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F29

## Windham Central Supervisory Union Model Policy on Nutrition

### Background

WCSU's Model Policy on Nutrition was developed by the School Health Advisory Council using guidelines from the Vermont Department of Education. The School Health Advisory Council is composed of parents, representatives of the school food service program, school administrators, community agencies, and representatives of the public.

### Nutrition Policy

#### Statement of Purpose

WCSU recognizes its responsibility to create a healthy school environment by promoting quality school nutrition. In order for children to achieve their full academic potential, healthy eating patterns are essential. Consuming a variety of nutritious foods promotes healthy growth and development, provides the necessary energy for learning and off-sets the development of chronic disease. A well-planned and well-implemented district nutrition program positively influences students' eating habits.

#### A. Nutritious Food Choices

Nutritious and appealing foods shall be prioritized in the school environment wherever and whenever food is sold or otherwise offered.

1. Nutritious foods are nutrient-dense foods including whole grains; low-fat or non-fat dairy products; fresh, frozen, or canned fruits and vegetables; lean meats, poultry, fish, and beans.
2. Nutritious foods must exceed the nutrient levels of Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value, which have been identified by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

#### B. The District Food Service Program

1. Menus shall be planned to conform to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the nutrient standards established in the regulations of the National District Lunch Program (7CFR 210) and the District Breakfast Program (7CFR 220).
2. A la carte food includes all foods sold by the food service program that are not part of a reimbursable meal. A la carte food shall conform to the a la carte guidelines outlined in Appendix B.
3. Whenever possible, food pricing strategies shall be designed to encourage students to purchase nutritious items and/or reimbursable meals.
4. The food service program shall establish procedures to include locally grown and prepared foods and beverages, as well as to encourage partnerships with local farms and manufacturers, and request local distributors to carry Vermont products in their inventory to allow for easier availability to

districts. This includes allowing districts to buy local products "off bid" if primary vendors cannot or will not sell them.

### **C. Other Food Choices at School**

Foods and beverages available at school shall support the nutritional needs of students and include appealing, nutritious foods and drinks.

1. Nutritious foods shall be prioritized at any time foods are sold at school to raise funds.
2. *All food sales on school grounds are under the management of the school food service program except foods sold as part of school-sponsored fundraising.*
3. Foods sold through vending machines shall conform to the Vending Guidelines outlined in Appendix C. No foods shall be sold from vending machines during meal service time.
4. Commercial advertising that promotes foods that are not nutrient-dense shall be discouraged in the district.
5. Foods sold in vending machines, school stores, snack bars, and other venues will be purchased using the practices described in section B4.

### **D. Promoting Healthy Eating Behaviors**

1. Students will be provided with adequate eating time and space. A minimum of twenty minutes, not including transition time, should be allotted for lunch, in accordance with findings of the National Food Service Management Institute.
2. Recess and other physical activities shall be scheduled before lunch whenever possible.
3. Teachers are discouraged from using candy to reward students for academic or behavioral accomplishments (e.g., giving a candy for finishing a math sheet, etc.).
4. Nutrition education shall be integrated into the health education program taught at every grade level. The nutrition education program shall focus on developing healthy eating behaviors, be based on theories and methods proven effective by research, and be consistent with Vermont's health education standards.
5. The school will encourage that snack foods served in the school environment as part of extra-curricular programs be nutrient-dense (of good nutritional quality) and that profit generation not take precedence over the nutritional needs of students.

Appendix A  
Definitions

A la Carte food - A la carte food includes all foods sold by the food service program that are not part of a reimbursable meal.

Intramurals – Competitive and non-competitive programs that are provided by the school for students enrolled in the school.

Nutritious foods - Nutritious foods are nutrient-dense foods including whole grains; low- fat or non-fat dairy products; fresh, frozen or canned fruits and vegetables; lean meats, poultry, fish, and beans. Nutritious foods exceed the nutrient levels of Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value, which have been identified by the United States Department of Agriculture (7 CFR 210, Appendix B).

Appendix B

A La Carte Food and Beverage Standards

“A la carte” refers to foods and beverages sold by the food service program in addition to the USDA reimbursable school meals. These food sales are intended to provide students with some additional food choices and to raise revenue to support the school food service program. Studies show that students who consume reimbursable school meals have better overall nutrient intakes than those who consume foods from any other source. A la carte foods are:

- priced to encourage students to select meals rather than a la carte foods;
- limited in quantity and variety; and
- designed to supplement, not replace, school meals.

Grades	Standard
K-5	
During Meal Service Periods	Eliminate foods that are sold outside of the breakfast and lunch programs.
Snacks and Breaks	If the school offers a morning or afternoon break/snack, individual items sold meet the a la carte food standards. The morning snack or break occurs at least 1.5 hours before the lunch meal.

Grades	Standard
6-12	
During Meal Service Periods	Limit foods that are sold outside of the breakfast and lunch programs to items that are a supplement to, rather than in competition with, the meal. Entrees that would qualify as a meal component for the reimbursable school breakfast or school lunch program is not available as an a la carte item. Individual items sold meet the a la carte food standards.

Beverages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Juice beverages must contain at least 50% fruit or vegetable juice, and the package size is no larger than 12 oz.</li> <li>• Water shall contain fewer than 20 calories per serving without artificial sweeteners.</li> <li>• Low or nonfat white or flavored milk, or drinkable yogurt shall be offered in portion sizes no larger than 16 oz. and contain no more than 340 total calories.</li> </ul>
Grains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole grains and naturally occurring grains with minimal amounts of added fat and sugar may be served. Whole grains will have at least 1 gram of fiber per serving.</li> <li>• Other products will contain no more than 5 grams of fat per 1 ounce serving and no more than 2 grams of saturated fat and/or trans fat per 1 ounce serving.</li> <li>• No more than 25 grams of total carbohydrate per serving (includes natural sugar and added sugar).</li> <li>• Portion sizes are limited to 2 oz. for most products, 3 oz. for baked goods such as muffins, pastries and bagels.</li> </ul>
Dairy Products Other Than Milk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular cheese – portion size no larger than 1½ oz.</li> <li>• Reduced fat cheese – portion size no larger than 2 oz.</li> <li>• Yogurt – portion size no larger than 8 oz.</li> <li>8 oz. should be equal to or less than 200 calories per serving</li> <li>6 oz. should be equal to or less than 150 calories per serving</li> <li>4 oz. should be equal to or less than 100 calories per serving</li> <li>• Frozen desserts, including ice cream, are limited to a portion size of no more than 3 oz.</li> </ul>
Fruits and Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If any foods are sold a la carte, fresh, frozen, canned and/or dried fruits and vegetables will be available as well.</li> <li>• Portion sizes for fried vegetables (french fries, onion rings, for example) will be ½ cup or less, and no larger than the portion of the same vegetable served in the school lunch program.</li> </ul>
Meat, Beans, and Nuts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total fat – no more than 5 grams of fat per 1 ounce serving with the exception of nuts, seeds, and nut butters.</li> <li>• Saturated fat and trans fat – no more than 2 grams per 1 ounce serving</li> <li>• Portion sizes are limited. For example: trail mix, nuts, seeds, jerky – no larger than 2 oz.</li> </ul>

## Background

### Grade K-6:

The rationale for the elementary school recommendation is that young children should only be presented with opportunities to make healthy food choices at school and healthy choices should be modeled throughout the school environment.

### Sugar:

Excess sugar adds unnecessary calories to the diet and contributes to tooth decay. This includes added sugars that do not naturally occur in food. Added sugars are sugars and sweeteners (white, brown, and raw sugars; fructose, honey, molasses, anhydrous dextrose, and crystal dextrose), and syrups (corn, malt, pancake, maple, and high fructose corn). Naturally occurring sugars present in milk and fruit, such as lactose and fructose are not considered added sugars.

### Fats:

Higher intakes of saturated and trans fats, and dietary cholesterol raise low density lipoprotein (LDL or "bad") cholesterol in the blood. An elevated LDL cholesterol increases the risk of developing coronary heart disease (CHD). To decrease LDL cholesterol and the risk of CHD, substitute monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats for saturated and trans fats and decrease the intake of cholesterol. Trans fat can be found in vegetable shortenings, some margarines, crackers, candies, cookies, snack foods, fried foods, baked goods, and other processed foods made with partially hydrogenated vegetable oils. Small amounts of naturally occurring trans fat can be found in some animal products, such as butter, milk products, cheese, beef, and lamb. Labeling of trans fats on food labels will be required starting January 1, 2006.

### Sodium:

Schools should be aware of the sodium content of foods served and sold. According to the FDA foods labeled healthy must contain less than or equal to 360 mg per serving for an individual food and 480 mg per serving for meal-type products.

### Caffeine:

Caffeine is a central nervous stimulant that in children may cause nervousness, anxiousness, fidgetiness or other similar behaviors. FDA requires that caffeine be listed on ingredient labels although herbal forms may not be recognized as caffeine sources. Herbal products containing kola (cola or kola nut), cacao (cocoa), guarana, mate, and green tea are known sources of caffeine.

### Beverages:

Beverages are included that provide nutritional value. Fruit and vegetable juices contain a variety of nutrients including Vitamin C; low fat and nonfat milk include calcium and Vitamin D and Vitamin A, while not adding excess calories from fat; water without added ingredients provides hydration without any calories. Flavored milks may be offered as long as they are low or non-fat and do not contain excess calories from added sugar. If soy beverages are sold they must be fortified with Vitamin A, Calcium and Vitamin D to a level equivalent to cow's milk, other dairy alternatives of low nutritional value are not recommended. Serving sizes are limited to reduce consumption of excess calories. According to the food guide pyramid serving sizes are 6 oz. for fruit juices and 8 oz. for milk.

Snacks:

Recommendations for snacks include those that are lower in calorie and contain nutrients. For all foods ingredient labels list items in the order of highest content in the food. If sugar or fat is listed first or second it is more likely that the item contains little nutritional value. Nuts and seeds are exempt from the fat restriction as they are high in monounsaturated fat, which can help lower LDL "bad" cholesterol and maintain HDL "good" cholesterol. There are not standard portion sizes for snacks but smaller portions are preferred to avoid excess calories from one food item. Best practice would be to include "whole" foods (close to their original state prior to processing, such as: fruits, vegetables, yogurt, cheese and nuts) whenever possible, which contain not only all the original nutrients but also health promoting phytochemicals and other biologically active substances.

Appendix C  
Vermont Vending Guidelines

Grades K-6	Recommendation
	Eliminate the sale of foods outside of the school meal program during the entire school day. Vending may be permitted after school hours and must follow the guidelines for secondary education.

Grades 7-12	Recommendation	
Non-Dairy Beverages	Best Practice	Acceptable Practice
	Beverages that contain 100% fruit or vegetable juice. Package size no larger than 8 oz.	Beverages that contain at least 50% fruit or vegetable juice. Package size no larger than 12 oz.
Bottled Water	Water without any added ingredients	Water containing fewer than 20 calories per serving without artificial sweeteners
Dairy Products	Low fat or nonfat, white or flavored milk, or drinkable yogurt, package size no larger than 10 oz. and total calories fewer than 200	Low fat or nonfat, white or flavored milk, or drinkable yogurt, package size no larger than 16 oz. and no more than 340 total calories

Recommendations for snacks include:

Cheese	Regular Cheese Serving size should be 1½ oz. or smaller Reduced Fat Cheese Serving size should be 2 oz. or smaller
Yogurt	No larger than 8 oz. 8 oz. should be equal to or less than 200 calories per serving 6 oz. should be equal to or less than 150 calories per serving 4 oz. should be equal to or less than 100 calories per serving

Non-Dairy Snack Foods	Fat: Limit to less than 5 grams of total fat per each 1 oz. serving. (Nuts and seeds are exempt from the fat restriction.)
	Saturated Fat/Trans Fat: Limit to less than 2 grams of saturated or trans fat per each 1 oz. serving.
	Total Carbohydrates: Limit to less than 25 grams of total carbohydrates per each 1 oz. serving. (Fresh, dried or canned fruits are exempt from the carbohydrate restrictions)
	Snack Portion Size: Serving size for snacks should be 2 oz. or less. Smaller portions are preferred.
Vending Sales and Contracts	All foods served and sold should be administered by the school food service. Contracts should include language allowing for purchase of items from another company if not sold by the contracted company.

#### References

*Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005*

*Regulations of the National School Lunch Program (7 CFR 210) and Regulations of the School Breakfast Program (7CFR 220)*

National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE)  
*Fit, Healthy and Ready To Learn, A School Healthy Policy Guide*

Massachusetts Action for Healthy Kids  
*Massachusetts A La Carte Food & Beverage Standards to Promote a Healthier School Environment*

The United States Department of Health and Human Services  
*The Surgeon General's Call for Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity, 2001*

Public Health Institute  
*California's Obesity Crisis: Focus on Solutions, March 2004*

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Policy Statement  
*Soft Drinks in Schools*

National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI)  
*Eating at School: A Summary of NFSMI Research on Time Required by Students to Eat Lunch*

United States Department of Agriculture  
*Changing the Scene, Improving the School Nutrition Environment*

National Food Service Management Institute  
*Relationships of Meal and Recess Schedules to Plate Waste in Elementary Schools*

Montana State University  
*MSU News*  
"Nutritionists say scheduling recess before lunch is best for students", October 01, 2003

Michigan State University Extension  
*Alternatives to Using Food as a Reward*

Durrant K.L. Known and Hidden Sources of Caffeine in Drug, Food and Natural Products.  
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National Association for Sport and Physical Education

North Carolina State Board of Education  
*Policy Manual*  
"Healthy Active Children – Section 2a"

Arkansas Child Health Advisory Committee  
*Recommendations*

*Michigan Policy on Quality Physical Education*

Maine Coordinated School Health Program  
*Guidelines*

National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity (NANA)  
*Model Local School Wellness Policies on Physical Activity and Nutrition*