

NE Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative – School Wellness Policy Review/Site Visits
School: Allamakee Community Schools - Allamakee County
April 9, 2008

Attendees: Donna Herman (school nurse), Brittany Krueger (student), Dave Herold (Superintendent), Micheal Krambeer (student), Denise Tysland (Food Service), Zan Zwimmer, Bob Wasson (Asst. Principal & A.D.), Deb Tweedy (El. P.E.)

Handouts: ISU Ext. Publications – “What Schools Can Do”, “Non-food Alternatives”, “Tips for Preparing a School Wellness Policy”

Format of Discussion:

- Introductions –
- Overview of F&F Initiative – Ann & Cindy
- Spring/Summer '07 County Discussions – Schools identified as an asset and one of the focuses of our initiative – Ann
- Explanation of each school’s policy review for 5 requirements: (Reference: IDE school wellness policy matrix & ISU-E Journal of Extension article – fall 2007)
 - Goals for Nutrition & Physical Activity
 - Nutrition Guidelines
 - Guidelines for Meal Reimbursement
 - Plan to Measure
 - Need to Involve Community
- Feedback for Clayton Ridge wellness committee –
 - Goals for Nutrition & Physical Activity – Physical Activity not addressed. Goals not measureable.
 - Nutrition Guidelines & Guidelines for Reimbursement – School day not defined. Beverage guidelines not measureable
 - Plan to Measure – No plan present
 - Involvement of Community – There were several key people (school staff) involved in the development of the school wellness policy. There are several new staff including Superintendent and Food Service Director since the development of this policy in 2006. The committee has met several times in the last year and have asked themselves if the policy really reflects what they are doing and/or if it is serving as a tool to guide them in their wellness efforts. They learned of the NE Iowa F&F Initiative and are interested in exploring next steps that will impact their wellness efforts. They want a policy that serves more than meeting a requirement.

4 essential steps of AI: Discover, Dream, Design, Deliver

Step 1) Discover: Telling stories of success is the first step in the process of discovering the positive core and appreciating the best of what is. To accomplish this, you might ask members of the wellness committee some of the following questions:

- **"Describe one aspect of the wellness policy development process that made you feel successful or inspired."** It's admittedly very broad and general, but it helps you understand what they deem valuable and what they see as their assets/strengths.
 - Recent school wellness day in conjunction with the AEA anti-bullying program. It was coordinated by the Professional Development committee and included presentations by Becky Baker from UNI (ideas for integrating wellness in the

school curriculum) and opportunities for the staff to participate in a variety of wellness activities for themselves. It was very well received by the staff.

- Addition of a salad bar this past year per Superintendent request. The response has been very positive and, in fact, surprised the food service staff. Students as well as faculty/staff been very happy with the option. The salad offering has been extended to the Jr. High and there is also interest from the Elementary faculty/staff.
- Mention of "Safe Schools Healthy Schools" grant that was extended an additional year and they are now in process of reapplying for... many positive outcomes related to outside funding to At-Risk students including drop-out prevention, character education, etc.
- **"Tell me about a resource you or others contributed that made development of the school wellness policy possible."** This might concern contributions made within the group, but perhaps some from outside the committee. Identifies resources and assets already at their disposal.
 - Elementary PE teacher – describes passion for teaching students to take care of their bodies and appreciate wellness. She promotes active living every opportunity she gets.
 - Fresh fruit bowls are popular. Extra time needed for prep but students love them when the food service has access to seasonal fruit.
 - Utilize ISU Extension Newsletters – "Growing Up Healthy & Active"
- **"What kinds of positive things have you observed that are related to development of a school wellness policy?"** (Notice I didn't write "as a result of" since some people are uncomfortable giving wholesale credit to a particular effort esp. if they think other factors are at work). Encourage them to think broadly about this question. It doesn't necessarily have to be impact based esp. at this early stage but perhaps their observations will be related to improved processes like communication. In other words, maybe it hasn't yet changed the eating or exercise habits of students, but in the process of developing the policy, maybe some faculty and staff got to know each other better, maybe members of the committee started making personal changes, maybe it changed the teaching curriculum on some level, maybe it stimulated more discussion among the faculty, maybe a few parents got more involved in the school, etc.
 - The addition of a community Wellness Center across the street from the school has been very positive for the school and community.
 - New playground planned with multi-activity surfaces considered.

Step 2) Dream: Envisioning what might be; sharing ideas for a preferred future. What does a successful school wellness policy look like and what can it do for the school/children/community, etc. Dreaming should be encouraged without attention to resources. In other words, it's a question that should be prefaced by: "If ANYTHING were possible, what if..."

- **"Based on what we've learned about what's working well, what would it look like if we did even better? What would a successful/effective school wellness policy do for the school, students, parents, teachers, administrators, and/or members of the community? In other words, what kinds of positive changes would a successful policy bring?"**

- Having a school wellness policy that is preK-12 that serves the needs of all and encourages having fun
- PE, health and academics – integrated throughout
- Impact student’s whole environment – school and home
- Continued collaboration between departments re health & wellness – co-teaching and cross-curricular activities
- Plethora of coaches so we could expand our offerings – including recreational, non-competitive offerings and get even more students involved in physical activities. Collaborate with Park & Rec
- Bring in motivational speakers for students and staff re wellness
- Avoid the health problems they predict for this generation of youth

Step 3) Design: Finding innovative ways to create the shared future outlined in the dream step; creating breakthrough propositions. What the school can do to commit resources, align standards, etc. to achieve the vision outlined in 2 (through the process of developing "provocative propositions")

- Ask the committee members: **"What can you do to secure the support and resources you need to create a school wellness policy that creates the kinds of positive changes you've just identified?"** Be creative!
 - Get people “on board” but it takes time
 - Continue the dialogue to create ownership and champions
 - Continue to look for funding and grants to support our work in wellness
 - Our staff is very interested – we need to find ways to make it happen
 - Offer more wellness days – physical and mental benefits, staff had fun together
- **You could go another step and ask them to develop some concrete, provocative propositions that show their commitment to specific strategies.** For example, “Our school will incorporate health and wellness activities into the curriculum of every class -- even accounting!” or something like that.

Step 4) Deliver: Sustaining change, implementing the innovation, setting the "school compass," and monitoring progress and evaluating results. What needs to happen, how, who will do it, by when? How will you know you are successful? What are some signs or indicators that show you are successful? Who will keep track of them and how?

- **"How will you know you've been successful in creating positive change? What tools and resources can you use to measure change?"** Again: Encourage them to be creative and don't overlook the students, teachers, and classes as possible resources!
 - Obesity rates for students (and staff) will decrease
 - Would be nice to have an updated weight room with equipment that monitors BMI, Blood Pressure, fitness measurements, etc.
 - Parents more informed – seeing changes in the home

Summary comments:

We offered Cindy Baumgartner (ISU Extension Family Nutrition & Health Specialist) as a contact for an inservice this spring. All of the people present were engaged for about 90 minutes. It is interesting to note that their school wellness policy is like a philosophy statement, however their overall focus and movement towards school wellness seems to be evolving/growing. Several staff involved in the development of the policy were not able to be at this meeting.

Administration is supportive of wellness programming and is looking for ways to develop a meaningful wellness policy and continued efforts.