

Wellness Policy

The health and physical well-being of our students directly affects their ability to learn. Childhood obesity increases the incidence of adult diseases occurring in children and adolescents such as heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes. The increased risk carries forward into their adulthood. Research indicates that a healthy diet and regular physical activity can help prevent obesity and the diseases resulting from it. It is understood that the eating habits and exercise patterns of students cannot be magically changed overnight, but at the same time, the Board of Education believes it is necessary to strive to create a culture in our schools that consistently promotes good nutrition and physical activity. The problem of obesity and inactivity is a public health issue. The Board is keenly aware that it has taken years for this problem to reach its present level and will similarly take years to correct. The responsibility for addressing the problem lies not only with the schools and the Department of Education, but with the community and its residents, organizations and agencies. Therefore, the District shall enlist the support of the larger community to find solutions which improve the health and physical activity of our students.

Goals: In its efforts to improve the school nutrition environment, promote student health, and reduce childhood obesity, the District will adhere to the Arkansas Rules Governing Nutrition and Physical Activity Standards in Arkansas Public Schools. Adhering to these rules will include, but it is not limited to district efforts to:

- Appoint a district school health coordinator who shall be responsible for ensuring that each school fulfills the requirements of this policy;
- Implement a grade appropriate nutrition education program that will develop an awareness of and appreciation for nutrition and physical activity throughout the curriculum;
- Enforce existing physical education requirements and engage students in healthy levels of vigorous physical activity;
- Strive to improve the quality of physical education curricula and increase the training of physical education teachers;
- Follow the Arkansas Physical Education and Health Education Frameworks in grades K-12;
- Not use food or beverages as rewards for academic, classroom, or sports performances;
- Ensure that drinking water is available without charge to all students;
- Establish class schedules, and bus routes that don't directly or indirectly restrict meal access;
- Provide students with ample time to eat their meals in pleasant cafeteria and dining areas;
- Establish no more than nine (9) school wide events which permit exceptions to the food and beverage limitations established by Rule. The schedule of the events shall be by school, and approved by the Principal;
- Abide by the current allowable food and beverage portion standards;
- Meet the more stringent of Arkansas' or the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Nutrition Standards for reimbursable meals and a la' carte foods served in the cafeteria;
- Restrict access to vended foods, competitive foods, and foods of minimal nutritional value (FMNV) as required by law and Rule; Crossett High School will restrict access to vending machines when current contract expires in 2009. All other schools are in compliance;
- Conform new and/or renewed vending contracts to the content restrictions contained in the Rules and reduce district dependence on profits from the sale of FMNV;
- Provide professional development to all district staff on the topics of nutrition and/or physical activity;
- Utilize the School Health Index available from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) to access how well the district is doing at implementing this wellness policy and at promoting a healthy environment for its students. Advisory Committee to enhance the district's efforts to improve the health of our students, School Nutrition and Physical Activity Advisory Committee (SNPAAC) shall be formed. It shall be structured in a way that ensures age-appropriate recommendations are made which correlate to our district's grade configurations. The SNPAAC shall have the powers and responsibilities delegated to it by statute and Rule. The overarching goal of the committee shall be to promote student wellness by monitoring how well the district is doing at implementing this policy.