

Montana School Wellness in Action 2017

A STEP BY STEP GUIDE—SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICY—IMPLEMENTATION



Montana School Wellness in Action!
A Step-By-Step Guide to
School Wellness Policy Implementation

Office of Public Instruction, School Nutrition Programs, Montana Team Nutrition,
Montana State University
2017

This guide, also available electronically on the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) [School Nutrition Programs](#) and [Montana Team Nutrition](#) (MTN) which provides information and guidelines to assist schools in updating their school wellness policies to support healthy school environments for students and staff. The OPI and Team Nutrition staff are always ready to assist you in learning more about this topic.

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Overview of School Wellness Policy Process

Since 2004, school wellness policies have been required for every Montana school participating in U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child Nutrition Programs, like the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and National School Lunch Program (NSLP). The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 expanded Local Wellness Policy (LWP) requirements with a greater emphasis on the implementation, evaluation and transparency at the local level.

This 2017 Montana School Wellness in Action Guide includes the most recent USDA guidance to provide your school with a practical, step-by-step approach to putting an effective Local Wellness Policy into action. It includes ideas, strategies and links to resources for improving the health, nutrition, and physical activity environments of your school. It can be used as the procedures to implement any wellness policy, including the Montana School Boards Association model policy (#2501). The Alliance for a Healthier Generation has also provided a sample model policy that is found at this link:

www.montana.edu/teamnutrition/wellness

We want to make Local Wellness Policy implementation as successful as possible while recognizing that some Montana districts have limited resources to devote to this important work.

LWP implementation is an ongoing process designed to create healthier school environments so that Montana students can optimize their health and reach their full academic potential. By using the step-by-step, ongoing approach outlined below, Montana schools can strengthen their existing Local Wellness Policies and create the healthy environments that students need to succeed.



Why Local Wellness Policies Matter to Schools

The following excerpt is from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): A Collaborative Approach to Learning and Health (<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/wsc/index.htm>)

Establishing healthy behaviors during childhood is easier and more effective than trying to change unhealthy behaviors during adulthood. Schools play a critical role in promoting the health and safety of young people and helping them establish lifelong healthy behavior patterns. Research shows a link between the health outcomes of young people and their academic success. To have the most positive impact on the health outcomes of young people, government agencies, community organizations, schools, and other community members must work together through a collaborative and comprehensive approach.

A local school wellness policy is a written document that guides a local educational agency or school district's efforts to create supportive school nutrition and physical activity environments. Each local education agency participating in federal Child Nutrition Programs, including the National School Lunch Program or the School Breakfast Program, is required to develop and implement a wellness policy as established by the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 and enhanced by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. Wellness policies can be integrated into the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC), <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/wsc/index.htm>, model for school health, and can help put into action several provisions of the Every Student Succeeds Act, including Title I and Title IV.



Current Local Wellness Policy (LWP) Requirements for Schools

“Congress recognizes that schools play a critical role in promoting student health, preventing childhood obesity, and combating problems associated with poor nutrition and physical inactivity.” [USDA, FNS, Local School Wellness Policy](#)

In 2010, Congress passed the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act (Sec. 204 of Public Law 111-296). This legislation updated the 2004 Local Wellness Policies (LWP) requirements established in Sec. 204 of Public Law 108-265, adding new provisions related to implementation, evaluation, and publicly reporting on the progress of wellness policies.

After considering more than 57,800 public comments on draft policy regulations, the USDA Food and Nutrition Service published the final rule on July 21, 2016, in the Federal Register. The final rule on LWP strengthens the requirements on public involvement, transparency, implementation, and evaluation. The final rule requires Montana schools to begin developing a revised local school wellness policy during the 2016-2017 school year. The requirements of the final rule must be met by June 30, 2017, and include:

- Permitting parents, students, school nutrition professionals, physical education teachers, school health professionals, school board members, school administrators, and the general public to participate in the development, implementation, review, and update of the local wellness policy.
- Designating as wellness policy leaders one or more school official(s) who have the authority and responsibility to ensure each school complies with the policy.
- Notifying and updating the public (including parents, students, and others in the community) about the content and implementation of the local wellness policy.
- Ensuring the wellness policy includes all of the required components:
 - Specific goals for nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness.
 - Nutrition guidelines for all foods and beverages available or for sale on the school campus during the school day that are consistent with federal regulations and Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.
 - Policies for other foods and beverages available on the school campus during the school day (e.g., in classroom parties, classroom snacks brought by parents, or other foods given as incentives).
 - Policies for food and beverage marketing that allow marketing and advertising of only those foods and beverages that meet the Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.
 - Description of public involvement, public updates, policy leadership, and evaluation plan.
- Evaluating the local wellness policy at least once every three years and publicizing the results on how schools are in compliance with the district policy, the extent to which the local wellness policy compares to model local school wellness policies, and the progress made in attaining the goals of the local wellness policy.

To learn more about the legislation behind the local wellness policy requirement and for a variety of links on local wellness policy topics, go to the USDA Local Wellness Policy page at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/local-school-wellness-policy>

Six Steps to Successful LWP Implementation

Step 1: Activate and Maintain a School Wellness Committee.

An active and engaged School Wellness Committee is essential for an effective Local Wellness Policy (LWP). Some Montana districts have maintained an active School Wellness Committee over the past decade, while others have been only minimally engaged.

The School Wellness Committee is a core group working to ensure that the elements of school wellness are implemented, communicated, and evaluated. As with any effective leadership group, your School Wellness Committee should include:

- Representatives from throughout the school/district.
- Diverse membership with a variety of expertise and skill-sets.
- Members who are enthusiastic, motivated, and willing champions of wellness.

Montana districts have structured School Wellness Committees in a variety of ways. Some are standalone committees, while others are part of a district's Montana Behavioral Institute Team or a community Graduation Matters committee.

Committee Membership

When inviting members to join your School Wellness Committee, look for representatives from each of the following stakeholder groups:

- Students.
- Parents/guardians, including PTA/PTO representatives.
- School food service professionals.
- School administrators.
- Hunger and homelessness coordinator (or food bank staff person).
- Teachers (especially physical education teachers).
- School board members.
- Local health care providers (physician, nurse, dentist, registered dietitian, mental health counselor, special education teacher, etc.).
- Fitness professionals with K-12 expertise.
- Chefs and other culinary experts from the community.
- Farmers, ranchers, MSU Extension staff, and other farm to school experts.

Once you have recruited School Wellness Committee members from the groups above, consider whether you have at least one representative from each school building in your district. Seamless communication throughout the district will be enhanced if each building has representation on the School Wellness Committee.

Select a Committee Chairperson

Once broad representation in all categories is confirmed, convene your committee and select a chairperson. The chairperson will be the individual charged with leading the meetings and will serve as the central communicator for the committee. Often the most appropriate person for this position is a school administrator (principal or assistant superintendent). The chairperson can help the committee determine a *regular meeting schedule*.

Designated Authority and Responsibility

USDA requires that each local educational authority or district “designate one or more school official(s) as wellness policy leaders who have the authority and responsibility to ensure each school complies with the policy.” The School Wellness Committee, in consultation with school administration, can determine where this authority and responsibility should be placed.

Worksheet 1, on page 21 of this guide, is designed to help your school/district complete the step of activating an effective School Wellness Committee.

Sign up Schools to become a Team Nutrition School

As your School Wellness Committee is getting organized, take a few minutes to make certain that all the schools in the district are signed up as Team Nutrition schools. Schools participating in USDA Child Nutrition Programs are invited to sign up as Team Nutrition Schools, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/join-team-become-team-nutrition-school>, and join an important network of schools working toward healthier school nutrition and physical activity environments. Today, almost half of the schools participating in the National School Lunch Program have signed up to be Team Nutrition Schools!

- Check to see if your school(s) are already enrolled and update contact information as necessary at https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn_schools_search.
- Sign up as new school at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/webform/tn-school-enrollment-form>.

Signing up to be a Team Nutrition School is free and easy. All schools participating in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs can sign up. Schools designate a Team Nutrition Leader and have the support of their school nutrition director and school principal. By signing up, schools will:

- Affirm their commitment to helping students make healthier food choices and be more physically active.
- Have the opportunity to collaborate with other Team Nutrition Schools.
- Be the first to hear about new nutrition education and training materials developed under the Team Nutrition initiative.
- Receive special nutrition education and promotion materials.
- Be eligible to apply for a HealthierUS School Challenge: Smarter Lunchrooms, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/hussc/healthierus-school-challenge-smarter-lunchrooms> award, a voluntary certification of excellence with national recognition.
- Have the opportunity for their Team Nutrition activities to be highlighted on social media and in print publications. See our [Team Nutrition Popular Events Idea Booklet](#) for examples.

Step 2: Communicate with Wellness Policy Stakeholders

Creating healthy school environments means change and many Montana districts have made substantial, successful changes to support strong bodies and smart brains. Still, changes can be challenging, particularly when those people affected do not understand the reasons behind the policies. Constant communication is essential for smooth and effective LWP implementation. When the “why” of school wellness is communicated clearly, the positive results usually include:

- Resistance to changes in the school environment is lessened.
- Champions wanting to actively participate in school wellness emerge.
- Common knowledge and language about school wellness engage an entire community.

Things to Consider When Communicating about School Wellness

Consider what some stakeholders may perceive as potential losses when changes are made in the school environment. Some common concerns include:

- Will choices be impacted?
- Will sales and/or revenues be reduced?
- Will beloved traditions be affected?

When communicating about school wellness, always:

- Convey factual information on changes and benefits relative to the nutrition, physical activity and wellbeing of youth.
- Provide stakeholders with relevant and positive information, i.e., why school is the best place for addressing issues of wellness in children and teens.

Strategies for Communicating About School Wellness

USDA requires that the public (including parents, students, and others in the community) be notified and regularly updated about the content and implementation of a Local Wellness Policy. School wellness information—and invitations to provide input on LWP issues—can be provided in all the ways that schools usually inform stakeholders. Here are some easy ways to communicate your school wellness policy to the school and community:

- Issue regular, open invitations for parents and the community to attend any School Wellness Committee meeting.
- Post the minutes of School Wellness Committee meetings on the district website and share through social media channels (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, etc.).
- Post a School Wellness Work Plan and Progress Report on the district website.
- Write a quarterly or biannual School Wellness Article for the school newsletter and/or local newspaper.
- Provide an annual report and presentation to the School Board on the school wellness policy plan and progress made on meeting the goals.
- Utilize the communication tools from the USDA Local School Wellness Policy Outreach Toolkit to reach school staff, parents and community members about the school wellness policy. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/local-school-wellness-policy-outreach-toolkit>. This toolkit includes customizable resources to encourage stakeholders to “*Be a School Wellness Champion*.” There are letters, PowerPoint presentations, and social media posts.

- Share information on what student clubs or groups are doing on wellness topics.

Additional ideas, resources, and sample messages for getting the word out on School Wellness are available on USDA's The School Day Just Got Healthier

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday>. This site is especially useful for both traditional and social media communications. These resources can be found at this link

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/school-day-just-got-healthier-media>.

Montana School Nutrition Program and Montana Team Nutrition Program staff are available to provide training and technical assistance to school districts in communicating the progress of local wellness policy requirements. [Contact OPI School Nutrition Program](#)

Step 3: Assess School Wellness Environment

Your district has probably made several changes that affect school wellness over the past decade. All Montana schools have implemented the new breakfast and lunch meal patterns required by the 2010 Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act. Many have expanded school breakfast programs with Breakfast in the Classroom and increased lunch consumption with Recess Before Lunch. Others have used Smarter Lunchrooms techniques to market healthy food options in the school cafeteria as well as around the campus.

Before establishing a Local Wellness Policy (LWP) or planning goals to meet the new USDA requirements, it is essential that your School Wellness Committee assess the current status of any policies related to nutrition, physical activity, and other related programming within the district. According to USDA's final rule on wellness policies, school districts must conduct an assessment of their wellness policy at a minimum of every three years. This assessment must be used to determine:

- Compliance with the wellness policy.
- How the wellness policy compares to model wellness policies?
- Progress made in attaining the goals of the wellness policy.

Fortunately, there are several assessment tools to help your committee see where change is needed. Start with *Worksheet 2: Assess Your School/District Wellness Policy Requirements* on pages 22 of this guide. This will help your Wellness Committee get a quick overview of where your school is doing well and where problems or concerns may be. This same information is available as an online tool for both school and district level reports. These tools were developed by Montana Team Nutrition to help districts meet the requirements of the USDA's school wellness policy and to help them communicate the district's plan to the public. Utilize this district level or individual school level electronic surveys:

- Montana District Level School Wellness Assessment Survey
<http://www.keysurvey.com/f/704854/10f2/>
- Montana Individual School Level Wellness Assessment Survey
<http://app.keysurvey.com/f/1018198/3e07>

For a more comprehensive assessment of school health, you can use one of the tools listed below. These tools dig deeper into the current status of wellness in your district and, more importantly, help you compare your school to best practices.

- **School Health Index (SHI): Self-Assessment & Planning Guide 2014**

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/shi/index.htm>

The SHI is an online self-assessment and planning tool that schools can use to improve their health and safety policies and programs. It's easy to use and completely confidential. The SHI was developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in partnership with school administrators and staff, school health experts, parents, and national nongovernmental health and education agencies.

- **Alliance for a Healthier Generation: Healthy Schools Program**

<https://schools.healthiergeneration.org>

This website hosts a version of the School Health Index that addresses two health topics: nutrition and physical activity. It also includes resources, access to national experts, and opportunities to earn national awards from the Alliance in addition to the USDA's HealthierUS School Challenge: Smarter Lunchrooms and Let's Move! Active Schools.

- **Fuel Up to Play 60 School Wellness Investigation**

<http://www.montana.edu/teamnutrition/wellness/assess.html>

This paper tool is designed for schools using the Fuel Up to Play 60 program. It may also be used to support any school's wellness efforts.

Step 4: Create a Master List of Wellness Priorities

With the five required components of the School Wellness Policy and assessment *Worksheet 2* from Step 3, your School Wellness Committee can now identify and prioritize specific areas of needed change within your school/district. *Worksheet 3* on pages 25 of this guide can help you create the master wellness plan for your school/district.

As the instructions note, your School Wellness Committee can use this worksheet to rate the items that were listed on *Worksheet 2* as HIGH or LOW priority—or as not applicable to your situation. Once the Wellness Committee has completed this prioritizing activity, your group can select two to three items from your high priority list to set your school wellness goals for the coming year.

Step 5: Select Yearly Wellness Goals

As a School Wellness Committee, examine the wellness priorities you listed in Step 4.

- How many high priority items are there?
- Among the high priority items, your School Wellness Committee should select one to three items to set as goals for the coming school year.

Beyond emerging as a high priority item, criteria for selecting these items might include:

- Are any of the items/changes required by law? If so, this should be addressed sooner than later.

- How much enthusiasm in your School Wellness Committee is there to work on this item/goal?
- Choose at least one goal related to nutrition and one related to physical activity.
- Choose at least one goal that can be achieved relatively easily to boost excitement for school wellness.
- Consider a goal as “phase 1” of a larger goal. For example, collecting baseline data for a more significant school environment change is a realistic goal for the year.

Once you have chosen two to three goals for the year, use the list of best practices below to complete the *Worksheet 4* on page 28 of this guide. This worksheet is designed to help your School Wellness Committee clearly categorize goals, clarify target dates, and designate responsible individual(s) for each.

Utilize this information in setting yearly goals for the five component areas of school wellness. This list is not inclusive but includes best practices to creating a healthy school environment.

Component 1-Nutrition Guidelines

In order to meet the overall goal for the Nutrition Guidelines Component, the district will influence the development of healthful life-long eating behavior in students by making the healthy choice the easy choice. It will achieve this by ensuring that nutrient-rich foods and beverages consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and USDA’s Choose My Plate <https://www.choosemyplate.gov>, are readily accessible on school campus.

The District will follow guidelines for all foods sold on campus during the school day using USDA’s Smart Snacks for School, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/tools-schools-focusing-smart-snacks>. School meals are planned in accordance to the USDA’s nutrition standards for the National School Breakfast, National School Lunch Program, After School Program Snack Program, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program, and the Summer Feeding Program.

Possible yearly goal(s) for Nutrition Guidelines include:

- School nutrition manager will complete a certified food handler course (as documented by ServSafe training).
- School nutrition program staff will regularly receive professional development through attending annual statewide or regional conferences.
- A method (i.e., School Lunch Advisory Council, or Suggestion Box) for obtaining student and parent input and/or feedback on breakfast, lunch menus and snack/beverage offerings.
- School will expand breakfast service with Breakfast in the Classroom, Grab-n-Go, or other cafeteria alternatives. Read about the options and find links at <http://opi.mt.gov/Leadership/Management-Operations/School-Nutrition/School-Meal-Programs/School-Breakfast-Program>
- School will adapt daily schedule to allow for Recess Before Lunch. More information about the benefits and implementation in [Montana Team Nutrition](#)

- The district will work toward meeting the [USDA Smart Snacks in School](#) throughout the school campus during the school day. This includes foods sold in student stores, vending machines, a la carte programs, and fundraisers.
- The district will work toward a farm-to-school program using the resources of Montana Farm to School Program, <http://www.montana.edu/mtfarmtoschool/>, to expand the procurement of local or regionally grown foods in their school meals programs.
- The district will work toward meeting the criteria for USDA HealthierUS School Challenge: Smarter Lunchrooms awards: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/hussc/healthierus-school-challenge-smarter-lunchrooms>.
- The district will promote non-food student rewards and/or, if foods or beverages are used, they are consistent with the USDA's Choose My Plate guidelines. Food will not be used as a reward or incentive in the classroom; staff will not withhold mealtime as a punishment method for students. More information at https://www.healthiergeneration.org/take_action/schools/snacks_and_beverages/non-food_rewards/
- The district will promote nutrient rich foods and beverages at classroom celebrations and/or promote non-food activities. More information at https://www.healthiergeneration.org/take_action/schools/snacks_and_beverages/celebrations/. Here is the sample language from the Alliance for Healthier Generation (AHG) Model Policy for *Celebrations and Rewards*:
 - All foods (or majority) *offered* on the school campus will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards [*or, if the state policy is stronger, "will meet or exceed state nutrition standards"*], including through:
 - Celebrations and parties. The district will provide a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers, including non-food celebration ideas. Healthy party ideas are available from the [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#) and from the [USDA](#).
 - Classroom snacks brought by parents. The district will provide to parents a [list of foods and beverages that meet Smart Snacks](#) nutrition standards.
 - Rewards and incentives. The district will provide teachers and other relevant school staff a [list of alternative ways to reward children](#). Foods and beverages will not be used as a reward or withheld as punishment for any reason, such as for performance or behavior.
- The district will work toward ensuring any food-based fundraisers held during the school day meet USDA's Smart Snacks in School. More information at https://www.healthiergeneration.org/take_action/schools/snacks_and_beverages/fundraisers/.
- Schools will promote drinking water by improving access to free, safe drinking water in varied locations of the school, including the cafeteria, and through education and encouragement by staff. More information about improving access to water at school is available from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at <https://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/data-statistics/plain-water-the-healthier-choice.html>

Component 2–Nutrition Education

In order to meet the overall goal for Nutrition Education, the district will influence the development of healthful, lifelong eating behaviors in students through nutrition education and nutrition promotion. Nutrition education will be offered as part of health enhancement classes as a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to adapt health-enhancing behaviors. Nutrition education will be incorporated as much as possible into the school day. Possible yearly goal(s) for Nutrition Education include:

- The district will meet the nutrition education criteria for USDA’s HealthierUS School Challenge: Smarter Lunchrooms
https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/2014hussc_criteria.pdf
- The district will teach nutrition education using resources based on up-to-date, scientifically-based nutrition information consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and [USDA’s Choose My Plate](#). See curriculum materials available at <https://healthymeals.fns.usda.gov/nutrition-education/nutrition-education-resources-elementary-school> and <https://healthymeals.fns.usda.gov/nutrition-education/nutrition-education-resources-middle-and-high-school>
- The district will implement Montana’s Harvest of the Month Program, <http://www.montana.edu/mtharvestofthemoth/index.html>, using a garden-based curriculum, <http://www.montana.edu/mtfarmtoschool/resources/school-garden.html>, with students, including community connections to agriculture to provide nutrition education and promotion.
- The district will make efforts to utilize school cafeterias as learning laboratories to allow students to apply critical thinking skills in making menu selections.
- The district will encourage student engagement in nutrition education through student mentoring activities or projects and the implementation of programs such as Fuel Up to Play 60, <https://www.fueluptoplay60.com>.
- Nutrition education will be taught by adequately prepared staff who participate in regular professional development in order to deliver effective instruction.

Component 3-Nutrition Promotion

In order to meet the overarching goal for Nutrition Promotion, the district will influence the development of healthful, lifelong eating behaviors in students through nutrition promotion.

Nutrition promotion messages will be targeted to specific audiences (students, staff, parents, or the community) to motivate them to take action and will be incorporated as much as possible into the school day. Possible yearly goal(s) for Nutrition Promotion include:

- The district will promote nutrition through enhancing the cafeteria with the addition of posters, displays, bulletin boards, and/or food-, nutrition-, and health-related artwork from students. USDA Team Nutrition posters are available at:
 - <https://www.fns.usda.gov/team-nutrition/elementary-posters>
 - <https://www.fns.usda.gov/team-nutrition-middle-school-posters>
 - <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/dig-posters>

- The district will initiate nutrition promotion efforts of refreshing water or calcium rich milk as beverages for students during the school day.
- The district will promote nutrition through the sales of healthy snacks and beverages in multiple ways through foods sold in vending machines, student stores, concession stands, and afterschool snack bars using [USDA Smart Snacks in School](#) guidelines.
- The signage displayed throughout the school campus will promote nutrient-rich foods and beverages as much as possible as evidenced in vending machines, scoreboards, and signs posted in the cafeterias. More about food and beverage marketing can be found at Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/nutrition/schoolnutrition.htm>.
- The district will promote non-food student rewards and/or if foods or beverages are used they are consistent with the [USDA's Choose My Plate](#) guidelines. Food will not be used as a reward or incentive in the classroom; staff will not withhold mealtime as a punishment method for students. More information at https://www.healthiergeneration.org/take_action/schools/snacks_and_beverages/non-food_rewards/
- The district will promote nutrient rich foods and beverages at classroom celebrations and/or promote non-food activities. More information at https://www.healthiergeneration.org/take_action/schools/snacks_and_beverages/celebrations/
- The district will work toward ensuring any food-based fundraisers held during the school day meet USDA's Smart Snacks in School. More information at https://www.healthiergeneration.org/take_action/schools/snacks_and_beverages/fundraisers/.
- The district encourages staff to be role models for health and exhibit a positive outlook toward healthy behaviors through offering staff wellness activities.
- The district will implement Smarter Lunchrooms techniques in cafeterias to motivate students to make healthful selections during the school lunch or breakfast meal.
- The district will implement Montana's Harvest of the Month Program, <http://www.montana.edu/mtharvestofthemonth/index.html>, using a garden based curriculum, <http://www.montana.edu/mtfarmtoschool/resources/school-garden.html>, with students, including community connections to agriculture to provide nutrition education and promotion.
- The district promotes nutrition to parents, families, and the community through sharing information on the school menus, newsletters, website, and social media; in addition to food-, nutrition-, and health-related classroom projects, school events, or activities.
- USDA's Local School Wellness Policy Outreach Toolkit provides extensive resources for involving families and the wider community in school wellness activities at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/local-school-wellness-policy-outreach-toolkit>

Component 4—Physical Activity

In order to meet the overarching goal for Physical Activity, the district will provide opportunities for every student to develop the knowledge and skills for specific physical activities to maintain physical fitness, and to obtain health education that instills an understanding of the short and

long-term benefits of a physically active and healthy lifestyle. Activities will be designed to meet the needs, interests, and abilities of all students.

Possible yearly goal(s) for Physical Activity include:

- The district will ensure that all students in Grades K-12 will receive daily health enhancement, or its equivalent of 150 minutes per week for elementary students and 225 minutes per week for middle and high school students, for the entire school year. Students with disabilities, special health-care needs, and those in alternative education settings will be included and accommodations made when necessary.
- The district will ensure that students will spend at least 50 percent of health enhancement class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.
- The district will ensure that the health enhancement curriculum demonstrates progression and sequence and be consistent with the 2016 Montana Health Enhancement standards for kindergarten through Grade 12.
- The district will ensure health enhancement is taught by certified health/physical education teachers or teachers that have received professional development in health enhancement and/or physical education.
- The district will ensure that class teacher-to-student ratios in health enhancement classes will be equivalent to those of other subject areas in the school.
- The district will ensure that student participation in other activities involving physical activity (e.g., interscholastic or intramural sports) will not be substituted for meeting the health enhancement requirement.
- The district will ensure that all elementary students will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoor, during which students are encouraged verbally and through provision of space and equipment to engage in moderate to vigorous physical activity.
- The district will discourage extended periods lasting two or more hours of inactivity by giving students recess time or periodic breaks during days when school-wide testing is scheduled.
- Teachers and other school personnel will not prohibit or deny student participation in recess or other physical activity as a consequence for inappropriate behavior or academic performance.
- All elementary, middle, and high schools will offer extracurricular physical activity program, (i.e., clubs or intramural programs). Middle and high schools, as appropriate, will offer interscholastic sports programs.
- School staff will educate and encourage student participation in community or club activities. After-school childcare and enrichment programs will provide and encourage daily moderate to vigorous physical activity for all participants.
- Resources, grants, and information to enhance physical activity in schools is available from numerous sources, including:
 - Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program (CSPAP), <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/physicalactivity/cspap.htm>.
 - Let's Move Active Schools <http://www.letsmoveschools.org/>.
 - SHAPE America <http://www.shapeamerica.org/publications/resources/>.

- Safe Routes to School <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/>.

Component 5–School Wellness

In order to meet this overarching goal for School Wellness, the district will strive to create a school environment that provides and demonstrates consistent wellness messages, is conducive to healthy eating and physical activity; and contributes to forming healthy life long habits for students and staff.

Possible yearly goal(s) for School Wellness include:

- School staff will strive to create comfortable cafeterias by ensuring adequate time to eat (breakfast–minimum 10 minutes seat time for students; lunch–minimum 20 minutes seat time). Seat time is defined as time students have to eat their meal (not time spent in line). More information on creating pleasant and positive mealtimes is available from [Montana Team Nutrition](#).
- Schools strive to schedule recess before lunch to promote a relaxed eating environment, improve food and milk consumption, and decrease food waste.
- The district partners with school parent organizations to promote student wellness.
- District staff and school parent organizations will strive to offer healthful choices at the concession stands at school sponsored events (sports, music, art, etc.). For more information, visit the Smarter Lunchroom Concession Stand Makeover at <http://foodpsychology.cornell.edu/discoveries/concession-stand-makeover>.
- Schools will implement innovative practices to increase school breakfast participation, such as breakfast in the classroom or grab and go service. Visit the OPI website for information on Steps to Jumpstart your Breakfast Program <http://opi.mt.gov/Leadership/Management-Operations/School-Nutrition/School-Meal-Programs/School-Breakfast-Program>.
- Schools will implement innovative Smarter Lunchrooms practices to increase the number of students making healthful choices. Learn more about Smarter Lunchroom behavioral economic techniques at <http://smarterlunchrooms.org>.
- Schools will encourage active transportation (walking, biking, etc.) to and from school. More at Safe Routes to School, <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/>.
- The district will offer staff opportunities to participate in physical activity and healthy eating programs and encourage staff to serve as role models for healthy habits. Read more from Action for Healthy Kids Staff as Healthy Role Models at <http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/component/content/article/39-step-3-challenges/1514-staff-as-healthy-role-models>.
- The school will work with the community leaders so that the use of school facilities, outside of school hours, can be utilized by community organizations or agencies to increase the physical activity opportunities for students and their families. The district will work together with local public leaders to make it safer and easier for students to walk and bike to school. For more information, read Establishing Shared Use Agreements for School Facilities from the Safe Routes Partnership at <http://www.saferoutespartnership.org/blog/establishing-shared-use-agreements-school-facilities>.

- The district encourages professional development opportunities for teachers, administrators, and other staff on nutrition education, physical activity, health enhancement, and the link between nutrition/activity on students' academic performance and behavior.
- The district offers an annual training session on school wellness strategies to staff, teachers, and school administrators. Action for Healthy Kids offers live and archived webinars at <http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/events/webinars>.
- The district partners with community groups to promote nutrition, physical activity, and wellness to students, staff, and families. The Kansas Team Nutrition Family Fun, Food & Fitness Event Planning Guide has offers ideas and detailed plans at <https://healthymeals.fns.usda.gov/state-sharing-center/kansas/family-fun-food-and-fitness-event-planning-guide>.

Step 6: Evaluate Progress and Share Results

Meaningful evaluations are critical to monitoring and sharing the results of Local Wellness Policy implementation because they help to:

- Improve the content of and support for a Local Wellness Policy.
- Document environmental changes, staffing needs, and changes in revenue.
- Ensure that your school activities programs are on course.
- Identify new and changing wellness needs.

The Basics of Evaluation

Evaluation of your school wellness activities can be summarized in one sentence: *It is all about a systematic approach to collecting information.* This data collection will then provide insight as to how well your school is doing with its wellness activities.

When to Create Your Evaluation Plan

The best time to put your evaluation plan in place is before you implement any new wellness activity. With this approach, you can collect baseline information in order to best track the impact of your activity.

Worksheet for Evaluation of Your School Wellness Activities

For each one-year goal or activity your wellness committee has identified in *Step 5* above, fill out a copy of *Worksheet 5* on page 29 to guide your evaluation of this goal. Make one copy of this worksheet for each goal your team has identified for the coming year.

Sharing School Wellness Goals

USDA requires that the public (including parents, students, and others in the community) be notified and regularly updated about the content and implementation of a Local Wellness Policy. School wellness information can be provided in all the ways that schools usually inform stakeholders. From *Step 2* on page 10 above, here are some easy ways to communicate your school wellness policy to the school and community:

- Issue regular, open invitations for parents and the community to attend any School Wellness Committee meetings.
- Post the minutes of School Wellness Committee meetings on the district website and share through social media channels (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, etc.).

- Post a School Wellness Work Plan and Progress Report on the district website.
- Write a quarterly or biannual School Wellness Article for the school newsletter and/or local newspaper.
- Provide an annual report and presentation to the school board on the school wellness policy plan and progress made on meeting the goals.
- Utilize the communication tools from the USDA Local School Wellness Policy Outreach Toolkit to reach school staff, parents, and community members about the school wellness policy. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/local-school-wellness-policy-outreach-toolkit>
- This toolkit includes customizable resources to encourage stakeholders to “*Be a School Wellness Champion.*” There are letters, PowerPoint presentations, and social media posts.

Additional ideas, resources and sample messages for getting the word out on School Wellness are available on USDA’s The School Day Just Got Healthier.

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday>

This site is especially useful for traditional and social media communication. These resources can be found at this link: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/school-day-just-got-healthier-media>

Montana School Nutrition Program and Montana Team Nutrition Program staff are available to provide training and technical assistance to school districts in communicating the progress of local wellness policy requirements. Contact information for Team Montana Nutrition Program staff is available at <http://www.montana.edu/teamnutrition/wellness/index.html>.

Worksheet 1: School Wellness Committee

Directions: Complete this worksheet to ensure the committee has the representation from all key stakeholders and school buildings for successful implementation. Be sure to designate your chairperson with an asterisk (*).

| Member Category | Name | Contact Information (telephone, email) | School Represented |
|--|-------------|---|---------------------------|
| Student | | | |
| Parent/Guardian | | | |
| School Foodservice Manager/Director | | | |
| Administrator | | | |
| Teacher | | | |
| School Board Trustee | | | |
| Community Member | | | |
| School Nurse | | | |
| School Counselor | | | |
| Parent Group (PTA/PTO) Member | | | |
| Health Care Provider | | | |
| Chef/Culinary Expert | | | |
| Farm to School Representative | | | |
| Fitness Professional | | | |
| Hunger/Homeless Advocate | | | |

Worksheet 2: Assess School/District Wellness Policy Requirements

Directions: Using the table below along with one of the school assessment tools listed on pages 9-10, list the key wellness items that are: (1) going well in your school, and (2) in need of change.

| Policy Component | What is going well in your school/district? | What change is needed in your school/district? |
|--|---|--|
| Nutrition Guidelines for Food at School | | |
| Foods offered at school meals | | |
| Breakfast availability | | |
| A la carte food/drink | | |
| Vending | | |
| Concessions | | |
| Student store(s) | | |
| Fundraising | | |
| Classroom Rewards | | |
| Classroom Parties | | |
| Farm to School options available | | |
| Other | | |

| Nutrition Promotion and Education | | |
|--|--|--|
| Curriculum | | |
| Harvest of the Month | | |
| School Garden Education | | |
| Staff Training | | |
| Other | | |
| Physical Activity at School | | |
| Minutes of HE class per week | | |
| HE Curriculum | | |
| Staff Training in HE | | |
| Minutes of recess per day | | |
| Recess schedule | | |
| Incorporating physical activity in classroom | | |
| Before and after school physical activity | | |
| Other | | |

| Other School Based Wellness Activities | | |
|--|--|--|
| Staff Wellness Promotion | | |
| Marketing and Promotion of Healthful Food Choices and Physical Activity | | |
| Smarter Lunchrooms Strategies | | |
| Annual Wellness Event (Health fair, fun run/walk/bike, etc.) | | |
| Parent and Community Engagement | | |
| Programs to Address Food Insecurity (e.g., Backpack Meals and School Pantries) | | |
| Other | | |

Worksheet 3: School Wellness Master List of Changes Needed

Directions: Use this worksheet in order to prioritize items that were listed on Worksheet 2 from the “what change is needed” category. Once you have completed this prioritizing exercise, select 2-3 items from your “high priority” list to set your goals for the year.

| 1) Nutrition Guidelines for Food at School | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| | Priority Level for Change | | |
| | High | Low | Not Applicable |
| Foods Offered at School Meals | | | |
| Breakfast Availability | | | |
| A La Carte Food/Drink | | | |
| Farm to School Procurement | | | |
| Vending | | | |
| Concessions | | | |
| Student store(s) | | | |
| Fundraising | | | |
| Classroom Rewards | | | |
| Classroom Parties | | | |

| 2) Nutrition Promotion and Education | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| Curriculum | | | |
| Harvest of the Month | | | |
| School Garden Education | | | |
| Staff Training | | | |
| Other | | | |
| 3) Physical Activity at School | | | |
| Minutes of HE Class Per Week | | | |
| HE Curriculum | | | |
| Staff Training in HE | | | |
| Number of Minutes of Recess | | | |
| Recess Schedule | | | |
| Incorporating Physical Activity in Classroom | | | |
| Before and After School Activity | | | |

| 4) Other School Based Wellness Activities | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| Staff Wellness Program | | | |
| Marketing/Promotion of Nutrition | | | |
| Smarter Lunchrooms Strategies | | | |
| Wellness Events (Health fair, fun run, etc.) | | | |
| Parent/community engagement events | | | |
| Programs to address hunger and food insecurity | | | |
| Other | | | |
| Other | | | |

Worksheet 4: School Wellness Goals and Action Plan

Directions: To develop (1-3) school wellness policy implementation goals, refer to number 1 on this worksheet. Or skip number 1 and work on the goals for the items identified as “high priority” on worksheet 3; set 1-3 goals for each of these items on how you want to improve in these school wellness areas below. In order to clearly categorize your goals, list action plan steps, set a target date and a responsible party for each of the goal/components.

| Goal/School Wellness Component (From the categories on Worksheet 3) | Action Plan Steps | Target Date for Implementation of Goal | Responsible Individual(s) |
|---|--------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| 1. School Wellness Policy Implementation: Form a committee: Update policy: Complete assessment: Other: | | | |
| 2. Nutrition Guideline: Goal 1: Goal 2: Goal 3: | | | |
| 3. Nutrition Education: Goal 1: Goal 2: Goal 3: | | | |
| 4. Nutrition Promotion: Goal 1: Goal 2: Goal 3: | | | |
| 5. Physical Activity: Goal 1: Goal 2: Goal 3: | | | |
| 6. School Wellness: Goal 1: Goal 2: Goal 3: | | | |

Worksheet 5: School Wellness Goal Evaluation

Directions: In order to develop an evaluation plan, complete a copy of this worksheet for EACH GOAL listed on Worksheet 4. There is a sample worksheet on page 30 to utilize in developing this evaluation plan.

Goal: _____

| Element of the goal to be evaluated | Any Baseline Data to Collect? | How will this element be monitored? | Who will gather evaluation information? | How often will evaluation data be gathered? |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

Worksheet 5- SAMPLE: School Wellness Goal Evaluation Form

Directions: In order to develop an evaluation plan, complete a copy of this worksheet for EACH GOAL listed on Worksheet 4.

Goal: Implement Recess Before Lunch (RBL)

| Element of the goal to be evaluated | Any Baseline Data to Collect? | How will this element be monitored? | Who will gather evaluation information? | How often will evaluation data be gathered? |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| Is milk waste decreased? | Milk waste study before RBL | Track milk waste after implementation of RBL | (Sample: Joe – Wellness Committee member | Once before RBL started-once after |
| Is student behavior improved during afternoon hours following RBL? | Number of behavioral referrals to office before RBL | (Number of behavioral referrals to office following implementation of RBL | Betty-wellness committee member | Once before RBL implementation–once after |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

CELEBRATIONS THAT SUPPORT CHILD HEALTH

FROM Alliance for Healthier Generation: Download complete PDF at https://www.healthiergeneration.org/asset/nvgd8g/13-6162_HSPHealthyCelebration.pdf

NON-FOOD CELEBRATION IDEAS



CHOOSE A PRIZE

Pencils or erasers
Stickers
Books
Enter a drawing or raffle for a bigger prize
Earn tokens or points toward a prize



GET MOVING

Lead a special physical activity break
Host a special event such as a dance or kite-flying party
Provide extra recess or PE time
Turn on the music and let students dance for a few minutes
Have a themed parade around your school



SHAKE UP YOUR ROUTINE

Let student choose a special activity or be a teacher's helper
Allow student to select a special book or invite a guest to read aloud
Go on a scavenger hunt
Host a special dress day where students can wear hats or pajamas



SHOW RECOGNITION

Give a certificate or ribbon
Post a sign in the classroom or on a prominent bulletin board
Give a shout-out in the morning announcements
For birthdays, allow child to wear a crown or special sash

HEALTHY SNACK & BEVERAGES IDEAS*

*Use the [Alliance's Smart Snacks Product Calculator](#) to ensure items meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. Ensure food allergies of any participants are known before serving any food item.



BEVERAGES

Water
100% fruit juice with no added sugar
Fat-free or low fat milk
Fruit smoothies (made with frozen fruit with no added sugar and fat-free or low fat yogurt)
100% fruit juice slushes with no added sugar
Silly Water—add fruit and herbs to plain water for fruit-infused blend



FRUITS & VEGGIES

Fresh fruit—trays, salads or kabobs
Fresh vegetables—trays, salads or kabobs
Canned fruit or fruit cups (in water, 100% fruit juice or light syrup)
Frozen fruit or fruit cups (in water, 100% fruit juice or light syrup)
Frosty fruits—freeze your own fruit (frozen grapes make a great summer treat!)
Dried fruit with no added sugar



WHOLE GRAINS

Whole grain crackers, pretzels or cereal bars
Small whole grain bagels or waffles or pancakes topped with fruit or nut or seed butter
Low-fat or air-popped popcorn (no added butter or salt)
Graham crackers
Baked whole grain tortilla chips with salsa or bean dip



PROTEINS

Fat-free or low fat yogurt (serve alone or as dip for fruits or veggies)
Nut or seed butter (serve with fruit or whole grain crackers)
Nuts or seeds
Trail mix made of nuts or seeds and dried fruit with no added sugar
Low-fat cheese (serve with fruit or whole grain crackers)
Hummus (serve with vegetables or whole grain crackers)

HEALTHY AND ACTIVE FUNDRAISERS

FROM Action for Healthy Kids: Download complete PDF at <http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/storage/documents/parent-toolkit/fundraisers-family-health-f1.pdf>



Active Fundraisers

Active fundraisers help students get the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity every day, and they can help families develop healthy habits together. Check your district wellness policy or school improvement plan to see if they contain any guidelines or goals about increasing physical activity or promoting better health through fundraising activities. If not, find out what it would take to add some so that your efforts become part of the school culture for many years to come.

Active Fundraisers are a Blast!

At Hoffman Trails Elementary in Hilliard, Ohio, it was a tradition for the PTO to plan an academically-based "thon" as an annual fundraiser, such as a math-a-thon or history-a-thon. But parent Kelly Schulze wasn't thrilled with the unhealthy prizes that were offered, so she took matters into her own hands and organized a "Hippity-Hop-a-Thon."

Students collected pledges for their participation, and they earned prizes like extra recess and tickets to attend a school dance with local radio talent serving as DJ. If they raised \$50, students could take home their very own hippity-hop ball. The fundraiser turned out to be a huge success. Every single student participated and had a blast.

SuperFit School Challenge is a program that combines fitness and fun for profitable fundraising: SuperFitSchoolChallenge.org

Fundraisers that Promote Physical Activity

- Fun walks or runs
- Walk-a-thons, bike-a-thons, jump-rope-a-thons, bowl-a-thons, skate-a-thons, hula-hoop-a-thons
- School dances
- Family obstacle courses
- Golf or tennis tournaments
- Teacher-student competitions (volleyball, softball, Frisbee)
- Community garden assistance (weeding, raking) for donations
- Sale or delivery of garden mulch, water softener salt or other home maintenance items for set price
- 30-day fitness and fundraising challenges
- Sport camps for adults — enlist high school athletic teams to hold introductory classes for kids or partner with city parks and recreation