

Nutrition Environment and Services is one of the ten components represented in the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child model. Research overwhelmingly shows a nutritious diet can 1) positively affect classroom behavior (e.g., on-task behavior), 2) reduce the risk of developing obesity, dental carries, iron deficiency anemia, and risk factors for chronic diseases, 3) improve academic grades, standardized test scores, and cognitive function, and 4) increase attendance rates. In addition, studies specifically show implementing a universal school breakfast program can decrease absenteeism and hunger, and improve grade-point averages. Also, the ability and skills required to make healthy nutrition choices creates empowerment and life long healthy eating habits.



The nutrition environment in the school should provide students with opportunities to learn about and practice healthy eating through foods and beverages available on campus and nutrition education and promotion provided during the school day. Students have access to foods and beverages in a variety of venues including the cafeteria, vending machines, grab 'n' go kiosks, school stores, concession stands, food carts, classroom rewards and parties, school celebrations, and fundraisers. School nutrition services provide meals that meet federal nutrition standards for the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs, and help ensure foods and beverages sold outside of the school meal programs (i.e., competitive foods) meet Smart Snacks in School standards.

~ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Ways the **WHOLE SCHOOL, WHOLE COMMUNITY, WHOLE CHILD** components can support nutrition environment & services in your school

### 1 HEALTH EDUCATION

- Use the Colorado Comprehensive Health and Physical Education Standards to integrate skill-based essential topics on nutrition (e.g., the relationship between healthy eating, personal health, and disease prevention) for grades K-12
- Provide training for people who provide nutrition education, and promote collaboration between nutrition services staff and teachers to reinforce nutrition education lessons taught in the classroom (e.g., nutrition services staff can provide food and ideas for nutrition education lessons and use the cafeteria for classes)
- In a health education curriculum, address the importance of water consumption, eating breakfast, and how to resist peer pressure related to unhealthy dietary behavior

### 2 PHYSICAL EDUCATION & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- Work with nutrition services staff to plan classroom lessons and activities that link the importance of healthy eating with physical activity
- Work with ancillary programs (e.g., Fuel Up to Play 60) to provide sample meal ideas to fuel active bodies and teach concepts of energy balance
- Provide information connecting nutritious foods to daily physical activity and sports performance

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*A whole child approach, which ensures each student is healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged, sets the standard for comprehensive, sustainable school improvement and provides for long-term student success.*

# NUTRITION ENVIRONMENT & SERVICES

Ways the **WHOLE SCHOOL, WHOLE COMMUNITY, WHOLE CHILD** components can support nutrition environment & services in your school

## 3 NUTRITION ENVIRONMENT & SERVICES

- Adopt and implement policies that require schools hold healthy celebrations and prohibit using food as a reward, withholding food as punishment, and advertising unhealthy food/beverages on school grounds
- Provide adequate time to eat school meals (10 minutes to eat breakfast and at least 20 minutes of seated time to eat lunch)
- Offer a variety of food choices in school meals that go beyond the National School Lunch Program requirements (e.g., offer foods that address cultural practices of the student population)
- Implement recess before lunch

## 4 HEALTH SERVICES

- Develop a Food Allergy Management and Prevention Plan, and collaborate with health services staff to provide appropriate meals to students with allergies and other special dietary and health care needs
- Provide nutrition information for health services staff to include as part of every health related encounter with students
- Create materials and educate students and parents about the link between good nutrition and illness such as colds, allergies, asthma, diabetes, obesity, and other health concerns

## 5 COUNSELING, PSYCHOLOGICAL & SOCIAL SERVICES

- Collaborate with nutrition services staff to create a nutrition recognition and strategy process that addresses the nutritional needs of at-risk students (e.g., undernourishment, obesity, and eating disorders)
- Provide food assistance and affordable food access information for families
- Develop a referral system for nutrition and weight management services

## 6 SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL CLIMATE

- Work with local organizations (e.g., Hunger Free Colorado) to assess food insecurity for students and utilize resources to address food gaps
- Provide information to students on how good nutrition can positively impact body image
- Educate students and staff about the effects of unhealthy eating behaviors (e.g., anorexia and obesity)

## 7 PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- Provide students with a clean, safe, and pleasant cafeteria and access to a free source of drinking water in or right outside the cafeteria and gymnasium, other indoor physical activity facilities, and hallways throughout the school
- Market messages for nutritious food and beverages on the exteriors of vending machines, food or beverage cups or containers, food display racks, coolers, and trash and recycling containers
- Place fruits and vegetables in areas of the cafeteria where they are easy to access (e.g., near the cashier)

## 8 EMPLOYEE WELLNESS

- Encourage staff to model healthy eating and drinking behaviors
- Offer programs for all employees on healthy eating and weight management that are easily accessible, free or low-cost
- Serve and sell food and beverages that meet the USDA's Smart Snacks in School standards at staff meetings, school-sponsored staff events, and in the staff lounge

## 9 FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

- Eat breakfast and lunch with children at school, and provide feedback on the experience and food provided
- Gather information about determining eligibility for free/reduced priced meals and ask for assistance with the application if needed
- Include nutrition education resources for families (recipes, meal planning, grocery shopping, and portion sizes) in the school newsletter

## 10 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Offer healthy cooking classes, Lunch and Learns, and other nutrition programs at schools
- Implement farm to school activities (e.g., incorporate products into the school meal program and host field trips)
- Build school-based community gardens and integrate nutrition education for students, families, and community members

# NUTRITION ENVIRONMENT & SERVICES

## Maintaining Administrator Support for Nutrition Environment & Services in the School



Offer school meal (breakfast and lunch) programs that are fully accessible to all students

Promote healthy fundraisers that sell non-food items or support activities (e.g., Walk-a-Thons)



Support healthy food purchasing and preparation practices

## Ways to Engage Students

- Display student artwork, promoting healthy food and beverages, in hallways, cafeteria, and bulletin boards throughout the school
- Work with students to create new healthy breakfast and lunch options (e.g., recipe contest, taste testing)



- ✓ Don't try to take on everything at once!
- ✓ The focus of the School Health Improvement Plan should be on the health needs/highest priorities identified through the assessment (School Health Index or Smart Source).
- ✓ Get input from other individuals in your school on how to best address your school's nutrition environment and services.
- ✓ Meet regularly with your school health team and monitor School Health Improvement Plan implementation progress.
- ✓ A final consideration: If you shared the School Health Improvement Plan with someone unfamiliar with it, would they understand the purpose, SMART objective, and action steps necessary to achieve the objective? Would they understand what the school health team is trying to accomplish? If not, add more details!

## Writing a SMART School Health Improvement Plan (SHIP)

### Sample SMART Objective

By May 15, 20XX, 100% of classroom teachers at Sun Elementary will offer only non-food rewards to students.

By May 15, 20XX, Sky Elementary will have constructed a school garden and implemented policies/practices for planting, maintaining, growing, and utilizing food from the garden.

For more information on School Health Improvement Plans, refer to the Destination <http://tinyurl.com/orq4pyu>



## SMARTness

To ensure your SHIP is SMART, be sure it includes:

- A SMART objective based on the priority identified from a school health assessment tool
- Action steps that are clear, complete, and in chronological order
- Action steps on data collection, team and grant responsibilities, and sustainability efforts
- A realistic budget aligned with the SMART objective
- Shared responsibility among all team members

## Resources

- [Alliance for a Healthier Generation, Schools:](http://tinyurl.com/qa4d4s4) <http://tinyurl.com/qa4d4s4>
- [Chef Ann Foundation:](http://www.chefannfoundation.org) <http://www.chefannfoundation.org>
- [Colorado Department of Education, Office of School Nutrition:](https://www.cde.state.co.us/nutrition) <https://www.cde.state.co.us/nutrition>
- [Colorado Education Initiative:](http://tinyurl.com/neb8csp) <http://tinyurl.com/neb8csp>
- [LiveWell Colorado:](https://livewellcolorado.org/healthy-schools/) <https://livewellcolorado.org/healthy-schools/>
- [RMC Health, Implementing Healthy Celebrations, Rewards and Fundraisers:](http://tinyurl.com/o3b5m3l) <http://tinyurl.com/o3b5m3l>
- [Smart Snacks and Competitive Foods Guide:](http://tinyurl.com/pb3xm4o) <http://tinyurl.com/pb3xm4o>
- [Smarter Lunchrooms Movement:](http://smarterlunchrooms.org) <http://smarterlunchrooms.org>
- [USDA, School Meals:](http://tinyurl.com/ojqccbz) <http://tinyurl.com/ojqccbz>

# NUTRITION ENVIRONMENT & SERVICES



## **Nutrition Environment: Incorporate nutrition standards and guidelines for competitive and other foods and beverages served and sold during the school day and the extended school day**

Competitive foods are food or beverage items sold in competition to the reimbursable school meal. The Colorado Competitive Food Service Policy states that competitive food service is any food or beverage available to students that is separate from the district's nonprofit federally reimbursed food service program, and is provided by a school-approved organization or by a school-approved outside vendor. Competitive foods and beverages shall not operate in competition with the district's food service program and cannot be sold 30 minutes before to 30 minutes after each scheduled meal service on any area of the school campus that is accessible to students. Schools can enhance their policy by limiting the sale of competitive foods for longer.

Per Smart Snacks, the school day is defined as midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. The extended school day is defined as the regular hours of school operation plus any time spent by students after the regular hours of operation for any purpose, including but not limited to participation in extracurricular activities or childcare programs. All foods and beverages sold during the school day must meet USDA's Smart Snacks in School and the Colorado Healthy Beverages Policy standards. School-related events where parents and other adults are a significant part of an audience are exempt from these rules. Such activities include but are not limited to selling beverages as boosters at events such as interscholastic sporting events, school plays, and band concerts.

### **Suggested action steps for your School Health Improvement Plan:**

- Complete a baseline assessment of current practices and policies
- Review Local School Wellness Policy and/or other policies that may address these practices
- Work with administrators to limit the sale of competitive foods and require adherence to USDA's Smart Snacks in School standards for all food and beverages served and sold during classroom celebrations and fundraisers as well as during extended school day activities (e.g., sports practices, clubs, concession sales, etc.). Include this language in your Local School Wellness Policy
- Solicit feedback on proposed policy from teachers, school staff, students, and parents
- Develop a list of healthy options to offer including fruits and non-fried vegetables in venues outside the cafeteria (e.g., vending machines, school stores, canteens, snack bars, or snack/food carts) with input from teachers, school staff, students, and parents
- Provide resources to teachers and families on healthy celebrations, fundraisers, and non-food rewards
- Advocate for Local School Wellness Policy Implementation
- Assess the implementation of your Local School Wellness Policy
- Share progress and outcomes of implementing this policy within the school community

## **Nutrition Services: Promote healthy food and beverage choices using Smarter Lunchroom techniques**

Smarter Lunchroom techniques apply evidence-based principles that lead children to make healthy food choices. This happens by creating an environment that improves student eating behaviors.

### **Suggested action steps for your School Health Improvement Plan:**

- Share Smarter Lunchroom best practices, and the link between nutritious food and learning, with administration, teachers, kitchen staff, students, and families
- Complete a Smarter Lunchroom baseline assessment with students, kitchen staff, and School Health Team members
- Pilot at least three Smarter Lunchroom techniques for a month (e.g., place nutritious foods like broccoli at the beginning of the lunch line; re-name food – give healthy food choices more creative, descriptive names; use attractive fruit baskets/bowls instead of stainless steel pans or chaffing dishes)
- Post information about Smarter Lunchrooms on the school's website, Facebook page, or other social media
- Run a report of food sales to see if healthier options were purchased during the Smarter Lunchroom pilot
- Discuss successes and any challenges on the Smarter Lunchroom pilot at a School Health Team meeting
- Fully implement and sustain Smarter Lunchroom techniques based on success of pilot and after resolving any challenges
- Share your Smarter Lunchroom success story in the school's newsletter