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CALIFORNIA TASK FORCE ON Youth and Workplace Wellness

Changing Lives: Planning Strategies for Local Wellness Policy Implementation

Purpose of Report

The California Task Force on Youth and Workplace Wellness (Wellness Task Force) recognizes that there is not simply one solution to Local School Wellness Policy (LSWP) implementation; rather there are many solutions to a set of complex variables. Each district with its own demographics, size, and financial situation, requires a unique approach to successfully plan and implement its policies. The purpose of this report is to provide LSWP implementation planning priorities and strategies developed by a diverse cross-section of California school district representatives and thereby facilitate information sharing amongst district personnel who may experience similar challenges and goals.

About the Wellness Task Force

Launched by the State Legislature in 2002, the Wellness Task Force addresses the critical issues of physical inactivity and low-nutritional sustenance in California's schools and workplaces. Wellness Task Force members and volunteers including health advocates, educators, health providers, youth, business leaders, fitness experts and experienced athletes work with legislators and other policy makers to identify issues and provide workable solutions. The Wellness Task Force is a project of the Public Health Institute.

Our mission is to create and promote programs and policies that increase access to nutritious foods and physical activity and decrease the prevalence of diabetes and other chronic diseases.

About the School Wellness Challenge

The **School Wellness Challenge** was developed by the Wellness Task Force in 2006 to provide a vehicle for information sharing between school districts staff and experts in the field. More importantly, the **School Wellness Challenge** provides both trainings and tools necessary for school districts to develop written implementation plans that correspond with their LSWP's. Without such assistance, LSWP's run the risk of simply becoming a part of the administrative backlog of projects for which there is neither clear direction nor assistance available for implementation.

This program was launched in October 2006 in response to recent California legislation which requires improved nutritional food and beverage standards for grades Kindergarten-12. These laws regulate the amount of fat, sugar, and calories contained in a la carte foods (foods sold outside the federal school meal programs (Senate Bill 12)) and phase out the sale of sodas and other sweetened beverages beginning in 2007 (Senate Bill 965). Additionally, the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 mandated that all school districts adopt wellness policies in the fall of 2006 to address the proliferation of unhealthy foods and beverages and to increase physical activity levels.

Contributing Partners

California Project LEAN
California School Boards Association
California Department of Education
Dairy Council of California

Contributing Trainers

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Methodology

Trainings: The *School Wellness Challenge*, in collaboration with its partners, provided five trainings over a four-month period. These trainings were based upon feedback by participants. Topics included:

- ❖ Developing and/or Maintaining a School Wellness Council and Introduction to the Implementation Planning Process
- ❖ Growing and Sustaining a School Garden (training hosted by Western Growers Association)
- ❖ Understanding and Applying Federal and State Laws Related to Senate Bills 12 and 965
- ❖ Innovative Strategies for Physical Education and Physical Activity
- ❖ Tools and Methods for Communicating with Stakeholders

Tools: *School Wellness Challenge* partners provided a number of tools and information to participating school districts. Below is a list of tools utilized, which are now available to *all* California school districts via the Wellness Task Force website (www.wellnesstaskforce.org):

- ❖ Audio and visual recordings of each training (webinars)
- ❖ PowerPoint presentations used at each training
- ❖ *Policy In Action Guide*, provided by California Project LEAN (which includes all implementation planning worksheets – www.CaliforniaProjectLEAN.org)
- ❖ Template letter for school districts to use when communicating updates to stakeholders
- ❖ Sample PowerPoint presentation for school districts to use when communicating to stakeholders (also available in Spanish)
- ❖ Fact sheets regarding pertinent Federal and State Laws
- ❖ Examples of alternative fundraising, classroom celebration, and reward alternatives

Application Process and Initial Request for Implementation Plans

In October 2006, an invitation to participate in the program, co-signed by California State Superintendent of Instruction, Jack O’Connell, and Senator Tom Torlakson (D-7), Chair of the Wellness Task Force, was sent to all California school superintendents. Originally, the program outline only called for 25 school districts to participate on a first-come, first-served basis; however, due to the overwhelming response, the Wellness Task Force provided space for 60 school districts to apply. Forty-one school districts actually attended the trainings and 22 completed the survey that led to this report.

These school districts, known as Leadership Circle districts, were asked to submit their written implementation plans as a part of their application process. Although several districts had Administrative Regulations, *no* districts (0%) provided copies of a written implementation plan at that time. In addition, only 57.8% of the districts surveyed in December 2006 (26 districts completed the December 2006 survey) responded that they have a Wellness Committee that meets regularly.

Demographics

The 2006-07 *School Wellness Challenge* participants represented a diverse cross-section of communities in Northern, Central and Southern regions of the state and included, rural, urban and suburban communities; small, medium and large districts; and a diverse population of students.

The 41 Leadership Circle districts represented roughly 530,000 California youth and nearly 30,000 employees. (See Appendix B for a complete list of participating school districts.)

Data Collection

Throughout the program, the Wellness Task Force collected data from participants through a series of phone calls and surveys, and from draft implementation plans submitted by Leadership Circle districts.

This report is the culmination of information provided by participating school districts (see Appendix A for survey).

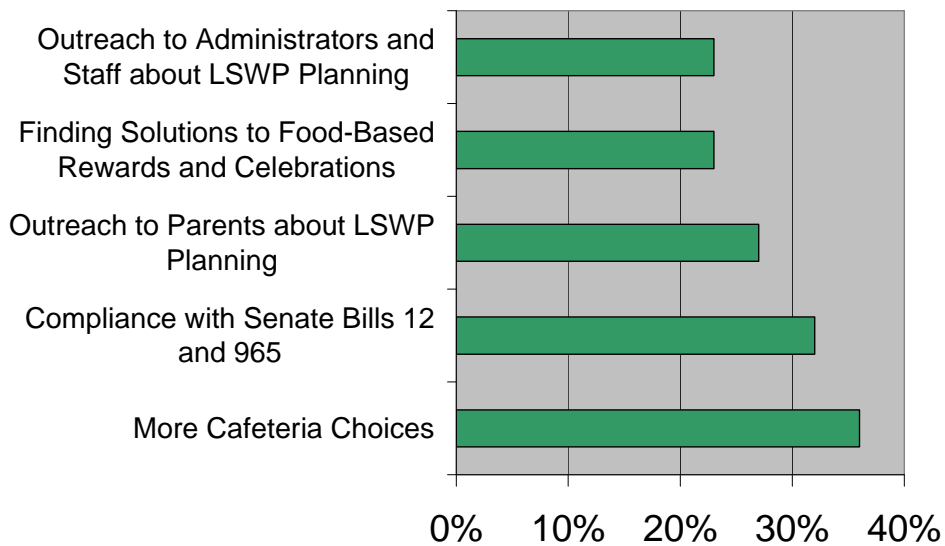
Key Findings

1. IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES: In terms of implementation, what were your district priorities this year?

Districts identified the following priorities for the 2006-07 school year.

Top Five Priorities

2006/07 Implementation Priorities



Other Identified Priorities

- Develop support materials to publicize the wellness policy
- Fundraise
- Draft board policies and administration regulations
- Encourage increased physical activities for students and staff
- Meet vending machine regulations
- Lay infrastructure for future wellness implementation
- Engage *youth* in developing programs and activities that promote healthy eating/active living
- Reorganize wellness committee to have regular meetings
- Establish how to measure implementation
- Incorporate a more diverse mix of parents into the process
- Identify and assist overweight/obese children in district
- Pilot programs at several schools
- Tailor district policies to meet each school's specific needs
- Delegate responsibilities for wellness plan
- Create 'train the trainer' materials for schools

Examples of Implementation Strategies for Priorities Listed Above

- ❖ Formation of the coordinated school health/wellness council to facilitate county needs in implementing the wellness plan (Alameda COE)
- ❖ Increase *youth* participation on coordinated school health council (Elk Grove Unified School District)
- ❖ Addition of a salad bar at the middle school (Fortuna Union Elementary School District)
- ❖ Expand the number of schools using the *CATCH PE* program (Newport-Mesa Unified School District)

"We believe that an integrated and coordinated school health program will result in school environments that promote and protect children's health, well-being, and ability to learn. The Wellness Plan will be a starting spot for home [to] school conversations about health and nutrition, and add a focus of good health to our counseling and family outreach programs. We'll take a look at the role of food as a positive force in school fundraisers and school events."
(Luther Burbank School District)

2. IMPLEMENTATION STEPS: Describe the steps you took to develop your written implementation plan. (Please include any trainings or meetings you attended.)

The survey indicated that the majority of the responding school districts attended at least one of the conferences/trainings/meetings offered by state-sponsored or state-affiliated organizations. This does not necessarily reflect the attendance numbers at the ***School Wellness Challenge*** trainings. All survey respondents participated in at least one of the ***School Wellness Challenge*** trainings. Fifty-six percent, or 23 of the total 41 Leadership Circle districts, participated in at least three of the trainings.

Top Seven Steps

1. Attended conference/trainings/meeting (59%)
2. Informed community stakeholders (36%)
3. Developed and/or maintained wellness committee (36%)
4. Enforced food policies (14%)
5. Identified timeline/deadlines (9%)
6. Surveyed students (9%)
7. Conversated with other school districts (5%)

Implementation Examples for Steps Listed Above

- Marriage of wellness policy/implementation into existing core curriculum
- Student involvement in wellness policy design and implementation
- Creation of brochure for families outlining new state regulations
- Wellness booths at all school sites on Back to School Night
- Presentation by Director of Nutrition and School Nurse to district staff to explain changes and new requirements
- Passage of bond measure that will fund the renovation of the school kitchen
- Meeting of all school principals to begin evaluation of school needs by using CDC School Health Index self-assessment planning guide from district wellness committee
- Distribution of resource guide for principals that includes goals of district-wide policy
- Planning meeting with representatives from coordinated school health
- Receipt of funding to support coordination and establishment of infrastructure and implementation programs and activities

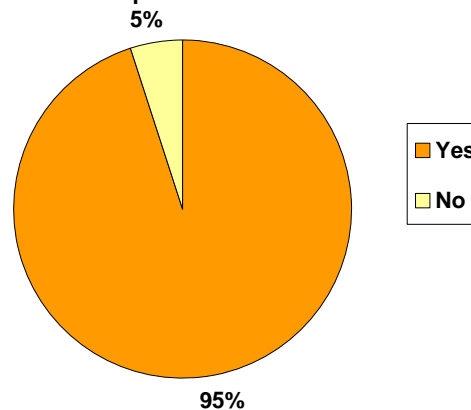
"I was very uninformed when starting this project. I knew little about the policies or how to implement them. The [California] Project LEAN materials gave me a way to organize my madness...I see them as being very useful for continuing the implementation process." (Lakeport Unified School District)

3. RESULTS: What are the results of your efforts?

❖ **Do you have a wellness committee that meets regularly?** 91% of respondents surveyed reported that they now have a wellness committee that meets regularly. *This is up 33.2% from our initial survey in December 2006.**

❖ **Do you have a partial, draft, written implementation plan?**

None of the districts provided implementation plans during the application and initial survey process in December 2006, indicating a 95% increase in written implementation plans.



❖ **If necessary, has your plan been approved by your school board?** California State Law does not require school boards to adopt implementation plans. Only five of the 22 districts surveyed indicated that the school board had approved their implementation plans.

4. PLAN DEVELOPERS: Who was involved in the development of your written implementation plan? (Please provide names of people, organizations, or other resources involved.)

Top Six Groups of Plan Developers

1. Teachers
2. Food service staff
3. Principals
4. Parents
5. School board members
6. Students

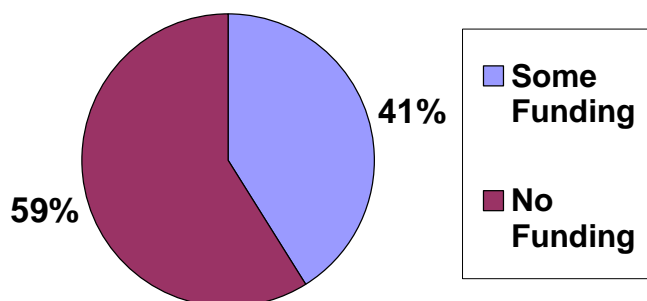
Below are a few specific examples of community stakeholder groups involved in the planning and implementation process:

- Healthcare professionals
- Communications and Public Relation professionals
- Local departments of Public Health and Education
- American Cancer Society
- North Coast Opportunities, a private nonprofit organization that specializes in developing and strengthening human services in Northern California communities

* Twenty-six school districts responded to the initial survey in December 2006. They do not necessarily correspond with the same school districts responding to the survey related to this report.

5. BUDGET: What was the budget for this activity? What was the source of funding?

Implementation Planning Budget



Thirteen respondents (59%) indicated that no funding was allocated to specifically develop this planning process or implement policies. Funding from districts that had allocated money ranged from \$200 to \$74,000.

Examples of Funding Sources

- ❖ Food Services
- ❖ School District general funds
- ❖ Foundations (e.g., San Francisco Foundation, Weed & Seed Grant, Catholic Charities, and Kaiser Permanente)
- ❖ American Cancer Society

6. TIME ALLOCATED: To date, what is your best estimate of the time involved in the implementation planning process?

Because there was not a standard of measurement for this question, the ways in which participants calculated their time varied. Responses ranged from 3 hours total, to 1000 hours district-wide.

7. TRAINING: How effective were the School Wellness Challenge trainings in terms of preparing you to use the California Project LEAN worksheets to develop your written implementation plan? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 ("5" being very effective and useful to your plan development and "1" being of no use at all.)

The Wellness Task Force received an averaged score of 4.

"The [School Wellness Challenge] training sessions were great – not only from the expertise but from the input of other districts in the room...this program has jettisoned us to the next level of thinking about wellness across the entire model of Coordinated School health. We are currently looking for ways to fund Wellness/CSH Coordinators in every district. We are beginning [to collaborate] with the Alameda County Department of Public Health to that end." (Ocean View School District)

8. DEMOGRAPHICS: What are the demographics of your target population?

According to Ed-Data¹, the following statistics reflect the 2005-06 demographics for the 22 responding school districts.

- ❖ Total number of students enrolled in all 22 responding school districts: 280,059
- ❖ Average percentage of students who receive free and reduced meals: 41.64% or 116,610 students
- ❖ Average percent of minority students: 64.18% or 177,557 students

¹ www.ed-data.k12.ca.us, District Comparison Results, Fiscal Year 2005-06.

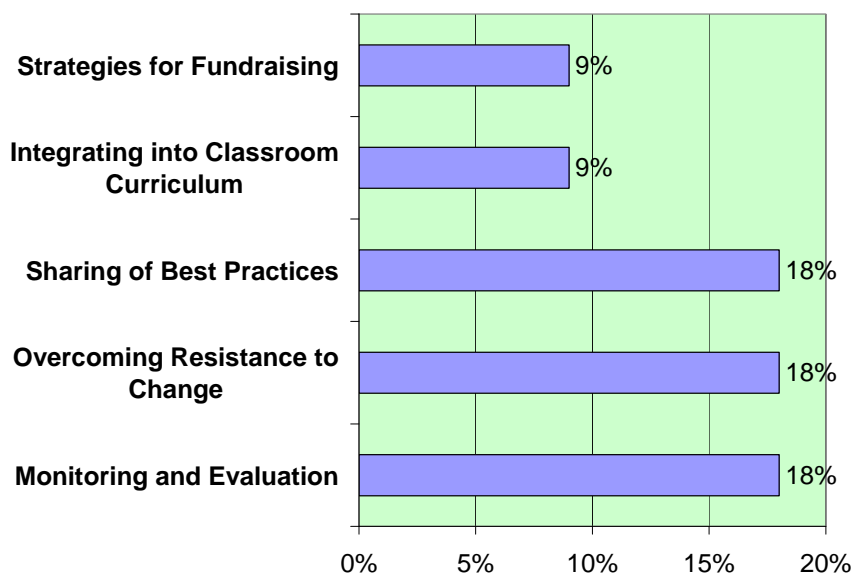
9. FUTURE TRAINING: Would you be interested in attending/participating in future trainings conducted by the California Wellness Task Force?

All respondents answered positively that they would be (or might be) interested in participating in another series of trainings provide by the Wellness Task Force. No respondents answered that they would not consider another series of trainings.

"I liked the trainings...I felt it was important to hear everyone's questions because we all struggle with the same problems. It provided me with an idea [of which] districts really had it together - [and] they can be used as contacts." (Sierra Sand Unified School Districts)

What type(s) of training(s) would help your district ensure full and successful implementation of your Local Wellness Policy?

Top Five Responses



Additional Responses

- ❖ Additional strategies for physical education teachers
- ❖ How to plan and implement health education curriculum
- ❖ How to negotiate competitive food and beverage contracts
- ❖ How to sustain implementation plans
- ❖ Creative solutions for tight budgets
- ❖ More information on how to involve stakeholders

"I think the trainings have all been very valuable and I would definitely consider attending any and all that were offered." (Encinitas Unified School District)

Recommendations

Based upon the results from the evaluation survey and informed conversations with district representatives during the *School Wellness Challenge* program, the Wellness Task Force recommends school districts pursue the following strategies:

1. Develop and/or maintain a written implementation plan that demonstrates progress accountability and an updated timeline.
2. Develop and/or maintain a Wellness Committee (which may include a Coordinated School Health Council) that is comprised of school personnel, students, parents and community stakeholders.
 - a. Physical activity and/or physical education staff should be represented on the Wellness Committee. Well-rounded LSWP's include increasing regular access to physical activity and quality physical education; yet, we found that very few teachers or community stakeholders who represent this field were included in the implementation process.
3. Collaborate with additional school districts to discover new strategies and to find solutions to similar problems. Wellness coordinators do not need to be (or feel) isolated through this process.
4. Connect with State and local stakeholders that can provide trainings and implementation resources.

Wellness Task Force Next Steps

As demonstrated by the survey results, additional funding is required to continue the *School Wellness Challenge*, which is a welcomed and necessary training program to assist school districts in the following:

1. Development and maintenance of written implementation plans;
2. Achievement of policy implementation goals (as listed in requested trainings above); and
3. Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation process.

Sponsors

The *School Wellness Challenge* was made possible through funding from for the following sponsors:



For more information about the School Wellness Challenge, or any Wellness Task Force programs and events, please contact:

Leah Cox, Executive Director
PO Box 1292
Orangevale, California 95662
wellnesstaskforce@yahoo.com
www.wellnesstaskforce.org

Appendix A

BRIGHT IDEAS SURVEY

ORGANIZATION Information

Organization Name:

Your Name:

Today's Date:

Address:

City:

ZIP:

Email:

Phone:

FAX:

Mailing Address:

City:

State: CA

ZIP Code:

suggested changes for school wellness challenge participants

Please enter your response to each of the following questions. (*Your answers can be typed directly on this form and the space allocated will expand to meet your needs as you type.*)

1. IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES: In terms of implementation, what were your district priorities this year?

2. IMPLEMENTATION STEPS: Describe the steps you took to develop your written implementation plan. (Please include any trainings or meetings you attended.) [300 word limit]

3. RESULTS: What are the results of your efforts? Please respond to the following questions, by checking the appropriate box and add any additional comments that you feel are relevant.

- Do you have a wellness committee that meets regularly? Yes No
- Do you have a partial, or draft, written implementation plan? Yes No
- If necessary, has your plan been approved by your school board? Yes No Not necessary
- How are the schools within your district utilizing this document? [500 word limit]

- Additional or supportive comments [200 word limit]:

4. PLAN DEVELOPERS: Who was involved in the development of your written implementation plan? (Please provide names of people, organizations, or other resources involved.)

5. BUDGET:

- What was the budget for this activity? \$
- What was the source of funding?

6. TIME ALLOCATED: To date, what is your best estimate of the time involved in the implementation planning process?

7. TRAINING: How effective were the School Wellness Challenge trainings in terms of preparing you to use the California Project LEAN worksheets to develop your written implementation plan? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 ("5" being very effective and useful to your plan development and "1" being of no use at all.) SCORE: ____

- Please explain your score [100 word limit]

BRIGHT IDEAS SURVEY

8. DEMOGRAPHICS: What are the demographics of your target population?

- Number of students enrolled in your district:
- Percentage of students who receive free and reduced meals:
- Student ethnicity:
- Other pertinent demographics:

9. FUTURE TRAINING: Would you be interested in attending/participating in future trainings conducted by the California Wellness Task Force: Yes No Possibly

- What type(s) of training(s) would help your district ensure full and successful implementation of your Local Wellness Policy?

10. IMPLEMENTATION PLANS: In compliance with your signed agreement, please submit your (draft) implementation plans, along with this form, by May 31, 2007. Implementation plans may be typed directly on the CA ProjectLEAN form at www.CaliforniaProjectLEAN.org, or attached to this document. If your plans are hand-written, please fax them to 916-760-7045.

We do not expect complete plans, rather just those worksheets that pertain to the Key Elements you have identified as priorities. We understand that these implementation plans are a work-in-progress, and as such, your work is a valuable learning tool for all California school districts. If you would like your plan to remain anonymous, please note that in your response.

WE APPRECIATE YOUR TIME AND EFFORT IN COMPLETING THIS SURVEY AND SUBMITTING YOUR PLAN!

Appendix B

2007 Participating School Districts

Alameda County Office of Education
(Hayward Unified School District)
Alta Dutch Flat Elementary Union School
District
Alvord Unified School District
Beaumont Unified School District
Buena Park Elementary School District
Chula Vista Elementary School District
Claremont Unified School District
Edison Elementary School District
Elk Grove Unified School District
Encinitas Union School District
Folsom Cordova Unified School District
Fortuna Union Elementary School District
Fremont Unified School District
Garvey School District
Geyserville Unified School District
Sierra Sands Unified School District
Torrance Unified School District
Ukiah Unified School District
Vacaville Unified School District
Ventura Unified School District
Windsor School District
Yuba City Unified School District

Irvine Unified School District
Kernville Unified School District
Lake Tahoe Unified School District
Lakeport Unified School District
Lassen Union High School District
Leggett Valley Unified School District
Live Oak Unified School District
Lodi Unified School District
Luther Burbank School District
Newport-Mesa Unified School District
Ocean View School District
Oxnard Elementary School District
Pioneer Union Elementary School District
Princeton Joint Unified School District
San Francisco Unified School District
San Mateo Union Hschool District
Shasta County Office of Education