

Healthy Kids Summary: Wisconsin

The Healthier Wisconsin Schools project will result in an increase in physical activity and improved healthy food options for Wisconsin children. In addition, the project will result in an increased understanding of how to reduce the burden of obesity among school-age children in Wisconsin. This will be accomplished by achieving the following goals:

1. Evaluating the Governor's School Health Award to determine its effectiveness as an agent for local policy and environmental change;
2. Completing a pilot study where 75 percent of schools meet the Governor's School Health Award criteria; and
3. Developing and disseminating policy recommendations for childhood obesity prevention efforts to key stakeholders at the state and local levels.

In recent years, much has happened in Wisconsin school and community settings to address childhood overweight. Federally required wellness policies in schools, as well as increased awareness of the health and economic burdens of obesity, has heightened attention to this area. The following is a brief overview of some of Wisconsin's programs and accomplishments:

1. **Wisconsin Nutrition and Physical Activity State Plan** provides a framework to help create and support environments that make it easier for all Wisconsin residents to make healthy food choices, be physically active, and achieve and maintain a healthy weight.
2. **Governor's School Health Award** was established to motivate and empower all Wisconsin schools to develop the policies, programs, and infrastructure needed to create and maintain a healthy school environment.
3. **Movin' and Munchin' Schools Program** encourages schools to develop creative strategies to promote healthy eating and increased physical activity among students, families, and staff.
4. **Got Dirt? Garden Initiative** consists of a step-by-step toolkit on how to start a garden, provides hands-on, skill-building trainings for beginning gardeners, and links beginning gardeners to volunteer master gardeners and/or local gardening experts.
5. **Wisconsin Homegrown Lunch Project** seeks to introduce healthy foods grown locally to Wisconsin schoolchildren while developing stable markets for the producers and processors of those foods.

The Healthier Wisconsin Schools project will allow for a more formalized approach to implementing the Governor's School Health Award as an agent for local policy change within schools and communities.

The first objectives will be to:

1. Assess selected pilot schools to gain a better understanding of common strengths, gaps, and barriers facing K-12 schools to establish and maintain school environments that support healthy eating and physical activity; and
2. Determine whether the Governor's School Health Award is effective at driving such change. To ensure representation of the state, schools will also be selected based on the following: percentage of students eligible for free and reduced-price meals, region of the state, rural versus urban, and racial/ethnic diversity.

The information gathered through this assessment will also be used by the policy team/expert panel and partners to develop a policy agenda, including recommendations for state (top-down) and local (bottom-up) decisionmakers to address broader system-level barriers schools face when making changes to improve their school environment (examples include the cost and availability of whole-grain bread items to school food service or using locally grown produce in school food service). Technical assistance will be provided to the selected pilot schools throughout the project period through regular calls, an e-mail list, resources, and training as needed to allow them to meet the criteria for the Governor's School Health Award. Finally, a marketing and promotion plan will be developed to showcase the success of the pilot

schools and to encourage additional schools to apply for the award in future award cycles. In summary, the award criteria, technical assistance, and marketing plan will be finalized based on the results of the completed post-evaluation of the pilot schools.

The Healthier Wisconsin Schools interdisciplinary team will include members of the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Health, the Office of Governor Jim Doyle—Assistant to the Policy Director, the Department of Public Instruction staff, the Department of Health and Family Services, and the Wisconsin Sports Foundation. Additional members will be invited to join the team or consult with the team based on their expertise in the area of childhood overweight and school policy.