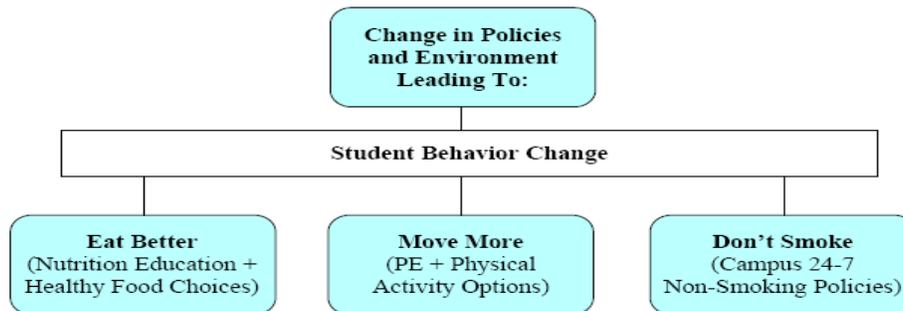


Generation With Promise Executive Summary

Empowering Michigan Middle School Students in Underserved Communities to Drive Policy, Environmental, and Youth Behavior Change in Schools

The **Generation With Promise** project, funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, links the Governor's **Cities of Promise** initiative in vulnerable communities with the **Michigan Steps Up** healthy lifestyles initiative led by the Michigan Surgeon General and the Michigan Department of Community Health. This unprecedented project aims to achieve and sustain change at the policy, environment *and* individual levels in schools/communities with racial and ethnic health disparities by empowering middle school youth, with the guidance of school and community mentors, to become change agents. Youth will gain the knowledge and skills to eat better, move more and not smoke as well as to work as a team, and with other teams, to create school environments and policies that support these healthy behaviors.



Need Statement:

Childhood obesity is a serious and growing problem in Michigan, and more Michigan youth are overweight than are nationally. Overweight children have a higher likelihood of being obese as adults, increasing their risk for several chronic diseases. Furthermore, among Michigan students, half of the current smokers in grades nine to twelve report that they began smoking between age 11 and 14. While education around these issues is critical, information does not easily transfer into behavior change if students do not have the opportunity and support to make healthy choices throughout their day and throughout their school.

Overview:

The project will unite evidence-based *programs* with empowering *possibilities* that students themselves create and promote as they lead change in their schools and communities. The intervention strives to lessen racial and ethnic disparities in health risk behaviors among middle school students and increase their access to information that is understandable and meaningful to them, as well as to open up opportunities for reasonable and sustainable changes that are self-empowering and student-led.

Middle schools from a select group of Cities of Promise (cities with high poverty rates, poor health status, safety/security issues, and infrastructure challenges) will participate in a three-year project that will empower and support **student action teams (SATs)**, under the guidance of **community mentor teams (CMTs)**, to be actively involved in:

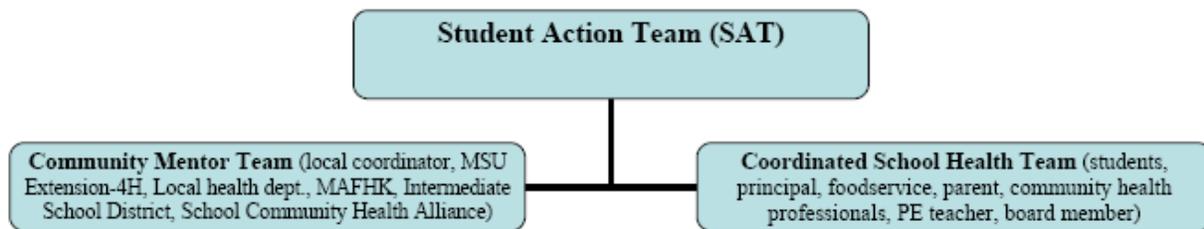
- The Coordinated School Health Team (CSHT) to assess their school environment using the Healthy School Action Tool
- Development of the plan to make changes in the school environment so that all students have opportunities to eat healthy and be physically active and be tobacco-free (in conjunction with the CSHT and the CMT)
- Identification of personal strategies to lead by example through positive health behaviors
- Playing a leadership role to create excitement and success among student action teams at others schools, then sharing their victories and learnings at an annual statewide Youth Summit
- Generating information that can be used to create a replicable model to extend to other Michigan schools in communities with racial and ethnic disparities.

Approach:

The project will depend on, encourage, and support youth involvement to drive policy change throughout the school campus—in the cafeteria, a la carte line, vending machines, concessions, classroom celebrations, school-wide events as well as in the health and physical education curriculum. The unique approach taken in this project hinges around youth involvement, mentorship, and youth-to-youth networking. Middle school students will be actively and continually involved in the change process – making decisions, planning actions, prioritizing needs, participating in and promoting new opportunities to make healthy choices at school as well as leading through example. As they gain leadership skills and generate best practices for making policy, environmental, and personal behavior change, they will work with and support students at other schools to get involved in the important and exciting process of making their school a healthier place to learn. Students will have an annual opportunity to showcase their progress and outcomes, recommend strategies based on their successes, and brainstorm together across geographic, cultural and demographic lines at an annual Youth Summit.

Targeted areas of change for this grant are consistent with the federally mandated local wellness policy components: nutrition education/healthy eating; food/nutrition standards; physical education and physical activity opportunities; and other school-based activities designed to promote student wellness.

Each school will select activities from a menu of options based on consistency with their district wellness policies and needs identified by the HSAT and Student Health Survey findings. Two primary curricula will be used: (1) The Exemplary Physical Education Curriculum (EPEC), and (2) The Michigan Model for School Health. Both curricula were developed in Michigan and both have received national awards.



Participants:

Two middle schools in Benton Harbor (Fair Plain Renaissance and Hull) and eight middle schools from four school districts in southeast Michigan (Pontiac, Detroit, Hamtramck and Highland Park) will be included in the Level 1/Intensive Intervention and will receive grants of \$25,000 during Year I and Year II. Four additional schools will receive \$25,000 for Years II and III for a total of 14 Level 1 schools. Although only Level 1 schools will be actively involved in the assessment, planning, and implementation phases, all other 33 schools from the eight Cities of Promise will be invited to participate in a Youth Summit, participate in a leadership workshops, or apply for a “Mentoring: “A Running Start” scholarship.

Partners:

The Michigan Department of Community Health and the Office of the Surgeon General will manage this project under the leadership of Dr. Kimberlydawn Wisdom, with assistance from MDCH and Michigan Department of Education staff. The project will benefit from the involvement, support, expertise and resources of other organizations including Local Health Departments, Michigan Action for Healthy Kids, Michigan State University Extension, The Governor’s Council on Physical Fitness, Health and Sports; and Cities of Promise. Additionally, leaders from a number of community, public health and public policy venues will serve on the CARE (Community Advisory Regional Experts) group as pro bono partners to provide oversight, guidance and advice as the project proceeds

Expected Outcomes and Impact:

- **Impact** student health through the creation of a healthy school environment and policies that support and sustain that environment.
- **Empower** middle school youth to create and promote policy, environmental, and behavior change through Student Action Teams guided by Community Mentor Teams.
- **Create, test and disseminate** the student-driven model for change in district/school policies, the school environment and student health behaviors.
- **Inform** policy through access to strategic state and local policymakers.
- **Help close racial health disparities** and build youth leadership skills in schools today and for our communities tomorrow.