

# **Independence Charter School - West Wellness Policy on Physical Activity and Nutrition**

## **Our Beliefs**

- We believe that all children can be successful in a safe, nurturing, and respectful environment.
- We believe that all members of our school community bring unique and valuable perspectives.
- We believe that students must be provided with a diverse set of learning tools to reach their fullest potential.
- We believe that by learning languages and studying cultures, children gain the skills needed to be active global citizens.
- We believe that we are responsible to a larger community and to one another. We strive to be active stewards of the local and global community.
- We believe that to reach excellence we must continue to nurture a reflective school community whose members contribute their talents, insights, and hard work in service to our students and to the larger community.

Thus, Independence Charter School-West (ICS-West) is committed to providing a school environment that promotes and protects children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, it is the policy of the Independence Charter School-West Board that:

- All students in grades K-8 will learn and have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Foods and beverages sold or served at school will meet state and federal nutrition standards.
- Qualified child nutrition professionals will provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students; will accommodate the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning; and will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.
- ICS-West will provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity.
- A committee representing students, parents, staff, food service professionals and health professionals will be engaged in monitoring and implementing the wellness of the district.

- To the maximum extent practicable, ICS-West will participate in available school food service programs to enhance student health including the federal school meal programs, and will apply for available grant funds to enhance nutrition and the nutrition education environment.

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

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

Independence Charter School – West (ICS-West) shall create a School Health Council consisting of individuals representing the community, including parents, students, administrators, staff, health professionals, and food service professionals. The School Health Council will be charged to develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies. The council also will serve as resources to school sites for implementing those policies.

### **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 meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations, including USDA guidelines under the School Meals Initiative, with consideration for promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity.

ICS-West should engage students and parents, through taste-tests of new entrees and surveys, in selecting foods sold through the school meal programs in order to identify new, healthful, and appealing food choices. In addition, ICS-West should share information about the nutritional content 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.

Qualified nutrition professionals will administer the school meal programs. As part of the Food Service Management Contract it is the responsibility of contracted party to provide continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals in school.

**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:

- ICS-West will, to the extent possible, arrange bus schedules and utilize methods to serve school breakfasts that encourage participation, including serving breakfast in the classroom, “grab-and-go” breakfast, or breakfast during morning break or recess.

- ICS-West 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.** ICS-West will make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to, and prevent the overt identification of, students who are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals.

**Meal Times and Scheduling.** ICS-West will:

- provide students with a clean and safe meal environment;
- provide adequate space for eating and serving school meals;
- provide students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch;
- schedule meal periods at appropriate times;
- not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities;
- schedule lunch periods to follow recess periods (in elementary school);
- provide students access to facilities for appropriate hygiene before and after meals (i.e. hand washing and brushing of teeth)
- limit access to the food service operation to student nutrition staff and authorized personnel.

**Sharing of Foods and Beverages.** ICS-West will 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.

**Competitive Foods.** All competitive foods, defined as foods offered at school other than through the National School Lunch or School Breakfast Programs, including a la carte foods, snacks and beverages, vending food, in-school fundraisers, classroom parties and holiday celebrations, will comply with established nutritional guidelines including the Guidelines for Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act (2010). Also, foods and beverages offered for sale to students at school will follow Smart Snacks in Schools (SSIS) guidelines, found at <http://fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/tools-schools-smart-snacks>

**Rewards.** ICS-West will not use foods or beverages, especially those that do not meet the nutrition standards for foods and beverages as rewards for academic performance or good behavior.

**Celebrations.** ICS-West should limit celebrations that involve food during the school day to no more than one party per class per month. The school will disseminate a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers.

### **III. Nutrition and Physical Activity Education and Promotion**

**Nutrition Education.** ICS-West aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by all students, to not only enhance their readiness to learn, but also to provide knowledge for leading healthy lives. The school will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- is provided within a sequential, comprehensive health education program in accordance with State Board of Education curriculum regulations and the academic standards for Health, Safety and Physical Education;
- is integrated into other areas of the curriculum such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects in order to complement, but not replace, academic standards based on nutrition education;
- is developmentally appropriate, interactive and will teach skills needed to adopt healthy eating behaviors;
- includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, participatory activities, such as contests, 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;
- provides informational materials to students and families to encourage sharing of health and nutrition information, and to encourage healthy eating in the home.
- shall reinforce lifelong lifestyle balance by linking nutrition education and physical activity; and
- includes training for teachers and other staff.

**Physical Education.** ICS-West will provide all students with quality physical education that promotes lifelong physical activity and provides instruction in the knowledge and skills necessary for lifelong participation. Comprehensive physical education classes:

- with adequate amounts of planned instruction in order for students to achieve the proficient level for the Pennsylvania Health, Safety and Physical Education standards, shall be the means through which all

- students learn, practice and are assessed on developmentally appropriate skills and knowledge necessary for lifelong, health-enhancing physical activity;
- will be provided within a sequential, varied and comprehensive health education program in accordance with State Board of Education curriculum regulations and the academic standards for Health, Safety and Physical Education;
  - will follow the National Association for Sport and Physical Education appropriate practices and the Centers for Disease Control guidelines;
  - will include a local assessment system to track student progress on the Health, Safety and Physical Education standards;
  - will have a teacher-to-student ratio comparable to other classes;
  - will be designed to meet the needs of all students (athletic and nonathletic, gender and cultural differences in students' interests), include cooperative as well as competitive activities, and will focus on understanding and ownership of personal fitness and wellness for life;
  - will engage students in moderate to vigorous activity as much time as possible within the physical education class or as physically active within the physical education class as a documented medical condition or disability will allow;
  - will occur in a physical and social environment that encourages safe and enjoyable activity for all students, with provision of safe and adequate equipment, facilities and resources;
  - will not use physical activity as a form of punishment; and
  - will ensure that appropriate professional development for staff is provided.

**Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting.** For students to receive the nationally-recommended amount of daily physical activity 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:

- Physical activity will be integrated across curricula with activities that are safe, enjoyable and developmentally appropriate for all students in all grades, subjects in order to complement, but not replace, academic standards based on physical education.

- All students will be given opportunities before, after, and throughout the school day for physical activity through physical education, movement and dance class, recess periods, and integration of physical activity into the curriculum.
- Faculty and staff will be appropriately trained in integrating physical activity into the various curricular areas.
- Classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.
- Teachers and other school and community personnel will not use physical activity (e.g., running laps, pushups) or withhold opportunities for physical activity (e.g., recess, physical education) as punishment.

**Communications with Parents.** ICS-West will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children.

- The school will offer healthy eating seminars for parents, send home nutrition information, post nutrition tips on school websites, and provide nutrient analyses of school menus.
- The school should encourage parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks and to refrain from including beverages and foods that do not meet the nutrition standards for individual foods and beverages.
- The school will provide parents a list of foods that meet the district's snack standards and ideas for healthy celebrations/parties, rewards, and fundraising activities
- The 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.

**Staff Wellness.** ICW-West highly values the health and well-being of every staff member and will plan and implement activities and policies that support personal efforts by staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

- The school should establish and maintain a staff wellness committee composed of at least one staff member, dietitian or other health professional, recreation program representative, union representative, and employee benefits specialist. The committee should develop, promote, and oversee a multifaceted plan to promote staff health and wellness.

**Daily Recess.** All elementary school students will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess.

## **V. Monitoring and Policy Review**

**Monitoring.** The CEO or designee will ensure compliance with established school-wide nutrition and physical activity wellness and education policies, and adherence to applicable local, state and federal requirements and guidelines. School food service staff, at the school, will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the CEO or designee.

**Policy Review.** Subject to annual review by the Board of Trustees, the CEO or designee will develop an annual summary report regarding the school's implementation of established nutrition and physical activity wellness and education policies, based on input from stakeholders (students, parents, school health council and/or staff members).