Healthy School Environments

May 5, 2016 (Happy Cinco de Mayo!)
Healthy Children, Healthy Weight Goal
Enable all children and their families to attain their optimal physical, social and emotional development and wellbeing.
Schools are Key to Healthier Children

Life Expectancy At Birth, By Years Of Education At Age 25, By Race And Sex, 2008.

S. Jay Olshansky et al. Health Aff 2012;31:1803-1813
A Long Institutional History in Schools

RWJF has a 30-year history of investment in schools

This includes:

• Major expansions of school-based health clinics and services.

• Scaling and replication of school-based interventions

• Cuts across physical, behavioral and cognitive health, with more recent investments in social and emotional development.

• Broad range of focus from cafeteria to classroom, school climate and out-of-school time.
Our Learning

• Learning Agenda
• Existing Investments
• Funder Collaboratives
• Trend Mapping

• Community Design Sessions
• Healthy Schools Forum
• Networking Strategies
• And much more...
A Vision for Schools
Realizing the Vision: Design Sessions

- Understand how people come to a culture of health.
- Build perspective on what hinders healthy, safe, and nurturing school environments.
- To gain insights on operational issues and how decision-making (political will) foster or hinder healthy school environments.
- To provide some resources on design thinking that participants can take away.
Three community workshops

- **Oakland**
  - Dec 8, 2015
  - 15 Participants
  - 3 Parents
  - 4 Students
  - 8 Teachers / staff

- **Silver Spring**
  - Dec 19, 2015
  - 20 Participants
  - 4 Parents
  - 8 Students
  - 4 Teachers / staff
  - 4 Other

- **Houston**
  - Jan 27, 2016
  - 15 Participants
  - 4 Parents
  - 4 Students
  - 4 Teachers / staff
  - 3 Other
Challenges

Barriers to healthy youth and healthy schools, from a community perspective

Solutions

Starter ideas for overcoming the barriers, from a community perspective
I'm a teacher trying to create a health and wellness environment in school, but it's hard because...

- Shift in administration / High turnover
- At-risk schools. With each new administrator comes new ideas/new
Total challenges identified in the three workshops: 897
Barriers to healthy youth and healthy schools went way beyond physical and mental health.
Barriers to healthy youth and healthy schools went way beyond physical and mental health.
Total ideas brainstormed in the three workshops: 284
The most popular ideas across all three workshops point to some recurring areas of community interest:

- Healthier school content
- Learning outside the walls
- Healthier school infrastructure
- Modeling healthy behavior
- Mutual understanding and support
- Community sharing and access
- Bridging school and home
- Prioritizing health with funding
Healthier school content

Ideas related to school content rethink the curriculum and flow of the school day to be more attentive to physical, cognitive, emotional, and social health.

Popular ideas included:

**Siesta**: nap time between classes

**Life skills classes for students**: teaching in critical skills that help students succeed in school and life

**Morning play time**: let kids play in school gyms and playgrounds before school

**Report card 2.0**: in addition to academic performance, grade students on things like healthy eating, exercise, and self advocacy

**ESOL for culture**: culture classes for immigrant students

**School-wide recess**

This idea reimagines recess as a time for both students and teachers to recharge body and mind together in shared activities.
Learning outside the walls

Ideas related to getting outside the walls emphasize the value of real-life experiences for learning about health and wellness – and learning in general.

Popular ideas included:

**Experiential learning**: more teaching in the form of field trips to encourage learning and social development

**Field/Desk/Whatever day**: students have a day to pursue whatever interests them

**Edible school yard**: turn schoolyards into productive green spaces where students can learn about healthy food and take classes outdoors

**Outdoor education for all**: make outdoor education part of the curriculum in every grade

---

**Healthy education field trips**

This idea gets students out of the school building to learn about food by going fishing, visiting farms, and touring processing plants.
Ideas related to school infrastructure emphasize improvements to school facilities and logistics to create a healthier experience.

Popular ideas included:

**Student lunch volunteers:** students pass out lunch to make the lines move faster

**Money for school gardens:** for ALL schools

**Playgrounds and PE:** bring them back to schools

**Rebuild schools:** make old, sad schools into new, happy schools

**Two hallways: one for running, one for walking**

This idea turns the rule of “no running in school” on its head, to create a space that encourages fun physical activity.
Mutual understanding and support

Ideas related to mutual understanding and support emphasize healthy, supportive relationships among in-school stakeholders.

Popular ideas included:

**Anonymous support group club:** students come together to discuss and relieve stress

**Multicultural lunchroom:** school cafeteria serves meals from different cultures different days of the week

**Peer conflict counselors:** peers act as counselors to resolve interpersonal frictions

**Get to know your teacher campaign:** students get to know and appreciate their teachers as people

**Counselor matching system:** match students and parents with the right counselors to best support them

---

**Buddy system**

This idea builds student competency and school community by pairing new students with experienced students to help them learn the culture and system.
Community sharing and access

Ideas related to sharing and access connect families with basic resources that enable healthier living – in some cases, through sharing or joint effort.

Popular ideas included:

**Local gardening economy:** community and students work local gardens, sell to locally-owned convenience stores and food trucks for purchasing by community members

**Fresh, healthy food truck vendors:** affordable, accessible healthy food in the neighborhoods that need it

**Community bartering center:** facilitate in-kind trading of needed resources within the community – e.g. babysitting in exchange for transportation

**Parent meal prep:** parents who don’t have time to cook healthy meals every night take turns preparing meals for more than one household

**Pantry assistance**
This idea envisions a “take-what-you-need” pantry where students and families can access basic resources for health and success at school and home.
Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) Framework
The Time is Now
When Social and Emotional Learning Is Key to College Success

While test scores can predict academic success, self-management and relationship skills may better prepare students to thrive and graduate.

ESSA Law Broadens Definition of School Success

By Evie Blad

A portion of the Every Student Succeeds Act that requires states to incorporate nonacademic factors into their accountability...
The Time is Now

**The Washington Post**

‘Every Student Succeeds Act’ is a gift for students

**Education Week**

Ed. Dept., HHS Offer Suggestions to Help Districts Pair Academics, Health Services

**Education Week**

Ed. Groups Urge 'Whole-Child' Approach to Counteract Poverty

Aim is to address barriers to success

SHAPE America

Every Student Succeeds Act: Game-changer for health and physical education
Healthy School Environments Strategy

Ensure that all pre-k and k-12 school environments are safe, equitable, and health promoting to create the conditions for the optimal learning experience.
The Next Best Step

Translation of research into policy & practice

Supporting emergent work

Coordinated strategic action

Policy analysis
Short-Term Outcomes: (1-3 years)

- Alignment of diverse stakeholders in education.
- Broad awareness of bi-directional link of health and education.
- Action to integrate more comprehensive health efforts into the school environment.
- Policy analysis and development to advance leverage points.
Systems-Level Population Health Outcomes

- Increased Attendance, Reduced Chronic Absenteeism
- Increase in 3rd Grade-Level Reading Benchmarks
- Increased Graduation Rates
- Increased Performance in Title I Schools
- Decrease in Children Measured as Having Poor or Fair Health
- 85% of Children at a Healthy Weight
- 50% Reduction of Childhood Obesity Disparities
Questions?
Questions?
Questions?
Questions?