



## School Wellness Policy Checkup: Is Your School District Addressing the Needs of Its Low-Income Students?

School districts with significant numbers of low-income students have the responsibility to implement local wellness policies that meet the specific needs of their students. Schools must play an important role in low-income children's health and well-being by providing an affordable source of healthy food and no-cost opportunities for physical activity in a safe environment. School wellness policies should address the expansion of participation in school meals and snacks to ensure that no child goes hungry, and to improve the nutritional status and health of students. Also, millions of children, including low-income children, have working parents and need breakfast, afterschool and summer programs to keep them safe, engaged and on track. These programs not only offer important academic, recreational, enrichment, and youth development benefits but can be particularly effective venues for improving nutrition and increasing physical activity.

### Find out if your school district is meeting these key benchmarks in its wellness policies:

- All children eligible for free and reduced-price meals have the opportunity to participate in the Child Nutrition Programs (breakfast, lunch, and afterschool and summer food) through frequent outreach to families, and coordination with the local Food Stamp Program and with agencies serving migrant, homeless and runaway youth (pp 24-25\*).
- Bus schedules are arranged and methods are utilized to serve school breakfast that encourage participation, such as serving breakfast in the classroom, "grab-and-go" breakfast, or breakfast after first period (pp 26-29).
- Nutrition standards for school meals are followed for all meals during the school day and are applied to afterschool and summer nutrition programs operated by the schools (pp 52-57).
- Whole grains, low-fat dairy products, and fresh fruits and vegetables (including produce from local farms when possible) are provided in school meals and afterschool and summer nutrition programs (pp 31-36, 54).
- School facilities are available during and after the school day to provide access to safe, no-cost physical activities for students (pp 49-51).
- All school-sponsored afterschool programs provide healthy snacks, and suppers when appropriate, through the Child Nutrition Programs (pp 52-57).
- Summer nutrition programs are operated in all schools in which more than 50 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals throughout the entire summer vacation. This meets children's nutrition needs regardless of whether or not the school operates summer school (pp 52-57).

\* See the indicated pages in the FRAC guide, *School Wellness Policy and Practice: Meeting the Needs of Low-Income Students* ([www.frac.org/pdf/wellness\\_guide2006.pdf](http://www.frac.org/pdf/wellness_guide2006.pdf)) for model wellness policy language and implementation strategies.