

STUDENT WELLNESS

The RSU 29 School Board (“Board”) recognizes that student wellness and good nutrition are related to students’ physical and psychological wellbeing and their readiness to learn. The Board is committed to providing a school environment that supports student wellness, healthy food choices, nutrition education, and regular physical activity. The Board believes that students who learn and practice healthy lifestyles in their formative years may be more likely to be conscious of the importance of good nutrition and exercise as adults, practice healthy habits, and reduce their risk of obesity, diabetes and other chronic diseases.

The School Board recognizes that:

- Everyone needs access to healthful food and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive.
- Obesity rates have doubled in children and tripled in adolescents over the last two decades, and physical inactivity and excessive caloric intake are predominant causes of obesity.
- Heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes are responsible for two-thirds of the 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.

Nutrition Standards

RSU 29 (“School Unit”) will ensure that meals provided by its Food Services Program meet the nutrition standards established by the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, and other applicable Federal child nutrition programs. The School Unit strives to provide adequate time and space for students to obtain food and eat in a clean, pleasant, and safe meal environment.

Other foods and beverages sold or available to students during the school day (“competitive foods”) will meet the federal Smart Snacks guidelines.

Water

To promote hydration, free, safe, unflavored drinking water will be available to students throughout the school day, including mealtimes, at every 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 standards for school nutrition professionals.

Nutrition Education

Nutrition education will be integrated into the standards-based instructional programs of all RSU 29 Schools, through health education, and/or other school subjects like math, science, language arts, physical education, social studies, and electives. It may also occur through the use of school gardens, taste testing, cooking demonstrations and school-wide events, as aligned with the content standards of Maine's system of Learning Results. Nutrition education should focus on skills students need to adopt and maintain healthy eating behaviors. Students should receive consistent nutrition messages throughout the schools, including classrooms, cafeteria, and school-home communications.

Nutrition Promotion

Schools will support healthful eating by students and encourage parents/guardians to provide healthy meals for their children by providing consistent nutrition messages and information and by cooperation with other agencies and organizations.

Physical Activity

RSU 29 will strive to provide all students developmentally appropriate opportunities for physical activity through physical education classes, recess periods for elementary school students, and extracurricular activities (clubs, intramural and interscholastic athletics). School programs are intended to build and maintain physical fitness and to promote healthy lifestyles. Teachers are encouraged to integrate physical activity into the classroom/school day in ways such as walking breaks, use of activity stations, motor breaks, etc. The schools should encourage parents to support their children's participation in physical activities, including available before- and after-school programs.

Administrators, teachers and other school community personnel are strongly discouraged from using physical activity (e.g., running, laps, pushups) or withholding opportunities for physical activity (e.g., recess, physical education) as a negative consequence during the academic school day.

Other School-Based Wellness Activities

RSU 29 schools, with prior approval of the Superintendent/designee, may implement other appropriate programs that support consistent wellness messages and promote healthy eating and physical activity.

The Board may approve policy regulations or guidelines for refreshments served at parties or celebrations during the school day or for food as rewards, or may delegate the responsibility for such regulations or guidelines to administrators at the school unit or school level.

The school unit may develop programs that encourage staff to learn and engage in healthy lifestyle practices.

Leadership

RSU 29 shall have a Student Wellness policy and a Wellness Committee. The Superintendent/designee shall be responsible for the oversight of development and implementation of the wellness policy in the schools. This includes ensuring that the school unit evaluates its schools' compliance with the wellness policy and progress in attaining wellness goals and making required information available to the public.

The evaluation process must include a comparison of the wellness plan with model local wellness policies, and it may include surveys or solicitation of input from students, parents, staff, and school administrators, including suggestions for improvement in specific areas.

Annual Notification of Policy

The school unit will annually inform families and the public of basic information about the wellness policy, including its content, any updates, and implementation status. This information will be made available on the school unit's website. It will include the contact information for the person coordinating the wellness committee as well as information about opportunities for the public to get involved with the wellness committee.

Triennial Progress Assessments

Every three years, the Superintendent/Designee will:

Assess the extent to which the school unit's schools are in compliance with the wellness policy;

Assess the extent to which the school unit's wellness policy compares to model wellness policies; and

Provide a description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the school unit's wellness policy.

The RSU 29 Wellness Committee will update the wellness policy based on the results of the triennial assessment and/or as:

The school unit's priorities change;
Community needs change;
Wellness goals are met;
New evidence-based health science emerges; or
New or updated Federal or State regulations are issued.

Parent Communications

The school unit will inform parents of improvements that have been made to school meal standards; availability of child nutrition programs and how to apply; the school unit's meal charging policy; and a list of healthy celebration party ideas (including a list of foods and beverages that meet the Smart Snacks standards).

Food and Beverage Marketing in Schools

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 standards. Food and beverage marketing includes but is not limited to:

- Brand names, logos or tags, except those that are present as labels on the food or beverage product or its container;
- Displays, such as vending machine exteriors;
- Corporate brands logos, names or trademarks on school equipment such as message boards or scoreboards;
- Corporate brands, logos, names or trademarks on cups used for beverage dispensing, menu boards, coolers, trash cans and other food service equipment;
- Corporate brands, logos, names or trademarks on posters, book covers, or school supplies distributed or offered by the school unit; or
- Advertisements in school publications or school mailings; or on product coupons or free samples.

Corporate brand names, logos and trademarks for companies that market products that comply with the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards will not be prohibited solely because they offer some noncompliant food or beverage items in their product line.

Nothing in this policy shall require immediate replacement of scoreboards or other durable equipment. However, when reviewing existing contracts or replacing these items over time, decisions should reflect the marketing considerations articulated in this policy.

Appointment and Role of the Wellness Committee

The Board/Designee shall appoint a school unit-wide Wellness Committee comprised of at least one of each of the following:

- A. Board member;
- B. School administrator;
- C. Food Services Director/designee;
- D. Student representative;
- E. Parent representative; and/or
- F. Community representative.

The Wellness Committee may also include:

- A. School nurse and/or other school health professional;
- B. Physical education teacher;
- C. Guidance counselor;
- D. Social worker;
- E. Community organization or agency representative;
- F. Other staff, as designated by the Supt; and/or
- G. Other persons, as designated by the Supt.

The Wellness Committee shall serve as an advisory committee in regard to student wellness issues and will be responsible for making recommendations related to the wellness policy, wellness goals, administrative or school regulations and practices, or raising awareness of student health issues. Recognizing the need for consistent review and revision of these regulations, the RSU 29 Wellness Committee shall provide semi-annual reports to the Superintendent/designee.

With the prior approval of the Superintendent/designee, the Wellness Committee may survey parents, students and the community and/or conduct focus groups or community forums on wellness-related issues.

Wellness Goals

RSU 29 has identified the following goals associated with student wellness:

Goals for Nutrition Education

The schools will provide nutrition education that focuses on the skills students need to adopt and maintain healthy eating behaviors.

Nutrition education will be provided in a sequential, comprehensive health education program aligned with the content standards of the Maine system of Learning Results.

Nutrition education will be integrated into other subjects as appropriate to complement, not replace, the health education program.

The school unit will provide foods that meet or exceed the federal nutrition standards, adequate time for students to obtain food and eat, lunch periods scheduled at appropriate hours of the day, adequate space to eat, and a clean and safe meal environment.

Appropriate professional development will be provided for food services staff.

Goals for Nutrition Promotion

School unit staff will cooperate with agencies and community organizations to provide opportunities for nutrition-related student projects and learning experiences.

Consistent nutrition messages will be disseminated throughout the school unit in the classroom, the cafeteria, and school-home communications.

Administrators and staff will be encouraged to model nutritious food choices and eating habits.

Schools will encourage parents/guardians to provide healthy meals and snacks for their children through take-home materials or other means.

Students will have access to clean and safe drinking water throughout the school day and during school activities.

Schools will promote consumption of water as an essential element in maintaining overall health and wellness.

Goals for Physical Activity

The physical education program will provide students with the knowledge and skills needed to be physically fit and take part in healthful physical activity on a regular basis.

Students will develop motor skills and apply them to enhance their coordination and physical performance.

Students will demonstrate responsible personal and social behaviors in physical activity settings.

The physical education curriculum will be aligned with the content standards of the Maine system of Learning Results.

Physical education classes will keep all students involved in purposeful activity for a majority of the class period.

Physical education classes will provide opportunities to learn for students of all abilities.

The schools will provide a physical and social environment that encourages safe and enjoyable physical activity and fosters the development of a positive attitude toward health and fitness.

The schools will provide facilities adequate to implement the physical education curriculum for the number of students served.

Schools will promote efforts to provide opportunities for students to engage in age-appropriate activities on most days of the week in both school and community settings.

The schools will provide opportunities for physical activity through a variety of before-and/or after-school programs including, but not limited to, intramural sports, interscholastic athletics and physical activity clubs.

Appropriate professional development will be provided for physical education staff and other staff involved in the delivery of such programs.

Goals for Other School-Based Activities

Goals of the wellness policy will be considered when planning school or classroom parties, celebrations or events.

Parents will be encouraged to provide nutritionally sound food for lunch or snacks brought from home or when providing food for classroom parties or events.

Schools will encourage maximum participation in school meal programs.

Schools will encourage student participation in developmentally community-based after-school programs that emphasize physical activity.

The schools will encourage parents to support their children's participation in physical activity, to be physically active role models, and to include physical activity in family events.

As feasible, school physical activity facilities will be made available after school hours for student, parent and community use to encourage participation in physical activity.

School administrators, staff, parents, students and community members will be encouraged to serve as role models in practicing healthy eating and being physically active, both in the school environment and at home.

Student organizations will be encouraged to engage in fundraising projects that are supportive of healthy eating and student wellness.

School-based marketing of foods and beverages, such as through advertisements in school publications, school buildings, athletic fields, and other areas accessible to students should support the goals of the wellness policy.

The school unit is encouraged to cooperate with agencies and community organizations to support programs that contribute to good nutrition and physical activity.

Legal Reference: 42 U.S.C. § 1751 (Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act)
7 CFR Parts 210 and 220

Adopted: November 6, 2017