



## MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN MICHIGAN SCHOOLS

### IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF MICHIGAN STUDENTS ONE STEP AT A TIME

#### THE BIG PICTURE

Schools play a critical role in the prevention of childhood overweight and obesity. Currently, more than 9 million youth, ages 6-19, are considered obese. The increased prevalence of overweight and obesity can be attributed to behavior choices, environment, and genetic factors. While youth are exposed to a variety of environments throughout their day that contribute to this crisis, a good amount of their time is spent in school.

Schools in Michigan and across the nation recognize their impact on student health and have begun to create healthier school environments. They combat the problems associated with poor nutrition and physical inactivity through education and a positive school environment that allows students to practice healthy behaviors.

Policy development is the first step in creating healthy school environments that are sustained over time. All schools were required to have a Local Wellness Policy (LWP) in place by July 1, 2006. Local Wellness Policies address nutrition education, nutrition standards, physical education, physical activity opportunities, and other school-based activities designed to promote student wellness. Research has shown that while schools have developed these policies not all of them are being implemented. The Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 requires schools to:

- Update their LWP
- Measure and report on implementation and progress of the LWP
- Inform parents, students, and community on the content and implementation of the LWP

#### HEALTHY SCHOOL ACTION TOOLS MOTIVATE MICHIGAN

Completion of Michigan's Healthy School Action Tools (HSAT) can be one of the many "next steps" a school decides to take. The HSAT are a set of online tools designed to help teams in Michigan schools assess the overall state of their environment in one or more topics and create an action plan that is realistic. These tools help schools understand their strengths and weaknesses so they can prioritize health initiatives that complement their LWP.

**FACT:** Over 730 Michigan schools have completed the HSAT since its debut in October 2004.



**FACT:** The most recent National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) shows the prevalence of overweight in youth has increased from 5.0% (1976-1980) to 10.4% (2007-2008) for 2-5 year olds, 6.5% to 19.6% for 6-11 year olds, and 5.0% to 18.1% for 12-19 year olds.

**FACT:** You can improve your school's health environment by completing the Healthy School Action Tools. Visit: [www.mihealthtools.org/hsat](http://www.mihealthtools.org/hsat)





# A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

## HEALTHY EATING & NUTRITION EDUCATION

Between September 2007 and June 2011, 400 schools completed the HSAT. These schools represented more than 204,000 students and nearly 20,000 staff members. Of the 83 counties in Michigan, 58 counties had at least one school that completed the HSAT with the majority being public schools (91%). Results from the 400 HSAT schools showed positive health initiatives and highlighted areas that still need work.



Top eleven counties with the most schools completing HSAT:

- Wayne—55
- Kent—31
- Lenawee—22
- Monroe—20
- Oakland—20
- St. Clair—16
- Chippewa—14
- Saginaw—14
- Genesee—12
- Marquette—11
- Ottawa—11

**FACT:** More than 77% provide 20 minutes or more for students to eat lunch after students obtain food.

**FACT:** More than 44% of schools have a fully implemented Local Wellness Policy.



**FACT:** Less than 35% have a written policy prohibiting the use of food as a reward.

**FACT:** More than 79% use low-fat or non-fat cheese in school meals.

**FACT:** More than 94% participate in the USDA National School Lunch Program and 88% participate in the National School Breakfast Program.



**FACT:** Less than 36% have a written policy stipulating that healthy foods and beverages must predominate in a la carte venues.

**FACT:** Less than 28% have a written policy prohibiting the sale of unhealthy foods and beverages in fundraisers.



## THE PATH TO SUCCESS

Michigan schools that have completed the HSAT have been successful in taking the following steps to make changes in their policies and environment.



### 1. CREATE A COORDINATED SCHOOL HEALTH TEAM (CSHT)

A CSHT consists of a group of passionate individuals that represent segments of the school and surrounding community. The group works together to identify school health barriers and opportunities and advises the school system on realistic solutions. This group usually includes teachers, administrators, food service directors, health care providers, parents, community members, and students.

### 2. JOIN A STATE SCHOOL HEALTH GROUP

Michigan Team Nutrition provides schools with dozens of up-to-date resources on nutrition education, physical education and physical activity including grant announcements, school health Web links, Michigan success stories, school awards, and upcoming events. Membership is free and enables schools to get a newsletter, be eligible for grants and more. To join Michigan Team Nutrition or find out what is happening in Michigan schools, visit <http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/team.html>.

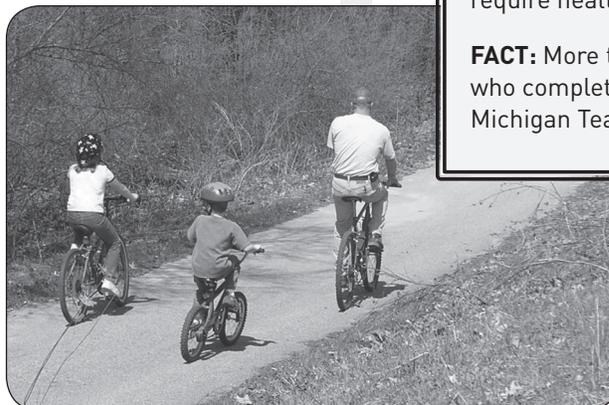
Michigan Action for Healthy Kids is one of 50 state teams nationwide dedicated to improving the health and educational performance of youth by creating health-promoting schools that support sound nutrition and physical activity as part of a total learning environment. To join Michigan Action For Healthy Kids or connect with other Michigan professionals and community advocates promoting healthy schools, visit [www.actionforhealthykids.org/tools\\_join.php](http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/tools_join.php).

### 3. CONTINUE YOUR EFFORTS

The HSAT not only reveals areas that need improvement but also highlights strengths to build upon. Unfortunately, all of these areas can't be addressed in the short term because schools can be limited by time, budget, support, and resources. Including them in a long-term plan shows a commitment to student health and enables schools to continue their efforts to provide a healthier future for youth of all ages.

For more information visit:  
[www.mihealthtools.org/hsat](http://www.mihealthtools.org/hsat)

The HSAT is presented by the Michigan Department of Community Health, Michigan Action for Healthy Kids, Michigan Department of Education, Michigan State University Extension, Michigan Team Nutrition, United Dairy Industry of Michigan, and the American Cancer Society.



**FACT:** More than 84% of the schools who completed the HSAT had a CSHT which met at least one or more times.

**FACT:** More than 90% of the CSHT's included an administrator.

More than 80% included a food service representative, a physical education teacher, and a parent.

More than 70% included a health teacher, and a school counselor.

More than 60% included a school nurse and a community member.

More than 45% included a student representative.

**FACT:** More than 61% of schools require health education.

**FACT:** More than 38% of schools who completed the HSAT were Michigan Team Nutrition schools.

