



## Valley Arts and Science Academy Wellness Policy

### **Responsibilities**

The Board of Education recognizes the important connection between a healthy diet and a student's ability to learn effectively and achieve high standards in school. The Board also recognizes the school's role, as part of the larger community, to promote family health, sustainable agriculture and environmental restoration.

The Board of Education recognizes that the sharing of food is a fundamental experience for all peoples; a primary way to nurture and celebrate our cultural diversity; and an excellent bridge for building friendships, and inter-generational bonds.

### **Mission**

The educational mission is to improve the health of the entire community by teaching students and family's ways to establish and maintain life-long healthy eating habits. The mission shall be accomplished through nutrition education, garden experiences, the food served in schools, and core academic content in the classroom.

### **Goals**

1. Ensure that no student at Valley Arts and Science Academy is hungry.
2. Ensure that a healthy and nutritious breakfast, lunch and after school snack is available to every student enrolled so that students are prepared to learn to their fullest potential.
3. Ensure that all qualified children become eligible for free meals by frequently checking with Fresno County Social Services.
4. Ensure maximum participation in the school meal program by developing a coordinated, comprehensive outreach and promotion plan for the school meal programs.
5. Shift from food-based menu planning to nutrient-based planning (as set forth under USDA guidelines) to allow for more flexible food selection from vendor.
6. Ensure that the nutritional value of the food served significantly improves upon USDA Dietary Guidelines by providing nutritious, fresh, tasty, locally grown food that reflects Fresno's cultural diversity.
7. Ensure that the food served shall be organic to the maximum extent possible, as defined by the California Certified Organic Farmers.
8. Eliminate whenever possible harmful food additives and processes, such as bovine growth hormones, irradiation, and genetically modified foods.
9. Serve meals in a pleasant environment with sufficient time for eating, while fostering good manners and respect for fellow students.

10. Maximize the reduction of waste by recycling, reusing, composting and purchasing recycled products whenever possible. Our school site shall have a recycling program.
11. Ensure an adequate amount of time for students to eat breakfast (20 minutes) and lunch (30 minutes) at appropriate times, preferably between 7:30 – 8:30 a.m. for breakfast and 11:00 a.m. – 1 p.m. for lunch. Lunch periods, whenever possible, should follow recess periods.

## **Strategies**

### **A. Integration into the Curriculum**

1. Integrate eating experiences, gardens, and nutrition education into the curriculum for math, science, social studies and language arts at all grade levels.
2. Establish a school garden. Give students the opportunity to plant, harvest, prepare, cook and eat food they have grown.
3. Establish relationships with local farms. Encourage farmers and farm workers to come to the school classroom and arrange for students to visit farms.

### **B. Student Participation**

1. Solicit student preferences in planning menus and snacks through annual focus groups, surveys, and taste tests of new foods and recipes.

### **C. Waste Reduction**

1. Ensure that cafeterias are part of the environmental education of students and staff through reducing waste, composting, recycling and purchasing recycled material.

### **D. Sustainable Agriculture**

1. Purchase food from school gardens and local farmers as a first priority, based on availability and acceptability.

### **E. Nutrition Education and Professional Development**

1. Provide regular professional development to enable the Food Service Staff to become full partners in providing excellent food for our students.

2. Provide regular training, at least annually, to teachers and the Food Service Staff on basic nutrition, nutrition education, and benefits of organic and sustainable agriculture.
3. Provide Child Nutrition Services with USDA approved computer software, training and support to implement nutrient-based menu planning.

#### **F. Public Information**

1. Each year in March, Child Nutrition Services shall prepare The Food Program Manager's Annual Report for the Board of Education, which will include: a) Description of the level of service and level of participation; b) Profit and Loss Statement for the past fiscal year; c) Budget for the future year; e) Report on the progress in meeting the wellness policy goals; f) Nutritional quality of the food being served; g) Inventory of equipment; h) Budget for maintenance and replacement equipment.
2. Valley Arts and Science Academy Wellness Policy, Food Program Manager's Annual Report, Monthly Menus and food policy information shall be available at District Office and on the web site.

#### **G. Maintenance and Repair of Equipment**

1. The Board of Education instructs the Maintenance Committee to include kitchen facilities, food preparation and storage of equipment as high priority in its comprehensive maintenance policy.
2. Modernize computer equipment and programs, and institute an automated accounting system.

#### **H. Physical Activity**

1. Students should have opportunities to engage in physical activities for the nationally recommended amount of 60 minutes per day whenever possible and should be encouraged to embrace physical activity as a personal habit and behavior. Opportunities for physical activity may be incorporated into other

subject lessons, and when possible between lessons or classes.

[The physical education minutes required are: 200 minutes per 10 school days for grades 1 through 6 (*Education Code* Section 51210)]

## **I. Monitoring and Policy Review**

1. The Executive Director or designee will ensure compliance with the Wellness Policies.
2. A formal assessment will be repeated every 3 years to assess progress and determine areas in need of improvement, and annual informal assessments will take place.

## **J. Foods provided outside of cafeteria**

1. Fundraisers: VASA will encourage healthy food and beverage choices at fundraising events. A list of healthy food and beverage suggestions will be provided to organizations to assist in this effort.
2. Foods Provided as Rewards or as Part of Curriculum: The use of food as reward for academic performance or good behavior is not permitted. To the extent that food is a part of a curricular event, efforts should be made to provide healthy choices.
3. Foods sent in as part of Celebrations: Please refer to VASA's Party and Birthday Celebration Policy
4. Snacks: Parents are encouraged to provide healthy snacks during the school day for their children. Foods that are not permitted are: Hot Cheetos, Cheetos, Puffs, candy of any kind, and soda, energy drinks, or kool-aid.

Board Policy **0005**

Approved **03/18/2009**