

Pending Board Approval

Thomas Edison Charter School Wellness Policy

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Thomas Edison Charter School Wellness Policy

Preamble

Thomas Edison Charter School (hereto referred to as TECS) is committed to the optimal development of every student. TECS believes that for students to have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic, developmental, and social success, we need to create positive, safe, and health-promoting learning environments at every level, in every setting, throughout the school year.

Research shows that two components, good nutrition and physical activity before, during, and after the school day, are strongly correlated with positive student outcomes. For example, student participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) School Breakfast Program is associated with higher grades and standardized test scores, lower absenteeism, and better performance on cognitive tasks.^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7} Conversely, less-than-adequate consumption of specific foods including fruits, vegetables, and dairy products, is associated with lower grades among students.^{8,9,10} In addition, students who are physically active through active transport to and from school, recess, physical activity breaks, high-quality physical education, and extracurricular activities – do better academically.^{11,12,13,14}

This policy applies to all students and staff at Thomas Edison Charter School and outlines our approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. Specifically, this policy establishes goals and procedures to ensure that:

- Students have access to healthy foods throughout the school day—both through reimbursable school meals and other foods available throughout the school campus—in accordance with Federal and state nutrition standards;
- Students receive quality nutrition education that helps them develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors;
- Students have opportunities to be physically active 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 behaviors in and out of school;
- The community is engaged in supporting the work of TECS in creating continuity between school and other settings for students and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits; and
- TECS establishes and maintains an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about, and monitoring of the policy and its established goals and objectives.

I. School Wellness Committee

Committee Role and Membership

TECS will convene a representative School Wellness Committee (hereto referred to as the SWC) that meets at least four times per year to establish goals for and oversee school health and safety policies and programs, including development, implementation, and periodic review and update of this district-level wellness policy (heretofore referred to as "wellness policy").

The SWC membership will represent all school levels (elementary and secondary schools) and include (to the extent possible), but not be limited to: parents and caregivers; students; representatives of the school nutrition program; physical education teachers; health education teachers; school nurse, school counselor; school administrators (ex., principal, vice principal, CFO, business manager), school board members; health professionals (ex., dietitians, doctors, nurses, dentists); and the general public. To the extent possible, the SWC will include representatives who reflect the diversity of the community.

Leadership

The Head of School or designee(s) will convene the SWC and facilitate development of and updates to the wellness policy, and will ensure the school's compliance with the policy.

The names, titles, and contact information for School Wellness Committee members is:

Name	Title	Email Address	DWC Role
Patricia Winder	CFO	Patricia.Winder@tecs.k12.de.us	Coordinator
Angela Cortes	Business/HR Manager	Angela.Cortes@tecs.k12.de.us	Staff Wellness
Amanda Morris May	Payroll/HR/Food Services Coordinator	Amanda.Morris-May@tecs.k12.de.us	Nutrition/Nutrition Education/Community communications
Eileen McLaurin	Nurse	Eileen.McLaurin@tecs.k12.de.us	Student & community wellness
Andrew diMichele	Teacher	Andrew.diMichele@tecs.k12.de.us	Active Academics
Marquita Ransom	Community Coordinator	Marquita.Ransom@tecs.k12.de.us	After School Activities
Brian Carter	PE Teacher	Brian.Carter@tecs.k12.de.us	Physical Activity/Education and Health Education
Adrien Pressey	PE Teacher	Adrien.Pressey@tecs.k12.de.us	Physical Activity/Education and Health Education
Vernice Smallwood	Office Manager	Vernice.Smallwood@tecs.k12.de.us	Parent Liaison
Wayne Cooper (?)	Board Member		Community Partnerships/involvement

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

Implementation Plan

TECS 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 TECS, 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: <http://thomasedison.charter.k12.de.us>.

Recordkeeping

TECS will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of the wellness policy at Thomas Edison Charter School, 2200 N Locust Street, Wilmington DE 19802. Documentation maintained in this location will include but will not be limited to:

- The written wellness policy;
- Documentation demonstrating compliance with community involvement requirements, including (1) Efforts to actively solicit SWC membership from the required stakeholder groups; and (2) These groups' participation in the development, implementation and periodic review and update of the wellness policy;
- Documentation of annual policy progress reports;
- Documentation of the triennial assessment* of the policy;
- Documentation demonstrating compliance with public notification requirements, including; (1) Methods by which the wellness policy, annual progress reports, and triennial assessments are made available to the public; and (2) Efforts to actively notify families about the availability of wellness policy.

Annual Progress Reports

TECS will compile and publish an annual report to share basic information about the wellness policy and report on the progress of meeting wellness goals. This annual report will be published around the same time each year in the month of May and households/families will be actively notified of the availability of the annual report. This report will include, but is not limited to:

- The website address for the wellness policy and/or how the public can receive/access a copy of the wellness policy;
- A description of TECS' progress in meeting the wellness policy goals;
- A summary of school events or activities related to wellness policy implementation;
- The name, position title, and contact information of the designated District policy leader(s) identified in Section I; and
- Information on how individuals and the public can get involved with the SWC.

The Triennial Progress Assessments

At least once every three years, TECS will evaluate compliance with the wellness policy to assess the implementation of the policy and include:

- The extent to which TECS is in compliance with the wellness policy;
- The extent to which the wellness policy compares to the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's model wellness policy; and
- A description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the District's wellness policy.

The person responsible for managing the triennial assessment is: Patricia Winder, CFO,
Patricia.Winder@tecs.k12.de.us.

The SWC will monitor TECS' compliance with this wellness policy.

The school will actively notify households/families of the availability of the triennial progress report.

Revisions and Updating the Policy

The SWC will update or modify the wellness policy based on the results of the annual progress reports and triennial assessments, and/or as school priorities change; community needs change; wellness goals are met; new health science, information, and technology emerges; and new Federal or state guidance or standards are issued. **The wellness policy will be assessed and updated as indicated at least every three years, following the triennial assessment.**

Community Involvement, Outreach, and Communications

TECS is committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of the wellness policy. TECS will actively communicate ways in which representatives of the SWC and others can participate in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the wellness policy through a variety of means appropriate for the district. TECS 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 a description of and compliance with Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.

TECS will actively notify the public about the content of or any updates to the wellness policy annually; at a minimum ensuring that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community. TECS will also use these mechanisms to inform the community about the availability of the annual and triennial reports.

III. Nutrition

School Meals

TECS is committed to serving healthy meals to children, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat milk; moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and zero grams *trans*-fat per serving; and to meet the nutrition needs of schoolchildren 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.

TECS participates in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program (SBP), and the Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program (FFVP) and is committed to offering meals 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 10 of the following Smarter lunchroom techniques:
 - Daily fruit options are attractively displayed in a location in the line of sight and reach of 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 the coolers;
 - Student surveys and taste testing opportunities are used to inform menu development, dining space décor, and promotional ideas;
 - Student artwork is displayed in the service and/or dining areas;
 - Daily vegetable options are bundled into all grab and go meals available to students;
 - Alternative entrée options are highlighted on signs within the service area;
 - Student surveys and taste testing opportunities are used to inform menu development, dining space décor, and promotional ideas;
 - Student artwork is displayed in the service/dining area;
 - Daily announcements are used to promote and market menu options.

Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

All school nutrition program directors, supervisors, 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 the school campus* ("school campus" and "school day" are defined in the glossary). TECS will make drinking water available adjacent to where school meals are served during mealtimes. In addition, students will be allowed to bring and carry (approved) water bottles filled with only water with them throughout the day.

- All water sources and containers will be maintained on a regular basis to ensure good hygiene standards. Such sources and containers may include drinking fountains, water jugs, hydration stations, water jets, and other methods for delivering drinking water.

Competitive Foods and Beverages

TECS 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. A summary of the standards and information 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.healthiergeneration.org/smartsnacks.

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.** TECS will provide a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers, including non-food celebration ideas. Healthy party ideas from the [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#) and from the [USDA](#).
2. **Classroom snacks brought by parents.** TECS will provide to parents a [list of foods and beverages that meet Smart Snacks](#) nutrition standards; and
3. **Rewards and incentives.** TECS 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*. TECS will make available to parents and teachers a list of healthy fundraising ideas.

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 the school, classrooms, gymnasium, and cafeteria. 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.

TECS 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 evidence-based healthy food promotion techniques through the school meal programs using [Smarter Lunchroom techniques](#); and
- Promoting foods and beverages that meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.

Nutrition Education

TECS aims to teach, model, encourage, and support healthy eating by 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;
- Is 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;
- Include enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, and participatory activities, such as cooking demonstrations or lessons, promotions, taste-testing, farm visits, and school gardens;
- Promote fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, and healthy food preparation methods;
- Emphasize caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (promotes physical activity/exercise);
- Link with school meal programs, cafeteria nutrition promotion activities, school gardens, Farm to School programs, other school foods, and nutrition-related community services; and
- Include nutrition education training for staff.

Essential Healthy Eating Topics in Health Education

TESC will include in the health education curriculum the following essential topics on healthy eating:

- The relationship between healthy eating and personal health and disease prevention;
- Food guidance from My Plate;
- Reading and using USDA's food 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;
- Importance of eating breakfast;
- Making healthy choices when eating at restaurants;
- Eating disorders;
- The Dietary Guidelines for Americans;
- Reducing sodium intake;
- Social influences on healthy eating, including media, family, peers, and culture;
- How to find valid information or services related to nutrition and dietary behavior;
- How to develop a plan and track progress toward achieving a personal goal to eat healthfully;
- Resisting peer pressure related to unhealthy dietary behavior;
- Influencing, supporting, or advocating for others' healthy dietary behavior.

Food and Beverage Marketing in Schools

TECS 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. TECS strives to teach students how to make informed choices about nutrition, health, and physical activity. It is the intent of TECS 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 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, such that only those foods that comply with or exceed those nutrition standards are permitted to be marketed or promoted to students.

IV. Physical Activity

Children and adolescents should participate in 60 minutes of physical activity every day. A substantial percentage of students' physical activity can be provided through a comprehensive, school-based physical activity program (CSPAP) that includes these components: physical education, recess, classroom-based physical activity, walk and bicycle to school, and out-of-school time activities and the district is committed to providing these opportunities. Schools will ensure that these varied opportunities are in addition to, and not as a substitute for, physical education (addressed in "Physical Education" subsection). In order to successfully address all CSPAP areas, TECS will encourage students to participate in *Let's Move! Active Schools* (<https://letsmove.obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/>).

Physical activity during the school day (including but not limited to recess, physical activity breaks, or physical education) **will not be withheld** as punishment for any reason. This does not include participation on sports teams that have specific academic requirements. TECS will provide teachers and other school staff with a list of ideas for alternative ways to discipline students.

To the extent practicable, TECS will ensure that its grounds and facilities are safe and that equipment is available to students to be active. TECS will ensure necessary inspections and repairs are conducted.

Physical Education

TECS 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, as well as incorporate essential health education concepts.

TECS elementary students in each grade will receive physical education for at least 90-105 minutes per week throughout the school year.

The physical education program for secondary students will promote student physical fitness through individualized fitness and activity assessments via Fitness Gram (or other appropriate assessment tool) and will use criterion-based reporting for each student.

Essential Physical Activity Topics in Health Education

TECS will include in the health education curriculum the following essential topics on physical activity *semesters when student is enrolled in health or physical education:*

- 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
- How much physical activity is enough, that is determining frequency, intensity, time, and type of physical activity
- Developing an individualized physical activity and fitness plan
- Monitoring progress toward reaching goals in an individualized physical activity plan
- Dangers of using performance-enhancing drugs, such as steroids
- Social influences on physical activity, including media, family, peers, and culture
- How to find valid information or services related to physical activity and fitness
- How to influence, support, or advocate for others to engage in physical activity
- How to resist peer pressure that discourages physical activity

Recess (Elementary)

Elementary students will be offered at least **20 minutes of recess** on all or most days during the school year (*This policy may be waived on early dismissal or late arrival days*). If recess is offered before lunch, schools will have appropriate hand-washing facilities and/or hand-sanitizing mechanisms located just inside/outside the cafeteria to ensure proper hygiene prior to eating and students are required to use these mechanisms before eating. Hand-washing time, as well as time to put away coats/hats/gloves, will be built in to the recess transition period/timeframe before students enter the cafeteria.

Outdoor recess will be offered when weather is feasible for outdoor play. Students will be allowed outside for recess except when outdoor temperature is above/below TECS-set temperature, inclusive of wind chill factors, during "code orange" or "code red" days, during storms with lightening or thunder, or at the discretion of the Head of School based on his best judgment of safety conditions.

In the event that the school must conduct **indoor recess**, teachers and staff will follow the indoor recess guidelines currently being developed that will promote physical activity for students, to the extent practicable

Recess will complement, not substitute, physical education class. Recess monitors or teachers will encourage students to be active, and will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

Physical Activity Breaks (Elementary and Secondary)

TECS recognizes that students are more attentive and ready to learn if provided with periodic breaks when they can be physically active or stretch. Thus, students will be offered **periodic opportunities** to be active or to stretch throughout the day on all or most days during a typical school week. TECS recommends teachers provide a short (3-5 minute) physical activity break to students during and between classroom times. These physical activity breaks will complement, not substitute, for physical education class, recess, and class transition periods.

TECS will provide resources and links to resources, tools, and technology with ideas for physical activity breaks. Resources and ideas are available through [USDA](#) and the [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#).

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.

TECS 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.

After School Activities

TECS offers opportunities and encourages students to participate in physical activity after the school day through a variety of methods: intramurals, varsity sports, cheerleading, Girls on the Run and physical activity in aftercare.

V. Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness

TECS will integrate wellness activities across the entire school setting, not just in the cafeteria, or physical activity facilities. TECS 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.

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, including but not limited to ensuring the involvement of the SWC.

All school-sponsored events will adhere to the wellness policy. All school-sponsored wellness events will include physical activity opportunities.

Community Partnerships

TECS will *develop* relationships with community partners in support of this wellness policy's implementation. Existing and new community partnerships and sponsorships will be evaluated to ensure that they are consistent with the wellness policy and its goals.

Community Health Promotion and Engagement

TECS 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.

As described in the "Community Involvement, Outreach, and Communications" subsection, TECS 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 opportunities to participate in school-sponsored activities and receive information about health promotion efforts.

Staff Wellness and Health Promotion

The SWC will have a staff wellness subcommittee that focuses on staff wellness issues, identifies and disseminates wellness resources, and performs other functions that support staff wellness in coordination with human resources staff. The subcommittee leader's name is:

Angela Cortes, Business/HR Manager, Angela.Cortes@tecs.k12.de.us

TECS will implement strategies to support staff in actively promoting and modeling healthy eating and physical activity behaviors. TECS will offer numerous activities/events in which staff may engage to keep healthy such as: annual staff VS students' basketball game and cheer off; Girls-on-the-run staff running partners; 5 and 10k runs; the biggest loser challenge; and other competitive challenges. TECS promotes staff member participation in health promotion programs and will support programs for staff members on healthy eating/weight management that are accessible and free or low-cost.

Professional Learning

When feasible, TECS 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 school 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 -time during before and after school activities that includes clubs, intramural sports, band and choir practice, drama rehearsals, etc.

School Campus -areas that are owned or leased by the school and used at any time for school-related activities such as the school building or on the school campus, 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 -midnight the night before to 30 minutes after the end of the instructional day.

Triennial – recurring every three years.

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¹⁰ Neumark-Sztainer D, Story M, Resnick MD, Blum RW. Correlates of inadequate fruit and vegetable consumption among adolescents. *Preventive Medicine*. 1996;25(5):497–505.

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¹⁵ Change Lab Solutions. (2014). *District Policy Restricting the Advertising of Food and Beverages Not Permitted to be Sold on School Grounds*. Retrieved from <http://changelabsolutions.org/publications/district-policy-schoolfood-ads>.