

## SCHOOL HEALTH INDEX – ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

### **Module 1: School Health and Safety Policies and Environment**

#### **Bethel Elementary/Whitcomb Jr/Sr High School Health Team Members**

Melissa Purdy	M.S./H.S. Health, FACS, and Outdoor Educator
Tim Perrault	M.S./H.S. Phys. Ed Teacher
Nicole Lamothe	M.S./H.S. Guidance Counselor
Laurie Smith	Elementary Health Educator
Felicia Diffenbach	Elementary Phys. Ed Teacher
Katie Orr	Elementary Guidance Counselor
Danielle Isham	School Nurse
Sandy Gilderdale	Food Service Director
Owen Bradley	Principal
Andra Bowen	Assistant Principal

#### **Planning Questions**

##### **Planning Question 1**

*Look back at the scores you assigned to each question. According to these scores, what are the strengths and the weaknesses of your school's policies and environment related to students' health and safety?*

Bethel Elementary scored well in many areas including positive climate, bullying prevention, student support and supervision, and tobacco policies. It is also worth noting that the SU recently developed a new Wellness policy; Bethel will move from partially to fully achieving several indicators (such as prohibiting withholding recess) once the School Board officially adopts the policy.

The two most glaring weaknesses revealed by the questions are the lack of a school health team and very low scores on the nutrition questions. It became clear when working on the discussion questions with the food service director that the cafeteria staff are not confident in their understanding of the Smart Snacks in Schools and other USDA dietary guidelines. Vending machines are not in compliance with the Smart Snacks regulations and the after school program director reported that she follows a separate set of government guidelines for her program. In short, the school is out of compliance in several areas relating to nutrition and staff ability to correct these shortcoming is extremely limited.

##### **Planning Question 2**

For each of the weaknesses identified above, list several recommended actions to improve the school's scores (e.g., create and maintain a school health committee).

Fortunately, the school health team was created last week! Bethel will receive funding through the School-based Tobacco Grant for the next several years. The funding pays part of our SAP counselor's salary and provides the needed impetus to meet as a school-wide health team in order to meet the lengthy and complex requirements of the grant. The school calendar and teacher's contracts allow for a monthly team meeting, so there is a reliable time already set aside for the health team to meet.

In addition to scheduling a school health team meeting for next week, our principal approved paying our food service director to attend these meetings (it can be difficult to ensure food service participation in these sorts of groups because cafeteria staff are not contractually - required to attend afterschool meetings). This is a good first step in making sure that the food service director is on the same page with other team members in promoting health throughout the school.

The vending machine issue should be reasonably easy to fix. We requested that the principals remove the Gatorade machine and reviewed the Smart Snacks guidelines with them. They are in agreement but feel they need Board approval to move forward. This is in process. There is some confusion about who is responsible for the vending machines; this needs to be discussed and clarified at the health team meeting.

The most glaring need is for professional development for the food service staff. This could be costly and logistically challenging! The food service director should have a mentor who can review the dietary guidelines with her and suggest changes to current meal patterns to ensure compliance.

The afterschool issue needs to be handled at the SU level because the program is led by an SU administrator. The SU-wide Wellness Team should discuss this issue to improve consistency between school day and afterschool food offerings.