

## WELLNESS POLICY FOR PK -12

### **POLICY:**

Somerville Public Schools envisions that all students and staff are healthy, safe, supported, engaged, and challenged. SPS recognizes that physical, social, and emotional health are linked to academic achievement and college, career, and community readiness. Students learn better in healthy schools with healthy employees.

This policy is intended to (1) promote healthy lifestyles by establishing guidelines and placing an emphasis on District-wide programs and efforts designed to support overall student wellness, and (2) help address the national challenge of childhood obesity at a local level.

### **Definition of Wellness:**

The definition of wellness long used by the National Wellness Institute is consistent with these tenets: Wellness is an active process through which people become aware of, and make choices toward, a more successful existence.

### **Guiding Principles:**

SPS shall establish and maintain an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication and monitoring of the Wellness Policy and its established goals and objectives.

1. SPS recognizes that optimal health looks different on different bodies in different circumstances and wishes to help students develop a healthy relationship with all foods and offer a variety of physical activities for students to engage in.
2. Students in SPS shall have access to healthy foods and drinkable water throughout the school day including access to the USDA's Child Nutrition Program and will have sufficient time to eat lunch within the lunch period.
3. All students in grades PK-12 shall receive standards-based health, nutrition, and physical education that provides students with learning experiences to develop the skills to live a healthy, well-rounded lifestyle.
4. All students in grades PK-12 shall have opportunities to be physically active. PK-8 will have sufficient recess time to provide opportunities for social development & expend energy in a safe environment.
5. Neither food nor physical activity opportunities (recess, etc.) shall be used to motivate or punish students unless there is a safety reason to do so.
6. SPS shall create and maintain healthy and safe physical environments that promote learning.

7. All students shall have access to strategies and supports to develop knowledge and skills for social-emotional health.
8. All students shall have access to health services to support students in chronic conditions management, first aid, and promote wellness through school based-nursing staff.
9. SPS is committed to establishing strong partnerships with students, employees, families, community members, and community organizations to ensure engagement and involvement between school and other settings to maximize the impact of wellness programming.

District Wellness Procedures for ensuring that specific goals and objectives designed to meet all Guiding Principles outlined in this Wellness Policy shall be developed by the District Wellness Committee and reviewed/revised by said committee at least every three (3) years, and presented to the Superintendent for approval. The approved procedures shall serve as the basis for evaluating schools' and district departments' compliance with this Wellness Policy, to assess progress toward the district's wellness goals, and to inform any recommended Wellness Policy changes. The Wellness Committee will report back to the School Committee on an annual basis.

LEGAL REFS: Section 204 of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (the Act), Public Law 111-296, added Section 9A to the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (NSLA) (42 U.S.C. 1758b), Local School Wellness Policy Implementation.

The provisions set forth in Section 204 expand upon the previous local wellness policy requirement from the Child Nutrition and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Reauthorization Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-265).

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Revised: June 2021

## **PROCEDURES**

### **I. Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability and Community Engagement**

**Goal/Objective:** At least once every three years, the district will evaluate compliance, strength of policy, and progress toward goals.

- a. Under the direction of the Superintendent's designee a District Wellness Committee will be established and convened annually for the purpose of evaluating policy adherence, and regularly as required by Section 204 of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 to discuss possible improvement efforts in the area of student and staff wellness.
- b. The Superintendent's designee shall ensure compliance with district wide wellness policies. In each school, the building administrator or designee shall ensure compliance.
- c. Schools are encouraged to convene a wellness team to support wellness initiatives at their school and/or to incorporate discussions about wellness initiatives into other school-based meetings.
- d. Every effort will be made to ensure that representation on the District Wellness Committee includes the Somerville School Committee, Parent Teachers Association (PTA), English Learners Parent Advisory Council (ELPAC), Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SSEPAC), School Councils, School Health Services, Physical Education Department, School Food and Nutrition Services Department, Somerville Community Schools Program, Superintendent's Office, Somerville Teachers' Union, community health agencies, student(s), parents/guardians, and school principals or their designees. Representation may occur through subcommittee work supporting district wellness. The District will utilize various methods of outreach throughout the year to encourage participation on this committee.
- e. The District Wellness Committee shall conduct an assessment of the policy every three years using the Wellness School Assessment Tool WellSAT-3.0 and the Well-SAT-I. Based on the results of the assessment, this committee will develop recommendations for the School Committee & the Superintendent to review and update/change the policy & procedures. Results of the triennial assessment will be posted to the SPS website.
- f. The Superintendent's designee will develop information to disseminate about the updated Wellness Policy during the next school year and a final version of the policy will be shared publicly.

## **II. Nutrition**

**Goal/Objective:** The district aims to teach, model, encourage, and support healthy eating to help all students develop healthy lifestyle practices.

### **1. School Meals**

- a. Meals served through the SPS Food & Nutrition Service Department (FNSD) shall comply with the National School Lunch and/or Breakfast standards for meal patterns, nutrient levels, and calorie requirements for the ages/grade levels served, as specified in 7 CFR 210.10 or 220.8, as applicable.
- b. SPS is committed to offering breakfast, lunch and afternoon snacks that are accessible to all students, are appealing and attractive to children, and are served in a clean setting.
- c. The FNSD will continue to work on improving the nutritional quality and student acceptance of school meals by developing new culturally relevant recipes, giving students as many choices as possible, focusing on food presentation, and giving students opportunities to sample new foods.
- d. The FNSD will work to support regional agriculture and the consumption of fruits and vegetables through the inclusion of locally grown produce in school meals.
- e. Schools will allow at least 20 minutes when possible for students to eat meals within the designated period.
- f. Schools will ensure water is made available and accessible to all students during meals and during the school day without charge.
- g. SPS qualifies for district-wide Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) until 2027. The district will provide all students with a 4-digit pin in order to not overtly identify students in any way. Applications for free/reduced priced meals are made available on the district website. Paper applications are available upon request.

### **2. Staff Qualifications & Professional Development**

- a. All school nutrition program directors, managers and staff will meet hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements in the USDA Professional Standards for Child Nutrition Professionals. These school nutrition personnel will refer to USDA's Professional Standards for School Nutrition Standards website to search for training that meets their learning needs.

### **3. Competitive Foods & Beverages**

- a. Items sold by the FNSD through the A La Carte program at Somerville High School will meet the guidelines established by the A-List for competitive foods and beverages sold or provided in public schools during the school day. (\*)

#### **4. Food Allergies**

- a. School Health Services, Food and Nutrition Services, school-based staff, families and students will work in collaboration to manage life-threatening food allergies in the school environment and on field trips in accordance with current SPS food allergy policy (JLCDD & JLCDD-R). (\*)

#### **5. Celebrations, Rewards and Snacks**

- a. Teachers and parents/guardians can access a list of recommended classroom snack foods and beverages online developed by the Somerville Food and Nutrition Services Department. (\*)
- b. Schools and classrooms are encouraged to replace food at parties and celebrations with other celebratory items and activities. (\*)
- c. All food items brought into the schools are required to contain nutritional content information due to potential food allergies. Non-prepackaged food items are also required to contain food preparation information including where the food was prepared, a list of ingredients used in preparation of the food item, known allergens that may be included among the ingredients, and the following statement if applicable: *“Produced in a kitchen where nuts, tree nuts, or other allergy producing products may have been present.”*
- d. School staff will not use food or candy as a reward for children’s accomplishments involving attendance, behavior, or academic performance.

#### **6. Fundraising**

- a. Students, staff and volunteers are strongly encouraged to consider fun, healthy fundraising options. Fundraisers conducted during the school day should encourage and promote good health habits. (\*)
- b. Schools are encouraged to hold non-food fundraisers. (\*)
- c. School fundraisers where food is sold will only be offered after school meals are over and will comply with USDA Smart Snacks In School standards. (\*)

#### **7. Health Promotion**

- a. All school staff will promote a school environment supportive of healthy eating & physical activity.

#### **8. Nutrition & Garden Education**

- a. Nutrition education lessons that are skills based will be offered to all pre-K-8 students when possible.

- b. School garden and nutrition instruction are encouraged as part of other relevant curriculum areas such as science
- c. Nutrition topics shall be integrated within the HS comprehensive health education curriculum.

### **9. Essential Topics in Health Education**

- a. The district will offer a comprehensive health education curriculum K-12 aligned with the Health Education Policy (IHAM). (\*)

### **10. Out of School Time Programs**

- a. Any snack provided by the Somerville Food and Nutrition Services Department will meet the guidelines outlined in this policy.
- b. Any snack served by community-based after school programs that receive school department funding will meet the guidelines outlined in this policy.
- c. Parents/guardians will be strongly encouraged to provide nutritious snacks for their children in an after-school program.
- d. Health and wellness professional development will be provided to afterschool staff annually.
- e. Candy and other foods that do not meet District nutrition guidelines will not be used as an incentive or reward during in-school or out-of-school-time programming.

## **III. Physical Activity**

**Goal/Objective:** To provide students with opportunities for quality physical education and daily physical activity before, during and after school in order to learn the short and long-term benefits of a physically active and healthy lifestyle.

### **1. Physical Education**

- a. Physical Education (PE) will be a required subject in all grades and every other grade at the high school level.
- b. The district's comprehensive, standards-based physical education curriculum identifies the progression of skill development in grades preK-12 and will be aligned with established state and federal physical education standards.
- c. All Somerville Physical Education teachers will be certified as is consistent with federal and state laws.

- d. The district shall provide all PE teachers with annual professional development opportunities that are focused on physical education and physical activity topics and competencies.
- e. Fitness assessments will be incorporated into PE at all schools.
- f. The district discourages students from substituting other school or community activities for physical education class time or credit in place of required physical education.
- g. All students regardless of their ability are integrated into PE class throughout the district.

## **2. Recess**

- a. Recess provides academic, social and physical benefits. Students should be given at least 20 minutes when possible to provide opportunities for social development in a safe environment, to expend physical energy and in order to increase alertness in the classroom.
- b. Recess should not be used to motivate or punish students unless there is a safety reason to do so.
- c. Principals are encouraged to provide recess before lunch for Prek-8 students when possible.
- d. Outdoor recess should take place unless the temperature, including the wind chill, is below 15 or if the heat index (temperature plus humidity) is above 97 or if conditions are deemed unsuitable or unsafe due to rain, snow, sleet or ice. (\*)

## **3. Classroom Physical Activity Breaks & Active Academics**

- a. Classroom teachers will be encouraged and supported in their efforts to incorporate movement as part of the classroom activities and provide short physical activity breaks between lessons and classes. (\*)

## **4. Before & After School Activities**

- a. Physical activity, outdoors whenever possible (see guidelines under III.2.d), will be incorporated as a consistent practice throughout the District in the afterschool program.
- b. The district shall provide physical activity opportunities before and/or after school for students.

## **5. Active Transport**

- a. Schools will participate in the Safe Routes to Schools program to promote safe walking, biking and “actively commuting” to and from school. (\*)

## **IV. Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness**

**Goal/Objective:** The district will coordinate and encourage initiatives and school based activities that are designed to promote student well-being, optimal development, strong educational outcomes and staff health and wellness.

### **1. Social Emotional Learning**

- a. Schools will receive ongoing professional development around Social Emotional Learning and all pre-K-8 teachers will implement a social emotional curriculum in the classroom. (\*)

### **2. Community Partnerships**

- a. Schools will participate in programs that support food security and be encouraged to expand programming as needed. (\*)

### **3. Digital Health & Wellness**

- a. The district will support balanced, safe & responsible use of technology.

### **4. Health & Wellness Information**

- a. The district will provide current, research-based information about health promoting behaviors.

### **5. Staff Health and Wellness Promotion**

- a. The District will promote staff member participation in health promotion programs and will support programs for staff members that are accessible and free or low-cost. (\*)

### **6. Professional Learning**

- a. When feasible, the district will offer annual professional learning opportunities and resources for staff to increase knowledge and skills about promoting healthy behaviors in the classroom and the school.

### **7. School Health Data Reporting**

- a. Height and weight data will be collected annually on all children in Grades 1, 4, 7 and 10, as required by Massachusetts. Results will be made available to families upon request. This information is confidential information consistent with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and to the maximum extent possible under the law.
- b. School & City officials will meet to review the Youth Risk Behavior Survey data and share the results with the school community. (\*)



## **8. Sustainability**

- a. The District will work with other city departments to strengthen sustainability efforts in schools.

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