

Wellness Policy Goals and Guidelines

**for
Lawrence County School System
Updated 2025**

Board Approved on May 15, 2025

★ *All new updates are highlighted*

The Wellness Policy requirement was established by the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 and further strengthened by the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010. It requires each Local Education Association (LEA) participating in the National School Lunch Program and/or Breakfast program to develop a Wellness Policy. The unique needs of each school under the LEA's Jurisdiction can be addressed.

Introduction:

As of 2021, the top three causes of death in Lawrence County across all age groups were heart disease, cancer, and respiratory illness.¹ Common risk factors for these diseases are imbalanced eating habits, physical inactivity, and lack of nutritional knowledge.

It is the intent of the Lawrence County School District that students develop balanced eating habits and set a foundation the nutritional knowledge necessary to maintain their health over a lifetime. To address this, we strive to educate students, staff, and parents/guardians of Lawrence County for improved long-term health among us. The actions steps taken to achieve this goal include offering all 5 food groups at lunch, at least 3 food groups at breakfast, participating in programs that educate and encourage fruit and vegetable consumption, and meet the nutritional needs of our school-aged children.²

It is also the intent of the Lawrence County School District to provide adequate time for physical exercise to develop a habit of lifelong fitness for our students. Physical education provides life skills that encourage students to be active and fit for life. It has a positive impact on students' physical, mental, and emotional health.

Public Participation and Updates:

A District School Wellness Policy Committee will be established to provide school district-wide leadership and general public participation in the development, implementation, and update of the School Wellness Policy, goals and guidelines. This committee will meet annually to review, address, and implement improvements to the Wellness Policy before the official triennial assessment. The Wellness Policy, updated information, annual progress reporting, and triennial

assessment will be made available to the public through the district website and social media.

Monitoring:

The school district superintendent and **district level child nutrition staff** will ensure compliance with established district-wide School Wellness Policy. In each school, the principal will ensure compliance with those policies in his/her school and will report on the school's compliance to the superintendent. Schools are encouraged to organize a school health council to develop, implement, monitor, and review school nutrition promotion and physical activity promotion.

School nutrition staff at the district level, 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 Administrative Review findings and any resulting changes.

The school district superintendent or a designee 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 schools within the district. That report will be provided to the school board and also distributed to all school health councils, parent/teacher organizations, school principals, and school health services personnel in the district.

Policy Review:

To help with the evaluation of the district's School Wellness Policy, each school in the district will conduct a baseline assessment of the school's existing nutrition and physical activity environments and policies. The results of those school-by-school assessments will be compiled at the district level to identify and prioritize needs. **This assessment was completed anonymously by parents in Fall 2023. The report is available on the school district website.**³ 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 its nutrition and physical activity policies, its provision of an environment that supports healthy eating and physical activity, and its nutrition and physical education policies and program elements. The district and individual schools within the district will, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.

Component 1: Nutrition Promotion

Nutrition promotion and education positively influence lifelong eating behaviors by using evidence-based techniques and nutrition messages, and by creating food environments that encourage healthy nutrition choices and encourage participation in school meal programs.

1. Students and staff will receive consistent nutrition messages throughout schools, classrooms, gymnasiums, and cafeterias.
2. Nutrition promotion also includes marketing and advertising nutritious foods and beverages to students and is most effective when implemented consistently through a comprehensive and multi-focused approach from school staff and teachers, parents, students, and the community.
3. The school district shall provide parents a list of ideas for balanced snacks and meals for classroom parties/events and to use at home. This will be available on the school website.
4. School staff members are encouraged to model healthy eating habits. They are role models to the students.

Component 2: Nutrition Education

1. Nutrition education will be integrated into other areas of the curriculum such as math, science, language arts and social studies.
2. Goal setting and decision making skills that enhance personal, family and community health shall be encouraged.
3. Nutrition education information will be reviewed by a qualified, credentialed nutrition professional.
4. Each school is encouraged to establish a school garden, to be used as an outdoor classroom for nutrition, science, and other lessons.
5. Staff shall integrate experiential education activities, - such as gardening, cooking demonstrations, farm and farmers' market tours - into existing curricula at all grade levels.
6. Nutrition education messages from the classroom will be modeled in the cafeteria and across campus by offering locally-grown food whenever possible within the reimbursable federal meal program.

7. Students are encouraged to try new foods multiple times, as it is safe for them, since research shows it takes food prepared only one way be offered at least 15 times for our taste buds to adjust. Early food exposure is shown to directly impact life long diet habits.⁴
8. Trying new foods is done by using 1 of the 5 senses, being student-led based on their comfortability and previous experiences with new foods.⁴ We provide a positive food-exposure environment by allowing students to choose which sense to use when trying new foods.

Component 3: Other School Based Activities that Promote Student Wellness

Local wellness policy goals are considered in planning all school-based activities.

Addendum I: ALSDE Smart Snack Exemption/Fundraising Guidelines

1. Occasional class parties and celebrations are exempt from the guidelines. However, providing healthful options is strongly encouraged. A list of healthy alternatives can be requested from the local Child Nutrition office.
2. All after-school and off-campus activities will be exempt.
3. School instructional staff shall collaborate with agencies and groups conducting nutrition education in the community to send consistent messages to students and their families. Guest speakers invited to address students shall receive appropriate orientation to the relevant policies of the school district.

Component 4: Nutrition Guidelines for all Foods and Beverages

Addendum II: USDA National School Lunch Meal Patterns

Addendum III: USDA Smart Snack Standards

1. All food and beverages available on the school campus during the school day will comply with the federal regulations for:
 - a. School meal nutrition standards will be followed per USDA guidelines for calories, protein, and other nutrients levels specific to each age group (breakfast, lunch, and summer feeding activities).⁵
 - b. Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.
Vending Machines

A la Carte sale
Fundraisers
Beverage contracts
Concession stands
Student stores

2. Food providers will take every measure to ensure that student access to foods and beverages meet federal, state, and local laws and guidelines. Food providers will offer a variety of age appropriate healthy food and beverage selections for elementary, middle, and high schools.
3. Food Vendors who repeatedly send foods that do not comply with USDA Smart Snack standards may no longer do business with the schools.

Component 5: Policies for Food and Beverage Marketing

1. Marketing and advertising will only be allowed for those foods and beverages that meet the federal nutrition guidelines and Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. School-based marketing of brands promoting predominantly **nutritionally inadequate** foods and beverages is prohibited. The promotion of **balanced** foods (including meat, low-fat dairy, nuts, and vegetarian meat alternatives, fruits, vegetables, and whole grains) is encouraged to **benefit energy levels, and academic performance.**
2. Examples of marketing techniques include the following: handouts, books or curricula, textbook covers, school supplies, school assemblies, educational incentive programs that provide nutritious food as **an option paired with in-school television,** samples or coupons promoting water, pricing structures that promote healthy options in a la carte lines or vending machines, sales of fruit for fundraisers, and **vouchers to physical activity promotion programs at the extension office.**

Component 6: Eating Environment

1. The Lawrence County Board of Education agrees with the National Association of State Board of Education's recommendations that students should be provided adequate

time to eat, at least 10 minutes for breakfast and 20 minutes for lunch, from the time the student is seated.

2. Lunch periods are scheduled, as required, between 10:00 AM and 2:00 PM unless specially exempt by the State Agency as seen on page 30 of the federal regulation report.⁶
3. Cafeterias include enough serving areas so that students do not have to spend too much time waiting in line. Students are recommended to be given 20 minutes of seated time for consuming meals per CDC guidelines to encourage proper digestion.⁷ Dining areas are attractive and have enough space for seating all students.
4. Drinking water is available for free to students at meals and throughout the day.
5. Food is never used as a reward or punishment for student behaviors, unless it is detailed in a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP).
6. Schools will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks.
7. Schools shall 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.
8. To promote lifelong positive eating behaviors, students, staff and visitors are not allowed to bring bottled or canned carbonated drinks or commercial or fast food into the lunchroom during lunch or breakfast unless these items are contained in a thermos bottle and/or plain wrapper/container.

Component 7: Child Nutrition Operations

1. The Child Nutrition Program will aim to be financially self-supporting. However, the program is an essential educational support activity. Budget neutrality or profit generation will not take precedence over the nutritional needs of the students. If subsidy of the child nutrition fund is needed, it will not be from the sale of foods that have minimal nutritional value and/or compete nutritionally with programs meals.

2. The Child Nutrition Program will ensure that all students have affordable access to the varied and nutritious foods they need to stay healthy and learn well.
3. The schools will strive to increase participation in the available Child Nutrition Programs (e.g. school lunch and school breakfast).
4. All food service personnel shall have adequate pre-service training in food service operations.
5. Schools must eliminate any social stigma attached to, and prevent the overt identification of, students who are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals. Schools may utilize electronic identification and payment systems; provide meals to all children, regardless of income; promote the availability of school meals to all students; and/or use nontraditional methods for serving school meals, such as "grab-and-go" or classroom breakfast.

Component 8: Food Safety/Food Security

1. All foods made available on campus comply with the state and local food safety and sanitation regulations. Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) plans and guidelines are implemented to prevent food illness in schools.
2. For the safety and security of the food storage and facility, access to the food service operations are limited to the Child Nutrition staff and authorized personnel only. After school hours use of facilities by non-school related groups must have CNP prior approval.
3. If using CNP equipment after school hours for non-school related groups, there must be supervision by a ServSafe certified CNP employee. This must be approved by the Board of Education using the Facilities Rental Agreement.

Component 9: Physical Activity/Education and Promotion

Addendum VI: CDC-Strengthen Physical Education in Schools

1. Physical Activity Education
 - a. Physical education courses will be the social environment where students learn, practice, and are assessed

on developmental appropriate motor skills, social skills, and knowledge.

b. All students in grades K-12, including students with disabilities, special health-care needs, and in alternative educational settings, will receive the nationally-recommended amount of daily physical activity for the entire school year. In Alabama that requirement is a minimum daily instructional period of at least 30 minutes in K-8th PE. It is recommended, however, that students in middle and high school receive a minimum of 50 minutes of physical education daily.

c. 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.

d. Policies will encourage that state-certified physical education instructors teach all physical education classes.

e. Physical activity education will take into consideration that students need energy from food consumption to participate in physical activity.

f. Physical education will include the instruction of safe and enjoyable individual activities, non-traditional as well as traditional competitive and non-competitive team sports, to encourage life-long physical activity for all students, including those who are not athletically gifted.

2. Physical Activity Promotion

a. In order for students to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior, students need opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class.

b. 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 sitting for prolonged periods of time.

c. 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.

d. All elementary, middle, and high schools will offer extracurricular physical activity programs, such as physical activity clubs or intramural programs. All high schools and middle schools, as appropriate, will offer interscholastic sports programs. Schools will offer a range of activities that meet the needs, interests, and abilities of all students, including boys, girls, students with disabilities, and students with special health-care needs.

e. Encourage the approved use of school facilities for physical activity outside of school hours. Schools are encouraged to develop relationships with community programs.

f. The district recognizes that school gardens and farm visits can offer physical activity opportunities, as well as agricultural education, by engaging students in activities such as planting, harvesting, and weeding. Teachers and students are encouraged to take advantage of these physical activity opportunities during the school day as well as through field trips and after-school activities.

g. Due to a decrease in daily nutrition and exercise habits in middle school and high school students the school district will incorporate early intervention events to emphasize the importance of nutrition and exercise habits for lifelong wellness. (One Mile Wellness Run 4th-8th grade, County Field Day, ACES Pizza Farm, Farm to School field trips, LC Children's Policy Council Have A Fit Day, etc.)

h. We strongly recommend 2 hours of each day spent outdoors as this has been shown in research to greatly improve the mental and physical health of children ages 2-17 years old.⁸ We strongly recommend utilizing 10-15 minutes of the school day for dedicated recess time (outdoors if weather permitting).

Component 10: Staff Wellness:

1. The school district 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.

2. School staff participates in the BC/BS Health Assessment.
3. Each school is encouraged to develop and maintain a Staff Wellness Committee composed of at least one staff member, school dietitian or other health professional, and recreation program representative.
4. The Staff Wellness Committee is encouraged to develop, promote, and oversee a multifaceted plan to promote staff health and wellness. The plan should be based on input solicited from school staff and should outline ways to encourage healthy eating, physical activity, and other elements of a healthy lifestyle among school staff.

Component 11: Implementation, Monitoring and Review:

To measure the success of the school wellness program, the following statistics shall be gathered for comparison every 3 years:

1. The number of students in each school
2. The ADP in the School Breakfast program
3. The ADP in the School Lunch Program
4. The length of the breakfast service
5. The length of the lunch service
6. The average number of physical activity minutes available to each student
7. The number of elementary students receiving physical education
8. The number of middle school students receiving physical education
9. The number of high school students receiving physical education
10. The number of minutes physical education is provided to elementary students
11. The number of minutes physical education is provided to middle school students
12. The number of minutes physical education is provided to high school students
13. The total number of school days elementary students are required to attend physical education during the current school year

14. The total number of school days middle school students are required to attend physical education during the current school year
15. The total number of school days high school students are required to attend physical education during the current school year.
16. List of indoor and outdoor physical activity facilities that are open to students, their families, and the community outside of school hours.
17. The methods PE teachers use to promote student participation in a variety of community physical activities.
18. School clubs/intramural groups that offer physical activity opportunities BEFORE and/or AFTER school.
19. The physical activity, fitness, healthy eating, or weight management programs and incentives offered to your school staff.
20. The ways the school staff is encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity behaviors for the students.
21. Any Wellness Activities/Community Events that your school hosts. (i.e. fun runs, health fairs, Bike to School Days, Jump Rope for Heart, field trips related to nutrition and physical activity)

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement (English) - updated

- In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.
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- To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#)  from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

- 1. **Mail:** U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue,
SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or

- 2. **Fax:** (202) 690-7442; or

- 3. **Email:** program.intake@usda.gov.

- This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

DISCLAIMER: The enclosed “nondiscrimination” language herein was added pursuant to the May 5, 2022, USDA memorandum. However, although included as currently required for audit compliance by the USDA, the State of Alabama objects to its **inclusion, applicability** and the **application** of this language, and may be subject to change or removal.

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement (Spanish) - updated

- De acuerdo con la ley federal de derechos civiles y las normas y políticas de derechos civiles del Departamento de Agricultura de los Estados Unidos (USDA), esta entidad está prohibida de discriminar por motivos de raza, color, origen nacional, sexo (incluyendo identidad de género y orientación sexual), discapacidad, edad, o represalia o retorsión por actividades previas de derechos civiles.
- La información sobre el programa puede estar disponible en otros idiomas que no sean el inglés. Las personas con discapacidades que requieren medios alternos de comunicación para obtener la información del programa (por ejemplo, Braille, letra grande, cinta de audio, lenguaje de señas americano (ASL), etc.) deben comunicarse con la agencia local o estatal responsable de administrar el programa o con el Centro TARGET del USDA al (202) 720-2600 (voz y TTY) o comuníquese con el USDA a través del Servicio Federal de Retransmisión al (800) 877-8339.

- Para presentar una queja por discriminación en el programa, el reclamante debe llenar un formulario AD-3027, formulario de queja por discriminación en el programa del USDA, el cual puede obtenerse en línea en:

- [https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDAProgramComplaintForm-](https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDAProgramComplaintForm-Spanish-Section508Compliant.pdf)

[Spanish-Section508Compliant.pdf](https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDAProgramComplaintForm-Spanish-Section508Compliant.pdf)



- de cualquier oficina de USDA, llamando al (866) 632-9992, o escribiendo una carta dirigida a USDA. La carta debe contener el nombre del demandante, la dirección, el número de teléfono y una descripción escrita de la acción discriminatoria alegada con suficiente detalle para informar al Subsecretario de Derechos Civiles (ASCR) sobre la naturaleza y fecha de una presunta violación de derechos civiles. El formulario AD-3027 completado o la carta debe presentarse a USDA por:

- (1) correo: U.S. Department of Agriculture

- Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

- 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

- (2) fax: (833)256-1665 o (202) 690-7442; o

- (3) correo electrónico: program.intake@usda.gov.
- Esta entidad es un proveedor que brinda igualdad de oportunidades.
- **ADVERTENCIA:** El texto adjunto sobre “no discriminación” se añadió de conformidad con el memorando del Departamento de Agricultura de Estados Unidos (USDA) del 5 de mayo de 2022. Sin embargo, aunque actualmente se incluye como requisito para cumplir con las auditorías del USDA, el estado de Alabama se opone a la **inclusión, aplicabilidad y aplicación** de este lenguaje, y puede cambiar o ser eliminado.

References:

1. [Lawrence County Health Report 2021](#)
2. [Nutrition and other Benefits of School Breakfast and Lunch Participation](#)
3. [Lawrence County CNP Local Data Collection 2023](#)
4. [Benefits of Food Exposure](#)
5. [USDA Nutrition Standards for Breakfast and Lunch](#)
6. [Lunch Scheduled Time Requirements](#)
7. [CDC Meal Times Recommendation](#)
8. [Research Study Showing Outdoor Time Improves Health](#)