



# Model Wellness Policy Guide

**Compiled and produced by:  
The Center for Ecoliteracy in collaboration with  
Slow Food USA and Chez Panisse Foundation**

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# Model Wellness Policy Guide

THE CENTER FOR ECOLITERACY, in collaboration with Slow Food USA and the Chez Panisse Foundation, has prepared this Model Wellness Policy Guide. The Guide provides language and instructions for drafting a Wellness Policy that places health at the center of the academic curriculum.

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The Guide is inspired by the work of the Child Nutrition Advisory Council of the Berkeley Unified School District. That working group, a forerunner of the Wellness Committee, drafted and supported to adoption the first school district wellness policy of its kind in the nation in August of 1999. Their inspirational language is an integrator throughout the Guide that ensures that the intention in adopting the policy, and the policy itself, remain connected.

# Model Wellness Policy Guide

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT has issued a mandate, through the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, that provides us all with a great opportunity: to establish standards for diet and health in our nation's public schools. The Wellness Policy process calls for each school district to form a Wellness Committee and draft a district Wellness Policy that addresses the quality of meals served at school, regularity of physical education, and instruction connected to diet and health. These school Wellness Policies will go into effect at the beginning of the school year in 2006. The Center for Ecoliteracy in collaboration with Slow Food USA and the Chez Panisse Foundation hope you will join us in this exciting endeavor by participating on a Wellness Committee at your neighborhood school, and recruiting others to serve.

The first step is to call your school district and determine the status of your local Wellness Committee. Wellness Committees are intended to be diverse, inclusive, and representative of the local community they serve. In addition to joining, or acting as an advisor to someone already on the committee, you may also be instrumental in bringing others to the process, insuring greater diversity.

Here are some basic principles on which we can all agree:

- Healthy children are the foundation of a healthy society;
- Healthy, well-nourished children are better able to learn;
- All children deserve nutritious, safe, and deliciously prepared food;
- Eating habits developed in childhood will affect health throughout life;
- Knowledge of food—how it is grown, who grows it, how it is prepared, its connection to tradition, and its influence in shaping the future of society—is integral to a healthy education;

The Wellness Policy development process provides us all with an opportunity to put these values-based principles into practice. In that spirit, the Center for Ecoliteracy, in

collaboration with Slow Food USA and the Chez Panisse Foundation, has developed a Model Wellness Policy Guide based on the groundbreaking work of the Berkeley Unified School District's Wellness Committee, formerly known as the Child Nutrition Advisory Council. The brilliance, determination, and foresight of this pioneer group led to the formulation of the first public school district food policy of its kind in the nation. That policy has been emulated by school districts across the nation, has influenced the current Wellness Policy process, and is acknowledged as the foundation for Grab Five, the national school meal policy of the United Kingdom.

Given the rapid rise in childhood obesity and diabetes, we now have no choice but to change school food policy on a national level. Join us in this extraordinary opportunity to influence the development of school district policies that promote human and environmental health, high academic achievement, and a sustainable future.

## How to Use this Guide

- The Model Wellness Policy Guide (the Guide) provides recommendations and model language for development of a comprehensive school Wellness Policy.
- The Guide is structured in numbered sections that correspond to the minimum requirements of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004.

- You must set goals as required by the Act. Model language and recommendations are provided by Center for Ecoliteracy, Slow Food USA, and the Chez Panisse Foundation to assist you in developing a comprehensive Wellness Policy that sets high standards for healthy learning. The Guide includes narrative language under headings and sub-headings that make clear the district's motivation in enacting policy, and specific language for individual policy points. You may use the language exactly as is, or adapt it to fit your school's unique culture and needs.
- Instructions throughout this guide will appear in *italics*.

## Background

In the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, the U.S. Congress established a requirement that all school districts with a federally funded school meal program form a Wellness Committee to draft a Wellness Policy by the start of the 2006-2007 school year. The law requires that these policies must, at a minimum:

1. Include goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness.

2. Establish nutrition guidelines for all foods available on campus during the school day with the objectives of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity.
3. Provide assurance that guidelines for reimbursable school meals shall not be less restrictive than regulations and guidance issued by the Secretary of Agriculture.
4. Establish a plan for measuring the impact and implementation of the local wellness policy.
5. Involve parents, students, and representatives of the school authority, school board, school administrators, and the public, in development of the local Wellness Policy.

Your commitment to the Wellness Policy development process will ensure that a complete understanding of wellness includes **additional enrichment and learning opportunities for the whole child** that:

- Integrate core curriculum with learning experiences in instructional gardens, kitchen classrooms, cafeterias, and local farms;
- Build skills linked to meal preparation;
- Emphasize fresh, local, seasonal, whole, and sustainably grown foods from local sources;

- Model recycling, reduction, and composting of waste;
- Develop positive social interactions, good manners, and enjoyment of meals through positive dining experiences;
- Lead to a basic understanding of the principles of sustainability;
- Enhance respect for cultural and agricultural values;
- Include families and the community as a resource in the learning process.

## Developing an Opening Statement

*School Wellness Policies are a direct expression of local care and concern for the well-being of young people. The best policies reflect core community values and culture, regional tastes and food traditions, and an emphasis on learning outcomes connected to diet, health, and environmental education.*

*Many school districts begin their Wellness Policies with a visionary **statement of responsibility** and a **preamble** that sets forth the conditions defining the need to act. This statement contains the vision of the school district and community for its students. This shared vision is the foundation of a partnership between school and community that makes clear the school district's intention in adopting the policy and leads to realization of policy goals.*

*In drafting a Wellness Policy for your school district, you may use the following sample language as is, or adapt it to fit your district's unique circumstances and needs.*

### **Sample Statement of Responsibility**

The Board of Education recognizes that there is a link between nutrition education, the food served in schools, physical activity, and environmental education, and that wellness is affected by all of these. The Board also recognizes the important connection between a healthy diet and a student's ability to learn effectively and achieve high standards in school.

The Board recognizes that it is the District's role, as part of the larger community, to model and actively practice, through policies and procedures: the promotion of family health, physical activity, good nutrition, sustainable agriculture, and environmental restoration.

The Board of Education further recognizes that the sharing and enjoyment of food, and participation in physical activities, are fundamental experiences for all people and are a primary way to nurture and celebrate our cultural diversity. These fundamental human experiences are vital bridges for building friendships, forming inter-generational bonds, and strengthening communities.

### **Sample Preamble**

*Wellness Policies often begin with a Preamble of statements that form the conceptual framework for change. The following are examples of such statements for consideration:*

- Whereas, a healthy diet is connected to a student's ability to learn effectively and achieve high standards in school;
- Whereas, each day, students and their parents trust that the foods offered at school are wholesome and safe, and that the Governing Board is responsible for ensuring the safety of foods provided at school;
- Whereas, fresh, seasonal, local, sustainably grown foods are a primary and recommended source of nutrition for growing children, and pre-packaged, highly processed foods create a solid waste packaging management problem and expense for school districts;
- Whereas, small and mid-size farms and America's rural communities are under economic stress, and the public dollars from farm-to-school programs create a steady and reliable source of income for farmers;
- Whereas, the knowledge and skill-base for farming, gardening, food preservation, cooking, and the ritual of the table are disappearing from American life;
- Whereas, public school is an excellent place to nurture and preserve America's food traditions

through storytelling, recipe swapping, rediscovering foodways, cooking classes, garden- and farm-based learning experiences, food served in the cafeteria, and connections to the core curriculum of science, math, language arts, history, geography, and social studies.

## Wellness Policy Requirement 1

**Set goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness.**

*This required policy section provides language to address school-based activities that promote student wellness in the areas of **nutrition education, physical activity, and school-based learning experiences.***

*You may use the language as is, or adapt it to fit your specific circumstances.*

### Nutrition Education

To help ensure the health and well being of each student attending \_\_\_\_\_ School District, and to provide guidance to school personnel in the areas of nutrition, health, physical activity and food service, the Governing Board encourages teachers, principals, and Nutrition Services employees to recognize the lunch period as an integral part of the educational program of the district, and

work to implement the goals of this policy. The Governing Board will ensure that:

- No student in the \_\_\_\_\_ School District goes hungry during school;
- An economically sustainable meal program makes available a healthy and nutritious breakfast, lunch, and after-school snack to every student at every school so that students are prepared to learn to their fullest potential;
- Each school in the district shall establish an instructional garden (tilled ground, raised bed, container, nearby park, community garden, farm, or lot), of sufficient size to provide students with experiences in planting, harvesting, preparation, serving, and tasting foods, including ceremonies and celebrations that observe food traditions, integrated with nutrition education and core curriculum, and articulated with state standards;
- Staff shall integrate hands-on experiences in gardens and kitchen classrooms, and enriched activities such as farm field studies, farmers' markets tours, and visits to community gardens, with core curriculum so that students begin to understand how food reaches the table and the implications that has for their health and future;

- Sampling and tasting in school gardens and kitchen classrooms shall be encouraged as part of nutrition education;
- Staff is encouraged to utilize food from school gardens and local farms in kitchen classrooms and cafeterias based upon availability and acceptability;
- Schools shall use food as an integrator and central focus of education about human events, history, and celebrations, and shall encourage classes to use food and cooking as part of a learning experience that sheds light on the customs, history, traditions, and cuisine of various countries and cultures;
- Eating experiences, gardens, cooking classes, and nutrition education are integrated into the core academic curriculum at all grade levels;
- Schools shall promote food-centered activities that are healthful, enjoyable, developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant, and participatory, such as contests, promotions, taste testing, farm visits, school gardens, and kitchen classrooms;
- Lunch periods shall be scheduled so that students do not have to eat lunch unusually early or late, and ideally, so that they come after periods of exercise;
- All school eating areas shall contain free, safe, drinking water sources and facilities for washing hands;
- At each school site, students shall play a role in a recycling program that begins with the purchase of recycled products and maximizes the reduction of waste by recycling, reusing, composting and purchasing, recycled products;
- Meals will be attractively presented and served in a pleasant environment with sufficient time for eating, while fostering good eating habits, enjoyment of meals, good manners, and respect for others;
- Students at the K–8 level will not be involved in the sale of candy, sodas, cookies and sweets at any school sponsored event or for any fundraising activity;
- A full-service kitchen will be installed at school sites where public bond money is expended to repair or remodel a school;
- The Maintenance Committee shall include kitchen facilities, food preparation and storage of equipment as a high priority in its comprehensive maintenance policy;
- Food Services shall work to modernize computer equipment and programs, and institute an automated accounting system and card swipe system to protect student privacy.

## **Physical Activity**

The Governing Board recognizes the positive benefits of physical activity for student health and academic

achievement. Recognizing that physical education is a crucial and integral part of a child's education, the district will provide opportunities to ensure that students engage in healthful levels of vigorous physical activity to promote and develop the student's physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being. Besides promoting high levels of personal achievement and a positive self-image, physical education activities should teach students how to cooperate in the achievement of common goals.

The components of the district's physical education program shall include a variety of kinesthetic activities, including team, individual, and cooperative sports and physical activities, as well as aesthetic movement forms, such as dance, yoga or the martial arts. Students shall be given opportunities for physical activity through a range of before- and/or after-school programs including, but not limited to, intramurals, interscholastic athletics, and physical activity clubs. The Governing Board will ensure that:

- Physical education teachers shall develop and implement a curriculum that connects and demonstrates the interrelationship between physical activity, good nutrition, and health;

- The District shall enhance the quality of physical education curricula and increase training of physical education teachers through site-based and district-wide staff development;
- Students shall have opportunities to enjoy physical activity through participation in gardening programs;
- An appropriate alternative activity shall be provided for students with a physical disability that may restrict excessive physical exertion;
- Physical education staff shall appropriately limit the amount or type of physical exercise required of students during air pollution episodes, excessively hot weather, or other inclement conditions.

### **Physical Activity Exemptions**

The Superintendent or designee may grant temporary exemption from physical education under any of the following conditions:

- The student is ill or injured and a modified program to meet his/her needs cannot be provided;
- The student is enrolled for one-half time or less;
- A student in grades 10-12 attends a regional occupational center or program and attendance in physical education courses results in hardship because of the travel time involved;

- A high school student is engaged in a regular school-sponsored interscholastic athletic program carried on wholly or partially after regular school hours;

A student is either:

- Age 16 years or older and has been enrolled in grade 10 for one or more academic years;
- Enrolled as a postgraduate student;
- Enrolled in a juvenile home, ranch, camp or forestry camp school with scheduled recreation and exercise.

## **School-Based Learning Experiences**

The Governing Board recognizes that experiential learning activities that assist students to make connections between diet, health, and environment are critical to formation of student understanding of personal wellness within a larger context of environmental health. Schools play a crucial role in educating students on environmental issues and preparing them to be the stewards of their natural resources. The quality of life in future generations will depend upon our students' willingness and ability to solve today's environmental problems and prevent new ones from developing.

The Governing Board desires to offer environmental education that fosters attitudes of personal responsibility toward the environment and provides students with the concepts, knowledge and skills needed to contribute meaningfully to decisions involving the environment and its resources. At all grade levels, the Governing Board urges that environmental facts should be taught as they relate to each other, so that students will understand basic ecological principles and appreciate the interrelated nature of living processes, the effect of human activities on ecological relationships, and the interdependence of humanity and nature.

The Governing Board also recognizes that interactive hands-on experiences with the natural world can empower students to actively investigate the ecological principles that sustain our environment. Through the use of experiential learning opportunities in school gardens and cooking classes, students can better understand where their food comes from and how the food choices they and their families make impact the health of the larger social and natural communities within which they live. The Governing Board will ensure that:

- Staff is encouraged to integrate garden, nutrition education, cooking and eating experiences, and energy

and renewable energy experiences into the curriculum for math, science, social studies and language arts at all grade levels;

- Staff is encouraged to establish relationships with local farms so that farmers and farm workers will visit school classrooms and students will visit farms;
- Students are encouraged to recycle, conserve materials, water, and energy, use biodegradable materials when possible, and dispose of wastes in an environmentally sound way at school, in the cafeteria, in the school garden and kitchen classroom, and in all classroom-based activities;
- Food service and teaching staff shall work cooperatively to integrate experiences in cafeterias, instructional gardens, kitchen classrooms, and farm field trips with the formal learning experience of all students;
- School food service will work with school departments, and with community partners and the School Health Council, to facilitate student understanding and appreciation of fresh, local, sustainably grown food;
- Students shall be offered the opportunity to participate in outdoor education programs that make connections between diet, health and the environment, and the interdependence of living things.

## **Professional Development**

The Governing Board recognizes that using the local food system as a context for learning, and embedding nutrition education in a school's curriculum, generates new content for students to learn. It also requires teachers to learn new content and new strategies for teaching it. For food service personnel, new menus require new ways of purchasing, preparing, and presenting foods. The transition to an educational model that makes food and health central parts of the academic curriculum requires professional development. The Governing Board will ensure that:

- Regular professional development will be provided to enable the Food Service Staff to become full partners in providing excellent school meals;
- Regular professional development will be provided, at least annually, to teachers and the Food Service Staff on basic nutrition, nutrition education, and benefits of sustainable agriculture;
- Child Nutrition Services will be provided with USDA-approved computer software, training, and support to implement nutrient-based menu planning when such flexibility is desirable;
- Child Nutrition Services Staff and district teachers will receive professional development jointly, at least

once a year, to facilitate a more coordinated approach to integrating classroom lessons with experiences in gardens, kitchen classrooms, and the cafeteria.

## Waste Reduction

The Board recognizes that school meal programs that utilize pre-packaged, processed foods consistently generate more solid waste than those that cook from whole ingredients. A shift to cooking meals from fresh, whole ingredients usually leads to a reduction in solid waste, and in the expense associated with waste disposal. The Governing Board will ensure that:

- Meals prepared at school utilize fresh, whole, unpackaged, unprocessed or minimally processed ingredients, to the maximum extent possible, in order to preserve nutritional content and reduce packaging waste;
- Cafeterias model environmentally sound practices, educate and involve students and staff in reducing waste, composting, recycling and purchasing recycled material;
- Post consumer food waste is composted and returned for use in the school garden program;
- Packaging containing school meals is made of recycled content and should be recycled;

- Savings from waste reduction policies administered by the school are tracked, and those savings are rebated to the school site for use in furthering the waste reduction and garden-based learning program.

## Wellness Policy Requirement 2

**Establish nutrition guidelines for all foods available on campus during the school day.**

*This required policy section provides language to **establish nutrition guidelines** for all foods available on campus during the formal learning day. You may use the language as is, or adapt it to fit your specific circumstances.*

Part of the educational mission of the \_\_\_\_\_ School District is to improve the health of the entire community by teaching students and families ways to establish and maintain life-long healthy eating habits. The mission shall be accomplished through nutrition education, physical education, garden-based learning experiences, environmental restoration, core academic content in the classroom, and the food served in schools. The Governing Board will ensure that:

- All qualified children will become eligible for free meals, through frequent checking and coordination with county social services;

- Maximum participation in the school meal program will be achieved by developing a coordinated, comprehensive outreach and promotion plan, and by putting systems in place that ensure the elimination of the stigma of accepting “free” lunch (such as a card swipe system);
- A shift from food-based planning to nutrient-based planning (as set forth in USDA guidelines) will be considered when it allows for more flexible food selection;
- The nutritional value of the food served will significantly improve upon USDA Dietary Guidelines through provision of nutritious, fresh, tasty, locally grown food that reflects community and cultural diversity;
- The reduced-price category for school lunch, breakfast, and snacks will be eliminated, so that all low-income children have healthy food available at no cost;
- Schools will provide students with at least 20 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 30-45 minutes after sitting down for lunch;
- Students will be encouraged to share food, as food sharing is a fundamental experience for all peoples. Despite concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children’s diets that can cause schools to discourage students from trading foods or beverages with classmates, sharing can be encouraged through service styles in the cafeteria, such as “family style,” that provide students with the opportunity to serve themselves from a common platter, and to pass platters of food to tablemates;
- The Nutrition Services Director will develop and implement a plan to support local sustainable agriculture by integrating organic foods, as defined by the USDA National Organic Program, into the meals served to students based on availability and acceptability;
- Child Nutrition Services will coordinate its menus with seasonal production of local farms, and with production in school gardens, so that school meals will reflect seasonality and local agriculture;
- Neighboring school districts will work cooperatively, and whenever possible, purchase collectively, in order to increase the amount of products purchased from local farms;
- Schools shall develop a “Healthy Snacks” and “Healthy Parties” policy, and provide parents and teachers with a list of healthy, affordable food choices for snacks and parties;
- Foods offered to students and employees of the district during the day as a snack, an incentive, or in school offices, whether provided by parents or staff, shall be consistent with the goals of the policy;

- Schools shall limit celebrations that involve food during the school day to shared monthly birthday celebrations, and should discourage serving foods and beverages that do not meet nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually;
- The foods used during classes as part of the learning process, for fundraisers that take place at school, for at-school parties, or school-sponsored events, should follow the nutrition guidelines for snacks at school, and should be healthy, safe, and delicious;
- Parents and staff are encouraged to provide party snacks that are consistent with the goals of the policy, and to see to it that such items are served after the lunch hour whenever possible;
- Foods served at school will carry sufficient nutrition information to allow parents and students to make informed dietary choices. Information must clearly indicate dietary appropriateness such as vegetarian, vegan, or kosher, and include processes such as organically grown, irradiated, contains bovine growth hormone (rBGH), or has been genetically modified;
- The exposure of children to potentially harmful residues of toxic agricultural chemicals such as pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, waxes, and fungicides will be reduced and/or eliminated by increasing the purchase of foods that are grown sustainably, without the use of toxic chemicals;
- Foods exposed to potentially harmful food additives and processes, such as bovine growth hormone, irradiation, high fructose corn syrup, excessive salt, artificial flavors and colors, hydrogenated oils (transfats), preservatives, and genetic modification, shall be reduced and/or eliminated;
- Schools shall offer a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, at least two non-fried vegetables and two fruit choices each day, and five different fruits and five different vegetables over the course of a week;
- No unhealthy food or beverage item may be advertised on school grounds, and fast food and “branded” food items shall not be offered for sale as part of any school meal program or as à la carte items;
- All revenue accrued by schools from foods sold on school campuses shall be spent only on school food services;
- Elementary schools shall not have vending machines or school stores accessible by students;
- Vending machines and school stores shall only offer approved items;
- Draft food and beverage vending contracts shall be made available to the public for inspection and comments before being signed by the district, and neither the district nor individual schools may sign exclusive contracts, or contracts with confidential clauses, with soft drink, fast food, or snack food companies.

## Wellness Policy Requirement 3

**Assure that guidelines for school meals are not less restrictive than those set at the federal level by the Secretary of Agriculture.**

*This required policy section provides language to assure that **guidelines for school meals set by the District Wellness Policy are not LESS restrictive than those set at the federal level by the Secretary of Agriculture.***

*You may use the language as is, or adapt it to fit your specific circumstances.*

- The Child Nutrition Services Director will review this policy and ensure that the policies are not less restrictive than those set by the Secretary of Agriculture or state law.

## Wellness Policy Requirement 4

**Establish a plan for measuring the impact and implementation of the local wellness policy.**

*This required policy section provides language to **establish a plan for measuring the impact and implementation of the local Wellness Policy.***

*You may use the language as is, or adapt it to fit your specific circumstances.*

*The Wellness Committee is a working group of the school district instrumental in drafting the Wellness Policy and in facilitating its adoption by the Governing Board. Wellness Committees, School Health Councils, or Child Nutrition Advisory Councils (CNAC), are diverse and inclusive bodies that draft and review district wellness and nutrition policies and practices, track implementation, and recommend changes or improvements to the district. The Committee is responsible for addressing food-related topics of concern to the school community, and making Wellness Policy recommendations to the Board of Education.*

In conjunction with adoption of a district Wellness Policy, the district shall establish a standing Wellness Committee, or School Health Council, to remain actively engaged with food service in monitoring the implementation of the Wellness Policy and in presenting recommendations to the Governing Board. The following guidelines pertain to the duties and responsibilities of standing Wellness Committees and food service to work cooperatively in evaluating success.

The standing Wellness Committee shall present to the Governing Board an Annual Report each year on the status of meeting the Wellness Policy goals. The report shall:

- Contain a review and comment on the Director’s Annual Report, Profit and Loss Statement, Marketing Plan and Business Plan;
- Contain recommendations for improving the delivery and cost effectiveness of food services;
- Assist the Director of Child Nutrition Services in the development and implementation of the Outreach and Promotion Marketing plan;
- Recommend to the Governing Board strategies to eliminate potentially harmful food additives and processes, and to increase the amount of fresh, local produce offered through the School Meal Program;
- Make periodic reports, as the School Health Council deems necessary;
- Establish rules for decision-making;
- Ensure that the full complement of students, as specified in the policy, is represented on the School Health Council.
- Solicit student preferences through taste tests, surveys, and interviews, and through student participation on the district Wellness Committee.

### **Nutrition Services Annual Report**

In order for the community to become full partners in the reinvention of food service, and in order for the Wellness

Committee to be fully informed about food service function, and able to assess the impact and implementation of the local Wellness Policy, full transparency of food service operations and financials is necessary.

The board shall require, and each year Child Nutrition Services shall prepare, The Director’s Annual Report for the Board of Education, which will include:

- Description of the level of service for each site and level of participation;
- Profit and Loss Statement for the past fiscal year;
- Outreach and Promotion Marketing Plan (with assistance from School Health Council);
- Budget for the future year;
- Report on the progress in meeting the Wellness Policy goals;
- Nutritional quality of the food being served;
- Inventory of equipment;
- Budget for maintenance and replacement equipment;
- Accounting of Child Nutrition Services’ financial reserve, if any, and a budget allocating the reserve;
- Annual review of school food sales to determine:

- Percentage of food purchased from local sources and the total dollar amount spent on local food;
- Income benefit or loss due to increases in local purchasing;
- Opportunities to increase purchase of local and seasonal items;
- Impacts on participation, and on fruit and vegetable consumption;
- Degree of nutrition education students are receiving and how it is administered.

Such report shall inform the work of the Wellness Committee, which shall prepare an annual report to the Board of Education that contains a review and comment on the Director’s Annual Report. The school district’s Wellness Policy, Director’s Annual Report, the Wellness Committee’s Annual Report, and Monthly Menus shall be available at the District Office and on the Board of Education’s website.

## Public Policy

The School Board will work cooperatively with School Boards throughout the state and the nation to advance goals of wellness by:

- Advocating for label disclosure through State and Federal legislation that will clearly label food products that have been irradiated, genetically modified or have been exposed to bovine growth hormones;
- Sending a Board of Education resolution requesting support for labeling legislation to:
  - School Boards in the State;
  - State School Boards Association;
  - National School Boards Association.

## Wellness Policy Requirement 5

**Involve parents, students, and representatives of the school authority, the school board, school administrators, and the public, in development of the local Wellness Policy.**

*This required policy section provides language for **establishment of an inclusive process to develop a district Wellness Policy.***

*You may use the language as is, or adapt it to fit your specific circumstances.*

*Wellness Committees are intended to be diverse and inclusive bodies, representative of the communities they serve. The*

*membership should be large enough to ensure complete representation—cultural, ethnic, and economic—of the district, and manageable enough to be effective at conducting meetings and making decisions.*

*All of the stakeholders—school administrators, educators, food service personnel, and parents—are concerned with student health and academic performance and want to help schools make a more positive impact in this area. The district Wellness Policy spells out challenges to student wellness and proposes solutions that have been arrived at through an inclusive public process.*

*The school district should also develop a vehicle whereby all members of the community who wish to have input to the Wellness Policy development process, whether or not they participate on the Committee, can register their concerns and recommendations with the district.*

*When constituting a Wellness Committee, it is critically important that all sectors of the learning community that will be charged with implementing the policy are represented including administration, food service, finance, facilities, communications, waste management, and instruction.*

*In addition, community members including parents, grandparents, farmers, school nurses, nutritionists, and health care professionals, and local organizations and agencies including community foundations, public health departments, and local elected officials concerned with the*

*health and well being of school age children are critically important contributors.*

*Experience has shown that innovation that occurs at a single school is unlikely to become part of lasting, district-wide change unless the innovation is institutionalized in a district food policy. Innovations that are not supported by all stakeholders have little chance of success.*

*Shared leadership creates the conditions for real and lasting change. Developing a school district Wellness Policy is a practical way to create a shared vision and language about needed change. When the Board of Education adopts a district Wellness Policy, the entire community knows the district is committed to improving the school environment for children and youth, particularly the school food system.*

## **Establishing a Wellness Committee**

*The Wellness Committee is a working group of the school district, instrumental in drafting the Wellness Policy. The Wellness Committee is responsible for addressing food-related topics of concern to the school community and making Wellness Policy recommendations to the Board of Education.*

The Board shall initiate a process to establish a Wellness Committee as a working group of the district. The Wellness Committee shall draft a Wellness Policy and facilitate its adoption by the Governing Board. The process to form the Wellness Committee shall be openly announced, accessible,

equitable, and inclusive. The Wellness Committee shall be a diverse and inclusive working group, representative of the demographics of the school district as a whole.

The following guidelines pertain to the establishment of Wellness Committees.

The recommended membership of the working group shall be as follows:

- The Superintendent;
- The Director of Child Nutrition Services;
- 3 Classified employees appointed by their employee organization;
- 3 teachers (elementary, middle and high school) appointed by their employee organization;
- 1 Principal appointed by their employee organization;
- 5 students (3 middle school and 2 high school) appointed by student government;
- 10 Community/Parent representatives appointed by the Board of Education.

The Wellness Committee shall meet at least six times a year at hours convenient for public participation, and for sufficient time to conduct the group's business.

## Resources

The partners in this effort share a common vision of sustainability and concern for our children and their future. We recognize a need to understand our place in nature, and to know more about food, ecosystems, and the cycles of life, in order to create sustainable communities.

### Center for Ecoliteracy

The Center's *Rethinking School Lunch* program uses a systems approach to address the crisis in childhood obesity, provide nutrition education, and teach ecological knowledge. The Center spent five years researching 10 interrelated dimensions vital to achieving this vision.

**[www.rethinkingschoollunch.org](http://www.rethinkingschoollunch.org)**

The Center provides a collection of brief essays entitled *Thinking outside the Lunchbox* that form the conceptual framework for change. Leading thinkers, educators, and policy makers probe the connections that link childhood obesity and other health issues, the interdependence of human and ecological communities, education for sustainability, and access to safe, fresh, and nourishing food for all people. New essays are added regularly.

**[www.ecoliteracy.org](http://www.ecoliteracy.org)**

## **Chez Panisse Foundation**

The Chez Panisse Foundation is committed to transforming public education by using food traditions to teach, nurture, and empower young people. The foundation envisions a curriculum, integrated with the school lunch service, in which growing, cooking and sharing food at the table give students the knowledge and values to build a humane and sustainable future.

[www.chezpanissefoundation.org](http://www.chezpanissefoundation.org)

## **The Edible Schoolyard**

The Edible Schoolyard, in collaboration with Martin Luther King Middle School, engages 950 public school students in a one-acre organic garden and a kitchen classroom. Using food as a unifying concept, students learn how to grow, harvest, and prepare nutritious seasonal produce. Experiences in the kitchen and garden foster a better understanding of how the natural world sustains us, and promote the environmental and social well-being of our school community.

[www.edibleschoolyard.org](http://www.edibleschoolyard.org)

## **The School Lunch Initiative**

The School Lunch Initiative (SLI) envisions revolutionizing school lunch by making food a central part of the academic

curriculum. SLI includes gardens, kitchen classrooms, and lunchrooms as contexts for learning. It restores connections between what children are taught and what they experience, between nutrition, health, and the ability to learn, between local communities and the farms that feed them.

[www.schoollunchinitiative.org](http://www.schoollunchinitiative.org)

## **Slow Food USA**

Slow Food USA's *Slow Food in Schools* is a unique national program of garden-to-table projects for children that cultivates the senses and teaches an ecological approach to food.

[www.slowfoodusa.org](http://www.slowfoodusa.org)

## **Additional Resources**

### **California Food Policy Advocates**

California Food Policy Advocates is a statewide public policy and advocacy organization dedicated to improving the health and well-being of low-income Californians by increasing their access to nutritious and affordable food.

[www.cfpa.net](http://www.cfpa.net)

## **Chef Ann Cooper**

Chef Ann Cooper offers consulting services for school administrators engaged in reinvention of school lunch programs. She provides nutrition and food choice education to students and works with schools to incorporate curricula that promote and increase the availability of healthy food and nutrition choices for kids and teens.

**[www.chefann.com](http://www.chefann.com)**

## **Community Food Security Coalition**

The Community Food Security Coalition is a non-profit 501(c)(3), North American organization dedicated to building strong, sustainable, local and regional food systems that ensure access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food for all people at all times. We seek to develop self-reliance among all communities in obtaining their food and to create a system of growing, manufacturing, processing, making available, and selling food that is regionally based and grounded in the principles of justice, democracy, and sustainability. CFSC has over 325 member organizations.

**[www.foodsecurity.org](http://www.foodsecurity.org)**

## **National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity (NANA)**

The National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity advocates national policies and programs to promote healthy eating and physical activity to help reduce the illnesses, disabilities, premature deaths, and costs caused by diet- and inactivity-related diseases such as heart disease, cancer, high blood pressure, diabetes, and obesity.

**[www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/nana.html](http://www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/nana.html)**

## **National Farm to School Program**

The National Farm to School Program is a project of the Center for Food and Justice, a division of the Urban and Environmental Policy Institute at Occidental College. The project brings together nine partners from four states to work on promoting farm-to-school programs nationwide.

**[www.farmtoschool.org](http://www.farmtoschool.org)**

