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Westerly Public Schools Student Nutrition and Physical Activity

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Policy Intent/Rationale:

The Westerly Public Schools promotes healthy schools by supporting wellness, good nutrition, and regular physical activity as part of the total learning environment. The District supports a healthy environment where children learn and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices. Schools contribute to the basic health status of children by facilitating learning through the support and promotion of good nutrition and physical activity. Improved health optimizes student performance potential and ensures that no child is left behind.

- A. Provide a comprehensive learning environment for developing and practicing lifelong wellness behaviors.

The entire school environment, not just the classroom, shall be aligned with healthy school goals to positively influence a student's understanding, beliefs and habits as they relate to good nutrition and regular physical activity. A healthy school environment should not be sacrificed because of a dependence on revenue from high added fat, high added sugar, and low nutrient foods to support school programs.

- B. Support and promote proper dietary habits contributing to students' health status and academic performance.

All foods available on school grounds and at school-sponsored activities during the instructional day should meet or exceed the RI and USDA Nutrition Standards and guidelines. Emphasis should be placed on foods that are nutrient dense per calorie. To ensure high quality, nutritious meals, foods should be served with consideration toward variety, appeal, taste, safety, and packaging.

- C. Provide more opportunities for students to engage in physical activity.

A quality physical education program is an essential component for all students to learn about and participate in physical activity. Physical activity should be included in a school's daily education program from grades K through 12. Physical activity should include regular instructional physical education, in accordance with The Rhode Island Physical Education Framework, as well as co-curricular activities and recess.

- D. Improve academic performance in high-risk groups so that no child is left behind.

Educators, administrators, parents, health practitioners and communities must consider the critical role student health plays in academic stamina and performance and adapt the school environment to ensure students' basic nourishment and activity needs are met. To ensure

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widespread understanding of the benefits to school environments where nutritious foods are provided and where students have an opportunity for physical activity, a public awareness campaign that highlights research demonstrating the positive relationship between good nutrition, physical activity, and capacity of students to develop and learn should be conducted.

- E. Establish and maintain a district-wide Health and Wellness Committee as a School Committee subcommittee and chaired by a School Committee member, as directed by RIGL 16-21-28, with the purpose of:
- developing guidance to explicate this policy
 - monitoring the implementation of this policy
 - evaluating policy progress
 - serving as a resource to school sites, (e.g. providing lists of healthy incentives, snacks, etc.)
 - revising policy as necessary
 - development of policies, strategies, and implementation plans that promote purchasing and serving locally grown fruits, vegetables and dairy products and that meet the requirements of the child nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004.
 - making recommendations regarding the district's health education curriculum and instruction, physical education curriculum instructions and nutrition and physical activity polices to decrease obesity and enhance the health and well-being of students and employees.

The subcommittee will meet as often as is necessary, with the goal of meeting at least four times per year per best practice recommendations of Alliance for a Healthier Generation, Action for Healthy Kids, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The subcommittee membership "shall consist of members of the general public, a majority of whom are not employed by the school district, including at least one parent" (RIGL 16-21-28). In addition, the membership will include, where possible, the following members as encouraged by RIGL 16-21-28:

- administrator;
- students;
- community and school-based health professionals;
- business community representatives;
- representatives of local and statewide nonprofit health organizations

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Additionally, the membership may include:

- District Food Service Director/Manager
- Dietitian
- Local Health Practitioner (e.g., pediatrician, dentist, or other appropriate certified medical professional)
- School Nurse-Teacher
- A parent representative from each school
- A student representative from each school
- Staff member representative from each school
- A School Committee/Board member
- District Administrative Representative
- Health / Physical Education Teacher
- Family & Consumer Sciences Teacher
- Local Community Partners (e.g. Boys & Girls Club, YMCA)

School staff, students, parents, and member of the community will be invited to participate in the committee through regular public notice and district communications.

Nutrition Education and Wellness Promotion:

General Wellness:

Westerly Public Schools will adhere to RI Rules and Regulations for School Health Programs (R16-21-SCHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model.

Schools promotion of lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity will establish linkages between health education and school meal programs and with related community services.

Nutrition and wellness will be supported by Westerly Public Schools administration and the Health and Wellness Committee, using the CDC's WSCC approach to comprehensive school wellness. The WSCC model includes ten (10) components:

- Physical Education and Physical Activity
- Nutrition Environment and Services

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- Health Education
- Social and Emotional School Climate
- Physical Environment
- Health Services
- Counseling, Psychological and Social Services
- Employee Wellness
- Community Involvement
- Family Engagement

Each school will engage families, providing information to meet District Wellness goals via District website, school newsletters, email, events and other available resources.

Student Nutrition and Wellness Education:

- Westerly Public Schools shall have a comprehensive, standards based, age appropriate health education program for grades K-12, in accordance with RI General Law (16-22-4), that includes nutrition themes and topics in accordance with the RI Department of Education Health Education Framework.
- Nutritional themes will also be integrated across the core curriculum into daily lessons as appropriate.
- Students will receive nutrition education that fosters the adoption and maintenance of health eating behaviors.
- Nutrition education and wellness promotion will be linked with the entire school food environment with consistent nutrition messages throughout cafeteria programs, health fairs, field trips, after school programming and assemblies.

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

Staff Nutrition and Wellness Education/Promotion

Westerly Public Schools highly values the health and well-being of every staff member and will plan and implement activities and policies that support personal efforts made by staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Staff will be encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity as a valuable part of daily life.

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The Health and Wellness Committee and Westerly Public Schools will develop a plan to encourage, promote, reward and support school and administrative staff health and wellness by encouraging all staff to improve their own personal health and wellness creating a positive role model for students, and by building the commitment of staff to include the school nutrition and physical activity environment.

Parent Nutrition and Wellness Education:

- Nutrition education will be provided to parents beginning at the elementary level. The goal will be to continue to educate and engage parents throughout middle and high school levels.
- Nutrition education may be provided in the form of handouts, postings on the district website, articles and information provided in district or school newsletters, presentations and events that focus on healthy eating, physical activity and healthy lifestyles, and through any other appropriate means available for reaching parents.

Nutrition Guidelines for All Foods at School:

The integrity of the school nutrition environment depends on the quality of ALL foods and beverages sold or served at school in Grades K-12. Foods that provide little nutritional value compete with healthy eating at school. The School District must also consider the need to protect students with special dietary concerns. The RI and USDA Nutrition Standards shall address ALL food beverages sold or served to students, including in the cafeteria, from vending machines, in school stores, as part of school-wide or classroom celebrations and anywhere on school premises.

Reimbursable Meal Program

The Westerly Public Schools will work closely with its District Food Service Director/Manager to offer affordable, nutritious, and appealing meals, including breakfast and lunch, snacks and beverages in compliance with the RI and USDA Nutrition Standards, in order to meet nutritional needs and optimize learning. All schools will participate in the full Breakfast (SBP) and Lunch (NSLP) programs and will meet both the USDA Nutrition Standards for School Meals as well as the Rhode Island Nutritional Requirements (RINR) (See Addendum #6 & #7).

- All meals will promote fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, low-fat and low sodium unprocessed items, in accordance with the current USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans (See Addendum #8).
- As part of the District's responsibility to operate a high-quality food service program, qualified nutrition professionals will administer the meal program and professional

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training and development will be offered for all food service staff working in the schools, as appropriate for their levels of responsibility and in compliance with current USDA professional standards. Training sessions will be offered for staff working directly under the food service provider as well as for district/school staff assigned to meal supervision duty in order to best promote the importance of healthy eating, food safety and positive healthy lifestyle role modeling, in a clear and consistent way among all school personnel.

- Schools will make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to students who are eligible for free/reduced price school meals and will prevent the overt identification of students who are eligible for free/reduced meals by using an electronic identification/payment system.
- The District will ensure that all children eligible for free/reduced meals will have the opportunity to participate in the SBP and NSLP by engaging in frequent outreach to families and coordination with local agencies involved in food security issues.
- The District will notify students, families/guardians of the availability of the Breakfast program and use methods to serve breakfasts that encourage participation, including but not limited to breakfast before school, grab-n-go style breakfast, etc.
- Information on the nutritional content and ingredients of meals will be available to students and parents, as requested.
- Food service will procure, serve and promote locally sourced RI products as much as possible.
- Schools and School Food Service Providers will engage students and parents through various means to encourage participation in school meals and to assist in identifying new, healthy and appealing food choices within the program to promote healthier eating habits.
- Due to food allergies, students are discouraged from sharing food amongst themselves. Share Tables will be utilized in the cafeteria as a way to reduce waste of non-perishable foods and whole fruit (in accordance with RIDE-RIDOH guidance).

Cafeteria Environment:

- A cafeteria environment that provides students with a relaxed, enjoyable climate shall be developed. The cafeteria environment is a place where students have:
 - Adequate space to eat and clean, pleasant surroundings;
 - Adequate time to eat meals. (The American School Food Service Association recommends at least 20 minutes for lunch from the time students are seated with their food); and

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- Convenient access to hand washing or hand sanitizing facilities before meals.

Students and staff will have access to free, safe and fresh drinking water during meal service and at other times throughout the school day. School will have working water fountains, water filling stations and allow students to carry refillable water bottles.

COMPETITIVE FOOD AND BEVERAGES SALES

Westerly Public Schools strongly encourages the sale or distribution of nutrient dense foods for all school functions and activities. Nutrient dense foods are those foods that provide students with calories rich in the nutrient content needed to be healthy. All foods/beverages sold outside of the SBP and NSLP before, during, and up to one hour after school, must comply with the USDA Smart Snacks in Schools regulations and RIGL 16-21-7 for the sale of only healthier snacks and beverages. This includes cafeteria a la carte, vending, school stores and school-based fundraisers.

Food:

- Packaged items will have no more than 200 calories and any entrée item for ala carte sale will have no more than 350 calories
- Items shall contain no more than 35% of its total calories derived from fat.
- Items shall contain no more than 10% of its total calories derived from saturated fat.
- Items shall contain no more than 35% sugar by weight

Beverages:

- Only milk (low fat white or fat free white or flavored), water and beverages containing 100% fruit or vegetable juices, may be sold on school grounds; serving size for elementary schools is 8 oz. and secondary schools 12 oz.
- Beverages with added sugar or those containing caffeine cannot be sold.

Fundraising/Concessions

Westerly Public Schools promote non-food fundraising or fundraisers that promote physical activity. All food fundraisers or Concession sales taking place off school grounds or one hour after the school day are encouraged to follow the USDA and RI Nutrition Standards for the sale of only healthier foods/beverages. Healthy options must be offered at any after-school event where food/beverage concessions are sold.

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Any groups, organizations or individuals who wish to sell food outside of the school day (PTO events, sports events) shall be notified of the nutrition standards of this Wellness Policy. All groups will be encouraged to purchase items through the School Food Services Provider and to utilize the services and expertise of a certified food manager for events.

Classroom/School Celebrations

- Classroom and school celebrations will not be centered on food, except on a limited basis and related to a curriculum activity with principal approval.
- If food and/or beverages are served, it is recommended that they comply with USDA Smart Snacks in School Nutrition Standards RI General Law 16-21-7 for the sale of healthier snacks and beverages, be commercially purchased and/or prepared, or provided by the District Food Service Provider.
- Parents/guardians must be given advance notice of any classroom or school activity where food will be served. Due to food safety and allergy issues, ingredient lists for all food/beverages shall be available.

Other Food and Beverages Served

The use of food rewards or incentives in the schools and classrooms to encourage student achievement or desirable behavior is strongly discouraged unless part of an approved behavior improvement plan or individual education plan (IP). The rare occasions that may provide an exception to this policy directive should be reported on the Wellness Evaluation prepared by the Principal.

Food and Beverage Marketing/Advertising

Marketing or promotion of foods and beverages that do not meet federal USDA and RI nutrition standards is prohibited as per RIGL 16-21-7.1 (see Addendum #4). School-based marketing will be consistent with the District's nutrition education curriculum and the promotion of good health. As such, schools will limit marketing to the promotion of foods and beverages that meet or exceed nutrition standards for reimbursable meals and competitive foods and beverages. The promotion of healthy foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, and water is strongly encouraged. Visual aids in cafeterias will reinforce lessons learned in Health classes to educate students about good nutrition. The advertising of any food or beverage that may not be sold in schools during the school day is prohibited on any school property.

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Physical activity is critical to a child's healthy weight and lifestyle as well as to his/her ability to focus in the classroom. To ensure that all students are adequately active during the day, physical activity needs to be incorporated into the daily schedule of the school. While Physical Education classes provide a specific environment in which students learn, practice and are assessed on developmentally appropriate motor skills, social skills, and knowledge of personal fitness goals and practices, all teachers should recognize the importance of including some physical activity within their classrooms.

Recognizing the role and interest of parents/families in helping to keep children healthy and active, the school district and individual schools will provide information to parents about the importance of daily physical activity as well as opportunities available in the community that may be of interest to families.

Physical Education

Physical Education shall be provided as required for all students in Grades K-12 according to Rhode Island General Law and the Rules and Regulations for the School Health Programs. Students shall receive an average of 100 minutes per week of health/physical education. Recess, free play, and after-school activities shall not be counted as physical education. Physical Education curricula shall be aligned with the standards and performance indicators in The Rhode Island Physical Education Framework.

All students in Grades K-12, including students with disabilities, special health care needs, and in alternative educational settings, will receive Physical Education as prescribed by state regulation. Participation in other activities involving physical activity (e.g. interscholastic or intramural sports) will not be substituted for meeting the physical education requirement. Students will spend at least 50% of physical education time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

Physical Education instruction shall be provided by certified, highly qualified teachers. Professional development will be provided as needed and appropriate to ensure the quality of instruction and the safety of students. The district will provide adequate, safe, and appropriate facilities for Physical Education instruction at each school with class size appropriate for instruction.

Physical Activity

In order that students have the opportunity to achieve the recommended amount of daily physical activity (at least 60 minutes per day) and fully embrace regular physical activity as a

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personal behavior, students need opportunities for physical activity beyond the Physical Education class. Supporting these goals:

- A daily recess period, preferably outdoors, of at least 20 minutes shall be provided to all students in elementary schools in accordance with RIGL 16-22-4.2. The School District will provide appropriate outdoor space and equipment. Recess or other physical activity shall not be taken away from students as a form of punishment unless the safety of a student(s) is a concern. Principals/teachers have the discretion to exceed the minimum allotted time for recess and award additional recess time for good behavior or student performance. Inappropriate exercise or other physical activity shall not be used for the disciplinary purposes. Regularly scheduled physical activity and physical education time shall not be sacrificed in order to provide extra instructional time or to complete class work, absent a compelling circumstance, which shall be approved and documented by the principal of the school.
- Schools will discourage extended periods (longer than 2hrs.) of inactivity.
- Classroom health education will complement physical education by reinforcing knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically active lifestyle and reduce time spent on sedentary activities.
- Opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into other subject areas.
- Classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons whenever possible and appropriate.
- School spaces and facilities should be available to students, staff, and community members outside of the school day and should be available to community agencies and organizations offering physical activity programs with the proper approval of school officials. School policies concerning safety will apply at all times.
- The district will work with community partners and local police to support safe walking and biking to schools.
- All schools will offer before/after school activities (clubs, intramural, interscholastic) and extracurricular programs that promote and provide opportunities for physical activity.

IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING

This Wellness Policy, along with any progress and compliance reports, will be posted on the District's website. The superintendent (or designee) will be responsible for leading the district's implementation plan and informing the public about the content and implementation. Implementation goals and strategies will be included in the District's Strategic Plan. Each school's School Improvement Team (SIT) will be responsible for addressing the policy through its School Improvement Plan and the building principal shall be responsible for providing the leadership necessary for their school's compliance with the policy. The full implementation of this policy will require the support of staff, students and families at the local school level.

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Procedures to guide the implementation of the policy will be developed by the Health and Wellness Committee and provided to all those responsible for their implementation and/or impacted by this policy. Information for students and parents will be included in Student Handbooks and staff will be informed about its content at annual staff orientations.

The Health and Wellness Committee will distribute in the spring of each year the RI Healthy Schools Coalition Wellness checklist to each school. Principals will be responsible for its completion by June 30 so a comprehensive summary of implementation and progress made in attaining the policy goals can be reported to the school committee, and to the public at least once every three years. These reports will be made public and include details on compliance, the extent to which the wellness policy compares to model wellness policies and progress made in achieving goals.

The Superintendent, together with the individual school principals, shall monitor and may make changes to the implementation procedures to assure their appropriateness and effectiveness to the extent that any changes do not diminish the requirements set forth in the policy required by state and federal regulations.

Any changes required by Federal or State Regulations governing district health and wellness policies shall automatically override the policy as stated here. The District Health and Wellness Committee will be responsible for periodic review of the policy to ensure compliance with new Federal and State regulations or inclusion of new evidence-based strategies, and other updates based on the triennial assessment.

LEGAL REFERENCES:

Federal Law:

School Health – § RIGL 16-21-7

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/title16/16-21/16-21-7.htm>

<https://webserver.rilegislature.gov/Statutes/TITLE16/16-21/16-21-7.HTM>

Health and Wellness Subcommittee – § RIGL 16-21-28

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/title16/16-21/16-21-28.htm>

<https://webserver.rilegislature.gov/Statutes/TITLE16/16-21/16-21-28.HTM>

Instruction in health and physical education - § RIGL 16-22-4

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/title16/16-22/16-22-4.HTM>

<https://webserver.rilegislature.gov/Statutes/TITLE16/16-22/16-22-4.HTM>

Rules and Regulations for School Health Programs (R16-21-SCH0)

http://www.thriveri.org/documents/Rules_Regs_School_Health.pdf

<https://rules.sos.ri.gov/regulations/Part/216-20-10-4>

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USDA Nutrition Standards for School Meals

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/nutrition-standards-school-meals>

RI Nutrition Requirements (RINR)

<http://www.thriveri.org/components/nutrition.html>

<https://rules.sos.ri.gov/regulations/Part/216-20-10-4>

USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans

<http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/>

RI Physical Education Framework

http://www.thriveri.org/documents/ri_pe_framework.pdf

[https://ride.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkgbur806/files/2024-](https://ride.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkgbur806/files/2024-08/Rhode%20Island%20Physical%20Education%20Framework%20March%202003.pdf)

[08/Rhode%20Island%20Physical%20Education%20Framework%20March%202003.pdf](https://ride.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkgbur806/files/2024-08/Rhode%20Island%20Physical%20Education%20Framework%20March%202003.pdf)

RI Health Education Framework

[https://ride.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkgbur806/files/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Instruction-and-Assessment-World-Class-Standards/Other-](https://ride.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkgbur806/files/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Instruction-and-Assessment-World-Class-Standards/Other-Subjects/RIDE_Health_Ed_Framework_2022.pdf?ver=2022-06-10-155908-047)

[Subjects/RIDE Health Ed Framework 2022.pdf?ver=2022-06-10-155908-047](https://ride.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkgbur806/files/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Instruction-and-Assessment-World-Class-Standards/Other-Subjects/RIDE_Health_Ed_Framework_2022.pdf?ver=2022-06-10-155908-047)

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