

## 6.1 FOODS SERVED AT PARTIES AND CELEBRATIONS

ADMINISTRATOR

# Creating Healthy Schools



### Implementation for success

To support healthy food served at parties and celebrations, the district/schools will:

- Promote physical activity and other activities at celebrations.
- Incorporate healthy foods into celebrations instead of “junk” food.
- Provide documents to teachers and staff containing ideas to replace food at celebrations.
- Eliminate sugar sweetened beverages at school/classroom celebrations.
- Plan celebrations in advance.

### Model Policy:

Our school district understands the importance of providing nutritious foods and beverages that meet the standards set by U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Schools will limit the foods and beverages served during parties and celebrations throughout the school day to no more than one party per class per month.

Each party will include no more than one food or beverage that does not meet nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually. Schools shall inform parents/guardians of the classroom celebration guidelines. Classroom celebrations will focus on activities (e.g., giving free time, extra recess, music and reading time) and healthy food options. The district will disseminate a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers.

### Evaluation:

In order to meet the requirements of the Healthy Hunger Free Act of 2010, the district wellness council and school administrators will be jointly accountable for implementing, enforcing, and evaluating this policy. Evaluation of this policy will include monitoring food items served at parties and celebrations, and surveying faculty and staff on how they are implementing this policy in their classrooms.

Each school will report annually to the district wellness council on the progress of policy implementation and will include recommendations where further district support may be beneficial. The district wellness council may also request that select schools conduct student, family, and/or staff surveys as part of their evaluation process. At the end of each school year, the district wellness council leader will submit an annual report to the superintendent/board of education on the implementation and evaluation of this policy. This report shall be posted on the Internet for easy public access.

## Rationale:

Solid fats and added sugars account for approximately 40% of calories consumed by children ages two to 18.<sup>1</sup> Adequate amounts of vegetables, whole grains, fruits, and calcium-rich foods are not being consumed, while saturated fat, sodium, and added sugars are being consumed in excess by children.<sup>2</sup>

Today about 1 in 3 children is overweight or obese and studies show that overweight children are likely to become overweight or obese adults.<sup>3</sup> If obesity among kids continues to increase at this rate, our current generation could become the first in American history to live shorter and sicker lives than their parents.

Proper nutrition promotes optimal learning. School and classroom celebrations typically include fun along with foods that are typically high in fat, added sugars, and empty calories like cake, candy, chips, pizza, and sugary drinks. Celebrating with these types of food promotes unhealthy choices and can contribute to obesity and other health-related problems. It also contradicts healthy eating education and sends a mixed message to students regarding healthy lifestyles.

Healthy food items served during celebrations can help facilitate improved academic behavior, create a positive and consistent message about healthy eating, and maintain an overall healthy school environment. Additionally, restrictions on food items during celebrations can help protect students with food allergies and create some excitement about good nutrition.

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*Two other versions of this policy item are available for both staff and family to assist with implementation and communication.*

## Resources:

- Center for Science in the Public Interest:  
[http://cspinet.org/new/pdf/healthy\\_school\\_celebrations.pdf](http://cspinet.org/new/pdf/healthy_school_celebrations.pdf)
- Connecticut State Department of Education:  
<http://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/HealthyCelebrations.pdf>  
Also: [http://www.mdpta.org/documents/Healthy\\_Celebrations.pdf](http://www.mdpta.org/documents/Healthy_Celebrations.pdf)
- Action for Healthy Kids:  
<http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/game-on/find-challenges/1786-ten-tips-for-making-the-switch-to-healthy-celebrations>

<sup>1</sup>Reedy J. Dietary sources of energy, solid fats, and added sugars among children and adolescents in the United States. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*. 2010-10;110:1477-84.

<sup>2</sup>United States Department of Agriculture. The quality of children's diets in 2003-2004 as measured by the healthy eating index. <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/Publications/NutritionInsights/Insight43.pdf>. Accessed March 12, 2014.

<sup>3</sup>Ogden CL. Prevalence of high body mass index in US children and adolescents, 2007-2008. *JAMA : the journal of the American Medical Association*. 2010-01-20;303:242-9.