

Model Wellness Policy

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION MODEL WELLNESS POLICY

Introduction and Rationale

Introduction

In the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, PL 105-268, the U.S. Congress established a new requirement for all local agencies (including public and nonpublic, as well as, Residential Child Care Institutions) with a federally funded National School Lunch program. The local agencies are required to develop and implement wellness policies that address nutrition and physical activity by the start of the 2006-07 school year. In response to this requirement the South Dakota Department of Education (SDDOE) convened a work group consisting of health, physical activity, nutrition, and education professionals representing a variety of organizations, plus students and parents, to develop a wellness policy for local agencies.

The model wellness policy developed by SDDOE meets the new federal requirement. It is based on science, research, and existing practices from exemplary states and local school districts around the country. The first priority of the work group was to promote children's health and well-being; however, feasibility of policy implementation was also considered.

Some aspects of a broader conception of "wellness" are not addressed in the model policies that follow. School districts are encouraged to establish and maintain a coordinated school health program that addresses all components of school health, including mental health services and school health services, which are not addressed in these model policies. These model policies also do not address certain important related areas, such as counseling services for those with eating disorders, food safety policies, and policies to reduce weight-related bullying. Schools may also choose to expand their wellness policy to address other risk behaviors. Additionally, schools will support the health of all students by hosting health clinics, health screenings, and encouraging the enrollment of eligible children in the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

Rationale

The increasing rates of overweight and obesity among youth threaten to jeopardize the future health and productivity of our children. Will academic success become more and more difficult for students to attain as lifestyle choices diminish a child's ability to learn? Will the students of today be the first generation to have a shorter life expectancy than their parents? Do over nourished and malnourished children face similar adversities?

A healthy school environment goes beyond school meals in the cafeteria. Living a healthy lifestyle and maintaining a healthy weight requires a combination of healthy food choices, knowledge of nutrition, and appropriate amounts of physical activity. All foods made available on school campuses should offer children nutritious choices. Nutrition education and physical activity should be incorporated into the school day as often as possible. The healthy, nutritionally astute, and physically active child is more likely to be academically successful.

The federal government recognizes that a coordinated effort by the entire community including child nutrition professionals, school board members, parents, students, school administrators, teachers and business community is warranted. These efforts involve adults serving as role models and community members being informed of the policies that improve the long- term health and well-being of students. The local agency has a strategic role to play in improving the health and well-being of children.

Using the Model Policies

Local agencies may choose to use the following model policies as written or revise them to meet local needs and reflect community priorities. When developing wellness policies school districts will need to take into account their unique circumstances, challenges, and opportunities. Among the factors to consider are socioeconomic status of the student body; school size; rural or urban location; and presence of immigrant, dual-language, or limited-English students.

The local agency must convene a committee to develop its wellness policy. The most effective wellness policy is one that has input from stakeholders in the community. The committee must include the following:

- Food service representative
- Administrator
- Classroom teacher (for example health and physical education, nutrition, and general subject matter)
- Student
- School board member
- Community member/Parent

The committee may also include:

- School nurse
- Dietitian and/or dietary manager
- Medical professional
- Local business representative

Steps in Developing Policy

Assess Needs and Resources

It often helps to begin by conducting a baseline assessment of schools' existing nutrition and physical activity environments. The results of school-by-school assessments can be compiled at the district level to prioritize needs. Useful self-assessment and planning tools include the [School Health Index](#) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), [Changing the Scene](#) from the Team Nutrition Program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and [Opportunity to Learn Standards for Elementary, Middle, and High School Physical Education](#) from the National Association for Sport and Physical Education.

Develop and Adopt Policy

The committee shall draft a policy using input from the committee members. It may be helpful to attain input from the general public after the policy is drafted. Compromises from the ideal might be required as district decision makers consider challenges such as limited class time, curriculum requirements, and funding and space constraints. The governing board shall adopt the policy.

Implement Policy

Educate students and the community on the existing needs, the policy, and desired effects. A local agency may find it more practical to phase in its wellness policies than to implement a comprehensive set of nutrition and physical activity policies all at once. Implementation must include addressing the following four components: Nutrition Education, Physical Activity, Nutrition Standards, and Other School Based Activities. The setting of goals, objectives, and timelines will assist in effective implementation of the policies.

Measure Success

As outlined in law, the local agency shall designate one or more persons with operational responsibility for ensuring that the local agency meets the requirements of the local wellness policy.

Nutrition Education Component

At each grade level nutrition education will be offered as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote their health. Nutrition education will be incorporated into the school day as often as possible. The primary goal of nutrition education is to influence students' eating behaviors.

Nutrition Education:

- teaches consistent scientifically-based nutrition messages throughout the school, classroom, cafeteria, home, community, and media;
- is part of health education classes and/or stand alone courses;
- is included in the scope and sequence of the curriculum in core subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects;
- includes the school cafeteria which serves as a “learning laboratory” to allow students to apply critical thinking skills taught in the classroom;
- uses the SD Health Education Standards and addresses nutrition concepts progressively in grades K through 12;
- provides enjoyable, developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant, and participatory activities (e.g. contests, promotions, taste testing, farm visits, and school gardens);
- offers information to families that encourages them to teach their children about health and nutrition, and assists them in planning nutritious meals for their families;
- will be taught by staff who are adequately prepared and who participate in professional development activities in order to deliver an effective program;
- will include a school nutrition/health team, such as Team Nutrition or Coordinated School Health, to conduct nutrition education activities and promotions that involve parents, students, and the community.

Physical Activity Component

The primary goal for the school's physical activity component is to provide opportunities for every student to develop the knowledge and skills for specific physical activities, maintain physical fitness, regularly participate in physical activity, and understand the short and long-term benefits of a physically active and healthful lifestyle.

Daily Physical Education Classes K-12

- All students in grades K-12 will receive daily physical education (or its equivalent of 150 minutes per week for elementary school students and 225 minutes per week for middle and high school students) for the entire school year. Students with disabilities, special health-care needs, and those in alternative educational settings will be included.
- Students will spend at least 50 percent of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.
- The physical education curriculum should demonstrate progression and sequence and be consistent with South Dakota and/or National Physical Education standards for Pre-K through grade 12.
- All physical education will be taught by highly qualified physical education teachers.
- Class teacher-to-student ratios should be equivalent to those of other subject area classes in the school.
- Student participation in other activities involving physical activity (e.g., interscholastic or intramural sports) will not be substituted for meeting the physical education requirement.

Physical Activity across the Curriculum

- Opportunities for physical activity are regularly incorporated into other subject areas (e.g. math, language arts, science, and social studies.).

Daily Recess

- All elementary school students will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which students are encouraged (verbally and through the provision of space and equipment) to engage in moderate to vigorous physical activity.
- When feasible, recess will occur prior to lunch to ensure appropriate healthful food intake.
- Extended periods of inactivity, two hours or more, are discouraged. When activities, such as mandatory school-wide testing, make it necessary for students to remain indoors for long periods of time, students will be given periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.

Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School

- All elementary, middle, and high schools will offer extracurricular physical activity programs, such as physical activity clubs or intramural programs.
- All high schools and middle schools as appropriate, will offer interscholastic sports programs.
- Schools will offer activities that meet the needs, interests, and abilities of all students, including boys, girls, students with disabilities, and students with special health-care needs.
- Schools will educate and encourage participation in community or club activities.
- After-school child care and enrichment programs will provide and encourage (verbally and through the provision of space, equipment, and activities) daily periods of moderate to vigorous physical activity for all participants.

Rewards/Incentives/Consequences

- Teachers and other school and community personnel will not use physical activity (e.g., running laps, push-ups) or withhold opportunities for physical activity (e.g., recess, physical education) as punishment.
- Students will not be denied physical activity for purposes of make-up work, testing, etc.

Safe Routes to School

- The school district will assess and, if necessary and to the extent possible, make needed improvements to make it safer and easier for students to walk and bike to school. When appropriate, the district will work together with local public works, public safety, and/or police departments in those efforts.
- The school district will explore the availability of funding through the SD Department of Transportation.
- The school district will encourage students to use public transportation when available and appropriate for travel to school.

Use of School Facilities Outside of School Hours

- School spaces and facilities will be available to students, staff, and community members before, during, and after the school day; on weekends; and during school vacations.
- Schools will educate the community, including parents and staff, about utilizing the facility. These spaces and facilities also will be available to community agencies and organizations offering physical activity and nutrition programs.
- School policies concerning safety will apply at all times.

Wellness Council/Committee

- Schools will develop a Wellness Council/Committee comprised of school personnel, community members, and students to plan, implement, and assess ongoing activities that promote healthy lifestyles, particularly physical activity for all age groups within the school community.

Other School-Based Activities Component

Schools will create an environment that provides consistent wellness messages, is conducive to healthy eating and physical activity; and contributes to forming healthy life long habits.

Professional Development

- Schools will provide ongoing professional development and education for foodservice professionals, educators, administrators and other staff.
- Schools will provide nutrition and physical education for students, staff, parents, and, where appropriate, community members.

Eating Environment

- Students and staff will have adequate space to eat meals in clean, safe, pleasant surroundings and will have adequate time scheduled as near the middle of the school day as possible to eat, relax, and socialize.
- Safe drinking water and convenient access to facilities for hand washing and oral hygiene will be available during all meal periods.
- Consideration will be given for passing time, bathroom break, hand washing, and socializing so as to allow ten minutes for breakfast and twenty minutes for lunch once the student is seated.

Recess Before Lunch

- Schools will schedule recess for elementary grades before lunch when possible so that children will come to lunch less distracted and ready to eat. Activity before lunch also encourages nutrient intake.

Rewards, Incentives, and Consequences

- Rewards and incentives will be given careful consideration as to the messages they send to the students receiving them. Food will not be used as a reward or incentive in the classroom, but other, more appropriate rewards may be used (e.g. extra free time, pencils, bookmarks,).
- Food will not be withheld from students as a consequence for inappropriate behavior or poor academic performance.
- Teachers and other school personnel will not prohibit or deny student participation in recess or other physical activity as a consequence for inappropriate behavior or poor academic performance; nor will they cancel recess or other physical activity for instructional make-up time.

Community Access to Facilities for Physical Activity

- Schools will provide community access to the school's physical activity facilities outside of the normal school day and/or form city-school partnerships to institute recreation programs utilizing school facilities when possible.

Vending Machines

- Vending machines with food and beverages will not be available in elementary schools. The school will provide healthy snacks as a part of the after-school care activities. In the event that these snacks are not available as a part of the after-school care activities, the school may provide vending services with healthy choices.
- No vending services will be available one hour before and one hour after the breakfast and lunch service.

Fundraising

- School fundraising activities will support healthy lifestyles. Such activities may include physical activity (e.g. walk-a-thon), school support (e.g. selling school memorabilia) and/or academic achievement (e.g. spelling bee).
- The sale of food or beverages as a fund raiser will not take place from one hour before and one hour after the breakfast and lunch service.
- Schools will encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity.
- The school district will make available a list of ideas for acceptable fundraising activities.

Wellness Councils

- Schools will organize local wellness councils comprised of parents, teachers, administrators, foodservice personnel, and students to plan, implement, and improve nutrition and physical activity within the school environment.

Nutrition Standards Component

Students' life-long eating habits are greatly influenced by the types of foods and beverages available to them. Foods of good nutritional content including fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy foods, and low-fat grain products will be available wherever and whenever food is sold or otherwise offered at school during the normal school day. Examples may include a la carte, snacks, vending machines, fund raising activities, parties, celebrations, and school sponsored events.

General Guidelines

- Food pricing strategies will be designed to encourage students to purchase nutritious items.
- Procedures will be in place for providing information to families, upon request, about the ingredients and nutritional values of the foods served.
- Food and beverages sold or served on school grounds or at school sponsored events during the normal school day will meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the Standards for Food and Beverages set forth in this document.

School Meal Program

- The school food service program will operate in accordance with the National School Lunch Act and the Child Nutrition Act of 1996 as amended and with applicable laws and regulations of the state of South Dakota. All schools will comply with USDA regulations and state policies.
- Schools will offer varied and nutritious food choices that are consistent with the federal government's Dietary Guidelines for Americans. For the purpose of this policy, "Dietary Guidelines for Americans" refers to the current set of recommendations of the federal government that are designed to help people choose diets that will meet nutrient requirements, promote health, support active lives, and reduce chronic disease risks.
- Menus will be planned with input from students, family members, and other school personnel and will take into account students' cultural norms and preferences.
- Students with special dietary needs (e.g. diabetes, celiac sprue, allergies,) will be accommodated as required by USDA regulation.

A La Carte Offerings in the Food Service Program

- A la carte items available during the school day will meet the Standards for Food and Beverages set forth in this document.
- School food service departments will not sell extra portions of desserts, french fries, and/or ice cream.

Snacks

- Healthy snacks will include fresh, dried, or canned fruits (in 100% juice only); vegetables; 1% or skim milk; and grains meeting the Standards for Food and Beverages set forth in this document.

Fundraising

- At least 50% of the fund raising activities will not involve the sale of food and/or beverages. If food and/or beverages are offered they will meet the Standards for Food and Beverages.

Parties and Celebrations

- Schools should limit celebrations that involve food during the school day.
- Each party should include no more than one food or beverage that does not meet the Standards for Food and Beverages.
- The district will disseminate a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers.

School Sponsored Events (such as but not limited to athletic events, dances, or performances)

- Healthy choices of food and beverages that meet the Standards for Food and Beverages will be offered at school-sponsored events outside the school day.

Vending Machines

- All foods and beverages sold in school vending must meet the Standards for Foods and Beverages and guidelines for vending machines set forth in this document.

Content of Vending Machines

These guidelines should be applied to all vending machines in the school

Best Choices:

Granola bars, whole-grain fruit bars	Nuts and seeds-plain or with spices
Nut mix	Trail mix-plain
Fresh fruit of all varieties	Dried fruit
Beef jerky (or buffalo jerky)	Yogurt, low fat and no sugars added
String cheese	Fruit/Vegetable juice (100% juice)
1% or skim milk	Plain water
Dry roasted peanuts, tree nuts, and soy nuts	Fruit bars
Frozen fruit juice bars (no sugar or high fructose corn syrup)	

Good Choices:

Nuts with light sugar covering; honey-roasted	Popcorn without hydrogenated fats
Individually packed fruit in natural juices only	Fruit leather
Animal crackers and graham crackers	Pretzels
Low fat ice cream and sherbet bars	Peanut butter and crackers
Low-fat pudding	Baked chips, corn nuts

Standards for Food and Beverages

1. Beverages:

- a. Provide 100% fruit and vegetable juices and limit portion sizes to 4-12 ounces.
- b. Provide water - non-carbonated and unflavored without added sugar, artificial sweeteners, or caffeine.
- c. Provide milk-skim or 1% in portion sizes of 8-16 ounces.
 1. Flavored milk (chocolate or strawberry), low fat, or skim may be offered in up to 12 ounce serving sizes with no more than 36 grams of sugar in a 12 ounce portion.
- d. Eliminate the sale of soft drinks, sports drinks, punch, fruit drinks, iced tea, coffee and coffee-like beverages, and other items not included in allowable beverages listed above.
- e. Allow only water as a beverage in the classroom.

2. Grains:

- a. Serve whole grains which contain at least 2 grams of fiber per 1 ounce serving. One half of all grains served should be whole grain.
- b. Limit portion sizes to 1.25 ounces - 2 ounces with most being 1.25 ounces.
- c. Limit total calories from fat to no more than 30%.
- d. Limit total calories from saturated fat to no more than 10%.
- e. Limit sugar content to no more than 35% of calories by weight, or less than 6 grams from sugar per serving.
- f. Limit the amount of trans fats.

3. Fruits and Vegetables:

- a. Offer fruits and vegetables prepared/packaged without added fat, sugar, or sodium. Low-fat dips and sauces on the side may be served in small portions to make foods more appealing.
- b. Offer ½ cup serving sizes of fruits and vegetables. Offer additional fruits and vegetables to help students reach the recommended 5 - 9 servings per day.
- c. Offer a variety of fruits and vegetables, especially colorful ones.

4. A la carte entrees and side dishes:

- a. Offer meat/meat substitutes in portions no greater than 3 ounces with 5 grams of fat per ounce or less (except nut butters).
- b. Offer nuts and seeds in portion sizes no greater than 1.25 ounces.
- c. Offer nut butters in portion sizes of 2 - 4 Tbsp.
- d. Offer non-fat and low-fat yogurt in portion sizes of 8 ounces or less. Sugar should not be the first ingredient on the label.
- e. Limit ice cream and frozen desserts to portion sizes of 4 ounces or less with 5 grams or less of fat. Sugar should not be the first ingredient.
- f. Offer cheese in portion sizes of 1- 2 ounces.

5. Condiments and miscellaneous:

- a. Offer salad dressing containing no more than 6 - 12 grams of fat per ounce.
- b. Remove salt shakers from tables.

DEFINITIONS

A La Carte: additional and separately priced foods sold in the lunch line.

Dietary Guidelines for Americans: dietary recommendations for healthy Americans age 2 years and over about food choices that promote health, specifically with respect to prevention or delay of chronic diseases.

Physical Activity: the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines physical activity as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that results in an expenditure of energy.

Normal School Day: time period spanning from the first bell of the day that begins the first class period to the last bell of the day ending the final class period.

Vending Machine: a coin operated machine for the sale of merchandise.

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