



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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MEDIA CONTACT: Nancy Rodriguez

Office: (502) 564-2000, ext. 4610 | **Cell:** (502) 330-5063 | **E-mail:** nancy.rodriguez@education.ky.gov

FEDERAL GRANT TARGETS IMPROVED SCHOOL HEALTH

(Frankfort, KY) –Kentucky students and staff will benefit from a new federal grant to fund health and wellness initiatives aimed at reducing risk factors associated with childhood and adult obesity, diabetes, heart disease and stroke.

Earlier this week, Governor Steve Beshear announced that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention awarded the Kentucky Department for Public Health (DPH) a \$1.7 million grant that, in part, focuses on healthy environments and prevention activities in schools to improve management of chronic diseases. Kentucky was one of only 32 states to receive additional funding to achieve even greater reach and impact.

The grant cultivates a partnership between the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) and DPH to focus on school health issues such as nutrition standards and policies, physical education and physical activity policies, and school staff wellness policies.

“KDE is committed to work with our partners to continuously improve the health and wellness of Kentucky’s students and school staff,” said Education Commissioner Terry Holliday. “Healthy students miss fewer days of school and are better able to learn and succeed,” he said. “Healthy staff members also have fewer absences and are role models for students to develop habits that support a healthy lifestyle.”

Throughout the five years of the grant, KDE and DPH will work together to promote healthy behaviors among school children and staff. Initiatives will include:

- developing a statewide School Health and Physical Education (S.H.A.P.E.) network;
- developing model nutrition and physical activity policies and pilot interventions in schools, early care and education worksites;
- working with the state employee worksite wellness program to target school employees;
- implementing nutrition and physical activity standards in schools; and
- improving the tracking of students with chronic conditions and working with schools to establish protocols to manage care needs and connect students to private or public insurance and medical homes

(more)

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Being overweight is one of the major risk factors for chronic disease. According to the Centers for Disease Control, a third of Kentucky high school students are either overweight or obese. The rate is only slightly lower in preschool children who are 2-5 years old.

“The health of young people is a priority of public health staff across the state,” DPH Commissioner Stephanie Mayfield said. “With this grant and particularly this partnership with Kentucky schools, we are promoting healthy outcomes for our students. By focusing on healthy habits now, we can prevent chronic diseases in these children’s adult years,” she said.

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