

SCHOOL WELLNESS

Background

Section 204 of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 (P.L. 108-265 Section 204) states that each school district participating in a program authorized by the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C.1751 et seq.) or the Child Nutrition Act of the 1966 (42 U.S.C.1771 et seq.) shall establish a school wellness policy. Proper nutrition and adequate physical activity have tremendous implications for student achievement and long term health. The school environment has a powerful influence on students and can help create and promote healthy habits and behaviors.

Objective

The Mt. Lebanon School District recognizes that student wellness and proper nutrition are related to students' physical well-being, growth, development and readiness to learn. The Board is committed to providing a school environment that promotes student wellness, proper nutrition, nutrition education and regular physical activity as part of the total learning experience. In a healthy school environment, students will learn about and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices that can improve student achievement and assist in reducing childhood obesity and reduce the risk for diet-related chronic diseases.

Definitions

“Competitive foods” are defined as foods and beverages offered or sold to students on school campus during the school day, which are not part of the reimbursable school breakfast or lunch.

“Exempt fundraisers” are fundraisers in which competitive foods are available for sale to students that do not meet the Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.

“Smart snacks” are a subset of competitive foods that refer specifically to food sold to students for money or tokens.

“School campus” means any area of property under the jurisdiction of a District school that students may access during the school day.

“School day” means the period from midnight before school begins until thirty (30) minutes after the end of the official school day.

Policy

To strive to ensure the health and well-being of all the students, the Board establishes that the District shall provide students:

- A comprehensive nutrition program consistent with federal and state requirements.
- Access, at reasonable cost, to foods and beverages that meet established nutritional guidelines.
- Physical education courses and opportunities for developmentally appropriate physical activity during the school day.
- Curriculum and programs designed to educate students about proper nutrition and lifelong physical activity, in accordance with State Board of Education curriculum regulations and academic standards.

The Board has appointed a Wellness Committee to permit participation of the community to assist in the development, implementation, periodic review and update of this policy. The Wellness Committee shall consist of at least one (1) of each of the following: School Board member, District administrator, District food service representative, student, parent/guardian, school health professional, physical education teacher and member of the public. It shall be the goal that committee membership will include representatives from each school building and reflect the diversity of the community.

The Wellness Committee shall serve as an advisory committee and shall assist with developing, implementing and periodically reviewing and updating this policy and with any necessary Administrative Guidelines.

The Wellness Committee shall review and consider evidence-based strategies and techniques in establishing goals for nutrition education and promotion, physical activity and other school based activities that promote student wellness as part of the policy development and revision process.

The Wellness Committee shall provide periodic reports to the Superintendent or designee regarding the status of its work.

Nutrition

The District recognizes that it is important for students to assume gradual responsibility for their health and well being as they mature and are developmentally ready to accept that responsibility. The ultimate goal is that our children learn to keep themselves healthy and safe and make wholesome food and activity choices. To that end, the District's program integrates a gradual system of lessening restrictions and increasing food choices as students move from elementary to middle to high school level in an environment that encourages a healthy lifestyle.

Students' lifelong eating habits are greatly influenced by the types of foods and beverages available to them. The District's goal is to assist students in developing the skills that are necessary to make nutritious food choices for a lifetime.

The selection of foods and beverages available in District schools during the school day shall be offered to students, faculty and staff with consideration for promoting health and reducing obesity. Food served through the National School Lunch or School Breakfast Programs, food and beverages sold or served by the District on school grounds or at school-sponsored events during the school day, and competitive foods shall comply with federal and state nutrition standards.

The Food Service Director shall provide assistance in selecting foods that meet these criteria.

The District makes available, as part of the school lunch and breakfast programs, a number of food choices that may meet the needs of students with food restrictions. Parents/guardians of students with special health needs and food requirements may provide safe and healthy foods from home to meet their child's specific needs.

Nutrition Education

The goal of nutrition education is to teach, encourage and support healthy eating practices and to provide students with the knowledge and skills needed to lead healthy lives. Promoting student health and nutrition enhances readiness for learning and increases student achievement.

The District's nutrition education program shall include the following:

- Nutrition education shall be provided within the sequential, comprehensive health education program in accordance with District curriculum guidelines and with State Board of Education curriculum regulations and academic standards for Health, Safety and Physical Education, and Family and Consumer Sciences.
- Nutrition education lessons and activities shall be age appropriate and behavior focused, which may include menu planning, reading nutrition labels and media awareness.
- Nutrition education shall be integrated into other subjects to complement but not replace standards-based nutrition education.
- Lifelong lifestyle balance shall be reinforced by linking nutrition education and physical activity.
- Consistent nutrition messages shall be provided throughout the schools, classrooms, and cafeterias/lunchrooms.
- Nutrition education shall be shared with families and the community through various means, such as the District web site, newsletters and programs, etc.
- The staff responsible for providing nutrition education shall be properly trained and prepared and shall participate in appropriate professional development in accordance with State and District regulations.

Nutrition Promotion

Nutrition promotion and education positively influence lifelong eating behaviors by using evidence-based techniques and nutrition messages, and by creating food environments that encourage healthy nutrition choices and encourage participation in school meal programs.

- District schools shall promote nutrition through the implementation of Farm to School activities where possible. Activities may include, but not be limited to, the initiation/maintenance of school gardens, taste-testing of local products in the cafeteria and classroom, classroom education about local agriculture and nutrition, field trips to local farms and incorporation of local foods into school meal programs.
- District staff shall cooperate with agencies and community organizations to provide opportunities for appropriate student projects related to nutrition.
- District food service personnel shall review and implement research-based, behavioral economics techniques in the cafeteria to encourage consumption of more whole grains, fruits, vegetables and legumes, and to decrease plate waste.
- Consistent nutrition messages shall be disseminated and displayed throughout the District, schools, classrooms, cafeterias, homes, community and media.
- Consistent nutrition messages shall be demonstrated by avoiding use of unhealthy food items in classroom lesson plans and school staff avoiding eating less healthy food items in front of students.
- District schools shall offer resources about health and nutrition to encourage parents/guardians to provide healthy meals for their children.

Physical Activity

Physical activity is a key component of a healthy lifestyle. The District shall strive to provide opportunities for developmentally appropriate physical activity during the school day for all students.

- Schools should contribute to providing children the opportunity to accumulate at least sixty (60) minutes of age-appropriate physical activity on most days of the week. The sixty minutes include physical activity outside of the school environment, such as outdoor play at home, sports, etc.
- Age appropriate physical activity opportunities, such as regular instructional physical education, co-curricular activities, interscholastic athletics, physical activity clubs, supervised unstructured recess, etc., shall be provided.
- Extended periods of student inactivity (2 or more hours) are discouraged. Students will be provided with opportunities to stand, stretch and move periodically throughout the school day.

- Because unstructured physical play is a developmentally appropriate outlet for reducing stress in children's lives, and research shows that physical activity improves children's attentiveness and decreases restlessness, all elementary students may have the opportunity to engage in recess during the school day.
- Information shall be provided to parents/guardians to help them incorporate physical activity into their students' lives through various means, such as PTA newsletters, handouts, District web site, etc.
- The District shall continue to partner with parents/guardians and community members to maintain and institute programs that support physical activity.
- During after-school hours, the District shall continue to allow students, staff and community members, regulated access to District physical activity facilities.
- The District shall cooperate with the police and public safety departments and the PTA to encourage safe walking to school.

Physical Education

Physical Education instruction shall promote lifelong participation in health-enhancing physical activities via a comprehensive, sequential and varied physical education and health curriculum.

- The physical education curriculum will emphasize enjoyable participation in physical activity and help students develop physical literacy needed to adopt and maintain physically active lifestyles.
- Students shall be taught the implications of and benefits from involvement in physical activity.
- Adequate amounts of planned instruction shall be provided in order for students to achieve the proficient level for the District and State Health, Safety and Physical Education academic standards.
- Curriculum shall be implemented in accordance with District and State curriculum guidelines.
- Per Pennsylvania Chapter 4 Regulation, athletics or other physical activities such as marching band are not to be substituted for physical education.
- Physical education staff will utilize appropriate instructional strategies to provide meaningful inclusion of all students regardless of skill or fitness level.
- Documented health conditions and disabilities shall be accommodated during Physical Education class in accordance with doctor's orders.

- Physical education class activity shall not be used or withheld as a form of discipline.
- A physically active and social environment that encourages safe and enjoyable activity for all students shall be provided.
- Safe and adequate physical education equipment and facilities shall be provided.
- Students should be moderately to vigorously active for as much physical education class time as possible.
- Physical education shall be taught by certified health and physical education teachers, who shall receive appropriate professional development in accordance with District and State regulations on a yearly basis.
- Health and Physical Education curriculum and program will be reviewed and updated as appropriate.

Other School Based Activities and Accommodations

Safe drinking water shall be available and accessible to students, without restriction and at no cost to the student, at all meal periods and throughout the school day.

Nutrition professionals who meet hiring criteria established by the District and in compliance with federal regulations shall administer the school meals program. Professional development and continuing education shall be provided for District nutrition staff, as required by federal regulations.

- The District will provide adequate space for eating and, where applicable, serving meals.
- The District will provide a clean and safe meal environment.
- The District will provide adequate time to eat: ten (10) minutes sit down time for breakfast and twenty (20) minutes sit down time for lunch.
- Meal periods shall be scheduled by the District at appropriate hours.
- Vegetarian meal choices shall be available in the middle and high school cafeterias.
- Students shall have access to hand washing or sanitizing before and after meals and snacks.
- Access to food service operation shall be limited to District nutrition staff and authorized persons.

- Qualified nutrition professionals shall administer the school meals program.
- Professional development shall be provided for District nutrition staff.
- Nutrition content of school meals should be available to students and parents/guardians.
- Students and parents/guardians may be involved in menu selections through various means, such as regularly scheduled meetings and taste testing.
- Appropriate training for cafeteria/lunchroom supervisory staff shall be provided in order to maintain safe and orderly eating environments.
- Administrators, teachers, food service personnel, students, parents/guardians, and community members shall be encouraged to serve as positive role models through District programs, communications and outreach efforts.
- Staff will be encouraged to participate in the District's Employee Wellness Program.
- The District shall provide appropriate in-service training to all staff on the components of the School Wellness Policy.

Nutrition Guidelines for All Foods/Beverages at School

All foods and beverages available in District schools during the school day shall be offered to students with consideration for promoting student health and reducing obesity.

Foods and beverages provided through the National School Lunch or School Breakfast Programs shall comply with established federal nutrition standards.

Foods and beverages offered or sold at school-sponsored events outside the school day, such as athletic events and dances, shall offer healthy alternatives in addition to or in lieu of more traditional fare.

Competitive Foods

Competitive foods available for sale shall meet or exceed the established federal nutrition standards (USDA Smart Snacks in School). These standards shall apply in all locations and through all services where foods and beverages are sold to students, which may include, but are not limited to: a la carte options in cafeterias, vending machines, school stores, snack carts and fundraisers.

The District may impose additional restrictions on competitive foods, provided that the restrictions are not inconsistent with federal requirements.

Fundraiser Exemptions

Fundraising activities held during the school day involving the sale of competitive foods shall be limited to foods that meet the Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, unless an exemption is approved in accordance with applicable Board policy and administrative regulations.

The District may allow a limited number of exempt fundraisers as permitted by the Pennsylvania Department of Education each school year: up to five (5) exempt fundraisers in elementary and middle school buildings, and up to ten (10) exempt fundraisers in high school buildings.

The District shall establish administrative regulations where necessary to implement fundraising activities in District schools, including procedures for requesting a fundraiser exemption.

Non-Sold Competitive Foods

Non-sold competitive foods available to students, which may include but are not limited to foods and beverages offered as rewards and incentives, at classroom parties and celebrations, or as shared classroom snacks, shall meet or exceed the standards established by the District.

If the offered competitive foods do not meet or exceed the Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, the following standards shall apply:

1. Rewards and Incentives: Foods and beverages shall not be used as a reward or incentive in District schools.
2. Classroom Parties and Celebrations: When possible, foods/beverages for parties and celebrations shall be provided by the food service department to help prevent food safety and allergy concerns.
3. Shared Classroom Snacks: When possible, foods/beverages for parties and celebrations shall be provided by the food service department to help prevent food safety and allergy concerns.

District building principals may impose additional restrictions on non-sold competitive foods used in classroom parties and celebrations and as shared classroom snacks, provided that the restrictions are not inconsistent with federal requirements. By way of example only, school principals may prohibit shared classroom snacks and food based parties and celebrations in their buildings.

The District may provide a list of suggested nonfood ideas and healthy food and beverage alternatives to parents/guardians and staff, which may be posted via the District website, student handbook, newsletters, posted notices and/or other efficient communication methods.

Marketing/Contracting

Any foods and beverages marketed or promoted to students on the school campus during the school day shall meet or exceed the established federal nutrition standards (USDA Smart Snacks in School) and comply with established Board policy and administrative regulations.

Exclusive competitive food and/or beverage contracts shall be approved by the Board, in accordance with provisions of law. Existing contracts shall be reviewed and modified to the extent feasible to ensure compliance with established federal nutrition standards, including applicable marketing restrictions.

Administrative Responsibility

It shall be the responsibility of the Administration, with input from the Wellness Committee, to develop and publish Administrative Guidelines necessary or advisable to implement this School Wellness Policy.

The Superintendent or designee shall be responsible for the implementation and oversight of this policy to ensure each of the District's schools, programs and curriculum is compliant with this policy, related policies and established guidelines or administrative regulations.

Each building principal or designee shall report to the Superintendent or designee regarding compliance in his/her school.

Staff members responsible for programs related to student wellness shall report to the Superintendent or designee regarding the status of such programs.

The Superintendent or designee shall annually report to the Board on the District's compliance with law and policies related to student wellness.

Triennial Assessments

The Superintendent or designee and the established Wellness Committee shall conduct an assessment at least once every three (3) years on the contents and implementation of this policy as part of a continuous improvement process to strengthen the policy and ensure implementation. This triennial assessment shall be made available to the public in an accessible and easily understood manner and include:

- The extent to which schools under the jurisdiction of the District are in compliance with the wellness policy;
- The extent to which the District's wellness policy compares to model local school wellness policies; and
- A description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the local school wellness policy.

The District shall make appropriate updates or modifications to the local school wellness policy, based on the triennial assessment.

Public Involvement and Public Notification

The District shall annually inform and update the public, including parents/guardians, students and others in the community, about the contents, updates and implementation of this policy via the District website, student handbooks, newsletters, posted notices and/or other efficient communication methods. This annual notification shall include information on how to access the School Wellness policy; information about the most recent triennial assessment; information on how to participate in the development, implementation and periodic review and update of the School Wellness policy; and a means of contacting Wellness Committee leadership.

Recordkeeping

The District shall retain records documenting compliance with the requirements this policy, which shall include:

1. This policy.
2. Documentation demonstrating that the District has informed the public, on an annual basis, about the contents of this policy and any updates to the policy.
3. Documentation of efforts to review and update this policy, including who is involved in the review and methods used by the District to inform the public of their ability to participate in the review.
4. Documentation demonstrating the most recent assessment on the implementation of this policy and notification of the assessment results to the public.

Communication

This policy shall be communicated to:

1. All District Staff
2. Students and Parents
3. The Mt. Lebanon Community

Adopted June 19, 2006
Revised June 15, 2015
Revised: February 25, 2019