



Nancy S. Grasmick
State Superintendent of Schools

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July 13, 2007

Dr. Jerry Dean Weast, Superintendent
Montgomery County Public Schools
850 Hungerford Drive
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Dr. Weast:

Thank you for submitting Montgomery County Public Schools' (MCPS) Wellness Policy to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). I appreciate the time, effort, and commitment you and your staff made in completing the process of writing, and now implementing, the policy.

The Wellness Policy Review Team at MSDE has completed its review of your Wellness Policy. I am pleased to inform you that your policy has met all of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Wellness Policy requirements. The team took special note of the following areas your policy addresses to promote health and wellness for your students:

- Food and beverage nutrition standards meet and exceed Management Operational Memorandum (MOM) 12 standards and apply to vending machines, school stores, fund raisers, à la carte foods, and to the athletic department.
- MCPS includes a section on communication of nutrition and fitness information for students, parents, and the community in their Wellness Policy.
- MCPS references, in their Wellness Policy, the Student Transportation policy implemented by schools that encourages students and families to model wellness by walking for exercise.

In addition, during the meeting with your team, MSDE identified the following outstanding practices that support student health and wellness:

- MCPS has a strong vending policy that is more restrictive than Management Operational Memorandum (MOM) 12 standards, which only allow vending machines to be accessible to the students 30 minutes after the end of the school day.
- MCPS has strong nutrition education links with the school and community groups, including "Through the Kitchen Door" and "Linkages to Learning."
- MCPS references community involvement and parental involvement in their policies, which link the school with parents and community in the area of health and wellness.

As you review and revise your policy, the team recommends the inclusion of language that would address (1) implementation of nutrition standards for school parties; and (2) nutrition education as professional development for elementary school teachers and all health and physical education teachers.



Dr. Jerry Dean Weast

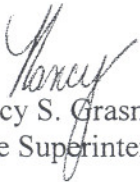
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I continue to believe that now is an excellent time to connect the USDA Wellness Policy requirements with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) coordinated school health program. While the USDA policy focuses on only three of the CDC components, MSDE encourages integration of all eight components to create a comprehensive Wellness Policy. I encourage you to continue to integrate and connect all of the eight components into the nutrition education, nutrition standards and physical activity sections of your Wellness Policy.

I commend you and your staff for your efforts to improve the health and wellness of Montgomery County's children. Attached is a list of ideas and suggestions to support you in moving forward with implementation and evaluation of your Wellness Policy. In addition, "Maryland's Healthy School Toolkit" is an excellent resource with information addressing all of the components of wellness policies. The toolkit is available at www.eatsmartmaryland.org. In April 2008, MSDE and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene will convene a one-day meeting to share challenges, solutions, and accomplishments school systems have had while implementing wellness policies. More information on this meeting will be sent to you in the near future.

Sincerely,



Nancy S. Grasmick
State Superintendent of Schools

NSG/vc

Enclosure

c: Kathleen Lazor
Stewart Eidel