

## **TIOGA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT WELLNESS POLICY**

### **PREAMBLE**

Mounting evidence suggests there is a direct link between nutritional intake and academic performance, as well as between physical activity and academic achievement. Physical activity in adolescents has consistently been related to higher levels of self-esteem and lower levels of stress and anxiety – each of which has been associated with better academic performance. However, current trends indicate that the majority of youth today are not eating well and are not engaging in appropriate amounts of physical exercise. In fact, only two percent of school-aged children consume the recommended daily number of servings from all five major food groups. Instead of eating fruits and vegetables, youth are consuming too much total fat. This, combined with the fact that almost half of young people ages 12-21 do not participate in physical activity on a regular basis, has placed youth of today at immediate risk of obesity, and long term risk of heart disease.

The Tioga Central School District is committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, it is the policy of the Tioga Central School District that:

- All students in grades K-12 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Foods and beverages sold at school should meet the nutrition recommendations of the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
- To the maximum extent practicable, all schools in our district will participate in available federal school meal programs (including the School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program [including after-school snacks], and the Summer Food Service Program.

### **I. School District Wellness Committee**

The Tioga Central School District will create a school wellness committee to develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies. The committee also will serve as a resource to school sites for implementing those policies. (A school health committee consists of a group of individuals representing the school and community, and should include parents, students, representatives of the school food service, members of the school board, school administrators, teachers, and school health professionals.)

### **II. Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served on Campus**

**School Meals.** Meals served through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs will:

- be appealing and attractive to children;
- be served in clean and pleasant settings;
- meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations;

*Breakfast.* To 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:

- Schools will, to the extent possible, operate the School Breakfast Program.
- Schools will, to the extent possible, arrange bus schedules and utilize methods to serve school breakfasts that encourage participation, including serving breakfast in the classroom, "grab-and-go" breakfast, or breakfast during morning break or recess.
- Schools that serve breakfast to students will notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast Program.

*Free and Reduced Price Meals.* Schools will 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.

*Summer Food Service Program.* The district currently provides a free Summer Food Service Program for all residents 18 years of age and younger. Breakfast is served from 8:00-8:30am and lunch is served from 11:00-12:00pm. Such program will continue for the 2007-2008 school year as grant funding allows.

*Meal Times and Scheduling.* Schools:

- Will, to the extent possible, provide students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch;
- Will, to the extent possible, schedule meal periods at appropriate times, e.g., lunch should be scheduled between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.

**Qualifications for School Food Service Staff** Qualified nutrition professionals will administer the school meal programs. Staff development programs should include appropriate certification and/or training programs for child nutrition directors and cafeteria workers, according to their levels of responsibility.

**Sharing of Foods and Beverages** Schools should discourage students from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets, and the spreading of infectious diseases.

### **III. Foods and Beverages Individually Sold in Buildings**

#### **Guidelines for Food and Beverages Sold**

*Elementary Schools.* The school food service program will approve and provide all breakfast and lunch food and beverage sales to students in elementary schools. Given young children's limited nutrition skills, food in elementary schools should be sold as balanced meals. If available, foods and beverages sold individually should be limited to low-fat and non-fat milk, fruits, and non-fried vegetables.

*Middle/High Schools.* The Tioga Central School District believes in and encourages nutritional meals and snacks for children. Foods sold within the Food Service Program should include only those that have no more than 35% of calories from fat.

#### **Guidelines for Classroom Snacks**

It is recommended that at classroom celebrations, teachers are encouraged to provide healthy snack alternatives for students.

### **IV. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing**

**Nutrition and Education Promotion.** The Tioga Central School District aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Schools should provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- promotes fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices; and
- emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise).

**Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting.** For students to receive the nationally-recommended amount of daily physical activity and for students to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior, students need opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class. Toward that end:

- classroom health education should complement physical education by reinforcing the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically-active lifestyle and to reduce time spent on sedentary activities, such as watching television.

**Staff Wellness.** The Tioga Central School District should establish and maintain a staff wellness committee as a subcommittee of the school health council. The committee should develop, promote, and oversee a plan to promote staff health and wellness. The plan should outline ways to encourage healthy eating, physical activity, and other elements of a healthy lifestyle among school staff.

## V. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

Tioga Central School District strives to adhere to the following guidelines:

**Physical Education (P.E.) K-12.** All students in grades K-12, including students with disabilities, special health-care needs, and in alternative educational settings, will receive physical education as an integral part of the instructional program.

**Daily Recess.** All elementary schools will schedule recess in addition to the daily instructional program, during which schools should encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment.

**Physical Activity and Punishment.** Teachers and other school personnel should minimize the withholding of opportunities for physical activity (*e.g.*, recess) as a punitive measure.

**Use of School Facilities Outside of School Hours.** School spaces and facilities should be available to students, staff, and community members before, and after the school day, on weekends, and during school vacations. School policies concerning safety and building use will apply at all times.

## VI. Monitoring and Policy Review

**Monitoring.** The superintendent or designee will ensure compliance with established district-wide nutrition and physical activity wellness policies.

**Policy Review.** The district, and individual schools within the district, should, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.