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533 WELLNESS

[All school districts that participate in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs are required by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (Act) to have a wellness policy that includes standards and nutrition guidelines for foods and beverages made available to students on campus during the school day, as well as specific goals for nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness. The Act requires the involvement of parents, students, representatives of the school food authority, teachers of physical education, school health professionals, the school board, school administrators, and the public in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the wellness policy. The Act also requires a plan for measuring implementation of the policy and reporting wellness policy content and implementation issues to the public, as well as the designation of at least one person charged with responsibility for the implementation and oversight of the wellness policy to ensure the school district is in compliance with the policy.]

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to set forth methods that promote student wellness, prevent and reduce childhood obesity, and assure that school meals and other food and beverages sold and otherwise made available on the school campus during the school day are consistent with applicable minimum local, state, and federal standards.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

A. The school board recognizes that nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness are essential components of the educational process and that good health fosters student attendance and learning

B. The school environment should promote and protect students' health, well-being, and

ability to learn by encouraging healthy eating and physical activity.

C. The school district encourages the involvement of students, parents, representatives of the school food authority, teachers, school health professionals, the school board, school administrators, and the general public in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the school district's wellness policy.

D. Children need access to healthy foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive.

E. All students in grades K-12 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.

F. Qualified food service personnel will provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students; try to accommodate the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning; and will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.

III. WELLNESS GOALS

[Note: The Act requires that wellness policies include goals for nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness.]

A. Nutrition Promotion and Education

1. The school district will encourage and support health eating by students and engage in nutrition promotion that is:

a. Offered as part of a comprehensive program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;

b. Part of health education classes, as well as classroom instruction in subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects, where appropriate; and

c. Enjoyable, developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant, and includes participatory activities such as contests, promotions, taste testing, and field trips.

d. Heron Lake-Okabena Public Schools recognizes the importance of nutrition education to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to lead a healthy life. Thus, we require sequential and comprehensive nutrition education to promote student wellness that is behavior focused, interactive, and participatory. Our curriculum includes nutrition education for students in including elementary, middle, and high school.

We believe that nutrition education can also be integrated into other parts of the school day. Instructional staff shall integrate nutrition into other subjects and work with the school meal program staff to integrate nutrition education into the larger school environment. For example, instructional staff can use the cafeteria as a learning lab by reinforcing nutrition lessons from the classroom with the foods available in the cafeteria. School gardens can also be used to support academic instruction in science

2. The school district will encourage all students to make age appropriate, healthy selections of foods and beverages, including those sold individually outside of reimbursable school meal programs, such as through a la carte/snack lines, vending machines, fundraising events, concession stands, and student stores.

B. Physical Activity

1. Students need opportunities for physical activity and to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior. Toward that end, health and physical education will reinforce the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a healthy lifestyle and reduce sedentary activities, such as watching television.

2. Opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into other subject lessons, where appropriate; and

3. Classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

C. Physical Education

Heron Lake-Okabena Public Schools utilizes a comprehensive, standards-based physical education curriculum that identifies the progression of skill development in grades K-12. The curriculum shall:

- *A. Align with established state physical education standards*
- *B. Undergo a formally established periodic review cycle consistent with other academic subjects*
- *C. Foster lifelong habits of physical activity for all students*
- *D. Provide elementary school students 150 minutes of physical education every week throughout the school year*
- *E. Provide middle and high school students 225 minutes of physical education every week throughout the school year*

Physical education for all grade levels shall be taught by teachers who are certified to teach physical education. The district shall provide all physical education teachers with annual professional development opportunities that are focused on physical education and physical activity competencies aligned with the established curriculum. Relatedly, the district shall provide professional development opportunities for all instructors on how to incorporate physical activity in the school day.

We believe that it is important for all students to participate in the district's comprehensive physical education program. As such, schools are not allowed to offer students exemptions from required physical education class time because of their enrollment in other courses or vocational training. This does not include exemptions due to disability, religious, or medical reasons. Additionally, there will be no substitutions allowed for physical education requirements. For example, students may not use activities like JROTC or school sports as substitutes for physical education time.

D. Physical Activity

Heron Lake-Okabena Public Schools is committed to promoting an active lifestyle for students, staff, and community members. As part of this commitment, all schools are required to develop a comprehensive school physical activity program that address family and community engagement and provide a wide variety of offerings. Specific initiatives to champion physical activity include:

a. *All schools shall provide physical activity opportunities before and after school for students in all grade levels. This can include physical activity clubs, intramurals, and other activities.*
b. *All elementary schools shall provide at least 20 minutes of recess time daily to all students.*
c. *Schools shall provide students in all grade levels at least one physical activity break for every 60 minutes of academic instruction daily.*
d. *All schools will develop joint-use agreements with community partners in order to provide expanded physical activity opportunities for all students and community members.*
e. *Each school shall partner with local government and community-based agencies to support active transport to school and implement a comprehensive active transport program (i.e., Safe Routes to School Program).*

Staff are strongly encouraged to use physical activity as a reward whenever feasible. For example, teachers may offer extra recess time to incentivize good behavior. However, physical activity may not be assigned to students as a consequence of poor behavior or punishment for any reason. For example, students may not be singled out to run extra laps or other physical activities as a behavioral consequence. Additionally, recess, PE, or other physical activities will not be withheld from students as a punishment for any reason.

Employee Wellness

Heron Lake-Okabena Public Schools will provide a comprehensive program promoting health and wellness for all employees. Specific strategies to support employee wellness include offering physical activity classes to staff; making physical activity equipment available for staff to use before and after the school day; and providing free water and healthy snacks in all employee break rooms [EW1]. Additionally, to foster a comprehensive, community-focused approach to wellness, staff will be encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity behaviors.

Coordination of Wellness Activities

Heron Lake -Okabena Public Schools will convene and maintain an active district-level wellness committee that meets quarterly. The wellness committee will be led by the superintendent or designee, who will be responsible for ensuring that the wellness policy is clearly communicated to all school personnel, students, parents, and community members. The policy will be posted on the district website, and each school's website.

Communications with Parents

1. The school district recognizes that parents and guardians have a primary role in promoting their children's health and well-being.
2. The school district will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and

daily physical activity for their children.

3. The school district encourages parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks and refrain from including beverages and foods without nutritional value.
4. The school district will provide information about physical education and other school-based physical activity opportunities and will support parents' efforts to provide their children with opportunities to be physically active outside of school.

IV. STANDARDS AND NUTRITION GUIDELINES

[Note: The Act requires that school districts have standards, selected by the school district, for all foods available on the school campus during the school day with the objective of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity. For foods and beverages sold to students during the school day on school campus, the Act requires that school districts also have nutrition guidelines.]

A. School Meals

[Note: The Act specifically requires that the wellness policy contain standards and nutrition guidelines for all foods and beverages sold to students during the school day that are consistent with meal requirements for lunches and after school snacks set forth in 7 C.F.R. § 210.10 and the meal requirements for breakfasts set forth in 7 C.F.R. § 220.8.]

1. The school district will provide healthy and safe school meal programs that comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations.
2. Food service personnel will provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students.
3. Food service personnel will try to accommodate the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning.
4. Food service personnel will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.
5. Food service personnel will take every measure to ensure that student access to foods and beverages meets or exceeds all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations that reimbursable school meals meet to USDA nutrition standards.
6. Food service personnel shall adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local food safety and security guidelines.
7. The school district 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.
8. The school district will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks.
9. The school district will make every effort to provide students with sufficient time to eat after sitting down for school meals and will schedule meal periods at appropriate times during the school day.
10. The school district will discourage tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes unless students may eat during such activities.

11. Free and reduced-price meals. *We work to ensure that families of students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals complete the necessary state application so the students can receive these meals. We do this by sending the application home to all families at the beginning of the school year and providing the application on the district website. Students pay for meals and snacks using an electronic ID. One benefit of this system is that it protects the privacy of students who are receiving a free or reduced-price meal.*

12. *Unpaid meal debt. We work directly with parents and guardians to resolve unpaid meal debt, including helping them determine if they qualify for free or reduced priced meals. We are careful not to stigmatize or involve the student when there are unpaid meal balances; we do not identify these students at school, and we continue to provide standard reimbursable meals.*

13. Farm to School Connections.

Heron Lake-Okabena Public Schools values our relationships with local farms and producers and strives to build these connections and support our local economy.

a. We will prioritize including locally grown and locally produced foods in our school meals and will promote these foods with taste tests and signage about the farm.

b. Students will receive education about agriculture and the food system through hands-on learning experiences. Examples include a school garden club; using the garden as a teaching tool; and having students visit local farms and see where some of the foods in their school meals are grown.

B. School Food Service Program/Personnel

1. The school district shall designate an appropriate person to be responsible for the school district's food service program, whose duties shall include the creation of nutrition guidelines and procedures for the selection of foods and beverages made available on campus to ensure food and beverage choices are consistent with current USDA guidelines.

2. As part of the school district's responsibility to operate a food service program, the school district will provide continuing professional development for all food service personnel in schools.

C. Competitive Foods and Beverages

1. All foods and beverages sold on school grounds to students, outside of reimbursable meals, are considered "competitive foods." Competitive foods include items sold a la carte in the cafeteria, from vending machines, school stores, and for in-school fundraisers.

2. All competitive foods will meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School (Smart Snacks) nutrition standards and any applicable state nutrition standards, at a minimum. Smart Snacks aim to improve student health and well-being, increase consumption of healthful foods during the school day, and create an environment that reinforces the development of healthy eating habits.

3. Before and Aftercare (child care) programs must also comply with the school district's nutrition standards unless they are reimbursable under USDA school meals program, in which case they must comply with all applicable USDA standards.

D. Other Foods and Beverages Made Available to Students

1. Student wellness will be a consideration for all foods offered, but not sold, to students on the school campus, including those foods provided through:

a. Celebrations and parties. The school district will provide a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers, including non-food celebration ideas.

[Note: Healthy party ideas are available from USDA.]

b. Classroom snacks brought by parents. The school district will provide to parents a list of suggested foods and beverages that meet Smart Snacks nutrition standards.

2. Rewards and incentives. Schools will not use foods or beverages as rewards for academic performance or good behavior (unless this practice is allowed by a student's individual education plan or behavior intervention plan) and will not withhold food or beverages as punishment.

3. Fundraising. The school district will make available to parents and teachers a list of suggested healthy fundraising ideas.

E. Food and Beverage Marketing in Schools

1. School-based marketing will be consistent with nutrition education and health promotion.

2. Schools will restrict food and beverages marketing to the promotion of only those foods and beverages that meet the Smart Snacks nutrition standards.

V. WELLNESS LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

A. Wellness Coordinator

[Note: The Act requires that local school wellness policies identify the position of the local education agency or school official(s) responsible for the implementation and oversight of the local school wellness policy.]

1. The superintendent will designate the Food Service Director (could be another position such as School Nurse, PE Teacher, etc.) to oversee the school district's wellness-related activities

(Wellness Coordinator). The Wellness Coordinator will ensure that each school implements the policy.

2. The principal of each school, or a designated school official, will ensure compliance within the school and will report to the Wellness Coordinator regarding compliance matters upon request.

A. Public Involvement

[Note: The Act requires a description of the manner in which parents, students, representatives of the school food authority, teachers of physical education, school health professionals, the school board, school administrators, and the general public are provided an opportunity to participate in the development, implementation, and periodic review and updated of the local school wellness policy.]

1. The Wellness Coordinator will permit parents, students, representatives of school food authority, teachers of physical education, school health professionals, the school board,

school administrators, and the general public to participate in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the wellness policy.

2. The Wellness Coordinator will hold meetings 3-4 times per year (4 is best practice), for the purpose of discussing the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the wellness policy. All meeting dates and times will be posted on the school district's website and open to the public.

VI. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

A. Implementation and Publication

[Note: The Act requires a description of the plan for measuring the implementation of the local school wellness policy.]

1. After approval by the school board, the wellness policy will be implemented throughout the school district.

2. The school district will post its wellness policy on its website, to the extent it maintains a website.

[Note: Per Minnesota Statute § 121A.215, when available, a school district must post its current local school wellness policy on its website.]

B. Annual Reporting

[Note: The Act requires that schools districts inform the public about the content and implemental of the local wellness policy and make the policy and any updates to the policy available to the public on an annual basis.]

The Wellness Coordinator will annually inform the public about the content and implementation of the wellness policy and make the policy and any updates to the policy available to the public.

C. Triennial Assessment

[Note: The Act requires a triennial assessment of the schools' compliance with the wellness policy. The Act also requires school districts to inform the public about progress toward meeting the goals of the wellness policy by making the triennial assessment available to the public in an accessible and easily understood manner.]

1. At least once every three years, the school district will evaluate compliance with the wellness policy to assess the implementation of the policy and create a report that includes the following information:

   a. the extent to which schools under the jurisdiction of the school district are in compliance with the wellness policy.

   b. the extent to which the school district's wellness policy compares to the model local wellness policies; and

   c. a description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the school district's wellness policy.

2. The Wellness Coordinator will be responsible for conducting the triennial assessment.

3. The triennial assessment report shall be posted on the school district's website or otherwise made available to the public.

D. Recordkeeping

[Note: The Act requires school districts to retain records to document compliance with the requirements of 7 C.F.R. § 210.30.]
The school district will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of the wellness policy. The records to be retained include, but are not limited to:

1. The school district's written wellness policy.
2. Documentation demonstrating compliance with community involvement requirements, including requirements to make the local school wellness policy and triennial assessments available to the public.
3. Documentation of the triennial assessment of the local school wellness policy for each school under the school district's jurisdiction efforts to review and update the wellness policy (including indication of who is involved in the update and methods to school district uses to make stakeholders aware of their ability to participate on the Wellness Committee).

Legal References: Minn Stat § 121A.215 (Local School District Wellness Policy)
42 U.S.C. § 1751 et seq. (Healthy and Hunger-Free Kids Act)
42 U.S.C. § 1771 et seq. (Child Nutrition Act of 1966)
7 U.S.C. § 5341 (Establishment of Dietary Guidelines)
7 C.F.R. § 210.10 (School Lunch Program Regulations)
7 C.F.R. § 220.8 (School Breakfast Program Regulations)

Local Resources: Minnesota Department of Education, www.education.state.mn.us
Minnesota Department of Health, www.health.state.mn.us
County Health Departments
Action for Healthy Kids Minnesota, www.actionforhealthykids.org
United States Department of Agriculture, www.fns.usda.gov
Rudd Center Model Local School Wellness Policy