the phone book. To start, call the newspapers, radio, and TV stations to ask which reporters cover health and education issues. Put all of the names, phone and fax numbers, and addresses you find on a media contact list.

Write a letter to the editor.

Newspapers print letters to the editor. These letters express opinions about issues that affect the community. You can write a letter to the editor. Your letter should describe how your concerns have affected your children and other students at the school. You can find the editor's name and address on the editorial page of the newspaper.

Write a press release.

A press release is a written description of a news story or event. Reporters like events, especially if youth are involved. Create an event at your school to attract reporters. A press release should be short and sweet – no more than two pages. Write it in collaboration with students or better yet, have a student write it. Fax or email a copy of your press release to all of the reporters on your media contact list and follow-up with a telephone call.

After you get media coverage, remember to get a copy of the newspaper article or a recording of the TV or radio story. You can use the copies the next time you contact a decision-maker.