

## Attachment H

OMB Control # 0584-0524  
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### USDA/FNS Formative Messaging & Supporting Content Focus Group Moderator's Guide (Middle School Teachers) 120 minutes

#### I. WELCOME AND GROUND RULES (5 minutes)

Welcome everyone. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am an independent marketing researcher. Thank you for coming for this discussion. Before we begin, I'd like to explain a few things about the discussion.

1. First of all, I want everyone to know there are **no wrong answers**. (We want to know your opinions and those opinions might differ. This is fine. We want to know what each of you thinks about the topics we will be discussing.
2. You have probably noticed the microphones in the room. They are here because we are **audiotaping** the discussion. Afterwards, I have to write a report. I want to give you my full attention and not have to take a lot of notes. Also, because we are taping, it is important that you try to **speak one at a time**. I may occasionally interrupt you when two or more people are talking at once in order to be sure everyone gets a chance to talk and that responses are accurately recorded.
3. Behind me is a one-way mirror. Some of the people working on this project are observing this discussion so that they can hear your opinions directly from you. However, your identity and anything you personally say here will remain private. By private I mean your names, addresses, and phone numbers will not be given to anyone, and no one will contact you after this group is over. When I write my report, I will not refer to anyone by name.
4. Please turn off your **beepers & cell phones**. The group will last only two hours. Should you need to go to the restroom during the discussion, please feel free to leave, but we'd appreciate it if you would go one at a time.
5. Feel free to say what is on your mind. If you have something negative to say, it is all right. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers. We just want to hear your opinions.

#### II. INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

1. Now, first let's spend a little time getting to know one another. Let's go around the table and introduce each of ourselves. Please tell me:
  - First name, and
  - What school you teach at,
  - What grade you teach
  - A little bit about yourself – such as your favorite hobby.

[MODERATOR: Instruct respondents that when questions in the guide refer to children, they should think of their middle school students. REMIND THEM OF THIS THROUGHOUT THE SESSION. Also, if they have children who are middle-school aged, ask them to respond first as a teacher of middle school students, and then, if they want to add any perspective as a parent, then can do so. They must denote any potential differences in these points-of-view, though.]

### **III. WARM UP/HELPING CHILDREN STAY HEALTHY (10 minutes)**

1. Let's begin our discussion this evening by discussing how we help middle school-aged children be healthy.
  - a. In general, what are some things that your school does to help the students stay healthy? [WRITE ON EASEL. IF NOT MENTIONED, PROBE NUTRITION/PHYSICAL ACTIVITY]
  - b. Of the items we have on this list, which are the easiest to do as a teacher for your middle students? Which are more challenging?
  - c. How much do you think about nutrition and physical activity when it comes to your students and your school?
  - d. What about making sure your students eat right and get exercise? Compared to the other priorities you have as a teacher, where does this rank? What makes you say that?
  - e. What opportunities do you think might compel your students to get more involved in improving nutrition and exercise at your school?
  - f. How important do you think nutrition and exercise are to your students? What makes you say that?

### **IV. ROLE OF INDIVIDUAL VS. COMMUNITY (10 minutes)**

1. Now let's talk a little bit more about nutrition and physical activity.
  - a. To what extent do you think it is your responsibility, as a teacher, to do what you can to make sure your students eat healthfully and get physical activity?
  - b. How much responsibility falls on your shoulders as opposed to your students or their parents? What makes you say that?
2. Are there any other institutions or people who should play a role in helping middle school-aged children eat healthfully and get exercise? What makes you say that?
3. [IF NOT MENTIONED:] What role should the middle school itself play?
  - a. Does the middle school play an important role? What makes you say that?
  - b. What about principals? What type of role do they play? What role should they play?
  - c. When you hear the phrase "healthy school environment" what does that mean to you?
    - i. Do you consider nutrition and physical activity to be a part of a healthy school environment? What makes you say that?
    - ii. If you had to rate the health of your school environment when it comes to nutrition and exercise, what would you say? Why?

## V. WHAT HAPPENS AT SCHOOL (5 minutes)

1. As a teacher, to what degree do you feel you can help make your students healthier – eating better, getting more exercise – while at school?
  - a. What are some things you think you can do (or already do), if anything, to help your students eat healthier while at school?
    - i. What are the biggest challenges?
  - b. What are some things you think you can do (or already do), if anything, to help your students get more exercise while at school?
    - i. What are the biggest challenges?
2. Based upon what you see in the lunchroom or otherwise, what do you think your students are eating too much of? In other words, what would you consider to be the most frequent/biggest “culprits” when it comes to the unhealthy foods your students eat?
3. Looking at the other side of the coin, what one or two “healthy” foods do you think your students definitely need to eat more of? What makes you say that?

## VI. MESSAGES and MESSAGE CONCEPTS (40 minutes)

1. We just discussed how it can be a challenge to get your middle school students to eat healthfully and get adequate exercise while at school. Now, we are going to read some statements and messages written to help convince teachers to take a more active role to help provide a healthier school environment for its students.

So first, we are going to look at a set of statements. Each **statement** is written on a card. I would like you to sort these cards. Place the card with the statement that you **find to be most convincing in terms of getting you to participate with other members of your community to try to make your school a healthier environment in terms of nutrition and physical activity for its students** on top. Put the one that does the second-best job underneath that one, and so on and so forth, until you get to the card that did the worst job (which should be on the bottom).

After you have done that, you will notice that each card has a letter in the lower right-hand corner. On **Handout A**, please write the letters of the cards in the order in which you have stacked them. Then, we'll talk about it.

[NOTE TO MODERATOR: To the extent possible, try to get respondents to ignore issues with grammar and/or word choice. The key is to have them focus on the messages.]

| Number | Teacher Messages  |
|--------|---|
| 106    | Students watch what you do. So when you lead by example, it reinforces the importance of smarter nutrition and regular physical activity.   |
| 107    | Nothing feels better than knowing you made a lasting difference in a child's life. Inspire, educate and motivate students and co-workers to make healthier food choices and be physically active  |
| 109    | Help them learn better through good nutrition and physical activity. Children that are well nourished and physically active are more likely to pay attention in class. Better attention means fewer class disruptions, better grades and a better future. |
| 110    | Achieve more with a healthier school environment. When students eat better and are physically active, they do better in class. A reputation for excellence is good for your career and your school.   |
| 113    | Here is your chance to give your students longer, healthier lives by combating childhood obesity right here, right now. Create a healthy school environment filled with healthy food choices and physical activity.                                       |
| 114    | It's not just about this school year. It's about entire lifetimes. Help them build healthy habits that support learning and success now and tomorrow.   |
| 115    | Help create future leaders. Empower your students to find ways to make foods at school healthier and add opportunities for physical activity. They'll build communication and advocacy skills and learn healthy habits.                                   |
| 116    | You are not alone. By leveraging the talents and enthusiasm of fellow teachers, students, principals, parents and the community, you can transform your school environment together.  |

[GO AROUND TABLE:] Which one did the best job? The second best job? Take a moment and explain why you selected those as your top two? [PROBE: likes, main idea/takeaway]

- a. Sometimes words can create pictures in your mind. Take a moment and take another look at the statement you placed on the top. What images or pictures come to mind as you read it?
- b. How does reading this statement make you feel? [PROBE: hopeful, empowered, guilty, nagged]
- c. [GO AROUND TABLE:] Now, let's look at the other side of the coin. Which **ONE** did not speak to you at all? [IF NECESSARY:] Which statement was at the bottom of your stack? Please explain why you thought this statement did a bad job.
- d. Were any of the statements confusing to you? Which one(s)? What about them were confusing?

*[The following section is designed to get at the message concepts/motivators.]*

2. In a moment, we are going to discuss the messages specifically. But, before we get there, I want to talk to you about what you just read in a different way. Many of these statements talked about the many responsibilities teachers have.
  - a. Which responsibilities are most important to you?
  - b. What is your reaction to the responsibilities in these messages associated with nutrition and physical activity? Are they realistic? What makes you say that?
3. Some of these messages talk about being an example to your students. How convincing is that as a reason to get involved in this effort, specifically? What makes you say that?
4. What's missing from what you just read? In other words, what are some other convincing reasons to get you to help make your school a healthier environment for its students?

MESSAGE SPECIFIC PROBES:

*[This section will contain a few probing questions for each message included in testing. They will explore the use of specific words and phrases as appropriate.]*

Message 106: Students watch what you do. So when you lead by example, it reinforces the importance of smarter nutrition and regular physical activity.

- a. Do you view “leading by example” as a way to reinforce lessons about nutrition and physical activity? What makes you say that?
- b. What about the term, “role model”?
  1. It is not listed in the message, but what does this phrase mean to you?
  2. How does it make you feel?

Message 107: Nothing feels better than knowing you made a lasting difference in a child’s life. Inspire, educate and motivate students and co-workers to make healthier food choices and be physically active.

- a. To what degree do you feel you have the resources to help students and co-workers make healthier food choices and be physically active? Why do you say that?
- b. What was your reaction to the opening phrase in this message? Did it “go with” the rest of the message? What makes you say that?

Message 109: Help them learn better through good nutrition and physical activity. Children that are well nourished and physically active are more likely to pay attention in class. Better attention means fewer class disruptions, better grades and a better future.

- a. In your experience, is this phrase true? What do you think would happen in your classroom if your school environment and the students were healthier? What makes you say that?

Message 110: Achieve more with a healthier school environment. When students eat better and are physically active, they do better in class. A reputation for excellence is good for your career and your school.

- a. What do you think about the last sentence in this message?

1. Is that important to you? What makes you say that?
2. How often do you think about your career when it comes to your students' success?

- b. Specifically, what about the phrase, "a reputation for excellence"?
  1. What does this phrase mean to you?
  2. How does it make you feel?

Message 113: Here is your chance to give your students longer, healthier lives by combating childhood obesity right here, right now. Create a healthy school environment filled with healthy food choices and physical activity.

- a. What role do you feel you play, as a teacher, in helping your students have a longer and healthier life? What makes you say that?

Message 114: It's not just about this school year. It's about entire lifetimes. Help them build healthy habits that support learning and success now and tomorrow.

- a. To what degree do you feel that you are able to teach your students healthy habits when it comes to nutrition and physical activity? What makes you say that?
- b. What was your reaction to the reference to "entire lifetimes"? What makes you say that?

Message 115: Help create future leaders. Empower your students to find ways to make foods at school healthier and add opportunities for physical activity. They'll build communication and advocacy skills and learn healthy habits.

- a. Do you feel you have the interest and resources to empower your students in this way? What makes you say that?

Message 116: You are not alone. By leveraging the talents and enthusiasm of fellow teachers, students, principals, parents and the community, you can transform your school environment together.

- a. When it comes to making your school a healthier place, do you feel alone? Or do you feel you could rally key stakeholders to move the cause forward? What makes you say that?

## **VII. SUPPORTING CONTENT (20 minutes)**

We also want to get your opinion on additional information that could be provided to teachers like you to try and get teachers involved in making their middle school a healthier environment through better nutrition and physical activity.

Take a quick look through this material [DISTRIBUTE PACKET OF SUPPORTING CONTENT]. Look through all of the materials and put a mark on the pages that would most convince you to take action.

1. What is your first reaction to the material you just looked through?
2. Which pages did you mark that you found most compelling? Why did you pick those pages?

3. Now I want you to think about all of the pages that were in the packet you received. On the sheet of paper in front of you, write down the letter of the page you liked the best. [ASK ABOUT EACH LETTER AND TAKE A HAND COUNT] Why did you select that page?
4. Which page did you like the least? What makes you say that?
5. Let's say that we are developing a brochure, and we only had room for one piece of information in the materials I provided to you. What would be the one thing that you would include? What makes you say that?

### **VIII. DEBRIEF ON MESSAGE & SUPPORTING CONTENT (10 minutes)**

1. After viewing these materials, do you feel that your classroom practices can affect what your students eat?
2. How do you feel about the idea of NOT using food to reward students? For example, not giving out candy for correct answers or holding contests where candy or fast food is the prize.
4. On a related note, how do you feel about making celebratory events such as birthdays and other holiday-related parties healthier by serving more nutritious foods or incorporating physical activity?
5. Do you currently incorporate nutrition education into your regular classroom instruction?
  - a. If so, what resources do you use to do this?
  - b. Do you use Team Nutrition or Eat Smart Play Hard materials?
  - c. If not, where do you go for resources?
  - d. Where do you go for educational resources in general?
6. Do you know if your school has a wellness policy and/or a wellness council?
  - a. If so, do teachers participate? Why or why not?
7. Do teachers eat with the students in the cafeteria? Or do they eat in a teacher lounge?
8. Have you ever heard of the Healthier US Schools Challenge (HUSSC)?
  - a. If so, do you think your school would be capable of getting an award?

### **IX. COMMUNICATION TOOLS (10 minutes)**

1. Still thinking about the information we just reviewed, where would you expect to see information like this? Where would you look for this type of information if you wanted it?
  - a. Where, specifically, *have you seen* information like this?
2. Is this information that you would be likely to notice or pay attention to? What makes you say that?
3. What are other ways that people have tried to provide you with nutrition or other health information?

- a. Is there an example that stands out to you as being something that you remember as being a really good way to share information like this with you? What about this example makes it stand out to you?
  - b. Are there any other ways you would want to get information about nutrition and health? What ways?
4. How would you most likely share information like this with other teachers?
5. Where do you usually get health and nutrition information? [PROBE: Online, doctor's office, school, community, etc.]
6. Do you have a computer and Internet access at home?
  - a. [If yes] Do you go online to search for health and nutrition information? Where do you go online for this information? What types of sites or information have you found to be most helpful?
  - b. [If no access] Do you go anywhere to access the Internet?

**X. FALSE CLOSE (5 minutes)**

1. [BRIEF] Throughout this evening, we have talked and read about ways to convince teachers to get involved in their schools to help make it a healthier environment in terms of nutrition and physical activity.
2. While I step out of the room for a moment to see if I need to cover any additional information, take a moment and answer the question on Handout B. It reads, "What would be the one thing you would say to a fellow teacher to get him/her to take part in an effort to make your middle school a healthier environment for nutrition and physical activity."

Thank you very much for your participation! Have a great day/evening!



**Attachment H1**

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First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/2010  
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Session #: \_\_\_\_\_

**Handout A**

Take a look at your stacked cards. Each card has a letter in the lower right-hand corner. Please write the letter of each statement in the blanks below in the order in which you sorted the cards.

Does best job motivating you to help make your school a healthier place by improving nutrition and increasing physical activity \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Does worst job of motivating you to help make your school a healthier place by improving nutrition and increasing physical activity \_\_\_\_\_

Attachment H1a

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Please note that the materials to follow will be printed on 5 x 8 index cards.

| Number | Teacher Messages  |
|--------|---|
| 106    | Students watch what you do. So when you lead by example, it reinforces the importance of smarter nutrition and regular physical activity.   |
| 107    | Nothing feels better than knowing you made a lasting difference in a child's life. Inspire, educate and motivate students and co-workers to make healthier food choices and be physically active  |
| 109    | Help them learn better through good nutrition and physical activity. Children that are well nourished and physically active are more likely to pay attention in class. Better attention means fewer class disruptions, better grades and a better future. |
| 110    | Achieve more with a healthier school environment. When students eat better and are physically active, they do better in class. A reputation for excellence is good for your career and your school.   |
| 113    | Here is your chance to give your students longer, healthier lives by combating childhood obesity right here, right now. Create a healthy school environment filled with healthy food choices and physical activity.                                       |
| 114    | It's not just about this school year. It's about entire lifetimes. Help them build healthy habits that support learning and success now and tomorrow.   |
| 115    | Help create future leaders. Empower your students to find ways to make foods at school healthier and add opportunities for physical activity. They'll build communication and advocacy skills and learn healthy habits.                                   |
| 116    | You are not alone. By leveraging the talents and enthusiasm of fellow teachers, students, principals, parents and the community, you can transform your school environment together.  |

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### Supporting Content Packet

**Empower students to become healthy eating advocates.** Work with your school wellness committee to find ways to engage students in creating a healthier school environment. Explore many possibilities, such as forming a student action group; putting nutrition and activity on the Student Council agenda; and conducting a student survey about ways to improve the school nutrition and physical activity environment.

**Close the lesson-reality gap.** Does what you teach about healthy food choices in class differ from what foods are available in your school? Work with the school wellness council, school nutrition manager, food vendors, Parent organization, and principal to move toward more nutrient-rich food and beverage choices. Make sure your classroom does not promote foods and beverages high in fat and added sugars. Eliminate signs and images promoting fast food and sweets and use something other than food to reward children for good work.

**Doing is the best way to learn.** Help your students apply lessons about making healthy food choices and physical activity in their real world, starting with the school cafeteria. Work with the school nutrition manager to have students calculate the fat, added sugars and calories in menu items, recommend ways to post nutrition information for students, and conduct taste testing of new fruit, vegetable, and whole grain items. If your school offers credits for community or service learning projects, encourage students to make their project a healthier school environment.

**Use nutrition and physical activity to reinforce math, science, English and health lessons.** Find lessons from Team Nutrition and other sources that are linked to education standards and use them in your classroom. Find ways to tie in your lessons with what's being grown in a school garden or local farm or being served in the cafeteria.

**Leverage existing school events and meetings to put an emphasis on smart foods and physical activity.** Get these topics on the agenda and weave them into the teacher/principal speeches at every staff meeting, PTA meeting, Back to School Night, concert, school play, science fair, etc.

**Create a fun and friendly competition** between classes to see who can make the most progress in physical activity hours logged, fruits and vegetables eaten, etc.

**Join with the school wellness committee and principal to make a school wide policy.** Agree that food will not be used as a reward, nor will physical activity be used as a punishment. For

birthdays and other in-class celebrations, encourage students and parents to bring in more nutrient-rich, healthier options. Provide a list of ideas.

**Model the change you want others to become.** Set the example by eating healthy foods yourself and getting regular physical activity. Ask others to join you for a balanced, delicious school lunch or walk around the playground. Let students and peers see you run or walk on the track or shoot baskets in the gym. Advocate for change and show others how to be effective advocates.

**Make your classroom a place where kids can learn and live healthier.** Give your students regular physical activity breaks, or combine physical activity with a lesson.



**Attachment H3**

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Session #: \_\_\_\_\_

**Handout B**

1. What is the one thing you would tell a fellow teacher if you were going to try and motivate them to help their middle school students eat healthier and get more physically active while at school?

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