

TITLE: Local School Wellness Policies and Academic Outcomes in Oregon High Schools

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STUDENT SUBMISSION: Yes

TOPIC/TARGET AUDIENCE: School wellness professionals and administrators, policy researchers

ABSTRACT: Background: Adequate nutrition and physical activity have a positive impact on psychosocial wellbeing, cognitive function, and academic performance. Local school wellness policies (LSWP) aim to support such behaviors to promote positive student outcomes. However, the relationship between the quality of LSWP and academic performance among high school students is unknown. Purpose: This study evaluated both the strength and comprehensiveness, conceptualized as total quality, of Oregon LSWP. Associations among total quality, school setting, and state standardized testing scores (Language Arts, Math, & Science) across 201 Oregon public high schools were examined. Methods: A two-way ANCOVA was conducted with standardized test scores as the dependent variable and LSWP total quality and school setting as the independent variables, controlling for socioeconomic status. Results: The average LCWP quality in this sample was strong. A negative, strong association between policy quality and academic outcomes was found ($p = .000$). There was not a significant association with school setting. Conclusion: These findings suggest a link between LSWP total quality and standardized test scores, but not in the expected direction. Prospective research is needed to determine if this association is confounded by spurious factors, and whether it is consistent across populations and time.

OBJECTIVE(S): Describe the variation in quality of local school wellness policies across Oregon high schools

Describe the association between the quality of local school wellness policies and academic outcomes in Oregon high schools
