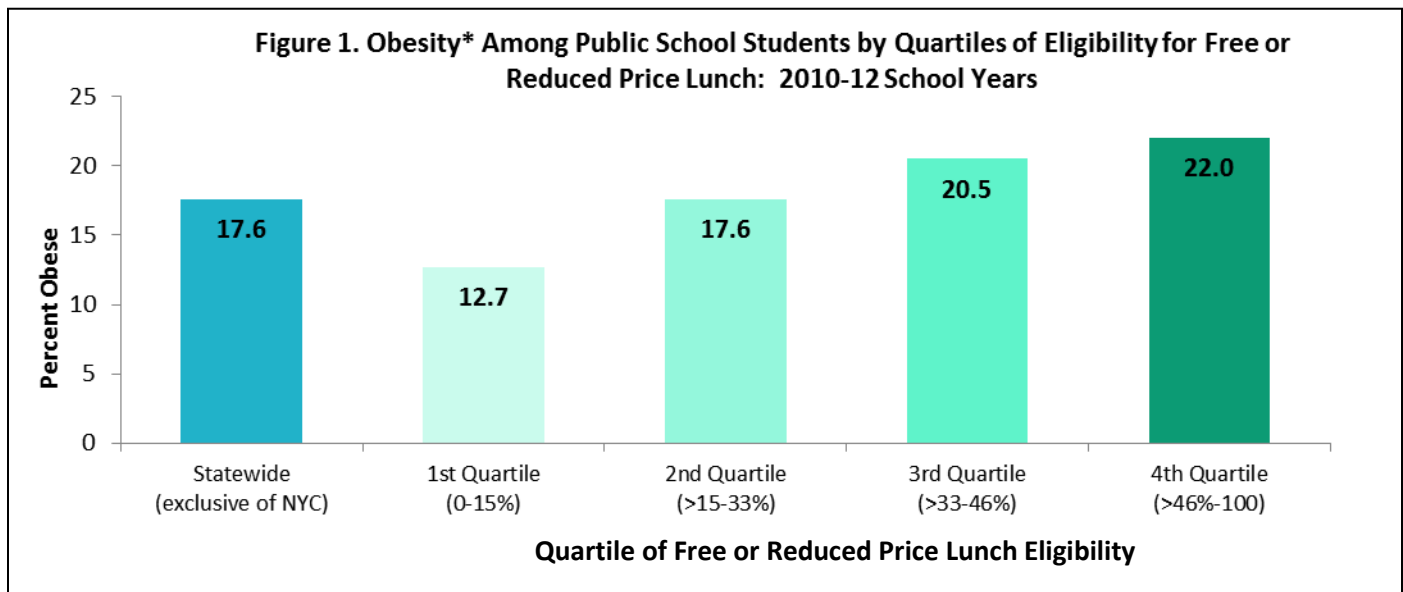


Information for Action # 2013-6

Rates of Student Obesity are Significantly Higher in High Need School Districts

The rate of childhood obesity remains at epidemic proportions in New York State and in the US. However, the burden of childhood obesity is not distributed equally across the population. National data indicate obesity is more prevalent among children raised in low income households.¹ In New York State, data collected from public school districts through the Student Weight Status Category Reporting System (SWSCR) illustrate rates of obesity are significantly higher in school districts in which a higher proportion of students are eligible for free or reduced price lunch. Based on SWSCR data from 2010-12:

- School districts above the median (50th percentile) in student eligibility for free or reduced price lunch have significantly higher rates of obesity than school districts below the median (data not shown), 21.4% versus 14.6%.
- Compared to public school districts in the bottom 25th percentile in need, the rate of obesity is nearly **twice as high** in school districts above the 75th percentile in need, 22.0% compared to 12.7% (figure 1).



Data Source: Student Weight Status Category Reporting System, 2010-12. *Obesity = \geq 95th percentile based on sex-specific Body Mass Index-for-age percentile.

PUBLIC HEALTH OPPORTUNITY

School districts in which a higher proportion of students are eligible for free or reduced price lunch represent priority settings for obesity prevention programs.

Information about obesity prevention opportunities in schools is available at:

- http://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/obesity/preventing_childhood_obesity.htm

Contact:

For more information about the data included and their specific implications for action, please send an email to DCCIPIFA@health.state.ny.us with IFA # 2013-6 in the subject line.

References:

¹ Singh GK, Siahpush M, Kogan, MD. Rising social inequalities in U.S. childhood obesity, 2003-2007. *Annals of Epidemiology* 2010;20(1):40-52.



To access other Information for Action reports, visit the NYSDOH public website:

http://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/prevention/injury_prevention/information_for_action/index.htm