

SCHOOL HEALTH PROGRAMS

SUCCESS STORIES FROM THE FIELD

2009

Wisconsin: Building Healthier Schools to Foster Healthier Students

The nation's major chronic disease killers—heart disease and stroke, cancer, and diabetes—are often caused by risk behaviors such as physical inactivity, unhealthy eating, and tobacco use. The 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) indicated that among Wisconsin's high school students

- 49% have ever smoked and 20.5% were current smokers.
- 11% were obese.
- Less than 18% ate fruits and vegetables at least 5 times a day.

Wisconsin's Coordinated School Health Program, supported in part through CDC's Division of Adolescent and School Health, has developed or supported initiatives to reduce tobacco use and increase physical activity and healthy eating among students, their families, and school staff. Efforts include the following:

- The School Tobacco Prevention Program is increasing the use of CDC's tobacco-use prevention guidelines in Wisconsin schools, implementing evidence-based educational programs, and making cessation services more available to youth.
- The *Movin' and Munchin' Schools* campaign is helping Wisconsin's young people, families, and school staff develop lifetime skills and habits of physical activity and healthy nutritional choices.
- The Governor's School Health Award is recognizing schools with policies, programs, organizational capacity, and parental and community involvement to support and promote healthy lifestyles and staff wellness.

Major accomplishments of the Wisconsin program include the following:

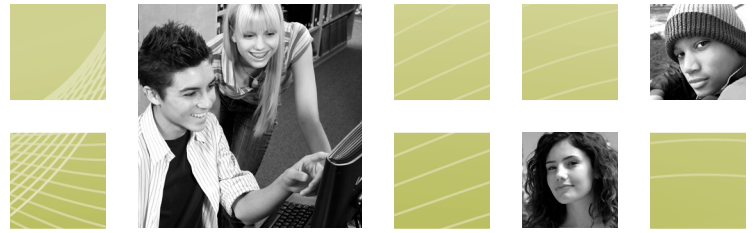
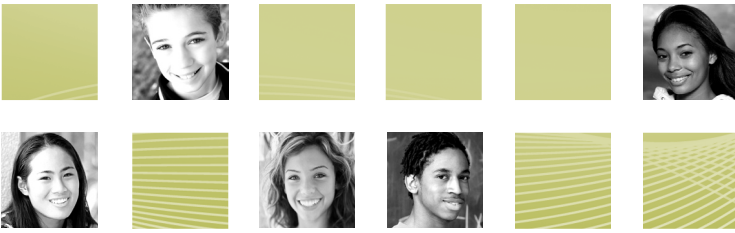
- The smoking rate among high school students decreased from 38.1% in 1999 to 20.5% in 2007.
- During the *Movin' and Munchin' Schools* campaign, 101,641 students, 39,143 parents, and 9,265 staff reported increases in physical activity and fruit and vegetable consumption.
- Wisconsin was one of 15 states selected as a National Governors Association Healthy Kids, Healthy America grantee for 2007–2008 to advance programs to help prevent childhood obesity.

North Carolina: Making Tobacco Free Schools a Reality in a Tobacco-Growing State

Each year, cigarette smoking accounts for approximately one of every five deaths in the United States. For high school students in North Carolina, the 2007 YRBS results indicated that about 22% smoked cigarettes. Among those students, more than half had tried to quit smoking cigarettes during the 12 months before the survey.

Tackling the smoking problem among youth has long presented a significant challenge for both the public health and public school sectors. The North Carolina Prevention and Control Branch, Health and Wellness Trust Fund Commission, and the state's Tobacco-Free Schools (TFS) initiative have made significant strides in addressing this major health concern. Partnerships and cross-agency efforts at multiple levels were key to North Carolina's progress in preventing smoking among its youth.





The North Carolina Healthy Schools Initiative, funded in part through CDC's Division of Adolescent and School Health, supported development and implementation of school policies to advance the state's youth antismoking campaign. Individuals and teams working with the Healthy Schools Initiative did the following:

- Helped develop and review model language for TFS policies.
- Sponsored regional workshops to train principals, other administrators, school nurses, and Safe and Drug-Free Schools staff in ways to attain compliance with TFS policies.
- Conducted forums with school superintendents, principals, and school board members to encourage them to join the growing ranks of other districts endorsing TFS policies.

The percentage of school districts in North Carolina adopting 100% TFS policies increased from 5% in 2000 to 75% in 2007. Building on that momentum, the state legislature further bolstered the campaign by passing a law in 2007 mandating statewide TFS compliance. By July 2008, all 115 of North Carolina's school districts were 100% tobacco-free.

California: Investment in Training for School Leaders Yields Huge Benefits for Students

In 2007, less than 30% of California students in grades 5, 7, and 9 met the fitness standards for the state's FITNESSGRAM, an annual physical fitness test given to students in selected grades in the state's public schools. In recent years, many of California's school districts have seen substantial reductions in resources available for supporting efforts to improve student health. Motivated by the growing concerns over student health and fitness levels, school health leaders in California decided to enhance their knowledge and skills in managing and promoting school health programs.

Funded by CDC's Division of Adolescent and School Health to promote coordinated school health (CSH), the California Department of Education's School Health Connections Program collaborated with the state Department of Health Services to conduct state- and local-level leadership institutes. These were modeled after the American Cancer Society's (ACS) National School Health Leadership Institutes and were conducted

in partnership with the California Division of the ACS, which also provided local staff and financial support.

Since 2005, more than 40 district teams in California have participated in School Health Leadership Institutes, learning how to build, promote, and sustain school health programs. Successful activities include the following:

- The El Dorado High School District obtained a Carol M. White Award for almost \$100,000 for 3 years to improve physical education programs.
- The Los Angeles Unified School District created a CSH District Council, launched CSH pilot programs, formally adopted a Policy and Blueprint on Wellness, and created the District's first comprehensive program to address childhood obesity and diabetes.

