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Kings County Mental Health Taskforce

Local School Wellness Policies in Kings County

The what, who and how of bringing a community together for wellness policy success

What is a Local School Wellness Policy?

As defined by the California Local School Wellness Policy Collaborative, “A local school wellness policy is a written document of official policies that direct efforts to establish a school environment that promotes students’ health, well-being, and ability to learn. The responsibility for developing a local school wellness policy is placed at the local level so the unique needs of each school can be addressed.” (1) Simply put, the Local School Wellness Policy (LSWP) is a district’s chance to develop a policy that supports student health by addressing the unique needs of the school district. In Kings County, our communities face many issues that affect student health. Local School Wellness Policies offer one opportunity for districts, parents, students and professionals to come together to support and strengthen the school environment to encourage student health.

To contact Health Eating/Active Living for more information relating to School Wellness, please email karina@kfpf.org.

How does a LSWP Support Students?

Evidence shows that students’ dietary behaviors and physical activity habits impact their academic achievement in the following areas: academic performance, education behavior, and students’ cognitive skills. Furthermore, healthy social-emotional development (capacity for self-confidence, trust, and empathy) in children correlates with healthy cognitive development and creates a strong foundation for school achievement. Young children who are socially and emotionally healthy have a greater chance of achieving success in school and in life. (2) Further, districts use the [Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child \(WSCC\) model](#) – CDC’s framework to address health in schools – to guide the creation of wellness policies. The WSCC model focuses on the child to align the common goals of both education leaders and health professionals. Writing a LSWP that uses the WSCC model to address the unique needs of your school community is a critical step toward building an environment that supports student health and improves academic achievement. To understand a bit more about our community, consider the following statistics on Kings County:

- 14.8% of residents live below the federal poverty level
- 81.1% of adults are overweight or obese
- 13.4% of residents have experienced food insecurity
- 20.1% of children live in households that have experienced food insecurity
- 72% of adults have experienced one or more ACEs
- Only 51.6% of 7th grade students are considered physically fit

For more information on this data, including yearly comparisons and its comparison to state and county wide data, please visit <http://www.kfpf.org/Dashboards/schoolwellness>

All these statistics exceed in comparison to California rates, and they demonstrate the need for more robust intervention and prevention in Kings County.

Bridging the Gap – Connecting Local Professionals to Your District

“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.” – Henry Ford

Student wellness benefits the entire school community, and Wellness Committees should include a variety of stakeholders to allow the community to support student health. Kings County has a wealth of community organizations and community health professionals willing and able to support your district through the writing and implementation of a LSWP. Community health professionals throughout Kings County can provide resources and technical advising to take your LSWP from paper to practice.

Creating an environment of wellness throughout our communities, Kings Partnership (KPPF) is a coalition working across sectors to enhance the quality of life in Kings County. With partner organizations across all sectors, KPPF is able to provide resources and personnel to support the school in any way.

Contact the Kings Partnership Executive Director, Julie LeFils, at julie@kppf.org to connect with local professionals that can assist your district.

Resources to Jump Start Your Wellness Policy Success

1. Sometimes getting started is the hardest part. The [Local School Wellness Policy Committee Guide](#) contains very useful tools for starting, establishing, and maintaining a successful wellness committee.
2. Sign up to receive the [California Local School Wellness Collaborative newsletter](#) to receive wellness policy updates, resources, professional development opportunities, and more.
3. If you already have a wellness policy written, use the [WellSAT 3.0](#) or the [Site-Level Assessment Questionnaires \(SLAQs\)](#) to assess the strength of the policy and identify areas that could be improved.
4. If you are preparing for your upcoming triennial assessment, utilize the [Triennial Assessment Template for Local Educational Agencies \(LEAs\)](#) to successfully complete the assessment. LEAs must conduct a comprehensive assessment of the Local School Wellness Policy a minimum of once every three years, beginning no later than June 30, 2022.
5. For general resources to support your LSWP, please visit the website of the [California Local School Wellness Policy Collaborative](#).

Sources:

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