

Wellness Policy

Introduction

Congress recognizes that schools play a critical role in promoting student health, preventing childhood obesity and combating problems associated with poor nutrition and physical inactivity. In 2004, Congress passed the Child Nutrition and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Reauthorization Act (Sec. 204 of Public Law 108-205). This act required by law that all local educational agencies (LEAs) participating in the National School Lunch Program or other child nutrition programs create local school wellness policies by School Year 2006. The legislation places the responsibility of developing a wellness policy at the local level so the individual needs of each LEA can be addressed.

In 2010, Congress passed the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (Sec. 204 of Public Law 111-296), and added new provisions for local school wellness policies related to implementation, evaluation and publicly reporting on progress of local school wellness policies. On February 26, 2014, new proposed rules for wellness policies were published in the Federal Register.

This proposed rule would require all local educational agencies participating in the National School Lunch Program and/or the School Breakfast Program to meet expanded local school wellness policy requirements consistent with the new requirements set forth in section 204 of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. This proposed rule would establish the framework for the content of the local school wellness policies, ensure stakeholder participation in the development of such policies, and require periodic assessment of compliance and reporting on the progress toward achieving the goals of the local school wellness policy. This proposed rule would also require local educational agencies, as part of the local school wellness policy, to implement policies for the marketing of foods and beverages on the school campus during the school day consistent with nutrition standards for Smart Snacks. Additionally, this proposed rule would require each local educational agency to make information about local school wellness policy implementation for all participating schools available to the public on a periodic basis. The provisions of this proposed rulemaking would ensure local educational agencies establish and implement local school wellness policies that meet minimum standards designed to

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support a school environment that promotes sound nutrition and student health, reduces childhood obesity, and provides transparency to the public on school wellness policy content and implementation.

Wellness Policy

The Wellness Policy is a written document of official policies that guide a LEA or school district's efforts to establish a school environment that promotes students' health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity.

The Wellness Policy requirement was established by the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, and further strengthened by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. It requires each local LEA participating in the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program to develop a Wellness Policy that promotes the health of students and addresses the growing problem of childhood obesity. The responsibility for developing a Wellness Policy is placed at the local level so the unique needs of each school under the jurisdiction of the LEA can be addressed.

Wellness Committee

Epic Charter School has designated Josh Brock, CFO, to ensure compliance with the Wellness Policy. The individual holding this position is also responsible for assembling a Wellness Committee. He reports directly to the Superintendent. Parents, students and school administrators will be invited to be a member of the committee. Epic Charter School will make an effort to recruit members from each category in forming the committee.

Once members of the Wellness Committee are identified, Epic Charter School will make available to the public and school community, a list of names and position titles (or relationship to the school) of individuals who are a part of the Wellness Committee on the school website at epiccharterschools.org.

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Promotion/Education and Physical Exercise

Advertising and Engaging

Smarter Lunchroom tools and strategies will be incorporated along with strategies to encourage consumption of more whole grains, fruits, vegetables and legumes while decreasing plate waste.

Smarter Lunchroom strategies may include:

- Drawing attention to fruit with signs and verbal prompts to grab students' attention;
- Displaying creative vegetable names on poster or menu board;
- Giving vegetables creative names;
- Giving target entrees creative names and display names on poster or menu board.

Epic Charter School will also engage in nutrition promotion, which includes the marketing and advertising of nutritious foods and beverages to students and is most effective when implemented consistently through a comprehensive and multi-channel approach by school staff and teachers, parents, students, and the community. Nutrition education teaches behavior focused skills and may be offered as part of a comprehensive, standards-based program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote their health and make positive choices regarding food and nutrition.

Epic Charter School will include wellness promotion as a part of its educational delivery system by:

- Including nutrition education as part of health education classes and/or stand-alone courses for all grade levels, including curricula that promote skill development, such as meal planning, recognizing food groups within a meal, understanding health information and food labels to evaluate the nutrient quality and contribution of foods;
- Integrating nutrition education into other core subjects such as math, science, language arts, and social sciences, as well as in non-core and elective subjects;
- Including nutrition and health posters, signage, or displays in the classrooms, hallways, gymnasium, and/ or bulletin boards that are frequently rotated, updated, or changed; and

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- Incorporate USDA provided grade-appropriate curricula and lessons on nutrition Education (Team Nutrition provides participating schools with nutrition education and promotion materials and strategies that help focus attention on the important role nutritious school meals, nutrition education, and a health-promoting school environment play in helping students learn to enjoy healthy eating and physical activity).

Physical Exercise

The primary goals and characteristics of quality physical education and physical activity are to provide opportunities for every student to develop the knowledge and skills for specific physical activities; maintain physical fitness; reduce sedentary time; learn about cooperation, fair play, and responsible participation that meets the needs of all students (at all levels of physical ability); and gain an appreciation for lifelong physical activity through a healthy lifestyle. Epic Charter School will ensure students engage in physical activity each day for children and adolescents. The school will further focus or teach academic content via physical movement and opportunities for physical activity before and after school. Epic Charter School will support teachers in incorporating opportunities for physical activity in the classroom whenever possible and in serving as role models by being physically active alongside the students.

National Guidelines for all Foods

Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program (77 FR 4088), updated the meal patterns and nutrition standards to align them with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The new meal pattern offers both fruits and vegetables each day, more whole grains, and portion sizes and calorie standards designed to maintain a healthy weight. To address school meals, the Wellness Policy could include information such as:

- An indication of whether the school is in compliance with the updated meal patterns;
- A description of the nutrition standards for school meals, emphasizing whole-grain offerings, fruit and vegetable offerings, low-fat and fat-free milk offerings, and

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compliance with the dietary specifications for calories, saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium;

- The Web site address (epiccharterschools.org) where the school or current menus are available or the best method to view the current menus, if not posted online;
- An indication of how participation in school meals programs will be promoted, how families are notified of the availability of the various Federal Child Nutrition Programs and how to determine students' eligibility to participate or a household's eligibility for free or reduced price meals;
- Policies regarding the timing and duration of school meals that consider evidence-based research to support healthy eating (i.e., the periods or times in which school meals are offered; the amount of time allowed for students to eat breakfast and lunch at school, after being seated; recess before or after lunch); and
- Policies regarding the availability and locations of free drinking water throughout the school day, including during the meal service as required by section 9(a)(5) of the NSLA and the frequency of regular maintenance on all water fountains to ensure hygiene standards for drinking fountains, water jugs, hydration stations, water jets, and other methods for delivering drinking water.

In addition to addressing food and beverages sold to students, the Epic Charter School Wellness Policy must also address standards for other foods and beverages available on-site. These would include policies such as those governing classroom parties or school celebrations that involve food, policies governing food-related rewards and incentives, and other State or local policies or nutrition standards for foods and beverages available that promote student health and reduce childhood obesity.

Annual Progress Report

Epic Charter School will inform and update the public about the content and implementation of the school Wellness Policy, the extent to which school is in compliance with the policy, and progress made in attaining the goals of the policy.

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The intent of these requirements is to promote public transparency and ensure parents have easy access to information about the wellness environment of the school their child attends.

Epic Charter School will inform parents and the public each school year of basic information about the Wellness Policy, the progress of each school toward meeting the goals of the policy, and any activities related to the policy that the school conducts.

This information will include:

- The Web site address (epiccharterschools.org) for the Wellness Policy and/or how the public can receive/access a copy of the Wellness Policy;
- A description of each school's progress in meeting the local school wellness goals;
- A summary of each school's events or activities related to the Wellness Policy implementation; and
- Information on how individuals and the public can get involved with the Wellness Committee.