

RSU 34 Wellness Policy

Regional School Unit 34 (hereto referred to as RSU 34) is committed to the optimal development of every student. RSU 34 believes that for students to have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic, developmental, and social success, we need to create positive, safe, and health-promoting learning environments at every level, in every setting, throughout the school year.

This policy outlines RSU 34's approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. Specifically this policy establishes goals and procedures to ensure that:

- School staff are encouraged and supported to practice healthy nutrition and physical activity behaviors in and out of school;
- The community is engaged in supporting the work of RSU 34 in creating continuity between school and other settings for students and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits.

RSU 34 Wellness Committee Role and Membership

RSU 34 will convene a representative district wellness committee that meets a minimum of four times per year to establish goals for and oversee school health and safety policies and programs, including development, implementation and periodic review of the Student Wellness policy.

The Wellness Committee shall also serve as an advisory committee in issues related to student wellness and will be responsible for making recommendations related to the wellness policy, wellness goals, administrative or school regulations and practices, or raising awareness of student health issues. With the prior approval of the Superintendent/designee, the Wellness Committee may survey parents, students and the community and/or conduct focus groups or community forums. The Wellness Committee shall provide periodic reports to the Superintendent/designee and, as requested, the Board.

The Wellness Committee shall include a Board member; School administrator; School Nutrition Director/designee; Student representative; Parent representative; and/or Community representative. The Wellness Committee may also include: School nurse, Teacher(s); Guidance counselor; Social worker; Community organization or agency representative; Other staff, as appropriate; and/or other persons, as designated by the Board.

Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability and Community Engagement

The Superintendent/designee shall be responsible for the oversight of development and implementation of the wellness policy in the schools. This includes ensuring that the school unit evaluates its schools' compliance with the wellness policy and progress in attaining wellness

goals and making required information available to the public. The principal of each school will ensure compliance with the policy within the school(s).

The evaluation process must include a comparison of the wellness plan with model local wellness policy, and it may include surveys or solicitation of input from students, parents, staff, and school administrators, including suggestions for improvement in specific areas.

Annual Notification of Policy

The school unit will annually inform families and the public of basic information about the wellness policy, including its content, any updates, and implementation status. This information will be made available on the school unit's website. It will include the contact information for the person coordinating the wellness committee as well as information about opportunities for the public to get involved with the wellness committee.

Triennial Process Assessments

RSU 34 shall establish and maintain an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about and monitoring of the policy and its established goals and objectives.

Every three years, the Director of School Nutrition will:

- Assess extent to which the school unit's schools are complying with the wellness policy;
- Assess the extent to which the school unit's wellness policy compares to model wellness policies; and
- Provide a description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the school unit's wellness policy.
- Assist the school unit's wellness committee in the update of the wellness policy based on the results of the triennial assessment and/or as:
 - The school unit's priorities change;
 - Community needs change;
 - Wellness goals are met;
 - New evidence-based health science emerges; or
 - New or updated Federal and State regulations are issued.

Parent Communications

The School Nutrition Director will inform parents of improvements that have been made to school meal standards; availability of child nutrition programs and how to apply; the school unit's meal charging policy, and other relevant information regarding the School Nutrition Program.

Nutrition Standards

Students in RSU 34 have access to healthy foods throughout the school day – both through reimbursable school meals and other foods available throughout the schools and school yards – in accordance with Federal and state nutrition standards;

Nutrition Goals

The school will provide nutrition education that focuses on the skills students need to adopt and maintain healthy eating behaviors. The schools' nutrition education will be integrated in a sequential, comprehensive health education program aligned with the content standards of the Maine system of Learning Results. Nutrition education will also be integrated into other subjects as appropriate to complement, not replace, the health education program.

The school unit will provide foods that meet or exceed the federal nutrition standards, adequate time for students to obtain food and eat, lunch scheduled at appropriate hours of the day, adequate space to eat, and a clean and safe meal environment.

Appropriate professional development will be provided for food services staff.

Nutrition Education

RSU 34 will teach, model, encourage and support healthy eating by all students. Nutrition education will be integrated into the instructional program through the health education program and/or the curriculum as aligned with the content standards of Maine's system of Learning Results. Developmentally appropriate and culturally-relevant nutrition education should focus on skills students need to adopt and maintain healthy eating behaviors. Students should receive consistent nutrition messages throughout the schools, including classrooms, cafeteria, and school-home communications.

School Meals

All schools within RSU 34 participate in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP). Schools within RSU 34 may also participate in the After-School Snack Program, Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), and CACFP After-School Meal Program. RSU 34 also operates additional nutrition-related programs and activities including Breakfast in the Classroom, Mobile Breakfast carts, Grab 'n' Go Breakfast, and Breakfast After the Bell. All schools within RSU 34 are committed to offering school meals through the NSLP and SBP programs, and other applicable Federal child nutrition programs, that:

- Are accessible to all students;
- Are appealing and attractive to children;
- Are served in clean and pleasant settings;
- Meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established by local, state and Federal statutes and regulations. (RSU #34 offers reimbursable school meals that meet USDA nutrition standards.
- Promote healthy food and beverage choices using , but not limited to the following techniques including;
 - Sliced or cut fruit is available daily
 - Daily vegetable options are bundled into all grab-and-go meals available to students.
 - All staff members, especially those serving, have been trained to politely prompt students to select and consume the daily vegetable options with their meal.

- Alternative entree options (e.g., salad bar, yogurt parfaits, etc.) are on posters or signs within all service and dining areas.
- Student surveys and taste testing opportunities may be used to inform menu development, dining space decor and promotional ideas.
- Student artwork is displayed in the service and/or dining areas when provided.
- Daily announcements are used to promote and market options.
- Menus will be posted on RSU 34 website and/or RSU 34 app. They may also be posted on individual school websites and/or RSU 34 school Facebook pages.
- RSU 34 child nutrition program will accommodate students with special dietary needs as mandated by a physician and in accordance with USDA and Maine Child Nutrition guidelines.
- Students are served lunch at a reasonable and appropriate time of day.
- Whenever possible, lunch will follow the recess period to better support learning and healthy eating.
- Participation in Federal child nutrition programs will be promoted among students and families to help ensure that families know what programs are available in their children's school.

School Nutrition Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

All school nutrition program directors, managers and staff will meet or exceed hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements in the USDA professional standards for child nutrition professionals.

Water

To promote hydration, free, safe, unflavored drinking water will be available to all students throughout the school day and throughout every school campus. RSU 34 will make drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes. Fresh water and cups will be available in the cafeteria during meal times if a drinking fountain is not present.

Goals for Nutrition Promotion

RSU 34 will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students throughout the school campus, as well as encourage participation in school meal programs. This promotion will occur by ensuring that 100% of foods and beverages promoted to students meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition program.

Competitive Foods and Beverages

To support healthy food choices and improve student health and well-being, all foods and beverages outside the reimbursable school meal programs that are sold to students on the school campus during the school day will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks nutrition standards. These standards will apply in all locations and through all services where foods and beverages are sold, which may include, but are not limited to, à la carte options in cafeterias, vending machines, school stores, and snack or food carts.

Celebrations and Rewards

All foods offered on the school campus will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards including celebrations, parties, and classroom snacks brought in by parents or staff. Foods and beverages will not be used as a reward, or withheld as punishment for any reason, such as for performance or behavior. Foods and beverages that meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in Schools nutrition standards may be sold through fundraisers in school and on the school grounds during the school day.

Food and Beverages Marketing in Schools

It is the intent of RSU 34 to protect and promote student's health by permitting advertising and marketing for only those foods and beverages that are permitted to be sold on the school campus, consistent with RSU 34's wellness policy. Any foods and beverages marketed or promoted to students on the school campus during the school day or extended school day will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.

Food and beverage focused marketing is defined as advertising and other promotions in schools. Food and beverage focused marketing often includes an oral, written, or graphic statements made to promote the sale of a food or beverage product made by the producer, manufacturer, seller, or any other entity with a commercial interest in the product. This term includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Brand names, trademarks, logos, or tags, except when placed on a physically present food or beverage product or its container.
- Displays, such as on vending machines exteriors
- Corporate brand, logo, name, trademark on school equipment, such as marquees, message boards, scoreboards, or backboards.
- Corporate brand, logo, name, or trademark on cups used for beverage dispensing, menu boards, coolers, trash cans and other food service equipment; as well as on posters, book covers, pupil assignment books or school supplies displayed, distributed, offered, or sold by RSU 34.
- Advertisements in school publications or school mailings.

As RSU #34/school nutrition services/Athletic Department/PTA.PTO reviews existing contracts and considers new contracts, equipment and product purchasing and replacement decisions should reflect the applicable marketing guidelines established by RSU #34 wellness policy as well as USDA and state guidelines that reference purchasing /vendor contracts.

Physical Activity

Goals for Physical Activity

The school unit will strive to provide all students developmentally appropriate opportunities for physical activity through physical education classes, recess periods for elementary school students, and extracurricular activities (clubs, intramural and interscholastic athletics). School programs are intended to build and maintain physical fitness and to promote healthy lifestyles. The schools should encourage parents to support their children's participation in physical activities, including available before- and after-school programs.

Physical activity during the school day (including but not limited to recess, classroom physical activity breaks or physical education) **will not be withheld** as punishment for reasons not related to playground behavior. This does not include participation on sports teams that have specific academic requirements.

To the extent practicable RSU 34 will ensure that its grounds and facilities are safe, and that equipment is available to students to be active. RSU 34 will conduct necessary inspections and repairs.

Physical Education

RSU 34 will provide students with physical education, using an age-appropriate, sequential physical education curriculum consistent with national and state standards for physical education. The physical education curriculum will promote the benefits of a physically active lifestyle and will help students develop skills to engage in lifelong healthy habits, as well as incorporate essential health education concepts.

RSU 34 will make appropriate accommodations to allow for equitable participation for all students and will adapt physical education classes and equipment as necessary.

All RSU 34 elementary students (grades K-8) in each grade will receive physical education no less than once a week throughout the school year.

Recess (Elementary)

Recess will complement, not substitute, physical education class. Recess monitors or teachers will encourage students to be active and will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the student whenever feasible. When possible and weather permitting, all elementary schools will strive to offer at least 20 minutes of recess on all days during the school year. This policy may be waived on early dismissal or late arrival days. If recess is offered before lunch, schools will have appropriate hand-washing facilities and/or sanitizing mechanisms located just inside/outside the cafeteria to ensure proper hygiene prior to eating and students are encouraged to use these mechanisms before eating. Hand-washing time, as well as time to put away coats/hats/gloves will be built into the recess transition period/timeframe before students enter the cafeteria.

Active Academics

Teachers will incorporate movement and kinesthetic learning approaches into “core” subject instruction when possible and will do their part to limit sedentary behavior during the school day. Teachers will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

Before and After School Activities

Whenever possible, RSU 34 may offer opportunities for students to participate in physical activity either before or after the school day (or both) through a variety of methods. RSU 34 will encourage students to be physically active fore and after school by:

Active Transport

RSU 34 will support active transport to and from schools located in areas that have walking and biking routes that enter the school yard. When appropriate, RSU 34 will encourage this behavior by engaging in any or all the activities below:

- Designate safe or preferred routes to school
- Instruction on walking/bicycling safety provided to students
- Promote safe routes program to students, staff, and parents via newsletters, websites, local newspaper
- Promote the maintenance and use of crosswalks on streets leading to schools
- Promote walking school buses

Other School-Based Wellness Activities

RSU #34 will integrate wellness activities across the entire school setting, not just in the cafeteria, other food or beverage venues and physical activity facilities. RSU 34 will coordinate and integrate other initiatives related to physical activity, physical education, nutrition, and other wellness components so all efforts are complementary, not duplicative, and work towards the same set of goals and objectives promoting student well-being, optimal development, and strong educational outcomes.

The schools, with prior approval of the Superintendent/designee, may implement other appropriate programs that support consistent wellness messages and promote healthy eating and physical activity.

The school unit may develop programs that encourage staff to learn and engage in healthy lifestyle practices.

Community Partnerships

RSU 34 will continue to develop relationships with community partners (e.g., hospitals, universities/colleges, local businesses, SNAP-Ed providers, and coordinators, etc.) in support of this wellness policy's implementation. Existing and new community partnerships and sponsorships will be evaluated to ensure that they are consistent with the wellness policy and its goals.

Community Health Promotion and Family Engagement

RSU 34 will promote to parents/caregivers, families, and the general community the benefits of and approaches for healthy eating and physical activity throughout the school year. Families will be informed and invited to participate in school-sponsored activities and will receive information about health promotion efforts.

RSU 34 will use electronic mechanisms (e.g. email or displaying notices on RSU 34's website or app), as well as non-electronic mechanisms, (e.g. newsletters, presentations to parents or sending information home to parents), to ensure that all families are actively notified of opportunities to participate in school-sponsored activities and receive information about health promotion efforts.

Staff Wellness and Health Promotion

The RSU 34 Wellness Team will coordinate with the superintendent of schools to focus on staff wellness issues, identify and disseminate wellness resources, and to perform other functions that support staff wellness. Schools in RSU 34 will implement strategies to support staff in actively promoting and modeling healthy eating and physical activity behaviors.

RSU 34 promotes staff member participation in health promotion programs and will support programs for staff members on healthy eating/weight management that are accessible and free or low-cost.

RSU 34 promotes a healthy eating/healthy meeting approach for all events with available food and beverage options.

Cross Reference:

EFE COMPETITIVE FOOD SALES-SALES OF FOODS IN COMPETITION WITH THE
SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM
ERD CHARGING OF MEALS BY STUDENTS

Adopted: October 2018

Revised: March 20, 2024