



# SCHOOL WELLNESS CHALLENGES AND RECOGNITION IDEAS

## Support and Promote the *Michigan Nutrition Standards*

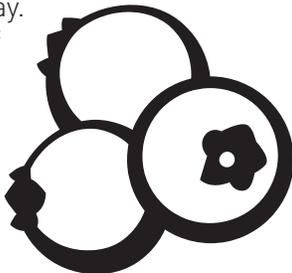
Getting school staff and families involved in nutrition, physical activity and health initiatives is an important task. The more committed school staff members are to their own health, the more likely they are to see how making healthy food choices that are consistent with the *Michigan Nutrition Standards*, and being physically active can benefit their students. 

*Why not conduct a school wellness challenge or contest?* Getting school staff excited and fired up about health sometimes requires teamwork, a little friendly competition or a jump start.

Below are a few easy to implement wellness contest and challenge ideas for school staff members, students, and families. Start with something fun and simple. Then, once you get people interested, try something a little more difficult. Keep contests fun and light-hearted. When the challenge is over, be sure to recognize participants for their efforts. (See page 2 for recognition ideas).

## SCHOOL WELLNESS CHALLENGES

Contests or challenges are a fun way to add a little “friendly competition” in the workplace and it’s a great way for school staff to be healthy role models for students, and for students to be healthy role models for each other.

- 1. Bring a Fruit or Vegetable to School.** Teachers set a goal to bring a fruit or vegetable to school, or to buy a fruit at school, and to eat it every day. Keep track of this for one month and award prizes. 
- 2. Walk Across Michigan.** Have staff keep track of how many miles they walk using a pedometer. Award people when they reach designated milestones such as 50 miles, 100 miles and so on. Give the biggest prize to the first person who walks across Michigan—which in the Lower Peninsula, is about 250 miles from Port Huron to Grand Haven.
- 3. Fruit and Vegetable Challenge.** Challenge staff and students to eat more fruits and vegetables. Keep track by classroom or grade each time someone eats a cup of fruit or vegetables. At the end of the week add up the cups. Keep the challenge going for several months by awarding the winning class with a traveling trophy, such as a golden apple.



**4. Say Yes to School Meals!** Staff members track how often they eat all the components of a school meal. If they do, they get a check mark but only if they eat ALL the components. The first person who reaches 20 meals wins the challenge.

**5. Build a Better Breakfast.** Ask the foodservice director to teach challenge participants (staff or students) how to create a healthy breakfast. Then, ask them to keep track of what they eat for breakfast for two weeks. (Start this in March during National School Breakfast week.) Develop a tracking system and give participants one point for eating breakfast and one additional point for eating a fruit or vegetable at breakfast. Add up points at the end of two weeks.

**6. Our Healthy Classroom.** Teachers and other school staff decorate their rooms with information, healthy messages, and reminders to eat healthy and be active. Students vote on which classroom looks the healthiest.

**7. Get Fit in Five.** The PE teacher leads the staff in 5-10 minutes of exercise each morning before the school day starts. Do this for one month. Participants who miss the least days win the prizes.

## SCHOOL STAFF RECOGNITION IDEAS

Everyone likes to be recognized for a job well done. Following are some low-cost ways to recognize school staff members for adopting healthy behaviors and being a healthy role model.

1. Create a **Healthy Hall of Fame** wall or display case with photos of exemplary staff doing healthy things. Add a new member each month. Hold a mini-induction at monthly staff meetings.
2. Post a super-size thank you note or recognition certificate on a classroom door.
3. Create and post a **“Health Nut Honor Roll”** in your school reception area. Write a short one sentence description about why they are on the honor role.
4. Provide challenge or competition winners with school lunch or school breakfast for one week. Make them a special pin or lanyard to wear so that foodservice staff know who the winners are.
5. Deliver a vegetable tray, fruit basket or fruit tray from foodservice to a winning classroom or challenge winner.
6. Find out the winners favorite healthy hobbies and buy an inexpensive but appropriate gift such as a copy of the latest fitness or healthy cooking magazine.
7. Each month or week at your staff meeting recognize someone who was caught doing something healthy such as eating a healthy lunch with students, drinking water or walking on his/her lunch hour. Make a certificate or a rotating trophy that moves from classroom to classroom.
8. Write a letter of praise recognizing specific healthy contributions and accomplishments. Send a copy to the school superintendent and the employee.
9. Plan a surprise picnic or healthy lunch for everyone who either participated in a health challenge or met/achieved a certain goal.
10. Keep a supply of fruit and vegetable note cards that can be given as immediate rewards. Keep the supply visible—in a basket or box in your office.