



Exciting New Partnership Opportunity

Healthy Eating and Physical Activity

Partnership

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) and the Department of Public Health (DPH) is offering eight school districts an opportunity to participate in an exciting five-year initiative to create policies and practices that promote increased physical activity, healthy nutrition environments and supports for students with chronic health conditions.

Student health status and school achievement are directly connected. Healthy eating and regular physical activity are essential components of student health and academic achievement.

Research has shown that children who eat well and are physically active learn better. Conversely, poorly nourished, overweight and underweight sedentary or hungry children tend to have weaker academic performance and score lower on standardized achievement tests. Participation in school breakfast programs is linked with increased academic test scores, improved daily attendance, better class participation and reduced tardiness, for example. Regular physical activity supports better learning while decreasing physical education may undermine the goal of better academic performance. Student fitness levels have been correlated with academic achievement, including improved math, reading and writing scores.

When the school environment consistently promotes well-planned and effectively implemented healthy nutrition and physical activity practices, demonstrated outcomes include improvements in students' overall health, behavior and academic achievement.

Improve your students' healthy nutrition environment and opportunities to be physically active.

Districts selected for this partnership will have an opportunity to become state and national leaders in implementing school health policies and practices that improve students' academic and life-long achievement. By participating in this five-year partnership, local districts will have the opportunity to work in three areas:

1. Create supportive nutrition environments

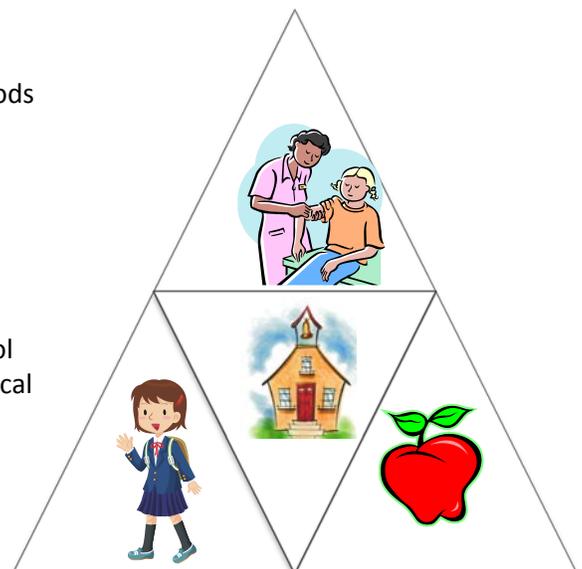
- Establish standards (including sodium) for all competitive foods
- Prohibit advertising of unhealthy foods and
- Promote healthy foods in schools, including school meal programs and other venues

2. Implement Comprehensive School Physical Activity Programs

- Quality physical education
- Physical activity programming before, during and after school (recess, classroom activity breaks, walk/bike to school, physical activity clubs)

3. Supports for students with chronic health conditions

- Develop a system for identifying, referring and tracking students with chronic health conditions.



How will districts benefit from this partnership?

As a partner, districts will receive:

- ✧ No cost, technical assistance from national and regional experts in areas related to increasing physical activity, improving the school nutrition environment and tracking and monitoring students with chronic health conditions;
- ✧ Cutting-edge resources and research to support evidence-based practices;
- ✧ Compliance assistance with all state mandates and requirements such as local wellness policies;
- ✧ Opportunities to network with other partner districts about successes, challenges and strategies addressing student health; and
- ✧ Guidance on the implementation of sustainable policies, programs and practices to support students' health and academic achievement.

What role will the state agencies play in this partnership?

The state agencies will commit to the partnership with the school districts to:

- ✧ Dedicate full-time consultants with expertise in areas related to increasing physical activity, improving the school nutrition environment and tracking and monitoring students with chronic health conditions;
- ✧ Provide professional development, technical assistance, research and best practice tools on increasing physical activity, creating a healthy nutrition environment and caring for students with chronic health conditions;
- ✧ Facilitate an ongoing learning collaborative among partner district teams to share successful strategies;
- ✧ Provide technical assistance on utilizing data for assessment, planning and monitoring.

What is involved at the district and school level?

The partner school districts will agree to:

- ✧ Designate a liaison for the partnership and identify key lead personnel in the three required areas
- ✧ Participate in conference calls and site visits with state consultants each year to support implementation;
- ✧ Attend professional development opportunities offered by the partnership on the three required areas, including implementing policies and practices;
- ✧ Assess existing policies; develop action plans and implement selected policies;
- ✧ Build and sustain effective teams and advisory committees;
- ✧ Strengthen community partnerships and parent engagement;
- ✧ Track policy adoption and monitor policy implementation; and
- ✧ Participate in required data collection activities including the Connecticut School Health Survey and School Health Profiles.

How is this partnership funded and who is eligible?

The Connecticut State Departments of Education and Public Health received funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to implement a cooperative agreement addressing childhood obesity, entitled *State Public Health Actions to Prevent and Control Diabetes, Heart Disease, Obesity and Associated Risk Factors and School Health*

This funding supports a five-year partnership between that state agencies and selected school districts. All LEAs may apply, however, if more than eight (8) applications are received; districts will be selected based on a variety of factors including need, capacity and readiness. Although there is no direct funding for partnering districts currently, there may be future funding opportunities.

Interested?

The Application deadline is November 15, 2013. If your district is interested in joining the partnership, visit the [Healthy School Communities for Successful Students](#) Web site at www.sde.ct.gov/sde/healthyschools. For questions, please contact: Donna Heins, Coordinated School Health Consultant, Connecticut State Department of Education, donna.heins@ct.gov or 860-807-2082.