New maps to help you connect with MU Extension

Connecting with MU Extension specialists has just become easier thanks to new maps and an easily searchable listing of MU Extension personnel that have been added to the MU Extension website. You can search the list of MU Extension specialists starting at extension.missouri.edu.

In the upper tab, click on “People”, then scroll down the list under “Select a specialty” to find the topic most relevant to your needs. For example, selecting “Horticulture Specialist” would give you the list of all the MU Extension regional specialists in horticulture who could help you with resources and information for home, school or community gardens.

To find the MU Extension specialists in your area, use the map feature located on the right side of the screen. Select the region where your county is located (scrolling over the top of the region will give you the list of counties in that region) and click. You can see the list of specialists who serve that region. Then, click on a county in the image on the right to find out which specialists serve that county.

Most of the MU Extension state specialists are located on the MU campus in Columbia, the regional specialists in your area can also help connect you with state specialists and the additional resources and assistance they can provide.

You can also access MU Extension personnel and services through a map at www.cim-network.org/muext. The map is part of the Community Issues Management (CIM) web-based system that can be used by local and regional organizations for community engagement in data-informed and collaborative decision making.

The foundation of this system is a process for framing issues through a wealth of Geographic Information System (GIS) data, and mapping and reporting tools custom built for organizations to better understand how issues impact people and place. Unique to CIM is a streamlined process to integrate and overlay local mapping data with state and national mapping data.

Register as a public access user to make maps, reports and search issue specific content in the CIM library where you can search by keyword (e.g. Health, Education, Childhood Obesity) to seek out information of interest.
Missouri schools now have a tool to measure the impact of their wellness policy efforts. You can access the School Wellness Inventory at the Missouri Coordinated School Health Coalition website: [www.healthykidsmo.org](http://www.healthykidsmo.org). It is also available at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, School Food Services website: [www.dese.mo.gov/divadm/food](http://www.dese.mo.gov/divadm/food). Look under “Recorded Presentations”.

The Missouri Coordinated School Health Coalition, with funding from the Missouri Foundation for Health, developed the School Wellness Inventory to help schools as they measure the impact of actions taken to improve student health, wellness and reduce childhood obesity. The six-page tool was developed and piloted with the assistance of 15 school districts around the state. Districts that tested the tool found that it not only gave them good guidance on what to measure but also helped them improve their outreach to parents.

The School Wellness Inventory starts with process evaluation questions about the district wellness committee and the committee membership. Districts rate questions based on their level of implementation, yes, no or somewhat, rather than a number score for each item. Some questions, such as committee membership, are based on Public Law 108-265, the law that required districts to develop a wellness policy. Additional questions deal with outcome evaluation and list items that can be measured. For instance, vending and school store revenue, participation in breakfast and lunch, plate waste, fitness scores and behavioral or academic performance.

The final questions relate to the involvement of parents, families and the community. They are based on the National Center for School Engagement, Epstein Model of Family Involvement, and work done by California’s Project Lean.

The tool directs districts to make the policy and the principals behind the policy available to committee members, families, and the community by prominently posting the policy on the district web site and offering informational sessions for stakeholders. This same recommendation is made by the White House Task Force on Childhood Obesity Report to the President; Recommendation 3.15. See the full report: [http://www.letsmove.gov/pdf/TaskForce_on_Childhood_Obesity_May2010_FullReport.pdf](http://www.letsmove.gov/pdf/TaskForce_on_Childhood_Obesity_May2010_FullReport.pdf).