

533 WELLNESS

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to assure a school environment that promotes and protects students' health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- A. The school board recognizes that nutrition education and physical education are essential components of the educational process and that good health fosters student attendance and education.
- B. The school environment promotes and protect students' health, well-being, and ability to learn by encouraging healthy eating and physical activity.
- C. Perham - Dent Public Schools encourages the involvement of students, parents, teachers, food service staff, and other interested persons in implementing, monitoring, and reviewing school district nutrition and physical activity policies.
- D. Children need access to healthy foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive.
- E. All students in grades K-12 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- F. Qualified food service personnel will provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students; try to accommodate the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning; and will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.

III. POLICY COMPONENTS

A. Policy Component: Nutrition Education and Promotion

1. Goal: Perham-Dent Public Schools will provide nutrition education experiences that positively influence students' eating behaviors and help develop lifelong healthy habits. The District will provide an environment that encourages and supports healthy eating by students.

2. Rationale: Nutrition education has been shown to improve eating habits and health. Connecting nutrition education to other content areas helps with the mastery of core subject standards. Research shows that behavior change correlates positively with the amount of nutrition instruction received. Linking nutrition education and promotion throughout the school and community reinforces consistent messages.

3. Policy Recommendation: Policies for Nutrition Education and Promotion will address the following areas: Standards-Based, Sequential Nutrition Education, Connecting with Existing Curriculums, Education Links with School, Professional Development for Teachers, Appropriateness of Nutrition Component of Comprehensive Health Education Curriculum, Educational Reinforcement, Nutrition Promotion, Staff Awareness, Staff Members as Role Models

a. *Standards-Based Sequential Nutrition Education:* Nutrition education shall be based on current science, research and national guidelines. Nutrition education shall be standards-based, using national or state-developed standards, such as the Connecticut State Department of Education's *Healthy and Balanced Living Curriculum Framework*. Nutrition education shall be offered as part of a planned, ongoing, systematic, sequential, standards-based, comprehensive school health education program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health. The nutrition education program shall focus on students' eating behaviors, be based on theories and methods proven effective by published research, and be consistent with the state's/district's comprehensive school health education standards/guidelines/curriculum framework. Students shall be able to demonstrate competency through application of knowledge, skill development and practice.

b. *Connecting with Existing Curriculums:* Nutrition education shall be a part of comprehensive school health education and shall also be included in other classroom content areas such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, family and consumer sciences and elective subjects. All prekindergarten-12 instructional staff members shall be encouraged to incorporate nutritional themes into daily lessons, when appropriate, to reinforce and support health messages.

c. *Education Links with School:* The nutrition education program links with school meal programs, other school foods, and nutrition-related community services that occur outside the classroom or that link classroom nutrition education to the larger school community, such as school gardens, cafeteria-based nutrition education and after-school programs. Nutrition education shall be offered in the school cafeteria and classroom, with coordination between school food service and teachers. The district shall link nutrition education with other coordinated school health initiatives.

d. *Professional Development for Teachers:* Perham - Dent Public Schools shall include appropriate training for teachers and other staff members. Staff members responsible for nutrition education shall be adequately prepared and shall regularly participate in professional development activities to effectively deliver the nutrition education program as planned. Preparation and professional development activities shall provide basic knowledge of nutrition, combined with the development of skills and adequate time to practice skills in program-specific activities. Training shall include instructional techniques and strategies designed to promote healthy eating behaviors. Staff members providing nutrition education shall not advocate dieting behaviors or any specific eating regimen to students, other staff members or parents.

e. *Appropriateness of Nutrition Component of Comprehensive Health Education Curriculum:*

Perham - Dent Public School staff shall assess all nutrition education lessons and materials for accuracy, completeness, balance and consistency with the state's/district's educational goals and curriculum standards. Materials developed by food marketing boards or food corporations shall be examined for appropriateness of commercial messages.

f. *Educational Reinforcement:* School instructional staff members shall collaborate with agencies and groups conducting nutrition education in the community to send consistent messages to students and their families. Guest speakers and performers invited to address students shall receive appropriate orientation to relevant district policies. School staff members shall be encouraged to coordinate with other agencies and community groups to provide opportunities for student volunteer work related to nutrition, such as assisting with food recovery efforts and preparing nutritious meals for home-bound people. School officials shall disseminate information to parents, students and staff members about community programs that offer nutrition assistance to families.

g. *Nutrition Promotion:* Perham - Dent Public Schools shall conduct nutrition education activities and promotions that involve parents, students and the community. The district shall participate in programs that promote and reinforce student health. The school team responsible for planning nutrition activities shall ensure interdisciplinary collaboration by including school food service, school nurses, health and physical education teachers, family and consumer sciences teachers, and other appropriate school staff members.

h. *Staff Awareness:* Perham - Dent Public Schools shall build awareness among teachers, food service staff, coaches, nurses and other school staff members about the importance of nutrition, physical activity and body-size acceptance to academic success and lifelong wellness.

i. *Staff Members as Role Models:* School staff members shall be encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity behaviors.

B. Policy Component: Physical Education and Physical Activity

1. Goal: Perham - Dent Public Schools will provide students with a variety of opportunities for daily physical activity and quality physical education. The district's physical activity component will provide opportunities for every student to develop the knowledge and skills for specific physical activities, and to maintain physical fitness, to regularly participate in physical activity, and to understand the short- and long-term benefits of a physically active and healthy lifestyle.

2. Rationale: Physical education plays a critical role in helping children learn necessary skills and develop confidence in their physical abilities. Schools can help children and adolescents become more physically active and fit by providing a wide range of accessible, safe and affordable opportunities to be active. Appropriate practices guided by competent, knowledgeable and supportive adults influence the extent to which students choose to engage in activities, enjoy physical activity and develop healthy lifestyles.

3. Policy Recommendations: Policies for Physical Education and Physical Activity will address the following areas: Standards-Based, Sequential Physical Education, Daily Recess, Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School, Physical Activity and Punishment, Safe Routes to School, Incorporating Physical Activity into the Classroom

a. Standards-Based, Sequential Physical Education

Physical education shall be standards-based, using national or state-developed standards and guidelines. Physical education classes shall be sequential, building from year to year, and content will include motor skills, concepts and strategies, engagement in physical activity, physical fitness, responsible behavior and benefits of physical activity. Students shall be able to demonstrate competency through application of skills, health wellness literacy, concepts and plans, and advocacy.

b. Daily Recess: All elementary school students shall have daily supervised recess, preferably outdoors, and before lunch when possible. Schools should encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity during recess and provide space, equipment and an environment that is conducive to safe and enjoyable activity. Districts shall ensure that students with special physical and cognitive needs have equal physical activity opportunities, with appropriate assistance and services. Districts shall discourage extended periods (i.e., periods of two or more hours) of inactivity. When activities, such as mandatory schoolwide testing, make it necessary for students to remain indoors for long periods of time, schools shall give students periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to get up from their chairs and be moderately active. Districts shall prohibit withholding of recess or the use of exercise as punishment, and shall develop alternative practices for promoting appropriate behavior. Recess shall not be withheld as a consequence of incomplete school assignments.

c. Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School

All elementary, middle and high schools shall offer extracurricular physical activity programs, such as physical activity clubs or intramural programs on campus or via the

Perham Area Community Center or community education. All high schools, and middle schools as appropriate, shall offer interscholastic sports programs. Districts shall offer a range of activities that meet the needs, interests and abilities of all students, including boys, girls, students with physical and cognitive disabilities, and students with special health care needs. After-school, child care and enrichment programs shall provide and encourage — verbally and through the provision of space, equipment and activities — daily periods of moderate to vigorous physical activity for all participants.

d. *Physical Activity and Punishment:* Teachers and other school and community personnel shall not use physical activity or exercise (e.g., running laps and pushups) or withhold opportunities for physical activity (e.g., recess and physical education) as punishment. Recess or other opportunities for physical activity shall not be withheld as a measure to enforce the completion of academic work. Appropriate alternate strategies shall be developed as consequences for negative or undesirable behaviors.

e. *Safe Routes to School:* When appropriate, the district shall work together with local public works, public safety and/or police departments to make it safer and easier for students to walk and bike to school.

f. *Incorporating Physical Activity into the Classroom:* Students in all grades shall be provided with opportunities for physical activity beyond and in addition to physical education. Classroom health education shall complement physical education by reinforcing the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically active lifestyle and to reduce time spent on sedentary activities, such as watching television. Opportunities for physical activity shall be incorporated into other subject lessons and can be used as reinforcement, reward and celebration for achievement, positive behavior and completion of assignments. Classroom teachers shall provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

C. Policy Component: Nutrition Standards for School Foods and Beverages

1. Goal: Perham - Dent Public Schools will provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious and appealing foods that meet students' health and nutrition needs and accommodate ethnic and cultural food preferences. School meals will include a variety of healthy choices that meet USDA School, Breakfast, Lunch, and Smart Snacks Guidelines, and are modified, as appropriate, for special dietary needs. Districts will use these guidelines to establish nutrition standards and provide clear guidance for all foods and beverages available everywhere on school grounds to encourage healthy choices for students.* The standards will focus on increasing nutrient density, decreasing fats, sodium and added sugars, and moderating portion size. Policies will encourage the consumption of nutrient-dense foods (such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat or nonfat dairy, lean meats, legumes, nuts and seeds) wherever foods are sold or served at school.

2. Rationale: Students' lifelong eating habits are greatly influenced by the types of foods and beverages available to them. Numerous studies have shown that students who eat breakfast and lunch at school consume a greater variety of healthy foods and more nutrients. Students consume more vegetables, drink more milk and fewer sweetened beverages, consume more grain mixtures, and eat fewer cookies, cakes and salty snacks than students who make other lunch choices. Over the past few decades, the availability of snack foods and beverages has increased at school, both in the cafeteria and through other school organizations including school stores, vending machines (e.g., soda and other sweetened beverages, snack chips and cookies) and fundraisers (e.g., candy and baked goods). These snacks are often low in nutrient density; they supply calories from added fat and/or sugar but relatively few, if any, vitamins, minerals and other nutrients. When children replace healthy meals with less nutritious snacks, they are often consuming inadequate nutrients and excess calories. When snacks of low nutrient density are consumed in addition to the school meal, children may be consuming too many calories. Nutrition standards help schools provide healthier food and beverage choices throughout the entire school environment.
3. Policy Recommendations: Policy recommendations for Nutrition Standards include (1) School Meals and (2) Other Foods and Beverages at School.
 - a. Policy Recommendations for School Meals: Policies for school meals will address the following areas: Nutrition Guidelines, Menu Planning, Breakfast Promotion, Special Dietary Needs. Specific guidance regarding the implementation of each policy recommendation for Nutrition Standards for School Meals follows under *Implementation Guidance for School Meals*, after this section. Resources to assist with the implementation of each policy recommendation are found in *Resources* at the end of this section.
 1. *Nutrition Guidelines*: School meals shall offer varied and nutritious food choices that are consistent with USDA School, Breakfast, Lunch, and Smart Snacks Guidelines, (which focus on increasing fruits, vegetables and whole grains). School meals shall: meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state and federal laws and regulations; offer a variety of fruits and vegetables, emphasizing fresh and locally grown produce, when available; serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk and nutritionally equivalent nondairy alternatives as defined by the USDA, which also comply with the state beverage requirements*; ensure that at least half of the grains served are whole grain; and share information about the nutritional content of meals with students, families and school staff members.
 2. *Menu Planning*: Menus shall be planned to be appealing and attractive to children. School meals shall be planned to

incorporate the basic menu planning principles of balance, variety, contrast, color and eye appeal. Menus shall be planned with input from students, parents and other school personnel and shall take into account students' cultural norms and preferences. Schools shall engage students and parents, through surveys and taste-tests of new entrees, in selecting foods sold through the school meal programs in order to identify new, healthful and appealing food choices.

3. *Breakfast:* Districts shall help ensure that all children have breakfast, either at home or at school, in order to meet their nutritional needs and enhance their ability to learn. Schools will: to the extent possible, operate the School Breakfast Program; to the extent possible, arrange bus schedules and use methods to serve school breakfasts that encourage participation, including serving breakfast in the classroom, "grab-and-go" breakfast, or breakfast during morning break or recess; notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast Program, if the school serves breakfast to students; and encourage parents to provide a healthy breakfast for their children through newsletter articles, take-home materials, or other means.

4. *Special Dietary Needs:* With appropriate medical documentation, modified meals shall be prepared for students with food allergies or other special dietary needs.

b. Policy Recommendations for Other Foods and Beverages: Policies for other foods and beverages at school will address the following areas: Food or Beverage Contracts, Cafeteria A La Carte Sales, Vending Machines and School Stores, Events on School Premises, Fundraising, Classroom Snacks, Access to Drinking Water, Food Brought into School, Celebrations and Meeting

1. *Food or Beverage Contracts:* Agreements with food or vending companies to sell foods or beverages in schools shall ensure that contractors will follow the federal regulations for school nutrition programs and all applicable state statutes and regulations. Beverages shall meet the requirements of state statute and food shall meet the district's nutrition standards.

2. *Cafeteria A La Carte Sales* Foods and beverages sold a la carte in the cafeteria shall meet the federal regulations for school nutrition programs and all applicable state statutes and regulations. Beverages shall meet the requirements of state statute and food shall meet the district's nutrition standards.

3. *Vending Machines and School Stores:* Foods and beverages sold in vending machines and school stores shall meet the federal regulations for school nutrition programs and all applicable state statutes and regulations. Beverages shall meet the requirements of state statute and food shall meet the district's nutrition standards.
4. *Fundraising:* School fundraising activities shall not involve food or beverages or shall only use foods and beverages that meet the requirements of the state beverage statute and the district's nutrition standards. Schools shall encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity. Perham - Dent Public Schools shall make available to students, parents, teachers and school groups a list of ideas for acceptable fundraising activities, such as healthy foods and beverages or alternate nonfood fundraisers.
5. *Classroom Snacks:* Classroom snacks shall feature healthy choices that meet the requirements of the state beverage statute and the district's nutrition standards. School personnel shall not withhold student access to snacks as punishment. A healthy snack list is available on the website.
6. *Access to Drinking Water:* Students and school staff members will have access to free, safe, fresh drinking water throughout the school day.
7. *Food Brought Into School:* Districts shall encourage families to pack healthy lunches and snacks and to refrain from including beverages that do not meet the requirements of the state beverage statute or foods that do not meet the district's nutrition standards. Districts shall develop procedures to ensure that all food brought from home to be shared with other students is safe.
8. *Celebrations and Meetings:* Districts shall limit celebrations and meetings at school that involve food. Foods and beverages served at school celebrations and meetings shall feature healthy choices that meet the requirements of the state beverage statute and the district's nutrition standards. Nonfood celebrations shall be promoted. The district shall disseminate a list of ideas to parents and teachers, including healthy food and beverage choices and alternative activities

for classroom parties (e.g., increased recess time instead of a class party).

D. Policy Component: Other School-Based Activities to Promote Student Wellness

1. Goal : School cafeteria environments will support healthy eating habits by providing clean, safe and pleasant settings with adequate time for students to eat. School meal procedures will encourage participation by all students. Food service staff members will have the knowledge and skills to provide cost-effective quality meals served safely. Districts will encourage school staff members to be role models for healthy eating and physical activity behaviors through the provision of staff wellness activities. School staff members will not use food to reward or punish students.
2. Rationale: Students eat more healthful food safely in a supervised, pleasant environment that provides enough time to eat and socialize. Students' meal participation is increased when schools use appropriate school meal procedures. Appropriate training is needed for school food service staff members to prepare healthy, safe and cost-effective meals. School staff wellness programs encourage adults to be enthusiastic and healthy role models for students. Using food as reward or punishment is an inappropriate practice that negatively impacts the development of healthy eating behaviors.
3. Policy Recommendations: Policies for Other School-Based Activities to Promote Student Wellness will address the following areas: Surroundings for Eating, Time for and Scheduling of Meals, Free and Reduced-Price Meals, Financial Operation of Child Nutrition Programs, Qualifications of Food Service Staff Members, Training for Food Service Staff Members, Food Safety, Food Rewards and Punishment, Sharing of Foods, Staff Wellness
 - a. *Surroundings for Eating*: School meals shall be served in clean and pleasant settings. A cafeteria environment that provides students with a relaxed, enjoyable climate shall be developed. The cafeteria environment is a place where students have adequate space to eat, clean and pleasant surroundings, adequate time to eat meals, and convenient access to hand washing or hand sanitizing facilities before meals.
 - b. *Time for and Scheduling of Meals*: Schools shall work to provide appropriate meal times with adequate time allotted for students to eat with the goal of at least 10 minutes for breakfast and 20 minutes for lunch after sitting down to eat. All schools must offer all full day students a daily lunch period of at least 20 minutes between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.
 - c. *Free and Reduced-Price Meals*: Schools shall prevent the overt identification of students who are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals and shall make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to students who are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals.
 - d. *Financial Operation of Child Nutrition Programs*: The school food service program shall aim to be financially self-supporting. However, the

program is an essential educational support activity. Budget neutrality or profit generation shall not take precedence over the nutritional needs of the students. If additional funds are needed, they shall not be from the sale of foods that have little nutritional value and/or compete nutritionally with program meals.

- e. *Qualifications of Food Service Staff Members* Qualified nutrition professionals shall administer the school meal programs. As part of Perham - Dent Public Schools' responsibility to operate a food service program, continuing professional development shall be provided for all nutrition professionals in schools. Staff development programs shall include appropriate certification and/or training programs for school food service directors, managers and cafeteria workers, according to their levels of responsibility.
- f. *Training for Food Service Staff Members:* All food service personnel shall have adequate preservice training in food service operations and regularly participate in professional development activities that address requirements for Child Nutrition Programs, menu planning and preparation, food safety, strategies for promoting healthy eating behaviors and other appropriate topics.
- g. *Food Safety:* All foods made available at school shall comply with state and local food safety and sanitation regulations. Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) plans and guidelines shall be implemented in school meal programs to prevent food-borne illness in schools.
- h. *Food Rewards and Punishment:* Schools shall not use foods or beverages as rewards for academic performance or good behavior, unless this practice is allowed by a student's individualized education plan (IEP). Schools shall not withhold food or beverages (including food served through school meals) as a punishment. Alternative rewards shall be developed and promoted.
- i. *Sharing of Foods:* Schools shall discourage students from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns with allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets.
- j. *Staff Wellness:* The district highly values the health and well-being of every staff member and shall plan and implement activities and policies that support personal efforts by staff members to maintain a healthy lifestyle and that encourage staff members to serve as role models.

E. Policy Component: Communication and Promotion

- 1. Goal: Perham - Dent Public Schools will promote clear and consistent messages that explain and reinforce healthy eating and physical activity habits. Districts will engage students, families, the community and the media in promoting a healthy school environment.
- 2. Rationale: The promotion of consistent messages in the school environment reinforces the district's commitment to students' health. Marketing materials in the cafeteria and classrooms should support the concepts and practices in the district's nutrition and physical activity policies. Marketing targeted to children through multiple media channels contributes to their choices about foods, beverages and physically active pursuits. Families

have a significant influence on students' eating and physical activity habits. Partnering with the local community increases schools' effectiveness in providing consistent health messages.

3. Policy Recommendations: Policies for Communication and Promotion will address the following areas: Consistent Health Messages, Engaging Families, Engaging Students, Partnering with Community Organizations, Food Marketing in Schools, Media

a. *Consistent Health Messages:* Students shall receive positive, motivating messages, both verbal and nonverbal, about healthy eating and physical activity throughout the school environment. All school personnel shall help reinforce these positive messages. Foods and beverages sold or served at school shall not contradict healthy eating messages. Perham - Dent Public Schools shall not use practices that contradict messages to promote and enjoy physical activity; for example, withholding recess or using physical activity as punishment (e.g., running laps, doing pushups).

b. *Engaging Families:* Perham - Dent Public Schools shall encourage family involvement to support and promote healthy eating and physical activity habits. The district shall support families' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children through effective two-way communication strategies that allow sharing of information from school to home and from home to school. The district shall offer nutrition education for parents which can include providing healthy eating seminars, sending home nutrition information, postings on district website, providing nutrient analyses of school menus in language families can understand and any other appropriate methods for reaching families. The district shall provide families with a list of foods that meet the district's nutrition standards and ideas for healthy celebrations, rewards and fundraising activities. The district shall provide opportunities for families to share their healthy food practices with others in the school community. The district shall provide information about physical education and other school-based physical activity opportunities before, during and after the school day, and shall support families' efforts to provide their children with opportunities to be physically active outside of school. Such supports shall include sharing information about physical activity and physical education through a website, newsletter or other take-home materials, special events or physical education homework.

c. *Engaging Students:* Schools shall consider student needs in planning for a healthy school environment. Students shall be asked for input and feedback through the use of student surveys and other means, and attention shall be given to their comments. Key health messages shall be promoted by coordinating classroom and cafeteria, and through planned promotions such as health fairs, nutrition initiatives, programs and contests.

d. *Partnering with Community Organizations:* Schools shall partner with community organizations (e.g., local businesses, faith-based

organizations, libraries, local health departments, local colleges and their students, and local health care providers) to provide consistent health messages and support school-based activities that promote healthy eating and physical activity.

- e. *Food Marketing in Schools:* School-based marketing shall be consistent with nutrition education and health promotion. Thus, schools shall limit food and beverage marketing to the promotion of foods and beverages that meet the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) nutrient standards for meals, the beverage requirements of state statute and the district's nutrition standards. Schools shall promote healthy food choices and shall not allow advertising that promotes less nutritious food and beverage choices. The promotion of healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy products, shall be encouraged.
- f. *Media :* Schools shall work with a variety of media, such as local newspapers, radio and television stations, to spread the word to the community about healthy eating and physical activity behaviors, and a healthy school environment.

F. Policy Component: Measurement and Evaluation

The district engages students, parents, PE and other teachers, food service professional, school health professionals, school board, school administrators, and the public in developing, implementing, annual monitoring, periodic review, and revising of the wellness policy through its wellness committee that meets regularly.

1. Goal: Perham - Dent Public Schools will develop a plan for measuring implementation of the local district nutrition and physical activity policies, including designation of one or more persons with operational responsibility for ensuring that schools are addressing the policy.
2. Rationale: In order for policies to be successful, Perham - Dent Public Schools must establish a plan for measuring implementation and sustaining local efforts, including evaluation, feedback and documentation based on sound evidence.
3. Policy Recommendations: Policies for Measurement and Evaluation will address the following areas: Monitoring, Policy Review
 1. *Monitoring:* The superintendent or designee (wellness coordinator) shall ensure compliance with established district wide nutrition and physical activity policies. In each school, the principal or designee shall ensure compliance with those policies in his or her school and shall report on the school's compliance to Perham - Dent Public Schools superintendent or designee. School food service staff members, at the school or district level, shall ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and shall report on this matter to the superintendent (or if done at the school level, to the school principal).
 2. *Policy Review:* Districts shall identify a strategy and schedule to help review policy compliance, assess progress and determine areas in need of improvement. As part of that process, Perham - Dent Public Schools shall review nutrition and physical activity policies; new research and evidence on health trends and effective programs; provision of an environment that supports healthy eating and

physical activity; and nutrition and physical education policies and program elements. The district and individual schools within the district shall, as necessary, revise the nutrition and physical activity policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.