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Wellness Policy of the Consolidated Districts

Reviewed and accepted by the Wellness Committee, January 11, 2023.

The School Districts are 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 Consolidated School Districts that:

- ❑ The school districts will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in implementing, monitoring, and communicating district-wide nutrition and physical activity policies. Attached in Appendix A is a list of all participants and their role(s).
- ❑ All students in grades K - 12 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis. All students will participate in physical education/health classes in grades K - 12 as required by MGL Chapter 71, Section 3. All physical education/health classes are taught by licensed teachers under the requirements of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). In addition, the physical education/health curriculum (Appendix B) addresses the current MA Curriculum Frameworks for Physical Education/Health as outlined by DESE. The current physical education/health curriculum includes but is not limited to:
 - ❑ Promoting a healthy and physically active lifestyle
 - ❑ A comprehensive nutrition unit at the elementary, middle, and high school levels that is sequential
 - ❑ Nutrition education that addresses agriculture and the food system at the elementary, middle, and high school levels as part of the nutrition unit
 - ❑ Includes structured physical education that promotes daily physical activity; middle and high school students receive approximately 30 minutes of daily physical education and elementary students receive 40 minutes weekly. In addition, elementary students receive 30 minutes of daily recess time to promote being physically active.
- ❑ Foods and beverages sold or served at school will meet the nutrition recommendations of the U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans and meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations.
- ❑ The Food Service Director will require the food service staff at each school to provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students; will accommodate the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning; and will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.
- ❑ To the maximum extent practicable, all schools in our district will evaluate the possibility, and if able, participate in available federal school meal programs (including the School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch

Program, After School Snack Program, Summer Food Service Program or Seamless Summer Option and /or the

elementary school Fresh Fruit and Vegetable 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, school meal programs, and related community services.

TO ACHIEVE THESE POLICY GOALS:

I. Wellness Committee and Schools

The Wellness Committee for the Consolidated Districts, comprised of Parents, Students, a representative of the School Food Authority, PE Teachers, School Nurses, School Board Members, and District Administration, will provide the necessary communication with all stakeholders regarding the district's policy and guidelines rationale, requirements, regulations, changes, and development.

The Wellness Committee will revisit the policy, guidelines, and relevant issues annually or as needed.

Inquiries and actions regarding the policy implementation will be the responsibility of the established Wellness Committee, the Director of Food Services as liaison, and building Principals.

Schools will identify individual wellness goals, as needed, and present these to the Consolidated Committee.

Schools will share nutrition and fitness best practices and evidence-based programming between schools.

Schools will collaborate and integrate with other community and school-based wellness initiatives.

Schools will ensure compliance with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health mandated Body Mass Index (BMI) screening program to identify students at risk for possible weight gain problems.

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, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations;

Offer a variety of fruits and vegetables;^[1]

At the Grades 7-12, serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk^[2] and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternative, Lactaid as defined by USDA. Parent/guardians are responsible for providing milk substitutes not recognized by the USDA as nutritionally equivalent unless a medical note from a licensed physician is provided. Nutritious school meals will be provided containing all required components.

At the Grades K-6, serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk^[3] and a nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternative, Lactaid as defined by USDA. Parent/guardians are responsible for providing milk substitutes not recognized by the USDA as nutritionally-equivalent. Nutritious school meals will be provided containing all required components.

Ensure that no less than 51% of the served grains are whole grain.^[4]

Potable drinking water will be provided in each cafeteria free of charge to all students and staff

The districts shall continue to promote farm-to-school connections and buy locally grown fruits and vegetables as a priority and whenever possible. Cafeterias will strive to model environmentally sound practices in order to educate students and staff about reducing waste, composting, and recycling.

Breakfast. To 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:

- ❑ Schools will operate the School Breakfast Program with priority placed on Breakfast in the Classroom.
- ❑ Schools will, to the extent possible, arrange bus schedules and utilize methods to serve school breakfasts.
- ❑ Schools that serve breakfast to students will notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast
- ❑ Schools will provide Wellness Policies on Physical Activity and Nutrition.

Free and Reduced-priced Meals. School Food Service Director will carefully monitor low income percentages through the MA Virtual Gateway and apply for schoolwide free meals for students under the Community Eligibility Provision, (CEP) and upon establishment of financial feasibility, implement CEP.

Schools will 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, schools may utilize electronic identification and payment systems; provide meals at no charge to all children, regardless of income; and promote the availability of school meals to all students. Meal balances will be directed to the parent/guardian for collection. Unpaid balances will go to the Superintendent's Office or Town Offices for further collection action as the districts/towns are required by law to fund this debt at year's end. Uncollected funds are not an allowable food service department expense per the USDA.

Summer Food Service Program. Schools in which more than 50% of students are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals will be encouraged to apply to sponsor the Summer Food Service Program for at least six weeks between the last day of the academic school year and the first day of the following school year. Summer Food Service Program operator's will make every effort to realize program self sustainability.

Meal Times and Scheduling. Schools:

- ❑ Will provide students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch; Time traveling to the cafe and time standing in line will be considered.
- ❑ Should schedule meal periods at appropriate times, e.g., lunch should be scheduled between 10:40 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. activities;
- ❑ Will provide students access to handwashing and/or provide hand sanitizer in cafeterias before they eat meals or snacks; and
- ❑ Should take reasonable steps to accommodate the tooth-brushing regimens of students with special oral health needs (e.g., orthodontia or high tooth decay risk).

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 kitchen general workers, according to their levels of responsibility as established and required by the USDA and the National School Lunch Program. All kitchen staff will have a ServSafe Certification on site.

Sharing of Foods and Beverages. Schools should discourage students from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns about contagious diseases, allergies, and other restrictions of some children's diets. Further, food items will not be prepared at home and brought to school to share with classmates.

Foods and Beverages Sold Individually

(i.e., foods sold outside of reimbursable school meals, such as through vending machines, cafeteria a la carte [snack] lines, fundraisers, school stores, etc.) The Districts will remain in compliance with **Massachusetts 105 CMR 225.000 Nutrition Standards for Competitive Food and Beverages in Public Schools**. In all of our schools, Pre K-12, no food or beverage will be sold in any school area from 31 minutes before the start of the school day to 31 minutes after the school day ends. This affects:

- School cafeterias
- School buildings, including hallways and classrooms
- School stores
- School snack bars
- Vending machines (including those in non-student areas such as the teachers' lounges and athletic areas)
- Concession stands
- Booster sales
- Fundraising activities
- School-sponsored or school-related events
- Any other location on school property

To be in compliance, all competitive foods (meaning any food or beverage that “competes” with the school lunch program) sold or provided in our schools must comply with the nutrition standards of DESE (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) and 105 CMR 225.000 as noted below:

Category	Standards
Juice	100% fruit and vegetable juice with no added sugar
Juice – Portion size limit	No more than four ounce serving or 8 oz. maximum ala carte
Milk (including alternative milk beverages such as lactose-free, as recognized by the USDA)	Low-fat (1% or less) and fat-free milk
Milk - Portion size limit (including alternative milk beverages such as lactose-free)	No more than eight ounce serving. All milk must be Fat free, 1% or Fat free flavored.

Category	Standards
Milk - Flavored, sweetened (including alternative milk beverages such as lactose-free)	Flavored milk must meet a minimum standard of no more than 22 grams of sugar per eight ounces and be fat free
Water	May contain natural flavorings and/or carbonation. Should not contain added sugars, sweeteners or artificial sweeteners.

Beverages with Added Sugar or Sweeteners	Beverages with added sugars or sweeteners are not allowed. Flavored milk or milk substitutes that have the same amount or less sugar than plain, fat-free or low-fat milk are allowed.
Other Beverages (soda, sports drinks, teas waters, etc.)	Only juice, milk, milk substitutes and water should be sold or provided.
Calories	Foods should be 200 calories or less per item. A la carte entrees should not exceed the calories count of entrée items of the equivalent portion size offered as part of the National School Lunch Program.
Fat	No more than 35% of total calories from fat.
Saturated Fat	No more than 10% of total calories from fat.
Trans Fat	All foods should be trans fat-free.
Fat Exemptions (all other categories apply, e.g., sugar and calories)	1 ounce servings of nuts, nut butters, seeds and reduced fat cheese.
Sugar	No more than 35% calories from sugar.
Sugar Exemptions (all other categories apply, e.g., fat and calories)	100% fruit with no added sugar, and low-fat or nonfat yogurt (including drinkable yogurt) with no more than 30 grams of sugar per 8-ounce serving
Sodium	No food with more than 200 mg sodium per item. A la carte entrees with maximum of 480 mg of sodium per item.
Grains	All breads or grain-based products should be whole grain (whole grain should be listed first in the ingredient statement). These include crackers, granola bars, chips, bakery items, pasta, rice, cereals etc.

Category	Standards
Caffeine	Trace amounts of naturally occurring caffeine (such as that found in chocolate) are allowed as long as the item complies with the rest of the nutrition standards.

Artificial Sweeteners	Artificial sweeteners are not permitted as substances added to food or beverages to provide a sweet taste while providing no additional calories, including aspartame, sucrose, acesulfame potassium, neotame, sugar alcohols and saccharine.
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Rewards and incentives for academic performance as to are not allowed due to the messages they send to students receiving them. If food is included in recognition of academic performance, it should be used in the general celebration of the achievement, not as the reward and must meet the above standards.

*District staff is encouraged to model healthy eating habits.

- Only study organizations approved by a designated school official are permitted to engage in fundraising on school grounds during the school day. These organizations are encouraged to raise funds through the sale of items other than food, and to offer healthy food choice alternatives. Cash and carry sales of food fundraisers will not be permitted during school hours.

III. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing

Nutrition Education and Promotion. The School Districts aim to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Schools will continue to provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- Is offered at each grade level as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based program 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 incorporated into classroom instruction, as appropriate to the unit/lesson, in subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects;
- Includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, participatory activities as often as possible.
- 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);
- Links with school meal programs, and other school foods, and nutrition-related community services;
- Teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food marketing.
- Includes training for teachers and other staff.

The consolidated districts will limit brand marketing to the healthy, whole and or smart snack compliant products, as well as prohibit the sale of “look-alike” Smart Snacks, Food based fundraisers are discouraged. Any non-compliant foods sold as fundraisers must be done off campus and not during school hours.

Integrating Physical Activity into Daily Life. For students to receive the nationally-recommended amount of daily physical activity (i.e., at least 60 minutes per day) 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:

- ❑ 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, such as watching television;
- ❑ opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into other subject lessons;
- ❑ classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

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 resources for parents by posting nutrition tips and monthly menus on school websites and social media pages.

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. BMI Screening will occur for students in grades 7 & 10 and will be performed during every school year. Results may be obtained by contacting the school nurse.

IV. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

Physical Education (P.E.) All students in grades K-6 will receive physical education for the entire school year. Students in grades 7-12 will receive physical education/health sciences for the entire school year. Student involvement in other activities involving physical activity (e.g., interscholastic or intramural sports) will NOT be substituted for meeting the physical education requirement. PE Curriculum available upon request.

Daily Recess. All elementary school 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. Options for student discipline that do not involve withholding recess should be explored and the amount of recess lost should be minimized.

Evaluation

The Wellness Committee will assess all education curricula and materials pertaining to wellness for accuracy, completeness, balance, and consistency with the state and district's educational goals and standards. **The Wellness Committee**, shall be responsible for the implementation and evaluation of the district policy and is charged with the responsibility of the operations for ensuring that schools meet the goals of the district wellness policy. **The Wellness Committee** will meet quarterly to address any issues and report to the School Committee annually.

The guidelines will be modified, as needed, based on changing state and federal legislation.

Reviewed and accepted by the Union 73 Wellness Committee 01/11/23.

[1] To the extent possible, schools will offer at least two non-fried vegetables and two fruit options each day and will offer five different fruits and five different vegetables over the course of a week. Schools are encouraged to source fresh fruits and vegetables from local farmers when practicable.

[2] As recommended by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005.

[3] As recommended by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005.

[4] A whole grain is one labeled as a “whole” grain product or with a whole grain listed as the primary grain ingredient in the ingredient statement. Examples include “whole” wheat flour, cracked wheat, brown rice, and oatmeal. [5] It is against the law to make others in the cafeteria aware of the eligibility status of children for free, reduced-price, or “paid” meals.

[6] School nutrition staff development programs are available through the USDA, School Nutrition Association, and National Food Service Management Institute.

Appendix A: Wellness Committee Members & Roles

REPRESENTATIVE	Ralph C. Mahar	Orange Elementary	Petersham Center
Administration	Scott Hemlin	Marie Cole	Aaron O’Conner
Parent	X	X	Sharon Skinner
Student (if applicable)	Saylor Kegans	X	X
Teacher Union	X	Jayne Fleck	X
Teacher (general education)	Robert Murchie	X	X
Teacher (general education)	Paula Robinson	X	X
Teacher (i.e. UA or SpEd or ELL or Title I or guidance)	X	Stephanie Cross	X
Staff/Para/Maintenance/Clerical	Jennifer Daigle	X	X
Community Member	X		X
Medical (nurse)	Susan Jillson	X	X
PE/Health Teacher	Kelly Ziomek	Jennifer Murphy	X
School Food Authority	Jacki Dillenback	Jacki Dillenback	Kris Wallace
School Board Member	Lynn Peredina	X	

Appendix B: Physical Education and Health Curriculum for R.C. Mahar and Petersham Center Schools is attached. The Orange Elementary curriculum is in process of updates and will be posted when available.