

## **Ravenswood City School District's Wellness Policies on Physical Activity and Nutrition**

### Preamble

Whereas, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention has declared obesity the fastest growing health threat in the United States, obesity rates have doubled in children over the last two decades, and approximately 3-out-of-4 overweight children remain overweight or become obese as adults;

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, over 60% of children in the Ravenswood City School District are considered unfit by the California Physical Fitness Test, compared to approximately 30% in San Mateo County overall, and one in three children in the Ravenswood City School District is overweight according to the California Physical Fitness Test;

Whereas, the Ravenswood City School District recognizes that children need access to healthful foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive;

Whereas the Ravenswood City School District recognizes that there is a link between nutrition education, the food served in schools, physical activity, and environmental education, and that research demonstrates an association between healthy diet and physical activity, student attendance, and academic achievement;

Whereas, students and their parents trust that the foods offered at school are wholesome and safe, and that the school district is responsible for ensuring the safety of foods provided at school;

Whereas, public school is an excellent place to nurture and preserve America's food traditions through storytelling, recipe swapping, cooking classes, garden-and farm-based learning experiences, food served in the cafeteria, and connections to the core curriculum of science, math, language arts, history, geography, and social studies.

Whereas, school districts around the country are facing significant fiscal and scheduling constraints;

Whereas, community participation is essential to the development and implementation of successful school wellness policies;

Thus, the Ravenswood City 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.

Let it be resolved, it is the policy of the Ravenswood City School District that:

- The school district will engage students, parents, teachers, administrators, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing district-wide nutrition, physical activity, and health policies.
- All students will have access to a variety of affordable and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students and accommodate the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body. Schools will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.
- All students will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Foods and beverages sold or served at school will significantly improve upon the USDA Dietary Guidelines through provision of nutritious, fresh, tasty, locally grown food that reflects community and cultural diversity.
- To the maximum extent possible, schools in our 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, and the Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program.
- Schools within the Ravenswood City School District will provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity.

TO ACHIEVE THESE POLICY GOALS:

***PART I: Goals for nutrition education, nutrition promotion, physical activity, and other school-based activities that are designed to promote student wellness.***

### **Nutrition Education**

1. The School District will encourage teachers, principals, and nutrition services employees to recognize the lunch period as an integral part of the educational program of the district, and work to implement the goals of this policy.
2. The School District will provide nutrition and health education to build nutrition knowledge and skills to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating. The School District will implement a comprehensive nutrition curriculum for students in all grades, kindergarten through eighth grade, with linkages to school meal programs and nutrition-related community services.

3. Nutrition education will be both subtly and blatantly integrated into core curriculum subjects and extra curricular classes for all grade levels. Examples:
  - a. Nutrition-based thematic units tying nutrition education to core and elective subjects, expand current use of *California Children's 5 a Day-Power Play! Campaign* and *Reading Through the Food Pyramid* curricula.
4. Nutrition education will be developmentally appropriate and will include enjoyable, culturally relevant participatory activities. Examples:
  - a. Wellness/Nutrition Message of the Day, contests, promotions, taste testing, healthy cooking classes, and farm visits.
  - b. Establishment of instructional gardens to provide students with experiences in planting, harvesting, preparation, serving, and tasting foods, including ceremonies and celebrations that observe food traditions, integrated with nutrition education and core curriculum, and articulated with state standards.
5. Total time teaching nutrition shall be a minimum of 15 hours per year.
6. To develop effective, school-based nutrition education, the board shall consider performing a needs assessment or focus groups of students, teachers, parents, and the community to identify attitudes toward food, baseline nutrition knowledge, and barriers to making healthy dietary choices.
7. Nutrition education should on a regular basis actively involve students' families and other community professionals.
8. Specific skills and knowledge aimed at improving and strengthening healthy eating habits will include: food preparation, food preservation and storage, social and cultural aspects of food and eating, enhanced self-esteem and positive body image, and consumer aspects of food selection.
9. The District will appoint a Nutrition Education Specialist or group to develop the nutrition curriculum for individual grade levels and for coordinated school-wide events or projects.

### **Nutrition Promotion**

1. The School District staff and teachers should adopt an attitude of healthy living and model responsible food choices.
  - a. No regular sodas, artificial fruit drinks, or junk food at school-sponsored staff functions and meetings.
  - b. Discourage teachers from using food as reward or punishment as recommended by the Center for Health Improvement and California Food Policy Advocates.

- c. Foods offered to students and employees of the district during the day as a snack, an incentive, or in school offices, whether provided by parents or staff, shall be consistent with the goals of the policy.
2. To promote an overall school environment that encourages students to make healthy food choices, the School District will
  - a. Adopt marketing techniques to promote healthful choices in food.
  - b. Eliminate advertising and marketing materials that promote poor nutrition choices and unhealthy behaviors.
3. Limited access to healthy food choices at community food markets prevents students and their families from providing healthy meals at school and at home. Therefore, the School District will advocate for opening a grocery store in East Palo Alto that offers healthy and affordable food including a large variety of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and low fat and no fat milk.
4. Policy for foods sold by student groups, parent groups, school-sponsored events:
  - a. School fundraising events will not involve selling of food or only those foods that meet the nutritional and portion sizes of foods sold individually as detailed in this policy.
  - b. Exploration of non-food means of raising funds for student and parent groups. Schools should encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity (ex. jog-a-thons, jump rope-a-thons, etc)
  - c. Limits to times when student and parent groups can sell food products, if at all.
5. School-sponsored Celebrations
  - a. Schools should limit celebrations that involve food during the school day to no more than one party per class per month.
  - b. Each party should include no more than one food or beverage that does not meet nutritional standards for foods and beverages sold individually
  - c. District will provide parents and teachers with a list of healthy, affordable food choices for snacks and parties.
  - d. Schools should develop “rewards” for good behavior and academic achievement that do not involve food. Example is “On a Roll Reward Program” at Louise Archer Elementary School (Vienna, VA), which includes a 1-mile walk with the principal around the neighborhood once each week for students selected by their teachers for hard-working students. (CDC: Making It Happen! School Nutrition Success Stories <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/nutrition/Making-It-Happen/index.htm>.)

### **Physical Education and Physical Activity Policy**

Physical Education is a key part of developing a healthy lifestyle. The school district will provide opportunities to ensure that students engage in healthful levels of vigorous

physical activity to promote and develop the student's physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being. In order to promote physical fitness and health awareness in students, every school in the Ravenswood City School District should establish a physical education curriculum that is in compliance with State standards and regulations, and at the same time tailored to suit the needs of its students based on their particular fitness profile and cultural interests.

1. Develop measures to effectively promote physical fitness.

- a. *Needs Assessment:* The school district should first assess the overall physical fitness level of their student population. Subsequently, they should assess the physical activity patterns and the attitudes towards physical fitness among the students and the parents, in order to better counsel them about physical activity, refer them to appropriate programs, and develop appropriate school physical activity guidelines.
- b. *Promote physical fitness among the faculty and staff:* In order for the staff and faculty to become good role models for their students, the school should provide them with school based health promotion programs that maximize their own awareness of the need for good physical fitness and healthy lifestyles.
- c. *Minimization of injury risk:* Schools should establish and enforce measures to prevent physical activity related injuries and illnesses in order to increase the effectiveness of the physical education curricula, increase student participation, and maximize overall physical fitness of the student population.
- d. *Continuous Evaluation:* Schools should regularly evaluate school and community physical activity instruction, programs, and facilities in order to ensure quality, compliance with state requirements, and attainment of desired outcomes.

2. Ensure compliance of California's K-8 Physical Education Standards.

All students, including those with disabilities, special health care needs and alternative education settings, shall participate in daily physical education throughout the entire school year. In order to comply with the Physical Education Model Standards for California public schools, the curriculum should offer at least 200 minutes every 10 days for grades K-6, and 400 minutes every 10 days for grades 7-12. The physical education program should:

- a. Invest at least 50% of the physical education class time in participation in moderate to vigorous physical activity.
- b. Emphasize knowledge and skills for a lifetime of physical activity as well as team sports.
- c. Actively teach cooperation, fair play, and responsible participation in physical activity.
- d. Be an enjoyable experience for all students.
- e. Provide many different physical activity choices, featuring cooperative as well as competitive games, so as to take into consideration the cultural and gender differences that influence students' interests, and meet the needs of all students.

- f. Teach self-management skills as well as movement skills. (Examples: Introduce program using a pedometer, with non-food rewards for certain miles jogged or walked with individual fitness journals and goals for each student).
- g. Promote participation in physical activity outside of school.
- h. Integrate health related physical fitness testing into the curriculum as an instructional tool, except in the early elementary grades. Such testing shall be used to teach students how to assess their physical fitness levels, set goals for improvement, and monitor progress in reaching their goals.
- i. Discourage/prohibit exemptions from physical education courses for students participating in extracurricular school or community activities. Exemptions should be allowed only for: 1) Students with special medical conditions. In this case, a physician must certify in writing the specific physical activities that can jeopardize the student's health and well-being. 2) Students whose parents request exemption from specific physical activities on basis of religious beliefs.
- j. Employ certified physical education teachers, with student- teacher ratios comparable to those in other curricular areas.

3. Integrate 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:

- a. 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.
- b. Opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into other subject lessons. (Example: physical activity skit or play charades, allowing them to act out verbs).
- c. Classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate. (Example: Use stretch breaks at the beginning of classes).

4. All elementary school students will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors.

- a. Recess should complement, not substitute for physical education.
- b. During recess, schools should encourage moderate to vigorous free and spontaneous physical activity through the provision of space and equipment.
- c. 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 a long period of time, schools should give students periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.
- d. Schools should not deny a student's participation in recess as a form of punishment, nor cancel recess for instructional makeup time.

5. Promote physical activity opportunities before and after school.

All elementary, middle, and high schools should offer extracurricular physical activity programs at an affordable price, with confidential waivers for financially disadvantaged students.

- a. Encourage and participate in the development of interscholastic sports programs.
- b. Schools should offer a diverse 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. These shall include competitive and non-competitive, structured and unstructured activities.
- c. After school child care and enrichment programs should provide and encourage, verbally and through the provision of space, equipment, and activities, daily periods of moderate to vigorous physical activity for all participants.
- d. Schools should include parents and guardians in physical activity instruction and in community and extracurricular physical activity programs, and encourage them to support their kids in enjoyable physical activities.
- e. In order to ensure student safety, all extracurricular programs shall be supervised by qualified staff, which may or may not be teachers. Such staff must be certified in accordance to state law.

6. Prohibit withholding physical activity or use of physical activity as punishment.

- a. 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.

7. Promote Safe Routes to School.

- a. The school district should assess and, if necessary and to the extent possible, make needed improvements to make it safer and easier for students to walk and bike to school. (Example: Elementary and middle schools may try to establish “Walking Buses”, whereby the parents and students that live within a prudent distance can all walk/bike together to school).
- b. The district should work together with local public works, public safety, and/or police departments in their efforts to establish safer routes for students to walk/bike to school. (Example: Police or public safety personnel can be assigned to oversee the “Walking Buses”).
- c. The school district should explore the availability of federal "safe routes to school" funds, administered by the state department of transportation, to finance such improvements.

8. Allow Use of School Facilities Outside of School Hours.

- a. Spaces and facilities should be available to students, staff, and community members before, during, and after the school day, on weekends, and during school vacations.
- b. These spaces and facilities also should be available to community agencies and organizations offering physical activity and nutrition programs.
- c. School policies concerning safety will apply at all times.

**PART II: *Nutrition guidelines for all foods available on each campus during the school day, with the objectives of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity.***

**Nutrition Guidelines**

Foods and beverages sold or served at school significantly improve on the nutrition recommendations of the most current US Dietary Guidelines for Americans published jointly by the US Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services every five years. *Ref: Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005, US Department of Health and Human Services and US Department of Agriculture*  
[www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document/](http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document/)

**School Meal Content and Nutritional Value**

School meals offered will significantly improve on the Federal Nutrition Standard of Food Minimal Nutrition Value, with efforts made to enforce a more rigid standard for food offered in the Ravenswood School District.

1. Foods shall be minimally processed, and avoid processed meats such as bologna, salami and hot dogs.
2. Schools will ensure that half of the served grains are whole grain.
3. Vegetarian and non-dairy vegetarian meals shall be offered in weekly menu.
4. Fresh fruits and vegetables shall be offered at each meal.
5. Schools will serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk and nutritionally equivalent non-dairy alternatives.
6. Foods will not be served that exceed 35% calories from fat.
7. Foods will not be served that exceed 10% calories from saturated fat.
8. Foods will not be served that exceed 35% sugar by weight (excluding fruits and vegetables).
9. Eliminate foods of minimal nutritional value that do not promote or model healthy food choices. Example: regular or baked chips, tortilla chips
10. Cooking nutrients shall retain maximal possible nutrients when possible.
11. Preference will be given to products grown in California and which are certified organic.
12. If parents of a child with severe peanut allergies request removal of products containing peanuts or peanut residue from the school's meal program, provisions will be made at the school site to accommodate the parents' request.

### School Meals

1. Child Nutrition Services department will annually survey students to learn more about their food preferences in order to provide more culturally appropriate and appetizing healthy choices. Schools should engage students and parents through taste-tests of new entrees in selecting foods sold in the cafeteria/snack bars. (See CDC: School Nutrition Success Stories <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/nutrition/Making-It-Happen/index.htm>, “Make more healthful foods and beverages available” and “Success Stories”).
2. The Child Nutrition Services Director will develop and implement a plan to support local sustainable agriculture by integrating organic foods, as defined by the USDA National Organic Program, into the meals served to students based on availability and acceptability.
3. Child Nutrition Services department will coordinate its menus with seasonal production of local farms, and with production in school gardens, so that school meals will reflect seasonality and local agriculture.
4. Schools should share information about the nutritional content of meals with parents and students which can be made available on menus, a website, on cafeteria menu boards, or placards.

### School Breakfast Program

1. The District will, to the extent possible, operate the School Breakfast Program.
2. The District will, to the extent possible, arrange bus schedules and utilize methods to serve school breakfasts that encourage participation, including serving breakfast in the classroom, “grab-and-go” breakfast (regular and chocolate milk, 100% juice, multigrain bars), or breakfast during morning break or recess.
3. Schools that serve breakfast to students will notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast Program.
4. Schools will encourage parents to provide a healthy breakfast for their children through newsletter articles, take-home materials, or other means.

### Portion Sizes

Limit portion sizes for foods sold individually to those listed below:

1. 1 and 1/4 ounces for crackers, popcorn, cereal, trail mix, nuts, seeds, or dried fruit
2. 1 ounce for cookies
3. 2 ounces for cereal bars, granola bars, pastries, muffins, bagels
4. 4 fluid ounces for frozen desserts including low-fat or fat-free ice cream, frozen yogurt
5. 8 ounces for non-frozen yogurt
6. 12 fluid ounces for beverages excluding water

## Meal Times and Scheduling

1. Lunch periods shall be scheduled so that students do not have to eat lunch unusually early or late, and ideally, so that they come after periods of exercise.
2. Schools will provide students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch.
3. Meals will be attractively presented and served in a pleasant environment with sufficient time for eating, while fostering good eating habits, enjoyment of meals, good manners, and respect for others.
4. Schools should not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes unless students may eat during such activities
5. Schools will provide students access to hand washing or sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks. All school eating areas shall contain free, safe, drinking water sources and facilities for washing hands.
6. Schools should take reasonable steps to accommodate the tooth-brushing regimens of students with special oral health needs (ex. orthodontia, high tooth decay risk)

## Snacks

Snacks served during the school day or in before or after school programs shall be healthful and make a positive contribution to children's diets and health. Schools shall assess if and when snacks be offered based on timing of school meals, children's nutrition needs, children's ages and other considerations. If eligible and applicable, schools will participate in the National School Lunch Program's After-school Snack Program.

## Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods

"Competitive Foods" includes food and beverages sold by all groups on campus, including a la carte sales in cafeteria, snack bars, student groups and parent groups. *Standards based on Senate Bill 12 (Escuita, 2005) which strengthens food standards originally described in Senate Bill 19 (Escuita, 2001). State standards effective July 1, 2007.*

1. An individually sold or served food item may have no more than
  - a. 35% of calories from fat (excluding legumes, nuts, nut butters, seeds, eggs, non-fried vegetables, and cheese packaged for individual sale)
  - b. 10% of calories from saturated fat (excluding eggs and cheese packaged for individual sale)
  - c. 35% sugar by weight (excluding fruits and vegetables)
  - d. Portion size for a la carte sales in cafeteria not to exceed the serving size of the food served in the National School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program.
2. Foods and beverages not meeting standards may be sold at least one half hour after the end of the school day or off of school premises.
3. Limit access to competitive foods during school meal service time to encourage participating in school meal programs and to discourage over-eating. Prohibit sale of food with minimal nutritional value on school campuses.

Foods and Beverages Offered or Sold at School Sponsored Events (ex. athletic events, dances, performances)

1. Foods listed above should meet the nutrition standards for meals or for foods and beverages sold individually.

Vending Machine Foods

1. Continue RCSD policy to prohibit the sale of food and beverage items to students via vending machines.

***PART III: Plan for measuring implementation of the wellness policy, including the designation of one or more persons in the district or at each school charged with the operational responsibility for ensuring that the school meets the policy.***

Implementation and monitoring impact of Wellness Policy

1. The existing district Fitness/Nutrition Advisory Council will remain actively engaged by monitoring the implementation of the Wellness Policy and in presenting recommendations to the Governing Board.
2. The School District will designate at least one person to maintain responsibility for program operation. The designee will ensure compliance with nutrition and physical activity wellness policies and school nutrition standards set by law (e.g. SB 12, Escuita 2005). The designee will develop a summary report every three years on district-wide compliance with the district's Wellness Policy to be provided to the school board and distributed to parent/teacher organizations, school principals, and school health services personnel.
3. The district will review the Wellness Policy every three years or less to ensure compliance with latest guidelines and standards for nutrition and physical activity and incorporate changes suggested by school assessments.
4. In each school, the principal or designee will ensure compliance in their schools and report on the school's compliance.
5. School food service staff, at the school or district level, will ensure compliance with nutrition guidelines set in this policy and report on this matter to the designee.
6. The district and individual schools within the district will conduct ongoing evaluation, revision, and implementation of the wellness policy. A baseline assessment of the school's existing nutrition and physical activity environments and policies will be compiled to identify and prioritize needs. Assessments will be repeated every three years to help review compliance, assess progress, and determine areas in need of improvement.

## Professional Development

The Board recognizes that using the local food system as a context for learning, and embedding nutrition education in a school's curriculum, generates new content for students to learn. It also requires teachers to learn new content and new strategies for teaching. For food service personnel, new menus require new ways of purchasing, preparing, and presenting foods. The transition to an educational model that makes food and health central parts of the academic curriculum require professional development. The board will ensure that:

1. Regular professional development will be provided to enable the Food Service Staff to become full partners in providing excellent school meals.
2. Regular professional development will be provided, at least annually, to teachers and the Food Service Staff on basic nutrition, nutrition education, and benefits of sustainable agriculture.
3. Child Nutrition Services Staff and district teachers will receive professional development jointly, at least once a year, to facilitate a more coordinated approach to integrating classroom lessons with experiences in gardens, kitchen classrooms, and the cafeteria.

## **References:**

AAP Statement on Physical Fitness and Activity in Schools, May 2000.

<http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/content/abstract/pediatrics;105/5/1156>

*Physical Education Model Content Standards for California Public Schools 2004.*

[http://www.cahperd.org/calendar/images/PE\\_Standards.pdf](http://www.cahperd.org/calendar/images/PE_Standards.pdf)

*Setting Physical Activity Goals.* USDA Food and Nutrition Services.

[http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Healthy/wellnesspolicygoals\\_physicalactivity.html](http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Healthy/wellnesspolicygoals_physicalactivity.html)

*Policies to Encourage Physical Activity.* National Association of State Boards of Education, 2000.

[http://www.nasbe.org/HealthySchools/Sample\\_Policies/physical\\_activity.html](http://www.nasbe.org/HealthySchools/Sample_Policies/physical_activity.html)

*Guidelines for School and Community Programs to Promote Lifelong Physical Activity Among Young People.* MMWR, CDC, March 1997.

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00046823.htm>

*Leon County Wellness Policy-Florida.*

<http://www.planning.leon.k12.fl.us/Policies/134.htm>

*Physical Activity and the Health of Young People.* CDC  
<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/physicalactivity/pdf/facts.pdf>  
<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/shpps/factsheets/pdf/pe.pdf>

*Model School Wellness Policies.* National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity.  
<http://www.schoolwellnesspolicies.org/WellnessPolicies.html#opportunities>