



Creating Policy, Systems, Environmental Change: Success Story and Lessons Learned

Be Well. Do Well.

Revising the San Francisco Unified School District Wellness Policy

Intervention Summary

“We cannot talk about equity for our students if we aren’t paying attention to what they’re eating and providing them with opportunities for physical activity. Too many children in the U.S. are getting diseases that could be prevented with a healthy diet and exercise. We have the ability to say this will not happen to our students here in San Francisco,” said Superintendent Richard A. Carranza.

The San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) updated its Wellness Policy in Spring 2015. The policy includes recommendations related to nutrition, nutrition education, food and beverage marketing, physical education, physical activity, and staff wellness. The policy provides a framework to help school administrators promote student health and wellness. Highlights of the updated policy include:

- Schools will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students, staff and families throughout the school campus.
- Withholding recess is not an option for dealing with behavioral issues.
- Sugar-sweetened or artificially sweetened beverages will not be sold or served to SFUSD students, staff or families at any time on any district property.
- School parties will be scheduled only after lunchtime.
- All vending machines on district property, including schools and central offices, shall adhere to SFUSD’s nutrition guidelines. Adult vending machines may contain unsweetened coffee or tea beverages.

“In keeping with the Board’s longstanding commitment to comprehensive student wellness, the updated wellness policy is ambitious because of the powerful connections it draws between health and academic achievement and its commitment to help students establish lifelong healthy behavior patterns,” said Board President Emily Murase PhD.

Over the course of the last two years, the SFUSD Food and Fitness Advisory Committee, which is comprised of families, staff, students, city agencies, and nonprofit organizations, developed recommendations for a revised wellness policy. The recommendations were based on updated State and Federal requirements, as well as current research and best practices.

The updated wellness policy incorporates the Board of Education's policy guidelines from the resolution Feeding Every Hungry Child in the SFUSD and supports developing a policy that allows all students to eat breakfast during their first class of the school day, a practice already in place at many schools.

Description of Barriers Encountered and Identified or Proposed Solutions

The revised SFUSD Wellness policy was adopted by the San Francisco Board of Education in April 2015. This was a great success for the health and wellness of SFUSD families, students and staff and now the work of implementation begins. Many schools and district offices immediately hopped aboard the wellness wagon and are leaders in spreading the health message, while others have been a bit slower to adopt. Many schools will be breaking decade long traditions in fundraising, celebrating and serving sugary beverages and less healthy foods. Implementation will require a change in culture and will be gradual; it is crucial that the changes occur within school sites so the work of communication and education will be community-based.

Future Directions/Sustainable Success

The District is in the process of hiring a Wellness Policy Coordinator who will work out the systems necessary for implementation and sustainability. The board of Education has generously funded the coordinator position as well as funds for staff and teacher education.

Contact information about this Narrative

Local Health Department Grant Name: City and County of San Francisco Department of Public Health

Grant #: 13-20505

Author's Name: Written by Mark Elkin, SFUSD and Submitted by Laura Brainin-Rodriguez, SFDPH, LHD Project Director

Phone: 415-575-5687

Email: laura.brainin-rodriquez@sfdph.org

This material was produced by the California Department of Public Health's Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Branch with funding from USDA SNAP-Ed, known in California as CalFresh. These institutions are equal opportunity providers and employers. CalFresh provides assistance to low-income households and can help buy nutritious food for better health. For CalFresh information, call 1-877-847-3663. For important nutrition information, visit www.CaChampionsForChange.net.