

HEALTH AND WELLNESS LCAP

Ideas for integrating health and wellness considerations into California's Local Control Accountability Plan.



How to Incorporate Health & Wellness into the LCAP

Santa Barbara County schools have made great strides toward becoming centers of health and wellness. The Orfalea Foundation has identified ten best practices in Santa Barbara County that we believe should be codified for each district through the Local Control Accountability Plan. Many districts are eager to embed these practices in the LCAP, but are not quite sure where they fit.

Below are some options, based on State priorities.

Basic Conditions for Learning (facilities, instructional materials, credentialed teachers)

If your goals include facility upgrades, this would be a good place to commit to treating the cafeteria and dining areas as learning environments, through physical design or cultural mandate.

A *living* wellness policy, customized to reflect the values of the school community, could well be a goal under this priority, e.g. The District Wellness Policy will require healthful on-campus food, access to hydration, and daily physical activity as basic conditions for learning.

A workplace wellness program can improve teacher energy, focus, and esprit de corps.

Implementation of State Standards (CCSS, NGSS)

N/A

Access to broad course of study

If goals include life-skills education, one may include food literacy components (such as garden lessons).

Pupil Achievement

Goals related to pupil achievement can benefit from Health & Wellness tactics such as Recess Before Lunch (which helps students return from lunch ready to learn), food literacy lessons (which typically include math and science components), and access to hydration and REAL food (for better focus).

Parent Involvement

An active Wellness Committee includes parent representatives who can, in turn, involve more parents in health and wellness dialogue that more closely aligns a student's school and home behaviors.

Likewise, parent volunteers in the dining area during meal times can support implementation of the wellness policy, assist younger children with food choices, and reinforce that meals are a time for socialization and community building.

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STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES BY EMPOWERING INDIVIDUALS

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Pupil Engagement

Many districts focus on reducing absenteeism and increasing graduation rates. “A University of Pennsylvania study estimated that obese students have 20 percent more absences. In another study, obesity was a better predictor of absenteeism than any other factor.” – from Center for Ecoliteracy.

Serving high quality, real food in a pleasant environment can keep students on campus at lunch time. For schools that qualify, breakfast programs – particularly breakfast-in-the-classroom programs – tend to increase attendance.

School Climate

This priority often includes goals related to improving student behavior, community connectedness, and the “sense of safety” for pupils, staff, and parents. We know that low blood sugar and dehydration contribute to behavior problems (for students AND adults), so access to REAL food and adequate hydration can be included as tactics here. Involving parents, staff, and students in the updating and communication of the Wellness Policy supports both connectedness and sense of safety.

Other Pupil Outcomes

Many districts include “All pupils are physically fit and healthy” as a goal in this area. As such, all ten best practices can be selected as tactics for reaching this goal:

Ten Best Practices for Schools That Wish To Be Community Beacons of Health and Wellness

1. The district’s Wellness Policy is *customized* to reflect the values of the school community.
2. The district’s Wellness Committee meets *regularly*, and includes representatives from each school and a diverse set of stakeholders, including teachers, students, food service workers, administrators, and parents.
3. Adults on campus *set a good example* in food and activity choices, as defined in the Wellness Policy.
4. Fresh drinking water is always available in or near eating areas, and *children are allowed access to water throughout the school day*.
5. *Food literacy* (basic understanding of the implications of food production, preparation and consumption) is part of the campus culture, in class, cafeteria and garden.
6. Schools schedule *recess before lunch*, and students have at least *twenty minutes of table time* after being served school lunch.
7. Student and adult *consumers are treated respectfully* and the cafeteria and dining areas are understood to be learning environments, and places to build community.
8. Cafeteria is set up to *teach students to reduce, recycle, and compost*, including a preference for durable dining ware over disposables where possible.
9. As specified in the Wellness Policy, schools allow only *healthy fundraisers and classroom celebrations*, and *do not use food as either punishment or reward*.
10. To the extent possible, all food served on campus is fresh, local, appealing, and prepared and served in an age-appropriate way (e.g., lettuce cut into bite-sized pieces).