

## MICHIGAN

### *Setting nutrition standards for foods and beverages offered at school*

#### **PROBLEM OVERVIEW**

Twelve percent of Michigan high school students are obese and few of them get recommended amounts of daily fruits and vegetables. Except for federally regulated school meals, foods and beverages sold in schools are largely exempt from nutrition standards and many of the most common food and beverage choices provided in vending machines, snack bars, or à la carte lines are high in fat, sugar, and calories and provide few necessary nutrients.

Schools reinforce the nutrition lessons they are teaching students in the classroom when they provide healthy food choices based on solid nutrition standards such as the Institute of Medicine's *Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools*. Creating state school nutrition standards that suit all stakeholders requires many steps to ensure that the resulting standards are accepted and implemented for the benefit of students, faculty, staff and administrators at schools.

#### **PROGRAM/ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION**

A Nutrition Standards Development Team drafted *Michigan Nutrition Standards* in July 2009 after a six month review of existing national standards such as those from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, the Institute of Medicine, the School Nutrition Association and USDA using a voting process to select the specific standards applicable to Michigan schools. Team members included staff from the American Cancer Society; Aramark; Compass, USA; the Michigan Department of Community Health; Michigan State University, including Extension and the Product Center; the National Association of State Boards of Education; the United Dairy Industry of Michigan; Oakland University; Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe; and several school districts including Anchor Bay, Clarkston, Hartland, Hudsonville, Lakeview and Sturgis .

The *Michigan Nutrition Standards* were adopted by the State Board of Education in July 2009 with a requirement that they be pilot-tested and that public opinion be solicited. The Michigan Team Nutrition Youth Wellness Initiative awarded mini-grants to 50 schools for activities that included pilot testing of the *Standards*. A kick-off event for school teams consisting of a principal, foodservice director, three teachers, a parent or community member, and up to four students was held at Ford Field, with support of two Detroit Lions players, to review grant objectives and motivate participation. An experienced school food service director provided ongoing technical assistance to the pilot schools.

At an April 2010 mid-year meeting state staff gathered feedback on implementation of the *Standards* from school teams. Feedback from the mid-year meeting and a public comment period begun in June 2010 will be used to revise the draft *Standards*. A final version of the document will be submitted to the State Board of Education for adoption in October 2010

#### **PROGRAM/ACTIVITY IMPACT**

As a result of the development of standards adopted by the State Board of Education, the Education Policy Action Team of the Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan statewide coalition is

devoting their resources to advocating for a legislative mandate to implement the *Michigan Nutrition Standards* in all Michigan schools.

Availability of Michigan-based standards stimulated a successful state application for an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act: Communities Putting Prevention to Work cooperative agreement award from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to develop the Schools Implementing Nutrition Standards Project. The project is a collaboration among the Michigan Departments of Health and Education, the United Dairy Industry of Michigan, and four school districts to fund districts to fully implement the *Michigan Nutrition Standards*. By widening the implementation experience to all schools in these districts where at least fifty percent of students enrolled are eligible for free or reduced priced school meals, and providing extensive training and technical assistance, the state can determine feasibility for statewide implementation. Parent surveys will gauge their knowledge of and support for the implementation of the *Standards* in these district schools.

District level Coordinated School Health Councils that are representative of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's coordinated school health model will be created in districts that have not yet formed one.

Results from the pilot tests and the district demonstration projects as well as a formal evaluation of the impact of *Standards* implementation on profit margins will inform the development of a toolkit to guide all Michigan school districts in cost neutral implementation of the *Standards*.

**CONTACT:**

Kyle Guerrant  
Manager, Coordinated School Health and Safety Programs  
Michigan Department of Education  
P.O. Box 30008  
Lansing, MI 48909  
GuerrantK@michigan.gov

Whitney Vance  
Nutrition Consultant, Coordinated School Health and Safety Programs  
Michigan Department of Education  
P.O. Box 30008  
Lansing, MI 48909  
VanceW@michigan.gov