



LEXINGTON
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Lexington Public Schools

Wellness Policy

Updated FY 2022-2023

**Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child model for
addressing health in schools**

District Wellness Policy

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Lexington Public Schools Wellness Policy

Introduction and Background

Understanding that physical and mental health, emotional well-being, and positive development are inextricably linked with academic success, Lexington Public Schools (LPS) has worked to transform the district's capacity to meet the health needs of Lexington children. Lexington Public Schools (LPS) is committed to promoting health and wellness for students and staff. The district incorporates health and wellness efforts into our strategic priorities in order to promote the optimal health and academic success of all students. It is a priority for LPS to create environments where everyone's success matters and to support the whole child including their physical, intellectual, emotional/mental, and social well being.*

Our vision for the LPS graduate challenges us to develop young people who are more than scholars. It calls for graduates who are healthy in both mind and body, prepared to make wise choices to ensure their own physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

Children need access to nutritious foods, wellness-related educational content (Health Education and Physical Education curriculum), and opportunities for physical activity throughout the day. In addition, children need access to services and curriculum that support their mental health and social/emotional development. Proper nutrition and physical activity before, during, and after the school day are strongly correlated with positive academic outcomes and foster lifelong healthy habits leading to longer, healthier lives.

Beyond the academic imperative however, school, civic, and community leaders have a responsibility to help Lexington's children overcome health barriers that may prevent them from successfully meeting the challenges of reaching adulthood and assuming their roles as the eventual leaders and stewards of our community. The district will maintain a focus on health equity and will work to ensure that students and staff across the district have equitable access to health and wellness efforts. The district recognizes the out-of-school time (OST) settings, such as academic enrichment programs (e.g., reading or math-focused programs), after school clubs, specialty programs (e.g., sports teams, STEM programs, and arts enrichment programs), and multipurpose programs that provide an array of activities (e.g., recreation centers/agencies, the Lexington Community Center, extended day programs, Summer Explorations, etc), provide critical opportunities to teach and reinforce healthy habits.

To create a healthy school environment where the healthy choice is the easy choice, we have developed this policy regarding wellness initiatives in Lexington Public Schools. This policy took effect in the FY '14 school year and has been reviewed and updated on a three year cycle.

**Federal Law (PL 108.265 Section 204), the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act 2010, and the USDA final rule of 2016 require each local education agency (LEA) participating in the National School Lunch and/or School Breakfast Program to develop a local wellness policy and establish a plan for measuring the implementation of the policy. The LPS Local Wellness policy applies to all students, staff and schools in the district; specific goals and measurable outcomes are identified within each section of the policy.*

All community stakeholders were invited to provide input taking into consideration the needs and perspectives expressed by members of the Lexington School community, and responding to both the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act and Massachusetts Standards for School Wellness Advisory Committees. This document is intended to assist Administrators and Wellness Council Members in implementing these guidelines in their schools.

The LPS School Health Advisory Council ([SHAC](#)) provides oversight of the District Wellness policy and is one means for assessing and promoting a healthy environment for LPS. SHAC is composed of LPS administrators, staff members, students and parents, members of the larger Lexington community and local public health representatives. The committee meets 4-5 times each school year to discuss topics related to the health and wellbeing of students and staff in our schools. LPS SHAC subcommittees meet throughout the year to focus on student health priorities. Subcommittee descriptions can be found at this [LINK](#). This policy will be reviewed for relevance by the SHAC at a minimum of once every three years and updates will be made as needed. The District will coordinate the wellness policy with other aspects of school management, including the District's School Improvement Plan, when appropriate. Before being finalized, the updated policy draft will be presented to the School Committee and the community with an opportunity for public comment before final approval. Approved policies are posted publicly on the district website. The Superintendent of Schools or their designee is charged with operational responsibility for ensuring that the schools meet the local wellness policy requirements.

Policy

The Lexington Public Schools (LPS) aims to actively promote the social, emotional and physical health and wellness of all students to advance both their healthy development and readiness to learn. Student and staff wellness is a core value of the District and a key strategy to address health inequities and to close opportunity and achievement gaps that impact LPS students. LPS will ensure that the healthy choice is the easy choice and that students learn the skills and knowledge needed to make those choices. LPS is committed to implementing a Whole School Whole Community Whole Child (WSCC) approach to wellness, as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and ASCD (Association of Supervisors and Curriculum Development). As a part of this approach, LPS will meet the health and wellness needs of all students through prevention, intervention, and intensive response. As a result, all LPS students will be challenged, supported, engaged, safe, and healthy. The District Wellness Policy is intended to link new and existing wellness-related policies and convey a framework for creating safe, healthy, and welcoming school environments. LPS shall take a comprehensive approach to reviewing and incorporating changes in policy, curriculum, and operating procedures to promote healthy lifestyles and sustainable wellness practices for all students and staff. The work of implementing this policy relies on the work and collaboration of instructional, operational, clinical, and administrative staff at schools and central office departments. LPS shall develop the capacity of schools to implement the policy and improve the quality and equity of programs, services, and supports. This policy is inclusive of all students, staff, and families.

School Wellness Committee:

Committee Role and Membership

The School Wellness advisory group will develop, recommend, review, and advise on implementation of school district policies that address student and staff wellness. The District Wellness Policy shall be reviewed once yearly by the District Wellness Council and considered for updates based on other model school wellness policies and best practices, annual report findings and recommendations, input from schools and the community, research evidence, and regulations. The District Wellness Council shall seek ongoing feedback from LPS community stakeholders. Additionally, the District Wellness Council will develop an annual Wellness Action Plan with goals and objectives for the coming school year.

The LPS School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) District Wellness Policy Committee meets at least two to four times per year to establish goals for and oversee the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of this district-level wellness policy.

This council shall include at a minimum representatives from: families, students, school and district instructional and operational administrators, relevant central department heads, school food and nutrition services staff, physical education and health education teachers, school nurses and other school health professionals (e.g. psychologists, guidance counselors, social workers) a school committee member, community youth serving agencies, healthcare providers, and the general public. Appointees to the maximum extent possible shall reflect the cultural, linguistic, and ethnic composition of LPS schools. General membership and attendance at the District Wellness Council is open to all stakeholders and the general public. The District Wellness Council will implement a plan for involving and engaging all of these stakeholders. SHAC provides a sign up list for interested members each year.

Leadership

The Superintendent or designee(s) will convene the District Wellness Policy Committee and facilitate development of and updates to the wellness policy, and will ensure each school's compliance with the policy.

The designated official for oversight is (The School Health Advisory Council Chair- LPS Assistant Coordinator PE, Health & Wellness Dept.) and LPS Coordinator PE, Health & Wellness Dept.)

Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability and Community Engagement:

Implementation Plan

The District will develop and maintain a plan for implementation to manage and coordinate the execution of this wellness policy. The plan delineates roles, responsibilities, actions, and timelines specific to each school; and includes information about who will be responsible to make what change, by how much, where, and when; as well as specific goals and objectives for nutrition standards for all foods and beverages available on the school campus, food and beverage marketing, nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, physical education and other school-based activities that promote student wellness. It is recommended that the school use the [School Health Index for Schools](#) or [Action for Healthy Kids' School Health Index](#) to complete a school-level assessment based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's School Health Index, create an action plan that fosters implementation and generate an annual progress report.

Policy Development, Implementation and Evaluation

- The Superintendent of Schools and his/her/their designee are charged with operational responsibility for ensuring that the schools meet the local wellness policy requirements.
- Building Principals, in consultation with school nurses, are responsible for monitoring and managing the local wellness policy in their building.
- The LPS Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) will be administered to all students in grades 7 - 12 on a bi-annual basis. Data derived from the survey will inform Local Wellness Policy updates as well as district wellness goals and activities.
- The School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) will compile data from the YRBS and report the findings and resulting goals to the School Committee at least tri-annually.
- The current Wellness Policy will be posted on the district website
- Wellness Policy content will be included in new staff orientation and in mandatory annual staff training modules.
- SHAC is composed of a large group of district employees, students, parents and community stakeholders.
- The School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) is responsible to review and update the Wellness Policy at a minimum of every three (3) years. The assessment results and policy draft will be made available to the public for review and comment before being finalized by a vote of the School Committee. This policy will be reviewed within three years of the policy's effective date.

This wellness policy and the progress reports can be found at: <https://www.lexingtonma.org/>

Recordkeeping

The District will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of the wellness policy at LPS District's Administrative Offices. Documentation maintained in this location will include but will not be limited to:

- The written wellness policy;
- Documentation demonstrating that the policy has been made available to the public;
- Documentation of efforts to review and update the Local Schools Wellness Policy; including an indication of who is involved in the update and methods the district uses to make stakeholders aware of their ability to participate on the DWC;
- Documentation to demonstrate compliance with the annual public notification requirements;
- The most recent assessment on the implementation of the local school wellness policy;
- Documentation demonstrating the most recent assessment on the implementation of the Local School Wellness Policy has been made available to the public.

Annual Notification of Policy

The District will actively inform families and the public each year of basic information about this policy, including its content, any updates to the policy and implementation status. The District will make this information available via the district website and/or district-wide communications. The District will provide as much information as possible about the school nutrition environment. This will include a summary of the District's events or activities related to wellness policy implementation. Annually, the District will also publicize the name and contact information of the District staff leading and coordinating the committee, as well as information on how the public can get involved with the school wellness committee.

Triennial Progress Assessments

At least once every three years, the District will evaluate compliance with the wellness policy to assess the implementation of the policy and include:

- The extent to which schools under the jurisdiction of the District are in compliance with the wellness policy;
- The extent to which the District's wellness policy compares to the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's model wellness policy; and
- A description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the District's wellness policy.

The position/persons responsible for managing the triennial assessment and contact information is the LPS Assistant Coordinator of PE, Health and Wellness, Coordinator of PE, Health and Wellness and the Resident District Manager Lexington School District Whitsons Culinary Group.

The District Wellness Committee, in collaboration with individual schools, will monitor schools' compliance with this wellness policy.

The District will actively notify households/families of the availability of the triennial progress report.

Revisions and Updating the Policy

The District Wellness Committee will update or modify the wellness policy based on the results of the annual School Health Index and triennial assessments and/or as District priorities change; community needs change; wellness goals are met; new health science, information, and technology emerges; and new Federal or state guidance or standards are issued. **The wellness policy will be assessed and updated as indicated at least every three years, following the triennial assessment.**

Community Involvement, Outreach and Communications

The District is committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of the wellness policy. The District will actively communicate ways in which representatives of the District Wellness Committee and others can participate in the development, implementation and periodic review and update of the wellness policy through a variety of means appropriate for the LPS district. The District will also inform parents of the improvements that have been made to school meals and compliance with school meal standards, availability of child nutrition programs and how to apply, and a description of and compliance with Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. The District will use electronic mechanisms, such as email or displaying notices on the district's website, as well as non-electronic mechanisms, such as newsletters, presentations to parents, or sending information home to parents, to ensure that all families are actively notified of the content of, implementation of, and updates to the wellness policy, as well as how to get involved and support the policy. The District will ensure that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community, and accomplished through means similar to other ways that the district and individual schools are communicating important school information with parents and adult caregivers.

The District will actively notify the public about the content of or any updates to the wellness policy annually, at a minimum. The District will also use these mechanisms to inform the community about the availability of the annual and triennial reports.

Cultural Proficiency

The Lexington Public Schools is committed to creating a culturally proficient District that embraces at its fundamental core the culturally sustaining and affirming beliefs and practices that honor differences while mitigating the effects of institutional racism in the effort to eliminate gaps and promote health and wellness for all. The District is committed to providing authentic learning opportunities for every child in every classroom in every school to ensure they develop into healthy, engaged, self-determined, and independent learners that are college and career ready. The District recognizes that Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices (CLSP) helps to create a safe,

healthy and welcoming environment that supports all students' social, emotional, physical and academic learning as well as their health and wellness. Cultural Proficiency is an approach that raises awareness of individual and institutional culture and bias, encourages cultural learning and relationship building, and implements CLSP, in order to respect, celebrate and build on cultural strengths and diversity. Cultural diversity includes but is not limited to group and/or individual identities based on race, ethnicity, nationality, immigration status, religion, language, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, social class, and home life or family structure. Cultural Proficiency should be integrated into the implementation of other areas of the District Wellness Policy, and is called out here to establish specific actions to be taken by the District and the schools.

The District will support the development of staff and administrators' competencies to build cultural proficiency in schools, classrooms and central office departments. Schools shall collectively assess their organizational structure, policies and school-wide practices for bias(es) as well as examine their physical environment, classroom curricula, instructional materials and wellness promotions. Schools will use this assessment to inform their annual Wellness Action Plan. The District and the schools shall include student, family and community participation in decision-making bodies and create structures for feedback from students, families and communities and increased engagement of all families in wellness-related policies and committees. This includes recognizing specific barriers faced by families of ELL students and ELL students with disabilities by targeting outreach to these groups and using the Translation resources available to the district to translate family-focused communications and to provide interpretation as requested during meetings.

Schools will follow other cultural proficiency-related policies, including those regarding race, ethnicity, immigration status, religion, language, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, and disabilities and policies that promote family and student engagement. The work of creating a culturally proficient district requires the participation of departments and staff across the District and requires engagement in interdepartmental collaboration. For more information on the work of the district go to the [2023-01-01 LPS Report on Efforts to Reduce Systemic Barriers to Equity](#).

Nutrition:

School Meals

Our school district is committed to serving healthy meals to children, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat milk; that are moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and have zero grams trans-fat per serving (nutrition label or manufacturer's specification); and to meeting the nutrition needs of school children within their calorie requirements. The school meal programs aim to improve the diet and health of school children, help mitigate childhood obesity, model healthy eating to support the development of lifelong healthy eating patterns, and support healthy choices while accommodating cultural food preferences and special dietary needs.

All schools within the District participate in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP). The District also operates additional nutrition-related programs and activities including Breakfast after the Bell, Grab 'n' Go Breakfast, and MA Farm to Schools. All schools within the District are committed to offering school

meals through the NSLP and SBP programs, and other applicable Federal child nutrition programs, that:

- Are accessible to all students;
- Are appealing and attractive to children;
- Are served in clean and pleasant settings;
- Meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established by local, state, and Federal statutes and regulations. (The District offers reimbursable school meals that meet [USDA nutrition standards](#).)
- Promote healthy food and beverage choices using the following marketing and merchandising techniques:
 - Whole fruit options are displayed in attractive bowls or baskets (instead of chafing dishes or hotel pans).
 - Sliced or cut fruit is available daily.
 - Daily fruit options are displayed in a location in the line of sight and reach of students.
 - All staff members, especially those serving, have been trained to politely prompt students to select and consume the daily fruit/vegetable options with their meal.
 - White milk is placed in front of other beverages in all coolers.
 - Alternative entrée options (e.g., salad bar, yogurt parfaits, etc.) are made readily available
 - A reimbursable meal can be created in any service area available to students
 - Student surveys are used to inform menu development, dining space decor and promotional ideas.
 - Daily announcements are used to promote and market menu options.
- Menus will be posted on the District website or individual school websites
- Menus will be created/reviewed by a Registered Dietitian or other certified nutrition professional.
- School meals are administered by a team of child nutrition professionals.
- The District child nutrition program will provide reasonable accommodations for students with special dietary needs.
- Students will be allowed at least 10 minutes to eat breakfast and at least 20 minutes to eat lunch, counting from the time they have received their meal and are seated (meets Healthy Schools Program Gold-level criteria).
- Students are served lunch at a reasonable and appropriate time of day.
- Lunch will follow the recess period to better support learning and healthy eating.
- Participation in Federal child nutrition programs will be promoted among students and families to help ensure that families know what programs are available in their children's school.

Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

All school nutrition program directors, managers and staff will meet or exceed hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements in the [USDA professional standards for child nutrition professionals](#). These school nutrition personnel will refer to [USDA's Professional Standards for School Nutrition Standards website](#) to search for training that meets their learning needs.

Water

To promote hydration, free, safe, unflavored drinking water will be available to all students throughout the school day* and throughout every school campus* (“school campus” and “school day” are defined in the glossary). The District will make drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes.

- All water sources and containers will be maintained on a regular basis to ensure good hygiene and health safety standards. Such sources and containers may include drinking fountains, water jugs, hydration stations, water jets and other methods for delivering drinking water.]
- Students will be allowed to bring and carry (approved) water bottles filled with only water with them throughout the day.

Competitive Foods and Beverages

The District is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages available to students on the school campus* during the school day* support healthy eating. The foods and beverages sold and served outside of the school meal programs (e.g., “competitive” foods and beverages) will meet the Massachusetts Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods and Beverages in Public Schools and the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, at a minimum. Smart Snacks aim to improve student health and well-being, increase consumption of healthful foods during the school day and create an environment that reinforces the development of healthy eating habits. The A-List is an up-to-date, ever-expanding list of snack products that meets Massachusetts Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods and Beverages in Public Schools and the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, whichever is stricter. The A-List can be found here:

<https://tools.johnstalkerinstitute.org/alist/alist.pdf>. A summary of the standards and information, as well as a Guide to Smart Snacks in Schools are available at:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/tools-schools-smart-snacks>. The Alliance for a Healthier Generation provides a set of tools to assist with implementation of Smart Snacks available at www.foodplanner.healthiergeneration.org.

To support healthy food choices and improve student health and well-being, all foods and beverages outside the reimbursable school meal programs that are sold to students on the school campus during the school day and the extended school day will meet or exceed the state nutrition standards. These standards will apply in all locations and through all services where foods and beverages are sold, which may include, but are not limited to, à la carte options in cafeterias, vending machines, school stores and snack or food carts.

Celebrations and Rewards

All foods offered on the school campus will meet or exceed the state nutrition standards, including through:

1. Celebrations and parties. The district will provide a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers, including non-food celebration ideas. Healthy party ideas are available from the [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](http://www.allianceforahealthiergeneration.org) and from the [USDA](http://www.usda.gov).
2. Rewards and incentives. Foods and beverages will not be used as a reward, or withheld as punishment for any reason, such as for performance or behavior. Food should not be used as a reward at school unless specified for a specific student’s Individual Education Program (IEP),

504, or behavior plan. When a food reward is specified in an IEP, 504 or behavior plan, foods of high nutritional value should be used whenever possible.

Fundraising

Foods and beverages that meet or exceed the state nutrition standards may be sold through fundraisers on the school campus* during the school day*. The District will make available to parents and teachers a list of healthy fundraising ideas [examples from the [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#) and the [USDA](#)].

- A building administrator and school nurse must be involved in the planning process for all food-related events.
- All fundraising activities or school store sales involving food that occur during the school day (from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of school on a given day) must meet the state and federal nutrition standards.
- Fundraising during and outside school hours will sell only non-food items or foods and beverages that meet or exceed the state nutrition standards. These fundraisers may include but are not limited to, donation nights at restaurants, cookie dough, candy and pizza sales, market days, etc. (Meets Healthy Schools Program Gold-level criteria)]

Nutrition Promotion

Nutrition promotion and education positively influence lifelong eating behaviors by using evidence-based techniques and nutrition messages, and by creating food environments that encourage healthy nutrition choices and encourage participation in school meal programs. Students and staff will receive consistent nutrition messages throughout schools, classrooms, gymnasiums, and cafeterias. Nutrition promotion also includes marketing and advertising nutritious foods and beverages to students and is most effective when implemented consistently through a comprehensive and multi-channel approach by school staff, teachers, parents, students and the community.

The District will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students throughout the school campus, as well as encourage participation in school meal programs. This promotion will occur through at least:

- Implementing at least ten or more evidence-based healthy food promotion techniques through the school meal programs using marketing and merchandising techniques; and
- Ensuring 100% of foods and beverages promoted to students meet the state nutrition standards. Additional promotion techniques that the District and individual schools may use are available at <http://www.foodplanner.healthiergeneration.org/>.

Food and Beverage Marketing in Schools

The District is committed to providing a school environment that ensures opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while

minimizing commercial distractions. The District strives to teach students how to make informed choices about nutrition, health and physical activity. These efforts will be weakened if students are subjected to advertising on District property that contains messages inconsistent with the health information the District is imparting through nutrition education and health promotion efforts. It is the intent of the District to protect and promote student's health by permitting advertising and marketing for only those foods and beverages that are permitted to be sold on the school campus, consistent with the District's wellness policy.

Any foods and beverages marketed or promoted to students on the school campus* during the school day* will meet or exceed the state nutrition standards.

Food and beverage marketing is defined as advertising and other promotions in schools. Food and beverage marketing often includes an oral, written, or graphic statement made for promoting the sale of a food or beverage product made by the producer, manufacturer, seller or any other entity with a commercial interest in the product.¹ This term includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Brand names, trademarks, logos or tags, except when placed on a physically present food or beverage product or its container.
- Displays, such as on vending machine exteriors
- Corporate brand, logo, name or trademark on school equipment, such as marquees, message boards, scoreboards or backboards (Note: immediate replacement of these items are not required; however, districts will replace or update scoreboards or other durable equipment when existing contracts are up for renewal or to the extent that is in financially possible over time so that items are in compliance with the marketing policy.)
- Corporate brand, logo, name or trademark on cups used for beverage dispensing, menu boards, coolers, trash cans and other food service equipment; as well as on posters, book covers, pupil assignment books or school supplies displayed, distributed, offered or sold by the District.
- Advertisements in school publications or school mailings.
- Free product samples, taste tests or coupons of a product, or free samples displaying advertising of a product.

As the District/school nutrition services/Athletics Department/PTA/PTO reviews existing contracts and considers new contracts, equipment and product purchasing (and replacement) decisions should reflect the applicable marketing guidelines established by the District wellness policy.

Essential Healthy Eating Topics in Health Education

The District will make healthy eating education culturally relevant for all students in the health education curriculum. The health education curriculum recognizes that the exact make-up of a diversified, balanced and healthy diet will vary depending on individual characteristics (e.g. age,

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gender, lifestyle, abilities and degree of physical activity), cultural context, locally available foods and dietary customs. Essential healthy eating topics will include

- Resources from the World Health Organizations (WHO) [A Healthy Diet fact sheet](#)
- Relationship between healthy eating and personal health and disease prevention
- Food guidance from a variety of sources including [MyPlate](#), The Food and Drug Administrations (FDA) Food and Nutrition Service, [Team Healthy](#)
- Reading and using FDA's nutrition fact labels
- Eating a variety of foods every day
- Balancing food intake and physical activity
- Eating more fruits, vegetables and whole grain products
- Choosing foods that are low in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol and do not contain *trans* fat
- Choosing foods and beverages with little added sugars
- Preparing healthy meals and snacks
- Risks of unhealthy weight control practices
- Accepting body size differences
- Food safety
- Importance of water consumption
- Importance of eating breakfast
- Making healthy choices when eating at restaurants
- Eating disorders
- [The Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#)
- Reducing sodium intake
- Social influences on healthy eating, including media, family, peers and culture
- How to find valid information or services related to nutrition and dietary behavior
- Resisting peer pressure related to unhealthy dietary behavior
- Influencing, supporting, or advocating for others'

Physical Activity

Children and adolescents are encouraged to participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. A substantial percentage of students' physical activity can be provided through a comprehensive school physical activity program (CSPAP). A CSPAP reflects strong coordination and synergy across all of the components: quality physical education as the foundation; physical activity before, during and after school; staff involvement and family and community engagement; and the district is committed to providing these opportunities. Schools will ensure that these varied physical activity opportunities are in addition to, and not as a substitute for, physical education (addressed in "Physical Education" subsection). All schools in the district will be encouraged to successfully address all CSPAP areas.

To the extent practicable, the District will ensure that its grounds and facilities are safe and that equipment is available to students to be active. The District will conduct necessary inspections and repairs.

- All elementary schools have a daily scheduled recess built into their schedule. There is also a limited opportunity for students to participate in a before school sports program which is limited by the number of students who can safely participate.
- Weather conditions are considered when outdoor recess is scheduled.
- Grades 6-12 provide a variety of physical activity opportunities for students through offering a variety of intramural sports such as after school fitness center opportunities and volleyball and basketball intramural activities.
- Grades 6-12 also has a comprehensive offering of sports teams which are supervised by the Athletics Department and requires a participation fee.
- Opportunities for family and community physical activity involvement are limited and incidental primarily due to the heavily scheduled facilities by town clubs and the relatively limited time available for school or community wide events. However opportunities do occur such as parent volunteers at the elementary field days and school based community fun runs (5Ks).
- Physical Activity opportunities are not withheld as a punishment.
- Individual physical activity breaks occur at the K-12 level but are classroom and teacher decision driven.

Physical Education

The District will provide students with physical education, using an age-appropriate, sequential physical education curriculum consistent with national and state standards for physical education. The physical education curriculum will promote the benefits of a physically active lifestyle and will help students develop skills to engage in lifelong healthy habits, as well as incorporate essential health education concepts (discussed in the *“Essential Physical Activity Topics in Health Education”* subsection). The curriculum will support the essential components of physical education.

All students will be provided equal opportunity to participate in physical education, health and wellness classes. The District will make appropriate accommodations to allow for equitable participation for all students and will adapt physical education classes and equipment as necessary.

The Lexington Public Schools Physical Education and Adaptive Physical Education program is a standards-based aligned program which supports physical literacy through the mission statement of **“Purposeful Movement, Healthy Decisions, Strategies for Life”**

The K-12 program is aligned with the following: Massachusetts Comprehensive Health Curriculum Framework, SHAPE (Society of Health and Physical Educators) America and APENS (Adapted Physical Education National Standards). The LPS program is designated as a *Quality Physical Education Program* as it contains the following essential elements:

- Guided by content standards.
- Student centered and developmentally appropriate.
- Physical activity and the motor skills form the core of the program.
- Teaches management skills and promotes self discipline.
- Promotes inclusion of all students.
- Emphasizes learning correctly rather than outcome.

Physical Education Overview

- The LPS K-12 physical education curriculum follows an age-appropriate, sequential physical education (PE) curriculum consistent and aligned with national and state standards for physical education.
- All students receive physical education classes at each grade level as required by MGL Chapter 71, Section 3.
- Elementary students receive 60 minutes of quality physical education instruction per week.
- Grades 6-12 students receive a minimum 100 minutes of quality physical education instruction per week.
- The Program has an inclusion-focused Adaptive Physical Education program that ensures equitable opportunity and participation for all students.
- Middle school students are required to take three full years of physical education classes
- High school students are required to complete six credits of physical education as part of their graduation requirements with a minimum of one semester of PE per year.
- All teachers are certified in accordance with the DESE licensure requirements.
- Most of the Adaptive PE (APE) teachers hold a national certification (CAPE)
- APE is included as part of each student's IEP.
- Physical Education waivers are not permitted and medically excused students are provided with an alternative program adapted for their medical contraindications
- Substitutions for PE such as recess or after school sports are not permitted as these activities, while promoting physical activity, are not necessarily curriculum based or involve certified PE teachers and many require a user fee and can be selective in nature.
- Students are moderately to vigorously active for at least 50% of class time during most or all physical education classes.
- All physical education teachers in the LPS program participate at least once a year in professional development in education workshops and courses.
- Physical fitness opportunities are promoted through a variety of units of study with a focus on student understanding and applying this knowledge to create age appropriate personalized fitness goals.

Essential Physical Activity Topics in Health Education

The District Physical and Health education classes include in curriculum a minimum of 12 the following essential topics on physical activity:

- The physical, psychological, or social benefits of physical activity
- How physical activity can contribute to a healthy weight
- How physical activity can contribute to the academic learning process
- How an inactive lifestyle contributes to chronic disease
- Health-related fitness, that is, cardiovascular endurance, muscular endurance, muscular strength, flexibility, and body composition
- Differences between physical activity, exercise and fitness
- Phases of an exercise session, that is, warm up, workout and cool down
- Overcoming barriers to physical activity
- Decreasing sedentary activities, such as TV watching

- Opportunities for physical activity in the community
- Preventing injury during physical activity
- Weather-related safety, for example, avoiding heat stroke, hypothermia and sunburn while being physically active
- How much physical activity is enough, that is, determining frequency, intensity, time and type of physical activity
- Developing an individualized physical activity and fitness plan
- Monitoring progress toward reaching goals in an individualized physical activity plan
- Dangers of using performance-enhancing drugs, such as steroids
- Social influences on physical activity, including media, family, peers and culture
- How to find valid information or services related to physical activity and fitness
- How to influence, support, or advocate for others to engage in physical activity
- How to resist peer pressure that discourages physical activity.

Recess (Elementary)

All elementary schools provide 45 minutes of lunch and recess. Schools will offer at least **20 minutes of recess** on all days during the school year. This policy may be waived on early dismissal or late arrival days. If recess is offered before lunch, schools will have appropriate hand-washing facilities and/or hand-sanitizing mechanisms located just inside/outside the cafeteria to ensure proper hygiene prior to eating and students are required to use these mechanisms before eating. Hand-washing time, as well as time to put away coats/hats/gloves, will be built into the recess transition period/time frame before students enter the cafeteria.

Outdoor recess will be offered when weather is feasible for outdoor play. [Recommendations for recess and weather can be found here.](#)

In the event that the school or district must conduct **indoor recess**, teachers and staff will follow the indoor recess guidelines that promote physical activity for students, to the extent practicable.

Recess will complement, not substitute, physical education class. Recess monitors or teachers will encourage students to be active, and will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible. Withholding recess or physical education class will not be used as a form of punishment or discipline.

Classroom Physical Activity Breaks (Elementary and Secondary)

The District recognizes that students are more attentive and ready to learn if provided with periodic breaks when they can be physically active or stretch. Thus, students will be offered **periodic opportunities** to be active or to stretch throughout the day on all or most days during a typical school week. The District recommends teachers provide short (3-5-minute) physical activity breaks to students during and between classroom time at least three days per week. These physical activity breaks will complement, not substitute, for physical education class, recess, and class transition periods.

The District will provide resources and links to resources, tools, and technology with ideas for classroom physical activity breaks.

Active Academics

Teachers will incorporate movement and kinesthetic learning approaches into “core” subject instruction when possible (e.g., science, math, language arts, social studies and others) and do their part to limit sedentary behavior during the school day.

The District will support classroom teachers incorporating physical activity and employing kinesthetic learning approaches into core subjects by providing annual professional development opportunities and resources, including information on leading activities, activity options, as well as making available background material on the connections between learning and movement.

Teachers will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

Before and After School Activities

The District offers opportunities for students to participate in physical activity either before and/or after the school day (or both) through a variety of methods. The District will encourage students to be physically active before and after school by:

- Intramural Fitness Center opportunities at the 6-12 levels
- Intramural team/individual sports activities at the 6-12 level
- After school competitive sports offered through the Athletics Department
- Clubs such as the badminton and table tennis clubs at LHS

Active Transport

The District supports walking, bicycling, and other forms of active transportation to and from school and encourages efforts to minimize driving and idling when possible. The District will encourage this behavior by engaging in *six or more* of the activities below; including but not limited to:

- Designate safe or preferred routes to school
- Promote activities such as participation in International Walk to School Week, National Walk and Bike to School Week
- Secure storage facilities for bicycles and helmets (e.g., shed, cage, fenced area)
- Instruction on walking/bicycling safety provided to students
- Promote safe routes program to students, staff, and parents via town and district communications
- Use crossing guards
- Use crosswalks on streets leading to schools

Wellness Promotion

LPS is committed to teaching students to make informed choices about nutrition, health and physical activity and to providing a school environment that ensures opportunities for all students to practice healthy behaviors. A coordinated school health approach guides district decision-making related to all aspects of student and staff physical and mental health and wellness.

A. Health Education

The Lexington Public Schools requires comprehensive K-12 health education that is medically accurate, age and developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically sustaining, and implemented in a safe and supportive learning environment where all students feel valued. Health Education offers a prevention-based course of study designed to provide students with the necessary knowledge, skills and strategies to act responsibly in a rapidly changing world.

The curriculum promotes healthy decision-making and teaches the personal skills that enable students to confront the many social, physical, and emotional challenges that occur throughout their lifetime. The curriculum also addresses issues of adolescent development including: emerging sexuality, drug and alcohol use, peer pressures, separation from parents, and feelings of invulnerability and immortality – all part of the journey from adolescence to adulthood. Interwoven into the curriculum are skill-based strategies including problem solving, communication techniques, conflict resolution, and decision-making models.

The LPS Health education department partners with health services and counseling departments in providing suicide prevention education to students and families in 7 and 9 grades utilizing the SOS (signs of suicide) curriculum, an evidence-based youth suicide prevention program that has demonstrated an improvement in students' knowledge and adaptive attitudes about suicide risk and depression. LPS health services also collaborates with LPS health educators in delivering health lessons (ie. Narcan training, etc) and administering the Massachusetts-mandated screening SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment).

Comprehensive health education curriculum shall be modified as needed for students with disabilities and students who are English learners. It shall promote healthy lifestyle habits, healthy relationships, and health literacy for all students.

The Lexington School Health Education curriculum is supported by data from the Lexington and Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Surveys (YRBS), [LPS YRBS: Overview & 2021 Detailed Results](#), and aligns with and reflects the LPS Health Education Frameworks, which integrate the [Massachusetts Comprehensive Health Curriculum Framework](#) and [National Health Education Standards](#), as well as the [National Sexuality Education Standards](#) and the [LPS K-12 Social Justice Standards](#). Qualified and trained teachers will implement the curricula. All schools will follow relevant promotion and graduation requirements that include: Health education that includes at minimum K-5 health education lessons in all 6 elementary schools; two semesters of health education in total in grades 7 to 8 taught by a licensed health education teacher; and 2 semesters of health education in total in grades 9 and 11 taught by a licensed health education teacher. In addition to these course requirements, health education topics will be integrated into other subject areas where possible, so as to reinforce their importance, provide additional skill practice, and demonstrate the connections of health concepts to many other content areas.

B. School Health Services

- School nurses in each building will provide care for all students including providing first aid, emergency care and assessment, the management of chronic conditions (e.g., diabetes, seizures, food allergies, etc), support for mental health and substance use concerns, preventive services, attendance follow-up, infectious disease surveillance and communication with the school team, families and community providers.
- Massachusetts-mandated screenings including vision, hearing, height, weight, postural and SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment) will be conducted per the required schedules for each screening. School nurses collaborate with PE teachers and school counselors to complete screenings.
- School nurses will be provided professional development that is pertinent to their practice in order to support student needs.
- Partner with Health Education teachers in delivering health lessons (ie. Narcan trainings, etc)

C. Physical Environment

- School buildings will be maintained with regular cleaning and maintenance practices that ensure compliance with safety standards.
- All use of tobacco, vapor products, alcohol, marijuana, and illegal substances is prohibited in district buildings and on school campuses.
- All buildings will utilize an electronic entry system that allows doors to remain locked during the school day thereby monitoring visitor access to buildings.
- The district Safety and Security committee will meet regularly to review current security measures and identify areas for improvement.
- School Resource Officers will collaborate with building administrators and will receive training as needed to stay current in safety procedures.

D. Employee Wellness

Lexington Public Schools offers a comprehensive level of support for their employees which can be found here which is overseen by the LPS Human Resources Department

[-https://sites.google.com/lexingtonma.org/lpswellness/home](https://sites.google.com/lexingtonma.org/lpswellness/home)

E. Family Engagement

- The district recognizes that a strong relationship between families/caregivers and school staff reinforces student health and academic development. Families are encouraged to be actively involved and engaged in their child's learning.
- Family representatives will be included in the SHAC as their input and feedback is essential to the committee's work.
- School staff will invite family members to volunteer in various capacities for classroom and building level activities and committees.
- Families will be kept informed of district wellness activities and other health-related information via email. Information regarding community-wide events will be shared with families through the mass communication system, ParentSquare, which is sent electronically to all families in the district.
- The district will make every effort to provide information to families in their primary language.
- The district holds an annual day-long Parent/Caregiver Academy in partnership with the town, schools, and other local experts. This event provides parents/adult caregivers the opportunity to attend workshops to gain the knowledge and skills to enhance their child's overall wellness, including mental health, physical health, and safety.

F. Community Involvement

- The district recognizes that a strong relationship between the community and schools reinforces student health and academic development.
- Representatives from community organizations (e.g. School Resource Officers, the Town of Lexington Human Services Dept. etc) will be included in the SHAC as their input and feedback is valued and appreciated.

G. Social-Emotional Climate

- Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is the process through which individuals develop self-awareness, self-control, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. The district will expand social and emotional learning Tier 1 programs and other evidence-based approaches that promote healthy development. Social-emotional skills will be explicitly taught, modeled, and reinforced across all grade levels. Examples of social, emotional, and behavioral learning approaches, tools, and/or programs include: Universal Design for Learning, Restorative Justice Circles, Serious talks, Mindfulness Practices, Active Bystander Initiative.
- A sense of belonging in a students community and at school is well documented to foster positive student outcomes for both mental health and academics. This is a building block for academic success, in that it encourages students to be more engaged in their own learning, and supports the district work to expand what student success looks like for the individual student. Staff will receive professional development in the areas of Diversity, Belonging, Inclusion and Equity (DBIE) in order to better support all students, foster an environment where everyone's success matters and the unique and diverse qualities of all students are celebrated.
- Anti-bullying policies will be included in student and staff handbooks, and concerns will be investigated promptly by administrators when reported.
- The district will use survey tools to assess student and family perceptions of belonging and connection at school, and district leaders will review the results.

Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness

The District will integrate wellness activities across the entire school setting, not just in the cafeteria, other food and beverage venues, and physical activity facilities. The District will coordinate and integrate other initiatives related to physical activity, physical education, nutrition, and other wellness components so all efforts are complementary, not duplicative, and work towards the same set of goals and objectives promoting student well-being, optimal development, and strong educational outcomes.

Schools in the District are encouraged to coordinate content across curricular areas that promote student health, with consultation provided by either the school or the District's curriculum experts.

All efforts related to obtaining federal, state or association recognition for efforts, or grants/funding opportunities for healthy school environments will be coordinated with and complementary of the wellness policy, including but not limited to ensuring the involvement of the District Wellness Committee.

All school-sponsored events will adhere to the wellness policy guidelines. All school-sponsored wellness events will include physical activity and healthy eating opportunities when appropriate.

LPS PE, Health and Wellness Prevention Program

The LPS Physical Education, Health and Wellness Prevention Program in collaboration with students,

faculty, parents, guardians, other school departments, town departments, and community members are committed to a community-based approach preventing, postponing, and reducing substance use, and other risky behaviors. Also, programming that strives to reduce and prevent suicide/self-harm behaviors and improve mental health and wellness. As part of the Lexington Public Schools' Physical Education and Wellness Department, the Prevention Program prepares students to be health-literate and to make informed and healthy choices throughout their lives. Core principles of the program include enhancing protective factors and reducing risk factors; including early aggression, academic failure, poor mental health and dropping out of school. Students learn to understand and demonstrate the responsibility they share as individuals, family members, and citizens to act in ways that enhance health for themselves and others. Participation in the Prevention Peer Leadership/Educators program helps students develop and use their leadership skills to influence others to make positive choices. Students also learn how to help promote a more supportive and safe school climate for all Lexington students. As a potential leader at LHS, students can make a significant difference in the Lexington schools and community.

Participation in the Prevention Peer Leadership/Educators program enables students to:

- Identify personal leadership qualities.
- Communicate effectively with students and adults about issues that affect youth
- Develop creative and diverse approaches to problem solving, resisting peer pressure, developing healthy friendships, coping with stress and communicating with adults.
- Explore the value/importance of personal and civic responsibility.
- Understand what student leaders can do to use their influence to prevent problems affecting other youth and to promote healthy lifestyles.

The Prevention Program provides targeted health education lessons to students in grades 5, 6, 8 & 9. All 5th and 6th graders receive two prevention lessons. The targeted health education lessons include content related to substance abuse, decision-making, active bystander skills and refusal skills as well as the development of resiliency and leadership in students. The Prevention Specialist trains Peer Education Leaders, grades 8-12 to provide the targeted health education lessons in conjunction with the Prevention Specialist.

Students can earn community service for many of the Peer Leadership/Educators activities.

Community Partnerships

The District will continue relationships with community partners (e.g., hospitals, universities/colleges, local businesses, etc) in support of this wellness policy's implementation. Existing and new community partnerships and sponsorships will be evaluated to ensure that they are consistent with the wellness policy and its goals.

Community Health Promotion and Family Engagement

The District will promote to parents/caregivers, families, and the general community the benefits of and approaches for health enhancing strategies throughout the school year. Families will be informed and invited to participate in school-sponsored activities, including participation in the School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) and will receive information about health promotion efforts.

As described in the "Community Involvement, Outreach, and Communications" subsection, the District will use electronic mechanisms (e.g., email or displaying notices on the district's website), as well as non-electronic mechanisms, (e.g., newsletters, presentations to parents or sending information home to parents), to ensure that all families are actively notified of opportunities to participate in school-sponsored activities and receive information about health promotion efforts.

Staff Wellness and Health Promotion

- *See Employee Wellness P- 19*

Professional Learning

A variety of Staff Wellness opportunities are provided by the Professional Learning Office which can be accessed through the <https://www.lexingtonma.org> website.

- QPR Training
- CPR Training
- Yoga classes
- Active Bystander Initiative
- DEI workshops
- LGBTQ inclusive practices
- Universal Design for Learning

Recommendations/Outcomes of Policy Assessments

Priority 1: District food based fundraising outside of school hours does not meet the USDA's Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. School building based administrators, faculty and students are not in compliance with the food policies. Students offer food at the activities fair and during bake sales. Serious concerns continue regarding food allergies and safety for those with food allergies.

This also includes building based food related activities that occur during the school day. (cookie decorating, etc)

Priority 2: Adequate time for Middle School and Elementary Students to eat lunch

Priority 3: Continue working towards implementation of comprehensive Health Education for elementary and middle school.

→add 6th grade health back into the MS Schedule.

→Continue working with the district and elementary school administrators, parents and scheduling committee to implement full year, weekly, health education in all 6 elementary schools that would be in line with other courses (ie: PE, Visual and Performing Arts, Science, Math, Social Studies, etc).

Although we meet many of the benchmarks under the HECAT there are significant gaps between 5th grade and 7th grade health. The transition to 6th grade is a critical time in a child's development with peer relationships, decision making and judgment as key elements impacting their health and well being. During the early part of the pandemic 6th grade health was added into the schedule to meet a need for scheduling gaps. Changes were made from semester based to tri-mester based schedules. In order to maintain 6th grade health under this new schedule it would require an increase in FTE. It was eliminated as a result of the change to trimesters.

Priority 4: Continue improving health lesson accessibility for students with disabilities and ELL students. Although some improvements have been made to accommodate and assure the diverse needs of all students are met through the health education curriculum more work needs to be done.

Priority 5: Eliminate plastic water bottles from cafeterias, Identify alternative options for students and staff

Priority 6: Minutes on PE

Priority 7: Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) requires further education at the middle and high school bike and driver education. This recommendation was the outcome of a recent MassDOT LPS study and report.

Priority 8: Currently most communications occur via electronic messaging often missing out on authentic and culturally inclusive conversations with all members of the Lexington school community. This can further isolate the most vulnerable students and their families. Through the Wellness assessment we learned that improvements need to be made that focus on student and family engagement for our neurodiverse and students receiving special education services, English Language Learners (ELL), Boston families and members of our culturally, ethnic diverse members.

Cross References

Federal

- Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act
- Public Law 111-296
- Public Law 108-265 (2004)
- Reauthorization Memoranda and Reauthorization Regulations
- Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act
- Child Nutrition Act of 1966

State

- CHAPTER 19A DEPARTMENT OF ELDER AFFAIRS : Section 37 Hot lunch program; incorporation into school lunch program
- M.G.L. c. 111, § 223:Nutritional standards for sale or provision of foods or beverages in public schools; school wellness advisory committees; food safety inspections at public schools,
<http://www.malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXVI/Chapter111/Section223>
- Chapter 7 Section 23B: Preference for products grown in or produced from products grown in commonwealth

Regulations

- US Department of Agriculture
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/regulations.htm>
- Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Department of Nutrition, Health and Safety
- 105 CMR 225.000: NUTRITION STANDARDS FOR COMPETITIVE FOODS AND BEVERAGES IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
<http://www.lawlib.state.ma.us/source/mass/cmr/cmrtxt/105CMR225.pdf>

Policies

- US Department of Agriculture <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/policy.htm>

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention “Youth Physical Activity: The Role of Schools.” August 2009

District

[LHS School Improvement Plan](#)

[LPS Bullying Prevention and Intervention](#)

[Equity at Lexington Public Schools](#)

[LPS YRBS: Overview & 2021 Detailed Results](#)

[2023-2024 LPS School Health Advisory Sign Up Link](#)

Please contact the LPS Assistant Coordinator for PE, Health and Wellness with any additional questions regarding the district’s Wellness Policy review.