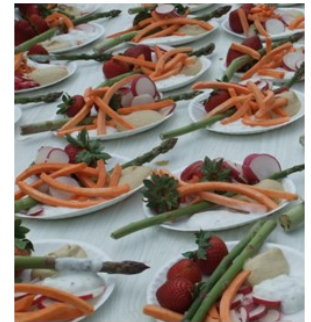


WISCONSIN SCHOOL GARDEN NETWORK BRIEF:

# IMPROVING HEALTH WITH SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICIES



School wellness policies are a tool to promote student health. Identifying goals for nutrition and physical activity helps schools create healthy students. This document provides an overview of school wellness policy history, outlines policy requirements, and suggests activities for inclusion. For ideas and sample language for including school gardens into a school wellness policy, see the Wisconsin School Garden Initiative Brief: *Incorporating School Garden Language into a School Wellness Policy*.



## School Wellness Policy History

Recognizing the importance of healthy students, Congress passed the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act in 2004. This act required schools participating in child nutrition programs to create local school wellness policies by the 2006-2007 school year. The [Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010](#)<sup>1</sup> added new implementation, evaluation, and progress reporting provisions for school wellness policies. In 2016, the USDA finalized regulations to create a framework and guidelines for written wellness policies<sup>2</sup>. The final rule requires schools to begin revising their school wellness policies during the 2016-2017 school year.

## School Wellness Policy Requirements

School wellness policies must include<sup>3</sup>:

- Goals for nutrition, physical activity, and other school-based activities that promote wellness.
- Nutrition guidelines for foods available in each school district.
- Roles for parents, students, school food staff, PE teachers, school health professionals, school board members, administrators, and the general public.
- A plan to inform and update the public about policy content and implementation.
- A plan to measure the progress toward wellness policy goals.

1 National Conference of State Legislatures. *Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-296) Summary*. Retrieved July 12, 2013 from [www.ncsl.org/issues-research/human-services/healthy-hunger-free-kids-act-of-2010-summary.aspx](http://www.ncsl.org/issues-research/human-services/healthy-hunger-free-kids-act-of-2010-summary.aspx)

2 Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. *School Wellness Policy*. Retrieved October 20, 2017 from <https://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/wellness-policy>

3 USDA Team Nutrition. *Local School Wellness Policy*. Retrieved October 20, 2017, from <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/local-school-wellness-policy>

## Supporting Activities through a School Wellness Policy

A school wellness policy is a great place to identify activities that improve student health. Whether it's related to physical activity, nutrition, or another school-based wellness activity, highlighting these activities in a school wellness policy will ensure current and future students can benefit from them. See below for activities to include in a school wellness policy.

### Nutrition Education

- Teach students to plant, tend, and eat fresh fruits and vegetables through a school garden program
- Promote local items through cafeteria signage
- Offer students opportunities to engage in hands-on cooking activities



### Physical Activity

- Encourage physical activity inside and outside of the classroom.



### Other School-Based Wellness Activities

- Composting programs help students develop a sense of environmental stewardship.
- Support district-wide Farm to School participation that includes locally sourced meals, nutrition education, school gardens, and other student engagement activities

## Resources

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction: Wisconsin Wellness: Putting Policy into Practice

<https://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/wellness-policy/toolkit>

Wisconsin School Garden Network Briefs: Incorporating School Garden Language into a School Garden Policy

<http://www.wischoolgardens.org/our-briefs>

Center for Ecoliteracy: Model Wellness Policy Guide

[http://www.ecoliteracy.org/sites/default/files/uploads/cel\\_model\\_wellness\\_policy\\_guide.pdf](http://www.ecoliteracy.org/sites/default/files/uploads/cel_model_wellness_policy_guide.pdf)

Farm to School Toolkit: Promoting Local Purchasing & Farm to School Activities

<http://www.cias.wisc.edu/foodservtools/8-Build-sustainability/model-wellness-policy-language.pdf>

Public Health Law Center: Sample School Wellness Policy, School Gardens

<http://publichealthlawcenter.org/sites/default/files/resources/ship-fs2-schoolwellnesssamplepolicylanguage-2011SchoolGardens.pdf>

For more information about the Wisconsin School Garden Network,



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