

GRACE HOPPER STEM ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL (GHSA)

Inglewood, California



School Overview

- Grace Hopper STEM Academy serves middle school students in grades 6-8.
- The school is in an urban community and 96% of students are eligible for Free or Reduced-price school meals.

School Wellness Policy Goals

- Provide students and families with nutrition education, and incorporate nutrition into the curriculum in a hands-on, interdisciplinary manner.
- Provide students with 150 minutes each week of PE activity-based instruction.
- Provide all students with 90 minutes a week of Health education with a Credentialed teacher.
- Partner with community groups to provide nutrition and wellness education.
- Ensure foods and beverages sold or served at GHSA meet the nutrition recommendations of the US Dietary Guidelines for Americans and all state and federal guidelines.

Establishing the School Wellness Policy

During the 2018, 2019 - 2020 school years, GHSA began the process of forming a school wellness council to develop its wellness policy. The new council included 3 school staff members, 3 parents (1 per grade level), community partners from various fields (health services, behavioral health, physical education, nutrition). Partners like the Beverly Hills West (CA) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated, LA County of Public Health and CDC/P, Choose MYPLATE, National School Lunch Program, National Standards for Food in Schools: Leading the Way Toward Healthier Youth, provided guidance on the development of the policy... (still in progress).

We applied for a Healthy Lifestyle grant from CA State Department of Health's Bureau of Community and School Health. Grant was to buy physical activity equipment and nutrition education materials.

Because GHSA is a small school district (1 school), we recognize that subgroups would need to be formed and a "Wellness Champion" needed to promote healthy eating and fitness using a variety of health and wellness messages to students, their families, and other staff members.

In 2019, the coordinator of the wellness council (CHT) reached out to Kaiser Permanente, Black Nurses Association, Colgate Palmolive, Community Grocery Store (Ralphs), to name a few (for the big ask) ... *Stipends and Fresh Fruits/Veggies/Produce/and other resources to implement wellness initiatives at*

GHSA. The council embarked on learning about new programs, resourcing other grant opportunities, creating action plans for programs and activities, sharing best practices and experiences. Before we could put learned and best practices in force - **The Pandemic hit in March of 2020 and school closed for 2 years.**

Action...Activities to Meet LEA School Wellness Policy Goals

Nutrition Education



GHSA added a comprehensive nutrition education curriculum to its health education course to encourage students to make healthy food choices. The curriculum was based on the results of the health assessment, which was used to define what type of nutrition education students needed. The school's environment and services are striving towards the **Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child** model and can help shape lifelong healthy eating habits.

Prior to the pandemic, GHSA partnered with The Beverly Hills West (CA) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated, Watts Community Health Center, Women for Wellness, Association of Black Women Physicians, Association of Black Nurses, Association of Black Dentists to implement a Community Health and Wellness Fair with the overarching goal of *Improving Community Health for A Healthier Lifestyle*. The health and wellness fair provided information, screenings and material that directly related to nutrition, wellness, and fitness for a healthy lifestyle then and beyond. Each week, the health and PE teachers provided at least one nutrition education lesson. Fun worksheets and videos were viewed on the importance of eating a healthy breakfast and how eating a healthy breakfast provides energy and improves memory throughout the day. Information was sent to parents to emphasize the connection between eating a healthy breakfast and doing better in school. Students were given a mini garden to take home.

This effort also inspired partner, The BHW Links, to include goals of adding more fresh fruits and vegetables to school meals and building a school garden, where students study life, caring for soil and plants fostering understanding the principles of birth, growth, maturity, death, competition, cooperation, and many other lessons that transfer to human lives. Students set personal goals for healthy eating using the Start Simple with MYPLATE app to pick simple daily food goals. All teachers received materials that focused on the importance of eating a healthy breakfast and the consequences of unhealthy snacking. These included posters, flyers, and handouts for students and parents.

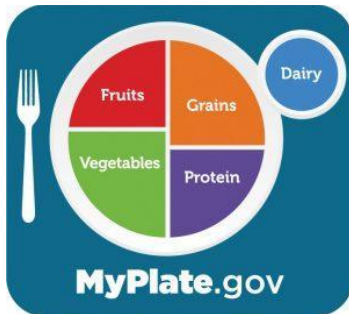
Physical Activity and Physical Education



PE classes, facilitated by the PE instructor, for all students, daily activity breaks, and afternoon physical activities helped GHSA meet the goal of getting at least 150 minutes of physical activity every week. 90% of students participated in the after-school activities throughout the year. The school's flexible curriculum allowed for all students to play and participate in activities on and off campus competitively in teams and singularly.

School Meals

GHSA's school meals need improvements and are a work in progress. The new required meal patterns are in the implementation stage (i.e., fat free skim milk and low fat 1% dairy options, lean protein choices and a variety of fruit juice and water. Moving forward, plans are for the wellness council to reconvene to work with a food service management company and food suppliers to create menus that meet or exceed nutrition requirements. In health class, all students learned about the benefits of healthy snack choices such as fruits, veggies, whole-grains, and low-fat dairy products. Students can sample healthy snacks, such as mini yogurt parfaits, hummus, smoothies (made with veggie and fruit combinations). Students review nutrition labels to make sure snacks meet the recommendations for competitive foods. Classroom parties serving food/snacks.



Accomplishment(s)

An innovative and successful initiative GHSA undertook was altering its snack cart. 8th grade students operate the school's snack carts. The PTO and students fundraise to purchase healthy snacks to be sold during breaktime and after school. GHSA never had vending machines.

Health class in 2019 integrated SEL into the curriculum to improve nutritional, academic, and behavioral outcomes. Returning to in-school study and best practices, the health teacher revisits the 5 SEL competencies for teachers and students, how SEL can positively impact healthy eating behaviors and nutrition, how to empower students to use SEL throughout the day, and how outside partners can help to make this work happen.

Sources

The Wellness Initiative:

<http://www.wellnessinitiative.org>

Healthy Youth Partnership

<http://www.healthyyouthpartnership.org>

MyPlate US Department of Agriculture

MyPlate.gov