

SPECIAL TOPICS IN PUBLIC HEALTH
ORIGINAL RESEARCH: FEATURED ABSTRACT FROM THE
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Healthy Weight in Schools: Supporting Schools Through Partnerships

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PEER REVIEWED

In 2002, statewide consensus recommendations — *The Role of Michigan Schools in Promoting Healthy Weight* — were developed under the leadership of the state departments of education and public health. Thirty statewide organizations participated in the consensus process. Many of these original partners and additional new organizations are actively collaborating to identify and implement initiatives to help schools implement the consensus guidelines.

Five specific initiatives have evolved: 1) a development, printing, and distribution plan for family education materials; 2) grants to schools to implement the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's *SHI: School Health Index* self-assessment and planning tool and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's *Changing the Scene* kit; 3) a Web site for easy access to resources and assessment tools; 4) a statewide conference on healthy school environments; and 5) leadership and development of resources for the *Michigan Action for Healthy Kids Coalition*.

Preliminary evaluation results suggest that schools find these tools useful in creating healthy school environments and promoting healthy weight.

Schools are struggling to address obesity during a time of limited resources. It is imperative that states do

everything possible to help them in their efforts. Partnerships reduce duplication and produce innovative products and tools.

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