

Wellness Policy Recommendations 2021-2022

Below are a series of prioritized recommendations provided by the [Healthi Kids](#) Wellness Policy Workgroup and the RCSD's Wellness Task Force. RCSD family leaders and community partners developed these recommendations in partnership.

Overview of Key Recommendations	
1	Frame the policy within racial health equity context (Statement of Purpose)
2	Develop accountability framework for communication and implementation of the school policy across school buildings (Create new section 5405.105)
3	Adopt stronger language to support enforcement and implementation of the policy (overall)
4	Adopt a series of recommendations to provide better communication to families about the policy including: (5404.95) - Communication with parent, and educator education on availability of student supports - Strengthens and provides mechanisms to encourage communication with families
5	Include language related to the importance of play based learning and encourage professional develop opportunities for staff (5405.5)
6	Strengthen language in the policy that shares recess shall not be taken away as a form of punishment (5405.5)
7	Adopt a new clause within the wellness policy related to safe routes to school (5405.5)
8	Develop a breastfeeding policy for students and staff (5405.100)
9	Adopt new language that shares food shall not be used as a reward/punishment (5405.4)
10	Update current sections on nutrition, particularly for food sold outside of school meals programs, to meet current federal guidelines/requirements (5405.4)
11	Amend Health, physical activity and nutrition education to meet current NYSED standards (5405.6, 5405.65, 5405.7)
12	Strengthen language to support the implementation of nutrition, physical activity, social emotional health, and health education professional development for educators and staff (5404.6b)

These subsequent recommendations identify additional gaps and recommendations based on the WELL SAT 3.0 analysis and have been pulled together by the Healthi Kids workgroup of RCSD family leaders and community partners.

Additional Recommendations/Gaps	
13	Ensure inclusion, culturally responsive and sustaining framework and English language learners are imbedded throughout the policy. Crosswalk policy with NYSED Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Framework (Statement of Purpose)
14	Adopt comprehensive language to address healthy marketing in schools (5405.40)

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15	Include language in the policy encouraging staff to adopt healthy fundraising and celebration guidelines in the classroom (5405.40)
16	Amend nutrition standards section to ensure communication of school meals menus to students and families (5405.40)
17	Amend nutrition standards section to include clause that encourages farm to school initiatives (5405.30)
18	Include School Breakfast Program within nutrition and school meals sections (5405.30 and 5405.40)
19	Amend Student Advisory Council to instead reflect the newly formed RCSD Meals Advisory Council (5405.90)
20	Include language to identify how educators can work with support services personnel to address health within the classroom (5405.80)

For a deep overview of these recommendations with associated language to amend the district wellness policy, please go to page 3.

Full Recommendations for the RCSD Wellness Policy with Recommended Language for Adoption

1	Frame the policy within racial health equity context (Statement of Purpose)
	Amend the statement of purpose: In opening paragraphs of the policy, ensure that the diversity and realities of our student population are made clear (e.g. 50% of students in Rochester live in poverty; many students rely on school meals as their only time for healthy nutrition).
2	Develop accountability framework for communication and implementation of the school policy across school buildings (Create new section 5405.105)
	Edit 5405.110 to read as follows: - The Superintendent shall implement this policy and establish such regulations and guidelines to carry out the requirements and standards set forth in this policy. The Superintendent must designate a District level staff member and/or an advisory team to monitor compliance; and such designee shall report semi-annually, and at such other times as the Superintendent specifies, regarding compliance with this policy and related procedures. School buildings must list on their website who their wellness policy liaison is, so families know whom to contact with any questions or concerns. Edit 5405.1 to read as follows: - A Wellness Task Force shall convene a meeting at least semi-annually and must be comprised of representatives of the Administration, parents, students, community representatives, teachers, and principals. The Wellness Task Force will review the implementation of this policy and make recommendations to the Administration and the Board with regard to issues impacting student and employee health, nutrition, physical education and wellness. Every 3 years, the Wellness Task Force must review the policy and make any relevant improvements. The review process, including who was involved and what changes were made must be communicated to all families in the District. Edit 5405.1 to read as follows: - To support increased transparency of Wellness Task Force meetings, the District will also create a page on their website where families can view the District Wellness Policy, as well as the Wellness Task Force meeting agendas and minutes.
3	Adopt stronger language to support enforcement and implementation of the policy (overall)
	Throughout the policy overall: Develop stronger language throughout all of the policy (e.g. encourages = must)
4	Adopt a series of recommendations to provide better communication to families about the policy including: (5404.95)
	Edit 5405.90 to read as follows: (c) The District requires and will support, through tools and resources, equitable communication with parents and guardians to better inform students of health opportunities, availability of student supports and effective access to care. (E.g., newsletters, communications via Parent Portal, backpack flyers, and on the district's Facebook page etc.)

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5	Include language related to the importance of play based learning and encourage professional develop opportunities for staff (5405.5)
	Edit 5405.6 as follows: Research shows that play and physical activity are foundational to whole child health. Kids who play every day are healthier, do better in school and have reduced feelings of anxiety. They also learn important social emotional skills (e.g. building blocks to help them later in life) like teamwork, problem solving, cooperation and conflict resolution. As such, staff must integrate playful and active learning into regular classroom settings and curriculum. This will be achieved by the following: - Requiring the teaching of health education in the classroom that complements physical education by reinforcing the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain an active lifestyle and reduce time spent on sedentary activities, such as watching television and playing videogames. - Providing professional development on ways to build physical activity into curriculum. The District will partner with community organizations to support professional development opportunities for staff and educators. - Fostering collaboration between physical education staff, teachers, paraprofessionals in school buildings through school wellness teams - Identifying inclusive opportunities for play for children of all abilities, sharing resources, and if needed partnering with community organizations like: the Strong Center for Developmental Disabilities and Rochester Accessible Adventures.
6	Strengthen language in the policy that shares recess shall not be taken away as a form of punishment (5405.5)
	Edit 5405.5 as follows: Understanding that physical activity is critical for learning and development, staff are forbidden from taking away opportunities for play and physical activity as forms of punishment.
7	Adopt a new clause within the wellness policy related to safe routes to school (5405.5)
	Add to 5405.50 B.3 as follows: All schools should implement strategies to promote active transportation and safe routes to school for all K-12 students who live within the 1.5 mile walkable/bikeable distance from the school. Safe routes to school is an approach that promotes walking and cycling through infrastructure improvements, enforcement, tools, safety education and incentives that encourage walking and biking. School buildings can implement safe routes to school strategies including: ensuring proper traffic calming infrastructure surrounding the school building, implementing walking school buses, and/or employing bus monitors and crossing guards. For resources on how to implement safe routes to school strategies: https://www.saferoutespartnership.org/
8	Develop a breastfeeding policy for students and staff (5405.100)
	Add to 5405.100 as follows: The District will provide a supportive environment to staff and students who wish to continue breastfeeding upon return to school. This includes providing milk expression breaks, a private, comfortable space with a locking door to express milk (that is not the bathroom), and support from staff and peers to facilitate mothers meeting their breastfeeding goals.

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9	Adopt new language that shares food shall not be used as a reward/punishment (5405.4)
	• Add to 5405.4 as follows: Create new policy that states that food should not be used as a reward or taken away as a form of punishment
10	Update current sections on nutrition, particularly for food sold outside of school meals programs, to meet current federal guidelines/requirements (5405.4 and 5404.3)
	• Add to 5405.40: The Superintendent of Schools shall develop regulations to establish specific guidelines for the sale or offering of foods, snacks and beverages in vending machines, school stores and elsewhere on school property. These regulations must meet or exceed the guidelines put forth in the USDA Smart Snack standards. These standards can be found at: https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/tools-schools-focusing-smart-snacks • Add to 5404.30: The Superintendent of Schools shall develop regulations to establish nutritional standards that promote the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, foods low in fat and sodium, and the preparation of school meals that reflect the current science in public health and progressive thinking among national experts in the development of healthy and successful school meal programs. These regulations must meet or exceed current USDA Standards and USDA Smart Snack Standards, which can be found at: https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/tools-schools-focusing-smart-snacks and https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/nutrition-standards-school-meals.
11	Amend Health, physical activity and nutrition education to meet current NYSED standards (5405.6, 5405.65, 5405.7)
	• Edit 5405.6 B to read as follows: (a) Health Education in elementary schools • Elementary school curriculum shall include health education as a constant for all pupils to meet NYSED Learning Standards for health, physical education, and family at all three levels, and NYSED Learning Standards for physical education. For more information visit: http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/curriculum-instruction/new-york-physical-education-learning-standards-2020.pdf (b) Health education in the secondary schools. • The secondary school curriculum shall include health education as a constant for all pupils to meet NYSED health standards (see http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/career-technical-education/learning-standards-for-health-physical-education-and-family-and-consumer-sciences-at-three-levels.pdf). In addition to continued health guidance in the junior high school grades, provision shall also be made for a separate one-half year course. In addition to continued health guidance in the senior high school, provision shall also be made for an approved one-half unit course. Health education shall be required for all pupils in the junior and senior high school grades and shall be taught by teachers holding a certificate to teach health. A member of each faculty with approved preparation shall be designated as health coordinator, in order that the entire faculty may cooperate in realizing the potential health teaching values of the school programs. The health coordinator shall insure that related school courses are conducted in a manner supportive of health education, and provide for cooperation with community agencies and use of community resources necessary for achieving a complete school - community health education program.

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	The curriculum shall focus on health promotion to enhance each student's independent thinking skills and decision-making. Each student is empowered to enhance personal responsibility for healthy living.
12	Strengthen language to support the implementation of nutrition, physical activity, social emotional health, and health education professional development for educators and staff (5404.6b)
	Add to 5405.6: - Providing professional development on ways to build physical activity into curriculum. The District will partner with community organizations to support professional development opportunities for staff and educators. Edit 5405.6 B to read as follows: - All staff will receive professional development to support in embedding nutrition, physical activity, social emotional health, and health education within lesson plans and current curriculum within a culturally responsive and sustaining framework to meet the needs of the District's student population. Professional development will occur every year to keep up with current trends and educational strategies that are related to health and wellness. The district will partner with community organizations to support the implementation of this clause. School staff will apply these learnings when developing their curriculum each year, integrate nutrition education in to classes outside of health education (e.g. science, social studies) and seek out participatory learning opportunities for students and their families.

Other opportunities and

13	Ensure inclusion, culturally responsive and sustaining framework and English language learners are imbedded throughout the policy. Crosswalk policy with NYSED Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Framework (Statement of Purpose)
	Amend the statement of purpose to include the following statement: This policy is written to ensure that inclusion and the needs of all learners are considered in all aspects of wellness. The policy reflects the NYSED Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Framework and connects to the current Code of Conduct.
14	Adopt comprehensive language to address healthy marketing in schools (5405.40)
	Edit 5405.20 to read as follows: (e) Marketing in schools buildings promotes healthy foods, beverages and lifestyles. This includes food marketing on school property and equipment (e.g. signs, scoreboards, sports equipment), on educational materials (e.g. curricula, textbooks, or other printed/electronic education materials), where food is purchased (e.g. exteriors of vending machines, food and beverage cups and containers, food display racks, coolers, trash and recycling containers), in school publications and media (e.g. ads in school publications, on school radio stations, in-school TV, computer screen savers, school sponsored internet sites, and announcements on PA system), and through fundraisers and corporate incentive programs (including PTA/PTO fundraisers). Schools should seek out opportunities to support local healthy

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	institutions (e.g. the public market), including farm to school initiatives. School building personnel must also be mindful of food marketing and logos when consuming food or beverages in the presence of children. See Superintendent Regulation 5405-R for more information about food marketing.
15	Include language in the policy encouraging staff to adopt healthy fundraising and celebration guidelines in the classroom (5405.40)
	Add to 5405.40: Schools are strongly encouraged to work with families to provide healthy classroom celebrations, including providing healthy food choices, and non-food celebration activities. For ideas, visit: https://www.actionforhealthykids.org/activity/healthy-active-parties/
16	Amend nutrition standards section to ensure communication of school meals menus to students and families (5405.40)
	Add to 5405.4: School buildings must collaborate with food service staff ensure lunch menus are available to students and their families. Food service staff must work alongside the RCSD Meals Advisory Council and students to develop menus that are culturally responsive and sustaining to students. Make spices and flavorings available (within USDA guidelines - low sodium/no salt added) to allow school foods to be more like what students eat at home.
17	Amend nutrition standards section to include clause that encourages farm to school initiatives (5405.30)
	Add to 5405.30: Where possible, the RCSD Department of Nutrition Services shall seek out opportunities for implementing farm to school strategies to ensure that all students have access to fresh, close to home produce and products.
18	Include School Breakfast Program within nutrition and school meals sections (5405.30 and 5405.40)
	Amend 5405.30 and 5405.40 All students in the District must have access to the USDA School Breakfast Program. Throughout each year, the District will communicate to families about the program, and provide support to any who wish to access the program.
19	Amend Student Advisory Council to instead reflect the newly formed RCSD Meals Advisory Council (5405.90)
	Amend 5405.90 (e): Amend the youth school meals advisory council and replace with the RCSD Meals Advisory Council.
20	Include language to identify how educators can work with support services personnel to address health within the classroom (5405.80)
	Amend Counseling, Psychological and Social Services & Health Services section: Include language to identify how educators can work with support services personnel, related services and community partners to address health within the classroom