

WELLNESS POLICY FOR OAKWOOD COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT #76

Belief Statement

The Oakwood CUSD #76 Board of Education is committed to providing a learning environment that promotes and supports overall 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 school goals to positively influence students' habits and beliefs and promote wellness and health, 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 ensure a total school environment that promotes and supports student wellness and health, helps to reduce childhood obesity, and meets the requirements of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 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 encouraging parents, students, school personnel and administrators, the school board, and the public in developing this policy.

Rationale

A disturbing number of children are inactive and do not eat well. The result has been an alarming three-fold increase in the number of children and adolescents who are overweight since 1980. On June 30, 2004, the U.S. Congress passed the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004. Recognizing the role schools can play in health promotion, this law requires local education agencies participating in a program authorized by the National School Lunch Act or the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 to develop a local wellness policy. The objectives of the wellness policy are to promote student health, improve the school nutrition environment, and reduce childhood obesity. In addition, Public Act 094-0199 amends the Illinois School Code, requiring the Illinois State Board of Education to establish a state goal that all districts have a wellness policy.

The link between nutrition and learning is well documented. Healthy eating patterns are essential for students to achieve their full academic potential, physical and mental growth, and life-long health and well-being. Healthy eating is demonstrably linked to reduced risk for mortality and the development of many chronic diseases. Schools and school communities have the responsibility to help students acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to establish and maintain lifelong healthy eating patterns. Well-planned and well-implemented wellness programs have been shown to positively influence childrens' health.

Schools also have the responsibility to help students establish and maintain lifelong habits of being physically active. According to the U.S. Surgeon General, regular physical activity is one of the most important things people can do to maintain and improve their physical and mental health and overall well-being. Regular physical activity reduces the risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, colon cancer, and diabetes, and the risk of premature death in general.

Goals for Nutrition Education

- Students in pre K-12 shall receive nutrition education as part of a program coordinated with comprehensive health education. The program shall provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to adopt healthy eating behaviors and aimed at influencing students' knowledge, attitudes, and eating habits. The curriculum shall be consistent with and incorporate relevant Illinois Learning Standards.
- Nutrition education should be integrated into the standards-based lesson plans of other school subjects such as math, science, language arts, social studies, physical education, health, and family and consumer science.
- It is recommended that a minimum of fifty contact hours be provided to students each year. Contact hours may include a combination of classroom instruction, nutrition education provided in the school cafeterias, health fairs, field trips and assemblies. The activities should be designed to promote student engagement and interaction in their learning.

Goals for Physical Activity

- Students in pre-K – 12 shall have the opportunity to participate in daily physical education that enables them to achieve and maintain a high level of personal fitness, emphasizes self-management skills and is consistent with state or district standards.
- It is recommended that elementary students participate in physical education for 150 minutes per week, and middle and high school students participate for 225 minutes per week (National Association of Sport and Physical Education recommendations). Special emphasis should be placed on promoting an active lifestyle in preschool through primary grades as health habits are established at a young age. Accommodations shall be made for students with disabilities, 504 plans, or other limitations.
- Schools will provide opportunities to promote physical activity through a range of before and after school programs, including intramurals, interscholastic activities, and clubs.
- The physical education program shall seek to actively engage families as partners in promoting physical activity beyond the school day.

Goals for Other School-Based Activities Designed to Promote Student Wellness.

Parent Partnerships

- Schools shall support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. This support shall begin in elementary school and continue through jr. high and high school.
- Parents shall be provided information to help them incorporate healthy eating and physical activity in their student's lives. This information may be provided in the form of handouts, postings on the school/district website, newsletters, and any other appropriate means available for reaching parents.

Consistent School Activities and Environments – Healthy Eating

- It is recommended that food providers share information about the nutritional content of school meals and /or individually sold foods with students, family and school staff.
- School meals shall be served in clean, safe and pleasant settings with adequate time provided for students to eat, at a minimum, in accordance with state and federal standards and guidelines.
- All food service personnel shall have adequate pre-service training and regularly participate in professional development activities that provide strategies for providing tasty, appealing, and healthy school meals; nutrition education strategies including coordination of classroom and cafeteria activities; and effective promotional strategies to encourage healthy eating habits.
- Food providers shall seek to involve families, students, and other school personnel in choosing nutritious food and beverage selections for their local school through a variety of activities designed to provide input into the decision making process.
- Food providers shall work with suppliers to obtain foods and beverages that meet the nutrition requirements of school meals and nutrition standards for those sold individually.
- Food providers shall strive to work with school instructional staff to reinforce nutrition instruction and foster an environment where students can learn about and practice healthy eating.
- Food providers shall take every measure to ensure that student access to foods and beverages on school campuses meets federal, state, and local laws and guidelines.
- Persons bringing foods and beverages to school for parties, celebrations, or meetings shall be encouraged to provide healthful options and shall be provided with a list of recommended food and beverage items (Attachment B).
- School-based organizations shall be encouraged to raise funds through the sale of items other than food (Attachment C).
- Schools shall take efforts to promote nutritious food and beverages consistent with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans and Food Guidance System (MyPyramid) such as fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy foods, and whole grain products.

- It is recommended that staff providing nutrition education seek out professional development activities that provide basic knowledge of nutrition, along with activities, instructional techniques, and strategies designed to change students' attitudes and behaviors.
- 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.

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 enjoyable, lifelong, healthy eating and physical activity among students.
- Physical education classes shall have a student-to-teacher ratio comparable to those in other curricular areas.
- When possible, teachers shall attempt to integrate physical education topics within other curricular areas.
- Schools are encouraged to limit extended periods of inactivity. When activities such as mandatory testing make it necessary for students to be inactive for long periods of time, it is recommended that schools give students periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.
- Schools are encouraged to develop community partnerships with other child-serving organizations to provide students with opportunities to be active.
- Physical activity facilities and equipment on school grounds shall be safe.
- Schools are encouraged to work with the community to create an environment that is safe and supportive of students walking or biking to school.

Nutrition Guidelines for All Foods and Beverages Available on School Campuses During the School Day.

- Food providers shall offer a variety of age-appropriate and appealing foods and beverage choices and employ food purchasing, preparation, and meal planning practices consistent with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- Schools shall make efforts to provide nutritious and appealing foods and beverages, such as fruit, vegetables, low-fat dairy products, and whole grain products, wherever and whenever food is sold or otherwise offered.

Guidelines for School Meals

- School meals served shall be consistent with the recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and/or shall meet, at a minimum, the nutrition requirements and regulations for the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program and all applicable state and local laws and regulations.

Measuring Implementation and 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 committee that includes parents, students, representatives of the school food authority, the school board, school administrators, and the public to oversee the development, implementation and evaluation of the wellness policy. In addition, it is recommended that the district superintendent also appoint teachers and health professionals as members of the committee.
- The terms of the district wellness committee members shall be staggered for continuity.
- The appointed district wellness committee members shall be responsible for:
 - Creating and maintaining bylaws for operation;
 - Assessment of the current school environment;
 - Development of the wellness policy;
 - Presenting the wellness policy to the school board for approval;
 - Measuring the implementation of the wellness policy; and
 - Recommending revision of the policy, as necessary
- The principal of each campus shall be responsible for implementation of the local wellness policy and shall appoint a school-based evaluation team to develop and implement an annual evaluation plan.
- The school-based evaluation team shall evaluate policy implementation and identify areas for improvement. The evaluation team shall report their findings to the campus principal and develop with him or her a plan for action for improvement, as needed.
- The wellness committee shall hear reports from each campus group annually.
- Before the end of each school year, the wellness committee shall recommend to the district superintendent any revisions to the policy it deems necessary.
- The wellness committee shall report to the superintendent and school board annually on the progress of the wellness committee and the status of compliance by the campuses.