

Cortez RE-1 District Wellness Policy and Implementation Strategies

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Cortez RE-1 District Wellness Policy

Wellness Policy

Cortez RE-1 School District (hereto referred to as The District) is committed to the optimal development of every student. The District believes that all students should have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic, developmental, and social success. The District intends to create positive, safe, and health-promoting learning environments at every level, in every setting, throughout the school year.

Research shows that two components, good nutrition and physical activity before, during, and after the school day, are strongly correlated with positive student outcomes, lower absenteeism, as well as better performance on cognitive tasks, higher grades and tests scores.

This policy outlines the District's approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing unhealthy distractions. Specifically, this policy establishes goals and procedures to ensure that:

- Students in the District have access to healthy foods throughout the school day—both through reimbursable school meals and other foods available throughout the school campus—in accordance with Federal and state nutrition standards;
- Students receive quality nutrition education that helps them develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors;
- Students have opportunities to be physically active before, during, and after school;
- Schools engage in nutrition and physical activity promotion and other activities that promote student wellness according to Colorado Department of Education School Law.
- School staff are encouraged and supported to practice healthy nutrition and physical activity behaviors in and out of school;
- The parent community will be informed of healthy eating and physical activity programs and policies creating continuity between school and other settings for students and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits
- The District encourages collaboration and engagement with community partners and organizations on health related issues and policies
- The District establishes a District Wellness Committee (DWC) for management, oversight and evaluation, implementation, communication about, and monitoring of the policy and its established goals and objectives.

Summary

The Cortez RE-1 District is committed to students having access to healthy foods throughout the school day, provides quality nutrition education from a variety of sources, encourages students to be physically active before, during and after school to promote student wellness according to Colorado Department of Education School Law. The District strives to incorporate national best practices for student health and wellness through a variety of programs as well as engagement and collaboration with outside agencies, organizations, parents and the community at large.

This policy applies to all students, staff, and schools in the District.

I. Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability, and Community Engagement

District Wellness Committee Role and Membership

The District will convene a representative district wellness committee (hereto referred to as the DWC) that meets three times per year to establish goals for and oversee school health and safety policies and programs, including development, implementation, and periodic review and update of this district-level wellness policy (heretofore referred as “wellness policy”).

The DWC membership will represent all school levels (elementary and secondary schools) and include (to the extent possible), but not be limited to: parents, students; school nurses or school health professionals, physical education or health education teachers, school administrators, Nutrition Services Director and community health related organizations. To the extent possible, the DWC will reflect the diversity of the community.

Leadership

The Superintendent or designee(s) will convene the DWC and facilitate development of and updates to the wellness policy, and will ensure each school’s compliance with the policy.

Name	Title	Email address	Role
Sandi VanHoutean	Nutrition Services Director for RE-1	svanhoutean@cortez.k12.co.us	
Kelly Proctor	Pinon Project	kproctor@pinonproject.org	
Donetta Dehart	Principal, Manauh	Ddehart@cortez.k12.co.us	
Shamai Buckel	Wellness Coordinator, Kiva	Shamai.buckel@gmail.com	
JoDee Powers	LiveWell Montezuma	lwmontezuma@gmail.com	
Susan Ciccica	District Wellness School Nurse	sciccica@cortez12.co.us	
Sarah Merlino	Physical Education teacher	smerlino@cortez12.co.us	
Monica Palmquist	Community Health Organizer	Monica.montezumacho@gmail.com	
Danyel Mezzanatto	Garden Coordinator Montezuma School to Farm Project	cortezelementaryschoolgardens@gmail.com	

All schools will be encouraged to designate a school wellness policy coordinator, who will help with the coordination and compliance of this policy.

Implementation Plan

The District will maintain a plan for implementation to manage and coordinate the execution of this wellness policy. The District plan delineates roles, responsibilities, actions, and timelines and other school-based activities that promote student wellness. The DWC will generate an annual progress report to be presented to the Nutrition Services Director, Superintendent and the School Board.

This wellness policy and all progress reports can be found electronically on the District’s website at: www.cortez.k12.co.us. Directions to finding the wellness policy can also be found in each school’s student handbook.

Recordkeeping

The District will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of the wellness policy on the Nutrition Services Director’s computer. Documentation maintained in this location will include but will not be limited to:

- The written wellness policy
- Documentation demonstrating compliance with community involvement requirements
- Documentation of annual policy progress reports for the District
- Documentation of the triennial assessment* of the policy for the District
- Documentation demonstrating compliance with public notification requirements, including: (1) Methods by which the wellness policy, annual progress reports, and triennial assessments are made available to the public; and (2) Efforts to actively notify families about the availability of wellness policy.

Annual Progress Reports

The District will compile and publish an annual report to share basic information about the wellness policy and report on the progress of the district in meeting wellness goals. This annual report will be published around the same time each year March and will include information from schools within the District. This report will include, but is not limited to:

- The website address for the wellness policy and/or how the public can receive/access a copy of the wellness policy;
- A summary of school events, celebrations or activities related to wellness policy implementation, goals and objectives
- The name, position title, and contact information of the designated District policy leader(s) identified in Section I; and
- Information on how individuals and the public can get involved with the DWC.

The annual report will be available at www.cortez.k12.co.us. The District will actively notify households/families of the availability of the annual report.

Triennial Progress Assessments

At least once every three years, the District will evaluate compliance with the wellness policy to assess the implementation of the policy and include:

- The extent to which schools under the jurisdiction of the District are in compliance with the wellness policy;
- The extent to which the District's wellness policy compares to national best practices for school health and wellness
- A description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the District's wellness policy.

The DWC is responsible for managing the triennial assessment. The District will actively notify households/families of the availability of the triennial progress report.

Revisions and Updating the Policy

The DWC will update or modify the wellness policy based on the results of the annual progress reports and triennial assessments, and/or as District priorities change; community needs change; wellness goals are met; new health science, information, and technology emerges; and new Federal or state guidance or standards are issued. **The wellness policy will be assessed and updated as indicated at least every three years, following the triennial assessment.**

Community Involvement, Outreach, and Communications

The District is committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of the wellness policy. The District will actively communicate ways in which representatives of DWC and others can participate in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the wellness policy through a variety of means appropriate for the Cortez RE-1 District. The District will also inform parents of the improvements that have been made to school meals and compliance with school meal standards, availability of child nutrition programs and how to apply, and a description of and compliance with Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. The District will use electronic mechanisms, as well as non-electronic mechanisms, to ensure that all families are actively notified of the content of, implementation of, and updates to the wellness policy. The District will ensure that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community.

The District will actively notify the public about the content of or any updates to the wellness policy annually, at a minimum. The District will also use these mechanisms to inform the community about the availability of the annual and triennial reports.

II. Nutrition

School Meals

Our school district is committed to serving healthy meals to children, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat milk; moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and zero grams *trans* fat per serving (nutrition label or manufacturer's specification); and to meet the nutrition needs of school children within their calorie requirements. 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.

All schools within the District participate in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Breakfast after the Bell (BAB) and *Special Milk Program (SMP)*. The District supports additional nutrition-related programs and activities including Farm to School, Montezuma School to Farm Project (MSTFP) and all school

gardens. All schools within the District are committed to offering school meals through the NSLP and School Breakfast Programs, and other applicable Federal child nutrition programs, that:

- Are accessible to all students;
- Are appealing and attractive to children;
- Are served in clean and pleasant settings;
- Meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established by local, state, and Federal statutes and regulations. (The District offers reimbursable school meals that meet [USDA nutrition standards](#).)
- Promote healthy food and beverage choices using the following [Smarter Lunchroom techniques](#):
 - Whole fruit options are attractively displayed on the fruit and vegetable salad bars
 - Sliced or cut fruit is available daily
 - Daily fruit options are displayed in a location in the line of sight and reach of students
 - All available vegetable options have been given creative or descriptive names
 - All staff members, especially those serving, have been trained to politely prompt students to select and consume the daily vegetable options with their meal
 - White milk is placed in front of other beverages in all coolers
 - Informal student surveys and taste testing opportunities are used to inform menu development, dining space decor, and promotional ideas
 - School announcements will be used to promote and highlight local and seasonal food options

Additionally:

- *Menus will be posted on the District website*
- *School meals are administered by a team of child nutrition professionals*
- *The District child nutrition program will accommodate students with special dietary needs*
- *Students will be allowed at least 10 minutes to eat breakfast and at least 20 minutes to eat lunch, counting from the time they have received their meal and are seated. Students are served lunch at a reasonable and appropriate time of day.*
- *Participation in Federal child nutrition programs will be promoted among students and families to help ensure that families know what programs are available in their children's school.*
- *The District will continue to support the following Farm to School activities:*
 - *Local and/or regional products are incorporated into the school meal program through annual participation by the Nutrition Services Director in the regional farm to school bidding process*
 - *Messages about nutrition are reinforced throughout the learning environment*
 - *School hosts a school garden with Seed to Table Curriculum through Montezuma School to Farm Project;*
 - *School hosts field trips to local farms*
 - *Schools utilize promotions or special events, such as Colorado Proud Day, National Farm to School Month and taste testings, that highlight the school garden and local/ regional products.*

Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

All school nutrition program directors, managers, and staff will meet or exceed hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements in the [USDA professional standards for child nutrition professionals](#). These school nutrition personnel will refer to [USDA's Professional Standards for School Nutrition Standards website](#) to search for training that meets their learning needs.

Water

To promote hydration, free, safe, unflavored drinking water will be available to all students throughout the school day* and throughout every school campus* (“school campus” and “school day” are defined in the glossary). The District will make drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes. Additionally, students will be allowed to bring and carry (approved) water bottles filled with only water with them throughout the day. All water sources and containers will be maintained on a regular basis to ensure good hygiene standards. Such sources and containers may include drinking fountains, water jugs, hydration stations, water jets, and other methods for delivering drinking water

Competitive Foods and Beverages

The District is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages available to students on the school campus* during the school day* support healthy eating. The foods and beverages sold and served outside of the school meal programs (i.e., “competitive” foods and beverages) will meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, at a minimum. Smart Snacks aim to improve student health and well-being, increase consumption of healthful foods during the school day, and create an environment that reinforces the development of healthy eating habits. A summary of the standards and information are available at:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/tools-schools-smart-snacks>.

To support healthy food choices and improve student health and well-being, all foods and beverages outside the reimbursable school meal programs that are sold to students on the school campus during the school day will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks nutrition standards. These standards will apply in all locations and through all services where foods and beverages are sold, which may include, but are not limited to, a la carte options in cafeterias, vending machines, school stores, and snack or food carts.

Celebrations and Rewards

Healthy food options will be encouraged in all school settings.

1. Celebrations and parties: The DWC will provide a list of healthy party ideas for parents and teachers, including non-food celebration ideas.
2. Classroom snacks brought by parents: The DWC will provide for parents a [list of foods and beverages that meet Smart Snacks](#) nutrition standards
3. Rewards and incentives. The District will encourage teachers and other relevant school staff to use alternative ways of rewarding students. The use of foods and beverages as a reward, or withheld as punishment for any reason, such as for performance or behavior are discouraged.

Fundraising

Foods and beverages that meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in Schools nutrition standards may be sold through fundraisers on the school campus during the school day.

Schools will encourage non-food fundraisers, and encourage those promoting physical activity (such as walk-a-thons, jump rope for heart, fun runs, etc.).

Nutrition Promotion

Nutrition promotion and education positively influence lifelong eating behaviors by using evidence-based techniques and nutrition messages and by creating food environments that encourage healthy nutrition choices and encourage participation in school meal programs. Students and staff will receive consistent nutrition messages, along with garden based curriculum throughout schools, classrooms, gymnasiums, and cafeterias.

Nutrition Education

The District aims to teach, model, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Schools will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- Is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
- Is part of not only health education classes, but also integrated into other classroom instruction through subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subject. This is achieved through garden-based curriculum delivered by the Montezuma School to Farm Project.
- Include enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, and participatory activities, such as cooking demonstrations or lessons, promotions, taste-testing, farm visits, and school gardens;
- Promote fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, and healthy food preparation methods;
- Link with school meal programs, cafeteria nutrition promotion activities, school gardens, Farm to School programs, other school foods, and nutrition-related community services;
- Teach media literacy with an emphasis on food and beverage marketing; and
- Include nutrition education training for teachers and other staff.
- The Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- Reducing sodium and sugar intake
- Social influences on healthy eating, including media, family, peers, and culture
- How to find valid information or services related to nutrition and dietary behavior
- How to develop a plan and track progress toward achieving a personal goal to eat healthfully
- Resisting peer pressure related to unhealthy dietary behavior
- Influencing, supporting, or advocating for others' healthy dietary behavior

Food and Beverage Marketing in Schools

The District is committed to providing a school environment that ensures opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. The District strives to teach students how to make informed choices about nutrition, health, and physical activity. It is the intent of the District to protect and promote student's health by permitting advertising and marketing for only those foods and beverages that are permitted to be sold on the school campus, consistent with the District's wellness policy.

Food advertising and marketing is defined as an oral, written, or graphic statements made for the purpose of promoting 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. This term includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Advertisements in school publications or school mailings.
- Free product samples, taste tests, or coupons of a product, or free samples displaying advertising of a product.

III. Physical Activity

Children and adolescents should participate in 60 minutes of physical activity every day. A substantial percentage of students' physical activity can be provided through a comprehensive, school-based physical activity program (CSPAP) that includes these components: physical education, recess, classroom-based physical activity, walk and bicycle to school, and out-of-school time activities. The district is committed to providing these opportunities. Schools will ensure that these varied opportunities are in addition to, and not as a substitute for, physical education (addressed in "Physical Education" subsection).

Physical activity during the school day (including but not limited to recess, physical activity breaks, or physical education) **will not be withheld** as punishment for any reason. The DWC will provide teachers and other school staff with a list of ideas for alternative ways to discipline students.

To the extent practicable, the District will ensure that its grounds and facilities are safe and that equipment is available to students to be active. The District will conduct necessary inspections and repairs. The District will encourage the following:

- *Through a formal, joint or shared use agreements indoor and outdoor physical activity facilities will be open to students, their families, and the community outside of school hours*
- *The District will work with schools to ensure that inventories of physical activity supplies are known and, when necessary, will work with community partners to ensure sufficient quantities of equipment are available to encourage activity for as many students as possible.*

Physical Education

The District will provide students with physical education, using an age-appropriate, sequential physical education curriculum consistent with national and state standards for physical education. The physical education curriculum will promote the benefits of a physically active lifestyle and will help students develop skills to engage in lifelong healthy habits, as well as incorporate essential health education concepts.

All students will be provided equal opportunity to participate in physical education classes. The District will make appropriate accommodations to allow for equitable participation for all students and will adapt physical education classes and equipment as necessary.

As per State of Colorado requirements, all District **elementary students** in each grade will receive physical education for at least 60-89 minutes per week throughout the school year.

All District **secondary students** (middle and high school) are required to take the equivalent of one academic year of physical education.

The District physical education program will promote student physical fitness through individualized fitness and activity assessments via the Presidential Youth Fitness Program or other appropriate assessment tools. The District encourages the following:

- *Students will be moderately to vigorously active for at least 50% of class time during most or all physical education class sessions*
- *All physical education teachers in the District will be required to participate in at least once a year professional development in education*
- *All physical education classes in the District are taught by licensed teachers who are certified or endorsed to teach physical education*
- *Waivers, exemptions, or substitutions for physical education classes are not granted without a note from a licensed physician*

Essential Physical Activity Topics in Health Education

The District will include in the health education curriculum the following essential topics on physical activity:

- The physical, psychological, or social benefits of physical activity
- How physical activity can contribute to a healthy weight
- How physical activity can contribute to the academic learning process
- How an inactive lifestyle contributes to chronic disease
- Health-related fitness, that is, cardiovascular endurance, muscular endurance, muscular strength, flexibility, and body composition
- Differences between physical activity, exercise, and fitness
- Phases of an exercise session, that is, warm up, workout, and cool down
- Overcoming barriers to physical activity
- Decreasing sedentary activities
- Opportunities for physical activity in the community
- Preventing injury during physical activity
- Weather-related safety, for example, avoiding heat stroke, hypothermia, and sunburn while being physically active
- How much physical activity is enough, that is, determining frequency, intensity, time, and type of physical activity
- Developing an individualized physical activity and fitness plan
- Monitoring progress toward reaching goals in an individualized physical activity plan
- Dangers of using performance-enhancing drugs, such as steroids
- Social influences on physical activity, including media, family, peers, and culture
- How to find valid information or services related to physical activity and fitness
- How to influence, support, or advocate for others to engage in physical activity
- How to resist peer pressure that discourages physical activity

Recess (Elementary)

All elementary schools will offer at least **20 minutes of recess** on all or most days during the school year. If recess is offered before lunch, schools will have appropriate hand-washing facilities and/or hand-sanitizing mechanisms located just inside/outside the cafeteria to ensure proper hygiene prior to eating and students are required to use these mechanisms before eating. Hand-washing time, as well as time to put away coats/hats/gloves, will be built in to the recess transition period/timeframe before students enter the cafeteria.

Outdoor recess will be offered when weather is feasible for outdoor play. Staff will utilize District Temperature Guidelines to assess when outdoor recess/play should be restricted.

In the event that the school or district must conduct **indoor recess**, teachers and staff will follow the indoor recess guidelines that promote physical activity for students, to the extent practicable.

Recess will complement, not substitute, physical education class. Recess monitors or teachers will encourage students to be active, and will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

Physical Activity Breaks and Active Academics with Kinesthetic Learning, (Elementary and Secondary)

The District recognizes that students are more attentive and ready to learn if provided with periodic breaks when they can be physically active or stretch. Thus, students will be offered **periodic opportunities** to be active or to stretch throughout the day on all or most days during a typical school week. The District recommends teachers provide short (3-5 minute) physical activity breaks to students during and between classroom time. These physical activity breaks will complement, not substitute, for physical education class, recess, and class transition periods.

The DWC will provide each school with resources and links to resources, tools, and technology with ideas for physical activity breaks.

Before and After School Activities

The District offers opportunities for students to participate in physical activity either before and/or after the school day (or both) through a variety of methods. The District will encourage students to be physically active before and after school by participation in clubs, physical activity in aftercare, intramurals, varsity and school sports.

Active Transport

The District will support active transport to and from school, such as walking or biking. The District will encourage this behavior by engaging in *six or more* of the activities below; including but not limited to:

- Designation of safe or preferred routes to school
- Promotional activities such as participation in International Walk to School Week
- Secure storage facilities for bicycles and helmets (e.g., shed, cage, fenced area)
- Instruction on walking/bicycling safety provided to students
- Encourage and promote safe routes programs to students, staff, and parents
- Crossing guards are used
- Crosswalks exist on streets leading to schools
- The DWC will utilize documentation of number of children walking and or biking to and from school to assist in evaluation for annual assessments

IV. Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness

The District will integrate wellness activities across the entire school setting, not just in the cafeteria, other food and beverage venues, and physical activity facilities. Schools in the District are encouraged to coordinate content across curricular areas that promote social, emotional, mental and physical student health.

All efforts related to obtaining federal, state, or association recognition for efforts, or grants/funding opportunities for healthy school environments will be coordinated with and

complementary of the wellness policy, including but not limited to ensuring the involvement of the DWC.

Community Partnerships

The District will continue relationships with community partners in support of this wellness policy's implementation.

Staff Wellness and Health Promotion

The District will encourage the implementation of strategies to support staff in actively promoting and modeling healthy eating and physical activity behaviors. The DWC will provide examples of strategies schools will use, as well as specific actions staff members can take. The District promotes staff member participation in health promotion programs and will support programs for staff members on healthy eating/weight management that are accessible that may include:

- *Utilization of health monitoring devices and promotion tools*
- *Fun Runs*
- *Healthy snacks at staff meetings and events*

Professional Learning

When feasible, the District staff and teachers will take advantage of professional learning opportunities and resources to increase knowledge and skills about promoting healthy behaviors in the classroom and school (e.g., working with Montezuma Farm to School Staff on integration of seed to table curriculum into class activities).

