

NE Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative – School Wellness Policy Review/Site Visits
School: North Winneshiek – Winneshiek County
February 11, 2008

Attendees: Birgitta Meade (science teacher), Andrea Homstad (school nurse), Barb _____ (Food service), Christy Nimrod (PE teacher), Tim Dugger (superintendent), and Karen Foster (parent)
Handouts given: ISU Ext. Publications – “What Schools Can Do”, “Non-food Alternatives”, “Tips for Preparing a School Wellness Policy”, and “Dollars and Sense: The Financial Impact of Selling Healthier School Foods” by the Center for Weight & Health – UC, Berkeley

Format of Discussion:

- Introductions
- Overview of F&F Initiative – Ann
- 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:
 - Goals for Nutrition & Physical Activity
 - Nutrition Guidelines
 - Guidelines for Meal Reimbursement
 - Plan to Measure
 - Need to Involve Community
- Feedback for North Winneshiek wellness committee – Our review indicates that the first 3 requirements are in place. There is a plan to measure implementation every 3 years beginning in 2009. There has been no formal measure since policy created in 2006. The following individuals developed the policy: Andrea (school nurse), Christy (PE teacher), Karen Foster (parent & nutritionist), Kris Heffern (parent & nurse), Tim (superintendent), & Wendy Twait (secretary).

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.
 - Increased PE to 3 days/ week and expanded to full K-8
 - Ground shift – less candy food as reward. Should we re-look @ food as reward?
 - + feedback for food service staff when more fresh fruits & veggies served. Variety is great. Kids can choose. Cook – “going through more peppers & cucumbers” Kids – “not so bad”!
 - Reading incentives – reward physical activity
 - Staff using weight room & new water dispenser – Staff using more
 - More & more conversation around wellness
 - Role modeling – school nurse planning programs for staff to role model healthier eating and physical activity

- On days when they have "Life Physical Skill" trips like skiing, bowling, biking & swimming, cooks will send healthier food so kids are not buying from vending machines
- **"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.
- Enthusiasm – staff excited to do good things for kids like this
- School is small enough they can have a conversation and try something really quick and if it "works", go with it
- Committee that developed policy had great ideas
- **"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.
- Nurse – started healthy newsletters articles that are sent home with kids
- Size of school – all staff in frequent contact/communication throughout the day
- School board is more interested in wellness

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?"**
- If weight room could become a community center within the school – give access to community members
- Steamers in kitchens for cooking veggies
- Improve quality of commodities
- Kids like frozen better than canned
- Real food! Local food! Storage for this
- If kids eat well in school, it will carry over to home
- Everyone – students, faculty & staff would all have ample opportunity to be physically active throughout the school day

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!
 - Not a lot we can do without funds, i.e., additional staff (p.e., food service, etc.)
 - Buying more fresh when possible – not sure who sells food or where to get it. Storage is a big issue
 - Need to make contacts such as local apple orchard
- **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.
 - Incorporate more in the classroom curriculum re food & fitness
 - Parents should be encouraged not to bring food in for parties, etc.
 - Pop consumption is down
 - Vending machine set-up restricts pop use

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!
 - Changes in BMI – but that will take some time to see results
 - Increased community involvement – More people interested
 - Advisory committee – could offer education/awareness re food & fitness issues

Summary comments:

I offered Cindy Baumgartner (ISU Extension Family Nutrition & Health Specialist) as a contact for an inservice this spring. They all seemed very interested in this option and indicated that many of the staff do not know a lot about the school wellness policy. They also thought they could really benefit from Cindy's advice re healthier options throughout the school day. All of the committee members were engaged, however, several had time constraints and either came late or had to leave early.