

SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICY

Rationale

The link between nutrition, physical activity, and learning is well documented. Healthy eating and activity patterns are essential for students to achieve their full academic potential, full physical and mental growth, and lifelong health and well being. Healthy eating and physical activity, essential for a healthy weight, are also linked to reduced risk for many chronic diseases, like Type 2 diabetes. Schools have a responsibility to help students learn, establish, and maintain lifelong, healthy eating and activity patterns. Well-planned and effectively implemented school nutrition and fitness programs have been shown to enhance students' overall health, as well as their behavior and academic achievement in school. Staff wellness also is an integral part of a healthy school environment, since school staff can be daily role models for healthy behaviors.

Goal

All students in Columbus Municipal School District shall possess the knowledge and skills necessary to make nutritious food choices and enjoyable physical activity choices for a lifetime. All staff in Columbus Municipal School District is encouraged to model healthful eating and physical activity as a valuable part of daily life.

To meet this goal, the Columbus Municipal School District adopts this school wellness policy **as a district-wide policy** with the following commitments to nutrition, physical activity, comprehensive health education, marketing, and implementation **in all schools**. This policy is designed to effectively utilize school and community resources and to equitably serve the needs and interests of all students and staff, taking into consideration differences in culture.

Commitment to Nutrition

The Columbus Municipal School District will:

- Offer a school lunch program with menus that meet the meal patterns and nutrition standards established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Child Nutrition Programs.
- Offer school breakfast and snack programs (where approved and applicable) with menus that meet the meal patterns and nutrition standards established by the U. S. Department of Agriculture and the Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Child Nutrition Programs.
- Encourage school staff and families to participate in school meal programs.
- Operate all Child Nutrition Programs with school foodservice staff who are properly qualified according to current professional standards (Mississippi Board of Education Policy, Code EE-2E)
- Establish food safety as a key component of all school food operations and ensure that the food service permit is current for the Food Service school site.

Page 2 of 6 - SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICY - JG

- Follow State Board of Education policies on competitive foods and extra food sales (Mississippi Board of Education Policy, Code EEH).
- Establish guidelines for all foods available on the school campus during the school day with the objective of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity.

The Columbus Municipal School District will:

- Provide adequate time for students to eat and enjoy school meals (a minimum of 15-20 minutes at breakfast and 18-25 minutes at lunch).
- Encourage students to make food choices based on the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, by emphasizing menu options that feature baked (rather than fried foods), whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables, and reduced-fat dairy products.
- Establish a cafeteria environment conducive to a positive dining experience, with socializing among students and between students and adults; with supervision of eating areas by adults who model proper conduct and voice level; and with adults who model healthy habits by eating with the students.
- Make school meals accessible to students with a variety of delivery strategies or alternate eating sites.
- Add nutritious and appealing options (such as fruits, vegetables, nuts, trail mix, beef jerky, reduced-fat milk, reduced fat-yogurt, reduced-fat cheese, 100% juice, and water) whenever foods/beverages are sold or otherwise offered at school, including vending machines, school stores, celebrations, social events, and other school functions.
- Discourage the use of foods as rewards for student accomplishment and the withholding of food as punishment (e.g., restricting a child's selection of flavored milk at mealtime due to behavior problems).
- Provide nutrition information for parents, including nutrition analysis of school meals and resources to help parents to improve food that they serve at home.

Commitment to Food Safe Schools

The Columbus Municipal School District will:

- Ensure that all staff members have viewed the video developed by the Office of Healthy Schools to support food safety on the school campus. For compliance with the Nutrition Standards all staff members must complete and sign pre- and post-test developed by the Office of Healthy Schools and maintain documentation of completion.
- Adequate access to hand-washing facilities and supplies will be available whenever and wherever students, staff, and families prepare, handle, or consume food.
- Develop and implement strategies that minimize risks for students and staff members who have food allergies and intolerances.

Commitment to Physical Activity/Physical Education

The Columbus Municipal School District will:

- Provide Physical Education/Activity in accordance with the Physical Education Rules and Regulations as approved by the State Board of Education in compliance with the Mississippi Healthy Students Act (State Board of Education Policy 4012).
- Require fitness testing for all 5th grade students.
- Require fitness testing for high school students; during the year they acquire the ½ Carnegie unit in physical education as required for graduation by the Mississippi Healthy Students Act (State Board of Education Policy 4012).
- Offer a planned sequential program of physical education instruction incorporating individual and group activities, which are student-centered and taught in a positive environment.
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- Implement the 2006 Mississippi Physical Education Framework.
- Implement the requirements of the Mississippi Healthy Students Act of 2007 (Senate Bill 2369).

The Columbus Municipal School District will:

- Schedule recess or physical education before lunch times as schedule allows increasing food consumed, decreasing plate waste, and improve cafeteria behavior.
- Incorporate 5- to 10-minute physical activity sessions in classrooms to teach subject areas and to make transitions between different lessons (e.g., *Take Ten! Mind and Body*, etc.).
- Establish or enhance physical activity opportunities (like walking clubs or fitness challenges) for staff and/or parents.
- Provide staff-monitored recreational activities that promote moderate physical activity during all outdoor and indoor recess times.
- Encourage active transportation to/from schools by assessing the safest routes for students to walk or bike to school, and by installing bike racks at school buildings.
- Collaborate with local recreational departments and youth fitness programs to promote participation in lifelong physical activities.
- Create wider opportunities for students to voluntarily participate in before- and after-school physical activity programs like intramurals, clubs, and at the secondary level, interscholastic athletics.

Commitment to Comprehensive Health Education

The Columbus Municipal School District will:

- Provide ½ Carnegie unit of comprehensive health education for graduation (2004 Mississippi Public School Accountability Standard 20, Appendix A).
- Implement the 2006 Mississippi Comprehensive Health Framework for grades 9-12 (2004 Mississippi Public School Accountability Standard 20, Appendix A).

The Columbus Municipal School District will:

- Offer comprehensive health education in grades K-8 (2006 Mississippi Comprehensive Health Framework).
- Implement the nutrition strand of 2006 Mississippi Comprehensive Health Framework.
- Emphasize the disease and prevention strand in the 2006 Mississippi Comprehensive Health Framework.
- Participate in USDA nutrition programs such as Team Nutrition Schools and the Healthier US School Challenge. The school will conduct nutrition education activities and promotions that involve students, parents, and the community. The school team responsible for planning nutrition activities will include school foodservice staff, school nurses, health and PE teachers, coaches, and additional staff, as appropriate.

Commitment to a Healthy School Environment

The Columbus Municipal School District will:

- Ensure that there are no pad locks or chains on exit doors; exits should never be obstructed (in accordance with Mississippi State Fire Code). Ensure that all exit signs are illuminated and clearly visible.
- Ensure that all chemicals are stored properly (in accordance with the Material Safety Data Sheet www.msdssearch.com).
- Refer to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's *Handbook for Public Playground Safety* (www.cpsc.com).
- Ensure that fire extinguishers are inspected each year and properly tagged.
- Conduct at least one emergency evacuation drill per month.
- Conduct self-assessments of all school buildings annually prior to school opening using the Bureau of Safe and Orderly Schools' Process Standard #36 Monitoring Tool.

Commitment to Marketing a Healthy School Environment

The Columbus Municipal School District will:

- Provide positive, motivating messages, both verbal and non-verbal, about healthy lifestyle practices throughout the school setting. All school personnel will help reinforce these positive messages.
- Involve students in planning for a healthy school environment. Students will be asked for input and feedback through the use of student surveys, and attention will be given to their comments.
- Promote healthful eating, physical activity, and healthy lifestyles to students, parents, teachers, administrators, and the community at school events (e.g., school registration, parent-teacher conferences, PTO meetings, open houses, health fairs, teacher in-services, and other events).
- Eliminate advertising and other materials on the school campus that promote foods of minimal nutrition value.

- Work with local media, like newspaper, TV and radio, to inform the community about the health problems facing Mississippi children, as well as the need for and benefits of healthy school environments.

Commitment to Quality Health Services

The Columbus Municipal School District will ensure that all school nurses are working under the guidelines of the *Mississippi School Nurse Procedures and Standards of Care*.

Commitment to Implementing a Quality Staff Wellness Program

The Columbus Municipal School District will:

- Promote health and reduce risk factors through professional and staff development programs, providing information flyers and newsletters, introducing incentives for participating in healthy practices and activities, and offering an employee assistance program.
- Encourage after-school health and fitness sessions for school staff.

Commitment to Family and Community Involvement

The Columbus Municipal School District will give parents and community members the opportunity to serve on the School Health Council (SHC).

Commitment to Implementation

The Columbus Municipal School District will:

- Establish a plan for implementation of the school wellness policy.
- Designate one or more persons to insure that the school wellness policy is implemented as written.

The Columbus Municipal School District will:

- Establish and support a School Health Council (SHC) that addresses all aspects of a coordinated school health program, including a school wellness policy.
- Conduct a review of the progress toward school wellness policy goals each year to identify areas for improvement.
- Prepare and submit a yearly report to the school board regarding the progress toward implementation of the school wellness policy and recommendations for any revisions to the policy as necessary.

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) policy, Columbus Municipal School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C.

Page 6 of 6 - SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICY - JG

20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

SOURCE: Columbus Municipal School District; Columbus, Mississippi

LEGAL REF: § 37-13-134, Mississippi Code of 1972, ann., reference 2004; Mississippi Public Schools Accountability Standards 32, Appendix B and 33; Mississippi Board of Education Policy, Code EE-2E; Mississippi Board of Education Policy, Code EEH.

CROSS REF:

DATE: May 8, 2006

AMENDED: October 12, 2009