Student and Staff Health and Wellness

Rio Rancho Public Schools believes that good health habits foster benefits for children and adults that last a lifetime, as well as creating an optimum environment for effective teaching and learning. In accordance with this philosophy and with the direction provided in New Mexico Public Education Department Wellness Policy rule 6.12.6.6. NMAC and the requirements of Public Law 108-265, the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, the district establishes the following policies relating to health, wellness, and nutrition:

1) Definitions:

   A) “A la carte” in the context of this policy and the state nutrition regulations means a beverage or food product sold in schools to students during the lunch period that is not part of the United States Department of Agriculture school meal program.

   B) “Competitive food” means a food or beverage sold at school other than one served as part of the United States Department of Agriculture school meal program. The term includes any item sold in vending machines, a la carte or through other school fundraising efforts.

   C) “Coordinated school health approach” means the framework for linking health and education. The focus is healthy and successful students. There are eight interactive components of coordinated school health: health education; physical education and activity; nutrition; social and emotional well-being; healthy and safe environment; health services; staff wellness; and family, school and community involvement.

   D) “Family, school and community involvement” means an integrated family, school and community approach for enhancing the health and well-being of students accomplished through the establishment of a district school health advisory council with the responsibility for making recommendations to the school board in the development or revision, implementation, and evaluation of the wellness policy.

   E) “Fund raisers” means beverage or food products sold to raise money that are not sold in vending machines or a la carte sales as defined in 1) A), or as part of the United States Department of Agriculture school meal program.

   F) “Health education” means the instructional program that provides the opportunity to motivate and assist all students to maintain and improve their health, prevent disease, and reduce health-related risk behaviors. The health education program will allow students to develop and demonstrate increasingly sophisticated health-related knowledge, attitudes, skills, and practices and meet the content standards with benchmarks and performance standards as set forth in 6.30.2.19 NMAC.
G) “Health services” means services provided for students to appraise, protect, and promote health. These services are designed to ensure access or referral to primary health care or behavioral health services or both, foster appropriate use of primary health care services, behavioral health services, prevent and control communicable diseases and other health problems, provide emergency care for illness or injury, promote and provide optimum sanitary conditions for a safe school facility and school environment, and provide educational and counseling opportunities for promoting and maintaining individual, family, and community health.

H) “Healthy and safe environment” means the physical and aesthetic surroundings and the psychosocial climate and culture of the school. It supports a total learning experience that promotes personal growth, healthy interpersonal relationships, wellness, and freedom from discrimination and abuse.

I) “Nutrition” means programs that provide access to a variety of nutritious and appealing meals and snacks that accommodate the health and nutrition needs of all students.

J) “Physical activity” means body movement of any type, including recreational, fitness, and sport activities.

K) “Physical education” means the instructional program that provides cognitive content and learning experiences in a variety of activity areas. It provides the opportunity for all students to learn and develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to personally decide to participate in a lifetime of healthful physical activity. It meets the content standards with benchmarks and performance standards as set forth in Section 6.30.2.20 NMAC. 6.12.6 NMAC.

L) “Social and emotional wellbeing” means services provided to maintain and/or improve students’ mental, emotional, behavioral, and social health.

M) “Staff wellness” means opportunities for school staff to improve their health status through activities such as health assessments, health education and health-related fitness activities. These opportunities encourage school staff to pursue a healthy lifestyle that contributes to their improved health status, improved morale, and a greater personal commitment to the school's overall coordinated school health approach.

N) “Vended beverages and foods” means a beverage or food product sold in vending machines to students in schools.

O) Emergency Operation Plan (EOP) means the document which outlines and explains function, resources and coordination procedures for responding to and supporting crisis, emergency, terrorist-response, and disaster operations, and is that portion of a safe school plan that details risk assessment and establishes the plans or procedures to manage a crisis.
2) **Family, school and community involvement**

The goal of family, school and community involvement within a coordinated school health approach is to create a total school environment conducive to student health and academic achievement. Shared responsibility and effective partnerships among families, schools and communities support the development and maintenance of this comprehensive learning environment.

A) In accordance with Public Education Department rule 6.12.6.6 NMAC, Rio Rancho Public Schools shall establish a School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) that consists of parent(s), school food authority personnel, school board member(s), school administrator(s), school staff; student(s); and community member(s). It shall be the responsibility of the Superintendent or designee to appoint the members of the SHAC in accordance with federal and state requirements.

The SHAC will have the responsibility to make recommendations to the local school board in the development or revision, implementation, and evaluation of the wellness policy consistent with this rule and will meet for this purpose a minimum of two times annually.

3) **Physical education**

Physical education is an instructional program taught by a certified physical educator. Physical education is one source, but should not be the only source of physical activity.

A) Rio Rancho Public Schools shall offer a planned, sequential K-12 physical education curriculum aligned to the physical education content standards with benchmarks and performance standards as set forth in 6.30.2.20 NMAC. Activities shall be based on goals and objectives that are appropriate for all children.

4) **Physical activity**

Physical activity covers a broad spectrum of opportunities for students to move and exercise their brains and bodies outside of the physical education curriculum. These may include but are not limited to integration of movement into core courses in classrooms to provision of sports, fitness, and recreational activities before and after school.

A) Students shall be provided with opportunities to engage in moderate to vigorous physical activity before, during and/or after school. The district shall create guidelines to provide such physical activity opportunities to students in addition to those provided through physical education classes.

B) All schools will provide education on the health benefits of physical activity that align with the New Mexico health education content standards, benchmarks, and performance standards as set forth in 6.30.2.19 NMAC.
5) Nutrition

Definition:
Nutrition means programs that provide access to a variety of nutritious and appealing meals that accommodate the health and nutrition needs of all students.

A) Rio Rancho schools shall promote the role of nutrition in academic performance and quality of life and will adhere to or exceed the nutrition guidelines set forth in 6.12.5.8. NMAC, to include:

i) Nutrition guidelines for a la carte offerings that meet or exceed the minimum guidelines set forth in Subsection B of 6.12.5.8 NMAC.

ii) Guidelines for school sponsored fund raisers during the normal school hours that meet or exceed the minimum guidelines set forth in Paragraph (1) of Subsection C of 6.12.5.8 NMAC.

iii) Guidelines for school sponsored fund raisers before and after school hours ensuring that at least 50% of the offerings shall be healthy choices in accordance with the requirements set forth in Paragraph (2) of Subsection C of 6.12.5.8 NMAC.

B) All schools will provide nutrition education activities that align with the New Mexico health education content standards, benchmarks, and performance standards as set forth in 6.30.2.19 NMAC.

C) School Meals:

Our school district is committed to serving healthy meals to children, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free, flavored, and low-fat, non-flavored 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.

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 meals and are seated. Students are served lunch at a reasonable and appropriate time of day. Lunch will follow the recess period to better support learning and healthy eating. 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.
D) Water:

To promote hydration, free, safe, unflavored drinking water will be available to all students throughout the school day and throughout every school campus. The District will make drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes.

E) 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.

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.

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 throughout schools, classrooms, gymnasiums, and cafeterias.

Nutrition promotion also includes marketing and advertising nutritious foods and beverages to students and is most effective when implemented consistently through a comprehensive and multi-channel approach by school staff and teachers, parents, students, and the community. The District will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students throughout the school campus, as well as encourage participation in school meal programs.

F) Nutrition Education

Nutrition Education aims to teach, encourage and support healthy eating. Nutrition Education and healthy eating inspire proper physical growth, physical activity, brain development, learning ability, emotional balance, a sense of well-being, obesity prevention and ability to develop disease resistance.

The District will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

i) Are designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
ii) Are 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 subjects;

iii) Include enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, and participatory activities, such as cooking demonstrations or lessons, promotions, taste testing, farm visits, and school gardens;

iv) Promote fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, and healthy food preparation methods;

v) Emphasize caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (promote physical activity/exercise);

vi) Link with school meal programs, cafeteria nutrition promotion activities, school gardens, Farm to School programs, other school foods, and nutrition-related community services;

vii) Teach media literacy with an emphasis on food and beverage marketing; and

viii) Include nutrition education training for teachers and other staff.

6) Health Education

A) Rio Rancho schools will provide a planned, sequential, K-12 health education curriculum that addresses the physical, mental, emotional and social dimensions of health and is aligned with the health education content standards with benchmarks and performance standards as set forth in 6.30.2.19 NMAC. The curriculum will provide the mechanism to help students acquire life skills that promote personal, family, community, consumer, and environmental health.

B) All schools will provide activities in comprehensive health education that align with the New Mexico health education content standards, benchmarks, and performance standards as set forth in 6.30.2.19 NMAC and federal NCLB requirements.

C) Parents or guardians may request an exemption from the parts of the health education curriculum that address the sexuality performance standards.

   i) Parents or guardians will be provided with a permission form including the course of study and the sexual content of the classes to be provided. If the parent or guardian does not sign the permission form, their child will be given alternate lessons to be determined by the district.

D) Schools shall provide age-appropriate instruction about HIV and related issues in the curriculum of the required health education content area to all students in the elementary grades, in the middle/junior high school grades, and in the senior high school grades as set forth in 6.12.2.10.C NMAC.

7) Healthy and Safe Environment

A healthy and safe school environment is vital to academic achievement and includes both the physical and aesthetic surroundings of the school and the creation of a climate and culture before, during, and after school that promotes personal growth, healthy interpersonal relationships, and respect for all members of the school community.
A) All Rio Rancho schools will develop and regularly review school safety plans that meet state requirements. These plans must include prevention strategies, policies and procedures in line with federal and state law and board policy, and emergency response plans.

B) All schools will comply with state law requiring that a minimum of 12 emergency drills will be conducted each year. These drills must include nine fire drills, two shelter-in-place drills, and one evacuation drill (which may be conducted as a tabletop exercise) at the intervals described in subsection M of 6.30.2.10 NMAC.

8) Social and Emotional Well-Being

A safe and healthy school environment where all students are effective learners requires creating a respectful and nurturing climate where students’ mental, emotional, behavioral, and social health needs are supported and, as necessary, improved.

A) Rio Rancho Public Schools shall develop and maintain plans addressing the behavioral health needs of all students in the educational process. Where possible, the district will collaborate with community agencies to provide services and promote strategies that maintain and/or improve students’ social and emotional well-being.

9) Health Services

Rio Rancho Public Schools is committed to providing health services through its schools that are appropriate to the school setting and that meet the needs of students in the educational process.

A) Rio Rancho Public Schools shall develop and maintain plans providing for health services that meet the needs of all students in the educational process. Such services shall be defined, coordinated, and evaluated through the district’s Health Services Plan.

B) School personnel will meet all federal and state reporting, record-keeping and confidentiality requirements.

10) Staff Wellness

Staff wellness activities are designed to promote the physical, emotional and mental health of school employees as well as to prevent disease and disability. A staff wellness program allows the staff to learn and practice skills to make personal decisions about health-enhancing daily habits.

A) RRPS’s staff wellness plan will address the staff wellness needs of all school and district employees that minimally insures an equitable work environment and meets the Americans with Disabilities Act, Part III.
B) Employees will be provided with opportunities to learn and participate in strategies supporting a healthy lifestyle.

11) 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. The District will coordinate and integrate other initiatives related to physical activity, physical education, nutrition, and other wellness components, so all efforts are complementary, not duplicative, and work towards the same set of goals and objectives promoting student wellbeing, optimal development, and strong educational outcomes.

12) Schools in the District are encouraged to coordinate content across curricular areas that promotes student health, such as teaching nutrition concepts in mathematics, with consultation provided by either the school or the District’s curriculum experts. All efforts related to obtaining federal, state, or association recognition 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 SHAC.

13) Evaluation

A) District health and wellness plans for family/school/community involvement, physical activity, nutrition, health education, physical education, healthy and safe environment, health services, social and emotional well-being, and staff wellness will include measurable targets and benchmarks for evaluating the implementation of the policy.

B) As per the provisions of rule 6.12.6.6. NMAC, one or more persons shall be delegated operational responsibility for ensuring that each school in the district is in compliance with this policy.

C) The SHAC will provide an annual progress report to the board.

Related policies: 210, 222, 223, 224, 356, 357, 369, 445, 465, 530, 542, 543, 550

Procedural appendices:
A. Family, School, and Community Involvement Plan
B. Physical Education Plan
C. Physical Activity Plan
D. Nutrition Plan
E. Health Education Plan
F. Healthy/Safe Environment Plan
G. Health Services Plan
H. Social and Emotional Well Being Plan
I. Staff Wellness Plan
J. Evaluation Plan