

# Why School Wellness?

## Contents:

- 
- A1** School Wellness Policy –  
What Is It and What Does It Mean?
- 
- A5** Health and Academics –  
Linking Nutrition and Activity to  
Student Achievement
- 



# School Wellness Policy

## What Is It and What Does It Mean?



### Why School Wellness?

School wellness policies were mandated as a result of the growing childhood obesity epidemic and its consequences on physical, emotional, and mental health. Being overweight is now the most common medical condition of childhood, with more than 9 million overweight children in the US. In Colorado, approximately 29% of children ages 2-14 are at an unhealthy weight.<sup>1</sup> The prevalence of childhood and adolescent obesity has tripled in the past 20 years.<sup>2,3</sup>

Today, 1 in 3 kids is at an **unhealthy** weight.

### The Link Between Schools and Childhood Obesity

- Emerging research is showing the link between physical activity, healthy eating, and academic performance.
- More than 95% of young people are enrolled in schools.
- Schools are an ideal setting for teaching kids how to live a healthy, well-balanced lifestyle.
- Students can get a large percent of their daily food and physical activity requirements while at school.

### Federal Law for School Wellness Policy

In 2004, President Bush signed the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act into law making it mandatory for every US school district participating in the National School Lunch Program and/or Breakfast Program to create a local school district wellness policy by June 2006 (Public Law 108-265; Section 204 – Local Wellness Policies).

The goal of this mandate was to help schools create policy to specifically address childhood overweight and obesity, and as such, to promote and improve children’s health by making changes in the school environment through the enhanced promotion of physical activity and healthy eating throughout the school day.

### Local Policy Development: Meeting School Needs

Because each school has unique needs, Congress mandated that each district develop its own local wellness policy. The policy had to meet the following guidelines:

- Include goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities designed to promote student wellness
- Provide nutrition guidelines for all foods and beverages available on school campuses during the school day with objectives of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity and type 2 diabetes
- Ensure that local guidelines for reimbursable meals meet federal requirements and nutrition standards
- Establish a plan for measuring implementation of the local wellness policy, including designation of at least one person within the district to ensure that the wellness policy is met
- Involve parents, school food authority, school board members, school administrators, and the public in the development of the school wellness policy

# Poudre School District Wellness Policy

The Poudre School District Board of Education promotes healthy schools by supporting student wellness, good nutrition, and regular physical activity as part of the total learning environment. Schools contribute to the basic health status of students by facilitating learning through the support and promotion of good nutrition and physical activity. Improved health optimizes student performance potential. Children who are physically active and who eat well-balanced meals are more likely to learn more readily in the classroom.

The Board of Education is committed to promoting physical activity and providing a healthy school nutrition environment, therefore reducing childhood obesity, and preventing diet-related chronic diseases.

## To further the principles stated above, the Board adopts the following four goals:

### 1. Poudre School District will support and promote a comprehensive learning environment for developing and practicing lifelong wellness behaviors.

The learning environment will positively influence a student's understanding, beliefs and habits as they relate to good nutrition and regular physical activity. Furthermore, this environment will provide students with appropriate resources and tools to make informed and educated decisions about lifelong healthy eating habits and beneficial physical activity.

### 2. Poudre School District will support and promote proper dietary habits contributing to students' health status and academic performance.

Foods and beverages available on school grounds and at school-sponsored activities shall meet or exceed district nutrition standards, the current U.S. Dietary Guidelines, and shall meet state and local health department guidelines.

### 3. Poudre School District will provide students more opportunities to engage in physical activity.

A quality physical education program is an essential component for all students to learn about and participate in physical activity. Physical activity should be included in a school's daily education program from grades pre-kindergarten through 12. Physical activity should include regular instructional physical education, in accordance with the district's content standards, as well as co-curricular activities and recess.

### 4. To best support this implementation, the district will create a Physical Fitness and Nutrition Advisory Council. The Council will:

- a. Serve as a resource to the schools.
- b. Develop a plan of implementation for the district with input and involvement from the schools.
- c. Assistant Superintendents will ensure the plans are implemented in the schools.



#### CROSS REF:

IHA, Basic Instructional Program  
EFEA, Nutritious Choices in School Vending Machines  
EFEA-R, Nutritious Choices in School Vending Machines

#### LEGAL REF:

Section 204 of Public Law 108-265  
C.R.S. 22-32-136

Approved: May 8, 2006

ADF – LOCAL SCHOOL WELLNESS

# Poudre School District School Wellness Policy

## Recommendations

The following recommendations support the Board of Education Local School Wellness Policy Goals:

1. **The goal of providing a comprehensive learning environment for developing and practicing lifelong wellness behaviors shall be accomplished by:**
  - a. The continued implementation of district content standard for health and nutrition education that teaches students about the effects of nutrition and physical activity on their health.
  - b. The provision of age-appropriate and culturally sensitive instruction to students that teaches them lifelong healthy eating habits and a healthy level of physical activity.
  - c. The availability of nutrition education in the school cafeteria as well as the classroom, with coordination between the district's Food Service staff and school staff.
  - d. The utilization of available resources to integrate nutrition education, physical activity and health into educational activities.
  
2. **The goal of supporting and promoting proper dietary habits contributing to student's health status and academic performance shall be accomplished when:**
  - a. Students shall have access to healthful food choices in appropriate portion sizes throughout the school day, including healthful meals in the school cafeteria with an adequate time to eat, healthful items in vending machines, and healthful items in school stores.
    - i. Current District vending guidelines, the competitive foods rule, and regulations relating to foods of Minimal Nutritional Values shall be used as the minimum for nutrition standards.
    - ii. Foods and beverages available during the school day (school meals, ala carte, school stores, parties, snacks, vending, celebrations, treats, etc.) should minimize use of trans and saturated fat, sodium and sugar as defined by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
  - b. The Food Guide Pyramid should be used as a model of healthy eating.
  - c. Schools shall not offer carbonated beverages to elementary school students during the school day.
  - d. Schools shall encourage healthy food choice options in appropriate portion sizes be made available to students at school functions (parties, celebrations, festivals, sporting events, etc.). Resource guidelines shall be made available to schools.
  - e. Students shall have access to fresh fruits and vegetables at school.
  - f. Schools shall encourage using non-food rewards for students. Resources for non-food reward ideas shall be made available to schools.
  - g. Schools shall discourage the use of unhealthy food as a fund-raiser. Events promoting physical activity should be included as fund-raising efforts.
  - h. The school district shall work to provide accessible and easily understood information to students and their parent/guardian concerning the nutritional content of foods and beverages available to students, as well as the nutritional content of competitive foods sold or available on school district property.
    - i. Students shall have access to a school facility with a sufficient number of functioning water fountains in accordance with local building codes, or other means to provide students with sufficient water.
  - j. Elementary schools should consider scheduling recess before lunch.
  - k. Schools should provide students access to hand washing prior to food/beverage consumption.



# Poudre School District School Wellness Policy

## Recommendations (cont'd)

### 3. The goal of providing students more opportunities to engage in physical activity shall be accomplished by:

- a. Schools are expected to follow Board policy recommendations for physical education instruction.
- b. A full time physical education teacher will hold an endorsement in Physical Education and that endorsement will be required for future full-time hires.
- c. All students should have access to age-appropriate physical activity where moderate to vigorous activity is encouraged and extended periods of inactivity are discouraged.
  - i. Schools should provide increased opportunities for physical activity during the school day through daily recess periods, elective physical education classes, walking programs, and the integration of physical activity into the academic curriculum.
  - ii. Schools should consider providing opportunities for physical activity through a range of after-school programs including intramurals, interscholastic athletics, and physical activity clubs.
  - iii. Schools should consider providing health-promotion activities and incentives for students, parents and staff that encourage regular physical activity such as speakers, recreational demonstrations, and walking clubs.
- d. Students shall be encouraged to participate in moderate to vigorous activity during recess.
- e. Schools should consider the impact of withholding physical activity before administering student discipline.
- f. Schools shall comply with developmentally appropriate district recommended health and fitness assessments.



### 4. In support of implementation of the wellness policy, the district will create a Physical Fitness and Nutrition Advisory Council. The council shall serve as a resource to the schools, develop a plan of implementation of the wellness policy for the schools, and review and report the effectiveness of the implementation plan to the Assistant Superintendents. The council should be made up of public health professionals, teachers, administrators, parents, students, community members and school representatives.

<p><b>CROSS REF:</b></p> <p>IHA, Basic Instructional Program</p> <p>EFEA, Nutritious Choices in School Vending Machines</p> <p>EFEA-R, Nutritious Choices in School Vending Machines</p>	<p><b>LEGAL REF:</b></p> <p>Section 204 of Public Law 108-265</p> <p>C.R.S. 22-32-136</p>
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Approved: May 8, 2006

ADF – LOCAL SCHOOL WELLNESS

**CanDo – Coalition for Activity and Nutrition to Defeat Obesity**  
 Poudre Valley Hospital Foundation  
 1024 South Lemay Avenue | Fort Collins, CO 80524  
 Phone: (970) 495-7517 | ve2@pvhs.org  
[www.CanDoOnline.org](http://www.CanDoOnline.org)

**Supported By:**  
 LiveWell Colorado

# Health & Academics

## Linking Nutrition and Activity to Student Achievement

Kids  
Can Do  
it!



### Key Wellness Recommendations

To optimize both health and readiness to learn, students should adopt the following healthy lifestyle habits:

- Be active for at least **60 minutes** every day.
- Start each day with a healthy breakfast.
- Eat 3 to 4 cups of colorful fruits and vegetables daily.
- Limit soda and other sugary drinks.
- Be size wise – choose small portions of foods.
- Get 8.5 to 11 hours of sleep each night.
- Limit screen time (TV, video games, computer) to less than 2 hours a day.

### Room for Improvement

- 75% of kids get less than 20 minutes of vigorous physical activity every day.<sup>10</sup>
- Less than 25% of adolescents eat enough fruits and vegetables each day.<sup>11</sup>
- American children average nearly 3 hours of TV per day.<sup>12</sup>
- 56 to 85% of children in school drink at least one soft drink daily.<sup>13</sup>

### The Learning Connection

Poor nutrition and physical inactivity not only lead to overweight and obesity, but they also have a negative impact on readiness to learn and academic achievement. A growing body of evidence is showing the connection between good nutrition, physical activity, healthy body weight, and student achievement.

### Nutrition and Academics

- In a study of 4th graders, students with the lowest protein in their diets had the lowest achievement scores.<sup>4</sup>
- Children with iron deficiency anemia have shortened attention spans, irritability, fatigue, and difficulty with concentration. As a result, they do poorly in vocabulary, reading, and other tests.<sup>5</sup>
- Even moderate undernutrition (not getting enough food or not getting enough nutrients) can have lasting effects. It can negatively affect cognitive development and school performance.<sup>6</sup>

**Less than 25% of adolescents eat enough fruits and vegetables each day.**

- Participation in a school breakfast program improves academic, behavioral, and emotional functioning and leads to increased math grades and lower absenteeism.<sup>7,8</sup>
- Children with poor nutrition during the brain's most formative years score much lower on vocabulary, reading comprehension, arithmetic, and general knowledge tests.<sup>9</sup>

# The Impact of Childhood Obesity

## Physical Health

- 70% of overweight adolescents will become obese adults.<sup>14</sup>
- Obesity is associated with increased risk for diabetes, heart disease, sleep apnea, asthma, and some types of cancer.<sup>15</sup>
- Kids who are overweight tend to have at least one medical problem like high blood pressure or asthma.<sup>10</sup>
- In a large study, 61% of overweight 5 to 10 year olds had risk factors for heart disease, and 26% had two or more risk factors.<sup>16</sup>



## Emotional Health

- Overweight children are more likely to suffer from depression and experience teasing and isolation from their peers.<sup>17</sup>
- In a study where children ranked six drawings of children in order of how well they liked each child, the obese child drawing was ranked last.<sup>17</sup>

## Financial Health

- In 2004, estimated costs related to overweight and obesity ranged from \$98 billion to \$129 billion.<sup>18</sup>
- School costs increase due to additional staff time needed to address academic, behavioral, and health problems related to childhood overweight.<sup>19</sup>

# The Learning Connection (cont'd)

## Physical Activity and Academics

- Academic achievement improves when kids spend more time in physical education, even when students spend less time in class! Consistently higher math scores were seen after 240 minutes per week of class time was exchanged for physical activity time.<sup>20,21, 22</sup>
- A 2002 study of over 850,000 5th, 7th, and 9th graders showed an association between physical fitness and SAT-9 test results. Students with the highest fitness scores also had the highest test scores.<sup>23</sup>
- Memory may be improved with aerobic conditioning. Exercise may strengthen certain areas of the brain, while oxygen intake during activity may enhance connections between neurons.<sup>24</sup>
- Intense physical activity programs have shown improvements such as increased concentration, reduced disruptive behavior, and improvements in math, reading, and writing test scores.<sup>25</sup>

## Body Weight and Academics

- Emerging evidence is showing a correlation between weight problems and lower academic achievement. Some attribute these findings to absenteeism.
- A recent scientific review of the literature concluded that childhood overweight and obesity were associated with poorer levels of academic achievement.<sup>26</sup>
  - Students with weight problems, poor nutrition, and physical inactivity have a higher incidence of psychological, social, and physical problems that frequently cause absenteeism.<sup>27</sup>

CanDo – Coalition for Activity and Nutrition to Defeat Obesity  
Poudre Valley Hospital Foundation  
1024 South Lemay Avenue | Fort Collins, CO 80524  
Phone: (970) 495-7517 | ve2@pvhs.org  
[www.CanDoOnline.org](http://www.CanDoOnline.org)

Supported By:  
LiveWell Colorado

kids  
CanDo  
it!

## References

- <sup>1</sup> Colorado Child Health Survey. 2005. Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. Accessed 9/10/2007 [www.cdphe.state.co.us/ps/mch/surveydata.html](http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/ps/mch/surveydata.html).
- <sup>2</sup> Ogden CL, Carroll MD, Curtin LR, McDowell MA, Tabak CJ, Flegal KM. Prevalence of overweight and obesity in the United States, 1999-2004. *JAMA*. 2006;295:1549-1555.
- <sup>3</sup> Flegal KM, Carroll MD, Kuczmarski RJ, Johnson CL. Overweight and obesity in the United States: Prevalence and trends, 1960-1994. *Int J Obes Relat Metab Disord*. 1998;22:39-47.
- <sup>4</sup> American School Food Service Association (ASFSA). Impact of hunger and malnutrition on student achievement. *School Board Food Service Research Review*. 1989;(1, Spring):17-21.
- <sup>5</sup> Parker, L. The relationship between nutrition and learning: a school employee's guide to information and action. Washington: National Education Association. 1989.
- <sup>6</sup> Center on Hunger, Poverty, and Nutrition Policy. Statement on the link between nutrition and cognitive development in children. Medford, MA: Tufts University School of Nutrition. 1995.
- <sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Guidelines for school health programs to promote lifelong healthy eating. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report Recommendations and Report*. 1996; Jun 14;45:RR-9.
- <sup>8</sup> Barnard, A. Study links school breakfast, results. *Boston Globe* 2000 Nov 29; [16] Minnesota Department of Children Families and Learning. School breakfast programs energizing the classroom. 1998.
- <sup>9</sup> Brown L. and Pollitt E. Malnutrition, poverty and intellectual development. *Scientific American*. 1996;274(2):38-43.
- <sup>10</sup> Action for Healthy Kids – School Wellness Policies Fact Sheet. Accessed 9/10/2007 [www.actionforhealthykids.org](http://www.actionforhealthykids.org).
- <sup>11</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Make a Difference at Your School. Accessed 9/10/2007 [www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/KeyStrategies](http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/KeyStrategies).
- <sup>12</sup> Turn off TV, Turn on a Healthier Lifestyle Fact Sheet: TV-Turnoff Network. Accessed 9/10/2007 [www.tvturnoff.org/images/facts&figs/factsheets/HealthyLife.pdf](http://www.tvturnoff.org/images/facts&figs/factsheets/HealthyLife.pdf).
- <sup>13</sup> Policy Statement: Soft Drinks in Schools. *American Academy of Pediatrics*. *Pediatrics*. 2004;113:152-154.
- <sup>14</sup> The Surgeon General's call to action to prevent and decrease overweight and obesity in children and adolescents. Accessed 9/10/2007 [www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/obesity/calltoaction/fact\\_adolescents.htm](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/obesity/calltoaction/fact_adolescents.htm).
- <sup>15</sup> Partnership for Prevention: Straight Talk About Obesity and Health; [www.prevent.org](http://www.prevent.org).
- <sup>16</sup> Freedman DS, Dietz WH, Srinivasan SR, Berenson GS. The relation of overweight to cardiovascular risk factors among children and adolescents: The Bogalusa Heart Study. *Pediatrics*. 1999;103:1175-1182.
- <sup>17</sup> Latner JD, Stunkard AJ. Getting worse: The stigmatization of obese children. *Obesity Research*. 2003;11(3):452-456.
- <sup>18</sup> Institute of Medicine. Committee on Prevention of Obesity in Children and Youth: Preventing childhood obesity: Health in the balance. Washington, DC. 2005.
- <sup>19</sup> The Learning Connection: The value of improving nutrition and physical activity in our schools. Action for Healthy Kids.
- <sup>20</sup> National Association for Sports and Physical Education, Executive Summary, Shape of the Nation 2001. Accessed 9/10/2007 [www.aahperd.org/naspe/pdf\\_files/shape\\_nation.pdf](http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/pdf_files/shape_nation.pdf).
- <sup>21</sup> Shephard RJ, Volle M, Lavalee M, LaBarre R, Jequier JC, Rajic M. Required physical activity and academic grades: a controlled longitudinal study. In: Limarinen and Valimaki, editors. *Children and Sport*. Berlin: Springer Verlag; 1984. 58-63;
- <sup>22</sup> Shephard RJ. Curricular physical activity and academic performance. *Pediatric Exercise Science*. 1997;9:113-126.
- <sup>23</sup> Grissom JB. Physical fitness and academic achievement. *Journal of ExPhys* 2005; 8(1):11-25.
- <sup>24</sup> The Role of Sound Nutrition and Physical Activity in Academic Achievement; Action for Healthy Kids, 2004; [www.actionforhealthykids.org](http://www.actionforhealthykids.org).
- <sup>25</sup> Symons CW, Cinelli B, James TC, Groff P. Bridging student health risks and academic achievement through comprehensive school health programs. *Journal of School Health*. 1997;67(6):220-227.
- <sup>26</sup> Taras H, Potts-Datema, W. Obesity and student performance at school. *J School Health*. 2005;75(8):291-295.
- <sup>27</sup> The Learning Connection: The Value of Improving Nutrition and Physical Activity in Our Schools. Accessed 9/10/2007 [www.actionforhealthykids.org](http://www.actionforhealthykids.org).