Ithaca City School District Health and Wellness Policy

Table of Contents

Preamble 2
School Health and Wellness Committee 3
Nutrition 4
Physical Activity 5
Health and Wellness Promotion 6
Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability, and Community Engagement 7
Ithaca City School District Health and Wellness Policy

Preamble

The goal of Ithaca City School District (hereeto referred to as ICSD) is to provide all students in the district the quality education that supports and allows each student to reach his full potential as a competent, educated adult and respected citizen of the community who understands how to maintain his good health for a lifetime. Optimal health and well-being are necessary to enable students to access quality education. The ICSD is committed to supporting the optimal health and well-being of every student in the district.

“Health” includes physical health AND mental health.

Optimal physical health in a child means that a child attains expected physical growth and physical development at appropriate ages, is appropriately nourished, is free of hunger and free of pain; that he has medical conditions controlled to the extent possible with modern medical resources. Physical fitness and healthy nutrition are integral to good health. Good dental health is necessary to avoid oral pain, poor nutrition and systemic infection. Appropriate immunizations are necessary for protection from infectious diseases of individual students and of the entire school community. Optimal student physical health requires an environment where injury risks and exposure to toxins are minimized.

Optimal mental health in a child means that a child develops, as appropriate for age, self-confidence, self-control, self-esteem and the ability to interact with others in mutually beneficial and satisfactory social exchanges. Optimal mental health requires recognition and treatment of conditions such as anxiety, depression and inattention and cognitive disabilities that detract from a child’s ability to function in an educational milieu.

Well-being

Well-being of a child refers to his feeling of and assurance of being supported by his school community in developing and using his talents and imagination and to his recognition of his obligation to support his fellow students as they endeavor to reach their developmental goals.

Elements of the support of physical health:

Nutrition

- Access to nutritious food at school for breakfast and lunch
- Access to food at home for children whose families cannot provide adequate nutrition
- Modeling of healthy eating: context, selection, portion size, scheduling, culture
- Removal of unhealthy food and drinks from vending machines in the schools
- Provide access to drinking water for students ad lib through the school day
- Incorporation of food science and nutrition into the curriculum: science, economics, social studies

Physical fitness

- Raise awareness among students that all people function best when physically fit but attaining fitness goals is an individual activity
• Provide opportunities for all students to set individual fitness goals and to monitor their progress toward the goals.
• Provide the space, equipment and tutorial support for students of various physical abilities to work toward their fitness goals
• Make the learning of life long fitness activities the curriculum of physical education
• Mandate participation in physical education as physical fitness classes where the competition is the student striving to meet his own goals, not competing with other students
• Provide opportunities for and encourage student participation in competitive athletics but make participation optional
• Provide fitness exercise breaks during academic activities
• Incorporation of physical fitness into the curriculum: science, economics, social studies

Access to medical care

• School nurse assures that mandated physical examinations are completed, that immunizations are complete, that health care needs are accommodated and ongoing access to health care is provided in school
• Assure that all students have access to a medical home; assist students to obtain health insurance if necessary
• Accommodation of needs resulting from medical conditions through the Alternative Educational Plan.

Access to dental care

• Provide dental hygiene visits in school
• Incorporate dental health into the curriculum in science, economics and social studies

Environmental safety

• Integrate preventative measures and address environmental health issues by fostering well-maintained school buildings and grounds.
• Promote environments that are conducive to learning and protect the health of building occupants.

Elements of the support of mental health

• Early recognition of students who may have mental health conditions: consider mental health conditions in students who are doing poorly academically, behaviorally or have high absenteeism.
• Recognize and intervene early with perpetrators and victims of bullying
• Provide curriculum support from Pre-K through 12th grade for emotional wellbeing and cultural sensitivity

Elements of the support of well being

• Ongoing programs in the schools to raise student awareness of inclusion
This policy applies to all students, staff and schools in the District. Specific measurable goals and outcomes are identified within each section below.

I. School Health and Wellness Committee

Committee Role and Membership

The District will convene a representative district health and wellness committee (hereafter referred to as the DWC) that meets at least four times per year to establish goals for and oversee school health and safety policies and programs, including development, implementation and periodic review and update of this district-level wellness policy (hereafter referred as “wellness policy”).

The DWC membership will represent all school levels (elementary and secondary schools) and include (to the extent possible), but not be limited to: parents and caregivers; students; representatives of the school nutrition program (e.g., school nutrition director); physical education teachers; health education teachers; school health professionals (e.g., health education teachers, school health services staff [e.g., nurses, physicians, dentists, health educators, and other allied health personnel who provide school health services], and mental health and social services staff [e.g., school counselors, psychologists, social workers, or psychiatrists]; school administrators (e.g., superintendent, principal, vice principal), school board members; health professionals (e.g., dietitians, doctors, nurses, dentists); and the general public. When possible, membership will also include Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education coordinators (SNAP-ED). To the extent possible, the DWC will include representatives from each school building and reflect the diversity of the community.

Leadership

The Superintendent or designee(s) will convene the DWC and facilitate development of and updates to the wellness policy, and will ensure each school’s compliance with the policy.

The designated official for oversight is the Coordinator of Health Services and Wellness at ICSD. Other individuals directly involved in the development and compliance of this policy include:

- Chief Academic Officer
- Director of Food Services
- Athletic Director
- School Physician
- School Principals
- District staff such as teachers and school nurses
- Students and Parents
- Community members

Each school will designate a school wellness policy coordinator, who will ensure compliance with the policy.

Community and School Health Advisory Committee

The vision of the Community and School Health Advisory Committee (CS-HAC) is to support the health and well-being of children so they are best able to fully engage in school and beyond.
Started in 2016, this committee is composed of community members and District staff who are invested in improving the health and wellness of county children and young adults. The CS-HAC provides a forum to bring together educators, who are aware of and looking for health care support for students and the health care providers in the community who are professionally attempting to meet the needs of students. Given the various backgrounds and expertise of the members of the CS-HAC, they are able to identify health care needs of students, identify barriers to meeting those needs and make proposals for solutions about how to best meet student health needs. The DWC will engage the CS-HAC as a resource in the development and implementation of policies and programs that support the health and wellness of all students.

II. Nutrition

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 to 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.

All schools within the District participate and are committed to the USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP).

Nutrition Education

The District will teach, model, encourage and support healthy eating by all students. Schools will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- Is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
- Is part of not only health education classes, but also integrated into other classroom instruction through subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences and elective subjects;
- Includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant and participatory activities, such as cooking demonstrations or lessons, promotions, taste-testing, farm visits and school gardens;
- Promotes fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products and healthy food preparation methods;
- Emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (promotes physical activity/exercise);
- Links with school meal programs, cafeteria nutrition promotion activities, school gardens, Farm to School programs, other school foods and nutrition-related community services;
- Teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food and beverage marketing; and
- Includes nutrition education training for teachers and other staff.
**Nutrition 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.

The District will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students throughout the school campus, as well as encourage participation in school meal programs.

**Food and Beverage Marketing in Schools**

The District is committed to providing a school environment that ensures opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. The District strives to teach students how to make informed choices about nutrition, health and physical activity. These efforts will be weakened if students are subjected to advertising on District property that contains messages inconsistent with the health information the District is imparting through nutrition education and health promotion efforts. It is the intent of the District to protect and promote student’s health by permitting advertising and marketing for only those foods and beverages that are permitted to be sold on the school campus, consistent with the District’s wellness policy.

**III. Physical Activity**

Children and adolescents should participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. A substantial percentage of students’ physical activity can be provided through a comprehensive school physical activity program (CSPAP). A CSPAP reflects strong coordination and synergy across all of the components: quality physical education as the foundation; physical activity before, during and after school; staff involvement and family and community engagement and the district is committed to providing these opportunities. Schools will ensure that these varied physical activity opportunities are in addition to, and not as a substitute for, physical education.

Physical activity during the school day (including but not limited to recess, classroom physical activity breaks or physical education) will not be withheld as punishment for any reason.

To the extent practicable, the District will ensure that its grounds and facilities are safe and that equipment is available to students to be active. The District will conduct necessary inspections and repairs.

**Physical Education**

The District will provide students with physical education, using an age-appropriate, sequential physical education curriculum consistent with national and state standards for physical education. The physical education curriculum will promote the benefits of a physically active lifestyle and will
help students develop skills to engage in lifelong healthy habits, as well as incorporate essential health education concepts.

All students will be provided equal opportunity to participate in physical education classes. The District will make appropriate accommodations to allow for equitable participation for all students and will adapt physical education classes and equipment as necessary.

The District physical education program will promote student physical fitness through individualized fitness and activity assessments (via the Presidential Youth Fitness Program or other appropriate assessment tool) and will use criterion-based reporting for each student.

Recess will complement, not substitute, physical education class. Recess monitors or teachers will encourage students to be active, and will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

IV. Health and Wellness Promotion

The District will integrate wellness activities across the entire school setting, not just in the cafeteria, other food and beverage venues and physical activity facilities. The District will coordinate and integrate other initiatives related to physical activity, physical education, nutrition and other wellness components so all efforts are complementary, not duplicative, and work towards the same set of goals and objectives promoting student well-being, optimal development and strong educational outcomes.

Health and Wellness Promotion

The District will promote evidence based health and wellness principles to ensure that students, families and staff have the opportunity to adopt healthy lifestyles. This will be accomplished by:

- Developing and disseminating key messages emphasizing healthy nutritional values, moderation and balance in food choices, and the importance of regular physical activity for health promotion and disease prevention.
- Making efforts to keep school or district-owned physical activity facilities open for use by students and staff outside school hours.
- Encouraging parents, teachers, staff, administrators, students, and community members to serve as role models in practicing healthy, nutrition and physical activity, both in school and at home.
- Developing and promoting activities to encourage healthy eating, physical activity, and other elements of a healthy lifestyle among school staff.
- Conveying clearly and consistently to all concerned that all activities involving food, nutrition, and/or physical activity be consistent with the guidelines set forth in this policy.

Community Partnerships

The District will develop and enhance existing relationships with community partners (e.g., hospitals, universities/colleges, local businesses, SNAP-Ed providers and coordinators, etc.) in support of this wellness policy’s implementation.
Community Health Promotion and Family Engagement

The District will promote to parents/caregivers, families, and the general community the benefits of and approaches for healthy eating and physical activity throughout the school year. Families will be informed and invited to participate in school-sponsored activities and will receive information about health promotion efforts.

Employee Health

The DWC will have a staff wellness subcommittee that focuses on staff wellness issues, identifies and disseminates wellness resources and performs other functions that support staff wellness in coordination with human resources staff.

Schools in the District will implement strategies to support staff in actively promoting and modeling healthy eating and physical activity behaviors. The District will encourage staff member participation in health promotion programs and will support programs for staff members on healthy eating/weight management that are accessible and free or low-cost.

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. 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.

V. Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability, and Community Engagement

Implementation Plan

The District will develop and maintain a plan for implementation to manage and coordinate the execution of this wellness policy. The plan delineates roles, responsibilities, actions and timelines specific to each school; and includes information about who will be responsible to make what change, by how much, where and when; as well as specific goals and objectives for nutrition standards for all foods and beverages available on the school campus, food and beverage marketing, nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, physical education and other school-based activities that promote student wellness.

Recordkeeping

The District will retain the following records to document compliance with the requirements of the wellness policy:

- The written wellness policy;
- Documentation demonstrating that the policy has been made available to the public;
- Documentation of efforts to review and update the Local Schools Wellness Policy; including an indication of who is involved in the update and methods the district uses to make stakeholders aware of their ability to participate on the DWC;
• Documentation to demonstrate compliance with the annual public notification requirements;
• The most recent assessment on the implementation of the local school wellness policy;
• Documentation demonstrating the most recent assessment on the implementation of the Local School Wellness Policy has been made available to the public.

**Annual Notification of Policy**

The District will actively inform families and the public each year of basic information about this policy, including its content, any updates to the policy and implementation status. The District will make this information available via the district website and/or district-wide communications. The District will provide as much information as possible about the school nutrition environment. This will include a summary of the District’s events or activities related to wellness policy implementation. Annually, the District will also publicize the name and contact information of the District/school officials leading and coordinating the committee, as well as information on how the public can get involved with the school wellness committee.

**Triennial Progress Assessments**

At least once every three years, the District will evaluate compliance with the wellness policy to assess the implementation of the policy and include:

• The extent to which schools under the jurisdiction of the District are in compliance with the wellness policy;
• The extent to which the District’s wellness policy compares to the Alliance for a Healthier Generation’s model wellness policy; and
• A description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the District’s wellness policy.

The position/person responsible for managing the triennial assessment and contact information is the Coordinator of Health Services and Wellness. The DWC, in collaboration with individual schools, will monitor schools’ compliance with this wellness policy. The District will actively notify households/families of the availability of the triennial progress report.

**Revisions and Updating the Policy**

The DWC will update or modify the wellness policy based on the results of the annual School Health Index and triennial assessments and/or as District priorities change; community needs change; wellness goals are met; new health science, information, and technology emerges; and new Federal or state guidance or standards are issued. The wellness policy will be assessed and updated as indicated at least every three years, following the triennial assessment.

**Community Involvement, Outreach and Communications**

The District is committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of the wellness policy. The District will actively communicate ways in which representatives of DWC and others can participate in the development, implementation and periodic review and update of the wellness policy through a variety of means appropriate for that district. The District will also inform parents of the improvements that have been made to school meals and compliance with school meal standards, availability of child nutrition programs and how to apply, and a description of and compliance with Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. The District will use electronic mechanisms, such as email or displaying notices on the district’s website, as well as
non-electronic mechanisms, such as newsletters, presentations to parents, or sending information home to parents, to ensure that all families are actively notified of the content of, implementation of, and updates to the wellness policy, as well as how to get involved and support the policy. The District will ensure that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community, and accomplished through means similar to other ways that the district and individual schools are communicating important school information with parents.

The District will actively notify the public about the content of or any updates to the wellness policy annually, at a minimum. The District will also use these mechanisms to inform the community about the availability of the annual and triennial reports.