

George I. Sanchez Charter School District

Wellness Policy



George I. Sanchez Charter School – Main Campus

6001 Gulf Freeway, Building E, Houston, TX 77023

George I. Sanchez Charter School – North Campus

215 Rittenhouse, Houston, TX 77076

George I. Sanchez Charter School District

Wellness Policy

Preamble

George I. Sanchez Charter School District is committed to the optimal development of every student. The district believes that for students to have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic developmental and social success, we need to create a positive, safe and health promoting learning environments throughout the school year.

Studies have demonstrated that nutrition affects students thinking skills, behavior, and health, all factors that impact academic performance. Research suggests that diets high in trans and saturated fats can negatively impact learning and memory, nutritional deficiencies early in life can affect the cognitive development of school-aged children and access to nutrition improves student's cognition, concentration, and energy levels.

Nutrition also indirectly impacts school performance. Poor nutrition can leave students susceptible to illness or lead to headaches and stomachaches, resulting in school absences.

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.

George I. Sanchez School District 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 activities.

This policy establishes goals and procedures to ensure that:

- Students in the district have access to healthy foods throughout the school day, which includes breakfast, lunch and after school activity snacks.
- 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.
- School staff are encouraged and supported to practice healthy nutrition and physical activity.
- The district establishes and maintains an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about and monitoring of the policy and its established goals and objectives.

To Achieve these policy goals:

I. School Wellness Committee

The school district will create, strengthen, or work within existing school health councils to develop, implement, monitor, review and revise school and physical activity policies as necessary. The committee also will serve as resources to school sites for implementing those policies.

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

The district will develop and maintain a plan for implementation to manage and coordinate the execution of this wellness policy. The plan delineates roles, responsibilities, actions and timelines specific to each school; and includes information about who will be responsible to make what change, by how much, where and when; as well as specific goals and objectives for nutrition standards for all foods and beverages available on the school campus, food and beverage marketing, nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, physical education and other school-based activities that promote student wellness.

This wellness policy and the progress reports can be found at: www.aama.org/gis/.org

Recordkeeping

The district will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of the wellness policy. Documentation maintained in this location will include but will not be limited to:

- The written wellness policy.
- Documentation demonstrating that the policy has been made available to the public.
- Documentation of efforts to review and update the Local Schools Wellness Policy.
- Documentation to demonstrate compliance with the annual public notification requirements.
- The most recent assessment on the implementation of the local school wellness policy.
- Documentation demonstrating the most recent assessment on the implementation of the Local School Wellness Policy has been made available to the public.

Annual Notification of Policy

The district will actively inform families and the public each year of basic information about this policy, including its content, any updates to the policy and implementation status. The district will make this information available via the district website and/or district-wide communications. The district will provide as much information as possible about the school nutrition environment.

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 the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's model wellness policy.
- A description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the district's wellness policy.

The position/person responsible for managing the triennial assessment and contact information is, **Yesenia Aguirre, child nutrition director (713) 929-2315.**

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 that 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, such as email or displaying notices on the district's website, as well as non-electronic mechanisms, such as newsletters, presentations to parents, or sending information home to parents, to ensure that all families are actively notified of the content of, implementation of, and updates to the wellness policy, as well as how to get involved and support the policy. The district will ensure that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community and accomplished through means similar to other ways that the district and individual schools are communicating important school information with parents.

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.

III. Nutrition

School Meals

Our school district is committed to serving healthy meals to children, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, fat-free and low-fat milk; that are moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and have zero grams *trans* fat per serving (nutrition label or manufacturer's specification); and to meeting 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), the School Breakfast Program (SBP), and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) Breakfast and Lunch. The district also operates additional nutrition-related programs and activities including Breakfast in the classroom.

All schools within the District are committed to offering school meals through the NSLP and SBP 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 at least ten of the following [Smarter Lunchroom techniques](#):
 - Whole fruit options are displayed in attractive bowls or baskets (instead of chaffing dishes or hotel pans).
 - 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.
 - Daily vegetable options are bundled into all grab-and-go meals available to students.
 - 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.
 - Alternative entrée options (e.g., salad bar, yogurt parfaits, etc.) are highlighted on posters or signs within all service and dining areas.
 - A reimbursable meal can be created in any service area available to students (e.g., salad bars, snack rooms, etc.).
 - Student surveys and taste testing opportunities are used to inform menu development, dining space decor and promotional ideas.
 - Student artwork is displayed in the service and/or dining areas.
 - Daily announcements are used to promote and market menu options.
- Menus will be posted on the district website or individual school websites and will include nutrient content and ingredients.
- Menus will be created/reviewed by a Registered Dietitian or other certified nutrition professional.
- 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 (meets Healthy Schools Program Gold-level criteria).
- 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.

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. The district will make drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes.

- Water cups/jugs will be available in the cafeteria if a drinking fountain is not present.
- All water sources and containers will be maintained on a regular basis to ensure good hygiene and health safety standards. Such sources and containers may include drinking fountains, water jugs, hydration stations, water jets and other methods for delivering drinking water.]
- Students will be allowed to bring and carry (approved) water bottles filled with only water with them throughout the day.

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 (e.g., “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, as well as a Guide to Smart Snacks in Schools are available at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/tools-schools-smart-snacks>. The Alliance for a Healthier Generation provides a set of tools to assist with implementation of Smart Snacks available at www.foodplanner.healthiergeneration.org.

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, à la carte options in cafeterias, vending machines, school stores and snack or food carts.

Celebrations and Rewards

All foods offered on the school campus will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards including through:

1. Celebrations and parties. The district will provide a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers, including non-food celebration ideas. Healthy party ideas are available from the [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#) and from the [USDA](#).
2. Classroom snacks brought by parents. The district will provide to parents a [list of foods and beverages that meet Smart Snacks](#) nutrition standards.

3. Rewards and incentives. The district will provide teachers and other relevant school staff a list of alternative ways to reward children. Foods and beverages will not be used as a reward, or withheld as punishment for any reason, such as for performance or behavior.

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 use only non-food fundraisers and encourage those promoting physical activity (such as walk-a-thons, Jump Rope for Heart, fun runs, etc.).
- Fundraising during and outside school hours will sell only non-food items or foods and beverages that meet or exceed the Smart Snacks nutrition standards. These fundraisers may include but are not limited to, donation nights at restaurants, cookie dough, candy and pizza sales, market days, 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 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, 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. This promotion will occur through at least:

- Implementing at least ten or more evidence-based healthy food promotion techniques through the school meal programs.
- Ensuring 100% of foods and beverages promoted to students meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.

Nutrition Education

The district will teach, model, encourage and support healthy eating by all 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.
- Promotes fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products and healthy food preparation methods.
- Emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (promotes physical activity/exercise).
- Links with school meal programs, cafeteria nutrition promotion activities, school gardens, Farm to School programs, other school foods and nutrition-related community services.
- Includes nutrition education training for teachers and other staff.

Essential Healthy Eating Topics in Health Education

The district will include in the health education curriculum a minimum of 12 of the following essential topics on healthy eating:

- Relationship between healthy eating and personal health and disease prevention
- Food guidance from [MyPlate](#)
- Reading and using FDA's nutrition fact labels
- Eating a variety of foods every day
- Balancing food intake and physical activity
- Eating more fruits, vegetables and whole grain products
- Choosing foods that are low in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol and do not contain *trans* fat
- Choosing foods and beverages with little added sugars
- Eating more calcium-rich foods
- Preparing healthy meals and snacks
- Risks of unhealthy weight control practices
- Accepting body size differences
- Food safety
- Importance of water consumption

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. These efforts will be weakened if students are subjected to advertising on District property that contains messages inconsistent with the health information the district is imparting through nutrition education and health promotion efforts. 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.

Any foods and beverages marketed or promoted to students on the school campus* during the school day* will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.

Food and beverage marketing is defined as advertising and other promotions in schools. Food and beverage marketing often includes 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:

- Brand names, trademarks, logos or tags, except when placed on a physically present food or beverage product or its container.
- Displays, such as on vending machine exteriors
- Corporate brand, logo, name or trademark on school equipment, such as marquees, message boards, scoreboards or backboards (Note: immediate replacement of these items are not required; however, districts will replace or update scoreboards or other durable

equipment when existing contracts are up for renewal or to the extent that is in financially possible over time so that items are in compliance with the marketing policy.)

- Corporate brand, logo, name or trademark on cups used for beverage dispensing, menu boards, coolers, trash cans and other food service equipment; as well as on posters, book covers, pupil assignment books or school supplies displayed, distributed, offered or sold by the district.
- 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.

As the district/school nutrition services/Athletics Department/PTA/PTO reviews existing contracts and considers new contracts, equipment and product purchasing (and replacement) decisions should reflect the applicable marketing guidelines established by the district wellness policy.

IV. Physical Activity/Physical Education

Children and adolescents should participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. Schools will ensure that these varied physical activity opportunities are in addition to, and not as a substitute for, physical education.

Physical activity during the school day (including but not limited to recess, classroom physical activity breaks or physical education) **will not be withheld** as punishment for any reason. The district 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.

- Through a formal joint- or shared-use agreement, indoor and outdoor physical activity facilities and spaces 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 and equipment are known and, when necessary, will work with community partners to ensure sufficient quantities of equipment are available to encourage physical activity for as many students as possible.

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. The curriculum will support the essential components of physical education.

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. All students are required to take the equivalent of one academic year of physical education.

Health education will be required in all grades and the district will require students to take and pass at least one health education course. The district will include in the health education curriculum a minimum of 12 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, such as TV watching
- 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

Active Academics

Teachers will incorporate movement and kinesthetic learning approaches into “core” subject instruction when possible (e.g., science, math, language arts, social studies and others) and do their part to limit sedentary behavior during the school day.

The district will support classroom teachers incorporating physical activity and employing kinesthetic learning approaches into core subjects by providing annual professional development opportunities and resources, including information on leading activities, activity options, as well as making available background material on the connections between learning and movement. Teachers will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

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 providing different programs and 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:

- Designate safe or preferred routes to school.
- Promote activities such as participation in International Walk to School Week, National Walk and Bike to School Week.
- Instruction on walking/bicycling safety provided to students

V. 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. 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 well-being, optimal development and strong educational outcomes.

Schools in the District are encouraged to coordinate content across curricular areas that promote 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 for efforts, or grants/funding opportunities for healthy school environments will be coordinated with and complementary of the wellness policy.

All school-sponsored events will adhere to the wellness policy guidelines. All school-sponsored wellness events will include physical activity and healthy eating opportunities when appropriate.

Community Health Promotion and Family Engagement

The district will promote to parents/caregivers, families, and the general community the benefits of and approaches for healthy eating and physical activity throughout the school year.

Families will be informed and invited to participate in school-sponsored activities and will receive information about health promotion efforts.

Professional Learning

When feasible, the district will offer annual professional learning opportunities and resources for staff to increase knowledge and skills about promoting healthy behaviors in the classroom and school (e.g., increasing the use of kinesthetic teaching approaches or incorporating nutrition lessons into math class). Professional learning will help district staff understand the connections between academics and health and the ways in which health and wellness are integrated into ongoing district reform or academic improvement plans/efforts.

Glossary:

Extended School Day – the time during, before and after school that includes activities such as clubs, intramural sports, band and choir practice, drama rehearsals and more.

School Campus - areas that are owned or leased by the school and used at any time for school-related activities, including on the outside of the school building, school buses or other vehicles used to transport students, athletic fields and stadiums (e.g., on scoreboards, coolers, cups, and water bottles), or parking lots.

School Day – the time between midnight the night before to 30 minutes after the end of the instructional day.

Triennial – recurring every three years.