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## **Stilwell School Board Passes Improvements to Wellness Policy**

*Local YAHL youth, representing Elevate Student Health, presented to the School Board to recommend improvements that were adopted by the Board.*

**Stilwell (June 28, 2022)** – The Stilwell School Board passed improvements to their district wellness policy to improve the health of over 1,300 students in their district. The policy updates include promoting nutrition fairs on school campuses, having at least 10 minutes of physical activity within the daily classroom routine and participation in the “Safe Routes to School” program that promotes walking and bicycling to school. Stilwell High School students and members of the [Youth Action for Health Leadership](#) (YAHL) program, which is funded by the Oklahoma [Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust](#) (TSET), spoke in support of the changes. These youth work with the [Elevate Student Health](#) campaign, a campaign focused on improving the health of Oklahoma youth through comprehensive physical activity and nutrition policies in schools.

Joshua Wilson, an incoming Senior at Stilwell High School, said, "Without health and wellness you don't have much of a future, so it's good to implement those policies so we can provide our youth with a good foundation for a good future."

Data from 2020 showed Oklahomans 10-17 years old experience obesity at 18.7%, one of the highest rates of childhood obesity in the nation. While weight does not equal health, children with obesity are more likely to develop chronic health conditions such as cardiovascular disease, Type 2 diabetes and mental health conditions.

Physical inactivity and poor nutrition are two of the greatest behavioral risk factors for obesity. Only 26.1% of Oklahoma high school students are physically active for 60 minutes per day, while 22.3% of students drink one or more sodas each day.

Most children consume as much as half of their daily calories at school, so schools have a tremendous opportunity to improve the health of their students. This is why Elevate Student Health partners with districts across the state to improve their wellness policies through greater access to nutritious foods, increased physical activity, and more opportunities to drink water throughout the day.

Stilwell Superintendent Geri Gilstrap was ecstatic that local youth were learning how to be engaged citizens. "Physical and mental well-being are at the core of promoting successful academic

achievement for students. Research illustrates that without the attainment of both mental and physical well-being, academic success is limited and students rarely achieve their full academic potential.”

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**Elevate Student Health** is an initiative working to improve the health of Oklahoma youth through comprehensive physical activity and nutrition policies in schools. It is funded by the Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust (TSET). For more information, visit [www.ElevateStudentHealth.com](http://www.ElevateStudentHealth.com).

**Youth Action for Health Leadership** (Y AHL), a program of the Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust (TSET), is a statewide youth-led initiative that partners with schools and organizations to make a meaningful and measurable impact on Oklahoma by promoting healthy behaviors. For more information, visit <https://yahlok.org/>.

**The Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust** (TSET) serves as a partner and bridge builder for organizations shaping a healthier future for all Oklahomans. TSET provides leadership at the intersections of health by working with local coalitions and initiatives across the state, cultivating innovative and life-changing research and working across public and private sectors to develop, support, implement and evaluate creative strategies to take advantage of emerging opportunities to improve the public’s health. TSET – Better Lives Through Better Health. To learn more, go to <https://tset.ok.gov/>.