

Purpose

Families are the primary teachers and caregivers for their children. The present and future health, growth, development, safety, and physical well-being of students are also the concern of the Upper Merion Area School District. The Board is committed to providing a school environment that promotes student wellness, proper nutrition, nutrition education, and regular physical activity as part of the total learning experience. In a healthy school environment, students will learn about and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices that can improve student achievement.

Authority

The Board adopts the Student Health and Wellness Policy based on the recommendations of the appointed Wellness Committee and in accordance with federal and state laws. The policy shall be included in the district's Strategic Plan.[\[1\]](#)[\[3\]](#)

To ensure the health and well-being of all students, the Board establishes that the district shall provide to students:

1. Safe and healthy schools for students and employees to learn and work, with a climate that nurtures learning, achievement, and growth of character.
2. The essential knowledge and skills they need to become health literate; that is, to make health-enhancing choices and avoid behaviors that can damage their health and well-being.
3. A comprehensive nutrition program consistent with federal and state requirements.
4. Access at reasonable cost to foods and beverages that meet established nutritional guidelines.
5. Physical education courses and opportunities for developmentally appropriate physical activity during the school day.
6. Curriculum and programs for grades K-12 that are designed to educate students about proper nutrition and lifelong physical activity, in accordance with State Board of Education curriculum regulations and academic standards.

7. The nutrition, health services, and social services students need in order to learn are provided either at the school site or in cooperation with other community agencies.

Health and success in school are interrelated. Schools cannot achieve their primary mission of education if students and staff are not healthy and fit physically, mentally, and socially. Credible surveys indicate that alarming proportions of young people engage in behaviors that put them at risk of serious health problems. In addition, the nation's leading health authorities recommend that schools take an active role in preventing disabling chronic health conditions that create misery and consume a burdensome share of the nation's resources. Well-planned and well-implemented school nutrition programs have been shown to positively influence students' eating habits.

The Upper Merion Area School District shall develop, adopt and implement a comprehensive plan for a thorough, well-coordinated school health, nutrition and physical education program that shall:

1. Be designed in response to demonstrated needs in the community.
2. Be based on models that demonstrate evidence of effectiveness.
3. Emphasize a positive youth development approach.
4. Make efficient use of school and community resources.
5. Respond to families' needs and preferences.

The coordinated school health program plan shall incorporate the following eight (8) components within a single framework:

1. A school environment that is safe; that is physically, socially, and psychologically healthful; and that promotes health-enhancing behaviors.
2. A sequential health education curriculum that is designed to motivate and help students maintain and improve their health, prevent disease, and avoid health-related risk behaviors and that is taught by well-prepared and well-supported teachers.
3. A sequential physical education curriculum that involves moderate to vigorous physical activity; that teaches knowledge, motor skills, and positive attitudes; that promotes activities and sports that all students enjoy and can pursue throughout their lives; that is taught by well-prepared and well-supported staff; and that is coordinated with the comprehensive school health education curriculum.
4. A nutrition services and education program that includes a food service program that employs well-prepared staff who efficiently serve appealing choices of nutritious foods, and a school environment that encourages students to make

healthy food choices.

5. A school health services program that is designed to ensure access or referral to primary health care services; foster appropriate use of health care services; prevent and control communicable disease and other health problems; provide emergency care for illness or injury; and is provided by well-qualified and well-supported health professionals.
6. A counseling, psychological, and social services program that is designed to ensure access or referral to assessments, interventions, and other services for students' mental, emotional, and social health and whose services are provided by well-qualified and well-supported professionals.
7. Integrated family and community involvement activities that are designed to engage families as active participants in their children's education; that support the ability of families to support children's school achievement; and to encourage collaboration with community resources and services to respond more effectively to the health-related needs of students.
8. A staff health promotion program that provides opportunities for school staff to improve their health status through activities such as health assessments, health education, and health-related fitness activities. Staff members shall be encouraged to serve as healthy role models for students.

Delegation of Responsibility

The Superintendent or designee shall be responsible for:

1. Preparing a comprehensive plan for eight (8) elements of a coordinated school health program, with input from students and their families.
2. Ensuring that the various components of the school health program are integrated within the basic operations of the district/school, are efficiently managed, reinforce one another, and present consistent messages for student learning.
3. Developing procedures to ensure compliance with school health policies.
4. Supervising implementation of school health policies and procedures.
5. Negotiating provisions for mutually beneficial collaborative arrangements with other agencies, organizations, and businesses in the community.
6. Reporting on program implementation, results, and means for improvement to whom and how often.
7. Assessing of school environment regarding student wellness issues.

8. Evaluating the food services program.[4]
9. Reviewing of all foods and beverages sold in schools for compliance with established nutrition guidelines.
10. Listing of activities and programs conducted to promote nutrition and physical activity.

The Upper Merion Area School District shall appoint a school health coordinator to assist in the implementation and coordination of school health policies and programs by:

1. Ensuring that the instruction and services provided through various components of the school health program are mutually reinforcing and present consistent messages.
2. Facilitating collaboration among school health/nutrition program personnel and between them and other school staff.
3. Assisting the Superintendent, building principal and other administrative staff with the integration, management, and supervision of the school health/nutrition program.
4. Providing or arranging for necessary technical assistance.
5. Identifying necessary resources.
6. Facilitating collaboration between the district/school and other agencies and organizations in the community who have an interest in the health and well-being of children and their families.
7. Conducting evaluation activities that assess the implementation and results of the school health program, as well as assisting with reporting evaluation results.

All personnel involved in the school health/nutrition and physical education programs shall possess the necessary qualifications and training essential to their duties. Professional staff shall be currently licensed, certified, and/or recertified according to the requirements established by the State Board or other agency for the positions in which they are employed and are expected to follow the performance and ethical standards established by their professional organizations.

Health and physical education teachers shall be required to periodically demonstrate their abilities to apply the content knowledge and instructional skills that are critical to the successful teaching of health and physical education.

All personnel involved in the school health program shall participate in ongoing professional development activities that are directly related to their responsibilities. In

particular, instructional staff who teach health topics shall satisfactorily complete professional development activities that provide basic knowledge about health and health education, including practice with teaching strategies designed to influence students' health-related behaviors and attitudes. Professional development programs shall:

1. Respond to the professional improvement needs of staff and schools.
2. Be designed to transfer knowledge and skills based on theories and methods proven effective by published research.
3. Encourage reflection and professional discourse among peers about classroom practice.
4. Be made available to staff at their place of work to the greatest feasible extent.
5. Provide necessary information about school health-related standards.
6. Guidelines, frameworks, regulations, policies and recommendations of state/district/school and federal agencies.

Guidelines

Wellness Committee

The Board shall appoint a Wellness Committee comprised of at least one (1) of each of the following: School Board member, district administrator, district food service representative, student, parent/guardian, and member of the public.

The Wellness Committee shall serve as an advisory committee regarding student health issues and shall be responsible for developing a Student Wellness Policy that complies with law to recommend to the Board for adoption.

Safety Committee

The district will establish a Safety Committee that will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the district safety policy. The purpose of the committee will be to encourage safety awareness; investigate accidents; conduct inspections and make

recommendations concerning safety-related issues. The Safety Committee will develop programs designed to promote safety awareness for students, staff and community.[5]

Food Service Program

The food service program and its personnel shall be under the general supervision and authority of a Food Service Director who reports to the Business Administrator. State and district officials retain legal oversight responsibility to ensure compliance with state and federal laws, regulations, and guidelines.

Athletic Program

Each middle school and high school shall appoint an Athletic and/or Student Activities Director to be primarily responsible for development, implementation, and ongoing administration of the school's intramural and interscholastic athletic programs.

Multiple indicators shall be used to assess the implementation and results of each component of the school health program. Health-related behaviors of students shall be anonymously surveyed. The evaluation plan shall also include assessments of students and families satisfaction with the school health program. The Board/other decision-making body shall review school health policies to assess their effectiveness and make appropriate adjustments.

District Programs

The district shall implement a comprehensive program of health/nutrition and physical education that is designed to promote healthful living and discourage health-risk behavior. Health-literate graduates of the school system shall be able to:

1. Comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention.
2. Access valid health information and health-promoting products and services.

3. Practice health-enhancing behaviors such as proper nutritional choices and reduce health risks.
4. Analyze the influence of culture, media, technology, and other factors on health.
5. Use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health.
6. Use goal-setting, decision-making, and self-management skills to enhance health.
7. Advocate for personal, family, and community health.
8. Select and participate in lifelong physical activities.

Health Education

The health education program shall be an integral part of a coordinated school health program, be consistent with the state's standards/guidelines/frameworks, and be reviewed by the Health Curriculum Review Committee. The health education program shall:

1. Utilize educational theories and methods that have credible evidence of effectiveness.
2. Emphasize learning and practicing the skills students need for healthful living.
3. Build functional knowledge and skills from year to year (i.e., be sequential in design).
4. Include accurate and up-to-date information.
5. Use active, participatory instructional strategies and techniques.
6. Be appropriate to students' developmental levels, personal behaviors, and cultural backgrounds.
7. Be consistent with state standards.
8. Focus on the behaviors that have the greatest effect on a person's health and emphasize the short-term and long-term consequences of personal health behaviors.
9. Encourage students to assess their personal behaviors and habits, set goals for improvement, and resist peer and wider social pressures to make unhealthy choices.
10. Stress the appealing aspects of living a healthy lifestyle and proper nutrition.

11. Address students' health-related concerns.
12. Utilize curriculum materials that are gender-neutral and nonstereotyping.
13. Assess students' achievement of health/nutrition knowledge and skills with assessment instruments aligned with the curriculum.
14. Be appropriately adapted to the special needs of students with disabling conditions, students with limited English proficiency, and students in alternative education settings.
15. Be taught by well-prepared instructors with adequate support.
16. Be allocated enough instructional time to achieve the program's goals.
17. Include means for program evaluation.
18. Involve parents/guardians and families as active partners in their children's learning.

Physical Activity

District schools shall strive to provide opportunities for developmentally appropriate physical activity during the school day for all students.

Age-appropriate physical activity opportunities, such as recess; before and after school; during lunch; clubs; intramurals; and interscholastic athletics, shall be provided to meet the needs and interests of all students, in addition to planned physical education.

Physical activity breaks shall be provided for elementary students during classroom hours.

Physical Education

Health/Nutrition and physical education topics shall be integrated into the instruction of other subject areas to the greatest extent possible. Such cross-teaching is intended to complement, not substitute for, a comprehensive health education program. Consistent nutrition messages shall be disseminated throughout the district, schools, classrooms, cafeterias, homes, community and media.

Nutrition education shall extend beyond the school environment by engaging and involving families and communities. Parents/Guardians shall have convenient opportunities to preview all curricula and materials. Parents/Guardians will be encouraged to bring in healthy foods for parties or celebrations. A student may be excused from receiving school instruction in specific topics upon the written request of a parent or legal guardian.

To the extent practicable, school staff shall cooperate with other agencies, organizations, and individuals conducting health education in the community. Guest speakers invited to address students shall receive appropriate orientation to the relevant policies of the district. School staff are encouraged to work with community organizations to provide opportunities for student volunteer work related to health.

Other School Based Activities

District schools shall provide adequate space, as defined by the district, for eating and serving school meals.

Students shall be provided a clean and safe meal environment.

Professional development shall be provided for district nutrition staff.

The district shall provide appropriate training to all staff on the components of the Student Health and Wellness Policy.

Goals of the Student Health and Wellness Policy shall be considered in planning all school based activities.

Fundraising projects submitted for approval shall be supportive of healthy eating and student wellness.

Administrators, teachers, food service personnel, students, parents/guardians, and community members shall be encouraged to serve as positive role models through district programs, communications and outreach efforts.

The district shall support the efforts of parents/guardians to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for children by communicating relevant information through various methods.

Nutrition Guidelines

All competitive foods available to students in Upper Merion Area district schools will strive to meet the Nutritional Standards for Competitive Foods in Pennsylvania Schools. The Upper Merion Area School District nutritional standards shall be implemented as a three (3) year plan.

Foods provided through the National School Lunch or School Breakfast Programs shall comply with federal nutrition standards under the School Meals Initiative.

Safe Routes to School

The district shall cooperate with local municipalities, public safety agency, police departments, and community organizations to develop and maintain safe routes to school.