

SUMTER COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICY

Board Approved
December 10th, 2020

Reviewed: 12/4/2024

Preamble

The Sumter County School District is committed to the optimal physical and academic development of every student. For students to achieve personal, academic, developmental and social success, we must create positive, safe and health-promoting learning environments at every level, in every setting, throughout the school year. The district will align health and wellness efforts with other school improvement endeavors to ensure the optimal health and academic success of all students.

Research shows that proper nutrition and physical activity before, during and after the school day are strongly correlated with positive academic outcomes. Student participation in the School Breakfast Program is associated with higher grades and standardized test scores, lower absenteeism and better performance on cognitive tasks.^{1,2} Conversely, less-than-adequate consumption of specific foods including fruits, vegetables, and dairy products is associated with lower grades. Finally, there is evidence that adequate hydration is associated with better cognitive performance.³

This policy outlines the District's approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. Specifically, this policy establishes goals and procedures that:

- Student in the Sumter County School District have access to healthy foods throughout the day both through reimbursable meals and other foods that are available and meet Federal and State nutrition standards and snacks that meet all Smart Snacks Standards.
- Students engage in nutrition and physical activity promotion and other activities that promote student wellness;
- Students have the opportunity to be active before, during and after school;
- Students receive quality nutrition education that helps them develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors;
- District and school staff are encouraged and supported to practice healthy nutrition and physical activity behaviors in and out of school;
- The community is engaged in supporting the work of the District in creating continuity between school and other settings for students and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits; and
- The District establishes and maintains an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication and monitoring the policy and its established goals and objectives.

I. SCHOOL WELLNESS COUNCIL

The Sumter County School District will convene a representative district wellness committee also referred to as the District Wellness Council or DWC that meets at least 4 times annually to establish goals and oversee school health and safety policies and programs, including development, implementation, and periodic review and update of this district-level wellness policy.

The DWC membership will represent:

- Superintendent or representative
- all school levels
- caregivers
- students
- School Nutrition representation
- PE teachers or school health professionals
- School administrators
- Community health professionals
- Afterschool programs staff
- General public
- Community stakeholders

To the extent possible the DWC will include representation from each school building to reflect the diversity of the community.

Leadership

The School Nutrition Director or designee will convene the DWC and facilitate development of and updates to the wellness policy. Each school will designate a school wellness policy coordinator, who will ensure compliance with the policy.

Notification to the Public

The Wellness Policy and updates will be displayed on the district website.

II. NUTRITION

School Meals

Our school district is committed to serving healthy meals to children, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat milk; that are moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and have zero grams' trans-fat per serving (nutrition label or manufacturer's specification); and to meeting the nutrition needs of school children within their calorie requirements. The school meal programs aim to improve the diet and health of school children, help mitigate childhood obesity, model healthy eating to support the development of lifelong healthy eating patterns and support healthy choices while accommodating cultural food preferences and special dietary needs.

All schools within the District participate in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program (SBP), and after school snack program. The District also operates additional nutrition-related programs and activities including AG in the classroom, Health Education, Physical Education, Health fair, Drug Fair, community health fair, field days, and community bonfires with physical activity. All schools within the District are committed to offering school meals through the NSLP and SBP programs, and other applicable Federal child nutrition programs, that:

- Are accessible to all students;

- Are appealing and attractive to children;
- Are served in clean and pleasant settings;
- Meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established by local, state, and Federal statutes and regulations. (The District offers reimbursable school meals that meet USDA nutrition standards.)
- Promote healthy food and beverage choices.
- Menus will be posted on the District website or individual school websites.
- School meals are administered by a team of child nutrition professionals.
- The District child nutrition program will accommodate students with special dietary needs.
- Students will be allowed at least 10 minutes to eat breakfast and at least 20 minutes to eat lunch, counting from the time they have received their meal and are seated.
- Students are served lunch at a reasonable and appropriate time of day.
- Participation in Federal child nutrition programs will be promoted among students and families to help ensure that families know what programs are available in their children's school

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 professional standards for child nutrition professionals. These school nutrition personnel will refer to the *USDA's Professional Standards for School Nutrition Standards* website.

Water

To promote hydration, free, safe, unflavored drinking water will be available to all students throughout the school day and throughout every school campus. The Sumter County School District will make drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes.

Competitive Foods and Beverages

The SCS District is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages available to students on the school campus* during the school day* support healthy eating. The foods and beverages sold and served outside of the school meal programs (e.g., “competitive” foods and beverages) will meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School 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. A summary of the standards and information, as well as a Guide to Smart Snacks in Schools are available at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/tools-schools-smart-snacks>. The Alliance for a Healthier Generation provides a set of tools to assist with implementation of Smart Snacks available at www.foodplanner.healthiergeneration.org.

To support healthy food choices and improve student health and well-being, all foods and beverages outside the reimbursable school meal programs that are sold to students on the school campus during the school day will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks nutrition standards. These standards will apply in all locations and through all services where foods and beverages are sold, which may include, but are not limited to, à la carte options in cafeterias, vending machines, school stores and snack or food carts.

Celebrations and Rewards

All foods offered on the school campus are encouraged to meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.

Fundraising

Foods and beverages that meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snack in Schools nutrition standards may be sold through fundraisers on the school campus during the school day.

- Schools will encourage the use of non-food fundraisers and encourage those promoting physical activity (such as fun runs, walks and dance-a-thons, etc.)

Nutrition Promotion

Nutrition promotion and education positively influence lifelong eating behaviors by using evidence-based techniques and nutrition messages, and by creating food environments that encourage healthy nutrition choices and encourage participation in school meal programs. Students and staff will receive consistent nutrition messages throughout schools, classrooms, gymnasiums, and cafeterias. Nutrition promotion also includes marketing and advertising nutritious foods and beverages to students and is most effective when implemented consistently through a comprehensive and multi-channel approach by school staff, teachers, parents, students and the community.

The SCS District will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students throughout the school campus, as well as encourage participation in school meal programs. This promotion will occur through at least:

- Ensuring 100% of foods and beverages promoted to students meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. Additional promotion techniques that the District and individual schools may use are available at <http://www.foodplanner.healthiergeneration.org/>

Nutrition Education

The SCS District will teach, model, encourage and support healthy eating by all students. Schools will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- Is 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 integrated into other classroom instruction through subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences and elective subjects;
- Includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant and participatory activities, such as cooking demonstrations or lessons, promotions, taste-testing, farm visits and school gardens;

- Promotes fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products and healthy food preparation methods;
- Emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (promotes physical activity/exercise);
- Links with school meal programs, Farm to School programs, other school foods and nutrition related community services;
- Teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food and beverage marketing; and
- Includes nutrition education training for teachers and other staff.

Food and Beverage Marketing in Schools

The SCS 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, such that only those foods that comply with or exceed those nutrition standards are permitted to be marketed or promoted to students.

III. PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Children and adolescents should participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. A substantial percentage of students' physical activity can be provided through a comprehensive school physical activity program (CSPAP). A CSPAP reflects strong

coordination and synergy across all the components: quality physical education as the foundation; physical activity before, during and after school; staff involvement and family and community engagement and the district is committed to providing these opportunities. Schools will ensure that these varied physical activity 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, classroom 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.

Physical Education

The SCS 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. The curriculum will support the essential components of physical education.

All students will be provided 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 schools will comply with the State of Georgia Department of Education requirements for physical education.

The District physical education program will promote student physical fitness through individualized fitness and activity assessments or other appropriate assessment tool and will use criterion-based reporting for each student.

Recess (Elementary)

All elementary schools will offer at least 20 minutes of recess on all days during the school year.

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.

Classroom Physical Activity Breaks (Elementary and Secondary)

The SCS 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 as needed short (3-5-minute) physical activity breaks to students during and between classroom time at least three days per week. These physical activity breaks will complement, not substitute, for physical education class, recess, and class transition periods.

Active Academics

Teachers will incorporate movement and kinesthetic learning approaches into “core” subject instruction when possible (e.g., science, math, language arts, social studies and others) and do their part to limit sedentary behavior during the school day.

The District will support classroom teachers incorporating physical activity and employing kinesthetic learning approaches

into core subjects by providing annual professional development opportunities and resources, including information on leading activities, activity options, as well as making available background material on the connections between learning and movement.

Teachers will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

Before and After School Activities

The SCS District offers opportunities for students to participate in physical activity either before and/or after the school day (or both) through a variety of methods. The District by encouraging students to be physically active before and after school by

Active Transport

The District will support active transport to and from school, such as walking or biking. The District will encourage this behavior by engaging in six or more of the activities below; including but not limited to:

- Designate safe or preferred routes to school
- Instruction on walking/bicycling safety provided to students
- Promote safe routes program to students, staff, and parents via newsletters, websites, local newspaper
- Use crossing guards
- Use crosswalks on streets leading to schools
- Document the number of children walking and or biking to and from school

IV. OTHER ACTIVITIES THAT PROMOTE STUDENT WELLNESS

The SCS District will integrate wellness activities across the entire school setting, not just in the cafeteria, other food and beverage venues and physical activity facilities. The District will coordinate and integrate other initiatives related to physical activity, physical education, nutrition and other wellness components so all efforts are complementary, not duplicative, and work

towards the same set of goals and objectives promoting student well-being, optimal development and strong educational outcomes.

Schools in the District are encouraged to coordinate content across curricular areas that promote student health, such as teaching nutrition concepts in mathematics, with consultation provided by either the school or the District's curriculum experts.

All efforts related to obtaining federal, state or association recognition for efforts, or grants/funding opportunities for healthy school environments will be coordinated with and complementary of the wellness policy, including but not limited to ensuring the involvement of the DWC.

Community Partnerships

The District will develop relationships with community partners (e.g., hospitals, universities/colleges, local businesses, SNAP-Ed providers and coordinators, etc.) in support of this wellness policy's implementation. Existing and new community partnerships and sponsorships will be evaluated to ensure that they are consistent with the wellness policy and its goals.

Community Health Promotion and Family Engagement

The District will promote to parents/caregivers, families, and the general community the benefits of and approaches for healthy eating and physical activity throughout the school year. Families will be informed and invited to participate in school-sponsored activities and will receive information about health promotion efforts.

As described in the "Community Involvement, Outreach, and Communications" subsection, the District will use electronic mechanisms (e.g., email or displaying notices on the district's website), as well as non-electronic mechanisms, (e.g., newsletters, presentations to parents or sending information home to parents), to ensure that all families are actively notified of opportunities to participate in school-sponsored activities and receive information about health promotion efforts.

Staff Wellness and Health Promotion

The District promotes staff member participation in health promotion programs and will support programs for staff members on healthy eating/weight management that are accessible and free or low-cost.

Professional Learning

When feasible, the District will offer annual professional learning opportunities and resources for staff to increase knowledge and skills about promoting healthy behaviors in the classroom and school (e.g., increasing the use of kinesthetic teaching approaches or incorporating nutrition lessons into math class). Professional learning will help District staff understand the connections between academics and health and the ways in which health and wellness are integrated into ongoing district reform or academic improvement plans/efforts.

Glossary:

Extended School Day – the time during, before and after school that includes activities such as clubs, intramural sports, band and choir practice, drama rehearsals and more.

School Campus - areas that are owned or leased by the school and used at any time for school-related activities, including on the outside of the school building, school buses or other vehicles used to transport students, athletic fields and stadiums (e.g., on scoreboards, coolers, cups, and water bottles), or parking lots.

School Day – the time between midnight the night before to 30 minutes after the end of the instructional day.

Citations:

¹Bradley B, Green AC. (2013). Do health and education agencies in the United States share responsibility for academic achievement and health? A review of 25 years of evidence about the relationship of adolescents' academic achievement and health behaviors. *Journal of Adolescent Health*. 52(5):523-532.

²Taras H. (2005). Nutrition and student performance at school. *Journal of School Health*. 75(6): 199-213.

³Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2019). Water access: Healthy schools. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/npao/wateraccess.htm>.