



Annual Report to the Mayor and the Council of the District of Columbia

November 30, 2015

Introduction

Pursuant to the D.C. Healthy Schools Act (the Act), the Healthy Youth and Schools Commission (the Commission) is charged with advising the Mayor and the Council of the District of Columbia on health, wellness and nutrition issues concerning youth and schools in the District. As required by the Act, the Commission is pleased to submit to the Mayor and the Council its Annual Report on the implementation of the Act in School Year (SY) 2014-2015.

This report is broken into three sections:

- I. Efforts made in SY 2014-2015 to improve the health, wellness, and nutrition of youth and schools in the District;
- II. Steps other states have taken to address the health, wellness, and nutrition of youth and schools; and
- III. Recommendations about how to further improve the health, wellness, and nutrition of youth and schools in the District.

It has been five years since the Act was implemented. In that time, there has been tremendous progress across all the areas addressed in the Act. Children are more active, and the food served in schools is healthier, fresher, and more local. Environmental literacy among students is higher, and schools are much more “green” than they were in 2010. That all being said, there is a consensus among Commissioners, school leaders, community activists, and staff at the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), that the Act needs to be refined in several key areas. There are two evaluations of the Act underway that will offer various recommendations to do just that. In addition, the Commission and its subcommittees are discussing possible amendments to the Act and will be guided by data from the aforementioned evaluations. Therefore Section III (Recommendations) contains details on these evaluations and how the data will be used, rather than specific recommendations.

The award of a comprehensive evaluation contract addressed one key concern noted by the Commission in its 2014 report. The other major concern was the lack of leadership at OSSE within the Division of Health and Wellness. The Commission was pleased to meet several times with State Superintendent of Education Hanseul Kang and appreciated her commitment to address both the need for additional leadership, as well as her understanding and commitment to strengthening health and wellness programs. The Commission was very happy to learn this fall of Donna Anthony’s hiring as Assistant Superintendent for Health and Wellness and is excited to collaborate with Donna and the entire team in the Division of Health and Wellness.

The Commission looks forward to continuing to work with the Mayor and the members of the Council to make schools and youth in DC among the healthiest in the nation.

I. Efforts Made in SY 2014-2015 to Improve the Health, Wellness, and Nutrition of Youth and Schools in the District

A. School Nutrition, Subchapter II. §§ 38-822.01 - 38-822.07

- The Division of Wellness and Nutrition Services at OSSE continues to oversee a number of robust food programs in DC schools. Summary data for SY 2014-2015 includes:
 - Total lunches served: 8,556,821
 - Total breakfasts served: 6,043,434
- 75% of the students in DC qualify for free or reduced priced lunches at school according to their parent's income status.

B. Farm-To-School Program, Subchapter III §§ 38-823.01 - 38-823.03

- Schools are continuing to serve locally grown fruits and vegetables as a part of their school meals, and OSSE is collecting school-level data on a quarterly basis.
- 75% of the produce (by weight) that is purchased locally by DC schools comes from between 100 and 200 miles of the District. The Act states: "Locally-grown" means from a grower in Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Virginia, or West Virginia, meaning food could be coming from as far away as 500 miles and still be considered local.
- In SY 2014-2015, OSSE awarded \$33,644 in grants to support farm field trips to 24 applicants that were schools or served schools. For the current school year, OSSE awarded \$32,520 to 22 applicants that were schools or serve schools.

C. Physical and Health Education, Subchapter IV §§ 38-824.01 - 38-824.05

- Six public charter schools and five DCPS schools are meeting the physical education minutes required by the Act compared to one school last year.
- The Commission organized a roundtable with Council staff and the Deputy Mayor for Education in June to discuss ways additional schools could come into compliance with these requirements.
- DCPS continues to collect FITNESSGRAM data, accumulating five years of statistics thus far.
- 36 schools were awarded DC Physical Activity for Youth grants from OSSE in May of 2015. These grantees are also collecting FITNESSGRAM data and providing it to OSSE.

D. Environment, Subchapter V. §§ 38-825.01 - 38-825.03

- To complement existing efforts related to school gardens, farm-to-school programs, and local wellness policies, an environmental literacy program has been established within OSSE to assist schools in implementation of the DC Environmental Literacy Plan.

- OSSE is currently soliciting applications for its first Environmental Literacy Leadership Cadre, a group of individuals from elementary schools across the District who will be responsible for developing and implementing an environmental literacy program at their schools.
- Additionally, OSSE is currently soliciting applications for the District of Columbia Environmental Literacy Fellowship Grant and Environmental Literacy Advancement Grant. The purpose of these grants is to increase the capacity of nonprofit and community based organizations to provide environmental education programs in the areas of air quality/climate change, water, land, resource conservation, and/or health for District elementary schools represented in the 2016 Environmental Literacy Leadership Cadre.
- Data on the type, location and use of school gardens continues to be collected by OSSE staff, demonstrating a thriving school garden program in the District.
- School Garden Grants continue to play an integral role in the support of garden-based education and integrating hand-on learning into classroom instruction and this year's request for proposals will be released on December 4, 2015. Grants awarded in SY 2014-2015 totaled \$375,000 across 24 grantees.

E. Health and Wellness Education, Subchapter VI. §§ 38–826.01 - 38–826.05

- 100% of schools submitted their School Health Profiles.
- 100% of schools reported that they promoted their local wellness policies to faculty, staff, parents, and students.
- DCPS committed resources to assist its 40 “priority” schools with forming and sustaining School Wellness Councils.
- During the fall of 2015, the Healthy Schools Act Booklist was released and training by OSSE staff with school librarians is underway.
- The DC Department of Behavioral Health supported the launch of DC Mental Health Access in Pediatrics (DCMAP) in early 2015, as provided for in the Behavioral Health System of Care Act of 2014. DCMAP is a project of Children’s National and MedStar Georgetown University Hospital, in consultation from Howard University. Services include immediate, live phone consultation with child mental health experts; brief, time-limited follow-up services as clinically indicated; mental health training and education; and resource guide maintenance.
- Through a mandate of the South Capitol Street Memorial Amendment Act of 2012, the DC Department of Behavioral Health developed training modules for teachers and Educators on signs and symptoms of mental health in youth and how to refer for services. While the Middle School and High School modules were launched in late 2014, the Elementary School module was launched in public schools and child development centers in 2015.

II. Steps Other States have Taken to Address the Health, Wellness, and Nutrition of Youth and Schools

There are hundreds of initiatives under way across the United States to address the health, wellness, and nutrition of young people. Members of the Commission, as well as the staff at OSSE, are examining a number of unique programs to inform the design and implementation of future efforts in DC. The following examples are illustrative of the types of program under review and do not reflect actual programs the Commission is seeking to replicate in DC.

Nutrition Education & Promotion

LearnWELL, Healthy CPS (Chicago, IL)

LearnWELL is an initiative of Healthy CPS (Chicago Public Schools) that supports schools in aligning with the city's wellness policies, which promote improved health and academic performance of all students as well as healthier school environments. This program provides support in the following areas; EatWELL (Nutrition Education), DineWELL (School Food & Health Snacks and Beverages), CelebrateWELL (Healthy Celebrations), FundraiseWell (Healthy Fundraising), and RewardWELL (Rewards and Punishments). LearnWELL offers a variety of resources, including step-by-step guides, training sessions and tips for teachers and parents that can help schools incorporate policy requirements in an effective and engaging way. Schools that become LearnWELL certified are implementing the district wellness policies regarding healthy food (including snacks and beverages) and physical activity and have applied to become Healthy Schools Certified.

Farm to School

Local Food Hub (Charlottesville, VA)

Based in Charlottesville, VA, the Local Food Hub serves more than 70 public schools in eight districts in Virginia. The Local Food Hub works with food service directors to integrate locally grown produce into their school meals and help them identify opportunities to grow this service from items like fresh produce to others, such as grass-fed ground beef. Local Food Hub also forges relationships between growers and schools, helping to facilitate growing school-specific and kid-friendly items that will be successful on the school lunch tray.

School Gardens

Education Outside (San Francisco, CA)

Education Outside is a service corps of emerging leaders who work in the San Francisco public elementary schools teaching engaging, standards-based science lessons around nature, the environment, and social justice. Education Outside is a nonprofit funded by foundations, government and corporate grants. Each partner school pays a site fee to have a corps member.

Physical Education & Physical Activity

30/20/10 Physical Activity Initiative (Chicago, IL)

In an attempt to meet the daily physical education requirement in Illinois, some public schools in Chicago are implementing the very exciting 30/20/10, a pilot program where schools offer students 30 minutes of physical education, 20 minutes of recess, and 10 minutes of in-class physical activity every

day. Schools participating in this initiative are exceeding by far the typical school in Chicago, which offers students only 30 minutes of physical education *per week*.

Environmental Literacy

PA Green & Healthy Schools (PA, Statewide)

PA Green & Healthy Schools Partnership is a collaborative effort of nonprofits, government agencies and others in Pennsylvania who are committed to ensuring all schools are healthy, environmentally friendly and cost-efficient places of learning. They encourage the creation of green schools; support school leaders, teachers, and students in green schools programming; and celebrate schools that integrating sustainable practices.

III. Recommendations about How to Further Improve the Health, Wellness, and Nutrition of Youth and Schools in the District

Evaluation Efforts Underway

There are two evaluation-related projects underway that the Commission believes will guide the efforts of OSSE staff in the Division of Health and Wellness, as well as inform the Council on ways to improve various aspects of the Healthy Schools Act.

American University, funded by Kaiser Permanente of the Mid-Atlantic Region, has evaluated the implementation of the Healthy Schools Act for the past five years. Primarily utilizing data from the School Health Profile, the research team has taken a longitudinal look at the provisions required by the Healthy Schools Act and how the school health landscape has changed with the implementation of the Act. Additionally, the research team has designed a tool to measure implementation of the Act on the school level. This tool, the Composite Score, allows the research team to assess level of implementation of the Healthy Schools Act, with a higher Composite Score representing stronger compliance with the Healthy Schools Act. American University is issuing a final report summarizing the findings of this research in January 2016.

Next, OSSE recently awarded a contract to Child Trends, a nonprofit research organization focused exclusively on children, youth and their families, to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the Act from its inception through the 2015-2016 school year. The evaluation aims to describe the health environment in District schools and assess how effective OSSE's health-related efforts are at supporting schools in establishing healthy environments and improvising student's health knowledge, attitudes and behaviors. Child Trends will be examining current sets of data using both qualitative and quantitative research methods in order to draw conclusions and correlations for their research questions. One of the objectives of the Child Trends evaluation is to analyze how schools with various characteristics differ in their implementation of the Act, with aims of better assisting each school according to their specific needs. In addition, OSSE is also working on revising the School Health Profile with the goal of obtaining less self-reported data, therefore resulting in higher quality data.

Significant Components of the Act that are of Concern to the Commission

The Commission and its subcommittees continue to discuss various components of the Act to ensure that meaningful progress is being made in improving the health and wellness of children in DC. Three are of particular note:

- The fact that so few schools are meeting the physical education requirements of the Act is a chief concern of the Commission. It is working with school and community leaders to identify ways to either (or both) modify the requirements or provide additional resources to schools to meet the requirements.
- Also of concern is the fact the District of Columbia Public Schools has not established a central kitchen facility as required by the Act. Again, the Commission is developing recommendations for the Council concerning this provision of the Act.

- The Commission also is examining how resources from the Healthy Schools Fund are made available for use by schools.

Looking to the Future

There is a strong consensus on the Commission that the Healthy Schools Act requires some key revisions to stay relevant and in step with changing national standards. Given that the Commission is tasked with safe-guarding the Act to ensure that our District schools have the highest possible standards for the health of our students, the Commission will be focusing in the coming year on concrete recommendations for amendment. The commission looks forward to working together with Council to fine-tune the Act in 2016.

APPENDIX A
Current Healthy Youth and Schools Commissioners

Name	Appointment	Affiliation
Donna Anthony	Designee representative of OSSE	OSSE
Cara Larson Biddle	Member Appointed by the Chairman of the Council	Children's National Medical Center
Lauren Biel	General member	DC Greens
Diana Bruce	Designee Representative of DCPS	DCPS
William Dietz	General Member	George Washington University
Shannon Foster	General Member	Payne Elementary School
Rebecca Levin	Member appointed by the Chairperson of the Council Committee with oversight over education	
Kellye McKenzie	General Member	Peer Health Exchange
Charneta Scott	Designee Representative of DBH	DBH
Jeff Travers	Chairperson	Cancer Support Community
Audrey Williams	Member appointed by DCPCSB	DCPCSB
Honor Williams	Student Member	George Washington University
Open	Designee representative of DOH	DOH