

# Westbrook Walnut Grove Elementary School District's Wellness Policies 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, only 2% of children (2 to 19 years) eat a healthy diet consistent with the five main recommendations from the Food Guide Pyramid;

Whereas, nationally, the items most commonly sold from school vending machines, school stores, and snack bars include low-nutrition foods and beverages, such as soda, sports drinks, imitation fruit juices, chips, candy, cookies, and snack cakes;

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 Westbrook Walnut Grove Elementary of the Westbrook Walnut Grove 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 Westbrook Walnut Grove Elementary School that:

- The elementary school 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-6 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; 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, our school in the district will participate in available federal school meal programs (including the School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program [including after-school snacks], Summer Food Service Program, Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program.
- Our school 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 Councils**

The school district and/or individual schools within the district will create, strengthen, or work within existing school health councils to develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies. The councils also will serve as resources to school site for implementing those policies. (A school health council consists of a group of individuals representing the school and community, and should include parents, students, 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, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations;
- offer a variety of fruits and vegetables;<sup>[1]</sup>
- serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk<sup>[2]</sup> and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (to be defined by USDA); and Tru-Moo Chocolate milk
- ensure that half of the served grains are whole grain.

Schools should engage students through taste-tests of new entrees and surveys, in selecting foods sold through the school meal programs in order to identify new, healthful, and appealing food choices. In addition, schools should 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 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:

- Our school will, to the extent possible, operate the School Breakfast Program.
- Our school will, to the extent possible, arrange bus schedules and utilize methods to serve school breakfasts that encourage participation, “grab-and-go” breakfast, or breakfast prior to beginning of school day.
- Our school that serve breakfast to students will notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast Program.

**Free and Reduced-priced Meals.** Westbrook Walnut Grove Elementary 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<sup>[3]</sup>. Toward this end, schools may utilize electronic identification and payment systems; provide meals at no charge to all children, regardless of income; promote the availability of school meals to all students.

**Summer Food Service Program.** Westbrook Walnut Grove Elementary School which more than 50% of students are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals will sponsor the Summer Food Service Program for ten weeks between the last day of the academic school year and the first day of the following school year.

**Meal Times and Scheduling.** Westbrook Walnut Grove Elementary School:

- will provide students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch;
- should schedule meal periods at appropriate times, e.g., lunch should be scheduled between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.;
- should not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities;
- will schedule lunch periods to follow recess periods (in elementary schools);
- will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks; and

**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 our school. 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.

**Sharing of Foods and Beverages.** Westbrook Walnut Grove Elementary School will discourage students from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets.

**Fundraising Activities.** To support children's health and school nutrition-education efforts, school fundraising activities will not involve food or will use only foods that meet the above nutrition and portion size standards for foods and beverages sold individually. Schools will encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity. 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 100% juice as the primary beverage. Schools will assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, children's nutritional needs, children's ages, and other considerations. The district will disseminate a list of healthful snack items to teachers, after-school program personnel, and parents.

- If eligible, schools that provide snacks through after-school programs will pursue receiving reimbursements through the National School Lunch Program.

**Rewards.** Westbrook Walnut Grove Elementary School will not use non-nutritional foods or beverages 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.** Westbrook Walnut Grove Elementary School will provide healthy snacks for Halloween, Christmas, and Valentine's parties. The school will discourage students from bringing treats for their birthday. Instead, the school food service will designate one day per month for birthday celebrations and they will provide the snack. The district will disseminate a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers.

**School-sponsored Events** (such as, but not limited to, athletic events, dances, or performances). Foods and beverages offered or sold at school-sponsored events outside the school day will be encouraged to meet the nutrition standards for meals or for foods and beverages sold individually (above).

### **III. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing**

**Nutrition Education and Promotion.** Westbrook Walnut Grove Elementary School aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Schools should 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 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, and taste testing;
- 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; accomplished through 25 minutes per grade, each school and 25 minutes of noon recess
- links with school meal programs, other school foods, and nutrition-related community services;
- 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 (*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; and
- classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

**Communications with Parents.** The school will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. The 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. The school will provide parents a list of foods that meet the district's snack standards and ideas for healthy celebrations/parties, rewards, and fundraising activities. In addition, the school will provide opportunities for parents to share their healthy food practices with others in the school community. This information will be provided in the school's fall packet.

The 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.** Westbrook Walnut Grove Elementary School 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. Each school should establish and maintain a staff wellness committee composed of at least one staff member, school health council member, local hospital representative, dietitian or other health professional, recreation program representative, union representative, and employee benefits specialist. (The staff wellness committee could be a subcommittee of the school health council.) 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. The staff wellness committee should distribute its plan to the school health council annually.

## **IV. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education**

**Daily Physical Education (P.E.) K-6.** All students in grades K-6, including students with disabilities, special health-care needs, and in alternative educational settings, will receive daily physical education (or its equivalent of 125 minutes/week for elementary school students) for the entire school year. All physical education will be taught by a certified physical education teacher. Student involvement in other activities involving physical activity

(e.g., interscholastic or intramural sports) will not be substituted for meeting the physical education requirement. Students will spend at least 50 percent of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

**Daily Recess.** All elementary school students will have at least 25 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.

Schools should discourage extended periods (*i.e.*, periods of two or more hours) of inactivity. When activities, such as mandatory school-wide testing, make it necessary for students to remain indoors for long periods of time, schools should give students periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.

**Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School.** The elementary school will offer extracurricular physical activity programs, such as physical activity clubs or intramural programs. The school will offer a range of activities that meet the needs, interests, and abilities of all students, including boys, girls, students with disabilities, and students with special health-care needs.

After-school programs will provide and encourage – verbally and through the provision of space, equipment, and activities – daily periods of moderate to vigorous physical activity for all participants.

**Physical Activity and Punishment.** Teachers and other school and community personnel will not use physical activity (e.g., running laps, pushups) or withhold opportunities for physical activity (e.g., recess, physical education) as punishment.

**Use of School Facilities Outside of School Hours.** School spaces and facilities should be available to students, staff, and community members before, during, and after the school day, and on weekends. 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. In each school, the principal or designee will ensure compliance with those policies in his/her school and will report on the school's compliance to the school district superintendent or designee.

School food service staff, at the school or district level, will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the superintendent (or if done at the school level, to the school principal). In addition, the school district will report on the most recent USDA School Meals Initiative (SMI) review findings and any resulting changes. If the district has not received a SMI review from the state agency within the past five years, the district will request from the state agency that a SMI review be scheduled as soon as possible.

The superintendent or designee will develop a summary report every three years on district-wide compliance with the district's established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies, based on input from schools within the district. 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 in the district.

**Policy Review.** To help with the initial development of the district's wellness policies, each school in the district will conduct a baseline assessment of the school's existing nutrition and physical activity environments and policies. The results of those school-by-school assessments will be compiled at the district level 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, and individual schools within the district, will, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.

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