

RSU 23 DEPARTMENT WELLNESS POLICY

The RSU 23 School Board is committed to creating a healthy school environment that enhances the development of lifelong wellness practices that promote healthy eating and physical activity. Health and success in schools are interrelated and can achieve their primary mission of education when students and staff are fit physically, mentally and socially. Students who learn and practice healthy lifestyles may be more likely to be aware of the importance of healthy eating and exercise as adults, practice healthy habits, and reduce their risk of obesity, diabetes and other chronic diseases. To this end the district will be transparent as to the implementation and adhering to this policy and welcomes public input.

NUTRITION EDUCATION

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 shall be integrated into classroom core subjects as appropriate to complement, not replace, the health education program. Students shall receive consistent nutrition messages based on the latest Dietary Guidelines for Americans throughout the school community, including classrooms, the cafeteria, and school-home communications. Nutrition education should focus on skills students need to adopt and maintain healthy eating behaviors.

NUTRITION STANDARDS

The district will ensure that all reimbursable school meals provided by the School Nutrition Program meet the current USDA nutrition standards (www.usda.gov), and will work toward meeting the recommendations of the Institute of Medicine (CDC). Healthy food choices shall be available to all students, and will be served in a clean, safe and pleasant environment. Free drinking water is available to students during meal times and throughout the day.

This policy serves as assurance that school unit guidelines for reimbursable meals are not less restrictive than USDA regulations and guidelines. The district will ensure that students qualifying for free or reduced priced meals are not overtly identified in any way and that competitive foods are sold from the same lines as reimbursable meals.

The district participates in and provides meals through the National School Lunch Program and the National School Breakfast Program; thus, the RSU 23 Nutrition Program shall be the sole provider of food served to students during meal times to

maximize participation in these programs. The USDA Professional Standards for State and Local Nutrition Programs are followed to ensure that professional development in the area of food and nutrition is provided for food service directors, managers, and staff. District staff will support participation in school meals programs, in order to help the program remain financially self-sufficient and self-sustaining. After obtaining food, students will have at least 20 minutes to eat lunch. All children, PreK-5, will participate in daily recess which will be scheduled before or after the lunch period.

BREAKFAST

All schools will provide breakfast through the USDA School Breakfast Program. To ensure that all children have breakfast, either at home or at school, in order to meet their nutritional needs and enhance their ability to learn, RSU 23 will operate the School Breakfast Program. Schools will, to the extent possible, utilize methods of serving school breakfasts that encourage participation, including serving breakfast in the classroom, “grab-and-go” breakfast, or breakfast during homeroom or morning break.

NUTRITION STANDARDS FOR COMPETITIVE AND OTHER FOODS AND BEVERAGES FUNDRAISERS

Fundraisers on school property during school hours shall not be in conflict with the school nutrition program. To support children’s health and nutrition education efforts, student organizations, PTO, Band Boosters, etc., will encourage school fundraising projects that are either non-food related or are supportive of healthy eating, student wellness and physical activity.

CELEBRATIONS/EVENTS

The district will support celebrations and classroom events that incorporate healthy eating and physical activity. At all school events held both inside and outside of the school day, any organization providing food and beverages is strongly encouraged to offer a variety of healthful choices. Administration at each school will establish appropriate celebration protocols, keeping healthful choices in mind, and will communicate those protocols to staff and parents. Information shall be sent to parents/guardians and staff, either separately or as part of a school newsletter, reminding everyone of the importance of providing healthy treats for students and/or encouraging the use of non-food treats for classroom events. School and community events held on school property outside of school hours that include food items must include healthy food choices during events and must follow the policy on Competitive Food Sales (Policy EFE, EFE-1 and JJE). District staff should model healthy food and beverage choices in the presence of students.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Physical education opportunities will include the components of a quality physical education program aligned with Federal statutes and State of Maine laws. Students will receive physical education at every grade K-8 and one year at high school. Physical education shall equip students with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for lifelong physical activity. The schools 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 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, and to understand the short-term and long-term benefits of a physically active and healthy lifestyle.

Students may be offered an opportunity for physical activity before, during or after school, when possible. Physical education staff will annually review this policy and make needed recommendations to the administration.

Appointment and Role of the Wellness Committee

The Superintendent or designee shall encourage and permit parents/guardians, students, food service employees, physical education teachers, school health professionals, board members, school administrators, and members of the public to participate in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the district’s student Wellness policy.

Implementation, Monitoring, and Assessment

The following must participate in the development of the Wellness Policy: parent, student, school nutrition representative, school board member, administrator, and a public representative. Also, Physical Education Teachers and School Health Professionals will be allowed to participate. The Superintendent shall designate one or more district employees, as appropriate, to ensure that each school site complies with this policy. The Superintendent or designees shall inform and update the public, including parents, guardians, students, and others in the community, about the contents and implementation of this policy. He/she shall periodically measure and make available to the public and assessment of the extent to which district schools are in compliance with this policy, the extent to which this policy compares to model Wellness Policies available from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and a description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the Wellness Policy. Wellness committee representatives will report to the Superintendent annually on the progress and status of the Wellness Policy and Wellness Initiatives. The Superintendent will provide a full update of Wellness

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Policy compliance and wellness initiatives at least once annually to the School Board.

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