

The Implementation of School Health Initiatives Linked to **Healthy Schools Program Participation** and **Higher Employment Counties** in Arizona

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Background

The AZ Health Zone supports SNAP-Ed school health initiatives at schools across Arizona where over 50% of students receive free-and-reduced-price lunch, including those in low employment counties.¹

A subset of these schools also participate in the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's **Healthy Schools Program (HSP)**, a national evidence-based initiative designed to create and sustain healthy school environments.



Objective

Low-employment counties in orange

Compare the implementation of school health initiatives among AZ Health Zone-supported schools in **HSP versus non-HSP schools** and **low versus higher income counties**.

6 NHSAC Sections

School Health & Safety Policies & Environment

Health Education

Physical Education & Other Physical Activity Programs

Nutrition Services

Health Promotion for Staff

Family & Community Involvement

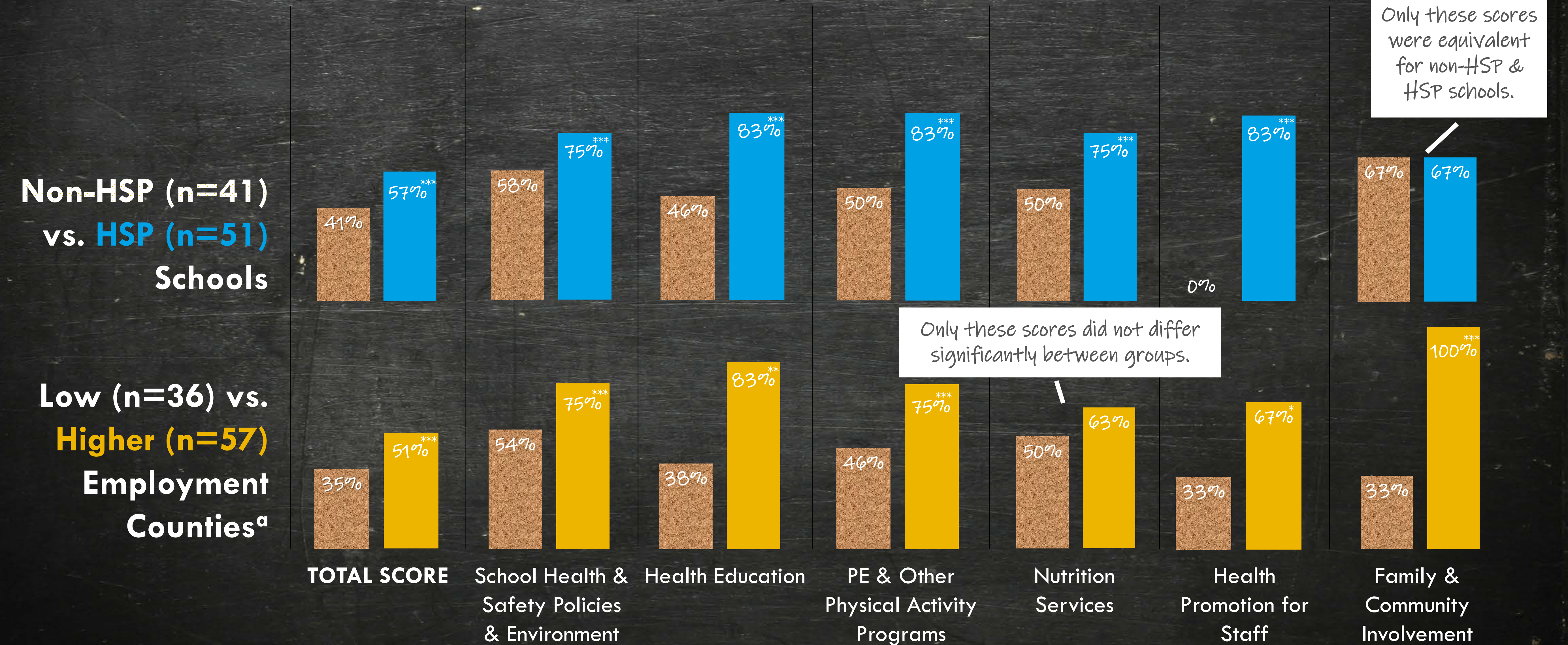
Methods

Data Collection. We used the HSP's National Healthy Schools Award Checklist (NHSAC) to measure school health implementation in six areas (right). Ninety-three schools across 13 of Arizona's 15 counties completed NHSACs.

Data Analysis. We calculated total and section scores as percents of the maximum achievable scores and generated mean and median scores for comparison across subgroups using the two-sample Wilcoxon rank sum test.

Results

Median Total and Section NHSAC Scores for AZ Health Zone Schools, by HSP Participation and County Employment Status, Arizona (N=93)



NHSAC: National Healthy Schools Award Checklist, HSP: Alliance for a Healthier Generation's Healthy Schools Program. ^a Low-employment counties: Apache, Cochise, Gila, Graham, Greenlee, Mohave, Navajo, Pinal, Santa Cruz, Yavapai; Higher-employment counties: Coconino, Maricopa, Pima. *p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001.

Conclusion

Implementation of school health initiatives was associated with HSP participation and location in higher employment counties. Schools in low-employment counties may have less overall support for non-essential education activities, aside from nutrition services that are federally regulated. The HSP may incentivize schools to begin or grow school health initiatives, or it may provide recognition for schools already engaged in comprehensive school health.

Reference

1. Economic Research Service, USDA. Atlas: County Classifications, Low Employment Counties. 2015 Edition. Available at: <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/atlas-of-rural-and-small-town-america/go-to-the-atlas/>

