
SECTION 4 – SCHOOL NUTRITION SERVICES

Definition

School nutrition services is the integration of nutritious, safe, affordable and appealing meals; nutrition education; and an environment that promotes healthy eating habits for all children. It includes schoolwide nutrition education and promotion, the school food service program, and all other sources of food and beverages available to students at school (e.g., cafeteria a la carte sales, vending machines, student stores, fundraisers, classroom snacks, and school celebrations). It also addresses policies and practices that encourage healthy eating throughout the school environment, such as adequate time to eat, pleasant surroundings, professional development for teachers and school food service personnel, adult role modeling, staff wellness promotion, and alternative practices to food as reward.

Rationale

Nutrition education has been shown to improve eating habits and health. Connecting nutrition education to other content areas helps with the mastery of core subject standards. Research shows that behavior change correlates positively with the amount of nutrition instruction received (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1996). Linking nutrition education and promotion throughout the school and community reinforces consistent health messages and provides multiple opportunities for students to practice healthy habits. Engaging families in nutrition education efforts increases the likelihood that student's eating behaviors will improve (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1996; Nader, Sellers, Johnson, Perry, Stone, Cook, Bebchuck & Luepker, 1996).

The types of foods and beverages available to students greatly influences students' lifelong eating habits. Numerous studies have shown that students who eat breakfast and lunch at school consume a greater variety of healthy foods and more nutrients (Action for Healthy Kids, 2002; U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1999). Students consume more vegetables, drink more milk and fewer sweetened beverages, consume more grain mixtures, and eat fewer cookies, cakes and salty snacks than students who make other lunch choices (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2001).

When children replace healthy meals with less nutritious snacks, they often consume inadequate nutrients and excess calories. When children consume snacks of low nutrient density in addition to the school meal, they might be consuming too many calories and too much fat and sugar. Schools can address both of these issues by providing healthier snack choices that limit fats, sugars and portion size, while promoting increased consumption of fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Nutrition standards help schools provide healthier food and beverage choices throughout the entire school environment, including cafeteria a la carte sales, classroom snacks and celebrations, vending machines, school stores and fundraisers.

Nutrition also affects children's behavior. For example, children who eat breakfast have better behavior, are more cooperative, and are less likely to have discipline problems (Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning, 1998). Children and teens who eat less are more likely to have difficulty getting along with others (Alaimo, Olson and Frongillo, 2001).

It is important for districts to address the school environment because it significantly affects students' eating habits. Students eat more healthful food safely in a supervised, pleasant environment that provides enough time to eat and socialize. Students' meal participation increases when schools use appropriate school meal procedures. School food service staff members need appropriate training to prepare healthy, safe and cost-effective meals. School staff wellness programs encourage adults to be enthusiastic and healthy role models for students. Using food as reward or punishment is an inappropriate practice that negatively affects the development of healthy eating behaviors.

An Overview of the School Nutrition Services Section

School nutrition services include: (1) nutrition education and promotion; (2) school foods and beverages (including school meals and all other foods and beverages available at school); and (3) an environment to promote healthy eating. Schools should address each of these components to ensure consistent implementation and promotion of healthy nutrition practices throughout the entire school environment. This section addresses each of the three components separately.

The information in this section is based on the Connecticut State Department of Education's *Action Guide for School Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies* and the federal U.S. Department of Agriculture's requirements for school wellness policy (see "Legislation Pertaining to School Nutrition" on Page 109). The action guide provides detailed guidance to assist school districts with developing, implementing and evaluating local school wellness policies.

Selected resources to assist with the implementation of each policy recommendation are found in Resources at the end of this section. Extensive resource lists are found in the action guide and are also contained in the Department's *Healthy School Nutrition Environment Resource List* and *List of Nutrition-Related Websites*, available at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=320754#Resources>.

This section presents policy recommendations, policy rationale, implementation strategies and resources for each of the three components of nutrition services.

NUTRITION EDUCATION AND PROMOTION

Component 1: Nutrition Education and Promotion***Policy Recommendations***

School districts will provide nutrition education experiences that positively influence students' eating behaviors and help develop lifelong healthy habits. Districts will provide an environment that encourages and supports healthy eating by students.

Policy recommendations for nutrition education and promotion address the following nine areas.

- 1.1. ***Standards-based, sequential nutrition education.*** Nutrition education shall be based on current science, research, national guidelines, and national and state standards.
- 1.2. ***Connecting with existing curriculum.*** Nutrition education shall be a part of comprehensive school health education and shall also be included in other classroom content areas such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, family and consumer sciences and elective subjects.
- 1.3. ***Education links with school.*** The nutrition education program shall link with school meal programs, other school foods, and nutrition-related community services that occur outside the classroom or that link classroom nutrition education to the larger school community, such as school gardens, cafeteria-based nutrition education and after-school programs.
- 1.4. ***Professional development for teachers.*** The school district shall include appropriate training for teachers and other staff members.
- 1.5. ***Appropriateness of nutrition component of comprehensive school health education curriculum.*** The school district shall assess all nutrition education lessons and materials for accuracy, completeness, balance, and consistency with the state's and district's educational goals and curriculum standards.
- 1.6. ***Educational reinforcement.*** School instructional staff members shall collaborate with agencies and groups conducting nutrition education in the community to send consistent messages to students and their families.
- 1.7. ***Nutrition promotion.*** The school district shall conduct nutrition education activities and promotions that involve parents, students and the community.
- 1.8. ***Staff awareness.*** The school district shall build awareness among teachers, food service staff, coaches, nurses and other school staff members about the importance of nutrition, physical activity and body-size acceptance to academic success and lifelong wellness.
- 1.9. ***Staff members as role models.*** School staff members shall be encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity behaviors.

Policy Rationale and Implementation Strategies

1.1. **Standards-based, sequential nutrition education.** Nutrition education shall be based on current science, research, national guidelines, and national and state standards.

The Connecticut State Department of Education's *Healthy and Balanced Living Curriculum Framework* presents a vision for healthy and balanced living by showing the interrelated concepts and skills in comprehensive school health (including nutrition) and physical education. The purpose of the curriculum framework is to guide the development of curriculum that challenge and motivate students and contribute to student learning and achievement. Districts are encouraged to use the *Healthy and Balanced Living Curriculum Framework* as a best practice document to develop the nutrition education component of their comprehensive health education curriculum.

Implementation strategies include:

- ✧ Base nutrition education on standards such as the Connecticut State Department of Education's *Healthy and Balanced Living Curriculum Framework*. (For additional information, see Section 1, Comprehensive School Health Education.)
- ✧ Offer nutrition education as part of a planned, ongoing, systematic, sequential, standards-based, comprehensive school health education program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health.
- ✧ Focus the nutrition education program on students' eating behaviors.
- ✧ Base the nutrition education program on theories and methods that are proven effective by published research and consistent with the state's and district's comprehensive school health education standards, guidelines and curriculum framework.
- ✧ Enable students to demonstrate competency through application of knowledge, skill development and practice.
- ✧ Plan for appropriate content areas, nutrition themes, nutrition education strategies and developmentally appropriate and culturally relevant activities. Specific guidance regarding these areas can be found in the Department's *Action Guide for School Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies*, available at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=320754#Action>.

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- 1.2. **Connecting with existing curriculum.** Nutrition education shall be a part of comprehensive school health education and shall also be included in other classroom content areas such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, family and consumer sciences, and elective subjects.

When nutrition education is linked with other content areas, children have daily exposure to nutrition concepts and messages. An interdisciplinary approach to nutrition education reinforces what children are learning. Nutrition concepts are easily linked with a variety of content areas, such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, family and consumer sciences, and elective subjects.

Implementation strategies include:

- ✧ Encourage all PK-12 instructional staff members to incorporate nutritional themes from the Connecticut State Department of Education's *Healthy and Balanced Living Curriculum Framework* into daily lessons, when appropriate, to reinforce and support health messages.
- ✧ Teach nutrition education as part of the comprehensive school health education curriculum.
- ✧ Use the interdisciplinary approach to nutrition education to complement but not replace sequential nutrition education lessons within a comprehensive school health education curriculum. The exclusive use of an interdisciplinary approach can sacrifice key elements of an effective nutrition education program (e.g., adequate instructional time, focusing on behaviors and skill-building, attention to scope and sequence, and adequate teacher preparation).



For information on comprehensive school health education, see Section 1, Comprehensive School Health Education. Additional information on connecting nutrition education to other curriculum areas is contained in the Department's *Action Guide for School Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies*. Resources to help districts connect nutrition themes to other areas of the school curriculum can be found in *Connecting with Existing Curriculums* under Resources in Section 3 of the Department's *Action Guide for School Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies*.

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- 1.3. **Education links with school.** The nutrition education program shall link with school meal programs, other school foods, and nutrition-related community services that occur outside the classroom or that link classroom nutrition education to the larger school community, such as school gardens, cafeteria-based nutrition education and after-school programs.

Many opportunities to enhance nutrition education exist at school and in the community. Examples include coordinated school health initiatives, cafeteria-based nutrition education, after-school programs, and nutrition promotions, events and initiatives such as school/community health fairs and school gardens.

Implementation strategies include:

- ✧ Offer nutrition education in the school cafeteria and classroom, with coordination between school food service and teachers.
- ✧ Link nutrition education with other coordinated school health initiatives.

For more information, see *Education Links with School* and *Nutrition Promotion* under Resources in Section 3 of the Department's *Action Guide for School Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies*.

- 1.4. **Professional development for teachers.** The school district shall include appropriate training for teachers and other staff members.

Appropriate training provides the necessary skills to allow teachers to provide quality nutrition education programs. Training should address developmentally and culturally appropriate content and teaching strategies.

Implementation strategies include:

- ✧ Ensure that staff members responsible for nutrition education are adequately prepared and participate regularly in professional development activities to effectively deliver the nutrition education program as planned.
- ✧ Offer preparation and professional development activities that provide basic knowledge of nutrition, combined with the development of skills and adequate time to practice skills in program-specific activities. Training shall include instructional techniques and strategies designed to promote healthy eating behaviors.
- ✧ Instruct staff members providing nutrition education not to advocate dieting behaviors or any specific eating regimen to students, other staff members or parents.
- ✧ Offer professional development activities in nutrition, in addition to teachers, to all appropriate school personnel; for example, mental health providers, school nurses and school food service personnel (for additional information, see *Training for Food Service Staff Members* under Resources in Section 6 of the Department's *Action Guide for School Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies*).

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1.5. **Appropriateness of nutrition component of comprehensive school health education curriculum.** The school district shall assess all nutrition education lessons and materials for accuracy, completeness, balance and consistency with the state's and district's educational goals and curriculum standards.

The Health Education Assessment Project (HEAP) and Health Education Curriculum Analysis Tool (HECAT) can assist districts with the evaluation of comprehensive school health education curriculums, including nutrition education lessons and materials. For additional information, see Section 1, Comprehensive School Health Education.

Implementation strategies include:

- ✧ Assess all nutrition lessons and materials for accuracy, completeness, balance and consistency with the state's and district's educational goals and curriculum standards (see the Department's *Healthy and Balanced Living Curriculum Framework* at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/LIB/sde/PDF/deps/student/Healthy&BalancedLiving.pdf>).
- ✧ Examine materials developed by food marketing boards or food corporations for appropriateness of commercial messages.



1.6. **Educational reinforcement.** School instructional staff members shall collaborate with agencies and groups conducting nutrition education in the community to send consistent messages to students and their families.

By collaborating with other school and community groups working on nutrition education, districts can increase the effectiveness of nutrition interventions by providing consistent and reinforcing health messages.

Implementation strategies include:

- ✧ Provide appropriate orientation regarding relevant district policies to guest speakers and performers invited to address students.
- ✧ Encourage school staff members to coordinate with other agencies and community groups to provide opportunities for student volunteer work related to nutrition, such as assisting with food recovery efforts and preparing nutritious meals for home-bound people.
- ✧ Disseminate information to parents, students and staff members about community programs that offer nutrition assistance to families.

For additional information, see the Department's *Action Guide for School Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies*.

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1.7. **Nutrition promotion.** The school district shall conduct nutrition education activities and promotions that involve parents, students and the community.

Participation in programs that promote and reinforce health emphasizes the school's commitment to a healthy school nutrition environment.

Implementation strategies include:

- ✧ Participate in programs that promote and reinforce student health, such as Team Nutrition and the HealthierUS School Challenge.
- ✧ Instruct the school team responsible for planning nutrition activities to ensure interdisciplinary collaboration by including school food service, school nurses, health and physical education teachers, family and consumer sciences teachers, and other appropriate school staff members.
- ✧ Promote nutrition through a variety of activities, including food demonstrations in school cafeterias, connecting with local farmers' markets and farm-to-school programs, sampling of popular healthy ethnic foods, and participating in comprehensive marketing campaigns (e.g., promoting nutrition and physical activity messages such as 5 A Day and daily physical activity).



Additional information and resources can be found in *Nutrition Promotion* under Resources in Section 3 of the Department's *Action Guide for School Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies*.

1.8. **Staff awareness.** The school district shall build awareness among teachers, food service staff, coaches, nurses and other school staff members about the importance of nutrition, physical activity and body-size acceptance to academic success and lifelong wellness.

It is important for all school personnel to be aware of the importance of nutrition and physical activity to student achievement so they can reinforce positive health messages in the school environment.

Implementation strategies include:

- ✧ Provide staff members with scientifically accurate and evidence-based health information regarding health benefits and risks of dietary habits, health trends and effective strategies for addressing nutrition issues, and food safety and food-borne illness prevention.
- ✧ Use appropriate personnel in the school district (including health and physical education teachers, family and consumer sciences teachers, school nurses, school medical advisers and school food service directors) and the community (including registered dietitians and other health professionals) to help promote staff awareness and to serve as a resource to teachers for nutrition and nutrition education.

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1.9. **Staff members as role models.** School staff members shall be encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity behaviors.

Adults can have a significant impact on the development of students' health behaviors.

Implementation strategies include:

- ✧ Encourage school staff members to model healthy eating and physical activity behaviors in a variety of ways.
- ✧ Use staff wellness programs to encourage school personnel to be positive role models for students.

For additional information, see Section 6, Staff Wellness, in this guide and Section 6 of the Department's *Action Guide for School Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies*.



Component 2: School Foods and Beverages

Policy Recommendations

School districts will provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious and appealing foods that meet students' health and nutrition needs and accommodate ethnic and cultural food preferences. School meals will include a variety of healthy choices that meet the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) meal pattern and nutrition requirements and the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, and are modified, as appropriate, for special dietary needs. Districts will use the Dietary Guidelines and other appropriate nutrition guidelines to establish nutrition standards and provide clear guidance for all foods and beverages available everywhere on school grounds throughout the school day to encourage healthy choices for students. The standards will focus on increasing nutrient density, decreasing fat and added sugars, and moderating portion size. Policies will encourage the consumption of nutrient-dense foods, such as whole grains, fresh fruits, vegetables and low-fat dairy products. Policy recommendations for school food and beverages include (1) school meals and (2) other foods and beverages at school.



School Meals

Recommended policy language for school meals addresses the following four areas.

- 2.1. **Nutrition guidelines.** School meals shall offer varied and nutritious food choices that are consistent with USDA nutrition standards and the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (which focus on increasing fruits, vegetables and whole grains).
- 2.2. **Menu planning.** Menus shall be planned to be appealing and attractive to children.
- 2.3. **Breakfast promotion.** Districts shall help 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.
- 2.4. **Special dietary needs.** With appropriate medical documentation, modified meals shall be prepared for students with food allergies or other special dietary needs.

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***Policy Rationale and Implementation Strategies
for School Meals***

2.1. ***Nutrition guidelines.*** School meals shall offer varied and nutritious food choices that are consistent with USDA nutrition standards and the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (which focus on increasing fruits, vegetables and whole grains).

School meals must meet USDA nutrient standards, as specified in the federal regulations. The nutrient standards specify the levels of nutrients that school meals must meet, as averaged over a week. More information on the nutrition requirements for school meals can be found in *Nutrition Requirements and Guidelines* and *Menu Planning* under Resources in Section 5 of the Department's *Action Guide for School Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies*.

Menus should support and reinforce the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The dietary guidelines encourage increased consumption of nutrient-dense foods and beverages such as whole grains, vegetables, fruits and low-fat dairy products, while limiting levels of cholesterol, fat, saturated fat, trans fat, sodium and added sugars. Information on the Dietary Guidelines can be found at http://www.usda.gov/cnpp/dietary_guidelines.html.

Implementation strategies include:

- ✧ Ensure that school meals meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state and federal statutes and regulations; offer a variety of fruits and vegetables; serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk (as recommended by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans) and nutritionally equivalent nondairy alternatives as defined by USDA; and ensure that half the grains served are whole grain (as recommended by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans).
- ✧ Ensure that reimbursable school meals meet the program requirements and nutrition standards specified by the USDA regulations for school meals (7 CFR Part 210 and Part 220), as well as all state and local requirements.
- ✧ Ensure that all students have affordable access to the varied and nutritious foods they need to stay healthy and learn well.
- ✧ Strive to increase participation in USDA's Child Nutrition Programs (e.g., National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, After-School Snack Program and Summer Food Service Program).
- ✧ Make information available on the nutritional content of meals and other foods and beverages sold to students, families and school staff members. Nutrition information could be made available on menus, in school newsletters, on a school website, at PTA/PTO meetings and parent open houses, and on cafeteria menu boards, placards or other point-of-purchase materials. (For additional information on communicating with families, see Section 8, School-Family-Community Partnerships, in this guide and *Engaging Families* in Section 7 of the Department's *Action Guide for School Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies*.)

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2.2. Menu planning. Menus shall be planned to be appealing and attractive to children.

Input from the school community, including students, parents and school staff members, is important to the menu planning process. The school community is the customer base of the school food service program, so menus should be planned to reflect local preferences. School meals also provide an opportunity to reflect and celebrate ethnic communities through preparation techniques and use of food products.

Implementation strategies include:

- ✧ Plan schools meals to incorporate the basic menu planning principles of balance, variety, contrast, color and eye appeal.
- ✧ Plan menus with input from students, parents, and other school personnel, taking into account students' cultural norms and preferences.
- ✧ Engage students and parents, through surveys and taste-tests of new entrees, in selecting foods sold through the school meal programs in order to identify new, healthful and appealing food choices.

Additional information and resources on menu planning can be found in the Department's *Action Guide for School Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies*.

2.3. Breakfast promotion. Districts shall help 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.

All students should start the day with a healthy breakfast, whether at home or at school. Breakfast consumption is clearly linked to academic achievement. Children who eat breakfast have higher test scores, work faster, make fewer errors, and are more creative. They also behave better in school, are less likely to have disciplinary problems, are more cooperative, and get along better with classmates. Breakfast eaters are healthier, have improved attendance, and are less likely to visit the school nurse. Children who eat breakfast also have higher consumption of needed nutrients than those who do not.

Implementation strategies include:

- ✧ Promote breakfast consumption to students and families so all students start the day with a healthy breakfast, whether at home or at school. The Department's handout, *Breakfast: Key to Academic Excellence*, addresses the relationship of breakfast and learning and can help schools with these efforts (see Resources at the end of this section).
- ✧ Participate in the USDA School Breakfast Program. (Information on the requirements for the School Breakfast Program can be obtained at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Breakfast/Default.htm> or by contacting the Department's Child Nutrition Unit at 860-807-2101).
- ✧ To the extent possible, arrange bus schedules and use methods to serve school breakfasts that encourage participation, including nontraditional breakfast service, such as breakfast served in the classroom, breakfast bags distributed to students, a "grab-and-go" breakfast, or breakfast after first period program or during morning break or recess.

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- ✧ Notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast Program, if the school serves breakfast to students.
- ✧ Encourage parents to provide a healthy breakfast for their children through newsletter articles, take-home materials or other means.

Additional resources to help schools implement a School Breakfast Program and promote student breakfast consumption are found in *Breakfast* under Resources in Section 5 of the Department's *Action Guide for School Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies*.

2.4. *Special dietary needs.* With appropriate medical documentation, modified meals shall be prepared for students with food allergies or other special dietary needs.

For schools participating in USDA Child Nutrition Programs (e.g., National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, After-School Snack Program), USDA regulations require substitutions or modifications in meals for children who are considered disabled under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and whose disabilities restrict their diet, when the need is certified by a licensed physician. Substitutions are also required when a physician determines that a child's severe medical condition requires specific dietary modifications, even if the child is not considered disabled under Section 504 or IDEA.

School food service programs may (but are not required to) make food substitutions for children who are not disabled but who are medically certified as having a special medical or dietary need. These substitutions may be made on a case-by-case basis and must be documented by a statement signed by a recognized medical authority, including physicians, physician assistants, doctors of osteopathy and advanced practice registered nurses (APRN).

Implementation strategies include:

- ✧ Develop district procedures for modifying meals based on children's special dietary needs. (The Department's *Menu Planning Guidance for School Nutrition Programs* provides detailed guidance on accommodating special diets in schools.)
- ✧ Develop district procedures for handling life-threatening food allergies (see *Guidelines for Managing Life-Threatening Food Allergies in Connecticut Schools* at http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/deps/student/health/Food_Allergies.pdf).
- ✧ Prepare modified meals for students with food allergies or other special dietary needs, based on appropriate documentation as required by federal and state regulations.
- ✧ Support close communication between the student, parents, school nurse, classroom teacher, food service personnel, school administrator and any other appropriate school staff members to implement meal plans for children with special dietary needs.

Specific procedures for handling meal accommodations for children with food allergies and other special dietary needs can be obtained by contacting the Department's Child Nutrition Unit at 860-807-2101. Information regarding the USDA's requirements can be found in *Accommodating Children with Special Dietary Needs in the School Nutrition Programs: Guidance for School Food Service Staff* (http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Guidance/special_dietary_needs.pdf).

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Other School Foods and Beverages

District policy shall address nutrition standards for all foods and beverages sold or served to students outside of school meals, including cafeteria a la carte sales, vending, student stores, concession stands, fundraisers, classroom snacks, after-school programs, field trips, school events, parties, celebrations and meetings. To support children's health and school nutrition education efforts, all foods and beverages sold or served at school shall meet the district's nutrition standards.

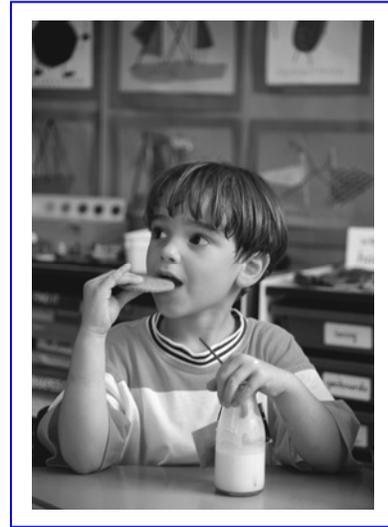
Recommended policy language for other school foods and beverages addresses the following seven areas.

- 2.5. **Food or beverage contracts.** Agreements with food or vending companies to sell foods or beverages in schools shall ensure that contractors will follow the district's nutrition standards.
- 2.6. **Cafeteria a la carte sales, vending and school stores.** Foods and beverages sold at school in the cafeteria, vending machines and school stores shall meet the district's nutrition standards.
- 2.7. **School-sponsored events.** Foods and beverages offered or sold at school-sponsored events during the school day shall meet the district's nutrition standards. School-sponsored events include, but are not limited to, athletic events, dances or performances.
- 2.8. **Fundraising.** School fundraising activities shall not involve food or beverages or shall only use foods and beverages that meet the district's nutrition standards
- 2.9. **Classroom snacks.** Classroom snacks shall feature healthy choices that meet the district's nutrition standards. School personnel shall not withhold student access to snacks as punishment.
- 2.10. **Food brought into school.** Districts shall encourage families to pack healthy lunches and snacks and to refrain from including beverages and foods that do not meet the district's nutrition standards for foods and beverages. Districts shall develop procedures to ensure that all food brought from home to be shared with other students is safe.
- 2.11. **Celebrations.** Districts shall limit celebrations that involve food during the school day. Foods and beverages served at school celebrations shall meet the district's nutrition standards. The district shall disseminate a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers, including healthy food and beverage choices and alternative activities (e.g., increased recess time instead of a class party).

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Policy Rationale and Implementation Guidance for Other School Foods and Beverages

Federal and state legislation affects districts' implementation of the policy recommendations for other foods and beverages at school. Districts must ensure that any locally developed nutrition standards are in compliance with all state and federal laws (see "Legislation Pertaining to School Nutrition Services" on Page 109). State legislation specifies the beverages that can be sold to students on school premises (Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes) and provides optional nutrition standards for all food items sold to students separately from a reimbursable meal. Districts that choose to certify for the healthy food option under Section 10-215f of the Connecticut General Statutes must follow the Connecticut Nutrition Standards for all food items sold to students separately from a reimbursable breakfast or lunch. (See "Nutrition Standards for Food and Beverages at School" on Page 100.) The Connecticut Nutrition Standards are available at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=320754#Standards>. A list of snack items that meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards is available at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=320754#Healthy>.



USDA school wellness policy regulations require that districts include nutrition guidelines for all foods available on the school campus during the school day, with the objectives of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity (see "Federal School Wellness Policy Legislation" under "Legislation Pertaining to School Nutrition Services" on page 109). This includes all foods that are sold and served to students. The Department's *Action Guide for School Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies* provides detailed guidance on developing, implementing and evaluating local school wellness policies.

Districts may choose to develop their own nutrition standards or may follow the Connecticut Nutrition Standards. Districts that choose to certify for the healthy food option under Section 10-215f of the Connecticut General Statutes **must** follow the Connecticut Nutrition Standards for all food items sold to students separately from a reimbursable breakfast or lunch.

2.5. Food or beverage contracts. Agreements with food or vending companies to sell foods or beverages in schools shall ensure that contractors will follow the district's nutrition standards.

Implementation strategies include:

- ✧ Provide clear guidance to all vendors regarding the district's nutrition standards and expectations for all food and beverages.
- ✧ Review all food and beverage contracts for compliance with the district's nutrition standards.
- ✧ Monitor food and beverages provided by vendors to ensure compliance with district nutrition standards.

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2.6. *Cafeteria a la carte sales, vending and school stores.* Foods and beverages sold at school in the cafeteria, vending machines and school stores shall meet the district's nutrition standards.

Implementation strategies include:

- ✧ Identify a point person who is familiar with the district's nutrition standards and can provide information, resources, training and technical assistance to other school staff members as needed.
- ✧ Disseminate the district's nutrition standards to all appropriate school staff members, such as the school food service director, cafeteria managers, athletic directors, parent groups and individuals who coordinate fundraising activities, school stores, kiosks, other school-based enterprises, vending machines and any other food sales to students.
- ✧ Provide training and technical assistance as needed to appropriate staff members on implementing the district's nutrition standards.
- ✧ Review nutrition information for all food and beverages for compliance with the district's nutrition standards.
- ✧ Review school recipes for compliance with the district's nutrition standards.
- ✧ Develop and provide lists of food and beverage items that comply with state and federal laws and also meet the district's nutrition standards. (See the Department's *List of Snacks Meeting the Connecticut Nutrition Standards* at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=320754#Healthy>.)

2.7. *School-sponsored events.* Foods and beverages offered or sold at school-sponsored events during the school day shall meet the district's nutrition standards. School-sponsored events include, but are not limited to, athletic events, dances or performances.

Implementation strategies include:

- ✧ Disseminate the district's nutrition standards to all individuals who coordinate school-sponsored events, e.g., parent groups, student clubs, sports teams, etc.
- ✧ Review product nutrition information for compliance with the district's nutrition standards.
- ✧ Review recipes for compliance with the district's nutrition standards.
- ✧ Develop and provide lists of food and beverage items that comply with state and federal laws and also meet the district's nutrition standards. (See the Department's *List of Snacks Meeting the Connecticut Nutrition Standards* at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=320754#Healthy>.)

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2.8. **Fundraising.** School fundraising activities shall not involve food or beverages or shall only use foods and beverages that meet the district's nutrition standards.

Implementation strategies include:

- ✧ Encourage fundraising activities that do not use food.
- ✧ Encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity.
- ✧ Make available to students, parents, teachers and school groups a list of ideas for acceptable fundraising activities, such as healthy food and beverages or alternate nonfood fundraisers. (See the Department's handout, *Healthy Fundraising*, at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=320754#Resources>.)
- ✧ Provide lists of food and beverage items that meet the district's nutrition standards and are acceptable for fundraising. (See the *List of Snacks Meeting the Connecticut Nutrition Standards* at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=320754#Healthy>.)



2.9. **Classroom snacks.** Classroom snacks shall feature healthy choices that meet the district's nutrition standards.

Foods and beverages available at school during the school day must meet the district's nutrition standards. Snacks served during the school day can make a positive contribution to children's diets and health if they emphasize fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy.

Younger children need snacks at times that allow them to come to their regular meals hungry but not starving. Their stomachs are small and their energy needs are high. Generally, most children need to eat within 3 to 4 hours of their last meal. With a long time span between breakfast and lunch (or lunch and the end of the school day), children may not be able to focus on learning without a healthy snack. Children do not have adults' ability to compensate for hunger. With a significant time span between meals, children can experience hunger symptoms (such as fatigue, irritability, inability to concentrate, weakness and stomach pains) that can interfere with learning.

Implementation strategies include:

- ✧ Assess whether and when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, children's nutritional needs, children's ages and other considerations
- ✧ Do not withhold student access to snacks as punishment. (See "Food Rewards and Punishment" on Page 107.)
- ✧ Ensure that classroom snacks are provided in compliance with district procedures for handling life-threatening food allergies and accommodating special dietary needs (see "Special Dietary Needs" on Page 93.)

SCHOOL FOODS AND BEVERAGES

- ✧ Encourage eligible schools to participate in the After School Snack Program. Schools that participate in the After School Snack Program must provide snacks that meet USDA meal pattern and nutrition requirements. Information on eligibility and implementation requirements for the After School Snack Program can be obtained at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Afterschool/default.htm> or by contacting the Department's Child Nutrition Unit at 860-807-2101.

For additional resources, see *Healthy Snacks* under Resources in Section 5 of the Department's *Action Guide for School Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies*.

2.10. Food brought into school. Districts shall encourage families to pack healthy lunches and snacks and to refrain from including beverages and foods that do not meet the district's nutrition standards for foods and beverages.

Districts should consider two issues regarding any food or beverages that are brought into school: (1) nutrition integrity; and (2) food safety.

Nutrition Integrity: Families should be provided with information that helps them to provide food and beverages from home that meet the district's policies and nutrition standards. For example, if the district goal is to encourage healthy meals and snacks, parents should be given guidance and resources on packing healthy meals and the types of food and beverages that should not be provided. If there is a district policy addressing allowable snack foods for classroom parties, parents should be provided with guidance regarding acceptable options (see "Celebrations" on this page.)



Food Safety: When parents send in homemade food, it is difficult to ensure that the food is safe from bacterial contamination. To protect food safety, all food to be shared with other students should be commercially prepared, prepackaged, unopened and, when possible, individually wrapped. It is also difficult to ensure that foods sent from home are safe for children with food allergies. Schools can protect food-allergic children by providing nonfood celebrations or, if food is served, obtaining it from a known source such as the school food service program.

Implementation strategies include:

- ✧ Provide families with information that encourages them to pack healthy lunches and snacks and to refrain from including beverages and foods that do not meet the district's nutrition standards for foods and beverages.
- ✧ Provide families with lists of food and beverage items that meet the district's nutrition standards. (See the *List of Snacks Meeting the Connecticut Nutrition Standards* at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=320754#Healthy>.)

SCHOOL FOODS AND BEVERAGES

- ✧ Develop procedures to ensure that all food brought from home to be shared with other students is safe.
- ✧ Consider prohibiting the service of foods from home when food will be shared with other students at school celebrations and other functions, and only allowing commercially prepared foods.

Resources on food safety are found in Section 6 of the Department's *Action Guide for School Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies*.

2.11. Celebrations. Districts shall limit celebrations that involve food during the school day. Foods and beverages served at school celebrations shall meet the district's nutrition standards.

Foods and beverages served at school celebrations and parties must meet the district's nutrition standards. Providing healthy classroom celebrations demonstrates a school commitment to promoting healthy behaviors. It supports the classroom lessons students are learning about health, instead of contradicting them, and gives students an opportunity to practice healthy behaviors. The Department's handout, *Healthy Celebrations*, provides schools with specific ideas for activities and healthy foods at school celebrations (<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=320754#Resources>).

Implementation strategies include:

- ✧ Promote a positive learning environment by providing healthy celebrations that shift the focus from the food to the child.
- ✧ When food is served, make it count with healthy choices.
- ✧ Incorporate a fun nutrition lesson by involving children in the planning and preparation of healthy snacks.
- ✧ Disseminate a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers, including healthy food and beverage choices and alternative activities (e.g., increased recess time instead of a class party).
- ✧ Consider determining an appropriate frequency for celebrations that involve food, e.g., limiting celebrations to no more than one party per class per month so that all birthdays are celebrated on one day each month instead of having multiple celebrations every week.



Nutrition Standards for Food and Beverages at School

Connecticut Nutrition Standards: The Connecticut Nutrition Standards focus on limiting fat, saturated fat, trans fat, sugars and sodium, moderating portion sizes, and promoting increased intake of fruits, vegetables and whole grains. The State Department of Education developed the Connecticut Nutrition Standards in response to Section 10-215e of the Connecticut General Statutes, which requires the Department to publish a set of nutrition standards for food items offered for sale to students at schools. These food items include all foods that are sold separately from a school lunch or breakfast that is reimbursable under the U.S. Department of Agriculture's School Breakfast Program or National School Lunch Program.

The Connecticut Nutrition Standards supplement and incorporate the Healthy Snack Standards that were previously developed as part of Connecticut's Healthy Snack Pilot. Together, these two standards address all a la carte foods sold in school, including entree items, cooked grains, soups, fruits and vegetables, and snacks and desserts. *Note: A la carte foods are foods sold separately from a reimbursable school meal.*

The Connecticut Nutrition Standards must be followed by all schools in any eligible public school district that chooses to implement the healthy food certification under Section 10-215f of the Connecticut General Statutes and receive additional funding. The standards apply to all sources of food sales to students on school premises, including, but not limited to, school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, and any fundraising activities on school premises, regardless of whether they are school sponsored.

The Department's *Connecticut Nutrition Standards for Food in School* includes the complete nutrition standards, the rationale for development and additional recommendations for implementation. A two-page handout, *Summary of Requirements for School Food and Beverages*, summarizes (1) the beverage requirements of Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes; and (2) the Connecticut Nutrition Standards. Both documents are available at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=320754#Standards>. The website also includes additional information and resources on healthy food certification and the Connecticut Nutrition Standards, such as handouts, a PowerPoint presentation and an extensive "Questions and Answers" handout.

ENVIRONMENT TO PROMOTE HEALTHY EATING

Component 3: An Environment to Promote Healthy Eating***Policy Recommendations***

School cafeteria environments will support healthy eating habits by providing clean, safe and pleasant settings with adequate time for students to eat. School meal procedures will encourage participation by all students. Food service staff members will have the knowledge and skills to provide cost-effective quality meals served safely. Districts will encourage school staff members to be role models for healthy eating and physical activity behaviors through the provision of staff wellness activities. School staff members will not use food to reward or punish students. Recommended policy language for promoting a healthy eating environment addresses the following 11 areas.

- 3.1. ***Surroundings for eating.*** School meals shall be served in clean and pleasant settings. A cafeteria environment that provides students with a relaxed, enjoyable climate shall be developed.
- 3.2. ***Time for and scheduling of meals.*** Schools shall provide appropriate meal times with adequate time allotted for students to eat (at least 10 minutes for breakfast and 20 minutes for lunch after sitting down to eat).
- 3.3. ***Free and reduced-price meals.*** Schools shall 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 meals.
- 3.4. ***Summer Food Service Program.*** Schools in which more than 50 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals shall sponsor the Summer Food Service Program for at least six weeks between the last day of the academic school year and the first day of the following school year, and preferably throughout the entire summer vacation.
- 3.5. ***Financial operation of child nutrition programs.*** The school food service program shall aim to be financially self-supporting.
- 3.6. ***Qualifications of food service staff members.*** Qualified nutrition professionals shall administer the school meal programs.
- 3.7. ***Training for food service staff members.*** All food service personnel shall have adequate preservice training in food service operations and regularly participate in professional development activities that address requirements for child nutrition programs, menu planning and preparation, food safety, strategies for promoting healthy eating behaviors and other appropriate topics.
- 3.8. ***Food safety.*** All foods made available at school shall comply with state and local food safety and sanitation regulations.
- 3.9. ***Food rewards and punishment.*** Schools shall not use foods or beverages as rewards for academic performance or good behavior, unless this practice is allowed by a student's individualized education plan (IEP). Schools shall not withhold food or beverages (including food served through school meals) as a punishment. Alternative rewards shall be developed and promoted.
- 3.10. ***Sharing of foods.*** Schools shall discourage students from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns with allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets.

ENVIRONMENT TO PROMOTE HEALTHY EATING

3.11. **Staff wellness.** The district highly values the health and well-being of every staff member and shall plan and implement activities and policies that support personal efforts by staff members to maintain a healthy lifestyle and that encourage staff members to serve as role models.

Policy Rationale and Implementation Strategies

3.1. **Surroundings for eating.** School meals shall be served in clean and pleasant settings. A cafeteria environment that provides students with a relaxed, enjoyable climate shall be developed.

The physical cafeteria environment greatly affects the atmosphere in which children eat. School practices should focus on making the dining experience more enjoyable for students. The cafeteria environment should be a place where students have adequate space to eat, clean and pleasant surroundings, adequate time to eat meals, and convenient access to hand-washing or hand-sanitizing facilities before meals.

Implementation strategies include:

- ✧ Develop a cafeteria environment that provides students with a relaxed, enjoyable climate.
- ✧ Provide sufficient serving areas in the cafeteria so students do not have to spend too much time waiting in line.
- ✧ Provide dining areas that are attractive and have sufficient space for seating with tables and chairs that are the right size for students.
- ✧ Encourage socializing among students, and between students and adults.
- ✧ Ensure that adults properly supervise school dining rooms and serve as role models to students.
- ✧ Use creative, innovative methods to keep noise levels appropriate—no “eat in silence,” no whistles, no buzzing traffic lights.
- ✧ Prioritize facility design in renovations or new construction (including the size and location of the dining/kitchen area, lighting, building materials, windows, open space, adequate food-service equipment for food preparation and service, and food and staff safety).
- ✧ Provide hand-washing equipment and supplies in a convenient place so that students can wash their hands before eating, or students have access to hand sanitizing supplies before they eat meals or snacks.
- ✧ Provide drinking fountains that are available for students to get water at meals and throughout the day.



Changing the Scene (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2000) contains resources to help schools promote a pleasant eating environment. Additional resources can be found under Resources in Section 6 of the Department’s *Action Guide for School Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies*.

ENVIRONMENT TO PROMOTE HEALTHY EATING

3.2. ***Time for and scheduling of meals.*** Schools shall provide appropriate meal times with adequate time allotted for students to eat (at least 10 minutes for breakfast and 20 minutes for lunch after sitting down to eat).

Implementation strategies include:

- ✧ Schedule meal periods at appropriate times, as near the middle of the day as possible, i.e., lunch should be scheduled between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. USDA regulations specify that meals cannot be served before 10 a.m. or after 2 p.m. unless an exemption is requested from the Connecticut State Department of Education.
- ✧ Do not schedule tutoring, pep rallies, club and organization meetings or other activities during meal times unless students may eat during such activities.
- ✧ Schedule meal periods that are long enough for students to eat and socialize. Scheduled meal times shall provide students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes to eat after sitting down for lunch. This time does not include the time needed to walk to the cafeteria from the classroom, select and pay for the meal, sit down at a table and walk back to the classroom after the meal.
- ✧ Schedule recess before lunch for the elementary grades. (For additional information on implementing recess before lunch, see Section 3, Physical Education, in this guide and Section 4 of the Department's Action Guide for School Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies.
- ✧ Take reasonable steps to accommodate the tooth-brushing regimens of students with special oral health needs (e.g., orthodontia or high tooth decay risk).

Additional resources can be found in *Time for and Scheduling of Meals* under Resources in Section 6 of the Department's *Action Guide for School Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies*.

3.3. ***Free and reduced-price meals.*** Schools shall 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 meals.

USDA prohibits schools from making others in the cafeteria aware of the eligibility status of children for free, reduced-price or paid meals. Schools must prevent the overt identification of students who are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals.

Implementation strategies include:

- ✧ Use 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.
- ✧ Use nontraditional methods for serving school meals, such as "grab-and-go" or classroom breakfast.

For additional information and resources on the requirements for free and reduced-price meals, contact the Child Nutrition Unit in the Department's Bureau of Health and Nutrition Services and Child/Family/School Partnerships at 860-807-2101.

ENVIRONMENT TO PROMOTE HEALTHY EATING

3.4. **Summer Food Service Program.** Schools in which more than 50 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals shall sponsor the Summer Food Service Program for at least six weeks between the last day of the academic school year and the first day of the following school year, and preferably throughout the entire summer vacation.

A child's need for nutrients does not end when school does. The Summer Food Service Program bridges this gap. Implementation strategies include:

- ✧ Offer meals during breaks in the school calendar.
- ✧ Coordinate with other agencies and community groups to operate, or assist with operating, a summer food service program for children and adolescents who are eligible for federal program support. Possible partners include local parks and recreation departments; faith-based organizations; public or private nonprofit residential private camps; public or private nonprofit colleges or universities participating in the National Youth Sports Program; local, county, municipal, state or federal government agencies; and any other type of private nonprofit organization.
- ✧ Contact the Department's Child Nutrition Unit at 860-807-2101 for additional information and resources on participation in the Summer Food Service Program.

Additional resources are found in *Summer Food Service Program* under Resources in Section 6 of the Department's *Action Guide for School Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies*.

3.5. **Financial operation of child nutrition programs.** The school food service program shall aim to be financially self-supporting.

Budget neutrality or profit generation shall not take precedence over the nutritional needs of the students. Financial decisions should not compromise high quality standards for food and customer acceptance.

Implementation strategies include:

- ✧ Base financial decisions on students' nutrition needs, not on profits.
- ✧ Do not generate additional funds from the sale of foods that do not meet the district's nutrition standards, have minimal nutritional value or compete nutritionally with program meals.
- ✧ Administer the school food-service program using sound financial and accounting practices. The National Food Service Management Institute's *Financial Management Information System* (http://www.nfsmi.org/Information/fmis/fmis_booklet.htm) is a tool to assist school food service directors with operational decision making and improving program quality and efficiency. It assists with interpreting the financial outcomes of decision making and with deciding whether the school food service program's financial health has changed from previous accounting periods.

Additional resources can be found in *Financial Management* under Resources in Section 6 of the Department's *Action Guide for School Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies*.

ENVIRONMENT TO PROMOTE HEALTHY EATING

3.6. *Qualifications of food service staff members.* Qualified nutrition professionals shall administer the school meal programs.

There are no state requirements for qualifications of school food service staff members. Qualification requirements are determined locally by each school district. The Connecticut State Department of Education encourages districts to model qualifications for food service staff members on the national recommendations from the National Food Service Management Institute and the School Nutrition Association.

Implementation strategies include:

- ✧ Develop district standards for qualifications of school food service personnel, based on the national recommendations of the School Nutrition Association and the National Food Service Management Institute.
- ✧ Provide continuing professional development for all school food service personnel.
- ✧ Include appropriate certification or training programs in staff development programs for school food service directors, managers and cafeteria workers, according to their levels of responsibility.
- ✧ Provide incentive programs to encourage school food service personnel to participate in the national food service certification programs of the School Nutrition Association.

For additional information, see *Qualifications of Food Service Staff Members* under Resources in Section 6 of the Department's *Action Guide for School Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies*.

3.7. *Training for food service staff members.* All food service personnel shall have adequate pre-service training in food service operations and regularly participate in professional development activities that address requirements for child nutrition programs, menu planning and preparation, food safety, strategies for promoting healthy eating behaviors and other appropriate topics.

Training and professional development opportunities should assist school food service staff members with meeting USDA requirements, planning and preparing safe and healthy meals, promoting healthy eating behaviors and other issues appropriate to a healthy school nutrition environment. In Connecticut, several organizations and agencies provide training opportunities for school food service personnel, including workshops, courses, conferences and food shows. These include the School Nutrition Association of Connecticut, the Connecticut State Department of Education and the New England Dairy & Food Council.

Implementation strategies include:

- ✧ Identify training and professional development opportunities that are appropriate for school food service personnel.
- ✧ Encourage and support professional development opportunities specific to local needs.

Additional information on training resources is found in *Training for Food Service Staff Members* in Section 6 of the Department's *Action Guide for School Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies*.

ENVIRONMENT TO PROMOTE HEALTHY EATING

3.8. **Food safety.** All foods made available at school shall comply with state and local food safety and sanitation regulations.

Serving safe food is a critical responsibility for school food service personnel and a key aspect of a healthy school environment. Implementation strategies include:

- ✧ Ensure that all school food service operations comply with the requirements of the State of Connecticut Public Health Code 19-13-B42 *Sanitation of Places Dispensing Foods or Beverages*. This includes compliance with the Connecticut Qualified Food Operator (QFO) legislation. (Additional information on Connecticut's food safety regulations can be found in the Department's *Action Guide for School Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies*.)
- ✧ Implement Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) plans and guidelines to prevent food-borne illness in schools. HACCP is a preventative food safety program to control food safety hazards during all aspects of food service operations. It reduces the risk of food-borne hazards by focusing on each step of the food preparation process from receiving to service.
- ✧ Ensure that food service operations comply with federal HACCP requirements. Section 111 of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-265) requires that all schools participating in Child Nutrition Programs implement a school food safety program, in the preparation and service of each meal served to children, that complies with any hazard analysis and critical control point system established by USDA. When properly implemented, HACCP-based food safety programs will help ensure the safety of school meals served to children.



Resources on HACCP and food safety are found in *Food Safety* under Resources in Section 6 of the Department's *Action Guide for School Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies*.

ENVIRONMENT TO PROMOTE HEALTHY EATING

3.9. **Food rewards and punishment.** Schools shall not use foods or beverages as rewards for academic performance or good behavior, unless this practice is allowed by a student's individualized education plan (IEP). Schools shall not withhold food or beverages (including food served through school meals) as a punishment. Alternative rewards shall be developed and promoted.

District policies should prohibit the use of food and beverages as rewards and punishments at school.

Food as a Reward: Adults often use food rewards because they are an easy, inexpensive and powerful tool to bring about immediate short-term behavior change. Yet, using food as a reward has many negative consequences that go far beyond the short-term benefits of good classroom behavior or performance. Rewarding students with unhealthy foods:

- ✧ undermines schools' efforts to teach students about good nutrition by modeling unhealthy behavior and contradicting the nutrition principles taught in the classroom;
- ✧ interferes with children learning to eat in response to hunger and satiety cues (this teaches children to eat when they are not hungry as a reward to themselves, and may contribute to the development of disordered eating);
- ✧ increases preference for unhealthy foods (research shows that food preferences for both sweet and nonsweet food increase significantly when foods are presented as rewards); and
- ✧ encourages overconsumption of unhealthy foods (foods that supply calories from fat and sugar, but few nutrients).

Food as Punishment: Federal law prohibits schools participating in the USDA school meal programs (e.g., National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program and After-School Snack Program) from restricting student access to school meals for any reason, including as a punishment for student behavior. Other inappropriate practices using food as punishment include:

- ✧ denying students access to cafeteria snack or a la carte lines;
- ✧ denying students access to certain types of foods; and
- ✧ preventing children from eating classroom snacks (when snacks are normally allowed) as a consequence of individual or class behavior.

District policies should prohibit school staff members from withholding access to meals and snacks as punishment, both in the classroom and cafeteria. Restricting access to meals, snacks or other foods and beverages is an inappropriate form of punishment. District policies should encourage the development of alternative practices for promoting appropriate behavior.

Implementation strategies for addressing food as reward or punishment include:

- ✧ Prohibit all staff members from denying students access to meals and snacks as punishment.
- ✧ Develop policies that encourage the development of alternative practices to using food as a form of reward or punishment.

ENVIRONMENT TO PROMOTE HEALTHY EATING

- ✧ Identify and publicize alternatives to food as a reward or punishment. The Department's handout, *Alternatives to Food as Reward*, provides specific ideas on alternatives to using food as a reward (<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=320754#Resources>).

For additional information, see *Behavior Management* under Resources in Section 4 of the Department's *Action Guide for School Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies*.

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

Implementation strategies include:

- ✧ Provide information to school staff members, families and students regarding the district policy on sharing foods.
- ✧ Educate school staff members, parents and students on the rationale for discouraging sharing of food and the issues related to sharing of food, e.g., potential problems for children with food allergies or other dietary restrictions.
- ✧ Discourage students from sharing foods and beverages.

Additional guidance on providing a safe school environment for children with food allergies can be found in the Department's *Guidelines for Managing Life-Threatening Food Allergies in Connecticut Schools*. Resources on special diets can be found in Section 5 of the Department's *Action Guide for School Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies*.

3.11. *Staff wellness.* The district highly values the health and well-being of every staff member and shall plan and implement activities and policies that support personal efforts by staff members to maintain a healthy lifestyle and that encourage staff members to serve as role models.

Health promotion services for all school staff members can positively affect their eating and physical activity behaviors and their effectiveness in teaching and modeling healthy behaviors. Implementation strategies include:

- ✧ Encourage school staff members to improve their own personal health and wellness in order to improve staff morale.
- ✧ Provide programs and activities to promote staff wellness.
- ✧ Encourage school staff members to be positive role models of healthy eating and physical activity behaviors.
- ✧ Encourage school staff members to build the commitment to promote the health of students and improve the school nutrition and physical activity environment.
- ✧ Use staff wellness programs to encourage school personnel to be positive role models for students.

Additional resources on staff wellness are found in Section 6, Staff Wellness, of this guide and in the Department's *Action Guide for School Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies*.

Legislation Pertaining to School Nutrition Services

Federal Legislation

Information on the federal regulations for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Child Nutrition Programs can be found at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/regulations.htm>, including:

- Code of Federal Regulations Part 210 National School Lunch Program.
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/regulations/7CFR210.pdf>
- Code of Federal Regulations Part 220 School Breakfast Program.
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/regulations/7CFR220.pdf>
- The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, Public Law 108-265.
http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Legislation/Historical/PL_108-265.pdf

Competitive Food Services: Section 210.11 (a) (2) of the Code of Federal Regulations prohibits the sale of foods of minimal nutritional value (FMNV) in food service areas during mealtimes. The federal regulations define four specific categories of FMNV: (1) soda water; (2) water ices; (3) chewing gum; and (4) certain candies, i.e., hard candy, jellies and gums, marshmallow candies, fondant, licorice, spun candy and candy-coated popcorn. Many foods of little nutritional value (e.g., chips, cookies and many types of candy) are not included in the federal definition of FMNV.

Note: The FMNV regulation applies only to schools participating in USDA's National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, After-School Snack Program and Special Milk Program. Schools that do not participate in the federally funded child nutrition programs are not subject to any federal nutrition standards. (For additional information, see *Competitive Foods in School Nutrition Programs* on the Connecticut State Department of Education website Child Nutrition Programs page at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/LIB/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/nslp/CompetitiveFoods.pdf>.)

School Food Safety Program: Section 111 of Public Law 108-265 requires that each school food authority shall implement a school food safety program, in the preparation and service of each meal served to children, that complies with any hazard analysis and critical control point system established by the Secretary.

School Wellness Policy: Section 204 of Public Law 108-265 requires that public and private schools and Residential Child Care Institutions (RCCIs) participating in USDA's Child Nutrition Programs (i.e., National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, After-School Snack Program and Special Milk Program) must establish a local wellness policy by the first day of the 2006-2007 school year. The federal law requires that, at a minimum, the district school wellness policy must:

1. Include goals for nutrition education, physical activity and other school-based activities designed to promote student wellness in a manner that the local educational agency determines appropriate
2. Include nutrition guidelines for all foods available on the school campus during the school day, with the objectives of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity

3. Provide an assurance that guidelines for school meals are not less restrictive than those set by the U.S. Department of Agriculture
4. Establish a plan for measuring implementation of the local wellness policy, including the designation of one or more persons within the local education agency or at each school, as appropriate, charged with ensuring that the school meets the local wellness policy
5. Involve parents, students, representatives of the school food authority, the school board, school administrators, and the public in development of the local wellness policy

State Legislation

Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-16b. Prescribed courses of study. (a) In the public schools the program of instruction offered shall include at least the following subject matter, as taught by legally qualified teachers, the arts; career education; consumer education; health and safety, including, but not limited to, human growth and development, nutrition, first aid, disease prevention, community and consumer health, physical, mental and emotional health, including youth suicide prevention, substance abuse prevention, safety, which may include the dangers of gang membership, and accident prevention; language arts, including reading, writing, grammar, speaking and spelling; mathematics; physical education; science; social studies, including, but not limited to, citizenship, economics, geography, government and history; and in addition, on at least the secondary level, one or more foreign languages and vocational education. For purposes of this subsection, language arts may include American sign language or signed English, provided such subject matter is taught by a qualified instructor under the supervision of a teacher who holds a certificate issued by the State Board of Education.

(c) Each local and regional board of education shall on September 1, 1982, and annually thereafter at such time and in such manner as the Commissioner of Education shall request, attest to the State Board of Education that such local or regional board of education offers at least the program of instruction required pursuant to this section, and that such program of instruction is planned, ongoing and systematic. <http://www.cga.ct.gov/2005/pub/Chap164.htm#Sec10-16b.htm>.

Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-215a. Nonpublic school and nonprofit agency participation in feeding programs. Nonpublic schools and nonprofit agencies may participate in the school breakfast, lunch and other feeding programs provided in sections 10-215 to 10-215b under such regulations as may be promulgated by the State Board of Education in conformance with said sections and under the federal laws governing said programs, except that such schools, other than the endowed academies approved pursuant to section 10-34, and agencies shall not be eligible for the funding described in subdivision (2) of subsection (a) of section 10-215b.

<http://www.cga.ct.gov/2007/pub/Chap169.htm#Sec10-215a.htm>.

Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-215b. Duties of State Board of Education re feeding programs. (a) The State Board of Education is authorized to expend in each fiscal year an amount equal to (1) the money required pursuant to the matching requirements of said federal laws and shall disburse the same in accordance with said laws, and (2) ten cents per lunch served in the prior school year in accordance with said laws by any local or regional board of education, the regional vocational-technical school system or governing authority of a state charter school, interdistrict magnet school or endowed academy approved pursuant to section 10-34 that participates in the National School Lunch Program and certifies pursuant to section 10-215f that the nutrition standards established by the Department of Education pursuant to section 10-215e shall be met.

(b) The State Board of Education shall prescribe the manner and time of application by such board of education, the regional vocational-technical school system, such governing authority or controlling authority of the nonpublic schools for such funds, provided such application shall include the certification that any funds received pursuant to subsection (a) of this section shall be used for the program approved. The State Board of Education shall determine the eligibility of the applicant to receive such grants pursuant to regulations provided in subsection (c) of this section and shall certify to the Comptroller the amount of the grant for which the board of education, the regional vocational-technical school system, the governing authority or the controlling authority of a nonpublic school is eligible. Upon receipt of such certification, the Comptroller shall draw an order on the Treasurer in the amount, at the time and to the payee so certified.

(c) The State Board of Education may adopt such regulations as may be necessary in implementing sections 10-215 to 10-215b, inclusive.

(d) The Commissioner of Education shall establish a procedure for monitoring compliance by boards of education, the regional vocational-technical school system, or governing authorities with certifications submitted in accordance with section 10-215f and may adjust grant amounts pursuant to subdivision (2) of subsection (a) of this section based on failure to comply with said certification. <http://www.cga.ct.gov/2007/pub/Chap169.htm#Sec10-215b.htm>.

Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-215e. Nutrition standards for food that is not part of lunch or breakfast program. Not later than August 1, 2006, and January first of each year thereafter, the Department of Education shall publish a set of nutrition standards for food items offered for sale to students at schools. Such standards shall not apply to food sold as part of the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program unless such items are purchased separately from a school lunch or breakfast that is reimbursable under such program. <http://www.cga.ct.gov/2007/pub/Chap169.htm#Sec10-215e.htm>.

Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-215f. Certification that food meets nutrition standards. (a) Each local and regional board of education, the regional vocational-technical school system, and the governing authority for each state charter school, interdistrict magnet school and endowed academy approved pursuant to section 10-34 that participates in the National School Lunch Program shall certify in its annual application to the Department of Education for school lunch funding whether, during the school year for which such application is submitted, all food items made available for sale to students in schools under its jurisdiction and not exempted from the nutrition standards published by the Department of Education pursuant to section 10-215e will meet said standards. Except as otherwise provided in subsection (b) of this section, such certification shall include food not exempted from said nutrition standards and offered for sale to students at all times, and from all sources, including, but not limited to, school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, and any fundraising activities on school premises, whether or not school sponsored.

(b) Each board of education, the regional vocational-technical school system and each governing authority that certifies pursuant to this section compliance with the department's nutrition standards for food may exclude from such certification the sale to students of food items that do not meet such standards, provided (1) such sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend, (2) such sale is at the location of such event, and (3) such food is not sold from a vending machine or school store. <http://www.cga.ct.gov/2007/pub/Chap169.htm#Sec10-215f.htm>.

Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-221o. Lunch Periods and Recess. Each local and regional board of education shall require each school under its jurisdiction to (1) offer all full day students a daily lunch period of not less than twenty minutes, and (2) include in the regular school day for each student enrolled in grades kindergarten to five, inclusive, a period of physical exercise, except that a planning and placement team may develop a different schedule for a child requiring special education and related services in accordance with chapter 164 and the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act, 20 USC 1400 et seq., as amended from time to time. In the event of a conflict with this section and any provision of chapter 164, such other provision of chapter 164 shall be deemed controlling. <http://www.cga.ct.gov/2005/pub/Chap170.htm#Sec10-221o.htm>.

Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-221p. Boards to make available for purchase nutritious and low-fat foods. Each local and regional board of education and governing authority for each state charter school, interdistrict magnet school and endowed academy approved pursuant to section 10-34, shall make available in the schools under its jurisdiction for purchase by students enrolled in such schools nutritious and low-fat foods, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, low-fat dairy products and fresh or dried fruit at all times when food is available for purchase by students in such schools during the regular school day. <http://www.cga.ct.gov/2007/pub/Chap170.htm#Sec10-221p.htm>.

Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-221q. Sale of beverages. (a) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (b) of this section, each local and regional board of education and the governing authority for each state charter school, interdistrict magnet school and endowed academy approved pursuant to section 10-34, shall permit at schools under its jurisdiction the sale of only the following beverages to students from any source, including, but not limited to, school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, and any fund-raising activities on school premises, whether or not school sponsored: (1) Milk that may be flavored but contain no artificial sweeteners and no more than four

grams of sugar per ounce, (2) nondairy milks such as soy or rice milk, which may be flavored but contain no artificial sweeteners, no more than four grams of sugar per ounce, no more than thirty-five per cent of calories from fat per portion and no more than ten per cent of calories from saturated fat per portion, (3) one hundred per cent fruit juice, vegetable juice or combination of such juices, containing no added sugars, sweeteners or artificial sweeteners, (4) beverages that contain only water and fruit or vegetable juice and have no added sugars, sweeteners or artificial sweeteners, and (5) water, which may be flavored but contain no added sugars, sweeteners, artificial sweeteners or caffeine. Portion sizes of beverages, other than water as described in subdivision (5) of this subsection, that are offered for sale pursuant to this subsection shall not exceed twelve ounces.

(b) Each such board of education or governing authority may permit at schools under its jurisdiction, the sale to students of beverages that are not listed in subsection (a) of this section, provided (1) such sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend, (2) such sale is at the location of such event, and (3) such beverages are not sold from a vending machine or school store. <http://www.cga.ct.gov/2007/pub/Chap170.htm#Sec10-221q.htm>.

For additional information, see *Overview of Connecticut Statutes for School Food and Beverages* and *Questions and Answers on Connecticut Statutes for School Food and Beverages*, available at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=320754#Standards>.

Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies Section 10-215b-1. Competitive Foods.

(a) No school food authority shall permit the sale or dispensing to students of extra food items anywhere on the school premises from thirty minutes prior to the start of any state or federally subsidized milk or food service program until thirty minutes after such program.

(b) “Extra food items” means tea, coffee, soft drinks and candy.

(c) “School food authority” means the governing body which has the legal authority to operate one or more school feeding programs and receive state or federal subsidies for the operation of any such program.

(d) The provisions of this section shall not apply to the Department of Corrections.

Note: Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes completely eliminates the sale of tea, coffee and soft drinks to students in all public schools, so it supersedes the timeframe previously allowed by Section 10-215b-1 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies. This regulation only apply to schools participating in USDA’s National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, After-School Snack Program and Special Milk Program.

Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies Section 10-215b-23. Income from the sale of food items. The income from the sale to students of food items, anywhere on the school premises from thirty minutes prior to the start of any state or federally subsidized milk or food service program until 30 minutes after any such program, shall accrue to the school food authority for the benefit of state or federally subsidized milk or food service programs.

Note: This regulation only apply to schools participating in USDA’s National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, After-School Snack Program and Special Milk Program.

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Resources

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- Action Guide for School Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies*, Connecticut State Department of Education, 2006: <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=320754#Action>
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- A Menu Planner for Healthy School Meals*, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1998: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/menuplanner.html>
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- Health Education Assessment Project (HEAP)*: http://www.ccsso.org/Projects/SCASS/Projects/Health_Education_Assessment_Project/1540.cfm
- Healthy and Balanced Living Curriculum Framework*, Connecticut State Department of Education, August 2006: <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/LIB/sde/PDF/deps/student/Healthy&BalancedLiving.pdf>
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- Healthy Fundraising*, Connecticut State Department of Education, 2005 (Revised February 2007): <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=320754#Resources>
- Healthy School Meals Resource System*, U.S. Department of Agriculture: <http://schoolmeals.nal.usda.gov>
- Keys to Excellence in School Food and Nutrition Programs*, School Nutrition Association: <http://www.schoolnutrition.org/KEYS>

Local Wellness Policy, U.S. Department of Agriculture:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Healthy/wellnesspolicy.html>

MyPyramid: <http://www.mypyramid.gov/>

Menu Planning Guidance for School Nutrition Programs, Connecticut State Department of Education, 2007: <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=320754>

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School Health Index for Physical Activity and Healthy Eating – A Self Assessment and Planning Guide, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2005: <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/shi/>

Snacks Meeting Connecticut's Healthy Snack Standards, Connecticut State Department of Education: <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=320754#Healthy>

Surveys, National Food Service Management Institute: <http://www.nfsmi.org/Information/resourceguide.htm#SURVEYS>

Team Nutrition, U.S. Department of Agriculture: <http://teammnutrition.usda.gov/library.html>

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Additional resources can be found in the Department's *Healthy School Nutrition Environment Resource List* and *List of Nutrition-Related Websites*, available at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=320754#Resources>. These lists contain websites and online resources to assist schools with promoting healthy eating and physical activity for children. The Department updates these lists regularly.