

TAHLEQUAH PUBLIC SCHOOLS DISTRICT WELLNESS POLICY

Preamble:

Good health fosters positive educational experiences. Children with access to healthy foods and physical activity grow, learn, and thrive. Numerous surveys have established that healthy children have greater attention spans and retention skills, higher test scores, and less absenteeism.

In the year 2006, our Nation faces a health epidemic of dangerous proportions. Only two percent of children ages 2 through 19 eat a healthy diet consistent with the five main recommendations from the Food Guide Pyramid. Obesity rates have doubled in children and tripled in adolescents over the last two decades. Physical inactivity and excessive calorie intake are the predominant causes of obesity. Unhealthy eating habits, physical inactivity, and obesity are major risk factors in heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes, which in turn are responsible for two-thirds of deaths in the United States¹. In Cherokee County, Oklahoma, the obesity rate in 2004 was 30.4%, up from 21.9% in 2002². The State of Oklahoma has the highest rate for deaths due to cardiovascular disease in the nation, with 411.6 deaths per 100,000 population³.

Therefore, the Tahlequah Public School district commits to fostering a healthy school environment that promotes and protects children's health, well-being, and ability to learn. We commit to participation in school-based activities which support healthy eating, physical activity, and long-term healthy lifestyles.

Background:

In compliance with Section 204 of Public Law 108-265, not later than the first day of the school year beginning after June 30, 2006, each local education agency participating in the National School Lunch Act shall establish a local school wellness policy for schools under the local educational agency. Tahlequah Public Schools' district Wellness Committee was formed in October of 2005. The committee consisted of food service professionals, athletics professionals, teachers, students, parents, administrators, board members, and community members. The following wellness policy has been established by said committee.

¹ National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity (www.nanacoalition.org)

² Oklahoma State Health Department County Health Profile 2004

³ America's Health: State Health Rankings, United Health Foundation 2004

Physical Education/Fitness Standards:

Objective: Promote a healthy lifestyle by providing Tahlequah Public School children with opportunities to participate in physical activities and events throughout each school year.

Action Plan Commitment:

At the elementary and middle school level, Tahlequah Public School District will...

- Provide physical education instruction and/or exercise programs for students in kindergarten through grade five for a minimum of sixty minutes each week in compliance with 2006-2007 Oklahoma State Board of Education regulations and Oklahoma Senate Bill 312.
- Schedule physical education for students in kindergarten through grade five either every day or on alternate days throughout the school year in accordance with Oklahoma PASS (Priority Academic Student Skills).
- Per Senate Bill 1186, an additional sixty minute average of physical activity is incorporated into the school week through a variety of activities which include but are not limited to physical education and nutrition education, recess at the elementary and middle school sites, Jog-A-Thons, school competitions, ROTC, intramurals and athletics. Physical activities within the physical education programs include fitness education, pre/post fitness testing, team and individual sports, lifetime activities and games.
- Per House Bill 1518, which amends Senate Bill 1186, the Board shall require, as a condition of accreditation, that public elementary schools provide to students in full-day kindergarten and grades one through five, an average of sixty minutes each week of physical activity, which may include, but not be limited to, physical education, exercise programs, fitness breaks, recess, and classroom activities, and wellness and nutrition education.
- Provide a Fitness Report on students participating in physical education classes in grades three through five to parents/guardians at least twice annually. The report will contain five components based on fitness challenges adopted by the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports. Limited physical testing occurs for students in grades six through eight.
- Develop physical education programs that interest adolescents which **may** include but are not limited to Individual and Team Sports, PE, Strength and Conditioning, Rock Climbing and Archery.
- Provide appropriate professional development to teachers on the importance of physical activity for young children and adults and the relationship of activity and good nutrition to academic performance and healthy lifestyles.
- The Tahlequah Public Schools Athletic Director functions as coordinator of elementary physical education. He will continue to plan and coordinate opportunities for additional physical activity for students, including health and nutrition as part of the curriculum. The opportunities may include but are not limited to before, during, and after school dance instruction, fitness trail programs, intramural programs, bicycling programs, walking programs, recess, and activities designed to promote physical activity.

- Per Oklahoma Senate Bill 1627, ensure the Healthy and Fit School Advisory Committee at each school site studies and makes recommendations regarding physical education and physical activity.
- Utilize the Boys and Girls Club and community volunteers to implement and supervise structured physical activities outside of the school day.
- Enable Tahlequah Middle School students to enroll in physical education elective courses during the day and be involved in after-school or extracurricular activities.
- Expand and maintain extracurricular course offerings for grades six through eight (such as Pom, Cheerleading, choir and band) to include other physical activities, i.e. dance and creative movement.

Action Plan Commitment:

At the secondary level, Tahlequah Public School District will...

- Maintain physical education or equivalent as a graduation requirement for Tahlequah High School students.
- Offer physical education courses that promote lifelong physical activity and are designed to interest young adults. Courses may include but are not limited to PE, Strength and Conditioning, Team Sports, Adaptive PE for Students with Disabilities, Aerobics, Athletics, and Personal Fitness.
- Offer extracurricular physical fitness opportunities that require daily activity.
- Enable THS students to enroll in physical education elective courses during the day and be involved in after-school or extracurricular activities.
- Expand and maintain extracurricular course offerings (such as Pom, Cheerleading, Show Choir, and band) to include other physical activities, i.e. dance and flag teams.
- Explore the possibility of developing an intramural program for students not participating in athletics.
- Implement and maintain group competitions that include physical activity, i.e. Pom and Cheer.
- Provide appropriate professional development to teachers on the importance of physical activity for young children and adults and the relationship of activity and good nutrition to academic performance and healthy lifestyles.
- The Tahlequah Public Schools Athletic Director functions as coordinator of elementary physical education. He will continue to plan and the possibility of designating a Physical Education Activity Coordinator to plan and coordinate opportunities for additional physical activity for students, including health and nutrition as part of the curriculum. The opportunities may include but are not limited to before, during, and after school dance instruction, fitness trail programs, intramural programs, bicycling programs, walking programs, recess, and activities designed to promote physical activity.
- Per Oklahoma Senate Bill 1627, ensure the Healthy and Fit School Advisory Committee at each school site studies and makes recommendations regarding physical education and physical activity.

Child Nutrition Program Standards:

Objective: Provide Tahlequah Public School students with appetizing, nutritious, and economical meals and snacks that comply with local, state, and federal regulations and are served in attractive surroundings by pleasant people.

Action Plan Commitment:

The Child Nutrition Program of Tahlequah Public School District will...

- Participate in the School Breakfast Program and the National School Lunch Program at all district sites.
 - Participate in the After-School Snack Program at all district sites eligible for free snacks (sites where at least 50 percent of enrolled children [based on data from two school years prior] are certified eligible for free or reduced-priced meals).
 - Ensure that snacks provided through the After-School Snack Program meet the meal pattern for snacks set forth in the Oklahoma State Department of Education School Food Service Compliance Document.
 - Follow guidelines provided in the Child Nutrition District Handbook, the Oklahoma State Department of Education School Food Service Compliance Document, and local, state, and federal regulations.
 - Promote safe and sanitary practices.
 - Actively participate in district nutrition education efforts.
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- Offer Child Nutrition staff members at least two professional development opportunities per year, which will provide instruction related to the nutrition field. An attempt will be made to offer one opportunity through third-party training.

Action Plan Commitment:

School meals provided through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs will...

- Meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations.
- Provide access to all five major food groups as defined by the Food Guide Pyramid.
- Follow the "Offer Versus Serve" system, where students must take three out of five food groups at lunch and three out of four food groups at breakfast.
- Offer a variety of fruits and vegetables, to include fresh and frozen.
- Serve only low-fat (up to 1%) and fat-free milk.
- Make every effort to ensure breads prepared for consumption contain at least one-third whole grain.

Action Plan Commitment:

School personnel involved in the collecting, processing, or maintaining of Free and Reduced-Priced Meal applications and statistics will...

- In accordance with federal law, not overtly identify students or family members participating in the Free and Reduced Program.
- Make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to students who are eligible for free and reduced-priced school meals and encourage families to participate in this program.
- Never force a student or family member to submit a free and reduced-priced meal application.

Action Plan Commitment:

School personnel involved in scheduling student mealtimes will...

- Make every effort to provide students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch.
- Schedule meal periods based on both student and curriculum needs. Explore the possibility of implementing "Recess Before Lunch" at those sites not currently doing so.
- Not schedule tutoring club, or organizational meetings or activities during meal service times, unless students may eat during such activities.
- Not compete with the School Meal Programs by serving/selling entrée alternatives during meal service times.
- Utilize the services of the Child Nutrition Program to provide meals during field trips or other activities that take students away from the school site during meal service times. Field trip/activity representatives must give Child Nutrition site managers seven days advanced notice of a scheduled event.
- To the extent possible, arrange bus schedules so that every student has the opportunity to participate in the School Breakfast Program.
- Discourage students from sharing unwrapped foods or open beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns about allergies, diet restrictions, and sanitation issues.
- Encourage students to practice personal hygiene, e.g. to wash their hands before meal service.
- Encourage students, and their families, to actively participate in the School Breakfast and Lunch Programs during designated meal periods.

Nutrition Education Standards:

Objective: Provide education to district students promoting good nutrition and healthy lifestyles, and showing the relationship of these factors to one's ability to learn and achieve.

Action Plan Commitment:

Tahlequah Public School district I-35 will...

- Establish a district-wide Nutrition Education Committee to coordinate nutrition education activities for each district school site. This committee will involve a three-year commitment for each member. Meetings will be held once a month for the first year and quarterly thereafter.
- Adhere to and embrace PASS (Priority Academic Student Skills) standards related to healthy living, ensuring that nutrition is included in healthy living curriculum topics. PASS standards will be applied at every grade level.
- Engage in nutrition promotion for grades one through six through district physical education and/or health instructors. At least four units of nutrition education will be taught at each grade level one through six each school year. Oklahoma PASS provides/requires four unit nutrition objectives.
- Ensure nutrition curriculum for grades seven through twelve emphasizes today's socio-nutrition issues, such as eating disorders, fad diets, and caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise).
- Offer nutrition education in both the school cafeteria and the classroom.
- Provide staff development for all district personnel promoting personal wellness and emphasizing the need to be positive role models for district students.
- Per Oklahoma Senate Bill 1627, ensure the Healthy and Fit School Advisory Committee at each school studies and makes recommendations regarding health education, nutrition, and health services.

Other School-Based Activities Standards:

Objective: Set a positive example for students of every age by providing a healthy school environment that promotes healthy eating, physical activity, and long-term healthy lifestyles.

Action Plan Commitment:

Tahlequah Public School district I-35 will...

- Make every effort to ensure food-related incentives (to include [but not limited to] class parties, child nutrition promotions, nutrition classes, and special events) within the district promote fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices.

- No foods of minimal nutritional value will be served to students through the Child Nutrition Program, in the cafeteria, or during meal service times. No foods of minimal nutritional value will be served to students during school hours.
- Ensure foods and beverages will not be withheld as a punishment. No student will be denied the opportunity to participate in school meal programs. While a student may be separated from other students during a food-related event as a result of disciplinary problems, the student may not be denied access to the foods and beverages provided for that event.
- Make every effort to ensure meal periods provide students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch.
- Ensure that all food and beverage sales to students in elementary and middle schools are approved by the Child Nutrition Program prior to implementation. Given young children's limited nutrition skills, food in elementary schools should be sold as part of a balanced meal. Items sold outside of meal time frames should not interfere with or contradict the district's wellness goals.
- Ensure within middle and senior high schools, all foods and beverages sold individually outside the reimbursable school meal programs (including those sold through ala carte lines, vending machines, student stores, or fundraising activities) during the school day, or during after-school programs where nutritional snacks are provided by Child Nutrition, will meet the following standards:

Beverages –

- Beverages Allowed: Water without caloric sweeteners; fruit and vegetable juices and fruit-based drinks that contain at least 50% fruit juice and that do not contain additional caloric sweeteners; unflavored or flavored low-fat or fat-free fluid milk.
- Beverages Not Allowed: Soft drinks, fruit-based drinks that contain less than 50% real fruit juice or that contain additional caloric sweeteners.

Foods –

- Vending machines will include at least a fifty-percent mix of healthy items, such as fruits, vegetables, yogurts, nuts, dried fruits, or grain products comprised of at least one-third whole grain. Foods of minimal nutritional value are never considered healthy alternatives.
- No foods of minimal nutritional value will be sold.
- Fundraisers will be pre-approved by Child Nutrition to monitor compliance.

To Maintain Policy Action Plans:

Tahlequah Public School district will establish a School Health Council to monitor, review, and revise as necessary the goals set forth in the district's Wellness Policy. This council will ensure...

- Foods and beverages sold or served at school meet the nutrition recommendations of the U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans concerning foods of minimal nutritional value.
- Students have access to affordable and nutritious foods through the district Child Nutrition Program that are served in clean, safe, and pleasant settings with adequate time for food consumption.
- All district schools have access to and encourage participation in school meal programs to the maximum extent possible, to include the School Breakfast Program, the National School Lunch Program, and the After-School Snack Program.
- Nutrition education programs exist at every school site and actively foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity.
- Physical education programs and activities exist at every school site and actively foster lifelong habits of physical fitness.
- All objectives and action plans documented in the district Wellness Policy are met on a continual basis and are updated as necessary in accordance with changing regulations and legal statutes.

Tahlequah Public Schools' School Health Council will be comprised of parents, students, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and interested community members. The council will meet quarterly to verify district compliance.

Tahlequah Public Schools is dedicated to providing a healthy school environment for every district student. This policy corroborates our commitment to excellence through healthy living.