

## **Instruction**

### **Student Nutrition and Physical Activity (Student Wellness Policy)**

The Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) recognizes that student wellness and proper nutrition are related to physical well-being, growth, development and readiness to learn. CREC is committed to providing a learning environment that promotes student wellness, proper nutrition, nutrition education, and regular physical activity as part of the total educational experience. In a healthy school environment, students will be exposed to, and participate in, positive nutritional and lifestyle practices that can improve student achievement. In accordance with federal and state law, it is CREC's policy to provide students access to healthy foods and beverages; provide opportunities for developmentally appropriate physical activity; and require all meals served to meet or exceed the stricter of either the federal nutritional guidelines issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture or the "Connecticut Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools".

In developing goals for nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness, CREC will, as required, review and consider evidence-based strategies and techniques.

### **Goals for Nutrition Promotion and Education**

The goals for addressing nutrition education include the following:

- Schools will support and promote good nutrition for students consistent with applicable federal and state requirements and guidelines.
- Schools will foster the positive relationship between good nutrition, physical activity, and the capacity of students to develop and learn.
- Nutrition education will be part of CREC's comprehensive standards-based school health education program and curriculum and will be integrated into other classroom content areas, as appropriate.
- Schools will link nutrition education activities with existing coordinated health programs or other comparable comprehensive school health promotion frameworks.
- Healthy snacks for the classroom, healthy packed lunches, and non-food alternatives for classroom celebrations will be strongly encouraged.
- Staff will be strongly encouraged to model healthful eating habits.

### **Goals for Physical Education and Activity**

The goals for addressing physical education and activity include the following:

- Schools will support and promote an active lifestyle for students.

- Physical education will be taught in all grades and shall include a standards-based, developmentally planned and sequential curriculum that fosters the development of movement skills, enhances health-related fitness, increases students' knowledge, offers direct opportunities to learn how to work cooperatively in a group setting, and encourages healthy habits and attitudes for a healthy lifestyle.
- Unless otherwise exempted, all students will be required to engage in CREC's physical education program.
- Recess and other physical activity breaks, before and after school activities, and walking and bicycling to schools, where safe to do so, are supported by CREC.
- Schools will work toward providing sixty minutes of physical activity daily for students (as a best practice).
- All elementary school students shall have at least twenty minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which schools encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity and provide space, equipment and an environment that is conducive to safe and enjoyable activity. A planning and placement team may develop a different schedule for a child requiring special education and related services.
- Physical activities will be integrated across the curricula when possible.
- Unless an emergency situation requiring immediate exclusion exists, no student shall be excluded or restricted from participating in the entire time devoted to physical exercise in the regular school day as a form of discipline or punishment, except:
  - 1) when the student poses a danger to the health or safety of other students or staff; or
  - 2) during the shortest period devoted to physical exercise if there are two or more such periods in the school day and the student is still able to participate in at least twenty minutes of physical exercise during the regular school day, and only once during the school week.

Such discipline or punishment may be imposed before and/or during the period of physical exercise, and appropriate interventions to redirect the student's behavior shall be used during the time of exclusion or restriction.

No student shall be excluded or restricted from participating in the entire time devoted to physical exercise in the regular school day as a form of discipline or punishment for not completing work on time or for academic performance.

### **Other School Based Activities to Promote School Wellness**

CREC will integrate wellness activities across the entire school setting, not just in the cafeteria, other food and beverage venues and physical activity facilities. CREC will coordinate and integrate other initiatives related to physical activity, physical education, nutrition and other

wellness components so all efforts are complementary, not duplicative, and work towards the same set of goals and objectives promoting student well-being, optimal development and strong educational outcomes.

CREC schools will coordinate content across curricular areas that promote student health, such as teaching nutrition concepts in mathematics, with consultation provided by either the school or CREC's curriculum experts.

All efforts related to obtaining federal, state or association recognition for efforts, or grants/funding opportunities for healthy school environments will be coordinated with and be complementary with the wellness policy.

All school-sponsored events will adhere to the wellness policy guidelines. All school-sponsored wellness events will include physical activity and healthy eating opportunities when appropriate. School-based activities focused on promoting healthy lifestyles will be incorporated into the daily efforts of the school community.

### **Nutrition Guidelines for Foods Available in Schools**

Students will be offered and schools will promote nutritious food choices consistent with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans and My Plate, published jointly by the U.S.

Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Agriculture, and guidelines promulgated by the Connecticut Department of Education in addition to federal and state statutes and national health organizations. In addition, in order to promote student health and reduce childhood obesity, the Executive Director or designee shall establish such administrative procedures to control food and beverage sales that compete with CREC's nonprofit food service in compliance with the Child Nutrition Act. CREC shall prohibit the sale of foods of minimal nutritional value as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and will ensure that all foods sold, served, or made available to students separately from school meals meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards. All beverages sold, served, or made available to students on school premises will be healthy choices that meet the stricter of either state statute or USDA beverage requirements.

### **Reimbursable School Meals**

Reimbursable school meals served shall meet, at a minimum, the nutrition requirements and regulations for the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program.

### **Marketing**

Any foods and beverages marketed or promoted to students on the school campus during the school day will meet or exceed the USDA "Smart Snacks in School" nutrition standards. Food and beverage marketing is defined as advertising and other promotions in schools. Food and beverage marketing often includes 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. As the District/School Nutrition Services/Athletic Department/PTA/PTO reviews existing contracts and considers new contracts,

equipment and product purchasing (and replacement) decisions should reflect the applicable marketing guidelines established by the CREC wellness policy.

### **Food Exemptions**

CREC will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the food items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting or extracurricular activity. The “school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held, and must be the same place as the food sales.

### **Community Input**

CREC will develop and implement methods of communicating with, and educating, parents and staff regarding this policy.

The Executive Director or designee will provide opportunities, suggestions and comments concerning the development, implementation, periodic review and improvement of the student wellness policy from community members, including parents, students, and representatives of the school food authority, teachers of health and/or physical education, school health professionals, members of the CREC Council, school administrators, and the public.

A Wellness Committee comprised of a variety of members (following state mandates) will be established to develop, and guide the implementation of, procedures consistent with established policy.

### **Monitoring**

CREC designates the Executive Director or his/her designee to ensure compliance with this policy and any administrative regulations. The Executive Director or designee is responsible for retaining all documentation of compliance with this policy and any regulations, including, but not limited to, each school’s three-year assessment and evaluation report and this wellness policy and plan. The Executive Director or designee will also be responsible for public notification of the three-year assessment and evaluation report, including any updates to this policy made as a result of CREC’s three-year assessment and evaluation.

CREC shall develop a plan designed to achieve the involvement requirements in the development, implementation, monitoring, and assessment of this policy.

The Executive Director or designee shall provide periodic implementation data and/or reports to the CREC Council concerning this policy’s implementation sufficient to allow the Council to monitor and adjust the policy. CREC, as required, will retain records and documents pertaining to the wellness policy which shall include the written school wellness policy, documentation demonstrating compliance with community involvement requirements, documentation of the

triennial assessment of the wellness policy and documentation to demonstrate compliance with the annual public notification requirement.

### **Evaluation of Wellness Policy**

In an effort to measure the implementation of this policy, the Executive Director or designee will be responsible for ensuring that each school meets the goals outlined in this policy. To ensure continuing progress, CREC will evaluate implementation efforts and their impact on students and staff at least every three years.

CREC will make available to the public an assessment of the implementation; the results of the three-year assessment and evaluation, including the extent to which the schools are in compliance with policy; and a description of the progress being made in attaining the goals of this policy.

The Student Wellness Policy shall be made available annually, at a minimum, to students and families by means of school registration, student handbooks and CREC's website. This availability shall include the policy, including any updates to and about the wellness policy and the Triennial Assessment, including progress toward meeting the goals of this policy. In addition, the annual notification shall include a description of each school's progress in meeting the wellness policy goals; summary of each school's wellness events or activities; contact information for the leader(s) of the wellness policy team; and information on how individuals and the public can get involved.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-16b Prescribed courses of study.

10-215 Lunches, breakfasts and the feeding programs for public school children and employees.

10-221 Boards of education to prescribe rules, policies and procedures.

10-215b Duties of state board of education re: feeding programs.

10-215e Nutrition standards for food that is not part of lunch or breakfast program.

10-215f Certification that food meets nutrition standards.

10-221o Lunch periods. Recess (as amended by P.A. 22-81).

10-221p Boards to make available for purchase nutritious, low-fat foods.

10-221q Sale of beverages.

Federal laws

PL 108-265 Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004

USDA Regulations

42 U.S.C. 1758b, Local School Wellness Policy Requirements.

Policy Adopted: March 31, 2006  
Revised: March 17, 2010  
Revised: November 20, 2013  
Revised: June 21, 2017  
Revised: May 20, 2020  
Revised: January 18, 2023

CAPITOL REGION EDUCATION COUNCIL  
Hartford, Connecticut