

## School Wellness Policy Evaluation

### Project Background:

The University of Hawai'i (UH) Healthy Hawai'i Initiative Evaluation Team (HHIET) collaborated with Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH), Chronic Disease Prevention Health Promotion Division (CDPHPD) and the Hawaii Department of Education (DOE) on a School Wellness Policy evaluation project during the 2019-2020 academic year.

Hawai'i's Wellness Guidelines were established in 2007, and then were strengthened and revised in the 2017- 2018 school year. The Wellness Guidelines implement Board of Education Policy 103-1 and fulfill the requirements of Public Law 108-265 Section 204 and the Healthy Hunger Free-Kids Act (2010). The Safety and Wellness Survey (SAWS), an online survey of public school principals in Hawai'i, is used to monitor and evaluate schools' progress towards implementing the Wellness Guidelines. Hawai'i DOH and DOE administer this survey together.

### Project Goals:

The primary goal of this evaluation project was to help Hawai'i schools improve their implementation of the state Wellness Guidelines. This project aims to understand why specific guidelines are challenging and how schools have been able to overcome barriers and successfully implement the guidelines. The project sought to identify best practices, practical examples, and lessons learned about wellness policy implementation that could be shared as success stories and guidance with schools in Hawai'i. Here are some of the intended research questions that will be answered by this project.

#### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How can Hawai'i public schools improve their implementation of the state Wellness Guidelines?
- What are some of the challenges to implementing Wellness Guidelines in schools?
- What are some methods or approaches that schools have utilized to overcome the barriers to implementing Wellness Guidelines?
- What recommendations and lessons learned can be shared by principals/schools to help other schools meet the state Wellness Guidelines?
- What resources and assistance are needed by schools in Hawai'i to help implement the Wellness Guidelines?

### Key Activities Completed Thus Far:

1. Created an Evaluation Plan including a detailed description of the methodology
2. Developed an Interview Guide
3. Selected a Sample of Schools to participate
4. Submitted a UH IRB Application and DOE Research Application

### Future Directions:

This project was impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, thereby impeding the ability to collect data and conduct interviews as planned. Future collaboration will be continued on this project at a time that is determined to be safe and feasible for all partners.

### Contact Details and Resources:

For more information, please contact:

- HHIET Evaluator, Becky Rodericks, rebekah7@hawaii.edu
- DOH School Health Coordinator, Katie Matsushima, katie.matsushima@doh.hawaii.gov
- School Health, Wellness Guidelines and SAW Data: (1) <https://health.hawaii.gov/school-health/> (2) <http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/TeachingAndLearning/HealthAndNutrition/WellnessGuidelines/Pages/home.aspx>