

# Nevada Department of Education

## *Statewide School Wellness*

### *Policy*

*DRAFT* 02/28/05



Office of Child Nutrition and School Health  
Nevada Department of Education, Carson City

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Nevada Statewide School Wellness Policy was drafted from recommendations made by community shareholders and the Nevada Nutrition Advisory Committee. The Nevada Department of Education wishes to acknowledge the contributions of the following community members from the areas of industry, education, food distribution, and regulation who contributed their expertise in the development of this model nutrition policy.

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The Nevada Department of Education would also like to express its appreciation to the 1500 community stakeholders statewide, who outlined the focus areas of community interest covered within this model nutrition policy.

## STATEWIDE CHILD NUTRITION, WELLNESS, AND HEALTHY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT PHILOSOPHY

The school environment has the potential to exert tremendous influence on children's behavior. As members of the Nutrition Advisory Committee, we agree that it is not only our responsibility, it is our obligation as adults to ensure that we provide the most healthful environment possible for our children. Therefore, we strongly advocate for changes in our schools that will help to promote nutritious food choices that are conducive to lifelong health and well-being, and not merely discourage those that are harmful. By focusing solely on the latter, we miss the opportunity to help children develop an appreciation for all foods and to realize the importance of moderation with respect to diet and health.

Our goal should be one of creating a positive school environment that facilitates healthful food choices by replacing less-nutritious options with foods such as fruits, vegetables, low-fat snack foods, fruit juice, and milk; by increasing the students' awareness of the association between diet and well-being through developmentally-appropriate nutrition education methods; and by encouraging adults to serve as positive role models. Students' learning is not limited to classroom lessons but also by their observations of others. Parents, teachers, and other school staff can reinforce classroom lessons by making health a priority in decisions they make regarding themselves and the schools. For example, by making a decision not to use food as a reward or incentive in their classrooms, teachers can help students establish healthful attitudes toward food including the primary role of food as a fuel source for growth, activity, and maintenance.

This goal may be best addressed through policy that reflects the values of the local community and involves all the stakeholders in the implementation process including students, parents, teachers, and other community members. A coordinated approach that reinforces appropriate messages related to food and nutrition through the curriculum and the School Nutrition Program is ideal.

Although not specifically addressed in the policy, components recommended by the Nutrition Advisory Committee such as the complementary benefits of physical activity, also need to be advocated. The concept of energy balance for lifelong health is dependent on 'energy in and energy out'. Over a lifetime, the consequences of a slight daily energy imbalance from too many calories consumed or too few calories expended can result in obesity, which is often associated with a variety of chronic diseases (e.g., coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, cancer, and osteoporosis) and a poor quality of life.

The initial charge of the Nutrition Advisory Committee was to help construct a "model policy" for the state of Nevada. As we strived toward our objective, we did so with the awareness that schools and school districts would face challenges in meeting the standards included in the policy. However, with the knowledge that good nutrition is optimal for academic performance, the committee continues to advocate for changes in Nevada's schools that promote one of the most important lessons in life....good health.

## INTRODUCTION

The Child Nutrition Program (CNP) and the Women, Infants, and Children's Program (WIC) Reauthorization Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-265) requires that each local educational agency participating in a program authorized by the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act or the Child Nutrition Act of 1966, establish a local school wellness policy by June 30, 2006.

Wellness policies supporting sound nutrition principles and an active lifestyle provide the guidance our children need to develop into healthy, active adults. Healthy, active adults do not carry the burdens of chronic illness that result from obesity and inadequate activity.

As the leaders in the education of Nevada's children, the Nevada State Board of Education challenges all school districts and their individual schools to develop local nutrition and wellness policy formats with their community members to include the student body, parents, neighbors, and business constituents. These policy formats should follow sound nutrition principles, based on scientific findings, as outlined within this document. School communities may develop policies that are more restrictive, although schools are reminded that students need to learn to make choices through the practical application of nutrition principals acquired in the classroom and at home.

Considerable national emphasis has been placed on obesity in the general population and particularly in children. Surveillance data relating to obesity rates among Nevada's youth has not been maintained prior to this date. However, it is estimated that the obesity rates for our youth are at least equal to or exceed the national average.

- Current research, although limited in many instances, demonstrates that childhood obesity has reached epidemic proportions with the percentage of overweight children more than doubling in the last two decades. The proportion of overweight adolescents has tripled within the same time period (NCHS 2004, LCB, 2005).
- Statistical data supports the fact that overweight children tend to become overweight adults, perpetuating the obesity problem (Guo SS, 1994).

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has classified obesity as a national epidemic. The Surgeon General of the United States has also issued a response, *A Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity*. Schools were identified by the CDC, as one of the key settings for public health strategies to address this concern:

- Approximately 95% of the nation's children, aged 5 – 17 years old, attend school.
- Approximately 55 % of young people eat one of their three daily meals from a school meal program.
- Nearly 16% of young people get two of three meals from the school meal programs.
- For some young people, school meals are the only nutritious meal that they receive.

Nevada has approximately 400,851 children who have access to the National School Lunch Program and/or the Special Breakfast Program, which requires sponsors to provide nutritious, well-balanced meals (Nevada 1, 2004). Approximately 163,812 (40.9%) of the students with meal

access in Nevada choose to participate in the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program (Nevada 2, 2004).

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has launched efforts to foster healthy school environments that support proper nutrition and the development of healthy eating habits to counteract these national health concerns and to improve the quality of the students' dietary choices.

The most appropriate venue for daily reinforcement of nutrition principles is the school. The school environment provides the stage for learning, while the school staff acts in a supporting role to enhance parental guidance as our children learn to make better daily food choices.

The increasing consumption of "junk food" and carbonated beverages by children are blamed for an alarming increase in obesity and type II diabetes:

- Only 2% of this nation's youth meet all the serving recommendations in the Food Guide Pyramid (Mathematica, 2001).
- Teenagers today drink twice as much soda as milk (Mathematica, 2001).
- The average calcium intake of adolescent girls is about 800 mg a day, although the Recommended Dietary Allowance for adolescents is 1,200 mg of calcium a day (Mathematica, 2001).

Healthy eating patterns are essential for students to be ready to learn, achieve their full academic potential, and derive the lifelong benefits of a healthy lifestyle.

The link between nutrition, learning, attendance, and classroom behavior has been defined in research that demonstrates:

- Improved student behavior in students who eat breakfast; while not having breakfast can affect the children's intellectual performance (NCHS, 2004/USDA, 2004).
- Improved test scores in children who receive adequate nutritional support. Even moderate malnutrition can have lasting effects on cognitive development and school performance (NCHS, 2000/USDA, 2004).
- Improved attendance rates at schools that provide breakfast programs (NCHS,2000/USDA, 2004).

Nutrition policies at the school level ensure that all students develop a knowledge base, enhance their physical and nutrition choices through school resources, and provide practice at making food and activity choices required within the activities of daily living.

Sound nutrition and wellness policies include provisions for adequate activity levels:

- In a typical day, 33% of children spend more than three hours watching television (Mathematica, 2001).
- Studies of young people have found that television watching is directly associated with obesity (Mathematica, 2001).

- Nearly 31% of high school students fail to engage in sufficient amounts of physical activity (CDC, 2004).

In response to this call for action, the Nevada Department of Education, in conjunction with the stakeholders of Nevada, and the Nutritional Advisory Council (2003-2005) has developed the following School Wellness Policy model. This policy has been developed as a broad based guidance tool to assist Nevada's School Districts and individual schools in developing nutrition policies that allow our children to gain the knowledge that enables them to make better food choices and to develop well-balanced physical activity plans. This is part of a community wellness format to "change the scene" in their school stores, cafeteria, ala cart lines, vending machines, and fundraising activities.

**STATEWIDE CHILD NUTRITION, WELLNESS, AND HEALTHY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT POLICY**

1. Each local education agency shall establish a “school wellness policy” that at a minimum shall include:

- Goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities designed to promote student wellness.
- Nutrition guidelines for all foods made available to students, whether given away, earned, or sold, on the school campus during the school day.
- Food choices that are low in saturated fat and cholesterol while being moderate in total fat.

A. Saturated fats shall be limited to 10% of the total calories in the food product.

B. Total fats shall be limited to 30% of the total calories in the food product. Nuts, seeds, fluid milk products containing 2% or less fat, and cheese or yogurt made from reduced-fat, low-fat, or fat-free milk are exempt from this standard.

2. Additionally, in a positive progression to a healthier school environment, food selections on all campuses shall incorporate the following guidelines:

- Sodium shall be limited to no more than 600 mg of sodium per serving.
- Sugars shall be limited to no more than 35% sugar by weight per serving. This percentage does not include sugars from fruits and vegetables when used as additives.

3. Servings will not exceed the following portion sizes:

Elementary/Middle/Junior Grades	High School Grades
Chips (regular) - 1 ounce	Chips (regular) - 1.25 ounces
Chips (baked or no more than 5 grams of fat per ounce), crackers, popcorn, cereal, trail mix, nuts, seeds, dried fruit, jerky, pretzels - 1.5 ounces	Chips (baked or no more than 5 grams of fat per ounce), crackers, popcorn, cereal, trail mix, nuts, seeds, dried fruit, jerky, pretzels - 1.5 ounces
Cookies/cereal bars (plain) - 2 ounces	Cookies/cereal bars – 2 ounces
Cookies/cereal bars (with nuts, raisins, chocolate pieces and/or fruit purees) – 2.2 ounces	Cookies/cereal bars (with nuts, raisins, chocolate pieces and/or fruit purees) – 2.2 ounces

Bakery items (e.g., pastries, muffins) - 3 ounces	Bakery items (e.g., pastries, muffins) - 3 ounces
Frozen desserts - 4 ounces	Frozen desserts - 4 ounces
Water – No Limit	Water – No Limit
	Electrolyte replacement beverages – 12 ounces
Fruit drinks and frozen slushes (must contain a minimum of 50 % fruit juice) - 16 ounces	Fruit drinks and frozen slushes (must contain a minimum of 50 % fruit juice) - 16 ounces

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4. Foods of minimal nutritional value will not be given away, sold, or used as incentives for students or student activities during the school day. The foods that are restricted from sale or 'give away' to students are classified within four categories:

- Soda Water — any carbonated beverage. No product shall be excluded from this definition because it contains discrete nutrients added to the food such as vitamins, minerals, and protein.
- Water Ices — any frozen, sweetened water such as "...sicles" and flavored ice with the exception of products that contain fruit or fruit juice.
- Chewing Gum — any flavored products from natural or synthetic gums and other ingredients that form an insoluble mass for chewing.
- Certain Candies — any processed foods made predominantly from sweeteners or artificial sweeteners with a variety of minor ingredients that characterize the following types: hard candy, jellies and gums, marshmallow candies, fondant, licorice, spun candy, and candy coated popcorn.

5. The following items are not restricted by the *Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value Policy* (FMNV). These items, however, may be restricted in usage by nutrition standards.

Ice Cream	Cookies	Cupcakes	Cakes	Chips	Dips
Candy containing chocolate and/or nuts (e.g. M & Ms, Snickers, Hershey's Kisses, Reese's Cups and Pieces, Milky Way, etc.)					

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6. Reimbursable meals provided to students under the National School Lunch Program are exempt from this policy since they are governed by Federal Regulation 7 CFR, parts 210 and 220.

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7. Each local educational agency may establish a policy that allows exemptions for foods that exceed the established nutrition parameters as follows:
  - In observance of state or national holidays;
  - For established religious observances such as Christmas, Hanukkah, and Kwanza;
  - School community observances, such as birthday parties;
  - As part of a learning experience related to the reinforcement of established lesson plans in the classroom; this exemption, however, does not allow for an exemption toward the sale of foods as part of a business enterprise or fundraising activity.
  
8. Beginning with the school year 2007, each local education agency shall:
  - Designate at least 15 minutes for students to consume the breakfast meal;
  - Designate at least 20 minutes for students to consume the lunch meal;
  - Serve lunch in the elementary schools after the mid-day recess period;
  - Designate at least 30 minutes of time daily, for physical activity.
  
9. In addition, each school's wellness policy shall include:
  - Guidelines for student incentives and rewards that are not based on the provision of foods of minimal nutritional value or foods that do not meet the food policy guidelines herein.
  - Guidelines for revenue accounting, in accordance with Nevada Revised Statute 233B.050, or in accordance with established school district rules of practice.
  - Designation of a person or persons responsible for the oversight of the wellness policy.
  - Provisions for an advisory group composed of representatives from the school community, who would provide guidance in the development of the local education agency's wellness policy. Potential sources for member recruitment would be from the school's parents, students, the school food authority, the school board, school administrators, and school nurses, but are not limited to these groups.
  - A plan for measuring implementation of the school's wellness policy at both the school level and district level which, at a minimum, shall include:
    - A. The number of students in each school;
    - B. The average daily participation in the National School Lunch Program;
    - C. The average daily participation in the School Breakfast Program;
    - D. The level of the wellness policy implementation;
    - E. The time of the lunch recess at the elementary school level;
    - F. The length of the breakfast service;
    - G. The length of the lunch service;
    - H. Whether the service of lunch after recess, was implemented at the elementary school level;
    - I. The number of children with access to physical activity;

- 100 J. The average number of physical activity minutes available to each student;  
101 K. The number of children with access to physical education;  
102 L. The number of children receiving physical education;  
103 M. The number of minutes of physical education provided;  
104 N. The total number of school days a student is required to attend physical education  
105 during the current school year;  
106 O. The name, business phone number, and e-mail address of the oversight officer.  
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108 10. The Nevada Department of Education shall provide a website to collect data and evaluate  
109 outcomes from policy implementation.  
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## DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply to the Nevada Department of Education, Statewide School Wellness Policy:

A La Carte	Refers to individually priced food items provided by the school food service department. These items may or may not be part of the reimbursable meal.
Activities of Daily Living	Those activities performed on a regular basis as part of a person's daily routine, such as, walking to and from class.
Candies	<p>A. <i>Hard Candy</i> — a product made predominantly from sugar (sucrose) and corn syrup that may be flavored and colored, is characterized by a hard, brittle texture and includes such items as sour balls, lollipops, fruit balls, candy sticks, starlight mints, after dinner mints, jaw breakers, sugar wafers, rock candy, cinnamon candies, breath mints, and cough drops.</p> <p>B. <i>Jellies and Gums</i> — a mixture of carbohydrates that are combined to form a stable gelatinous system of jellylike character and are generally flavored and colored, and include gum drops, jelly beans, jellied and fruit-flavored slices.</p> <p>C. <i>Marshmallow Candies</i> — an aerated confection composed of sugar, corn syrup, invert sugar, 20% water, and gelatin or egg white to which flavors and colors may be added.</p> <p>D. <i>Fondant</i> — a product consisting of microscopic-sized sugar crystals that are separated by a thin film of sugar and/or invert sugar in a solution such as candy corn/mints.</p>

Candies (cont'd)	<p>E. <i>Licorice</i> — a product made predominantly from sugar and corn syrup that is flavored with an extract made from the licorice root.</p> <p>F. <i>Spun Candy</i> — a product manufactured from sugar that has been boiled at high temperature and spun at a high speed in a special machine.</p> <p>G. <i>Candy Coated Popcorn</i> — popcorn that is coated with a mixture made predominantly from sugar and corn syrup.</p>
Competitive Foods	<p>Foods and beverages sold or made available to students that compete with the school's operation of the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, and/or the After-school Snack Program. This definition includes, but is not limited to, food and beverages sold or provided in vending machines, in school stores, or as part of school fundraisers. School fundraisers include food sold by school administrators or staff (principals, coaches, teachers, etc.), students or student groups, parents or parent groups, or any other person, company, or organization.</p>
Elementary School Campus	<p>Refers to any campus containing a combination of grades K - 6. Examples: EE, PK - 3, 5 - 6, and 6th grade centers. Middle/Junior high schools with grade levels including one grade in this range would <u>not</u> be covered by this policy. Example: a 6 – 8<sup>th</sup> grade middle school.</p>
FMNV: Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value	<p>Refers to the four categories of foods and beverages (soda water, water ices, chewing gum, and certain candies) that are restricted by this policy.</p>
Fried Foods	<p>Foods that are cooked by total immersion into hot oil or other fat, commonly referred to as “deep fat frying”. This definition does not include foods that are stir-fried or sautéed.</p>

Middle/Junior High School Campus	Refers to any campus containing a combination of grades 6 - 8. High schools with grade levels including one grade in this range would <u>not</u> be covered by this policy. Example: a high school with grades 8-12.
Physical Activity	Activity chosen by a person, not as a part of the activities of daily living, which allows exercise and mental diversion.
Physical Education	A structured physical educational program which incorporates classes or lessons but not recess and is approved for curriculum inclusion in the State of Nevada.
Refined or Added Sugar	Includes, but is not limited to, sucrose, dextrose, fructose, corn syrup, high fructose corn syrup, and other sweeteners that are added to food products.
School Day	For the purposes of this policy, the school day is defined as thirty (30) minutes prior to either the breakfast meal service time or the beginning of the first class of the day, whichever is earlier, to thirty minutes after the dismissal of all classes for the day.
School Meals	Meals provided under the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, and the After School Snack Program for which schools receive reimbursement in accordance with all applicable federal regulations, policies, instructions, and guidelines.
Snacks	Defined as either competitive foods or a la carte (see definitions above), depending on whether or not they are provided by the school food service department.
Trans Fat	Occurs in foods when manufacturers use hydrogenation, a process in which hydrogen is added to vegetable oil to turn the oil into a more solid (saturated) fat. Trans fat may be found in such foods as margarine, crackers, candies, cookies, snack foods, fried foods, baked goods, salad dressings, and other processed foods.
Vended Product/Items	Refers to all food products sold on a school campus within store settings, classrooms, vending machines, vendor carts, through ala' cart sales, or in areas maintained for adult use.

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