

Purpose and Goal

The link between nutrition and learning is well-documented. Healthy eating patterns are essential for students to achieve their full academic potential, full physical and mental growth, and life-long health and well-being. Healthy eating is demonstrably linked to reduced risk for mortality and development of many chronic diseases as adults. Schools have a responsibility to help students and staff establish and maintain lifelong, healthy eating patterns. Well-planned and well-implemented school nutrition programs have been shown to positively influence students' eating habits.

All students shall possess the knowledge and skills necessary to make nutritious and enjoyable food choices for a lifetime. In addition, staff members shall be encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity as a valuable part of daily life. The District shall prepare, adopt, and implement the District's Wellness Policy of 2011 to encourage healthy eating and physical activity. This plan shall make effective use of school and community resources and shall equitably serve the needs and interests of all students and staff, taking into consideration differences in cultural norms.

**Commitment to
Nutrition and
Physical Activity**

The Board shall appoint a school health advisory committee (SHAC). One of its missions shall be to address nutrition and physical activity issues, and the SHAC shall develop, implement, and evaluate guidelines that support a healthy school nutrition environment. This committee shall offer revisions to these guidelines annually or more often if necessary.

Principals shall address concerns such as kinds of foods available on their campus, sufficient mealtime, nutrition education, and physical activity.

Nutrition education shall be integrated across the curriculum, and physical activity shall be encouraged daily.

The school food service staff shall participate in making decisions and guidelines that affect the school nutrition environment.

Quality School Meals

The District shall offer breakfast, lunch, and after-school snack programs. Students and staff shall be highly encouraged to promote and participate in these programs.

School food service staff members who are properly qualified according to current professional standards and who regularly participate in professional development activities shall administer the child nutrition programs.

Food safety shall be a key part of the school food service operation.

All food and beverages available during the day shall meet the nutrition standards established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA), conforming to good menu planning principles, and featuring a variety of healthy choices that are tasty, attractive, of excellent quality, and are served at the proper temperature.

Student focus groups shall be utilized to provide input on local, cultural, and ethnic student favorites.

School personnel, along with parents, shall encourage students to choose and consume full meals. Positive nutrition statements shall be provided to students on a daily basis.

**Other Healthy Food
Options**

The SHAC shall develop and recommend to the administration guidelines on nutrition standards for food and beverages offered during the school day.

No food or beverages other than those provided through the school food service department may be made available to elementary school students during the school day. Elementary classrooms may serve one nutritious snack per day in the morning or afternoon (not during lunchtime) under the teacher's guidance. The snack may be provided by school food service, teachers, parents, or other groups and should be at no cost to the students. Foods and beverages other than those provided through the school food service department may not be available to junior high students until 30 minutes after the last lunch period and may not be available to high school students until after 10:00 a.m. All food and beverage offered during the school day must meet current TDA Guidelines.

School staff shall not use food as a reward for student accomplishment. The withholding of food as punishment for students is prohibited. (For example, restricting a child's selection of flavored milk at mealtime due to misbehavior in the classroom shall be prohibited.)

The District shall provide nutritional information to parents that shall encourage parents to provide safe and nutritious foods for their children.

**Pleasant Eating
Experiences**

Facility design shall be given priority in renovations and new construction.

Adequate time to eat in a pleasant dining environment should be provided. The minimum eating time for each child after being served shall be 20 minutes for breakfast and 30 minutes for lunch.

Schools shall encourage socializing among students and between students and adults. Adults shall properly supervise dining rooms and shall serve as role models to students by demonstrating

proper conduct and voice level. Parents shall be highly encouraged to dine with students in the cafeteria.

Creative, innovative methods shall be used to keep noise levels appropriate.

Nutrition Education

The District shall follow health education curriculum standards and guidelines as stated by the Texas Education Agency. Schools shall link nutrition education activities with the CATCH program.

Students in prekindergarten through grade 12 shall receive nutrition education that is interactive and teaches the skills they need to adopt healthy eating behaviors. Teachers shall be encouraged to integrate nutrition education into core curriculum areas such as mathematics, science, social studies, and language arts as applicable.

Nutrition education shall be offered in the school dining room and in the classroom, with coordination between school food service staff and teachers. Teachers can display posters, videos, websites, and the like on nutrition topics.

District campuses shall participate in USDA nutrition programs such as "Team Nutrition" and shall conduct nutrition education activities and promotions that involve students, parents, and the community. The school nutrition team responsible for these activities shall be composed of child nutrition services staff, student services staff, school nurses, health teachers, and physical education coaches.

Marketing

Students shall receive positive, motivating messages, both verbal and nonverbal, about healthy eating and physical activity throughout the school setting. All school personnel shall help reinforce these positive messages.

Schools shall consider student needs in planning for a healthy school nutrition environment. Students shall be asked for input and feedback through the use of student surveys and focus groups.

Schools shall promote healthy food choices and shall not allow advertising that promotes less nutritious food choices.

Healthy eating and physical activity shall be actively promoted to students, parents, teachers, administrators, and the community at registration, open houses, health fairs, teacher in-services, and the like.

Schools shall work with a variety of media to spread the word to the community about a healthy school nutrition environment, such as local newspapers and television stations.

Implementation

The SHAC shall be composed of parents, students, and District staff. Each campus principal shall select two parents and one staff member, such as a teacher, nurse, school counselor, or administrator to represent the campus. Permanent members of the committee shall include the student services coordinator, the athletic director, and the food service director. Members shall serve at least one full year term.

The SHAC shall annually review District policies and practices related to school nutrition, student health and safety, and physical activity.

Before the end of each school year, the committee shall recommend to the Superintendent any revisions to the student nutrition/wellness policy/practices that it deems necessary.

The SHAC shall report via the director of student support and community services any recommendations made for District and/or campus practices.