

NE Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative – School Wellness Policy Review/Site Visits
School: Howard Winneshiek Schools - Howard County
March 3, 2008

Attendees: Rob Hughes (Principal – Elma/Lime Springs, Scott Wiley (MS teacher) Dorie _____ (Lime Springs teacher), Cheryl Dickman, Food Service Director, Jerry Brown Principal – Ridgeway, Brian Nye (superintendent)

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

Format of Discussion:

- Introductions – including Cindy Baumgartner via teleconference
- 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 Howard-Winneshiek wellness committee – Our review indicates that all of the requirements are in place. (Reference: IDE school wellness policy matrix & ISU-E Journal of Extension article – fall 2007)
 - Goals for Nutrition & Physical Activity – Goals are clear and measurable. One question- Amount of daily physical activity.
 - Nutrition Guidelines & Guidelines for Reimbursement - Clearly defined. Discussion re following points:
 - Vending – beverages pg. 7 – Starting fall 08, Pepsi will not stock the “student access” machines with high-sugar items. There will be diet soda and smaller bottles/containers of low-sugar drinks for student access in middle & high school. There are no vending machines in the schools with candy bars or chips. No changes for soda in concessions
 - Fundraising – biggest challenge as each class relies on this funding source for their field trips, etc. “Unhealthy” foods for fundraising purposes are not sold for consumption on school campus. It seems like the vendors for fundraisers are supplying healthier (non candy) options. This is an area the school continues to work on.
 - Suggestion - define the school day
 - Plan to Measure – Clearly defined. The policy has been in place for 1 yr. Each principal is responsible for the annual evaluation/monitoring. Last year Rob Hughes worked with designated staff (“wellness person”) in Elma & Lime Springs to complete the annual eval/measurement. The committee plans to work on making this process consistent across the district.
 - Involvement of Community – List of committee members reviewed. Diverse group including community health care providers, youth, food service, school board, etc. (all of the recommended representation). Are they meeting regularly? No. Today was the first meeting of the school wellness committee. Several were unable to attend. Only 1/3 of those invited were able to attend.

They asked how often they should meet? Our response was that it depends on your goals as a school wellness committee. In the coming months it will be important to determine their goals and plans to achieve them. Time for school personnel to work on this in addition to their full-time work is an issue. We encouraged them to think about small steps.

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.
 - Example described by middle school teacher for his 7th graders last year; he coordinated an effort with school Food Service and a local dietician and created a project for the students using "My Pyramid" where the students learned about daily nutritional & caloric needs and physical activity-- based on their height & weight & age-- in creating their own wellness plan
 - Faculty & staff benefit – receive "wellness" blood testing no charge. This has been a nice "fit" with the school wellness policy and has inspired some faculty/staff to make lifestyle changes.
 - Faculty & staff @ Lime Springs & Elma have coordinated team-based efforts over last 2 years to work on healthy lifestyles (eating healthier, increasing physical activity, etc.) Response has been positive...especially the support for one another.
 - In developing the school wellness policy – the m.s. teacher said it was a good experience to sit down with a cross-section of school people, health & community people to work on it
- **"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.
 - Indicated that they used the recommended "state model" for creating this policy
 - Multiple committee meetings – time & effort
 - Partnerships with local ISU Extension, local Hospital, health care providers, etc. were great resources
- **"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.

- Food Service Director – currently working on some projects through SNA
 - o National Breakfast Week – sent packets to outlying schools – emphasis on importance of breakfast
 - o “Got Milk?” – program to engage students - consume more dairy products. Discussed options for additional financial support via local dairy producers, etc. F.S. Director shared that the price of dairy products is up; she is concerned about impact on dairy offerings in school lunch program. All milk products are skim or 1%.
- Changes in Health Curriculum – school wellness policy influenced ways they’ve made changes to integrate health & wellness throughout the curriculum. Continue to work on “alignment” throughout k-12 curriculum
 - o General public – parents needed to be informed of these changes
- Summer Food Service program with USDA – “Wisdom & Wellness” – coordinated by Rob Hughes & Vanette Grover (ISU-Ext. Youth Specialist). The program provides a meal & education for children over an 8 week period in Elma & Lime Springs. Last year, they served 173 kids 3,047 meals. Current work by leadership includes the development of an advisory board and seeking donations to develop a foundation to provide ongoing support.

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?"**
- MS principal from Ridgeway – “I can make it better by taking more responsibility for this plan and evaluating our implementation annually”
- Everyone – support each other daily in eating healthier & being more active --students, faculty & staff would all have ample opportunity to be physically active throughout the school day
- Continue to provide information/education so that Wellness for everyone becomes second nature – in school and at home...drinking water instead of pop, playing outside regularly
- Parents on board! We need to educate the parents that it’s ok to walk to school. Maybe we could do it in night classes or parent-teacher conferences.

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!
 - School leadership – We need to model school wellness – teachers will follow, students will follow. We need more communication, more education, more collaboration with community partners.
 - We could create displays for school conferences – they are pretty well attended
 - We could use help with inservices for the staff (CSIP) re any research support for wellness and the impact on students.
 - We need to look @ the environment around us and ask – are there good choices available?
 - Brief discussion re possibility of Safe Routes to School grant and involvement of schools and community members.
 - Reality – all of this takes time, energy and support. We can't presume that there is extra time in the school day. There are small steps we can take from a leadership stand-point. We can model it, embrace it and make it a high priority. To do this, we need major support from the community with the health and school connection.

- **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!

We were not able to get to this question.

Summary comments:

We offered Cindy Baumgartner (ISU Extension Family Nutrition & Health Specialist) as a contact for an inservice this spring. All of the committee members were engaged, however, several had time constraints and it was the first time for this group to meet. 2 had been involved in creating the wellness policy.