

STUDENT WELLNESS

The Board recognizes that student wellness and good nutrition are related to students' physical and social-emotional well-being and their readiness to learn. The Board is committed to providing a school environment that supports student wellness, healthy food choices, nutrition education, and regular physical activity. The Board believes that students who learn and practice healthy lifestyles in their formative years may be more likely to be conscious of the importance of good nutrition and exercise as adults, practice healthy habits, and reduce their risk of illness and/or other chronic diseases.

Nutrition Standards

The school unit will ensure that meals provided by its Food Services Program meets or exceeds the nutrition standards established by the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, and other applicable federal child nutrition programs.

Other foods and beverages sold or available to students during the school day ("competitive foods") will meet or exceed the federal Smart Snacks guidelines.

Water

To promote hydration: free, safe, unflavored drinking water will be available to students throughout the school day, including mealtimes, at every school.

Nutrition Education

Nutrition education will be integrated into the instructional program through the health education program and/or the curriculum as aligned with the content standards of Maine's system of Learning Results. Nutrition education should focus on necessary skills to adopt and maintain healthy eating behaviors. Students should receive consistent nutrition messages throughout the schools, including classrooms, cafeteria, and school-home communications.

Nutrition Promotion

Schools will support healthful eating by students and encourage parents/guardians to provide healthy meals for their children by providing consistent nutrition messages and information and by cooperation with other agencies and organizations.

Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

All school nutrition program directors, managers, and staff will meet or exceed hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements in the USDA standards for school nutrition professionals.

Physical Activity

The school unit will strive to provide all students developmentally appropriate opportunities for physical activity through physical education classes, recess periods for elementary school students, and extracurricular activities (clubs, intramural and interscholastic athletics). School programs are intended to promote healthy lifestyles. The schools will provide opportunities for parents/guardians to support student participation in physical activities, including available before- and after-school programs.

Social and Emotional Wellness

Programs and services that support student social and emotional competence create an environment most conducive to a student's ability to learn and thrive.

The school unit will identify, operationalize and integrate social emotional learning priorities in each school using age and grade-appropriate methods, as determined by each school's leadership. Collaboration among students, families, schools, communities, and outside agencies, as well as integration with academic learning, will be encouraged.

Other School-Based Wellness Activities

The schools, with prior approval of the Superintendent/designee, may implement other appropriate programs that support consistent wellness messages and promote healthy eating and physical activity.

Leadership

The Superintendent/designee shall be responsible for the oversight of development and implementation of the wellness policy in the schools. This includes ensuring that the school unit evaluates its schools' compliance with the wellness policy and progress in attaining wellness goals and making required information available to the public.

The evaluation process must include a comparison of the wellness plan with model wellness policies (e.g. MSMA), and it may include surveys or solicitation of input from students, parents/guardians, staff, and school administrators, including suggestions for improvement in specific areas.

Annual Notification of Policy

The school unit will annually inform families and the public of basic information about the wellness policy, including its content, any updates, and implementation status. This information will be made available on the school unit's website. It will include the contact information for the person coordinating the wellness committee, as well as information about opportunities for the public to get involved with the wellness committee.

Triennial Progress Assessments

Every three years, the Director of School Nutrition will:

Assess the extent to which the school unit's schools are in compliance with the wellness policy;

Assess the extent to which the school unit's wellness policy (e.g. MSMA) compares to model wellness policies; and

Provide a description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the school unit's wellness policy.

The school unit's wellness committee will update the wellness policy based on the results of the triennial assessment and/or as:

The school unit's priorities change;

Community needs change;

Wellness goals are met;

New evidence-based health science emerges; or

New or updated federal or State regulations are issued.

Parent/Guardian Communications

The school unit will inform parents/guardians of improvements that have been made to school meal standards; availability of child nutrition programs and how to apply; the school unit's meal charging policy; and a list of healthy celebration party ideas (including a list of foods and beverages that meet the Smart Snacks standards).

Food and Beverage Marketing in Schools

Any foods and beverages marketed or promoted to students on the school campus during the school day will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks standards. Food and beverage marketing includes, but is not limited to:

Brand names, logos or tags, except those that are present as labels on the food or beverage product or its container;

Displays, such as vending machine exteriors;

Corporate brands' logos, names, or trademarks on school equipment such as message boards or scoreboards;

Corporate brands' logos, names, or trademarks on cups used for beverage dispensing, menu boards, coolers, trash cans, and other food service equipment;

Corporate brands' logos, names, or trademarks on posters, book covers, or school supplies distributed or offered by the school unit; or

Advertisements in school publications or school mailings; or on product coupons or free samples.

Corporate brand names, logos, and trademarks for *companies* that market products that comply with the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards will not be prohibited solely because they offer some noncompliant food or beverage items in their product line.

Appointment and Role of the Wellness Committee

The Board shall appoint a district-wide Wellness Committee comprised of at least one of each of the following:

- A. Board member;
- B. School administrator;
- C. Food Services Director/designee;
- D. Student representative;
- E. Parent/guardian representative and/or community representative;
- F. School nurse and/or other school health professional.

The Wellness Committee may also include:

- A. Physical education teacher;
- B. School counselor;
- C. Social worker;
- D. Other staff, as designated by the Board; and/or
- E. Other persons, as designated by the Board.

The Wellness Committee shall serve as a committee in regard to student wellness issues and will be responsible for making recommendations related to the wellness policy, wellness goals, administrative or school regulations and practices, and raising awareness of student health issues.

With the prior approval of the Superintendent/designee, the Wellness Committee may survey parents/guardians, students, and the community and/or conduct focus groups or community forums.

The Wellness Committee shall provide periodic reports to the Superintendent/ designee and, as requested, to the Board.

Wellness Goals

The Board has identified the following goals associated with student wellness:

Goals for Nutrition Education

The schools will provide nutrition education that focuses on the skills students need to adopt and maintain healthy eating behaviors.

The schools' nutrition education will be provided in a sequential, comprehensive health education program aligned with the content standards of the Maine system of Learning Results.

Nutrition education will be integrated into other subjects as appropriate to complement, not replace, the health education program.

The school unit will provide foods that meet or exceed the federal nutrition standards, adequate time for students to obtain food and eat, lunch scheduled at appropriate hours of the day, adequate space to eat, and a clean and safe meal environment.

Appropriate professional development will be provided for food services staff.

Goals for Nutrition Promotion

School unit staff will cooperate with agencies and community organizations to provide opportunities for nutrition-related student projects and learning experiences.

Consistent nutrition messages will be disseminated throughout the school unit in the classroom, the cafeteria, and school-home communications.

Administrators and staff will be encouraged to model nutritious food choices and eating habits.

Schools will encourage parents/guardians to provide healthy meals and snacks for their children through take-home materials or other means.

Students will have access to clean and safe drinking water throughout the school day and during school activities.

Schools will promote consumption of water as an essential element in maintaining overall health and wellness.

Goals for Physical Activity

The physical education program will provide students with the knowledge and skills needed to optimize their physical health.

Students will have the opportunity to develop motor skills and apply them to enhance their coordination and physical performance.

The physical education curriculum will be aligned with the content standards of the Maine system of Learning Results.

Physical education classes will keep all students involved in purposeful activity for a majority of the class period.

Physical education classes will provide opportunities to learn for students of all abilities.

The schools will provide a physical and social environment that encourages safe and enjoyable physical activity and fosters the development of a positive attitude toward health and fitness.

The schools will provide facilities adequate to implement the physical education curriculum for the number of students served.

Schools will provide opportunities for students to engage in age-appropriate activities on most days of the week in both school and community settings.

The schools will provide opportunities for physical activity through a variety of before- and/or after-school programs including, but not limited to, intramural sports, interscholastic athletics, and physical activity clubs.

Appropriate professional development will be provided for physical education staff and other staff involved in the delivery of such programs.

Goals for Social and Emotional Well-Being

PLAN: Each school will respond to the social and emotional needs of students and provide tiered support as needed. RSU No. 5 will recognize students' individual and collective social and emotional needs to inform programming, scheduling, and other opportunities.

TRAIN: Licensed and trained professionals, as well as mental health support staff within RSU No. 5, will help to implement programming and train staff on ways to support all students' social and emotional wellness with a lens of understanding of individual needs and perspectives.

SUPPORT: Social and emotional learning will promote student self-awareness, self-advocacy, social awareness, self-regulation, and support life-long healthy lifestyles.

CONNECT: RSU No. 5 staff will connect students and families to resources and supports in school and in the community as appropriate.

Goals for Other School-Based Activities

Goals of the wellness policy will be considered when planning school or classroom parties, celebrations, or events.

Parents/guardians will be encouraged to provide nutritionally sound snacks from home and food for classroom parties or events.

Schools will encourage maximum participation in school meal programs.

Schools will encourage parents/guardians and students to take advantage of developmentally appropriate community-based after-school programs.

Fundraising projects will be supportive of healthy eating and student wellness.

School-based marketing of foods and beverages, such as through advertisements in school publications, school buildings, athletic fields, and other areas accessible to students should support the goals of the wellness policy.

The schools are encouraged to cooperate with agencies and community organizations to support programs that contribute to good nutrition and physical activity.

Legal Reference: 42 U.S.C. § 1751 (Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act)
7 CFR Parts 210 and 220
20-A MRSA § 6662

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