

SCHOOL WELLNESS

PREAMBLE

The Rapides Parish School District recognizes that schools play a vital role in promoting student health, preventing childhood obesity, and combating problems associated with poor nutrition and physical inactivity. The District shall promote a healthy school environment by emphasizing student wellness, good nutrition, regular physical activity, and mental health wellness, and making these tenets an integral part of the total learning environment.

This policy outlines the District's approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day, while minimizing commercial distractions. Specifically, this policy establishes goals and procedures to ensure that:

- Students in the District have access to healthy foods at designated times throughout the school day both through reimbursable school meals and other foods available throughout the school campus in accordance with federal and state nutrition standards;
- Students receive quality nutrition education that helps them develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors;
- Students have opportunities to be physically active before, during, and after school;
- Schools engage in nutrition and physical activity promotion and other activities that promote student wellness;
- School staff are encouraged and supported to practice healthy nutrition and physical activity behaviors in and out of school;
- The community is engaged in supporting the work of the District in creating continuity between school and other settings for students and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits; and
- The District establishes and maintains an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about, and monitoring of the policy and its established goals and objectives. This policy applies to all students, staff, and schools in the District.

COMMITTEE ROLE AND MEMBERSHIP

The District shall convene a representative School Health Advisory Council that meets each semester to establish goals for and oversee school health and safety policies and programs, including development, implementation and periodic review and update of

the district-level Wellness Policy.

The District membership will, to the extent possible, represent all school levels (elementary and secondary schools) and include, but not be limited to: parents and caregivers; representatives of the school nutrition program; physical education teachers; health education teachers; school health professionals, school administrators (ex., superintendent, principal, vice principal), school board members; health professionals and the general public. To the extent possible, the District will include representatives from each school building and reflect the diversity of the community.

LEADERSHIP

The Superintendent or designee(s) shall convene the District's School Health Advisory Council and facilitate development of and update the School Wellness Policy and will ensure each school's compliance with the policy.

Each school will designate a School Wellness Policy coordinator, who will ensure compliance with the policy.

WELLNESS POLICY IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING, ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Implementation Plan

The District shall develop and maintain a plan for implementation to manage and coordinate the execution of the School Wellness Policy. The plan delineates roles, responsibilities, actions and timelines specific to each school; and includes information about who will be responsible to make what changes, by how much, where and when, as well as specific goals and objectives for nutrition standards for all foods and beverages available on school campuses, food and beverage marketing, nutrition promotion, education, physical activity, physical education and other school-based activities that promote student wellness. It is recommended that each school use the Healthy School Program online tools to complete a school-level assessment based on the *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's School Health Index*, create an action plan that fosters implementation and generate an annual progress report.

School Wellness Policy and the progress reports may be found at www.rpsb.us.

Recordkeeping

The District shall retain records to document compliance with the requirements of the *School Wellness* policy at the Rapides Parish School Board Food and Nutrition Department. Documentation maintained in this location will include but will not be limited to:

- The written *School Wellness* policy;
- Documentation demonstrating that the policy has been made available to the public;

- Documentation of efforts to review and update the local *School Wellness* policy; including an indication of who is involved in the update and methods the District uses to make stakeholders aware of their ability to participate;
- Documentation to demonstrate compliance with the annual public notification requirements;
- The most recent assessment on implementation of the local *School Wellness* policy;
- Documentation demonstrating the most recent assessment on the implementation of the *School Wellness* policy has been made available to the public.

Annual Progress Reports

The District will compile and disseminate an annual report to share basic information about the *School Wellness* policy and report on the progress of the schools within the District in meeting wellness goals. This annual report will be published around the same time each year and will include information from each school within the District. This report will include, but is not limited to:

- The website address for the *School Wellness* policy and/or how the public can receive/access a copy of the *School Wellness* policy;
- A description of each school's progress in meeting the *School Wellness* policy goals;
- A summary of each school's events or activities related to *School Wellness* policy implementation;
- Information on how individuals and the public can get involved with the School Health Advisory Council.

The District shall make this information available via District websites and/or district wide communication.

Triennial Progress Assessments

At least once every three (3) years, the District shall evaluate compliance with the *School Wellness* policy to assess the implementation of the policy. The *School Wellness* policy shall be assessed and updated as indicated at least every three (3) years, following the triennial assessment.

Revisions and Updating the Policy

The District will update or modify the *School Wellness* policy based on the results of the annual progress reports and triennial assessments, and/or as District priorities change; community needs change; wellness goals are met; new health science information, and technology emerges; and new federal or state guidance or standards are issued. The *School Wellness* policy will be assessed and updated as indicated at least every three

(3) years, following the triennial assessment.

Community Involvement, Outreach, and Communications

The District is committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of the *School Wellness* policy. The District will actively communicate ways in which representatives and others can participate in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the *School Wellness* policy through a variety of means appropriate for the District. The District will also inform parents of the improvements that have been made to school meals and compliance with school meal standards, availability of child nutrition programs and how to apply, and a description of and compliance with *Smart Snacks in School* nutrition standards. The District will use electronic mechanisms, such as email or displaying notices on the District's website, as well as non-electronic mechanisms, such as newsletters, presentations to parents, or sending information home to parents, to ensure that all families are actively notified of the content of, implementation of, and updates to the *School Wellness* policy, as well as how to get involved and support the policy. The District will ensure that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community, and accomplished through means similar to other ways that the District and individual schools are communicating other important school information with parents.

The District will actively notify the public about the content of or any updates to the *School Wellness* policy annually, at a minimum. The District will also use these mechanisms to inform the community about the availability of the annual and triennial reports.

NUTRITION

School Meals

The Rapides Parish School District is committed to serving healthy meals to children, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat milk; moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and have zero grams trans-fat per serving (nutrition label or manufacturer's specification); and to meeting the nutrition needs of school children within their calorie requirements. The school meal programs aim to improve the diet and health of school children, help mitigate childhood obesity, model healthy eating to support the development of lifelong healthy eating patterns, and support healthy choices while accommodating cultural food preferences and special dietary needs.

All schools within the District participate in United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and the After School Snack Program. All schools within the District are committed to offering school meals through the NSLP and SBP programs, and other applicable federal child nutrition programs, that:

- Are accessible to all students;

- Are appealing and attractive to children;
- Are served in clean and pleasant settings;
- Meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations. (The District offers reimbursable school meals that meet USDA nutrition standards.)
- Promote healthy food and beverage choices using the Smarter Lunchroom techniques:
 - Menus will be posted on the District website and nutrient content and ingredients will be available at each school.
 - Menus will be created/reviewed by a Registered Dietitian or other certified nutrition professional.
 - The District child nutrition program will accommodate students with special dietary needs. Students must have a diet prescription from a licensed physician, with a detailed explanation of the students' restriction(s)
 - Students will be allowed at least ten (10) minutes to eat breakfast and at least twenty (20) minutes to eat lunch.
 - There must be three (3) hours between the beginning of breakfast and the beginning of lunch.
 - Students are served lunch at a reasonable and appropriate time of day.
 - Participation in federal child nutrition programs will be promoted among students and families to help ensure that families know what programs are available in their children's school.

Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

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

Water

To promote hydration, free, safe, unflavored drinking water will be available to all students throughout the school day and throughout every school campus (In accordance with 7 CFR 210.11 for purposes of this policy, school day shall be defined as beginning at midnight until thirty (30) minutes after the official school day ends and school campus shall be defined as all areas of the property under the jurisdiction of the school that are accessible to students the school day). The District will make drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes.

Competitive Foods and Beverages

The District is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages available to students on the school campus during the school day support healthy eating. The foods and beverages sold and served outside of the school meal programs (e.g., “competitive” foods and beverages) will meet the Louisiana Smart Snacks nutrition standards. Louisiana Smart Snacks aim to improve student health and well-being, increase consumption of healthful foods during the school day, and create an environment that reinforces the development of healthy eating habits. A summary of the standards and information are available at: <http://www.louisianafitkids.com>. The Alliance for a Healthier Generation provides a set of tools to assist with implementation of Smart Snacks available at: www.healthiergeneration.org/smartsnacks.

To support healthy food choices and improve student health and well-being, all foods and beverages outside the reimbursable school meal programs that are sold to students on the school campus during the school day will meet or exceed the Louisiana Smart Snacks nutrition standards. These standards will apply in all locations and through all services where foods and beverages are sold, which may include, but are not limited to, a la carte options in cafeterias, vending machines, school stores, and snack or food carts and fundraisers.

Schools shall not do anything that will be in competition with the school breakfast and lunch programs.

Celebrations and Rewards

All foods offered on the school campus are encouraged to meet or exceed the Louisiana Smart Snacks standards, including through:

1. Celebrations and parties. The District will provide a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers, including non-food celebration ideas. Healthy party ideas are available from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation and from the USDA.
2. Classroom snacks brought by parents. The District will provide to parents a list of foods and beverages that meet Smart Snacks nutrition standards.
3. Rewards and incentives. The District will provide teachers and other relevant school staff a list of alternative ways to reward children. Foods and beverages will not be used as a reward, or withheld as punishment for any reason, such as for performance or behavior.

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. Students and staff will receive consistent nutrition messages throughout schools, classrooms, gymnasiums, and cafeterias. 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-channel approach by school staff and teachers, parents, students, and the community.

The District will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students throughout the school campus, as well as encourage participation in school meal programs.

Nutrition Education

The District aims to teach, model, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Schools will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- Is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
- Is part of not only health education classes, but also integrated into other classroom instruction through subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects;
- Includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, and participatory activities, such as cooking demonstrations or lessons, promotions, taste-testing, farm visits, and school gardens;
- Promotes fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, and healthy food preparation methods;
- Emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (promotes physical activity/exercise);
- Links with school meal programs, cafeteria nutrition promotion activities, school gardens, Farm to School programs, other school foods, and nutrition-related community services.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Children and adolescents should participate in sixty (60) minutes of physical activity every day. A substantial percentage of students' physical activity can be provided through a comprehensive, school-based physical activity program (CSPAP). A CSPAP reflects strong coordination and synergy across all of the components: quality physical education as the foundation; physical activity before, during and after school; staff, family and community involvement. Schools will ensure that these varied physical

activity opportunities are in addition to, and not as a substitute for physical education.

To the extent practicable, the District will ensure that its grounds and facilities are safe and that equipment is available to students to be active. The District will conduct necessary inspections and repairs.

Physical Education

The District will provide students with physical education, using an age-appropriate, sequential physical education curriculum consistent with national and state standards for physical education. The physical education curriculum will promote the benefits of a physically active lifestyle and will help students develop skills to engage in lifelong healthy habits.

All K-8 elementary students in each grade shall receive physical education for at least 150 minutes per week throughout the school year. All secondary students (middle and high school) are required to take the equivalent of 1.5 academic years of physical education.

The District physical education program shall promote student physical fitness through individualized fitness and activity assessments (via the Presidential Youth Fitness Program or other appropriate assessments tool) and will use criterion-based reporting for each student.

Essential Physical Activity Topics in Health Education

All high school students are to take and pass at least one health education course. The District will include in the health education curriculum a minimum of twelve (12) of the following essential topics on physical activity:

- The physical, psychological, or social benefits of physical activity
- How physical activity can contribute to a healthy weight
- How physical activity can contribute to the academic learning process
- How an inactive lifestyle contributes to chronic disease
- Health-related fitness, that is, cardiovascular endurance, muscular endurance, muscular strength, flexibility, and body composition
- Differences between physical activity, exercise and fitness
- Phases of an exercise session, that is, warm up, workout and cool down
- Overcoming barriers to physical activity
- Decreasing sedentary activities, such as TV watching
- Preventing injury during physical activity
- Weather-related safety, for example, avoiding heat stroke, hypothermia and sunburn while being physically active
- How much physical activity is enough, that is, determining frequency, intensity, time and type of physical activity

- Developing an individualized physical activity and fitness plan
- Monitoring progress toward reaching goals in an individualized physical activity plan
- Dangers of using performance-enhancing drugs, such as steroids
- Social influences on physical activity, including media, family, peers and culture
- How to find valid information or services related to physical activity and fitness
- How to influence, support, or advocate for others to engage in physical activity
- How to resist peer pressure that discourages physical activity

Recess (Elementary)

~~All elementary schools will offer up to twenty (20) minutes of recess on all days during the school year.~~ Each school that includes any of the grades kindergarten through five shall provide at least fifteen (15) minutes of recess, consisting of supervised, unstructured free play, each school day. If recess is offered before lunch, schools will have appropriate hand-washing facilities and/or hand-sanitizing mechanisms located just inside/outside the cafeteria to ensure proper hygiene prior to eating and students are required to use these mechanisms before eating. Hand-washing time, as well as time to put away coats/hats/gloves, will be built in to the recess transition period/timeframe before students enter the cafeteria.

Classroom Physical Activity Breaks (Elementary and Secondary)

The District recognizes that students are more attentive and ready to learn if provided with periodic breaks when they can be physically active or stretch. Thus, students will be offered periodic opportunities to be active or to stretch throughout the day on all or most days during a typical school week. The District recommends teachers provide short (3-5 minutes) physical activity breaks to students during and between classroom-time at least three (3) days per week. These physical activity breaks will complement, not substitute physical education classes, recess and class transition periods.

The School Board shall provide resources and links to resources, tools and technology with ideas for classroom physical activity breaks. Resources and ideas are available through USDA and Alliance for a Healthier Generation.

Active Academics

Teachers will incorporate movement and kinesthetic learning approaches into “core” subject instruction when possible (e.g., science, math, language arts, social studies, and others) and do their part to limit sedentary behavior during the school day.

The District will support classroom teachers incorporating physical activity and employing kinesthetic learning approaches into core subjects by providing annual professional development opportunities and resources, including information on leading activities, activity options, as well as making available background material on the connections between learning and movement.

Teachers will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

OTHER ACTIVITIES THAT PROMOTE STUDENT WELLNESS

The District shall integrate wellness activities across the entire school setting, not just in the cafeteria, other food and beverage venues, and physical activity facilities. The School Board shall coordinate and integrate other initiatives related to physical activity, physical education, nutrition, and other wellness components so all efforts are complementary, not duplicative, and work towards the same set of goals and objectives promoting student well-being, optimal development, and strong educational outcomes.

Public schools in Rapides Parish are encouraged to coordinate content across curricular areas that promote student health, such as teaching nutrition concepts in mathematics, with consultation provided by either the school or the District's curriculum experts.

All efforts related to obtaining federal, state, or association recognition for efforts, or grants/funding opportunities for healthy school environments will be coordinated with and complementary of the *School Wellness* policy.

All school-sponsored events will adhere to the *School Wellness* policy. All school-sponsored wellness events will include physical activity and healthy eating opportunities when appropriate.

Community Partnerships

The District will continue relationships with community partners (e.g., hospitals, universities/colleges, local businesses, foundations, etc.) in support of this *School Wellness* policy's implementation. Existing and new community partnerships and sponsorships will be evaluated to ensure that they are consistent with the *School Wellness* policy and its goals.

Community Health Promotion and Family Engagement

The District will promote to parents/caregivers, families, and the general community the benefits of and approaches for healthy eating and physical activity throughout the school year. Families will be informed and invited to participate in school-sponsored activities and will receive information about health promotion efforts.

As described in the "Community Involvement, Outreach, and Communications" subsection, the District will use electronic mechanisms (e.g., email, or displaying notices on the District's website), as well as non-electronic mechanisms, (e.g., newsletters, presentations to parents or sending information home to parents), to ensure that all families are actively notified of opportunities to participate in school-sponsored activities and receive information about health promotion efforts.

Staff Wellness and Health Promotion

Schools in the District will implement strategies to support staff in actively promoting and modeling healthy eating and physical activity behaviors. Examples of strategies schools will use, as well as specific actions staff members can take, include, walking track, Zumba class, walking on treadmills. The District promotes staff member participation in health promotion programs and will support programs for staff members on healthy eating/weight management that are accessible and free or low-cost.

Professional Learning

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

New Policy: April, 2006
Revised: December, 2009
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Revised: November, 2011

Revised: June, 2014
Revised: June, 2015
Revised: July 5, 2017
Revised: October, 2023

Ref: PL 108-265 (*Section 204, Child Nutrition and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Reauthorization Act of 2004*); 42 USC 1751 et seq. (*Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act*); 42 USC 1771 et seq. (*Child Nutrition Act of 1966*); 7 CFR 210 (*National School Lunch Program*); 7 CFR 220 (*School Breakfast Program*); La. Rev. Stat. Ann. §§17:17.1, [17:17.7](#), [17:197.1](#); Board minutes 2-6-07, 2-2-10, 8-3-10, 11-1-11, 6-3-14, 6-2-15, 7-5-17.