

Ridgewood Local School District Wellness Policy

Introduction

The primary responsibility of schools is to foster academic achievement. Schools do this not only by providing a high-quality instructional program, but also by paying attention to the needs of the whole child that influence academic achievement. Student health has a tremendous impact on student learning. Recent statistics about both the poor diet and declining level of physical activity of this generation of America's children, however, spotlight a generation at risk. Congress included a requirement in the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 that each school education agency participating in a program authorized by the National School Lunch Act of 1966 must establish a local wellness policy by the beginning of school year 2006-07.

This policy must:

- include goals for nutrition education, physical activity and other school-based activities designed to promote student wellness;
- include nutrition guidelines for all foods available in each school during the school day; the objectives of the guidelines will be to promote student health and reduce childhood obesity;
- assure those guidelines for reimbursable school meals will not be less restrictive than regulations and guidance issued by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, as those regulations and guidance apply to schools;
- establish a plan for measuring the effectiveness of the wellness policy, including designation of one or more district employees who will be charged with operational responsibility for ensuring the wellness policy is effectively enforced;
- involve parents, students, representatives of the school food authority, the school board, administrators and the public as members of the wellness committee.

Rationale

- Only 2% of children (2 to 9 years old) meet the five main recommendations of the Food Guide Pyramid.
- Compared to ten years ago, children are consuming an additional 100 calories more per day. Additional calories generally come in the form of soda, juice, fast food and candy.
- In the last 20 years, the number of obese children in the United States has doubled to one in five children. The January 2004 issue of the American School Board Journal stated that the medical community is calling childhood obesity the nation's "largest emerging issue" and a "national epidemic" that demands urgent attention.
- One in three American children born in 2000 will develop diabetes in their lifetime.
- Fewer than one in four children get 20 minutes of vigorous physical activity daily.
- A meta-analysis of nearly 200 studies of the effectiveness of exercise on cognitive functioning found that regular physical activity supports better learning. Other recent studies have found a significant relationship between academic achievement and fitness levels.
- Physical activity in adolescents has consistently been related to higher levels of self-esteem and lower levels of anxiety and stress - each of which has been associated with better academic performance.

Philosophy and Goals

The Ridgewood Local School District is committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, it is the policy of the Ridgewood Local School District that:

- The school district will engage students, parents, teachers, food service staff, health professionals, administration, board member(s), and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing district-wide nutrition and physical activity policies.
- Adequate time will be provided for all students to have access to all school meals.
- School cafeterias will be safe, comfortable, pleasant eating environments.
- Food emergency training will be provided for food service staff.
- Collaboration will be developed between teachers and food service staff on nutrition education.
- Consistent nutrition education will be promoted between school, parents and students.
- The sales and consumption of healthy foods through vending, fund-raising, and class activities are encouraged.
- All students in grades K-12 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Schools will provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity, and will establish linkages between health education and school meal programs.

I. District Wellness Policy Committee

The school district will create a school wellness policy committee to develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical education policies. This committee will consist of a group of individuals representing the school and community, and will include parents, students, representatives of the school food authority, member(s) of the school board, school administration, teachers, health professionals, and members of the public.

II. Nutrition

A. Food Service Operation

Ridgewood Local Schools participate in the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program through the Ohio Department of Education, Office for Safety, Health and Nutrition. Ridgewood follows the Traditional Food-Based Menu Planning option.

The five required food items for a daily lunch are:

- One serving of meat/meat alternate
- One serving of grains/breads
- Two servings of vegetables or fruit or one of each
- One serving of milk (Reauthorization Act of 2004 requires us to offer fluid milk in a variety of fat contents.)

Minimum requirements for breakfast are:

- Two servings of meat/meat alternate OR two servings of grains/breads OR one serving of each
- ½ cup of juice/fruit/vegetable
- 8 oz. of milk

All menus must attempt to meet nutrient standards according to the following:

- Total fat must not exceed 30% of calories for the week
- Saturated fat must be less than 10% of calories for the week.
- Daily Nutrient Allowances:

	Grades K-4	Grades 5-12
Energy Allowances (calories)	633	785
Protein (grams)	9g.	15g.
Calcium (milligrams)	267 mg.	370 mg.
Iron (milligrams)	3.3 mg.	4.2 mg.
Vitamin A (Retinol Equivalents)	200 RE	285 RE

Ridgewood Local Schools eliminated deep-fat frying as a method of on-site preparation for foods served as part of school meals. Flash-fried foods by the manufacturer may be served, but should be heated or baked by another method.

B. Appropriate Use of Food

Proper nutrition can have a positive effect on children’s cognitive development, behavior, ability to concentrate, school attendance and educational performance. Students’ lifelong eating habits are greatly influenced by the types of foods and beverages available to them.

- Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value are prohibited from being served or sold when a reimbursable meal is served, sold and/or eaten. Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value refers to the four categories of foods and beverages (soda water, water ices, chewing gum and certain candies) that are restricted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture under the child nutrition program.
 - Soda water - any carbonated beverage
 - Water ices - any frozen, sweetened water with the exception of products that contain fruit or fruit juices
 - Chewing gum – any products that form insoluble mass for chewing
 - Certain candies - hard candies, jellies and gums, marshmallow candies, fondant (i.e., fudge, chocolates, creamy candies), licorice and candy-coated popcorn
- School organizations are encouraged to raise funds through the sale of items other than food. Foods of minimal nutritional value, sold for fund-raising purposes, are prohibited during meal services.
- Students will not be permitted to call for delivery of food from outside vendors during the school day (As stated in Food Sale Standards Policy - File EFF)
- School staffs are encouraged to model healthy eating behaviors.
- Rewards and incentives for academic performance should be given careful consideration as to the messages they send to students receiving them. If food is included in

recognition of academic performance, it should be used in general celebration of the achievement not as the reward. In order to promote consistent nutrition messages throughout the school environment, school faculty and staff are encouraged to provide healthy foods to students during class activities. Food will not be withheld from students as punishment.

C. Promoting a Healthy Eating Environment and Nutrition

- School cafeterias should provide safe, comfortable and pleasant eating environments. Breakfast and lunch times are to be relaxed atmospheres for students to enjoy and socialize. The minimum recommended eating time for each student should be 10 minutes from the time they are seated to eat breakfast and 20 minutes from the time they are seated to eat lunch. The district should not establish policies, class schedules, bus schedules or other barriers that directly or indirectly restrict meal access.
- Healthy nutrition information will be promoted to students and parents through the use of the school website, newsletters and special events.

D. Food Emergencies

Food service staff will receive training to be able to respond quickly and effectively to food emergencies such as choking, medical emergencies or situations that require students to shelter in school.

E. Promoting Nutrition in Health Education

Nutrition education is promoted 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.

- All health education classes in which students receive credit toward graduation will be taught by state-certified health education teachers.
- Nutrition education will promote the consumption of fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products.
- Students will be taught healthy food preparation methods, healthy meal planning, appropriate use of food nutrition labels and the principles of healthy weight management.
- Students will be provided opportunities to practice behaviors that enhance health behaviors and participate in educational activities that involve parents/families.

III. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

A. Physical Activity Throughout the School Day

- Students will be given opportunities for physical activity during the school day through physical education classes, daily recess periods for elementary and middle school students and use of physical activity in the academic curriculum.
- Daily recess of at least 20 minutes will be provided for elementary and middle school students.
- Withholding recess as punishment or the use of recess time to complete assignments should be limited.
- When possible, recess will be scheduled before lunch so students are more relaxed and focused on eating.

- Extended periods (i.e., periods of two or more hours) of inactivity are to be discouraged. When activities, such as mandatory testing, make it necessary for students to remain inactive for long periods of time, students are to be given periodic breaks during which students are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.
- Classroom teachers are encouraged to provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.
- The use of physical activity as a reward or celebration of academic achievement is encouraged.

B. Physical Education

- Physical education staff shall be an essential element of our district's instructional program. All students will be provided the opportunity to develop skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to participate in a lifetime of healthful physical activity.
- Physical education shall be taught by state-certified physical education instructors. Students should be moderately to vigorously active at least 50% of the time while participating in physical education class.
- Physical fitness testing should emphasize the health-related components of physical fitness (e.g., cardiorespiratory endurance, muscular strength and endurance, flexibility and body composition). Testing should be a mechanism for teaching students how to apply behavioral skills (e.g., self-assessment, goal setting, and self-monitoring) to physical fitness development and for providing feedback to students and parents about students' physical fitness.
- The results of physical fitness testing should not be used in assigning grades.
- Students shall be supported in setting and meeting personal fitness goals that result in the achievement and maintenance of a health-enhancing level of physical fitness.
- The withholding of participation in physical education class as punishment or the use of physical education class time to complete assignments from other classes is prohibited.

C. Opportunities for Physical Activity Outside the Normal School Day

- The district will provide community access to and encourage students and community members to use the district's physical activity facilities outside of the school day.
- Our district will provide information about physical education and other school-based physical activity opportunities and support parents' efforts to provide their children with opportunities to be physically active outside of school. Such supports include sharing information through the district website, newsletter, or other take-home materials, special events or physical education or health homework.

The policy will be modified based on legislation.