

New Federal Requirement for School Wellness Policies

Andover School Food Services is pleased to be a pivotal part of our nation's move toward healthier lifestyle choices. We are lowering the fat, decreasing the sodium and increasing the calcium in our school menus. With the start of the new school year, Andover School Food Services invites district patrons to take an active role in their student's lunchroom experience. Please encourage your student to make smart choices from every food group, finding a balance between food and physical activity and by getting the most nutrition out of the calories consumed.

When Congress reauthorized the Child Nutrition Act last summer, it added a new requirement that every school receiving federal funds for foodservice programs must adopt a wellness policy by the beginning of the 2006-2007 school years. This policy requirement applies to the approximately 97,000 schools participating in the school meals program, or about 95% of all public schools. The new mandate is intended to push schools to serve healthier food to children and confront the costly public health threat of obesity.

Among the provisions, each school's wellness policy must include the following:

Goals for nutrition, education, physical activity, and other school-based activities that are designed to promote student wellness;

Nutrition guidelines for all food available on each school campus during the school day, with the objectives of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity;

A plan for measuring implementation of the wellness policy, including the designation of one or more persons charged with operational responsibility for ensuring that the school meets the local wellness policy; and

Involvement of parents, students, representatives of the school food authority, the school board, school administrators, and the public in the development of the school wellness policy.

The Kansas State Department of Education has been working for several months to develop model wellness guidelines. They have published a schedule for this process:

In Aug 2005, model guidelines were presented to the State Board of Education.

Sept-Oct 2005: KSDE provided regional statewide training on local wellness policies for school personnel. Districts will be asked to send a team of representatives to these workshops.

Oct 2005 – ongoing: KSDE will provide technical assistance to district personnel to support their efforts to adopt and/or adapt the model wellness guidelines to meet local needs.

July 2006: all districts will have a local wellness policy in place. This policy will be incorporated into each district's 2006-07 School Nutrition Program renewal agreement with KSDE.

Please call the Andover School Food Services office, 733-3653, with any questions.

Ann Katt
Director of Child Nutrition
Andover Public Schools