

### **3-301.3 Food Services - Wellness Program**

#### **Local Wellness Policy**

The Queen Creek Unified School District is committed to supporting the overall well-being and academic success of every student, ensuring each has the opportunity to fully participate in the educational process.

The Governing Board, in consultation with the Director of Child Nutrition, school administrators, and the community, adopts the following goals for student wellness:

#### **I. Wellness Policy Goals**

##### **a. Goals for Nutrition Promotion**

The district actively encourages student participation in all appropriate meal programs, including the School Breakfast Program and the National School Lunch Program. Meal program menus are published on the district website and distributed through parent newsletters, and include detailed information on nutrient content and ingredients. The Child Nutrition Department promotes participation in these programs through regular outreach to families via the QCUSD Child Nutrition social media accounts.

##### **b. Goals for Nutrition Education**

The district is committed to providing comprehensive nutrition education that equips students with the knowledge and skills necessary to make informed, healthy food choices and maintain lifelong wellness. Instruction is embedded within core content across all grade levels, with intentional opportunities for students to practice and apply what they learn in meaningful, real-world contexts.

Nutrition education may be delivered in collaboration with community partners and emphasizes experiential learning, including cooking demonstrations, hands-on food preparation, taste testing, school gardens, farm tours, and the exploration of new school menu items.

##### **c. Goals for Physical Activity**

The district is committed to promoting and supporting student participation in physical activity, recognizing its essential role in overall health, academic performance, and well-being. Schools shall provide students with diverse, inclusive opportunities for physical activity, including physical education classes, elective physical education courses, and the intentional integration of movement into the academic curriculum.

##### **Elementary Schools (K–6)**

- Students in grades K–6 shall receive a minimum of 30 minutes of Physical Education twice per week.
- All elementary students shall be provided daily recess as a standard part of the school day. Recess shall not be withheld or extended as a form of reward or punishment.

## Junior High Schools

- While Physical Education is not required at the junior high level, schools are encouraged to offer elective physical activity opportunities that support continued student engagement in movement and wellness.

## High Schools

- A minimum of one year of Physical Education shall be required for graduation.

Extended Inactivity in accordance with State Statutes, extended periods of inactivity — defined as two or more consecutive hours — are strongly discouraged at all grade levels. Staff are encouraged to incorporate movement breaks and active learning strategies throughout the school day to minimize prolonged sedentary periods.

### **d. Goals for Other School-Based Activities that Promote Student Wellness**

The district recognizes that student wellness extends beyond the classroom and supports a variety of activities and partnerships that reinforce a culture of health throughout the school community.

School-sponsored events incorporate wellness components, including opportunities for physical activity and access to healthy foods. Community partnerships with hospitals, universities, local businesses, and SNAP-Ed providers help extend wellness initiatives beyond the school setting and connect students and families with additional resources.

The district also prioritizes staff wellness, recognizing that employees who model healthy behaviors positively influence students. Staff wellness is supported through a dedicated wellness subcommittee, strategies to encourage healthy behaviors, and promotion of staff participation in available health programs.

## **II. Nutrition Standards**

### ***School Meals***

The school meal programs aim to improve the diet and health of school children, help mitigate childhood obesity, model healthy eating to support the development of lifelong healthy eating patterns, and support healthy choices while accommodating cultural food preferences and special dietary needs.

- a. All schools in the district will participate in the National School Lunch Program.*
- b. All meals will, at a minimum, meet the New Meal Pattern requirements.*
- c. Free, potable water will be available to all students during meal periods.*
- d. Additional standards include:*

- i.* 50% of lunch items will be prepared from scratch or made on-site.
- ii.* School meal standards meet the following district guidelines: meals are appealing and attractive to students and served in clean, pleasant settings
- iii.* Local and/or regional products are incorporated into the school meal programs
- iv.* Fresh fruits and vegetables are served 5 times per week
- v.* Menus are created and reviewed by a Registered Dietitian or other certified nutrition professional, and school meals are administered by a team of nutrition professionals.

### ***Competitive Foods and Beverages***

- a. Nutrition standards for competitive foods and beverages must, at a minimum, meet the USDA's Smart Snacks in Schools guidelines. Foods and beverages sold outside the school meal programs will meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards on the school campus during the school day (midnight to thirty minutes after the end of the school day). This applies to all foods sold in the following locations:
  - i.* A La Carte
  - ii.* In student stores
  - iii.* In vending machines
  - iv.* Fundraisers (including holiday sales)
  - v.* Outside vendors
- b. *Additional criteria the district has established for competitive foods:*
  - i.* Beverages or food containing more than 10mg of caffeine per ounce will be prohibited at all QCUSD campuses (USDA regulations prohibit caffeine entirely at the K-8 level)
  - ii.* No sodas or energy drinks are allowed to be sold.
- c. Arizona Law (ARS 15-242) states that all food and beverages served to students in grades K-8 must meet the USDA's Smart Snacks in Schools guidelines. The USDA's Smart Snacks in Schools and Arizona Nutrition Standards do not apply to foods brought in from home or for activities such as classroom parties.
- d. Foods served during the school day for grades K–12 meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in Schools nutrition standards, as required by Arizona Nutrition Standards (ARS 15-242). *These guidelines apply to:*

- i.* School-sponsored events
  - ii.* Group celebrations involving more than one classroom
- e. School staff will receive a suggested list of foods and beverages that meet the USDA Smart Snacks nutrition standards that the Child Nutrition department can offer for purchase.
- f. All food brought onto campus for student consumption during classroom celebrations must originate from commercial grocery or food service stores or from other commercial kitchens certified to comply with Maricopa County Environmental Service regulations. This excludes curriculum-based food and celebrations.

### ***Fundraising***

- a. Fundraisers in grades K-6 must comply with USDA Smart Snacks Standards.
- b. Exempt Fundraising Windows: QCUSD junior and high schools may designate a limited number of weeks each school year during which exempt fundraisers may be conducted by clubs and organizations that are not required to meet Smart Snacks Standards. The number of exempt fundraising weeks permitted per term is as follows:
  - First Term - 2 weeks
  - Second Term - 3 weeks
  - Third Term - 2 weeks
  - Fourth Term - 2 weeks

The fundraiser will be open to all from Monday to Friday.

- c. Scheduling & Approval Process: The Student Council, in conjunction with the site administrator, is responsible for managing the exempt fundraising calendar each semester. This includes:
  - Selecting and publishing the specific exempt weeks to all clubs and organizations.
  - Accepting fundraiser requests from clubs and organizations.
  - Reviewing submissions to ensure no two groups are selling identical items.
  - Submit all required paperwork to the Child Nutrition Director for approval.

All clubs and organizations wishing to participate must submit a fundraiser request to the Student Council and site administration for review and approval.

- d. Food & Beverage Sale Restrictions: To protect the integrity of the school meal program, the following restrictions apply to all student food and beverage sales and fundraisers at all sites:
  - Sales are prohibited from 15 minutes before to 15 minutes after published breakfast and lunch service times.
  - Exception: High school student stores are exempt from this time restriction.

- Students, employees, and school visitors may not privately sell food or beverages to students on school grounds, unless the sale is part of an approved fundraiser.

### **Food and Beverage Marketing in Schools**

Food and beverage marketing is defined as advertising and other promotions in schools. Food and beverage marketing often includes oral, written, or graphic statements made to promote the sale of a food or beverage product made by the producer, manufacturer, seller, or any other entity with a commercial interest in the product. All products marketed on the school campus must, at a minimum, meet the Smart Snacks guidelines.

- a. All foods and beverages advertised on the school campus during the school day meet or exceed USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition guidelines. These guidelines apply to vending machine exteriors, beverage and food service equipment, and posters.

### **III. Arizona Healthy Schools Act – Ultra-Processed Foods**

In accordance with the Arizona Healthy Schools Act (A.R.S. §15-242.01), the District shall ensure that foods and beverages served, sold, or otherwise made available to students on school campus during the school day comply with state requirements regarding ultra-processed foods.

Beginning in the 2026–2027 school year, schools that participate in federally funded or assisted school meal programs may not serve, sell, or permit third parties to sell foods or beverages to students during the school day that contain ingredients prohibited under Arizona law. These ingredients include, but are not limited to, potassium bromate, propylparaben, titanium dioxide, brominated vegetable oil (BVO), and certain artificial food dyes, including Blue 1, Blue 2, Green 3, Red 3, Red 40, Yellow 5, and Yellow 6, as defined by state statute.

This requirement applies to all foods and beverages available to students on the school campus during the school day, including but not limited to:

- School meal programs
- Vending machines
- School stores
- A la carte sales
- Fundraisers
- School Celebrations
- Concessions or other food sales by school organizations or third-party vendors

All foods and beverages sold to students during the school day must also continue to comply with USDA Smart Snacks in School Standards, when applicable.

This restriction does not apply to foods or beverages brought from home by a parent or guardian for their student's personal consumption.

The District will work with food vendors, manufacturers, and school organizations to ensure compliance with all applicable federal and state regulations.

The Child Nutrition Department will support school sites and student organizations in ensuring compliance with applicable federal and state regulations.

#### **IV. School Wellness Committee**

##### ***Committee Role and Membership***

QCUSD will convene a wellness committee to establish goals and oversee school health and safety policies and programs, including the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of this district-level wellness policy.

- a. The committee will meet twice annually, once in the fall and once in the spring.
- b. The committee is open to all members of the school community, including parents, teachers, staff, school board members, and PTO representatives.
- c. The public is notified of opportunities to participate through the district's social media channels, ensuring transparency and encouraging community involvement in promoting student wellness.

##### ***Leadership***

QCUSD has designated a school official(s) who have the authority and responsibility to ensure each school complies with the local wellness policy.

- a. The designated official for oversight of implementation at each school is the school cafeteria manager.
- b. The designated official for convening the wellness committee is the district nutritionist.
- c. The person designated to inform the public about the wellness policy is the nutritionist, via social media and the district's website.

#### **V. Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability, and Community Engagement**

##### ***Implementation of the Wellness Policy***

- a. Once the wellness policy is finalized, the district will communicate its goals and policies to all schools, which will then implement the policies and work toward the goals as appropriate. While the policies will be implemented consistently across all schools, the specific actions taken to achieve the goals may vary by school. The district will review

the wellness policy in accordance with the Alliance for a Healthier Generation and conduct the review during biannual wellness committee meetings. If any changes are needed, the committee will discuss them and present them to the school board for approval.

### ***Triennial Progress Assessments***

At least once every three years, QCUSD must conduct an assessment of its wellness policy. To accomplish this, the district will evaluate compliance with its wellness policy and assess progress toward meeting its goals. Additionally, USDA requires that the district compare its policy to the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's model wellness policy.

- a. QCUSD will assess compliance and progress of its local wellness policy at least once every 3 years
  - i. The district will assess progress toward the goals of the wellness policy through a combination of tools, including the Alliance for a Healthier Generation Healthy Schools Program. Progress will be reviewed during the biannual wellness committee meetings, where committee members evaluate implementation across schools, identify successes, and highlight areas needing improvement. Any recommended changes or updates to the policy will be discussed by the committee and presented to the school board for approval, ensuring ongoing accountability and continuous improvement in promoting student wellness. The person responsible for this assessment is the nutritionist.

### ***Revisions and Updating the Policy***

QCUSD will update or modify the wellness policy as appropriate.

- a. The Director of Child Nutrition and the Nutritionist, together with a committee of staff and citizens, will annually review the district's progress toward the wellness goals.
- b. The Superintendent will adopt administrative regulations to implement this policy.

### ***Notification of Wellness Policy, Policy Updates, and Triennial Assessment***

The District will inform families and the public each year of any updates to the wellness policy and every three years of its compliance with the written wellness policy.

- a. The district wellness policy is available to the public on the child nutrition website.
- b. The annual progress reports and updates are available on the child nutrition website.
- c. The district will make the Triennial Assessment available on the child nutrition website.

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