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Westville School Board Passes Improvements to Wellness Policy

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

Westville (July 18, 2022) – Westville School Board passed improvements to their district wellness policy to improve the health of almost 1,000 students in their district. The policy updates include designating officials to facilitate the development of the wellness policy and publishing their contact information for the public. A local High School student and member 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 at the June Board meeting.

Katherine Jones, an incoming Sophomore at Westville High School, said “Elevate Student Health is important to me because the kids are the future, and wellness policies set the standard for youth health.”

The [Elevate Student Health](#) campaign is a campaign focused on improving the health of Oklahoma youth through comprehensive physical activity and nutrition policies in schools.

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.

Westville Superintendent Terry Heustis was ecstatic that local youth were learning how to be engaged citizens. “We feel like changing our wellness policy to upgrade our standards will help our kids be healthy and fit,” said Superintendent Heustis.

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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.

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 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/>.