



# Warren Petryk

Date: September 7, 2017 State Representative • 93rd Assembly District

To: Members of the Assembly Committee on Education

From: Representative Petryk

Re: Testimony regarding Assembly Bill 215 – Nutrition Education Act

Good morning/afternoon Chairman Thiesfeldt and members of the committee. I appreciate this opportunity to come before you today to speak in favor of Assembly Bill 215 which I co-authored with Senator Olsen.

In an era where childhood obesity and diabetes is on the rise, it is more important than ever that we teach our children the importance of eating a nutritious diet and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. According to the Journal of American Medical Association, childhood obesity is at epidemic levels in our country with more than one third of children overweight or obese (2012).

As we all know, both healthy, and unfortunately, not-so-healthy, habits are established early in the life and tend to carry through to adulthood. This legislation aims to help create healthy nutritional habits for our youngest populations with the hope that these nutritional routines will carry on throughout their lives. Ultimately these habits will aid in creating a healthy, able-bodied workforce for Wisconsin, while reducing significant health care costs that are associated with obesity.

Assembly Bill 215 updates the state's existing nutrition health education requirements in schools to include instruction on the nutritive value of foods as outlined in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The bill also incorporates a nutrition education component into the health education credit currently required for high school graduation. When combined with access to nutritious foods in schools and at home, evidence-based nutrition education, as proposed in this legislation, encourages healthy eating habits in children and improves child health outcomes.

The bill does not mandate how information on nutrition should be delivered, nor does it mandate how much time should be spent teaching it. The bill simply seeks to make sure that every school district is providing this very important health and diet information to our students.

Better nutritional choices lead to better health, leading young citizens to a happier and more productive life at home, at school, and eventually as part of our growing workforce. As my personal nutritionist advises me, "Nothing tastes as good as Healthy feels."

AB 215 has the enthusiastic support of the School Nutrition Association of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, and the American Heart Association. Nutrition education is an evidence-based, cost-effective way to improve health outcomes and foster healthy eating habits for a lifetime. I humbly ask for your support on this essential legislation. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.



---

## Luther S. Olsen

State Senator

14th District

**TO:** Assembly Committee on Education  
**FROM:** Senator Luther Olsen  
**DATE:** Thursday, September 7, 2017  
**SUBJECT:** Testimony for Assembly Bill 215

---

Thank you Chairman Thiesfeldt and members of the Assembly Committee on Education for holding a hearing and allowing me to testify in support of Assembly Bill 215.

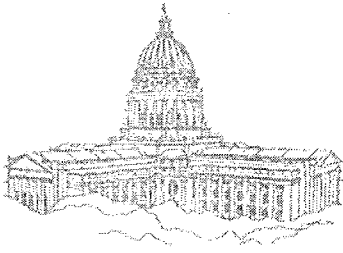
Studies show that nutrition and healthy eating habits that are established early in life tend to carry on throughout our lives. This bill will update the nutrition education standards we currently have in place and will add a nutrition education component. It would incorporate the following measures:

1. Updates the nutrition education standards to include instruction on the nutritive value of foods as outlined in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, an evidence-based publication by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
2. Adds a nutrition education component into the health education credit that we currently require for graduation.

This bill does not mandate how the information is to be delivered or how much time needs to be spent teaching it, we wanted to leave those decisions up to the schools. The purpose of this legislation is to ensure that all students are receiving this important information.

Childhood obesity rates have tripled since the 1970s and the rate of diabetes has been steadily increasing as well. It is our hope that the nutrition education act we have put together will promote healthy habits by educating children on the importance of having a nutritious diet in order to prevent chronic disease and to show them how to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Again, thank you for holding a hearing today and I ask for your support on AB 215.



**LENA C. TAYLOR**

Wisconsin State Senator • 4th District

HERE TO SERVE YOU!

**Testimony of State Senator Lena C. Taylor  
Assembly Committee on Education  
Assembly Bill 215  
September 7, 2017**

Chairman Thiesfeldt, members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to submit written testimony on Assembly Bill 215, relating to education about nutrition. This bill would require the Department of Public Instruction to modify its education standards to include a food nutrition component in its high school health education credit requirement.

Healthy eating is developed by having good habits. Far too often, preventable chronic diseases such as diabetes, some cancers, and cardiovascular disease are developed or exacerbated by poor nutritional choices. The U.S. Department of Health notes that almost 117 million Americans, almost half of the adult population, have one or more preventable chronic disease. The agency attributes these diseases to poor quality eating patterns and physical inactivity.

Helping our children make healthier nutritional choices early on is one of the best ways to fix many of Wisconsin's primary health problems. Almost 69% of Wisconsin adults are overweight or obese. The Wisconsin Department of Health has found a strong correlation between chronic diseases and the prevalence of overweight and obesity. In Wisconsin, 89% of individuals with diabetes is overweight or obese. Among cardiovascular diseases, 77% with heart attacks were overweight or obese; 82% of those with heart disease were overweight or obese.

By addressing these issues early on, we can help create healthier communities and decrease our long-term health care costs. A 2014 study by Duke's Global Health Institute estimates that childhood obesity, developed at age 10, would cost an additional \$19,000 in lifetime health care costs compared to a normal weight child. In the United States alone, the direct costs of childhood obesity are \$14 billion each year. Among adults, we spend an average of \$19,000 each year in direct medical costs for every patient with cardiovascular disease. By addressing nutrition in our schools, we can reduce the prevalence of obesity, chronic diseases, and reduce our health care costs.

Chairman Thiesfeldt, members of the committee, I ask for your support for this bill. By establishing a more concentrated nutrition component of the health education requirement we can teach students the importance of a nutritious diet.

Thank you for your time.



"Leadership in Public School Governance"

JOHN H. ASHLEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

122 W. WASHINGTON AVENUE, MADISON, WI 53703  
PHONE: 608-257-2622 FAX: 608-257-8386

TO: Members, Assembly Committee on Education  
FROM: Dan Rossmiller, WASB Government Relations Director  
DATE: September 7, 2017  
RE: **ASSEMBLY BILL 215**, relating to education about nutrition.

The Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB), on behalf of all 422 public school boards in the state of Wisconsin, **has a number of concerns about** Assembly Bill 215 and **opposes** the bill as introduced.

While we support providing Wisconsin public school students with information and instruction about the nutritive value of foods and the role of a nutritious diet in promoting health, we are troubled that this bill, while well-intentioned, imposes yet another instructional mandate on school districts and a new high school graduation requirement. We note that the bill does not apply to private voucher schools or independent charter schools.

The bill would require that a nutrition education component be incorporated into the health education credit currently required for graduation. Current law prohibits a school board from awarding a high school diploma to a pupil unless the pupil has successfully completed at least a half credit of health education. Because pupils may fulfill their health education requirement in any grade between grade 7 and grade 12, establishing this new graduation requirement will require schools to add a notation to each pupil's transcript about whether they have completed this requirement.

We further note that the bill does not specify when this graduation requirement becomes effective, creating the potential for confusion and the possibility that a pupil who completed his or her health education requirement several years ago might be denied a diploma on the basis that he or she failed to meet the new requirement established by this bill. Further, as this committee learned during the consideration of Assembly Bill 398 last month, health education courses offered online in summer school or interim sessions do not qualify for state aid, making them less available. In many districts, this means that a pupil who discovers they have not met this graduation requirement would have to meet this instructional requirement during the normal school calendar in order to receive a diploma.

We are concerned that lawmakers are beginning to regard health education as a sort of household "junk drawer" into which a host of new requirements are being added. Last session a requirement for CPR instruction was added. This session, a nutrition education component and a requirement for instruction about teen dating violence are being proposed to be added. While we do not quarrel that nutrition education can improve students' eating habits and help them become healthy adults, we also believe students need consistent messages throughout their schooling and that a comprehensive approach that incorporates nutrition education throughout the course of a pupil's schooling using age-appropriate lessons that are consistent in scope and sequence is likely to be a more effective approach than lumping instruction into one required course.

We are also concerned that the bill would tie instruction about nutrition to specific federal standards outlined in *The Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, a document that has been published jointly every 5 years since 1980 by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Department of Agriculture (USDA). Tying instruction to a document that potentially changes every five years is troubling. We note that over time this document and its recommendations have changed over time with no input from school board members or other school leaders.

Finally, we question why the changes proposed by this bill would appear to bypass the standards review/revision process established by the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) for reviewing our state's 27 current model academic standards, as well as newly proposed model academic standards.

This process, which appears to be working well, involves a review by the Standards Review Council, which includes two school board members, among other stakeholders, as well as the distinguished chairman of this committee. Wisconsin already has model academic standards for nutrition education that were last adopted in 2009 and set an expectation of skills and knowledge that should be required by the end of fourth eighth and twelfth grades.

The process of reviewing our state's standards is already underway and we presume changes to our state's existing Nutrition Education standards could easily be reviewed as part of that process.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.



## **School Administrators Alliance**

*Representing the Interests of Wisconsin School Children*

---

**TO:** Assembly Committee on Education  
**FROM:** John Forester, Executive Director  
**DATE:** September 7, 2017  
**RE:** AB 215 – Education About Nutrition

The School Administrators Alliance (SAA) is opposed to Assembly Bill 215, relating to education about nutrition.

AB 215 requires the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to modify its nutrition education standards to include knowledge of the nutritive value of foods and the role of a nutritious diet in promoting health. The bill also requires school boards to change their instruction about nutrition to conform to the new DPI nutrition education standards.

Current law requires school boards to provide instruction about the vitamin content of food and food and health values of dairy products. The bill would require that a nutrition education component be incorporated into the health education class, which is a requirement for high school graduation.

In anticipation of this hearing, I sought input on AB 215 from a broad cross-section of SAA members. I'd like to share with you some of their thoughts on the bill. As a preface, I would like to share that SAA members in general believe that the intent behind the bill – promoting health, preventing chronic disease, and battling obesity – is laudable.

First of all, we are unsure of the wisdom of linking Wisconsin's nutrition education standards to a publication of the federal departments of health and human services and agriculture. If these publications change, does that mean our standards, and perhaps even Wisconsin statutes, will have to change as well?

Secondly, we understand that the DPI currently has in place a comprehensive process for review and revision of our Wisconsin academic standards. We believe it makes sense for the policy experts at DPI, with input from practitioners in the field, to determine which standards need revising and which standards are most in need of immediate attention.

Finally, nearly all the SAA members I consulted about this bill recoiled at the creation of a new high school graduation requirement in the bill. They fear that every time we add a mandate something else needs to be watered down to meet the mandate. They believe that local educators and local school boards, operating within the broad parameters established by the state and federal

government, are in the best position to determine the instructional programming that best meets the unique educational needs of the children in their communities.

Our educators in Wisconsin face some enormous challenges in meeting the objectives we have for K-12 education. In a nutshell, I would characterize these primary objectives as follows:

- To improve student achievement for all students.
- To close those stubborn achievement gaps.
- To make sure all Wisconsin students graduate college and career ready.

We currently have lots of statutory requirements directed at schools, some that help schools to achieve these objectives and some that don't. Every legislative session we see several bills, like AB 215, that would create new instructional mandates. And we all know that there are scores of interest groups that believe that schools should be providing children with instruction in many new subject areas in order to meet laudable public policy goals. In short, these proposals, if adopted, would lead school districts to take time, money and focus away from their primary objectives.

Finally, I am going to ask a question I have asked the Committee before and will likely ask again. Given the very big challenges that we face and the important objectives we are working hard to achieve, how would you like Wisconsin public schools to use the precious minutes we have in the limited number of instructional days in each school year?

Thank you for your consideration of our views. If you should have any questions on our thoughts on AB 215, please call me at 608-242-1370.



Making the right food choices, together.

## Wisconsin Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics



### What Are the Dietary Guidelines for Americans?

**The *Dietary Guidelines* is a critical tool for professionals to help Americans make healthy choices in their daily lives to help prevent chronic disease and enjoy a healthy diet.**

The *Dietary Guidelines* is required under the 1990 National Nutrition Monitoring and Related Research Act, which states that every 5 years, the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services (HHS) and of Agriculture (USDA) must jointly publish a report containing nutritional and dietary information and guidelines for the general public. The statute (Public Law 101-445, 7 U.S.C. 5341 et seq.) requires that the Dietary Guidelines be based on the preponderance of current scientific and medical knowledge. The 2015-2020 edition of the Dietary Guidelines builds from the 2010 edition with revisions based on the Scientific Report of the 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee and consideration of Federal agency and public comments.

The *Dietary Guidelines* is updated every five years and serves as the evidence-based foundation for nutrition education materials that are developed by the Federal Government for the public. For example, Federal dietary guidance publications are required by law to be consistent with the *Dietary Guidelines*. It also is used to inform USDA and HHS food programs, such as USDA's National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program, which feed more than 30 million children each school day, and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, which uses the *Dietary Guidelines* as the scientific underpinning for its food packages and nutrition education program with about 8 million beneficiaries.

In HHS, the Administration on Aging implements the *Dietary Guidelines* through the Older Americans Act Nutrition Services programs (i.e., nutrition programs for older adults), with about 5,000 community-based nutrition service providers who together serve more than 900,000 meals a day across the United States. Other Departments, such as the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs, also use the Dietary Guidelines to inform programs. The *Dietary Guidelines* also may be used to inform the development of programs, policies, and communication by audiences other than the document's principal audiences. These audiences, who share the common goal of serving the general public, include businesses, schools, community groups, media, the food industry, and State and local governments.

The *2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines* translates science into succinct, food-based guidance that can be relied upon to help Americans choose foods that provide a healthy and enjoyable diet. Its recommendations are ultimately intended to help individuals improve and maintain overall health and reduce the risk of chronic disease—its focus is disease prevention. Regardless of an individual's current health status, almost all people in the United States could benefit from shifting choices to better support healthy eating patterns. Thus, the *Dietary Guidelines* may be used or adapted by medical and nutrition professionals to encourage healthy eating patterns to patients.

**These Guidelines also embody the idea that a healthy eating pattern is not a rigid prescription, but rather, an adaptable framework in which individuals can enjoy foods that meet their personal, cultural, and traditional preferences and fit within their budget. Several examples of healthy eating patterns that translate and integrate the recommendations in overall healthy ways to eat are provided.**



The Guidelines include:

1. Follow a healthy eating pattern across the lifespan. All food and beverage choices matter. Choose a healthy eating pattern at an appropriate calorie level to help achieve and maintain a healthy body weight, support nutrient adequacy, and reduce the risk of chronic disease.
2. Focus on variety, nutrient density, and amount. To meet nutrient needs within calorie limits, choose a variety of nutrient-dense foods across and within all food groups in recommended amounts.
3. Limit calories from added sugars and saturated fats and reduce sodium intake. Consume an eating pattern low in added sugars, saturated fats, and sodium. Cut back on foods and beverages higher in these components to amounts that fit within healthy eating patterns.
4. Shift to healthier food and beverage choices. Choose nutrient-dense foods and beverages across and within all food groups in place of less healthy choices. Consider cultural and personal preferences to make these shifts easier to accomplish and maintain.
5. Support healthy eating patterns for all. Everyone has a role in helping to create and support healthy eating patterns in multiple settings nationwide, from home to school to work to communities.

Key recommendations for a healthy eating pattern include:

1. A variety of vegetables from all of the subgroups—dark green, red and orange, legumes (beans and peas), starchy, and other
2. Fruits, especially whole fruits
3. Grains, at least half of which are whole grains
4. Fat-free or low-fat dairy, including milk, yogurt, cheese, and/or fortified soy beverages
5. A variety of protein foods, including seafood, lean meats and poultry, eggs, legumes (beans and peas), and nuts, seeds, and soy products
6. Oils

Key Recommendations that are quantitative are provided for several components of the diet that should be limited. These components are of particular public health concern in the United States, and the specified limits can help individuals achieve healthy eating patterns within calorie limits:

1. Consume less than 10 percent of calories per day from added sugars
2. Consume less than 10 percent of calories per day from saturated fats
3. Consume less than 2,300 milligrams (mg) per day of sodium
4. If alcohol is consumed, it should be consumed in moderation—up to one drink per day for women and up to two drinks per day for men—and only by adults of legal drinking age.

In tandem with the recommendations above, Americans of all ages—children, adolescents, adults, and older adults—should meet the *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans* to help promote health and reduce the risk of chronic disease. Americans should aim to achieve and maintain a healthy body weight. The relationship between diet and physical activity contributes to calorie balance and managing body weight.

**\*The information contained in this document was accessed and obtained from <https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/> August - September 2017.**

September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017

## The Nutrition Education Act Testimony

Good Morning , members of the Assembly Committee on Education. My name is Caitlin Harrison and I work as the Food Service Director at the Pulaski Community School District as well as current the Legislative Chair for the School Nutrition Association of Wisconsin. I have over five years of experience as a school nutrition professional and have been working at Pulaski Community School District since 2012. In Pulaski, we have 7 schools, 5 of which are elementary, a middle school and high school. We serve over 2,500 healthy and balanced meals each day to students. As I am sure you have heard before, each work day is incredibly different. My days are filled with anything from hunting down whole grain hamburger buns due to an order shortage, filling a kitchen shift for a cook that is out sick, testing new healthy recipes with students and staff, marketing our healthy meals to students, to working on our budget plan or reporting to the state, and much, much more. The day could also lead me to the classroom, where our Food Service staff will run Farm to School nutrition education lessons that teach young students the importance of learning where their food comes from and why it is so important to build a healthy foundation early on in life. We have worked very hard as a District to provide appealing, healthy meals to the students that meet our regulations set by the USDA. In our community, we have a large agricultural and farming influence; many of our student's either have grown up on a farm or have family members who farm for a living. Our District also includes Hobart, one of the fastest growing communities in Wisconsin over the last few years. With such a variety of families and backgrounds, I feel it is so important to support science and research-based nutrition education for all the students not only in my District, but in all of Wisconsin, so they have the confidence and energy to pursue any career path they choose.

I am here today to express my support for Assembly Bill 215, known as The Nutrition Education Act. Based on my education with a Bachelor's degree in Nutritional Sciences and holding my Dietetic Technician Registry, I am very familiar with nutrition and how it can lead to healthy and productive lives, especially when positive habits are instilled at a young age. It's clear that we can do more in Wisconsin to ensure a healthy population, especially in young people. Countless studies have shown that eating habits are established early in life and tend to carry through to adulthood. That is why it is so important that we are updating this Nutrition Education Act to encompass the Dietary Guidelines. The Dietary Guidelines are a critical tool for professionals such as myself to help Americans make healthy choices in their daily lives to prevent chronic disease and enjoy a healthy diet. These Guidelines serve as the evidence-based foundation for nutrition education material that is developed by the Federal Government for the public. It is also used to inform USDA programs such as USDA's National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program, which feed more than 30 million children each school day. The Key Recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans are, a variety of vegetables, fruits (especially whole fruits), grains (at least half of which are whole grains), fat-free or low-fat dairy, including milk, yogurt, and cheese (and/or fortified soy beverages), a variety of protein foods, and oils.

Current law requires Wisconsin schools meet certain educational goals and expectations established by the state. In addition to academic skills, public schools must offer an instructional program to provide students with knowledge and means to maintain lifelong health, including information on the value of nutritious foods. Current law also requires Wisconsin students to complete at least a half credit in health education to graduate from high school.

Schools are in a unique position to promote healthy eating and effective nutrition education can lead to greater academic success for students and benefit them far beyond the classroom. That's why the Nutrition Education Act updates the state's nutrition education standards to include instruction on the nutritive value of foods, as outlined in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, and the importance of a nutritious diet in promoting health, preventing chronic disease, and maintaining a healthy weight. The bill also effectively incorporates a nutrition education component into the health education credit that is currently required for graduation from high school.

The Nutrition Education Act would improve nutrition education in Wisconsin classrooms by simply updating the state's nutrition education standards to incorporate a nutrition component into health education. Mr. Chair and members of the committee; this bill makes sense for so many reasons. I ask you to make nutrition education a priority in an already-required health class and support this bill. I am confident the results from educating young people about nutrition and healthy eating habits will not only make Wisconsin kids healthier today, but also help them to develop responsible and healthy eating habits as adults tomorrow.

Thank you again for allowing me the chance to testify in support of AB 215, The Nutrition Education Act. As someone with first-hand experience in a profession that seeks to make people healthier through healthy food and eating habits, I ask you to support this bill. I'm happy to answer any questions at this time.

Good afternoon, members of the Assembly Committee on Education. My name is Christina Lemon. I am a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) and President of the Wisconsin Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (WAND).

WAND is a statewide organization of 1,400 food and nutrition professionals—primarily RDNs who are certified by the State of Wisconsin to ensure safe and evidence-based nutrition counseling, as well as Nutrition and Dietetic Technicians, Registered (NDTRs). Our members work in a variety of settings, including hospitals, clinics, long-term care, public health, grocery stores, education, research and foodservice management, including school foodservice.

RDNs obtain a Bachelor's degree in food and nutrition from an accredited university, complete 1,200 hours of supervised practice through an accredited internship, and pass the national registration examination for dietitians. Approximately 50% of dietitians also hold a graduate degree in nutrition or a related discipline. In addition, we must complete 75 hours of continuing education every five years to maintain our registration and certification.

NDTRs complete dietetic technician coursework and at least 450 hours of supervised practice within an academic program leading to an associate degree, and pass a national registration examination for dietetic technicians.

Why does WAND support of AB 215, The Nutrition Education Act? WAND's vision is to "Optimize Wisconsin's health through food and nutrition." One of the primary goals of our strategic plan is that WAND members "improve the health of Wisconsin residents." Supporting the passage of The Nutrition Education Act fully aligns with our organization's vision and goals.

Schools are in a unique position to promote healthy eating and provide sound nutrition information in time to impact critical growth and development. Effective nutrition education can lead to greater academic success for students and benefit them far beyond the classroom.

AB 215 provides a practical plan for improving nutrition education in the classroom, by more clearly defining current resources and guidelines for nutrition education curricula and by updating the state's nutrition education standards to incorporate a nutrition component into an already-required health education class.

Specifying that curricula be consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans is key to this legislation's anticipated benefit. Rigorously researched, updated, and published jointly every five years by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Department of Agriculture (USDA), these Guidelines are required under the 1990 National Nutrition Monitoring and Related Research Act. They provide evidence-based dietary advice that promotes health and reduces risk of chronic disease. The Guidelines already serve as a basis for multiple federal food and nutrition education programs, including the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), nutrition programs for older adults, and programs of the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Thank you for allowing me to testify in support of The Nutrition Education Act. Please join the Wisconsin Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics in supporting AB 215. I'd be happy to answer any questions at this time.

## Statement of Dr. Katie Wilson, SNS

Wisconsin State Assembly      Committee on Education      September 7, 2017

Chairman Thiesfeldt and Members of the Committee on Education, I am Dr. Katie Wilson, certified as a national school nutrition specialist through the School Nutrition Association. I appreciate the opportunity to share my support for AB 215, known as the Nutrition Education Act. My background includes serving as a WI school nutrition director for 23 years and the 2008-2009 President of the National School Nutrition Association, followed by 5 years as the Executive Director of the Institute of Child Nutrition, and most recently 2 years as the USDA Deputy Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services in Washington D.C.

We have all become aware of the health crisis this country is experiencing with diet related diseases, particularly obesity and WI is not immune to this issue. According to *The State of Obesity: Better Policies for a Healthier Americans*, released in August 2017, 13.4% of Wisconsin's 10-17-year-old children are overweight or obese. That ranks WI as 38<sup>th</sup> in the nation for childhood and adolescent obesity and it is estimated that 60% of obese adolescents will be obese adults. With all the health-related diseases that are associated with poor diets, it is simply overwhelming to think of the health care costs and the loss of productivity in the near future due to these diet related health issues in children and adolescents.

The serious issue of health disparity due to poor diets in our children and the lack of comprehensive nutrition education in school is why I am here to express my support for AB215. Wisconsin should be the leader helping to improve the skills necessary for a life-long healthy lifestyle. The American Journal of Public Health research shows "the school environment provides many opportunities to teach children about important health and nutrition practices and that the influence of schools on the health of children is strong". Once children become school-aged the community schools in which they spend much of their time take on a critical responsibility regarding each child's wellness, and can help foster good eating habits and lifestyle choices that last a lifetime.

Current law requires Wisconsin schools to provide health and wellness curriculum throughout K-12, including at least a half credit of health education in high school. My experiences teaching nutrition education in the classroom at variety of age levels resulted in a willingness of students to try new foods and make healthier choices at school and at home. The Nutrition Education Act is not a new proposal but an update to the state's already existing nutrition education standard and incorporates a critical nutrition education component into the health education credit in high school. What we know about nutrition has changed over the years and aligning curriculum with the latest Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs) will make sure students are receiving the most recent and reliable nutrition information about a balanced diet that includes all necessary nutrients, based on scientific research.

Mr. Chair and members of the committee, this bill will assist students in WI with an education that includes skills necessary to make healthy choices impacting many activities throughout their lives. Statistics show that school-based interventions can improve both health and academic performance among students, so in closing I ask you to make updating WI school's nutrition education a priority and support this bill.

Thank you to the Committee on Education for its' leadership in providing this hearing and your commitment to the health and well-being of WI children. I would be happy to answer any questions for the clarifications as time allows.

Dr. Katie Wilson, SNS      [ktwilson369@hotmail.com](mailto:ktwilson369@hotmail.com)      608.792.7660

*Kt Consulting*

*Assisting associations, organizations, government, and industry*



**Date: September 7, 2017**

**Assembly Bill 215**

**Nutrition Education Act Testimony by Judi Smith,**

**Sheboygan Area School District- email [jsmith@sasd.net](mailto:jsmith@sasd.net), phone 920-459-3531**

**Good Morning members of the Assembly Committee on Education:**

**I am an experienced school nutrition coordinator for the 10,300 Sheboygan Area School District students. I have been leading change in school nutrition for over 25 years. I recently co-wrote the nutrition portion of a Physical Education Grant, (PEP) worth \$180,000 and this year's only school district to receive the Farm2school Grant worth \$99,969. The purpose of these grants is to provide nutrition education in the classroom and incorporate it with existing curriculum. My collaboration is with Nourish. Nourish is a non-profit organization in my community doing "feet on the ground" work to make education happen. I am passionate about nutrition education being the key to making change in the health of our youth and our community. I believe education is essential to learn and grow. I'm currently working to finish my master's degree in education- teaching and learning so I can incorporate evidenced based practices in my trainings.**

**I am here today to express my support for Assembly Bill 215, known as The Nutrition Education Act.**

- The bill would improve nutrition education by updating the state's nutrition education standards to incorporate a nutrition component into education.**
- The bill updates the state's nutrition education standards to include instruction on the nutritive value of foods, as outlined in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, and the importance of a nutritious diet in promoting health, preventing chronic disease, and maintaining a healthy weight.**

**Changing the meal pattern requirements for school meals alone is not enough. Based upon my professional experience, we need to do more to get the health crisis for our youth turned around.**

**As an education system it seems obvious that we need to add nutrition education in this area to have an impact. I ask you, if not us than whom? You hold the power to make change happen to impact our youth for years to come. Numerous studies have shown that eating habits are established early in the life and tend to carry through to adulthood.**

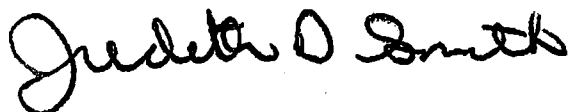
**Mr. Chair and members of the committee, this bill makes sense for so many reasons. I ask you to make nutrition education a priority. Support this bill. I am confident the results from educating young people about nutrition and healthy eating habits will not only make Wisconsin kids healthier today, but also help them to develop responsible and healthy eating habits as adults tomorrow.**

**There is already existing law that requires Wisconsin schools to meet certain educational goals and expectations established by the state. In addition to academic skills, public schools must offer an instructional program to provide students with knowledge and means to maintain lifelong health, including information on the value of nutritious foods. Current law also requires Wisconsin students to complete at least a half credit in health education to graduate from high school. This is an update.**

**Schools are in a unique position to promote healthy eating and effective nutrition education can lead to greater academic success for students and benefit them far beyond the classroom.**

**Thank you again for allowing me the chance to testify in support of AB 215, The Nutrition Education Act. As someone whose mission is to impact academic achievement and our youth's health, I ask you to support this bill.  
I'm happy to answer any questions at this time.**

**Sincerely,**



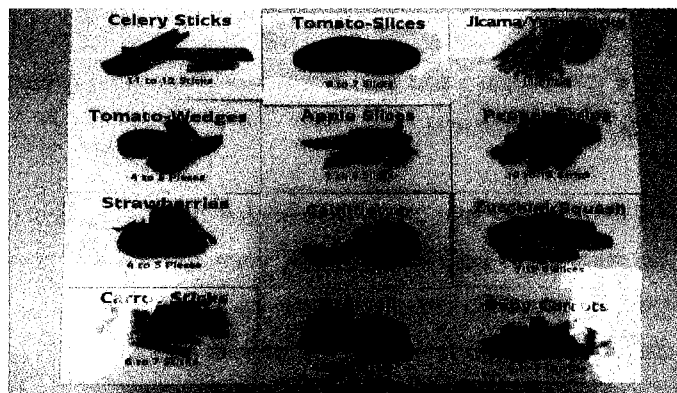
**Judith D Smith, School Nutrition Specialist  
Coordinator of School Nutrition Sheboygan Area School District**

**SASD Nutrition Department Mission:**

Our mission is to provide our students the nourishment they need for outstanding academic achievement and healthy lives.

**Rationale:**

We recognize that sound nutritional habits are developed by exposing students to a variety of foods. A well-nourished student has better attendance, is more attentive, and is better behaved with an increased energy level which results in academic success.





---

## The Nutrition Education Act Testimony

Date: September 7, 2017

Good Morning members of the Assembly Committee on Education. My name is Jim Degan and I am a School Nutrition Specialist and work as the School Nutrition Manager for the School District of Janesville. I have been in School Nutrition since 2002 and in Janesville since August 2011. The School District of Janesville is a district of 21 schools with an enrollment of approximately 10,000 students. We serve food through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Area Eligible after School Snack Program (AEASSP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and the Wisconsin School Day Milk Program (WSDMP).

I am a past president of the SNA-WI which represents over 1200 school nutrition professionals working to provide safe nutritious meals to Wisconsin's children. I also co-chair and am on the advisory board of the Wisconsin School Nutrition Purchasing Cooperative (WiSNP) which represents 52 school districts that collectively purchase goods and services in the State of Wisconsin. WiSNP represents an enrollment of just over 110,000 students. I am also a member of SNA National Financial Management Task Force, HealthTide (WI Obesity Prevention Network) and on Wisconsin's Farm to School advisory board.

As a School Nutrition Manager I have been responsible for the implementation of the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act (HHFKA) in the School District of Janesville. The Dietary Guidelines for America created evidence based recommendations used to construct the HHFKA regulations for school meals. These guidelines are revised every five years to reflect science based changes in what a person needs for lifelong healthy eating lifestyle.

The HHFKA has taken a huge step in providing students with healthy nutritious meals during the school day. Our biggest hurdle in implementing the HHFKA was students not eating because the foods they received were not similar to foods that they eat at home or away from home. Although painful to implement, the HHFKA has been a positive step in improving the eating habits of children. The biggest lesson I learned from this process was that most students will make good choices if given enough information about what they are putting into their bodies.

I am here today to express my support for Assembly Bill 215, known as The Nutrition Education Act. Based upon my professional experience, I am very familiar with nutrition and how it can lead to healthy and productive lives, especially when positive habits are instilled at a young age. It's clear that we can do more in Wisconsin to ensure a healthy population, especially in young people. Numerous studies have shown that eating habits are established early in the life and tend to carry through to adulthood.



Current law requires Wisconsin schools meet certain educational goals and expectations established by the state. In addition to academic skills, public schools must offer an instructional program to provide students with knowledge and means to maintain lifelong health, including information on the value of nutritious foods. Current law also requires Wisconsin students to complete at least a half credit in health education to graduate from high school.

Schools are in a unique position to promote healthy eating and effective nutrition education can lead to greater academic success for students and benefit them far beyond the classroom. That's why the Nutrition Education Act updates the state's nutrition education standards to include instruction on the nutritive value of foods, as outlined in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, and the importance of a nutritious diet in promoting health, preventing chronic disease, and maintaining a healthy weight. The bill also effectively incorporates a nutrition education component into the health education credit that is currently required for graduation from high school.

The Nutrition Education Act would improve nutrition education in Wisconsin classrooms by simply updating the state's nutrition education standards to incorporate a nutrition component into health education. Mr. Chair and members of the committee; this bill makes sense for so many reasons. I ask you to make nutrition education a priority in an already-required health class and support this bill. I have seen firsthand the benefits from educating young people about nutrition and healthy eating habits will not only make Wisconsin kids healthier today, but also help them to develop responsible and healthy eating habits as adults tomorrow.

Thank you again for allowing me the chance to testify in support of AB 215, The Nutrition Education Act. As someone with first-hand experience in a profession that seeks to make people healthier through healthy food and eating habits, I ask you to support this bill. I'm happy to answer any questions at this time.

Thank you to the Committee and the School Nutrition Association for this opportunity to share my story with you today. My name is Kerri Feyen. I am the Director of Nutrition Services for the West Salem and Bangor School Districts. Between my five school buildings, I have the honor of serving almost 2,400 students each day; three of which are my own.

The 2010 Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act brought on so many great changes to the nutrition programs and helped to ensure that every child had access to the right foods to fuel growing minds and bodies. Additional changes have been made over the last few years, and in my professional opinion, we are almost where we need to be. My districts have found the balance between providing healthy meals and serving students what they will actually eat. I credit this to education.

In 2013, a situation occurred in my high school, in my first month in the school district. I sat at a table of student athletes who had mostly brought home lunch. We talked a little about why they didn't eat at school, when one of the older girls simply said, "I just don't know what's in it."

A similar situation occurred when a student in 7<sup>th</sup> grade was upset that they HAD to take a fruit or vegetable and kept asking why. I overheard the lunchroom aide, in exasperation; pull out what has become my favorite mom line, "Because I said so...". The real reason should have been an opportunity to educate the student on the overall nutritional value of the garden bar foods and the effects healthy eating will have on their heart, bones, and muscles – so they don't have a heart attack at age 50... But on average, my staff connects with a student for less than 10 seconds.

It became clear that we had missed a step. Telling a student to eat healthy, "because I said so" was never going to be enough. I began the process of educating the students in my district about the foods I was serving them. I plastered the bulletin boards, websites, social media and lunch lines with information about nutritional value, ingredients, brands, where I sourced local foods, and pushed hard with the Farm To School program. I did this in all buildings, to all grade levels. And the response was overwhelming! Vegetarians, gluten free dieters, clean eaters, and self-proclaimed foodies started eating lunch at school and participation has now increased to almost 75% daily.

But we can't be done just yet. In looking over the curriculum for many schools, I have found that nutrition education is not a requirement at all. Or that it is only required for certain grades and lasts only for a section, a month, or just one unit-one week. The education is varied by grade level and touches on things like exercise, healthy living choices, and disease prevention. Although all of these things are important elements of nutrition education, it is equally important to give students the answers to 'why' nutrition is important. They should all have an understanding of what good nutrition will do for them and what poor or malnutrition looks like. Students should understand 'how' healthy choices would keep them strong, and the effect food and nutrients have on their bodies and minds. Nutrition directors will continue to offer the right choices, but students need to understand what makes it the right choice; and this can only come from teaching and learning, not just because we said so.