



Wellness Procedures & Standards

Wappingers Central School District Wellness Procedures and Standards

INTRODUCTION

The Wappingers Central School District is committed to providing a learning environment that supports and promotes wellness, good nutrition and an active lifestyle. It recognizes the positive relationship between good nutrition, physical activity, and the capacity to students to develop and learn. The entire school environment shall be aligned with healthy school goals to positively influence students' beliefs and habits and promote health and wellness, good nutrition and regular physical activity. As a result, the school board adopted a Local Wellness Policy on August 8, 2006 #5900 that outlines these objectives and charges a District Wellness Committee with developing procedures and standards for implementation of this policy. The Procedures and Standards address goals for nutrition education, physical activity and other school-based activities designed to promote student wellness; nutrition standards for all foods available during the school day; guidelines for reimbursable school meals, community involvement; and a plan for measuring implementation, including designating one or more persons charged with operational responsibility.

RATIONALE

A disturbing number of children are inactive and do not eat well. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention noted that childhood obesity is more common within specific populations and socioeconomic status. Childhood obesity threatens to make this generation of American children the first to have a shorter lifespan than their parents¹.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) provided nutritionally sound and balanced lunches at no or low cost to over 29 million children each school day in fiscal year 2019. In 2020, NSLP participation averaged over 22 million children each school day. The decline is due to disruptions in the program in the second half of 2020 due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, which forced the closure of many schools and child care institutions beginning in March. In response, the USDA issued waivers allowing for flexibilities in the implementation of the NSLP and expanding program, Seamless Summer Option (SSO). Overall, about 3.2 billion meals were served through the NSLP or SSO in 2020. Waivers available during the pandemic are seen as an aid/bridge to assist children of all ages (K-12).

In addition, while regulations and operations occur at the Federal level, within the Food and Nutrition Service, each state administers the program (NSLP) by an interstate agency. The objectives of the wellness policy are to improve the school nutrition environment, promote student health and reduce childhood obesity.

The link between nutrition and learning is well documented. Healthy eating patterns are essential for students to achieve their full academic potential, full physical and mental growth and lifelong health and well-being. Healthy eating is demonstrably linked to reduced risk for mortality and development of many chronic diseases. Schools and school communities have a responsibility to help students acquire the

¹ Ohshansky, Sj, et al. A Potential Decline in Life Expectancy in the United States in the 21st Century. New England Journal of Medicine 2005; 35:11.

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knowledge and skills necessary to establish and maintain lifelong healthy eating patterns. Well-planned and well-implemented wellness programs have been shown to positively influence children's health.

Schools also have a responsibility to help students establish and maintain lifelong habits of being physically active. According to the U.S. Surgeon General, regular physical activity is one of the most important things people can do to maintain and improve their physical health, mental health, and overall well-being. Regular physical activity reduces the risk of premature death in general and of heart disease, high blood pressure, colon cancer, and diabetes.

STRUCTURE

The District Wellness Committee has been established to assess current activities, programs and policies available in the District; identify specific areas of need within the District; develop procedures and standards; and provide mechanisms for implementation, evaluation, revision and updating of the procedures and standards. So as to reach the entire district, the building level committee representative should plan to attend the quarterly district wide wellness committee meetings to report at the local level.

I. Goals for Nutrition Education, Physical Activity & their School Based Activities

Considering the parameters of the school district (academic programs, annual budget, staffing issues, and available facilities) as well as the community in which the district is located, the following goals have been established:

A. Nutrition Education

The District will provide nutrition education to facilitate the voluntary adoption of healthy eating habits and other nutrition-related behaviors conducive to health and well-being by establishing the following standards for:

- 1. Classroom Teaching:** The District will integrate health and nutrition programming throughout the curriculum for grades K-6. Nutrition education topics will be integrated within comprehensive, standards-based health education and family and consumer science programs in grades 7-12. Nutrition education shall be designed to help students learn:
 - a.** Nutritional knowledge, benefits of healthy eating and essential nutrients.
 - b.** Nutrition related skills, including but not limited to planning a healthy meal; safe food preparation, handling and storage; understanding and using food labels; and critically evaluating nutrition information and commercial food advertising.
- 2. Education, Marketing and Promotion Links Outside the Classroom:** Consistent nutrition messages will be taught throughout the schools, classrooms, cafeteria, home, community, and media. Linkages will be established between health education, school meal programs and related community services.

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- 3. Teacher Training:** Schools will provide ongoing professional development and education for teachers and other staff. Staff responsible for nutrition education shall be adequately prepared and regularly participate in professional development activities to effectively deliver the nutrition education program as planned. Preparation and professional development activities shall provide basic knowledge of nutrition, combined with skill practice in program specific activities and instructional techniques and strategies designed to promote healthy eating habits.

B. Physical Activity

The Wappingers Central School District (WCSD) will provide opportunities for every student to develop the knowledge and skills for specific physical activities to maintain physical fitness, to regularly participate in physical activity, and to understand the short-term and long-term benefits of a physically active and healthy lifestyle. The following standards have therefore been established:

- 1. Physical Education Graduation Requirements:** The New York State Education Department (NYSED) requires all students in grades K-12 to attend and participate in a physical education program. Students entering 9th grade until graduation must earn the equivalent of two units of credit in physical education to be eligible to receive a diploma. A quarter ($\frac{1}{4}$) credit is earned per semester for a total of eight semesters (grades 9-12). This accumulates to two units of credit necessary to receive a diploma. Students may not accelerate in physical education.
- 2. Physical Education Class Requirements:** All pupils in elementary grades shall attend and participate in physical education two times per six-day cycle. All pupils in secondary grades shall attend and participate in physical education for not less than three times in a six day cycle in one semester, and not less than two times in a six day cycle in the other semester.
- 3. Adapted Physical Education (PE) for any Child Who Has a Unique Need in PE:** Adapted physical education addresses those students that have an individualized education program under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and Article 89 of the New York State Education Law. Students who have a medical excuse will participate in activity as per physician's recommendations and/or modifications.
- 4. Curriculum:** New York State Learning Standards for Physical Education are used as a guideline for our physical education program in grades K-12.
- 5. Discipline:** Physical Education cannot be withheld from students for purposes of discipline. Physical activity will not be used as a form of discipline (e.g., running laps). Students shall not sit out of physical education class as response to inappropriate behavior, unless the behavior is deemed unsafe.
- 6. Staff Training/Certification for Physical Education:** All K-12 physical education teachers are required to hold a valid New York State Teaching Certificate. Staff development will

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assist physical education teachers and athletic coaches to learn and improve upon current academic and athletic trends to better meet the students' needs.

7. **Physical Activity Outside Physical Education Classes:** Because students should engage in a minimum of 60 minutes of physical activity per day the school district encourages physical activity outside physical education classes.
 - a. For students in elementary grades, outdoor recess will be offered on a daily basis, weather permitting, and should be used for the purposes of promoting physical activity. The entire recess should not be withheld as a form of discipline nor used as classroom make-up time. Every child has a fresh start each day. Elementary students will also be encouraged to participate in school-sponsored clubs, intramural sports and local recreation programs. Whenever appropriate, teachers will incorporate movement and physical activity into daily classroom routines and lessons.
 - b. Students in secondary grades will be encouraged to participate in school sponsored clubs, intramural sports, interscholastic athletics, and local recreation programs. Whenever appropriate, teachers will incorporate movement and physical activity into daily classroom routines and lessons.
 - c. Whenever possible, the District will provide facility access to students, families, staff, and the community for physical activity.
 - d. Schools will encourage parents and guardians to support their children's participation in physical activity, to be physically active role models and to include physical activity in family events.

C. Other School-Based Activities

The District wishes to establish a school environment that presents consistent wellness messages and is conducive to healthy eating and physical activity for all. In order to present a coordinated school approach where District decision-making related to nutrition and physical activity encompasses all aspects of the school, the following standards are necessary to achieve this goal:

1. **Rewards/Punishment:** Schools will be discouraged from using 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 punishment. (See Attachment A for a list of classroom rewards)
2. **Celebrations:** Schools should limit celebrations that involve food during the school day. Parties will be limited to twice per month and will include no more than one food or beverage that does not meet the District's nutrition standards for food and beverages sold individually. The District will make available a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers. (See Attachment B)
3. **Fundraising Activities:** To support children's health and school nutrition-education efforts, the District will encourage school fundraising activities that do not involve food.
 - a. The District will encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity.

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- b. The District will make available a list of ideas for fundraising activities. (See Attachment C)
 - c. If food is used as a Fundraiser, organizers will be encouraged to use only items that meet the District's nutrition standards for food and beverages sold individually.
 - d. Food not meeting the District nutrition standards for food and beverages sold individually cannot be sold as a fundraiser on campus during the school day.
 - e. The Food Service Director will collect all nutritional content for reimbursable meals, a la carte menu items as well as vending machines.
- 4. Dining Environment:** The school district will provide a clean, safe, enjoyable meal environment for students by;
- a. Providing students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks.
 - b. Providing enough space and serving areas to ensure all students have access to school meals with a minimum wait time.
 - c. Making drinking fountains or portable water available so that students can get water at meals and throughout the day.
 - d. Providing access to free/reduced price meals to all students in a non-stigmatizing manner and working to prevent the overt identification of students who are eligible for free and reduced prices.
 - e. Ensuring time for students to enjoy eating healthy food with friends in school.
 - f. Scheduling lunch time as near the middle of the school day as possible.
 - g. Encouraging parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks. (See Attachment B)
- 5. Staff wellness and training:** Activities to promote staff wellness will be encouraged. The District will provide opportunities for on-going professional training and development for foodservice staff and teachers in the areas of nutrition and physical education.

II. Nutrition Standards for All Foods Available on School Campus During the School Day.

Students' lifelong eating habits are greatly influenced by the types of food and beverages available to them. The following standards have been established to encourage healthy lifelong eating habits by providing foods that are high in nutrients, low in fat and added sugars, and of moderate portion size:

A. Reimbursable School Meals

All schools in the District will participate in the National School Lunch Program and participate in the National School Breakfast Program. Guidelines for these meals are not less restrictive than regulations and guidance issued by the Secretary of Agriculture pursuant to Subsections (a) and (b) of Section 10 of the Child Nutrition Act (42 U.S.C. 1779) and Section 9(f)(1) and 17(a) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1758(f)(1), 1766(a)), as those regulations and guidance apply to schools. This requirement implies that the District must ensure that reimbursable school meals meet the program requirements and nutrition standards set forth under the USDA School Meals Initiative for Healthy Children (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/usda>

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[school-meals-healthy-meals-healthy-schools-healthy-kids](#)). The Wappingers Central School District Food Services Department has adopted the following more restrictive standards for reimbursable school meals: no foods are fried, whole grain pastas and breads are offered daily as well as chicken nuggets, additional fruit and vegetables and salad every day. Bonus fruits are offered and encouraged above the NSLP USDA guidelines.

B. Foods and Beverages Sold Individually

Foods and beverage offered outside the reimbursable school meal programs during the school day include those sold through a la carte lines, vending machines, student stores, and fundraising activities. The following standards currently apply:

1. Vending machines in middle and high schools are not available to the students during the day.
2. Individually packaged snacks will be single serving in size. Food and beverage items will meet the USDA guidelines for fat, saturated fat, sugar and calories based on age and the NSLP a la cart food regulations K-12.
 - a. Exclusions: The following foods do not have to meet the fat and saturated fat limits but must be no more than the caloric standards set by grade level: non-fried fruits/vegetables, nuts, nut butters, seeds, eggs, and cheese packaged for individual sale (e.g. string cheese). **Note:** No Trans fats. Nutrition information for products sold on campus during the school day will be readily available near the point of purchase and/or obtained through the Food Service office.
3. Nutritional information available at the Food Service office, on our website when possible and shared bi-annually with the WCSD Wellness Committee.

III. Foods Available Outside the School Day

A. School-Sponsored Events (i.e.: performances, athletic events, dances)

Whenever possible, foods and beverages offered or sold at school-sponsored events outside the school day should meet the District nutrition standards for food and beverages sold individually.

B. Before and After School Programs

Programs taking place at the school will be encouraged to incorporate nutrition related components, healthy snacks and physical activity, and will be made aware of the District's Wellness Procedures and Standards.

IV. Community Involvement

The District Wellness Committee shall include parents, students, and representatives of the school food authority, the school board, school administrators, and the public.

To the extent practicable, students and parents shall be involved in the development of strategies designed to promote healthy food choices in the school environment, and the school cafeteria will

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provide a variety of nutritionally sound meals and beverage choices. The school will encourage students' active, age-appropriate participation in decisions regarding healthy lifestyles and choices. Positive reinforcement such as letters of recognition and acknowledgement will be utilized as a means to encourage healthy eating patterns among the student populations. In addition, the school will share information about the nutritional content of meals with parents and students. Annual student and parent surveys will be conducted. The results will be shared with the Wellness Committee and other applicable parties.

V. Plan for Measuring Implementation

A. Overall Operational Responsibility

The Superintendent shall be charged with the operational responsibility for ensuring that each school within the District meets the Wellness Policy requirements. The Superintendent will also ensure school and community awareness of the Procedures and Standards through various means, including but not limited to, the District's newsletter, calendar and website. Further, professional development activities for staff and student awareness training will be provided, as appropriate, on the goals of the District's Wellness Policy and Procedures and Standards.

B. District Wellness Committee

As charged by the District's school board, this committee's role is to:

1. Assess the current school environment.
2. Wellness Policy for the District and related Procedures and Standards for implementation.
3. Build awareness and support.
4. Present the Wellness Procedures and Standards to the school board.
5. Meet at least quarterly to follow up with implementation and evaluation.
 - a. Evaluation and feedback from interested parties, including an assessment of student, parent, teacher, and administration satisfaction with the wellness plan, will be analyzed (annual surveys).
 - b. Evaluation and review of food offerings – reimbursable and a la carte and vending machines. Review will be conducted bi-annually. Collective data that has been documented (attendance, discipline, and test scores) and reviewed by the committee bi-annually.
6. Recommend to the WCSD Policy Committee any revisions to the policy it deems necessary.
7. Provide information on District's website pertaining to the activity of the Wellness Committee as well as other pertinent information, including but not limited to Rose and Kiernan Wellness updates, building level wellness initiatives, etc.
8. Serve as a liaison with community agencies in providing outside resources to help in the development of nutrition education programs and physical activities.

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C. Individual Schools

The Principal of each campus shall appoint a building wellness committee to meet at least quarterly to:

1. Develop building-level activities and programs (See Attachment D)
2. Evaluate procedures implementation
3. Identify areas for improvement
4. Report findings to the campus principal and develop with him/her a plan of action for improvement, as needed.

Each principal shall be invited to all District Wellness Committee meetings and always encouraged to provide feedback.

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ATTACHMENT A - Classroom Rewards

- A smile
- Going first
- Verbal praise
- Sit by friends
- Teaching the class
- Helping the teacher
- Enjoy class outdoors
- A field trip for the class
- Choosing a class activity
- Walk with a teacher during lunch
- Eat lunch outdoors with the class
- Eat lunch with a teacher or principal
- Extra credit or class participation points
- Taking care of the class animal for a day
- Have lunch or breakfast in the classroom
- A photo recognition board in a prominent location in the school
- A note from the teacher to the student commending his or her achievement
- Ribbon, certificate in recognition of achievement or a sticker with an affirming message
- Take a trip to the treasure box (filled with: stickers, temporary tattoos, highlighters, sidewalk chalk, notepads, erasers, bookmarks, pencils, pens, etc.)
- Recognition of a child's achievement on the school-wide morning announcements or website
- A phone call, e-mail, or letter sent home to parents/guardians commending a child's accomplishment

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ATTACHMENT B - Healthful Food and Beverage Options

At any school function (parties, celebrations, meetings, etc.) healthy food options should be made available to promote student, staff and community wellness. Examples of nutritious food and beverages that are consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans are listed below:

- Fruit salad
- Pasta salad
- Pure ice-cold water
- Cereal and low-fat milk
- Bread sticks with marinara
- Trail mix (dried fruits/nuts)
- 100% fruit or vegetable juice
- Fat-free/low-fat pudding cups
- Pretzels or reduced fat crackers
- Flavored soy milk fortified with calcium
- Fat-free/low-flavored yogurt & fruit parfaits
- Dried fruits - raisins, cranberries, apples, apricots
- Single serving applesauce or canned fruit in juice
- Peanut butter with apple wedges or celery sticks
- Fruit smoothies made with fat-free or low-fat milk
- Party mix (variety of cereals, nuts, pretzels, etc.)
- Baked chips with salsa or low-fat dip (ranch, onion, bean, etc.)
- Mini bagels with whipped light or fat-free cream cheese
- Frozen fruit pops with fruit juice or fruit as the first ingredient
- Raw vegetable sticks/slices with low-fat dressing or yogurt dip
- Dry roasted peanuts, tree nuts and soy nuts (not coconut or palm nuts)
- Sliced fruit - nectarines, peaches, kiwi, star fruit, plums, pears, mangos, apples, etc.
- Low-fat muffins (small or mini), granola bars and cookies (graham crackers, fig bars)
- Fresh fruit wedges - cantaloupe, honeydew, watermelon, pineapple, oranges, tangelos, etc.
- Lean meats/reduced fat cheese sandwiches (light/reduced fat mayonnaise in chicken/tuna salad)
- Fat-free/low-fat milk/milk products (string cheese, single-serving cottage cheese, cheese cubes)

This list is not all-inclusive and is meant only to provide parents and school staff with guidance for healthier food and beverage choices. Not all food and beverage items on this list will necessarily meet District nutrition standards as items vary in sugar, fat and calorie content from brand to brand. However, all of the items in the list are believed to be consistent with the intent of the wellness policy to promote student health and reduce childhood obesity.

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ATTACHMENT C - Fundraising Ideas

- Raffle
- Candies
- Book sale
- Cookbook
- Car wash*
- Student artwork
- Stuffed animals
- Stadium pillows
- School photo ID
- Educational games
- Holiday decorations
- Shopping donation programs
- School mascot temporary tattoos
- Faculty and/or student talent show
- Teacher/student sports competition
- Auction of donated goods and services
- Balloon bouquets for special occasions
- Bottled water with the schools own label
- Refillable water bottle with the school logo
- Glow in the dark novelties (popular at dances)
- Greeting cards, especially designed by students
- School calendars with all the important school dates on them
- Party bags for kids' birthday parties filled with non-food novelties
- Sale of flowers/balloons for the family to purchase for student graduates
- Walkathons or other physical activity challenges, i.e.: Jump Rope for Heart*
- School spirit items (tee-shirts, sweatshirts, sweatpants, lanyards, pennants, bracelets, caps)
- Growing and/or selling flowers and plants for holiday (Valentine's Day and Mothers' Day)

*These fundraisers have the added benefit of promoting physical activity for students.

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ATTACHMENT D - Ideas for Building Wellness Committees

AT SCHOOL:

Promote healthy choices at mealtime

- Announcements
- Taste tests
- Food of the week
- Visual displays – screens in schools
- Labeling
- Incentives/contests for making healthy choices

Enhance dining environment

- Family style dining
- Pleasing décor
- Monitored/reduced noise level
- Reduced lines
- ‘Special person’ visits

Encourage healthy choices in the classroom

- Alternatives to food incentives for behavior
- Birthday celebration alternatives
- Healthy choices for parties

Monitor candy/bake sale fundraisers

- Frequency
- Restricted number of items purchases
- Inclusion of healthy items
- List of suggested alternatives

Promote physical exercise

- Walking club
- Organized games at recess
- Fitness Fridays in PE
- Stretching breaks during class
- Obstacle course

Educate students

- Information on healthy lifestyles in lesson plans
- Gardening program
- Student assemblies focused on wellness
- Educate Staff
- Speakers at staff meetings
- Training of lunch monitors

AT HOME:

Educate parents

- National statistics
- Federal Law (Section 204 of 108-265) mandating local school wellness policies
- Possible new NYS legislation (Spitzer/Galef bills)
- National PTA DVD
- Regular communications via newsletter, e-mails
- Speakers on different wellness topics

Encourage behavior modification

- Healthy choices incentive program
- TV turn-off week
- Contest to limit fast food for a month
- Promotion to switch to skim or 1% milk

Plan fun family programs

- Bike Rodeo
- Health Fair
- Heart Hop
- Square Dance
- Healthy Snacks Poster Contest
- Walk-a-thon
- Obstacle Course
- Dads-N-Dodgeball

Present healthier options

- Suggestions for quick and fast meals
- “Kids in the Kitchen” presentation
- Healthy foods cookbook
- List of healthy snacks
- Taste tests for parents at school
- Grocery store tours with dietician