



HEALTH IMPACT STATEMENT

Supportive Nutrition Environments in Illinois (IL) Schools

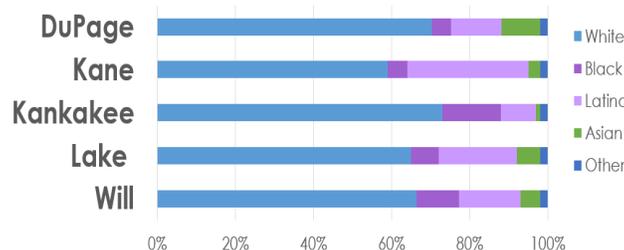
I. PROBLEM

In 2015, five counties in IL—DuPage, Kane, Kankakee, Lake, and Will—received State Public Health Actions grant 1305 funding through the IL Chronic Disease and School Health program (CDASH) to Prevent and Control Diabetes, Heart Disease, Obesity and Associated Risk Factors and Promote School Health. CDC reports that in 2013-2014, 20.6 percent of youth aged 12-19 were obese in the U.S. as compared to 11.5 percent in IL and 6.5-11.9 percent in CDASH communities¹. From 2011-2014 the prevalence of obesity remained stable in U.S. children and youth overall, but was higher among Hispanics (21.9 percent) and non-Hispanic blacks (19.5 percent)², as such, 92,202—353,216 children and youth were at elevated risk for obesity in CDASH communities. Long term obesity can contribute to many health conditions that limit quality and length of life such as hypertension, diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. One major risk factor for obesity is dietary intake. The 2014, Illinois Youth Survey (IYS)³ showed that 34.3-45.9 percent of youth residing in CDASH communities reported consuming the USDA recommended two or more servings of fruit per day and even fewer students (14.2-17.7 percent) met the recommended more than three servings of vegetables per day. Local Health Departments (LHDs) in CDASH communities worked with schools to create supportive nutrition environments. CDC defines a healthy school nutrition environment as one that provides students with nutritious and appealing foods and beverages, consistent and accurate messages about good nutrition, and ways to learn about and practice healthy eating throughout the time spent at school.⁴ CDASH communities aimed to create a supportive nutrition environment to improve eating behaviors and reduce obesity in youth and prevent long term adverse health outcomes.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

POPULATION SIZE		MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME	
DuPage	916,924	DuPage	\$84,908
Lake	703,462	Lake	\$83,152
Will	677,560	Will	\$81,438
Kane	515,269	Kane	\$73,347
Kankakee	113,449	Kankakee	\$54,697
ILLINOIS	12,800,000	ILLINOIS	\$60,690

RACIAL & ETHNIC DIVERSITY

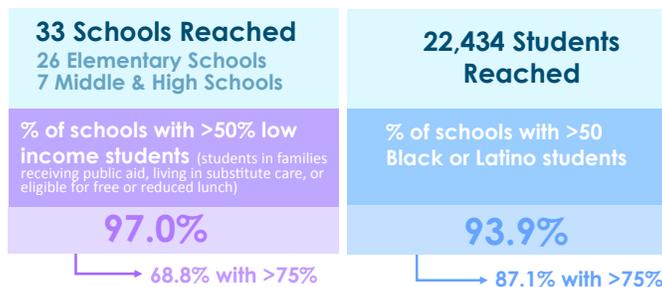


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011. Retrieved from http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_11_5YR_DP04

II. INTERVENTION

In order to create policies that support nutrition environments in schools, all five communities used the School Health Index (SHI) between 2015 and 2018.⁵ The SHI is a self-assessment and planning tool that enables schools to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their school's policies and programs for promoting health and safety; develop an action plan for improving student health and safety; and involve teachers, parents, students, and the community in improving school policies, programs, and services. The LHDs worked with 33 schools in CDASH communities on the Nutrition and Food Services module scorecard of the SHI between the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 school years. Of the 33 schools participating in SHI, 97.0 percent offered free and reduced-price meals for all students who meet income requirements. Additionally 84.8 percent of participating schools exceeded the National School Lunch Program requirements for fruits and vegetables to offer one additional serving per week from any of the three vegetable subgroups (dark green, red and orange, dry beans and peas). A majority of schools surveyed also promoted healthy food and beverage choices and school meals using Smarter Lunchroom techniques (69.7 percent) and collaboration between nutrition staff and teachers to reinforce nutrition education lessons taught in the classroom (63.6 percent). The SHI also identified areas for improvement. For example, only 21.2 percent of schools reported implementing farm to school activities. LHDs provided technical assistance and resources to schools to help them improve their nutrition environments. The interventions listed in the table to the right have been initiated as a result of this LHDs working closely with schools to complete the SHI and helping them tailor their activities to improve their school nutrition environment.

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS



Source: Illinois Report Card, 2015. Retrieved from <https://www.illinoisreportcard.com/> on 08/02/2018.

INTERVENTIONS RELATED TO SHI

Strategy	Activity
Promote healthy food and beverage choices using Smarter Lunchroom Techniques	Developing school gardens • Launching 5-4-3-2-1 Go!® messaging campaign
Adequate time to eat school meals	Expanding time for lunch
Farm to school activities	Participating in National Farm to School Program

Source: Self-reported data from LHDs on school interventions implemented.



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III. HEALTH IMPACT

Preliminary findings suggest that LHDs are moving the needle in the right direction to improve nutrition behaviors and reduce obesity in children and youth in CDASH communities. Comparing the 2014 and 2016 IYHS, 5.4 percent more students met fruit intake recommendations and 1.9 percent more students met the vegetable intake recommendations in CDASH communities as compared to the State overall. Although it is challenging to assess changes in obesity over such a short time frame, in four of five CDASH communities, obesity increased by under 1.5 percent (range -0.7 percent to 1.3 percent). The outlier county had a small sample size in 2016. The obesity rate for the state overall increased by 10.3 percent, a difference of over 9.0 percent between IL and the majority of CDASH communities. Through changing nutrition environments, CDASH communities are able to promote positive health behavior and reduce the rate of obesity increase in children and adolescents.

IV. SOURCES

¹ *Child Obesity Facts*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/childhood.html> on 05/28/2018.

² *Illinois State Nutrition and Physical Activity Profile, 2015*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/state-local-programs/profiles/pdfs/illinois-state-profile.pdf> on 05/21/2018.

³ *Illinois Youth Health Survey—County Reports, 2014-2016*. University of Illinois: Center for Prevention Research and Development. Retrieved from <https://iys.cprd.illinois.edu/results/county> on 05/28/2018.

⁴ *School Nutrition Environment*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/nutrition/schoolnutrition.htm> on 05/28/2018

⁵ School Health Index, 2015-2017. Provided for CDASH school sites by LHDs.

V. FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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The interventions highlighted in this document were made possible by funding from the CDC-1305 Chronic Disease and School Health (CDASH) grant and in partnership with the Illinois Department of Public Health CDASH team.