

## **EDINBURG COMMON SCHOOL DISTRICT'S WELLNESS POLICY ON PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND NUTRITION**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Children need access to healthy foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive. Good health fosters student attendance and education. Healthy eating can help individuals achieve and maintain a healthy body weight, consume important nutrients, and reduce the risk of developing health conditions. Between 2001 and 2010, consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages among children and adolescents decreased, but still accounts for 10% of total caloric intake. Empty calories from added sugars and solid fats contribute to 40% of daily calories for children and adolescents age 2-18 years – affecting the overall quality of their diets. Approximately half of these empty calories come from six sources: soda, fruit drinks, dairy desserts, grain desserts, pizza, and whole milk. Most youth do not consume the recommended amount of total water. Between 2003 and 2010, total fruit intake and whole fruit intake among children and adolescents increased. However, most youth still do not meet fruit and vegetable recommendations.

The Edinburg Common School District is committed to provide a school environment that promotes and protects children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity within fiscal and scheduling constraints. Therefore, it is the policy of Edinburg Common School District that:

- The school district will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing district-wide nutrition and physical activity policies.
- All students in grades Pre-K will have the opportunity, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Foods and beverages sold or served at school will meet the nutrition guidelines of the U.S. Dietary Guidelines from Americans.
- The Edinburg Common School will participate in federal school meal programs (including the School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program).
- The Edinburg Common School will provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity.

### **TO ACHIEVE THESE POLICY GOALS:**

#### **I. School Health Councils**

The school district will create, strengthen, and work within existing

school health councils to develop, implement, monitor, review, and as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies. The councils will also serve as resources to school sites do implementing those policies.

A School health council should consist of the following:

Parent School food representative  
School board member  
Administrator  
Teacher  
Health professional  
Prevention professional

Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served in School

## **II. School Meals**

Meals served through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs will:

- Be appealing and attractive to children.
- Be served in clean and pleasant settings.
- Meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by state and federal statutes and regulations.
- Offer a variety of fruits and vegetables
- Serve only low-fat (1 percent) and fat-free milk.
- Ensure that half of the served grains are whole grain.
- Include whole foods rather than processed preservative-laden foods when possible.

The Edinburg Common School should engage students and staff through taste-tests of new entrees and surveys, for selecting foods sold through the school meal programs in order to identify new, healthful, and appealing food choices.

The Edinburg Common School will ensure that breakfast and lunch will be available to all students in order to meet their nutritional needs and enhance their ability to learn.

### *Free and Reduced-Price Meals*

Edinburg Common School will make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to, and prevent the overt identification of, students who are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals.

### *Meal Times and Scheduling*

- Provide students with at least 15 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch.
- Schedule meal periods at appropriate times.
- Provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks.
- Federal Regulations require lunches to be served between 10:00am and 2:00pm.

### *Sharing of Foods and Beverages*

Edinburg Common School will discourage students from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack time, due to concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets.

### *Beverages*

In addition to 1 percent or skim milk, only water, fruit and vegetable juices and fruit-based drinks that are 100 percent fruit juice and that do not contain additional caloric sweeteners will be served.

### *Snacks & Rewards*

Snacks served during the school day will make a positive contribution to children's diets and health, with an emphasis on serving fruits and vegetables. The district will disseminate a list of healthful snack items to teachers, after-school program personnel, PTO, and parents.

School-Sponsored Events (such as, but not limited to, athletic events, dances, or performances). Group sponsored fund raisers that take place off school grounds or outside of the school day are not required to meet these requirements but are encouraged too.

Foods and beverages offered or sold at school-sponsored events outside the school day are encouraged to meet the nutrition standards for meals or for foods and beverages sold individually but are not required to.

## **III. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing**

### Nutrition Education and Promotion

Edinburg Common School District aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Edinburg Common School will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- Is offered at each grade level as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based program 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 classroom instruction in subject such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects;

- Includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, participatory activities, such as contests, promotion, taste testing;
- Promotes fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices;
- Emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and physical activity/exercise.

#### *Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom setting*

Edinburg Common School District will encourage health instruction in health class and in the regular classroom.

- Classroom health education will complement physical education by reinforcing the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain physically-active lifestyle and to reduce time spent on sedentary activities, such as watching television;
- Opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into the classroom setting.
- The district will participate in initiatives that promote physical activities at home.

#### *Communication with parents*

The Edinburg Common School District will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. Semi-annually the Edinburg Common School District will send home and post on the district's website nutrition information and nutrition tips that will encourage parents to make use of the list of healthy food suggestions for celebrations, parties, rewards and for packing lunches and snacks.

#### *Food Marketing in Edinburg Common School*

School-based marketing will be consistent with nutrition education and health promotion.

#### *Staff Wellness*

The Edinburg Common School District highly values the health and well-being of every staff member and will plan and implement activities and support facilities that will encourage personal efforts by staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle. These activities should encourage healthy eating, physical activity, and other elements of a healthy lifestyle among school staff.

### **IV. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education**

#### *Physical Education*

All students in grades K-6 will receive three days per week of physical education for the entire school year. A certified physical education teacher will teach all

physical education instruction. Physical Education will not be withheld as a form of punishment or discipline. Pre-K students will also receive physical education.

### *Daily Recess*

Elementary school student that are eligible receive at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which Edinburg Common School should verbally encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity and provide space and equipment.

Edinburg Common School will encourage students to have periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active as part of the educational process (e.g., kinesthetic learning).

Research also indicates that having recess before lunch leads to less food waste and fewer behavioral problems at lunch. Outdoor recess as long as children are adequately protected has a benefits over indoor recess due to fresh air sunshine, but also psychological effects of leaving the school building. Recess will be held outdoors whenever possible and held indoors during the most inclement weather, at the discretion of the superintendent.

Moderate to vigorous physical activity releases brain chemicals that also help learning. Some school experimenting with more recess (four daily 15 minute periods in grades K-1 and two daily periods in grades 2-5 have found increased self-discipline and focus, higher academic performance, decreased misbehavior and decreased off-task classroom behavior. Recess shall not be for punishment or reward.

### *Use of School Facilities Outside of School Hours*

School facilities are available to student, staff, and community members after the school day.

## **V. Monitoring and Policy Review**

### *Monitoring and Policy Review*

The Wellness Committee will ensure compliance with established district-wide nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. The Committee will review the Wellness Policy every three years to assess progress and determine areas in need of improvements.

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