



# Education Initiatives to Prevent Childhood Obesity

**NC State Board of Education  
NC Department of Public Instruction**

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Sr. Policy Advisor for Healthy Responsible Students



# North Carolina Public Schools

- 1.4 Million Students
- 115 Local Education Agencies
- 2,500 Schools
- 190,000 Teachers/Staff

*The Message: Graduate!*

*Dr. June Atkinson, State Superintendent*

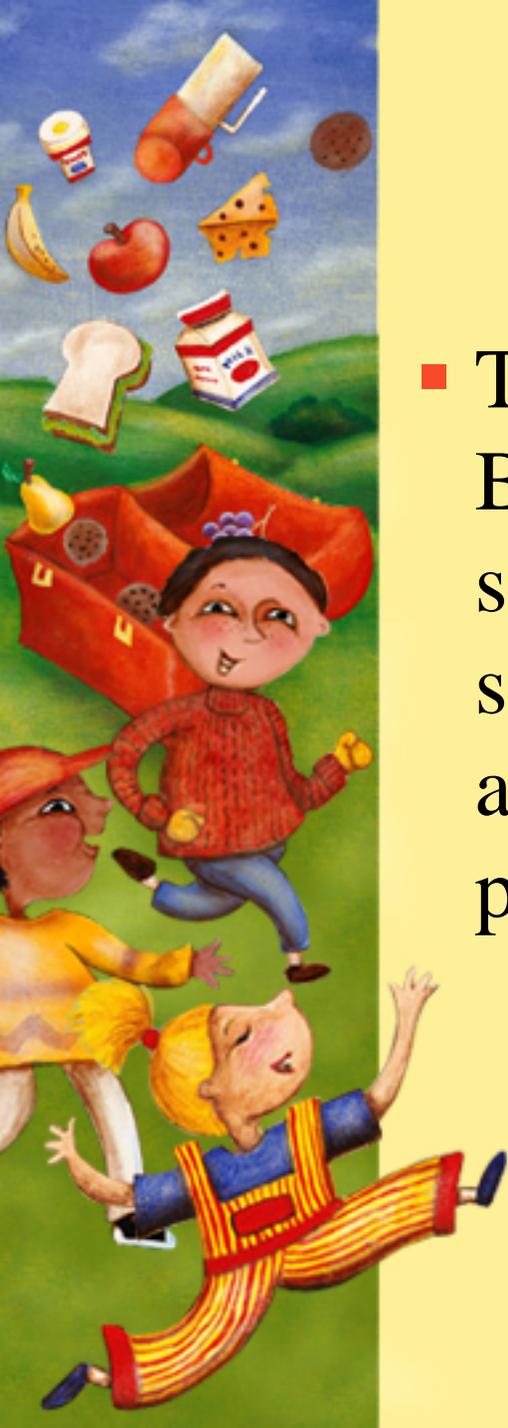


# NC State Board of Education

- 5 Goals Supporting Its Mission
- Healthy Responsible Students
- Newly Approved and Appointed Senior Policy Advisor, July 2008

# The NC State Board of Education Mission

- The guiding mission of the NC State Board of Education is that every public school student will graduate from high school, globally competitive for work and postsecondary education and prepared for life in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.



# NC Department of Public Instruction

- NC Healthy Schools Section
  - Two State funded positions
  - Five Federally funded positions
  - One position housed in DPH
- Competitive Funding by CDC in 5 year cycles, ~ \$900,000 annually
- Promotes Coordinated School Health Programs (CSHP)





# Coordinated School Health

- Health Education
- Physical Education
- Child Nutrition Services
- Health Services
- Healthy School Environment
- Mental Health
- Staff Wellness
- Family/Community Involvement

# NC Department of Public Instruction

- Child Nutrition Services Section
  - 28 Federally funded positions
    - 18 housed regionally to directly serve LEAs
  - Two Federally funded positions housed at DPH



# Child Nutrition Services

- 8th Largest School Meals Program in the nation
- Serving 1.8 million meals per day
- 50 % of students depend on school meals for their primary source of nutrition
- 15,000 Employees



# Student Success

- There is direct link between a students' health and their academic performance.
- More formal education is consistently associated with lower death rates, while less education predicts earlier death. The less schooling people have, the higher their levels of risky health behaviors such as smoking, being overweight, or having a low level of physical activity.

Freudenberg N, Ruglis J. Reframing school dropout as a public health issue. *Prev Chronic Dis* 2007;4(4). [http://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2007/oct/07\\_0063.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2007/oct/07_0063.htm). Accessed 9/11/2008.





Two character traits which impact obesity are:

**Good judgment** and **self-discipline**

Student Services, including counselors, social workers and school psychologists, are also key in addressing obesity.

# Academic Connections

*“If we are serious about saving a generation of children, ensuring that not one of them is left behind, we must see that health and achievement go hand-in-hand. Only when children are healthy and safe will we be able to focus on improving their academic performance.”*

*Pat Cooper, Superintendent McCombs County Schools, MS*



An illustration on the left side of the slide depicts three children in a grassy field. One child in a red sweater and blue pants is running towards the right, carrying a red lunchbox. Another child in a yellow shirt and orange hat is running towards the left. A third child in a blue and yellow striped outfit is running towards the right. Above them, various food items are floating in the air, including a banana, an apple, a slice of cheese, a sandwich, a carton of milk, a cookie, and a glass of juice. The background shows a green hill under a blue sky with clouds.

# Framework of Initiatives

## **(1) Providing healthier foods to students**

- DPI has formed the School Meals Initiative Team (SMI)
- Composed of 8 RDs/LDNs
- One per each of 8 educational regions
- Provides training, TA, and monitoring of LEA Child Nutrition Programs

An illustration on the left side of the slide shows three children running happily on a green field. Above them, various food items are floating in the air, including a banana, an apple, a slice of cheese, a cookie, a sandwich, a carton of milk, and a carton of juice. The children are dressed in colorful clothing, and the overall scene is bright and cheerful.

# Local Wellness Policy

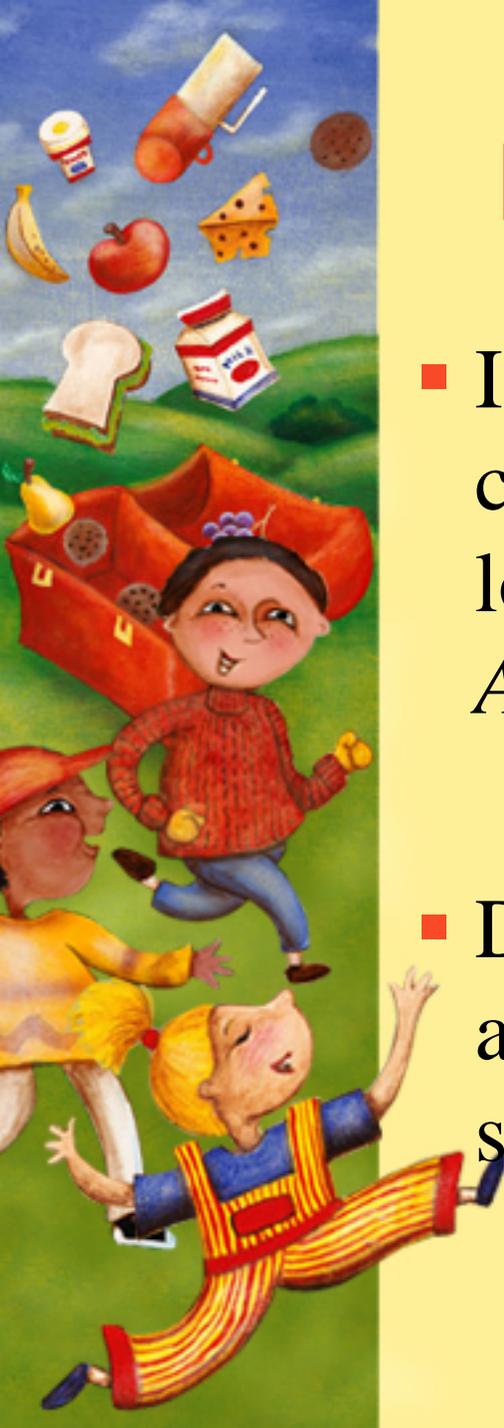
- Physical Activity
- Nutrition Education
- Nutrition Standards
- Other School Based Activities

The law requires goals, guidelines, assurances, a plan for measuring, and a plan for involving various stakeholders in each of these areas.



# Framework of Initiatives

- SBE developed nutrition standards for elementary schools per Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- 95% of elementary schools have voluntarily implemented these standards which are required for implementation in 2010.
- Middle School Nutrition standards (based on Dietary Guidelines) have been drafted.



# Framework of Initiatives

- Implementing nutrition standards has contributed to a significant financial loss for the LEAs due to eliminating *A La Carte* foods and beverages.
- DPI is awaiting funding and estimates a cost of \$18 million to test the standards for Middle Schools.



# Framework of Initiatives

- NC is the only state in the nation to require LEAs to document routine compliance with Federal and State nutrition standards.
- SBE requires a semi-annual nutrient analysis and software has been purchased and is utilized in the schools to assist in nutrient analysis of menus.



# Framework of Initiatives

- The number of students with diabetes, Celiac Disease, food allergies and sensitivities is on the rise.
- The SMI Team works with the Section 504 Plans and accommodations to address these student needs and to provide appropriate meals.



# Framework of Initiatives

- The sale of competitive foods and beverages undermines the nutritional, operational and financial integrity of the Child Nutrition Program.
- SBE policy prohibits the sale of foods/beverages to students (other than CNS) during the school day.

An illustration on the left side of the slide depicts a vibrant scene. At the top, various food items like a banana, apple, cheese, bread, and a carton of milk are shown floating in the air. Below, three children are running joyfully on a green field. One child in a red sweater and blue pants is in the foreground, another in a yellow shirt is to the left, and a third in a blue and red striped outfit is in the lower foreground. A red shopping basket filled with food items is positioned near the children.

# Framework of Initiatives

## **(2) Improving the availability of healthy foods at home and in the community**

- Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program
- \$1million grant, annually (32 ES )
- Parents report students asking for more fruits tasted at school and influence more fruits/vegetables coming into the home.

# Framework of Initiatives

## **(3) Increasing frequency, intensity, and duration of physical activity in the schools**

In recognition of the need for students to become more active during the school day, the SBE was among one of the first in the nation to adopt a comprehensive Healthy Active Children Policy.





# Healthy Active Children Policy

- Requires School Health Advisory Councils in each LEA (SHACs)
- Mandates 30 minutes of physical activity daily (K-8)
- Recommends 150 minutes of physical education in elementary schools per week
- Recommends 225 minutes of healthful living education in middle schools per week
- Protects recess and other PA time
- Promotes Coordinated School Health
- Reports to State Board of Education



# Framework of Initiatives

- Development and use of *Energizers*
- Fit Kids Website (HWTF)
- UNC Study of the HAC policy
- 40% of NC elementary schools provide 150 minutes of physical education per week
- 44% of NC middle schools provide 225 minutes of the *Healthful Living Standard Course of Study* per week.



# Framework of Initiatives

One Million Dollar Grant to DPI from  
Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust

- Funding provided for physical education equipment and training
- 35 low wealth schools
- UNC providing the evaluation



# Framework of Initiatives

- In School Prevention of Obesity and Disease (*ISPOD*)
- All physical educators conduct bi-annual *FITNESSGRAM* testing
- All North Carolina physical educators trained in *SPARK* as a baseline curriculum

For information [www.ispod.info](http://www.ispod.info)



# Framework of Initiatives

*Sports, Play, Active Recreation for Kids*  
(*SPARK*) statewide training

- 50,000 data sets

Partnering with NCAAHPERD and  
funded by KBR, HWTF, Blue Cross  
Blue Shield Foundation



# Framework of Initiatives

- In partnership with Be Active NC and funded by the Health and Wellness Trust Fund, 32,500 classroom teachers were prepared to implement the Healthy Active Children Policy and utilize the *Energizers*.
- UNC Greensboro served as evaluators

# Framework of Initiatives

## (4) Master plan for pedestrian and bicycle paths

- Encourage Walk/Bike to School Events
- Work with school architects to encourage open activity spaces



# Framework of Initiatives

## (5) Improving access to safe places where children can play

- Encourage joint-use policies for schools and communities
- Provide before and after school programs (e.g., 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Centers, Intramurals)





# Framework of Initiatives

## (6) Activities or programs that limit children's screen time

- Encourage time for activity in and out of the school day
- *LimiTV* brochure produced by Healthy Schools Section
- Substitute interactive video games such as *HOPSports* and *Wii* sports for sedentary games

# SCORE

## Southern Collaborative on Obesity Reduction Efforts (SCORE)

- \$10,000 grant from Council of State Governments (CSG)
- Educating Policy Makers
  - NC General Assembly
  - NC State Board of Education
  - NC School Boards Association
  - Others





# From Process to Practice

- **E**ducate policy makers
- **P**rovide State level leadership
- **I**dentify goals
- **E**ngage partners
- **E**mbrace local control
- **Secure funding**
- **E**valuate



Children must be healthy  
in order to be educated,  
and they must be educated  
to be healthy.



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