

Activate Omaha Kids
Nutrition Plank Committee Meeting
Wednesday, March 12, 2008
Collaborating Center
Minutes

Members Present: Kara Meisinger, Tim Bivens, Travis Lucas, Kathleen Upton, Jennifer Talarico, Tammy Green, Mary Balluff, Carrie Miller, Daniel Lawse, Sarah Schram, Lori Swirzinski, Martha Nepper, Deb Wille and Cheryl Carlberg
Staff Present: Diane Roberts

1. FYI
 - a. Welcome and introductions.
 - b. News, concerns
 - i. Mary Balluff presented the two main areas that would be addressed in our meeting today: the inventory of existing programs and the questions that were unanswered by either the Activate Omaha Kids inventory or the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services survey and still of interest to the Nutrition Plank; and, school wellness policies.
 - ii. Daniel Lawse of the Green Neighborhood Council was present and offered the assistance of the council in the Nutrition Plank's proposed neighborhood audit to identify gaps or desert areas in accessing fruits and vegetables, as well as food distribution through community gardens and farmers' markets. The Council will be supporting new and existing community gardens, and providing education on the health and environmental value of local food.
 - iii. Cheryl Carlberg of the VNA provided the group with information on the Baby-Friendly Hospital initiative.
2. Review of the Inventory of Community Assets
 - a. Mary Balluff presented a matrix comparing the Activate Omaha Kids inventory, the original Nutrition (specific) Plank survey and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services survey. The matrix illustrated common areas that were answered as well as areas with questions left unanswered that were considered valuable by the Nutrition Plank. The group discussed whether or not those questions left unanswered were essential to the continuing work of the plank with respect to locating gaps in programming. Additional questions deemed as "need to know" about programming were: 1) frequency, length and duration of program meetings, 2) whether a specific curriculum is used, what it is and if training was provided, 3) is there program evaluation, 4) who teaches the curriculum and their title, 5) funding sources, status of program (permanent, pilot or ongoing) and dates, 6) program setting, i.e. child care centers, community centers, school, etc. and 7) whether a program falls

under the goals of the Nebraska Physical Activity and Nutrition State Plan, and if so, which one (or more).

3. Discussion of school wellness policies

- a. Carrie Miller brought many of the existing school wellness policies from the Douglas-Sarpy county area, both public and parochial schools. Some were only a few pages, while others were extensive. In the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, the U.S. Congress established a new requirement that all school districts with a federally-funded school meals program develop and implement wellness policies that address nutrition and physical activity by the start of the 2006-2007 school year. Most school districts created a wellness policy, and then mandated that there be site-specific wellness policies for each school.
- b. The discussion centered on how to identify the *best practices* for a school wellness policy and how to determine the essential elements that should be included in a school wellness policy. Bev Benes with the Nebraska Department of Education has developed the Nebraska Wellness Policy Builder (which was adapted from Child Nutrition and Wellness, Kansas State Department of Education. These documents provide guidelines for policy development. The websites below are the Nebraska Wellness Policy Builder and the Kansas School Wellness Policy Model Guidelines (from which the Nebraska Policy Builder was adapted.) The group will bring to the next meeting those items which they feel are essential for an exemplary wellness policy.

<http://www.neactionforhealthykids.org/wellness/WellnessPolicyBuilder-Full.pdf>

http://www3.ksde.org/kneat/SNP/SNPDocs/Wellness/Wellness_Policy_Guidelines_Booklet_V2.pdf

- c. It was thought the group could then divide the policies received from the state and assess each policy for strengths and weaknesses. The approach to the schools was discussed, as well, and it was felt that the assessment could best provide strengths and (more subtly) identify areas needing improvement with suggestions for revisions. Martha Nepper feels that most schools are anxious for assistance. Kara Meisinger has done the school wellness policy for Brownell-Talbot (even though this school does not receive federal funding) and found struggles with implementation.

4. The next meeting of the Nutrition Plank is scheduled for Wednesday, April 9 at 2:30 p.m. at the Collaborating Center in Room 1010. We will again discuss any organizations or programs that should be added to the Community Asset matrix, as well as the method for gaining the additional information about programming that is valuable to the Nutrition Plank. We will also discuss the important elements necessary for an exceptional school wellness policy.