



Groton-Dunstable Regional School District Wellness Policy EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What is the Wellness Policy?

In June 2004, the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act was signed into law making it mandatory for all school districts participating in the Federal School Meal Programs to create a local wellness policy by July 2006. The GDRSD Wellness Policy was drafted and reviewed by the District Health Initiative (DHI), comprised of students, parents, and staff. The School Committee approved the policy last January. The Administrative Council has approved the accompanying policy guidelines, also drafted by the DHI.

The purpose of the policy is to enhance physical, emotional, and social growth and development, which ultimately enhances student learning. In the past 20 years, the prevalence of overweight children has more than doubled in the U.S. and tripled among adolescents (USDA). The health implications are serious: being overweight can lead to heart disease, diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, bone and joint problems, sleep apnea, and social and psychological problems (www.connectforkids.org). Schools, families, and the community need to work in partnership to promote the healthy development of children and teens. The outcomes of reduced obesity rates, more physical activity, positive mental health, and social competency, all contribute to the development of the whole child and ultimately leads to children who are fit, healthy, and ready to learn.

A summary of the Wellness Policy guidelines can be found on the following pages. To read the *GDRSD Wellness Policy* in its entirety and accompanying materials go to the school district's website at www.gdrsd.org. Included in the documents are ideas for practices that support the policy and promote health. If you have questions or would like more information, contact Dr. Judy Robinson, Health Coordinator, at 978-448-6362, x1132 or at jrobinson@gdrsd.org.

Opportunities for Faculty/Staff, Parent, and Community Involvement

Formed at the start of the 2005-2006 year, the District Health Initiative (DHI) serves as a functional group that supports the Wellness Policy. The DHI is comprised of parents, students, administrators, teachers, and community members. As part of our ongoing efforts to promote wellness, the DHI will convene the following committees this year:

WELLNESS COMMITTEES

These committees will be comprised of parents, teachers, and students who will work to actively promote the guidelines outlined in the Wellness Policy. The committees will identify creative strategies to promote the policy and its components and will be formed for the elementary, middle, and high school levels.

RECESS BEFORE LUNCH (RBL)

This committee will focus on Kindergarten – grade 4 recess scheduling. The task force will research and evaluate RBL programs in place in area districts, research the positive outcomes, identify obstacles, and determine next steps in planning.

HIGH SCHOOL AFTER SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAM

This committee will examine the feasibility of instituting a self-sustaining snack/dinner program at the high school level. The committee will research similar programs in area districts and identify strategies to implement the program at the high school.

All members of the GDRSD staff and Groton and Dunstable communities are invited to participate in these committees. If you would like to participate, complete the form below and return it to Dr. Judith Robinson, Health Coordinator, P.O. Box 730, Groton, MA 01450. You can also email Judy directly at jrobinson@gdrsd.org.

GDRSD District Health Initiative Committees

I am interested in serving on the following DHI Committees.

_____ Wellness Committee—Grade level (please circle below)

PreK-4

Middle School

High School

_____ Recess Before Lunch (K-4)

_____ High School After School Meal Program

Name: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Available to meet: Days After School Evenings



Groton-Dunstable Regional School District Wellness Policy Guidelines

Coordinated School Health

The District Health Initiative (DHI) shall insure the implementation and continuation of a coordinated school health program. The DHI is to be comprised of staff, administrators, teachers, parents, students, and community members. GDRSD shall participate in the Emerson Hospital Youth Risk Behavior Survey to assess students' level of risk behaviors on an ongoing basis. The Superintendent shall identify a staff member/health coordinator who has primary responsibility for coordinating school health efforts.

Comprehensive Health Education

The Physical and Behavioral Health (PBH) curriculum shall provide opportunities for all students to become independent lifelong learners who commit to their own health and nutritional needs as developmentally appropriate. The curriculum is to be aligned with the Massachusetts State Frameworks for Comprehensive Health. Students shall be taught healthy living skills that promote physical, emotional, and social well being through the PBH curriculum.

Nutrition Education

Nutrition education shall be incorporated into the Physical and Behavioral Health curriculum throughout the preschool, primary, and secondary school years and it shall be integrated into other areas of the curriculum, such as science, when appropriate. It shall encourage students to apply critical thinking skills about healthy food choices. Nutrition education information will be shared with families and the broader community to positively impact students.

Physical Education

Physical education classes are to be designed to stress physical fitness and encourage healthy, active lifestyles. They will include the instruction of individual activities as well as competitive and non-competitive team sports to encourage lifelong physical activity. Assessment of student progress in physical education is to be based on individual progress over time and based on personalized fitness goals. Sufficient equipment should be available to ensure that all students can participate in physical education. Equipment available supports the PBH curriculum.

Physical Activity

Physical activity is valuable and whenever possible shall be integrated across curricula and throughout the school day at the PreK-12 level. Equipment should be available for all students to participate in physical activity. When daily recess is provided, it should not be used as a punishment or a reward. Providing extra recess or physical activity as a reward is up to the discretion of the teacher.

Other School Based Activities

After school programs are to encourage physical activity and healthy habit formation. Local wellness policy goals are considered in planning all school-based activities (e.g., school events, field trips, dances, and assemblies, etc.). Support for the health of all students is demonstrated by offering health screenings, helping to enroll eligible children in Medicaid and other state children's health insurance programs. Information on state health insurance programs shall be distributed to families.

Nutrition Guidelines for All Foods Served in the GDRSD

Nutrition services policies and regulations for reimbursable meals shall not be less restrictive than regulations and guidelines issued by the Secretary of Agriculture. Nutrition guidelines apply to

all classrooms, cafeterias, and at school- sponsored events in all schools and at the Peter Twomey Youth Center, including school stores. District staff and affiliated groups that make snack food and drinks available at school-sponsored events are encouraged to use the following criteria:

- a. Contain no more than 30% calories from fat
- b. Contain no more than 10% of saturated fat and are limited in trans fatty acids
- c. Contain less than 35% sugar by weight unless exempt because of high nutritional status, such as fresh, dried or canned fruits and vegetables
- d. Contain at least 50% real juice with no added sweeteners
- e. Contain no caffeine except in chocolate products such as chocolate milk
- f. Contain some nutrients such as vitamins or minerals (healthy drinks)

Vending machine offerings available to students at school and school-sponsored events are to conform to the following criteria:

- a. Beverage vending machines containing soda, sugared drinks and sports drinks should be restricted from use during school hours and will not be turned on before the start of the school day
- b. At least 50% of beverages in vending machines should be healthy beverages (see #3), 100% fruit juice and unflavored milk
- c. Candy should not be available in vending machines
- d. Place no vending machine in any elementary school with the exception of water machines

The school lunch program and a la carte offerings in all cafeterias are to be consistent with recommendations from the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and *USDA School Meals Initiative for Healthy*. Teachers are to limit the use of food as a teaching tool and/or a reward. It is recommended that teachers do not use candy for rewards for students. Parents shall be encouraged to serve healthy snacks and treats at school, including daily snacks brought in from home. Advertising messages shall meet the standards outlined in the District policy for *Public Solicitation Policy in the Schools*. They should also be consistent with and reinforce the objectives of the education and nutrition environment goals of the District. Fundraising during the school day (bus to school, school to home) that involves foods includes healthy choices and shall provide age appropriate selections. Fundraisers should support a healthy school environment and be free from solicitation of foods that do not meet the specifications of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (for example, bake sales, candy sales). Extracurricular fundraising groups are encouraged to adhere to the aforementioned guidelines.

Healthy and Safe Environment

The District shall promote a healthy and safe environment for all before, during, and after school activities. District buildings and grounds, structures, buses and equipment are to meet all current health and safety standards, including environmental air quality, and be kept clean, safe, and in good repair. All school district buildings are to maintain an environment that is free of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs. Safety procedures for students and staff shall support personal safety and a violence and harassment free environment. Appropriate training, including but not limited to the prevention of harassment, violence, and bullying are to be offered to all staff and bus company personnel where appropriate. The District's Food Allergy policy should be adhered to and reviewed on a regular basis. Animals should not be brought into the schools. Schools principals should use discretion to make exceptions in cases when working with animals is directly related to the curriculum or other educational programs (e.g., assemblies, science classes). Due to potential for allergic reactions, only non-latex balloons shall be used in District facilities and use of other latex products is discouraged.

Social and Emotional Well Being

District staff shall provide a supportive environment that includes adequate guidance counseling and other support services that encourages students, families, and staff to request assistance when needed and links them to school or community resources. Through the Physical and Behavioral

Health (PBH) curriculum students shall be taught skills to express thoughts and feelings in a responsible manner, including but not limited to problem solving skills, conflict resolution skills, stress reduction, and interpersonal relationships. Students shall be taught to understand and respect the differences in others and embrace diversity. Youth Risk Behavior Survey data is to be reviewed to identify social and emotional needs of students and determine prevention and intervention strategies.

Nursing Services

District staff shall provide adequate nursing staff to meet the medical needs of its students and to fulfill state mandated screening requirements as determined by the Department of Public Health and/or the Department of Education. District staff, including nurses, the Health Coordinator, and guidance counselors, shall collaborate with community health liaisons and resources to promote health and wellness for students and staff. School nurses are a part of the District's health education efforts and are to assist in teaching topics in the PBH curriculum when scheduling and time allows.

Family, School, and Community Partnerships

Family, student, and community partners shall be included in an ongoing basis in school and district wellness planning processes through involvement in groups such as the District Health Initiative and school councils. Community partnerships shall be developed and maintained as a resource for school and district programs, activities, and events (for example, the collaboration between the District and the Groton-Dunstable Alliance for Youth).

Staff Wellness

The District shall provide an Employee Assistance Program that provides confidential assessment and referral services, and short-term counseling to help employees work through life's challenges. Teachers shall be encouraged to promote healthy nutrition decisions by serving as role models for students and by demonstrating healthy nutritional choices in the classroom. Schools are to be in compliance with alcohol, tobacco, and other drug free policies. The District shall promote an accessible and productive work environment free from physical dangers or emotional threat. District facilities are to be maintained in a manner to ensure compliance with safety, occupational, and health laws, policies, and rules.

Monitoring and Compliance

The Wellness Policy and Guidelines are to be communicated to all school district teachers and staff through the appropriate administrators (superintendent, principals, etc.). This information is to be provided annually to new staff members. Affiliated groups are to be informed of the policy and Guidelines via the appropriate district personnel. This information shall be communicated at the start of each school year through in-service trainings and appropriate staff meetings. Students are to be informed of the Wellness Policy in appropriate venues, including but not limited to, school newsletters, mailings, class meetings, freshmen retreats, and advisor/advisee programs. The Superintendent and his/her designee(s) shall establish a plan for measuring implementation of the Wellness Policy and Guidelines.