

Plymouth School District Implements School Nutrition/Healthy Lifestyle Policy

In 2005, the Plymouth School Board adopted the School Nutrition/Healthy Lifestyle Policy (Policy Number 341.34). Major implementation of the policy will begin with the start of the 2005/2006 school year. This message provides a summary of why the District adopted the policy, the major features of the policy, and the plan for implementation. The full text of the policy (and all District policies) is available on the District web site or by contacting the District office.

Why do we need a school nutrition/healthy lifestyle policy?

Many school age children are not physically fit due to poor eating habits and insufficient physical activity. According to the Surgeon General of the United States and major medical groups, such as the Mayo Clinic, a growing number of school children have risk factors that increase the potential for serious disease starting as early as young adulthood.

Closer to home, the Wausau School District, in cooperation with the Wausau Heart Institute and local foundations, recently completed a detailed evaluation of their student body. The results were startling:

- Half the students had elevated cholesterol levels.
- 28-37 percent of students were overweight with 16-18 percent overweight to obese.
- 25 percent of all students and 50 percent of overweight students have insulin resistance, a marker indicating the potential for developing diabetes.
- Most students did not eat a balanced diet and food choices became less healthy as students grew older.
- Students engaged in far more sedentary activity than physical activity.

The Wausau School District results are similar to other studies across the nation. There is no reason to expect that the results would be different in Plymouth. Based on the results, the Wausau School District, partnering with the Marathon County Health Department created a task force to identify ways to reverse the trend.

In our own area, the Sheboygan County Health Department has set, as a major priority, the goal to encourage county citizens to improve lifestyle choices that affect health.

What does the policy require?

For years, as in most school districts, students in the Plymouth School District had access to vending machines that sold non-nutritious snacks and beverages. In addition, some of the food offerings in the breakfast and lunch menu were based more on student preference than on nutritional content. At the same time, students were taught little about the benefits of healthy diet unless they chose specific elective courses. And finally, although exercise was emphasized in the physical education curriculum, there was little effort to relate exercise and healthy eating.

The Nutrition/Healthy Lifestyle policy requires a coordinated program including:

- Healthy food choices in school food service and vending.
- More emphasis on regular exercise for all students.
- District wide education on the importance of healthy lifestyle choices.

What can we expect in the 2005/2006 school year?

Beginning in the 2005/2006 school year, sugar based beverages will not be available in district vending machines that are available to students and more nutritious snacks will replace candy and other sugar/fat based foods. The food service and ala carte offerings have been revised to emphasize whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables, and reduce the frequency of fried food selections. Attention will also be given to appropriate serving sizes. In addition, we are rewriting the Health curriculum K-12, to assure a coordinated and well-articulated effort in teaching the importance of a living a healthy lifestyle. As part of any curriculum review, educational materials will be purchased and staff training will be provided to support any curricular change.

It should be noted that several schools have prepared for these changes by coordinating healthy lifestyle choices into the goals we set for improving each of our schools. We are confident that this attention and passion will bring about a positive lifestyle change for our students and staff.

What improvements in health do we expect?

We understand that improvements in health will not occur overnight. Students are bombarded with advertising encouraging them to eat unhealthy foods. Within walking distance of our city schools, there are dozens of stores and restaurants selling candy, chips, and fast food that, according to guidelines for good health, should be eaten only occasionally. It may take years to change behavior and we do not expect to convince every student or parent of the benefits. However, we will, at a minimum, provide encouragement and assistance to students and parents interested in improving kids' health for the long term.

If you have questions or concerns about the policy or how it is being implemented, contact Anne Gamoke in the Pupil Services Office, at 892-5022.

341.34 School Nutrition/Healthy Lifestyle

The Plymouth Joint School District strives to contribute to the general well being, mental and physical capacity and learning ability of students. The District supports wellness, good nutrition, and regular physical activity as a part of the total learning environment. By support and promotion of good nutrition and physical activity, our schools contribute to the health of children. Improved health increases student performance potential.

The Plymouth Joint School District Board of Education has adopted this policy to promote the health and well being of all students. This policy includes general guidelines and nutrition standards for foods and beverages.

General Guidelines

1. Provide a comprehensive learning environment for developing and practicing lifelong wellness behaviors. This environment will include educational

opportunities for students in nutrition education, health education, and physical education.

2. Provide students access to adequate and healthy food choices on scheduled school days at reasonable prices.
3. Ensure that food sales/parties for students are held during hours that will not conflict with the lunch and breakfast programs.
4. Support and promote proper dietary habits. All foods available prior to the start of the school day and during the instructional day should meet or exceed the district nutrition standards.
5. School programs should not depend on revenue from high-fat, low nutrient foods.
6. School food service will comply with the healthy lifestyles policy to reinforce messages about healthy eating and to insure that foods offered promote good nutrition and contribute to the development of lifelong, healthy eating habits.
7. Provide school staff involved in nutrition education and in supporting a healthy school environment, with adequate pre-services and ongoing inservice training that focuses on strategies for behavioral change.
8. Involve family members and the community in supporting and reinforcing nutrition education and the promotion of healthy eating and lifestyles.
9. Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the healthy lifestyles policy and change the program as appropriate to increase its effectiveness.

Nutrition Standards

Plymouth Joint School District strongly encourages the sale or distribution of nutrient dense foods and beverages for all school functions and activities where food or beverages are required. Nutrient dense foods are those foods that provide students with calories rich in the nutrient content needed to be healthy. The following nutrition standards govern the sale of food on school grounds.

1. No food item for sale prior to the start of the school day and throughout the instructional day will have more than 30% of its total calories derived from fat.
2. No food item for sale prior to the start of the school day and throughout the instructional day will have more than 10% of its total calories derived from saturated fat.

3. Nuts and seeds are exempt from these standards because they are nutrient dense and contain high levels of monosaturated fat. Foods high in monosaturated fat help lower "bad" cholesterol and maintain "good" HDL cholesterol.
4. Encourage the consumption of nutrient dense foods, i.e., whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables.
5. No individual item served by food service as part of a traditional meal, as an ala cart item, or as a snack item may contain more than one third of its weight from added sugar.
6. The full meal hot lunch program will continue to follow the U.S. Government's Nutrition Standards.
7. The hot lunch provider will follow the district nutrition standards when determining the items in ala carte sales.
8. Vending sales of artificially sweetened drinks will only be permitted in staff lounges.
9. The non-vending sale of artificially sweetened drinks will not be permitted on school grounds both prior to the start of the school day and throughout the instructional day, but will be permitted at those special school events that begin after the conclusion of the instructional day.
10. Milk, water, and 100% fruit juices may be sold on school grounds both prior to and throughout the instructional day.
11. All fundraising projects will follow the district nutrition standards.
12. Strong consideration should be given to nonfood items as part of any teacher-to-student incentive programs. Should teachers feel compelled to utilize food items as an incentive, they are encouraged to adhere to the district nutritional standards.

Approved:

Revised: