

# THOMASTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICY – TRIENNIAL ASSESSMENT

### **Strong Policies and Aligned Practices**

Our successes are centered around our nutrition and student wellness goals and implementation of a healthy school environment. We are headed towards a comprehensive standard based curriculum where all students will be exposed to nutrition education. Our goal is to integrate nutrition lessons into other classes and subjects.

The Food Service Director of Thomaston Public Schools can ensure that all meals served to students are in compliance with the USDA Federal Guidelines; including fresh fruits and vegetables, low fat dairy, and whole grains. A la carte items are offered and sold to students in grades K-12, and are in compliance with Smart Snack standards; with no competitive market, including fundraisers and school stores. Free, portable water is available during each meal period for all students.

The district has strict adherence to protect the privacy of all students, including the status of their lunch accounts; for example: whether they receive free or reduced lunch. Our strict confidentiality policies allow for a very limited amount of people to have access to this information, as well as a coding system used in our point of sale system.

We have physical education for all of our K-12 students and our goals address qualifications for our PE teachers and recess for all our elementary students. Physical activity is promoted as a positive activity throughout all grade levels, and is never used as a punishment towards students.

### **Practice Implementation Plans**

The Thomaston Public Schools Wellness committee will work together to revise the local school wellness plan (LSWP) to ensure that all elements that are written in the policy are also practiced in the classrooms.

The district identifies that nutrition education is vital to a student's overall health and wellness. The district's curriculum recognizes that all students should receive sequential and comprehensive nutrition education, however this is only taking place for high school students (grades 9 - 12). Elementary and middle school students receive it in some grades, but not throughout all. When a curriculum audit is completed, the curriculum will be revised to ensure that nutrition education teaches skills that are behavior focused, interactive, and/or participatory, at all grade levels. Nutrition education is also not aligned with the school food environment; however, future changes will implement that the food service department works in partnership with the teaching staff to ensure a collaborative environment for all students.

All classroom celebrations will adhere to Smart Snack Guidelines, activity breaks will be encouraged throughout each school day, and marketing will be done to promote healthy food and beverage choices inside and outside the school buildings.

Currently, the Wellness Committee has not met in many years. However, moving forward a wellness committee composed of appropriate stakeholders will be meeting regularly to ensure the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the LSWP.

### **Update Policies**

The Thomaston Public Schools Wellness Committee recognizes that the LSWP is missing crucial elements of policy based on federal regulations, as well as other agenda items that are practiced in the classroom, but not are supported in a written policy. When revising the LSWP, the committee will ensure that all elements that are practiced in the classroom are aligned in the written policy.

The Thomaston Food Services Department serves breakfast at each school, on a daily basis, with adequate seat time. Adequate seat time is also provided during the lunch service, with all lunch periods being 25 to 30 minutes in length. All food service employees receive ample training to follow USDA Professional Standards requirements, with topics including Civil Rights, food safety, and federal nutrition guidelines updates.

The written physical education curriculum that is designed for Thomaston Public Schools is aligned with national and state physical education standards. While not stated in the LSWP, students are never allowed to choose a substitution for physical education or to be exempted from taking physical education. Teachers are also required to complete a mandated amount of ongoing training hours.

Marketing is also designed throughout the schools and on school grounds to entice students and teachers to make healthier decisions when it comes to foods and beverages. This includes marketing that is done on education materials, sports equipment, and school publications. All items that are marketed meet Smart Snack standards.

The wellness policy is located for the public to locate by visiting the [Thomaston Public Schools website](#).

### **Opportunities for Growth**

There are many areas where Thomaston Public Schools has recognized as areas of growth for the district.

Although nutrition education is integrated in health classes and other instructional opportunities, staff are encouraged to integrate other nutritional themes, but this is not done with fidelity. Moving forward, nutrition education will be a theme in other curricula outside of health; including science and math classes. Currently, nutrition education does not include agriculture or the food system.

The families are provided free and reduced applications through the district's website. In the future, the food service department will provide applications to all students at the end of the current school year for the upcoming school year. Applications will also be made available in individual school principal offices and notifications will go in local papers and media outlets, including Facebook. School meal participation is relied on by word of mouth. No special tactics are planned; such as taste tests. Future school meal participation will be increased by advertising on social media platforms, as well as engaging children in the school meals program. This will be done by conducting taste tests on new products, incorporating local produce, and integrating school agriculture programs into the lunchroom.

Classroom parties and celebrations, at the elementary school level, are not regulated in any way. Food is often used as a reward in the classrooms, at all grade levels; K-12. Moving forward, the district will implement strict regulations on food and beverages in the classroom, through building administration, and food will no longer be allowed to be used as a reward.

Our current plan does not meet the guidelines for minutes per week for physical education at all grade levels. Hours per week of physical education instruction will be reviewed during the next curriculum audit. Due to the geographical landscapes of the town, active transportation is not a viable method of transportation for many of our students. The lack of sidewalks leading to the schools makes walking and biking a safety concern. Due to the fact that all families are provided the option of having bus transportation, no action will be taken regarding this issue.

Although the district has strived to support employee wellness, specifically in the area of mental health, we realized we must also focus on the physical wellness of our staff. In order to update the current wellness policy, staff will complete a survey to determine ways that administration can support their specific needs in health and wellness. The district will look at appropriate ways to market healthier food and beverages to staff members, including revisiting the location of soda vending machines. The updated policy will address marketing by disallowing all marketing through fundraisers and corporate incentive programs.

Due to the size and makeup of the Thomaston Public School district, the overall wellness committee will implement the wellness policy at each school level, with leadership by individual building administration.