

## Northshore Education Consortium Wellness Policy

### Policy Intent/Rationale

The Northshore Education Consortium promotes healthy programs by supporting wellness, good nutrition, regular physical activity appropriate to each student's strengths and challenges, and positive dietary and lifestyle practices as part of the total learning environment. Our schools contribute to the basic health status of children by facilitating learning through the support and promotion of good nutrition and physical activity. Improved health optimizes student performance potential and ensures that children need to be healthy to learn and learn to be healthy. The following information builds a rationale for the development of this policy:

- Children need access to healthful foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn and thrive.
- Good health fosters student attendance and education.
- 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.
- 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.

To support wellness, good nutrition, and regular physical activity, the Northshore Education Consortium will do the following:

- Empower program faculties and parents to act as partners with program directors, NEC physician, and food service, in developing, implementing, monitoring, reviewing, and, as necessary, revising nutrition and physical activity guidelines.
- Engage all stakeholders in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing consortium wide nutrition and physical activity policies.
- Provide a comprehensive learning environment for developing and practicing lifelong wellness behaviors. The entire school environment, not just the classroom, shall be aligned with healthy program goals to positively influence a student's understanding, beliefs and habits as they relate to good nutrition and regular physical activity. The consortium will provide in-service opportunities geared toward educating students to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity.
- Support and promote proper dietary habits contributing to students' health status and academic performance. To the extent possible, all foods available on school grounds and at school-sponsored activities during the instructional day should meet or exceed the nutritional guidelines set forth by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). In addition, all programs in the collaborative will participate in available federal school meal programs. 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, safety and packaging. Students will have access to affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet their health and nutrition needs, and a clean, safe, pleasant setting and adequate time to eat.
- Develop Food Allergy Guidelines are being to ensure an Allergy-Aware settings for our students.
- Provide opportunities for students to engage in physical activity. Physical activity / education is an essential component for all students to learn about and participate in. Physical activity will include physical activities as well as co-curricular activities and recess, when developmentally appropriate. All students will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis commensurate with their capabilities.
- Commit to improving academic performance for all students. Educators, health and nutrition staff, administrators, and parents 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.
- Create a monitoring and accountability system. To ensure that the wellness policy is enacted, there will be an assessment system created to monitor progress. A Wellness Committee will be established including the Executive Director or designee, NEC physician, parent(s), nursing staff, occupational therapy staff, physical therapy staff, SLP staff, teacher representatives, and curriculum directors. The committee will meet quarterly and will provide an annual report summarizing status of wellness policy and procedures and compliance with policy.

## Northshore Education Consortium Wellness Guidelines on Physical Activity and Nutrition

The Northshore Education Consortium is committed to providing school environments that promote and protect students' health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, it is the policy of the Northshore Education Consortium that:

- The consortium will engage students, parents, teachers, food service provider, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing district-wide nutrition and physical activity policies.
- All students in consortium programs 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.
- Students will be provided with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students and will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.
- To the maximum extent practicable, the Northshore Education Consortium will participate in available federal school meal programs.
- Programs will provide nutrition lessons aimed at fostering lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity among students, and will establish linkages between health education and school meal programs, and with related community services.

### TO ACHIEVE THESE GOALS:

#### 1. Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served on Campus

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
- serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (to be defined by USDA)
- ensure that half of the served grains are whole grain

Schools should engage students and parents, 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 the NEC website, on cafeteria menu boards.

**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:

Schools will, to the extent possible, operate the School Breakfast Program.

Schools 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, or breakfast during morning break or recess.

Schools that serve breakfast to students will notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast Program.

Schools will encourage parents to provide a healthy breakfast for their children through newsletter articles, take-home materials, or other means.

#### Meal Times and Scheduling. Programs:

- 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 10:30 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 provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks
- 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. Food service is provided by a vendor who meets the standards for nutrition.

Sharing of Foods and Beverages. Programs should discourage students and staff from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some students' diets. The Northshore Education Consortium will continue to implement Food Allergy Guidelines.

#### STRIVING TO MEET THESE GUIDELINES:

##### Beverages:

Preferred: water or seltzer water<sup>1</sup> without added caloric sweeteners; fruit and vegetable juices and fruit-based drinks that contain at least 50% fruit juice and that do not contain additional caloric sweeteners; unflavored or flavored low-fat or fat-free fluid milk and nutritionally-equivalent nondairy beverages (to be defined by USDA)

Non-preferred: soft drinks containing caloric sweeteners; sports drinks; iced teas; fruit-based drinks that contain less than 50% real fruit juice or that contain additional caloric sweeteners; beverages containing caffeine, excluding low-fat or fat-free chocolate milk (which contain trivial amounts of caffeine).

##### Foods:

A food item sold individually:

- will have no more than 35% of its calories from fat (excluding nuts, seeds, peanut butter, and other nut butters) and 10% of its calories from saturated and trans fat combined
- will have no more than 35% of its weight from added sugars
- 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.
- Fruits and/or non-fried vegetables should be included in provided meals. Such items could include, but are not limited to, fresh fruits and vegetables; 100% fruit or vegetable juice; fruit-based drinks that are at least 50% fruit juice and that do not contain additional caloric sweeteners; 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: Limit portion sizes of foods and beverages sold individually to those listed below:

- One and one-quarter ounces for chips, crackers, popcorn, cereal, trail mix, nuts, seeds, dried fruit, or jerky
- One ounce for cookies
- Two ounces for cereal bars, granola bars, pastries, muffins, doughnuts, bagels, and other bakery items
- Four fluid ounces for frozen desserts, including, but not limited to, low-fat or fat-free ice cream;
- Eight ounces for non-frozen yogurt
- Twelve fluid ounces for beverages, excluding water
- The portion size of a la carte entrees and side dishes, including potatoes, will not be greater than the size of comparable portions offered as part of school meals. Fruits and non-fried vegetables are exempt from portion-size limits.

Snacks: Snacks served during the school day or in school related activities will make a positive contribution to children's diets and health, with an emphasis on healthy choices. Program personnel will assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, student's nutritional needs, student's ages, and other considerations. The consortium will disseminate a list of healthy snack items to program personnel, and parents.

Fundraising Activities: To support student's health and school nutrition-education efforts, Northshore Education Consortium will encourage fundraising activities that promote healthy food choices and physical activity. The consortium will make available a list of ideas for **acceptable fundraising activities**.

**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 meet the nutrition standards for meals or for foods and beverages sold individually (above).

## 2. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing

Nutrition Education and Promotion: The Northshore Education Consortium aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Schools should provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- Is integrated in school wide curriculum

---

<sup>1</sup> Surprisingly, seltzer water may not be sold during meal times in areas of the school where food is sold or eaten because it is considered a "Food of Minimal Nutritional Value" (Appendix B of 7 CFR Part 210).

- Is part of 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 farm visits, and school gardens
- Promotes fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices;
- Where appropriate, emphasizes portion sizes and physical activity
- Links with school meal programs, other school foods, and nutrition-related community service
- Includes training / curriculum for teachers and other staff
- Does not use unhealthy food as a reward

**Encouraging Physical Activity:** To the extent possible, in order for students to receive the nationally-recommended amount of daily physical activity (at least 60 minutes per day) and for students to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior, the consortium will provide opportunities for physical activity throughout the school day. Student involvement in other activities involving physical activity (e.g., interscholastic or intramural sports) will be encouraged. 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.

**Communications with Parents:** The consortium will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. The consortium will offer healthy eating information and physical activity suggestions for parents, and provide nutrient analyses of school menus. Programs 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 consortium will encourage parents to make healthy choices for celebrations/parties, rewards, and fundraising activities. The consortium will provide information about physical education 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 the NEC newsletter, or other take-home materials, or special events.

**Staff Wellness:** The Northshore Education Consortium highly values the health and well-being of every staff member and will research and plan workshops and activities aimed at staff wellness.

### 3. Monitoring and Policy Review

**Monitoring The Wellness Committee** will ensure compliance with established consortium -wide nutrition and health and wellness policy through annual review and goal setting.