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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 policies 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

Additionally, the membership may include:

- District Food Service Director/Manager

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- 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)

Nutrition Education and Wellness Promotion:

General Wellness:

Westerly Public Schools will adhere to RI Rules and Regulations of School Health Programs (R16-21-SCHO) in line with those of the CDC regulations.

Schools promotion of life long 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 Center for Disease Control and Preventions Coordinated School Health approach to comprehensive school wellness. The Coordinated School Health model includes eight (8) areas of school health:

- Safe Environment
- Physical Education
- Health Education
- Staff Wellness
- Health Services
- Mental and Social Health
- Nutrition Services
- Family Involvement

Each school will engage families, providing information to meet District Wellness goals via

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District website, school newsletters, email, events and other available resources.

- 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 referenced at the end of this policy. The District Food Service Director/Manager will provide adequate training in food service operations, including professional development in the area of food and nutrition for all responsible for the food service program in the Westerly Public Schools. Students and their families will be provided with information about the nutritional content of all school meals.

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, fieldtrips, 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

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 life style. Staff will be encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity as a valuable part of daily life.

The Health and Wellness Committee and Westerly Public Schools will develop a plan to

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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 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 that focus on nutritional value 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 1--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 limitations. The RI and USDA Nutrition Standards shall address ALL food beverages sold or served to students from vending machines, in school stores, as part of school-wide or classroom celebrations prior to and during the school day as well as a la carte items sold during school meals.

All fundraising projects involving the sale/consumption of food, beverages and/or snacks prior to and during the instructional day will follow the RI and USDA Nutrition Standards when determining the items being sold.

All fund-raising projects sponsored by staff, students and/or parent organizations (outside the times above) are encouraged to follow the RI and USDA Nutrition Standards and will strive to support healthy eating and wellness.

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

- All foods served as part of the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), including its after-school snack component, will meet

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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 training and development will be offered for all food service staff working in the schools, as appropriate for their levels of responsibility. 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.
- 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 assist in identifying new, healthy and appealing food choices within the program to promote healthier eating habits.

School Breakfast Program (SBP)

To ensure that all children have a breakfast that meets their nutritional needs and optimizes their ability to learn:

- All schools will operate the School Breakfast Program.
- Schools will use methods to serve breakfasts that encourage participation, including but not limited to breakfast before school, grab-n-go style breakfast, etc.
- All schools will notify students, parents and guardians of the availability of the School Breakfast Program.

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RI and USDA NUTRITION STANDARDS

Nutrition Standards Intent/Rationale:

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. In an effort to support the consumption of nutrient dense foods in the school setting, the district has adopted the following nutrition standards governing the sale of food, beverage, and candy on school grounds. Schools are encouraged to study these standards and develop building protocol using the following RI and USDA Nutrition Standards as minimal guidelines.

Food:

- Encourage the consumption of nutrient dense foods, i.e. WHOLE GRAINS, FRESH FRUITS, VEGETABLES, and DAIRY PRODUCTS.
- It is recognized that there may be rare special occasions when the school principal may allow a school group to deviate from these Standards, but those special occasions must be recorded and included in the Health and Wellness Subcommittee Annual Report.

Snacks:

Only “healthier snacks” may be sold or distributed on school grounds to students both prior to and throughout the instructional day, including vending machines and school stores. “Snack” means a food that is generally regarded as supplementing a meal. Individually sold portions of healthier snacks shall meet the Federal and State requirements for a la carte items .

Beverages:

- Only “healthier beverages” may be sold or distributed on school grounds both prior to and throughout the school day, including vending machines and school stores. Healthier beverages include: Water, including carbonated water, flavored or sweetened with one hundred percent (100%) fruit juice and containing no added sweetener.
- One percent (1%) fat milk, nonfat milk, and dairy alternatives, such as fortified soy beverages: plain or flavored, with a sugar content of not more than four (4) grams per ounce.
- One hundred percent (100%) fruit juice or fruit based drinks that are composed of

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- no less than fifty percent (50%) fruit juice and have no added sweetener.
- Vegetable based drinks that are composed of no less than fifty percent (50%) vegetable juice and have no added sweetener.
- All beverages other than water and milk shall be 12oz. or less.
- Students and staff will have access to free, safe and fresh drinking water throughout the school day.

Candy:

Federal and State Requirements can be found at www.thriveri.org. The sale of candy is prohibited during school hours. The sale of candy as a fundraiser is prohibited.

On rare special occasions the principal of the school may allow a group to deviate from these Standards, but those special occasions must be recorded and included in the Health and Wellness Annual Assessment.

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

Fundraising:

- All fund-raising projects must comply with the USDA Smart Snack in Schools regulations and RI General Law (16.21.7) involving the sale and consumption of food, beverages, and/or snacks prior to, during, and one hour after school hours.
- All fund raising projects for sale and consumption within and prior to the instructional day will follow the USDA Smart Snack in Schools regulations and RI General Law (16.21.7) when determining the items being sold.
- Schools may be allowed to sell snacks or beverages that do not comply with the USDA Smart Snacks in Schools regulations and RI General Law (16.21.7) as part of school fundraising in any of the following circumstances:
 - The items sold by students of the school and the sale of those items takes place off and away from the premises of the school;

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- The items sold by students of the school and the sale of those items takes place one hour or more after the end of the school day; and
- The items are sold during a school sponsored student activity after the end of the school day.

Other Foods and Beverages Served

Teacher-to-Student Incentive:

The use of food items as part of a student incentive program is strongly discouraged. Should teachers feel compelled to utilize food items as an incentive, they are required to adhere to the USDA Smart Snack in Schools regulations and RI General Law (16.21.7).

Classroom and School Celebrations

Classroom and school celebrations will not be centered around food, except if the food items are part of a curriculum related activity. While not prohibited, parties should be framed so as to discourage the consumption of unhealthy food items and should encourage food and beverages items that comply with the USDA Smart Snacks in Schools regulations and RI General Law (16.21.7) for the sale of only healthier snacks and beverages. (1)

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

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.

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STUDENTS

Physical Education and Physical Activity

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. Class size will be appropriate for instruction and meet the requirements of the current Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA).

A daily recess period, preferably outdoors, of at least 20 minutes shall be provided to all students in grades K-4. 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. 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.

INTEGRATING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN THE CLASSROOM

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

- Schools will discourage extended periods (longer than 2hrs.) of inactivity.
- Classroom health education will complement physical education by

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- 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.

STAFF WELLNESS

The Westerly Public Schools value the health and well-being of every staff member. As is the case with students, healthy staff members are more successful and better able to meet the obligations that are part of their employment. A sub-committee of the District Health and Wellness Committee will develop a plan to promote staff health and wellness. The purposes of this plan shall be to:

- Encourage all school staff to improve their personal health and wellness
- Improve staff morale
- Support positive role modeling
- Build the commitment of staff to promote the health and wellness of students
- Build the commitment of staff to help support the district's efforts to improve the health of the school environment

IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING

This Wellness Policy will be posted on the District's website. Implementation 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. The full implementation of this policy will require the support of staff, students and families at the local school level. 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. The Health and Wellness Committee will distribute in the spring of each year the RI School Wellness checklist. Principals will be responsible for submitting by June 1st of each year the RI School Wellness checklist.

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

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Committee will be responsible for periodic review to ensure compliance with Federal and State regulations.

LEGAL REFERENCES:

Federal Law:

School Health – § RIGL 16-21-7

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/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>

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

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

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

http://sos.ri.gov/documents/archives/regdocs/holding/DOH/SchoolHealthPrograms_PublicHearingDraft_April2012.pdf

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>

USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans

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

RI Physical Education Framework

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

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