

## Student Wellness

### Purpose:

In order for students to thrive academically, personally, and socially, it is important for schools to encourage a connection with nutrition and other aspects of wellness. Through

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| 1. Education.      | Inspire students to make healthy choices. |
| 2. Meal Guidelines | Follow rules- (NSBP/NSLP)                 |
| 3. Waste reduction | Composting, Gardens. Outdoor classrooms.  |
| 4. Assessments     | Building Wellness committee               |

Here are the key points we recommend to enhance the Wellness experience for students:

1. Students have access to nutritious food throughout the school day, and the school should monitor that all students are fed.
2. Schools purchase local / farm-to-school breakfast and lunches.
3. Students should be given the adequate amount of time to eat meals in order to flourish in the classroom. Monitor line times
4. Nutrition curriculum-informing students of the importance of proper nutrition and physical activity, highlighting the connection between food, environment, culture, and local food.
5. Building level implementation of a garden that supports the connection between local and organic foods, while reinforcing a sense of belonging through student farming to stimulate creativity and mental wellbeing.
6. Staff should contribute to the effort to reduce overall waste. Tracking daily, as well as forecasting meals properly.

Education and Promotion of Healthy Eating: Positive contributors to a sustainable, healthy future for students.

1. **Instructional garden**- Each school should establish an instructional garden. *Students gain experience in planting, caring for a garden, harvesting, and teamwork through gardening. If the school does not have the ability to accommodate a garden, the school may make arrangements with another school and/or local farm or community garden.*

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2. **Activity periods**-Schools should schedule physical education and other activity periods before meals or at least 1 hour after a meal.  
*Students should be given proper time to digest their meal before they are required or encouraged to participate in any form of physical activity. Students should not feel like they need to rush through their meal in order to spend time outside.*
3. **Student awareness** of nutrition and the food system should be developed through science, social studies, family and consumer science, foreign language, and health classes.  
*Teachers should show how food expresses the customs, history, and traditions of various cultures to strengthen students' understanding of diversity within themselves, their peers, and the world around them. Foreign language and social studies courses are excellent places to discuss how food goes beyond nutrition.*
4. **Hands-on experiences** for students surrounding food should be provided through science, social studies, family and consumer science, foreign language, and health classes.  
*Hands-on experiences help students with different learning styles to get the best understanding of these topics. Examples of this may include cooking, sampling, tasting, planting, and garden upkeep, as well as how fresh fruit and vegetables can be preserved by canning, drying, or pickling.*
5. **Student activities**-such as farmer's market tours, local farm tours, and community garden field trips. After school cooking clubs and events.  
*These field trips will work to support the connection between food production and health. It is important for student understanding to be able to see how the system they are learning about works within a community.*
6. **Classes**-Each school should provide grade-appropriate classes to discuss the nutritional aspects of food, including the nutrients each person needs, complex vs. simple carbs, refined vs. natural sugar, different types of proteins (both animal and plant), how to read nutrition labels, and more.  
*Nutrition education should properly prepare students to make choices that will best support their health both in and outside of school.*
7. **Curriculum** should discuss the difference between whole foods vs. processed foods, encourage organic, farm-to-table, and local foods, and educate students on how native produce and other native plants support health.  
*Learning about the details of food labels can help students choose the healthiest foods for them in ways most adults are not able to do for themselves. Classes should also*

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*learn about government food assistance programs to understand the support resources that are available to them and their families.*

8. **Recycling**-Students should be introduced to recycling practices when they enter school. Every year through high school. Schools provide a refresher on recycling. *Recycling practices may vary depending on regional practices, so educating students on the practices the recycling company each school uses is crucial for proper waste management.*

9. **Composting**-Science classes should teach about the positive impacts of composting and how to compost in science classes. *Teaching students about composting is an opportunity to show how important systems like the life cycle of a plant and biodegradation work.*

### **Meal Guidelines**

Meals provide a great way to generate more understanding than classroom lessons, including how food can be delicious, nutritious, and culturally diverse. While expanding their palates and enjoying tasty food, students should make connections with one another through conversation and the food.

1. POS system protects the confidentiality of students who receive free or reduced-price meals. *Making payments completely confidential will prevent other students from being aware, and potential overt identification.*
2. Schools should provide students with a minimum of fifteen (15) minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and twenty (20) minutes after sitting down for lunch. Whenever possible, lunch should occur after outdoor exercise. *By allowing students to have more time to eat, they have more time to enjoy their food, build connections, and digest their food. Outdoor exercise exposes students to vitamin D as well as fresh air.*
3. Food services should use no less than one (1) product from a local farm each week to the extent possible. Local is defined as within a 400 mile in state demographic. *Using at least one local farm food item for student meals each week will allow students to experience a taste of what farm-to-school programs can offer.*
4. Food services should encourage a plant-based diet providing whole foods and optional less meat. Meatless Mondays as an example. *A menu that prioritizes fruits and vegetables is essential for combating serious health issues related to meat. See the fact sheet for more information.*

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5. Food services should ensure that each food item is clearly marked to indicate dietary classifications such as vegetarian, vegan, halal, or kosher.  
*By using indicators, students and staff can make informed decisions about the food being served to see if it aligns with their diet.*
6. Students should be served culturally diverse and appropriate food to reflect various cuisines and flavors.  
*Inclusion should intersect with as many areas in the students' school day as possible.*
7. If staff members or students wish to provide a product, that may not follow the nutritional guidelines, a waiver system is in place. The building Principal is required to submit an (exception request), waiver to be approved by the Food Service Director.

### **Waste Reduction**

The school district will make waste reduction a priority and expect students and staff to recycle. Recycling bins should be clearly marked to separate recyclables, trash, and compostable food waste. A recycling bin should be located adjacent to each trash bin. Cafeteria staff, lunch monitors, and custodians should help guide students to properly separate their trash from recyclables and compost items.

1. Food waste and food scraps should be composted and returned for use in the school garden program or landscaping. Arrangements should be made for surplus food waste to (or picked up by) a local composting service or local farm.  
*See the fact sheets for more information on composting.*
2. When possible, cafeteria staff should use canning and/or pickling to prolong the shelf-life of fresh produce.

### **Implementation and Assessment**

The building principal, shall support the goals through the building wellness committee, policy implementation, and action plans as listed. The Building Wellness committee shall evaluate each school's implementation of all aspects of this Wellness Assessment and report the results to the Board, including plans for any improvements that may be needed.