

TUSCALOOSA COUNTY SCHOOLS WELLNESS POLICY

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Tuscaloosa County Schools' Wellness Program is to provide each student with the knowledge, skills and opportunities necessary to make nutritious food and physical activity choices for a life time. In addition, all staff is encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity as a valuable part of daily life.

Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served on Campus

The school campus should reflect a healthy nutrition environment. Adequate time to eat should be allowed to have a pleasant dining experience. All schools will ensure that all students have daily access to meals served. Schools may not establish policies, class schedules, bus schedules, or other barriers that directly or indirectly restrict access to or the completion of meals.

School Meals

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

1. be appealing and attractive to children and be served in clean and pleasant settings;
2. focus on improving meal quality and increasing the variety of fruits and vegetables, especially raw fruits and vegetables;
3. serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (to be defined by USDA);
4. have serving sizes that will comply with the meal pattern requirements as described by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) regulations. Foods served and/or sold through the cafeteria shall adhere to the guidelines established by the USDA and published in the School Meals Initiative (SMI) for Healthy Children, 1995 guidance. Serving size of fresh fruits and vegetables or canned fruits and non-starchy vegetables will not be limited.
5. average, for a weekly period, meeting the standards of the “*Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005*”, which recommends no more than 30% of an individual’s calories be furnished from fat and 10% or less from saturated fat. School lunches should meet the standard of providing one-third and school breakfasts the standard of providing one-fourth of the Recommended Dietary Allowance for protein, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, iron, calcium, and calories;
6. emphasize increasing the quantity of whole grains served with the ultimate goal of half of all the grains served to be whole grain. Products are considered Whole Grain if a *whole grain product* is listed as the primary grain ingredient in the ingredient statement. Examples include whole wheat flour, cracked wheat, brown rice, yellow corn meal and oatmeal;
7. review the items offered as a la carte sales and evaluate the nutritional contributions of each item. Foods not meeting the criteria should be eliminated or portion sizes reduced in order to be in compliance with the requirements;
8. limit the amount and number of times deep fried products are served. Fried vegetable products (potatoes, okra, etc.) are to be limited in the number of times they are served and are not to exceed three ounces per serving. Preparation techniques should be modified to reduce the number of fried foods with the intention of elimination.

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 parents and students. Such information could be made available on menus, websites, cafeteria menu boards, 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:

1. All Tuscaloosa County schools will operate a School Breakfast Program.
2. Schools administrators will arrange bus schedules and utilize methods to serve school breakfasts that encourage participation.
3. Schools will notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast Program.
4. School administrators will encourage parents to provide a healthy breakfast for their children if they do not eat breakfast at school. This can be accomplished through newsletters, student handbooks, or other means.

Free and Reduced-priced Meals:

Federal Law requires that schools 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 meals.

1. Schools in Tuscaloosa County will utilize electronic identification and payment systems that do not identify the student's eligibility.
2. In the event of computer failure, school cafeterias will have procedures in place to account for meals without exposing individual student's eligibility status.
3. School administrators are to promote the availability of school meals to all students and encourage participation in the lunch and breakfast program.

Meal Times and Scheduling by School Administrators:

1. Provide students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch;
2. Transportation schedules shall permit students ample time to participate in the breakfast program;
3. Students that are transported by a bus that has been delayed shall be given the opportunity to participate in the breakfast program;
4. Ensure school staff are assigned to monitoring duties in the lunchroom to provide supervision in the serving and dining areas;
5. Schedule meal periods at appropriate times;
6. Organizational meetings, activities, tutoring, clubs, etc. should not be scheduled during meal times unless students may eat during such activities;
7. Provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks; and
8. Should take reasonable steps to accommodate the tooth-brushing regimens of students with special oral health needs (e.g. orthodontia or tooth decay risk).

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. This can be accomplished by individual schools furnishing staff supervision in the school cafeteria during serving times at both the serving line and dining area. No food or beverage from an outside source shall be shared with students in the cafeteria.

Qualifications for Child Nutrition Director:

Any person employed as a CNP Director must meet the standards of the Code of Alabama (1975) 290-080-030-05 and 06 as amended June 6, 1994. A CNP Director who does not meet the educational requirements must complete those requirements within a three year period from the date of employment. If educational requirements are not met within the three year period the person cannot continue being employed as a CNP Director.

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. Professional development will be provided for all nutrition professionals. 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. School nutrition staff development programs are available through the USDA, School Nutrition Association and the National Food Service Management Institute. School food service staff should be encouraged to participate and maintain certification through the School Nutrition Association.

Sale of Food and Beverages:

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.), as a minimum, must follow the Alabama State Department of Education guidelines.

1. **Elementary Schools:** The school administrator will approve, monitor and provide all food and beverage sales to students in elementary schools following the guidelines established by the State Department of Education. 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.
2. **Middle/Junior High and High Schools:** The school administrator will approve, monitor and provide all food and beverage sales to students in middle/junior /high schools following the guidelines established by the State Department of Education. 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,

State Guidelines on Foods and Beverages

1. **Elementary Schools:** (Defined as a school where the majority of the students are in grades Pre-K through 5) No carbonated soft drinks shall be available for sale to students at any time during the school day.
2. **Middle Schools:** (Defined as a school where the majority of the students are in grades 6 through 8) A minimum of 70% of the selections available for sale during the school day in vending machines, or for sale in school stores, are to be non-carbonated soft drinks. At a maximum, 30% of the selections may be carbonated beverages, but at least 50% of those drinks must be no or low calorie selections.
3. **High Schools:** (A high school is defined as a school where the majority of the students are in grades 9 through 12) A minimum of 50% of the selections available for sale in vending machines, or for sale in school stores, are to be non-carbonated soft drinks. At a maximum 50% of the selections may be carbonated beverages, but at least 50% of these drinks must be no or low calorie selections.
4. **Applicable to All Schools:** No item considered to be in this category of carbonated drinks may be provided free of charge to students or brought on campus for consumption. No food or beverage that has high fructose corn syrup or sugar listed as the first ingredient may be made available during the school day. (The school day is defined as the period of time that children arrive at school until after the end of the last scheduled class.) No vending display front may display any product that is not water or 100% fruit juice. (Vending machine fronts in athletic venues are not included here.) Items that may be sold include non-carbonated flavored or unflavored water, 100% fruit juices, milk, tea and sport drinks. No sale of food or beverage items of any kind or other competing food/beverage sales are to be available to students during meal service times. Food and/or beverage from outside sources may not be stored in CNP freezers, coolers, or dry storage areas.
5. **Foods and beverages not allowed on campus:** Foods or beverages that cannot be sold or served on campus cannot be purchased elsewhere and brought on campus for consumption or for sale to other students.
6. **Sack lunches:** Parents that prepare sack lunches for consumption on school premises should be encouraged to follow these same guidelines.

Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value:

In addition to the restriction regarding the sale of carbonated beverages listed, no one on the school campus may provide access to “for sale” or “free” foods and beverages of minimal nutritional value as identified under USDA regulations 7 CFR 210, Appendix B,

Categories of Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value until after the end of the last scheduled class. These classifications are as follows:

1. Water ices, including frozen sicles, ices and slushes, except those ices containing fruit juices;
2. Chewing gum, flavored or unflavored from natural or synthetic sources;
3. Certain candies, processed predominately from sugar or corn syrup sweeteners or artificial sweeteners combined with a variety of ingredients including but not limited to:
 - Hard candies, sour balls, fruit balls, candy sticks, starlight mints, after dinner mints, sugar wafers, rock candy, cinnamon candies, breath mints, and cough drops
 - Jellies and gums, such as gum drops, jelly beans, jellied or flavored fruit slices
 - Marshmallow candies or other aerated sugar, corn syrup or invert sugar confections
 - Fondants, such as candy corn or soft mints
 - Licorice
 - Spun candy or cotton candy
 - Candy coated popcorn

Allowable snack and a la carte items:

All snack or a la carte items sold or provided must meet the following guidelines per one ounce serving:

1. Less than 30 grams of carbohydrates
2. Less than 360 milligrams of sodium
3. Less than 10% of the daily value of fat
4. Containing at least 5% (and preferably 100 of the daily value of Vitamin A, Vitamin C, iron, or calcium
5. Contain fiber (5% of the daily value)

Portion sizes should follow these requirements:

1. Chips, one ounce maximum, baked or containing no more than 3 to 7.5 grams of fat per bag. This includes crackers, popcorn, Trail mix, seeds, nuts, dried fruit, and pretzels.
2. Cookies/cereal bars, 1.3 ounce maximum
3. Pastries and muffins, 2 ounce maximum
4. Frozen dairy desserts, low fat ice cream, puddings, jellied fruit bowls, 4 ounce maximum
5. Yogurt, (low fat), less than 30 grams total carbohydrate, 8 ounce maximum
6. Milk, 1% milk fat or less, flavored and unflavored
7. Flavored milk to contain no more than 30 grams of sugar, 8 ounce maximum serving size
8. Beverages other than water, to include sports drinks, 100% fruit juice, and low sugar fruit smoothies, 12 ounce maximum
9. 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).

Fundraising Activities:

All fundraising activities (except for contracts issued before August 8, 2005) that involve the selling of food during school hours or as students gather on the school campus before school begins or as students wait on transportation or otherwise exit the school campus following school dismissal should enforce food choices that promote good health. Sales during school hours shall not include those foods listed as Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value or exceed those portion sizes identified as allowable. This also means that all events outside of the school day are not affected by this requirement and that booster clubs, etc. are free to select items for sale for specific fundraising and concessions sales as long as the activity does not conflict with this position. Fundraising activities that take place during school hours should be designed 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. In addition, these foods will not be sold during meal service times. School will encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity.

Snacks:

Snacks served during the school day will make a positive contribution to children’s diets and health, with an emphasis on serving fruits and vegetables as the primary snacks and 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.

Rewards:

Schools will not use foods or beverages that do not meet the nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually (above), as rewards for academic performance or good behavior, and will not withhold food or beverages (including food served through school meals) as a punishment.

Nutrition Education and Promotion:

The Tuscaloosa County Schools will aim to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Schools should provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

1. follows health education curriculum standards and guidelines as outlined in the Alabama Health curriculum.
2. is not only a part of the health education classes, but is integrated into other areas of the curriculum such as math, science, language arts, and social studies;

3. promotes fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices;
4. encourages students to start the day with a nutritious breakfast;
5. emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise);
6. links with school child nutrition program,
7. teaches media literacy, with an emphasis on food marketing; and
8. includes faculty professional development and staff training activities which provide basic knowledge of nutrition, skill practice in program-specific activities, and instructional techniques and strategies designed to promote healthy eating habits.

Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting:

For students to receive the nationally recommended 60 minutes of daily physical activity and for students to fully embrace physical activity as a personal behavior, students need opportunities for physical activities beyond physical education classes. Toward that end classroom teachers will provide short physical activity break between lessons or classes as appropriate. Opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into other subject areas. Classroom health education will complement physical education by reinforcing the knowledge and self management skills needed to maintain a physically active lifestyle and minimize time spend on sedentary activities.

Food Marketing in Schools:

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

Communications With Parents:

The Tuscaloosa County School District will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. The district/school will send home nutrition information, post nutrition tips and links to credible nutritional information on its website. The district will provide parents with a list of foods that meet the standards set forth by the committee and encourage them to refrain from packing food items that do not need healthy nutritional standards. In addition parents will be offered healthy alternatives for holiday parties/snacks.

The district/school will provide information about physical education and other school based programs that encourage physical activity before, during and after the school day;

and support parents' effort 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.

Each school in the district will host an informational meeting (a health fair) to provide families with general nutritional/fitness guidelines and links to local informational resources available to them.

Staff Wellness: The Tuscaloosa County School District places great value on the health, safety, and well-being of each employee. To that end, the district and each school will develop and implement policies and procedures that establish and maintain healthy lifestyles. Each school should develop a wellness committee composed of teachers, coaches, administrators, the school nurse(s), and the child nutrition program manager, with input from the employee health benefits representative. The committee should consider all aspects of employee health, including managing current health problems of employees and illness prevention. The plan should cover healthy eating, appropriate physical activities, and other healthy living considerations. The committee shall solicit input from the employees, develop a written plan of action, and distribute the plan to all the employees.

Physical Activity Opportunities: All students must be taught by teachers certified in physical education, with a minimum of a 30 minute period daily of planned physical activity for kindergarten through 5th grade, and 50 minutes for middle and high school. Students must spend 50% of the period in moderate to vigorous physical activity. The state guidelines for teacher/pupil ratio must be followed. The state course of study guidelines will be used in planning the physical education curriculum

1. **Daily Recess:** During the school day, not more than 15 minutes may be allotted for a supervised movement activity led by an employee other than the physical education teacher in the elementary school. The activities must be supervised by a certified employee. This movement activity may take place inside or outside and may include but is not limited to: walking on outdoor track, stretching, exercise or movement CD's or DVD's use of large play equipment. This recess is not a daily requirement but is a recommendation, depending on grade level and time allowed for regular daily physical education classes.
2. **Physical Activities Before and After School:** Students should have the opportunity to participate in before and after school activity programs through clubs, extended day and other time periods. Extended day programs should include enrichment opportunities which promote and encourage physical fitness and wellness. At the middle and high school levels, walking programs may be implemented for students and staff. Middle and high school extracurricular sports should be valued through the provision of space, time and resources.

3. **Physical Activity and Punishment:** Physical education should be viewed as a positive part of the school day and life activity. Therefore, use of physical activity as a punishment is not recommended. Other forms of punishment should be explored as per the Tuscaloosa County School System Code of Conduct and the local school policy.
4. **Safe Routes to School:** Each school will work with the appropriate public officials and parent groups to ensure that walkers and bike riders can arrive and leave safely from the school campus. This will include use of supervised student safety patrols, crossing guard(s) employed by the local police department, and appropriate sign and lights at key points near the school. It is recommended that parents/guardians take the primary responsibility to ensure their child knows the safe route to home/school.
5. **Use of School Facilities Outside of School Hours:** Use of school facilities should be promoted for purposes such as health/wellness clinics, group or individual clubs or groups such as walking, jump rope, sports teams, archery, etc. Emphasis will be placed on family and community support and involvement. School policies concerning the use of facilities and safety will apply at all times. Fee-based program such as karate, exercise courses, and nutrition courses should be encouraged.

Monitoring and Policy Review

Monitoring: The superintendent or designee will ensure compliance with established district wide nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. The principal will ensure compliance in his/her school and will report on the schools' compliance to the superintendent or designee.

School Food Service Staff: School food service staff at the local and district level, will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report findings to the local school principal. In addition, the local school principal will report findings to the superintendent or designee.

Policy Review: Each school in the district will conduct a baseline assessment of the school's existing nutrition, health and physical activity environments and policies. The results of each school's assessments will be submitted to the superintendent or designee to identify and prioritize district wide needs.

Assessment: Assessments will be conducted every three years to review compliance, assess progress, and determine areas in need of improvement.