

RICHLAND PARISH SCHOOLS DISTRICT & FOOD SERVICE WELLNESS POLICY



Revised 7/2025

RICHLAND PARISH SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICY

On June 30, 2004, Congress passed Section 204 of Public Law 108-265, of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004. This law requires each local education agency participating in a program, authorized by the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S. 1751 et seq.) or the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S. C. 1771 et seq.), to establish a local school wellness policy by July 1, 2006.

PREAMBLE

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Preamble

Whereas, children need access to healthful foods (School Food Service) and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive (Superintendent & Site Principals),

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 nutritional recommendations from the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act,

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 Richland Parish 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 Richland Parish School District that:

The Richland Parish School District Principals can 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. This is dependent on time, staff availability and the school principals.

Richland Parish School District has appointed all Principals, to coordinate and assess the implementation of a wellness policy. The following principals Kenya Grimes—Delhi High School, Edward Parks—Delhi Middle School, Pamela Norris—Delhi Elementary, Reagan Holloway—Holly Ridge Elementary, Chelsea Chisolm Rayville High School, Amanda Stein—Rayville Junior High, Elycia Smith-Hill—Rayville Elementary, Tyler Dean—Mangham High School, Elizabeth Gregorie—Mangham Junior High, Ashley

Malmay—Mangham Elementary, and Beverly Smart—Start Elementary. All K-12 students will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis as determined by the individual site Principals.

Each site Principal will make certain that all foods and beverages sold or served at school concessions will meet the nutrition recommendations of the U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The Smart Snack List located on Louisiana Fit Kids website compiled by Pennington will serve as a reference. The Smart Snack list will be provided, by the SFS, to all site principals prior to the start of school. The site principal will purchase foods and beverages that comply with The Smart Snack List. No outside foods other than sack lunches are permitted on the closed school campuses in Richland Parish. That means schools allowing Door Dash, teachers selling food, or Food Trucks on campus are in violation of USDA guidelines and subject to fines or reimbursing School Food Service. No sales prior to lunch, at the school level, can be conducted unless the proceeds are going into school food service accounts. Sales of food that complies with the Smart Snack list are allowed after meal service.

Richland Parish School Food Service will provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students; will accommodate the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning; and will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings. The site Principal, during class scheduling, will allocate adequate time for students to eat.

To the maximum extent practicable, all schools in our district will participate in available federal school meal programs including the School Breakfast and Lunch Program, including after-school meals.

Individual school Principals, if they so choose, and if staff and money is available, can 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.

SCHOOL HEALTH COUNCILS

The school district and/or individual school principal within the district will have the opportunity, if they so choose, to create, strengthen, or work within existing school health councils to develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, revise physical activity policies. The councils also will serve as resources to school sites for developing policies and suggesting implementing new policies. In participating schools, the school health council organized by the schools, that choose to participate, will consist of a group of individuals representing the school and community. The committee should include parents, students, and representatives, of the school food authority, members of the school board, school administrators, teacher, health professionals, and members of the public.

NUTRITIONAL QUALITY OF FOODS AND BEVERAGES SOLD AND SERVED ON CAMPUS—EACH CAMPUS WILL BE GIVEN A SMART SNACK LIST TO USE AS GUIDANCE—VIOLATIONS OF THESE GUIDELINES CAN RESULT IN FINES TO THE SCHOOL OR REIMBURSING SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE THEIR MEAL COST

School Meals

Meals served through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs will:

- Be appealing and attractive to children;
- Be served in clean and pleasant settings;
- Meet, all nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations;
- Offer a variety of fruits and vegetables complying with new nutritional guidelines for a balanced daily and weekly program;
- Serve only low-fat and reduced fat milk and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternative; and
- Ensure that grains served or offered are whole grain.

Schools should engage students and parents, through taste-tests of new entrees and surveys, in selecting foods sold through the school meal programs in order to identify new, healthful, and appealing food choices. In addition, schools could share information about the nutritional content of meals with parents and students. Such information will be available on the school board's website, on cafeteria menu boards, placards, or other point-

Federal and State Requirements

The Richland Parish school district will:

- Offer a school lunch program with menus that meet the meal patterns and nutrition standards established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Louisiana Department of Education, Office of School and Community Support.
- Provide school breakfast and snack programs (where approved and applicable) with menus that meet the meal patterns and nutrition standards established by the U. S. Department of Agriculture and the Louisiana Department of Education, Office of School and Community Support.
- Encourage school staff and families to participate in school meal programs.
- Operate all Child Nutrition Programs with school foodservice staff who are qualified according to current professional standards (*1196 Louisiana School Food Service Policy Guidance Manual*).
- Establish food safety as a key component of all school food operations and ensure that the food service permit is current for the Food Service school site.
- Follow State Board of Education policies on competitive foods and extra food sales (refer to *1196 Louisiana School Food Service Policy Guidance Manual*).
- Establish guidelines for all foods available on the school campus during the school day with the objective of promoting health and reducing obesity. (See "Other School Policies.")

School District Policies

It is suggested that Richland Parish School District provide:

- Adequate time for breakfast and the recommended 30 minutes for lunch.

- Whole and enriched grain products that are high in fiber, low in added fats and sugars, and served in appropriate portion sizes consistent with the current USDA standards.
- Fresh, frozen, canned or dried fruits and vegetables using healthy food preparation techniques and 100 percent fruit or vegetable juice.
- Nonfat, **reduced fat**, low fat, plain and/or flavored milk and yogurt, nonfat, **reduced fat** and/or low-fat real cheese.
- Nuts, nut butters, seeds, trail mix, and/or soybean snacks.
- Healthy food preparation techniques for lean meat, poultry, and fish.
- School meals accessible to all students with a variety of delivery strategies, such as breakfast in the classroom, grab-and-go meals, or alternate eating sites.
- A cafeteria environment conducive to a positive dining experience, with socializing among students and between students and adults; with supervision of eating areas by adults who model proper conduct and voice level; and with adults who model healthy habits by eating with the students.

Other School Policies

The Richland Parish School Food Authority suggests:

- Eliminate use of foods as **rewards** for student accomplishment. (See appendix A for reward alternatives.)
- Encourage serving healthy food at school **parties**. Notices shall be sent to parents/guardians either separately or as part of a school newsletter, reminding them of the necessity of providing healthy treats for students and/or encouraging the use of non-food treats for classroom birthday or award celebrations. (See appendix B for healthy school parties.)
- Strongly discourage selling food items of limited nutritional value as **fundraisers**, such as candy, cupcakes, or sugar beverages. (See appendix C for healthy fundraising alternatives.)
- Strongly encourage nutritious and appealing options (such as fruits, vegetables, nuts, beef jerky, reduced-fat milk, reduced fat-yogurt, reduced-fat cheese, 100% juice and water) whenever foods/beverages are sold or otherwise offered **after school** at sporting and academic events, celebrations, social events, after school care, and other school functions.

Food Marketing

- School-based marketing should be consistent with nutrition education and health promotion. As such, it is recommended that schools limit food and beverage marketing to the promotion of foods and beverages that meet the nutrition standards for meals or for foods and beverages sold individually. School-based marketing of brands promoting predominantly low-nutrition foods and beverages is strongly discouraged. The promotion of healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy foods is encouraged.
- Marketing activities that promote healthful behaviors include vending machine covers promoting water or milk; pricing structures that promote healthy options in vending machines, and sales of fruit for fundraisers.

- The goal of improving nutritional intake can also be accomplished by applying basic marketing strategies to sales of healthful options. Schools can consider the four P's when establishing guidelines for foods and beverages served or sold during the school day:
 - **Product:** Vendors and companies have increasing numbers of products available—many with a more healthful profile than traditional snack foods and beverages.
 - **Placement:** The sales of more nutrient-rich foods and beverages can be increased by placing them in “prime” locations—like at students’ eye level in a vending machine.
 - **Price:** Another way to increase the sale of healthful items is to offer them at a lower cost. For example, water can be sold for \$.25 to .50 less than other drinks.
 - **Promotion:** There are many creative ways to promote healthy options---like offering samples of new healthful products or giving discount coupons during the introductory period; or designating healthy choices in vending machines and school cafeteria by using school mascot symbol.

Nutrition Education

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) advocates the need for school-based nutrition education. Because a high percent of all children and adolescents are enrolled in school, the classroom environment is ideally suited to give students the skills and support needed to adopt healthful eating behaviors for life. Teachers, food service personnel, and other staff can offer their expertise and model appropriate eating behaviors. Additionally, students have opportunities to practice healthful eating behaviors at school. Collaboration among school food service staff, teachers, the community, families and institutional services is necessary.

There are two broad approaches to school-based nutrition education – traditional classroom lessons that address general knowledge, attitude, and behavior – and behavioral change programs based on social learning theory. Using both venues is recommended for optimal impact. Nutrition education can be integrated into content area instruction across the curriculum including science, mathematics, English/language arts, and social studies. The alignment of nutrition lessons with standards and benchmarks provides for easy integration of the information into routine instructional planning. Integration of nutrition information into teaching content areas should use the resources of the classroom, the school, and the community. Nutrition education also is part of health education, which enables students to acquire knowledge and skills needed to practice good health. A planned, sequential curriculum is essential.

Behavior change can be enhanced through social learning theory, as well. Social learning theory may include a parent component for younger students and peer involvement for older students. School activities such as Family Nutrition Night can promote the social learning theory. Additionally, the cafeteria can be used as part of the total educational system for modeling behavior.

The Richland Parish school district will:

- Promote and implement nutrition education that promotes lifelong healthful eating practices;

- Use lessons that are age-appropriate, behaviorally focused content that is developmentally appropriate and culturally relevant;
- Use lessons that are sequential and are correlated with standards, benchmarks, and grade level expectations;
- Provide hands-on activities that are fun;
- Provide repeated opportunities for students to taste foods that are low in fat, sodium and added sugars and high in vitamins, minerals and fiber;
- Focus on positive aspects of healthful eating behaviors; and
- Promote social learning techniques such as role modeling, providing incentives, developing social resistance skills, overcoming barriers to behavioral changes and goal setting, social resistance skills, overcoming barriers to behavioral changes and goal setting.
- Strive toward hiring qualified, certified health education teachers.
- Provide staff development for teachers.

Physical Education

Both regular physical activity and nutrition mutually contribute to healthy citizens and reduce the incidence of diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, depression, obesity, and other chronic health problems. Federal Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that children and teenagers be physically active for an accumulation of at least 60 minutes daily. Since children spend the majority of their time at school during weekdays, it is imperative that schools provide students with the means to participate in physical activity.

When examining Physical Education programs, ask the question, “Does the physical education program help every student attain the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for them to lead an active, productive life and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical fitness?” Quality physical education programs include the following components:

1. Emphasizes knowledge and skills that promote a lifetime of physical activity.
2. Is based on standards that define what students should know and be able to do.
3. Keeps students active for most of the class time.
4. Provides many different physical activity choices.
5. Meets needs of **all** students, especially those who are not athletically gifted.
6. Features cooperative, as well as competitive, games.
7. Develops students’ self-confidence and eliminates practices that humiliate students.
8. Assesses students on their progress in reaching goals, not on whether they achieve an absolute standard.
9. Promotes physical activity outside of school.
10. Teaches self-management skills, such as goal setting and self-monitoring.

11. Actively teaches cooperation, fair play, and responsible participation in physical activity and is an enjoyable experience for students.
12. Focuses, at the high school level, on helping adolescents make the transition to a physically active adult lifestyle.

In Louisiana, Act 814 passed in 2003 to require that public schools for grades K-6 provide 30 minutes each day of quality physical activity. **Act 734**, passed in 2004, revised Act 814 wording to require 30 minutes each school day of *quality, moderate to vigorous physical activity for students*. Implementation of Act 734 requirements began with the 2004-5 school year.

The Richland Parish school district will:

- Promote and implement quality physical education programs that emphasize and promote participation in lifelong physical activities and reaching a health enhancing level of physical fitness among all students.
- Provide students in grades K-8 with a minimum of 150 minutes per week of health and physical education.
- Ensure that students in grades K-6 participate in planned, organized, and moderate to vigorous physical activity for a minimum of 30 minutes each school day.
- Strive toward having qualified, certified physical education teachers guide physical activity instruction in all elementary grades as well as in middle and high school physical education classes.
- Provide staff development on standards implementation for physical education instructors.
- Ensure that adequate safety policies and provisions are in place for physical education programs.
- Strive toward ensuring that adequate equipment is in place to guarantee that all students are able to be active for a minimum of 30 minutes per school day.
- Provide a variety of fitness training, motor skills, and teamwork modules in the 270 hours of physical education required at the high school level for graduation.
- Use a recognized instrument or program such as *Fitnessgram*®, to evaluate student's physical fitness.
- Provide age-appropriate equipment and facilities for implementing quality physical education programs.

Physical Activity Opportunities

In order to improve health and fitness of our students and to prevent childhood obesity, we must put increased emphasis on the importance of physical activity for students. The following recommendations are made in the best interest of students recognizing that schools, parents and communities will need to be creative in finding additional opportunities and resources for physical activity outside physical education classes.

The Richland Parish school district will provide opportunities for physical activity:

- Recognize that daily physical activity is essential to student welfare and academic performance.
- Encourage physical activity during recess for elementary students, intramurals programs, and integration in the academic curriculum, and clubs as well as in physical education programs.

- Provide daily recess for all children in K-8th grade.
- Work with the community to create ways for students to walk, bike, and skateboard, roller-skate, play basketball, play softball, play baseball, or participate in other physical activities in a safe location at times other than the school day.
- Encourage parents and guardians to support students' participation in physical activities, to be physically active role models, and to include physical activities in family plans.
- Encourage school staff to participate in physical activities to serve as role models.
- Support community-based physical activity programs.

SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE'S ROLE IN WELLNESS PROGRAM

Farm to School

Farm to School programs connect K-12 with the objectives of serving healthy meals in school cafeterias: improving student nutrition; providing agriculture, health and nutrition education opportunities; and supporting local and regional farmers. Local purchasing, school gardens, and other farm to school activities are a relevant component of a comprehensive wellness policy that works to prevent obesity, assure that school meal programs meet nutritional guidelines, and teach students where their food comes from.

Farm to School programs support local and regional farmers and the local economy by working with local distributors and farmers to purchase locally grown foods. There are many benefits for starting and expanding Farm to School programs in schools. The Farm to School efforts can increase student participation in the school meal programs and increase consumption of fruits and vegetables, by an average of one serving per day, which can help prevent childhood obesity and improve nutrition. Food purchased through Farm to School can be successful within limited nutrition services food budgets once planning and menu choices are consistent with seasonal availability of fresh and minimally processed local produce. Farm to School programs can promote life-long healthy habits and improve student knowledge and attitudes toward food, nutrition and agricultures.

Nutrition Services will provide fresh hydroponic greenhouse vegetables and farm produce to Richland Parish School District to be utilized as part of the school meals program

Nutrition Services will plan menus to accommodate the local availability of produce grown by greenhouse and farm raised fresh produce.

Teachers will be encouraged to incorporate the greenhouse hydroponics and school gardens as part of curriculum to enrich students' learning opportunities around food, nutrition, mathematics, science, language arts and the environment.

Nutrition Services will participate in Harvest of the Month program as an activity to further the introduction of locally grown fruit and produce and to allow students the experience of trying the item.

PRODUCE SITES FOR RICHLAND

1. Hydroponic gardens, were started in August of 2015, and are located on Rayville High Campus. Rory and Mary Gresham oversee the production of tomatoes, lettuce and other produce grown in the greenhouses. The product is sent to all cafeterias in parish for meals.
2. Student help will be used when available in the greenhouses. This program has been offered yearly.
3. Raised bed gardens are located at Delhi High School. Gardens are set up to be used by elementary school, high school, and community.
4. Menus will reflect items harvested from the greenhouses and used in a recipe.
5. Posters will be used to display items that are Harvest of the Month. Menus will reflect items grown on campus or locally.

Stakeholders:

1. Rory Gresham—Greenhouse Production Manager
2. Gracie Hosea—CNP Supervisor
3. Beverly Gresham—Field Manager

Implementation:

Greenhouses were renovated 2015 at Rayville High to start the program of growing produce. Meetings held regularly determine what items we would like to grow. The greenhouses are constantly being updated and restructured to be compliant with USDA guidelines.

Data Collection and Monitoring:

Data is collected at production sites on the produce harvested and at the delivery sites. Pounds or heads of produce is counted and recorded when harvested. Delivery forms are signed at the receiving site after an inspection of the produce. Those forms are kept at school sites and copies sent to central office.

Public Notification

Web Page for Richland Produce was created to display the produce being grown in the Hydroponic Production Houses at Rayville High School. Greenhouses are Gap Certified and are regularly inspected. The greenhouses have made the list as a Farm to School Produce site in Louisiana.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATIONS 2024—2025

1. ALL GREEN HOUSES AT RHS ARE CURRENTLY UNDER THE SFS's MANAGEMENT. PRODUCE NOW GROWN INCLUDE TOMATOES, LETTUCE, CUCUMBERS, AND BELL PEPPERS.
2. RAYVILLE'S GREEN HOUSES ARE CONTINUOUSLY BEING UPDATED AND IMPROVED. GREENHOUSES ARE GAP CERTIFIED AND REGULARLY INSPECTED. THE GREENHOUSES HAVE MADE THE LIST FOR FARM TO SCHOOL PRODUCE SITES IN LOUISIANA, WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS ABLE TO PURCHASE FROM THE SITE IF PRODUCE IS AVAILABLE.

RICHLAND PARISH SFS FARM TO SCHOOL WELLNESS TEAM

THE TEAM SHALL CONSIST OF THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS:

1. Gracie Hosea, CNP Supervisor
2. Beverly Gresham, CNP Field Manager
3. Anthony Powell, Manager
4. Tyrone Powell, Manager
5. Donna Sorey, Manager
6. Jackie Tyree, Manager
7. Jessica Smith, Manager
8. Jackie Powell, Manager
9. Martha Hales, Manager
10. Martha Avants, Manager
11. Rory Gresham, Green House Manager
12. Mary Gresham, Green House Assistant