



MUSC Boeing Center
for Children's Wellness

2020

Impact Report

Letter from the Director

Dear friends of the MUSC Boeing Center for Children's Wellness,

What a year! It was one of many highs but also unexpected stressful events. Moving the needle on childhood obesity and student wellness was already a big task, but the coronavirus pandemic made it harder but even more important. We have responded by developing and sourcing wellness activities for families to use at home, as well emphasizing social-emotional needs among both students and staff. The bottom line is that what we are doing is working and is needed now more than ever.

Through our evaluation efforts over the last year, we know that students attending schools participating in the MUSC Boeing Center for Children's Wellness (BCCW) School-Based Wellness Initiative (previously the Docs Adopt School Health Initiative) have improved health and do better in school. Some of these impacts include decreased obesity, fewer asthma-related urgent care visits, better school attendance, reduced suspensions/expulsions, and a higher high school graduation rate. These results affirm our hypothesis that a healthy kid is a better learner.



We are also delighted to introduce new team members. Dr. Kathleen Head has joined us as our Associate Director. Dr. Head has a lifelong passion for this work and ideal training, including a degree in Nutrition Sciences, training in Pediatrics and Internal Medicine, and a fellowship in Academic Medicine with an MPH. Our two new Program Coordinators include Lauren Kelly, MSPH, and Magie Young, MPH, RDN, LD, both of whom are dedicated to improving the wellness of children. Lauren brings a wealth of experience in community work and Magie brings not only expertise as a dietician but also a background in the corporate world. We are very fortunate to have these talented people join our team.

Magie and Lauren join us to support a wonderful opportunity from the BlueCross® BlueShield® of South Carolina Foundation Diabetes Free SC (DFSC) initiative. The Foundation believes, as we do, that healthy kids become healthy adults, therefore reducing the burden of Type 2 Diabetes. As part of this initiative we are expanding to eight new districts in the 2020-2021 school year.

This year, we have also significantly reorganized the MUSC BCCW. The programs for infants and young children, directed by Kerrie Schnake, have moved back to the University of South Carolina after five years at the MUSC BCCW. Despite this reorganization, our similar missions will allow for continued collaboration among initiatives.

The MUSC BCCW School-Based Wellness Initiative impacts over 100,000 children each year. This sustained impact would not be possible without the Boeing Company's continued investment over the past ten years, as well as new community partners. We are grateful that they share our vision, that the best way to change the world is to reach one child at a time, helping them to be healthy, succeed in school and thrive in life.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Janice D Key MD". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Janice D. Key, MD

About Us

Our Mission

The MUSC BCCW engages school communities in creating healthy learning environments through the implementation of targeted wellness initiatives.

Our Vision

Our vision is a South Carolina where all children are healthy, succeed in school, and thrive in life.



What We Do

The MUSC BCCW School-Based Wellness Initiative works to create a culture of wellness by providing direct support and motivation for K-12 schools and districts as they implement evidence-based wellness strategies. The Initiative is designed to engage the school community in creating a healthy learning environment through support from an MUSC BCCW Program Coordinator, an active school wellness committee, and the utilization of the School Wellness Checklist© (SWC).

Program Coordinators provide ongoing support and training to districts and schools by guiding them through the implementation of wellness strategies, collaborating with community partners, and sustainability planning. School Wellness Committees implement policies and practices that focus on students, staff, and families' health and well-being. They also work with an MUSC BCCW Program Coordinator to build relationships within the community to align wellness efforts.

School Wellness Committees utilize the SWC, the implementation tool that provides participating schools with various evidence-based strategies and resources that assist them in making the policy, systems, and environmental changes required to build and sustain a culture of wellness. Schools implementing significant wellness changes throughout the school year receive a monetary wellness award to grow and sustain their wellness initiatives the following year.

About Us

Adapting to the COVID-19 Pandemic

The 2019-2020 school year was unlike any other due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In a typical school year, there is a race for schools to complete the School Wellness Checklist®, MUSC BCCW team site visits, and Wellness Award Celebrations to recognize school achievements. None of these events were able to occur this year as a result of the pandemic. Instead, school staff were adapting to providing remote instruction, assisting with COVID-19 contact tracing, and ensuring students had access to food and reliable internet.

These rapid changes led to a shift in focus for the MUSC BCCW team. Instead of the typical end of year push, we sourced and developed resources to help schools prioritize wellness in a virtual setting. We created a website page dedicated to wellness activities that could be implemented virtually for staff and students. The team encouraged schools to share these resources with families to implement physical activity and nutrition initiatives at home that were traditionally emphasized at school. The due date for the SWC was also extended to give schools more time to log points after the school year ended. Given the circumstances of how the school year concluded, we anticipated a decrease in overall participation. However, we are thrilled to report that more than 90% of participating schools were awarded wellness funds.

2020-2021 School Year

Despite the challenges created by the pandemic, the 2020-2021 school year will still be one of growth for the MUSC BCCW. We are excited to help schools continue to create a culture of wellness, whether they are doing so virtually or in-person and socially distanced. In these uncertain times, schools need our support more than ever.

“Schools are facing more challenges than ever in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. This expansion gives us an opportunity to reach more schools in South Carolina and provide the support they so desperately need,” says Dr. Key.

This year, we are expanding to 11 new school districts. Three of these districts are supported by Healthy Me - Healthy SC (HMHSC). Eight of these districts are supported by a new, three-year grant provided through the BlueCross® BlueShield® of South Carolina Foundation in support of the Diabetes Free SC (DFSC) initiative.

HMHSC is a collaborative program between the Medical University of South Carolina and Clemson University. This partnership is designed to improve health care access and health inequities in rural and underserved areas of South Carolina, employing impact and innovation to build healthier communities.

DFSC is a long-term, multi-million-dollar, statewide initiative dedicated to addressing the epidemic of diabetes in three strategic directions: improved pregnancy outcomes in women with diabetes; reduced lifelong risk of diabetes in children; and the prevention of diabetes and its complications in adults. The MUSC BCCW is included in the effort to reduce the lifelong risk of Type 2 diabetes in children through our School-Based Wellness Initiative. The BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina Foundation is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

We are excited to welcome two new team members, Lauren Kelly and Magie Young, to our team to support this DFSC expansion. Lauren and Magie join the team with diverse experiences, and we are excited for them to begin supporting new schools!



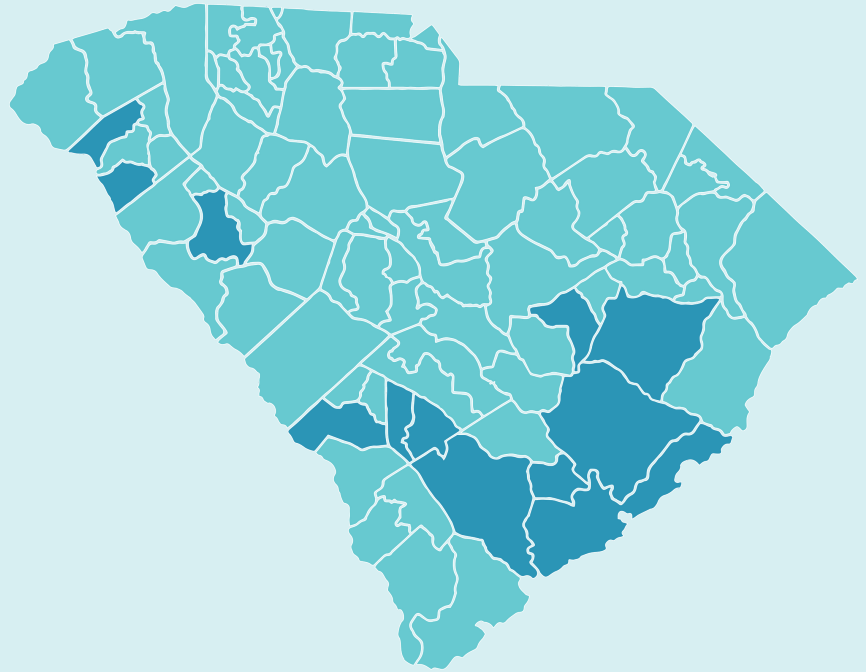
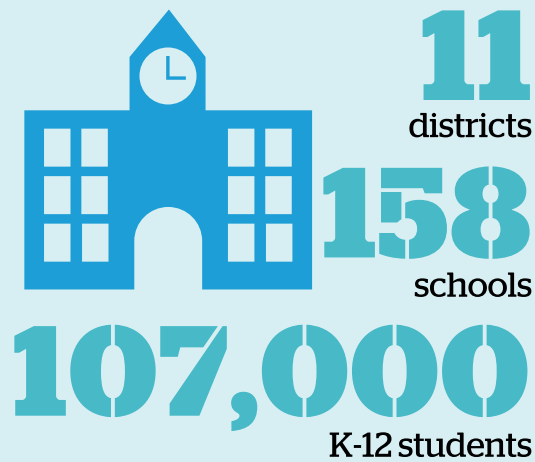
Lauren Kelly



Magie Young

By the Numbers

2019-2020 impact across schools state-wide



This map reflects only School-Based Wellness Initiative counties. Previous reports included child care initiatives.



54%

schools had
community partners



\$94K

wellness funds
awarded to schools



78

schools served and
promoted locally
grown produce



64%

schools had food-
based gardens



52%

schools participated in
community physical
activity events



54

schools used
gardens to teach
about nutrition



101

schools had staff
wellness
programming



111

schools increased
classroom physical
activity



122

adopting health
care professionals

Outcomes

Our impact on health and education



Obesity

Since 2008, there has been a 38% decrease in the prevalence of obesity amongst 5th graders in Charleston County schools. Students attending schools that participated in the Initiative and implemented more wellness activities had healthier weights.



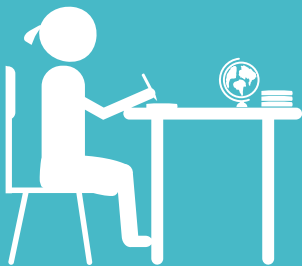
Asthma Urgent Care

There are 12% fewer asthma related urgent care visits among Charleston County students participating in the Initiative compared to those who are not.



School Type

The Initiative works equally well in all types of schools, including elementary, middle, and high schools, and even in schools where most students are from under-resourced families and have an increased risk of being overweight or obese.



Attendance, Suspensions, and Expulsions

Schools who participated longer in the Initiative had higher student attendance and lower suspensions/expulsions rates.

Four years of participation by a school is associated with a 0.5% increase in attendance rate. For example, in a student body of 200, there are about 33 more student days per year.



Graduation Rate

For every 50 points a school achieved on the SWC, a high school's graduation rate is 1.5 percentage points higher.

For example, in a high school with a graduating class with 300 students, about ten more graduated.

Flowertown Elementary School

Creating physical activity opportunities for staff and students

Flowertown Elementary School (FES) is consistently recognized as one of the top three participating schools in Dorchester School District Two. One of the reasons FES is so successful is attributed to their engaged School Wellness Committee, a key component of the MUSC BCCW School-Based Wellness Initiative. The committee works to help create a culture of wellness across the entire school community by engaging students, staff, families, and community partners.

When schools closed in March due to the pandemic, staff quickly adapted to distance learning. Because the existing culture was one of wellness, they were able to implement their initiatives in a virtual setting seamlessly. Brian Chismar, PE Teacher, developed “Mr. C’s PE” YouTube Channel to provide physical activity opportunities to students at home. As participation grew, he worked with students to submit videos to the channel for their peers to follow. When students talked about what they did at home when schools were closed, they were happy to show off Mr. C’s YouTube Channel lunges!



Brian received positive feedback from families who shared that they, too, were participating in the videos! He didn’t just reach students; he helped create physical activity opportunities for staff and families at home as well. Another component of FES’s success is the engagement of staff. Flowertown Elementary School goes above and beyond the minimum to engage their staff in wellness. A popular event among staff is the “Faculty Face-Off.” You’ll find staff participating in these competitive sports games frequently throughout the year!

The level of engagement would not be possible without support from the school’s administration. Carey Hodges, FES Principal, sees the benefits of engaging staff in wellness initiatives. Principal Hodges says, “By building a culture of health and wellness at Flowertown, we continue to remind one another to maintain balance and wellbeing.”

These opportunities are not only beneficial because they boost morale among staff, but they also emphasize a culture of wellness within the school, as staff model behavior for students. Their Fit Kid of the Month program highlights both a student and staff member each month who demonstrated healthy behaviors. Their success in engaging both students and staff in wellness is what sets them apart from other schools, and it doesn’t go unnoticed. “Happy and healthy teachers equals happy and healthy students,” says Principal Hodges.

“Happy and healthy teachers equals happy and healthy students.”



Bamberg County Schools

The importance of community partners and school gardens

Bamberg County continues to see success in their school wellness initiatives due to their engagement of the whole school community, including staff, families, and community partners. In 2018, Bamberg County schools established a partnership with Southeastern Housing And Community Development (SHCD). They are a nonprofit organization that supports community development by fostering collaboration among citizens and community partners. Through their partnership with local schools, they provide valuable experiences and resources to students across Bamberg County.



This partnership with SHCD connects schools with Lara Buss, Community Engagement Program Manager. Lara supports schools by being an active member of each school's wellness committee and helping them earn points on the School Wellness Checklist©.

One of the ways Lara is involved in this is by supporting schools in expanding school gardens. In helping care for gardens, students can learn new skills, be physically active, understand the importance of nutrition, and try new kinds of fresh fruits and vegetables.



Across the six schools in Bamberg County, there are 41 garden beds.

Bamberg-Ehrhardt Middle School

It can be a challenge to engage middle schools in wellness programming. Lara recognizes this and seeks new and creative ways to help schools earn more points on the Checklist©. Lara has worked closely with Denise Miller, Principal at Bamberg-Ehrhardt Middle School, to grow their garden programs significantly over the last few years. Bamberg-Ehrhardt Middle School now has 28 garden beds and four chickens!

In addition to growing gardening programs, Bamberg-Ehrhardt Middle School received their GAP (short for "good agriculture practices") certification in 2019. The GAP certification is a designation by the USDA that verifies fruits and vegetables are produced, packed, handled, and stored as safely as possible to minimize risks of food safety hazards. They are one of just a handful of schools in South Carolina that have been GAP certified!



4

chickens



**GAP
Certified**



28

garden beds

Supporting the MUSC BCCW

Initiatives Made Possible Through Support From:

The Boeing Company
BCBS of South Carolina Foundation Diabetes Free SC
Cooper River Bridge Run
Medical University of South Carolina
Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation
SC Department of Education
Self Family Foundation
Stony Point Foundation



Giving to the Initiative

The MUSC BCCW relies on grants, donations, and sponsorships to carry out its mission of creating healthy learning environments in schools across South Carolina.

To support our initiatives, donations can be mailed to us or made online at:

givenow.musckids.org/donate.

Be sure to select "a fund of my choosing" when making your donation and designate the MUSC BCCW to receive your gift.





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