

Local School Wellness Policies in Massachusetts

There are many factors that help children achieve happy and academically successful paths in life. The activities, policies, and programs available in your community have the ability to shape the mental and physical health of children. As 99% of children attend school each day, local education agencies (LEAs) have a large role in influencing each student's ability to adopt healthy behaviors and focus on children.

The *Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010* and the *Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act* requires that every LEA participating in the National School Lunch Program maintain a local school wellness policy (LSWP) in a nationwide effort to "establish a school environment that promotes students' health, well-being, and ability to learn." Massachusetts legislature also passed *An Act Relative to School Nutrition* in July 2010 that requires the establishment of a school wellness advisory committee (SWAC) within each district. This checklist will assist your districts in ensuring your schools develop a LSWP that will not only meet federal and state regulations but encourages each child to meet their maximum potential.

CHECKLIST

Is/Does your SWAC:

- Be a group of individuals from the school/district. Membership should reflect the cultural, linguistic, and ethnic composition of the community as much as possible?
- Have a designated official responsible for oversight of the LSWP?
- Be a standing committee (as opposed to a single-issue task force)?
- Inform the superintendent of the wellness committee members?
- Take charge of making recommendations concerning school health/wellness policies, programs, and practices?
- Meet at least 4 times per year and keep minutes?
- Conduct a needs assessment each year and develop and implement an annual action plan that includes attention to nutrition, physical activity, and obesity?
- Build support with all stakeholders and allow their participation in the development, implementa-

tion, periodic review, and update of the LSWP?

- Monitor progress?
- Write an annual report and communicate?
- Permit participation by the general public and the school community including parents, students, representatives of the school food authority, teachers of physical education, school health professionals, the school board, and school administrators in the wellness policy process?

Does your LSWP contain:

- Goals that review and consider evidence based strategies surrounding:
 - Nutrition education and promotion?
 - Physical activity?
 - Other school-based activities to promote student wellness? Such as:
 - Bullying prevention policies and plans
 - Tobacco-free schools
 - Indoor air quality
 - Sex education
 - Stress reduction
 - School district will provide a clean, safe, enjoyable meal environment for students
 - School district will schedule lunch time as near the middle of the school day as possible
 - School district will prohibit the use of food or physical activity as a reward or punishment in schools
 - School district will make efforts to keep school or district-owned physical activity facilities open for use by students outside school hours
- Standards for all foods and beverages provided, but not sold, to students during the school day on each participating school campus (e.g., in classroom parties, classroom snacks brought by parents, or other foods given as incentives)?
- Standards and nutrition guidelines for all foods and beverages sold to students during the school day on each participating school campus (e.g., fundraising, marketing of only foods and beverages that meet nutrition standards)?

- Identification of the position of the LEA or school official(s) responsible for the implementation and oversight of the LSWP to ensure each school's compliance with the policy?
- Description of the manner in which parents, students, representatives of the SFA, teachers of physical education, school health professionals, the school board, school administrators, and the general public are provided an opportunity to participate in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the LSWP?
- Description of the plan measuring the implementation of the local school wellness policy, and for reporting LSWP content and implementation issues to the public?

Does your district:

- Permit Parents, students, representatives of the school food authority, teachers of physical education, school health professionals, the school board, school administrators, and the general public to participate in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the LSWP?
- Inform the public about the content and implementation of the LSWP, and make the policy and any updates to the policy available to the public on an annual basis?
- Inform the public about progress toward meeting the goals of the LSWP and compliance with the LSWP by making the annual assessment available to the public in an accessible and easily understood manner?
- Designate one or more LEA officials or school officials to ensure that each participating school complies with the LSWP?
- Each year, assess schools' compliance with the LSWP, and make assessment results available to the public. The assessment must measure the implementation of the LSWP and include:
 - The extent to which the LEA's LSWP compares to model LSWPs?
 - A description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the LSWP?
- Make Appropriate updates or modifications to the LSWP, based on the annual assessment?
- Have the written LSWP on record?
- Have documentation demonstrating compliance with community involvement requirements, including requirements to make the LSWP and annual assessments available to the public as required?
- Have documentation of the annual assessment of the LSWP for each school under its jurisdiction?