

**WELLNESS THROUGH NUTRITION**  
**AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

Effective: May 19, 2015

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**I. Implementation Procedures Statement**

Coordinated school health is a systematic approach to improving students' health and well-being so they can participate and succeed in school. Developing habits for healthy eating and regular physical activity can have a lifelong positive impact on students' health. A coordinated approach calls for the Board of Education, Superintendent, and staff to work together, engage families and communities, and commit to consistent modeling of healthy behaviors. Attention to the physical, social, emotional, and mental health of our student body involves the entire community, including students, parents, counselors, teachers, health professionals, community organizations, administrators, and more.

In order to successfully implement this policy, the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) is committed to engaging and educating the community, staff, and students of the importance of health and well-being to academic achievement.

**II. Health and Nutrition Education**

- A. Students in prekindergarten–grade 12 will receive health education in multiple formats with opportunities to acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary for making health-promoting decisions, achieving health literacy, adopting health-enhancing behaviors, and promoting healthy lifestyles.
- B. The health education curriculum will include nutrition education for students in prekindergarten–grade 8 and in a required high school health education course. Nutrition education will provide students with developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant, participatory activities to develop student understanding of the food system and to experience a variety of tastes.
  - 1. At the elementary level, the health education curriculum will be taught by the classroom teacher as one of the five content areas in the elementary curricular program.
  - 2. At the middle school level, the health education curriculum will be taught every other day for one semester, or in a schedule with a comparable number of hours.

3. At the high school level, the health education curriculum will be taught for one semester (18 weeks) to meet high school graduation requirements.
  4. Nutrition education will develop student understanding of the food system and aid students in experiencing different tastes through programs such as: school gardens, visiting local farms, Days of Taste or similar programs, Department of Agriculture Robinson Nature Center, community college curriculum, and others.
  5. The cafeteria will be utilized as a learning environment to reinforce nutrition education.
- C. Nutrition education will be included in the essential objectives in appropriate elective courses such as Family and Consumer Sciences, Health Education, and Physical Education.
- D. Staff will be encouraged to teach nutrition education through content integration in curricular areas such as science, mathematics, and social studies. HCPSS will provide resources to all teachers on how to integrate nutrition education into the curriculum.
- E. Staff will collaborate with other programs and offices such as the Gifted and Talented Program, and Student Services to deliver nutrition education through classroom, small group, and individual activities.
- F. Nutrition information and resources will be provided to families through newsletters, publications, health fairs, the HCPSS website, and other means.

### **III. Physical Education and Physical Activity**

- A. Physical Education
1. Students at all grade levels will have access to the physical education curriculum.
  2. The HCPSS will implement a physical education curriculum for students in prekindergarten–grade 8.
    - a. The elementary school master schedule will reflect an average of 90 minutes of physical education per week.
    - b. The middle school master schedule will reflect 50 minutes of physical education every other day.
  3. In grades 9–12, students will receive one-half credit of physical education instruction, the Lifetime Fitness course, to meet graduation requirements. In addition, HCPSS will offer a variety of physical education electives.

4. Physical education staff will receive professional development on an ongoing basis.

B. Physical Activity

With the goal of limiting extended periods of inactivity and to promote learning, staff will receive resources, guidance, and professional development on ways to incorporate physical activity within the school day.

1. Recess

- a. Each elementary school will provide a 30 minute daily recess, preferably outdoors, during which schools should encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity through the provision of adequate space and equipment. Exceptions may be made by the principal for circumstances such as shortened days, special events, and altered schedules.
- b. Recess must be adequately and appropriately staffed and supervised.
- c. At the middle school level, time permitting, schools will provide students with daily opportunity for supervised physical activity.
- d. Schools will implement recess guidelines for outside recess.

2. Other Physical Activity During School

- a. All staff will be encouraged to incorporate physical activity breaks whenever possible into classroom instruction.
- b. HCPSS will provide training that encourages physical activity to aid teachers in implementing physical activity breaks.
- c. School Wellness Teams will proactively communicate with parents/guardians about the importance of physical activity.

3. Extracurricular and Intramural Programs

- a. Each middle school will provide an intramural program that offers students an opportunity to participate in sports, games, and/or dance activities that focus on cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength, endurance and flexibility.
- b. Each high school will provide a comprehensive interscholastic athletic program under Policy 9080 Interscholastic Athletic Program.

#### **IV. Facilities and Equipment**

- A. When schools are built or renovated, the design of gymnasium facilities will consider the Physical Education Facilities Guidelines issued by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE).
- B. The HCPSS will review its permitting and actual space usage each year to ensure maximum use of school facilities during and after school in accordance with Policy 10020 Use of School Facilities.

#### **V. Nutrition Services; Foods and Beverages**

These procedures apply to all foods and beverages made available to students during the school day including but not limited to:

- School Meals Program
- A la carte and snack/dessert items
- Vending machines
- Classroom lessons
- Beverage contracts
- School stores
- Food brought from home for classes or groups of students
- Student rewards
- School parties/ celebrations/ dances/ athletic events/ concerts/ picnics/ field days/ fairs/festivals, etc.
- Resource speakers

Foods and beverages covered by this policy will comply with the current U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans and federal, state, and local laws, including safety and sanitation standards set by the Health Department Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) plans and guidelines.

- A. Safety and Security Issues Related to Foods and Beverages
  - 1. Howard County Health Department Regulations (referenced via the Howard County Code) require that food served to the public must be prepared in a licensed facility. The license for the HCPSS School Food and Nutrition Service is not transferable to outside caterers or groups applying for use of the facilities.
  - 2. For the safety and security of the food and facility, access to the food service facilities is limited to HCPSS Food and Nutrition Service staff.
  - 3. The preparation of foods and beverages during the school day by any group or organization other than the HCPSS School Food and Nutrition Service

office is prohibited, except that students may prepare foods and beverages in accordance with the provisions of section V.A.4. of these procedures.

4. Classroom activities that involve cooking are not permitted, except as defined in the curriculum for Family and Consumer Science, Academic Life Skills (ALS), and when indicated in a student's IEP. Any of these activities will not include hazardous foods. Examples of potentially hazardous foods that are excluded from classroom activities include foods made with poultry, meats, fish, rice, eggs, seafood, mayonnaise, dairy products, casseroles, and sauces containing meat.
5. Schools will provide students the opportunity to wash their hands before and after eating meals or snacks.
6. Principals and teachers will request that parents and other individuals avoid bringing foods to school that might cause a food allergic student to have an allergic reaction. (See the HCPSS Guidelines for Management of Students with Severe Food Allergies.)
7. Except as provided in sections V.A.4. and V.E.2., no foods or beverages are to be sold or given without charge to any students in a school from 12:01 a.m. until after the end of the last lunch period except through the School Food and Nutrition Service.

**B. Student Rewards**

Foods and beverages will not be given as a reward to students or withheld as a punishment, except as provided in a student's Individualized Educational Program (IEP) or 504 Plan. Coupons for food items that are to be consumed off school campus may be given. Outside partners providing coupons are encouraged to offer healthier, nutrient-dense choices (i.e. those that include fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and/or low-fat dairy and foods that limit the sodium, fat, sugar and calories per serving). Informational resources on the Institute of Medicine (IOM) Nutrition Standards, in consultation with HCPSS registered dietitian on the use of those standards, will be provided to external partners.

**C. School Meals Program**

1. The School Food and Nutrition Service will provide approved school lunches each day that school is in session.
2. School meals will meet all nutrition standards established by the U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans and IOM Nutrition Standards.
3. Daily food choices offered to students will include multiple entrees, fresh unlimited salad bars, trays of fruits and vegetables, whole grain breads and rolls, and flavored and unflavored fat-free or 1% milk. Although students are

free to choose the foods they want for lunch, at least one of their choices will be a fruit or vegetable.

4. Main course food items offered as alternatives to or in addition to the reimbursable meal will be offered in reasonable portion sizes that are consistent with the USDA for Child Nutrition Programs.
5. The School Breakfast Program will be available to all students every weekday morning that school is in session. Exceptions may be made by the school principal on delayed opening days. No advance registration is necessary, students can attend every day or only occasionally, and the meals will be based on the nutrition recommendations set forth in the U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The School Breakfast Program models include but are not limited to: Traditional Breakfast, Breakfast in the Classroom, Grab and Go Breakfast, and/or Breakfast after First Period.
6. Morning bus routes will be scheduled to allow students to arrive in time for breakfast.
7. The HCPSS will proactively promote the school breakfast program to students and parents to encourage greater participation.
8. Students are prohibited from leaving the school campus for lunch.
9. Students will be given adequate time to eat. Exceptions may be made by the school principal on delayed opening days by allowing lunch periods to be compressed and by not offering the breakfast program since lunch periods may start as soon as the students arrive at school.
10. The School Food and Nutrition Service will incorporate produce from local farms as much as possible and when in season and available.
11. Schools will make nutritional information available to students to make informed decisions. Healthier choices, such as salads and fruit, will be prominently displayed in cafeterias and competitively priced.
12. Students will be provided a pleasant environment in which to eat school meals. Appropriate supervision will be provided in the cafeteria and rules for safe behavior will be consistently enforced.
13. Professional development in the area of food and nutrition will be provided annually for food service managers, staff, and school administrators.
14. The school system will provide periodic food promotions at each school level to encourage taste testing of healthy new foods being introduced on the menu.

15. Students and families will have the opportunity to provide input on local, cultural and ethnic favorites, and the input will be considered in development of the school meals programs.

D. Beverages

1. All beverages given or sold to students on school campus, including beverages sold in vending machines that are accessible to students, must meet the IOM Nutrition Standards.
2. Students will have access to drinking water that is safe and clean throughout the school day, and free of charge in the school cafeteria, classrooms, hallways, gymnasiums, play yards, and athletic fields.
3. The Superintendent/Designee will set and maintain hygiene standards for drinking fountains, water coolers, hydration stations, water jets, and other methods of delivering drinking water.
4. High school students may purchase unflavored, unfortified, non-carbonated water from vending machines operated by the Food and Nutrition Service during the school day.

E. Other Foods and Beverages

1. A la carte and snack/dessert items sold by the Food and Nutrition Service will meet the IOM Nutrition Standards.
2. A principal may permit food and/or beverages in conjunction with a special celebration no more than once per month after the end of the last lunch period. Such events may not replace the food service provided that day by the Food and Nutrition Service. The foods and beverages served will be prepared commercially in licensed facilities and will comply with the IOM Nutrition Standards. Schools are encouraged to develop alternatives to the use of food for celebrations.

The single exception is that an annual celebration in each school is permitted once per year.

3. All foods and beverages sold in high school vending machines that are accessible to students will meet the IOM Nutrition Standards.

F. Vending Machines Accessible After the School Day

1. Foods and beverages sold after the end of the school day through vending machines in schools are permitted only at the high school level and will meet IOM Nutrition Standards.

2. All vending machines accessible to students, except those operated by the School Food and Nutrition Service, will have and use a timing device to automatically prohibit access to the vending machines from 12:01 a.m. until the end of the school day.

## **VI. District-Level Implementation**

The Superintendent/Designee will oversee school implementation and compliance with this policy including:

- A. Provide assistance and support to schools with implementation of the policy and improve programming functions.
- B. Ensure schools are offered support services through various departments including the Food and Nutrition Service and Health and Physical Education, to ensure the full implementation of this policy.
- C. Establish a process to gather regular reporting and feedback from individual schools, community partners, students, and parents on the implementation of the policy.
- D. Conduct periodic evaluations and report on systemwide and individual schools' compliance with the policy.
- E. Conduct periodic, systemwide review and assessment of this policy and other related Board policies on their effectiveness and, based on this assessment, propose policy revisions.

## **VII. School-Level Implementation**

- A. Each school principal will ensure that a School Wellness Team is formed annually to spearhead health and wellness initiatives at the school that are in compliance with this policy. The principal will establish a system to annually identify School Wellness Team members which may include parents/guardians, teachers of physical education, classroom teachers, school nurses/assistants, students, school administrators, and community health and wellness partners.
- B. Each school principal will annually designate a school employee to serve as the School Wellness Champion who will:
  1. Lead and coordinate their school's efforts to increase healthy eating and physical activity for students.
  2. Serve as the liaison for their respective school's policy implementation and reporting.



3. Establish and lead a School Wellness Team that develops goals, strategies, and initiatives for student health, wellness, and physical activity during the school year.
- C. Each school principal will provide annual updates to the Superintendent/Designee regarding the school's health and wellness initiatives and the school's implementation of this policy.

#### **VIII. Staff Health and Wellness**

- A. The Employee Wellness Council will review the program philosophy, vision, mission, goals, and objectives of the HCPSS Commit To Be Fit Employee Wellness Program, evaluate the needs of the school system, recommend specific programs, determine needed resources, and establish evaluation outcome measures. In partnership with the Wellness Coordinator, Employee Wellness Council members will act as champions of wellness by promoting participation of all employees in healthy lifestyle activities.
- B. The Employee Wellness Council will support the goal of the HCPSS Commit To Be Fit Employees Wellness Program, which is to provide opportunities, support, and encouragement for employees to seek healthy lifestyle choices that enhance physical, emotional, mental, and social well-being.
- C. The Employee Wellness Council members will represent a variety of school district departments. The Employee Wellness Council will also act on behalf of those departments not represented and will seek input from those departments through regular communication. All departments will have an opportunity to have representation on the council as members are rotated off and are replaced bi-annually.
- D. The Employee Wellness Council will present an annual report to the Board to include information such as program highlights, details of activities conducted, participation data, future plans, measures of results, and return on investment data.

#### **IX. Family/Community Collaboration**

- A. The HCPSS will partner with the Howard County School Health Council (COMAR 13A.05.05) and other agencies to support the implementation of coordinated and comprehensive school health practices.
- B. Parents and members of the community have the opportunity to be involved in implementation of this policy through:
1. Howard County School Health Council: Parents and members of the community may serve on the School Health Council and/or its subcommittee.

2. School Wellness Teams: Parents and community health and wellness partners will be invited to participate in school-level School Wellness Teams.
  3. Boosters and PTA Council of Howard County (PTACHC): The Superintendent/Designee will work with schools and community organizations such as the Boosters and PTACHC.
- C. Parents will receive educational resources and encouragement to help their children implement physical activity.
- D. Families will be informed of school activities that encourage healthy eating and physical activity.

**X. History**

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