



# Creating Healthy Schools

## 2.2 Family Involvement

### What is the current policy?

Our school district cares about the health and well-being of staff members and students and understands the influence parent and family actions have on student behaviors. Our school is required to have strong wellness policies. Each school is required to create and implement its own School Wellness Policy.

We believe it is important to have a component on family involvement. All staff will support parent and family involvement that promotes healthy eating, physical activity, and healthy lifestyle behaviors.

## Ideas!

### How can your school get more involved?

There are several ways your school can help promote family involvement in school wellness. Below is a list of suggestions:

#### Connect and build positive relationships with parents.

- Review the school mission. Does it reflect the importance of parent engagement and establish the foundation for parent engagement in school health activities?
- Support the school wellness advisory committee, increase parental involvement in PTO/PTA groups, increase parental awareness that such groups exist.
- Ask parents about their needs and interests.

#### Promote benefits of family involvement and ways that families can become more engaged at school.

- Conduct an orientation session at beginning of school year on school wellness policies.
- Provide guidelines on school wellness policies in each parents/students orientation materials.
- Include updates in school newsletters with links to policy/guidelines online.
- Promote online link to School Wellness PowerPoint.

(more on back)

### Why is this important?

Under the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010, the Federal Government enacted legislation regarding school wellness policies. Each school is required to create and implement School Wellness Policies. Support of these policies should come not only from administration, staff and faculty, but families as well. Families hold the potential to play a critical role in the quality of and extent to which Local School Wellness Policies (LSWP) are developed and implemented. Family involvement in LSWP implementation can help create a healthy learning environment by providing an important opportunity for families to promote success in the classroom as well as the health and wellness of their own children and all those children attending the school. As staff members, you can help facilitate family involvement. At left are recommendations for increasing family involvement.

**Family involvement  
can help create a  
healthy learning  
environment!**



## Resources:

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has designed a handbook outlining strategies for involving parents in school health. This handbook also provides solutions for common challenges associated with this policy and can be found at:  
[http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/protective/pdf/parent\\_engagement\\_strategies.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/protective/pdf/parent_engagement_strategies.pdf)  
Also: [https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/protective/pdf/parentengagement\\_teachers.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/protective/pdf/parentengagement_teachers.pdf)
- Learn more about family engagement policies. The National School Boards Association has compiled links to sample district policies. For more information about these policies, go to:  
<http://www.nsba.org/resource-library/board-leadership?page=1>  
Also: <https://www.nsba.org/services/school-board-leadership-services/food-allergieschool-health>
- In partnership with the California Department of Public Health and the Public Health Institute, California Project LEAN (Leaders Encouraging Activity and Nutrition) hopes to increase healthy eating and physical activity within communities. California Project LEAN has created a template to engage parents in local school wellness policies and can be found at:  
[http://www.californiaprojectlean.org/docuserfiles/ParentsInAction\\_web\(1\).pdf](http://www.californiaprojectlean.org/docuserfiles/ParentsInAction_web(1).pdf)

*Two other versions of this policy item are available for both administration and family to assist with implementation.*



# Ideas!

- Provide information about physical activity opportunities before, during and after the school day which parents and families can take part in together.
- Provide families with a clear understanding of what their children will learn at each grade level.
- Recognize families that are active in school wellness activities and encourage more families to participate.
- Hold meetings at various times and dates to accommodate family schedules.
- Create easy access to the School Wellness PowerPoint and Orientation Packet.

### **Make your parent advisory council a big deal.**

- Assign staff to oversee and manage.
- Solicit participation from PTO/PTA and other parent groups.
- Encourage at least one family member to participate in a wellness program advisory council.
- Highlight advisory board actions & decisions periodically in a newsletter.
- Provide online opportunities for all parents to provide input on advisory board issues being reviewed and discussed.
- Invite family members to become involved with school nutrition and physical activity programs by providing input and feedback during development and implementation of these programs.

### **Provide families with the necessary information and tools to learn about healthy lifestyle environments.**

- Provide educational materials to family members on how to teach their children about physical activity, and nutrition.
- Provide examples of nutritious meals and snacks in multiple forms, like handouts, school website, district/school newsletters, and presentations.
- Share information about family physical activity opportunities through websites, newsletters, other take-home materials, special events, or physical education homework.

### **Take into consideration cultural differences when engaging families in school wellness programs.**

- Translate healthy lifestyle handouts, materials, and other various resources into Spanish for easy understanding in English as second language households.
- Assign translators at PTO/PTA meetings.
- Offer nutrition education sessions to families in Spanish.

### **Encompass all grade levels in family involvement strategies.**