

Summary of Summit V Environmental, Policy, and Systems Change Suggestions

At Children's Optimal Health Summit V, participants were asked to use the city wide obesity maps of Austin to brainstorm environmental, policy, and systems changes that could be implemented to turn the curve on child obesity. Those suggestions were collected by the Austin/Travis County Health Department as potential ways to spend grant money targeted at city wide systems change. Below is the entire list of recommendations:

Environmental Changes

- 1) Communities need sidewalks for safe routes to schools
- 2) Increase posters and signs about healthy habits on school campuses/ cafeterias.
- 3) A safe adult monitoring system in each park and/or playground
- 4) Recruit a Wal-mart to an area if HEB is not willing to build in East/far East Austin
- 5) Promoting awareness of statistics within the community so they are empowered.
 - a. Target faith based sites to promote awareness of stats
- 6) AISD folder day to include some sort of health related tip (i.e. recipes, free physical activity event)
- 7) More promotion of free after school activities
- 8) School gardens with access to fresh foods and use them in cafeteria
- 9) Make parks safe and accessible after hours → Skyway walks to safely allow people to access parks
- 10) Community pools open for our long swim season
- 11) Neighborhood police presence for outdoor safety
- 12) Grocery stores or smaller farmers markets in all areas of the city
- 13) Families eat together
- 14) Vending machine contracts: with parks city schools, and hospitals
- 15) More access to available recreational facilities
 - a. Open schools to public use vs. building new parks
- 16) Some sort of incentive for grocery stores to move into East Austin area
- 17) Access to safe walking paths, sidewalks with good lighting
- 18) Lower tax for Grocery stores
- 19) Mobile Grocery stores
- 20) Community Gardens in low income neighborhoods and schools
- 21) Lighting at parks for access in the evening
- 22) Change land use patterns (increase sidewalks, bike lanes, better street connections, etc)
- 23) More supermarkets in East Austin
- 24) Mobile farmer's markets to east Austin
- 25) Attractiveness and maintenance of parks
- 26) Sidewalks and parks
- 27) City garden plots – Identify city land available

- 28) More options to promote community pride
- 29) Beautification of historic areas
- 30) Get rid of billboards
- 31) Text on sales for healthy foods
- 32) Media messages about healthy food habits City-wide – billboards, photos more than words, radio, TV
- 33) Healthy food sources in low income communities – affordable
- 34) The average American lifestyle (busy, fast, not enough time to cook/prepare meals) leads people to use drive thru and fast food a lot more.

Policy Changes

- 1) Using foreclosed homes as a means to open “healthy oriented stores, shops, nutrition”.
- 2) Once healthy food options become available in underserved areas, ban the use of food stamps at convenience stores, gas stations, and other snack food locations (Walgreens, etc.)
- 3) Involve kids in surveys about why they don’t exercise or eat right. Ask them ideas on what they would like to do to improve health.
- 4) Park programs → free but actively recruit adults to volunteer
- 5) All schools required to really be a public space for grounds, gym, and meeting space
- 6) PE 4 days a week
- 7) Add 3 weeks to the school year or longer school days to add PE daily
- 8) 20/20 grade – eat out 2 times a week
- 9) Changes in food distributed by food banks
- 10) Incorporating health and nutrition into the school curriculum
 - a. Accountability
 - b. Performance measures
- 11) school health → check for flat feet so children can get “treatment” (arches) so they are able to participate in PE without getting tired
- 12) Insurance drives to allow people to know if they are eligible → community centers can help families get insurance – have low cost distribution of information
- 13) Providing more access to healthy food in cafeteria → are vending machines still in schools?
- 14) Integrating dance into music programs
- 15) Ask the kids what they would like to see
- 16) Give tax breaks to stores that build grocery stores (with large produce departments) in underserved areas
- 17) Give financial incentive to farmers/farmers markets to be in underserved areas, plus give infrastructure supports to have extended hours – partner with specific institutions (ex. Farmers markets on Houston Tillitson Campus, farmers market at Plaza Saltillo – weekly)

- 18) Better transportation
- 19) Examine and monitor the types of food (and how the food is packaged) when food is delivered to day cares, schools.
- 20) Compete with another comparable city for better fitness, nutrition
- 21) Educate parents at subsidized child care centers – the probably have older kids at home
- 22) Reach out and Read – in Doctors offices and pharmacies for parents to learn about education
- 23) Advocate with State Reps
- 24) Apply 504 to include obese level or morbidly obese level
- 25) Targeted education to children in families know to be at risk – educate parents as to why this is important
- 26) Greater parental involvement at the middle school level
- 27) Identify parent leaders who can mentor other parents – peer education model
- 28) Improve the quality and the nutritional value of the foods available through the free and reduced lunch programs (less filler content) – set specific thresholds for the quality and nutritional value of these foods
- 29) Price healthy foods (fruits and vegetables) at bargain prices and no profit margin for the school district
- 30) Mandate physical activity EVERY day for elementary and middle school students (PE is priority over art, music)
- 31) Open school gyms and playgrounds ever day after school until dusk → merge this with Austin PARD to use parks staff and supervise these sites (like Plano ISD – how tax benefit for City vs. ISD paying for these services)
- 32) Subsidize food stamp costs for healthier foods
- 33) Continue WIC changes to support better/healthier choices
- 34) Quality and nutrition of school breakfast and lunch
- 35) Parental education on how to manage financial food choices (no money for big trips to the store)
- 36) Subsidy for food assistance – full enrollment of WIC eligible population
- 37) Food stamp back log eliminated
- 38) Incentives/assurances for food banks that ensure that the food they get (and then distribute) is nutritious and healthy
- 39) Improve enrollment procedures
- 40) Increase tax on unhealthy foods (i.e. Cheetos, Soda, Drive Thrus)
- 41) Bring back PE
- 42) Incentives for grocery stores
 - a. Tax subsidies
- 43) Incentives for small grocery stores to provide fresh produce
- 44) Incentives for restaurants to offer healthy options, smaller portions, list nutritional info
- 45) Eliminate tax on healthy foods
- 46) Target interventions on areas with the highest numbers of obese children
- 47) AISD policy – no candy, soda, sports drinks, chips allowed on campus

- 48) Churches and companies have policies about providing healthy food choices and food offerings at their sponsored events, functions, and cafeterias.
- 49) Change how people get enrolled in State/Federal programs
- 50) Quicker/short form for women with young children

Systems Changes

- 1) Showing the parents the reality (diseases, graphically, negative effects) of what will happen to their obese children
- 2) Provide a "obesity report card" that a parent receives on their kids rating → A,B, C, D, F depending on health evaluation
- 3) Create a system-wide Task Force to analyze school lunch program
- 4) Pressure food vendors to improve nutritional quality of foods served in schools
- 5) Pursue more fresh foods to markets
- 6) Use nutrition in education to children and parents
 - a. Math problems adding the calories of cake, ice cream, candy, etc
 - b. Read about healthy options
- 7) APD and PTA partner together to provide a presence in parks after schools
- 8) Use celebrities on social networking sites (facebook and twitter) to send healthy messages for the followers to read
- 9) Partnerships between universities and community agencies for obesity intervention projects, research, data
- 10) Educate families about buying healthy foods while on a budget
- 11) AISD schools adoption farm to school partnerships for getting fresh produce (local) to schools – increase school/community gardens
- 12) Introducing healthier varieties of cultural favorite foods with city wide community celebrations (Juneteenth, Thanksgiving, Dias y Seis)
- 13) Health info hotline – resource info, healthy living, healthy food questions
- 14) Look at precursors to Middle School obesity
- 15) Run Cap Metro buses from East side to farmer's markets which now take food stamps
- 16) Get information to parents
- 17) Cooking classes in low income communities → accessible way to develop skills
ex. Community centers, schools
- 18) Programming for people to allow them to make changes
- 19) "Baby College" → teach parents how to cook, parenting skills
- 20) Let people now there is an option, where it is, how to get there, → get more information other there, readily available
- 21) Farmers markets in communities that need them
- 22) Community initiatives
 - a. Health promoters
 - b. People to people outreach
 - c. Community radio
 - d. Teatro popular: educate through plays

- 23) Improve / Increase physical activity in all classes
- 24) More info on calorie numbers
- 25) Better coordination at the school between teachers (classroom lessons) nutritional expert, PE teachers → and then connecting back to the home/family to ensure that this actually happens
- 26) Schools increasing intramural activities free for kids who don't do competitive sports
- 27) Increase after school offerings that offer fitness –related programs
- 28) Replace video games with Wii type games that involve physical activity to play
- 29) WIC teaching cooking
- 30) Get afterschool programs to offer more creative activities – Hip Hop, etc. – increase funding
- 31) Day care centers to increase their physical activity and healthy foods for their kids – laws to mandate
- 32) Recreation centers, YMCA, after school programs to allow older kids to attend and participate as parents are working
- 33) Increase farmers markets seeking in low income areas
- 34) Anti-candy campaign city wide @ Halloween
- 35) Every home visiting program have access to a nutrition specialist
- 36) Intensive support for >95 obese child and family
 - a. Emotional
 - b. Nutritional
 - c. Home visits
 - d. Better food provided
- 37) Opportunities for grocery stores to hold nutritional cooking classes