

# Russell County Schools District's Wellness Policies on Physical Activity and Nutrition

The Russell County School District is committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, it is the policy of the Russell School District that:

- The school district will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing district wide nutrition and physical activity policies.
- All students in grades PreK-12 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis
- Foods and beverages sold or served at school, through the cafeteria program, will meet the nutrition recommendations of the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
- Qualified child nutrition professionals will provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students; and will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.
- To the maximum extent practicable, all schools in our district will participate in available federal school meal programs (including the School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program [including after-school snacks], Summer Food Service Program, Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program.
- Schools will provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity, and will establish linkages between health education and school meal programs, and with related community services.

## TO ACHIEVE THESE POLICY GOALS:

### 1. School Health Councils, School Health Advisory Board (SHAB)

The school district and/or individual schools within the district will create, strengthen, or work within existing school health councils to develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies. The councils also will serve as resources to school sites for implementing those policies. (A school health council consists of a group of individuals representing the school and community, and should include parents, students, representatives of the school food authority, members

of the school board, school administrators, teachers, health professionals, and members of the public.)

## **II. Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served on Campus**

### **School Meals**

Meals served through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs will:

- be appealing and attractive to children;
- be served in clean and pleasant settings;
- meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations;
- offer a variety of fruits and vegetables;
- serve low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk and/or nutritionally equivalent non-dairy alternatives (to be defined by USDA); and
- offer more whole grain products.

Schools should engage students and parents, in selecting foods sold through the school meal programs in order to identify new, healthful, and appealing food choices. In addition, schools should share information about the nutritional content of meals with parents and students. Such information could be made available on menus, a website, on cafeteria menu boards, placards, or other point-of-purchase materials.

**Breakfast.** To ensure that all children have breakfast, either at home or at school, in order to meet their nutritional needs and enhance their ability to learn:

- Schools will, to the extent possible, operate the School Breakfast Program.
- Schools will, to the extent possible, arrange bus schedules and utilize methods to serve school breakfasts that encourage participation.
- Schools that serve breakfast to students will notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast Program.
- Schools will encourage parents to provide a healthy breakfast for their children through newsletter articles, take-home materials, or other means

**Free and Reduced-priced Meals.** Schools will make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to, and prevent the overt identification of, students who are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals. Toward this end, schools may utilize electronic identification and payment systems.

**Meal Times and Scheduling.** Schools:

- will provide students with at least 10 minutes to eat breakfast and a minimum of 25 minutes for lunch;
- should schedule meal periods at appropriate times, e.g., lunch should be scheduled between 10:45 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.;
- should not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities;
- will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks; and
- should take reasonable steps to accommodate the tooth-brushing regimens of students with special oral health needs (e.g., orthodontia or high tooth decay risk).

**Qualifications of School Food Service Staff.** Qualified nutrition professionals will administer the school meal programs. As part of the school district's responsibility to operate a food service program, we will provide continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals in schools. Staff development programs should include appropriate certification and/or training programs for child nutrition directors, school nutrition managers, and cafeteria workers, according to their levels of responsibility. At this time, (02/12) all the cafeteria managers have Servsafe Certification

**Sharing of Foods and Beverages.** Schools should discourage students from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets. This is stressed in Policy JHCD-A, Guidelines for Managing Students with Food Allergies.

**Foods and Beverages Sold Individually (i.e., foods sold outside of reimbursable school meals, such as through vending machines, cafeteria a la carte [snack] lines, fundraisers, school stores, etc.)**

**Elementary Schools.** The school food service program will approve and provide all food and beverage sales to students in elementary schools. Given young children's limited nutrition skills, food in elementary schools should be sold as balanced meals. If available, foods and beverages sold individually will offer low-fat and non-fat milk, fruits, and non-fried vegetables.

**Middle and High Schools.** In middle and high schools, foods and beverages sold individually outside the reimbursable school meal programs will offer (including those

sold through a la carte [snack] lines, vending machines, student stores, or fundraising activities) during the school day, or through programs for students after the school day.

### **Beverages**

- Schools will offer: water or seltzer water without added caloric sweeteners; fruit and vegetable juices and fruit-based drinks that contain at least 50% fruit juice and that do not contain additional caloric sweeteners; unflavored or flavored low-fat or fat-free fluid milk and nutritionally-equivalent nondairy beverages (to be defined by USDA);

### **Foods**

- A food item sold individually:
  - will be offered that have no more than 35% of its calories from fat (excluding nuts, seeds, peanut butter, and other nut butters) and 10% of its calories from saturated and trans fat combined;
  - will be offered that have no more than 35% of its *weight* from added sugars;
  - will offer items that contain no more than 230 mg of sodium per serving for chips, cereals, crackers, French fries, baked goods, and other snack items; will contain no more than 480 mg of sodium per serving for pastas, meats, and soups; and will contain no more than 600 mg of sodium for pizza, sandwiches, and main dishes.
- A choice of at least two fruits and/or non-fried vegetables will be offered for sale at any location on the school site where foods are sold. Such items could include, but are not limited to, fresh fruits and vegetables; 100% fruit or vegetable juice; fruit-based drinks that are at least 50% fruit juice and that do not contain additional caloric sweeteners; cooked, dried, or canned fruits (canned in fruit juice or light syrup); and cooked, dried, or canned vegetables (that meet the above fat and sodium guidelines).

### **Portion Sizes:**

- Limit portion sizes of foods and beverages sold individually to those listed below:
  - One and one-quarter ounces for chips, crackers, popcorn, cereal, trail mix, nuts, seeds, dried fruit, or jerky;
  - One ounce for cookies;

- Two ounces for cereal bars, granola bars, pastries, muffins, doughnuts, bagels, and other bakery items;
- Four fluid ounces for frozen desserts, including, but not limited to, low-fat or fat-free ice cream;
- Eight ounces for non-frozen yogurt;
- Twelve fluid ounces for beverages, excluding water; and\
- The portion size of a la carte entrees and side dishes, including potatoes, will not be greater than the size of comparable portions offered as part of school meals. Fruits and non-fried vegetables are exempt from portion-size limits.

**Fundraising Activities.** To support children's health and school nutrition-education efforts, the school district will make available a list of ideas for acceptable fundraising activities. Schools will encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity.

**Snacks.** Snacks served during the school day or in after-school care or enrichment programs will make a positive contribution to children's diets and health, with an emphasis on serving fruits and vegetables as the primary snacks and water as the primary beverage. Schools will assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, children's nutritional needs, children's ages, and other considerations.

- If eligible, schools that provide snacks through after-school programs will pursue receiving reimbursements through the National School Lunch Program.

**Celebrations.** Each party should include no more than one food or beverage that does not meet nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually.

### **III. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing**

**Nutrition Education and Promotion.** Russell County School District aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Schools should provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- is offered at each grade level as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;

- is part of not only health education classes, but also classroom instruction in subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects;
- includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally relevant, participatory activities, such as contests, promotions, taste testing, farm visits, and school gardens;
- promotes fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fatfree dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and healthenhancing nutrition practices;
- emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise);
- links with school meal programs, other school foods, and nutritionrelated community services;
- teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food marketing; and
- includes training for teachers and other staff.

**Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting.** For students to receive the nationally-recommended amount of daily physical activity (*i.e.*, at least 60 minutes per day) and for students to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior, students need opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class. Toward that end:

- classroom health education will complement physical education by reinforcing the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically-active lifestyle and to reduce time spent on sedentary activities, such as watching television;
- opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into other subject lessons; and
- classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

**Communications with Parents.** The district/school will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. The district will offer healthy eating tips for parents through the after school programs, post nutrition tips on school websites. Schools should encourage parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks and to refrain from including beverages and foods that do not meet the above nutrition standards for individual foods and beverages.

The district/school will provide information about physical education and other schoolbased physical activity opportunities before, during, and after the school day; and

outside of school. Such supports will include sharing information about physical activity and physical education through a website, newsletter, or other take-home materials, special events, or physical education homework.

**Food Marketing in Schools.** School-based marketing will be consistent with nutrition education and health promotion. As such, schools will offer food and beverage marketing to the promotion of foods and beverages that meet the nutrition standards for meals or for foods and beverages sold individually (above). The promotion of healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products is encouraged.

**Staff Wellness.** Russell County School District highly values the health and well-being of every staff member and will plan and implement activities and policies that support personal efforts by staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Each district/school should establish and maintain a staff wellness committee composed of at least one staff member, school health council member, local hospital representative, other health professional, recreation program representative, union representative, and employee benefits specialist. (The staff wellness committee could be a subcommittee of the school health council.) The committee should develop, promote, and oversee a multifaceted plan to promote staff health and wellness. The plan should be based on input solicited from school staff and should outline ways to encourage healthy eating, physical activity, and other elements of a healthy lifestyle among school staff. The staff wellness committee should distribute its plan to the school health council annually.

#### **IV. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education**

**Daily Physical Education (P.E.) PreK-12.** Students, in grades PreK-12, will be offered daily, through Physical Education classes, including students with disabilities, special health-care needs, and in alternative educational settings, will receive daily physical education (or its equivalent of 150 minutes/week for elementary school students and 225 minutes/week for middle and high school students) for the entire school year. All physical education will be taught by a certified physical education teacher. Student involvement in other activities involving physical activity (e.g., interscholastic or intramural sports) will not be substituted for meeting the physical education requirement. Students will spend at least 50 percent of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

**Daily Recess.** Elementary schools, grades PreK-5, students will strive toward at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which schools should encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity. Schools should discourage extended periods (*i.e.*, periods of two or more hours) of inactivity. When activities, such as mandatory school-wide testing, make it necessary for students to remain indoors for long periods of time, schools should give students periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.

**Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School.** The district schools will offer extracurricular physical activity programs, such as physical activity clubs or intramural programs. All high schools, and middle schools as appropriate, will offer interscholastic sports programs. Schools will offer a range of activities that meet the needs, interests, and abilities of all students, including boys, girls, students with disabilities, and students with special health-care needs.

After-school enrichment programs will provide and encourage – verbally and through the provision of space, equipment, and activities – daily periods of moderate to vigorous physical activity for all participants.

**Physical Activity and Punishment.** Teachers and other school and community personnel will not use physical activity (e.g., running laps, pushups) or withhold opportunities for physical activity (e.g., recess, physical education) as punishment during the regular school day.

**Safe Routes to School.** The school district will strive to make it safer and easier for students to walk school when appropriate.

**Use of School Facilities Outside of School Hours.** School spaces and facilities should be available to students, staff, and community members before, during, and after the school day, on weekends, and during school vacations. These spaces and facilities also should be available to community agencies and organizations offering physical activity and nutrition programs. School policies concerning safety will apply at all times.

## **V. Monitoring and Policy Review**

**Monitoring.** The superintendent or designee will ensure compliance with established district-wide nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. In each school, the principal or designee will ensure compliance with those policies in his/her school and will report on the school's compliance to the school district superintendent or designee.

School food service staff, at the school or district level, will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the superintendent (or if done at the school level, to the school principal). In addition, the school district will report on the most recent USDA School Meals Initiative (SMI) review findings and any resulting changes. If the district has not received a SMI review from the state agency within the past five years, the district will request from the state agency that a SMI review be scheduled as soon as possible.

The superintendent or designee will develop a summary report every three years on district-wide compliance with the district's established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies, based on input from schools within the district. That report will be provided to the school board and also distributed to all school health councils, parent/teacher organizations, school principals, and school health services personnel in the district.

**Policy Review.** Assessments will be repeated every three years to help review policy compliance, assess progress, and determine areas in need of improvement. As part of that review, the school district will review our nutrition and physical activity policies; provision of an environment that supports healthy eating and physical activity; and nutrition and physical education policies and program elements. The district, and individual schools within the district, will, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.