

NE Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative – School Wellness Policy Review/Site Visits
School: Starmont Schools - Fayette County
March 17, 2008

Attendees: Ruth Goldenstein– school nurse; Julie Riechers- At Risk & Wellness teacher; Barb Schoenjahn, Elementary PE; Maggie Tucker & Jan Murray–Family & Consumer Sciences teachers; Sandy Klaus, M.S. Principal, Luke Dement-Student; Sandy Kirby -Head Cook; Sue Burrack – Food Service & School Counselor & Regional Team member

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 –
- 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 Starmont wellness committee –
 - Goals for Nutrition & Physical Activity – Goals are present and ambitious.
 - Nutrition Guidelines & Guidelines for Reimbursement – School day not defined. Paragraph re Guidelines for Reimbursement
 - Plan to Measure – Not present
 - Involvement of Community – There were several key people (school staff K-12) involved in the development of the school wellness policy. Most of staff @ this meeting worked on the development of their policy. They do not have set meeting times but have met several times since late summer '06 when it was established. They presented an inservice to all faculty and staff at that time with a complete overview and 1 pg. Summary given to everyone. They met again fall '07 to review and incorporate policy into Wellness Curriculum. They have had several youth involved at times. They do not have someone from outside the school community involved in the school wellness policy.

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.
 - Starmont schools has been a part of “the UNI Obesity study” – directed & being tracked by Dr. Hensley. When this years sophomores were in 4,5, & 6th grade,

they determined that 41% of them were obese or at risk to become obese based on their BMIs. With this study, a 3rd day of PE was added in addition to the establishment of a wellness curriculum that included physical activity and health. These kids also had 2 yrs. of daily exposure to fruits & veggies. They have followed these students and this group is currently 38% obese or at risk. They are not sure that this represents a significant change. However, they like the changes they've made because of this study. They saw a 16% drop from last yr.

- In fall'07, spent time reviewing Wellness Policy with entire staff (110) on a curriculum day
- The State guidelines for the wellness policy really keep the nutrition and physical activity separate. With the F&F initiative, it will be good to see where we can bridge for more integration of food & fitness in the school environment. Maybe we can encourage state policy makers to re-think this.
- There is growing interest re fitness. People are becoming more and more knowledgeable.
- The Team Nutrition grant – enabling the school to offer fresh veggies and fruit – made a bigger impact on our school than the development of the school wellness policy. This was very favorable. Sue Burrack – Food Service Director actually purchased all of the produce and arranged to have it processed (ex. – pineapple – food service staff cut it up instead of buying it cut up in the grocery store) and was able to extend the grant dollars for two years instead of the intended one! Princ. noted that there was lots of interest in this & it was “inspiring.” People had more knowledge & she saw people working together more. Local groc. store even ran out of some of the produce the kids had recently sampled-the learning extended to purchases families made at home
- Pepsi has pulled all “sugar” soda and replaced with diet soda, waters & juices. Principal has emphasized to staff that they need to be role models re soda consumption, although sugared pop still sold in faculty lounges. (student mentioned that some kids have snuck into the lounge to get pop-like after play practice)
- Many teachers have sent information home to parents re healthy snack options and they have seen items such as meat & cheese trays, fruit trays etc, be brought in –instead of cupcakes.
- Student talked about during ITBS-students go to the gym & walk for 15 min to “prep their minds” He felt exercise gave them energy for the tests
- **"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.
- Ideas!! Many of the staff contacted other schools (St. Louis, Ia. City, etc.) and teacher-friends to learn what they were doing with their school wellness policy and programming.
- Conferences – Several had attended meetings that provided some good information in this process.

- Applying for a PEP grant-large physical educ. fed. grant (strict phys. fitness trng.-like dumbbells, medicine ball, stretch bands, stability balls to improve posture, etc.)
- **"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.
- During ITEDs the students walked for 15" in the gym before their tests. The student present thought this was very helpful.
- The awareness of staff, students and parents seems to be growing. It's a part of a lot of conversations every week.
- They are eager to learn about the results of the concession stand survey and determine ways to make some changes.
- Priced food so it is cheaper to buy a meal than ala carte; this increased the # who eat the whole meal; found kids don't buy fruits or veggies in ala-carte otherwise; always have a main entrée + 2nd choice; no longer offer "Little Debbie"-type snacks; make their own trail mix; offer cheese sticks now; do not have a salad bar; can order salad the morning of & ave. about 7 salads/day

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?"**
- Daily PE for all students. Elementary PE teacher currently reading about Naperville, Ill school where they've incorporated a "Zero/0 Hour" PE class that is combined with a reading readiness class ("Spark" by John Rafferty) and this group of students experienced a significant impact on academic performance when they worked out 45 min. beforehand Another example: "PE for Life" a program being utilized in Grundy Center-Rick Schubach-teacher
- Have a "Farm to School" program
- Food Service-Wish distributors have more varieties; wants to use more local foods
- Parents on board – healthy food for snacks, parties, etc.
- Be able to see kids carrying water to school, instead of pop
- Seeing higher consumption (all!) of fruits & veggies disappear off the lunch line

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!
 - Grants
 - Incorporate healthy eating and physical activity in everything we do in our school-lots of education; try to do lots of things in classes/talk to kids constantly
 - Food Service – provide and encourage students to try new healthy food items. Ex. – “Make your own sub – day”. Try and decrease ala carte (“less-healthy”) items. Student mentioned he would like to see the hot foods offered in ala carte healthier; maybe have a sub station instead of a “hot pocket”. Sue mentioned maybe minimizing choices available so that’s all that’s available?
 - Incentive program for staff wellness-pursue thorough insurance company? Used to do this-was social as well as physically healthier. Promote for everybody
 - Concession stands-look at different offerings; coordinate with conf. so there are similar offerings when they go to “away” games
 - After school programs-La City has offered new foods/ethnic choices
 - Have all students use “www.mypyramid.gov” website for their personal wellness plan
- **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.
 - There was some discussion re the impending hire of a new superintendent this spring; the group present thought they’d like to incorporate the wellness policy and programming in the interview process for the new superintendent!
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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!
 - Physical Fitness levels will improve (tested annually grades 3-12 – Fitness Report card)
 - BMIs will decrease – UNI Obesity Study
 - Prevalence of fruits and vegetables consumed in school!
 - Parents bringing in healthy snacks!
 - School insurance will provide incentives for wellness and then our staff will become better role models!
 - Concessions will be healthier in all of the schools in our region!

- Physical activity will be promoted throughout the school day for all

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 more than 2hrs. The Food Service Director & Guidance Counselor (Sue Burrack), the FCS teacher, wellness teacher, and school nurse are champions of wellness and youth as future leaders. They have created structures for the students to succeed and use their knowledge re the health impact of healthy eating and physical activity. Administration is supportive of the staff champions and the student leadership in the wellness area.