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Research Informing Policies & Practices
for Healthy Youth

Evaluating Progress and Opportunities in School District Wellness Policies Three Years after the Federal Mandate

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Acknowledgments

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Presentation Overview

- ✓ Overview of federal wellness policy requirement
- ✓ Describe study methods
- ✓ Highlight key findings
- ✓ Highlight areas where wellness policies aligned with 2007 Institute of Medicine competitive food & beverage standards
- ✓ Report availability
- ✓ Next steps

Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 (P.L. 108-265, Section 204) –aka: Wellness Policy Requirement

Wellness policy required by 1st day '06-'07 school year

All school districts participating in the National School Lunch Program or Child Nutrition Programs

Required components:

1. Goals for nutrition education, physical activity, other school-based activities
2. Guidelines for all foods/sold served (i.e., competitive foods)
3. Assurance that reimbursable meal guidelines at least meet Federal regulations
4. Implementation plans
5. Involvement of key stakeholders in policy development

Brief Study Overview

Ongoing nationwide evaluation of school district wellness policies

- Nationally representative sample of 579, 641, and 593 school districts, respectively, for school years 06-07, 07-08, and 08-09
- Data presented weighted to %age of students nationwide in districts with given policy provision
- Very high response (policy collection) rates
 - 94% for 06-07 and 07-08
 - 97% for 08-09

Primary policy collection and analysis, included wellness policy and all associated regulations/guidelines/procedures

- Also included cross-referenced policies/models/embedded state laws

Brief Study Overview (cont.)

Policies coded by grade level using adaptation of Schwartz et al. (2009, *JADA*) scheme

Focus on required wellness policy elements:

Goals for nutrition education

School meal requirements

Competitive food guidelines

Goals for physical activity

Implementation plans

Also included provisions for physical education and separately analyzed competitive food & beverage policies to assess alignment with 2007 IOM standards

Brief Study Overview (cont.)

Policies evaluated using an ordinal coding scheme:

0: No policy

1: Weak policy (should, encourage, may, try, attempt)

2: Strong policy (must, shall, require)

For competitive food and beverage content restrictions, policies coded using additional coding scheme that accounts for the 2007 IOM competitive food standards. This scheme typically is as follows:

0: No policy

1: Weak policy (should, encourage, may, try, attempt)

2: Strong policy (must, shall, require) less than IOM standard

3: Strong policy that meets IOM standard

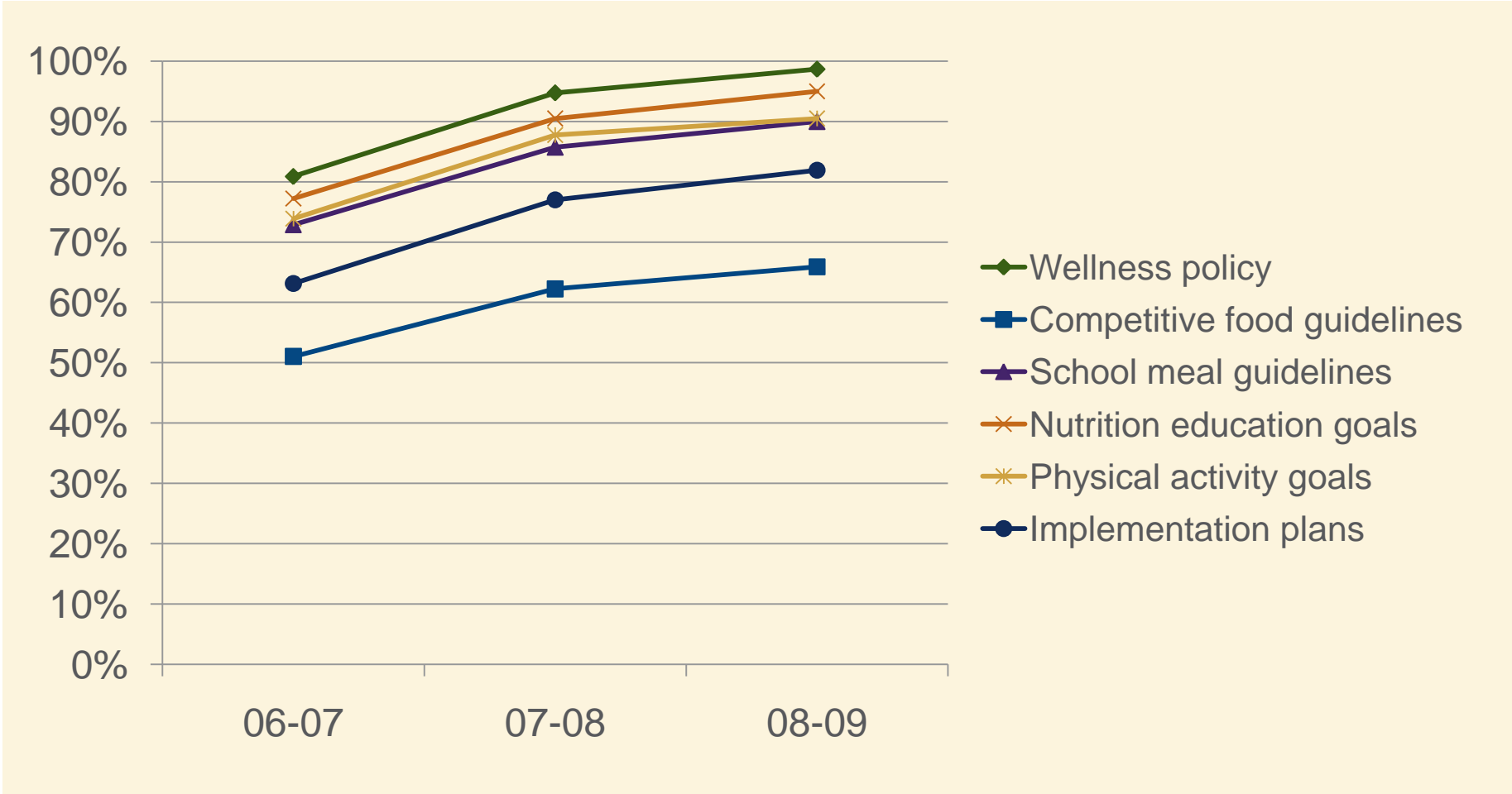
4: Complete competitive food/beverage ban or location ban

Highlights of Key Findings

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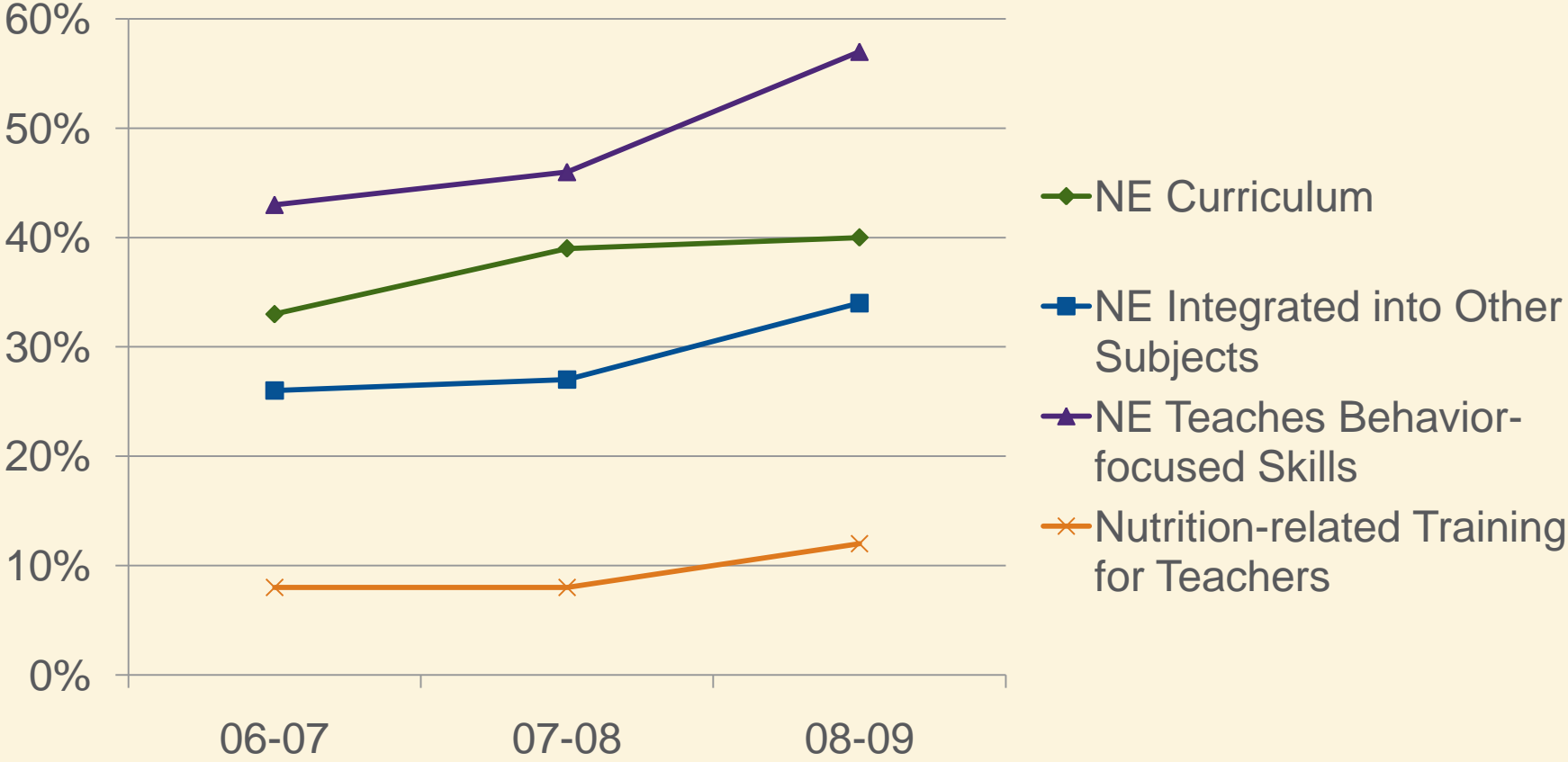
Wellness Policy Requirements

% of Students in Districts with Policy by Year



Selected Nutrition Education Policy Requirements

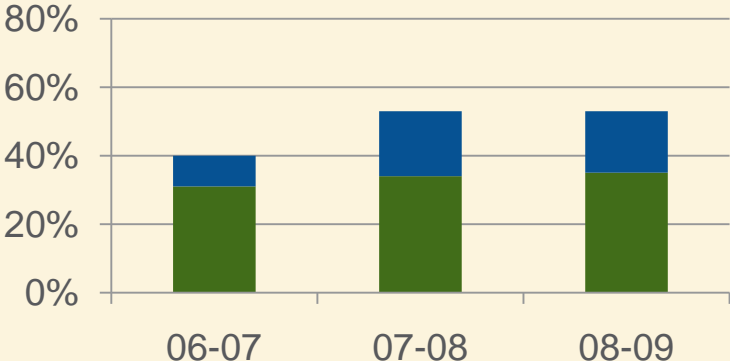
% of Students in Districts with Policy by Year



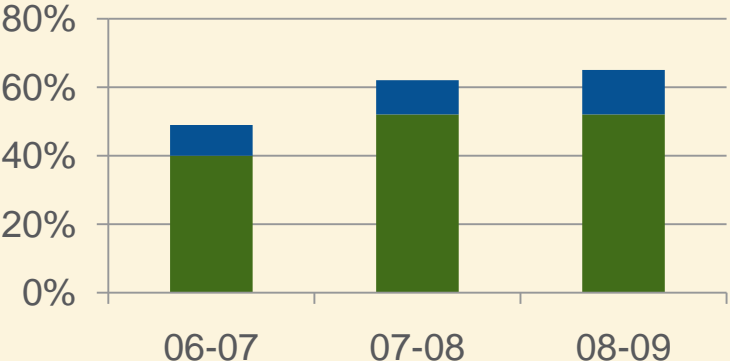
Selected School Meal Policy Provisions

% of Students in Districts with Policy by Year

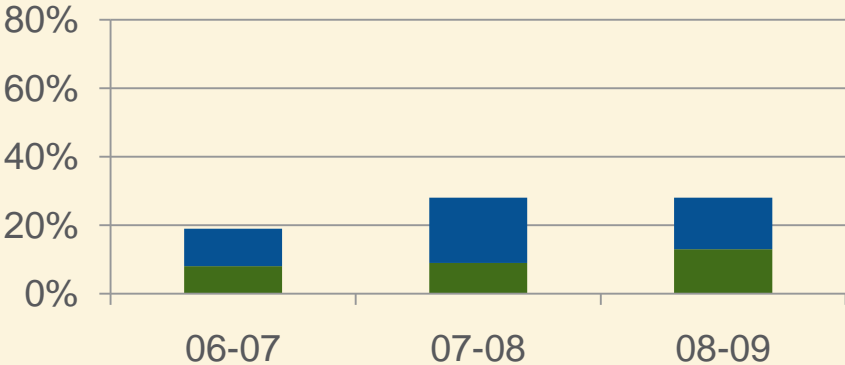
Meals Meet Dietary Guidelines



Adequate Time to Eat



Nutritional Content Info for Meals

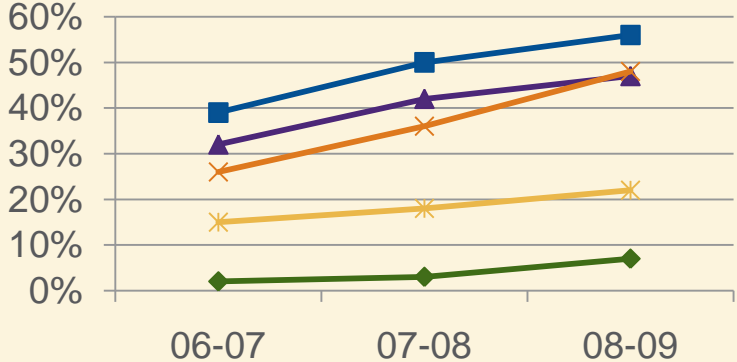


- Strong policy (Required)
- Weak policy

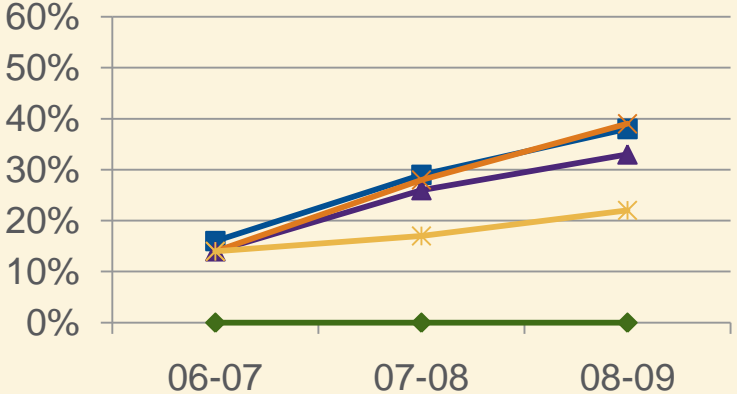
Competitive Food & Beverage Location Restrictions by Grade Level and Year

% of Students in Districts with Policy by Grade Level and Year

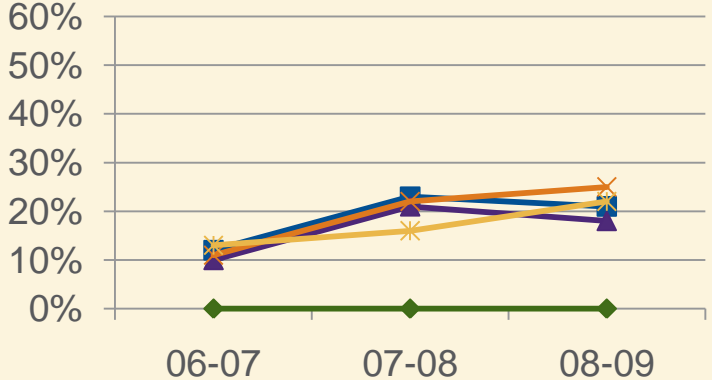
Elementary



Middle



High

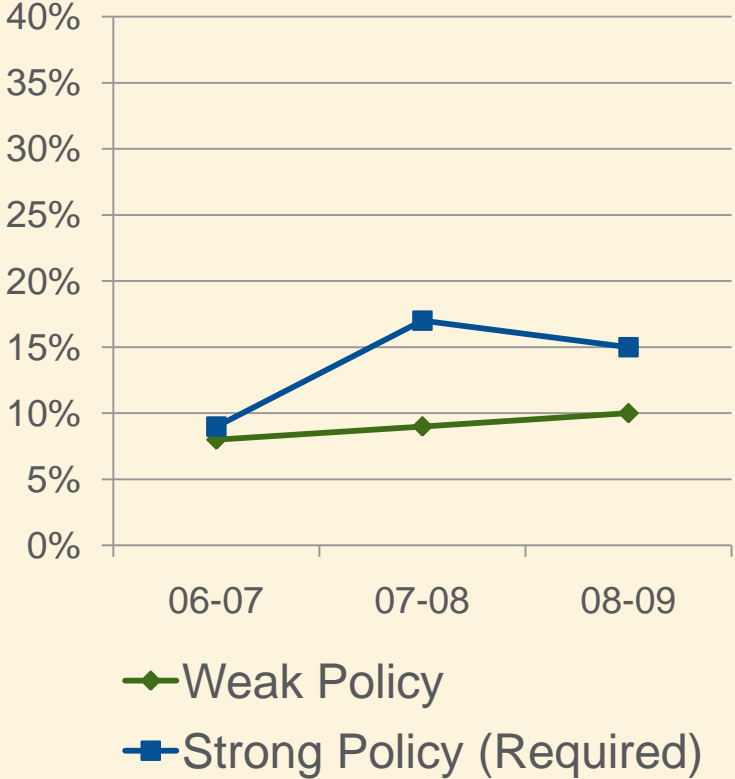


- ◆ Ban
- Vending Machines
- ▲ School Stores
- ✕ A la Carte
- * Guidelines apply to contracts

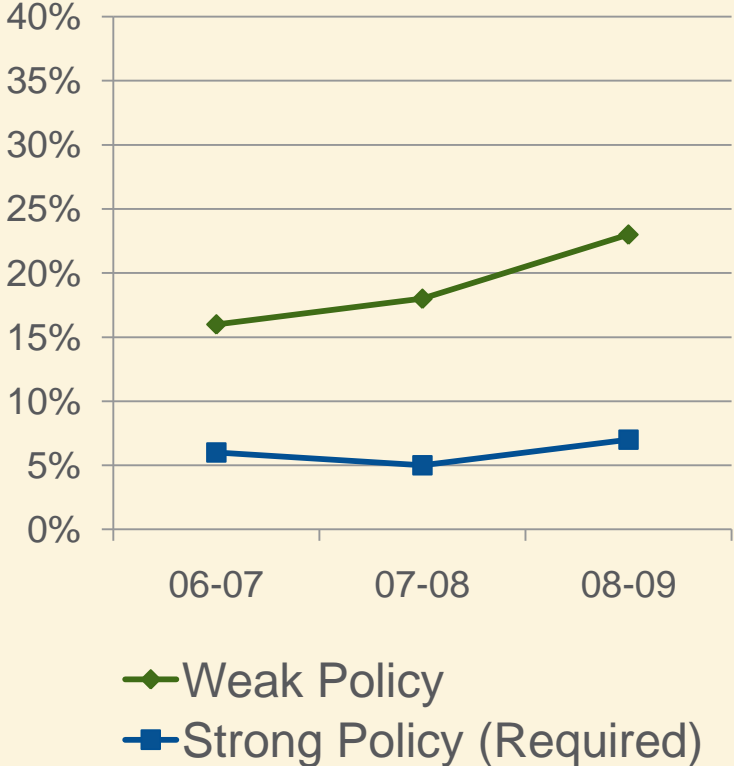
Policies Related to Advertising and Marketing of Foods & Beverages in Schools

% of Students in Districts with Policy by Year

Restrict Advertising of Unhealthy Food & Beverages

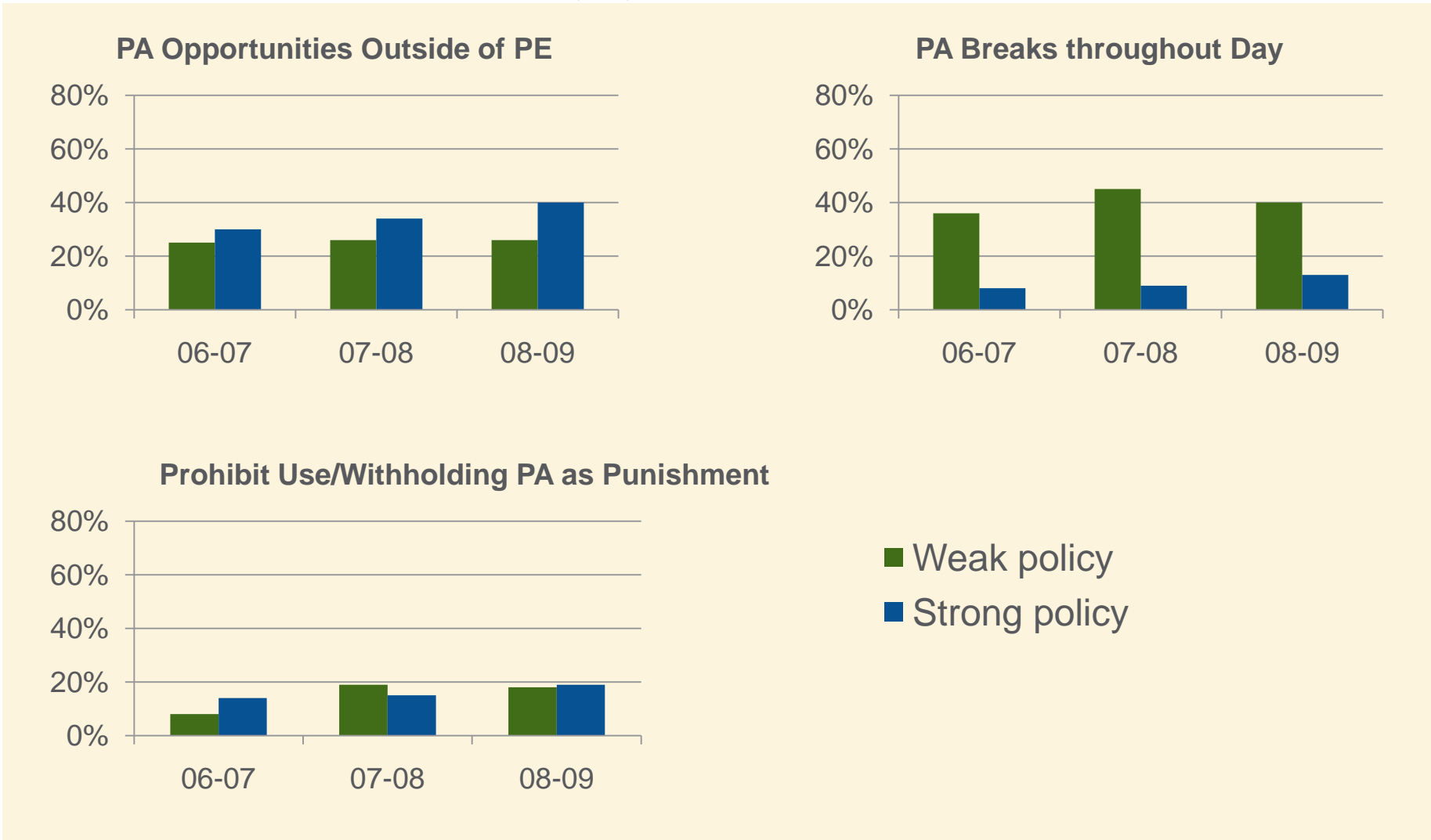


Promotion of Healthy Foods and Beverages



Selected Physical Activity Policy Provisions

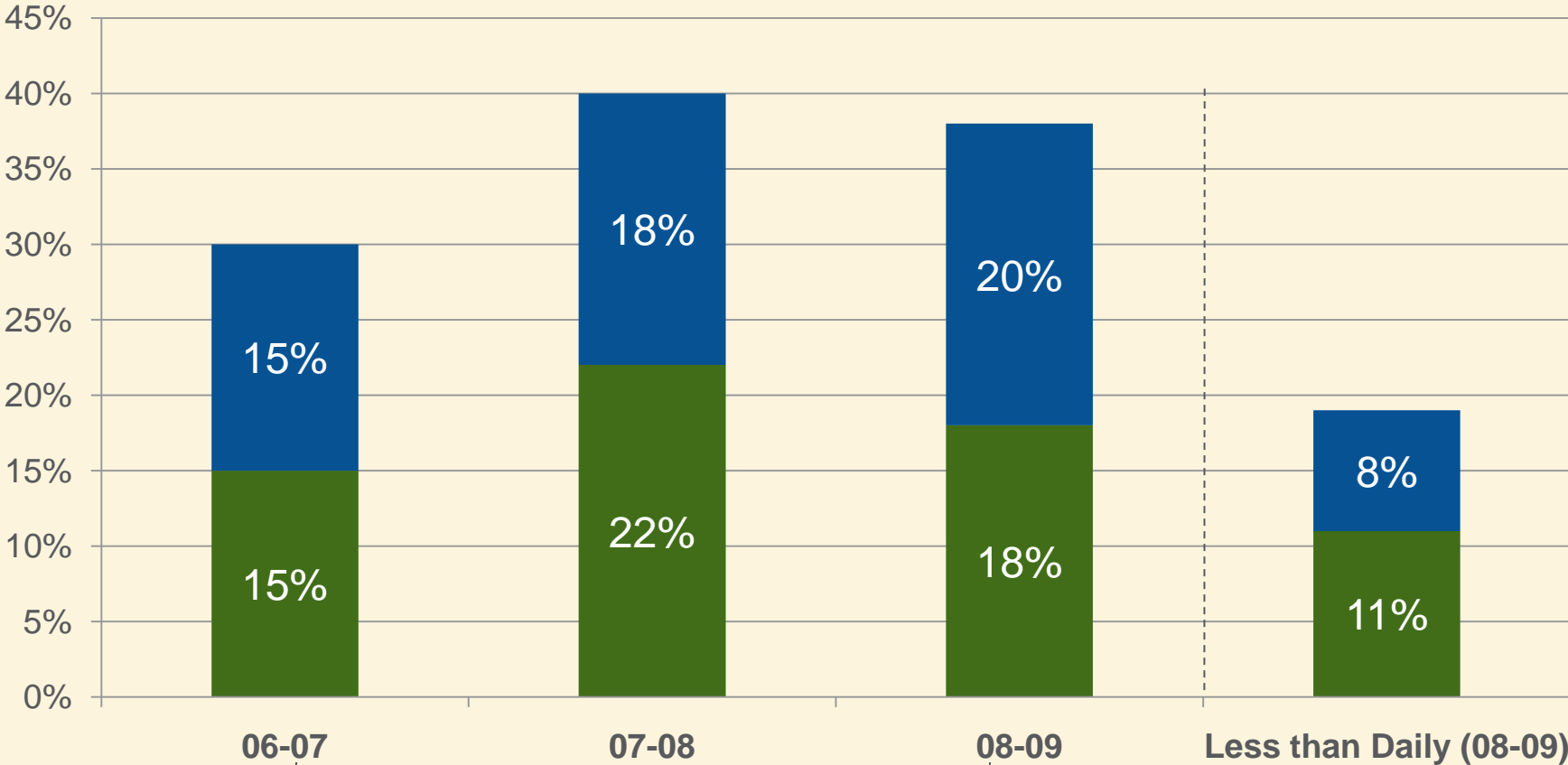
% of Students in Districts with Policy by Grade Level and Year



Elementary School-Level Recess Provisions Contained in Wellness Policies

% of Students in Districts with Policy by Grade Level and Year

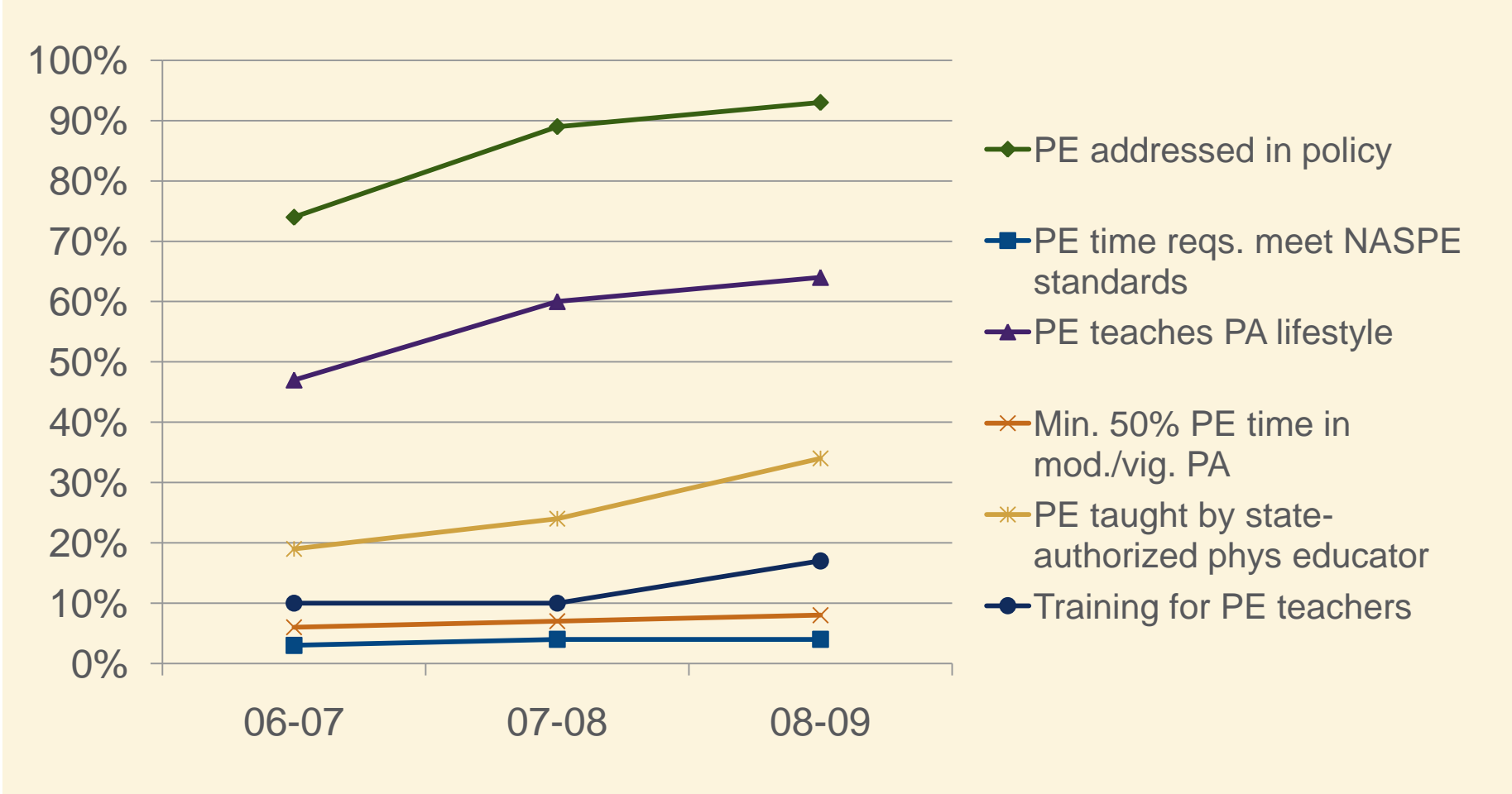
■ Weak policy ■ Strong policy (Required)



Daily Recess

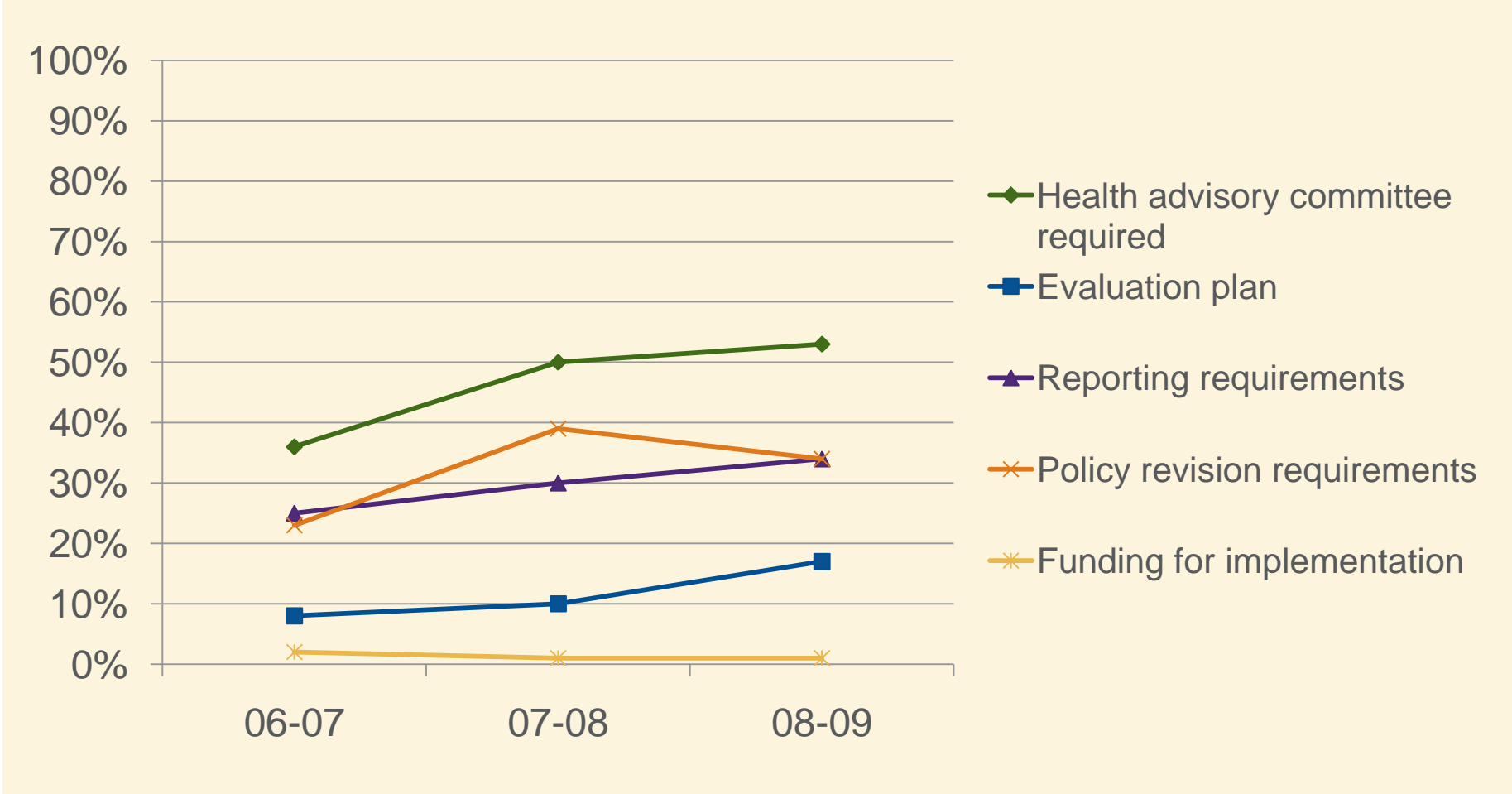
Selected Physical Education Policy Provisions (not required wellness policy element)

% of Students in Districts with Policy by Grade Level and Year



Requirements for Wellness Policy Implementation and Evaluation Plans

% of Students in Districts with Policy by Grade Level and Year



Wellness Policy Alignment with IOM 2007 Competitive Food & Beverage Standards

IOM Competitive Food Standards

Fat

No more than 35% of total calories from fat per portion

Trans fat-free (no more than 0.5 g)

Sugar

No more than 35% of total calories from sugar per portion

Sodium

No more than 200 mg of sodium per portion

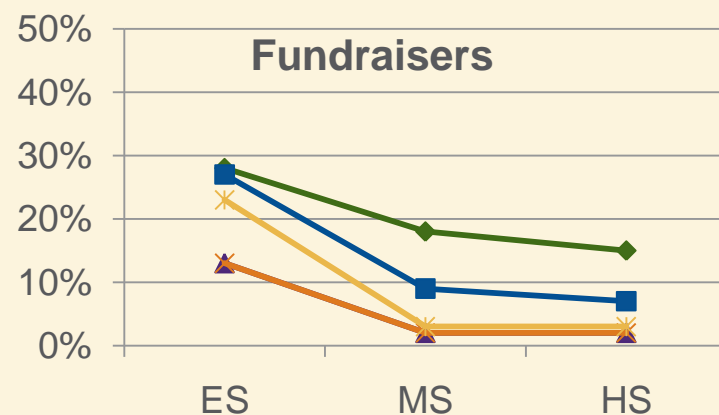
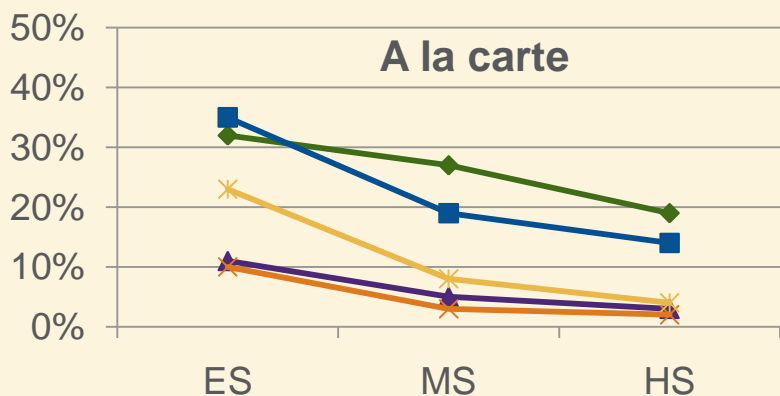
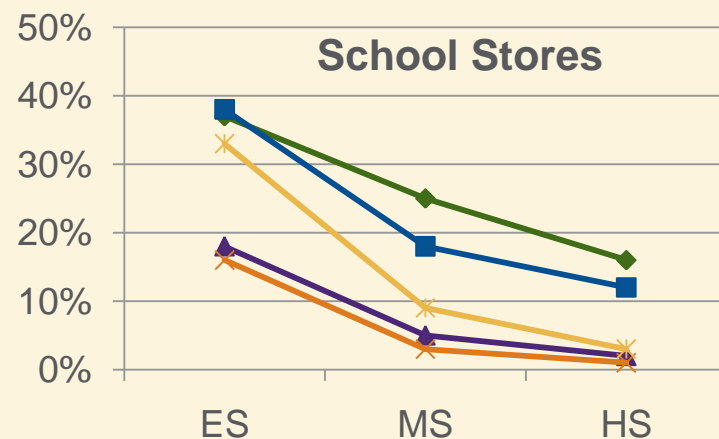
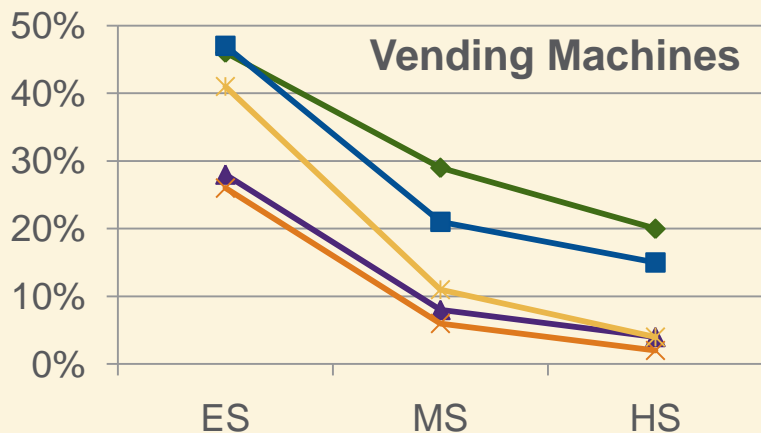
Calories

No more than 200 calories per portion

Institute of Medicine (IOM), *Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools: Leading the Way toward Healthier Youth*, April 23, 2007.

Competitive Food Content Restrictions that Meet IOM Standards or Ban Such Sales, SY 2008-09

% of students in districts with policy by grade level



◆ Sugar
 ■ Fat
 ▲ Trans Fat
 ✕ Sodium
 ✱ Calories

IOM Competitive Beverage Standards

Sugar-Sweetened Beverages (SSB)

Beverages with added caloric sweeteners are prohibited

Sugar/Calorie Content of Flavored Milk

Less than 22 g of sugars per 8 oz serving

Fat Content of Milk

Only low-fat (1%) or non-fat/skim milk

Serving Size

Water any size; AND

8 oz per serving for milk (including flavored milk); AND

4 oz per serving for 100% juice (ES/MS); AND

8 oz per serving for 100% juice (HS)

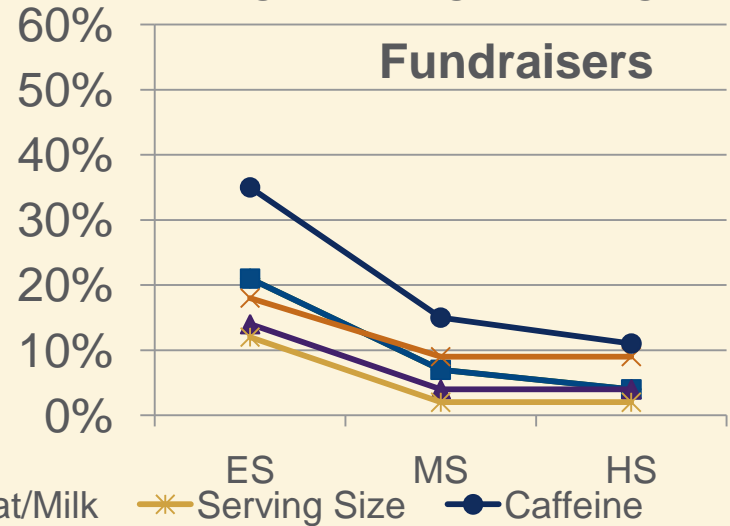
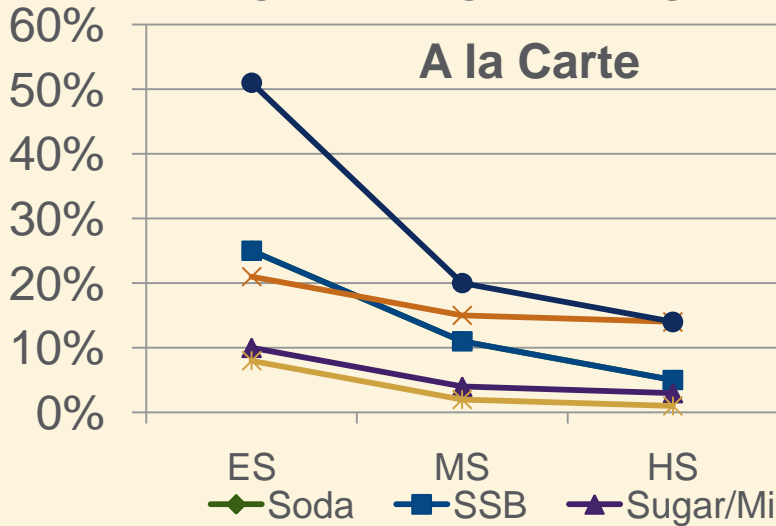
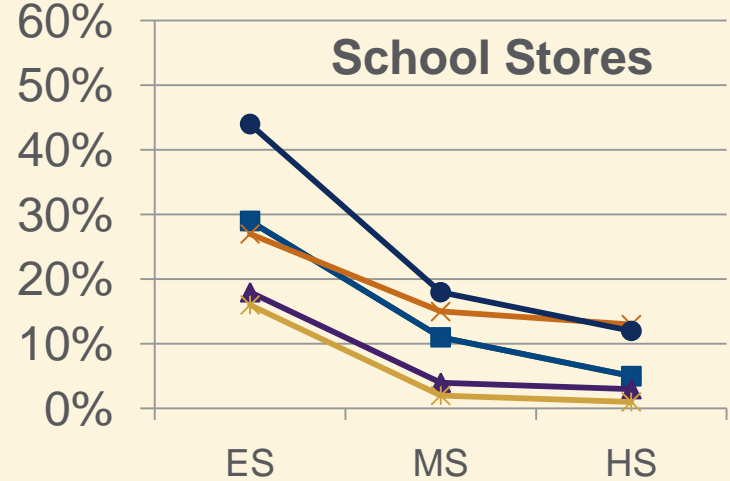
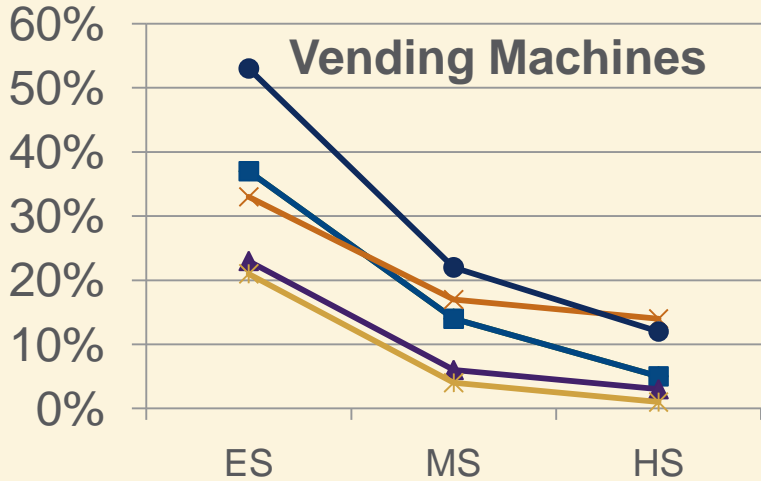
Caffeine

Beverages with added caffeine are prohibited

Institute of Medicine (IOM), *Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools: Leading the Way toward Healthier Youth*, April 23, 2007.

Competitive Beverage Content Restrictions that Meet IOM Standards or Ban Such Sales, SY 2008-09

% of students in districts with policy by grade level



ES MS HS Soda SSB Sugar/Milk Fat/Milk Serving Size Caffeine

***Note: Soda/SSBs overlap**

Report/Data Availability and Next Steps

Report Availability

http://www.bridgingthegapresearch.org/research/district_wellness_policies/



Two reports issued to date:

Report 1:

Local Wellness Policies: Assessing School District Strategies for Improving Children's Health. School Years 2006-07 and 2007-08.

Report 2:

School District Wellness Policies: Evaluating Progress and Potential for Improving Children's Health Three Years After the Federal Mandate. School Years 2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-09. Vol. 2.

Detailed data tables contained in the back of the report

Detailed Data Tables Contained in the Report—Table 1

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Wellness Policy Data

The following table summarizes most of the data compiled for this study for school years 2006–07, 2007–08 and 2008–09. All data are weighted to reflect the percentage of elementary, middle and high school students nationwide who were enrolled in a district with a given policy provision. All data reflect policies in place by the first day of the given school year. More details, including data presented at the district level and for various subpopulations and geographic areas, are available at www.bridgingthegapresearch.org.

We defined **STRONG POLICY PROVISIONS** as those that required action and specified an implementation plan or strategy. They included language such as *shall, must, require, comply and enforce*. **WEAK POLICY PROVISIONS** offered suggestions or recommendations, and some required action, but only for certain grade levels or times of day. They included language such as *should, might, encourage, some, make an effort to, partial and try*.

Where applicable, significant change across the categories (no policy, weak policy and strong policy) over the three-year period is identified and was computed using chi-square statistics.

TABLE 1 Percentage of Students in Districts Nationwide with Wellness Policy Provisions, School Years 2006–07, 2007–08 and 2008–09

Selected Policies for Competitive Foods and Beverages ¹	% OF STUDENTS IN DISTRICTS NATIONWIDE								
	Elementary			Middle			High		
	06–07	07–08	08–09	06–07	07–08	08–09	06–07	07–08	08–09
Nutrition guidelines for competitive foods and beverages¹ (Required wellness policy element)									
No policy	19%	6%	4%	22%	8%	4%	24%	16%	7%
Weak policy	27%	28%	25%	28%	30%	29%	28%	30%	33%
Strong policy	55%	65%	70%	50%	62%	67%	47%	59%	60%
Significant change over 3-year period	p<.001			p<.001			p<.001		
Nutrition guidelines apply to competitive food and/or beverage contracts									
No policy	82%	78%	68%	83%	79%	69%	84%	81%	70%
Weak policy	3%	4%	10%	3%	4%	9%	3%	3%	8%
Strong policy	15%	18%	22%	14%	17%	22%	13%	16%	22%
Significant change over 3-year period	p<.001			p<.001			p<.001		
Nutrition information for competitive foods and/or beverages									
No policy	90%	84%	91%	92%	84%	90%	92%	82%	90%
Weak policy	4%	5%	5%	4%	4%	5%	4%	5%	4%
Strong policy	6%	12%	5%	4%	12%	5%	4%	13%	6%
Significant change over 3-year period	p<.001			p<.01			p<.05		
ACCESS RESTRICTIONS									
Competitive food and/or beverage ban									
No policy	84%	82%	81%	97%	95%	96%	99%	98%	98%
Weak policy	14%	16%	13%	3%	5%	4%	1%	2%	2%
Strong policy	2%	3%	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Significant change over 3-year period	p<.001								

¹See table 2 for additional competitive food and beverage policy provisions.
²Data for school years 2006–07 and/or 2007–08 have been revised slightly from data originally reported.
 Due to rounding, some percentages may not sum exactly to 100. Exact numbers are available at www.bridgingthegapresearch.org.
 Source: Bridging the Gap, Health Policy Center, Institute for Health Research and Policy, University of Illinois at Chicago, 2010.

- Table 1 (page 15 of the report) contains data by grade level of applicability and year (06-07 through 08-09) for each category of policy examined.
- To illustrate the potential “reach” of the policy provisions, all data in Table 1 are weighted to reflect the **%age of students in districts nationwide** with the given policy provision.
 - The %age of districts nationwide with the various provisions is usually slightly lower than the %age of students.
 - Hope to make the district-level data available on our website in coming months.

Detailed Data Tables Contained in the Report—Table 2: Competitive Food & Beverage Restrictions by 2007 IOM Standards

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Competitive Food and Beverage Content Restriction Data

The following table summarizes restrictions on competitive foods and/or beverages for school year 2008–09, including limits on sugar, fat, sodium, calories, and caffeine, as well as restrictions on sugar-sweetened beverages. New to this year's report, we have analyzed the food and beverage restrictions by each location of sale. All data are weighted to reflect the percentage of elementary, middle and high school students nationwide who were enrolled in a district with a given policy provision. All data reflect policies in place by the first day of the given school year. More details and data presented at the district level and for various subpopulations and geographic areas are available at www.bridgingthegapresearch.org.

We defined **STRONG POLICY PROVISIONS** as those that required action and specified an implementation plan or strategy. For all provisions except for other sugar-sweetened beverages, fat content of milk and caffeine content of beverages, there are two categories for strong policies to differentiate those that: 1) met the 2007 IOM competitive food and beverage standards; or 2) had a weaker requirement that did not meet the IOM standards. For other sugar-sweetened beverages, fat content of milk and caffeine content of beverages, there is only one strong policy category for those that met the IOM standard. In either case, strong policy provisions included language such as *shall*, *must*, *require*, *comply* and *enforce*. **WEAK POLICY PROVISIONS** offered suggestions or recommendations, and some required action, but only for certain grade levels or times of day. They included language such as *should*, *might*, *encourage*, *some*, *make an effort to*, *partial* and *try*.

TABLE 2 Percentage of Students Nationwide in Districts with Wellness Policies Addressing Competitive Food and Beverage Content Restrictions by Grade Level and Location of Sale, School Year 2008–09

% OF STUDENTS IN DISTRICTS NATIONWIDE, SY 2008-09								
Elementary School Level (Grades 1–5)								
FOOD STANDARDS								
Sugar content								
	Any Location*	Vending Machines	School Stores	A la Carte	Class Parties	Fundraisers	Wellness Events	
No policy/provision	27%	29%	38%	33%	78%	54%	96%	
Weak policy	13%	15%	16%	26%	20%	10%	4%	
Strong policy: Did not meet IOM standard	11%	11%	9%	10%	0%	8%	0%	
Strong policy: Met IOM standard (≤35% of total calories/total weight from sugar)	18%	20%	21%	22%	2%	15%	0%	
Competitive food or location ban	30%	26%	16%	10%	0%	13%	0%	
Fat content								
No policy/provision	19%	21%	30%	23%	70%	51%	95%	
Weak policy	16%	18%	20%	21%	28%	10%	5%	
Strong policy: Did not meet IOM standard	13%	14%	13%	22%	0%	13%	0%	
Strong policy: Met IOM standard (≤35% of total calories from fat)	21%	21%	22%	25%	2%	14%	0%	
Competitive food or location ban	30%	26%	16%	10%	0%	13%	0%	

Any Location means the extent to which the policy provisions apply to at least one of the competitive food/beverage locations examined for this study: vending machines, school stores, à la carte, class parties, fundraisers, and/or evening/community events.

Due to rounding, some percentages may not sum to exactly 100. Exact numbers are available at www.bridgingthegapresearch.org.
Source: Bridging the Gap, Health Policy Center, Institute for Health Research and Policy, University of Illinois at Chicago, 2010.

- Table 2 (page 22 of the report) contains competitive food and beverage content restrictions by grade level of applicability and location of sale (vending, stores, a la carte, fundraisers, parties), classified according to the 2007 IOM standards.
- Only have data with this classification for 2008-09 (future reports will contain more years of data).
- To illustrate the potential “reach” of the policy provisions, all data in Table 1 are weighted to reflect the **%age of students in districts nationwide** with the given policy provision.
 - The %age of districts nationwide with the various provisions is usually slightly lower than the %age of students.
 - Hope to make the district-level data available on our website in coming months.

Data Monographs/Reports-Primary School Survey



Executive summary released June 8, 2010

School Policies and Practices to Improve Health and Prevent Obesity: National Elementary School Survey Results

Executive Summary, surveys, research briefs, and video Q&A available at:

www.bridgingthegapresearch.org

Complete report forthcoming

Continued Research Planned

- Companion monographs on implementation of the wellness policies and related practices in elementary, middle and high schools
- Analyses examining variation in district policies based on state obesity rates and based on state policy/laws
- Linkages between applicable state laws/policies, district policies and school-level practices at the primary and secondary school levels
- Analyses examining the relationships between the wellness policies and school practices and student weight outcomes (2ry only)
- Ongoing surveillance of wellness policy and implementation progress and innovation following *hopeful* congressional reauthorization
 - SY 09-10 data completed and SY 10-11 policies being collected

For more information: www.bridgingthegapresearch.org

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District Wellness Policy Report

Landmark study reveals majority of district wellness policies fail to provide healthy school environment for kids.
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Evaluating school district wellness policies

Bridging the Gap
Bridging the Gap is a nationally recognized research program. Our goal is to improve the understanding of how policies and environmental factors affect diet, physical activity, and obesity among youth, as well as youth tobacco use.

What We Do

- Identify the policy and environmental factors that have the greatest impact on diet, physical activity, obesity and tobacco use among youth.
- Track trends and changes in these factors over time at the state, community and school levels.
- Disseminate findings to help advance solutions for reversing the childhood obesity epidemic and preventing young people from smoking.

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Local Wellness Policies: Assessing School District Strategies for Improving Children's Health: School Years 2006-07 and 2007-08 is the most comprehensive ongoing analysis of the federally-mandated district wellness policies.
[Report](#)
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Executive Summary
Major findings from *Local Wellness Policies: Assessing School District Strategies for Improving Children's Health: School Years 2006-07 and 2007-08*. More information
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Contact for additional information

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