



Serving up a School Culture of Health, Wellness & Nutrition

A guide for implementing promising practices that promote healthy eating, nutrition education and physical activity in K-6 schools

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Serving up a School Culture of Health, Wellness and Nutrition provides lessons learned and recommendations for how to create a school culture that values the important role healthy food, nutrition education and physical activity play in education. By sharing promising practices from other schools we hope you will find the inspiration, guidance and ideas you need to implement changes across your school environment.

Introduction

Schools play an important role in promoting student health and combating the rising rates of obesity and diet-related illness among children. This effort begins in the cafeteria — the largest classroom in the school— by serving healthy meals and continues by addressing nutrition, health and fitness as part of the overall education of students. In other words, schools need to educate the whole child, giving each one the tools she or he needs to make a lifetime of positive choices. This approach requires collaboration among food service staff, school nurses, physical education teachers, classroom teachers, and administrators to bolster food, nutrition, and physical activity choices and educational opportunities that can have lasting impacts on students' health and ability to learn.

The Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act supports schools in raising a healthier generation of children by mandating changes to the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), establishing meal patterns and nutrition standards that align with the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA). Beginning on July 1, 2012, the USDA required schools participating in the NSLP to meet these new guidelines, increasing the availability of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and fat-free/low-fat milk, decreasing sodium and saturated fats, eliminating trans fats, and meeting revised calorie requirements.

Recognizing that most schools participating in the NSLP need ongoing training, technical assistance, mentoring, and financial support to effectively implement practices that improve their food, nutrition education and physical activity environments, the Vermont Agency of Education (VT AOE) applied for a Team Nutrition Training Grant to fund the *Green Mountain Healthy Kids Challenge* (GM-HKC). Partnering with Vermont Food Education Every Day (VT FEED) and the School Nutrition Association of Vermont (SNA-VT) they designed the school initiative of GMHKC, the Nutrition Edu-



NEI participants prepare a local lunch from scratch.

NEI participants network with professionals from other schools.



“As a result of NEI, everyone that attended came away with a common and better understanding of what was needed to meet the changes that were being implemented. It also provided the environment for staff members that normally would not have had the opportunity to come together and share knowledge and learn from each other. This experience provided a great foundation or springboard for the team to build on to begin the process, back at our school, to address how to meet the nutrition-related education needs.”

— LYDIA HUBBARD
SECOND GRADE TEACHER
FERRISBURGH CENTRAL SCHOOL

Fact:

87% of participants recommended the combination of a three-day intensive followed by yearlong mentoring for school teams.

education Institute, to support schools as they met the new NSLP requirements; improved nutrition education in their cafeteria, classrooms and community; and increased movement throughout the day.

The Nutrition Education Institute (NEI) Model

After an application process, nine K-6 Vermont public schools were selected to participate in the institute. Each school assembled an interdisciplinary six-person team composed of food service staff, teachers, parents, a school administrator and a nurse and/or physical education teacher and each demonstrated a commitment to improving their food, nutrition education and physical activity cultures. Schools also needed to be willing to apply for the Healthier U.S. School Challenge (HUSSC) Award, a voluntary certification initiative established by the USDA to recognize those schools participating in the NSLP that have created healthier school environments through the promotion of nutrition and physical activity.

Participating schools received the following support for one year:

- ***A three-day residential, intensive training program.*** Teams attended presentations, participated in workshops, networked with experts and other school teams, and had dedicated team planning time to develop a comprehensive action plan for implementing changes in their school.
- ***Ongoing mentoring.*** Each team was assigned a mentor to facilitate the action plan process and provide resources. Teams met four times with mentors throughout the school year to document progress, access resources and plan next steps.
- ***Mini-grant funding.*** Teams submitted applications with their



completed action plans to receive up to \$1,000 to support the implementation of their action plans.

- **2013 Healthier U.S. School Challenge Award application assistance.** Each team was required to apply and received support from mentors during the application process.
- **A day-long reflection.** Teams reconvened at the end of the school year to connect one last time with their mentor, review their work and develop an action plan for the following year.

This framework, used to support school teams in creating a culture of healthy food, nutrition education and physical activity, reflects several theories on professional development. First, since shifting school culture requires involvement from more than just one person, diverse implementation teams were required. Research suggests that teachers need 49 hours of professional development in a single strategy each year to sustain a new practice (*Wei, Darling-Hammond, and Adamson 2010*). Hence, the three-day intensive summer program. Providing multiple touch points for school teams through regular meetings with mentors provides the opportunity to implement, reflect and change course as necessary. Jen Cirillo, Director of Professional Development at Shelburne Farms, describes it this way, “It’s not a flu shot; it’s more like taking your vitamins.” Drawing from several professional development models, including Shelburne Farm’s “Every Classroom” approach, the Nutrition Education Institute (NEI) involved professional development that was built up over time, putting the necessary pieces in place to establish independent and sustainable school teams.



NEI participants valued the time they could devote to planning, both on their own and in groups, as well as the opportunity to network with each other.

How This Guide Came to Be

Throughout the Nutrition Education Institute process and in particular at the quarterly meetings with mentors, the nine school teams documented the work they were doing in each of five designated areas: Cafeteria, Classroom, Physical Education, Outdoor Learning/Garden, and Family-School Connections. Chronicling the impact these activities were having on students and staff provided us with the evidence

“Our mentor was very positive and connected to our community and school. She always asked good questions of the team to keep us working on our goals and moving forward. Best of all, if we had questions about the mini-grant and HUSSC process she was quick to offer help — and quick to get back to us with those answers. She kept us motivated, in a good way, by having realistic goals for us to achieve between meetings and we wanted to share our progress with her and the rest of the team.”



NEI participants learn from the Market Garden staff at Shelburne Farms.

“The summer group work went more in depth as to *why* each part of the [HUSSC] award was chosen to be prioritized. We learned why we wanted to do these things at our school — that is wasn’t just jumping through hoops. It gave us fuel to motivate through the bureaucratic steps. [We spent] a lot of time visioning, then came back to school to put our boots on the ground.”

we needed to identify those that showed promise — those that effectively moved the school culture in a positive direction. *Serving up a School Culture of Health, Wellness and Nutrition* contains the lessons learned from their experiences, the Promising Practices of Nutrition Education. This guide does not suggest that this is a one-size-fits-all approach to changing school food, nutrition education and physical activity. What it is, however, is a database of tried and true methods that can be adapted and applied to help other schools establish and reach their goals.

While we recognize that the resources and opportunities provided to the school teams participating in the Nutrition Education Institute format are not available to everyone, there are other ways to go about accomplishing the same goals. For example, what participants valued most about the three-day intensive training program was the ability to immerse themselves in a topic, dedicate significant time to collaborative planning and network with other schools. Carving out time for team members to attend relevant trainings and participate in follow-up planning can serve the same purpose, equipping teams with some of the tools they need to implement change.

Serving up a School Culture of Health, Wellness and Nutrition contains countless creative, real-life examples of how NEI school teams made significant improvements to the food, nutrition education and physical activity environments in their own schools. What school teams learned along the way, the big ideas and small tips, have been synthesized into a practical guide. We hope that other school teams in Vermont and nationwide will use these field-tested ideas to support their efforts, making schools healthier places for kids to learn.

What You Will Find in this Guide

Serving up a School Culture of Health, Wellness and Nutrition provides a framework for taking practical steps to help your school redefine the role of food, nutrition education and physical activity at every level, from the cafeteria to the classroom. It is designed so that anyone interested in contributing to a healthy school environment can use it as a resource. Although the sections are ordered for the school team just beginning the process, if your school has already made progress along this path you can pick and choose which stand-alone sections are most relevant for helping you take the next step. Here’s a glimpse of what each section addresses:

- **Assembling a School Team** describes how to think strategically about pulling together a group of diverse, committed individuals and set the stage for successful collaboration.
- **Taking the Pulse** establishes the importance and gives guidance for assessing your current school culture, identifying current practices and opportunities.
- **Adopting the Mentor Model** illustrates how to align your team and build a productive relationship with someone who can share their knowledge, experience, resources, and network to help advance your work.
- **Changing the Culture** provides strategies for making sweeping and lasting change.
- **Cultivating Connections** helps identify and build collaborative relationships across the school environment to support a comprehensive approach to implementing change.
- **Revising and Implementing a Wellness Policy** outlines the process for aligning your school's policy with the food, nutrition education and physical activity goals of your school team.
- **Building Community Connections** highlights opportunities for communicating and educating parents and community members, inviting participation which provides the necessary support for the school team to succeed.

Each section includes:

- **Theory in a Nutshell.** At the request of the school teams, this guide is not mired in theory. Instead each section begins with a one- to two-sentence statement explaining the rationale and giving context for each step.
- **Promising Practices.** The things that worked for other schools, shared through tips and examples.
- **Expanded School Profiles.** Detailed narrative of how schools tackled particular steps.
- **Tools and Templates.** The resources that were instrumental to helping school teams carry out their work.

Theory in a nutshell:

Assembling a team of diverse, committed individuals to guide your efforts sets the stage for creating comprehensive, long-lasting change that will benefit students' health and their ability to learn.

Assembling a School Team

"A good team goes a long way. Having an understanding team is critical. They should support, not judge you."

The Benefits of Working as a Team

Although you may subscribe to the theory that it's easier to do it yourself, schools participating in the Nutrition Education Institute (NEI) all agreed that working as a team to improve their school nutrition, nutrition education and physical activity environment was critical to success. The majority of teams noted that meeting as a cross-sector team built understanding about everyone's role and responsibility at school. This was especially true for staff that had little prior knowledge about how food service operates. Building

"Working with people that I normally don't talk to... It gave us all a new view on what we do."

understanding, and respect, is an important first step to making change happen. Also,

- Having other people in the school on the team adds credibility to your work.
- Having the support of the team, through shared responsibility, shifts schools away from the scenario where one or two ambitious people work towards a goal in isolation.
- Working alongside team members with different knowledge, experience and perspectives opens up countless networking opportunities and resources.



The Barre City school team learns creative ways to integrate MyPlate into physical education during a summer program workshop.

When **Barre City Elementary and Middle School** assembled their Food Forum Group they made sure to cover their bases by including administration, the food service director, kitchen staff, teachers, students, and the school nurse. This representation helps them examine ideas and issues from every angle before implementing, increasing the probability that they will succeed. The Forum meets once a month throughout the school year, serving as a sounding block for anyone in the school community who has thoughts or concerns to share about the foodservice program.

Developing Team Diversity

Think school-wide and be systematic when developing a school team. In addition to making sure you have representation from each of the areas of the school you are trying to impact, invite individuals with diverse skill sets. That way, each member can have a distinct function and share their unique expertise as you work towards your

shared dream. Take into consideration a person's position within the school or community but don't forget about passion, energy and commitment to the cause. These traits can go a long way towards reaching your goals.

Recognizing that collaboration between food service staff, teachers, parents, school administrators, nurses, and physical education teachers is necessary to bolster comprehensive nutrition,

"Finding the right balance of team members is important — too few and it is a lot more work, too many and it is too difficult to move forward."

nutrition education and physical activity, schools applying for the NEI were required to assemble a diverse 6-person team comprised of representatives from each of these areas. While we identified this as our criteria, several schools expressed a desire to

recruit additional members, inviting guidance counselors and more classroom teachers to participate. Having more members also offers insurance that the team will continue to function even if you lose one or two members. Swanton School took this one step further, creating a Wellness Advisory Committee with representatives from all grade levels and groups of professionals (see school profile, facing page).

Whatever size team you settle on, your goal is to create an active, cohesive team consisting of people who are committed to the initiative and its goals and to sharing the workload. Sharing the workload is critical to the success of a team. Try to avoid the situation where "the same people always show up at the table." As one participant noted, "the people who are involved are already maxed out and do not have a lot of extra time to take something else on." This doesn't mean that these well-intentioned people, if interested, shouldn't participate, it just means that you'll want to take extra care to establish a team where the majority of the workload doesn't fall on a few, select individuals.

High on the list of factors that NEI participants said fueled progress was administrative participation and support. Administrative involvement was particularly effective when it was present from the beginning.

Good Questions to Ask

Sonya Spaulding from Barre City Elementary & Middle School advises asking the following questions when assembling your school team:

- 1 Can everyone commit to at least one year of work?
- 2 Does everyone know and understand the goals?
- 3 How will each team member contribute towards reaching these goals?

"Working as a team reminded our go-getter to slow down and think things through, to bounce ideas off other people before acting on them."

Your Team

Consider some combination of the following members of your school community when assembling your team:

- School administrators
- Food service staff
- Classroom teachers
- Physical Education teacher
- School nurse
- Support staff
- Guidance counselor
- Parents
- School board members
- Students



Salisbury Community School created a tri-fold display that they take on the road with them. At every available opportunity they display the tri-fold, which creatively includes details about their mission and long- and short-term goals in nutrition education and physical activity.

Remember that an administrator can be supportive without attending every meeting because they set the tone for the school, letting staff know that this initiative is valued by the principal. Also, schools noted that they needed an administrator on their team in order to get teachers to take part. It helped to get “all staff bubbling, to move from a small team to a whole school team.”

Getting the Right People Involved

Perhaps you already have a well-rounded team of energized individuals ready to take on the task of improving your school environment. More likely, though, you are among the countless schools that have one or two passionate people looking for more key stakeholders. NEI school teams struggled with the same reality, but discovered some successful strategies to solicit support.

While some schools targeted specific teachers to invite, others asked anyone they thought might be interested to join, pulling them into meetings and involving them in research or application paperwork. Several teams, like Swanton School (see *Tools & Templates*, p. 81), created Power Point presentations to give at Parent-Teacher Organization, school board, faculty, or School Health Advisory meetings, highlighting their focus for the year and inviting participation. Several teams took this opportunity to share related literature, reinforcing their case for improving the school nutrition and physical activity environment. Others reached out to teachers, staff and parents through emails, letters and newsletters (see examples in *Tools & Templates*).

Another approach is to host a brainstorming session. Invite educators, parents, students, school support staff, community members, and administrators to participate in the conversation. Providing a structured venue to receive feedback on your ideas, identify challenges and opportunities, and pinpoint potential resources builds buy-in. The more you involve people in the planning of your initiative, the more likely you are to find supporters. This approach is also successful at engaging the nonbelievers. Make sure to leave time at the end of the brainstorming session to capitalize on the excitement you’ve built and enlist supporters who would like to join the team. Informally, you can also take advantage of local events, such as Town Meeting Day, ice cream socials or chili challenges to promote your ideas and invite support.

“We needed one person taking charge and holding the other members to what they agreed on during meetings”

In the end, there's really no wrong way to go about building your team as long as you end up with diverse representation from motivated people. Which of the above strategies is best? It depends on your individual school. For example, small schools with close contact between students, parents and staff will require a different approach than a larger, more expansive school. Be open to trying several strategies and don't be discouraged if your first attempts aren't successful.

Defining Roles: Who's Going to Do What?

Once you've compiled your team, you'll need to work together to define each member's roles and responsibilities, making sure that everyone is in agreement. School teams emphasized the importance of clearly laying out expectations at the start to avoid confusion, duplication of effort and inefficiency. In general, team members need to be willing to meet regularly and to help identify the team's purpose, vision, goals, and needs. They will also be responsible for implementing changes, documenting and promoting your accomplishments, and making plans for the future.

Begin by deciding what you want to accomplish and then assign responsibilities. For example, if keeping the community informed of your activities is a priority, consider assigning a team member with the task of setting up a publicity calendar and following through. Here are some other hints to bear in mind:

- Set realistic goals to avoid overwhelming team members. Chances are this isn't the only initiative they are involved with.
- Each person should walk away from team meetings with clear tasks that need to be accomplished before the next meeting.
- Be sure to assign someone with the task of organizing meetings, creating agendas, following up with meeting minutes, and sending reminders between meetings.
- Have one person keep meeting minutes so less time is spent on overlap from one meeting to the next.
- Identify a facilitator (not necessarily the organizer) to keep members on task during meetings.

In terms of leadership, school teams took different approaches:

- Several chose a strong leader or champion who was capable of looking ahead, staying on top of what needed to get done and

Tip!

Remember that just because a team member is an effective organizer does not mean that they also have to be the facilitator. Refer to the Guided Meeting Questions in *Tools & Templates*, p. 83 for ideas about how to facilitate the meeting and keep you on task.

“Have the leader be a staff member. Parents are great but staff is a constant — they have a good pulse on what’s happening in the school.”

— KELLI BROWN, HINESBURG

ensuring that tasks were accomplished. In some cases the mentor filled this role while in others there were members of the team such as a parent, teacher or food service manager who propelled the group onward. Your school principal might be a good fit, offering the voice of experience and reason with the ability to see your goals within the context of the larger school community.

- In one case, two people shared leadership, the “thinker” and the “doer,” which made an effective combination.
- One school divided into sub-committees, with each one identifying a leader and taking on the tasks associated with one particular goal.
- Others found that it worked best to share leadership among all members.

Learning to Manage Team Dynamics

Ideally, you’ve compiled a team of interested, engaged, motivated individuals who have the same goals, and strategies for accomplishing those goals, in mind. Take some time to make sure that you all agree about what completing a particular goal means and what success will look like. Every team, no matter how harmonious, will require nurturing to achieve optimum success. Moving forward it will be important to foster an atmosphere where team members feel comfortable sharing thoughts or concerns, heard, and respected. The first step is to build understanding and respect among team members. Keeping open lines of communication can help. How will you keep everyone informed and share ideas at and between meetings? For example, several NEI teams cited Google docs as a useful communication tool.



The Vergennes Elementary school team takes a break while working on their action plan during the summer program.

Keep in mind that although it is important for your team to share a purpose you don’t need to only include members who will always agree or comply. In one NEI school the PE teacher was reluctant to participate on the team. By the end of the year she was buzzing with excitement about how much the students enjoyed playing the nutrition-related games she had incorporated as a result of her participation. Instead of excluding a difficult or resistant staff member, take this opportunity to include and educate them, potentially transforming their contribution to the school wellness environment.

Sustaining Momentum

While thoughtful team design goes a long way, there needs to be a structure in place to meet regularly in order to keep momentum. NEI schools left the three-day summer institute feeling energized and ready to take on the work that lay before them, but several stalled mid-way through the school year and found it difficult to maintain momentum. Several expressed the wish to reconvene the institute — an opportunity to pull everyone back together and regenerate that momentum — which wasn't realistic at the time. Fortunately there are other strategies to keep the sparks flying.

Assigning tasks that need to be completed before the next meeting and creating a system of accountability helps teams remain productive. If you sense that momentum is waning, you may decide that you need to meet more often than originally anticipated. For the NEI schools, having a leader who is a strong organizer and communicator, who can nudge team members by sharing notes and sending meeting reminders and emails, significantly impacted the progress.

The importance of setting realistic goals and sharing the workload has already been emphasized. What does this mean in practice? One lesson learned was that teams needed to realize the limits of those not on the team and be respectful of what they were realistically capable of tackling. Some schools found it helpful to set mini-goals so that they could note (and celebrate) progress toward larger goals. In general, everyone agreed it was really important to keep the process fun and maintain a sense of humor.

Running a Successful Team Meeting

How often you meet and for how long will depend on the preferences and needs of your team. Our recommendation to NEI participants was to meet with their mentor four times during the course of the school year. While this felt like the right interval for a couple of teams, most met more often than quarterly, recognizing that shorter, more frequent meetings worked better for their team's productivity. Some met monthly while others met weekly. Still others expressed an interest in meeting more regularly but cited full platters and time constraints as limiting factors. What's most important is that you schedule regular meetings to check in, plan next steps and offer support to one another.

“Everyone on the team came from their own perspective but was there for the kids, had a good level of trust in one another, and a good understanding of the school community.”

“List-making allowed us to define what was important and put it into a sequenced, somewhat linear format.”

To pave the way for purposeful and productive meetings school teams suggest:

- Pick a meeting day and time that helps ensure diverse representation.
- Consider identifying a regular meeting time, such as the second Tuesday of the month, so that members can reserve a spot in their busy schedules for this regular commitment.
- If you are having trouble with attendance, consider the hurdles and try to accommodate. For example, would it help if you had a babysitter on hand?
- Send reminders, with an agenda if possible, to make sure that team members show up and are ready to work.
- Prioritize your agenda with items that need immediate attention at the top just in case you don't get to every topic in the allotted time.
- At the end of each meeting make a plan for what needs to happen before the next meeting and assign tasks to each team member.

Once you've pulled together a team and set the stage for productive collaboration it's time to evaluate your school's current culture and practices in order to determine the exact nature of your work. The next chapter provides a framework for conducting an assessment of your school food, nutrition education and physical activity environments, the next step towards creating a healthy learning culture.

Thinking Critically about Committees

Recognizing the potential that a school team has to create positive change, the Swanton School is taking a systematic and comprehensive approach to assembling their Wellness Advisory Committee. For starters, they've selected the PE teacher, Dustin King, to lead the charge, serving as the committee's chairperson. His first task was to introduce the new wellness team to all staff, during grade-level inservices, where he used a Power Point presentation (see *Tools & Templates*, p. 81) to share their statement of purpose, what they learned during the NEI summer program, their mission statement, and their goals for the upcoming school year. The primary purpose was to build buy-in, hopefully sparking an interest that would lead staff to join the committee.

Getting Staff Involved

Although the original intent was for the administration to *require* representation on the

"If you provide concrete action steps rather than philosophical discussion you will gain more interest from your staff."

— DUSTIN KING, SWANTON SCHOOL

Wellness Committee from each grade level, as well as from support staff, teaching specialists, special education and paraprofessionals, a change in administration and the school's leadership model shifted the structure of the initiative. The plan is still to have representation from across the school environment, but joining the team is now voluntary. The team operates under the assumption that people want to be involved in a group that



The Swanton school team developed a power point presentation to educate staff about their work.

takes action rather than debates ideas. Their plan is to promote the tangible action steps (for example, integrating the cooking cart, improving recess and creating staff wellness opportunities) as a way to encourage others to get involved. The administration is doing their part to help with recruitment by reinforcing the message that this group is an important part of a school-wide initiative.

Keeping Staff Involved

The voluntary nature of the committee could present a challenge for keeping staff involved and motivated. The team is taking two steps to nip this in the bud. The first is to take real action, structuring meetings so they have a focus and an outcome (for example, making decisions about what playground equipment to purchase or when to hold a staff yoga class). By respecting the staff's time and giving them the satisfaction of accomplishing tangible tasks the team hopes

to minimize attrition. Second, they hope that arranging for staff to receive professional development credit by participating will boost their commitment to the cause.

Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities

Members are expected to attend all five committee meetings ready to be “part of a solution.” Even though there is a designated committee leader, everyone will play an equal part in making decisions about improving wellness at Swanton. Once the committee is established for the year, the goal is to identify the interests of individuals and encourage them to join a subcommittee (groups of two or three) that will address the specific goals and tasks associated with their chosen initiative. The subcommittees will include, but are not limited to: staff wellness, recess, cooking cart/taste testing, school garden, and composting. All wellness committee members will help plan and run the school’s Wellness Night. In addition to serving as a facilitator Dustin will bring informa-

The Swanton school team created a clear action plan for their Wellness Team to implement.

tion and ideas from the subcommittees to the school’s Leadership Team for discussion and approval. He will also serve as a sounding board for non-committee staff who would like to share their ideas, questions or concerns about school wellness with the Leadership Team.

Garnering Administrative Support

A change in administration resulted in the creation of a new Leadership Team. This team, run by the co-principals, is comprised of the Technology Integration Leader, Math Leader, Literacy Leader, Social Responsibility Leader, Special Education Leader, and Wellness Leader. The Leadership team plans to meet each week for one hour when each team leader will have the chance to bring ideas, initiatives and issues to the table for consideration. As a group they will discuss the attributes of each and make decisions about how to move forward. This

“Our new Co-Principal model is really putting Wellness at the forefront of our school.”

— DUSTIN KING, SWANTON SCHOOL

tiered structure sets the stage for the school to consider changes within the context of the entire school. Receiving recognition as a mainstream fact at the school is a major coup for the Wellness Advisory Committee, giving them a voice and an opportunity to create systemic change.

SWANTON SCHOOL WELLNESS ACTION PLAN							
Rough Draft – 4/10/13							
TARGET – Our mission is to create a sustainable school wide culture, which promotes the importance of overall health and wellness of our school community.							
ACTION STEP	DESCRIPTION	STAFFING	INFRASTRUCTURE	BUDGET	PROFESSIONAL LEARNING	YEAR	DATA COLLECTION/EVALUATION
1.	Promote overall health and wellness within our school community.	Admin., Professional staff, Paraprofessional staff, Food staff	*Following school wellness plan. *Meeting time. *Team is broken into subcommittees for smaller goals. *Cooking cart/taste-testing program.	TBD	*Opportunity to attend workshops/conferences. *Knowledge of success in surrounding schools.	Y1/Y2	*Pictures/copies of exposure information *Student/staff surveys *Pictures of students involved in wellness work
2.	Provide opportunities to increase physical activity time for our students.	Admin., Paraprofessional staff, Professional staff	*Following school wellness plan. *Meeting time. *Recess budget. *Paraprofessional input. *Incorporate into every school day.	TBD	*Opportunity for paraprofessional training/positive input. *Physical activity resources for classroom teachers.	Y1/Y2	*Student surveys *Staff surveys *Increase recess options/equipment
3.	Provide opportunities for staff to increase whole body wellness.	Admin., Professional staff, Paraprofessional staff	*Following school wellness plan. *Meeting time. *Work towards fitness center/room.	TBD	*Direction towards resources/information. *Knowledge of success in surrounding schools.	Y1/Y2	*Staff surveys *New opportunities for staff wellness *Pictures of staff involved in wellness work

Indicators of Success for this Goal (We will create these together)

Theory in a nutshell:

Conducting a detailed assessment of your school's current culture and practices provides the information you will need to establish goals, define priorities and plan next steps.

Taking the Pulse

Before you can work towards creating a school-wide culture that embraces the value of food, nutrition education and physical activity you must first conduct an evaluation of current culture and practices. Although you may think you've got a pretty good idea about what's going on in your school, a comprehensive and methodical assessment will provide the most accurate picture, helping you to clearly establish goals, define priorities and plan next steps.

**Nutrition Education Institute 2012 - 2013
School Assessment Rubric**

Please complete this rubric as a school team and email it to Danielle Pipher (dpipher@shelburnefarms.org) by Tuesday, June 12th. In addition, please bring a completed print/hard copy with you to the Summer Nutrition Education Institute at Shelburne Farms on June 25th. This rubric will be used as a tool for creating your action plan and assessing your progress throughout the year's nutrition education activities.

Name of School _____
Names of team members completing rubric: _____
Date completing rubric: _____

1. My school is enrolled as a Team Nutrition School
 Yes No Not sure
2. My school participates in the National School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program
 Yes No Not sure

Dear Summer Nutrition Institute Team Members,

The questions and rubric on the following pages are for you to complete as an assessment of your school's current status related to the Healthier U.S. School Challenge (HUSCC) criteria and Farm to School programming. The rubric is designed around the categories in the HUSCC, adding some activities related to Farm to School. This "self" assessment tool will serve as the baseline against which we can measure the types of changes that are made at your school over the coming year, following your participation in the Summer Nutrition Education Institute.

The first sets of questions below (under "school breakfast" and "school lunch" headings) are followed by four columns that give you the criteria of how advanced your school is in relation to the question (a ranking of 1 to 4, from less advanced to more), but don't necessarily provide HUSCC criteria. Please answer each question in the far left column to the best of your ability. Then circle the response that best matches your answer (or don't circle anything if there's not a good match). Thank you for taking the time to complete these questions!

Scoping Out the Scene

School teams began the Nutrition Education Institute (NEI) by working collaboratively to complete the School Assessment Rubric, found in *Tools & Templates* on p. 84. The rubric was designed to assess a school's current status relative to the criteria established by the **Healthier U.S. School Challenge Award** and Farm to School programming. Conducted at the start of the process, this tool provided a valuable reference point for several of the components that contribute to school culture:

- School breakfast
- School lunch
- Nutrition and food education
- Physical education and activity
- Farm to school institutional support

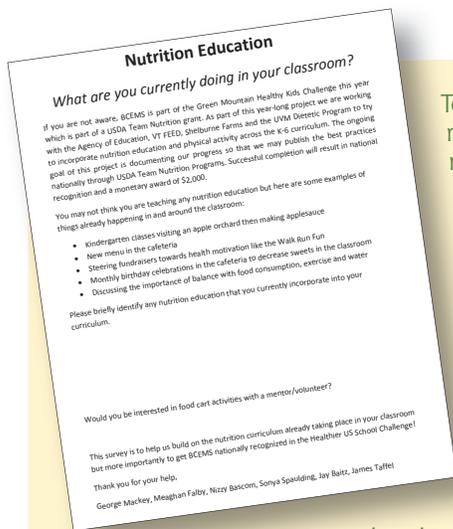
Each school participating in the Nutrition Education Institute completed the NEI School Assessment Rubric.

Healthier U.S. School Challenge Award

HUSCC is a voluntary certification initiative established by the USDA to recognize schools that have created a healthier environment through the promotion of nutrition and physical activity. The project partners chose to include HUSCC in the Nutrition Education Institute because it reinforces the importance of creating systemic change across the school environment, in the cafeteria, classroom and community.

Nutrition education at Salisbury Community School.





To find out how much and what nutrition education was being taught in classrooms, the **Barre City** team designed a simple survey and distributed it to each classroom teacher. They provided a list of examples of nutrition education they knew

was already taking place and then asked teachers to “Please briefly identify any nutrition education that you currently incorporate into your curriculum.” Compiling the results helped identify effective examples as well as opportunities for additional integration. See *Tools & Templates*, p. 91.

- Fundraising
- School food service excellence

School teams found this to be a valuable exercise because it helped:

- Establish a benchmark against which they could measure progress.
- Identify barriers and areas in need of improvement to focus on in an action plan.
- Narrow their focus prior to setting short- and long-term goals.
- Realize how many changes had already been implemented, boosting pride, confidence and respect.

- Understand what was being taught in the classroom and what was happening in the kitchen.
- Identify where there was interest in and support for improving school culture.
- Build buy-in by beginning the conversation with appropriate people; building understanding and developing relationships with the key players.
- See the school culture from several points of view.

The NEI Rubric is just one example of the assessment rubrics that are available. Several more are listed in the *Resources* section. Take time to figure out which is the right tool for the job and make sure to select one that helps you examine the entirety of your school nutrition, nutrition education and physical activity environment. Keep in mind that completing the same assessment again in the future will help you measure the progress you are making.

Setting Goals

Use the results from the assessment to determine which areas of your school culture are in need of attention. Does the lunch menu need a makeover? Are classroom celebrations perpetuating unhealthy messages by revolving around sugar-laden snacks? Do you wish more classroom teachers would integrate the school garden into their curriculum? By identifying gaps you can begin to set goals for improving dif-

“We conducted a survey to determine how many teachers are using activity bursts in the classroom. Almost all of the classroom teachers responded and are doing movement breaks of one type or another. We were pleasantly surprised by these results.”

— KARYL KENT,
RICHMOND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Tip!

Consider the size of your staff, the degree of interest and other planned initiatives when deciding how many goals to take on.

ferent areas of the school. Acknowledge your school's stage of change as well as its readiness so you can identify realistic and attainable goals. After your team brainstorms multiple short and long term goals, remember to be realistic about what can be accomplished and by when.

Prioritizing your Purpose

School action plans are often not successful if too many goals and too many changes are expected to be accomplished. A recurring reminder from school teams was to be realistic about what you can

"The idea is to make a difference. If you don't assess or measure for change how do you know if you are making a difference (good, bad, no changes, a lot, a little)?"

actually achieve during a specific time frame. While it is important to keep an eye on the big picture by setting long-term goals it is also critical to success that you establish short-term goals that can be met, celebrated and used as building

blocks for change. The Action Planning template, described in the next section, will help you follow this approach.

When prioritizing your goals remember to examine the support network that is in place to help you accomplish them. If one in particular has captivated the interest of multiple staff and parents or has an established set of resources to draw from it might indicate a good place to start. For example, if the physical education teacher has a wealth of information on activity bursts you may want to prioritize the goal of increasing movement in the classroom and take immediate advantage of his or her expertise.

Creating an Action Plan

The next step is to create a concrete plan for accomplishing your goals. School teams used the Action Planning Template (See *Tools & Templates*, p. 92) to establish a clear vision for moving forward. You'll notice that the Action Planning Template begins by asking you to define your Statement of Purpose. This is the all-encompassing mission statement that will guide your work and which you will refer back to when setting additional goals and action plans. Seek input and be open to revisions as you further refine the scope of your efforts.

From there, the Action Planning Template is divided into five sections: Cafeteria, Classroom, Physical Education, Outdoor Learning/Garden, and Family-School Connections. In each section you are asked to identify the following:

Tip!

Using Grants to Gauge Status

Anne Cohn from Ferrisburgh has this advice for teams: "Apply for the Healthier U.S. School Challenge Award (see *Resources*, p. 153) and any other healthy school-type grant. You'll learn all you need to just by working on these applications — it's probably the easiest was to assess where you are for practices and where you should be heading."

Tip!

Take time to communicate with other, more experienced, schools while developing your action plan. What have they done? How did they do it? What has been successful? How have they overcome obstacles? Use this advice from seasoned experts to guide your goal setting.

Tip!

Set up a binder at the beginning of the process to keep your effort organized. Decide how best to organize the binder for your school team. Consider including the following:

- Completed School Assessment Rubric
- Copy of the Action Planning Template
- Meeting minutes
- Monthly checklist
- Documentation of practices
- Your school wellness policy.

- Goals (for the upcoming school year)
- Action Steps (WHAT needs to be done?)
- WHO is responsible? (Lead person and group members)
- Timeline (By WHEN do things need to be done?)
- Resources Needed

There are also spaces for defining long-term ideas and goals for future years and describing how you will document your practices. This tool offers a good starting point, encouraging you to work with your team to think through each goal and make a plan for its execution, but be open to the action plan evolving as you move forward.

Getting to Work

After assessing where you are, what you want to do and how to go about it, it's time to get to work. The next chapter covers the important role that mentors can play in helping you accomplish your well thought out goals. Having a clear idea about your needs will help you align your team with an appropriate mentor who has the knowledge, skills and network to help you succeed.

Crafting Connections through Curriculum Audits

“The idea is to get everyone who works in the school—teaching staff, specialists, support staff, administrators, and the school nurse—all in one room,” says Danielle Pipher, VT FEED Education and Professional Development Coordinator and Salisbury Community School team’s mentor. The goal? To conduct a curriculum audit—a curriculum mapping process designed to identify what a school is currently doing in their classrooms and where opportunities exist to build or deepen connections. A faculty meeting or in-service is ideal for gathering together the requisite personnel to participate in this exercise which, if effective, results in increased communication among staff, reduced redundancy in content, and a richer educational experience for students.

Salisbury staff undertook this task during a faculty meeting in the fall. To start Danielle framed their discussion by asking “What experiences do you want students to have by the

time they graduate from sixth grade?” The staff brainstormed — to learn how to cook, to milk a cow, to visit a farm. All ideas were welcomed and recorded on a master list. In a typical curriculum audit, the next step is to have all staff supply three layers of information to complete the Curriculum Framework chart (see *Tools & Templates*, p. 103).

For the first layer Danielle asks teachers to share their general curriculum themes. Since Salisbury had limited time (the entire process usually takes two to three hours and they had only one) the team sent the chart around to staff as a shared Google doc and asked them to complete it before the meeting. The plan was for a retired first-grade teacher, who was well-liked and had good “street cred” after working in the school for over 20 years, to schedule interviews with each teacher, helping them complete the chart. Unfortunately, due to illness, she was unable to follow through. Before continuing Danielle compiled the information contributed by teachers on a master chart. For the second layer teachers were asked to write down what they were already doing related to nutrition education. For example, taking a field trip to a local orchard where they learn nutrition facts about apples while studying circumference in math. This information, demonstrating what they were already successfully doing, was incorporated into the chart. Finally, in the third layer, the staff was asked to draw attention

Farm to School Curriculum Framework		Elementary School K-6							
	K	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Cafeteria	All School
Fall									
Winter									
Spring									

Salisbury conducted a curriculum audit to determine how much nutrition education was being taught in classrooms.



The Salisbury Community school team began planning during the NEI summer program.

to the opportunities that existed for incorporating nutrition education into the curriculum with the probing question “Where could it fit into the framework?”

The next step was to look at the chart as a group, identifying overlap and thinking more strategically about what they teach and who teaches it. Ideally, this discussion results in the staff taking a more unified, team approach to teaching. Maybe a unit can be co-taught? Or perhaps a teacher who really dreads teaching a particular topic can find someone to trade with? This exchange can reduce the feelings of isolation that teachers feel when they are focused on their own individual classrooms and curriculum. The brainstormed list that was created earlier was reintroduced and the staff was asked to cross reference it with the chart in order to identify where some of the ideas could fit into the curriculum.

Finally, Danielle asked the question “What do you need to make this happen?” compiling another list. For example, training on a particular topic, a study circle, or professional develop-

ment? Ideally, the principal is present for the entire curriculum audit and at this stage is able to share insight on the support the administration is willing and able to provide. Since curriculum maps are vital to the work of administrators—they are required to provide

them to the district, school board and parents—they are usually quite enthusiastic about this process, opening a window for staff and school teams to request reinforcement.

The lessons learned from a curriculum audit vary by school. In Salisbury it became clear that nutrition education was the weakest link in their wellness initiative. Also, the teachers were at capacity and could not take anything new on. This forced them to think strategically about making better use of current opportunities. They realized that, with a little support from the Food Service Manager and the school team, they could use their Friday Lunch Bunch gatherings to incorporate nutrition lessons. Unlike every other day, when students have lunch in their classrooms, these weekly multi-age sessions are the perfect venue for nurturing nutrition awareness. The school team left the curriculum audit charged with the task of locating nutrition education materials that could be adapted for this use.

Theory in a nutshell:

Aligning your school team with someone who is familiar with group process and has relevant knowledge, and establishing clear expectations for the role they will play, can support the successful implementation of your action plan.

Adopting the Mentor Model

Central to the Nutrition Education Institute (NEI) model, each participating school team was assigned a mentor. Mentors were selected based on their knowledge and experience in the fields of school nutrition, nutrition education and professional development. School teams received support from their mentor for a complete school year, beginning with an introductory meeting in June and continuing through the closing reflection meeting the following June.



The Barre City school team works with their mentor at the NEI summer program.

Mentors were specifically tasked with:

- Facilitating their school team during a three-day intensive program where they developed their action plan for the upcoming school year.
- Supporting their team during the application process for a project-related mini-grant from the Agency of Education aimed at providing the funds necessary to implement their action plan.
- Meeting regularly with their team during the school year to help them implement their action plan and document progress. Mentors determined with teams how best to distribute these meetings but were required to have contact, by phone or in person, at least four times.
- Supporting their school team as they implemented the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- Assisting schools during their application process for the Healthier U.S. School Challenge Award.
- Attending a half-day mentor meeting in January to check in, share lessons learned and useful resources and problem solve.

“[Our mentor] kept us on task and helped us focus and define our priorities.”

— SALISBURY TEAM MEMBER

- Facilitating their school team during a follow-up meeting where teams reported on their experiences and developed an action plan for moving forward.

This chapter summarizes what we’ve learned from mentors and school teams about the value of having a mentor, how to identify the right person for the job and what you can expect from this relationship. If you have developed a team and identified goals the hope is that you will align yourselves with a mentor who can help you successfully implement your action plan.

The Merits of a Mentor

What can a mentor bring to the table that team members can’t provide for themselves? We conducted a survey of school teams to answer that exact question.

School teams explained that mentors:

- Had connections to related specialists, expanding the information and resources available to the team.
- Created a system of accountability, requiring teams to make and document their progress. This process helped teams recognize the building blocks for further change.
- Provided external motivation to maintain momentum.
- Added credibility to the team’s efforts.
- Introduced evaluation strategies to help the team effectively assess the impact of their work.
- Saved the team time by sharing relevant research, tools and curriculum.
- Facilitated relationships with administration.
- Mediated conflicts or stalemates within the team.
- Provided context to the larger movement, helping the team to stay on track and keep perspective.

When to Bring a Mentor on Board

Timing is everything. You’ll notice that the chapters in this guide are organized in the order we suggest you carry them out: *first* compile a team, *next* conduct a school-wide assessment, and *then* engage the mentor. Waiting to engage a mentor until after you have assessed your

Tip!

Decide right from the start how the team will communicate with the mentor. Consider assigning one member of the team to be the contact person who will take responsibility for relaying messages back and forth.

Tip!

Consider preparing food, maybe even a taste test recipe, to share at the meetings. Offering intentional nourishment gives you the opportunity to demonstrate what the school is working on while keeping everyone energized.

needs and prioritized your goals gives you the ability to align your team with someone who has suitable skills and knowledge to help you move forward.

What to Look for in a Mentor

As we've already mentioned, above all you need to find a mentor who has the ability to meet the team's needs. Consider whether your team would be best served if the mentor is someone who already has knowledge of the school community, is an outsider bringing with them a fresh perspective or falls somewhere in between those two. The group of mentors working with the Nutrition Education Institute had representatives from each of these categories. We had consultants who were working with the same schools on other projects, a parent of students at the school, a community member, and several who were professional partners with no interaction besides this project. There are pros and cons to each. Take into consideration your team's individual personalities, needs and goals to determine the best configuration for your school.

Other things to keep in mind when choosing a mentor:

- Instead of having a single mentor, it may work best to identify several people who can help with the variety of goals your team has identified.
- Finding someone with outside funding eliminates the need for you to seek financial support for their role. For example, an employee of a community health organization who was hired to coordinate health and wellness.
- Schools have set schedules. Affiliating yourself with someone who has a more flexible schedule will make communication and scheduling meetings easier.
- A good personality fit can go a long way towards motivating your team to keep focused.

By surveying the community and surrounding area you will be able to locate potential sources for mentors.

- Does your town have a community or nonprofit organization whose mission is to improve health?
- Are you located near a university or college that has a department of nutrition, dietetics or physical education?
- Do you know of any professional nutritionists or fitness experts who live or work nearby?

Tip!

If you choose a mentor who is not part of the school community ask them to dedicate some time before your first meeting to learning about the school. Facilitate this process by organizing a tour and introducing them to key players.

"[Our mentor] helped us to dream crazy then draw from those dreams the things we could start with. She helped us map our action steps and timeline. Gave us resources. Gave us praise (important!). Asked tough questions. Was available."

— FERRISBURGH TEAM MEMBER

“We needed a reminder system between team meetings. Maybe the mentor could send an email mid-way to the next meeting reminding members who had taken on tasks to complete them before the next meeting. We all forget or become so busy we don’t keep up. A friendly reminder is helpful.”

Expand your search by asking around, inviting suggestions from team members and others in your school community. If you approach someone who isn’t able to help, ask for their suggestions too.

What a Mentor Should Do

Establishing clear expectations for the role the mentor will play is pivotal to the success of the mentoring relationship. Do this at the start of your planning meetings to prevent miscommunication, frustration and disappointment. Depending on their time commitment, ability and connections, they may or may not be able to fulfill your team’s requests but it is reasonable for you to ask your mentor to:

- Help the team to build relationships and establish a process.
- Facilitate the implementation of your action plan.
- Function as a sounding board, providing an outside perspective and sharing insight based on their experience and knowledge.
- Identify and brainstorm strategies for food, nutrition and physical activity connections to the classroom, cafeteria and community.
- Share examples of “what’s possible.”
- Answer questions and connect you to relevant resources.
- Engage others by modeling how to successfully communicate with staff and the community about the team’s work.
- Co-present or attend a meeting with the staff or principal.
- Help brainstorm how to take down barriers that exist within your school community by opening lines of communication and sharing knowledge.
- Keep you on track by documenting progress, holding team members accountable for accomplishing tasks.
- Be a motivational guide or “cheerleader.”
- If the arrangement is temporary, determine a course of action for when mentoring ends.

Even though it isn’t necessary (or practical) for the mentor to attend every one of your team meetings, they should attend regularly enough to help you sustain focus and maintain momentum. Establish a schedule so that everyone understands how often and when the mentor will

Tip!

If possible, your mentor should connect with other mentors who are working with schools on similar initiatives. Together they can troubleshoot, learn from one another’s lessons and swap tools.

Methods for Mentors to Mediate Conflict

Inadequate administrative support, staff resistance and uncooperative team members are a few of the many circumstances that can create friction as you act toward change. As an outsider the mentor is in a unique position to assess and influence the outcome of these situations. Although they may not be trained in conflict resolution there are some simple strategies they can use to help your team come out on top, including:

- Keep working towards forging relationships. This is the number one way to avoid conflict.
- If team members don't trust each other the mentor needs to help them create a process they can trust instead.
- Don't let meetings turn into gossip sessions. Instead of feeding the drama, redirect the conversation and then encourage direct communication with the individual(s) being discussed.
- If the situation during a meeting becomes uncomfortable, draw attention to the issue rather than skirt around it. State what you notice and would like the group to do about it.
- Speak individually and privately to a difficult team member to see if you can help resolve the issue.

be present. Keep them up to date in between meetings by calling to check in or sending meeting minutes.

What a Mentor Shouldn't Do

There *are* certain things you should *not* expect your mentor to do. This is mostly because it's important for the school team to develop the necessary skills and relationships to effect change on their own. After all, this is a home-grown initiative, not an outsider's agenda. On top of promoting independence there are also some counterproductive actions to advise your mentor against. Mentors should avoid:

- Taking on too much of the work. Their job is facilitating, not doing.
- Running team meetings, acting like they are in charge. Appoint a team member to do this instead.
- Setting unrealistic expectations for the team.
- Forging relationships for the team. They should, however, facilitate them.
- Communicating with the larger community. Communication should come from the team since it is their initiative, not the mentor's.
- Forcing success. It's okay to fail, that's how we learn which practices hold promise and which don't.

- Pushing their agenda. The team has to own their process and outcomes, both good and bad.
- Being the savior, swooping in to rescue an overcommitted team member or poorly executed activity.
- Being judgmental and comparing your school to others. However, offering examples that have worked at other schools is quite helpful and should be encouraged.
- Spending too much time during meetings assessing progress that not enough time is devoted to lending support for accomplishing future deadlines and goals.

Ideally, the mentor will check in with you to ask “What am I doing that’s working?” and “What should I stop doing?” If not, make sure to give this feedback unsolicited. The mentor is there to help your team work together towards your goals as effectively as possible. If that’s not the case you need to let them know what they can do to better serve your needs.

Measuring the Success of Mentorship

Ultimately, the mentor’s goal should be to put themselves out of business, making it possible for the school team to function well and continue to make progress even in their absence. If the mentor has done their job, the following will be evident:

- The team can run a productive meeting on its own.
- The team is proud of their work.
- The team makes an effort to reach out to other schools, sharing wisdom and seeking advice.
- People outside the team are excited about the project and want to participate.
- The community is aware of the team’s efforts.
- The team continues to establish new goals, looking ahead towards building project sustainability.

By assembling a team, developing an action plan, and seeking the support of a mentor you’ve laid the groundwork for changing your school culture. The next chapter highlights the lessons that school teams learned about making comprehensive and lasting changes to their school food, nutrition education and physical activity environment.

Fruitful Facilitation in Ferrisburgh

Choosing a mentor is a bit like choosing a mate, you need to find someone who the team can communicate well with, who will bring out the best in the team and who will support the team as it reaches new heights. As the school team from Ferrisburgh Central discovered, finding the right fit goes a long way towards constructive collaboration. Of course, they started out on the right foot, too. Three elements came together. The team includes several seasoned teachers who have worked together for many years, establishing a foundation

“There wasn’t a lot of ego. They shared a vision, with everyone taking equal ownership of the work and in their success.”

— JEN CIRILLO, MENTOR
FERRISBURGH CENTRAL SCHOOL

of trust. Secondly, since the staff culture entails committee involvement and frequent meetings, staff had a comfortable structure and process already in place. The trifecta was that their mentor, Jen Cirillo, the Director of Professional Development at Shelburne Farms, was a member of the Ferrisburgh community, creating instant familiarity.

Still, there were several other factors that fostered a productive climate for teamwork at Ferrisburgh Central. From the start, they worked with Jen to establish clear expectations. They would meet monthly from 3:30 to 5:30pm. Each person had a job assignment: the fifth grade teacher on the team became the committee chair. A parent and board member prepared



The Ferrisburgh Central school team met with their mentor, Jen Cirillo (back, second from left) during the NEI summer program

the minutes and sent reminder emails about next meetings and things to do. Jen clearly defined what she could offer which included bringing her computer along to document the team’s best practice information. Clearly defining their roles led to fewer miscommunications and less conflict. They also decided as a group to focus on one really tangible goal that would serve as evidence of their work, getting a cooking cart for the school. Having a focal point gave direction to their conversations.

In this case, the mentor brought much more to the table than just documentation skills. Trained in the art of facilitation, Jen was a professional facilitator for many years and understood that her primary job was to show up and create a space for the team to have a conversation. Using the best practice template as a framework (see p. 104) she was able to encour-

age them through the process of talking about their practices, something that likely wouldn't have happened without her. Jen's presence during this process also helped to keep the team accountable for their tasks. The mentor also made sure that each meeting had structure, with a clear beginning and closure at the end. Jen's other top tips for facilitation include:

- Listen to the group to find out what is most important to them. Are they focused on results? On engaging in a process? On building relationships?
- Help clarify people's thinking by putting it on paper or typing it into a computer. Ask for clarification can help them be purposeful about what they are saying.
- Help them do *their* work, rather than asking them to do *your* work. Don't have an agenda, just start the conversation.
- Be a little bit of a cheerleader to spark their enthusiasm.
- Have some conversation starters in your back pocket. For example, if someone proposes an idea that isn't well received, be prepared to ask the group "What do we like about the idea?" or "Can you give me some warm feedback? How about some cold feedback?"

The mentor's current work in the education field also qualified her to provide ample examples with details from other schools, backed up by her knowledge of state and national initiatives. If she couldn't provide an instant response she willingly researched answers and followed back up with the team in a timely man-

ner, a much-appreciated trait.

Almost as important as a mentor's knowledge and experience is his or her attitude. "Our mentor was very approachable, positive and fun," says Judy Elson from the Ferrisburgh Central team. "She is easy going, does not get bogged down in too much detail, understands that we have

full plates as most of us are teachers, and respects the work we do." Provid-

"She was always there with us and she felt very much a part of our team."

— JUDY ELSON,
FERRISBURGH CENTRAL SCHOOL

ing an encouraging and safe environment for collaboration made it possible for the team to brainstorm, plan and implement practices that improved the school's culture. For example, increasing the amount of physical activity students have during the day by 15 minutes through the implementation of a classroom movement tracking form.

Unfortunately, the experience wasn't all roses. One staff member was required by the principal to participate on the team. This person reluctantly attended meetings, often sitting away from the group. This team member not only didn't make a positive contribution she actu-

Leadership Training

The mentor who worked with the Ferrisburgh team participated in a Facilitative Leadership training through Interaction Associates (see Resources). This group offers workshops and online learning to help leaders develop facilitation skills that can improve the effectiveness of a team, project or organization.



Ferrisburgh students participate in a field trip to a local apple orchard.

ally demonstrated behaviors that impeded the progress of the team. The mentor was called on to use her mediation skills to attempt to resolve the situation. This involved repeatedly and politely inviting the member to join the group. When that didn't work, Jen spoke to her privately, trying to identify and rectify the issue. Finally, when all else failed, the team and mentor decided it was best to just continue their work without her cooperation.

When asked if there was anything they wish their mentor had done differently the Ferrisburgh team leader responded "Can she keep working with us? We are going to miss having her at the table this year." That seems like good evidence that having a mentor on board was a positive experience for this team!

Theory in a nutshell:

Every school has a culture. Since traditional approaches reign, creating significant change in school culture requires patience. Taking a strategic approach will increase the likelihood that nutrition, nutrition education and physical activity practices will be positively impacted.

Changing the Culture

Cause for Change

Surveying the school nutrition, nutrition education and/or physical activity scene (see *Taking the Pulse*, p. 15) will shed light on the areas of your school culture which would benefit from some attention. Ideally, you've utilized the Action Planning Template to help prioritize your school's needs (see *Tools & Templates*, p. 92). There are choices to make and priorities to order: Will you devote energy to boosting lunch participation or cultivating curriculum connections, to increasing movement or supporting staff wellness? Where will you decide to direct your attention? School teams participating in the Nutrition Education Institute (NEI) identified some key components to keep in mind for improving your chances of success at shifting school culture.

Setting the Stage for Sweeping Change

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

Having involved and supportive administrators can pave the way for transforming your school's culture, from granting a spot on the highly-coveted staff meeting agenda to providing release time for professional development. In contrast, school teams that lacked administrative participation said that it significantly hindered their ability to effectively shift the school environment. Most importantly, putting their stamp of approval on your proposal sends a clear message to the staff that this initiative is a school-wide priority. This "push from the top" calls everyone's attention to the matter and sets the stage for implementing the changes you have outlined.

While it may not be realistic (or necessary) for your principal to show support by attending every team meeting, there are plenty of other ways she or he can back the team up. For example, administrators can:

- *Carve out time, preferably during school hours, for staff to attend meetings, plan activities and curriculum or develop new initiatives.* What participants valued most about NEI was the opportunity

"Although we did not think in the beginning that we were doing all that much to create an impact and change attitudes, we realize that there is quite a bit of activity going on. Upon reflection, we realize we are slowly but surely having an impact on students and staff."

— SALISBURY NEI TEAM

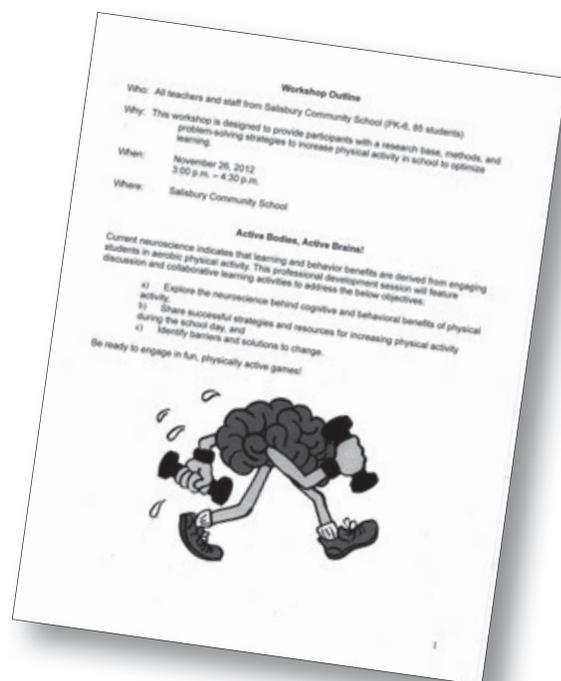
"Administrative presence and support is vital to the success of the initiative. They are the ones with the power, through scheduling, money, release time, professional development opportunities, to help bring the plan to actualization."

— KEENAN HALEY, SHARON

"The time spent dreaming and implementing is vital."

to have dedicated time to focus on brainstorming and planning with peers. Providing these opportunities can make it possible for staff to participate in the initiative.

- **Allocate time and finances for professional growth.** Many teachers and food service staff lack the knowledge and, therefore, confidence to teach about nutrition or physical activity. Providing release time and funding for professional development can diminish this barrier. Some administrators even mandate a greater degree of investment from school staff by requiring a certain number of hours of professional development devoted to these topics.
- **Improve access for staff to relevant resources.** Inviting outside experts to present during inservices can create connections to nutrition- and physical-activity-related information, activities, curriculum, and funding. Several NEI schools invited Lindsay Simpson, a Physical Education Consultant with the Agency of Education, to lead an inservice on the impact of and opportunities for movement throughout the school day.
- **Provide access to the school staff and board.** The Nutrition Education Committee from Ferrisburgh Central School, for example, presented their Action Plan to the school board at its monthly meeting, building awareness and buy-in for their planned efforts.
- **Hire knowledgeable and qualified staff.** A supportive administrator will see job openings as an opportunity to hire individuals who will not only support but advance your cause. Barre City Elementary and Middle School vetted potential employees with this in mind and ended up hiring experienced cafeteria staff with the ability to add diversity to the menu. The result? The rest of the staff is asking for recipes and students are trying more new foods. Ideally, administrators will also see to it that you have *enough* staff to accomplish your goals. Recognizing it as a necessity in order for the kitchen to meet growing demands, the Vergennes Union Elementary School principal put more hours into the kitchen budget to go towards staffing.
- **Create community connections.** Sending out messages to families in the school newsletter or blog not only keeps parents informed, when they come from the principal they validate the work of your team and build support. At the start of the school year, the Hinesburg Community School principal drafted a let-



Outline for professional development workshop offered to Salisbury Community School staff.

Tip!

On top of contracted professional development requirements, Richmond Elementary School offers voluntary sessions that take place once a month before school, allowing staff to delve deeper into a topic of interest without overcommitting.

ter for the school newsletter, sharing information about their NEI experience and related plans for the upcoming year.

- **Clearly define expectations for staff.** By taking time during a staff meeting or including language in the staff manual, a supportive principal can establish rules of conduct that support a healthy school culture and emphasize the important role that teachers have as role models for students. In Richmond, the Assistant Superintendent sent around a message to all staff about being mindful of their actions around students regarding soda and coffee mugs. Simply put, the message said “FOOD: To your health!!! Do you drink soda in front of students? Even diet soda? Think about our role modeling, I know the soda might taste good, but we are role models, and the students do soak up everything they see.”

Administrative bumps in the road

What can you do if your administrator is less than enthusiastic about your plans? For starters, make sure to include them in the process right from the beginning. In addition, they are more likely to jump on board if you have tried to align your goals with those of the school and district. Do policies exist that support the changes you are proposing? It may be that your school or district policy is neutral at best and you decide that a priority is to revise it to more effectively guide the practices you are hoping to implement. Find recommendations and examples for how to do this in *Revising and Implementing a Wellness Policy* (p. 63). In general, if you encounter reluctance consider scaling back, identifying smaller goals you can work towards while winning over your administrator.

STAFF PARTICIPATION

Having an administrator who fosters opportunities for staff to seek professional development, educate themselves, plan, and implement changes will go a long way towards getting more staff participation. School teams we worked with made these suggestions to increase involvement of school staff:

- **Build buy-in:** Identify key players and solicit their support at the start. Draw on excited teachers, staff, and administrators but don't be afraid to pull in those who are skeptical of change. This might be just the thing you need to convert a non-believer, as was the case in one NEI school. By participating on the school team a veteran physical education teacher went from reluctant

“We need to promote the idea that we are working together to educate the ‘whole’ child, beyond the ‘core’ subjects.”

— DIANE BENWARE, SALISBURY

to enthusiastic over the course of a school year, ultimately spending an entire sick day making 90 bean bags for a nutrition-related PE game! To engage staff in designing changes consider giving them a voice by conducting a survey to identify values and priorities.

- **Communicate clearly.** Just because you are spending many hours planning this initiative doesn't mean that school staff knows what you are up to or why. If possible, get on the agenda for a monthly staff meeting and create a concise, informative and, ideally, interactive presentation. Be as transparent as possible, illustrating the importance of what you are proposing and how you hope they will participate.
- **Foster understanding and respect.** If your goal is to have certain values reflected across the school environment it is critical for all staff — including classroom teachers, food service staff and physical education teachers — to understand one another's roles and responsibilities as well as what you are trying to accom-

Physical Activity in the Classroom Survey, January 2013

Dear Classroom Teachers,

Your school Health Committee is collecting information to determine your interest. **Please respond to this email!**

We have been working on 2 wellness items that will soon be available for your use: a traveling cooking cart and physical activity kits for each classroom.

How would you like to receive information about these items and future wellness related items or activities?

- email
- bulletin board
- 7 am meeting for those interested in a specific topic

We are also collecting information on any physical activity that you incorporate into the classroom (exercise breaks, games etc). **Please jot a short note about any such activity breaks that you take with your kids.**

Thanks much, Linda

The Richmond Elementary school team asked teachers to complete this simple survey to determine how many were taking physical activity breaks during the day.

Swanton Schools Staff

When their principal earmarked one hour of an August inservice for the Swanton School team to present their plan, they took full advantage. They began by describing what they had learned during the NEI three-day intensive meeting. They shared their mission statement and the goals that resulted from the accompanying team planning time, and they highlighted opportunities for students and staff to get involved. The team also described the federally-mandated changes to the school lunch program. They left plenty of time for questions, providing staff members with a venue to voice concerns about previous changes.

As a follow-up, the team requested time during an October staff meeting to provide all teachers and support staff with activity bins containing cards describing short physical activities. They also provided teachers with binders containing information on the produce they were serving as part of the Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program (FFVP). Providing information and resources created yet another opportunity for the team to stress the role of physical activity and nutrition in the Swanton school environment. It also opened the door for staff to share how they were already incorporating movement into their classrooms throughout the day. The team learned

about random dance parties in a kindergarten classroom, walks on the Rail Trail, and how second graders use activity sticks to "get the wiggles out."

What impact did their presentation make? Afterwards, one third-grade teacher shared some creative ideas, such as "pretend you are walking through piles of gum," for younger grades to incorporate as they transition from one activity to another. Another teacher reported that including movement in her daily routine has helped keep her hyperactive students calm and focused. The team isn't done educating the staff yet. Plans for the upcoming school year include inviting state Physical Education Consultant Lindsay Simpson to lead an interactive training on how physical activity affects the brain.



The Swanton team used a Power Point presentation to educate staff about their work.



Menu for the staff wellness luncheon in Vergennes

plish. Staff who know and empathize with one another are more likely to work together to achieve a common goal. If possible, provide opportunities for staff to shadow each other or give a staff presentation to raise awareness. The Vergennes team participated in a unique approach, contributing to a district-wide staff luncheon for 200 people. The luncheon menu was designed to reflect changes in school nutrition guidelines, creating an opportunity for everyone to enjoy delicious food while learning more about the school food service program. In addition to building awareness, they built enthusiasm, with many staff requesting that recipes be posted on the district website!

- Understand and be respectful of limitations.** There are many demands placed on school staff, including food service, from meeting contractual obligations to attending to individual student needs. There's no way around it; this affects the amount of time a staff member can devote to any new initiative. Don't take it personally — continue to offer opportunities, large and small, for staff to participate.

“Remember to start small, go slow. Do not overwhelm the non-believers. Stay open to the non-believer input. They may come on board after you've given up on them.”
- Coordinate with other committees.** To avoid duplication of effort, research which, if any, existing school committees share a common purpose. For example if one of your goals is to integrate more nutrition education into the curriculum consider assigning

Richmond Raises the Bar

Every Wednesday after school staff members and parents at Richmond Elementary School meet as a running club. Participants pay \$80 to Fleet Feet for coaching, incentive gifts and entry to a 5K “graduation” race. The club is divided into two groups, one beginner and one advanced, so coaches can tailor their training to the different levels. Each week participants are pushed to increase their distance, building up the stamina and confidence to compete. Participation has increased each session and knowing the rest of the club is expecting them motivates members to show up week after week.

Half the staff is also participating in the PATH program, a voluntary wellness program in which each individual chooses their own personal activity and works toward a goal to improve their health. For example, several staff

chose to wear pedometers and try to increase the number of steps they were taking each day. Talk about role modeling! Students are always asking them “How many steps do you have?”

Richmond didn't limit their focus to fitness. The food service manager led a “healthy snack ideas” class during a staff meeting. Taking the opportunity to showcase their new cooking cart she prepared several simple, nutritious snacks that staff could easily prepare for themselves. Although she received rave reviews it wasn't until the next “Brekkie with a Techie” meeting flier came out, advertising in bold that “free healthy breakfast treats” would be served, that she realized her presentation had made an impact. Now, more and more staff approach her for ideas before all-school or staff celebrations.

a team member to attend curriculum meetings to identify opportunities for merging missions.

- **Do the groundwork.** We've already established that school staff are busy people. To save time, do the homework for them by finding out about and sharing related professional development opportunities, curriculum or resources. You can also put a plug in to administration to encourage their participation in professional development or make necessary purchases.
- **Hold them accountable.** Many teachers participating in NEI found it useful to be held accountable for accomplishing certain tasks. Having a deadline or goal made them more likely to implement activities in the classroom and document the impact.
- **Nurture staff needs.** Instead of just expecting staff to *play* role models, offer opportunities for them *become* role models. From hosting a nutritious snacking presentation for staff to organizing a walking program, investing in the well-being of your staff sends the important message that you care. See Richmond Raises the Bar side box for ideas.

BETTER COMMUNICATION WITH THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY



The Currier Elementary school team created fun signage to help students make good choices at lunch.

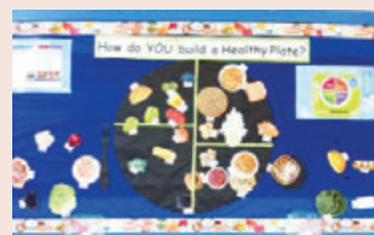
It is also important to keep families in the know, giving them the information and tools they need to support the work you are doing during the school day. Across the board, NEI teams found that communication, especially about the new USDA guidelines, was highly effective at getting the community on board. Whichever

of the following methods of communication you choose, be sure to put your messages out in a respectful, nonjudgmental way.

- **Send notices home.**
- **Create and post videos of school events.** The Richmond Elementary School principal not only attended their first annual Family Wellness Night, he also took footage of the event and created a video set to music that was posted on the school's blog.
- **Submit articles to the school newsletter or town paper.**

Tips!

- The **Ferrisburgh Central School** team gave classroom teachers surveys and tracking forms (see p. 110) to identify and increase movement in the classroom. After completing the requisite one month of tracking, most teachers found that physical activity was integral to their classroom work and made it an ongoing practice.
- In **Barre** the school nurse meets with each family at kindergarten screenings to discuss their Wellness & Nutrition policy and to promote healthy eating. Families are given a handout packed with healthy snack suggestions and tips for getting kids to eat more vegetables. By getting this information to the caregivers of their youngest students they can support the early development of healthy lifetime habits.



- **Vergennes** created an interactive MyPlate bulletin board outside the cafeteria, prompting students to place different healthy foods into their correct food group. Several schools created "Food of the Month" boards, with pictures, nutrition facts and information about where the food is grown locally.

Eat Like a Bear



In Richmond, the “Food of the Month” for January was Alaskan Salmon. On Alaska Day, with support from their Farm to School program, students were challenged to “eat like a bear” while taste-testing salmon cakes (a vegetarian option was available). Captain Tony, a local resident who spends his summers fishing in Alaska, supplied the fish and visited with each class, giving a slide show and answering questions. Posters adorned the cafeteria walls and several classes conducted related lessons and activities. The response? Students enthusiastically tried the salmon, some for the first time, and eagerly shared their experience with their families. Many parents reported making the salmon cake recipe that was sent home because their kids couldn’t stop raving about them. The event was a hit! One student asked the food service manager “Can we have Captain Tony for the Food of the Month again?” Captain Tony declared, “spending the day at Richmond Elementary School was one of the highlights of my year.”



Captain Tony, a local resident who spends his summers fishing in Alaska, said “spending the day at Richmond Elementary School was one of the highlights of my year.”

- **Design displays.** Create eye-catching and educational displays around school to educate staff, students and visitors. Most NEI schools used bulletin boards to convey information about everything from what was for lunch and serving sizes to nutrition facts and the food groups.
- **Send surveys.** Give kids and parents a voice by sending home simple and direct surveys related to the work you are doing. This practice not only builds buy-in, it assists you in designing a plan that meets the needs of your school community.
- **Never miss an opportunity to communicate directly.** Keep tabs on school events and have a presence when possible.
- **Plan a school-wide event and make it a big deal!** If you don’t already have one in mind, look to national events for inspiration. For example, National Walk to School Week, usually in October, may provide the perfect springboard for launching more physical activity at your school.

PERSEVERANCE

Lastly, remember that accomplishing a true cultural shift takes time. The NEI timeframe spanned one school year and teams unanimously agreed this kind of change takes more time than that. The key to success is to take it slowly: have reasonable expectations and set achievable goals. Taking the time to evaluate the current situation

“It is more satisfying to do a few things quite well rather than many things only so-so. Realize that 5 to 7 years of work is necessary to create any significant systemic change.”

— DIANE BENWARE, SALISBURY

and identifying and prioritizing areas in need of change allows you to take a scaled approach rather than attempting to conquer everything all at once. This method has at least two benefits: It doesn’t overwhelm the members on your team and it gives your community a chance to see and slowly gain respect for what is happening. Accomplishing a

few things well (rather than many things not so well) creates a positive attitude about change and helps administrators, staff and parents to understand the

“I feel that our action plan is moving along slowly and steadily, but it is moving and it’s thoughtful.”

value of, and become more willing to, support the cause. Remember, while it’s a good idea to look to other

schools as examples, their change likely didn’t happen all at once either. If you ask, you’ll learn that they’ve spent years getting to where they are.

10 Successful Strategies for Shifting School-Wide Culture

Just as your school culture and needs are unique, so are the strategies that will prove successful at making change happen. NEI schools reported that the following strategies significantly influenced the implementation of their action plans. As you move forward, consider these tips and ideas from participating NEI schools in the context of *your* school setting:

1. **Student-driven activities:** With guidance from a team member and teacher, one class of Swanton students produced an episode of their “What’s News” program on the changes in their lunch program and school-wide goals for integrating cooking and physical activity into the classroom. Using borrowed equipment from Northwest Public Access Television and sage advice from the school’s technology integration specialist, students honed their questioning, writing, communication, and collaborative skills while interviewing peers, developing scripts and recording the show which was used as a venue for educating students, staff and parents. Up next? Public service announcements, included like commercials for the news program, which will focus on physical activity and nutrition.
2. **Taste tests:** Across the board NEI schools confirm that taste tests, from hummus and kale to celeriac and jícama, provide a safe environment for students to try new foods and provide constructive feedback, giving them the opportunity to feel ownership about and inform menu choices. In addition to

Tip!

Swanton students designed a playground survey aimed at assessing how students felt about recess activities. After collecting and analyzing the data, they discovered that most

students were dissatisfied with their options. In response, they researched easy-to-implement games, gathered directions and created a wish list of simple equipment. They sent a letter (see p. 113) and met with the principal to share their survey, data and recommendations. As a result, a new tetherball set was purchased and the playground supervisors now allow students to alternate between two different playgrounds.

Playground/ Recess Survey Fall 2012

Classroom: _____ Grade: _____
Are you a boy or a girl? _____

The purpose of this survey is for Kaleidoscope to gather information that will help us to address recess and how to make it more enjoyable for kids, increase opportunities for physical activity, support efforts to improve our playground, and to provide students with an opportunity to have a voice.

When you give your answers, please take time to think about reasonable answers that will make sense for our school. Think about cost, weather, storage and providing opportunities for as many kids as possible.

- 1 What do you like to do at recess on the soccer field/playground?

- 1 Do you think there are enough options for things to do on the soccer field/ playground for recess?

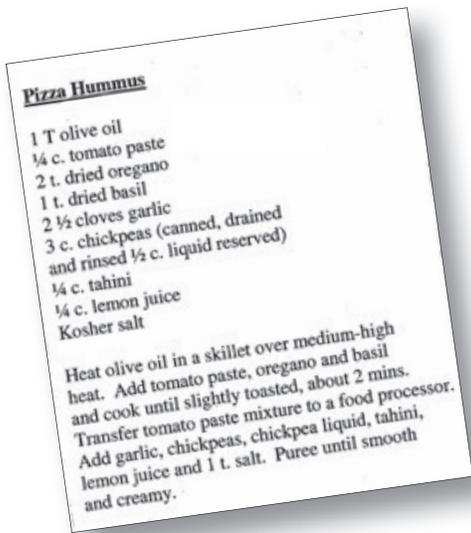
- 1 What kinds of things do you like to do when you play outside either at school or at home? This will help us to generate ideas.

- 1 Are you able to play on the "middle playground" during recess?

- 1 If your answer to #4 is "no," would you like to be able to play on the "middle playground" during recess?



Students at Hinesburg Community School help serve lunch.



Students at Currier Memorial School prefer the chickpea hummus pizza over the traditional tomato sauce version.

“Sometimes I think I am going to not like it, but then I try it and I like it!”

Kindergarten students at Richmond Elementary taste test the coleslaw they made.



increasing exposure to new foods, taste tests encourage students to think critically and have conversations about food. The results can sometimes be surprising. At Currier Memorial School, staff and students voted in favor of the chickpea pizza over a more traditional



Ferrisburgh Central School students taste test celeriac.

tomato sauce version. The Swanton School team learned that students are more receptive to new foods if they are introduced by an enthusiastic teacher or staff member. Students also respond favorably when the food service staff says things like “I really need your help with this; could you let me know what you think?” Taste tests are especially effective when linked to other parts of the school day. In Richmond, for example, the “Food of the Month” was cabbage and students taste-tested coleslaw in the cafeteria, the same recipe that kindergarten students made in their enrichment classroom. This approach provides multiple touch points for students to interact with a new food, making them more likely to incorporate it into their eating repertoire. (Find school taste-testing tips in *Tools & Templates*, p. 115).

“I really like this! I would eat this if we had it for lunch. It needs a little more spice though.”

— STUDENT, SWANTON SCHOOL

3. **Farm to School:** New federal guidelines paved the way towards offering more fruits and vegetables in school lunch. While some expressed concern about meshing farm to school with these new guidelines, NEI schools saw this as an opportunity to ramp up their endeavors, increasing the number of local options on the menu. By taking the time to draw connections to where and how food is grown, most schools noted that participation increases on days when local food is served. Although some schools faced challenges when trying to buy from local farmers, by creating a relationship with a farming group in northern Vermont they now have local food delivered once a week. As part of their farm to school program, Ferrisburgh students grow greens in the school greenhouse and the food service staff incorporates them into the lunch offerings.



Students in the greenhouse at Ferrisburgh Central School.

4. **Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program (FFVP):** This national program, administered by the Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service, introduces students to a variety of produce that they might not have otherwise had the opportunity to sample. Selected schools receive reimbursement for the cost of making free fresh fruits and vegetables available to students during the school day. When Vergennes Union Elementary

"I love Thursday because it is the day we get to try new foods and our teacher tries them with us."

School began offering FFVP at their school only half the students would eat the produce, with classrooms sending the rest back for composting. Participation drastically increased after volunteers took the time

to visit each classroom and role model for teachers how to conduct a taste test. Now, once a week each classroom has an official teacher-led taste test. Students see the featured fresh fruit or vegetable whole, learn about its nutrition, and taste the food. In addition to increasing fruit and vegetable consumption, they've found that it is a great way to support their nutrition education lessons.

Barre Goes Big with Fundraising

Barre City Elementary and Middle School organizes only one fundraising event a year. It seems risky for a school to put all of their fundraising eggs in one basket until you learn that this event has raised up to \$36,000 for the school! The annual school-wide Walk-Run-Fun fundraiser takes place in two phases. First every student, grades Pre-K through 8th, has two weeks to seek sponsors who make a flat donation to the student. Last year more than half the student body raised money. Teachers help to incentivize students by giving concrete examples for how the money will be used, for example to support their class field trip to Boston or the Montshire Museum. At the end of the two-week period they celebrate with the main event, the Walk-Run-Fun!

The event takes place during the school day so all students can participate. An advertisement in the local paper raises awareness and invites community members to attend. Each student receives a hat which is color-coded for their classroom, building team spirit and fostering friendly competition. The day begins with each class coming outside to warm up with a Jazzercise instructor for 10 minutes. Then, serenaded by a DJ, the students walk or run the course set up around the edge of the football field. Finally, everybody gets a healthy snack as they cheer on their fellow schoolmates.

Students are rewarded with prizes for the amount of donations they've collected. Prizes, such as drawstring bags or water bottles emblazoned with the school logo, are given out to each student who reaches the \$50, \$75 and \$100 level. One student in Pre-K through 4th and another in 5th through 8th who raise the most money receive grand prizes, from a ride in a limo with friends to an indoor rock climbing certificate. There are also parties for each class that raises the most money in their grade level. These have always been pizza parties but now they are switching to healthier alternatives, such as sledding parties with a healthy snack. The funds raised are donated to each class to use for field trips and enrichment. A percentage is also given to the specials (for example, art, music, physical education, technology education and family and consumer sciences) to enhance their programs. In the past, they have used the money to invite artists to the school or purchase new equipment.

5. **Activity-based fundraising:** It's almost impossible to create a healthy school culture while raising funds through unhealthy activities or products. By taking a creative, non-food, healthy food or physical activity approach to fundraising, you send the loud and clear message that you mean business. Barre City raised \$28,000 from their non-food 2012 Walk-Run-Fun annual fundraiser (see sidebar)! Salisbury created a FarmRaiser, a fundraising event that promotes local eating by providing a CSA pickup at their school in the fall. In addition to raising needed funds, this design helps them enhance the connection between families and their farm to school work.



The salad bar (including this fruit and veggie bar) at Hinesburg Community School is available to all students purchasing hot lunch.

6. **Meeting the new school nutrition guidelines:**

Increasing the fruit and vegetable requirement in school lunches placed the cafeteria center stage for many schools' efforts. One factor that had particular influence was making the salad bar available to all students purchasing hot lunch. Empowering students to make their own decisions about what and how much to take had a positive impact on consumption. In addition the initial, mandated changes served as a springboard for new ideas and programs in other areas of the school. As an example, several schools found that the increase

in fruit and vegetable consumption elevated the importance of integrating the school garden into the curriculum.

7. **Professional development:** Creating change necessitates equipping teachers, food service and other school staff with the skills and tools they need to be successful. Inviting outside experts into

the school to share their knowledge and resources can lead to changes in practice. Lindsay Simpson, a Physical Education Consultant from the Agency of Education, led a workshop during the summer meeting of NEI. School teams, such as Salisbury, quickly took her up on her offer to visit individual schools and present a two-hour all staff training on movement and the impact of physical activity on learning. This jump-started movement in their school. Salisbury invited VT Food Education Every Day (VT FEED) to visit and model for teachers how to conduct taste tests and activities related to changes in the national school lunch guidelines (see “Reading, Writing, Arugula,” in *Tools & Templates*, p. 121).



When Ferrisburgh Community School wanted to begin a composting program they sought the help of their experienced neighbors at Charlotte Central School, attending a composting workshop and taking home the important information they needed to get started.

8. **Curriculum integration:** More than a couple of the NEI schools referenced a wish to hire a dedicated nutrition education person to guide their efforts. Despite this unfulfilled desire, most made strides toward greater integration. For starters, Currier Memorial began scrutinizing their curriculum, searching for ways to use nutrition education to teach other subjects. Ferrisburgh Central has tasked the teachers on their team with the responsibility of getting the message out to their colleagues that change is coming.

“Think of everything that you do as education or opportunities to educate. Every meal is a learning experience.”

— ANNE COHN
FERRISBURGH CENTRAL SCHOOL

9. **Counting on the community:** All of the NEI schools found that there just wasn’t enough time to accomplish their goals. A logical solution is to seek support from the families in your school community. Strapped with the increasing demands of meeting the new nutrition guidelines, applying for a Healthier U.S. School Challenge Award and getting the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program off the ground, the food service manager in Vergennes was more than thrilled when a parent volunteered to help create menus. In addition to the some much-needed support, this experience helped raise awareness in the community about the important job that school food service has.



Hinesburg students and parents help prepare food for a Harvest Dinner.

“Helping with the menus has really opened up my eyes to the challenges of school food service. I had no idea there were so many pieces to the puzzle of the lunch tray.”

— PARENT VOLUNTEER
VERGENNES UNION ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Finding Funding



Richmond Elementary School received a grant from Fuel Up to Play 60 to fund a cooking cart.

With school budgets becoming increasingly limited, even the most supportive administrator is likely to balk at a request to fund your efforts. Luckily, with a little research and networking you should be able to identify some good fits for funding agencies.

Salisbury was awarded a mini-grant from Vermont-NEA, receiving \$500 to create ten “movement boxes” for each classroom and the Learning Lab. Each box was outfitted with a copy of the *Smart Moves* DVD, laminated activity cards and props. Classroom teachers, the Special Education department, the guidance counselor, and the physical education teacher participated in a training to learn how to provide regular body breaks throughout the school day. Each participant received a box.

Hinesburg and Richmond received funding from Fuel Up to Play 60, a program founded by the National Dairy Council and NFL, in collaboration with USDA. Hinesburg is using their funds to offer more taste-testing in the cafeteria, brain breaks in the classroom, and apples for snack. Richmond assembled a state-of-the-art cooking cart and installed a “Fitness Path” around the perimeter of the school.

food as a reward, deciding as a result to offer non-food rewards for the summer reading program.

- A conversation between a parent and a team member where the parent said, “Well you’ve really done it now.”

The school garden was integrated into the summer reading program at Vergennes Union Elementary.

10. **Improving the cafeteria atmosphere:** After considering the factors that influence participation, such as noise levels, interaction with food service and how much time it takes to be served, several NEI schools focused their attention on cafeteria climate, creating a more fun and inviting atmosphere. To freshen up their look, Hinesburg Community hung food art created by Burlington artist Bonnie Acker. They also added some al-literation to the menu with the addition of Taco Tuesday. At Currier Memorial, teachers are sitting side-by-side with students, observing what’s being eaten, listening to what they have to say about food and role modeling healthy eating. Everyone agrees this has created a calmer, more peaceful eating climate for all. Richmond added a second serving line, decreasing wait time.

Spotting Success

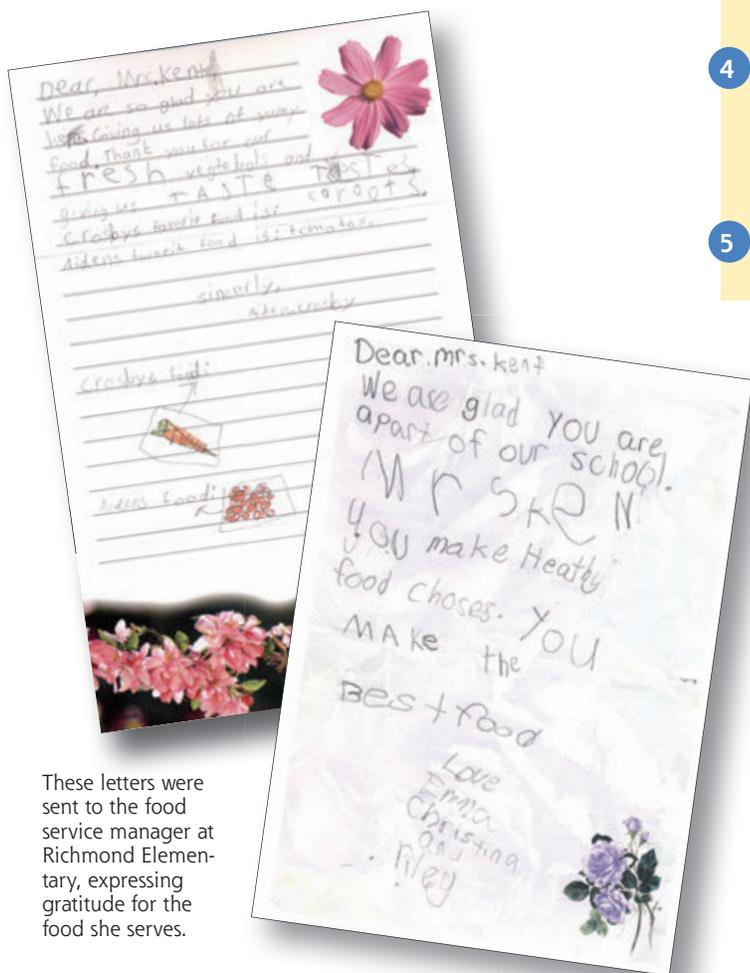
What does success look like? How will you know your efforts are effective? From catching a glimpse of movement in the classroom to seeing a “picky eater” try jícama, success looks different at every school. Here’s how some school teams knew they were having an impact:

- They saw a decrease in sugar-laden snacks coming in to school for celebrations.
- The parent-teacher group approached the team to confirm the school’s policy on fundraisers and the use of



The team member was concerned, until the parent explained that when he offered to take his daughters to McDonald's for lunch they turned him down, giving nutritional reasons they had learned in school. The parent was actually really impressed!

You'll likely need more than this type of anecdotal evidence to state your case to administrators, funders and parents. Documenting your practices helps to identify what works and who's being impacted. NEI schools found the Best Practice template (p. 104) to be a useful tool in tracking progress. Plan to devote time during your team meetings to record information. Asking team members to come prepared to contribute saves time. Moving forward, you can use this information to determine which strategies are worth repeating and which need modification.



These letters were sent to the food service manager at Richmond Elementary, expressing gratitude for the food she serves.

Steps to Changing School Culture

When considering a culture change, keep these steps in mind:

- 1 **Lay the groundwork!** Be transparent with students, staff and the community about what you are trying to accomplish. Make sure to state your case, highlighting the impact of good food, nutrition education, and physical activity on child development and student learning.
- 2 Don't lose sight of the big picture (develop a plan with long-range goals) but **establish smaller, more specific and attainable short-term goals** you can work towards along the way. The action plan template (*Tools & Templates*, p. 92) is designed to help you do this effectively.
- 3 **Discuss and document progress at regular meetings** and use this as a springboard for planning next steps. The Best Practice template (p. 104) is a useful tool for keeping track of your activities and their impact. Be sure to celebrate and promote your success.
- 4 **Network with other schools** that are further along in the process or professionals who can help you access the available resources and curriculum you need to move to the next level. Another way to accomplish this is to work with a mentor.
- 5 Be patient! Making a cultural shift takes time.

"Our formal curriculum has not been changed but our faculty is now fully on board with the idea of teaching children healthy and sustainable eating habits."

— SARAH ANDERSON,
FERRISBURGH CENTRAL SCHOOL

Barre Takes on Celebrations

Faced with new federal guidelines calling for, among other changes, a reduction in the fat and sugar content of foods being served to students, Barre City Elementary and Middle School decided to examine their birthday and holiday celebration practices. Although the nutrition requirements are intended to regulate meals being served in the cafeteria, in an effort to create a healthy school culture Barre City decided to use the measures to establish a new celebration policy. As is true in our society, it is typical practice to mark a special occasion at school by sharing food. While this tradition is touching, the nutritional quality of these communal snacks is often deficient, filling kids up with sugar- and fat-laden baked goods with alarming regularity. Rather than ban celebrations the school decided to draft a policy that makes students feel special while promoting positive choices.

Seeking to send a different message, the administration became actively involved in implementing the new policy. The co-principals collaborated on a letter informing parents about the changes. Here's an excerpt (the full letter can be found in *Tools & Templates*, p. 129):

"To help support these federal nutrition requirements and to do our part to reduce the incidence of childhood obesity and health issues such as juvenile diabetes, we are working closely with Mr. George Mackey, the manager of Fitz Vogt, our food service provider. In collaboration with George, rather than have treats such as cupcakes, brownies

BCE/MS April 2013
 Food Service Director: George Mackey 802.476.9441
 Registered Dietitian: Pat Harrison

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
1 Chicken Parmesan Sandwich-White Wheat Bun Green Salad Fruit Milk	2 Minnie Mouse's Shepherd's Pie Stovetop Broccoli White Wheat Roll Fruit Milk	3 Roast Turkey Whipped Sweet Potatoes Green Beans White Wheat Roll Fruit Milk	4 Breakfast for Lunch! Scrambled Eggs & Cheese Sausage French Toast Fruit Smoothie Fruit Milk	5 Chicken & Crisp Vegetables in a White Wheat Roll with Fruit Dressing Fruit Milk
6 Happy Joe Jr. on White Wheat Bun with White Cheddar in Carrot Slacks Fruit Milk	7 Lasagna White Wheat Garlic Bread Mixed Green Salad Fruit Milk	8 Chicken & Rice Dinner Chicken & Rice Dinner Lasagna with Cheese & Sausage Fruit Milk	9 New York Style Cheesecake Fruit Milk	10 Homemade Mac & Cheese Peas & Carrots Fruit Milk
11 Grilled Ham & Cheese Creamy Tomato Soup Strawberry Dressing Fruit Milk	12 BBQ Pork Sandwich on White Wheat Bun Creamy Dressing Fruit Milk	13 Happy Birthday! Crispy Chicken Fingers Green Peas Vegetables Macaroni Fruit, Milk	14 Sub Sandwich Chicken & Cheese with Fruit Dressing Fruit Milk	15 Whole Wheat Spaghetti White Wheat Sauce Garlic Breadsticks Green Salad Fruit Milk
22 VACATION	23 VACATION	24 VACATION	25 VACATION	26 VACATION
29 Cheeseburger on White Wheat Bun with White Cheddar, Tomato & Pickle Tater Tots Fruit Milk	30 Turkey & Cheddar Sandwich Green Salad Fruit Milk			31 New Orleans! Chicken orzo Spaghetti Pizza Orange Esmerbert

Dietitian's Corner:
FOR COLOR, FLAVOR, HEALTH, ADD HERBS! HERBALicious!
 A sprig of parsley, a rosemary "leaf", some mixed chives, a leaf of basil - fresh herbs can add a special dimension to the meal. Not only do they add a touch of class as a garnish, they add subtle flavor and they are good for you! Many provide health benefits with antioxidants, essential oils, vitamins and minerals that help us to stay healthy and fight off disease. Plant a few herbs in your garden this spring and harvest the benefits!

DAILY OFFERINGS:
Salad Bar: Choice of Dressing or Vinaigrette, Sandwiches & Wraps, Add a Fruit and/or Vegetables & Milk.
Additional Fruit & Vegetable Choices, May Include: Apples, Grapes, Mandarin Oranges, Fruit Cocktail, Peaches, Raspberries, Pineapples, Fruit Cakes, Honeydew Melon, Cantaloupe.
Choices of Milk: (Served 7% or 5% Skim Cheese)
Breakfast Prices: Full \$1.25, Reduced \$0.95, Adult \$1.50.
Lunch Prices: Full \$2.10, Reduced \$1.45, Adult \$2.40, Milk \$0.50.
 Menu Subject to Change!

Birthday celebration days are highlighted on the school lunch calendar at Barre City Elementary and Middle School.

and cookies brought in for birthday celebrations, once a month, George is preparing a special meal, including a favorite dessert, for everyone as a way of recognizing all of the birthdays that occur during that month. In addition, George has graciously agreed to provide a healthy treat for Halloween, the December holiday, and Valentine's Day, October 31, December 21, and February 14. We are sure the children will appreciate this generous gesture on Mr. Mackey's part."

With this official decree they were off! Now the food service staff prepares a monthly birthday

celebration meal that is served during regular lunch periods and capped off with a dessert, such as brownies or cake. This is the only time when dessert, other than fresh fruit, is offered in the cafeteria. To build fanfare, the date is marked on the school lunch calendar and the cafeteria staff don “*Happy Birthday*” hats while serving students. The impact? Students are openly appreciative about *Birthday Celebration Day* and participation in the school lunch program has increased. They have also noticed a marked decrease in the number of classroom birthday parties, with fewer and fewer home-made and store-bought baked goods and treats passing through the front office. A side benefit, students who cannot afford to provide celebratory snacks for an entire class are not excluded from the festivities.

“Parents are getting the message that the once a month celebration is offered... and change is slowly happening!”

— GEORGE MACKEY,
FOOD SERVICE DIRECTOR,
BARRE CITY ELEMENTARY & MIDDLE SCHOOL

Eat, DRINK and Be Merry

Another approach to changing school-wide culture at Barre City involved installing water dispensers for bottle-filling, both in the cafeteria and throughout the school building. By making water more readily available they are promoting increased water consumption while decreasing the use of disposable water bottles.

The new policy extends to the celebration of major holidays, too. For these, the cafeteria staff supplies healthy snacks such as yogurt, diced fruit cups, cheese and crackers, vegetables and dip, and apple cider. Oatmeal raisin or sugar cookies are also provided for each student. Since the snack boxes include fresh fruits and vegetables, are distributed to all classrooms, and are sent outside normal lunch hours, George can use Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program funds to pay for some of the snack box contents. Items that are not covered, such as cookies or cheese, he pays for out of his food-service budget. This practice, too, has been very well received by students, staff and parents.

Theory in a Nutshell:

Educating the whole child calls for a comprehensive approach that redefines the role of food, nutrition education and physical activity across the school environment. Despite the hurdles preventing productive relationships across this environment, there are as many, if not more, opportunities for constructive collaboration between the cafeteria, classroom and physical education.



Seeing the Need

A Ferrisburgh teacher asked students to help her cover the broccoli growing in the garden. One student exclaimed "How? Broccoli grows on a tree!" Recognizing a teachable moment, the teacher took the students out to the garden and showed them how broccoli actually grows.

Cultivating Connections

Most schools are compartmentalized. In order to complete what needs to be accomplished day in and day out administrators, teachers and staff tend to focus their attention in a singular fashion. Classroom teachers adhere to the Common Core, food service staff answers to the USDA School Meal Guidelines, and the Physical Education teacher is guided by the National Standards for Physical Education. Finding common ground can be a challenge. As the schools participating in the Nutrition Education Institute (NEI) have demonstrated, however, it isn't impossible. Even though crossing the lines into unfamiliar territory can be daunting, read on to find out how fruitful the results can be when multidisciplinary teams brainstorm, plan and implement the education of the whole child.

Focus on the Foundation

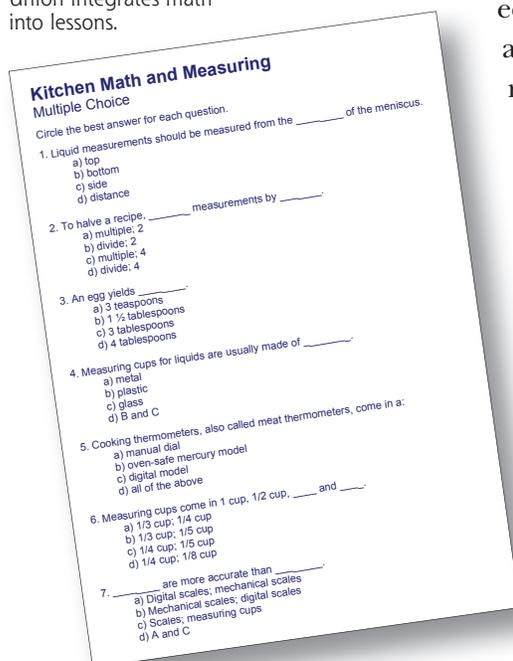
The first step in cultivating a collaborative atmosphere is building understanding and respect among all school staff. Many staff may be surprised to learn that nutrition

education is part of the nurse's and physical education teacher's responsibility or that the USDA recently changed the school lunch guidelines, increasing the

daily minimum requirement for fruits and vegetables. While it is impractical for all staff to have intricate knowledge of each other's roles and responsibilities, a general understanding can go a long way towards building a respectful relationship. Although several NEI schools expressed interest in deepening their knowledge and understanding through shadowing staff in other roles, the more sensible solution is to provide a venue, such as a survey, meeting or inservice, for staff to share their job requirements, requests and concerns in a safe and open-minded situation. It's important to have everyone at the table for this conversation, making sure the entire staff has a voice and part in the process. In addition to diminishing divergence among staff this

"All the folks at the table were committed to planning activities to improve student wellness."

Nutrition education at Vergennes Union integrates math into lessons.



open exchange sheds light on what is currently happening, what they hope will happen and ideas they have for getting there.

Building Blocks

Once you've planted the seeds for productive partnerships, it's time to maximize their potential. First, make sure both real and perceived barriers and opportunities have been identified and recorded. For example, if a teacher criticizes that it takes too much time for students to sign up for hot lunch, call together a small group of teachers and food service staff to brainstorm a solution for streamlining the process while still meeting everyone's needs.

Here are more ways to clarify the potential for these relationships:

- **Explore existing opportunities.** Identify where the potential already exists for connecting the curriculum to food or nutrition education. Consider changing the student reward system to align with your wellness goals, such as using physical activity instead of food to celebrate accomplishments.
- **Create new opportunities.** Work with colleagues to plan a school-wide activity or event that integrates different disciplines and highlights wellness activities as fun for everyone.
- **Keep everyone informed.** Streamline your communication to keep all staff informed and involved as you move forward.
- **Find time.** Ask the administration to set aside time in staff schedules to dedicate to collaborative brainstorming and planning.

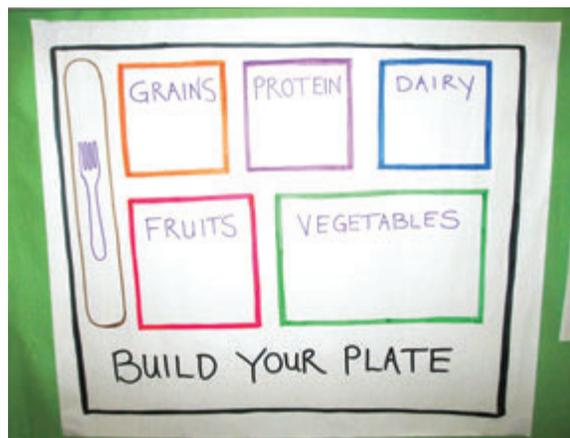


The Salisbury Community school team worked with VT FEED to offer the "Reading, Writing, Arugula" lesson to all students.

Lessons Learned

Hunger Free Vermont's *The Learning Kitchen* curriculum gave Hinesburg Community School the momentum they needed to change the Family Consumer Science curriculum. Now, instead of baking brownies and cookies students hone their culinary skills by preparing foods like veggies burgers.

Salisbury Community students used food photos and cafeteria trays to practice building a balanced lunch.



Salisbury Studies the World

During the winter session of their "Friday Explorations," a one-hour multi-age class, Salisbury's Literacy Specialist and Food Service Manager take students "Around the World on Five Plates." Each week they prepare healthy food from a different region of the world while learning about geography, history, and culture.

Students use passports to record ingredients, recipes, taste test feedback, and interesting facts about each region.



- **Make the most of all-staff gatherings.** Take advantage of a staff meeting or an inservice, inviting colleagues or outside experts to deliver relevant information and resources, add credibility to your efforts and catalyze action.

Tricks of the Trade

After a year of experimenting with and taking stock of different approaches school teams identified the following activities and tools as effective in creating increased interactions among staff while positively impacting student learning and health.

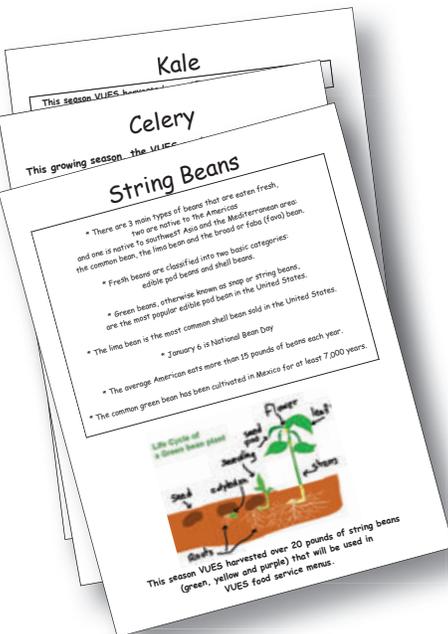
CREATING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN CAFETERIA AND CLASSROOM

Expectations for food service professionals have changed dramatically over the years. These days they find themselves operating the largest classroom in the school, cooking from scratch and teaching students about nutrition education. This shift is contributing to the creation of qualified child nutrition professionals equipped to influence the relationship that students have with their food. Cited as a key factor in implementing their action plans, school teams wisely encouraged collaboration between food service staff and classroom teachers to develop fresh approaches to teaching students about food and nutrition.

The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)

This national program, administered by the Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service, introduces students to a variety of produce that they might not have otherwise had the opportunity to sample. Selected schools receive reimbursement for the cost of making free fresh fruits and vegetables available to students during the school day. Participating in this program initiates interactions between food service staff and teachers because the food is prepared in the cafeteria and presented in the classroom. School teams made the most of this opportunity, boosting relations by:

- Sending surveys to classroom teachers to gauge enthusiasm and solicit suggestions for how to make the program run smoothly.
- Modeling how to introduce produce and run a classroom taste test.
- Creating binders for every classroom with fact sheets on each fruit and vegetable.
- Using this opportunity to introduce local produce and highlight a local farmer.



These fact sheets link the Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program to the school garden at Vergennes Union (see *Tools & Templates*, p. 136).

- Inviting students to participate in the preparation of produce.
- Incorporating the most popular fruits and vegetables from the snack program into the lunch menu.

Classroom Taste Tests

School teams used taste tests not only to introduce students to new foods but also to connect food and nutrition education to the curriculum by:

- Studying the impact that “food miles” has on the appearance, taste, nutritional quality and environment by taste testing local and California-grown carrots.
- Inviting food service into the Family and Consumer Science class to taste test different kinds of squash and cranberry sauce. The most popular items were added to the menu, significantly increasing the consumption of squash.
- Sending food service into the classroom to prepare and try a variety of fruits and vegetables with students making them more likely to take “try it” portions on the lunch line.
- Providing nutrition information to a weekly “Lunch Bunch” gathering of multiage students to support the food label studies that accompanied taste tests.
- Inviting a professional chef to use cabbage, the cafeteria’s “Food of the Month,” to prepare coleslaw with students during their enrichment class. The coleslaw was taste-tested in class and then served on the salad bar.
- Celebrating Food Revolution Day by having every classroom, with the support of a parent or community volunteer, make guacamole and hummus to taste test with a variety of vegetables. Students learned the ingredients, studied related history and voted on which dip they liked best.

Cooking Carts

Mobile kitchens, equipped with the supplies needed to cook with a classroom full of students (see Cooking Cart Equipment List, p. 139), provide ample



Barre students made and taste-tested guacamole and hummus for Food Revolution Day.

Tip! Cash for Carts



The cooking cart at Richmond Elementary School has everything a teacher needs to cook with 20 students.

Richmond Elementary School received \$3,000 from Fuel Up to Play 60, most of which was used to create a mobile kitchen cart. Fuel Up to Play 60, a program founded by the National Dairy Council and NFL, in collaboration with USDA, supports schools in their efforts to get students to eat healthy and be active. See *Resources*, p. 153.

Unveiling a New Cooking Cart

Consider these steps when unveiling a new cart to staff:

- Introduce the cart and its features by offering a cooking demonstration during a staff meeting, preparing a healthy snack for everyone.
- Create a simple process for signing the cart out.
- Develop a system for replenishing supplies.
- Keep the cart in a convenient spot, accessible by all.
- Provide suggestions, and ideally funding, for how staff can acquire ingredients. Consider creating a pantry (a large Rubbermaid container works well) of non-perishables for staff to use.
- Meet with teachers to identify opportunities for integrating into the curriculum.
- Offer suggestions for activities or lessons that can be integrated into the curriculum.
- Coordinate professional development opportunities to help staff feel more comfortable incorporating the cart into their classrooms.
- Provide a place, such as a binder, for staff to give feedback, suggest equipment or supply additions and share resources.

opportunities for students to explore their gastronomic gifts while studying history, math and everything in between. The majority of school teams utilized some version of a cooking cart.

Some examples include:

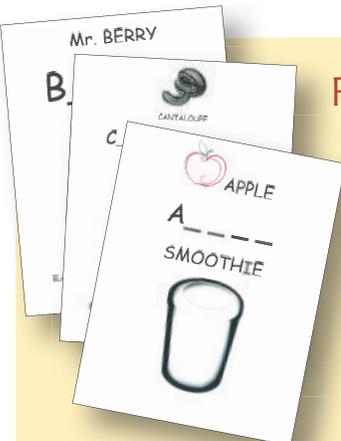
- Teaching a unit on Food Science.
- Inviting a chef or food service staff to use the cart with students, introducing them to the cooking profession.
- Studying local agriculture, using the cart to prepare recipes made from local ingredients.
- Concluding a Vermont Economics unit on maple syrup by making maple smoothies and maple balsamic vinaigrette for the salad bar.
- Using technology to create an instructional video on the cooking cart, demonstrating its features and how to use the utensils and appliances safely.
- Teaching life skills to students who receive special services.
- Exposing pre-school students to nutrition concepts, fostering positive eating habits.

School Gardens

School gardens have long been recognized as fertile grounds for bringing learning to life. From planting seeds to harvesting produce for the cafeteria, school teams nurtured this connection through:

- Working with the school nutrition staff, teachers and students to use the results of cafeteria taste tests to decide what to plant in the school garden and creating a map to assign planting locations.
- Hosting a seed planting day, starting plants in the classroom while learning about seeds and plant requirements.
- Growing, caring for and harvesting crops, building awareness about vegetables and nutri-

Richmond Reaps the Benefits



One preschool teacher in Richmond planned her curriculum for the year around the concept of growing healthy bodies. "When you eat fruits and vegetables your body will grow BIG and STRONG and your brain will be ready for LEARNING!" she explains

to students. To celebrate Friendship Day the class used the cooking cart to whip up a batch of fruit and yogurt smoothies. The healthy drinks were such a hit, the smoothie chefs were at it again the following week and the week after that and so on. The teacher wove it into the social studies, science and literacy curriculum. Students compiled a Smoothie Snack Book while learning about and consuming without hesitation smoothies that are chock full of nutrients.

tion while learning about the life cycle of plants. Produce is proudly delivered to the cafeteria and the menu highlights which meals include ingredients from the school garden.

- Turning garden learning into art, creating posters about what plants need to grow.
- Linking literacy to the garden, bringing a book to life by incorporating produce into a lesson.
- Weighing produce and developing graphing skills while tallying how much is harvested.

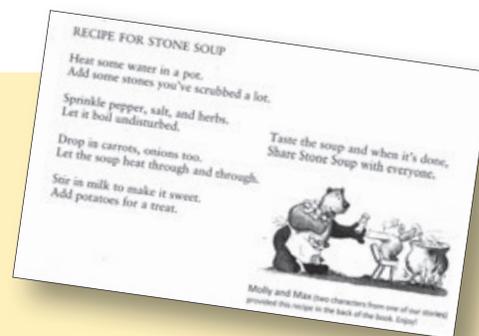


Students create garden art in Richmond.



Studying Stone Soup

Every year kindergarten students in Richmond read and discuss different versions of the classic tale *STONE SOUP*. Students are invited to bring a vegetable from home to create the recipe. Extra produce is gleaned from the school garden. Led by a parent and farm to school volunteer, students learn about fruit and vegetable identification while studying a photo card of their vegetable. Next, they hand deliver it to a large pot. The cafeteria staff prepares the soup and serves it to the kindergarteners during lunch. "Soup from a stone, and just a bit more." (See lesson plan in *Tools & Templates*, p. 140.)



Back to Basics

April and May finds all students at Vergennes Union Elementary School in the garden, planting seeds and prepping beds. As first-year participants in the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program they were pleasantly surprised at how well the garden pig-

gybacked with their produce snack program, helping them make that final connection to where food really comes from. By fall the school garden is bursting with the bounty of their hard work, just in time for Back to School night. Each classroom harvested something from the school garden and featured it in their classroom on the occasion. Classroom displays included an information sheet with details about their pick including how much was harvested from the garden, as well as a taste test opportunity. The pairing was so successful at educating both students and parents that they are hoping to make it a Back to School tradition.

Tip! Worm Composting

If your cafeteria already composts consider setting up worm bins in classrooms so students can study the decomposition of lunch waste through up-close observations and interactions. If you don't have a cafeteria composting system in place, worm bins are a great place to start.



Gifts from the Garden

During Enrichment class at the beginning of the school year Richmond first graders toured the school garden looking for pumpkins. After tracking them down they made observations about the pumpkin vines, flowers and fruits. Each student harvested a mini pumpkin. Drawing a connection to the social studies curriculum, their teacher helped them create cards to accompany the pumpkins as a gift to their kindergarten buddies, welcoming them to the school.



Classy Compost

When a small group of students showed interest in starting a composting program at Ferrisburgh Central School the science teacher jumped at the opportunity. Over the next several years she worked with students to conduct audits, meet with administration and the food service manager and study models from neighboring schools. The

school now composts all food scraps on site, approximately 40 pounds a day. Leftover food from snack time is ferried down to the cafeteria from each classroom in small buckets. This is added to the large Tupperware bins where staff and students scrape their lunch scraps and the kitchen staff deposits their cooking scraps. The fourth, fifth and sixth grade students sort and weigh the compost daily. Kindergarten students lend a hand by wheeling the bins to the compost shed. The fifth and sixth graders work in small groups with a teacher to layer the compost with manure, leaves, wood shavings or shredded paper. The manure is donated to the school, with parent volunteers providing transportation. Throughout the winter classes visit the compost shed, checking on progress, taking and recording temperature readings (the compost cooks at about 150°F) and making observations. Each classroom incorporates composting into the curriculum where it makes sense. In the spring, when the compost is finished, students spread it onto the school garden where it will nourish the plants that produce food for the cafeteria, completing the cycle.

PAVING THE WAY FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN THE CLASSROOM

Most school teams found that their physical education teacher had a wealth of information, suggestions and resources for increasing

movement in the classroom. From introducing the topic during a staff meeting to sourcing useful equipment, seeing the physical education teacher as a partner saved valuable time and catapulted several schools into active, learning environments with increased student engagement and decreased disciplinary action.

Activity Cards

Laminated cards with simple fitness activities (e.g., jumping jacks, leg lifts and arm rolls) and quick directions proved to be a powerful tool, helping teachers increase movement in the classroom. Most school teams introduced the cards during a staff meeting or inservice, inviting the

Fueling Ferrisburgh to Move



The Ferrisburgh school team took it one step further when they introduced activity cards to their staff. In addition to handing out Fit Deck cards (see *Resources*, p.153) they asked teachers to use a blank calendar to track movement in their classrooms for one month by recording the number of minutes and activities for each day. Their goal was to add 15 minutes of physical activity per day. At the end of the month they averaged the results, discovering they had increased it by 13.6 minutes. What's more, the tracking activity gave them the motivation they needed to make physical activity a permanent part of their school day.

physical education teacher or an outside expert to lead the presentation. In response, school teams observed teachers taking 5-minute motor breaks in classrooms several times a day, using them to transition between different academic blocks or specials. In Swanton, students can be seen pretending to walk through piles of gum, skating to their seats and walking like a gorilla. Random dance parties are also popular!

Physical Activity Boxes

Supplementing activity cards with physical activity boxes that hold equipment to support the activities (e.g., bean bags, poly spots, and activity dice) made it even easier for teachers to incorporate movement into their daily routines.

Opportunities for Extended Physical Activity during the School Day

With the goal of introducing students to a variety of lifelong skills and helping them develop a positive attitude about being active it can be useful to think outside the typical school physical education box. Some examples from school teams include:

- Establishing and introducing a system for teachers to sign out school equipment, like snowshoes, to take students on a winter outing.
- Organizing multi-week sessions where students can participate in grade-specific excursions during the school day, such as taking ski or snowboard lessons at a local mountain.
- Learning a skill (e.g., throwing a disc or practicing track and field events) during PE then taking a field trip to practice that skill in a relevant setting (e.g., a disc golf course or the high school track).
- Organizing an all-school Wellness Day where students spend an entire day rotating through different stations designed to promote healthy eating and physical activity.
- Participating in programs such as the Global Children’s Challenge (see *Resources*, p.153) where students wear pedometers and are encouraged to take as many steps as possible for 50 days, recording their steps in a log book and progress on an online map of the world. As they virtually visit different locations on the map they study the food, geography, history, and culture of that place.

“The students get so excited about running laps you’d think I handed them a candy bar!”

Tip!

Fuel up to Play 60 Funds can be used to purchase materials and equipment to increase movement in the classroom. See *Resources*.

Schools of Fish

Vergennes Union Elementary School shares property with the town pool, making it an ideal setting for students to learn a non-traditional sport in PE class: swimming. For four weeks at the end of each school year students are in the pool twice a week, learning pool safety and swimming techniques.

Richmond Running

A support teacher in Richmond took her class of first graders out of the classroom to run laps for about 10 minutes each morning before school started. Before they could participate, they would race against the clock to complete their morning chores, like putting away their backpacks. Starting in the gym and eventually moving outside, they took their heart rates each day and worked on building up their endurance, from being able to barely run one lap to running the entire time. *“This has helped get some of the wiggles out and also encourages students to stay healthy. What a great way to start the day,”* she says.



Salisbury students build a healthy meal as a relay team using MyPlate as a guide.

- Installing a fitness path that can also be used as a story path or nature trail.
- Seizing opportunities throughout the school day to let students walk or run laps around the playground or on the school's walking path.

LINKING THE CAFETERIA TO PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Many schools share a common cafeteria and gymnasium space. In some cases, this configuration creates tension between the food service staff and physical education teacher, with surprisingly little communication taking place. In others sharing a space dictates that these colleagues frequently check in with one another, creating a bond. In this scenario you are likely to find them taking advantage of their close proximity to check in with or lend support to one another. Other evidence of productive partnerships in this arena includes:

"This is my new, go-to game that the kids love. They call it 'The Food Game!'"

— LINDA RIELL,
RICHMOND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
REFERRING TO A NUTRITION EDUCATION
PE LESSON CALLED "SNACK ATTACK"
(SEE P. 141 FOR LESSON PLAN.)

- Organizing a joint activity such as having students move compost for the school garden (which provides produce for the cafeteria) during PE class.
- Incorporating movement into the cafeteria by having restless students participate in physical activities, such as jumping jacks or wall push-ups, while they wait in line to get served or head back to class.
- Coordinating with each other around teaching nutrition education in PE, drawing connections to the food being served in the cafeteria and the impact it has on students' bones, muscles, hearts, and lungs.
- Reinforcing messages, such as MyPlate, that are represented in the cafeteria by integrating them into PE lessons.
- Inviting the PE teacher to help serve students, creating an unmistakable connection for students between food, physical activity and health.



Students at Richmond Elementary School do wall push-ups while they wait to be dismissed from the cafeteria.

Tip! Finding More Time

With the many requirements that need to be tackled in our education system it can be hard to find time to fully implement your action plan. Take advantage of "free" time in the school day to engage kids in meaningful activities. Consider inviting students and staff to walk before recess, recording their daily distance on mileage sheets or to rotate through the garden during recess to plant, pull weeds and harvest produce.

Afterschool Activities

From the arts to athletics, many schools offer organized afterschool activities to enrich students' lives. Facing fewer constraints than during the school day these classes are ideal for exposing students to new topics, allowing in-depth study and encouraging creativity. They also provide the perfect venue for meshing multiple disciplines without having to fit into a rigid timeframe. Here's how school teams made the most of these post-school periods:



Students participating in the afterschool **gardening** program at Richmond Elementary School use the cooking cart to prepare a healthy snack.

Garden Clubs

Members of Barre's Cityscape Afterschool Garden Club get fit and learn about growing food by participating in the entire garden process, from starting seedlings in the spring to harvesting vegetables for the cafeteria and putting the beds to rest in the fall. The two parent volunteer garden coordinators in Richmond collaborated with six students from the University of Vermont to start their afterschool garden club. Following Green Mountain Farm to School's Sprouts curriculum, participants gather every Thursday from 2:30 to 4:00 PM during the five-week sessions to work in the garden, learn about plants and nutrition and enjoy a healthy snack. They become self-appointed "Garden Ambassadors," proudly showing off their hard work to classmates.

Taste Testing

Carrier Elementary uses their six-week afterschool program to train "official taste testers." Participants begin by brainstorming new foods and identifying and preparing recipes which they subject to the "thumbs up, thumbs down" test, deciding whether it is worthy of testing with fellow students. If it passes participants present the recipe to each classroom, listing the ingredients, describing how it was made and distributing to students. If it receives more thumbs up than thumbs down school-wide the recipe gets added to the school lunch menu with the "A Taste-Test Item" mark of approval.



Students participating in the afterschool **cooking** class at Richmond Elementary School have the opportunity to prepare recipes from scratch using local ingredients.

Cooking Classes

During each of their three afterschool enrichment sessions Richmond Elementary offers a Farm to School cooking class. On top of preparing and tasting recipes made from local ingredients participants learn about what's grown locally and nutrition concepts. They leave each week with a sample of what they've prepared, compiling the recipes into a personal cookbook that goes home at the end of the session. Students excitedly run in the kitchen door each week, studying the ingredients that are laid out, asking "what are we making?" and several parents each session comment that their child tries things in class that they would "never try at home."

Fitness

Approximately 85% of the student population at Vergennes Union Elementary participates in their annual Jump Rope for Heart afterschool event. The event raises money for the American Heart Association while promoting physical activity. Exercising for a good cause one student was overheard exclaiming "Wow, I never knew jump-roping was so much fun. I want to do this at home to try to get more exercise for my heart!"

Nourishing Lessons

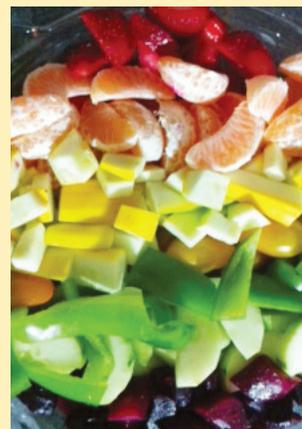
Wishing for support, several school teams expressed the desire to hire a nutrition educator, someone who can devote their time and energy to integrating food and nutrition education across the curriculum. Addison Northwest Supervisory Union (ANWSU) is fortunate to have exactly this. Through a creative approach to funding, Lynne Rapoport serves as the district's Nutrition Liaison. She is funded through three sources. The high school, through the contract they have with Café Services, pays her for ten hours a week to facilitate communication between the school and Café Services and to support the composting and recycling programs. An additional two hours per week is funded by ANWSU to promote their district-wide wellness initiative. Lastly, Vergennes Union Elementary School pays her to lead nutrition education efforts for 15 to 30 hours during the school year. Unfortunately, the numbers don't quite add up and Lynne volunteers additional hours every week.

Lynne is in every classroom at Vergennes Elementary four times a year teaching nutrition education and once a week with the Fresh Fruit



Students help prepare the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program snack

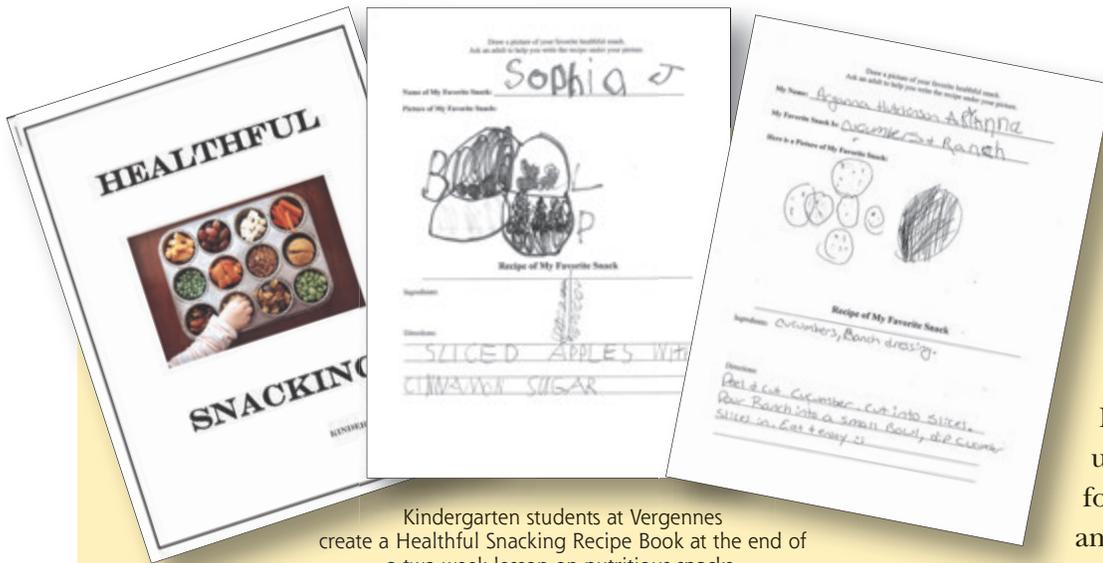
& Vegetable Program (FFVP). Lynne has found FFVP to be a highly effective vehicle for teaching nutrition education. As part of the program she offers weekly taste tests, bringing food into the classroom and paving the way for discussions on different nutrition topics including nutrient



A "rainbow" taste test is offered to students at Vergennes Union as part of the Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program.

dense foods, how to eat mindfully and the right to make healthy choices. Lynne says, "Sometimes after leaving the classroom I wonder if anyone was really listening until I hear in the hall things like "did you check to see the nutrient density of that granola bar?" or "can we have those red peppers we tried in class at lunch time?" or a student using our teaching term "don't yuck my yum!"

Using conversations with teachers and the school's health curriculum as fuel, Lynne designs lengthier lessons, seeking opportunities to help students connect with food through the school garden, cooking cart and cafeteria taste tests. These lessons, taking place in the classroom, cafeteria, physical education, and afterschool enrichment focus on nutrition education topics like healthy snacking, mindful eating, MyPlate and the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. When prompted to provide her top, go-to nutrition education activities, here's what she came up with:



Kindergarten students at Vergennes create a Healthful Snacking Recipe Book at the end of a two-week lesson on nutritious snacks.

- **Nutrition Bingo.** With Nutrition Education Institute mini-grant funds they purchased a Nutrition Bingo game that fuses physical activity and nutrition education. The younger grade levels use pictures of foods while the older ones use nutrition facts. In addition to being played during PE and afterschool enrichment it is also a reward for the school-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program.
- **Make Your Own MyPlate.** Following a lesson on MyPlate, healthy eating and personal choice students in the afterschool enrichment program create their own version of MyPlate using a melamine plate kit (see tip). The plates are used during meals, encouraging students to compare school lunch with the MyPlate recommendations. They learn that if they take the fruit and vegetable offerings they are able to fill half their plates!
- **Healthy Meal Relay.** Teams make a healthy meal while spending time in the school garden.
- **Healthful Snacking Recipe Book.** The kindergartners start by singing a song

about the food groups, to the tune of “Where is Thumbkin?” (Where is Dairy? Where is Dairy? Here I am). Lynne holds up a collage that assigns a food group to each finger and thumb on a hand.

During lessons on what makes a healthy snack they make their own fruit kebobs and try veggies with dip. Armed with a handout to complete, students are asked to go home and discuss a favorite snack with their families, draw a picture and write down the recipe. Lynne compiles these pages into a Healthful Snacking book that is given to each kindergarten family. At the end of the two-week lesson students invite their parents to a tasting celebration, featuring foods from each group.

From the interactive MyPlate display in the hall outside the cafeteria to the kid-created food labels on the lunch line Lynne is using her paid and volunteer time to come up with creative ways to teach students about nutrition. Moving forward, even though they already have a fully-stocked cooking cart, Lynne hopes to make nutrition education even more accessible by creating classroom cooking kits. Each classroom will receive a box containing cutting boards, apple cutters, scissors, peelers, knives, bowls, spoons, gloves, and hair nets.

Tip!

Schools can order classroom kits with 25 or 50 templates for students to personalize plates with MyPlate art. Learn more at www.makit.com.

Meshing Movement with Learning

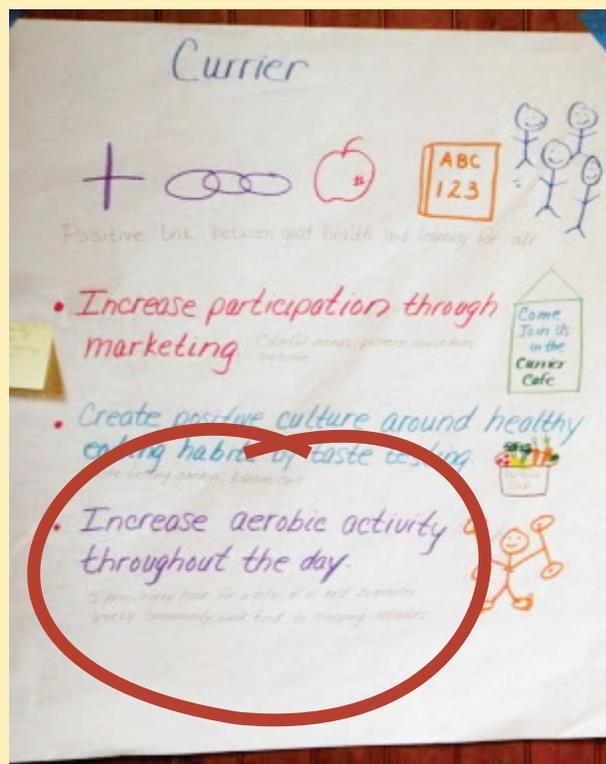
The Nutrition Education Institute challenged school teams to distinguish between physical education—the structured movement and learning that takes place in the gymnasium—and physical activity—the opportunity to get students moving throughout the school day. Taking time for physical activity in the classroom was a new concept for some but not for Currier Memorial School. In fact, they make a concerted effort to integrate the two.

Making Walking a Habit

Every Friday, the entire school walks at least one-third of a mile around the perimeter of the school. The principal provides coverage so that everyone can participate. Community members are also invited. They used to start off the day with the walk. At 8:00 AM, after breakfast and students had delivered their belongings to the classroom, the whole school would meet in the gym before heading outside. When teachers weighed in that they would like to start instruction time at 8:00am, instead of after the walk, the administration complied, moving the walk to Friday afternoons from 2:30 to 2:45 PM.

Moving Bodies Shifts Attitudes

One hundred percent of the teachers at Currier Memorial provide 3- to 5-minute “motor breaks” throughout the day. Following an NEI summer program presentation by Lindsay Simpson, a physical education consultant with the VT Agency of Education, the school purchased physical activity card packs to distribute



Increasing activity was part of Currier Memorial school team's plan from the start.

to each classroom teacher. These flash cards have photos and descriptions of short activities that teachers can use to get their students up and moving. Depending on student behavior and time constraints teachers either conduct the activities as is or modify them to accommodate their needs. Each classroom has access to the outside so teachers sometimes use these breaks to send their students into the fresh air for fitness.

Looking for new ways to keep students engaged, most teachers started by offering one



Which Cards to Choose?

Currier Memorial chose the Classroom Activity Cards from Active & Healthy Schools™ Program (see Resources). The activities are separated into 20-card packs for three grade level ranges, K–2, 3–4 and 5–6. They provide step-by-step instructions for activities that can easily be conducted in the classroom setting, such as lunges, limbo and running in place.

movement break in the morning and one in the afternoon. Over time, as they witnessed the positive impact these bursts were having on student focus and productivity, there's been an attitude shift. No longer is this time perceived as "taking away from valuable teaching time." Instead it is embraced as a way to make teaching more effective and it is well-received. Having support from the principal has helped. The practice has achieved school-wide acceptance so teachers know that it's not only okay for them to offer these breaks, it's actually encouraged. Additionally, some teachers have sought out the school's occupational and physical therapists for tips on how to customize activities to meet the developmental abilities of elementary school children.

Using Persuasion to Get Physical

To meet state learning objectives students in third through sixth grade must conduct research for and prepare a piece of writing — specifically an argumentative letter that presents both sides of an issue. The teachers at Currier Memorial use this opportunity to empower students, en-

Tackling Transitions

Replacing the kindergarten clean up song or a musical interlude, the second-grade teacher at Currier Memorial gives her students the option of picking an activity card or doing a lap to transition from one activity to the next. If they choose taking a lap they need to get ready and lined up at the door in short order. Once the door is opened students have a designated amount of time to run around the playground and return to their seats. On rainy days they do a lap around the gym. If they dawdle, taking more than the allotted time, they don't get to participate in this prized pursuit the next time. Apparently, this is all the incentive they need to get moving.

couraging them to use their voice in a respectful and convincing way to motivate action. During the NEI the Food Service Manager asked teachers if they could frame the assignment around nutrition and physical activity. The third graders decided to focus on movement, examining the pros and cons, and came up with a case for integrating it into the classroom. They shared their persuasive pieces at a school-wide bi-weekly gathering. Every other Wednesday a different grade is given the responsibility of presenting their work to the rest of the school. In this case, the presentation led to action with an increase in activity breaks during the day.

By being willing to meet the needs of teachers, taking a comprehensive approach and connecting to the curriculum, Currier Memorial has made physical activity an integral part of their school culture, which inspires students to develop healthy habits that will remain with them long after graduation.

Teaching through Taste Tests

Through monthly taste tests, the Richmond Elementary Farm to School Program offers students the opportunity to try new foods in a familiar environment—the cafeteria. By now, the taste test procedure is familiar, too. After everyone has been served and

“Maybe they’ll give us the recipe.”

••••

“Best taste test ever!”

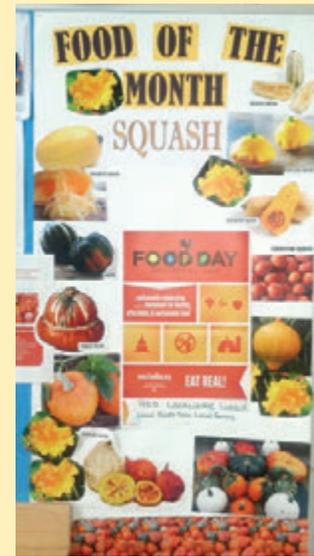
is seated the Farm to School Coordinator gives a less-than-one-minute introduction of the food to be tasted, providing information about where it came from, health benefits and how it is prepared. Students are reminded each time of the two rules: 1) everybody tries at least a little bite (unless you are allergic) and 2) nobody is allowed to say “eww, yuck, gross” because this will hurt the feelings of the people who prepared the recipe. Samples are then handed out. At the end of lunch, each student receives a sticker to place on a flip chart that has three columns—“I liked it!” “I’m not sure” and “I didn’t like it.” At the end of the day



Students at Richmond Elementary vote on the salmon cakes they taste-tested for January’s Food of the Month.

the results are tallied and reported to teachers and staff via email with a request that they share them with students. Students really enjoy the experience, as evidenced by the greeting the Coordinator gets *each* time she enters the school. Students rush to her, asking “Are we having a taste test?”

Operating under the assumption that the more chances students have to interact with their food the more likely they are to incorporate it into their daily diet, this active farm to school program creates connections wherever possible. For starters, the taste tests are linked to the “Food of the Month.” Selected



by Karyl Kent, the Food Service Manager, and advertised on a cafeteria bulletin board created by another school team member, the Food of the Month highlights foods that are promoted by MyPlate, reinforcing the importance of eating a balanced diet of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean proteins. But, as you’ll see in the following summary of one year’s worth of taste tests, the connections run deeper than that:

- **September Food of the Month: Kale**
They started the year off with a peren-



Kindergarteners at Richmond Elementary made coleslaw, the same recipe that the whole school taste tested.



In May, students at Richmond Elementary taste tested fiddleheads.

nial favorite, kale chips made with kale that had been harvested by students at nearby Jericho Settlers' Farm.

- **October Food of the Month: Squash**
They topped spaghetti squash harvested from nearby Freedom & Unity Farm with marinara sauce.
- **November Food of the Month: Parsnips**
Students harvested the parsnips at Jericho Settlers' Farm afterschool the week before and farmer Christa Alexander came to school to hand out samples and talk with students during the taste test.
- **December Food of the Month: Sweet Potato.** Two dips — a black bean dip and a sweet potato hummus — were served with sliced local carrots.
- **January Food of the Month: Protein**
Students were challenged to “Eat Like a Bear” during Alaska Day when they sampled salmon cakes (a vegetarian option was available) and attended a slide show and Q & A session with local resident and Alaskan salmon fisherman

Captain Tony. Posters were hung in the cafeteria and several teachers conducted related lessons.

- **February Food of the Month: Cabbage**
Kindergartners worked side-by-side with a professional chef in their enrichment classes, making the Cranberry Coleslaw recipe that was served in the taste test.
- **March Food of the Month: Legumes**
Bean balls topped with marinara were served by a local food processor, Joe Bossen of VT Bean Crafters. He explained the origin of the beans as well as described how the bean balls were made by his company.
- **April Food of the Month: Grains**
The Spanish teacher, during her unit on ancient civilizations, taught students about quinoa, the ingredient used to prepare the quinoa salad for the taste test.
- **May Food of the Month: Wild Edibles**
One of the food service staff foraged the fiddleheads served in the taste test.



Students from Richmond Elementary School helped harvest the parsnips that were used in their November Food of the Month taste test.



good with oranges — try a piece.” The student took a bite and said, “Hey, I like that!” He took another piece and put it on his friend’s tray and said, “You should try this, it’s really good.” The friend took a bite, nodded in agreement and then put some on his tray.

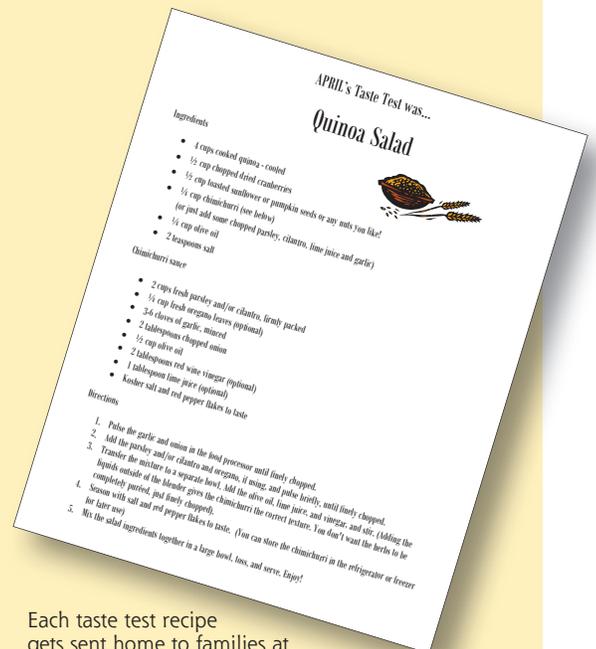
As a result of their exposure to new foods in the school cafeteria, students are more willing to try new foods at home, too. Since all of the recipes go home in students’ home-school folders, parents have the ability to recreate taste test recipes. Pretty

regularly the Farm to School Coordinator will receive an email from a parent saying that their child, who had resisted eating something previously (e.g., quinoa), is now open to giving it a try.

- **June Food of the Month: Strawberries and Rhubarb.** As part of their year-end BBQ, students and parents taste tested strawberry-rhubarb crisp with vanilla ice cream.

Giving students the responsibility of providing feedback that informs menu offerings has helped them start conversations about food. They take their jobs seriously, thinking critically about what is going into their mouths. An observer walking around the cafeteria during a taste test is likely to overhear comments like “They’re better than I thought they’d be” or “The beans are the best part” or “The marinara really brings it together.”

In addition to giving students a new topic of conversation, these experiences are increasing student willingness to try new foods. Karyl recalls the following conversation with pride. A student asked her, “Mrs. Kent, what’s that?” She answered, “Jícama! It’s crunchy and tastes really



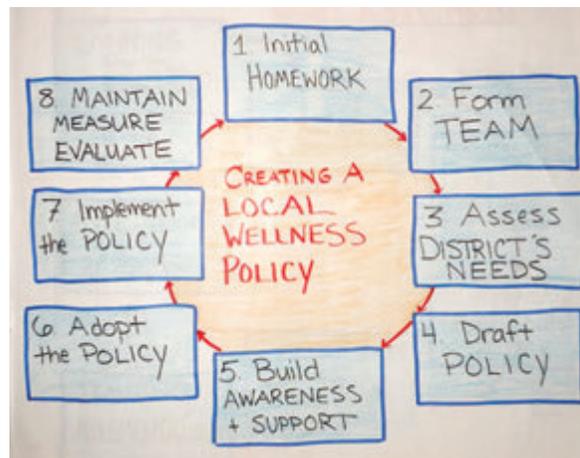
Each taste test recipe gets sent home to families at Richmond Elementary School.

Theory in a Nutshell:

Adopting a wellness policy in your school or district that aligns with the goals of your action plan will improve your chances of creating a healthy school culture.

Revising & Implementing a Wellness Policy

Wellness policies are tools that schools and districts can use to set values, guide practices and establish expectations for administration, staff and parents. The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 required all schools and districts with a federally funded school meals program to adopt wellness policies by the beginning of the 2006/2007 school year. The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 broadened the scope of wellness policies, requiring additional stakeholders to participate and increased communication with the public about the policies and their implementation. The idea behind mandating these changes is to pave the way for schools to create policies that more effectively promote establishing, maintaining and evaluating healthy school environments. Carrying out the changes put forth in this guide will be much easier if the policy that steers your school practices is aligned with your goals. Although the revision process will require significant effort, think of it this way: the federal government is giving you the *opportunity* to review, strengthen and implement your policy so that it can better meet the needs of your school team.



Tip!

The Center for Ecoliteracy Model Wellness Policy Guide provides model language and recommendations to help you develop, monitor and update a comprehensive wellness policy that sets high standards for healthy living. You can adapt their statements, tailoring the model policy to the needs of your school and district. See [Resources](#).

Tip!

Review the wellness policies of several area schools when revising your policy. Most of these are available online.

There are many resources available to help guide you in the development of a comprehensive wellness policy. These are listed in the *Resource* section. The purpose of this chapter to help you think about the wellness policy in the context of the work your school team is doing to improve the food, nutrition and physical activity environment in your school.

Making Sure the Right People Are on Your Team

The purpose of a wellness policy committee is to revise your policy, support its implementation, evaluate its effectiveness and make additional revisions, as necessary. Although it's related, this directive differs from the mission statement of your school team. Revisit your team roster and make sure the right people are on board for the new task at hand. In addition to making sure you have adequate representation from your school and community you'll want to determine whether there is another group working towards the same goal to join forces with. Specific individuals to consider include:

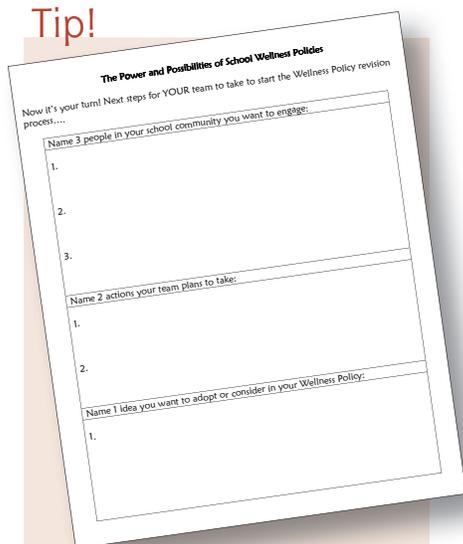
- School administrators
- Food service staff
- Classroom teachers
- Physical Education teacher
- School nurse
- Support staff
- Guidance counselor
- Parents
- School board members
- Students

Depending on your school's objectives, needs and established relationships you may also want to consider the following candidates: health care providers, community groups, school groups, physical activity groups, university departments, government agencies, hospitals, public health representatives, social service agencies, and local civic organizations.

Critiquing the Current Policy

First, determine if your school's policy *needs* to be revised. Now is the time to confirm if and what needs changing. Armed with your needs assessment (representing the practices that are actually in place) and action plan (defining the direction you would like the school to go) review your current policy and identify its strengths and weaknesses. It may be, as was the case in Hinesburg (see school profile, p. 67), that your wellness committee is making revisions that will inform the district policy. The alternative is for the committee to add specificity to the district policy creating a local policy that only applies to your school.

Tip!



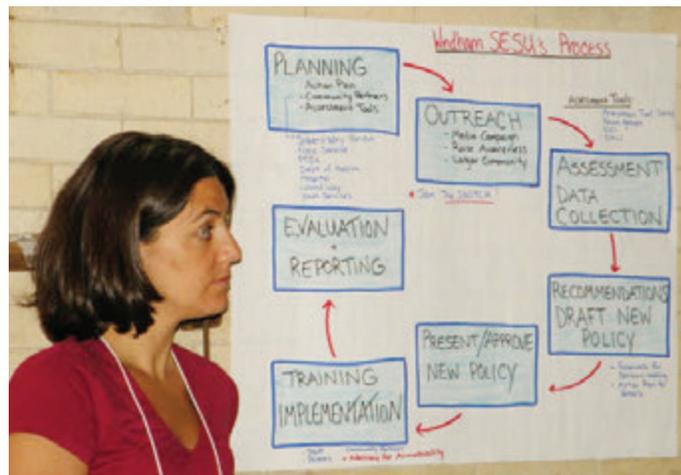
School teams attended a workshop on wellness policies at the NEI summer program and received a worksheet to help them think about the policy revision process. See "The Power and Possibilities of School Wellness Policies," *Tools & Templates*, p. 148

Tip!

Survey the administration, staff and parents to solicit input and recommendations about your school's wellness policy.

Aligning the Action Plan and Wellness Policy

The first page of the Action Planning Template (p. 92) has a spot to include your statement of purpose with the caveat that it should be linked to the school's wellness policy. If you've already completed a needs assessment and developed an action plan you've done the difficult part of figuring out what aspects of your school culture need attention and identifying realistic approaches to creating change. The last piece of the puzzle is crafting a wellness policy that reflects the goals and objectives you've outlined. This isn't as hard as it seems. In fact, the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 paves the way for you to do it by requiring that every school policy must:



Kathryn Gillespie of Windham County Farm to School educates NEI participants about wellness policies.

- Include goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness.
- Establish nutrition guidelines for all foods available on campus during the school day with the objectives of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity.
- Provide assurance that guidelines for reimbursable school meals shall not be less restrictive than regulations and guidance issued by the Secretary of Agriculture.
- Establish a plan for measuring the impact and implementation of the local wellness policy.
- Involve parents, students, and representatives of the school authority, school board, school administrators, and the public in the development of the local wellness policy.

Draft policy language that incorporates your specific goals into these statements, solidifying their importance to your school. To build awareness and support (“buy-in”) invite the school community, including administrators, teachers, food service, staff, and parents to review the wellness policy draft and provide feedback. Once you've received and incorporated this feedback it is time for the wellness committee to turn their attention to implementation.

“We came together easily on a draft. It was amazing, in fact, how easy it was. No meeting — just online in Google docs... and done!”

— KELLI BROWN
HINESBURG COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Implementing the Wellness Policy

Developing a wellness policy is an impressive achievement. Take time to celebrate, and then remember that the creation of a policy does not necessarily mean it will be implemented. The first step in implementing your wellness policy is to introduce it to the school community. The NEI school teams made the following suggestions:

- Send the policy electronically to school administrators, teachers, staff and families
- Present at a staff meeting
- Hold a question and answer session for parents and community members
- Post the policy on the school's website in an easily accessible location

Next, make a plan for how you will put into action the practices that are outlined in the policy. Here are some questions to consider as you do so:

- Will you implement the entire policy at once or will you phase in changes over time?
- Who are the appropriate staff members to take on each task?
- What resources do you need?
- Who will provide general oversight to make sure you stay on track?
- How will you address negative attitudes about the new policy changes?
- How will you celebrate the positive changes you make?
- How will you document your progress to determine how well the policy is being implemented?
- What will the revision process look like?

As with any significant change, you'll need to have patience. With your revised policy in place you can rest assured that with time and purposeful action your school will begin to reflect practices that contribute to a positive nutrition, nutrition education and physical activity culture.

Questions adapted from the *Action Guide for Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies*, Connecticut State Department of Education

Turning Process into Policy

Compelled by the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA) the school team from Hinesburg Community School (HCS) set about revising their district's wellness policy. This undertaking served three purposes. First, they'll be ready when it becomes mandatory for wellness policies to

"The wellness policy is the umbrella for the practices that are taking place at your school."

— KELLI BROWN, HINESBURG COMMUNITY SCHOOL

include the new requirements outlined in the HHFKA (right now it's encouraged). Second, the team could guarantee that the new policy would support their efforts by proactively aligning it with their goals. Third, establishing a school-wide policy would go a long way towards convincing resistant staff to get on board with their wellness initiative.

Endeavoring to build a school environment that champions "Feeding the Whole Child" the school team, known as the Wellness Improvement Team, began by sharing their intentions. They submitted an article to the town paper notifying the community about their plans to revise the policy stating *"HCS will take a closer look at our school's wellness policy and revise it to include an emphasis on nutrition education and physical activity, creating a stronger wellness climate across the school and in the community."* In another letter published in the school newspaper, the principal emphasized the importance that all staff gets on board by saying a *"healthy environment will be created through the collaborative efforts of our food service department, our physical education department, our classrooms, our students, our families, and our greater community."* He also took this opportunity to invite participation, ending with the inspirational phrase "Eat Well. Learn Well."



The Hinesburg Community School team began planning during the NEI summer program.

Identifying another school wellness policy to use as a model gave them the fodder they needed for the next phase. The team leader, Kelli Brown, found a website from The Vermont Department of Health listing the winners of their Fit and Healthy Kids School Wellness Awards (see *Resources*). This award recognizes Vermont schools whose policies and practices reflect a high priority on healthy outcomes for children and staff. After reviewing several policies, searching for ones that reflected the character of the school and “felt like Hinesburg,” she chose Chittenden Central Supervisory Union’s policy. Taking it back to the team Kelli asked them to consider the question “What doesn’t feel right about it?” In the end they decided that it was pretty close to what they were looking for, using the base content as a starting point and tweaking it to align with the unique values and tone of their district. They also modified the physical education, food service and classroom sections to better comply with the HHFKA.

Next came reviewing the policy. To streamline the process the team employed a group sharing application Google docs, an online tool that allowed everyone on the team to make and resolve comments efficiently. After several rounds of internal back-and-forth they were ready to send it to a couple outsiders for review. Brooke Gannon, a Child Nutrition Consultant from the Agency of Education, and the district’s attorney provided valuable feedback that was incorporated into the next draft. For the most part the attorney focused on making the policy less specific, evaluating the resources (for example, professional development) needed to execute the policy statements and gave the district less to maintain. She was also leery of dictating

Meeting the Mission

Throughout the wellness policy revision process the Hinesburg team was guided by their mission statement: The Hinesburg Community School’s Wellness Improvement Team recognizes and supports the need for a policy that supports an environment that models good nutrition and healthy habits. We strongly believe that our schools must create wellness connections between the cafeteria, classroom and community. We believe that during childhood food and nutrition relationships are created and these relationships are often continued throughout adulthood. We believe that to change the obesity epidemic amongst our students we need to foster a school environment that exemplifies healthy food relationships and wellness throughout the school day.

teacher behavior in the policy, asking the team to remove language about a teacher’s responsibility to serve as a role model for students. This expectation, she believed, should be laid out in their contracts, not in a wellness policy for students.

By asking around, the team learned about the district’s formal review process. All school policies are reviewed every five years. Fortunately, the following school year was a review year so they would only need to wait until the next spring. In the meantime the principal sent it to his peers at each of the other five schools in their supervisory union, giving these school communities the opportunity to read it and provide feedback. The hope is that their policy will be adopted district-wide. For this to happen, every school must accept it on top of the district approval. If it isn’t unanimous, however, they will still be able to adopt it for Hinesburg Community School.

Many schools struggle with implementation. For Hinesburg it's not so much a question of "if" they will implement their policy, but rather how far to go. As they consider this, the team finds itself pondering the question "Does it apply to everything that happens under our school roof?" They are already beginning to translate policy into practice by piloting non-food celebrations with one grade level, spurred

"Some teachers march to policy. So if it's not in a policy, it's fair game. One teacher said, 'I'm going to serve cake until there is a policy that says I can't.' You can't touch that with grassroots approach."

— KELLI BROWN,
HINESBURG COMMUNITY SCHOOL

on by the high number of kids entering kindergarten with allergies and sensitivities. They've sent a letter to the kindergarten parents and established a new snack model, with parents signing up to supply snack for the whole classroom one day a month. Rolling out this practice with a single grade gets them one step closer to making it a school-wide practice.

Although the process has been relatively efficient the team found themselves disappointed by the lack of resources available to help pave the way. Specifically, they wanted a State model policy that interprets the law for them and materials such as fliers and letters that could be used to inform the community about the relevance of the changes that were coming. In the end, though, they found the experience to be fruitful and are appreciative that HHFKA giving them the incentive they needed to get started. When a parent recently told Kelli that she is single-handedly changing the school's culture, she countered by stating that the law was the motivator; it just came at a time when there was a group of people willing to take it on.

Theory in a Nutshell:

Putting thought and effort into communicating with and educating parents and community members invites participation, and provides the support school teams need to accomplish their goals.

Building Community Connections

Timing is Everything

“Take the time to properly introduce your wellness team to the school and community — its purpose, its mandates, and its goals. Make sure it is clear that you are not just pushing one person’s agenda, but responding as a school team to a federal requirement regarding nutrition guidelines. We wish we had educated staff and parents about the federal guidelines that drove the changes in our foodservice program more at the beginning. It might have eliminated some of the misunderstanding around why our procedures were changing.”

— SHELLY TORREY, HINESBURG COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Tip!

To increase awareness about their efforts to feed students healthy food and to educate families about how to guide choices at home the Richmond Elementary Food Service Manager uses the back of her menus to share nutrition notes and recipes.

For February, just in time for Valentine’s Day, she included information on Healthy School Celebrations.

With help from the USDA’s 10 Tips Nutrition Education Series (www.ChooseMyPlate.gov) she provided ten tips for choosing a variety of proteins in March and suggestions for making half your grains whole in April.

Since you are playing a part in their child’s education, you have a responsibility to keep the parents in your school community informed and to respond to their concerns about your work. Fortunately, the more effort you put into communicating with, educating and engaging the community, the greater the rewards you will reap. After all, you need their support to succeed and in order to support your efforts they need to first understand what you are doing and why. Add the fact that students are more likely to live healthy lives if they receive consistent messages about nutrition and physical activity at home and at school and everyone begins to understand the importance of building bridges. Giving parents the tools they need to reinforce what you are doing at school plays a key part in helping you accomplish the goals you have outlined in your action plan.

Considering Current Knowledge

While most of your parents are probably not as entrenched in the food, nutrition education and physical activity world as your school team they’re also not empty vessels. Involved parents will already have some idea about what the school is doing around these topics. However, it can still be useful to evaluate exactly what they know before you begin your communication campaign. Consider conducting a family survey, asking questions about the school food service program, food, nutrition education (including farm to school and school gardening) and movement in the classroom and hopes they have for a healthy school culture. Another approach is to give a preliminary

presentation on your action plan, leaving plenty of time for comments and questions. These will help you gauge what information is out there and customize your approach for connecting to the community.

Keeping Your School Community in the Know

Since publicity deadlines are more voluntary (in other words, you can decide whether you *want* to send something to the local paper or post

“Keep the community informed about your progress. Make everything public, one way or another.”

something on your school’s blog by the deadline) keeping the school community informed can sometimes take a back seat. As a result, this is one of the items on that’s always on the to-do

list but frequently gets pushed to the next day, week or month. For this reason it’s a good idea to *assign one person* on your team with the task of getting the word out in a clear and consistent way. Here are some methods that worked for the school teams:

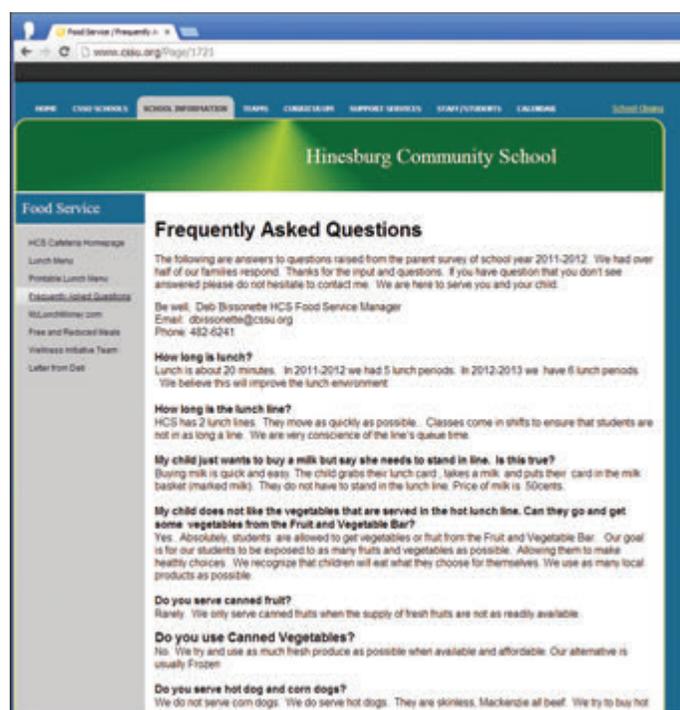
- **Submit stories to the school newsletter, town paper or local news or radio stations.** Topics may include details about your school health initiative, changes to the lunch menu, recent events, nutrition facts, exercise tips, or the Fruit and Vegetable Program.
- **Treat the school menu like a newsletter to parents.** Add details about the Food of the Month, local products and nutrition information.
- **Create a page on the school’s website and keep it up to date.** Provide menus, taste test information, recipes, event announcements, and photos
- **Take advantage of social media like Facebook, Twitter, Front Porch Forum, and the school’s blog.** Announce events, post photos from a field trip or classroom cooking session or share student quotes.
- **Write a letter directly to parents.** Give context to the team’s work and explain changes that are coming.

Cost Comparisons

The Food Service Manager at Ferrisburgh Central conducted a cost comparison between her chicken tenders and Lunchables Chicken Dunkers, then shared the results with parents, along with a comparison of nutrition information. The response? Students would rather eat the school’s version because it tastes better and costs less!

Showing gratitude for the grub

Ferrisburgh school hosted a Harvest Meal to thank families for helping to harvest 1,485 pounds of food from the school garden. On top of enjoying a locally-grown gourmet meal, families conducted a food miles activity.



The food service manager at Hinesburg Community School uses the school’s web site to educate parents about the food service program.

Variations on Family Fun/Wellness Night

With a shared purpose — getting families together to promote good nutrition and fitness — each school team interpreted how to go about it in their own unique way.

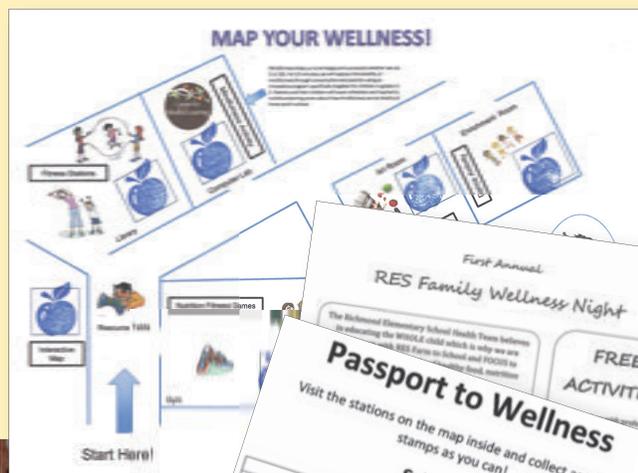
Salisbury: Salisbury held a garden party and seed exchange where families got exercise by helping with garden chores. Staff, parents and students worked side by side, snacked on fresh fruits and vegetables and swapped seeds and plants that they got to take home. They also took advantage of this captive audience to sign up volunteers for summer garden maintenance.

Ferrisburgh: Everyone attending Ferrisburgh’s Wellness Night had the option to try out Tae Kwan Do or yoga. They also showed episodes from HBO’s *Weight of the Nation* series, illustrating the importance of the school team’s initiative in combatting the obesity epidemic facing our nation’s children.

Richmond: Richmond’s evening featured “School Lunch for Dinner,” a cooking class with a professional chef, nutrition-related activities led by the PE teacher, interactive food and fitness stations, dance classes run by a local dance studio, a taste test, mindfulness activities with a local mindfulness expert, and ice skating. Students could stamp their “Passport to Wellness” at each station and families went home with related information, including a list of local activities to help them stay fit and a “Wellness Challenge.”



Salisbury Community School offers families “Fun Nights” filled with healthy snacks, nutrition education, and fitness activities.



First Annual
RES Family Wellness Night

The Richmond Elementary School Health Team believes in educating our RES team to help and FOCUS on "Healthy Food, Nutrition"

FREE ACTIVITIES

Visit the stations on the map inside and collect as many stamps as you can!

Passport to Wellness

Schedule

Time	Activity	Location
5:30 - 7:00 pm	Session 1: 5:30 - 5:50 pm	Resource Table
5:30 - 7:00 pm	Session 2: 6:00 - 6:20 pm	Nutrition Fitness Games
5:30 - 7:00 pm	Session 3: 6:30 - 6:50 pm	Games
5:30 - 7:00 pm	Session 1: 5:30 - 5:50 pm	Fitness Stations
5:30 - 7:00 pm	Session 2: 6:00 - 6:20 pm	Mindfulness Activity
5:30 - 7:00 pm	Class 1: 5:30 - 6:10 pm	Library
5:30 - 7:00 pm	Class 2: 6:20 - 7:00 pm	Computer Lab
5:30 - 7:00 pm	Class 1: 5:30 - 5:50 pm	Cooking Class
5:30 - 7:00 pm	Class 2: 6:00 - 6:20 pm	Ballet
5:30 - 7:00 pm	Class 3: 6:30 - 6:50 pm	Hip-Hop/Break dancing
5:30 - 7:00 pm		Hip-Hop/Break dancing
5:30 - 7:00 pm	School Lunch for Dinner	Enrichment
5:30 - 7:00 pm	Taste Test	Cafeteria
5:30 - 7:00 pm	Healthy Lunchbox Activity	Cafeteria
5:30 - 7:00 pm	Skating	Outside



Richmond Elementary School offers mindfulness activities, food, nutrition education and fitness at their Family Wellness night.



Hinesburg Community School thanks families with a Harvest Dinner.

- **Organize a community meal.** Before the science fair, back to school night or parent-teacher conferences or in celebration of the school garden

harvest bring families together to learn about your program and enjoy one another's company over a healthy meal.

- **Host a family event.** Bring people together for a Fun Run, Family Wellness Night or Harvest Festival to celebrate your work, share information and raise money.
- **Permit use of the school for community activities.** Open up the gym for karate or Zumba classes or let the community use the walking path to foster fitness.
- **Have a presence at community events.** Use events like Town Meeting Day or a Select Board meeting to offer snacks and information.
- **Integrate into school activities that are already happening.** Piggy-backing on an already existing event saves time while helping you get your message out.
- **Give presentations to anyone who will listen.** Create a concise Power Point presentation to share with community groups, the parent-teacher organization or a group that you've gathered.

Tip:

Hinesburg Community School purchased a subscription to *Nutrition Nuggets*



a monthly reproducible newsletter from Resources for Educators (www.rfeonline.com) that is packed with practical ideas families can use to improve their nutrition and physical activity. They include it in their school newspaper.



A slide from a Power Point presentation that the Vergennes team uses to share information with the community. See *Tools & Templates*, p. 151.

Homework assignment bridges the gap

During their nutrition unit, students in the Health and Family Consumer Science class in Barre discussed the difference between “real” and processed food. Then they wrote a goal for how they might work towards consuming more whole foods. Their homework assignment was to work towards their goal with the teacher checking in at the week’s end to see how it went.

Dig into reading

The theme for one summer’s reading program in Vergennes was *Dig Into It!* During the kick-off event, while parents were learning about the reading program they got a tour of the garden, participated in a garden scavenger hunt, potted an herb plant to take home, and signed up to help with garden maintenance over the summer. It gave this school team the chance to show parents, many of whom had never been to the school garden, how the garden is integrated into the school day.

Initiating dialogue through inserts

In celebration of National Nutrition Month in March the wellness team from Vergennes Elementary sent out weekly inserts in the school newsletter to educate parents about the nutrition education and physical activity happening at school. Several parents expressed appreciation for the information saying that it helped initiate conversations with their children.

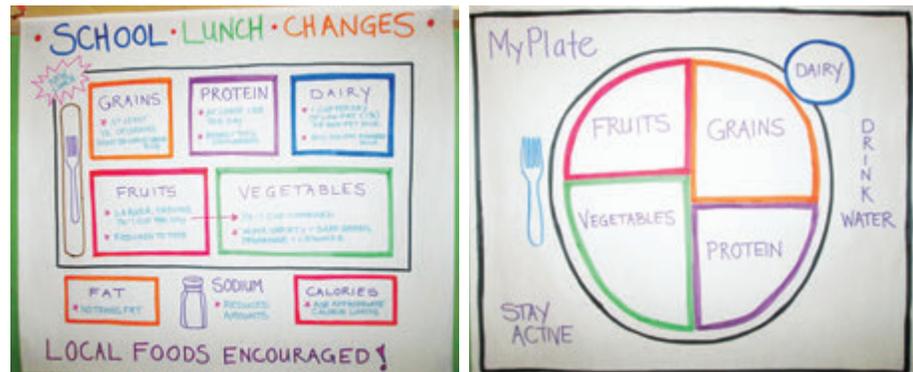


Hinesburg Community School invites families to walk to school with their kids each Wednesday.

Tip!

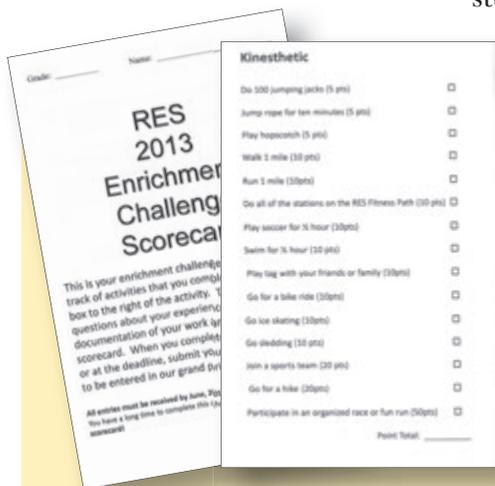
The school garden coordinators at Richmond Elementary School sold mint tea (made with mint from the school garden) at the Farmer's Market and during soccer practice to raise awareness and funds to purchase seeds and supplies for the next year's garden.

- **Make connections through homework assignments.** This approach encourages families to think critically about their behavior with students driving the process.
- **Create signage around school.** Educate visitors with easy to understand, quick-to-read displays about MyPlate, the Food of the Month or the Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program.
- **Involve parents in activities.** Plan walk to school days and invite parents to participate with their kids.



Eye-catching signage at Salisbury Community School educates passers-by.

Clearly, you can't use all of these. Take some time to review the ideas with your team and choose a couple that seem doable and apt to succeed. Engage students to help with any of the projects your team develops. One class of Hinesburg first graders picked produce from the school garden unsolicited, observing what was growing and eating cherry tomatoes. At the next parent meeting the parent of one of these students thanked the school for the introduction, saying that their child was now asking to start a garden at home.



Enriching Family Life through Fitness

Each year students at Richmond Elementary School can participate in the Enrichment Challenge. When they complete activities they check them off in a booklet provided by the school, sometimes adding a note, photo or drawing. They receive points for each activity and at the end of the year the

Actively Engaging the Community

Much of this chapter has been dedicated to addressing the team's responsibility to keep the school community informed. What about the community's responsibility to the school? Parent and community volunteers play an important role in helping you accomplish goals. Building a solid volunteer base will make it more likely that

enrichment teacher tallies a score for these extra curricular adventures. This past year, in hopes that it would inspire families to get exercise together by running, biking and hiking, they added a kinesthetic page to the booklet.

"I love when my mom comes to help with the snack cart because I get to see her."

— OLIVIA
VERGENNES UNION
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

the same people aren't repeatedly being tapped to help out. Chances are if you've taken the time to communicate and educate parents at least a few will want to become

involved in the work you are doing. Keep the following in mind as you broaden your volunteer network:

- Invite individuals to share their own unique skills or knowledge by offering a range of volunteer opportunities, such as cooking, chaperoning a field trip, writing the newsletter, or building picnic tables.
- Be organized. Clearly define volunteer jobs and set up a schedule so everyone involved knows what they are doing and when. In Vergennes, eight parent volunteers take turns prepping and running the snack cart for an hour, making sure each day of the week is covered.
- Look for help in a variety of places, including local high schools, colleges, community groups and businesses.
- Seek out mutually beneficial opportunities. For example, students in Ferrisburgh take care of the town's maple trees in exchange for the town tapping the trees to provide the school with local syrup.

Each individual will have their own ideas, resources and networks to contribute. As you bring more people on board be open to the evolution of the initiative, acknowledging that each change brings with it the opportunity to engage even more people.



The Hinesburg Community School team makes sure to thank the people who help them with their work!



A parent volunteer helps out in the school garden at Hinesburg Community School.

School Cook for a Day

A favorite program at Vergennes Union Elementary School is "Cook in our Apron." Parent and community volunteers come into the kitchen and help prepare food. Between ten and twelve people regularly come, usually to prep the labor-intensive produce from the school garden or neighboring farms. On top of lending much-needed support to the food service program these individuals have become some of the biggest advocates for the school's wellness program and initiatives.

Increasing Support, Decreasing Waste

In Hinesburg one parent led the charge in setting up a compost sorting station in the cafeteria. This individual worked with the Chittenden Solid Waste District and visited other schools in the area to develop a system that worked for the Hinesburg school. Now the fifth graders weigh the waste and all students are talking about chicken feed, trash and landfills. They've gone from generating around 50 pounds of trash a day to 15!

Bringing the Farm to the School

Sharon Elementary School has put a unique spin on the traditional field day that schools typically host at the end of the year. Each May since 2004, they have drawn together around 175 staff, students, families, farmers, local producers, and community members for their annual Farm & Field Day. On top of getting the kids out of the classroom for some experiential learning, this day is about

“This day is a chance for us to celebrate all of our hard work over the school year linking farming and food education with health, wellness and other curricular areas.”

— LAURA LEWIS, SHARON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

reflecting on, celebrating, and sharing with the school community all of the effort they have put into linking food and farming to the curriculum. The event takes place during the school day and every student participates. For the past three years they’ve also invited grades from other schools in their district to attend, taking advantage of the opportunity to educate and inspire others.

There are nine stations around the school that eight groups of students visit throughout the day. Groups spend 20 minutes at each station, pausing for a local snack (such as, Green Mountain Creamery Greek yogurt or Cabot cheddar cheese), lunch and a special dessert (ice cream from nearby Strafford Organic Creamery!). The stations are divided into three categories: Animals, Learning Stations, and Games.

Animals

The Farm & Field Day organizer, teacher Laura Lewis, writes letters inviting different farmers and local producers to run a station. Since this is a particularly busy time of year for farmers who plant crops (or harvest hay) it can be difficult to get them to participate. However, Sharon has learned that there are plenty of animal farmers around to keep students busy. These farmers are invited to bring their animals and farm equipment to display and are encouraged to offer interactive opportunities for students. This gives students the chance to see the animals up close and learn how farmers work with them.



At Farm & Field Day, students learn about bees from a beekeeper.

Here are some activity examples:

- Visiting with oxen from Billings Farm
- Getting reacquainted with Lilly, a cow from the Vermont Farmstead Cheese Company named by Sharon students, and taste-testing cheese
- Taking turns milking a goat and taste-testing goat cheese made from the milk
- Learning about honey bees and their importance to farming and tasting honey with a local beekeeper
- Watching border collies round up a small flock of sheep
- Visiting with pigs, chickens, work horses, and rabbits

Learning Stations



Students plant the school's production garden at Farm & Field Day.

Every year one learning station is devoted to planting the school's production garden. This garden is managed by the food service manager. Together with the students, she decides what to plant based on taste tests from the previous

winter. They create a map of the garden to use as a guide for planting during Farm & Field Day. The event kicks off the gardening season, creating the occasion to involve all students and highlight how the garden is integrated into the curriculum and provides produce for the school cafeteria. Other learning stations have included:

- West Lebanon Feed & Supply introducing students to different kinds of grains and how they are used to feed farm animals
- A local farrier demonstrating how to put shoes on ponies
- Learning how to build rock walls and install fencing
- Following a tree from the forest to construction
- Carding wool
- Studying water conservation and painting rain barrels
- Learning about compost

Games

The sixth graders are charged with the task of creating games with a “farm twist” for three stations. Working as a class they come up with the games, make the rules, gather the materials, and practice them before Farm & Field Day. Usually based on traditional field games like capture the flag, hot potato and ultimate Frisbee, the students come up with creative and fun names for the games, such as:

- “Catch The Cow”
- “Collect the Eggs”

Sharon Elementary School • Sharon, VT

- “Toss the Chicken”
- “Capture the Farm Animals”
- “Protect the egg”

Afterwards, personalized thank you notes are sent to each community participant with photos. Teachers also send home newsletters, recounting the day, sharing photos and thanking volunteers. Here’s a newsletter excerpt from one of the first and second grade teachers:

“At our stations we helped plant our school production garden and learned first-hand about Honey Bees, Oxen, and the job of a farrier. Able to join us as a special treat was Lilly, the Jersey calf our school named last January from VT Farmstead Cheese Co. in South Woodstock. Our three game stations were created and led by our 6th graders. We played “Protect the Egg”, “Capture the Farm Animals” (a spin on Capture the Flag) and “Save the Egg” (a spin on hot potato). For snack we tasted two kinds of cheese, Cheddar cheese from Cabot and Cheese crumbles from VT Farmstead Cheese Co. We also had Greek yogurt from Green Mountain Creamery. Following our lunch we had Strafford’s Organic Creamery ice-cream. Yum, Yum! A big thank you to all who donated items! A special thank you to all the community members and parents who helped make the day possible.”

Although the day is a complete success and the kids have a blast, there is one thing that the organizer would like to improve on—letting local newspapers know about the event. Plans for the day expand each year. Some ideas percolating for next year include cooking activities in preparation for the annual Jr. Iron Chef VT competition (www.jrironchefvt.org), incorporating apples and maple syrup, teaching students about the impact that Hurricane Irene had on farming, inviting a local farm to bring their smoothie bike, and building scarecrows for the garden.

Students sign personalized thank you notes that are sent to the farmers and producers who participate in Farm & Field Day.



“Parents and other school communities can see the energy that surrounds our farm to school program and hopefully start to initiate some practices at home or at their school.”

— KEENAN HALEY,
SHARON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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"Fit & Healthy Kids"

Swanton School's Plan for the [Healthier U.S. School Challenge](#) 2012-2013



Healthier School Challenge Continued

4. FUNDRAISING: We need to clarify more for our own understanding.
 - Look for ways to sell more "non-food items"
 - Food items sold during the day meet guidelines for "competitive foods."
5. SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE EXCELLENCE:
 - Making food attractive and presented in ways that encourages kids to try healthier foods.
 - Kids are given input into offerings for lunch.

The Healthier U.S. School Challenge:

Recognizing Excellence in Nutrition and Physical Activity

1. HOT LUNCH PROGRAM: We are already meeting most criteria in the "Gold" & "Gold with Distinction" categories on the rubric.
 - Breakfast & lunch
 - Competitive Foods
2. CLASSROOM:
 - Nutrition & Food Education (Quick Connections: Morning Meeting, Fresh Fruit & Veggie Grant Binder)
 - Physical Activity (includes PE class, recess, training for staff, Physical Activity Box)
3. FARM TO SCHOOL INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT:
 - Local/ Garden Foods
 - Taste Testing
 - Connections in the Classroom (Fresh Fruit & Veggie Grant)

Our Plan & Mission Statement

Our mission is to create a sustainable school wide culture, which supports the education of our school community on the importance of nutrition and physical activity. Through this knowledge students, families, and staff will become empowered to make healthy decisions for their bodies, their environment, and their community.



Childhood Obesity Facts

Center for Disease Control 2012

Childhood obesity has more than tripled in the past 30 years.

The percentage of children aged 6–11 years in the United States who were obese increased from 7% in 1980 to nearly 20% in 2008.

Similarly, the percentage of adolescents aged 12–19 years who were obese increased from 5% to 18% over the same period.

10-15% of low income children ages 2-4 in Vermont are obese.

Swanton's Goal for the Healthier US Schools Challenge: Goal 1 Cafeteria

Long Term Goal: More students choose to consume the healthy foods offered within our school lunch program.

Goal for 2012-2013 School Year: We will create opportunities that encourage kids to try new and healthy foods.

First Step: We will expand our taste testing program.



Goal 2: CLASSROOM

Long Term Goal: Students will understand the value of good nutrition and physical activity.

Goal for 2012-2013 School Year: Teachers will discuss the importance of nutrition and physical activity within the classroom setting.

First Step: We will provide teachers with activity bins and materials (such as Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Information Binder) to foster discussions about nutrition and physical activity.

Goal 5: Family School Connection

Long Term Goal: Kids and families will integrate healthy behaviors into their lives.

Goal for 2012-2013 School Year: We will educate our community on the importance of nutrition and physical activity as it relates to a child's education.

First Step: We will work towards developing a "Wellness Night" where families spend the evening together, engaged in healthy activities.

GOAL 3: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Long Term Goal: Students will develop a positive attitude towards physical activity and will become more active.

Goal for 2012-2013 School Year: We will create a variety of new opportunities for students to engage in physical activity during recess.

First Step: We will educate and support (recess) staff through hands on training (offering materials & directions for physical activities), and provide opportunities for them to have proactive input.

How You Can Support this Program

1. Be positive about our goals; especially in front of students.
2. Take time to try to integrate physical activity into your teaching. Just try it... you might be surprised.
3. Take a moment to talk about the nutritional facts when kids are having their Fruit/ Veggie Snack.
4. Get involved. Join us as part of our Advisory. We would love to have your support, so please share your ideas even if you can't meet with us.
5. Try cooking a healthy recipe with a group of kids. You don't need to be a classroom teacher to do so.
6. Collect and analyze some simple data regarding exercise and healthy eating or taste testing with your students.

Goal 4: Outdoor Learning & Garden

Long Term Goal: Our school will utilize the school garden's produce more effectively (throughout the school).

Goal for 2012-2013 School Year: We will collaborate with the "Garden Group" and align our goals with their goals.

First Step: Meet with the "Garden Group" and develop common goals and next steps.



Ten Guided Questions for Mentors and Team Leaders

If you are a school mentor or team leader the Nutrition Education Institute mentors recommend having the following questions in your “back pocket” to direct team planning and implementation:

1. What is the best way to communicate with the team? Who will be the main contact person?
How is this person best reached?
2. Where have you successfully integrated nutrition education and physical activity into your curriculum?
3. What initiatives have you already tried?
4. What is the school already working on? What are you most proud of?
5. What resources (human and otherwise) are available to you in the community?
6. What opportunities are present that in the school and outside community that you can piggyback on?
7. What does success look like? What would you like to see happen?
8. What is most challenging? What are you struggling with now? What resources do you need to overcome these particular obstacles?
9. What does healthy modeling look like?
10. What are your barriers to change? How can you address them?

Nutrition Education Institute 2012 - 2013

School Assessment Rubric

Please complete this rubric as a school team and email it to Danielle Pipher (dpipher@shelburnefarms.org) by **Tuesday, June 12th**. In addition, please bring a completed print/hard copy with you to the Summer Nutrition Education Institute at Shelburne Farms on June 25th. This rubric will be used as a tool for creating your action plan and assessing your progress throughout the year's nutrition education activities.

Name of School _____

Names of team members completing rubric _____

Date completing rubric _____

1. My school is enrolled as a Team Nutrition School
 Yes No Not sure
2. My school participates in the National School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program
 Yes No Not sure

Dear Summer Nutrition Institute Team Members,

The questions and rubric on the following pages are for you to complete as an assessment of your school's current status related to the Healthier U.S. School Challenge (HUSSC) criteria and Farm to School programming. The rubric is designed around the categories in the HUSSC, adding some activities related to Farm to School. This "self" assessment tool will serve as the baseline against which we can measure the types of changes that are made at your school over the coming year, following your participation in the Summer Nutrition Education Institute.

The first sets of questions below (under "school breakfast" and "school lunch" headings) are followed by four columns that give you the criteria for meeting the HUSSC (bronze, silver, gold and gold+). After that, starting with the section on nutrition education, the columns provide a sense of how advanced your school is in relation to the question (a ranking of 1 to 4, from less advanced to more), but don't necessarily provide HUSSC criteria. Please answer each question in the far left column to the best of your ability. Then circle the response that best matches your answer (or don't circle anything if there's not a good match). Thank you for taking the time to complete these questions!

HUSSC Criteria for Elementary/Middle schools	Bronze	Silver	Gold	Gold with distinction
School Breakfast				
How many students attend your school? _____	No ADP required	Less than 20%	20-34%	35% or greater
What is your school breakfast average daily participation (ADP) rate? _____				
School Breakfast: What is the number of different fruits and vegetables offered each week? _____	At least 3 per week (at least one served fresh/week)	At least 3 per week (at least one served fresh/week)	At least 1 every day (at least 2 served fresh/week)	At least 1 every day (at least 2 served fresh/week)
How many are served fresh? _____				
School Breakfast: What is the percent of Grains offered weekly that are whole grain-rich? _____	50% to 69%	50% to 69%	At least 70%	100%
School Lunch				
What is your school lunch average daily participation (ADP) rate? _____	No ADP required	Less than 60%	60-74%	75% or greater
School Lunch: How many additional servings per week of vegetables are offered beyond what is required in the meal pattern? _____	All levels must offer dark green, red and orange, and dry beans and peas as required in meal pattern. Must also offer 1 additional serving weekly.	All levels must offer dark green, red and orange, and dry beans and peas as required in meal pattern. Must also offer 1 additional serving weekly.	All levels must offer dark green, red and orange, and dry beans and peas as required in meal pattern. Must also offer 2 additional servings weekly.	All levels must offer dark green, red and orange, and dry beans and peas as required in meal pattern. Must also offer 2 additional servings weekly.

HUSSC Criteria for Elementary/Middle schools	Bronze	Silver	Gold	Gold with distinction
School Lunch: How many servings of fresh fruit are offered each week? _____	All levels must offer at least 5 different fruits each week (fresh, frozen, canned, dried or 100% juice). Bronze: Must have 1 fruit/week served fresh	All levels must offer at least 5 different fruits each week (fresh, frozen, canned, dried or 100% juice). Silver: Must have 2 fruits/week served fresh	All levels must offer at least 5 different fruits each week (fresh, frozen, canned, dried or 100% juice). Gold: Must have 3 fruits/week served fresh.	All levels must offer at least 5 different fruits each week (fresh, frozen, canned, dried or 100% juice). Gold+: Must have 4 fruits/week served fresh.
School Lunch: What is the percent of Grains offered weekly that are whole grain-rich? _____ How many different types of whole grain-rich foods are offered? _____	2/3 of the minimum required grains offered each week must be whole grain rich. At least 3 different types of whole grain-rich foods offered each week.	2/3 of the minimum required grains offered each week must be whole grain rich. At least 3 different types of whole grain-rich foods offered each week.	All grains offered must be whole-grain rich. At least 3 different types of whole grain-rich foods offered each week.	All grains offered must be whole-grain rich. At least 3 different types of whole grain-rich foods offered each week. Only one whole grain-rich offering/week can be a grain-based dessert.

	1	2	3	4
Indicators drawn from HUSSC or Farm to School Nutrition and Food Education				
How many grades are in your school? _____	Nutrition/food education is not currently provided in any grades	Nutrition/food education is provided in some grades (k-6)	Nutrition/food education is provided in all grades (k-6)	
How many classes engage students in nutrition/food education? _____	Nutrition/food education is not currently provided in any grades	Nutrition/food education is provided in some grades (k-6)	Nutrition/food education is provided in all grades (k-6)	
Does your school use Team nutrition or other evidence-based food, farming, nutrition curricula? _____	School does not use these curricula	Some classes use this curriculum	All classes use this curriculum	
Does your school use a collaborative team approach to provide nutrition/food education? _____	No teachers are providing nutrition/food education	Nutrition/food education is led by one person (such as PE teacher or food service)	There are different people providing nutrition/food education but they aren't working together	The people providing nutrition/food education are working as a team.
Is food, farm and nutrition education integrated into the curriculum at your school? _____	No, opportunities for integration of food, farm and nutrition education (FFN) have not been identified	Opportunities for integration of FFN have been identified but not implemented	Lessons or units integrating FFN are being taught in some grade levels	FFN lessons are integrated into curriculum across disciplines using a coordinated approach
Are hands-on opportunities to learn about growing and cooking food integrated into the curriculum at your school? _____	No, we do not yet provide hands-on opportunities to learn about growing and cooking food.	Opportunities for using growing and cooking as learning experiences have been identified	Growing and cooking experiences are integrated into teaching units and meeting established goals	Growing and cooking experiences are integrated into curriculum across disciplines using a coordinated approach

	1	2	3	4
Indicators drawn from HUSSC or Farm to School				
Does your school provide annual training to before and after school program staff on nutrition/food? ___	School provides no training for this group	School provides training for some of these staff	School provides annual training on nutrition to almost all before and after school program staff	
Does your school evaluate the impact of your food and nutrition education activities? ___	No, we carry out the activities but we don't have a way to measure their impact.	Yes, we use our own home grown tools to get a sense of whether our food/nutrition programs are making a difference.	Yes, we use evaluation tools to determine program impacts.	
Physical Education and Activity				
Does your school provide structured physical education? ___	No, there is no structured physical education.	Yes, a minimum average of 45 minutes/week throughout the school year	Yes, a minimum average of 90 minutes/week throughout the school year	Yes, a minimum average of 150 minutes/week throughout the school year
Does your school provide opportunities for unstructured physical activity (e.g. recess, gardening) at school? ___	No, opportunities for unstructured physical activity are not provided.	Yes, opportunities for unstructured physical activity are provided occasionally.	Yes, physical activity opportunities are provided daily outside of physical education classes	
Does your school provide annual training to before and after school staff on physical activity? ___	School provides no training for this group	School provides training for some of these staff	School provides annual training on physical activity to almost all before and after school program staff	

Indicators drawn from HUSSC or Farm to School	1	2	3	4
Farm to School Institutional Support				
Is your school engaged in purchasing and preparing local foods? _____	Possibilities for incorporating local food into the menu have been identified and/or resources to help source local food identified.	Local sources of food have been identified and several local foods piloted in school meals.	Local food regularly incorporated into menu for the school year. School food service can adapt to fluctuating sources of local food and can adapt their budget as necessary.	Annual purchasing contracts have been established between local farmers and the school. System in place to sustain the purchase of local food consistently; new local food sources evaluated regularly.
Does your school's physical infrastructure for processing, cooking and preparing food enable you to prepare local foods? _____ Do your school food service staff have opportunities for professional development? _____	School food service has begun to identify infrastructure and professional development needs and changes to be made to incorporate local food into the menu.	Infrastructure changes initiated or being planned. Professional development opportunities provided for school food service staff.	Infrastructure changes allow for incorporation of more local foods. All school food service staff have opportunities for professional development.	Food Program infrastructure can sustain processing, cooking, and serving local foods over the long term. Plan in place for ongoing evaluations of infrastructure and professional development needs as local food purchasing increases.
Are connections made at your school across the classroom, cafeteria & community? _____	Faculty and school food service have an interest in, and/or can identify, possibilities for engaging faculty and students in the farm to school program.	School food service, faculty and administration have connected classroom learning with the cafeteria and/or the community.	Faculty connect cafeteria taste tests with classroom learning. Teachers and food service staff consider the school food program to be a resource. Students have experiences with local farms/farmers/food producers.	Community members, students, and school staff see the school food program as an integral part of the school and community. The school has a coordinated approach to providing students experiences with local farms/farmers/food producers.

Indicators drawn from HUSSC or Farm to School	1	2	3	4
Fundraising				
Does your school sell food items during fundraisers? ____	Yes, we sell food items and they do not meet the guidelines for competitive foods.	Yes, food items are sold during the school day but they meet the guidelines for competitive foods.	Only non-food items are sold through fundraising activities.	
School Food Service Excellence				
Is your school using “smarter” lunchroom techniques to encourage fruit consumption? ____	No, we don’t know what those are.	We have started to think about ways to increase fruit sales but we haven’t implemented anything yet.	Yes, fruit is displayed in two locations, with one being near the cash register. Attractive displays, signage and staff encourage fruit selection.	
Is your school using “smart” lunchroom techniques to encourage vegetable consumption? ____	No, we don’t know what those are.	We have started to think about ways to increase vegetable sales but we haven’t implemented anything yet.	Yes, students are given the opportunity to provide input into vegetable offerings and suggest creative names. Nutrient-rich vegetable options are displayed first among side dishes.	

Nutrition Education

What are you currently doing in your classroom?

If you are not aware, BCEMS is part of the Green Mountain Healthy Kids Challenge this year which is part of a USDA Team Nutrition grant. As part of this year-long project we are working with the Agency of Education, VT FEED, Shelburne Farms and the UVM Dietetic Program to try to incorporate nutrition education and physical activity across the K-6 curriculum. The ongoing goal of this project is documenting our progress so that we may publish the best practices nationally through USDA Team Nutrition Programs. Successful completion will result in national recognition and a monetary award of \$2,000.

You may not think you are teaching any nutrition education but here are some examples of things already happening in and around the classroom:

- Kindergarten classes visiting an apple orchard then making applesauce
- New menu in the cafeteria
- Steering fundraisers towards health motivation like the Walk Run Fun
- Monthly birthday celebrations in the cafeteria to decrease sweets in the classroom
- Discussing the importance of balance with food consumption, exercise and water

Please briefly identify any nutrition education that you currently incorporate into your curriculum.

Would you be interested in food cart activities with a mentor/volunteer?

This survey is to help us build on the nutrition curriculum already taking place in your classroom but more importantly to get BCEMS nationally recognized in the Healthier US School Challenge!

Thank you for your help,

George Mackey, Meaghan Falby, Nizzy Bascom, Sonya Spaulding, Jay Baitz, James Taffel



Vermont FEED 2012

NUTRITION EDUCATION ACTION PLANNING TEMPLATE

Group Members:

Statement of Purpose: (this should be linked to the school's wellness policy – attach a copy or insert text below)



Vermont FEED 2012

NUTRITION EDUCATION ACTION PLANNING TEMPLATE

Cafeteria * consider both the cafeteria educational environment as well as the physical environment

Goals (2012-13 School Year)	Action Steps (WHAT needs to be done?)	WHO is responsible? (lead person and group members)	Timeline (BY WHEN do things need to be done?)	Resources Needed

Long-term Ideas & Goals for Future School Years:

NUTRITION EDUCATION ACTION PLANNING TEMPLATE

Vermont FEED 2012



Documentation of Cafeteria Best Practices:

How will you record best practices of this section?

What do you need to collect to document your progress? Think about pre-, during, and post- evaluation and documentation.



Vermont FEED 2012

NUTRITION EDUCATION ACTION PLANNING TEMPLATE

Classroom

See Curriculum Planning Tool for unit development

Goals (2012-13 School Year)	Action Steps (WHAT needs to be done?)	WHO is responsible? (lead person and group members)	Timeline (BY WHEN do things need to be done?)	Resources Needed

Long-term Ideas & Goals for Future School Years:

NUTRITION EDUCATION ACTION PLANNING TEMPLATE

Vermont FEED 2012



Documentation of *Classroom* Best Practices:

How will you record best practices of this section?

What do you need to collect to document your progress? Think about pre-, during, and post-evaluation and documentation.



Vermont FEED 2012

NUTRITION EDUCATION ACTION PLANNING TEMPLATE

Physical Education

Goals (2012-13 School Year)	Action Steps (WHAT needs to be done?)	WHO is responsible? (lead person and group members)	Timeline (BY WHEN do things need to be done?)	Resources Needed

Long-term Ideas & Goals for Future School Years:



Vermont FEED 2012

NUTRITION EDUCATION ACTION PLANNING TEMPLATE

Documentation of *Physical Education* Best Practices:

How will you record best practices of this section?

What do you need to collect to document your progress? Think about pre-, during, and post- evaluation and documentation.



Vermont FEED 2012

NUTRITION EDUCATION ACTION PLANNING TEMPLATE

Outdoor Learning/Garden

Goals (2012-13 School Year)	Action Steps (WHAT needs to be done?)	WHO is responsible? (lead person and group members)	Timeline (BY WHEN do things need to be done?)	Resources Needed

Long-term Ideas & Goals for Future School Years:

NUTRITION EDUCATION ACTION PLANNING TEMPLATE

Vermont FEED 2012



Documentation of *Outdoor Learning/Garden Best Practices*:

How will you record best practices of this section?

What do you need to collect to document your progress? Think about pre-, during, and post- evaluation and documentation.



Vermont FEED 2012

NUTRITION EDUCATION ACTION PLANNING TEMPLATE

Family-School Connections

Goals (2012-13 School Year)	Action Steps (WHAT needs to be done?)	WHO is responsible? (lead person and group members)	Timeline (BY WHEN do things need to be done?)	Resources Needed

Long-term Ideas & Goals for Future School Years:

NUTRITION EDUCATION ACTION PLANNING TEMPLATE

Vermont FEED 2012



Documentation of *Family-School Connections* Best Practices:

How will you record best practices of this section?

What do you need to collect to document your progress? Think about pre-, during, and post- evaluation and documentation.

Elementary School K-6

Farm to School Curriculum Framework

	K	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Cafeteria	All School
Fall									
Winter									
Spring									

Food and Nutrition Education Curriculum and Best Practices Planning Template

Steps:

- Convene your team and discuss what's happening; take notes.
- As a team complete the data chart.
- Team member enter data chart into Survey Monkey.

Directions:

1. Quarterly (October, December, February, April) convene a team meeting. Spend at least 45 minutes discussing your evolving practices in nutrition education to help to document best practices. When possible, please take photos and gather documentation of student work or teacher/cafeteria practice change. Feel free to submit any additional evidence —teacher or student work, photos, additional reflections sheets.

Use the questions below to guide your discussion. Appoint one team member to take notes of the discussion. Consider the following areas for each question:

- Cafeteria
 - Classroom
 - Physical Education
 - Outdoor Learning/Garden
 - Family-School Connections
1. What evidence did you see this month of the school personnel/teachers/food service utilizing resources (human or otherwise) that support nutrition education?
 2. What evidence do you see that the school is using schoolyard and outdoor learning spaces (garden, farms, etc)? How are these spaces being used and what infrastructure is emerging to support this work (i.e. assigning specific garden beds to classes, watering schedules, etc)?
 3. What evidence do you see that nutrition is being integrated into existing units or new units of study? What resources are being used to develop these units (professional development, unit templates, community partners, online tools, web resources, etc)
 4. What evidence do you see that nutrition education programming is having an impact on students?
 5. What challenges do you notice school personnel, students, or community partners facing?

6. How do you measure success (i.e. more students participating in taste tests, less food is being thrown away in the cafeteria, etc.)? What tools (i.e. survey, etc.) or strategies (i.e. data collection, etc) are you using?
7. Any quotes or anecdotes (positive or negative) from school personnel, teachers, students, or family/community partners related to nutrition education.
8. Any other observations or evidence of impacts you would like to share?

2. DATA CHART

What: What happened? If you observed or took part in the event or practice that resulted in the impact, describe it here. For example, “Phil Black’s 3rd grade class prepared a bean dip and presented it for a taste test to their peers in the cafeteria.”

Who: The role and name (optional) of the individual or group on whom the impact was observed, for example, “Jane Emerson’s 5th grade class” or “the afterschool program staff”.

Impact: The trend you have observed, for example “increased student participation in the lunch program” or “increasing number of teachers using the gardens”.

Evidence or Example: The specific thing you observed, for example, “implementation of weekly team planning meetings” or “the outdoor learning space is now a regularly used by Ms. Lopez’s class” or quotes such as “he said to me: “They really got it. When I see the way kids’ eyes light up at this stuff, I’m convinced it’s worth the effort.” Whenever possible, please attempt to quantify the trend. For instance: “Two new garden beds established.” or “Three new teachers approached me for ideas about nutrition projects this month.”

	What happened?	Who was impacted?	What is the impact?	Evidence or Example
Cafeteria				

Classroom				
Physical Education				
Outdoor Learning/Garden				
Family-School Connections				

3. Visit [SURVEY MONKEY](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/KR8LF7V) <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/KR8LF7V>
And enter the findings from your Data Chart.

Dear RES Staff,

We are gearing up for a fresh new year in the RES cafeteria!
I have attended many conferences and trainings this summer and am excited about some new changes coming to school food service!

There are some significant changes that you will need to be aware of, so I will outline them here. These have been brought about by the new USDA meal pattern requirements and the US Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act.

1) We will be using our salad bar as the service station for all fruits and vegetables. It is no longer an alternative. All children having school lunch will go through the salad bar to get their fruit and vegetable servings. There is NO Maximum serving quantity on Fruits and Vegetables, but children MUST leave with a Minimum of 1/2 cup of each. I will be monitoring the Salad Bar this year to ensure the proper portions are being taken. There will be a "My Tray" display at the beginning of the lunch line to help students learn what a balanced meal looks like. The main entree, proteins and grains, and occasional "featured" vegetables will be served at the hot lunch counter. There will be alternative proteins available as well such as cottage cheese or yogurt for those not wanting the main meal.

The USDA protein portion for children grades K-5 is 1-2 oz per day, no more than 9oz per week per child, so it is necessary to control the portions that we offer, hence cottage cheese, meats and shredded cheese will not be available on the salad bar.

2) We will be setting up TWO lunch service lines at the hot lunch counter serving the same foods (like we do on grinder day). This will help us serve students quickly so they will have more time to eat. Both sides of the salad bar will contain the same F&V choices.

2) Fruit Juice will NOT be offered as a beverage choice at lunch. Fruit juice replaces fresh fruit as a component and can only be offered twice a week. That would be difficult to regulate, so we will not be offering it. If a student needs juice at lunch we are required to have a Physicians note to document it. Fruit juice will be offered at breakfast and snack time.

3) We will NOT be taking a lunch count this year. We will be forecasting our lunch preparations based on history and production records. This should make your day just a tiny bit easier. We do need to know who is getting snack drinks and snack bags each day, so please send a list of names when students come for snacks.

4) Students will NOT be scanning cards this year. We will collect them in a basket and enter them after all have been served. This gives us more serving hands and will allow me to monitor the salad bar.

5) BREAKFAST: breakfast will again this year be served "to go" to be eaten in the classroom. While this is not ideal and we would hope in the future to have enough time for children to eat in the cafeteria, we will do the best we can with the schedule we are given. I have purchased "Breakfast Bento Boxes" to use in the mornings. They have 3 compartments to put foods in, so

they can be packed and covered with their lids, hopefully reducing spills and reducing the need to individually wrap each fruit and bread and cheese etc...thereby reducing labor in the morning. We will try to figure out a dirty dish station in each area of the school so the hallways will not be lined with trays of dirty dishes and foods.

6) KINDERGARTEN AND PRESCHOOL breakfasts: Staffing in the morning has changed, so we will not be able to deliver breakfasts to kindergarten and preschool. If you can have someone come down to pick up breakfasts or have someone escort those students needing breakfast to the cafeteria, that would be terrific.

7) Statements of accounts will NOT be sent home weekly. We will instead only send home BILLS when accounts are delinquent. We will be strongly encouraging families to go online to pay for meals.

8) Each month we will highlight a "Food of the Month" starting with Kale in September. We will taste test, feature it on the salad bar or menu, feature it in the garden, (if we have it there), send home recipes and ask the Richmond Market to use our RES Food Of the Month sign to designate it at the store. We would love for classes to take part in choosing Foods of the Month, and we are looking to highlight dark greens (romaine, spinach, broccoli, chard, kale) orange and red veggies (squash, sweet potatoes, red peppers, carrots,) dried beans and legume (lentils, soybeans, black beans...) and local produce of all sorts.

Shirley, Dani and I will be making some BIG changes this year, the new regulations are somewhat daunting and we will be doing our best to create a vibrant, engaging atmosphere in the cafeteria. You will see a new look in the kitchen as well. I look forward to sharing with you more about the new changes in food service as well as sharing what I have learned about wellness in the months to come!

--

Karyl Kent
Food Service Manager
Richmond Elementary School

10 Things You Always Wanted To Know About Your School Nutrition Program But Were Too Afraid To Ask

1. Every school day school nutrition professionals must meet differing local, state and federal nutrition standards; provide quality, safe and healthful meals that kids enjoy; accommodate special dietary needs and food allergies of a diverse student body; all for less than \$2.57 per meal.
2. Your school nutrition program offers as many whole grain products as possible. In many cases, pizza crust, French toast sticks, pancakes, waffles, breadsticks and pasta contain whole grains. Nutrition standards require beginning July 1, 2012 (SY 2012-2013), through June 30, 2014 (SY 2013-2014), half of the grains offered during the school week must meet the whole grain-rich criteria. Beginning July 1, 2014, (SY 2014-2015), all grains must meet the whole grain-rich criteria.
3. Your school nutrition program purchases as much locally grown fruits and vegetables as possible. Many schools are also starting to grow their own vegetables.
4. Your school nutrition program offer a wide variety of fruits and vegetables. Students who eat school meals have the opportunity to get at least 4 of their '5-a-day' at school.
5. When menu planning, the school nutrition program follows very specific guidelines. They are required to provide $\frac{1}{3}$ of RDA of protein, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, iron, calcium, and calories - no more that 30% of calories are to come from fat and less than 10% from saturated fat.
6. Your school nutrition program has to keep track of everything: what days each student ate lunch, how it was served, what was the temperature of the meal, how each student's lunch got paid for - and be able to provide it up to 3 years later.
7. Your school nutrition program operates under strict federal and state guidelines. Cafeterias have a state review every 3-5 years to ensure their program's meals meet nutritional standards; and have annual health inspections.
8. Students receiving free and reduced lunch are kept confidential and are not identified in the lunch line. Students can apply for free and reduced meals any time during the year. Applying for Free/Reduced actually benefits the school district as a whole by increasing funding from many sources in different departments. Many sources of funds require that a particular participation percentage level be met.
9. Updated Standards for School Meals issued in January 2012 were built upon recommendations from the Institute of Medicine and include:
 - Ensure students are offered both fruits and vegetables every day of the week;
 - Increase offerings of whole grain-rich foods;
 - Offer only fat-free or low-fat milk;
 - Limit calories based on the age of children being served to ensure proper portion size;
 - Increase the focus on reducing the amounts of saturated fat, trans fats, added sugars, and sodium.
10. The Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 strengthened local school wellness policies. We know that these can be a powerful force for change in many communities, and the HHFKA now requires more engagement from the local level so that wellness policies do not just become a paper that gets filed away in a drawer somewhere.



October 17, 2012

Classroom Teachers,

We on the HUSSC (Healthier US Schools Challenge) team are working on a mini-grant to pay for our Fit Deck cards and to build the traveling Cooking Cart.

In order to be eligible for the \$1,000 in grant money our school needs to:

1. Include regularly scheduled PE classes, **and allow for physical activity at other times**
2. Provide nutrition education

These qualifiers come from the folks at the Green Mountain Healthy Kids Challenge HUSSC mini grant.

Number 2 will be accomplished through our nutrition lessons and the Cooking Cart.

We need your help to accomplish number 1. Our goal is for 150 minutes of teacher-guided physical activity every week. (so, recess cannot be included in the 150 minutes) PE twice a week means our kids already get 80 minutes per week.

To reach the 150 minutes goal each classroom teacher should provide 15 minutes of guided physical activity per day. This can be done in five-minute chunks throughout the day, or all at once; whatever works best for you and your students. Use those Fit Deck cards, take time for yoga, stretch and rejuvenate between lessons, run once around the loop – whatever you like. Let's give our students the benefits of the exercise that we all know grows brain cells – and we will have a few more dollars to pay for the Cooking Cart and the Fit Decks.

We also need you to record the amount of time that you give to in-class physical activity. Remember those calendars we had kids fill out (or parents, or we filled out for kids) for the Pep Grant the last few years? This is even easier than that. On the back of this notice you are provided with a blank calendar grid marked for school days during the month of November. Write a number in the box, showing how many minutes of activity you lead every school day that month. (Remember the goal is 15+) Also include the type of activity. At the end of the month give your calendar to Donna. That's all, it is that easy. Any photos or other documentation would be appreciated, but not necessary.

We thank you, and your students' brains thank you!

The FCS HUSSC team:

Donna, Judy, Lydia, Annie C, Sue, Marianna, Sarah, Katie Boyle and Betsy Vick

November 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
4	5 M: A:	6 M: A:	7 M: A:	1 Minutes: Activity: 8 M: A:	2 2	3 3
11 11	12 M: A:	13 M: A:	14 M: A:	15 M: A:	16 M: A:	17 17
18 18	19 M: A:	20 M: A:	21 21	22 22	23 23	24 24
25 25	26 M: A:	27 M: A:	28 M: A:	29 M: A:	30 M: A:	

May 3, 2013

Dear Vergennes Union Elementary School Family Member,

Beginning in 2012 our school has been making changes to our food service environment as we work toward becoming certified as an award-winning school by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's voluntary Healthier US School Challenge.

The Healthier US School Challenge nationally recognizes schools at the Bronze, Silver, Gold, or Gold of Distinction award levels for:

- 1) Serving school lunches that reflect the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*;
- 2) Restricting the availability of foods and beverages at school to those that do not meet healthier guidelines of lower fat, added sugars, and sodium
- 3) Offering nutrition education for students to learn to make healthy choices; and
- 4) Providing physical education and opportunities for students to be physically active during the school day.

We believe that children who learn to make healthy food choices and be physically active at school will continue these habits into adulthood. These are some of the changes on our school lunch menu:

- A wider variety of fruits and vegetables, including dark green and orange vegetables, dry beans and peas, and fresh fruits
- Frequent use of whole-grain products
- Low-fat or fat-free milk

We invite you to have lunch with your child anytime at VUES and to encourage your child to try new foods. Involving your child in selecting healthy choices at the grocery store and preparing healthy choices at home will reinforce the messages we're teaching at school.

If you are interested in serving on our school's Wellness Team, please contact any of our team members listed below; or call the school office at 877-2938.

We hope that you will encourage your children to choose a tasty, nutritious lunch at school. Please call us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Your VUES Healthier US School Challenge Team

Lisa Sprague
Lynne Rapoport
Allison Vigne
Robyn Newton
Katie Birkett
Kathy Cannon
Tricia Comeau

February 2nd, 2013

Swanton Central School
24 Fourth Street
Swanton, VT 05488

Dear Mr. Coon:

We want to thank you for coming to meet with us about the playground problems and our results from our survey of the 5th and 6th grade students.

One hundred thirteen kids out of the 143 kids who completed the survey agree that there is not enough to do at recess. One of the questions we asked was, "Are you allowed to go on the middle playground?" Eighty-one out of 85 sixth graders said, "No, they aren't allowed to play there, but they would like to." We would like to ask that you let 6th graders play on both the soccer field and middle playgrounds. We did last year.

Right now there is a big problem with obesity in our country. Kids aren't getting enough exercise. If you let 6th graders use both playgrounds at recess, there will be more to do. More kids would get exercise, which is part of our school goals.

When kids aren't bored they won't get in trouble as much. There isn't enough to do on the soccer field at recess, so kids get in trouble for doing things they are not supposed to. If they could

play on the middle playground, they wouldn't get into so much trouble.

We also know you are worried about money. Our survey showed that kids want more swings and a playground structure. If you let us go on the middle playground at recess, you won't have to spend money buying swings and equipment.

We know that you are worried about not having enough adults to supervise the kids during the 6th grade recess, but we have some ideas. We could separate the four adults so there are two on each playground (the soccer field and the middle playground). Students would have to agree to stay on one playground or the other for the entire recess, with no switching allowed. There are so many people who work our school, that we would like to see if there is one person who could be added to do duty during our recess from 1:15 -1:45 each day. Maybe, for the sake of the kids, there is a classroom that could manage without that adult for a short half hour? If not, is there more than one person who could share the duty for that time throughout the week?

We are working hard to improve our behavior in the lunchroom and at recess. It sure would help if there were more to do at recess. We understand that you are a very busy person, but we would like to ask you to make it possible for us to use both playgrounds at recess.

Sincerely yours,

Kaleidoscope

6 Steps to Implementing a Taste Test Program in Your School

1 Know your goals. Before doing a taste test, establish a few goals that are easy to communicate. Are you implementing a taste test program to expand children’s food choices? Encouraging more healthy snack or lunch choices brought from home? Do you want to broaden the school lunch or breakfast menu? Do you want to introduce local foods?



An interested parent at Rumney school invited teachers, a local farmer and the school’s food service manager to attend a local Farm to School workshop in 2007. These folks became regular supporters of the school-wide taste testing program that exists today. A diverse team will help ensure that your program has the support it needs to take off and remain sustainable. (photo courtesy of Rumney Memorial School)

2 Develop a food committee. Meet with the food service director or head cook to discuss possibilities, and then with the school principal to discuss your goals and make a plan. Find parents and teachers who are supportive of the idea of a taste testing program. Your best allies are the people who

work with the students every day. Most teachers will support a program, but be careful about adding to their workloads. If your focus is on local food, find an area farmer who can supply produce to your school and who would be willing to speak to a class or possibly come for part of a taste test. Meet with food service personnel to communicate your ideas and to discuss ways to use local foods in the school menu. Think about the VT FEED “3 C’s” model: representatives from each of the C’s should be part of your team. Your committee, together with food service personnel, can decide how often taste tests should occur, what format (in the cafeteria or classrooms), what foods to try, and how to fund the foods being tested (PTO’s make great partners). They can also help analyze taste test results.

3 Start small and think through the details. With the committee, decide what food you first want to feature. Where will you get it? (Perhaps your school wants to build a relationship with a nearby farm where you know you can get local potatoes.) What recipe will you try? (roasted potatoes, maybe?) How much will the ingredients cost? (Will the farmer donate potatoes just for tasting? Is the school food service willing to spend extra money?) Does the kitchen have the staff and equipment to prepare the food? How will the food be ordered? Who will prepare it? If

the students like the new food, is the recipe repeatable on the lunch or breakfast line? Be sure to meet and talk through all these questions with the school food service director and cooking staff. *For ideas on what foods and recipes have been used in taste tests, see “A School Year of Seasonal Recipes,” Appendix A, p.29, VT FEED Guide for Using Local Foods in Schools, or the resources in Appendix J, p.45.*

4 Be respectful of food service personnel and teachers. Food service personnel have a tough job, take pride in what they cook, and are busy. Teachers and other school personnel have a lot of time demands, too. Everyone has the same goal—to feed our children the freshest healthiest food possible, but we may have different ideas on how to get there.

5 Offer hands-on experiences. Children learn best when they are actively involved and using their hands. Children who help prepare food for a taste test are more likely to try it, and like it than children who have not been involved. If at all possible, include monthly hands-on lessons in the classroom or cafeteria so students have the chance to participate in making the food. *See sample VT FEED curriculum units on the website for ideas on how to integrate taste testing foods into curriculum.*

6 Just do it! Meet with teachers and food service staff to find a date that works for a taste test. Invite parents to help, either in your weekly newsletter or through a special invitation. If you are considering a classroom taste test program, find a time each week or month that fits well into the class schedule. (Snack time is usually a good time.) Encourage teachers and staff to be a part of the taste tests, integrate the information into their curriculum (if possible), and help model healthy eating behaviors. If you plan to conduct cafeteria taste tests during lunchtime, encourage staff members to be involved in the testing, or sample along with the students. By getting the whole school involved, you are more likely to have a successful program. Once you have had one or two successful taste tests, invite your local political figures and the local paper to see for themselves that your school is making some school food changes. *See “Taste Test Do’s and Don’ts,” Appendix G, p.42 and VT FEED Guide for Using Local Food in Schools for a press release example.*

High school students reflect back on taste tests...

“I really enjoyed the taste test we did! It was an interactive, simple way to decide between two different versions of salad we made. I’m sure that if kids could choose their own meals and snacks by having a taste test there wouldn’t be any problems with encouraging them to eat school meals.” — Schuyler Cowan, 11th grade

“The activity was engaging because it was hands-on and we were able to make our own choices throughout the process of making the salad.” — Mae Kemsley, 10th grade

Using individual trays or small paper cups—like for the roasted root vegetables below—makes a taste test more aesthetically pleasing and encourages children to try a food that otherwise might go untouched on a school lunch tray. *(photo courtesy of Ferrisburgh Central School)*



Taste Tests in the Cafeteria

The objectives of a cafeteria taste test are to involve students, teachers, parents, community members and food service in introducing new foods to students and to build the relationship between food service personnel and the rest of the school community. As students become familiar with taste tests, they will be more open to trying new foods. Regular taste tests can become an exciting school-wide event.

Choose foods to taste test that:

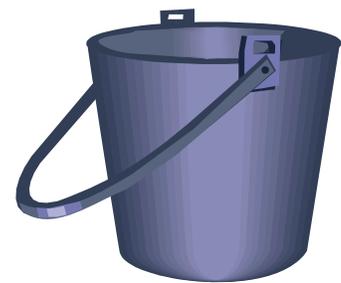
- increase consumption of whole grains, fruits and vegetables
- can be featured on the menu as a regular breakfast or lunch item
- will meet school food program requirements for nutrition, presentation, and cost.

Tips for Successful Cafeteria Taste Tests

- Always start with the food service personnel to plan a taste test. They can decide with you what foods to try.
- Partner with the PTO or a local business to help raise money for the food and for a taste test coordinator to work a few hours a month.
- Start with regular monthly taste tests of simple, affordable food (so it's easy to repeat if students like it).
- Find parents or community volunteers who can coordinate the classrooms with cafeteria activities. Food service personnel are unlikely to have the time to do this, although they can participate in some parts.
- Use local produce when possible and invite your local farmer or processor to join your taste test.
- If possible, work with teachers and food service personnel to have a small group of students help prepare the food. Remember, "If they make it, they will eat it."
- Offer small servings in a positive, non-coersive atmosphere.
- Advertise taste tests in the school newsletter or in letters home to families.
- Announce the results to the whole school after the taste test has finished and what the next steps are for that new food.
- Openly appreciate efforts made, and celebrate successes and lessons learned.

Taste Test Reminders!

- Wash hands well!
- Teach proper equipment use & care
- Dont forget to clean up!



Composting Rots!

Encourage children who can't finish their samples to compost the rest.

Taste Tests in the Classroom

Some teachers and food service directors have successfully introduced new foods in the classroom in short, informal sessions. Working with food service is ideal so that classroom-tested food can then be featured on the school menus. The classroom also offers an opportunity to integrate taste tests into the curriculum. Begin by talking with the teacher to find out



Ben Gleason from Gleason Grains, whose whole wheat flour is used in the school food program, is invited to speak in a Ferrisburgh Central School classroom. Connecting Community to Classrooms is a VT FEED fundamental. (photo courtesy of Ferrisburgh Central School)

the best way to make the taste test an educational opportunity. The key is to keep it simple: roasted slices of delicata squash, different types of lettuce, or a sampling of locally grown apples can be part of a dynamic taste testing lesson. If students are involved in preparing the food to be tested, they will be more likely to eat it. Adding “fun food facts” can also familiarize students with a new food and help them accept it. (See “Fun Seasonal Food Facts,” Appendix B, p.33; “Sample Nutrition Lesson,” Appendix F, p.40; the VT FEED Curriculum Units, www.vtfeed.org)

Tips for Successful Classroom Taste Tests

- When using local foods, show where it is grown on a state or county map. (Compare it to bananas grown in South America!)
- Tie the taste test to other subjects, like math. For example, show students a parsnip, have them estimate its weight, then have them weigh it. Ask younger children to guess the color of a vegetable after it is peeled.
- Invite food service staff to a classroom taste test to introduce a new food and make more school-wide connections.
- Try foods that are (or could be) served in the school food program.
- Invite a farmer to bring his or her local food and discuss how it is grown or made.
- To help keep down costs, ask parents to provide some of the foods, or ask parents and community volunteers to help organize taste testing.
- Be sure to communicate regularly with parents about what their children are trying—they won’t believe it!
- To increase the consumption of vegetables, invite classes to experiment with recipes and create names for new dressings and dips, for example.
- Keep the school food service aware and involved in your classroom taste tests—they might be able to provide some of the raw ingredients and feature the foods in their breakfasts or lunches.

Taste Test Do's and Don'ts

TASTE TESTS DO'S	TASTE TEST DON'TS
<p>Involve as many teachers, food service employees, parents, and other interested, school community linked adults as possible.</p>	<p>Expect things to happen too quickly. <i>(Substantive change takes time, dedication, set backs, disappointment and hard work.)</i></p>
<p>Empower your food service workers to take over roles. More than merely “lunch ladies,” food service workers have valuable insights into the eating habits and preferences of the students they serve daily.</p>	<p>Immediately ask kids what they want. <i>(You likely know the answer: pizza, french fries, ice cream, soda, and candy are likely to be their ideas for improving school lunch.)</i></p>
<p>Provide students with choices from pre-selected, preferably locally grown or produced food items. Having options is good, but keep it within a reasonable scope based on availability and cost.</p>	<p>Introduce strange, exotic, or hard-to-get foods. <i>(Kids will try lots of things but their palates are not necessarily ready for “adult” foods. Also, cafeterias are unlikely to offer exotic foods that are hard to find and/or pay for.)</i></p>
<p>Involve students in the preparation, serving, sampling, and tabulation of results from classroom or cafeteria-based taste tests.</p>	<p>Expect kids to love the food you're offering if they didn't have a hand in the preparation or were not involved in the taste test process.</p>
<p>Strengthen connections between teachers, administrators, and food service personnel by attempting to include them in normal school functions such as faculty meetings, awards or celebration ceremonies, lunch-related events and other in-class goings on.</p>	<p>Think changes can be made without the help and support of the food service personnel and food service director. <i>(Everyone should be focused on the same goal: serving students nutritious food, and it takes a variety of adult roles to see this come to fruition.)</i></p>
<p>Think sustainability — testing food items you can serve with some regularity is better than offering exotic foods that will never find their way to lunch trays.</p>	<p>Be discouraged if food isn't accepted right away. <i>(Word of mouth, peer pressure, and repeated exposure will help build interest.)</i></p>

adapted from Dan Treinis, teacher, Burlington School Food Project

Safety Tips for Cooking with Children & Youth

Safety is the #1 priority when cooking with children. Adults should supervise all food preparation and cooking activities.

- 1 Be sure to wash your hands with soap and water before touching food.**
Teach proper hygiene and respect in the kitchen. Gloves can be used if the products will be served raw. If the products will be cooked, gloves are not required.
- 2 Start with a clean cooking area.**
Clean all counter tops and surfaces before preparing food on them.
- 3 Be careful with knives (and other tools like graters).**
Teach children the proper ways to hold them, wash them, carry them and store them. Instill the importance and responsibility that comes with safe knife and equipment handling. Most children take this responsibility very seriously.
- 4 Tie back long hair and pull up long sleeves before washing hands.**
Try to eliminate as many possible hygiene or safety interferences prior to cooking.
- 5 Do only one job at a time and avoid multiple distractions.**
It's easy for children to get excited and sidetracked with too many tasks and environmental distractions. Try to provide a calm and focused environment so that the students can engage in the task at hand.
- 6 Work in small groups.**
Cooking with children is most successful when they can work in groups of no more than 5-6 (with at least 1 adult per group). Younger groups benefit from even smaller groups. Cooking in the classroom is a great way to involve parent volunteers and increase the number of adults in the classroom for cooking activities.
- 7 Encourage teamwork!**
Cooking together is a great way to build relationships and learn to work together. Try dividing the recipe and cooking jobs up so that everyone can participate equally. Encourage students to work together when measuring, mixing and monitoring food preparation.
- 8 Play it safe!**
When it comes to buying, preparing, cooking and storing food - check expiration dates, wash your produce well, cook (cooked food) thoroughly and store foods properly so they don't spoil.
- 9 Clean up!**
Include cleaning up and composting as part of the activity time.
- 10 Have FUN!**
Cooking with children is enjoyable and rewarding. Teach a child to cook and you feed him/her for a lifetime!



Reading, Writing, *Arugula!*

“Your School Day Just Got Healthier!”

FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND NUTRITION EDUCATION

Healthy People 2020 objectives recommend increasing the proportion of fresh fruits and vegetables available to students. Farm to School programs and nutrition education activities in the classroom provide an opportunity to increase student access to these foods while educating them about how they are grown, processed and prepared. Less than 1 in 10 Americans currently meet the dietary recommendations for fruits and vegetables and over the last decade we have seen a significant increase in diet-related diseases and obesity. A recent study reported that schools participating in Farm to School programs increased student consumption of fruits and vegetables by 84%!

Hands-on food education has the potential to empower students by connecting and contextualizing food, farms and nutrition within the bigger picture of health, politics, and ecology. Teaching with a whole system’s lens can facilitate a deeper learning experience, encouraging practical knowledge that helps students make healthier choices.

FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION CROSSES ALL DISCIPLINES!

Language Arts	Read and write about food, farming, nutrition and healthy choices through informational text comprehension and composition.
Math	Estimate weights of foods or crops, use recipes and cooking activities to teach practical math skills.
Social Studies	Use local foods to explore geography. Compare it with other foods consumed from different parts of the world. Discuss how agricultural practices have change over time, the economics of food and history and heritage related to the food system.
Science	Use food to explore cycles, the needs of living things, interdependence, natural resources and sustainability.
Creative Arts	Invite the class to create fun names, slogans and advertising materials for healthy foods.
Community	Invite a farmer to bring his or her local food into the classroom and discuss how it is grown or made.



¹Schneider L, Chriqui J, Nicholson L, Turner L, Gourdet C, Chaloupka F. Are farm-to-school programs more common in states with farm-to-school-related laws? J Sch Health. 2012; 86: 210-216.

WHAT IS A TASTE TEST?

A taste test is a small sample of food offered either in the classroom, or in the cafeteria at lunchtime, introducing its flavor, texture and smell. The item might be a dollop of fresh salsa with a handful of corn chips, a small 2-oz. serving of roasted root vegetables, or a mini whole-wheat carrot-apple muffin. After the sample has been offered, children (and adults) vote on whether they tried it, liked it, and would be willing to try it again.

WHAT FOODS TO TASTE TEST?

Choose foods that:

- Increase consumption of whole grains, fruits and vegetables
- Can be featured on the menu as a regular breakfast or lunch item
- Will meet school food program requirements for nutrition, presentation, and cost.



TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL TASTE TESTS!

- ✓ Always start with the food service personnel to plan a taste test. They can decide with you what foods to try.
- ✓ Connect with school food service, PTO or the school administrator to see what funding is available to support your taste test. For instance, the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Grant Program provides funding for classroom cooking and taste tests once a week.
- ✓ Find parents or volunteers that can help support you on the day of your taste test.
- ✓ Use local produce when possible and invite your local farmer or processor to join your taste test. Assign 1 adult to each group of students helping to prepare the food. Remember, "If they make it, they will eat it."
- ✓ Offer small servings in a positive, non-coercive atmosphere.
- ✓ Advertise taste tests in the school newsletter or in letters home to families.
- ✓ Announce the results to the whole school after the taste test has finished and what the next steps are for that new food.



POSY POETRY & LOCAL FOOD TASTE TEST!

Adapted from Shelburne Farms Project Seasons

Grade Level: This lesson plan can be adapted for all grade levels!

Groupings: Small groups of 4-5 students (ideal for cooking activities)

Time: 1-2 hours (depending on recipe and curriculum extensions)

MATERIALS

- Recipe for Taste Test!
- Ingredients for recipe
- Any cooking equipment needed
- Taste test cups or paper plates
- Toothpicks
- Taste test ballots
- Paper lunch bags for storing words
- Taste test results sheet (one for each food being tasted)
- Pens, pencils, markers
- Graph/Butcher Paper

Example:

Vermont 3rd Grade Expectations Addressed in this Lesson

(This lesson plan can be adapted to meet your specific grade level expectations or Common Core State Standards)

Math

M3:23 Interprets a given representation

M3:24 Analyzes patterns, trends or distributions in data in a variety of contexts...

M3:25 Organizes and displays data using bar graphs or tables

Language Arts

W3:4 Students demonstrate command of the structures of the English Language...

W3:18 In writing poetry, demonstrate awareness of purpose...

W3:19 In writing poetry, use language effectively...

Physical & Cultural Geography

H&SS 3-4:11 Students interpret geography and solve geographic problems...

FIRST STEP:

Connect with the school food service to brainstorm recipes and ideas for a classroom taste test! Ideally you want to try foods that are (or could be) served in the school food program.

PROCEDURE:

1. With your class brainstorm some recipe ideas. Older students can be asked to research nutritional guidelines or interview food service staff to generate ideas. This is a great opportunity to discuss the seasonality of foods and nutrition concepts.
2. Once you've determined what you want to prepare, develop a plan for gathering ingredients and equipment and enlisting parent/volunteer support. Remember – keep it simple! Please read “Taste Test Do’s and Don’ts” and “Safety Tips for Cooking with Children & Youth” before your cooking activity.

Once your taste test food/recipe is prepared, you're ready to embark on a literacy, math and social studies classroom adventure...

POSY POETRY/LITERACY CONNECTION

Ideal for grades 3 and up.

This lesson plan works particularly well if you're trying several different foods (examples: varieties of local apples, greens, cheeses, vegetable dips, etc.)

Explain to the class that they aren't just going to be eating – they're also going on a taste testing adventure to collect data! This is a chance to find out how many of your classmates like the food and practice using descriptive words.

Introduce sensory description and descriptive words. Give examples and ask students to be creative. Tell them that they aren't going to be allowed to talk while they try the foods so that they can focus on thinking of an adjective/descriptive word to describe the way the food tastes to them.

- Place different plates of bite sized foods on a long table or in various corners of the classroom. Each plate of bite-sized food will have taste test ballots for recording if students like the food, don't like the food or sort of like the food and a spot for writing their descriptive word. A paper lunch bag is great for collecting completed ballots. Ask students to visit each food, tasting and recording their preferences and words without talking!
- When everyone has had a chance to visit, taste and record data and words for all the foods, divide the students into small working groups of 4-5. Give each group the paper bag full of ballots, a sheet for recording results, as well as a large sheet of paper for a graphing activity.
- Ask groups to sort through their paper bag. Counting the number of likes, dislikes and maybe responses. Record the results on the data sheet. Next ask students to organize the descriptive words into a poem. It's a good idea to explore the concept of poetry and read some examples before beginning this project. Link this activity to your current literacy focus. Discuss different types of poems: Haiku, Acrostic, Free Verse, etc. Set ground-rules for what words are and aren't allowed. Students groups will work as a team to develop a poem and share it with the class. Consider inviting other classes, teachers and food service to your class poetry slam!

MATH CONNECTION

Explain to student groups that they'll also be developing a bar graph to share the data collected about student preferences for the different foods. Explain how to make a bar graph and visually display the data collected. In addition to sharing their poem, they'll be presenting their bar graph to the class. You'll also want to make sure to share the results with the food service staff – taste testing is a democratic process that is helping to inform the lunch menu!

SOCIAL STUDIES/GEOGRAPHY CONNECTION

Depending on what foods are chosen, this is a great opportunity to explore where their food is coming from. Teachers will determine how to best connect and weave in the day's taste testing activity into the geography/mapping lesson. Older students could research miles traveled, economic impact/cost, comparison with local foods, etc.

Some things to keep in mind during this activity are flow and behavior during taste testing. Students may need assistance at the different stations writing their words and recording their results. When they aren't tasting different foods you could engage them in another interim activity like quiet reading or a simple art project.

Check out the Vermont FEED website for additional recipes, resources and tools!

www.vtfeed.org

Another great resource for nutrition education materials and ideas:

www.schoolmealsvt.com

NUTRITION EDUCATION CURRICULUM EXTENSIONS

- Write a taste testing procedure document for recipe/cooking activity.
- Study new vocabulary that relates to food and nutrition.
- Write letters to local businesses requesting donations of food for classroom taste tests.
- Generate questions you have about the school food program and/or nutritional guidelines that could lead to future research projects.
- Publish a class newsletter about taste tests, nutrition education activities and projects and distribute it to other classrooms and students.
- Read current events related to food, farming, hunger, nutrition, policy, etc.
- Write a creative story in the first person from the point of view of a particular plant in your garden. What might it say, act like, etc.
- Prepare a written or oral report about a particular food – the history, botany, uses, nutrition, etc.
- Create a class recipe book that offers nutrition advice and information.



Reading, Writing, Arugula!

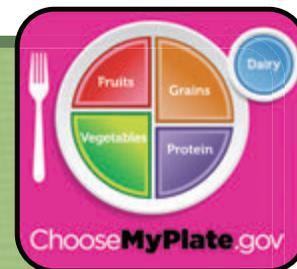
“Your School Day Just Got Healthier!”

This fall, the Salisbury Community School cafeteria is working around the clock to meet tough new federal nutrition standards for school meals, ensuring that meals are healthy and well-balanced, providing students all the nutrition they need to succeed at school.

School meals offer students milk, fruits and vegetables, proteins and grains, and they must meet strict limits on saturated fat and portion size.

Now is a great time to encourage your kids to choose school lunch!

In addition to meeting new standards, the Salisbury Community School is working on increasing the amount of locally grown foods served, student taste tests, nutrition education and physical activity opportunities; all in an effort to build healthy bodies and a healthy awareness of good nutrition.



BUILD YOUR PLATE!

Draw lines to connect the foods that belong in a healthy, nutritious lunch to your school lunch tray.



DIG IN!

Taste Test!

Black Bean & Sweet Potato Salad

Ingredients:

- 1 12-ounce can black beans
- 1 large sweet potato
- ½ teaspoon cumin
- ½ teaspoon coriander
- Salt to taste



Dressing:

- 2 tablespoons fresh cilantro or basil, minced
- 1-tablespoon lemon or lime juice
- 1-teaspoon honey
- 1-tablespoon olive oil

- Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
- Peel and cut sweet potatoes into a small, uniform cubes. Place on a lightly oiled sheet pan. Sprinkle on cumin, coriander, and salt.
- Bake until they are fork tender and beginning to brown and crisp on the edges, about 15-25 minutes. Keep an eye on them so that they don't burn.
- Let sweet potatoes cool while making the dressing. In a bowl, whisk together the dressing ingredients.
- Rinse black beans and combine with sweet potatoes and dressing. Drizzle with olive oil, toss to coat. Can be served either chilled or at room temperature.

Contributed by: Christa Gowen, Beeman Elementary School, New Haven, VT.

Get To Know The NEW School Lunch!

	Before	After
Fruits	1/2 - 3/4 cup per day (fruit and vegetable combined)	1/2-1 cup per day
Vegetables		3/4-1 cup per day (with weekly amounts of specific types)
Meat/Meat Alternative	1.5 -2 oz eq (daily minimum)	Grades K-5: at least 1 oz per day, 8-10 oz eq per week; Grades 6-8: at least 1 oz per day, 9-10 oz eq per week; Grades 9-12: at least 2 oz per day, 10-12 oz eq per week
Grains	At least 1 serving per day, and 8 servings per week across all grades.	Daily minimums and weekly ranges: Grades K-5: 1 oz per day, 7-10 oz eq per week; Grades 6-8: 1 oz per day, 8-10 oz eq per week; Grades 9-12: 2 oz per day, 10-12 oz eq per week
Whole Grains	Encouraged, but not required	At least half of grains served should be whole grain-rich by beginning July 1, 2012. Beginning July 1, 2014, all grains must be whole grain rich.
Milk	1 cup per day A variety of fat contents allowed;	1 cup per day of low fat (1% fat) or nonfat milk Only nonfat milk can be flavored
Calorie Maximums	No maximums	Grades K-5: 650 calories; Grades 6-8: 700 calories; Grades 9-12: 850 calories
Sodium	Reduce, no set targets.	Target for 2014-15 school year: Grades K-5: less than 1230 mg per lunch; Grades 6-8: less than 1360mg per lunch; Grades 9-12: less than 1420 mg per lunch
Fat	Saturated Fat: <10% of calories Trans Fat: no limits	Saturated Fat: <10% of calories; Trans Fat: 0g

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture (www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/governance/legislation/comparison.pdf)

SALISBURY COMMUNITY SCHOOL Farm to School & Wellness Team Mission Statement

We believe good health is the foundation for success in school and is essential for life-long health and productivity.

Our school is already doing many things that contribute to the overall health of our students.

Our team realizes that there is more that we can do to shift the perception that nutrition education, physical activity and education are separate offerings in school.

We strive to create a culture of educational experiences, hands-on activities and experiences with healthy food choices combined with increased physical activity to foster habits that will promote lifelong choices for well-being.

Join us!

*Green Mountain
Healthy Kids
Challenge Grant
Recipient!*

Use your imagination!

Draw the healthiest lunch you can think of making sure you have a fruit, vegetable, dairy, whole grain and protein!





MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
1 Chicken Parmesan Sandwich on Whole Wheat Bun Green Salad Fruit Milk	2 Mama Ruel's Shepherd's Pie Steamed Broccoli Whole Wheat Roll Fruit Milk	3 Roast Turkey Whipped Sweet Potatoes Green Beans Whole Wheat Roll Fruit Milk	4 Brunch for Lunch! Scrambled Eggs & Cheese Sausage French Toast Fruit Smoothie Milk	5 Chicken & Crispy Vegetables in a Whole Wheat Soft Wrap w/Ranch Dressing Fruit Milk
8 Sloppy Joe Jr. on Whole Wheat Bun Cucumber or Carrot Sticks Fruit Milk	9 Lasagna Whole Wheat Garlic Bread Mixed Green Salad Fruit Milk	10 Chicken & Romaine Caesar Salad w/Whole Wheat Croutons Dinner Roll Fruit Milk	11 Beef & Bean Burrito w/Cheddar Cheese, Salsa, Lettuce & Sour Cream Fruit Milk	12 Homemade Mac & Cheese Peas & Carrots Fruit Milk
15 Grilled Ham & Cheese Creamy Tomato Soup Spinach Salad w/Strawberry Dressing Fruit Milk	16 BBQ Pork Sandwich on Whole Wheat Bun Baked Beans Creamy Coleslaw Fruit Milk	17 Crispy Chicken Fingers, Oven Fries, Vegetable Medley, Fruit, Milk 		19 Whole Wheat Spaghetti w/Meat Sauce Garlic Breadstick Green Salad Fruit Milk
22 VACATION	23 VACATION	24 VACATION	25 VACATION	26 VACATION
29 Cheeseburger on Whole Wheat Bun w/Lettuce, Tomato & Pickle Tater Tots Fruit Milk	30 Turkey & Cheddar Croissant Green Salad Fruit Milk			NOW OFFERING CHEESE OR VEGETABLE PIZZA OPTION EVERYDAY!

DIETITIAN'S CORNER:

FOR COLOR, FLAVOR, HEALTH. ADD HERBS! HERBALICIOUS!

A sprig of parsley, a rosemary "tree", some minced chives, a basil leaf – fresh herbs can add a special dimension to the meal. Not only do they add a touch of class as a garnish, they add subtle flavor and they are good for you! Many provide health benefits with antioxidants, essential oils, vitamins and minerals that help us to stay healthy and fight off disease. Plant a few herbs in your garden this spring and harvest the benefits!

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.)



*FitzVogt is proud to be your food service provider!
We offer local products when available.*



DAILY OFFERINGS

Deli Bar Made to Order Subs, Sandwiches & Wraps Add a Fruit and/or Vegetable & Milk	Pizza Cheese or Veggie	Salad Bar Assortment of Fresh Produce Meat & Cheese Rolls & Milk
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Additional Fruit & Vegetable Choices May Include

Apples	Oranges	Mandarin Oranges	Applesauce
Pears	Bananas	Fruit Cocktail	Fruit Juices
Peaches	Pineapple	Fruit Gelatin	Tossed Salad
Celery	Carrots	Vegetable Salad	

Choice of Milk
Skim, 1% gr Skim Chocolate

Breakfast Prices	Lunch Prices
Paid \$1.25	Paid \$2.10
Reduced \$0.00	Reduced \$0.40
Adult \$1.50	Adult \$3.00
	Milk \$0.50

Menu Subject to Creativity!

October 16, 2012

Dear Parents,

As we mentioned in the newsletter we mailed home in August, there are many new, recently enacted, federal nutrition requirements that are having a direct impact on the nature of the lunches we serve here at school. The requirements were created in response to a national concern with childhood obesity and related health issues. The new requirements mandate a dramatic increase in whole grains and fresh fruits and vegetables and a corresponding decrease in high salt, high fat, and sugar rich foods.

To help support these federal requirements and to do our part to reduce the incidence of childhood obesity and health issues such as juvenile diabetes, we are working closely with Mr. George Mackey, the manager of Fitzvogt, our food service provider. In collaboration with George, rather than have treats such as cupcakes, brownies, and cookies brought in for birthday celebrations, once a month, George is preparing a special meal, including a favorite dessert, for everyone as a way of recognizing all of the birthdays that occur during that month. In addition, George has graciously agreed to provide a healthy treat for Halloween, the December holiday, and Valentine's Day, October 31, December 21, and February 14. We are sure the children will appreciate this generous gesture on Mr. Mackey's part. We also hope it serves to relieve the pressure on you since you won't need to feel as if you have to prepare or purchase one more food item at already busy times of the year and when we know your food costs are high enough.

We want to thank you for all you are doing to help support good nutrition practices. Please feel free to contact either of us if you have any questions or concerns about the nutrition requirements or our response to them.

Sincerely,

Michele Cote

James Taffel

Effective & Healthy Rewards for Kids



Rewards and performance accomplishments reinforce desirable behavior and encourage its repetition.

The Most Effective Rewards

- * Are intrinsic (the behavior itself results in good feelings)
- * Or, if extrinsic, the rewards
 - Are related to the behavior
 - Fit naturally into the context and mission of a classroom
 - Are given promptly after the positive behavior occurs
 - Are awarded consistently

at school, at home, and in the community

The goal of rewarding is to help children internalize desirable behaviors, so external rewards are not needed.

Schools have a responsibility to both teach and model healthy behaviors.

- Research clearly demonstrates that healthy kids learn better. The best learning environment includes consistent health messages that are supported by access to healthful foods, beverages, and physical activity.
- Non-food rewards support student health

Disadvantages of Using Food as a Reward

- Teaches kids to eat when they're not hungry: The use of foods as rewards, pacifiers, and treats communicates to a child that there are reasons for eating other than hunger.^{1,2} Using food to reward behavior or performance connects food to mood and can instill lifetime habits of rewarding or comforting oneself with food.
- Encourages over-consumption: Children's preferences for foods increase when those foods are used as rewards for performing non-food-related tasks; also, limiting those foods causes children to like them more.^{2,3}
- Compromises health: Foods commonly used as rewards are "empty calorie" foods - high in calories, fat, sugar, and salt and low nutritional value. These foods displace healthier food choices and contribute to the development of obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and cavities.
- Undermines classroom learning: Nutrition principles taught in the classroom are meaningless if they are contradicted by rewarding with foods of low nutritional value.



www.ccwsd.org

Alternatives to Food as a Reward⁴

Remember the positive power of praise and recognition.
Respect and words of appreciation can go a long way.

"Thanks for helping!"

"You did a great job!"

The options for non-food rewards are limited only by imagination, time, and resources.

Recognition

- Recognize the student's achievement during school-wide announcements and/or the school's website
- Create a photo recognition board
- Write a note to the student commending the achievement
- Phone, email, or write a letter to parents/guardians
- Give a certificate of recognition/achievement

Privileges

- Go first
- Choose a class activity
- Help the teacher
- Enjoy extra recess with a friend
- Make deliveries to the office
- Read outdoors
- Have a teacher read a special book to the class
- Do puzzles, word play, or brainteasers
- Take care of the class animal for the day
- Get "free choice" time at the end of the day
- Eat lunch with a teacher/principal
- Take a walk with the teacher/principal
- Select a book from the library
- Sit with a friend

Earn Play Money, Tokens, or Points for

- Gift certificate to a bookstore or sporting goods store
- Sports equipment
- Ticket to an event or movie
- Magazine subscription
- For older children, enter a drawing for donated prizes
- Other reward items (see next column)

Reward Items

- School supplies Sports equipment (Frisbee, hacky-sack, hula hoop, jump rope, ball)
- A plant, or seeds & a pot
- Paperback book
- Trophy, plaque, ribbon
- Sticker
- Magnet
- Stuffed animal
- Temporary tattoo
- Hair accessory
- Bracelet, necklace
- Shoe laces
- Sunglasses
- Cap
- T-shirt
- Cup
- Flashlight
- Trip to treasure box filled with toys/trinkets
- Various low-cost toy/trinket
- Extra credit

Rewards for a Class

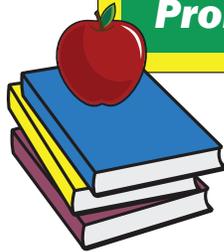
- Allow extra recess
- Provide extra PE, art, music, or reading time
- Dance to music
- Play a game (i.e., reading or phonic board game)
- Eat lunch in a special place
- Go to the lunchroom first
- Read outdoors
- Hold class outdoors
- Teacher reads aloud to the class
- Schedule a field trip
- Show a fun video

References

1. Puhl R and Schwartz MB (2003). If you are good you can have a cookie: The link between childhood food rules and adult eating behaviors. *Eating Behaviors*, 4:283-293.
2. Birch LL (1999). Development of food preferences. *Annu Rev Nutr*, 19:41-62.
3. Fisher J and Birch LL (1999). Restricting access to palatable foods affects children's behavioral response, food selection and intake. *Am J Clin Nutr*, 69:1264-72.
4. Adapted from Alternatives to Food as Reward, Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Health & Nutrition Services and Child/Family/School Partnerships, 2004; Constructive Classroom rewards, Center for Science in the Public Interest, www.cspinet.org/schoolfood; Alternatives to Using Food as a Reward, Michigan Team Nutrition (a partnership between the Michigan Department of Education and Michigan State university Extension), 2004, www.tn.fcs.msu.edu/foodrewards.pdf.

Alternatives to Food as Reward

Promoting a Healthy School Environment



Food is commonly used to reward students for good behavior and academic performance. It's an easy, inexpensive and powerful tool to bring about immediate short-term behavior change. Yet, using food as reward has many negative consequences that go far beyond the short-term benefits of good behavior or performance.

Research clearly demonstrates that healthy kids learn better. To provide the best possible learning environment for children, schools must provide an environment that supports healthy behaviors. Students need to receive consistent, reliable health information and ample opportunity to use it. Finding alternatives to food rewards is an important part of providing a healthy school environment.



“Rewarding children with unhealthy foods in school undermines our efforts to teach them about good nutrition. It’s like teaching children a lesson on the importance of not smoking, and then handing out ashtrays and lighters to the kids who did the best job listening.”
 Marlene Schwartz, PhD, Co-Director, Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity, Yale University

Consequences of Using Food as Reward



Compromises Classroom Learning: Schools are institutions designed to teach and model appropriate behaviors and skills to children. Nutrition principles taught in the classroom are meaningless if they are contradicted by rewarding children with candy and other sweets. It's like saying, “You need to eat healthy foods to feel and do your best, but when you behave or perform your best, you will be rewarded with unhealthy food.” Classroom learning about nutrition will remain strictly theoretical if schools regularly model unhealthy behaviors.

Contributes to Poor Health: Foods commonly used as rewards (like candy and cookies) can contribute to health problems for children, e.g., obesity, diabetes, hypertension and cavities. Food rewards provide unneeded calories and displace healthier food choices.

Encourages Overconsumption of Unhealthy Foods: Foods used as rewards are typically “empty calorie” foods — high in fat, sugar and salt with little nutritional value. Decreasing the availability of empty calorie foods is one strategy schools can use to address the current childhood obesity epidemic.

Contributes to Poor Eating Habits: Rewarding with food can interfere with children learning to eat in response to hunger and satiety cues. This teaches kids to eat when they are not hungry as a reward to themselves, and may contribute to the development of disordered eating.^{2,3}

Increases Preference for Sweets: Food preferences for both sweet and non-sweet food increase significantly when foods are presented as rewards. This can teach children to prefer unhealthy foods.^{3,4}



About 20 percent of children are overweight.¹ Over the past three decades, the childhood obesity rate has more than doubled for preschool children aged 2-5 years and adolescents aged 12-19 years, and it has more than tripled for children aged 6-11 years.



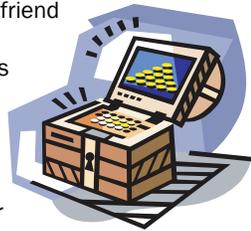
What Schools Can Do

Ideas for Alternatives to Using Food as a Reward ^{5,6}

Schools can help promote a healthy learning environment by using nonfood rewards. The ideas below are just a beginning and can be modified for different ages. Be creative, and don't forget the simple motivation of recognizing students for good work or behavior.

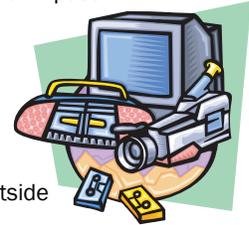
Elementary School Students

- Make deliveries to office
- Teach class
- Sit by friends
- Eat lunch with teacher or principal
- Eat lunch outdoors with the class
- Have lunch or breakfast in the classroom
- Private lunch in classroom with a friend
- Be a helper in another classroom
- Play a favorite game or do puzzles
- Stickers, pencils, bookmarks
- Certificates
- Fun video
- Extra recess
- Walk with the principal or teacher
- Fun physical activity break
- School supplies
- Trip to treasure box filled with nonfood items (stickers, tattoos, pencils, erasers, bookmarks, desktop tents)
- Dance to favorite music in the classroom
- Paperback book
- Show-and-tell
- Bank system - Earn play money for privileges
- Teacher or volunteer reads special book to class
- Teacher performs special skill (singing, cart wheel, guitar playing, etc.)
- Read outdoors or enjoy class outdoors
- Have extra art time
- Have "free choice" time at end of the day or end of class period
- Listen with headset to a book on audiotape
- Items that can only be used on special occasions (special art supplies, computer games, toys)



Middle School Students

- Sit with friends
- Listen to music while working at desk
- Five-minute chat break at end of class
- Reduced homework or "no homework" pass
- Extra credit
- Fun video
- Fun brainteaser activities
- Computer time
- Assemblies
- Field trips
- Eat lunch outside or have class outside



High School Students

- Extra credit or bonus points
- Fun video
- Reduced homework
- Late homework pass
- Donated coupons to video stores, music stores or movies
- Drawings for donated prizes among students who meet certain grade standards



Share what works! Let us know your strategies to motivate students so we can share with others.

For more information on a healthy school environment, contact Susan Fiore, MS, RD, Nutrition Education Coordinator at susan.fiore@ct.gov or (860) 807-2075.

References

- 1 Ogden CL, Carroll MD, Curtin LR, McDowell MA, Tabak CJ, Flegal KM. Prevalence of overweight and obesity in the United States, 1999-2004. JAMA 295:1549-1555. 2006.
- 2 Puhl R. and Schwartz, MB (2003). If you are good you can have a cookie: The link between childhood food rules and adult eating behaviors. Eating Behaviors, 4, 283-293
- 3 Birch LL. Development of Food Preferences. Annu Rev Nutr 1999, 19:41-62
- 4 Fisher J, Birch LL. Restricting access to palatable foods affects children's behavioral response, food selection and intake. Am J Clin Nutr 1999;69:1264-72
- 5 Alternatives to Using Food as a Reward. Michigan State University Extension, 2003. <http://www.tn.fcs.msue.msu.edu/foodrewards.pdf>
- 6 Non-Food Ways to Raise Funds and Reward a Job Well Done. Texas Department of Agriculture, 2004. http://www.squaremeals.org/vgn/tda/files/2348/3614_1034_NonFoodRewards.pdf

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Connecticut State Department of Education
Bureau of Health and Nutrition Services and Child/Family/School Partnerships



September 2004 rev. 2/07

Salisbury Community School News

For the week of November 12, 2012

BINGO NIGHT

Help the 6th Grade Class raise funds for their class trip; join us for Bingo on Friday, November 16th at 6:30 pm.

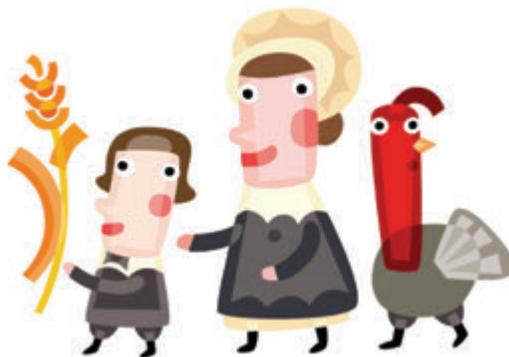
Great Prizes!!



Thanksgiving Box Top collection sheet is available through Donna at the front desk. Box Tops help our school with student activities money

Salisbury Community School Food Drive Begins

Please help us collect non-perishable food items to donate to the Addison County Food Shelf. They provide food for 600 people each month and the need increases as the temperature outside decreases! We will be collecting food through November and December; weighing the food we collect as a school and celebrating our stewardship at different points. Items that are needed: nonperishable nutritious food items like cereal, peanut butter, soups, canned tuna, fruits and vegetables, other canned meats, and paper goods like toilet paper, diapers, diaper wipes, etc. In the past we have collected over 500lbs of food and we are hoping to surpass that number this year.



Happy Thanksgiving...

Attention Students: Stop For Science!

Students, be sure to check out our "STOP for Science" poster located outside the science classroom. A poster on a special topic will be up for about a month. Be sure to STOP for Science and read the poster.

You might be surprised at how science is related to many of the things you are familiar with and use each day. Take the scientist challenge by answering questions on the sheets provided. There are three difficulty levels, so choose sheets that fit best for you.

Any question answered correctly qualifies you for a random drawing to have lunch with a scientist. The winners from each poster will be included in a final drawing at the end of the year to win other science-related prizes.

This week's topic: When Stars Go Boom:

Level 1. What is the Sun?

Level 2: What common force that holds you to the Earth gives a star its energy?

Level 3: Was the star that exploded and caused the Crab Nebula smaller or larger than our Sun?

Reading, Writing, Arugula: Your School Day Just Got Healthier

On Friday, November 16th, in the afternoon, our nutrition mentor Danielle Pipher will be doing a program with students called "Reading, Writing, Arugula: Your School Day Just Got Healthier" Grade clusters will be visiting the gym where different activities will be taking place. The activities will include information about nutrition and healthy choices, information about school lunch, a taste test, physical activity, and more! The Salisbury Farm to School Committee and Vermont FEED Interns will be assisting with all the activities.



It's Friday Afternoon.... ... Do You Know What Your Kids Are Doing?



Kindergartners are working independently on vocabulary



First graders are listening to a story.

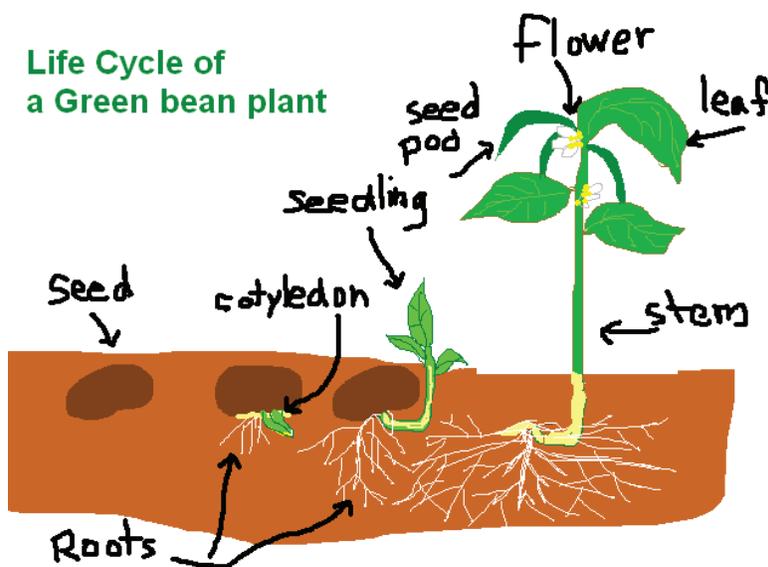
Second and third graders are writing and illustrating stories.



Fourth and fifth graders are working on vocabulary. Sixth graders are doing map work.

String Beans

- * There are 3 main types of beans that are eaten fresh, two are native to the Americas and one is native to southwest Asia and the Mediterranean area: the common bean, the lima bean and the broad or faba (fava) bean.
- * Fresh beans are classified into two basic categories: edible pod beans and shell beans.
- * Green beans, otherwise known as snap or string beans, are the most popular edible pod bean in the United States.
- * The lima bean is the most common shell bean sold in the United States.
- * January 6 is National Bean Day
- * The average American eats more than 15 pounds of beans each year.
- * The common green bean has been cultivated in Mexico for at least 7,000 years.



This season VUES harvested over 20 pounds of string beans (green, yellow and purple) that will be used in VUES food service menus.

Celery

This growing season, the VUES garden harvested over 30 pounds of celery to be used in the school lunch program menus and recipes.



- * Celery is native to the Mediterranean and the Middle East, and was used by the ancient Greeks and Romans as a flavoring.
- * Two billion pounds of celery are grown each year in the U.S.
- * Supposedly, it takes more calories to eat and digest celery than there is in the celery.
- * Celery stalks, celery seed and celeriac (celery root) are each grown commercially from different varieties of the plant.
- * California produces more than 2/3rds of the celery grown in the U.S. and Florida produces about 20%.



Kale

This season VUES harvested over 15 pounds of Kale that will be used in VUES food service menus and recipes.

- * Kale is a hardy and hearty green, and has been cultivated for over 2,000 years.
- * One cup of kale provides more than the daily requirement of vitamins A and C. It is also a good source of calcium and fiber.
- * Like other greens, kale descends from wild cabbage that originated in Asia Minor though it is known for its popularity in Scandinavia, Germany, Holland and Scotland.
- * Kale was brought to the United States in the 17th century by English settlers. It is now a favorite in the southern United States where, like many cooking greens, it has been considered a poor man's food.
- * Like most cooking greens, kale can grow in colder temperatures and withstand frost — which actually helps produce even sweeter leaves. Kale can also grow well in the hot weather in the southern United States and in poor soil.



COOKING CART EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

Appliances

- Induction Range
- Blender
- Electric griddle
- Immersion blender
- Hand mixer

Cooking Utensils

- Can opener
- Lemon/Lime squeezer (2)
- Cheese grater (5)
- Measuring spoon set (6)
- Measuring cup sets (5)
- Rolling pin (2)
- Salad spinner
- Wooden spoon (4)
- Sandwich spreader (5)
- Vegetable peeler (5)
- Large whisk (4)
- Small whisk (4)
- Chef's knife
- Paring knife (10)
- Plastic lettuce knife (5)
- Cutting boards (10)
- Rubber spatulas (10)
- Turners (10)
- Slotted serving spoons (4)
- Solid serving spoons (6)
- Ladle
- Tongs
- Apple peeler corer slicer (5)
- Apple slicer (5)
- Colander
- Mixing bowls (3)

Pots & Pans

- Stock Pot with lid
- Steamer basket for stock pot
- Sauté pan with lid
- Large sauce pan with lid
- Small sauce pan with lid
- Baking dish (2)
- Baking sheet (2)
- Loaf pan
- Muffin pan (2)

Tableware

- Melamine plates (20)
- Melamine bowls (20)
- Dinner spoons (24)
- Dinner forks (24)
- Dinner knives (24)

Miscellaneous

- First aid kit
- Pot holder (4)
- Aprons (20)
- Plastic lined tablecloths (5)
- Kitchen towels (4)
- Cleaning cloths
- Tote box (for dirty dishes)
- Dishwashing liquid

Stone Soup Lesson

Can be adapted for Grades K-4 | Taught to all 3 Kindergarten Classes September 2012

Background:

Students read and discussed different versions of the Stone Soup tale with their classroom teachers in the week prior to our lesson.

Materials:

- Several versions of Stone Soup
- Large soup pot and ladle
- Photo ID cards of vegetables
- Vegetables for soup

Advance preparation:

Students were invited to bring a small vegetable from home. Anything was encouraged. Extras were provided from the school garden and the cafeteria's kitchen. (Potentially this whole lesson could be done in the garden, utilizing food from the garden, picked fresh right then and there.)

Lesson Format:

Students gathered in the cafeteria, with a large gathering place organized between two tables. They sat on the benches around a blanket placed on the floor.

Each child was given a shiny photo card from Farm to School materials showing a vegetable that we had on hand. Some familiar vegetables were included as well several less familiar ones. Students who brought something from home were given a card to match that vegetable.

Facilitator introduces today's task: We are going to make a pretend stone soup, and when we have acted out the story together and gathered all the yummy ingredients, we will give them to the kitchen and our excellent school lunch staff will turn those ingredients into a delicious soup that we can all share!

Facilitator acts out the story, describing how we can make soup from a stone. Adding, "just a little bit of" each extra thing will make it taste much better. Emphasis is put on the idea that each child can contribute and each child makes a difference.

First we start with some foods from deep in the ground. These store very well, so many people who garden or farm have extras of these vegetables. Ask, "Does anyone have any onions?" Child says, "I do." Child comes up, adds their (whole) onion to the pot, pretends to stir, and taste and proclaims, "Yes, that is much better!"

Repeat this process for root veggies:

Stems:

Leaves:

Fruits:

Facilitator describes a bit about each plant part as you introduce it. For example, how do you know if something is a fruit. Or, teach nutrition mini-lessons on vitamin content in different vegetables, and the role that vitamin plays in our body. (This content can be varied based on grade levels' framework and goals in health and science.)

Conclude the lesson with a few strong volunteers delivering the pot full of veggies to the kitchen and anticipation for tasting the final product at lunch.

Soup from a stone, and just a bit more.

SNACK ATTACK

Objective: to be as fit and healthy as possible by avoiding too much unhealthy junk food!

Equipment:

- 6 bean bags (represent healthy snacks): Red apple, Yellow banana, Orange orange, Blue blueberry, White cheese.
- 2 cones
- 3 sections of swim noodles (about 17" long, represent junk food)

Procedure: Before class arrives, place one cone at each end of gym under the BB hoop. Place the 3 noodles and 6 bean bags in the center of the gym.

To begin: have students sit in girl boy pattern around the black circle. Ask if they have played this game before! If they have played the game, ask them to raise hands and tell a rule of the game! If they have not played before, go over how to play (see below).

Before the game begins, ask if there are any questions! Remind students if they have forgotten any important rule.

How to play the game:

- There are 3 kinds of players: *Healthy Snacks* (each person holding a bean bag), *Junk Food* (each holding a swim noodle) and *Healthy Kids*.
- It is a tag game. The object of the game is for *Healthy Kids* to avoid being tagged by the *Junk Food*.
- Travel in a safe way, use your eyes so there's no bumping, look for good space.
- *Junk Food* can tag any *Healthy Kid* from the waist or lower. Tag gently, don't whack. *Healthy Snack* players can NOT be tagged!
- If tagged, the *Healthy Kid* MUST stop and keep feet glued to the floor. Wave arms overhead slowly like you've run out of energy. This signals that you need help!

- It's taggers choice. That means if the player does not stop when tagged, the *Junk Food* can call out "I tagged you" and the player must stop (doesn't get to argue or ignore). Be honest!
- All *Healthy Snacks* must travel around looking for *Healthy Kids* who have been tagged. The *Healthy Snacks* free the *Healthy Kids* by giving them their healthy snack and stating "A _____ is a healthy snack."
- The player receiving the bean bag (healthy snack) must first go to a cone and travel half way around the gym COUNTER CLOCKWISE. Now that player re-enters the game looking for *Healthy Kids* who need help!
- Once you give away your bean bag (healthy snack) you turn into a *Healthy Kid* who needs to be on the lookout for *Junk Food*!

Rules and Safety:

- All players must perform the locomotor movement prescribed by the teacher. I usually say walk, jog or run, but you can add a different movement.
- The *Junk Food* must tag players below the waist.
- All *Healthy Kids* who are tagged must freeze and begin slowly waving their arms overhead.
- The *Healthy Snacks* can only free the *Healthy Kids* by giving them their healthy snack and stating "a _____ is a healthy snack."
- A player who has been freed must first go to one of the cones and travel a half lap before going to free someone else who has been tagged.

Other:

- Every few minutes, blow whistle, players stop. Return to the black circle. Choose 3 new *Junk Food* and 6 players to hold the healthy snacks.
- Play as many rounds as time allows.
- Part way through the class, you may say "Water Break." Students WALK to line up. When they come back in the gym, sit around the black circle.

SUPER 17 RELAY:

Gr. 3-4

Purpose: teaches nutrition information, the daily servings needed each day from the 5 food groups

Equipment: 5 folded mats, 2 long swim noodles, 4 relay batons, 4 hula hoops (or boxes, or crates), bean bags: 10 purple, 15 red, 15 blue, 20 green, 25 orange and 4 information sheets listing the Super 17 that read as follows:

- 2 PURPLE (meat/beans)
- 3 RED (fruit)
- 3 BLUE (dairy)
- 4 GREEN (vegetables)
- 5 ORANGE (grains)

Set up: 5 folded mats are placed at center court to create a circle. Place the 2 swim noodles inside. On top of the mats are the bean bags, spread out all around.

Teams: at the corners of the gym are 4 teams of equal students. They have a baton, a hoop (or box or crate) and a food group information sheet. *In the center of the mats are 1 or 2 "chefs" each holding a noodle.*

Object: The object of the game is to collect all of the Super 17 (foods), as represented by the color of the bean bags.

TO ORGANIZE:

- Have students sit together, and give the basics of the game. If they have played the game before, ask them to tell you the rules. See the bullets below as to how to begin!
- Divide students into 4 groups (try to have 3-4 kids per group) and send each group to hoop/baton at the corners of the gym.

- They must form a line beside the hoop with the first person holding a baton.
- The team will need the Super 17 Information Sheet in order to collect the correct # of each color bean bags. Team must look this over before starting and figure out their strategy! One person at a time goes while holding the baton.
- Pick 2 students to be "chefs" and send them to center, each holding a noodle.
- When teacher says go the relay starts.

TO PLAY THE GAME:

- Students try to pick up one bean bag at a time and return to the group, putting the bean bag in the hoop. Hand baton to next person in line, go to end of line.
- Baton must be handed not tossed.
- The chefs are trying to TAP the runners with the noodle! Try not to tap the head, tap shoulders and lower.
- When tagged/tapped by the noodle, runners must immediately return to their group and give the baton to the next person, and go to the back of the line.
- If tapped while holding a bean bag, they must put the bean bag back on the mat, return to the group, hand baton to next person in line, go to end of line.
- Taggers choice: if the chef says they tapped you, you cannot argue with them, you must return to the line.
- If a player drops a bean bag, they must put it back on the mat and return to the group.
- If any bean bags fall on the floor, players must set them back on the mats.
- Group continues until all bean bags/food groups indicated have been put in the hoop.
- When all 17 bean bags are in the hoop, the whole group is seated and calls out SUPER 17. Teacher comes over and checks the food groups.

- **Teacher can decide that game is over when one team completes the task, or can allow the other groups more time to complete it. Teacher can count down 10 seconds and say game over!**
- **Take a water break if needed after a round is completed.**
- **To re-start, put all bean bags back on top of the mats. Re-form the lines at the hoops. Choose 2 new chefs and start another round. Play as many rounds as time allows!**

At end of class, students can help put equipment away: pick 2 students to put each mat away with Velcro facing the wall, in a stack.

Bean bags go in crate, batons and food group papers on top, collect hoops.

***When time allows, you can ask kids for examples of foods from the various food groups, a good time to do this is when students are seated, before you organize the teams!**

Food Groups:

- **2 PURPLE**
(meat/beans)
- **3 RED** *(fruit)*
- **3 BLUE** *(dairy)*
- **4 GREEN**
(vegetables)
- **5 ORANGE** *(grains)*

PLEASE NOTE:

- Before games starts, have kids sit near one of the hoops that contains a baton and information sheet. Hold up the sheet so all are looking at it!
- Tell the kids they'll be collecting colored bean bags that refer to the food groups.
- Have them read the list with you: blue equals DAIRY PRODUCTS (read all the food groups together as a group)
- At the end of the relay, go around to each group and have them tell you what they have collected. Make sure they say "5 GRAINS" not 5 orange bean bags (for example).
- With the groups that have not collected all 17, have them tell you WHAT FOOD GROUPS THEY ARE MISSING, for example "we're missing 2 vegetables"

MAKE SURE KIDS KNOW THAT IF THEY ARE TAPPED BY THE NOODLE AT ANY TIME THEY MUST RETURN TO THE GROUP AND HAND THE BATON TO THE NEXT PLAYER IN LINE!

The Power and Possibilities of School Wellness Policies

Now it's your turn! Next steps for YOUR team to take to start the Wellness Policy revision process....

Name 3 people in your school community you want to engage:
1.
2.
3.
Name 2 actions your team plans to take:
1.
2.
Name 1 idea you want to adopt or consider in your Wellness Policy:
1.

Local School Wellness Policies: Overview and Action Steps

Overview

- The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 required all districts to establish local school wellness policies by School Year 2006-2007.
- The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 expands the scope of wellness policies; brings in additional stakeholders in its development, implementation and review; and requires public updates on the content and implementation of the wellness policies (Section 204).
 - The intent is to strengthen local school wellness policies so they become useful tools in evaluating, establishing and maintaining healthy school environments, and to provide transparency to the public on key areas that affect the nutrition environment in each school.

Summary of Action Steps for Local Educational Agencies and Districts/Schools:

1. Review the memorandum on wellness policies: http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Policy-Memos/2011/SP42-2011_os.pdf.
2. Begin reviewing the local school wellness policies during School Year 2011-2012 and start implementing the new requirements.
3. Consult the resources linked below.
4. By end of SY11-12, districts and schools should also be working toward developing a reasonable method to inform and update the public about the content, implementation, and assessment of wellness policies.

Interagency Work Group

- **Agencies involved:** U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food and Nutrition Service (USDA FNS), working with the U.S. Department of Education (ED), and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, acting through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- **Interagency group:**
 - Has published a technical assistance plan outlining activities to support local educational agencies (LEAs) at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Healthy/lwp5yrplan.pdf>.
 - Will provide training and technical assistance to local educational agencies, school food authorities, and State educational agencies to meet these new requirements and establish healthy school environments that are intended to promote student health and wellness (ongoing).
 - Will identify and develop resources and training on designing, implementing, promoting, disseminating, and evaluating local school wellness policies and overcoming barriers to the adoption of local school wellness policies (ongoing).
- **FNS will publish a Proposed Rule Fall 2012.** The public will have an opportunity to comment on this rule.

Local School Wellness Policy Resource Links

- **FNS:** <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/healthy/wellnesspolicy.html>.
 - On an ongoing basis, FNS will be updating these materials to reflect the new requirements; these materials are a useful starting point for LEAs working to strengthen their local school wellness policies to meet the requirements of the new law.
- **CDC:** <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/npao/wellness.htm>
 - The CDC website includes resources to assist districts in designing, implementing and promoting elements of local school wellness policies.
 - *School Health Guidelines to Promote Healthy Eating and Physical Activity* is a resource that presents guidelines for developing, implementing, and evaluating school-based healthy eating and physical activity policies and practices for K-12th grade students. There is also a series of strategies to facilitate implementation of the guidelines <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/npao/strategies.htm>

12/06/2011. Created by US Department of Agriculture’s Food and Nutrition Service (USDA FNS); US Department of Education (ED); and US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Comparison Chart of the 2004 and 2010 requirements for local school wellness policies (LWP)

	Old Requirements Child Nutrition WIC Reauthorization Act, 2004	New Requirements Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010
Overview	Directs local educational agencies (LEAs) to have in place a LWP for each school under its jurisdiction.	Strengthens LWPs and adds rules for public input, transparency, and implementation.
Elements of the Local School Wellness Policy	LWP to include, at a minimum, goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities to promote student wellness, as well as nutrition guidelines for all foods available on school campus.	In addition to the 2004 requirements, the LWP is also to include goals for <u>nutrition promotion</u> .
Stakeholder Involvement	LEAs are required to involve parents, students, and representatives of the school food authority, the school board, school administrators and the public in the development of LWP.	In addition to the 2004 requirements, LEAs are now required to permit <u>teachers of physical education</u> and <u>school health professionals</u> to participate in the development of LWP.
Stakeholder Participation	The stakeholders named above are required to participate in the development of the LWP.	In addition to the 2004 requirements, LEAs are now required to permit <u>all stakeholders named above and in 2004</u> to participate in the <u>implementation and periodic review and update</u> of LWP.
Local Discretion	LEAs can determine the specific policies appropriate for the schools under their jurisdiction, provided that those policies include all required elements specified in the Act.	Same as 2004 requirement.
Public Notification	None.	LEAs are required to inform and update the public (including parents, students, and others in the community) about the content and implementation of the LWP.
Measuring Implementation	LEAs are required to establish a plan for measuring implementation of the LWP.	LEAs are required to measure periodically and make available to the public an assessment on the implementation of LWP, including the extent to which schools are in compliance with LWP, the extent to which the LWP compares to model LWP, and to describe the progress made in attaining goals of LWP.
Local Designation	LEAs are required to establish a plan for measuring implementation of the LWP, including designation of one or more persons within the LEA or at each school, as appropriate, charged with operational responsibility for ensuring that the school meets the LWP.	LEAs are required to <u>designate one or more LEA officials or school officials</u> , as appropriate, to ensure that each school complies with the LWP.

12/06/2011. Created by US Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (USDA FNS); US Department of Education (ED); and US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Can You Read Between The Lines??



Get To Know The NEW School Lunch

	<u>Before</u>	<u>After</u>
Fruits	1/2-3/4 cup/day	1/2-1 cup/day
Vegetables	*combined F & V	3/4-1 cup/day
Meat / Meat Alt.	1.5-2 oz eq./ day minimum	1oz/day minimum 8-10oz eq./week
Grains	1 serving/day; 8 servings/week	1oz /day; 7-10oz eq./week
Whole Grains	Encouraged; not required	At least half served should be whole grain-rich
Milk	1 cup/day, any	1 cup/day of low fat (1% fat) or nonfat; flavored non-fat only
Calorie Max.	No maximums	2014-15 SY: 650-700
Sodium	Reduce, no target	2014-15 SY: <1230mg
Fat	Sat.: <10% of cal. Trans: no limits	Sat.: <10% of cal. Trans: Og allowed

This year, the Vergennes Union Elementary School cafeteria is working around the clock to meet tough new federal nutrition standards for school meals, ensuring that meals are healthy and well-balanced, providing students all the nutrition they need to succeed at school. School meals offer students milk, fruits and vegetables, proteins and grains, and they must meet strict limits on saturated fat and portion size.

Now is a great time to encourage kids to choose school lunch!

In addition to meeting new standards, VUES is working on increasing student taste tests, nutrition education and physical activity opportunities; all in an effort to build healthy bodies and a healthy awareness of good nutrition.

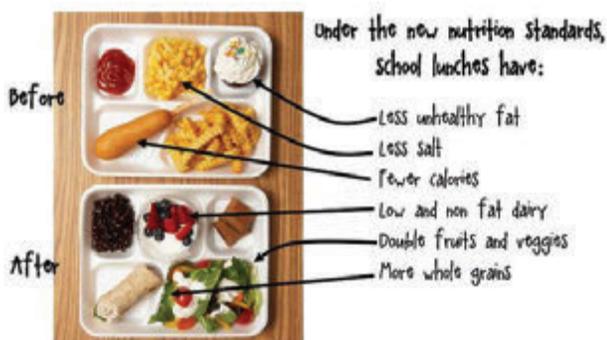
Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program at VUES this year!

The Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program can be an important catalyst for change in the efforts to combat childhood Obesity by helping children Learn more healthful eating habits.

The Program has been successful in introducing school children to a variety of produce that they otherwise might not have the opportunity to sample.



The School Day Just Got Healthier!



Visit www.schoolfoods.org/back2school for more information.

Green Mountain Healthy Kids Challenge

USDA Funded Grant Opportunity

Only 10 elementary Schools Chosen in Vermont to participate – VUES being one of them!

Goal: to determine best practices for encouraging collaborative work between food service staff; school nurses; teachers; parents; and administrators in order to bolster positive food and nutrition choices and educational opportunities that can have a lasting impact on improving student's health and ability to learn.

What Can You Do To Help Support the FF&V Program???

Teachers serving fruits and vegetables to their students can model healthful eating habits by participating with their students and including a nutrition education lesson.



Teachers can help monitor and direct the food distribution, and use the opportunity to talk with students about nutrition, health, hygiene and manners.

How Can You Help???

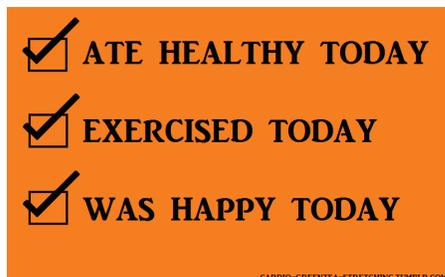
Healthy School Celebrations:

from birthday parties to holiday celebrations, there are many in elementary schools. Along with the fun, usually comes food; and many times less healthy choices.

*Provide parents with healthy ideas for birthdays and other celebrations. List only healthy items on the class party sign-sheet. Have parents offer a healthy snack alternative also when less healthy snacks are brought in.

*Shift the focus of school parties from unhealthy food to healthy fun. Find ways to recognize students, celebrate them and make them feel special, without using food.

School Wellness Check List:



Healthy Foods + Exercise =
 ♥ Better Health
 ♥ Better Grades
 ♥ Better Behavior

How Can You Help???

*Healthy Rewards for Students:

Rewards and performance accomplishments reinforce desirable behavior and encourage its repetition. The goal of rewarding is to help children internalize desirable behaviors, so external rewards are not needed.

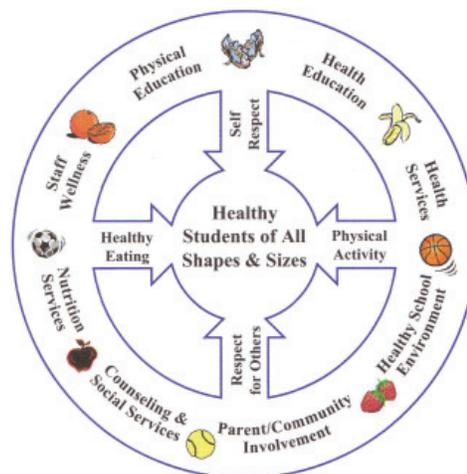
The options for non-food rewards are limited only by imagination, time, and resources.

*Disadvantages of Using Food as a Reward: teaches kids to eat when they're not hungry; encourages over-consumption; compromises health; and undermines classroom learning

School Wellness Policies

Federal law requires every school district to have a local wellness policy.

These policies must address nutrition education, physical activity, school meals, and all other foods and beverages available at school.



Resources

Activities

Make your own plate

MakIt: Personalized Treasures Made By You
<http://www.makit.com>

Awards & Funding

Fit and Healthy School Wellness Awards

Vermont Department of Health
http://healthvermont.gov/family/fit_healthykids.aspx

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program

United States Department of Agriculture,
Food and Nutrition Service
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/ffvp>

Fuel up to Play 60

National Dairy Council
<http://www.fueluptoplay60.com>

Healthier U.S. School Challenge

United States Department of Agriculture,
Food and Nutrition Services
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/hussc/healthierus-school-challenge>

Vermont Farm to School grant program

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and
Markets
http://agriculture.vermont.gov/producer_partner_resources/funding_opportunities/vaafm_funding/farm_to_school

VT-NEA mini-grant program

Vermont NEA
<http://www.vtneaprofessionalprograms.org/Mini-Grant.php>

Communication

10 Tips Nutrition Education Series

United States Department of Agriculture
<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/healthy-eating-tips/ten-tips.html>

Nutrition Nuggets for school newsletter

Resources for Educators
www.rfeonline.com

Curriculum Resources

Chefs Moves to Schools

Let's Move Initiative
<http://www.chefsmovetoschools.org>

Choose MyPlate.gov

Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion,
United States Department of Agriculture
<http://www.choosemyplate.gov>

Food Day School Curriculum

Center for Food and Environment, Teachers
College Columbia University
https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/food-day/pages/24/attachments/original/1341610970/Food_Day_School_Curriculum_2012_NO_BRAND.pdf?1341610970

Green Mountain Farm to School Curriculum

Green Mountain Farm to School
<http://www.greenmountainfarmtoschool.org/resources>

Health Teacher

<http://www.healthteacher.com>

Learning Zone Express Nutrition Education Products

<http://www.learningzonexpress.com>

LiFE curriculum series

Center for Food & Environment, Teachers
College Columbia University
<http://blogs.tc.columbia.edu/cfe/education/nutrition-curriculum>

Life Lab Curriculum and Activity Guides

Life Lab Science Program
<http://www.lifelab.org/store/curriculum>

Nourish: Food & Community Curriculum

WorldLink
<http://www.nourishlife.org/teach/curriculum>

Nutrition Detectives

<http://www.davidkatzmd.com/nutritiondetectives.aspx>

Team Nutrition

United States Department of Agriculture,
Food and Nutrition Service
<http://teamn nutrition.usda.gov>

Team Nutrition Resource Library

Team Nutrition, United States Department
of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service
<http://teamn nutrition.usda.gov/library.html>

Vermont Farm to School Food, Farm, and Nutrition Curriculum Units

Vermont Food Education Every Day
<http://www.vtfeed.org/materials/vermont-farm-school-food-farm-and-nutrition-curriculum-units>

Facilitation

Facilitative Leadership training

Interaction Associates
<http://www.interactionassociates.com/services/facilitative-leadership>

Farm to School

10 Facts about Local Foods in Cafeterias

United States Department of Agriculture
http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/f2s/pdf/F2S_10_facts.PDF

Vermont Food Education Every Day (FEED)

www.vtfeed.org

A Guide for Farm to School Community Action Planning

<http://www.vtfeed.org/materials/guide-farm-school-community-action-planning>

A Guide to Taste Testing Local Foods in Schools

<http://www.vtfeed.org/materials/guide-taste-testing-local-foods-schools>

A Guide for Using Local Food in Schools

<http://www.vtfeed.org/materials/guide-using-local-food-schools>

A Report on Promising Practices of Farm to School Education

http://www.vtfeed.org/sites/default/files/staff-files/Farm%20to%20School%20Month/CDCReportCardMAY2011_Forweb.pdf

Farm to School

United States Department of Agriculture,
Food and Nutrition Service
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool>

Farm to School Field Guide for Food Service

Community Alliance with Family Farmers
http://food-hub.org/files/resources/field_guide_for%20FSD.pdf

National Farm to School Network

<http://www.farmtoschool.org/>

Vermont Farm to School Network

<http://www.vtfeed.org/farmtoschoolnetwork>

Non-Food Fundraising

Non-food Alternatives for School Rewards and Fundraising

Iowa State University Extension
<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/publications/pm2039a.pdf>

Non-Food based Fundraising Ideas

Parents Advocating School Accountability
http://www.pasasf.org/nutrition/pdfs/nonfood_fundraising.pdf

Physical Activity Resources for Classroom Teachers

Active Academics

www.activeacademics.org

Active Education: Physical Education, Physical Activity and Academic Performance

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
<http://activelivingresearch.org/active-education-physical-education-physical-activity-and-academic-performance>

Brain Breaks

Michigan Department of Education
www.emc.cmich.edu/brainbreaks

Classroom Activities Cards

Active & Healthy Schools Program
<http://www.activeandhealthyschools.com>

FitDeck Exercise Playing Cards

<http://fitdeck.com>

Global Children's Challenge
Centre for Social Innovation
<http://socialinnovation.ca/node/1672>

Let's Move
<http://www.letsmove.gov/active-schools>

**Planned Action toward Health (PATH)
Wellness Programs**
Vermont Education Health Initiative
<https://secure.tomypath.com/vehi>

School Nutrition Programs: ABC for Fitness
www.davidkatzmd.com/abcforfitness.aspx

Take 10! Healthier Lifestyles, 10 Minutes at a Time
www.take10.net

The Association Between School-based Physical Activity, Including Physical Education, and Academic Performance
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/health_and_academics/pdf/pa-pe_paper.pdf

Winter Kids Outdoor Learning Curriculum
Winter Kids Education Foundation
www.winterkids.org

School Assessment

Health Education Curriculum Analysis Tool (HECAT)
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/hecat/index.htm>

Physical Education Curriculum Analysis Tool (PECAT)
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/pecat/index.htm>

School Health Index (SHI): Self-Assessment & Planning Guide
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/shi/index.htm>

School Wellness Investigation
Fuel up to Play 60
<http://school.fueluptoplay60.com/swi/introduction.php>

Wellness School Assessment Tool (WellsAT)
Yale Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity
<http://www.wellsat.org>

School Gardens

Fresh, Healthy and Safe Food: Best Practices for using produce from school gardens
National Farm to School Network
http://www.farmtoschool.org/files/publications_188.pdf

Kids Gardening
National Gardening Association
<http://www.kidsgardening.org>

The Edible Schoolyard Project
<http://edibleschoolyard.org>

School Meals

Best Practices for VT School Meals Programs
The Alliance to End Hunger
<http://www.hungerfreecommunities.org/resource-library/best-practices-for-vermont-school-meals-programs/>

Best Practices Sharing Center
United States Department of Agriculture
<http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/best-practices>

Fresh from the Farm: The MA Farm to School Cookbook
http://www.farmtoschool.org/files/publications_134.pdf

National School Lunch Program
United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/nslp/national-school-lunch-program>

National Food Service Management Institute
The University of Mississippi
<http://www.nfsmi.org>

Recipes for Healthy Kids
United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service
http://www.teamnutrition.usda.gov/resources/r4hk_schools.html

Rethinking School Lunch Guide

Center for Ecoliteracy
<http://www.ecoliteracy.org/downloads/rethinking-school-lunch-guide>

Salad Bars: The Lunch Box Guide

The LunchBox: Healthy Tools to Help All Schools
http://www.thelunchbox.org/sites/default/files/Salad%20Bars-The%20Lunch%20Box%20Guide_v1_0.pdf

School Lunch Initiative

Center for Ecoliteracy
<http://www.school lunchinitiative.org>

Tray Talk: Communities for Healthy School Meals

School Nutrition Association
<http://www.traytalk.org>

USDA Recipes for Schools

United States Department of Agriculture
Food and Nutrition Service
http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/usda_recipes.html

What you need to know about school lunch

Chez Panisse Foundation
<https://edibleschoolyard.org/store/public-policy/what-you-need-to-know-about-school-lunch.html>

School Nutrition Guidelines

Child Nutrition Programs

United States Department of Agriculture,
Food and Nutrition Service
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/child-nutrition-programs>

Child Nutrition Programs

Vermont Agency of Education
http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_nutrition.html

Comparison of Previous and Current Regulatory Requirements under Final Rule “Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs” (published January 26, 2012)

United States Department of Agriculture,
Food and Nutrition Service
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/governance/legislation/comparison.pdf>

Core Nutrition Messages

United States Department of Agriculture,
Food and Nutrition Service
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/core-nutrition/core-nutrition-messages>

Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010

United States Department of Agriculture,
Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion
<http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/DietaryGuidelines.htm>

Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010

United States Department of Agriculture,
Food and Nutrition Service
http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Legislation/CNR_2010.htm

The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004

United States Department of Agriculture,
Food and Nutrition Service
http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/_private/_audit/Child-NutandWICReauthActof2004.pdf

Wellness Policies

Action Guide for Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies

Connecticut State Department of Education
<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2678&Q=322594>

Local School Wellness Policy

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/npao/wellness.htm>

Local School Wellness Policy

United States Department of Agriculture,
Food and Nutrition Service
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/healthy/wellnesspolicy.html>

Model School Wellness Policies

National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity
<http://www.schoolwellnesspolicies.org/WellnessPolicies.html>

Model Wellness Policy Guide

Center for Ecoliteracy
http://www.ecoliteracy.org/sites/default/files/uploads/cel_model_wellness_policy_guide.pdf

**School Health Guidelines to Promote
Healthy Eating and Physical Activity**
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
[http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/
rr6005a1.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr6005a1.htm)

School Wellness Policies
Yale Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity
http://yaleruddcenter.org/what_we_do.aspx?id=160

Vermont Healthy Schools Resource
Vermont Department of Health, Agency of
Human Services
[http://healthvermont.gov/local/school/healthy_
schools.aspx#resource](http://healthvermont.gov/local/school/healthy_schools.aspx#resource)

VT Nutrition and Fitness Policy Guidelines
Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets,
Vermont Department of Education and Ver-
mont Department of Health
[http://healthvermont.gov/family/fit/documents/nutri-
tion_fitness_policy_guidelines.pdf](http://healthvermont.gov/family/fit/documents/nutrition_fitness_policy_guidelines.pdf)