Building Healthy Communities:
Engaging elementary schools through partnership

A healthy school transformation program valued at $50,000

Application due March 15, 2013
Implementation begins August 2013

The application and more information can be found at coe.wayne.edu/centerforschoolhealth/programs.php*
Introduction

Blue Cross® Blue Shield® of Michigan, the Center for School Health in the College of Education at Wayne State University, the Michigan Fitness Foundation, and the United Dairy Industry of Michigan invite Michigan elementary schools to apply for the Building Healthy Communities healthy school transformation program for the 2013-2014 school year.

Building Healthy Communities is a comprehensive, school-wide program surrounding children and families with healthy eating and physical activity. Its wide-ranging approach includes:

- Educating students through curriculum
- Providing a healthy, supportive environment that makes the healthy choice the easy choice
- Encouraging students to practice lessons learned in the classroom
- Providing access to physical activity opportunities
- Providing access to healthy, nutrient-rich food and beverages

The transformation package is valued at $50,000 per school. It includes curriculum, physical activity equipment, healthy eating resources, professional development, and at-school mentoring and technical assistance from a healthy school coordinator. The school-wide approach engages everyone in the school building. Team members include principals, classroom teachers, physical education teachers, librarians or media center specialists, school leadership, food service directors or managers, other school staff, and parents.

Our goal is to focus on childhood obesity and its many associated chronic diseases, and at the same time improve school attendance and academic achievement.
“Health and success in school are interrelated. Schools cannot achieve their primary mission of education if students and staff are not healthy and fit physically, mentally and socially.”

—National Association of State Boards of Education

Eligibility

• Public, charter or private nonprofit schools in Michigan may apply.
• Schools must serve students in the fourth grade.
• Schools must participate in the federal school meals program.
• Schools must be willing to start, grow or sustain a healthy school breakfast program for students, preferably in their classrooms.

Preference will be given to schools:

• Located in the following counties: Genesee, Huron, Ingham, Lapeer, Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw, and Wayne
• Where at least 35 percent of students are eligible for the federal free and reduced-price school meals program
• That are committed to putting the entire nine-component program into practice and sustaining it in following years

Preference is given to schools in the counties listed above with a greater rate of students who are eligible for the federal free and reduced-priced school meals, but all nonprofit schools in the state are eligible to apply. Schools that are taking part in other nutrition education and physical activity programs are eligible. Schools that have received a previous Building Healthy Communities award from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan are not eligible. Schools that applied in prior years, but were not funded, are invited to apply again.

How to apply

Download the application from the Wayne State University Center for School Health website at coe.wayne.edu/centerforschoolhealth/programs.php*. Turn in the completed application by 5 p.m. on March 15, 2013.

The Center for School Health will hold two informational conference calls for interested schools at 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. on Feb. 26, 2013. To join either call, dial 1-800-462-5837 and enter conference code 210301#. If you are unable to join either call but are interested in the program and have questions about it, contact Dr. Annie Murphy, associate director of the Center for School Health, at a.murphy@wayne.edu. She will answer via email. All questions and responses will be posted on the Building Healthy Communities application website.

Key dates

Feb. 26, 2013
Informational conference calls

March 15, 2013
Applications due by 5 p.m.

May 15, 2013
School awards announced

Aug. 29, 2013
Full-day kick-off and program orientation at WSU

June 15, 2014
Program conclusion

Visit coe.wayne.edu/centerforschoolhealth/programs.php* for more information.

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The healthy school transformation

Building Healthy Communities is based on the PE-Nut™ philosophy that physical education and nutrition education work together in schools. The Michigan Fitness Foundation developed PE-Nut. It gives students, teachers and administrators the tools they need to change the school environment through healthy living activities and education. Successful programs involve a variety of people at the school and provide education and information for students at different times and places during the day. The Center for School Health at Wayne State University redesigned the Building Healthy Communities model last year to further embrace a comprehensive school-wide philosophy. The model for the coming year now includes a ninth component — Healthy Breakfast (see graphic below). The model unites programs and resources that are:

- Home-grown in Michigan
- Theoretically sound and evidence-based
- Linked with state and national health and education standards
- School friendly
The program

The nine components of Building Healthy Communities and the commitment required by key people are described here. If it isn’t possible for your school to include all nine components using the resources and support we provide, this program might not be a good fit for your school.

1. Principal involvement

For school-based health initiatives to be successful, school principals must be fully engaged in the program. In Building Healthy Communities, principals will:

- Read the “healthy tip of the day” morning announcements (provided)
- Include articles about healthy living and this program on the school website and newsletters to parents (provided)
- Support efforts by teachers, staff and students
- Work with the food service director or manager to start or improve a Breakfast in the Classroom program
- Take part in media interviews or hosting media events at the school
- Work together with the healthy school coordinator
- Approve and support the the project evaluation in their school

2. Healthy breakfast

Research shows that school breakfast is linked to improved health, academic performance, attendance, and classroom behavior. The Michigan Department of Education understands this benefit and allows Breakfast in the Classroom to count toward instructional time. Building Healthy Communities in partnership with the United Dairy Industry of Michigan will provide the training, practical help and resources needed to start or improve a Breakfast in the Classroom program for all students. This can be done by either bringing breakfast directly into the classroom or having students pick it up in another location and eat it in the classroom. The food service director’s role is to:

- Work with the school principal to plan and start or improve a Breakfast in the Classroom program (unless the existing breakfast program has at least 80-percent average daily participation).
- Apply to receive the equipment needed to start the breakfast plan.
- Keep project staff informed about average daily participation for breakfast throughout the year and provide other requested information for the evaluation component.
3. Classroom education

Classroom lessons and activities form an important part of nutrition education and physical activity promotion in schools. Classroom teachers are role models as well as educators. Six classroom teachers per school (including fourth grade) will:

- Pick six classrooms to take part, including all fourth-grade classrooms.
- Join the healthy school coordinator in teaching *Healthy Classrooms, Healthy Schools*, a 10-lesson program that merges nutrition and physical activity education with healthy food tastings.
- Use *Health Through Literacy™* classroom book sets to integrate healthy eating and physical activity promotion into language arts instruction.
- Send the *Take Home Book Bag* home with students to share health messages, recipes and snack ideas with families.
- Get students active in classrooms with short, guided Physical Activity Breaks as a way to release energy, get their blood flowing, and improve time-on-task and learning.
- Use *Healthy Living Games* during indoor recess or as a non-food reward.
- Support Breakfast in the Classroom.
- Evaluate the project by completing monthly logs.

4. Physical education

Quality physical education lays the foundation for a lifetime of physical activity. Physical educators will receive professional development, at-school mentoring and all the equipment needed for the Exemplary Physical Education Curriculum. EPEC® is an award-winning, evidence-based curriculum used by teachers throughout Michigan and across the country. Physical educators will:

- Attend a professional development workshop one Saturday in September 2013.
- Use EPEC as their primary physical education curriculum.
- Evaluate the project by completing a record about the use of EPEC.
5. Active recess

Recess can be a great opportunity for students to be physically active while they enjoy time with their friends. Physical activity equipment and encouragement to play help increase activity levels during recess. Schools will:

- Receive a mobile cart stocked with fun physical activity equipment and active recess game cards so recess monitors can quickly and easily encourage students to be more active.
- Make sure the mobile equipment cart is available during all recess sessions.
- Use recess game cards to encourage inactive students to get moving.

6. Student leadership through Fuel Up to Play 60

Getting students engaged in the school transformation process is an excellent way to help them make and sustain change. It also helps them build leadership skills. Each school will form a leadership team for Fuel Up to Play 60, with student representatives from grades 3-5. This program was launched by the National Dairy Council and National Football League. It’s coordinated in our state by the United Dairy Industry of Michigan. An adult adviser guides students through a six-step process that includes: advertising the program, recruiting players for the team, coordinating a kickoff event, conducting a school environment health assessment, developing and implementing healthy school plays, and publicizing success stories. Teams can apply for extra funds to pay for their healthy eating and physical activity plays. Adult advisers will be paid a stipend for their efforts, as well. Schools will:

- Choose a team adult adviser.
- Recruit student members (grades 3-5).
- Mentor students through a six-step process.
- Meet at least twice monthly.
- Register the school on the Fuel Up to Play 60 website.
- Apply for Fuel Up to Play funds to support the healthy school plays developed by the student leadership team.
7. Events for families

Family events at school are an important way to showcase healthy school initiatives. They also help promote change at home. Along with the student leadership team’s healthy school activities, schools will host health-related events for students and their families. Sample events might include family fitness and nutrition nights, 5K run/walk, health fairs, and many others. The program provides funds to support these events. The schools’ role is to:

- Choose a program leader.
- Develop and host family events in partnership with the student leadership team.

8. Media center education

Stocking the library or media center with high-quality children’s books that focus on healthy living messages through fun and engaging stories is another way to engage students and their families with this program. Each school will:

- Receive a bookcase stocked with health-themed books. Students can take the books home to start family discussions about healthy habits.
- Place the bookcase in a central location in the school library or media center.
- Promote books with students.

9. After-school Healthy Kids Clubs

Research shows that after-school programs can significantly increase students’ physical activity and healthy eating behaviors. Each school will organize and run an after-school club that will follow a five-step formula that includes a healthy snack and nutrition education, a mileage walking/running session, record keeping and goal setting, a fun and active game, and a review of healthy eating and physical activity education. The program provides funds for healthy snacks and a stipend for the club leader. Schools will:

- Choose an adult leader.
- Promote the club to all students (K-5).
- Hold regular club sessions following the 5-step formula.
Evaluating the Healthy School Transformation Program

The evaluation process is critical to understanding the success of this program. It measures whether the school environment changed and how well the program met its goals to improve students' health, school attendance and academic achievement. Schools will play an active role in the evaluation process by:

- Approving the evaluation plan
- Getting consent from fourth-grade students and their parents/guardians
- Completing short surveys and interviews
- Monitoring student physical activity
- Maintaining program logs
- Providing student attendance records, academic achievement scores, and average daily participation data for breakfast and lunch

All data will be kept fully confidential, and project reports will not identify schools or individuals.

Getting started

When you complete the application, you will choose the school staff member who will be responsible for leading each program component. This is your Building Healthy Communities School Team. A full-day orientation to the Healthy School Transformation Program will be held on the Wayne State University campus on Aug. 29, 2013. All team members must attend, including principal or assistant principal, after-school healthy kids club leader, student leadership team adviser, physical education teacher, six classroom teachers (including all fourth-grade teachers), and food service director or manager. If your team is not available to attend the full-day orientation, please do not apply for this program.
The Building Healthy Communities partners: Who we are

We are Michigan’s largest nonprofit health insurer, Michigan’s only urban public research university, and nonprofit organizations with statewide impact and leadership roles in fitness, nutrition and health initiatives.

Together, we bring extensive experience working in rural, suburban and urban multi-cultural schools and communities. Our special focus is on decreasing health disparities in low-income schools and communities. Our combined efforts reach every county in Michigan with nutrition and physical activity programs.

As a nonprofit health insurance company, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan has a unique social mission to promote access to high-quality, affordable health care coverage and improve the health of Michigan residents. Since 2009, Blue Cross has led the Building Healthy Communities program, helping elementary schools and community partners implement nutrition and physical education programs and activities. To date, Blue Cross has awarded nearly $2.7 million to the Building Healthy Communities Program in 83 schools and more than 35,000 students. Blues funding, at more than $600,000 per year, anchors the Building Healthy Communities program.

The Wayne State University Center for School Health in the College of Education was founded in 2010. Its mission is to improve the health of young people and their families through physical activity and healthy eating opportunities and education. Programming offered by the center has transformed environments in hundreds of low-income urban schools in our state’s most economically depressed region. Various federal, state and local agencies provide funding for teacher professional development, resources and support to change students’ health-related behavior. The center coordinates the Building Healthy Communities application process, implements the program with selected elementary schools and conducts program evaluation.

The Michigan Fitness Foundation has been a leader in school and community health partnerships for the past 20 years. The foundation’s efforts are as diverse as direct programming and evaluation, social marketing, and engagement in policy and advocacy. MFF leads the Michigan Nutrition Network and Safe Routes to School™ and coordinates the Promoting Active Communities™ program. Its evidence-based PE-Nut™ and EPEC® curricula are at the core of the Building Healthy Communities program.

The United Dairy Industry of Michigan has a more than 80-year history of providing science-based nutrition information to, and in partnership with, a variety of stakeholders committed to fostering a healthier Michigan. Dairy farmers are helping to fight childhood obesity by engaging students in the Fuel Up to Play 60 program, aimed at making schools healthier places. This program empowers students to “get active and play” for 60 minutes daily and “fuel up” with nutrient-rich foods like low-fat and fat-free dairy foods, fruits, vegetables and whole grains. More than 3,000 Michigan schools, reaching 1.4 million students, are currently enrolled in Fuel Up to Play 60.
Why we invest in this program

Together, we’re committed to changing the health profile of youth in Michigan, especially among children in low-income urban areas. Childhood obesity exacts too high a price across our state in terms of health, economic impact and academic performance. Without intervention, most overweight and obese children become overweight and obese adults, with higher incidence of many chronic diseases, including heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and some cancers.

In 2008, Michigan spent $3.1 billion on obesity-related medical costs. That figure is projected to quadruple to $12.5 billion in 2018. If we can just maintain our current health status rather than watch it erode further, we will save $6.9 billion in that time.

We aim to address a vulnerable time in youth development by partnering with elementary schools to foster environments where healthy choices are encouraged and expected, and where children build healthy habits and lifestyles. We support a school-wide approach where children hear and see messages that prompt them to make healthy choices throughout the school — in classrooms, in the gym, in hallways, on the playground, and before or after the school day.

We do this because:

- The pathway toward chronic diseases in adulthood is formed in our early years.
- It’s easier to prevent the adoption of behaviors that lead to health risks than to change established patterns of behavior.
- Healthy school programs also improve students’ educational achievement (grades, test scores), behavior (time on-task, attendance, conduct), and cognitive skills and attitude (concentration, memory, mood).
- Quality, comprehensive healthy school programs have a unique opportunity to help children learn and practice healthy behaviors.
- We are committed to leading Michigan to a healthier future — and to investing in the generation of Michigan citizens.

We hope that your school will submit an application to participate next year in the Building Healthy Communities healthy school transformation program. The application is posted at coe.wayne.edu/centerforschoolhealth/programs.php* and is due March 15, 2013.

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A partnership between

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