533 WELLNESS

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to set forth methods that promote student wellness, prevent and reduce childhood obesity, and assure that school meals and other food and beverages sold and otherwise made available on the school campus during the school day are consistent with applicable minimum local, state, and federal standards.

In addition, this policy aims to foster a positive, inclusive, and supportive environment that recognizes the importance of mental health and wellbeing for students and staff, which is essential for academic success, personal development, and overall quality of life.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

A. The school board recognizes that nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness are essential components of the educational process and that good health fosters student attendance and learning.

B. The school environment should promote students' health, well-being, and ability to learn by encouraging healthy eating and physical activity.

C. The school district encourages the involvement of parents, students, representatives of the school food authority, teachers, school health professionals, the school board, school administrators, and the general public in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the school district's wellness policy.

D. Children need access to healthy foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive.

E. All students in grades K-12 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.

F. Qualified food service personnel will provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students; try to accommodate the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning; and will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.

G. The school district will work to create an environment where students and staff feel safe, supported, valued, and included.

H. The school environment will encourage open discussions about mental health to reduce stigma.

III. WELLNESS GOALS

A. <u>Nutrition Promotion and Education</u>

1. The school district will encourage and support healthy eating by students and engage in nutrition promotion that is:

   a. offered as part of a comprehensive program designed to provide

students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;

b. part of health education classes, as well as classroom instruction in subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects, where appropriate; and

c. enjoyable, developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant, and includes participatory activities, such as contests, promotions, taste testing, and field trips.

2. The school district will encourage all students to make age appropriate, healthy selections of foods and beverages, including those sold individually outside the reimbursable school meal programs, such as through a la carte/snack lines, vending machines, fundraising events, concession stands, and student stores.

B. Physical Activity

1. Students need opportunities for physical activity and to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior. Toward that end, health and physical education will reinforce the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a healthy lifestyle and reduce sedentary activities, such as watching television;

2. Opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into other subject lessons, where appropriate; and

3. Classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

C. Communications with Parents

1. The school district recognizes that parents and guardians have a primary role in promoting their children's health and well-being.

2. The school district will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children.

3. The school district encourages parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks and refrain from including beverages and foods without nutritional value.

4. The school district will provide information about physical education and other school-based physical activity opportunities and will support parents' efforts to provide their children with opportunities to be physically active outside of school.

5. Encourage open communication between home and school about mental health concerns. Provide support for students in need of extra help and collaborate with the school to create a consistent approach to well-being.

D. Mental Well-being

1. Enhance Mental Health Literacy: Ensure that students and staff are educated about mental health, its signs, and how to seek help.
2. Support Early Intervention: Identify early signs of mental health challenges and provide timely and appropriate support.
3. Provide Access to Resources: Ensure both students and staff have access to mental health resources, including counseling and external support services.

4. Foster Emotional Resilience: Equip the school community with the skills to manage stress, cope with challenges, and maintain positive wellbeing.

IV. STANDARDS AND NUTRITION GUIDELINES

A. School Meals

1. The school district will provide healthy and safe school meal programs that comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations.

2. Food service personnel will provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students.

3. Food service personnel will try to accommodate the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning.

4. Food service personnel will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.

5. Food service personnel will take every measure to ensure that student access to foods and beverages meets or exceeds all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations and that reimbursable school meals meet USDA nutrition standards.

6. Food service personnel shall adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local food safety and security guidelines.

7. The school district will make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to, and prevent the overt identification of, students who are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals.

8. The school district will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks.

9. The school district will make every effort to provide students with sufficient time to eat after sitting down for school meals and will schedule meal periods at appropriate times during the school day.

10. The school district will discourage tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes unless students may eat during such activities.

B. School Food Service Program/Personnel

1. The school district shall designate an appropriate person to be responsible for the school district's food service program, whose duties shall include the creation of nutrition guidelines and procedures for the selection of foods and beverages made available on campus to ensure food and beverage choices are consistent with current USDA guidelines.

2. As part of the school district's responsibility to operate a food service program, the school district will provide continuing professional development for all food service personnel in schools.

C. Competitive Foods and Beverages

1. All foods and beverages sold on school grounds to students, outside of reimbursable meals, are considered "competitive foods." Competitive foods

include items sold a la carte in the cafeteria, from vending machines, school stores, and for in-school fundraisers.

2. All competitive foods will meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School (Smart Snacks) nutrition standards and any applicable state nutrition standards, at a minimum. 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.

3. Before and Aftercare (child care) programs must also comply with the school district's nutrition standards unless they are reimbursable under USDA school meals program, in which case they must comply with all applicable USDA standards.

D. Other Foods and Beverages Made Available to Students

1. Student wellness will be a consideration for all foods offered, but not sold, to students on the school campus, including those foods provided through:

a. Celebrations and parties. The school district will provide a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers, including non-food celebration ideas.

[Note: Healthy party ideas are available from the USDA.]

b. Classroom snacks brought by parents. The school district will provide to parents a list of suggested foods and beverages that meet Smart Snacks nutrition standards.

2. Rewards and incentives. Schools will not use foods or beverages as rewards for academic performance or good behavior (unless this practice is allowed by a student's individual education plan or behavior intervention plan) and will not withhold food or beverages as punishment.

3. Fundraising. The school district will make available to parents and teachers a list of suggested healthy fundraising ideas.

E. Food and Beverage Marketing in Schools

1. School-based marketing will be consistent with nutrition education and health promotion.

2. Schools will restrict food and beverages marketing to the promotion of only those foods and beverages that meet the Smart Snacks nutrition standards.

V. WELLNESS LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

A. Wellness Coordinator

1. The superintendent will designate a school district official to oversee the school district's wellness-related activities (District RN and Director of Child Nutrition). The Wellness Coordinator will ensure that each school implements the policy.

2. The principal of each school, or a designated school official, will ensure compliance within the school and will report to the Wellness Coordinator regarding compliance matters upon request.

B. Public Involvement

1. The Wellness Coordinator will permit parents, students, representatives of the school food authority, teachers of physical education, school health professionals, the school board, school administrators, and the general public to participate in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the wellness policy.

2. The Wellness Coordinator will hold meetings, from time to time, for the purpose of discussing the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the wellness policy. All meeting dates and times will be posted on the school district's website and will be open to the public.

VI. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

A. Implementation and Publication

1. After approval by the school board, the wellness policy will be implemented throughout the school district.

2. The school district will post its wellness policy on its website, to the extent it maintains a website.

B. Annual Reporting

The Wellness Coordinator will annually inform the public about the content and implementation of the wellness policy and make the policy and any updates to the policy available to the public.

C. Triennial Assessment

1. At least once every three years, the school district will evaluate compliance with the wellness policy to assess the implementation of the policy and create a report that includes the following information:

   a. the extent to which schools under the jurisdiction of the school district are in compliance with the wellness policy;

   b. the extent to which the school district's wellness policy compares to model local wellness policies; and

   c. a description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the school district's wellness policy.

2. The Wellness Coordinator will be responsible for conducting the triennial assessment.

3. The triennial assessment report shall be posted on the school district's website or otherwise made available to the public.

D. Recordkeeping

The school district will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of the wellness policy. The records to be retained include, but are not limited to:

1. The school district's written wellness policy.

2. Documentation demonstrating compliance with community involvement requirements, including requirements to make the local school wellness policy and triennial assessments available to the public.

3. Documentation of the triennial assessment of the local school wellness policy for each school under the school district's jurisdiction efforts to review

and update the wellness policy (including an indication of who is involved in the update and methods the school district uses to make stakeholders aware of their ability to participate on the Wellness Committee).

Legal References:

Minn. Stat. § 121A.215 (Local School District Wellness Policy; Website)
42 U.S.C. § 1751 *et seq.* (Healthy and Hunger-Free Kids Act)
42 U.S.C. § 1758b (Local School Wellness Policy)
42 U.S.C. § 1771 *et seq.* (Child Nutrition Act)
7 U.S.C. § 5341 (Establishment of Dietary Guidelines)
7 C.F.R. § 210.10 (School Lunch Program Regulations)
7 C.F.R. § 220.8 (School Breakfast Program Regulations)

Local Resources:

Minnesota Department of Education, www.education.state.mn.us
Minnesota Department of Health, www.health.state.mn.us
County Health Departments
Action for Healthy Kids Minnesota, www.actionforhealthykids.org
United States Department of Agriculture, www.fns.usda.gov