

Wellness Policy

LSWP Triennial Assessment Summary 06-2022

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA), which oversees the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) in public schools, requires a Triennial Assessment of our Local School Wellness Policy. The Easton, Redding & Region 9 wellness policy can be found at <https://www.er9.org/common/pages/DisplayFile.aspx?itemId=6971356> and was developed to support student and staff health and well-being.

Our Wellness Committee, composed of stakeholders in the Easton & Redding communities, has performed an assessment of our policy, using the WellSAT, which is a quantitative assessment tool developed by the University of Connecticut's Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity. The goal of the assessment is to compare ER9's policy to a model policy, identifying our strengths, our areas for growth and our plans to improve our wellness policy. The evaluation examines these components of our policy:

- **Nutrition Education**
- **Standards for USDA Child Nutrition Programs and School Meals**
- **Nutrition Standards for Competitive and Other Foods and Beverages**
- **Physical Education and Physical Activity**
- **Wellness Promotion and Marketing**
- **Implementation, Evaluation and Communication**

Our Strengths:

Nutrition Education:

Our districts use a standards-based curriculum with specific goals to promote student wellness. The nutrition program is comprehensive and sequential. It includes a variety of interactive lessons, along with projects, research, class discussion, and an introduction to a number of related components.

Most students will have nutrition education included in their programs before they graduate from the middle school. Sequential and comprehensive nutrition education is provided to all high school grade levels.

Standards for USDA Child Nutrition Programs and School Meals:

Our food service management company assures compliance with all elements of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act (HHFKA).

We use a POS system that alerts our cashiers of a student's eligibility for free or reduced price meals, and we have a clear procedure for providing information through multiple avenues (e.g., Applications for are sent home to all families at the beginning of the school year and are available on the district website)

All schools have free water available, either 5 gallon water bubblers, a water cart or the typical water fountain with bottle refill station.

Training for food and nutrition staff meets or exceeds the USDA Professional Standards

Procuring locally grown foods is a priority. We can describe specific efforts to increase purchases and promote local foods.

We are confident that students with unpaid balances are not stigmatized in any way (e.g., overtly identified) and are always given the regular reimbursable meal.

In order to increase participation in the school meal program, we do monthly marketing campaigns and various tasting throughout the school year at all schools. (Pre-pandemic)

Breakfast is offered for 25 minutes before school starts and there is a 10 minute morning break also. Lunch periods average 25 minutes at all 5 schools. (Pre-pandemic)

Nutrition Standards for Competitive and Other Foods and Beverages:

If the schools or school stores offer competitive foods, we ensure that all items meet Smart Snacks standards.

There are vending machines on the property(s) and the food services director ensures that snacks are compliant. There are no food or beverage fundraisers during the school day.

There are no products with caffeine sold at the high school level.

There are no foods served or sold after the school day.

Teachers do not use food as a reward in the classroom.

Students have consistent access to water at no cost throughout the school day.

Physical Education and Physical Activity:

There is a written physical education curriculum and it is implemented for every grade and it is aligned with national/state standards.

Our schools promote a physically active lifestyle through role modeling, accessibility to materials which promote physical activity, along with regular participation in a variety of activities.

All of the physical education classes are taught by state certified/licensed teachers and relevant professional development is offered to PE teachers every year.

No PE exemptions are offered, as PE classes are graduation requirements like any other academic courses.

Daily recess is provided for at least 20 minutes for all grades in elementary school.

Most teachers provide regular physical activity breaks for students. They use online resources to help create different movement breaks in the classroom.

There is an agreement between the school and community with regard to shared use of the grounds facilities (i.e. Basketball, Lacrosse).

Wellness Promotion and Marketing

Our policy addresses physical activity not being used nor withheld as a punishment for students.

Multiple strategies are used to promote healthy food or beverage choices.

Any foods marketed on school property meet Smart Snack criteria and are only in the cafeteria.

Implementation, Evaluation and Communication:

ER9 has an ongoing district wellness committee which meets at least twice a year.

The wellness committee is comprised of teachers, parents, school nurse, administrators, board members, food service management director and a community member.

There are building level representatives who serve on the district wellness committee.

The policy is made public on the website and all wellness committee meetings are posted and open to the public. Minutes are posted following each meeting.

Areas for Growth and Improvement:

Nutrition education is not part of their curriculum, but instructional staff are encouraged to integrate nutritional themes into lessons when appropriate, making all disciplines cross curricular.

We are addressing restrictions on types of food and beverages served at celebrations.

We will ensure that all staff know how to access the USDA Smart Snacks nutrition standards.

We will work towards returning to the minimum required PE time per week in all schools.

Plan for Improvement:

Overall, our wellness policy compared favorably to the model policies in the WellSAT assessment tool. As we continue our work, we will:

- Work to update the language in our policy to strengthen it and bring it further into compliance.

- Focus on reviewing the triennial assessment and making recommendations on updates needed. Once completed the updated policy will be submitted to the ER9 Board of Education for approval.
- Encourage the continued use of movement breaks districtwide.
- Work with after school clubs and programs and our community partners to provide alternatives for after school healthy food and beverages that meet nutrition standards.
- Work with Easton & Redding's police departments to identify and ensure safe routes to school to encourage families to walk to school.