WELLNESS POLICY 6142.101

It is the policy of the Meriden Board of Education to promote the health and well-being of district students by supporting wellness, good nutrition and regular physical activity as part of the total learning environment. In furtherance of this policy, the Board has created an Advisory Council on Wellness ("Advisory Council") to review any available state or federal guidance on wellness issues and to assist in formulating recommendations for specific goals and guidelines aimed at promoting lifelong wellness practices among district students. This Advisory Council involves parents, students, representatives from the school food authority (i.e., any private company employed to provide food services), teachers of physical education, school health professionals, school administrators, the board of education, and members of the public and may also involve Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ("SNAP") coordinators or educators. The Advisory Council will be involved in the development and implementation of the policy, the triennial assessment and periodic updating of the policy.

1. GOALS AND GUIDELINES

The Board recognizes that schools contribute to the health of children by facilitating learning through the support and promotion of good nutrition and physical activity, which helps to optimize student performance and ensure that every student succeeds. Accordingly, the Board supports a healthy environment where children learn and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices. Indeed, the Board believes that educators, administrators, parents, health practitioners and member of the school community should consider the critical role student health plays in academic stamina and performance and adapt the school environment to ensure students' nutritional and physical activity needs are met. To that end, the Board, following consultation with the Advisory Council, adopts the following goals and guidelines in order to promote student wellness:

1. Provide a comprehensive learning environment for developing and practicing life-long wellness behaviors.

To achieve this end, the school environment, not just the classroom, shall provide clear and consistent messaging that reinforces and positively influences a student's understanding, beliefs and habits as they relate to good nutrition and regular physical activity. Nutrition education shall be integrated within the health education program and across other content areas such as science, language arts, family and consumer science, and cooking, where feasible. Nutrition education shall be supported and supplemented whenever possible by the school health and school-based health center programs. Further, nutrition education shall be standards-based using the Connecticut State Department of Education's Healthy and Balanced Living Curriculum Framework at all grade levels and consistent with the State of Connecticut's health education standards/guidelines/framework and the Connecticut State Department of Education's Guidelines for a Coordinated Approach to School Health. Nutrition education shall also be based on current science, research and national guidelines, including the use of U.S. Department of Agriculture Team Nutrition materials, MyPlate, and the most current dietary guidelines. Educational materials shall be free of brands and illustrations of unhealthful foods.

Nutrition education shall be designed to help students learn: nutritional knowledge, including but not limited to, the benefits of healthy eating, essential nutrients, nutritional deficiencies, principles of healthy weight management, the use and misuse of dietary supplements, and safe food preparation, handling and storage; nutrition-related skills, including but not limited to, planning a healthy meal, understanding and using food labels, and critically evaluating nutritional information, misinformation, and commercial food advertising; and self-evaluation skills, including, but not limited to, assessing one's personal eating habits; setting goals for improving eating habits and achieving such goals.

Cafeterias shall serve as an additional source of nutrition education, using posters and signage free of brands and illustrations of unhealthful foods, to promote good nutrition and food choices. Faculty and staff are encouraged to serve as role models for students by demonstrating that healthy eating and physical activity are a valuable part of daily life.

2. Work collaboratively to support and promote proper dietary habits contributing to students' wellness; academic performance and demonstrating a commitment to improving student nutrition.

The Board recognizes that healthy eating patterns are essential for students to achieve their academic potential, full physical and mental growth and life-long health and well-being. The link between nutrition and learning is well-documented. Further, healthy eating is demonstrably linked to reduced risk for mortality and development of many chronic diseases as adults. The Meriden Public Schools (the "District") shall encourage students and staff members to establish and maintain life-long, healthy eating patterns. Well-planned and well-implemented school nutrition programs have been shown to positively influence students' eating habits. To that end, school breakfast and lunch programs compliant with all federal and state laws and regulations shall be available at all schools. In accordance with state law, a minimum of twenty minutes shall be allowed for lunch. In addition, students shall be provided with a clean, pleasant, and safe environment for eating meals, which will include convenient access to hand-washing facilities and free, safe and fresh drinking water.

Further, the District strongly discourages the use of food items as part of a student incentive program. Non-food alternatives are strongly encouraged for classroom celebrations. Should a classroom celebration use food items, adherence to the guidance from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards is strongly encouraged. Additionally, the use of healthy snacks such as those following the Connecticut Nutrition Standards limiting portion size, total fat, saturated fat, and grams of added sugar shall be strongly encouraged.

Wherever possible, nutritional information shall be made available to faculty and staff members through a variety of means such as in-service training, publications, curriculum and publications which will include, but not be limited to, alternative birthday celebrations, activities to increase physical activity in the classroom, healthy snacks, alternative non-food reward options, and alternatives to withholding recess as a consequence for student actions. Parents shall be encouraged to supply their child(ren) with naturally nutrient-rich foods and beverages such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, lean meats, legumes, nuts and seeds. Soda brought from home is strongly discouraged.

Lastly, the District supports and shall promote the opportunity for students to participate in Meriden's Summer Food Service program, where they may receive two nutritionally balanced meals per day during the summer recess. Information related to the program may be disseminated by the school website, newspapers, nurse newsletters, publications, open houses, speakers through the PTO, and health fairs.

3. Provide opportunities for students to engage in physical activity.

The District takes a holistic approach towards increasing the health of students by concentrating on the physical, mental and emotional health of each student. In furtherance of this goal, a quality physical education program is an essential component for all students to learn about and participate in physical activity. The physical activity goal of the District is to keep the students in all grade levels physically active in order to help increase their overall level of health and well-being. As a result, physical activities shall be provided to all students throughout the school day and integrated across the curricula when possible.

1. Physical Education

The District's Physical Education curriculum shall be based on the Healthy and Balanced Living Curriculum Framework and shall develop the psychomotor, cognitive, and affective domain of all students Pre-kindergarten to grade 12, inclusive. Students will develop their psychomotor domain through instruction and practice of the skills necessary to be competent in a variety of physical activities. Psychomotor assessments will be completed during each unit to measure competency of students. The cognitive domain of the students will be developed through problem solving activities and self, as well as peer, assessment of skills. In high school, students shall be given written assessments to ensure understanding of skills and knowledge. In order to develop their affective domain, students will be encouraged by their teachers and classmates to succeed and to view physical activity as being pleasurable. Teachers may assess the accomplishment of this domain through observation and classroom discussions. Teachers shall be offered in-service training in order to increase their knowledge in the area of physical education.

Generally, class size will be structured to ensure appropriate instruction and feedback opportunities. Lessons shall be designed to provide appropriate scope and sequence for all activities, and modifications shall be made in order to include all students. Rules to physical activities may be modified in order to prevent injuries based on class size, ability of students,

or condition of a facility. Students shall be encouraged to assist one another in order to create an emotionally safe environment. Physical education instruction and activity shall be integrated into the school day as follows:

- Elementary schools: students in PreK through grade 5 shall be given a minimum of 20 minutes per day to be physically active during recess; and shall participate in up to 30 minutes of structured physical education per week.
- Middle schools: students shall participate in up to 94 minutes of structured physical education per week for two terms during the year.
- High schools: students in grades 9 through 11 shall participate in with up to 235 minutes of instruction for a half year. The high school physical education curriculum shall allow students to choose the activities they participate in, with a focus on fitness and lifetime activities. During fitness activities, students shall engage for the majority of the class in vigorous physical activity.

Additionally, students in grades 4, 6, 8, and 10 shall participate in the Connecticut State Fitness Test in order to measure their level of fitness in the areas of flexibility, cardiovascular endurance, and muscular strength and endurance. The final exam for high school students in grades 9, 10, and 11 shall include the Connecticut State Fitness Test and a written assessment.

1. Other Opportunities For Physical Education

1. Recess

Recess provides opportunities for physical activity, which helps students stay alert and attentive in class and provides other educational and social benefits. School authorities shall encourage and develop schedules that provide a minimum of twenty (20) minutes within every school day for full-day elementary students to enjoy supervised recess. The schools shall have playgrounds or other facilities and equipment available for free play. Recess shall complement, not substitute for, physical education classes. Staff members shall neither deny nor require a student's participation in recess or other physical activity as a form of discipline or punishment, nor should they cancel it for instructional make-up time.

1. Extracurricular Activities

Students are encouraged to participate in physical activities outside of school and are made aware, through instruction or assignments, as to where and when they can get involved in these activities. Extracurricular activities for the students in elementary school may include before- and after-school programs. The middle schools may offer intramural sports and an outreach program after school. The high schools may offer intramural sports, including tennis, badminton, volleyball, and fitness activities such as weights and outdoor activities throughout the year.

iii. School/Community Collaboration

The District shall work with the Meriden Recreation Department and other community organizations to coordinate and enhance opportunities available to students and staff members for physical activity during their out-of-school time. Students and staff are encouraged to participate in physical activities outside of school and are made aware through instruction or assignments as to where and when they can get involved in these activities. Extracurricular activities for the students in elementary school may include before and after school programs. The middle schools may offer intramural sports and an outreach program after school. The high schools may offer intramural sports, such as tennis, badminton, volleyball, and fitness activities such as weights and outdoor activities, throughout the year. Intramural and intramural activities may not be substituted for physical education.

4. Encourage and promote increased consumption of nutrient-dense foods and beverages.

The Board believes that the District's nutrition and food services operation is an essential educational support activity. In accordance with federal law, the District's National School Lunch Program ("NSLP") and the School Breakfast Program ("SBP") shall be nonprofit, and aim to be financially self-sufficient. The District's Special Milk Program and After School Snack Program shall comply with all the requirements for program operation. Further, all reimbursable school meals (i.e., free and reduced lunches) shall meet the program requirements and nutrition standards established by U.S. Department of Agriculture; NSLP; SBP and all applicable state statutes and regulations applicable to school meals. Feedback from food service staff and consumers (i.e., students, district staff and parents) shall be considered in the planning of appealing, varied, nutritious, high-quality meals that encourages increased participation in the reimbursable breakfast and lunch programs offered and discourages the purchase of á la carte and vended foods.

All non-reimbursable food items and beverages (i.e., á la carte sales) sold on school premises must meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and/or all applicable state statutes and regulations. This requirement applies to the sale of food and beverages at all activities on school grounds, whether sponsored by the school or an outside group. Food items that do not meet Connecticut Nutrition Standards and/or beverages that do not meet the requirements of applicable state statute may only be sold to students at the location of an event that occurs after the school day or on the weekend, provided the sale is not from a vending machine or a school store. However, the Board believes healthy school environment shall not be sacrificed because of a dependence on revenue from high-added fat, high-added sugar and low-nutrient foods to support school programs. Accordingly, the sale of non-food items is strongly encouraged to be used for fundraising projects. Where food items are sold for such projects, nutrient-rich food items is encouraged. Further, all fundraising projects involving the sale of food to students on school premises must follow the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverage requirements of the state statute at all times, unless they are sold to students at the location of an event that occurs after the school day or on the weekends, provided the sale is not from a vending machine or a school store. Similarly, organizations operating concessions at events that occur after the school day or on the weekends shall offer water, and a minimum of, but not limited to, one fruit and/or vegetable option for purchase. It is recommended that these healthier choices be marketed and sold at a lower profit margin to encourage student selection. The display and advertising of foods with minimal nutritional value is strongly discouraged.

Foods items and beverages shall be served with consideration toward variety, appeal, taste, safety and packaging with an emphasis on nutrient-rich items such as fresh fruits; vegetables; whole grains; low fat dairy (i.e., 1% low-fat milk or less); lean meats; legumes; and nuts and seeds, while limiting levels of cholesterol, fat, saturated fat, trans fat, sodium and added sugars. Food or beverage marketing on campus during school hours shall only be permitted of foods and beverages that may be sold on the school campus during the school day and that comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and all applicable state laws and regulations.

5. Promote professional growth and development of food service management and cafeteria staff.

The Board shall encourage food service management and cafeteria staff to actively participate in nutrition professional organizations and partake in activities, based upon current nutrition science and national health recommendations, which promote professional growth and development. The District's food service manager and cafeteria managers shall, at minimum, be certified in food safety and sanitation. In addition, all cafeteria staff shall be formally trained in Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points ("HACCP"), food safety and sanitation requirements, and preparation of a variety of nutritious foods. Further, all foods served shall meet or exceed the minimum nutrition standards set by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for NSLP and SBP as well as applicable state statutes. Foods purchased and/or prepared by food service management shall promote good health and nutrition by utilizing low-fat methods allowing for maximum nutrient retention, such as baking and steaming.

Food services personnel shall also provide families with the ability to monitor their children's food purchases at all grade levels. Nutrition information for school breakfast and lunch menu items shall be available upon request of the Food Service Program. Nutrition information for á la carte, vended items, and items sold by the school stores, all meeting the Connecticut Nutrition Standards, shall be accessible on the Food Service Program's website, if possible. Wherever possible, other nutritional information shall be provided to parents on healthy snacks; breakfast and lunch ideas; non-food birthday celebration ideas; nutritional needs of children; healthy portion sizes; food label reading guidelines; and fun activities to encourage physical activity outside of school.

1. **MEASURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF WELLNESS POLICY**
2. Oversight of the Wellness Policy

Pursuant to this policy, the Board shall designate the Superintendent or designee to be responsible for the implementation and oversight of the school district's wellness program. The Superintendent or designee will be responsible for ensuring that the goals and guidelines relating to nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, school-based wellness activities and nutritional value of school-provided food and beverages are met, that there is compliance with the wellness policy, and that all school policies and school-based activities are consistent with the wellness policy.

1. Triennial Assessment

At least every three years, the Board will measure and make available to the public an assessment on the implementation of the wellness policy. In this triennial assessment, the Board will indicate the extent to which schools are in compliance with the wellness policy and how the Board's wellness policy compares with model school wellness policies. In addition, the triennial assessment will provide a description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the wellness policy and will provide the basis for appropriate updates or modification to the wellness policy.

1. Informing and Updating the Public

In accordance with federal law and applicable regulations, the Board will inform and update the public (including parents, students and others in the community) about the content and implementation of its wellness policy as well as the results of the triennial assessment. The results of the triennial assessment will be made available in an accessible and easily understood manner. The Board will make its wellness policy and any updates to the policy available to the public on an annual basis.

1. Recordkeeping

The Board of Education will retain records to document compliance with the local school wellness policy requirements. The Board shall retain the Wellness Policy, documentation demonstrating compliance with community involvement requirements, documentation of the triennial assessment and documentation to demonstrate compliance with public notification requirements.

Legal References:

Connecticut General Statutes:

- 10-215f Certification that food meets nutrition standards.
- 10-221o Lunch periods. Recess.
- 10-221p Boards to make available for purchase nutritious and low-fat foods.
- 10-221q Sale of beverages.

Public Act 16-37, *An Act Concerning Connecticut's Farm to School Program*

Public Act 16-132, *An Act Establishing a Red Ribbon Pass Program*

Federal Law:

42 U.S.C. § 1751

Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act § 9(f)(1) and § 17(a), codified at 42 U.S.C. § 1758(f)(1), 42 U.S.C. § 1758b and 42 U.S.C. § 1766, as amended by Pub. L. 111-296, § 204, *Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010*.

20 U.S.C. § 7118, as amended by Pub. L. 114-95, *Every Student Succeeds Act*.

7 C.F.R. § 210.10 Meal requirements for lunches and requirements for afterschool snacks.

7 C.F.R. § 210.11 Competitive food service and standards.

7 C.F.R. § 210.31. Local school wellness policy.

7 C.F.R. § 220.8 Meal requirements for breakfasts.

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