

DISTRICT NUTRITION & WELLNESS POLICY

WHEREAS the Somers Central School District recognizes the positive benefits of physical activity, wellness education, health, nutritional and physical education, healthy food choices and their impact on academic achievement, the Board of Education is further committed to wellness as a priority for all members of the school community.

As such, the Board of Education sets forth the following goals and policy guidelines to provide District students with a school environment that promotes student health and wellness and reduces childhood obesity.

The District will create an environment that supports healthy eating habits, physical education/physical activity, and nutrition education by:

1. Employing a process for ongoing review and improvement of the nutritional quality of all foods served to District students – in the cafeteria and from vending machines by taking the following actions, to the greatest extent possible:
 - a. Increasing whole foods (whole grains and locally-grown and/or organic fruits and vegetables, to the greatest extent possible);
 - b. Lowering refined sugar;
 - c. Reducing the use and/or sale of highly-processed products
 - d. Eliminating foods of low nutritional value in vending machines and replacing them with more nutritious foods;
 - e. Eliminating food as classroom rewards;
 - f. Ensuring that all foods and beverages available for sale to students on the school campus during the school day meet or exceed the program requirements and nutrition standards found in federal regulations. To accomplish this, the Board directs that the district serve healthy and appealing foods and beverages at District Schools, following state and federal nutrition guidelines, as well as safe food preparation methods.

2. The District will maintain the following standards in regards to the Health and Wellness of all students:
 - a. Creating an interdisciplinary approach to sustainability, nutrition, health, and physical education/physical activity that cuts across all academic disciplines, integrating physical activity, nutrition, wellness and sustainable practices within the school curriculum.
 - b. Providing a K-12 nutrition education, wellness and physical education program that supports and encourages a healthy lifestyle.
 - c. The District is further committed to maintaining the financial stability of its food service program and ensuring that an appropriately priced lunch is available for all students.

For purposes of this policy, “school campus” means all areas of District property accessible to students during the school day; “school day” means the period from the midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day; and “competitive food” means all food and beverages other than meals reimbursed under federal food programs available for sale to students on the school campus during the school day.

Foods and Beverages Available for Sale to Students on School Campus During the School Day

School Meals – the District shall:

1. Include fruits, vegetables, salads, whole grains, and low fat items at least to the extent required by federal regulations.
2. Encourage students to try new or unfamiliar items
3. Make efforts to ensure that families are aware of need-based programs for free or reduced-price meals and encourage eligible families to apply.
4. Consider serving produce and food from local farms and suppliers.
5. Make free drinking water available at locations where meals are served.

Meal Scheduling- the District shall

1. Provide adequate time to eat
2. Schedule lunchtime for appropriate time periods

Foods and Beverages Sold Individually (e.g., a la carte, vending machines, school stores) – the District shall:

1. Ensure that all such items meet the nutrition standards set in federal regulations for competitive foods regarding whole grains, fruits, vegetables, calories, fat, saturated fats, trans fats, sugar, sodium, and caffeine.
2. Permit the sale of fresh, frozen or canned fruits and vegetables, if processed pursuant to federal regulations, as exempt from the nutrition standards.
3. Work with existing vendors or locate new vendors that will comply with nutrition standards

Fund-Raising Activities – the District shall:

1. Ensure that all fundraisers selling food or beverages to students on school campus during the school day meet the nutrition standards set in federal regulations for whole grains, fruits, vegetables, calories, fat, saturated fats, trans fats, sugar, sodium, and caffeine.
2. Promote non-food items to sell, or activities (physical or otherwise) in which to participate.
3. Student groups conducting fundraisers which take place off the school campus or outside the school day must obey this policy.
4. Outside organizations (e.g., Parent groups, booster clubs) conducting fundraisers which take place off the school campus or outside the school day are encouraged to follow this policy.

Celebrations – the District shall:

1. Set guidelines for the frequency and content of classroom and school-wide celebrations where food is served.
2. Promote the use of food items which meet the standards for competitive foods and beverages and promote non-food activities, and discourage foods and beverages which do not meet those standards, at celebrations.
3. Model the healthy use of food as a natural part of celebrations.

Physical Activity

Physical activity is an important factor in staying healthy and being ready to learn. The Board encourages every student to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to perform a variety of physical activities, to regularly participate in physical activity, and to appreciate and enjoy physical activity as an ongoing part of a healthy lifestyle. In addition, staff, families, and community are encouraged to participate in and model physical activity as a valuable part of daily life. The District's Physical Education program shall

adhere to the curricular requirements of the Commissioner of Education and the New York State Learning Standards. In addition, the District shall promote the integration of physical activity in the classroom and promote clubs and activities that meet the various physical activity needs, interests, and abilities of all students. In this regard, the District shall promote activities, primarily at the secondary schools, for physical activity through a range of before and after-school programs including, but not limited to, intramurals, interscholastic athletics and physical activity clubs, physical activity shall not be used for punishment or reward.

Physical Education:

1. Students shall engage in physical education for at least the minimum number of hours or days per week under State requirements.
2. Physical Education classes shall incorporate the appropriate NYS Learning Standards.
3. Promote, teach and provide opportunities to practice activities that students enjoy and can pursue throughout their lives.
4. The performance of physical activity shall not be used as a form of discipline or punishment.

Recess- The District shall schedule a daily allotment of recess time for elementary students. Recess shall not be used for punishment or reward.

Nutrition Promotion and Education

The Board believes that nutrition promotion and education is a key component in introducing and reinforcing healthy behaviors in students. Nutrition promotion and education that teaches the knowledge, skills, and values needed to adopt healthy eating behaviors shall be integrated into the curriculum. Nutrition promotion and education information shall be offered throughout the school campus including, but not limited to, school dining areas and classrooms.

Staff members who provide nutrition promotion and education shall be appropriately certified and trained. The District's broader Health Education program shall incorporate the appropriate New York State Learning Standards.

The Board's goals for nutrition promotion and education include that the District will:

1. Include nutrition education as part of not only health education classes, but also classroom instruction in subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences and elective subjects.
2. Include enjoyable, developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant, participatory activities, such as contests, promotions, taste testing, farm visits, and school gardens.
3. Promote fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low fat dairy products, safe and healthy food preparation methods, and health enhancing nutrition practices.
4. Emphasize caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure.
5. Teach media literacy with an emphasis on food marketing.

Implementation, Monitoring and Review

The Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee shall to be responsible for ensuring that the provisions of this policy are carried out throughout the district. The Principal in each school building shall ensure that the wellness activities and actions are being implemented at the building-level.

The Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee shall submit a progress report annually to the Board and the public on the content, implementation and effectiveness of this policy. Every year, the

Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee, in consultation with appropriate personnel and advisory committees, shall monitor and review the district's wellness activities to determine whether this policy is having a positive effect on increasing student wellness and decreasing childhood obesity in the district. Based on those results, this policy, and the specific objectives set to meet its goals, may be revised as needed.

To that end, a District Wellness Committee with representation from parents, students (when appropriate), school food service professionals, physical education teachers, school health professionals, school administrators, the general public, and the Board shall participate in the development, implementation and periodic review and update of this wellness policy, under the direction of the Superintendent or his/her designee. The Committee is charged with creating an annual review of the progress in the implementation of this policy and the development of proposed next steps which shall include, but not be limited to, an assessment of: compliance with this policy; how this policy compares to model policies issued by state or federal agencies; and progress made in attaining goals of this policy.

The District shall monitor and review the implementation and effectiveness of this policy using various methods, which may include, but are not limited to:

1. Periodic informal surveys of Building Principals, classroom staff, and school health personnel to assess the progress of wellness activities and their effects.
2. Periodic checks of the nutritional content of food offered in the cafeterias for meals and a la carte items, and sales or consumption figures for such foods.
3. Periodic checks of the nutritional content of food available in vending machines, and sales or consumption figures for such foods.
4. Periodic checks of the amount of time students spend in Physical Education classes, and the nature of those activities.
5. Periodic checks of extracurricular activities of a physical nature, in the number of offerings and rates of participation by students.
6. Periodic surveys of student/parent opinions of cafeteria offerings and wellness efforts.

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