

# The Impact of School-Level Wellness Teams: A Key Step to Successfully Implementing Wellness Policies



Nutrition | Health | Physical Activity – Making  
Wellness Work: One School at a Time

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# Agenda

- **Welcome and introductions**
- **Making the Case for Wellness**
- **Policies and programs 101**
- **Effective wellness teams**
- **Resources & Next steps**



# Wellness and Nutrition Services

- Works with schools and community based organizations to promote positive, healthy behaviors, and quality of life for children and youth in the District of Columbia
  - Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
  - DC Free Summer Meals Program
  - Federal Emergency Food Assistance Program
  - Healthy Schools Act Initiatives
  - School Programs (NSLP and SBP)

# Healthy Schools Act Initiatives Team

- The Healthy Schools Act Initiatives Team seeks to create a culture of wellness in all DC public and public charter schools through removing barriers and creating pathways to a healthier school environment.



# Question

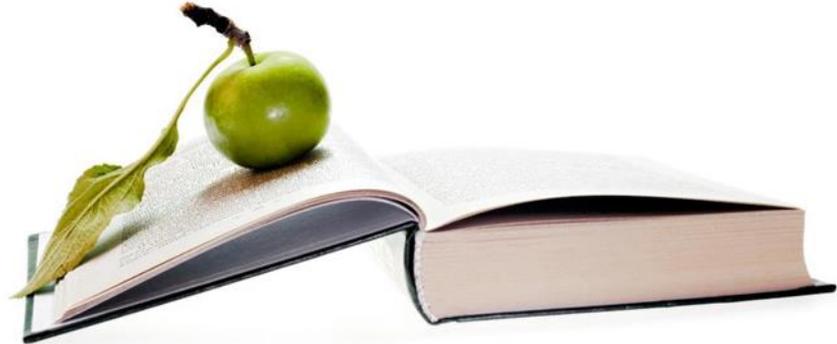
What does school health mean to you?



*Linking Student  
Wellness to Academic  
Success*

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Making The Case  
For Wellness  
One School at a  
Time!



# The Challenge

Look around a kindergarten classroom.



Unless we take action today, about half of these kids will be obese adults – and counted among the millions of new cases of diabetes, heart disease, stroke and cancer.

# The Challenge

- **One in three children in DC are overweight or obese.**
- **Only one in three children are physically active every day.**
- **DC has the 9<sup>th</sup> highest rate of childhood overweight and obesity in the US.**
- **Children spend more than 7.5 hours a day in front of a screen for non-school purposes.**
- **Kids view more than 40,000 commercials on TV each year and 87% of the food and beverages they see are for unhealthy foods.**

- Institute of Medicine, President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition, American Psychological
- Association DC Youth Risk Behavior Survey

# Why Schools?

- Schools reach most children and adolescents.
- Children spend around 1,200 hours per year in school.
- Many children consume at least half of their meals at school.
- Teachers, school staff and parent volunteers are key role models.
- Curriculum standards for health include nutrition and physical education.
- School teach kids what we value and what is important in our community.



# Why Schools?

**55 MILLION SCHOOL KIDS**

Each one of us can help improve the eating and activity habits of the **55 MILLION** school kids in this country and, in the process, improve their health so they can succeed in the classroom.

**GOOD FOOD**  
+  
**ACTIVE BODIES**  
=  
**KIDS EQUIPPED FOR SUCCESS!**

Kids who attend "healthy" schools have fewer absences, higher academic achievement and self-esteem and are more likely to graduate from high school.

**PHYSICAL ACTIVITY SUPPORTS ACHIEVEMENT**  
Even moderate exercise, like walking, increases brain activity.

**KIDS WHO EAT WELL, LEARN BETTER**  
Students who eat school breakfast have been shown, on average, to attend 1.5 more days of school per year and score 17.5% higher on standardized math tests.

**HEALTHIER PRACTICES CAN INCREASE SCHOOLS' BOTTOM LINES**  
Schools can get a financial boost by offering more nutritious meals & snacks. Students will buy and eat healthier foods and beverages.

**EVERY KID HEALTHY**

Visit [ActionforHealthyKids.org](http://ActionforHealthyKids.org), where you can read *The Learning Connection: What You Need to Know to Ensure Your Kids Are Healthy and Ready to Learn* and in under 1 minute, you can take the *Every Kid Healthy Pledge*. You'll have access to our free programs, volunteer opportunities and school grants.

**Action for Healthy Kids®**

**Northwestern Mutual® Foundation**

**Healthy Kids  
(People!)  
Learn Better**

**Good Food + Active Bodies = Kids Equipped for Success**

# Making the Case for Wellness



- Well nourished children tend to have higher energy levels, are more cheerful, and are more alert and able to concentrate.
- They also score higher on vocabulary, reading comprehension and arithmetic tests.



# Making the Case for Wellness



- A recent study of 5,000 children found a significant association between **diet quality** and academic performance.
- Are our students ready to learn if they begin their school day hungry?

Florence MD, Asbridge M, Veugelers PJ. Diet quality and academic performance. *Journal of School Health*. 2008; 78: 209-215.

# Fitness Break

- Throwing a football
- Juggling a soccer ball
- Shooting an arrow
- Shooting a hockey puck
- Swimming underwater
- Fielding a ground ball and throwing it to first base
- Dunking a basketball
- Shooting a jump shot
- Running through tires
- Batting a baseball
- Serving a tennis ball
- Downhill skiing
- Spiking a volleyball
- Swinging a golf club

# What Movement Does for the Brain

- Increases learning ability
- Increases attentiveness
- Increases the level of engagement
- Decreases behavioral issues
- Decreases absenteeism



# Let's Talk Celebrations!



In class, students learn about nutrition, healthy eating and the importance of moderation.



Yet in some classrooms students eat birthday treats over 25 times each year.





Fruit Sales

Do your fundraisers encourage healthy lifestyle choices?



Cookie Dough



Seed Packets



Water Bottles



Dance-a-thon

Student Artwork



Candy Sales



Bike-a-thon

# Physical Activity



In class, students learn that physical activity is critical to lead a long and healthy life.

*Yet after school many students spend up to 7.5 hours in front of a screen for non school purposes.*



How will our children learn to make healthy choices with so many conflicting messages?

WHAT'S THE  
SOLUTION?

A hand holding a white marker is shown on the right side of the image, positioned as if it has just finished writing the word 'SOLUTION?' on the green chalkboard. The hand is light-skinned and is holding the marker with a tripod grip. The marker is white with a blue and red band near the tip. The green chalkboard background is uniform in color.

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Working  
Together

# School Wellness Policies 101

- School Wellness Policy Requirements
- Understanding Your School's Policy
- Meeting Wellness Policy Goals
- Creating or Strengthening Your School's Wellness Team



# School Wellness Policies

**The 2004 Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act required districts to have a wellness policy that includes:**

- Nutrition guidelines
- Goals for nutrition education, physical activity and other school-based activities
- A plan for measuring implementation



# School Wellness Policies

## The 2010 Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act added:



- Required reporting on policy content and implementation
- Required periodic assessments
- Goals for nutrition promotion



Learn more about the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act and local wellness policies at:  
[www.fns.usda.gov/tn/healthy/lwp5yrplan.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/healthy/lwp5yrplan.pdf)

# School Wellness Policies

**In addition to federal requirements, the DC Healthy Schools Act, 2010 requires the wellness policy to include:**

- Sufficient time for school meals
- Health and physical education guidelines
- Goals for:
  - Increasing physical activity
  - Improving environmental sustainability
  - Increasing use/consumption of local foods



# School Wellness Policies

Wellness policies must be developed and implemented by “local parents, teachers, administrators, school food service, school boards and the public.”



# Action Steps



1. Read your district policy and any school policies or guidelines.
2. Pay attention to policy language.
3. Ask questions.

# Action Steps



**Fuel Free Friday**



**School Garden Build Day**



**School Garden Market**

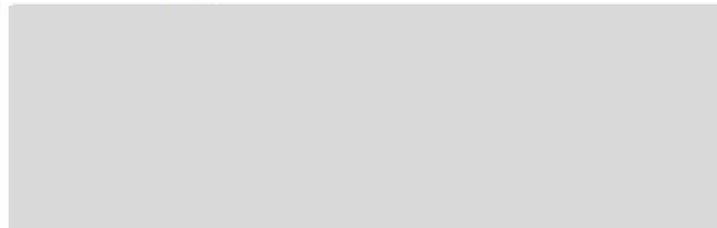
4. Use the policy or school guidelines as a platform for your wellness projects.

# Action Steps

5. Promote the policy and your school's wellness practices.



# Building a Successful and Sustainable Wellness Team



# Teams Go by Many Names



- School health council
- School health improvement team
- School health advisory committee
- Wellness council
- Wellness committee
- Coordinated School Health team
- *Game On!* team
- *Fuel Up to Play 60* team
- HealthierUS School Challenge team

# School Wellness Teams

A wellness team helps to maintain wellness as a priority for the school, assesses school-level needs, and guides the growth of school wellness at the ground level.

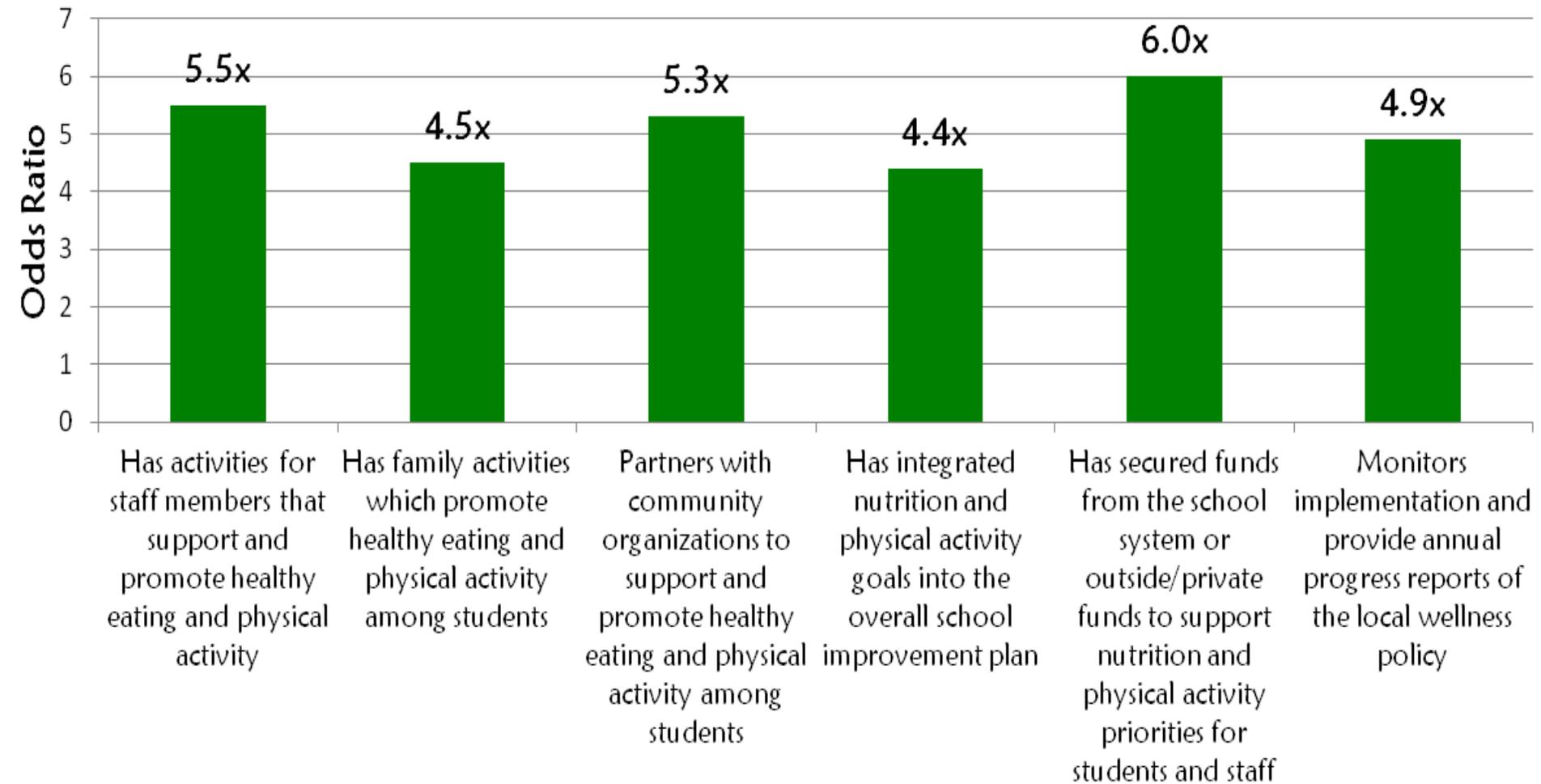


# School Wellness Teams



- Develop a vision and goals
- Lead projects that promote health
- Raise funds to support programs
- Measure the impact of programs
- Promote and celebrating successful health initiatives
- Develop resources to help others replicate their success

# Schools are More Likely to Implement Wellness Policies and Practices When a Wellness Committee is in Place



My School...

# Who can be on the team?



# Step 1 - Recruit Your Team

- Identify the Wellness Coordinator
  - A critical step in starting a wellness team
  - With support of school administration, the school community should nominate and identify a school wellness coordinator *and* discuss the role of the wellness team within the school
- Get Principal buy-in
- Identify champions
- Plan for a group of 6-12 members

## Step 2 – Assess the Health of Your School Environment

*How will you know where you're going, if you don't know where you've been?*



# Why Do a Wellness Assessment?



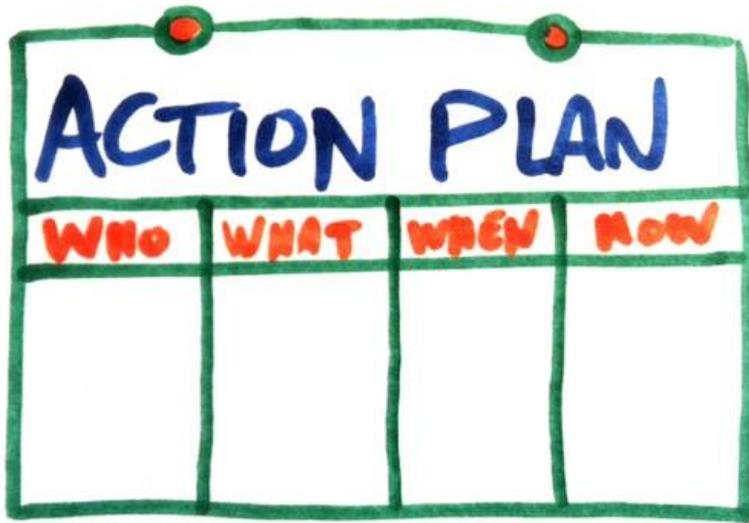
- Develop relationships with key staff.
- Determine your school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Define goals that suit your school's needs.
- Justify your decision to make changes.
- Document starting points to show progress over time.

# Type of Wellness Assessments



- School Health Index (SHI)
- WellSAT
- *Fuel Up to Play 60*  
School Wellness  
Investigation
- Alliance for a Healthier  
Generation Healthy Schools  
Program Inventory

# Step 3 – Develop an Action Plan



A hand-drawn diagram of an action plan table. The title 'ACTION PLAN' is written in large blue letters at the top. Below the title is a table with four columns labeled 'WHO', 'WHAT', 'WHEN', and 'HOW' in red letters. The table has a green border and two red pushpins at the top corners.

WHO	WHAT	WHEN	HOW

- Engages and informs school wellness champions
- Improves school-community collaboration and communication
- Creates a team mission, goals, timeline, and budget
- Implements sustainable programming

# Step 4 - Creating Project Goals

- **Identify health and wellness goals that are linked to:**

- Your School's Wellness policy
- Wellness assessment results
- Improving academic achievement
- Previous successes and failures
- Needs/wants school community

GOALS

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_



# Step 5 - Choose Activities/Initiatives/Events

- *Choose school activities to address your goals*
  - By November 2015, 50% of 3rd graders will participate in a school breakfast
    - Host at least 3 taste tests for new breakfast items
    - Display monthly breakfast related information on bulletin boards and in the school newspaper
    - Implement grab-n-go breakfast model

# Other Activities

- **Promote non-food rewards as positive incentives for students**
- **Hold a family health and fitness night**
- **Provide a list of healthier snacks and beverages for classroom celebrations**
- **Provide daily stretches during morning announcements**
- **Sponsor Mileage Clubs/Walking and Running Clubs/Peer Mediation Clubs/Cooking Clubs**
- **Build a school garden**
- **Promote open gym time before or after school**
- **Any many more!**

# Step 6: Create Sustainability



## **Incorporate sustainability into your action plan**

- Involve your community
- Promote your initiatives widely
- Track and communicate your progress

# Sustainability

- Incorporate health and wellness objectives into your school improvement plan
- Investigate funding opportunities
- Communicate and promote the importance of healthy eating and physical activity for students, families, and the community

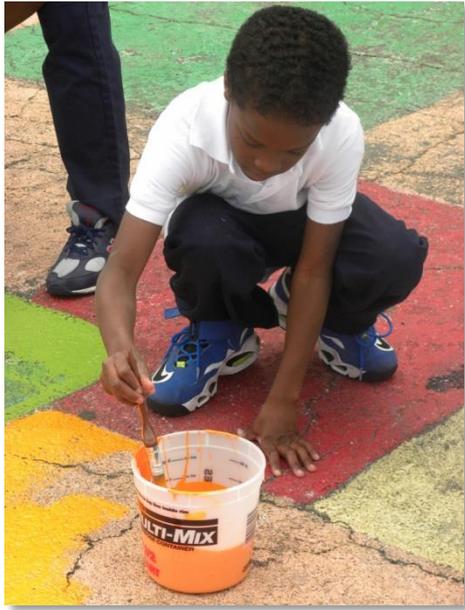
# Sustainability

Create sustainability by signing up for a recognition program



- HealthierUS School Challenge  
[www.fns.usda.gov/tn/healthierus/](http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/healthierus/)
- Blair Tucker-Gruchala  
OSSE, Program Specialist  
(202) 741-6481  
[Blair.Tucker-Gruchala@dc.gov](mailto:Blair.Tucker-Gruchala@dc.gov)

# Finding Funding



- School and district funds
- PTO/PTA Funds
- Donations from families
- Community Partners
- Grants
  - Sign up to receive OSSE's Weekly E-newsletter, [LEA Look Forward](#).

USDA Team Nutrition: Funding a Local School Wellness Policy  
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/funding-local-school-wellness-policy>

# Celebrate and Communicate Successes

- With a variety of communication tools available, it should be easy to keep your school community and school wellness committee members informed and connected.

Most Common Ways Schools Shared Information on School-Level Wellness Activities	
PTA/Community Meetings	51%
Website	44%
Newsletters	38%
Word of Mouth	35%
Bulletin Board	22%

# Step 7: Evaluate Progress and Modify Your Action Plan

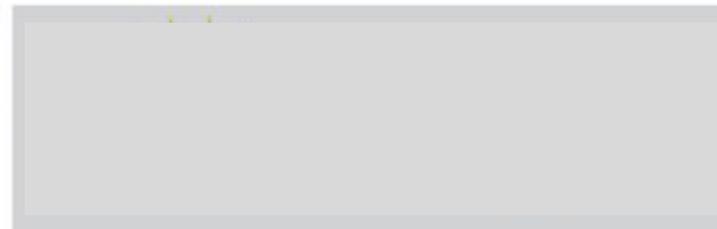
- Continue to both formally and informally assess
- Determines if the strategies employed should be modified to meet or maintain goals



# Next Steps

“There is only one way... to get anybody to do anything. And that is by making the other person want to do it.”

- Dale Carnegie  
- Lecturer and Author of *How to Win Friends and Influence People*



# Key Take Aways

We...

- Made the case for school wellness
- Discussed policies requirements
- Reviewed tips and best practices for building/strengthening a team
- Reviewed activities/initiatives/events

# Next Steps

- **Read your school's Wellness Policy**
- **Join or volunteer with your school's wellness team**
- **If a team doesn't exist, start one! OSSE will help. We can:**
  - **Help provide trainings on starting a wellness team**
  - **Establish support with partner agencies**
  - **Alert you of funding opportunities**

# Resources

- **Wellness Team Toolkits**
  - [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#)
  - [Action for Healthy Kids](#)
- **Wellness Assessment Tools**
  - [School Health Index](#)
  - [WellSat](#)
  - [Fuel up to Play 60](#)
- **OSSE – Healthy Schools Act Initiatives Teams**
  - Nichelle Johnson, [NichelleL.Johnson@dc.gov](mailto:NichelleL.Johnson@dc.gov)  
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  - Laura Hansen, [laura.hansen@dc.gov](mailto:laura.hansen@dc.gov)  
*Nutrition Education Specialist*

**Questions**