

School District Profile

School District:	Windham Public Schools	Grades:	PK-12	Enrollment:	3,633
Number of Schools:	6	Education Reference Group (ERG):	I		
Team Leader:	Shawn Grunwald School-Based Health Center Coordinator	Phone:	(860) 465-2465		
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School Health Team in Place before Pilot Project: No

School Health Team Members:

School board member, school nurse, school food service, parent representative, health educator, physical education teacher, family and consumer sciences teacher, community group representative, dietitian and school-based health center staff

Other People Who Should Have Been Included on the School Health Team:

Superintendent and school store advisor

Policy Adopted by Board of Education: The policy concepts were approved by the board of education in June 2005. Policy adoption will take place in the 2005-2006 school year, after the board completes a review of all district policies.

Number of Times School Health Team Met: 8

Length of Each Meeting: $\frac{3}{4}$ -3 hours

Continuation of School Health Team after Pilot Completion:

The School Health Team will continue as part of an overall school health advisory committee which is much broader in scope but will have a set agenda item dedicated to school nutrition and physical activity.

Process for Identifying and Prioritizing Program Improvement Needs:

We based program improvement needs on the results of the *School Health Index*, coupled with discussion with the various administrators and board of education members to determine how realistic it would be to actually effect change.

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Steps Used for Policy Development and Adoption:

1. Conducted *School Health Index*.
2. Surveyed parents, students, principals and cafeteria managers.
3. Presented results to districtwide PTO and superintendent.
4. Assigned one person (team leader) to write draft policies. Shared draft policies with team, superintendent and assistant superintendent. Solicited and incorporated feedback.
5. Draft policies presented at Student Services Committee of Board of Education, which approved content.
6. Policies given to Policies Subcommittee for format change (administrator in charge approved content).
7. Format modified but no content changes made. Policies were sent to full board of education for adoption. Board approved policy concepts in June 2005.
8. Policy adoption will take place in the 2005-2006 school year, after the board completes a review of all district policies.

Challenges to the Policy Development Process:

The biggest challenge was moving forward from the information gathering stage to the actual policy writing stage. This was solved by assigning one person to write the policy draft and the group trusting that person to complete the task. Checks and balances were built in by allowing each team member to review and comment on the initial draft, and then review the final draft document.

Successes with the Policy Development Process:

The biggest success was the gathering together of different people from different schools and disciplines to work together on the tasks. We were also successful in connecting with the districtwide PTO to work together on student health and achievement goals.

Critical Resources Needed to Ensure Success with Policy Development:

Allocated staff time that is funded through this grant so staff members are not “donating” time to this project when they are already overcommitted on other things.

Characteristics Important to an Effective, Productive and Successful School Health Team:

- Build in social time so members can get to know one another (if they don't already) and build some camaraderie.
- Schedule sufficient time for meetings.
- Have a clear leader who is empowered and willing to set the agenda and do some extra work.

Activities Conducted as a Result of Work on the School Nutrition Policies Project:

- One of the team members developed a staff wellness program that included a walking program, BMI and weight monitoring, blood pressure checks and incentives for participation.
- Worked with a class advisor on piloting a healthy fundraiser. The fundraiser was successful and will be incorporated as a yearly event.
- Started a parent resource library via the districtwide PTO and a resource library for staff members via the Curriculum Office with materials procured through this project.
- The board of education is exploring incorporating Connecticut-grown foods into the cafeteria.
- The board of education is looking at scheduling recess before lunch in at least one of the elementary schools (K-4).

Strategies for Promoting Adoption and Districtwide Support of the Policies:

Throughout the whole process, the team leader sent out periodic informational memos to each building representative, principals, superintendent, assistant superintendents and department heads to keep them informed of the process, and to allow them to keep staff members updated and informed. Parents were informed through the districtwide PTO and PTO newsletters. Students will be informed in the same manner as every other board policy, through student handbooks.

Strategies for District Implementation of the Policies:

The relevant parts of the policies will be part of the school staff handbook and student handbook. One of the high school classes has made a commitment to doing at least one healthy fundraiser (citrus fruits). Information was distributed at a districtwide PTO meeting for inclusion in PTO newsletters.

Methods for Evaluating Success of District Implementation of the Policies:

We will monitor a variety of areas, such as the number of fundraisers done next year involving either nonfood items or healthy food choices; whether Connecticut-grown foods are instituted in the school lunch program; and whether at least one school has recess before lunch. The policies recommend but do not mandate these things, so if they are done implementation will be considered successful.

Recommendations for Success with the Policy Development Process:

- Be realistic about what you hope to accomplish in a certain timeframe and with local funding constraints. It is better to take on a small amount, be successful and build on your success to move on the next step than to set a large goal and not reach it.
- Choose your team members carefully. It is critical for success that team members are willing to work hard to get the job done.

Policies

*Windham Public Schools
Draft Student Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies*

Policy Intent/Rationale

Windham Public Schools promote healthy schools by supporting wellness, good nutrition and regular physical activity as part of the total learning environment. Windham Public Schools supports a healthy environment where children learn and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices. Schools contribute to the basic health status of children by facilitating learning through the support and promotion of good nutrition and physical activity. Improved health optimizes student performance potential and ensures that no child is left behind.

- A. Provide a comprehensive learning environment for developing and practicing lifelong wellness behaviors.

The entire school environment, not just the classroom, shall be aligned with healthy school goals to positively influence a student's understanding, beliefs and habits as they relate to good nutrition and regular physical activity. A healthy school environment should not be sacrificed because of a dependence on revenue from high-added fat, high-added sugar and low-nutrient foods to support school programs.

- B. Support and promote proper dietary habits contributing to students' health status and academic performance.

To the extent possible, all foods available on school grounds and at school-sponsored activities during the instructional day should meet or exceed the nutritional guidelines set forth by the USDA (U.S. Department of Agriculture). Emphasis should be placed on foods that are nutrient dense per calorie. To ensure high-quality, nutritious meals, foods should be served with consideration toward variety, appeal, taste, safety and packaging.

- C. Provide opportunities for students to engage in physical activity.

A quality physical education program is an essential component for all students to learn about and participate in physical activity. Physical activity will include regular instructional physical education as well as co-curricular activities and recess.

- D. Windham Public Schools are committed to improving academic performance in high-risk groups so that no child is left behind.

Educators, administrators, parents, health practitioners and communities must consider the critical role student health plays in academic stamina and performance and adapt the school environment to ensure students' basic nourishment and activity needs are met.

Student Nutrition

The Board recognizes that healthy eating patterns are essential for students to achieve their academic potential, full physical and mental growth and lifelong health and well-being. The link between nutrition and learning is well documented. Healthy eating is demonstrably linked to reduced risk for mortality and development of many chronic diseases as adults. Schools have a responsibility to help students and staff members establish and maintain lifelong, healthy eating patterns. Well-planned and well-implemented school nutrition programs have been shown to positively influence students' eating habits.

The School Breakfast/Lunch Programs

Although the Windham Board of Education believes that the district's nutrition and food services operation should be financially self-supporting, it recognizes, however, that the nutrition program is an essential educational and support activity. Therefore, budget neutrality or profit generation must not take precedence over the nutrition needs of its students. In compliance with federal law, the District's National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) shall be nonprofit. The district National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) and After-School Snack Program will comply with all the federal requirements for program operation.

Cafeteria Environment

Students will be provided with a pleasant and safe environment for eating meals. In accordance with state law, a minimum of 20 minutes will be allowed for lunch. The consumption of soda is strongly discouraged. School dining areas will be periodically reviewed by building principals to ensure that the physical structure of the eating area is in good repair, seating is not overcrowded, noise is not allowed to become excessive, rules for safe behavior are consistently enforced, tables and floors are cleaned between meal periods and appropriate supervision is provided.

Fundraising

All fundraising projects involving sale and consumption of food within and prior to the instructional day will adhere to the federal NSLP and SBP regulations. Nutrient-dense food items will be encouraged as products sold for fundraising projects. The sale of nonfood items is strongly encouraged to be used for fundraisers.

Nutrition Practices in Classroom

Healthy snacks in appropriate portion sizes are strongly encouraged. The use of food items as part of a student incentive program is strongly discouraged. Nonfood alternatives are strongly encouraged for classroom celebrations.

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Parent/Guardian Information

Wherever possible, nutritional information will be provided to parents on healthy snack, breakfast and lunch ideas, nonfood birthday celebration ideas, calcium needs of children, healthy portion sizes, food label reading guidelines, and fun activities to encourage physical activity outside of school. Dissemination vehicles can include, but not be limited to, newsletters, publications, open houses, speakers through the PTO and health fairs.

Faculty Information

Nutritional information will be available to staff members through a variety of means such as in-service training, publications, the school-based health center program, curriculum and publications which will include, but not be limited to, alternative birthday celebrations, activities to increase physical activity in the classroom, healthy snacks, alternative nonfood reward options and alternatives to withholding recess as a consequence for student actions.

Nutrition Education

Nutrition education topics shall be integrated within the health education program and be consistent with the State of Connecticut's health education standards/guidelines/framework. Nutrition education shall be designed to help students learn:

- nutritional knowledge, including but not limited to, the benefits of healthy eating, essential nutrients, nutritional deficiencies, principles of healthy weight management, the use and misuse of dietary supplements, and safe food preparation, handling and storage;
- nutrition-related skills, including but not limited to, planning a healthy meal, understanding and using food labels, and critically evaluating nutritional information, misinformation, and commercial food advertising; and
- how to assess one's personal eating habits, set goals for improvement and achieve these goals.

Nutrition education will be supported and supplemented whenever possible by the school health and school-based health center programs.

Physical Activity

The Board recognizes that schools have a responsibility to help students and staff members establish and maintain lifelong habits of being physically active. According to the U.S. Surgeon General, regular physical activity is one of the most important things people can do to maintain and improve their physical health, mental health, and overall well-being. Regular physical activity reduces the risk of premature death in general and of heart disease, high blood pressure, colon cancer and diabetes in particular. Promoting a physically active lifestyle among young people is important because it can help increase students' capacity for learning, it has substantial health benefits and it helps lay the foundation for being regularly active throughout life.

Windham Public Schools shall provide physical activity and physical education opportunities, aligned with the state physical education requirements, which provide students with the knowledge and skills to lead a physically active lifestyle.

Physical Education

Developmentally appropriate components of a health-related fitness assessment will be introduced to students at an early age to prepare them for future assessments. Physical education classes shall be sequential, building from year to year, and content will include movement, personal fitness, and personal and social responsibility. Students should be able to demonstrate competency through application of knowledge, skill and practice. A health-related fitness assessment will be administered with students beginning in grade 3. Students shall receive results and use this as a baseline in understanding their own level of fitness and for creating fitness goals and plans. For students with medical issues, adaptive/alternative plans will be made. Students cannot have physical education withheld for disciplinary reasons. During inclement weather, there is a back-up plan for physical education. Wherever appropriate, physical activity will be incorporated into classroom routines.

Extracurricular Physical Activity Programs

School staff members should encourage and support the participation of all students in extracurricular activities, including but not limited to, interscholastic athletics and intramural sports, yet such participation is a privilege and not a right. Windham Public Schools may establish and equitably enforce reasonable eligibility requirements based on appropriate grade, enrollment status or residency, satisfactory academic performance, acceptable attendance record, good conduct and suitable health status or physical condition. Students denied permission to participate in an extracurricular activity shall receive a prompt explanation of the reasons, have an opportunity to respond and be provided with opportunities to reestablish their eligibility.

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Other Opportunities for Physical Activity

Recess

Recess provides opportunities for physical activity, which helps students stay alert and attentive in class and provides other educational and social benefits. School authorities shall encourage and develop schedules that provide time within every school day for preschool, elementary and middle school students to enjoy supervised recess. The schools shall have playgrounds or other facilities and equipment available for free play. Recess shall complement, not substitute for, physical education classes. Staff members shall not deny a student's participation in recess or other physical activity as a form of discipline or punishment, nor should they cancel it for instructional make-up time.

School/Community Collaboration

Windham Public Schools shall work with the Windham Recreation Department and other community organizations to coordinate and enhance opportunities available to students and staff members for physical activity during their out-of-school time.

Staff Wellness

All school staff members are encouraged to improve their own personal health and wellness. Windham Public Schools will strive to plan, establish and implement activities to promote physical activity among staff members and strive to provide opportunities for staff members to conveniently engage in regular physical exercise.