



Ventura Unified School District Wellness Policy

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Preamble

Ventura Unified School District (hereto referred to as the District) recognizes the link between student health and learning and desires to provide a comprehensive coordinated program promoting healthy eating and physical activity for district students. The Superintendent or designee shall build a coordinated school health system that supports and reinforces health literacy through health education, physical education and activity, health services, nutrition services, psychological and counseling services, health promotion for staff, a safe and healthy school environment, and parent/guardian and community involvement.

This policy outlines the District's approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. This policy should be posted at each school site. Specifically, this policy establishes goals and procedures to ensure that:

- Students in the District have access to healthy foods throughout the school day – both through reimbursable school meals and other foods available throughout the school campus– in accordance with Federal and state nutrition standards;
- Students receive quality nutrition education that helps them develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors;
- Students have opportunities to be physically active before, during and after school;
- Schools engage in nutrition and physical activity promotion and other activities that promote student wellness;
- School staff are encouraged and supported to practice healthy nutrition and physical activity behaviors in and out of school;
- The community is engaged in supporting the work of the District in creating continuity between school and other settings for students and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits; and
- The District establishes and maintains an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about and monitoring of the policy and its established goals and objectives.

This policy applies to all students, staff and schools in the District. Specific measureable goals and outcomes are identified within each section below.

I. School Wellness Committee

Committee Role and Membership

The District will convene a representative district wellness committee (hereto referred to as the DWC) that meets quarterly to establish goals for and oversee school health and safety policies and programs, including development, implementation and periodic review and update of this district-level wellness policy and make recommendations to the Superintendent and School Board.

The DWC membership will represent all school levels (elementary and secondary schools) and include (to the extent possible), but not be limited to: parents and caregivers; students; representatives of the school nutrition program; physical education teachers; health education teachers; school health professionals school health services staff and mental health and social services staff; school administrators school board members; health; and the general public. To the extent possible, the DWC will include representatives from each school and reflect the diversity of the community.

Leadership

The Superintendent or designee(s) will convene the DWC and facilitate development of and updates to the wellness policy, and will ensure each school’s compliance with the policy. The designated official for oversight is Chris Massa, Farm to School Operations Specialist, chris.massa@venturausd.org.

The DWC members are:

| Name | Title/ Relationship to the District | Email address | Role on committee |
|-----------------|--|--|--------------------------|
| David Creswell | Superintendent | David.creswell@venturausd.org | |
| Kara Muniz | Director of FNS | Kara.muniz@venturausd.org | |
| Chris Massa | Farm to School Specialist | Chris.massa@venturausd.org | Chair |
| Alise Echele | Registered Dietician | Alise.echele@venturausd.org | Nutrition Educator |
| Diedre Monarres | Principal | Diedre.monarres@venturausd.org | |
| | | | |

Each school will designate a school wellness policy coordinator, who will ensure compliance with the policy.

II. Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability and Community Engagement

Implementation Plan

The District will develop and maintain a plan for implementation to manage and coordinate the execution of this wellness policy. The plan delineates roles, responsibilities, actions and timelines specific to each school; and includes information about who will be responsible to make what change, by how much, where and when; as well as specific goals and objectives for nutrition standards for all foods and beverages available on the school campus, food and beverage marketing, nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, physical education and other school-based activities that promote student wellness. It is recommended that the school use the [Healthy Schools Program online tools](#) to complete a school-level assessment based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s School Health Index, create an action plan that fosters implementation and generate an annual progress report. To determine whether the policy is

effectively implemented district-wide and at each school, the minimum following indicators shall be used:

1. Descriptions of the district's nutrition education, physical education, and health education curricula by grade level
2. Number of minutes of physical education instruction offered at each grade span
3. Number and type of exemptions granted from physical education
4. Results of the state's physical fitness test
5. An analysis of the nutritional content of meals served based on a sample of menus
6. Student participation rates in school meal programs, compared to percentage of students eligible for free and reduced-price meals
7. Number of sales of non-nutritious foods and beverages in fundraisers or other venues outside of the district's meal programs
8. Feedback from food service personnel, school administrators, the school health council, parents/guardians, students, teachers, before- and after-school program staff, and/or other appropriate persons
9. Health Education, Health Services, Family and Community Involvement, Healthy School Environment, Counseling and Psychological Services, and Health Promotion for staff data will be presented as part of the annual report or through other means as determined by the Board
10. Any other indicators recommended by the Superintendent and approved by the Board

To encourage consistent health messages between the home and school environment, the Superintendent or designee may disseminate health information and/or the district's student wellness policy to parents/guardians through district or school newsletters, handouts, parent/guardian meetings, district and school web sites, and other communications. Outreach to parents/guardians shall emphasize the relationship between student health and academic performance.

The Superintendent or designee shall inform and update the public, including parents/guardians, students, and others in the community, about the contents and implementation of this policy. Annually, the District will also publicize the name and contact information of the District/school officials leading and coordinating the committee, as well as information on how the public can get involved with the wellness committee.

At least once every three years, the District will measure and make available to the public an assessment of the extent to which district schools are in compliance with this policy, and a description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the wellness policy.

This wellness policy and the progress reports can be found at:

<http://www.venturausd.org/Portals/3/Health%20Services/Student%20Wellness%20BP%205030.pdf>

Community Involvement, Outreach and Communications

The District is committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of the wellness policy. The District will actively communicate ways in which representatives of DWC and others can participate in the development, implementation and periodic review and update of the wellness policy through a variety of means appropriate for that district. The District will also inform parents of the improvements that have been made to school meals and compliance with school meal standards, availability of child nutrition programs and how to apply, and a description of and compliance with Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. The District will use electronic mechanisms, such as email or displaying notices on the district's website, as well as non-electronic mechanisms, such as newsletters, presentations to parents, or sending information home to parents, to ensure that all families are actively notified of the content of, implementation of, and updates to the wellness policy, as well as how to get involved and support the policy. The District will ensure that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community, and accomplished through means similar to other ways that the district and individual schools are communicating important school information with parents.

The District will actively notify the public about the content of or any updates to the wellness policy annually, at a minimum. The District will also use these mechanisms to inform the community about the availability of the annual and triennial reports.

III. Nutrition

School Meals

Our school district is committed to serving healthy meals to children, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat milk; that are moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and have zero grams *trans* fat per serving (nutrition label or manufacturer's specification); and to meeting the nutrition needs of school children within their calorie requirements. The school meal programs aim to improve the diet and health of school children, help mitigate childhood obesity, model healthy eating to support the development of lifelong healthy eating patterns and support healthy choices while accommodating cultural food preferences and special dietary needs. In order to maximize the district's ability to provide nutritious meals and snacks, all district schools shall participate in available federal school nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs, after-school snack programs, and Supper Programs, to the extent possible. When approved by the California Department of Education, the district may sponsor a summer meal program. For all foods provided by the district on each campus during the school day the Board shall adopt nutrition guidelines which meet or exceed state and federal nutrition standards are consistent and support the objectives of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity.

Nutrition Education

The District will teach, model, encourage and support healthy eating by all students. Schools will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- Is 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 integrated into other classroom instruction through subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences and elective subjects;
- Includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant and participatory activities, such as cooking demonstrations or lessons, promotions, taste-testing, farm visits and school gardens;
- Promotes fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products and healthy food preparation methods;
- Emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (promotes physical activity/exercise);
- Links with school meal programs, cafeteria nutrition promotion activities, school gardens, Farm to School programs, other school foods and nutrition-related community services;
- Teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food and beverage marketing; and
- Includes nutrition education training for teachers and other staff.

Nutrition Promotion

Nutrition promotion and education positively influence lifelong eating behaviors by using evidence-based techniques and nutrition messages, and by creating food environments that encourage healthy nutrition choices and encourage participation in school meal programs. Students and staff will receive consistent nutrition messages throughout schools, classrooms, gymnasiums, and cafeterias. Nutrition promotion also includes marketing and advertising nutritious foods and beverages to students and is most effective when implemented consistently through a comprehensive and multi-channel approach by school staff, teachers, parents, students and the community.

The District will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students throughout the school campus, as well as encourage participation in school meal programs. This promotion will occur through at least:

- Implementing at least ten or more evidence-based healthy food promotion techniques through the school meal programs using [Smarter Lunchroom techniques](#); and
- Ensuring 100% of foods and beverages promoted to students meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. Additional promotion techniques that the District and individual schools may use are available at <http://www.foodplanner.healthiergeneration.org/>.

Food and Beverage Marketing in Schools

In compliance with Board Policy on Advertising and Promotion, the Board strongly encourages limiting the marketing and advertising of foods and beverages through signage, vending machine fronts, logos and scoreboards, school supplies, advertisements in school publications, coupon or incentive programs, or other means, except for healthy options.

Competitive Foods and Beverages

The District is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages available to students on the school campus during the school day and thirty minutes before and after support healthy eating.

The foods and beverages sold and served outside of the school meal programs (e.g., “competitive” foods and beverages) will meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, at a minimum. Smart Snacks aim to improve student health and well-being, increase consumption of healthful foods during the school day and create an environment that reinforces the development of healthy eating habits. A summary of the standards and information, as well as a Guide to Smart Snacks in Schools are available at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/tools-schools-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 options in cafeterias, vending machines, school stores and snack or food carts.

Celebrations and Rewards

The Superintendent or designee strongly encourages parents/guardians or other volunteers to use healthy options for occasional class parties. Class parties or celebrations shall be held after the lunch period when possible. Teachers are encouraged to find alternatives to the use of foods as a reward or incentive for students.

Fundraising

The Superintendent or designee shall strongly encourage school organizations to use healthy food and/or beverage options or non-food items for fundraising purposes. The District will make available to parents and teachers a list of healthy fundraising ideas.

IV. Physical Activity

All students shall be provided opportunities to be physically active on a regular basis. They should participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. Opportunities for moderate to vigorous physical activity shall be provided through physical education and recess and may also be provided through school athletic programs, extracurricular programs, before- and after- school programs encouraging students to walk or bicycle to and from school, in-class physical activity breaks, and other structured and unstructured activities. The Board may enter into joint use agreements to make district facilities or grounds available for recreational or sports activities outside the school day and/or to use community facilities to expand students’ access to opportunities for physical activity.

Essential Physical Activity Topics in Health Education

Health education will be required in all grades (elementary) and the district will require middle and high school students to take and pass at least one health education course. The District will include in the health education curriculum a minimum of 12 the following essential topics on physical activity:

- The physical, psychological, or social benefits of physical activity
- How physical activity can contribute to a healthy weight
- How physical activity can contribute to the academic learning process
- How an inactive lifestyle contributes to chronic disease
- Health-related fitness, that is, cardiovascular endurance, muscular endurance, muscular strength, flexibility, and body composition

- Differences between physical activity, exercise and fitness
- Phases of an exercise session, that is, warm up, workout and cool down
- Overcoming barriers to physical activity
- Decreasing sedentary activities, such as TV watching
- Opportunities for physical activity in the community
- Preventing injury during physical activity
- Weather-related safety, for example, avoiding heat stroke, hypothermia and sunburn while being physically active
- How much physical activity is enough, that is, determining frequency, intensity, time and type of physical activity
- Developing an individualized physical activity and fitness plan
- Monitoring progress toward reaching goals in an individualized physical activity plan
- Dangers of using performance-enhancing drugs, such as steroids
- Social influences on physical activity, including media, family, peers and culture
- How to find valid information or services related to physical activity and fitness
- How to influence, support, or advocate for others to engage in physical activity
- How to resist peer pressure that discourages physical activity.

V. **Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness**

The Superintendent or designee shall provide opportunities for students to receive psychological and counseling services and health services as appropriate, through qualified staff and/or in collaboration with qualified community agencies to promote social, emotional and physical health.

The Superintendent or designee shall promote a safe and healthy school environment to include facilities, school climate, tobacco free schools/facilities, campus security and environmentally appropriate recycling and energy saving strategies.

Staff Wellness and Health Promotion

The Superintendent or designee shall encourage staff to serve as positive role models for healthy eating and physical fitness. He/she shall promote work-site wellness and may provide opportunities for regular physical activity among employees. Professional development for staff may include strategies to assess health knowledge and skills and promote healthy behaviors.

