

Topeka Public School Health Council

Wellness Policies and Practices in Schools

Report to the School Board and Administration

Topeka, January 2009

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About this report

This report was produced by the Topeka Public School Health Council. It reflects the work over many months of a group of volunteer parents, teachers and community members committed to improving the health and wellness of our students. The report identifies several areas for improvement in the district schools and contains 23 recommendations for the district administration and Board.

The first section describes the reasons for the report and the process that the Council adopted. Sections two through four discuss gaps and recommendations in the areas of nutrition, nutritional education and physical activity. Appendix one contains a summary table of the same recommendations discussed in the previous sections. Appendix two lists the individuals that contributed to the development of the recommendations.

The Council would like to thank all the people who dedicated their time and resources to improve the health of our students. The Council also would like to thank the Topeka Public School administration for the support provided to its activities.

Topeka, January 2009

Part 1 - Introduction

Background

According to information from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, since 1980 the prevalence of overweight nationwide has doubled in children and tripled in adolescents. Some facts worth mentioning:

1. Individuals who become overweight in childhood are more likely to become overweight as adults and are at higher risk for chronic diseases such as Type 2 Diabetes and heart disease.
2. Without lifestyle interventions, one in three US children born today will develop diabetes.
3. If that child is a Hispanic female, her chances of developing diabetes in her lifetime increase to one in two.
4. For the first time, life expectancy of U.S. young adults today is shorter than that of their parents, primarily due to the health effects of overweight and obesity.

Kansas' youth show similar rates of overweight as in the rest of the nation. One in four Kansas students, grades 9-12 were either overweight or at-risk for overweight in 2005. In our district, the proportion of students with a body mass index (BMI) considered healthy ranges from 57% in elementary schools to 51% in middle schools and 49% in high schools.¹ That means that about half of our students could be at risk of being or becoming overweight.

In addition, even children who do not show current signs of being overweight may suffer from nutritional deficiencies caused by their unhealthy eating habits, and may not get enough physical exercise. These deficiencies may have serious long-term consequences on the children's health and may affect their ability to be good learners in school.

Without positive, health promoting lifestyle changes, prevalence of overweight in our youth will continue to increase along with the chronic diseases associated with excess body weight. In order to reverse current trends of overweight, poor nutrition, and increased sedentary activities, ***changes must occur in the home, school, and the community.***

Schools have a special role and interest in reversing these trends:

1. Unhealthy children do not make good students, and the link between good nutrition and healthy habits on one hand and academic performance on the other has been known for a long time.

¹ The numbers for USD 501 are based on a partial sample of students and may not reflect accurately the true prevalence of overweight in the entire student population

2. According to the Institute of Medicine, the school environment has a vital role in shaping children’s health behaviors – children tend to practice in life what they learn in school.
3. Children spend the majority of their day at school, often staying for after-school activities; the foods and beverages available during and after school can contribute a significant number of calories to their total daily consumption.
4. The rise in obesity over the past 2-3 decades has been accompanied by an increase in the number of alternative food options available on school campuses. These “competitive foods” that are obtained from a variety of sources, including à la carte service in the school cafeteria, school stores and snack bars, and vending machines, are competing with the traditional breakfast and lunch offered through federally reimbursable school nutrition programs.

These concepts could not be expressed more clearly than how they were captured by M.P., a student at Topeka High School: *“Many teenagers and adolescents already have very unhealthy diets at home. At school, where they are supposed to be being educated about living independently and making good decisions, they are being fed junk food! This is only going to encourage students to eat unhealthier outside of school as well, which causes many more health problems. I think that adults everywhere, especially in schools, need to be setting good examples for students.”* (M.P., freshman, Topeka High School, 2007)

The Topeka School Health Council

In recognition of this crisis, since 2006 public school districts nationwide have been required by federal law² to adopt and implement a “**wellness policy**” that promotes students’ health through nutrition education, physical activity and other school-based activities. Wellness policies must also include nutrition guidelines for all foods available on each school campus within the district. The federal law also requires the involvement of parents, students, the school board, school administration and the public in the development of the local wellness policy.

Topeka Public School Board approved in 2006 policy number 8235 that commits the district to providing school environments that promote and protect children’s health. Like all board policies, wellness policies establish a general direction for the district, leaving details of implementation to administrative regulations. In mid-2007 a group of concerned parents, teachers and citizens in the district decided to work together to promote a healthier environment in our schools. With the support of the Topeka Public School administration they created the School Health Council. The Council received a more formal recognition in March 2008 with administrative regulation 8235-1 that describes the Council’s role and membership. The Council has met regularly every 6-8 weeks through the end of 2008. Members of the Council are listed in Appendix 2.

² Federal Child Nutrition and Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Reauthorization Act of 2004 (P.L. 108-265, 42 USC 1751).

Assessment of current policies and practices

One of the first actions that the Council decided to take was to survey all the schools in the district and assess to what extent they meet the standards for nutrition, nutritional education and physical activity recommended by the state Department of Education.³ The assessment, completed in the summer of 2008, revealed that wide variability in wellness policies and practices exists among schools in the district. When central policies are in place, such as for the composition of school breakfast and lunch, these tend to be in line with current standards. Some areas in which schools appear to be particularly far from the recommended standards are the use of vending machines and the amount of physical activity that students achieve during the school day.

Development of recommendations

Based on the assessment of the current policies and practices and on the current national and state standards and recommendations, the council deliberated over a period of several months to identify opportunities to promote good nutrition and fitness in the schools. The results of the Council's work are presented in this report.

The recommendations from the School Health Council are presented below and summarized in the table in Appendix 1. The recommendations are grouped in three sections: nutrition, nutritional education and physical activities. Each section contains multiple recommendations and each recommendation is linked to one or more specific national or state standards.

Conclusions

It is the hope of the School Health Council that the work that the council members conducted can be used by the Topeka Public School Administration to promote health and fitness in our schools. Topeka public schools have a long tradition of being on the front line to assure that our students can learn in a healthy environment and that teachers act as positive role models. In 1986 our district was one of the first in the nation to completely ban smoking from school property, a move that some districts in our state only recently have followed. It is the hope of the School Health Council that the district administration will have the same positive vision and leadership to address the current public health emergency represented by the epidemic of obesity among our children.

³ The Kansas School Wellness Policy Model Guidelines were published in the fall of 2005 and can be accessed at [http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/filelib/toolsforteam/recom/KS_Wellness_Policy_Guidelines_Booklet_Final%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/filelib/toolsforteam/recom/KS_Wellness_Policy_Guidelines_Booklet_Final%20(2).pdf)

Part 2 – Nutrition⁴

Recommendation N.1 (uniform district policies)

Establish a uniform district policy to:

1. Encourage the offer of a la carte items in all middle and high schools.⁵
2. Define parameters for the types of food to be offered that meet the EXEMPLARY standards defined by the Kansas Department of Education.

Standard of reference

Kansas State Department of Education a-la-carte Exemplary Guidelines.

A LA CARTE FOOD ITEMS are limited to:

- The same portion size of any food item served that day in the NSLP or SBP
- Fruits and/or vegetables
- Low-fat and/or nonfat yogurt
- Other items – At least 50% of items offered meet all of the following guidelines per serving:
 - Fat – Except for nuts, seeds and nut butters, 35% or less of total calories from fat (or less than 4 g. per 100 calories)
 - Sugar – Except for fruit without added sugar, 35% or less of weight from total sugar (or less than 9 g. per 100 calories)
 - Calories – 200 calories or less per selling unit

A LA CARTE BEVERAGES are limited to:

- Water, non-caloric
- Only low-fat (1% or 1/2%) and/or skim (nonfat) milk
- Soy or rice beverages with 35% or less of weight from total sugar (or less than 9 g. per 100 calories)

Gap observed

A la carte foods and beverages currently offered often do not meet good nutritional standards for fat, sugar and calories.

Comments

A la carte foods and beverages play an important role to complement items included in the regular school menu. Currently, each school decides a la carte menus independently. The School Health Council recommends that a la carte menus be available in each middle and high school and that they only include items that meet nutritional standards recommended by the Kansas Department of Education.

⁴ Refer to Appendix 1 for a summary table of the recommendations.

⁵A La Carte: A beverage or food product sold in schools to students during the lunch period that is not part of the United States Department of Agriculture school meal program.

Recommendation N.2 (fruit and vegetables)

Always make fresh fruit and vegetables available through regular lunch program and through a la carte menu, prepared in ways that appeal to students (e.g., pre-cut apples versus whole fruit).

Standard of reference

Kansas State Department of Education School Meals and a la Carte Exemplary Guidelines.

Gap observed

A la carte items and regular lunch menus do not include consistently fruits and vegetables.

Comments

Fruit and vegetable consumption among young individuals are often much lower than recommended. Students are more likely to eat fruit that is prepared in a way appealing to them and that is easy to consume. The School Health Council recommends that both fruit and vegetable offerings be increased and diversified, both in the regular lunch and in the a la carte menus.

Recommendation N.3 (water in classrooms)

Allow and encourage students to have individual water bottles in the classroom.

Standard of reference

Kansas State Department of Education Exemplary Nutritional Standards.

Gap observed

Some schools do not allow or encourage the use of water bottles in the classroom. No consistent policy is present in the district.

Comments

Consumption of high-sugar, high-calories drinks is common among young individuals and is in part responsible for the increased level of obesity observed among children. Promoting the consumption of water as the basic drink during regular daily activities is an important part of a comprehensive healthy diet.

Recommendation N.4 (information)

Parents, teachers and organizations should be informed about the guidelines for the use of food and beverages in schools.

Standard of reference

Kansas State Department of Education Nutrition Education Exemplary Guidelines.

Gap observed

Parents, students, teachers and organizations are not well informed about the importance of offering food and beverages with good nutritional value and the current guidelines recommended by state and national experts.

Comments

Education should be the cornerstone for the implementation of good nutrition policies in the district. Some recommendations are only feasible with the full participation of parents, teachers and the community at large.

Recommendations N.5 and N.6 (foods and drinks offered during school hours)

Recommendations N.5 and N.6 deal with the use of food or drinks offered (but not sold) at school events during regular school hours.

N.5 - For classroom rewards, parties and celebrations schools should be encouraged to use items other than food or beverages. If food and beverages are offered, efforts should be made to offer items that meet the standards established for a la carte offering.

N.6 - If food or beverages are provided for classroom rewards, parties and celebrations they should be offered at least one hour after the end of the last lunch period.

Standard of reference

Kansas State Department of Education Nutrition Education Advanced and Exemplary Guidelines.

Institute of Medicine Nutrition Standards for foods in schools.

Gap observed

Schools in general have no policies on what foods and beverages can be used for rewards, parties and celebrations and when they can be offered.

Comments

This recommendation addresses food and drinks that are served, but not sold to students during regular school hours. The School Health Council recommends that for classroom rewards items other than food or drinks should be used. There are a variety of alternatives available for this purpose, and members of the Council have offered to assist individual schools and teachers in identifying options other than food and drinks.

For parties and celebrations for which parents provide support, the Council recommends that educational efforts be undertaken by the school and the teachers to encourage parents to either use items besides food and drinks, or to provide healthy choices.

Recommendations N.7 and N.8 (food and drinks sold for fundraising activities)

Recommendations N.7 and N.8 deal with the sale of food and beverages for fund raising activities.

N.7 - YEAR 1 - At least 50 percent of fundraising activities will not involve the sale of food and/or beverages.

YEAR 2 - At least 75 percent of fundraising activities will not involve the sale of food and/or beverages.

N.8 - The standards established for a la carte offering should be applied also to food and beverages sold for fundraising activities during regular school hours.

Standards of reference

Kansas State Department of Education Nutrition Advanced and Exemplary Guidelines.
Institute of Medicine Nutrition Standards for foods in schools.

Gap observed

Schools in general have no restrictions on the use of food and beverages for fundraising activities.

Comments

Because the presence of mixed messages can create confusion among students, the promotion of good nutrition in the school must include all food and drinks offered, sold and promoted through the school system. Currently fundraising activities sometime include food or drinks of poor nutritional value. Alternatives exist for schools to raise funds using items other than food and drinks and their use should be encouraged. (Note that the sale of food and beverages for fundraising activities outside of regular school hours is addressed in recommendation N.9.)

Recommendations N.9 and N.10 (food and drinks at school-sponsored events outside of school hours)

Recommendations N.9 and N.10 deal with the sale of food and beverages at school-sponsored events after school hours.

N.9 - When food and beverages are sold as part of fundraising activities outside of normal school hours, at least 50 percent of the offering for each fundraiser should meet the same standards established for a la carte sale. This should apply also to door-to-door or student-sponsored fundraising activities.

N.10 - Beverages and food products may be sold outside of normal school hours at school-sponsored events (including sports events) provided that at least 50 per cent of the offerings meet the same standards established for a la carte sale.

Standard of reference

Kansas State Department of Education Nutrition Advanced and Exemplary Guidelines.
Institute of Medicine Nutrition Standards for foods in schools

Gap observed

Schools in general have no policies on what foods and beverages can be sold at school-sponsored events outside of normal school hours.

Comments

The intent of these recommendations is to encourage the offering of healthier choices for school-sponsored events and activities that take place outside of regular school hours (including sports events). The Council hopes that through the implementation of these recommendations schools can reinforce the importance of all aspects of healthy life styles. The School Health Council recognizes that fundraising activities and after school events often involve many adults. For this reason the Council is not recommending that food and drinks of poor nutritional value be banned completely from after-school events, but that healthy choices be offered in the same amount as less healthy ones.

Recommendations N.11 N.12, and N.13 (sales of drinks in vending machines)

Recommendations N.11, N.12 and N.13 deal with the sale of drinks in schools through vending machines.

N.11 - Establish a uniform district policy that allows the use of vending machines in schools. If a vending machine is placed in a school, the items offered and the hours of operation shall be consistent with the district policy.

N.12 - Formally endorse the guidelines from the American Beverages Association as the minimum standards for food and beverages sold in vending machines (endnote 1).

N.13 – Sugar-free carbonated drinks can be sold in vending machines only in high schools after the last lunch period.

Standard of reference

Kansas State Department of Education Nutrition Advanced and Exemplary Guidelines.
Alliance for a Healthier Generation School Beverages Guidelines.

Gap observed

While the district has contracts that govern the use of vending machines in schools, there are considerable variations among schools in regard to the content and the hours of operation of the machines. Drinks sold in vending machines do not always meet good nutritional guidelines.

Comments

The use of vending machines in schools is a phenomenon that has gained growing popularity among students and teachers throughout the country. In the past few years concerns have been raised about offering to students items for consumption that often have minimal or no nutritional value. Public health experts and educators have advocated for the implementation of policies that regulate what is available for sale in schools. Proponents of restrictions on the use of vending machines and on the types of food and drinks sold through machines stress two main reasons for concern:

1. Many children already consume a high quantity of food and drinks with no nutritional value and high caloric content, and obesity among children has become an epidemic of unprecedented proportions.
2. As educational venues, schools should set an example and encourage the adoption of healthy life styles.

In 2006 the Alliance for a Healthier Generation facilitated the development of voluntary guidelines related to the sale of beverages in U.S. schools. The Alliance for a Healthier Generation is a partnership between the American Heart Association and the William J. Clinton Foundation. The voluntary guidelines were approved by the American Beverage Association and representatives from the major companies that produce soft drinks. The full guidelines can be found in endnote 1.

The School Health Council debated at length the issue of vending machines in schools. The results of the discussion were as follows:

1. The Council recognized the value of offering food and drinks throughout the day to students and teachers in the school.
2. The Council also identified a need for a more uniform policy throughout the district that would support the offering of healthier choices to be purchased from vending machines.
3. The Council endorsed the guidelines from the American Beverage Association and recommended that the district administration incorporate the same guidelines in its contract with PepsiCo. that provides drinks through vending machines in the schools. Company representatives on the Council have agreed to follow these guidelines.
4. Recommendation N.13 limits the sale of sugar-free carbonated soft drinks (so-called “diet drinks”) only to high schools and only after the last lunch period.⁶ This recommendation is more restrictive than the American Beverage Association guidelines. The Council discussed the nutritional value of diet drinks and the effect of their content on the nutritional balance of young people. After a thorough discussion, the Council decided to allow the sale of diet drinks only in high schools and only after the last lunch period. The reasons that support this recommendation are explained in the side box in this page. This recommendation is consistent with the position of the Institute of Medicine⁷ and

“Diet drinks” and nutrition

Between 1965 and 1996, milk consumption dropped by 36 percent accompanied by a three fold increase in the consumption of sweetened carbonated beverages. Consumption of soft drinks continues to increase and according to the National Institute of Health, children and teens that consume soft drinks have lower intakes of important nutrients compared to those that don't, suggesting that consumption of soda including diet soda displaces nutritious foods in the diet. Both regular and diet sodas appear to affect a child's intake of vitamins, minerals and additives. While non-nutritive sweeteners are considered safe even for children by the FDA, other components of diet soda can also adversely affect health. Diet sodas are high in acid which may erode tooth enamel. Some diet sodas also contain caffeine. Excessive caffeine intake can lead to disturbed sleeping patterns, anxiety and nervousness, upset stomach, headaches and difficulty concentrating. Caffeine and phosphoric acid in diet sodas may also affect calcium metabolism and bone strength at a time when children should be building strong, healthy bones.

⁶ Patrick O'Donnell, General Manager, Pepsi-Cola of Topeka, who is a member of the School Health Council, disagreed with this particular recommendation and stated that Pepsi-Cola endorses the ABA guidelines.

⁷ “...these competitive beverages should be allowed only in high schools, and only after the school day has ended” IOM Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools, page 5.

with the advanced standards recommended by the Kansas Department of Education.

In our district part of the revenues from the vending machines are directed to the district administration and to individual schools. The evidence from the many schools and districts throughout the nation and in Kansas that have already adopted guidelines similar to those proposed by the Council suggests that in the majority of cases the new policy is either revenue-neutral or results in a slight increase in revenues. In some cases a decrease in revenues has been reported, often only temporary. The Council is aware that there is a possibility (although unlikely) that the new proposed policy would result in a decrease in contract revenues to the schools and the district, but believes that funding school initiatives cannot be done through the sale to students and teachers of products that are known to be dangerous to their health. Council members are available to support the administration and individual schools in the identification of alternative sources of revenues, should the revenues from the sale of soft drinks decrease as a result of the new policy.

Recommendation N.14 (sale of snacks in vending machines)

Foods offered in vending machines should meet the standards for Tier 2 foods established by the Institute of Medicine (endnote 2).

Standard of reference

Kansas State Department of Education Nutrition Advanced Guidelines.
Institute of Medicine Nutrition Standards for foods in schools.

Gap observed

Food sold in vending machines does not always meet good nutritional guidelines.

Comments

Just like for drinks in vending machines, the School Health Council determined that schools should not offer products to students that may be dangerous to their health. Some of the foods and snacks currently available for purchase on school vending machines do not meet good nutritional standards. The guidelines recommended by the Institute of Medicine appear to be reasonable and have been endorsed by the Council.

Recommendation N.15 (vending machines available only to staff)

The same standards adopted for vending machines available to the students should be used for machines available only to staff that are located on school property.

Standard of reference

Kansas State Department of Education Nutrition Advanced Guidelines.

Gap observed

Teachers and other staff do not always send a consistent message to students regarding the importance of maintaining good nutrition and eating healthy food.

Comments

As role models for the students, teachers and other staff should always send a consistent, positive message about healthy food and drink choices. Having dual standards for food and drinks available for purchase in the schools could jeopardize the success of the health promotion policies directed to students. Teachers and staff retain the freedom to purchase any kind of food or drinks of their choice outside of the school and to consume them at school, if they so wish, but should be strongly encouraged to set an example for students and not consume food or drinks of poor nutritional value in front of their students.

ENDNOTES

(1) American Beverage Association School Beverage Guidelines

Only the following beverages will be offered during school hours:

Elementary Schools

- Bottled water
- Up to 8 ounce servings of milk and 100% juice
 - o Fat-free or low-fat regular and flavored milk and nutritionally equivalent (per USDA) milk alternatives with up to 150 calories/ 8 ounces
 - o 100% juice with no added sweeteners, up to 120 calories / 8 ounces, and with at least 10% of the recommended daily value for three or more vitamins and minerals

Middle School

- Same as elementary school, except juice and milk may be sold in 10 ounce servings

High School

- Bottled water
- No- or low-calorie beverages with up to 10 calories / 8 ounces
- Up to 12 ounce servings of milk, 100% juice and certain other drinks
 - o Fat-free or low-fat regular and flavored milk and nutritionally equivalent (per USDA) milk alternatives with up to 150 calories / 8 ounces
 - o 100% juice with no added sweeteners, up to 120 calories / 8 ounces, and with at least 10% of the recommended daily value for three or more vitamins and minerals
 - o Other drinks with no more than 66 calories / 8 ounces
- At least 50% of non-milk beverages must be water and no- or low-calorie options

Time of Day

- All beverages sold on school grounds during the regular and extended school day.
- The extended school day includes before and after school activities like clubs, yearbook, band, student government, drama and childcare/latchkey programs.
- These guidelines do not apply to school-related events where parents and other adults are part of an audience or are selling beverages as boosters during intermission, as well as immediately before or after an event. Examples of these events include school plays and band concerts.

(2) Institute of Medicine Tier 2 foods

Tier 2 snack foods are those that do not exceed 200 calories per portion as

packaged and:

- No more than 35 percent of total calories from fat
- Less than 10 percent of total calories from saturated fats
- Zero trans fat (less than or equal to 0.5 g per portion)
- 35 percent or less of calories from total sugars
- Sodium content of 200 mg or less per portion as packaged.

Part 3 – Nutritional Education⁸

Recommendation N.16 (family education)

1. USD 501’s website is user-friendly and informative for both parents and students. Taking advantage of its functionality and placing health information on the website would be beneficial and free.
2. Meadows Elementary currently sends out a newsletter to parents. If a district-wide health newsletter was established and sent out in the same format Meadows’ is, it would reach a large audience.
3. Journalism students are often assigned a variety of projects. Creating public service announcements for health-related issues would teach those students valuable information. These PSA’s could be played on Channel 14 as well.
4. If different healthy foods are tried by students in school lunches, they should be rewarded with stickers that say “I tried a new healthy food today”. These stickers, when worn home, will spark conversation between the parents and student. Students should also be provided with recipes containing the new healthy foods, and the recipes should be taken home to parents.

Standard of reference

Kansas State Department of Education Family & Community basic nutrition education guidelines.

Gap observed

Families currently do not always receive information that encourages them to teach their children about health and nutrition, and to provide nutritious meals for their families.

⁸ Refer to Appendix 1 for a summary table of the recommendations

Recommendation N.17 (parents joining students at meal time)

1. A friendly competition between grades in schools could take place. Whichever class has the most participation among parents in attending school lunches will be rewarded (free recess or healthy snack).
2. School newsletters can include information about parents eating lunch with students (day/time restrictions, food guidelines, etc.)

Standard of reference

Kansas State Department of Education Family & Community basic nutrition education guidelines.

Gap observed

Parents are not always encouraged to join students for healthy meals at school.

Comments

Parents are bringing fast food into school when eating lunch with their student. Parents should be encouraged to bring healthy food when visiting a child during lunch.

Recommendation N.18 (staff as role models)

1. Teacher participation in school health fairs would set a good example for students and parents.
2. Several teachers participate annually in Walk Kansas, which is a fitness challenge offered by K-State Research and Extension offices. Newsletters could include information about these teachers' accomplishments in the program, setting a healthy example for those who read it.
3. Field Days could include events specifically for teachers. The children who watch their teachers compete and be active will have a good example of what to follow.

Standard of reference

Kansas State Department of Education Staff Wellness basic nutrition education guidelines.

Gap observed

The School will encourage each member of the staff (both certified and non-certified) to serve as a healthy role model for students.

Recommendation N.19 (nutritional education and resources for staff)

1. Staff newsletters could contain information about nutrition resources for teachers.
2. In-services could include guest speakers who teach the importance of healthy behaviors and incorporation health information into the curriculum.

Standard of reference

Kansas State Department of Education General Guidelines & Classroom basic nutrition education guidelines.

Gap observed

Currently no regular update is provided to staff regarding resources that they could use to promote healthy life styles among their students.

Part 4 – (Physical activities)⁹

Recommendation N.20 (opportunities for participation in physical activities)

- Maintain and expand opportunities for increased participation in physical activity classes at all levels, with immediate attention to promoting PE as an attractive exploratory elective for middle school students.
- Further input is needed to consider the needs of high school students and how to enhance participation in existing PE classes beyond the minimum 1unit required.

Standard of reference

Kansas State Department of Education Basic Guidelines for General Physical Activity and Physical Activity Classes.

- All students in grades K-12, including students with disabilities, special healthcare needs and in alternative education settings have the opportunity to participate in moderate to vigorous physical activity on a regularly scheduled basis each school week during the entire school year.
- Students should receive a minimum of 100-150 minutes of physical education per week, at the moderate to vigorous level.

Gap observed

Elementary students participate in 112.5 minutes of PE per week, which meets basic wellness recommendations, but middle school students do not have a PE requirement or class unless chosen as an exploratory elective. High school students are required to complete 1unit of PE and health during four years.

Comments

The priority associated with the implementation of federal education standards is well appreciated by the Council and finding ways to enhance and promote physical education may be challenging. The School Health Council recommends reviewing existing district physical activity policies and programs to find ways to make elective options more attractive to students, increasing uniformity in policies between schools, and creating an environment in which physical fitness is valued as an essential component for lifelong wellness.

⁹ Refer to Appendix 1 for a summary table of the recommendations

Recommendation N.21 (revise curriculum)

Maintain and expand opportunities for sequential PE skill development in grades K-12. Build upon strengths in the K-5 curriculum, review the middle school PE curriculum and guide, and increase linkages to options available in the high school PE curriculum.

Standard of reference

Kansas State Department of Education Basic-Exemplary Guidelines for Physical Education Classes

Gap observed

Physical education curriculum was found to be consistent with Kansas State Board of Education standards for K-5, but the middle school curriculum guide needs to be revised in order to promote sequential development of skills. The Council did not have information concerning the high school curriculum or guide.

Comments

Creating an environment in which physical activity competencies are cultivated in students with diverse levels of athletic ability is consistent with the goal of promoting lifelong wellness, successful learning, and career readiness.

Recommendation N.22 (resources for expanding equipment)

Advise increased use of supplemental funding sources such as the Topeka School Fund, grants, PTO Campbell Soup label program and private partners to help replenish and extend equipment options.

Standard of reference

Kansas State Department of Education Basic-Exemplary Guidelines for Physical Education Classes

Gap observed

Budget constraints limit purchase of more innovative athletic equipment and consumable items that need to be regularly replaced.

Comments

Resources exist to supplement physical education program equipment needs. Exploring partnerships with private organizations and education institutions such as Washburn University was suggested.

Recommendation N.23 (education on the value of physical activity)

More emphasis in the classroom setting needs to be given to promoting knowledge about health and the functioning of the human body. These changes could be implemented by incorporating activities into other subject content. In-services could provide an opportunity to present and share teaching strategies for accomplishing this goal.

Standard of reference

Kansas State Department of Education Basic-Exemplary Guidelines for Physical Activity Throughout the Day.

Gap observed

Reinforcement of the knowledge and skills needed for a physically active lifestyle is currently taught by individual teachers in selected subjects such as science or life skills classes, but is not consistently integrated into other subjects.

Comments

- Classroom health education reinforces the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically-active lifestyle and to reduce time spent doing sedentary activities, such as watching TV.
- Opportunities for improving health knowledge can be integrated into other subject areas such as math, language arts and social studies.
- Classroom teachers can use short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes to demonstrate the importance of physical activity in everyday learning.

Recommendation N.24 (use of physical activity as a discipline tool)

A clear district policy is needed to eliminate the practice of withholding PE or using exercise for punitive reasons.

Standard of reference

Kansas State Department of Education Basic-Exemplary Guidelines related to Punishment.

Gap observed

The practice of withholding PE or recess is still used in some instances as a form of punishment or as motivation to get students to complete their work.

Comments

Physical activity should be presented as something enjoyable and not be linked to discipline actions. Physical activity should not be used (e.g. running laps, pushups) or withheld (e.g. recess, physical education) as punishment.

Recommendation N.25 (recess time)

- Encourage uniform policy for recess in all elementary schools to be not less than 30 minutes per day (divided into two periods as needed).
- Schedule lunch recess before eating whenever possible.

Standard of reference

Kansas State Department of Education Exemplary Guidelines for Recess.

Gap observed

Recess is offered in most elementary schools for 15 minutes in the AM or PM, and 15 minutes before or after lunch (total 30 minutes per day), but policy has not been set to guarantee this.

Comments

Moderate to vigorous supervised recess is recommended for elementary students, preferably outdoors. Recess before lunch allows students a more relaxed and adequate eating time, not shortened by the desire to start recess early.

Recommendation N.26 (athletic clubs)

- Encourage the growth of athletic clubs at all levels and promote parent and staff involvement.
- Showcase successes in selected schools to encourage replication in other schools.
- Envision a future when intramurals might be offered at the middle school and high school levels.

Standard of reference

Kansas State Department of Education Advanced Guidelines for Before and After School physical activity.

Gap observed

There are no school-sponsored intramural physical activities due to limited personnel and funding. Athletic clubs (e.g. running clubs) have been successful when supported by parent and teacher volunteers.

Comments

Before and after school programs that offer a range of physical activity choices that meet the needs, interests and abilities of all students increase opportunities for students to develop lifelong personal activity habits and help reduce sedentary time.

Recommendation N.27 (family fitness events)

Expand family fitness fun opportunities to involve more schools and families, with emphasis on developing behavior change strategies. Work on developing a behavior change tracking system for students and families.

Standard of reference

Kansas State Department of Education Basic-Exemplary Guidelines for family and community physical activity

Gap observed

No fitness events have been conducted in the district until the fall of 2008. The first family fitness fun night (sponsored by the School Health Council) was held at Robinson Middle School 10/08 and was a resounding success!

Comments

Family activity events help families to gain information about how to incorporate increased physical activity into their lives. Knowledge is necessary, but not sufficient for promoting lifestyle changes, and further support will be needed to accomplish lasting behavior change.

Recommendation N.28 (partnership and community involvement)

Strengthen partnership between PE teachers and community-based programs such as *Shawnee Summer Scorecard*. Create a program for exercise and tracking of physical activity for students and families that extends beyond the school walls.

Standard of reference

Kansas State Department of Education Exemplary Guidelines for family and community physical activity.

Gap observed

No coordinated school-based programs currently exist for sending materials to families to support their efforts to be physically active. A community-based model for promoting physical activity in children has been developed (*Shawnee Summer Scorecard*) and could be used as a school-based model for helping families in the community.

Comments

Partnership with *Shawnee Summer Scorecard*, which is based upon a successful Centers for Disease Control intervention model, could provide students with year-round incentives to be more physically active. Contact information for *Shawnee Summer Scorecard*: Lisa Martin, Shawnee County EFNEP Agent, ljmartin@ksu.edu.

Appendix 1

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendations from Work Groups

Workgroup Name: Nutrition

State standard requirement (e.g F1, D2, etc)	Gap to address	Recommendation Number	Recommendation
D2 through 9 (a la carte offering)	A la carte ¹⁰ foods and beverages do not meet consistently good nutritional standards for fat, sugar and calories.	N.1	Establish a uniform district policy to: 1. encourage the offer of a la carte items in all middle and high schools. 2. define parameters for the types of food to be offered that meet the EXEMPLARY standards defined by the Kansas Department of Education. (Endnote 1)
	A la carte items and regular lunch menus do not include consistently fruits, vegetables, yoghurt.	N.2	Always make fresh fruit and vegetables available through regular lunch program and through a la carte menu, prepared in ways that appeal to students (e.g., pre-cut apples versus whole fruit).

¹⁰A La Carte: A beverage or food product sold in schools to students during the lunch period that is not part of the United States Department of Agriculture school meal program.

State standard requirement (e.g F1, D2, etc)	Gap to address	Recommendation Number	Recommendation
F1 through F8 (food offered during school day – classroom parties, celebrations, rewards, fundraisers, intramural events, school-sponsored events).	Some schools do not allow or encourage the use of water bottles in the classroom.	N.3	Allow and encourage students to have individual water bottles in the classroom.
	Parents, students, teachers and organizations are not informed about the importance of offering food and beverages with good nutritional value.	N.4	Parents, teachers and organizations should be informed about the guidelines for the use of food and beverages in schools.
		N.5	For classroom rewards, parties and celebrations schools should be encouraged to use items other than food or beverages. If food and beverages are offered, efforts should be made to offer items that meet the standards established for a la carte offering.

State standard requirement (e.g F1, D2, etc)	Gap to address	Recommendation Number	Recommendation
	Schools in general have no policies on <u>when</u> foods and beverages can be offered <u>during school days</u> .	N.6	If food or beverages are provided for classroom rewards, parties and celebrations they should be offered at least one hour after the end of the last lunch period.
	Schools in general have no restrictions on the use of fundraising activities involving food and beverages.	N.7	YEAR 1 - At least 50 percent of fundraising activities will not involve the sale of food and/or beverages. YEAR 2 - At least 75 percent of fundraising activities will not involve the sale of food and/or beverages.
	Schools in general have no policies on <u>what</u> foods and beverages can be offered <u>during school days</u> for fundraising activities ¹¹ or other events.	N.8	The standards established for a la carte offering should be applied also to food and beverages <u>sold</u> for fundraising activities during normal school hours.
		N.9	When food and beverages are sold as part of fundraising activities outside of normal school hours, at least 50 percent of the offering for each fundraiser should meet the same standards established for a la carte sale. This should apply also to door-to-door or student-sponsored fundraising activities.

¹¹ Fundraising: beverage or food products sold to raise money that are not sold in vending machines, a la carte sales or as part of the United States department of agriculture school meal program.

State standard requirement (e.g F1, D2, etc)	Gap to address	Recommendation Number	Recommendation
	Schools in general have no policies on <u>what</u> foods and beverages can be sold at school-sponsored events <u>after normal school hours</u> .	N.10	Beverages and food products may be sold outside of normal school hours at school-sponsored events (including sports events) provided that at least 50 per cent of the offerings meet the same standards established for a la carte sale.
E1 through E8 (vending machines)	No uniform district policy exists for the sale of food and beverages in vending machines (in regard to what is sold and during what hours of operation).	N.11	Establish a uniform district policy that allows the use of vending machines in schools. If a vending machine is placed in a school, the items offered and the hours of operation shall be consistent with the district policy.
	Drinks sold in vending machines do not always meet good nutritional guidelines	N.12	Formally endorse the guidelines from the American Beverages Association as the minimum standards for food and beverages sold in vending machines. (2)
		N.13	Sugar-free carbonated drinks can be sold in vending machines only in high schools after the last lunch period.
	Food sold in vending machines does not always meet good nutritional guidelines.	N.14	Foods offered in vending machines should meet the standards for Tier 2 foods established by the Institute of Medicine. (3)
	Teachers are looked at as role models, but they do not always send a consistent message to students regarding the importance of maintaining good nutrition and eating healthy food.	N.15	The same standards adopted for vending machines available to the students should be used for machines available only to staff that are located on school property.

(1) Kansas State Department of Education a-la-carte guidelines

A LA CARTE FOOD ITEMS are limited to:

- The same portion size of any food item served that day in the NSLP or SBP
- Fruits and/or vegetables
- Low-fat and/or nonfat yogurt
- Other items – At least 50% of items offered meet all of the following guidelines per serving:
 - Fat – Except for nuts, seeds and nut butters, 35% or less of total calories from fat (or less than 4 g. per 100 calories)
 - Sugar – Except for fruit without added sugar, 35% or less of weight from total sugar (or less than 9 g. per 100 calories)
 - Calories – 200 calories or less per selling unit

A LA CARTE BEVERAGES are limited to:

- Water, non-caloric
- Only low-fat (1% or 1/2%) and/or skim (nonfat) milk
- Soy or rice beverages with 35% or less of weight from total sugar (or less than 9 g. per 100 calories)

(2) American Beverage Association School Beverage Guidelines

Only the following beverages will be offered during school hours:

Elementary Schools

- Bottled water
- Up to 8 ounce servings of milk and 100% juice
 - Fat-free or low-fat regular and flavored milk and nutritionally equivalent (per USDA) milk alternatives with up to 150 calories/ 8 ounces
 - 100% juice with no added sweeteners, up to 120 calories / 8 ounces, and with at least 10% of the recommended daily value for three or more vitamins and minerals

Middle School

- Same as elementary school, except juice and milk may be sold in 10 ounce servings

High School

- Bottled water
- No- or low-calorie beverages with up to 10 calories / 8 ounces
- Up to 12 ounce servings of milk, 100% juice and certain other drinks
 - o Fat-free or low-fat regular and flavored milk and nutritionally equivalent (per USDA) milk alternatives with up to 150 calories / 8 ounces
 - o 100% juice with no added sweeteners, up to 120 calories / 8 ounces, and with at least 10% of the recommended daily value for three or more vitamins and minerals
 - o Other drinks with no more than 66 calories / 8 ounces
- At least 50% of non-milk beverages must be water and no- or low-calorie options

Time of Day

- All beverages sold on school grounds during the regular and extended school day.
- The extended school day includes before and after school activities like clubs, yearbook, band, student government, drama and childcare/latchkey programs.
- These guidelines do not apply to school-related events where parents and other adults are part of an audience or are selling beverages as boosters during intermission, as well as immediately before or after an event. Examples of these events include school plays and band concerts.

(3) Institute of Medicine Tier 2 foods

Tier 2 snack foods are those that do not exceed 200 calories per portion as packaged and:

- No more than 35 percent of total calories from fat
- Less than 10 percent of total calories from saturated fats
- Zero trans fat (less than or equal to 0.5 g per portion)
- 35 percent or less of calories from total sugars
- Sodium content of 200 mg or less per portion as packaged.

Workgroup Name: Physical Activity

State standard requirement	Gap to address	Recommendation Number	Recommendation
A1 through 4 (time spent in physical education classes)	Elementary students participate in 112.5 minutes of PE per week, which meets basic wellness recommendations, but middle school students do not have a PE requirement or class unless chosen as an exploratory elective. High school students are required to complete 1 unit of PE and health during four years.	N.20	Maintain and expand opportunities for increased participation in physical activity classes at all levels, with immediate attention to promoting PE as an attractive exploratory elective for middle school students. Further input is needed to consider the needs of high school students and how to enhance participation in existing PE classes beyond the minimum 1 unit required.
A5 (physical education curriculum)	Physical education curriculum was found to be consistent with Kansas State Board of Education standards for K-5, but the middle school curriculum guide needs to be revised in order to promote sequential development of skills. No available information was submitted concerning the high school curriculum or guide	N.21	Maintain and expand opportunities for sequential PE skill development in grades K-12. Build upon strengths in the K-5 curriculum, review the middle school PE curriculum and guide, and increase linkages to options available in the high school PE curriculum.
A8 (available equipment)	Budget constraints limit purchase of more innovative athletic equipment and consumable items that need to be regularly replaced.	N.22	Advise increased use of supplemental funding sources such as the Topeka School Fund, grants, PTO Campbell Soup label program and private partners to help replenish and extend equipment options.

State standard requirement	Gap to address	Recommendation Number	Recommendation
B1 (physical activity integrated into classroom activities)	Reinforcement of the knowledge and skills needed for a physically active lifestyle is currently taught by individual teachers in selected subjects such as science or life skills classes, but is not consistently integrated into other subjects.	N.23	More emphasis in the classroom setting needs to be given to promoting knowledge about health and the functioning of the human body. These changes could be implemented by incorporating activities into other subject content. In-services could provide an opportunity to present and share teaching strategies for accomplishing this goal.
C1 (use of physical activity as punishment)	The practice of withholding PE or recess is still used in some instances as a form of punishment or as motivation to get students to complete their work.	N.24	A clear district policy is needed to eliminate the practice of withholding PE or using exercise for punitive reasons.
D1-2 (recess)	Recess is offered in most elementary schools for 15 minutes in the AM or PM, and 15 minutes before or after lunch (total 30 minutes per day), but policy has not been set to guarantee this.	N.25	Encourage uniform policy for recess in all elementary schools to be not less than 30 minutes per day (divided into two periods as needed). Schedule lunch recess before eating whenever possible.
E3-4 (extracurricular physical activity programs)	There are no school-sponsored intramurals due to limited personnel and funding. Athletic clubs (e.g. running clubs) have been successful when supported by parent and teacher volunteers.	N.26	Encourage the growth of athletic clubs at all levels and promote parent and staff involvement. Showcase successes in selected schools to encourage replication in other schools. Envision a future when intramurals might be offered at the middle school and high school levels.

State standard requirement	Gap to address	Recommendation Number	Recommendation
F1 & F3 (supporting physically active families)	The first family fitness fun night was held at Robinson Middle School 10/08 and was a resounding success!	N.27	Expand family fitness fun opportunities to involve more schools and families, with emphasis on developing behavior change strategies. Work on developing a behavior change tracking system.
F4 (physical resources to support family behavior change efforts)	No coordinated school-based programs currently exist for sending materials to families to support their efforts to be physically active. A community-based model for promoting physical activity in children has been developed (<i>Shawnee Summer Scorecard</i>) and could be used as a school-based model for helping families in the community.	N.28	Strengthen partnership between PE teachers and community-based programs such as <i>Shawnee Summer Scorecard</i> . Create a program for exercise and tracking of physical activity for students and families that extends beyond the school walls.

Appendix 2

School Health Council Members

The following individuals participated in the work of the School Health Council and contributed to the work of the School Health Council. The affiliation indicated for each individual does not imply endorsement of this report from the respective organizations.

Name	Organization/ Affiliation
Dr. Gianfranco Pezzino Chair	Kansas Health Institute And Shawnee County Health Officer
Bobbe Mansfield, RN, ARNP	Baker University School of Nursing
Dr. Mark Penn	Center for Manual Medicine
Dr. Julie Putnam	Topeka Public Schools Director of Nursing Services
Lesli Clark	Shawnee County Health Agency
Val Patterson	Topeka Public Schools Burnett Center Human Resources
Laurie Little-Weast	Junior League of Topeka
Jennifer Church	KDHE Nutrition/Physical Activity Program Manager
Lisa Martin, RD, LD	K-State Research & Extension
Lisa Regnier	Topeka Public Schools Meadows
Martha Froetschner, RN, BSN	KDHE Nurse Consultant Immunization Program
Dr. Gregory VanSickle	Pediatrics Associates
Dr. Dennis Cooley	Pediatrics Associates
Pat O'Donnell	Pepsi-Cola Bottling Company
Tammy Austin	Topeka Public Schools Robinson Middle School Principal
Michael Ramirez, MS, ATC, LAT	Saint Francis Medical Center
Charlie Schmidt	Schmidt Vending Inc.
Amber Groeling	Hy-Vee Dietitian
Linda Lucero, RN	Registered Nurse

Name	Organization/ Affiliation
Clardy Vinson	Topeka Public Schools State Street Elementary Principal
Ron Harbaugh	Topeka Public Schools Director of Communications
Barbara Mercer, LPN	Topeka Public Schools Lowman Hill
Dr. David Edwards	Saint Francis Internal Medicine
Bill Bagshaw	Topeka Public Schools
Dr. Terry Sandlin	Topeka Public Schools Administration
Jeff Litfin	Topeka Public Schools Administration
Dr. Peg McCarthy	Topeka Public Schools Board of Education
Alfred Gutierrez	Topeka Public Schools DCAC
Nicole Jahnke	Topeka Public Schools Director of Food and Nutrition Services
Maria Sherman	Topeka Public Schools
Keelin Counihan	Topeka Public Schools Whitson Elementary
Theresa Stous, RN	Topeka Public Schools William's Magnet PTO
Marty Gies	Topeka Public Schools Williams Elementary, Principal
Cathy Rinner	YMCA
Debra Rukes	YWCA
Pam Brunsworks	Topeka Public Schools