

POLICY: JHK

Approved: September 25, 2006

Reviewed:

Revised:

## HEALTHY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

The School District of Hartford Jt. #1 promotes a healthy school environment through nutrition education, healthy food choices, physical activity and other activities designed to promote life-long health and well-being. A healthy school environment encompasses more than food and beverage choices available in the school cafeteria. It also includes appropriate meal schedules, serving times, dining atmosphere, food in the classroom, fundraisers, vending machines, concessions, positive role models, nutrition education, physical activity and consistent messages about healthy behaviors. This wellness policy promotes healthy behaviors that affect the development of human potential and enhance the attributes of good citizenship, like success in school, responsible decision-making, caring about self and community, setting and attaining goals.

The District wellness policy outlines the six components of a healthy school environment as identified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and other nutrition and school organizations throughout the United States. Each component is important and affects the nutrition and physical activity in a child's school life. Each includes a rationale, responsibility and implementation guidelines. This wellness policy aims to provide students a healthy school environment in which all members of the education team make nutrition and physical activity a priority every day.

### **Component 1: Nutrition Education**

**Rationale:** Students who practice good nutrition attend school with minds and bodies ready to take advantage of their learning environment. Nutrition influences a child's development, health status, well-being and potential for learning. The link between good nutrition and good education is clearly demonstrated by better attendance, higher test scores and fewer behavior problems in school.

**Responsibility:** K-5 classroom teachers, in collaboration with physical education teachers, are responsible for teaching nutrition concepts as part of the District health curriculum. At the middle school, family and consumer education teachers, in collaboration with physical education teachers, will teach nutrition concepts.

The Staff Development Coordinator, in collaboration with health educators, will provide professional development training on nutrition education and other healthy lifestyle concepts.

**Implementation:** School programs should ensure that students in pre-kindergarten through grade 8 receive nutrition education that provides the knowledge they need to adopt healthy lifestyles. Nutrition education should be well-integrated within a comprehensive school health education program and should include instruction that helps students learn more about the

importance of various food groups; situations specific to individuals; dietary guidelines including caloric intake, eating more fruits and vegetables, less sugar and low-fat dairy, meat, fish or poultry; healthy cooking methods, the recognition of the role media play in marketing and advertising foods and beverages; and the relationship of a balanced diet and regular exercise to a healthy lifestyle.

Nutrition concepts should be modeled by school personnel. The District will support extra-curricular activities and units that integrate nutrition concepts.

Nutrition education will include the reinforcement of physical activity and the health risks associated with a sedentary lifestyle.

Coaches stress with student athletes the importance of nutrition, including healthy breakfast choices, caloric intake and proper hydration.

Staff primarily responsible for nutrition education will be trained and regularly participate in professional development activities to effectively deliver quality, science-based nutrition education.

## **Component 2: Physical Education & Activity**

**Rationale:** Students are taught the importance of physical activity and the relationship to a healthy lifestyle. The District will expose students to a comprehensive physical education program and a wide range of physical activities so that students develop the knowledge and skills to be physically active throughout their life.

**Responsibility:** Physical education teachers are responsible for teaching the physical education curriculum. School staff will support the mandates of the physical education curriculum and further promote and encourage other physical activities, co-curricular activities and recess.

The Staff Development Coordinator, in collaboration with health educators, will provide professional development opportunities on physical education programs and activities for healthy lifestyles.

**Implementation:** School programs should ensure that all students in pre-kindergarten through grade 8 receive a developmental, sequential, comprehensive, standards-based physical education curriculum.

All physical education classes should be taught by certified physical education teachers.

School staff should not use participation or non-participation in physical education classes as a way to punish or discipline students.

Physical activity should include regular instruction in physical education, co-curricular activities and recess. Substituting any one of these components for the others is not appropriate.

Physical education should be designed to build interest and proficiency in the skills, knowledge and attitudes essential to a lifelong, physically active lifestyle.

Whenever possible, each school will provide daily recess that encourages physical activity.

Each school should ensure that students have adequate space and equipment to participate in structured physical activity.

Each school should ensure that physical activity facilities on school grounds are kept safe and well-maintained.

Staff responsible for teaching physical education will regularly participate in professional development activities to effectively deliver physical education instruction.

### **Component 3: Quality Meals**

**Rationale:** Healthy school meals provide the energy and nutrients children need for sound minds and bodies. Studies confirm what parents and teachers have known for years: children who are not well nourished have difficulty learning. The Food Service Department is proud of the role it plays in providing students with a nutritious meal each school day. The USDA lunch meal patterns require that a meat/protein, fruit, vegetable, bread and milk be offered in specific quantities to qualify for a reimbursable meal. These meal patterns are designed to provide 1/3 of the recommended dietary allowances for key nutrients. The menu must also provide no more than 30% of the total calories from fat, and no more than 10% from saturated fat. This variety of healthy foods allows children to learn to enjoy many different foods and to develop healthy eating patterns.

**Responsibility:** The Food Service Director will provide students with a well-balanced menu that meets the *Guidelines of the National School Lunch Program*, is appealing to students' tastes and is affordable.

#### **Implementation:**

- 1) The Food Service Director is properly qualified and certified; food service staff should have pre-service training and participate in ongoing training.
- 2) Menu selection meets nutrition standards established by the USDA.
- 3) Menu selection follows the USDA price guidelines so that the school lunch meal is always a better value than purchasing ala carte items separately.
- 4) Menu selection continues to support or improve upon providing healthy choices, such as: using all whole grain bread; adding whole wheat to bread products, such as:
  - French bread, pizza crust, or mini loaves for sub sandwiches
  - Offering desserts two times a week instead of daily; offering fat free milk 1% chocolate milk, 2% milk
  - Offering 100% fruit juices at the middle school and bottled water

- Offering two fruit servings each day (one canned and one fresh)
  - Offering two vegetable servings each day (one baked/steamed and one fresh)
  - Ala carte offerings at the middle school include fresh salad, yogurt parfait, vegetable trays, fresh fruit cups
  - Offering yogurt everyday at the middle school and 3-4 times a month at both elementary schools
  - Offering baked chips at the middle school
  - Reducing frequency of potato offerings on district wide menus
  - Baking rather than frying products
  - Offering 0% trans fat French fries
  - Individually packaging condiments for portion control and food safety
  - Using pepper and other herbs to enhance flavor, not salt
  - Use Taher *Pure Health* logo to identify foods that are lower in fat and higher in nutrients
- 5) Opportunities to attend nutrition education programs are available; also, nutrition education materials or food service publications.

With the changing environment and the concern of rising childhood obesity, the Food Service Department will continue to evaluate the lunch program. Changes made will comply with USDA guidelines and any local wellness policies.

#### **Component 4: Other Healthy Food Options**

**Rationale:** The quality of the school nutrition environment depends on the quality of **all** foods and beverages sold or served at school. Since all foods and beverages contribute to meeting the dietary needs of students, they should have access to nutrient dense foods (whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables) during the school day.

**Responsibility:** The School Board, in collaboration with parents, teachers, school administrators and students, will set competitive food options for the District.

#### **Implementation:**

- 1) Carbonated beverages should not be available to elementary school students during the school day.
- 2) Carbonated beverages should only be available in the middle school when a full array of milk, juices, water and other products are available.
- 3) Non-carbonated water, 100% fruit juices and/or milk shall be available at concession stands in addition to soda.

- 4) Each school should encourage fundraisers that promote positive health habits such as the sale of non-food or nutritious food items, as well as fundraising to support physical activity events.
- 5) Foods and beverages sold at fundraisers should reinforce the importance of healthy choices and portion control.
- 6) Classroom celebrations should encourage healthy treats, and age appropriate portion sizes. The District will offer suggestions to parents and families for types of foods that are appropriate.
- 7) Students will be encouraged to *drink water* throughout the day. Drinking water should be conveniently available for students at all times.
- 8) Concessions at school functions should include *at least as many healthy food choices as foods of minimal nutritional value*. It is recommended that groups market these healthy options at a *lower profit margin* to encourage selection by students.
- 9) Serving sizes of concession beverages, excluding water, will be limited to 12 ounces or less.
- 10) A la carte foods that are available include *at least as many healthy food choices as foods of minimal nutritional value*. They should include a variety of choices of nutritious foods, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat or non-fat dairy foods.
- 11) Serving sizes of a la carte beverages, excluding water, will be limited to 12 ounces or less.
- 12) Vending machines are not available to students during the school day.
- 13) Vending machines should offer healthy beverage options.

### **Component 5: Pleasant Dining Experience**

**Rationale:** Children will enjoy their food more and may try to make more healthy options if they can relax, eat and socialize without feeling rushed. Studies show that environment has a powerful influence on behavior. A pleasant dining area allows students to pay attention to what they are eating, and to enjoy the sensory and social aspects of a healthy meal.

**Responsibility:** Principals, lunchroom supervisors, food service personnel and maintenance and custodial services are responsible for maintaining a pleasant lunchroom environment.

**Implementation:** The lunch room environment should be a place where students have an adequate space to eat; pleasant, clean surroundings; convenient access to handwashing facilities; and adequate time for meals. (The Department of Public Instruction and The American Food Service Association recommends at least 20 minutes for lunch from the time that students are seated.)

Students are encouraged to socialize while maintaining an appropriate voice level for conversation.

Dining areas are attractive.

Food service personnel meet with building administrators/District staff to review meal schedules and facilitation of meal service.

### **Component 6: Commitment to Marketing Consistent Health Messages**

**Rationale:** The District recognizes that parents and families are a child's first and most important teachers. When children enter school, the responsibility for their learning is shared by the school, families, community, and the children themselves.

**Responsibility:** The responsibility is shared by school staff, parents, community and students.

**Implementation:** The District should provide educational information to families on healthy eating, such as information on the *Food Pyramid* and *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. Each school should provide information to parents to help them promote and incorporate physical activity and healthy eating into their children's lives.

*The District should not allow advertising messages that promote consumption of less nutritious food and beverages.*

Parent, staff, community and student input and feedback will be considered in planning a healthy food environment.

The District and food service staff should develop newsletter release or other communications about the food service program.

The District encourages healthy eating and physical activities within the school community. The District Wellness Committee should promote activities that improve the health and wellness of staff and that encourage participation in healthy lifestyles.

The District Wellness Committee has volunteers representative from each building.