



Wellness Policy Fundamentals

Key Considerations as You Develop Your Local Wellness Policy

Local Wellness Policy Area 1: Setting Nutrition Education Goals

The primary goal of nutrition education, which may be defined as "any set of learning experiences designed to facilitate the voluntary adoption of eating and other nutrition-related behaviors conducive to health and well-being," (ADA 1996) is to influence students' eating behaviors.

- a) **Classroom teaching:** classroom-based nutrition education includes requirements that the subject be taught, follows standards, and/or addresses specified learning outcomes, is integrated across curriculum and aligns with other health education content
- b) **Education, marketing and promotions outside classroom links with school:** nutrition education that occurs outside the classroom, or that links classroom nutrition education to the larger school community, such as school gardens and cafeteria-based nutrition education
- c) **Teacher training:** requirements for professional preparation or ongoing professional development for teaching nutrition

Local Wellness Policy Area 2: Setting Physical Activity Goals

The primary goal for a school's 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 healthy lifestyle.

A comprehensive physical activity program encompasses a variety of opportunities for students to be physically active including: physical education, recess, walk-to-school programs, after-school physical activity programs, health education that includes physical activity as a main component, and physical activity breaks within the regular classroom.

- a) **Physical education (classroom format and instruction):** the number of minutes per day or week that physical education is required; the number of days per week that physical education is required; the intensity
- b) **Physical education (high school graduation requirements):** indicates whether physical education is required for graduation; the amount of physical education that is required to graduate



of physical activity during physical education class; prohibiting the use of physical activity as punishment

c) **Physical education (staff training/certification):** requirements for professional preparation or ongoing professional development for teaching physical education

d) **Physical education (teacher-to-student ratio):** the number of students permitted per teacher for a physical education class

e) **Physical education (standards/requirements-based; curriculum requirements):** the use of national or state-developed standards for physical education; the use of specified curriculum for physical education

f) **Physical activity outside of physical education:** number of days per week, minutes or hours per day, or classroom-based physical activities *outside of* physical education requirements

g) **Recess to promote physical activity:** number of days per week; number of minutes per day; type of recess or free-play time during the school day and *outside of* physical education; recess before lunch

h) **Walking or biking to school to promote physical activity:** safer routes to school for pedestrians and bicyclists; walk-to-school days; walking or biking safety policies

Local Wellness Policy Area 3: Establishing Nutrition Standards for All Foods Available on School Campus during the School Day

Students' lifelong eating habits are greatly influenced by the types of foods and beverages available to them. Schools must establish standards to address all foods and beverages sold or served to students, including those available outside of the school meal programs. The standards should focus on increasing nutrient density, decreasing fat and added sugars, and moderating portion size. Schools must ensure that reimbursable school meals meet the program requirements and nutrition standards set forth under the 7 CFR **Part 210** and **Part 220**.

a) **Nutritional value of foods and beverages:** foods or beverages that should or should not be made available to students; standards for nutrient levels for foods or beverages; times those items may be made available

b) **Portion size:** the per serving amount of a food or beverage to offer to students

c) **À la carte, vending, student stores, or concession stands:** types of foods or beverages or nutrient standards for items that may be offered to students from these venues

d) **After-school programs, field trips, or school events:** types of foods or beverages or nutrient standards for items that may be offered to students from these venues

e) **Parties, celebrations, or meetings:** types of foods or beverages and nutrient standards for items that may be offered to students on these occasions

f) **Food rewards:** use of food as a reward or punishment



- g) **Food-related fundraising:** use of food sales in schools
- h) **Food or beverage contracts:** agreements with food or vending companies to sell foods or beverages in schools

Local Wellness Policy Area 4: Setting Goals in the School Meals Programs

Schools play a role in helping students make healthy food choices. At a minimum, schools must serve reimbursable meals that meet USDA's requirements as well as follow the principles of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

- a) **Developing goals that exceed minimum nutrition standards set by USDA** set forth under the 7 CFR **Part 210** and **Part 220**, and meet the more rigid *HealthierUS* School Challenge menu criteria (http://teammnutrition.usda.gov/HealthierUS/criteria_instructions.pdf) could have a positive impact on lunch menus and childhood obesity
- b) **Access to school nutrition programs:** all children who require food are able to obtain it in a non-stigmatizing manner
- c) **Time and scheduling for meals:** time allotted for students to eat; the scheduling of mealtimes that might interfere with students' participation in school nutrition programs
- d) **Surroundings for eating:** the physical setting in which students eat
- e) **Qualifications of food-service staff:** requirements for professional preparation or ongoing professional development for food-service staff

Local Wellness Policy Area 5: Setting Goals for Other School-Based Activities Designed to Promote Student Wellness

Policies established under this category create a school environment that provides consistent wellness messages and is conducive to healthy eating and being physically active.

- a) **Marketing of food and/or beverages:** locations for food and beverage marketing activities and types of marketing permitted to students; strategies to increase the appeal of healthful food and beverage items
- b) **Sustainable food practices:** environmentally-friendly practices such as the use of locally grown and seasonal foods, school gardens, and non-disposable tableware
- c) **Access to facilities for physical activity after school hours:** access by students, families, or community groups to a school's physical activity facilities
- d) **After-school programs:** physical activity or nutrition-related components of school-based programs for students that occur after school hours
- e) **Coordinated School Health approach:** a model to guide school decision-making related to physical activity and nutrition that encompasses all aspects of the school, from education to staff wellness to addressing smoking and tobacco



- f) **School health councils:** the establishment of committees that help oversee and coordinate physical activity and/or nutrition or other aspects of student health
- g) **Community/family involvement:** communications to families on health or nutrition topics (including body mass index results); the involvement of family or community members in school health councils or taskforces
- h) **Staff wellness:** physical activities and/or nutrition services or programs designed to benefit staff health
- i) **Education Links with schools:** curriculum integrates physical activity and nutrition education in all subjects, such as math and science, as much as possible throughout the school day
- j) **Counseling, psychological, and social health services:** services, which safeguard the physical, emotional, and social well being of students
- k) **Health services:** programs to promote the health of students and help to assure that students are healthy, in the classroom, and ready to learn

Local Wellness Policy Component 6: Setting Goals for Measurement and Evaluation

- a) **Funding support:** funds to support policy implementation and/or evaluation
- b) **Implementation:** a plan for executing the policy, including objectives, dates and person(s) responsible
- c) **Monitoring and evaluation:** group or agency responsible for overseeing the policy, monitoring and evaluating implementation, or reporting on the status of the policy to schools, parents, or the community
- d) **Revision:** process for making changes to the policy based on evidence of implementation or effectiveness; a person responsible for this process