

## WELLNESS POLICY

The Board of Trustees recognizes the relationship between student well-being, health and wellness and student achievement as well as the importance of comprehensive wellness policies. The Board of Trustees is committed to protecting children's health, well-being and ability to learn to their fullest potential by supporting a school environment that promotes healthy choices and behaviors that foster lifelong habits with respect to eating, physical activity and social-emotional health. Therefore, the Board of Trustees has adopted this policy to serve as a guideline for the school administration to carry out LFDCS's objectives in this arena.

### **A. Wellness Advisory Committee ("WAC")**

#### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of the Wellness Advisory Committee (WAC) is to ensure that LFDCS has an established group of school community and concerned local community representatives to recommend, review and help implement policies addressing school nutrition, health and nutrition education, physical activity and social-emotional learning.

Wellness Definition: Process by which individuals move toward optimal physical, mental and emotional health, regardless of current health status or disability, by practicing healthy decision-making within an empowering environment that leads to a sense of well-being.

#### **2. Scope and Application**

##### *a. Establishment*

The WAC shall encourage development of a program that actively promotes wellness in LFDCS and to maximize LFDCS' opportunities for grant awards. As the Superintendent's designee, the School Dietician or designee shall appoint committee members, including a designee to serve as a liaison between the WAC and school administration, and ensure the active functioning of the WAC. The WAC shall include at a minimum representatives from a wide range of school health and health-related disciplines, including school nurses, school nutrition and physical activity staff; teachers, parents, students, members of the Board of Trustees and community agencies serving youth.

- Appointees to the maximum extent possible shall reflect the cultural, linguistic and ethnic composition of the community. To the extent feasible, appointees shall include representatives of local boards of health, school physicians, and local health care providers, such as hospitals and primary care providers.
- The WAC shall be advisory to the Board of Trustees.
- The WAC shall meet at least four times a year.
- WAC reports, as well as minutes of the meetings, including the names of attendees, shall be maintained and shall be provided to the Department of Public Health or the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education upon request.

##### *b. WAC Functions*

The WAC, on an annual basis, shall recommend and/or review LFDCS' policies to promote student wellness, such as those addressing health (including social – emotional) education and services, school nutrition and the nutrition environment, physical education and opportunities for physical activity around the school environment. Such policies shall include:

- goals and objectives for the coming year, which shall be observable and measurable;
- a process for evaluating the progress to be made in the coming year in reaching the annual goals and objectives, which may include the use by LFDCS of a self-assessment tool;
- any recommendations concerning the establishment or functioning of wellness teams and initiatives.
- a proposal to school administration and the Board of Trustees on an annual basis of a copy of the policies developed, including goals and objectives for the coming year. The report shall include:
  - an action plan which details ways in which the WAC may work with school personnel, including school nurses, to achieve the annual goals and objectives;
  - ways that LFDCS and the WAC might best monitor and evaluate progress toward reaching the annual goals and objectives;
  - ways of developing community support for school wellness initiatives and coordinating school and community initiatives on physical activity and nutrition;
  - an assessment of the accomplishments of the previous year and identification of work still needed in order to accomplish the previous year's goals and objectives; and
  - a review of membership and membership participation in the previous year and, as appropriate, a request to school administration for replacements.

In setting goals and objectives, the WAC shall consider:

- suggestions and recommendations from students, parents, teachers, school nurses, school administrators, nutrition and physical education staff and other interested parties;
- input from all those affected by the goals or objectives, to the maximum extent feasible; and
- general public health data, such as student health needs assessments; assessments and indicators of student health status and health awareness; information from health providers and public health officials as to causes of morbidity and mortality and possible methods of prevention; and data indicating the effect of health status on academic performance.
- information about current programs and practices that might have a bearing on student health, such as: BMI screening data; status of food nutrition and nutrition education programs, and food consumption patterns, including breakfast and lunch program participation; meaningful opportunities for physical activity,

including the amount of time and the quality of the opportunities provided for physical activity through physical education, recess and travel to and from school; and status of current school health and behavioral health services and health education programs.

## **B. Development of Guidelines**

Upon adoption of Wellness policies, school administration, in consultation with the WAC will develop implementation procedures. School administration will review the policies and related implementation procedures and share expectations with staff on an annual basis to ensure implementation and adherence.

## **C. Nutrition**

LFDCS's goal is that all students will have opportunities, support and encouragement to make healthy nutrition choices throughout the school day through meals, snacks and beverages provided as part of the school meal program, at other times during the school day such as through food and nutrition education integrated in the health education curriculum and in school events taking place outside of school hours.

The food service program will provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious and appealing foods and beverages that:

- Meet the health and nutrition needs of students and adhere to or exceed the USDA School Meal regulations;
- Meet the Massachusetts School Nutrition regulations, as applicable;
- Accommodate the religious, ethnic and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning;
- Provide clean, safe and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat; and a minimum of 20 minutes for lunch and a minimum of 10 minutes for breakfast, after sitting down; and
- Ensure that no student need go hungry while in school

LFDCS will participate in available federal school meal programs including the school breakfast program, national school meal program; and, to the maximum extent practicable, summer food service program, fruit and vegetable snack program, and child and adult care food program. School administration will ensure that LFDCS adheres to the nutritional standards set by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health for competitive foods and beverages including vending machines, a la carte items offered in school cafeterias, school-sponsored or school-related events. In addition, LFDCS will maintain the same Massachusetts standards for concession stands, booster sales, fundraising activities and school-sponsored or school-related events.

## **D. Physical Education and Physical Activities**

LFDCS's goal is that all students will have opportunities, support and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis throughout the school day through physical education (PE) classes, and before and after school activities in athletics and physical activity integrated into the academic curriculum where appropriate. Additionally, weather

permitting there will be daily recess periods with active play for grades K-1-4. The Health, Physical Education and Athletics departments will provide all students, including students with disabilities, special health care needs, and those in alternative educational settings, with access to a variety of opportunities for physical activity. These activities will:

- Adhere to or exceed the Massachusetts Comprehensive Health Curriculum Framework and the National Association for Sport and Physical Education Standards;
- Ensure that students learn skills for lifelong activities; and
- Provide students with the opportunity to participate in physical activity through a range of programs including but not limited to, intramurals and competitive interscholastic athletics, and activities that are available to all students, regardless of skill level, such as intramurals and physical activity clubs.
- LFDCS will ensure that physical education is taught by qualified educators who are certified by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to teach physical education. In addition, as part of a quality physical education program, all physical education teachers will be expected to participate regularly in professional development activities.
- Students will not be kept from recess or excluded from a Physical Education class except if the removal is necessary to protect the health, safety and welfare of the student, other students and staff or the permission of the student's parent/guardian has been given for the student's removal or exclusion. Physical activity or recess will neither be denied nor required as a form of punishment. All students in grades K-8 will have recess supervised by trained staff, preferably outdoors, during which the schools will encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment. Students will not be denied recess to conference with teaching staff, finish projects or make up work unless under unusual circumstances.
- Students and staff will be encouraged to engage in active transportation (walking, bike riding, etc.) to and from school and to support a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age by working to make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing mode of transportation.

## **E. Health and Nutrition Education and Promotion**

### **1. LFDCS's goals for health education activities:**

- Students will receive encouragement, support and education to adopt and maintain healthy behaviors through health education, including nutrition education and social emotional learning.
- Students receive health education that teaches the skills they need to adopt and maintain healthy behaviors.
- Students receive consistent health messages from all aspects of the school program.
- Health education curriculum standards and guidelines address nutrition, physical education and social-emotional learning.
- Nutrition is integrated into the health education curriculum. Staff who provide health and nutrition education will have appropriate training.
- Health and nutrition education curriculum will be aligned to the Massachusetts Comprehensive Health Curriculum Framework, National Health Education

Standards and the National Sexuality Education Standards and will establish linkages between health education, school meal programs and related community services.

2. Kindergarten-1 through grade 8 staff will attend district health education training.
  - LFDCS will ensure that staff are qualified educators prioritizing health education.
  - LFDCS 's administration will provide training to enable school staff to value and promote physical health and nutrition education, healthy eating and opportunities for students to be physically active, and will ensure that school staff adheres to the Wellness policies and related administrative guidelines and procedures.
  - Nutrition promotion will support and enhance classroom nutrition education.

Under the direction of the STEM Coordinator, LFDCS school gardens will be maintained as a health and nutrition resource and all gardens will include edible fruits and vegetables and use organic practices.

Approved by LFDCS Board of Trustees 11/8/23