

State Strategies to Support Local Wellness Policies

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Section 204 of Child Nutrition & WIC Act of 2004

Requires LEAs to adopt local wellness policies that include:

- ▶ Goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school based activities to promote student wellness;
- ▶ Nutrition guidelines for all foods available on each school campus during the school day with the objectives of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity;

Section 204

- ▶ An assurance that guidelines for reimbursable school meals shall not be less restrictive than regulations and guidance issued by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture; and
- ▶ A plan for measuring the implementation of the local wellness policy, including the designation of one or more person within the LEA or at each school charged with operational responsibility of ensuring compliance with the policy.

Purpose & Methodology

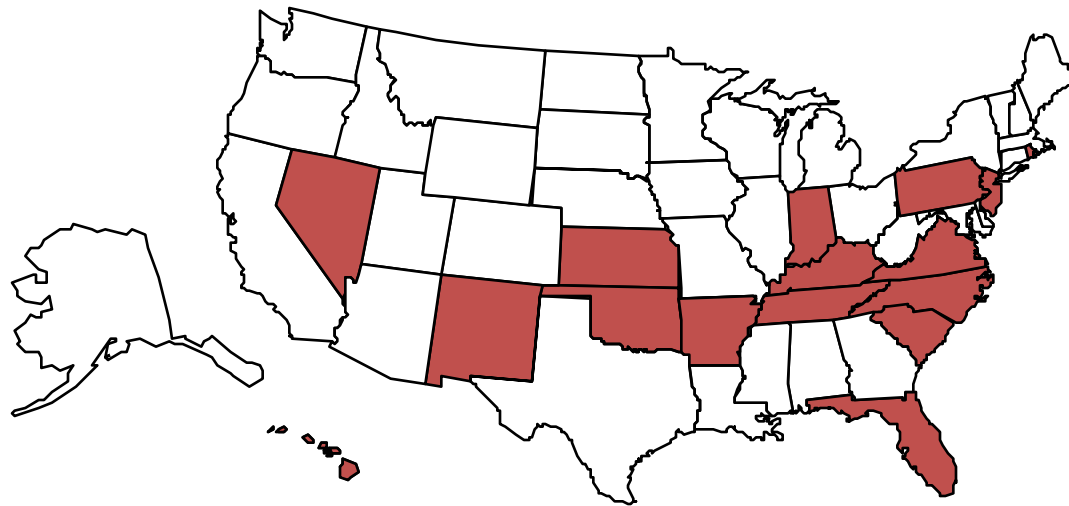
- ▶ What are states doing to support to creation and implementation of local wellness policies?
- ▶ Examined state laws, policies, and agency guidance documents and resources that specifically support Section 204 requirements.

Outline of Findings

48 states are actively providing assistance and support to LEAs in support of Section 204 requirements in one or more of the following ways:

1. Additional Accountability Requirements
2. Additional Policy Content Requirements
3. Policy Compliance Checking
4. Resolutions Encouraging Local Policy Action
5. Policy Guidance Materials
6. State-level Advisory Councils
7. Other State Initiatives

Additional Accountability Requirements



States with laws or regulations to strengthen accountability provisions of local wellness policies

1. Accountability

A. Integration into the General Education Accountability System

- ▶ 3 states: Rhode Island; Arkansas; and South Carolina
- ▶ Kentucky recommends it to districts

Example: Rhode Island requires “all [district] strategic plans include strategies to decrease obesity and improve the health and wellness of students and employees through nutrition, PA, health education, and PE. Said strategies shall be submitted... to the Dept.’s of Elementary & Secondary Education and Health.

Potential Benefits – Integration

Integration of local wellness policies into their general accountability system can:

- ▶ Assure that schools will address issues of student nutrition and physical activity;
- ▶ Place nutrition and physical activity on equal footing with academic and other high-importance areas;
- ▶ Communicate that the state considers school wellness as being important and imply that school improvement and school health go hand-in-hand; and
- ▶ Encourage schools to take a more active role in promoting professional development for staff in the area of wellness.

1. Accountability

B. Requirements Strengthening Local Accountability

- ▶ 10 states: Arkansas; Rhode Island; South Carolina; Florida; Kentucky; New Mexico; Indiana; Tennessee; Alabama; and Mississippi.
- ▶ Example: Florida requires each district to annually review its local wellness policy.

Potential Benefits – Local Accountability

Strengthening local accountability of districts in the creation, implementation, and evaluation of local wellness policies can:

- ▶ Involves community in policy process;
- ▶ Allows districts to receive community input;
- ▶ Increases community buy-in into wellness policy; and
- ▶ Raises awareness of student health issues.

1. Accountability

C. State Evaluation of Local Policies

- ▶ Nov. 2005 Memo from Director of Child Nutrition at USDA states that state agencies need to provide oversight to determine compliance with Section 204 through on-site visits (e.g. School Meals Initiative Reviews).
- ▶ However, states only required to confirm that wellness policy is in place – no evaluation is required.
- ▶ 8 states do review and evaluate wellness policies: Pennsylvania; Colorado; Maryland; North Carolina; Kansas; New Mexico; New Jersey; and Hawaii.

1. Accountability

Example: Kansas

- ▶ Through its NSL Renewal Agreement, requires LEAs to annually complete the online Wellness Policy Builder assessment tool to document their consideration of the state's School Wellness Policy Guidelines as required by state law.
- ▶ The Department of Education's Child Nutrition and Wellness staff, through their annual formal review, has officially incorporated monitoring of wellness policy implementation into their protocols. The required written wellness policy implementation plan of each LEA is also evaluated.

Potential Benefits – State Evaluation

Active state review and critical evaluation can:

- ▶ Stimulate dialogue between SEA and LEAs in creating and implementing local wellness policies;
- ▶ Give the state a better idea of what is happening at the local level, which in turn informs the SEA of how best to provide technical assistance to local districts; and
- ▶ Allow local districts to draw on state resources to help them develop and implement effective policies that meet their particular needs.

1. Accountability

D. Requirements for On-Going Reporting to the State

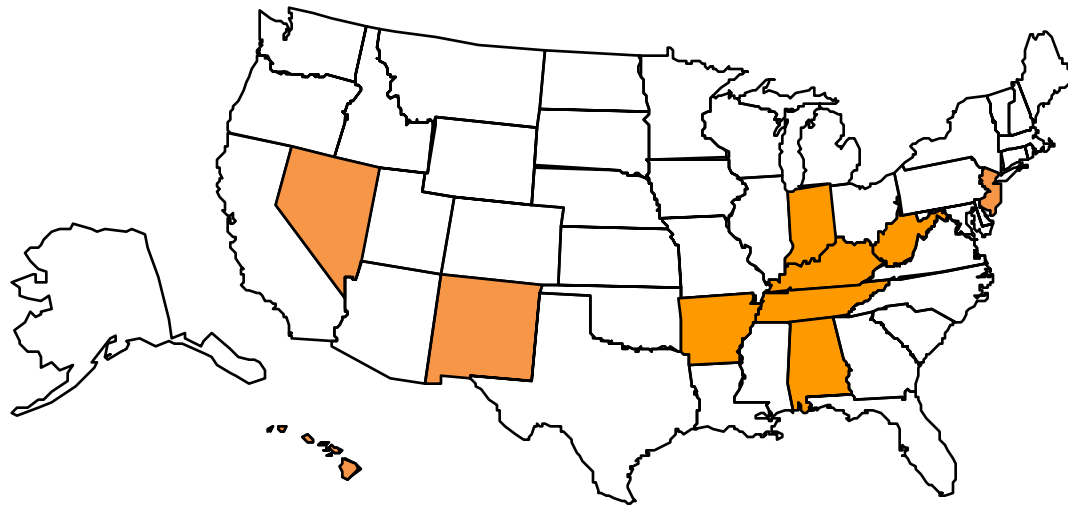
- ▶ State requires LEA to report on the wellness policy (creation, revisions, implementation, etc.).
- ▶ 5 states: Oklahoma; Kentucky; Tennessee; Nevada; and North Carolina.

Potential Benefits – State Review

An on-going process of state monitoring or review is likely to prove beneficial:

- ▶ The SEA can better provide the proper technical assistance based on the actual needs of local schools and districts; and
- ▶ The SEA learns about local success stories resulting from the implementation of local wellness policies that can be shared with other LEAs, who can then reap the benefits of shared experiences and knowledge.

2. Additional Content Requirements



States with legislation or regulations that include additional content requirements for local wellness policies

2. Content Requirements

- ▶ 10 states: West Virginia; Arkansas; New Mexico; Nevada; New Jersey; Tennessee; Indiana; Kentucky; Alabama; and Hawaii
- ▶ Example: West Virginia *State Board of Education Position Statement* refers LEAs to state's pre-existing minimum standards when developing wellness policies

2. Content Requirements

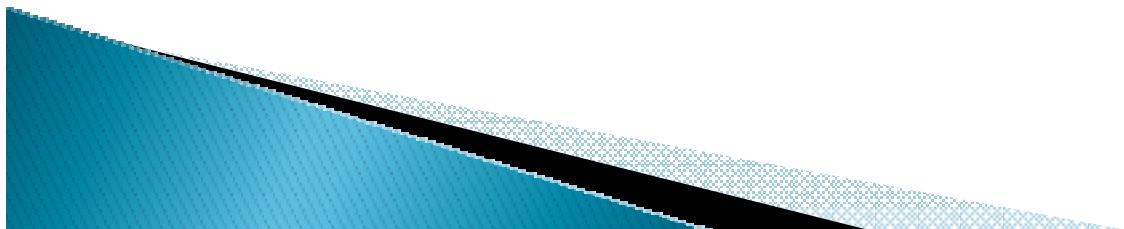
Example: Nevada State Board of Education's Statewide School Wellness Policy:

- ▶ Sets nutritional standards for foods outside NSLP concerning fat, sodium, sugars, and serving size limits;
- ▶ Prohibits certain foods of MNV during the school day;
- ▶ Requires minimum eating times of at least 15 minutes for breakfast and 20 minutes for lunch;
- ▶ Requires at least 30 minutes of PA per day; and
- ▶ Includes minimum data collection and reporting requirements

Potential Benefits – Content Reqs

Additional research-based content standards and requirements can:

- ▶ Augment the minimal federal law and allows the state can set a baseline for all schools; and
- ▶ Increase the likelihood that all students will receive the benefits of a healthy school environment



3. Policy Compliance Checking

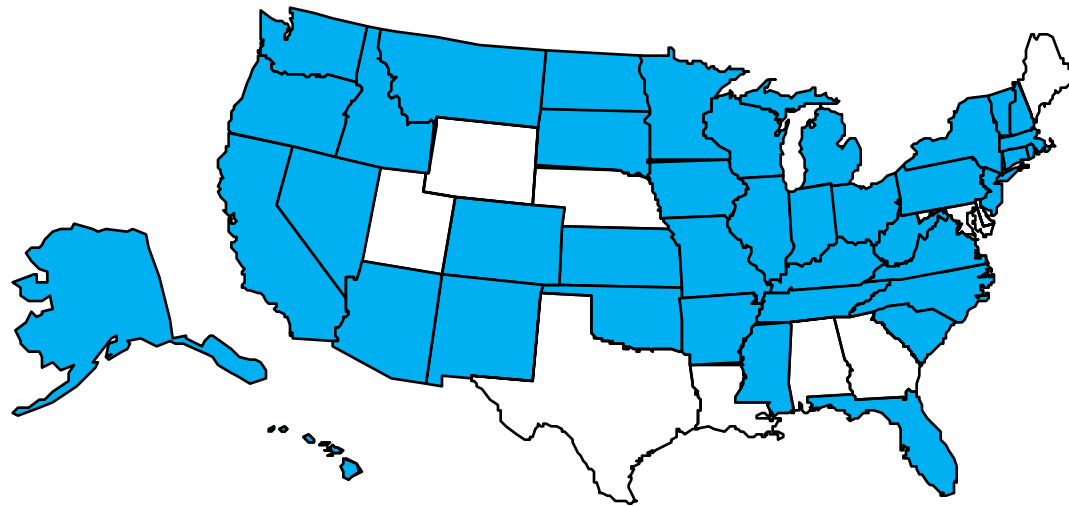
Some states have implemented a systematic approach to check for compliance with Section 204 (no critical assessment involved):

- ▶ Washington has a checklist for LEAs to complete, confirming adoption of each mandated component of a wellness policy.
- ▶ Florida requires LEAs to submit a copy of their policy to the state.
- ▶ Nebraska required LEAs to submit their policy to the state along with a brief checklist that required the identification of challenges the district faces in implementation.

4. Resolutions Encouraging Local Action

- ▶ The Colorado, Nevada, and Utah legislatures passed resolutions urging school districts adopt and implement wellness policies.
- ▶ The Montana, Connecticut, and West Virginia State Boards of Education adopted position statements encouraging districts to adopt and implement local wellness policies

5. Policy Guidance Materials



States that have developed their own wellness policy guidance materials

5. Policy Guidance Materials

States have created guidance for LEAs in 4 ways:

1. Summaries of existing state laws and policies
2. Wellness policy assessment tools
3. Wellness policy guides and tool kits
4. Model policies

5A. Summaries of Existing Policies

Some states have pre-existing laws and policies that address Section 204 requirements but exist outside of the requirement for local wellness policies.

- ▶ Arizona has a Healthy School Environment Policy and health and physical activity standards; and
- ▶ West Virginia has pre-established rules and regulations concerning nutrition and physical activity that it references in its position statement on wellness policies.

5B. Wellness Policy Assessment Tools

Other states have created needs assessment and development instruments for LEAs:

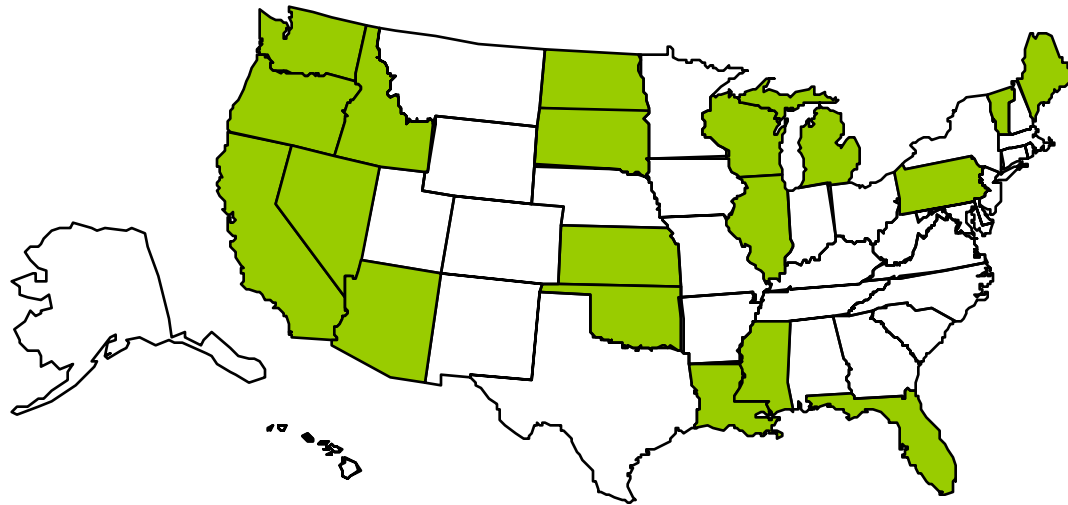
- ▶ Iowa, in conjunction with Iowa State University, has implemented an online web tool for schools to use as a self-assessment when creating wellness policies
- ▶ Virginia, through the Governor's office, has created an online Nutrition & Physical Activity Scorecard application that encourages competition amongst schools
- ▶ Kansas has created its online Wellness Policy Builder which documents and encourages consideration of the state's School Wellness Policy Guidelines

5C. Wellness Policy Guides & Toolkits

Most states, through their departments of education, agriculture, and/or health have created policy guides or toolkits:

- ▶ Connecticut's *Action Guide for School Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies*
- ▶ Colorado's *Local School Wellness Policy: A Step By Step Guide to Implementing P.L. 108-265, Section 204 and Colorado Senate Bill 05-081*
- ▶ Mississippi's *Local School Wellness Policy Guide for Development*
- ▶ Ohio's *Healthier Schools: A Brighter Tomorrow*

5D. Model Policies



States that provide locally-developed model wellness policies

5D. Model Policies

At least 19 state departments of education or health offer their own model wellness policies.

- ▶ Many can be used verbatim to satisfy state and federal requirements
- ▶ Some offer additional options for language and topic areas (e.g. vending policies, fundraising, etc.) that policymakers can consider
- ▶ Some provide actual examples of “exemplary” local wellness policies from within and outside the state

Potential Benefits – State Resources

Providing quality state resources for policy development and implementation is important:

- ▶ Each state has its own unique policy context
- ▶ Evaluative guidance in the form of online tools, checklists, and other data collection strategies can provide timely and relevant assistance to district personnel
- ▶ Well-researched guidance materials, technical assistance, and supporting policy can all contribute to improving school wellness and creating a healthy learning environment, which in turn leads to better health and academic outcomes for students.

6. State-Level Advisory Councils

Several states have formed statewide councils to:

- ▶ Formulate policies;
- ▶ Strategies;
- ▶ Action plans; and
- ▶ Guidance to address childhood obesity and student wellness

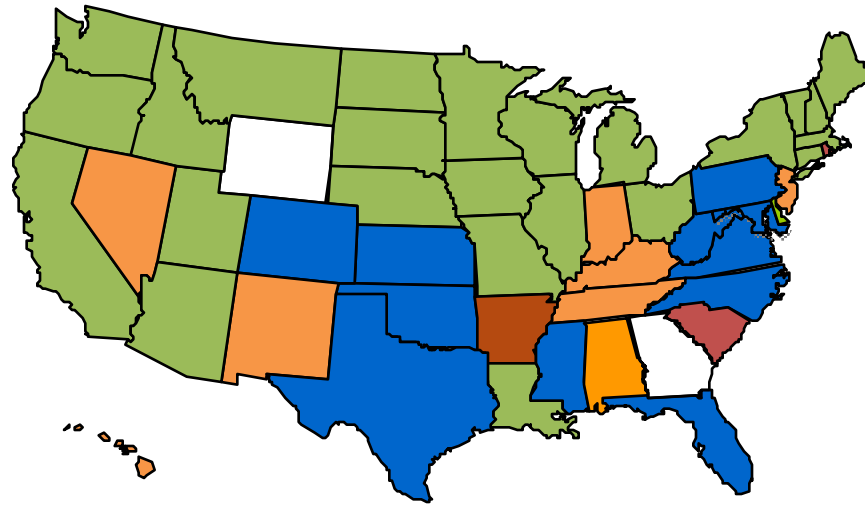
State–Level Advisory Councils

- ▶ Delaware has formed a statewide council that will exist until 2011 to, amongst other duties, provide guidance to the state Department of Education and ensure that each school district has a health leadership team per Section 204 requirements
- ▶ Illinois requires the creation of a School Wellness Policy Taskforce to identify barriers to implementing wellness policies, recommend how to reduce the barriers, recommend statewide nutrition standards, and evaluate the effectiveness of the wellness policies

7. Other State Initiatives

- ▶ Indiana, North Dakota, and Vermont are conducting studies of local wellness policies via a voluntary survey of School Wellness Monitors
- ▶ South Dakota and Virginia have made wellness policy submission a requirement for state school health recognitions and awards.

Overview of the States



Integrated local wellness policies into the general education accountability system and have additional policy content requirements (3 states).



Additional accountability requirements and additional content requirements for local wellness policies (8 states).



Additional accountability requirements or additional content requirements for local wellness policies (11 states).



Produced guidance materials, passed a resolution, and/or created a state advisory committee. No additional content or accountability requirements (26 states).

Conclusion

Given the broad and flexible nature of Section 204, states have an opportunity to:

- ▶ Harness the power of local policy impact
- ▶ Take on a leadership role in promoting school health.

These strategies are potential tools to be used in meeting the challenge.

Questions?

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