

Promising Practices for Linking Education, Activity, and Food



Experiences from Select
California Secondary Schools



Featured Schools

- 16 middle and high schools that participated in the Linking Education, Activity and Food (LEAF) Pilot Program Grants
- Over 14 other schools that submitted details of practices they have field-tested and found successful



Promising Practices Criteria

1. Addresses one or more LEAF goals:
 - Nutrition standards
 - California-grown fruits and vegetables
 - Effective, experiential nutrition education
 - Healthy fundraising activities
 - No student goes hungry
 - Students are physically active



Criteria (cont.)

2. Involves and impacts middle or high school students through positive youth development: building strong relationships with others, learning new skills, and giving back to the community.



Criteria (cont.)

3. Demonstrates strong promise of being sustainable:

- Written school or district policy or administrative support
- School staff and student involvement
- Broad stakeholder support
- Lasting infrastructure changes
- Little or no cost



Criteria (cont.)

4. Can be replicated in other schools, based on a formal or informal evaluation and/or answers to the following questions:
 - What problem was this practice designed to address?
 - How do you know that the practice addresses this problem successfully?



Key Strategy Areas

1. Linking

2. Education

3. Activity

4. Food

- Spells LEAF!
- Four of the critical components of a Coordinated School Health Plan
- Consistent with CDC's *School Health Index & CA Health Framework*



Linking Strategies:

Creating Policy and Environments for Optimal Learning

- Developing strong health councils
- Adopting comprehensive school health policies
- Implementing effective community outreach





Linking Challenges

- Lack of time to meet regularly
- Personnel changes
- Differing priorities of stakeholders
- Getting issues/policy on Board agenda
- District departments often work in isolation
- Policies are separated by department
- Community members unaware of issues
- Too many issues tackled at once



Education Strategies:

Integrating Nutrition and Academics

- Providing experiential nutrition education
 - School gardens
 - Cooking classes
 - Farm/ farmers' market field trips
- Integrating nutrition education concepts throughout multiple subject areas
- Preparing secondary students to teach younger students





Education Challenges

- Lack of health/nutrition education standards
- Increasing academic demands
- Limited facilities
 - Garden space
 - Cooking classrooms
- Professional development needs



Activity Strategies:

Promoting Healthy Bodies and Minds

- Improving physical education instruction
 - Curriculum
 - Equipment
 - Staff development

- Providing physical activity opportunities
 - Community-based
 - After school
 - Peer education





Activity Challenges

- Large class size
- Narrow focus on academic coursework
- Professional development needs
- Facilities and equipment have not kept pace with increasing enrollments



Food Strategies:

Modeling Health in Our Schools

- Improving school lunch choices while reducing or eliminating *a la carte* items
- Upgrading facilities (murals, tables, layout) and marketing school meals (packaging, signage)
- Purchasing locally grown fruit and vegetables for school meals





Food Strategies:

Modeling Health in Our Schools

- Offering accessible breakfast programs
 - Classrooms
 - School fitness centers
- Increasing access to school meals
 - Application incentives
 - More points of sale
 - Computer point of sale systems





Food Strategies:

Modeling Health in Our Schools

- Increasing healthy food/beverages outside school lunch
 - Vending machines
 - Student stores
 - Student food fundraisers
- Supporting healthy fundraising through profit-sharing partnerships
 - Student groups
 - Parent organizations
 - School administrators





Food Challenges

- Too short or too few lunch periods
- Inadequate facilities, technology, and staff training
- Meal reimbursement rates do not keep pace with inflation and operational costs
- Loss of revenue – actual or perceived/feared
- Regulations for school food/beverage sales not as strict as for school meals
- Open campus
- Limited access to local produce growers

Carpinteria Middle School



How One School is Linking
Education, Activity, and Food
(A Virtual Tour)



Taking Action for Healthy School Environments

- California Department of Education publication aimed at decision makers (school, district, regional, state)
- Includes recommendations that reflect successes and address challenges
- Due out Fall 2005
- Contact CDE Press at 800-995-4099 or <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/pn/rc/>



Healthy
children,
ready to
learn...