

Smarter Lunchrooms Movement Language for Local School Wellness Policies

Purpose

Integrate Smarter Lunchrooms Movement (SLM) into your school district's Local School Wellness Policy (LSWP) to ensure sustainability of SLM.

LSWP Requirements

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) released a final rule on July 29, 2016 for LSWP (§210.30(c)(1)). For more information on LSWP, visit the following USDA Web page at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/local-school-wellness-policy>.

Under this rule, local education agencies such as school districts are now required to review and consider evidence-based strategies and techniques in establishing goals for nutrition promotion and education, physical activity and other school-based activities that promote student wellness. At a minimum, the USDA would expect local education agencies to review SLM tools and strategies, which are evidence-based, simple, low-cost and no-cost changes that are shown to improve student participation in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program while encouraging consumption of more whole grains, fruits, vegetables and legumes and decreasing plate waste.

General Guidelines for Integrating SLM Language in LSWP

As much as possible, districts should use strong policy language to mandate SLM implementation, provided that there is stakeholder commitment to SLM. Strong language includes phrases such as “will implement Smarter Lunchrooms Movement practices”; “shall conduct Smarter Lunchrooms Movement training for cafeteria staff”; or “will use signage on all food items.” Often, the policy includes specific details.

If there isn't stakeholder commitment, the district may choose to moderate the language with phrases such as “to the extent possible” or “will promote the use of Smarter Lunchrooms Movement.” On the following pages are suggested SLM policy inserts, organized by the common components of an LSWP.

Suggested Model SLM Language in an LSWP

Insert in the Preamble or Overview

“The board supports the use of health-promoting marketing strategies for our meal programs. School food service shall commit to incorporating Smarter Lunchrooms Movement tools and strategies, which are evidence-based, simple, low-cost changes that are shown to improve student participation in the school meal program while encouraging consumption of whole grains, milk, fruits, vegetables and legumes, and decreasing plate waste.”

[You may also include additional information about SLM. See below.]

- “The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement of California, developed in partnership with the Cornell Center for Behavioral Economics in Child Nutrition, which is funded by the USDA Economic Research Service/Food and Nutrition Service is a grassroots movement of those who are concerned with the way children eat and who wish to change these behaviors through the application of evidence-based lunchroom-focused principles that promote healthful eating.”
- “Smarter Lunchrooms Movement practices include using creative names for fruits and vegetables and targeted entrées, training staff to prompt students to select fruits and vegetables, placing unflavored milk in front of other beverage choices, promoting a particular entrée and bundling “grab and go” meals that include fruit and vegetable items, which have all been shown to improve the likelihood that children will make healthier choices.”

Insert in the Nutrition Education and Promotion Section

“Nutrition education and promotion positively influence lifelong eating behaviors by using evidence-based techniques and nutrition messages and by creating food environments that encourage healthy food choices and participation in the school meal programs.”

“The district will provide nutrition education that aligns with Smarter Lunchrooms Movement practices being implemented in the lunchroom. Examples include food tastings aligned with feature foods in the cafeteria, offered along with more comprehensive and sequential nutrition education.”

“The district will also connect the cafeteria to the classroom by employing nutrition messaging aligned with Smarter Lunchrooms Movement practices being implemented in the cafeteria. Consistent nutrition messages will be delivered throughout all the district schools, in the cafeterias, classrooms, gymnasiums, hallways and other areas in

the schools, using venues such as posters, signage, artwork, newsletters and verbal announcements.”

“The district will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students throughout the school campuses, as well as encourage participation in school meal programs. This promotion will occur through at least:

- Implementing evidence-based, healthy food promotion techniques through the school meal programs using [Smarter Lunchrooms Movement techniques](#) and promoting foods and beverages that meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.
- Using additional possible promotion techniques districtwide and at individual schools, available at www.healthiergeneration.org/smartsnacks.”

Insert in the Nutrition Guidelines Section—School Meals

“The district is committed to serving healthy meals to students. All schools within the district participate in USDA Child Nutrition Programs, including the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program and *[include here any additional federal child nutrition programs in which the district participates, possibly including the Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program, Special Milk Program, Summer Food Service Program, supper programs or others]*.”

“The district also operates additional nutrition-related programs and activities, including *[if applicable, insert a list of other programs such as Farm to School programs, school gardens, Breakfast in the Classroom, Mobile Breakfast carts, Grab 'n' Go Breakfast or others]*. All schools within the district are committed to offering school meals through the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program and other applicable federal child nutrition programs that:

- Are accessible to all students.
- Are appealing and attractive to children.
- Are served in clean and pleasant settings.
- Meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established by local, state and federal statutes and regulations. (The district offers reimbursable school meals that meet [USDA nutrition standards](#).)”

“The district will incorporate strategies and principles from the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement at each school site. The district will require healthy food and beverage

products such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy products and water at all meals and school-sponsored events. Smarter Lunchrooms Movement strategies and actions such as signage will be used to encourage students to make healthier choices.”

[Note: A district may elaborate and provide more SLM implementation-specific information from the SLM Self-Assessment Scorecard or include information in an Administrative Regulation. Some examples of the SLM practices are listed below.]

- “Whole fruit options are displayed in attractive bowls or baskets (instead of chaffing dishes or hotel pans).”
- “Sliced or cut fruit is available daily.”
- “Daily fruit options are displayed in a location in the line of sight and reach of students.”
- “All available vegetable options have been given creative or descriptive names.”
- “Daily vegetable options are bundled into all ‘grab and go’ meals available to students.”
- “All staff members, especially those serving meals, have been trained to politely prompt students to select and consume the daily vegetable options with their meals.”
- “White milk is placed in front of other beverages in all coolers.”
- “Alternative entrée options (e.g., salad bar, yogurt parfaits, etc.) are highlighted on posters or signs within all service and dining areas.”
- “Reimbursable meals can be created in any service area available to students (e.g., salad bars, snack rooms, etc.).”
- “Student surveys and taste testing opportunities are used to inform menu development, dining space decor and promotional ideas.”
- “Student artwork is displayed in the service and/or dining areas.”
- “Daily announcements are used to promote and market menu options.”
- “The district will engage youth in tasting and creating names for new menu items.”

Insert in the Nutrition Guidelines Section—(continued)

Foods and Beverages Sold Separate from the Meal Program

“The district is committed to serving healthy foods and beverages to students. All schools within the district will only sell foods and beverages that meet the Smart Snack Guidelines and will competitively price the preferred choices, such as fruits, vegetables, and low-fat white milk.”

Foods Provided but Not Sold

“The district is committed to only offering healthy foods and beverages to students. All schools within the district will only offer foods during classroom celebrations and school events that meet the Smart Snack Guidelines and will only offer healthy or non-edible items for fundraising purposes..”

Marketing

“The district prohibits marketing of any items that do not meet the Smart Snack guidelines. This includes logos such as those on scoreboards, placemats, cups and bulletin boards. All marketing will be targeted towards promoting health and nutrition.”

Insert in Professional Development

“The district will ensure that food service staff receives professional development in Smarter Lunchrooms Movement principles, strategies and practices once a year.”

Insert in Monitoring and Evaluation

“The district will monitor and evaluate the implementation and impact of Smarter Lunchrooms Movement, using tools such as the SLM Self-Assessment Scorecard, food production records, sales records, student surveys, meal participation rates, and plate waste studies.”

“The district will report the results of their Smarter Lunchrooms Movement evaluation annually to the board.”

Insert in Stakeholder Engagement and Community Partnerships (if applicable)

“The district will *[insert as appropriate to current efforts: develop, enhance or continue]* relationships with community partners (e.g., hospitals, universities/colleges, local businesses, etc.) in support of the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement components of the wellness policy’s implementation. Existing and new community partnerships and sponsorships will be evaluated to ensure that they are consistent with the wellness policy and its goals.”

“School food service staff will consult with Smarter Lunchrooms Movement of California Technical Advising Professionals for advice, resources, guidance and inspiration.”

Much of this language has been adapted from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation’s Model Wellness Policy, which can be viewed at

https://www.healthiergeneration.org/take_action/schools/wellness_committees_policies/wellness_policies/

Helpful Links

California Local School Wellness Policy Collaborative web page:

<http://teamcaliforniaforhealthykids.org/school-wellness/>

California Department of Education School Wellness web page:

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/he/wellness.asp>

Dairy Council of California School Wellness web page:

<http://www.healthyeating.org/Schools/School-Wellness/School-Wellness-Policies.aspx>

University of California CalFresh School Wellness Policy web page:

<http://uccalfresh.org/resources/school-wellness-policy>

California School Boards Association Student Wellness Policy web page:

<https://www.csba.org/GovernanceAndPolicyResources/ConditionsOfChildren/StudentPhysicalHealthWellness/StudentWellnessPolicy.aspx>

California Project LEAN School Wellness web page:

<http://www.californiaprojectlean.org/doc.asp?id=168&parentid=20>

Center for Ecoliteracy *Model Wellness Policy Guide*:

http://www.ecoliteracy.org/sites/default/files/cel_model_wellness_policy_guide.pdf