

Veribest Independent School District's Wellness Policy On Physical Activity and Nutrition

Preamble

Whereas, children need access to healthful foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive;

Whereas, good health fosters student attendance and education;

Whereas, obesity rates have doubled in children and tripled in adolescents over the last two decades, and physical inactivity and excessive calorie intake are the predominant causes of obesity;

Whereas, heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes are responsible for two-thirds of deaths in the United States, and major risk factors for those diseases, including unhealthy eating habits, physical inactivity, and obesity, often are established in childhood;

Whereas, 33% of high school students do not participate in sufficient vigorous physical activity and 72% of high school students do not attend daily physical education classes;

Whereas, only 2% of children (2 to 19 years) eat a healthy diet consistent with the recommendation of the healthy plate;

Whereas, nationally, the items most commonly sold from school vending machines, school stores, and snack bars include low-nutrition foods and beverages, such as soda, sports drinks, imitation fruit juices, chips, candy, cookies, and snack cakes;

Whereas, school districts around the country are facing significant fiscal and scheduling constraints; and

Whereas, community participation is essential to the development and implementation of successful school wellness policies;

Thus, the Veribest Independent School District is committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, it is the policy of the Veribest Independent School District that:

- The school district will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing district-wide nutrition and physical activity policies.

- All students in grades K-12 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Foods and beverages sold or served at school will meet the nutrition recommendations of the Texas Department of Agriculture.
- Qualified child nutrition professionals will provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students and will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.
- To the maximum extent practicable, all schools in our district will participate in available federal school meal programs.
- Veribest ISD will provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity, and will establish linkages between health education and school meal programs, and with related community services.
- TDA's new policy for 2015-2016 school year is allowing deep fat drying back into schools, however, Veribest ISD has chosen not to implement this policy at this time as we feel it would not be in the best interest of our students.

COMPONENTS

Local Wellness Policy Component 1: Setting Nutrition Education Goals

The primary goal of nutrition education is to influence students' eating behaviors. The following should be considered when establishing nutrition education policy language:

1. Students in grades pre-K-2 receive nutrition education that is interactive and teaches the skills they need to adopt healthy eating behaviors.
2. Nutrition education is offered in the school dining room as well as in the classroom, with coordination between the foodservice staff and teachers.
3. Students receive consistent nutrition messages throughout the school, classroom cafeteria, home, community and media.
4. State and district health education curriculum standards and guidelines include both nutrition and physical education.
5. Nutrition is integrated into the health education curricula or core curriculum (e.g., math, science, language arts).
6. Schools link nutrition education activities with the coordinated school health program.
7. Staff members who provide nutrition education have appropriate training.
8. Schools are Team Nutrition Schools and they conduct nutrition education activities and promotions that involve parents, students, and the community.

Local Wellness Policy Component 2: Setting Physical Activity Goals

The primary goal for the district's physical activity component is to provide opportunities for every student to develop the knowledge and skills for specific physical activities, maintain physical fitness, regularly participate in physical activity, and understand the short-and long-term benefits of a physically active and healthful lifestyle.

The following includes goals for physical activity:

1. At a minimum, K-6 students should have at least 30 minutes/day or 135 minutes/week of moderate to vigorous physical activity. In grades 7-8 students should have at least 30 minutes/day for four semesters of moderate to vigorous physical activity.
2. Students will be given opportunities for physical activity during the school day through daily recess periods, elective physical education (PE) classes, walking programs, and the integration of physical activity into the academic curriculum.
3. Opportunities for physical activities during inclement weather will be increased.
4. Students will be given opportunities for physical activity through a range of after-school programs including intramurals, interscholastic athletics, and physical activity clubs.
5. Schools will work with the community to create an environment that is safe and supportive of students' physically active commute to and from school.

Local Wellness Policy Component 3: Establishing Nutrition Standards for All Foods Available on School Campus During the School Day

Students' lifelong eating habits are greatly influenced by the types of foods and beverages available to them. Schools must ensure that reimbursable school meals meet the program requirements and nutrition standards set forth under Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 at www.fns.usda.gov.

Local Wellness Policy Component 4: Setting Goals for Other School-Based Activities Designed to Promote Student Wellness

Policies were established under this category to create a school environment that provides consistent wellness messages and is conducive to healthy eating and being physically active. The policies include:

1. Provide a clean, safe, enjoyable meal environment for students.
2. Provide adequate time for students to enjoy eating healthy foods with friends, scheduled as near the middle of the school day as possible.
3. Discourage use of food as a reward and prohibit using food as punishment.
4. Provide enough space and serving areas to ensure student access to school meals with a minimum of wait time.
5. Ensure that on-campus fundraising efforts are supportive of healthy eating.
6. Provide on-going professional training and development for food service staff and teachers in the areas of nutrition and physical education.
7. Provide student access to physical activity facilities outside school hours.
8. Schedule recess for elementary grades at a time that does not distract the children from eating.
9. Develop strategies for parents, teachers, school administrators, students, food service professionals, and community members to serve as role models in practicing healthy eating and being physically active, both in school and at home.

TO ACHIEVE THESE POLICY GOALS:

I. Local School Wellness Policies

Effective August 1, 2004, all Texas public schools participating in the federal child nutrition programs were required to have a Local Wellness Policy in place. With the *Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010*, the requirements have been strengthened and additional requirements have been added. Veribest ISD's Wellness Policy addresses all requirements for the Local Wellness Policy.

II. School Health Advisory Councils (SHAC)

The school district and its campuses will create, strengthen, and/or work within the existing school health advisory council to assist and provide input in developing, implementing, monitoring, reviewing, and as necessary, revising school nutrition and physical activity policies. The council consists of a group of individuals representing the school and community and should include parents, students, and representatives of the school food authority, member(s) of the school board, school administrators, teachers (including physical education teachers), health professionals, and members of the public. Interested people are encouraged to contact VISD Central Office at 325-655-4912. The members serve as resources for implementing these policies. The SHAC also addresses health services, healthy and safe school environment, counseling and mental health services, staff wellness promotion, parent and community involvement, health education, nutrition services, and physical education.

III. Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 Requirements-Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served on Campus

The requirements of the Healthy, Hungry-Free Kids Act of 2010 are available at www.fns.usda.gov.

All vending machines at Veribest ISD meet the Nutrition Guidelines set by the USDA.

IV. Information and Updating the Public

- A. Veribest ISD's Wellness Policy will be posted on the VISD website at www.veribestisd.net under *Policies and Resources* then *Health and Safety Policies*.
- B. School Messenger information will be shared with parents on all campuses.
- C. Veribest ISD will provide the local newspaper with an article about the process, product, and participants of updating Veribest ISD's Local Wellness Policy.
- D. Information about Veribest ISD's Wellness Policy will be published in the annual Student Handbooks.
- E. Veribest ISD's Wellness Policy will be available in principals' offices for those who desire a paper copy.
- F. Emails, VISD Facebook, texts
- G. The assessment information below will be presented in the formal SHAC annual report which usually occurs in the May or June board meeting.

V. Monitoring Assessing the Veribest ISD Wellness Policy

- A. The Superintendent will be responsible for monitoring Veribest ISD's Wellness Policy with input from others.
- B. The SHAC (School Health Advisory Council) and other interested people such as individuals representing the school, community, parents, students, representatives of the school food authority, members(s) of the school board, school administrators, teachers (including physical education teachers), health professionals, and members of the public will at least annually assess the Veribest ISD Wellness Policy to measure the extent to which campuses are in compliance with the Policy.
- C. The SHAC will measure the extent of the progress made in attaining the goals of the Local Wellness Plan.
- D. The assessment information will be made available to the public as in *Informing and Updating the Public* listed above.

