Office of the State Superintendent of Education

LOCAL WELLNESS POLICY

NUTRITION ENVIRONMENT AND SERVICES
SCHOOL MEALS

Eating food that meets health and nutritional needs is associated with better attendance, fewer missed school days and improved academic success.

Healthy meals provide the essential nutrients and energy needed for students to perform, learn, grow and stay healthy.

To support this, schools must serve meals that comply with federal and local nutrition requirements. These balanced meals must offer a variety of fruits, vegetables and whole grains while limiting sodium, added sugars and saturated fat.

REMINDER

All meals provided to students through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and other supplemental programs must meet federal and local nutritional standards.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR SETTING YOUR GOALS

- Evaluate the latest administrative review for your local education agency (LEA) and assess compliance with required nutritional standards for school meals.
- Collaborate with your school community to draft measurable goals that address the required elements and meet students' nutritional needs, including ensuring there are plans to increase the use of locally grown, locally processed and unprocessed foods from growers engaged in sustainable agriculture practices.
- Include learning experiences and activities that encourage students to participate in the school meal programs and select healthy foods and beverages.

REQUIRED ELEMENTS

- Plans for increasing the use of locally grown, locally processed, and unprocessed foods from growers engaged in sustainable agriculture practices (DC Code § 38-826-01(b)(2)(B)).

RECOMMENDED ELEMENTS

- Track procurement using the Locally Grown Food Item Tracking Log (DC Code § 38-823.01).
- Serve school meals that meet or exceed the federal nutritional and local HSA standards (DC Code § 38-822.02(a)).

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

- School administrators
- School nutrition professionals
- Food service staff
- School business and operations staff
- Health education teachers
- Students
- Parents
- Community-based organizations

RESOURCES

- OSSE Administrative Review Findings

Webpage from the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) with summaries of the most recent final Administrative Review (AR) results. The AR provides a comprehensive evaluation of school meals programs of School Food Authorities (SFAs) participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and are conducted at a minimum, once in every three-year cycle.

- OSSE School Health Profiles Data

Self-reported school-based health questionnaire completed annually by all public schools and public charter schools, as required by the Healthy Schools Act (HSA).

- USDA Nutrition Standards for School Meals

Webpage from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) with information and resources regarding nutrition standards for school meals.

- Locally Grown and Unprocessed Food Tracking Log

Log where local education authorities (LEA) must report to the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) the local foods served as part of the school meal programs on a quarterly basis.

- Food Buying Guide

Resource by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) that assists Child Nutrition Program (CNP) operators, food manufacturers, and other stakeholders with purchasing the correct amounts of foods for CNP and determining the contribution that each food makes toward meal pattern requirements.