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Wellness Policies on Physical Activity and Nutrition

The board promotes healthy students by supporting wellness, good nutrition and regular physical activity as a part of the total learning environment. The school district supports a healthy environment where students learn and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices. By facilitating learning through the support and promotion of good nutrition and physical activity, the school contributes to the basic health status of students. Improved health optimizes student performance potential.

The school district provides a comprehensive learning environment for developing and practicing lifelong wellness behaviors. The entire school environment, not just the classroom, shall be aligned with healthy school district goals to positively influence a student's understanding, beliefs and habits as they relate to good nutrition and regular physical activity.

The school district supports and promotes proper dietary habits contributing to students' health status and academic performance. All foods available on school grounds and at school sponsored activities during the instructional day should meet or exceed the school district nutrition standards and in compliance with state and federal law. Foods should be served with consideration toward nutritional integrity, variety, appeal, taste, safety and packaging to ensure high quality meals. See USDA Federal Guidelines for the Smart Snacks Initiative at www.educateiowa.gov/pk-12/learner-supports/healthy-kids-act

The school district will develop a local wellness policy committee comprised of representatives of the board, parents, leaders in food/exercise, students and employees. The local wellness committee will develop a plan to implement and measure the local wellness policy and monitor implementation and evaluation the implementation of the policy. The committee will report annually to the board regarding the effectiveness of this policy.

Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served on Campus (Smart Snacks Initiative)

School Meals

Our school district is committed to serving healthy meals to children, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat milk; that are moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and have zero grams *trans*-fat per serving (nutrition label or manufacturer's specification); and meeting the nutrition needs of school children within their calorie requirements. The school meal programs aim to improve the diet and health of school children, help mitigate childhood obesity, model healthy eating to support the development of lifelong healthy eating patterns and support healthy choices while accommodating cultural food preferences and special dietary needs.

Meals served through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs will:

- be appealing and attractive to children.
- be served in clean and pleasant settings.
- meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations.
- offer a variety of five different vegetables and fruits¹,
- serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk²; and
- ensure that half of the served grains are whole grain.³

Schools should engage students and parents, through taste-tests of new entrees and surveys, in selecting foods sold through the school meal programs in order to identify new, healthful, and appealing food choices. In addition, schools should share information about the nutritional content of meals with parents and students. Such information could be made available on menus, a website, on cafeteria menu boards, placards, or other point-of-purchase materials.

Breakfast. To 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 and when viable, operate the School Breakfast Program.
- Schools will, to the extent possible and when viable, arrange bus schedules and utilize methods to serve school breakfasts that encourage participation, including serving breakfast in the cafeteria.
- Schools that serve breakfast to students will notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast Program.
- Schools will encourage parents to provide a healthy breakfast for their children through newsletter articles, take-home materials, or other means.

¹ To the extent possible, schools will offer non-fried vegetables and five fruit options each day and will offer five different fruits and five different vegetables over the course of a week. Schools are encouraged to source fresh fruits and vegetables from local farmers when practicable.

² As recommended by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005.

³ A whole grain is one labeled as a "whole" grain product or with a whole grain listed as the primary grain ingredient in the ingredient statement. Examples include "whole" wheat flour, cracked wheat, brown rice, and oatmeal.

Free and Reduced-priced Meals. Schools will make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to, and prevent the overt identification of, students who are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals⁴. Toward this end, schools may utilize electronic identification and payment systems; provide meals at no charge to all children, regardless of income; promote the availability of school meals to all students; and/or use nontraditional methods for serving school meals, such as "grab-and-go" or classroom breakfast.

Meal Times and Scheduling. Schools:

- will provide students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch.
- should schedule meal periods at appropriate times,
- should not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities.
- will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks; and
- should take reasonable steps to accommodate the tooth-brushing regimens of students with special oral health needs (e.g., orthodontia or high tooth decay risk).

Qualifications of School Food Service Staff. Qualified nutrition professionals will administer the school meal programs. As part of the school district's responsibility to operate a food service program, we will provide continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals in schools. Staff development programs should include appropriate certification and/or training programs for child nutrition directors, school nutrition managers, and cafeteria workers, according to their levels of responsibility.⁵

Professional Learning

When feasible, the district will offer annual professional learning opportunities and resources for staff to increase knowledge and skills about promoting healthy behaviors in the classroom and school (e.g., increasing the use of kinesthetic teaching approaches or incorporating nutrition lessons into math class). Professional learning will help District staff understand the connections between academics and health and the ways in which health and wellness are integrated into ongoing district reform or academic improvement plans/efforts.

Sharing of Foods and Beverages. Schools should discourage students from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets.

Foods and Beverages Sold Individually {Compliance of Smart Snacks Initiative}

(i.e., foods sold outside the reimbursable school meals, such as through vending machines, cafeteria ala carte [snack] lines, fundraisers, school stores, etc.)

- There will be no foods individually sold elementary through middle school

⁴ It is against the law to make others in the cafeteria aware of the eligibility status of children for free, reduced-price, or "paid" meals

⁵ School nutrition staff development programs are available through the USDA, School Nutrition Association, and National Food Service Management Institute.

Elementary Schools. The school food service program will approve and provide all food and beverage sales to students in elementary schools. Given young children's limited nutrition skills, food in elementary schools should be sold as balanced meals. If available, foods and beverages sold individually should be limited to low-fat and non-fat milk, fruits, and non-fried vegetables.

Middle/Junior High and High Schools. In middle/junior high and high schools, all foods and beverages sold individually outside the reimbursable school meal programs (including those sold through a la carte [snack] lines, vending machines, student stores, or fundraising activities) during the school day.

Foods Sold Outside the Meal

All foods and beverages sold individually outside the reimbursable meal programs during the school day will meet nutrition standards by state or federal guidelines. The district is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages available to students on the school campus *during the school day* support healthy eating. Foods and beverages sold outside of the school meal programs (ex “competitive” foods/beverages) will meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School Nutrition Standards, at a minimum.

Snacks. Snacks served during the school day or in after-school care or enrichment programs will make a positive contribution to children's diets and health, with an emphasis on serving fruits and vegetables and the primary snacks and water and milk as the primary beverage.

Schools will assess when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, children's nutritional needs, children's ages, and other considerations. The district will disseminate a list of healthful snack items to teachers, after-school program personnel, and parents.

- If eligible, schools that provide snacks through after-school programs will pursue receiving reimbursements through the National School Lunch Program.

Rewards. Schools will not use foods or beverages, especially those that do not meet the nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually (above), as rewards for academic performance or good behavior. This includes but is not limited to Pizza Parties that replace the standard NSLP lunch.

School-sponsored Events (such as, but not limited to, athletic events, dances, or performances).

To support healthy choices and improve student health and wellbeing, all foods and beverages offered or sold at school-sponsored events outside the school day will meet or exceed the USDA smart snack nutrition standards for meals or for foods and beverages sold individually.

Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing

Nutrition Education, and Promotion.

Nutrition promotion and education positively influence lifelong eating behaviors by using evidence-based techniques and nutrition messages, and by creating food environments that encourage healthy nutrition choices and encourage participation in school meal programs. Students and staff will receive consistent nutrition messages throughout schools, classrooms, gymnasiums, and cafeterias. Nutrition promotion also includes marketing and advertising nutritious foods and beverages to students and is most effective when implemented consistently through a comprehensive and multi-channel approach by school staff, teachers, parents, students and the community.

Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Schools will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion and education that:

- is offered at each grade level as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health.
- health education is taught through classroom instruction in subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects;
- includes enjoyable, developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant, participatory activities.
- promotes fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices.
- emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise);
- links with school meal programs, other school foods, and nutrition-related community services.

Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting. For students to receive the nationally-recommended amount of daily physical activity (*i.e.*, at least 120 minutes per week) and for students to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior, students need opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class. www.tinyurl.com/lowa-HKA

Toward the end:

- classroom health education will 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 will be incorporated into other subject lessons
- classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

Communications with Parents. Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools will send home nutrition information, post nutrition tips on school websites, and provide nutrient analyses of school menus. Schools should encourage parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks and to refrain from including beverages and foods that do not meet the above nutrition standards for individual foods and beverages. Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools will provide parents a list of foods that meet the district's snack standards and ideas for healthy celebrations/parties, rewards, and fundraising activities. In addition, Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools will provide opportunities for parents to share their healthy food practices with other in the school community. www.tinyurl.com/lowa-HKA

Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools will provide information about physical education and other school-based physical activity opportunities before; during, and after the school day; and support parents' efforts to provide their children with opportunities to be physically active outside of school. Such supports will include sharing information about physical activity and physical education through a website, newsletter, or other take-home materials, special events, or

physical education homework.

Food Marketing in Schools. School-based marketing will be consistent with nutrition education and health promotion. As such, schools will limit food and beverage marketing to the promotion of foods and beverages that meet the nutrition standards for meals or for foods and beverages sold individually (above).⁶ School-based marketing of brands promoting predominantly low-nutrition foods and beverages⁷ is prohibited. The promotion of healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products is encouraged.

Any foods and beverages marketed or promoted to students on the school campus* during the school day* will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.

Staff Wellness. Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools values the health and well-being of every staff member and will plan and implement activities and policies that support personal efforts by staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Each district/school should establish and maintain a school wellness committee composed of at least one staff member, school health council member, local hospital representative, dietitian or other health professional, recreation program representative, union representative, and employee benefits specialist. (The staff wellness committee could be a subcommittee of the school health council.) The committee should develop, promote, and oversee a multifaceted plan to promote staff health and wellness. The plan should be based on input solicited from school staff and should outline ways to encourage healthy eating, physical activity, and other elements of a healthy lifestyle among school staff. The staff wellness committee should distribute its plan to the school health council annually.

Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

Physical Education (P.E.) K-12. All students in grades K-12, including students with disabilities, special health-care needs, and in alternative educational settings, will receive the opportunity to participate in the maximum amount of Physical Educations available as determined by the district. All physical education classes will be taught by a certified physical education teacher. Students will spend at least 50 percent of physical education class time participation in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

Daily Recess. All elementary (K-5) school students will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which schools should encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment.

Schools should discourage extended periods (*i.e.*, periods of two or more hours) of inactivity. When activities, such as mandatory school-wide testing, make it necessary for students to remain indoors for long periods of time, schools should give students periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.

⁶ Advertising of low-nutrition foods and beverages is permitted in supplementary classroom and library materials, such as newspapers, magazines, the internet, and similar media, when such materials are used in a class lesson or activity, or as a reference tool

⁷ Schools should not permit general brand marketing for food brands under which more than half of the foods or beverages do not meet the nutrition standards for foods sold individually or the meals are not consistent with school meal nutrition standards.

Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School

All middle and high schools will offer extracurricular physical activity programs, such as physical activity clubs or intramural programs. All high schools, and middle schools as appropriate, will offer interscholastic sports programs. Schools will offer a range of activities that meet the needs, interests, and abilities of all students, including boys, girls, students with disabilities, and students with special health-care needs.

After-school childcare and enrichment programs where available will provide and encourage verbally and through the provision of space, equipment, and activities - daily periods of moderate to vigorous physical activity for all participants.

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. When appropriate, the district will work together with local public works, public safety, and/or police departments in those efforts. The school district will explore the availability of federal "safe routes to school" funds, administered by the state department of transportation, to finance such improvements. The school district will encourage students to use public transportation when available and appropriate for travel to school and will work with the local transit agency to provide transit passes for students.

Use of School Facilities Outside of School Hours. School spaces and facilities should be available to students, staff, and community members before, during, and after the school day, on weekends, and during school vacations. These spaces and facilities also should be available to community agencies and organizations offering physical activity and nutrition programs. School policies concerning safety will always apply.

Monitoring and Policy Review

Monitoring. The President/School Wellness Team will ensure compliance with established district wide nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. In each school, the principal or designee will ensure compliance with those policies in his/her school and will report on the school's compliance to the school district superintendent or designee.

School food service staff, at the school or district level, will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the superintendent (or if done at the school level, to the school principal). In addition, the school district will report on the most recent USDA School Meals Initiative (SMI) review findings and any changes. If the district has not received a SMI review from the state agency within the past five years, the district will request from the state agency that a SMI review be scheduled as soon as possible.

The President/School Wellness Team will develop a summary report every year on district-wide compliance with the district's established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies, based

on input from schools within the district. That report will be provided to the school board and distributed to all school health councils, parent/teacher organizations, school principals, and school health services personnel in the district.

Policy Review. To help with the initial development of the district's wellness policies, each school in the district will conduct a baseline assessment of the school's existing nutrition and physical activity environments and policies.⁸ The results of those school-by-school assessments will be compiled at the district level to identify and prioritize needs.

Assessments will be repeated every year to help review policy compliance, assess progress, and determine areas in need of improvement. As part of that review, the school district will review our nutrition and physical activity policies; 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, will, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.

⁸ Useful self-assessment and planning tools include the *School Health Index* for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), *Changing the Scene* from the Team Nutrition Program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and *Opportunity to Learn Standards for Elementary, Middle, and High School Physical Education* from the National Association for Sport and Physical Education.

