

## **Talbot County Board of Education**

### **Wellness Policy**

*(Revised 07-01-2024)*

#### **Rationale:**

The link between nutrition, physical activity, and learning is well documented. Healthy eating and activity patterns are essential for students to achieve their full academic potential, full physical and mental growth, and lifelong health and wellbeing. Healthy eating and physical activity is essential for a healthy weight; both are linked to reduced risk for many chronic diseases, like Type 2 diabetes. Schools have a responsibility to help students learn, establish, and maintain lifelong, healthy eating and activity patterns. Well-planned and effectively implemented school nutrition and fitness programs have been shown to enhance students' overall health, as well as their behavior and academic achievement in school. Staff wellness also is an integral part of a healthy school environment, since school staff can be daily role models for healthy behaviors.

The Talbot County Board of Education is committed to providing a school environment that enhances learning and development of lifelong wellness practices.

To accomplish these goals:

- Talbot County School Nutrition Program complies with federal, state and local requirements.
- Nutrition education is provided and promoted.
- Patterns of meaningful physical activity connect to students' lives outside of physical education.
- All student-based activities are consistent with local wellness policy goals.
- All foods and beverages made available on campus (including vending, concessions, a la carte, student stores, parties, and fundraising) during the school day are consistent with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- All foods made available on campus adhere to food safety and security guidelines.
- The school environment is safe, comfortable and pleasing, and allows ample time and space for eating meals. Food and/or physical activity is not used as a reward or punishment.
- The school district will make every effort to eliminate and social stigma attached to, and prevents the overt identification of, students who are eligible for free and reduced-price meals. Toward this end, the school district may utilize electronic identification and

payment systems; provide meals at no charge to all children, regardless of income; promote the availability of meals to all students.

- Talbot County Schools will support the integration of a farm to school program into the school food program and the curricular and co-curricular activities as appropriate to facilitate the nutritional and educational goals of the school district.
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## **NUTRITION EDUCATION**

- Nutrition education will promote fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free products, healthy food preparation methods and health-enhancing nutrition practices.
- Nutrition education will involve sharing information with families and the broader community to positively impact students and the health of the community.
- Schools will provide information to families that encourage them to teach their children about health and nutrition and to provide nutritious meals for their families.
- Students will be encouraged to start each day with a healthy breakfast.
- To maintain food safety and prevent foodborne illness, school staff must understand the principals of food safety and continuously monitor factors that may place foods prepared or served at school at risk for contamination.
- Hand washing is critically important as a strategy for preventing foodborne illnesses. According to a report by CDC, hands may be the most important means by which enteric viruses are transmitted. Frequent hand washing by students and staff is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Adherence to hand hygiene reduces transmission of anti-microbial-resistant organisms and overall incidence of infections. School staff may have many opportunities to educate staff and students about how important it is to wash hands when they are dirty, before eating, after using the restroom, and after handling animals or animal waste, and how important it is to do so more frequently when family, classmates or friends are sick. Schools should allot time in the school schedule for students to wash hands before eating school meals. School should attempt to provide warm water to all students and staff. Schools should make available soap, paper towels and supplies in a clean restroom environment to all students and staff. Hand washing education will be reinforced at all grade levels and parents and families will be provided with hand washing educational materials.
- Administration in each school will be encouraged to change the name of health class to wellness class.

## **Setting Goals for other School Based Activities Designed to Promote Student Wellness**

- The Talbot County School District will sponsor a school health committee\council for the purpose of evaluating the school environment (through the application of CDC's School

Health index or another comparable assessment tool) and the school's policy implementation.

- Encourage parents that when they send lunches from home to pack healthy lunches and snacks and to refrain from including beverages and foods that do not meet the established nutrition standards for individual foods and beverages; provide parents a list of foods that meet the school district's snack standards and ideals for healthy celebrations/parties, rewards and fundraising activities. Suggest to teachers that when arranging a classroom party that children are assigned foods and amounts so that an excess of unhealthy foods are not brought into the classroom.
- Classroom teachers and appropriate school staff are provided with assistance in detecting student health problems that may impact learning.
- Establish and support a School Health Council (SHC) that addresses all aspects of a coordinated school health program, including a school wellness program.
- The SNP will provide side items of at least three components, consisting of at least one serving of fruit and/or vegetable and qualifying as a reimbursable meal, to students when having a class party or cookout.

#### **Farm to School**

- Talbot County Schools will support the development of farm to school programs to help students eat more nutritious foods and promote healthier lifelong eating patterns.
- Support the local farmers and economy while informing students about important information about their food.
- Integrating foods grown in school gardens into school meals while providing students with the opportunity to eat healthy, locally grown foods.

#### **NUTRITION GUIDELINES FOR ALL FOODS ON CAMPUS**

- Classroom snacks feature healthy choices.
- Nutrition education is incorporated during classroom snack times, not just during meals. Foods and beverages sold at and for fundraisers include healthy choices and provide age appropriate selections for elementary schools, middle schools and high schools.
- USDA regulations prohibit the sale of non-nutritional foods and carbonated beverages during meal times in the cafeteria at all school levels. With this in mind and in order to encourage better nutrition and develop healthy eating habits, students or their parents are not allowed to bring foods to school from outside restaurants nor have food delivered to school from restaurants until after the last lunch period is over; students are not allowed to leave campus for lunch; and no carbonated drinks will be allowed in the cafeteria during lunch period. Of course, lunches sent with students when they come to school in the morning in lunch boxes or plain bags are allowed. To encourage students to eat a

healthy, nutritious meal a student must purchase a school lunch prior to purchasing extras sold in the lunchroom.

**Foods Sold in School Must:**

1. Comply with the general criteria:
  - Be a “whole grain-rich” grain product containing 50% or more whole grains by weight, or have whole grains as the first ingredient; or
  - Have as the first ingredient a fruit, a vegetable, a dairy product, or a protein food; or
  - Be a combination food that contains at least ¼ cup fruit and/or vegetable
  - Contain 10% of the Daily Value (DV) of one of the nutrients of public health concern in the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (calcium, potassium, vitamin D, or dietary fiber). \*\* (If water is the first ingredient, the second ingredient must be one of the items above.)
2. And meet, at a minimum, the Nutrition Standards for all foods sold in schools:

**Calorie Limits:**

- Snack items: = 200 calories
- Entrée items: = 350 calories

**Sodium Limits:**

- Snack items: = 200mg
- Entrée items: = 480 mg

**Fat Limits:**

- Total fat: =35% of calories
- Saturated fat: <10% of calories
- Trans fat: zero grams

**Sugar Limits:**

- =35% of weight from total sugars in food
3. Or qualify for an exemption from the Nutrition Standards.
  4. Accompaniments such as cream cheese, salad dressing and butter must be included in the nutrient profile as part of the food item sold.

**Beverages sold in school must:**

1. Be one of the allowable beverages for all grades
  - Plain water (with or without carbonation)

- Unflavored or flavored 1% low fat milk
  - Unflavored or flavored fat free milk and milk alternatives permitted by NSLP/SBP
  - 100% fruit or vegetable juice and 100% fruit or vegetable juice diluted with water (with or without carbonation), and no added sweeteners
2. Comply with the size limits for each grade
    - Elementary schools may sell up to 8-ounce portions
    - Middle schools and high schools may sell up to 12-ounce portions
    - There is no portion size limit for plain water
  3. High schools may allow additional “no calorie” or “lower calorie” beverage options to students.
    - No more than 20-ounce portions of calorie-free, flavored water (with or without carbonation); and other flavored and/or carbonated beverages that are labeled to contain = 5 calories per 8 fluid ounces or =10 calories per 20 fluid ounces.
    - No more than 12-ounce portions of beverages with = 40 calories per 8 fluid ounces, or = 60 calories per 12 fluid ounces.

#### **Fundraisers:**

- The sale of food items that meet the nutrition requirements at fundraisers are not limited in any way under the standards.
- All snacks sold in schools must meet the aforementioned nutritional requirements.
- The standards do not apply during non-school hours, on weekends, and at off-campus fundraising events.
- Food items not meeting nutritional requirements must be within the guidelines for Exempted Fundraisers.
- Items sold at school events, such as Field Day, etc., must be compliant with the Smart Snacks guidelines. Food items sold that are in compliance may be sold at any time. Food items that are not in compliance must be “Exempted Fundraiser” and cannot be sold 30 minutes prior to and 30 minutes after breakfast or lunch meal times.

#### **Food and Beverage Marketing in Schools:**

- Food and beverage marketing is defined as advertising and other promotions in schools. Food and beverage marketing often includes an oral, written, or graphic statements made for the purpose of promoting the sale of a food or beverage product made by the producer, manufacturer, seller or any other

entity with a commercial interest in the product. All products marketed on the school campus must, at a minimum, meet the Smart Snacks guidelines.

### **EATING ENVIRONMENT**

- The National Association of State Boards of Education recommends that students should be provided adequate time to eat, at least 10 minutes for breakfast and 20 minutes for lunch, from the time the student is seated. Schools will encourage socializing among students, and between students and adults. Parents are highly encouraged to dine with students in the cafeteria.
- Dining areas are attractive and have enough space for seating all students. Facility design will be giving priority in renovations and new construction.
- Drinking water will be available for students at meals and throughout the day.
- Food is not used as a reward or a punishment for students' behaviors, unless it is detailed in a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP).
- A child's need for nutrients does not end when school ends. Therefore, recommend offering a summer feeding program for children who are eligible for federal program support.
- Students are encouraged to start each day with a healthy breakfast.
- Schools should not schedule tutoring, pep rallies, assemblies, club/organization meetings, and other activities during meal times.
- Adults will properly supervise dining rooms and serve as role models to students by demonstrating proper conduct and voice level, and by eating with the students.
- Creative, innovative methods will be used to keep noise levels appropriate, such as flashing the lights on and off to reduce the noise level. School personnel will be discouraged from assigning silent lunch to entire lunch groups or classes. Discipline should be directed toward individual students.

### **FOOD SAFETY/FOOD SECURITY**

- All foods made available on campus comply with the state and local food safety and sanitation regulations. Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) plans and guidelines are implemented to prevent food illness in schools.

- Classroom cook-outs will be discouraged but if allowed by administration, HACCP guidelines will be mandatory, such as monitoring and recording temperatures of food items and the Talbot County Health Inspector may inspect for compliance.
- For the safety and security of the food and facility, access to the food service operations are limited to Child Nutrition staff and authorized personnel.

### **CHILD NUTRITION OPERATIONS**

- The child nutrition program will aim to be financially self-supporting. However, the program is an essential educational support activity. Budget neutrality or profit generation will not take precedence over the nutritional needs of the students. If subsidy of the child nutrition fund is needed, it will not be from the sale of foods that have minimal nutritional value and/or compete nutritionally with program meals.
- The child nutrition program will ensure that all students have affordable access to the varied and nutritious foods they need to stay healthy and learn well.
- The school will strive to increase participation in the available federal Child Nutrition programs (e.g. school lunch, school breakfast, after-school snack and summer feeding program).
- Employ a food service director or manager/supervisor, who is properly qualified according to current professional standards, to administer the school food service program and satisfy reporting requirements.
- All food service personnel shall have adequate pre-service training in food service operations.
- All reimbursable school meals will meet the USDA standards, program requirements and nutrition standards set forth under the 7 CFR Part 210 and Part 220.

### **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

- The primary goal for a school's physical activity component is to provide opportunities for every student to develop the knowledge and skills for specific physical activities, maintain physical fitness, regularly participate in physical activity, and understand the short- and long-term benefits of a physically active and healthy lifestyle.
- Students should be given opportunities for physical activity during the school day through daily recess periods, elective physical education (PE) classed, walking programs, and the integration of physical activity into the academic curriculum.
- Adequate equipment is available for all students to participate in physical education. Physical activity facilities on school grounds will be safe.
- Changing rooms will be available for students who wish privacy when dressing for physical education activities.
- The schools provide a physical and social environment that encourages safe and enjoyable activity for all students, including those who are not athletically gifted.

- Information will be provided to families to help them incorporate physical activity into their student's lives.
- Physical education courses will be the environment where students learn, practice and are assessed on developmentally appropriate motor skills, social skills, and knowledge.
- Policies ensure that state-certified physical education instructors teach all physical education classes.
- Policies ensure that state physical education classes have a student/teacher ratio similar to other classes.
- Time allotted for physical activity will be consistent with research, national and state standards. For example, the National Association for Sport and Physical Education includes recommendations for at least 60 minutes and up to several hours of physical activity per day for children 5 to 12 years of age. Children should have several opportunities for physical activity lasting 15 minutes or more approximately every two hours, especially during the daytime hours.

### **Daily Physical Education**

The school district should provide physical education that:

- Is taught by a certified physical education teacher;
- Includes student with disabilities, students with special health-care needs may be provided in alternative educational settings; and,
- Engages students in moderate to vigorous activity during at least 50 percent of physical education class time.

### **Daily Recess**

Elementary schools must provide recess for all students that:

- Is at least 20 minutes a day;
- Is preferably outdoors;
- Encourages moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment; and,
- Discourages 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.

## **PLAN FOR MEASURING IMPLEMENTATION**

## **Monitoring**

The superintendent will ensure compliance with established school district-wide nutrition and physical activity wellness policies.

In each school:

- The principal will ensure compliances with those policies in the school and will report on the school's compliance to the superintendent; and,
- Food service staff, at the school or school district level, will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within food service areas and will report on this matter to the nutrition supervisor.

In the school district:

- The school district will report on the most recent USDA Administrative Review (AR) findings and any resulting changes. If the school district has not received a AR review from the state agency within the past 5 years, the school district will request from the state agency that a AR be scheduled as soon as possible;
- The nutrition supervisor will develop a summary report every three years on school district-wide compliance with the school district's established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies, based on input from schools within the school district; and,
- The report will be provided to the school board and also distributed to all school wellness committees, parent/teacher organizations, principals, school nutrition and health services personnel in the school district.

## **Policy review**

Assessments of each school's existing nutrition and physical environments and practices will be compiled at the school district level to identify and prioritize needs every three (3) years to help review policy compliance, assess progress and determine areas in need of improvement. As part of that review, the school district will review the nutrition and physical activity policies and practices and the provision of an environment that supports healthy eating and physical activity. The school district, and individual schools within the school district, will revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.

WELLNESS POLICY COMMITTEE- 2024-2025

School Compliance Oversight- Mr. Taylor

1. Willie Epps

2. Shakira Stevenson

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4. ~~Danish~~ L. Davis

5. G. Teas

6. 