

## WELLNESS POLICY

### ZION ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT #6

#### BELIEF STATEMENT

The Board of Education of Zion Elementary School District #6 is committed to providing a learning environment that supports and promotes wellness, good nutrition, and an active lifestyle and recognizes the positive relationship between good nutrition, physical activity and the capacity of students to develop and learn. The entire school environment shall be aligned with healthy school goals to positively influence students' beliefs and habits and promote health and wellness, good nutrition and regular physical activity. In addition, school staff shall be encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity as a valuable part of daily life.

#### INTENT

The purpose of this policy is to ensure a total school environment that promotes and supports student health and wellness, helps to reduce childhood obesity and meets the requirements of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 and the Illinois School Code, including, without limitation, goals for nutrition education, physical activity and other school-based activities designed to promote student wellness; nutrition guidelines for all food available during the school day; a plan for measuring implementation including designating one or more persons charged with operational responsibility; and involving parents, students, school food service providers, the school board, school administrators, and the public in developing this policy.

#### RATIONALE

A disturbing number of children are inactive and do not eat well. The result is an alarming 16 percent of children and adolescents are overweight – a three-fold increase since 1980. Congress passed the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 on June 30, 2004. Recognizing the role schools can play in health promotion; this law requires local education agencies participating in a program authorized by the National School Lunch Act or the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 to develop a local wellness policy. The objectives of the wellness policy are to improve the school nutrition environment, promote student health and reduce childhood obesity. In addition, Public Act 094-0199 amends the Illinois School Code, requiring the Illinois State Board of Education to establish a state goal that all districts have a wellness policy.

The link between nutrition and learning is well documented. Healthy eating patterns are essential for students to achieve their full academic potential, full physical and mental growth and lifelong health and well-being. Healthy eating is demonstrably linked to reduced risk for mortality and development of many chronic diseases. Schools and school communities have a responsibility to help students acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to establish and maintain lifelong healthy eating patterns. Well-planned and well-implemented wellness programs have been shown to positively influence children's health.

Schools also have a responsibility to help students establish and maintain lifelong habits of being physically active. According to the U.S. Surgeon General, regular physical activity is one of the most important things people can do to maintain and improve their physical health, mental health, and overall well-being. Regular physical activity reduces the risk of premature death in general and of heart disease, high blood pressure, colon cancer, and diabetes.

## GOALS FOR NUTRITION EDUCATION

- Students in preschool through grade 8 shall receive nutrition education as part of a sequential program that is coordinated within a comprehensive health education curriculum. The program shall be designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to adopt healthy eating behaviors *and* aimed at influencing students' knowledge, attitudes and eating habits. Special emphasis should be placed on nutrition education in preschool through primary grades as eating habits are established at a young age. The curriculum shall be consistent with and incorporate relevant Illinois Learning Standards.
- To maximize classroom time and to achieve positive changes in students' eating behaviors, nutrition education shall be integrated into the standards-based lesson plans of other school subjects like math, science, language arts, physical education, health, family and consumer science and social sciences.
- To achieve positive changes in students' eating behaviors, it is recommended that a minimum of fifty contact hours of nutrition education opportunities be provided to students each year. Contact hours may include a combination of classroom instruction; nutrition education provided in the cafeteria; or health fairs, field trips and assemblies providing nutrition education.
- The nutrition education program shall include enjoyable interactive activities such as contests, promotions, taste testing, field trips and school gardens.

## GOALS FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- Students in preschool through grade 8 shall participate in daily physical education that enables them to achieve and maintain a high level of personal fitness; emphasizes self-management skills including energy balance (calories in minus calories out); is consistent with state/district's standards/guidelines/framework; and is coordinated within a comprehensive health education curriculum. The curriculum shall be consistent with and incorporate relevant Illinois Learning Standards.
- **It is recommended that all students in all grades participate in physical education for the maximum number of minutes per week that can possibly be worked into the school schedule.** Special emphasis should be placed on promoting an active lifestyle in preschool through primary grades as health habits are established at a young age. Accommodations shall be made for students with disabilities, 504 plans, and other limitations.
- Schools shall provide a daily supervised recess period to elementary students.
- It is recommended that recess be held before lunch. Studies show improved student behavior on the playground, in the cafeteria and the classroom; and students waste less food and drink more milk when eating after recess.
- Students shall be provided opportunities for physical activity through a range of before- and after-school programs including intramurals, interscholastic athletics, and physical activity clubs.
- Because students should engage in a minimum of 60 minutes of physical activity a day, the physical education program shall actively engage families as partners in providing physical activity beyond the school day.

## GOALS FOR OTHER SCHOOL-BASED ACTIVITIES DESIGNED TO PROMOTE STUDENT WELLNESS

### *Parent Partnerships*

- Schools shall support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. This support shall begin in elementary school and continue through middle school.

- Parents shall be provided information to help them incorporate healthy eating and physical activity into their student's lives. This information may be provided in the form of handouts, postings on the school/district and Foodservice website, information provided in school/district newsletters, presentations that focus on nutrition and healthy lifestyles and any other appropriate means available for reaching parents.

*Consistent School Activities and Environment – Healthy Eating*

- It is recommended that food providers share information about the nutritional content of school meals and/or individually sold foods with students, family and school staff.
- School Meals shall be served in clean, safe and pleasant settings with adequate time provided for students to eat, at a minimum, in accordance with state and federal standards and guidelines. The National Association of State Boards of Education recommends that students have adequate time to eat, relax and socialize: at least 10 minutes after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch.
- All food service personnel shall have adequate pre-service training and regularly participate in professional development activities that provide strategies for providing tasty, appealing and healthy meals; nutrition education strategies including coordination of classroom and cafeteria activities; and effective promotional techniques to encourage healthy eating habits.
- Food providers shall involve families, students and other school personnel in choosing nutritious food and beverage selections for their local schools through surveys, committees, taste-testing and similar activities designed to provide input into the decision-making process.
- Food providers shall work with suppliers to obtain food and beverages that meet the nutrition requirements of school meals and nutrition standards for those sold individually.
- Food providers shall work closely with school instructional staff to reinforce nutrition instruction and foster an environment where students can learn about and practice healthy eating.
- Food providers shall take every measure to ensure that student access to food and beverages on school campuses meets federal, state, and local laws and guidelines.
- Students, parents, school staff and community members bringing food and beverages to school for parties/celebrations/meetings shall be encouraged to provide healthy options and shall be provided with a list of recommended food and beverage options.
- **All food brought in for parties/celebrations/meetings/fundraisers shall be obtained from sources that comply with all laws related to food and food labeling. The use of home prepared food is prohibited.**
- School-based organizations shall be encouraged to raise funds through the sale of items other than food. **Fundraisers involving food, shall adhere to the competitive food standards for the sale competitive food sold to students on the school campus of the participating school during the school days, with a limited number of exceptions per school year.**
- To reduce competition with nutritionally balanced school meals and enhance student safety, it is highly recommended that, to the extent practicable, students are not permitted to leave school grounds to purchase food or beverages and parents not bring to lunch food from fast food vendors.
- Partnerships between schools and businesses are encouraged and many commercial advertising relationships involve food or beverages. To meet wellness objectives, it is recommended that commercial advertising relationships involve only food and beverages that meet nutrition standards. The Food Service Department will have nutritional analyses of the food items that are sold to students.

- Schools shall take efforts to promote nutritious food and beverage choices consistent with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans and Food Guidance System (My Plate) such as fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy food and whole grain products.
- Nutrition education shall be provided by trained and well-supported staff with adequate pre-service and in-service training per school. It is recommended that staff involved in nutrition education complete a pre-service course in nutrition and a minimum of one hour of nutrition education in-service training per school year. Preparation and professional development shall provide basic knowledge of nutrition along with activities, instructional techniques and strategies designed to change students' attitudes and behavior.
- All food and beverages made available on campus shall comply with federal, state and local food safety and sanitation regulations.
- For the safety and security of food, access to any area involved in storage, preparation or service of food on the school campus shall be limited to authorized personnel.

#### *Consistent School Activities and Environment-Physical Activity*

- Physical Education shall be provided by trained and well-supported staff that is certified by the state to teach physical education. All physical education teachers shall regularly participate in continuing education activities that impart the knowledge and skills needed to effectively promote enjoyable lifelong healthy eating and physical activity among students.
- Physical education classes shall have a student to teacher ratio comparable to those in other curricular areas.
- The physical education program shall be closely coordinated with the other components of the overall school health program. Physical education topics shall be integrated within other curricular areas. In particular, the benefits of being physically active shall be linked with instruction about human growth, development, and physiology in science classes and with instruction about personal health behaviors in health education class.
- The District recognizes that students are more attentive and ready to learn if provided with periodic breaks when they can be physically active or stretch. Thus, students will be offered periodic opportunities to be active or stretch throughout the day on all or most days during a typical school week. The District recommends teachers provide short physical activity breaks to students during and between classroom times. These physical activity breaks will complement not substitute, for physical education class, recess, and class transition periods.
- The District will provide resources and links to resources, tools, and technology with ideas for physical activity breaks.
- Schools are encouraged to develop community partnerships with other child-serving organizations such as park districts to provide students with opportunities to be active.
- Schools are encouraged to provide student and community access to and promote use of the school's physical activity facilities outside of the normal school day. Physical activity facilities and equipment shall be safe.
- Schools are encouraged to work with the community to create a community environment that is safe and supportive of students walking or biking to school.

#### *Food or Physical Activity as a Reward or Punishment*

- School Personnel shall be encouraged to use nonfood incentives or rewards with students and shall not withhold food from students as punishment.
- School personnel shall not use physical activity as punishment or withhold participation in recess or physical education class as punishment.

### *Nutrition Guidelines for Competitive Foods and Beverages*

- The District is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages available to students on the school campus during the school day support healthy eating.
- The foods and beverages sold and served outside of the school meal programs (ie, “Competitive” foods and beverages) will meet USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, at a minimum.

#### *Competitive food includes:*

- A la carte offerings in the food service program;
- Food and beverage choices in vending machines, snack bars, school stores; and
- Food and beverages sold as part of school-sponsored fundraising activities.
- Smart Snacks aim to improve student health and well-being, increase consumption of healthy foods during the school day, and create an environment that reinforces the development of healthy eating habits.

### *Guidelines for School Meals*

- School meals served shall be consistent with the recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and/or shall meet at a minimum, the nutrition requirements and regulations for the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program and all applicable state and local laws and regulations.
- Food Providers shall offer a variety of age-appropriate, appealing food and beverage choices and employ food preparation, purchasing and meal planning practices consistent with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans (e.g. provide a variety of fruits and vegetable choices: serve low-fat and fat-free dairy products; ensure that whole grain products are served).

### *Measuring Implementation & Community Involvement*

- The District superintendent shall be charged with the operational responsibility for ensuring that each school meets the local wellness policy requirements.
- The district superintendent shall appoint a district wellness committee that includes parents, students, and representatives of the school food authority, the school board, school administrators, and representatives of the public to oversee development, implementation and evaluation of the wellness policy. In addition, it is recommended that the district superintendent also appoints teachers (including pre-school-grade 8, family and consumer science, physical education, nurse, etc.) as members of the committee.
- The terms of district wellness committee members shall be staggered for continuity.
- The appointed district wellness committee shall be responsible for;
  - Creating and maintaining bylaws for operation
  - Development of a wellness policy
  - Presenting the wellness policy to the school board for approval
  - Measuring the implementation of the wellness policy; and
  - Recommending revision of the policy, as necessary.

The principal of each school shall be responsible for implementation of the local wellness policy And shall appoint a school-based evaluation team to develop and implement an annual evaluation plan.

The school-based evaluation team shall evaluate policy implementation and identify areas for improvement. The evaluation team shall report their findings to the school principal and develop with him/her a plan of action for improvement, as needed.

The wellness committee shall hear reports from each school group annually.

Before the end of each school year the wellness committee shall recommend to the district superintendent any revisions to the policy if deems necessary.

The wellness committee shall report to the superintendent and school board annually on the progress of the wellness committee and the status of compliance by each school.