

**Kerens Independent School District**  
Wellness Policies on Physical Activity and Nutrition

**Preamble**

Whereas, children need access to healthful foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn and thrive;

Whereas, good health fosters student attendance and education;

Whereas, obesity rates have doubled in children and tripled in adolescents over the past two decades, and physical inactivity and excessive calorie intake and 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 five main recommendations from the Food Guide Pyramid;

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 Kerens ISD 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 Kerens ISD that:

The school district will 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 polices.

All students in grades K-12 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.

Foods and beverages sold or served at school will meet the nutrition recommendations of the U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Qualified child nutrition professionals will provide students 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 and adequate time for students to eat.

To the maximum extent practicable, all campuses in our district will participate in available federal school meal programs (including the School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program).

Schools will 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.

## **TO ACHIEVE THESE POLICY GOALS:**

### **I. School Health Councils**

The school district and/or individual schools within the district will create, strengthen, or work within existing school health councils to develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies. The councils also will serve as resources to school sites for implementing those policies. (A school health council consists of a group of individuals representing the school and community, and should include parents, students, representatives of the school food authority, members of the school board, school administrators, teachers, health professionals, and members of the public.)

### **II. Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served on Campus**

#### **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, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations;
- ...offer a variety of fruits and vegetables;
- ...serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk, and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (to be defined by USDA); and
- ...ensure that all of the served grains are whole grain.

Schools should engage students, employees, 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 should share information about the nutritional contents of meals with parents and students. Such information could be made available on menus, a website, on cafeteria menu boards, placards, or other point-of-purchase materials.

**Breakfast.** To ensure that all children have breakfast, either at home or at school, in order to meet their nutritional needs and enhance their ability to learn:

- ...schools will, to the extent possible, operate the School Breakfast Program.
- ...Schools will, to the extent possible, arrange bus schedules and utilize methods to serve school breakfasts that encourage participation, including serving “grab-and-go” breakfast and breakfast in the classroom and break times.
- ...schools that serve breakfast to students will notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast Program.
- ...schools will encourage parents to provide a healthy breakfast for their children through newsletter articles, take-home materials, or other means.

### **Free and Reduced-priced Meals.**

Schools will make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to, and prevent the over identification of, students who are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals. Toward this end, schools may utilize electronic identification and payment systems; promote the availability of school meals to all students; and/or use nontraditional methods for serving school meals

### **Meal Times and Scheduling.** Schools:

- ...will provide students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch;
- ...should schedule meal periods at appropriate times, e.g., lunch should be scheduled between 10:30 am and 1:30 pm.
- ...should not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities.
- ...in elementary school, will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks; and
- ...should take reasonable steps to accommodate the tooth-brushing regimens of
- ...students with special oral health needs (e.g., orthodontia or high tooth decay risk).

**Qualifications of School Food Service Staff.** Qualified nutrition professionals will administer the school meal programs. As part of the school district’s responsibility to operate a food service program, we will provide continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals in schools. Staff development programs should include appropriate certification and/or training programs for child nutrition directors, school nutrition managers, and cafeteria workers, according to their levels of responsibility.

**Sharing of Foods and Beverages.** Schools should discourage students from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children’s diets.

**Foods and Beverages Sold Individually (i.e., foods sold outside of reimbursable school meals, such as through vending machines, cafeteria a la carte[snack] lines, fundraisers, school stores, etc.)**

**Each campus is allowed six free days to utilize as they want but on the other days, the campuses must adhere to:**

**Elementary Schools.** The school food service program will approve and provide all food and beverage sales to students in elementary schools. Given young children's limited nutrition skills, food in elementary schools should be sold as balanced meals. If available, foods and beverages sold individually should be limited to low-fat and non-fat milk, fruits, and non-fried vegetables.

**Middle/Junior High and High Schools.** In middle/junior high and high schools, all foods and beverages sold individually outside the cafeteria program (including those sold through a la carte [snack] lines, vending machines, student stores, or fundraising activities) during the school day, or through programs for students after the school day, will meet the following nutrition standards:

#### **Beverages**

Allowed: water or seltzer water without added caloric sweeteners; fruit and vegetable juices and fruit-based drinks; unflavored or flavored low-fat or fat-free fluid milk and nutritionally-equivalent nondairy beverages; sports drinks; and iced teas

#### **Foods**

We recommend a choice of at least two fruits and/or non-fried vegetables will be offered for sale at any location on the school site where foods are sold. Such items could include, but are not limited to, fresh fruits and vegetables; 100% fruit or vegetable juice; fruit-based drinks that are at least 100% fruit juice and that do not contain additional caloric sweeteners; cooked, dried, or canned fruits (canned in fruit juice or light syrup); and cooked, dried, or canned vegetables (that meet the above fat and sodium guidelines).

**Celebrations.** Celebrations will encompass what is outlined in our student handbooks.

**Snacks.** Snacks served during the school day or in after-school care or enrichment programs will make a positive contribution to children's diets and health, with an emphasis on serving fruits and vegetables as the primary snacks and water as the primary beverage. Schools will assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, children's nutritional needs, children's ages, and other considerations.

**Vending Machines.** Must follow the Smart Snack Guidelines which can be found at [Squaremeals.com](http://Squaremeals.com).

### **III. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing**

Kerens School District aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. In addition, the district supports physical education for all students. The Coordinated School Health Program will be a TEA approved program. Schools should provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- is offered at each grade level as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;

- is part of not only health education classes, but also classroom instruction in subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects;

- includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, participatory activities, such as contest, promotions, taste testing, farm visits, and school gardens;

- promotes fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices;

- emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise);

- links with school meal programs, other school foods, and nutrition-related community services;

- teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food marketing.

**Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting.** For students to receive the nationally-recommended amount of daily physical activity (i.e., at least 45 minutes per day) and for students to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior, students need opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class. Toward that end:

Classroom health education will complement physical education by reinforcing the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically-active lifestyle and to reduce time spent on sedentary activities, such as watching television.

**Communications with Parents.** The district/school will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. The district/school will send home nutrition information, and post nutrition tips on school websites. Schools should encourage parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks and to refrain from

including beverages and foods that do not meet the above nutrition standards for individual foods and beverages.

The district/school will provide information about physical education and other school-based physical activity opportunities before, during, and after the school day; and support parents' efforts to provide their children with opportunities to be physically active outside of school. Such supports will include sharing information about physical activity and physical education through a website, newsletter, or other take-home materials, special events, or physical education homework.

**Food Marketing in Schools.** School-based marketing will be consistent with nutrition education and health promotion. As such, schools will 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 (above). School-based marketing of brands promoting predominantly low-nutrition foods and beverages is prohibited. The promotion of healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products is encouraged.

Examples of marketing techniques include the following: logos and brand names on/in vending machines, books or curricula, textbook covers, school supplies, scoreboards, school structures, and sports equipment; educational incentive programs that provide food as a reward; programs that provide schools with supplies when families buy low-nutrition food products; in-school television; and food sales through fundraising activities. Marketing activities that promote healthful behaviors (and are therefore allowable) include: vending machine covers promoting water; pricing structures that promote healthy options in a la carte lines or vending machines; sales of fruit for fundraisers; and coupons for discount gym memberships.

**Staff Wellness.** Kerens School District highly values the health and wellbeing of every staff member and will plan and implement activities and policies that support personal efforts by staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

#### **IV. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education**

**Daily Physical Education (P.E.) K-12.** All students in grades K-12, including students with disabilities, special health-care needs, and in alternative educational settings, will receive daily physical education (or its equivalent of 100 minutes/week for elementary school students and 225 minutes/week for middle and high school students) for the entire school year. Student involvement in other activities involving physical activity (e.g., interscholastic or intramural sports) will meet the physical education requirement. Students will spend at least 50 percent of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

**Daily Recess.** All elementary school students will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which school should encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment.

Schools should discourage extended periods (i.e., periods of two or more hours) of inactivity. When activities, such as mandatory school-wide testing, make it necessary for students to remain indoors for long periods of time, schools should give students periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.

**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. When appropriate, the district will work together with local public works, public safety, and/or police departments in those efforts. The school district will explore the availability of federal “safe routes to school” funds, administered by the state department of transportation, to finance such improvements.

**Use of School Facilities Outside of School Hours.** The school track and tennis courts should be available to students, staff, and community members before, during, and after the school day, on weekends, and during school vacations. These spaces and facilities also should be available to community agencies and organizations offering physical activity and nutrition programs. School policies concerning safety will apply at all times.

#### **IV. Monitoring and Policy Review**

**Monitoring.** The superintendent or designee will ensure compliance with established district-wide nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. In each school, the principal or designee will ensure compliance with those policies in his/her school and will report on the school’s compliance to the school district superintendent or designee.

School food service staff, at the school or district level, will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the superintendent (or if done at the school level, to the school principal). In addition, the school district will report on the most recent USDA School Meals Initiative (SMI) review findings and any resulting changes. If the district has not received a SMI review from the state agency within the past five years, the district will request from the state agency that a SMI review be scheduled as soon as possible.

The superintendent or designee will develop a summary report every three years on district-wide compliance with the district’s established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies, based on input from schools within the district. That report will be provided to the school board and also distributed to all school health councils, parent/teacher organizations, school principals, and school health services personnel in the district.

**Policy Review.** To help with the initial development of the district's wellness policies, each school in the district will conduct a baseline assessment of the school's existing nutrition and physical activity environments and policies. The results of those school-by-school assessments will be compiled at the district level to identify and prioritize needs.

Assessments will be repeated every three years to help review policy compliance. Assess progress, and determine areas in need of improvements. As part of that review, the school district will review our nutrition and physical activity policies; provision of an environment that supports healthy eating and physical activity; and nutrition and physical education policies and program elements. The district, and individual schools within the district, will, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop a working plan to facilitate their implementation.