



- Action Required
 Information Only

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Greg Baker
FROM: Jessica Sankey, director of Wellness on behalf of the Wellness Policy Advisory Committee
DATE: June 6, 2016
SUBJECT: Wellness Policy Recommendations

We are pleased to present the attached recommended *Bellingham Public Schools Food, Food Education, Physical Education and Physical Activity Policy*; information about the process leading to the recommended policy; and implementation goals for school year 2016/17.

This document is organized in 5 sections:

1. Introduction
2. Scope and schedule
3. Summary of advisory group work and input from stakeholders
4. Recommended Bellingham Public Schools Food, Food Education, Physical Education & Physical Activity Policy *Proposed*
5. Next steps

1. Introduction

All local educational agencies participating in the National School Lunch Program and/or the School Breakfast Program are required to meet the expanded local school wellness policy requirements consistent with section 204 of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. To meet the wellness policy requirements, Bellingham Public Schools convened a 20-member Wellness Policy Advisory Group representing parents, students, representatives of the school food authority, teachers of physical education, school and community health professionals, school administrators and the general public. A public call for applications was shared on March 15, 2016 and the group was formed.

The Wellness Policy Advisory Group consists of the following members:

- Mary Anderson, parent and Whatcom Council of Governments representative
- Kate Foster, Bellingham Public Schools nurse
- Caroline Greer, Cordata Elementary physical education teacher

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- Gail Knops, parent and WWU physician
- Erica Lamson, parent and registered dietitian
- Brooke Larrabee, parent
- Nikki Lockhart, Bellingham High School physical education teacher
- Alison Merz, Wade King teacher
- Tanya Peckler, Fairhaven Middle School and Columbia Elementary physical education teacher
- Sarah Simpson, Homeless Family liaison
- Jaren Tilley, Squalicum High School student
- Kathy Thompson, WWU wellness coordinator
- Maria Tyas, Food Services staff member
- Anne Welsh, parent and pediatrician
- Steve Wiley, school counselor
- Heidi Rodriguez, Assistant Food Services director
- Mark Dalton, Food Services director
- Analisa Ficklin, Wade King Elementary principal, Co-Chair
- Jessica Sankey, director of Wellness, Co-Chair
- Tanya Rowe, executive director of Communications and Community Relations

2. Scope and Schedule

This group drafted a wellness policy according to the requirements defined by the [Department of Agriculture Proposed Rule: Local School Wellness Policy Implementation under the Healthy, Hunger-free Kids Act of 2010](#). Local School Wellness Policies are required to include at a minimum:

- Goals for nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness;
- Nutrition guidelines for all foods available on each school campus during the school day that are:
 - Consistent with USDA’s meal pattern requirement and the nutrition standards for competitive foods;
 - Designed to promote student health.

The Wellness Policy Advisory Group met five times between March and June 2018. Members became familiar with the federal Wellness Policy rule; the Health Schools Program Framework of Best Practices; and examples of strong wellness policies from Berkeley Unified School District, Boulder Valley School District, Seattle Public Schools, and Wenatchee School District. Advisory group members shared drafts of the wellness policy with community interest groups: Bellingham physical education teachers; the Bellingham Farm-to-School Advisory Group; and Common Threads School Garden Collective food educators.

Although this group was tasked with drafting a “wellness policy,” members acknowledged that the federal requirements for a wellness policy are not broad enough to include a whole-child, whole-community approach to wellness. Safety, social-emotional health, substance use and abuse, and sexual health are topics the advisory group urges school district leadership to address in a similar, community-supported forum. Because these topics are not included in this policy, the advisory group recommends titling the

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policy attached here “The Bellingham Public Schools Food, Food Education, Physical Education and Physical Activity Policy.”

Attached to this report please find the recommended Food, Food Education, Physical Education and Physical Activity policy and a schedule for assessing progress against identified implementation goals.

3. Summary of Advisory Group Work and Input from Stakeholders

The Wellness Policy Advisory Group agendas focused each meeting on a single topic included in the wellness policy: Physical Education; Physical Activity; Nutrition; and Nutrition Education.

Bellingham physical educators advocate at the state and national level for best practices in physical education, and Wellness Policy Advisory Group members drew on our local expertise to inform the **Physical Education** section of the drafted wellness policy. Three key recommendations for implementation focus arose:

- Consistently schedule 100 minutes of physical education/week for students in grades 1-8;
- Encourage middle and high school physical education class participation and reduce the number of students waiving waive physical education;
- Physical education classes, at any level, are taught by licensed teachers with endorsements in physical education.

The **Physical Activity** topic allowed our advisory group to think about the benefits of physical health, fitness and activity to our students, teachers, staff and broader community; and also moved the conversation beyond the physical education classroom. The advisory group is proud to recommend physical activity as a reward for students, and to advise against withholding physical activity as a punishment; the group also encourages adults to be active alongside students, both as role models and in order to care for their own health.

The Advisory Group recommends that rather than “Nutrition,” the Bellingham Public Schools Food, Food Education, Physical Education & Physical Activity Policy refer to “**Food**,” because food is what we eat and what makes up the meals and celebrations we share. Nutrition is merely one element of food and of the cooking and eating and clean-up experience. The Bellingham Food Services Vision Statement, developed during the 2015-16 school year with broad-based input, provides the basis of the Food section of the Bellingham Food, Food Education, Physical Education & Physical Activity Policy; the advisory group worked hard to define in positive language what the critical goal of feeding children healthy food is. Rather than writing a wellness policy in reaction to the national pediatric obesity epidemic, our advisory group chooses to address the value of fostering, for every student, a healthy relationships with food.

The most important next step for the Food section of the attached policy is defining and refining our district “food values.” The proposed Food, Food Education, Physical Education & Physical Activity policy references three different sets of standards:

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- Food and beverages served in the school meal program must meet the requirements of the **National School Lunch Program** and the **School Breakfast Program**;
- Foods sold to students at school or as part of any during-school fundraising effort must meet the requirements of the **USDA Smart Snacks in Schools Program**;
- Bellingham Public Schools “food values” and priorities. Several local school wellness policies in different districts use food values developed to meet their specific needs; our Wellness Policy Advisory Group recommends that our district also define our food priorities in accordance with the Food Service Advisory Group. Implementing local food values would mean ensuring that any celebrations that include food, any fundraising, and any foods served as part of a school meal program adhere to the local food values. Examples of food values follow in the “Implementation Goals” section of these recommendations.

The Wellness Policy Advisory Group recognizes a strong link between student behaviors and learning, the food served at school by the school authority, and academic lessons about food. The **Food Education** section recommends a formal acknowledgment of that link, and that healthy food served at school be reinforced with lessons about food and how to make healthy food choices.

Implementation Goals document the priorities for action of the Wellness Policy Advisory Group, and represent the gap between our ideals and our practice. According to the Local School Wellness Policy Implementation Proposed Rule, each local educational agency must designate one or more school official to ensure that each participating school complies with the local school wellness policy. The Bellingham Wellness Policy Advisory Group recommends an ongoing team to assess, recommend, and annually report progress toward meeting the proposed Implementation Goals.

4. Recommended Bellingham Public Schools Food, Food Education, Physical Education & Physical Activity Policy Proposed

The attached recommended Bellingham Public Schools Food, Food Education, Physical Education & Physical Activity Policy is designed to replace existing policy 3440, procedure 3440P, policy 8500, and procedure 8500P. Attached to the recommended policy are implementation goals. The federal wellness policy requires inclusion of specific goals against which local education agencies must review progress annually.

5. Next Steps

Build a Food, Food Education, Physical Education and Activity Policy Implementation Advisory Group to meet at least 4 times annually. Wellness Policy Advisory Group members are encouraged to continue their involvement by joining the Implementation Advisory Group. The Implementation Advisory Group is asked to begin SY 2016/17 with a focus on defining our local food values.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute student, teacher, administrator, food service authority and community input on this Bellingham Public Schools Food, Food Education, and Physical Education &

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Physical Activity Policy. Health and wellbeing in our schools are topics that our advisory group members are passionate and knowledgeable about; it was a privilege to include such broad expertise in this report.