



Making healthy easier.



HEALTHY
SCHOOLS



BE WELL partners with schools to implement best practices thus creating healthy school environments.

Healthy schools best practices focus on guidelines, practices, spaces and social support in order to encourage healthy eating and physical activity as well as support the development of lifelong healthy behaviors.

Filling up on a healthy beverage option

Who doesn't want kids to drink more water? SHIP works to promote this healthy beverage option. In Blue Earth County, SHIP partnered locally to get Mankato students easier access to drinking water during the school day.

In spring 2017, BE WELL and Nicollet County SHIP worked with eight Mankato Area Public Schools to complete their School Health Index (SHI), an assessment and planning tool schools use to improve health and wellness policies. The SHI had already been completed at the district level; the additional assessments now provide direction for health improvement efforts at the individual school level.

One of the emerging themes from the SHI results was lack of easy access to water in the schools.

SHIP staff at both Blue Earth and Nicollet counties worked with the schools to install 22 hydration stations, which were purchased with SHIP funds, while the schools covered installation costs. To further support the effort, the schools changed existing policies to allow students to carry reusable water bottles into classrooms.

"Everyone is so glad we have [a hydration station]. It definitely helps the kids drink more water during the day because it's easier to fill up their water bottles," said Kennedy Elementary staff member Brittinni Lockwood.

The project impacts over half of the schools in the Mankato district, reaching more than 4,000 students and 450 staff.

"I drink more water because it is easier to fill my water bottle!"

5th grade student at Washington Elementary

BE WELL is the local public health initiative of the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) in Blue Earth County. Our goal is to make healthy living easier. Find out more at www.blueearthcountymn.gov/bewell

BE WELL Quarterly — February 2018

