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## WELLNESS

The Lincoln Public Schools acknowledges the important relationship between students' wellness and their academic learning as well as the role that schools have in developing the behaviors students need for lifelong wellness. Accordingly, the district will promote practices, programs and learning environments that comprise a comprehensive approach for meeting these needs. The following goals, practices and standards related to nutrition and physical activity, outlined in five policy areas, specify the expectations.

### **Policy Area 1: Nutrition Education Goals**

#### Classroom

The curriculum of the Lincoln Public Schools will include instruction about knowledge and concepts associated with the development of healthy nutrition behaviors. The Curriculum Frameworks of the Massachusetts Department of Education will serve as the primary guidance concerning topics. The main topics should include but not be limited to Improving Nutrition, Safe and Adequate Food Supply, Social Influences on Healthy Food Choices.

#### Education, marketing and promotions outside classroom

Food services staff will seek opportunities through regular notices (e.g. menu handouts) and displays (e.g. posters in serving and dining areas) to reinforce the nutritional concepts that are being taught in classes.

#### Teacher training

Nutrition information and concepts will be taught by licensed health education teachers or other licensed teachers who receive guidance or training from qualified health educators.

Key issues to be monitored for Policy Area 1:

- knowledge and concepts related to nutrition as indicated by Frameworks are being taught
- teachers responsible for nutrition education have appropriate licensing and training

### **Policy Area 2: Physical Activity Goals**

#### Physical Education: time, frequency, intensity

Students enrolled in the Lincoln Public Schools will have a scheduled Physical Education class for a minimum of one period per week throughout the school year. The total number of minutes for Physical Education instruction will not be less than 50 minutes per week. Students will spend at least 50 percent of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity. Student participation in other activities that involve physical activity (e.g. intramural or interscholastic athletics) will not replace the physical education requirement. Decisions about scheduling Physical Education should take into consideration the time recommendations of various health and educational professional organizations.

Physical Education: staff training/certification

All physical education classes will be taught by a licensed physical education teacher. In addition, the district will support efforts for physical education teachers to remain current in their specialization as well as attain additional relevant certifications such as CPR and First Aid credentials.

Physical Education: teacher-to-student ratio

The number of students assigned to Physical education classes should be consistent with the Lincoln Public Schools class size policy. In addition, administrators and teachers should be mindful of class size when considering how best to maintain a safe setting and to achieve the specified learning expectations for the classes.

Physical Education: standards/requirements

The curriculum of the Lincoln Public Schools will include instruction about knowledge and concepts associated with physical activity and fitness. Students will, by repeated practice, acquire and refine a variety of manipulative, locomotor, and non-locomotor movement skills, and will utilize principles of training and conditioning, will learn biomechanics and exercise physiology, and will apply the concept of wellness to their lives. The Curriculum Frameworks of the Massachusetts Department of Education will serve as the primary guidance concerning topics to be taught and grade levels at which topics should be taught. The main topics should include but not be limited to Motor Skill Development, Fitness, and Personal and Social Competency in physical activity settings.

Teachers and other school personnel will not use physical activity (e.g. running, laps, pushups) or withhold opportunities for physical activity (physical education class) as punishment.

Physical activity outside Physical Education

As part of the curriculum planning and instructional design process it will be the practice of the district to consider how movement, hands-on involvement or other forms of physical activity may enhance learning in the given curriculum area. Based on the extent to which that impact is genuine, the integration of physical activity will be encouraged.

Recess

The district will aspire to provide all students with at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors throughout the school year, during which there will be sufficient direction, space and equipment that will encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity. Ordinarily, other required activities for a student (e.g. a tutoring session) will not be scheduled to occur simultaneous with the student's recess period. The administration of each school will monitor recess practices so that recess occurs during the school day at appropriate times. The administration of each school will also monitor participation in recess to ensure there are no adverse or repetitive patterns of recess being withheld as punishment.

Walking/biking to schools

Rules and procedures at each school regarding walking or bicycling will to the greatest extent possible encourage these options and offer appropriate suggestions (e.g. use of safety equipment; advice about safe routes) and establish appropriate conditions (e.g. designated areas for parking bicycles).

Key issues to be monitored for Policy Area 2:

- knowledge and concepts related to physical education as indicated by Frameworks are being taught teachers responsible for physical education have appropriate licensing and training
- continual assessment of whether there is sufficient time for physical education and physical activity
- school handbooks include information about walking/bicycling to and from school

### **Policy Area 3: Nutrition Standards for All Foods/Beverages**

Research confirms that hunger affects learning, poor nutrition affects learning and overall health status, and school meals provide essential nutrients and calories. To that end, standards have been established to address all foods and beverages sold or served to students. The standards focus on increasing nutrient density, decreasing fat and added sugars, and moderating portion size.

#### Nutrition value of foods and beverages

The Lincoln Public Schools' lunch program aims to be appealing to children and to serve meals in clean and pleasant settings, and strives to meet or exceed the dietary guidelines, nutrient standards, and portion allotments established by state and federal statutes and regulations for public school food service programs. Food and beverages that conflict with the District's policy of promoting a healthy school environment shall be discouraged. The dietary guidelines and nutrient standards shall follow the minimum standards set by Federal and State statute requirements including but not limited to USDA and Massachusetts Department of Education School Nutrition Programs and Services. The nutrient content of foods served as part of the school lunch program, including sugar content, shall be communicated to families on the monthly lunch menu.

#### Portion size

Portion sizes will meet, at a minimum, the standards by grade level as defined by the Federal government including the portion variations by grade level.

#### A la carte, vending, student stores, or concession stands

The primary a la carte items to be offered are fresh fruits and vegetables. If a la carte desserts are offered, they shall be limited to one per student. If there should be vending machines on campus, it shall be limited to containing water, vitamin enhanced water and/or 100% juice beverages.

#### Parties, celebrations, meetings

The district recognizes that food and beverages often have an appropriate place in celebrations, special events and other occasions when members of a school community come together. In all of these instances there should be a balanced approach so that there are always healthy options for food items, and less healthy foods should be offered in moderation. The district discourages the distribution of candy on school grounds and urges moderation when candy is available for special events (e.g. Valentine's Day) or when used in special projects that support the curriculum. Planners of these events should also consider portion size guidelines and whether there should be limits for children regarding how many portions they may have of certain food items being served. Administrator,

teachers, parents and others responsible for class or school parties should consult regarding healthy party ideas.

#### Food rewards

The district discourages the use of food as a reward for academic performance or behavior unless indicated in a student's individual education or accommodation plans. Schools and school staff will also not withhold food as a punishment.

#### Food-related fund raising

The district discourages fund-raising activities that involve food items that are not consistent with the nutritional value or portion size standards used for its food services programs. Moreover, the district encourages fund-raising activities that promote physical activity.

#### Qualifications of food service staff

The district will contract with qualified nutrition professionals to administer the school lunch program. Staff development will include appropriate certification and/or training programs for all staff according to their level of responsibility and as required by law. Staff will be expected to participate in regularly scheduled and appropriate seminars on topics including but not limited to food safety, choke prevention and fire safety.

#### Food or beverage contracts

Food or beverage contracts must follow state procurement laws and local purchasing practices. Food service distributors and vendors will be monitored to ensure that they provide predominately healthy food and beverage choices that comply with this policy's purpose in all venues.

Key issues to be monitored for Policy Area 3:

- lunch menus comply with nutrition guidelines
- individuals with responsibilities in the food services program have appropriate qualifications and training
- efforts to disseminate alternative ideas for fundraising and parties

### **Policy Area 4: Other School-Based Wellness Activities**

#### Access to child nutrition programs

As indicated by the Massachusetts School Nutrition Task Force expectation that school districts "ensure children have access to adequate and healthy food while in school" and the recommendation of the National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity that "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." Access to school nutrition programs should be a high priority for the district. Access will include efforts to inform families about eligibility for free and reduced fee lunch programs and assist families in the application for such programs in a non-discriminatory manner. In addition, the provision of free and reduced fee lunch programs will occur in a non-stigmatized environment (e.g. not identified as such when getting the meal). (See policy on Free/Reduced Lunch Program.) Within schools there will be assistance provided to students with disabilities or medical needs who require assistance accessing food (e.g. opening containers, cutting food, making choices, eating). In all cases, hungry students

should always have an option for a nutritious meal. The Administration and the District-Wide School Health Council should continue to monitor the need to offer breakfast within the schools.

#### Timing and scheduling school meals

School schedules should be designed so that students have adequate time to enjoy lunch in a non-rushed atmosphere at an appropriate time near the middle of the school day. Ordinarily, other required activities for a student (e.g. a tutoring session) will not be scheduled to occur simultaneous with the student's lunch period.

#### Surroundings for eating

Meals served at school will occur in an environment that is clean with appropriate lighting. Both hand-washing facilities and water fountains should be nearby and easily accessible. The routines and coordination of serving will be designed to avoid delays and long lines. Coordination will include arrangements for adequate seating areas with tables and chairs/benches that are an appropriate size for the students. There will be a plan at each school that is responsive to the needs of students with food allergies. The plan should include proper cleaning provisions and efforts to educate staff and peers about these needs.

#### Marketing of food and beverages

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

#### Sustainable food practices

To the extent reasonable the school lunch program should obtain and serve locally grown and seasonal fruits and vegetables throughout the school year. In addition, the district encourages the use of environmentally safe products and utensils.

#### Access to facilities for physical activity after school hours

The district will have easy-to-use procedures for accessing school physical activity facilities during after school hours for youth athletic programs, student and family physical activities, walking clubs, and other recreation activities.

#### After school programs

School staff members should encourage and support the participation of all eligible students in school-sponsored extracurricular physical activities such as interscholastic sports program. When such after school programs are established, staff will communicate and coordinate information regarding health and safety needs of participants and they will operate programs according to applicable procedures and rules (e.g. MIAA requirements). Staff members who oversee after school programs will have appropriate certifications (e.g. CPR or First Aid), model sportsmanlike attitudes and behaviors. Student athletes will be taught good sportsmanship, such as treating opponents with fairness, courtesy and respect, and are held accountable for their actions. The district will also collaborate as appropriate with such organizations as LEAP, Hanscom Club House and Youth Center, Lincoln Recreation, and other sponsors of youth programs to coordinate among staffs and assist with student transitions from school to these programs.

#### Coordinated school health approach

The district expects this Wellness policy to be part of a coordinated school health approach that encompasses all aspects of health education, physical education, health services, food services, and student and staff wellness.

#### District Health Advisory Council

This Wellness policy requires the formation of a District Health Advisory Council to facilitate understanding and cooperation among those interested in developing, monitoring and improving the local school health program. Members should include representatives from administration, school nurses, Health and Physical Education teachers, students, parents, food services program representatives, community members with an interest in health issues, and, as needed, other town officials who focus on youth concerns (e.g. youth officer, recreation officials).

#### Staff wellness

Staff and faculty behaviors can influence students' perceptions of wellness. The district encourages the dissemination of information to staff that promotes physical activity and healthy lifestyle choices. These efforts contribute to their improved health status, reduced stress, improved morale, and a greater personal commitment to the school's overall health program which in turn make it more possible for staff to be positive role models for students.

#### Community/family involvement

Like other school endeavors, efforts to promote student wellness are much more effective when schools actively solicit family involvement and engage community resources and services. The district encourages schools to enhance school experiences with other events such as nutrition education programs for parents and physical activity programs that involve families.

Key issues to be monitored for Policy Area 4:

- appropriate scheduling and facilities for lunch
- continuing assessment of student nutritional needs throughout the school day
- establishment of district health advisory council

### **Policy Area 5: Governance and Evaluation**

#### Funding

It is the responsibility of the district to provide through its operating budget or through resources available from state or federal grants targeted for nutrition, food services or wellness programs sufficient funding to support at a reasonable level activities aimed at meeting the requirements of this policy (e.g. instructional time, staffing, food program quality, professional development, facilities, and administrative needs).

#### Monitoring and evaluating

The Superintendent and/or the Superintendent's designee will ensure compliance with the provisions of the established Wellness policy. Principals will monitor activities such as the physical education program, meal and snack scheduling, enrichment or after school programs, role of food in special events, fostering an environment that encourages healthy food and fitness choices among students, staff, and parents. District food service program

staff will monitor the nutritional content of school lunch program. Central Office staff will monitor district-based wellness activities such as professional development, training, licensure and certifications, food and beverage related contracts, and facilities needs. The administration will report to the School Committee periodically about the compliance with the Wellness policy.

The district will establish a District Health Advisory Council (see Policy Area 4). This council is charged with supporting the effective implementation of this policy. The council shall establish a plan to assess how well the Wellness policy is being managed and enforced, and then by this plan monitor and evaluate school compliance. The Health Advisory Council will review compliance reports and national school health trends in order to suggest improvements or changes to the district program. The Health Advisory Council will coordinate their efforts with the district administration and collaborate with the administration on reports to the School Committee.

NOTE: In a few instances ideas or sentences from the “model policy” offered by National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity”, from the policy of the Groton-Dunstable (MA) Regional Schools and from the policy of the Plymouth (MA) Public Schools have been used in compiling this policy for the Lincoln Public Schools.

*Approved at School Committee Meeting of June 1, 2006  
Reaffirmed at School Committee Meeting of May 3, 2007*