

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT WELLNESS PROGRAM

I. PURPOSE

This policy has been created to address childhood obesity which has become a nation-wide epidemic. Research indicates that obesity and subsequent disease are largely preventable through diet and regular physical activity. Heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes are responsible for two-thirds of the deaths in the United States. The major risk factors for those diseases, which include unhealthy eating habits, physical inactivity, and obesity, often are established in childhood. Healthy eating patterns and increased physical activity are essential for students to achieve their academic potential, full physical and mental growth, and lifelong health and well-being. Schools cannot achieve their primary mission of education if students are not healthy.

II. POLICY

The MTRSD is committed to helping students learn to take responsibility for their own health by creating a healthy school environment that supports the development of students' wellness practices.

- Our goal is to create a school environment that provides consistent wellness messages and is conducive to healthy eating and being physically active.
- Staff members are encouraged to serve as positive role models for a healthy lifestyle.
- The School System will encourage and support staff participation in on-site and off-site professional development opportunities in the areas of nutrition and physical activity.

III. NUTRITION EDUCATION

The primary goal of nutrition education is to help students develop lifelong healthy eating habits. Students will be encouraged to start each day with a healthy breakfast and to make healthful choices at lunch and snack time.

The nutrition curriculum is sequential and consistent with the following:

- the Massachusetts Health Curriculum Frameworks
- and the current USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans

IV. NUTRITION GUIDELINES

The School System shall encourage students to make food choices based on the most current USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Foods served at the breakfast and lunch programs will meet the state and Federal nutrition standards. Other available foods such as a la carte offerings, vending machine products, food fundraisers, foods served as snacks and at students celebrations, will meet the criteria outlined in the policy regulations.

The School System nutrition standards do not apply to food served at staff functions. However, healthy food choices are highly recommended.

V. FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM

It is acknowledged that the feeding of children is primarily a family responsibility. However, to supplement the families' efforts, every school shall operate a food service program to ensure that all students have affordable access to the varied and nutritious foods they need to stay healthy and learn well.

The food service program shall aim to be financially self-supporting. However, budget neutrality or profit generation must not take precedence over the nutritional needs of the student. If subsidy of the food service is needed, it should not be from the sale of foods that have minimal nutritional value

- The school food service program will operate in accordance with the applicable laws and regulations of the state of Massachusetts and USDA regulations.
- The school will strive to increase participation in the available federal Child Nutrition programs.
- The school shall make efforts to ensure that families are aware of need-based programs for free or reduced meals and that eligible families are encouraged to apply.
- The school food service program shall maintain the confidentiality of students and families applying for or receiving free or reduced-price meals.

VI. PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The primary goal for the schools' physical activity component is to provide opportunities for every student to develop the knowledge and skills for specific physical activities, maintain physical fitness, regularly participate in physical activity, and understand the short and long-term benefits of a physically active and healthful lifestyle.

All physical education classes are taught by certified physical education teachers. Certified means those teachers who have been awarded a credential by the Massachusetts Department of Education permitting them to teach physical education.

The physical education curriculum is sequential and aligned with the following:

- the Mohawk School System Curriculum,
- the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks,
- and the National Physical Education Standards.

VII. IMPLEMENTATION

A Wellness Committee will be established and will meet regularly to review the regulations of the Wellness Policy and to evaluate the implementation of the policy.

The Wellness Committee will be chaired by the Health Coordinator and will have members from the following groups: physical education, health education, food service, nursing, administration, parent organizations, and interested staff. Student input will be sought as needed. Each school must have a representative on the committee.

The responsibility for the implementation of the Wellness Policy in each school is assigned to the principal for that respective school and the district-wide Health Coordinator.

First Reading: May 10, 2006

Second Reading: June 14, 2006

Mohawk Trail Regional School District Committee