

Tarrant School District's Wellness Policy on Physical Activity and Nutrition

PREAMBLE

The Tarrant Board of Education is aware that obesity rates have doubled in children and tripled in adolescents over the last two decades. Physical inactivity and excessive calorie intake are the predominant cause of obesity. Heart disease, cancer, and stroke are responsible for two-thirds of the deaths in the United States. Major risk factors for these diseases stem from unhealthy eating habits, physical inactivity and obesity. Unhealthy eating habits and physical inactivity are often established in childhood. Thirty-three percent of high school students do not participate in sufficient vigorous physical activity and seventy-two percent of high school students do not attend daily physical education classes. Only two percent of children between the ages of two and nineteen eat a healthy diet consistent with the five main recommendations from the Food Guide Pyramid. Nationally, the items most commonly sold from vending machines and school stores include low-nutrition foods and beverages, such as soda, sports drinks, imitation fruit juices, chips, candy, cookies and snack cakes. Therefore, the Tarrant City School District is committed to children having access to healthy foods and opportunities to be physically active. The Tarrant City School District believes that eating healthy and being physically active will help one grow, learn and thrive. It is also our belief that good health fosters student attendance and education.

Thus, the Tarrant City 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 Tarrant School District that:

- The school district will engage and invite students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and interested community members to participate in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing district-wide nutrition and physical activity policies.
- All students K-12 will have the opportunity, support and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Foods and beverages sold or served at school will meet the nutrition recommendations of the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and *The Alabama Department of Education Nutrition Policies*.
- Qualified child nutrition professionals will provide students with access to a variety of affordable nutritious and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of our students.
- Administration will provide a clean, safe and pleasant setting for the student body and adequate time for students to eat.
- To the maximum extent possible, all schools in our district will participate in available federal school meal programs (e.g.: School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program, After-school Snack Program, and Seamless Summer Option).
- Schools will provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity.

TO ACHIEVE THESE GOALS:

I. School Health Councils

The school district and/or individual schools will create, strengthen, or work within existing health councils to develop, implement, monitor, review and if necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies.

Council consists of a group of individuals representing the school and community, and should include:

- Parents
- Students
- Representatives of the school food authority
- Members of the school boards
- School administrators
- Teachers
- Health professionals
- Members of the public
- School Nurses

II. Nutrition Guidelines for all foods available on the school campus during the school day (school day defined: the period of time that children arrive at school until after the end of the last scheduled class).

A. **School Meals** – meals served through the National Lunch and Breakfast program will:

- Be provided at each school (breakfast and lunch)
- Be appealing and attractive to students
- Be served in a clean and pleasant setting
- Comply with the National School Lunch and Breakfast standards for meal patterns, nutrient levels, and calorie requirements for the ages/grade levels served, as specified in 7CFR 210.10 or 220.8, as applicable.
- Offer a variety of fruits and vegetables
- Serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk
- Provide adequate time to eat and a pleasant dining experience. At least 10 minutes, after sitting down, will be provided to eat breakfast and at least 20 minutes will be provided after sitting down, to eat lunch.
- Insure that all students will have access to meals offered
- Serve portion sizes that comply with the meal pattern requirements as described by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) regulations.
- Serve foods through the cafeteria that adhere to the guidelines published in the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act, 2010 guidance.
- Insure that no more than 30% of an individual's calorie intake will be from fat and 10% or less from saturated fat.

- Focus on increasing the options of whole grain products.
- Include preparation techniques designed to reduce the number of fried foods and increase baking, steaming and roasting preparation methods.
- Limit fried food products to a ½ cup serving size.
- Insure that snack and a la carte items sold on campus during school hours follow the Smart Snacks in Schools Guidance. Accessed at the following link:
<https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/smartsnacks.pdf>
- Insure that all competitive foods will follow state standards and guidelines.
- Insure that free drinking water is available during meals via water fountains installed in dining areas, and throughout the school day via additional water fountains.

Smart Snack Standards require the following:

- Whole grain product that contains 50 percent or more whole grains by weight (have a whole grain as the first ingredient); or
- Have as the first ingredient a fruit, vegetable, a dairy food, or a protein food; or
- Be a combination food that contains at least ¼ cup of fruit and/or vegetable (for example ¼ cup of raisins with enriched pretzels); and
- With few exemptions (found in Smart Snacks Guidance), foods must meet the nutrient standards for calories, sodium, fats, and total sugars listed below:
 - Calories- Snack: 200 calories or less, Entrée: 350 calories or less
 - Sodium- Snack: 200 mg or less, Entrée: 480 mg or less
 - Total Fat- 35% of calories or less
 - Saturated Fat- 10% of calories or less
 - Trans Fat- 0 g
 - Total Sugars- 35% by weight or less

In addition, schools should:

- Engage students in taste tests on new entrees and surveys in order to identify new, healthful, and appealing food choices.
- Purchase and promote locally-sourced foods for school meals, when practicable.
- To the extent possible, schedule lunch periods to follow recess periods (elementary).
- Provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks.
- Provide qualified nutrition professionals that will administer the school meal programs. The district will provide continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals in the schools. Staff development programs should include appropriate certification and/or training programs for child nutrition directors, school nutrition managers, and cafeteria workers, according to

their levels of responsibility. In-service and professional development training opportunities will be completed by 100% of food service staff.

- Provide parent education on good nutrition by means of one of the following: classes, reading material, parent newsletters, and any other appropriate means of communication.
- Discourage students from sharing their food or beverage with another student during meal or snack times, due to concerns about allergies and other restrictions on other children's diets
- Protect the privacy of students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals by implementing a PIN or scan-card system for all students at the Point of Sale. The Point of Sale system will appear the same for paying students and those who qualify for free or reduced-price meals. Electronic payment systems will be available, though use will not be required, and cash or check will be accepted for a la carte items as well as meal payment. All communication regarding notification of eligibility or balances due will be sent to student caregivers via sealed correspondence.
- Unpaid meal balances will be addressed as directed by the district's Unpaid Meal Debt Policy. Students will be served a reimbursable meal, without regard to unpaid meal debt. All families will be informed regarding application for free or reduced-price meals upon registration for school.

FOODS OF MINIMAL NUTRITIONAL VALUE (FMNV)

No one on the school campus may provide access to "for sale" or "free" foods and beverages of minimal nutritional value as identified under USDA regulations 7CFR 210 Appendix B, Categories of Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value until after the end of the last scheduled class. These classifications are as follows:

- Water ices, including frozen popsicles, ices and slushes, except those ices containing fruit juice;
- Chewing gum, flavored or unflavored from natural or synthetic sources;
- Certain candies, processed predominately from sugar or corn syrup sweeteners or artificial sweeteners combined with a variety of ingredients including but not limited to:
 - Hard candies, sour balls, fruit balls, candy sticks, starlight mints, after dinner mints, sugar wafers, rock candy, cinnamon candies, breath mints, and cough drops,
 - Jellies and gums, such as gum drops, jelly beans, jellied and flavored fruit slices,
 - Marshmallow candies or other aerated sugar, corn syrup or invert sugar confections,
 - Fondants, such as candy corn, and soft mints,
 - Licorice,

- Spun candy, cotton candy,
- Candy coated popcorn,

B. Fund-raising Activities

All fund-raising activities that involve the selling of food during school hours or as students gather on the school campus before school begins or as students wait on transportation or other wise exit the school campus following school dismissal should reinforce food choices that promote good health. Sales during school hours shall not include those foods listed in the Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value listed above and shall meet the requirements outlined in the Smart Snacks in Schools guidance. This also means that all events outside the school day are not affected by this requirement and that booster clubs, cheerleaders, softball/baseball, etc. are free to select items for sale for specific fund-raising and concession sales as long as the activity does not conflict with this position. Schools will encourage fund-raising activities that promote physical activity. The school district will make available a list of ideas for acceptable fundraising activities. Per Smart Snacks in Schools Standards, 30 days of exempt fundraisers are allowable, wherein non-compliant food items can be sold within the school day. No competitive foods may be sold within one hour of meal service times.

C. School Parties

Students are being taught about good nutrition and the value of healthy food choices. Many times food served in the classroom, in the case of a class party, are low in nutrients and high in calories. This sends them a mixed message – that good nutrition is just an academic exercise and is not important to their health or education. To send the right message Tarrant School District will promote healthy food choices at school parties. Teachers will be provided with recipes for creative snacks/low-fat party dips. Below is a list that may be helpful in making good food choices for school parties. Schools should limit celebrations that involve food during the school day to no more than two parties per class a year, preferably at Winter Break and the end of school. The school will encourage parents and families to provide healthy options and limit food and beverages that do not meet nutrition standards. The school will provide a list of healthier party foods at the beginning of the year.

1. 100% juice
2. Fresh fruit assortment
3. Fruit and cheese kabobs
4. 100% fruit snacks
5. Vegetable trays
6. Cheese – cubes/strings
7. Pretzels

8. Graham Crackers
9. Low-fat popcorn
10. Animal crackers
11. Angel food cake topped with fruit
12. Pizza
13. Low-fat pudding
14. Low-fat yogurt
15. Quesadillas with salsa
16. Hot dogs

D. School Stores

School stores should support a healthy environment. Items that students purchase should contribute valuable nutrients to their diet and not excessive amounts of components such as sugar, fat, and sodium. School stores will be required to follow the Smart Snacks in Schools guidance.

E. Food as Rewards for Academic Performance or Good Behavior – Food withheld as a form of punishment

The district will encourage non-food alternatives as rewards. Food will never be withheld from a student as a form of punishment (including food served through school meals).

F. Snacks

Snacks served during the school day or in after-school care or enrichment programs will make a positive contribution to children's diets and health. Schools that provide snacks through the after-school program will pursue receiving reimbursements through the National School Lunch Program and will follow the USDA and ALSDE guidelines.

G. Vending Machines

All vending machines will be inaccessible or turned off during the school day.

Guidelines Regarding Carbonated Beverages Sold In Schools (whether through the cafeteria or vending machines)

Elementary School: No vending machine display front may display any product that is not water or 100% fruit juice. Per Smart Snack Standards, 8 oz. portions that may be sold include carbonated or non-carbonated flavored and unflavored water, 100% fruit or vegetable juices or fruit juices diluted with carbonated or non-carbonated water, flavored or unflavored fat-free or low-fat milk.

Middle School: No vending machine display front will display any product that is not water or fruit juice. Per Smart Snack Standards, 12 oz. portions that may be sold include carbonated or non-carbonated flavored and unflavored water, 100% fruit or vegetable juices or fruit juices diluted with carbonated or non-carbonated water, flavored or unflavored fat-free or low-fat milk.

High School: All vending machine fronts in high schools other than those located in athletic spectator settings will display only water and juice products. Per Smart Snack Standards, 12 oz. portions that may be sold include carbonated or non-carbonated flavored and unflavored water, 100% fruit or vegetable juices or fruit juices diluted with carbonated or non-carbonated water, flavored or unflavored fat-free or low-fat milk, and low-calorie (equivalent to 5 calories per fluid ounce) beverages, with or without caffeine and/or carbonation. Up to a 20 oz. portion of no-calorie beverages may be sold if there are less than 5 calories per 8 fluid ounces.

*The school day is defined as the midnight before until 30 minutes after the end of the last scheduled class.

H. Food as part of an instructional curriculum – Teachers may use foods for instructional purposes as long as the items are not considered candy or Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value (FMNV) as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture. Students that use food as part of the instructional curriculum may consume the food prepared as part of the class as long as they do not provide them to other students and/or classes. Food that is provided as part of the class or school cultural heritage event is exempt from the policy as long as the food served is not in competition with the school meal. Regular meal service must continue to be available to all students.

I. Foods served/available/purchased for field trips – School-approved field trips are exempt from the nutrition policy, unless the school lunchroom provides the lunches. A school official must approve the date and purpose of the field trip.

III. **Nutrition Education and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing**

A. **Nutrition Education and Promotion**

Tarrant School District aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating habits. Schools should provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- Is offered at each grade level as part of a comprehensive, standards-based program, aligned with state and/or national physical education standards, and designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health.

- Includes nutrition as a part of classroom instruction in subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, health and physical education, where appropriate.
- Includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, participatory activities, such as contests, promotions, taste testing, farm visits and school gardens.
- Emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and physical activity/exercise.
- Includes training for teachers and other staff.

B. Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting - in order for students to achieve the nationally recommended amount of daily physical activity and for students to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior, students need opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class. Tarrant schools will work toward:

- Classroom health education will compliment physical education by reinforcing the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically-active lifestyle and to reduce time spent on sedentary activities, such as watching television;
- Opportunity for physical activity will be incorporated into other subject lessons when appropriate; and
- Classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

C. Communication with Parents – The district/school will support parents’ efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. The district/school will send home nutrition information and post nutrition tips on school websites. Schools should encourage parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks and to refrain from including beverages and foods that do not meet the above nutrition standards for individual foods and beverages. The district/school will provide parents a list of foods that meet the district’s snack standards and ideas for healthy celebrations/parties, rewards, and fundraising activities.

D. Food marketing in Schools – School-based marketing will be consistent with nutrition education and health promotion. Schools will limit food and beverage marketing to the promotion of foods and beverages that meet the nutrition standards for meals or individual food and beverage sales. School-based marketing of brands promoting predominantly low-nutrition foods is prohibited. The promotion of healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products is encouraged.

E. Staff wellness – School staff shall be encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity behaviors. In-services or resources on nutrition and

health will be shared with staff periodically. Handouts pertaining to classroom snacks will be distributed.

The School district will coordinate with school nurses on implementing staff wellness for the purpose of:

- Coordinating school building efforts with district level policies and programs;
- Surveying the needs and interest of school staff in wellness activities and knowledge;
- Creating and implementing a school employee wellness action plan including weight management, health screenings, tobacco cessation, and stress management;
- Reporting the implementation and to the school wellness council.
- Coordinating with each building to provide activities that promote healthy living.

IV. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

A. Daily Physical Education (P.E.) K-12. All students in grades K-8 including students with disabilities, special health-care needs and in alternative educational settings, will receive daily physical education (or its equivalent of 150 minutes/week for elementary school students). All students in grades 9-12 will complete one year of physical education for 55 minutes a day. All physical education will be taught by a certified physical education teacher, who shall attend annual physical education professional development. Student involvement in other activities involving physical activity (e.g., interscholastic or intramural sports) will not be substituted for meeting the physical education requirement. Students will spend at least 50 percent of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

Physical education in the school district is based on a written curriculum that is aligned to the State of Alabama standards for physical education.

All students shall be regularly assessed for attainment of physical education learning objectives.

B. Daily Recess - All elementary school students will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised physical activity, preferably outdoors, during which schools should encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment. Schools should discourage extended periods of inactivity (e.g., periods of two or more hours). When activities, such as mandatory school-wide testing, make it necessary for students to remain indoors for long periods of time, schools should give students periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.

- C. **Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School** –The high school and middle school as appropriate, will offer interscholastic sports programs. Schools will offer a range of activities that meet the needs, interests, and abilities of all students, including boys, girls, students with disabilities and students with special health-care needs.

After-school childcare and enrichment programs will provide and encourage daily periods of moderate to vigorous physical activity for all participants.

Schools will offer at least 30 to 60 minutes of exercise during afterschool hours and could break it up into multiple periods.

- D. **Physical Activity and Punishment** – Teachers and other school and community personnel will NOT use physical activity (e.g., running laps, pushups) or withhold opportunities for physical activity (e.g.: recess, physical education) as punishment.

- E. **Safe Routes to School** – The school district recognizes that walking, bicycling, and other forms of physical activity before school promotes overall student wellness by providing the opportunity for social interaction and exercise. Physical activity is necessary in building lifelong healthy habits for children and helps develop an environment that promotes improved academic performance.

- To the extent possible, the school district will make needed improvements to make it easier and safer for students to walk and bike to school. When appropriate, the district will work together with local public works, public safety, and/or police departments in those efforts.

V. **Monitoring and Policy Review**

- A. **Monitoring-** The superintendent or designee will ensure compliance with established district-wide nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. In each school, the principal or designee will ensure compliance with those policies in his/her school and will report on the school's compliance to the school district superintendent or designee.

School food service staff, at the school or district level, will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the superintendent (or if done at the school level, to the school principal). In addition, the school district will report on the most recent USDA Administrative Review findings and any

resulting changes. If the district has not received an Administrative Review from the state agency within the past five years, the district will request from the state agency that an Administrative Review be scheduled as soon as possible.

The superintendent or designee will develop a summary report every three years on district-wide compliance with the district's established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies, based on input from schools within the district. That report will be provided to the school board and also distributed to all school health councils, parent/teacher organizations, school principals, and school health services personnel in the district.

B. Policy Review- To help with the initial development of the district's wellness policies, each school in the district will conduct a baseline assessment of the school's existing nutrition and physical activity environments and policies. The results of those school-by-school assessments will be compiled at the district level to identify and prioritize needs.

Assessments will be repeated at least every three years to help review policy compliance, assess progress, and determine areas in need of improvement. As part of that review, the school district will review our nutrition and physical activity policies as compared to the latest national recommendations; provision of an environment that supports healthy eating and physical activity; and nutrition and physical education policies and program elements. The district, and individual schools within the district, will, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.

All Tarrant City Schools shall promote their local wellness policy to faculty, staff, parents, and students. A copy shall be posted on the district and school websites. In addition to the local wellness policy, the triennial assessment results shall be posted to the district website.

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