

MERIDIAN PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT LOCAL WELLNESS PLAN

Rationale

The link between health of students and learning is well documented. If Children are to be successful in school they cannot be tired, hungry, sick, suffering from drug abuse or worried that school is an unsafe environment in which they could become a victim of a violent act. It has become apparent that problems such as poor nutrition, lack of physical activity, substance abuse, depression, teen pregnancy, obesity, bullying and more - can adversely affect not only a child's health, but also his or her ability to learn! That is precisely why a coordinated approach to school health can make a difference. A coordinated approach to school health improves children's health and their capacity to learn through the support of families, schools and communities working together. At its' very core, a coordinated approach to school health is about keeping students healthy over time, reinforcing positive healthy behaviors throughout the school day and making it clear that good health and learning go hand in hand.

Our School District is committed to providing a school environment that enhances learning and the development of lifelong wellness practices.

Goals

All students in the Meridian Municipal School District shall possess the knowledge and skills necessary to make nutritious food choices and enjoyable physical activity choices for a lifetime.

To meet this goal, the Meridian Municipal School District adopts this school wellness policy with the following commitments to nutrition, physical activity, and comprehensive health education. This policy is designed to effectively utilize school and community resources and to serve the needs and interests of all students and staff, taking into consideration differences in culture.

Commitment to Nutrition

The Meridian Municipal School District will:

- Participate in available federal school meal programs (including school lunch, breakfast and after school snacks during tutoring) with menus that meet meal patterns and nutrition standards established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Child Nutrition Programs.

- Operate with qualified Child Nutrition Professionals that will provide students with access to a variety of nutritious and appealing meal programs that meet the health and nutrition needs of students; and will provide clean, safe and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.
- Provide Health and Nutrition Education information to schools in the district.
- Encourage school staff and families to participate in school meal programs.
- Ensure that foods and beverages sold or served at school will meet the nutrition recommendations of the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
- Follow State Board of Education policies on competitive foods and extra food sales (Mississippi Board of Education Policy, Code EEH)
- Designate all schools as closed campuses. All campuses are closed to deliveries, sales, and/or consumption of retail fast foods. Students are not allowed to leave during their lunch break nor or they allowed to send for or receive outside purchased food items during the school day.
- Designate that carbonated beverages are not allowed to be consumed in the school cafeteria during meal service.
- Have available nutritious and appealing options (such as fruits, vegetables, reduced-fat milk, reduced-fat yogurt, reduced-fat cheese, 100% juice, and water) whenever foods/beverages are sold or otherwise offered at school, including vending machines. **See Appendix A for example of guidelines.**
- Eliminate use of foods as rewards for student accomplishment and the withholding of food as punishment (e.g., restricting a child's selection of flavored milk at mealtime due to behavior problems). **See Appendix B for non-food reward ideas.**

Commitment to Food Safe Schools

The Meridian Public School District will:

- Implement a food safety program based on HACCP principles for all school meals, as required by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Child Nutrition Programs and ensure that the food service permits are current for the all school sites.
- All school personnel (school board members, administrators, teachers, school nurses, instructional and health services paraprofessionals, food service staff, custodians and facilities managers and administrative support staff) will receive

- copies of the Local School Wellness Plan to include food safety policies and procedures and relevant professional development.
- Adequate access to hand washing facilities and supplies will be available whenever and wherever students, staff and families prepare, handle or consume food.

Commitment to Physical Activity/ Physical Education

The Meridian Municipal School District will:

- Provide students in grades K-8 with daily physical education instruction by a physical education teacher. Daily recess periods for elementary school students, including unstructured, supervised, active play is provided by the district.
- Kindergarten students will participate in physical activity for a minimum of 40 minutes per school day. This time is used to help the child increase the skills involved in physical coordination.
- Offer a planned program of physical education instruction incorporating individual and group activities, which are student centered and taught in positive environment.
- Require fitness testing for high school students; during the year they acquire the ½ Carnegie Unit in physical education as required for graduation by the Mississippi Healthy Students Act (State Board of Education Policy 4012).
- Graduation requirements for 9th through 12th grade students shall include ½ Carnegie Unit in physical education.
- Collaborate with local recreational department and youth fitness programs to promote participation in lifelong physical activities.

Commitment to Comprehensive Health Education

The Meridian Municipal School District will:

- Provide ½ Carnegie Unit of comprehensive or family and individual health education for graduation (2004 Mississippi Public School Accountability Standard 20).
- Base instruction on the 2006 Mississippi Comprehensive Health Framework for grades 9-12 (2004 Mississippi Public School Accountability Standard 20).
- Patterns of healthy eating habits are encouraged and supported through the teaching of health and wellness education classes to students in grades 9 – 12.

Commitment to a Healthy School Environment

The Meridian Municipal School District will:

- Ensure that there are no pad locks or chains on exit doors: exits should never be obstructed (in accordance with Mississippi State Fire Code). Ensure that all exit signs are clearly visible.
- Ensure that all chemicals are stored properly (in accordance with the Material Safety Data Sheet (www.msdssearch.com)).
- Refer to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's Handbook for Public Playground Safety (www.cps.com); for federal guidelines for playground safety.
- Ensure that fire extinguishers are inspected each year and properly tagged.
- Complete yearly maintenance of heating and cooling systems; check coils, filters, belts, etc. in order to maintain safe operation and healthy air quality.
- Conduct at least one emergency evacuation drill per month.
- Ensure that two means of exiting are available in each classroom in case of emergency.
- Never use extension cords as a permanent source of electricity anywhere on a school campus.
- Comply with the applicable rules and regulations of the State Board of Education in the operation of its transportation program (in accordance with the MS Code 37-41-53; State Board of Education Policies 7903, 7904, and 7909; and Accreditation Standard #35).
- Provide facilities that meet the criteria of: (MS Code 37-7-301 (c) (d) (J); 37-11-5, 49 and 45-11-1-1; and Accreditation Standard #36.
- Comply with the requirements for Safe and Healthy Schools.
- Inspect all buses on a quarterly basis and ensure that they are well maintained and clean.
- Require that all bus drivers have a valid bus driver certificate and a commercial driver's license and operates the bus according to all specified safety procedures. Maintain a record of yearly motor vehicle reports on each bus driver and evidence that each driver has received two hours of in-service training per semester (SB Policy 7903).
- conduct bus evacuation drills at least two times each year (SB Policy 7904).
- Provide operational facilities that are equipped and functional to meet the instructional needs of students and staff (in accordance with the Mississippi School Design Guidelines at www.edi.msstate.edu).
- Conduct random drug testing on students and employees as prescribed in the district's board approved policy.
- Implement a district Communicable Disease Policy.
- Install security cameras on the school campus.
- Utilize regularly scheduled meetings with the School Health Council, school board members, etc. to determine and discuss the current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges associated with implementing and maintaining your school's healthy and safe environment.

Commitment to Marketing

The Meridian Municipal School District will:

- Will promote fruits, vegetables, whole grain products and healthy food preparation methods as a method of enhancing nutrition practices among students and faculty.

Commitment to Quality Health Services

The Meridian Municipal School District will:

- Ensure all school nurses are working under the guidelines of the *Mississippi School Nurse Procedures and Standards of Care*.
- Offer comprehensive health services for students in grades K-12, through the employment of school nurses, as a means to academic success.
- Work with students, parents and local healthcare providers to effectively manage and treat chronic diseases.
- Promote healthy lifestyles through school and community events (PTA meetings, open houses, health fairs, teacher in-services, and other events).
- Establish partnerships with local health care providers to expand awareness programs (e.g. School Based Clinics, MS Extension Service, Greater Meridian, Weems Mental Health, Local Hospitals, Canopy and Youth Villages)

Commitment to Providing Counseling, Psychological and Social Services

The Meridian Municipal School District will:

- Adhere to the details outlined in the Licensure Guidelines (451) when hiring guidance counselors and psychologists.
- Provide at a minimum, a ½ time licensed guidance counselor for high school and ensure that all elementary school students have access to qualified student support personnel.
- Hire school guidance counselors with a minimum of a Master's Degree in Guidance and Counseling, or in an emergency situation, an appropriate certification as determined by the Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification and Licensure and Development.

- Hire school counselors who agree to abide by the American School Counselor Association Code of Ethics and address the mental health, academic, and career needs of students in the school setting.
- Offer counseling, group assessments interventions and other mental health services, as well as referrals to community health professionals.
- Ensure that all school guidance counselors provide comprehensive counseling services.

Commitment to Family and Community Involvement

The Meridian Municipal School District will:

- Give parents and community the opportunity to serve on the School Health Council.
- Invite family members to a school meal.
- Coordinate at least one Staff and Community Wellness event during the school year.

Commitment to Quality Staff Wellness

The Meridian municipal School District will:

- Provide health and nutrition education information to school staff.
- Develop relationships with community health providers (e.g., local health departments, hospitals, health professionals), recreational facilities and other community members who can provide resources for or support school wellness activities.
- Ensure that all staff is aware of the Mississippi State and School Employees' Health Insurance Plan that has been enhanced to include *Motivating Mississippi: Keys to Living Healthy*.
- Encourage employee walking teams or clubs.

Commitment to Policy Implementation

The Meridian Municipal School District will:

- Establish a plan for implementation of the school wellness policy.
- Designate one or more persons to ensure that the school wellness policy is implemented as written.

- Establish and support a School and/or a District Health Council that addresses all aspects of a coordinated school health program, including a school wellness policy (Mississippi Code of 1072 Annotated, Section 37-13-134).
- The superintendent will ensure compliance with the established district-wide wellness policy. The principals will ensure compliance with the policy in his/her school and will report on the school's compliance to the superintendent.
- The superintendent or designee will comprise a summary on district-wide compliance and report to individuals or agencies on an as needed basis.

Office of Healthy Schools

Operation Guidelines for School Health Councils

The following guidelines are provided by the Office of Healthy Schools to support quality implementation of school health policies and standards through a school health council:

- School health Councils should meet a minimum of three times per school year.
- School Health Councils should maintain accurate minutes of the meeting to document the recommendations and topics of each meeting.
- Make at least one annual presentation to the local school board to approve any revisions to the local school wellness policy, identify successes, and/or make recommendations for future policy development. The Student Services Office handles this task for principals.

Retrieved from www.mde.k12.ms.us

Appendix A: Nutrition Guidelines

The Meridian Municipal School District strongly encourages the sale or distribution of nutrient dense foods for all school function and activities. Nutrient dense foods are those foods that provide students with calories rich in the nutrient content needed to be healthy. In an effort to support the consumption of nutrient dense foods in the school setting, the district has adopted the following nutrition standards governing the sale of food, beverage, and candy on school grounds. Schools are to study these standards and develop building policy using the following Nutrition standards as minimal guidelines.

These food and beverage regulations apply to all Mississippi school campuses during the regular and extended school day defined as the hours between 7:00 am and 4:00 pm. The extended school day includes activities such as clubs, yearbook, band and choir practice, student government and drama.

This policy **does not** apply to school-related events: such as interscholastic sporting events, school plays, PTO sponsored events, and band concerts where parents and other adults constitute a significant portion of the audience or are selling beverages as boosters.

Food

- Include fruits and vegetables prepared and packaged without added fat, sugar, or sodium.
- Snack items should contain < 200 calories per package, no more than 35 percent of total calories from fat (with the exception of nuts, seeds, peanut and other nut butters, and cheeses), no more than 10 percent of calories from saturated and or trans-fat.

Beverages

- Only reduced-fat milks (including flavored milk), bottled water, sports drinks and beverages containing 50-100% fruit juices with no added artificial or natural sweeteners, may be sold or distributed on school grounds prior to and during the instructional day in elementary, middle, and high schools.

Candy

- Candy is defined as any processed food item that includes the following:

Sugar (including brown sugar, corn sweetener, corn syrup, fructose, glucose (dextrose), high fructose corn syrup, honey, invent sugar, lactose, maltose, molasses, raw sugar, table sugar (sucrose), syrup) is listed as one of the first two ingredients and sugar is more than 25% of the item by weight.

Appendix B: Non-Food Rewards

Read a book.
Sit by friends.
Read outdoors.
Teach the class.
Have extra art time.
Enjoy class outdoors.
Have an extra recess.
Play a computer game.
Read to a younger class.
Get a no homework pass.
Sing a silly song together.
Make deliveries to the office.
Listen to music while working.
Play a favorite game or puzzle.
Earn play money for privileges.
Walk with a teacher or principal.
Eat lunch outdoors with the class.
Be a helper in another classroom.
Eat lunch with a teacher or principal.
Start and maintain a vegetable garden.
Dance to favorite music in the classroom.
Get a “free choice” time at the end of the day.
Listen with a headset to a book on audiotape.
Have a teacher perform special skills. (i.e. sing).
Be first in line when the class leaves the room.
Have a teacher read a special book to the class.
Take a trip to the treasure box (stickers, pencils, erasers, bookmarks, etc.).

Additional online resources for non-food reward ideas:

Connecticut Team Nutrition

[www.state.ct.us/sde/deps/Student/NutritionEd/Food As Reward HO1.pdf](http://www.state.ct.us/sde/deps/Student/NutritionEd/Food%20As%20Reward%20HO1.pdf)

Michigan Team Nutrition

www.tn.fcs.msue.msu.edu/foodrewards.pdf

New England Food and Dairy Council

www.newenglanddairyCouncil.org/PDF/alternativefoodrewards.pdf

Texas Department of Agriculture

[www.squaremeals.org/vgn/tda/files/983/1034 NonFoodRewards.pdf](http://www.squaremeals.org/vgn/tda/files/983/1034%20NonFoodRewards.pdf)

Appendix C: Fundraising Alternatives

Many new school fundraising strategies are being developed with school financial needs and concerns about student nutrition in mind. Instead of candy, schools are selling:

- Fresh and exotic fruit, like cases of citrus fruit
- High quality potatoes, onions, or other produce items
- Nuts and trail mix
- Popcorn

Schools may also sell a variety of non-food items such as:

- Gift wrap
- Magazine subscriptions
- Garden seeds
- Candles
- Discount coupon books
- Plants and flowers
- School spirit items

Schools may also utilize traditional and non-traditional fundraising events such as:

- Car washes
- Walk-a-thons, bike-a-thons, jog-a-thons, skate-a-thons, etc.
- Family game nights
- 3-on-3 basketball tournaments
- Silent auctions
- Talent shows