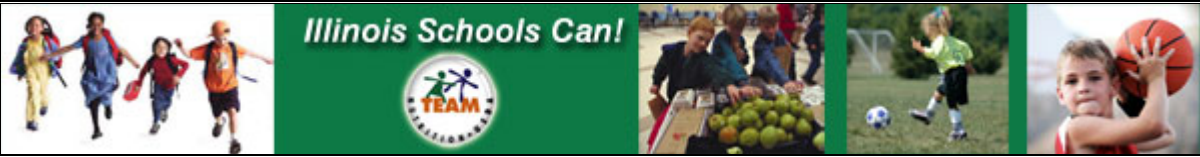


February 2009



The *Illinois Schools Can!* newsletter is produced by the Illinois Nutrition Education and Training (NET) Program. The purpose of the newsletter is to assist school staff in promoting and supporting healthy lifestyle choices for students. Each issue includes information on resources, upcoming training, and grant opportunities that can support school wellness policies. For additional information and resources, visit KidsEatWell.org/.

- [Upcoming Conferences and School Wellness Training](#)
- [Grant Opportunities for Schools](#)
- [New Wellness Resources](#)
- [School Wellness Success Stories](#)
- [Partner Contributions](#)
- [Dietary Guidelines: Decreasing Sodium in School Meals](#)
- [Contribute to the *Illinois Schools Can!* e-Newsletter or sign up to receive the newsletter](#)

Wellness Events and Training

Register Now for Regional Wellness Policy Conferences - March 2009

The Illinois NET Program will be presenting *School Wellness Policies: Striving for Excellence*, a one-day conference that will assist schools in evaluating and improving their wellness policies. Participants can register (\$17.00 registration fee) to attend one of the locations listed below:

- Wednesday, March 18th at the NIU Outreach Center in Naperville
- Thursday, March 19th at the Holiday Inn-Champaign/Urbana
- Friday, March 20th at the Rend Lake Resort in Whittington

Teachers are eligible to receive a \$75.00 SUBSTITUTE REIMBURSEMENT. Reimbursement forms will be distributed at the conferences. You can download a registration brochure [here](#) for full details.

** If you are unable to attend the conference, we have a **new** training workshop, *Evaluating School Wellness: Easier Than You Think!*, which will also be made available as an in-service program to individual schools in April 2009. Please call 800-466-7998 for details.

Farm to Cafeteria Conference - March 2009

The National Farm to School Network and the Community Food Security Coalition are hosting the *4th National Farm to Cafeteria Conference: Going the Distance... and Shortening It*, March 19-21, 2009. This year's conference will be held in Portland, OR and will include topics on sustainable agriculture, youth voices in school meals, and growers' perspectives on supply and demand. There will be field trips to local farms and workshops in grant writing and federal and state policy. Please visit FarmtoCafeteriaConference.com for full details.

Whole Grains Council Conference - April 2009

The Whole Grains Council will be presenting the *Make (at least) Half Your Grains Whole Conference* on April 20-22, 2009 in Alexandria, VA. The conference will include science updates and culinary examples of utilizing whole grains. Additionally, there will be interactive sessions to facilitate information exchange between school foodservice directors, manufacturers, health professionals, and media representatives. For registration information and full details, please visit www.wholegrainscouncil.org/get-involved/attend-our-conference.

Color My Meals Healthy Workshop - April 2009

This workshop developed by the Illinois NET Program is a fun, interactive experience for preschool program staff to learn how to economically prepare healthy meals and snacks with "kid appeal". Learn how to make menu enhancements that align with the Child and Adult Care Food Program and 2005 Dietary Guidelines, read labels for improved nutritional composition, and create a sample cycle menu. For more information or to schedule training, please download our [service flyer](#) or contact the Illinois NET Program at ilnet@kidsroe.org, 800-466-7998.

Save the Date! Action for Healthy Kids' Illinois School Wellness from A to Z Conference- May 5, 2009

The 2009 conference will be held at the Decatur Conference Center in Decatur, Illinois. There will be speakers, breakout sessions, school recognitions, exhibits and more. This year's keynote speaker will be Connie Evers, MS, RD, founder of *The 24 Carrot Press*. Look for registration information on the *Illinois* page of www.AFHK.org in early March.

University of Illinois School Lunch Conference - July 20-22, 2009

The University of Illinois at Champaign/Urbana is hosting a conference titled, *Everyone to the Table: Fostering Partnerships in School Nutrition*. The conference will cover national trends in school lunch programs, fostering partnerships with parents and community members, solutions to healthy and cost-effective menus,

school nutrition program success stories, and exploring multicultural, organic and vegetarian meals. It is relevant to food service directors, cafeteria managers, school district personnel, food service companies, dietitians and nutritionists. Look for registration information at www.nsr1.uiuc.edu or call 217-244-1706.

Grant Opportunities

Garden Grant for 2009 - Deadline: Mar. 1, 2009

Each year *Mantis*, a garden machinery manufacturer, provides awards to nonprofit gardening programs that enhance the quality of life in their host communities. Past winners have included schools, churches, park departments and community projects. Twenty-five programs will be chosen to receive a *Mantis* Tiller/Cultivator and their choice of a gas powered 2-cycle engine or electric motor - valued at \$349.00. For more information or to apply please visit www.kidsgardening.com/grants/mantis-criteria.asp/.

Carol M. White Physical Education Program Grant - Deadline: Mar. 6, 2009

This Physical Education Program (PEP) Grant is awarded yearly to 95 schools that plan to initiate, expand or enhance their P.E. programs, including after-school programs, for students in K-12th grade. The grant amounts vary with a maximum award of \$100,000-\$500,000, and can be used over a 36-month period. Applications may be submitted in paper format or online through www.grants.gov/. Click [here](#) to review the RFP. For more information call Carlette Huntley at 202-245-7871 or email: Carlette.Huntley@ed.gov.

Illinois Zero Waste Schools Grant Program Request for Application Posted

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity has posted its Request for Application (RFA) for the competitive Illinois Zero Waste School Grant Program. It is located at: www.ildceo.net/dceo/Bureaus/Energy_Recycling/Education/ISTEP_program.htm/. DECA highly recommends that applicants participate in one or more conference calls included at the above URL. If you have any questions, please contact Brett Ivers at Brett.Ivers@illinois.gov or by phone at 217/524-5859. The due date is March 20!

Wellness Resources

Recruiting Parental Support for Local Wellness Policies

In a recent needs assessment of Illinois schools, more than three-fourths responded that they needed more information and training for parents regarding school wellness policies. In response, the Illinois NET Program and Illinois Action for Healthy Kids partnered together to create [A Parent's Guide to School Wellness](#)

[Policies](#) . This informative brochure can be downloaded and distributed to parents to increase awareness and start a discussion in your school community.

New! Eat Smart, Play Hard™ Educational Materials

The Eat Smart. Play Hard.™ Campaign encourages and teaches children, parents, and caregivers to eat healthy and be physically active everyday. Eat Smart. Play Hard.™ offers resources and tools to convey and reinforce healthy eating and lifestyle behaviors that are consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the MyPyramid Food Guidance System. Please visit the following website to order the **new** Eat Smart. Play Hard™ materials: tn.ntis.gov/. To view or download the Eat Smart. Play Hard™ materials visit:

fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhardkids/.

Crunch the Numbers Curriculum from Scholastic - 3rd and 4th grade

This standards-based math program, developed by Scholastic, shows students how to make fruits and vegetables a delicious and healthy part of their lives. All of the lessons and materials are downloadable from scholastic.com.

Learn to be Healthy Activities and Lesson Plans - K-12th grades

The *Learn to Be Healthy* website provides interactive student health-science activities and teacher lesson plans that include: teacher-led activities, student games and web quests. These web-based kits meet many National and State Education Standards and make health education fun. Suitable for children in grades K-12. You must first become a member (no charge) to have access to all the educational materials. Go to www.learntobehealthy.org/parents-teachers/kits and sign-up!

Updated High School Curriculum - *Pyramid Plus for Teens: Real Life Nutrition*

Based on the *MyPyramid* and 2005 Dietary Guidelines, this program has been updated by the *Oregon Dairy Council* for teens in grades 9-12. This engaging curriculum teaches teens to make nutrient-rich food choices. The new curriculum has nine lessons including *Label Lingo*, *Making Healthy Eating a Habit*, *Body Image*, *Quick and Healthy Eating* and *Creating a Personal Action Plan*. It also contains student assessments, full-color food charts, posters and other teaching aides. For more information about ordering this kit visit:

www.oregondairycouncil.org/catalog/category/detail/?cat_id=2&catitem_id=156&a.../.

HealthierUS Schools Challenge 2008-2009 UPDATES

In December 2008 the USDA finalized several more changes to the Challenge

criteria. These changes include modifications in fruit and vegetable requirements, sugar and sodium criteria, competitive beverage criteria, physical education requirements and whole grain criteria. Please visit: teamnnutrition.usda.gov/HealthierUS/index.html for the revised *HealthierUS* School Challenge resources, including the new HUSSC application and the quick-look [Award Comparison Chart](#). For specific questions, please call the Illinois NET Program at 800-466-7998.

School Wellness Success Stories

Ridgeview Elementary School in Colfax, Illinois

Ridgeview Elementary is the first Illinois school awarded a Silver certification in the HealthierUS School Challenge (HUSSC). HUSSC was established by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to recognize schools that create healthier school environments through their promotion of good nutrition and physical activity.

Ridgeview Elementary met the requirements for the Silver certification through these activities:

- They signed up and became a Team Nutrition school.
- They met the 70% ADP rate for reimbursable school meals by eliminating ala carte items for K - 5 so that all meals met the *HealthierUS* School Challenge gold meal plan.
- They purchased the *CATCH™* program and implemented it into their 3-5 grade classrooms.
- They purchased the *Eat Well, Keep Moving™* curriculum and integrated it into their 1st and 2nd grade P.E. program.
- They enlisted Cooperative Extension Services staff to provide monthly nutrition education lessons to the 1st and 2nd grade classrooms and provided follow-up activities for the teachers.
- The monthly parent newsletter provided nutrition education, while nutrition posters, murals (painted by high school art students) and other forms of print media were posted throughout the school and cafeteria.
- They partnered with Illinois Wesleyan University Community Health nursing students and Ridgeview High School students interested in a nursing career to present the Body Walk program for K - 5. Jr. High Student Council members assisted.
- Only healthy treats were provided at parties and special events.
- They hired a nutrition consultant to improve the school lunch menu and purchased the *Lunch Bytes Software* to help keep track of the nutritional value of their school meals.
- They provided daily physical education for 30 minutes in all grades.
- An additional 20 minutes of physical activity/recess was offered BEFORE lunch each day to promote healthier eating habits.

- Physical Activity has been used for rewards like Dance, Dance Revolution and a Bounce House.

Go to teamnutrition.usda.gov/HealthierUS/index.html for more information on the HUSSC program.

Ridgeview will be recognized by the USDA and Illinois State Board of Education on March 17 and will receive a plaque and banner to commend their achievement.

Well done Ridgeview Elementary! You are a shining example for all schools in Illinois!

Tell us about your Success Story!

Do you have a success story about improving wellness for elementary aged children in your school environment? If so, e-mail us at ilnet@kidsroe.org. We may share your story in a future newsletter.

Partner Contributions

Wellness Policy Monitoring Tool

Action for Healthy Kids (AFHK) has launched an easy-to-use tool to help schools continually assess and improve implementation of their district's wellness policy. The *AFHK Wellness Policy Monitoring Tool* is fully customizable for each school and it provides an implementation 'desk top' where users can post their wellness policy initiatives, note progress, plan their next steps, and determine resources needed. The results page scores the user's profile and provides links to helpful resources based on areas needing improvement. Go to the AFHK website to begin using the tool: www.actionforhealthykids.org/wellnesstool/Presentations/pres-out652.php/.

Preparing for Change: Decreasing Sodium in School Meals

Did you know that the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) recommends that sodium consumption be limited to 2,300 milligrams (mg) or approximately one teaspoon of salt per day? According to the Guidelines, more than half of Americans consume too much sodium. In addition, 75 percent of the sodium in foods that Americans consume comes from manufacturer processing. To meet the 2005 DGAs, school lunches should not exceed 767 mg of sodium while a school breakfast should generally not exceed 575 mg of sodium on average. The USDA's Food and Nutrition Service recommends that sodium be reduced incrementally in Child Nutrition Programs, with a stepped plan for meeting the DGA recommendations.

Here are some great tips to start decreasing the sodium in your school meals:

- Consider serving more entrees prepared from scratch in place of preprepared entrees. Start out with one scratch meal weekly for breakfast and/or lunch and increase the offering as feasible. Check out recipe links at KidsEatWell.org/MealPlanning.html/.
- Serve more fresh meat, poultry, and fish products versus breaded and processed meat products on your lunch menus.
- Use fewer prepared, breaded, or cured meat products for breakfast.
- When possible, offer fresh and frozen vegetables in place of canned.
- When choosing canned items, read the Nutrition Facts labels and choose the item lowest in sodium. Drain the liquid from the can and rinse foods such as vegetables and beans with cold water prior to preparation.
- Provide smaller or fewer portions of sauces, gravies, dressings, and condiments which tend to be high in sodium.
- Experiment with sodium-free spices to season foods. Try a combination of garlic powder, onion powder, and pepper to season vegetables.
- For additional suggestions on lowering sodium in your school meals, check the gradual plan for reducing sodium in the *Step Up Plan* at KidsEatWell.org/flyers/StepUpPlan.pdf/.

For more information on this timely topic, see the Illinois State Board of Education [Outlook](#).

Be an Illinois Schools Can! Partner

If you have information about resources, training or grant opportunities that support wellness initiatives for Illinois schools, please email your contributions of 150 words or less to ilnet@kidsroe.org. **The deadline for the April 2009 electronic newsletter submissions is March 15, 2009.**

The Illinois Nutrition Education & Training Program is supported by the Illinois State Board of Education.

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