

During September, San Francisco Unified School District's (SFUSD) School Health Programs focused on starting the school year right by developing healthy habits for the entire year. Studies show that skipping breakfast, low vegetable intake, and soda intake are associated with reduced cognitive performance and/or increased risk of childhood obesity.** Following, learn more about just a few of the healthy nutritional programs that have been created in our Wellness Centers.*

Partnership with SF-Marin Food Bank Provides Food for Thought

Every Monday, Cesar Dominguez, the Community Health Outreach Worker (CHOW) at Ida B. Wells High School, greets an SF-Marin Food Bank van, helps unload a large palette of food, and looks over the inventory—fresh oranges, tangerines, apples, carrots, individually wrapped string cheese, and other healthy snacks.

Cesar distributes the snacks into individual classroom bins and replenishes them with fresh fruit and snacks throughout the week as needed. During lunch times, students can also visit the Wellness Center to take advantage of the fresh provisions the Food Bank provides.

Ida B. Wells High School is one of 30 public schools participating in the Morning Snack Program, a partnership with the SF-Marin Food Bank. Each school day, the program serves 8,000 students throughout the school district.

Studies show a direct link between nutrition and academic performance. Ninth-grade students in San Francisco public schools who do not report consuming five or more servings of fruit and vegetables per day are 30 percent more likely to report C, D or F grades than students who do.***

"Most of our students don't have the opportunity to eat a substantial amount of food on a regular basis, and they are often hungry sitting in class," Cesar says. "With the snacks made available to them, we can ensure that they are meeting some basic nutritional needs." Ida B. Wells has been partnering with the Food Bank since 2009.

Thurgood Marshall High School's Wellness Center has maintained a similar partnership with the Food Bank for the past three years. CHOW Jessie Escobar says their Center receives a large delivery of fresh fruit every Monday morning. "The drivers are familiar and friendly faces to Wellness. They typically bring the fruit to our door and then I make sure all the fruit is sorted and washed," he says.

"At Marshall, we receive approximately 500 pieces or 100 of pounds of fruit, and we typically go through it all by the end of the week. It is proof that 'if you build it, they will come,' or in our case, 'if you offer it, it will be eaten by growing teenagers.'"

At Marshall, apples and oranges are available throughout the day. "A majority of the students that come to our Wellness Center will pick up a snack 'for the road' on their way to class," Jessie says. "Teachers know they can send their students who may need a pick-me-up during class time. If we have fruit, then we should give, give, give."

Jessie says the benefits from the partnership with the Food Bank come in the form of consistency. "We are known on campus as the place to go when students need a snack, especially during the stretches

before and after lunchtime. More importantly, a fresh piece of fruit is a much better choice than any sugary soda or bag of chips. It is a proactive way to offer healthy options for kids.”

Perhaps the most important health benefit? “Having fruit increases daily foot traffic in our Wellness Center --- word spreads fast about snacks -- which leads to meeting students, introducing groups and Wellness services, and making lasting relationships. It is a win-win,” Jessie says.

*Adolphus K et al. The Effects of Breakfast on Behavior and Academic Performance in Children and Adolescents. *Front. Hum. NeuroSci.* 2013; 7;425.

**Barlow SE, for the Expert Committee. Expert committee recommendations regarding the prevention, assessment, and treatment of child and adolescent overweight and obesity: summary report. *Pediatrics.* 2007;120(suppl 4):S164-S192.

***Centers for Disease Control. High School YRBS [San Francisco]/prepared by the SFDPH, Maternal, Child & Adolescent Health, 2013.

To learn about other nutrition programs in our Wellness Centers, visit [our web site](#).