

Greater Lowell Technical High School



**WELLNESS
POLICY**

**Approved by the
Greater Lowell Technical School Committee
November 16, 2023**

SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICY

Wellness Guidelines in Support of Federal Law PL 108.265 & PL111.296 Section 204

The Greater Lowell Regional Vocational Technical High School District recognizes the relationship between student well-being and student achievement as well as the importance of a comprehensive school wellness program designed to promote healthy decision making and encourage lifelong behaviors of balanced nutrition, exercise, emotional and physical well-being.

OUR GOAL

To increase the awareness of our students and school community members of the importance of healthy food choices and participation in daily physical activity, enabling them to make informed decisions with regard to their health and well-being.

OUR MISSION

To provide a healthy school environment where students have access to nutritious foods, health and physical education classes and activities that promote lifelong wellness.

WELLNESS COMMITTEE

The Healthy Hunger-free Kids Act of 2010 requires all local agencies participating in Federal Child Nutrition programs to establish and implement for all schools under its jurisdiction, local school wellness policies that meet minimum standards designed to promote sound nutrition, student health, reduce childhood obesity and provide transparency to the public on the school nutrition environment.

The Greater Lowell Regional Vocational Technical High School District has established a wellness committee to develop, implement and promote a wellness policy through school and community involvement. It will consist of at least one (1): student, parent, school nurse, school food service representative, school administrator, and teacher. The Superintendent will offer consultation and provide input on implementation and evaluation of the policy to ensure compliance; will assess for integration in the district curriculum and alignment with core frameworks. The Wellness Committee will meet at least annually to review policy and make recommendations to the School Committee for review and approval and adoption of policy revisions. The Wellness Committee will plan for implementation and evaluation of this policy annually.

NUTRITION STANDARDS AND NUTRITION PROGRAM

- All school meals served through the Greater Lowell Technical High School Breakfast/Lunch Program will operate in compliance with the National School Breakfast/Lunch Program (NSBP/NSLP) and under the guidelines developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), USDA Meal Requirements (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/nutrition-standards->

[school-meals](#)). Emphasis will be placed on reinforcing guidelines that meet lower fat, more whole grains, fruits and vegetables, and meet standards for nutrient analysis and menu plans.

- All school meals served through the Greater Lowell Technical High School Breakfast/Lunch Program will adhere to all food safety, local board of health and food security guidelines.
- All school meals served through the Greater Lowell Technical High School Breakfast/Lunch Program will be consistent with established nutrition environment standards with the advertising of foods or beverages in the areas accessible to students during mealtimes.
- All school meals will be served in clean, safe, and pleasant settings with adequate ventilation, lighting and seating that reflect the value of the social aspect of eating and under appropriate supervision. Rules for safe behavior will consistently be enforced.
- Cafeteria displays and school communications will be used to educate students regarding the relationship among dietary intake, eating behaviors, physical activity and emotional health.
- Free and Reduced Priced Meals applications will be made available to all families. Parents/Guardians will be notified of the availability of all school meal options and will be encouraged to determine eligibility for reduced or free meals.
- Students will be provided an adequate amount of time to eat meals.
- Sharing of food and beverages with one another is discouraged due to students with food allergies and dietary restrictions.
- Per state and federal regulations, Greater Lowell Technical High School will comply with the MA 105 CMR 225.000: Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods and Beverages in Public Schools and the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, whichever is stricter.
- All competitive foods and beverages sold to students outside of the school meal programs during the school day (defined as midnight before to 30 minutes after school ends) must meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards and the MA 105 CMR 225.000: Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods and Beverages in Public Schools whichever is stricter. This includes a la carte items. All nutrition information will be made available to students for non-prepackaged competitive foods and beverages served in the cafeteria (this does not apply to fresh fruit and vegetables.)
- Exemptions at the local level are allowed for special school-sponsored or school-related events:
 - Curriculum and Classroom Instruction: Food products may be used to enhance classroom instruction when there is a clear or specific connection to the curriculum. Approval must be obtained from Assistant Superintendent-Principal
 - Fundraising Activities: Student fundraising activities during the school day by school-sanctioned student groups, clubs involving the sale of competitive foods or beverages are permitted with the permission of the Assistant Superintendent-Principal and will meet the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) school meal and Smart Snacks (Smart Snacks) nutrition standards.
 - Student Rewards: Food or beverages will not be used as rewards for good behavior or academic achievement unless it is part of a student's Individual Educational Plan or directed by a medical professional.
 - School Celebrations: All classroom and school celebrations held during the official

school day will be non-food events /include a variety of healthy choices and will be limited per the approval of the Assistant Superintendent/ Principal.

- Greater Lowell Technical High School in partnership with the Merrimack Valley Food Bank has established a food pantry to service students and their families who are food insecure.

NUTRITION EDUCATION

The school's nutrition education program will be evidence-based and be consistent with the expectations established in the state's curriculum frameworks and content standards, and will be designed to build the skills and knowledge that all students need to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

- Nutrition education will be provided as part of the Health and Physical Education programs and also be integrated into the curriculum in subject areas such as Math, Science, and English, to foster knowledge needed for lifelong health.
- Collaboration between the school nutrition program and academic programs will occur to encourage activities and utilize resources to promote healthy eating programs.
- Nutrition education will also include information and resources provided in the school cafeteria, on the school website, and comprehensively through the health/physical education classes and our school nursing department. The goal is to foster healthy weight, fitness, and the prevention of chronic diseases.
- The promotion of our school-based garden and greenhouse is a priority to increase student knowledge of growing nutritious foods.
- Opportunities will be integrated into the curriculum to increase Farm to School initiatives, and Smarter Lunchroom techniques to increase student access to locally grown foods, and increase student awareness of healthy foods offered each day.
- Professional development will be provided to school nutrition staff to enhance their basic knowledge of nutrition combined with the skills training to promote healthy food preparation and guidance to share with students in order to promote healthy eating habits. Staff will provide activities and programs in each school to promote nutrition education.
- Nutrition education will also include parent/guardian resources in an effort to reinforce messages that students are provided in school regarding healthy eating. Nutrition education will involve sharing information with the community and encourage activities that develop consistent messaging both at home and at school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical Education will be an essential element of Greater Lowell Technical High School's program of studies and will provide the opportunity for all students to develop the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to participate in a lifetime of healthy physical activity. Physical Education will guide students through a process that will enable them to achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical. The physical education program shall:

- Provide all students with equal opportunity to participate in physical education classes. The District will make appropriate accommodations to allow for equitable participation for all students and will adapt physical education classes and equipment as necessary.
- Be taught by educators who are certified by the state of Massachusetts to teach physical education and regularly participate in professional development activities to effectively deliver the physical education program.
- Focus on teaching the knowledge and skills needed to live a healthy lifestyle and be aligned to the Massachusetts State Frameworks;
- Provide instruction that is wellness-based with an emphasis on educating the whole child.
- Provide an extensive range of fitness activities with instruction that addresses the varied interests, needs and abilities of the diverse student population.
- Consider gender and cultural differences in students' interests;
- Actively teach self-management skills, cooperation, fair play, and responsible participation in physical activity; as well as movement skills;
- Include cooperative as well as competitive games;
- Focus on helping adolescents make the transition to an active adult lifestyle; and be an enjoyable experience for all students.

The school environment will also offer opportunities to further increase student's physical activity such as interscholastic sports, intramural sports, and afterschool activities as well as to promote participation in physical activity outside of school.

HEALTH EDUCATION

A comprehensive program of Health Education will be designed to promote healthful living and discourage health-risk behaviors. This program will be offered to students in grades 9-12. Health-literate graduates of the school system shall be able to:

- Comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention;
- Access valid health information and health-promoting products and services;
- Practice health-enhancing behaviors and reduce health risks;
- Use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health;
- Use goal-setting, decision-making, and self-management skills to enhance health; and
- Advocate for personal, family, and community health.

The Health Education program shall be an integral part of a coordinated school-based health program, be consistent with the Massachusetts State Health Curriculum Frameworks and the National Health Education Standards. The health education program shall:

- Utilize educational theories and methods that have credible evidence of effectiveness;
- Emphasize learning and practicing the skills students need for healthful living;
- Build functional knowledge and skills from year to year (i.e., be sequential in design);

- Include accurate and up-to-date information;
- Use active, participatory instructional strategies and techniques;
- Be appropriate to students' developmental levels, personal behaviors, and cultural backgrounds;
- Be consistent with community standards;
- Focus on the behaviors that have the greatest effect on a person's health and emphasize the short-term and long-term consequences of personal health behaviors;
- Encourage students to assess their personal behaviors and habits, set goals for improvement, and resist peer and wider social pressures to make unhealthy choices;
- Stress the appealing aspects of living a healthy lifestyle;
- Address students' health-related concerns;
- Utilize curriculum materials that are gender-neutral and non-stereotyping;
- Assess students' achievement of health knowledge and skills with assessment instruments aligned with the curriculum;
- Be appropriately adapted to the special needs of students with disabling conditions;
- Be taught by well-prepared instructors with adequate support;
- Be allocated enough instructional time to achieve the program's goals;
- Be taught in classes that are the same average size as classes in other subject areas;
- Include means for program evaluation.

HEALTH SERVICES

The school Health Services are intended to complement and support student achievement while promoting and improving student's overall health. There are three school registered nurses and one licensed practical nurse. They each serve as a liaison between home and school regarding health concerns and serve as a health resource for the school community. The school nurses complete mandated state screenings, provide care for accidents, illnesses, and other medical situations, and assist in promoting good health and maintaining a healthy, safe environment for staff and students.

- All students and staff have access to Health Services.
- Requirements for physical examinations and immunizations will be enforced according to the MA DPH guidelines by the school nurses. Annual preventative health screenings will be completed each year and information is shared with parents for appropriate follow-up care:
 - Heights, Weights/BMI: All tenth-grade students will be screened.
 - Postural Screening: All ninth-grade students will be screened for scoliosis. Screening will take place during physical education. Parents/guardians will be notified of any problems that necessitate medical follow-up.
 - Vision and Hearing: All tenth-grade students will be screened. Parents/guardians will be notified of any problems that necessitate medical follow-up.
- Interview Screening (Verbal) for Substance Use Disorders: The Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 97, requires that all public schools utilize a verbal screening tool to screen students annually for substance use disorders. The Greater Lowell Technical High School

counseling staff will annually provide interview-based screening for 10th grade students utilizing the CRAFFT-II Screening Interview, a behavioral health screening tool for use with children under the age of 21. The CRAFFT-II is the most commonly used substance use screening tool for adolescents in Massachusetts. Screening is voluntary and students may choose not to answer any or all of the screening questions. All students will receive some educational material and a resource list at the time of screening. Parents will be informed of the screening in advance and given the opportunity to opt their child out of the screening. Results of the screening will not be included in the student's school records, nor will it be shared with any staff other than the Screening, Brief Intervention Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) Team composed of the nursing staff, the school adjustment counselors, and the students school counselor. If needed, the student will be referred to the appropriate school resource for further evaluation.

- The school nurses will support health and safety education to promote life-long health and wellness by:
 - Supporting district-wide nutrition and physical education; • Encouraging students to eat breakfast and lunch;
 - Encouraging healthy food choices; • Removing or controlling health related barriers to fitness and nutrition.
- The school nurses will advocate for a safe and healthy school environment by:
 - Collaborating with students, family, school staff and medical personnel to meet the needs of students with nutritional special needs;
 - Providing maximal nutritional and social opportunities in least restrictive environment (e.g. allergy aware plans and allergy aware zones);
 - Creating Individualized Action Plans for students with special nutritional needs, chronic injuries or illnesses that potentially restrict activity.
- The school nurses will refer students/families and staff to appropriate health related service including:
 - Free and reduced breakfast and lunch programs;
 - Local nutritional resources and school/local food pantries;
 - Community programs and resources to promote family health and fitness.
- The school nurses will consult with the School contracted Physician as needed.
- Health insurance, WIC and SNAP Benefits programs are promoted to improve student health and food security.
- Community health education and emotional health guidance is provided to coordinate appropriate health services.
- Student health information relevant to the students' participation in school will be collected by the school nurses and parent permission obtained in order to share this information with appropriate faculty and staff.
- Food allergen training and information is managed to support student health whether through the use of epi-pens, CPR or Choke Prevention. Trainings are scheduled district wide annually. Guidance on emergency care for all students and staff is provided.

- Communication with students and families through the Health and Wellness homepage, connect-ed calls, emails, letters bulletin board/poster displays assist the outreach to improve overall access to individualized student health care is ongoing.
- Greater Lowell Technical High School in conjunction with the school contracted physician will stock nasal naloxone and permission to carry and administer nasal naloxone to a person (student, staff member, visitor) in the school and on school grounds in the event of respiratory depression, unresponsiveness, or respiratory or cardiac arrest when an overdose from opioid is suspected. This shall be limited to the school nurses, the athletic trainer, and the school resource officers. These individuals will complete a Department of Public Health approved Naloxone training prior to carrying and/or administering nasal naloxone and the training shall be repeated every three years.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH

- Greater Lowell Technical High School will provide a supportive learning and work environment that includes counseling, guidance, and social work.
- Greater Lowell Technical High School will foster an atmosphere where differences are respected and students are encouraged to express thoughts and feelings responsibly.
- There will be a protocol in place for detection and referral of students who have potential for harm to self or others.
- Greater Lowell Technical High School will provide information to families regarding available community resources for physical and mental health service.
- Greater Lowell Technical High School will participate in risk surveys appropriate to the community to guide program development and offer student support.
- Greater Lowell Technical High School has formed a Reaching Resilience Committee to develop and support ongoing school-wide resources and practices that prioritize the social-emotional well-being and mental health of the entire school community.

STAFF WELLNESS

Greater Lowell Technical High School aspires to provide exemplary services that support our employees in carrying forward the district's mission. The Human Resource Department, in collaboration with the Reaching Resilience Committee, will help identify and disseminate resources that support staff wellness.

HEALTHY AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT

- Greater Lowell Technical High School will provide a safe environment for all before, during and after school: meeting health and occupational safety standards and codes and will be free of tobacco, alcohol and drugs.
- Greater Lowell Technical High School supports a culture where everyone is safe, respected, and accepted. Violence, bullying, and harassment will not be tolerated.
- Students will be taught campus safety rules.
- Staff will be informed of and follow safety regulations.

- The Assistant Superintendent-Principal and The Director of Plant Services will monitor equipment/grounds and refer potential hazards for repair promptly.
- The School Resource Officers, certified law enforcement officers, are available for additional support and to collaborate with the school and the community.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Greater Lowell Technical High School will develop relationships with community partners in support of this wellness policy's implementation and encourage collaboration with local municipalities, public safety agencies and community organizations.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

When feasible, Greater Lowell Technical High School will offer annual professional learning opportunities and resources for staff to increase knowledge and skills about promoting healthy behaviors in the classroom, (e.g., increasing the use of kinesthetic teaching approaches or incorporating nutrition lessons into math class), the connections between academics and health, and the ways in which health and wellness are integrated into ongoing district reform or academic improvement plans/efforts.

OTHER IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

The Health and Wellness Policy will be reviewed every three years and revisions presented to the school committee for approval.

The Health and Wellness Committee will recommend updates and modifications to the implementation of the Wellness Policy based on the results of triennial review and/or as District priorities change; community needs change; new health science, information, and technology emerges; and new federal or state guidance or standards are issued.

The Health and Wellness Committee in consultation with the Director of Curriculum Instruction and Assessment will evaluate all education curricula and materials pertaining to wellness for accuracy, completeness, balance, and consistency with the state and district's educational goals and standards.

The Health and Wellness Committee shall ensure dissemination of the Wellness Policy and shall review all school practices against the policy to ensure that such practices are consistent with the policy's provisions.

The Health and Wellness Committee will meet annually to assess wellness initiatives that are needed to improve the overall health of students, and to make future programming recommendations and policy revision recommendations.

RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

[http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/regs/105cmr225-nutrition-standards.](http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/regs/105cmr225-nutrition-standards)

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/nslp/national-school-lunch-program-nslp>

<https://www.healthiergeneration.org/>

<https://cspinet.org/protecting-our-health/healthy-school-lunches>

<https://cspinet.org/resource/sweet-deals-school-fundraising-can-be-healthy-and-profitable>

<https://sites.google.com/gltech.org/reachingresilience/teacher-wellness?authuser=0>

<https://sites.google.com/gltech.org/glths-human-resources/wellness?authuser=0>