

Rooks Creek Wellness Policy
Adopted May 2021

Whereas, children need access to healthful foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive;

Whereas, good health fosters student attendance and education;

Whereas, obesity rates have doubled in children and tripled in adolescents over the last two decades, and physical inactivity and excessive calorie intake are the predominant causes of obesity;

Whereas, heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes are responsible for two-thirds of deaths in the United States, and major risk factors for those diseases, including unhealthy eating habits, physical inactivity, and obesity, often are established in childhood;

Whereas, 33% of high school students do not participate in sufficient vigorous physical activity and 72% of high school students do not attend daily physical education classes;

Whereas, nationally, the items most commonly sold from school vending machines, school stores, and snack bars include low-nutrition foods and beverages, such as soda, sports drinks, imitation fruit juices, chips, candy, cookies, and snack cakes;

Whereas, community participation is essential to the development and implementation of successful school wellness policies;

Thus, the Rooks Creek Community Consolidated School District #425 is committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, it is the policy of the Rooks Creek Community Consolidated School District #425 that:

- The school district will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing district-wide nutrition and physical activity policies.
- All students in grades K-12 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Foods and beverages sold or served at school will meet the nutrition recommendations of the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
- Qualified child nutrition professionals will provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students; will accommodate the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning; and will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.
- To the maximum extent practicable, all Graymont Grade School in our district will participate in available federal school meal programs (including the School Breakfast

Program, National School Lunch Program [including after-school snacks], Summer Food Service Program, Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program, and Child and Adult Care Food Program [including suppers]).

- Graymont Grade School will provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity, and will establish linkages between health education and school meal programs, and with related community services.

Graymont Grade School will create, strengthen, or work within existing 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.

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 only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk³ and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (to be defined by USDA); and
- ensure that half of the served grains are whole grain.^{3,4}

Graymont Grade School 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, Graymont Grade School should share information about the nutritional content of meals with parents and students. Such information could be made available on menus, a website, on cafeteria menu boards, placards, or other point-of-purchase materials.

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:

- Graymont Grade School will, to the extent possible, operate the School Breakfast Program.
- Graymont Grade School will, to the extent possible, arrange bus schedules and utilize methods to serve school breakfasts that encourage participation.
- Graymont Grade School will notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast Program.
- Graymont Grade School will encourage parents to provide a healthy breakfast for their children through newsletter articles, take-home materials, or other means.

Graymont Grade School 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, Graymont Grade School may utilize electronic identification and payment

systems; provide meals at no charge to all children, regardless of income; promote the availability of school meals to all students; and/or use nontraditional methods for serving school meals.

Graymont Grade School:

- 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 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.

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 at Graymont Grade School. 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

Graymont Grade School 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.

The school food service program will approve and provide all food and beverage sales to students at Graymont Grade School. Given young children's limited nutrition skills, food at Graymont Grade School 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.

Rooks Creek Consolidated Community School District #425 aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Graymont Grade School 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;
- 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, and nutrition-related community services;
- teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food marketing; and
- includes training for teachers and other staff.

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;
- opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into other subject lessons; and
- classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

The district/school will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. Graymont Grade School 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 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 will include sharing information about physical activity and physical education through a website, newsletter, or other take-home materials, special events, or physical education homework.

School-based marketing will be consistent with nutrition education and health promotion. As such, Graymont Grade School will limit food and beverage marketing to the promotion of foods and beverages that meet the nutrition standards for meals or for foods and beverages sold individually. School-based marketing of brands promoting predominantly low-nutrition foods and beverages¹² is prohibited. The promotion of healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products is encouraged.

Rooks Creek Community Consolidated School District #425 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.

All students in grades K-8, including students with disabilities, special health-care needs, and in alternative educational settings, will receive daily physical education as established by the Illinois School Code 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.

All elementary school students will have at least 15 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which Graymont Grade School should encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment.

Graymont Grade School 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, Graymont Grade School should give students periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.

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.

The school district will assess and, if necessary and to the extent possible, make needed improvements to make it safer and easier for students to walk and bike to school. When appropriate, the district will work together with local public works, public safety, and/or police departments in those efforts. The school district will explore the availability of federal "safe routes to school" funds, administered by the state department of transportation, to finance such improvements. The school district will encourage students to use public transportation when available and appropriate for travel to school, and will work with the local transit agency to provide transit passes for students.

School spaces and facilities should be available to students, staff, and community members before, during, and after the school day, on weekends, and during school vacations. These spaces and facilities also should be available to community agencies and organizations offering physical activity and nutrition programs. School policies concerning safety will apply at all times.

The superintendent will ensure compliance with established district-wide nutrition and physical activity wellness policies.

School food service staff will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the superintendent. In addition, the school district will report on the most recent USDA School Meals Initiative (SMI) review findings and any resulting changes.

The superintendent 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 Graymont Grade School. That report will be provided to the school board and also distributed to all parent/teacher organizations.

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 will, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.

Graymont Grade School will buy and sell food to other districts per cost of item per Public Act 102-0359.