

ADVOCACY IN ACTION: HELP DRAFT YOUR LOCAL SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICY

TAKE ACTION! AN ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITY

What: In June 2004, Congress passed and the President signed into law, the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act (P.L. 108-265). This law requires every school district that receives federal school meal funds to establish a local School Wellness Policy by the first day of the 2006-2007 school year. The policies must address nutrition and physical activity goals and other school-based activities that serve to promote and reinforce overall health and wellness.

Girl Scouts is encouraging adults to partner with girls to take action and become involved in the development and implementation of their local School Wellness Policy so that what girls say about healthy living is addressed and included in the policies. The School Wellness Policies are currently being drafted nationwide and present a great opportunity for girls to advocate and make their voice heard on issues that impact their daily lives.

Who: According to the law, students, parents, representatives from the school food authority, school board members, school administrators and the general public must be involved in developing a School Wellness Policy. In some schools, a School Health Coordinating Team has already been established to work on development of the School Wellness Policies.

Why: Advocacy is an important skill for girls to learn. It is also a critical component in educating and influencing key policy and decision makers as well as the general public about what girls need to lead healthy lives. As the Girl Scout Movement works towards becoming “a premier voice for girls and expert on their growth and development,” advocacy will help us raise our voice and the voices of girls on important issues.

The release of the Girl Scout Research Institute study, “*The New Normal? What Girls Say About Healthy Living*,” which highlights the girl perspective on healthy living, presents a remarkable opportunity to showcase our expertise and bring the voice of girls to the national and local dialogue. (For a copy of the report visit <http://www.girlscouts.org/research/>.)

Take Action and ensure that the unique girl perspective about healthy living is included in School Wellness Policies!

How: To take action, please review the following resources for guidelines, advocacy tips, fact sheets, community statistics, model policies and other relevant material. To get started go to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Services at
http://teamn nutrition.usda.gov/Healthy/wellnesspolicy_steps.html

Getting Started:

Team Nutrition – the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service’s official resource on developing and implementing a local wellness policy that promotes healthy eating and physical activity in schools, including a step-by-step guide on how to get involved in creating, implementing and evaluating a School Wellness Policy.
http://teamn nutrition.usda.gov/Healthy/wellnesspolicy_steps.html

Other Resources:

Girl Scout Research Institute Reports

- *Weighing In: Helping Girls Be Healthy Today, Healthy Tomorrow* outlines trends for youth in the areas of health, nutrition and physical activity as they relate to child obesity and weight issues.
<http://www.girlscouts.org/research/>
- *The New Normal? What Girls Say About Healthy Living* examines girls’ attitudes and behaviors about health.
<http://www.girlscouts.org/research/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) - State- and city-specific fact sheets on childhood obesity, including data from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey and School Health profiles and suggestions for addressing the obesity epidemic.
<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/obesity/facts.htm>

Model School Wellness Policies

- Sponsored by the [National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity](#) (NANA), this website features model policies for local school districts developed by more than 50 health, physical activity, nutrition and education professionals from a variety of national and state organizations.
<http://www.schoolwellnesspolicies.org/index.html>
- The Center for Ecoliteracy, Slow Food USA and the Chez Panisse Foundation have prepared a downloadable Model Wellness Policy Guide.
http://www.ecoliteracy.org/programs/wellness_policy.html

National School Boards Association (NSBA) - NSBA's School Health Resource Database contains sample policies, journal articles, and program descriptions.

<http://www.nasbe.org/>

Action for Healthy Kids - A public-private partnership of more than 50 national organizations and government agencies representing education, health, fitness and nutrition, Action for Healthy Kids addresses the epidemic of overweight, sedentary and undernourished youth by focusing on changes in schools.

<http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/index.php>

Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) - FRAC has released a comprehensive *Advocate's Guide to School Nutrition Programs* which includes information and advocacy tips for participating in the development of your School Wellness Policy. It can be ordered from the FRAC website for \$35.00 or it may be available in your local library.

<http://www.frac.org/>

National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) - NASBE's website contains resources, including state-level School Wellness Policies, to help create safe, healthy and nurturing school environments.

<http://www.nasbe.org/HealthySchools/index.mgi>

Let Us Hear From You:

Please send your School Wellness Policy, process highlights, local articles and other relevant information about your advocacy action to Girl Scouts of the USA at advocacy@girlscouts.org so we can share your ideas and outcomes with others.

For assistance, further suggestions or questions about this advocacy opportunity, contact Susan Goldberg, Director of Advocacy at 202-659-3780 or sgoldberg@girlscouts.org.

For 93 years, Girl Scouts of the USA has been actively engaged in activities that promote healthy living for girls. Today, this issue continues to be a priority for Girl Scouting. Through research, policy, program and advocacy, Girl Scouts is adding an important voice to the ongoing national and local dialogue about how to address the well-being of girls.

Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) is the preeminent organization for and leading authority on girls with 3.8 million girl and adult members. Now in its 93rd year, Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence and character, who make the world a better place. The organization serves girls from every corner of the United States, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

GSUSA's Public Policy and Advocacy Office, located in Washington, D.C., works in partnership with local Girl Scout councils to educate representatives of the legislative and executive branches of government and advocate for public policy issues important to Girl Scouting. For more information, contact us at (202) 659-3780 or advocacy@girlscouts.org.