

Purpose and Goal

The link between nutrition and learning is well documented. Healthy eating patterns are essential for students to achieve their full academic potential, full physical and mental growth, and life-long health and well-being. Healthy eating is demonstrably linked to reduced risk for mortality and development of many chronic diseases as adults. Schools have a responsibility to help students and staff establish and maintain lifelong, healthy eating patterns. Well-planned and well-implemented school nutrition programs have been shown to positively influence students' eating habits.

All students shall possess the knowledge and skills necessary to make nutritious and enjoyable food choices for a lifetime. In addition, staff are encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity as a valuable part of daily life. The District shall prepare, adopt, and implement a comprehensive plan to encourage healthy eating and physical activity. This plan shall make effective use of school and community resources and equitably serve the needs and interests of all students and staff, taking into consideration differences in cultural norms.

**Commitment to
Nutrition and
Physical Activity**

In order to promote the District's commitment to good nutrition and physical activity:

1. The Board will appoint a school health advisory council (SHAC). The SHAC shall address nutrition and physical activity issues and shall develop, implement, and evaluate guidelines that support a healthy school nutrition environment. This committee will offer revisions to these guidelines annually or more often if necessary.
2. Principals will address concerns such as the types of foods available on campus, sufficient mealtime, nutrition education, and physical activity.
3. Nutrition education shall be integrated across the curriculum and physical activity will be encouraged daily.
4. The school food service staff will participate in making decisions and creating guidelines that will affect the school environment.
5. The District will provide an environment that fosters safe and enjoyable fitness activities for all students, including those who are not participating in competitive sports.
6. Physical education classes will regularly emphasize moderate to vigorous activity.
7. The District will encourage teachers to integrate physical activity into the academic curriculum where appropriate.

8. Teachers and other school staff will receive training to promote enjoyable, life-long physical activity for themselves and students.
9. The District will encourage parents to support their children's participation, to be active role models, and to include physical activity in family events.

Quality School Meals

The District shall ensure that nutrition guidelines for reimbursable school meals shall be at least as restrictive as federal regulations and guidance and that all foods available on each campus are in accordance with the Texas Public School Nutrition Policy. [See CO]

1. The District will offer breakfast, lunch, and after-school snack programs. Students and staff are highly encouraged to promote and participate in these programs.
2. School food service staff, who are properly qualified according to current professional standards and who regularly participate in professional development activities, will administer the child nutrition programs.
3. Food safety will be a key part of the school food service operation.
4. Menus will conform to good menu planning principles, and will feature a variety of healthy choices that are tasty, attractive, of excellent quality, and are served at the proper temperature.
5. Students will be given the opportunity to provide input on local, cultural, and ethnic favorites.
6. School personnel, along with parents, will encourage students to choose and consume full meals.
7. Positive nutrition statements will be provided to students on a daily basis.

Other Healthy Food Options

The following will provide options and support healthy food choices:

1. The SHAC will develop and recommend to the administration guidelines on nutrition standards for food and beverages sold in schools. This includes snack bars, a la carte, vending, and non-exempt fundraising on campus. School campus is defined as all areas of the property under the jurisdiction of the school that are accessible to students during the day. A school day is defined as the period from the midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day.

2. All students will be encouraged to bring healthy food items from home.
3. Competitive foods is any food item(s) sold on the school campus, during the school day, that is not part of the reimbursable meal. All food items sold must meet one of the four general standards to be considered for sale. Be whole grain as the first ingredient, combination food, ten percent daily value. An items category will determine the total calories allowed and total sodium.
4. Elementary classrooms may serve one nutritious snack per day in the morning or afternoon (not during lunch time) under the teachers' guidance. The snack may be provided by the school food service, the teacher, the parents, or other groups and should be at no cost to the student. Any food or beverage item not provided by the school food service must be individually wrapped and packaged.
5. School staff shall not use food as a reward for student accomplishment. The withholding of food as punishment is prohibited, for example, restricting a child's selection of flavored milk at mealtime due to misbehavior in the classroom.
6. The District will provide nutritional information to parents that will encourage parents to provide safe and nutritious food for their children.
7. Organizations shall only use nonfood items or food designed for delivery and consumption after school hours as fundraisers. Food items for sale should be evaluated by using the Nutrition Calculator on the child nutrition website, USDA Smart Snacks webpage, Alliance for Healthier Generation, or squaremeals.com. For example, barbecue plate sales after school hours would be acceptable. The sale of individually wrapped candy (i.e., candy bars) as a fundraiser is prohibited; however, packaged candy gift items are allowed provided they are only part of a fundraising project that includes other gift items (i.e., nuts, candies, jewelry) as well. Texas schools are allowed up to six exempt fundraisers per campus per school year. Appropriate documentation of items sold must be available for review during a TDA Administrative Review.
8. Organizations operating concessions at school functions should include some healthy food choices in their offerings. It is recommended that groups market these healthy options at a lower profit margin to encourage selection by students.

**Pleasant Eating
Experience**

The District will endeavor to provide a pleasant eating experience through the following:

1. Facility design will be given priority in renovations and new construction.
2. Drinking fountains will be available for students to get water at meal times and throughout the day.
3. A short snack-free recess for elementary campuses is encouraged to be scheduled sometime before lunch so that children will come to lunch less distracted and ready to eat.
4. School personnel will assist all students in developing the healthy practice of washing hands before eating.
5. School personnel will schedule appropriately so that students do not have to spend too much time waiting in line.
6. Schools should not schedule tutoring, pep rallies, assemblies, club or organization meetings, or other activities during meal times.
7. Adequate time to eat in a pleasant dining environment should be provided. The minimum eating time for each child after being served will be ten minutes for breakfast and 20 minutes for lunch.
8. Schools will encourage socializing among students and between students and adults.
9. Adults will properly supervise dining rooms and serve as role models to students by demonstrating proper conduct and voice level, and by eating with the students. Parents are highly encouraged to dine with students in the cafeteria.
10. Creative, innovative methods will be used to keep noise levels appropriate.

Nutrition Education

The District shall implement, in accordance with law, a coordinated health program with a nutrition education component [see EHAB and EHAC] and shall use health course curriculum that emphasizes the importance of proper nutrition [see EHAA].

In addition, the District establishes the following goals for nutrition education:

1. Students in prekindergarten–grade 12 will receive nutrition education that is interactive and teaches the skills they need to adopt healthy eating behaviors.

2. Teachers are encouraged to integrate nutrition education into core curriculum areas such as mathematics, science, social studies, and language arts as applicable.
3. Nutrition education will be offered in the school dining room and in the classroom, with coordination between school food service staff and teachers. Teachers can display posters, videos, websites, and the like on nutrition topics.
4. District campuses will participate in USDA nutrition programs such as "Team Nutrition" and conduct nutrition education activities and promotions that involve students, parents, and the community. The school nutrition team responsible for these activities will be composed of child nutrition services staff, student services staff, school nurses, health teachers, and physical education coaches.

Marketing

Wellness messages will be marketed in the following ways:

1. Students will receive positive, motivating messages, both verbal and nonverbal, about healthy eating and physical activity throughout the school setting. All school personnel will help reinforce these positive messages.
2. Schools will consider student needs in planning for a healthy school nutrition environment. Students will be asked for input and feedback through the use of student surveys, and attention will be given to their comments.
3. Schools will promote healthy food choices and will minimize advertising that promotes less nutritious food choices.
4. Healthy eating and physical activity will be actively promoted to students, parents, teachers, administrators, the community at registration, PTO meetings, open houses, health fairs, teacher in-services, etc.
5. Schools will work with a variety of media to spread the word to the community about a healthy school nutrition environment, such as local newspapers and television stations.

Implementation

Implementation of the policy shall be as follows:

1. The SHAC shall be composed of parents and District staff.
2. Each Board member shall nominate two parents/community representatives to serve on the SHAC.
3. Each campus principal shall select staff members, such as a teacher, nurse, school counselor, or administrator to represent the campus.

4. The SHAC members from each campus will conduct a review of their respective campuses in the fall semester of each year to identify areas for improvement. These groups will report their findings to the campus principal and discuss areas of need with the SHAC.
5. The SHAC will hear reports from each campus group.
6. The Safety Audit Team will present pertinent campus findings to the SHAC and discuss recommendations.
7. The SHAC will report quarterly to the Superintendent on the progress of the committee and the status of compliance by the campuses.
8. Before the end of each school year, the committee will provide the Superintendent with any recommended revisions to the student nutrition/wellness plan.