

# Cooter School District Wellness Policy

## Preamble

Cooter R-IV School 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 USDA School Breakfast Program is associated with higher grades and standardized tests scores, lower absenteeism and better performance on cognitive tests. Conversely, less than adequate consumption of specific foods including fruits, vegetables, and dairy products, is associated with lower grades among students. In addition, students who are physically active through active transport to and from student recess, physical activity breaks, high-quality physical education and extracurricular activities-do better academically. Finally there is evidence that adequate hydration is associated with better cognitive performance.

## Rationale

The increasing rates of overweight and obesity among youth threaten to jeopardize the future health and productivity of our children. Will academic success become more and more difficult for students to attain as lifestyle choices diminish a child's ability to learn? Will the students of today be the first generation to have a shorter life expectancy than their parents? Do over nourished and malnourished children face similar adversities?

A healthy school environment goes beyond school meals in the cafeteria. Living a healthy lifestyle and maintaining a healthy weight requires a combination of healthy food choices, knowledge of nutrition, and appropriate amounts of physical activity. All foods made available on school campuses should offer children nutritious choices. Nutrition education and physical activity should be incorporated into the school day as often as possible. The healthy, nutritionally astute, and physically active child is more likely to be academically successful.

The federal government recognizes that a coordinated effort by the entire community including child nutrition professionals, school board members, parents, students, school administrators, teachers and business community is warranted. These efforts involve adults serving as role models and community members being informed of the policies that improve the long-term health and well-being of students.

### **School Wellness Committee**

The district will convene a district wellness committee that meets four times per year, representing all school levels establishing goals for and overseeing school health and safety policies and programs, including developmental, implementation, and periodic review and update of this policy.

The membership will represent all school levels and include but not limited to: parents/caregivers, students, representatives of school nutrition program, physical education teachers, health teachers, school health professionals, school administrators, board members, health professionals, and general public.

### **Leadership**

The Superintendent or designee will convene the DWC and facilitate development of and updates to the wellness policy, and will ensure each school's compliance with the policy.

### **Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability and Community Engagement**

The District will develop and maintain a plan for implementation to manage and coordinate the execution of this policy. The plan delineates roles, responsibility, action, and timelines specific to the district and includes information about who will be responsible to make what changes are needed.

The wellness policy can be found at [www.cooter.k12.mo.us](http://www.cooter.k12.mo.us)

The District will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of the policy in the superintendent's office.

The district will inform families/public via the school website and the District Handbook.

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 the representatives of DWC and others can participate in the development, implementation, and periodic reviews and update of the wellness policy through a variety of means appropriate for the District. The District will display notices on the website, as well as information sent home 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.

## **Physical Activity**

The district's physical activity goal is to assist in learning to value and enjoy physical activity as an ongoing part of a healthy lifestyle by ensuring that every student has the opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to perform a variety of physical activities, maintain physical fitness and regularly participate in physical activity. In order to achieve the physical activity goal the district will:

1. Develop a sequential program of appropriate physical activity for every student.
  - Provide for at least 150 minutes of physical education for students in the Elementary grades during a school week and 2 units for high school students.
  - Provide time in elementary school for supervised recess. All students will have at least 60 minutes per day of supervised recess. Recess will be scheduled around the lunch period and held outdoors when possible.
2. Provide opportunities and encouragement for students to voluntarily participate in before and after school physical activity programs, such as intramural activities, interscholastic athletics and clubs by:
  - Providing a diverse selection of competitive and noncompetitive, as well as structured and unstructured activities to the extent that staffing and district/community facilities permit.

## **Nutrition**

Our School District is committed to serving healthy meals to children, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat free/low fat milk; that are moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and have zero grams Trans fat per serving and to meeting the nutrition needs of school children within their calorie requirements. The school meal programs aim to improve the diet and health of schoolchildren, 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.

The District is committed to offering school meals that are:

Accessible to all students

Appealing and attractive to children

Served in clean and pleasant setting

Student's lifelong eating habits are greatly influenced by the types of foods and beverages available to them. Food of good nutritional content including fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy

foods, and low-fat grain products will be available whenever and wherever food is sold or otherwise offered at school during the normal day.

Nutrition education is offered as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote their health. Nutrition education is incorporated into the school day. The primary goal is to influence student's eating behaviors

### **Nutrition Education**

The district's nutrition education goal is to integrate sequential nutrition education with the comprehensive health program and to the extent possible, the core curriculum taught at every grade level in order to provide students with the necessary knowledge and skills to make healthy nutrition decisions. In order to achieve the nutrition goal, the district will:

1. Provide students with nutrition –related skills that minimally include the ability to:
  - Plan healthy meals
  - Understand and use food labels
  - Apply the principles of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) and MY Pyramid
  - Critically evaluate nutrition information, misinformation and commercial food advertising
  - Assess personal eating habits, nutrition goal setting, and achievement
2. Provide instructional activities that stress the appealing aspects of healthy eating, are hands-on based, culturally relevant, developmentally appropriate and enjoyable. Examples of activities include, but are not limited to :
3. Food preparation, contests, promotions, taste testing, farm visits, and school gardens.

### **Competitive Foods and Beverages**

The district is working toward ensuring foods and beverages that are available on school campus support healthy eating. 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.

### **Celebrations and Rewards**

Healthy options are made available to staff for healthy party ideas including non food celebration ideas. Alternative non food items such as extra recess, bookmarks, stickers, pencils can be given as rewards.

## **Fundraising**

The District will encourage using non food fundraisers to support healthy lifestyles. Some examples are selling school memorabilia, calendars, candles, promoting physical activities such as walkathons.

## **Staff Qualifications and Professional Development**

All school nutrition staff will meet or exceed hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements in the USDA professional standards. Professional Standards for School Nutrition Standards website to search for trainings that meet their learning needs.

## **Water**

To promote hydration, free, safe, unflavored drinking water will be available throughout the school day and throughout the campus. The District will make drinking water available where school meals are served during meal time.

## **Tobacco**

Tobacco use prevention education will focus on all the grades with particular emphasis on middle school and reinforcements in all later grades. Instructional activities will be participatory and developmentally appropriate. Tobacco use prevention education programs will be implemented in accordance with Board policy, relevant administrative procedures and law.

## **Evaluation**

At least every three years, the District will evaluate compliance with the wellness policy to assess the implementation of the policy. The DWC will monitor compliance and update on the schools' website.

The DWC will update the policy based on the results from the School Health Index and/or as District priorities change, community needs, wellness goals are met; new health science, information and technology emerges; and new Federal or state guidance or standards are issued. The wellness committee will assess any materials pertaining to wellness for accuracy, completeness, balance and consistency with the state and district education goals and standards. The wellness program coordinator shall be responsible for devising a plan for implementation and evaluation of the district wellness policy and are charged with operational responsibility for ensuring that school meets the goals of the district wellness policy. The coordinator will make recommendations to the wellness policy in accordance with these assessments. The Board will revise the policy as it deems necessary. Administrative procedures will be revised accordingly.

