

# **Mary M. Knight School District School Wellness Policy**

The policies outlined within this document are intended to create a school environment that protects and promotes the health of our students. Our commitments to providing nutrition education and regular physical activity, as well as access to nutritious foods for all students, are described here.

## **I. Nutrition education and promotion**

Students will receive consistent nutrition messages throughout schools, classrooms, cafeteria, and school media:

- Teachers will integrate nutrition education into core curricula;
- Nutrition promotion will include participatory activities and promotions;
- The nutrition education program will be linked to school meal programs and cafeteria nutrition promotion;
- Nutrition education will be offered in the cafeteria as well as the classroom, with coordination between the foodservice staff and teachers;
- Nutrition education will promote fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and accurate portion sizes;
- Students will have opportunities to taste foods that are low in saturated and trans fats, sodium and added sugar;
- Staff members responsible for nutrition education will regularly participate in relevant professional development (e.g., training on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and how to teach them);
- Staff will only use approved nutrition curriculum in the classroom.
- Nutrition education will be provided to families via handouts, newsletters, postings on the website, presentations, and workshops. The school menu will be posted online;

Specifically, the nutrition curriculum will encompass:

- Promotion of adequate nutrient intake and healthy eating practices;
- Skill development, such as reading labels to evaluate the nutrient quality of foods, meal planning, and analysis of health information;
- Examination of the problems associated with food marketing to children;
- Nutrition themes including, but not limited to USDA's MY Plate, Dietary Guidelines for Americans, adequate nutrient intake (such as carbohydrates, proteins, fats), body image and food safety.

## **II. Nutrition Standards for All Food and Beverages Sold or Served on School Grounds**

### **A. USDA School Meals:**

School meals will include a variety of healthy choices while accommodating special dietary needs and ethnic and cultural food preferences. All schools shall participate in the USDA school breakfast, school lunch and summer food programs.

#### **In addition:**

- All reimbursable meals will meet nutrition standards mandated by the USDA, as well as any additional state nutrition standards that go beyond USDA requirements;
- The school meal programs will be administered by a team that will include the food service director and the cooks. All cafeteria staff will be provided training on USDA meal plans/reimbursable meals so they can properly advise students as to the meal components they may/must take, as well as cooking techniques, recipe implementation, sanitation, and food safety;
- Students will be provided at least 10 minutes to eat breakfast and 20 minutes to eat lunch after being seated;
- Meals will be served in a clean and pleasant setting and under appropriate supervision. Rules for safe behavior will be consistently enforced;
- High school campus will be “closed” meaning that students are not permitted to leave the school grounds during the school day;
- Lunch will accompany a recess period and will be scheduled between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.;
- Tutoring, club, or organizational meetings will not be scheduled during meal time, unless students may eat during such activities;
- Students will have access to hand washing/hand sanitizing facilities before meals and snacks and staff will remind students to make use of them;
- Information on the nutritional content and ingredients of meals will be found on menus, in school newsletters and on the district web-site. Parents and students will be informed that information is available and information shall be kept up-to-date;
- Participation in school meal programs will be promoted. Parents will be notified of the availability of the breakfast and lunch programs and will be encouraged to determine eligibility for reduced or free meals.

### **B. Competitive Foods and Beverages**

All foods and beverages *sold* on school grounds to students outside of reimbursable school meals are considered “competitive foods.” Competitive foods include items sold a la carte in the cafeteria, from vending machines, school stores and for in-school fundraisers. *All* competitive foods must comply with the district’s nutrition standards, as well as all applicable state and federal standards.

## **Mary M. Knight School District Nutrition Standards:**

**The Institute of Medicine's nutrition standards for competitive foods/beverages in schools has been adopted by the district. A summary of the standards is below.**

### **Foods**

Only fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds, whole grains, low-fat dairy and combination products may be sold, following the standards below:

- Packaged items shall not exceed one serving per package/200 calories;
- Items shall contain no more than 35% of total calories from fat, less than 10% of total calories from saturated fats and zero trans fats. Exception: The fat content of nuts and seeds will not count against the total fat content of packaged products;
- Items shall contain no more than 35% of calories from total sugars. Exception: Yogurt, may contain up to 30grams of total sugars per 8 oz. serving;
- Items shall contain less than or equal to 200mg of sodium per packaged portion;
- Combination items must contain at least one serving of whole grains, fruit or vegetable, per portion as packaged, in any combination (e.g., ½ serving of fruit and ½ serving of whole grain in one portion).

A la carte items in the cafeteria must be USDA school meal components (200 calorie limit does not apply) AND meet the above fat and sugar limits. A la carte items cannot exceed 480mg of sodium.

*Whole fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds are preferable to processed food items.*

### **Beverages**

The only beverages allowed to be sold outside of school meals include:

- Low-fat (1%), non-fat or non-dairy milk in 8 oz. portions (plain or flavored with no more than 22 grams of total sugars per 8 oz.);
- 100% fruit/vegetable juice in 4 oz. portions for elementary and middle school, and 8 oz. portions for high school;
- Plain water.

## **C. Additional Foods Available to Students**

### **Fundraising**

- Non-food fundraising is promoted. When in-school fundraising involves food, items must meet the district's nutrition standards for competitive foods and cannot be sold for immediate consumption.

- Fundraising activities that promote physical activity are encouraged.

### **Celebrations**

- Foods that meet the district's nutrition standards are encouraged.

### **Food used as reward or punishment**

Research clearly indicates that the use of food to reward/reinforce desirable behavior and academic performance, etc. has negative, unintended consequences. The use of food as a reward is discouraged and withholding food as a punishment is strictly prohibited.

### **Access to Drinking Water**

- Students and school staff members will have access to free, safe, fresh drinking water at all times throughout the school day. Water jugs and cups will be available in the cafeteria if water fountains are not present, and water cups will be available near water fountains. Supervisory staff will facilitate access to water in the cafeteria. Students will be allowed to bring drinking water from home into the classroom.
- Water will be promoted as a substitute for sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs)
- School staff will be encouraged to model drinking water consumption.
- Maintenance will be performed on all water fountains regularly to ensure that hygiene standards for drinking fountains, water jugs, hydration stations, water jets, and other methods for delivering drinking water are maintained.

### **III. Other**

#### **Marketing**

School-based marketing will be consistent with nutrition education and health promotion. As such, the following guidelines apply:

- Schools will restrict food and beverage marketing to the promotion of only those foods and beverages that meet the nutrition standards set forth in the District Wellness Policy-

### **IV. Physical Activity**

#### **Physical Education**

Physical Education will be standards- based, using national and state-developed standards. Physical Education classes will be sequential, building from year to year, and content will include motor skills, concepts and strategies, engagement in physical activity, physical fitness, responsible behavior and benefits of physical activity. Physical education programs will meet the needs of all students, including those who are not athletically gifted, and actively teach cooperation, fair play, and responsible participation. Students will be able to demonstrate competency through application of skills.

Student involvement in other activities, including those involving physical activity (e.g. interscholastic or intramural sports), will not be substituted for physical education.

- Physical education classes for high school students will count toward graduation and GPA;
- The school will provide adequate space/equipment and conform to all safety standards;
- The school prohibits the use of physical activity and withholding of physical education class and other forms of physical activity as punishment;
- All Physical Education classes will be taught by a qualified physical education teacher and at least 50% of class time will be spent in moderate to vigorous activity;
- Physical education staff will receive professional development on a yearly basis;

#### **Physical Activity**

All students will have opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class on a daily basis. Classroom health education will reinforce the knowledge and skills needed to maintain a physically active lifestyle. Students will be encouraged to reduce sedentary time, and will not be required to engage in sedentary activities for more than two hours without an opportunity to stretch and move around. Short (3-5 minute) “energy release” physical activity

breaks will be provided between classes in elementary school, for example, programs such as Take 10! And ABC for Fitness will be used to incorporate short activity breaks into the day. Teachers will be expected to incorporate opportunities for physical activity in the classroom whenever possible and will be encouraged to serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students.

### **Recess**

All elementary school students will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess during the lunch period, during which moderate to vigorous physical activity will be encouraged. Outdoor recess will only be withheld in the event of extreme weather, as defined by the district (this may vary regionally). In the event that recess must be held indoors, teachers and staff will follow indoor recess guidelines, developed by the school's Wellness Committee, to ensure adequate physical activity for students.

### **Physical Activity Programs**

Elementary, middle, and high school will offer extracurricular physical activity programs, such as physical activity clubs and intramural programs. High school and middle school will offer interscholastic sports programs to all students.

### **Safe Routes to School**

The school district will assess and, if necessary and to the extent possible, make needed improvements to make it safer and easier for students to walk and bike to school.

### **V. Evaluation and Enforcement**

This wellness policy was developed by the District Wellness Committee, a group comprising individuals from the following groups: parents, teachers, students, school administration, food service director and staff, and Health and Physical Education staff. The committee is active—meetings are held two times during the school year to review and revise, if needed, policy content. A progress report is prepared after each meeting for the superintendent evaluating the implementation of the policy and regulations and includes recommended changes or revisions. The Committee shall also undertake additional tasks as consistent with the wellness policy guidelines issued by the USDA. All meeting dates and times will be posted on the school district's website and meetings will be open to the public.

The principal of each school will ensure compliance within the school and will report on compliance to the superintendent, who will provide a report to the school board and the wellness committee. The superintendent will identify a coordinator who will ensure that each school implements the policy and will collect, summarize and report on evaluation data to the committee. Policy revisions will take into account new research and evidence on health trends, new national and state standards and guidelines, new state and federal initiatives, local evaluation data, changing district priorities, and other issues.

Revised: ~~May 16, 2014~~ ~~July 24, 2014~~, ~~May 12, 2016~~, **September 27, 2021**