Promising Practices

Ideas, Advice, and Models for Successful Local Wellness Policy Implementation

About Promising Practices

The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 required that schools that sponsor school meal programs develop local wellness policies to address childhood obesity. In response to this requirement, schools in Pennsylvania and across the nation developed policies which include goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school–based activities to promote student wellness. Policies also include nutrition guidelines for foods and beverages sold in schools and plans for policy implementation.

In the fall of 2006, ***Project PA***, a collaboration between the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Division of Food and Nutrition and Penn State University, developed an online submission form through which schools could submit "Promising Practices" related to local wellness policy implementation. This manual is a compilation of selected "Promising Practices" that may provide ideas, advice, and models for successful local wellness policy implementation.

This collection of "Promising Practices" was produced and edited by ***Project PA***: Claudia Probart, Ph.D., R.D.; Elaine McDonnell, M.S., R.D., L.D.N.; J. Elaine Weirich, M.Ed.; Charles J. Orlofsky, B.A. The project would also like to thank Carol Gilbert, M.Ed., SFNS, for assistance in editing.

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Pocono Mountain School District

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Objective(s)

- To expand our existing Health and Physical Education program beyond the school day.
- To provide a summer program that focuses on health, fitness and Physical Education.
- To support the district's move to a fitness–based Physical Education program, by upgrading existing cardiovascular and weight room equipment to enable students to get the benefits of a safe and effective workout.
- To provide teachers with tools necessary to accurately assess students in Physical Education by upgrading and increasing the number of heart rate monitors and pedometers.
- To educate students about the benefits of proper nutrition and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Category

- Use of Accountability Block Funding, Social and Health Category, to Support Local Wellness Policy Implementation

Description

- Our main focus for the grant was to increase fitness levels of students and fight the increasing problem of childhood obesity.
- We have expanded our fitness program by upgrading cardiovascular and weight training equipment at the secondary levels.
- We have purchased the *TRIFIT* system for both high schools to serve as an educational tool for students and an assessment tool for teachers.
- We have also upgraded heart monitors and added two full class sets to each high school and new heart rate monitors for each Intermediate school.
- All buildings (12) were also equipped with three class sets of pedometers to use in class. These pedometers are accessible to the after school programs and the summer program.
- We are in the process of adding *Traversing Walls* to our Intermediate schools. These walls will add another activity to our program and tie in well with the existing traversing walls that already exist in the elementary centers.
- We have had the *FOODPLAY* corporation present nutrition programs to all elementary school students in grades three and four. The programs are outstanding and sent a great message to reinforce healthy eating habits.
- Also at the elementary level, we have added a two–week summer program that supports what we teach in Health and Physical Education through the school year.
- At both secondary schools we have supported the "Snack Shack," which is a healthy food stand that is open each day after school for anyone staying for athletics, clubs, tutoring or any other program.

Advice

- This has been a great opportunity to improve and expand our programs and add additional programs that support our goal of increasing fitness levels and fighting obesity.
- The main lesson learned is that you need to take the time to research the new initiatives and programs that you are interested in implementing and that is extremely time consuming…but it is well worth it.
- Our opportunities have opened more doors for students to be involved and actively engaged in programs in school, after school and during the summer months.

Evidence of Success

- Many students are using the cardiovascular and weight training equipment in Physical Education and before school and after school.
- The summer program included 350 students. Parents and students are already asking if the program will run this summer.
- Teachers and students requested the *FOODPLAY* program for the second year. The program had rave reviews from faculty, administration and students.
- The use of the heart rate monitors by the students, as well as the pedometers have been great successes.
- The students love incorporating technology into what they are doing in Physical Education and it is a great tool for assessment.

The School District of Philadelphia — Francis Scott Key Elementary School

Contact Information

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Objective(s)

- To promote healthy eating habits and encourage an exercise plan to help young people improve school performance, establish positive health habits, and prevent diseases in adulthood.
- To work with parents/guardians by providing informational sessions aimed at improving nutrition, physical fitness activities, and overall wellness.

Category

- Extended Learning Opportunities

Description

- *Fitness is Alive @ Charleroi Elementary* (F.A.C.E.) Afterschool program is a six–week program that meets twice a week.
- The core purpose is to educate students and their parents/guardians about healthy lifestyle choices.
- We partnered with Mon Valley Hospital, Mon Valley YMCA, Nutrition Inc., California University of Pennsylvania and various community physicians.

Advice

- Parental involvement is critical.
- Program is based on help from volunteers. Therefore staff, parent, and other agency involvement is critical to maintain the program.

Evidence of Success

- Student word of mouth moved the program ahead.
- First program included 28 children. The second program included 58 participants.

Charleroi Area School District — Charleroi Elementary School

Contact Information

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Objective(s)

- To emphasize and teach the importance of physical activity and good nutrition for students who are identified as being at–risk and hope these habits become lifelong healthy habits.
- To ensure that the staff were also engaged in cancer/chronic disease risk reduction education and weight loss/exercise initiative.
- To pilot a program in an underserved urban geography, reaching a diverse and at–risk student/family population.

Category

- Extended Learning Opportunities

Description

- The After School Health Club at Francis Scott Key Elementary was a collaborative partnership between the American Cancer Society, the School District of Philadelphia, and school staff.
- The club consisted of 19 sessions, 75 minutes long, on Monday and Wednesday, from November 30, 2005, to March 3, 2006.
- The first half of each session took place in a classroom and focused on nutrition, and the second half took place in the gym and focused on physical activity.
- Activities included basketball, jump rope/double dutch, aerobics/nutrition video, *J-MAT* (Jackie Chan exercise videogame).
- High school students and American Cancer Society youth volunteers lectured on smoking messaging specific to the Asian community. Students taught tinickling (ethnic dance with sticks), limbo/electric slide, throwing the ball, and running.
- Nutrition lessons during healthy snack time included all aspects of healthy eating and introduced new foods.
- Francis Scott Key staff competed against the staff of a neighboring school, Vare Elementary in a wellness competition involving increasing exercise and decreasing alcohol consumption.
- Professional Development Day was held for staff in the spring of 2006 on stress management.

Advice

- Club participation enhanced individual's chances for success in following healthy lifestyles.
- Partnering with high school students and the American Cancer Society assisted in program content.

Evidence of Success

- Students demonstrated greater comfort level with discussing health related issues.
- As a result of the wellness competition Francis Scott Key staff lost 5 pounds per person, while staff at Vare Elementary lost 2.7 pounds per person.
- Pre/Post fitness test results showed an improvement in every participant from beginning to end.
- All participants reported feeling better physically and emotionally.

Boyertown Area School District — Boyertown Area Senior High School

Contact Information

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Objective(s)

- To put into effect our mission statement: "Promote healthy lifestyles for all" in Boyertown Community. (Focus areas include healthy eating, physical activity, and anti-tobacco.)

Category

- Community Involvement

Description

- We used the American Cancer Society model to establish a Wellness Council.
- We worked with Foodservice Department to offer healthier choices in the cafeteria and eliminate/decrease sugary and/or high fat snacks and drinks.
- We raised funds and sought grants to replace a cinder track with an all–weather track for community and school use.
- We sponsored smoke–free restaurant weekends.

Advice

- Establish a good rapport with local media.

Evidence of Success

- Seek community support through donations.
- Promote efforts through local media.

Conemaugh Valley School District — Conemaugh Valley Elementary, East Taylor Elementary, & Conemaugh Valley Jr/Sr High School

Contact Information

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Objective(s)

- To collaborate with higher education community organizations to provide nutrition education for students, staff, and community.
- To utilize qualified nutrition professionals as consultants for school district food services, menu planning, health classes, cooking demonstrations, and community workshops.

Category

- Community Involvement

Description

- Partnership with Indiana University of Pennsylvania's Department of Nutrition was established to provide master's level dietetic students a community rotation at the Conemaugh Valley School District. Rotations lasted 3 weeks.
- Dietetic students provide nutrition counseling, menu planning, and nutrition education to students; quarterly healthy newsletters to parents; analysis of BMI statistics; community workshops; and cooking demonstrations as determined by the Health & Wellness Director and supervisor of dietitians.
- This collaboration provides real world experience for dietetic students (i.e., diabetic children, food allergies, limited budget for food.)

Advice

- Use community resources when available—they are experts.
- Foster relationships with community resources that are beneficial to both parties.
- Many community agencies are looking for opportunities to work with schools. You just need to do a little research.

Evidence of Success

- At the time, our Food Service Director did not have a nutrition background. The dietetic rotation was invaluable in helping the school district implement new nutrition policies.
- The relationship was beneficial to both the school and university, resulting in a 5–year commitment.
- We have received positive parental feedback regarding healthy newsletter, cooking demonstrations, and workshops.

Farrell Area School District — Coordinated School Health Council Research Study for Farrell Area Schools

Contact Information

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Objective(s)

- To foster collaboration among community agencies and allow them to focus on a common goal.
- To increase physical activity in the curriculum and after school.
- To provide Nutrition Education through Character Education Service–Learning

Category

- Community Involvement

Description

- We established an Obesity Reduction Committee in January 2004. The purpose of the committee was to identify ways in which to address childhood obesity and improve overall student health in the Farrell community. This led to the Coordinated School Health Council.
- The council addresses eight segments of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Coordinated School Health Model.
- Changes in foodservice have included removal of sodas and sugary snacks from vending machines, reduction in the price of milk, introduction of low–fat milk, continuation of a free salad bar for students in grades five through twelve, and displaying of nutrition information and healthy eating messages in halls and on café walls.
- In 2004 Highmark Community Foundation awarded the district a Challenge Grant for the development of a nutrition education curriculum.
- We have received mini–grants from Pennsylvania Advocates for Nutrition and Activity.
- Community health fairs focusing on wellness through nutrition education and physical activity are held periodically for students, their families, and the community.
- Students are also provided health education lessons at the "Children's Opportunities for Outside Learning" (C.O.O.L.) afterschool and summer program. C.O.O.L. is sponsored by 21st Century Community Learning Centers.
- The school district plans on expanding their nutrition program by changing the types of foods offered at school sporting events.
- The school district received a Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program grant from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for the last two school years.

Advice

- Many providers throughout Farrell actively participate in the pursuit of a healthier community.
- One of the main messages that students receive is that being healthy is fun.

Evidence of Success

- We have maintained a high level of student attendance, which may be indicative of improvements in students' health and wellness.
- Student performance on the President's Physical Fitness Test has improved.
- Students have exhibited an increased interest in health and fitness.

Neshannock Township School District — Neshannock Memorial Elementary School

Contact Information

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Objective(s)

- To incorporate our health and wellness programs into our action plans of our Wellness Policy.
- To continue to educate the members of our School Health Council on the concepts of a Coordinated School Health Program.
- To develop and update evaluations for each of our programs in our Wellness Program.

Category

- Community Involvement

Description

- This has been our second year for our Neshannock Township School District's School Health Council.
- The Council is comprised of members from the school, community, medical field and social services. An American Cancer Society representative attends our meetings and acts as a resource person.
- Two needs assessments were developed: 1)Professional staff and 2) School health council members.
- Questions were open–ended and broad and the two main issues were food selections in the cafeteria and bullying/self–esteem issues with our students.
- Within the School Health Council there are five sub–committees: 1) High School Wellness, 2) Elementary Wellness, 3) Student Wellness, 4) Wellnes Policy and 5) Safety.
- Our Elementary Wellness Committee decided to go to reverse recess (recess before lunch) and eliminated snacks.
- Elementary students are still permitted to bring a birthday treat (within the policy guidelines).
- Communicating the wellness policy with student and booster groups was an issue addressed at the high school level.
- The School Health Council is an avenue to highlight our programs to community members and parents. The meetings are also another way to network with community agencies.

Advice

- Incorporate representatives from key agencies within the community. Our resources include Penn State Cooperative Extension, Drug and Alcohol Commission, American Cancer Society, Jameson Hospital, Department of Health, Children's Advocacy Center, New Castle Community YMCA and Community Alternatives.

Evidence of Success

- During each meeting we make progress in updating our Wellness Policy.
- We plan to submit our revised wellness policy to the school board in May.

New Kensington — Arnold School District

Contact Information

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Objective(s)

- To increase parent awareness of healthy meal preparation.
- To increase student ability to prepare healthy snacks to increase student activity.

Category

- Community Involvement

Description

- Our school district has been able to partner with a variety of community agencies to help implement our wellness policy.
- Alle–Kiski Medical Center (AKMC) has provided pedometers for students in grades 3 through 5 to allow them to track their activity.
- AKMC is providing exercise physiologists and physical therapists to come to our schools to reinforce the activtity program.
- The local "Weed and Seed" program provided a grant to implement educational programs and purchase educational material. ("Weed and Seed" is a community–based strategy sponsored by the U. S. Department of Justice to prevent, control, and reduce violent crime, drug abuse, and gang activity. The strategy involves cooperation between law enforcement agencies and prosecutors to "weed out" violent criminals and drug abusers and collaboration between public agencies and community–based private organizations to "seed" much–needed human services, including prevention, intervention, treatment, and neighborhood restoration programs.)
- Adagio Health provided wellness education to schools that qualify.
- AKMC provided chefs to demonstrate healthy and economical meal preparation during a family–based evening program. "Weed and Seed" provided funds to purchase food and supplies.
- AKMC provided chefs to teach latch–key students how to safely select and prepare afterschool snacks. "Weed and Seed" provided the funds to purchase the food and supplies.
- Penn State Cooperative Extension provided a program called "Super Cupboard" to teach parents healthy meal preparation. This is offered once a week for four weeks. "Weed and Seed" funds are used to purchase the food.

Advice

- Consider partnerships with other agencies. When we started to plan how we would implement the wellness policy we were without funds. As we partnered with one community agency, we became aware of others that could help meet our needs.
- Be open to any contact that can help to further the wellness goals of the school district. In doing so, the policy goes beyond the doors of the school and involves the whole community.

Evidence of Success

- We have been successful in obtaining community partners. The programs are still in the planning stages.

Rose Tree Media School District — Springton Lake Middle School

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Objective(s)

- To increase nutrition awareness for students, parents, and community members.

Category

- Community Involvement

Description

- Springton Lake Middle School formed a Health Council and worked with community organizations to promote nutrition awareness.
- The council has offered several strategies to increase awareness on many levels—students, parents, and the community level.
- Community organizations involved include the YMCA and local hospital. Representatives from these organizations helped the school council members and school food service to offer a variety of events.
- We offered a healthy cooking demonstration with food-tasting and nutrition information. This was presented by the Riddle Memorial Hospital chef, the Food Service Director, and registered dietitians.
- We then started a "Healthy Cooking Club" which was encouraged and highlighted at the cooking demonstration.
- We followed up with a one night parent and community cooking demonstration and nutrition awareness seminar.
- Healthy snacks offered in the lobby were donated by our local produce market.
- We offered healthy food tasting in our cafeteria—introducing healthy dips and other items donated by the community organizations with preparation and presentation done by the parents. Some of the items tested were created by the "Healthy Cooking Club."
- We offered a health fair for parents and the community which highligted fitness and nutrition and included approximately 25 vendors. The "Healthy Cooking Club" students prepared smoothies with donated fruit for members of the community at this health fair.
- We are currently planning a healthy meal offering in conjuction with another health fair for students, parents and the community.
- The health council also runs a very successful staff and student fitness program. This is a team–based event with weekly prizes. Some prizes are donated and others are purchased. The council has held several fundraisers to support this program.

Advice

- Form a Health Council and promote health and fitness and the community will get involved.
- Seek out and apply for grants.

Evidence of Success

- Surveys conducted with students have indicated many positive comments about the information they learned from the chef.
- Students asked for and are being included in the upcoming health fair.
- The "Healthy Cooking Club" and the Health Council have produced a cookbook for the community. The cookbook is available at the health fair.
- Parents requested the presentation offered at school be televised on the local Cable–TV station.
- More initiatives are being supported.

Big Spring School District —
Frankford, Mifflin, Newville, Oak Flat, and Plainfield Elementary Schools

Contact Information

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Objective(s)

- To educate students about the importance of proper nutrition and physical activity within the elementary schools.

Category

- Nutrition Education

Description

- The Carlisle Area Health and Wellness Foundation granted $25,000 to the Health and Wellness Committee of Big Spring School District as an opportunity to educate students in Kindergarten through fifth grade about the benefits of nutrition and exercise.
- The students are taught basic nutrition with special emphasis on decreasing the risk of childhood obesity.
- They are oriented to *MyPyramid* with physical activity brought to their attention.
- Some nutrition lessons are more advanced with information regarding specific diseases including diabetes, heart disease, gluten sensitivity, lactose sensitivity, and childhood obesity.
- We have also implemented an Afterschool Wellness Program that takes place one day a week and is offered to children in second to fifth grades in the Newville Elementary School.
- The program begins with a nutritious snack followed by various warm–up activities, the main activity, and multiple cool–down stretches. During the main activity, nutrition information and the importance of hydration are discussed.
- The program ends with a healthful snack to take home.

Advice

- Support of a committee is key to a successful lesson.
- Keeping the lessons age appropriate with an open mind to suggestions contributes to program success.

Evidence of Success

- Currently, we are unable to accommodate everyone. The program has become so popular that there are children on a list waiting to become a part of the program.
- The children have verbalized understanding in the previous lessons and put the information they have learned to good use when selecting their mid–morning snacks and lunches.

Brownsville Area School District

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Objective(s)

- To promote student wellness.

Category

- Nutrition Education

Description

- Beginning in October 2006, theme–based activities were initiated to empower educators, parents, and students to make healthy food and physical activity choices. *MyPyramid* was the basis for all the lesson plans, handouts, and posters used by the staff. Healthy snacking was the theme for November. The importance of grain products was the December theme. Future themes will include physical activity and school breakfast.
- A newsletter, including poems, essays, word searches, a parent corner, and recipes was sent to each household.
- In conjunction with the "Jump for the Heart" lessons in February, jump ropes will be provided for all students.
- In March, as part of a "Go for the Greens" theme, green fruits and vegetables will be given to students after an assembly conducted by a registered dietitian.
- In April, for "Turn Off the TV Week," frisbees will be provided to selected classrooms with suggestions on activities other than watching TV.

Advice

- It has been proven that school–based efforts present great opportunities to promote healthy bodies and healthy minds.
- The classroom, school cafeteria, and other school activities provide a clear and consistent message that explains and reinforces healthy eating and physical activity habits.

Evidence of Success

- Students are learning to make healthy lifestyle choices not only in school but also at class parties and sports events.

Great Valley School District

Contact Information

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Objective(s)

- To introduce new foods to students through tasting, then incorporating the foods into the school lunch program.
- To introduce new fruits and vegetables with the hope of increasing the fruit and vegetable consumption of students.
- To provide a positive, productive activity that brings the public into the cafeteria.

Category

- Nutrition Education

Description

- Parents, senior citizens, and staff volunteer to "slice and dice" fruits and vegetables that are then offered to the students in the cafeteria for taste–testing.
- The foodservice department purchases the products and supplies the volunteers with nutritional information.
- Volunteers offer samples to the students, discuss nutritional information, and get to socialize with the students.

Advice

- Offering free products in a safe environment encourages students to try something they otherwise might not.
- Use high school athletes to present the foods to younger students.
- Accompany the tasting with a discussion table that has further information and examples.

Evidence of Success

- Students request taste tests.
- Taste testing offers the parents and senior citizens an opportunity to be active in the cafeteria, gaining a better understanding and appreciation of the school meals program.
- The Parent Advisory Group is enthusiastic and has increased support.
- Student consumption of fruits and vegetables has increased.
- Participation increased in middle school when high school athletes presented the foods.

Great Valley School District — Charlestown Elementary School

Contact Information

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Objective(s)

- To raise students' awareness of the nutritional value of food items brought to school for snacks.
- To utilize specific information about items brought to school for snack in the health curriculum.
- To educate parents about healthy snack options for students.

Category

- Nutrition Education

Description

- Customized classroom posters about the students' choices for classroom snacks are diplayed in the classroom. They are utilized for nutrition education and for parent awareness.
- The Parent Advisory Group surveyed specific classrooms, listing and tabulating items that students bring for snacks, then hanging a poster in the classroom with the results.
- The information will be incorporated into nutrition education activities and copies of the poster will be sent home to parents.
- It is our hope that the poster will be posted on the family refrigerator.
- The poster will highlight the good choices, offer other healthy options, and downplay the negative choices.

Advice

- Research has shown that specific local information tends to "bring home" a subject better than general vague information.
- Although it employs a slight sense of guilt, specific information is proven to raise awareness.
- Highlight healthy snacks sold in the cafeteria as option.

Evidence of Success

- We plan to survey the students again in June and compare our tabulations.

Spring Grove Area School District

Contact Information

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Objective(s)

- To provide an easy alternative way for parents to celebrate their child's birthday, instead of sending in an unhealthy treat.
- To offer a nutritious snack for students that teachers feel comfortable serving.
- To teach students that birthdays do not have to include unhealthy treats.

Category

- Nutrition Guidelines

Description

- Through the foodservice department, parents are able to order a "Birthday Basket," a basket that is filled with nutritious pre–packaged snacks, and other items (stickers, erasers, etc) for their children's birthdays.
- Baskets are filled with two different snacks (e.g., baked goldfish, sliced apples) and a sticker or other item for every child in the classroom.
- Baskets are delivered by the head cook on the morning of the birthday. A birthday card accompanies the basket and a Polaroid instant picture of the child is taken.
- Teachers are in charge of the basket and can distribute the snack items when they choose.

Advice

- Work with your teaching staff and parents to develop a type of basket that will work for your district.
- Frequently change the items included in the baskets to avoid monotony.
- Remind your staff and the parents about the convenience of this approach.
- Work with the school nurse and teachers on issues related to allergies.

Evidence of Success

- We are receiving positive comments from staff, parents, and students.
- The numer of baskets that we have sold indicates that this plan fulfills a need.

Blue Mountain School District — Blue Mountain Elementary School West

Contact Information

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Objective(s)

- To offer a healthy alternative to the traditional school lunch while staying within mandated guidelines.

Category

- Nutritional Guidelines

Description

- We created a cold alternative to the menu selections featuring lower fat items for school lunch.
- We submitted sample menus to the food service manager with request to pilot the program.
- Offerings include: 4 oz. yogurt, peanut butter with crackers or pretzels, fruit, carrots with dip; turkey or ham and cheese roll, crackers, fruit, tossed salad with dressing on the side; hard boiled egg, roll, fruit, tossed salad with dressing on the side.

Advice

- Work in conjunction with the Food Service Department.
- Seek input from students when planning healthy alternatives.

Evidence of Success

- The new menu offerings are so popular that the hot alternative was eliminated.
- Food service personnel report far less food waste.

Chartiers Valley School District — Chartiers Valley

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Objective(s)

- To implement healthier choices for students as a result of the wellness policy.

Category

- Nutrition Guidelines

Description

- Chartiers Valley School District has been sucessful in implementing its wellness policy for 2006–2007 in developing options for students.
- We are offering "Grab 'n Go" sandwiches on multigrain breads, chef salads, fresh fruits and vegetables, yogurt parfaits, baked chips and crackers.
- Sugary sodas have been replaced with bottled water, flavored milk, fruit punch, Powerades, and fruit juices.
- Lunch selections offered students choices of lower fat entrees, a variety of fresh and cooked fruits and veggies, whole grain breads, and more baked fries or baked food options. "Fry–Free Fridays" are popular.
- Deep fried foods are being prepared with a healthier alternative to shortening. Trans–fat free frying oil has been in use.
- Chartiers Valley hopes to continue adding more aspects to its wellness campaign for the future.
- For next year we hope to add more fry–free days to the menu, entertain more healthy selections for our staff and students to choose from as well limiting the amount of sugary snacks brought in as treats from home.

Advice

- Introduce healthier choices.

Evidence of Success

- We have seen an increase in meals served.

Wilmington Area School District — Wilmington Area Schools

Contact Information

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Objective(s)

- To make the school and community aware of wellness factors that we are trying to develop.

Category

- Nutrition Guidelines

Description

- "Grab 'n Go" breakfast now includes breakfast bars that contain whole grains.
- Cookie and cakes for desserts on the school lunch menu have been limited to approximately two or three a month and are low in fat and sugar content.
- Low–fat and low–calorie dressings are offered on the bars and main menu items.
- All chips served are baked.
- Pretzels are all wheat.
- Meatball sandwiches are now made with a wheat bun.
- On our weekly sandwich bars at the middle school and high school we offer a wheat sandwich bun.
- All breads used for sandwiches or as a main menu item are whole grain white bread.
- More fresh fruits and tossed salads are offered as main menu items.
- Our tacos are now made on a soft tortilla wrap instead of the corn shell.
- Vending machines now contain low–sugar, low–fat, and non–fat items, more fruit bars and less chocolate and high–sugar items.
- Soda machines are now filled will juice, water, and flavored water drinks. No carbonated items are included.

Advice

- This was a gradual process which we started to implement about two years ago.
- We previously had many a la carte items, but have elimiated almost all of them.
- At first, the students grumbled a bit. But over time they have adjusted to the changes.

Evidence of Success

- Students may still grumble, but the lunch counts have increased.

Burgettstown Area School District — Burgettstown Middle High School

Contact Information

Contact Person: Jan Marietta
Contact Person's Title: School Nurse
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Contact Person's Phone Number: (724) 947–8114
Contact Person's FAX Number: (724) 947–3325

Objective(s)

- To incorporate healthy snacking and nutrition education into our district's special activities and in–school parties for students in all grade levels.

Category

- Nutrition Guidelines

Description

- At the elementary level, classroom parties for birthdays and holidays are common practice. The School Health Council approached the PTA and teachers requesting they modify foods offered for parties. Additionally, foods for these events should follow nutrition standards.
- The Health Council and the principal provided a list of acceptable foods for parents to supply for birthdays and holidays.
- The foodservice department has provided parents the opporutnity to order nutritious snacks for a minimal price.
- Birthday students wear a special hat for the day and the party is held at the end of the day so as to not disturb classes or interfere with lunch.
- The supplied treats are healthy snacks such as fruit and dip, veggies and dip, fruit pizza, cheese platters, trail mix, Chex mix, granola and yogurt, etc. Cookies, cupcakes, and candy have been eliminated.
- At the Middle School and High School level, special events are centered around academics with cultural events like Mardi Gras and Cinco de Mayo.
- Foods offered at the Middle School and High School events are also consistent with the Nutritional Standards. Students prepare the celebration foods at home and bring them to school.
- The Middle School and High School annual "Caring Team Auction" sponsored by the Student Council raises money for children in need of health care and grief counseling.
- Past auction items included high sugar, decadent treats, the more sugar laden the better. Auction items would sell for $75 and up.
- When the rules of the auction changed to follow the nutritional standards, the food items auctioned became very creative. Students and staff made homemade salsa and baked chips, taco dip, fruit trays,vegetable trays, cheese balls and crackers, etc.
- The auction remained as popular as ever, with even more students donating food items to be auctioned.

Advice

- The sharing of food with friends is more important than the actual food itself, and when healthy food is available, they will eat it.

Evidence of Success

- Our "Caring Team Auction" raised nearly $3000 in one day for children in need of health care.
- Nearly 90% of the items auctioned came from the students themselves, a significant increase of student participation from previous years.
- At the elementary level, parties remain an important part of celebrating birthdays and holidays. Parties with healthy foods were as big of a hit as parties with cupcakes and ice cream.

Great Valley School District — Great Valley Elementary Schools

Contact Information

Contact Person: Barbara Nissel
Contact Person's Title: Food Service Supervisor
Email: bnissel@gvsd.org
Contact Person's Phone Number: (610) 889–2100
Contact Person's FAX Number: (610) 889–2143

Objective(s)

- To offer convenient, healthy, safe choices that parents may purchase for classroom celebrations that support our Wellness Policy.

Category

- Nutrition Guidelines

Description

- We advertise an assortment of healthy snacks that can be ordered three days ahead of time for classroom celebrations.
- The order form can be found on our food service website under Birthday Snack Form, www.gvsd.org
- We offer fruit smoothies, low fat muffins, sliced apples with fat free caramel dip and soft pretzels for $.50 each.
- The foodservice staff deliver the purchased items along with a birthday card and small gift.
- The foodservice staff member arrives at the classroom in a Dr. Seuss's birthday hat and sings for the student.

Advice

- Many parents are employed and do not have time to prepare healthy snacks. Promote this opportunity as a convenience for working parents.
- Other than sliced apples, we have avoided providing fresh fruit for celebrations because the quality would be difficult to maintain and it is difficult to transport.
- Continually advertise the service.

Evidence of Success

- Numerous parents take advantage of the service.
- Many have thanked us for providing the healthy snack/treat options.

Homer-Center School District — Homer-Center Elementary and High School

Contact Information

Contact Person: M. Susan McLoughlin, M.S., R.D., L.D.N.
Contact Person's Title: Food Service Director
Email: smcloughlin@homercenter.org
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Contact Person's FAX Number: (724) 479–3967

Objective(s)

- To make subtle nutrition changes to benefit students without undue hardship on the parents or the foodservice department.

Category

- Nutrition Guidelines

Description

A number of changes were implemented in the district to improve the health of the students:

- *Snack Carts:*
  - All items on all cafeteria snack carts are 150 calories or less.
    Elementary school students:
    - ✓ Grades Kindergarten through 2nd are never permitted to purchase from the snack cart.
    - ✓ Grades three and four are permitted to purchase from the snack cart one day per week.
    - ✓ Grades five and six are permitted to purchase every day.
  - All students must finish their lunch first and may only purchase up to two snacks. Students are always permitted to purchase extra food items from the daily menu.
  - High school students have unlimited access to the snack carts.
- *Beverages:*
  - A milk vending machine will be installed in the high school through a grant received from the Milk Marketing Board.
  - Healthy beverage choices have been added to soda machines. The machines now include 100% juice options as well as water. Fewer than 50% of the selections are soda.
- *Kindergarten:*
  - During Kindergarten orientation the Food Service Director speaks with incoming Kindergarten parents about the foodservice department and healthy snacks.
  - Kindergarten students have a snack every afternoon provided by the students.
  - The Foodservice Director designed a "Healthy Snacks" handout, which is distributed and reviewed with parents. Parents are made aware of healthy options and what foods are best to send with their child for their daily snack.
  - The Kindergarten teachers have taken this a step further and are using the handout as their guidelines. They are requesting parents to follow the guidelines and only send in nutritious snacks and milk or juice.

Advice

- Changes were implemented at the start of this school year and were not even questioned!
- Changes were not drastic thus there was no backlash.

Evidence of Success

- No decrease in sales in the vending or snack carts was evidenced.
- Parents were more accepting of the changes when the reasons for the changes were explained.
- We did not take a hard–line approach of discontinuing everything because we know that the students will get it somewhere else, if not here.
- Teaching students they can still have "extras" and do it in a more healthful way is teaching at its best.

State College Area School District

Contact Information

Contact Person: Megan Schaper
Contact Person's Title: Food Service Director
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Contact Person's Phone Number: (814) 231–5093
Contact Person's Fax Number: (814) 231–5444

Objective(s)

- To encourage children to select and eat more fresh produce at lunch time.

Category

- Nutrition Guidelines

Description

- The typical school lunch includes a daily canned fruit selection. Fresh fruit choices are usually limited to apples, oranges, bananas, and grapes.
- We want to expose students to other fruits and offer fruits in such a variety students can always find something that they like.
- By carefully monitoring produce prices and working with our produce supplier, we have found that we can offer cantaloupe, honeydew, fresh pineapple, watermelon, kiwi, clementines, and even strawberries and peaches at costs comparable to that of canned fruit.
- We offer a wide variety of choices each day so that even the pickiest eater can find something that he/she likes to eat.

Advice

- Explain your objective to your produce supplier and ask them to alert you to any special pricing or deals.
- Train staff on fruit presentation so that they understand that they can offer fresh fruit choices such as melons and kiwi without a lot of extra work. For example, watermelon can be cubed quickly and then cupped. Melons can be washed and sliced into 12–16 servings per melon and served with the skins. Kiwi can be served the same way. Strawberries can be washed and served whole.

Evidence of Success

- Our students routinely choose fruit and vegetable side dish choices every day.
- Students, parents and staff comment on the wonderful variety of fruits available.
- Parents relate that their children have asked for different fruits at home that they do not normally buy.

Bellefonte Area School District — Bellefonte High School

Contact Information

Contact Person: Barbara Eckley
Contact Person's Title: Director of Food Services
Email: beckley@basd.net
Contact Person's Phone Number: (814) 355–4814
Contact Person's FAX Number: (814) 353–2421

Objective(s)

- To offer healthier beverages in vending machines.

Category

- Nutrition Guidelines

Description

- We replaced juice drinks and soft drinks with all water choices.

Advice

- Make offerings in a positive manner: "Look what we have done for you!" instead of "Look what we had to take away."

Evidence of Success

- Vending sales have increased 74% since September 2006. (Reported in January 2007.)

Crawford Central School District — West End Elementary School and Neason Hill Elementary School

Contact Information

Contact Person: Karen Hill
Contact Person's Title: Food Service Director
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Contact Person's Phone Number: (814) 336–1121
Contact Person's FAX Number: (814) 336–1582

Objective(s)

- To better prepare students for academic success by helping them stay focused on learning and not distracted by hunger.

Category

- Nutrition Guidelines

Description

- As a result of working with the parents, teachers and students through various meetings, we began a "Grab 'n Go" Breakfast program at each school which is directed to those students who did not have an opportunity to eat breakfast at home prior to riding the school bus or walking to school.

Advice

- We surveyed parents prior to implementation of the program.
- Almost all returned responses were negative and indicated no interest in the program.
- However, when we did a trial month of the program, the response was tremendous.
- Do not always listen to what the surveys say.

Evidence of Success

- Many more children than expected are participating.
- Teachers have reported that children are more attentive during the morning classes and fewer discipline problems have occurred.

Loyalsock Township School District — High School

Contact Information

Contact Person: Beth Hufnagel
Contact Person's Title: Food Service Director
Email: bhufnagel@ltsd.k12.pa.us
Contact Person's Phone Number: (570) 323–3211
Contact Person's FAX Number: (570) 323–5303

Objective(s)

- To offer students foods with consideration for promoting health and reducing childhood obesity.
- To create a breakfast option that would appeal to students, meet nutrition guidelines, promote the benefits of eating a healthy breakfast and increase student participation in the breakfast program.

Category

- Nutrition Guidelines

Description

- We created "Camelot Café," a breakfast "Grab and Go" kiosk service that we offer daily at our high school.
- We converted a mobile salad bar into a breakfast cart.
- Each day, the cart is loaded with a variety of whole grain breakfast cereals, cereal bars, enriched donuts and muffins, assorted bagels, fresh fruit, low–fat yogurt, milk, 100% juice, bottled water and hot chocolate made with 1% milk.
- The cart is transported each morning to the high school lobby along with a terminal from our Point of Sale (POS) system. Students and faculty are able to purchase breakfast items using cash or their POS cafeteria account.
- Students gather around stand–up cafe tables that were purchased for this concept.
- Faculty members are allowing students to complete breakfast in their first period rooms if necessary.

The "Camelot Café" promotes healthy breakfast consumption in a population that previously did not eat breakfast and generated a community spirit among students, faculty, and administration.

Advice

- Communication is key to successful implementation of this program.
- Meetings, signage, email communication and articles in high school and district newsletters promoted excitement and support from students, faculty and administration.
- The opportunity for nutrition education in the communications was an added bonus to wellness promotion in the district.

Evidence of Success

- School breakfast participation has increased in the high school.
- Middle school students and administration would now like to initiate a special breakfast program too.
- The "Camelot Café" has become a positive meeting and gathering place for our entire school community.

Mechanicsburg Area School District — Mechanicsburg Middle School

Contact Information

Contact Person: Karin Marlin
Contact Person's Title: Food Service Director
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Contact Person's Phone Number: (717) 691–3437
Contact Person's FAX Number: (717) 691–3228

Objective(s)

- To decrease the number of beverages offered in our middle school in order to help students make better beverage choices.

Category

- Nutrition Guidelines

Description

- We have decreased beverage offerings to our middle school students and have switched from 8–ounce milk cartons to 8–ounce plastic milk bottles.
- We also introduced vanilla flavored milk which has been very popular. Many "non–milk" drinkers have indicated they like vanilla milk.

Advice

- Do not be intimated by the higher cost of the plastic milk bottles. Students will purchase more milk and you will sell more reimbursable school meals.

Evidence of Success

- From November 2005 to November 2006 milk sales increased by 10 percent.
- School meal participation increased by two percent for the first four months of the 2006 school year.
- Students are choosing more milk which leads to higher reimbursable meal participation.

Mount Carmel Area School District — Mount Carmel Area

Contact Information

Contact Person: Krista Avillion
Contact Person's Title: Food Service Director
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Contact Person's FAX Number: (570) 339–4349

Objective(s)

- To decrease students' fat intake.

Category

- Nutrition Guidelines

Description

- We have decided to cut whole milk from our School Lunch program, both at breakfast and lunch.
- We now only offer 2%, 1% milk (including 1% flavored varieties) and skim milk.
- Although we had some complaints from high school students, the transition has been very positive.
- Informational signs were displayed in our serving lines regarding the amount of saturated fat in whole milk and some expert opinions (by pediatricians) on when whole milk consumption should be replaced with lower–fat milk.
- In our Nutrition Education classes, drinking low–fat and skim milk is stressed.

Advice

- We have found that smaller steps work better for our particular school district.
- The geographical area in which a district is located has an effect on the nutritional habits of students and faculty.

Evidence of Success

- We have seen an increase in the consumption of low–fat and skim milk.

Penn State Cooperative Extension

Contact Information

Contact Person: Lynn James, M.S., R.D., L.D.N.
Contact Person's Title: Extension Educator
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Contact Person's Phone Number: (570) 988–3950
Contact Person's FAX Number: (570) 988–3953

Objective(s)

- To increase students' (third through fifth grade) and their parents' healthy eating habits and physical activity and family communication skills and behaviors.

Category

- Community Involvement

Description

- The Family Fitness Program is a new statewide, Penn State Extension developed, research–based after school program for all children ages eight to twelve
- Children and parents attend concurrent sessions to receive information, skills, and motivational guidance leading to significantly improved food choices, physical activity and family support
  - Upon completion of the training, participants will be able to:
    - ✓ describe new research recommending educating children and parents together for decreasing childhood overweight issues.
    - ✓ identify new school/community partners to help facilitate the Family Fitness Program.
    - ✓ identify new ways to recruit families and utilize new marketing materials to run a successful child over weight prevention program.
    - ✓ utilize the Family Fitness lessons to improve family communication, healthy eating and physical activity behaviors.
    - ✓ increase ability to use Motivational Interviewing skills.
    - ✓ utilize new youth physical activity measurements.
    - ✓ utilize the youth and parent program evaluation tools.

Evidence of Success

- We saw significant improvement in healthy eating behaviors (increased whole grains, fruit, breakfast, willingness to try new fruits and vegetables, less higher fat and sugar foods and drinks), increased minutes of physical activity and ease of physical activity, and less screen time.
- Parents and children showed improved communication and goal setting for healthy eating, increased physical activity, planning and preparing meals together, and increased knowledge of Nutrition Facts labels.
- Compared to control groups we saw significant improvement in selection of whole grains, trying new fruits and vegetables, consuming lower fat foods, setting more healthy eating goals, planning meals together, and increased knowledge of Nutrition Facts labels.
- Preliminary data collected six months after the program was initiated showed that 68% met the goal of maintaining BMI level.

Philadelphia School District

Contact Information

Contact Person: Joan Nachmani
Contact Person's Title: Program Director
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Contact Person's FAX Number: (215) 335–5056

Objective(s)

- To promote student wellness.
- To increase, within a limited budget, the likelihood that all Food Stamp recipients will make healthy food choices consistent with the most recent dietary advice, as reflected in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the *MyPyramid Food Guidance* system.

Category

- Nutrition Education

Description

- The *EAT RIGHT NOW* program is the official Nutrition Education Program of the district.
- Entering its seventh year, this unique program provides nutrition education programs and services to food stamp–eligible adults and children in the Philadelphia public schools.
- It teaches, encourages and supports healthy eating by students and is taught across the curriculum.
- It includes enjoyable, developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant, participatory activities, such as contests, promotions, taste testing, farm visits and school gardens.
- Fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low–fat and fat–free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health–enhancing nutrition practices are promoted.
- The program emphasizes calorie balance between food intake and energy expenditure.
- Links are made with school meal programs, other school foods, nutrition–related community services and Home and School Councils.
- The program includes media literacy with an emphasis on food marketing.
- Teachers and nutrition professionals receive professional development to enhance their skills in teaching nutrition education.
- Classroom teachers are provided resource materials and lesson plans.
- A staff of Nutrition Educators are assigned schools and teach classes in a series or one–time intervention.
- A cable TV show has been developed and aired for students in the classroom. Special program topics addressing sports nutrition, pregnancy and nutrition, and weight maintenance are taught in the middle and high schools.
- Staff conducts "Home and School" meetings, as well as "Parent Workshops."
- Health fairs at schools regularly request nutrition information and our staff personnel to be present at these school events.
- Additional services include school–based farmers' markets, school gardening, summer camp and after-school clubs, newsletters and professional performances of nutrition assembly programs.
- Trainings for teachers, coaches, nurses, and school administration take place on a limited basis to ensure that accurate nutrition information can be relayed to the children.
- Activities include taste testing of new foods, providing written follow–up activities for the children and take–home parent information to carry messages for the family.
- Our program operates from Kindergarten through 12th grade on a daily basis.
- Over 275 schools receive ongoing services in any or all of the above requested programs.

Advice

- By working with the community partnerships and coordinating our efforts in such a large district, we have achieved a high level of programming as well as maximized the level of services we are able to provide to our schools.

Evidence of Success

- Individual schools request *EAT RIGHT NOW* program annually and our educators are invited back for additional services as the program progresses through the school year.
- A comprehensive annual evaluation/report has demonstrated program success with extensive outreach, meeting funding source objectives and providing excellent education practices.
- Teachers' and administrators' testimonials, children writing letters of thanks to our educators, and district support of our program to obtain funding are all evidence of program success.

Tredyffrin/Easttown School District — Valley Forge Middle School

Contact Information

Contact Person: Sheri DeMaris
Contact Person's Title: 5th Grade Guidance Counselor
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Contact Person's FAX Number: (610) 240–1325

Objective(s)

- To teach students how to prepare healthy lunches and snacks.

Category

- Nutrition Education

Description

- Each Monday afternoon the "Healthy Cooking Club" meets in the Family Consumer Science Room.
- Students hear a presentation on healthy lunch preparation and then help prepare healthy lunch and snack items for our students in the Homework OASIS program.
- Students from our high school TV station videotape and interview the club participants.
- On Wednesdays in March, during National Nutrition Month, we offer healthy snacks to the students who rate them based on taste, price, etc.
- The ratings are shared with the Food Service Director for ideas about what to offer in our cafeteria.

Advice

- It is a great way to introduce healthy eating into the school system, start teaching students and expose other students in the district to healthy eating habits.
- Parents are important in supporting the program. They have donated many items.

Evidence of Success

- Students receive a questionnaire following their experience in the club to assess what they learned and whether they are using the information at home when preparing their own lunches.
- The students are going home and teaching their parents about things they are learning.
- Students who bring bag lunches are packing healthier lunches.
- The program is expanding. Ms. DeMaris is working to collaborate with *Whole Foods* to do a PBS show, along with creating a workbook with recipes and plans.

Upper Perkiomen School District School District — Hereford Elementary School and Marlborough Elementary School

Contact Information

Contact Person: Valerie B. Nartowicz, MS, RD
Contact Person's Title: Food Service Director
Email: vnartowi@upsd.org
Contact Person's Phone Number: (215) 541–2445
Contact Person's FAX Number: (215) 679–5906

Objective(s)

- To promote healthier eating by introducing fruits and vegetables to the students in fun ways.

Category

- Nutrition Education

Description

- The foodservice department, with help from teachers and parents in the elementary schools, implemented Dole's "5 A Day, Color your Way" program.
- The first Tuesday of each month is "Color your Way Day." A fruit and vegetable of the featured color is served in the cafeteria.
- Each month different colored fruits and vegetables are promoted. The reason for eating the specific colored fruit and vegetable is addressed.
- Teachers include information about the colored fruits and vegetables in the day's lesson plan.
- Nutrition information about the specific color vegetables and fruits appears on the monthly menu that is sent home with every student.
- As an added experience, the first Monday and Thursday of each month is "Taste–Testing Day."
- The foodservice department, with the help of parent organizations, offers student taste testing experiences during which students are exposed to new healthier foods. Tested items have included green apples, pears, figs, kiwi fruit, butternut squash and beets.

Advice

- All parties involved must be willing to promote the program if it is to work successfully. Students will be willing to try anything if you make it fun.

Evidence of Success

- The amount of fresh fruits and vegetables eaten in the cafeteria has increased due to the "Color your Way" program.
- The taste–testing has helped to increase awareness.

West Chester Area School District — Exton Elementary

Contact Information

Contact Person: Diane Peralta
Contact Person's Title: School Nurse/Chairperson Health Committee
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Contact Person's Phone Number: (484) 266–1400
Contact Person's FAX Number: (484) 266–1499

Objective(s)

- To increase students' consumption of fruits and vegetables and to encourage them to try new fruits and vegetables.

Category

- Nutrition Education

Description

- The Health Committee started a "Star" fruit or vegetable of the week. One week it is a fruit and one week a vegetable.
- A display in the cafeteria describes why the featured item is healthy. If a student tries it, he/she gets a star stamped on his/her hand (washable of course.)
- For February, we are doing "Academy Rewards." The students will receive a ballot to vote for their favorite fruit and vegetable. The winners will be our "Star" choices for the month.
- We will be doing an "Academy Rewards" for the lunches. There will be a red carpet, lights, music and gold stars of past "Star" fruits and vegetables.
- Each year we collaborate with the music department to write a song. Each Monday in October, a first grade class sings the song after announcements. We have the song on a CD for use during our "Family Night" in the Spring.

Advice

- Be sure to ask for and get help. You will need volunteers.
- Be creative. Use what you have. You will be successful if the program is not difficult.
- Our budget is $200 for the year.

Evidence of Success

- There was a huge increase in carrot sales the first week. The first day we ran out of carrots.
- Every child with a stamped hand has tried the "Star" fruit or vegetable of the week. There are a lot of stamped hands in the school.

Upper Moreland School District — Upper Moreland Elementary Center

Contact Information

Contact Person: Cynthia Dawso Van Druff
Contact Person's Title: Director–Food Service
Email: CAV@UMTSD.ORG
Contact Person's Phone Number: (215) 830–1522
Contact Person's FAX Number: (215) 659–3421

Objective(s)

- To create workable and healthy à la carte options to reflect our guidelines while nourishing and retaining our customers.

Category

- Nutrition Guidelines

Description

- Initially, the foodservice department established guidance for snacks by grade level as follows: Children in first and second grades were permitted only one à la carte snack; children in grades three through five could purchase up to two snacks. Parents could further restrict purchases.
- Working with principals we created workable and healthy changes for snacks and introduced "Cubby's Healthy Picks" representing color coded à la carte items.
- This became a foundation in our Wellness Policy for the elementary school meal program. A three pronged approach was used: (1) revised offerings, (2) reducing frequency of purchases, and (3) promoting the benefits of whole grains, fresh fruit, milk, and vegetables in serving areas.
- The "Cubby's Healthy Picks" program works as follows: Each item is coded either green or yellow. A cute bear has a color cutout in the belly and announces the item.

"Green Zone" snacks include 8–ounce plain water, Go–Gurt, fresh fruit, juice, and soft pretzels. The reformulated "Yellow Zone" snacks are reduced fat/sugar ice cream, baked bag snacks, reduced fat snack cakes. "Yellow Zone" snacks are restricted to one snack only.

- Cards are used on the serving line to reinforce healthy behaviors and practices (e.g., "Want Strong Bones? Drink Milk," or "Get Growing with Grains.")
- We promoted our concepts and changes to children and teaching staff through signage, live announcements, and the school handbook.

Advice

- Be sure to include parents from all grade levels in your plan.
- Even though you may believe you thoroughly promoted your plan, some people may not be aware of it. (We learned this when parents complained about rules about not buying three cookies.) Advertise your program ***often*** and in different ways.
- We learned that working together we can facilitate behavior changes in young school–aged children.

Evidence of Success

- Meals counts have increased district–wide. A la carte sales have decreased slightly.
- We have sold over 4,000 bottles of water and 2,000 Go–Gurts. Sales of cookies have been cut in half. Fresh fruit purchases have tripled over last year (reported in January 2007.)

Neshannock Township School District — Neshannock Memorial Elementary School

Contact Information

Contact Person: Patricia Kardambikis, Ph.D.
Contact Person's Title: School Nurse/ Health Educator
Email: pkardambikis@aol.com
Contact Person's Phone Number: (724) 652–8709

Objective(s)

- To help students identify parts of a food label and compare nutritional values of a variety of foods.
- To teach students to identify the food groups on *MyPyramid* and select foods that belong to each food group.
- To encourage students to identify healthier foods from each group, especially in relation to snacks.

Category

- Nutrition Education

Description

- Neshannock Memorial fourth grade teachers, Dr. Kardambikis, school nurse and Janice Alberico, Penn State Cooperative Extension Director, coordinate to educate our fourth grade students to better understand how to read a food label.
- After receiving classroom instruction on *MyPyramid* and the components of a food label, students then travel to Giant Eagle Grocery Store in an extended health lesson involving finding food labels that match clues they are given on "Scavenger Hunt" sheets.
- The students had to acquire a base knowledge of the type of food that they will look for before searching for the food labels.
- With this activity, students are able to visualize and compare food labels of their favorite foods and to see for themselves if they are making healthy food choices.

Advice

- Hands–on lessons improve learning.
- Our local Giant Eagle is very supportive.
- Partnering with a Penn State Cooperative Extension Educator is invaluable. Her expertise and knowledge is what makes this a great program.
- Share the resources from the *MyPyramid for Kids*, Team Nutrition, and USDA Food Nutrition Service with teachers and health staff.

Evidence of Success

- The parents who assist with the grocery store visits are very positive.
- When the students are reviewing the results of their "Scavenger Hunt," they are very excited to share with the class.

City Charter High School

Contact Information

Contact Person: Patrice Johnson, M.Ed.
Contact Person's Title: Assistant Principal
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Contact Person's FAX Number: (412) 690–2316

Objective(s)

- To teach, encourage, and support healthy lifestyles for our students.

Category

- Other School–Based Activities

Description

- We provide programs which focus on nutrition, healthy living, and wellness.
- Our nutrition series runs during the school day with the exception of "Nutrition Day" which is an evening collaborative event with a culinary school.
- Events include "Apple Crunch Day," "Got Milk" campaign, and "Go for the Greens."
- The wellness series consists of grade level classroom presentations by professionals in the respective fields — 9th grade: *oral health*; 10th grade: *physical health*; 11th grade: *mental health*; 12th grade girls: *breast and cervical cancer*; 12th grade boys: *testicular and prostate cancer*.
- The "Healthy Living" series is comprised of afterschool seminars on topics ranging from self esteem to the hazards of smoking.
- Programs focus on topics such as self–esteem, cancer research, domestic violence, drug and alcohol awareness, avoiding tobacco, heart health, and violence.
- The snacks served at all functions are healthy.

Advice

- The "Health and Wellness" committee should have student representatives from each grade level.
- Student input is paramount. They support what they believe in and rally their friends.
- Have a school newsletter and if possible, a page on the school's website.
- Offer a variety of programs.
- Involve the staff in overall planning and in attending events.
- Have a public relations (poster) campaign in school.
- Collaborate with local providers. This also makes students aware of community resources.

Evidence of Success

- Our programs are supported by the student body.
- Student groups are mindful of having healthy snacks at their events and bake sales.
- Students are having conversations with peers about the topics

Easton Area School District

Contact Information

Contact Person: Christine Mattes
Contact Person's Title: Certified School Nurse/Department of Pupil Services
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Contact Person's Phone Number: (610) 250–2400
Contact Person's FAX Number: (610) 829–5808

Objective(s)

- To disseminate health and wellness information via the internet to students, staff, homes, media, and the community.

Category

- Other School–Based Activities

Description

- A "Wellness Link" is found on the district home page at http://www.eastonsd.org/wellness/Home.html.
- This site provides consistent messages regarding the wellness policy and initiatives taking place in the district and community.
- The front page highlights current "Health and Wellness" activities happening throughout the nine schools.
- Many components are featured, including pages on students, staff, and community partners, physical activity, healthy choices, wellness, a health tip of the week, and upcoming events.

Advice

- Make the website your own. Build the design based on your schools' needs.
- Personalize with staff profiles, student photos, and stories about accomplishments.
- Show the positive changes happening with students, staff, and the community.

Evidence of Success

- The wellness link has heightened the awareness of wellness.
- Change is evident in many of our district personnel. Reports by staff members indicate the healthy tips of the week are being read.
- School activities and classroom parties have a new twist toward healthy snacks, creative fundraising, and exercise.
- The wellness link is being viewed by many neighboring school districts interested in getting the attention of their communities.

Salisbury–Elk Lick School District

Contact Information

Contact Person: Becky Stutzman
Contact Person's Title: Health/PE Teacher
Email: stutzmanr@selsd.com
Contact Person's Phone Number: (814) 662–2733
Contact Person's FAX Number: (814) 662–2544

Objective(s)

- To encourage students to become more physically active and to make healthy food choices.

Category

- Other

Description

- A daily 30–minute physical activity period for elementary students was scheduled and implemented by the teaching staff utilizing the *SPARK* curriculum.
- Six teachers were sent to a *SPARK* training. Other staff trained during two in–service days.
- Elementary students participate in a classroom walk challenge and track daily steps.
- We walk our school mascot "Ernie the Elk" around the United States visiting points of interest. A bulletin board tracks his progress. Morning announcements share facts about the states he visits.
- The cafeteria program encouraged elementary students to participate in a "Fruit & Vegetable Challenge." Recipes were introdued by the cafeteria manager in health classes.
- Students were encouraged to take and consume fruits and vegetables offered during lunch.
- Students who met monthly goals were treated to a fruit or vegetable pizza party and the class who had the greatest participation was treated to an end–of–the–year field trip.
- Physical Education students are enrolled in a weekly elementary health class.
- An afterschool program for students in Kindergarten through eighth grade is offered at a *YMCA Camp* through a *PEP Grant*. Afterschool sessions focus on movement and nutrition.
- At the high school level, additional Physical Education credit was added to graduation requirements.
- Students are required to independently keep an exercise and nutrition log and write a summary, emphasizing calories in versus calories out.
- A circuit–training class is offered three periods a day to all senior high students.
- A mid–morning break was instituted in the junior/senior high school. During the break, students can have an opportunity to fuel up on healthy vending items.
- This year, as a result of a grant, students are offered free fresh fruit and vegetable choices.
- Our vending machine choices were changed to offer healthier alternatives.

Advice

- Do not discount a program because you do not have the funds. Grants are available to fund fitness and nutrition programs.

Evidence of Success

- The drop in referrals to the clinic, improved behavior, and improved academic performance are evidence of success.
- Also the students at the junior/senior high school are consuming the fruits and vegetables during their mid–morning break.

South Eastern School District — Fawn Area Elementary

Contact Information

Contact Person: Beth A. Riale
Contact Person's Title: Registered Nurse
Email: rialeb@sesd.k12.pa.us
Contact Person's Phone Number: (717) 382–4220
Contact Person's FAX Number: (717) 382–1326

Objective(s)

- To implement district–wide "Student Wellness Policy" health and wellness education for students, parents and staff.
- To introduce a free voluntary afterschool playgroup (*SPARK* — www.sparkpe.org/.)
- To introduce the *Take 10!* (www.take10.net/) program into the elementary classrooms (K–4th.)
- To provide monthly healthy snack opportunities for students to learn how to assess and prepare the snack and sample new foods.

Category

- Other

Description

- Students experience multiple opportunities throughout the day to participate in physical activities.
- Parents are participating with their children in wellness education.
- Students are being introduced to healthy treats (snacks.)

Advice

- Encourage members of the parent/teacher association to participate as much as possible.
- When introducing new programs to teaching staff, provide information toward the end of the year so they know what will be in place for the following year. Everyone resists change at first even if it is positive.

Evidence of Success

- We have started logging minutes of physical activity for students to be able to evaluate the achievement of goals.
- The teachers who participate love the programs.
- I have a waiting list for the afterschool *SPARK* program.
- I have received a lot of positive feedback from parents whose children used to go home and sit in front of the television.

Abington School District — Rydal Elementary School

Contact Information

Contact Person: Dr. Laura Pladus
Contact Person's Title: Principal
Email: LauraPladus@abington.k12.pa.us
Contact Person's Phone Number: (215) 884–1308
Contact Person's FAX Number: (215) 881–2578

Objective(s)

- To encourage students to choose healthy foods.
- To help students recognize that healthy foods can be a fun part of any party or celebration.

Category

- Parent Involvement

Description

- The "Student Wellness Policy" in Abington School District places an emphasis on changing the food offerings in all environments at school.
- One of these environments is the classroom, including school parties and celebrations.
- The nutritional guidelines adopted by the school district include guidelines for classroom parties.
- Specifically, the policy states that parties will offer minimal amount of foods (maximum two to three items) that contain added sugar as the first ingredient and also the parties should include fresh fruits and vegetables, water, fruit juice or milk.
- Dr. Pladus hosted a meeting of the "Parent Council" at which time the "Wellness Policy" was discussed.
- The parents were highly supportive of the changes in policy for classroom parties.
- Parties have now been transformed at Rydal Elementary School.
- One parent created a beautiful edible cornucopia for a Thanksgiving celebration that was replete with fruits and vegetables of the season.

Advice

- The key to the successful implementation of this practice is the involvement of parents and staff.
- Additionally, it is important to have an administrator who is committed and fully believes it is crucial to make these changes.
- Some parents and staff are resistant to veer from traditional practices. It is helpful to have data to support your decisions and to have the flexibility and creativity to make these changes fun and inviting.

Evidence of Success

- We have received positive feedback from staff, students, and parents.
- We have observed students enjoying the healthy alternatives during classroom celebrations.

Cumberland Valley School District — Middlesex Elementary School

Contact Information

Contact Person: Wendy Oberdorf
Contact Person's Title: Registered Nurse
Email: woberdorf@cvschools.org
Contact Person's Phone Number: (717) 697–2362
Contact Person's FAX Number: (717) 249–0251

Objective(s)

- To give several options and ideas for healthy snacks, providing choices rather than demanding adherence to our new wellness policy guidelines.

Category

- Parent Involvement

Description

- A booklet with several healthy recipes, snack suggestions, and educational activities was handed out to the room parents at a PTO–sponsored, room parent tea before room parties began for the school year.
- This booklet also gave the nurse a chance to remind room parents to be on the alert for possible classmates' food allergies.

Advice

- This was done two years before a wellness policy was in place in our school district. With just a slight update, the booklet fit in nicely with the policy guidelines.
- Being proactive is the key.
- Remain active, stay informed on the latest concern from a governmental perspective for public school systems.
- Get started early with implementation practices.

Evidence of Success

- Many parents and PTO executives have reported using the activities and suggestions during room parties.
- They have said it was helpful to have some ideas to help guide decisions for snacks for the parties instead of just saying to decrease the "'junk food."
- I did not research if the snack suggestions were utilized in the home, but my hope is some of them were used in that setting as well.

Greater Nanticoke Area School District — Greater Nanticoke Area Elementary Center

Contact Information

Contact Person: Cynthia Evans or Dr. Mariellen Scott
Contact Person's Title: PTA President (Evans); Principal (Dr. Scott)
Email: packageone@aol.com
Contact Person's Phone Number: (570) 735–1320
Contact Person's FAX Number: (570) 733–1006

Objective(s)

- To educate our Kindergarten through fifth grade students about proper nutrition while involving the family.
- To help our children make wise choices today so that those choices will become habit and will lead to a healthy lifestyle.

Category

- Parent Involvement

Description

- We sponsor monthly events that families may attend.
- We held a "Family Walk Day." Everyone walked a mile and came into the gym for games and snacks.
- We hosted a "Healthy Hoedown." We learned square dancing and country line dancing.
- We are trying to emphasize that physical activity can be fun.
- With the country theme in mind, we served food from around the United States: *New England clam chowder*, *Maryland crab soup*, *Louisiana gumbo*, *North Carolina loose meat sandwiches*, etc.
- A chili cook–off and an apple pie bake were held. Local politicians and business owners judged the event.
- Family roller skating and bowling nights were held.
- The parents help track the number of laps students walk during recess so we can track our progress in our walk around the world.

Advice

- Make sure that you have a good parent support base for any of these activities.
- It helps to keep the students excited about the activities.

Evidence of Success

- One parent said, "It is really great to involve whole families so that we can all learn, have fun and get healthier together."
- A community member said, "I'm proud to help sponsor and make such a program succeed."

Holy Family School

Contact Information

Contact Person: Sister Margaret Ann Quinn
Contact Person's Title: Principal
Email: P035HolyFamily@hbgdiocese.org
Contact Person's Phone Number: (717) 232–2551
Contact Person's FAX Number: (717) 232–9661

Objective(s)

- To comply with the "Local Wellness Policy" by eliminating all sweets supplied by parents for special occasions.

Category

- Parent Involvement

Description

- Each month a table is set up in the cafeteria for students celebrating a birthday during the month.
- Birthday decorations, special plates, napkins, and cups decorate the celebration table.
- Students receive goody bags with pencils, erasers, and other little trinkets.
- Everyone sings *Happy Birthday* to those celebrating a birthday.

Evidence of Success

- Students feel honored and recognized by their fellow classmates.
- Parents are encouraged to attend the celebration.
- Overall, there is a reduction in the flow of parents, who unintentionally disrupt the classroom day to bring in party treats.

Neshannock Township School District — Neshannock Memorial Elementary School

Contact Information

Contact Person: Patricia Kardambikis, Ph.D.
Contact Person's Title: School Nurse/Health Educator
Email: pkardambikis@aol.com
Contact Person's Phone Number: (724) 652–8709

Objective(s)

- To be an advocate for family members to increase their physical activity.
- To help students and parents understand the importance of balancing food intake and physical activity.
- To assist students in identifying reasons for adopting healthy eating and physical activity patterns.

Category

- Parent Involvement

Description

- Neshannock Memorial held a "*Wellness Expo*: Life is Good."
- The Neshannock Memorial Health Services, Physical Education Department and the Neshannock Memorial's PTO will hold the third annual "Wellness Expo." The committee connects with local health agencies, restaurants, and fitness organizations.
- With a theme of *Life is Good* the evening events are divided into various areas of the school involving exercise, safety, nutrition and health information.
- The parents and students progress through the hallways, two gyms, the cafeteria, auditorium and classrooms, learning about healthy eating, hearing from speakers on self–improvement techniques, and enjoying free samples and prizes.
- It is the goal at Neshanock Memorial that children be physically fit and achieve the knowledge to be responsible for their own good health behaviors.
- Health behaviors include making healthy food choices and avoiding the hazards of smoking.

Advice

- Incorporate activities, health related information, interactive art projects and entertainment that would appeal to school children and parents.
- Stress that this is a family/adult event and it was not acceptable to just drop off children.
- Encourage families to wear comfortable clothing and tennis shoes.
- Recruit high school students to serve as informational guides.
- Collaborate with your foodservice department. Ours provides a display of new food selections being served to meet the district's "Wellness Policy."

Evidence of Success

- Last year more than 500 people participated in our program.

Pine Grove Area School District — Pine Grove Area Middle School

Contact Information

Contact Person: Joanne Brindle
Contact Person's Title: Administrative Assistant
Email: jbrindle@pgasd.com
Contact Person's Phone Number: (570) 345–2731
Contact Person's FAX Number: (570) 345–6473

Objective(s)

- To get the parents involved with the students in practicing healthy eating and portion control.

Category

- Parent Involvement

Description

- We held a healthy Thanksgiving Dinner where the students cooked the food and served it to their parents.
- We had turkey, vegetables prepared using spray butter, carrots with artificially–sweetened brown sugar, wheat rolls, low–fat pumpkin cookies, low–fat stuffing, salad, water and lemonade made with artificial sweetener.
- We also showed the parents a "Project PA" video (*Preventing Childhood Overweight and Obesity: Parents Can Make a Difference*) on childhood obesity before the meal.
- The children served the parents with a consideration of portion control.

Evidence of Success

- Everyone had a great time and I believe both parents and students got the message that Thanksgiving dinner should not be an "all–you–can–eat" buffet.

The Food Trust

Contact Information

Contact Person: Bonnie Hallam
Contact Person's Title: Senior Associate
Email: bhallam@thefoodtrust.org
Contact Person's Phone Number: (215) 568–0830
Contact Person's FAX Number: (215) 568–0882

Objective(s)

- To increase the consumption of nutritious foods by teaching children and parents to make healthier food choices.
- To increase student and parent awareness of locally grown food, and enlist the support of parents to help increase children's consumption of local produce.

Category

- Parent Involvement

Description

- The "Kindergarten Initiative" uses experiential learning to affect change in how children and parents shop, think about food, and eat.
- In schools, teachers integrate nutrition concepts into their standard curricula so that children are exposed to nutrition education on a regular basis.
- Using trips and taste testing, children's senses are engaged to reinforce the concept of healthy eating and the importance of local agriculture.
- Parents are included in many of the activities in which children participate.
- Special events for parents, as well as regular communications, keep parents informed and help parents reinforce the messages that children are receiving in school.

Advice

- Any successful program must be easy for teachers to incorporate into the topics they are required to teach during the kindergarten year.
- Aligning nutrition topics with the kindergarten standards is very important.
- Food in the classroom must be delivered in a way that is easy for teachers to serve.
- Ensuring that multiple facets of a program reinforce each other is very important.
- Using food, trips, classroom education and parent events to reinforce the same theme is a very effective way of affecting change.

Evidence of Success

- "The Food Trust" conducted a thorough evaluation of the "Kindergarten Initiative" in 2005–2006 where schools participating in the initiative were compared to control schools.
- At the beginning of the year, 47% of students in control schools and 51% in experimental schools knew the recommended number of daily servings for fruits and vegetables.
- At the end of the year, 47% of students in the control school answered correctly, whereas 84% in the experimental schools could correctly answer the question about the number of recommended servings of fruits and vegetables.
- At the end of the year, children in experimental schools had significantly increased the number of fruits and vegetables consumed per day, whereas students in control schools had only increased fruit and vegetable consumption slightly.
- More than 80% of parents surveyed (2004–2005) believed that their level of awareness around providing healthier snack options for their children increased as a result of the program.

Abington Heights School District — Abington Heights Middle School

Contact Information

Contact Person: Ilene White
Contact Person's Title: School Counselor
Email: whitei@ahsd.org
Contact Person's Phone Number: (570) 585–4338
Contact Person's FAX Number: (570) 586–6361

Objective(s)

- To increase students' opportunities for physical activity.
- To offer a variety of physical activities.
- To help students start the school day with an active, alert attitude.

Category

- Physical Activity/Physical Education

Description

- As part of our "Local Wellness Policy," we applied for and received a "PANA" (Pennsylvania Advocates for Nutrition and Activity) grant to establish a before–school activity program.
- The program runs from 7:30–7:55 daily with adult supervision in one of the gyms.
- We advertised the program and received close to 100 permission slips for students in grades five through eight.
- The program has expanded from a walking program to include use of jump ropes, stretchy bands, and *Dance-Dance Revolution*.
- We hope to add weights in the near future.
- We are encouraging our high school honor society students to become involved as role models and helpers to meet their required community service hours.

Advice

- Consider space issues. This may need to be addressed as participation grows.
- Start out with one activity, such as walking to music, before adding other options. Then consider gradually adding options such as jump ropes, weights, etc.

Evidence of Success

- More permission slips arrive daily even though the program started a month ago.
- Students are using this time to socialize with others while they exercise.
- The teachers report that the students involved in the program arrive in homeroom afterwards, energized and alert.

Albert Gallatin Area School District — D. Fred Swaney Elementary

Contact Information

Contact Person: Mrs. Carol Ryan
Contact Person's Title: Principal
Email: cryan@albertgallatin.k12.pa.us
Contact Person's Phone Number: (724) 564–9761
Contact Person's FAX Number: (724) 564–4232

Objective(s)

- To provide an activity that occurs consistently on a daily basis at a designated time.
- To provide a physical activity in which all students and staff can participate.
- To de–emphasize competitiveness and promote lifelong physical fitness.

Category

- Physical Activity/Physical Education

Description

- We are "Walking Our Way to Fitness" at D. Fred Swaney Elementary.
- Our program was initiated as a way to enhance school total wellness.
- In conjunction with our "District Health and Wellness Policy," students, faculty, and staff enjoy an invigorating 10–minute walk around the hallways of the building each morning.
- Upbeat music accompanies every walk and is occasionally coordinated with a theme such as an upcoming holiday or sporting event.

Advice

- Take into account school demographics such as total population, layout, and class schedules.
- Present the idea to your faculty and be open for suggestions.
- Be willing to make adjustments as they will certainly make the program more efficient and successful.
- Approach any new idea with a positive attitude and a lot of enthusiasm. We knew what we wanted to accomplish at our school, we formed a plan, we sought support, and we implemented it the best way we saw fit.

Evidence of Success

- Aside from the noted physical benefits, our walking program has had an immediate impact on the emotional state of our students and staff. After the first several days of walking, our building's overall attitude has become more positive and enthusiastic and everyone looks forward to our 10–minute walk.
- The pressures of a rigorous school day can become overwhelming for everyone. Our walking program has become a built–in form of stress relief.
- The social aspects of our walking program abound.
- We have invited parents and public officials including school board members, and health and wellness coordinators to participate in the walk. Several parents walk with us daily.
- In April 2006, our program was highlighted by the local media when Pennsylvania Secretary of Health, Dr. Calvin Johnson, visited our school. He and his staff members actually participated in our 10–minute walking program.

Blue Mountain School District — Blue Mountain School District

Contact Information

Contact Person: Barbara Freiwald
Contact Person's Title: School Nurse
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Contact Person's Phone Number: (570) 385–5580
Contact Person's FAX Number: (570) 356–7206

Objective(s)

- To promote fitness and a healthy lifestyle through the practice of walking.

Category

- Physical Activity/Physical Education

Description

- On "Walking Wednesdays" students walk laps to promote organized exercise.
- Students are given a token to mark accomplishments after they reach personal goals.
- A school goal of "walking" to Disney World has been set. Progress toward this goal is displayed on the school bulletin board.
- An end–of–year DJ dance party with healthy snacks is planned.

Advice

- Make physical activity optional.
- Engage faculty in activity and more students will become involved.

Evidence of Success

- Positive feedback from students, parents, and faculty.
- This is an optional program but has 100% school–wide participation.

Central Dauphin School District — Central Dauphin East High School

Contact Information

Contact Person: Donna Roth
Contact Person's Title: Health and Physical Education Department Chair
Email: droth@cdschools.org
Contact Person's Phone Number: (717) 541–1662
Contact Person's FAX Number: (717) 545–7139

Objective(s)

- To increase students' fitness level and decrease "Body Mass Index" through physical activity and nutrition education.

Category

- Physical Activity/Physical Education

Description

- Physical education class was developed to meet students' individualized needs.
- The class meets the physical education requirements of the school.
- Students exercise in their target heart rate zone.
- Heart rate is monitored with heart rate watches, handheld pulse batons, or cardio–fitness machines equipped with heart rate monitors.
- By monitoring their own heart rate, students can individualize their workout to meet their goal fitness level.
- Activities are designed to improve fitness level and include weight lifting, running, walking, circuit training, aerobics, yoga, and cardio–fitness machines.

Advice

- By presenting the program as a positive opportunity, students are excited to enroll.
- When initiating any new program, it is crucial to have the support of the building administrator.

Evidence of Success

- Students no longer dread coming to physical education class. Attitude towards physical education is reflected by increased participation, resulting in improvements in grades.
- A comparison of 12–minute run scores from first and fourth marking periods show improvements in physical fitness.
- Improved fitness is also shown as students must increase the intensity of the workout in order to reach their target heart rate.
- More than 65 students enrolled in the class the first year it was offered.

Diocese of Greensburg — Holy Trinity School

Contact Information

Contact Person: Barbara Sabo
Contact Person's Title: Principal
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Contact Person's Phone Number: (724) 238–6430
Contact Person's FAX Number: (724) 238–6688

Objective(s)

- To increase our students' physical activity levels.

Category

- Physical Activity/Physical Education

Description

- Because our regular school day could only accommodate limited time for physical activity we decided to go outside the school day to provide more opportunities.
- To date, we have started a track club, a jump–rope team, a bowling league, an ultimate frisbee team, and three volleyball teams. Each team includes 15–25 students. Teams are added based on student interest and parent/teacher availability.
- Future plans include trying to get more parents involved, initiating family bike rides on Saturdays, and starting an aerobics class for parents a half hour before they pick up their children from school.

Advice

- Student interest for these types of clubs/teams is high. Participation is growing rapidly. The most difficult part is developing new programs for our students.

Evidence of Success

- We only have 125 students in our school. When 15–25 students participate in an activity, we feel it is successful.
- Students are suggesting ideas for additional clubs.

Easter Seals Western Pennsylvania Private School

Contact Information

Contact Person: Merrill Christy
Contact Person's Title: RN, BCABA
Email: mchristy@westernpa.easterseals.com
Contact Person's Phone Number: (412) 281–7244
Contact Person's FAX Number: (412) 281–9333

Objective(s)

- To encourage children to walk 100 miles (or do "100 miles" of aerobic activity) and lift 10,000 pounds in a 10–month school year or 12–month calendar year.

Category

- Physical Activity/Physical Education

Description

- Students spend 20–30 minutes a day, three to five days a week engaged in flexibility, strength training, and endurance exercises.
- Students begin by stretching. Then they lift one–pound weights (water bottles) 50 times with each hand.
- Students who are unable to walk or walk with a walker receive credit for 20 minutes of continuous activity.
- Progress is monitored on a wall chart showing miles walked and pounds lifted per child.
- Certificates are awarded every 25 miles walked and every 1000 pounds lifted.

Advice

- Make it fun. Children decorated their own water bottle weights by adding food coloring, glitter, and sequins to the water.

Evidence of Success

- We have seen an increase in physical activity in sedentary children.
- A physical therapist commented on clients' improved endurance and greater degree of strength for therapy.
- Children are healthier and walks are completed more quickly. At the start of the program, it took 30 minutes to walk the half–mile course. It is now completed in 20–25 minutes.

Greater Nanticoke Area School District — Greater Nanticoke Area Elementary Center

Contact Information

Contact Person: Cynthia Evans or Dr. Mariellen Scott
Contact Person's Title: PTA President (Evans); Principal (Dr. Scott)
Email: packageone@aol.com
Contact Person's Phone Number: (570) 735–1320
Contact Person's FAX Number: (570) 733–1006

Objective(s)

- To help our children make wise choices today so that those choices will become habit and lead to a healthy lifestyle.

Category

- Physical Activity/Physical Education

Description

- Students are walking on a voluntary basis during recess. Their progress around the world is mapped. For every lap walked, a student is issued a ticket. Tickets are collected at the end of recess.
- Parent volunteers help hand out tickets and keep track of the number of laps the students walk.
- To keep the walking fun and maintain student interest, each day a different prize or activity is used.
- We created a mascot for the program. Her name is "Miglia" which is Italian for miles.
- Each month the classroom from the Kindergarten–second grade and third–fifth grade divisions receive a party for walking the farthest distance.
- During their parties we play various games in order to teach them facts or encourage them to try different foods.
- Two party themes the students like the most are "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Veggie" and "Name that Fruit."
- In "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Veggie" 15 uncommon vegetables are selected, such are turnips, okra, parsnips, etc. Children receive incentives for sampling the vegetables.
- In "Name that Fruit" we send a list of clues and information on uncommon fruits, such as carabola, quince, pomegranetes, etc. to the class in the morning. The teacher reviews the facts with the class. We have ready–to–eat samples of each of the fruits. Students are divided into groups of four and each group tries to guess what each fruit is based on the clues they heard in the morning. Winning group members receive a prize.

Advice

- The help of parent volunteers is very important in keeping track of the number of laps the students walk during recess. It is important to have a good parent support base and a lot of help.
- Keep the activities interesting by adding daily incentives.

Evidence of Success

- Some students are losing weight.
- To date they have walked 8,960 miles.
- One student loves walking at recess because he doesn't have to sit alone anymore and the other students are not making fun of him at recess. He really feels a part of something.
- The students are really proud that they have already reached Mongolia in their walk around the world.
- The students have also been more disciplined during recess. There have been fewer playground behavior problems because the students are walking and not arguing with each other.
- Some students have begun to bring healthier snacks with them to school.
- Some students have commented that they enjoy trying new foods and actually like them.
- Overall the students are excited about the activities. Children and their families are learning and trying new, healthier foods and exercising together.

Holy Family School

Contact Information

Contact Person: Sister Margaret Ann Quinn
Contact Person's Title: Principal
Email: P035HolyFamily@hbgdiocese.org
Contact Person's Phone Number: (717) 232–2551
Contact Person's FAX Number: (717) 232–9661

Objective(s)

- To help reduce childhood obesity by keeping students involved in a variety of activities.

Category

- Physical Activity/Physical Education

Description

- In addition to regular gym class, different forms of exercise were added for all children.
- A ballroom dancing class is one example. This not only teaches students about the grace and elegance of ballroom dancing but also provides a great form of exercise

Advice

- Be open to a variety of different forms of exercise and activities.

Evidence of Success

- Students are practicing the dances during recess and are excited about attending the class.

Leechburg Area School District —David Leech Elementary School

Contact Information

Contact Person: Dr. Cynthia Portman
Contact Person's Title: Elementary Principal
Email: cportman@leechburg.k12.pa.us
Contact Person's Phone Number: (724) 845–6071
Contact Person's FAX Number: (724) 845–9723

Objective(s)

- To provide students with physical fitness opportunities after the school day and to promote physical fitness at home.

Category

- Physical Activity/Physical Education

Description

- Students are invited to stay after school to participate in "Walking With The Principal."
- Participating children and the principal walk inside the school during inclement weather and outside the school when weather permits.
- Each month, the principal sends home a "Fit For Life" activity log in which students can record activities they participated in that involve physical fitness.
- Students can choose from many physical fitness activities and families are encouraged to join in the fun. "Walking With The Principal" can be recorded on this form.
- Students who do 60 minutes of physical activity at least five days a week receive a "Fit For Life" Award at one of the David Leech Elementary Honor Assemblies that are held at the end of each nine week period.

Advice

- Involving the families in this activity is an important part of the process.
- All students receive activity logs each month in the hopes that more students will participate.
- The activity logs include activities that require no equipment so that all children have an opportunity to participate.

Evidence of Success

- Students are excited to earn the "Fit For Life" Awards.
- When the program began in October, only ten students participated. Once these students received their awards on the stage during the Honor Assembly, this number increased dramatically. In November and December, 35 students received awards for participation.

Lycoming County School Districts — (Loyalsock Township, Williamsport Area, Muncy, Montgomery Area and Montoursville Area)

Contact Information

Contact Person: Beth Hufnagel
Contact Person's Title: Food Service Director
Email: bhufnagel@ltsd.k12.pa.us
Contact Person's Phone Number: (570) 323–3211
Contact Person's FAX Number: (570) 323–5303

Objective(s)

- To encourage students and their parents/families to begin and continue healthy behaviors related to physical activity and fitness.

Category

- Physical Activity/Physical Education

Description

- Five Lycoming County school districts committed their participation in the "Lycoming Fitness Challenge."
- The challenge was created by The Lycoming Wellness Council, a committee of the Youth Development Task Force of the Lycoming County Health Improvement Coalition, Inc.
- For six weeks, students from five school districts compete to earn points through physical activity.
- The competition pits school districts, school buildings within districts, teachers and youth against their counterparts.
- Any kind of moderate to vigorous activity completed outside the school day counts. This includes activities such as walking, hiking, rollerblading, and frisbee–throwing.
- The Lycoming Fitness Challenge gives students and their school one point for every minute of activity completed. Points are doubled for any activity involving the student and his/her family.
- Adults at home and teachers at school tally the points. Prizes for those individuals and buildings that collect the most points will be awarded by school districts.
- Some overall winners also will be named and receive prizes donated by area businesses.
- This unique approach uses team competition in a friendly, *esprit de corps* way to increase exercise levels among students and extends the benefits to families.

Advice

- Communication through many meetings and emails and a team effort promoted the success of the program kick–off.
- Because the challenge is currently in progress, the Lycoming Wellness Council will complete an overview/evaluation of this wellness effort at the conclusion of the challenge.

Evidence of Success

- Two weeks into The Lycoming Fitness Challenge, good participation by students and faculty had been reported.
- Student enthusiasm and motivation remain high.
- County outcomes will be reported in number of minutes of exercise completed in this six–week period with a class screened with pre– and post–competition measures to determine classroom impact.

Mohawk Area School District — Mohawk Area Junior & Senior High

Contact Information

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Objective(s)

- To enable elementary students to identify and engage in physical activities that promote physical fitness and health.
- To encourage senior high students to analyze factors that affect physical activity preferences and design physical activities that encourage lifetime fitness.

Category

- Physical Activity/Physical Education

Description

- Our wellness policy mandates that the daily announcements will include an exercise of the week which all students in grades K–6 may participate in for up to three minutes at least once a week.
- Seniors and juniors create, desgin, and implement a three–minute exercise video for the elementary students to perform after the morning announcements.
- The videos are designed by students taking "Advanced Health and Wellness" and "Music–Media" classes.
- This project is a cross–curriculum assignment covering several state standards.
- The students create the script for the video, perform the video, and then students taking "Music–Media" class edit and lay out the video.
- The exercises range from jumping jacks to dance steps. The focus of the videos is on improving endurance and strength.
- The senior high students use proper terminology when referring to the muscles and the health–related components of physical fitness.
- The elementary students perform the exercises first thing in the morning and perform the same video for the whole week before moving on to a new exercise. This gives the students time to practice and master the exercise they have learned.

Advice

- Good communication within your school district is critical.
- Use students that respect and honor physical fitness to perform in the videos.
- Be patient at the start of this practice until the students get a feel for what is required.

Evidence of Success

- The teachers at the elementary school report that all the students are active during the videos and are enjoying them.
- Parents have contacted the Physical Education teachers and administrators praising the program and stating that their children are coming home and teaching them the exercises.
- This program was featured in the local newspaper.

Neshannock Township School District — Neshannock Memorial Elementary School

Contact Information

Contact Person: Patricia Kardambikis, Ph.D.
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Contact Person's FAX Number: (724) 657–9721

Objective(s)

- To provide an alternate physical activity for the students during any part of the school day.
- To exemplify that activity can occur in other areas than in the gym and playground.
- To provide a physical fitness activity that is fun and also has a beat to it.

Category

- Physical Activity/Physical Education

Description

- Students participated in the production of our own Neshannock Memorial Walk Video *Let's Walk!* funded by Walk Productions Inc. of New Castle, PA. Leslie Sansone provided her entire video crew for the production.
- It was an exciting learning experience to observe the video production process.
- This video has been placed in every classroom and in the gyms.
- Now the students are able to "walk" at any time of the school day.
- This is just one more tool to assist in increasing the physical activity levels of our students.
- Our fifth grade choir along with our 6th grade jazz band provided music as members of our student health council "walked" alongside the elementary students.
- This video was an entire school project and it will assist in the health and academic welfare of the whole child.

Advice

- This video was a great tool in the ability to integrate physical activity in the classroom.
- Our students feel ownership of the video. When "walking" with the video they are actually watching themselves, which motivates them to exercise.
- Develop your own "walk video" by asking for assistance from high school media classes.
- Movement of any kind can lead to more movement and the fact that the students are moving together also makes it fun.
- As educators, we do not want our students to view exercise as something that is hard to do.
- The music on the video is inspiring. Just watching the video makes you want to move.

Evidence of Success

- Playground supervisors appreciate having access to this video during lunch recess, for bad weather days. Students can get a 15 to 20 minute workout at their desks.
- The video is also great during testing or a stressful time in the classroom. Having the video handy and permitting the kids to get out of their seats and move around helps to regenerate their minds and helps them sit for the academic portion of the day.
- The parents have also been positive and students are *walking at home*.
- The best evidence of success is the fact the students want to *walk with their own video*.

Neshannock Township School District — Neshannock Memorial Elementary School

Contact Information

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Objective(s)

- To identify ways to increase and monitor physical activity.
- To explain that incorporation of moderate or vigorous daily physical activity into one's life does not require a structured exercise plan or special exercise equipment.

Category

- Physical Activity/Physical Education

Description

- The fourth graders at Neshannock Memorial are wearing pedometers and "Walking Across America."
- The entire fourth grade walks together every Tuesday and Thursday, calculates their steps, and places mile markers on a United States map located in the 4th grade hallway.
- The students' destination is Sacramento, California. A surprise will be waiting when they arrive in Disney.
- Their "trip" began in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. They "walked" to Charleston, West Virginia; Topeka, Kansas; and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. They will "walk" their final and longest journey of 1337 miles to Sacramento, California.
- A themed day has been planned for the end of their journey — a "Disney" certificate and a walk to our high school auditorium to view a Disney movie.
- We are encouraging the students to take the extra steps now and hopefully begin an awareness of increasing their activity level for a healthier life.
- The staff is participating in a "10,000 Step–Plus Pedometer Challenge."

Advice

- By placing a time frame on the program and limiting the days of actually calculating the steps teachers are not overwhelmed with the program.
- Pedometers have been supplied by a variety of grants: Gateway Health Plan, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center and Wal–Mart.
- We number the pedometers and each student uses his/her own pedometer for the entire 6 weeks. We reuse the pedometers from year to year.
- January is a great time to begin the programs when the weather is not the best for outside activities.
- Inform parents.
- Begin with a lesson about the pedometers.

Evidence of Success

- The students and staff ask to repeat the program.
- This is a two–part program that health services plans for the fourth grade.
- Last year was the first year for the "Disney" theme and both teachers and students enjoyed the journey.

Newport School District — Newport Elementary School

Contact Information

Contact Person: Katie Pitzer or Stew Kirk
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Objective(s)

- To increase the physical activity level of 4th through 6th graders.

Category

- Physical Activity/Physical Education

Description

- "No One Left on Their Behind" is a program that was developed by Stew Kirk, Physical Education teacher. The program is assisted by Katie Pitzer, Physical Education teacher and other faculty.
- Students were arriving at school early and sitting in the halls and socializing.
- The program emphasizes that instead of sitting, students could walk/jog and socialize for more physical activity.
- Students in grades four through six that arrive early to school participate in the program. It begins by 7:30 a.m. and ends around 7:50 a.m.
- The students go out to the track to walk/jog instead of sitting in the halls waiting for school to start at 8:00 a.m.
- We hand out popsicle sticks for every lap and record the number of laps students complete.
- We plan to continue "No One Left on their Behind" as long as the wind chill does not drop below 28 degrees.

Advice

- Take into consideration small time slots of time, such as 15 or 20 minutes in the morning, to get in a little more activity than students would normally get.

Evidence of Success

- Students automatically go outside on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings. They don't need to be coaxed.
- We usually have 80–100 participants.
- Many students that used to only do two or three laps are now able and motivated to complete four, five, six or more laps.
- At least 50 students have already completed five miles since we started the program in the beginning of September 2006.
- Currently, approximately 10 students have logged 15 miles in the mornings.
- At least one student has already logged over 100 laps (approximately six laps on our track equal one mile).
- Many students are excited about this and complete more than one mile every morning.
- "No One Left on their Behind" was recognized on a local TV station.

Pine–Richland School District — Hance Elementary School

Contact Information

Contact Person: Terry Lea Wentz, CRNP
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Objective(s)

- Students will be educated about the benefit of physical activity.
- Students will develop mathematical skills in converting their steps into miles and calculating monthly totals.
- Students will develop positive social interactions by working in groups toward goals.
- Students will increase their physical activity during recess thereby improving health and fitness.

Category

- Physical Activity/Physical Education

Description

- The "Mileage Club" is a walking incentive program for students and teachers to promote the formation of healthy habits.
- Students in grades four and five are issued pedometers and walk during recess on a school grounds course.
- For each mile completed, students have their "Mile Marker" cards stamped or punched.
- Students are responsible for logging and converting their steps into miles.
- Awards (toe tokens, pencils, neckchains, and t–shirts) are provided as miles are accumulated.

Advice

- The program has been funded by the "Pine–Richland Opportunities Fund" with a $1,000 grant. We have found that these funds are being depleted quickly due to overwhelming participation. Our advice would be to ensure that a significant level of funding is available to continue the program for future years.
- The purchase of pedometers and incentives and making our own t–shirts have been very costly endeavors.

Evidence of Success

- Fifty percent of the students logged over 20 miles in the Fall. Seventy–five percent of students are participating.
- The students are enthusiastic about the program and want to participate.

Quakertown Community School District — Neidig Elementary

Contact Information

Contact Person: Kimberly Rogers
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Objective(s)

- To increase students' fitness and activity levels.

Category

- Physical Activity/Physical Education

Description

- Many students at Neidig Elementary do not have the opportunity to participate in physical activities outside of school.
- For the past three years I have offered jump rope clubs to students before school to allow them to work on skills and improve confidence and fitness level.
- I have parent permission forms, roster sheets, and an outline of how I run the club each year.
- Participation is growing such that I have had to limit my numbers and offer two sessions.

Advice

- Provide students with jump rope poems and sayings, trick cards, website information, and music.

Evidence of Success

- This year, a student who was not very physically active in class nor skillful in jumping rope wanted to participate in the program. The child now participates fully in every PE class and has learned to jump rope well and even run into a turning rope.
- I have made more student connections and have helped my students feel good about being active and working hard.
- I have had great attendance at these weekly jump rope mornings and students look forward to exercising together.
- Parents have enjoyed the fact that the program is exciting to their children and free of charge to them.
- Students love the fact that they can be together in a non–competitive environment.

Towanda Area School District

Contact Information

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Objective(s)

- To make school facilities more available to the public and the community.

Category

- Physical Activity/Physical Education

Description

- The school is open to the public every day that school is in session for indoor walking from 6AM to 7AM and from 4PM to 6PM.
- The Physical Education teacher and a secretary typed two routes which may be used by walkers.
- Twelve to fifteen people participated the first week that this was initiated (early January 2007). The daily number now runs between 20–24 (reported in late January 2007).
- Most of the walkers are senior citizens who live in the district and pay taxes but no longer have students enrolled in school.
- Community members can exercise in the school and see the work of students outside of each classroom as they pass through the halls.
- Additionally, the district sponsored a wellness day in–service program.
- The elementary school nurse wrote a grant to have a nationally renowned walking expert serve as keynote speaker and group facilitator. His presentation was so powerful that it has kicked off a number of additional activities.
- Every day the teachers in the Grade 3–6 building accompany their children on a walk or run around the track which borders the school building. Many teachers from the primary building do the same.
- A contest is underway for teams of four employees to record the number of daily steps and compete to get the greatest number of steps per team.
- The results are posted weekly on a webpage by the school nurse.
- The Business Manager teaches a kickboxing class on Tuesdays. A healthy lifestyles group meets on Wednesdays.

Advice

- Sponsor a kick–off event to catch attention and enthusiasm.

Evidence of Success

- Teachers, students, support staff and senior citizens are incorporating physical activity into their daily routines voluntarily.
- Teachers report great success and students have the ability to focus better on academic tasks following the walk.

Erie Diocese — Saint Boniface Erie

Contact Information

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Objective(s)

- To encourage students to decipher healthy choices in a stimulating atmosphere.
- To create an ongoing atmosphere of healthy well–being and education through action based initiatives.

Category

- Student Involvement

Description

- "Pumping Hearts" and "Snacking Smarts" is a 40 minute program offered every Thursday afternoon for the entire school and staff.
- The cafeteria is turned into the "Snacking Smarts Zone" where the middle school students have budgeted, researched, promoted, and organized how to best represent their snack and its benefits.
- "Snacking Smarts" presenters share information about the featured snack and then participants become involved.
- They may participate in discussion, complete activities, or challenge each other to recall information.
- They also make connections to the nutrients being discussed or how the snack connects to the larger idea of healthy living.
- Each participant is able to sample the snack being highlighted.
- The gym becomes the center of "Pumping Hearts" where another group of middle school students have planned, promoted, and direct the physical activity for the week.
- Participants learn from the directors about the particular body part the activity is targeting and the importance of that body part.
- The particpants are then instructed in how to perform the activity.
- The goal is constant movement. Even when an activity stops for some participants, such as in musical chairs, students are invited to participate in an alternate movement activity such as jump rope.
- Teachers participate in the activities, which serve as a community builders.

Advice

- Give students the chance to be leaders and creators of the program.
- Make sure you have a time frame of 30–40 minutes to implement the program and have someone in charge of organizing the structure.
- Include the implementation of "Pumping Hearts" and "Snacking Smarts" as part of the Health Assessment.
- Investigate grant opportunities for the program to cover the cost of snacks.

Evidence of Success

- Based on student, staff, and parent feedback, "Pumping Hearts" is a success.
- Our students have elevated their level of physical activity by 80 minutes each month.
- Students have learned how to implement information learned at "Pumping Hearts" and "Snacking Smarts" into their everyday lives.

Jim Thorpe School District — L. B. Morris Elementary School

Contact Information

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Objective(s)

- To incorporate a community service event and promote physical activity for faculty and staff.
- To make students and faculty aware of opportunities to increase physical activity using everyday items.

Category

- Student Involvement

Description

- Faculty and students bring to school two or more canned goods to be used initially as a lightweight aerobic tool in their Physical Education class.
- All canned goods are collected and transported to the local food pantry by the students and faculty for the upcoming holiday season (Thanksgiving and Easter).
- The "U Can Two Can" is a biannual event created by our Physical Education Department.

Advice

- Keep it simple and get the community involved.
- To increase the number of contributions, the class that collects the most canned goods wins an additional Physical Education class for that marking period.

Evidence of Success

- This project has been featured through newspaper reports and on a local television station.
- We have received "thank you" notes from the local food pantry.
- Since 2001, our school has collected more than 30,000 canned goods for the Jim Thorpe Food Pantry.

Loyalsock Township School District — Loyalsock Township High School/Loyalsock Township Middle School

Contact Information

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Objective(s)

- To involve students in our menu planning and selection process.

Category

- Student Involvement

Description

- A "SNAC" — Student Nutrition Advisory Committee was created.
- Middle and high school students who expressed interest in participating in nutrition and wellness endeavors in their school food service program were invited to attend.
- The committee meets once monthly to discuss items such as menu planning and nutrition promotions during school lunch periods in the cafeteria, "The Lancer Court."
- The committee will be involved in taste–testing potential new menu offerings and spearheading nutrition promotions such as the "*Got Milk* Mustache" promotion and "*100% Fad–Free* National Nutrition Month" promotion in March.

Advice

- Being open to student feedback and participation in a food service operation will be a win–win situation for any school community.
- Student participation will be a positive experience if they are allowed to be a part of planning processes. This also prevents the committee meetings from becoming negative gripe sessions.

Evidence of Success

- Students have expressed positive feedback about promotions knowing that their peers have been involved in the planning wellness events in their cafeteria.
- It has been positive to team high school and middle school age students together.
- Student committee members are gradually taking ownership of the "SNAC" meeting process. One student has taken the role of recorder.
- We look forward to the growth of this committee and the student–lead nutrition education efforts that will follow

Pine Grove Area School District — Pine Grove Area Middle School

Contact Information

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Objective(s)

- To encourage students to eat healthier and understand portion control.

Category

- Student Involvement

Description

- Every Tuesday in our afterschool program we spend an hour on nutrition.
- We follow up each lesson with a healthy snack which the students prepare. For example, for one lesson, we talked about eating whole wheat bread versus white. Most students had never tried whole wheat bread and were uninterested in trying it. One of our rules is you must try everything. Now, the majority of students are choosing whole wheat products instead of white when given the choice.
- The afterschool program students conducted presentations for the school board. After the presentation the students served the board members a pita pocket snack using whole wheat pitas. They also shared with the board the rule about trying everything. The presentation and the healthy snack was a huge success with our board.
- Another successful snack was a sundae made with vanilla yogurt (instead of ice cream), cheerios, nuts and a cherry on top. When we first mentioned this to the students, they said "Yuck!", but after tasting it they realized it was tasty.

Advice

- Always follow your lesson with a hands–on activity. The kids love it and will remember it.

Evidence of Success

- If asked, our students will tell you: (1) choose whole wheat over white; (2) carefully portion your helpings; (3) choose fruit over candy; (4) read nutrition labels to know what you are actually eating and; (4) get up and move.

Wayne Highlands School District — Wayne Highlands Middle School

Contact Information

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Objective(s)

- To help middle school Family and Consumer Sciences students realize the importance of good nutrition by placing them in the role of teacher for younger children, other students, their families, and older members of our community.
- To conduct community outreach activities.

Category

- Student Involvement

Description

- The nutrition program at Wayne Highlands is project–based. After learning about nutrition, our Family and Consumer Sciences students plan and implement nutrition fairs for more than 300 Kindergarten and preschool children in our community. Each school year for the past seven years, we have offered eight nutrition fairs for the young children in our community.
- Our outreach also includes four visits for *Head Start* children. The middle school students plan healthy snacks for the children during their visit to our school.
- Our Family and Consumer Sciences students also host a "Generation Celebration" for older citizens in our community. When the older people visit, we share information regarding the newest information and issues in nutrition.
- By presenting the information in this way, students realize the importance of applying information we learn in the classroom. It is not just about completing a paper or passing a test; good nutrition is about working with people and finding ways to plan your health.

Advice

- Take an active community outreach approach to nutrition. This form of teaching involves the students as community teachers.
- Collaborate with your foodservice department.

Evidence of Success

- Kindergarten and preschool educators continue to request that we come back to offer this program each year.
- Frequently, parents will send notes or stop me at the supermarket to comment on how the young children are asking for fresh fruits.
- In conjunction with our nutrition education messages, we have worked closely with our foodservice department to impact change in cafeteria choices. We are involved in a healthy nutrition change process in our school. When I first began delivering the message, students did not like the change. Today, they are active agents of change in our community.

Dr. Gertrude A. Barber National Institute — Elizabeth Lee Black School

Contact Information

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Objective(s)

- To design and implement a plan to provide a developmentally appropriate, comprehensive nutrition education program for all students of the school.

Category

- Teacher/Staff Involvement

Description

- This school serves children with a diverse range of abilities. Some students suffer from mild/moderate developmental delays. Others have autism, sensory impairments, significant cognitive disabilities, and severe multiple disabilities. Through the creativity of the Wellness Committee an "Action Plan" was developed containing numerous components to improve the overall wellness environment of the school to accommodate a wide range of abilities.
- We offer special school–wide fitness rallies to develop a sense of excitement.
- "Color Me Healthy" — provides curriculum resources to implement an adaptable, research–based physical activity and fitness program for our special population.
- "Courageous Pacers" — provides information to parents, staff and students on components of the "Wellness Plan" encouraging participation, understanding, and carry–over to the home.
- Each school–wide fitness event provides information and experiences to improve activity and movement, an opportunity to experience healthy food options as well as new tastes/textures of foods, and activities to reinforce fitness while encouraging development across the domains.
- We have established a template for each event so that the planning for each subsequent event or activity requires less staff time.

Advice

- Realize there are always minutes to be found in every student's day and in each teacher's plan. Identify where you have free or flex time and offer or lead an activity.
- Stay goal–focused.
- Bursts of movement, even during lessons, are good for everyone and students love the novelty.
- Let the students see that the teacher and staff are moving as well.
- Change types of activities during breaks or transitions in the instructional schedule.

Evidence of Success

- Teachers are writing fitness breaks into their daily schedules; students are asking to walk or run in the gym or spend additional time in the fitness room.
- Teachers are submitting data of the increased movement and activity for all the students.
- Teachers and students enthusiastically participate in and help support the fitness activities.
- Being able to meet the initiatives of the "Wellness Plan," while simultaneously meeting existing requirements of the "IEPs (Individualized Education Programs)" and the curriculum standards was key to our success.
- We quickly received teacher buy–in and support.

Neshannock Township School District — Neshannock Memorial Elementary School

Contact Information

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Objective(s)

- Provide opportunities for physical activity within the workplace involving muscular strength, endurance, flexibility, and body composition.
- Provide an opportunity for in–house medical assessments and health and nutrition education.
- Provide structured physical activity that involves maintaining or increasing cardiorespiratory fitness.

Category

- Teacher/Staff Involvement

Description

- The Neshannock Township School District has three specific programs for promoting personal staff health and wellness.
  - A health fair is provided to the staff through our local hospital in October. Flu shots, cholesterol screening, and take home colon–rectal tests are available. The staff receives health information and counseling on nutrition and hazards of smoking. The Neshannock teacher's association and administration provides a healthy breakfast.
  - "10,000 Step-Plus Challenge" was initiated for all staff and administration. Teams choose a name and some teams plan team walking time.
  - A faculty "Wellness Room" opened featuring aerobics classes, videos, weights and endurance bands. A treadmill and a stationary recumbent bike were donated. The room also has a scale and health education materials on nutrition, cardiovascular health, the hazards of smoking and pandemic flu. This room is open when school is open to accomodate the staff's schedule.

Advice

- Check with your insurance carrier for funds for staff wellness.
- Work with your local hospital to find out if there are free community services they can offer.
- Research grant opportunities to provide funds for activities.
- Offer prizes and incentives for participation in staff wellness events.

Evidence of Success

- Positive comments have been received from staff and 15 staff members who participated in aerobic class.

Penn Manor School District — Penn Manor High Schoool

Contact Information

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Objective(s)

- To begin a district–wide wellness initiative with all staff in an effort to reduce health care costs and employee absenteeism.

Category

- Teacher/Staff Involvement

Description

- We formed a Wellness Committee with representatives from each of the 10 buildings in our district and from each group of our support staff. We met over the summer, giving Act 48 credits, and continued to meet during the school year for one hour per month.
- We surveyed our entire staff to determine needs and interests, and then began a "10,000 Step Program" where each particpant was given a pedometer and an electronic spreadsheet that calculated steps per week.
- At three checkpoints through the school year from the initial January start, we gave small incentives for both increasing steps for those who were not at 10,000 and maintaining steps for those who were. We distributed conversion charts for other fitness activities.
- At the various checkpoints, participants earned prizes including t–shirts and tickets toward a final drawing for donated prizes such as amusement park tickets, a beach bag, baseball game tickets, and a mall gift certificate.
- This school year, we have incorporated an educational element in the form of "stall talk" on the backs of bathroom doors, various speakers on nutrition, and several district–wide exercise classes for people at all fitness levels.
- Both last school year and this school year as part of the district wellness initiative we hosted a benefits fair for all staff featuring more than 40 community vendors representing financial, physical, and intellectual wellness, as well as several groups that did BMI, blood pressure, and cholesterol screenings at no cost for employees.

Advice

- Start with a very simple program and involve all district personnel.
- We looked for a program that anyone at any level of fitness could do safely and easily, with minimal expense.

Evidence of Success

- We surveyed the staff at the conclusion of last year's program and found that people wanted to continue.
- Morale improved and approximately a third of the district's staff continues to participate in our wellness initiatives.
- The school board approved the addition of a Wellness Coordinator, which is a paid position, and the funding of speakers and incentives.

Spring Grove Area School District — Paradise Elementary

Contact Information

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Objective(s)

- To increase physical activity among staff and students.
- To provide opportunities for our students to engage in age–appropriate physical activities during the school day.

Category

- Teacher/Staff Involvement

Description

- At the start of the school year, we introduced a walking club program to the staff. For every 30 minutes of physical activity, staff earned a sneaker (token).
- All forms of activity are counted, not just walking.
- A month later, the students got in on the action. Students were told that for every mile they walked, they could also earn a sneaker, *and* they could take a sneaker from any teacher they choose!
- The students loved being able to ask the teachers for one of their tokens.
- The program runs at lunch recess, and teachers have the option to choose additional times to walk with their classes as well.
- The number of laps per mile was measured on a blacktop area outside, and around the perimeter of the gym on rainy days.
- The designated student leader for the group was responsible for keeping track of the number of laps walked.
- Popsicle sticks work well for keeping track of laps. The students pick up a stick each time they pass the start point.
- Students each have a mileage card to keep track of their laps and miles.
- We plan to run the program indefinitely, as the students are really enjoying it.
- As an added incentive for those students who reach the 25–mile mark, our district athletic director has approved one free admission to a home sporting event.

Advice

- I ran a similar program before, where students walk to different destinations, and track their progress toward a certain point. I found it easiest to keep it simple, but if you want to tie it into a history or geography lesson, it could be done that way.

Evidence of Success

- The large majority of our staff and students are participating in this program.
- It is voluntary, so students choose which days they want to walk.

Glossary

Several acronyms are used throughout this manual. Below is a key to the most commonly used acronyms.

BMI — Body Mass Index
IEP — Individualized Education Program
PEP — Physical Education Program
SPARK — Sports, Play and Active Recreation for Kids!

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