Policy Update April 2026

PREAMBLE

The Board of Education of Sherrard School District is committed to providing a learning environment that supports and promotes wellness, good nutrition, and an active lifestyle and recognizes the positive relationship between good nutrition, physical activity and the capacity of students to develop and learn. The entire school environment shall be aligned with healthy school goals to positively influence students' beliefs and habits and promote health and wellness, good nutrition and regular physical activity. In addition, school staff shall be encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity as a valuable part of daily life.

INTENT

The purpose of this policy is to ensure a school environment that promotes and supports student health and wellness, helps to reduce childhood obesity and meets the requirements of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA) and the Illinois School Code, including, without limitation, goals for nutrition education, physical activity and other school-based activities designed to promote student wellness; nutrition guidelines for all foods available during the school day; a plan for measuring implementation including designating one or more persons charged with operational responsibility; and involving parents, students, school food service staff, the school board, school administrators, and the public in developing this policy.

RATIONALE

Research shows that two components, good nutrition and physical activity before, during and after the school day, are strongly correlated with positive student outcomes. For example, student participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) School Breakfast Program is associated with higher grades and standardized test scores, lower absenteeism and better performance on cognitive tasks. Conversely, less-than-adequate consumption of specific foods including fruits, vegetables and dairy products, is associated with lower grades among students. In addition, students who are physically active through active transport to and from school, recess, physical activity breaks, high-quality physical education and extracurricular activities do better academically. Finally, there is evidence that adequate hydration is associated with better cognitive performance.

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 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. Specific measureable goals and outcomes are identified within each section below.

School Campus is defined as areas that are owned or leased by the school and used at any time for school-related activities, including on the outside of the school building, school buses or other vehicles used to transport students, athletic fields, stadiums and parking lots. This also includes equipment such as scoreboards, coolers, cups and water bottles.

School Day – the time between midnight the night before to 30 minutes after the end of the instructional day.

GOALS FOR NUTRITION EDUCATION

- Nutrition curriculum for students in PreK through grade 12 shall be consistent with and incorporate relevant Illinois Learning Standards.
- The program shall be designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to adopt healthy eating behaviors *and* aimed at influencing students' knowledge, attitudes and eating habits. Special emphasis should be placed on nutrition education in PreK through primary grades as eating habits are established at a young age.
- To maximize classroom time and to achieve positive changes in students' eating behaviors, nutrition education has been integrated into the curriculum**.**

GOALS FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- Students in PreK through grade 12 shall participate in physical education or physical activities that enable them to achieve and maintain a high level of personal fitness; emphasizes self-management skills including energy balance; is consistent with state/District's standards/guidelines/framework; and is coordinated within a comprehensive health education curriculum. The curriculum shall be consistent with and incorporate relevant Illinois Learning Standards. Accommodations shall be made for students with disabilities, 504 plans, and other limitations.
- Elementary students (K-4) in each grade will receive physical education for at least 60 minutes per week throughout the school year. In addition to the physical education curriculum, elementary students have the opportunity for an additional 60 minutes of supervised physical activity per day.
- All secondary students (grades 5-12) are required to take the equivalent of one academic year of physical education. In addition to the physical education curriculum, students in grades 5 and 6 have the opportunity for an additional 45 minutes of supervised activity per day. Students in grades 7 through 12 have the ability to flex out their schedules by 1) opting out of physical education class as they are actively involved in school athletics and marching band, 2) take a

second physical education class to fill scheduling requirements or 3) take an alternative physical education class geared towards athletic/personal fitness.

- The District shall encourage families as partners in providing and promoting after school programs that offer students the opportunity to participate in physical activity beyond the school day.

GOALS FOR OTHER SCHOOL-BASED ACTIVITIES DESIGNED TO PROMOTE STUDENT WELLNESS

Parent Partnerships

- Parents shall be provided information to help them incorporate healthy eating and physical activity into their students' lives in a variety of formats.

Consistent School Activities and Environment – Healthy Eating

- Food service leadership will share information about the nutritional content of school meals and/or individually sold foods with students, family and school staff as requested.

Consistent School Activities and Environment –Physical Activity

- Physical education shall be provided by trained and well-supported staff that is certified by the state to teach physical education. All physical education teachers shall regularly participate in continuing education activities that impart the knowledge and skills needed to effectively promote a healthy lifestyle.
- The physical education program shall be coordinated with the other components of the overall school health program. Physical education topics shall be integrated within other curricular areas. In particular, the benefits of being physically active shall be linked with instruction about human growth, development, and physiology in science classes and with instruction about personal health behaviors in health education class.
- Schools are encouraged to provide student and community access to the school's physical activity facilities outside of the normal school day in accordance with the District's facility usage policy.
- Physical activity facilities and equipment on school grounds shall be safe. The district will conduct necessary inspections and repairs.

Food or Physical Activity as a Reward or Punishment

- School personnel shall not withhold food from students as punishment.
- School personnel should not withhold participation in physical education class or supervised physical activity as a punishment.
- School personnel are strongly encouraged to use nonfood incentives as rewards.

NUTRITION GUIDELINES FOR ALL FOODS AND BEVERAGES AVAILABLE ON SCHOOL CAMPUSES DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

School Meals

Our school district is committed to serving healthy meals to children with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and fat-free and low-fat milk that are 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 program aims 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 USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program SBP). 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 Smarter Lunchroom techniques including:

    - Daily fruit options are displayed in a location in the line of sight and reach of students.
    - Serving line staff members have been trained to politely prompt students to select and consume the daily vegetable options with their meal.
    - White milk is placed in front of other beverages in all coolers.
    - Daily announcements are used to promote and market menu options.
    - Menus will be posted on the District website
    - The District child nutrition program will accommodate students with special dietary needs with a medical authority statement on file.
    - Students are served lunch at a reasonable and appropriate time of day.
    - Lunch will follow the recess period when possible to better support learning and healthy eating.

All school nutrition staff will meet or exceed hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements in the USDA professional standards for child nutrition professionals.

To promote hydration, free, unflavored drinking water will be available to all students throughout the school day and throughout every school campus. The District will make drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes

- Water stations/jugs will be available in the cafeteria area if a drinking fountain is not present.
- All water sources and containers will be maintained on a regular basis to ensure good hygiene and health safety standards. Such sources and containers may include drinking fountains, water stations, water jugs and other methods for delivering drinking water.
- Students will be allowed to bring and carry (approved) water bottles filled with only water with them throughout the day according to building administration rules.

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 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, as well as a Guide to Smart Snacks in Schools are available at:
http://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/tools-schools-smart-snacks.

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 USDA 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.

The building administrator shall determine the procedure for food consumed by the students during the school day in an off-campus setting (e.g., field trip) consistent with USDA nutrition standards.

For the safety and security of food, access to any area involved in storage, preparation or service of food on the school campus shall be limited to authorized personnel.

The District is committed to providing a school environment that ensures opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. It is the intent of the District to protect and promote students' health by permitting advertising and marketing for only those foods and beverages that are permitted to be sold on the school campus, consistent with the District's wellness policy.

Food loss and waste continue to be an issue facing the nations' food supply. In order to prevent food waste, the District will make every effort to produce the precise number of meals needed on any given day by using production and consumption records and resources such as the USDA's Food Buying Guide. The District utilizes the "offer vs serve" option for all students in grades 5 through 12 for meals served during lunch periods. However, in the event excess food remains, the District will continue to provide food to students in need beyond the meals provided through the USDA School Nutrition Programs. In accordance with Public Act 102-0359, and federal and local regulations and sanitation codes: The District will designate an area at each meal site in order for students to donate unopened, packaged food items provided by district food service staff. Those items will be available to other students or may be sent home to supplement weekend backpack bags.

MEASURING IMPLEMENTATION & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- The district superintendent shall be charged with the operational responsibility for ensuring that each school meets the local wellness policy requirements.
- The district superintendent shall appoint a district wellness team that includes a variety of staff and community members to oversee and evaluate the wellness policy. Team members should include PE teacher, health education teacher, general education teacher, school nurse, school counselor, building principals, food service staff, Food Service Director, students and parents.
- The appointed district wellness team shall be responsible for:
    - Assessment, development and revision of the policy, as necessary.
- The principal of each campus shall be responsible for implementation of the local wellness policy and will review annually at the start of each school year with staff.
- The District will actively inform families and the public each year of basic information about this policy, including its content, any updates to the policy and implementation status.
- The wellness team shall report to the superintendent and school board once every three years.

OTHER ACTIVITIES THAT PROMOTE STUDENT WELLNESS

The District encourages wellness activities across the entire school setting, not just in the cafeteria, other food and beverage venues and physical activity facilities. The District may 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.

Schools in the District 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 are encouraged to be coordinated with and complementary of the wellness policy, including but not limited to ensuring the involvements of the wellness team or the school wellness committee.

School-sponsored events are encouraged to adhere to the wellness policy guidelines and may include physical activity and/or healthy eating opportunities when appropriate.

Students, parents, school staff and community members bringing foods and beverages to school for parties/celebrations/meetings held during the school day shall be encouraged to provide healthful options. Treats brought to school for student consumption must be prepared and packaged commercially in a certified kitchen facility.

All student-to-student food-based fundraisers during the school day must have approval of the school administration. Fundraising during the school day will sell only non-food items or foods and beverages that meet or exceed the Smart Snacks nutrition standards.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

The District may utilize relationships with community partners (e.g., hospitals, universities/colleges, local businesses, SNAP-Ed providers and coordinators, etc.) in support of this wellness policy's implementation. Existing and new community partnerships and sponsorships will be consistent with the wellness policy and its goals.

COMMUNITY HEALTH PROMOTION AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

The District encourages parents/caregivers, families and the general community to be aware of the benefits of healthy eating and physical activity. Families may be informed and invited to participate in school sponsored activities.

The District may use electronic mechanisms such as the district website or non-electronic mechanisms (such as newsletters, presentations to parents or sending information home to parents) to participate in school-sponsored activities and to receive information about health promotion efforts.

STAFF WELLNESS AND HEALTH PROMOTION

The wellness team may have a staff wellness subcommittee which may focus on staff wellness issues, identify and disseminate wellness resources and perform other functions that support staff wellness in coordination with human resources.

Schools in the District may implement strategies to support staff in actively promoting and modeling healthy eating and physical activity behaviors. The District encourages staff member participation in health promotion programs and may support healthy eating/weight management programs that are accessible and free or low-cost.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

When feasible, the District may 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.