

Union #74 Wellness Policy

Maine is facing a youth obesity epidemic. Physical inactivity and poor diet is quickly approaching tobacco as the leading cause of death for Americans. The number of Maine youth who are overweight has increased at an alarming rate. More than 36% of Maine kindergarten children are overweight and 33% of third graders in Union #74 are overweight or at risk of being overweight. These children may face significant health problems including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and depression. Poor health negatively impacts a child's capacity to learn. Healthy eating and daily physical activity can improve academic performance, attendance, mood, alertness, and behavioral issues.

In order to promote student health, reduce childhood obesity, the Union #74 School District is committed to providing a school environment that enhances learning and the development of lifelong wellness practices.

To accomplish these goals:

- The Child Nutrition Program will comply with the federal, state and local requirements. Child Nutrition Programs are accessible to all children.
- Union #74 will implement a sequential and interdisciplinary nutrition education which will be supported through the Union #74 Comprehensive Health Education Program in grades K-8.
- School sponsored activities should make every effort to meet the attached guidelines.
- All food and beverages served by the Union #74 Food Service Program during the school day are consistent with the current USDA Guidelines for Child Nutrition.
- All foods made available on campus adhere to food safety and security guidelines.
- Monitor and evaluate the policy based on MSMN Guidelines. The Superintendent/designee shall be responsible for the implementation, monitoring efforts, and of the reporting to the Boards on an annual basis. Monitoring may include surveys or solicitation from students, parents, staff, and school administrators.

The following are **guideline recommendations** that are supported and encouraged by the Union #74 school district. The School Health Advisory Council, Coordinated School Health Leadership Team, Union #74 Wellness Team, The Ad Hoc Nutrition Team, and The Wellness Policy Review Team have agreed to the below recommendations:

NUTRITION EDUCATION:

- Nutrition education is offered at each grade level, in the health curriculum, as a part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health.
- Nutrition education is integrated into other areas of the curriculum as appropriate.
- We will continue to support the Kitchen to Classrooms program in Union #74 schools which links the school food service program with the Nutrition Education Program.
- The Union #74 Health Education Curriculum Committee will assess and report on all nutrition education curricula materials for accuracy, completeness, balance, and consistency with the district's education goals and standards.
- Nutrition Education will involve sharing information with families and the broader community to positively impact students and the health of the community.
- Students will be encouraged to start the day with a healthy breakfast per USDA standards.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY:

- Provide opportunities for physical activity to be integrated across curricula and throughout the school day.
- Physical education classes will provide an environment where students learn, practice and are assessed on developmentally appropriate motor skills, social skills, and knowledge.
- Policies ensure that certified physical education instructors teach all physical education classes.
- Policies ensure that state physical education classes have a student/teacher ratio similar to other classes.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY (continued):

- Encourage a daily recess, for all K-8students.
- Encourage schools to plan recess before lunch since research indicates that physical activity prior to lunch can increase the nutrient intake and reduce food waste. (this put back in)
- Physical education includes the instruction of individual activities as well as competitive and non-competitive team sports to encourage life-long physical activity. (Ex. Golf; Winter sports programs.)
- Adequate equipment is available for all students to participate in physical education programs. Physical activity facilities on school grounds will be safe.
- The school will provide a physical and social environment that encourages safe and enjoyable activities for all students, including those who are not athletically gifted.
- Information will be provided to families to help them incorporate physical activity into their student's lives.
- Classroom health education will complement 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.
- Classroom teachers will attempt to integrate short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes as appropriate
- Encourage adaptive physical education classes for students who have difficulty participating in regular physical education classes.
- Student participation in physical education, recess and physical activity is an important and required part of a student's day.

OTHER SCHOOL BASED PROGRAMS:

- To the extent possible, after school programs will encourage physical activity and healthy habit formation.
- The Union #74 School district will support local wellness committees comprised of families, teachers, administrators, community members and students which will recommend plans, implement and improve nutrition and physical activity in the school environment.

- The school district will continue to develop connections with the community to address the health and well being of it's members, such as partnerships with the Healthy Maine Partnerships, The Wellness Team, F.A.R.M. S. (Focus on Agriculture in Rural Maine Schools.), Miles Memorial Hospital and the Y.M.C.A
- The school district will continue to involve the school nurses in the development of health education programs which directly impact the health and wellness of our students.

NUTRITION GUIDELINES FOR ALL FOODS ON CAMPUS

- All foods made available on campus, during school hours, will comply with the current USDA Guidelines for Child Nutrition.
- Meals served through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program will:
 - Be appealing and attractive to children;
 - School Nutrition Program staff will take every measure to ensure that student access to foods and beverages meets federal, state and local laws and guidelines.
 - School Nutrition Program staff will offer a variety of age appropriate health food and beverage selections for elementary schools.
 - Offer a variety of fruits and vegetables.
- Serve only low fat (1%) and fat free milk and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives, (to be defined by the USDA).
- Ensure that we offer whole grain foods throughout the menu planning process.
- Union #74 Schools should engage students and parents, through taste tests of new entrees and surveys, in selecting foods sold through the school meal programs to identify new, healthful, and appealing food choices. (USDA guidelines.)

NUTRITION GUIDELINES FOR ALL FOODS ON CAMPUS (continued):

- Nutrition information for products on snack carts, a la carte and vending machines will be readily available near the point of purchase.
- Classroom snacks are encouraged by teachers to be healthy choices.

EATING ENVIRONMENT:

- The National Associate of State Boards of Education Recommends that students should be provided adequate time to eat lunch: at least 10 minutes for breakfast and 15 minutes for lunch, starting from the time the students is seated.

- Lunch periods are scheduled as near the middle of the school day as possible.
- Dining areas will be attractive and have enough space for seating all students.

CHILD NUTRITION OPERATIONS:

- Encourage adequate funding to support the School Nutrition Program to meet or exceed current USDA guidelines.
- Schools will make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to, and prevent the overt identification of students who are eligible for free or reduced lunch. .
- The school will strive to increase participation in the available federal Child Nutrition Programs, (school lunch and school breakfast.)
- The school union will employ a food service director who is properly qualified, according to current professional standards, to administer the school food service program and satisfy reporting requirements.
- All food service personnel shall have adequate training in food service operations.

FOOD SAFETY AND SECURITY:

- ❖ All foods made available on campus comply with the state and local food safety and sanitation regulations. Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) plans and guidelines are implemented to prevent food illness in schools.
- ❖ For the safety and security of the food and facility, access to the food service operations are limited to the Food Service Staff and authorized personnel. For further guidance, see the US Department of Agriculture food security guidelines.

APPENDIX:

- CHILD NUTRITION GUIDELINES.
- (STATUTORY AUTHORITY: 20-A MRSA, Section 6602.)
- FOODS OF MINIMAL NUTRITIONAL VALUE
- CHAPTER 51: STATE OF MAINE