

# Chapter 4: Staff Wellness

## Policy Recommendations

[SCHOOL CORPORATION] supports the health and well-being of our staff by creating and promoting policy and environmental supports to provide physical activity and healthy eating opportunities.

### A. Nutrition and Physical Activity

1. The school corporation will promote programs to increase knowledge of physical activity and healthy eating for faculty and staff. Presentations on health and wellness will be provided at least twice each school year.
2. The school corporation benefits department will work with local fitness centers to offer reduced membership fees.
3. Schools will allow staff to use school facilities outside of school hours for activities such as group fitness classes, walking programs and individual use.
4. Staff will be encouraged to participate in community walking, bicycling or running events.
5. Staff vending machines will contain at least 50 percent healthy choices as outlined in the approved nutrition standards.
6. At least 50 percent of the food options available at staff meetings will meet the approved nutrition standards. During meetings lasting longer than one hour, staff will have the opportunity to stretch and be physically active.
7. Schools will promote breastfeeding by making reasonable efforts to provide a private location for employees to express breast milk, in accordance with Indiana Code 22-2-14-2.

## Rationale for Policy Recommendations

- Teachers have the opportunity to model healthy behaviors to their students.
- The implementation of wellness activities can motivate school staff to pursue a healthy lifestyle and establish a greater personal commitment to school health programs.
- The implementation of these policies increases access to opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity.
- Organizations and schools who use wellness programs can decrease health care costs by having healthier employees.

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### TOOLS INCLUDED IN THIS CHAPTER:

Healthy Meetings  
Physical Activity  
Healthy Eating  
Tobacco Cessation

## Healthy Meetings

Offering healthy foods and beverages at meetings can give your staff the opportunity to eat healthy in their work environment. Promoting healthy eating during school meetings can help staff model these behaviors in their own homes, classrooms or elsewhere on school grounds. Meetings do not have to include foods or beverages. However, if available, the following guidelines are recommended:

### Healthy Food Options

- Serve low-calorie and low-fat foods.
- Serve salads with dressing on the side. Offer at least one low-fat or fat-free dressing.
- Serve fruits and vegetables whenever possible.
- Serve small portions (e.g., cut bagels in half).
- If providing breads, cereals and crackers, make sure that some options are whole grain.
- Avoid fried foods or cream sauces.
- Offer low-fat dips such as hummus, salsa and low-fat dressings.
- Limit the serving size of meat to no more than 4 ounces.
- Consider offering low-fat dairy options such as yogurt or cheese.
- Include a vegetarian option at all meals.
- If serving a dessert, provide fresh fruit, fruit crisps, small cookies, or small servings of sorbet.



### Healthy Beverage Options

- Provide reduced-fat or low-fat milk for coffee rather than cream or half-and-half (evaporated skim milk also works well for coffee).
- Provide pitchers of water.
- Serve milk (skim or 1%), 100% fruit or vegetable juice, water, unsweetened hot or iced tea, or diet soda.
- Check the time. Consider offering only beverages at mid-morning, mid-afternoon meetings, or meetings shorter than 1½ hours.

### Physical Activity Opportunities

- Spell out your school corporation's name: With every consonant, stand up; and with every vowel, sit down. This can become more interactive if you add other components to standing and sitting down, such as reaching in the air or doing a jumping jack.
- For two-hour meetings, include a "stand-up-and-stretch" break. Participants can gently stretch the neck, shoulders, arms, hands, legs, feet and back; and make circles with their arms, head and hips.
- For two to four hour meetings, include a five to 10-minute activity break for walking, or schedule a five-minute light aerobic activity.
- For all-day meetings, in addition to stretch breaks and five minute activity breaks, schedule time for a 30-minute break and encourage participants to take a walk or engage in another physical activity.



### Example policy language:

[School Corporation] will offer at least 50 percent "better choice foods/beverages" for our staff at meetings. During longer meetings, staff will have the opportunity to stretch and/or be physically active.

## Physical Activity

In addition to student health, the school corporation can create opportunities for and promote physical activity to teachers and staff. It is equally important for school staff members to maintain their health.

School staff members can model a physically active lifestyle to students. One way to model behavior would be to recognize accomplishments of staff members. By recognizing staff accomplishments through announcements or school newspapers, students can observe healthy behaviors and gain interest in maintaining a physically active lifestyle.

### **The following are some physical activities that can provide school staff with help in developing a physically active lifestyle:**

- Teacher-led student walking program, compete against other grade levels.
- Pick a destination, such as San Diego, and track to see if you can walk the number of miles it would take to get there.
- “Biggest Loser” staff competition.
- Staff vs. students physical activity competition.
- Walking competition among classes or schools.

### **In addition to programs or competitions at the school, the administration can offer other staff wellness opportunities, such as:**

- Discounted gym memberships,
- Professional development,
- Walking meetings, and
- Access to school facilities to increase opportunities for physical activity.



### **Indiana Healthy Weight Initiative's *Snapshots of Success***

“Exercising with the kids promotes a healthy school culture. Teachers actively participating in the walk-a-thon serve as role models to the students.”

– Gayla Vonderheide, Director of Health Services, Batesville Community School Corporation



### **Indiana example:**

“Pound the Playground” – walking competition among classes or schools, developed by the Healthier Morgan County Initiative in Indiana: [www.healthiermorgancounty.org](http://www.healthiermorgancounty.org).

# 10 Fun Ways to “Walk the Talk” at Your School

- ① **Take 10 at every meeting** – Take 10 minutes to get moving – with a few stretches, a few dance moves or a few crunches.
- ② **Introduce new activities** – Expose staff to new options for being active. Invite local experts to your school to demonstrate yoga, Pilates or Zumba®.
- ③ **Organize a sports team** – Many recreational centers offer adult softball, volleyball, dodge-ball leagues, etc. Organize one with staff from your school.
- ④ **Plan active celebrations** – Hula-Hoop® or Limbo contests? Conga lines? A little silliness can provide active fun at little or no cost.
- ⑤ **Join local events** – Nearly every community has walks, runs or other active events where you can share your group spirit. For example, Batesville School Corporation, in Indiana, is organizing a Mini-Marathon Training Program to train for the Indianapolis Mini-Marathon.
- ⑥ **Start a walking club** – Getting together at a specific time and place often makes it easier to get motivated and get moving. After the school day would be a great time to meet!
- ⑦ **Get a little competitive** – Some people are motivated by a competitive spirit and like to see who can walk the most steps. Pedometers could be included for this activity.
- ⑧ **Give activity awards** – Recognize staff who become more active and those who support others in active lifestyles.
- ⑨ **Choose an active location** – Hold meetings at places where staff can be active before or after the meeting takes place, like a park or bowling alley.
- ⑩ **Support active communities** – Become involved in community initiatives to support bike paths, safe sidewalks, skate parks or hiking trails. These can provide fun and safe activities for people of all ages.

*(Adapted from Eat Right Montana)*

## Healthy Eating

Teachers and staff can be given opportunities to choose healthy options. Staff can be supported with healthy meetings as well as healthy options in the vending machines.

Student interest in healthy eating may increase when they see their teachers eating healthy. By organizing and promoting a staff-oriented program, campaign or activity, students will observe staff interest in healthy eating and likely model that behavior at school and at home.

### Healthy Recipe Exchange

School staff can use an existing bulletin board or open wall space to start and maintain a recipe exchange.

The Coordinated School Health (CSH) Advisory Council can post three to four different recipes each month on a staff bulletin board. Your wellness committee may also choose to provide take-away copies of the recipes or compile them into cookbooks.

Recipe themes can be changed every month to add interest to the exchange. For example, the January theme might be 'Whole Grains' and all recipes featured in January would include whole grains. More suggestions for interchangeable monthly themes include:

- January 'Whole Grains'
- February 'Milk and Cheese'
- March 'Versatile Vegetables'
- April 'Lean Meats and Protein'
- May 'Flavorful Fruits'
- June 'Low-Fat Cooking'
- July 'Delicious Desserts'
- August 'Super Snacks'
- September 'Vegetarian Tastes'
- October 'Low-Sodium Cooking'
- November 'Holiday Feasts'
- December 'Smart Drinks'

When selecting recipes, try to include culturally diverse recipes to enable participation among all school staff. Include vegetarian recipes or offer suggestions for vegetarian alternatives to recipes. Also, make sure that the recipes are 'healthy' or come from a recognized health source.



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### MyPlate

The federal government nutrition education and guidance can be found at [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov). This website highlights balancing calories, learning about the food groups and planning a healthy menu. Staff can get healthy eating tips and other valuable resources from MyPlate.

### Healthy Vending

Similar to policies for student vending machines, staff vending machines should include healthy options. Talk to your vending machine representative about healthier items that are available for the vending machine. (Refer to the "Sample Letter to Beverage Vendor" in the Nutrition section of this toolkit.) Schools are encouraged to provide 50 percent "healthy options" in food vending machines (see Nutrition section of the toolkit) and to decrease the amount of sugar-sweetened beverages (e.g. regular soda, high-calorie juice and sports drinks) in the staff vending machines. Talk to your vending operator about healthy items that are available for the vending machines.

# Tobacco *Cessation*

Tobacco use is one of the most preventable causes of death and disease in the United States. Each year, cigarette smoking causes more deaths than alcohol, AIDS, car crashes, illegal drug use, murders and suicides, combined. The impact of tobacco on Indiana is staggering, costing Hoosiers 9,700 lives each year. Indiana ranks among the top states with high smoking rates 21 percent (2010 BRFSS).

Schools have an opportunity to encourage and support their staff in tobacco cessation. As with nutrition and physical activity, students of all ages view teachers and staff as role models. Schools can prevent some students from ever starting to smoke with a strong tobacco-free campus policy and strong supports for staff in quitting tobacco use. If your school district would like assistance in implementing a tobacco-free campus policy, please visit the Indiana State Department of Health's Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Commission at [www.statehealth.in.gov](http://www.statehealth.in.gov) and locate the tobacco control coalition in your community.



Indiana State  
Department of Health  
Tobacco Prevention and Cessation

The Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Commission offers Indiana employers its Quit Now Preferred Employer program. The Quit Now Preferred Employer program is a great value for employers interested in reducing tobacco use and smoking-related costs.

Becoming a Quit Now Preferred Employer is an aggressive way to reduce tobacco use in the workplace and improve the health and wellness of employees. Employers of any size will have access to the resources needed to begin helping those who are ready to quit tobacco. By completing the brief enrollment form, your company becomes connected to a statewide network of cessation specialists, health experts and wellness-conscious employers. To enroll, visit [www.in.gov/quitline](http://www.in.gov/quitline).

The Indiana Tobacco Quitline, 1-800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669), is a free phone-based counseling service that helps Indiana tobacco users quit.

## Services include:

- One-on-one coaching for tobacco users who have decided to quit
- Access to interactive website
- Support materials

*Services are available 7 days a week in more than 170 languages.*

*A trained quit coach will work with you and provide solutions tailored to your needs.*

*For support information, call today at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669).*

Tobacco-Free Campus Map (visit the Indiana State Department of Health website at [www.statehealth.in.gov](http://www.statehealth.in.gov) to see the counties where school corporations have tobacco-free campuses)

