



Wellness Policy Implementation Guidance

Preamble

Albertville City Schools (here to referred to as the District) is committed to the optimal development of every student. The District believes that for students to have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic, developmental and social success, we need to create positive, safe and health-promoting learning environments at every level, in every setting, throughout the school year.

Research shows that two components, good nutrition and physical activity during and after the school day, are strongly correlated with positive student outcomes. For example, student participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) School Breakfast Program is associated with higher grades and standardized test scores, lower absenteeism and better performance on cognitive tasks. Conversely, less-than-adequate consumption of specific foods including fruits, vegetables and dairy products, is associated with lower grades among students. In addition, students who are physically active through active transport to and from school, recess, physical activity breaks, high-quality physical education and extracurricular activities – do better academically. Finally, there is evidence that adequate hydration is associated with better cognitive performance.

This policy outlines the District's approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. Specifically, this procedure establishes goals to ensure that:

- Students in the District have access to healthy foods throughout the school day – both through reimbursable school meals and other foods available throughout the school campus in accordance with Federal and state nutrition standards;
- Students receive quality nutrition education that helps them develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors;
- Students have opportunities to be physically active during and after school;
- Schools engage in nutrition and physical activity promotion and other activities that promote student wellness;
- School staff are encouraged and supported to practice healthy nutrition and physical activity behaviors in and out of school;
- The District establishes and maintains an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about and monitoring of the policy and its established goals and objectives.

This procedure applies to all students, staff and schools in the District. Specific measurable goals and outcomes are identified within each section below. The District should coordinate the wellness policy

with other aspects of school management, including the District's / School Continuous Improvement Plan, when appropriate.

I. School Wellness Committee

Committee Role and Membership

The District should convene a representative district wellness committee (hereto referred to as the DWC) that meets at least **once** per year to establish goals for and oversee school health and safety policies and programs, including development, implementation and periodic review and update of this district-level wellness policy (heretofore referred to as "wellness policy").

The DWC membership will represent all school levels (elementary and secondary schools) and include (to the extent possible), but not be limited to: parents and caregivers; students; representatives of the school nutrition program; physical education teachers; health education teachers; school health professionals staff, and mental health and social services staff; school administrators, school board members; health professionals (e.g., dietitians, doctors, nurses, dentists); and the general public. When possible, membership should also include Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education coordinators. To the extent possible, the DWC will include representatives from each school building and reflect the diversity of the community.

The Superintendent or designee(s) will convene the DWC and facilitate development of and updates to the wellness policy, and should ensure each school's compliance with the policy. The designated official for oversight is the Child Nutrition Program Director. The names, titles, and contact information (email address) of these individuals are included at the end of this document. Each school should designate a school wellness policy coordinator, who will ensure compliance with the policy. Refer to Appendix A for a list of school-level wellness policy coordinators.

II. Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability and Community Engagement

Implementation Plan

The District should develop and maintain a plan for implementation to manage and coordinate the execution of the wellness policy. The plan delineates roles, responsibilities, actions and timelines specific to each school; and includes information about who will be responsible to make what change, by how much, where and when; as well as specific goals and objectives for nutrition standards for all foods and beverages available on the school campus, food and beverage marketing, nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, physical education and other school-based activities that promote student wellness.

The wellness policy and the progress reports can be found at: www.albertk12.org.

Recordkeeping

The District will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of the wellness policy at the District's Child Nutrition Office. Documentation maintained in this location will include but will not be limited to:

- The written wellness policy;
- Documentation demonstrating that the policy has been made available to the public;
- Documentation of efforts to review and update the Local Schools Wellness Policy; including an indication of who is involved in the update and methods the district uses to make stakeholders aware of their ability to participate on the DWC;
- Documentation of compliance with the annual public notification requirements;
- The most recent assessment on the implementation of the wellness policy;
- Documentation demonstrating the most recent assessment on the implementation of the Local School Wellness Policy has been made available to the public.

Annual Notification of Policy

The District should actively inform families and the public each year of basic information about the policy, including its content, updates to the policy and implementation status. The District should make this information available via the district website and/or district-wide communications. Annually, the District should also publicize the name and contact information of the District/school officials leading and coordinating the committee, as well as information on how the public can get involved with the school wellness committee.

Triennial Progress Assessments

At least once every three years, the District should evaluate compliance with the wellness policy to assess the implementation of the policy and include:

- The extent to which schools under the jurisdiction of the District are in compliance with the wellness policy;
- The extent to which the District’s wellness policy compares to the Alliance for a Healthier Generation’s model wellness policy; and
- A description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the District’s wellness policy.

The DWC, in collaboration with individual schools, will monitor schools’ compliance with the wellness policy. The District should actively notify households/families of the availability of the triennial progress report. The position/person responsible for managing the triennial assessment and contact information is Suzannah Yoder, CNP Director. Contact: 256-891-1183 ext. 216, suzannahyoder@albertk12.org.

Revisions and Updating the Policy

The DWC will update or modify the wellness policy based on the results of the annual School Health Index or similar tool, and triennial assessments and/or as District priorities change; community needs change; wellness goals are met; new health science, information, and technology emerges; and new Federal or state guidance or standards are issued. **The Wellness Policy will be assessed and updated as indicated at least every three years, following the Triennial Assessment.**

Community Involvement, Outreach and Communications

The District should actively communicate ways in which representatives of DWC and others can participate in the development, implementation and periodic review and update of the wellness policy through a variety of means appropriate for that district. The District should also inform parents of the improvements that have been made to school meals and compliance with school meal standards, availability of child nutrition programs and how to apply, and a description of and compliance with Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. The District should ensure that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community, and accomplished through means similar to other ways that the district and individual schools are communicating important school information with parents.

The District should actively notify the public about the content of or any updates to the wellness policy annually, at a minimum. The District should also use these mechanisms to inform the community about the availability of the annual and triennial reports.

III. Nutrition

School Meals

Our school district is committed to serving healthy meals to children, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat milk; that are moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and have zero grams *trans*-fat per serving (nutrition label or manufacturer's specification); and to meeting the nutrition needs of school children within their calorie requirements. All schools within the District participate in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP). The cafeterias are committed to offering school meals that:

- Are accessible, appealing and attractive to all students;
- Are served in clean and pleasant settings;
- Meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established by local, state, and Federal statutes and regulations. (The District offers reimbursable school meals that meet [USDA nutrition standards](#).)
- Menu links will be posted on the District website and individual school websites, and nutrient content.
- Menus are created/reviewed by a Registered Dietitian or other certified nutrition professional.
- School meals are administered by a team of child nutrition professionals.
- The District child nutrition program will accommodate students with special dietary needs.
- Students should be allowed at least 10 minutes to eat breakfast and at least 20 minutes to eat lunch, counting from the time they have received their meal and are seated.
- Students are served lunch at a reasonable and appropriate time of day.

Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

All school nutrition program directors, managers and staff will meet or exceed hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements in the USDA professional standards for child nutrition professionals. These school nutrition personnel will refer to USDA's Professional Standards for School Nutrition Standards website to search for training that meets their learning needs.

Water

To promote hydration, free, safe, unflavored drinking water should be available to all students throughout the school day and throughout every school campus. The District should make drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes. Bottle-fillers are located inside or just outside each school cafeteria. Students should be allowed to bring and carry (approved) water bottles filled with only water with them throughout the day.

Competitive Foods and Beverages

The District is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages available to students on the school campus during the school day support healthy eating. The foods and beverages sold and served outside of the school meal programs (e.g., “competitive” foods and beverages) will meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, at a minimum. A summary of the standards and information, as well as a Guide to Smart Snacks in Schools are available at:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/guide-smart-snacks-school> The Alliance for a Healthier Generation provides a set of tools to assist with implementation of Smart Snacks available at www.foodplanner.healthiergeneration.org.

Alabama Department of Education has adopted a more stringent set of regulations, including as it relates to fundraising, and these can be accessed at:

<https://www.alabamaachievers.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Meal-Pattern-Resources.pdf>

To support healthy food choices and improve student health and well-being, all foods and beverages outside the reimbursable school meal programs that are sold to students on the school campus during the school day should meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks nutrition standards. These standards should apply in all locations and through all services where foods and beverages are sold, which may include, but are not limited to, à la carte options in cafeterias, vending machines, school stores and snack or food carts.

Fundraising

Foods and beverages that meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in Schools nutrition standards may be sold through fundraisers on the school campus during the school day*. The District should make available to parents and teachers a list of healthy fundraising ideas from the [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#), [Action For Healthy Kids](#), and the [USDA](#)].

▪ *Schools will be encouraged to use non-food fundraisers, and encourage those promoting physical activity (such as walk-a-thons, Jump Rope for Heart, fun runs, etc.).*

Nutrition Promotion

Nutrition promotion and education positively influence lifelong eating behaviors by using evidence-based techniques and nutrition messages, and by creating food environments that encourage healthy nutrition choices and participation in school meal programs. Students and staff should receive consistent nutrition messages throughout schools, classrooms, gymnasiums, and cafeterias. Nutrition promotion also includes marketing and advertising nutritious foods and beverages to students and is most effective when implemented consistently through a comprehensive and multi-channel approach by school staff, teachers, parents, students and the community.

Nutrition Education

The District should teach, model, encourage and support healthy eating by all students. Schools will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- Is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
- Is part of health education classes, but also integrated into other classroom instruction through subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences and elective subjects;
- Includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant and participatory activities, such as cooking demos / lessons, taste-testing, farm visits and school gardens;
- Promotes fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products and healthy food preparation methods;
- Emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure

Food and Beverage Marketing in Schools

The District is committed to providing a school environment that ensures opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. These efforts will be weakened if students are subjected to advertising on District property that contains messages inconsistent with the health information the District is imparting through nutrition education and health promotion efforts. It is the intent of the District to protect and promote student's health by permitting advertising and marketing for only those foods and beverages that are permitted to be sold on the school campus, consistent with the District's wellness policy.

Any foods and beverages marketed or promoted to students on the school campus during the school day should meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, such that only those foods that comply with or exceed those nutrition standards are permitted to be marketed or promoted to students.

IV. Physical Activity

Children and adolescents should participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. A substantial percentage of students' physical activity can be provided through a comprehensive school physical activity program (CSPAP). A CSPAP reflects strong coordination and synergy across all of the components: quality physical education as the foundation; physical activity before, during and after school; staff involvement and family and community engagement and the district is committed to providing these opportunities.

Physical activity during the school day (including but not limited to recess, classroom physical activity breaks or physical education) **will not be withheld** as punishment for any reason. *This does not include participation on sports teams that have specific academic requirements.*

To the extent practicable, the District will ensure that its grounds and facilities are safe and that equipment is available to students to be active. The District will conduct necessary inspections and

repairs.

Physical Education

The District will provide students with physical education, using an age-appropriate, sequential physical education curriculum consistent with national and state standards for physical education. The physical education curriculum will promote the benefits of a physically active lifestyle and will help students develop skills to engage in lifelong healthy habits, as well as incorporate essential health education concepts (discussed in the “*Essential Physical Activity Topics in Health Education*” subsection). The curriculum will support the essential components of physical education.

All students should be provided equal opportunity to participate in physical education classes. The District should make appropriate accommodations to allow for equitable participation for all students and should adapt physical education classes and equipment as necessary.

All District **elementary students** in each grade will receive physical education for at least 60-89 minutes per week throughout the school year. All Albertville **secondary students** (middle and high school) are required to take the equivalent of one academic year of physical education.

- All physical education teachers in Albertville will be required to participate in at least a once a year professional development in education (meets Healthy Schools Program Silver-level criteria).
- All physical education classes in Albertville are taught by licensed teachers who are certified or endorsed to teach physical education (meets Healthy Schools Program Gold-level criteria).

Recess (Elementary)

All elementary schools should offer at least **20 minutes of recess** on all days during the school year. *This procedure may be waived on early dismissal or late arrival days.* If recess is offered before lunch, schools will have appropriate hand-washing facilities and/or and-sanitizing mechanisms located just inside/outside the cafeteria to ensure proper hygiene prior to eating and students are required to use these mechanisms before eating. Hand-washing time, as well as time to put away coats/hats/gloves, should be built into the recess transition period/time frame before students enter the cafeteria.

Outdoor recess should be offered when weather is feasible for outdoor play. In the event that the school or district must conduct **indoor recess**, teachers and staff will follow the indoor recess guidelines that promote physical activity for students, to the extent practicable.

V. Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness

The District should integrate wellness activities across the entire school setting, not just in the cafeteria, other food and beverage venues and physical activity facilities. The District should coordinate and integrate other initiatives related to physical activity, physical education, nutrition and other wellness components so all efforts are complementary, not duplicative, and work towards the same set of goals and objectives promoting student well-being, optimal development and strong educational outcomes.

All efforts related to obtaining federal, state or association recognition for efforts, or grants/funding opportunities for healthy school environments will be coordinated with and complementary of the wellness policy, including but not limited to ensuring the involvement of the DWC/SWC. All school-sponsored events should adhere to the wellness policy guidelines. All school sponsored wellness events will include physical activity and healthy eating opportunities when appropriate.

Community Partnerships

The District should develop relationships with community partners (e.g., hospitals, universities /colleges, local businesses, SNAP-Ed providers and coordinators, etc.) in support of the wellness policy's implementation. Existing and new community partnerships and sponsorships will be evaluated to ensure that they are consistent with the wellness policy and its goals.

Community Health Promotion and Family Engagement

The District should promote to parents/caregivers, families, and the general community the benefits of and approaches for healthy eating and physical activity throughout the school year. Families will be informed and invited to participate in school-sponsored activities and will receive information about health promotion efforts.

As described in the "Community Involvement, Outreach, and Communications" subsection, the District will use electronic mechanisms (e.g., email or displaying notices on the district's website), as well as non-electronic mechanisms, (e.g., newsletters, presentations to parents or sending information home to parents), to ensure that all families are actively notified of opportunities to participate in school-sponsored activities and receive information about health promotion efforts.

Staff Wellness and Health Promotion

Schools in the District should implement strategies to support staff in actively promoting and modeling healthy eating and physical activity behaviors. Examples of strategies schools should use, as well as specific actions staff members can take, include staff weight loss competitions, active walking groups, and exercise classes offered after school. The District promotes staff member participation in health promotion programs and will support programs for staff members on healthy eating/weight management that are accessible and free or low-cost.