



A PARTNERSHIP OF THE MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Identifying and Addressing Wellness Disparities: Dietary Patterns and Latino Youth

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GOAL

○ **To increase ability**

- **To identify adolescent populations most at risk of poor nutrition and obesity, *and***
- **To use multiple strategies to help schools address those issues with a target population**

CDC's Strategies to Reduce Disparities

- **Focus programmatic efforts**

 - Analyze data to identify youth at highest risk

 - Target efforts and resources

 - Support design and implementation of evidence-based culturally appropriate interventions and programs

- **Raise awareness**

- **Build partnerships**

- **Document impact**

<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/disparities/strategies.htm>

Available sources of information

- **Publicly available data**
 - School demographics (Education)
 - Educational disparities (Education)
 - Disease and risk factor rates (Public Health)
- **Survey data – YRBS and other**
 - Behaviors, attitudes, beliefs
- **Focus groups, interviews**
- **Research articles, reports**

Massachusetts Demographics, 2008-09

958,910 students, PK – 12

○ Ethnicity:

- African American 8.2%
- Hispanic/Latino 14.3%
- Asian, PI 5.2%
- White, non Hispanic 69.9%

○ Special Populations:

- 1st Language Not English 15.2% (51% Spanish)
- Limited English Proficient 5.9%
- Low Income 30.7%
 - Free lunch 25.2%
 - Reduced price lunch 5.5%

Massachusetts Demographics, 2008-09

**Although 14.3% of students are Hispanic/ Latino,
only 3% of teachers are Hispanic**

**92% of Massachusetts teachers are white/non-
Hispanic**

Educational Disparities among Massachusetts Youth, 2007

Compared to all other ethnic groups, Latino students fare worse in terms of:

- ◉ **Attendance rates**
- ◉ **Dropout rates**
- ◉ **Graduation rates**
- ◉ **Percentage of “Warning/Failure” Scores on MCAS (standardized tests)**

Educational Disparities among Massachusetts Youth, 2007

- . . . And the achievement gap between Hispanic students and white/Anglo students is larger in Massachusetts than in the country as a whole.**

Public Health Indicators

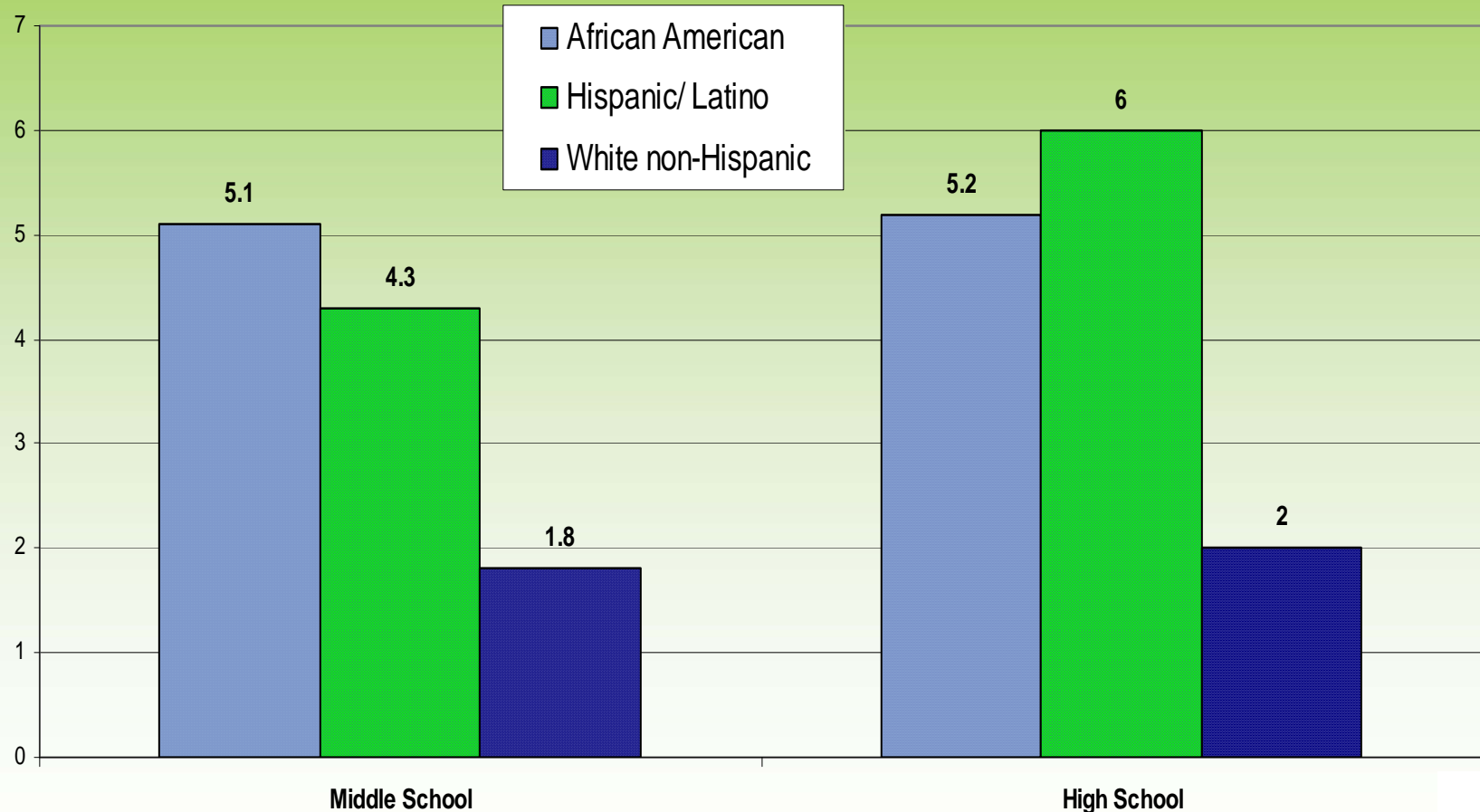
○ **Diabetes rates among Massachusetts adults:**

- **African American 10%**
- **Hispanic 7%**
- **White, non Hispanic 6%**

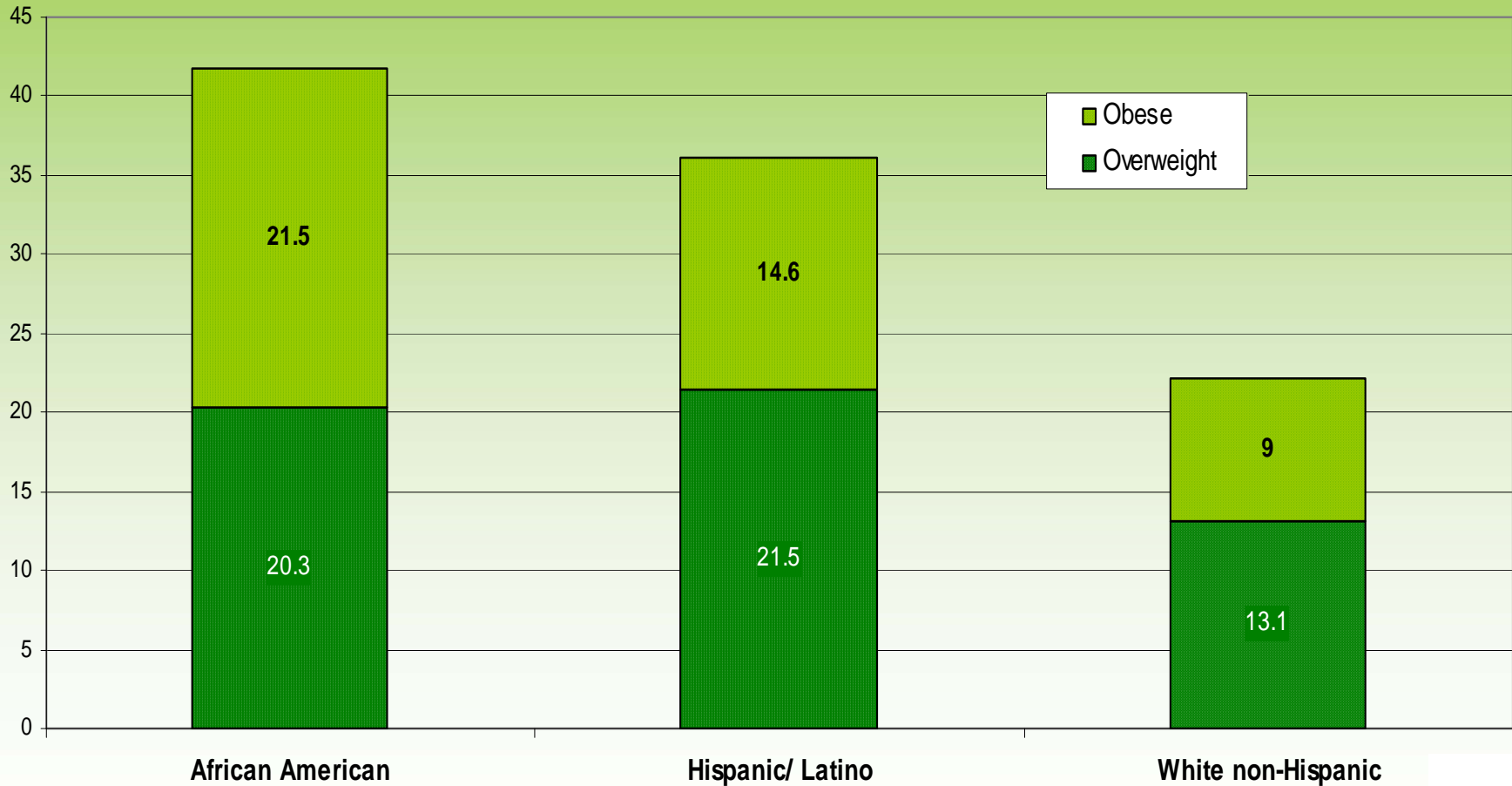
○ **Obesity rates among Massachusetts adults:**

- **African American 33%**
- **Hispanic 27%**
- **White, non Hispanic 20%**

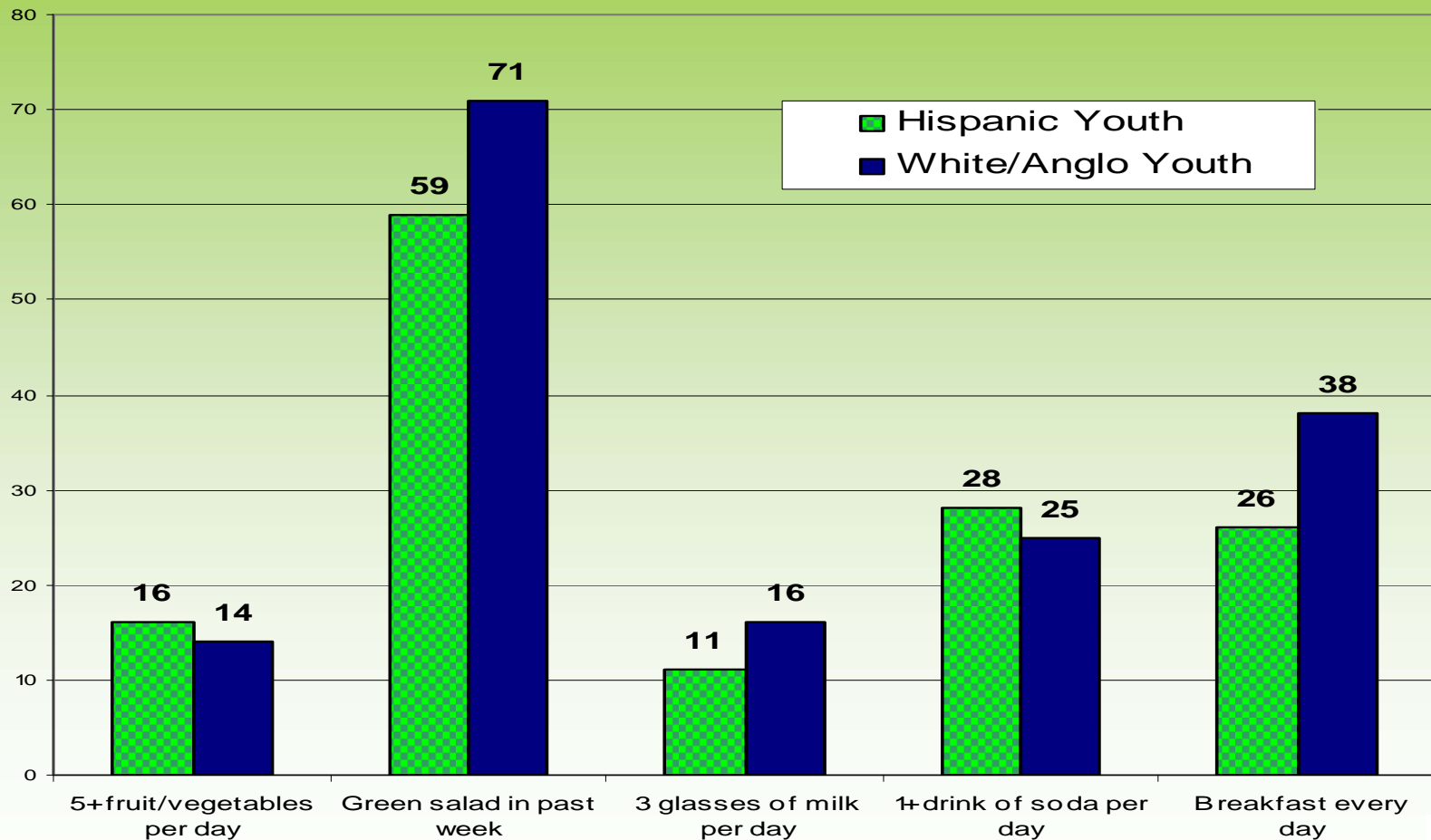
Self-Report Type II Diabetes among Massachusetts Youth, 2007



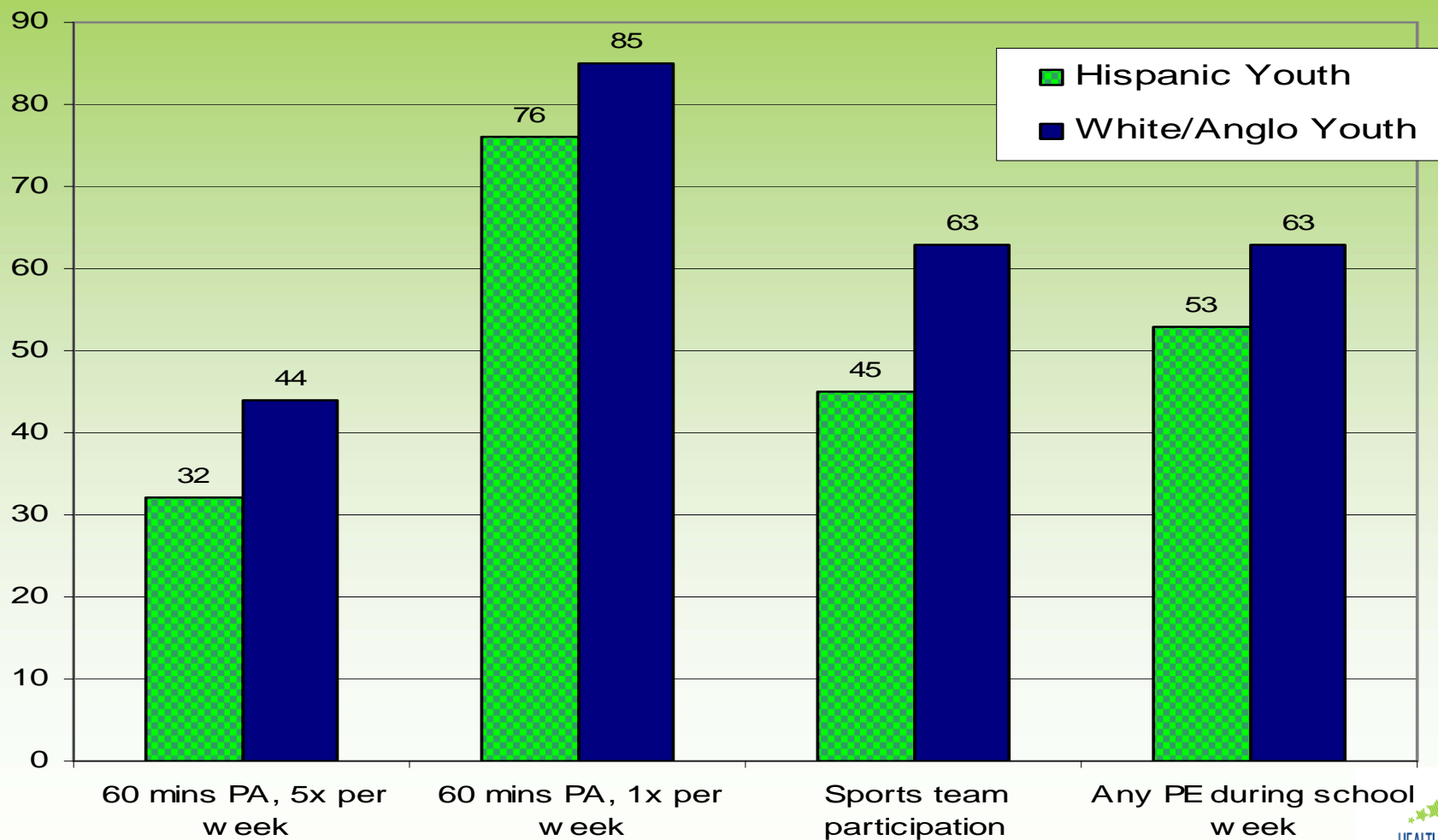
Self-Report Overweight and Obesity among Massachusetts Youth, 2007



Differences in Dietary Behavior between Hispanic and White/Anglo Massachusetts Youth, 2007



Differences in Physical Activity between Hispanic and White/Anglo Massachusetts Youth, 2007



John Snow Institute Focus Groups

- **3 focus groups were conducted with Latino/a early adolescents**

32 Latino/a students, ages 11-15

Bilingual facilitator and bilingual notetaker

Focus on eating and physical activity patterns in and out of school

John Snow Institute Focus Groups

- **Major findings:**

Students ate more take-out than home cooked foods

Students were dissatisfied with school foods (“nasty,” not tasty or appealing)

Junk/fast food widely available at school

Most were aware of what healthy eating entails

Targeting training, assistance, resources

Identifying districts with highest Hispanic school-age population:

Lawrence	(87%)	Boston	19,165
Chelsea	(77%)	Springfield	12,806
Holyoke	(75%)	Lawrence	10,592
Springfield	(50%)	Worcester	7,931
Lynn	(42%)	Lynn	5,575
Fitchburg	(38%)	Holyoke	5,144
Southbridge	(37%)	Chelsea	4,204

- ◉ **Holding PD events in key communities**
- ◉ **Early/prioritized invitations to key communities**
- ◉ **Limited eligibility for some resources**

“Food, Culture, and Community”

- **One month on-line course for school staff**
- **Partnership of MA ESE and Stalker Institute for Food and Nutrition (Framingham State)**
- **Course developed by Janet Schwartz (FSC) and BOND (Boston Organization of Nutrition Directors of Color)**

Increasing Cultural Competency: “Food, Culture and Community” course

o Teachers were asked to

- Write about and share their own cultural background and “foodways”**
- Review demographic data and describe the cultural/ethnic background of students in their district**
- Read about cultural differences in foods and food practices**
- Complete pre- and post-course Camphino-Bacorte Cultural Competence self-assessment**

“Food, Culture and Community” course

○ Teachers were asked to

- Interview a member of their district community from a different ethnic group about foodways
- Visit an ethnic grocery in their community, interview proprietor, write about experience
- Review one of two nutrition education interventions (*We Can!* or *Planet Health*) with an eye toward cultural appropriateness
- Suggest ways to apply what they had learned to their school

“Food, Culture and Community” course

- **Follow-up telephone interviews were conducted 2-3 months after completion of the course**
- **Teachers reported**
 - **Having students prepare a banquet using recipes and foods from their own cultures**
 - **Bringing in snacks from ethnic grocery**
 - **Planning to make changes in their own classes or schools**
 - *Lesson on Food Pyramid*
 - *Changing offerings in school lunch*
 - *Having students adapt home culture recipes to lower fat content and increase nutrition*

Increases in appreciation of students' cultures and communities

- “The course opened my eyes about how nutrition is so much more than the American diet. Each culture has their own way of eating and of what they believe is a healthy diet.
- “It helped me be aware of what kids are eating at home, the kinds of rituals they have, and whether they were maintaining their cultures.”
- “The interview gave me greater insight into the community. I gained a greater appreciation for how proud she was, and it made me realize that I need to respect the pride of my kids. It reminded me that culture has a place in the classroom, and that you don't ask kids to check their cultures at the door.

○ **Questions?**

○ **Comments?**

○ **For more information, contact Carol Goodenow**
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Exercise:

Pair up with someone from another site and exchange answers to the following questions:

- What is one student population in your SEA/LEA/TG/TEA at high risk of poor health outcomes? How many? Where are they?**
- What behavioral risk data do you have about this population as compared to other youth?**
- What organizations or groups in your LEA/SEA focus on work with this population? What is your current relationship with these organizations?**
- What programs or interventions do you currently have to address the needs of this population?**