

2013

CREC Wellness Policy Evaluation:  
A School-Based Assessment of  
Implementation



Brian Greenleaf

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### Background and Purpose of Study

In 2006, all schools participating in the National School Lunch Program were mandated to have Local Wellness Policies. CREC adopted a policy, which was revised in early 2010. In December of 2010, the Healthy, Hunger Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act expanded regulations on Local School Wellness Policies. Following the adoption of these regulations, the CREC Wellness Committee performed a review of the CREC Student Wellness Policy language. However, CREC has not completed a study of the level of implementation of the policy within the schools. This paper will evaluate the implementation of the CREC Wellness Policy through the eyes of the individuals who are tasked with performing the duties prescribed. The evaluation will take a look at the five major sections of the policy: Nutrition Education, Physical Education and Activity, Nutrition Guidelines for Foods Available in Schools, Reimbursable School Meals, and Communication and Stakeholder Involvement.

### Major Findings

- Respondents agreed CREC complies with state and federal policies for School Meal Programs and Nutrition Guidelines.
- Differences in Physical Education and Nutrition education are apparent between primary and secondary school participants.
- Responses also show lower scores for Communication and Stakeholder Involvement, suggesting more outreach to stakeholders can be done.

### Recommendations

### Food for thought...



**Adopt new policy language which clarifies the goals of the Wellness Policy.**

- Adopt the language proposed by the CREC Wellness Committee.
- Make regulations behind the current policy more available to stakeholders.



**Increase outreach to and encourage collaboration between stakeholders.**

- Publish a link to the Wellness Policy on each school's website under "For Parents and Students" tab.
- Invite stakeholders to participate in a review of the Wellness Policy.
- Do an outreach campaign to students, parents, and community organizations on the greater topic of wellness.



**Review and revise Physical Education and Health curriculum with teachers across grade levels.**

- Designate a professional development day to ensure PE teachers are educated about the expectations and goals of the Wellness Policy
- Encourage teachers to identify places where their school or program is not meeting the goals of the Policy.
- Whenever possible, review CREC policies around selecting and building temporary facilities to ensure consistency between schools.



**Food Service Programs should look for ways to increase sustainable and environmentally friendly practices.**

- Adopt consistent language around environmentally friendly and sustainable practices for all contracts between CREC and food service providers.
- Find ways to promote and encourage collaboration and best-practice sharing between providers of food service in the Capitol Region.
- Pilot a program to develop a unit of curriculum where food service providers and health education staff collectively deliver content.



**Develop a mechanism to ensure that an annual review of the Wellness Policy is completed.**

- Designate a specific person or division to lead the annual review of the wellness policy.
- Invite volunteers to help with the process and review.

## **Executive Summary**

In early 2010, the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) revised the Student Wellness Policy to include new and stronger language regarding the implementation and monitoring of the policy. However, The Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010, signed into law in December, 2010, expanded upon regulations regarding local wellness policies. The new regulations focused on increasing implementation and assessment, as well as requiring community input.

CREC is a unique organization that operates 18 magnet schools and seven student service programs which serve roughly 10,000 students from its 35 member school districts in Connecticut daily. Additionally, CREC magnet schools underwent a great expansion with 10 of the magnet school programs being starting in 2010 or after.

Using three surveys developed in collaboration with CREC staff, this study seeks to understand the implementation of the Wellness Policy in five categories: Physical Education; Nutritional Education; Nutrition Guidelines for School Meals; Administration of the School Meal Program; and Communication and Stakeholder Involvement. This type of study is significant, as a literature review revealed that previous research has only looked at implementation of Wellness Policies from a district level.

The data show agreement among school staff for many areas of the CREC Wellness Policy. However there was some disagreement around implementation of the Physical and Nutritional Education pieces, with significant difference correlating to Primary and Secondary schools. Furthermore, a majority of survey takers said that they had not been invited to participate in the periodic review and implementation of the Policy. However, over 90% stated they either would or might participate if asked.

In the end, this report makes five recommendations for the consideration of the CREC Wellness Committee and Executive Director: consider implementing new policy language with includes stronger and more specific goals, included stakeholders in discussions around the policy, review and revise Physical Education and Health curriculum and policies with teachers across grade levels, look for ways to increase sustainable and environmentally-friendly practices in school cafeterias, and finally develop a mechanism to ensure annual monitoring of the wellness policy goals and outcomes.

## **Purpose of Study**

The CREC Wellness Policy adopted in 2010, includes a provision that “an annual review and assessment of implementation and effectiveness of said policy and corresponding procedures” shall be conducted and presented to the Executive Director. With this goal in mind, this paper will evaluate the implementation of the CREC Wellness Policy through the eyes of the individuals who are tasked with performing the duties prescribed. The evaluation will take a look at the five major sections of the policy: Nutrition Education, Physical Education and Activity, Nutrition Guidelines for Foods Available in Schools, Reimbursable School Meals, and Communication and Stakeholder Involvement.

## **Introduction**

### *Background of CREC*

The Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) is a unique organization that operates within the State of Connecticut. One of six Regional Education Service Centers (RESC) within the State of Connecticut, CREC exists by Connecticut General Statute 10-66, which states that four or more boards of education may form these organizations for the “purpose of cooperative action to furnish programs and services.” Established in 1966, today CREC is composed of 35 school districts encompassing 36 cities and towns in and around the Hartford metro region. CREC serves over 150,000 students per year through its many programs (CREC Website); however the core of the organization comes from its Student Services programs and the CREC Magnet Schools.

The student services programs serve over 3,500 students daily (Executive Directors Report 2011-2012), in seven main programs. These programs include full day and extended day programs, as well as services performed in the community and school districts. Currently there are seven main student service programs, however only four serve students at a CREC based facility. These programs are CREC's Soundbridge School for students with auditory disabilities, the Farmington Valley Diagnostic Center and Polaris Center which serve students with behavioral issues, and the River Street School for students with Autism.

The Magnet Schools of CREC currently service over 6,500 students daily in 18 interdistrict magnet schools across the Hartford region. In the fall of 2013, CREC will increase its enrollment to 7,000 students and add one additional magnet school program (Executive Directors Report 2011-2012). These magnet schools operate with funding and support from the State of Connecticut under the settlement of the 1996 court case *Sheff vs. O'Neill*, which held that racial segregation in the Hartford region was in violation of the state's constitution. The case, with subsequent settlements agreed upon in 2003 and 2008, set the path for the expansion of interdistrict magnet schools (Sheff Movement).

#### *Creation of CREC's Wellness Policy*

In 2004, with the passage of the Child Nutrition and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Reauthorization Act, each local education agency (LEA) who participated in the National School Lunch Program was required to adopt a Wellness Policy by 2006. The act required the adopted wellness policy set plans to meet the following goals:

“(1) goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities; (2) nutrition guidelines for all foods sold on school campus during the school day in order to promote health and reduce obesity; (3) a plan to ensure policy implementation, including designating persons with operational responsibility; (4) involvement of parents, students, and representatives of the LSFA, school board, school administrators, and public; and (5) guidelines for reimbursable school meals not less restrictive than applicable regulations and guidance issued by the Secretary for the school breakfast and school lunch programs” (Library of Congress Summary).

In response to this legislation, CREC formed the Wellness Committee, comprised of members from the health services, food service, and curriculum staff to develop a Wellness Policy. CREC adopted its first policy on June 20, 2006 (see Appendix A).

In 2008, the state of Connecticut, in association with the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity at Yale University, compiled and assessed Connecticut School District wellness policies. The assessment looked at the language in the policies and did not look at the implementation of the policies within the school districts. The CREC policy scored lower than the state average for both comprehensiveness and strength at this time. Out of 100 possible points, core received a 33 for comprehensiveness and a 26 (out of 100) for strength; however these were only slightly lower than the State averages of 53 and 36, respectively.

#### *Revision to the CREC Wellness Policy and New Requirements*

In response to the 2008 report, CREC set to revise the Wellness Policy in the spring of 2010. The Policy was revised, effective March 17, 2010 (see Appendix B). This policy added sections to strengthen and clarify language, including additional language regarding the monitoring and implementation of the policy. It created six broad categories that would be regulated and assessed: Goals for Nutrition Education, Goals for Physical Education and

Activity, Nutrition Guidelines for Foods Available in Schools, Reimbursable School Meals, Community Input, and Monitoring.

The Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010, signed into law in December, 2010, expanded upon the requirements of the WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004. After the 2004 bill, many LEAs set forth plans for implementation of the wellness policies, but “were not required to report on compliance and implementation; as a result, implementation and evaluation efforts were not monitor or conducted regularly.” New requirements focused on increasing implementation and assessment, as well as requiring community input.

In response to the new requirements, the CREC Wellness Committee examined the policy for revision. The Committee developed a spreadsheet based on the new requirement to determine to determine what changes could be made to strengthen the language of the policy to make it comply with the new regulations (see Appendix C). The Committee decided that the existing language of the 2010 revision was broad enough to cover the new requirements and did not push forward with the adoption of a new policy. Instead, additional regulations provided by the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education are used to promote the goals of the wellness policy.

### **Wellness Literature Review**

A literature review of articles discussing school wellness policies and their implementation yielded mixed results. Many of the articles pre-date the new requirements set forth by the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010. Additionally, many focus on the

evaluation of the strength of local wellness policies. Only a few focused on the actual implementation of the policies, however none looked at implementation at the school level.

Although many schools developed policies as required in the 2004 WIC Reauthorization Act, the policies created varied in their content and strength (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation 2009; Moag-Stahlberg, 2008; Lyn, 2012). This was true in Connecticut as well. The CT State Department of Education (CSDE) report issued in 2008, found that policies varied widely from district to district. A key finding from the study was that districts participating in the healthy food certification (HFC) program, as set forth by Connecticut General Statute 10-215f., did have stronger statements when it came to school meals and other school food items (Connecticut State Department of Education, 2008). CREC did and continues to participate in the HFC program.

Studies also examined the barriers, both perceived and real, to the implementation of local wellness policies. Agron et al, (2010) looked at the perceived barriers and needs among school leaders and wellness advocates. In this study, funding is cited as the number one perceived barrier to implementation, which is consistent with other literature (Chriqui et al, 2009). Agron, et al. also found other factors to include conflicting priorities and lack of time and the ability to education and get support from stakeholders, including students (Argon, 2010).

Few articles look deeply at the implementation of local wellness policies. Probart et al. (2010) developed and evaluated a 39 item survey to examine the implementation and perceived impacts of local wellness policies in Pennsylvania. Their survey of 499 superintendents found that “two years after the passage of a federal mandate for wellness policies, consistent wellness

policy implementation steps were not followed...leading to concern over measurement and enforcement” (Probart et al, 2010).

A review of Alabama schools districts also examined implementation of wellness policies; however only in the context of nutrition requirements. Gaines et al. (2011) examined local wellness policies and administered a survey to school superintendents asking them to rank implementation on a 12 item survey created by the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE). The survey measured the implementation of selected ALSDE mandates on nutrition requirements. The result averaged 79% compliance with the selected requirements for the 123 respondents.

Furthermore, Gaines et al. identified a limitation to school district level surveys of implementation as being unable to account for the variation of implementation at the school level. While there is a lack of research on school based implementation of local wellness policies, currently there does not appear to be a central effort, either at the federal or state level, make progress on this front. Thus, it is unclear at this point if other local school districts have followed through with the requirements set forth by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.

## **Methods**

Previous examinations of the policy have been conducted to understand how the language contained within the policy meets the statutory and regulatory obligations under the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. As no previous study has been conducted to evaluate the implementation, the goal of this methodology is to ascertain a basic understanding of

implementation activities at the school level, as well as move towards a deeper understanding of what factors may have led varying levels of implementation.

To accomplish the goal of understanding, ideas were brainstormed as to the best method of data collection and channel of distribution. The Committee and researcher looked at the Action for Healthy Kids Wellness Policy Tracker, which was developed to help “assess implementation of the policy; [and] monitor results of wellness policy activities” (Action for Healthy Kids website). However, the group ultimately determined that this tool did not meet the goals of the study design, given the varying aspects of the wellness policy. In the end, collaboration with the CREC Wellness Committee determined that multiple surveys should be developed for various stakeholders and implementers at the school level.

These surveys were then developed in consultation with the CREC Wellness Committee and CREC staff responsible for curriculum. Ordinal survey questions were developed from the CREC Wellness Policy to gauge how school based personnel view the implementation process. These surveys ask questions related to the different sections of the Wellness Policy. Sections include the Nutrition Education, Physical Education, Nutrition Guidelines for Schools, Reimbursable School Meals, and Communication and Stakeholder Involvement. The survey questions were then cross-referenced against the Action for Healthy Kids Wellness Policy Tracker to ensure all areas of the policy were being measured.

Three surveys were ultimately developed (Appendix D) based on the appropriate school level personnel who were targeted based on their relevance to the Wellness Policy implementation. The section on Communication and Stakeholder Involvement was distributed

across all three surveys. Physical education teachers were given a survey encompassing Nutrition Education, Physical Education. Food service managers received a survey with questions on Nutrition Guidelines for Schools and Reimbursable School Meals. Finally, the survey for school health personnel encompasses a mix of questions from all sections, whose relevance was determined by the CREC Wellness Committee. With authorization from CREC's Executive Director, these surveys were distributed to the appropriate personnel with directives from their supervisors to complete them.

Additional program level data were collected from the CREC Wellness Committee to assist effort to find other factors that may lead to varying levels of implementation (Appendix E). This data include, but is not limited to, information about the school program (e.g. what type of facility is the school in, etc.) to information about the food service operations (e.g. is the program outsourced, is the food prepared on site, etc.). Unfortunately, as the 10 of the magnet schools are less than 3 years old, some school based data such as characteristics of students served and student performance scores are not available at this time and thus cannot be used for analytical purposes.

Data were then analyzed using both univariate and bivariate analyses. Mean and standard deviation, median, were calculated for all survey questions. Pearson correlations were also run between the variables.

## Results

The survey was administered over a 4 day period in which it was distributed by the UMass researcher via email, with several follow up and reminder emails sent to previously identified subjects. Additional emails were sent by the CREC Wellness Committee and CREC supervisory staff to encourage participation in the survey.

Ultimately, 50 participants responded to the survey, an overall rate of 47.6%. However, response rates for the three groups varied. Physical Education staff responded at a 57% rate, compared to 42% for those receiving the Food Service study and 44% for those receiving the School Nurses survey.

The respondents ultimately represented 100% of the magnet schools and 75% student services programs, but the coverage percentage varies between surveys. Appendix F shows the coverage of schools by responses to each survey.

### *Nutrition Education*

Questions posed on the Physical Education and Health Teacher survey yielded mixed results on nutrition education. Table 1 (next page) shows the responses to the nutrition education portion of the survey. Overall, there were many questions which yielded a wide range of responses, however when checked against programmatic information, only a few were correlated.

There appears to be a correlation between the type of school and opinions on whether nutrition topics are integrated with the health curriculum and taught at every level. Table 2 demonstrates that those who work at an elementary school were more likely to disagree that

**Table 1. Nutrition Education**

<b>Question</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>% of respondents who Disagree</b>	<b>% of respondents who are Neutral or Agree</b>	<b>% N/A</b>
My school supports and promotes good nutrition for students consistent with applicable federal and state requirements and guidelines	15	26.67	83.33	0
My school fosters a positive relationship between good nutrition, physical activity and the capacity of student to develop and learn.	15	13.33	86.66	0
Nutrition topics are integrated within the comprehensive health education curriculum and taught at every grade level.	14	37.51	64.29	0
The nutrition education program has worked with the school meal program to develop school gardens and use the cafeteria as a learning lab.	15	86.67	13.33	0
Health and Physical Education teachers in my school receive ongoing professional development for nutrition education.	15	53.33	46.67	0
In my school, nutrition education activities are linked with the coordinated school health program	15	40	60	0
Nutrition education incorporates lessons helping children acquire skills for reading food labels and menu planning.	15	13.33	86.66	0
At my school, staff members are encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity as a valuable part of daily life.	31	32.26	64.52	3.23
Nutritional education or information are provided to parents in the form of:				
handouts	30	76.67	0	23.33
school website	28	46.43	21.43	32.14
newsletters	28	32.14	42.86	25
presentations	28	28.57	46.43	25
other	16	18.75	31.25	50
Adequate opportunity for physical activity is provided to students after school hours.	15	33.33	40	26.67
My school labels or marks health food items available so students know which items are healthy.	13	38.46	38.46	23.08
Education materials used in the health classroom are free of pictures or illustrations including name brands or unhealthy food.	15	26.67	60	13.33
The Nutrition and Physical Activity Advisory Council includes stakeholders.	15	33.33	46.67	20

nutrition topics are integrated with the health education and taught at every grade level than their counterparts working in secondary schools.

**Table 2.** Nutrition topics are integrated within the comprehensive health education curriculum and taught at every grade level.

	N	Mean	StDev.	Median	Pearson Correlation	P-Value
<b>Type</b>					0.5262	.037
Student Services Program	0	*	*	*		
Primary	6	2.4	0.548	2.0		
Secondary	9	3.67	1.12	4.0		

A majority of teachers disagreed that Health and Physical Education teachers receive ongoing professional development for nutritional education (Table 3). While those working in both primary and secondary school teachers disagreed, on average, those working in primary schools averaged a lower mean (1.66) than their secondary school counterparts (2.89).

**Table 3.** Health and Physical Education teachers in my school receive ongoing professional development for nutrition education.

	N	Mean	StDev.	Median	Pearson Correlation	P-Value
<b>Type</b>					0.477	.072
Student Services Program	0	*	*	*		
Primary	6	1.67	0.816	1.5		
Secondary	9	2.89	1.36	3.0		

When it comes to collaboration with the school meal program to develop gardens and use the cafeteria as a learning lab, 86% of teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed. The other respondents were neutral.

Primary school teachers also disagreed more than their secondary school counterparts that nutrition education activities are linked with the coordinated school health program. Table 4 shows that those working in primary schools averaged 2.0, while those in secondary schools averaged 3.44.

**Table 4.** In my school, nutrition education activities are linked with the coordinated school health program.

	N	Mean	StDev.	Median	Pearson Correlation	P-Value
<b>Type</b>					0.617	.014
Student Services Program	0	*	*	*		
Primary	6	2.0	1.10	2.0		
Secondary	9	3.44	0.88	3.0		

When respondents were asked about opportunities for after school activity, the type of school, rather than whether or not the school is located in a permanent or temporary facility, appears to have a greater weight on how respondents answers. Table 5 shows that the correlation for the type of school is much stronger (0.644) than the type of facility (0.083). Again, those in primary schools were more likely to disagree that there were opportunities for physical activity after school.

**Table 5.** Adequate opportunity for physical activity is provided to students after school hours.

	N	Mean	StDev.	Median	Pearson Correlation	P-Value
<b>Type</b>					0.644	.010
Student Services Program	0	*	*	*		
Primary	6	2.5	1.23	2.0		
Secondary	9	4.22	0.97	4.0		
<b>Facility</b>					0.083	0.768
Temporary	9	3.44	1.67	4.0		
Permanent	6	3.67	0.816	4.0		

### *Physical Activity*

Physical activity questions yielded a similar mix of answers across many of the questions. Table 6 shows the responses to question in this section.

There also appears to be a correlation between the type of school and whether or not the respondent agreed that Physical Education classes have the same student/teacher ratios used in other classes. However, unlike the correlations above, in this instance secondary level teachers

**Table 6. Physical Education**

<b>Question</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>% of respondents who Disagree</b>	<b>% of respondents who are Neutral or Agree</b>	<b>% N/A</b>
Physical Education classes at my school:				
are taught in all grades	15	26.66	73.33	0
include standards-based, developmentally planned and sequential curriculum	15	6.67	93.33	0
foster the development of movement skills, enhance health related fitness	15	6.67	93.33	0
increase students' knowledge	15	6.67	93.33	0
offer opportunities to learn how to work cooperatively	15	6.67	93.33	0
encourage healthy habits and attitudes for a healthy lifestyle	15	6.67	93.33	0
My school provides instructional physical education for 150 minutes for elementary children and 225 minutes for middle and high school students.	15	26.67	73.33	0
Physical Education Classes have the same student/teacher ratios used in other classes.	15	33.33	66.67	0
The physical education program is provided adequate space and equipment and conforms to all applicable safety standards.	15	46.67	53.33	0
All physical education classes are taught by a certified Physical Education Instructor.	15	6.67	93.33	0
Physical Education staff receives professional development on a yearly basis.	15	13.33	86.67	0
Physical activity opportunities are offered daily during the school day to students.	15	40	60	0
At my school, staff members do not deny participation in recess or other physical activity opportunities as a form of discipline or punishment unless the safety of students is in question.	15	26.66	66.67	6.67
My school provides intramural sports as an option for all students.	15	40	60	0
CREC promotes the use of my school's facilities for physical activity programs offered outside of school hours by community-based organizations.	15	40	60	0

were more likely to disagree than their primary teacher counterparts. Table 7 shows that those at the secondary level had a lower mean score (2.56) than their counterparts at the primary level (4.67). However, it cannot be assessed from this question if Physical Education Classes have a higher or lower ratio than other classes.

**Table 7.** Physical Education Classes have the same student/teacher ratios used in other classes.

	N	Mean	StDev.	Median	Pearson Correlation	P-Value
<b>Type</b>					-0.736	0.002
Student Services Program	0	*	*	*		
Primary	6	4.67	0.516	5.0		
Secondary	9	2.56	1.24	2.0		

A correlation between the type of facility, temporary or permanent, is present for the responses to whether or not the physical education program is provided adequate space and equipment and conforms to safety standards, as demonstrated by Table 8. The median score for those in temporary spaces was 2 (disagree), compared to 3 (neutral) for those in permanent facilities.

**Table 8.** The physical education program is provided adequate space and equipment and conforms to all applicable safety standards.

	N	Mean	StDev.	Median	Pearson Correlation	P-Value
<b>Facility</b>					0.587	0.021
Temporary	9	2.11	0.782	2.0		
Permanent	6	3.33	1.03	3.0		

*Nutrition Guidelines for Foods Available in Schools*

There was little variation in answers among questions related to the school meal program. Table 9 shows the levels agreement or disagreement with the questions of this section. There proved to be no significant correlation between Meal Programs provided by CREC, outsourced to local municipalities, and those outsourced to outside vendors.

**Table 9.** Nutrition Guidelines for Foods Available in Schools

Question	N	% of respondents who Disagree	% of respondents who are Neutral or Agree	% N/A
Students are offered and schools will promote nutritious food choices consistent with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans and My Plate and guidelines circulated by the Connecticut Department of Education.	17	0	94.12	5.88
My school prohibits the sale of foods of minimal nutritional value as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.	17	0	94.12	5.88
All foods sold to students separately from school meals meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards.	17	0	64.71	35.29
My school provides breakfast through the USDA School Breakfast Program.	17	0	88.24	11.76
My school encourages the consumption and choice of nutrient dense food, such as whole grains, fruits, and vegetables.	15	0	93.33	6.67
At my school, students have the opportunity to provide input on school meals, including the suggestion of local, cultural, and ethnic favorites.	17	35.29	47.06	17.65
Students are provided with adequate time to eat lunch with appropriate supervision in the cafeteria.	17	5.88	70.59	23.53
Rules for safe behavior in the cafeteria are consistently enforced.	17	0	76.47	23.53
Professional development in the area of food and nutrition has been regularly provided for food service managers and staff.	17	11.76	70.59	17.65
My school shares and publicizes information about the nutritional content of meals to stakeholders such as, students, parents, and staff.	32	28.13	50	21.88
My school has adopted strategies to increase the appeal of healthy food and beverage items.	17	5.88	82.35	11.76
My school has adopted environmentally-friendly practices such as...				
the use of locally grown and seasonal foods	17	35.29	64.71	0
school gardens	17	88.24	11.76	0
Non-disposable tableware	17	76.47	23.53	0
Foods and beverages served at school celebrations meets the CREC guidelines for healthy food and snacks.	17	5.88	76.47	17.65
My school strongly discourages the use of food/beverages as a reward or punishment.	17	5.88	58.82	35.29
Foods purchased to raise funds meets the State and District Regulations.	17	5.88	52.94	41.18

### Reimbursable School Meals

Similar to the responses to the Nutrition Guidelines section, respondents were largely in agreement for questions regarding Reimbursable School Meals (Table 10). There was strong agreement across multiple questions dealing with the regulation of food in schools. Zero respondents disagreed that CREC was meeting USDA and Connecticut standards for food served in schools and again no respondents disagreed that CREC was encouraging the consumption of healthy foods.

**Table 10.** Reimbursable School Meals

Question	N	% of respondents who Disagree	% of respondents who are Neutral or Agree	% N/A
Reimbursable school meals served meet the nutrition requirements and regulations for the National School Lunch Program.	17	0	82.35	17.65
Sustainable food practices have been adopted at my school.	17	11.76	64.71	23.53
Children who require food assistance are able to obtain it in a non-stigmatizing manner that prevents overt identification of eligibility.	17	5.88	82.35	11.76
The physical setting in which students eat is...				
Safe	17	5.88	94.12	0
Inviting	17	5.88	94.12	0
Overcrowded	16	75	25	0

There were a couple of questions that did show some disagreement. Notably the use of environmentally-friendly received lower scores in total. The practice of using locally grown and seasonal foods scored highest, with only 35.29% in disagreement, while respondents disagree that the practice of using school gardens (88.24%) and non-disposable tableware at (76.47%). This finding appears to be consistent with the response by Physical Education and Health teachers around partnerships with the cafeteria to use school gardens.

Respondents agreed or are neutral that the physical setting in which students eat is both safe (94%) and inviting (94%). They disagreed or strongly disagreed that the physical space in their school is overcrowded (76.5%).

*Health Services*

A majority (88%) of those responding to the School Nurses survey felt their school provides adequate health services to students, while the remaining 12% remained neutral (See Table 11). For mental health services, such as counseling, psychological and social health services, 82% agreed services were adequate. The remaining 18% disagreed; however there does not appear to be any correlation between the type or location of the school.

**Table 11.** Health Services

<b>Question</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>% of respondents who Disagree</b>	<b>% of respondents who are Neutral or Agree</b>	<b>% N/A</b>
My school provides adequate counseling, psychological, and social health services for students.	16	19	81	0
My school provides adequate health services to students	16	0	100	0

*Communication and Stakeholder Involvement*

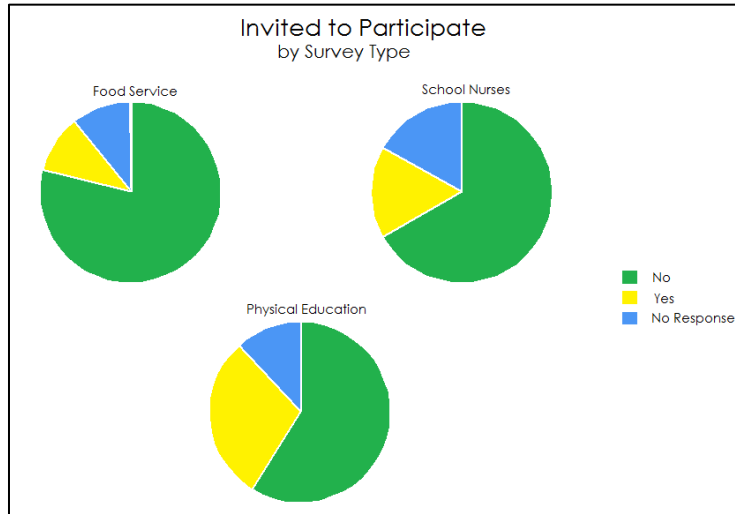
Results for the final section, which was asked of all participants, show mixed views from many stakeholders on issues of communication and involvement with the CREC Wellness Policy (Table 12).

**Table 12.** Communication and Stakeholder Involvement

<b>Question</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>% of respondents who Disagree</b>	<b>% of respondents who are Neutral or Agree</b>	<b>% N/A</b>
The goals of the Wellness Policy have been clearly communicated with:				
Students	47	30	45	26
Parents	46	28	43	28
Staff	46	32	45	21
I have been invited to participate in the implementation, periodic review, and update of the CREC Wellness Policy.	47	79	21	0
If invited, I would participate in a review or update of the CREC Wellness policy.	47	4	53	43
My school effectively communicates with and educates parents and staff on health topics (including Body Mass Index results).	46	20	30	50
My school has an effective School Health Council.	47	36	26	38
My school promotes staff wellness through physical activities and/or other programs designed to benefit staff health.	47	19	26	55

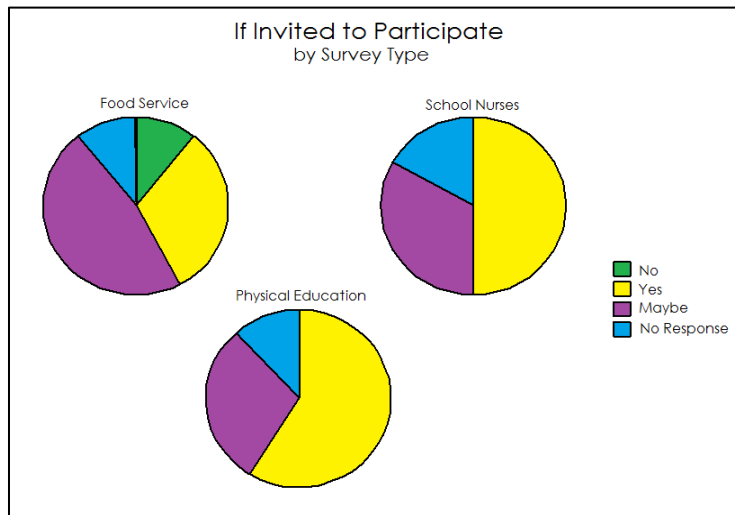
Of those answering the question as to whether or not they had been invited to participate in the periodic review, implementation and update of the CREC Wellness policy, 79% said that they had not been. The number varied by the type of survey taken, with those taking the physical education survey responding that they were invited to participate at a higher percentage than those taking the school nurses survey or those taking the food service survey (See Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Invited to Participate, by Survey Type**



However, when asked if they would participate, the numbers reversed. Over half (53%), indicated that they would participate in a review or update of the wellness policy. Another 43% said that they might participate, with just 4% responding saying they would not. Of the groups of surveys, food service were the least likely to want to participate, while PE teachers were the most likely to respond that they would participate (Figure 2).

**Figure 2. If Invited to Participate, by Survey Type**



Overall, feelings were fairly neutral on the communication of the goals with students, parents and staff (Table 13). Each question had a median score of 3 (neutral), with a mean just slightly below. However if you break it down by the survey taken, the picture changes. Those taking the food service survey were much more positive about communication across the board, with the median score for each rising to 4 (agree). Those taking the physical education survey and those taking the school nurses survey were more likely to disagree that goals had been clearly communicated.

The numbers also changed by the type of school. Those working in a student services program agreed that the goals were communicated clearly for students, parents, and staff than did their counterparts in the magnet schools. However, this could be attributed to the small sample size of respondents from student services programs. In the magnet school program, respondents working in secondary schools were neutral about communication about the goals of the program, while those working in elementary schools disagreed across all three questions.

### *Limitations*

The relatively low sample size for each survey, compounded by a low response rate and low total population at the beginning, is a limitation of this survey. With few crossover questions between the surveys (excluding the communication and stakeholder involvement section), it is unclear whether a clear picture of each school's implementation will emerge. Furthermore, answers on compliance may be inflated due to the self-reporting nature of surveys.

**Table 13.** The goals of the Wellness Policy have been clearly communicated with:

	N	Mean	StDev.	Median	Pearson Correlation	P-Value
Students	35	2.94	1.26	3.0		
Parents	33	2.88	1.14	3.0		
Staff	36	2.97	1.28	3.0		
<b>Students: By Survey Type</b>					-0.538	0.001
Physical Education	13	2.46	1.27	2.0		
Food Service	10	4.2	0.79	4.0		
School Nurses	12	2.42	0.79	2.0		
<b>Parents: By Survey Type</b>					-0.397	0.022
Physical Education	12	2.58	1.24	2.5		
Food Service	9	3.78	0.83	4.0		
School Nurses	12	2.5	0.91	2.5		
<b>Staff: By Survey Type</b>					-0.414	0.012
Physical Education	13	2.62	1.39	2.0		
Food Service	10	4.0	.082	4.0		
School Nurses	13	2.54	1.05	2.0		
<b>Students: By School Type</b>					-0.113	0.517
Student Services	4	4.5	0.58	4.5		
Primary	15	2.33	1.05	2.0		
Secondary	16	3.13	1.20	3.5		
<b>Parents: By School Type</b>					-0.185	0.303
Student Services	4	4.5	0.58	4.5		
Primary	14	2.29	0.99	2.0		
Secondary	15	3.0	0.93	3.0		
<b>Staff: By School Type</b>					-0.121	0.480
Student Services	4	4.5	0.58	4.5		
Primary	16	2.44	1.15	2.0		
Secondary	16	3.13	1.20	3.5		

Additionally, the varying nature of CREC programs, with traditional elementary, secondary, couple with student service programs, may mean that certain questions asked do not apply in certain situations. Also, the CREC magnet schools are currently undergoing a period of great expansion. Ten schools are currently house in temporary locations until

permanent schools can be built, with some having moved locations from year to year. This only adds to the variability of responses.

Finally, as many of the schools are in their infancy, data on student demographics, achievement, finding complete and relevant information by which to compare the different schools and programs. Further analysis should take these factors into account.

## **Analysis**

This study is the first attempt to examine the implementation of CREC's local wellness policy. A review of the results shows that on many points of the CREC Wellness policy, participants indicated that their school complied with the applicable federal, state, or CREC regulation. However, some groups of survey takers had wider variation of agreement and disagreement than others.

Overall there was wide agreement across many of the questions. Respondents overwhelmingly agreed CREC complies with state and federal guidelines for nutrition standards and school meal and physical education.

The greatest source of disagreement came from Physical Education and Health staff members who participated in the survey. Clear differences between Primary and Secondary schools showed in these questions around topics of nutrition and physical education. At this point, with lack of other evidence, it is unclear if other programmatic differences have any effect on this disagreement.

One of the large questions at the beginning of this project revolved around whether or not the differences in the physical setting of the building, either in a temporary or permanent facility, would correlate with the survey responses. However, there were mixed results regarding the correlation of answers with the physical setting of the building. While the site of the building as temporary correlated to a lower assessment of the space provided for physical education, it did not lead to a similar correlation for space provided for student school meal programs.

Finally, responses regarding Communication and Stakeholder Involvement showed disagreement, including across the multiple surveys. Those taking the Physical Education survey were simultaneously more likely to have said they were invited to participate in review of the Wellness Policy and more likely to indicate participation if invited. Those responding to Food Service survey were least likely in each category.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the analysis presented above, the following recommendations are recommended for consideration by the CREC Wellness Committee and Executive Director.

### ***Recommendation #1***

*Consider implementing the recommended policy language developed by the CREC Wellness Committee which includes stronger and more specific goals.*

While the policy revised in March of 2010 is broad enough to cover the requirements of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, a considerable amount of work has been done behind the scenes to ensure compliance with the statutory obligations. Trying to understand the various aspects of the policy, with multiple documents all stating goals, was a challenge during the research process of this paper. Publishing a new policy with clearer language will help stakeholders to understand and comply with the policy. This time also would allow for the Committee to perform outreach to stakeholders.

Possible actions:

- Adopt the language proposed by the CREC Wellness Committee.
- Make regulations behind the current policy more available to stakeholders.

***Recommendation #2***

*Increase outreach to and encourage collaboration between stakeholders.*

CREC should consider ways to increase communication and stakeholder involvement in the revision, implementation and monitoring of the Wellness Policy. The research findings above found that a majority of stakeholders have not, or claim to have not, been invited to participate in the ongoing revision, implementation, and monitoring of the Wellness Policy. Furthermore, the Wellness Policy is only available to CREC employees who can access the CREC intranet.

While this survey was conducted with stakeholder interests in mind, it only takes a look at the opinions of CREC employed staff or vendors. The Wellness Policy stakeholders include

those who do not work for CREC, like students, parents, and community based organizations. Research found that only 40% of respondents indicated that they disagree that physical education spaces are used for community based organizations. CREC needs to do a better job engaging the greater community on issues of Wellness.

Possible actions:

- Publish a link to the Wellness Policy on each school's website.
- Invite stakeholders to participate in a review of the Wellness Policy.
- Do an outreach campaign to students, parents, and community organizations on the greater topic of wellness.

***Recommendation #3***

*Review and revise Physical Education and Health curriculum and policies with teachers across grade levels.*

The greatest source of disagreement in this study came from physical education and health teachers responding on areas of nutrition and physical education. The disagreement is correlated to the primary and secondary school teachers for many questions. As this study does not examine the causes of any disagreement, the topic of physical and nutritional education in primary and secondary schools should be examined further by CREC supervisory staff.

While CREC is in a period of expansion, with many of its schools currently in a temporary facility, the magnet schools should continue to be conscious of difficulties temporary facilities can have on wellness. This report noted some correlation between the different

locations of facilities, temporary or permanent, and some issues, such as however this will continue to be a source of variation until all schools are in their permanent sites.

Possible actions:

- Designate a professional development day to ensure PE teachers are educated about the expectations and goals of the Wellness Policy
- Encourage teachers to identify places where their school or program is not meeting the goals of the Policy.
- Whenever possible, review CREC policies around selecting and building temporary facilities to ensure consistency between schools.

***Recommendation #4***

*Food Service Programs should look for ways to increase sustainable and environmentally-friendly practices.*

The study found that all an overwhelming majority of respondents reported compliance with the regulations and statutes on the nutritional value of food sold in schools. Additionally, the CREC Policy focuses primarily on compliance with the applicable federal and state regulations.

However, the study also found that the adoption of sustainable and environmentally friendly practices varied between schools. For a majority of respondents, they disagreed that non-disposable tableware and the development of school gardens are used in their school. The survey of Physical Education teachers also found that respondents disagree that any collaboration between food service programs and the health curriculum exists.

Possible actions:

- Adopt consistent language around environmentally friendly and sustainable practices for all contracts between CREC and food service providers.
- Find ways to promote and encourage collaboration and best-practice sharing between providers of food service in the Capitol Region.
- Pilot a program at a couple schools to develop a unit of curriculum where food service providers and health education staff collectively deliver content.

***Recommendation #5***

*Develop a mechanism to ensure that an annual review of compliance with the Wellness Policy is completed.*

While this paper is a first review of the CREC Wellness Policy on record, it should be the first step, not the last. Currently, there is no mechanism or procedure to ensure that annual reports will follow.

Further studies should go beyond the limitations of this survey. Although this paper takes an approach based at the school level, one major limitation for CREC in trying to move forward is that the data presented are aggregated, and do not examine individual school practices. Furthermore, outcome based data such as Body Mass Index results, which require multiple years of information to demonstrate progress, will be available for a greater number of schools in upcoming years. These data will be key to understanding how the CREC Wellness Policy is affecting student well-being.

Finally, with a growing, complex network of schools and programs, variation with compliance is inevitable if schools are not closely monitored. CREC needs to utilize its internal resources as well as its school communities, to put a formal process for review in place.

Possible actions:

- Designate a specific person or division to lead the annual review of the wellness policy.
- Invite volunteers to help with the process and review.

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## Appendix A – CREC’s 2006 Student Wellness Policy

### **Instruction**

#### **Student Nutrition and Physical Activity (Student Wellness Policy)**

The Capitol Region Education Council recognizes that student wellness and proper nutrition are related to physical well-being, growth, development and readiness to learn. CREC is committed to providing a learning environment that promotes student wellness, proper nutrition, nutrition education, and regular physical activity as part of the total educational experience. In a healthy school environment, students will be exposed to, and participate in, positive nutritional and lifestyle practices that can improve student achievement.

To foster the healthy development of students, CREC will ensure that all schools and programs provide:

- A comprehensive nutrition program consistent with federal and state regulations.
- Access, at reasonable cost, to foods and beverages that meet established nutritional guidelines.
- Physical education courses and opportunities for developmentally appropriate physical activity during the school day consistent with federal and state requirements.
- Curriculum, programs and activities for grades Pre K-12 that are designed to educate and promote proper nutrition and lifelong physical activity in compliance with state requirements.

In addition, CREC will develop and implement methods of communicating with, and educating, parents and staff regarding this initiative.

A Wellness Committee comprised of a variety of members (following state mandates) will be established to develop, and guide the implementation of, procedures consistent with established policy.

An annual review and assessment of implementation and effectiveness of said policy and corresponding procedures shall be completed by the Wellness Committee and forwarded to the Executive Director or designee for his/her review. The Executive Director shall be responsible for ensuring compliance with said policy and procedures.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

PA 04-224 An Act Concerning Childhood Nutrition in Schools,  
Recess and Lunch Breaks

PL 108-265 The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of  
2004

USDA Regulations

Policy approved: June 20, 2006

## Appendix B – CREC’s 2010 Student Wellness Policy Revision

6142.10 (a)

### **Instruction**

#### **Student Nutrition and Physical Activity (Student Wellness Policy)**

The Capitol Region Education Council recognizes that student wellness and proper nutrition are related to physical well-being, growth, development and readiness to learn. CREC is committed to providing a learning environment that promotes student wellness, proper nutrition, nutrition education, and regular physical activity as part of the total educational experience. In a healthy school environment, students will be exposed to, and participate in, positive nutritional and lifestyle practices that can improve student achievement.

#### **Goals for Nutrition Education**

The goals for addressing nutrition education 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 CREC’s comprehensive school health education curriculum and will be integrated into other classroom content areas, as appropriate.

#### **Goals for Physical Education and Activity**

The goals for addressing physical education and activity include the following:

- Schools will support and promote an active lifestyle for students.
- Physical education will be taught in all grades and shall include a standards-based, developmentally planned and sequential curriculum that 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.
- Unless otherwise exempted, all students will be required to engage in CREC’s physical education program.

#### **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 Pyramid, 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 CREC's nonprofit food service in compliance with the Child Nutrition Act. CREC 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.

### **Reimbursable School Meals**

Reimbursable school meals served shall meet, at a minimum, the nutrition requirements and regulations for the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program.

### **Community Input**

CREC will develop and implement methods of communicating with, and educating, parents and staff regarding this initiative.

A Wellness Committee comprised of a variety of members (following state mandates) will be established to develop, and guide the implementation of, procedures consistent with established policy.

### **Monitoring**

An annual review and assessment of implementation and effectiveness of said policy and corresponding procedures shall be completed by the Wellness Committee and forwarded to the Executive Director or designee for his/her review. The Executive Director shall be responsible for ensuring compliance with said policy and procedures.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

PA 04-224 An Act Concerning Childhood Nutrition in Schools,

Recess and Lunch Breaks

PL 108-265 The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of

2004

USDA Regulations

Policy Adopted: March 31, 2006

CAPITOL REGION EDUCATION COUNCIL

Policy Revised: March 17, 2010

Hartford, Connecticut

## Appendix C – CREC Committee Evaluation of Policy Language 2012

	Old Requirements	New Requirements	CREC Policy Current Language <span style="color: red;">Proposed CREC Policy Language</span>
<b>Overview</b>	Directs local educational agencies (LEAs) to have in place a LWP for each school under its jurisdiction.	Strengthens LWPs and adds rules for public input, transparency, and implementation.	The Capitol Region Education Council recognizes that student wellness and proper nutrition are related to physical well-being, growth, development and readiness to learn. CREC is committed to providing a learning environment that promotes student wellness, proper nutrition, nutrition education and a regular physical activity as part of the total educational experience. In a health school environment, students will be exposed to, and participate in positive nutrition and lifestyle practices that can improve student achievement.
<b>Elements of the Local School Wellness Policy</b>	LWP to include, at a minimum, goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities to promote student wellness, as well as nutrition guidelines for all foods available on school campus	In addition to the 2004 requirements, the LWP is also to include goals for nutrition promotion.	<p><b>Goals for Nutrition Education</b></p> <p><b>The goals for addressing nutrition education include the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools will support and promote good nutrition for students consistent with applicable federal and state requirements and guidelines.</li> <li>• Schools will foster the positive relationship between good nutrition, physical activity and the capacity of student to develop and learn.</li> <li>• Nutrition topics shall be integrated within the comprehensive health education curriculum and will be integrated into other classroom content areas, as appropriate.</li> </ul> <p style="color: red;">The primary goal of nutrition education, which may be defined as “any set of learning experiences designed to facilitate the voluntary adoption of eating and other nutrition-related behaviors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools will support and promote good nutrition for students consistent with applicable federal and state requirements and guidelines.</li> <li>• Schools will foster the positive relationship between good nutrition, physical activity and the capacity of student to develop and learn.</li> <li>• Nutrition topics shall be integrated within the comprehensive health education curriculum and taught at every grade level (k-12).</li> <li>• The nutrition education program shall work with the school meal</li> </ul>

			<p>program to develop school gardens and use the cafeteria as a learning lab.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ongoing professional development for teachers teaching nutrition.</li><li>• Schools will link nutrition education activities with the coordinated school health program.</li><li>• Nutrition education will incorporate lessons helping children acquire skills for reading food labels and menu planning.</li><li>• Staff will be encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity as a valuable part of daily life.</li><li>• Nutritional education will be provided to parents in the form of handouts, the school website, and information provided in district or school newsletters, presentations that focus on nutrition and health lifestyles and through any other appropriate means available to reach parents.</li><li>• Schools shall label/mark healthy food items available so students know which items are healthy.</li><li>• Education materials shall be free of brands and illustration or unhealthful food.</li><li>• The Nutrition and Physical Activity Advisory Council shall include (stakeholders) and shall meet a minimum of two times annually to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the policy.</li></ul> <p><b>Goals for Physical Education and Activity</b></p> <p><b>The goals for addressing physical education and activity include the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Schools will support and promote an active lifestyle for students</b></li><li>• <b>Physical education will be taught in all grades and shall include standards-based, developmentally planned and sequential curriculum that 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.</b></li><li>• <b>Unless otherwise exempted, all students will be required to engage in CREC's physical education program.</b></li></ul>
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			<p>The goals for addressing physical education and activity include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The physical education Committee will submit for approval a K-12 comprehensive curriculum/program.</li> <li>• Physical education will be taught in all grades and shall include standards-based, developmentally planned and sequential curriculum that 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.</li> <li>• CREC will follow NASPE standards when scheduling physical education classes for all students.</li> <li>• Physical Education Classes will have the same student/teacher ratios used in other classes</li> <li>• The physical education program shall be provided adequate space and equipment and conform to all applicable safety standards</li> <li>• The physical education classes will be taught by a certified Physical Education Instructor and shall ensure that all staff receives professional development on a yearly basis</li> <li>• Physical Activity opportunities shall be offered daily during the school day.</li> <li>• Staff members shall not deny participation in recess or other physical activity opportunities as a form of discipline or punishment unless the safety of students is in question.</li> <li>• Participation in intramural sports shall be an option for all students</li> <li>• The district is encouraged to promote the use of school facilities outside of school hours for physical activity programs offered by community-based organizations.</li> <li>• All elementary school students shall have daily recess</li> </ul> <p><b>Nutrition Guidelines for Foods Available in Schools</b></p> <p><b>Students will be offered and schools will promote nutritious food choices consistent with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans</b></p>
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			<p><b>and My Pyramid, 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 CREC's nonprofit food service in compliance with the Child Nutrition Act. CREC 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.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 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.</li><li>• 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 CREC's nonprofit food service in compliance with the Child Nutrition Act.</li><li>• CREC 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.</li><li>• Nutritional value of foods and beverages that should or should not be made available to students; standards for nutrient levels for food or beverages; times those items may be made available. All beverages sold or served to students on school premises will be healthy choices that meet the requirements of state statute.</li><li>• All schools will provide breakfast through the USDA School Breakfast Program</li></ul>
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage the consumption and choice of nutrient-dense food, such as whole grains, fruits, and vegetables</li> <li>• Students will have the opportunity to provide input on local, cultural, and ethnic favorites</li> <li>• Students will be provided with adequate time to eat lunch with appropriate supervision in the cafeteria and rules for safe behavior shall be consistently enforced</li> <li>• The district shall ensure that professional development in the area of food and nutrition is provided for food service managers and staff.</li> <li>• The district shall share and publicize information about the nutritional content of meals with students and parents</li> <li>• Nutrition guidelines that require the use of products that are high in fiber, low in added fats, sugar, and sodium and served in appropriate portion sizes, consistent with USDA standards shall be established for all foods offered by the district’s nutrition services department or contract vendors.</li> <li>• Foods and beverages served at school celebrations must meet the District’s Nutritional Standards</li> <li>• CREC strongly discourages the use of food/beverages as a reward or punishment.</li> <li>• Foods purchased to raise funds must also meet the District’s Nutrition Standard and (what other agencies)</li> </ul> <p><b>Reimbursable School Meals</b></p> <p><b>Reimbursable school meals served shall meet, at a minimum, the nutrition requirements and regulations for the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reimbursable school meals served shall meet, at a minimum, the nutrition requirements and regulations for the National School Lunch Program and/or Other school-based activities designed to promote student wellness</li> <li>• Sustainable food practices</li> <li>• Access to facilities for physical activity after school hours</li> <li>• After-school programs</li> </ul>
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools will link nutrition education activities with the Coordinated School Health Program.</li> </ul>
Stakeholder Involvement	LEAs are required to involve parents, students, and representatives of the school food authority, the school board, school administrators and the public in the development of LWP.	In addition to the 2004 requirements, LEAs are now required to permit teachers of physical education and school health professionals to participate in the development of LWP.	<p><b>No Existing Language</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CREC will establish a team of parents, students, food service personnel, school administrations and Board representation to develop the CREC Local Wellness Policy.</li> <li>CREC Teachers of Physical Education and School health Professionals will participate in the development of the CREC Wellness Policy.</li> </ul>
Stakeholder Participation	The stakeholders named above are required to participate in the development of the LWP.	In addition to the 2004 requirements, LEAs are now required to permit all stakeholders named above and in 2004 to participate in the implementation and periodic review and update of LWP.	<p><b>No Existing Language</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All above named stakeholders will participate in the implementation and periodic review and update of the CREC Local Wellness Policy.</li> </ul>
Local Discretion	LEAs can determine the specific policies appropriate for the schools under their jurisdiction, provided that	Same as 2004 Requirement	<b>No Existing Language</b>

	those policies include all required elements specified in the Act.		
<b>Public Notification</b>	None.	LEAs are required to inform and update the public (including parents, students, and others in the community) about the content and implementation of the LWP.	<p><b>Community Input</b></p> <p>CREC will develop and implement methods of communicating with, and educating, parents and staff regarding this initiative.</p> <p>A Wellness Committee comprised of a variety of members (following state mandates) will be established to develop, and guide the implementation of, procedures consistent with established policy.</p> <p><b>Community and Family Involvement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CREC will develop and implement methods of communicating with, and educating, parents and staff on health or nutrition topics (including body mass index results.)</li> <li>• School Health Councils</li> <li>• A Wellness Committee comprised of a variety of members (following federal and state mandates) will be established to develop, and guide the implementation of, procedures consistent with established policy.</li> <li>• Staff Wellness</li> <li>• physical activities and /or nutrition serves or programs designed to benefit staff health</li> <li>• Educational Links with schools</li> <li>• Counseling, psychological, and social health services</li> <li>• Health Services</li> <li>• CREC Teachers of Physical Education and School Health Professionals will participate in the development of the CREC Local Wellness Plan</li> </ul>
<b>Measuring Implementation</b>	LEAs are required to establish a plan for measuring implementation of the LWP.	LEAs are required to measure periodically and make available to the public an assessment on the	<p><b>Monitoring</b></p> <p><b>An annual review and assessment of implementation and effectiveness of said policy and corresponding procedures shall be completed by the Wellness Committee and forwarded to the Executive Director or designee for his/her review. The Executive Director shall be responsible</b></p>

		implementation of LWP, including the extent to which schools are in compliance with LWP, the extent to which the LWP compares to model LWP, and to describe the progress made in attaining goals of LWP.	<p><b>for ensuring compliance with said policy and procedures.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An annual review and assessment of implementation and effectiveness of said policy and corresponding procedures shall be completed by the Wellness Committee and forwarded to the Executive Director or designee for his/her review. The Executive Director shall be responsible for ensuring compliance with said policy and procedures.</li> <li>• The Advisory Council shall meet at least annually to review nutrition and physical activity policies evidence on student health impact, and effective program and program elements.</li> </ul>
Local Designation		LEAs are required to designate one or more LEA officials or school officials, as appropriate, to ensure that each school complies with the LWP.	<b>No Existing Language</b>

Add to Legal Reference

School Wellness Policy Evaluation Tool - Robert Wood Johnson, Healthy Eating Research Program Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act 2010

Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Coordinated School Health Leadership Project

Action for Healthy Kids

## Appendix D – Surveys

# Consent form to Participate in Research Study

Researcher(s): Brian Greenleaf

Study Title: Evaluating the Implementation of the CREC Wellness Policy

## 1. WHAT IS THIS FORM?

This consent form will give you the information you will need to understand why this study is being done and why you are being invited to participate. It will also describe what you will need to do to participate and any known risks, inconveniences or discomforts that you may have while participating. We encourage you to take some time to think this over and ask questions now and at any other time. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form and you will be given a copy for your records.

## 2. WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE?

Members of the CREC Community involved in health, nutrition and physical education are eligible to participate in this study.

## 3. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

As part of the CREC Wellness Policy, an annual review and assessment of said policy is required. This study will seek to determine how well the policy has been implemented after its revision in 2010 and the effectiveness of the policy in promoting healthy students and staff.

4. WHERE WILL THE STUDY TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?

This study will be conducted using a web-based survey platform, which can be accessed at your convenience. It will require one-session, which will take about a half an hour. Once the survey is completed, you will not be contacted in the future.

5. WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO?

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to answer questions regarding the implementation of the CREC Wellness Policy. Questions will ask your opinion, as a stakeholder, about implementation of the Wellness Policy adopted in March 2010.

Please to try to answer all of the questions contained within. If you do not know or if the question is not relevant to your school/program select the "N/A" option. Additionally, you may skip any question you feel uncomfortable answering.

6. WHAT ARE MY BENEFITS OF BEING IN THIS STUDY?

You may not directly benefit from this research; however, we hope that your participation in the study may provide insight into how CREC can more effectively implement its current policy or revise it to increase student and staff wellness.

7. WHAT ARE MY RISKS OF BEING IN THIS STUDY?

We believe there are no known risks associated with this research study; however, a possible inconvenience may be the time it takes to complete the study.

8. HOW WILL MY PERSONAL INFORMATION BE PROTECTED?

Any personal information collected as a part of this survey is confidential and will not be used for any purpose other than data collection and response tracking. Only the UMass researcher will have access to the survey responses and any information provided within will be made anonymous before analysis.

10. WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

Take as long as you like before you make a decision. We will be happy to answer any question you have about this study. If you have further questions about this project or if you have a research-related problem, you may contact the researcher, Brian Greenleaf at bgreenle@pubpol.umass.edu or at (978) 835-3421. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research subject, you may contact the University of Massachusetts Amherst Human Research Protection Office (HRPO) at (413) 545-3428 or humansubjects@ora.umass.edu."]

11. CAN I STOP BEING IN THE STUDY?

You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to. If you agree to be in the study, but later change your mind, you may drop out at any time. There are no penalties or consequences of any kind if you decide that you do not want to participate.

12. WHAT IF I AM INJURED?

The University of Massachusetts does not have a program for compensating subjects for injury or complications related to human subjects research, but the study personnel will assist you in getting treatment.

13. SUBJECT STATEMENT OF VOLUNTARY CONSENT

When signing this form I am agreeing to voluntarily enter this study. I have had a chance to read this consent form, and it was explained to me in a language which I use and understand. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have received satisfactory answers. I understand that I can withdraw at any time. Please print a copy of this signed Informed Consent form for your records.

**\*1. I have read the consent form above and agree to proceed with the study.**

Yes

**\*2. Initials**

**\*3. Date**

## Identifying Information

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**4. What is your first name?**

**5. What is your last name?**

**6. What is the job title for your current position?**

**7. At which school(s) do you work?**

**8. How many years have you worked for CREC or participated in providing meals for CREC Schools/Programs?**

**9. How many years have you worked in your current location?**





## Reimbursable School Meals

This section will ask questions about the school meal program at your school, including reimbursable school meals.

The CREC Wellness Policy States: reimbursable school meals served shall meet, at a minimum, the nutrition requirements and regulations for the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program.

Please answer the all of the questions in this section. If the answer does not apply or you do not know, please select "N/A".

### 25. Reimbursable school meals served meet the nutrition requirements and regulations for the National School Lunch Program.

Yes	No	Do Not Know	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### 26. Sustainable food practices have been adopted at my school.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### 27. Children who require food assistance are able to obtain it in a non-stigmatizing manner that prevents overt identification of eligibility.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### 28. The physical setting in which students eat is...

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Safe	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inviting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overcrowded	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



# Consent Form to Participate in Research Study

Researcher(s): Brian Greenleaf

Study Title: Evaluating the Implementation of the CREC Wellness Policy

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**9. How many years have you worked in your current location?**







**28. Physical Education staff receives professional development on a yearly basis.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly Agree      N/A

**29. Physical activity opportunities are offered daily during the school day to students.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly Agree      N/A

**30. At my school, staff members do not deny participation in recess or other physical activity opportunities as a form of discipline or punishment unless the safety of students is in question.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly Agree      N/A

**31. My school provides intramural sports as an option for all students.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly Agree      N/A

**32. CREC promotes the use of my school's facilities for physical activity programs offered outside of school hours by community-based organizations.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly Agree      N/A

**33. In a typical week, how many hours are your school's athletic and physical activity facilities used by community based organizations outside of the school day?**

**34. If an elementary school, all students have daily recess.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly Agree      N/A



## Appendix E – School Information

<b>School Name</b>	<b>Primary/Secondary/ Student Services</b>	<b>Facility Type</b>	<b>Food Preparer (Vendor, Town, CREC)</b>
Discovery Academy	Primary	Temp	CREC
Glastonbury-East Hartford Elementary Magnet School	Primary	Perm	Town
Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts Elementary Magnet School	Primary	Temp	Town
International Magnet School for Global Citizenship	Primary	Temp	CREC
Montessori Magnet School	Primary	Perm	Town
Museum Academy	Primary	Temp	Town
Reggio Magnet School of the Arts	Primary	Temp	Town
University of Hartford Magnet School	Primary	Perm	Vendor
Academy of Aerospace & Engineering	Secondary	Temp	Town
Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts	Secondary	Perm	Vendor
Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts Magnet Middle School	Secondary	Temp	Vendor
Medical Professions and Teacher Preparation Academy	Secondary	Temp	Town
Metropolitan Learning Center	Secondary	Perm	Town
Public Safety Academy	Secondary	Temp	Town
Two Rivers Magnet High School	Secondary	Temp	Vendor
Two Rivers Magnet Middle School	Secondary	Perm	Town
Farmington Valley Diagnostic Center	Student Services	Perm	Town
River Street School	Student Services	Perm	N/A
Polaris Center	Student Services	Perm	CREC
SoundBridge	Student Services	Perm	Town

## Appendix F – Coverage of Schools by Survey

School	PE Survey	Food Service Survey	Nurses Survey
Discovery Academy	X		
Glastonbury-East Hartford Elementary Magnet School		X	X
Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts Elementary Magnet School	X	X	X
International Magnet School for Global Citizenship		X	
Montessori Magnet School		X	X
Museum Academy		X	X
Reggio Magnet School of the Arts	X	X	X
University of Hartford Magnet School	X	X	X
Academy of Aerospace & Engineering	X	X	X
Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts		X	X
Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts Magnet Middle School			X
Medical Professions and Teacher Preparation Academy	X	X	X
Metropolitan Learning Center	X	X	X
Public Safety Academy	X	X	X
Two Rivers Magnet High School	X		X
Two Rivers Magnet Middle School	X	X	X
Farmington Valley Diagnostic Center		X	
River Street School			X
Polaris Center		X	X
Soundbridge			