



Youngstown Preparatory Academy

# Local Wellness Policy

March 2022

## I. **PREAMBLE**

The district is committed to the optimal physical and academic development of every student. For students to achieve personal, academic, developmental and social success, we must create positive, safe and health-promoting learning environments at every level, in every setting, throughout the school year. The district will align health and wellness efforts with other school improvement endeavors to ensure the optimal health and academic success of all students.

Research shows that proper nutrition and physical activity before, during and after the school day are strongly correlated with positive academic outcomes. For example, student participation in the 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. Participation in active transportation to and from school (e.g., walking and bicycling), recess, physical activity breaks, physical education and extracurricular activities involving physical activity results in better academic outcomes for students. Finally, there is evidence that adequate hydration is associated with better cognitive performance.

This local school wellness policy (LWP) outlines the district's approach to ensuring that the school environment provides opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day. This policy applies to all students, staff and schools in the district. Specific measurable goals and outcomes are identified within each section.

In order to be compliant with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) final rule of 2016 (final rule), the policy must at minimum:

- identify one or more school district and/or school official(s) who have the authority and responsibility for ensuring that each school complies with the LWP
- include language inviting caregivers, students, representatives of the school food authority\* (SFA), teachers of physical education (PE), school health professionals, the school board, school administrators and the general public to participate in the development, implementation, review and update of the LWP
- include language describing the methods for informing the public (including caregivers, students and others in the community) about the LWP and any updates to the policy on an annual basis
- include language requiring that at least once every three years, the following is measured and made available to the public:
  - the extent to which schools comply with the LWP
  - the extent to which the LWP compares to model local school wellness policies

- the progress made in attaining the goals of the LWP
- include nutrition standards for all foods and beverages sold on the school campus\* during the school day\* that are consistent with federal regulations for school meals and the Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards\* (Smart Snacks standards)
- include standards for all foods and beverages offered\*, but not sold, to students during the school day (e.g., for classroom parties or classroom snacks brought by caregivers),
- include specific goals for nutrition education\* and nutrition promotion\* activities
- include requirements for marketing and advertising on the school campus during the school day of only those foods and beverages that meet Smart Snacks standards
- include specific goals for physical activity opportunities
- include specific goals for other school-based activities that promote student wellness

The district understands that resources are not equally distributed. The district will maintain a focus on health equity and will work to ensure that all students and staff across the district have equitable access to health and wellness efforts.

The district recognizes that the out-of-school time (OST) settings, such as academic enrichment programs (e.g., reading or math-focused programs), specialty programs (e.g., sports teams, STEM programs and arts enrichment programs) and multipurpose programs that provide an array of activities (e.g., 21st Century Community Learning Centers, Boys & Girls Clubs, recreation agencies and YMCAs), provide critical opportunities to teach and reinforce healthy habits. As such, the district will promote the use of the National AfterSchool Association Healthy Eating and Physical Activity (HEPA) Standards among all school-based OST program providers.

## **II. DISTRICT WELLNESS COUNCIL**

### **Purpose of the Council**

In order to be compliant with the USDA final rule, the district will convene a representative District Wellness Council (DWC) that meets at least four times per year to establish goals for and oversee school health and safety policies and programs – including the development, implementation and periodic review and update of this LWP.

### **Council Membership**

In order to be compliant with the USDA final rule, the DWC will include representatives from the school and district level and will reflect the diversity of the community.

The DWC membership will include, but is not limited to:

- superintendent (or designee)
- caregivers (ensure diversity of representation in terms of race, ethnicity, gender identity, disability status, etc.)
- students
- representatives of the school nutrition program (e.g., school nutrition director)
- ,physical and health education teachers and school health professionals (e.g., school nurses, physicians, dentists or other personnel who provide school health services)
- specialized instructional support personnel (e.g., school counselors, psychologists or social workers)
- school administrators (e.g., superintendents, principals or vice principals) • school board members
- community health professionals (e.g., dietitians, doctors, nurses or dentists)
- school-based OST program staff (e.g., district after school program coordinator, 21st Century Community Learning Center district lead or director of community-based afterschool services)
- general public (ensure diversity of representation in terms of race, ethnicity, gender identity, disability status, etc.)
- community stakeholders (e.g., Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP Ed) coordinators, representatives from community-based organizations or local business representatives)

### **Council Leadership**

In order to be compliant with the USDA final rule, the superintendent (or designee) will convene the DWC, facilitate development of and updates to the LWP and ensure each school's compliance with the policy. The names and contact information of the superintendent (or designee) and the council members will be made readily available to the public.

The district requires that each school within the district establish an ongoing School Wellness Committee (SWC) that supports LWP implementation as well as LWP monitoring and reporting to the DWC. Schools can refer to the School Wellness Committee Toolkit for guidance.

### **III. ACCOUNTABILITY**

#### Triennial Assessments

In order to be compliant with the USDA final rule, at least once every three years, the district will assess the LWP by measuring:

- the extent to which the LWP meets the requirements of the final rule
- the extent to which schools under the jurisdiction of the district are complying with the LWP
- the progress made in attaining the goals of the LWP

#### Documentation

In order to be compliant with the USDA final rule, the district will retain records to document the presence of and compliance with the LWP, including but not limited to:

- the current and previous board-approved LWP
- documentation demonstrating that the LWP has been made available to the public
- documentation of the most recent district- and school-level assessments of implementation
- documentation of efforts to review and update the LWP, including who was involved, and how the district made stakeholders aware of their ability to participate

#### Policy Updates

In order to be compliant with the USDA final rule, the DWC will update the LWP based upon:

- the results of the triennial assessment
- district priorities
- community needs
- the results of school health assessments
- school-level implementation progress
- emerging scientific information
- new federal or state regulations or guidance

#### Notification to the Public

In order to be compliant with the USDA final rule, the district will actively inform caregivers and the public each year of basic information about the LWP, including but not limited to:

- its content and any updates
- district- and school-level implementation status

- an explanation of why updates were made, who was involved and how stakeholders were made aware of their ability to participate
- the effective dates of any policy changes
- the names and contact information of the district and school officials leading and coordinating the DWC
- information on how the public can get involved with the DWC
- information about DWC meetings including dates, times, locations, agendas and meeting minutes
- mechanisms for the public to provide feedback and comments

In order to be compliant with the USDA final rule, the district will ensure that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community and will use communication methods that are appropriate to ensure that all caregivers have access to the information. The district will keep persons with disabilities or those that represent the interests of those with disabilities involved in all aspects including LWP updates and assessments. The district will use multiple methods to distribute this information to the community, including but not limited to:

- electronic mechanisms (e.g., email)
- displaying notices on the district and school websites
- non-electronic mechanisms (e.g., newsletters)
- presentations to caregivers
- sending information home to caregivers

## **Public Involvement**

In order to be compliant with the USDA final rule, the district is committed to ensuring that the community is aware of and involved in the development and implementation of the LWP. The district will actively communicate the ways in which representatives of the DWC, SWC and others can participate in the development, implementation and periodic review and update of the LWP.

## **IV. NUTRITIONAL SERVICES**

### **School Meals**

Children consume as many as half of their daily calories at school. Schools play an important role in offering meals with vital nutrients while shaping students' eating habits. Students who participate in the school meal programs have access to nutritious foods and beverages to support their growth, development and academic performance.

The USDA Child Nutrition Programs\* (child nutrition programs) aim to improve the health of students, help mitigate hunger and obesity and model healthy eating by providing meals that are low in fat and sodium, and abundant in fruits, vegetables and

whole grains. These programs support the development of lifelong healthy eating patterns while accommodating cultural food preferences and special dietary needs.

In order to be compliant with the USDA final rule, all schools within the district will participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) and will provide meals that meet the nutrition standards for school meals by including:

- fruits and vegetables, including a variety of fruits and vegetables that meet the required vegetable subgroups (dark green, red and orange, dry beans, and peas and legumes)
- grains (whole grain-rich)
- meats and meat alternates
- fat-free and low-fat milk
- access to free drinking water

In addition:

- school meals will be accessible to all students, and the district will accommodate special dietary needs and food allergies as required by federal regulations
- school meals will be administered by a team of qualified nutrition professionals who meet or exceed the hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements of the USDA Professional Standards for Child Nutrition Professionals
- the district will make every effort to ensure, to the maximum extent practicable, that the method of payment does not identify a student as eligible for free or reduced-price meals (e.g., using prepayment systems which mask students' eligibility status)

## **Water**

Access to safe, free drinking water helps to increase students' overall water consumption, maintain hydration and reduce energy intake when substituted for sugar-sweetened beverages. In addition, adequate hydration may improve cognitive function among children and adolescents, which is important for learning.

In order to be compliant with the USDA final rule, free, safe, unflavored drinking water will be available to all students during mealtimes where school meals are served.

## **Competitive Foods and Beverages**

Competitive foods and beverages include those items sold in vending machines, school stores and snack or food carts, as well as any food-based fundraising meant for consumption during the school day.

These foods are called competitive foods because students may choose to eat them instead of healthier foods offered through the school meal programs.

In order to be compliant with the USDA final rule, the district will ensure that all foods and beverages sold to students on the school campus during the school day support healthy eating, including those provided outside of the school meal programs. All foods and beverages sold outside of the school meal programs, during the school day will, at a minimum, meet Smart Snacks. These standards will apply in all locations and through all services where foods and beverages are sold, which may include but are not limited to à la carte, vending machines, school stores and snack or food carts, as well as any food-based fundraising meant for consumption during the school day.

To qualify as a Smart Snack, a snack or entrée must:

- be a grain product that contains 50% or more whole grains by weight (have a whole grain as the first ingredient), or
- have as the first ingredient a fruit, vegetable, dairy product or protein food, or be a combination food that contains at least ¼ cup of fruit and/or vegetable, and
- meet the following minimum standards for calories, sodium, sugar and fats:

Nutrient	Snack	Entree
Calories	200 calories or less	350 calories or less
Sodium	200 mg or less	480 mg or less
Total Fat	35% of calories or less	35% of calories or less
Saturated Fat	Less than 10% of calories	Less than 10% of calories
Trans Fat	0g	0g
Sugar	35% by weight or less	35% by weight or less

### **Celebrations and Rewards**

Celebrations and positive reinforcement are an important part of our district’s culture of supporting students. Using food as a reward or withholding food as a punishment undermines healthy eating habits and interferes with children’s ability to self-regulate their eating.

In order to be compliant with the USDA final rule, the district will ensure that celebrations and rewards are consistent with our nutrition policies. All foods and beverages served and offered on the school campus outside of the school meal programs during the school day will meet [insert standards determined by the district].



This includes foods and beverages offered during celebrations and parties, for classroom snacks and as rewards and incentives. The district recommends utilizing rewards that promote physical activity and/or promote educational messages (e.g., a coupon for a free book at the book fair for consistently returning books to the library on time). Foods and beverages will not be withheld as a punishment for any reason.

### **Fundraising**

Fundraising efforts provide opportunities for student, staff, family and community collaboration and reflect the healthy eating practices and policies in the district.<sup>14</sup> In order to be compliant with the USDA final rule, the district will allow only foods and beverages that meet or exceed Smart Snacks standards to be sold through fundraisers on the school campus during the school day.

### **Nutrition Education**

Nutrition education is a vital part of a comprehensive health education program and empowers children with knowledge and skills to make healthy food and beverage choices.

In order to be compliant with the USDA final rule, the district will teach, model, encourage and support healthy eating among students. Schools will provide nutrition education integrated into other subjects, as part of health education and/or offer stand-alone classes at each grade level.

### **Nutrition Promotion**

Nutrition promotion using evidence-based techniques and nutrition messages helps to create healthy food environments and positively influences lifelong healthy eating behaviors.<sup>16</sup> It also helps to encourage and increase participation in school meal programs.

In order to be compliant with the USDA final rule, the district will ensure that students and staff receive consistent nutrition messages throughout the school campus including in classrooms, gymnasiums and cafeterias. The district and all schools will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students across the school campus during the school day and will encourage participation in school meal programs.

### **Food and Beverage Marketing**

Health and wellness efforts are weakened when students are subjected to advertising on district property that promotes unhealthy foods and beverages.<sup>17</sup> The district is committed to teaching students to make informed choices about nutrition, health and physical activity and to providing a school environment that ensures opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors.

In order to be compliant with the USDA final rule, all foods and beverages marketed to students on the school campus during the school day will meet or exceed Smart Snacks. This includes the marketing of products on:

- the exterior of vending machines
- posters, flyers, menu boards, coolers, trash cans and other foodservice equipment
- cups used for beverage dispensing

As entities, including the district, school nutrition services, athletics department, and the parent-teacher association/ organization\* (PTA/PTO) review existing contracts and consider new contracts, equipment and product purchasing (and replacement) decisions should reflect the marketing guidelines established by this LWP.

## **V. PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OPPORTUNITIES**

Children and adolescents, including children with disabilities, should participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day in order to ensure optimum health.

In order to be compliant with the USDA final rule, the district requires that a combination of physical activity opportunities from, but not limited to, the list below be offered to students:

- physical education (see Physical and Health Education section for additional recommended language)
- classroom physical activity
- active academics
- daily recess
- before- and after-school activities, including sports
- support for and promotion of active transportation

### **Classroom Physical Activity**

Classroom physical activity is defined as any physical activity done in the classroom. Classroom physical activity can take place at any time and occur in one or several brief periods of time during the school day. Classroom physical activity should be offered in addition to physical education and recess and at all school levels (elementary, middle and high school).

The two primary approaches for classroom physical activity are:

- physical activity integrated into planned academic instruction
- physical activity outside of planned academic instruction

Classroom physical activity can benefit students by:

- improving their concentration and ability to stay on-task in the classroom

- reducing disruptive behavior, such as fidgeting, in the classroom
- improving their motivation and engagement in the learning process
- helping to improve their academic performance (higher grades and test scores)
- increasing their amount of daily physical activity

The district requires that:

- classroom physical activity be incorporated into planning throughout the school day and the extended school day
- classroom physical activity be integrated into planned academic instruction to reinforce academic concepts and to reinforce skills learned in physical education
- physical activity be provided in the classroom outside of planned instruction (physical activity breaks)
- classroom physical activity be offered in addition to physical education and recess at all school levels
- barriers to classroom physical activity, such as lack of equipment or available space, are minimized
- schools do not utilize activities or materials that are the product of a food, beverage or dietary supplement company
- classroom physical activity not be withheld from or required of students as a disciplinary approach
- classroom teachers receive resources and annual training on promoting physical activity and integrating physical activity in the classroom

### **Daily Recess**

Recess is a scheduled time that provides an essential break from demanding cognitive tasks. Recess provides time to move, play, problem solve and socialize. Increased attention span and academic performance can result after recess, and recess helps children to learn social skills that may not be achieved in a structured classroom environment.

Recess is offered in kindergarten through 12th grade and although these physical activity periods may not always be called recess in secondary schools, they serve the same purpose—to provide student-selected opportunities to engage in physical activity and take a break from academic work during the school day.

The district will ensure that all elementary schools will offer 20 or more minutes of recess on all days during the school year which will complement, not substitute for, physical education class and will:

- provide schools and students with adequate spaces, facilities, equipment and supplies for recess

- ensure that spaces and facilities for recess meet or exceed recommended safety standards
- prohibit the exclusion of students from recess for disciplinary reasons or academic performance in the classroom
- provide staff members who lead or supervise recess with ongoing professional development
- provide strategic inclusion and oversight of opportunities for students with special needs or disabilities to participate
- assess the accessibility of playgrounds and outdoor play areas and make changes to improve access
- provide equipment to allow for inclusion of students with disabilities into activities

## **VI. OTHER ACTIVITIES THAT PROMOTE STUDENT WELLNESS**

Schools are integral in promoting healthy behaviors, and the school building provides numerous opportunities to educate students about healthy habits.

In order to be compliant with the USDA final rule, the district will integrate wellness activities across the entire school setting, including the cafeteria, other food and beverage venues, classrooms and physical activity facilities.

### **Health Education**

Effective health education emphasizes the teaching of essential health topics and skills necessary to adopt, practice and maintain healthy behaviors, such as choosing nutritious foods and engaging in regular physical activity.

The district will ensure that:

- all students, K-12, take comprehensive, skills-based health education
- health education is taught by qualified and trained professionals
- the health education learning standards and curriculum are regularly evaluated and revised
- schools utilize a planned, sequential and comprehensive health education curriculum that:
  - \*is culturally and developmentally appropriate
  - \*addresses a clear set of behavioral outcomes that promote healthy eating and physical activity behaviors
  - \*provides opportunities for students to practice the following skills: analyzing influences, accessing information, interpersonal communications, decision making, goal setting, self-management and advocacy

## Physical Education

PE, as the basis of a CSPAP, provides students with the opportunity to develop motor skills, as well as knowledge and behaviors for physical activity.

Physical education teachers assess student knowledge, motor and social skills and provide instruction in a safe and supportive environment. PE can increase grades and standardized test scores and help students to stay on task in the classroom.

Though important for increasing physical activity, other physical activity experiences such as recess, intramural sports or recreational endeavors should not be used as a replacement for physical education. The district will ensure that:

- all elementary students, including students with disabilities, receive 150 minutes per week of PE instruction throughout the school year
- all middle and high school students, including students with disabilities, receive the PE during all academic years
- PE classes are based upon age-appropriate, sequential physical education curricula that are consistent with national and state standards, promote the benefits of a physically active lifestyle and help students develop skills to engage in lifelong healthy habits

PE classes utilize a curriculum that incorporates essential health education concepts as discussed above

- students are engaged in moderate to vigorous physical activity\* (MVPA) for at least 50% of class time during most or all PE classes
- all PE teachers in the district receive professional development in PE at least once per year
- all PE classes are taught by licensed teachers who are certified or endorsed to teach PE waivers, exemption or substitutions for PE classes are not granted
- PE teachers provide appropriate accommodations to ensure that all students, including students with disabilities, are provided with an equal opportunity to participate
- PE teachers are provided with training and specialized equipment to support the inclusion of students with disabilities in PE
- student physical fitness is promoted through individualized fitness and activity assessments (e.g., the Presidential Youth Fitness Program and FitnessGram) and criterion based reporting is used for each student, including students with disabilities