



LINKING THE *MICHIGAN NUTRITION STANDARDS* WITH SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Support and Promote the *Michigan Nutrition Standards*

The Michigan Department of Education requires that all public schools submit a **School Improvement Plan** every three-five years, and that school improvement is an ongoing process.

To complete the plan schools must:

- gather data;
- study the data;
- plan strategies and action steps;
- implement the plan.

To create a plan schools must first ask themselves these questions:

Where are we now and where do we want to be? How can we close the gap?

It makes good sense for schools to consider adding the implementation of the *Michigan Nutrition Standards* to their school improvement plan. There is a plethora of research that shows that good nutrition and increased physical activity are linked with academic achievement.

Michigan schools can be purposeful about including the implementation of the *Michigan Nutrition Standards* into their school improvement plans. Read on for more information.

REQUIRED PLAN COMPONENTS

There are 10 required components of a school improvement plan:

1. Needs Assessment
2. Services for Eligible Students
3. Incorporation into the Existing School Improvement Plan Process
4. Instructional Strategies
5. Title I and Regular Education Coordination
6. Instruction by Highly Qualified Staff
7. High Quality and On Going Professional Development
8. Strategies to Increase Parental Involvement
9. Coordination of Title I and Other Resources
10. Ongoing Review of Eligible Student Progress



WHERE SHOULD SCHOOLS BEGIN?

In addition to completing the school Comprehensive Needs Assessment (**CNA**), it's recommended that a school also complete the Healthy School Action Tools (**HSAT**) and the Michigan Profile for Healthy Youth (**MiPHY**). These tools will help schools further identify gaps and help them find a "best fit" place to implement the *Michigan Nutrition Standards* and other nutrition and physical activity initiatives. There are many places in the school improvement plan where planning to implement, and implementing the *Michigan Nutrition Standards* might fit.

To find out more about School Improvement Plans go to:

www.advanc-ed.org/mde
or mi.gov/osi and click on "School Improvement."

- 1. Needs Assessment.** Schools can use the data collected from the CNA, the HSAT, and the MiPHY to learn more about where and how to begin implementing the *Michigan Nutrition Standards*. The data will help them identify high priority areas and health/nutrition needs that should be addressed first. Currently, there are HSAT and MiPHY questions already incorporated into the CNA.
- 2. Services to Eligible Students.** School meals are a service schools offer. If school meal (Breakfast, Lunch and After School Snack Program) participation is low in a school where there is a high percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price school meals, academic achievement may be low. Increasing participation in school meals may help increase achievement. Food service directors and schools can learn more about how to implement the standards and increase school meal participation in the [*Michigan Nutrition Standards Toolkit*](#).
- 3. Instructional Strategies.** Good nutrition and physical activity go hand in hand. When teachers teach to the Michigan Health Education Grade Level Content Expectations students gain the knowledge and skills to make healthy decisions about what they eat and drink and how much, and what kinds of physical activity they should engage in. There is research that shows that [good nutrition and physical activity](#) are linked to better academic performance. Incorporating more physical activity into the school day, and ensuring that foods and beverages sold or offered to students at school and at school-related functions meet the *Michigan Nutrition Standards*, are ways to improve instruction.
- 4. Professional Development.** School staff members need to understand why the *Michigan Nutrition Standards* were developed and why they are important. Improving the foods and beverages students are offered or provided at school can improve their health status. The *Michigan Nutrition Standards Toolkit* contains a research-based training to inform school staff, parents, and community members about the standards and about their role in providing students with high-quality foods and beverages in all venues where food is offered at school, not just in the school cafeteria.
- 5. Parental Involvement.** Parents need to be actively involved in their children's education. Research shows that students who have involved parents or caregivers do better at school. The [*Michigan Nutrition Standards Toolkit*](#) suggests many ways parents can learn more about the standards or become involved in one or more facets of the implementation process. These suggestions include attending school functions or family nights where information on the standards is highlighted or presented, becoming part of the coordinated school health team, taking part in healthy school or classroom celebrations and more.

Proper Nutrition and Physical Activity are linked to better learning. Including the implementation of the *Michigan Nutrition Standards* into the School Improvement Plan makes sense since increasing academic achievement is the main reason School Improvement Plans exist.