

533 WELLNESS

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to assure a school environment that promotes and protects students' health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

The Mesabi East Public Schools is committed to providing a healthy school environment because:

A. The school board recognizes that nutrition education and physical education are essential components of the educational process and that good health fosters student attendance and education.

B. The school environment should promote and protect students' health, well being, and ability to learn by encouraging healthy eating and physical activity.

C. The school district encourages the involvement of students, parents, teachers (K-12 specialists in health, physical education and science), food and nutrition services staff, school board, school administrators, and other interested persons (such as Public Health Specialists) in implementing, monitoring, and reviewing school district nutrition and physical activity policies. A Wellness Committee shall be formed to plan, implement and improve the school district's nutrition and physical activity in the school environment.

D. Children need access to healthy foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, thrive and to achieve academic success.

E. All students in Pre K-12 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.

F. Qualified food and nutrition services personnel will provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students; try to accommodate the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning; and will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings.

III. GUIDELINES

A. Foods and Beverages Served/Sold During the School Day

1. All foods and beverages made available on campus (including concessions, vending, beverage contracts, and a la carte cafeteria items) will be consistent with the current USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

- a. Food and beverages offered over the course of a school week will be nutrient dense, including whole grain products and fiber-rich fruits and vegetables to provide students a variety of choices to maintain a balanced diet.
- b. Foods and beverages available during the school day will include a variety of healthy choices that are of excellent quality, appealing to students, and served at the proper temperatures.
- c. Foods and beverages available during the school day minimize the use of trans and saturated fats, sodium and sugars as defined by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- d. Elementary Schools. The Food and Nutrition Services Department will approve and provide all food and beverage sales to students in elementary schools. Given young children's limited nutrition skills, food in elementary schools will be sold as balanced meals. Food and beverages will not be sold individually to students, except low-fat milk, fruits and non-fried vegetables.
- e. Mesabi East Junior/Senior High School. At the 7-12 grade level, Mesabi East will encourage all food and beverages sold outside of the school meal program to offer health alternatives. i.e. such as fruit, vegetables, at least 50% fruit juices, water, etc. These health items will use competitive pricing to encourage their sale.
- f. Mesabi East will discourage the sale and use of power drinks (Monster, Red Bull, etc.), energy drinks, bakery products, candy, non-health foods, etc. at the school functions on and off the school site.
- g. Mesabi East will implement a poster program in visible areas of the school promoting nutritional choices and dietary regulations.
- h. Mesabi East will collaborate with classroom teachers and meal program providers to educate our students with nutritional information as well as display healthy choice alternatives.

Foods:

- Foods and beverages available during the school day will minimize the use of trans and saturated fats, sodium and sugar as defined by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- A choice of at least two fruits and/or non-fried vegetables will be offered at all school sites where meals and food is served/sold. Such items will include, but not limited to, fresh fruits and vegetables; 100% fruit and vegetable juice; cooked, dried or canned fruits (canned in fruit juice or light syrup); and cooked, frozen and canned vegetables.

Portion Sizes:

- Food and beverages will be offered in modest portion sizes age-appropriate for elementary, middle, and high school students, respectively.

2. Food and nutrition services personnel will take every measure to ensure that student access to foods and beverages meet or exceed all federal, state, and guidelines.

3. Food and nutrition services personnel shall adhere to all federal, state, and local food safety and security guidelines.

4. The school district will make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to, and prevent the overt identification of, students who are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals. Food and nutrition services will utilize electronic identification and payment systems; provide breakfast meals for Pre K-6 grade students at no charge, regardless of income; promote the availability of school meals to all students; and/or nontraditional methods for serving school meals, such as “grab-and-go” or classroom breakfast.

5. The school district will provide student access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks.

6. The school district will make every effort to provide students with sufficient time to eat after sitting down for school meals and will schedule meal periods at appropriate times during the school day. Mesabi East Public Schools:

- a. Will provide students with adequate time to eat breakfast and lunch;
- b. Should schedule meal periods at appropriate times i.e. lunch should be scheduled between 10:30 am and 1 pm.
- c. Dining areas are attractive and have enough space for seating all students.

7. The school district will discourage tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities.

8. School sites should discourage students from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meals or snack times, given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children’s diets.

9. The school district will ensure that all children have breakfast, either at home or at school, in order to meet their nutritional needs and enhance their ability to learn:

- a. Schools will, to the extent possible or by regulation, operate the School Breakfast Program.
- b. Schools will, to the extent possible, arrange bus schedules and utilize methods to serve school breakfasts that encourage participation, including serving breakfast in the classroom or cafeteria, “grab-and-go” breakfast, or breakfast during morning break or recess.
- c. Schools that serve breakfast to students will notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast Program.

10. **Snacks.** Snacks served during the school day (including breakfast and/or enrichment programs) will make a positive contribution to children’s diets and health, will emphasize serving whole grains, fruits, vegetables and dairy as the primary snack items. The district will disseminate a list of healthful snack items.

11. **Celebrations.** Schools should limit celebrations that involve food during the school day to no more than one party per class per month. Classroom celebrations, especially in elementary schools, should encourage healthy choices and portion control. The celebration should take place

during the last hour of the school day so it will not interfere with school meals. No items may be prepared at home and brought to school for other students.

12. **Fundraising.** To support children's health and school nutrition-education efforts, schools will encourage fundraising that promotes the sale of non-food and nutritious food items; being mindful of food safety. Schools will encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity. The district will make available a list of ideas for acceptable fundraising activities.

13. **School-sponsored Events (such as, but not limited to, athletic events, dances, or performances).** Concessions sales can be a great opportunity to provide and promote healthy choices. Concession sales can be profitable and contribute to the health and well being of students. Research shows that students will buy and consume healthy foods and beverages when the options are tasty, accessible and affordable. To the extent possible, healthy choices will be made available.

14. Promotional activities will be limited to programs that are requested by school officials to support teaching and learning. All promotional activities in schools will be connected to activities that encourage physical activity, academic achievement or positive youth development.

15. Advertising messages are consistent with and reinforce the objectives of the education and nutrition environment goals of the school. Advertising of foods or beverages in the areas accessible to students during meal times must be consistent with standards established for the school environment.

B. School Food and Nutrition Program/Personnel

1. The school district will provide healthy and safe school meal programs that strictly comply with all federal, state, and local statutes and regulations.

2. The Director of Food and Nutrition Services shall be responsible for the school district's school meal programs, whose duties shall include the creation of nutrition guidelines and procedures for the selection of foods and beverages served in the cafeterias during the school day to ensure food and beverage choices are consistent with current USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

3. Food and Nutrition Services programs will aim to be financially self-supporting. However, the program is an essential educational support activity. Budget neutrality or profit generation will not take precedence over the nutritional needs of the students. Food and Nutrition Services will ensure that all students have affordable access to the varied and nutritious foods they need.

4. The school district shall designate an appropriate person, whose duties shall include the creation of nutrition guidelines and procedures for the selection of foods and beverages made available on campus outside of the School Meals Program to ensure food and beverage choices are consistent with current USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

5. As part of the school district's responsibility to operate a food and nutrition service program, the school district will provide continuing professional development for all food and nutrition service personnel in schools. Personnel on the food preparation staff may apply for staff development funds to meet certification needs or for training programs.

C. Nutrition Education and Promotion

1. The school district will encourage and support healthy eating by students and engage in nutrition promotion.
2. The staff responsible for nutrition education will be adequately prepared and participate regularly in professional development activities to effectively deliver an accurate nutrition education program. Preparation and professional development activities will provide basic knowledge of nutrition, combined with skill practice in program-specific, evidence based activities and instructional techniques and strategies designed to promote healthy eating habits.
3. The school cafeteria will serve as a “learning laboratory” to allow students to apply nutrition skills taught in the classroom. The promotion of healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low fat dairy products will be encouraged.
4. The school district will provide information to families that encourage them to teach their children about health, nutrition and the importance of daily physical activity.

D. Physical Activity

1. Students need opportunities for physical activity and to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior. Toward that end, health education will reinforce the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a healthy lifestyle and reduce sedentary activities such as watching television;
2. Opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into other subject lessons, where appropriate; and
3. Classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes as appropriate.

E. Communications with Parents

1. The school district recognizes that parents and guardians have a primary and fundamental role in promoting and protecting their children’s health and well-being.
2. The school district will support parents’ efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children.
3. The school district encourages parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks and refrain from including beverages and foods without nutritional value.
4. The school district will provide information about physical education and other school-based physical activity opportunities and will support parents’ efforts to provide their children with opportunities to be physically active outside of school.

F. Safe Physical Environment

1. Have safety meetings throughout school year to address safety concerns.
2. Make CPR and fire extinguisher training available to staff on a request basis.
3. Conduct proper safety drills as advised by Minnesota Department of Education.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

A. After approval by the school board, the wellness policy will be implemented throughout the school district.

B. School food service staff, at the school or district level, will ensure compliance within the school's food service areas and will report to the food service program administrator, the building principal, or the superintendent's designee, as appropriate.

C. The school district's food service program administrator will provide an annual report to the superintendent setting forth the nutrition guidelines and procedures for selection of all foods made available on campus.

D. The superintendent or designee will ensure compliance with the wellness policy and will provide an annual report of the school district's compliance with the policy to the school board.

Legal References: 42 U.S.C. § 1751 *et seq.* (Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act)
42 U.S.C. § 1771 *et seq.* (Child Nutrition Act of 1966)
P.L. 108-265 (2004) § 204 (Local Wellness Policy)
7 U.S.C. § 5341 (Establishment of Dietary Guidelines)
7 C.F.R. § 210.10 (School Lunch Program Regulations)
7 C.F.R. § 220.8 (School Breakfast Program Regulations)

Local Resources: Minnesota Department of Education, www.education.state.mn.us
Minnesota Department of Health, www.health.state.mn.us
County Health Departments
Action for Healthy Kids Minnesota, www.actionforhealthykids.org and
www.actionforhealthykids.org/filelib/toolsforteam/recom/MNHealthy%20Foods%20for%20Kids%208-2004.pdf