

Regional School Unit 24



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1 of 6

STUDENT WELLNESS, NUTRITION, AND FOOD SALES ON SCHOOL PROPERTY

The Regional School Unit No. 24 (RSU) Board (RSUB) recognizes that student wellness and good nutrition are related to students' physical and psychological well-being and their readiness and/or willingness to learn. The RSUB is committed to providing school environments that support student wellness, healthy food choices, nutrition education, and regular physical activity. The RSUB further believes that students who learn and practice healthy lifestyles in their formative years are more likely to be conscious of the importance of good nutrition and exercise as adults, practice healthy habits, and consequently reduce their risk of heart disease, cancer, diabetes and other chronic diseases.

The RSUB is committed to providing a school environment that promotes and protects children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity.

Therefore, it is the policy of the RSUB that:

- All students in grades PreK-12 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Foods and beverages sold or served at school will meet or exceed federal and state nutrition standards.
- 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; will accommodate the cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning; and will offer a pleasant setting with adequate time for all students to eat.
- To the extent practicable, all RSU schools will participate in available federal school meal programs (including the School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program [including after-school snacks], Summer Food Service Program, and Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program.
- RSU schools will provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity, and will establish linkages between health education and school meal programs, school gardens, and with related community services.
- The RSUB will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing district-wide nutrition and physical activity policies.

TO ACHIEVE THESE POLICY GOALS:

Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served on Campus

The RSU Food Services Manager (FSM) will ensure that all food products provided to students through the School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch, After School Snack, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable, and School Milk Program meet the nutrition standards established by local, state, and federal regulations.

All other sales of foods and beverages on RSU property compete with these programs, and must be in compliance with this policy.

DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this policy the following definitions shall apply:

- Competitive foods: any foods or drinks sold or made available to students on RSU Property during the school day other than meals that are part of the National School Breakfast/Lunch Program. This includes á la carte and vending machine sales.
- Nutrition education: a planned sequential instructional program that provides knowledge and teaches skills to help students adopt and maintain lifelong healthy eating patterns.
- Smart Snacks: Snacks that meet the USDA Nutrition Standards for all foods sold in schools.

School Meal:

Meals served through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs will:

- Be appealing and attractive to students;
- Be served in clean and pleasant settings;
- Meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations;
- Offer a variety of fruits and vegetables;
- Avoid foods that contain artificial dyes;
- Serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (to be defined by USDA);
- Whole grains will be served following USDA guidelines;
- Provide at a minimum one low fat salad dressing option.

Through taste-tests, surveys, and/or Maine Harvest Lunch, all RSU schools will engage students to identify new healthful and appealing foods for the school food program. Nutritional content of RSU school meals will be made available to students and parents upon request.

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, the RSU will:

- Operate the School Breakfast Program.
- To the extent possible, arrange bus schedules and utilize methods to serve school breakfasts that encourage participation, including serving breakfast in the classroom, “grab-and-go” breakfast, or breakfast during morning break or recess.
- Notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast Program. encourage parents to provide a healthy breakfast for their children through newsletter articles, take-home materials, or other means.

Free and Reduced-priced Meals. To eliminate any social stigma attached to, and prevent the overt identification of students who are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals, the RSU will utilize Nutrikids or a similar electronic identification and payment systems.

Summer Food Service Program. When possible, schools in which more than 50% of students are eligible for free or reduced-priced school meals, will sponsor the Summer Food Service Program.

Meal Times and Scheduling. To the extent possible, schools:

- Will strive to provide students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch;
- Should schedule meal periods at appropriate times, *e.g.*, lunch should be scheduled between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.;
- Should not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities;
- When possible lunch periods will be scheduled to follow recess periods (in elementary schools);
- Will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks; and
- Should take reasonable steps to accommodate the tooth-brushing regimens of students with special oral health needs (*e.g.*, orthodontia or high tooth decay risk).

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, continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals in schools will be provided. Staff development programs should include appropriate certification and/or training programs for food service directors, kitchen managers, and cooks, according to their levels of responsibility.

Competitive Food Sales on RSU Property During the School Day

Elementary Schools. Competitive foods will not be offered during the school day.

Middle and High Schools. Competitive foods offered during the school day will follow USDA Smart Snack rules and guidelines. [NOTE: See Appendix A for Smart Snacks in School USDA's "All Foods Sold in Schools" Standards and Appendix B for Nutrition Standards for All Foods Sold in School"]

Rewards. RSU schools will not use 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 behavioral punishment, (except when stated in a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP)).

School Parties/Celebrations. Foods may be brought into the classroom by students/parents as part of a special occasion such as a school party or celebration. School celebrations containing food should be considered an opportunity to reinforce nutrition lessons and put lessons into practice. Foods brought in for celebrations should follow the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. These foods should include fruits, vegetables, low fat dairy foods and low fat whole grain products. Foods high in fat and sugars will be used sparingly. This practice will be listed in the student handbook. The RSU will disseminate a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers.

Food Sold or Served Outside of the School Day If food or beverages are provided outside of the school day (such as, but not limited to, concession stands, dances, or school performances), they shall strive to meet the RSU 24 Nutrition Standards for Food and Beverages outside the School Meals Programs in order to ensure consistent messaging and role modeling throughout the school environment. Healthy alternatives will be offered, including whole grain foods, fresh fruits, and vegetables. A list of suggested items will be made available to outside booster and parent groups. Healthy choices will be encouraged through promotional pricing and product placement.

Fundraising. Fundraisers should consist of primarily non-food items. However, if food items are sold during the school day, they must meet the RSU 24 Nutrition Standards for Food and Beverages available outside the School Meals Programs.

Nutrition Education

Nutrition education shall be provided as part of the health education program and, as appropriate, shall be integrated into classroom subjects such as math, science, language arts, physical education, and social studies. Students shall receive consistent nutrition messages based on the latest Dietary Guidelines for Americans throughout the school community, including classrooms, the cafeteria, and school-home communications.

Physical Education K-12

RSU students in grades PreK-8 will receive physical education for the entire school year. RSU students in grades 9-12 must complete one experience as defined by program standards. The physical education curriculum will emphasize life-long skills, be aligned with state and national standards, and engage students in moderate to vigorous activity at least 50% of class time. Physical education will be taught by a certified physical education teacher.

Physical Activity

Daily Recess. Elementary and middle school students will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which schools should encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment.

Schools should discourage extended periods (*i.e.*, periods of two or more hours) of inactivity. When activities, such as mandatory school-wide testing, make it necessary for students to remain indoors for long periods of time, schools should give students periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.

Physical Activity and Punishment. Teachers and other RSU personnel will not use physical activity (*e.g.*, running laps, pushups) or withhold opportunities for physical activity during the day (*e.g.*, recess, physical education) as punishment, unless participation would cause a student to be a danger to himself/herself or others is allowed by a student's individual education plan (IEP).

Physical Activity Before and After School. In addition to interscholastic sports programs, all RSU schools should attempt to offer co-curricular physical activities, such as clubs or intramural programs. These programs will strive to include all interested students regardless of athletic ability.

Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting. For students to receive the nationally-recommended amount of daily physical activity (*i.e.*, at least 60 minutes per day) and for students to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior, students need opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class. Toward that end:

- Classroom health education will complement physical education by reinforcing the
- Knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically-active lifestyle and to reduce time spent on sedentary activities, such as watching television;
- When possible, opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into other subject lessons; and
- Classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

Staff Wellness

RSU 24 highly values the health and well-being of every staff member and will support personal efforts by staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Schools are encouraged to implement staff wellness related programs and activities that are consistent with the Wellness Policy.

Appointment and Role of the RSU School Health Leadership Team

The RSUB tasks the RSU School Health Leadership Team to appoint a district-wide Wellness Committee comprised of at least one of each of the following:

- A. Board Member;
- B. School Administrator;
- C. School Nutrition Director/designee;
- D. Student Representative;
- E. Parent Representative; and/or
- F. Community Representative.

[NOTE: Those listed above are specified by law. In the interest of obtaining input from diverse points of view within the school system, school boards are encouraged to add at least the school nurse, one or more teachers, and a guidance counselor or social worker to the Wellness Committee. The Board may wish to add others who have a direct interest in student health issues.]

The Wellness Committee may also include:

- A. School Physician;
- B. School Nurse;
- C. Physical Education Teacher;
- D. Teacher(s);
- E. Guidance Counselor;
- F. Social Worker;
- G. Community Organization or Agency Representative;
- H. Other Staff, as designated by the Board; and/or
- I. Other Persons, as designated by the Board.

The School Health Leadership Team will serve as an advisory committee in regard to student wellness issues and will make recommendations related to the wellness policy, wellness goals, administrative or school regulations and practices, and/or raising awareness of student health issues.

With the prior approval of the RSUB, the School Health Leadership Team may survey parents, students, conduct focus groups or community forums as appropriate.

The School Health Leadership Team shall provide periodic reports to the Superintendent/designee and yearly or as requested, to the RSUB.

Monitoring, Communication and Policy Review

The Superintendent shall designate one or more district employees, as appropriate, to be responsible for the implementation of the Wellness Policy. The Food Service Director will be responsible for monitoring efforts to meet the guidelines for nutritional quality of foods and beverages sold on school property. Building Administrator (BA) will be responsible for monitoring efforts to meet the intent of this policy. Monitoring may include surveys or solicitation of input from students, parents and staff.

The local school wellness policy annual progress report must include, at a minimum:

- A. The website address (i.e., URL or uniform resource locator) for the local school wellness policy and/or how the public can receive/access a copy of the local school wellness policy;
- B. A description of each school's progress in meeting the local school wellness goals;
- C. A summary of each school's events or activities related to local school wellness policy implementation.
- D. The name, position title, and contact information of the designated local agency official (s) or school official(s) leading/coordinating the school wellness policy team/health advisory council; and
- E. Information on how individuals and the public can get involved with the school wellness policy team.

Policy Review. Assessments will be conducted every three years to help review policy compliance, assess progress, and determine areas in need of improvement. As part of that review, the RSU 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 RSUB will, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.

References: USDA Smart Snacks in School
Nutrition Standards for All Foods Sold in School

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