



Child Nutrition & Wellness

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Local Wellness Policies Required by July 2006

Public Law 108-265 reauthorized federal Child Nutrition Programs which includes the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program. Section 204 of this law requires that not later than the beginning of the 2006-2007 school year, local educational agencies participating in the school meal programs must establish a local "school wellness policy" that, at a minimum:

1. Includes nutrition guidelines for all foods available on the school campus during the school day (e.g. school meals, a la carte, vending, school stores, fund-raisers etc.);
2. Provides an assurance that guidelines for school meals are not less restrictive than those set by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture;
3. Includes goals for nutrition education, physical activity and other school-based activities designed to promote student wellness in a manner that the local educational agency determines appropriate;
4. Establishes a plan for measuring implementation of the local wellness policy; and
5. Involves parents, students and representatives of the "school food authority" (i.e. school nutrition program), the school board, school administration and the public in development of the local wellness policy.

Senator Tom Harkin of Iowa was one of the proponents of this legislation. In remarks following passage of the law, Senator Harkin said "...the Child Nutrition legislation does say that this is something that schools should put some thought and effort into. The legislation entrusts our schools, parents, and health professionals in local communities with the power and with a well-deserved responsibility to tend to our children's health and their nutrition and schools.

"If USDA and stakeholders groups are energetic about working with schools to draft policies that are sensible and protective of child health without being onerous and burdensome, I expect that parents and schools around the country will respond enthusiastically and that the final result of the local wellness policies will be that our kids will eat much healthier diets when they are at school."

The 2005 Kansas Legislature passed SB154. This new state law supports the federal requirement for local wellness policies by directing the Kansas State Board of Education to "develop nutrition guidelines for all foods and beverages made available to students in Kansas public schools during the school day....In developing such guidelines, particular attention shall be given to providing healthful foods and beverages, physical activities and wellness education with the goals of preventing and reducing childhood obesity." The state law also requires that "When establishing the wellness policy of the school district, the board of education of each district shall take into consideration the guidelines developed by the state board..."

The Child Nutrition & Wellness section of the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) has been working for several months to develop model wellness guidelines that:

- Build upon the best wellness policies from across our state and the nation;
- Reflect input from national and Kansas experts in the fields of food service, nutrition education and physical education;
- Consider feedback from the various groups impacted by the wellness policy; and
- Provide for consensus, flexibility and local control.

Following is a brief overview of the steps and schedule for this process:

Jan-Feb. 2005..... KSDE invited content experts to participate in the following work groups: Nutrition, Physical Activity and Nutrition Education. Each of these work groups has approximately 20 members.

KSDE evaluated standards and policies from other states, the federal government and national organizations. Based on this review, a first draft of model wellness guidelines was developed. These guidelines include three levels: basic, advanced and exemplary. School districts will determine the level(s) of these guidelines that will be implemented in their schools.

- The “basic” level meets all requirements of current federal and state laws and regulations.
- The “advanced” level incorporates all guidelines for the basic level plus more healthful guidelines.
- The “exemplary” level incorporates all guidelines for the Basic and Advanced levels plus more healthful guidelines.

Mar. 2005..... Work groups reviewed and revised the first draft of the guidelines resulting in the second draft.

Apr. 2005 The second draft of the policy was presented to a group of approximately 120 individuals representing all three work groups and leaders of health and education organizations. Their input resulted in the third draft.

May 2005 Draft three of the prototype policy was posted on KSDE’s website for review and comment. Interested groups and organizations were invited to provide feedback.

June 2005 Public meetings will be held at locations around the state to obtain further input resulting in draft four of the guidelines.

Aug 2005..... The model guidelines will be presented to the State Board of Education.

Sep-Oct 2005..... KSDE and partners will provide regional statewide training on local wellness policies for school personnel. Districts will be asked to send a team of representatives to these workshops.

Oct 2005 – Ongoing.. KSDE and partners will provide technical assistance to district personnel to support their efforts to adopt and/or adapt the model wellness guidelines to meet local needs.

July 2006..... All districts will have a local wellness policy in place. This policy will be incorporated into each district's 2006-2007 School Nutrition Program renewal agreement with KSDE.

In summary, this approach will support school districts' efforts to create a healthier environment for students based on quality guidelines, flexibility and local needs. For current information on this process, go to www.kn-eat.org, What's New, Local Wellness Policies.