

Nutrition Education

Quality nutrition education which is presented creatively, is grade appropriate, and builds knowledge and skills throughout the child's school experience. It addresses factual information and explores the health, social, cultural, and personal issues influencing food choices. Nutrition and nutrition education are recognized as important contributors to overall health.

Comprehensive nutrition education programs extend beyond the classroom into the larger school environment. The school cafeteria serves as a laboratory where students apply critical thinking skills taught in the classroom. Physical education programs, after-school sports, and school health services are appropriate avenues for nutrition education efforts. Students need to explore how:

1. Knowledge has purpose and meaning in their lives; and
2. Curriculum points to the connections within and across disciplines.

Examples of how nutrition can be integrated into classes include discussing ethnic food practices in the context of history and geography; preparation of healthy food in home economics, adult living, or life skills courses; the study of essential nutrients in science and biology classes; applying mathematical and technological skills to conduct dietary analysis; and addressing the wide range of social, cultural, and psychological aspects of food in language and social studies classrooms.

The District has a comprehensive curriculum approach to nutrition in kindergarten through grade 12. All instructional staff are encouraged to integrate nutritional themes into daily lessons when appropriate. The health benefits of good nutrition should be emphasized. These nutritional themes include but are not limited to:

1. Knowledge of My Plate;
2. Healthy choices to decrease illness;
3. Sources and variety of foods;
4. Guide to a healthy diet;
5. Diet and disease;
6. Understanding calories and food as energy;
7. Healthy snacks;
8. Healthy breakfast;
9. Healthy diet;
10. Food labels;
11. Major nutrients;
12. Multicultural influences;
13. Serving sizes by age, sex, and activity level;
14. Proper sanitation;
15. Importance of fluid intake and selection; and

16. Identifying and limiting low nutrition food.

The District nutrition policy reinforces nutrition education to help students practice these themes in a supportive school environment.

All nutrition education will be scientifically based, consistent with the most recent Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Nutrition education will be offered in the school cafeteria as well as in the classroom, with coordination between school food service staff and teachers. Teachers can display posters, videos, websites, etc. on nutrition topics and send materials home to involve parents.

Participation in USDA nutrition programs is encouraged as the District conducts nutrition education activities and promotions that involve students, parents, and the community. The school nutrition team responsible for these activities will be composed of child nutrition services staff, student services staff, school nurses, health teachers, and physical education coaches.

School Community

For a truly comprehensive approach to the school-based nutrition programs and services, it is crucial that all members of the school community help to create an environment that supports healthy eating practices. Administrators, teachers, school food service and other personnel; parents; and students need to be involved in this effort. Decisions made in all school programming need to reflect and encourage positive nutrition messages and healthy food choices. This includes coordination of nutrition education with the cafeteria and the promotion of healthy food choices in the cafeteria and all school events, such as fundraisers.

Local Community

The effectiveness of school-based nutrition programs and services can be enhanced by outreach efforts in the surrounding community. Personnel should be familiar with the health and nutritional resources available through the community and local agencies. Contacts should be made with the health department, community nutrition programs, health centers, local food pantries, and fitness programs. Once contact has been established, collaborative efforts should be made with other community agencies to positively influence the health and nutritional status of school-age children.

Schools will work with a variety of media to spread the word to the community about a healthy school nutrition environment, such as local newspaper and television stations.

Parent Involvement

The District will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. The District will offer healthy eating seminars for parents, send home nutrition information, post nutrition tips on school websites, and provide nutrient analyses of school menus. Schools should encourage parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks and to refrain from

including beverages and foods that do not meet the District’s nutrition standards for individual foods and beverages. Celebrations that involve food during the school day shall be limited to no more than one party per class per month. No more than one food or beverage that does not meet nutrition standards for Smart Snacks in Schools may be served at such parties. The District will provide parents a list of foods that meet the District’s snack standards and ideas for healthy celebrations/parties, rewards, and fundraising activities. In addition, the District will provide opportunities for parents to share their healthy food practices with others in the school community.

The District will provide physical education and other school-based physical activity opportunities before, during, and after the school day; and support parents’ efforts to provide their children with opportunities to be physically active outside of school. Such support will include sharing information about physical activity and physical education through a website, newsletter, or other take-home materials, special events, or physical education homework.

Parents are to be advised that their children are participating in a nutrition education or counseling experience, encouraging their support at home. Parent involvement can be in person or through communication sent to the home.

1. Nutrition education will be provided to parents beginning at the elementary level. The goal will be to continue to educate parents throughout the middle and high school levels;
2. Healthy eating and physical activity will be actively promoted to students, parents, teachers, administrators, and the community at registration, PTO meetings, open houses, health fairs, teacher inservices, etc.; and
3. Nutrition education from evidence-based sources (such as USDA’s Team Nutrition and My Plate) may be provided in the form of handouts, postings on the District website, or presentations at open houses that focus on nutritional value and healthy lifestyles.

Cross Reference: 8200 Healthy Lifestyles
8230 District Nutrition Standards

Legal Reference: I.C. § 33-512 Governance of Schools
42 USC § 1758b, Section 204 Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010
7 CFR § 210.30 Local School Wellness Policy

Other References: Implementation and Monitoring Plan, Idaho State Department of Education

Policy History:

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