

# ISD 709 Wellness Policy Update

## Background

Each local educational agency that participates in the National School Lunch Program or other federal Child Nutrition programs is required by federal law to establish and implement a local school wellness policy for all schools under its jurisdiction.

Local wellness policies are an important tool for parents, local educational agencies (LEAs) and school districts in promoting student wellness, preventing and reducing childhood obesity, and providing assurance that school meal nutrition guidelines meet the minimum federal school meal standards. (USDA)

## Process

The draft wellness policy is based on the Minnesota School Board Association's (MSBA) Model Wellness Policy (2010), and is an update to ISD 709's current Wellness Policy number 6300. The primary resource when considering additions to the MSBA model policy language was the Public Health Law Center's model wellness policy language. A representative committee made recommendations for modifications to the draft policy. The committee was represented by the following stakeholders during the process:

- |  |                    |                                 |
|--|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| ▪ Administration                         | ▪ Indian Education | ▪ Teachers                      |
| ▪ School board                           | ▪ Duluth YMCA      | ▪ School Nurse                  |
| ▪ Principals and<br>assistant principals | ▪ Child Nutrition  | ▪ Office of Education<br>Equity |
| ▪ A pediatrician                         | ▪ Farm to School   | ▪ Parents/guardians             |
|  | ▪ Public Health    |                                 |

A series of wellness committee meetings were held between March 2016 and December 2016, where policy language was reviewed and commented on. In between meetings, stakeholders had the opportunity to provide comment and feedback on the policy. During this time frame, a School Health Index was completed at the district level, which helped to identify gaps in the current wellness policy and identify best practices. On July 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016, the USDA Food and Nutrition Service finalized regulations to create a framework and guidelines for written wellness policies established by local educational agencies. The current draft of Wellness Policy reflects the most up to date regulations required by the USDA, and implementation will be supported through a Wellness Committee Action Plan and Communication Plan.

## Health and Achievement

*The mission of the wellness committee is to assure a school environment that promotes and protects all students' health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity.*

Healthy students are better learners, and all students deserve the opportunity to be healthy and successful.

- *Healthy students are better on all levels of academic achievement: academic performance, education behavior, and cognitive skills and attitudes.*

Schools can influence eating and physical activity behaviors.

- *Students spend much of their time at school, and may eat 2 out of 3 meals per day and get much of their physical activity at school.*
- *Investing in the health of students contributes to health communities in the future.*

All students deserve the opportunity to be healthy and successful.

- *Providing access to healthy foods and physical activity plays an important role in the academic achievement of students*

Source: Centers for Disease Control, Health and Academic Achievement (2014)