



Michigan's School District Nutrition and Physical Activity Policy Assessment Tool

Background

Childhood obesity is a burgeoning health issue in Michigan where one in four high school-age youth is already considered overweight.¹ In addition to increasing the risk of health-related consequences such as cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes, obesity in childhood can negatively affect self esteem and contribute to student absenteeism and decreased learning at school.^{2,3,4} Establishing and/or modifying policies to support healthy eating and physical activity where children live and play is a promising strategy for preventing childhood obesity. This type of intervention is recommended by some of the leading national health organizations, including Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Institute of Medicine, as well as the National Association of State Boards of Education.^{5,6,7}

Across the nation, state-level legislation aimed at preventing obesity and promoting health among youth has focused predominantly on policies that affect schools, where youth spend a large proportion of their time.⁸ In Michigan, policy recommendations for improving the school nutrition and physical activity environment are put forth by the State Board of Education, but local jurisdictions choose which, and to what extent, policy recommendations are implemented at the local level.⁹ This results in a fragmented approach that is unlikely to be effective in reducing obesity across the state.

To learn more about how to successfully implement childhood obesity prevention policies, Michigan Departments of Community Health and Education (MDCH and MDE) applied for and were awarded a one-year grant from the National Governor's Association (NGA) to conduct the *Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan* project. One component of this project focuses on implementing school district-wide policies that support healthy lifestyles to learn the challenges, feasibility, and effectiveness of this strategy as part of a statewide effort to reduce the prevalence of childhood obesity in Michigan.

Purpose of the Assessment Tool

The purpose of this tool is twofold: 1) to assist school districts in assessing current policies that pertain to healthy eating, nutrition education, physical activity, and physical education, and 2) to assist school districts in selecting policies to implement in their districts as part of the NGA *Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan* grants being coordinated by MDCH and MDE.

Audience

This assessment tool should be completed by the District Coordinated School Health Team. Team membership should include the superintendent or appointee, food service director, teachers (physical education, health education, staff wellness), health services representative, school counseling representative, students, parents, and community partners.

Instructions for Completing the Assessment Tool

1. **Convene** your District Coordinated School Health Team. All relevant members outlined on your NGA grant application should be present.
2. **Assess** your district’s current policies as a group by completing the assessment tool.
3. **Discuss** the questions following each section of the assessment. Consider why your district has or has not been successful in establishing and implementing policies that support healthy lifestyles as you navigate the assessment.
4. **Select** a minimum of two policies from the *Policy Menu* below to be the focus of your *Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan* grant efforts over the next year. One policy should be from Tier 1 and one from Tier 2. Both tiers of policy recommendations are important in creating change to support healthy lifestyles in your district. Tier 1 recommendations may be more challenging to implement, but are more likely to result in positive changes in nutrition and physical activity behavior. Tier 2 policies are complementary policies that may be less effective on their own, but can be part of a comprehensive strategy when paired with a Tier 1 policy.

When selecting which policies to implement, consider current district policy gaps, resources, and support, as well as community support. The discussion questions at the end of each section and the *Policy Selection Matrix* on page 21 will assist you with this process. It will be most beneficial to your district to select policy options that complement one another. For example, you might choose to implement a physical education frequency and duration policy from Tier 1 along with removing the physical education waiver from Tier 2.

Policy Menu

Tier 1		Tier 2	
Nutrition	Physical Activity	Nutrition	Physical Activity
Vending machine food and beverage standards for all schools.	Frequency and duration of physical education for all grade levels.	Michigan Model for Health curriculum for all grade levels.	Quality physical education curriculum for all grade levels.
À la carte food and beverage standards for all schools.	Frequency and duration of recess for elementary schools.	Classroom snacks/rewards standards for all grade levels.	Classroom physical activity breaks.
Concessions/fund-raising/school stores food and beverage standards for all schools.	Structured physical activity during recess and before and after school.	Recess before lunch for elementary schools.	Remove physical education waiver.

5. **Plan** for how you will implement the selected policies using the *School District Action Plan* on page 22. This page provides space for your group to brainstorm SMART objectives¹⁰ or actionable strategies. Use the questions in this assessment tool as a guide for determining your actions. After your policies are implemented, you should be able to check the **“Written policy exists and is fully implemented”** box for assessment questions pertaining to your policy areas. When formulating your action strategies, also consider how you will evaluate whether the policy has been implemented and whether the policy changes were beneficial to your district.

A. Food and Beverages in Schools

Please check the box which most accurately represents whether or not the specified action is a district policy and if that action is taking place campus-wide in all schools.

Policy language specifies that this action takes place campus-wide in all schools (except where otherwise noted)	No written policy	Written policy exists, but is not fully implemented	Written policy exists and is fully implemented
School Meals			
1. Policy specifies that information is made available to students and their parents/guardians concerning USDA school meal requirements and the nutrition content of food and beverages provided/sold.			
2. Policy specifies that school food service personnel are encouraged to attend professional development training.			
3. Policy specifies that students participate in taste tests and/or surveys to obtain their input on school meals.			
4. Policy specifies that the school meal program must meet at a minimum the USDA school lunch and breakfast nutrition standards.			
5. Policy specifies that the school participates in the School Breakfast Program.			
Standards for Competitive Foods			
6. Policy defines a competitive food and beverage. (Definition from USDA: ¹¹ Any and all food and beverages available to students as alternatives to the federally reimbursed school meal; as á la carte items in school cafeterias; as items from vending machines, snack bars, and school stores; or as part of special profit-making events).			
7. Policy specifies specific standards be followed for all competitive foods offered/sold on campus.			

Policy language specifies that this action takes place campus-wide in all schools (except where otherwise noted)	No written policy	Written policy exists, but is not fully implemented	Written policy exists and is fully implemented
8. Policy specifies that all venues offering and/or selling competitive food and beverages must comply with the specific nutrient standards outlined in the policy (school stores, á la carte, vending, fundraising, etc).			
9. Policy lists what grade levels the policy specifically applies to (elementary, middle, high).			
10. Policy specifies the time of day the policy pertains to (during school hours, after school, etc).			
<p><i>Below are the nutrition standards recommended by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) Committee on Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools in a report released April 2007.¹² Districts considering implementing policies that affect competitive food offerings should utilize these standards.</i></p>			
<p>11. IOM Standard 1: Policy specifies that snacks, foods, and beverages meet the following criteria for dietary fat per portion as packaged:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No more than 35% of total calories from fat; • <10% of total calories from saturated fats; and • Trans fat-free. 			
<p>12. IOM Standard 2: Policy specifies that snacks, foods, and beverages provide no more than 35% of calories from total sugars per portion as packaged. <i>Exceptions include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% fruits and fruit juices in all forms without added sugars; • 100% vegetables and vegetable juices without added sugars; and • Unflavored nonfat and low-fat milk and yogurt; flavored nonfat and low-fat milk with no more than 22 grams of total sugars per 8-ounce serving; and flavored nonfat and low-fat yogurt with no more than 30 grams of total sugars per 8-ounce serving. 			
<p>13. IOM Standard 3: Policy specifies that snack items are 200 calories or less per portion as packaged and á la carte entrée items do not exceed calorie limits comparable to National School Lunch Program items.</p>			

Policy language specifies that this action takes place campus-wide in all schools (except where otherwise noted)	No written policy	Written policy exists, but is not fully implemented	Written policy exists and is fully implemented
14. IOM Standard 4: Policy specifies that snack items meet a sodium content limit of 200 mg or less per portion as packaged or 480 mg or less per entrée portion as served for à la carte.			
15. IOM Standard 5: Policy specifies that beverages containing nonnutritive sweeteners are only allowed in high schools after the end of the school day.			
16. IOM Standard 6: Policy specifies that foods and beverages are caffeine free, with the exception of trace amounts of naturally-occurring caffeine-related substances.			
17. IOM Standard 7: Policy specifies that foods and beverages offered during the school day for all grades are limited to those meeting Tier 1 criteria (see Appendix A, page 23).			
18. IOM Standard 8: Policy specifies that plain, potable water is available throughout the school day at no cost to students.			
19. IOM Standard 9: Policy specifies that sports drinks are not available in the school setting except when provided by the school for student athletes participating in sports programs involving vigorous activity of more than 1 hour's duration.			
20. IOM Standard 12: Policy specifies that Tier 1 snack items are allowed after school for student activities for elementary and middle school. Tier 1 and Tier 2 snacks are allowed after school for high school (for standards, see Appendix A, page 23).			
Vending			
21. Policy specifies that restrictions are in place for student access to vending machines.			
22. Policy specifies that all foods and beverages offered in vending machines meet the nutritional standards outlined by the Institute of Medicine noted above and on page 23.			

Policy language specifies that this action takes place campus-wide in all schools (except where otherwise noted)	No written policy	Written policy exists, but is not fully implemented	Written policy exists and is fully implemented
23. IOM Standard 11: Policy specifies that the exterior of vending machines does not depict commercial products or logos or suggest that consumption of vended items conveys a health or social benefit.			
Food as a Reward			
24. IOM Standard 10: Policy specifies that there is a prohibition on using food as a discipline for students (this includes withholding snacks or food as punishment).			
25. IOM Standard 10: Policy specifies that there is a prohibition on using food as a reward for students (this includes offering classrooms rewards such as pizza parties or other high calorie food rewards).			
Fundraisers			
26. IOM Standard 13: For on-campus fundraising activities during the school day, policy specifies that items must meet Tier 1 criteria (for standards, see Appendix A, page 23).			
27. There is a fundraising policy emphasizing the sale of healthy food items or of non-food items (examples include flowers, gift wrap, sporting events, and family fun events).			
28. Policy specifies that fundraising activities will NOT involve the sale of food or beverages.			
29. IOM Standard 13: Policy specifies that fundraising activities involving the sale of food will take place outside the school day (school day is defined as ½ hour before school starts until after the school bell rings at the end of the school day) and must meet the IOM standards for Tier 1 for elementary and middle schools and Tiers 1 and 2 for high schools (for standards, see Appendix A, page 23).			

Policy language specifies that this action takes place campus-wide in all schools (except where otherwise noted)	No written policy	Written policy exists, but is not fully implemented	Written policy exists and is fully implemented
30. Policy specifies that students and staff are prohibited from personal fundraising efforts that include the sale of foods or beverages on campus.			
31. Policy specifies that external organizations, parents, and others using school property are notified of the “healthy” fundraising policy, if applicable.			
Classroom Snacks and Celebrations			
32. There is a policy in place outlining appropriate foods that can be served during classroom celebrations.			
33. Policy specifies that classroom celebrations encourage healthy choices and portion control and not include more than one item from outside the criteria established for “healthy” foods.			
School Stores and Concessions			
34. Policy specifies specific nutrition standards for foods served in school stores.			
35. Policy specifies times of the day school stores are able to sell foods and beverages.			
36. Policy specifies nutrition standards for foods offered at concession stands during school activities or events.			
37. Policy requires healthy foods and beverages to be provided at all concession stands during school activities and events.			

Discussion on Foods and Beverages in Schools

Michigan received an 'F' rating from the Center for Science in the Public Interest in 2006 for policies for competitive foods and beverages.¹³ The ratings for this report were based on the following criteria:

- 1) beverage nutrition standards;
- 2) food nutrition standards;
- 3) grade level(s) to which policies apply;
- 4) time during the school day to which policies apply; and
- 5) location(s) on campus to which policies apply.

Your district will need to consider all of these types of criteria if considering food and beverages policies.

Please discuss and answer the following questions about policies that affect foods and beverages served in schools in the spaces below:

Who and/or what groups in your district may oppose district policies establishing/modifying nutrition standards for foods and beverages served in all schools? What strategies could you use to overcome these barriers?

Who in your district would support district policies for establishing/modifying nutrition standards for foods and beverages served in all schools? How can you involve the district and broader community in supporting and implementing your policies?

What type of staff, resources, etc. would you need to implement a policy for establishing/modifying nutrition standards for foods and beverages in school? How can you utilize the funding provided by the NGA *Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan* grant to implement a food and beverage policy in your district?

B. Nutrition Education

Please check the box which most accurately represents whether or not the specified action is a district policy and if that action is taking place campus-wide in all schools.

Policy language specifies that this action takes place campus-wide in all schools (except where otherwise noted)	No written policy	Written policy exists, but is not fully implemented	Written policy exists and is fully implemented
1. Policy specifies a district nutrition education goal.			
2. Policy specifies that nutrition education is provided to all students.			
3. Policy specifies that nutrition education is part of a preK-12 comprehensive health education curriculum such as Michigan Model for Health.			
4. Policy specifies that health/nutrition education teachers are provided opportunities for professional development.			
5. Policy specifies that the nutrition education curriculum used is scientifically accurate and skills-based, as well as reflects the 2005 Dietary Guidelines.			
6. Policy specifies that nutrition education curriculum is culturally relevant and appropriate.			
7. Policy specifies that before and after school programming should include nutrition education.			

Discussion on Nutrition Education

Please discuss and answer the following questions about implementing a district policy for nutrition education in the spaces below:

Who and/or what groups in your district may oppose a district policy implementing a comprehensive health education curriculum such as the Michigan Model for Health (which contains a nutrition education component) in all schools? What strategies could you use to overcome these barriers?

Who in your district would support implementing a comprehensive health education curriculum such as the Michigan Model for Health in all schools? How can you involve the district and broader community in supporting and implementing a health education policy?

What type of staff, resources, etc. would you need to implement a policy requiring a comprehensive health education curriculum such as the Michigan Model for Health in your district? How can you utilize the funding provided by the NGA *Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan* grant to facilitate this process?

C. Physical Education

Please check the box which most accurately represents whether or not the specified action is a district policy and if that action is taking place campus-wide in all schools.

Policy language specifies that this action takes place campus-wide in all schools (except where otherwise noted)	No written policy	Written policy exists, but is not fully implemented	Written policy exists and is fully implemented
1. Policy specifies that all ELEMENTARY SCHOOL students will have 150 minutes per week of physical education through out the entire year.			
2. Policy specifies that all MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL students will have 225 minutes per week of physical education for the entire school year.			
3. Policy specifies that schools maintain a graduation requirement of 1 credit for both Health and Physical Education in HIGH SCHOOL .			
4. Policy specifies that a quality physical education curriculum must be utilized.			
5. Policy specifies that physical education is taught by certified physical education teachers.			
6. Policy specifies that physical education teachers are required to participate in training and staff development.			
7. Policy specifies that interscholastic or intramural sports or elective classes such as marching band cannot be substituted for physical education class.			
8. Policy specifies that physical education is provided in an appropriate student-teacher ratio that ensures adequate supervision and minimized risk of injuries.			
9. Policy specifies that physical education electives are available to HIGH SCHOOL students.			

Discussion on Physical Education

Discuss the potential for implementing a physical education policy in your district. Answer the discussion questions in the spaces below:

Who and/or what groups in your district may oppose a district-wide policy addressing physical education? What strategies could you use to overcome these barriers?

Who in your district would support a district-wide policy addressing physical education? How can you involve the district and broader community in supporting and implementing your policy?

What type of staff, resources, etc. would you need to implement a policy for physical education? How can you utilize the funding provided by the NGA *Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan* grant to facilitate this process?

D. Physical Activity During School Hours

Please check the box which most accurately represents whether or not the specified action is a district policy and if that action is taking place campus-wide in all schools.

Policy language specifies that this action takes place campus-wide in all schools (except where otherwise noted)	No written policy	Written policy exists, but is not fully implemented	Written policy exists and is fully implemented
1. Policy specifies that in addition to physical education, all students are provided with other opportunities to be physically active during the school day <i>(The recommended amount of physical activity is at least 60 minutes per day for youth)</i> .			
2. Policy specifies that classroom health education reinforces knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a healthy lifestyle, active living, and reduce sedentary activities such as watching television.			
3. Policy specifies that physical activity is integrated into health and other classroom curriculum such as science, math, and social studies when appropriate.			
4. Policy specifies that classroom teachers provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.			
5. Policy specifies that extended periods (2+ hours) of inactivity are discouraged.			

Discussion on Physical Activity During School Hours

Discuss the potential for implementing a policy affecting physical activity during school hours in your district. Answer the discussion questions in the spaces below:

Who and/or what groups in your district may oppose a district policy on physical activity during school hours? What strategies could you use to overcome these barriers?

Who in your district would support implementing a policy on physical activity during school hours? How can you involve the district and broader community in supporting and implementing your policies?

What type of staff, resources, etc. would you need to implement a policy for physical activity during school hours? How can you utilize the funding provided by the NGA *Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan* grant to facilitate this process?

E. Recess

Please check the box which most accurately represents whether or not the specified action is a district policy and if that action is taking place campus-wide in all schools.

Policy language specifies that this action takes place campus-wide in all schools (except where otherwise noted)	No written policy	Written policy exists, but is not fully implemented	Written policy exists and is fully implemented
1. Policy specifies that ELEMENTARY SCHOOL students are provided with at least 30 minutes of supervised recess each day.			
2. Policy specifies that structured activities are offered during recess.			
3. Policy specifies that ELEMENTARY SCHOOL students have their recess period <u>before</u> they eat lunch.			
4. Policy specifies that teachers/staff are prohibited from withdrawing recess as a punishment.			

Discussion on Recess

Discuss the potential for implementing a recess policy in your district. Answer the discussion questions in the spaces below:

Who and/or what groups in your district may oppose a district recess policy? What strategies could you use to overcome these barriers?

Who in your district would support implementing a recess policy? How can you involve the district and broader community in supporting and implementing a recess policy?

What type of staff, resources, etc. would you need to implement a policy for recess? How can you utilize the funding provided by the NGA *Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan* grant to facilitate this process?

F. Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School

Please check the box which most accurately represents whether or not the specified action is a district policy and if that action is taking place campus-wide in all schools.

Policy language specifies that this action takes place campus-wide in all schools (except where otherwise noted)	No written policy	Written policy exists, but is not fully implemented	Written policy exists and is fully implemented
1. Policy specifies that every student is provided with opportunities to voluntarily participate in extra curricular physical activities that meet his or her needs, interests, and abilities.			
2. Policy specifies that safe opportunities are provided for both <u>organized and informal</u> use of indoor and outdoor facilities, before and after school.			
3. Policy specifies that school facilities are available to student staff and community members before and after the school day, on weekends, and during school vacations for physical activity and nutrition programs through Community Education.			
4. Policy encourages safe walking/ biking/blading to and from school programs such as Safe Routes to School.			
5. Policy specifies that students are surveyed annually for their interest in physical activity opportunities outside of the school day.			
6. Policy specifies that teachers and other school and community personnel do not use physical activity (running laps, pushups) or withhold opportunities for physical activity (recess, physical education) as punishment.			

Discussion on Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School

Discuss the potential for implementing a district policy for physical activity opportunities before and after school. Please discuss and answer the following questions in the spaces below:

Who and/or what groups in your district may oppose a district policy for providing opportunities for physical activity before and after school? What strategies could you use to overcome these barriers?

Who in your district would support implementing a policy that addresses physical activity opportunities before and after school? How can you involve the district and broader community in supporting and implementing your policy?

What type of staff, resources, etc. would you need to implement a policy for physical activity before and after school? How can you utilize the funding provided by the NGA *Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan* grant to facilitate this process?

Policy Selection Matrix

This section is designed to assist you in selecting at least two policies to implement in your district. Rank the following policies according to the criteria below on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest. Add up the total score for each policy and report the sum in the far right column. Select the policy that received the highest score from Tier 1 and the policy that received the highest score from Tier 2 and record them on the next page.

	Policy Option	Priority (1-10)	Feasibility (1-10)	District Support (1-10)	Community Support (1-10)	Total Points (4-40)
Tier 1 Policy Options	Vending machine food and beverage standards for all schools.					
	À la carte food and beverage standards for all schools.					
	Concessions/fundraising/school stores food and beverage standards for all schools.					
	Frequency and duration of physical education for all grade levels.					
	Frequency and duration of recess for elementary schools.					
	Structured physical activity during recess, before, and after school.					
Tier 2 Policy Options	Michigan Model for Health curriculum for all grade levels.					
	Classroom snacks/rewards standards for all grade levels.					
	Recess before lunch for elementary schools.					
	Quality physical education curriculum for all grade levels.					
	Classroom physical activity breaks.					
	Remove physical education waiver.					

School District Action Plan

Record the policies from the previous page that scored the highest in each Tier. Brainstorm actions that you will take to establish these policies in your district. Record actionable steps you will take in the SMART format grids below:

Tier 1 Highest Ranked Policy Option:

Actions	Person Responsible	Due Date	Date Completed
1)			
2)			
3)			
4)			
5)			
6)			
7)			
8)			

Tier 2 Highest Ranked Policy Option:

Actions	Person Responsible	Due Date	Date Completed
1)			
2)			
3)			
4)			
5)			
6)			
7)			
8)			

Appendix A. Foods and Beverages that Meet Tier 1 and Tier 2 Standards Established by the Institute of Medicine.

Tier 1 Food and Beverage Standards for All Students

Tier 1 foods are fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and related combination products*, and nonfat and low-fat dairy that are:

- Limited to 200 calories or less per portion as packaged.
- No more than 35 percent of total calories from fat.
- Less than 10 percent of total calories from saturated fats.
- Zero trans fat (less than or equal to 0.5 g per serving).
- 35 percent or less of calories from total sugars, except for yogurt with no more than 30 g of total sugars, per 8-oz. portion as packaged.
- Sodium content of 200 mg or less per portion as packaged.
- À la carte menu entrée items meet fat and sugar limits as listed above and:**
 - Are National School Lunch Program (NSLP) menu items.*
 - Have a sodium content of 480 mg or less.

Tier 1 beverages are:

- Water without flavoring, additives, or carbonation.
- Low-fat and nonfat milk (in 8 oz. portions):
 - Lactose-free and soy beverages are included.
 - Flavored milk with no more than 22 g of total sugars per 8-oz. portion.
- 100-percent fruit juice in 4-oz. portion as packaged for elementary/middle school and 8 oz. (two portions) for high school.
- Caffeine-free, with the exception of trace amounts of naturally occurring caffeine substances.

*Combination products must contain a total of one or more servings as packaged of fruit, vegetables, or whole grain products per portion.

**200-calorie limit does not apply; items cannot exceed calorie content of comparable NSLP entrée items.

Tier 2 Food and Beverage Standards for High School Students After School

Tier 2 snack foods are those that do not exceed 200 calories per portion as packaged and:

- No more than 35 percent of total calories from fat.
- Less than 10 percent of total calories from saturated fats.
- Zero trans fat (less than or equal to 0.5 g per portion).
- 35 percent or less of calories from total sugars.
- Sodium content of 200 mg or less per portion as packaged.

Tier 2 beverages are:

- Non-caffeinated, non-fortified with less than 5 calories per portion as packaged (with or without nonnutritive sweeteners, carbonation, or flavoring).

References and Resources

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- ⁴ Tarras H, Potts-Datema W. Obesity and student performance at school. *Journal of School Health* 2005;75(8):291-295.
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- ¹⁰ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Healthy youth! Program evaluation resources: SMART cards for SMART objectives. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/evaluation/SMART-text.htm>. Accessed January 2, 2008.
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- ¹² Institute of Medicine. Report brief April 2007: Nutrition standards for foods in schools: leading the way towards healthier youth. Available at: <http://www.iom.edu/CMS/3788/30181/42502.aspx>. Accessed December 13, 2007.
- ¹³ Center for Science in the Public Interest. School foods report card: a state-by-state evaluation of policies for foods and beverages sold through vending machines, school stores, á la carte, and other venues outside of school meals. June 2006. Available at: www.schoolfoods.org/resources_reportcard.pdf. Accessed December 13, 2007.