

# How to Create and Implement a Local Wellness Policy

WYOMING  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

## ◆ Homework

There are no standard procedures for developing a school wellness policy; the process will vary from one district to another. Find out who needs to be involved or kept informed in your district/agency, who needs to review and approve drafts, and what a typical timeline for review and approval might be. If you are not familiar with your district's/agency's procedures, find out from the school district superintendent's office. The process by which you develop your district's/agency's policy can have a significant impact on your school, community and the effectiveness of implementation. So, take your time and plan carefully.

## ◆ Identify a Policy Development Team

A policy team can consist of:

- ▶ Parents;
- ▶ Students;
- ▶ Food Service Staff;
- ▶ School Board Members;
- ▶ School Administrators and
- ▶ Community members

It is important to collaborate with any existing efforts underway in the school or community. If your school district is already working on student wellness issues and has an existing infrastructure, such as a school health council, a coordinated school health program, or a Physical Education Program these people are well-positioned to assist in the development of the policy.

## ◆ Assess the District's Needs

Before making plans to develop policies, you should assess the current situation and the nutrition and physical activity needs of your students.

## ◆ Draft a Policy

Based on your needs assessment, draft your initial policy statements. They must address nutrition education, physical activity, other school-based activities that promote student wellness, nutrition guidelines for all foods available on each campus, and a plan for measuring implementation, as required by the SP 42-2011 Memo located at:

[http://edu.wyoming.gov/Programs/nutrition/State\\_Guidance.aspx](http://edu.wyoming.gov/Programs/nutrition/State_Guidance.aspx)

Section 204 of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-296) added Section 9A to the Richard B. Russell national School Lunch Act (42 USC 1758b), *Local School Wellness Policy Implementation*. The provision set forth in Section 204 expand upon the previous local wellness policy requirement from the

Child Nutrition and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Reauthorization Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-265). The Wyoming Department of Education, Child Nutrition Programs reviewer will be looking for the following information. Be sure these items are included in your policy.

- ☑ The involvement of students, parents, school food authority, school board members, and the public in the development of the plan;
- ☑ Goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness;
- ☑ Nutrition guidelines for all foods available on each school campus during the school day that promote student health and reduce childhood obesity;
- ☑ A plan for measuring implementation of the policy;
- ☑ Designation of one or more persons charged with the operational responsibility; The plan includes PE teachers, school health professional, and school administrators in the development, implementation, periodic review and update of the policy;
- ☑ The Wellness policy includes a plan for nutrition promotion; and
- ☑ Informs and updates the public (including parents, students, and community) about the content and implementation of the policy.

#### ◆ **Build Awareness and Support**

It is important to obtain support from schools and your community in order for the policy to be smoothly adopted and widely implemented. Student involvement is also an important component of building awareness and support. Enlist local media to spread awareness of the district's needs and community leaders to speak out in favor of the proposed solutions. Invite winning Healthier US School Challenge students and Food Service Directors from your state to present information. Be prepared for challenges that may arise and ensure all spokespeople for the policy are providing a consistent message. When dealing with the education community, it is helpful to identify the potential benefits the policy can have on student learning and academic achievement.

#### ◆ **Adopt the Policy**

In most, if not all school districts/agencies, the district 'school board' or governing body, must approve the wellness policy before it can be implemented. A public hearing or presentation might be necessary. The district superintendent's office or the agency's CEO can describe the usual process and advise you on how matters are brought before the board. Team members will have a better understanding of board procedures if they have attended board meetings prior to presenting the policy proposal.

Prepare a persuasive and concise case in support of the policy and provide supportive background information. It is wise to invite and involve policy supporters (such as parents, school nurses, and other community members) to attend the board meeting to voice their support and/or make a presentation on behalf of the proposed policy.

### ◆ **Implement the Policy**

Implementation requires good planning and management skills, the necessary resources, consistent oversight, and widespread buy-in by school staff and the local community. Leadership, commitment, communication and support are the keys to your success.

Implementation can occur all at once or may be phased-in over time. Your team is in the best position to determine which approach is likely to be most effective in your district.

### ◆ **Maintain, Measure and Evaluate the Effort**

A sustained effort by each district is necessary to assure that new policies are faithfully implemented. Periodically assess how well the policy is being managed and enforced.

Reinforce the policy goals with school staff if necessary. Be prepared to update or amend the policy as the process moves on. The school district or individual schools should celebrate policy success milestones (and the district team can do the same!). Evaluation and feedback are very important in maintaining a local wellness policy. You need to document any financial impact to the school foodservice program, school stores, or vending machine revenues