

THATCHER UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT WELLNESS POLICY

The policies outlined within this document are intended to create a school environment that protects and promotes the health of our students. This policy applies to all schools in the district. Our commitments to providing nutrition education and regular physical activity, as well as access to nutritious foods for all students, are described here.

I. Nutrition education and promotion

Students will receive consistent nutrition messages throughout schools, classrooms, cafeterias, and school media:

- Teachers will integrate nutrition education into core curricula;
- Nutrition promotion will include participatory activities such as contests, promotions, and farm visits, such as (Angle Orchards, Apple Annies)
- The nutrition education program will be linked to school meal programs, cafeteria nutrition promotion, after-school programs, and farm-to-school programs;
- Nutrition education will be offered in the cafeteria as well as the classroom, with coordination between the food service staff and teachers;
- Nutrition education will promote fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and accurate portion sizes;
- Students will have opportunities to taste foods that are low in saturated and trans fats, sodium and added sugar;
- Staff members responsible for nutrition education will regularly participate in relevant professional development (e.g., training on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and how to teach them);
- Staff will only use approved nutrition curriculum in the classroom. Curriculum developed by corporate interests is prohibited;
- Nutrition education will be provided to families via handouts, newsletter, postings on the web-site, presentations, and workshops. The school menu will be posted online;

Specifically, the nutrition curriculum will encompass:

- Promotion of adequate nutrient intake and healthy eating practices;
- Skill development, such as reading labels to evaluate the nutrient quality of foods, meal planning, analysis of health information;
- Examination of the problem associated with food marketing to children;
- Nutrition themes including, but not limited to USDA'S MY Plate, Dietary Guidelines for Americans, adequate nutrient intake (such as carbohydrates, proteins, fats), body image and food safety.

II. Nutrition Standards for All Food and Beverages Sold or Served on School Grounds

A. USDA School Meals:

School meals will include a variety of healthy choices while accommodating special dietary needs and ethnic and cultural food preferences. All schools shall participate in the USDA school breakfast and school lunch programs.

In addition:

- All reimbursable meals will meet nutrition standards mandated by the USDA, as well as any additional state nutrition standards that go beyond USDA requirements;
- The school meal programs will be administered by a team that will include cafeteria manager, cafeteria staff, business manager and Director of Operations. If the district does not employ staff with all three areas of expertise, consultants will be used. All cafeteria staff will be provided training on USDA meal plans/reimbursable meals so they can properly advise students as to the meal components they may/must take, as well as cooking techniques, recipe implementation, sanitation, and food safety;
- All menus will be reviewed by a dietician when possible. When this is not feasible, sample USDA menus or USDA software for menu review may be used;
- Students will be provided at least 10 minutes to eat breakfast and 20 minutes to eat lunch after being seated;
- Meals will be served in a clean and pleasant setting and under appropriate supervision. Rules for safe behavior will be consistently enforced;
- Lunch will follow recess period and will be scheduled between 10:30 a.m and 1 p.m.;
- Tutoring, club, or organizational meetings will not be scheduled during meal time, unless students may eat during such activities;
- Students will have access to hand washing/hand sanitizing facilities before meals and cafeteria staff will remind students to make use of them;
- Participation in school meal programs will be promoted. Parents will be notified of the availability of the breakfast and lunch programs and will be encouraged to determine eligibility for reduced or free meals.

B. Competitive Foods and Beverages

All foods and beverages sold on school grounds to students outside of reimbursable school meals are considered “competitive foods.” Competitive foods include items sold a la carte in the cafeteria, from vending machines, school stores and for in-school fundraisers. All competitive foods must comply with district’s nutrition standards, as well as all applicable state and federal standards. All energy drinks are prohibited to be sold on school grounds.

Thatcher Unified School District Nutrition Standards:

The USDA nutrition standards for competitive foods/beverages in schools has been adopted by the district. A summary of the standards is below.

Foods

Only fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds, whole grains, low-fat dairy and combinations products may be sold, following the standards below:

- Packaged items shall not exceed one serving per package/200 calories;
- Items shall contain no more than 35% of total calories from fat, less than 10% of total calories from saturated fats and zero trans fats. Exception: The fat content of nuts and seeds will not count against the total fat content of packaged products;
- Items shall contain no more than 35% of calories from total sugars. Exception: Yogurt, may contain up to 30 grams of total sugars per 8 oz serving;
- Items shall contain less than or equal to 200mg of sodium per packaged portion;
- Combination items must contain at least one serving of whole grains, fruit or vegetable, per portion as packaged, in any combination (e.g., ½ serving of fruit and ½ serving of whole grain in one portion).

A la carte items in the cafeteria must be USDA school meal components (200 calorie limit does not apply) and meet the above fat and sugar limits. A la carte items cannot exceed 480mg of sodium.

Whole fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds are preferable to processed food items.

Beverages

The only beverages allowed to be sold outside of school meals include:

- Low-fat (1%), non-fat or non-dairy milk in 8oz portions (plain or flavored with no more than 22 grams of total sugars per 8 oz);
- 100% fruit/vegetable juice in 4 oz portions for elementary and middle school, and 8 oz portions for high school;
- Plain water.

C. Additional Foods Available to Students

Fundraising

- Non-food fundraising is promoted. When in-school fundraising involves food, items must meet the district's nutrition standards for competitive foods and cannot be sold for immediate consumption. When out-of-school fundraising events involve food, items sold must meet the nutrition standards for the district's for competitive foods.
- Fundraising activities that promote physical activity are encouraged.

Celebrations

- Celebrations that involve food will be limited to one per month. Only foods that meet district's nutrition standards will be allowed at school celebrations;
- Parents will be made aware in advance of when a celebration with food is taking place and what is to be served;
- Non-food celebrations will be promoted and a list of ideas will be available to parents and teachers.

Access to Drinking Water

- Students and school staff members will have access to free, safe, fresh drinking water at all times throughout the school day. Water jugs and cups will be available in the cafeteria if water fountains are not present. Supervisory staff will facilitate access to water in the cafeteria. Students will be allowed to bring drinking water from home into the classroom.
- Water will be promoted as a substitute for sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs).
- School staff will be encouraged to model drinking water consumption.
- Maintenance will be performed on all water fountains regularly to ensure that hygiene standards for drinking fountains, water jugs, hydration stations, water jets, and other methods for delivering drinking water are maintained.

III. Other

Marketing

School –based marketing will be consistent with nutrition education and health promotion. As such, the following guidelines apply:

- Schools will restrict food and beverage marketing to the promotion of only those foods and beverages that meet the nutrition standards set forth in the District Wellness Policy;

Examples of marketing techniques include the following:

- Brand names, trademarks, logos, or tags, except when placed on a physically present food or beverage product or on its container;
- Displays, such as on vending machine exteriors;
- Corporate brand, logo, name, or trademark on cups, posters, book covers, school supplies, or educational materials;
- Corporate brand, logo, name, or trademark on school equipment, message boards, scoreboards, or uniforms;
- Advertisements in school publications or school mailings;
- Sponsorship of school activities, fundraisers, or sports teams;
- Broadcasts on school radio stations or in-school television, such as Channel One;
- Educational incentive programs such as contests, or programs that provide schools with supplies or funds when families purchase specific food products;
- Free samples or coupons displaying advertising of a product.

Food used as reward or punishment

Research clearly indicates that the use of food to reward/reinforce desirable behavior and academic performance, etc. has negative, unintended consequences. The use of food as a reward and withholding food as a punishment are strictly prohibited.

IV. Physical Activity

Physical Education

All K-12 students will receive daily physical education (150 minutes per week for elementary school students and 225 minutes per week for middle and high school students) for the entire school year. Physical Education will be standards-based, using national and state-developed standards. Physical Education classes will 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. Physical education programs will meet the needs of all students, including those who are not athletically gifted, and actively teach cooperation, fair play, and responsible participation. Students will be able to demonstrate competency through application of skills.

Student involvement in other activities, including those involving physical activity (e.g. interscholastic or intramural sports), will not be substituted for physical education.

- Physical education classes will count toward graduation and GPA;
- Teacher to student ratio will be no greater than 1:25;
- The school will provide adequate space/equipment and conform to all safety standards;
- The school prohibits the use of physical activity and withholding of physical education class and other forms of physical activity as punishment;
- All physical Education classes will be taught by a qualified physical education teacher and at least 50% of class time will be spent in moderate to vigorous activity;
- Physical education staff will receive professional development on a yearly basis;

Physical Activity

All students will have opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class on a daily basis. Classroom health education will reinforce the knowledge and skills needed to maintain a physically active lifestyle. Students will be encouraged to reduce sedentary time, and will not be required to engage in sedentary activities for more than two hours without an opportunity to stretch and move around. Short (3-5 minute) “energy release” physical activity breaks will be provided between classes in elementary school, for example, programs such as Take 10! And ABC for Fitness will be used to incorporate short activity breaks into the day.

Teachers will be expected to incorporate opportunities for physical activity in the classroom whenever possible and will be encouraged to serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students.

Recess

All elementary school students will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess before the lunch period, during which moderate to vigorous physical activity will be encouraged. Outdoor recess will only be withheld in the event of extreme weather, as defined by the district (this may vary regionally). In the event that recess must be held indoors, teachers and staff will follow indoor recess guidelines, developed by the school’s Wellness Committee, to ensure adequate physical activity for students.

Physical Activity Programs

Elementary, middle, and high school will offer extracurricular physical activity programs, such as physical activity clubs and intramural programs. High school and middle school will offer interscholastic sports programs to all students.

Safe Routes to School

The school district will assess and, if necessary and to the extent possible, make needed improvements to make it safer and easier for students to walk and bike to school. For example, crossing guards may be stationed around the school to facilitate safe walking and biking school commutes, and bike racks will be available. The school will work together with local public works, public safety, and/or police department in those efforts.

V. Evaluation and Enforcement

This wellness policy was developed by the District Wellness Committee, a group comprising individuals from the following groups: parents, teachers, students, school administration, food service manager, and staff, Board of Education, Health Services, and Health and Physical Education staff. The committee is active—meetings are held 2 times during the school year to review and revise, if needed, policy content and to design and evaluate implementation plans throughout district schools. A progress report is/will be prepared after each meeting for the superintendent evaluating the implementation of the policy and regulations and include recommended changes or revisions. The Committee shall also undertake additional tasks as consistent with the wellness policy guidelines issued by the USDA. All meeting dates and times will be posted on the school district's website and meetings will be open to the public.

The principal of each school will ensure compliance within the school and will report on compliance to the superintendent, who will provide a report to the school board and the wellness committee. The superintendent will identify a coordinator who will ensure that each school implements the policy and will collect, summarize and report on evaluation data to the committee. The following will be included in an annual report: (1) the extent to which each school is in compliance with the wellness policy, (2) a comparison of the district policy to model local school wellness policies; (3) the progress made in attaining the goals of the policy; (4) any recommend changes to the policy; (5) a detailed action plan for the following school year to achieve annual goals and objectives; and (6) any additional information required by the USDA. The annual report shall be posted on the school district website and mailed to all district families before the start of the following school year.

Policy revisions will take into account new research and evidence on health trends, new national and state standards and guidelines, new state and federal initiatives, local evaluation data, changing district priorities, and other issues.