

Instruction

School Nutrition and Physical Activity (Student Wellness)

Purpose and Goal

The Easton, Redding, and Region 9 School Districts strive to make a significant contribution to the general well-being and the education of each student. It is the conviction of the boards of education that good health optimizes student performance and leads to richer lives. The ER9 School Districts, therefore, support the maintenance of an environment where students learn healthy habits, participate in regular physical activity and receive proper nutrition as part of their total educational experience.

Creating, sustaining and promoting opportunities for appropriate physical activity assist every student to develop knowledge and skills leading to fitness, increased physical awareness and understanding of the benefits of an active and healthy lifestyle. Physical education plays a critical role in developing those skills and enhancing confidence. Provision of safe, accessible and affordable opportunities, as well as related instruction, guided by knowledgeable and supportive adults, influence the extent to which students choose to engage in and to enjoy physical activity throughout life.

In addition, nutrition impacts general health and readiness to learn. The lifelong habits of students are often affected by the foods they select or those that are available to them. For this reason, all foods available by the ER9 School Districts during mealtimes shall meet or exceed USDA standards for the National School Lunch Program and CT nutrition standards and Dietary Guidelines for Americans and My Plate. Further, other foods and beverages offered at schools will include nutritious options.

As part of the larger community, the ER9 School Districts are committed to providing learning environments that encourage lifelong healthy behavior. All ER9 schools shall be aligned with goals that positively influence students' understanding, beliefs and habits related to regular physical activity and good nutrition. The school communities shall help reinforce these positive messages.

The Boards of Education shall establish an ER9 Wellness Advisory Committee to develop school district policies on physical activity and nutrition for recommendation to and approval by the boards. The Committee membership will represent all school levels (elementary and secondary schools) and include (to the extent possible), but not be limited to: board members, school administrators, food service personnel, parents/guardians, representative students, physical and/or health education teachers; classroom teachers, school health professionals (school nurses), dietician and community members. To the extent possible, the Committee membership will include representatives from each school building and reflect the diversity of the community. In coordination with school administrators, the committee will monitor the implementation of the policy, evaluate its effectiveness and make recommendations for modifications, if necessary. This policy shall be interpreted consistently with Section 204 of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (Public Law 11-296).

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Physical Education and Physical Activity

Daily Physical Education and Standards-Based, Sequential Physical Education

A comprehensive physical education program will be offered at each school level with electives offered at the high school. Physical education will be taught in all grades (K-12) by a certified/licensed teacher and shall include a standards-based, developmentally planned and sequential curriculum that fosters the development of movement skills, enhances health-related fitness, increases students' knowledge, offers direct opportunities to learn how to work cooperatively in a group setting, and encourages healthy habits and attitudes for a healthy lifestyle. PE classes shall have a pupil-teacher ratio comparable to that in the classroom context. Unless otherwise exempted, all students will be required to engage in the District's physical education program. Student involvement in other activities, including those involving physical activity (e.g., interscholastic or intramural sports), will not be substituted for physical education.

In providing a quality physical education program the boards of education encourage the schools in the districts to:

- Provide physical education instructional periods for a minimum of 80 minutes per week for elementary and middle schools and up to two hundred twenty five (225) minutes per week for high school students, while meeting the minimum requirement of the completion of one credit of physical education before high school graduation.
- Staff physical education classes to provide for maximum student participation and safety.
- Provide adequate space/equipment and conform to all safety standards.
- Promote student participation in moderate to vigorous physical activity for at least 50 percent of physical education class time.
- Continue the implementation of developmentally-appropriate, health-related fitness assessments (e.g., The "Third Generation" Connecticut Physical Fitness Assessment, Physical Best, Fitness Gram and President's Council).
- Utilize lesson plans that increase student activity level in school and at home.
- Maintain alignment of the physical education curriculum with state and national standards.
- Provide the opportunity for all PE and Health staff to engage in professional development and encourage them to take advantage of other Physical Education and Health Education training opportunities.

Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School and Use of School Facilities Outside of School Hours

Participation in before and/or after school physical activity programs should be provided at the middle and high school levels.

Schools and communities can provide numerous opportunities, as well as physical facilities, for students, staff members and community to engage in structured and unstructured physical

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Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School and Use of School Facilities Outside of School Hours (continued)

activity. Therefore, (i) consistent with the policy adopted by the Board of any District regarding the use of school facilities and (ii) so long as such use is not in conflict with the mission or purpose of any School District, the Districts strongly encourage school personnel to:

- Work with recreation agencies and other area organizations to coordinate and enhance opportunities available to students, staff members and the community for physical activity outside of the regular school day.
- Develop periodic and ongoing programs to increase activity choices for students, staff members and the community.
- Maintain collaboration with area agencies and organizations to make school facilities available to students, staff members and the community for physical activity in a manner that does not infringe on the overall educational curriculum.

The use of school facilities shall be in accordance with Board Policy and this section is not intended to enlarge or otherwise alter the conditions of such use under any policy.

Daily Recess and Physical Activity and Punishment

Recess provides opportunities for physical activity, which helps students stay alert and attentive in class and provides other educational and social benefits. Therefore, the Districts shall:

At the elementary level:

- Encourage schedules that provide time, to the extent possible, within every school day for students to enjoy supervised recess. All elementary school students will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess during which moderate to vigorous physical activity will be encouraged.
- Have playgrounds or other facilities and equipment available for recess.
- Encourage students to be physically active at recess to supplement the daily recommended activity time for children.
- Not substitute recess for physical education classes.
- Strongly discourage the cancellation of recess to make up instructional time.

Additionally:

- Districts shall designate a planning and placement team to develop a different schedule for a child requiring special education and related services in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Educational Act.
- Strongly discourage the denial of a student's participation in recess or other scheduled physical activity as a form of discipline or punishment (except for when the safety of the student and/or others is at risk or when the student is abusing the recess privilege itself).
- Encourage the middle and high schools to provide intramural opportunities for all students and encourage student participation.

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Incorporating Physical Activity into the Classroom

The ER9 School Districts strongly encourage professional development as a means of increasing the knowledge base of staff members as it relates to a healthy lifestyle. Staff members are encouraged to integrate physical activity as part of the learning process. Classrooms shall incorporate, where reasonable, appropriate, short breaks that include physical movement.

Nutrition Education and Wellness Promotion

To ensure the well-being and health of all students, it is the policy of the Boards that the following practices shall be implemented:

- Nutrition education, health and fitness topics will be part of the District's comprehensive health education curriculum and will be integrated into other classroom content areas, as appropriate.
- Nutrition education curriculum shall be based on theories and methods proved through published research and current science and shall be consistent with state and federal requirements and guidelines. All resources and materials will be complete, accurate, balanced and consistent with the Districts' educational goals and curriculum guidelines. All commercial materials shall be reviewed for accuracy and appropriateness by the ER9 Wellness Advisory Committee.
- Collaboration between the Districts' health and physical education programs and food service program is encouraged. Nutrition promotion shall be offered in the school cafeteria and classrooms as described in Nutrition curricula.
- Nutrition Education focuses on skills including but not limited to reading food labels and menu planning.
- The entire school environment, not just the classroom, shall be aligned with healthy school goals to encourage good nutrition. Staff members are encouraged to model healthy eating behaviors. Nutrition education, activities and promotions will be provided to staff members, parents, students, coaches, nurses and other caregivers in the school community as appropriate. These activities may include but are not limited to handouts, professional development workshops, postings on the district website, articles, school newsletters, and presentations that focus on nutritional value, disease prevention, body image and self-acceptance, stress management, and other issues related to healthy lifestyles.
- Staff members responsible for nutrition education shall be adequately prepared through regular participation in training to effectively deliver the nutrition curriculum. Training shall include instructional techniques and strategies designed to promote healthy eating behaviors.
- It is encouraged that nutrition instruction be integrated into other subject areas as appropriate and reasonable.
- The food service management company will market healthy foods according to district guidelines and state and federal requirements and guidelines.

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Nutrition Standards

School Meals

Nutrition Guidelines

ER9 Schools participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the Connecticut Healthy Food Certification Program under CGS Section 10-215f. School meals shall offer varied and nutritious food choices that meet or exceed USDA standards for the National School Lunch Program and Connecticut nutrition standards and Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010 and My Plate. A variety of fruits and vegetables, milk (according to recommendations of the USDA and AAP), water, 100% fruit juice and whole grains will be available for purchase. The focus is on moderating calories, limiting unhealthy fats, sodium and sugars, and increasing consumption of nutrient-rich foods, such as fruit, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, lean meats and legumes.

Nutritional content of meals will be shared with students, staff members and families.

Foods

The food service management company abides by USDA regulations for all foods they sell. All sources of food sales to students must comply with the “Connecticut Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools” including, but not limited to, cafeteria a la carte sales, vending machines, school stores and fundraisers. Only foods listed on the CSDE’s *List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages*, will be sold. Nutrition guidelines that require the use of products that are whole-grain rich, high in fiber, and low in added sugar and sodium, served in appropriate portion sizes consistent with USDA standards shall be established for all foods offered by the food service management company.

Beverages

The District shall ensure that all beverages sold to students comply with the requirements of state statute and USDA beverage requirements.

Menu Planning

School menus will be planned to incorporate the principles of balance, variety, contrast, color and eye appeal. The food service management company provides the opportunity for input in menu planning from students, parents and staff members. Student feedback and participation in the school lunch program will include taste testing and student surveys. All menus will be reviewed by a dietician when possible. When this is not feasible, nutrition analysis software (using the USDA National Nutrient Database) will be used for menu review.

Reimbursable School Meals

Reimbursable school meals served shall meet, at a minimum, the nutrition requirements and regulations for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program.

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Breakfast

The Districts shall promote the value of a nutritious breakfast through implementation of a variety of promotional efforts and the School Breakfast Program at the high school level.

Special Dietary Needs

With appropriate medical documentation, modified meals shall be prepared for students with food allergies or other special dietary needs.

Other Foods and Beverages

Vending Machines and Other Sources of Food/Snacks

Availability of snacks and beverages sold from vending machines will be monitored in accordance with state and federal statutes. All beverage vending machines accessible to students will only dispense water.

Foods and snacks that are high in sugar and/or candy will not be available and/or distributed to students during lunchtimes through the food service, vending machines or fundraisers. Candy is defined as any processed food item that has any form of sugar listed as one of its first two ingredients (e.g., table sugar, sucrose, brown sugar, corn sweetener, fructose, glucose, dextrose, high fructose corn syrup, honey, lactose, maltose, molasses, and raw sugar).

Food or Beverage Contracts

The Districts shall evaluate all agreements with food or vending companies to sell foods or beverages in school for compliance with the CT Nutrition Standards and the CT Healthy Food Certification Program.

Fundraisers

The sale of non-food items is strongly encouraged. To the extent fundraising projects by students, staff members or parent organizations include food items, it is encouraged that the products be nutrient dense.

It is recognized that there might be occasions when the school principal or the head of school could allow a school group to deviate from these standards. Such discretion is left to the school principal or the head of school. When occasions have been approved by the school principal or the head of school, the sale of beverages that are high in sugar and/or candy (as defined in vending machine section above) to students must be conducted in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend. Such sale must be at the location of such event, and beverages and/or candy may not be sold from a vending machine or from a school store or a school cafeteria.

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Fundraisers (continued)

Each school should develop and distribute fundraiser guidelines that inform the sellers about Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-221 and Public Act 06-63 regarding fundraising and low-fat food availability and discourage the sale of candy and other sugary, high-fat foods.

Nutrition Practices in the Classroom and School Culture

Appropriate portion sizes of healthy snacks are strongly encouraged in terms of both teacher and parent practices. The use of high-sugar, low-nutrient food items as student incentives/rewards in the classroom is strongly discouraged. Incentives that result in increased physical activity are encouraged (e.g., lengthened recess and active games).

Teachers and parents should be encouraged to limit the frequency of celebrations that include high-sugar, low-nutrient food items. The promotion of non-food alternatives is strongly encouraged. If a fee is collected to cover the cost of foods and beverages given to students for celebrations and when lunch is not served on an Early Dismissal Day, then the food is being sold to students and must meet the CT Nutrition Standards.

Pre-K - 8 schools will provide suggestions to parents for healthy alternatives to low-nutrient, high-sugar food items to be served as snacks or for celebrations. Schools should assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, children's nutritional needs, ages and other considerations.

Other School-Based Activities to Promote Student Wellness

Surroundings for Eating

School meals shall be served in clean and pleasant settings and under appropriate supervision. Rules for safe behavior will be consistently enforced. The high school campus will be "closed" meaning that students are not permitted to leave the school grounds during the school day to purchase food elsewhere. Students will have access to hand washing/hand sanitizing facilities before meals and snacks.

Time for and Scheduling of Meals

Schools shall provide appropriate mealtimes with adequate time allocated, per state statute, for students to eat. All full day students will have a daily lunch period of not less than twenty minutes.

Qualifications of Food Service

The Boards will contract with food service providers who follow state and federal guidelines for training and safety and who include professional development on strategies for promoting healthy eating behaviors.

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Access to Drinking Water

Students and school staff members will have access to free, safe, fresh drinking water at all times throughout the school day. Water jugs and cups will be available in the cafeteria if water fountains are not present. Supervisory staff will facilitate access to water in the cafeteria. Students will be allowed to bring drinking water from home into the classroom.

Staff Wellness

The ER9 School Districts value the health and well-being of staff members and support their efforts to maintain healthy lifestyles. Staff members are encouraged to serve as role models for a healthy lifestyle.

Funding Support

The food service management company shall provide an annual Nutrition Grant to fund district nutritional initiatives.

Communication and Promotion

Consistent Health Messages

The Districts shall provide a learning environment for developing and practicing lifelong wellness behaviors. The entire school environment shall be aligned with healthy goals to positively influence a student's understanding, beliefs and habits as they relate to good nutrition and regular physical activity.

Engaging Families & Partnering with Community Organizations

The Districts respect families' efforts to provide healthy foods and daily physical activity for children. The Districts also encourage family, as well as community involvement, in supporting and reinforcing a healthy lifestyle.

The Districts support nutrition education for parents that may include, but is not limited, to providing healthy eating seminars, sending home nutrition information, postings on schools' websites, providing nutrient analyses of school menus and any other appropriate and effective methods for reaching families.

The Districts may promote school and community-based physical activity opportunities by sharing information through various means, including announcements, websites, newsletters or take-home materials.

Engaging Students

Schools shall engage students in planning and promoting a healthy school environment. Key health messages shall be encouraged by collaborative efforts between classroom and cafeteria personnel and through planned promotions. Such promotions could include, but not be limited to, health fairs and nutrition initiatives.

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Food Marketing in Schools

School-based marketing will be consistent with nutrition education and health promotion. Schools will restrict food and beverage marketing to the promotion of only healthy foods and beverages, (including fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy products), that meet the nutrition standards set forth in the District Wellness Policy.

Measuring and Evaluating

Monitoring

The Boards designate the Superintendent or his/her designee with the operational responsibility for ensuring that each school meets the requirements of the ER9 District Wellness Policy.

The Principals and the Head of School, or their designees, shall be responsible for the implementation and evaluation of the effectiveness of the wellness program.

The ER9 Wellness Advisory Committee will meet a minimum of twice a year. Members shall include, but need not be limited to, board members, school administrators, food service personnel, parents/guardians, representative students, physical and/or health education teachers, a school nurse, to the extent possible a registered dietician, and community members as appointed by the Superintendent.

The ER9 Wellness Advisory Committee should regularly assess the unique needs for meals or snacks at each school taking into account the time spent at school by students and staff. In addition, the Food Service Director will provide regular reports to the ER9 Wellness Advisory Committee related to students' patterns of food and snack purchases from the food service program. This information may be used in assessing improvements in the overall food program.

The schools' lunch service should be offered the opportunity to address these needs and concerns first with supplementation from vending machines and other sources as needed.

Community Input

The Superintendent, or designee, will invite suggestions and comments concerning the development, implementation, periodic review and improvement of the school wellness policy from community members, including parents, students, and representatives of the school food authority, teachers of physical education, school health professionals, members of the Board of Education, school administrators, and the public.

Evaluation of Wellness Policy

The following procedure shall be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the Wellness Policy:

- The ER9 Wellness Advisory Committee shall monitor the implementation of the Wellness Policy; evaluate progress in implementing policy; serve as a resource to school sites; and recommend revisions of the policy through the Superintendent or his/her designee, as determined necessary.

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- The policy shall be biennially reviewed to determine if it is meeting current needs and is workable in promoting healthy eating and physical activity.

In an effort to measure the implementation of this policy, the Board of Education designates the Principals and the Head of School, or their designees, as the people who are responsible for annually evaluating the effectiveness of the School Wellness Program and that their school meets the goals of this policy in promoting healthy eating and physical activity by ensuring:

1. Board policy is implemented as written.
2. All building, grade-level nutrition and physical education curriculum and materials are assessed for accuracy, completeness, balance and consistency with state and local district educational goals and standards.
3. Nutrition education is provided through the Districts' age-appropriate, comprehensive nutrition program.
4. Teachers responsible for nutrition and physical education receive curriculum-specific professional development.
5. Families and community organizations are involved, to the extent practicable, in nutrition education.

The Districts will make available to the public an assessment of the implementation, including the extent to which the schools are in compliance with policy and a description of the progress being made in attaining the goals of this policy.

(cf. 3542.33 – Food Sales Other Than the National School Lunch Program)

Legal Reference: **Connecticut General Statutes**

10-16b Prescribed courses of study

10-215 Lunches, breakfasts and the feeding programs for public school children and employees

10-221 Boards of education to prescribe rules, policies and procedures

10-221o Lunch Periods. Recess

10-221p Boards to make available for purchase nutritious, low-fat foods

10-221q Sale of beverages

10-215a Non-public school participation in feeding program

10-215b Duties of state board of education re: feeding programs

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10-215e Nutrition standards for food that is not part of lunch or breakfast program

10-215f Certification that food meets nutrition standards

10-216 Payment of expenses

10-215b-1 State board of education regulation. Competitive foods

PA 04-224 An Act Concerning Childhood Nutrition in Schools, Recess, and Lunch Breaks

PA 06-63 An Act Concerning Healthy Food and Beverages in School

National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program; Competitive Foods. (7 CFR Parts 210.11 and 220.12)

The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, Public Law 108-265

Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs, 7CFR Parts 210 & 220

Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, Public Law 11-296

Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (as amended by P.O. 108-269, July 2, 2004)

School Breakfast Program, 7 C.F. R. Part 220 (2006)

USDA, Center for Nutrition Policy & Procedures, My Plate, June, 2011

National School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program: Nutrition Standards for All Foods Sold in School (Federal Register, Vol. 78, No. 125, June 28, 2013)