

STUDENT WELLNESS

NEPN/NSBA CODE: JL

The Board recognizes that student wellness and good nutrition are related to students' physical and psychological well-being and their readiness to learn. The Board is committed to providing a school environment that supports student wellness, healthy food choices, nutrition education, and regular physical activity. The Board believes that students who learn and practice healthy lifestyles in their formative years may be more likely to be conscious of the importance of good nutrition and exercise as adults, practice healthy habits, and reduce their risk of obesity, diabetes and other chronic diseases.

Nutrition Standards

The school unit will ensure that meals provided by its Food Services Program meet the nutrition standards established by the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, and other applicable Federal child nutrition programs.

Other foods and beverages sold or available to students during the school day ("competitive foods") will meet the federal Smart Snacks guidelines.

- Students will be provided at least 10 minutes to eat breakfast and 20 minutes to eat lunch after seated.
- Meals will be served in a clean and pleasant setting and under appropriate supervision.
- Students will have access to hand washing/sanitizing facilities before meals and snacks
- Where applicable, lunch will follow recess
- Participation in school meal programs will be promoted regularly.
- Parents will be notified of the availability of breakfast and lunch via handouts and the school website. The menu will be available on the school website and via paper copy.
- Families will be strongly encouraged to pack healthy snacks, lunches and beverages.

Water

To promote hydration, students and staff will have access to free, safe, unflavored drinking water throughout the school day, including mealtimes. Water will be promoted as a substitute for sugar-sweetened beverages. Maintenance will be performed on all water fountains regularly to ensure that hygiene standards for drinking fountains are maintained.

Nutrition Education and Promotion

Nutrition education will be integrated into the instructional program through the health education program and/or the curriculum as aligned with the content standards of Maine's system of Learning Results. Nutrition education should focus on skills students need to adopt and maintain healthy eating behaviors. Students should receive consistent nutrition messages throughout the schools, including classrooms, cafeteria, and school-home communications.

The school will support healthy eating by students and encourage parents/guardians to provide healthy meals for their children by providing consistent nutrition messages and information and by cooperation with other agencies and organizations.

Goals for Nutrition Education and Promotion

- The school will provide nutrition education that focuses on the skills students need to adopt and maintain healthy eating behaviors.
- The schools' nutrition education will be provided in a sequential, comprehensive health education program aligned with the content standards of the Maine system of Learning Results.
- Nutrition education will be integrated into other subjects as appropriate to complement, not replace, the health education program.
- The school unit will provide foods that meet or exceed the federal nutrition standards, adequate time for students to obtain food and eat, lunch scheduled at appropriate hours of the day (OR: as close to the middle of the school day as possible), adequate space to eat, and a clean and safe meal environment.
- School unit staff will cooperate with agencies and community organizations to provide opportunities for nutrition-related student projects and learning experiences.
- Consistent nutrition messages will be disseminated throughout the school unit in the classroom, the cafeteria, and school-home communications.
- Administrators and staff will be strongly encouraged to model nutritious food choices and eating habits.
- The school will encourage parents/guardians to provide healthy meals and snacks for their children through take-home materials or other means.

Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

All school nutrition program directors, managers and staff will meet or exceed hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements in the USDA standards for school nutrition professionals. Appropriate professional development will be provided for food services and the health education staff.

Physical Activity and Physical Education

The school unit will strive to provide all students developmentally appropriate opportunities for physical activity through physical education classes, recess periods for elementary school students, and extracurricular activities (clubs, intramural and interscholastic athletics). School programs are intended to build and maintain physical fitness and to promote healthy lifestyles. The school should encourage parents to support their children's participation in physical activities, including available before- and after-school programs.

All K-10 students will receive physical education for the entire school year. Physical education will be standards-based, using national and state-developed standards. Physical Education classes will be sequential, building from year to year, and content will include motor skills, concepts and strategies, engagement in physical activity, physical fitness, responsible behavior and benefits of physical activity.

These programs will meet the needs of all students, and actively teach cooperation, fair play, and responsible participation. Student will be able to demonstrate competency through application of skills

Students will be encouraged to reduce sedentary time, and will not be required to engage in sedentary activities for more than two hours without an opportunity to stretch and move around. Teachers will be expected to incorporate opportunities for physical activity in the classroom whenever possible and will be encouraged to serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students.

RECESS: All elementary students will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, during which moderate to vigorous physical activity will be encouraged. Outdoor recess will only be withheld in the event of extreme weather, as defined by the district. Recess will not be withheld as a form of punishment, unless the student is a danger to themselves or their peers, as determined by administration.

Goals for Physical Activity

- The physical education program will provide students with the knowledge and skills needed to be physically fit and take part in healthful physical activity on a regular basis.
- Students will demonstrate responsible personal and social behaviors in physical activity settings.
- The physical education curriculum will be aligned with the content standards of the Maine system of Learning Results.
- Physical education classes will keep all students of all abilities involved in purposeful activity for at least 50% of the class period.
- The school will provide a physical and social environment that encourages safe and enjoyable physical activity and fosters the development of a positive attitude toward health and fitness.
- The school will promote efforts to provide opportunities for students to engage in age-appropriate activities on most days of the week in both school and community settings.
- The school will conduct annual physical fitness assessments in the appropriate grade levels
- The school will prohibit the use of physical activity and withholding of physical education class and other forms of physical activity as punishment, unless the student is a danger to themselves or their peers.
- Physical education staff will receive professional development on a yearly basis.

Other School-Based Wellness Activities

The school, with prior approval of the Superintendent/designee, may implement other appropriate programs that support consistent wellness messages and promote healthy eating and physical activity.

The Board delegates to the Superintendent/designees the responsibility for developing regulations or guidelines for “healthy celebrations” (refreshments served at parties or celebrations during the school day), and the use of food as rewards in the instructional program.

The school unit may develop programs that encourage staff to learn and engage in healthy lifestyle practices.

Goals for Other School-Based Activities

- Goals of the wellness policy will be considered when planning school or classroom parties, celebration or events.
- Parents will be encouraged to provide nutritionally sound snacks from home and food for classroom parties or events.
- The Board encourages maximum participation in school meal programs.
- The Board encourages parents and students to take advantage of developmentally appropriate community-based after-school programs that emphasize physical activity.
- The Board encourages parents to support their children’s participation in physical activity, to be physically active role models, and to include physical activity in family events.
- As feasible, school facilities will be made available after school hours for student, parent and community use to encourage participation in physical activity.
- School administrators, staff, parent, students and community members will be encouraged to serve as role models in practicing healthy eating and being physically active, both in the school environment and at home.
- Student organizations will be encouraged to engage in fundraising projects that are supportive of healthy eating and student wellness.
- School-based marketing of foods and beverages, such as through advertisements in school publications, school buildings, athletic fields, and other areas accessible to students should support the goals of the wellness policy.

Leadership

The Superintendent/designee shall be responsible for the oversight of development and implementation of the wellness policy in the school. This includes ensuring that the school unit evaluates its schools' compliance with the wellness policy and progress in attaining wellness goals and making required information available to the public.

The evaluation process must include a comparison of the wellness plan with model local wellness policies, and it may include surveys or solicitation of input from students, parents, staff, and school administrators, including suggestions for improvement in specific areas.

Annual Notification of Policy

The school unit will annually inform families and the public of basic information about the wellness policy, including its content, any updates, and implementation status. This information will be made available on the school unit's website. It will include the contact information for the person coordinating the wellness committee as well as information about opportunities for the public to get involved with the wellness committee.

Triennial Progress Assessments

Every three years, the Director of School Nutrition will:

- Assess extent to which the school unit is in compliance with the wellness policy;
- Assess the extent to which the school unit's wellness policy compares to model wellness policies;
- Provide a description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the school unit's wellness The school unit's wellness committee will update the wellness policy based on the results of the triennial assessment and/or as:
 - Community needs change;
 - Wellness goals are met;
 - New evidence-based health science emerges; or
 - New or updated Federal or State regulations are issued.

Parent Communications

RSU 78 will inform parents of improvements that have been made to school meal standards; availability of child nutrition programs and how to apply; the school unit's meal charging policy; and a list of healthy celebration party ideas (including a list of foods and beverages that meet the Smart Snacks standards)

Food and Beverage Marketing in Schools

School-based marketing will be consistent with nutrition education and health promotion. As such, RSU 78 will restrict food and beverage marketing to the promotion of only those foods and beverages that meet the nutrition standards set forth in the District Wellness Policy;

Brand names, logos or tags, except those that are present as labels on the food or beverage product or its container;

Displays, such as vending machine exteriors;

Corporate brands logos, names or trademarks on school equipment such as message boards or scoreboards;

Corporate brands, logos, names or trademarks on cups used for beverage dispensing, menu boards, coolers trash cans and other food service equipment;

Corporate brands, logos, names or trademarks on posters, book covers, or school supplies distributed or offered by the school unit; or

Advertisements in school publications or school mailings;

Corporate brand names, logos and trademarks for companies that market products that comply with the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards will not be prohibited solely because they offer some noncompliant food or beverage items in their product line.

Nothing in this policy shall require immediate replacement of scoreboards or other durable equipment. When reviewing existing contracts or replacing these items over time when necessary and/or financially feasible, decisions should reflect the marketing considerations articulated in this policy.

Appointment and Role of the Wellness Committee

The Board shall appoint a district-wide Wellness Committee comprised of at least one of each of the following:

- A. Board member
- B. School administrator
- C. Food Services Director/designee
- D. Student representative
- E. Parent representative; and/or
- F. Community representative
- G. School Nurse
- H. Guidance Counselor or Social Worker
- I. Teacher

The Wellness Committee shall serve as an advisory committee in regard to student wellness issues and will be responsible for making recommendations related to the wellness policy, wellness goals, administrative or school regulations and practices, or raising awareness of student health issues.

With the prior approval of the Superintendent/designee, the Wellness Committee may survey parents, students and the community and/or conduct focus groups or community forums.

The Wellness Committee shall provide periodic reports to the Superintendent/designee and, as requested, to the Board.

Legal Reference: 42 U.S.C. § 1751 (Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act)
7 CFR Parts 210 and 220 20-A MRSA 6662

Adopted: June 13, 2006

Revised: July 30, 2013

Revised: June 13, 2018

Reviewed: 6.6.2022