



SECTOR: SCHOOLS

CASE STUDIES

Case Study I: Linking Education, Activity and Food: The LEAF Program

Case Summary

Sixteen schools from 9 school districts in California were awarded grants by the California Department of Education with funding from the California Department of Food and Agriculture to pilot test the implementation of SB 19, the Pupil Nutrition, Health and Achievement Act of 2001. The LEAF pilot schools were required to establish nutrition and physical activity advisory committees, develop and adopt district-wide nutrition and physical activity policies, implement the SB 19 nutrient standards for competitive foods and beverages, promote the consumption of fruits and vegetables and implement an array of other practices aimed to improve health and reduce obesity among their students.

Outcomes

All of the schools were successful in forming Child Nutrition and Physical Activity Advisory Committees (CNPAACs), developing and adopting district wide policies and implementing SB 19 nutrient standards for competitive foods and beverages. Schools also made improvements to school food service including upgrading facilities and improving the quality and variety of the school meals. Establishing international marketplace lunch service and salad bars were 2 of the most common strategies for improving the meal program. The LEAF schools also enhanced their nutrition education and physical education programs. The integration of cooking and gardening themes were among the most effective education strategies. Most schools were successful in increasing student participation in the lunch program and decreasing purchases of less healthy snack foods and beverages. This resulted in increased revenues and profits for the school food service departments. The provision of fruits and vegetables by LEAF schools also increased over the period of the grant. Student self-reported dietary intake improved as did their attitudes toward physical activity. Teacher and parent support for nutrition and physical activity efforts at the schools also improved.

Source

Center for Weight and Health, LEAF Evaluation Reports, www.cnr.berkeley.edu/cwh



Case Study II: Los Angeles Unified School District Bans Soft Drinks in Schools

Case Summary

In 2002, the Los Angeles Unified School District passed the Healthy Beverage Resolution, which took effect in January 2004. The resolution prohibits the sale of soft drinks at all school sites. Only approved beverages may be sold in vending machines, cafeterias, student stores or advertised, with a few exceptions for fundraising or school events at least one half hour after the end of the school day.

Healthy beverage choices offered in schools include water, milk, fruit juices, sports drinks and sparkling juices.

Outcome

LAUSD reports that the Healthy Beverage Resolution encouraged children to make healthy choices in drinks, and also has influenced food choices and consumption. LAUSD has also adopted several health related initiatives.

Source:

Achieving a District Ban on Soda and Unhealthy Snacks – a Healthy Eating Bright Idea (Submitted on August 26, 2005). California Project LEAN.

<http://californiaprojectlean.org/brightideas/genBrightIdeasList.asp?CATNID=1004>



Case Study III: Farmers' Market Salad Bar at Santa Monica – Malibu Unified School District

Case Summary

The Farmers' Market Salad Bar (FMSB) program in Santa Monica-Malibu USD offers students a wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables purchased directly from local farmers. The program, which grew from a parent's suggestion, replaces ordinary salad bars with fresher, more appealing farmers' market produce. When a 1997 pilot at McKinley Elementary proved successful, the department implemented the program at all 15 schools, with a FMSB lunch costing less than a hot entrée meal.

Students can take as much as they want and only what they want from FMSB, which eliminates waste. A fully reimbursable meal, the FMSB is kept fresh and interesting with the addition of a potato bar, pasta bar, or soup bar once a month. Students who select the salad bar receive the hot entrée along with it. Salad bar participation doubles on these days. FMSB participation is boosted by the district's gardening program, operated by volunteers and paid staff, which maintains gardens at all school sites, conducts farm and market tours, and offers nutrition lessons.

Outcome

In some schools, salad bar use increased 1700%, with 30-50% of the students choosing the salad bar on any given day. For the year 1999-2000 the Santa Monica-Malibu USD food services brought in \$138,000, demonstrating that the FMSB can be a part of a fiscally and nutritionally sound food services department.

Sources

Kojima D, Teare C, Dill L, and Boyle M. Improving Meal Quality in California's Schools: A best practices guide for healthy school food service. California Food Policy Advocates. www.cfpa.net

Mascarenhas M and Gottlieb R. The Farmers' Market Salad Bar: Assessing the first three years of the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District program. Occidental College Community Food Security Project. Report prepared for the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District Food and Nutrition Services, October 2000.

www.uepi.oxy.edu/cfsp



Case Study IV: Planet Health, Massachusetts

Case Summary

Planet Health is an interdisciplinary school-based health behavior intervention designed to reduce obesity among boys and girls in grades 6 to 8 in Massachusetts. Through classroom and physical education (PE) activities, Planet Health aims to increase activity, improve dietary quality, and decrease inactivity.

Planet Health's materials are designed to fit within existing curricula, and consist of two parts. Part one, Classroom Lessons, contains 32 lessons and Power Down, a campaign to reduce TV viewing. Part two, Physical Education Micro-Units and FitChecks, contains 30 brief lessons and tools for self-assessment of activity and inactivity. Teacher trainings, flexible design, and planning tools facilitate the implementation of Planet Health.

Outcomes

Over 2 school years students from public schools in 4 Massachusetts communities participated in the Planet Health intervention program. The prevalence of obesity among girls in intervention schools was reduced compared with controls, controlling for baseline obesity. No differences were found among boys. Among girls, each hour of reduction in television viewing predicted reduced obesity prevalence.

Source

Gortmaker SL, Peterson K, Wiecha J, Sobol AM, Dixit Sujata, Fox MK, and Laird N. Reducing Obesity via a School-Based Interdisciplinary Intervention Among Youth. *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine*. 1999;153:409-418.



More ideas from the field ...

Assessment tool, background materials and advocacy tips on a CD ROM to help improve the nutrition environment at schools	Changing the Scene, U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service
Offering more choices while limiting competitive food sales; creating ‘food court’ where all choices are healthy	Folsom Cordova Unified School District, Sacramento County
Dancing, aerobics and other school Physical Education programs that increase participation and intensity of physical activity	SPARK, Just for Kids!, Project Heart and others
Nutrition education integrated into general curriculum	Youth Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program (FSNEP)
Integrating organic gardening activities, nutrition education, and cooking into curriculum	The Edible Schoolyard / Chef Alice Waters and Berkeley Unified School District
Multilevel intervention in school: creating a school health policy committee, student health committees, parental education, improving PE, increasing physical activity during school time, lower fat offerings in cafeteria and school stores.	M-SPAN program, San Diego
Nutrition education delivered through professional theater companies performing at schools	FOODPLAY Productions, Kaiser Permanente’s Educational Theater Program
A ‘junk free school’ policy, including changing from bake sales to plant sales and asking parents not to send any desserts in lunches	Nathan Hale School, New Haven Connecticut



Additional Ideas ...

- Expand and integrate nutrition and physical activity into health curriculum
- Provide annual assessment of BMI, diet and/or physical fitness
- Implement interventions to reduce screen time

Physical activity

- Encourage students to walk or bike to school.
- Participate in walk to school week.
- Participate in the Safe Routes to School Program.
- Encourage active recess; provide sports equipment during recess.
- Provide physical activity breaks in class; incorporate physical activity into class time.
- Mandate and enforce daily PE for all grades.
- Increase compliance with recess and PE requirements in schools
- Increase time and quality requirements for PE in schools
- Provide PE that is based on sequential curricula.
- Focus PE on fitness and lifelong skills not just team sports.
- Offer more opportunities and incentives for students to engage in enjoyable physical activities – before, during and after school
- Open up school gym after school hours for use by community members; upgrade gym and outdoor exercise facilities.

Nutrition

- Make water available to children throughout the day.
- Ensure the water is cool and tastes OK.
- Encourage/provide incentives for teachers and other school staff to role model healthy behaviors.
- Increase the quality and quantity of whole grains, low-fat milk and fruits and vegetables offered
- Provide more healthy food options at parties and other site events
- Provide adequate time for meals
- Restrict nearby sidewalk and store-front vending of unhealthy choices
- Remove advertising for less healthy foods
- Increase points of service and/or adjust mealtime schedule to shorten meal lines.
- Improve attractiveness and health of school meal offerings.
- Improve school kitchen, serving and eating areas so that food service can provide healthier meals and a more attractive eating environment for students.
- Develop and enforce nutrient standards for competitive foods and beverages (i.e. healthy options in snack bars, carts, stores and vending machines.)
- Develop and enforce standards for food and beverages used for fundraising, events and rewards.
- Consider reducing or eliminating the use of food and beverages for fundraising purposes.
- Offer nutrition education in all grades



- Incorporate hands-on interactive nutrition education that is practical and focused on behavior change.
- Plant school gardens and use as an educational tool.
- Provide financial rewards or other incentives for schools to make healthy changes

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