

NASBE Issue Brief: State Strategies to Support Local Wellness Policies

Problem Overview

Leading health officials and organizations have identified obesity—especially the increase in the number of overweight children—as a critical health threat facing the United States. Overweight young people are more likely than children of normal weight to become overweight or obese adults. Federal and state governments are addressing this growing health problem through various measures, including policy mandates.

In 2004, the U.S. Congress passed the Child Nutrition and Women, Infants, and Children Reauthorization Act, which includes a requirement for all local education agencies (LEAs) that participate in programs authorized by the National School Lunch Program or the Child Nutrition Act to establish local wellness policies. These policies need to address nutrition education, physical activity, and nutrition standards for foods and beverages offered at school.

Program/Activity Description

Through CDC funding to support and promote healthy eating in schools, the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) collected and analyzed information about the various ways that states are helping to implement the mandated wellness policies. NASBE's Center for Safe and Healthy Schools has developed a special issue brief, *State Strategies to Support Local Wellness Policies*, that is the first document to

- Describe new laws, regulations, policies, or guidance materials developed to address wellness policies in 48 states.
- Categorize how specific states are providing assistance and support to LEAs.
- Highlight promising strategies that may help strengthen the impact of local school wellness policies.

In addition, information about states' laws, policies, or resources related to wellness policies can be found at www.nasbe.org under NASBE's school health policy database.

Program/Activity Outcome

The Child Nutrition and Women, Infants, and Children Reauthorization Act has given states an opportunity to harness the power of local policymaking and take on a leadership role in promoting school health. NASBE's issue brief and online database are rich resources for state and local education agencies as they continue to evaluate, enhance, or revise their local wellness policies.

