

## **EXPLANATION OF MISSOURI MODEL DISTRICT WELLNESS POLICY, PROCEDURE AND FORMS**

MSBA is presenting a NEW policy and procedure and two (2) new forms for district consideration. Several supplemental materials are provided as well. As most districts are aware, the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 requires each school district that participates in a program under the National School Lunch Act to establish a local wellness policy for each school in the district by the beginning of the 2006-2007 school year.

### **Federal Law**

The Federal law requires that parents, students, representatives from the school food service, Board members, administrators and members of the public be involved in the development of the policy, which must include the following components:

1. Nutrition guidelines selected by the district that apply to all foods available on each school campus during the school day and that promote student health and reduce childhood overweight and obesity.\*
2. Assurances that guidelines for reimbursable school meals will be no less restrictive than those reflected in the regulations and guidance issued pursuant to the National School Lunch Act.
3. Goals for nutrition education designed to promote student wellness in a manner the district determines is appropriate.
4. Goals for physical activity designed to promote student wellness in a manner the district determines is appropriate.
5. Goals for other school-based activities designed to promote student wellness in a manner the district determines is appropriate.
6. A plan for measuring implementation of the local wellness policy.
7. Designation of at least one (1) person who is responsible for policy implementation.

\*"Childhood overweight" is the term preferred by the Centers for Disease Control and the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, although the statutes refer to "childhood obesity."

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### **State Law**

In anticipation that federal money might be available to states to assist local districts with implementation, the Missouri Legislature passed House Bill 568 in 2005. This bill establishes a model wellness program and provides that any money furnished by the federal government in conjunction with the federal requirements above will be available to be used “by selected school districts to establish school-based pilot programs that focus on encouraging students to establish and maintain healthy lifestyles.” In other words, if the federal government gives the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) money to implement wellness programs, DESE will use that money to set up pilot programs in some school districts. The bill provides that school districts may apply for one-year grants beginning in the 2005-2006 school year. Criteria for awarding these grants have yet to be established. **At the present time, no funding is available.**

House Bill 568 requires that the content of wellness programs address state and national standards established by the No Child Left Behind Act, Healthy People 2010 Leading Health Indicators compiled by the National Center for Health Statistics, and the Produce for Better Health Foundation’s “5 a Day the Color Way” program. The bill also identifies the following general program components:

1. Tobacco use prevention education.
2. Promotion of balanced dietary patterns and physical activity to prevent becoming overweight or obese.
3. Discussion of the serious and chronic medical conditions that are associated with being overweight.

In addition, the bill requires grant recipients to develop programs that:

1. Are multidisciplinary, addressing academic standards in math, language arts and health.
2. Use multimedia sources that engage students.
3. Are evidence based and demonstrate success such as changes in body mass index or attitudes toward tobacco use.
4. Can be integrated into the core curriculum at the elementary level.
5. Are sustainable and available as a resource.

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6. Address students' academic success as well as health concerns.
7. Encourage links between school and home to promote active lifestyles.
8. Focus tobacco prevention on grades four (4) and five (5).
9. Create an obesity prevention program that includes K-5 sequential wellness education.

Finally, the bill calls for professional development and assessment of the model wellness program after the 2005-2006 school year.

Districts that wish to apply for grants must ensure that their wellness policy and program comply with the requirements of state law above.

### **Development of Wellness Policy, Procedure and Forms**

MSBA developed this policy and the accompanying procedure and forms in cooperation with the Department of Health and Senior Services, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, University of Missouri Extension, and the Missouri School Food Service Association. Other contributors included the Dairy Council and the American Heart Association. This workgroup met over the course of the summer and developed a policy, procedure and forms that are research based and that provide school districts with a best practices approach to a comprehensive wellness program.

Please note that one component of the federal law requires input from students, parents, administrators, school food services and the community in the development of this policy. Local districts must present this policy and procedure for review and revision to a committee that meets the membership requirements set forth in federal law before implementation and adoption.

### **Policy Components**

1. This policy is based on best practices and designed to comply with federal law. If the district wishes only legal compliance, it need only develop the policy in cooperation with parents, food service representatives, students, staff, Board members and the community and address the seven (7) items required by federal law listed on page one (1) of this explanation.
2. Implementation, oversight and evaluation responsibilities are assigned to the wellness committee. If the district has a School Health Advisory Council (SHAC), the district may choose to form their wellness committee around their SHAC (for more information on

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School Health Advisory Councils or the components of a Coordinated School Health Program see <http://www.healthykidsmo.org>). The wellness committee should ideally include at least one (1): parent, student, representative from school food services, school nurse, Board member, member of the administrative team, and other members of the staff or community as appropriate. **PLEASE NOTE:** The Board must designate at least one (1) person as coordinator.

3. The wellness workgroup has chosen to use the Missouri Eat Smart Nutrition Guidelines as a baseline to guide districts. The Missouri Eat Smart Guidelines chart is provided to districts in the supplemental material included in this update. The Missouri Eat Smart Guidelines use the USDA Dietary Guidelines as a template and were adapted from "Child Nutrition and Wellness," drafted by the Kansas State Department of Education. The collaboration between Kansas and Missouri on these guidelines exists in hopes of being consistent in setting nutritional guidelines among bordering states to help facilitate change in schools and influence vendors.
4. The presented policy language designates that the Eat Smart Nutrition Guidelines apply to "foods available on campus during the school day." This is written broadly enough to include any after-school programs that the district may want covered. The district is free to expand or limit this definition of the school day.

**NOTE:** Districts that choose NOT to adopt the "Tobacco-Free District" policy AH will be inconsistent with this policy. Also, districts that have customized policies IGDF and KI or procedure IGDF-AP need to be sure the wellness policy is consistent with that customization.

### **Procedural Components**

Many of the components in this sample procedure reflect a "best practices" approach to a district wellness program. The procedural components represent a variety of programs, activities, curricular changes, schedule changes and perhaps policy changes. Districts should look at each item closely to determine if that particular item meets the district's needs.

1. The nutrition guidelines and application of those guidelines are not established in law. The law only requires that districts apply guidelines designed to promote student health and reduce childhood obesity. The Missouri Eat Smart guidelines were agreed upon by the workgroup as model. The workgroup also applied these guidelines to foods served in after-school programs and intramural activities that may happen outside of the school day although the law does not require districts to include these activities. The district should specify which, if any, after-school programs are subject to the nutrition guidelines.

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The Eat Smart guidelines represent a continuum of health food choices. The commitment of resources rises with each level. Adhering to the "minimum" level is sufficient to satisfy the law. The intermediate and advanced levels are offered for those districts that wish to adopt standards above what is required.

For each area listed on page one (1) of the procedure (i.e., breakfast, vending, etc.), the district should read the requirements of the minimum, intermediate and advanced categories and then choose the category that they believe to be most appropriate. For example, one district might choose to meet the "advanced" goals in all categories, while another district might choose to designate vending as "minimum," lunch as "intermediate" and snacks as "advanced." Districts should feel free to mix and match and customize to achieve the best nutritional guidelines for their students and district.

After districts determine which of the guidelines they will use, the district needs to customize their procedure accordingly. Because the nutrition guidelines will be individualized for each district, and because they require input from a variety of people, MSBA has chosen to leave the specifics blank in the procedure. **Districts must fill in this section with their chosen nutrition guidelines in order to comply with law.**

2. Note that the physical activity section establishes recess before lunch rather than after. Research indicates that recess before lunch:
  - ▶ Allows children to eat more, increasing nutrition intake and reducing food waste.
  - ▶ Improves the cafeteria atmosphere. The lunchroom is more relaxed and conducive to eating since the students are not rushing through lunch to get outside.
  - ▶ Improves student behaviors on the playground and in the classroom, as they return more ready to learn.

Switching recess and lunch requires careful consideration, planning and some adjustments. The following resources can assist in making the recess and lunch switch successful:

"Recess Before Lunch: A Guide for Success," developed by the Montana Team Nutrition, can be found at: <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfood/recessBL.html>.

Indiana's Department Education Team Nutrition website, which reviews Indiana's success stories and resources: <http://doe.state.in.us/food/training/welcome.html>.

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3. The physical activity section also recommends that the district not use physical activity as a form of discipline or withhold recess as punishment. Experts strongly recommend this component.
4. The tobacco education component contains a “tobacco-free district approach.” Some districts currently allow tobacco use by staff or patrons in designated areas of campus. The district should check Board policy (MSBA policy AH) before implementing this particular component of the procedure. MSBA previously offered three (3) versions of this policy but is recommending that all districts adopt a “tobacco-free” version. Revised versions of policy AH and a new procedure, IGAEA-AP (Teaching About Alcohol, Tobacco and Drugs) are included in this update packet.
5. The sun safety component does not require that districts provide sunscreen, nor is it recommended that districts routinely apply sunscreen to students due to the possibility of allergic reactions. The sun safety component is about educating students and parents so that they exercise good choices. If the district prohibits the wearing of hats or sunglasses, it should lift that prohibition at times when students are exposed to high UV levels.
6. The section on meal times may require the district to make changes to schedules or policies. All of these recommendations are based on best practices to improve student health and should be implemented if possible.
7. While staff wellness is not specifically mentioned in the federal law, the workgroup concluded that a truly comprehensive wellness program should include staff. Implementing a staff wellness program may also be financially beneficial to the district since healthier staff typically miss fewer days and have lower health care costs. Please note that district-sponsored physical activities for staff may have workers' compensation implications, and districts should contact local counsel when implementing such programs.
8. The outdoor air pollution standards are especially important in Missouri’s urban and suburban schools where air quality is a serious health concern.
9. As the district considers currently permitted marketing in its schools it should pay particular attention to such things as branding, inadvertent marketing, pictures on vending machines, logos on district equipment (such as scoreboards) and the advertising in sports programs, school newspapers and on video programs shown to students. MSBA and the workgroup realize that marketing is a source of revenue for the district, and the district must weigh that revenue source against the goal of improving student and staff health.

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10. Compliance/Evaluation--no specific compliance indicators are required by law, and the district may choose any indicators it deems appropriate. The workgroup recommends using the School Health Index and Physical Fitness Reports because they are appropriate indicators, and the district is already compiling this information. However, the district may also use overall student/staff attendance records and may want to assess and monitor the weight or Body Mass Index (BMI) of each individual student.

### **Form Components**

New form ADF-AF1 is a sample evaluation tool. MSBA formulated this evaluation grid to reflect each of the required steps of MSBA's wellness policy. If the district customizes the policy, they should also customize this form accordingly. Districts may want to create a similar form for the administrative procedure. MSBA has not provided a form reflecting the steps of the administrative procedure due to the anticipated wide variance between district procedures.

New form ADF-AF2 is a tool for assessing the impact of the district's wellness policy and program. A sample of possible items to use as "process" or "outcome" indicators has been provided in the supplemental material entitled "Sample Measurable Compliance Indicators for Determining Impact of District Wellness Policy." Districts should use this sample as a guide in choosing indicators that reflect their district's policy, procedure and program goals.

### **Supplemental Materials**

1. "Sample District Wellness Policy Implementation Work Plan"--MSBA is providing this sample work plan to assist districts in implementing the wellness policy, procedure and program.
2. "Sample Measurable Compliance Indicators for Determining Impact of District Wellness Policy"--As mentioned above, this sample is to assist districts in choosing appropriate indicators for use with ADF-AF2.
3. "Missouri Eat Smart Nutritional Guidelines"--Use these guidelines as a starting point for developing the district's unique nutritional guidelines. Refer to this chart when filling out the guidelines in ADF-AP.
4. Resource List--Provides the district with resources used in devising these sample wellness materials, as well as resources to further assist districts as they customize and develop their wellness program.

### **Resources**

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In addition to the supporting materials provided with this policy and procedure, the district may use the following contacts for additional information on specific topics:

1. MSBA, Department of Education Policy  
policy@msbanet.org  
(800) 221-6722, ext. 324

MSBA is the first point of contact for districts that subscribe to MSBA's Policy services. Contact MSBA for questions regarding the model wellness policy and related materials.

2. Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
School Food Services Section  
(573) 751-3526

Districts that do not subscribe to Policy Services or that want specific information on federal school meal programs, monitoring or compliance should contact DESE Food Service.

3. Department of Health and Senior Services  
Health Promotion Unit  
(866) 726-9926

The DHSS is a source of expertise in the areas of physical activity and nutrition issues as they relate to children. In addition, they provide support for other policy initiatives, such as tobacco use prevention.

4. University of Missouri Extension  
573-882-1933

Extension is a source of expertise in the areas of physical activity and nutrition issues as they relate to children, with a special emphasis on nutrition education.