

# **Rhode Island School District Nutrition & Physical Activity MODEL POLICY LANGUAGE**

## **Preamble**

In June 2005, the Rhode Island General Assembly passed legislation (RIPL Chapter 05-074/05-076, amending Section 16-2-9 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-2 entitled "School Committees and Superintendents") to address the health and wellness of students and employees.

The new law was developed in accordance with the 2004 Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act, Section 204 of Public Law 108-265. It requires the establishment of a subcommittee of the school board or committee to decrease obesity and address school health and wellness policies for students and employees.

## **Intent**

The purpose of this model policy language is to provide a template and sample language for district policy writers. This document is not intended for adoption in its entirety by districts, unless they so choose. It is intended for districts to use AS A TOOL in drafting their own policies.

Districts may choose to use sections of this document and/or alter the language in any way. However, we believe the language contained in this document is reasonable and sound. We developed this tool to help Rhode Island school districts achieve Rhode Island Healthy Schools Coalition Goals in a sustainable manner, through the development and adoption of district policy.

*Developed and Endorsed by the Rhode Island Healthy Schools Coalition  
June 2006*

*Endorsed by the Rhode Island Board of Regents  
and by the Rhode Island Department of Health  
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**All feedback in the use of this document is greatly appreciated.  
Please e-mail comments and suggestions to: [info@kidsfirstri.org](mailto:info@kidsfirstri.org)**

## **Policy Intent/Rationale**

The \_\_\_\_\_ School District promotes healthy schools, by supporting wellness, good nutrition, and regular physical activity as part of the total environment. The District supports a healthy environment where students and staff learn and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices. Schools contribute to basic health status by facilitating learning through the support and promotion of good nutrition and physical activity. Improved health optimizes student and staff performance potential.

### ***To accomplish these goals:***

#### **A. Provide a comprehensive learning environment for developing and practicing lifelong wellness behaviors for students and staff.**

The entire school environment, not just the classroom, shall be aligned with healthy school goals to positively influence the understanding, beliefs and habits of students and staff as they relate to good nutrition and regular physical activity. A healthy school environment should not be sacrificed because of a dependence on revenue from high-fat, high-sugar, and low nutrient dense foods to support school programs.

#### **B. Support and promote proper dietary habits contributing to student and staff health status and students' academic performance.**

All foods available on school grounds and at school-sponsored activities during the instructional day and during afterschool programs should meet or exceed the district nutrition standards. Emphasis should be placed on foods that are nutrient dense per calorie. To ensure high quality, nutritious meals, foods should be served with consideration toward variety, appeal, taste, food safety, and packaging. Locally grown and produced fruits, vegetables and dairy items should be purchased and served whenever possible.

#### **C. Provide more opportunities for students and staff to engage in physical activity.**

A quality physical education program is an essential component for all students to learn about and participate in physical activity. Physical activity should be included in a school's daily education program and during afterschool activities from grades pre-K through 12. Physical activity should include regular instructional physical education, in accordance with The Rhode Island Physical Education Framework, as well as co-curricular activities, and recess. Encourage increased physical activity among staff.

#### **D. The \_\_\_\_\_ School District is committed to improving academic performance for all students so that no child is left behind.**

Educators, administrators, parents, health practitioners, afterschool program providers and communities must consider the critical role student health plays in academic stamina and performance and adapt the school environment to ensure students' basic nourishment and activity needs are met. To ensure widespread understanding of the benefits to school environments where nutritious foods are provided and where students have an opportunity for physical activity, a public awareness campaign that highlights research demonstrating the positive relationship between good nutrition, physical activity, and capacity of students to develop and learn should be conducted.

**E. Establish and maintain a district-wide Coordinated School Health and Wellness Sub-committee of the District School Committee that shall consist of:**

- Members of the district’s school communities, a majority of whom are not employed by the school district. Such members shall include parents, students, representatives from community agencies, the business community, local and statewide non-profit health organizations and health professionals.
- A member of the School Committee
- District Food Service Director/Manager
- School personnel including but not limited to:
  - School Nurse-Teacher
  - Staff member representative from each school
  - District Administration
  - Physical Education and Health Program Leader
  - Family & Consumer Sciences Teacher
  - Principal

**The purpose of the sub-committee is:**

- Development of health and wellness policies, strategies and implementation
- Make recommendations regarding the district’s health education curriculum and instruction
- Make recommendations regarding the district’s physical education curriculum and instruction
- Make recommendations regarding nutrition and physical activity policies to decrease obesity and enhance the health and well-being of students and employees
- Evaluate policy progress and revise as necessary
- Serve as a resource to school sites, (e.g. provide lists of healthy incentives, snacks, birthday celebration foods, etc.)

**Responsibilities may include, but not be limited to, oversight of the following:**

- Implementation of district nutrition and physical activity standards
- Integration of nutrition and physical activity in the overall curriculum
- Assurance that staff professional development includes nutrition and food safety and physical activity issues
- Assurance that students receive nutrition education and engage in vigorous physical activity
- Encourage healthful eating and inclusion of nutrient dense food options and the reduction of high-fat, high-sugar, and low nutrient dense foods among all school venues that involve the sale of food.
- Encourage each school to participate in the RI Food Safe Schools Program.
- Prepare an Annual Report each year that includes, but may not be limited to, the following information:
  - Monthly district menus and meal counts
  - Listing of all a la carte and vending sales of foods throughout the district including school food service, vending machines, school stores, culinary and special education programs, in-school and in-class fundraisers, etc.
  - Listing of physical activity programs and opportunities for students throughout the school year.
  - Listing of staff wellness promotion activities

## **Nutrition Education Standards**

### **Student Nutrition Education:**

The \_\_\_\_\_ School District has a comprehensive curriculum approach to nutrition in Kindergarten through 12th grade. All K-12 instructional staff will be encouraged to integrate nutritional themes from the Rhode Island Department of Education *Health Education Framework* and/or the Rhode Island Family & Consumer Science Framework into daily lessons when appropriate. The health benefits of good nutrition should be emphasized. These nutritional themes include but are not limited to:

Knowledge of the Food Guide Pyramid	Healthy heart choices
Sources & variety of foods, including locally grown	Dietary Guidelines for Americans
Diet and disease prevention	Understanding calories
Healthy snacks	Healthy breakfast
Food labels	Bone health & osteoporosis
Major nutrients	Multicultural influences
Serving portion sizes	Proper Food Safety/Sanitation
Promote and identify high nutrient dense foods	Reducing the risk of foodborne illness

### **Parent Nutrition Education:**

- Nutrition education will be provided to parents beginning at the elementary level. The goal will be to continue to educate parents throughout middle and high school levels.
- Nutrition education may be provided in the form of handouts, postings on the district website, articles and information provided in district or school newsletters, presentations that focus on nutritional value and healthy lifestyles, and through any other appropriate means available for reaching parents.

### **Staff Nutrition & Physical Activity Education:**

Nutrition and physical activity education opportunities will be provided to all school staff at the elementary, middle and high school levels. These educational opportunities may include, but not be limited to, the distribution of educational and informational materials and the arrangement of presentations and workshops that focus on nutritional value and healthy lifestyles, health assessments, fitness activities, and other appropriate nutrition and physical activity-related topics. The purpose of staff nutrition and physical activity education will be to:

- Encourage all school staff to improve their own personal health and wellness
- Improve staff morale
- Create positive role modeling
- Build the commitment of staff to promote the health of students
- Build the commitment of staff to help improve the school nutrition and physical activity environment.

## **DISTRICT NUTRITION STANDARDS**

### **The USDA Reimbursable School Meal Programs (school food service):**

- The full meal school breakfast and lunch programs will comply with the USDA Requirements for Federal School Meals Programs. The district standards may be more restrictive than USDA guidelines but may not be less restrictive. The School Food Service provider will be encouraged to purchase locally grown fruits, vegetables and dairy products whenever possible.
- The School Food Service Program including vending, ala carte, afterschool snack program, and foods sold on campus will follow the District's Nutrition Standards when determining the items offered in the cafeteria as a la carte and for competitive food offerings.
- The Food Service Director will work closely with the district-wide Coordinated School Health and Wellness Sub-Committee.

### **A la Carte, Vending and All Foods Sold on Campus**

#### **Food:**

- Encourage the consumption of nutrient dense foods, i.e. Whole Grains, Fresh Fruits & Vegetables, and Dairy Products.
- Any given food item for sale prior to the start of the school day and throughout the instructional day, will meet the District Nutrition Standards for Vending and A la Carte Foods. Refer to attached detailed District Nutrition Standards for Vending and A la Carte Foods.

#### **Beverages:**

- ONLY Milk, Water, and beverages containing 50-100% fruit juices with no added artificial sweeteners may be sold on school grounds both immediately prior to and throughout the instructional day. This standard can be phased-in over the next three school years.
- Refer to the attached detailed District Nutrition Standards for Vending and A La Carte Foods.

#### **Cafeteria Environment:**

- A cafeteria environment that provides students with a relaxed, enjoyable climate shall be developed.
- The cafeteria environment is a place where students have:
  - Adequate space to eat and clean, pleasant surroundings;
  - Adequate time to eat meals. (The School Nutrition Association (SNA) recommends at least 20 minutes for lunch from the time students are seated with their food); and
  - Convenient access to hand washing or hand sanitizing facilities before meals.

#### **Fundraising:**

- All fund-raising projects shall follow the District Nutrition Standards for Vending and A La Carte Foods.
- All fund raising projects for sale and consumption within and prior to the instructional day will follow the District Nutrition Standards for Vending and A La Carte Foods when determining the items being sold.
- No candy will be sold for fundraising. Candy is defined as any processed food item that has:
  1. sugar (including brown sugar, corn sweetener, corn syrup, fructose, glucose dextrose, high fructose corn syrup, honey, invert sugar, lactose, maltose, molasses, raw sugar, table sugar /sucrose, syrup listed as one of the first two ingredients  
AND
  2. sugar is more than 25% of the item by weight.
- Non-food based fundraisers are encouraged
- Fundraisers that promote physical activity are encouraged

**Teacher-to-Student Rewards and Incentive:**

It is the intent of the school district that rewards and incentives do not undermine efforts put forth in the nutrition policy. Therefore, the district prohibits the use of food as reward or punishment in the classroom or in the school environment. All teachers must comply with the District Nutrition Standards for Vending and A La Carte Foods in the classroom.

**Classroom and Afterschool Program Snacks:**

Classroom and after school program snacks provided by the teacher must comply with District Nutrition Standards for Vending and A La Carte Foods.

**Celebrations:**

Celebrations include, but are not limited to, birthdays, holidays, pot-lucks, etc. The school district may choose to handle celebrations in a variety of ways:

- Non-food celebrations only
- All celebrations must comply with District Nutrition Standards for Vending and A La Carte Foods.
- Celebrations are limited to a designated number of times per year
- Food for celebrations are handled in a safe manner; hot foods kept hot and cold foods kept cold.

**School Stores:**

School Stores who sell food during the school day must comply with District Nutrition Standards for Vending and A La Carte Foods.

**Concessions:**

Starting in 2007-08 school concessions will offer water, 100% juice and low-fat milk or flavored milks with no more than 4 grams of sugar per ounce at events.

**Exemption:**

*(School districts may want to specify an exemption from the District Nutrition Standards. It is recommended that the exemption be included in the policy language for community-wide clarity.)*

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

**Definitions for the purposes of this policy:**

**Physical Activity (PA)** -is any leisure or non-leisure movement of the body that expends energy, such as exercise, sports, dance, mobility training or physical therapy, brisk walking, swimming or other body movements that result in an increased heart rate.

**Physical Education (PE)** -a sequential, developmentally appropriate K to 12 curriculum, in accordance with the Rhode Island Physical Education Framework, enabling students to develop the knowledge, motor skills, self-management skills, attitudes and confidence needed to adopt and maintain physical activity throughout their lives.

**Adapted Physical Education and Physical Activities** -are those designed for a student whose special needs or other health conditions require alternative safe and appropriate physical activities that meet their specific needs.

**District Physical Activity Goal:** To provide daily physical activity and physical education opportunities, empowering students with the knowledge and skills to lead a physically active lifestyle.

The \_\_\_\_\_ School District shall utilize the following Implementation Strategies:

**A. Physical Education: PE and/or adapted PE will be available for all students.**

1. Every student in grades k-12 should participate in daily PE for the entire school year with the state mandated requirement as the minimum time allotment. The NASPE recommendation is for 150 minutes per week in elementary grades and 225 minutes in high school.
2. District shall establish specific learning goals and objectives for PE. A sequential, developmentally appropriate curriculum shall be designed, implemented, and evaluated to help students develop the knowledge, motor skills, self-management skills, attitudes, and confidence needed to adopt and maintain physical activity throughout their lives.
3. District will implement recommended guidelines for school PE/PA leaders established by the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) enabling students to achieve and maintain a high level of personal fitness:
  - Expose students to a wide variety of physical activities
  - Teach physical skills to help maintain a lifetime of health and fitness
  - Encourage self-monitoring enabling students to set and achieve fitness goals
  - Individualize fitness/activity programs
  - Help students to establish a personal fitness baseline and create individual fitness benchmarks to monitor progress
  - Be active/positive role models
4. District will implement recommended PE/PA guidelines for students K-12 established by NASPE:
  - Children should accumulate at least 60 minutes, and up to several hours, of age appropriate physical activity on all (or most) days of the week, including during afterschool programs
  - Children should participate in several bouts of PA lasting 15 minutes or more each day
  - Children should participate in a variety of age appropriate physical activities designed to achieve optimal health
  - Extended periods (periods of 2 hours or more) of inactivity are discouraged for children during daytime hours
5. District will implement health-related fitness assessment:
  - Introduce developmentally appropriate components of a health-related fitness assessment (e.g. FitnessGram, Physical Best or the President’s Challenge) in kindergarten or first grade.
  - Beginning in middle school and continuing through high school a health-related fitness assessment should be administered to all students.

**B. Physical Activity: PA and/or adapted PA opportunities will be available for all students daily: before, during and after school.**

1. Provide adequate, developmentally appropriate, safe facilities and recreation areas for PA.
2. Develop student understanding of all procedures and information to minimize risks associated with PA
3. Collaborate with qualified professionals and organizations in the community contributing to PA opportunities.
4. Require the incorporation of NASPE Guidelines, as listed in 3 and 4 above, throughout all district PA activities.

**C. District will create opportunities and devote resources for STAFF to engage in physical activity.**

This policy will go into effect \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_