

Milford Central School District's Wellness Policy On Physical Activity and Nutrition

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, 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 Milford Central 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. Therefore, it is the policy of the Milford Central School District 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.
- Foods and beverages sold or served at school will meet the nutrition recommendations of the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
- 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 and will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.

- To the maximum extent practicable, our district will participate in available federal school meal programs such as the School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program [including after-school snacks], and Summer Food Service 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.

TO ACHIEVE THESE POLICY GOALS:

I. School Health Advisory Committee

The school district will create, strengthen, or work within existing school health committees to develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies. The committees also will serve as resources to school sites for implementing those policies. (A school health advisory committee consists of a group of individuals representing the school and community, and should include parents, students, and representatives of the school food authority, members of the school board, school administrators, teachers, health professionals, and members of the public.)

II. Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served on Campus

SCHOOL MEALS

Meals served through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs will:

- be appealing and attractive to children;
- be served in clean and pleasant settings;
- meet, or exceed, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations;

MCS will attempt to share information about the nutritional content of meals with parents and students. Such information could be made available on menus, a website, on cafeteria menu boards, placards, or other point-of-purchase materials.

Breakfast: To strive for all children having breakfast, either at home or at school, in order to meet their nutritional needs and enhance their ability to learn:

- MCS will operate the School Breakfast Program.
- MCS will, to the extent possible, arrange bus schedules and utilize methods to serve school breakfasts that encourage participation, including serving breakfast in the classroom, "grab-and-go" breakfast, or breakfast during morning break or recess.
- MCS will notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast Program.
- MCS will encourage parents to provide a healthy breakfast for their children through newsletter articles, take-home materials, or other means.

Free and Reduced-priced Meals: Milford Central School 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. Toward this end, the school may utilize electronic identification and payment systems; promote the availability of school meals to all students; and/or use nontraditional methods for serving school meals, such as "grab-and-go" or classroom breakfast.

Qualifications of School Food Service Staff: Qualified nutrition professionals will administer the school meal programs. As part of the school district's responsibility to operate a food service program, we will provide continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals in schools. Staff development programs should include appropriate certification and/or training programs for child nutrition directors, school nutrition managers, and cafeteria workers, according to their levels of responsibility.

NUTRITION GUIDELINES FOR ALL FOODS ON CAMPUS

All foods and beverages sold individually outside the reimbursable school meal programs (including those sold through a la carte lines, vending machines, student stores, or fundraising activities) during the school day will strive to comply with the current USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Fundraising Activities: To support children's health and school nutrition-education efforts, MCS will encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity and healthy nutrition. The school district will make available a list of ideas for acceptable fundraising activities.

Snacks: Snacks served during the school day or in after-school care or enrichment programs will make a positive contribution to children's diets and health, with an emphasis on serving fruits and vegetables as the primary snacks and milk or water as the primary beverage.

- If eligible, when our school provides snacks through after-school programs they will pursue receiving reimbursements through the National School Lunch Program.

Rewards: School will not use foods or beverages, especially those that do not meet the nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually as rewards for academic performance or good behavior, and will not withhold food or beverages (including food served through school meals) as a punishment.

Celebrations: The district will disseminate a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers.

III. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion

Nutrition Education and Promotion: Milford Central School District aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Schools should provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- is part of not only health education classes, but also classroom instruction in subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects;
- includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, participatory activities, such as contests, promotions, taste testing, farm visits, and school gardens;
- promotes fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices;
- emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise);
- includes training for teachers and other staff.

Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting: For students to receive the nationally-recommended amount of daily physical activity and for students to fully

embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior, students need opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class. Toward that end:

- opportunities for physical activity will be encouraged for inclusion into other subject lessons.

Communications with Parents: The district/school will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. The district/school will offer healthy eating seminars for parents, send home nutrition information, post nutrition tips on school websites, and provide nutrient analyses of school menus. Schools should 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. In addition, the district/school will provide opportunities for parents to share their healthy food practices with others in the school community.

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

Staff Wellness: Milford Central School District highly values the health and well-being of every staff member and will plan and implement activities and policies that support personal efforts by staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle. The staff wellness committee could be a subcommittee of the school health advisory committee. The committee should develop, promote, and oversee a multifaceted plan to promote staff health and wellness. The plan should be based on input solicited from school staff and should outline ways to encourage healthy eating, physical activity, and other elements of a healthy lifestyle among school staff.

IV. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

MCS recognizes the positive benefits of physical activity for student health and academic achievement. Recognizing that physical education is a crucial and integral part of a child's education, the district will provide opportunities to ensure that students engage in healthful levels of vigorous physical activity to promote and develop the student's physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being. Besides promoting high levels of personal achievement and a positive self-image, physical education activities should teach students how to cooperate in the achievement of common goals. The components of the district's physical education program shall include a variety of kinesthetic activities, including team, individual, and cooperative sports and physical activities, as well as aesthetic movement forms, such as dance, yoga or the martial arts. Students shall be given opportunities for physical activity through a range of before-

and/or after-school programs including, but not limited to, intramurals, interscholastic athletics, and physical activity clubs.

- Physical education teachers shall develop and implement a curriculum that connects and demonstrates the interrelationship between physical activity, good nutrition and health.
- MCS shall enhance the quality of physical education curricula and increase training of physical education teachers through site-based and district-wide staff development.
- An appropriate alternative activity shall be provided for students with a physical disability that may restrict excessive physical exertion.

Daily Recess: All kindergarten through 4th grade students will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which schools should encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment.

Physical Activity and Punishment: Teachers and other school and community personnel will not use physical activity (e.g., running laps, pushups) as punishment.

Use of School Facilities Outside of School Hours: School spaces and facilities will be available to students, staff, and community members before, during, and after the school day, on weekends, and during school vacations unless the district is operating under a contingent budget. These spaces and facilities also should be available to community agencies and organizations offering physical activity and nutrition programs. School policies concerning safety will apply at all times.

V. Monitoring and Policy Review

Monitoring: The superintendent or designee will ensure compliance with established district-wide nutrition and physical activity wellness policies

School food service staff will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the superintendent. In addition, the school district will report on the most recent USDA School Meals Initiative (SMI) review findings and any resulting changes

The superintendent or designee will develop a summary report every three years on the compliance with the district's established nutrition and physical activity wellness policy. That report will be provided to the school board and also distributed to all school health councils, parent/teacher organizations, school principals, and school health services personnel.

Policy Review: To help with the initial development of the district's wellness policy, the School Health Advisory Committee will conduct a baseline assessment of the school's

existing nutrition and physical activity environments and policies. The results of the assessment will help to identify and prioritize needs.

Assessments will be repeated every three years to help review policy compliance, assess progress, and determine areas in need of improvement. As part of that review, the school district will review our nutrition and physical activity policies; provision of an environment that supports healthy eating and physical activity; and nutrition and physical education policies and program elements. The district will, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.

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