POLICY: FEDERAL CHILD NUTRITION ACT WELLNESS POLICY

CODE: C9
(MANDATORY)

Purpose
The intent of this Policy is to ensure compliance with the local policy requirements of the federal Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, and the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA). In accord with those requirements, this Policy has been developed in consultation with parents, students, representatives of the school food services authority, school administrators, teachers of physical education, school health professionals and the public.

Policy Statement
It is the policy of the Maple Run Unified School District to establish goals for nutrition promotion and education, nutrition guidelines, physical activity and other school-based activities that are designed to promote student wellness. With the objective of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity, the district will also establish nutrition guidelines for all foods available at school during the school day. The district will review and consider evidence-based strategies in determining these goals.

Farm to School Program: The district recognizes that school gardens and farm visits can offer physical activity and nutritional education opportunities, as well as agricultural education, by engaging students in activities such as planting, harvesting and weeding.

1. Goals for Nutrition Promotion and Education:

Nutrition promotion and education positively influence lifelong eating behaviors by using evidence-based techniques and nutrition messages, and by creating food environments that encourage healthy nutrition choices and encourage participation in school meal programs. Students and staff will receive consistent nutrition messages throughout schools, classrooms, gymnasiums, and cafeterias.

Nutrition promotion also includes marketing and advertising nutritious foods and beverages to students and is most effective when implemented consistently through a comprehensive and multi-channel approach by school staff, teachers, parents, students and the community. The District will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students throughout the school campus, as well as encourage participation in school meal programs.

The District protects the privacy of students who qualify for free or reduced priced meals. No procedures identify these students in the enrollment process nor in the provision of meals. Families are routinely provided information about eligibility for free/reduced

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priced meals and encouraged to apply. Periodic updates are provided, and information is readily available to parents/guardians through verbal, printed, and website communications. Schools must serve students a reimbursable meal, regardless of whether the student has money to pay or owes money.

The District shall provide nutrition promotion and education programs as required by state law and regulations of the State Board of Education. In particular, the District shall provide a nutrition component in its Comprehensive Health Education program and shall develop curricular programs intended to accomplish applicable goals enumerated in the Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities and the National Health Education Standards.

A. Nutrition education and promotion programs shall be conducted by appropriately licensed staff members. Nutrition education teaches skills that are behavior focused, interactive and/or participatory. All school Food Service personnel, including nutrition program directors, managers and staff will meet or exceed hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements in the USDA professional standards for child nutrition professionals. These school nutrition personnel will refer to USDA’s Professional Standards for School Nutrition Standards website to search for training that meets their learning needs.

B. To the extent practicable, nutrition education and promotion shall be integrated into core curricula in areas such as science, and family and consumer science courses. In PK-12 schools, nutrition education is recommended to be offered at each grade level as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based health education curriculum that meets state and national standards.

C. The district will limit food and beverage marketing to the promotion of only those foods and beverages that meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards on school campus.

D. All schools will implement at least ten or more evidence-based healthy food promotion techniques through the school meal programs using Smarter Lunchroom techniques.

E. Morning schedules allow students time to eat breakfast.

F. Students are prohibited from leaving campus for lunch, except for senior privileges.

G. Educational signage in the food service area indicates the daily menu offerings and required minimum selections needed to make a complete meal.

H. The district discourages consumption of competitive foods in place of school meals by limiting competitive food choices during mealtimes in the cafeteria.

I. Schools encourage increased consumption of fruits and vegetables and a culture of trying new foods in the school cafeteria.

J. Schools shall label/mark healthy food items available, so students know which the healthy items are.

K. The healthiest choices, such as salads and fruit, will be prominently displayed in the cafeterias to encourage students to make healthy choices.

L. Local food selections shall be marked so students connect the foods they eat with the farms that produce them.
2. Goals for Physical Education and Physical Activity

The District shall offer opportunities for students in grades PreK-12 to participate in at least 30 minutes of physical activity within or outside of the school day. Schools will ensure that these varied physical activity opportunities are in addition to, and not as a substitute for, physical education.

Physical Education
A. The District shall provide physical education classes for all students as required by Vermont Education Quality Standards. The District shall provide all students with physical education, by developing or adopting a written age-appropriate, sequential physical education curriculum consistent with national and state standards for physical education.
B. Exemptions from physical education class time or credit is allowed but discouraged.
C. Schools may not allow students to substitute other school or community activities for required physical education time or credit, unless an individual plan is developed that meets state standards.
D. Adapted physical education shall be designed, delivered and assessed by a licensed physical education teacher in consultation with other colleagues (e.g. special educator, occupational therapist), student, and parents as necessary.
E. Each school shall provide students in grades K-8 with at least two physical education classes per week, comprised of a minimum of 60 minutes per week. Students in grades 9-12 are required to enroll in one and one-half years of physical education, comprised of 91-221 minutes per week each of three semesters.
F. Physical Education classes will have a student/teacher ratio similar to those used in other classes.
G. The District PreK-12 physical education program will promote student physical fitness through individualized fitness and activity assessments via FitnessGram or other appropriate assessment tools and will use criterion-based reporting for each student.
H. During physical education, students should be moderately to vigorously active for an average of at least 50% of class time during most or all physical education class sessions.
I. Physical education teacher professional development shall be based on identified needs and aligned with other school or district continuous improvement priorities. All PE teachers will be given the opportunity to participate in at least one content-related professional development activity/course each year.
J. All physical education classes in the district are taught by licensed teachers who are certified or endorsed to teach physical education.
K. Lifetime sport instruction shall be included.
L. School staff members are encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity behaviors.

Physical Activity
The District shall offer opportunities for students in grades PreK-12 to participate in at least 30 minutes of physical activity within or outside of the school day. PreK programs will follow Vermont childcare licensing requirements for daily physical movement. Physical
activity may include recess and movement built into the curriculum but does not replace physical education classes.

A. All elementary schools will offer at least 20 minutes of recess on all days during the school year. This policy may be waived on early dismissal or late arrival days.

B. Schools will have appropriate hand-washing facilities and/or hand-sanitizing mechanisms located just inside/outside the cafeteria to ensure proper hygiene prior to eating and students are required to use these mechanisms before eating.

C. In the event that the school or district must conduct indoor recess, teachers and staff will promote physical activity for students, to the extent practicable.

D. The district recognizes that students are more attentive and ready-to-learn if provided with periodic breaks during which they can be physically active or stretch.

E. Teachers should provide students with a physical activity break for every 60 minutes of academic instruction daily. These physical activity breaks will complement, not substitute for physical education class, recess, and class transition periods.

F. School personnel shall not use physical activity or withhold physical education class, movement opportunities or recess as a punishment. Guidelines will be developed to address this issue. This does not apply to eligibility for interscholastic athletics, nor to physical activities in interscholastic athletic practices or games.

G. Teachers will incorporate movement and kinesthetic learning approaches into “core” subject instruction when possible and limit sedentary behavior during the school day.

H. Physical activity opportunities should be provided at the schools for families and community members.

I. District policies require schools to enter into joint-use agreements for community use of school facilities and school use of community facilities for physical activity programming.

J. Schools promote walking and biking to school.

K. To the extent practicable, the district will ensure that its grounds and facilities are safe, and that equipment is available to students to be active. The district will conduct necessary inspections and repairs.

3. Goals for Nutrition and Other School Based Activities

A. The District shall ensure that guidelines for reimbursable school meals are not less restrictive than regulations and guidance issued by the Secretary of Agriculture pursuant to sections (a) and (b) of section 9A(a) and (b) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act as those regulations and guidance apply to schools.

B. The District shall provide adequate space for eating and serving school meals.

C. The District shall provide a clean and safe meal environment for students.

D. The District shall establish meal periods that provide adequate time to eat and are scheduled at appropriate hours. Students will be scheduled at least 10 minutes to eat breakfast and at least 25 minutes to eat lunch.
E. The use of food is never to be used as a reward or punishment.
F. The District shall provide training opportunities as appropriate for food service and other staff members in areas of nutrition and wellness.
G. Schools participating in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast programs shall make free potable water available to children in the meal service areas.
H. Students will be allowed to bring and carry approved water bottles filled with only water with them throughout the school day. Free, potable water will be available to children throughout the school day.
I. The district will implement other wellness-based school activities from time to time at the discretion of the superintendent or his or her designee. These activities will be in accordance with evidence-based strategies such as those provided in the Vermont School Wellness Policy Guidelines.
J. The district will seek community partnerships to provide resources, environmental approaches, and/or social and behavioral programs for parents/caregivers, families, and the general community to engage in healthy eating and physical activity.
K. At the building level, the staff focuses on student wellness issues, identifies and disseminates wellness resources, and performs other functions that support student wellness.
L. The district staff wellness committee, with a staff representative from each school, meets once per month throughout the school year. This district-wide staff wellness committee provides a variety of resources, activities, and promotional wellness events.
M. There is a district wellness policy committee including all stakeholders that meets at least quarterly.

4. Goals for Nutrition Services
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 programs aim 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. To support these goals:
A. All schools will provide breakfast and lunch in compliance with the USDA School Lunch and Breakfast Program requirements. No foods of minimal nutritional value, as listed in 7 CFR 210, Appendix B and 7 CFR 220, Appendix B shall be sold in food service areas during breakfast and lunch periods.  
B. All school menus will be based on the USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
C. Schools provide food service flexibilities, such as: Farm to School, school gardens, Breakfast in the Classroom, Mobile Breakfast carts, Grab ‘n’ Go Breakfast, or other applicable food programs that increase food access.
D. Schools shall provide periodic food promotions to encourage taste testing of healthy new foods being introduced on the menu.

E. The district shall use the USDA’s Smarter Lunchroom tools and other resources available on the USDA website to increase participation.

F. Schools use USDA geographical preference rules to access local food and beverages whenever possible.

G. Nutrition Services will coordinate its menus with seasonal production of local farms and with production in school gardens so that school meals will reflect seasonally and local agriculture.

H. The school food service program is in good standing with all USDA meal program regulations, such as nutrition specifications, civil rights and food safety.

I. The school food service program administration materials are available upon request. Examples include meeting minutes, participation rates, health inspection results and its nutritional compliance results.

J. Menus will be posted on the District website or individual school websites, and nutrient content and ingredients are available.

K. School meals are administered by a team of child nutrition professionals.

L. Students are served lunch at a reasonable and appropriate time of day.

M. When possible, lunch will follow the recess period to better support learning and healthy eating.

N. Participation in Federal child nutrition programs will be promoted among students and families to help ensure that families know what programs are available in their children’s school.

5. Nutrition Standards for Competitive and Other Foods & Beverages

There is no exemption in Vermont for fundraisers that do not meet the Smart Snack standards during the school day. These standards also apply for all foods provided, but not sold, to students during the school day. Foods provided but not sold may include food that is part of a classroom celebration or provided by parents or community organizations free of charge. These standards are recommended to also apply to off-campus events and to campus events that occur outside of the school day.

A. Schools will encourage options of selling non-food items or participating in other events to support the school and community such as gift wrap, light bulbs, plants, books, car washes, walkathons, fun runs, School garden produce, etc. The District will provide a list of healthy fundraising ideas from such sources as the Alliance for a Healthier Generation and the USDA.

B. The district will work to eliminate the advertising of foods and beverages that are not available for sale in district schools. This includes school property (e.g. signs, scoreboards, sports equipment, vending machines, food or beverage containers, racks, coolers, trash or recycling containers), school publications or school media outlets, and fund raisers or incentive programs that provide children with free or discounted foods or beverages. No advertising of foods and beverages that fail to meet Smart Snack standards will be present in cafeterias. High school administration is encouraged to limit food and beverages that contain caffeine. All advertising must be approved by the principal.

6. Celebrations and Rewards
Recognizing food allergies and dietary restrictions, at the start of each school year and periodically throughout the year, teachers and staff will communicate with parents and students about appropriate foods, preferably smart snacks and healthy choices to be allowed in classroom celebrations.

A. The district will provide a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers, including non-food celebration ideas.
B. Celebrations will focus on activities. If food is included in the celebration, healthy choices should be made available.
C. The District will provide teachers and other relevant school staff a list of alternative ways to reward children.
D. Food and beverages will not be used as a reward, or withheld as punishment for any reason, such as performance or behavior. Exceptions can be approved.

7. Assessment
The District will conduct an assessment of the wellness policy every 3 years. This assessment will determine compliance with the wellness policy, how the wellness policy compares to model wellness policies, and progress made in attaining the goals of the wellness policy. The triennial assessment results will be made available to the public. The district wellness policy committee will review progress with all relevant stakeholders and recommend policy updates for School Board consideration.

8. Policy Implementation.[10]
A. The Superintendent or his/her designee shall periodically monitor district programs and curriculum to ensure compliance with this policy and any administrative procedures established to carry out the requirements of this policy. The district shall periodically inform and update the public about the content and implementation of this policy, including the extent to which District schools are in compliance with this policy, the extent to which this policy compares to model local school wellness policies and a description of the progress made in attaining the goals of this policy.[11]
B. The District shall 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 this policy.[12]
C. The Superintendent or his/her designee shall report at least annually to the board and to the public on the District’s compliance with law and policies related to student wellness. The report shall include information as to the content and implementation of this policy, and an assurance that district guidelines for reimbursable meals are not less restrictive than regulations and guidelines issued for schools in accordance with federal law. [13]

MRUSD Board
Date Adopted: 11/2/2016
Date Revision Adopted: 6/5/2017
Date 2nd Revision Adopted: 6/5/2019

Legal Reference(s).
16 V.S.A. §§131 & 906(b)(3).


Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010, Section 204 of Public Law 111-296.


[2] These goals are intended to be illustrative. Local policy makers should consider the addition of locally established goals. For examples of goals used elsewhere, consult the resources listed in the material accompanying this model policy.


[4] These goals are intended to be illustrative. Local policy makers should consider the addition of locally established goals. For examples of goals used elsewhere, consult the resources listed in the material accompanying this model policy.

[5] These goals are illustrative. Local policy makers should consider the addition of locally established goals. For examples of goals used elsewhere, consult the resources listed in the material accompanying this model policy.

[6] This provision is required of schools participating in National School Lunch and Breakfast programs.

[7] The federal law requires that local wellness policies include “nutrition guidelines selected by the local educational agency for all foods available on each school campus…during the school day with the objectives of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity.” Include locally established guidelines as appropriate.

[8] Required of schools participating in National School Lunch and Breakfast programs.


[10] The Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act requires the establishment of “a plan for measuring implementation of the local wellness policy, including the designation of 1 person within the local education agency or at each school, as appropriate, charged with operational responsibility for ensuring that the school meets the local wellness policy.” For examples of implementation plans, consult the references cited in the materials accompanying this model policy.


[13] P.L. 111-296 Sec. 9A(b)(4) and (5)