



REPORT
BRIEF FOR
STUDENTS



The Wellness Impact:

Enhancing Academic Success through Healthy School Environments



The Wellness Impact is a report that explains why school wellness is more important than ever to the future of students like you and the future of our nation. It stresses the value of better nutrition and increased physical activity in making sure that your school environment *improves your performance*. This brief provides highlights of the report and some action ideas that you can take for your school.

For a copy of the complete report, visit www.GENYOUthFoundation.org.

The Report's Main Points

IT'S ALL ABOUT SCHOOLS. Students like you spend about 2,000 hours each year at school, where teachers, your peers and the overall school environment can make it easier (and harder) to make healthy eating and physical activity choices. Schools can and should be healthy places and students like you can help. Why is it so important? Because when you are healthy, you perform better.

THE PROOF IS IN THE BRAIN. New research into how students' brains are affected by nutrition and physical activity is strengthening the learning connection, which is the idea that improved nutrition and physical activity directly affect learning.

EVERYBODY PAYS THE PRICE. The costs of ignoring healthy schools take many forms. Costs to kids may include inability to concentrate, lower academic achievement, early onset of chronic diseases like diabetes and even reduced career prospects. Costs to schools may include absenteeism and lower test scores. Costs to society may include rising healthcare expenses and an unprepared workforce. Yet creating healthy school environments is an opportunity to reduce all these costs.

HOW IS YOUR SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICY? School wellness policies are required by law; however, some schools and districts are doing better than others at putting them in place. Now is a great time to find out about your school's wellness policy — first to be certain you have one and then to find out how you can help put it into practice!

TACKLING HURDLES. Challenges to school wellness include lack of time, money and leadership. Yet in spite of these barriers, having a healthy school is a realistic vision — one that students can support!

YOUR VOICE AND ACTIONS MATTER!

Many of you aren't getting all of the nutrients or the amount of physical activity you need, which limits your ability to learn and achieve in school. Schools can help by creating environments that *make the healthy choice the easy choice* for students like you and your peers.

Does your school provide kid-appealing, low-fat and fat-free milk and dairy foods, fruits, vegetables and whole grains in all places where food is available on campus? Are you getting classroom-based or recess-based physical activity? Are there before- and after-school physical activity options? Regular nutrition and physical education classes?

If not, talk to your parents, teachers, counselor or principal. Like you, they know that **healthy students are better students.**

SCHOOL BREAKFAST: SMALL STEP, BIG IMPACT

Does your school provide breakfast? **It should.** School breakfast is an easy step to improving school and student wellness. Whether served in the cafeteria, in the classroom or grab 'n' go style, students who eat school breakfast...

- * Are better able to learn
- * Achieve higher test scores
- * Are less likely to be absent from school
- * Behave better in school

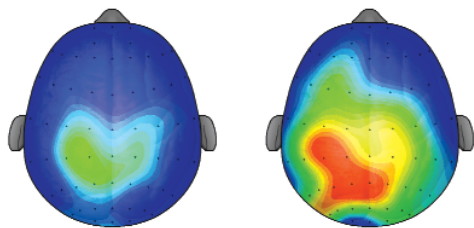
Source: Food Research and Action Center, www.frac.org.

AMAZING IMAGES

Research shows that learning is affected by both the quality of foods students like you eat and by physical activity. Brain-imaging, a tool in the field of neuroscience, is helping us understand these connections better than ever before. The images here represent the work of Dr. Charles Hillman of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, who is focusing on the relationship between physical activity and students' attention, memory and academic performance.

Cognitive Effects of Exercise in Preadolescent Children

Average composite of 20 students' brains taking the same test after sitting quietly or taking a 20-minute walk:



After 20 minutes of Sitting Quietly

After 20 minutes of Walking

Reprinted with permission of Dr. C. H. Hillman.

With the help of neuroimaging, we're learning that:

- * Physical fitness may benefit cognition and brain health as well as academic performance.
- * Early physical activity experiences may shape the brain and its functions.

Physical activity may positively impact your academic performance, *whether it comes during PE class, recess, in the classroom or before/after school.*

Kids need options. It's true of eating and it's also true of gym class. We have to find the fun in something and do what we like to do.

— Julianna, Middle School Student, New Jersey
Julianna is one of the thousands of students who serve as Fuel Up to Play 60 Student Ambassadors in their schools.

What Students Can Do

LEAD BY EXAMPLE. Be a good role model for other students at your school. Eat well and move more.

ENCOURAGE. Urge your friends and classmates to try unfamiliar, healthful foods.

ASK. Ask your teacher or principal about your school's wellness policy. Ask what you can do to help make sure it's working!

PITCH IN. Help your school organize walkathons or family food-and-fitness fairs, improve playground facilities or sponsor wellness-themed fundraisers. Check out the Fuel Up to Play 60 Playbook (<http://school.fueluptoplay60.com/playbook/>) for lots of great ideas!

JOIN AND LEAD. Be willing to take part in a school health advisory council or committee. Share your ideas and time to make your school/district a healthier place.

START A MOVEMENT. There's strength in numbers. Spread your enthusiasm for improving your school's nutrition and physical activity practices with other students and with your parents, too.



**Eat healthy.
Get active.
Make a
difference.**

Developed by the NFL and National Dairy Council, **Fuel Up to Play 60** is helping to make healthy eating and physical activity a bigger part of the day at nearly 73,000 schools across the country. Fuel Up to Play 60 presents an opportunity for you to help make healthy changes that last at your school. You can help your classmates have more opportunities to choose tasty, healthy foods at school and to move more every day. When you get involved, here's what can happen for you and your school. You'll:

- * become a leader
- * perform your best at school
- * win valuable rewards and prizes
- * lead and participate in fun activities
- * help earn much-needed funds for your school

Interested in taking it further? **The Fuel Up to Play 60 Student Ambassador Program** is your chance to stand up for your classmates by making your school and community healthy places to live and learn!

Learn more at FuelUpToPlay60.com.

About GENYOUth Foundation

Founded through an unprecedented public-private partnership with the National Dairy Council (NDC) and the National Football League (NFL) and committed to child health and wellness, GENYOUth brings leaders in health, education, government and business together in a movement to reverse childhood obesity rates. The Foundation officially launched on February 4, 2011, at Super Bowl XLV with the signing of a historic six-way Memorandum of Understanding with U.S. Departments of Agriculture, Education and Health & Human Services. GENYOUth empowers students to improve nutrition and physical activity by taking small steps to accelerate a lifetime of healthy changes. When youth are given a voice, change can happen. For more information, visit www.GENYOUthFoundation.org.

About National Dairy Council

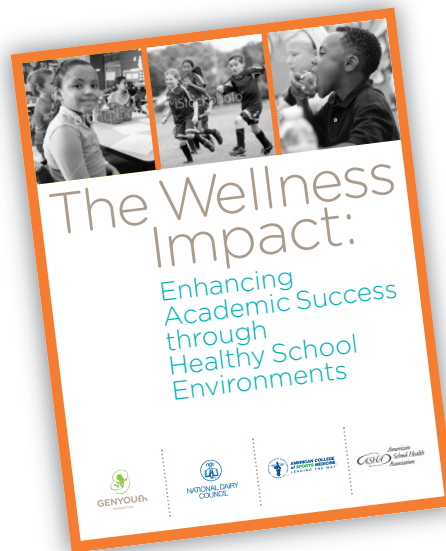
Established in 1915, National Dairy Council® (NDC), the nonprofit organization funded by the national dairy checkoff program, is committed to nutrition education and research-based communications. NDC provides science-based nutrition information to, and in collaboration with, a variety of stakeholders committed to fostering a healthier nation, including health professionals, educators, school nutrition directors, academia, industry, consumers and media. For more information, visit www.NationalDairyCouncil.org.

About the American College of Sports Medicine

The American College of Sports Medicine is the largest sports medicine and exercise science organization in the world. More than 45,000 international, national and regional members and certified professionals are dedicated to advancing and integrating scientific research to provide educational and practical applications of exercise science and sports medicine (acsm.org).

About the American School Health Association

The American School Health Association is the leading membership organization for school health professionals. It is concerned with all health factors that are necessary for students to be ready to learn, including optimum nutrition, physical fitness, emotional well-being and a safe and clean environment. The Association focuses its efforts on professional development, outreach and advocacy for educators and health providers (ashaweb.org).



For a copy of the complete report – including references and other supporting materials – visit www.GENYOUthFoundation.org.



This report was produced with generous funding support from the Midwest Dairy Council.

Copyright © 2013