School Health Policies and Practices Survey (SHPPS)
Report for Greenville County Elementary Schools 2012-2013 & 2013-2014 School Years

Melissa Fair, MPH ■ Carlee Campbell ■ Alicia Powers, PhD ■ Catherine Puckett ■ Sally Wills, MPH

Background:
Youth obesity has become a public health priority, with rates more than tripling in recent decades (Giden, C.L et al, 2014). In 2012, 33% of United States youth were overweight or obese (Piedmont Health Foundation, 2008).

To assess the existing policies and practices of United States schools, the CDC developed the School Health Policies and Practices Study. This online tool assists schools in understanding their current physical activity and nutrition policies and practices.

The Greenville County school district includes 52 elementary schools. The chart below represents demographic data on all schools in the district and the subset of schools that participated in the SHPPS during the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 academic years. During the 2012-2013 school year, results were obtained from 40 elementary school administrators, while in 2013-2014 data obtained from only 25 elementary school administrators.

### Demographics:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographics of GCSD Elementary Schools Completing and Not Completing SHPPS Survey</th>
<th>2012-2013</th>
<th>2013-2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SHPPS Schools (N=40)</td>
<td>All GCSD (N=52)</td>
<td>SHPPS Schools (N=25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free/Reduced lunch</td>
<td>39.80%</td>
<td>54.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>59.80%</td>
<td>56.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>22.30%</td>
<td>22.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>14.60%</td>
<td>14.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7.40%</td>
<td>7.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Minority</td>
<td>44.50%</td>
<td>43.90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Objectives:
- Obtain information on the physical activity policies and practices set in GCSD 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years.
- Obtain information on the nutrition policies and practices set in GCSD in 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years.
- Report these findings to GCSD elementary schools in order to make positive changes in policies and practices for GCSD elementary schools.

### Methods:
LWG developed an abridged version of the CDC’s SHPPS tool to be completed by GCSD school administrators. The adapted version of this survey contained took approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete.

Within physical activity, the LWG SHPPS measured physical activity breaks, active transportation to and from school, school recess time, and withholding of recess as a form of punishment. Within nutrition, the survey measured food as incentives in school fundraising, a la carte food item sales, school policy and practice within food service programs, and parental involvement in the food service program.

In the late spring of the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 academic years, all 52 GCSD elementary administrators were invited to complete the LWG SHPPS survey. Each administrator was sent the survey link with an invitation to complete the survey and an IRB consent form. School administrators were given 3 weeks to complete the survey.

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize demographic information of students from the elementary schools whose administrators completed the survey. Descriptive statistics were also used to summarize administrator responses to the questions about school physical activity and nutrition practice and policy.

### Results:
- **SHPPS Survey seeks to answer the following questions:**
  - What are the characteristics of each component of school health at the state, district, school and classroom levels and across elementary, middle and high schools?
  - Are there persons responsible for coordinating and delivering each component of school health, and what are their qualifications and educational backgrounds?
  - What collaboration occurs among staff from each component of school health and with staff from outside agencies and organizations?
  - How have key policies and practices changed over time?

### Positive Characteristics:
- Schools reported 4.9% average recess days per week, which is comparable to the national recommendations of 5 days per week.
- In the 2013-2014 school year, 100% of schools indicated that staff were discouraged from excluding students from recess as a form of punishment.
- There was an increase in policies that require fruits and vegetables to be offered at school concession stands, increased from 0% in 2012-2013 to 25% in 2013-2014.
- From the 2012-2013 to the 2013-2014 academic year there was a 12% increase in the number of schools that discouraged the use of food as an incentive for behavior or academic performance.

### Negative Characteristics:
- GCSD reported fewer minutes (20.33 in 2012-2013 and 21.93 in 2013-2014) of recess per day compared to the national average of 24-30 minutes per day (CDC, 2006).
- In 2013-2014, 14.29% of schools reported staff were allowed to exclude students from recess as punishment.
- The percentage of schools that had a policy preventing the sale of junk foods in school concession stands, decreased from 80% in 2012-2013 to only 50% in 2013-2014.
- In the 2013-2014 academic year, only 25% of schools had a policy that prohibited the practice of using food as incentives for good behavior or academic performance.

### Next Steps:
- Increase allotted recess times to meet CDC recommendations of 60 minutes of play per day.
- Increase policies that prohibit the removal of recess as punishment.
- Increase policies to increase availability of fresh fruits and vegetables, while also reducing the availability of junk foods with high sugar, fat, and caloric content in concession stands.
- Increase policies that prohibit junk foods and encourage healthy foods as incentives.
- Development of policies and practices that encourage schools to adopt healthier a la carte menu items.