

Wellness Policy

The USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) is now requiring all schools and agencies that participate in the National School Lunch Program to have a Wellness Policy on file. The due date is July 1, 2006.

(Note: This does apply to schools who purchase only milk through the government subsidy.)

There are some examples of policies on: www.fns.usda.gov/tn

Other details can be found at: www.ode.state.oh.us/food_service

- [National School Lunch Program](#) – Lunches supplied by this program provide one-third of the daily nutritional requirement for children. Approximately 165 million lunches are provided yearly in Ohio's schools through this program.
- [School Breakfast Program](#) – Reports show that students who eat breakfast improve their behavior and ability to perform in the classroom. This program provides an estimated 32 million breakfasts at more than 1,400 sites.

Congress recognizes that schools play a critical role in promoting student health, preventing childhood obesity, and combating problems associated with poor nutrition and physical inactivity. To formalize and encourage this role, Congress passed a law (P.L. 108 - 265) requiring each school district participating in the National School Lunch and/or Breakfast Program to establish a local wellness policy by the beginning of School Year 2006-2007.

This legislation supports President George W. Bush's [HealthierUS initiative](#). This Initiative helps Americans take steps to improve personal health and fitness and encourages all Americans, including children, to be [physically active every day](#); eat a [nutritious diet](#); get [preventive screening](#); and make [healthy choices](#).

The legislation also places the responsibility of developing a wellness policy at the local level, so that the individual needs of each district can be addressed. According to the requirements for the Local Wellness Policy, **school districts must set goals for nutrition education, physical activity, campus food provision, and other school-based activities designed to promote student wellness. Additionally, districts are required to involve a broad group of individuals in policy development and to have a plan for measuring policy implementation.**

These web pages www.fns.usda.gov/tn serve as a clearinghouse of information on the Local Wellness Policy. Sample policies and reference materials are provided to help school districts as they develop their own wellness policies. These materials are intended for guidance and reference; however local policies are not limited to the examples listed here. Although these sample policies and materials have been provided to assist school districts in developing their own local wellness policies, USDA has not approved or endorsed any of them.

The following can be found on the website: www.fns.usda.gov/tn

- **[Local Wellness Policy Requirements \(See Below –Components of a Wellness Policy\)](#)**
This section describes the requirements of the policy and provides links to examples and implementation tools for each component.
- **[Local Process: How to Create, Implement, and Evaluate a Wellness Policy](#)**
This section explains the process of creating and implementing a wellness policy.
- **[Examples: Local Wellness Policies](#)**
This section provides examples of model policy language and existing policies on various wellness topics.
- **[Implementation Tools and Resources](#)**
This section provides links to implementation tools including curricula, program ideas, and best practices.
- **[Funding a Local Wellness Policy](#)**
This section provides a list of grants and resources that are available to support the implementation of a local wellness policy.
- **[Frequently Asked Questions](#)**
This section provides answers to some of the most common questions about the wellness policy.

Components of a Wellness Policy

As required by law, a local wellness policy, at a minimum, shall include:

1. Goals for *nutrition education, physical activity and other school-based activities* that are designed to promote student wellness in a manner that the local educational agency determines is appropriate;

Sample policy language, existing state and local policies, implementation tools, and resources are available for:

- **[Nutrition education](#)**
- **[Physical activity](#)**
- **[Other school-based activities designed to promote wellness](#)**

2. *Nutrition guidelines* selected by the local educational agency for all foods available on each school campus under the local educational agency during the school day with the objectives of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity;

More information is available at: **[Setting nutrition guidelines](#)** for all foods and beverages available on campuses.

3. *Guidelines for reimbursable school meals*, which are no less restrictive than regulations and guidance issued by the Secretary of Agriculture pursuant to Subsections (a) and (b) of Section 10 of the Child Nutrition Act (42 U.S.C. 1779) and Section 9(f)(1) and 17(a) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1758(f)(1), 1766(a)0, as those regulations and guidance apply to schools;

This requirement implies that districts must ensure that reimbursable school meals meet the program requirements and nutrition standards set forth under the 7 CFR Part 210 and Part 220.

4. *A plan for measuring implementation* of the local wellness policy, including designation of 1 or more persons within the local educational agency or at each school, as appropriate, charged with operational responsibility for ensuring that each school fulfills the district's local wellness policy;

More information is available at:

[Maintaining, measuring and evaluating a wellness policy](#)

5. *Community involvement*, including parents, students, and representatives of the school food authority, the school board, school administrators, and the public in the development of the school wellness policy.

More information is available at:

[Identifying a policy development team](#)