

# Building Awareness and Support for Your Wellness Policies

**After drafting a policy, it is important to build awareness and support from key stakeholders within the school and community.** Here are several tips to building awareness and support from different stakeholders:

**School Administrators:** Gain attention by focusing on the health problems that their most vulnerable students are likely to face and describe how your wellness policies would work to solve some of these problems.

**School Board Members:** Get to know the board members and research how they acted on past health and nutrition issues.

**Food Service Director and Staff:** School food service staff are the experts on food and nutrition within the school community. Utilize their knowledge to build support to introduce new foods and incorporate nutrition education in meal time. The food service directors might be concerned now that their budget will cover new food items, so it is important to know how other centers have made healthy changes without costing too much.

**Teachers:** Teachers may feel overwhelmed by wellness policies because they may be seen as another burden. If it impacts their classroom it is important to include them in the policy making and implementation. Inform them about the benefits that they will experience from healthier kids.

**Parents:** Parents are the most effective advocates on their children's behalf. It is crucial to make an extra effort to get parents involved in the wellness policies.

**Children:** Think of the children as customers — ask for their input. Have the children participate in creating ways to implement policies.

**Community Members:** One way to heighten success for the new policy is to make it known to the general public. Community involvement can greatly enhance the quality and sustainability of wellness policies.

\*Adapted from Food Research and Action Center. School Wellness Policy and Practice: Meeting the Needs of Low-Income Students and Action for Healthy Kids

