

STUDENT NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: STUDENT WELLNESS

The LEARN Board of Directors believes that LEARN programs should make a significant contribution to the general well-being of each student, promoting healthy schools by supporting wellness, good nutrition and regular physical activity as part of the total learning environment.

Children who eat well-balanced meals and are physically healthy are more likely to learn in the classroom. The link between good nutrition and good education is clearly demonstrated by better attendance, higher test scores, and fewer behavioral problems in school.

To promote the health and well-being of all students, LEARN shall adhere to the following components of a coordinated approach to achieving student wellness:

Goals for Nutrition Education and Promotion

The goals for addressing nutrition, education and promotion include the following:

- Schools will support and promote good nutrition for students consistent with applicable federal and state requirements and guidelines.
- Schools will foster the positive relationship between good nutrition, physical activity, and the capacity of students to develop and learn.
- Nutrition education will be part of LEARN's comprehensive school health education curriculum at every grade level (K-12) and will be integrated into other classroom content areas, as appropriate.
- Nutrition education will provide the knowledge and skills necessary to promote health.
- The entire school environment, not just the classroom, shall be aligned with healthy school goals to positively influence a student's understanding, beliefs, and habits as they relate to good nutrition and regular physical activity.
- Through Meet the Farmer Events and other such activities, students have the chance to meet actual local farmers in person to learn about the food system. Children may have an opportunity to visit local farms where produce is purchased for school meals.

Goals for Physical Activity

The goals for addressing physical activity and other school-based activities include the following:

- Schools will support and promote an active lifestyle for students and will provide physical education that fosters lifelong habits of physical activity.
- Physical education will be taught in all grades and shall include a standards-based, developmentally planned and sequential curriculum that is aligned with established state physical education standards and fosters the development of movement skills, enhances health-related fitness, increases students' knowledge, offers direct opportunities to learn how to work cooperatively in a group setting, and encourages healthy habits and attitudes for a healthy lifestyle.
- Physical education for grades K-12 is required to be taught by a certified/licensed teacher who is endorsed to teach physical education.
- Unless otherwise exempted, all students will be required to engage in LEARN's physical education program. There will be no substitutions allowed for the physical education class time or credit requirement.
- School employees shall not deny a student's participation in the entire time devoted to physical exercise in the regular school day as a form of discipline or punishment, nor should they cancel it for instructional make up time. Further, any student in kindergarten through grade twelve shall not be required to engage in physical activity as a form of discipline in the regular school day.
- Schools must provide physical activities/movement breaks each day, especially shortened days in which recess is not held.
- Outdoor recess should be encouraged whenever possible, even during minor inclement weather episodes.
- Continue to follow state guidelines for recess requirements at every grade level.
- Schools shall provide at least 20 minutes of active daily recess to all elementary school students.

Nutrition Guidelines for Foods Available in Schools

Students will be offered and schools will promote nutritious food choices consistent with the current *Dietary Guidelines for Americans and My Plate*, published jointly by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Agriculture, and guidelines promulgated by the Connecticut Department of Education in addition to federal and state statutes. In addition, in order to promote student health and reduce childhood obesity, the Executive Director or designee shall establish such administrative procedures to control food and beverage sales that compete with LEARN's nonprofit food service in compliance with the Child Nutrition Act. LEARN shall prohibit the sale of foods of minimal nutritional value as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and will ensure that all foods sold to students separately from school meals meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards. All beverages sold or served to students on school premises will be healthy choices that meet the requirements of state statute.

All sources of food sales to students at school must comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards including, but not limited to, cafeteria a la carte sales, vending machines, school stores and fundraisers. Snacks served in before or after school programming all meet the requirements consistent with Healthy Foods Certification standards. No snacks are sold to students during after school programs. LEARN shall ensure that all beverages sold to students comply with the requirements of state statute. No caffeinated beverages are sold at any time to any student, regardless of grade level. LEARN shall ensure compliance with allowable time frames for the sale of competitive foods as specified by state law.

- A comprehensive nutrition program consistent with federal and state requirements will be provided.
- Any celebrations held during school hours which may include food must provide food options which are consistent with Healthy Foods Certification standards. (Please refer to Connecticut Nutrition Standards).
- See CSDE website for a list of [healthy food guidelines and options](#)
- Food rewards or incentives shall not be used in classrooms to encourage student achievement or desirable behavior. Physical activity as a reward is strongly recommended.
- Exceptions for curriculum-based events will be made.
- The LEARN Board of Education encourages food-free celebrations in school.

Standards for USDA Child Nutrition Programs and School Meals

Reimbursable School Meals

Reimbursable school meals served shall meet, at a minimum, the nutrition requirements and regulations for the USDA National School Lunch Program and/or USDA School Breakfast Program, as specified in 7 [CFR 210.10](#) or [220.8](#) as applicable:

Students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals are not overtly identified in any way. Any a la carte or second meals must be paid for at the point of sale, regardless of the student's lunch status, with cash or money in the student lunch account. This is the only time money is expected at the point of sale.

Meal shaming is prohibited in all LEARN schools. All students who come for service will be served one reimbursable meal, regardless of any balance owed or ability to pay. Schools will reach out to the family of a child with an unpaid balance to assess whether the child is eligible for free or reduced-price meals, and work together to find a mutually acceptable repayment plan. Parents/Guardians of students who are full pay or reduced status are encouraged to prepay for meals.

Applications for free/reduced price meals are made available to every family over the summer, though our online platform and paper copies are available at each school. Multiple follow-up attempts are then made to be sure all who qualify are aware of the program and the need to fill out an application annually. The application, along with information about our food service program, is always available on [LEARN's website](#).

LEARN holds School Food Authority Board meetings twice annually at all of our schools. This gives students, parents, and staff an opportunity to provide input on local, cultural favorites, as well as dislikes. Feedback is always welcome. Taste testing is conducted regularly to promote and encourage students to try healthy new foods being introduced on the menu. Ample time is provided between drop-off time and the start of the school day for any child who wants to consume breakfast at school.

After obtaining food, students will have at least 10 minutes to eat breakfast, and 20 minutes to eat lunch.

Students and staff will have access to free, safe, and fresh drinking water throughout the school day. Water fountains or water filling stations are also available in all cafeterias.

All school nutrition program directors, managers and staff will meet hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements in the USDA Professional Standards for Child Nutrition Professionals. These school nutrition personnel will refer to USDA's Professional Standards for School Nutrition Standards website to search for training that meets their learning needs.

School meals will include fresh, locally grown foods from farms engaged in sustainable practices whenever possible and these foods will be promoted in the cafeteria. Cafeterias will regularly provide taste tests for locally grown products.

Wellness Promotion and Marketing

Any foods and beverages marketed or promoted to students on the school campus during the school day will meet or exceed the [USDA "Smart Snacks in School" nutrition standards](#). Food and beverage marketing is defined as advertising and other promotions in schools. Food and beverage marketing often includes oral, written, or graphic statements made for the purpose of promoting the sale of a food or beverage product made by the producer, manufacturer, seller or any other entity with a commercial interest in the product. As the District/School Nutrition Services/Athletic Department/PTA/PTO reviews existing contracts and considers new contracts, equipment and product purchasing (and replacement) decisions should reflect the applicable marketing guidelines established by the District wellness policy.

Salads and fruit are prominently displayed in the cafeterias to encourage students to make healthy choices.

Every effort will be made to select educational materials for the classroom that is free of brand names/logos and illustrations of unhealthy foods. No signage is allowed in our cafeterias for foods that do not meet Smart Snack nutrition standards.

LEARN staff are encouraged to live healthy lifestyles and get more movement into their day. One way in which this is achieved is through offering Wellness Challenges several times per year. Staff are encouraged to set step goals and enter into friendly competition, with prizes offered once challenges are completed.

Staff in each school are also invited to sample fresh, locally grown foods from farms engaged in sustainable practices, as our cafeterias provide taste tests for locally grown products. School staff members shall be encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity behaviors.

Monitoring

The Executive Director or designee shall provide periodic implementation data and/or reports to the Board concerning this policy's implementation sufficient to allow the Board to monitor and adjust the policy.

The District, as required, will retain records and documents pertaining to the wellness policy which shall include the written school wellness policy, documentation demonstrating compliance with community involvement requirements, documentation of the triennial assessment of the wellness policy and documentation to demonstrate compliance with the annual public notification requirement.

LEARN established The Wellness Leadership Committee to set goals for and to oversee school health nutrition and wellness policies and programs, including development, implementation and periodic review and update of this district-level wellness policy.

The Wellness Leadership Committee seeks opportunities and initiatives to encourage wellness activity among students, staff, families, and the community.

The Committee will review nutrition education, physical activity, and school-based activities that promote student and staff wellness, and meets regularly throughout the school year.

Parents, students, representatives of the school food authority, PE teachers, school health professionals, the school board, school administrators, and the general public are invited to join the wellness committee, and be included in the development, implementation, review and update of the wellness policy.

Each school is encouraged to also develop a school level wellness committee, to meet regularly and discuss topics related to student and staff wellness. Information regarding our wellness committee is available on our website.

Program Evaluation

The Board designates the Executive Director (or designee) with the operational responsibility for ensuring that each school meets the requirements of LEARN's wellness policy. In addition, the principal of each school, or his/her designee, shall be responsible for the implementation and evaluation of the effectiveness of this wellness policy.

At the school level, the building principal or his/her designee will ensure: that the board policy and regulations are implemented as written; that nutrition education is consistent with LEARN's educational goals and standards and is provided throughout the students' school years as part of the health/wellness curriculum; that physical education teachers receive annual professional development opportunities that are focused on physical education/physical activity topics and competencies specifically for physical education teachers; and that to the extent possible, families and community organizations are involved in nutrition education.

The School Wellness Policy shall be made available annually, at a minimum, to students and families by means of student handbooks and LEARN's website. This availability shall include the policy, including any updates to and about the wellness policy and the Triennial Assessment, including progress toward meeting the goals of this policy. In addition, the annual notification shall include contact information for the leader(s) of the wellness policy team; and information on how individuals and the public can get involved.

The LEARN Wellness Leadership Committee shall conduct a quantitative assessment of policy implementation every three years, using the Wellness School Assessment Tool-Implementation (WellSAT-I) or the School Health Index, review the latest national recommendations pertaining to school health, and will update the wellness policy accordingly.

(cf. 3542 - Food Service)
(cf. 3542.33 - Food Sales Other Than National School Lunch Program)
(cf. 3542.34 - Nutrition Program)
(cf. 3542.45 - Vending Machines)
(cf. 6142.6 - Physical Education)
(cf. 6142.61 - Physical Activity)
(cf. 6142.62 - Recess/Unstructured Time)
(cf. 6142.10 - Health Education)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes.

10-16b Prescribed courses of study.

10-215 Lunches, breakfasts and the feeding programs for public school children and employees.

10-221 Boards of education to prescribe rules, policies and procedures.

10-215a Non-public school participation in feeding programs.

10-215b Duties of state board of education re: feeding programs.

10-216 Payment of expenses.

10-215e Nutrition standards for food that is not part of lunch or breakfast program.

10-215f Certification that food meets nutrition standards.

10-221o Lunch periods. Recess.

10-221p Boards to make available for purchase nutritious, low-fat foods.

10-221q Sale of beverages.

Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies.

10-215b-1 Competitive foods.

10-215b-23 Income from the sale of food items.

National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program;
Competitive Food Services. (7 CFR Parts 210.11 and 220.12)

The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, Public Law 108-265

Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs, 7 CFR Parts 210 & 220

Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, P.L. 111-296, 42 U.S.C. 1751

Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (as amended by P.L. 108-269, July 2, 2004).

School Breakfast Program, 7 C.F.R. Part 220 (2006)

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