

PLAINFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
HEALTH & WELLNESS POLICY

The Plainfield Board of Education recognizes that student wellness and proper nutrition are related to students' physical well being, growth, development, and readiness to learn. The Board is committed to providing a school environment that promotes student wellness, proper nutrition, nutrition education, and regular physical activity as part of the total learning experience. In a healthy school environment, students will learn about and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices that can improve student achievement.

To ensure the health and well-being of all students, the Board establishes that the District shall provide to students:

- A comprehensive learning environment for developing and practicing lifelong wellness behaviors;
- Access at reasonable cost to foods and beverages that meet established nutritional guidelines;
- Physical education courses and opportunities for developmentally appropriate physical activity during the school day;
- Curriculum and programs for grades K-12 that are designed to educate students about proper nutrition and lifelong physical activity, in accordance with State Board of Education curriculum regulations and academic standards.

The Board of Education will regularly evaluate the effectiveness of this policy in promoting student wellness and life-long fitness and revise the program as appropriate to increase its effectiveness.

### **Nutrition Education**

The Plainfield Public Schools includes nutrition education for grades Pre-Kindergarten through 12 in the comprehensive health curriculum. The goal of Nutrition Education is to teach, encourage and support healthy eating habits by students. Nutrition Education lessons and activities are to be age appropriate. These nutritional themes include (but are not limited to):

- Knowledge of the Food Guide Pyramid A comprehensive analysis of both the original pyramid and the revised "MyPyramid" Plan as unveiled by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and why that revision was found to be necessary.
- Food allergies A comprehensive analysis of food allergy symptoms as well as how to assure the school food program takes this information into consideration. Nutrition instruction shall be closely coordinated with the food service program and

other components of the school health program. The food service program is to be notified of all students with any food allergies.

- Image and self-worth In American culture, high self-esteem is seen as being the basis for career success and good relationships with other people. Feeling good about oneself is presented as a highly desirable goal that is worth the sacrifice. Low self-esteem is obviously undesirable. This portion of the program would address self worth.
- Basic Nutrition Education
  - Curriculum to include:
    - Sources and variety of foods
    - Diet and exercise
    - Healthy meals & snacks
    - Major Nutrients
    - Serving sizes
    - Identify and limit foods of low nutrient density
    - Heart healthy choices
    - Food labels
    - Multicultural influences
    - Proper Food safety/sanitation
    - Importance of food as fuel for the body

Nutrition education reinforces these themes in a supportive school environment. District staff shall cooperate with agencies and community organization to provide opportunities for appropriate student projects related to nutrition.

Nutritional Education will be provided to parents beginning at the elementary level. The goal will be to continue to educate parents throughout middle and high school levels. This education may be provided in the form of handouts, postings, articles, presentations that focus on nutritional value and healthy lifestyles and through any other appropriate means available for reaching parents.

### **Nutrition Guidelines**

Eating well is essential for optimal growth and development of children and youth, and has a positive influence on school performance. Students are able to concentrate better, retain and apply information and have more positive relationships with their peers. The eating patterns of children and youth also impact their future health, and reduce the risk of obesity, chronic diseases and dental concerns. Growing, active children need lots of fluids. Lack of fluids can lead to dehydration, headaches, fatigue and difficulty concentrating. Drinking water shall be available at all meal periods and throughout the school day.

Bagged lunches from home should contain at least one item from each of the four food groups. School staff members are encouraged to model healthy eating behaviors.

The cafeteria environment shall provide students with a climate that is clean, safe, relaxed, and enjoyable. It shall have adequate space to eat, have clean pleasant surroundings and provide

adequate time to eat meals. There shall be adequate access to hand washing or hand sanitizing facilities before meals and snacks.

Plainfield Public Schools is incorporating Connecticut's Healthy Snack Standards which focus on decreasing fat and sugar, increasing nutrient density, and moderating portion sizes for snack foods and beverages in school. The district will use these standards to determine what snacks are available during the school day, including a la carte sales in the cafeteria, vending machines, school stores, fundraisers, and other school events.

Foods sold during the school day will meet USDA standards will incorporate healthy choices. The school day begins with the arrival of the first child at school and ends after the last scheduled instructional period. Foods that do not meet these standards can only be sold in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day.

Reimbursable meals served in the Plainfield Public Schools meet the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) school nutrition standards applicable to school meals.

A document summarizing the information contained in *Connecticut's Healthy Snack Standards for Foods and Beverages in Schools* and a list of snack items that meet the standards will be available upon request in all school offices and student cafeterias.

### **Physical Activity**

The Plainfield Board of Education recognizes that schools have a responsibility to help students establish and maintain lifelong habits of being physically active. According to the U.S. Surgeon General, regular physical activity is one of the most important things people can do to maintain and improve their physical health, and overall well-being. Regular physical activity reduces the risk of premature death of heart disease, high blood pressure, colon cancer, and diabetes. Promoting a physically active lifestyle among young people is important because it can help increase students' capacity for learning, it has substantial health benefits, and helps lay the foundation for being regularly active throughout life.

Plainfield Public Schools shall provide physical activity and physical education opportunities, aligned with the state physical education requirements, which provide students with the knowledge and skills to lead a physically active lifestyle.

Physical education classes and physical activity opportunities will be available to all students. The physical education program shall be closely coordinated with the other components of the overall school health program.

**Physical Education Instruction**

Developmentally appropriate components of a health-related fitness assessment will be introduced to students at an early age to prepare them for future assessments. 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. For students with medical issues, adaptive/alternative plans will be made. Students cannot have physical education withheld for disciplinary reasons. Wherever appropriate, physical activity will be incorporated into classroom routines.

All teachers and staff members shall aim to develop students' self-confidence and maintain a safe psychological environment free of embarrassment, humiliation, shaming, taunting, or harassment of any kind. Physical education teachers shall not order performance of a physical activity as a form of discipline or punishment.

As recommended by the National Association for 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 physical fitness through the following:

- Expose youngsters to a wide variety of physical activity;
- 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 a product;
- Be active role models; and
- Provide regular opportunities for daily physical activity lasting 15 minutes or more.

**Assessment**

All students shall be regularly assessed for attainment of the physical education learning objectives.

Health-related physical fitness testing shall be integrated into the curriculum as an instructional tool, except in the early elementary grades. Tests shall be appropriate to students' developmental levels and physical abilities. Such testing shall be used to teach students how to assess their fitness levels, set goals for improvement, and monitor progress in reaching their goals. A health-related physical fitness assessment will be administered with students beginning in grade 3. Students shall receive results and use this as a baseline in understanding their own level of fitness and for creating fitness goals and plans. The staff will maintain the confidentiality of fitness test results, which will be made available only to students and their parents/guardians.

**Exemptions**

Physical education teaches students essential knowledge and skills; for this reason, exemptions from physical education courses shall not be permitted on the basis of participation on an athletic

team, community recreation program, or other school or community activity. A student may be excused from participation in physical education only if (1) a physician states in writing that specific physical activities will jeopardize the student's health and well-being; (2) a parent/guardian requests exemption from specific physical activities on religious grounds; or (3) as determined by a planning and placement team "PPT" meeting or Section 504 team.

### **Recess**

Recess, when scheduled prior to lunch, provides opportunities for increased physical activity, which helps students stay alert and attentive in class and provides other educational and social benefits. School authorities shall encourage and develop schedules that provide time within every school day for elementary school students (K through Grade 5) to enjoy supervised recess. During inclement weather, efforts should be made to provide an indoor back-up plan for physical education and recess. The schools shall have playgrounds or other facilities and equipment available for free play. Recess shall be a complement, not a substitute for, physical education classes.

The physical activity during recess should involve physical exertion of at least a moderate intensity level and for a duration sufficient to provide a significant health benefit to students.

### **Extracurricular Physical Activities**

Intramural programs, physical activity clubs, and interscholastic athletics are valuable supplements to a student's education. Schools shall endeavor to provide every student meeting Board eligibility requirements with opportunities to voluntarily participate in extracurricular physical activities that meet his or her needs, interests, and abilities. The primary focus of extracurricular physical activity programs will be on facilitating participation by all interested students, regardless of their athletic ability. Equal opportunity on the basis of gender shall permeate all aspects of program design and implementation.

### **Other School-Based Wellness Activities**

#### **School/Community Collaboration**

Schools shall work with recreational agencies and other community organizations to coordinate and enhance opportunities available to students and staff members for physical activity during their out-of-school time. Schools are encouraged to negotiate mutually acceptable, fiscally responsible arrangements with community agencies and organizations to keep school- or district-owned facilities open for use by students, staff members, and community members during non-school hours and vacations. School policies concerning safety shall apply at all times.

#### **Wellness Training, Outreach, Education, and Funding**

Administrators, teachers, food service personnel, students, parents/guardians, and community members shall be encouraged to serve as positive role models through programs, communications and outreach efforts. Appropriate training shall be provided to *teachers on how to integrate*

***nutrition education into other basic subjects.*** Educational opportunities and outreach efforts may include, but are not limited to:

- distribution of educational and informational materials
- arrangement of presentations and workshops that focus on nutritional value and healthy lifestyles
- health assessments
- fitness activities
- other appropriate nutrition and physical activity-related topics

The efforts of parents/guardians to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for children shall be supported by communicating relevant information through various methods. To the extent possible, available funding and outside programs to enhance student wellness shall be utilized.

### **Policy Evaluation**

The Superintendent or designee shall be responsible to monitor District schools, programs, and curriculum to ensure compliance with this policy, related policies and established guidelines or administrative regulations.

A district-wide Wellness Committee, which annually will report to the Plainfield Safety and Health Committee and the Board of Education, shall monitor the implementation of the District's wellness policy and its nutrition and physical activity components. The Wellness Committee is charged with evaluating policy progress, serving as a resource to school sites, and recommending revisions of the policy, through the Superintendent or his/her designee, as determined necessary. The membership of the Wellness Committee shall include the District's food services coordinator/manager, parent representative from each school (or school level), staff member representative from each school (administrative representative, nurse, physical education, health education, teacher representatives, or Family and Consumer Science), and other interested parties.

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the school wellness program in promoting healthy eating and physical activity and implement program changes as necessary to increase the program's effectiveness, the building Principal or his/her designee is responsible for ensuring board policy and this administrative regulation are implemented as written. Each school will be responsible for reporting to the Wellness Committee at a minimum the following information:

1. Monthly menus and meal counts;
2. Listing of physical activity and wellness programs & opportunities for students through the school year and the number of participants;
3. Percentage of students meeting goal on physical fitness test; and,
4. Feedback from students, parents, staff members, and the public.

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