

COMPREHENSIVE WELLNESS POLICY

(1) Philosophy

On June 30, 2004, the President of the United States signed Public Law 108-265, the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004. Section 204 of this law requires school districts participating in the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program to develop a local wellness policy that addresses student wellness and the growing problem of childhood obesity.

The Rensselaer City School District (RCSD) Board of Education believes in a coordinated and comprehensive approach to both student and staff wellness. To that end, the Board of Education believes that all children who are healthy are more likely to...

- * learn more
- * behave better
- * complete their formal education.

The Board of Education also believes that healthy staff can...

- * More effectively perform their assigned duties
- * Model appropriate wellness behaviors for students.

(2) Nutrition

Academic performance and quality of life issues are affected by the choice and availability of good foods in our school. Healthy foods support student physical growth, brain development, resistance to disease, emotional stability, and the ability to learn.

- a) Nutrition guidelines that require the use of products that are high in fiber, low in added fats, sugar, and sodium, and served in appropriate portion sizes consistent with USDA standards shall be established for all foods offered by the RCSD Food Services Department and all vendors.
- b) The Food Services Department will aim to be financially self-supporting. However, this program is an essential educational support system and profit generation should not take precedence over the nutritional needs of the students.

- c) The District is cognizant of visual messages fostering another opportunity to teach students health because the brain can absorb more information in less time. Therefore, posters depicting healthy behaviors in the workout room, cafeteria and throughout the hallways in the school building will be present.
- d) The Food Service Manager shall be certified in nutrition or collaborate with nutrition professionals to attain recipe and menu information to help deter childhood obesity.
- e) The RCSD shall provide a clean and safe meal environment for students. Twenty minutes to eat and digest healthy foods shall be made available to all students.
- f) Nutrition shall be integrated into Health Education, Home and Careers, and other curriculum areas such as Physical Education, Math, Science, and Language Arts. Students are more likely to eat healthy foods if the message is consistent throughout the school community.
- g) All foods and beverages sold after school shall meet federal recommended guidelines. Nutritious selections shall be included in all menus. According to Section 10 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1996, 42, USC 1779, as amended by the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act, the District will no longer sell unhealthy food items for fundraising. Examples of alternative fundraisers may include the sale of fruits, magazines, clothing, plants, and gifts. Car washes have also been successful.
- h) The Food Service Department shall follow federal and state regulations for reimbursable meals.
- i) Birthdays that occur during the same month in an elementary school class shall be celebrated together on just one day of the month for that particular class. Options for celebrations will include the students names announced during the morning announcements, a birthday sash, a student's favorite activity can be chosen to play, or any other non-food celebration.
- j) Coffee will not be sold in the cafeteria, but can be used in catering events that do not include students. If vending machines exist in the District, they will only include nutritionally valuable items that follow the same guidelines as the Food Service Program.

(3) Health Education

The K-12 Health Education program shall provide the opportunity for all students to understand and practice concepts and skills related to health promotion and disease prevention.

Students in the RCSD shall receive instruction based on the New York State Standards:

- a) Personal Health and Fitness; A Safe and Healthy Environment; and Resource Management.
- b) In accordance with NYS regulations, the instruction shall be provided as follows: Grades K-5 by regular classroom teachers; a certified health educator shall provide the equivalent of a ½ year course of study in middle school and a ½ year course in high school.
- c) The RCSD shall appoint a Health Director/Coordinator who is certified in Health Education. Duties include: Distribution of current health information to the K-12 Health programs; coordination of a Health and Wellness Team; organizing health promotion programs such as health fairs, assemblies, in-service instruction, newsletters, and community partnerships. The Health Director/Coordinator shall be compensated a minimum of 1 supervision period and a reasonable salary/stipend for such duties. The salary shall be negotiated into the next contract.

(4) Physical Education

The RCSD believes that Physical Education and physical activity shall be an essential element of the schools instructional program. Opportunities shall be provided for every student to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for specific physical activities and to maintain lifelong physical fitness.

- a) In accordance with NYS regulations, the instruction shall be provided as follows: Grades K-3 daily instruction for a total of 120 minutes per week; grades 4-6 three days per week instruction for a total of 120 minutes; grades 7-12 every other day for a total of 120 minutes per week. The 120 minutes of instruction is exclusive of any time that may be required for dressing or showering.
- b) To receive a high school diploma, 2 units of instruction must be earned. All instructors must be certified in Physical Education.

- c) The RCSD shall appoint an Athletic Director/Coordinator who is certified in Physical Education. Duties include: Scheduling athletic events; coach supervision; collaborate with the maintenance department for facility safety; distribute current Physical Education information to the K-12 Physical Education programs; organize the athletic banquet. The Athletic Director/Coordinator shall be compensated a minimum of 1 class period and a reasonable salary/stipend for such duties.
- d) In addition to Physical Education class, students shall be given opportunities for physical activity during daily recess for elementary students. Students in grades 7-12 shall be given the opportunity for physical activity in after-school programs such as intramurals and interscholastic sports. Integration of physical activity into the academic curriculum such as “class walks” would be an effective strategy to increase both student and staff wellness.
- e) The RCSD will make efforts to keep physical activity facilities open for use by students and community residents after school hours. The RCSD shall encourage parents and guardians to support their children’s participation in physical activity, to be physically active role models, and to include physical activity in family events.

(5) Safe and Healthy Environment

The RCSD believes that a safe and healthy environment supports academic success for all students. Safer school communities promote healthier students. Healthier students do better in school and make greater contributions to their community.

- a) All RCSD school buildings, grounds, buses, and equipment shall meet all current health and safety standards; and be kept inviting, clean, safe, and in good repair. Buses shall shut off engines whenever possible. All environments shall be free of tobacco, alcohol, and prohibited substances.
- b) Safety procedures and appropriate training for students and staff shall always support personal safety, an environment free from harassment, and an environment free of a threat or act of violence. The RCSD shall work to create an environment where students, parents/guardians, and staff are respected, valued, and accepted with high expectations for personal behavior and accomplishments.

(6) Counseling, Psychological and Social Services

The RCSD is committed to developing and providing programs and services for staff, students, and their families that promote social and emotional well being to optimize conditions for teaching and learning. A supportive environment shall be provided that includes the services of guidance counselors, school psychologists, and social workers. Such an environment shall encourage students, families, and staff to request assistance when needed and shall link them to school and community resources.

- a) In accordance with NYS regulations, these programs shall help students who exhibit any attendance, academic, behavioral, or adjustment problems.
- b) These programs shall address, but not be limited to, issues such as suicide, depression, anxiety, and antiviolence.

(7) Health Services

The RCSD believes that an effective health care delivery system that promotes academic achievement will improve the mental and physical health of both students and staff.

- a) The primary coordination of health services shall be through a trained school health care practitioner with the support and direction of RCSD. Full time coverage shall be available during school hours. The RCSD shall collaborate with community health resources to promote health and wellness for students, families, staff, and community.
- b) Coordinated and comprehensive programs of accessible health services shall be provided to students and staff and shall include , but not be limited to, nursing, violence prevention, school safety, communicable disease prevention, health screening, community health referrals, immunizations, parenting skills, first aid, CPR/AED, and other priority health education topics.

(8) Family, School, and Community Partnership

The RCSD believes in fostering solid family, school, and community partnerships. These relationships will positively impact student wellness.

- a) Family, student, and community partners shall be included on an on-going basis in wellness planning processes within the RCSD.
- b) Community partnerships shall be developed and maintained as a resource for RCSD programs, projects, activities, and events. The diverse cultural make-up of the school community shall be valued when planning wellness activities.
- c) The district shall actively support the engagement of students, families, and staff in community health enhancing activities.

(9) Staff Wellness

The RCSD is aware that a healthy staff can more effectively perform their duties and serve as powerful role models for healthy living. The district shall provide information about wellness resources and services that promote the health and safety of all staff. All personnel involved in the school health program shall possess the necessary qualifications, training, and experience that are essential to their duties.

- a) The RCSD shall provide an accessible and productive work environment free from physical dangers and emotional threat that is consistent with applicable occupation and health laws, policies, and rules.
- b) All personnel involved in the school health program will be provided the opportunity for ongoing professional development. Faculty and staff will model good health habits for our students.
- c) The RCSD shall support the development and implementation of staff wellness activities to ensure that all staff has access to opportunities that enhance their health.

(10) Monitoring and Policy Review

The RCSD Health and Wellness Team believes that with compliance of the RCSD Wellness Policy, childhood obesity rates will decline. Students will less likely suffer from diabetes, heart disease, stroke, hypertension, cancer, renal disease, and stress. Research indicates that healthier students are more likely to achieve higher test scores, behave better, and become more productive citizens.

- a) The school district superintendent will ensure overall compliance of the established district wide wellness policies. In each school, the principals will ensure local compliance of the policies in his/her school and will report on the school's compliance to the school district superintendent. Health and Wellness team members may assist in communication to the building principals if they recognize that policies are in non-compliance.

- b) The Wellness policy shall be annually reviewed by the Health and Wellness Team.

Adopted by the Board of Education: June 27, 2006
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