

## **PHILOSOPHY**

The Greater Lawrence Technical School District (GLTSD) and the Greater Lawrence Technical School (GLTS) actively work to create a climate that promotes the physical, emotional, and mental health of all students and staff and that draws on the resources of the larger community. In doing so, GLTS recognizes the important connections between the health and wellness of all members of the GLTS community and their families and the ongoing success of students in and outside school, now and in the future.

## **GLTS WELLNESS COMMITTEE**

The GLTS Wellness Committee is composed of teachers, coaches, students, district committee members, parents, nurses, the food service director, guidance staff, and medical professionals. The group focuses on the health and wellbeing of school and community members and is responsible for crafting and assessing the Wellness Policy and monitoring progress on its goals. The committee meets approximately two-three times a year with a goal of meeting four times a year, starting in FY 2024.

## **NUTRITION**

Greater Lawrence Technical School recognizes that a healthy intake of food and nutrients is essential for students to take full advantage of the learning environment in school. Eating patterns developed during childhood can affect eating patterns in later years. It is the school's goal that students have information available to them regarding wise food choices. By displaying educational materials throughout food serving areas, offering meals selected for their nutritional value, integrating nutrition education within required Wellness classes, and providing all students with free breakfast and lunch, GLTS shall ensure students have the knowledge and ability necessary to choose a diet that

supports health and reduces the risk of illness and future chronic diseases. The nutrition program shall:

- provide an assurance that guidelines for reimbursable school meals shall not be less restrictive than regulations and guidance issued by the Secretary of Agriculture pursuant to subsections (a) and (b) of section 10 of the Child Nutrition Act (42 U.S.C. 1779) and section 9 (f) (1) and 17 (a) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1758 (f) (1) and 1766 (a) 0, as those regulations apply to schools. The guidelines will adhere to the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010, which follow the new guidelines set forth by both state and federal agencies;
- serve foods to students that comply with all state and local food safety regulations. Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point plans and guidelines shall be implemented to prevent food illness in schools;
- provide ample access to water through a hands-free potable water station in the cafeteria and water fountains throughout the school;
- ensure that the variety of snack and beverage items made available during the school day meets the guidelines of the Massachusetts Action for Healthy Kids and/or the State of Massachusetts Nutrition Standards in School;
- include healthy choices for food and beverages sold at fundraisers;
- display food providers' logos and trademarks on school grounds only when unavoidable (e.g., in vending machines) and remain cognizant of the educational context in which they are found;
- adhere to established nutrition environment standards regarding advertising of foods or beverages in the areas accessible to students during mealtimes;
- ensure that profit generation will not take precedence over the nutritional needs of students. Any subsidy needed for the child nutrition program will

never come from the sale of foods with minimal nutritional value or compete nutritionally with program meals;

- provide students with affordable access to the varied and nutritious foods needed to stay healthy and learn well by providing free meals for all students through the Community Eligibility Program;
- protect the privacy of students who qualify for free or reduced priced meals by using a code at the point of sale that is the same for all the students;
- increase participation in school meal programs by providing varied meals each week and offering a second chance breakfast to all students from 7:45 a.m. to 9:00 a.m., Monday through Friday;
- send a letter to every GLTS household and publish information on the GLTS website regarding eligibility for free meals and programs such as second chance breakfast;
- never use food as a reward or punishment for student behaviors, unless detailed in a student's Individualized Education Plan;
- provide sufficient time, thirty minutes, for students to each lunch;
- educate students through cafeteria displays and school communications about the intersection of dietary intake, eating behaviors, physical activity, and emotional health;
- ensure annual training for food and nutrition services staff is in accordance with USDA Professional Standards;
- integrate nutrition lessons into the health and physical education programs.

## **WELLNESS EDUCATION**

The Greater Lawrence Technical School Wellness program provides students with the knowledge and skills necessary to make healthy choices and develop personal habits that persist throughout the lifespan. The program's primary goal—to promote healthy individuals, healthy relationships, and overall healthy

living through the development of physical, social, and emotional skills—is aligned with the GLTS core values of high expectations, growth mindset, lifelong learning, and supportive environment.

Freshman Wellness and Sophomore Wellness are required year-long courses divided into one semester of health education and one semester of physical education. Students in eleventh and twelfth grades are required to take physical education as a year-long course and select from a menu of activities. Students participate in Wellness classes sixty minutes a day, roughly twenty weeks a year.

## **Physical Education**

The physical education program at Greater Lawrence Technical School is designed to help students develop the knowledge, motor skills, self-management behaviors, attitudes, and confidence needed to adopt and maintain physical activity throughout their lives. The program shall:

- be presented as part of a holistic model of wellness;
- follow a sequential, developmentally appropriate curriculum that is consistent with both the Massachusetts Comprehensive Health Curriculum Framework and national standards;
- feature functional, strength, and conditioning training; team building activities; recreational games; and swimming and water safety;
- employ DESE-licensed and state-certified staff who aim to develop students' self-confidence and sense of wellbeing in an environment free of humiliation and harassment of any kind. Physical education staff shall regularly participate in professional development activities to stay abreast of current developments in the field of physical education, evolving

understandings of the physical development of adolescents, and research-based instructional strategies;

- provide opportunities for families to stay informed of the physical education program through a regularly updated GLTS Wellness Instagram page and biweekly communication between freshmen physical education teachers and families.

## **Health Education**

Health education involves not only personal health but also community and ecological health. Health education at GLTS shall:

- be presented as part of a holistic model of wellness;
- follow a sequential, developmentally appropriate curriculum that is consistent with both the Massachusetts Comprehensive Health Curriculum Framework and national standards;
- feature social and emotional health, nutrition, teen pregnancy prevention, drug use prevention, ecological health, consumer health, personal care and body systems, suicide prevention and depression, among other topics.

## **ATHLETICS**

The skills athletes develop in teams, from self-discipline to teamwork, translate into better performance in academics and better mental and physical health. The GLTS Athletics program supports the development of scholar-athletes who succeed on and off the field. To achieve this goal, GLTS shall:

- provide eighteen sport offerings comprising forty-two teams, the majority of which will be open to all students, regardless of skill level or previous exposure;
- provide after-school transportation for students from all four sending communities to ensure the accessibility of extracurricular athletics for all students;
- provide free after-school snacks for all students and meals for students whose games extend into evening hours;
- educate athletes and their families about concussions, publish the concussion policy on the GLTS website, and ensure the policy always stays current with recommendations from the medical community;
- address topics such as nutrition, opioid use, and concussions at a fall athletic assembly for athletes;
- offer an alternative after-school fitness program, Reggies on the Move, for students who do not wish to participate in competitive team sports. Reggies on the Move shall increase students' fitness levels; expose students to weight training and other forms of physical activity; promote and encourage overall healthy lifestyles through nutrition education, emotional support, and the cultivation of self-esteem and the ability to make positive choices;
- offer an optional total body conditioning summer program for all students. The program will run two hours a day, four days a week.

## **STAFF WELLNESS**

GLTS recognizes that staff need to take care of themselves both to model self-care for students and to manage their own stress and maintain their physical health. As a result, GLTS staff shall be:

- given before-school access to the gym and weight room and thirty minutes of access to these areas after schools;
- provided with the resources and encouragement to develop staff-led, non-competitive indoor and outdoor movement groups designed to build community and healthy habits;
- informed by the Human Resources Department of the wellness offerings of the EAP (Employee Assistance Plan) through staff newsletters and emails.

## **HEALTH SERVICES**

GLTS is committed to supporting each student's health through providing a range of high-quality health services. To achieve this goal:

- physical education teachers shall conduct scoliosis screenings of all ninth grade students;
- school nurses shall conduct BMI, vision, and hearing screenings of all tenth grade students;
- school counselors shall conduct SBIRT screening of all ninth grade students;
- school nurses shall provide a carb count and weekly menu for all diabetic students and provide the cafeteria with a list of all known student food allergies;
- school nurses may refer students to the Greater Lawrence Technical School Teen Health Center, a full-service, school-based health clinic, until 4 p.m. each school day and during some summer hours. Through the Teen Health Center, students shall be able to receive:
  - primary care such as physicals, sick care, and immunizations
  - free and confidential reproductive health care

- nutritional counseling services including individual and group counseling for obesity, obesity prevention, and sports nutrition
- the Nursing Department and Greater Lawrence Family Health Clinic shall create a Health Counsel for students to regularly share their ideas and needs, so the clinic can offer community-responsive programming.
- bimonthly sessions with a sports medicine physician

## **GUIDANCE, COUNSELING, AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL HEALTH**

In order to support students' self-esteem, self-efficacy, and overall mental health, GLTS has instituted a number of initiatives through and outside the Guidance Department, Student Services Department, and Student and Family Engagement Office. As such,

- every student in grades 9-12 shall be assigned a school counselor;
- guidance services shall be aligned with the MA Model for School Counseling;
- students who require mental health support shall be referred to the School Adjustment Counselors/School Social Workers for additional Tier 2 support, which may include individual and small group services, with frequency of appointments based on level of need;
- GLTS counselors and Discipline Department staff shall use a trauma-informed approach when working with students; this compassionate approach ensures that each student's situation is appreciated in context;
- students returning from extended absences for medical and mental health hospitalization/treatment or who meet other at-risk criteria may participate in the Bridge for Resilient Youth in Transition (BRYT) Program;



- all students shall participate in a 42-minute “What I Need” (WIN) block every academic day, approximately twenty weeks each year
  - students in all grades may choose to participate in one of the counselor-run, mixed-grade WINrichment groups ranging from stress management and meditation to LGBTQIA+ community building groups;
  - GLTS staff shall deliver social-emotional learning lessons, developed by the BARR Center (Building Assets, Reducing Risks), one time a month to all students.

## **COMMUNITY HEALTH INITIATIVES**

GLTS recognizes that the health of families and the larger community and the health of students and staff are inextricably linked. As such,

- the Parent & Family Engagement Group shall sponsor events throughout the school year including programming that educates parents and families about mental health, drug awareness, resources for supporting students at home, and other areas concerning social and emotional health;
- the Medical Assisting department shall continue to host an annual health fair in late May for staff and students;
- in partnership with Merrimack Valley Food Bank, GLTS shall manage and staff the Reggie Locker, a service that provides food and toiletries to students and families that are food-insecure

## **EVALUATION**

THE GLTS Wellness Committee shall be responsible for monitoring the faithful implementation of the Wellness Policy. Any recommendations for changes or amendments to the policy will be brought to the Superintendent-Director for

review and submission to the School Committee for review and adoption. The Wellness Policy will be accessible on the GLTS website. In addition, the District will document efforts to review and update the policy.