WELLNESS

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New York City
Department of Education

WELLNESS REPORT 2013

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Mayor of New York City

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NYC Department of Education
Dennis M. Walcott, Chancellor

Dear Fellow New Yorkers,

We know that students who are healthy, active, and well-nourished are better prepared to learn in the classroom and more likely to fulfill their academic and social potential. In fact, the New York City Department of Education has long recognized student wellness, being in good physical, mental and emotional health, as one of the most important building blocks of a great education.

With Mayor Bloomberg's support, we have integrated wellness into all facets of our schools. Our cafeterias now serve nutritious meals high in fiber, low in sodium and fat, and free of trans fats. More than 1,000 school salad bars—and growing—provide students with fresh vegetables every day. Across the City, we are supporting more school-based health and fitness initiatives to help ensure that students' physical and emotional needs are met. Moreover, this year, we significantly expanded our Move-to-Improve physical activity program for elementary school students, as well as increased grant funding to encourage the creation of School Wellness Councils.

There are many encouraging signs that this work is having a positive impact. More school communities are becoming active, taking on health-focused initiatives, and thinking about wellness in new and exciting ways. We are confident that, over time, the health of our City's youth will drastically improve as a result of our groundbreaking initiatives.

Our wellness programs and achievements, described in this report, are wide-ranging, and while we have laid significant groundwork during the eleven years of this Administration, it is critical to continue this momentum. Every New Yorker must be involved in the mission to create a healthy future for our 1.1 million school children. Working together, we can ensure that today's young people live long, fulfilling lives.

Sincerely,

Dennis M. Walcott
Chancellor

Dear New York City Public School Families,

Supporting the health of our students today will have resounding effects for years to come, and City schools are making important and long-lasting contributions to these efforts. School wellness initiatives are a deliberate attempt to influence the health and fitness of every student, every year.

These critical endeavors are most successful when wellness is prioritized as part of the school culture and families and community members work together on behalf of students. In addition, our work with other City agencies and numerous community-based organizations complements school initiatives and is an essential component to developing a sustainable citywide structure to support students.

In this report, we share updates about programs that address many different aspects of wellness with a variety of approaches. We continue to develop new initiatives and expand current ones with the goal of creating a healthier, better future for our youth.

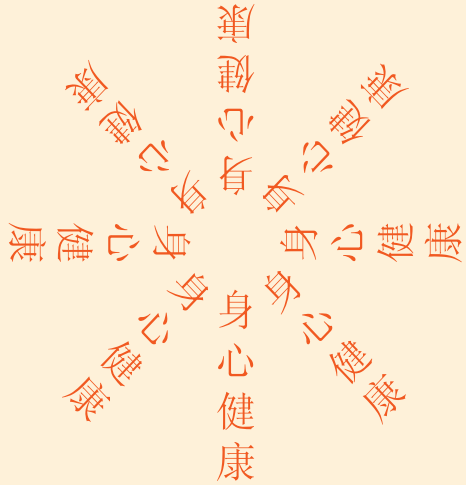
Helping our children enrich their wellbeing and learn how to make healthy decisions requires all of us to work together. I am proud of our shared accomplishments to date and our commitment to ongoing wellness efforts.

Stay Well,

Kathleen Grimm
Deputy Chancellor for Operations

COMMUNITY

WELLNESS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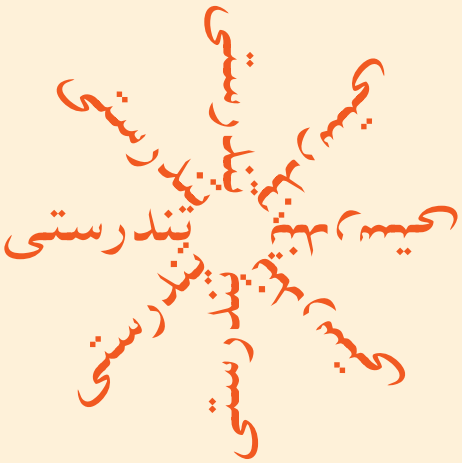
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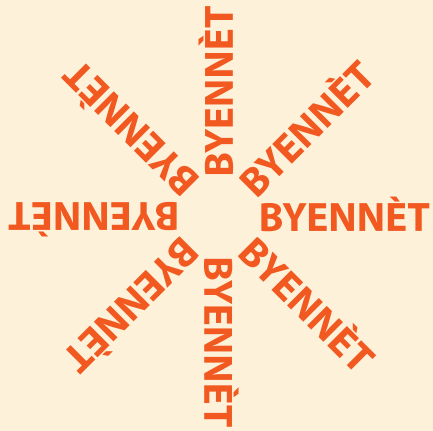
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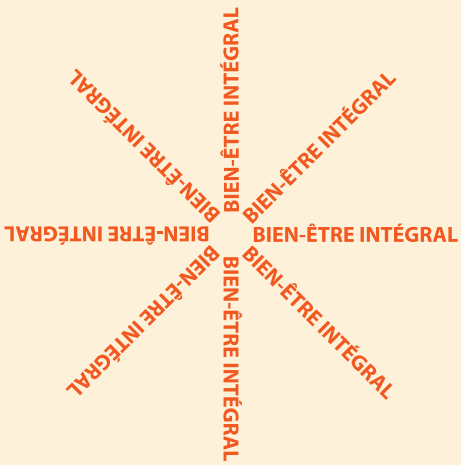
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Wellness is a relatively new term in American vocabularies that has been in increasing use since the 1970's. *Wellness* means being healthy in mind and body.

A school *community* refers to everyone connected with a school, from students to staff to families to neighbors.

New York City's emphasis on *wellness* and *school community* and their joint significance has led the City to the forefront of a national effort to stop and reverse the childhood obesity epidemic. Although schools cannot change the public health landscape alone, the New York City Department of Education (DOE) has introduced and reinforced a wide range of wellness programs focused on improving the "calories in = calories out" equation needed for good health.

School Wellness Councils

In 2010, the DOE launched a School Wellness Council (SWC) grant program to address the need for school-based structures that can attract wellness champions from across the school community. Grants of $2,500, originally awarded to 50 schools in the first two years of the program, support schools in creating or strengthening a School Wellness Council that is tasked with developing practical and innovative plans to address specific school-based wellness priorities. Councils typically include a mix of parents, Parent Associations, students, teachers, school nurses, administrators, SchoolFood staff, custodians, mental health providers, and community based organizations. The cornerstones of school-based wellness action plans are physical and health education, and also include improvements to physical activity, food and nutrition, staff wellness, school environment, health services, and other areas which can influence student health and wellbeing.

In 2011-2012, the Office of School Wellness Programs added a mentoring component that awarded three schools additional funding to support and mentor other SWC grantees. SWC staff partnered with StoryCorps, a national oral history project, to record interviews discussing how SWCs engaged school communities around health and wellness, and the unexpected benefits that emerge from this work.

Through funding from the Mayor's Obesity Task Force, the grant program expanded in scope and capacity to serve more school communities in 2013. Currently, the SWC grant program awards 125 grants, including 14 additional mentor schools. Additionally, SWC staff piloted an observational scorecard for Councils to use when reviewing various components of school wellness. Compared to other wellness inventories, this local tool references local and State standards and regulations, and more easily links to available resources (free and at-cost). As a result, SWCs can access information and develop solutions more efficiently and effectively.

Highlights of school efforts included:

- A teacher who runs every day organized a running club open to staff, parents, and students, regardless of prior experience or fitness levels.
- A science teacher and health teacher coordinated with the cafeteria manager so that science and nutrition lessons incorporate information about the seasonal foods being served in the cafeteria.
- A physical education (PE) teacher became certified in yoga instruction to strengthen the school's PE program and add to out-of-school options.
- A parent rallied the school community to design and plant a school garden and then started a cooking class using those foods.
- Students and parents committed to raising funds using non-food fundraisers.
- An entire school adopted physical activity breaks as a part of its daily schedule to contribute to the 60 minutes of exercise children need daily.

2013 School Wellness Council Culminating Event at NYU's Kimmel Center

At the end of each grant year, grantees showcase their work with poster and video presentations at a culminating event on Anniversary Day. In 2011-2012, more than 40 schools highlighted their work at the Park Slope Armory in Brooklyn, and in 2012-2013, more than 100 schools participated at New York University's Kimmel Center.

Annual School Wellness Poster Contest

New York City public school students in grades K-12 are invited each year to submit poster designs for a contest promoting wellness in schools, specifically the importance of physical activity, good nutrition and adequate sleep. This year, over 1,000 entries were received from grade-level

categories of elementary, middle, and high school. From these entries, first place winners received $500 worth of wellness related items for their schools, with runners up receiving $250 worth. Winning posters are displayed on the DOE website and featured in a calendar shared throughout the school system.

A student winner of the 2013 School Wellness Poster Contest with Chancellor Walcott.

Partnerships

The DOE is not alone in its wellness endeavors, nor can it fully support the health of students without the involvement of families and other partners. City agencies, community-based organizations, non-profits, and groups throughout New York City help make wellness a reality in schools by providing free and low-cost resources every day.

For instance, New York Road Runners (NYRR) youth and school programs provide hundreds of free, comprehensive running and fitness programs for New York City public schools with grades K-12, including the Developmental Track and Field Series (grades 3-8) during the school day, as well as physical activity programs and events before and after school, and on weekends (e.g., CHAMPS programs, Mighty Milers, Young Runners, and citywide Jamborees). As a partner, NYRR provides professional development and networking opportunities to City teachers and school staff throughout the year, as well as coaching videos and PE lesson plans vetted by teachers and expert runners.

Working with other City agencies has also expanded opportunities for students. For example, the DOE and Department of Parks and Recreation have partnered for many years to teach public school children how to swim and be safe in and around large bodies of water. In 2011, the Parks Department launched the Swim for Life program to facilitate better collaboration and sharing of resources among public and private entities with the goal of teaching every second grader how to swim. To date, more than 18,000 students from schools across the City have participated in Swim for Life.

On the nutrition side, SchoolFood partners with nutritional education programs, like Super Sprowtz, to increase vegetable consumption in school dining rooms. Super Sprowtz is dedicated to helping students make the connection between what is served in the cafeteria and what is taught in the classroom.

PHYSICAL FITNESS

Physical Education

In New York City, almost 40 percent of public school students are overweight or obese. Physical education (PE) plays a critical role in teaching students the skills, knowledge, and motivation that create the foundation for a healthy and active life, both inside and outside of school. National and local research increasingly indicate a correlation between student fitness levels and academic achievement, student focus, attendance, and wellbeing. It is more important than ever to prioritize rigorous, high quality PE that meets New York State requirements.

Physical education instruction is required by the State at all grade levels K-12, and high school students must earn four PE credits in order to graduate. In 2013, the DOE increased accountability for PE in schools by adding an item to the principal's Compliance Checklist.

The DOE recommends a health-related fitness curriculum, *Physical Best*, which teaches students why physical activity is important. This curriculum promotes individual choice and makes connections to traditional and non-traditional opportunities to remain active for lifelong health and wellness.

To help schools provide high-quality instruction and move toward full compliance with State instructional standards, the Office of School Wellness Programs (OSWP) offers a wide range of free trainings: a certification workshop in *Physical Best*; "No Gym? No Problem!" for teachers who may have non-traditional activity spaces; workshops for Adaptive PE teachers who work with students with disabilities; and support for administrators and network staff. In the 2012-2013 school year, there were more than 80 PE professional development workshops serving over 1,700 participants.

Adaptive Physical Education

The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act entitles all students with disabilities to receive a free, appropriate public education, including appropriate PE. Adaptive physical education (APE) adapts, modifies and/or changes a physical activity so it is as appropriate for a person with a disability as it is for a person without one.

OSWP oversees scheduling and support for more than 150 itinerant teachers serving over 4,200 students with disabilities in approximately 440 elementary schools citywide. The APE team also coordinates more than 30 citywide events each year with more than 5,900 participating students, including the Adaptive Winter Games, Special Olympics Winter and Summer Games, and the Track & Field series.

OSWP partners closely with District 75, which serves students with the most severe disabilities. Shared goals, strategic collaboration, and the leveraging of resources results in more opportunities for students and coordinated support for APE teachers citywide.

Teachers from P.S. 13 in Queens participating in a MTI training.

Move-To-Improve

Move-to-Improve (MTI) is an elementary classroom-based physical activity program designed by the DOE and the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH). As of June 2012, more than 5,000 teachers in about 500 schools were trained in MTI. With funding from the Mayor's Obesity Task Force, the DOE is on track to train an additional 6,000 teachers by 2014, including a cadre of MTI All-Star schools, where more than 85 percent of classroom teachers are trained.

MTI fitness activities integrate grade-level academic concepts and physical activity in a 10-minute lesson aligned to State Physical Education learning standards. MTI can supplement a school's existing physical education program and help elementary schools meet the State mandate of 120 minutes of physical education per week.

The Centers for Disease Control published a study on the effectiveness of MTI in increasing physical activity. The study, *An Observational Evaluation of Move-To-Improve, a Classroom-Based Physical Activity Program, New York City Schools, 2010* found that students in classes led by teachers who completed MTI training engaged in four times as much physical activity as those students in non-MTI trained classrooms.

NYC FITNESSGRAM

NYC FITNESSGRAM is a health-related, criterion-based assessment that supports students as they pursue personal fitness goals for lifelong health. More than 860,000 students received a NYC FITNESSGRAM report in June 2013. Through

NYC FITNESSGRAM, students learn about and measure components of health-related fitness: aerobic capacity, muscle strength, muscular endurance, flexibility, and body composition. Reports document students' performance on fitness assessments and suggest ways to help them reach the "Healthy Fitness Zone," optimal performance for better health based on their age and sex. NYC FITNESSGRAM reports are also available for families in one of 10 home languages.

CHAMPS Middle School Basketball League game

CHAMPS Middle School Sports and Fitness League

The CHAMPS Middle School Sports and Fitness League promotes student physical activity during the critical middle school years when students' daily physical activity diminishes. Programs include a wide range of traditional and non-traditional sports and activities, including basketball, softball, tennis, flag rugby, crew, tai chi and dance. CHAMPS offers programs in three seasons, and in 2012-2013, 1,415 programs served 27,000 students in 379 schools, including students in District 75 schools. Through CHAMPS, students also have the opportunity to participate in a range of showcases and culminating events. Key partners include New York City Council, Answer Vending, CC Vending, New York Road Runners, the New York Jets, Home Runs for Harlem, New York Sports Club, and Zog Sports.

Public Schools Athletic League

Established in 1903, the Public Schools Athletic League (PSAL) is the oldest scholastic athletic league in the country and coordinates all high school interscholastic athletics for 37,000 students competing in 22 varsity sports from over 400 member schools. PSAL partners with numerous organizations that provide funding and other support for PSAL activities, including Beat the Streets, which supports wrestling, and National Football League member, the New York Jets. Last year, the PSAL established 50 new teams, all for young women. Funding in 2013 led to the creation of a director-level position responsible for creating a strategic plan to increase the female student participation rate in PSAL sports.

Over the past four years, top-performing student athletes have traveled to Russia, Ghana, and Brazil. Last year, a group of PSAL's top baseball players traveled to St. Petersburg, Russia to compete against local teams.

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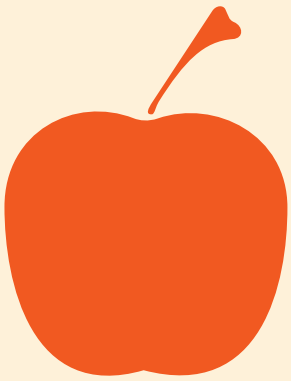

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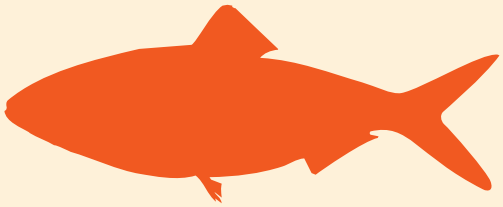

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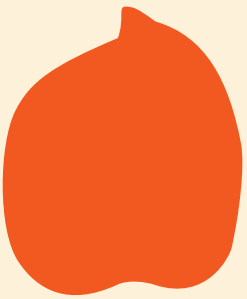

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SchoolFood

This year, the United States Department of Agriculture changed the nutritional standards for food served in schools for the first time in 15 years. These new federal standards mirror much of what the DOE's SchoolFood department has built and improved on over the past decade. The introduction of new products and menus this year enhanced nutritional standards while appealing to students' palates, including new seasonings such as Cajun spices and Indian garam masala. Meals now have reduced sodium, fat, and cholesterol. The use of trans fats and artificial colors and flavors is prohibited, and the DOE is working to eliminate all high fructose corn syrup.

In addition, SchoolFood has installed over 1,000 salad bars in schools, and funding from the Mayor's Obesity Task Force will allow for the installation of salad bars in all remaining schools with capacity. Whole Foods, which shares a building with the High School of Art and Design and P.S. 59 in midtown Manhattan, donated 57 salad bars to City public schools as part of this effort.

SchoolFood has also significantly increased the amount of whole grains served to students. Currently, whole grains are featured on all DOE menus. In 2012, the Whole Grain Council sponsored a competition—the Whole Grains Challenge—for U.S. schools participating in the National School Lunch Program. The DOE secured a place on the Top Ten Winner List for its success serving students whole grains in schools. New lunch recipes include the Warm Taco Boat with Jasmine Rose Rice (both of which are whole grain) and Beans; Whole Grain Pasta with Italian Bolognese Sauce, Marinara Sauce or Garlic and Herbs; and the Red, White and Green Whole Grain Panini.

Approximately one-third of added sugar in Americans' diet comes from carbonated beverages, with nine percent from fruit drinks. Encouraging children to drink water by changing the environment can play an important role in shaping healthy habits for life. To make water the preferred choice, the Department has installed water jets that offer cold, fresh tap water in more than 300 school cafeterias. An allocation of $850,000 per year for the next three years will allow the Department to install more than 900 new water jets.

Every summer, SchoolFood serves millions of summer meals to children 18 years old and younger. In an effort to reach as many children as possible, SchoolFood uses mobile food trucks to serve free, nutritious, and delicious meals at beaches, parks, and playgrounds throughout the City. In the summer of 2012, SchoolFood served over 120,000 meals from its three mobile trucks, nearly doubling the success in 2011, and SchoolFood is building on this success in 2013.

Nutrition Education

Nutrition education is a key part of comprehensive health education. To engage and inspire a wider audience of teachers and school staff interested in wellness, the Office of School Wellness Programs widened its portfolio of opportunities on dedicated citywide professional development days and also created smaller networking opportunities for School Wellness Council champions. Trainings and events featured partners like Family Cook Productions, a train-the-trainer model for healthy classroom cooking and nutrition, and FoodFight, a nutrition education organization which explores personal health goals with educators to strengthen their commitment to school wellness.

Cafeteria water jet

Grow to Learn: Citywide School Gardens Initiative

The Grow to Learn (GTL) initiative was established by the Mayor's Fund and non-profit GrowNYC to inspire, facilitate, and promote the creation of sustainable school gardens in City public schools. Under the initiative, schools can apply for a grant of $500 to $2,000, and receive expert assistance from GreenThumb, a NYC Department of Parks and Recreation community garden program.

At M.S. 167 in Manhattan, students get hands-on garden experience

M.S. 167 plants raised beds

Currently, 233 gardens are registered with GTL, and the initiative receives funding of $150,000 per year through the Mayor's Obesity Task Force. In collaboration with the DOE, the Mayor's Fund to Advance NYC, and the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation, GrowNYC launched GTL to coordinate the school garden movement across the five boroughs, leading to information collection, best-practice sharing, and teacher and school outreach. By pooling best practices, this initiative ensures that every school has access to the information and support needed to start and maintain a successful garden. Major sponsorship for this initiative comes from the Bank of America, the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, and Rachael Ray's foundation Yum-o!.

The Garden to School Café program, a partner of GTL, combines efforts from the DOE, NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets, NYC Parks and Recreation, GrowNYC, and GreenThumb to connect school gardens and school meals through lunchtime harvest events and educational activities. The purpose is to encourage knowledge of healthful foods, farming, and the local food system.

HEALTH

Comprehensive Health Education

Health education empowers students to take responsibility for their wellbeing by helping them to develop the knowledge and skills they need to make healthy decisions. Comprehensive health education, beginning in elementary and continuing through middle and high school, includes age-appropriate lessons on injury prevention; mental and emotional health; nutrition; tobacco, alcohol and other drugs; family health and sexuality; HIV/AIDS; and personal and consumer health. Lessons also address essential skills: self-management; relationship management; stress management; communication; decision making; planning and goal setting; and advocacy.

The DOE recommends curricula at all grade levels: *HealthTeacher* for elementary grades, *Middle School HealthSmart* for middle school, and *High School HealthSmart* plus *Reducing the Risk* for high school. The Office of School Wellness Programs (OSWP) provides free health education training for administrators and teachers citywide; attendees receive free copies of the recommended curricula. In 2012-2013, there were over 70 health education professional development sessions covering comprehensive health education, sexual health education, and HIV/AIDS, with over 1,000 participants.

In 2012, OSWP completed a medical update of the DOE's HIV/AIDS curriculum to ensure that the required annual lessons for students in grades K-12 contained the most up-to-date and medically accurate information.

OSWP continues to support implementation of the 2011 sexual health education mandate, part of Mayor Bloomberg's Young Men's Initiative to reduce disparities for young men of color. There is free training for teachers and administrators, as well as information for parents, guardians, and members of the school community. This initiative underscores the DOE's commitment to ensuring that all students have the knowledge and the skills to support a healthy and successful future.

School-Based Health Centers

Thousands of school-aged children in New York City have limited access to comprehensive health services because of financial and geographical hardships and other barriers to care. Currently, there are 126 school-based health clinics (SBHC) serving over 150,000 students. This year, Chancellor Dennis Walcott unveiled an initiative to allocate $30 million in capital funds to build 20 new SBHCs in middle and high schools over the next three years. The DOE is planning to open six to seven sites in each of the next three school years, and so far, 13 SBHCs have been identified.

Numerous studies show that SBHCs increase access to health care for minority youth, improve school attendance and performance, reduce emergency room visits, prevent unnecessary hospitalizations, and lower total annual Medicaid expenditures.

SBHCs offer a wide range of services to children and teens in the community including medical care and counseling. Some sites also provide dental health services, mental health care, reproductive health services (high schools only), and optometry services. Centers are staffed by qualified medical staff and mental health professionals, and the State Department of Health oversees the performance of all SBHCs to ensure that they are providing high-quality care.

An SBHC can serve as a student's Primary Care Provider (PCP), or complement services provided by an outside PCP with scheduled and walk-in services, as well as 24-hour telephone coverage to assist with problems that may arise when the SBHC is closed.

Nursing

The DOE and NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) developed the Healthy Options and Physical Activity Program (HOP) to provide school nurses with knowledge, clinical tools, educational materials, and other resources to work with students, their families, and school communities around developing healthy behaviors. Through HOP, nurses provide critical healthcare services and engage in proactive activities focused on student wellness. In the 2012-2013 school year, HOP expanded to every elementary school with a school nurse.

The more than 37,000 students in City public schools who have a Body Mass Index over 30, indicating obesity, receive a clinical assessment of height, weight, blood pressure, and other health risks by Office of School Health nurses and physicians. Referrals

are made to families, primary care physicians, and community organizations. In addition, parents or guardians receive educational material like *Helping your Child Reach a Healthy Weight*. Students are seen in the medical room for follow up visits to reinforce the key health messages of the program and to provide encouragement.

Mental Health

School-based mental health clinics (SBMHCs) offer a variety of services targeting general education students who have emotional and behavioral challenges. The program oversees collaborations and initiatives with mental health agencies, hospitals, and non-profits serving youth and also treats and educates students and their families dealing with mental health issues that impede academic achievement. There are now over 195 SBMHC programs serving all five boroughs. All services are private and kept confidential from the school staff.

In 2013, there were 26 nurses enrolled in STARS (Screening the At Risk Student). STARS aims to identify and ensure appropriate treatment for middle school students with depression who are at risk for suicide or other harmful behaviors. Nurses then follow up to ensure that the students are under care.

There are also 15 schools with a Mobile Response Team (MRT), each serving five schools. In response to school staff referrals, the MRT conducts assessments and links students to mental health and other social services. MRTs build the capacity of school staff and families to recognize and respond to mental health problems or crises. Ten schools are in the MRT program run by the Interborough Developmental and Consultation Center in Brooklyn, and five Bronx schools are part of the NYC Visiting Nurse Service's "The Promise Zone", which uses the MRT program model.

Vision Screening

Poor vision in childhood has been shown to lead to poor academic outcomes and poor health later in life. The Office of School Health's vision program identifies children with severe vision deficits likely to affect their health status, safety, and academic achievement. The program screens for amblyopia, also known as lazy eye, which, if left untreated, can lead to permanently reduced sight. In 2012-2013, the program screened 159,000 kindergarten and first grade students and identified about 12,000 as at risk for amblyopia. The optometry program evaluates students with other significant eye problems. These students are offered free exams by optometrists and free corrective glasses.

ENVIRONMENTS

Construction and Planning

Multiple offices within the DOE collaborate to ensure that space and facility access supports physical education (PE) and encourages activity for students. The School Construction Authority works hand in hand with the DOE's Office of Space Planning to allocate funding and complete renovation and construction projects that create PE spaces in traditional and non-traditional areas. Multiple City agencies and community-based organizations also work with schools to provide access to neighborhood resources used for physical activity.

While space limitations in concentrated urban areas like New York City are sometimes considered barriers to providing a high quality PE program, these challenges can be overcome with creativity and thoughtful planning. With more than 1,800 schools in more than 1,200 physical buildings, there are a variety of school and building types throughout the City, and schools are providing innovative, top quality PE programs using both traditional and non-traditional spaces. Many schools also support their PE programs by utilizing off-site locations, like City parks and recreation centers, community centers, and other sites. The Office of School Wellness Programs (OSWP) provides training and technical assistance to help schools best utilize available space.

All new school buildings are built with a dedicated physical education space, and the DOE has undertaken a number of creative renovations of existing spaces to make them suitable for PE and activity, including room conversions, the creation of fitness rooms, and other repurposing of space. The Office of Space Planning completed 30 renovations of this type in the last two years, spending close to $4.5 million building multi-use space.

NYC PlayStreets, an initiative of the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, enables schools to close the street during the school day to allow for student activity. In 2012-2013, the program expanded to schools below 96th Street.

The before and after playground renovation at P.S. 87 in the Bronx

PlaNYC

Released in 2007, PlaNYC is an unprecedented effort undertaken by Mayor Bloomberg to prepare the City for one million more residents and enhance the wellness and quality of life for all New Yorkers. The plan brought together over 25 City agencies to work toward the vision of a greener, greater New York.

As part of this effort, the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation and non-profit Trust for Public Land (TPL) teamed with the DOE to increase physical activity among children by extending the operating hours of New York City public school yards.

Under this initiative, called Schoolyards to Playgrounds, Mayor Bloomberg's administration identified school playgrounds as opportunities to enhance access to and increase the amount of open space for all New Yorkers, as well as further the PlaNYC goal of bringing all New Yorkers within a 10-minute walk of a park.

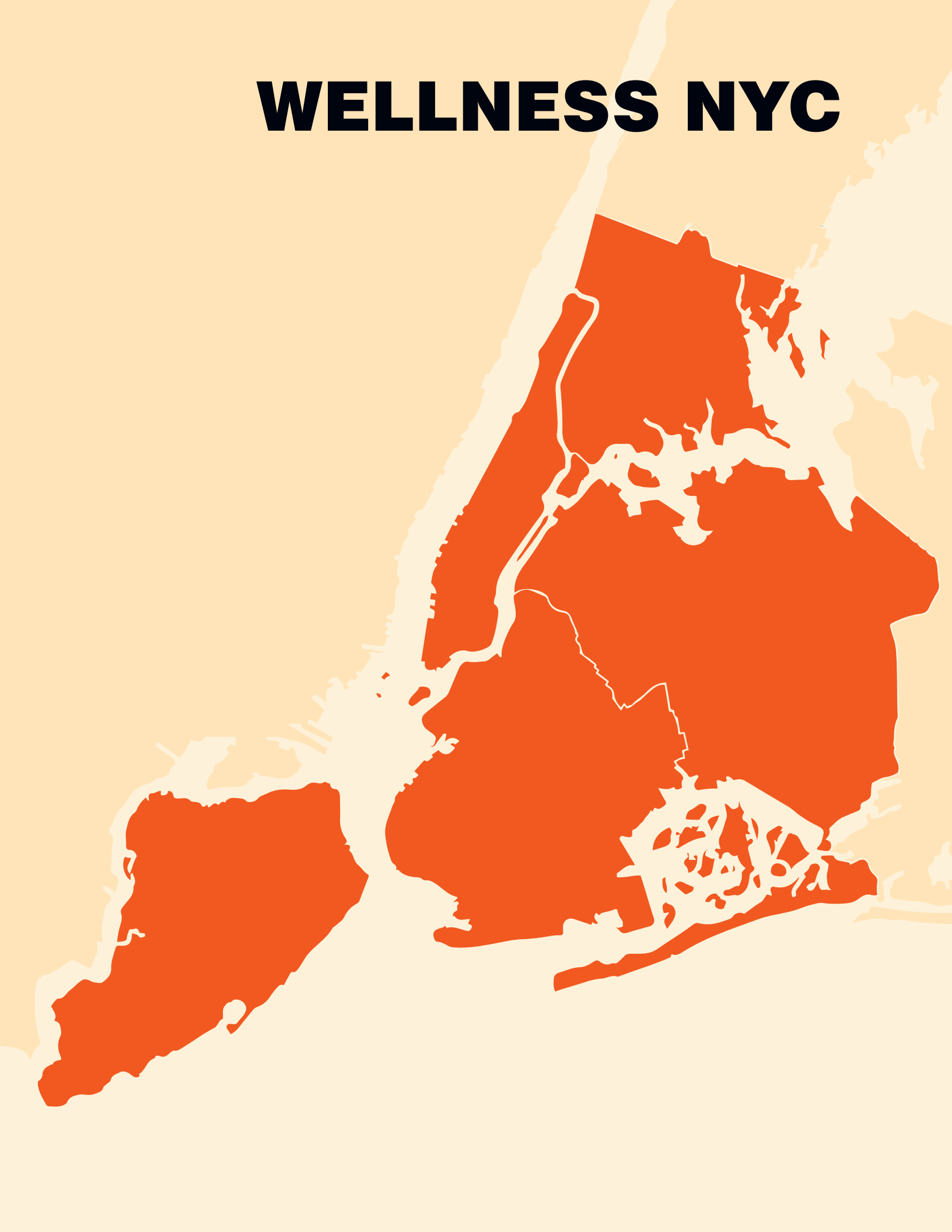
Using a sophisticated analysis to identify areas that lack open space and have a high ratio of children per playground, the City found 290 sites that could greatly benefit from the program. As of November 2012, over $80 million has been invested to build

226 playgrounds since 2007. Last year alone, over 70 new sites were renovated and opened for public use. The open sites have brought an additional 500,000 New Yorkers within a 10-minute walk of a park.

Between 2007 and 2010, more than 800 participatory design meetings across the five boroughs were held to create playgrounds that reflect the unique needs of each community. Students, parents, teachers, and community members became landscape architects for a day and placed templates of amenities like basketball hoops and benches on a base map of the schoolyard. At P.S. 205 in Bensonhurst, for example, the play equipment was designed to accommodate the school's substantial limited mobility population. These before and after photos of P.S. 87 in the Bronx illustrate the wide range of options that can be tailored to community needs.

Ongoing stewardship of these 155 community playgrounds is a vital part of the program. Since the first PlaNYC sites opened in 2009, TPL has held 10 stewardship workshops, awarded 35 schools annual grants of up to $1,500, supplied garden-startup kits to 35 sites, and led environmental education or teacher training workshops at 25 schools.

WELLNESS NYC



This report began by acknowledging that schools play a critical role in student wellness, but that collaborations among parents, community groups, and schools, especially through school wellness councils (SWC), can significantly amplify the effect. A coordinated community effort to teach, model healthy behaviors, and provide health services is a "win" for all New Yorkers. Despite the challenges, there are many success stories, like these:

- One school in Queens is the first public school in the City, perhaps the nation, to serve an all-vegetarian lunch five days a week. The SWC teamed up with SchoolFood and the NY Coalition for Healthy School Food. They formed tasting councils, held parent sample sessions, and hosted a family dinner night to shape the new menu. A majority of school staff in this early childhood school has been trained and use the Move-to-Improve program, becoming one of the first MTI All-Star schools in the City.

- The SWC at an elementary school in the Rockaways, already noteworthy for its strong commitment to physical activity and fundraising for the community, quickly mobilized after Hurricane Sandy to make sure basic needs of students and families were met. SWC members used existing relationships with community based organizations to raise funds for the food bank and distribute food to families in need. They partnered with other schools to receive school supplies, sponsored clothing drives, and even ensured that during the holiday season, each student received a donated gift.

- At a District 75 K-12 school serving students with disabilities, the SWC partnered with Bike NY to target bike safety and cycling as a lifelong fitness activity for students to bolster physical activity and strengthen students' independence.

- Led by the PE teachers and SWC champions at each school, two co-located Bronx elementary schools started "Staff Wellness Fridays," with informal basketball and volleyball games. SWC grants supported a co-ed intramural basketball league for students in grades 4 and 5. The schools asked two additional schools to form a developmental league that emphasized participation, fitness, and sportsmanship.

- An SWC high school re-opening its pool after a number of years turned to an SWC mentor school located on the same campus for expertise and assistance on running an afterschool swimming program.

Wellness possibilities and options are unlimited. The DOE encourages all school communities to discover their possibilities by e-mailing wellness@schools.nyc.gov.

The New York City Department of Education Wellness Policies on Physical Activity and Nutrition

(Originally issued 2006; revised June 2010)

June 2010

Also available online at http://schools.nyc.gov/wellness

INTRODUCTION

Childhood obesity is epidemic throughout the United States, with rates tripling over the past 30 years. New York City is home to an even higher proportion of obese and overweight children than other parts of the country. The importance of this issue cannot be overstated. Childhood obesity has both immediate and long-term health effects. Childhood obesity increases the likelihood of adult obesity, which is associated with heart disease and cancer. Current research also reveals that higher levels of fitness are associated with better academic performance. To read the most recent New York City public school research on childhood obesity and its consequences, go to http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/survey/survey-2009 fitnessgram.pdf.

Public concern about the impact of childhood obesity has risen significantly since DOE published its first Wellness Policies on Physical Activity and Nutrition in 2006. This 2010 update raises the bar for New York City public schools. The policies also align with the Obama administration's goal of ending the childhood obesity epidemic within a generation. Our broad-based approach to wellness includes commonsense strategies, such as making healthier foods available in our schools while increasing opportunities for students to be physically active. Through these efforts, we aim to help students to make healthier choices today and to develop healthy habits that will last a lifetime. We encourage all school community members to review these policies and begin a serious consideration of how wellness can be integrated into daily teaching and learning, as well as extending to students' lives outside school.

First Lady Michelle Obama, who launched the national Let's Move campaign to address childhood obesity, sets expectations this way: "Ultimately, it's going to take all of us—businesses and non-profits; community centers and health centers; teachers and faith leaders; coaches and parents… all working together to help families make commonsense changes so our kids can get, and stay, healthy." The Department of Education invites parents, educators, and community leaders to help make that vision a reality for the 1.1 million children who attend City schools.

BACKGROUND

In the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, the U.S. Congress established a requirement for school districts that participate in federally funded school meal program(s) to develop and implement a wellness policy. The wellness policy must include goals for nutrition education and physical activity, along

with guidelines to promote student health and reduce childhood obesity.

This document outlines the New York City Department of Education's (DOE) wellness policy. This policy is designed to promote the health and well-being of students, while taking into account competing priorities and the availability of funds. The DOE engaged—and continues to engage—students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in policy development and review.

PREAMBLE

The New York City Department of Education is committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, DOE will:

- Support all schools in providing opportunities for physical activity and encouraging all students to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Ensure that food and beverages sold or served at school meet the nutrition recommendations of the U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- Ensure that school meals provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet their health and nutritional needs.
- Participate in available federal school meal programs (including the School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program [including after-school snacks], Summer Food Service Program, Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program, and Child and Adult Care Food Program [including suppers]).
- Provide nutrition education and physical education to foster life-long habits of healthy eating and physical activity. Establish linkages between health education and school meal programs, and related community service agencies.

SPECIFIC POLICIES

1. School Wellness Councils

DOE encourages schools to develop or work with existing school wellness councils to monitor school nutrition and physical activity policies and practices. Councils may include parents, students, representatives of the school food program, school administrators, teachers, health professionals, and members of the public (including cooperating community-based organizations). The council's role is advisory; final responsibility for implementation rests with the principal.

2. Nutritional Quality of SchoolFood Meals

SchoolFood Meals Served in Accordance with the National School Meals Programs

Meals served by SchoolFood through the National School Breakfast (NSB), Lunch (NSL), After-School Snack, and Supper programs will:

- Meet, local, State, and federal requirements for reimbursement.

  Restrict the fat content of meals as follows:
  - Total fat will be limited to 30 percent of the total calories over the course of the week.
  - Saturated fat will be limited to 10 percent of the total calories over the course of the week.
  - Partially hydrogenated oils will be limited in accordance with current dietary guidelines.

Provide limited amounts of sodium and cholesterol. Provide restricted amounts of high fructose corn syrup, with a goal of eliminating high fructose corn syrup from all products.

- Offer and promote the consumption of fresh fruit and a variety of vegetables daily.
- Offer and promote the inclusion of plant-based entrees. Offer three varieties of reduced-fat milk:
  - Low-fat (1%),
  - Fat-free, and
  - Fat-free chocolate milk.

  Exception: Some special populations (i.e. special education) may receive whole milk.

The nutritional content of daily menu items and snacks is available on the SchoolFood website, http://www.opt-osfns.org/osfns.

Program Services

Breakfast - To meet students' nutritional needs and stress the benefits of a healthy breakfast, SchoolFood encourages students to participate in the School Breakfast program.

- Breakfast will continue to be offered at no charge to all NYC public school students.
- A "Grab-and-Go" or breakfast in the classroom option is available to schools seeking alternate ways to provide students with a healthy meal to begin the school day.

Lunch – SchoolFood offers students a varied lunch menu designed to meet nutritional standards.

- SchoolFood works to develop new, healthy items for use in menus.

Menus - New foods and menu items are evaluated to identify healthful and appealing choices by:

- Evaluating items in the SchoolFood test kitchen before use in schools.
- Testing items in selected schools and obtaining feedback from student customers before marketing the product more widely.
- Reviewing likes and dislikes of students based on production records.

Monthly menus are posted in the school dining room and on the SchoolFood website, http://www.opt-osfns.org/osfns.

Foods and Beverages Sold / Served Outside the NSB and NSL Programs (Vending Machines, A La Carte Snacks, School Stores, School-Based Kitchens etc.)

Effective in February 2010, only foods and beverages that meet the Department of Education SchoolFood guidelines may be offered for sale during school hours. The SchoolFood list will not include items prohibited by federal and/or State law.

Information on SchoolFood-approved snack products, ingredients, portion sizes, and other information are available on the SchoolFood website, http://www.opt-osfns.org/osfns.

Standards for Areas Not Accessible to School Children (i.e., Teacher Lounges and Administrative Offices)

Beverage vending machines in administrative offices and teacher-accessible areas (e.g., teachers' lounge and other spaces to which students do not have access) shall comply with the Citywide standards for beverage vending machines for adults, which may be updated from time to time by the City in its sole discretion.

Guidelines for the Sale of Food and Snack Items

SchoolFood's goal is to encourage students to develop

Standards for Areas Accessible to School Children

Elementary and Middle School

Machine Locations	Permitted Products	Calorie Limit	Serving Size Limit
Student-Accessible Areas	Water	N/A	None
	Low-calorie drinks without artificial flavors or colors	10 calories per 8 oz.	None

High School

Machine Locations	Permitted Products	Calorie Limit	Serving Size Limit
Student-Accessible Areas	Water	N/A	None
	Low-calorie drinks without artificial flavors or colors	25 calories per 8 oz.	None

NOTE: *Caffeinated beverages will be allowed in High Schools. Carbonated beverages will be allowed in High Schools and Middle Schools (includes 6-8th and 6-12th grade schools). Carbonated and caffeinated products are not allowed in Elementary Schools (includes K-5th, K-8th and K-12 schools). Aerated (carbonated) beverages can be sold if on the USDA exemption list for carbonated beverages for use in School Meal Programs. The link below lists all beverages which are currently on this list. If a manufacturer believes their product meets the USDA qualifications, they are urged to contact the USDA to be added to this exemption list. http://portal.nysed.gov/portal/page/pref/CNKC/IntDocs/Exemptions%20Under%20the%20Competitive%20Food%20Regulation%20List.pdf*

healthy eating habits by reducing or eliminating the total fat, saturated fat, transfat, cholesterol, and sodium content of snack items. Many popular snack items have been reformulated to meet enhanced nutritional standards.

The Chancellor's Regulation on Competitive Foods (CR A-812) is available at: http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/381F4607-7841-4D28-B7D5-0F30DDB77DFA/78296/A812FINAL.pdf

Approved Items - Only approved foods may be offered for sale to students through vending machines, school stores, and/or school fundraising activities during non-meal hours from the beginning of the school day through 6:00 PM, weekdays, with one exception that is limited to PA/PTA fundraising (Chancellor's Regulation A-812, Section I, Paragraph "H"). Student fundraising sales of approved items will be allowed throughout the school day outside of the *cafeteria (Chancellor's Regulation A-812, Section I, Paragraph"). Approved beverages may be sold all day.*

Note: Snack vending machines may not be used in any schools serving grade levels pre-kindergarten ("PK") through five (5).

Effective February 2010 the nutritional standards for approved snacks and beverages are as follows:

- The maximum level of fat is 35 percent of total calories (nuts and nut butters are exempt)
- Less than 10 percent of calories from saturated fat 0.5 grams of transfat or less
- Less than 35% of calories from sugar (fruit products with no added sugar are exempt)
- Less than 200 total calories Sodium content may not exceed 200 mg per portion
- Grain-based products must contain at least 2 grams of fiber per serving
- Combination products of dried fruit and nuts are exempt from the total fat standard

New items can be proposed for inclusion on the approved snack list by contacting SchoolFood , Food Support Unit, NYC Department of Education, Attn: Ms. Lorraine Burke, 44-36 Vernon Blvd – Room 413, L.I.C., NYC 11101/ telephone: 718-707-4249 email: Lburke@schools.nyc.gov.

Prohibited Items - The following items may not be offered for sale to students through vending machines, school stores, student fundraising, and/or other school fundraising activities from the beginning of the school day through 6:00 PM weekdays:

- Chewing gum
- Candy (including hard candy, jellies, gums, marshmallow candy, fondant, licorice, spun candy, and candy coated popcorn)
- Water ices which do not contain fruit or fruit juices
- Artificial sweeteners

A list of snacks that meet NYC Department of Education criteria is available on the SchoolFood website, http://www.opt-osfns.org/osfns. See Chancellor's Regulation A-812 for further information.

Nutrition Education and Promotion

SchoolFood will work within all NYC Public Schools to develop and maintain effective SchoolFood Partnerships with members of the school community. In Partnership meetings SchoolFood will discuss nutrition-related topics and the food service program at the school. They will provide information on any aspect of the SchoolFood program upon request. SchoolFood will encourage principals to invite students from various classes, the principal or a designee, the parent coordinator, the school nurse, and the SchoolFood manager to participate in Partnership meetings. Partnership members will work together to foster communication between SchoolFood and the school community.

Wellness councils will work with SchoolFood Partnerships to promote and monitor nutritional and physical activity policies and programs in their respective schools. These groups will serve as a resource to the school administration in implementing those policies.

The Office of School Wellness Programs will complement these efforts by addressing nutrition education in professional development trainings for the Department's recommended comprehensive health education curricula, HealthTeacher (for grades K-5) and HealthSmart (for grades 6-12).

Communications with Parents

The DOE encourages schools to support parents'

efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. Schools may offer healthy-eating seminars for parents, send home nutrition information, post nutrition tips on school websites, and provide nutrient analyses of school menus. Schools may 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 school may provide parents with a list of foods that meet the DOE's snack standards and ideas for healthy celebrations/parties, rewards, and fundraising activities. In addition, the school may provide opportunities for parents to share their healthy food practices with others in the school community.

Food as Reward

Teachers should not use foods or beverages, especially those that do not meet SchoolFood nutrition standards (described above), as rewards for academic performance or good behavior.

Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

Daily Physical Education K-12

DOE encourages principals to provide daily physical education (or an alternate schedule that meets New York State requirements) to students in grades K-12, including students with disabilities and/or special health-care needs and those in alternative educational settings. As of 2007-2008, meeting the NYSED requirements for physical education is part of the Principal's Compliance Checklist. To the extent possible, physical education will be taught by a certified physical education teacher or a teacher specializing in physical education. Students should spend at least 50 percent of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

Curriculum – The DOE is committed to the use of a health-related fitness curriculum, such as Physical Best, in all of its schools.

Assessment - DOE has adopted NYC FITNESSGRAM (based on the Cooper Institute's FITNESSGRAM) as its standard method of assessing students' health-related fitness. All schools are expected to incorporate NYC FITNESSGRAM into their physical education program. As of 2007-2008, participation in NYC FITNESSGRAM is part of the Principal's Compliance Checklist. Students and parents receive printed reports of student performance on NYC FITNESSGRAM.

Physical Activity

Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting

For students to receive the nationally-recommended 60 minutes of physical activity per day, they need opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class. Toward that end principals are encouraged to:

- Provide classroom health education that complements 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.
- Provide opportunities for physical activity as part of other subject lessons.

- Have classroom teachers provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

The Office of School Wellness Programs provides ongoing professional development opportunities to train classroom teachers to incorporate physical activity into daily instruction.

Daily Recess - In addition to physical education classroom time, DOE encourages principals to provide elementary school students with at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which time staff encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity and provide appropriate space and equipment. DOE policy states that outdoor play is permitted regardless of temperature so long as weather conditions are appropriate.

Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School – The DOE encourages all elementary, middle, and high schools to offer extracurricular physical activity programs, such as physical activity clubs and intramural programs. All high schools and middle schools are also encouraged to offer interscholastic sports programs. The DOE recommends that schools offer a range of activities that meet the needs, interests, and abilities of all students, including boys, girls, students with disabilities, and students with special health-care needs.

After-school child care and enrichment programs should encourage daily periods of moderate to vigorous physical activity for all participants to the extent possible.

Physical Activity and Punishment - Teachers and other school and community personnel should not use physical activity (e.g., running laps, pushups) or withholding opportunities for physical activity (e.g., recess, physical education) as punishment.

Use of School Facilities Outside of School Hours

Principals are encouraged to allow school spaces and facilities to be available for school-sponsored activities that promote fitness for its students during non-school hours. As circumstances permit, DOE will encourage schools to make these spaces and facilities available to community agencies and organizations offering physical activity and nutrition programs and willing to pay for pass-through custodial and safety costs. School policies concerning safety will apply at all times. Compliance with Chancellor's Regulation D-180 on "Extended Use of School Buildings" is required.

Communications with Parents

DOE encourages schools to provide information aboutphysical education and other school-based physical activities before, during, and after the school day; and support parents' efforts to provide their children with opportunities to be physically active outside school. Such supports can include sharing information about physical activity and physical education through a website, newsletter, or other take-home materials, special events, or physical education homework.

Staff Wellness

The DOE encourages its staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Each principal is encouraged to work with a group of staff to develop, promote, and oversee a

multi-faceted plan to promote staff health and wellness. The plan should outline ways to encourage healthy eating, physical activity, and other elements of a healthy lifestyle.

Monitoring and Policy Review

In each school, the principal or designee will ensure compliance with this wellness policy as well as Chancellor's Regulation A-812 and will report on the school's compliance to the appropriate DOE manager. In addition, SchoolFood and Office of School Wellness Programs will provide the following services:

- SchoolFood will work with the local health department, community advocacy organizations, and the educational community to assess and promote student acceptance of the NSB and NSL programs.
- SchoolFood will continue to use USDA-approved software to monitor compliance of cycle menus and
- snack programs with federal, State, and local nutritional policies and standards.
- Menu items will be randomly collected, analyzed, and evaluated for compliance with SchoolFood specifications.

SchoolFood will continue to participate in the School Meals Initiative at least once every five years or as dictated by the NY State Education Department.

The DOE Central Office of School Wellness Programs, in conjunction with the Office of Compliance Services, will track participation in activities recommended under fitness and physical education guidelines and will provide a report on schools' participation to the Chancellor and the Panel for Educational Policy. The Central Office of School Wellness Programs will provide additional technical assistance and support for schools on increasing their level of participation in activities recommended under fitness and physical education guidelines.

Policy Review

During the 2010-2011 school year, the DOE will develop a detailed report of its existing nutrition and physical activity programs. Data from this report will be used to recommend changes in wellness policies and will serve as a baseline for future efforts. These reports will be triennial and will permit reassessment of the value of existing policies and highlight areas where additional implementation efforts are needed.

Inquiries

Inquiries pertaining to the Wellness Policy should be addressed to:

Office of School Health
42-09 28th Street
Queens, NY 11101
347-396-4629(telephone)
Wellness@schools.nyc.gov

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