



Merritt Academy

Local Wellness Policy

EVALUATED
1/2023
1/2024
1/2025

Preface

In accordance with 7 CFR 210.31(c), a Local Education Agency that participates in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and/or School Breakfast Program (SBP) must establish a Local School Wellness Policy for all schools under its jurisdiction. As of June 30, 2017, Local Wellness Policies must meet the minimum requirements set forth in the Final Rule: Local School Wellness Policy Implementation Under the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.

Local Wellness Policies are a valuable tool in the promotion of student health and wellness through the NSLP and SBP. Schools play an essential role in preparing students for successful futures, and proper nutrition and physical activity are key to creating constructivist learning environments. Local Wellness Policies provide guidance to further support schools efforts to provide students with a successful and healthy future.

Wellness Policy Committee

Wellness Policy Leadership

Jacque White/Rose Scianimanico Food Service Directors

[Local Education Agencies are required to designate at least one school official as having the responsibility of ensuring that schools within the District adhere to Wellness Policy goals and procedures. This person(s) is also responsible for coordinating the required triennial assessments. LEAs are required to identify the title of the school official(s) in the Wellness Policy Leadership position in the content of the Wellness Policy, however, private contact information of this staff person(s) are not required to be published. The U.S. Department of Agriculture encourages LEAs to offer a means of contact to the public. This may be done through a school-based phone number and/or email address.]

Wellness Policy Committee Members

Tammy Visger, Food Service Director

Alicia Cottrell, Food Service Director

Pam Bakeman, Food Service Director

Aaron Gainer, Physical Education Teacher

Nathan Seiferlein, School Principal

Wellness Policy Committee Responsibilities

Public Involvement

[LEAs must ensure public involvement in the Local Wellness Policy process in order to promote transparency and inclusion. Therefore, LEAs must permit the general public to be a part of the Wellness Policy Committee, and language regarding this practice is required to be present in the Wellness Policy. Some examples of the general public include parents, students, healthcare professionals, local farmers, and community leaders. LEAs must also permit participation by members of the school community, including teachers, food service professionals, administrators, health professionals, and school board members. Responsibilities of Wellness Policy Committee members may include policy development, implementation, and review.]

The Local Education Agency permits and encourages public involvement in Local Wellness Policy development, implementation, updates, and reviews. Therefore, the LEA shall invite a variety of stakeholders within the general public to participate in Local Wellness Policy processes. The following methods of communication will be utilized to notify the general public of the opportunity to participate in these processes:

- School Website and School/Parent Newsletter and School Facebook Page/Social Media

Assessments

[Per USDA requirements, LEAs must conduct an assessment of the wellness policy every 3 years, at a minimum. This is commonly referred to as the “triennial assessment.” USDA also requires language regarding the Wellness Policy evaluation plan to be present in the content of the policy. LEAs must designate at least one LEA or school official(s) as responsible for determining the extent to which each school under its jurisdiction is in compliance with the Local Wellness Policy. Additionally, other stakeholders must be permitted to be involved in the review process.]

Under the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, assessments of the Local Wellness Policy must occur no less than every three years. Merritt Academy shall conduct assessments of the Local Wellness Policy every 3 years, beginning in 2022 and occurring every 3 years thereafter. These assessments will:

- Ensure the wellness policy is in compliance with USDA, State, and Local rules and regulations
- Compare the LEA’s wellness policy to model wellness policies
- Measure the progress made in achieving the goals as outlined in the LEA’s wellness policy

Updates

[It is a requirement that language outlining policy updates and how the LEA will inform the public of updates and reviews be included in the Local Wellness Policy. Per USDA requirements, LEAs must update or modify the Wellness Policy as appropriate.]

The Wellness Policy Committee must update the Local Wellness Policy as appropriate in order to fit the needs and goals of the Local Education Agency. The LEA shall make the following available to the public:

- The Local Wellness Policy, including any updates to the policy, on a yearly basis
- The triennial assessment, including progress toward meeting the goals outlined in the wellness policy

Through the following channels:

- School Website, Parent/School Newsletter, School Facebook/Social Media

Records

The Local Education Agency shall maintain record of the Local Wellness Policy. This includes keeping a copy of the current wellness policy on file and maintaining documentation of the following actions:

- The most recent assessment of the policy
- Availability of the wellness policy and assessments to the public
- Reviews and revisions of the policy, including the individuals involved and the efforts made to notify stakeholders of their ability to participate in the process

Nutrition

The Local Education Agency recognizes the important role nutrition plays in academic performance as well as overall quality of life. The National Education Association references numerous articles supporting the effects of nutrition on the classroom, for example, hunger often has a negative impact on students' success, attendance, and behavior.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 18.5 percent of the nation's youth was considered obese in 2015-16. This percentage increased 1.3 percent when compared to the previous year. Conversely, 15.7 percent of American families experienced food hardship in 2017. Through participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's School Nutrition Programs, the LEA commits to serving nutritious meals to students in order to prevent both overconsumption of nutrient-poor foods and food insecurity to give students the best chance to succeed inside and outside the classroom.

Nutrition Standards

Meals

[Nutrition standards for reimbursable meals consistent with Federal guidelines must be included in the content of the Wellness Policy.]

All reimbursable meals served for the purposes of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) must meet or exceed USDA nutrition standards and regulations. This includes meeting standards for each of the meal pattern components (i.e. Grains, Meat/Meat Alternates, Fruits, Vegetables, and Milk) as well as meeting or exceeding the limitations set for calories, sodium, saturated fat, and trans fat.

Competitive Foods

[Nutrition standards for competitive food and beverage items sold on campus during the school day that are consistent with Federal regulations must be included in the content of the Wellness Policy.]

All competitive foods and beverages sold must comply with the USDA Smart Snacks in Schools nutrition standards (7 CFR 210.31(c)(3)(iii)). Competitive foods and beverages refer to those that are sold to students outside the reimbursable meal on the school campus (i.e. locations on the school campus that are accessible to students) during the school day (i.e. the midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the school day). This includes, but is not limited to, vending machine and à la carte items.

Other Foods and Beverages

[Nutrition standards for all food and beverage items provided, but not sold, to students on campus during the school day must be included in the content of the Wellness Policy. LEAs may choose Option A or Option B based on the needs of the applicable organization, or create their own "Other Foods and Beverages" policy as appropriate. It is not a requirement for LEAs to prohibit using food as a reward or as part of a celebration, however, it is considered a best practice and encouraged by the USDA. Additionally, the Final Rule does not require LEAs to apply competitive foods standards to foods and beverages that are provided, but not sold to students. An LEA's policy for "Other Foods and Beverages" can be made at the Local level.]

- A. The following policy refers to all foods and beverages provided, but not sold to students. The Local Education Agency will prohibit the use of food as a reward or as part of a celebration. Providing alternatives to food as a reward promotes healthier habits by reducing exposure to less nutritious food items and, therefore, the amount of calorie-dense food items consumed (e.g. cakes, cookies, candy, etc.). This helps children develop improved food

preferences and hunger cues to carry them throughout life. Instead, schools will implement the following methods for rewards and celebrations:

- Be a helper in another classroom, Dance to favorite music in the classroom, Get “Free Choice” time at the end of the day.
- B. The following policy refers to all foods and beverages provided, but not sold to students. The Local Education Agency will prohibit food and beverage items that do not meet Smart Snacks nutrition standards for reward and celebration purposes. More than 25 percent of children’s daily calories may come from snacks, therefore, providing Smart Snacks allows for a more nutrient-dense calorie intake.

Fundraisers

[LEAs may choose Option A or Option B based on the needs of the applicable organization, or create a description based on their own fundraising practices. If the LEA utilizes exempted fundraising days (i.e. those in which food and/or beverage items sold do not meet Smart Snacks nutrition standards), the LEA’s policy for reviewing and approving/denying exempted fundraising days must be outlined in the Wellness Policy. Please note, a list of approved requests must be maintained. Exempted fundraising days are prohibited for Grades 8 and below. Grades 9 through 12 are limited to no more than nine exempted fundraising days per school year.]

- A. All fundraisers promoting food and/or beverage items that are held on school campus (i.e. locations on the school campus that are accessible to students) during the school day (i.e. the midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the school day) must meet Smart Snacks nutrition standards.

The school shall also utilize non-food fundraisers to promote healthy habits and well-being. The school will implement the following non-food fundraising ideas:

- Jump Rope For Heart
- B. Fundraisers promoting food and/or beverage items that are held on school campus (i.e. locations on the school campus that are accessible to students) during the school day (i.e. the midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the school day) must meet Smart Snacks nutrition standards. However, the LEA may participate in infrequent exempted fundraising days, in which food and beverage items do not meet Smart Snacks standards, as the LEA sees fit. *[This statement may apply only to certain schools within an LEA. See guidance below.]* These exempted fundraising days shall not exceed nine days within one year. The LEA shall comply with the following procedures when managing exempted fundraising days:

- Fund Raising Tracker Tool

Nutrition Education

[Specific goals for nutrition education and promotion must be included in the Local Wellness Policy. These goals must be developed using evidence-based strategies. The goals outlined below are examples of goals an LEA may incorporate into their Wellness Policy. However, schools know what goals best fit their needs, and LEAs are encouraged to edit the following section as needed.]

In accordance with the Michigan Learning Standards, the Local Education Agency shall meet all Michigan requirements and standards for Health Education. The Local Education Agency shall include nutrition education within the health education curriculum and integrate nutrition education into other core subjects, as appropriate. Various grade levels and curriculums shall use nutrition education information, research, and materials from the following resources:

- My Plate, Team Nutrition, United Dairy Council

The Local Education Agency shall incorporate nutrition education into the following curriculums for the following grade levels:

- Nutrition unit in Health class, Nutrition unit in Physical Education Class

[It is not a requirement for Local Education Agencies to include specific numbers of hours and frequencies in Local Wellness Policies. However, it is encouraged by the USDA in order for schools to better determine if they are meeting Nutrition Education goals. When developing goals for Nutrition Education, it is important for Wellness Policy Committee members to collaborate with individuals involved in providing curriculum to students. This may include teachers, principals, superintendents, school nurses, and other staff members.]

Nutrition Promotion

The District shall implement nutrition promotion techniques through multiple channels, including the cafeteria, classroom, and home.

The District shall make cafeteria menus and nutrition information available through the following platforms:

- School Website, Hand-outs in school office, Menus posted in cafeteria

Marketing

[LEAs that choose to allow food and beverage marketing in their facilities are required to include policy language that only allows the marketing of foods and beverages that meet the competitive foods standards. However, schools can always follow stricter policies than required by the USDA. LEAs may choose Option A or Option B based on the needs of the applicable organization, or create their own description as appropriate.]

- A. The Local Education Agency will prohibit the marketing and advertising of all foods and beverages that do not meet Smart Snacks nutrition standards on the school campus (i.e. locations on the school campus that are accessible to students) during the school day (i.e. the midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the school day). The marketing standards described above apply, but are not limited to, oral, written, and graphic statements made for promotional purposes. Items subject to marketing requirements include, but are not limited to, posters, menu boards, vending machines, coolers, trash cans, scoreboards, and other equipment. This policy does not require schools to immediately replace equipment that does not meet this requirement, however, the District shall implement these standards as equipment needs replaced in the future.
- B. The Local Education Agency will prohibit the marketing and advertising of all foods and beverages on the school campus (i.e. locations on the school campus that are accessible to students) during the school day (i.e. the midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the school day). The marketing standards described above apply, but are not limited to, oral, written, and graphic statements made for promotional purposes. Items subject to marketing requirements include, but are not limited to, posters, menu boards, vending machines, coolers, trash cans, scoreboards, and other equipment. This policy does not require schools to immediately replace equipment that does not meet this requirement, however, the District shall implement these standards as equipment needs replaced in the future.

[Schools may choose Option A or Option B based on the needs of the applicable District, or create their own description as appropriate. LEAs that choose to allow food and beverage marketing in schools are required to include policy language that only allows the marketing of food and beverages that meet the competitive foods standards.]

Physical Activity

[Specific goals for physical activity must be included in the Local Wellness Policy. These goals must be developed using evidence-based strategies. The goals outlined below are examples of goals an LEA may incorporate into their Wellness Policy. However, schools know what goals best fit their needs, and LEAs are encouraged to edit the following section as needed.]

Physical activity is a key component of the health and well-being of all students. Physical activity lowers the risk for certain diseases, including obesity, heart disease, and diabetes. Physical activity also helps improve brain function, allowing students to perform better in school.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends adolescents get at least 60 minutes of physical activity five days per week. Nearly 79 percent of school-age children fall short of meeting this requirement. The Local Education Agency recognizes this connection and commits to promoting and providing opportunities for physical activity during and outside the school day.

Physical Education

In accordance with the Michigan Learning Standards, the Local Education Agency shall meet all Michigan requirements and standards for Physical Education. The LEA shall offer Physical Education class as follows:

- All Elem. and M.S. students will have 90 minutes of P.E. a week and H.S. 255 minutes

Other Opportunities for Physical Activity

The District shall include additional physical activity opportunities, outside of Physical Education class, during the school day through the following:

- Recess, Brain Breaks (action songs), ACES

[It is not a Local Wellness Policy requirement for Local Education Agencies to include the number of hours of Physical Education class and other opportunities for physical activity offered to students. However, it may help schools determine the effectiveness of physical activity and education practices based on the schools' needs.]

The following opportunities for participation in school-based sports shall be offered to students each year:

- Girls/Boys Basketball, Cheerleading, Boys/Girls Soccer, Girls Softball, Boys Baseball

Physical Activity Promotion

The District shall promote physical activity through the participation in the following initiative(s):

- ACES-All Children Exercise Simultaneously

[Wellness Policy Committee members should coordinate with appropriate staff members when developing goals for Physical Activity. This may include teachers, coaches, school nurses, and other school staff members.]

Other School-Based Activities

[Specific goals for other school-based activities that promote wellness must be included in the Local Wellness Policy. These goals must be developed using evidence-based strategies. The goals outlined below are examples of goals an LEA may incorporate into their Wellness Policy. However, schools know what goals best fit their needs, and LEAs are encouraged to edit the following section as needed.]

Just as it takes a comprehensive curriculum to provide education to support students' futures, the Local Education Agency's wellness approach must also be comprehensive in its intent to provide students with the tools they need to live a healthy lifestyle. In order to further establish positive behaviors related to nutrition, physical activity, and health, the LEA commits to making additional wellness-based activities available to all students beyond the cafeteria and gymnasium.

The Local Education Agency shall offer other school-based activities to support student health and wellness, including coordinated events and clubs. The following events shall be organized and promoted each year:

- Try Days

[Committee members should work with those involved in the planning and operation of Other School-Based Activities. This may include school nutrition professionals, teachers, other school staff members, Parent Teacher Organizations, and student groups.]