

THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

RESOLUTION ON UTILIZING AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT DOLLARS TO SUPPORT BUILDING HEALTHIER SCHOOLS AND IMPROVING NUTRITIONAL OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS

Resolution Summary

President Obama noted throughout his campaign that education would be one of his top priorities. That promise was made good by including nearly \$115 billion for schools as part of the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009. This immediate boost to the economy, albeit temporary, has saved, restored, or created thousands of jobs in the states for preschool, K-12 and higher education where cuts were made. Additionally, jobs were created for school modernization projects included in the act.

Nearly \$9 billion is available in state stabilization funds for any public safety or other government service, including education. These funds are left entirely to state discretion for spending, but school modernization is an eligible use of the dollars. State Fiscal Stabilization Fund dollars may be used for "modernization, renovation, or repair of public school facilities and institutions of higher education facilities." Twenty-four billion dollars in bonds for school construction is available where federal, state and local dollars will be utilized to retire costs.

Schools have an important role in encouraging healthy behaviors among their students and creating an environment that makes it easier for them to make healthy choices. Policymakers have the opportunity to utilize ARRA funds to create healthier school environments, which will reduce childhood overweight and obesity, by building healthier schools and offering healthy nutrition options for students.

Additional Resource Information

Leadership for Healthy Communities: "Supporting Healthy Communities through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009"

http://www.leadershipforhealthycommunities.org/images/stories/lhc_policybrief_econ_4.6.09_final.pdf

U.S. Department of Education: School Modernization

<http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/modernization/index.html>

National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities

<http://www.ncef.org/index.cfm>

CSG Management Directives

Management Directive #1: Promote efforts to utilize American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds through the state fiscal stabilization fund and school construction bonds to improve gymnasiums, playgrounds and other recreational facilities used for physical activity.

Management Directive #2: Support efforts of local school districts to purchase, renovate or replace equipment needed to prepare healthy meal options for students.

Management Directive #3: CSG staff will post approved resolution on CSG's website and make available through its regular communication venues at the state and local level to ensure its distribution to the state government and policy community.

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WHEREAS, children and adolescents benefit from physical activity, and moderate amounts of daily physical activity are recommended for all ages;

WHEREAS, nearly half of American youth are not vigorously active on a regular basis, and 14% report no recent physical activity;

WHEREAS, participation in all types of physical activity declines strikingly as age or grade in school increases;

WHEREAS, physical education in schools across the United States has been substantially reduced, or completely eliminated, as an attempt to improve test scores or to reduce budgets;

WHEREAS, children who are physically active and fit tend to perform better in the classroom, and studies have shown a direct correlation between academic performance and nutrition;

WHEREAS, healthy eating helps young people grow, develop, and achieve in school and helps prevent childhood and adolescent health problems such as overweight and obesity, eating disorders, dental problems and iron deficiency anemia;

WHEREAS, research suggests that not eating breakfast can affect children's intellectual Performance; and

WHEREAS, poor eating habits and inactivity are the root causes of overweight and obesity.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that The Council of State Governments encourages state policymakers and local school officials to utilize American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds to improve children's health and academic achievement by ensuring all plans for construction, repair and/or modernization of schools include quality enhancements to gymnasiums, playgrounds and other facilities that allow for physical activity.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that The Council of State Governments recommends that school food authorities at the state and local level ensure that schools use funds to purchase, renovate or replace the equipment needed to prepare healthy meals that offer healthy, appealing foods such as fruits, vegetables and low-fat grain products wherever food is available.

Adopted this ____ Day of November, 2009 at the CSG Annual Meeting in La Quinta, California.

Gov. Joe Manchin III

Sen. Bart Davis

CSG President

CSG Chairman