

This is the Introduction of the *Nutrition Education Resource Guide*, published 2011 by the California Department of Education. The purpose of this guide is to provide an instructional resource for California schools, from kindergarten through grade twelve, to implement effective, standards-based nutrition education programs for students.

The complete publication is available at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/he/nerg.asp>.

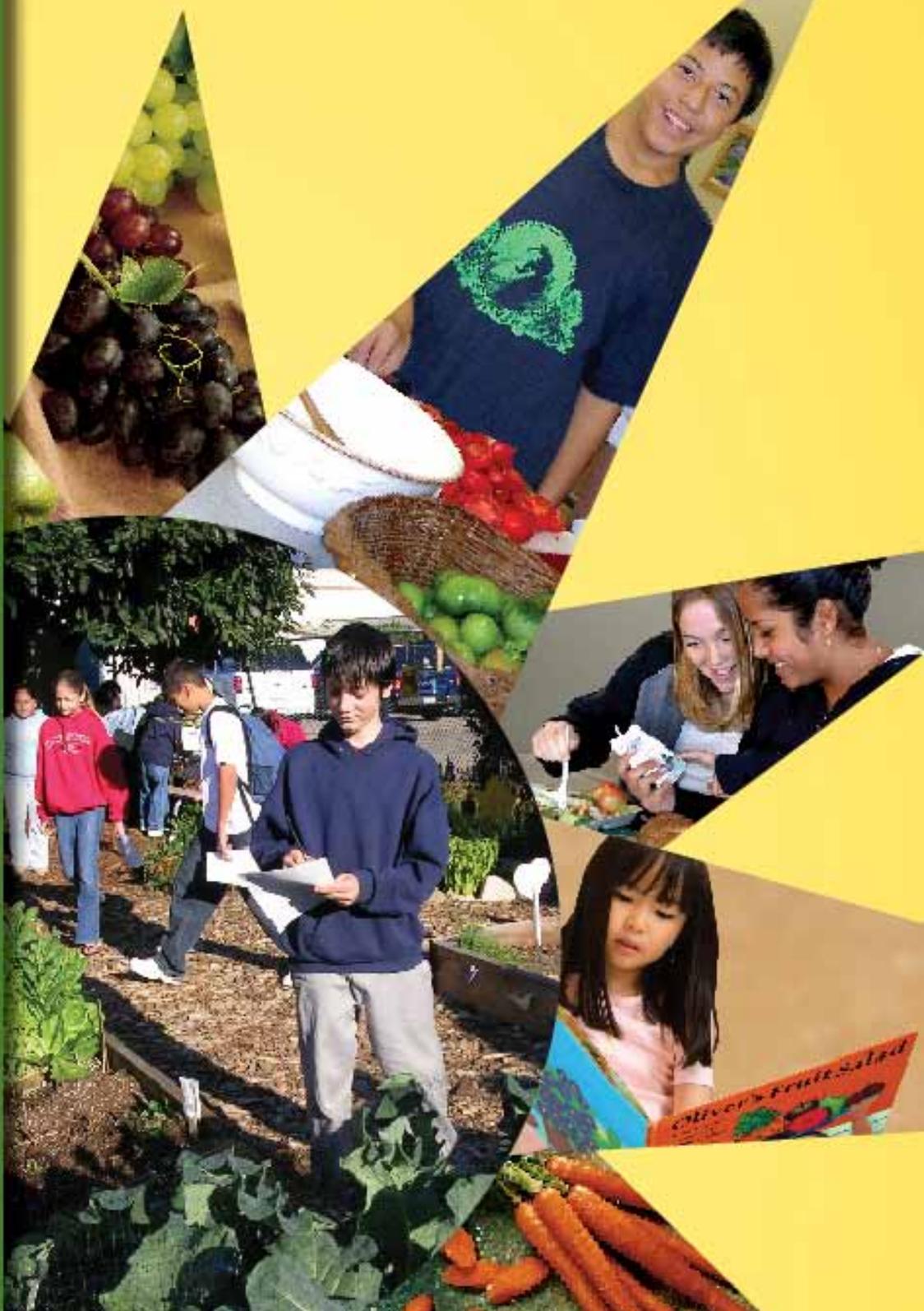
# Nutrition Education Resource Guide

for  
California  
Public  
Schools

*Kindergarten  
Through  
Grade Twelve*



California Department  
of Education  
Sacramento, 2011



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## Publishing Information

The *Nutrition Education Resource Guide for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve* was developed by the Nutrition Services Division, California Department of Education. This publication was edited by Faye Ong and John McLean, working in cooperation with Heather Reed, Consultant. It was designed and prepared for printing by Juan D. Sanchez and was published by the Department of Education, 1430 N Street, Sacramento, CA 95814-5901. It was distributed under the provisions of the Library Distribution Act and *Government Code* Section 11096.

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## Ordering Information

Copies of this publication are available from the Nutrition Services Division, California Department of Education. The nutrition competencies are posted at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/he/ncccindex.asp>.

## Notice

The guidance in the *Nutrition Education Resource Guide for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve* is not binding on local educational agencies or other entities. Except for the statutes, regulations, and court decisions that are referenced herein, the document is exemplary, and compliance with it is not mandatory. (See *Education Code* Section 33308.5.)

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## A Message from the State Superintendent of Public Instruction

On behalf of the California Department of Education (CDE), I am pleased to introduce the *Nutrition Education Resource Guide* as a valuable tool to assist local educational agencies and after-school programs in their efforts to implement well-planned, high-quality instructional programs in nutrition education.

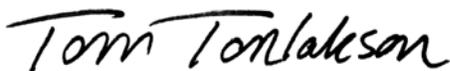
Research consistently demonstrates that students' academic achievement is directly linked to their nutrition and health status. As many experts know, healthy eating and regular physical activity are essential components of a healthy lifestyle. Yet, many of California's students are at risk for obesity, which significantly impacts their ability to lead successful, healthy, and long lives.

Throughout my tenure in public service, I have demonstrated a long-standing commitment to improving student nutrition and physical education, to ensuring that healthy snacks are provided to students, and to promoting nutrition education in after-school programs. As State Superintendent of Public Instruction, "Safe and Healthy Kids" is one of my top four educational priorities.

The CDE's commitment to student health supports the recently released *California Obesity Prevention Plan: A Vision for Tomorrow, Strategic Actions for Today*. The CDE's vision for ensuring "Safe and Healthy Kids" also aligns with the "Let's Move!" campaign championed by First Lady Michelle Obama. The First Lady has partnered with the United States Department of Agriculture's HealthierUS School Challenge (HUSSC) to recognize schools that create healthier school environments through their delivery of nutritious school meals, nutrition education, and physical activity.

The resource guide provides many resources to create nutrition education programs that qualify for HUSSC awards and that align with state and national movements for nutrition education. California schools and after-school programs can use this resource guide to ensure that students are taught the nutrition skills they need to lead healthy lives.

We have incredible opportunities to make investments in education that give every child the chance to learn in a safe and healthy school environment. All of us who work with the youths of our state must join to make the vision for a healthy California a reality for generations to come.



Tom Torlakson

State Superintendent of Public Instruction

# Acknowledgments

**M**any people helped to develop this guide for use by district leaders, teachers, policymakers, and child-nutrition directors. Their hard work and dedication are acknowledged.

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A random sample of 160 teachers from kindergarten through grade twelve, currently employed in public schools in California, reviewed the nutrition competencies.

## Reviewers of Draft Versions of the Nutrition Competencies

Many thanks go to those who provided input on earlier drafts of the Nutrition Competencies, including the following staff members from the California Department of Education:

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# Introduction

## About This Guide

The purpose of this guide is to provide an instructional resource for California schools, from kindergarten through grade twelve, to implement effective, standards-based nutrition education programs for students. The guide was designed to (1) meet the *Health Education Content Standards for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve* (California Department of Education 2008) in the Nutrition and Physical Activity content area; and (2) address the nutrition competencies.

Educators may use it as a resource to plan, implement, and evaluate instructional strategies for a comprehensive nutrition education program. Brief descriptions of the Health Education Content Standards (HECS) and nutrition competencies follow. They are expanded upon in section I, “Nutrition Competencies.”

- **HECS**, which were adopted by the California State Board of Education in 2008, provide guidance to local educators for developing the curriculum instructional strategies for health education. They are divided into six health content areas. Standards for the Nutrition and Physical Activity content area are found in kindergarten and grades two, four, five, seven and eight, and nine through twelve.
- **Nutrition competencies** define what students need to know and be able to do at each grade level to build nutrition literacy and to make healthful food choices. Curriculum leaders and nutrition educators in California school districts can use the nutrition competencies to determine a scope and sequence for nutrition-related health-education curricula and nutrition concepts and skills to emphasize in the classroom. Many nutrition competencies are addressed in the Nutrition and Physical Activity content area of the HECS.



Nutrition education is any combination of educational strategies, accompanied by environmental supports, designed to facilitate the voluntary adoption of food choices and other food- and nutrition-related behaviors conducive to health and well-being. Nutrition education is delivered through multiple venues and involves activities at the individual, community and policy levels.

—Isobel R. Contento, EdD, RD

*Nutrition Linking Research: Theory and Practice (2007)*

## Contents of the Guide

This resource guide provides information about policy and standards related to nutrition education and recommended nutrition education curricula and instructional materials. It also includes useful ideas, guidelines, and resources to help create a quality nutrition education program. The main sections are:

- I, Nutrition Competencies
- II, Recommended Instructional Resources
- III, Guidance on Implementing a Quality Nutrition Education Program
- appendix A, Descriptions of Recommended Instructional Resources
- appendix B, Resources for Enhancing Nutrition Education
- appendix C, Nutrition Basics
- appendix D, Evaluation Checklist
- Glossary
- Works Cited

## Intended Audience

The resource guide is primarily intended for use by local school district curriculum directors and lead teachers, nutrition education coordinators and specialists, and other school district staff who plan nutrition education in elementary, middle, and high schools. Child nutrition directors and managers, after-school program directors and curriculum coordinators, and teachers conducting nutrition education will also find this guide useful. In addition, community and government agency personnel who design nutrition programs may find the resources in this guide helpful.

## Nutrition Education in Schools

Nutrition education has an important role in the lives of students; it supports their academic success and prepares them to lead healthy and productive lives.

Nutrition education is a continuum of learning experiences that help people to make informed decisions about nutrition. Dr. Isobel R. Contento's internationally recognized definition of nutrition education underscores the fact that behavioral change demands broad and comprehensive outreach and education to ensure success.

## Impact of Nutrition Education on Students

Nutrition education in schools helps prepare students for life. Students who graduate from high school with a strong background

in nutrition education will have the skills to make informed nutrition and health decisions. As with any subject, students will succeed if they begin building basic skills early, so that by the time they graduate from high school, they can make healthy food choices for themselves. And most important, students who have developed competency in nutrition education will begin adulthood with an appreciation and healthy enjoyment of food, as well as a positive body image. Given the national childhood obesity epidemic, students need nutrition education to navigate a complex world of food choices. Children who develop healthy habits at an early age are more likely to be well, stay well, and do well in school.

## Local School Wellness Policy

Nutrition education is not only desirable for students, it is also required by local school wellness policy. The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-265, Section 204) included a provision requiring all school districts participating in any federal child nutrition program to establish and adopt a local school wellness policy.

In 2010, Section 204 of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 added Section 9A, “Local School Wellness Policy Implementation.” The new provisions strengthened requirements for ongoing implementation, assessment and public reporting of wellness policies and also expanded the team of collaborators participating in development of the policy. In addition, goals for nutrition promotion were now required. For more information, please visit the Food and Nutrition Services Web site at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/healthy/wellnesspolicy.html>.

The federal law requires the local school wellness policy, at a minimum, to accomplish the following objectives:

- Involve parents, students, representatives of school food service, the school board, school administrators, physical education teachers, and the community in the development and implementation of the school wellness policy, with periodic review and updates.
- Establish goals for nutrition education, nutrition promotion, physical activity, and other school-based activities designed to promote student wellness.
- Set nutrition guidelines for all food available on each school campus during the school day.
- Provide assurance that guidelines for reimbursable meals will not be less restrictive than federal regulations and guidance issued by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).
- Update and inform the public about the content and implementation of the local wellness policies, including compliance, comparison to model policies, and progress in attaining the goals.

As highlighted above, school districts are required to establish a school wellness policy that includes goals for nutrition education and nutrition promotion. However, the language in the policy provisions for nutrition education varies greatly from district to district in terms of strength and specificity. Refer to section IV, “Guidance for Implementing a Quality Nutrition Education Program,” for more direction on how to assess the strength of the nutrition component of a district’s wellness policy and for suggestions for making these policy provisions more definitive.

## Indicators of Quality Nutrition Education

High-quality nutrition education teaches both knowledge and skills in a comprehensive and sequential way, using curriculum based on valid research evidence. Good curriculum is interactive, experiential, and connected to a healthy school environment.

In the document *School Nutrition . . . By Design!* (2006), the California Department of Education provides nine design principles for developing a healthy school nutrition environment. For each design principle, the document identifies a series of quality indicators that represent a best practice for implementation.

For Design Principle 4, Nutrition Education, an effective nutrition education program is designated as a quality program when it:

1. adheres to the USDA Dietary Guidelines and other science-based nutrition research and evidence-based instructional strategies;
2. is based on the national or state health education standards;
3. is taught as part of a comprehensive health education program;
4. integrates nutrition knowledge and skills across the curriculum at certain grade levels;
5. values and encourages experiential learning that builds knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors that promote healthy choices;
6. assesses students’ acquisition of nutrition knowledge, skills, and behaviors;
7. engages family and community members to reinforce instruction;
8. incorporates the physical environment to support the concepts promoted through the program.

These indicators set the context for the nutrition competencies, which provide a focus for instruction in nutrition education. To view the full *School Nutrition . . . by Design!* document, please visit the following Web page: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/he/documents/schnutrtn071206.pdf> (accessed July 22, 2011).