

**Students**

**Wellness—Physical Activity and Nutrition**

1. **Nutrition Education and Promotion**

Nutrition education will be a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based program designed to provide all students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health. The National Health Education Standards, the Healthy and Balanced Frameworks (Connecticut Standards and performance indicators), and HEAP (Health Education Assessment Program) will provide the framework for the curriculum.

At the elementary level, classroom teachers will offer nutrition education at every grade level every year. At both the middle and high school levels, nutrition education will be offered as part of the required health education courses taught by certified health education teachers. At the high school level successful completion of the health education course, which includes nutrition, is required to graduate. Nutrition education is not only part of health education, but it is also integrated into other content areas such as mathematics, science, language arts, world languages, and Family and Consumer Sciences.

The health skills and nutrition content include, but are not limited to:

- Making healthy eating choices considering various factors:
  - Variety of foods (food pyramid)
  - Nutrients
  - Portion and serving size
  - Preparation and processing
  - Calories
  - Physical activity level
  - Importance of breakfast
  - Lunch options, including choices in school cafeteria
- Analyzing the factors that impact eating choices; including multicultural, family, religious, medical, and media influences and concerns
- Accessing accurate information about healthy eating by reading food labels, interpreting menus and recipes, and using Internet and printed sources
- Understanding the relationship that healthy eating habits have to general well being and disease prevention.

A planned, ongoing program of staff development will be provided to update information and enhance integration.

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Nutrition education will link with school food service programs and with all foods served within the school building. It will promote fruits, vegetables, whole grains products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices.

Nutrition education in the district has established and continues to expand ways to collaborate with the food services programs, families, and the community to educate and reinforce nutrition education. These informational messages are consistent with the curriculum content and current nutritional research. The department supervisor for health and physical education and operations manager for nutrition services, working collaboratively with building based administration, are responsible for this wellness/health communication.

- The school health education component and school food services program link with the families and the communities by providing educational and informational materials through the health and physical education and food services web pages, school newsletters, workshops, various handouts ( i.e. menu with nutritional analysis), and nutrition education homework that students do with their families.
- The school food service program displays educational and information materials that reinforce the classroom lessons both in the serving lines and in the cafeteria to promote healthy eating choices.
- The school food services offers ideas for and participates in classroom nutrition lessons.
- The school food service program will continue to participate in the Farms to Schools Program, an initiative that encourages use of and consumption of locally grown fresh produce with the intent to reduce the need for processed foods and to promote healthy eating choices.
- There are opportunities for parents to eat periodically with their students in the cafeteria.

### 2. Physical Education and Physical Activity

Physical education and physical activity are both necessary to help children develop into healthy, active adults. Physical education is teaching children the skills and knowledges to establish and sustain a healthy, active lifestyle. It is best offered through a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based curriculum that is taught by certified, highly qualified physical education teachers. Physical activity is a term that refers to movement in a broader sense. Physical activity at school includes recess, intramurals, athletics, and various recreational opportunities; it includes daily activities such as walking to the store or to school, taking the stairs rather than using an elevator, or raking leaves.

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The West Hartford Physical Education Curriculum is a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health and fitness. Its design has been guided by National Standards, the NSAPE benchmarks, as well as the Connecticut Healthy and Balanced Living Framework (CT. Standards and grade level performance indicators).

- The lower elementary grades focus on body management, as well as manipulative and locomotor skill development. Creative dance, cultural dance, cooperative activities, and functional fitness are also taught.
- The upper elementary grades build on this foundation with added complexity and specificity. General movements and simple sequences evolve into more complex routines and dances, specific sport movements and game strategies, and adventure education/cooperative problem solving tasks.
- Starting in fourth grade, and continuing through twelfth grade, every year students take the state fitness assessment and develop goals to improve.
- Middle schools continue this spiraling and scaffolding where a variety of individual, dual and team sports are taught. Dance and adventure education, as well as fitness and fitness assessments, are part of the middle school experience.
- High school culminates with students having the opportunity to select opportunities with an emphasis on leisure and lifelong experiences, i.e. yoga, golf, tennis, ballroom dance, ultimate frisbee. All high school students are required to use the physical fitness data to create and implement a personal fitness plan.
- The goal of the physical education class will be that students spend at least 50 percent of the physical education class time participating in physical activity, with as much time as possible spent at a moderate to vigorous physical activity level. Instructional practices and strategies minimize student inactivity, i.e. avoid waiting in lines; structure classes so highly skilled students do not dominate activities, not using games that eliminate students.
- Offerings take into account gender and cultural differences.
- Offerings integrate health and physical education topics and skills.
- Instructional strategies and standards-based models are used to meet the diverse needs of all students, including the athletically gifted and the not so athletically gifted. The inclusion model will be implemented wherever possible, ensuring that the needs outlined in students' individual education plans are met in the least restrictive environment.

The quality of this curriculum and the effectiveness of its implementation on student learning will be maintained by:

- Evaluation of curriculum using the West Hartford Curriculum Review Process and PECAT (Physical Education Curriculum Analysis Tool developed by CDC or Center for Disease Control). This includes gathering student and parent input.

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- Analysis of the effectiveness of implementation of the curriculum by examining student performance on common district physical education assessments, teacher-generated assessments, and the mandated state fitness assessments.
- A student/teacher ratio that maximizes movement and safety and is similar to other classes. In West Hartford the current practice and recommended maxima, within the constraints of budget, instructional time and space, do not exceed 30 at any grade.
- Safe and adequate equipment and facilities to provide the quality offerings to meet the diverse needs of all students, consistent with national standards.

Physical education at the elementary level will be offered at each grade level at least twice a week by a certified physical education teacher.

Physical education at the middle level will be offered at each grade level every year by a certified physical education teacher. Grades 6 and 7 are scheduled for 100+ days of physical education, each at a minimum of 40 minutes in duration on full days. Grade 8 is scheduled for 70+ days, each at a minimum of 40 minutes in duration on full days.

Physical education at the high school level will be offered at each grade level every year by a certified physical education teacher. Class periods are a minimum of 40 minutes in duration for all grade levels on full days. Successful completion of physical education is required for graduation from West Hartford Public Schools. Currently we require 1.75 credits of physical education/health to graduate.

A student may be excused from participation in physical education only if a physician states in writing the specific physical activities that jeopardize the health and well-being of a student. Student involvement in other activities involving physical activity (i.e. interscholastic or intramurals) shall not be substituted for meeting the physical education requirement.

All physical education teachers in West Hartford will be certified and highly qualified as outlined by the state. A planned, ongoing program of staff development will be provided to update information and enhance integration. This professional development will include, but not be limited to: curriculum writing and revision; assessment development, implementation, and analysis of student performance; standards-based instruction models to meet needs of all students; best practices that encourage lifelong health and fitness; and content updates in all movement areas.

On a typical school day all elementary school students will have at least 30 minutes of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which schools should encourage physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment.

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Recess will be outdoors, except in the case of inclement weather. Inclement weather may include excessive heat, rain, snow, temperatures below 20 degrees including wind-chill factor, ice or unsafe play surfaces.

Opportunities for physical activity should not be withheld, except for a medical exclusion with documentation from a health care provider. Students will not be denied participation in recess or other physical activity opportunities as a form of discipline or punishment, nor shall such time be taken for instructional purposes, except as determined appropriate on a case-by-case basis.

NASPE (National Association of Sport and Physical Education) recommends at least 60 minutes of physical activity per day. In order for students to accumulate this time, students need opportunities for physical activity beyond the physical education classes and recess.

- Physical activity should be incorporated into the classroom as part of the learning process whenever possible, i.e. energizing physical activity breaks.
- All elementary schools are encouraged to continue with and expand before and after school programs during the year, i.e. before school running clubs, family dance nights.
- All middle schools shall offer a broad base of intramural and interscholastic programs that meet the needs, interests, and abilities of all students, including boys and girls, as well as students with physical and cognitive abilities. A partial list of current offerings includes badminton, soccer, dance revolution, volleyball, strength training, cross country, track and field, flag football, and Unified Sports.
- All high schools shall offer a broad base of intramural and interscholastic programs that meet the needs, interests, and abilities of all students, including boys and girls, as well as students with physical and cognitive abilities. A partial list of current offerings include golf, swimming, football, cheerleading, ice hockey, lacrosse, gymnastics, basketball, baseball, softball, field hockey, wrestling, cross country, track and field, strength/cardiovascular training in fitness centers, and Unified Sports.
- Physical activity ideas and community recreational opportunities are periodically posted on the district and department web page and sent home with students.

West Hartford encourages all school staff members to improve their own personal health and wellness, and serve as role models for our students. The district supports a healthy environment by:

- Providing a productive work environment free from physical dangers or emotional threat as is as safe as possible and consistent with applicable occupation and health laws, policies, and laws.
- Establishing and enforcing drug, alcohol, and tobacco free policies.

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Additional wellness educational opportunities may include, but not be limited to, the distribution of educational and informational materials and the arrangement of presentations or workshops that focus on health lifestyles, wellness behaviors, yoga/relaxation, and other related topics.

The school district, working with the local police department, will recommend safe routes for students to walk and bike to school.

School facilities will be available to community agencies offering physical activity and nutrition programs when these facilities are not being used for school-based activities. All school guidelines and procedures concerning safety and building use will apply.

### **3. Nutritional Guidelines for Schools**

The Nutrition Services Department will plan menus that, over the course of a week, meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. All meals served as part of the published school breakfast and school lunch menus shall be analyzed for nutritional value to assure that Dietary Guidelines are met. Purchasing programs and preparation methods will be used that decrease fat, calorie, and sodium levels in food. All cooked foods offered as part of a meal will be baked or steamed.

Nutrition information for school meals will be made available through monthly menus and on the Nutrition Services Department web site. Detailed nutrition analysis of menu items will be provided to school nurses and families with special dietary needs. Nutrition information will be kept on file in the Nutrition Office for all a la carte foods and will be available upon request.

As a component of the reimbursable lunches, fresh fruit will be offered daily, fresh vegetables will be offered a minimum of two times per week, and whole grains will be offered at least three times per week.

School cafeterias will follow USDA guidelines for food safety for all foods served. Each school cafeteria will employ at least one Qualified Food Operator as defined by the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health. Formal training for all Nutrition Services employees will be conducted a minimum of three times per year, including topics on food safety, nutrition, proper use of cleaning chemicals, and menu planning and preparation. Professional Development Programs outside of the district that include appropriate certification and/or training programs will be offered to nutrition staff according to their level of responsibility.

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Lunch offerings will be marketed to parents and students through monthly menus, and through the department's web page. Those schools offering breakfast will market the breakfast menus in a similar fashion. A copy of the monthly menu will be given to students in elementary and middle schools, and will be posted in classrooms and other areas as appropriate in high schools. Nutrition Education material will be included on the back of elementary menus.

The Nutrition Services Department will, to the extent possible, ensure that all eligible children receive free and reduced-price meals. The cafeteria procedures will ensure that students eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals are not treated differently from other students or easily identified by their peers. Nutrition Services will work with administrators of summer school programs in the district to investigate the feasibility of Summer Food Service Programs, and implement these programs as appropriate.

School meals shall be served in clean and pleasant settings. On a typical school day, lunch programs will be served beginning at a minimum of two hours after the official beginning of the school day. A minimum of 20 minutes eating time is recommended.

Adequate space and lighting will be provided, and cafeterias will be furnished and decorated for a relaxed and enjoyable environment. Nutrition Education materials will be posted in the serving areas and dining areas to reinforce classroom learning. Appropriate cleaning solutions and cloths will be available for tables to be cleaned prior to each lunch period, with special procedures and separate equipment in place for allergy-free tables. All students will have access to hand washing before they eat meals or snacks. Drinking fountains will be available for students to get water at meals and throughout the school day.

For food and beverages sold individually at the elementary level:

- Beverages will include a variety of low fat flavored and unflavored milk, water, and 100% fruit and vegetable juices. All beverages will meet the requirements and portion sizes specified by state statute.
- A la carte packaged snacks sold will meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards, which minimize the content of fat, sodium, sugar and calories. Snacks are sold at a limitation of one snack per child per day.
- A choice of at least two fruits and/or non-fried vegetables will be offered for sale a la carte each day, including but not limited to fresh fruit, canned fruit in fruit juice or light syrup, 100% fruit juice, fresh vegetables, or cooked vegetables.

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For food and beverages sold individually at the middle and high school level, including vending machines and school stores:

- Beverages will include a variety of low fat flavored and unflavored milk, water, and 100% fruit and vegetable juices. All beverages will meet the requirements and portion sizes specified by state statute.
- A la carte packaged snacks sold must meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards, which minimize the content of fat, sodium, sugar, and calories.
- A choice of at least two fruits and/or non-fried vegetables will be offered for sale a la carte each day, including but not limited to fresh fruit, canned fruit in fruit juice or light syrup, 100% fruit juice, fresh vegetables, or cooked vegetables.

All food and beverages sold at events that take place in the classroom, during fundraising activities, PTO events, and other activities on school grounds must meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and the beverage requirements of the state statute, unless they are sold at the location of an event that occurs after the school day or on the weekend, provided the sale is not from a vending machine or school store. Foods and beverages that are given (not sold) to students at these events are strongly encouraged to follow the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and the beverage requirements of the state statute. The food service department will support this effort by making such foods that meet the standard available for purchase. Whether foods served at special events (ethnic fairs, etc.) meet this guideline is left to the discretion of the building principal.

Foods served or to be consumed at after school activities, field trips, school events, and school party offerings will promote the consumption of fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, and utilize preparation methods that minimize added salt, sugar, and fat. Written guidelines will be made available outlining suggestions for healthy celebrations and fundraisers. At a minimum, all foods offered for student purchase shall include nutritious, low-fat food including, but not limited to, low-fat dairy products, and fresh or dried fruit at all times when food is available for student purchase during the regular school day. School parties offering healthy food will be limited to holiday celebrations. Otherwise, non-food items should be used for reward or celebration.

#### 4. Measuring the Implementation of the Wellness

The superintendent or his/her designee shall ensure compliance with the Wellness Policy and accompanying regulations. The principal or his/her designee in each school shall ensure compliance with the policy and regulation within the school and shall report on the school's compliance to the superintendent or his/her designee. Designated school food service staff



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members at the district level shall ensure compliance with nutrition policies within each school's food service areas and shall report on this matter to the superintendent.

The District West Hartford Health Advisory Council has been established to provide a systematic approach to protecting and promoting the health and well-being of its students and staff. As part of these responsibilities, in coordination with the school administration, the Health Advisory Council will review the Wellness Policy annually to determine if it is meeting the current needs.

The Council uses the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Coordinated School Health Program model and brings together a broad range of school and community stakeholders. The membership should include, but not be limited to, representatives from the Board of Education, school administration and staff, health and physical education department, school medical advisor, school nurse, food service provider, a registered dietitian, community businesses, community recreational and leisure services, mental health profession, youth-serving and health-related community agencies, parents, and students. This Council will meet a minimum of four times yearly. The West Hartford Public School budget supports curriculum implementation and extracurricular activities (i.e. intramurals). Additionally, the district, schools, and food services actively pursue grants to support wellness activities.

The effectiveness will be determined by analyzing data gathered from these sources:

- School Health Index
- District Curriculum Review Process (includes student performance results on common district assessments related to physical education and nutrition standards)
- Input from students and parents through periodic focus groups and surveys
- Annual evaluation of School Lunch Programs (i.e. participation rates, nutritional profile of menus, changes in school menus based on student preference)

Using this data, the Council will make recommendations to the superintendent or his/her designee and the Board of Education. Changes in the Wellness Policy will be communicated to students, parents, school staff, and the community through the district website, newsletters, and student handbooks.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes 10-221p.

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