

# Vernon Parish School Board Health and Wellness Policy

2013-2014

## Purpose

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Child Nutrition and Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) Reauthorization Act of 2004 requires that each local educational agency (LEA) participating in the National School Lunch Program establish a local school Wellness Policy by July 1, 2006.

This Wellness Policy establishes a formal system of building a world-class school environment that is safe and healthy, thereby enhancing the potential for academic achievement among students. A healthy child in a nurturing and safe environment has a better attendance record and performs better in school than a child who is not. Whereas hunger in America still exists, obesity among children and adolescents has risen over the past 20 years and continues to be a concern. Few children eat a healthy diet consistent with recommendations established by health professionals. Students consume extra calories from foods and beverages that are high in sugar and fat and low in nutrients. Physical inactivity and excessive caloric intake are the main causes of obesity. Chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes are responsible for a majority of deaths in the United States, and major risk factors for those diseases, including unhealthy eating habits and physical inactivity, often are established in childhood. Students need access to healthful foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow and learn.

Although school districts around the country are facing significant fiscal and scheduling constraints, schools and the community must collaborate to develop and implement successful school wellness policies that are dynamic and meet the needs of the students in the district. In addition to health and physical education, the school environment should provide a model of life skills related to healthful eating and physically active habits.

Thus, the Vernon Parish District is committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity habits.

The areas addressed in the Wellness Policy include:

1. Nutrition services guidance
2. Nutrition education
3. Physical activity and physical education
4. Communication and promotion of the Wellness Policy
5. Monitoring adherence and evaluation
6. The Tobacco Policy

## Nutrition Services

Foods and beverages sold or served at school will meet the nutrition requirements as outlined in *Bulletin 1196, Louisiana Food and Nutrition Programs, Policies of Operations*. Qualified Child Nutrition Program 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 religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning; and will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.

## School Meals

The Vernon Parish School District will:

1. Offer a school lunch program with menus that meet the meal patterns and nutrition standards established by the USDA Child Nutrition Program and the Louisiana Department of Education, Office of School and Community Support.
2. Provide school breakfast programs (where approved and applicable) with menus that meet the meal patterns and nutrition standards established by USDA and the Louisiana Department of Education, Office of School and Community Support.
3. Encourage students, school staff, and families to participate in school meal programs. Nutrition and meal pamphlets will be available for parent access.
4. Strive to operate all Child Nutrition Programs with school foodservice staff who are qualified according to current professional standards.
5. Provide professional development opportunities for food service staff.
6. Ensure that food safety and sanitation are followed throughout the school, including providing facilities to wash hands before preparing and eating food.
7. Ensure that the food service permit is current for the Food Service school site.
8. Offer whole and enriched grain products that are high in fiber, low in added fats and sugars, and served in appropriate portion sizes that are consistent with the current USDA standards.
9. Offer fresh, frozen, canned or dried fruits and vegetables using healthy food preparation techniques and 100 percent fruit or vegetable juice.
10. Offer nonfat, reduced-fat, low-fat, plain and/or flavored dairy products.
11. Offer whole-grain breads and cereals.
12. Use healthy food preparation techniques for lean meat, poultry, and fish, such as baking.
13. Encourage that all foods brought into the cafeteria meet the USDA Child Nutrition Guidelines.
14. Ensure that school meals are accessible to all students with a variety of delivery strategies.
15. Ensure that students receive adequate time to eat breakfast and lunch, encouraging the recommended 30 minutes seat time for lunch.
16. Provide a cafeteria environment that is conducive to a positive dining experience, with socializing among students and between students and adults; encouraging supervision of eating areas by adults who model proper conduct and voice level; and with adults who model healthy habits by eating with the students. (Cafeterias will provide adequate supplies of hand washing soap, water and disposable towels for use at each facility.)

## **Foods and Beverages Offered Outside of the Child Nutrition Programs**

An effective Wellness Program addresses foods and beverages sold and served on campus outside of the USDA Child Nutrition Programs. Nutrition education is more effective if the foods and beverages sold and offered are healthful and consistent with what is taught in the classroom. Foods and beverages sold outside the USDA Child Nutrition Programs includes vending machines, concession stores, school parties, fundraising events, and rewarding/bribing students with food.

### **Vending Machine and Concession Store Laws**

Foods and beverages must meet specific nutritional criteria if on the grounds at any time during a period beginning one-half hour before the start of the school day and ending one-half hour after the end of the school day. These criteria were developed as a result of the approval of Senate Bill No. 146, Act 331 passed during the Louisiana Legislature's Regular Session in 2005.

- a. ≤ 150 calories
- b. ≤ 35% of total calories from fat
- c. ≤ 10% to total calories from saturated fat
- d. ≤ 30 grams of sugar
- e. ≤ 360 milligrams of sodium

In addition, the criteria for beverages offered for sale in public high schools was amended as a result of the passage of HB 767/Act 306 passed by the Louisiana Legislature during its 2009 Regular Session. Except for items sold as part of the school food program, the food and beverages must meet the following criteria per serving:

In high schools, beverages shall include:

- a. Bottled water
- b. No-calorie or low-calorie beverages that contain up to 10 calories per eight ounces
- c. Up to 12 ounce servings of beverages that contain 100 percent fruit juice with no added sweeteners and up to 120 calories per eight ounces.
- d. Up to 12 ounce servings of any other beverages that contains no more than 66 calories per eight ounces,
- e. At least 50% of non-milk beverages shall be water and no-calorie or low-calorie options that contain up to 10 calories per eight ounces
- f. Low-fat milk, skim milk, and non-dairy milk.

### **Foods and Beverages Sold Outside of the School Cafeteria**

The Vernon Parish school district will:

1. Follow the nutrition guidelines set by state law for vending machines and concession stands and stores.

2. Encourage the elimination use of foods and beverages as **rewards** for student accomplishment.
3. Encourage parents and school officials to provide healthful food and beverage choices at school **parties**. A list of healthy foods and beverages and non-food rewards and activities will be provided annually to administrators, students, teachers, and parents. (See appendix A for healthy snack and school party ideas.)
4. Promote **fundraisers** that sell items other than food and beverages or only foods and beverages that are nutrient dense (low in calories and high in nutrients). (See appendix B for healthy fundraising alternatives.)
5. Encourage parents and school officials to provide nutritious and appealing food and beverage options (such as fruits, vegetables, nuts, reduced-fat milk, reduced fat-yogurt, reduced-fat cheese, 100% juice and water) whenever foods/beverages are sold or otherwise offered **after school** at sporting and academic events, celebrations, social events, after school care, and other school functions.

## Nutrition Education

School-based nutrition education includes traditional classroom lessons and behavioral change programs based on social learning theory and marketing. Using all venues is recommended for optimal impact.

Nutrition is not a stand-alone course. It is taught in health education and science classes and can be integrated into core content area of instruction across the curriculum. A planned, sequential curriculum where the lessons are aligned with standards, benchmarks, and grade-level expectations is essential to impact knowledge, attitude, and behavior.

Behavior change can be enhanced through social learning theory and marketing, as well. Social learning theory may include a parent component for younger students and peer involvement for older students. School activities such as Family Nutrition Night can promote the social learning theory. Additionally, the cafeteria can be used as part of the total educational system for modeling behavior.

The Vernon Parish School District will:

1. Provide the equivalent of a six-week unit on nutrition or ensure that at a minimum of 30 hours of nutrition is taught in the classroom during the year.
2. Implement nutrition education programs that promote lifelong healthful eating practices that are research-based.
3. Use lessons that are age-appropriate, behaviorally focused content that is developmentally appropriate and culturally relevant.
4. Use curriculum and lessons that are sequential and are correlated with standards, benchmarks, and grade level expectations.

5. Provide hands-on activities that are fun and engaging.
6. Encourage repeated opportunities for students to taste foods that are low in fat, sodium and added sugars and high in vitamins, minerals and fiber.
7. Promote positive aspects of healthful eating behaviors.
8. Promote social learning techniques such as role modeling, providing incentives, developing social resistance skills, overcoming barriers to behavioral changes and goal-setting, social resistance skills, overcoming barriers to behavioral changes and goal setting.
9. Strive toward hiring qualified, certified health education teachers.
10. Provide nutrition education related staff development opportunities for teachers on an annual basis.
11. Encourage parent involvement in lessons taught and school activities.
12. Coordinate marketing activities with nutrition education classroom activities.
13. Encourage parents who come to eat lunch with their children by bringing their own meals to model good nutrition habits. Consumption of soft drinks and other non-nutritious food items brought from home or from a restaurant is discouraged.

## **Physical Education and Activity**

Daily physical activity is essential to student welfare and academic performance. Federal Guidelines recommend that children and teenagers be physically active for an accumulation of at least 60 minutes daily. Since children spend the majority of their time at school during weekdays, it is imperative that schools provide students with the means to participate in physical activity. Districts and schools, including parents and communities, must offer additional opportunities and resources for physical activity outside physical education classes.

The Vernon Parish school district will:

1. Implement quality physical education programs that emphasize and promote participation in lifelong physical activities and reaching a health enhancing level of physical fitness among all students.
2. Align the physical education lessons with standards, benchmarks, and grade-level expectations.
3. Provide students in grades K-8 with a minimum of 150 minutes per week of physical education.
4. Provide students in grades K-5 with planned, organized, and moderate to vigorous physical activity for a minimum of 30 minutes each school day.
5. Ensure that enough age-appropriate and safe equipment is in place to guarantee that all students have the opportunity to be active for physical education and physical activity.
6. Ensure that qualified, certified physical education teachers guide physical activity instruction in all elementary grades as well as in middle and high school physical education classes.

7. Provide staff development on standards implementation for physical education instructors.
8. Provide a variety of fitness training, motor skills, and team work modules in physical education required at the high school level for graduation.
9. Ensure that all high school students take one and a half units of physical education.
10. Use a recognized instrument or program such as *Fitnessgram*®, to evaluate students' physical fitness.
11. Provide daily recess for all children in K-8<sup>th</sup> grade. Encourage physical activity for elementary students during intramurals programs, clubs, and recess as well as in physical education programs.
12. Encourage physical activity during recess for elementary students, intramurals programs, and clubs, as well as in physical education programs.
13. Integrate physical activity in the academic curriculum,
14. Work with the community to create opportunities for students to walk, bike, skateboard, roller-skate, play basketball, play softball, play baseball, or participate in other physical activities in a safe location at times other than the school day.
15. Provide opportunities for parents and guardians to support students' participation in physical activities, such as a Safe Routes to School Program, to be physically active role-models, and to include physical activities in family plans.
16. Encourage school staff to participate in physical activities to serve as role models.
17. Encourage students to be active for at least half of the class time.
18. Develop students' self-confidence and eliminate practices that humiliate students.

## **Tobacco-Free School Policy**

It is important for school leaders to send a clear, consistent non-use message to their students, staff, and community by implementing a 100% Tobacco-Free policy. By implementing such a policy, school leaders will be countering the tobacco industry's influence with efforts to promote safe learning environments and healthy lifestyles.

Because tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death, disease, and disability, the Vernon Parish School Board shall provide a 100% Tobacco-Free school environment.

All tobacco products (e.g. smoke, smokeless, spit, spitless, etc.) and smoking devices are prohibited on any school campus, school vehicle, or parish school board property. School campus includes the elementary or secondary school building and buildings on that campus. School Board property shall include any portable buildings, field houses, stadiums, equipment storage areas, vacant land, or any property owned, operated, or leased by the board.

All tobacco products are also prohibited at school-sponsored functions away from school property.

Tobacco advertising is also prohibited in school buildings, at school functions, and in school publications.

### **Compliance and Enforcement**

"Tobacco-Free" signs shall be displayed on school property. Notice of this policy shall be posted at the entrances to the grounds of each school and school building, and within school vehicles.

Notice of this policy shall be given to students, all school staff, parents or families through dissemination of the student handbook every year and posted signage at each campus. The community shall be made aware of the policy by signage and handbooks as needed.

In addition to disciplinary action, those students who are found in violation of this policy shall be referred to the school's health provider (Nurse, Health Center, or Social Worker) for a tobacco intervention. The school's health provider shall have the option of referring the student to the Fax to Quit Louisiana Program, coordinated by The Department of Health and Hospitals Tobacco Control Program, which refers the student to the Louisiana Quit-line, a free counseling service done over the phone for tobacco cessation.

School employees who violate the 100% Tobacco-Free School Policy shall, in addition to disciplinary action, also be referred to the Louisiana Quit-Line (1-800-QuitNow) which is a free counseling service for tobacco cessation.

# APPENDIX A

## Snack and Party Ideas

Snacks are important to provide nutrients for growing children.

1. Include a wide variety of foods that are rich in nutrients.
2. Have healthful snacks available and easily accessible. Cut up fruits and vegetables for easy eating, especially children with loose teeth or braces.
3. Try low-fat versions of milk, ice cream, crackers, and chips.
4. Avoid using food as a reward or punishment.
5. Be a good role model by eating healthful snacks with your children/students.
6. Choose fruits and vegetables as snacks so children/students can meet the goal of eating at least three or more servings of vegetables and two or more servings of fruits a day.
7. Involve children/students in planning and shopping for foods and beverages for snacks and parties.
8. Involve students in planning a party that provides healthy food choices and activities that do not focus the party on food.
9. Offer food again, even if children/students did not like it the first time, especially fruits and vegetables. Students need repeated exposure to new foods.
10. For more information, call the free American Dietetic Association Hotline at: (800) 366-1655 or visit the website at <http://www.eatright.com>.

### Alternatives to Using Food as a Reward

Using food as a reward undermines nutrition education, encourages over consumption of extra calories, especially foods high in fat and added sugar, and teaches children to eat when they are not hungry. Some alternatives for rewarding children include:

Sit by friends Give a set of flashcards or books Reading time Extra time for art or music Hold class outside Listen to music while working Play a favorite game or puzzle Dance to favorite music	Keep a treasure box filled with non-food items Go for walks Give stickers, pencils, and other school supplies Offer dress down day Offer free time at the end of the week Eat lunch with the principal or teacher
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For more ideas, visit the following web sites:

- Michigan Department of Education Team Nutrition – <http://www.tn.fcs.msue.msu.edu>
- USDA Team Nutrition *Create Healthy, Active Celebrations*
  - <http://www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhardeducators/materials/>

## APPENDIX B

### Creative Fundraising Ideas

Healthy fundraising ideas promote consistent messages of practicing healthy eating and physical activity habits in the classroom, throughout the school, and at home. Listed below are some ideas for raising funds without selling food.

1. Sports tournament – Sell tickets to students and family members to attend a student volleyball, tennis, or golf tournament. Include some local celebrities to increase sales throughout the community.
2. Pledge ideas -- Walk-a-thon and fun runs – Hold a walk and or run on the school grounds. Ask for pledges to sponsor.
3. Spring yard work to local community members – Offer to rake yards and spread compost at a bargain rate.
4. Basketball tournament – Charge a team of three players \$40 for entrance and ask local businesses for prize donations. Provide tee shirts for the event and raise the entrance fee.
5. Plant sale – Sell perennials, herbs, or seeds; poinsettias during the holidays, and flowers for Valentine’s Day.
6. Community job fair – Rent booths for a fee to local companies and solicit free advertisements for local radio stations or newspapers. Charge an entrance fee.
7. Crafts fair – Local and regional crafts persons can rent booths for a fee. The school can charge a small entrance fee to the public.
8. School event planners – Sell planners at school registration. Planners include all event dates, such as sports events, national tests, dances, plays, etc. Fifty percent of the sales can be profits.
9. Sell seat cushions at sporting events – Sell advertisements on the cushions to 20 local businesses for \$50 – 100 to make even more money.
10. Administrative fun - Have money jars available for the students to make donations. The school secretary would count the money in the jars on a daily basis and post the total. At set dollar increments, the principal and/or vice-principal would have to do stunts, such as dress as a cheerleader, do cheers, etc.
11. Raffle of gift baskets assembled by students - Choose a theme such as gardening, sports, or arts and crafts. Most items for the baskets can be donated.
12. Sell candles, greeting cards, gift wrap, magazines, buttons, pins, pens, crafts, batteries, Frisbees, pet treats, and calendars.
13. Rent a special parking place.
14. Involve the community – Conduct workshops or classes, a scavenger hunt, a recycling program, a car wash for donations, a garage sale
15. Sell school spirit supplies – megaphones, shakers, plastic cups, T-shirts, school supplies, bumper stickers, cookbooks or books developed by the school
16. Host art, music, and science events such as a read-a-thon, spelling bee, science fair, talent show, art show, plays, and concerts

Adapted from *Twenty Ways to Raise Funds without Candy*, Illinois Nutrition Education and Training Program, Illinois Department of Education, Creative Financing and Fun Fundraising for Schools, Sports, and Clubs, California Project LEAN, and WIN Wyoming, Family and Consumer Sciences, University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service