



Cass Lake-Bena Wellness Committee 2018-2019 Highlights



Who We Are

Located on the Leech Lake Indian Reservation in northern Minnesota, Cass Lake-Bena Schools serves 1,211 students from kindergarten through high school.

Comprised of district administrators, educators, food services staff, licensed medical professionals, and community partners, the Cass Lake-Bena Wellness Committee has continued to implement policy, systems, and environmental changes in order to promote student and staff wellness throughout the district.

Lessons Learned: *Student Voices*

Bryan “Beef” Sathre, a Health Teacher on Cass Lake-Bena’s wellness committee, emphasized the importance of including student perspectives in the development and implementation of policies and programs to improve school wellness. Encouraging student involvement and empowering students to take ownership of the health and wellbeing of their school environment will continue to be a priority for the committee.

Our Plan

The Cass Lake-Bena Wellness Committee completed the School Health Index, and identified the following priorities to improve student and staff wellness during the 2018-2019 school year:

- **Create a representative school health committee or team**
- **Ensure all foods and beverages served and offered during the school day meet the USDA’s Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards**
- **Implement professional development for classroom teachers**
- Increase availability of before- and after-school physical activity
- **Increase availability of physical activity breaks in classrooms**
- **Ensure adequate physical activity facilities**
- Create health emergency response plans

This year Cass Lake-Bena has made progress on many of these priorities. See how the highlighted accomplishments build on the **priorities in bold above.**

What We’ve Accomplished: *More Ways to be Active*

This year, Cass Lake-Bena’s Wellness Committee expanded a focus on physical activity in and out of the classroom. This year the district constructed a **new rock climbing wall** in the gym of Cass Lake Middle School, funded in part by the CDC 1801 Healthy Schools grant. The climbing wall is a unique feature that will allow students to have fun and try new skills, while also building muscle strength. The wall will be used during PE classes, and will also be available for other classes to support **physical activity breaks** during the school day. This year Physical Education teachers also received **professional development** through Shape America training to ensure that they’re teaching to the new physical education standards.



Students enjoy the newly installed climbing wall at Cass Lake Middle School.

Wellness Committee Members

Becky Gustafson, Briana Angstman, Bryan Hackbarth, Bryan “Beef” Sathre, Deb Brodeur, Josh Grover, Karolyn Roebuck, Kathy Wittner, Kelsey Engel, Kevin Neal, Melissa Jenson, Missy Freeman, Rochelle Johnson, & Sue Chase

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What We've Accomplished: *Smart Snack Awareness*

Students at Cass Lake-Bena High School created a short video about **Smart Snack standards** in order to increase community awareness. Featuring the school's Principal, Bryan Hackbarth, and the district Food Service Director, Deb Brodeur, the video details policy changes to promote healthier celebrations and fundraising, and healthy alternatives for foods and beverages offered during the school day. The video also provides an overview of the Smart Snacks Product Calculator, which is used to check whether a food meets the USDA Smart Snacks nutrition standards.



Image from a student-produced video educating the school about their Smart Snacks policy, posted on YouTube

What We've Accomplished: *Healthier Celebrations*

A major accomplishment in the 2018-2019 school year was to bring school celebrations in line with the district wellness policy to ensure that all **foods and beverages offered during the school day meet Smart Snacks standards**. It was a challenge to get parents and teachers on board with new guidelines, since everyone was used to celebrating each student's birthday with cupcakes and other sugary treats. Now parents have the option to purchase a Panther Snack Birthday Treat package to provide their child's classroom with one whole grain or fruit-based snack on their child's birthday. Students are still recognized and celebrated on their birthdays, but now in a way that promotes healthy habits.

What We've Accomplished: *Fresh, Flavorful & Fun*

After participating in a Fresh, Flavorful, and Fun culinary training for school nutrition professionals, food service staff implemented 'flavor stations' at the high school and the Area Learning Center. These stations are designed to **increase student vegetable consumption** by allowing students to season their own food using low-sodium herb and spice blends.

Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child

The Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model is a student-centered approach to health in schools that focuses on students being "healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged." This model includes all components necessary for overall school health, which include student mental and physical health, social and emotional climate, family and community engagement, and the wellness of school employees. The WSCC model emphasizes the **strong link between health and academic achievement**.

