

What is a Wellness Policy?

In 2004, Congress passed a law requiring every school district that uses federal dollars for school lunch or breakfast to create a local wellness policy by the start of the 2006-2007 school year.

What will the policy include?

The law places the responsibility of developing a wellness policy at the local level so the individual needs of each school district can be addressed. Schools must set goals for nutrition education, physical activity and other school-based activities.

Each wellness policy, at a minimum, must include:

- Nutrition guidelines for food served in schools
- Nutrition education
- Physical activity
- Other school-based activities designed to promote student wellness

What role can parents play?

The law requires school districts to involve a variety of groups in designing and carrying out the policy, including:

- ▶ Students
- ▶ Parents
- ▶ Community Members
- ▶ School Board Members
- ▶ Administrators
- ▶ School Food Service Personnel

As a parent, you know your children and their needs better than anyone. By getting involved with your local wellness team you can help create, support and enhance school policies that will improve their school environment. Students are more likely to adopt healthy eating and activity habits if they see and experience them at home, as well as school.

Competitive Foods at School

Food items sold during meal periods outside the cafeteria—from vending machines, student stores, school fundraisers, food carts or food concessions—are known as “competitive foods.” They compete with the school food program for student buyers. Ala carte foods are sold individually in the cafeteria, but outside of the regular school breakfast or lunch meal. None of the ala carte or competitive foods are bound by the nutrition guidelines that school breakfast and school lunch must follow.

Free and Reduced Price Meals

Any child at a participating school may purchase a meal through the School Breakfast and National School Lunch Programs. Children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the poverty level are eligible for free meals. Those with incomes between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty level are eligible for reduced-price meals, for which students can be charged no more than 40 cents.

Schools receive federal funds for meals served through the School Breakfast and National School Lunch Programs. School districts set their own prices for full-price (paid) meals, but must operate their meal services as non-profit programs.



Child Nutrition Programs
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Support healthy food,
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North Dakota
Department of Public Instruction
Dr. Wayne G. Sanstead, State Superintendent



What are some things that might be included in the policy?

- ▶ Vending machines in schools will be required to offer healthy snacks and beverages.
- ▶ Fund-raising efforts will include non-food or healthy food items.
- ▶ Learning activities for a variety of subjects will include healthy eating examples and/or physical activity.
- ▶ Breakfast and lunch menus will include more fruits, vegetables and whole grain items.
- ▶ School meals will support healthy eating habits by showing normal portion sizes and appropriate food amounts.
- ▶ Schools may encourage breakfast program participation by offering breakfast in the classroom or a grab and go breakfast.
- ▶ To encourage better eating at lunch, schools may have recess before lunch.

How can I get involved?

- ☀ Find out what your school's wellness policy is. If you're not sure what the policy means, ask for specific examples of what will be done.
- ☀ Speak up at school board meetings. Voice your support about policy plans. Encourage other parents to do the same.
- ☀ Volunteer to serve on your school's policy committee. Now that the policy is adopted, extra help is needed to get it implemented.
- ☀ Help your school put the policy into action by supporting the policy at school and making similar changes at home.
- ☀ Talk to your child about changes that have happened at his school as a result of the policy.
- ☀ Maintain a positive attitude about the changes to support healthy habits.
- ☀ Have lunch or breakfast with your child at

school. See for yourself how school meals look, smell and taste. If you go with an open mind, you may be surprised at how cafeteria offerings have changed since you were a student.

The Scoop on School Meals!

School meals are healthy meals. Children who eat meals at school through the USDA School Breakfast Program or the National School Lunch Program receive many benefits:

- ◆ School meals must meet guidelines for fat, saturated fat, calories, vitamins and minerals.
- ◆ Children who eat lunch at school consume twice the servings of fruits and vegetables, and more grains and dairy.
- ◆ No super-sizing here. School meals provide age-appropriate serving sizes.



What's in a meal?

The School Breakfast Program

Many schools in North Dakota serve breakfast every morning. Children who are too tired to eat or wake up late still have a chance to eat a nutritious meal before they sit down to learn.

School Breakfast must provide:

- 8 ounces of milk
- ½ cup of fruit or juice
- 2 servings of grain or bread products
or
- 1 serving of grain and one meat serving

A typical school breakfast menu could be:

1 cup Cold Cereal
1 slice Toast
½ cup Orange Juice
8 ounces Milk

The National School Lunch Program

Today's school lunches are quite different than the lunches many of us remember from when we went to school. School meals are planned to be tasty, fresh, colorful and kid friendly. Variety and choices are offered to meet different student preferences.

A School Lunch must provide:

- 2 ounces of Meat/Meat Alternate
- 2 different Fruits and/or Vegetables
- 1 serving of Grain or Bread
- 8 ounces of Milk

A typical school lunch could be:

Softshell Taco w/Ground Beef and Cheese
Lettuce and Tomato for topping
Tortilla Chips and Salsa
Fresh Grapes
Milk



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