

Position

The Providence School Board recognizes the District’s responsibility to promote and support the health and well-being of its students, families, and staff. Students who are healthy and ready to learn are better able to achieve their academic potential. A healthy learning environment is one in which good nutrition is available, students engage in regular physical activity, physical and health education are regarded as essential to the core educational program, and both social and emotional wellness are promoted and actively modeled throughout all schools. The Providence School Board believes that an effective learning environment for all grade levels is one where students and staff learn and practice positive lifestyle behaviors. The Board further believes improved health and wellness optimizes student and staff performance.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set forth the District’s goals and expectations relative to wellness, including nutrition guidelines and education, physical and health education, and physical activity. This policy also adheres to all federal and state mandates relative to the wellness of students and staff. Goals will be provided in the following sections listed below.

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Section 1: PPSD Health & Wellness Subcommittee

In accordance with RI General Law (16-21-28), the Providence Public School District's (PPSD) School Board will appoint a district-wide Wellness subcommittee to be known as the Wellness Committee (*See Addendum for Legal Reference*). The Wellness Committee will consist of members of the general public, a majority of whom are not employed by the school district. Membership will include, but is not limited to: District staff, including teachers and administrators; students; at least one parent; community and school-based health professionals; business community representatives; and representatives of local and statewide nonprofit health organizations. The Wellness Committee will be chaired by a full member of the School Board and will report to the School Board regarding all components of student wellness including nutrition education, physical activity, and the implementation of school wellness policies.

The members of the Wellness Committee will:

- Collaborate and coordinate resources to drive school health objectives;
- Periodically review and suggest updates to the Wellness Policy;
- Make recommendations to the Superintendent and the Board of Education regarding issues related to:
 - Health education curriculum and instruction,
 - Physical education curriculum and instruction,
 - Nutrition and physical activity policies to decrease obesity and enhance the health and well-being of students and employees, and
- Annually prepare all district, state, and federal reports required of the Wellness Committee.

Section 2: Nutrition Education and Wellness Promotion

Student Nutrition Education and Wellness Promotion: The School Board believes that health and wellness education are essential components of a student's core educational program. Nutrition education is necessary for students to understand what constitutes healthy eating and to adopt lifelong healthy eating behaviors at an early age. Nutrition education shall be linked to the school environment and integrated into Health Education and/or other subjects at each grade level to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health. To be effective, nutrition education for children must be appropriate for the students' ages, reflect their cultures, and provide opportunities for them to practice nutrition skills and have fun.

Staff Nutrition and Wellness: The Wellness Committee and PPSD Administration will develop a plan to encourage, promote, reward, and support school and administrative staff health and wellness. The purpose of staff wellness education and promotion will be to: encourage all staff to improve their own personal health and wellness; improve staff morale; create positive role modeling; build the commitment of staff to promote the health of students; and build commitment of staff to improve the school nutrition and physical activity environment. Staff are encouraged to refrain from consuming foods and beverages of minimal nutritional value in the presence of students as a way of healthy role-modeling.

Parent Nutrition Education: Nutrition education will be provided to parents beginning at the elementary level. The goal will be to continue to educate parents throughout middle and high school levels. Examples of nutrition education include: handouts, postings on the district website, articles and information provided in district or school newsletters, presentations that focus on nutritional value and health lifestyles, and through any other appropriate means available for reaching parents.

Section 3: Nutrition Guidelines for Reimbursable School Meal Programs

The School Board believes that to optimize learning outcomes, help students learn about the importance of healthy eating and promote good nutrition as a part of our Providence school culture, meals that are served during the school day and as part of the after school programs will provide age-appropriate and balanced nutrition for all our students. All foods served as part of the School Breakfast Program (SBP), the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) including its after school snack component, and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) will meet both the USDA Requirements for Federal School Meals Programs as well as the Rhode Island State Nutritional Requirements (RINR) (*See Addendum for Legal Reference*).

Schools will make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to students who are eligible for free/reduced price school meals and will prevent the overt identification of students who are eligible for free/reduced meals. PPSD will ensure that all children eligible for free/reduced meals will have the opportunity to participate in the SBP, NSLP and the CACFP by engaging in frequent outreach to families and coordination with local agencies involved in food security issues.

School Breakfast Program (SBP): To ensure that all children have access to a healthy breakfast, PPSD will operate the SBP and will, to the extent possible, arrange bus schedules and utilize methods to serve school breakfasts that encourage participation. Schools will notify parents and students about the availability of breakfast at school and schools will encourage parents to ensure that all students eat a healthy breakfast, either at home or at school, before arriving for a day of learning.

National School Lunch Program (NSLP): Schools will schedule lunch periods at appropriate times and will provide students with at least 20 minutes to eat lunch. Schools will make every effort to ensure that the lunchroom environment is pleasant and well-designed in order to promote healthy eating habits. Schools will notify parents and students about the availability of lunch at school and will promote healthy menu options through the timely distribution of both printed and online menus. The food service provider will be required to run periodic food promotions to encourage taste testing of healthy new foods that appear on the menu. In addition to the USDA and RINR nutritional requirements for lunch meals, PPSD will also provide access to free, fresh drinking water during meal times in the food service areas of schools.

After school snacks served through the NSLP will make a positive contribution to children's diets and health with an emphasis on serving fruits and vegetables as primary snacks and water as the primary beverage.

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP): Snacks and meals served under the CACFP will make a positive contribution to children's diets and health with an emphasis on serving fruits and vegetables as primary snacks and water as the primary beverage.

Qualifications of School Food Service Staff: As part of the PPSD's responsibility to operate a high-quality food service program, qualified nutrition professionals will administer the meal program and professional training and development will be offered for all nutrition professionals working in the schools, as appropriate for their levels of responsibility. Training sessions will be offered for staff working directly under the food service provider as well as for district/school staff assigned to meal supervision duty in order to best promote the importance of healthy eating, food safety, and positive healthy lifestyle role modeling, in a clear and consistent way among all school personnel.

Food Marketing & Food Promotion in Schools: School-based marketing will be consistent with the district's nutrition education and health promotion. Schools will make every effort to limit food and beverage marketing to the promotion of foods and beverages that meet the nutrition standards for school meals (USDA and RINR) (*See Addendum for Legal Reference*). Promotion of healthy foods including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, and water is encouraged.

Local Procurement: The School Board recognizes the importance of a farm to school approach to help students eat more nutritious foods and promote healthier lifelong eating patterns; support the local economy and local farmers; and teach students about the origins of their food and how it is grown. Schools are encouraged to offer fresh, seasonal, locally grown produce at every location on the school site where food is sold and at all school-sponsored events and activities.

Section 4: Nutrition Standards for Competitive and Other Foods and Beverages

The School Board believes that maintaining a high quality school wellness culture relies on the good nutritional quality of **all** foods available and sold to students and staff. It is important to communicate the message of healthy eating and to adhere to the PPSD Wellness Policy in all food-related events within the school community including, but not limited to, vending machines, a la carte offerings, school stores, health fairs, fundraisers, classroom events, rewards, and school celebrations. In addition, the School Board believes that school events, initiatives, and messaging outside of the National School Meal Program offer the opportunity for school staff to model and promote healthy eating habits as part of the overall educational experience of every Providence student.

A La Carte Food & Vending Machines: By Rhode Island State Law (RI General Law 16-21-7), all foods sold or served outside of the Reimbursable Meal Program must adhere to the nutrition standards for Vending and A La Carte foods in schools (*See Addendum for Legal Reference*).

Food Rewards, Incentives & Punishments: The School Board believes that school-based rewards must support the efforts put forth in PPSD's nutrition policies. PPSD prohibits the use of food or candy as a reward, incentive, or punishment in the classroom or school environment.

School Stores: By Rhode Island State Law (RI General Law 16-21-7), all foods sold in school stores must adhere to the nutrition standards for Vending and A La Carte foods in schools and cannot be sold during school meal service (*See Addendum for Legal Reference*). Vending machines must have timers ensuring they are shut off during meal times.

Fundraising: By Rhode Island State Law (RI General Law 16-21-7), all foods sold in schools must adhere to the nutrition standards for Vending and A La Carte foods in schools and cannot be sold during school meal service (*See Addendum for Legal Reference*). Schools may permit the sale of beverages and snacks that do not comply with the RI State Law for Vending and A La Carte Foods as part of school fundraising in any of the following circumstances: (1) The items are sold by pupils of the school and the sale of those items takes place off and away from the premises of the school; (2) The items are sold by pupils of the school and the sale of those items takes place one hour or more after the end of the school day; or (3) The items are sold during a school sponsored pupil activity after the end of the school day.

Decisions about the sale of food items for fundraising should focus on district nutrition goals and healthy food messaging for students. Non-food based fundraisers are strongly encouraged. Fundraisers that promote physical activity are also strongly encouraged. Fundraising projects that do include food are encouraged to adhere to the nutritional guidelines as put forth by the RI State Law for Vending and A La Carte Foods.

Classroom and School Celebrations: Classroom and school celebrations will not be centered on food, except if the food items are part of a curriculum-related activity. While not prohibited, parties should be framed so as to discourage the consumption of unhealthy food items and should encourage food items that meet the State nutrition standards. The PPSD shall allow parents/guardians the right to refuse their child's participation to partake of food brought to school from the homes of other students or from sources other than PPSD's food service provider.

Section 5: Physical Education and Physical Activity

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE): The School Board believes that a year-round, high-quality physical education instruction program provides an environment in which students learn, practice, and are assessed on developmentally appropriate motor skills and knowledge of personal fitness goals and practices in order to gain the knowledge and skills to lead a physically active lifestyle.

Physical Education Teachers: All physical education classes will be taught by a certified physical education teacher. Schools will encourage PE teachers to continually seek new information and expertise to stay current and enthusiastic about the program's goals as well as maintain his/her role as a physical activity expert in the school.

Physical Education Exemptions & Alternatives: It is required that all K-12 students should take physical education courses and strongly suggested that no substitutions, waivers or exemptions should be permitted, except when a student provides exemption documentation from a medical doctor. In cases where the general physical education course cannot meet the needs of a student because of a permanent physical or cognitive disability, the student can be referred to Special Education and or to the 504 team. Upon parental consent, the student will receive a comprehensive Adapted Physical Education (APE) Evaluation to determine student need and eligibility for APE services.

State Physical Education Requirements: Every school in the PPSD will adhere to RI State requirements for physical education. Physical Education is required for all students in grades 1-12 according to RI General Law (16-22-4) and Section 3.5 of the Rules and Regulations for School Health Programs (*See Addendum for Legal Reference*). Students should receive an average of 100 minutes per week of health/physical education. Recess, free play, and after-school activities are not counted as physical education (see Physical Activity sections below). School Physical Education curricula must be aligned with the standards and performance indicators in *The RI Physical Education Framework (See Addendum for Legal Reference)*.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: The School Board believes all schools should encourage an environment that supports physical activities beyond the physical education program, for students, staff, and community before, during, and after the school day. Physical activity is critical to maintaining a healthy weight and a healthy lifestyle, and has a direct influence on a student's ability to focus in the classroom. To ensure that all students are staying active, physical activity needs to be incorporated into the daily school curriculum and prioritized as essential to each child's social and academic achievement. Daily physical activities, including recess, must never be withheld as a disciplinary strategy and teachers and other school and community personnel will not use physical activities as punishment.

Daily Recess: The School Board believes recess and unstructured play time have a positive effect on students' academic achievement and social development and that

recess should complement, not replace, physical education. All elementary students shall be provided with daily recess opportunities, preferably outdoors. All elementary schools shall allot 10-15 minutes each day for recess. Daily recess requirements must occur during the school day, however, schools are encouraged to provide physical activity opportunities before and after the school day.

Building administrators shall have the discretion to exceed the minimum allotted time for recess as they deem appropriate, including, but not limited to awarding additional recess time to reward good behavior and student performance. Building administrators shall have the discretion and authority to withhold recess from students due to inclement weather or other concerns related to student safety during recess. During times of inclement weather, alternative activities will be provided that promote free play and students' social and emotional wellness.

Physical Activity Breaks: Schools are encouraged to provide physical activity opportunities prior to the beginning of the school day as well as during classroom time, not including physical education or lunchtime recess. Opportunities for physical activity may be incorporated into other subject lessons and/or classroom teachers may provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

After-School Activities: All elementary, middle, and high schools are encouraged to offer after-school activities and extracurricular programs that promote staying physically active and provide opportunities for periods of moderate to vigorous physical activity for all participants. Schools should make an effort to offer a range of physical activities that meet the needs, interests, and abilities of all students, including boys, girls, students with disabilities, and students with special health-care needs, including but not limited to, clubs, classes, intramural, or interscholastic activities.

Community Use of School Facilities: School spaces and facilities should be available to students, staff, and community members outside of the school day and should be available to community agencies and organizations offering physical activity programs with the proper approval of school officials. School policies concerning safety will apply at all times.

Safe Routes to School: PPSD will work with local public works, public safety and/or police departments in making it safer and easier for students to walk or bike to school. The school district will encourage students to use public transportation when appropriate and available for travel to school and will work with the local transit agency to help provide transit passes for students.

Section 6: Implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting

Wellness Policy Communication: This policy, any proposed updates, and progress reports, will be posted and accessible on the school district website to inform and update the public (including parents, students, and others in the community) about the content and implementation of the PPSD Wellness Policy.

Wellness Policy Implementation and Monitoring: The PPSD Wellness Committee will review the policy on a yearly basis and forward any recommended revisions to the School Board. The PPSD Wellness Committee shall meet regularly and the PPSD Wellness Committee Chair will report the Committee's progress and/or recommendations to the School Board and Superintendent. In its annual review, the Wellness Committee will make sure that: PPSD is in compliance with the local wellness policy, that the local education agency's local wellness policy compares to model local school wellness policies, that progress is made in attaining the goals of the local wellness policy, and that this assessment is made available to the public.

Wellness Policy Compliance: The principal of each school shall be responsible for providing the leadership necessary to be in compliance with the Wellness Policy. Review of the Wellness Policy will be included in principal and staff orientations at the beginning of the school year, and the Wellness Committee will support these orientations if requested. The Director of Child Nutrition Services (CNS) shall be responsible for meeting the nutrition regulations set forth in this policy. The Superintendent and the Board of Education are responsible for providing resources necessary for the achievement of the Wellness Policy Goals.

Wellness Policy Reporting: The Wellness Committee, working with the CNS staff and school administration, will report publicly to the Superintendent and the Board of Education on Wellness Policy implementation and evaluation on an annual basis. This report will be based on objective data collection as much as possible (including the submission of any forms or reports required by the Superintendent or designee) and will include detailed assessments of the following elements:

- a. The extent to which schools are in compliance with the Wellness Policy,
- b. Obstacles that schools report in meeting compliance of elements of the wellness policy
- c. How the Wellness Policy and practices compare to other school districts and model policies,
- d. A description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the Wellness Policy, and
- e. A Wellness Policy implementation plan at the district and school level with measurable objectives for attaining each goal of the Wellness Policy.

The Superintendent shall develop regulations and procedures for the implementation of this policy.

Section 7: Addendum

Legal Reference

1. RI General Law (16-21-28), Health and Wellness Subcommittee:
<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/TITLE16/16-21/16-21-28.HTM>
2. General Law (16-22-4) and Sec. 3.5 of the Rules and Regulations for School Health Programs: <http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/title16/16-22/16-22-4.HTM>
3. RI General Law (16-21-7), School Health:
<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/TITLE16/16-21/16-21-7.HTM>
4. Public Law (111-296, Section 204) Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010:
<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-111publ296/html/PLAW-111publ296.htm>
5. Public Law (108-265, Section 204) Child Nutrition WIC Reauthorization Act:
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/healthy/108-265.pdf>
6. Rhode Island Nutrition Requirements (RINR):
http://www.thriveri.org/documents/RINR2009_%20BOR_%20Mandated%2011%205%2009.pdf
7. 2010 Rhode Island Nutrition Guidelines for School Vending & A La Carte Foods:
http://www.thriveri.org/documents/RINutrition_GuidelinesVending_AlaCarte-FINAL.pdf
8. USDA Nutrition Standards for School Meals:
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/governance/legislation/nutritionstandards.htm>
9. Dietary Guidelines for Americans: <http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/>
10. RI Physical Education Framework:
http://www.ride.ri.gov/instruction/DOCS/frameworks/Phys_ed/docs/RI_PE_Frameworko rk.pdf

Additional School-Based Wellness Policies

1. RI Safe School Act- Statewide Bullying Policy:
<http://sos.ri.gov/documents/archives/regdocs/released/pdf/DOE/6774.pdf>
2. RI General Law (16-21-SCHO), Rules and Regulations for School Health Programs:
http://sos.ri.gov/documents/archives/regdocs/holding/DOH/SchoolHealthPrograms_PublicHearingDraft_April2012.pdf

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