



STUDENT WELLNESS, NUTRITION, AND FOOD SALES ON SCHOOL PROPERTY

The Regional School Unit-24 (RSU) Board (RSUB) recognizes that student wellness and good nutrition are related to students physical and psychological well being and their readiness and/or willingness to learn. The RSUB is committed to providing school environments that support student wellness, healthy food choices, nutrition education, and regular physical activity. The RSUB further believes that students who learn and practice healthy lifestyles in their formative years are more likely to be conscious of the importance of good nutrition and exercise as adults, practice healthy habits, and consequently reduce their risk of heart disease, cancer, diabetes and other chronic diseases.

The RSUB is committed to providing a school environment that promotes and protects children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity.

Therefore, it is the policy of the RSUB that:

- All students in grades PreK-12 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 cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning; and will offer a pleasant setting with adequate time for all students to eat.
- To the extent practicable, all RSU schools 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 Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program.
- RSU 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 and school meal programs, school gardens, and with related community services.
- The RSUB 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.

TO ACHIEVE THESE POLICY GOALS:

Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served on Campus

The RSU Food Services Manager (FSM) will ensure that all food products provided to students through the School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch, After School Snack, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable, and School Milk Program meet the nutrition standards established by local, state, and federal regulations.

All other sales of foods and beverages on RSU property compete with these programs, and must be in compliance with this policy.

DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this policy the following definitions shall apply:

- **Competitive foods:** any foods or drinks sold or made available to students on RSU Property during the school day other than meals that are part of the National School Breakfast/Lunch Program. This includes á la carte and vending machine sales.
- **Nutrition education:** a planned sequential instructional program that provides knowledge and teaches skills to help students adopt and maintain lifelong healthy eating patterns.
- **Foods of minimal nutritional value:** foods which provide less than a minimum of 5 percent of the recommended dietary intake (RDI) for each of eight specified nutrients per serving per 100 calories. The eight nutrients to be assessed are – protein, vitamin A, vitamin C, niacin, riboflavin, thiamine, calcium, and iron.

School Meal:

Meals served through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs will:

- be appealing and attractive to students;
- be served in clean and pleasant settings;
- meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations;
- processed foods must contain zero partially hydrogenated oils (commodity foods excluded)
- offer a variety of fruits and vegetables;
- provide foods that are free from artificial food dyes;
- serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (to be defined by USDA); and
- ensure that a minimum of half of the served grains are whole grain.
- Provide at a minimum one low fat salad dressing option

Through taste-tests, surveys, and Maine Harvest Lunch, all RSU schools will engage students and parents to identify new healthful and appealing foods for the school food program. Nutritional content of RSU school meals will be made available to students and parents on the RSU website and/or menus.

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, the RSU will:

- operate the School Breakfast Program.
- Offer only cereals that contain less than 35% weight from sugar and a minimum on 1 gram of fiber per serving
- 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, or breakfast during morning break or recess.
- notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast Program.
- encourage parents to provide a healthy breakfast for their children through newsletter articles, take-home materials, or other means.

Free and Reduced-priced Meals. To eliminate any social stigma attached to, and prevent the overt identification of students who are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals, the RSU will utilize Nutrikids or a similar electronic identification and payment systems.

Summer Food Service Program. When possible, schools in which more than 50% of students are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals will 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, and preferably throughout the entire summer vacation.

Meal Times and Scheduling. To the extent possible, schools:

- 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
- 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, continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals in schools will be provided. Staff development programs should include appropriate certification and/or training programs for food service directors, kitchen managers, and cooks, according to their levels of responsibility.

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 allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets.

Competitive Food Sales on RSU Property

Elementary Schools. Competitive foods will not be offered during the school day.

Middle Schools. Foods sold outside the reimbursable school meal programs during the school day are limited to fruits, vegetables, low fat dairy, nuts, 100% whole grains, will meet the Maine Department of Education's Regulation 51 and 435, and will meet the following nutrition requirements.

Beverages

- Allowed: water or seltzer water without added sweeteners; 100% vegetable and fruit juice (may contain carbonation); *limit serving size to a maximum of 6 ounces*; unflavored or flavored low-fat (1% or less) or fat-free fluid milk and nutritionally-equivalent nondairy beverages; *limit serving size to a maximum of 8 ounces*

Foods

- Any food item offered or sold individually on school grounds:
 - will have no more than 35% of its calories from fat (excluding nuts, seeds, peanut butter, and other nut butters), 10% of its calories from saturated fat (excludes reduced fat cheese), contain zero grams of trans fats as stated on the item's nutrition facts label.

- will have no more than 35% of its *weight* from added sugars (excludes fruit, vegetables and milk) ;
- will not contain artificial food dyes
- will not exceed 200 calories
- will contain no more than 230 mg of sodium

High Schools. All foods sold outside the reimbursable school meal programs during the school day, or through programs for students after the school day will meet Maine Department of Education's Regulation 51, 435, and the following nutrition and portion size standards:

Beverages

- Allowed: water or seltzer water without added sweeteners; 100% vegetable and fruit juice (may contain carbonation); *limited to eight ounce servings*; unflavored or flavored low-fat (1% or less) or fat-free fluid milk and nutritionally-equivalent nondairy beverages; *limited to eight ounce servings*.

Foods

Any food item sold individually:

- will have no more than 35% of its calories from fat (excluding nuts, seeds, peanut butter, and other nut butters), 10% of its calories from saturated fat (excluding reduced fat cheese), contain zero grams of trans fats as stated on the item's nutrition facts label;
 - will have no more than 35% of its *weight* from added sugars (excludes fruit, vegetables and milk) ;
 - will not contain artificial food dyes
 - will contain no more than 230 mg of sodium per serving for chips, cereals, crackers, French fries, baked goods, and other snack items; will contain no more than 480 mg of sodium per serving for pastas, meats, and soups; and will contain no more than 600 mg of sodium for pizza, sandwiches, and main dishes.
- With the exception of vending machines, a choice of at least two fresh fruit or vegetables or other non-fried vegetables, and a minimum, of one whole grain product will be offered for sale at any location on the school site where foods are sold during the school day. Fruit and vegetable items could include, but are not limited to, fresh fruits and vegetables; 100% fruit or vegetable juice; cooked, dried, or canned fruits (canned in fruit juice or light syrup); and cooked, dried, or canned vegetables (that meet the above fat and sodium guidelines).

Portion Sizes/Calories:

- Not to exceed the serving size of the food served in the National School Lunch Program; for packaged items, the package or container is not to exceed 200 calories.

Snacks. Snacks provided by the school or sent in by parents that are served during the school day or in after-school care or enrichment programs will make a positive contribution to children's diets and health. RSU schools providing snacks to students will follow the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. These foods should include fruits, vegetables, low fat dairy foods, whole grains, and not include foods containing partially hydrogenated oils or artificial food dyes.

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

Rewards. RSU schools will not use 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 behavioral punishment, (except when stated in a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP)).

School Parties/Celebrations. Foods may be brought into the classroom by students/parents as part of a special occasion such as a school party or celebration. School celebrations containing food should be considered an opportunity to reinforce nutrition lessons and put lessons into practice. Foods brought in for celebrations should follow the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. These foods should include fruits, vegetables, low fat dairy foods and low fat whole grain products. Foods high in fat and sugars will be used sparingly. This practice will be listed in the student handbook. The RSU will disseminate a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers.

School-sponsored Student Events. Foods and beverages offered or sold at school-sponsored events outside the school day that are not open to the public will meet the nutrition standards for competitive foods.

School-sponsored Community Events The RSUB recognizes that proceeds from the sale of foods and beverages outside of the School Meal Program are a significant source of funds for student activities and/or authorized community/RSU organizations.

Therefore, as allowed by Maine Department of Education Rule Chapter 51, the RSUB permits the sale of food and beverages outside the total food program to:

- a. School staff;
- b. Attendees at RSU-sponsored events held on RSU property; and
- c. The public at community events held on RSU property in accordance with the RSU facility use policy.

When foods and beverages are sold to raise funds for schools, student, and/or other approved activities, a minimum of one food will be offered from each of the following categories: fruits and vegetables (not fried); low fat/fat free dairy products; whole grains, nuts, and/or seeds.

Funds from all food and beverage sales on RSU property shall accrue to the benefit of the RSU's non-profit school food service program. The RSUB, as authorized by Chapter 51, hereby authorizes funds raised through authorized sales outside the total food service programs to accrue to the sponsoring school, approved student organization, or other RSU-approved community organization and uses in accordance with applicable cash-management and administrative procedures, as applicable.

Nutrition Education

- Nutrition education will be taught as part of the comprehensive health education program based upon Maine's System of Learning Results. Teachers are encouraged to integrate school gardens, when they exist, into their curriculum.
- Health education at the secondary level will be taught by a certified health education teacher. Whenever possible, health education in grades PreK through 8 will be taught by a certified health education teacher. In the absence of a certified health teacher, health education will be the responsibility of classroom teachers.
- Students in grades PreK-8 will receive health education for the entire school year.

Course grades shall be awarded in the same way grades are awarded in other subject areas and shall be included in calculations of grade point average, class rank and academic recognition programs such as honor roll.

Physical Education K-12. RSU students in grades PreK-8 will receive physical education for the entire school year. RSU students in grades 9-12 must complete 1 credit in physical education. The physical education curriculum will emphasize life-long skills, be aligned with state and national standards, and engage students in moderate to vigorous activity at least 50% of class time. Physical education will be taught by a certified physical education teacher.

- **Annual Fitness Assessment.** All students shall be regularly assessed for attainment of the physical education learning objectives. Students in grades 4-12 will complete an annual fitness assessment. Results from the fitness assessments will be sent home to parents a minimum of once per year.

Physical Activity

- **Daily Recess.** Elementary and middle 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.
- 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 and Punishment.** Teachers and other RSU and community personnel will not use physical activity (*e.g.*, running laps, pushups) or withhold opportunities for physical activity during the day (*e.g.*, recess, physical education) as punishment, unless participation would cause a student to be a danger to himself/herself or others is allowed by a student's individual education plan (IEP).
- **Physical Activity Before and After School.** In addition to interscholastic sports programs, all RSU schools should attempt to offer co-curricular physical activities, such as clubs or intramural programs. These programs will strive to include all interested students regardless of athletic ability.
- **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;
 - when possible, 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.
- **Safe Routes to School.** The RSU will 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. When appropriate, the district will work together with local public works, public safety, and/or police departments in those efforts. The school district will explore the availability of federal "safe routes to school" funds, administered by the state department of transportation, to finance such improvements.

- **Use of RSU Facilities Outside of School Hours.** RSU 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. These spaces and facilities also should be available to community agencies and organizations offering physical activity and nutrition programs. RSU policies concerning safety will apply at all times.

Staff Wellness

The RSU 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. The RSU should establish and maintain a staff wellness committee. (The staff wellness committee could be a subcommittee of the school health leadership team.) 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 RSU staff. The staff wellness committee should distribute its plan to the School Health Leadership Team annually.

Appointment and Role of the RSU School Health Leadership Team

The RSUB tasks the RSU School Health Coordinator to appoint and maintain an RSU-wide School Health Leadership Team comprised of at least one of each of the following:

- RSUB member (RSUB Appointment)
- School administrator from each school
- Food Services Director
- Student RSUB representative
- Parent representative from each school
- School nurse
- Teacher(s)
- Guidance counselor
- Others as he/she desires

The School Health Leadership Team will serve as an advisory committee in regard to student wellness issues and will make recommendations related to the wellness policy, wellness goals, administrative or school regulations and practices, and/or raising awareness of student health issues.

With the prior approval of the RSUB, the School Health Leadership Team may survey parents, students, conduct focus groups or community forums as appropriate.

The School Health Leadership Team shall provide periodic reports to the Superintendent/designee and yearly or as requested, to the RSUB.

Communication

The Wellness Policy and Implementation Plan will be communicated to parents, students, and staff at least once a year. Wellness Policy Implementation updates will be communicated at administrative meetings. Outcomes of the Wellness Policy will be communicated to the RSUB annually.

Monitoring and Policy Review

The School Health Coordinator shall be responsible for the implementation of the Wellness Policy. The Food Service Director will be responsible for monitoring efforts to meet the guidelines for nutritional quality of foods and beverages sold on school property. Building Administrator (BA) will be responsible for monitoring efforts to meet the intent of this policy. Monitoring may include surveys or solicitation of input from students, parents, staff, as desired by the BA.

Reports may include, but are not limited to:

- The status of the RSU environment in regard to student wellness issues
- Evaluation of the RSU food services program and compliance with nutrition guidelines
- Summary of wellness programs and activities in the RSU schools
- Feedback from students, parents, staff, school administrators and wellness committee
- Recommendations for policy, program or curriculum revisions

Policy Review. Assessments will be conducted every three years to help review policy compliance, assess progress, and determine areas in need of improvement. As part of that review, the RSU 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 RSUB will, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.

References: Maine DOE Rules Chapter 51
42 U.S.C. § 1751
RSU Policy KF (series)

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