



Going Beyond School Wellness Policies

to Promote Healthy Eating and Physical Activity

As society becomes more aware of and concerned with children's health issues, communities are turning to schools to provide an environment that promotes both healthy eating and physical activity. Children spend a large portion of their days at school and oftentimes eat an extensive amount of their daily calories on the campus. Because of this, school policies supporting healthy eating and physical activity are an important component of school efforts to promote the health and well-being of school children. Good nutrition and physical activity help improve academic performance, attendance rates, behavior, and lifelong health and well-being of students.

Federal law requires that school districts receiving federal breakfast and/or lunch dollars have a school wellness policy. The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act directed the USDA to adopt regulations specifying community participation, nutrition standards, reporting and evaluation. As of June 2015, the USDA has not yet released its final rule governing the content of school wellness policies.

While student wellness is strongly influenced by the specific school wellness policies, many other policies and procedures also impact student wellness. For



example, practices around fundraising with unhealthy foods, food corporation sports sponsorship, school social media usage, or school gardens all have potential to impact healthy eating, but their respective policies are likely found outside of the wellness policy. For this reason, it is most effective to take a holistic approach when doing a policy review around school wellness. Strong school wellness policies can help

schools achieve their health and wellness goals, but in order for them to be implemented in the school setting, school wellness concepts must be embedded in other school board policies impacting nutrition and physical activity. This document has been developed to be used as a guide to identifying other school board policies, rules and regulations that should be analyzed as advocates update school wellness policies.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND HEALTHY EATING OPPORTUNITIES

School districts use a variety of written content to regulate the school setting. These include school board policies, rules, forms, handbooks and website content. Advocates interested in promoting healthy food and physical activity in schools should fully review each of these written documents to identify ways to use existing language in their effort or change the existing language to better health. When looking at school board policies and rules, it is critical that school districts use a variety of structures to regulate the school environment through school board policy and rules. When doing a scan of existing school board policies, use the list below to consider policies that may impact physical activity and healthy eating opportunities for students, staff and community members.

	HEALTHY EATING
	PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
Administration & Policy	
School district system accountability / Program improvement process	
School board objective / Mission	
Adoption, development, implementation, evaluation of policies	
District strategic plan	
Purchasing: Cooperative purchasing / Local purchasing / Purchasing policy / Purchasing authority / Bid and quotations requirements / Vendor relations	
Food services: Free and reduced-price meals / Food and nutrition services program, competitive food sales / Food services management	
School food services funds: System of accounting	
Gifts to employees / Acceptance of gifts	
Organized religion	
Waste reduction and recycling	
BMI collection policy / Data management / Health examinations / Data / Records and reports	
School board appointments to district committees / Organizations	
Education programs research request / Focus, funding and process of district research	
Public requests, suggestions and complaints	
Awards, recognition, and incentives for staff, school volunteers, advisory committee members, and community members	
Qualification and duties / Staff training	

	HEALTHY EATING	PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
Wellness		
School wellness / Student wellness / Staff wellness / Worksite wellness		
Health and safety / Student supervision and welfare / Comprehensive health care / Individual health plan		
Creation of wellness committee (district and/or site committees), agenda, mission, scope, responsibilities		
Instruction		
Student promotion, acceleration, retention and program design / Early admission / Graduation requirements		
School district curriculum and instruction goals / Curriculum development and review process / Alternative programs / Textbooks and instructional materials		
Student handbooks		
In-school time		
Vending machines		
Field trips		
Physical education		
Reward / Discipline / Restrictive procedures		
Organization of school calendar and school day / The school day / School calendar		
Employee-student relations / Teaching methods		



	HEALTHY EATING
	PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
Out-of-school Time	
Board-approved high school programs and activities / School activities / Programming pilot projects	
Before- and after-school programs / Evaluation of extra-curricular activities / Interscholastic athletics / Guidelines for adding or dropping a sport or activity / District-sponsored clubs and activities / Interscholastic athletics / Athletic coaches / Student activity fund management	
Middle school students participation in senior-high-level activities	
Student fundraising	
Student transportation safety policy / Transportation of public school students / Use of bicycles / Safety patrol	
Communication & Marketing	
Distribution of non-school sponsored materials on school property by non-school person, students, or employees	
Public sales on school property	
Use of technology / Social media	
Marketing and outreach	
Naming school district facilities	
Advertising / Marketing on school buses / Advertising in schools / Promotion in schools	
Community Relations	
Parent organizations, booster clubs and other fundraising activities / Off-campus, school-sponsored activities	
(Existing school board councils/committees) school board committees / Community school council policy / School site councils / School advisory councils / Citizens' advisory committees / Community education advisory councils	
Community education / Parent-teacher organizations / Relations with family and community organizations / School and community partnerships	
Parent/guardian responsibility / Parent/guardian involvement in district policy	
Partnerships with business / Relations with special interest groups / Direct-support organizations	
Relations with educational institutions and organizations / Relations with governmental authorities	
Shared-use & Siting	
Kitchen use policies / Culinary facility use policy	
Pool use policies / Weight training facility	
Community/school garden policy and siting	
Physical plant security / School safety and security	
Use of school district facilities and equipment / Equal access to school facilities / Building access / Public use of school facilities / Staff use of school facilities / Agreement for use of school facilities / Public conduct on school property / Schedule of fees for use of facilities and equipment	
Buildings, grounds and equipment inspections	
School visitor guidelines	
Facility expansion / School siting / School improvement / Interlocal agreement for public school facility planning	
Contracts / Liability exemption	

Other important policies:

- Sanitation and housekeeping
- Bullying prohibition, violence prevention
- Drug-free workplace
- Students and employees with communicable diseases and infectious conditions
- Weapons
- Title 1 programs (parental involvement, reimbursement, etc).

Conclusion

While school wellness policies are important, health and wellness concepts should be reflected in other school policies, from transportation to curriculum development. A comprehensive school policy review, as well as an effective plan for implementation, require a holistic analysis and approach to embedding health and wellness concepts throughout all school policies.



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