

WANT YOUR KIDS TO BE
HEALTHIER AT SCHOOL?



Robert Wood Johnson
Foundation



TAKING ACTION TO PREVENT OBESITY

Healthy, Active Kids Perform Better in School.

[INSERT DECISION MAKER NAME], Does your school district's Local Wellness Policy (LWP) need updating? Most likely. [OR Are Local Wellness Policies (LWPs) up to date in school districts across [STATE]? Most likely not.] While 95% of school districts have existing LWPs, most policies remain fragmented, underdeveloped, and lack sufficient implementation plans. Further, when measured during the 2013-14 school year, less than 50% of LWPs included language for all required LWP components. That's why the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service finalized regulations to create a framework and guidelines for written LWPs.

After all, schools should be places that support the health and wellness of all children – no matter where they live, what school they attend, or what grade they are in.

LWPs can help to ensure that kids are receiving and learning healthy nutrition and physical activity habits that can last a lifetime. But these policies can't update themselves. Ultimately, LWPs work best when parents, teachers, and community members come together to provide input, when they are made readily available and transparent, and when schools are accountable for implementing the policies.

Raise Your Hand.

This is why it is so important that LWPs are not only created and updated, but also include plans for assessment and implementation:

- Most children spend the majority of their waking hours and eat up to half their daily calories at school.
- With more than 50% of students in the US qualifying for free and reduced lunch, lunch is often the most nutritious meal of the child's day.
- More than one in three children is at risk for developing diabetes, heart disease, and cancer later in life.
- The majority of public school students are exposed to food and beverage marketing in school. The most heavily marketed food and beverages in schools are unhealthy, including candy, snack food, fast food and sugary beverages.
- Chronic diseases have a greater impact on communities of color, and longstanding racial inequities and socio-economic challenges leave many schools without the resources to provide children with healthy food and access to regular physical activity. But students at these schools shouldn't be at greater risk because of where they live.
- When children receive proper nutrition, and get more time for physical education, they do better physically, mentally, and emotionally. That's good for everyone – kids, schools, local communities, and our country.

As a leader, you can help make a difference. Take an active role in updating your LWP to ensure it includes – or better yet, exceeds – all required LWP components. Encourage members of your community to provide input. Use an assessment tool, such as [WellSAT](#) or [Center for Disease Control's School Health Index](#) to ensure accountability and transparency. And don't forget to create a plan for equitable implementation.

Visit www.voicesforhealthykids.org/schoolwellness to learn more.