

## Attachment I

OMB Control # 0584-0524  
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### USDA/FNS Formative Messaging & Supporting Content Telephone Focus Group Moderator's Guide (Middle School Principals) 90 minutes

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

Welcome everyone. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am an independent marketing researcher. Thank you for dialing into 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. 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, and because we are having this discussion via conference call, 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. Some colleagues are listening to the discussion with me. They want to hear your opinions directly from you. They will not participate in the discussion in any way except they might ask me to go over a topic or notify me if I skipped something we need to discuss.
4. One of the great things about doing groups over the phone is that it adds a layer of privacy to the discussion. Your names 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. During the discussion, we will only use first names.
5. The discussion will last only 90 minutes.
6. Finally, you were mailed a packet prior to the discussion. As was mentioned when you were recruited, this packet contains materials that we'll be discussing today. Please be sure you have this packet nearby. However, please do not open it or look at the materials inside until I prompt you to. [NOTE: This instruction will change if the materials are sent via e-mail, as opposed to overnight delivery.]

#### II. INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

1. Now, first let's spend a little time getting to know one another. Let's each take turns introducing ourselves. Please tell me:
  - First name, and
  - What local area you live in,
  - What school you are a principal at, and

- A little bit about yourself—such as a favorite hobby

### **III. WARM UP/HELPING CHILDREN STAY HEALTHY (5 minutes)**

1. Let's begin our discussion
  - a. In general, what do you think is your most important job as a principal? What makes you say that?
  - b. Now, let's get a bit more specific...what are some things that your school does to help the students stay healthy? [IF NOT MENTIONED, PROBE NUTRITION/PHYSICAL ACTIVITY]
  - c. How much do you think about nutrition and physical activity when it comes to your students and your school?
  - d. Compared to all of the priorities you have as a principal, where does making sure your students eat nutritiously and get enough physical activity this rank? 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 principal, 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, their parents, or your teachers and staff? What makes you say that?
2. [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 teachers? Food service/cafeteria/school nutrition managers? 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? Do you consider nutrition and physical activity to be a part of a healthy school environment? What makes you say that?
  - d. If you had to rate the health of your school environment when it comes to nutrition and exercise, what would you say? What are your school's strengths in these areas? What are some areas of improvement?

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

1. As a principal, 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, 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, if anything, to help your students get more exercise while at school?
  - i. What are the biggest challenges?

**VI. MESSAGES and MESSAGE CONCEPTS (30 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 principals to take additional steps to help make their schools a healthier environment in terms of nutrition and physical activity for its students.

So first, we are going to look at a set of statements. Please go ahead and open the packets that were mailed to you. Please open the first envelope labeled “A.” Inside, you will find 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 | Principal Messages  |
|--------|---|
| 138    | When a healthier school environment is present, kids and teachers are more likely to be too. Not only are well-children and staff less likely to be absent, they are less likely to experience other barriers to learning—such as poor concentration and low energy level. Fuel your school performance with healthy foods and opportunities for physical activity. |
| 139    | Studies show that well nourished and physically active children perform better academically. Better attendance and improved concentration can mean better grades and increased graduation rates.  |
| 140    | Sometimes clever counts more than cash. Use your creativity, and that of your staff, students, parents and community. Come up with cost effective ways to make healthy food choices and regular activity possible for all.  |
| 141    | Engage parents in their child’s school life through the topics of nutrition and physical activity. Getting parents involved in plans to make your school environment healthier can lead to greater connectedness on other issues such as academics.   |
| 144    | Make it a common cause. It takes a community of players to create and maintain a healthy school environment. Help everyone to unite around this common goal—teachers, students, parents, school foodservice, and community members—everyone with a stake in your school.  |
| 145    | It starts at the top, so walk the talk. Your school needs your leadership to help children learn to make healthy food choices and be physically active. Create and support a school wellness council and be an advocate for policies that limit the sale of less healthful foods in schools and promote physical activity.  |

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| <b>148</b> | A healthier workplace says you value and care about the well-being of teachers, students and staff. When people feel valued, they are more satisfied in their jobs and perform better. Encourage all to eat healthier and be more physically active. |
| <b>149</b> | Go for the Gold. Schools that make changes to promote healthy foods and physical activity are winning national awards and recognition. Be the principal who helped to gather everyone together and made it happen.                                   |

[ASK EACH RESPONDENT] 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. How does reading this statement make you feel? [PROBE: hopeful, empowered, guilty, nagged]
- b. [ASK EACH RESPONDENT:] 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.
- c. 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 different priorities principals have to balance.
  - a. Which of the priorities named in the messages are most important to you?
  - b. Are they realistic? What makes you say that?
3. Some of these messages talk about maintaining or improving your school reputation. 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? What would you say to other principals to get them involved in this effort?

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 138: When a healthier school environment is present, kids and teachers are more likely to be too. Not only are well-children and staff less likely to be absent, they are less likely to experience other barriers to learning – such as poor concentration and low energy level. Fuel your school performance with healthy foods and opportunities for physical activity.

- a. Specifically, this phrase talks about reducing school “absences” and improving “concentration and energy levels” through a healthier school environment. Do you feel this is true? What makes you say that?
- b. How important is this as a reason to develop a healthier school environment?

Message 139: Studies show that well nourished and physically active children perform better academically. Better attendance and improved concentration can mean better grades and increased graduation rates.

- a. Specifically, this phrase talks about your school’s “grades and graduation rates.” How much do you feel a healthier environment in terms of nutrition and physical activity would improve these areas for your school? What makes you say that?
- b. Would this message be more or less convincing if it discussed lower grade retention rates instead of increased graduation rates? What makes you say that?

Message 140: Sometimes clever counts more than cash. Use your creativity, and that of your staff, students, parents and community. Come up with cost effective ways to make healthy food choices and regular activity possible for all.

- a. Specifically, this phrase references that making a healthier school environment can impact your budget. How much of a hindrance is the budget in terms of helping your school to become a healthier environment in terms of nutrition and physical activity?
- b. Do you agree or disagree with the statement, “Sometimes clever counts more than cash”? What makes you say that?

Message 141: Engage parents in their child’s school life through the topics of nutrition and physical activity. Getting parents involved in plans to make your school environment healthier can lead to greater connectedness on other issues such as academics.

- a. To what degree do you feel you can influence parents to get more involved in making your school environment healthier in terms of nutrition and physical activity? What makes you say that?

Message 144: Make it a common cause. It takes a community of players to create and maintain a healthy school environment. Help everyone to unite around this common goal—teachers, students, parents, school foodservice, and community members—everyone with a stake in your school.

- a. Specifically, this phrase references a “common cause”. Do you feel you have the resources necessary to unite all the key players around the cause of making your school a healthier environment in terms of nutrition and physical activity? What makes you say that?
- b. How likely is this to happen? What makes you say that?

Message 145: It starts at the top, so walk the talk. Your school needs your leadership to help children learn to make healthy food choices and be physically active. Create and support a school wellness

council and be an advocate for policies that limit the sale of less healthful foods in schools and promote physical activity.

- a. Specifically, this phrase references being an “advocate” for policies that would make your school a healthier environment in terms of nutrition and physical activity. To what degree to you feel you have the resources and ability to influence policy changes? What makes you say that?
- b. What was your reaction to the phrase, “It starts at the top, so walk the talk”?

Message 148: A healthier workplace says you value and care about the well-being of teachers, students and staff. When people feel valued, they are more satisfied in their jobs and perform better. Encourage all to eat healthier and be more physically active.

- a. To what degree do you feel offering healthy food choices and more opportunities for physical activity would help your students and staff feel more valued and perform better? What makes you say that?

Message 149: Go for the Gold. Schools that make changes to promote healthy foods and physical activity are winning national awards and recognition. Be the principal who helped to gather everyone together and made it happen.

- a. To what degree are winning national awards and recognition important to you and your school? What makes you say that?
- b. How much, if at all, do these types of awards help you, professionally?

## **VII. SUPPORTING CONTENT (15 minutes)**

We also want to get your opinion on additional information that could be provided to principals like you to try and get you, your staff, student body and parents involved in making their middle school healthier through better nutrition and physical activity.

Please open the envelope labeled “B” which should contain a small packet of materials. Take a quick look through this material. 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? State the letter you see in the bottom right-hand corner of the pages you selected. 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 front page of the packet, write down the letter of the page you liked the best. [ASK ABOUT EACH LETTER AND TAKE A TALLY] 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. 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? [IF NOT MENTIONED, PROBE ON INTERNET/WEB SOURCES, YOUTUBE, ETC.]
  - 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 related to your school or student body?
  - 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 your staff, students and parents?
5. What information would be MOST helpful to you when it comes to helping your students eat more healthfully?

### **IX. CLOSE (5 minutes)**

1. [BRIEF] Throughout this evening, we have talked and read about ways to convince principals to get involved in their schools to help make it a healthier environment in terms of nutrition and physical activity.
2. Please take all of your handouts and materials and place them in the self-addressed stamped envelope we provided for you and place it in the mail.
3. Before we end our discussion, how would you answer the following question?

What information would be MOST helpful to you when it comes to getting your students to eat more healthfully and getting more physical activity while at school?

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

**Attachment I1**

**OMB Control # 0584-0524**  
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Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 2 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. **An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.** Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services, Office of Research, Nutrition and Analysis, Alexandria, VA 22302 (0584-0524). Do not return the completed form to this address.

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

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

**Envelope 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 \_\_\_\_\_



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

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|--------|---|
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| 139    | Studies show that well nourished and physically active children perform better academically. Better attendance and improved concentration can mean better grades and increased graduation rates. (or lower grade retention rates).  |
| 140    | Sometimes clever counts more than cash. Use your creativity, and that of your staff, students, parents and community. Come up with cost effective ways to make healthy food choices and regular activity possible for all.  |
| 141    | Engage parents in their child’s school life through the topics of nutrition and physical activity. Getting parents involved in plans to make your school environment healthier can lead to greater connectedness on other issues such as academics.   |
| 144    | Make it a common cause. It takes a community of players to create and maintain a healthy school environment. Help everyone to unite around this common goal—teachers, students, parents, school foodservice, and community members—everyone with a stake in your school.  |
| 145    | It starts at the top, so walk the talk. Your school needs your leadership to help children learn to make healthy food choices and be physically active. Create and support a school wellness council and be an advocate for policies that limit the sale of less healthful foods in schools and promote physical activity.  |
| 148    | A healthier workplace says you value and care about the well-being of teachers, students and staff. When people feel valued, they are more satisfied in their jobs and perform better. Encourage all to eat healthier and be more physically active.  |
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### Envelope B: Supporting Content Packet

**Borrow from the best.** All kinds of schools have found ways to create healthier nutrition and physical activity environments. Use their best and most realistic ideas at your school. (provide links to school case studies)

**Bring everyone into the circle of change.** School wide change requires everyone to play a part and get onboard. Hold a meeting or a fun event for students, teachers, staff and parents to become interested, motivated and active in creating a healthier environment. Promote workplace wellness opportunities and incentives for teachers and staff to practice healthy behaviors.

**Build school spirit and momentum by challenging and encouraging everyone to participate.** Organize staff and students into work groups who execute parts of the overall plan. Or create a friendly competition between grades. Recognize and reward effective teams and their accomplishments.

**Participate in the HealthierUS Schools Challenge.** This voluntary certification program provides criteria for a variety of award levels-so you can make changes gradually. Plus, schools receive national recognition, community attention and monetary awards.

**Seek support and solicit ideas far and wide.** Share your healthy environment goals and program with professional, corporate, civic, youth and parent organizations in your community. Attend some of their meetings as a speaker. Ask your local paper to run a story about the healthy activities at your school. Invite ideas from doctors, nurses, dietitians and administrators of your local hospital. And ask your school system to support the efforts at your school.

**Allow students to voice their opinions and make some of the decisions.** Students are more likely to eat their lunches if they have a role in selecting the food, or purchase healthier vending beverages and snacks if they had a say in what is provided. Plus, involving students in your school's healthy school environment efforts is a good way to foster greater connectedness-a feeling of belonging and that the adults at school care about them. Children who are more connected tend to perform better in school and graduate.

**How does your school measure up?** Ask your school wellness council to assess how well your

school promotes healthy foods and provides students with opportunities to be physically active. There are a number of easy-to-use tools being used by other schools. Listen to their findings and come up with strategies for improvement.

**Make the usual school events and activities healthier.** Consider what is being sold through fundraisers and explore non-food options. Some schools have used activities that promote physical activity to raise funds-such as conducting a Spin-a-thon, Walk, or basketball competition. Ask the PTA and booster clubs to brainstorm ways they can also make their fundraising efforts healthier.

**Lead the way. Set the example. Walk the Talk.** Be physically active at school and make healthy food choices. Shoot hoops in the gym, or drop into a PE class from time to time. Eat in the school cafeteria at least once a week and give students a “shout out” whenever you see them making healthy choices.

**Healthy habits are not something that you can practice just on the morning of the test.** Providing physical activity breaks and healthy foods support continual learning through the school year that prepares them for test day, and for life.



