



A Coordinated Approach to School Wellness Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools



The mission of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) is to maximize academic achievement by every student in every school. CMS ensures that every child is fit, healthy and ready to learn.

The CMS wellness policy follows the CDC Coordinated School Health Program model, which consists of eight interactive components: health education, physical education, health services, nutrition services, psychological and counseling services, a healthy school environment, health promotion for staff, and family/community involvement. The School Health Advisory Council evolved into a Coordinated School Health (CSH) Service Integration Team and a CSH Director was hired. The CDC School Health Index was completed by the team from the district level and then distributed to principals to fill in school specifics. The CSH team is divided into small groups which serve as mentors to schools. In addition, CMS looks to community partners, such as the YMCA and local businesses, to adopt schools and offer support.

Principals received a directive to establish School Health Teams at each school site in the district to support health and wellness initiatives for students, staff and families. A School Health Team Toolkit was developed and training workshops were offered to school staff and school nurses to support the wellness policy in the district. Wellness became a school charter. School Health Teams work to divide and conquer the individual components of the wellness policy. Schools report to the superintendent on how they are working to meet the goals and objectives of the wellness policy. In addition, progress is tracked through results of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS).

CMS has encouraged family involvement by hosting a Parent University, with one focus area being school wellness. The university offers either in-person or online classes using a research-based curriculum and tip sheets. A Coordinated School Health Web page and newsletter supply updates to families, community members and staff.

Nutrition is a key component of the wellness policy. The N.C. Nutrition Standards for Elementary Schools have been implemented. School meals at the middle and high schools meet the same standards and changes have been made to a la carte options. Child Nutrition Services (CNS) provides allergen info and carbohydrate counts for pre-K through high school menus. Every month color menus are posted online. CNS provides nutrition tips for families on menus, the district Web site and in newsletters and a yearly calendar. The “Healthy Student Body is Within Reach” monthly check-off calendar is distributed in August as a back to school kickoff. Parents are encouraged to help students reach the check-off nutrition and health goals. In addition, nutrition messages reach students and staff through cafeteria bulletin boards, posters and grab and go meal bags. CNS staff and teachers work together to provide nutrition education to students. These coordinated efforts, along with other wellness aspects, follow a true “Recipe for Excellence” for Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools.



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