Implementing Effective School Wellness Policies
Mississippi School Nurses ~ April 2006
Jackson, Mississippi

Mississippi School Wellness Policies

KEY strategy for improving academic achievement and health

Is student health the missing link in school improvement?

Health is Academic

got breakfast?

Academics
BOTTOM LINE: Kids need nutrition to get information IN, not just OUT on test days.

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Wellness policies are required on the first day of school 2006.

Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004

Implementing an EFFECTIVE School Wellness Policy

WHY?
WHAT?
HOW?
WHO?
WHEN?

Our kids are facing a weight, nutrition, and health crisis.

More than overweight kids

Weighty Health Issues
Overweight
Overfed
Undernourished
Sedentary
Diabetes (type 2)
CVD Risk Factors
Eating disorders

NHANES

Overweight
• Higher in African-American youth, especially girls
• Higher in Mexican-American youth
• Higher in low-income children and teens
• Faster increases among low-income teens

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Being overweight is an academic issue

- Overweight children have more school absences than children with a healthy weight.
- Overweight children report a lower quality of life.
- Weight-related teasing is a significant cause of bullying at school.

Overweight, overfed ... and undernourished

OVERFED
Over 40 percent of kid’s calories come from added fat and sugar.

OVERFED
USDA MEDIUM LARGE SUPER-SIZE

PORTION DISTORTION

320 calories

20 years ago, a turkey sandwich had 320 calories. How many calories are in today’s portion?

PORTION DISTORTION

410 Calories

150 Calories

Undernourished

Importance of DAIRY:

- Kids who avoid milk more likely to be overweight & have fractures
- Higher milk intake in children associated with lower body fat

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Being undernourished is an academic issue

- Optimal nutrition is necessary for optimal cognitive functioning.
- Zinc and iron (along with other nutrients) are critically important to brain function.
- Sub-optimal nutrition has been shown to affect academic performance and even IQ scores.

SEDENTARY

- Couch potato parents … and tater tot kids

SEDENTARY

- Less PE in school
- More screen time
- Only 1/2 get regular vigorous activity
- 14% of teens report NO physical activity

SEDENTARY

- 33 percent of 2 to 7 year olds have a TV in their bedroom

SEDENTARY

- Too much TV is an academic issue
- Excessive screen time undermines children's education.
- Excessive screen time reduces time that children have to read, do homework, and explore the world around them.
- Kids who watch a lot of TV (with simple words and sentences) miss the vocabulary they need to excel at school.

Type 2 DIABETES

- Prevalence of Type 2 diabetes has increased dramatically in teens and kids as young as 10
- Increases larger in African American, Native American, and Mexican American populations

DIABETES

“One in three children born in the US in 2000 will become diabetic …”

CDC ~ 06/15/03

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Type II diabetes is an academic issue
- Children with Type II diabetes have more school absences.
- Fluctuating blood sugar levels contribute to poor behavior and other school problems.
- Kids with Type II diabetes need more intensive nursing services.

These problems have far-reaching consequences.

The Impact
Health consequences
- Cardiovascular, hypertension, Type 2 diabetes
- High blood cholesterol, respiratory ailments, and orthopedic problems

Psychological consequences
- Self-esteem, withdrawal, anxiety, body image

Academic consequences
- Attendance, classroom behavior, cognitive development, test scores, and academic performance

Mississippi Budget Consequences
Obesity-related costs
$757 million dollars per year, over half of those expenses were paid by Medicare and Medicaid

Nutrition and fitness improve academic performance.

Nutrition and fitness help children behave well in school.

Nutrition and Fitness
- Reduce fatigue
- Reduce irritability
- Reduce apathy
- Reduce anxiety
- Reduce depression
- Reduce infections
- Reduce absences

Nutrition and Fitness
- Improve attendance
- Improve energy levels
- Improve participation
- Improve behavior
- Improve test scores
- Improve academic success

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**Academics**

**BOTTOM LINE:**
Kids need nutrition to get information **IN,** not just **OUT** on test days.

**BREAKFAST**
boosts brainpower in the **MORNING.**

**LUNCH**
boosts brainpower in the **AFTERNOON.**

**SNACKS**
boosts brainpower **AFTER SCHOOL.**

**Fitness is an ACADEMIC issue.**

Research supports fitness

Is student **health** the missing link in school improvement?

**Weighty Health Issues**
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Real Solutions
FAMILY
PRE-SCHOOL
SCHOOLS
COMMUNITY
HEALTH CARE
INDUSTRY

Schools play a central role in creating solutions.

Wellness policies are required on the first day of school 2006.

Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004

Senator Tom Harkin
“On one hand, the specter of malnutrition and hunger continues to haunt millions of Americans, especially children. At the same time, we are confronted with a grave public health threat in the form of obesity and overweight, which are quickly becoming a major threat not just to individuals but to our Nation as a whole.”

Gov. Haley Barbour
“Weight is something with which many of us struggle, including me, so I have a special appreciation for the educational, physical and emotional value of diet, exercise and other elements of healthier living.”

DeSoto County Supt. Milton Kuykendall
... hoped that the fight against obesity would become “a community wide effort.” School system helped do its part by building physical education facilities and spending more on PE teachers.

Mississippi School Wellness Policy Guide for Development

Commitment to Nutrition

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Commitment to Nutrition
Commitment to Physical Activity
Commitment to Comprehensive Health Education

Commitment to Marketing a Healthy School Environment
Commitment to Implementation

Three Steps for Success
1. Gather input and assess current situation.
2. Develop and approve a school wellness policy.
3. Implement an effective school wellness policy.

A team approach...
- Students
- Families
- Teachers
- Coaches
- School Nurses
- Counselor
- Principal
- Superintendent
- Foodservice staff
- After-school staff
- Doctor
- Dietitian
- Therapist
- Dentist
- Orthodontist
- Public Health
- YWCA/YMCA
- Boys/Girls Club
- Extension
- College/University

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YOU are natural leaders for implementing effective school wellness policies.

Who Benefits?
Administrators
Teachers
Schools
Families

Who Benefits?
Students

SLIDES
Mississippi
Department of Education
Office of Healthy Schools
www.mde.k12.ms.us/HealthySchoolsIndex.html

Thank You

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