

Syracuse/Utica Academy of Science Charter School Wellness Policy

The policies outlined within this document are intended to create a school environment that protects and promotes the health of our students. This policy applies to all schools in the district. Our commitments to providing nutrition education and regular physical activity, as well as access to nutritious foods for all students, are described here.

I. Nutrition education and promotion

Students will receive consistent nutrition messages throughout schools, classrooms, cafeterias, and school media:

- The nutrition education program will be linked to school meal programs, school gardens, cafeteria nutrition promotion, after-school programs,
- Nutrition education will be offered in the cafeteria as well as the classroom, with coordination between the foodservice staff and teachers;
- Nutrition education will promote fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and accurate portion sizes;
- Students will have opportunities to taste foods that are low in saturated and trans-fats, sodium and added sugar;
- Staff members responsible for nutrition education will regularly participate in relevant professional development (e.g., training on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and how to teach them);
- Staff will only use approved nutrition curriculum in the classroom. Curriculum developed by corporate interests is prohibited;
- Nutrition education will be provided to families via handouts, newsletters, postings on the web-site, presentations, or workshops. The school menu will be posted online;
- Staff is strongly encouraged to model healthful eating habits.
- Families will be requested to pack lunches and snacks that meet district nutrition standards and will be provided with written guidance on how to accomplish this.
- The elementary school will allow students to eat “healthy snacks” during the scheduled snack time. A list of approved snacks will be provided.

Specifically, the health curriculum will encompass:

- Promotion of adequate nutrient intake and healthy eating practices;
- Skill development, such as reading labels to evaluate the nutrient quality of foods, meal planning, analysis of health information;
- Examination of the problems associated with food marketing to children;
- Nutrition themes including, but not limited to USDA’s MY Plate, Dietary Guidelines for Americans, adequate nutrient intake (such as carbohydrates, proteins, fats), body image and food safety.

II. Nutrition Standards for All Food and Beverages Sold or Served on School Grounds

A. USDA School Meals:

School meals will include a variety of healthy choices while accommodating special dietary needs and ethnic and cultural food preferences. All schools shall participate in the USDA school breakfast, and school lunch.

In addition:

- All reimbursable meals will meet nutrition standards mandated by the USDA, as well as any additional state nutrition standards that go beyond USDA requirements;
- The school meal programs is administered by a fully licensed and accredited food vendor. All cafeteria staff will be provided training by vending company with school district oversight, on USDA meal plans/reimbursable meals so they can properly advise students as to the meal components they may/must take, as well as cooking techniques, recipe implementation, sanitation, and food safety;
- All menus are produced by trained child nutrition staff employed by the food vendor and reviewed by their dietician as necessary. When this is not feasible, sample USDA menus or USDA software for menu review may be used;
- Students will be provided at least 10 minutes to eat breakfast and 20 minutes to eat lunch after being seated;
- Meals will be served in a clean and pleasant setting and under appropriate supervision.
 - Rules for safe behavior will be consistently enforced;
- Lunch will be scheduled between 10:50 a.m. and 1p.m.;
- Tutoring, club, or organizational meetings will not be scheduled during meal time, unless students may eat during such activities;
- Students will have access to handwashing/hand sanitizing facilities before meals and snacks and cafeteria staff will remind students to make use of them;
- Participation in school meal programs will be promoted. Parents will be notified of the availability of the breakfast, and lunch and will be encouraged to determine eligibility for reduced or free meals. Schools may use non-traditional breakfast service to increase participation, such as breakfast served in the classroom;

B. Competitive Foods and Beverages

All foods and beverages *sold* on school grounds to students outside of reimbursable school meals are considered “competitive foods.” Competitive foods include items sold a la carte in the cafeteria, from vending machines, school stores and for in-school fundraisers. *All* competitive foods must comply with all applicable state and federal standards

Syracuse/Utica Academy of Science Charter School Nutrition Standards:

Foods

Only fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds, whole grains, low-fat dairy and combination products may be sold, following the standards below:

- Packaged items shall not exceed one serving per package/200 calories;
- Items shall contain no more than 35% of total calories from fat, less than 10% of total calories from saturated fats and zero trans fats. Exception: The fat content of nuts and seeds will not count against the total fat content of packaged products;
- Items shall contain no more than 35% of calories from total sugars. Exception: Yogurt, may contain up to 30 grams of total sugars per 8 oz serving;
- Items shall contain less than or equal to 200mg of sodium per packaged portion;
- Combination items must contain at least one serving of whole grains, fruit or vegetable, per portion as packaged, in any combination (e.g., ½ serving of fruit and ½ serving of whole grain in one portion).

A la carte items in the cafeteria must be USDA school meal components AND meet the above fat and sugar limits. A la carte items cannot exceed 480mg of sodium.

Whole fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds are preferable to processed food items.

Beverages

The only beverages allowed to be sold outside of school meals include:

- Low-fat (1%), non-fat or non-dairy milk in 8 oz portions for elementary schools and up to 12 oz for middle and high school (plain or flavored with no more than 22 grams of total sugars per 8 oz);
- 100% fruit/vegetable juice in 8 oz portions for elementary, up to 12 oz portions for middle and high school;
- Water.

C. Additional Foods Available to Students

Fundraising

- Non-food fundraising is promoted. When in-school fundraising involves food, items must meet the federal nutrition standards for competitive foods and cannot be sold for immediate consumption. When out-of-school fundraising events involve food, the standards do not apply.
- Fundraising activities that promote physical activity are encouraged.

Celebrations

- Celebrations will be held with administration approval and will be held after lunch, not in conjunction with lunch.
- Non-food celebrations will be promoted and a list of ideas will be available to parents and teachers.

Access to Drinking Water

- Students and school staff members will have access to free, safe, fresh drinking water at all times throughout the school day. Supervisory staff will facilitate access to water in the cafeteria. Students will be allowed to bring only drinking water into the classroom in a clear container.
- Water will be promoted as a substitute for sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs)
- School staff will be encouraged to model drinking water consumption.
- Maintenance will be performed on all water fountains regularly to ensure that hygiene standards for drinking fountains, water jugs, hydration stations, water jets, and other methods for delivering drinking water are maintained.

Food used as reward or punishment

Research clearly indicates that the use of food to reward/reinforce desirable behavior and academic performance, etc. has negative, unintended consequences. Withholding food as a punishment is strictly prohibited.

IV. Physical Activity

Physical Education

All K-12 students will have opportunities to engage in physical education for the entire school year. Physical Education will be standards- based, using national and state-developed standards. Physical Education classes will be sequential, building from year to year, and content will include motor skills, concepts and strategies, engagement in physical activity, physical fitness, responsible behavior and benefits of physical activity. Physical education-will meet the needs of all students, including those who are not athletically gifted, and actively teach cooperation, fair play, and responsible participation. Students will be able to demonstrate competency through application of skills.

Student involvement in other activities, including those involving physical activity (e.g. interscholastic or intramural sports), will not be substituted for physical education.

- Physical education classes will count toward graduation and GPA;
- The school will provide adequate space/equipment and conform to all safety standards;
- The school prohibits the use of physical activity and withholding of physical education class and other forms of physical activity as punishment;
- Physical education staff will receive professional development on a yearly basis;

Physical Activity

When possible students will have opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class on a daily basis. Students will be encouraged to reduce sedentary time, and will not be required to engage in sedentary activities for more than two hours without an opportunity to stretch and move around. Short (3-5 minute) “energy release” physical activity breaks will be provided between classes in elementary school, for example, programs such as Take 10! And ABC for Fitness will be used to incorporate short activity breaks into the day.

Teachers will be expected to incorporate opportunities for physical activity in the classroom whenever possible and will be encouraged to serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students.

Recess

All elementary school students will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess during which moderate to vigorous physical activity will be encouraged. Outdoor recess will only be withheld in the event of extreme weather, as defined by the district (this may vary regionally). In the event that recess must be held indoors, teachers and staff will follow the buildings recess guidelines. developed by the school’s Wellness Committee, to ensure adequate physical activity for students.

Physical Activity Programs

Elementary, middle, and high school will offer extracurricular physical activity programs, such as physical activity clubs and intramural programs. High school and middle school will offer interscholastic sports programs to all students.

Safe Routes to School

The school district will assess and, if necessary and to the extent possible, make needed improvements to make it safer and easier for students to walk and bike to school. For example, crossing guards may be stationed around the school to facilitate safe walking and biking school commutes. The school will work together with local public works, public safety, and/or police departments in those efforts.

V. Evaluation and Enforcement:

This wellness policy was developed by the District Wellness Committee, a group comprising individuals from the following groups: parents, teachers, school administration, food service director and staff, Health Services, and Health and Physical Education staff. The committee is active—meetings are held once a year during the school year to review and revise, if needed, policy content and to design and evaluate implementation plans throughout district schools. The Committee shall also undertake additional tasks as consistent with the wellness policy guidelines issued by the USDA.

All meeting dates and times will be posted on the school district's website and meetings will be open to the public.

The Dean of each school will ensure compliance within the school and will report on compliance to the superintendent, who will provide a report to the school board. The superintendent will identify a coordinator who will ensure that each school implements the policy and will collect, summarize and report on evaluation data to the committee. The following information will be included in an annual report: (1) the extent to which each school is in compliance with the wellness policy, (2) the progress made in attaining the goals of the policy; (3) any recommended changes to the policy; (4) a detailed action plan for the following school year to achieve annual goals and objectives; and (5) any additional information required by the USDA.

Policy revisions will take into account new research and evidence on health trends, new national and state standards and guidelines, new state and federal initiatives, local evaluation data, changing district priorities, and other issues.

Current Wellness Policy Committee members:

Dr. Tolga Hayali, Superintendent/Parent
Mustafa Ersoy, Dean of Utica Academy of Science High School
Erdal Duman, Dean of Utica Academy of Science Middle School
Galip Bak, Dean of Syracuse Academy of Science
Pamela Smith, Dean of Syracuse Academy of Science
Kadir Yavuz, Dean of Syracuse Academy of Science/Parent
Bekir Duz, Chief of Staff Syracuse Academy of Science/Parent
Courtney Siciliano Utica Academy of Science Middle School PE/Health Teacher
Zachary Kiggins Syracuse Academy of Science Elementary School PE Teacher
Linda Spencer Syracuse Academy of Science Central School Registration Officer
Serkan Turgay Syracuse Academy of Science High School PE Teacher
Mike Herr- ARAMARK/ School Food Director