#### NEW 2/2025

#### Rhea County School Nutrition Procedures Manual

**Wellness Procedures**

On June 30, 2004, the President signed Public Law 108-265, the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004. Section 204 of this law requires school districts/LEAs participating in the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program to develop a local wellness policy that addresses student wellness and the growing problem of childhood obesity, by the school year 2006.

**General Statements concerning Wellness:**

* Children need access to healthy foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive.
* Good health fosters student attendance and education.
* Obesity rates have doubled in children and tripled in adolescents over the last two decades, and physical inactivity and excessive calorie intake are the predominant causes of obesity.
* Heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes are responsible for two-thirds of deaths in the United States, and major risk factors for those diseases, including unhealthy eating habits, physical inactivity, and obesity, often are established in childhood.
* School districts/LEAs around the country are facing significant fiscal and scheduling constraints.
* Community participation is essential to the development and implementation of successful school wellness policies.

The Rhea 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 Rhea County School District that:

* The school district will engage students, parents, teachers, school nutrition 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 K-12 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis. Middle school students participate in Physical Education class every day. Elementary students participate in Physical Education class as well as recess unless they are enrolled in band.
* 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.
* All schools in our district will participate in available federal school meal programs (including the School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program) Schools that qualify may participate in the after-school snack program and the Summer Food Service Program.

**Local Wellness Policy Components:**

1. **Nutrition Promotion and Education Goals**
2. **Physical Activity Goals**
3. **Nutrition Standards**
4. **Other School-Based Activities**
5. **Policy Implementation, Monitoring and Review**
6. **Public Notification and Stakeholder Involvement**
7. **Policies for Food and Beverage Marketing**

**1. Nutrition Education Goals:**

**Nutrition Promotion**

Rhea County Schools offer nutritional promotions through various activities. Nutritional tidbits are posted on the school menu each month. Posters promoting healthy eating are on display in each of the dining areas. Rhea County Schools implement at least 5 Smarter Lunchroom techniques.

**Nutrition Education:**

* Is offered in some schools 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.
* Will be evident in the cafeteria/lunchroom setting by bulletin boards, posters, and menus that promote fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, and low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices.
* Will include community outreach by the use of the LEAs Internet Website, Parent menus and flyers.
* Will discourage teachers from using high fat, sugar and sodium foods as rewards
* Offer a variety of low-fat foods
* Ensure that whole grain products are made available
* Promote more collaboration between food service staff and teachers
* Offer a variety of fruits and vegetables daily and will offer FRESH fruits/vegetables at least three times per week subject to price and availability.
* Serve a variety of milk, including fat-free, low-fat, flavored and unflavored, daily. The fat content of chocolate milk will be fat free.

**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 training programs for child nutrition directors, school nutrition managers, and cafeteria workers, according to their levels of responsibility. The School Nutrition Program will follow the USDA Professional Standards for All School Nutrition Employees effective July 1, 2015.

**2. Physical Activity Goals:**

Children and adolescents should participate in 60 minutes of physical activity every day. A substantial percentage of students’ physical activity can be provided through a comprehensive, school-based physical activity program (CSPAP) that includes these components: physical education, recess, classroom-based physical activity, walk and bicycle to school, and out-of-school time activities. The district is committed to providing these opportunities. Schools will ensure that these varied opportunities are in addition to, and not as a substitute for, physical education.

\*Physical activity during the school day (including but not limited to recess, physical activity breaks, or physical education) **will not be withheld** as punishment for any reason.

To the extent practicable, the district will ensure that its grounds and facilities are safe and that equipment is available to students to be active. The district will conduct necessary inspections and repairs.

**The Physical Activity Law**

* 130 minutes of physical activity each full school week for all elementary school students. Elementary schools must offer at least one period of physical activity that is at least 15 minutes each day.
* 90 minutes of physical activity each full school week for middle school students.
* The grade levels, elementary and middle, should align with how the district identifies the school.
* A district may choose to integrate more student physical activity time for elementary and middle school students during the school week than is required.
* Guidelines for Implementation:
* Physical activity may include walking, jumping rope, playing volleyball, or other forms of physical activity that promote fitness and well-being.
* Recess and free play activities may be used to meet the requirements.
* Physical Education may count towards meeting the physical activity law, but the physical activity law shall not replace the current physical education program.

**Physical Education**

The district will provide students with physical education, using an age-appropriate, sequential physical education curriculum consistent with national and state standards for physical education. The physical education curriculum will promote the benefits of a physically active lifestyle and will help students develop skills to engage in lifelong healthy habits, as well as incorporate essential health education concepts.

All students will be provided with equal opportunity to participate in physical education classes. The district will make appropriate accommodations to allow for equitable participation for all students and will adapt physical education classes and equipment as necessary.

All district elementary students will follow the Tom Cronan Act for Elementary Physical Education.

**The Tom Cronan Act of 2018, guarantees that all Tennessee elementary school children will now benefit from**:

* Two days per week of instructional physical education.
* A total of at least 60 minutes per week of physical education.
* Physical education taught by a licensed physical education professional (an undergraduate degree in physical education and/or an endorsement in physical education).
* The physical education class shall meet the needs of students of all physical ability levels, including students with disabilities who shall participate in moderate physical activity to the extent appropriate as determined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
* A student shall be excused from a physical education class for medical reasons. The LEA may require a parent or legal guardian to provide documentation of a student’s reason for being excused from the physical education class.

All district **secondary students (middle**) are required to take the equivalent of one academic year of physical education.

The district physical education program will promote student physical fitness through individualized fitness and activity assessments.

**Recess (Elementary)**

All elementary schools will offer at least **15 minutes of recess** on all or most days during the school year. (This policy may be waived on early dismissal or late arrival days). If recess is offered before lunch, schools will have appropriate hand-washing facilities and/or hand-sanitizing mechanisms available to ensure proper hygiene prior to eating and students are required to use these mechanisms before eating. Hand-washing time, as well as time to put away coats/hats/gloves, will be built into the recess transition period/time frame before students enter the cafeteria.

**Outdoor recess** will be offered when weather is feasible for outdoor play.

If the school or district must conduct **indoor recess**, teachers and staff will follow the indoor recess guidelines that promote physical activity for students, to the extent practicable.

Recess will complement, not substitute, physical education class. Recess monitors or teachers will encourage students to be active and will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

**Physical Activity Breaks (Elementary and Secondary)**

The district recognizes that students are more attentive and ready to learn if provided with periodic breaks when they can be physically active or stretch. Thus, students will be offered **periodic opportunities** to be active or to stretch throughout the day on all or most days during a typical school week. The district recommends teachers provide short (3-5 minute) physical activity breaks to students during and between classroom time. These physical activity breaks will complement, not substitute, for physical education class, recess, and class transition periods.

**3.Nutritional Guidelines of Foods and Beverages Available on Campus**

The health of today’s school environment continues to improve. Students across the country are now offered healthier school meals with more fruits, vegetables and whole grains through the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program.

Nutrition guidelines are implemented for a la carte, vending and other foods available on the school campus effective July 1, 2006. Beginning July 1, 2014, all Rhea County schools will follow the United States Department of Agriculture Smart Snacks In School, “All Foods Sold in Schools” standards as follows:

The Smart Snacks in School standards published by USDA will build on those healthy advancements by ensuring that all other snack foods and beverages available for sale to students in school are tasty and nutritious.

**Smart Snacks in Schools’ Nutritional Standards for Foods**

Any food sold in schools must:

* Be a “whole grain-rich” grain product; or
* Have as the first ingredient a fruit, a vegetable, a dairy product, or a protein food; or
* Be a combination food that contains at least ¼ cup of fruit and/or vegetable; or
* Contain 10% of the Daily Value (DV) of one of the nutrients of public health concern in the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (calcium, potassium, vitamin D, or dietary fiber).\*

\*On July 1, 2016, foods may not qualify using the 10% DV criteria

**Accompaniments**

Accompaniments such as cream cheese, salad dressing and butter must be included in the nutrient profile as part of the food item sold. This helps control the number of calories, fat, sugar and sodium added to foods.

**Nutrition Standards for Beverages**

All schools may sell:

* Plain water (with or without carbonation)
* Unflavored low-fat milk
* Unflavored or flavored fat free milk and milk alternatives permitted by NSLP/SBP
* 100% fruit or vegetable juice and
* 100% fruit or vegetable juice diluted with water (with or without carbonation), and no added sweeteners.

Elementary schools may sell up to 8-ounce portions, while middle schools and high schools may sell up to 12-ounce portions of milk and juice. There is no portion size limit for plain water.

Beyond this, the standards allow additional “no calorie” and “lower calorie” beverage options for high school students.

No more than 20-ounce portions of calorie-free, flavored water (with or without carbonation); and other flavored and/or carbonated beverages that are labeled to contain < 5 calories per 8 fluid ounces or = 10 calories per 20 fluid ounces.

No more than 12-ounce portions of beverages with = 40 calories per 8 fluid ounces, or= 60 calories per 12 fluid ounces.

**Other Requirements**

**Fundraising Activities**. To support children’s health and school nutrition-education efforts, foods that do meet nutrition and portion size standards for foods and beverages sold individually will not be used for school fundraising activities. Schools will encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity. The school district will make available a list of ideas for suggested fundraising activities.

**Fundraisers:**

Food items that meet nutrition requirements are not limited

The standards do not apply during non-school hours, on weekends and at off-campus fundraising events.

The standards provide a special exemption for infrequent fundraisers that do not meet the nutrition standards. Each State agency is responsible for establishing the number of exempt fundraisers that may be held in schools each year.

LEAs may set special exemptions for infrequent school-sponsored fundraisers that sell foods or beverages that do not meet the nutrition standards for Smart Snacks, such specially exempted fundraisers shall take place no more than twenty (20) days per semester per school site. No specially exempted fundraiser foods or beverages may be sold in competition with school meals in the food service area during the meal service. The principal of the school shall ensure that the twenty (20) day limit per semester is not exceeded. The principal of each school must keep a list of exempt fund raisers. LEAs shall include the special exemptions set for infrequent school-sponsored fundraisers in the Local Wellness Policy required by the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. LEAs may request approval to exceed the twenty (20) day limit per semester from the Department of Education.

**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 low-fat and less sugar and sodium items. The district will disseminate a list of healthful snack items to teachers, after-school program personnel, and parents.

**Rewards**. Schools will discourage using high fat and sodium foods or beverages as rewards for academic performance or good behavior, and will not withhold food or beverages (including food served through school meals) as a punishment.

**Celebrations**. Schools will limit celebrations that involve food during the school day to no more than **TWO** parties per class per year. Each party should include only **NON-HOMEMADE** foods that meet nutritional standards for foods and beverages. FOODS AND BEVERAGES MUST BE INDIVIDUALLY WRAPPED AND OR PACKAGED.

# Communications with Parents. The district/school will support parents’ efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. The district/school will, send home nutrition information; post nutrition tips on school websites and menus at least once per month. Schools should encourage parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks. The Coordinated School Health Supervisor will work with Rhea Fit and the School Health Advisory Committee to provide parents a list of foods and ideas for healthy celebrations/parties, rewards, and fundraising activities.

**All schools will follow the approved competitive foods policy**.

**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 regulations;
* offer a variety of fruits and vegetables daily and will offer FRESH fruits/vegetables three times per week subject to price and availability...
* serve a variety of milk, including fat-free, lowfat, flavored and unflavored, on a daily basis. The fat content of chocolate will be fat free.
* ensure that whole grain products are made available.

Schools should engage students and parents, through taste-tests of new entrees, in selecting foods sold through the school meal programs in order to identify acceptable new, healthful, and appealing food choices.

**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.

**Meal Times and Scheduling**.

Schools:

* will provide students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch;
* will discourage using high fat ,sugar and sodium foods as a REWARD or Punishment

**4.OTHER SCHOOL BASED ACTIVITIES:**

**Cafeteria Atmosphere:**

1. School dining areas have sufficient space for students to sit and consume meals.
2. School dining areas are clean, safe and pleasant environments that reflect the value of the social aspects of eating.
3. Enough serving areas are provided to ensure student access to school meals with a minimum of wait time.
4. Meal times are scheduled near the middle of the day.
5. Students are given adequate time to enjoy eating healthy meals with friends.
6. Food or physical activity will be discouraged from using as a reward or punishment.

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### 5. Policy Implementation, Monitoring and Review

**Policy Implementation:** The Director of School or designee will ensure compliance with nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. At the school level, the principal or designee will ensure compliance with those policies and will report on the school’s compliance to the director of schools or designee.

**Monitoring:** The Rhea County Director of Schools or designee will ensure compliance with established district-wide nutrition and physical activity/wellness policies and procedures. 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 nutrition 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 school nutrition supervisor.

The DOS or designee will develop an assessment by school every three years on district-wide compliance with the district’s established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. That report will be provided to the school board and distributed to all school health councils, parent/teacher organizations, school principals, and school health services personnel in the district.

The assessment will be repeated to 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

**Policy Review**: To help with the review of the Rhea County Wellness Policy, the School Health Index will be used to assess the school’s existing nutrition and physical activity environments and policies. The results of this School Health Index will be used to identify and prioritize needs.

**6.Public Notification**

The public will be notified about the Rhea County School Wellness Policy on the Rhea County Schools’ web-site at [www.rheacounty.org](http://www.rheacounty.org) as well as school menus. It may also be included in the back to school packet that is sent home with students at the beginning of each school year. The Rhea County School System will inform and update the public about content included in the Wellness Policy as well as periodically give an assessment of the implementation and compliance with the Wellness Policy. The notification will be made on the Rhea County Schools’ web-site at [www.rheacounty.org](http://www.rheacounty.org).

**Stakeholder Involvement and Participation**

The Rhea County School System will notify parents, PE teachers, school health professionals, school administrators, school board representatives and the general public of the opportunity to participate in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the local Wellness Policy. The notification will be posted on the Rhea County Schools’ web-site at [www.rheacounty.org](http://www.rheacounty.org). Other efforts to notify potential stakeholder will be done through a district wide e-mail or on school menus.

1. Policies for Food and Beverage Marketing

The District is committed to providing a school environment that ensures opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. The District strives to teach students how to make informed choices about nutrition, health and physical activity. These efforts will be weakened if students are subjected to advertising on District property that contains messages inconsistent with the health information the District is imparting through nutrition education and health promotion efforts. It is the intent of the District to protect and promote student’s health by permitting advertising and marketing for only those foods and beverages that are permitted to be sold on the school campus, consistent with the District’s wellness policy.

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 in School nutrition standards *[or, if stronger, “state nutrition standards”]*, such that only those foods that comply with or exceed those nutrition standards are permitted to be marketed or promoted to students.

Food and beverage marketing is defined as advertising and other promotions in schools. Food and beverage marketing often includes an oral, written, or graphic statements made for the purpose of promoting the sale of a food or beverage product made by the producer, manufacturer, seller or any other entity with a commercial interest in the product.[[1]](#endnote-1) This term includes, but is not limited to the following:

* Brand names, trademarks, logos or tags, except when placed on a physically present food or beverage product or its container.
* Displays, such as on vending machine exteriors
* Corporate brand, logo, name or trademark on school equipment, such as marquees, message boards, scoreboards or backboards (Note: immediate replacement of these items are not required; however, districts will replace or update scoreboards or other durable equipment when existing contracts are up for renewal or to the extent that is in financially possible over time so that items are in compliance with the marketing policy.)
* Corporate brand, logo, name or trademark on cups used for beverage dispensing, menu boards, coolers, trash cans and other food service equipment; as well as on posters, book covers, pupil assignment books or school supplies displayed, distributed, offered or sold by the District.
* Advertisements in school publications or school mailings.
* Free product samples, taste tests or coupons of a product, or free samples displaying advertising of a product.

As the District/school nutrition services/Athletics Department/PTA/PTO reviews existing contracts and considers new contracts, equipment and product purchasing (and replacement) decisions should reflect the applicable marketing guidelines established by the District wellness policy.

1. USDA NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

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   1. Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or2. Fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or 3. Email: program.intake@usda.gov.

   This institution is an equal opportunity provider. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)