

New Mexico Statewide Strategic Action Plan



Physical Activity and Nutrition in the Schools

April 26 & 27, 2004

Officially endorsed by the: New Mexico Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Health

Sponsored by: Action for Healthy Kids New Mexico State Team; School & Family Support Bureau and Student Nutrition Program, Public Education Department; Office of School Health, Department of Health

Physical Activity and Nutrition Forum

Executive Summary

Action for Healthy Kids™ is a national and statewide initiative dedicated to improving children's nutrition and physical activity in schools. The New Mexico Action for Healthy Kid's state team, in collaboration with the School and Family Support Bureau in the New Mexico Public Education Department and the Office of School Health in the New Mexico Department of Health, coordinated a statewide steering committee and convened a strategic planning forum on physical activity and nutrition for school aged children in the school setting.

Vision

The vision of New Mexico Action for Healthy Kids is that healthy, active students will make lifelong choices for optimal health.

Mission

The mission of the strategic planning forum was to identify strategies to support New Mexico schools to collaborate with families and communities to help students build and maintain healthy, lifelong nutritional and fitness habits.

Focus Areas and Themes

The two day strategic planning forum addressed seven focus areas: economics of food at school, school meals, nutrition education curriculum, quality physical education, integration of physical activity into the curriculum, extracurricular activities, and parent & community education and involvement. Discussion groups were focused on five common themes: integration, training, facilities and equipment, resources, and policy.

The strategic planning forum was comprised of 105 visionary individuals from communities around New Mexico, committed to making a contribution to the education reform movement. The results of their work are provided in this document. These goals, strategies, and objectives form the foundation for a statewide strategic action plan for New Mexico's schools and policy makers regarding the important connections among nutrition, physical activity, student health and student achievement.

Goals and Recommendations

The forum resulted in five goals and 15 recommendations. This document will be used to inform the work of policy makers, legislators, administrators, teachers and parents in the areas of physical activity and nutrition for school aged children in the school setting.

GOALS

- Goal 1: Health Education: Provide comprehensive health education for grades K-12 and mandate health education as a graduation requirement.
- Goal 2: Physical Education: Provide all students in New Mexico with quality, daily physical education that meets the national standards as well as maintaining the physical education graduation requirement, not allowing options for alternative credit for physical education and ensuring that physical education will be taught by a licensed and endorsed physical educator.
- Goal 3: Nutrition: Provide all students in New Mexico with access to healthful food choices throughout the school day.
- Goal 4: Parent and Community: Increase knowledge and awareness in the community about the importance of nutrition and physical activity for the health of New Mexico's children and families.
- Goal 5: Physical Activity: Provide all youth in New Mexico with access to extracurricular physical activity programs.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Physical Education

- Update statewide physical education content standards with benchmarks emphasizing the benefits of an active and healthy lifestyle.
- Train K-12 teachers to promote movement and to integrate physical activity into non-physical education classrooms throughout each day for all students.
- Promote and seek resources to support quality, daily physical education that meets national standards.

Nutrition

- Create a statewide nutrition policy that supports enhanced nutrition for students and nutrition education.
- Create a statewide policy on competitive food and vending machine sales.
- Create a statewide policy that promotes the use of locally-grown foods in schools.
- Create a statewide policy requiring training for school food service personnel leading to certification.
- Mandate food and nutrition training for K-12 teachers.
- Integrate Food and Nutrition Education Curricula with existing curricula and structure.
- Explore the feasibility of placing a Nutrition Education Coordinator in each school district.

Physical Activity

- Create a statewide plan for providing community-based physical activity programs for all youth.
- Provide training on developmentally appropriate activities to those who coach or lead extracurricular activities, including parents of children who participate in the activities.

Parent and Community

- Develop a comprehensive, integrated statewide training program for policy makers, health care and youth care professionals, parents and community members to provide current child-centered nutrition and physical activity information.
- Develop appropriate policies within communities to create environments conducive to physical activity and healthful food choices for everyone.
- Develop school-centered workplace policies conducive to appropriate physical activities and healthful food choices for teachers, parents and staff.