

Menands Union Free School District
Local Wellness Policy

Preamble

On June 30, 2004, Congress passed section 204 of Public Law 108.265, requiring that by the first day of the 2006 school year, all schools must develop a local wellness policy that addresses student wellness and the growing problem of childhood obesity.

The Menands Union Free District Board of Education (BOE) believes that our school environment should foster healthy eating habits, physical activity, and general well being for both students and staff. It is our belief that students who are given the knowledge and opportunity to live a healthy lifestyle will be better able to learn, will have better attendance, and will be better equipped to carry over healthy habits to non-school hours. By instilling these values early in life, it is our belief that we can reduce the risk factors that can lead to major diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, cancer, and stroke later in life.

To accomplish this goal, the district will have a comprehensive approach to wellness, engaging students, parents, teachers, food service staff, health professionals, administrators, and interested community members.

School District Health Council

The Menands Union Free School District will have a Health Advisory committee that will oversee, create, monitor, and revise the Wellness Policy as necessary. Members of this committee may consist of parents, teachers, students, administrators, school food authority members, school board members, health professionals, and members of the public.

Nutrition Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served on School Property

The Menands Union Free School District believes that a hungry child cannot learn. Healthy foods support physical growth, brain development, disease resistance, emotional stability, and the ability to learn. To provide our students and staff the greatest opportunity to succeed, the District will:

Provide meals through the National School Lunch and Breakfast programs, meeting or exceeding the nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations.

Continue to operate, support, and promote the School Breakfast Program.

Ensure the anonymity of students participating in the Free and Reduced Price meal Program through the use of a cafeteria Point of Sale system. Persons other than the cashier and the food service director are not to know the classification of students taking school lunch.

Offer a variety of fruits and vegetables, with an emphasis on fresh produce when available.

Serve low fat milk, fat free milk and milk alternatives.

Serve a majority of whole grain and pastas.

Participate in and promote the Choose Sensibly program by selling only the snacks that meet or exceed the nutrition requirements of the program (7 grams or less of fat, 2 grams or less of saturated fat, 360 milligrams or less of sodium and 15 grams or less of sugar) and providing students with a list of qualifying snack items for use at home.

Sell snacks that qualify for the Choose Sensibly program only one time per week.

Allow students at least 10 minutes to eat breakfast in their classroom or cafeteria.

Schedule meal periods between 11:00am and 1:30pm, and all students will be allowed at least 20 minutes for meal times.

Make a reasonable attempt to schedule lunch after recess periods for elementary classes.

Allow students access to restrooms to wash or sanitize hands prior to mealtimes.

Allow and encourage food service staff to attend professional development programs, round table discussions, and support groups that pertain to their level of responsibility.

Discourage and disallow the sharing of food and beverages between students, given growing concerns about food allergies and other restrictions.

Foods and Beverages Individually Sold or Offered in School (i.e. not through lunch or breakfast programs)

The foods and beverages available in the students' environment influence lifelong eating Habits. These influences are present throughout the day and in many forms other than during school meal times. To endure that healthy eating habits are reinforced outside of school meal programs, the following guidelines have been set for food and beverages served or offered to students in school:

Beverages sold or offered shall be low in sugar and fat, and will have one serving per package. Juice drinks shall be at least 50% juice. Beverages shall have less than 10% caffeine. Bottled water and naturally flavored water shall be offered.

Gatorade and juice vending machine will be available only after 2:30pm for after school sports and activities.

Electrolyte replacement beverages (PowerAde, Gatorade) shall contain 42 grams or less of additional sweeteners per 20 oz. serving.

Snacks offered in school shall meet the Choose Sensibly guidelines:

7g or less fat, 2g or less saturated fat

15g or less sugar

360 mg or less sodium

USDA guidelines shall be followed and students should be offered fresh fruits and vegetables instead of high fat, low fiber snack foods.

Attention should be given to the appropriate portion size for elementary and middle school students.

Food and Beverages sold as part of a fund raising activity shall be nutritious, low in fat and sugar, and meet federal guidelines. Candy sales, baked good sales, and donut sales do not meet the guidelines set forth above. Healthier or non-food alternatives such as flower sales, chicken or pasta dinners, and coupon books should be considered. Catalogue merchandise sales shall contain a majority of non-sugar items.

Classroom snacks shall, at a minimum, meet the Choose Sensibly guidelines above. A sample list of qualifying snacks will be made available for students, parents, and teachers. Fresh fruits and vegetables are encouraged.

Food and Beverages, especially those that do not meet the nutrition standards outlined in this policy, will not be used as rewards for academic performance or good behavior (unless allowed by a student's individual education plan).

Celebrating during the school day that include foods or beverages shall meet the guidelines listed above. In no instance shall there be more than one food or beverage offered that does not meet the guidelines. A list of healthy party ideas will be made available for students, parents, and teachers.

Foods and Beverages served as school-sponsored events will meet all guidelines set forth in this policy.

Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing

The Menands Union Free School District will be dedicated to providing yearly updates and training to teachers and staff as necessary to teachers to build physical activity into their curriculum.

Periods of physical activity will be integrated into the classroom setting. Physical activity such as the "Take 10" program should be done at least once per day in the elementary classrooms, where students are engaged in a physical activity for a ten-minute length of time. Morning announcements will periodically include a 30 second morning stretch or "wake up" activity.

Reward incentives that are activity oriented are encouraged.

Communication with parents and the community is a key to achieving success with this wellness plan. Snack guidelines, Celebration guidelines and health guidelines will be posted on the Menands School website; articles, and updates will appear in the PawPrints newsletter; and information will be provided to parents on the evening of the Open House. A set of links to health and wellness websites will be provided on the Website for additional resources.

Food Marketing in the school will consistently promote nutritionally sound beverages, food, fruits, and vegetables. Posters about these foods, the USDA's nutrition guidelines, and healthy choices will be placed throughout the school.

We believe that a healthy staff is a more effective staff. We all serve as role models for the students in our school. Staff shall have access to wellness resources such as the Hope Health letter distributed by the school nurse. We hope to offer a staff wellness seminar in the future, which would include blood pressure and cholesterol screenings, stress management tools, and nutrition information.

Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

The Menands Union Free School District believes that Physical Education and physical activity should be an essential element of the school day. The primary goals of this component are to provide every student the opportunity to develop the knowledge, skill, and attitude to develop and maintain physical fitness for life.

In accordance with NYS regulations, qualified teachers who are given professional development opportunities will teach physical education classes.

Time requirement/calendar week is 120 minutes exclusive of dressing/showering.

Grade level breakdown:

K-3 is daily physical education.

4-6 is at least 3 days/week

7-12 is at least 3 days/week one semester and at least 2 days/week the other semester

Developmentally appropriate physical education will be offered to all students in the District throughout the course of the year.

The Physical Education Curriculum:

- Will provide students with knowledge, skills and attitudes essential for each individual to develop lifelong fitness plans and goals.
- Is aligned with both the New York State Learning Standards and standards set by the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE).
- Encourages students to develop healthy emotional and social behaviors necessary for successful development in society.

Physical Education Instruction and Assessment:

- Curriculum, instruction and assessment are all aligned
- Encourages students to maintain a healthy self-concept related to physical activities and abilities,
- Gives students the opportunities to participate in activities to develop skills needed for lifetime sports and activities.
- Is taught by a certified physical education teacher trained on the latest physical education practices and methods.
- Keeps all students actively involved throughout a majority of the class period

Opportunity to Provide a Positive Learning Environment:

- Includes student of all abilities
- Has enough equipment so every student is capable of participation
- Has teacher/student ratio comparable to those found in other subject areas and classrooms
- Offers activities which promote student confidence and competence in activities and skills in the physical realm.
- Includes the development of an individualized health/fitness plan and goals to reach optimal levels of health and fitness

In addition to physical education classes, every student in kindergarten through eighth grade will have a daily recess. A recreation coordinator has been employed to lead in moderate to vigorous games and activities at this time including basketball, jumping rope, foursquare, kickball, and other activity-oriented games. Students also have the opportunity to explore a comprehensive fitness playground incorporating upper body stations, climbing, swinging, and balance skills. Students will also have the opportunity to participate in pedometer activities encouraging walking as fitness. Emphasis will be placed on scheduling recess prior to lunch for elementary students.

Students will not be inactive for periods of longer than two hours at a time due to changing of classes with special area teachers and other subject area teachers located at various points throughout the school building.

Students in fifth through eighth grades have the opportunities to participate in the following organized sports after-school throughout the course of the school year: soccer, cross-country running, volleyball, and track & field. There is also a fitness and strength building club called power up. Students in second through eighth grades may also be involved in community sports teams such as soccer, basketball, baseball, and softball and cheerleading. The school also has a dance program for all ages' after-school. An open gym takes place throughout the course of the year for various physical activities and sports. We encourage students to participate in various community activities throughout the school year such as local races (i.e. Freihofer's Run).

Teachers and school personnel will refrain from using physical activity in a punitive manner (such as running laps, push-ups). It is agreed that students should not be withheld from recess or other opportunities for physical activity as punishment.

The school is fortunate to have a bike path closed to automobile traffic on school grounds leading to area homes. Parents must complete an authorization to have their child bike or walk to school throughout the course of the school year. Students are encouraged to walk in groups. The path is controlled by local police and is maintained by the village of Menands. There are also clearly marked crosswalks exiting across the road from the school. Students participate in bike safety instruction supplemented by AAA going over rules of traffic and helmet requirements.

Monitoring Policy Review

The Wellness Committee shall meet a minimum of twice per year to monitor and review the wellness policy. We believe that this policy is a continuous work in progress, and will need to be updated on an annual basis.