

NUTRITION AND WELLNESS POLICY

Arlington Public Schools

The Arlington Public Schools support health, nutrition and physical activity for everyone.

Evidence indicates that good nutrition is linked to learning readiness and academic achievement, decreased discipline problems, and decreased emotional problems (1). The U.S. Surgeon General has identified schools as a key setting for public health strategies to improve wellness: “Public health approaches in schools should extend beyond health and physical education to include school policy, the school physical and social environment, and links between schools and families and communities” (2). Similarly, the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies of Sciences recommends: “Schools should provide a consistent environment that is conducive to healthful eating behaviors and regular physical activity” (3).

As part of reauthorizing federal school nutrition programs, the U.S. Congress has asked each school district in the United States to prepare a wellness policy, establishing guidelines for nutrition, physical activity, and wellness.

Nutrition and wellness for children depend on families, the health system, the food industry, and the wider community. The Arlington Public Schools recognize it is the district’s role, as part of this community, to actively practice, through policies and procedures, the promotion of good nutrition and physical activity. Here are some basic principles on which we agree:

- Healthy children are the foundation of a healthy society.
- Healthy, active, well-nourished children are better able to learn.
- Eating, health, and activity habits developed in youth will affect health throughout life.
- Following the principles of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, a healthy diet includes foods from all food groups with limited portions of foods high in sugar, saturated and *trans* fat, and salt.

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Areas to be addressed by this policy are as follows and are detailed in Nutrition and Wellness Policy Goals (JLCE-E).

- Nutrition Education
- Physical Activity
- Health Education
- Nutrition Standards for All Foods Available on School Campus during the School Day

Wellness Committee

Through this wellness policy, the school district takes action to improve nutrition education, physical activity, health education, school food services, and other food sources in schools. The Superintendent of Schools is responsible for the implementation of this wellness policy and will designate an administrator be the point of contact for health and wellness issues, and to chair a health and wellness committee to oversee implementation of this policy. The wellness committee shall consist of at least one parent, student, nurse, school food representative, School Committee member, school administrator, member of the public, and other community members as appropriate. The Superintendent or his designated wellness committee chairperson will work with the wellness committee to develop an implementation plan by January 2007, and the policy will take full effect by September 2008.

Measurement and Evaluation

Evaluation and measurement of progress toward the wellness goals is an integral component of the process to ensure and sustain family health, good nutrition and physical activity.

- Information relevant to school wellness and nutrition will be available to the School Committee and the public, except where it infringes on the right to privacy of students and staff. In particular, all contracts of the Arlington Public Schools and the School Food Service related to the sale or marketing of foods and beverages will be public information, available for inspection upon request from members of the community.
- To promote steady, feasible, improvements in school meals year after year, the School Food Service director will provide a report to the School Committee at the end of each school year, describing the activities and financial status of the School Food Service (including sales of school meals in the free, reduced-price, and full-price categories, sales from vending machines, and a la carte sales), setting specific goals for nutrition and wellness improvements in the coming year, and summarizing the progress on the goals for the year just completed.
- The Superintendent or his/her designee will provide a report to the School Committee at the end of each school year, describing the implementation of this Wellness Policy. The report will include: information about the staff that have been assigned nutrition and wellness responsibilities, available statistics about the health and wellness status of students, progress and hurdles on implementing the wellness policy provisions, any exceptions that the Superintendent authorized to those provisions, goals and specific actions for improving nutrition and wellness in the coming school year, achievement of the goals and actions from the year just completed, and any recommendations for future revisions to the Wellness Policy itself.

Legal references:

The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, section 204, P.L. 108-265
The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, 42, U.S.C. 1751-1769h
The Child Nutrition Act of 1996, 42 U.S.C. 1771-1789

Cross references:

EFC, Free and Reduced-Cost Food Services
IHAMA, Teaching About Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drugs
KI, Public Solicitations/Advertising in District Facilities

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