

**South Coast Educational Collaborative**



# Wellness Policy

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# **Preface**

South Coast Educational Collaborative (SCEC) participates in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) and as such we have established a Local School Wellness Policy for all schools under our jurisdiction in accordance with 7 CFR 210.31(c) and the Final Rule: Local School Wellness Policy Implementation Under the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.

The wellness policy promotes students' physical and mental health by creating goals to implement enriched programming in nutrition, physical activity, and overall well-being. SCEC's Wellness Policy recognizes the interconnectedness of well-being and learning. Therefore, we include guidance on educational practices that foster deeper learning which we believe will further support efforts to provide students with a foundation for a successful and healthy future.

Since 2018, our organization has been committed to supporting the use of Deep Learning Pedagogies and Practices in our classrooms and instruction. According to Michael Fullan (2021), deep learning requires four essential elements to exist in the educational environment: safe learning environments, strong learning partnerships, creative pedagogical practices, and leveraging digital technology. These elements support the development of six core competencies, known as the 6Cs: Character, Creativity, Communication, Collaboration, Citizenship and Critical Thinking.

SCEC believes that there is a 7<sup>th</sup> C, Connections. All individuals long to feel safe, significant, and situated in life. Our ability to form and sustain relationships plays a major role in the overall well-being of our organization. Hence, our goals in all dimensions of student wellness will include actions that foster a sense of belonging and trust. We believe belonging is an essential component to examine and the first step in providing a psychologically safe learning environment for all individuals in our organization.

## **Wellness Vision**

Our vision is to provide culturally competent, holistic, and wellness-focused services that promote students' skill development to enhance their ability to cope with current and future life challenges. This vision is empowered by using evidence-based strategies, supporting staff training and well-being, implementing effective mental health consultation to students, families, and staff, and by facilitating mental health services for individuals who need them. Together, these approaches create safe inclusive environments where all individuals experience a sense of belonging, being seen, heard, understood, and valued.

## **Wellness Mission**

It is the mission of the SCEC Wellness Committee to promote the health and wellness of individuals in our schools through education and initiatives that: encourage individuals to engage in habits that support all aspects of wellness; increase awareness of factors and resources that contribute to a sense of well-being; inspire and empower individuals to take responsibility for their own health decisions and choices; and identify and practice norms that foster a sense of belonging and create psychologically safe teaching and learning environments.

## **Key Ideas about Wellness**

- Well-being (purpose, meaning, belongingness, control, making a contribution) is of greater intrinsic interest to students, which in turn can lead to deeper academics.
- Widen the perspective to well-being and deep learning so that the focus of improvement is on the Global Competencies and learning therein, including the link to academic subjects.
- Academics is not a primary intrinsic motivator for most students. An obsession with academics serves to undercut equity.

## **Wellness Committee**

# Wellness Committee Leadership

South Coast Educational Collaborative (SCEC) will designate at least one school official as having the responsibility of ensuring that programs within SCEC adhere to Wellness Policy goals and procedures. This person(s) is also responsible for coordinating the required triennial assessments. The SCEC wellness compliance officers are:

**1. Jason Prozzo, MEd, Director of Food and Nutrition**

Email: jprozzo@scecoll.org

Phone: 774-406-0887

**2. Marissa Rauseo BSN-RN, NCSN, Nurse Facilitator**

Email: mrauseo@scecoll.org

Phone: 508-954-1803

# Wellness Policy Committee Members

**1. Health Services Committee Membership:**

- a. Victoria Mello, BSN-RN
- b. Lindsey Poeira, BSN-RN, NCSN
- c. Danielle Fox, MHA, BSN-RN
- d. Ashley Botelho, MSN, APRN, FNP-BC

**2. Clinical Services Committee Membership:**

- a. Debra Jean-Laurent MA, LCDP, SAC
- b. Dr. Catherine Vieira-Baker Ph.D. -Licensed Psychologist
- c. Erin Carr MEd, School Counselor

**3. Related Service Providers Committee Membership:**

- a. Jacqueline Gallishaw M.S
- b. Kara Whittaker PT, DPT
- c. Cynthia Generazzo, APE, OTA

**4. Educators/Teachers-Paraprofessional Committee Members:**

- a. Alicia Albernaz, Para-Seekonk HS
- b. Eric Peloquin, Para - North Seekonk
- c. Jennifer Schubert, Teacher - North Seekonk
- d. Samantha Walkden, Para - FES

# Wellness Committee Membership Recruitment

SCEC permits and encourages public involvement in the Local Wellness Policy process to promote transparency and inclusion. Therefore, SCEC encourages the public to be a part of the Wellness Policy Committee and involved in policy development, implementation, updates and reviews. SCEC provides opportunities for participation by members of the public including parents, students, healthcare professionals, local farmers, and community leaders. SCEC also expects participation by members of the school community, including teachers, food service professionals, administrators, health professionals, and school board members. Responsibilities of Wellness Policy Committee members may include but are not limited to policy development, implementation, and review.

SCEC is committed to providing increased transparency in wellness policies. The policy, committee meeting information (dates, meeting minutes) and plans for updating the policy will be made available to the public.

Therefore, SCEC should invite a variety of stakeholders within the public to participate in Local Wellness Policy processes. The following methods of communication will be utilized to notify the public of the opportunity to participate in these processes:

- Website
- Newsletters
- Email/Text Notification
- Promotional Flyers

## **Assessments**

Per USDA requirements, under the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, SCEC will assess the Wellness Policy every three (3) years, at a minimum. This is commonly referred to as the “triennial assessment.” The USDA also requires language regarding the Wellness Policy evaluation plan to be present in the content of the policy. SCEC will designate at least one school official as responsible for determining the extent to which each school under its jurisdiction is in compliance with the Local Wellness Policy. Additionally, other stakeholders will be permitted to be involved in the review process.

SCEC will conduct assessments of the Local Wellness Policy every three years, beginning in July 2023 and occurring every 3 years thereafter. These assessments will:

- Utilize The Massachusetts Local Wellness Policy Assessment Tool. This tool was developed by Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), in partnership with the School Wellness Initiative for Thriving Community Health (SWITCH), The John C. Stalker Institute of Food & Nutrition (JSI), and the Alliance for a Healthier Generation (AHG). The online tool consists of two separate assessments:
  - o The Massachusetts Local Wellness Policy Strength Checklist is used to score local wellness policy language based on state and federal regulations.
  - o The Massachusetts Local Wellness Policy Implementation Assessment is used to measure the level of compliance in implementing the Local Wellness Policy and

to identify areas of strength and opportunities for growth

## **Updates**

SCEC will update the Local Wellness Policy as appropriate to fit the needs and goals of the organization. SCEC will make the following available to the public:

- The Local Wellness Policy, including any updates to the policy, on a yearly basis
- Results of the triennial assessment, including progress toward meeting the goals outlined in the Wellness Policy

These policies and assessments will be made available through the following channels:

- SCEC Website

## **Records**

SCEC maintains a record of its Wellness Policy and will keep a copy of the Wellness Policy on file electronically on Google drive, a printed copy in the SCEC Health Services Office and maintain documentation in the same manner of the following actions:

- The most recent assessment of the policy
- Availability of the Wellness Policy and assessments to the public
- Reviews and revisions of the policy, including the individuals involved and the efforts made to notify stakeholders of their ability to participate in the process
- Wellness Committee meeting dates and approved meeting minutes

## **Policy Content Domains**

SCEC Wellness Policy will address 3 specific domains of wellness, two of which are required by the USDA and the DESE; these include Nutrition and Physical Activity. The regulations that dictate Wellness Policy development also allow individual school districts to develop goals that address additional wellness domains identified as being essential to supporting the overall sense of well-being in their schools. In this current policy, SCEC has identified Social-Emotional Wellness as its third domain and has developed goals centered on fostering a sense of belonging in our school community.

## **Nutrition**

SCEC recognizes the important role that nutrition plays in a student's academic performance, classroom behavior and overall quality of life. Through participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's School Nutrition Programs, SCEC commits to serving nutritious meals to students to prevent both overconsumption of nutrient-poor foods and food insecurity, giving the students the best chance to succeed inside and outside the

classroom.

## **Nutrition Standards**

### **Meals**

All reimbursable meals served for the purposes of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) meet or exceed USDA nutrition standards and other local, state and federal regulations. This includes meeting standards for each of the meal pattern components (i.e. Grains, Meat/Meat Alternates, Fruits, Vegetables, and Milk) as well as meeting or exceeding the limitations set for calories, sodium, saturated fat, and added sugars as outlined in the United States Department of Agriculture National Standards for School Meals: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/schoolmeals/nutrition-standards>.

Meals and nutritional content served at SCEC through the National School Lunch and/or Breakfast Programs will be:

- Served in a clean, safe, and pleasant environment with access to hand washing/hand sanitizing stations, in accordance with local board of health and USDA regulations and requirements.
- Scheduled at appropriate times during the school day and provide students with at least 10 minutes to sit and consume breakfast and at least 20 minutes to sit and consume lunch.
- Nutritious, appealing, and attractive to children. SCEC will engage students in taste tests and surveys on new entrée choices to provide students with choice and voice in the food selection process.
- Transparent in information shared on nutritional content, which is made available on school menus and other point-of service materials,
- Meet and support any students' nutritional requirements due to physician diagnosed chronic health conditions, including allergies and implemented in accordance with food allergy guidelines.
- Sensitive to student privacy while making every effort to eliminate social stigma attached to free and reduced lunch status.

### **Competitive Foods**

All competitive foods and beverages sold or provided in SCEC locations will comply with the USDA [SMART SNACKS](#) in Schools nutrition standards (7 CFR 210.31(c)(3)(iii)). Competitive foods and beverages refer to those that are sold to students outside the reimbursable meal on the school campus during the school day. This includes, but is not limited to, vending machines and à la carte items.

### **Other Foods and Beverages**

The following policy refers to all foods and beverages provided, but not sold to students:

- SCEC encourages the use of non-food as a reward or as part of a celebration. Providing alternatives to food as a reward promotes healthier habits by reducing exposure to less nutritious food items and, therefore, the amount of calorie-dense food items consumed (e.g. cakes, cookies, candy, etc.). This helps children develop an improved understanding of healthy food choices and hunger cues to carry them throughout life.
- SCEC prohibits use of food and beverage items that do not meet Smart Snacks nutrition standards for reward and celebration purposes. More than 25 percent of children's daily calories may come from snacks, therefore, providing Smart Snacks allows for a more nutrient-dense calorie intake.
- Each SCEC program shall provide free access to plain portable water during the school day at no cost. Use of refillable water containers by students is encouraged and permitted in accordance with the state and local health and wellness guidelines. All portable water stations shall adhere to cleaning and disinfecting protocols in accordance with local board of health requirements.
- SCEC discourages the sharing of food and beverages between students during meal or snack times due to concerns for potential allergic reactions or illnesses related to food sensitivities and dietary restrictions.

## **Nutrition Education**

In accordance with the Massachusetts health curriculum framework standards, SCEC will meet all state and local school district requirements and standards for Health Education. SCEC will embed deep learning strategies when developing and implementing education lessons on nutrition and strive to integrate nutrition education into other core subjects, as appropriate.

## **Nutrition Promotion**

SCEC will implement nutrition promotion techniques through multiple channels, including the cafeteria, classroom, and home.

SCEC will make cafeteria menus and nutrition information available through the following platforms:

- SCEC Website

**Farm to School** efforts positively impact School Nutrition Programs by serving fresh and nutritious food items. Additionally, Farm to School programs have been linked to increased consumption of fruits and vegetables. SCEC shall set goals around future participation in Farm to School activities.

## **Marketing**

SCEC prohibits the marketing and advertising of all foods and beverages that do not meet Smart Snacks nutritional standards on ALL school campuses during the school day. The marketing standards described above apply, but are not limited to, oral, written, and graphic statements made for promotional purposes. Items subject to marketing requirements include, but are not limited to, posters, menu boards, coolers, trash cans, and other equipment. This policy does not require schools to immediately replace equipment that does not meet this requirement; however, SCEC shall implement these standards as equipment needs to be replaced in the future.

## **Nutrition Goals**

- a) Using a variety of pedagogical practices and the leveraging of digital platforms, educational teams will develop and provide opportunities for all SCEC students to participate in health classes that allow them to understand the relationship between making healthy nutritional choices and learning.
- b) Create and educate staff on a snack list of ideas/options that meet Smart Snack standards for staff to reference when planning events, activities or purchasing classroom snacks.
- c) Encourage student participation in school meal planning and creation of promotional materials.
- d) Provide consistent nutrition messages to students from all aspects of the school program.
- e) Create awareness of options for study to pursue careers in nutrition for older students.

## **Physical Activity**

Physical activity is a key component of the health and well-being of all students. Routine participation in physical activity lowers the risk for certain diseases, including obesity, heart disease, and diabetes. Physical activity also helps improve brain function, allowing students to perform better in school.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend children and adolescents get at least 60 minutes of physical activity five days per week. SCEC recognizes the importance of physical activity and its connection to well-being. SCEC commits to promoting and providing opportunities for engaging in physical activity both during and outside the school day.

## **Physical Education**

Massachusetts law on physical education, which is contained in MGL Chapter 71, Section 3, states that "Physical Education shall be taught as a required subject in all grades for all

students in the public schools for the purpose of promoting the physical well-being of students." It requires physical education to be taught in public schools as a required subject for all students in all grades. Individual school districts have the authority to determine the hours of instruction for physical education, as they do for all other subjects of instruction.

- SCEC policy states that all students will have the opportunity to participate in physical education and/or structured social time (SST) and that participation will not be withheld as a means of disciplinary action.
- SCEC policy states that all students shall be allowed to participate in physical education classes and SST without disruption unless the exclusion is necessary to protect the health, safety and welfare of the student, other students or staff.

## **Other Opportunities for Physical Activity**

SCEC shall include additional physical activity opportunities, outside of physical education class, during the school day through the following:

- SCEC provides weekly opportunities to participate in swim programs for 30 minutes in community pools. Students may attend on a rotating basis.
- K-8 SST is available twice per day. 15-minute sessions in elementary school and 30-minute sessions in middle school.
- SCEC Programs having access to a gymnasium, exercise equipment and any type of additional recreational space will create opportunities periodically throughout the day for classroom teachers/paraprofessionals to utilize those spaces to provide students with access to areas that are equipped with a variety of options to engage in movement breaks.
- SCEC Life Academy students have YMCA memberships and participate in fitness routines weekly.

The following opportunities for participation in school-based unified sports shall be offered to students each year:

- SCEC encourages and supports participation in Unified Sports Programs in collaboration with our Public School Districts. Several SCEC High School and Middle School programs currently participate in Unified sports including Unified Track and Field, Unified Basketball, Unified Bocce and Unified Bowling.

## **Physical Activity Goals**

- a) Using a variety of pedagogical practices and the leveraging of digital platforms, educational teams will provide opportunities for all SCEC students to engage in health classes that teach connections between physical and mental health.
- b) Educational teams will collaborate with students when developing and embedding physical activities into their daily classroom routines.
- c) All students at SCEC will be provided opportunities, support, and encouragement to identify, select and participate in preferred physical activity throughout the

- school day.
- d) Create a document of recreational and fitness related opportunities available in the community that can be shared with students' families.
  - e) Staff members will be encouraged to seek opportunities for enjoyable, lifelong physical activity.

## **Well-being and Learning**

Student well-being goes beyond the physical aspects that are addressed under nutrition and physical activity. It encompasses the overall perception of health experienced by the student and expressed by having a positive outlook on their social, mental, spiritual, cultural and emotional health. Influencing the well-being of our students involves teaming up with them to collaborate and help to build skills necessary for lifelong success. SCEC's approach is rooted in Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) as a mindset that honors empathy, mutual respect and growth allowing all students at SCEC to thrive in all aspects of their life. SCEC believes that promoting well-being and learning applies to all students and we are committed to ensuring equality for all.

### **Defining Well-being**

Well-being is more than the absence of illness. Well-being encompasses quality of life and the ability of individuals and communities to contribute to the world in a meaningful and purposeful way. Well-being encompasses all the different dimensions of health that are necessary to create a feeling of purpose, belonging, control and satisfaction with their life. This includes physical, mental, emotional, social and intellectual health. It is a lifelong journey that requires skill development in critical thinking, adaptability and resilience, self-awareness and reflection, connection and purpose.

### **Promoting Well-being**

- Embedded Social Emotional Learning in the curriculum and within Deep Learning Pedagogies
- Clinical supports both individualized and small group services
- Building Family Support networks at all programs
- Practicing Trauma Informed Care
- Utilizing strategies from Crisis Prevention and Intervention (CPI) model
- Utilizing strategies and mindset from Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS)

### **Social-Emotional Wellness Goals**

- a) Using a variety of pedagogical practices and the leveraging of digital platforms, educational teams will provide students with opportunities to learn more about themselves and their emotions, developing their ability to responsibly and

- independently use their voice and make meaningful and healthy life choices.
- b) Educational teams will collaborate with students to solve problems that are identified to be impacting their sense of belonging, safety or academic progress at school.
  - c) Staff will be provided opportunities for training in the Collaborative Problem Solving model.
  - d) Staff members will be encouraged to seek opportunities for improving their individual skills needed to enhance their own well-being.

## References

Fullan, M., & Edwards, M. (2022). *Spirit Work and the science of collaboration*. SAGE Publications.

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