

School Wellness Policies

The table below summarizes evidence for the nutrition and physical activity policy elements found in the *Wellness Policy Toolkit for Oklahoma Schools* (S1, S2).

Outcome: Adopt policies that improve the nutritional profile of foods and increase physical activity in school settings

What does a school wellness policy do?	What is the evidence-base rationale for the policy?
<p>School Wellness Policies (generally)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopts a school wellness policy that improves nutrition and increases physical activity. Establishes a Healthy and Fit School Advisory Committee (HFSAC) that makes recommendations and provides advice to the school principal regarding health education, nutrition, and health services. <p>Under federal law, all school districts participating in the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program are required to adopt a written wellness policy.¹ Oklahoma state law also requires schools to comply with requirements regarding competitive foods, physical activity, recess, physical education, and Healthy Fit School Advisory Committees.²⁻⁴</p> <p>These requirements are supported by recommendations for school policies that promote healthy eating⁵⁻⁷ and physical activity from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Institute of Medicine (IOM), the Surgeon General, and the American Academy of Pediatrics.⁸⁻¹¹ Both the Surgeon General and the CDC also recommend establishing a school health team.^{9,10}</p>
<p>Improve Access to Healthy Foods</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires school meals to follow the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) requirements. Offers/serves meals that are accessible appealing, and attractive to children. Makes clean drinking water available and accessible without restriction and at no charge throughout the day. Provides adequate time for students to eat meals. Requires that all competitive foods and beverages sold to students during the school day meet or exceed the USDA’s Smart Snacks standards. Serves only foods and beverages that meet the USDA’s Smart Snacks standards during classroom parties and celebrations. <p>The CDC, the IOM, the Surgeon General, and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring strong nutritional standards for all foods and beverages sold or provided throughout the school day, after school, at all school sponsored events, and at all community events held on school property.^{5,7,9,10,12,13} Making clean drinking water available and accessible in schools.^{9,13-15} <p>Children and youth spend the majority of their time during their formative years at school, where they consume at least half of their daily calories.¹⁵ Studies have shown that students who eat a more nutritious diet perform better in school.¹⁶ The CDC’s review of the evidence on nutrition found that a “lack of adequate consumption of specific foods, such as fruits, vegetables, or dairy products, is associated with lower grades among students.”¹⁷</p> <p>Another review of the impact of USDA’s changes to school meal standards found that fruit selection increased by 23 percent and vegetable consumption increased by 16.2 percent.¹⁸</p>
<p>Promote Healthy Eating</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offers nutrition education to all grades (K–12). Prohibits the use of foods, beverages, and candy to reward or punish academic performance or student behavior. Prohibits the marketing of foods and beverages that do not meet the USDA’s Smart Snack standards. Permits only fundraisers that feature non-food items and beverages. Encourages farm-to-school programs and school gardens. <p>The National Prevention Council, the CDC, Healthy People 2020, the IOM, and the American Academy of Pediatrics all recommend strategies for promoting healthy eating in schools, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prohibiting unhealthy food marketing in schools.^{6,7} Providing nutrition education.^{5,7,13,19} Encouraging healthy fundraisers,¹⁰ including evening or community-related activities.¹² Encouraging Farm-to-School programs and school gardens.^{6,7}

<p>Create and Promote Opportunities for Physical Activity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures that all students (K–12) participate in a minimum of 60 minutes of physical activity each day. • Incorporates physical activity breaks throughout the day. • Requires that all schools establish a comprehensive, standards-based PE curriculum for each grade. • Prohibits the use or withholding of physical activity as punishment. • Ensures the availability of proper equipment and facilities that meet safety standards. • Encourages community use of recreational facilities. • Encourages active transportation to and from school. 	<p>The IOM, the Surgeon General, the CDC, and Healthy People 2020 all recommend strategies for creating and promoting opportunities for physical activity, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing recess and physical activity breaks.^{9,13,20} • Offering physical education.^{8–10,13,19,20} • Not using physical activity as punishment.⁶ • Ensuring the safety of school facilities and equipment.^{10,13} <p>The CDC’s review of physical activity in schools found positive associations between physical activity and academic achievement.^{10,17}</p> <p>“The evidence suggests that 1) substantial evidence indicates that physical activity can help improve academic achievement, including grades and standardized test scores; 2) physical activity can affect cognitive skills and attitudes and academic behavior (including enhanced concentration, attention, and improved classroom behavior); and 3) increasing or maintaining time dedicated to physical education might help and does not appear to adversely affect academic performance.”¹⁰</p> <p>The Surgeon General and Healthy People 2020 recommend allowing community use of school recreational facilities^{8,9,20} and encouraging active transportation.^{8,13,20}</p>
--	--	---

Bibliography

1. 42 U.S.C. 1758b (2015).
2. 70 OSA 5-147.
3. 70 OSA 11-103.9.
4. 70 OSA 24-100a.
5. National Prevention Council. *National Prevention Strategy: Healthy Eating*; 2010. Available at: www.surgeongeneral.gov/priorities/prevention/strategy/healthy-eating.pdf.
6. American Academy of Pediatrics Institute for Healthy Childhood Weight. Fruits and Vegetables/Schools. Available at: www2.aap.org/obesity/schools_5.html.
7. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Bridging the Gap Research Program. *Strategies for Creating Supportive School Nutrition Environments*. Atlanta, GA; 2014. Available at: www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/npao/pdf/LWP_SchoolNutrition_Brief.pdf.
8. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Step It Up! The Surgeon General’s Call to Action to Promote Walking and Walkable Communities*. Washington, D.C.; 2015. Available at: www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/calls/walking-and-walkable-communities/.
9. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Surgeon General’s vision for a healthy and fit nation. *Public Health Rep*. 2010;125:514-515. Available at: www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK44660/pdf/Bookshelf_NBK44660.pdf.
10. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. School health guidelines to promote healthy eating and physical activity. *MMWR*. 2011;60(RR-5):1-76. doi:21918496.
11. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Bridging the Gap Research Program. *Local School Wellness Policies: Where Do They Stand and What Can You Do?* Atlanta, GA; 2014.
12. Institute of Medicine. *Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools: Leading the Way toward Healthier Youth*. Washington, D.C.; 2007. Available at: <https://iom.nationalacademies.org/Reports/2007/Nutrition-Standards-for-Foods-in-Schools-Leading-the-Way-toward-Healthier-Youth.aspx>.
13. Story M, Kaphingst K, Robinson-O’brien R, Glanz K. Creating Healthy Food and Eating Environments: Policy and Environmental Approaches. *Annu Rev Public Heal*. 2008;29:253-272. doi:10.1146/annurev.publhealth.29.020907.090926.
14. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Increasing Access to Drinking Water in Schools*. Atlanta, GA; 2011. Available at: www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/npao/pdf/Water_Access_in_Schools.pdf.
15. Guthrie J, Newman C. Eating Better at School: Can New Policies Improve Children’s Food Choices? *United States Dep Agric*. 2013. Available at: www.ers.usda.gov/amber-waves/2013-september/eating-better-at-school-can-new-policies-improve-children%E2%80%99s-food-choices.aspx#.Vs-ElfkrKM8.
16. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Physical Inactivity and Unhealthy Dietary Behaviors and Academic Achievement Factsheet. *Youth Risk Behav Surveill*. 2010.
17. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Health and Academic Achievement*. Atlanta, GA; 2012. doi:10.1016/B978-0-12-375000-6.00001-X.
18. Cohen J, Richardson S, Parker E, Catalano P, Rimm E. Impact of the New U.S. Department of Agriculture School Meal Standards on Food Selection, Consumption, and Waste. *Am J Prev Med*. 2014;46(4):388-394. doi:10.1016/j.amepre.2013.11.013.
19. U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services. Educational and Community-Based Programs: Objectives. *Heal People 2020*. 2015. Available at: www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/educational-and-community-based-programs/objectives.
20. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Physical Activity: Objectives. *Heal People 2020*. 2015. Available at: www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/physical-activity/objectives.