**ELBERT COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**WELLNESS POLICY**

**Revised 2023**

**BOE approved 05/15/23**

The Elbert County Board of Education is committed to providing a school environment that enhances learning and development of lifelong nutritious food and physical activity practices. All faculty and staff of the Elbert County School District are encouraged to model healthful eating and physical activity as a valuable part of daily life.

To meet this goal, the Elbert County School District adopts this School Wellness Policy with commitments, as specified in accompanying regulations or procedures, to nutrition education, physical activity, nutrition guidelines, other school-based activities, nutrition promotion and implementation. This policy is designed to effectively utilize school and community resources and to serve the needs and interests of all students and staff.

**ELBERT COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**WELLNESS PROCEDURES**

**NUTRITION EDUCATION PROCEDURES**

* Nutrition education will be integrated into all school curriculum areas.
* All schools will be USDA Team Nutrition schools.
* The school cafeteria will serve as a learning laboratory to support classroom instruction through menu offerings, point-of-sale information, signage, etc.
* The School Nutrition Program staff will be professionally prepared in the area of nutrition and serve as a resource to classroom teachers.
* Nutrition information will be shared with students, faculty, staff and families.
* Nutrition information taught by classroom teachers will be reviewed by a qualified credentialed nutritional professional (School Food and Nutrition Specialist or a Registered Dietitian who specializes in school-based nutrition)
* Students will receive nutrition messages throughout the school that are consistent with classroom instruction.
* Farm to School initiatives will be implemented into nutrition education standards using cooking demonstrations, taste tests, school gardens, farmer visits and field trips.
* School gardens and greenhouses will be used as learning labs in all schools.

**NUTRITION GUIDELINES PROCEDURES**

* All foods and beverages available to students on school campus will promote behavior change to improve student health and reduce childhood obesity. The items served will be consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, USDA guidelines for program meals, and with the USDA Smart Snacks in Schools standards. These foods and beverages include, but are not limited to, those items in vending machines, ala carte, daily snacks in classrooms, school stores, fundraisers, student incentives and student rewards in the classroom.
* Foods that do not meet the Dietary Guidelines should not be used for student rewards in the classroom. See Appendix 1 for classroom reward suggestions.
* Class birthday parties will be celebrated one time per month for all students in the class who have a birthday in that month. The party may include all foods.
* To promote fruit and vegetable consumption, whole fruit will be displayed in attractive bowls or baskets, sliced or cut fruit will be offered in both canned and fresh form, and all fruit and vegetable choices will be offered at eyesight level for students.
* To promote healthy milk consumption, white milk will be displayed in front of all other beverage choices in the milk cooler.
* Water will be available to all students during meal service and encouraged during all other parts of the school day. Water fountains and bottle filling stations will be used to encourage consumption of water throughout the school day.
* To minimize school food waste, students at all grade levels will have choices of daily menus and choices within food items represented on the daily menu. Students, ages 1st grade and above, may refuse food items offered.
* In the school’s lunch program, a minimum participation of 70% will be maintained at the High School, 85% at the Middle School, and 90% at the elementary schools.
* All school meals will be USDA 6-cent Certified.
* The sale price of meals will be controlled to encourage student purchases, but should be adequate to provide healthy foods such as fresh produce.
* All students will be encouraged to start each day with a healthy breakfast. Schools will promote breakfast as a means to enhance academic achievement. Student participation in the school breakfast program will be encouraged through scheduling and innovative food delivery.
* Dining areas will be attractive.
* All foods available on campus will adhere to food safety standards. Any sanitation deficiencies sited on local inspections will be corrected immediately.
* Each preparation site will be represented by one person credentialed in food safety.
* Foods and beverages will not be used as punishment. All students will be offered all choices of items on the menu each school day.
* Students will have adequate time to eat school meals after being seated. Students will be allowed, at a minimum, 10 minutes to consume breakfast and 20 minutes to consume lunch.
* Georgia grown foods will be served daily in all schools.

**PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROCEDURES**

* Time allotted to physical education will be consistent with research, national and state standards.
* Physical activity will be integrated into core curriculum areas for all students. Brain breaks for students will be used to enhance classroom management and knowledge retention.
* Recess is required for all elementary students daily.
* Physical activity or recess will not be used entirely as punishment. All students will be given guided choices instead of free time to ensure physical activity during the school day.
* Patterns of physical activity will be encouraged in students’ lives outside of physical education.
* Physical education will be the environment where students learn, practice and are assessed on developmentally-appropriate motor skills, social skills and knowledge. Students will also participate in periodic fitness assessments.
* Credentialed physical education instructors will teach physical education classes.
* Physical education will include instruction in individual activities as well as competitive and non-competitive team sports.
* Adequate equipment will be available for all students to participate in physical education and activity.
* The school environment will provide for safe and enjoyable activity for all students including those that are not athletically gifted.
* Schools will work with families to assist them in incorporating safe physical activity into their daily lives.
* Physical activity information will be shared with students, faculty, staff and families.

**OTHER SCHOOL-BASED ACTIVITIES PROCEDURES:**

* Schools will provide safe, clean and hygienic restrooms. Soap and paper towels or automatic hand dryers will be available at all times.

**NUTRITION PROMOTION AND MARKETING**

* School Wellness will be promoted throughout the school and community using these tools:
  + Nutrition will be integrated in core curriculum in classroom
  + Nutrition messages will be given throughout cafeteria with signage and nutritious menu offerings
  + Nutrition and physical activity information will be shared with parents.
  + Students will be encouraged to try new and healthy menu items.
* Limit unhealthy food and beverage marketing to students on campus during the school day.
* Farm to School will be promoted throughout the schools with bulletin boards, morning announcements, cafeteria signage, School Nutrition menus and social media.
* School Wellness will be promoted in the community by posting the Wellness Policy and Wellness Committee meetings on the Elbert County Board of Education website.
* School Wellness will also be promoted through community partnerships with Elbert Memorial Hospital, Elbert County Health Department and Elbert Partners for Health.

**MEASURING AND IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES:**

* The School Wellness Committee shall consist of the Superintendent, students, classroom teachers, administrators, Physical Education teacher, School Nurse, parents, community health leaders, BOE member, School Nutrition Director and other School Nutrition personnel.
* It will be the responsibility of the Principal for training and implementation of this policy.
* The Principal, School Nutrition Director, and each faculty member who serves on the Wellness Policy committee will meet annually to review the progress towards the School Wellness Policy goals and identify areas of improvement. The Principal and School Nutrition Director will prepare and submit a yearly report in March to the Board of Education regarding the progress toward implementation of the goals of the School Wellness Policy.
* The Elbert County BOE Wellness Policy and Procedures will be updated annually, making changes based on the annual SHC report. The annual report will be posted on the Elbert County Board of Education website.