WISCONSIN SCHOOL GARDEN INTIATIVE BRIEF:

IMPROVING HEALTH WITH SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICIES

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School wellness policies are a tool to promote student health. Identifying goals for nutrition and physical activity helps schools create healthy students. This document provides an overview of school wellness policy history, outlines policy requirements, and suggests activities for inclusion. For ideas and sample language for including school gardens into a school wellness policy, see the Wisconsin School Garden Initiative Brief: *Incorporating School Garden Language into a School Wellness Policy.*



School Wellness Policy History

Recognizing the importance of healthy students, Congress passed the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act in 2004. This act required schools participating in child nutrition programs, to create local school wellness policies by the 2006-2007 school year. Six years later, Congress passed the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010[1] which added new implementation, evaluation, and progress reporting provisions for school wellness policies.

School Wellness Policy Requirements

School wellness policies must include[2]:

- Goals for nutrition, physical activity, and other school-based activities that promote wellness.
- Nutrition guidelines for foods available in each school district.
- Roles for parents, students, school food staff, PE teachers, school health professionals, school board members, administrators, and the general public.
- A plan to inform and update the public about policy content and implementation.
- A plan to measure the progress toward wellness policy goals.

1 National Conference of State Legislatures. *Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-296) Summary.* Retrieved July 12, 2013 from www.ncsl.org/issues-research/human-services/healthy-hunger-free-kids-act-of-2010-summary.aspx

2 USDA Team Nutrition. *Local School Wellness Policy.* Retrieved July 15, 2013, from http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/healthy/wellnesspolicy_requirements.html
Dietetic Association, *107*(4), 662-665.

Supporting Activities through a School Wellness Policy

A school wellness policy is a great place to identify activities that improve student health. Whether it's related to physical activity, nutrition, or another school-based wellness activity, highlighting these activities in a school wellness policy will ensure current and future students can benefit from them. See below for activities to include in a school wellness policy.



Nutrition Education

- Teach students to plant, tend, and eat fresh fruits and vegetables through a school garden program
- Promote local items through cafeteria signage
- Offer students opportunities to engage in hands-on cooking activities



Physical Activity

- Encourage physical activity inside and outside of the classroom.



Other School-Based Wellness Activities

- Composting programs help students develop a sense of environmental stewardship.
- Support district-wide Farm to School participation that includes locally sourced meals, nutrition education, school gardens, and other student engagement activities

Resources

Center for Ecoliteracy: Model Wellness Policy Guide
http://www.ecoliteracy.org/sites/default/files/uploads/cel_model_wellness_policy_guide.pdf

California Department of Education, Nutrition Services Division: Healthy School Environment
http://www.healthyschoolenvironment.org/training-resources/wellness-policies

Farm to School Toolkit: Promoting Local Purchasing & Farm to School Activities
http://www.cias.wisc.edu/foodservtools/8-Build-sustainability/model-wellness-policy-language.pdf

Public Health Law Center: Sample School Wellness Policy, School Gardens
http://publichealthlawcenter.org/sites/default/files/resources/ship-fs2-schoolwellnesssamplepolicylanguage-2011SchoolGardens.pdf

WSGI
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For more information about the Wisconsin School Garden Initiative,

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