

Arkansas School for the Blind 2022-2023 Wellness Policy

Preamble

The Arkansas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired is committed to the optimal development of every student. The District believes that for students to have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic, developmental, and social success, we need to create positive, safe, and health-promoting learning environments at every level, in every setting, throughout the school year.

Research shows that two components, good nutrition and physical activity before, during, and after the school day, are strongly correlated with positive student outcomes. For example, student participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) School Breakfast Program is associated with higher grades and standardized test scores, lower absenteeism, and better performance on cognitive tasks. Conversely, less-than-adequate consumption of specific foods including fruits, vegetables, and dairy products, is associated with lower grades among students. In addition, students who are physically active through active transport to and from school, recess, physical activity breaks, high-quality physical education, and extracurricular activities – do better academically.

The Arkansas School for the Blind (referred to hereafter as ASB) is committed to providing a school environment that promotes and protects children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting health education, healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, it is the policy of the Arkansas School for the Blind that:

- ASB will offer opportunities to students, parents, teachers, child nutrition professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing School nutrition and physical activity policies.
- All students in grades Pre-k/K-12 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Foods and beverages sold or served at school will meet the nutrition recommendations of the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
- ASB qualified child nutrition professionals will provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students; will accommodate the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning; and will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.

- To the maximum extent practicable, ASB will participate in available federal school meal programs (including the School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program and Summer Food Service Program,
- ASB will provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity, and will establish linkages between health education and school meal programs, and with related community services..
- ASB will adhere to Federal Smart Snacks regulations.
- ASB will adhere to the Arkansas Rules Governing Nutrition and Physical Activity Standards in Arkansas Public Schools, including the Maximum Portion Size List requirements.

TO ACHIEVE THESE POLICY GOALS:

I. School Wellness Committee

ASB will create, strengthen, and work within the existing School Wellness Committee to develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies. The ASB Wellness Committee consists of a group of individuals representing the school and community, including the Chairman of the committee, parents, students, the school food authority, members of the school board, school administrators, teachers, health professionals, and members of the public. This committee will meet quarterly during the school year.

II. Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served on Campus

School Meals

Meals served through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs will:

- be appealing and attractive to children;
- be served in clean and pleasant settings;
- meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations;
- offer a variety of fruits and vegetables;
- Ensure that all grains served are whole grain rich.

ASB will engage students and parents, through taste-tests of new entrees and surveys, in selecting foods served through the school meal programs in order to identify new, healthful, and appealing food choices. In addition, ASB will share information about the nutritional content of meals with parents and students upon request. In addition, the Wellness Committee will review school menus quarterly.

Breakfast. To ensure that all children have breakfast, either at home or at school, in order to meet their nutritional needs and enhance their ability to learn:

- ASB will, operate the School Breakfast Program.
- ASB will, to the extent possible, arrange bus schedules and utilize methods to serve school breakfasts that encourage participation, including serving breakfast in the classroom, “grab-and-go” breakfast, or breakfast during morning break or recess.
- ASB will notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast Program.
- ASB will encourage parents to provide a healthy breakfast for their children through newsletter articles, take-home materials, or other means.

Meal Times and Scheduling. ASB:

- will provide students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch;
- will schedule meal periods at appropriate times, *e.g.*, lunch is scheduled between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.;
- will not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities;
- will schedule recess periods to follow lunch periods.
- will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks; and
- will take reasonable steps to accommodate the tooth-brushing regimens of students with special oral health needs (*e.g.*, orthodontia or high tooth decay risk).

Summer Food Service Program. The Arkansas School for the Blind will sponsor the Summer Food Service Program for the three weeks that students are on campus.

Qualifications of Child Nutrition Staff. ASB qualified nutrition professionals will administer the school meal programs. As part of ASB's responsibility to operate a food service program, we will provide continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals at ASB. Staff development programs will include appropriate certification and/or training programs for child nutrition directors, school nutrition managers, and cafeteria workers, according to their levels of responsibility.

Sharing of Foods and Beverages. ASB will discourage students from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets.

Foods and Beverages Sold Individually (*i.e.*, such as through vending machines, fundraisers, student stand, etc.)

Beverages

- **Allowed:** water or seltzer water¹ without added caloric sweeteners; fruit and vegetable juices and fruit-based drinks that contain at least 50% fruit juice and that do not contain additional caloric sweeteners; unflavored or flavored low-fat or fat-free fluid milk and nutritionally-equivalent nondairy beverages (to be defined by USDA);
- **Not allowed:** soft drinks containing caloric sweeteners; sports drinks; iced teas; fruit-based drinks that contain less than 50% real fruit juice or that contain additional caloric sweeteners; beverages containing caffeine, excluding low-fat or fat-free chocolate milk (which contain trivial amounts of caffeine).

Foods

- A food item sold individually:
 - will have no more than 35% of its calories from fat (excluding nuts, seeds, peanut butter, and other nut butters) and 10% of its calories from saturated and trans fat combined;
 - will have no more than 35% of its *weight* from added sugars;²

¹ Surprisingly, seltzer water may not be sold during meal times in areas of the school where food is sold or eaten because it is considered a "Food of Minimal Nutritional Value" (Appendix B of 7 CFR Part 210).

² If a food manufacturer fails to provide the *added* sugars content of a food item, use the percentage of weight from *total* sugars (in place of the percentage of weight from *added* sugars), and exempt fruits, vegetables, and dairy foods from this total sugars limit.

- will contain no more than 230 mg of sodium per serving for chips, crackers, baked goods and other snack items; will contain no more than 480 mg of sodium per serving for pastas, meats and soups; and will contain no more than 600 mg of sodium for pizza, sandwiches, and main dishes.
- A choice of at least two fruits and/or non-fried vegetables will be offered for sale at any location on the school site where foods are sold. Such items could include, but are not limited to, fresh fruits and vegetables; 100% fruit or vegetable juice; fruit-based drinks that are at least 50% fruit juice and that do not contain additional caloric sweeteners; cooked, dried, or canned fruits (canned in fruit juice or light syrup); and cooked, dried, or canned vegetables (that meet the above fat and sodium guidelines).³

Portion Sizes:

- Limit portion sizes of foods and beverages sold individually to those listed below:
 - One and one-quarter ounces for chips, crackers, popcorn, cereal, trail mix, nuts, seeds, dried fruit, or jerky;
 - One ounce for cookies;
 - Two ounces for cereal bars, granola bars, pastries, muffins, doughnuts, bagels, and other bakery items;
 - Four fluid ounces for frozen desserts, including, but not limited to, low-fat or fat-free ice cream;
 - Eight ounces for non-frozen yogurt;
 - Twelve fluid ounces for beverages, excluding water; and
 - The portion size of a la carte entrees and side dishes, including potatoes, will not be greater than the size of comparable portions offered as part of school meals. Fruits and non-fried vegetables are exempt from portion-size limits.

Fundraising Activities. To support children’s health and school nutrition-education efforts, school fundraising activities will not involve food or will use only foods that meet the above nutrition and portion size standards for foods and beverages sold individually. Schools will encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity. The School Wellness Committee will make available a list of ideas for acceptable fundraising activities.

³ Schools that have vending machines are encouraged to include refrigerated snack vending machines, which can accommodate fruits, vegetables, yogurts, and other perishable items.

Snacks. Snacks served during the school day or in after-school care or residential programs will make a positive contribution to children's diets 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. The School Wellness Committee will disseminate a list of healthful snack items to teachers, after-school program personnel, dormitory personnel and parents.

Rewards. Schools will not use foods or beverages, especially those that do not meet the nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually (above), as rewards for academic performance or good behavior,⁴ and will not withhold food or beverages (including food served through school meals) as a punishment.

Celebrations. ASB will limit celebrations that involve food during the school day to no more than the allowed nine (9) events per school year.

School-sponsored Events (such as, but not limited to, athletic events, dances, or performances). Foods and beverages offered or sold at school-sponsored events outside the school day will meet the nutrition standards for meals or for foods and beverages sold individually (above).

III. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing

Nutrition Education and Promotion: ASB will teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. ASB will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- is offered at each grade level as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based program (that is in compliance with the Curriculum Frameworks of the State of Arkansas) designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
- is part of not only health education classes, but also classroom instruction in subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects;
- includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, participatory activities, such as contests, promotions, taste testing, farm visits, and school gardens;
- promotes fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices;
- emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise);

⁴ Unless this practice is allowed by a student's individual education plan (IEP).

- links with ASB's school meal programs, foods sold at the Stand, and nutrition-related community services;
- teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food marketing; and
- includes training for teachers and other staff.
- allows students to access valid health information, products, and services that promote consumer, community and environmental health (this can be done through Health and Physical Education classes as well as through Nutrition Services and community services free to the public that must be made available to all citizens of a community.
- allows students to develop skills for making healthy food choices (through health classes and nutrition services).

Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting. For students to receive the nationally-recommended amount of daily physical activity (*i.e.*, at least 60 minutes per day) and for students to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior, ASB students will be provided opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class. Toward that end:

- 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.

Communications with Parents. ASB will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. ASB will send home nutrition information, post nutrition tips, menus and health/nutrition related links on the school's website, and provide nutrient analyses of school menus upon request. ASB will encourage parents to offer their children healthy meals and snacks and refrain from including beverages and foods that do not meet the above nutrition standards for individual foods and beverages. ASB will provide parents a list of foods that meets ASB's snack standards and ideas for healthy celebrations/parties, rewards, and fundraising activities.

ASB will provide information about physical education and other school-based physical activity opportunities before, during, and after the school day; and support parents' efforts to provide their children with opportunities to be physically active outside of school. Such supports will include sharing information about physical activity and physical education through a website, newsletter, or other take-home materials, special events, or physical education homework.

Food Marketing in Schools. School-based marketing will be consistent with nutrition education and health promotion. As such, ASB will limit food and beverage marketing to the promotion of foods and beverages that meet the nutrition standards for meals or for foods and beverages sold individually. ASB adopts the policy that school-based marketing of brands promoting predominantly low-nutrition foods and beverages is

prohibited. The promotion of healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products is encouraged.

Examples of marketing techniques include the following: logos and brand names on/in vending machines, books or curricula, textbook covers, school supplies, scoreboards, school structures, and sports equipment; educational incentive programs that provide food as a reward; programs that provide schools with supplies when families buy low-nutrition food products; free samples or coupons; and food sales through fundraising activities. Marketing activities that promote healthful behaviors include: vending machine covers promoting water and natural juices; promotion of healthy options in a la carte lines or vending machines; sales of fruit for fundraisers; etc.

Staff Wellness. ASB highly values the health and well-being of every staff member and will plan and implement activities and policies that support personal efforts by staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Staff will be notified of health and wellness programs/resources offered through the Employees Benefits Division for state employees. In addition, staff participates in two annual school fitness walks on the ASB campus.

IV. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

Daily Physical Education (P.E.) K-12. All students in grades K-12, including students with disabilities, special health-care needs, and in alternative educational settings, will receive daily physical education (or its equivalent of 100 minutes/week for elementary school students and 200 minutes/week for middle and high school students) for the entire school year. All physical education will be taught by a certified physical education teacher. Student involvement in other activities involving physical activity (e.g., interscholastic or intramural sports) will not be substituted for meeting the physical education requirement. Students will spend at least 50 percent of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity learning and demonstrating motor skills, movement concepts and personal and social behavior skills appropriate for society and defined by the Physical Education Curriculum Frameworks of Arkansas.

Daily Recess. All elementary school students will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which schools should encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment.

ASB shall discourage extended periods (*i.e.*, periods of two or more hours) of inactivity. When activities, such as mandatory school-wide testing, make it necessary for students to remain indoors for long periods of time, schools should give students periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.

Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School. All elementary, middle, and high schools will offer extracurricular physical activity programs, such as physical activity clubs or intramural programs. All high schools, and middle schools as appropriate, will offer interscholastic sports programs. Schools will offer a range of activities that meet the needs, interests, and abilities of all students, including boys, girls, students with disabilities, and students with special health-care needs.

Physical Activity and Punishment. Teachers and other school and community personnel will not use physical activity (e.g., running laps, pushups) or withhold opportunities for physical activity (e.g., recess, physical education) as punishment.

Bus Safety. ASB staff will routinely ensure that children arriving and departing school follow safe bus practices (walking to bus, using rails, no horse playing) during loading and unloading of children. Students will also be informed of general bus safety and the proper crossing of the street. (look both ways, stay in crosswalks, listen)

Use of School Facilities Outside of School Hours. ASB will follow School Board policies regarding use of school facilities.

Other Wellness Services: ASB operates an on campus infirmary licensed by the Arkansas Department of Health and staffed with RN's and LPNs. ASB provides mental health services to Pre-k – 12th grade students through an on campus Licensed Master Social Worker.

V. Monitoring and Policy Review

Monitoring: The superintendent or designee will ensure compliance with established campus-wide nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. In the elementary and secondary school the principal or designee will ensure compliance with those policies in the school and will report on the school's compliance to superintendent or designee.

School food service will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the superintendent. In addition, the school will report on the most recent USDA administrative review findings and any resulting changes.

The superintendent or designee will develop a summary report every school year on campus-wide compliance with the school's established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies, based on input from the elementary and secondary schools. The report will be included in the annual Report to the Public and placed on the school website. The report will also be used to revise the wellness priority in the school ASCIP plan as necessary. The report will be provided to the school board and also distributed to all school health staff, parent/teacher organizations, school principals, and school health services personnel.

Policy Review: To help with the initial development of the school's wellness policies, the school will conduct a baseline assessment of the existing nutrition and physical activity environments and policies using the School Health Index assessment.

Assessments will be repeated yearly to help review policy compliance, assess progress, and determine areas in need of improvement. As part of that review, the school will review their nutrition and physical activity policies; provide an environment that supports healthy eating, physical activity, and nutrition and physical education policies and program elements. The school will, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.