

Implementation

School Wellness Policies

Common themes from schools with wellness policy implementation success...

- **A “wellness champion” served as the driving force for developing and implementing the wellness policy.**

A single wellness champion—such as a school nurse, district superintendent, or community member—led the process in many schools and districts. This champion played a critical role in starting the process and keeping it going when challenges arose.

- **Creating a wellness council to lead implementation efforts.**

Many schools and districts set up wellness councils to develop their wellness policies and to implement programs and activities. These councils included various stakeholders, such as school and district leaders, school staff, community partners, parents, and students. They helped schools and districts implement wellness policies by providing leadership, accountability, and structure. They also provided the support and resources needed to face challenges as they emerged.



- **Students generally responded well to activities designed to improve health and wellness.**

School officials reported that many students were excited about new health and wellness activities, especially when they were given an active role in making decisions. For example, students responded better to new menu items in school lunches when they could taste and give feedback on recipes. They also liked lessons on nutrition that included hands-on experience, such as planting and tending fruits and vegetables in school gardens.

- **Inviting parents to help set wellness goals and plan activities helped to ensure support and participation.**

When parents were able to be involved in developing and putting wellness policies into practice, they were more likely to accept and support new activities and changes in the schools. Some schools also reported that, when parents were involved, health and wellness lessons carried over to students' homes.

- **Partnering with community groups provided resources for wellness activities.**

Finding resources for new wellness activities was difficult for schools and school districts. Many addressed this challenge by partnering with community organizations that could provide some of the resources needed. These partnerships also allowed more community involvement in the efforts to improve student health.

- **External funding helped schools and districts accomplish many of their wellness activities.**

Most schools and districts sought and received grants to fund the implementation of their wellness policies. These grants were critical to the launch of many of the activities featured in the stories. However, relying on external funding can make the sustainability of wellness activities challenging. For example, schools and districts might need more training and support to create processes to ensure that these activities can be continued after external funding expires.