2026-2027
Local School Wellness Policy

BOARD APPROVED
September 9, 2026

Philadelphia Public Schools

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!* And that is precisely why a coordinated approach to school health can make a difference! A coordinated approach to school health improves kids' 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.*

Goal:

All students in Philadelphia Public School District shall possess the knowledge and skills necessary to make healthy choices that promote healthy lifestyles. All staff members in Philadelphia Public School District are encouraged to model a lifestyle of healthy eating patterns and moderate physical activity as a valuable part of their daily lives.

To meet this goal, Philadelphia Public School District adopts this school wellness policy with the following commitments to implementing a coordinated approach to school health. This policy is designed to effectively utilize school and community resources and to equitably serve the needs and interests of all students and staff, taking into consideration differences in culture.

Commitment to Nutrition

ALL Philadelphia Public Schools (PES, PMS, PHS) will:

- Offer a school lunch program with menus that meet the meal patterns and nutrition standards established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Child Nutrition Programs.
- Offer school breakfast and snack programs (where approved and applicable) with menus that meet the meal patterns and nutrition standards established by the U. S. Department of Agriculture and the Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Child Nutrition Programs.
- Promote participation in school meal programs to families and staff.
- Operate all Child Nutrition Programs with school foodservice staff who are properly qualified according to current professional standards (Mississippi Board of Education Policy, Code 2001).
- Follow State Board of Education policies on competitive foods and extra food sales (Mississippi Board of Education Policy, Code 2002).

- Specific goals for nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness. In developing these goals, local educational agencies must review and consider evidence-based strategies and techniques; Include goals for nutrition promotion, nutrition education, physical activity and other school-based activities to promote student wellness. (Move2Learn and Play60 programs)
- Implement Nutrition Standards as adopted by the State Board of Education in accordance with the Mississippi Healthy Students Act (State Board of Education Policy 4011),
    - Healthy food and beverage choices;
    - Healthy food preparation;
    - Marketing of healthy food choices to students, staff and parents;
    - Food preparation ingredients and products;
    - Minimum/maximum time allotted for students and staff lunch and breakfast;
    - Availability of food items during the lunch and breakfast periods of the Child Nutrition Breakfast and Lunch Programs;
    - Methods to increase participation in the Child Nutrition School Breakfast and Lunch Programs.
- Establish guidelines in accordance with the Mississippi Beverage and Snack Regulations for all foods available on the school campus during the school day with the objective of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity.
- Establish a cafeteria environment conducive to a positive dining experience, with socializing among students and between students and adults; with supervision of eating areas by adults who model proper conduct and voice level; and with adults who model healthy habits by eating with the students.

Commitment to Food Safe Schools

ALL Philadelphia Public Schools (PES, PMS, PHS) 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 permit is current for the school site. HACCP Principles for K-12 schools can be downloaded at: https://fnsprod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/Food_Safety_HACCPGuidance.pdf
- Develop a food safety education plan for all staff and students, consistent with Fight Bac® (www.fightbac.org) and other national standards for safe food handling at home and in school.
- All school personnel (school board members, administrators, teachers, school nurses, instructional and health services paraprofessionals, foodservice staff, custodians and facilities managers, and administrative support staff) will receive copies of the Local School Wellness Policy 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.
- The food safety assurance plan must address strategies that minimize risks for students and staff who have food allergies and intolerances.

Commitment to Physical Activity/Physical Education

The Philadelphia Elementary School will:

- Provide 150 minutes per week of activity-based instruction for all students in grades K-8 (in accordance with Section 37-13-134, Mississippi Code of 1972, ann., reference 2023 Mississippi Public Schools Accountability Standards 27.1.
- Provide Physical Education/Activity in accordance with the Physical Education Rules and Regulations as approved by the State Board of Education in compliance with the Mississippi Healthy Students Act (State Board of Education Policy 4012).
- Require fitness testing for all 5th grade students.
- Offer a planned sequential program of physical education instruction incorporating individual and group activities, which are student centered and taught in a positive environment.
- Instruction must be based on 2013-2014 Mississippi Physical Education Frameworks.
- Implement the requirements of the Mississippi Healthy Students Act of 2007 (Senate Bill 2369).

The Philadelphia Middle School will:

- Provide Physical Education/Activity in accordance with the Physical Education Rules and Regulations as approved by the State Board of Education in compliance with the Mississippi Healthy Students Act (State Board of Education Policy 4012).
- Offer a planned sequential program of physical education instruction incorporating individual and group activities, which are student centered and taught in a positive environment.
- Instruction must be based on 2013-2014 Mississippi Physical Education Frameworks.
- Implement the requirements of the Mississippi Healthy Students Act of 2007 (Senate Bill 2369).
- Address concussions by adopting and implementing a policy for students in grades 7-12 who participate in activities sanctioned by the Mississippi High School Activities Association (MHSAA). This policy will include a concussion recognition course that has been endorsed by the Mississippi Department of Health. This course will provide information on the nature and risk of concussions for students participating in athletics. Also included in the policy, parents/guardians will be provided with a concussion policy before the start of regular school athletic season. (House Bill 48)
- Create opportunities for students to voluntarily participate in before- and after-school physical activity programs like intramurals, clubs, and at the secondary level, interscholastic athletics.

The Philadelphia High School will:

- Provide Physical Education/Activity in accordance with the Physical Education Rules and Regulations as approved by the State Board of Education in compliance with the Mississippi Healthy Students Act (State Board of Education Policy 4012).
- 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).
- Offer a planned sequential program of physical education instruction incorporating individual and group activities, which are student centered and taught in a positive environment.
- Instruction must be based on 2013-2014 Mississippi Physical Education Frameworks.

- Implement the requirements of the Mississippi Healthy Students Act of 2007 (Senate Bill 2369).
- Graduation requirements for 9th through 12th grade students shall include ½ Carnegie unit in physical education.
- Provide instruction in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and use of Automated External Defibrillator (AED) for students in grades 9-12 in the school year they earn their ½ Carnegie Unit for physical education. (House Bill 432)
- Address concussions by adopting and implementing a policy for students in grades 7-12 who participate in activities sanctioned by the Mississippi High School Activities Association (MHSAA). This policy will include a concussion recognition course that has been endorsed by the Mississippi Department of Health. This course will provide information on the nature and risk of concussions for students participating in athletics. Also included in the policy, parents/guardians will be provided with a concussion policy before the start of regular school athletic season. (House Bill 48)
- Create opportunities for students to voluntarily participate in before- and after-school physical activity programs like intramurals, clubs, and at the secondary level, interscholastic athletics.

Commitment to Comprehensive Health Education

The Philadelphia Elementary School will:

- Implement the requirements of the Mississippi Healthy Students Act of 2007, which requires 45 minutes per week of health education instruction as defined by the State Board of Education for grades K through 8.
- Instruction must be based on the Mississippi Contemporary Health for grades K-8.
- Implement the requirements of MS Code 37-13-171, which requires the development of a sex related education policy and instruction on medically accurate or evidenced based abstinence-only or abstinence-plus curricula.
- Provide Universal Precautions training for all teachers, superintendents and staff.

The Philadelphia Middle School will:

- Implement the requirements of MS Code 37-13-171, which requires the development of a sex related education policy and instruction on medically accurate or evidenced based abstinence-only or abstinence-plus curricula.

The Philadelphia High School will:

- Provide ½ Carnegie unit of health education for graduation (2012 Mississippi Public School Accountability Standard 20, Appendix A).
- Instruction must be based on the Mississippi Contemporary Health for grades 9-12 (2012 Mississippi Public School Accountability Standard 20, Appendix A).
- Implement the requirements of MS Code 37-13-171, which requires the development of a sex related education policy and instruction on medically accurate or evidenced based abstinence-only or abstinence-plus curricula.

Commitment to a Healthy School Environment

ALL Philadelphia Public Schools (PES, PMS, PHS) 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 illuminated and clearly visible.
- Ensure that all chemicals are stored properly (in accordance with the Material Safety Data Sheet www.msdssearch.com).
- Ensure that fire extinguishers are inspected each year and properly tagged.
- Complete yearly maintenance of the heating and cooling system in your school; check coils, filters, belts, etc. in order to maintain safe operation and healthy air quality.
- Conduct at least one emergency evacuation drill per month.
- Every school will have an anti-bullying policy that outlines procedures for dealing with bullying situations in the school.
- Ensure that two means of egress are available in each classroom in case of an emergency; if there is only one door, designate a window (properly sized) as a means of egress.
- 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 #29).
- 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)
- Ensure arrival of all buses at their designated school sites prior to the start of the instructional day.
- Conduct bus evacuation drills at least two times each year. (SB Policy 7904)

Provide facilities that meet the criteria of: (MS Code 37-7-301 (c) (d) (j); 37-11-5, 49 and 45-11-101; and Accreditation Standard #29).

- Provide facilities that are clean.
- Provide facilities that are safe.
- Provide proper signage that explains tobacco, weapons, and drugs are prohibited on the school campus and at school functions.
- 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 http://www.edi.msstate.edu/guidelines/design.php)
- Provide air conditioning in all classrooms, Code §37-17-6(2) (2000).

Comply with the requirements for Safe and Healthy Schools:

- Maintain a comprehensive School Safety Plan on file that has been approved annually by the local school board. (MS Code 37-3-81 and 37-3-82(2); and Accreditation Standard #37.1)

- State Board Policy EBB (1990) prohibits the possession of pistols, firearms or weapons by any person on school premises or at school functions. Code §37-11-18 (1996) requires any student who possesses a knife, a handgun, other firearm or any other instrument considered to be dangerous and capable of causing bodily harm or who commit a violent act on educational property be subject to automatic expulsion for one calendar year. The superintendent of the school is authorized to modify the period of time for expulsion on a case-by-case basis.
- Prohibits students from possessing tobacco on any educational property, Criminal Code §97-32-9 (2000). Code §97-32-29 (2000) further prohibits the use of tobacco on any educational property for adults who, if in violation, would be subject to a fine and issued a citation by a law enforcement officer. Educational property is defined as any public school building or bus, campus, grounds, athletic field, or other property used or operated during a school-related activity.
- Install locks on classroom doors in order to create security from the inside.
- Eliminate unnecessary school bus idling that causes pollution and creates health risk for children such as; asthma, allergies, and other respiratory problems – **http://www.epa.gov/cleanschoolbus**
- Hire a District Safety Officer or a School Resource Officer.
- Conduct random drug testing on students.
- 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 Quality Health Services

ALL Philadelphia Public Schools (PES, PMS, PHS) will:

- Ensure all school nurses are working under the guidelines of the 2013 *Mississippi School Nurse Procedures and Standards of Care.*
- Provide for teachers and staff training regarding signs and symptoms of asthma. (MS Code Sections 37-11-71 and 73-25-37)
- Every child who has been diagnosed with asthma must have an asthma action plan on file in the school office.
- Know the district anaphylaxis policy. Providing training by a healthcare professional, preferably a school nurse, for the individuals that will be responsible for implementing the policy at the school site. (MS Code Sections 37-11-71 and 73-25-37)
- The school nurse should attend at least one MDE sponsored training each school year.
- The school nurse should submit heath services data on the 10th of each month for the Previous month.
- Offer comprehensive health services for students in grades K-12, through the employment of school nurses, as a means to academic success.
- Collaborate with other school staff to provide health services as part of a Coordinated School Health Program.
- 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).

Commitment to Providing Counseling, Psychological and Social Services

ALL Philadelphia Public Schools (PES, PMS, PHS) will:

- Adhere to the details outlined in the Licensure Guidelines (436 or 451) when hiring guidance counselors and psychologists. The state does not have a policy specifically outlining the requirements for a school social worker. For licensure as a social worker in the state of Mississippi, a candidate must: provide verification of a baccalaureate degree in social work from a college or university accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) or Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and scores a minimum of 70 on the ASWB basic exam.
- Abide by Mississippi Code 37-9-79 (Amended 2014) as the school provides for counseling and guidance for students.
- Provide at a minimum, a ½ time licensed guidance counselor for middle and high schools and ensure that all elementary school students have access to qualified student support personnel such as: guidance counselors, social workers, nurses, psychologists, psychometrists, and others (as required by the Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, Process Standard 6).
- 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.
- Ensure that all school guidance counselors provide comprehensive counseling services such as:
  - Academic and personal/social counseling.
  - Student assessment and assessment counseling.
  - Career and educational counseling.
  - Individual and group counseling.
  - Crisis intervention and preventive counseling.
  - Provide all licensed teachers and principals with in-service suicide prevention training as directed by MS Code 37-3-101.
  - Referrals to community agencies.
  - Educational consultations and collaborations with teachers, administrators, parents and community leaders.
  - Education and career placement services.
  - Follow-up counseling services.
  - Conflict resolution.
  - Other counseling duties or other duties as assigned by the school principal.
- Offer quality counseling, psychological and social services provided by professionals such as certified school counselors, psychologists, and social workers.
- Provide additional services to improve students' mental, emotional, and social health.
- Offer counseling, group assessments, interventions and other mental health services, as well as referrals to community health professionals.
- Hire qualified counselors who will address the mental health, academic, and career needs of students in the school setting.

Commitment to Family and Community Involvement

Philadelphia Public Schools will:
Invite parents and community members to participate in school health planning by serving on the local School Health Council (Senate Bill 2369).

At a minimum, the school board shall appoint one (1) person from each of the following groups:

- Parents who are not employed by the school district;
- The director of local school food services;
- Public schoolteachers;
- Public school administrators;
- District students;
- Health care professionals;
- The business community;
- Law enforcement;
- Senior citizens;
- The clergy;
- Nonprofit health organizations; and
- Faith-based organizations.

The Philadelphia Middle/High School will:

- Invite parents and community members to participate in school health planning by serving on the local School Health Council
- Encourage health education skill-building activities at home by including homework for health instruction, personal goal setting for healthy behaviors, and other health education-related activities.
- Develop homework assignments for students that involve family discussions about health topics and age-related health issues.

Commitment to Implementing a Quality Staff Wellness Program

The Philadelphia Elementary School will:

- Promote health and reduce risk factors through professional and staff development programs, providing information flyers and newsletters, introducing incentives for participating in healthy practices and activities, and offering an employee assistance program.

The Philadelphia Middle/High School will:

- Promote health and reduce risk factors through professional and staff development programs, providing information flyers and newsletters, introducing incentives for participating in healthy practices and activities, and offering an employee assistance program.
- Develop relationships with community health providers (e.g., local health departments, hospitals, neighborhood clinics, health professionals), recreational facilities, voluntary health organizations (e.g., American Cancer Society, American Lung Association, American Heart Association), and other community members who can provide resources for or support school employee wellness activities.

Commitment to Marketing a Healthy School Environment

ALL Philadelphia Public Schools (PES, PMS, PHS) will:

- Use school announcement systems, internal TV channels, school website, Facebook, text messaging and other social media to promote health messages to students and families.

Commitment to Implementation

ALL Philadelphia Public Schools (PES, PMS, PHS) will:

- Establish a plan for implementation of the school wellness policy.
- Designate one or more people at each school to ensure that the school wellness policy is implemented as written.
- Establish and support a School Health Council (SHC) that addresses all aspects of a coordinated school health program, including a school wellness policy (Mississippi Code of 1972 Annotated, Section 37-13-134).
- Conduct a review of the progress toward school wellness policy goals each year to identify areas for improvement.
- Prepare and submit a yearly report to the school board regarding the progress toward implementation of the school wellness policy and recommendations for any revisions to the policy as necessary.