



WORKING TOWARD HEALTH EQUITY

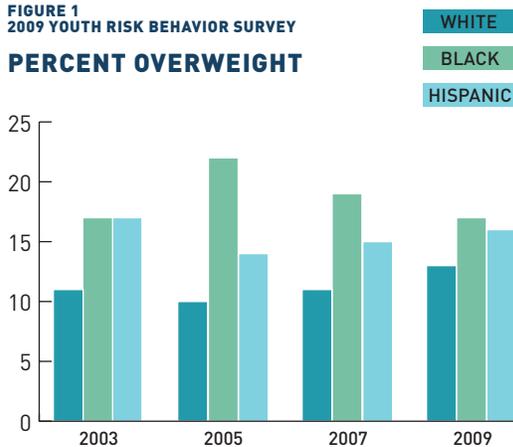
There are many compelling reasons why a school should adopt the *Michigan Nutrition Standards*. One of these is to work toward health equity. According to Healthy People 2020, health equity is defined as “the attainment of the highest level of health for all people. Achieving health equity requires valuing everyone equally with focused and ongoing societal efforts to address avoidable inequalities, historical and contemporary injustices, and the elimination of health and health care disparities.”

Addressing health equity is everyone’s responsibility. Schools and communities can play a part in improving health for all by implementing the *Michigan Nutrition Standards*. Consistently offering food and beverages that are healthy and that meet the *Michigan Nutrition Standards*, in schools throughout the state, can address some of the inequalities that exist especially when it comes to childhood obesity.

The rise in childhood obesity in the last 30 years has been alarming. Unfortunately, obesity does not affect all populations equally. Higher rates of obesity are seen in racial/ethnic minorities and children from lower socio-economic status.^{28, 29}

The weight inequality is illustrated in Michigan high school students in the 2009 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS).¹⁸ See Figure 1.

FIGURE 1
2009 YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY
PERCENT OVERWEIGHT



In some areas with higher poverty, there is a lack of access to healthy foods from full service supermarkets. Research shows that low income areas have access to half as many supermarkets as higher income areas.³⁰ See Figure 2.

FIGURE 2
PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLDS IN
POVERTY BY COUNTY, MICHIGAN 2010

