HOPE Community Academy

Student Wellness – Food, Nutrition and Physical Activity

I. Purpose

This policy supports a school environment that promotes student wellness, prevents and reduces childhood obesity, and assures that school meals and other food and beverages sold and otherwise made available on the school campus during the school day are consistent with applicable minimum local, state and federal standards.

II. General Statement of Policy

A. The school district recognizes that nutrition promotion and education, and physical activities that promote student wellness, are components of the educational process, and that good health fosters student attendance and learning.

B. The school environment should promote students' health, well-being, and ability to learn by encouraging healthy eating and physical activity.

C. The district encourages involvement of the school community, parents, students, food service authority, school board, school administration, school health professional, teachers of physical and mental health education, client service manager and kitchen manager from the awarded food management company.

D. Students need access to healthy foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive.

E. Students will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.

F. Qualified food service employees, in partnership with the district, will:

1. Provide healthy food choices within the United States Department of Agriculture ("USDA") guidelines and compliance with all applicable federal, state and local laws, rules and regulations;
2. Offer fresh, high quality, minimally processed foods;
3. Promote whole foods, natural fibers and other natural nutrients;

4. Minimize saturated fats and added sugars;
5. Teach lifelong healthy eating habits that reinforce the belief of moderate consumption in all food groups;
6. Provide access to and information about a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students;
7. Consider the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning; and
8. Provide a healthy dining experience with clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.

III. Wellness Goals

A. Nutrition Promotion and Education

1. The school district will encourage and support healthy eating and hydration by students and engage in nutrition promotion that is:

   a. Offered as part of a comprehensive program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;

   b. Part of health education classes as well as classroom instruction, when appropriate;

   and c. Enjoyable, developmentally appropriate, and culturally relevant.

2. The district will encourage all students to make age-appropriate healthy selections of foods and beverages, including those sold individually outside the reimbursable school meal programs.
3. **Rewards and incentives.** The District will provide teachers and other relevant school staff a list of alternative ways to reward children. Foods and beverages will not be used as a reward (unless this practice is allowed by a student's individual education plan or behavior intervention plan), or withheld as punishment.

B. Physical Activity

Students need opportunities for physical activity and to embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior. The district provides opportunities to be active to reinforce the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a healthy lifestyle and reduce sedentary activities.

C. Communications with Parents

1. The district will provide information about its food service programs, physical and nutrition education, and other district-sponsored physical activity opportunities. 2. The

district will provide to staff and parents a list of suggested foods and beverages that meet Smart Snacks nutrition standards for lunches, snacks, celebrations, fundraising, etc.

3. The district requires that fundraising, including activities such as donation nights at restaurants, cookie dough, candy and pizza sales and market days during the school day and during the extended school day (including during out-of-school time/and before and after school) sell only non-food items or foods and beverages that meet or exceed Smart Snacks. The district encourages schools to use fundraisers that promote physical activity (e.g., walk-a-thons, Jump Rope for Heart or fun runs). The district will make available to caregivers and all school and school-based OST staff a list of healthy fundraising ideas.

D. School Food Service Program/Personnel

1. The school district will designate an appropriate person to be responsible for the school district's food service program, whose duties will include the monitoring of USDA nutrition regulations/guidelines. The school district designee will select food and beverages made available on campus that are consistent with current USDA guidelines.
2. As part of the district's responsibility to operate a food service program, the district will provide continuing professional development for district designee. We will work with our FSMC to ensure continued training of all company food service staff in our schools.

E. Competitive Foods and Beverages

1. All foods and beverages sold on school grounds to students, outside of reimbursable meals are considered "competitive foods." Competitive foods include items sold a la carte in the cafeteria and from vending machines.
2. All competitive foods will meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School (Smart Snacks) nutrition standards and any applicable state 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.
3. Afterschool programs must also comply with the school district's nutrition standards unless they are reimbursable under USDA school meals program, in which case they must comply with all applicable USDA standards.

F. Food and Beverage Marketing in Schools

1. School Food Service program marketing will be consistent with nutrition education and health promotion.
2. Schools will restrict food and beverages marketing to the promotion of those foods and beverages that meet the Smart Snacks nutrition standards during the school day, as per Federal Guidelines.

IV. Wellness Leadership and Community Involvement

A. This student wellness policy and associated practices will be implemented throughout HOPE Community Academy and monitored by the Wellness Committee. The direction of the committee will come from the Executive Director or designee, who will serve as chair(s) of the committee.

B. The Student Wellness Committee will meet at least twice each year, convened by the chair(s), to participate in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the wellness policy. The Committee will be comprised of district administration, the food service manager, food service representative, health services coordinator, physical education and mental health education staff, site administration, and at least three parent representatives, one from each level (elementary, middle and high school). All meetings will be open to the public.

C. School food service staff will ensure compliance within the school's food service areas, and will report concerns to the Student Wellness Committee or chair(s), as appropriate.

D. The chair(s) will ensure compliance with the student wellness policy and provide an annual report of policy compliance to the school board.

V. Policy Implementation and Monitoring

A. Annual Reporting

1. The chair(s) will annually inform the public about the content and implementation of the wellness policy and make the policy and any updates to the policy available to the public.

B. Triennial Assessment

1. At least once every three years, the district will evaluate compliance with the wellness policy to assess policy implementation and create a report that includes the following information:

   a. The extent to which the district's wellness policy compares to model local wellness policies; and

   b. A description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the district's wellness policy.

2. The chair(s) will be responsible for conducting the triennial assessment. 3. The triennial assessment report will be posted on the district's website or otherwise made available to the public.

C. Recordkeeping

The school district will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of the wellness policy. The records to be retained include, but are not limited to:

1. The school district's written wellness policy.
2. Documentation demonstrating compliance with community involvement requirements, including requirements to make the local school wellness policy and triennial assessments available to the public.
3. Documentation of the triennial assessment of the local school wellness policy for each school under the district's jurisdiction efforts to review and update the wellness policy.

Appendix to HOPE Community Academy Wellness Policy

Students' lifelong eating habits are influenced by the types of food and beverages available to them at school. The school nutrition program promotes health through menus that feature a variety of appealing and nutritious offerings prepared at each school. The nutrition program is guided by the district wellness policy as developed by a collaborative community process.

In recognition of the above statements, the district will adhere to the following

standards: **1. Provide healthy food choices within USDA guidelines**

a. Menu planning will focus on providing a variety of fruits, vegetables, legumes, whole grains, lean proteins, and fat free foods

b. Weekly average calories will meet the age specific USDA guidelines

c. Saturated fat content will be less than or equal to 10% of total calories per week

d. Trans fat content will be zero, unless naturally occurring in products

e. Sodium content will meet the USDA weekly average requirement by grade

group f. Free water will be available in the cafeteria at breakfast and lunch

2. Offer fresh, high quality and minimally processed food

a. Fast food branded menu options will not be offered in any grade

levels b. Products will be prepared fresh for each lunch service as

possible

c. Fresh and locally sustainable foods will be offered, when possible

d. Skim, 1% and lactose free white milk and skim chocolate milk will only be offered
e. Meats and poultry will not contain textured vegetable protein as filler and be treated with ammonium hydroxide

f. The purchases of meats certified to be from animals not treated with antibiotics and growth hormones will continue to increase

g. The use of products containing artificial colors, additives and preservatives will be minimized

3. Promote the use of whole grains, natural fibers, vegetables, fruits, and nutrient-rich foods

a. Grains will be at least 50% whole grain

b. Whole grains (e.g. brown rice, couscous, wild rice) will be offered at least once per week and in their natural state

c. Legumes will be offered a minimum of once per week

d. A combination of at least four fruit/vegetable options (minimum one fresh fruit) and three vegetable options (minimum two fresh vegetables) will be offered daily

4. Minimize the amount of saturated fats and added sugars

a. Products that contain high fructose corn syrup will be eliminated

b. Artificial sweeteners will not be used or offered

5. Teach lifelong healthy eating habits that reinforce the belief of moderate consumption in all food groups

a. A variety of entrées and appropriate side items will be available for students to choose a complete meal following the MyPlate model as recommended by the 2010 USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans

b. Food services employees and teachers will receive the training they need to promote healthy eating with MyPlate

c. MyPlate educational materials will be displayed in the cafeteria to promote healthy

eating d. The MyPlate icon visual will be included on combo meal program documents

6. Provide information about a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutritional needs of students

a. Special diet and food allergy information will be coordinated through the school nurse and needed accommodation provided by the food services program

b. FSMC will provide training for their employees annually

c. FSMC will provide a SERV Safe certified kitchen manager

d. Free School Meal information options will be communicated to families e.

The district's food service will not prepare or serve products containing nuts

7. Consider the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning

a. Menus will reflect a wide variety of diverse items

ADDENDUM TO WELLNESS

POLICY Healthy Snacks, Treats, and Non-Food

Alternatives **Effective Date:** October 2, 2025

Purpose

This addendum supports our commitment to student health and wellness by providing practical guidance for teachers and parents when selecting snacks, treats, and rewards for classroom celebrations, special events, and recognition activities.

Guiding Principles

• Promote nutritious choices that support student learning and energy
• Respect food allergies, dietary restrictions, and cultural preferences
• Encourage non-food rewards to build positive associations beyond eating • Create inclusive celebrations where all students can participate safely

Healthy Snack and Treat Suggestions

Fresh Fruits & Vegetables

• Apple slices with individual sunflower butter packets (check for allergies) • Orange segments or clementine's
• Grapes (halved for younger students)
• Berries: strawberries, blueberries, raspberries
• Baby carrots with hummus cups
• Celery sticks with cream cheese or seed butter
• Cherry tomatoes
• Cucumber slices
• Bell pepper strips with ranch dip

Whole Grains & Protein

• Whole grain crackers with cheese cubes
• String cheese or cheese portions
• Yogurt cups or tubes (low sugar varieties)
• Hard-boiled eggs
• Whole grain muffins (banana, blueberry, zucchini)
• Whole wheat pretzels
• Air-popped popcorn (lightly salted)
• Trail mix (nut-free options available)
• Granola bars (low sugar, check ingredients)

Special Occasion Treats (Healthier Options)

• Frozen fruit bars or 100% juice popsicles
• Dark chocolate pieces (70% cacao or higher)
• Homemade fruit smoothies
• Yogurt parfaits with fruit and granola
• Fruit cups
• Ants on a log (celery, seed butter, raisins)

- Mini whole wheat bagels with cream cheese
- Rice cakes with toppings
- Baked sweet potato chips
- Dried fruit (unsweetened)

Beverage Options

- Water (always encouraged!)
- 100% fruit juice (in small portions)
- Milk (regular, low-fat, or plant-based alternatives)
- Flavored sparkling water (unsweetened)

Important Reminders:

- **Always check with the classroom teacher about student allergies before bringing food**
- Review ingredient labels for common allergens (nuts, dairy, eggs, gluten, soy) • Provide ingredient lists when bringing homemade items
- Consider individually wrapped portions for safety and portion control • **Note: The district's food service will not prepare or serve products containing nuts**

Non-Food Reward and Celebration Ideas

Individual Student Recognition

Tangible Items:

- Pencils, erasers, or fun pens
- Stickers or temporary tattoos
- Bookmarks
- Small notepads or journals
- Colorful paperclips or binder clips
- Bouncy balls or stress balls
- Sidewalk chalk
- Art supplies (crayons, markers, colored pencils)
- Friendship bracelets or lanyards
- Playing cards
- Puzzle books or brain teasers
- Small toys from the dollar store
- Bubbles
- Glow sticks or glow bracelets
- Badges or buttons with positive messages

Experiences & Privileges:

- Extra recess time (5-10 minutes)
- Choose a class game or activity
- Lunch with the teacher
- First in line for the day
- Choose seating for the day
- Be the teacher's helper
- Lead a classroom activity
- Extra computer/tablet time
- Free reading time
- Listen to music while working
- Homework pass (one assignment)
- Dress down day pass
- Show and tell opportunity
- Read to a younger classroom

Classroom Celebrations & Parties

Activity-Based Celebrations:

- Dance party with favorite music
- Outdoor games and relay races
- Arts and crafts projects
- Science experiments or demonstrations
- Movie time with popcorn (plain)
- Talent show
- Game tournament (board games, card games) • Scavenger hunt
- Building challenges (LEGO, blocks)
- Dress-up day (theme-based)
- Karaoke session
- Story time with student readers
- Puzzle competition
- Class field trip or nature walk

Recognition Programs:

- Student of the Week/Month certificate
- Positive phone call or note home
- Photo on classroom "Star Student" board • Name announced during morning announcements • Trophy or ribbon for achievement
- Handwritten note from teacher

• Principal's office visit (positive recognition) •
Class mascot for the day (stuffed animal buddy)

Birthday Celebrations (Non-Food)

• Birthday crown or special hat
• Birthday book donation to classroom library •
Lead the birthday song
• Choose a game for the class to play
• Bring a favorite book to share with the class •
Special birthday chair decoration
• Create a birthday video message from classmates •
Class-made birthday card
• Extra special privilege for the day
• Share a special talent or hobby with the class

Implementation Guidelines

For Teachers:

• Communicate snack and treat preferences at the beginning of the school year •
Maintain updated allergy list for your classroom
• Celebrate non-food rewards as enthusiastically as food treats
• Model healthy choices in your own snacking habits
• Create a "treasure box" of non-food items for rewards

For Parents:

• Contact the teacher before bringing snacks or treats to school
• Choose individually wrapped items when possible
• Consider sending non-food items for birthday celebrations
• Be mindful of cost when selecting items (keep celebrations equitable) •
Save traditional treats for home celebrations

For Administration:

• Provide resources and suggestions to support this policy
• Recognize classrooms that successfully implement non-food rewards
• Budget for non-food reward items when possible
• Ensure all staff receive training on food allergy awareness

Questions or Concerns

Please contact the school wellness committee or administration with questions about this policy or to suggest additional healthy alternatives.

Together, we can create a culture of wellness that supports every student's health, learning, and success!

This addendum is part of HOPE Community Academy's comprehensive Health and Wellness Policy and should be reviewed annually.