

# WELLNESS POLICY ASSESSMENT & REVIEW – BELLEVILLE MENNONITE SCHOOL

## Minutes from March 13 Discussion & Subsequent Correspondence

March 27, 2019

### I. Wellness Policy:

The purpose of a wellness policy is to guide in establishing and maintaining a school environment that promotes students' health, well-being, and ability to learn.

### II. Progress Report:

#### **How well are we meeting policy goals?**

All students K-12 have the opportunity each day to receive a healthy lunch which complies with NSLP nutritional guidelines. There are more than thirty different meals offered throughout the year. Any foods and beverages which are sold on campus during the school day are in compliance with Smart Snack guidelines. All students K-12 participate in PE class two times each week. BMS offers Jr High and Varsity sports (Soccer, Basketball & Field Hockey).

#### **Are we in compliance with policy guidelines?**

Due to relaxed NSLP guidelines, the Food Service Director has chosen to no longer serve fat-free milk. There were no students selecting fat-free white milk over 1% white milk when it was offered, and changing from fat-free chocolate milk to 1% chocolate milk has been met with a favorable response by all students. BMS has also elected to apply for waivers for several whole grain foods such as pasta and rolls which were poor quality and received negative reviews from the students.

There is a scheduled break each day for students in grades 6-12 when they are able to purchase Smart Snack compliant foods or consume foods brought from home. This break time is monitored by faculty and staff, but not by food service staff. While students are *encouraged* to bring in healthy snacks, there is no regulation of the items which are actually brought into the school and sometimes shared with peers.

We utilize parent volunteers in the Café on a daily basis and conduct a survey regarding school lunches with the students and staff annually. These surveys have been analyzed and results have been used to make adjustments which improve the overall appeal of school lunches.

There are four lunch periods from 11 AM to 1 PM: K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12. Each lunch period is at least 25 minutes. High school students do occasionally have meetings during their lunch period; however they are able to eat during the meeting.

Water is available at water fountains and sinks throughout both buildings and cups are provided at lunch for drinking during mealtime. In addition, water bottles are available for purchase at any time.

There are no vending machines on campus and no soda is served during the school day, with the exception of a few special events and class parties (less than four times per year). Concession stands which sell food during evening sporting events offer a variety of menu items, including some healthy snack choices. Parents are encouraged to provide healthy snacks when offering birthday treats to their children's class.

A variety of PE classes and physical activities are available to all students throughout the school year. Elementary grades (K-5) have recess at least two times each day. Weather permitting, recess is held outdoors. Field Day is an annual event held as a celebration at the end of the school year which promotes physical activities for all students. School facilities and fields are used by a variety of groups and community teams throughout the year as they are available.

## **What progress has been made since the last revision?**

An ice machine was purchased and installed in the school kitchen during the 2015-16 school year, which allowed food service staff to begin offering ice water (instead of tap water) to all students during their lunch periods. We have seen a tremendous increase in the amount of water that is consumed by students each day at lunch. The ice machine is also available to all staff, who utilize it on a regular basis to fill their own water bottles.

Colorful, attractive canvas collages and photos of fresh fruit and vegetables have been used to decorate the walls in the cafeteria area. These dynamic images were chosen in an effort to highlight the variety of delicious, healthy foods that are available to us. They replaced informational food posters which focused on the many beverages and snacks that are unhealthy choices and should be avoided.

In addition to sports programs for the middle and high school students, elementary students are invited to participate in basketball camps which have been developed and are held several times throughout the year (March Madness, summer camp). High school students are involved as group coaches in these events, which promotes mentoring relationships and increased interest in physical activity.

## **Summarize school activities, any wellness events, and outline areas for improvement.**

There are several periods of time (before school, during morning break, after school) when the gym could be used for physical activity. Students are currently not permitted to use the gym or outdoor fields before and after school unless under the direction of a coach. While it would create a logistical challenge for our limited faculty and staff to provide that supervision, it may increase the amount of physical activity that some students engage in on a daily basis.

Scheduling conflicts limit the number health classes and variety of PE classes which can be offered. We will continue to look for opportunities to increase the frequency of such classes.

The following comments were given by Mrs. Brittany Weaver, Health & Physical Education teacher: *"Being the only Health and Physical Education teacher makes it difficult for me to do all of the things I would like to be able to do with the students. I would love for Health class to be offered more than once a week. Currently, it is only offered once a week to all 8th and 10th grade students, but I would prefer more days with the students. With this limited amount of time I feel that I have to rush through the information and am unable to do many supplemental activities to make the class more relevant. It would also be great to be able to speak to the elementary students at least a few times a month about nutrition and how their bodies function, but I don't feel that I should take away our limited time spent doing physical activity during PE class. Perhaps going up sometime during the day would be better, but scheduling would be an issue. Also, I would love to be able to offer an elective PE class for middle school and high school students, but again due to the very tight schedule, I am unable to offer this class for our students. Lastly, we do have some weight equipment that is not utilized. It would be great to be able to start an after school program for interested students to participate in weight training. While we do have equipment, this would most likely require a better space and some updated cardio equipment, which we are unable to purchase at this time."*

Nutrition information and healthy snack options are provided in brochure form to all families at the beginning of each school year and are available on the website at all times. However, the Food Service Director could periodically send suggestions and reminders to parents and teachers about healthy snacks.

Monthly menus could be created with a featured fruit and vegetable, which would provide increased opportunities to learn about and try the featured foods prepared in a variety of ways.

While we do prepare many foods from scratch in our kitchen, several of our kitchen staff have indicated a desire to prepare pizza in-house as well, instead of serving prepacked pizza. We will look to replace these menu items in the coming year!