

**BOARD POLICY  
WELLNESS**

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**Burke County Public Schools  
Wellness Policy**

The Burke County Board of Education recognizes that student wellness is related to students' well-being, growth, development, and readiness to learn. The Board of Education also recognizes that the school plays a critical role in creating an environment that promotes student and staff wellness. The Board of Education is committed to providing a school environment, which will promote and protect a student's health by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Part of the school learning experience should address health education, physical education, nutrition education and health promotion for students and staff.

**Policy Rationale:**

The link between nutrition, physical activity, and learning is well documented. Healthy eating and activity patterns are essential for students to achieve their full academic potential, full physical and mental growth, and for lifelong health and well-being. Healthy eating and physical activity, essential for healthy weight and overall health, is linked to a reduced risk for many chronic diseases such as Type 2 diabetes, stroke, high blood pressure, asthma, heart disease and cancer. Nearly 40% of children in Georgia are overweight or obese, and physical inactivity and unhealthy eating habits are the predominant causes of this trend.

Schools have the responsibility to help students learn, establish, and maintain lifelong, healthy eating and activity patterns. Well-planned and effectively implemented school nutrition education and fitness programs have been shown to enhance students' overall health, as well as their behavior and academic achievement in school. Optimal health is essential for students to achieve their full academic potential.

Employee wellness is also an integral part of a healthy school environment. Increased attendance and improved work energy and vigor are present among staff engaged in healthy eating practices and physical activity. Such behaviors serve as daily role models for healthy behaviors among students.

**Goal:**

All students in Burke County Public Schools shall possess the knowledge and skills necessary to make nutritious food choices and embrace regular physical activity as

personal behaviors for a lifetime. All staff in Burke County Public Schools are encouraged and provided with opportunities to model healthy eating and physical activity as a valuable part of daily life.

To meet this goal, the Burke County Board of Education adopts this wellness policy with the following commitments to nutrition education, physical activity, nutrition guidelines and other school-based activities. This policy is designed to serve the needs and interests of all students and staff in our school district.

Therefore, it is the policy of Burke County Board of Education that students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members are engaged in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing the policy as set forth herein.

### Classroom Food

Our school environment must support proper nutrition and promotion of healthy eating habits. In order to achieve this goal, the primary snacks for activities, parties, and celebrations should consist of fruits, vegetables, and whole grain products with water and 100% fruit juice as the primary beverages. The following recommendations will help promote wellness for our students:

- Educate classroom teachers, students, and parents about nutritious snacks
- Feature healthy snack choices and minimize non-nutritious ones
- Encourage nutritious choices in the classroom when using food for rewards.
- Encourage portion control as well as a variety of healthy snacks when having celebrations.
- Limit food as a reward or punishment for student behaviors, unless it is detailed in a student's Individualized Educational Plan (IEP).

### Competitive Food Sales

Competitive foods are those items sold to students during the school day that are not a part of the school nutrition program. To support the health and nutrition of all faculty, staff, and students of Burke County Public Schools, only competitive foods that are consistent with U.S.D.A. guidelines will be served. The policy will also guide the Burke County Public Schools to:

- Provide only nutritious items in vending machines for sale to students and adults. All vending machine items should meet the requirements under the Alliance for a Healthier Generation.
- Require that items sold during the daily lunch period to meet U.S.D.A. nutrition guidelines. Schools that are HealthierUS School Challenge recipients must meet the

requirements for competitive food sales, limiting portion size to those served in the National School Lunch Program, limit total fat to <35%, limit sugar to < 35% by weight, and limit salt to <480 mg. All schools must meet the competitive food sales, including food and beverages, requirements established under U.S.D.A. meal guidelines as they are updated.

- The sale of sugar-sweetened beverages will be limited. The sale of water, 100% juice and low-fat milk will be strongly encouraged. Schools meeting HealthierUS School must meet the required guidelines.
- Staff members who purchase beverages out of the teacher vending machines or bring sugar-sweetened beverages from home must put the beverage in a cup during the school day and not consume it from the can/bottle in front of school children.
- Develop alternative rewards instead of foods with minimal nutrition value; i.e. cupcakes, candy, ice cream, pizza, etc. Contact your school wellness committee for ideas on appropriate rewards, free promotional giveaways, etc.
- Encourage schools that sell food during extracurricular activities to provide more nutritious alternative items for patrons.
- Schools participating in fundraising activities encourage the sale of nutritious items, such as fruits and bottled water, over foods of minimal nutritional value, such as sugar-sweetened beverages and doughnuts.

### Employee Wellness

The Burke County Board of Education highly values the health and general well-being of each Burke County School Employee. Research indicates that there is a correlation between employee wellness, the cost of medical insurance premiums and the number of employee sick days used; therefore, the Burke County Board of Education supports the establishment of a wellness program to promote the physical fitness and mental well-being of all employees.

Activities and policies will support and promote personal efforts by staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Each school will develop, implement and monitor a multifaceted plan to foster staff health and wellness to include:

- Use of school facilities by employees for wellness program related activities, unless such activities interfere with the use of the facilities for educational purposes.
- Voluntary employee participation in wellness programs, except as otherwise directed by law or by separate Board policy procedures.
- The establishment of each school's wellness program and implementation in a fiscally responsible manner.

- The Board of Education will not be liable for any injuries or damages, which may result from an employee's voluntary participation in any wellness program activity.
- A policy that whenever outside resources or persons are used for wellness activities, the principal and/or his designee at each school will be responsible for determining compensation levels of such instructors or resource persons or for the collection of any fees that may be required for the services of those persons or use of those resources.

### Nutrition Education and Wellness Promotion

Children are an important audience for nutrition education because a healthy diet is essential for their normal growth and development, and because children are establishing food patterns they carry into adulthood. In order to develop lifelong healthy eating patterns, children need to be introduced to a variety of nutritious foods in a positive manner. The overarching goal of nutrition education is to motivate participants to make healthy food choices. To this end, the Nutrition Education Program will:

- Provide students in grades Pre-k through 12 with nutrition education that meets the Georgia Performance Standards for health education that is interactive, teaches the skills necessary to adopt healthy eating behaviors and includes enjoyable, developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant, participatory activities such as contests, promotions, taste testing, farm visits and school gardens.
- Provide the same basic nutrition information at all levels of education, such as reading Nutrition Facts labels, understanding MyPlate, and understanding the basics about the different food groups, building on those basic ideas as progression is made through the grades and integrating instruction to the greatest extent possible into core curriculum areas of math, science, reading and language arts.
- Complement physical education by reinforcing the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a healthy and physically active lifestyle and to reduce time spent in sedentary activities.
- Promote consistent nutrition messages throughout the school, classroom, cafeteria, home and community. Staff will be encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity as a valuable part of daily life.
- Nutrition facts labels will be displayed in the cafeteria so students and adults can learn to make healthy food choices each day. Other nutrition education materials will be displayed around the cafeterias during meal times. Nutrition information on menu items is also available at [www.burke.k12.ga.us](http://www.burke.k12.ga.us).
- Ensure nutrition education curriculum will be sensitive to differences in religious and ethnic dietary patterns.

- The entire school environment, from the classroom to the cafeteria, shall be aligned with healthy school goals to positively influence a student's understanding of good nutrition and regular physical activity.
- Nutrition education is also made available to students and families through the Burke County Public Schools website. Nutrition cookbooks, newsletters and other useful links can be found to provide further education on leading a healthy lifestyle.

### Physical Activity

The Burke County Board of Education is committed to creating an environment that is conducive to students achieving the benefits of physical fitness and to enjoy physical activity as an ongoing part of a healthy lifestyle that becomes a lifelong habit. Given the alarming rate of obesity, all schools will offer planned sequential programs of physical fitness instruction incorporating individual and group activities, which are student centered and taught in a positive environment. All activities during school hours will adhere to both Federal and State Rules and Regulations regarding physical education, recess and other forms of physical activity. Guidelines will include:

- Physical activity that is encouraged and integrated across curricula throughout the school day. Physical activity will not only be encouraged during physical education class, but through classroom activities such as the JAM School Program and recess. Recess will be made available each day to elementary school students.
- Time allotted for physical activity is consistent with research, and national/state standards.
- Physical education includes the instruction of individual activities, as well as competitive and non-competitive team sports and other after school programs in order to encourage life-long physical activity.
- Adequate equipment is available for all students to participate in physical education. Physical activity facilities on school grounds will be subject to all applicable state/federal guidelines.
- Physical and social environment will be provided that encourages safe and enjoyable activities for all students, including those who are not athletically gifted. Staff members are encouraged to not deny physical activity to a student as discipline or punishment unless the safety of other students is in question.
- Information will be provided to families to help them incorporate physical activity into their student's lives. Schools will encourage families and community members to institute programs that support physical activity.

### Other School-Based Activities

Children are our most valuable resource, and good health is essential to their academic success. Promoting wellness with all other school-based activities involves many different facets. A school environment that provides consistent wellness messages and is conducive to the health and well-being of students and staff members is essential to the Burke County Board of Education. Research indicates that healthy students are more prepared to learn, more likely to attend school and class, and better able to manage their health-related needs. To meet this goal:

- School surroundings are to be clean, safe and enjoyable for all students and staff.
- Local wellness policies are to be considered when planning all school activities to include, but not be limited to, dances, assemblies, field trips, and after-school programs.
- Open communication with and support from community/family is strongly encouraged regarding health updates, wellness policies and the overall well-being of the students.
- A school nurse, in collaboration with physical education teachers, dietitians, and school nutrition staff, will serve as a facilitator for the health of students and staff.

### School Nutrition/School Meals

Given how hunger interferes with childhood growth, health and learning, it is the goal of the Burke County Board of Education Nutrition Program to provide school meals and snacks that are consistent over time which meet:

- USDA Dietary Guidelines
  - My Pyramid Guidelines
  - Recommended Dietary Intakes
  - Healthier US School Challenge Guidelines
  - USDA nutrient standards for school meals
  - Child Nutrition Act Requirements
  - Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act Requirements
- All schools will provide breakfast through the U.S.D.A. School Breakfast Program and lunch through the U.S.D.A. National School Lunch Program.
  - School meals will promote the consumption of nutrient-dense foods by:
    - Offering whole grains weekly
    - Offering fresh fruits and vegetables daily
    - Only offering 1% low-fat or nonfat flavored and unflavored milk
    - Using cooking methods that promote the consumption of healthier foods

- School menus will offer a variety of foods to appeal to different taste preferences. Occasional taste tests with students will allow for student input on new products.
- No meal or snack offered through the School Nutrition Program will be denied to a student as punishment.
- The school cafeterias will offer a clean, safe environment with appropriate supervision for students to eat lunch.
- Drinking water is available on all school campuses through safe, clean water fountains throughout each school building.

Qualified child nutrition professionals, who receive yearly food service training, will provide students with full access to a variety of nutritious and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students in clean, safe, and pleasant settings with adequate time for students to eat.

#### Implementation/Evaluation:

To ensure that the students, faculty, and staff of Burke County Public Schools are afforded the opportunity to receive the benefits of this policy, the following means of implementation will include:

- The development of a “Wellness Council” that will oversee the implementation and evaluation of the wellness policy. The council will consist of members from each school’s wellness committee, including but not limited to the following: physical education teacher, school nurse, classroom teacher, school food personnel, administration, a parent or community member, and a member of the Board of Education
- Each school will establish a “Wellness Committee” as directed by the Principal and will be charged with the development of a school-level implementation plan of the wellness policy. Members may include but not limited to physical education teachers, counselors, nurses, classroom teachers, members of administration, parents, and school food personnel.
- Bi-annually, each school’s wellness committee will monitor and evaluate policy compliance to assess the state of adherence to the current policy within the school. The information will be posted on the website and updated as evaluations are conducted. Any non-compliance issues will be addressed and an action plan will be created. The Board of Education will be updated as needed on policy compliance throughout the county.
- The Burke County Public Schools Wellness Policy will be made available for public viewing on the Burke County Public School website ([www.burke.k12.ga.us](http://www.burke.k12.ga.us)).