

be active



ShapingNJ School Toolkit: Creating Healthy Active Schools

June 2012



eat smart



SHAPINGNJ

The State Partnership for Nutrition,
Physical Activity and Obesity Prevention



Office of Nutrition
and Fitness
(609) 292- 2209





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Barbara Baron, MS, RD, CDN, American Dairy Association and Dairy Council

Steve Bergonzoni, Mid Atlantic Regional Office, USDA

Jacqueline Bricker, Marketing Specialist, NJ Department of Agriculture

Christene DeWitt-Parker, MSN, CSN, RN, NJ Department of Education

Beth Feehan, Director, New Jersey Farm to School Network

Michelle Feliciano, NJ School Nutrition Association

Janet M. Hawk, School Nutrition Services, New Jersey Department of Agriculture, Coordinator

Denise Langevin, MS, RD, New Jersey Dietetic Association

Jacqueline Malaska, Executive Director, New Jersey Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance

James A. McCall, PhD, New Jersey Action for Healthy Kids

Juliet McGuinness, M.A.T., New Jersey Department of Education

Kathleen T. Morgan, Dr. MH, DTR, Chair, Community Health Sciences, Rutgers Cooperative Extension, Rutgers University

Linda L. Morse, RN, NJ-CSN, MA, CHES, FASHA, Executive Director, New Jersey State School Nurses Association

Brendan O'Reilly, M.Ed., New Jersey Department of Education

Megan Squires, MS, RD, CDN, American Dairy Association and Dairy Council

Jennifer Salt, Dietetic Intern, Montclair State University Dietetic Internship

Elaine Suehnholz, RN, NJ Department of Health –Retired

Emily Vroengindewey, Dietetic Intern, Montclair State University Dietetic Internship

William Walker, New Jersey Department of Agriculture



INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Toolkit is to provide guidance and suggest tools and resources for school communities working to advance school wellness and create healthier school environments throughout New Jersey. This Toolkit compiles shared knowledge that the **ShapingNJ** School Workgroup has gathered over the past few years through our joint work with an eye toward enhancing, simplifying, and advancing the planning and decision making processes that continue to occur at the community level. The primary audience of this Toolkit is school community members, including administrators, staff, teachers, parents, and community members.

This Toolkit provides user-friendly strategies, policy components and associated actions, practices, tools, and resources for current or potential members of School Wellness Teams (sometimes referred to as Wellness Councils) to advance comprehensive policy development and implementation efforts focused on nutrition and physical activity in schools.

Creation of the Toolkit

This toolkit grew out of a robust policy planning and research process that began with a review of research and creation of data briefs on behaviors identified as foundational to healthy eating and active lifestyles. This information, along with the experience of **ShapingNJ's** Partners, resulted in the development of three major strategies to promote healthier school environments. The major strategies that have guided development of this Toolkit are:

- ✓ To strengthen State and local wellness policies and facilitate their implementation in every school through:
 - Enhancing the minimum standards in New Jersey School Nutrition/Wellness Policy to promote increased access to healthy foods, physical activity, nutrition education, and school based wellness activities; and,
 - Encouraging active wellness/health teams in each school, with support and guidance from the school district and broad representation from the community and the school.
- ✓ To make it easier for schools to serve appealing, healthy and child-friendly meals through:
 - Promoting adequate resources, including an increased federal subsidy for breakfast and lunch programs; and,
 - Developing an infrastructure that allows schools to prepare and/or purchase healthy foods.



- ✓ To engage all students in both physical education programs (a curriculum-based program that teaches skills for maintaining an active lifestyle) and physical activity opportunities, such as recess, classroom based movement and activity breaks, and before- and after-school programs.

What the Toolkit is not!

ShapingNJ is administered at the NJ Department of Health & Senior Services, and therefore respects the authority of our partners. This toolkit does ***not*** include ***or replace*** the State Nutrition and Wellness Policy issued from the NJ Department of Agriculture and likewise respects the authority of the NJ Department of Education, including, for example, core curriculum content standards and State Physical Education requirements. The toolkit is ***not*** intended to comprehensively address all eight components of the Coordinated School Health Model, nor is it the official NJ School Wellness Policy.

Toolkit Purpose & History of School Wellness Policies

While, as noted above, this Toolkit is ***not*** a state mandate, nor official policy, it does reflect the recent legislative environment for local school wellness policies and can assist schools as they work to meet federal and state requirements. In 2004, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) adopted a requirement that schools participating in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs develop a local wellness policy by the first day of the 2006-2007 school year. New Jersey responded to the federal legislation by adopting its own Local School Nutrition Policy, which required participating schools to either adopt their own Wellness/Nutrition Policy by September 2006, or to adopt the New Jersey Model School Nutrition Policy by September 2007. The guidance issued by the NJ Department of Agriculture also states that once a policy is adopted, one or more people must be designated to oversee policy implementation and evaluation. Additionally, in 2010 President Obama signed the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, which not only funds child nutrition programs and free lunch programs in schools, but incorporates new nutrition standards for schools to reform school lunch and breakfast programs.

The Status of School Wellness Policies and Teams in 2012

Plans are underway at the New Jersey Department of Agriculture's Division of Food and Nutrition to update the NJ School Nutrition/Wellness Policy standards in accordance with the



new federal requirements. The template included in this document (see Part 2) builds on the information in the NJ School Nutrition/Wellness Policy and expands it to provide the groundwork for a comprehensive wellness policy that also includes nutrition education, physical education, physical activity, and other aspects of school wellness. The progress made by New Jersey schools in having active school wellness teams to plan and implement school wellness policies varies greatly. Some districts have made great strides, while others do not have an active wellness team. Given federal mandates requiring healthier school environments, local wellness policies are more important now than in the past. Wellness teams and policies are practical ways for parents, local education agencies, and school districts to:

- ✓ Engage youth;
- ✓ Promote student wellness;
- ✓ Prevent and reduce childhood obesity; and,
- ✓ Assist with meeting the federal school meal standards.

The USDA is encouraging schools to review their local wellness policies and to begin implementing the new requirements during the 2011-12 and 2012-2013 school years. This Toolkit is a resource for districts to begin or to enhance the process of wellness policy development and implementation.



WHAT'S IN THE TOOLKIT?

This Toolkit is divided into three major sections, as follows:

Part 1: The School Wellness Team - Part 1 provides a roadmap and recommends resources for creating and maintaining successful, active School Wellness Teams. Such Teams are central to policy implementation and are thus their formation is an essential first goal to address in school wellness policies. The remaining goals are outlined in Part 2.

Part 2: The Nutrition & Physical Activity Components of a School Wellness Policy - Part 2 provides an overview of the major components of a comprehensive school nutrition and physical education and activity policy, including goals and many references and resources to enhance your understanding of key topics. This information is particularly useful if your local team is ready to draft or adopt a local wellness policy. This part of the Toolkit is organized around the five major policy components, as described below:

NUTRITION– Ensure that your school is a part of the national movement to serve healthier school meals! This section includes resources and tools to ensure that your school meals, vending and à la Carte items are consistent with the federal standards and provides tips to increase meal participation. This part of the nutrition policy framework also provides suggestions for non-food rewards for students’ school accomplishments.

NUTRITION EDUCATION - Promote the creation of consistent messages that link the classroom to the cafeteria with meaningful life lessons, specifically through inclusion of lifelong wellness in health education, collaboration with community partners to enhance nutrition education efforts, and curriculum integration across subject areas. As students learn where their food comes from, have the opportunity to taste fresh foods from the garden or local farm, and choose the foods they put on their tray, their interest in why food is important and how it affects their health and futures will broaden.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION – Promote participation in a quality physical education (PE) program, the foundation of a comprehensive school physical activity program. Quality physical education uses a planned, sequential program of curricula and instruction based on state and national PE standards so that all students, including those with disabilities, develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to maintain a physically active lifestyle. This part of the policy framework also encompasses provision of professional development opportunities for PE teachers that enhance their ability to provide quality physical education.



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY – Meet the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ recommendation that children and adolescents (aged 6-17) participate in 60 minutes or more of physical activity daily. Schools have an opportunity to help students follow this recommendation by providing a comprehensive physical activity program that includes a quality physical education program, recess, physical activity breaks, physical activity integrated into classroom instruction, intramural and interscholastic sports, walk- and bike-to-school plans, and before- and after-school physical activity programs.

OTHER WELLNESS ACTIVITIES – Ensure that your school wellness policies encompass staff wellness and provide opportunities to integrate activities within family and community structures, including through collaborative school/community gardening opportunities, community meals, and other activities.

Part 3: Promising Tools & Practices: Translating Policy into Practice – The purpose of Part 3 is to inspire creative ways to create healthier school environments. This section starts with a definition of “Promising Practices” and provides sample tools intended to assist schools as they implement their vision of healthier school environments. The sample tools and practices presented in Part 3 are not a comprehensive list, nor do they include all of the resources identified in Part 2 of the Toolkit. Rather, these tools are consistent with the school strategies prioritized by the *ShapingNJ* Partnership and, more importantly, have been selected to illustrate how schools can successfully translate policy into practice. The sample practices and tools highlighted in this section of the Toolkit are:

TOOLS THAT ENCOURAGE ACTIVE LOCAL WELLNESS TEAMS - As described in Part 1 of the Toolkit, these include assessment and planning tools to assist teams with evaluating current efforts, and developing action plans and priorities to create healthier school environments:

- ✓ School Health Index
- ✓ Coordinated School Health Model Framework
- ✓ The Alliance for a Healthier Generation Healthy Schools Program Framework

TOOLS THAT MAKE IT EASIER FOR SCHOOLS TO SERVE APPEALING, HEALTHY CHILD-FRIENDLY MEALS – These sample tools include innovative practices to translate school nutrition policies (detailed in Part 2 of the Toolkit) to practices that enhance both access to and student acceptance of healthier foods in the school setting:

- ✓ The Healthier US School Challenge
- ✓ Breakfast in the Classroom



- ✓ Farm to School
- ✓ School Gardens
- ✓ School Salad Bars

TOOLS THAT PROMOTE COMPREHENSIVE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND QUALITY PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN SCHOOLS – These sample tools help schools translate school physical education and physical activity policies into practices that engage all students:

- ✓ Fitness Assessment tools, such as Fitness Gram
- ✓ Let's Move in Schools
- ✓ Safe Routes to School
- ✓ Joint Use Agreements

MULTIPURPOSE TOOL THAT SPANS NUTRITION & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY – This is an example of a multi-purpose tool that addresses both nutrition education and physical activity:

- ✓ Fuel Up to Play 60

THE FUTURE OF THE TOOLKIT

The **ShapingNJ** School Workgroup considers this a 'living' document; we intend to enhance the toolkit over time as our joint knowledge base expands and as we continue to learn the valuable challenges faced, lessons learned, and successes achieved at the grassroots level. The **ShapingNJ** School workgroup will continue to function as the coordinator in the journey to create healthier school environments in NJ.



PART 1: SCHOOL WELLNESS TEAM – WHY, WHAT, & HOW?

The purpose of this section of the Toolkit is to encourage active wellness teams in New Jersey’s schools, with support, leadership, and guidance from school districts and broad representation from communities and schools. This *ShapingNJ* Strategy is a significant step toward creating healthier school environments.

Research shows that creating a School Wellness Team is an effective approach for interacting with the local community on school health issues and for organizing and strengthening efforts to implement school wellness policy. The Team can help ensure that the community has a voice in planning and implementing comprehensive policies to support healthy school environments.

Create a School District-level or Building-level Wellness Team to Promote Healthy, Active School Environments and to Guide Policy Implementation

The creation of a School Wellness Team is a central goal that schools need to include as part of a School Wellness Policy. The remaining goals are outlined in Part 2 of the Toolkit. Read more in this Section about the steps your school or community can take to create or re-energize your School Wellness Team, including the roles and activities of the Team, key members to include on the Team, and resources available to assist your organizational efforts.

School Wellness Teams: Now!

As noted earlier, this is a time of transition and change in the regulations that govern school meals, school wellness policy, and local School Wellness Teams that guide wellness policy implementation. At this time, there is no clear, consistent guidance on the terminology used to refer to School Wellness Teams and many in the educational community use the terms “Team” and “Council” interchangeably. We are also aware that others in New Jersey, including the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, use the term “Council” to refer to both district-level and individual school-level wellness workgroups. The collaborations that your school is engaged in may influence your choice of terms. Additionally, this document includes new national resources that refer to “Team” as the school building-level group and “Council” as the district-level entity. To learn more about this two-tiered approach from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s *School Health Guidelines to Promote Healthy Eating and Physical Activity*, see <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/npao/strategies.htm>.



PART 1: SCHOOL WELLNESS TEAM

In this version of the Toolkit, we use School Wellness Team broadly to refer to district-level and school building-level groups working to develop and implement school wellness policy.

As noted in the Introduction, Section 204 of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, Public Law 111-296, expands the scope of wellness policies; brings in additional stakeholders in policy development, implementation and review; and requires public updates on the content and implementation of wellness policies. USDA's Food and Nutrition Service expects to publish a proposed rule on local wellness policies (including the role of school teams) in the fall of 2012.

Due to these impending changes, please consider this section of the Toolkit a working draft as we await this federal guidance. Watch for revisions to this section of the Toolkit in the months ahead on the *ShapingNJ* website at:

<http://www.state.nj.us/health/fhs/shapingnj/work/publications/#3>.

STEP 1: Identify and Select Key Members of School Wellness Team

Since the quality, variety, and extent of School Wellness Team activities will depend upon the members, consider the following criteria:

- ✓ Representative of the diversity of your community;
- ✓ Understanding of the culture, norms and dynamics of your community;
- ✓ Demonstrated passion for kids and health;
- ✓ Willingness to devote time;
- ✓ Key influencer in the school and community;
- ✓ The least powerful, as well as the most powerful;
- ✓ People you do not know well; and,
- ✓ Skeptics, as well as believers.

To learn more about forming a School Wellness Team:

Alliance for a Healthier Generation's *School Wellness Council Toolkit*

http://www.healthiergeneration.org/uploadedFiles/For_Schools/Helpful_Tools/08Toolkit_SWC.pdf

American Cancer Society's *Improving School Health: A Guide to Community School Health Councils*

<http://www.cancer.org/acs/groups/content/@nho/documents/document/guidetocommunityschoolhealthcou.pdf>



PART 1: SCHOOL WELLNESS TEAM

It is important to have a diverse group of members that can offer different perspectives to the decision making process of the Team. Each group brings unique contributions that are valuable in creating healthier school environments for students and staff.

Recommended Core Team Members:

- School Administrator
- Principal
- Physical Education Teacher
- Health Education Teacher
- Mental Health Professional
- Health Services Staff/School Nurse
- Nutrition/Food Service Staff
- Maintenance & Transportation Staff
- Parents
- Students
- PTA/PTO Representative
- Community Members

ShapingNJ Partners have shared common observations about key elements of successful School Wellness Teams, including the importance of *leadership*, (or at a minimum, strong engagement) of the School Principal. See the following tips and resources to assist you in recruiting the School Principal to support the work of the Wellness Team.



Tips for Recruiting a School Principal: Champion of the School Wellness Team

- **Take time to know what every Principal cares about:**
 - ✓ Direct the conversation toward the interests, concerns and goals of an education professional. (Meet or exceed the education standards)
- **Advocate for education:**
 - ✓ Outline and define the broad *educational* benefits of healthy students, healthy staff, and a healthy school environment.
 - ✓ Advocate for a healthy school environment in which students can practice what they learn about making healthy decisions and staff can practice and model healthy behaviors.
- **Clarify common goals and report results that principals and administrators want to hear:**
 - ✓ Higher academic achievement from students
 - ✓ Increased staff satisfaction and decreased staff turnover
 - ✓ The development of a school-community culture that promotes and enhances student growth
- **Appeal to the Principal as a Leader**
 - ✓ Recognize the principal's leadership skills and ability to set the climate for learning, level of professionalism, morale of teachers and degree of concern for what students may or may not become.
 - ✓ Engage the principal to engage the entire school community in promoting health and well-being.
 - ✓ Invite the principal to engage the entire school community in promoting health and well-being and elevate health initiatives in the school improvement plan.
- **Send a letter to the School Principal requesting support for the School Wellness Team**
 - ✓ Use the *ShapingNJ* instructions and sample letter from community member to the School Principal, available at <http://www.state.nj.us/health/fhs/shapingnj/work/publications/#3>

Learn more: <http://www.ascd.org/healthyschoolcommunities>

Adapted from The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development's *The Healthy School Communities Model: Aligning Health and Education in the School Setting, 2011*. Available at:
<http://www.ascd.org/ascd/pdf/siteascd/publications/aligning-health-education.pdf>

Another essential core member of the team is the school PTA or PTO.

Learn more about the National Association's PTA Resolution on School Health Councils:
<http://www.pta.org/2011.htm>

Community members and parents may also express their interest in volunteering for a School Wellness Team.

Interested in Volunteering for a School Wellness Team in your Community?
See *ShapingNJ's* Sample Letter from Community Member:
<http://www.state.nj.us/health/fhs/shapingnj/work/publications/#3>



STEP 2: Assess School Health Environment

School Wellness Teams can create, strengthen, or work within existing school health policy structures to develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, refine and update school nutrition and physical activity policies. In addition to developing and implementing nutrition and physical activity policies, Teams typically:

- ✓ Assess the school health environment, considering the interests of students, staff, and community members; evaluate existing programs and policies; and identify ways to strengthen these programs and policies to improve the health of students, staff, and community members.

The School Health Index is a tool that can be used to assist SWCs in the assessment of a school: <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/SHI/> (for more information, see Part 3 of this Toolkit).

STEP 3: Develop an Action Plan

In addition to assessing the current status of wellness policy implementation, the Team can develop and implement an action plan based on what was learned from the assessment.

Sample Action Plan items might include:

- ✓ Supporting the school in developing a healthier school environment;
- ✓ Creating a vision and goals for the local school wellness program;
- ✓ Assisting in policy development;
- ✓ Promoting parent, community, and professional involvement in developing a healthier school environment;
- ✓ Advocating for school health programs and policies within the broader school community;
- ✓ Educating the community on healthy school/wellness initiatives;
- ✓ Identifying funding and leveraging resources for student and staff wellness; and,
- ✓ Planning and implementing programs for students and staff.

There are excellent resources to assist your School Wellness Team in developing an action plan, implementing that plan, and tracking results. Refer to the national resources noted at the end of this section, especially *Promoting Healthy Youth, Schools, and Community: A Guide to Community-School Health Councils*, an excellent resource with step-by-step guidance for starting a School Wellness Team, including templates, sample letters, and planning guides.



Step 4: Building and Sustaining Active School Wellness Teams

One strategy for sustaining active school wellness Teams is to consider working within a Professional Learning Community (PLC) that is focused on the *whole child*. A PLC is an ongoing process used to establish a school wide culture that develops leadership focused on building and sustaining school improvement efforts. A PLC is difficult to define -- it is not a prescription, a new program, a model, or an innovation to be implemented. Rather, a PLC is a way of working together that leads to continuous school improvement. The PLC involves, but is not limited to, teachers, administrators, support staff, and students.

The purpose of a Wellness PLC is to ensure that those programs and services that focus on student health and safety also support student learning. The PLC brings together various members of the school team (in this case the wellness team) to set and achieve common goals and to establish a process for collective inquiry about best practices.

Creating a Wellness PLC can help team members to see the connections between health and academic achievement, can broaden the reach of the wellness team to whole school applications, and can reinforce the idea that everyone in the school is part of a PLC dedicated to optimizing learning.

Wellness PLCs enable schools to focus on critical health issues that impact students and the entire school community and to learn how those issues influence student learning. Using the same structures and processes as other PLCs in the school establishes credibility, helps to establish a common language, improves communication, and creates an authentic connection to the mission of the school.

Tips for PLC Success:

Strong, supportive leadership is necessary to build and sustain PLCs. In addition to high-level administrative support, PLCs require supportive conditions in which to develop and thrive. At the very least, PLCs require suitable spaces for meetings and strong communication structures in place to keep people involved and informed (including meetings to discuss problem areas and new ideas, as well as mechanisms for school-wide announcements and distribution of information).

For more information on what a PLC is: <http://www.centerforcsri.org/plc/program.html>

To locate schools using PLCs and to see examples of how they are working:
<http://www.allthingsplc.info/plcLocator.php>



ShapingNJ Resources to Support Active School Wellness Teams

ShapingNJ Partners have developed several helpful tools to assist School Wellness Teams. We hope that you find these tools useful in communicating and advancing your work at the community level, recruiting champions and skilled team members, and informing the community of the valuable work undertaken by your Team. Key examples of this work include:

- A tri-fold brochure to help you generate interest in establishing a School Wellness Team, entitled *The Importance of a School Wellness Council in Your School*: <http://www.state.nj.us/health/fhs/shapingnj/work/publications/SCHOOL%20WELLNESS%20COUNCIL%20BROCHURE%20FINAL.pdf>.
- A webinar to help you advance the work of existing School Wellness Teams entitled *The How to of School Wellness Councils: Developing and Sustaining Your Team*: http://www.state.nj.us/health/fhs/shapingnj/documents/school_wellness_council_webinar.pdf
- Sample letter and talking points to recruit the support of the School Principal: <http://www.state.nj.us/health/fhs/shapingnj/work/publications/#3>.
- Sample letter from community member seeking to volunteer for School Wellness Team: <http://www.state.nj.us/health/fhs/shapingnj/work/publications/#3>



ShapingNJ's Favorite National Resources

The following resources have been useful to *ShapingNJ* partners' efforts in establishing and maintaining active School Wellness Teams.

ShapingNJ's Favorite National Resources:

- **Alliance for a Healthier Generation's *School Wellness Council Toolkit*** - a comprehensive guide for forming and sustaining school wellness teams:
http://www.healthiergeneration.org/uploadedFiles/For_Schools/Helpful_Tools/08Toolkit_SWC.pdf
- **American Cancer Society**
<http://www.cancer.org/Healthy/MoreWaysACSHelpsYouStayWell/SchoolHealth/index> - includes information on school health teams, as well as a comprehensive guide, *A Guide to Community School Health Councils*, as a free download in PDF format. Helpful appendices include scripts, meeting planners, and promotional material.
<http://www.cancer.org/acs/groups/content/@nho/documents/document/guidetocommunityschoolhealthcou.pdf>
- **Center for Disease Control and Prevention** <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/> - defines the role of schools in promoting childhood wellness and outlines ten strategies to promote physical activity and healthy eating in *Make A Difference at Your School*:
<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/keystrategies/pdf/make-a-difference.pdf>
- **National Alliance for Nutrition & Physical Activity** <http://www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/nana.html> provides in depth sample policies and resources; see **Model Policies** at <http://www.schoolwellnesspolicies.org/>
- **Nemours Health & Prevention's *Planting the Seeds for Healthy Schools: Building Effective District Wellness Policies*** - a tool created by Nemours Health & Prevention Services to assist school wellness teams with reviewing, revising, implementing and monitoring your district's local wellness policy: <http://www.state.nj.us/health/fhs/shapingnj/work/shapingnj/schools/>
- **School Health Index** <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/SHI/> – structured around CDC's model of a coordinated school health program (CSHP), this is a self-assessment tool, not a tool for comparison to other schools. For more information on the School Health Index, See Part 3 of this Toolkit.

In addition, please note that Part 3 of this Toolkit includes sample tools and practices to translate school wellness policy and team priorities into successful practice.



PART 2: NUTRITION & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY COMPONENTS OF A SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICY

PART 2: THE NUTRITION & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY COMPONENTS OF A COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICY

This part of the Toolkit provides the policy framework for comprehensively addressing nutrition and physical activity in your local school wellness policy. Whether your School Wellness Team is ready to draft a new policy or revise an existing policy, this section provides a framework to ensure the policy's comprehensiveness and identifies relevant policy elements/actions and resources to assist your implementation efforts. It is important to inform appropriate constituents (parents, teachers, school administrators, community members, etc.) about each of the goals in the policy components addressed in this section of the Toolkit.

The framework presented in this Section encompasses the following five policy components:

1: NUTRITION

2: NUTRITION EDUCATION

3: PHYSICAL EDUCATION

4: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

5: OTHER WELLNESS ACTIVITIES

For each of the above policy areas, goals and recommended policy elements or actions are provided to guide your Team's efforts. In addition, resources are identified to deepen your understanding of specific goals and actions.

Sample NJ School Wellness Policies:

<http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/divisions/fn/pdf/guidelines.pdf>



1: NUTRITION

Nutrition programs, such as participation in a school breakfast program, have been proven to enhance daily nutrient intake, leading to improvements in academic performance and psychosocial functioning¹. Breakfast has also been associated with a lower BMI (body mass index) and improved overall health and academic achievement. This part of the policy framework ensures that your school is a part of the national movement to serve healthier school meals. It includes resources to ensure that your school meals, vending and à la carte items are consistent with the federal standards and provides tips to increase meal participation. There are also suggestions for non-food rewards for students' school accomplishments. You will find ideas to help maximize the use of healthy food choices in school celebrations and meetings, and to fundraise with non-food or healthy food options.

The Nutrition Component includes nine (9) goals.

¹ Klienman, et al. 2002. Diet, breakfast, and academic performance in children. *Annals of Nutrition & Metabolism*, 2002; 46(suppl 1): 24-30.



NUTRITION TOPIC: SCHOOL MEALS CRITERIA

Nutrition Goal 1: School meals meet established Federal Nutrition Standards and Healthier US Schools Criteria.

There are four (4) elements/actions to include in the school wellness policy to meet school meals criteria, as follows:

- 1: Plan and prepare menus to comply with Federal Nutrition Standards
- 2: Provide food service personnel with regular professional development on school meal programs, nutrition/health education, and wellness.
- 3: Share nutrition information about foods and beverages with school constituencies to the extent possible.
- 4: Promote participation in and application for locally or nationally-recognized awards programs.

School Meals Criteria Resources:

- **USDA: Food and Nutrition Service: Nutrition Standards for School Meals**
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/governance/legislation/nutritionstandards.htm>
- **USDA: FNS: Healthier US Schools Challenge**
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/healthierus/index.html>
- **Alliance for a Healthier Generation: Healthy Schools Program Framework; Criteria for Developing a Healthier School Environment**
https://schools.healthiergeneration.org/_asset/1062yk/07-278_HSPFramework.pdf
- **Breakfast Anytime, Anywhere Poll Questions**
<http://school.fueluptoplay60.com/tools/view.php?id=15749440>



NUTRITION TOPIC: INCREASE PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAM

Nutrition Goal 2: Increase meal participation rates by offering alternative service methods and quality, accessible, appealing meals.

There are eight (8) elements/actions to include in the wellness policy to meet the goal of increased participation rates, as follows:

1: Offer alternative service methods to increase school breakfast participation (i.e. Breakfast After the Bell which includes Breakfast in the Classroom, Grab n' Go Breakfast and Last Chance Breakfast).

Breakfast Participation Resources:

- USDA: Food and Nutrition Service: School Meals <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/>
- USDA: Food and Nutrition Service: School Breakfast Program <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/breakfast/>
- USDA: Food and Nutrition Service: School Breakfast Program: Strategies for School Breakfast Program Expansion <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Breakfast/expansion/expansionstrategies.htm>
- Eat Breakfast Change your Life! <http://www.breakfasteveryday.org/>
- School Nutrition Association: Growing School Breakfast Participation http://www.schoolnutrition.org/uploadedFiles/School_Nutrition/102_ResourceCenter/ResearchingSNIndustry/Research_by_Topic/GrowingBreakfast.pdf
- Food Research and Action Center: School Breakfast in America's Big Cities: School Year 2010-2011: http://frac.org/pdf/urban_school_breakfast_report_2012.pdf



- 2: Provide students an opportunity to have input on school menu items.
- 3: Conduct regular food tasting activities with students to introduce healthy menu items.
- 4: Feature menus with healthy choices that are flavorful and attractively presented.

Additional Meals Resources (Actions 2-4):

- **California Department of Education: Feed More Kids – Improve Program Participation:** <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/he/feedmorekids.asp>
- **Vermont Farm to School: A Guide to Taste Testing:** <http://www.vtfeed.org/materials/guide-taste-testing-local-foods-schools>
- **Taste Test Tip Sheet:** <http://school.fueluptoplay60.com/tools/view.php?id=15749505>

- 5: Promote the school meal programs to all constituencies.
- 6: Provide food safety training to all nutrition staff.
- 7: Provide food service personnel with regular professional development.
- 8: Help communities establish local farm to school networks, create school gardens and ensure that more local foods are used in the school setting.

Farm to School/Local Food Resources (Action 8):

- **New Jersey Farm to School Network:** <http://www.njfarmtoschool.org/> (click the School Gardens link at the top for more resources).
- **The National Farm to School Network:** <http://farmtoschool.org/>
- **Support for School Gardens:** [http://njfarm2school.pbworks.com/w/page/3692033/Support for School Garden Programs](http://njfarm2school.pbworks.com/w/page/3692033/Support%20for%20School%20Garden%20Programs) (for more information on school gardens, see Part 3 of the Toolkit).



NUTRITION TOPIC: VENDING AND À LA CARTE

Nutrition Goal 3: Vending and à la carte nutrition standards within the school meal programs will meet national, state, or locally recognized standards that are equivalent to or exceed the national standards. À la Carte refers to individually priced food items provided by school food service compared to meals that include multiple items for one price.

There are two (2) elements/actions to include in the wellness policy to meet vending and à la carte nutrition standards, as follows:

- 1: Encourage meal participation with à la carte foods and beverages to supplement school meals.
- 2: Ensure à la carte foods and beverages meet established nutrition standards and support healthy eating.

Vending and à La Carte within Meal Program Resources:

- USDA, Clarification of Competitive Foods and Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value, 2010, http://dpi.wi.gov/fns/pdf/ta_09_02_2011_s.pdf
- Alliance for a Healthier Generation, Healthy Schools Program Framework (p.5-7): https://schools.healthiergeneration.org/_asset/l062yk/07-278_HSPFramework.pdfhttps://schools.healthiergeneration.org/_asset/l062yk/07-278_HSPFramework.pdf
- Alliance for a Healthier Generation, Competitive Foods Guidelines: <http://www.healthiergeneration.org/companies.aspx?id=2540>
- Alliance for a Healthier Generation, Competitive Beverage Guidelines: <http://www.healthiergeneration.org/companies.aspx?id=1376>



NUTRITION TOPIC: VENDING (OUTSIDE OF THE SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAM)

Nutrition Goal 4: Vending nutrition standards outside the school meal programs will meet national, state, or locally recognized standards that are equivalent to or exceed the national standards.

There are two (2) elements/actions to include in the wellness policy to meet vending standards outside of the school meal program, as follows:

- 1: Ensure that all student-accessible vended foods meet established nutrition standards and support healthy eating.
- 2: Promote healthy choices for vended foods and beverages to ensure sustained sales volume.

Vending Resources (Action 2):

- Dairy Vending: <http://www.midwestdairy.com/0p39a14/dairy-vending/>
- CDC: Recommended Nutrition Standards for Foods Sold Outside of School Meal Programs: http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/nutrition/pdf/nutrition_factsheet_youth.pdf
- Nemours Health and Prevention Services, Healthy Vending Guide: <http://nemours.org/content/dam/nemours/www/filebox/service/preventive/nhps/resource/healthyvending.pdf>



NUTRITION TOPIC: CLASSROOM REWARDS

Nutrition Goal 5: Use non-food rewards for school accomplishments.

There are two (2) elements/actions to include in the wellness policy to promote the use of non-food rewards, as follows:

- 1: Provide the school system and Parent Teacher Association/Organization (PTA/PTO) with alternatives for food rewards.
- 2: Provide training to teachers on non-food related incentives.

Classroom Rewards Resources:

- **Action for Healthy Kids Virginia Healthy Rewards for Kids:**
<http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/for-schools/resources/files/vaafhk-healthy-rewards.pdf>
- **Constructive Classroom Rewards: Promoting Food Habits While Protecting Children's Health:** http://www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/constructive_rewards.pdf



NUTRITION TOPIC: SCHOOL PARTIES/CELEBRATIONS/MEETINGS (PCM)

Nutrition Goal 6: School parties/celebrations/meetings (PCM) and other school-sponsored events should maximize the use of healthy food choices.

There are three (3) elements/actions to include in the wellness policy to maximize the use of healthy food choices at PCM and other school-sponsored events, as follows:

1: Provide the school system with alternatives to food for celebrations.

PCM Resources (Action 1):

- **Action for Healthy Kids Virginia School Parties: Putting the Health into Fun:**
<http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/for-schools/resources/files/vaafhk-school-parties.pdf>
- **Healthy School Parties:** <http://www.healthiergeneration.org/schools.aspx?id=3296>

2: Establish food standards for school PCM and other school-sponsored events.

3: Provide recognition or an award to schools for meeting healthful food and beverage options for school PCM and other school-sponsored events.



NUTRITION TOPIC: FUNDRAISING

Nutrition Goal 7: School-based organizations and groups/clubs should raise at least 50% of funds with non-food or healthy food options. (Healthy Foods are defined as those that fit within the Federal Nutrition Standards, consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans).

There are three (3) elements/actions to include in the wellness policy to meet the goal of raising at least half of funds with non-food or healthy food options, as follows:

- 1: Provide the school system and PTA/PTO with alternatives to food fundraisers.
- 2: Work with local vendors to make healthy food options available for purchase.
- 3: Identify physical activity alternatives for fundraising using existing models.

Fundraising Resources:

- **Healthy Fundraising, Promoting a Healthy School Environment:**
<http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/assets/clubs/healthy-school-fundraising.pdf>
- **Action for Healthy Kids: Healthy Fundraisers for Schools:**
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdenutritran/download/pdf/WPHealthyFundraisingforSchools.pdf>
- **NJ Department of Agriculture: Wellness Rules in NJ: Model School Nutrition Policy Resources -2007 (see p.17):** <http://www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/fn/pdf/resources.pdf>
- **Wisconsin Action for Healthy Kids: Healthy Food Fundraising:**
<http://www.dpi.wisconsin.gov/fscp/pdf/neschfundrsg.pdf>
- **NJ Farm to School Network: Local Food Procurement:**
<http://www.njfarmtoschool.org/foodservice/local-procurement-and-contracts/>



NUTRITION TOPIC: DINING ENVIRONMENT

Nutrition Goal 8: Students will have adequate space and time to eat in a pleasant dining environment.

There are six (6) elements/actions to include in the wellness policy to ensure that students have adequate space and time to eat in a pleasant dining environment, as follows:

- 1: Provide facilities that are easy to access and adequate to meet demand.
- 2: Provide meal schedules that support healthy meal patterns.
- 3: Provide recess before lunch whenever possible.
- 4: Upgrade eating and serving areas to improve function and image of the cafeteria.
- 5: Allow 20 minutes to eat lunch and 20 minutes before or after for recess (K-8).
- 6: Provide adequate staff to allow students to purchase meals quickly and minimize time standing in the lunch line.

Dining Environment Resources (Actions 1& 2):

- **Cornell University: Food and Brand Lab: Smarter Lunchrooms: Subtle Solutions to Mindless Eating in Schools:** <http://smarterlunchrooms.org/pdfs/Suggestions.pdf>
- **Improving the Dining Experience in Schools:** [http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/Dining Experience 09 10.pdf](http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/Dining%20Experience%2009%2010.pdf)
- **Changing the Scene: Improving the School Nutrition Environment:** <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/guide.pdf>
- **When Nudging in the Lunch Line Might be a Good Thing:** <http://www.ers.usda.gov/AmberWaves/March09/Features/LunchLine.htm>

Meal Timing/Recess Resources (Action 3):

- **Benefits of Recess before Lunch:** [http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/hsmrs/South Dakota/Benefits of Recess Before Lunch.pdf](http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/hsmrs/SouthDakota/Benefits%20of%20Recess%20Before%20Lunch.pdf)



NUTRITION TOPIC: FOOD MARKETING

Nutrition Goal 9: School-based marketing, on school grounds, will be consistent with Federal Nutrition Guidelines

There are two (2) elements/actions to include in the wellness policy to address school-based marketing on school grounds, as follows:

- 1: All foods marketed in schools must meet the federal nutrition standards for school meals and/or à la carte foods.
- 2: Encourage schools to market/promote healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low fat dairy products.

Food Marketing Resources:

- **Marketing Foods and Beverages in Schools: The Effect of School Food Policy on Students' Overweight Measures:**
<http://www.journals.marketingpower.com/doi/abs/10.1509/jppm.29.2.204?prevSearch=%5Ball%3A+University+of+Nebraska%5D+AND+%5BsearchText%3A+University+of+Nebraska%5D&searchHistoryKey=>
- **Food Marketing to Children:**
http://www.cspinet.org/new/pdf/food_marketing_to_children.pdf
- **Food for Thought: Interagency Working Group Proposal on Food Marketing to Children:**
<http://www.ftc.gov/os/2011/04/110428foodmarketfactsheet.pdf>
- **National Food Service Management Institute: Marketing in the Middle Grades: Adolescent and Food Habits and Marketing Strategies that Work:**
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdenutritran/download/pdf/Marketiiddlegrade.pdf>



2: NUTRITION EDUCATION

This part of the policy framework promotes the creation of consistent messages that link the classroom to the cafeteria with meaningful life lessons, specifically through inclusion of lifelong wellness in health education, collaboration with community partners to enhance nutrition education efforts, and curriculum integration across subject areas.

As students learn where their food comes from, have the opportunity to taste fresh foods from the garden or local farm, and choose the foods they put on their tray, their interest in why food is important and how it affects their health and futures will broaden and deepen.

Join the movement to create a healthier school environment enhanced by supportive nutrition messages. Watch the changes happen! We hope you enjoy using the resources to empower the children in your community to make healthy decisions and achieve lifelong wellness.

The Nutrition Education Component addresses three main topics, each with one goal.



NUTRITION EDUCATION TOPIC: LIFELONG WELLNESS

Nutrition Education Goal 1: Students in grades K-12 will receive a comprehensive program in health education focused on the skills needed to adopt healthy eating behaviors and lifelong wellness practices.

There are four (4) elements/actions to include in the school wellness policy to address lifelong wellness, as follows:

- 1: Nutrition education topics are integrated into the comprehensive health education program taught at every grade level. Nutrition education is part of not only health education classes, but also classroom instruction in other subjects, with links to school meal programs, school foods, physical education, and health-related community services.
- 2: The nutrition education program is based on theories and methods proven by published research to improve nutrition behaviors and is consistent with the state's health education standards.
- 3: The nutrition instruction program design includes an emphasis on healthy eating behaviors, physical activity, and screen time reduction.
- 4: Nutrition education is developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant, and includes participatory, enjoyable nutrition promotion activities such as taste testing, farm visits, school gardens, etc.

Lifelong Wellness Resources:

- **Choose My Plate:** website with national guidelines for physical activity and daily nutrition recommendations, as well as tools like the Super-Tracker for planning and analyzing your daily diet and activity. <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/>
- **USDA resources:** include a variety of lesson plans and curricula, as well as reports and studies about nutrition education, grant information, and ethnic and cultural resources. http://fnic.nal.usda.gov/nal_display/index.php?info_center=4&tax_level=2&tax_subject=270&topic_id=1337
- **The USDA's Team Nutrition:** a resource library for educators with age appropriate nutrition education materials. <http://teamn nutrition.usda.gov/educators.html>
- **Dole's SuperKids:** contains lesson plans that can be integrated into each school subject, along with games, comics, recipes, fitness tips, music and videos for kids, parents and educators. <http://www.dole.com/DoleHTMLSuperKids/tabid/1173/Default.aspx>



NUTRITION EDUCATION TOPIC: COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

Nutrition Education Goal 2: Schools will collaborate with community partners to enhance nutrition education efforts.

There is one element/action to include in the school wellness policy to address community collaboration, as follows:

- 1: Faculty work with outside resources and other community partners to reinforce classroom lessons (cafeteria taste-testing, farm tours, cooking demonstrations, etc.).

Community Collaboration Resources:

- **Communities in Schools:** <http://www.communitiesinschools.org/>
- **Farm to School:** <http://www.farmtoschool.org/> (see Part 3 of Toolbox for more information on Farm to School and School Gardens)
- **Chefs Move to Schools:** <http://www.chefsmovetoschools.org/>
<http://www.letsmove.gov/chefs-move-schools>



NUTRITION EDUCATION TOPIC: CURRICULUM INTEGRATION

Nutrition Education Goal 3: Nutrition education is integrated into other subject areas besides health.

There is one element/action to include in the school wellness policy to address curriculum integration, as follows:

- 1: Work with core subject area teachers to incorporate nutrition education into course material (science, social studies, math, and language arts).

Curriculum Integration Resources:

A comprehensive curriculum of nutrition education, provided by educators certified to teach health education, supports normal growth and development, the prevention of disease, and the development of life-long healthy eating behaviors. The New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards, K-12, include a sequential process of delivering education about nutrition.

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/cccs/>



3: PHYSICAL EDUCATION

This part of the policy framework is centered on participation in quality physical education (PE) programs, as defined by the National Association for Sport and Physical Education¹, as the foundation of a comprehensive school physical activity program.

Quality physical education uses a planned, sequential program of curricula and instruction, based on state and national PE standards so that all students, including those with disabilities, develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to maintain a physically active lifestyle. State-certified health and physical education instructors should teach physical education.

The Physical Education Component has one goal.

¹ See <http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/publications/teachingTools/PAvsPE.cfm>



PHYSICAL EDUCATION TOPIC: QUALITY PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical Education Goal 1: All students in grades K-12 will participate in a quality physical education program.

There are five (5) elements/actions to include in the school wellness policy to address quality physical education, as follows:

- 1: Provide physical education teachers with professional development opportunities that enhance their ability to provide quality physical education to students.
- 2: Students in physical education will be instructed and assessed in foundational motor and fitness skills.
- 3: Students in physical education class should be moderately to vigorously physically active for at least 50% of the class period.
- 4: Students will be instructed using diverse and developmentally appropriate physical activities to meet their individual needs and interests during physical education class.
- 5: Increase the capacity for schools to provide an environment for physical education that is conducive to learning with respect to class size, equitable space, sufficient equipment, technology, safety and cleanliness.

Physical Education Resources:

- Let's Move in School: <http://www.aahperd.org/letsmoveinschool/> (See Part 3 of Toolkit for more information on this tool)
- National Association for Sport and Physical Education: <http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/>
- NJAHPERD: <http://www.njahperd.org/>
- NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/cccs/progressions/2/>
- NJ DOE Health & Physical Education Model Curriculum: <http://www.nj.gov/education/aps/cccs/chpe/>
- Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans: <http://www.health.gov/paguidelines/guidelines/>
- Instructional Practice Guidelines: <http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/standards/nationalGuidelines/upload/Appropriate-Practices-grid.pdf>
- Fitness Gram: <http://www.fitnessgram.net/programoverview/> (See Part 3 of Toolkit for more information on this tool)



4: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

This part of the policy framework reflects the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' recommendation that children and adolescents (aged 6-17) participate in 60 minutes or more of physical activity daily. Schools have an opportunity to help students follow this recommendation by providing a comprehensive physical activity program that includes a quality physical education program, recess, physical activity breaks, physical activity integrated into classroom instruction, intramural and interscholastic sports, walk- and bike-to-school plans, and before- and after-school physical activity programs.

There is one goal in the Physical Activity Component.



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY TOPIC: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL DAY

Physical Activity Goal 1: All students in grades K-12 will have opportunities outside of physical education class to be physically active during the school day.

There are six (6) elements/actions to include in the school wellness policy to address physical activity throughout the school day, as follows:

- 1: Provide at least one 20 minute recess, preferably before lunch, to all students in grades K-5.
- 2: Provide resources to school staff to assist them in providing physical activity breaks in the classroom and throughout the school day.
- 3: Provide professional development to school staff on how to integrate physical activity into classroom instruction.
- 4: Encourage schools to collaborate with their local Safe Routes to School coordinator to develop walk- and bike-to-school plans, programs, and activities.
- 5: Increase the capacity for schools to provide an environment that promotes physical activity.
- 6: Encourage joint use agreements to maximize opportunities for physical activity before and after school.

Physical Activity Resources:

- **Let's Move in School:** <http://www.aahperd.org/letsmoveinschool/> (See Part 3 of Toolkit for more information on this tool)
- **National Association for Sport and Physical Education:** <http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/>
- **NJAHPERD:** <http://www.njahperd.org/>
- **Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans:** <http://www.health.gov/paguidelines/guidelines/>
- **Alliance for a Healthier Generation:** <http://www.healthiergeneration.org/schools.aspx>
- **Safe Routes to School:** <http://www.nj.gov/transportation/community/srts/> (See Part 3 of Toolkit for more information on this tool)
- **Joint Use agreements:** for more information, see Part 3 of this Toolkit.



5: OTHER WELLNESS ACTIVITIES

School districts have the ability to communicate with and educate a broad cross-section of the communities that they serve. Not only does school policy affect students, the district can interact with and consider staff, parents, and other community members in the implementation of wellness policies. In particular, local wellness policy should consider the health and well-being of staff members and should incorporate and implement activities and policies that support efforts by staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

In addition to the School Wellness Team, each district/school should consider establishing a staff wellness committee composed of at least one staff member, school health council member, local hospital representative, dietitian or other health professional, recreation program representative, union representative, and employee benefits specialist. The committee should develop, promote, and oversee a plan to promote staff health and wellness. The plan should be based on input solicited from school staff and should outline ways to encourage healthy eating, physical activity, and other elements of a healthy lifestyle among school staff.

This part of the policy framework ensures that school wellness policies encompass staff wellness and provide opportunities to integrate activities within family and community structures, including collaborative school/community gardening opportunities, community meals, and other activities.

There are two goals in the Other Wellness Component.



OTHER WELLNESS TOPIC: STAFF WELLNESS

Other Wellness Goal 1: School environment promotes healthy lifestyle for school staff.

There are nine (9) elements/actions to include in the school wellness policy to address staff wellness, as follows:

- 1: District has staff wellness committee that meets at least 2 times per year.
- 2: The committee develops and implements a plan to promote staff health and wellness in schools.
- 3: Staff is provided with opportunities to participate in physical activity programs
- 4: Staff has opportunities to participate in healthy eating programs.
- 5: Food options in staff lounges and at staff meetings meet the competitive food guidelines.
- 6: District markets and promotes staff wellness programs and provides incentives for participation.
- 7: Staff is educated about their role as models for students with regard to healthy lifestyle habits.
- 8: District has recognition program in place for school personnel that exemplify healthy role models.
- 9: Staff is provided with information and materials about healthy eating and physical activity for use in their daily lives and classrooms.

Staff Wellness Committee & Staff Wellness Plan Resources:

- **Definition of school staff wellness committee (see p.10):**
https://schools.healthiergeneration.org/_asset/I062yk/07-278_HSPFramework.pdf
- **Staff Wellness Plan example components:**
<http://www.schoolwellnesspolicies.org/resources/SchoolStaffWellness.pdf>
- **Design an Employee Wellness Program:**
<http://healthiergeneration.org/schools.aspx?id=3394>



OTHER WELLNESS TOPIC: FAMILY AND COMMUNITY WELLNESS

Other Wellness Goal 2: Integrate school wellness policies and activities into broader community.

There are six (6) elements/actions to include in the school wellness policy to address family and community wellness, as follows:

- 1: Develop an on-site community vegetable garden.
- 2: Involve the community in gardening and landscaping on school grounds.
- 3: Hold community meals featuring a variety of ethnic foods.
- 4: Sponsor a family wellness event with a local chef to teach about making healthy family meals and to provide other interactive, fun family-oriented wellness activities.
- 5: Sponsor community service projects encouraging physical activity.
- 6: Limit non-instructional television/screen time.

Family & Community Wellness Resources:

- **Let's Move-Start a Community Garden:** <http://www.letsmove.gov/start-community-garden>
- **New Jersey Farm to School Network, School Garden Checklist:** <http://www.njfarmtoschool.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/school%20garden%20checklist-1.pdf>
- **Let's Move Chef's to School-Recipes for Success:** <http://www.letsmove.gov/recipes-success>
- **Guidance on TV Viewing Time:**
<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/Media/pages/Where-We-Stand-TV-Viewing-Time.aspx>
<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/107/2/423.full>
<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/sleeping-angels/200908/watching-tv-leads->



PART 3: PROMISING TOOLS & PRACTICES - TRANSLATING POLICY INTO PRACTICE

"Promising practices" refers to small or large changes to existing approaches to service delivery, in this case related to school wellness. They may be based on evidence of positive results from formal evaluations or driven by creative experimentation. Sometimes, promising practices prompt the development of entirely new ideas, culminating in "A-ha!" moments. It is our hope that the tools and practices in this section of the Toolkit inspire creative implementation of healthier school environments.

The sample tools and practices presented herein are not a comprehensive list, nor do they include all of the resources identified in Part 2 of the Toolkit. Rather, these tools are consistent with the School Strategies prioritized by the *ShapingNJ* Partnership and, more importantly, have been selected to illustrate how schools can successfully translate wellness policy into practice. We hope the tools and practices highlighted in this section provide a range of opportunities for schools transitioning from policy development to policy implementation.

The sample practices and tools highlighted in this section of the Toolkit are:

Tools That Encourage Active School Wellness Teams

As described in Part 1 of the Toolkit, these include assessment and planning tools to assist teams with evaluating current efforts, and developing action plans and priorities to create healthier school environments:

- ✓ School Health Index
- ✓ Coordinated School Health Model Framework
- ✓ The Alliance for a Healthier Generation Healthy Schools Program Framework

Tools That Make It Easier For Schools to Serve Appealing, Healthy Child-Friendly Meals

The following sample tools include innovative practices to translate school nutrition policies (detailed in Part 2 of the Toolkit) into practices that enhance both access to and student acceptance of healthier foods in the school setting:

- ✓ The Healthier US School Challenge
- ✓ Breakfast in the Classroom
- ✓ Farm to School



- ✓ School Gardens
- ✓ School Salad Bars

Tools That Promote Comprehensive Physical Activity & Quality Physical Education Programs in Schools

These sample tools help schools translate school physical education and physical activity policies into practices that engage all students:

- ✓ Fitness Assessment tools, such as Fitness Gram
- ✓ Let's Move in Schools
- ✓ Safe Routes to School
- ✓ Joint Use Agreements

...And a Multipurpose Tool That Spans Nutrition & Physical Activity

This is an example of a multi-purpose tool that addresses both nutrition education and physical activity:

- ✓ Fuel Up to Play 60



TOOLS THAT ENCOURAGE ACTIVE SCHOOL WELLNESS TEAMS

These sample tools will assist School Wellness Teams in assessing their school environment, developing an action plan, and tracking progress over time. More specifically, these tools will help teams focus their implementation efforts by:

- Identifying strengths and weaknesses in the school environment;
- Prioritizing practices to be changed or adopted;
- Documenting and supporting the joint decisions made by the team; and,
- Tracking policy implementation and progress over time.



TOOL: School Health Index

Topic: Nutrition, physical activity, and more; this tool spans a broad range of health and safety policies and programs.

Audience: A tool for collective use by the School Wellness Team

Description: The *School Health Index (SHI): Self-Assessment & Planning Guide* is a self-assessment and planning tool that schools can use to improve their health and safety policies and programs. This tool is not specific to Nutrition, Physical Activity or Obesity Prevention.

How it Works: Encourages a School Wellness Team to assess their health environment together.

Learn how to Conduct a School Health Index (SHI):

- ✓ **Assemble a School Wellness Team.** The Team should consist of teachers, administrators, other school staff, parents, students, community members, the school nurse and food service director or manager.
- ✓ **Introduce the SHI Tool to the School Health Team.** There are 8 modules included in the assessment: physical education, health education, nutrition services, health services, counseling and psycho-social health services, the school environment, family and community involvement, and staff wellness. The SHI also addresses cross-cutting questions for five (5) health topics: physical activity, nutrition, tobacco, asthma and safety/injury.
- ✓ **The School Health Team completes the 8 self-assessment modules.** Many schools complete two modules at a time. Some schools complete four modules in two meeting sessions. Each module takes 1-1 1/2 hours to complete. Schools work at their own pace; progress will depend on the depth of the team's discussions.
- ✓ **The School Health Team identifies two or three priority areas** that need to be strengthened and develops an action plan. The action plan consists of identifying the action/activity to be accomplished, the steps needed to get the activity completed, the person responsible and the timeline.

Unique Features: Includes a tool for elementary and middle/high school.



What Users Say: The SHI assessment and action plan process takes most School Health Teams a total of 12-15 hours to complete; one tip is to plan to complete the tool in multiple meetings.

Links: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/shi/index.htm>



TOOL: Coordinated School Health Model Framework

Topic: A comprehensive eight-component wellness model that addresses nutrition and physical activity, as well as a broader range of topics.

Audience: School Wellness Teams

Description: Coordinated school health (CSH) is recommended by CDC as a strategy to improve school health programs. CDC defines CSH as a systematic approach to improving the health and well-being of all students so they can fully participate and be successful in school. The process involves bringing together school administrators, teachers, other staff, students, families, and community members to:

- ✓ Assess health needs;
- ✓ Set priorities; and,
- ✓ Plan, implement, and evaluate all health-related activities.

CSH typically integrates health promotion efforts across eight interrelated components that already exist to some extent in most schools. These components include: health education, physical education, health services, nutrition services, counseling, psychological and social services, healthy and safe school environments, staff wellness, and family and community involvement.

Unique Features: The Coordinated School Health Model framework is a gold standard to be aware of as school wellness teams define a long-term vision. Coordinated School Health is a comprehensive approach and embraces school wellness beyond the scope of Nutrition and Physical Activity.

Link: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/cshp/>



TOOL: Healthy Schools Program

Topic: Nutrition & Physical Activity

Audience: This tool is designed for collective use by the School Wellness Team.

Description: The Healthy Schools Program encourages schools to follow these Six Steps to a Healthier School- the “roadmap” for making school health changes:

- ✓ **Convene** a School Wellness Council;
- ✓ **Assess** your current efforts using the Healthy Schools Program Inventory;
- ✓ **Create** an action plan;
- ✓ **Explore** resources;
- ✓ **Take action**; and,
- ✓ **Celebrate** success!

How It Works: It is a circular journey where schools continuously take a status check, work on making improvements, learn from successes and challenges, and keep pushing the needle forward. When schools repeat the cycle each year, it becomes embedded in the culture of the school and efforts to become a healthy school are sustained.

Link: <http://www.healthiergeneration.org/schools.aspx>



TOOLS THAT MAKE IT EASIER FOR SCHOOLS TO SERVE APPEALING, HEALTHY CHILD-FRIENDLY MEALS

The national movement to provide healthier foods in schools has resulted in several areas of suggested practices to create access to healthier kid-friendly foods. Although schools will likely prioritize a single practice at a time, schools that are most successful often have a broader vision to create a healthier food environment that includes a school garden, purchasing of locally grown food, and provision of a variety of fruits and vegetables via a Fruit and Veggie Bar.

A Food and Nutrition Service's (USDA) report found that most school-aged children did not eat the recommended number of daily servings for fruits and vegetables. Programs like Farm to School, School Gardens and *Let's Move* Salad Bars to Schools are effective tools for increasing students' acceptance of healthy food by providing hands-on learning opportunities for children to grow, touch, and taste fresh, local fruits and vegetables.

Farm to School is a way for your school to establish relationships with local farms, where schools can find many educational opportunities for their students, as well as local produce for healthier school meals. Students can also grow their own food through a school garden program and learn first-hand where food comes from.

When it comes to lunch meal options, salad bars are a great place for kids to try the new fruits and vegetables that they are growing and learning about. Simply incorporating salad bars as part of school lunch has shown to increase fruit and vegetable consumption an average of 1.2 servings per student per day¹. Currently, only 21 percent of U.S. schools offer a salad bar at least once a week. Be among the first to offer a healthy and appetizing salad bar to your students!

¹ Slusser, Wendy. 1998. *How to Develop a Salad Bar for School Lunch Menu Programs*. UCLA: School of Public Health.



TOOL: Healthier US School Challenge

Topic: Nutrition and Physical Activity

Audience: School Foodservice Director, Classroom Teachers, and School Wellness Teams

Description: The Healthier US School Challenge is a voluntary certification initiative established in 2004 to recognize those schools participating in the National School Lunch Program that have created healthier school environments through promotion of nutrition and physical activity. It includes an application for schools in the National School Lunch Program to apply for a voluntary USDA certification in recognition of the school's effort to create a healthier school environment through promotion of nutrition and physical activity.

How It Works: Schools can use this tool at their own pace to streamline the menu planning process and to take other steps to gradually create a healthier school environment.

Unique Features:

- ✓ **A menu planning tool** to ensure meals meet standards for new federal meal standards and more.
- ✓ **A valuable learning process** that helps the school wellness team focus on areas needing improvement.
- ✓ **Includes incentive** of a monetary award and eligibility for free school salad bar.

Success Stories: As of January 2012, there were 20 award-winning schools in New Jersey. For a current list of New Jersey award-winners, see <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/healthierus/NewJersey.html>

Link: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/healthierus/index.html>



TOOL: Breakfast in the Classroom

Topic: Nutrition / School Breakfast

Audience: School Foodservice, School Wellness Teams, and School Administrators

Description: Learn how to provide access to school breakfast without reducing teaching time.

How It Works: Breakfast in the Classroom makes breakfast available to all students, regardless of income level – and it's served after the opening bell. This makes it easier for all students to easily participate. Learn how to serve breakfast during homeroom at the start of the school day, or other options like grab and go -where students can grab a breakfast from a cart in the hallway and enjoy it in their classroom while the teacher takes attendance, collects homework or teaches a short lesson plan.

Unique Features:

- ✓ **Higher Participation** – More students eat breakfast.
- ✓ **Better Nutrition** – A healthy breakfast beats skipping breakfast.
- ✓ **Better BMI** (Body Mass Index) – Works as an effective tool in the fight against childhood obesity.
- ✓ **Better attendance**, behavior and attention.
- ✓ **Builds social skills.**
- ✓ **Embraced** by busy parents – that their children receive an inexpensive breakfast.
- ✓ **Easy** execution for teachers and school administrators alike.

Success Stories: See how Perth Amboy successfully implemented this tool:

<http://www.acnj.org/admin.asp?uri=2081&action=15&di=2117&ext=pdf&view=yes>

Link: <http://www.breakfastintheclassroom.org/>



TOOL: Farm to School

Topic: Nutrition/Nutrition Education/ Physical Activity

Audience: Food Service Director, Classroom Teachers

Description: Farm to School's mission is to improve school food, promote locally grown produce and educate through school gardens. Kids learn about the benefits of locally grown food that looks fresh and tastes great. Farm to School is broadly defined as a program that connects schools (K-12) and local farms with the objectives of serving healthy meals in school cafeterias, improving student nutrition, providing agriculture, health and nutrition education opportunities, and supporting local and regional farmers. More than 30 million children eat a school lunch five days a week, 180 days a year. If school lunch can taste great and support the local community, it is a win-win for everyone.

How it Works: The National Farm to School Network provides regional support including training and technical assistance, information services, networking, and support for policy, media, and marketing activities. Some programs include school gardens and composting, others integrate food education in the classroom, with the unifying principle of ensuring that school children have the opportunity to eat healthy foods from local farms.

Farm to School programs connect school meals with local agriculture by purchasing directly from local farmers in a strategy that increases the profitability of farming, improves the quality of school meals, and re-creates relationships in the community among consumers and the people who grow their food. The farm to school relationship provides nutrition education opportunities that help children understand where their food comes from and how their food choices impact their bodies, the environment, and their communities at large.

Link: <http://www.farmtoschool.org/>



TOOL: School Gardens

Topic: Nutrition - Kids learn where their food comes from as they learn to grow and taste fresh, delicious foods.

Audience: Students, Classroom Teachers, PTA, community

Description: School gardens offer opportunities for fun and physical activity while also serving as an important educational tool to help students understand how healthy food is produced and where their food comes from. Some research suggests that, when used as part of a nutrition education strategy, school gardens can increase knowledge of fruits and vegetables and influence behavior change among children.

How it Works: Whether using a window box to grow herbs in the classroom or turning a portion of the school property into a full-fledged vegetable garden, the hands-on experience of growing something and having the opportunity to pick it is changing how children see fruits and vegetables and the living world they inhabit.

Unique Features & Benefits:

- ✓ Address multiple learning styles while teaching about natural processes, tools and their proper use, where food comes from and nutrition
- ✓ Link farm to school in the Garden State
- ✓ Improve environmental awareness
- ✓ Demonstrate sustainability
- ✓ Promote garden foods and good nutrition
- ✓ Increase physical activity
- ✓ Teach patience and responsibility
- ✓ Teach students to work cooperatively and improve social skills
- ✓ Build classroom relationships, team work and school spirit
- ✓ Support interdisciplinary education
- ✓ Increase self-esteem and self-worth
- ✓ Serve as an outdoor science lab
- ✓ Save money while improving nutrition
- ✓ Beautify the school environment
- ✓ Involve the community, parents and administrators



Success Stories:

- Nine NJ schools received grants to build school gardens and promote fruit and vegetable consumption through interactive lessons and activities, which link classroom education to the foods served in the cafeteria. To learn more: <http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/news/press/2011/approved/press110406.html>
- AtlantiCare awards 27 mini-grants to support school garden and wellness activities in NJ communities: <http://www.atlanticare.org/index.php/news/391-atlanticare-awards-27-mini-grants-to-support-school-garden-and-wellness-activities-in-atlantic-cape-may-and-ocean-counties>

Learn More:

- Sample Policy: <http://www.nifarmtoschool.org/resources/farm-to-school-policy/>
- Starting a Garden <http://www.nifarmtoschool.org/school-gardens/starting-a-garden/>
- Support for School Gardens
<http://nifarm2school.pbworks.com/w/page/3692033/Support%20for%20School%20Garden%20Programs>
- Princeton School Gardens Cooperative <http://www.psgcoop.org/>



TOOL: *Let's Move Salad Bars to Schools*

Topic: Nutrition – Increase Fruit and Vegetable Consumption

Audience: School Wellness Team members, Food Service Director and others that represent schools in the National School Lunch Program (Grades K-12)

Description: A school salad bar creates an opportunity for kids to sample new fruits and vegetables, become familiar and comfortable with them and start enjoying a variety of healthy foods each day. Transform your cafeteria into a classroom and educate your students' palates while meeting federal nutrition standards and promoting healthy foods.

Unique Features & Benefits: Both academic research and actual experience in schools show that children respond to salad bars by trying new items, incorporating greater variety into their diets, and increasing their daily consumption of fruits and vegetables. Children learn to make decisions that carry over outside of school and into the future. The *Let's Move Salad Bars to Schools* Program is a national website where schools can register to request a salad bar and sponsors can locate interested schools and provide sponsorship.

How it Works: Implementing a Salad Bar in your school is one of the fastest ways to create fresh food access to all students purchasing a reimbursable meal. In fact the "salad" can be much more than greens and fruit. By utilizing USDA Commodity foods like diced chicken, tuna, cheese, egg products and grain products, the Salad Bar reinvents itself as a reimbursable meal. Using the bar to introduce children to food in its fresh state and to educate students' palates by offering some special seasonal salads makes fast work of transforming your cafeteria into a classroom enjoyed by all every day. "Salad Bars the Lunch Box Guide" is a valuable toolkit that walks schools through equipment selection, regulations, federal recipe requirements, purchasing, budgeting, staff training, marketing and engaging students. By utilizing USDA Commodity foods, the Salad Bar reinvents itself as a reimbursable meal and even a money saver! The toolkit also demonstrates how salad bars can be prepared and maintained safely.

Funding Sources: A school salad bar can be sponsored for \$2500

Unique Features & Benefits: When offered multiple fruit and vegetable choices, children respond by trying new items, incorporating greater variety into their diets, and increasing their daily consumption of fruits and vegetables.



The benefit of salad bars in schools extends beyond the healthy foods consumed during the breakfast or lunch hour. Increased daily access to a variety of fruits and vegetables provides a personal experience about choices that can shape behavior far beyond the school lunch line. Children learn to make decisions that carry over outside of school, providing a platform for a lifetime of healthy snack and meal choices.

Links:

<https://saladbars2schools.org/>

http://www.astphnd.org/resource_files/374/374_resource_file6.pdf

[http://www.thelunchbox.org/sites/default/files/Salad Bars-The Lunch Box Guide v1 0.pdf](http://www.thelunchbox.org/sites/default/files/Salad%20Bars-The%20Lunch%20Box%20Guide%20v1%200.pdf)

Success Stories: <https://saladbars2schools.org/media>

Learn More:

- Fundraising Tips https://saladbars2schools.org/pdf/fundraising_tips.pdf
- Request a salad bar at: <http://www.saladbars2schools.org/apply>
- *Salad Bars in Schools* - Implementation Resource:
http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/healthy/5_Day/salad_bars.pdf
- *Best Practices: Handling Fresh Produce in Schools*:
http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/safety/pdf/best_practices.pdf
- *The Lunch Box* - Resources on starting a salad bar at your school:
<http://www.thelunchbox.org/resources/salad-bar>
- How to start a Farmer's Market Salad Bar Program:
[http://www.thelunchbox.org/sites/default/files/Riverside FM Salad Bar Handbook Edited 2010 .pdf](http://www.thelunchbox.org/sites/default/files/Riverside%20FM%20Salad%20Bar%20Handbook%20Edited%202010.pdf)



TOOLS THAT PROMOTE COMPREHENSIVE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND QUALITY PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN SCHOOLS

These tools are examples of some of the ways that schools can translate quality physical education and comprehensive physical activity policies into practice. These tools include those that promote physical activity opportunities and learning such as recess, classroom-based movement, curriculum-integration, physical activity before and after school, and quality physical education programs.



TOOL: Fitness Gram



Topic: Quality Physical Education

Audience: Students in Grades 4-12, and School Wellness Teams

Description: Fitness Gram is software available for purchase that helps to assess students' physical fitness in the areas of aerobic capacity, muscular strength, muscular endurance, flexibility, and body composition. It is also a fitness-reporting program.

How it Works:

- The data is collected and then analyzed to suggest areas for improvement, when appropriate.
- The programs are also useful in providing feedback to children and parents, and maintaining accurate and comprehensive records over time. There is also a component that allows students to record their activity for a day and emphasizes the need for 60 minutes of physical activity a day.

Unique Features & Benefits: Students track their progress in achieving and maintaining their own level of fitness. Students do not compare their fitness level with other students.

Learn More: There are a variety of software options available with technical support. Learn about options for an individual school or district. www.fitnessgram.net



TOOL: Let's Move in Schools



Topic: Physical Education and Physical Activity; a tool to establish a comprehensive school physical activity program

Audience: Physical Education Teachers and others interested in promoting a comprehensive school physical activity program

Description: A tool to support every school's ability to provide a Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program (CSPAP).

How it works: The first step is to register on the website. Next, download the tools or purchase a toolkit.

Unique Features:

- Places a priority on students learning skills and gaining confidence to be physically active for a lifetime.
- Provides support to teachers, principals, superintendents, school boards, and parents to help kids to become more physically educated and active in school.
- Highlights the 5 components of a CSPAP:
 - ✓ Physical Education
 - ✓ Physical Activity During School
 - ✓ Physical Activity Before and After School
 - ✓ Staff Involvement
 - ✓ Family and Community Involvement



Benefits:

- Students can achieve the goal of participating in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity each day through a variety of school-based physical activity opportunities.
- School Staff teach students to coordinate their fitness opportunities beyond the school day as they practice what they learned in physical education.
- Students are fully physically educated and well equipped for a lifetime of physical activity.

Learn More About Other Features:

- ✓ How to implement LMIS tool kits
- ✓ Monthly physical education online teacher toolkits
- ✓ Information on how to approach administrators to join the program
- ✓ Templates for press releases, etc.
- ✓ Videos to share

Link: <http://www.ahperd.org/letsmoveinschool/>



TOOL: Safe Routes to School

Topic: Physical Activity

Audience: School Wellness Teams, School Administrators, PTA, Local Green Teams

Description: Providing safe and accessible paths for children to get to school on foot or bike can help them to gain confidence and independence, as well as increase physical activity and wellness. Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a federal, state and local effort to improve the health and well-being of children by enabling and encouraging children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school. SRTS seeks to make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative, thereby encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age.

When routes are safe, walking or biking to and from school is an easy way to get the regular physical activity children need for good health. Research has shown:

- ✓ Physically active kids have improved mood and concentration, a stronger self-image and more self-confidence.
- ✓ Physically active kids have fewer chronic health problems and report lower levels of smoking and alcohol consumption.
- ✓ Walking or riding is children's preferred method of getting to school.

How it Works: People interested in the program are encouraged to form a team (may be the school wellness team or a subgroup of it), hold a kickoff meeting to gather interest, gather information and identify barriers to walking and cycling to school, find solutions, make a plan, fund the plan, and act on the plan. It is also important to continually evaluate the plan, make improvements, and keep moving.

Unique Features & Benefits:

- ✓ On-line guide available.
- ✓ Training course available in person or online (cost is \$5000).
- ✓ Handouts and resources available for download and include talking points for a variety of audiences.



- ✓ Sample surveys for gathering data from students and parents.

Success Stories: To see examples of how NJ communities are embracing Safe Routes to School and succeeding with their programs, see:

<http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/data-central/success-stories/new-jersey>

Funding Sources: Administered by the Federal Highway Administration, SRTS funds are distributed to states based on student enrollment, with no state receiving less than \$1 million per year. SRTS funds can be used for both infrastructure projects and non-infrastructure activities. NJ funding may be obtained through NJDOT for infrastructure projects or through the NJ Safe Routes to School Resource Center and their TMA Regional Coordinators for educational and encouragement programs. Mini-grants are also available through national organizations and funding may also be available locally. Most programs benefit from a combination of the above.

Link: New Jersey Safe Routes to School Resource Center: www.saferoutesnj.org

Learn More:

- ✓ Sample Optional Policy: Available on the NJ SRTS Resource Center website.
- ✓ NJ Resources: <http://policy.rutgers.edu/vtc/srts/>
- ✓ Regional Trainings & Technical Assistance <http://policy.rutgers.edu/vtc/srts/training/>
- ✓ NJ SRTS Toolkit: <http://policy.rutgers.edu/vtc/srts/toolbox/>
- ✓ Learn About National Resources: <http://saferoutesinfo.org/>
 - Online guide: <http://guide.saferoutesinfo.org/index.cfm>
 - Funding Portal: <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/funding-portal>



TOOL: Joint use Agreements

Topic: Physical Activity Before and After School

Audience: School Wellness Teams, School Administrators, PTA, Local Green Teams

Description: Many communities lack safe, adequate places for children and their families to exercise and play. Schools might have a variety of recreational facilities, gymnasiums, playgrounds, fields, courts, tracks— but many districts close their property to the public after school hours because of concerns about costs, vandalism, security, maintenance, and liability in the event of injury.

How it Works: A joint use agreement is a formal agreement between two separate government entities, often a school district and a city or county setting forth the terms and conditions for the shared use of public property.

Unique Features & Benefits:

- ✓ Playing Smart guidebook (includes info on how to begin a JUA, funding, overcoming obstacles, language to be used, and more)
- ✓ Checklist for developing a Joint Use Agreement:
<http://www.nplanonline.org/nplan/products/checklist-developing-joint-use-agreements>
- ✓ Some handouts/resources available in Spanish and English

Link: Joint Use Tool at *ShapingNJ* <http://www.state.nj.us/health/fhs/shapingnj/work/publications/#3>

Learn More:

- ✓ NPLAN, the National Policy & Legal Analysis Network, provides legal and policy guidance on public health issues. To see NPLAN's joint use resources
<http://www.nplanonline.org/nplan/joint-use>
- ✓ Sample agreements: <http://www.nplanonline.org/childhood-obesity/products/nplan-joint-use-agreements>



MULTIPURPOSE TOOL THAT ADDRESSES NUTRITION & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



TOOL: Fuel Up to Play 60

Topic: Nutrition Education & Physical Activity

Audience: School Wellness Teams, Physical Education Teachers, and other interested in no-cost school health programs for students in Grades K-12. The program is targeted to both 'tweens and teens, especially those in Grades 4-8.

Description: *Fuel Up to Play 60* is an in-school nutrition and physical activity program launched by the National Dairy Council (NDC) and the National Football League, in collaboration with United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Unique Features & Benefits: The program encourages students to work collaboratively with adults to make real changes by implementing school-wide healthy eating and physical activity “plays”—strategies that help students “fuel up” with nutrient-rich foods (low-fat and fat-free dairy foods, fruits, vegetables and whole grains) and “get up and play” for at least 60 minutes every day.

Success Story: *Central Elementary School, Orange, NJ.* State Program Advisor of the Year Award Winner (NJ), Cafeteria Manager Kiesha Mack, became involved in Fuel Up to Play 60 to help with her goal of providing a nutritious breakfast and lunch program for all of her students. She creates her menus to encourage nutritious choices that appeal to students so they will continue to eat and practice healthy habits. Some of these changes include incorporating whole grains into menu items, and offering fresh fruit on a daily basis. Noting a positive psychological effect on her students, Ms. Mack says the program has made students happy – because they know adult leaders care about their health. Kiesha aims to have all of the schools in her district fully participating in the program this school year, and plans to conduct outreach to administrators, family members and classroom teachers.

Link: <http://www.fueluptoplay60.com>