

Union Parish School Wellness Policy

On June 30, 2004, Congress passed Section 204 of Public law 108-265, of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004. This law requires each local education agency participating in a program, authorized by the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S. 1751 et seq.) or the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1771 et seq.), to establish a local school wellness policy by July 1, 2006.

Preamble

Whereas, children need access to healthful foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive;

Whereas, good health fosters student attendance and education;

Whereas, obesity rates have doubled in children and tripled in adolescents over the last two decades, and physical inactivity and excessive calorie intake are the predominant causes of obesity;

Whereas, heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes are responsible for two-thirds of deaths in the United States, and major risk factors for those diseases, including unhealthy eating habits, physical inactivity, and obesity, often are established in childhood;

Whereas, more high school students should participate in sufficient vigorous physical activity and attend daily physical education classes;

Whereas, very few children (2 to 19 years) eat a healthy diet consistent with the recommendations from MyPyramid;

Whereas, nationally, the items most commonly sold from school vending machines, school stores, and snack bars include low-nutrition foods and beverages, such as soda, sports drinks, imitation fruit juices, chips, candy, cookies, and snack cakes;

Whereas, school districts around the country are facing significant fiscal and scheduling constraints; and

Whereas, community participation is essential to the development and implementation of successful school wellness policies;

Thus, the Union Parish 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.

The Union Parish School District has appointed Sue H. Brown to coordinate and assess the implementation of a wellness policy.

Therefore, it is the policy of the Union Parish School Districts that:

- The school district will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing district-wide nutrition and physical activity policies.
- All students in grades K-12 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Recommend that foods and beverages sold or served at school meet the nutrition requirements as outlined in *Bulletin 1196*.
- 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 students; will accommodate the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning; and will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.
- To the maximum extent practicable, all schools in our district will participate in available federal school meal programs (including the School Breakfast Program and the National School Lunch Program).
- Schools will provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity, and will establish linkages between health education and school meal programs, and with related community services.

Federal and State Requirements

The Union Parish school district will:

- Offer a school lunch program with menus that meet the meal patterns and nutrition standards established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Louisiana Department of Education, Office of School and Community Support.
- Provide school breakfast and snack programs (where approved and applicable) with menus that meet the meal patterns and nutrition standards established by the U. S. Department of Agriculture and the Louisiana Department of Education, Office of School and Community Support.
- Encourage school staff and families to participate in school meal programs.
- Operate all Child Nutrition Programs with school foodservice staff who are qualified according to current professional standards (*Policies of Operation, Bulletin 1196*).
- Establish food safety as a key component of all school food operations and ensure that the food service permit is current for the Food Service school site.
- Follow State Board of Education policies on competitive foods and extra food sales (refer to *Bulletin 1196*).
- Establish guidelines for all foods available on the school campus during the school day with the objective of promoting health and reducing obesity. (See “Other School Policies.”)

School District Policies

The Union Parish school district will provide:

- Adequate time for breakfast and the recommended 30 minutes for lunch.
- Whole and enriched grain products that are high in fiber, low in added fats and sugars, and served in appropriate portion sizes consistent with the current USDA standards.
- Fresh, frozen, canned or dried fruits and vegetables using healthy food preparation techniques and 100 percent fruit or vegetable juice.
- Nonfat, **reduced fat**, low-fat, plain and/or flavored milk and yogurt, nonfat, **reduced fat** and/or low-fat real cheese.
- Nuts, nut butters, seeds, trail mix, and/or soybean snacks.
- Healthy food preparation techniques for lean meat, poultry, and fish.
- A cafeteria environment conducive to a positive dining experience, with socializing among students and between students and adults; with supervision of eating areas by adults who model proper conduct and voice level; and with adults who model healthy habits by eating with the students.

Other School Policies

The Union Parish school district will:

- Encourage the elimination of the use of foods as **rewards** or student accomplishment. (See appendix A for reward alternatives.)
- Encourage serving healthy food at school **parties**. Notices shall be sent to parents/guardians either separately or as part of a school newsletter, reminding them of the necessity of providing healthy treats for students and/or encouraging the use of non-food treats for classroom birthday or award celebrations. (See appendix B for healthy school parties.)
- Strongly discourage selling food items of limited nutritional value as **fundraisers**, such as candy, cupcakes, or sugar beverages. (See appendix C for healthy fundraising alternatives.)
- Strongly encourage nutritious and appealing options (such as fruits, vegetables, nuts, beef jerky, reduced-fat milk, reduced fat-yogurt, reduced-fat cheese, 100% juice and water) whenever foods/beverages are sold or otherwise offered **after school** at sporting and academic events, celebrations, social events, after school care, and other school functions.

Food Marketing

- School-based marketing should be consistent with nutrition education and health promotion. As such, it is recommended that schools 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. School-based marketing of brands promoting predominantly low-nutrition foods and beverages is strongly discouraged. The promotion of healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy foods is encouraged.
- Marketing activities that promote healthful behaviors include: vending machine covers promoting water or milk; pricing structures that promote healthy options in vending machines, and sales of fruit for fundraisers.
- The goal of improving nutritional intake can also be accomplished by applying basic marketing strategies to sales of healthful options. Schools can consider the four P's when establishing guidelines for foods and beverages served or sold during the school day:
 - **Product:** Vendors and companies have increasing numbers of products available—many with a more healthful profile than traditional snack foods and beverages.
 - **Placement:** The sales of more nutrient-rich foods and beverages can be increased by placing them in “prime” locations—like at students’ eye level in a vending machine.
 - **Price:** Another way to increase the sale of healthful items is to offer them at a lower cost. For example, water can be sold for \$.25 to .50 less than other drinks.
 - **Promotion:** There are many creative ways to promote healthy options---like offering samples of new healthful products or giving discount coupons during the introductory period; or designating healthy choices in vending machines and school cafeteria by using school mascot symbol.

Nutrition Education

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) advocates the need for school-based nutrition education. Because a high percent of all children and adolescents are enrolled in school, the classroom environment is ideally suited to give students the skills and support needed to adopt healthful eating behaviors for life. Teachers, food service personnel, and other staff can offer their expertise and model appropriate eating behaviors. Additionally, students have opportunities to practice healthful eating behaviors at school.

Collaboration among school food service staff, teachers, the community, families and institutional services is necessary. There are two broad approaches to school-based nutrition education – traditional classroom lessons that address general knowledge, attitude, and behavior – and behavioral change programs based on social learning theory. Using both venues is recommended for optimal impact.

Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) courses including Family and Consumer Sciences I, Family and Consumer Sciences II, Food and Nutrition and Advanced Food and Nutrition are already being offered in the high schools in Union Parish. Schools that offer Family and Consumer Sciences at the seventh and eighth grade levels also offer nutrition. Nutrition education can be integrated into content area instruction across the curriculum including science, mathematics, English/language arts, and social studies. The alignment of nutrition lessons with standards and benchmarks provides for easy integration of the information into routine instructional planning. Integration of nutrition information into teaching content areas should use the resources of the classroom, the school, and the community. Nutrition education also is part of health education, which enables students to acquire knowledge and skills needed to practice good health. A planned, sequential curriculum is essential.

Behavior change can be enhanced through social learning theory, as well. Social learning theory may include a parent component for younger students and peer involvement for older students. School activities such as Family Nutrition Night can promote the social learning theory. Additionally, the cafeteria can be used as part of the total educational system for modeling behavior.

The Union Parish school district will:

- Appoint the five (5) Family and Consumer Sciences teachers to serve as liaisons for the implementation and assessment of the wellness policy at each high school site;
- Promote and implement nutrition education that promotes lifelong healthful eating practices;
- Use lessons that are age-appropriate, behaviorally focused content that is developmentally appropriate and culturally relevant;
- Use lessons that are sequential and are correlated with standards, benchmarks, and grade level expectations;
- Provide hands-on activities that are fun;
- Provide repeated opportunities for students to taste foods that are low in fat, sodium and added sugars and high in vitamins, minerals and fiber;
- Focus on positive aspects of healthful eating behaviors; and
- Promote social learning techniques such as role modeling, providing incentives, developing social resistance skills, overcoming barriers to behavioral changes and goal setting.
- Strive toward hiring qualified, certified health education teachers.
- Provide staff development for teachers.

Physical Education

Both regular physical activity and nutrition mutually contribute to healthy citizens and reduce the incidence of diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, depression, obesity, and other chronic health problems. Federal Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that children and teenagers be physically active for an accumulation of at least 60 minutes daily. Since children spend the majority of their time at school during weekdays, it is imperative that schools provide students with the means to participate in physical activity.

When examining Physical Education programs, ask the question, “Does the physical education program help every student attain the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for them to lead an active, productive life and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical fitness?” Quality physical education programs include the following components:

1. Emphasizes knowledge and skills that promote a lifetime of physical activity.
2. Is based on standards that define what students should know and be able to do.
3. Keeps students active for most of the class time.
4. Provides many different physical activity choices.
5. Meets needs of **all** students, especially those who are not athletically gifted.
6. Features cooperative, as well as competitive, games.
7. Develops students’ self-confidence and eliminates practices that humiliate students.
8. Assesses students on their progress in reaching goals, not on whether they achieve an absolute standard.
9. Promotes physical activity outside of school.
10. Teaches self-management skills, such as goal-setting and self-monitoring.
11. Actively teaches cooperation, fair play, and responsible participation in physical activity and is an enjoyable experience for students.
12. Focuses, at the high school level, on helping adolescents make the transition to a physically active adult lifestyle.

In Louisiana, Act 814 passed in 2003 to require that public schools for grades K-6 provide 30 minutes each day of quality physical activity. **Act 734**, passed in 2004, revised Act 814 wording to require 30 minutes each school day of *quality, moderate to vigorous physical activity for students*. Implementation of Act 734 requirements began with the 2004-5 school year.

The Union Parish school district will:

- Strive to promote and implement quality physical education programs that emphasize and promote participation in lifelong physical activities and reaching a health enhancing level of physical fitness among all students.
- Provide students in grades K-8 with a minimum of 150 minutes per week of health and physical education.
- Ensure that students in grades K-6 participate in planned, organized, and moderate to vigorous physical activity for a minimum of 30 minutes each school day.
- Strive toward having qualified, certified physical education teachers guide physical activity instruction in all elementary grades as well as in middle and high school physical education classes.
- Provide staff development on standards implementation for physical education instructors.
- Strive toward ensuring that adequate equipment is in place to guarantee that all students are able to be active for a minimum of 30 minutes per school day.
- Provide a variety of fitness training, motor skills, and team work modules in the 270 hours of physical education required at the high school level for graduation.
- Encourage the use of a recognized instrument or program such as *Fitnessgram*®, to evaluate student's physical fitness.
- Provide age-appropriate equipment and facilities for implementing quality physical education programs.

Physical Activity Opportunities

In order to improve health and fitness of our students and to prevent childhood obesity, we must put increased emphasis on the importance of physical activity for students. The following recommendations are made in the best interest of students recognizing that schools, parents and communities will need to be creative in finding additional opportunities and resources for physical activity outside physical education classes.

The Union Parish school district will provide opportunities for physical activity:

- Appoint a health and physical education teacher to serve as liaison for the implementation and assessment of the wellness plan at each school site.
- Recognize that daily physical activity is essential to student welfare and academic performance.
- Encourage physical activity during recess for elementary students, intramurals programs, integration in the academic curriculum, and clubs as well as in physical education programs.
- Provide daily recess for all children in K-8th grade.

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- Work with the community to create ways for students to walk, bike, skateboard, roller-skate, play basketball, play softball, play baseball, or participate in other physical activities in a safe location at times other than the school day.
- Encourage parents and guardians to support students' participation in physical activities, to be physically active role-models, and to include physical activities in family plans.
- Encourage school staff to participate in physical activities to serve as role models.
- Support community-based physical activity programs.

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply to the Louisiana School Wellness Policy:

- A. Competitive Foods:** Foods and beverages sold or made available to students that compete with the school's operation of the National School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program. This definition includes, but is not limited to, food and beverages sold or provided in vending machines, in school stores or as part of in-school fundraisers. In-school fundraisers include food items sold by school administrators or staff (principals, coaches, teachers, etc.), students or student groups, parents or parent groups, or any other person, company or organization. These items may be sold at school *only* if they meet the requirements *SBESE Bulletin 1196*.
- B. Elementary School:** School with grade 9 and one or more lower grades, but not grades 10, 11, or 12; schools with any single grade or combination of grades below grade 9,
- C. FMNV:** Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value. Refers to the four categories of foods and beverages (soft drinks, water ices, chewing gum, and certain candies) that are restricted by the U. S. Department of Agriculture under the child nutrition programs. (See section on FMNV.)
- D. Food Service:** Refers to the school's operation of the National School Program and Breakfast Program and includes all food service operations conducted by the school principally for the benefit of school children, all of the revenue from which is used solely for the operation or improvement of such food services.
- E. Fruit or Vegetable Drink:** Beverages labeled as containing fruit or vegetable juice in amounts less than 100 percent.
- F. Fruit or Vegetable Juice:** Beverages labeled as containing 100 percent fruit or vegetable juice.
- G. High School:** Any school whose grade structure falls within the 6 through 12 range and includes grades in the 10 to 12 range, or any school that contains only grade 9.
- H. School Day:** For the purpose of the Louisiana School Wellness Policy, the school day begins during a period of thirty minutes after the end of the normal school day.,
- I. School Meals:** Meals provided under the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program for which schools receive reimbursement in accordance with all applicable federal regulations, policies, instructions and guidelines.

Alternatives to Using Food as a Reward

At school, home, and throughout the community kids are offered food as a reward for “good” behavior. Often these foods have little or no nutritional value but are easy, inexpensive, and can bring about short-term behavior change.

There are many disadvantages to using food as a reward:

It undermines nutrition education being taught in the school environment.

- It encourages over-consumption of foods high in added sugar and fat.
- It teaches kids to eat when they are not hungry as a reward to themselves.
- Kids learn preferences for foods made available to them, including those that are unhealthy.
- Poor food choices and inadequate physical activity contribute to overweight and obesity.

Students Learn What They Live

Kids naturally enjoy eating healthy and being physically active. Schools and communities need to provide them with an environment that supports healthy behaviors. Below are some alternatives for students to enjoy instead of being offered food as a reward at school.

ZERO-COST ALTERNATIVES

- Sit by friends
- Watch a video
- Read outdoors
- Enjoy class outdoors
- Have an extra art time
- Teach the class
- Have an extra recess
- Play a computer game
- Read to a younger class
- Bet a no homework pass
- Make deliveries to the office
- Listen to music while working
- Play a favorite game or puzzle
- Earn play money for privileges
- Walk with a teacher during lunch
- Eat lunch outdoors with the class
- Be a helper in another classroom
- Eat lunch with a teacher or principal
- Get “free choice” time at the end of the day

- Listen with a headset to a book on audiotape
- Have a teacher perform special skills (i.e. sing)
- Have a teacher read a special book to the class
- Give a 5-minute chat break at the end of the day

LOW-COST ALTERNATIVES

- Select a paperback book
- Enter a drawing for donated prizes
- Take a trip to the treasure box (nonfood items)
- Get stickers, pencils, and other school supplies
- Receive a video store or movie theatre coupon
- Get a set of flash cards printed on a computer
- Receive a “mystery pack” (notepad, folder, sports card, etc.)

Healthy School Parties

School can play a major role in helping students become fit, healthy and ready to learn. One way to accomplish this is for foods offered in schools to support lessons learned in the classroom regarding nutrition and physical activity. What better venue than schools – which have a great impact on children – to support the message that proper nutrition and physical activity are a key part of a healthy lifestyle? Positive examples of making healthy eating choices and encouraging physical activity should be visible throughout the school. Parties as well as cafeterias, school stores, vending machines, and after-school events offer opportunities for schools to reinforce the message that making healthy food choices and being physically active means a healthier body and a sharper mind.

Snack Ideas for School and Classroom Parties

Of course, the foods offered at school parties should add to the fun, but try to avoid making them the main focus. Remember, schools are responsible for helping students learn lessons about good nutrition and healthy lifestyles and students should practice these lessons during school parties. For example, consider combining student birthday parties into one monthly event that incorporates physical activities as well as healthy snacks. Also, be sure to consider ethnic and medical food restrictions and allergies when providing classroom snacks.

Here is a list of healthy snack choices to consider for classroom events. Serving all healthy foods and incorporating physical activities make a powerful statement. Actions speak louder than words: **Lead by example.**

- Fresh fruit and vegetables. Buy locally when possible.
- Baby carrots and other vegetables with low fat dip
- Yogurt
- Trail mix*
- Nuts and seeds*
- Granola bars*
- Bagels with low fat cream cheese
- Soft pretzels and mustard
- Pizza (no extra cheese and no more than one meat)
- Pudding
- String cheese
- Cereal bar
- Single-serve low fat or fat free milk (regular or flavored)
- Bottled water (including unsweetened flavored water)
- Fig cookies
- Animal crackers
- Baked chips
- Low fat popcorn
- 100% fruit juice (small single-serves)

***May be allergens and/or a choking risk for some people. Please check with a health care provider.**

Appendix A and B was adapted from: **Tips and Tools to Help Implement Michigan's Healthy Food and Beverage Policy** – <http://www.tn.fcs.msue.msu.edu/toolkit.pdf>.

Smart Fundraisers for Today's Healthy Schools

Raising money may present a constant challenge for schools. School fundraisers may help pay for computers, field trips, athletics, music, art, and other programs that educate and enrich young lives – important programs that are not always covered by shrinking school budgets. More than just raising money to pay for valuable programs, a well-run fundraiser can also be an experience that educates, builds self-esteem, provides community service, and promotes school and community spirit.

Fundraising does not have to involve selling food items of limited nutritional value, such as candy. Following are web sites and fundraising ideas that offer alternatives to selling candy. When healthy food choices are used as fundraising items, the healthy eating message presented in the schools is reinforced. Some of the ideas even have the added benefit of providing additional physical activity opportunities for students.

Take a look and help your school select a creative fundraising alternative to selling foods of limited nutritional value.

Search the Web

Select a search engine and type in “school fundraisers” to access 112,000 + sites. A few of these sites are:

- www.afrds.org/homeframe.html - Association of Fund-Raising Distributors and Suppliers. Site includes a Toolbox with “Fundraising Fundamentals”, a checklist for evaluating fundraising companies, and a resource on product fundraising issues and trends.
- www.PTOtoday.com – lists fundraising activities by categories, has a “work vs. reward” equation, contains a parent sharing section on “what works, what doesn’t and why.”
- www.fundraising-ideas.com – Offers free newsletter with programs, services, and press releases. Links to www.amazon.com with books on fundraising.

Instead of candy, schools are selling:

- Fresh and exotic fruit, like cases of citrus fruit
- High quality potatoes, onions, or other produce items (local or Louisiana produce)
- Nuts and trail mix
- Popcorn

Schools are also selling an ever-expanding variety of non-food items such as:

- Gift wrap
- Magazine subscriptions
- Garden seeds
- Candles
- Discount coupon books
- Raffles of gift baskets
- Plants and flowers
- School spirit items
- Cookbooks
- Cleaning Services
- School t-shirts and spirit items
- Other gift items

Appendix C

Continued

Schools are also utilizing a wide variety of traditional and non-traditional fundraising events such as:

- Car washes
- Wall-a-thons, bike-a-thons, skate-a-thons, etc.
- Family game nights
- “Hire a Student Day” for odd jobs, babysitting services, etc. (with proceeds going to the school)
- 3-on-3 basketball or soccer tournaments
- Silent auctions
- Talent shows
- Family skate nights
- Monday night football “Dads Night Out”
- “Moms Night Out” restaurant discounts
- School Movie Night (free movies can be rented at the library)
- Raffle of dinner prepared by school faculty
- Fashion show
- Dinner and a movie
- Dinner Theater (students perform play)
- Parent “Principal of the Day”
- Sell VIP parking spaces
- Rock-a-thons