

Creating a Healthy School Environment: Lessons Learned From Development of School Nutrition Policies

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School Nutrition/Wellness Policies

- Nutrition policies advocated by a variety of organizations.
- Few nutrition policies exist.
- Wellness policies now mandated by Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004.



Healthy School Nutrition Environments: A Team Approach

- Implemented through Project PA (a collaboration between the PA Department of Education and Penn State University)
- Purpose: to provide models for improving school nutrition environments and developing school nutrition policies



HSNE: A Team Approach

- Mini-grants to 7 schools (up to \$4000)
- Schools were required to:
 - Establish a team
 - Develop and implement action plan
 - Conduct project assessment
 - ✓ Environmental assessment
 - ✓ Other local assessment
 - Develop policy and present it to administrative body



Project Team

- Administered funds
- Provided support and resources
- Advised regarding assessment
- Monitored schools' progress
- Interviewed key staff members



School Activities/Programs

- Cafeteria events
- Peer-mentoring projects
- Health/Nutrition fairs
- Walking programs
- Incorporating nutrition into existing activities
- Outreach to parents



School Policy Areas

- Marketing healthy food choices
- Competitive foods
- School meals
- Nutrition education
- Integration of SFS department with schools' educational mission



School Nutrition Environment Assessment

1. Quality School Meals
 2. Pleasant Eating Experiences
 3. Other Healthy Food Options
 4. Commitment to Nutrition and Physical Activity
 5. Nutrition Education
 6. Marketing
- Areas of Strength
- Mixed results on pre-test;
Some improvement pre-post
- Weakest areas on pre-test;
Improvements pre-post



Other Assessment

- Teacher and parent surveys to aid policy development
- Teacher feedback on activities
- Tracking of school meals participation & a la carte revenue
- Student knowledge tests (pre-post)



Lessons Learned

- Schools were able to implement changes without negative effects on school meals participation or a la carte revenue.
- Schools needed assistance with assessment component.
- Schools may need assistance with marketing and communication.



Lessons Learned (cont'd)

- State school boards association was valuable resource.
- Schools relied on sample policies.
- Media attention on obesity was a facilitator.
- Principal support was critical.



Lessons Learned (cont'd)

- Time, cost, and staff turnover were barriers to policy development.
- Concerns were expressed about policy enforcement.

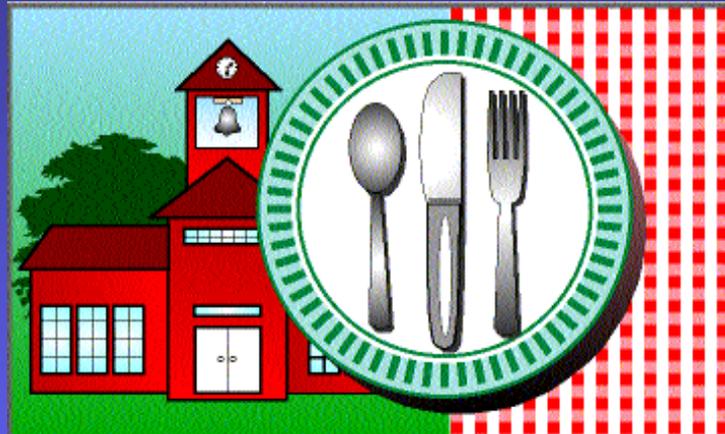


Lessons Learned (cont'd)

- Policy development process differed in each school.
- Support came from various groups.
- Project was impetus to continue to address school nutrition environment issues.



**For more information,
check the Project PA website:**



<http://nutrition.psu.edu/projectpa>