

Somerton School District #11
Wellness Committee Guidance On
Student Wellness

Revised By Wellness Committee: 11-13-2013

Preamble:

Over the past thirty years the number of overweight children ages 6-17 in the United States has doubled, and more than 25% of children ages 6-11 are obese. Among children ages 12-17, 25% of girls and 18% of boys, are obese. Obesity is common enough among our children, that it is now considered to be an epidemic. There is evidence that obesity contributes to a number of other serious health conditions, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and cardiovascular disease, but with proper diet and exercise most of these diseases can be prevented or controlled, and this is why we have to take prevention of obesity so seriously, and do what we can to correct this problem.

The causes of obesity includes the over consumption of calories, inactivity, and environmental influences. Obesity, and related risk factors such as pre-diabetes may be corrected and/or prevented by incorporating a healthy living model into the lives of children.

Many children consume more calories than are needed for proper growth and development, and often the calories consumed are of minimal nutritional value. To prevent obesity we must focus on energy balance, which is defined as calories consumed versus calories expended, and provide better nutritional choices for children at school and at home.

Somerton School District recognizes the need to create a healthy environment in order to prevent childhood obesity, and to combat other health problems that are caused by poor nutrition and physical inactivity. Therefore, the district has developed a wellness policy to address areas of nutrition, health education, and physical activity, to help improve the health and well being of all of the students in the district.

Thus, it is the goal of the Somerton School District to help combat childhood obesity and contribute to the health and well-being of it's students by offering well balanced nutritional meals, by teaching students how to live a healthy lifestyle, by encouraging staff to be positive role models for healthy behaviors and by providing students with opportunities to participate in a variety of physical activities throughout the school day to help keep them fit, and maintain the correct energy balance. In addition, the district believes that when children are provided with adequate nutrition, balanced with the right amount of physical activity, they will be better able to focus on learning, have improved behavior, improved test scores, and have fewer absences from illnesses, and they will have lasting positive outcomes on their overall health as adults.

Nutritional Guidelines

In accordance with the National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C., 1751 et,seq.) Child Nutrition Act (42 U.S.C. 1771 et. seq.) and the Arizona Revised Statute 15-242 all meals served at school through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs will meet, at a minimum, the nutrition requirements of the Arizona Nutrition Standards which is based on the 2005 dietary Guidelines for Americas and the United States Department of Agriculture's Federal Child Nutrition Program Regulations.

All foods and beverages sold individually outside the reimbursable school meal programs including those sold through a la carte (snack) lines, vending machines, student stores, fundraising activities, or school events during the normal school day will also meet the Arizona Nutrition Standards. The standards are not applicable to classroom parties. Also in accordance with Arizona Nutrition Standards, carbonated beverages that do not meet minimal nutritional standards will not be sold or served during the school day.

Food Service Staff

Qualified food services staff, under the direction of the food services manager, will provide students with access to a variety of affordable nutritious foods, that are attractive and appealing to children, served in the correct portion size, and meet the health and nutrition needs of students. The food served will accommodate the ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning. Food services will provide a clean, safe, and pleasant environment for students to eat in, and will provide adequate time for students to eat. In addition to providing nutritious meals on a daily basis, the food services staff will also provide opportunities to engage students, parents, and staff by asking for their suggestions, and taking surveys periodically. Food services staff will also place nutrition information boards up in the cafeteria, provide a variety of different food menus, have cook outs on outside activity days, and other fun activities throughout the year to make eating an enjoyable experience for the students. Staff development programs, and certification and/or training programs, will be available to the food service staff according to their needs and levels of responsibility.

School Breakfast Program

Schools will operate the School Breakfast Program. Schools that serve breakfast to students will notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast Program. If parents choose not to have their children eat breakfast at school, they will be encouraged to provide breakfast for their children at home to help meet the nutritional needs of the students, which will help prepare them for a successful day of learning.

Summer Food Service Program

The district will participate in other food programs such as the Summer Food Service Program based on the need and according to availability. Serving site information will be made readily available to students, parents, and the community prior to the program beginning.

Snacks

Snacks served during the school day, or in after-school care, or enrichment programs should make a positive contribution to the student's diet and health, with an emphasis on serving fruits and vegetables as the primary snacks and water as the primary beverage. Schools will assess if and when to offer snacks, based on timing of school meals, children's nutritional needs, children's ages, and other considerations. Empty calorie and high sugar snacks will be discouraged. Parents will be reminded to send healthy snacks for school or classroom parties.

Food as Reward or Punishment

Schools should not use foods or beverages, especially those that do not meet the Arizona Nutrition Standards, as rewards for academic performance or good behavior, and should not be withheld as a punishment. Nonfood rewards should be encouraged instead of using foods as the reward, to help students understand that eating as a reward can have long term negative consequences, and contribute to obesity in some people.

Food Marketing in Schools

School-based marketing will be consistent with nutritional education and health promotion. Schools in the district will limit food and beverage marketing to the promotion of foods and beverages that meet the Arizona Nutrition Standards. The promotion of healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products will be encouraged in the classroom and in the cafeterias.

Food Allergies and Special Diets

The Food Services Manager will address food allergies and special diets for students on an individual basis, and will make reasonable accommodations for these students as necessary. Sharing of food between students during meals will be discouraged, and will be monitored. Sharing at snack times will also be discouraged, given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets.

Health and Nutrition Education

The district will provide students with a variety of opportunities in various settings to learn more about health and nutrition curriculum for each grade level. Students will be provided with information about such areas as injury prevention and personal safety, prevention and control of disease, tobacco and substance abuse prevention, and mental and emotional health issues that may effect students. In an effort to encourage students to make healthy food choices at school as well as outside of school, students will be taught to read food labels. Students will also learn that having too much sugar and fat in their diets can have adverse effects on their health. The food services staff will share information about the nutritional content of individual food items that are served with parents and students, so they can make informed choices, and select foods according to their nutritional content. Such nutritional information will be made available in one or more of the following methods: through newsletters, on printed menus, cafeteria menu boards, placards, web-sites, bulletins, educational materials through presentations, or by other health promotion agencies.

Physical Education and Activity

All students in grades K-8, including students with disabilities, special health care needs, and in alternative educational settings, will be provided with a variety of opportunities to be physically active on a regular basis. All students will participate in physical education classes and daily recess for at least 15 minutes. The District will promote other opportunities for all students such as walk-to-school programs, before and after school sports, and special physical activity clubs. Students will also be encouraged to take advantage of opportunities to be physically active outside of school, and during breaks from school. School personnel will not use physical activity (e.g., running laps, pushups) or withhold opportunities for physical activities as punishment. Classroom health education will complement physical education by reinforcing the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically active lifestyle, and to reduce time spent on sedentary activities, such as watching television. Opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into other subject lessons, and classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes as appropriate. The goal for students in Elementary school is to receive 150 minutes or more of physical education each week. The goal for students in Middle school is to receive 225 minutes or more of physical education each week. Students will also be encouraged to start their own walking and work out clubs, and will be provided access to school facilities outside of regular school hours when needed, with appropriate approval. Students will also be encouraged to walk or bike to school when possible to get in the habit of being physically active on a routine basis. When appropriate, the district will work together with the local public works agencies, public safety department, and/or police departments in those efforts to make it safe and easy for students to walk or bike to school.

Staff Wellness

Somerton School District highly values the health and well-being of every staff member, and will plan and implement activities that support personal efforts by staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle. The district will continue to provide staff with safety and health tips, and other health information and benefits as they become available. The district will arrange for onsite health services when possible, and have other agencies come to the district to do health fairs periodically. The district also provides counseling and smoking cessation support for staff when these services are needed. The district will provide opportunities for staff members who aren't normally required to be C.P.R. (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) certified to get C.P.R. training if they are interested.

Parent, Community, and Staff Involvement

The school district will engage students, parents, teachers, food services staff, health services professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing districtwide nutrition and physical activity policies on an ongoing basis at required intervals.

Policy Reviews

The Superintendent or his/her designee will ensure compliance with established districtwide nutrition and physical activity wellness policy. The school district and/or individual schools within the district will create school health councils to develop, implement, monitor, review, and as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies. The school health councils will also serve as a resource to their school sites for implementing the policy. The school health councils will consist of a group of individuals representing the school and community, and should include parents, students, representatives of the school food services, members of the school board, school administrators, teachers, health professionals, and members of the public. The school health councils will provide the superintendent with wellness policy compliance reports at required intervals in accordance with laws and policies set out in the National School Lunch act (42 U.S.C., 1751 35.seq.) and the Child Nutrition Act (42 U.S.C. 1771 et. seq.) The superintendent will also provide progress and compliance reports to the District School Board and the Arizona Department of Education as per the requirements and will make recommendations based in the outcome of the reports.

Somerton School District Health Advisory Council Members that participated in the revision and updates of the local wellness committee guidance on 11-13-13.
Chelsea Grasso, Jeremy Hurlbut, Anthony Gerg, Jessica Halverson, Chris Fermanis, Luz Rubio, Elizabeth Santos and Jorge Cano.

If you have any questions in regards to this wellness committee guidance, please feel free to call the District Food Service Director at (928) 341-6411.