A look back at the first three years of school district wellness policies in the U.S.

Progress and opportunities

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Presentation Overview

✓ Overview of federal wellness policy requirement
✓ Describe study methods
✓ Highlight key findings
✓ Report/data accessibility
✓ 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; 09-10 data being compiled
- Data presented weighted to %age of students nationwide in districts with given policy provision
- 94% response (collection) rate for 06-07 and 07-08
- 97% response rate 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

Related studies examining school-level policies and practices
Brief Study Overview (cont.)

Policies coded by grade level using adaptation of Schwartz et al. (2009) 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
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 (Linda will discuss)
Highlights of Key Findings
Wellness Policy Requirements

% of Students in Districts with Policy by Year

- Wellness policy
- Competitive food guidelines
- School meal guidelines
- Nutrition education goals
- Physical activity goals
- Implementation plans

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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

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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

Weak Policy  Strong Policy

06-07 07-08 08-09
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

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Selected Nutrition Education Policy Requirements

% of Students in Districts with Policy by Year

- NE Curriculum
- NE Integrated into Other Subjects
- NE Teaches Behavior-focused Skills
- Nutrition-related Training for Teachers
Selected Physical Activity Policy Provisions

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

**PA Opportunities Outside of PE**

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**PA Breaks throughout Day**

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**Prohibit Use/Withholding PA as Punishment**

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Selected Physical Education Policy Provisions

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

- PE addressed in policy
- PE time reqs. meet NASPE standards
- PE teaches PA lifestyle
- MVPA time in PE
- PE taught by state-authorized phys ed
- Training for PE teachers

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Requirements for Wellness Policy Implementation and Evaluation Plans

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

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

06-07 07-08 08-09

- Health Advisory Committee Role
- Evaluation plan
- Reporting requirements
- Policy revision provisions
- Funding for implementation
Report/Data Availability and Next Steps
Data Monographs/Reports-Wellness Policy

First report released July 2009
Executive Summary, Monograph and backup data available at:
www.bridgingthegapresearch.org

New Update report containing 2008-09 data forthcoming, expected release, end of June/early July
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 to be released in July 2010
Continued Research Planned

• Analyses examining factors associated with variation in wellness policy components and strength as well as changes over time

• Companion monographs on implementation of the wellness policies and related practices in elementary, middle and high schools

• 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 congressional reauthorization
For more information:
www.bridgingthegapresearch.org
Contact for additional information

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