



May 2016

Smart Choices: Enhancing a Healthier School Environment

ISD 200 Nutrition Successes 2010-2016

- **Farm-To-School:** Since January 2015, ISD 200 food service department has received \$72,900 in grants from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and Blue Cross Blue Shield that have allowed the district to purchase equipment to serve more Minnesota-grown fruits and vegetables in school meals.
- **School Lunch:** All 3 elementary schools in ISD 200 have received the prestigious Healthier US School Challenge award! (www.fns.usda.gov/tn/HealthierUS/Minnesota.html) The HUSSC award recognizes schools that serve a wide variety and quantity of dark green and orange vegetables, fresh fruits, whole grain foods (buns, rolls, breads, pastas and rice), low-fat and skim milk, and beans and peas weekly.
- **Salad Bar:** Hastings Middle school launched a fresh fruit and vegetable salad bar spring 2014. The self-serve salad bar was part of efforts by the district to decrease food waste by making foods more appealing. Food service staff from each school received training in January 2015 on new chef-approved techniques and recipes for preparing fruits and vegetables. Students in the ISD 200 business class have also contributed to the reduction in food waste by creating a promotional video which may be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o8jLHYTW7s0>
- **School Breakfast:** The elementary schools in ISD 200 now have a new and improved breakfast menu that rotates weekly. Breakfasts include choice of whole grain, lean protein, fruit and milk daily.
- **Vending:** All beverage vending machines in ISD 200 schools sell exclusively water. Snack machines, which turns on after school hours, now meet nutrition standards to ensure snacks are lower in sugar, fat, sodium and calories. The food and beverage offerings at the high school store have also improved to meet these same nutrition standards.
- **A La Carte Lines:** Foods sold outside of the federally reimbursable meal program, such as snacks, now meet nutrition standards to ensure they are lower in sugar, fat, sodium and calories. The district switched to snacks sold in smaller portions, increased whole grain options and removed many high-calorie, salty options such as egg rolls and pretzels with cheese.
- **Healthy Classrooms:** All elementary school teachers received training on the use of non-food classroom rewards to influence mindful eating practices by students at a young age and reduce consumption of high sugar foods between meals.
- **Garden:** Hastings middle school planted a vegetable garden in their courtyard spring 2015. The garden expanded to 6 beds in 2016 and has been thriving thanks to partnerships between U of M Master Gardeners and Hastings afterschool programs OASIS and the Me to We club. Produce harvested from the garden makes an appearance on the school lunch line and has been used for cooking in FACS classes.
- **Orchards:** Apple trees were planted at McAuliffe elementary and Hastings Middle School during the summer of 2010. Hastings food service is now utilizing the apples in meal planning.
- **Healthy Hydration:** Spring 2016 the Hastings High School business class spearheaded a healthy hydration campaign that coincided with the wellness committee's installment of 2 "hydration stations" in the high

school. The campaign, aimed to make water an attractive alternative to reduce student consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages, included marketing and communication materials such as a video, posters, print ads and a newspaper article as well as a survey of student beverage habits.

ISD 200 Physical Activity Successes 2010-2014:

- **Active Recess:** Recess aides at Hastings elementary schools received professional development training from the Dakota County Public Health Department in 2013 on best practices to keep children engaged and active during recess. New outdoor equipment was purchased to further support movement. The district is planning a second fall 2016 training that will expand upon principals learned and bridge recess activities with skills learned in PE class.
- **Active Classrooms:** ISD 200 teachers are encouraged to try out activities that increase movement in the classroom. Movement breaks aligned with curriculum content are associated with increased student brain activity, focus, self-control, and academic performance. To expand upon these efforts, Hastings plans to train all teachers in grades K-8 on classroom Energizers in 2017. Hastings posts fresh new ideas for classroom movement breaks on the Smart Choices website:
<http://www.smartchoiceshastings.info/physical-activity-routines.html>
- **Open Gym:** Starting in 2013 and continuing today, ISD 200 wellness committee collaborates with Community Education to offer elementary school-aged children and their caregivers free indoor gym opportunities at Kennedy elementary school Saturday mornings during the cold, winter months.

Building a strong, lasting wellness-promoting learning environment:

- **Wellness committee:** The district wellness committee, comprised of Health Services, wellness representatives from every school and school food service has continued to meet to discuss and implement wellness projects for over 6 years. This committee is instrumental to ensuring a wellness promoting environment to nourish academic achievement is a norm in the district.
- **Passage of a strengthened district wellness policy:** As of July 2015, Hastings has passed a strengthened wellness policy that increases opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity during the school day.
- **District-wide wellness assessment:** This spring 2016, the wellness committee completed a district-wide comprehensive assessment of the wellness environment that included nutrition services, PE/physical activity, health education, health and counseling services, employee wellness, family/community engagement in wellness and the social/emotional climate.
- **Newly Developed Partnerships:** Representatives from the district collaborated with A Healthier Hastings for All community group, led by Allina Health, from 2013-2015. Currently, wellness is one of the three main components of the Hastings Vision 2025 initiative.

Check us out on the web! <http://www.smartchoiceshastings.info/smart-choices.html>

Eager to learn more? Please contact Mary Ellen Fox, Health Services Coordinator and Student Wellness Committee Chair at mfox@hastings.k12.mn.us

Smart Choices is a partnership of the Dakota County Public Health Department and school districts in Dakota County committed to making the healthy choice the easy choice by creating opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity before, during and after school. Smart Choices is made possible by funding from the Minnesota Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP), and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota.