

The New York City Department of Education Wellness Policies on Physical Activity and Nutrition

November 2006

BACKGROUND

In the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, the U.S. Congress established a requirement for school districts that participate in federally funded school meal program(s) to develop and implement a wellness policy. The wellness policy must include goals for nutrition education and physical activity, and guidelines that will promote student health and reduce childhood obesity.

This document outlines the New York City Department of Education (DOE) wellness policy. This policy is designed to promote the health and well-being of students, while taking into account competing priorities and the availability of funds. DOE engaged students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in policy development and review.

PREAMBLE

The New York City Department of Education 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, DOE will:

- Support all schools in providing opportunities for and encouraging all students to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Ensure that food and beverages sold or served at school will meet the nutrition recommendations of the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
- Ensure that school meals provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet their health and nutritional needs while accommodating the religious, ethnic, and cultural food preferences of the student body.
- Ensure that students are provided with clean, sanitary settings and adequate time to eat.
- Participate in available federal school meal programs (including the School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program [including after-school snacks], Summer Food Service Program, Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program, and Child and Adult Care Food Program [including suppers]).
- Provide nutrition education and physical education to foster life-long habits of healthy eating and physical activity. Establish linkages between health education and school meal programs, and related community service agencies.

SPECIFIC POLICIES

1. School Health Wellness Councils

DOE encourages schools to work with an existing school health council or a newly created school wellness council to develop, implement and monitor school nutrition and physical activity policies and practices. Councils may include parents, students, representatives of the school food program, school administrators, teachers, health professionals, and members of the public (including cooperating community-based organizations). The council's role is advisory; final responsibility for implementation rests with the principal.

2. Nutritional Quality of SchoolFood Meals

SchoolFood Meals Served in Accordance with the National School Meals Programs

Meals served by SchoolFood through the National School Breakfast (NSB), Lunch (NSL), After-School Snack and Supper programs will:

- Meet, local, state, and federal requirements for reimbursement.
- Adhere to regulations and requirements for kilocalories, protein, iron, calcium, and vitamins A and C.
- Restrict the fat content of meals as follows:
 - Total fat will be limited to 30% of the total calories per meal.
 - Saturated fat will be limited to 10% of the total calories per meal.
 - Partially hydrogenated oils will be limited in accordance with current dietary guidelines.
- Provide limited amounts of sodium and cholesterol.
- Provide restricted amounts of high fructose corn syrup, with a goal of eliminating corn syrup from all products.
- Offer and promote the consumption of fresh fruit and a variety of vegetables daily.
- Offer and promote the inclusion of plant-based entrees.
- Offer three varieties of reduced-fat milk:
 - Low-fat (1%),
 - Fat-free, and
 - Fat-free chocolate milk.
- Serve bread and rolls that contain at least 50% whole wheat.

The nutritional content of daily menu items and snacks is available on the SchoolFood website, www.opt-osfns.org <<http://www.opt-osfns.org>>.

Program Services

Breakfast - To meet students' nutritional needs and stress the benefits of a healthy breakfast, SchoolFood encourages students to participate in the School Breakfast program.

- Breakfast will continue to be offered at no charge to all NYC public school students.
- A “Grab-and-Go” breakfast option is available to schools seeking alternate ways to provide students with a healthy meal to begin the school day.

Lunch - SchoolFood offers students a varied lunch menu designed to meet nutritional standards and appeal to a wide range of tastes.

- SchoolFood works to develop new, healthy items for use in menus.
- Deli, salad, pasta, and bagel bars are used to build participation and excitement in the dining room.

Menus - New foods and menu items are evaluated to identify healthful and appealing choices by:

- Evaluating items in the SchoolFood test kitchen before use in schools, and
- Testing items in selected schools and obtaining feedback from student customers before marketing the product more widely.

Monthly menus are posted in the school dining room and made available to the each school's administrative office.

Foods and Beverages Sold / Served Outside the NSB and NSL Programs (vending machines, A La Carte snacks, fundraisers, school stores, school-based kitchens etc.)

Only approved foods and beverages that meet either Department of Education; SchoolFood regulations for the NSB and NSL programs; or US Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005 may be offered for sale to students in student government association stores, vending machines, and fundraisers.

Information on SchoolFood-approved snack products, ingredients, portion sizes, and other information are available on the SchoolFood website.

Beverages -

Allowed:

- Bottled water without added caloric sweeteners.
- Fruit and vegetable juices / beverages that contain 100% juice.
- Unflavored low-fat, unflavored, and flavored fat-free fluid milk.
- Soy milk (fortified with calcium, B12, vitamin A & D, no more than 18 grams of added sweetener per 8 oz. serving).
- Decaffeinated coffee, tea, and hot chocolate (high schools only).

Not allowed:

- Juices or juice-based drinks with less than 100 % fruit juice.
- Caffeinated beverages of any kind (caffeinated beverages are provided in teachers' cafeterias and for special events catering).
- Flavored or sweetened water.
- Milk or milk-based beverages other than the variety served in the NSB and NSL programs.
- Carbonated beverages of any kind (carbonated beverages are provided in teachers' cafeterias and for special events catering).

- Beverages containing additives such as herbal preparations and non-vitamin supplements.

Guidelines for the Sale of Food and Snack items

SchoolFood's goal is to encourage students to develop healthy eating habits by reducing or eliminating the total fat, saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, and sodium content of snack items. Many popular snack items have been reformulated to meet enhanced nutritional standards.

- The maximum level of fat is 38% of total calories.
- Sodium content may not exceed 350 mg per portion.
- Artificial coloring, flavoring, sweeteners, and MSG are not permitted.
- Schools may not sell food items that do not comply with nutritional standards for foods served to students from the beginning of the school day until the end of the last lunch period.
- Schools may sell 100% juice, water, and milk throughout the entire school day.
- A choice of at least two fruits and/or non-fried vegetables must be offered alongside other items for sale at any school location.

Prohibited items - The following items are prohibited by Federal and/or State law, and may not be sold in school before the end of the last school lunch period:

- Sweetened soda water
- Chewing gum
- Candy (including hard candy, jellies, gums, marshmallow candy, fondant, licorice, spun candy, and candy coated popcorn)
- Water ices which do not contain fruit or fruit juices

Portion Size - The portion size of *a la carte* entrees and side dishes will not be greater than the size of comparable portions offered as part of the USDA School Meals program. Fruits and non-fried vegetables are exempt from portion-size limits.

A list of snacks that meet NYC Department of Education criteria is available on the SchoolFood website. See Chancellors Regulation A-812 for further information.

SchoolFood Service Staff

Qualified nutrition professionals will participate in the administration of the school meal program and will be provided with opportunities for continuing professional development including the DOHMH Food Handlers certificate.

SchoolFoods Training and Culinary Concepts Department will provide training in all areas of food service.

- SchoolFood works to develop management and kitchen personnel knowledge and implementation of sanitary and food safety practices.
- Regional Chefs focus on recipe preparation and food presentation to insure that the nutritional and aesthetic quality of breakfast and lunch menus are uniform.

3. Nutrition Education and Promotion

SchoolFood will work within all NYC Public Schools to develop and maintain effective SchoolFood Partnerships with members of the school community. In Partnership meetings School Food will discuss nutrition-related topics and the food service program at the school. The will provide information on any aspect of the SchoolFood program on request. SchoolFood will work with principals to ensure that students from all classes, the principal or a designee, the parent coordinator, the school nurse, and the SchoolFood manager participate in Partnership meetings.

Partnership members will work together to foster communication between the SchoolFood and the school community. The Partnership process will:

- Teach students the long term benefits of choosing a healthy diet and provide the information necessary to make healthy food choices.
- Include enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant participatory activities to build the Partnership and encourage active student participation.
- Promote fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices.
- Emphasize that maintaining a healthy weight is best done by eating right and being physically active.
- Acquaint participants with nutrition-related community services and initiatives.

Existing health teams and health councils will work with SchoolFood Partnerships to develop, implement, promote and monitor nutritional and physical activity policies and programs in their respective schools. These groups will serve as a resource to the school administration for implementing those policies.

The Office of Health Education and Family Living will complement these efforts by addressing nutrition education in professional development trainings for their comprehensive health education curriculum, *HealthTeacher*.

Marketing

School-based marketing will be consistent with current nutrition education practices and the promotion of healthy eating habits. As such, SchoolFood will limit food and beverage marketing to the promotion of foods and beverages that meet the nutrition standards for meals or for foods and beverages sold individually. SchoolFood will utilize theme days, promotional giveaways and various media to promote and build participation in the National School Breakfast, Lunch, and summer feeding programs.

Communications with Parents

DOE encourages schools to support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. Schools may offer healthy-eating seminars for parents, send home nutrition information, post nutrition tips on school websites, and provide nutrient analyses of school menus. Schools may 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 school may provide parents with a list of foods that meet the DOE's snack standards and ideas for healthy celebrations/parties, rewards, and fundraising activities. In addition, the school may provide opportunities for parents to share their healthy food practices with others in the school community.

DOE encourages schools to provide information about physical education and other school-based physical activities before, during, and after the school day; and support parents' efforts to provide their children with opportunities to be physically active outside school. Such supports can include sharing information about physical activity and physical education through a website, newsletter, or other take-home materials, special events, or physical education homework.

4. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

Daily Physical Education K-12

DOE encourages principals to provide daily physical education (or an alternate schedule that meets New York State requirements) to students in grades K-12, including students with disabilities, special health-care needs, and in alternative educational settings. To the extent possible, physical education will be taught by a certified physical education teacher or a teacher specializing in physical education. Students should spend at least 50 percent of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

Curriculum - DOE is committed to the use of a health-related fitness curriculum, such as *Physical Best*, in all of its schools.

Testing - DOE has adopted NYC FITNESSGRAM (based on the Cooper Institute's FITNESSGRAM) as its standard method of assessing student health-related fitness. It is anticipated that this method will be applied to all students in 2007-08.

Students and parents receive printed reports of student performance on NYC FITNESSGRAM.

Physical Activity

Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting - For students to receive the nationally-recommended 60 minutes of physical activity per day, they need opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class. Toward that end principals are encouraged to:

- Provide classroom health education that complements 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.
- Provide opportunities for physical activity as part of other subject lessons.

- Have classroom teachers provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

SPARK, a curriculum designed for classroom teachers to integrate physical activity into the school day, is being implemented in many schools.

Daily Recess - In addition to physical education classroom time, DOE encourages principals to provide elementary school students with at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which staff encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity and appropriate space and equipment are provided. DOE policy states that outdoor play is permitted regardless of temperature, when weather conditions are appropriate.

Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School - All elementary, middle, and high schools will be encouraged to offer extracurricular physical activity programs, such as physical activity clubs and intramural programs. All high schools, and middle schools, are encouraged to offer interscholastic sports programs. Schools are encouraged to 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 child care and enrichment programs will encourage daily periods of moderate to vigorous physical activity for all participants to the extent possible.

Physical Activity and Punishment - DOE discourages teachers and other school and community personnel from using physical activity (e.g., running laps, pushups) or withholding opportunities for physical activity (e.g., recess, physical education) as punishment.

Use of School Facilities Outside of School Hours

Principals are encouraged to allow school spaces and facilities to be available for school-sponsored activities that promote fitness for its students during non-school hours. As circumstances permit, DOE will encourage schools to make these spaces and facilities available to community agencies and organizations offering physical activity and nutrition programs and willing to pay for pass through custodial and safety costs. School policies concerning safety will apply at all times.

5. Staff Wellness

DOE encourages its staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Each principal is encouraged to work with a group of staff to develop, promote, and oversee a multifaceted plan to promote staff health and wellness. The plan would outline ways to encourage healthy eating, physical activity, and other elements of a healthy lifestyle.

6. Monitoring and Policy Review

In each school, the principal or designee will ensure compliance with those policies and will report on the school's compliance to the appropriate DOE manager. In addition, SchoolFood and the Office for Fitness and Physical Education will provide the following services:

- SchoolFood personnel will continue to monitor the procurement, production, service, and safety of food/ supplies provided to students. SchoolFood's HACCP

procedures have been developed to maintain the highest level of safety and sanitation in all food storage, preparation, and service areas.

- SchoolFood will work with the local health department, community advocacy organizations, and the educational community to assess and promote student acceptance of the NSB and NSL programs.
- SchoolFood will continue to use USDA-approved software to monitor compliance of cycle menus and snack programs with federal, state, and local nutritional policies and standards.
- Menu items will be randomly collected, analyzed, and evaluated for compliance with SchoolFood specifications.
- SchoolFood will continue to participate in the School Meals Initiative at least once every five years or as dictated by the NY State Education Department.
- The DOE Central Office of Fitness and Physical Education will monitor participation in activities recommended under fitness and physical education guidelines, and will provide a report on schools' participation to the Chancellor and Panel for Educational Policy. The Central Office of Fitness and Physical Education will provide additional technical assistance and support for schools on increasing their level of participation in activities recommended under fitness and physical education guidelines.