

How to Use this Guide

Using the Wellness Policy Guide

The U.S. Department of Agriculture required that schools participating in the National School Lunch or Breakfast Programs have Wellness Policies at the beginning of the 2006-2007 school year. All Wellness Policies are required to have goals for at least **four components**:

- nutrition guidelines;
- physical education/activity;
- nutrition/health education; and
- other school based activities.

School supervisors from nutrition services, physical education, health education, and other areas involved with student wellness must collaborate on designing a plan to implement and monitor the policies and procedures/regulations established to support the plan. This guide is designed to be used as a template for implementation and monitoring of the Wellness Policy in a school system. For each of the required components, the template contains:

- sample goals;
- implementation activities;
- steps to support implementation;
- expected outcomes aligned with activities; and
- monitoring opportunities.

Establish Goals

Each policy component must have a variety of activities designed to support the goals. The school system wellness team should modify and use the forms and templates provided in this guide to monitor how well policy activities are being implemented and how they have impacted the health of students. It is most realistic to look at a long-term implementation and monitoring process for any Wellness Policy, perhaps as long as ten years.

When establishing goals, it is wise to select some goals that are easy to accomplish and some that are more difficult. An easy goal will allow your wellness teams to have some quickly attainable and measurable accomplishments. In contrast, by establishing some hard goals, your team will see the benefit of establishing an implementation and monitoring plan focused on long-term change. Most school systems will have easy and hard goals that have a varying degree of complexity and difficulty to implement. Goals that are already aligned with a current practice will be easier than goals that require a systemic review and complex change.

See the two examples below:

Example of an easy goal

Goal: “Meet the USDA nutrition guidelines for all school meals”

Priority: High

Timeline: 7/01/2009

Responsibility: School Nutrition Services

Example of challenging goal

Goal: “Serving healthy snacks at all school activities and in school stores”

Priority: Low

Timeline: 7/01/2012

Responsibility: School Parent Teacher Association, Student Government

Action Steps

This guide also serves as a template for school systems to design their own implementation and monitoring plan. School wellness teams are in the forefront of policy implementation and should have a broad representation from the school organization. It is best to work in teams by discipline and across disciplines to review this guide and to apply it to the school system’s policies. The following action steps are meant to guide your team as it moves through the stages of implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

1. Establish priorities for each policy component goal, step, and activity.

Determine what policy goals are required versus recommended, have deadlines, can be quickly implemented, or already have broad support from the constituents involved. Use these criteria and others to establish what the priorities are.

2. Modify and use the forms in this guide to describe the key policy goals within each component of your school system’s Wellness Policy.

Review the sample goals and identify those that are similar to your school system’s goals. Rework your goals if you find some clearer statements of what you wish to accomplish. Use the forms provided to document your goals.

3. Identify additional ideas for activities designed to implement the goals of the policy.

Review the activities in the sample goals, steps, and associated outcomes to further develop the goal charts. While some of the statements may fit your needs as written, it is more effective to use the tone and information in the sample statement and write your own activities. Think about long-term activities that you may or would like to undertake.

4. Describe methods to use and evidence to document and monitor achievements.

Review the sample monitoring ideas presented in the guide and add your own. Consider how you will collect this data, with whom you will share it, and how you will make use of the results.

5. Determine a timeline for implementation of each activity.

Timelines will support your efforts and provide positive reinforcement and accountability. While each activity may have its own timeline, the goals must be time-specific for effective monitoring.

6. Identify individuals who will be involved in implementing and monitoring the Wellness Policy.

Determine who should be involved and make them a part of your wellness team for each component.

7. Establish a comprehensive monitoring plan for your school system.

This step should have been completed as an integral step of the policy-making process. See Section 7 Implementation Plan section of this guide for a suggested comprehensive monitoring plan.

8. Accomplish wellness monitoring just as you would accomplish a journey of 1,000 miles; one step at a time!

Be prepared to embrace the process of change over a long period of time.

SAMPLE PAGE from Nutrition Guidelines section

Goal # 2. Increase meal participation rates by offering quality, accessible, and appealing meals.

Activities:

- 2.1 Provide students an opportunity for input on school menu items.
- 2.2 Feature menus with choices that are flavorful and attractively presented.
- 2.3 Upgrade eating and serving areas to improve function and image of cafeteria.
- 2.4 Promote the school meals program to all constituencies.**
- 2.5 Provide food safety training to all nutrition staff.
- 2.6 Conduct regular food tasting activities with students to introduce healthy menu items.

Activity 2.4		In place by	Responsibility
Promote the school meals program to all constituencies.		9/2010	all
Steps	Expected Outcome	Monitoring	
1. Develop promotional materials with student input (signs, posters, in-class promotions, public address system, bulletins, and school cable TV ads).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will perceive the cafeteria as a source for nutrition information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of promotional materials created. 	
NOTE: Each step should have an outcome and monitoring component. Some monitoring may apply to more than one step or outcome.			

SAMPLE Goals and Activities

Class Activity

Goal:

Activities:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Activity		In place by	Responsibility
Steps	Expected Outcome	Monitoring	
1.	•	•	
2.	•	•	
3.	•	•	
4.	•	•	
5.	•	•	
6.	•	•	