

# **WELLNESS POLICY**

## **West Aurora School District 129**

### **BELIEF STATEMENT**

The Board of Education of West Aurora School District 129 recognizes that healthy eating habits and regular physical activity are essential for students to optimize their physical and mental health and achieve their full academic potential. Research indicates that obesity, malnutrition, and subsequent diseases are largely preventable through healthy eating habits and daily physical activity. Schools, parents, and the community share the responsibility in promoting healthy eating habits and encouraging physically active lives amongst young people.

### **RATIONALE**

Congress passed the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 on June 30, 2004. Recognizing the role schools can play in health promotion; this law requires local education agencies participating in a program authorized by the National School Lunch Act or the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 to develop a local wellness policy. The objectives of the wellness policy are to improve the school nutrition environment, promote student health and reduce childhood obesity through physical education and nutrition education. In addition, Public Act 094-0199 amends the Illinois School Code, requiring the Illinois State Board of Education to establish a state goal that all districts have a wellness policy.

### **TO ACHIEVE THESE POLICY GOALS:**

The school district will work within an existing district health wellness committee representing the schools and community to develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, recommend revision of school nutrition and physical activity policies to the school board. The committee also will serve as a resource to school sites for implementing those policies. To the maximum extent practicable, all schools will participate in available federal school meal programs (including the School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program, and after-school snacks) and include daily physical activity.

### **Elementary, Middle and High School**

In elementary, middle and high schools, all foods and beverages sold individually during breakfast or lunch periods, outside the reimbursable school meal programs (including those sold through a la carte [snack] lines, vending machines, and student stores, or fundraising activities), will meet nutrition and portion size standards required by the USDA. Schools are encouraged to use fundraising activities that promote student exercise. If fundraising activities involve food, schools are encouraged to follow USDA requirements. Schools are encouraged not to use foods or beverages, especially those that do not meet the nutrition standards as rewards for academic performance or good behavior. Schools will not withhold food or beverages served through school meals as a punishment.

## **I. Food Safety**

All food service equipment and facilities will meet applicable local and state standards for safe food preparation and handling, sanitation, and workplace safety.

## **II. Nutrition Education and Physical Activity**

Schools should provide nutrition education and integrate physical activity into the classroom setting.

### **Goals for Nutrition Education**

Nutrition education is offered as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to adopt healthy eating behaviors and aimed at influencing students' knowledge, attitudes and eating habits. To achieve positive changes in students' eating behaviors, it is recommended that education opportunities be provided to students each year. Opportunities may include a combination of classroom instruction, nutrition education provided in the cafeteria, and assemblies providing nutrition education.

### **Goals for Physical Activity**

Students shall participate in physical education activities during the school day through recess periods, physical education (P.E.) classes, walking programs, and the integration of physical activity into the academic program. Schools will promote an environment supportive of physical activity. All students in grades K-12, including students with disabilities, special health-care needs, and in alternative educational settings, will receive regular physical education. Schools are encouraged to provide students with moderate to vigorous physical activity.

## **III. Mental Health and Wellness**

Schools will support student mental health by providing resources for social-emotional wellness to students and families, including staffing school social workers across all grade levels. Students and families may access school social workers in their child's school building to request resources or support for a student struggling with social-emotional issues (i.e., stress, anxiety, depression, etc.) that may be affecting their overall wellness and school success. Topics supporting mental health and wellness are included in the Health class curriculum for grade levels 6-9, and are aligned with social-emotional learning standards. Social and Emotional lessons were added to the physical education curriculum during the 20-21 school year and will be expanded on in the following school years to further support our students and their mental health and wellness. Additional resources and information may be accessed through the district Student Services webpage.

## **IV. Immunizations**

Physical examination and immunizations are required for school entrance in specific grades according to Illinois Code. Schools will provide the list of required physical examinations and immunizations on the District's website.

## **V. Goals for Other School-Based Activities Designed To Promote Student Wellness**

Schools will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and physical activity for their children. Parents will be encouraged 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 school will provide information about physical education and other school-based physical activity opportunities before, during, and after the school day.

## **VI. Policy Implementation**

One individual will be assigned to monitor standards of the Local Wellness Policy. This individual will report findings to the District Health Wellness Committee. The Director of School Dining Services will ensure compliance with nutrition guidelines within the school food service menus and will report on this matter to the School Health Council. The individual assigned for compliance of the Local Wellness Policy will report on the district's compliance to the superintendent/designee. Assessments will be completed every year to help review policy compliance, assess progress, and determine areas in need of improvement.