

FORMATIVE RESEARCH: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

for

The Examination of Communication Factors Affecting Policymakers

A Report to:

California Project LEAN of the
California Department of Health Services
and the Public Health Institute

Funded by:

California Cancer Research Program
Community-Initiated Research
Collaboration Awards

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INTRODUCTION

Today's youth are at risk for cancer in adulthood due to many factors -- one of which is the rise in adolescent obesity. Although the youth obesity epidemic is a multi-faceted issue, what and where children eat are central. California schools play a significant role in feeding California's children and thus, contribute to the acquisition of lifetime dietary habits. Many of the foods adolescents eat at school are high in fat, sugar, sodium and calories, and low in fiber. These types of foods are sold in part because they are popular and thus, create a sales profit. School fast food sales, in particular, generate revenue for food service operations with shrinking budgets. Schools allow advertising on campus, including brand names on facilities and equipment, and sponsorship of school events in exchange for funding to support not only school food service operations but also salaries of physical education teachers and sports programs. These policy practices can contribute to inadequate diet and the acquisition of poor dietary habits.

The primary purpose of this project is to reduce cancer risk through the accomplishment of formative research in California communities that will assist in the development of a health communications plan targeted at policymakers. The study was undertaken through collaboration between California Project LEAN (Leaders Encouraging Activity and Nutrition) (CPL), 10 California communities, and the University of South Florida (USF), College of Public Health. All members formed the Community Research Collaborative. These members have a strong history of conducting community-based health communications research.

The overall research objectives of this project are to:

- Review and document successful prevention program models that have used policy strategies to impact population-based behavior change, especially in the area of nutrition.
- Identify the economic and policy issues associated with fast food sales on high school campuses.
- Determine which policymakers have the most influence and are the most likely to make policy changes in the school community.
- Determine the health communication strategies that have the most potential to influence policymakers to enact school policies that support healthy eating for low-income teens.

The broad, long-term goals of the project include (a) determining policymakers' attitudes, perceptions and motivations related to the enactment of policies that support healthy eating in high schools; (b) mitigating barriers to the adoption of school policies that support healthy eating; and (c) reducing the prevalence of prostate and ovarian cancer-related risk factors, particularly inadequate diet.

Very little information exists regarding the factors that influence (motivating and deterring factors) school board members in relation to nutrition policy; hence the need for

this study. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention funded a Joint Work Group in 1998 to determine how to talk with school board members about teen pregnancy. The work group found that school boards make policy and superintendents implement it. School board policymaking occurs in the context of 1) state statutes and regulations, and 2) politics. Our research project will look at nutrition within these contexts and will present communication strategies for addressing them.

To date, formative research for this initiative has involved an in-depth literature review, key informant interviews and a brief solicitation survey developed and conducted by Project LEAN staff at the annual California School Board Association (CSBA) meeting December 1, 2000. The literature review, key informant interviews and information from the solicitation survey will contribute to the development of a survey to be administered to a stratified (by school district) random sample of school board members in California, as well as randomly selected superintendents in California.

This report focuses primarily school board members, as they were the majority of policy makers interviewed. However, community collaborative members conducted interviews with superintendents, principals, assistant principals, and state and national education leaders.

The key informant interviews, survey development and implementation has been approved by the University of South Florida's Institutional Review Board (IRB #99.333) (Appendix A).

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS (KII)

Data Collection

Based on the review of literature, input from community collaborative, and conversations with key individuals a draft key informant survey was developed. This survey was shared with several state and national experts in the area of school health and social marketing. Based on their comments a final version of the *Healthy Food Choices & School Policies: Key Opinion Leaders* interview guide was developed (Appendix B).

Key informant interviews (KII) were performed with 57 policymakers. Coordinators from the community collaborative were asked to identify and interview a minimum of five key informants (KI) within their respective region (Appendix C). Appendix D is a map showing regions within California. Depending upon the community and the availability of individuals, key informants held different titles and positions from region to region. A *Key Informant Selection Process* guide was developed and provided to each community coordinator (Appendix E). Community coordinators were also provided *When Calling a Key Informant to Schedule a Meeting* guide (Appendix F) to assist in setting up the interview as well as provide consistency among coordinators. Community coordinators were also provided a *Scheduling a Key Informant Interview* form (Appendix G), which needed to be completed and submitted to California Project LEAN. A *California Chefs Cook Lean Cookbook* for participation was provided to the interviewees.

Key informant interviews were recorded in several ways. Some were audiotaped, some interviewers typed their notes and saved as an electronic file, some had handwritten notes, and some had a combination of the aforementioned. The researchers reviewed all interviews regardless of how they were recorded. Thirty-seven interviews had electronic files. These electronic files were printed out and reviewed by three researchers. The researchers compared their notes and comments. From their notes the KII Codes were developed (Appendix H).

Twenty-nine interviews were audiotaped, of those 26 were transcribed. The three tapes not transcribed were inaudible. The KII Codes were used to analyze the transcribed interviews. Two researchers read each transcript and compared coding for inter-rater consistency. Based on the codes recurring themes were identified. Passages that represented the sentiments of the interviewees were also identified.

KII Findings

Fifty-four key informant interviewees completed demographic profiles, among which 48% were school board members. The gender distribution was even; 52% male (28) and 48% female (26). Of those who reported their ethnicity, over half (61%)

reported being Caucasian and eight (15%) interviewees identified themselves as Hispanic. Other policymakers interviewed included: superintendents (15%); principals (15%); Assistant Superintendent (6%); state and national leaders in education (17%).* Eighteen (33%) of the interviewees had school age children, and 17 enrolled them in public schools.

Briefly describe why you became a school board member?

The key informant interviews revealed many reasons why participants are involved with the school board. Many have a vested interest in the school district and the community. Participants have lived in the district, many for over twenty years, and have raised their children in the school system. Thus, this personal experience has motivated them to improve school conditions for their own children and the community.

Many also assumed the position of school board member by appointment because someone stepped down before their term was over. This appointment has often been a result of their commitment to children or their involvement in community and public service. They then sought re-election and continued as a school board member.

The driving force for school board members is their interest in children's issues and their need to give the community a voice. As an elected official, many see it as their duty to communicate the needs of their community, including the needs of the students, the parents, and the school staff.

Well my kids were in the schools and I wanted to stay involved in their lives and I was interested in school issues...

I have been involved in the district for 14 years as a parent activist, so to speak, a PTA president at several different schools and a community member of several different curricular committees in our district. And it was, for me, it was a natural progression to go to the level where I actually was making policy for the district.

To help us better understand how school policies are made, can you explain to me generally how a policy is brought forward to the school or school district and then acted on?

Participants discussed several ways in which policy is brought forward. It appears that the California School Boards Association (CSBA) is one of the most influential organizations in initiating policy. State mandated policies and guidelines also drive policy at the local level. For example, the United States Department of

*NOTE: Percentages were rounded to the nearest whole number

Agriculture's (USDA) National School Lunch Program's (NSLP) nutrition guidelines are used as a starting point for many food service issues.

School board members also play an important role in bringing forth policy. The introduction of items from school board members to the school board may be a result of prevalent issues in their district or issues that may have been brought to their attention by parents and concerned citizens. School groups such as the School Site Council and the Parent Teacher Association/Organization (PTA/PTO) are also active in bringing issues to school board.

School board members also indicated that principals and superintendents would introduce issues and have them placed on the agenda. Several suggested that it was the superintendent's role to place an item on the agenda for the school board to discuss and act upon.

...One way is that the California School Board Association writes up sample policy and they distribute them to the school districts on a regular basis...

...Sometimes members of the board bring up specific concerns that they have...

...A parent, someone in the school district, brings up issues and we find that we need to clarify the answer to those issues through policy.

...It's the school administration that brings forward the need for a policy and the justification for a policy and even drafts the policy.

Policies can come to the board in several ways. There are mandated, policies mandated by public law so they would come to the board through the staff and the recommendations would be based on the fact that they're required by law...Policies would come to the board through student and parent groups such as the PTA or the school site...

As a school board member, what do you consider to be important issues concerning your school today?

The school board members considered a wide variety of issues to be important. The first and foremost was that of academic achievement and standards. The primary goal of schools is to educate students so that they may successfully complete school, gain acceptance into college, succeed academically and become productive members of society. As a result, top priorities include testing for graduation, literacy, assessment, and accountability. In addition, teacher training and curriculum development are all linked with high quality instruction for students.

Another top priority for many school board members was the development of the school facility. Space has become a big problem as more and more students are enrolled in school. As a result there is often the inconvenience of undergoing reconstruction and the need for funding to carry out this task.

Safety has also become a big dilemma due to the violence that occurs in schools. There is a need for police to be present at the schools in an effort to reduce crime. This is also a prevalent issue due to the national attention gained by the Columbine shootings.

Other priorities include keeping up with the changing demographics and having teachers trained to meet these needs. Many times the language barrier is the greatest challenge. There is also a need for school nurses and persons trained to deal with mental health issues. Low on the list of concerns is that of health, nutrition, and physical activity.

...The single most important [thing] is to make sure each and every child gets a quality education.

...In the high school, the biggest issue this year is going to be the high school exit exams. Because they are just in for a real treat when they find out maybe half of these kids are not going to pass.

...Number one would obviously be school safety...

We've been working, oh probably eight years, on renovating our buildings because we didn't have enough room and we have dilapidated school buildings.

...Boards are under such tremendous pressure to show improved performance...the business of education is so complex...their plate is very full. So it's hard to get school health crowded on the plate. The reason this agenda doesn't get advanced is just that it's more of a passive – yeah, that's okay, but we're busy or, you know, that's all well and good but it's somebody else's job.

In the past, who has approached you regarding the need for change in school health policies/issues?

Key informants revealed that several groups of people have approached them in the past regarding school health issues, although some stated that they have never been approached regarding health policy. The school nurse, the nutritionist, the counselor and other school staff have been quite active with regards to health issues. Teachers, particularly health educators, have expressed their concern for various health issues. Parent groups and student clubs, having experienced many of these issues first hand, have

also approached school board members about these issues. Lastly, community groups and members have also suggested health issues.

We hired a nutritionist and so normally they bring to us what they see is the need for the district.

...Parents often times bring up issues that are not just academic but related to, you know, school health issues.

Well I don't know that anyone has approached me directly in that regard.

...Health policy issues come to the board usually from teacher curriculum committees, people who are studying the curriculum...

When making a decision about a school health policy from whom do you seek advice?

When school board members need advice regarding school health policy, they seek advice from a wide variety of sources. Many school board members seek advice from school nurses and counselors since many are actively involved with the health of the students. Health teachers and physical education teachers are also quite helpful. With regards to nutrition issues, school board members rely heavily on the advice of the Food Service Director or nutritionist. The school board staff, particularly superintendents and principals, the policies of other districts, and the CSBA are also resources which school board members rely upon. The local health department and the state and county offices of education have also been valuable sources of information.

And the resources, you know, among the other resources are CSBA, other districts, the State Department of Education, their legal counsel or their health advisors.

Well, if there is a health issue, I would go to the nurse...She's been there a long time, she appears to know this community and it's needs...She's networked well with various agencies.

What type of support do you need from community members (i.e., parents, business leaders) to bring forth a school health policy OR to support a school health policy?

When asked the types of support needed to bring forth a school health policy, participants most often stated that a unified community voice, signaled by repeated complaints, interest, and collective visibility are crucial. Only through the voice of many people could board members confirm that an issue was of great concern, and worthy of review. In addition, board members felt that a proposed policy was strengthened by sound background information.

...You need to hear from any political organizations that have positions on this because that helps you understand the political organizations that have positions on this ...if it's something you've never really been exposed to before.

Tangible demonstration and support. Turnout at board [meetings]. People speaking during the public comments section of the meeting. Letters to the editor of the paper. You know, news stories in the local papers. You know, that's how opinion is formed in this country.

...I wouldn't go out if there was just one person telling me this. I would hope that I would get more than one phone call about any situation or any problem. And then normally, when I get at least a half a dozen phone calls, then I usually visit the school to find out for myself or either I would call the director and say this is what I'm hearing. ...If you have more than five phone calls there must be something wrong. And usually you get a letter signed by any number of parents.

...Good policy should be driven by real research and real information so that you know that it's going to really make a difference.

What do you need to know about a specific school health policy issue (i.e., healthy food choice, exclusive pouring contracts) in order to bring it to the school board's attention for discussion?

The majority of participants emphasized the importance of seeing the student benefit of a health policy when bringing it to the school board's attention. Statistical support, as well as practical significance, through the proven success of similar programs in other districts provides a foundation for a strong policy proposal. A formal or informal cost-benefit analysis, many felt, helps to ensure that all sides of the issue have been investigated, prior to board discussion.

In addition, the link between health and education is important, as academic performance is among the major priorities in school districts. A number of members discussed the cultural implications of alternatives to existing nutrition programs, suggesting that a diverse school population must be considered when thinking about a new or improved school health policy.

How it's going to benefit the kids. I want to make sure that anything that we do is going to be beneficial for the kids ... We have 48,000 kids in our district...I want to know how it's going to affect the pupils and make sure that it's going to be something that we're doing positive for them.

...What's the goals, what's the vision, what's the hope that the board wishes to accomplish with this policy, and then if they're going to do an administrative regulation to it, to ask superintendents to do something, what specific things do they want done and then what measures of success are there, so that when they go back and review this policy, they'll have a sense of whether it was successful or not. ...They need to have a concrete understanding of the problem and what their proposed solution may in fact be.

...The mission of education is to educate children academically and then with that perspective, we try to promote certain school health programs on the basis of their immediate short-term benefit for improving academic performance. So that we can point to the good research showing the link between the school breakfast program and improved academic performance...I mean all of us know there is a link, but there's just lack of research demonstrating this...That's really the only argument that will fly with board members.

...Appreciate the role of the board member as a layperson charged with governing a district. They're not experts on educational issues. They're not experts on safety issues. They're charged with utilizing their best judgments on these issues.

Sometimes it is cultural, they won't eat it. They just flat out won't eat it, you know? So try to make something that's a little bit closer to what they're used to eating and more than likely they will eat it and they will have better sales.

If a parent/community member wanted to bring a school issue to your attention (e.g., fast foods, soda machines in the school) what process would have to take place to have the issue placed on the school board agenda?

The general (formal) process of developing a new policy requires that the policy be brought to the superintendent who in turn brings it to school board's attention at the school board meeting. The policy item is then placed on the school board agenda. The school board then elects to approve or reject the policy item after it being placed on the agenda for two consecutive meetings. If the item is approved, the district then develops regulations that support the new policy.

Informally school board members can ask that an issue be placed on the agenda. This could occur after the school board member hears from several parents/community members about an issue and decides that the school board should address it.

...The superintendent should bring forward the need for policy and get a preliminary go ahead from the board on whether to go ahead and draft something.

...The draft policy tends to be voted up or down. ...It's an iterative process...Board members are always complaining about how frustrating it, the slow pace of change and how incredibly complex education policy is.

The board might give me a general topic that they would like a policy on and I draft the policy and I bring it to the board for a first reading and then they review it along with the public...ask me questions, make modifications...at the next meeting we bring it back for a second reading and adoption.

Personally, from whom or where do you get information regarding school/community health/nutrition issues?

When seeking information on school and community health, or nutrition issues, the majority of participants read local and national newspapers. In addition, many access the Internet for current information. Others frequent professional journals or magazines for health information. A few look to school board members or their school's superintendents for information.

I would say TV, professional organizations, ...other board members and ...I read it in the paper and do you have this problem and you need to look into it. The superintendent said look into it to find out about it. ...She would bring up things to us that we hadn't even heard about.

...I do a lot of my own research and private reading...I count on national publications like the Christian Science Monitor, Harper's Magazine...the Monitor always has the new things, what's on the horizon for health.

What have you found to be the major barriers with regards to implementing school health policy?

The major barriers to implementing school health policy discussed by interviewees surrounded financial limitations, other school priorities (i.e. academic performance, facility expansion, and curriculum) and lack of education among parents. Due to contracts with fast food or soda vendors (which help fund important school programs), school board members believed their hands were tied regarding the school's healthy food choice options because these vendors were able to provide external funds for the school district.

Lack of parent education is also seen as a barrier. Lack of parental education carried two different meanings. First, some school board members referred to parents not understanding school health issues and specifically the importance of nutrition. Second, parents do not know how the school board operates and how they can influence the school board and make things happen within their school and community. Whether due to cultural implications or apathy, many interviewees believed parents need to be more aware of the importance of the school's role in the health of their children.

...A lot of it comes down to dollars. They are going to want to do what is right, but it's hard sometimes when you've got this thing dangling in front of you. Here you can have these things if you want. You know, it's hard for them to say no, when especially, we've dealt with such severe budget cuts, because the money is so targeted.

Well boards are under such tremendous pressure to show improved performance, I mean, the business of education is so complex that there's so many other things that they have to be looking at.

...We need parent education. And I know we don't have enough school nurses in our schools to be able to get bilingual people to go to homes and talk to the Hispanic parents about nutrition and health issues, hygiene and stuff like that...A lot of the things that we took for granted that are supposed to happen, the younger parent's don't approve of. And a lot of them want to pull certain books out of the library. It runs a whole gamut.

SOLICITATION SURVEY

Data Collection

California Project LEAN developed a brief one-page (front and back) solicitation survey that was distributed at the annual California School Board Association (CSBA) meeting on December 1, 2000 (Appendix I). California Project LEAN, in consultation with USF, took advantage of this opportunity to collect more formative data that would assist in the development of the school board member survey. USF provided secondary data analysis of the anonymous survey results.

Solicitation Survey Findings

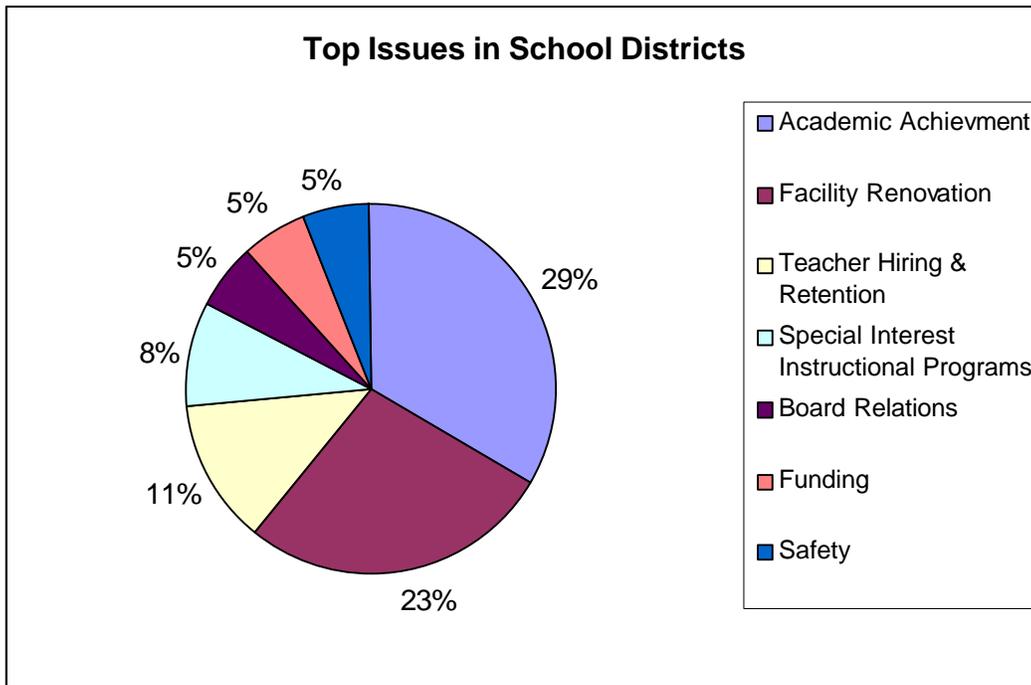
Thirty-eight key opinion solicitation surveys were conducted, among which the majority (89.5%) were school board members. Of those who provided their age (32), the mean was of 49 years. Among the 35 participants who responded to the question of gender, approximately 71% (26) were female and 24% (9) were male. Sixty-one percent (23) of opinion leaders had at least one high school in their district, 35% (13) did not have a high school, and 5% (2) did not respond. Among participants who described their school districts (36), 45% (16) represented suburban school districts, 34% (13) described their districts as rural, and nearly 16% (8) said their districts were urban. See the table below for daily attendance of school districts.

Daily Attendance of School Districts

Daily Attendance	Percent (N)
Less than 1000	7.9 (3)
1001-3000	15.8 (6)
3001-5000	28.9 (11)
5001-10000	26.3 (10)
10001-20000	18.4 (7)
20001 or more	2.6 (1)
Total	38
Total	38

Key Issues in Your School

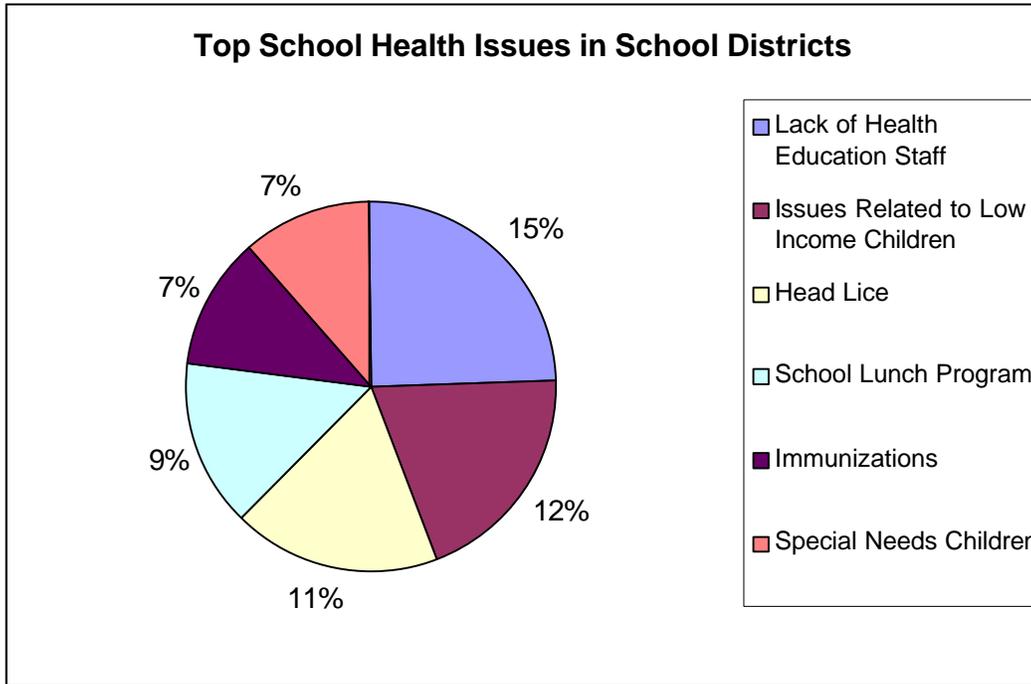
When asked to list issues important to their school districts, many of the opinion leaders' responses coincided with important school priorities raised in key informant interviews. The chief issue addressed in schools districts was academic performance. Student scores on annual standardized tests and exit exams were signs of school ranking and subsequent accreditation, making achievement a top priority. Second, facility renovation, due to rapid growth, overcrowding, and old buildings, was frequently mentioned. Hiring of qualified teachers, as well as retention, through salary increases, were among major agenda items. Other instructional programs, such as alternative education, special education tracks, and bilingual education were also of concern to key opinion leaders. Funding limits, school safety, as well as board and staff relations were also mentioned as important issues within their schools.



Key School Health Issues in Your School

The major school health issue cited by opinion leaders surrounded health education to help children make healthier food choices and be more physically active. However, lack of trained instructors and nurses was a major barrier to this goal. Issues related to low-income children were also of concern. Undernourishment, resulting in inability to learn, and uninsured students, with no access to medical and dental care all linked poverty to an optimal school experience. Management of head lice was also an

issue in school districts. The nutritional value of school lunches was a key school health issue. Many participants elaborated on food preparation and storage practices within the food nutrition program. Other issues surrounded the importance of school immunizations, as well special needs children whose health conditions required on-site management.



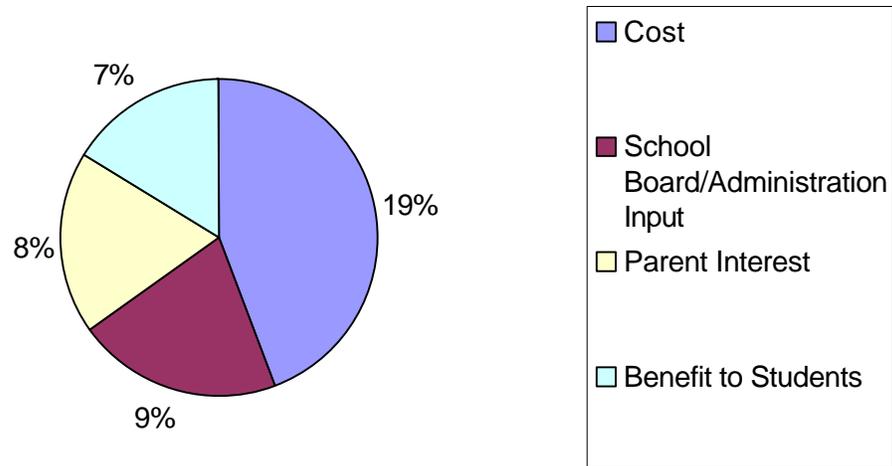
School Health Issues Significance

The majority of key opinion leaders feel that school health issues are important. Forty-seven percent (18) feel issues such as fast foods, food carts, vending machines and pouring contracts are *Very Important*, and nearly 40% (15) feel school health issues are *Important*. Only 10% (5) say school health issues are *Somewhat Important*. One participant (3%) did not respond.

Factors that Influence School Board Decision-Making

Cost was the mostly frequently listed response among opinion leaders when asked to think about influences on school health decision-making. Although school health issues were important to many board members, money earmarked for other programs or interests made cost benefit analysis of a school health interest very important. Input of school board administration, as well as parents was also important. Finally, staff believed that the welfare and potential benefit to students was important in decision-making relative to school health policies.

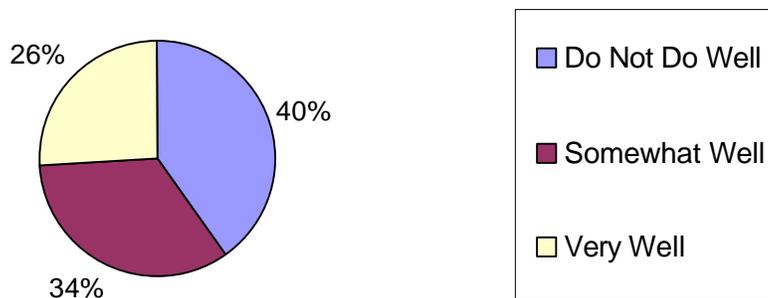
Major Factors Influencing School Board Decision-Making Relative to School Health Issues



School District Efforts to Provide Access to Healthy Foods

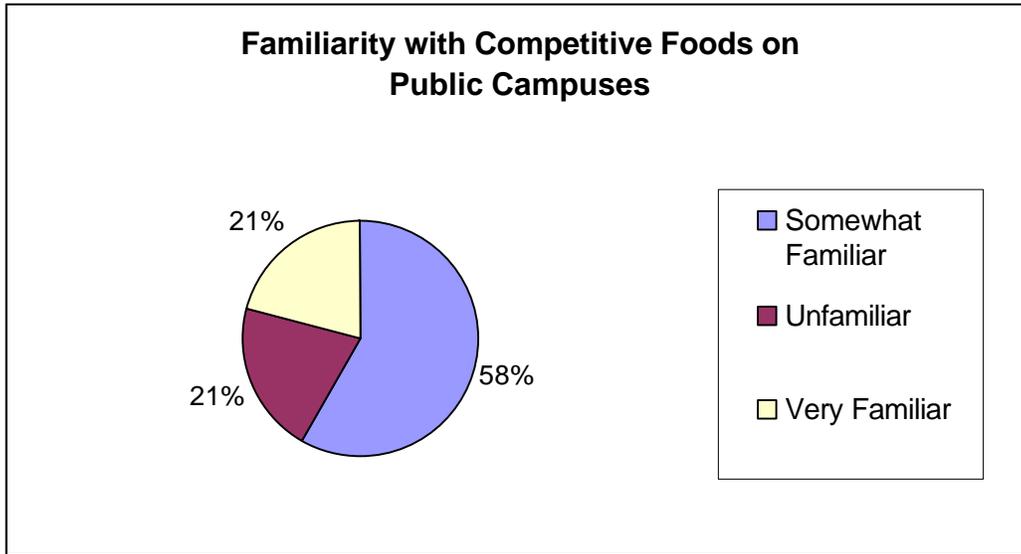
Opinion leaders have fairly “split” responses as relates to their school districts’ effectiveness in providing healthy food choices. Nearly 40% (15) feel their districts did not do well, 34% (13) say districts did *Somewhat Well*, and 26% (10) claim their districts do *Very Well*.

School Districts' Effectiveness in Providing Healthy Food Choices



Familiarity with Competitive Foods on Public Campuses

The majority of opinion leaders (58%) are *Somewhat Familiar* with competitive foods on public school campuses. Nearly 21% (8) of participants are *Unfamiliar* with the problem, and 21% (8) are *Very Familiar* with the issue.



SUMMARY OF FORMATIVE RESEARCH FINDINGS

The findings of the key informant interviews and solicitation survey suggest that school board members become school members because they are concerned about the overall well-being of children and youth, and have a desire to give back to their community. However, school health issues, in particular healthy food choices, are not necessarily issues of concern or issues that have been brought to their attention.

Although many of those interviewed realized that school health issues, in particular healthy food choices was important for school age children, other issues such as academic achievement and facilities were considered most important. For healthy food choices to be considered as a school board agenda item it must first be brought forward as an issue by more than one person and school board members must be provided with factual information. Critical information should link school achievement with nutrition and clear student benefit must be seen. Also, school board members emphasized the importance of knowing the cost-benefit of providing healthy food choices in the school.

Superintendents and school board staff appeared to have a great influence over the issues that appeared on the school board agenda. Principals also were considered influential in bringing items forward for placement on the school board agenda.

When school board members need advice regarding school health policy, they seek advice from a wide variety of sources. Sources included school nurses, counselors, health and physical education teachers. With regards to nutrition issues, school board members rely heavily on the advice of the Food Service Director or nutritionist. The resources, which school board members rely on, include the school board staff, particularly superintendents and principals, the policies of other districts, and the CSBA.

School board members read both local, state and national newspapers, as well as professional and lay journals to keep abreast of current issues.

School board members believed that parents needed to better understand how the school board operated so they could have greater influence over the policies developed by the school board and that parents needed to better understand the importance of health and nutrition for the over well being of children.

Findings from this phase of the formative search will guide the development of a school board member survey.

APPENDIX A

**University of South Florida
Institutional Review Board Approval**



November 21,2000

Kelli McCormack Brown, Ph.D., CHES
Department of Community and Family Health
MDC Box 56

Dear Dr. Brown:

Your new protocol (**IRB #99.333**) entitled,
"Examination of Communication Factors Affecting Policymakers"

has been approved under Exempt Category number 3 (i). This action will be reported at the next convened IRB-02 meeting on December 15, 2000.

If you have any questions regarding this matter please do not hesitate to call my office at 974-5638.

Sincerely,

Louis Penner, Ph.D.
Chairperson, IRB-02

LP:amr
Cc:FAO

Office of Research, Division of Research Compliance
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APPENDIX B

***Healthy Food Choices & School Policies:
Key Opinion Leaders Survey***

***Healthy Food Choices & School Policies:
Key Opinion Leaders***

Name: _____

Date:

Project LEAN Region _____

Interviewer:

Statements in bold are instructions or comments that the interviewer should provide to the key informant (KI).

[OTHER INSTRUCTIONS AND COMMENTS INTENDED ONLY FOR THE INTERVIEWER ARE PROVIDED IN BRACKETS AND CAPS AND SHOULD NOT BE READ TO THE KI]

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed.

Your assistance and comments are valuable and important.

This interview is informal, like a conversation.

Purpose

Discuss how school health policies are determined, in particular, what influences school board members (like yourself – if appropriate) in their school health policy decision-making process.

I am doing this interview as part of a collaborative process between Project LEAN and the University of South Florida (Tampa, FL).

I am very interested in all your ideas, comments and suggestions.

No right or wrong answers: want both positive and negative comments.

Results from this interview will be combined with other interviews to assist in developing a survey for school board members.

Procedure

About 30 – 45 minutes

I will be audio taping this interview as well as taking notes.

This interview is confidential. You may stop the interview at any time.

As indicated on the phone I will need you to read and sign this informed consent form. [GIVE TO THEM, HAVE THEM READ AND SIGN, YOU THEN SIGN. OFFER THEM A COPY IF THEY WANT]

We have a lot to cover so I might change the subject or move ahead, but let me know if you want to add something. Don't let me cut you off.

-
1. Please talk about how long you have been a school board member, principal, superintendent, etc...

PROBE: How long have you lived in this school district?

Have you held more than one term on the school board?

[] Yes [] No

If YES, how many terms have you held? _____

2. To help us better understand how school policies are made, can you explain to me generally how a policy is brought forward to the school board and then acted on.

3. As a school board member, principal, superintendent, what do you consider to be important issues concerning schools today?

PROBE: pouring/contract rights, bussing, academic achievement, testing, fast foods, etc.

[AFTER THEY HAVE TOLD YOU THE ISSUES THEY THINK ARE IMPORTANT, ASK THEM TO RATE HOW IMPORTANT THE ISSUE IS: VERY IMPORTANT (1), IMPORTANT (2), SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT (3)]

4. Of the above issues you mentioned, which issues are your school board dealing with or addressing this year?

PROBE: How did these issues become issues in which the school board decided to address?

7. When making a decision about a school health policy who do you seek advice from?

PROBE: Are any of these more influential than others?

PROBE: Do you look to other school districts or CSBA for sample policies?

8. What type of support do you need from community members (i.e., parents, business leaders) to bring forth a school health policy OR to support a school health policy?
9. What do you need to know about a specific school health policy (i.e., healthy food choice, pouring contracts) in order to bring it to the board's attention for discussion?

14. Think about all the things we have talked about today, which of these things is most influential for you when making a decision about school health policies in your school district?

15. Does personal experience play a role in your decision making process?

If so, please explain how.

16. We have covered a lot. Is there anything else you believe I should know to help us better understand what influences how decisions are made?

JUST A FEW FINAL DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Gender: Female Male

Age: _____

Ethnicity: African American
 Alaskan Native
 Asian/Pacific Islander
 American Indian or Native American
 Other {specify}: _____

Do you consider yourself: Hispanic OR Non-Hispanic

Do you have any school age children? Yes No

IF YES, How many? _____

What grades? _____

Are they enrolled in public school? Yes No

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!

[GIVE THEM COOKBOOK]

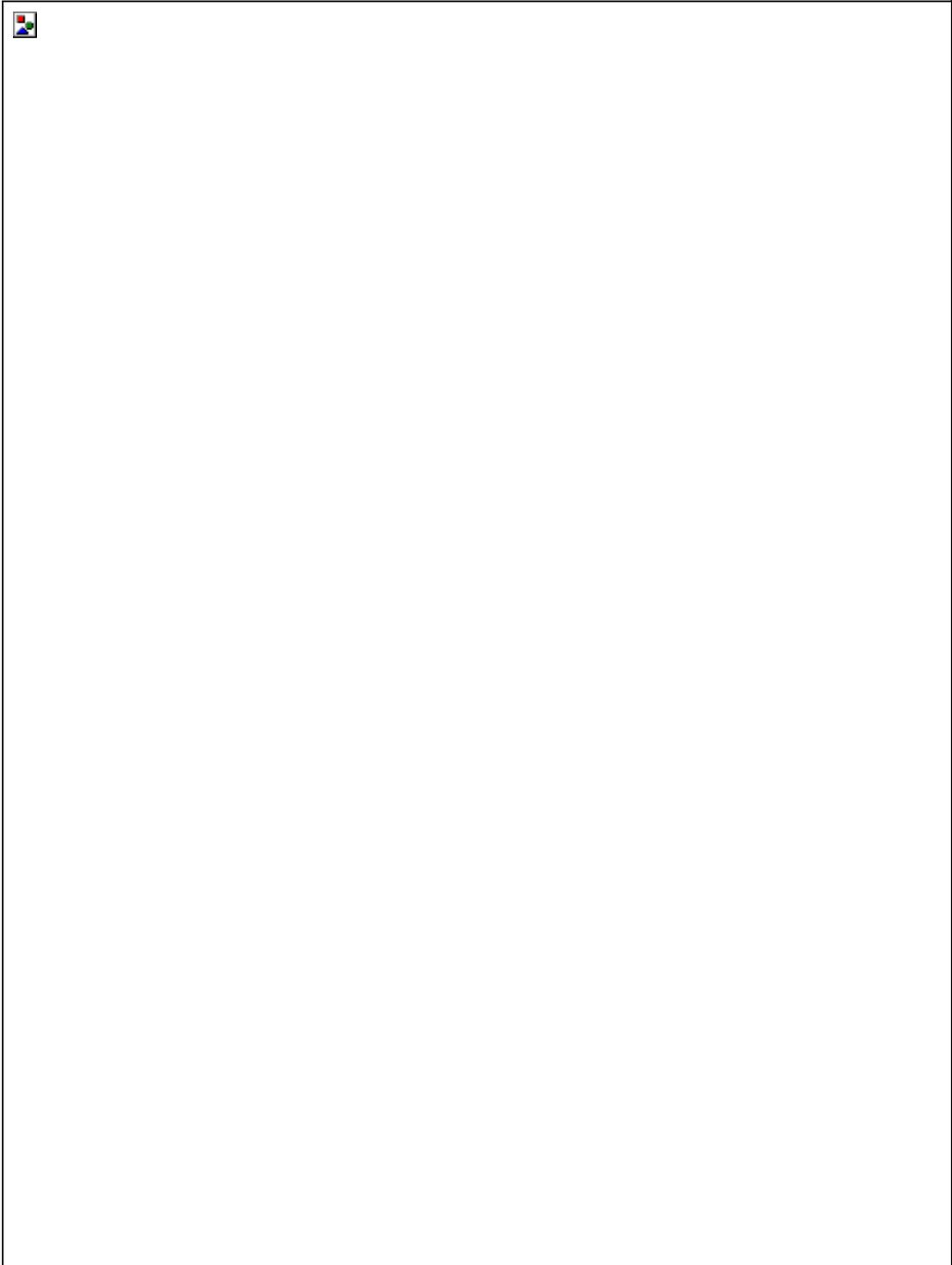
APPENDIX C

Number of Key Informant Interviews by Region	
Project LEAN Region	# of Key Informant Interviews
Bay Area	5
Central Valley	5
Gold Coast	5
Gold Country	5
Great South	5
Los Angeles	5
North Coast	5
North Central	4
Sierra Cascade	5
Southern Coast	6
Project LEAN/FOR Office*	7
Total	57

* Staff from Food on the Run (FOR) interviewed key informants at the state and national levels

APPENDIX D

California Project LEAN Region Map



APPENDIX E

Key Informant Selection Process Guide

Cancer Research Grant
“Examination of Communication Factors Affecting Policymakers”

Key Informant Selection Process

Objective: To interview 5 key informants in your region regarding how school health policies are determined, in particular, what influences school board members in their school health policy decision-making process.

Key informants can be thought of as those persons who can provide valuable information about the school health policy process and how decisions are made. Key informants can also be *stakeholders*. Stakeholders are persons in a position to make decisions that affect the future of the program (e.g. school board member, superintendent, principal).

- Step 1. Identify at least five potential key informants in your region. Send the key informants you have identified to Vicki Berends by 10/24/00 before scheduling your appointments. Include the key informants name, title, affiliation and city. We would like to make sure we have a representative sample of various types of stakeholders across the state before proceeding. You may want to consult with the Food on the Run sites in your region to help identify key informants. You may also want visit the California School Board Association web site at www.csba.org to find a listing of school board members by region. If you have trouble identifying 5, identify 2 or 3 and then ask each of these key informants during your phone conversation who else you should contact.
- Step 2. After the state CPL has approved your key informants, contact each to determine if they have time to meet with you for approximately 45 minutes (more than likely it will be less than 45 minutes, but you want to allow yourself plenty of time). Your interviews must be completed by 11/15/00.
- Step 3. Arrange for the meeting place to be convenient for them, quiet, and a place that you and the key informant will be not be interrupted.

See When Calling a Key Informant to Schedule a Meeting Script

Potential Key Informants/Stakeholders

- ✓ Current school board member (at least 2, 3 would be better)
- ✓ Previous school board member (don't go back beyond 3 years)
- ✓ Superintendent
- ✓ Deputy superintendent
- ✓ High school principal or assistant principal

Try to get 2-3 school board members and 1 of each of the following:

- ✓ Superintendent
- ✓ Deputy superintendent
- ✓ High school principal

Those you do *not* want to interview:

- ✓ School board member/Teacher/Parent who is suing or who has sued school district
- ✓ School board member who ran but lost in the recent election

APPENDIX F

When Calling a Key Informant to Schedule a Meeting Script/Guide

Cancer Research Grant
“Examination of Communication Factors Affecting Policymakers”

When Calling a Key Informant to Schedule a Meeting

Identify Yourself.

Hi, I'm _____ the regional coordinator with Project LEAN Food on the Run campaign. If you have a few minutes I would like to briefly explain a project I am involved with and request some information from you.

Background.

Preliminary research tells us that elected and appointed officials (such as yourself – if this applies) have significant influence on policies and food sales on school campuses. We are working with 10 regions in the state and in each region 5 people like yourself will be interviewed. This information (all 50 interviews) will be compiled to provide us a better understanding of school food policies.

What You Are Requesting.

I would like to interview you for approximately 30 – 45 minutes to help us better understand the attitudes, barriers, perceptions and motivations regarding implementation of school policies affecting healthy food options. As a key leader in the community, your experiences and opinions are valuable to us.

When.

Set up a time convenient for them from November 1 through November 15. Obviously we can be flexible. Although not before November 1.

How the Interview Will Take Place.

- ✓ I can meet you at your office.
- ✓ The interview will take approximately 30-45 minutes.
- ✓ All information will be *confidential*. No names will be attached to any information. Only the position you hold and how long you have held that position.
- ✓ The interview will be audio taped and transcribed. (If this is not possible then you must take copious notes).
- ✓ I will also take notes during the interview.

Informed Consent.

- ✓ Indicate that an informed consent form will need to be signed.

See Informed Consent for more information.

- ✓ If they want you can fax to them ahead of time.

Any Questions?

- ✓ I will send you a brochure on the Project LEAN Food on the Run campaign.
- ✓ Also, you will be provided with a *Chefs Cook Lean Cookbook* for taking the time to be interviewed.

Any Suggestions for Others I Should Interview?

APPENDIX G

Scheduling a Key Informant Interview Form

Cancer Research Grant
“Examination of Communication Factors Affecting Policymakers”

Scheduling a Key Informant Interview

Who: _____

Title: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ **Fax:** _____

Date Scheduled: _____

Time: _____ **Place:** _____

Notes to self:

Called to Confirm Meeting: _____

APPENDIX H

KII Codes

KII CODES:

KII - #1 Why school board member		CODE
Children in school	Kids	
Involved in community/concerned citizen		CommInv
Interested in kid's issues		KidsIssues
Principals:		
Education background		Educ
KII - #2 Who brings policy to school board		CODE
CSBA		CSBA
State mandated/guidelines		Mandate
School board member		SchBd
Parent/Concern citizen		CommMem
PTA/School Site Council		SchGrp
Note: Tabia overview of general process is good		
KII - #3 Most important issues		CODE
Academic standards (student achievements, tests, assessment)		Academic
Construction/facilities/space		Facility
Curriculum (literacy)		Curr
Safety		Safety
Barriers (changing demographics, language, lack of school nurse, nutritionist)		Barrier

KII - #6 Who has approached You		CODE
Teachers (health educators)		Teach
School nurse		SchNur
Parents (parent groups)		Parents
Students (student clues)		Students
Community members/groups		CommGrp
KII – #7 Who do you seek advice from		CODE
School Nurse		AdvSN
Teachers (health and PE)		AdvTeach
Food Service (nutritionists)		AdvFS
CSBA		AdvCSBA
School Board staff (superintendent, principal, staff)		AdvStaff
KII - #9 Support needed from community to bring policy to table		CODE
Parents speaking out (attending meetings, more than 1 person needed)		ParSpkOut
Community Support		CommSupp
Valid, factual information		ValidInfo
Board’s responsibility to inform parents/community		BoardResp

KII - #10 What do you need to know about a school health policy to bring to table		CODE
Benefits to Students		StuBen
Implementation Cost (cost vs. benefit)		Imple\$\$
Link nutrition to learning		Nut & Learn
Research policy (information, support/oppose, other schools, other policies, do homework)		ResPolicy
Cultural implications		Cultural
KII - #11 Process to place school health policy on agenda		CODE
Informal (take to school board member and have them place on agenda)		Informal
Formal (superintendent, researchers, school board agenda)		Formal
CSBA		
Home Economics Dept.		HomeEc

KII - #12 Where do you get school nutrition information?	CODE
CSBA (newsletter, workshops, seminars)	InfoCSBA
Media (local & national newspaper, TV, professional journals)	InfoMedia
State/Federal Agencies (CA Office of Educ, CA Nutrition Network, CA Dept. of Health services, USDA, ProjectLEAN, FOR)	InfoAgency
School Nurse, FS Director	InfoSchStaff
Superintendent, Principal, School Board Staff	InfoSchBrd
Internet	InfoInternet
KII - #13 Barriers to implementing school nutrition policies	CODE
Money (Healthy foods cost more - real or perception)	Bar\$\$
Apathy among Parents (lack of awareness,)	BarApathy
Parents not educated enough about policies	BarParEduc
Cultural issues/appropriateness	BarCul
Lack of school staff on campus (school nurse)	BarStaff
Not a Priority – health (don't see connection between nutrition and learning)	BarPriority
Simplify meal reimbursement application	BarPol
Cafeteria self supporting	BarCafe

APPENDIX I

Healthy Food Choices & School Policies: Key Opinion Leaders Solicitation Survey

***Key Opinion Leaders Survey:
Healthy Food Choices & School Policies***

In a collaborative effort between California Project LEAN's Food on the Run campaign and the California Department Health Services we would like to gain your opinion and insight on healthy food choices and school policies.

Your responses will be completely confidential. Results of this survey will be used to develop a school board member survey that will be distributed in early Spring 2001.

By completing this short survey you will receive a free **CALIFORNIA CHEFS COOK LEAN** Cookbook.

What are the five key issues in your school [school district] this year?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

What are the five key *school health* issues in your school [school district] this year?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

In my opinion, school health issues such as healthy food choices at school (i.e., fast foods, food carts, vending machines, pouring contracts) are:

- Very Important
- Important
- Somewhat Important
- Not Important
- Not a Problem

BACK →

In my opinion, compared to other school issues (e.g., academic achievement, test scores) healthy food choices as a school health issue is often overlooked.

Very Well Somewhat Well Not Well Don't Know

How familiar are you with the issue of competitive foods on public school campuses (i.e., fast foods, food carts, vending machines, pouring contract/rights)?

Very Familiar Somewhat Familiar Unfamiliar

What factors influence your school board decision-making?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

If a school board member, how many years have you been a school board member? _____

If a principal, how many years have you been a principal? _____

If a superintendent, how many years have you been a superintendent? _____

Gender: Female Male **Age:** _____

Do you have at least one high school in the school district you represent?

Yes No

Would you consider your school district to be: Rural Suburban Urban

What is the average daily attendance of your school district:

Under 1,000 1,001 – 3,000 3,001 – 5,000 5,001 – 10,000
 10,001 – 20,000 20,000+

Thank you for your time!

Please return this survey to:

Victoria Berends, California Project LEAN

California State Department of Health Services
School Health Connections - Healthy Families Booth #235

Or fax to: (916) 552-9909