

Baldwin County Board of Education Wellness Policy

Revised June 2023

Introduction

Baldwin County Board of Education (hereto referred to as the District) is committed to the optimal development of every student. The District believes that for students to have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic, developmental, and social success, we need to create positive, safe, and health-promoting learning environments at every level, in every setting, throughout the school year.

Research shows that two components, good nutrition and physical activity before, during, and after the school day, are strongly correlated with positive student outcomes. For example, student participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) School Breakfast Program is associated with higher grades and standardized test scores, lower absenteeism, and better performance on cognitive tasks.^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7} Conversely, less-than-adequate consumption of specific foods including fruits, vegetables, and dairy products, is associated with lower grades among students.^{8,9,10} In addition, students who are physically active through active transport to and from school, recess, physical activity breaks, high-quality physical education, and extracurricular activities – do better academically.^{11,12,13,14}

This policy outlines the District's approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. Specifically, this policy establishes goals and procedures to ensure that:

- Students have access to healthy foods throughout the school day—both through reimbursable school meals and other foods available throughout the school campus—in accordance with federal and state nutrition standards;
- Students receive quality nutrition education that helps them develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors;
- Students have opportunities to be physically active during and after school;
- Schools engage in nutrition and physical activity promotion and other activities that promote student wellness;
- School staff are encouraged and supported to practice healthy nutrition and physical activity behaviors in and out of school;
- The community is engaged in supporting the work of the District in creating continuity between school and other settings for students and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits; and
- The District establishes and maintains an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about, and monitoring of the policy and its established goals and objectives.

This policy applies to all students, staff, and schools in Baldwin County Public Schools.

I. Wellness Committee

Committee Role and Membership

The District will convene a representative District Wellness Committee (hereto referred to as the DWC) that meets as necessary to establish goals for and oversee school health and safety policies and programs, including development, implementation, and periodic review and update of this wellness policy.

The DWC membership will represent all school levels (elementary, middle, and high) and include (to the extent possible), all areas of Baldwin County. DWC members will be recruited as needed. A link will be posted on our district website explaining how to join the committee.

Leadership

The Child Nutrition Coordinator and Assistant Superintendent or designee(s) will convene the DWC and facilitate development of and updates to the wellness policy and will ensure each school's compliance with the policy.

Committee Members as of June 2023:

- Andrea Lindsey, District 2 Board Member, President
- Marty McRae, Assistant Superintendent
- Renee Carter, Assistant Superintendent
- [Joe Sharp](#), Assistant Superintendent
- Erin Miller, CNP Coordinator
- Alison Rudd, Health Services Coordinator
- Ashley Phillips, RN Fairhope East Elementary
- Jessica Webb, Principal Foley High
- Phillip Fountain, Principal Central Baldwin Middle
- Allison Guy, Principal Spanish Fort Elementary
- Yolanda Hawthorne, CNP Lead Manager
- Misti Stafford, CNP Lead Manager
- Darlene Webb, CNP Lead Manager

Each school will designate a school wellness policy coordinator, who will ensure compliance with the policy at the local school.

II. Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability, and Community Engagement

Implementation Plan

The District will develop and maintain a plan for implementation to manage and coordinate the execution of this wellness policy. The plan delineates roles, responsibilities, actions, and timelines specific to each school, and includes information about who will be responsible to make what change, by how much, where, and when, as well as specific goals and objectives for nutrition standards for all foods and beverages available on the school campus, food and beverage marketing, nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, physical education, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness.

This wellness policy and the progress reports can be found at www.bcbe.org.

Recordkeeping

The District will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of the wellness policy in the Child Nutrition Central Office. Documentation maintained in this location will include but will not be limited to:

- The written wellness policy;
- Documentation demonstrating compliance with community involvement requirements, including (1) Efforts to actively solicit DWC membership from the required stakeholder groups; and (2) These groups' participation in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the wellness policy;
- Documentation of the triennial assessment* of the policy
- Documentation demonstrating compliance with public notification requirements, including: (1) Methods by which the wellness policy and triennial assessments are made available to the public; and (2) Efforts to actively notify families about the availability of wellness policy.

Triennial Progress Assessments

At least once every three years, the District will evaluate compliance with the wellness policy to assess the implementation of the policy and include:

- The extent to which schools under the jurisdiction of the District are in compliance with the wellness policy;
- A description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the District's wellness policy.

The persons responsible for managing the triennial assessment and contact information are Marty McRae, Assistant Superintendent and Erin Miller, Child Nutrition Coordinator.

The DWC, in collaboration with individual schools, will monitor schools' compliance with this wellness policy.

The District will actively notify households/families of the availability of the triennial progress report.

Revisions and Updating the Policy

The DWC will update or modify the wellness policy based on the results of the triennial assessment, and/or as District priorities change; community needs change; wellness goals are met; new health science, information, and technology emerges; and new Federal or state guidance or standards are issued. **The wellness policy will be assessed and updated as indicated at least every three years per USDA requirements.**

Community Involvement, Outreach, and Communications

The District is committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of the wellness policy. The District will actively communicate ways in which representatives of DWC and others can participate in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the wellness policy through a variety of means appropriate for that district. The District will also inform parents of the improvements that have been made to school meals and compliance with school meal standards, availability of child nutrition programs and how to apply, and a description of and compliance with Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. The District will use electronic mechanisms, such as email or displaying notices on the district's website and social media pages to ensure that all families are actively notified of the content of, implementation of, and updates to the wellness policy, as well as how to get involved and support the policy.

The District will actively notify the public about the content of or any updates to the wellness policy annually, at a minimum. The District will also use these mechanisms to inform the community about the availability of the triennial report.

III. Nutrition

School Meals

Our school district is committed to serving healthy meals to children, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat milk; moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and zero grams *trans* fat per serving (nutrition label or manufacturer's specification); and to meet the nutrition needs of school children within their calorie requirements. The school meal programs aim to improve the diet and health of school children, help mitigate childhood obesity, model healthy eating to support the development of lifelong healthy eating patterns and support healthy choices while accommodating cultural food preferences and special dietary needs.

All schools within the District participate in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP). All schools within the District are committed to offering school meals that:

- Are accessible to all students;
- Are appealing and attractive to children;
- Are served in clean and pleasant settings;
- Meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established by local, state, and Federal statutes and regulations. (The District offers reimbursable school meals that meet USDA nutrition standards.)
- Menus will be posted on the District website or individual school websites, and will include nutrient content and ingredients as available
- Menus will be created/reviewed by Erin Miller, CNP Coordinator and Registered Dietitian.
- School meals are administered by a team of Child Nutrition Professionals.

- The District child nutrition program will accommodate students with special dietary needs.

Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

All school nutrition program directors, managers, and staff will meet or exceed hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements in the USDA professional standards for child nutrition professionals. These school nutrition personnel will refer to USDA's Professional Standards for School Nutrition Standards website to search for training that meets their learning needs.

Water

To promote hydration, free, safe, unflavored drinking water will be available to all students throughout the school day* and throughout every school campus* ("school campus" and "school day" are defined in the glossary). The District will make drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes. In addition, students will be allowed to bring and carry (approved) water bottles filled with water with them throughout the day.

- Water cups/jugs will be available in the cafeteria if a drinking fountain is not present.

Competitive Foods and Beverages

The District is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages available to students on the school campus* during the school day* support healthy eating. (School Day - midnight the night before to 30 minutes after the end of the instructional day). The foods and beverages sold and served outside of the school meal programs (i.e., "competitive" foods and beverages) will meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, at a minimum. Smart Snacks aim to improve student health and well-being, increase consumption of healthful foods during the school day, and create an environment that reinforces the development of healthy eating habits. The Alliance for a Healthier Generation provides a set of tools to assist with implementation of Smart Snacks available [Healthier Generation](#).

To support healthy food choices and improve student health and well-being, all foods and beverages outside the reimbursable school meal programs that are sold to students on the school campus during the school day will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks nutrition standards or, if the state policy is stronger, will meet or exceed state nutrition standards. These standards will apply in all locations and through all services where foods and beverages are sold, which may include, but are not limited to, a la carte options in cafeterias, vending machines, school stores, and snack or food carts.

Celebrations and Rewards

All foods offered on the school campus are encouraged to meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards (or state standards) to include:

1. Celebrations and Parties/Classroom Snacks brought by parents: The district will provide a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers, including non-food celebration ideas. Healthy party ideas can be found online from the [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#) and from the USDA . Because of the increase in food allergies and intolerances, it is recommended that parents provide non-food items for birthday celebrations instead of cupcakes or food items.

2. Rewards and incentive. Foods and beverages will not be used as a reward, or withheld as punishment for any reason, such as for performance or behavior.

Fundraising

Foods and beverages that meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in Schools nutrition standards may be sold through fundraisers on the school campus* during the school day*.

Schools should aim to have non-food fundraisers, and encourage those promoting physical activity (such as fun runs, jump rope for heart, relays, etc.).

- Fundraising outside school hours (evenings) may sell foods and beverage items that do not meet the Smart Snacks nutrition standards. This may include but is not limited to, donation nights at restaurants, cookie dough, candy sales, etc.

Exempt Fundraiser Definition

An exempt food fundraiser is defined as the sale of food items that do not meet the USDA Smart Snacks in Schools standards and are sold during the school day. A school may sponsor up to and not exceed **30** exempt fundraisers per year, for no more than one (1) day each in length. Exempt fundraiser food is prohibited from being sold as a la carte item, in vending machines or school stores, or before school on school campus.

Foods sold as part of exempt fundraisers may not be sold one (1) hour before or after meal periods. Example: If lunch ends at 12:30 pm, then the fundraiser could not start until 1:30 pm.

Exempt Fundraiser Procedure:

- School Principal:
 1. Complete Alabama's Implementation of USDA Smart Snacks in School and Exempt Fundraisers Form.
 2. Provide copy to CNP Coordinator
 3. Provide documentation of approval upon request by Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) for audit review.
- Superintendent:
 1. Complete and sign the Attestation of Compliance with Alabama Implementation of USDA Smart Snacks in School and Fundraising Activities
 2. Provide to CNP Coordinator to support the annual online application renewal.
- CNP Coordinator:
 1. Place a copy of the Alabama's Implementation of USDA Smart Snacks in School Exempt Fundraisers Form (signed by school principal) in the wellness plan file.
 2. Provide documentation of approval upon request by ALSDE.

Nutrition Promotion

Nutrition promotion and education positively influence lifelong eating behaviors by using evidence-based techniques and nutrition messages, and by creating food environments that encourage healthy nutrition choices and encourage participation in school meal programs.

Students and staff will receive consistent nutrition messages throughout schools, classrooms, gymnasiums, and cafeterias. Nutrition promotion also includes marketing and advertising nutritious foods and beverages to students and is most effective when implemented consistently through a comprehensive and multi-channel approach by school staff and teachers, parents, students, and the community.

The District will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students throughout the school campus, as well as encourage participation in school meal programs. This promotion will occur through at least:

- Promoting foods and beverages that meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. Additional possible promotion techniques that the District and individual schools may use are available at www.healthiergeneration.org/smartsnacks.

Nutrition Education

The District aims to teach, model, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Schools will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- Is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
- Is part of not only health education classes, but also integrated into other classroom instruction through subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects;
- Include enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, and participatory activities, such as cooking demonstrations or lessons, promotions, taste-testing, farm visits, and school gardens;
- Promote fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, and healthy food preparation methods;
- Emphasize caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (promotes physical activity/exercise);
- Link with school meal programs, cafeteria nutrition promotion activities, school gardens, Farm to School programs, other school foods, and nutrition-related community services;
- Teach media literacy with an emphasis on food and beverage marketing; and

Essential Healthy Eating Topics in Health Education

The District will include in the health education curriculum the following essential topics on healthy eating:

- The relationship between healthy eating and personal health and disease prevention
- Food guidance from MyPlate
- Reading and using USDA's food labels
- Eating a variety of foods every day
- Balancing food intake and physical activity
- Eating more fruits, vegetables, and whole grain products
- Choosing foods that are low in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol and do not contain *trans* fat
- Choosing foods and beverages with little added sugars
- Eating more calcium-rich foods
- Preparing healthy meals and snacks
- Risks of unhealthy weight control practices
- Accepting body size differences

- Food safety
- Importance of water consumption
- Importance of eating breakfast
- Making healthy choices when eating at restaurants
- Eating disorders
- The Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- Reducing sodium intake
- Social influences on healthy eating, including media, family, peers, and culture
- How to find valid information or services related to nutrition and dietary behavior
- How to develop a plan and track progress toward achieving a personal goal to eat healthfully
- Resisting peer pressure related to unhealthy dietary behavior
- Influencing, supporting, or advocating for others' healthy dietary behavior

USDA's Team Nutrition provides free nutrition education and promotion materials, including standards-based nutrition education curricula and lesson plans, posters, interactive games, menu graphics, and more.

Food and Beverage Marketing in Schools

The District is committed to providing a school environment that ensures opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. The District strives to teach students how to make informed choices about nutrition, health, and physical activity. These efforts will be weakened if students are subjected to advertising on District property that contains messages inconsistent with the health information the District is imparting through nutrition education and health promotion efforts. It is the intent of the District to protect and promote student's health by permitting advertising and marketing for only those foods and beverages that are permitted to be sold on the school campus, consistent with the District's wellness policy.

Any foods and beverages marketed or promoted to students on the school campus* during the school day* are encouraged to meet USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards or state standards such that only those foods that comply with or exceed those nutrition standards are permitted to be marketed or promoted to students.

Food advertising and marketing is defined¹⁵ as an oral, written, or graphic statements made for the purpose of promoting the sale of a food or beverage product made by the producer, manufacturer, seller, or any other entity with a commercial interest in the product. This term includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Brand names, trademarks, logos or tags, except when placed on a physically present food or beverage product or its container.
- Displays, such as on vending machine exteriors.
- Corporate brand, logo, name, or trademark on school equipment, such as marquees, message boards, scoreboards, or backboards (Note: immediate replacement of these items are not required; however, districts will consider replacing or updating scoreboards or other durable equipment over time so that decisions about the replacement include compliance with the marketing policy.)

- Corporate brand, logo, name, or trademark on cups used for beverage dispensing, menu boards, coolers, trash cans, and other food service equipment; as well as on posters, book covers, pupil assignment books, or school supplies displayed, distributed, offered, or sold by the District.
- Advertisements in school publications or school mailings.
- Free product samples, taste tests, or coupons of a product, or free samples displaying advertising of a product.

IV. Physical Activity

Children and adolescents should participate in 60 minutes of physical activity every day. A substantial percentage of students' physical activity can be provided through a comprehensive, school-based physical activity program (CSPAP) that includes these components: physical education, recess, classroom-based physical activity, walk and bicycle to school, and out-of-school time activities and the district is committed to providing these opportunities. Schools will ensure that these varied opportunities are in addition to, and not as a substitute for, physical education (addressed in "Physical Education" subsection). All schools in the district will be encouraged to participate in *Let's Move! Active Schools* (www.letsmoveschools.org) in order to successfully address all CSPAP areas.

Physical activity during the school day (including but not limited to recess, physical activity breaks, or physical education) **will not be withheld** as punishment for any reason.

To the extent practicable, the District will ensure that its grounds and facilities are safe and that equipment is available to students to be active. The District will conduct necessary inspections and repairs.

Physical Education

The District will provide students with physical education, using an age-appropriate, sequential physical education curriculum consistent with national and state standards for physical education. The physical education curriculum will promote the benefits of a physically active lifestyle and will help students develop skills to engage in lifelong healthy habits, as well as incorporate essential health education concepts (discussed in the "*Essential Physical Activity Topics in Health Education*" subsection).

All students will be provided equal opportunity to participate in physical education classes. The District will make appropriate accommodations to allow for equitable participation for all students and will adapt physical education classes and equipment as necessary.

All District **elementary students** in each grade will receive physical education for at least 60-89 minutes per week throughout the school year. All **secondary students** (middle and high school) are required to take the equivalent of one academic year of physical education.

The District physical education program will promote student physical fitness through individualized fitness and activity assessments (via the Presidential Youth Fitness Program or other appropriate assessment tool) and will use criterion-based reporting for each student.

Essential Physical Activity Topics in Health Education

The District may include in the health education curriculum the following essential topics on physical activity:

The physical, psychological, or social benefits of physical activity

- How physical activity can contribute to a healthy weight
- How physical activity can contribute to the academic learning process
- How an inactive lifestyle contributes to chronic disease
- Health-related fitness, that is, cardiovascular endurance, muscular endurance, muscular strength, flexibility, and body composition
- Differences between physical activity, exercise, and fitness
- Phases of an exercise session, that is, warm up, workout, and cool down
- Overcoming barriers to physical activity
- Decreasing sedentary activities, such as TV watching
- Opportunities for physical activity in the community
- Preventing injury during physical activity
- Weather-related safety, for example, avoiding heat stroke, hypothermia, and sunburn while being physically active
- How much physical activity is enough, that is, determining frequency, intensity, time, and type of physical activity
- Developing an individualized physical activity and fitness plan
- Monitoring progress toward reaching goals in an individualized physical activity plan
- Dangers of using performance-enhancing drugs, such as steroids
- Social influences on physical activity, including media, family, peers, and culture
- How to find valid information or services related to physical activity and fitness
- How to influence, support, or advocate for others to engage in physical activity
- How to resist peer pressure that discourages physical activity

Break/Snack Time (Revised from “Recess”)

While learning excellence is the reason we exist, we also know how important it is for students to develop socially and physically. Fortunately, these skills are no longer relegated to a small period out of the day called “recess.” In the 21st Century learning environment, periods of time dedicated to social and physical development are interwoven throughout the entire instructional process. Cooperative learning, hands-on investigations, art, and music are examples of instructional activities that provide for social exchange, active movement, and creative expression. Physical Education is now the time period when students engage in interactive play to release energy. In addition, physical education is another opportunity to develop social interaction through team challenges. Educators are trained to pace their teaching, whatever the subject at hand, and when they see the need, they can depart briefly from the educational routine to give students a mental break.

Before and After School Activities

The District offers opportunities for students to participate in physical activity either before and/or after the school day (or both) through a variety of methods. The District will encourage students to be physically active before and after school by joining athletic teams or clubs, participating in walks/runs, and promoting exercise at home.

Staff Wellness and Health Promotion

The DWC will promote staff wellness and perform other functions that support staff wellness in coordination with human resources staff.

Schools will implement strategies to support staff in actively promoting and modeling healthy eating and physical activity behaviors. The District promotes staff member participation in health promotion programs and will support programs for staff members on healthy eating/weight management that are accessible and free or low-cost.

Glossary:

Extended School Day - time during before and afterschool activities that includes clubs, intramural sports, band and choir practice, drama rehearsals, etc.

School Campus - areas that are owned or leased by the school and used at any time for school-related activities such as the school building or on the school campus, including on the outside of the school building, school buses or other vehicles used to transport students, athletic fields, and stadiums (e.g. on scoreboards, coolers, cups, and water bottles), or parking lots.

School Day - midnight the night before to 30 minutes after the end of the instructional day.

Triennial – recurring every three years.

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