

WELLNESS POLICY ON PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND NUTRITION REGULATIONS

I. School District Wellness Committee

The school district wellness committee will create, strengthen, or work with individual school health councils to develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies. The councils also will serve as resources to school sites for implementing those policies. (A school health council may consist of a group of individuals representing the school and community, and may include parents, students, representatives of the school food services, members of the school committee, school administrators, staff, health professionals, and members of the public.)

II. Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served on Campus

School Meals: Meals served through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs will:

- be appealing and attractive to children;
- be served in clean and pleasant settings;
- meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations;
- offer a variety of fruits and vegetables;²
- serve no more than 2 % low fat milk³ and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (to be defined by USDA); and
- add more whole grains to offerings.^{3,4}

When possible, schools should engage students and parents, through taste-tests of new entrees and surveys, in selecting foods sold through the school meal programs in order to identify new, healthful, and appealing food choices. In addition, schools should share information about the nutritional content of meals with staff, students, and parents. Such information could be made available on menus, a website, on cafeteria menu boards, placards, or other point-of-purchase materials.

Breakfast. To ensure that all children have breakfast, either at home or at school, in order to meet their nutritional needs and enhance their ability to learn:

- Ideally, schools will operate the School Breakfast Program (Title I Schools).
- Ideally, schools will utilize methods to serve school breakfasts that encourage participation including serving breakfast, "grab-and-go" breakfast, or breakfast during morning break or recess.
- Schools that serve breakfast to students will notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast Program.
- Schools will encourage parents to provide a healthy breakfast for their children through newsletter articles, take-home materials, or other means.

Free and Reduced-priced Meals. Schools will make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to, and prevent the overt identification of, students who are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals⁵. Toward this end, schools may utilize electronic identification and payment systems; promote the availability of school meals to all students; and/or use nontraditional methods for serving school meals, such as "grab-and-go" or classroom breakfast.

Meal Times and Scheduling. Schools will, to the extent possible:

- will provide students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch;
- should schedule meal periods at appropriate times, *e.g.*, lunch should be scheduled between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.;
- should not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities;
- will try to schedule lunch periods to follow recess periods, (in elementary schools);
- will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks; and
- should take reasonable steps to accommodate the tooth-brushing regimens of students with special oral health needs (*e.g.*, orthodontia or high tooth decay risk).

Qualifications of School Food Service Staff. Qualified nutrition professionals will administer the school meal programs. As part of the school district's responsibility to operate a food service program, we will provide continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals in schools. Staff development programs should include appropriate certification and/or training programs for child nutrition directors, school nutrition managers, and cafeteria workers, according to their levels of responsibility.⁶

Sharing of Foods and Beverages. Schools should discourage students from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets.

Foods and Beverages Sold Individually (*i.e.*, foods sold outside of reimbursable school meals, such as through vending machines, cafeteria a la carte [snack] lines, fundraisers, school stores, etc.)

Elementary Schools. The school food service program will approve and provide all food and beverage sales to students in elementary schools. Given young children's limited nutrition skills, food in elementary schools should be sold as balanced meals. If available, foods and beverages sold individually should be limited to low-fat and non-fat milk, fruits, and non-fried vegetables. If possible, at each lunch, choices of fruits and vegetables will be made available.

Middle and High Schools. In middle/junior high and high schools, all foods and beverages sold individually outside the reimbursable school meal programs (including those sold through a la carte [snack] lines, vending machines, student stores, or fundraising activities) during the school day, or through programs for students after the school day, will meet the following nutrition and portion size standards:

- **Beverages**
 - **Allowed:** water or seltzer water⁷ without added caloric sweeteners; fruit and vegetable juices and fruit-based drinks that contain at least 50% fruit juice and that do not contain additional caloric sweeteners; unflavored or flavored low-fat or fat-free fluid milk and nutritionally-equivalent nondairy beverages (to be defined by USDA);
 - **Not allowed:** soft drinks containing caloric sweeteners; iced teas; fruit-based drinks that contain less than 50% real fruit juice or that contain additional caloric sweeteners; beverages containing caffeine, excluding low-fat or fat-free chocolate milk (which contain trivial amounts of caffeine).
- **Foods**
 - A food item sold individually:
 - will have no more than 35% of its calories from fat (excluding nuts, seeds, peanut butter, and other nut butters) and 10% of its calories from saturated and trans fat combined;
 - will have no more than 35% of its *weight* from added sugars;⁸
 - will contain no more than 230 mg of sodium per serving for chips, cereals, crackers, French fries, baked goods, and other snack items; will contain no more than 480 mg of sodium per serving for pastas, meats, and soups; and will contain no more than 600 mg of sodium for pizza, sandwiches, and main dishes.
 - A choice of at least two fruits and/or non-fried vegetables will be offered for sale at any location on the school site where foods are sold. Such items could include, but are not limited to, fresh fruits and vegetables; 100% fruit or vegetable juice; fruit-based drinks that are at least 50% fruit juice and that do not contain additional caloric sweeteners; cooked, dried, or canned fruits (canned in fruit juice or light syrup); and cooked, dried, or canned vegetables (that meet the above fat and sodium guidelines).⁹

Fundraising Activities (includes, but not limited to PTO, School Council, Band, Sports Teams). To support children's health and school nutrition-education efforts, school fundraising activities will not involve food or will use only foods that meet the above nutrition and portion size standards for foods and beverages sold individually. The school district will make available a list of ideas for acceptable fundraising activities. In school bake sales will be limited to one per organization per year.

Snacks. Snacks served during the school day or in after-school care or enrichment programs will make a positive contribution to children's diets and health, with an emphasis on serving fruits and vegetables as the primary snacks and low fat milk or water as the primary beverage. Schools will assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, children's nutritional needs, children's ages, and other considerations. The district will disseminate a list of healthful snack items to teachers, after-school program personnel, and parents.

- If eligible, schools that provide snacks through after-school programs will pursue receiving reimbursements through the National School Lunch Program.

Rewards. Schools will discourage the use of foods or beverages, as rewards for academic performance or good behavior,¹⁰ and will not withhold food or beverages (including food served through school meals) as a punishment. All students will be allowed to rehydrate after physical activity, including recess and physical education.

Celebrations. Schools should limit celebrations that involve food during the school day to no more than one party per class per month. Each party should include no more than one food or beverage that does not meet nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually (above). The district will disseminate a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers.

School-sponsored Events (such as, but not limited to, athletic events, dances, or performances). It is strongly encouraged that school-sponsored events will offer choices that meet nutritional guidelines. The school district will make available a list of ideas for healthier fundraising activities.

III. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing

Nutrition Education and Promotion. The West Springfield Public School District aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Schools should provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- is offered at each grade level as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
- if a health teacher is not available at the elementary level, some aspects of health will be integrated into physical education, and other components will be taught by the primary teacher and nurse, if possible;
- is part of not only health education classes, but also classroom instruction in subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects;
- includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, participatory activities, such as contests, promotions, taste testing, farm visits, and school gardens;
- promotes fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices;
- emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise);
- links with school meal programs, other school foods & nutrition-related community services;
- links with MS and HS Family & Consumer Science in following the nutritional recommendations as outlined.

Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting. For students to receive the nationally-recommended amount of daily physical activity (*i.e.*, at least 60 minutes per day) and for students to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior, students need opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class. Toward that end:

- classroom health education will complement physical education by reinforcing the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically-active lifestyle and to reduce time spent on sedentary activities, such as watching television;
- if possible, opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into other subject lessons;
- recommend that classroom teachers provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

Communications with Parents. The district/school will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. The district/school may offer healthy eating seminars for parents, send home nutrition information, post nutrition tips on school websites, and provide nutrient analyses of school menus. Schools should encourage parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks and to refrain from including beverages and foods that do not meet the above nutrition standards for individual foods and beverages. The district/school will provide parents a list of foods that meet the district's snack standards and ideas for healthy celebrations/parties, rewards, and fundraising activities.

The district/school will provide information about physical education and other school-based physical activity opportunities before, during, and after the school day; and support parents' efforts to provide their children with opportunities to be physically active outside of school. Such supports may include sharing information about physical activity and physical education through a website, newsletter, or other take-home materials, or special events.

Staff Wellness. The West Springfield Public School District highly values the health and well-being of every staff member and will plan and implement activities and policies that support personal efforts by staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Each school should establish and maintain a staff wellness committee, which should develop, promote, and oversee a multifaceted plan to promote staff health and wellness. The plan should be based on input solicited from school staff and should outline ways to encourage healthy eating, physical activity, and other elements of a healthy lifestyle among school staff. The staff wellness committee should distribute its plan to the school health council annually.

IV. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

Physical Education (P.E.) K-12. Our school district has made a commitment to improving the physical activity opportunities and physical education of our students.

Physical Activity Benchmarks:

- 30 minutes of recess are offered each day at the elementary level, 10 minutes at the Middle School level.
- At least 3 activity breaks (3-5 minutes in length) are offered throughout the school day (not including recess or lunch time at the elementary level). At the Middle and High School levels these breaks are considered when changing classes.
- The Physical Education program for each student, meets a minimum of 2 or more times per week.
- Students are offered the opportunity to participate in an achievement for a healthy lifestyle challenge.
- A Physical Activity program is offered to teachers and staff and organized by the schools wellness committee.

Physical Education (P.E.) K-12. All students in grades K-12, including students with disabilities, special health care needs, and in alternative education settings, will receive physical education. It is recommended the offering be a minimum of 2 or more days per week throughout the school year. Our schools are working toward meeting NASPE guidelines for daily physical education of 150 minutes/week for elementary and 225 minutes/week for middle and high schools students for the entire school year. All physical education will be taught by a certified physical education teacher. Student involvement in other activities involving physical activity (e.g., interscholastic or intramural sports) will not be substituted for meeting the physical education requirement. Students will spend at least 50 percent of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity. Minimum class time recommended: K:35 minutes, grades 1-3: 30 minutes, grades 4-5: 45 minutes, Middle School: 45 minutes, and High School: 45 minutes. Currently the schedules vary at the MS and HS and are blocked into terms or semesters, and NASPE guidelines are not being met. The plan is to reassess the schedules and to work toward meeting these guidelines.

Daily Recess. Ideally, all elementary school students will have at least 15 minutes a day of supervised recess in the morning and at least 15 minutes in the pm. When possible recess should be held outdoors during which schools should encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and throughout the use of activity prompts posted throughout the school. Schools should provide equipment for students to use during recess to help them to be moderately to vigorously active. Schools with limited outdoor space should provide alternative opportunities for students to be moderately to vigorously active in the classroom, hallway, or gymnasium.

Schools should discourage extended periods (*i.e.*, periods of two or more hours) of inactivity. When activities, such as mandatory school-wide testing, make it necessary for students to remain indoors for long periods of time, schools should give students periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.

Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School. If there is an interest and funding is available, elementary, middle, and high schools will offer extracurricular physical activity programs, such as physical activity clubs or intramural programs. All high schools, and middle schools as appropriate, will offer interscholastic sports programs. Schools will offer a range of activities that meet the needs, interests, and abilities of all students, including boys, girls, students with disabilities, and students with special health-care needs.

After-School Activity Standards:

- Whenever possible, an after-school activity program will be encouraged and supported.
- School social support programs that promote physical activity, such as, “Walking Buddies” and small group activity programs will be encouraged.
- A newsletter to parents promoting family activities will be send home or available on line, 3 times per year.
- Evening or weekend school-sponsored programs for parents and students designed to encourage family activity and healthy eating are supported.

Physical Activity and Punishment. Teachers and other school and community personnel will not use physical activity (*e.g.*, running laps, pushups) or withhold opportunities for physical activity (*e.g.*, recess, physical education) as punishment.

Use of School Facilities Outside of School Hours. School spaces and facilities should be available to students, staff, and community members before, during, and after the school day. These spaces and facilities also should be available to community agencies and organizations offering physical activity and nutrition program. School policies concerning safety will apply at all times.

V. Monitoring and Policy Review

Monitoring. The superintendent or designee (Wellness Committee—a subcommittee of the Health Advisory Council) will ensure compliance with established district-wide nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. In each school, the wellness policy designee or Wellness Committee, and administrator, will ensure compliance with those policies in his/her school and will report on the school's compliance to the school district superintendent or designee.

School food service staff, at the school or district level, will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the superintendent (or if done at the school level, to the school principal). In addition, the school district will report on the most recent USDA School Meals Initiative (SMI) review findings and any resulting changes. If the district has not received a SMI review from the state agency within the past five years, the district will request from the state agency that a SMI review be scheduled as soon as possible.

The superintendent or designee will develop a summary report every three years on district-wide compliance with the district's established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies, based on input from schools within the district. That report will be provided to the school board and also distributed to all school health councils, parent/teacher organizations, school principals, and school health services personnel in the district.

Policy Review. To help with the initial development of the district's wellness policies, each school in the district will conduct a baseline assessment of the school's existing nutrition and physical activity environments and policies.¹³ The results of those school-by-school assessments will be compiled at the district level to identify and prioritize needs. Assessments will be repeated every three years to help review policy compliance, assess progress, and determine areas in need of improvement. As part of that review, the school district will review our nutrition and physical activity policies; provision of an environment that supports healthy eating and physical activity; and nutrition and physical education policies and program elements. The district, and individual schools within the district, will, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.

Footnotes

- ² To the extent possible, schools will offer at least two non-fried vegetable and two fruit options each day and will offer five different fruits and five different vegetables over the course of a week. Schools are encouraged to source fresh fruits and vegetables from local farmers when practicable.
- ³ As recommended by the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005*.
- ⁴ A whole grain is one labeled as a "whole" grain product or with a whole grain listed as the primary grain ingredient in the ingredient statement. Examples include "whole" wheat flour, cracked wheat, brown rice, and oatmeal.
- ⁵ It is against the law to make others in the cafeteria aware of the eligibility status of children for free, reduced-price, or "paid" meals.
- ⁶ School nutrition staff development programs are available through the USDA, School Nutrition Association, and National Food Service Management Institute.
- ⁷ Surprisingly, seltzer water may not be sold during meal times in areas of the school where food is sold or eaten because it is considered a "Food of Minimal Nutritional Value" (Appendix B of 7 CFR Part 210).
- ⁸ If a food manufacturer fails to provide the *added* sugars content of a food item, use the percentage of weight from total sugars (in place of the percentage of weight from *added* sugars), and exempt fruits, vegetables, and dairy foods from this total sugars limit.
- ⁹ Schools that have vending machines are encouraged to include refrigerated snack vending machines, which can accommodate fruits, vegetables, yogurts, and other perishable items.
- ¹⁰ Unless this practice is allowed by a student's individual education plan (IEP).
- ¹¹ Advertising of low-nutrition foods and beverages is permitted in supplementary classroom and library materials, such as newspapers, magazines, the Internet, and similar media, when such materials are used in a class lesson or activity, or as a research tool.
- ¹² Schools should not permit general brand marketing for food brands under which more than half of the foods or beverages do not meet the nutrition standards for foods sold individually or the meals are not consistent with school meal nutrition standards.
- ¹³ Useful self-assessment and planning tools include the *School Health Index* from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), *Changing the Scene* from the Team Nutrition Program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and *Opportunity to Learn Standards for Elementary, Middle, and High School Physical Education* from the National Association for Sport and Physical Education.

The W.S.P.S. policies were developed by the Wellness Policy Committee (2005-2006) with guidance from the National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity.

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