

Operating across 9 school sites in LA County, Lawndale Elementary School District (LESD) serves a diverse student body of over 6,300 pre-kindergarten thru 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. 84% of children attending LESD qualify for free or reduced price school meals.

LA County, similar to most of the nation, has seen a steady rise in child obesity rates. According to 2014 AskCHIS data 63% of LA County children are overweight or obese and 27% of children likely live in households at or below 100% of the federal poverty level. "Wellness is a fundamental building block for our students to achieve success at school," says Marc Milton, LESD's Director of Food Services.

Milton is quick to cite what led his district to incorporate wellness into the LCAP: "Our history has allowed us to get to the place we are today...Our district understood the importance of having site level wellness committee representation... When it came down to LCFF, it was a culture for the district. It was an easy sale."

About 10 years ago, LESD started a collaboration with the Network for a Healthy California to promote wellness across the district. "We made a lot of progress over that time," However, similar to many other districts in California, there was a scramble to financially support existing efforts when the Network closed. With limited funding, the district piloted incentivizing teachers and other district staff to participate on the school district's wellness council. By offering a small stipend, each school site was represented in an active and engaged wellness committee. Together the committee worked tirelessly to establish a comprehensive wellness policy for the district and contributed to a district-wide culture shift.

When Network funding ran dry, a new opportunity to support wellness liaisons with Local Control Funding Formula funds appeared. Marc made a pitch to the district, provided a budget, and soon his request was included in the LCAP. "When the expense line conversation came up it was so hard for anyone to say those funds were not worthwhile to be spent."

## LAWNDALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT



**“The LCAP is a demonstration of our district’s existing commitment to student wellness.”**

Marc Milton, Director of Food Services  
Lawndale Elementary School District

## DISTRICT ACTION

LESD included promotion of health and wellness as a goal within their local control and accountability plan and funded a food service/wellness liaison at each school to promote wellness and encourage healthy choices for students and their families.