



Health

Center for Health Equity

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

Mary T. Bassett, MD, MPH

Commissioner

Dear School Administrator,

Children in low-income neighborhoods are at a higher risk of childhood obesity and developing chronic diseases later in life than children in the rest of the city. This is partly due to insufficient physical activity and a lack of healthy eating options available in these neighborhoods.

The Center for Health Equity's Neighborhood Health Action Centers, opening soon, are part of the Health Department and New York City's plan to promote health equity and reduce health disparities at the neighborhood level. The Action Centers will invest in key neighborhoods by working with schools to implement robust physical activity and healthy eating programs. They will also work with the Department of Education's Office of School Wellness Programs as part of a larger commitment to raising student achievement levels and combating the childhood obesity epidemic.

The Center for Health Equity and the Office of School Wellness Programs have designed this toolkit to help your school create a **School Wellness Council** and **School Wellness Policy** to improve the health of your school community. As part of your wellness policy:

Promote Active Living: Ensure students get 60 minutes of daily physical activity through physical education, active recess, classroom physical activity breaks, active transportation to and from school and before- and after-school physical activity programs.

Promote Healthy Eating: Start by removing chocolate milk from your school menu to reduce the amount of sugar children consume daily. Serve plain (unflavored) 1% or skim milk instead.

Together, we can improve the health of our students. If you have any questions or would like additional assistance in strengthening your school's wellness policies, please email healthyschools@health.nyc.gov.

Sincerely,