

**Sylacauga City Schools**  
**Wellness Plan Committee Members:**

Tracey Allen – PTO, Sylacauga High School  
Doris Cook – CNP Manager, Nichols Lawson  
Vanessa Green – Coosa Valley Medical Hospital  
Matt Hubbard – Assistant Principal, Sylacauga High School  
Blane Lambert – PTO Nichols Lawson  
Steve Masters – Coosa Valley Medical Hospital  
Jennie McGhee – Sylacauga City Schools Board Member  
Dan Perkins – Physical Education, Pinecrest Elementary  
Kelly Smitherman – PTO, Indian Valley  
Laura Strickland – PTO, Pinecrest  
Maddie Suber – SHS Focus President  
Grant Taylor – Sylacauga High SGA President  
Kelley Wassermann – CNP Director  
Becky Weeks – R.N.  
Teresa Wright – Coosa Valley Medical Center

## **Background and Rationale for Developing a Local Wellness Plan**

In response to declining nutritional intake and increasing childhood obesity, Congress included a new requirement in the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 to address changes that would promote wellness for students. Every school participating in the National School Lunch Program is to implement a Wellness Plan by the beginning of the 2006-2007 school year to promote nutrition in schools, encourage increased consumption of foods and beverages that fit in with Dietary Guidelines for Americans, and promote increased physical activity. With the passage of this Act, the federal government recognizes that a coordinated effort by the entire community including child nutrition professionals, school board members, parents, students, school administrators, and teachers is warranted. These efforts involve adults serving as role models and community members being informed of the policies that improve the long-term health and well-being of students.

Poor eating habits and sedentary lifestyles are more prevalent in children today than in the past two decades. The percentage of overweight children aged 6 – 11 years has more than doubled in the past 20 years and among adolescents aged 12 – 19, the figure has more than tripled. Less than 40 percent of children and adolescents in America meet the Dietary Guidelines for saturated fat, and almost 80 percent of young people do not eat the recommended number of servings of fruits and vegetables. Factors contributing to this trend include larger portion sizes and the over-consumption of nutrient-poor foods, as well as children's decrease in level of activity due in part to increased use of technological entertainment, decline in participation in extracurricular activities, and a more sedentary lifestyle in general.

The link between nutrition and learning is well documented. Healthy eating patterns are essential for students to achieve their full academic potential, full physical and mental growth, and lifelong health and well-being. Healthy eating combined with proper exercise are demonstrably linked to reduced risks for early mortality and development of many chronic diseases as adults. Schools have a responsibility to help students establish and maintain lifelong, healthy patterns. Well-planned and well-implemented school nutrition and physical education programs have been shown to positively influence students' habits.

Encouraging physical activity and good nutrition are paramount. By implementing a comprehensive plan – one that includes consideration of and sensitivity to students, schools, families and the community environment – we can foster lifelong healthy choices.

## **Sylacauga City Schools Wellness Plan**

The Sylacauga City Schools Board of Education is committed to providing a school environment that enhances learning and development of lifelong wellness practices. The Wellness Plan has four components: setting nutrition education goals, setting physical activity goals, establishing nutrition standards for all foods available on school campus during the school day, and setting goals for other school-based activities designed to promote student wellness. To satisfy the requirements of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, the local wellness committee will monitor the school's implementation of the wellness plan and evaluate student health and activities. The committee shall offer revisions to the plan annually or more often, if necessary. The child nutrition director and school principals are charged with the operational responsibility for ensuring that each school remains in compliance with the local wellness plan. The results will be reported to the superintendent of education.

To accomplish these goals:

- Child Nutrition Programs comply with federal, state and local requirements. Child Nutrition Programs are accessible to all children.
- Nutrition education is provided and promoted.
- Patterns of meaningful physical activity connect to students' lives outside of physical education.
- All school-based activities are consistent with local wellness plan goals.
- All foods and beverages made available on campus (including vending, concessions, a la carte, student stores, parties, and fundraising) during the school day are consistent with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- All foods made available on campus adhere to food safety and security guidelines.
- The school environment is safe, comfortable, pleasing, and allows ample time and space for eating meals. Food and physical activity are not used as a reward or punishment.

### **Local Wellness Plan Component 1:**

## **Setting Nutrition Education Goals**

The primary goal of nutrition education is to influence students' eating behaviors.

- Nutrition education will be integrated into other areas of the curriculum such as math, science, language arts and social studies, wherever appropriate. Students will receive nutrition education that is interactive and teaches the skills they need to adopt healthy eating behaviors.
- Nutrition education information will be reviewed by a qualified, credentialed nutrition professional who is specialized in school-based nutrition.
- Nutrition education is offered in the cafeteria as well as in the classroom, with coordination between the foodservice staff and teachers.
- The Child Nutrition staff will be adequately prepared and participate regularly in professional development activities to effectively deliver an accurate nutrition education program as planned. Preparation and professional development activities will provide basic knowledge of nutrition and strategies designed to promote healthy habits.
- The Child Nutrition staff will consider student needs in planning for a healthy school menu. Students will be asked for input and feedback through the use of student surveys.
- Menus will meet the nutrition standards established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Alabama State Department of Education, conforming to good menu planning principles, and featuring a variety of healthy choices that are tasty, attractive, of excellent quality, and are served at the proper temperature.
- Students will receive consistent nutrition messages throughout the school, classroom and cafeteria, home, and community.
- Advertising messages are consistent with and reinforce the objectives of the education and nutrition environment goals of the school.
- Nutrition education will involve sharing information with families and the broader community to positively impact students and the health of the community.
- Students will be encouraged to start each day with a healthy breakfast.

## **Local Wellness Plan Component 2:**

## Setting Physical Activity Goals

The primary goal for a school's physical activity component is to provide opportunities for every student to develop the knowledge and skills for specific physical activities, maintain physical fitness, regularly participate in physical activity and understand the short-term and long-term benefits of a physically active and healthful lifestyle.

- Physical activity should be integrated across curricula and throughout the school day.
- Physical education courses will be in an environment where students learn, practice, and are assessed on developmentally appropriate motor skills, social skills and knowledge.
- Policies ensure that state-certified physical education instructors teach all physical education classes.
- Policies ensure that physical education classes have a student/teacher ratio following Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) standards and meet all requirements set forth by the Alabama State Department of Education.
- Provide a daily recess period, which is not used as a punishment or a reward. Consider planning recess before lunch since research indicates that physical activity prior to lunch can increase the nutrient intake and reduce food waste.
- Physical education includes the instruction of individual activities as well as competitive and non-competitive team sports to encourage life-long physical activity.
- Adequate equipment is available for students to participate in physical education. Physical activity facilities on school grounds will be safe.
- The school provides a physical and social environment that encourages safe and enjoyable activities for all students, including those who are not athletically gifted.
- Information will be provided to families to help them incorporate physical activity into their student's lives through extracurricular athletic programs as well as collaboration with Sylacauga Parks and Recreation department and after school programs sponsored by other organizations such as Sylacauga Alliance for Family Enhancement (SAFE).

- Schools are encouraged to provide community access to and encourage students and community members to use the school's physical activity facilities outside of the normal school day according to policies established by the Sylacauga City Schools Board.
- Schools will encourage families and community members to institute programs that support physical activity.

**Local Wellness Policy Component 3:**

## **Establishing Nutrition Standards for All Foods Available on School Campus During the School Day**

Students' lifelong habits are greatly influenced by the types of foods and beverages available to them. Schools must ensure that reimbursable meals meet the program requirements and nutrition standards. They must also establish standards to address all foods and beverages sold or served to students, including those available outside of the school meal programs.

- Guidelines for reimbursable school meals shall not be less restrictive than regulations and guidance issued by the Secretary of Agriculture pursuant to section 10 of the Child Nutrition Act and section 9 of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, as those regulations and guidance apply to schools.
- All foods made available on campus will comply with the current USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans:
  1. Vending machines
  2. A la carte
  3. Beverage contracts
  4. Fundraisers
  5. Concession stands
  6. Student stores
  7. School parties/celebrations
- Food providers will take every measure to ensure that student access to foods and beverages meets federal, state, and local laws and guidelines.
- Nutrition information for products offered in a la carte and vending sales is readily available near the point of purchase.
- Promotional activities will be limited to programs that are requested by school officials to support teaching and learning. All promotional activities in schools will be connected to activities that encourage physical activity, academic achievement, or positive youth development and are in compliance with local guidelines.
- Food providers will be sensitive to the school environment in displaying their logos and trademarks on school grounds.
- Classroom snacks, parties, celebrations and meetings will feature healthy choices.

- Foods and beverages sold at fundraisers include healthy choices and provide age-appropriate selections for elementary schools, middle schools and high schools.
- Advertising of foods or beverages in the areas accessible to students during meal times must be consistent with established nutrition environment standards.

**Local Wellness Policy Component 4:**

## **Setting Goals for Other School-Based Activities Designed to Promote Student Wellness**

Guidelines established under this category create a school environment that provides consistent wellness messages and is conducive to healthy eating and being physically active.

- A clean, safe, enjoyable meal environment will be provided for students. Dining areas are attractive and have enough space for seating students.
- School personnel will assist all students in developing the healthy practice of washing hands before eating.
- Adequate time for student to enjoy eating healthy foods will be provided. The National Association of State Boards of Education recommends that students should be provided adequate time to eat lunch and breakfast, at least 10 minutes for breakfast and 20 minutes for lunch from the time the student is seated.
- Lunch periods will be scheduled as near the middle of the school day as possible.
- Food is prohibited as a reward or a punishment for student behaviors, unless it is detailed in a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP).
- After-school programs will encourage physical and healthy habit formation.
- Local wellness plan goals are considered in planning all school-based activities (such as school events, field trips, dances, and assemblies).
- Support for the health of all students is demonstrated by hosting health clinics, health screenings, and helping to enroll eligible children in Medicaid and other state children's insurance programs.
- All food service personnel shall have adequate pre-service training in food service operations.
- A child's need for nutrients does not end when school does. Therefore, it is recommended that lunch be offered during the summer for all children through the USDA Summer Feeding Program (Sylacauga Summer Café.)
- Employ a food service director who is properly qualified and certified according to current professional standards to administer the school food service program and satisfy reporting requirements.

- All foods made available on campus comply with federal, state, and local food safety and sanitation guidelines. Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) plans and guidelines are implemented to prevent food illness in schools.
- For the safety and security of the food and facility, access to the food service operations are limited to Child Nutrition staff and authorized personnel only.

## **Conclusions**

The school setting can play a major role in children's wellness habits through the examples provided by teachers and other adults, the food available in the school cafeteria and other areas on campus, and the encouragement of physical activity and movement throughout the day. Building their knowledge and appreciation for these skills helps students make healthy lifestyle choices. To make a difference, nutrition education for children should be appropriate for students' ages, reflect their cultures, and provide them opportunities to have fun. An effective wellness plan can help students learn the skills they need to make healthy choices.

Healthy school meals provide energy and nutrients children need for sound minds and bodies. Studies confirm what parents and teachers have said for years – children who are not well nourished have difficulty learning. The variety of healthy foods offered in school meal programs allows children to learn to enjoy different foods and develop healthy eating patterns. Schools should continue to emphasize meals that meet nutrition standards established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, conform to good menu planning principles, and feature a variety of healthy choices that are tasty, attractive and of excellent quality. Schools should use food preparation techniques to provide school meals that are lower in saturated fats, sodium, and sugar, and emphasize healthy food choices that include lean meats, fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat or not-fat milk.

The quality of the school nutrition environment depends on the quality of all foods and beverages sold or served at school. Foods that provide little nutrition compete with healthy school meals and send mixed messages to students. This undermines nutrition education efforts and discourages healthy eating. School nutrition practices should address all foods and beverages sold or served during the school day to students. This includes foods and beverages sold in vending machines. Decisions about the sale of competitive foods should be based on nutrition goals for students.

Healthy physical activity is essential for students to achieve their full potential and maintain a healthy body. Schools are a great place to influence students' physical activity patterns. In a healthy community environment, daily physical activity should have top priority. Physical education programs offer an excellent forum to provide the opportunity for all students to develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to participate in a lifetime of healthful physical activity.

## Online Resources

[www.nasp.org/s\\_nassp/index.asp](http://www.nasp.org/s_nassp/index.asp)

[www.schoolnutrition.org](http://www.schoolnutrition.org)

[www.fns.usda.gov](http://www.fns.usda.gov)

[www.nfsmi.org/Healthy Schools/fithealthy.html](http://www.nfsmi.org/Healthy_Schools/fithealthy.html)

[www.actionforhealthykids.org](http://www.actionforhealthykids.org)

[www.aahperd.org](http://www.aahperd.org)

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- Every school will have a Wellness Committee to regularly review its established plan of action in order to ensure compliance and make adjustments as necessary for the successful implementation of the plan.