

# **NEWBURYPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

## **Wellness Policy**

### **PURPOSE AND GOALS**

This document serves to guide the direction of the Newburyport Public Schools toward a school community and community at-large that enjoys higher levels of wellness. It contains policy elements and goal statements. It intentionally does not mirror the style of other policy documents, and is intended to be a living document that will evolve with progress toward our goals. Goals or statements that require additional budgetary or human resources describe a desired direction and do not imply a policy requirement.

The Newburyport Public School system is committed to promoting health and wellness for the students and staff within the school community. The District also collaborates with others to help improve the health and wellness of the whole community. The Newburyport Public School system supports guidelines for nutrition education, physical activity, food and beverages sold and served within our schools, and the establishment of a Health and Wellness Advisory Board. The Newburyport Public School System also strives to reduce youth risk behaviors and to build ASSETS in our youth and community through our curriculum and by collaborating with others in the community.

The *Foods at School* provisions of this policy will be effective October 7, 2008 and fully implemented no later than January 1, 2009.

### **NUTRITION EDUCATION**

- The curriculum will include nutrition education following the Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE) Curriculum Frameworks at all levels consistent with our system's goal of offering elementary, middle, and high school health education.
- The staff responsible for nutrition education will be provided curriculum and support materials as well as professional development activities as needed. Professional development activities will provide basic knowledge to effectively deliver an accurate nutrition education program as planned.
- The school cafeteria serves as a "learning laboratory" to allow students to apply their learning about nutrition and critical thinking skills taught in the classroom.
- The school system will provide information to families that encourage them to teach their children about health and nutrition.
- Students will be encouraged to start each day with a healthy breakfast.
- Students, parents and staff will learn about food allergies, their impact on child health, and the emotional dimensions of having an allergy.

### **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND HEALTHY CHOICES EDUCATION**

- 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.
- Time allotted for physical activity will be consistent with research, national and state standards.

- A daily recess period will be provided for students in grades kindergarten to eight, which is not used as a punishment or a reward.
- Physical activity participation will take into consideration the “balancing equation” of food intake and physical activity.
- Physical education will include the instruction of individual activities as well as competitive and non-competitive team sports to encourage life-long physical activity.
- Adequate equipment will be available for all students to participate in physical education. Physical activity facilities on school grounds will be safe.
- The school system will provide physical and social environments that encourage safe and enjoyable activity for all students.
- Schools are encouraged to provide community access to and encourage students and community members to use the school’s physical activity facilities outside of the normal school day.
- The District supports and helps to coordinate initiatives and programs that promote physical activities, such as a walk to school program or community activities that promote fitness.
- The Newburyport Public Schools will collaborate with the Beacon Coalition and other community agencies and organization to promote the goals of this policy in the community at large.

### **OTHER SCHOOL BASED ACTIVITIES**

- After school programs will encourage physical activity and healthy habit formation.
- Support for the health of all students is demonstrated by having a school nurse in every building, hosting health screenings, and helping to enroll eligible children in Medicaid and other state children’s health insurance programs. Having the community hospital and other health support systems involved will support the goals.

### **NUTRITION GUIDELINES FOR ALL FOODS AT SCHOOL**

- There will be District guidelines, reviewed annually, disallowing certain foods and practices and encouraging other foods and practices. These shall be updated annually by the Superintendent in consideration of recommendations made by the Health and Wellness Advisory Council and feedback from Principals and School Councils.
- Policies will be developed by Principals in consideration of recommendations made by each School Council that will limit foods and determine other practices at the school level that will support the essential principles of this Wellness Policy. Practices addressed shall include parties and celebrations, individual student snacks, fund-raisers, vending, sale of food on campus during school hours (hot dog stands, special event vendors, etc.), field trips, and any food brought into school outside of the school lunch program. School level policies shall strictly observe the District Guidelines immediately following. School-level and District policies will be regularly communicated to parents and students and, what is appropriate will be included in student/parent handbooks and other annual publications.

#### **District Guidelines on Foods and Food Practices During School Hours**

- Soda and candy shall not be allowed in school.
- Nuts and nut products, peanuts and peanut products are restricted foods. Allowance of these foods will be based on health concerns in each school. Decisions in regard to these foods rest

with the Principal and School Nurse and shall reflect District policies and guidelines issued by the Massachusetts Department of Public health. The Principal shall have final authority.

- Food shall not be used as a reward or given out as a treat by school staff at any time with the exception of approved celebrations and in situations where food is part of an Individualized Education Plan. Staff may not otherwise provide candy to students unless indicated in a child's health plan or as directed by a medical professional.
- Fund-raising activities shall not sell or provide food to students for consumption on school premises during school hours.

Principals and School Councils shall consider the following lists when developing school-level rules in regard to foods brought into the school outside of the school lunch program:

School-level Policies Shall **Encourage** These Foods and Practices

100% juice	Milk, fat free and 1% fat
Fresh fruit	Vegetables
Whole grain products	Foods on Massachusetts A la Carte and food and beverage standards list

Celebrations and parties that feature activities rather than food

School-level Policies Shall **Limit** These Foods

High sugar, fat, or sodium snacks, foods and beverages including, but not limited to, the following:

Cakes	Full fat dairy products
Cookies	Ice cream
Cupcakes	Pies
Doughnuts	

And School-level Policies Shall **Limit** These Practices

Parties and celebrations with food

Home prepared foods and baked goods without specific ingredients lists

## **EATING ENVIRONMENT**

- Students will be provided adequate time to eat lunch (approximately 20 minutes for lunch).
- Lunch periods will be scheduled as near the middle of the school day as possible.
- Cafeterias will include enough serving areas so that students do not have to spend too much time waiting in line.
- Drinking water will be available for students at meals through the drinking fountain and vending machines
- Cafeteria climate will be evaluated by the Health and Wellness Advisory Board and recommendations included in its annual report to the Superintendent.

## **SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM**

- The school lunch 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 system will strive to increase participation in the available federal Child Nutrition programs, including breakfast where available.
- All food service personnel shall have adequate in-service training in food service operations.
- All foods and beverages sold individually by the contracted food service provider, à la carte or in vending machines, will serve to enhance a student's school lunch with the focus on healthier food and beverage choices. These choices will follow the USDA Dietary Guidelines and the Massachusetts A la Carte and Food and Beverage Standards.
- Meals served through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs will meet or exceed nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations, and offer a variety of fruits and vegetables. Portion control and nutritious food choices will be considered in the pricing of our school lunch.
- Expansion of the School Breakfast Program will be encouraged.
- There shall be no discrimination in any manner within the school lunch program.
- No soft drinks (soda/pop) will be available for sale to students at any school.
- Meals served through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs will be appealing and attractive to children, served in clean and pleasant settings, meet or exceed nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations, and offer a variety of fruits and vegetables. Portion control and nutritious food choices will be considered in the pricing of our school lunch.
- There shall be no discrimination in any manner within the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program sold and served to students.
- Principals, in collaboration with the Assistant Superintendent and the contracted Food Services Manager, will have oversight of the school lunch program within their buildings.

## **FOOD SAFETY AND FOOD SECURITY**

- All foods made available on school grounds will comply with the state and local food safety and sanitation regulations. Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) plans and guidelines will be implemented to prevent food illness in schools.
- All food service staff will be Serv-Safe Certified and participate in continuing staff development and training.
- For the safety and security of the food and facility, access to the food service operations will be limited to Child Nutrition staff, custodial and authorized personnel (US Department of Agriculture food security guidelines).

## **YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR**

The Newburyport Public Schools will systematically address youth risk behaviors by:

- Participating in the Youth Risk Behavior Survey and the ASSETS survey on a regular basis.
- Educating the public about the meaning of the survey data.
- Organizing the wellness curriculum to systematically address risk behaviors and health choices from kindergarten through grade twelve.
- Collaborating with the Beacon Coalition and other organizations to impact students, families, and the larger community, in regard to promotion of ASSET building and reduction of youth risk behaviors.
- Supporting intervention programs in the schools and in the community including Second Step (Elementary Schools), Peer Mediation (High School and Middle School), Life Skills (Middle School), Health and Prevention Program (High School), alcohol and tobacco use prevention education, Smoking Cessation (High School), and similar intervention programs.
- Striving to secure a position in the school system dedicated to the coordination of health and wellness programming PK-12 through grant funding and allocations from the local education budget.
- Integrating resources procured through grants such as the Essential Health Services grant with wellness and prevention efforts and programs.
- Maintaining a publicly accessible Health and Wellness web site that provides information about issues and services pertaining to health and wellness and that serves as a resource for the schools and community.

## **IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING**

The individual health needs of each student will be taken into consideration in the implementation of this policy and these guidelines.

### **Health and Wellness Advisory Council**

The Superintendent will establish a Health and Wellness Advisory Council that will foster physical activity, wellness, good nutrition, and healthy choices in our schools. The Advisory Council will be co-chaired by the Superintendent and School Nurse Leader.

This Advisory Council will consist of members appointed by the Superintendent representing the following constituencies:

- Parents
- Assistant Superintendent- Co-chair
- School Nurse Leader- Co-chair
- Teachers
- School Committee
- A representative of Anna Jaques Hospital
- Curriculum Director
- Wellness Coordinator, PK-12 (future)
- Food Services Director
- High School Wellness Department Chair
- Representative of Youth Services and the Beacon Coalition
- School Prevention Specialists
- School Nurse
- School Physician

The Advisory Board's role and responsibilities will include but not be limited to:

1. Recommend procedures to the Superintendent and Principals to implement this policy.
2. Review the policy and the implementation procedures annually.
3. Monitor and evaluate the progress toward compliance with the goals of the policy.
4. Measure the outcomes of the changes implemented by various tools such as student satisfaction surveys, parent satisfaction surveys, school health statistical data collected in compliance with the Department of Public Health (DPH), and other data collection and monitoring mechanisms.
5. Provide an annual report to the Superintendent of Schools regarding the policy and its implementation, including recommendations and measures to take to improve student wellness by May 15<sup>th</sup> of each year.
6. Advise the contracted food services provider on meeting the goal of offering healthy, attractive, and student-acceptable breakfast, lunch, and à la carte food items that meet or exceed federal and state guidelines
7. Support school based wellness initiatives as they develop
8. Act as a liaison to municipal agencies that are collaborating with the Newburyport Public Schools on wellness programs.
9. Promote parent and staff education around the Wellness Policy.

The Superintendent shall annually report to the School Committee progress toward the ends of the School Committee's policy on wellness and the goals of this administrative policy at or before the last School Committee meeting of the school year.