

ALACHUA LEARNING CENTER

WELLNESS POLICY

Preamble

On June 30, 2004, Congress passed Section 204 of Public Law 108-265, of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004. This law requires each local education agency participating in a program, authorized by the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S..1751 et seq.) or the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1771 et seq.), to establish a local school wellness policy by July 1, 2006.

The Board of the Alachua Learning Center recognizes and acknowledges that schools cannot achieve their primary mission of education if students and staff are not physically, mentally and socially healthy. The Board believes that schools should provide an environment where students are taught healthy eating and physical activity knowledge, skills and values. In addition, the campus-wide environment should provide ample opportunity to practice these skills on a daily basis.

Thus, the Alachua Learning Center 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 Alachua Learning Center that:

- The Alachua Learning Center will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing its nutrition and physical activity policies.
- All students in grades KG-8 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Foods and beverages sold or served at school will meet the nutrition recommendations of the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
- 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.
- The Alachua Learning Center will participate in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program.
- The Alachua Learning Center will provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity, and will establish linkages between health education and school meal programs, and with related community services.

TO ACHIEVE THESE POLICY GOALS:

I. School Health Council

The Alachua Learning Center will create a school health council to develop, implement, monitor, review, and as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies. The council also will serve as a resource to the Alachua Learning Center for implementing those policies. (The school health council consists of a group of individuals representing the school and community, and includes parents, students, and representatives of the school food authority, members of the school board, school administrators, teachers, and health professionals.)

II. Nutritional Quality of Food and Beverages Sold and Served on Campus

School Meals

Meals served through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs will:

- Be appealing and attractive to children;
- Be served in clean and pleasant settings;
- Meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations;
- Offer a variety of fruits and vegetables;
- Serve low-fat milk (1 %, .5% & skim) and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (to be defined by USDA); and
- Ensure that half of the served grains are whole grains.

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:

- The Alachua Learning Center will, to the extent possible, operate the School Breakfast program.
- The Alachua Learning Center will, to the extent possible, arrange bus schedules and utilize methods to serve school breakfasts that encourage participation, including serving breakfast to students arriving late for school.
- The Alachua Learning Center will notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast Program.
- The Alachua Learning Center 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. The Alachua Learning Center 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. Toward this end, the Alachua Learning Center uses a billing payment system.

Meal Times and Scheduling. The Alachua Learning Center:

- will provide students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch;
- will schedule meal periods at appropriate times, e.g., lunch will be scheduled between 10:45 a.m. and 12:00 noon.
- will not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities;
- will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks; and
- should take reasonable steps to accommodate the tooth-brushing regimens of students with special oral health needs (e.g., orthodontia or high tooth decay risk).

School Food Service. The School Food Service will operate the food service program in accordance with the requirements of the National School Lunch and Breakfast program. School Food Service personnel will attend appropriate staff development programs according to their levels of responsibility.

Sharing of Foods and Beverages. The Alachua Learning Center 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.

Foods and Beverages Sold Individually (i.e., foods sold outside of reimbursable school meals, such as through vending machines, cafeteria a la carte (snack) lines, fundraisers, school stores, etc.)

Elementary Schools. The school food service program will approve and provide all food and beverage sales to students in elementary school. Given young children's limited nutrition skills, food in elementary school should be sold as balanced meals. If available, foods and beverages sold individually may be limited to milk (whole, low-fat and non-fat), fruits, and non-fried vegetables.

Middle School. In middle school, all foods and beverages sold individually outside the reimbursable school meal programs (including those sold through a la carte [snack] lines), during the school day, or through programs for students after the school day, will meet the following nutrition and portion size standards:

Beverages

Allowed: water or seltzer water without added caloric sweeteners; fruit and vegetable juices and fruit-based drinks that contain at least 50% fruit juice and that do not contain additional caloric sweeteners; unflavored or flavored whole and low-fat fluid milk and nutritionally-equivalent nondairy beverages (to be defined by USDA);

Not allowed: Foods of minimal nutritional value, such as soft drinks containing caloric sweeteners; sports drinks; iced teas; fruit-based drinks that contain less than 50% real fruit juice or that contain additional caloric sweeteners; beverages containing caffeine, excluding low-fat or fat-free chocolate milk (which contain trivial amounts of caffeine).

Foods

- Food items sold individually
 1. The Alachua Learning Center will offer low fat content ice cream bars on its ala carte menu. Other items served should have no more than 35% of calories from fat (excluding nuts, seeds, peanut butter, and other nut butters) and 10% of calories from saturated and trans fat combined.
 2. Items sold will have no more than 35% of their weight from added sugars.
 3. Foods and beverages that have as the first ingredient: sugar, corn syrup, shortening or similar, may not be sold to students on school grounds during the normal school day.

Portion Sizes:

- Limit portion sizes of foods and beverages sold individually to those listed below:
 1. One and one-quarter ounces for chips, crackers, popcorn, cereal, trail mix, nuts, seeds or dried fruit.
 2. One ounce for cookies;
 3. Two ounces for cereal bars, granola bars, pastries, muffins, doughnuts, bagels, and other bakery items;

4. Four fluid ounces for frozen desserts, including, but not limited to low-fat or fat-free ice cream;
5. Eight ounces for non-frozen yogurt;
6. Twelve fluid ounces for beverages, excluding water; and
7. The portion size of a la carte entrees and side dishes, including potatoes, will not be greater than the size of comparable portions offered as part of school meals. Fruits and non-fried vegetables are exempt from portion-size limits.

Fundraising Activities. To support children’s health and school nutrition-education efforts, the Alachua Learning Center fundraising activities will use only foods that meet the above nutrition and portion size standards for foods and beverages sold individually. The Alachua Learning Center will encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity.

Snacks. Snacks served during the school day or in after-school care or enrichment programs will make a positive contribution to children’s diets and health, with an emphasis on serving fruits and vegetables as the primary snacks and water as the primary beverage. The Alachua Learning Center will assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, children’s nutritional needs, children’s ages, and other considerations.

Celebrations: A goal of the Alachua Learning Center will be to limit the number of celebrations that involve food during the school day to no more than one party per class per month and that each party should include no more than one food or beverage that does not meet nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually (above). The school food service will disseminate a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers.

School-sponsored Events (such as, but not limited to, athletic events, dances, or performances). A goal of the Alachua Learning Center will be to offer and sell foods and beverages at school-sponsored events that will meet the nutritional standards for meals or for foods and beverages sold individually (above).

III. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing

Nutrition Education and Promotion. The Alachua Learning Center aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. The Alachua Learning Center will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- Is offered at each grade level as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
- Is part of not only health education classes, but also classroom instruction in subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects.
- Includes enjoyable, developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant, participatory activities; and may include such activities as contests, promotions, 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;
- Emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise);
- Links with school meal programs, other school foods, and nutrition-related community services;
- Sponsors educational programs prepared by University of Florida students for age appropriate nutrition education.
- Teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food marketing; and
- Includes training for teachers and other staff.

Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting For students to receive the nationally recommended amount of daily physical activity (i.e., at least 60 minutes per day) 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:

- Classroom health education will complement physical education by reinforcing the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically-active lifestyle and to reduce time spent on sedentary activities, such as watching television, computer games, etc.
- Opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into other subject lessons; and
- Classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

Communications with Parents. The Alachua Learning Center will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. The Alachua Learning Center will encourage parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks and to refrain from including beverages and foods that do not meet the above nutrition standards for individual foods and beverages. The Alachua Learning Center will provide parents with a list of foods that meet the school's snack standards and ideas for healthy celebrations/parties, rewards, and fundraising activities.

The Alachua Learning Center 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. Such supports may include sharing information about physical activity and physical education through a website, newsletter, or other take-home materials, special events, or physical education homework.

Food Marketing. School-based marketing will be consistent with nutrition education and health promotion. As such, the Alachua Learning Center will limit food and beverage marketing to the promotion of foods and beverages that meet the nutrition standards for meals or for foods and beverages sold individually (above). School-based marketing of brands promoting predominantly low-nutrition foods and beverages is prohibited. The promotion of healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products is encouraged.

Staff Wellness. The Alachua Learning Center highly values the health and well-being of every staff member and encourages each member of the staff to serve as healthy role model for students.

IV. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

Daily Physical Education (P.E.) KG – 8 All students in grades KG-8, including students with disabilities, special health-care needs, and in alternative education settings, will receive daily physical education (or its equivalent of 150 minutes a week for elementary school students and 180 minutes a week for middle students) for the entire school year. A certified physical education teacher will teach all physical education. Student involvement in other activities involving physical activity (e.g., interscholastic or intramural sports) will not be substituted for meeting the physical education requirement. Students will spend at least 50 percent of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity. Three times during the school year the middle school students will participate in the Presidential Challenge. Those who are fit will be awarded either the National Physical Fitness Award or the Presidential Physical Fitness award.

Daily Recess. All elementary school students have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors. Moderate to vigorous physical activity is encouraged verbally and through the provision of adequate space and age-appropriate equipment.

The Alachua Learning Center will discourage extended periods (i.e., periods of two or more hours) of inactivity. When activities, such as mandatory school-wide testing, make it necessary for students to remain indoors for long periods of time, the Alachua Learning Center will give students periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.

Physical Activity and Punishment. 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.

V. Monitoring and Policy Review

Monitoring. The director or designee will ensure compliance with established school-wide nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. The director or designee will ensure compliance with those policies in his/her school and will report on the school's compliance to the Department of Education.

School food service staff will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the director. In addition, the Alachua Learning Center will report on the most recent USDA School Meals Initiative (SMI) review findings and any resulting changes. (Note: The Alachua Learning Center received a SMI review in 2005 and will receive the next one in 2010.)

The director or designee will develop a summary report every three years on school-wide compliance with the Alachua Learning Center's established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. This report will be provided to the school board, the school health council and also distributed to all parent/teacher organizations.

Policy Review. To help with the initial development of the school's wellness policy, the Alachua Learning Center will conduct a baseline assessment of the existing nutrition and physical activity environment and policies. The results of these assessments will be compiled to identify and prioritize needs.

Assessments will be repeated every three years to help review policy compliance, assess progress, and determine areas in need of improvement. As part of that review, the Alachua Learning Center will review its nutrition and physical activity policies; provision of an environment that supports healthy eating and physical activity; and nutrition and physical education policies and program elements. The Alachua Learning Center will, as necessary, revise the wellness policy and develop work plans to facilitate its implementation.

Adopted: March, 2006

First Revision: March, 2007

Second Revision: May, 2008

Alachua Learning Center

Local Wellness Policy

Policy Committee Members

Lead Person – Linda Powell

Representative of:

School Board – Sandra Elsey

School Administrator – Tom Allin

School Food Service – Rama Charan

School Nurse – Miriam Wolf, RN

Physical Education – Rangunath Zaldivar

Health Education – Jamuna Logan

Parents - Linda Delaney

Students – Citralekha Glasheen