

Local Wellness Policy Implementation Grant

Parent Champions for School Wellness Initiative Report

October 2007



This project was funded, at least in part, with federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the view or policies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
INTRODUCTION	4
INCREASING PARENT AWARENESS THRU PRINT MEDIA.....	4
ENGAGING PARENTS THROUGH PARENT WORKSHOPS	4
APPENDIX A: EduGuide Article.....	9
APPENDIX B: School Wellness Workshop Invitation.....	10
APPENDIX C: Mini Action Plan.....	11
APPENDIX D: Parent Success Story Form.....	12
APPENDIX E: Parent Workshop Evaluation Form	13

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) was awarded approximately \$80,000 through the United States Department of Agriculture's Local Wellness Policy Implementation Grant. The purpose of the grant was to encourage Local Wellness Policy (LWP) adoption and implementation among Michigan local educational agencies (LEA). One element of the grant included a parent component. This component was included to encourage parents to work with their districts to implement LWPs. Parent workshops and technical assistance were provided to parents throughout Michigan. The following major activities were accomplished:

- Creation and distribution of a parent-friendly LWP EduGuide article distributed statewide.
- Development of a parent workshop to inform and motivate parents to become champions for school wellness.
- Implementation of 18 parent workshops throughout Michigan.

From October 2006 through April 2007, 21 workshops were conducted at intermediate and local school districts, hospitals and health departments. Of those workshops, 18 (86%) were for parents and three (14%) were for educators and others interested in working with parents.

Of the 345 participants, 213 (62%) were parents. The remaining 132 (38%) participants included principals, health teachers, food service staff, health department and hospital personnel, intermediate school district health coordinators, and students.

As part of the workshop structure, participants were asked to complete the Mini Action Plan that identified three actions they might take as a result of the workshop. A total of 116 (34%) plans were received from participants. The plans included a total of 261 intended actions.

INTRODUCTION

The goal of the parent intervention component was to provide LWP training and technical assistance to parents in an effort to inform them of the policy and enlist their support and assistance for campus-wide implementation. Specifically, this goal was to be accomplished by increasing parental awareness regarding the LWP requirement; implementing parent friendly workshops; providing follow-up technical assistance to parents; and collecting parent LWP implementation success stories.

The project goals were successfully achieved and details of the work completed under each goal, lessons learned and recommendations for future work in engaging parents in LWP are contained within this report.

INCREASING PARENT AWARENESS THROUGH PRINT MEDIA

In an effort to increase parent awareness regarding the federal requirement for each agency to adopt a LWP by July 2006, an article was written titled, "A Menu for Success - One School District's Path to Wellness." This article was written based on an interview with six Parent Teacher Association (PTA) moms who read about the requirement for school districts to have a LWP in the National PTA publication *Our Children*. They approached district administration about becoming involved and soon their LWP was written, approved by the school board, and the PTA moms started rolling out initiatives for healthy changes. The article was published in *EduGuide*, a national, award winning, magazine-style publication by the Michigan Non-Profit Partnership for Learning. The article reached an estimated 150,000 households through more than 90% of schools statewide (Appendix A). The article was also distributed through the following media outlets:

- Included in the 2007 Parenting Awareness Michigan Packet mailed in December 2006 with a statewide distribution of 7,000.
- Included in approximately 350 workshop packets at state-wide Parent Champions for School Wellness workshops.

ENGAGING PARENTS THROUGH PARENT WORKSHOPS

A 90-minute parent workshop ("Parent Champions for School Wellness") was developed to inform parents about the LWP; the need for such a policy; and ways parents can support the policy at school, home, in the community, and in the workplace. There were 21 workshops conducted in 13 counties from October 2006 through April 2007, at intermediate and local school districts, hospitals, and health departments. Of those workshops, 18 were parent workshops (86%) and three (14%) were primarily for educators interested in working with parents. The 13 counties included Macomb, Monroe, Marquette, Oakland, Kalamazoo, Grand Traverse, Ottawa, Saginaw, Genesee, Chippewa, Charlevoix, Otsego, and Alpena.

Of the 345 participants, 213 (61.7%) were parents. The remaining 132 participants included principals, health teachers, food service staff, health department and hospital personnel, intermediate school district health coordinators, and students. Attendance for the 18 parent workshops averaged 11 participants. Three parent workshops had 30, 31, and 35 respectively and two had 20 in attendance. Two of the three with 30 plus attendance were at conferences and the third was a presentation in an inner city elementary school. Four parent workshops were cancelled and, therefore, not included in the count of the 21 workshops in this report.

Marketing the parent workshops was an on-going effort. A flyer was created and e-mailed to Regional Health Coordinators across the state. Information about the workshops was included in the fall 2006 *EduGuide* and in the 2007 Parenting Awareness Michigan Packet. Hosting information was also printed in the September and December 2006 editions of *Prevention Network Newsletter* and posted on the Parent Action for Healthy Kids (PAFHK) Web site. A presentation at the December 2006 Michigan Action for Healthy Kids (MAFHK) coalition meeting titled "Empowering Parents into Action for Healthier Kids" resulted in workshops being hosted by health departments (Ottawa) and hospitals (Otsego Memorial Hospital, Gaylord and Alpena General Hospital) who are working with schools on wellness initiatives. A template was created and made available to hosts to use to advertise their workshop (Appendix B). Several of the host sites took advantage of the template altering it slightly for their community. Conference brochures and newsletters were also used by the host sites to advertise workshops.

Workshop participants were provided a complimentary MAFHK *Healthy School Toolkit* and the workshop focused on 5 toolkit components:

- ✓ "The State Board of Education Model Local Wellness Policy," a template for developing a district's wellness policy.
- ✓ "Making the Case," a DVD to present to local parent groups, school personnel, or community members.
- ✓ "Tips and Tools to Help Implement Michigan's Healthy Food and Beverage Policy," information and ideas for making positive, sustainable changes in the school nutrition environment.
- ✓ "Tips and Tools to Promote Physical Education and Physical Activity," information and ideas for making positive, sustainable changes in the school environment.
- ✓ "Healthy School Toolkit Resources," a list of reliable sources of additional information.

Tooth brushes were provided by the Michigan Dental Association and distributed to participants who turned in their Mini Action Plan and evaluation. In addition,

MAFHK tote bags were given to parents who provided contact information for follow up success stories.

The workshop packet contained the following:

- Presentation Power Point
- *Agree or Disagree* activity document
- *About the Wellness Policy* document
- *MyPyramid Food Intake Pattern Calorie Levels* document
- *Team Talk* The Michigan Team Nutrition Newsletter, Spring 2006
- *Share Your Success* document
- *A Menu for Success* document
- Mini Action Plan
- Evaluation Instrument

In addition to providing an historic perspective, data was given on the state of overweight and physically inactive children in Michigan and nationally. There were 3 activities during the 90-minute workshop and an opportunity to work as a group to share ideas, discuss possible actions parents can take, and to commit to one, two, or three Mini Action Plans to complete by the end of the 2006-2007 school year. The first activity was a pre- and post-test to determine how much the participants know about the LWP. The second activity, was titled "Agree or Disagree," and required participants to read a number of statements and to check off whether they *agree* or *disagree* with the statement. The third activity titled "Healthy Behaviors," helped participants think of how they might role model healthy behaviors to their children. During the last fifteen minutes of the workshop participants worked in groups, looking at resources in the *Healthy School Toolkit*, sharing ideas, and creating Mini Action Plans.

To encourage parents to take action, workshop participants were asked to fill out the Mini Action Plan stating one to three actions they might take as a result of the workshop (Appendix C). One copy was left with the workshop facilitator and the other copy was kept by participants as a reminder of their commitment to their action plan. Participants were also offered the opportunity to provide contact information to share their success at the end of the 2006-2007 school year (Appendix D). The success stories collected from this project may be found on the *Michigan Healthy Schools, Healthy Students* Web site (www.mihealthtools.org).

Of the 345 workshop participants, 116 (34%) Mini Action Plans were received containing a total of 261 intended actions. About 30% of the intended actions were for nutrition (school parties, snacks, food service), 30% personal (family walks, less soda pop at home), 11% for physical activity (recess before lunch, hold a walk-a-thon, denying recess as punishment), and 35% in the "other" category (follow up with administrator about the LWP, meet with food service director, hold a workshop for parents).

Participants were given an eight point Parent Workshop Evaluation Form at the end of the workshop (Appendix E). A total of 214 (62%) participants completed the

evaluation and results revealed that participants were highly pleased with the content and the structure of the parent workshops.

- Of those who participated in a parent workshop, **87%** indicated that the presentation met participant's needs. Example of comments:
 - *It was extremely informative.*
 - *I could have done a full day.*
 - *Wonderful education for the need to promote healthy living.*
 - *Positive presentation.*
- Of those who participated in a parent workshop, **86%** indicated that the presentation enhanced their knowledge about using LWP to improve school wellness. Example of comments:
 - *It makes me want to make changes.*
 - *Motivated me to get involved.*
 - *I know now about the sugar intake of my kids.*
 - *Stressing better eating habits.*
- Of those who participated in a parent workshop, **72%** indicated that the presentation enhanced their skills in using LWP to improve school wellness. Example of comments:
 - *I can now make a healthy food chart for my children.*
 - *I will take some info back to my school.*
 - *Made aware of where to check for more information.*
- Of those who participated in a parent workshop, **93%** indicated that the materials used in the presentation enhanced the effectiveness of the workshop. Example of comments:
 - *The toolkit will be awesome.*
 - *Great resources.*
- All who participated in a parent workshop indicated that the instructor effectively presented the workshop content. Example of comments:
 - *Very interactive.*
 - *I never stopped listening.*
 - *The instructor was very knowledgeable and kept our attention.*

Additionally, 85% indicated they were very likely to initiate a follow up conversation and/or take at least one action about these issues, 97% indicated they would recommend this workshop to other parents, and 96% indicated that the workshop motivated them to take at least one action.

To improve the potential for parents to take action, technical assistance (coaching/mentoring) was offered to parents. The facilitator answered questions, provided resources, and offered tips on how to work with schools on the LWP. Much of the technical assistance provided after a workshop was to help parents locate a Web site, answer a question about the LWP and provide tips on how to get

on the wellness committee. Often parents had an idea and wanted to know of someone else who might have done something similar. After the workshop, many of the e-mails received were for resources or to clarify the LWP. Other e-mails were to voice frustration over barriers within the school campus.

A menu for success

One school district's path to wellness

Annette Fuhrman always used the word "tragic" when she spoke to friends and neighbors about overweight children. She thought the damage to an overweight child's health and self esteem was tragic. But most tragic, perhaps, was the apparent lack of concern about this epidemic from the general public.

Then one day in 2005, Fuhrman, of Rochester Hills, was excited to learn that a new federal law had been passed. It required school districts, with input from parents, to develop a local health-related student wellness policy by July 1, 2006.

Before she knew it, Fuhrman had joined five other dedicated moms just as passionate about the topic of promoting healthy weight. They rolled up their sleeves and got to work on a policy for Rochester Community Schools. Others got word and got involved. Pretty soon, everyone from the superintendent's office to the food service staff joined the cause.

Rochester's Wellness Committee was formed and began writing the school's policy. Soon, candy disappeared from school halls and cafeterias. Soda pop machines were shut down during school hours. More milk machines showed up. Students joined "Milk Madness" contests and opted for "super sized" fruits and veggies at lunch. Parents noticed that students spent their money on too many high calorie ala carte foods instead of purchasing the healthier and less expensive national school lunch meals. Before long, all incoming 6th graders were attending an orientation entitled, "*Make the most of your lunch program! Choose well and save.*"

The School Board of Rochester Community Schools unanimously approved the wellness policy by the summer 2006 deadline. The entire experience reinforced the powerful message that good nutrition and physical fitness promote students' health and academic success — and that by working together, school communities can accomplish almost anything.

The publishing of this article is funded in part with federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the view or policies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.



What must school district wellness policies include?

- Goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities.
- Nutrition guidelines for all foods on the school campus.
- Assurance that reimbursable school meals meet the National School Lunch Program requirements.
- Participation by entire school community and the community at large.
- A school wellness policy evaluation plan.

How can parents promote school wellness?

- Check out what is being served for classroom snacks, rewards, parties, ala carte, and vending machines.
- Check out what daily physical activity and education opportunities are being offered.
- Review your district's local wellness policy.
- Become a champion for change.

How can parents become champions for change?

- Learn more. Sign up for a free and fun workshop for parents by visiting Parent Action for Healthy Kids at www.parentactionforhealthykids.org and click on "School Wellness" or contact Barb Flis at 248-538-7786.
- Build a network of parents who care about student wellness and spread the word.
- Join the school wellness committee.
- Join Michigan Action for Healthy Kids at: <http://www.actionforhealthykids.org>.
- Enroll your school in Team Nutrition at: <http://www.tn.fcs.msue.msu.edu>.
- Share your healthy schools parent success story at <http://www.mihealthtools.org/schoolsuccess>.

For more information about the local wellness policy, visit: www.tn.fcs.msue.msu.edu/policies.html.

Attention Parents!

You are invited to attend a free school wellness workshop

Schools play a critical role in promoting student health, healthy body weight, healthy eating, and physical activity. All districts in Michigan now have wellness policies in place and invite parents to be a part of the healthy changes that will start to take place throughout the school campus.

To learn what your district is doing to promote student health and how you can support these changes please attend this exciting free and fun workshop! Bring a Friend.

During This Inter-Active Workshop Parents Will:

- Learn how the wellness policy will benefit student health and learning
- Brainstorm ways parents can become champions for change
- Have fun! Meet other parents who support healthy eating & physical activity

Date:

Time:

Place:

To Register:

The presenter is Barbara Flis, Founder of Parent Action for Healthy Kids. Barb has conducted numerous workshops both statewide and nationally and currently serves as Chair of the Schools Committee for the Michigan Surgeon General's *Michigan Steps Up Campaign*. In June, 2005 she was appointed by Governor Jennifer Granholm to coordinate the *Talk Early & Talk Often* parent education initiative. Barb's grass-roots PTA experiences reinforce her belief that parents can be powerful partners when it comes to the health of children.

The workshop is funded in part with federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. The workshop content does not necessarily reflect the view or policies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government. In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

MINI ACTION PLAN
A SUCCESS IS A SUCCESS NO MATTER HOW SMALL!

This school year I plan to do the following:

1. _____

By (Date): _____

2. _____

By (Date): _____

3. _____

By (Date): _____

_____ **YES, I would like some assistance writing a success story!**
www.mihealthtools.org

NAME:

ADDRESS:

PHONE:

E-MAIL:

**HAVE YOU BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN MAKING
HEALTHY CHANGES AT YOUR SCHOOL?**

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Parents are powerful health advocates and the best way to demonstrate that is by sharing the great work that you are doing to make your child's school a healthy place to learn. By submitting your success story, you and your school can receive recognition for your efforts and inspire others.

A SUCCESS IS A SUCCESS NO MATTER HOW SMALL!

One small thing can make school a healthier place for children, staff and families. It could be healthier food for school parties, PTA meetings or Staff Appreciation. The school fundraising activity may be a walk-a-thon or other family related physical activity. Or you may take the lead on providing healthier food and beverages in vending machines or implementing "recess before lunch."

WE WANT TO HEAR YOUR STORY!

SHARE YOUR SUCCESS WITH OTHERS!

Michigan's Healthy School Success Story website is now available! Visit www.mihealthtools.org and click on Healthy Schools – Healthy Students

NEED HELP WITH YOUR SUCCESS STORY?

Contact Barbara Flis, Parent Action for Healthy Kids and she will help you write and submit your success story.

**Barbara Flis, 248-538-7786 or
barb@parentactionforhealthykids.org**

**Parent Champions for School Wellness!
EVALUATION**

1. Overall, how well did this workshop meet your needs?

Very Somewhat Not at all

Comments:

2. How well did the workshop enhance your knowledge about how you as a parent can use local wellness policies to improve school wellness?

Very Somewhat Not at all

Comments:

3. How well did the workshop enhance your skills in using local wellness policies to improve district and/or school wellness?

Very Somewhat Not at all

Comments:

4. How effective did the instructor present the content of the workshop?

Very Somewhat Not at all

Comments:

5. How well did the materials (transparencies, videos, activities) enhance or facilitate the effectiveness of the workshop?

Very Somewhat Not at all

Comments:

6. As a result of this workshop, how likely are you to initiate a follow up conversation and/or take at least one action about these issues?

Very Somewhat Not at all

Comments:

7. Would you recommend this workshop to other parents?

Yes No

8. The goal of this workshop was to motivate parents (you) to use local wellness policies to take at least one action to improve student and/or staff health. Did this workshop motivate you to take at least one action?

Yes No *Comments:*