

COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

POLICY: WELLNESS POLICY

DATE ADOPTED: June 4, 2024

PURPOSE

It is the intent of the School District to comply 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 authority, teachers of physical education, school health professionals, the school board, school administrators and the general public.

POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the 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. The School District will review and consider evidence-based strategies in determining these goals.

I. NUTRITION EDUCATION AND PROMOTION

The School 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 Education Quality Standards.

Schools will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion in the following ways.

- A.** Included in health education classes and also integrated into other classroom instruction through subjects such as math, science, language arts, social studies, and electives, as applicable.
- B.** Includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, and culturally-relevant participatory activities, such as cooking demonstrations or lessons, promotions, taste-testing, farm visits, and school gardens. These activities happen regularly throughout the year,
- C.** Promotion of fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices.
- D.** Is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote their individual health.

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- E. Links with school meal programs, cafeteria nutrition promotion activities, school gardens, Farm to School programs, other school foods or nutrition-related community services.

Some suggestions for promotion of healthy food and beverages choices include:

- A. Signage that displays daily food choices.
- B. Giving families menus, photos and/or videos of food items on the menu.
Posting menus on the district website and/or individual school websites along with nutritional content and ingredients.
- C. Information about nutritional content of foods.
- D. An “infomercial” about new foods to increase familiarity with new foods, nutritional content.
- E. Promoting a fruit or veggie of the day.
- F. Taste tests and recipe contests involving students and staff.
- G. Signage in the food service area that indicates the daily menu offerings and required minimum selections needed to make a complete meal.
- H. Scheduling a recess period before lunch to encourage healthy eating.
- I. Support from the district for Farm to School activities.
- J. Identifying school personnel/team to help bridge connection to nutrition and curriculum.

Nutrition education and promotion programs shall be conducted by appropriately licensed staff members. The district shall provide appropriate, needs-based professional learning in the area of nutrition education for teachers and other staff.

II. STANDARDS FOR USDA CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS AND SCHOOL MEALS

A. School Meals

All schools are committed to providing healthy meals for students in compliance with the USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP). District menus are based on the USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans and either meet or exceed the current nutrition requirements established by local, state, and Federal statutes and regulations. In addition, the District Food Service uses USDA geographical preference rules to access local foods and beverages whenever possible.

The district and the food service program is committed to offering and promoting school meals that are:

1. Accessible to all students.

2. Served in clean and pleasant settings.
3. Given adequate time to eat (a full 20 minutes, at minimum, to sit down in the cafeteria), and
4. Scheduled at appropriate hours.

B. Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

The School District shall ensure that professional development in the areas of food service, administrative practices, and nutrition is provided for all food service managers and staff in accordance with USDA professional standards. A copy of the USDA professional standards is available on the USDA website: <https://professionalstandards.fns.usda.gov/>

C. Water

Potable drinking water will be available throughout the school day at every school, including in the meal service area, at no cost to students.

III. NUTRITIONAL STANDARDS FOR COMPETITIVE FOODS AND OTHER BEVERAGES

A. Competitive Foods and Beverages

The School District is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages sold to students during the school day are, at minimum, in compliance with the USDA Smart Snacks federal nutrition standards. This includes all additional non-meal food and beverages, such as those from vending machines, beverages, a la carte lines, school stores, and snack or food carts. These standards will apply in all locations and through all services where foods and beverages are sold to students during the school day, which is legally defined as being from 12:00 a.m. to 30 minutes after the official end of the school day.

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. [Corresponds to Vermont Agency of Education Model Local Wellness Policy - Goals for Nutrition Promotion and Education #3]

A summary of the standards and information, as well as a Guide to Smart Snacks in Schools are available at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/tools-schools-focusing-smart-snacks>.

B. Celebrations and Rewards

The School District is required to establish nutrition guidelines for all other 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 food that is provided by parents/caregivers or community organizations free of charge.

All schools will provide a list of healthy party/celebration guidelines to parents and teachers and other relevant school staff members that include non-food celebration ideas. Healthy party ideas are available from the Alliance for a

Healthier Generation and from the USDA Website. These guidelines apply to foods provided by the school and foods provided by families of students.

Food shall not be used in district schools as a reward or punishment except as part of behavioral intervention plan developed by licensed professionals, whose content is subject to state and local grievance procedures under Section 504 and IDEA.

C. Fundraising

Only foods and beverages that meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in Schools nutrition standards may be sold through fundraisers on the school campus during the school day, which is from 12:00 a.m. to 30 minutes after the official end of the school day for students. The USDA Smart Snacks nutrition standards can be found on the USDA website: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/guide-smart-snacks-schools>.

The School District will make available to families, teachers, and other relevant school staff members a list of healthy fundraising ideas. Additional healthy fundraiser ideas are available from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation and Active Schools Fundraising.

IV. PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

All students in grades K - 12 will have the opportunity to engage in at least 30 minutes of physical activity during or after each school day. Activities may include recess, movement breaks, participation in sports, walking or bicycling to and from school, and other movement opportunities related to the curriculum. The School District will ensure that these varied physical activity opportunities are in addition to, and not as a substitute for, physical education.

Other ideas for increasing physical activity in schools can be found in the Active Students are Better Learners document provided by the State of Vermont.

A. Recess

All elementary schools (K-5) 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. Outdoor recess will be offered when weather is feasible for outdoor play, at the discretion of the building administrator based on their best judgment of safety conditions.

B. Physical Education

The School District will provide students with physical education, using age-appropriate, sequential physical education curriculum consistent with the national and state standards for physical education. The physical education curriculum will promote the benefits of a physically active lifestyle and will help students develop skills to engage in healthy lifelong habits. Physical education programs will promote students' physical fitness through individualized fitness and activity assessments and will use criterion-based reporting for each student.

The School District will provide physical education classes for all students as required by the Education Quality Standards. Currently, the Educational Quality Standards requires:

1. K - 8: a minimum of two physical education classes per week.
2. 9 - 12: one and one half years of physical education or the equivalent thereof.

All students will be provided equal opportunity to participate in physical education classes. The School District will make appropriate accommodations to allow for equitable participation for all students and will adapt physical education classes and equipment as necessary. Flexible, alternative pathways for proficiency-based learning in physical education shall be made equally accessible for all students.

V. WELLNESS PROMOTION AND MARKETING

The School District will implement other wellness based school activities at the discretion of the superintendent, his or her designee, and/or a District Wellness committee. These activities will be in accordance with evidence-based strategies such as those provided in the Vermont School Wellness Policy Guidelines. Examples of such activities include:

- A. Fuel Up To Play 60.
- B. Wellness fairs.
- C. Walk and bike to school events.
- D. Running programs such as “Ready, Set, Run” and “Girls on the Run”.
- E. Jump Rope for Heart.
- F. Workshops such as mindfulness and yoga.
- G. Exercise classes for students and/or staff.
- H. Partnering with outside organizations to provide health checks and clinics for employees, such as BCBS for health assessments and the flu shot clinic, Albany College, and Colchester Parks and Recreation.
- I. Informational family nights on topics connected to wellness.

VI. IMPLEMENTATION, EVALUATION, AND COMMUNICATION

- A. The School District will develop and maintain a plan for implementation to manage and coordinate the execution of this wellness policy. The superintendent, his or her designee, and/or a District Wellness Committee, 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.

- B. The School District will convene a representative District Wellness Committee to establish goals for and oversee the implementation, monitoring, periodic review, and update of the wellness policy. District Wellness Committee membership will represent all school levels and include (to the extent possible), but not limited to: parents and caregivers, students, representatives of the school food authority, teachers of physical education, school health professionals, the school board, school administrators and the general public.
- C. The School District shall annually inform and update the public about the content and implementation of this policy, including the extent to which 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.
- D. The superintendent, or his or 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.

VII. ASSESSMENT

The School District will conduct an assessment of the wellness policy every three years. This assessment will determine:

- A. District compliance with the wellness policy.
- B. How the wellness policy compares to model wellness policies.
- C. Progress made in attaining the goals of the wellness policy.

The wellness policy will be updated or modified by the School District based on the results of the triennial assessment and annual progress reports. Assessment tools currently available include the following:

- A. WellSAT 2.0: <http://www.wellsat.org/>
- B. CDC School Health Index: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/shi/index.htm>
- C. ASCD SIT (whole child/CDC): <http://sitool.ascd.org/Default.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2f>