

STUDENT AND STAFF WELLNESS

1.0 Purpose

General Statement of Policy

The Mercer County Board of Education recognizes that while parents are the primary teachers and caregivers for their children, the present and future health, safety, and well-being of students is also the concern of Mercer County Schools. Schools have a duty to help prevent unnecessary injury, disease, and chronic health conditions that can lead to disability or early death. It is essential that students learn to take responsibility for their own health and to adopt health-enhancing attitudes and behaviors, as follows:

- Every school shall be a safe and healthy place for children and employees to learn and work, with a climate that nurtures learning, achievement, and growth of character;
- All students shall be taught the essential knowledge and skills they need to become “health literate” - that is, to make health-enhancing choices and avoid behaviors that can damage their health and well-being;
- Each school shall be organized to reinforce students’ adoption of health-enhancing behaviors, and school staff shall be encouraged to model healthy lifestyles; and
- School leaders shall ensure that the nutrition, health services, and social services children need in order to learn are provided either at the school site or in cooperation with other community agencies.

Good health and success in school are interrelated. Schools cannot achieve their primary mission of education if students and staff are not healthy and fit physically, mentally, and socially. Surveys indicate an alarming number of young people engage in behaviors that put them at risk of serious health problems. In addition, the nation’s leading health authorities recommend that schools educate students in strategies that help prevent disabling, chronic health conditions that create misery and consume a burdensome share of the nation’s resources.

Mercer County Schools, in compliance with the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, has therefore established a local County Wellness Council comprised of representatives from the school food authority, the local school board, school administrators, parents, students, and the public. Further, the Wellness Council has developed this Student and Staff Wellness policy for the purpose of establishing the following:

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- Goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities designed to promote student wellness and address the growing concern of childhood obesity;
- Nutrition guidelines for all foods available on each school campus during the school day with the objectives of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity;
- Guidelines for reimbursable school meals, which are no less restrictive than regulations and guidance issued by the Secretary of Agriculture; and
- A plan for measuring implementation of the local wellness policy.

2.0 Definitions

- 2.1 Fitness Testing Program - Testing programs (designed for school-aged children) that test cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength and endurance, flexibility, and body composition (ex. Fitness Gram, Physical Best, and Presidential Physical Fitness Test).
- 2.2 BMI (Body Mass Index) - A measure of body composition used in determining an individual's level of fitness.
- 2.3 *Let's Party* - A publication of the WVDE Child Nutrition program that includes healthy recipes and ideas for nutritious classroom parties and special events in schools.
- 2.4 *Let's Play* - A publication of the WVDE Child Nutrition program that includes descriptions of active games and other ideas to keep children actively involved at school parties and special events.

3.0 Procedures

Setting Nutrition Education Goals

- 3.1 Mercer County Schools' aim is to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students, as stated in WVDE Policy 2520.5 (Health Content Standards and Objectives for West Virginia Schools).
- 3.2 Schools shall promote and provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

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- 3.2.a Is offered at each grade level as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
- 3.2.b Teaches the importance of healthy eating and physical activity to maintain healthy weight;
- 3.2.c Is part of not only health education classes, but also classroom instruction in disciplines such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and appropriate elective courses;
- 3.2.d Includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, participatory activities such as contests, promotions, taste testing, farm visits, and school gardens;
- 3.2.e Promotes eating of fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices;
- 3.2.f Emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and physical activity;
- 3.2.g Links with school meal programs, other school foods, and nutrition-related community services;
- 3.2.h Teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food marketing;
- 3.2.i Complements physical education by reinforcing the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically-active lifestyle and reduces time spent on sedentary activities such as watching television, playing video games, and using the computer; and
- 3.2.j Includes adequate training for teachers and other staff.

Setting Physical Activity Goals

- 3.3 In accordance with WVDE Policy 2520.6, Content Standards and Objectives for Physical Education, and House Bill 2816, each child enrolled in the public schools of this state will actively participate in physical education classes during the school year to the level of his or her ability as follows:

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- 3.3.a Elementary Grades: Not less than thirty (30) minutes of physical education, including physical exercise and age-appropriate physical activities, for not less than three (3) days a week.
- 3.3.b Middle School Grades: Not less than one full period of physical education, including physical exercise and age-appropriate physical activities, each school day of one semester of the school year.
- 3.3.c High School Grades: Not less than one full course credit of physical education, including physical exercise and age-appropriate physical activities which shall be required for graduation, and the opportunity to enroll in an elective lifetime physical education course. (Schools should be encouraged to develop additional physical education/ fitness elective courses for students.)
- 3.3.d Health and Physical Education programs will incorporate fitness testing, reporting, recognition, fitness events and incentive programs which require participation in grades four (4) through eight (8) and the required high school course.
- 3.3.e At all grade levels, students will spend at least fifty percent (50%) of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.
- 3.3.f The fitness testing program shall be selected from nationally accepted fitness testing programs (designed for school-aged children) that test cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength and endurance, flexibility, and body composition. The program shall include modified tests for exceptional students. (Mercer County will use the testing program recommended by the WVDE.)
- 3.3.g All schools shall participate in National Physical Fitness and Sports in the month of May of each year and shall make every effort to involve the community it serves in the related events.
- 3.3.h Body Mass Index (BMI) measures shall be used as an indicator of progress toward promoting healthy lifestyles among school-aged children. The BMI shall be included in kindergarten screening procedures. Students in grades four (4) through eight (8) and students in high school physical education courses shall have their body mass index measured through required fitness testing procedures.

All high school students not enrolled in required or elective physical education courses shall be offered an opportunity for an annual BMI and blood Pressure screening through a Wellness Council sponsored school health fair. All BMI data

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shall be reported in aggregate to the governor, the State Board of Education, the Healthy Lifestyles Coalition, and the Legislative Oversight Commissions on Health and Human Resource Accountability.

- 3.4 All elementary schools will have a minimum of one-hundred (100) minutes per week of supervised recess preferably outdoors during which schools should encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity through the provision of available space and equipment. (This component should be in effect at the beginning of the 2007-2008 school year.)
- 3.5 Schools shall 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 periodic breaks during which students are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.
- 3.6 Schools shall encourage students to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior with a goal of participating in the nationally-recommended amount of daily physical activity (i.e., at least sixty (60) minutes per day).
- 3.7 Teachers shall seek opportunities to incorporate physical activity into subject areas other than physical education.
- 3.8 Secondary schools shall be encouraged to offer intramural sports programs and/or other physical activity programs either before or after school or during extended lunch periods after meal serving is completed.
- 3.9 All middle and high schools shall offer SSAC sanctioned interscholastic sports programs.
- 3.10 Teachers and other school personnel shall be discouraged from withholding recess as punishment.
- 3.11 Schools shall be encouraged to make available facilities such as gymnasiums, playgrounds, auditoriums, etc. to students, staff, and community members before, during, and after the school day, on weekends, and during school vacations.
- 3.12 Schools shall be encouraged to make spaces and facilities available to community agencies and organizations offering physical activity and nutrition programs. (All applicable county, state, and federal policies regarding use of school facilities, including rental agreements, shall apply.)

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**Establishing Nutrition Standards for All
Foods and Beverages Available on School Campus**

- 3.13 Students' lifelong eating habits are greatly influenced by the type of foods and beverages available to them. Mercer County Schools will address all foods and beverages sold or served to students, including those available outside of the school meal program. The standards will focus on increasing nutrient density, decreasing fat and added sugars, and moderating portion size. Mercer County Schools will ensure that reimbursable school meals meet the program requirements and nutrition standards set forth in the Standards For School Nutrition Policy (4321.1).
- 3.14 School meals served through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs will:
- 3.14.a Be appealing and attractive to children;
 - 3.14.b Be served in clean and pleasant settings;
 - 3.14.c Meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by the state of West Virginia, and federal statutes and regulations;
 - 3.14.d Be planned using a food-based approach;
 - 3.14.e Address the nutrient needs of three distinct age groups(grades K-5, 6-8, 9-12);
 - 3.14.f Offer a variety of fresh, frozen, and canned fruits packed in light syrup or juice at both breakfast and lunch;
 - 3.14.g Offer fresh and cooked vegetables daily, including dark green and red/orange vegetables weekly;
 - 3.14.h Offer flavored and unflavored non-fat milk, and unflavored 1% milk, and non-dairy milk alternatives (as defined by the USDA) when medically necessitated;
 - 3.14.i Serve whole grain-rich grain based foods, such as breads and pasta for no less than half the total grains served;
 - 3.14.j Use USDA recipes or locally written recipes that conform to USDA guidelines;
 - 3.14.k Contain zero grams of trans fat, and conform to USDA specifications for calories, saturated fat, and sodium;

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- 3.14.l Progressively target the 2022-23 goals for lower sodium meals;
- 3.14.m Serve foods that are baked, steamed, broiled, or boiled, not fried;
- 3.14.n Offer additional foods for pregnant and lactating students;
- 3.14.o Make available to parents, students, and staff, the nutritional profiles of individual menu items and/or complete meals; and
- 3.14.p Be free of charge to all students in Mercer County.

Breakfast

- 3.15 To ensure that all children have a nutritious breakfast, schools will:
 - 3.15.a Offer, at a minimum, one serving of milk, two servings of fruit, and one serving of grains;
 - 3.15.b Offer meat or meat alternatives in addition to grains when the grain requirement is met;
 - 3.15.c Offer whole grain rich cereals, breads, and baked goods;
 - 3.15.d Provide adequate calories for each age group (K-5, 6-8, 9-12) according to USDA guidelines;
 - 3.15.e Design meal schedules and systems that encourage participation;
 - 3.15.f Make every effort to offer breakfast on two-hour delay days; and
 - 3.15.g Encourage children to eat a nutritious breakfast either at home or at school.

Meal Times and Scheduling

- 3.16 Mercer County Schools, in accordance with West Virginia Board of Education Policy 4320:
 - 3.16.a Will provide students with at least ten (10) minutes after receiving their meal to consume their breakfast and twenty (20) minutes after receiving their meal to consume their lunch;

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- 3.16.b Should schedule meal periods on regular-schedule school days at appropriate times, e.g., with not less than three hours or more than four and one-half (4 ½) hours elapsing from the beginning of the school breakfast service to the beginning of the school lunch service;
- 3.16.c Shall not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students are allowed to eat during such;
- 3.16.d Will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks; and
- 3.16.e Will provide access to lunch for any/all students, including those who may be separated due to lunch detention and/or in-school suspension.

Qualifications of School Food Service Staff

- 3.17 Qualified nutrition professionals will administer the school meal programs in accordance with WVDE Policy 4320. As part of its responsibility to operate a food service program, the school district will provide continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals in schools. Staff development programs shall include appropriate certification and/or training programs for child nutrition directors, school nutrition managers, and cafeteria workers, according to their levels of responsibility.

Sharing of Foods and Beverages

- 3.18 Schools shall discourage students from sharing their foods and/or beverages with one another given concerns about viruses, allergies, communicable diseases, and other restrictions on some children's diets.

Other Foods and Beverages Available During the Instructional Day

- 3.19 According to WVDE Policy 4321.1 and House Bill 2816, all foods sold outside of reimbursable school meals, such as through vending machines, fund raisers, school stores, etc., available during the school day shall:
 - 3.19.a Limit total calories to not more than two hundred (200) per product/package;
 - 3.19.b Limit total fat to no more than thirty-five percent (35%) of calories per product/package excluding nuts, seeds, or cheese;
 - 3.19.c Limit saturated fat to less than ten percent (10%) of the total calories;

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- 3.19.d Limit trans-fat 0 grams per product/package;
- 3.19.e Reduce sugar content of food items to no more than thirty-five percent (35%) of calories per product excluding fruits;
- 3.19.f Limit sodium to no more than two hundred (200) milligrams per product/package;
- 3.19.g Include no candy, chewing gum, or flavored ice bars sold or served during the instructional day;
- 3.19.h Include healthy beverages defined as water, 100 percent fruit and vegetable juice and low-fat or fat-free milk (High schools selling soft drinks during the school day must sell and make equally accessible, water and 100% vegetable juice.) Schools are encouraged to eliminate the sale of soft drinks;
- 3.19.i Limit fruit/vegetable juice portion sizes to no more than four (4) ounces for elementary students and no more than eight (8) ounces for middle/high schools students per product/package;
- 3.19.j Except for foods served in the school nutrition programs, no food shall be sold in elementary schools from the time the first child arrives until twenty (20) minutes after all students are served lunch;
- 3.19.k Wherever and whenever foods are sold or otherwise offered on school premises both during and outside the school day, such foods should include nutritious options; and
- 3.19.l Food and/or drink machine areas may not be located in such a way as to encourage the choice or purchase of foods as a ready substitute for, or addition to, reimbursable meals.
- 3.19.m Due to special dietary needs and food safety concerns, foods and beverages brought or delivered from outside sources may be consumed only by individual students for which they were brought or delivered, and not by the general student population. Organized food events and celebrations held during the school day shall be regulated and monitored by school personnel to meet the requirement of Policy 4321.1 (section 5.2)

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Foods Used for Rewards and Punishment

- 3.20 When schools use foods or beverages as rewards for academic performance or good behavior, nutritious options should be included.

Celebrations

- 3.21 Celebrations held during the school day shall be regulated and monitored by school personnel to meet the requirements of Policy 4321.1 (section 5.2).
- 3.22 Schools shall limit holiday celebrations that involve food during the school day to not more than two per class per year subject to available accrued instructional time. All food and beverages served during celebrations must meet the criteria for “other foods.” The Child Nutrition Department shall assist in determining the validity of an item, and shall distribute a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers.
- 3.23 The Child Nutrition Department and the County Wellness Council will make available parent training sessions as requested for the WV *Let’s Party* and *Let’s Play* initiatives of the WVDE.

Other Foods and Beverages Available Outside the School Day

- 3.24 According to Policy 4321.1, wherever and whenever foods are sold or otherwise offered on school premises both during and outside the school day, such foods should include nutritious options.
- 3.25 The County Child Nutrition Department and the County Wellness Council should assist volunteer groups and student organizations that currently operate concessions or food sales to implement this provision.
- 3.26 Schools are encouraged to participate in the USDA Team Nutrition project.

Setting Goals for Other School-Based Activities Designed to Promote Wellness Communication with Parents

- 3.27 The County Child Nutrition Department and the County Wellness Council shall:
- 3.27.a Support parents’ efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children;

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- 3.27.b Offer healthy eating seminars for parents whenever possible, send home nutrition information, post nutrition tips on school websites, and provide nutrient analysis of school menus;
- 3.27.c Provide parents information on packing healthy lunches and snacks;
- 3.27.d Provide parents a list of foods that meet the district's snack standards and ideas for healthy celebrations/parties, rewards, and fund raising activities;
- 3.27.e Provide information about physical education and other school-based physical activity opportunities before, during, and after the school day and support parents' efforts to provide their children with opportunities to be physically active outside of school; and
- 3.27.f Provide information to parents and students about bicycle and ATV helmet safety as well as the use of seatbelts in automobiles.

Food Marketing in Schools

- 3.33 School-based marketing should be consistent with nutrition education.
- 3.34 Principals shall determine when food items for sale by students shall be distributed. In elementary schools, it is recommended that all food items for sale by students shall be picked up by parents before or after school.
- 3.35 On school premises, from the arrival of the first child at school until the departure of the last regularly scheduled school bus, all fund-raising activities involving foods and beverages shall comply with the standards set forth in Policy 4321.1 (section 5.1).
- 3.36 School-based marketing of brands promoting predominantly low-nutrition foods and beverages is discouraged.
- 3.37 School-based marketing of brands promoting healthy eating is encouraged.
- 3.38 Marketing activities that promote a healthy lifestyle are encouraged.

Staff Wellness

- 3.39 Mercer County Schools values the health and well-being of every staff member and will plan and implement appropriate activities and policies that support personal efforts by staff members.

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- 3.40 Each school shall establish and maintain a School Wellness Committee of two (2) to three (3) members who will assist in planning and supporting the wellness activity in their school.
- 3.41 The County Wellness Council, in cooperation with the School Wellness Committee, shall develop, promote, and oversee a comprehensive plan to promote staff health and wellness.
- 3.42 The plan should be based on input solicited from school staff and from a variety of related outside sources, and should outline ways to encourage healthy eating, physical activity, and other elements of a healthy lifestyle.

4.0 Administration

- 4.1 Mercer County shall designate a school wellness coordinator to assist in the implementation and coordination of school wellness policies and programs. The coordinator will:
 - 4.1.a Establish a County Wellness Council that is composed of diverse members of the school community representing the seven components of the coordinated school health program, plus members of the community, family members, and students, as appropriate. The council shall meet regularly to assess the progress of all aspects of the school health program and assist the coordinator with general oversight, planning, evaluation, and periodic revisions of all aspects of the school health program;
 - 4.1.b Facilitate collaboration among the County Wellness Council and school-based wellness committee members and between them and other school staff;
 - 4.1.c Assist the superintendent/school principal and other administrative staff with the integration, management, and supervision of the school wellness program;
 - 4.1.d Provide or arrange for necessary technical assistance;
 - 4.1.e Identify necessary resources;
 - 4.1.f Facilitate collaboration between the county/school and other agencies and organizations in the community who have an interest in the health and well-being of children and their families; and

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- 4.1.g Utilize the Center for Disease Control's School Health Index to conduct ongoing evaluation activities that assess the implementation and effectiveness of the school wellness program, as well as assist with reporting evaluation results.
- 4.2 The Food Service program and its personnel shall be under the general supervision and authority of the Director of Child Nutrition who reports to the appropriate WVDE designee who provides oversight responsibility to ensure compliance with state and federal laws, regulations, and guidelines.

5.0 Severability

If any portion of this policy or the application thereof to any person or circumstances is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of this policy.

Authority: W.Va. Constitution, Article XII, §2, and W.Va. Code §§16-9A-4, 16-9A-9, 17A-1-1, 18-2-5, 18-2-5a, 18-2-7b, 18-2-9, 18-2-33, 18-2C-1 et seq., 18-5-1, 18-5-13, 18-16-1, 18A-1-1, 18A-5-1, 18A-5-1a, 60A-1-101, 60A-7-11a, 61-2-15, 61-7-2, and 61-7-11a.

Source: Board of Education Minutes

Date(s): 2/27/07; 11/18/08; 11/13/12