

SYNOPSIS
URBANA SCHOOL DISTRICT 116
BOARD OF EDUCATION
STUDY SESSION
MAY 2, 2006

The Board of Education had its first taste of the school district's new wellness policy and it wasn't sugarcoated.

The policy, which is required of all school districts participating in the federal Free And Reduced Lunch Program, has to be in place by the beginning of the 2006/07 school year. Federal mandates required attention paid to specific areas, including nutrition education, food service, and physical activity. The mandate also said certain groups had to be represented on the committee writing the policy: school board, students, parents, community members, and administration.

The policy recommendations include nutrition education in pre-K through 12th grade that teaches skills needed to adopt health eating behaviors, daily physical activity and recurring "stretch breaks" during the school day, and school-based activities that promote wellness, including community partnerships and after-school programs. The policy also discourages teachers from using candy as a reward, while recommending that recess not be withheld as a punishment.

Several members of the board are concerned about the community partnerships aspect, specifically our booster groups that sell soda pop and not-so-healthy food choices as part of their fundraising. The policy also contains a brief paragraph about staff wellness.

The board also heard from two school district learning teams, Urbana High and Prairie Elementary. UHS teachers Phyllis Gingold and Mark Freedman talked about how helpful CRISS (CReating Independence through Student-Owned Strategies) training had been for their classroom activities. The Prairie teachers discussed PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) strategies and the wonderful impact it's had on the atmosphere at Prairie.

The board also heard very brief reports from every school improvement team. The high school is working on teacher-led staff development, attacking the chronic truancy rate, and creating an instructional lab so teachers can tape and observe their own teaching methods. UMS is focused on reading and math scores, and math teachers are working throughout the summer with students who have been identified as capable of performing at a higher level than they're displaying. Elementary building plans include focusing on the district's three SMART goals, working on reading and math, building literacy materials, and always examining data to point them in the newest direction. As Dr. Joan Fortschneider said, "disaggregating data has become a part of our culture." King School held a Saturday Academy earlier this year and 60 students attended for seven weeks to work on reading skills. Curriculum mapping is occurring throughout the district as well. All of our buildings find the mobility and truancy rates to be continual challenges and find that the judicial system isn't much help when it comes to truancy, so our outreach workers are very important.