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- Lessons from the Field -

Enhancing Student Nutrition and Physical Movement in America's Schools

Wednesday, April 12, 2023 | 3:00 – 4:30 PM ET
Transcript

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to today's webinar, Enhancing Student Nutrition through Physical Movement in America's Schools. On behalf of the U.S. Department of Education, we're so pleased to have you with us today. In fact, we have nearly 600 people registered for this webinar, so we expect to have more folks joining us soon. We have a variety of folks coming in from various school levels and various different roles in the school as well as many people coming in from the community who want to know more about student nutrition and physical movement and the way that we can advance these in our schools for health and for learning.

This webinar is part of our Lessons from the Field webinar series. This series highlights the effective tools, techniques, and strategies employed by everyday practitioners to address those hot topics that are on the top of educators' minds. You can access recorded webinars from this series via the webpage that's now being shared with you in chat. In today's webinar, our speakers will be sharing information about student nutrition and physical movement and the strategies to enhance these in our schools in a variety of different ways.

As always, if you have additional strategies that are working well for you and your school or your community, please reach out to bestpracticesclearinghouse.ed.gov to share. Our work is stronger together and we all benefit when we share the strategies and learn from one another. Please note that the content of this presentation does not necessarily represent the policy or views of the U.S. Department of Education, nor does it imply endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education. My name is Cindy Carraway-Wilson, and I'm a training specialist at National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments for NCSSLE.

NCSSLE is funded by the Office of Safe and Supportive Schools within the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. To learn a little more about NCSSLE, we encourage you to visit our website. To help you understand the kind of things that we have to offer on the right-hand side of the slide, you will see an image of our current homepage. On the left, there's some resources that are popular resources that you might be interested in checking out and/or downloading. Please note that this webinar is being recorded and all materials you see today including the slides, the reference resources, and a recorded version of this webinar will also be available on the event webpage within this website.

And in fact, some items are already on the website for your review, including the speaker bios and the slides. Please also note that you can access those previous webinars from Lessons from the Field that I mentioned earlier also on the event webpage at the webpage here. We also want to let you know that we share a lot of valuable resources and upcoming events via social media, so please do follow us. Now to move into the content of the webinar, here's a brief look at the agenda. You will see here that we're going to be setting some context and having two separate panels here for our webinar.

One with information on student nutrition and the practitioner panel, followed by some information about physical movement both in Phys ED classes but also in other areas within the school day and we will hear from several practitioners who are using movement in creative ways. We will have closing remarks and we encourage you to state to the end, which is 4:30 so that you can participate and hear the responses in the live Q&A section of the webinar. We have a lot of wonderful speakers today as you can see from this slide.

And all of these subject matter experts will be sharing that the detailed information with ideas that you can take home and implement in your school or your district. As we move into each of these presentations and our panels, please remember to use that Zoom Q&A button to post your questions so that we can respond to them. We'll be responding to several of the questions at the end of the webinar. Now it's my great pleasure to introduce Ms. Carlette KyserPegram from the U.S. Department of Education.

She's an education program specialist there in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education in the Office of Safe and Supportive Schools. Carlette.

Carlette KyserPegram: Thank you, Cindy, and thank you to everyone joining us today. I am pleased to welcome you to our latest Lessons from the Field webinar, Enhancing Student Nutrition and Physical Movement in America's Schools. As we have just recognized March as National Nutrition Month, we are here today to continue building awareness of how both good nutrition and opportunities for movement are essential to the overall development of children and adolescents. As educators, we have the opportunity to teach young people about healthier nutrition choices and where food comes from, as well as encourage a lifestyle of physical activity and movement.

And we hope today's webinar adds to that awareness. So what do we have planned for you today? Well, the first part of the webinar will share updated information about nutrition and ways to incorporate movement in schools including and beyond physical education class. We will hear about recent trends in nutrition and movement from CDC and learn about nutrition education and policy development from the USDA. Two school practitioners will share their efforts to address nutrition and nutrition educations in their schools.

In the second part of today's webinar, you'll hear about the positive impacts of movement and ways to incorporate physical activities in all school settings from SHAPE America. Our three panelists will share the various ways they are incorporating movement in their communities and the outcomes they hope to achieve and have seen based on their efforts. We hope you come away with some new ideas that can support the health and academic success of your students. So again, thank you for joining us today. We hope you enjoy this session. And with that, I'm going to turn it back over to Cindy.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Thank you so much, Carlette, for that enthusiastic welcome. We appreciate your ongoing support for these hot topic webinars for the lessons from the field series. Now it's my pleasure to introduce Dr. Sarah Sliwa from the US Centers for Disease Control. She's a health scientist there at the CDC's Healthy Schools in the Division of Population Health. Dr. Sliwa.

Sarah Sliwa: Thank you so much for inviting me to be a part of this presentation and to have the opportunity to help set the stage for our conversation. As you know, public health and education, we serve the theme children quite often in the same setting, and we know that healthy students are better learners. So for us in the Healthy Schools branch, we're a part of CDC's broader mission by helping schools create health promoting and safe school environments, which in turn can influence students' health behaviors. So on the slide I'm showing the whole school, whole community, whole child framework, which is what we use to talk about the connections between student wellbeing and learning.

The framework is student-centered, so there's literally a child at the middle of the image and emphasizes the role of the community in supporting the school and emphasizes the connection between health and academic achievement and the importance of evidence-based school policies and practices. We know that if students are coming to school hungry, they aren't ready to learn. We know that physical activity can help students focus, can help accept regulation and behavior and mood. We have those 10 components that work together to address non-academic barriers to learning by making sure that students are safe, supported, challenged, healthy and engaged.

And we have the community wraps around the model. We know what happens in the community influences what happens at school and vice versa. Our work at CDC Healthy Schools focuses on increasing the quality and quantity of opportunities for students to move their bodies, to access nutritious foods and to learn about impact of practice health behavior as well at school. And this includes addressing physical activity throughout the school day, influencing the

school nutrition environment and services and comprehensive health education and supporting school health infrastructure that's necessary for passing and adopting evidence-based policies and practices.

With a small team and a large scope of work in our branch, we rely a lot on collaboration to get things done. I'm a health scientist on a research application and evaluation team, and I'm just going to provide a quick overview of the type of work we do. So we do a mix of research synthesis and evaluation work, translation, offering funding and support and offering training, professional development and technical assistance. So in our research, a lot of what we do uses secondary data, like national service systems that we use to describe what's happening.

And then we also conduct systematic reviews and environmental scans to identify what seems to be working and what resources schools are using. And we use that information to both figure out what's already there, but also what's missing, where can we help fill a gap. We conduct evaluations to learn more about what challenges and successes our awardees are experiencing and to help us identify what tools and resources, the ones that we've already have, are they being used, are they useful? And then next we have translation.

So we develop and partner to develop tools and resources to help move those evidence informed practices and policies out of those thick reports and help them go into schools. So we develop resources to help with translation to move evidence to practice, but also to address the gaps that we find in our synthesis work. And so some examples of products we've created are the school health index assessment tool and the wellness policies and action tool, which can be used to help schools meet the USDA's triennial assessment requirement for local wellness policies, which you'll be hearing about later.

Then funding and support. We fund state departments of education for activities in infrastructure development, health education, nutrition and physical activity during the school day as well as before and after school. And we also work closely with NGOs to help reach priority audiences including school decision makers. And today you'll be hearing from some of our funded partners in North Carolina and Missouri sharing some more state-specific examples. And then finally on the right side we have training and professional development.

So through our funded partners and our grantees, but also through our training tools for healthy schools, we try to make it easier for schools and groups that work with schools to use our resources and products. So when I'm talking about evidence-based practices, what are we trying to promote? I'm going to take a quick moment to talk about some of the school-based opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity that we support through our work. So in that framework, one of the blue turquoise components I talked about references to the nutrition environment services.

And so when we think about healthy school nutrition environment, we're looking at one that provides students with nutritious and appealing foods and

beverages with consistent accurate messages about good nutrition and with ways for students to learn about and practice those healthy eating behaviors throughout the time they're on school grounds, and that includes before and after school. So this kind of nutrition environment would include school meals, nutrition standards for food and beverages sold and served in schools, and that would include things like fundraisers and vending machines.

We think about access to clean drinking water throughout the day. And then we're also thinking about things like staff role modeling and food and beverage marketing, which send messages about eating behaviors and have the potential to reinforce healthy eating. And then we're thinking about healthy eating learning opportunities. And this can be both formal learning opportunities through health education curricula, but also through applied learning through school gardens, farm to school activities and taste tests.

For physical education and physical activity, we're really thinking about opportunities for movement throughout the school day. And we promote a comprehensive school-based physical activity program to increase physical activity opportunities before, during and after school. And it's multi-component approach includes PE, but also physical activity during school, like recess, classroom, physical activity breaks or physically active lessons. It emphasizes family and community engagement, staff involvement and opportunities for schools to offer physical activity before and after school.

And so that can include active transportation to and from school through things like safe arts school program. It can include before school, walking clubs, intramural sports, and after school programs, just to name a few. I talked a little bit about the work that our research application team does, but we also have a program side within our branch that manages the CDC Healthy Schools program and that currently funds 16 State Department of Education agencies and they're highlighted in yellow on this map. And those states are working to implement evidence-based practices using a comprehensive approach that's illustrated through our whole school, whole community, whole child model.

Specifically some of our awardees work is really looking at adopting practices and policies to promote school nutrition, physical education and physical activity and school health services to help build that school health infrastructure and provide professional development and technical assistance to local education agencies. So this is really more about the vision. So schools can offer safe and appealing opportunities to be physically active and to eat nutritious foods. And our Healthy Schools branch is part of a larger center for chronic disease prevention and health promotion where we collectively envision vibrant, thriving, active communities where you live, work and play.

And we know schools are often the champions in the community and can lead by example through programs to support youth and healthy growth and development. So I've spent some time outlining the vision and I'm really excited to turn it over to our next speakers who'll provide more vivid examples of what this looks like in practice. But before I do, I'd be remiss if I didn't take advantage

of the opportunity to note that on our webpage, you can find some of our key resources like the School health Index, the local Wellness Policy and Action Tool, as well as stories of achievement from our funded partners.

So I'll just say that if you have any questions, I know I try to cover a lot in a small amount of time, please feel free to follow up through email and the QR code will also provide the link to our webpage. Thank you so much for having me.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Sarah, thank you so much for that wonderful grounding. And with all that information about the importance of nutrition and physical movement, let's dig into the topic of nutrition. Next, please welcome Ms. Katey Halasz, who is the nutritionist in the nutrition education promotion branch of the Food Nutrition Services at the US Department of Agriculture. Katey.

Katey Halasz: Great. Thanks, Cindy. As Cindy mentioned, I mentioned I'm a registered dietician with USDA's Food and Nutrition Service, and I work specifically on USDA's Team Nutrition Initiative. During the next 10 minutes, I'm going to give you a very high level overview of some of the things that we're working on at the Food and Nutrition Service, also known as FNS that helps support nutrition efforts in schools. And since I work specifically on the Team Nutrition Initiative, we're going to start there.

So for those of you that are not familiar with Team Nutrition, we support USDA's Child Nutrition programs, which includes the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program by developing nutrition education resources to help children gain the knowledge, skills and motivation to make healthy food and physical activity choices as part of a healthy lifestyle. We also provide training and technical assistance to child nutrition professionals and provide technical resources to support healthy environments for schools, childcare and summer meal sites.

Team Nutrition offers a number of nutrition education tools for free, and many of our resources can help schools meet math, science, English, language arts and health standards. But before I dive in and give an overview of some of our resources, I do want to mention the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, also known as the DGAs. So Food and Nutrition Services child nutrition programs like school meals are designed to be consistent with the DGAs and the DGAs are really grounded in a rigorous scientific review process and required by law to be based on the synthesis of current scientific and medical knowledge.

The dietary guidelines really focus on the combination of foods and beverages that make up an individual's whole diet over time and not just single foods or eating occasions in isolation. The DGAs are translated by our MyPlate team into consumer messages in the form of MyPlate. And the information found in the dietary guidelines is then used to develop, implement, and evaluate federal food, nutrition, and health policies and programs. Those DGAs, as well as MyPlate messages that are based on the DGAs are really the basis also for our federal nutrition education materials, including team nutrition resources.

So here's just a taste of some of the resources that we offer at Team Nutrition, and really I'm just scratching the surface here. But on the top left, we have our Discover MyPlate Nutrition Education for Kindergarten resource, and this includes six lessons that integrate nutrition education again into math, science, English language arts, and health. Teachers can meet core education standards through these ready-to-go and interactive lessons that help children become food smart as they practice reading, writing, counting, and much more.

For grades one through six, we have our Serving Up MyPlate resource. This resource includes the importance of eating from all five food groups, using the MyPlate icon and includes a variety of hands-on activities while meeting core education standards. For grade six through eight, we have our Fueling My Healthy Life resource. The materials for each grade group have a specific nutritional focus and are designed to raise awareness of the importance of healthy food choices. It's designed really for educators to pick and choose from a variety of learning activities that include informational text articles, student assessments, digital interactives and videos.

And then on the bottom left, you'll see that we have photos and posters available. We have hundreds of original photos in the Team Nutrition photo collection under our USDA Flickr account, and we encourage you to use those photos. They are free for any of your nutrition education materials. We also offer a variety of posters for different grade groups to enhance nutrition education in schools. And last, if you're looking for fun ways to start a conversation about nutrition or promote nutrition education on your social media channels or your websites, then please check out our Team Nutrition web quizzes.

There's a total of 14 quizzes on there, including four quizzes in Spanish on a variety of topics. So next we're going to talk just a little bit about local school wellness policies. If you're not familiar with local school wellness policies, it is a written document that guides a school district's efforts to establish a school environment that promotes student health, wellbeing, and ability to learn. It is a federal requirement if a school participates in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program.

And if you'd like to more learn more about school wellness policies, Team Nutrition does have resources for that. We have an infographic to encourage school districts to renew, strengthen, and nourish their policy efforts. We have a Guide to Smart Snacks in School, which provides tips on how to meet smart snack standards and why those are important. And then we also provide an outreach toolkit. So some parents and school staff may be unaware that their school district even has a wellness policy.

So this resource was designed to hopefully help close that communication gap by increasing awareness and providing specific examples of how parents and school staff can get involved. So all of our Team Nutrition materials are free for anyone to view and download on our Team Nutrition website, which is teamnutrition.usda.gov. And please know that many of our resources, actually

most of them, are available both in English and in Spanish. And if you participate in or administer the USDA National School Lunch Program and/or breakfast programs, you may request free printed copies of Team Nutrition materials.

So to order free materials, you can go to our homepage and click the order Team Nutrition resources button. If you'd like larger quantities than what's available there, you can email us at teamnutrition@usda.gov. Okay, so I'm going to switch gears a little bit and talk about some of our current grant opportunities and recognition awards. We currently have a grant opportunity through our team nutrition grants. USDA recently released a request for application for the fiscal year 2023 Team Nutrition Training Grant supporting nutrition education for school aged children, state agencies that administer the National School Lunch Program and/or CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Meals and Outside-School-Hours Care Centers and School Food Authorities.

This is the first time School Food Authorities are eligible to apply for up to one million each in grant funds. And under this grant, state agency and School Food Authority grantees will facilitate the adoption of healthy eating patterns for school-aged children. And we're defining school-aged children as pre-K through 12th grade, and through the implementation of MyPlate Nutrition Education, which is connected to the nutritious meals and snacks offered through USDA Child Nutrition Programs. Applications are due by May 22nd, and we expect to announce awards in August of this year.

And you can find more information on that at the link and QR code on the slide. We also have our Healthy Meals Incentives Initiative, also known as HMI. In late 2022, FNS established the HMI to really support our state and local school nutrition experts in improving the nutritional quality of school meals through school food authority recognition and technical assistance grants, also through the generation and sharing of innovative ideas and tested practices and also through food systems transformation. There are four components within this initiative. They are the recognition awards for school food authorities, grants for small and/or rural school food authorities, Healthy Meals summits, and School Food System Transformation Challenge Sub-Grants. Again, you can find more information on HMI and that opportunity at the link and QR code on the slide.

Another major effort FNS is working on right now are the proposed updates to the school nutrition standards. So as you may know, in order to receive federal reimbursements for meals served, schools must follow nutrition standards to ensure high quality, nutritious meals that meet the needs of students, but also align with the dietary guidelines for Americans. Within a basic framework that's set by USDA, local school meal program operators then develop their own menus and make decisions about specific foods they serve and how they are prepared based on student preferences in their area.

In February, the Federal Register released the proposed rule for Child Nutrition Programs: Revisions to Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. And really, a goal of this proposed rule is to gain insight through public comment on how to establish long-term standards that

are nutritionally sound but also operationally feasible. We are currently asking for feedback on these nutrition standards, including those on added sugars, on milk, on whole grains, and sodium. And the FNS website offers a page where you can find much more information and resources about this proposed rule. You can use the QR code to go directly to that page, and if you're interested in providing feedback, please do so by May 10th.

In addition to focusing on improving the nutritional quality of school meals, we are also focused on access and the Community Eligibility Provision, also known as CEP. So CEP is an option for eligible high-need school districts participating in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Programs to offer meals at no cost to students for up to four years without collecting household applications. To be eligible, at least 40% of students must be directly certified or categorically eligible for free meals because they participate in another federal assistance program like SNAP.

There are many benefits to CEP, including that all students have access to free healthy meals at school, so there's no stigma attached to getting a free meal. Participation tends to increase, and no student is ever told they can't eat because they don't have enough money in their account. We've recently published a proposed rule to expand access to CEP by lowering the threshold for schools to be eligible for CEP from 40% to 25%. And the comment period for this rule is open until May 8th. So you can scan the QR code on the slide to get more information about the CEP rule and provide comments if you desire.

All right. So thank you for your attention today. Please visit our Team Nutrition website, subscribe to our Team Nutrition eNewsletter, send us an email at teamnutrition@USDA.gov if you have any questions, and follow us on Twitter, @TeamNutrition. And please make sure to stay connected to FNS as a whole, even outside of Team Nutrition. If you have any questions, need help navigating FNS, or want to learn more about our 15 nutrition assistance programs, please contact my colleague, Liz Campbell, in External Affairs. Thanks, everyone.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Thank you Katey for all that information. You covered a lot of territory there. I also appreciate that you gave opportunities both for feedback and also for some funding resources that might help our listeners to be able to engage in some of the interesting ways people are improving nutrition.

Now I'd like to welcome our two panelists coming in for this nutrition portion of the webinar. Mr. Jeff Murrie is the Farm to School Coordinator at Florence One Schools and Briggs Elementary in South Carolina. And Mrs. Laura Beckmann is a Consultant for Training and Technical Assistance at the Missouri Department of Education and Secondary Education. And to start off this section, I'd like to begin with a video that's coming from Florence One Schools and Mr. Jeff Murrie.

Video: Name's Jeff Murrie. I teach kindergarten through sixth grade Farm to School, Related Arts at Briggs Elementary. And we're in the epicenter of everything that's going on with the farm right now. In 2015, we applied for a South Carolina Department of Ag and Education Farm to School grant for \$4,000 that enabled

us to construct the raised beds that you see behind me. And since then, we've grown by leaps and bounds each year. We have a poultry facility that was funded through private donations. And then, this year our latest adventure is the composting initiative that we started with a \$1,300 grant from Department of Health and Environmental Control.

So everything we're doing at Briggs right now falls under the umbrella of sustainability. And it's a really good umbrella term, because we're trying to teach children to eat healthier, to grow their own foods. We're respecting the environment and the earth in which we live. And the kids enjoy it a lot. They learn a lot. They learn all the parts of a chicken and they learn to distinguish between a hen and a rooster. We have an observation beehive, so they learn about that bees are going out collecting pollen and nectar. Most kids think they go out and collect honey. We learn about soil temperature, nutrients in the soil, elements. The list just goes on and on and on. The biggest thing that I tell everybody is that I've never seen something that addresses all five senses of a student. They touch, they feel, they smell, they taste.

I didn't realize I was going to become so passionate about this course, but children's palates are formed from the time they're born, and their parents decide what they want to eat and how they eat. And so, by the time they come to school, we only have a few years to change their ideas about foods. For example, we tasted mushrooms the other week. We actually are growing mushrooms now, and a lot of the kids had never tasted a mushroom. And I asked them why and they said, "Well, my parents told me I wouldn't like them." And I was like, "Well, did you ever taste them?" And they said, "No, we never tasted them." But I let them taste stuff in my classroom like kale, mushrooms, and the kids suddenly realize this is something that they like.

What I'm trying to do through the class and school nutrition is to change our students' palates, so that when their parents says, "Let's run through McDonald's," that child will eventually say, "You know what? I don't want to go to McDonald's because it's not good for me. It's full of bad things." And that can happen, it's just going to be a really slow process. But it will happen. The yogurt bar is the perfect example of that that we installed at Briggs. We did yogurt sampling in class and added natural honey to it with dried fruits, and the kids loved it. And most kids never would have tried it, but once we tried it in class, then they realized it was actually something good.

I think the class gives them a safety zone where it's okay to be honest about what you're going to taste, and no one's going to say, "You have to eat that because I paid for it, that costs money." None of that's there. We just have to sample it and taste it. And then we talk about what it felt like. Why did you like it? Why did you not like it? And most of the time, 95% of the time, the kids actually end up liking what we taste. So what we're trying to do, is just change the entire culture from farm to the table. That's what we're trying to do.

The funniest thing to watch is a child touching dirt. They're scared to death of it. I don't know whether they think they're going to hurt the dirt or they're going to

get dirty from a shovel just touching the soil, I don't know. But it's very obvious now after doing this class that kids get no exposure to digging, being outside in nature. Very few of the kids that we have at school have ever dug a hole. The kids come to this class and they get to plant a seed. By the end of May, they'll actually get to come out and see the seeds they planted, how they've trellised up the vine, and then they'll actually get to pick straight from the garden and put them in their mouth and eat them.

It's just the connection to the earth and where food comes from, and also understanding there's just a lot of labor and a lot of energy that goes into growing something. And the garden's open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Please come visit. It's pretty cool. We have an informational kiosk that can sort of tell you the story of what we're trying to do. We're always out here working, planting. We have a pollinator garden in the back. We have the only observation beehive in this part of the state of South Carolina. We'd like to see other schools have gardens, but I get asked all the time, "How much time does it take?" It's a full-time job. But it's a passion, it's something I love doing. Come visit The Farm at Briggs. It's a great place. We love it, the community loves it.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Thank you so much, Jeff, for sharing such a great video. It really provides a lot of information, a lot of detail about what you're doing there at Briggs. Is there anything else that you'd like to share in the time that we have left for this particular section, this particular question of activities that you're doing?

Jeffery Murrie: Well, first of all, just to make sure that y'all can actually hear me, correct?

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Yes, we can. Yes.

Jeffery Murrie: Okay, good. So the question that I was posed was, "What were some of the first things that we did in creating this program and these activities?" The initial launch for the Farm to School at Florence One was a result of a \$4,000 USDA and Department of Education grant that pretty much launched The Farm at Briggs...

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Okay. It looks like we may have lost Jeff just now, and so we will work to get him back. While we work to get Jeff back in, Laura, I'd like to switch over to you if that's okay. And I'd like to pose that same question to you. Can you tell the audience a bit about the different types of activities that are going on in your area around school nutrition?

Laura Beckmann: Sure. Thanks, Cindy. I'm glad to be here. We have worked with seven priority school districts with Missouri Healthy Schools Initiative. So this is the school district of University City. Four of the school districts are in the St. Louis area, and three are in the Bootheel, which is a very low level, south part of Missouri.

So just as Jeff was sort of showing sort of the work that he's doing, University School District has had the beehive and they have a sustainability class. This started actually in a high school initiative of Growing Together, and now it is coming back into the middle school. But Growing Together, basically they're

bringing in parents and school community members, and they're actually learning how to plant seedlings. And they're getting growing equipment, gardening tools, and they're coming together as a community. They have a garden, they have chickens. And they also have been using this sort of as a therapeutic way of SEL, where kids are actually, like Jeff said, utilizing all of those senses, but being able to look at their emotions as well. And it's different type of schooling.

In the YouTube video, you can see more detail, but it's also part of the US Department of Education Green Schools Initiative. And so, this district has become a Missouri Green School and US Department of Education winner, award winner, for really focusing on health and wellness as well as sustainability.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Thank you. And I know you had some other things that you wanted to share related to other activities.

Laura Beckmann: Yes. So in the Kennett School District, the Kennett School District has a Culinary Skills Institute, and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education works with the Department of Health and Senior Services that delivers the Culinary Skills Institute. So they work with your food service and they teach them healthy eating, how to serve healthy recipes to kids in schools, and get taste tests with kids, "What recipes do they enjoy?"

They do breakfast in the classroom so that kids who are late to school and miss breakfast, they actually are served that second breakfast. And you can see a student getting ready to pull the carts to the classroom, as well as projects with nutrition education through their regular teachers within the school system or using out-of-school time providers to teach those types of classes.

And then, in the lower right-hand pictures, you'll see the Family and Consumer Science course that has students cooking. And they're actually cooking a meal for their firefighters. So they're serving meals to the community, building that connectedness with the school community, as well as working on skills and cooking and healthy living.

And then, to top it off, we always tie a lot of their work to the awards. So the Alliance for Healthier Generation has the America's Healthiest Schools Awards. And so, all of this work, they're able to transfer to these types of awards. And they were the only school district in Missouri, and we know nationally at this time in 2020, that had all four schools as an American Healthiest School.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Amazing. That's pretty amazing. Can you briefly share a little bit about the Healthy Concessions and nutrition education that you had mentioned?

Laura Beckmann: Absolutely. So in Senath Elementary, they actually, the Missouri University of Extension comes in and they do a Show Me Nutrition curriculum because many times way down in the rural areas, they really focus more on, or they have to center a lot on, other resources besides what the school has. So they focus on

the nutrition education pieces with their family nutrition, utilizing Missouri University of Extension Services, which are free. So they have third through fifth graders coming in using those hydroponic gardens as well as the University of Missouri Extension has also developed Healthy Concession Stand Toolkit, so that even at games, during activities in high school or middle school intermural programs or even out-of-school after school programs in the elementary school, we can focus on serving healthier items.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Oh, that's always wonderful news for those folks who don't like to eat the junk food going to games but still want to have food. That's wonderful. And then, finally, if you could just touch on, just really briefly, that food pantry element of the work that you're doing.

Laura Beckmann: Yes. And so, in Charleston School District, they had focused on, and again, all of these are evidence-based practices that CDC has really helped us to incorporate. So they really did an invitation. They completed their cafeteria with murals that markets healthy eating with the blue jays and the salad and the murals of the "Milk makes you stronger" with the fruit. And then, they took a building that was sort of not being used and they actually built it into a food pantry. But not only just food, but looking at clothing and items that students might need. First within their cafeteria, they're showcasing their fruits and vegetables at the beginning of their cafeteria walkthrough. And then, the Missouri Extension also developed food pantry educational materials that these pantries can use.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Excellent. Thank you so much, Laura. We're going to jump back to you, Jeff, now that you're back. We're grateful-

Jeffery Murrie: Thank you.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: ... you could get back in. So we're going to go back to your slide. You were going to talk a little bit about kind of how you got there. And then-

Jeffery Murrie: Cool.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Yes, go ahead.

Jeffery Murrie: Correct. Thank you. So the first thing I did, I needed a role model that I could sort of look up to, and I was lucky enough to find Shelburne Farms, located in Vermont. And I've spent a couple of summers up there for Summer Institutes that have been extremely valuable in my direction and development in what we've been able to do here in Florence School District One.

The next thing that I did is I needed to find who my local community members might be. So I held a sustainability interest meeting at my school and extended an invitation to everyone. And at that meeting, a lady showed up by the name of Haley Vasuki, who was a local plant-based educator and vegan cheerleader. And so, she has been in my school for the past four years conducting teaching demonstrations and testing tastings with the students from kindergarten through sixth grade.

And that's where I always like to say that if the children are given a positive environment with some basic ground rules, they will eat pretty much anything that you put in front of them. But it has to be a safe, non-judgmental environment where they always know that they can refuse or say, "No thank you." But I've had a lot of great success with plant-based education in my school.

But the big thing, if you... Yes, that slide. This is what we are currently working on in Florence. This is our kindergarten through 12th grade Ag Education Center that's been named The Farm at Florence One. So we are in the developmental stages. You can see at the upper right-hand corner, that's one of the views where our teaching kitchen is going to be located. And there's an elevation at the upper left-hand side of what that will look like. And then, we have a exterior portion as well.

This site is going to be one of the first in our region, maybe for the entire state. The six-acre site is going to include a teaching kitchen, greenhouses, raised beds, livestock enclosures, classroom space, a communal dining experience, and four acres of row crops. This is going to be the epicenter for all things related to ag education, nutrition, STEM, sustainability, career exploration, and row crop production not just for our kindergarten through 12th graders, but also for our entire community. Many of those on the side of the county, the city where we're located, is in a federally designated food insecure or a food desert area.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Mm-hmm. Yeah. Yeah, I remember you mentioning that. That's very wonderful, this great project. We're going to go quickly to our last... Back to Laura for a moment, also talking with you, Laura, briefly about the steps it took to get there. And then, we'll have just a minute to hear just one example of an outcome from each of you as well. So Laura, can you tell us about some of the steps that you took to launch your programs?

Laura Beckmann: Well, just as which is mentioned by CDC, every LEA has local wellness policies. And so, the DESE has local wellness policies developed by the Missouri School Board Association. And then, though we utilize the WSCC model as the basis of a foundation of building that vast, robust committee and bringing in community people. And then, as they take the Assessment of School Health Index, that really relates to that whole WSCC model and best practices in each of those components that serve the whole child. And then, as a group, they're able to really analyze, "What are the needs and what are the practices and policies that we do not have in place that would best serve our students with nutrition and physical education and activity?"

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Great.

Laura Beckmann: And just as Jeff is talking about the initiatives, we have a lot of state initiatives as well as school districts that are working on several nutrition improvements and healthy eating behavior enhancements. So we work very closely with Department of Health and Senior Services. We have Lisa Lauer, who is our Farm to School consultant and a Farm to School Missouri group. And so we have so

many things in place at the state level as far as funding and toolkits and things to help school districts get started in this process.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Yeah, I appreciate that both you and Jeff mentioned the need to partner and sometimes, as Jeff mentioned, he's partnering pretty far away from where he is all the way up to Vermont to get some of that support for the Farm to School approach. So that's incredibly important to involve the community wherever that community is located for sure. Now I'd like to speak a little bit about the outcomes. Jeff, can you take maybe a minute to kind of share an example or two of things that you've noticed that are different in your students from the nutrition efforts that you're taking?

Jeffery Murrie: I would like to say that simply to see the faces of children that have never been given the opportunity to be outside, physically active in the garden, working with plants. We also have goats and chickens. My students are student leaders and they collect the eggs each day and they feed the goats and the chickens. But one of the most heartwarming stories was when we were doing our composting initiative prior to COVID, a student came to a teacher's class one day and said, "Ms. Smith, I'm not going to bring any more of those nasty snacks wrapped in plastic." And the teacher said, "Why darling?" And she said, "Because I can't put any of that in the composting bin and I want to participate and I can only put fresh fruits or vegetables in that composting bucket, so I'm going to start eating fresh fruits and vegetables." So that alone is one of the driving forces behind what I tried to do every day with Farm to School and working on this project in Florence.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: That's wonderful. So you shifted nutrition and you made a young person very much aware of the impact that they can have on their environment and their community by participating in composting. Excellent, thank you. And Ms. Laura, do you have an example of an outcome or an indicator of success that you'd like to share?

Laura Beckmann: Well, I had a video that we would show and it shows the impact. So I'll just let the video speak to a few of those coming up.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Absolutely. We'll bring that right up.

Video: As of two years ago, Missouri Healthy Schools has produced a series called On the Move MO School Success Stories, which highlight the great work being done in Missouri schools. Here's just a few of our school success stories. The more we can put students at the forefront and guides them and that learning progression, guide them in those experiences, it's meaningful. It is engaging, it is rich. To best serve our students and our community, we need them to be physically, mentally, socially well. One of our key offerings is to have lots of fresh vegetables and fresh fruit. We're addressing nutrition education as well as physical education as well as SEL. I think we're going to need dreamers to carry us into that next phase of just how the world will move. After looking at the numbers, it's clear that real change has occurred. I think it was 22% of our students started out without being in any healthy fitness zones, and that

lowered to 4%. So just looking at the beginning and the end is what's really cool. We served 1800 households in September 2022. We served 250 households in January 2020. That's a 600% increase in the number of clients and households we have served in roughly two and a half years. Within the last six months, we've launched our MHS Live Podcast, which allows real-time conversation about topics schools are facing. This is a statewide team for school-based mental health. If you'd like to see our full library of content, visit the Missouri Healthy School's YouTube channel to view the On the Move MO playlist of videos or by clicking on the live tab to access all of the previously recorded MHS podcasts.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: And Laura, thank you so much for that video. That's pretty telling number that difference between... what was it? 22%, not being in a zone, going all the way down to 4%. That's an impressive, and it's also a great segue into our next section of our webinar. So I'd like to thank you Laura and Mr. Jeff, I'd like to appreciate both of you coming in to share your wisdom with us. And now it's my pleasure to introduce Ms. Audra Walters. She's going to take us right into that physical movement focus as we shift gears. So please welcome her. She's the senior manager of Healthy Schools at SHAPE America. Audra.

Audra Walters: Excellent. Thank you, Cindy. Hello everyone. I'm super happy to be with you. I loved hearing about nutrition from Katey, Jeff, and Laura. Jeff, I wonder, I've also been to Shelburn Farm, so I wonder if we were at that same farm to school conference in 2014, but I just appreciate the work that you do, and I know it's super rewarding and impactful. But before we jump into talking about enhancing physical movement in America schools, I want to take a little pause and do a quick stretch. It's around three o'clock local time, so you can stand, you can sit. But I just ask that you take a moment to stretch your bodies this afternoon, get up and move if that's what your body needs right now. As Cindy said, my name is Audra Walters. I'm the senior manager of Healthy Schools for SHAPE America, which is the Society of Health and Physical Educators.

We are the largest organization of health, education and physical education teachers in the nation, and we love talking about healthy and active schools. So we're super happy to be on this webinar with y'all today. I know you don't have access to the chat function, but I'm going to ask you just take a moment to think about how you plan on being active today. I personally love walking and listening to podcasts, especially on gorgeous spring days like what I have here. So I'd like to propose that as we think about how we will be physically active today, we also have a touchpoint for the next little bit of our webinar as we talk about enhancing movement.

And that's the premise of building physical literacy for all kids. So physical literacy is the ability to move with competence and confidence in a wide variety of physical activities in multiple environments that benefit the healthy development of the whole person. So Sarah's already shared some of the long-lasting benefits of physical activity on our physical and mental health. So think of this as the solid foundation for a lifetime of movement. The physical literacy journey is inclusive. It is for all individuals regardless of their ability, age, class,

gender, or race. And physical literacy is based on the premise that everyone can acquire and apply the knowledge and skills to move more confidently in physical activities that are enjoyable to them.

All right. So how can families, schools, and communities support kids on their physical literacy journey? Sarah also mentioned the comprehensive school-based physical activity programs. This is a model of all of the ways that physical activity can happen before, during, and after the school day. So schools are in particular in a unique position to help students attain the nationally recommended minutes of daily activity. And using this model to better understand all of the ways that movement can be enhanced during the school day can help us identify for our own communities and our own schools where we can increase students' access to movement opportunities. And I know you'll hear more about what this is in practice from our awesome panelists really soon.

But before we hear from them, let's establish the distinction between physical activity and physical education. So what's the difference? Oftentimes, these two things are lumped together, and although they are both critical and they are both related, they are two different aspects of the physical literacy journey. So two of the main goals of physical education are to prepare kids for a lifetime of physical activity by building their physical literacy skills and also engage them in that physical activity during the school day in their physical education classes, which is an academic skills-based class. Physical activity on the other hand, super important. And it provides that opportunity to apply the skills that they learn in physical education to get their bodies up and moving and to play.

So a bit more about what this looks like in schools. Physical activity, activity opportunities can be both structured and unstructured, and it includes recess and active brain breaks or brain boosters during class. So like little moments where I just asked you to stand up and stretch, they could be a little bit more extended. And also incorporating movement into instruction itself. So there's a lot of different ways that physical activity can look throughout the school day. And recess isn't just for the littles. Middle school and high schoolers can integrate physical activity periods in creative ways throughout the school day like during mid-morning breaks and lunchtime activities or part of physical activity clubs.

There are so many creative ways to incorporate physical activity. And I'll share some resources and a little bit on that and then you'll hear more from the panelists. So physical education on the other hand, is that academic subject that has standards like other academic subjects and the standards consider the psychomotor cognitive effective and social learning domains essential to facilitating the physical literacy journey for students. We're actually in an exciting moment where we are in the process of revising and updating the standards now, and you can visit the SHAPE America webpage to learn more about the process and opportunities where you can provide input on the revision of the National Physical Education standards.

Physical education is so important and physical activity is so important. So I know that there's a tension sometimes with how however many minutes there are in the school day, but kids deserve access to both. And I know the time constraints in the school day make it very difficult, but it's critical to protect students access to both of those because it improves their mental and physical health. It can impact academic related aspects of development. And both are really, really critical to a child's lifelong physical activity journey, their development, their social emotional learning development. And so both are just super critical.

I will say that I am biased since I work for SHAPE America, that as we talk about enhancing movement in schools and all of the amazing things that can be done in schools to support that, I want to continue to emphasize why physical education is uniquely so important and it's the foundation of that physical literacy journey. So there are a lot of benefits to physical education in schools. It obviously increases students' levels of physical activity. It can impact their academics and help them stay on task in the classroom. And we know that students that attend physical education are approximately two to three times more likely to be active outside of school and are almost twice as likely to continue to be active in a healthy level into adulthood. So it's a really critical part of that foundational learning.

So we've come full circle. Enhancing movement in schools is so critical to the mental and physical health of our kids. And so providing these opportunities throughout the school day, we can help them move along this journey through both ideally access to lots of physical activity opportunities to practice the skills that they learn in physical education as well as access to a quality academic subject of physical education. So I hope that this intro helps build the foundation for understanding the context of what our panelists are going to talk about soon and help us think about ways that we can enhance physical movement in schools and make sure that students have access to what they need because it's so critical in not just kids, but also in adults, physical activity journey.

That was a really quick overview and there are so many awesome resources, too many to highlight in just a few minutes. So if you're interested in learning more about any aspects of this comprehensive school physical activity program, so more about physical education, more about physical activity during the school day, such as recess and classroom physical activity, there's a list of some resources that will be provided that's just a snapshot of some things to get you started. And the resources from SHAPE America as well as CDC Healthy Schools and the US Department of Health and Human Services Move Your Way Campaign. There are resources for physical education, including a crosswalk on how social emotional learning competencies happen organically through standards-based physical education instruction, which is so critical for a student's development, as well as some key resources around incorporating more physical activity in the school day and strategies for recess.

So we also, SHAPE America also has monthly physical activity calendars that are available for both elementary level kids, secondary level kids, and are available in both English and Spanish. And there's also an amazing resource on the Move Your Way webpage, including fact sheets videos. But I wanted to highlight my favorite personal resource is there's an interactive page for adults and also for parents and caregivers on how to find ways to fit more activity into the day for you so it kind of guides you through a way where you can try to accumulate and work towards that goal of daily physical activity.

I'd be remiss though if I didn't briefly share how this connects to a much larger vision of how we can be a nation of more healthy schools. SHAPE America's really honored to work alongside many other organizations as part of the National Healthy Schools Collaborative that's created a 10-year roadmap of how we hope to strengthen schools by supporting a healthy school where everyone thrives. And so I've highlighted a few of the priorities that physical education plays an important role in enhancing. For more information on this kind of big picture, you can check out healthyschoolsroadmap.org. And the goal of this group is to coordinate and accelerate equitable funding policy and practices for health and education so that every school succeeds and every educator excels and every child thrives, which is a worthy goal. So you can find so much more on our webpage and on social media, Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, LinkedIn, all the things. But with that, I'm going to turn it back over to Cindy and the awesome panelists that I can't wait for you to hear more about on what all of this looks like in action in schools. So thanks, Cindy.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Yes. Thank you so much for that, Audra, and I also appreciate this afternoon stretch that you provided. Thank you so much for that. So now it's my pleasure to welcome Dr. Ellen Essick, who's the Section Chief at North Carolina Healthy Schools. Welcome back. Laura Beckmann, who is from Missouri, who we heard about from in a nutrition section, and Mr. Demetrius Napolitano, the founder and CEO of Fostering Meditation, who will be joining us for this section of the webinar focusing in on what's happening in schools in the area of movement. So first, I'd just like to take a couple of minutes to hear from each of you about a summary of some of the activities or enhancements that you're doing to enhance active movements in school. And Dr. Essick, I'd like to begin with you.

Ellen Essick: Thanks so much, Cindy. Appreciate being here. I could say this out to Audra and it would take care of everything. I think it was a very nice setup. Certainly we, as Sarah mentioned earlier, we're one of the CDC funded states, and we certainly have selected 10 districts that we work very intensely with. But we also try to do statewide work to increase physical activity across the state. And to do that, we use data to drive all of our decisions around policies and programs and action. And I'll talk about one of those policies in a second. So we do look at our data, our youth risk behavior survey data, and sadly, we've noticed that the physical activity of our students, at least for the past seven days has gone down over the last 10 years. And at the same time, students who feel sad or hopeless and depressed has gone up. And so what we're looking at the state to tell us is that we need to specifically address physical activity to also help address mental and behavioral health issues in our students.

And that was high school data. We see the exact same thing beginning to happen at our middle school students. While some of that may have been pandemic related, it's still important to use this data to drive our work. And one thing that we're very fortunate to have is a policy that actually guides some of that work statewide. In addition to what we do intensely with districts, we have a healthy active children policy. It requires 30 minutes of physical activity daily in grades K-8.

It requires that schools not withhold recess as a form of punishment and that physical activity not be used as a punishment. It also requires that schools maintain a school health advisory council, which I'll talk about a little bit later on, and that they maintain their local wellness policy. And then finally, some recommendations, not requirements, because we're still working on staffing and other issues, is it's a recommendation that schools get 150 minutes of physical education with a certified physical education teacher in the K-5 grades and 225 minutes of Healthful Living, which is health and physical education with a certified teacher in middle school grades. So we have clearly got a policy that our data told us we needed, and we're using that policy to help drive our work.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Excellent. Thank you so much for that overview, and I appreciate that you're using that data in that way to really see those alignments and those connections between those two important factors. Now, I'd like to hear from Laura again about some of the things that you're doing around physical movement in Missouri.

Laura Beckmann: Sure. Well, we have, again, working with several school districts, and this is a statewide approach. So we do have a lot of conferences and a lot of professional development and technical assistance. But one of the school districts we work with is Bayless, and the superintendent and a principal were highlighted in the last video. They have several research publications right now on how their students' fitness levels have improved and how students who are more fit are aligned to higher attendance levels and higher GPA levels. So a lot of that data is being used right now. It also is showing SEL that they're more calm and have better emotional regulation. So they have done a lot of significant amount of work. They have morning announcements on mindful movements before starting class in the video below. And all these are videoed, they were highlighted the State Board of Education meeting last month on integrating more after school programs with physical activity.

And they have just received notice that they have scored higher than any other district in the region on student growth in their APR in English and math and growth in English for subgroups. So really it shows the connectedness, the building of physical activity opportunities and how they're still mastering growth in learning. They have their Facebook page, they have Bronco Awards where students develop their own health and fitness goals, and then they also do mindful minutes in physical education classes right after their moderate vigorous activity and going back to class. So again, all of this research has proven to show an impact on learning, and it certainly is showing an impact on learning.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: That mindfulness piece in here. And that's going to be a great segue to Demetrius in a moment, but if you want to share a little bit about this.

Laura Beckmann: Absolutely. They did a huge professional development with Dr. Drew Schwartz, with 123 Wellness with their staff. And this was all intended for self-care and employee wellbeing, but it also goes down in trickles into, "If we can take care of our own bodies and understand those movements and how it regulates focus or calm or provides energy, then we can do these simple strategies and movements for our students in the classroom." So again, one of the other slides that we had previously was they have sensory motor hallways, that they've put in, so that there's a lot of this knowledge and skill that they are putting toward their students and helping parents to utilize these strategies at home. And in this slide, it shows the multiple, different ways of integrating physical activity beyond just really improving physical education, instruction and curriculum. So in the top left corner, they're doing the classroom physical activity breaks, where they have GoNoodle and they have the rock climbing walls in the lower level, where they're integrating pickleball and things like that, that's much more than what a traditional team based PE program would be. It's more of a program where kids can get involved in different types of activities, beyond the classroom.

They have the color run down below in Ritenour School District. It's also highlighted with the second-largest food pantry that you saw earlier in the video. And bringing in those parents and the community to really engage in physical activity as something that's important. In the top right-hand corner, they actually put steps, the wood construction class, the students actually developed these and so now people know how many steps, if they're calculating steps to different parts of the school building and they're able, their 10,000 steps a day. And down below is the sensory motor hallways, where students in between classrooms as they travel, are doing these brain-based models that would really impact cognitive thinking.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Wonderful. Thank you so much for all of those examples. And again, it's a great segway into the work that you're doing Demetrius. If you can share a lot of that information as well, that's wonderful.

Demetrius Napolitano: Yeah. No, it's always... First and foremost, it's such a pleasure to be here. Just to give you 30 seconds of my background story. My name is Demetrius Napolitano. I spent 22 years inside of New York City's foster care system, where I was in over 30 different foster homes, adopted twice, spent time in a non-security detention, was homeless, went through all of the various forms of abuse and all of those things. I should by all means be, according to statistics, dead or in jail. But I got into meditation through my second adopted dad, in 2018, and after studying with him, I went to India to study how I could use yoga and meditation to address my own internal conflict and inability to sit still, as I was on four to five different medications as a child to regulate my self awareness and ability to regulate oneself.

And so when I came back from India, I started my own nonprofit called Fostering Meditation, fostering meaning to nurture, to encourage, buildup. Meditation is mental development. And I returned back to my former elementary school in East Harlem and we transformed this former locker room, that served as a detention center when I was a child there, and we turned it into... I'm so sorry, because I wish I would've put together a picture so you can see it, but I'll create the best imagery through my words. But when we transformed this space and turned it into a yoga room, meditation room, and I now serve children from kindergarten all the way up to eighth grade, and they come into this space and practice mindfulness of emotions, mindfulness of their body, et cetera, et cetera. And what I've found through the practice is that children are, they're seeking some type of activity such as meditation and yoga in their daily lives to help them regulate their big emotions that they're experiencing.

And as someone who's been practicing now for four years, and as someone who was also violated in his own body as a child, yoga has helped me to, one, befriend my body and befriend my mind even with all the turbulence that happens. And so teaching young children and young adults, young youth, how to move mindfully in their bodies, that are also struggles with a lot of anxiety and the such in this time. And so that's the work that we're doing, Fostering Meditation is now. We are teaching more youth and then also transforming spaces inside of schools. Instead of sending kids to detention centers, let's instead send them to Fostering Meditation's wellness rooms, so that they can go in there, smell lavender essential oil and relax their shoulders, and then they can come up with their own solutions for what they could have done differently. Gratitude.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Excellent. Thank you. So it's that idea of using movement, not just for physical health, not just for mental health, but for also being able to learn the ability to regulate one's own emotions and body and to stay connected in that, where they be present and to be able to then be present in the classroom to learn. So that's a great example. Thank you so much for that. Now I'd like to go into the next question that we have for this panel, which are what are some of those first steps that you had to take, that maybe some of our listeners might need to take? And for this one, we will begin with Laura on the second question.

Laura Beckmann: Yeah. The first steps is really the local wellness policy, getting districts to utilize that WSCC model and build that robust team of people and then assessing themselves on evidence-based practices, and then building a comprehensive school improvement plan. Really, it's just the same as what districts and schools would do with academic plans, but they're doing the same thing with health, is they're taking the results and they're really looking at best practices and they're designing three to five goals of improvement that can impact policies and processes. So building those school improvement plans or school health improvement plans, along with academic plans can significantly improve learning and the health practices and policies in schools.

So after they do that assessment and then they look even deeper, and in the comprehensive school physical activity program, that is even more of an in-depth assessment on what you're doing around physical activity, those components. And utilizing physical education as that foundational piece, building a great curriculum with a professional development for teachers to deliver best instruction and assessment practices, but then also incorporating more opportunities for recess, building after school programming, looking at your playground and improving those opportunities and access. Girls on the Run was another one where it builds that social and emotional piece, as well as that physical piece and building that connectedness in different opportunities around the school, before or after, with families and communities to engage in physical activity, not just within the school building, but beyond. And in the lower right-hand corner, you can see they build an intermural program for their elementary school and our high school students are actually coaching the elementary. So it's the role models, it's building that connectedness with older students and having another person that cares about them.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Well, yeah, so you're really pinging a lot of really important developmental keys there; the relationship, the ability to take on different roles for those adolescents and the physical activity piece. Wonderful. Thank you. And Dr. Essick, would you like to go? And add more on what you're doing and what were your first steps?

Ellen Essick: Well, first I would agree with Laura. That assessment is incredibly important. In our state, the School Health Advisory Councils are required in each district. Many of them do the school health index. They use other types of assessment tools, including one that we've created to help them look at their youth risk behavior survey data, to help them see where they are and where they need to move forward and also do some of that planning for things that don't happen during the school day. I would say the number one thing we're really encouraging our districts to do, and I would encourage anybody to do, is to teach the standards you have. I think it gets real easy for physical education. Healthful living in our state includes health education and physical education, but oftentimes when the time runs short, those things don't happen. So I think including integration, our professional developments around how do we integrate those standards into the regular classroom, because particularly in the K-5, well K-5 physical education, we have certified teachers, but for health education, it's the classroom teacher. And if we don't provide ways to integrate, it's not likely going to be taught, so really focusing on that integration.

Currently, we're updating our standards and doing that allows us to think about what can we realistically get done and what's most important for our students to have. So integration is the key there and that advocacy for those standards. We work with our partners, everyone wants to add one more thing to the curriculum, and we want them to help us advocate for more time for that curriculum, because that's what we really need if we're going to be able to teach those skills that Audra talked about earlier, those lifelong skills that our students need to be successful.

One of the ways that we've tried to do that is through some of our statewide professional development and technical assistance. Actually going to schools, working particularly with some of the less experienced teachers, who haven't had some of the experience that other folks have had, and providing a lot of that professional development and then technical assistance. And I think what we've done for our other teachers is to look at energizers. We have, over the years, created energizers for each grade level, K through five, and after school energizers as well. And those specifically integrate physical activity into other content areas. So if you're the social studies teacher, we have an activity that you can do in social studies, to meet one of your standards and also include physical activity in the day. So those energizers the way... Again, integration is the key if we want these two things to happen in our schools.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Okay. Excellent. I know you also mentioned that the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child model is very important for your work as well in your district. Is there anything else that you wanted to bring up about that?

Ellen Essick: We were very fortunate as a state, that our state board of education has adopted the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child framework as a framework for everyone in the state to use. It guides all of our work and it guides the work of our districts. So they're becoming more comfortable with that integration between academics and health, and how that fits within the community in which each of those folks work, because every district in the state has a different community and we want to make sure we're aware of that and also being sensitive to that.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Excellent. Thank you. And Demetrius, so there's there some questions already hitting the Q&A about yoga, but I'd like to hear from you about your school. So you went to your school and you introduced this concept of bringing yoga in and then you got a space transformed. So what were the first steps to get in, to offer yoga as a form of movement to support young people?

Demetrius Napolitano: Yeah, so I was very fortunate that... Steve Jobs said, "You can only connect the dots looking backwards.", and when I looked back at the child that I was at this school, I used to bang my head against the wall. I was punching windows. I was a very, because of my experience in foster care, a very angry child, at least from the surface level. And so when I got into meditation and I ran into one of my fellow teachers and told her about my mission of going to India to learn the practices, around that same time the principal, because this is right before the pandemic, but children's anxiety was still rising. And so he had already circulated an email about bringing meditation to the school. And then lo and behold, I come into the space and for the first two years it was a little hard, because I was teaching inside of classrooms, inside of the auditorium or the lunchroom and the kids had a very challenging time staying focused.

And so after the third year, now with the pandemic, we were doing a hybrid between being in person and being online, I saw that a lot of the kids was like, you know what? It's hard for them to stay focused. So, can we transform... Is there a room that we can designate as our meditation and yoga room? And so if

you do go to the website at fosteringmeditation.org, it's much more in depth there. But I remember when he opened the door to the locker room and the room was cluttered with stuff to the ceiling, that was a storage space. And over a three month, four month period, we transformed the entire room and all of the kids in the building know something about yoga meditation, because of this space. And even when kids are having challenging moments, as two third-graders had recently during recess, instead of sending them to a corner to be in detention, they sent them up to the meditation room. After I was able to make them laugh and we do some yoga meditation, then once again, as I said in my last response, they came up with their solutions on what they can do differently.

So the kids have their solutions within them already. We just need to create more spaces and opportunities for them to, one, relax their shoulders and then, "Hey, well what could you have done differently?". And to wrap up my point, for things that... Because not everyone's going to have the money and the resources to transform an entire space, but maybe you just transform a space inside of your room, inside of your classroom, "Okay, this is the corner or a space where we have maybe an essential oil or maybe a meditation pillow, maybe some plants.". Something that the kids can resonate with calmness and more than that, you have to cultivate your own practice. Many times my teachers are very stressed out and I have my moments as well, but then kids mirror what they see. So if they see that the teachers in appearance are all having anxiety and getting lucid, not controlling their emotions, they're only going to mirror that. So as teachers and as the adults in these young person's life, and I'm not saying that it's going to be easy, because it is oftentimes very challenging, but I would remind you to cultivate your own practice and all you have to do is slowly connect with each breath that you take. Gratitude Cindy.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Thank you so much, Demetrius. Appreciate you. All right. Now, just briefly, we're pushing time and I definitely want to address a few more questions from our Q&A. Can you each give us just a super brief, maybe 30-second example of some outcomes that you've achieved or successes that you've experienced? And for this question, we'll start with you, Demetrius.

Demetrius Napolitano: Yeah. I've seen, once again, from children who... I think of one story in particular. I was going down the stairs, leaving the building after showing a congress member the meditation room and there was this third-grader who was on the wall, visibly very upset. And after the principal saw me, she said, "Hey, do you want to go upstairs to the meditation room?", and he reluctantly went upstairs and I ran upstairs to turn the LED lights on, turn the waterfall on that we have on in there and make it all available for him. When he got there, when that child walked into that room, that child went from this angry third-grader, who has mother issues, because he's in foster care, and all of his challenges. But when he walked into that space, his energy completely transformed and he was a kid again, laughing at the lights, amazed by the smell, amazed to just be in a space where he once again can relax his shoulders. So I leave you with the power of spaces to transform young people's emotional states.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Excellent. Thank you. That's a wonderful example. Thank you. All right. Now I'd like to hear from Dr. Essick.

Ellen Essick: Hi. I would just say that some of the biggest successes are the smallest ones, because every small step we take moves us somewhere. Just two quick examples, we had a district who had recess time, but they took the risk and divided it into two sections, so they didn't add more time, they just divided it in two different times of the day and saw a significant test score rise over the course of a year. Now it took a lot of courage, because a lot of times we don't want to do things differently, but it made such an impact on those students.

We also had a district that couldn't get enough physical education time in, so they started opening the gym in the morning, bringing in one physical education teacher, and they did dance. A problem came up that their kids wouldn't go to eat breakfast, because they were enjoying the physical education so much. They implemented opening up a pickup breakfast on the way to class. And so really thinking creatively and outside of the box to make some really small changes, I think is what's most important.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Excellent. Thank you so very much. And Laura, another quick example of a success.

Laura Beckmann: I would just say with all of the different pictures and things that we shared, that the success is the spaces. They have created spaces. They have systems in place and the resources in place, so the success here is the sustainability of those changes. And there has been some increase in recess time throughout the day. Our profiles data has showed a significant increase in comprehensive school physical activity programming from 3% to 43% in the state. Those types of successes, you're saying that you are increasing the reach and the sustainability will continue, because of the success that they've had.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Excellent, thank you. Yes. So the sustainability, the spaces, and thinking outside of the box, those are the three key takeaways I heard from the three of you. I'd like to welcome all of our speakers in and address a question or two. Again, really brief. We are going to be posting all of the resources and those video links and things like that all with the recording. There's one question here that that's kind of popping up a couple times, in different ways about policies in school wellness policies. How are school wellness policies being used to strengthen the school nutrition? And maybe also let's cross in there, the school physical activity environment. Katey, do you want to start with that?

Katey Halasz: Sure. And just really quick, because I know we're short on time. There's two main resources I wanted to share. So there's a number of tools and resources on our team nutrition website for local school wellness policies, which hopefully my colleague can work to get that in the chat box for you guys. But to help with additional resource sharing at the ground level, the Institute of Child Nutrition in collaboration with us at USDA have created the Child Nutrition Sharing Site and there you can find model policies, checklists, presentations you can grab and use. And some of the activities that have shown up there, that districts and

schools have done, include annual health fairs, presentations at schools, school events by community health professionals that they've partnered with and even taste test events at schools to help inform their school menu.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Excellent. Excellent. Thank you. I do want to bring the webinar to a formal close. We got to a couple of the questions in the Q&A, so I appreciate your time. We want to encourage everyone to keep your eyes out for the next lessons from the Field and Human Trafficking Webinars. We have one coming up next week on forced criminality and human trafficking. And then in April and May, we have three other lessons from the field webinars, as you can see on this slide.

We also really hope that you can take a few minutes to complete the feedback form. Your feedback is what is guiding the content that we deliver. Your comments and your questions will be shared with the speakers and also with the Department of Education, so that we can continue to use your ideas to guide us. And always, if you are using best practices in your community that are different, please feel free to reach out and share those with us. That would be also greatly appreciated as well. And on this, 4:31, 1 minute passed, sorry about that everyone, we will go ahead and close the webinar and we hope that you've gathered some nuggets, that you can take with you to your district or your school to make changes around nutrition and health. Thank you.