

# Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) Wellness Champion Initiative **Evaluation Report**

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Prepared for S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation by



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## Initiative Overview

The mission of the S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation's Oakland Unified School District (**OUSD**) **Wellness Champion Initiative** is *"to reduce obesity and chronic disease among high risk youth in Oakland public schools by creating school environments that promote healthy eating, physical activity, and wellness."* To accomplish that goal, the Foundation provided five OUSD schools with School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs) with up to \$50,000 per school each year for five years, starting Spring 2010, to improve the health and fitness of their students.

The five SBHC school sites below were chosen based on their ability to demonstrate an integrated approach to promote nutrition and physical activity at the school sites involving the SBHC, Wellness Champions, youth leaders, school administration, and other key community partners.

School Name	Grades Served	SBHC Name
Fremont High School	9-12	Fremont Tiger Clinic
Oakland High School	9-12	Wildcat Wellness Center
Oakland Technical High School	9-12	TechniClinic
Urban Promise Academy (UPA)	6-8	Hawthorne SBHC
West Oakland Middle School (WOMS)	6-8	WOMS SBHC



## Evaluation Goals and Methods

For the past four years, the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) Evaluation Team has conducted evaluation assessment activities, as described below, to document Initiative program efforts and school and participant-related outcomes in the five funded schools.

Evaluation Method	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
<b>Student &amp; School Community Activity Logs</b> documented participant information and dates of one-time and on-going school wellness programs and activities. SBHC staff entered data into the Efforts To Outcomes database <sup>1</sup> for analysis by UCSF.	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Youth Program Surveys</b> documented the impact of youth development programs from the participants' perspective.	✓			
<b>Youth Participatory Evaluation</b> in partnership with adult allies and with assistance from UCSF trained five groups of youth to develop and collect data about how to improve the school environment.		✓	✓	
<b>Interviews with Key Adults</b> including Wellness Champions, principals, and OUSD leaders asked how the Initiative had impacted the school and youth, successful strategies, and what is needed for sustainability.				✓
<b>Youth Program Participant Focus Groups</b> explored perceptions of school nutrition and physical activity among students, and program experiences.	✓			✓
<b>Secondary Data Analysis</b> of site-specific existing food and physical activity data including <i>California Healthy Kids Survey</i> , <i>Fitnessgram</i> , and <i>OUSD Nutrition Services Data</i> . <sup>2</sup>		✓	✓	✓

As all five participating SBHCs were concurrently funded by Alameda County Health Care Services Agency and participate in the program evaluation of SBHCs conducted by UCSF, the data collection tools included in this project are methods that are currently or have previously been included in the County evaluation. All tools and evaluation procedures were approved by UCSF's Committee on Human Research, which ensures the ethical treatment of all participants in research and evaluation studies.

This Evaluation Report describes the perceptions of and experiences with the Initiative from the perspectives of youth leaders and key adults in May-June 2014. To gather this data, UCSF interviewed six Wellness Champions, three principals and one OUSD representative. Two interviews were held in person, and the rest by telephone. UCSF also facilitated three focus groups with 12 youth leaders who have been involved in projects to improve their school environments around healthy eating and physical activity. The participants were evenly divided between middle and high school and gender.<sup>3</sup> Parental and participant consent was obtained and participants received a \$10 gift card.

This **Evaluation Report** describes the activities conducted over the entire Initiative, and highlights key successes achieved by each of the five sites. The Report then describes the perceptions of and experiences with the Initiative from the perspectives of youth leaders and key adults. Finally, the Report summarizes key findings of the Initiative evaluation and recommendations for future sustainability efforts.

<sup>1</sup> An Excel worksheet was used instead in 2013-14.

<sup>2</sup> Site level data has been provided to each of the sites. OUSD Nutrition Services data is included in this Report.

<sup>3</sup> Oakland High School was not represented.

## Initiative Participants and Activities

In creating and implementing the school’s wellness mission, the sites included a broad array of stakeholders and formed **Wellness Committees**. Each site received funding to support **Wellness Champions** who were school staff (e.g., teachers) or SBHC staff (e.g., health providers) to coordinate wellness activities aimed at improving the school environment. Involvement in the Initiative provided them with professional development, as well as the opportunity to engage in activities or build skills or relationships with school/district staff. Quarterly, for each of the Initiative’s five years, Wellness Champions participated in “Academies,” or cross-site meetings, which gave Initiative partners the opportunity to discuss various topics related to school wellness. For example, there were presentations and discussions regarding nutrition services, mindfulness in the classroom, maintaining an engaged wellness committee, physical education requirements and improvement strategies, and working with principals.

Wellness Champions worked closely with **School Administrators** to plan and implement school wellness strategies. **Youth leaders** in each of the five sites led efforts to research and advocate for changes to their school wellness environments, as well as educate the school community on health and wellness issues. The youth groups ranged from peer health education groups, SBHC youth advisory boards, sports leaders, and on-line youth magazine staff. **Initiative participants** included students, parents and family members, as well as school staff who were reached through activities carried out by Wellness Champions, youth leaders, and SBHC staff. The number of participant encounters increased, from 2,264 in 2010-11 to 11,833 in 2013-14.<sup>4</sup>

To achieve the Initiative goal of creating healthier school environments, most activities were related to nutrition/health education, but also focused on self-esteem and image, youth advisory, and school climate activities. The number of Initiative activities increased over the course of the Initiative, with 419 activities documented in 2010-11 and 890 activities in 2013-14. The table below provides detailed information on the 2013-14 activities.<sup>5</sup>

Type of Activity, 2013-14	# Encounters (n=11,833)	# Activities (n=890)
Nutrition/health education (including gardening/cooking)	45%	42%
Supplies given (e.g. snack)	1%	14%
Peer health education group/peer counseling/mentoring	7%	12%
Youth advisory board/leadership/research/advocacy group	6%	9%
Self esteem/image/empowerment	9%	8%
Other classroom presentation/intervention	5%	3%
School consultation (including COST)	2%	3%
Health fairs, outreach	10%	2%
Crisis intervention/grief support	1%	2%
School-wide assembly or special event	7%	1%
School safety/climate presentation/activity	3%	1%
Physical activity/recreation/dance/yoga	1%	1%
Other (screening, social skills/communication/anger, parent/family workshop or training, arts/enrichment)	5%	3%

<sup>4</sup> These counts of participants may be duplicated, if they were served in multiple activities and sessions.

<sup>5</sup> Categories for “Type of Activity” differed over Initiative years, so cannot be aggregated.

## Site Specific Activities and Achievements

The following summarizes each site's main activities and key achievements from 2009 to 2014.

### Fremont High School

- Promoted lunch during closed campus.
- Wellness Champions initiated “Grab N Go” and “Second Chance” breakfast to encourage students to eat a healthy breakfast daily. This strategy successfully increased participation in the breakfast program, and, according to teachers, helped to reduced truancy and increase students' ability to focus during morning classes.
- Student leaders were instrumental in easing the transition to closed campus lunch by identifying a number of lunchtime activities for students, including opening the gym for lunchtime basketball and a physical activity equipment lending library. They also led research to investigate how to improve engagement in Physical Education classes.
- Student leaders took their passion for wellness beyond this program and applied for and were awarded funds to advocate for a corner store makeover to assure that a store near the school sells healthy snacks for students and the community.
- Student leaders did an inventory of the school's water fountains and assessed their functionality and cleanliness. They also did education around water use and gave out water bottles to students.
- From convening a separate Wellness Committee engaging multiple stakeholders to incorporating efforts into an existing standing committee, wellness has been included as a key consideration in school rebuilding efforts.



### Oakland High School

- The Champions participated in designing and maintaining the Public Health Academy, including obtaining funding for the Academy, working with Academy teachers on developing the public health curriculum, and providing individual support and case management for students.
- Wellness Champion coordinated key stakeholders for input and guidance on wellness activities and the Public Health Academy.
- The SBHC activated three youth leadership groups: one group writes, edits, and publishes a health and wellness section for the online school magazine, FRESH; another engages student athletes as wellness role models; and the third conducts peer health education.
- Youth leaders helped ease the transition to closed campus lunch by identifying new lunchtime activities, including opening the field for soccer/flag football and lunchtime disc jockeying sessions.

### Oakland Technical High School

- Wellness Champions initiated “Grab N Go” breakfast and lunch to encourage students to eat healthy meals on the school campus; “Grab N Go” successfully increased participation in the breakfast and lunch programs.
- The Champions introduced Yoga/Mindfulness into the classroom to help students relieve stress and enhance focus. The Oakland Tech mindfulness program experience helped encourage OUSD to expand mindfulness in the classroom district-wide.

- The SBHC activated a group of youth leaders who have educated their peers on a variety of health and wellness topics including positive body image and cafeteria offerings, designed and coordinated an annual health fair, conducted research to understand student health and wellness priorities, and organized a school-wide dance competition.
- Through the Wellness Committee, staff and partners interested in wellness came together and brainstormed ideas for how to make the campus healthier. The Committee will be sustained beyond this Initiative.

### Urban Promise Academy

- Healthy food and physical activity have been incorporated into UPA's every-day activities. For example, UPA's youth leaders advocated for eliminating candy sales at dances, educated students about drinking water, and instituted healthy smoothie sales. They also now have a salad bar at lunch.
- The Champions educated, engaged, and empowered families by conducting parent wellness and exercise classes. They also engaged parents to coordinate the lunchtime salad bar and initiate/maintain the garden and before-school open gym.
- Every UPA student now receives a month of health education – using a curriculum designed and taught by the SBHC staff.

### West Oakland Middle School

- The Champions addressed food insecurity by initiating and maintaining the West Oakland Middle School food bank pantry, which allows families and others in the community to obtain free, healthy food. They also initiated and maintain the lunchtime salad bar and “Second Chance” breakfast to assure that all students eat a healthy breakfast and are ready to learn.
- They integrated education on community health into the school's science curriculum and also designed a three-session workshop taught during science classes that covers physical, social, and political aspects of communities and how these drivers impact health.
- They designed and installed a school garden and have partnered with a community-based organization, classroom teachers, and afterschool staff to integrate gardening into academic subjects and afterschool activities.
- Youth peer educators presented to their classmates on the benefits of drinking tap water over bottled water. They also led students on a school scavenger hunt to find educational messages about the importance of drinking water. Finally, students completed a questionnaire testing their water knowledge and received a free water bottle.

## Initiative Impacts on Student Outcomes

### Peer Health Education Increases Health Knowledge

Several youth focus group participants mentioned **peer health education** as one of their biggest accomplishments. Sample topics included demonstrations to show sugar content in popular drinks and foods, positive body image messages, and presentations on ingredients in hot chips. Through the Initiative, youth leaders offered students, families and teachers healthy food. For example, at one school during school dances and other school events for families, youth prepared and gave out fruit smoothies. Youth also hosted “body positive” activities at school-wide events trying to create more positive culture around self-acceptance and self-esteem. A Key Adult interviewee explained, “Peer health educators did presentations to classmates about eating hot chips, about what is in them, [and] what effect it has on your body. It has been interesting to see the kids come in and once we have the discussion, light

bulbs go off and they become very engaged. Even if they don't stop eating hot chips, they'll think about how many they eat."

Youth noted changes like seeing fewer students carrying around unhealthy foods like fries or hot chips at school. "We teach people how to be healthy and what are the benefits of being healthy and negative effects of not being healthy." They described several lessons that the youth leaders have taught their peers, including the importance of eating breakfast, participating in Physical Education, and eating healthy foods. According to a Key Adult interviewee, "Even on the playground and in the classroom, they hold peers accountable, share information, and question them."

## Initiative Improves Academic Engagement

A Key Adult interviewee noted that school staff members are increasingly recognizing that students need to be more physically engaged, not just for sake of exercise but to engage their minds as well. One of the reflections from staff is that they can see how engaging students physically, even a little, can help better engage their minds. One interviewee reported that **yoga and mindfulness** activities at school and in classrooms have had positive impacts on students. Teachers also reported that increased access to healthy breakfasts helped students better focus during their morning classes.

The youth leaders also reportedly increased their academic success as a result of the Initiative. Their enhanced **confidence** and sense of control over their lives carried over into the classrooms, where they became more confident with speaking and asking questions. A Key Adult interviewee pointed out that the youth leaders are often "already really good students, at least on honor roll"; in fact a program requirement is to maintain a certain grade point average. One interviewee shared a story about the growth of a youth leader during the program, "One shy youth became a really powerful speaker. You could see her more involved in school, being a leader, and helping with fundraising. It also increased her self-esteem. She started in a running group, lost weight, and her grades went up."

## Initiative Impacts Youth Leaders

The youth focus group participants reported that they were proud of successfully organizing events, advocating for changes on their campuses, and presenting health information to other students, parents, and school staff. The impacts on the youth leaders themselves were numerous. Participants learned a lot of information about **food and beverage choices** and their effects on the body (including skin, cholesterol, blood pressure, etc.). This new information "changed the way they think of things" and made them "more aware of their choices and the effects."

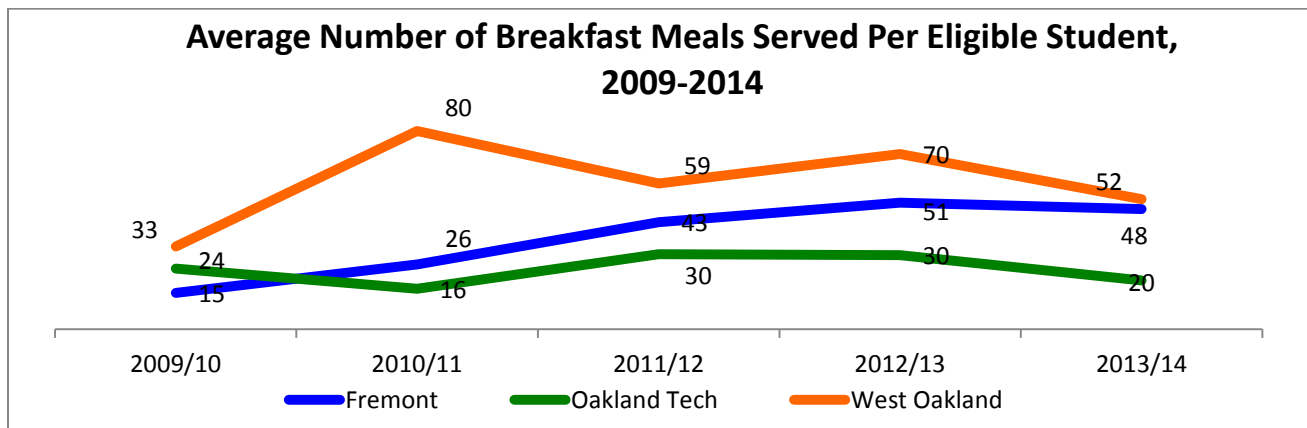
Youth leaders gained useful **presentation, public speaking, and interview skills**. Many said they now feel more comfortable speaking to adults and in front of other students. They also enjoyed presenting at youth conferences and connecting with other youth groups. They also acquired new **leadership skills**. One student said that participation in the group has helped her in school to "step up and show more leadership" and that the skills they learn in the group can translate into other classrooms. One Key Adult interviewee said, "The group has also affected their confidence, maybe because they see themselves as leaders or because they have stepped out of their shells to do something that requires them to be more extroverted." Through coordinating and planning events and working with school and district administration to make changes at the school, students gained **responsibility and learned organizational skills**. One student said that he or she "enjoyed a sense of giving back to the school community" through this work. Through this experience and other information they were exposed to,



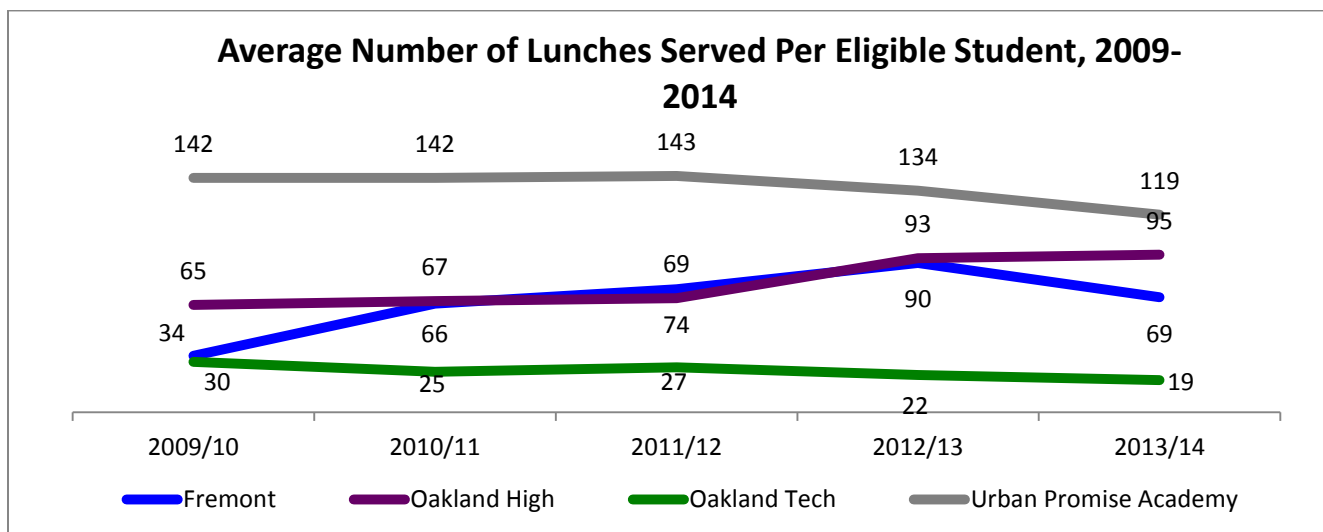
some students said that they **learned more about careers, especially health careers**. One student likened the responsibility required for participating in the group to being “*like a job.*”

### School Meals

Each Initiative site focused on improving access to school meals as one of their strategies. As shown below, the average number of breakfast meals served per eligible student at West Oakland Middle School, which began a “Second Chance” breakfast program increased initially, although there was a subsequent decline. Fremont High School, where the most positive change is seen in the average number of breakfast meals served per eligible student, initiated both “Grab N Go” breakfast and “Second Chance” breakfast. Oakland Technical High School also showed an increase in breakfasts, after starting “Grab N Go” breakfast in 2011-12, though there was a slight decline in 2013/14.



In addition to breakfast programs, Initiative sites also worked on increasing access to and awareness of school lunch offerings. Fremont and Oakland High Schools both promoted the cafeteria during transitions to a closed campus policy, and reported an increase in the number of lunches served. Noting low levels of cafeteria use, as most students go off campus for lunch, Oakland Technical High School youth leaders worked on educating students about the cafeteria and also started a new “Second Chance” lunch program, with a cart providing lunch items near the front entrance to the school. Although Urban Promise Academy saw a slight decrease in lunches served, their school used a unique strategy to improve the school cafeteria salad bar at lunch by using parent volunteers.



While many factors influence whether students choose to purchase school meals, the Initiative sites made efforts to increase awareness of these programs, expand locations and timing of meal availability, and gather information from students about their preferences. As described later in the report, youth focus group participants and Key Adults noted many positive effects of these efforts including reduced truancy, and increased attention in classes.

## Initiative Impacts on Systems Change

### Advocacy and Education Increases Access to Drinking Water

To increase access to clean drinking **water**, some groups shared information about tap water with students, gave out water bottles, or identified water fountains at the school that needed repair. A Key Adult interviewee said, *“The Wellness Initiative provided the students with water bottles, which they are allowed to bring to class. The only other beverage option at school is now white milk (not chocolate).”* In addition, OUSD also helped each site to install water stations in their cafeterias.

### Advocacy Improves Student Access to Physical Activity

Although most of the Initiative activities and reported changes focused on improved nutrition, some changes were also noted around **physical activity**. The most common effort was to make **gymnasiums or sports fields open during lunchtime or after school** for students to play. Some schools increased access to their gymnasium by recruiting parent chaperones or asking teachers to supervise. One Key Adult interviewee explained, *“[We now have] more outdoor activity. With a parent champion, kids can play in gym before school.”*

Some schools also purchased **new sports equipment and/or improved the physical education facilities**. One Key Adult interviewee explained, *“Our main yard used to be cement, now we have turf and a nicer environment, with flowers, etc.”* Another said, *“Youth advocated for things like lockers that make them feel safe and proud to come to school, weight rooms with the right equipment, teachers with the right training, football field that students can play on, and getting access to the pool across the street.”*

Others **improved and increased the variety of sports and activities available**. For example, some students trained for a half-marathon and one school organized a dancing event. One Key Adult interviewee said, *“Thanks to Bechtel, they now have a plethora of athletic activities they can do – volleyball, soccer, baseball, etc. It has really helped the Physical Education program now that the kids have more choices of things to do. Especially for girls - if they weren’t interested in basketball there wasn’t much to do. Now with more options, it has increased girls’ participation.”*

One Key Adult interviewee felt that improved access to physical activity and healthy food options in the school community has affected students’ body sizes. She said, *“I’ve been here nine years. At [our school’s] yearly uniform sales, uniform sizes are shrinking. Wellness must be working, kids having better nutrition, enough physical activity.”*

### Initiative Strengthens School and Community Partnerships

A key component of the Wellness Champion Initiative was to **involve the entire school community** in improving the school wellness environment. One Key Adult interviewee explained, *“I feel the great success for our vision is to incorporate community and families not just to learn, but to love and own the idea of health and wellness in the school.”* Others explained that the **communication between**

**the key stakeholders** was a huge asset. One said, “We (school administrator and lead Wellness representative) don’t have any communication gaps. We can be honest with each other, for example about what we can do in a given timeline. That is powerful because we’re not trying to do too much and get caught up and get behind.”

“My focus was to make sure we were seen as part of [the school] campus, not a separate entity housed on the campus. I made sure to be a part of staff meetings, school governance council meetings, wherever I could be to let them know I’m a part of their team. When you build those relationships with people it makes it easier.” – Key Adult Interviewee

However, this type of effort did not come without **challenges**. For example, one interviewee explained, “School and CBO integration/partnership is harder than it looks. There are challenges around authority, leadership, financing the project. Who gets the money, and how it is distributed? How to work with people that have different mandates from different agencies, figuring out a common ground.” Stakeholders within each school community had different priorities, and some stakeholders were concerned that school wellness might not always continue to be the top concern. One said, “There are so many different priorities of a school. We were at a community school leadership retreat last week and nutrition was brought up as an important issue for next year but when we prioritized, it didn’t make the top strategies or goals. There are more urgent issues.”

Overall, there was a sense that the schools would continue to ensure that key representatives are at school meetings advocating for wellness programs and policies and that a success of the initiative was the strong relationships between Wellness Champions and school administration.

**Parents** have been increasingly involved through the Initiative. For example, many have taken nutrition education classes, similar to the classes their children take so that they can support what is being taught at home. At one school, another way they have been involved is to be a “Parent Wellness Champion,” making personal phone calls to parents to encourage them to come to workshops (*Communications Champion*), helping in the cafeteria (*Salad Bar Champion*), and supervising structured play (basketball, soccer) before school and recess (*Safety Champion*). According to a Key Adult at that school, involving parents in these ways has not only increased access to healthy foods and physical activity for their children at school, but parents model healthy behaviors at home when they are exposed to new information and healthy recipes.

## Initiative Increases Availability of Health Education

Nearly all of the respondents explained that there is now more **classroom-based health education** offered to students as a result of the Initiative. At one school, for example, health education is now offered as part of regular school day for five weeks, with an option to continue for four additional weeks. A Key Adult from that school explained that the health education program grew over the course of the Initiative, starting with only a few classes to become a core part of the school curriculum reaching all students. The interviewee also noted that the increase in classroom health education has prompted more students to access health education counseling and other services at the SBHC. One site where regular health education classes had been discontinued started a new **Public Health Academy** for students to focus on a health and wellness curriculum and learn about health careers throughout their high school education. Another school is **training teachers in mindfulness** and how to incorporate it into their daily schedule. The success of this program at one of the Initiative schools has contributed to an expansion of the mindfulness program in OUSD schools.

## Initiative Influences District and SBHC Strategies

Respondents described the impact of the Initiative on the operations of the SBHCs. For example, SBHCs became more linked to non-medical and non-clinical school wide wellness activities. Some stakeholders also felt that the Initiative provided momentum for SBHCs to develop more **clinically based nutrition and physical activity programs and services**.

*“We’re not just fixing you when you’re broken; it is helping you to learn ways of staying healthy, especially when you’re talking about a food desert in an urban environment. The ability for young people to learn about foods and vegetables and learn how to cook them properly adds to the idea of the wrap-around services of a SBHC.” – Key Adult Interviewee*

The achievements of this Initiative also helped to **improve and grow OUSD wellness program**. For example, Oakland Technical High School was one of the early sites to include the mindfulness program described above. Stemming from its success there and at other schools, OUSD is supporting its expansion to other sites. Another example is that OUSD is using best practices from the Bechtel Wellness Champion sites to influence its own Wellness Champion program such as adding a youth advocacy component. The hope is that some of the Bechtel sites will be involved and can share some of their successful strategies to be replicated at other schools.

## Professional Impact on Adult Leaders

Key Adult interviewees explained that their involvement in the Initiative improved their **partnerships**, as they became more aware of community needs, improved their networking skills and learned how to build relationships with groups both on and off campus. One explained, *“This position pushed me to learn a lot, become more aware of needs of community, to meet people in service agencies and in this school.”* Others described improved **youth development skills**, by working directly with youth and helping train them as leaders. One respondent said she gained experience in workshop facilitation and youth development curriculum development.

Several interviewees mentioned that the Wellness Champion Academies were helpful for **professional development** and sharing ideas and best practices.

- *“As a new employee, it was helpful to go to the Wellness Champion Academies and connect with others, school districts, other schools.”*
- *“The opportunity to collaborate and network with other sites has been invaluable.”*
- *“I learned a lot through the Academies. I didn’t know the OUSD Health and Wellness Policy before, for example.”*

## Recommendations for Sustainability

When asked what support was needed to **sustain the Initiative efforts**, respondents provided many recommendations:

- **Maintaining consistency of stakeholders and staff** who are passionate about their mission and can advocate for and connect the programs with new opportunities.
- **Securing district support in connecting the schools to new funding opportunities** now that Bechtel funding has ended. Most respondents reported that they were looking for new grants to sustain their staff and programs to continue health and wellness services and keep them successful.

- **Establishing strong partnerships** with and consistent support from school administration, teachers, and community organizations. Respondents described some challenges that they encountered during the Initiative, primarily around time, prioritization, and partnership integration. One said, “*Things (changes in school meals or water access for example) may not have always happened as quickly as sites would have liked.*” A key recommendation is to secure buy-in, collaboration and involvement of all key partners, including school and district administration, teachers, as well as students. Other comments from interviewees included:
  - *“It would be hard to be able to do something like a peer wellness champion [youth] group if you didn’t have the support of administration. It means having to pull kids from other programs to be a part of this.”*
  - *“If we get an okay from the principal, but not teachers, it won’t go anywhere. The teachers have allowed us to come into the classroom and do health education and workshops. Most teachers and administration are all for what we’re doing here. When you listen to what they would like to see, that helps. Taking their ideas and making them a part of what we’re doing.”*

Respondents also gave suggestions to **improve technical assistance** provision to the Wellness Champions, such as having one to two key people providing support to sites rather than the larger group of technical assistance providers and a more comprehensive orientation for new Wellness Champions. One said, “*I wish we’d had an orientation for new Wellness Champions that came on midway through Initiative.*”

Interviewees also mentioned that having **consistent access to same set of data** to assess and monitor progress and successes would be valuable. They reported that having access to data like California Healthy Kids Survey results and other data included in data profiles provided to sites was very helpful to site planning. Based on their experiences and what they achieved through the Initiative, respondents suggested that the following are good measures of success for others who want to do similar work.

- How the community feels about and speaks about their health.
- Lasting changes, like policies or programs extending beyond the grant period.
- Developing strong youth leaders, empowering them to make changes.
- Having a built-in mechanism to monitor health and wellness data.
- Visible environmental changes, like more working water fountains, a salad bar, and increased student engagement and awareness.
- Students thinking about and making healthier decisions. “*To me, at the minimum, that is success; the young people are thinking about the choices they are making, health wise.*”

## Summary

The five Initiative sites have been innovators in school wellness – working to create healthy school environments for students, parents, and staff – and serving as models for schools within and beyond the OUSD. Key findings from the evaluation include:

**Broad program activities and achievements.** The number of students, staff, parents and other individuals reached through wellness efforts increased over the course of the Initiative, from 2,264 in 2010-11 to 11,833 in 2013-14. Activities related to health and wellness more than doubled during this time period from 419 activities in 2010-11 to 890 activities in 2013-14. Site specific activities and achievements included initiating “Grab N Go” and “Second Chance” breakfast and lunch programs, which subsequently increased participation in school meal programs; increasing physical activities for

students; increasing access to and consumption of drinking water; and expanding health education efforts to increase students' awareness and knowledge of healthy nutrition and physical activity. Many adult partners noted that these activities also had visible impacts on students' academic engagement.

**Cultural shift in schools.** The activities funded through this Initiative and the heightened attention to health and wellness helped to foster a culture change within the school sites. Parents, school staff, and youth bring a new awareness to activities like planning celebrations and fundraisers at schools. This shift subsequently contributed to the creation of other health and wellness programs and policies, such as establishing new health education programs and SBHC strategies to focus on wellness activities.

**Positive impacts on youth leaders.** Youth leaders reported that they learned about food and beverage choices and their effects on the body, and gained useful presentation, public speaking, organizational and leadership skills. They noted that, in particular, presenting to their peers, planning events, and working with school and district administration to make changes at their schools helped them to develop these skills. Through this experience and other information they were exposed to, some students also said that they learned more about careers, especially health careers.

**Improvements to the food environment.** Respondents described a culture change about healthy foods and hydration. Establishment of school gardens, salad bars, breakfast and lunch programs, and water hydration stations led to increased access to healthy foods. Students were also more likely to consciously make healthy choices, such as not bringing soda to school. Key Adult interviewees hoped that students would use the same decision making processes outside of school as well.

- *“New salad bars and gardens can be seen as long-term environmental changes.”*
- *“[Improving the] school lunches is the biggest and lasting impact. It will continue in the future. Because of our partnership with cafeteria staff and the Director of Nutrition Services we’ve been able to make some changes to lunch menu.”*

**Improvements to the physical activity environment.** Initiative efforts led to increased opportunities for physical activities most commonly by allowing students to gain access to gymnasiums or sports fields during lunchtime or after school. Some schools also purchased new sports equipment and/or improved the physical education facilities or improved and increased the variety of sports and activities available.

**Critical role of Wellness Champions.** Wellness Champions served as the lead coordinators of health and wellness efforts and integrated themselves into the school staff and culture to ensure that health and wellness were key topics of discussion. Their efforts led to strong partnerships with school administrators and staff, as well as parents and community partners. This Wellness Champion Initiative also influenced expansion of the District-wide Wellness Champion program and some of these sites will be able to continue work and share their best practices through the District program.

As demonstrated by this Evaluation Report, the Wellness Champion Initiative made many significant contributions to the creation of healthy school environments for students, parents, and staff in OUSD. The successes of these efforts demonstrate that a deep investment in a small number of sites, like was done through this Initiative, can foster creative thinking and the space to test innovative models, which can then be streamlined to disseminate and replicate broadly and more efficiently in other schools and districts.