

# *Wellness Policy*

Department of  
Physical Education, Health,  
And  
Family & Consumer Sciences



## **WELLNESS POLICY** (approved 8/31/06)

The Springfield Public School District promotes healthy schools, by supporting wellness, good nutrition and regular physical activity as part of the total learning environment. The district supports a healthy environment where children learn and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices. Improved health optimizes student performance potential and ensures that all children will have the opportunity to perform at maximum capacity.

### **Wellness Policy Goals:**

#### **A Provide a comprehensive learning environment for developing and practicing Lifelong Wellness behaviors.**

The entire school environment, not just the classroom, shall be aligned with healthy school goals to positively influence a student's understanding, beliefs and habits as they relate to good nutrition and regular physical activity.

#### **B Support and promote proper dietary habits contributing to students' health status and Academic performance.**

All foods available for students on school grounds and at school-sponsored activities will meet or exceed the district nutrition standards

#### **C Provide more opportunities for students to engage in physical activity.**

A quality physical education program is an essential component for all students to learn about and participate in physical activity. Physical activity should be included in a school's daily education program from grades PreK through 12. Physical activity should include regular instructional physical education, in accordance with the Massachusetts Health/Physical Education Framework, as well as co-curricular activities, and structured activity time that incorporates appropriate kinesthetic activity into classroom instructional time.

#### **D Springfield Public Schools are committed to improving academic performance of all students.**

Educators, administrators, parents, health practitioners and communities must consider the critical role student health plays in academic stamina and performance and adapt the school environment to ensure students' basic nourishment and activity needs are met. An ongoing public awareness campaign, in partnership with local agencies, will be conducted that highlights research demonstrating the positive relationship between good nutrition, physical activity, and capacity of students to learn. An annual report will be made to the Springfield School Committee documenting the Wellness Policy implementation and its impact.

### **Student Nutrition:**

**School Breakfast/Lunch Programs:** The school breakfast and lunch programs will continue to follow the USDA Requirements for Federal School Lunch Programs. The School Food Service Program provider will follow the Mass Action for Healthy Kids Nutrition Standards when determining the items in the a la carte and "competitive foods" sales. The Resident District Manager will work closely with the Wellness/Health Advisory Council.

**Cafeteria Environment:** Wherever possible, convenient access to hand-washing or hand sanitizing facilities before meals will be made available.

**Fundraising:** All fund-raising will follow the Mass Action for Healthy Kids Nutrition Standards. A list of Creative Financing & Fun Fundraising will be provided to each school (<http://www.newenglanddairyCouncil.org/PDF/creative-financing.pdf>).

**Teacher-to-Student Incentive:** If teachers feel compelled to utilize food items as an incentive then they are required to adhere to the Mass Action for Healthy Kids Nutrition Standards.

**Classroom Parties/Group Snack:** A list of healthy alternative party and group snacks, the "AList," will be provided to each classroom teacher. Only juice, milk or water will be available.

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## **GOAL #1: NUTRITION EDUCATION**

**Student Nutrition Education:** The Springfield Public School District has a comprehensive curriculum approach to nutrition in PreK through grade 12. The health benefits of good nutrition should be emphasized. These nutritional themes are in alignment with the Massachusetts Comprehensive School Health Frameworks.

**Elementary:** All students will receive 24 hours per year (Average of 40 minutes per week) of health education taught by a certified health/physical education teacher, following the Springfield Public Schools Learning Outcomes, which include nutrition. Health topics will be reinforced in ELA through the selection of appropriate literature. **Massachusetts' Frameworks Addressed:** Healthy Food; My Pyramid; Our Bodies Food Safety; Food and Family Choices

**Middle School:** All middle school students will receive a minimum of 1/4 of a year of health education in grades 6, 7 and 8. This will be taught by a certified health educator (whenever possible) and will include nutrition and fitness education in alignment with the Springfield Health Education Standards and the Massachusetts Comprehensive School Health Frameworks. Health topics will also be reinforced through Science and ELA classes. **Massachusetts' Frameworks Addressed:**

Key Nutrients; Dietary Guidelines; Reading Labels; Analyzing Dietary Intake; Food Safety; Eating Disorders; Components of a Healthy Diet

**High School:** All high school students will pass .5 credit of health education, to include nutrition education, in order to graduate. Health topics will also be reinforced in Science and ELA classes.

**Massachusetts' Frameworks Addressed:** Healthy Food Choices; Analyzing Diets; Preparing Food; Food-borne Illnesses; Resource Management Skills; Media and Its Influence; Nutrition Needs at Different Life Stages; Eating and Other Components to Health

**Parent Nutrition Education:** When possible, nutrition education will be provided to parents/guardians beginning at the elementary level. The goal will be to educate parents/guardians throughout middle and high schools levels as well. Nutrition education may be provided in the form of handouts, postings on the district website, articles and information provided in district and school newsletters, presentations that focus on nutritional value and healthy lifestyles, P.T.O. presentations and through any other appropriate means available for reaching parents.

**Staff Nutrition & Physical Activity Education:** For the purposes of:

- Encouraging all school staff to improve their own personal health and wellness
  - Improving staff morale
  - Creating positive role modeling
  - Building the commitment of staff to promote the health of students
  - Building staff commitment to help improve school nutrition and physical activity environment
- Nutrition and physical activity education opportunities will be provided to all school staff at the elementary, middle and high school levels. These educational opportunities may include, but are not limited to, the distribution of educational and informational materials and the arrangement of presentations and workshops that focus on nutritional value and healthy lifestyles, health assessments, fitness activities, and other appropriate nutrition and physical activity related topics.

## **GOAL #2: PHYSICAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES**

**1. Time, Frequency, Intensity:** All elementary students will receive a minimum average of 40 minutes of physical education (24 hours per year), taught by a certified physical education teacher (whenever possible), every week and 15 minutes of supervised physical activity that incorporates appropriate kinesthetic activities each day. All middle school students will receive physical education for 45 minutes every other day for three marking periods. Student involvement in other activities involving physical activity (e.g. recess, 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.

**2. High School Graduation Requirements for Springfield Students:** Two credits in physical education will be required for graduation in the Springfield Public Schools. Students' involvement in other activities involving physical activity (e.g. interscholastic sports) will not be substituted for meeting the physical education requirement unless engaged in an approved physical education class for athletes. Students will spend at least 50 percent of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

**3. Staff Training and Certification Standards/requirements**

- All physical education courses will be taught by a highly-qualified, certified physical education teacher per teacher contract.
- All PE classes will adhere to the city's K-12 Physical education standards aligned with MA DOE frameworks that include a standard on physical education K-12. National PE standards will also be incorporated to address motor skills, movement forms, and health related fitness.
- Schools should discourage extended periods of inactivity (i.e. periods of two or more hours during school wide testing). Schools will give students periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active (stretch breaks).
- Teachers and other school and community personnel will not use physical activity (e.g. running laps, push ups) or withhold opportunities for physical activity (e.g. recess, physical education) as punishment.

**4. Physical Activity Outside of Physical Education**

- Schools are encouraged to offer after school intramural programs and/or physical activity clubs that meet the needs and interests of all students, including those who are not athletically gifted and those with special health care needs.
- Schools are encouraged to provide community access to and encourage students and community members to use the school's physical activity facilities outside of the school day.
- Schools should encourage parents and community members to institute programs that support physical activity, such as a "walk to school" program.
- Schools should encourage after-school childcare programs to provide developmentally appropriate physical activity for participating children and reduce or eliminate the time spent in sedentary activities such as watching television or videos.

**5. Directed Instructional Kinesthetic Activity:** All elementary school students should have at least 15 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, that support the physical education standards. Schools will encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment.

**6. Walking/Biking to School:** The school district will, to the extent possible, make needed improvements to make it safer and easier for students to walk and bike to school. When appropriate, the school district will work with local public works, public safety, and/or police departments in those efforts. The district will explore federal "safe routes to school" funds, administered by the state department of transportation, to finance such improvements.

**GOAL #3: NUTRITION STANDARDS**

**Nutrition Standards Intent/Rationale:** All foods available for students on school grounds and at school-sponsored activities will meet or exceed the district nutrition standards.

**1. Food:**

- All schools serve reimbursable meals.
- All schools will provide nutritious meals including whole grains/bread, fresh fruit/vegetables, dairy products and meat/meat alternatives.
- All a la carte items will meet or exceed the districts nutritional standards.
- When available, schools will participate in a "Farm to School" program to increase the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Massachusetts A La Carte Food and Beverage guidelines will be used to promote a healthier school environment.

## 2. Beverages:

- ONLY Milk, Water, and fruit juices and healthy beverages may be sold on school grounds before, during and after the instructional day.

## **GOAL #4: SCHOOL-BASED ACTIVITIES**

### **District Physical Activity Goal:**

The Springfield Public School District shall provide physical activity and physical education opportunities, aligned with the Massachusetts State Frameworks for Physical Education, that provide students with the knowledge and skills to lead a physically active lifestyle.

### **The Springfield Public School District shall utilize the following Implementation Strategies:**

1. Physical education classes and physical activity opportunities are required for all students.
2. Schools will be encouraged to offer daily before/after school activities in addition to the regularly scheduled physical education and activity time during the school day.
3. As recommended by the National Association of Sport and Physical Education (NASPE), school leaders of physical activity and physical education shall guide students through a process that will enable them to achieve and maintain a high level of personal fitness through the following:
  - Expose youngsters to a wide variety of physical activities
  - Teach physical skills to help maintain a lifetime of health and fitness
  - Encourage self-monitoring so youngsters can see how active they are and set their own goals
  - Individualize intensity of activities
  - Focus feedback on process of doing your best, rather than on product
  - Be active role models
4. Introduce developmentally appropriate components of a health-related fitness assessment to the students at an early age to prepare them for future assessments (e.g. FitnessGram, Physical Best or President's Council).
5. Begin fitness or activity logging in elementary school. Assist students to interpret their personal attainments and compare them to national physical activity recommendations.

### **2004 Guidelines from National Association of Sport and Physical Education recommend:**

1. Children should accumulate at least 60 minutes, and up to several hours, of age appropriate physical activity on all, or most days of the week.
2. Children should participate in several bouts of physical activity every day at school for 15 minutes or more.
3. Children should participate each day in a variety of age-appropriate physical activities designed to achieve optimal health, wellness, fitness and performance benefits.
4. Extended periods (periods of two hours or more) of inactivity are discouraged for children, especially during the daytime hours

Beginning in Middle School and through High School, administer a health-related fitness assessment with students. Students shall receive results and use this as a baseline in understanding their own level of fitness, creating fitness goals and plans, and logging activities identified to achieve the goals.

Logs should include day, time, type and length of activity, whether the activity was done alone or with others, and how the student felt before and after the activity. Physical education classes shall be sequential, building from year to year, and content will include movement, personal fitness, and personal and social responsibility. Students should be able to demonstrate competency through application of knowledge, skill, and practice.