

**MR. ANDREW J. JONES**

Superintendent



## **Rensselaer Central Schools Corporation**

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# **Rensselaer Central School Corporation Wellness Policy March 2026**

## **Wellness Policy on Physical Activity and Nutrition**

The School Board of Rensselaer Central School Corporation supports the health and well-being of the corporation's students by promoting nutrition and physical activity at all grade levels.

In accordance with federal law, it is the policy of the Board to provide students access to healthy foods and beverages; provide opportunities for developmentally appropriate physical activity; and require that all meals served by the school corporation meet or exceed the federal nutritional guidelines issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The Board recognizes that good nutrition and regular physical activity affect the health and well-being of the Corporation's students. Furthermore, research suggests that there is a positive correlation between a student's health and well-being and his/her ability to learn. Moreover, schools can play an important role in the developmental process by which students establish their health and nutrition habits by providing nutritious meals and snacks, supporting the development of good eating habits, and promoting increased physical activity both in and out of school.

Schools alone, however, cannot develop students' healthy behaviors and habits with regard to eating and exercise. It will be necessary for not only the staff, but also parents and the public at large to be involved in a community-wide effort to promote, support, and model such healthy behaviors and habits.

The School Wellness Policy shall be made available to students and families via the corporation's website and each school's office.

## **Wellness Committee**

1. Andrew Jones – Superintendent of Rensselaer Central School Corporation
2. Chad Wynn – Chairperson and Principal of Van Rensselaer Elementary
3. Chris McElroy – Director of Food Service
4. Courtney Wilcox – School Board Representative
5. George Cover – School Board Representative
6. Marcella Baxter – Corporation Nurse
7. Jodi Hickman – Teacher at Rensselaer Central Primary
8. Ashton Wireman – Teacher at Van Rensselaer Elementary
9. Becky Zacher – Teacher at Rensselaer Central Middle School
10. Stephanie Dobson – Physical Education/Health Teacher at Rensselaer Central High School
11. Monica Clemente – Middle School Counselor
12. Taylor Widner – Parent Representative and Health Department
13. Emily Louck – Student Representative

## **Wellness Policy Goals for 2026-2029**

1. Promote nutrition and wellness through the school menus, vending machines and signage.
2. Educate students on nutrition through teacher and student-led lessons, activities, and discussion.
3. Continue to offer breakfast to all students throughout the corporation.
4. Support and promote proper dietary habits contributing to students' health status and academic performance.
5. Continue to hold Walk/Bike to School events twice a year.
6. Promote to students and staff using the school facilities during out of school hours.
7. Promote to the community, students, and staff Adult Fitness and Open Swim.
8. Utilize Wellness Committees in every building to meet, discuss, and address student mental health and well-being.
9. Work with our local health department on relevant health issues.
10. Meet in the Fall, Winter, and Spring as a committee to review the policy.

# Nutritional Guidelines for Foods and Beverages

In compliance with Nutritional Guidelines for Foods and Beverages, Rensselaer Central School Corporation (RCSC) will:

## A. School Meals

**1.** Meals served through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs will:

- Be appealing and appetizing to children;
- Meet, at a minimum, the nutrition requirements established by the USDA for federally funded programs;
- Contain 0 percent trans fats;
- Offer a variety of fruits and vegetables;
- 50 percent of the grains offered are whole grain-rich.

**2.** All cooked foods will be baked or steamed. Proper procurement procedures and preparation methods will be used to decrease excess fat, calorie and sodium levels in food.

**3.** Special dietary needs of students will be considered when planning meals, according to the document *Accommodating Children with Special Dietary Needs in the School Nutrition Programs*.

**4.** The food services department has the nutritional content of meals available to share with students and parents/guardians.

## B. School Meal Participation

**1.** To the extent possible, schools will provide the USDA School Breakfast Program to all students.

**2.** To the extent possible, schools will utilize methods to serve school breakfasts that encourage participation.

**3.** Schools will inform families of the availability and location of Summer Food Service Program meals, in accordance with the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. Schools in which more than 50 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-priced school meals will sponsor the Summer Food Service Program when feasible.

### C. Mealtimes and Scheduling

1. Adequate time will be provided to students to eat lunch (at least 20 minutes after being served) and breakfast (at least 10 minutes after being served).
2. Elementary schools will schedule recess before lunch if the schedule allows.
3. School meals will be served in clean and pleasant settings.
4. Students will have convenient access to hand-washing and sanitizing stations.
5. Potable (drinking) water must be readily available at all mealtimes.
6. Appropriate supervision will be provided in the cafeteria and rules for safe behavior shall be consistently enforced.

### D. Professional Development

1. Professional development and training will be provided at least annually to food service managers and staff on proper food handling techniques and healthy cooking practices.

## **Nutrition Standards for Competitive and Other Food and Beverages**

### **A. Approved Nutrition Standards, based on the nutrition standards of the Institute of Medicine (2007).**

#### **1. K-12 à la carte, school vending machines and other foods outside of school meals shall be limited to:**

- No more than 30 percent of total calories from fat,
- Less than 10 percent of total calories from saturated fats,
- 0 percent trans fats,
- No more than 35 percent of calories from total sugars,
- No more than 200 milligrams of sodium per portion as packaged,
- No more than 200 calories per package, and
- 100 percent of the grains offered are whole grain-rich.

#### **2. K-12 à la carte, school vending machines and other beverages outside of school meals shall be limited to:**

- Water without flavoring, additives, or carbonation,
- Low-fat and nonfat milk (in 8- to 12-ounce portions),

- 100% fruit juice in 4-ounce portions as packaged for elementary/middle school and 8 ounces (2 portions) for high school, and
- All beverages other than water, white milk or juice shall be no larger than 12 ounces.

## **B. Availability**

1. A vending machine at an elementary school that dispenses food or beverage items may not be accessible to students.
2. Vending machines in middle and high schools:
  - Will contain items that meet the approved nutrition standards. (Smart Snacks)
3. Vending machines for school staff will not be accessible to students.
4. Food and beverages will not be sold in school stores.
5. Students and staff will have free, potable (drinking) water for consumption available in water fountains throughout the school building.

## **C. Concession Stands**

1. The concession items sold at school-sponsored events to participants, fans and visitors shall include at least 50 percent healthy beverages and foods, according to the approved nutrition standards.

## **D. Classroom Celebrations**

1. Classroom teachers will encourage healthy choice foods for classroom celebrations via newsletters.
2. Classroom celebrations could include activities (e.g., giving free time, extra recess, music and reading time).
3. Schools shall inform parents/guardians of the classroom celebration guidelines.
4. All food and drink must be commercially prepared and packaged with the nutrition label and ingredient list on the package. No homemade items.

## **E. Food as a Reward or Punishment**

1. School staff will not withhold food or drink at mealtimes as punishment.

## **F. Fundraisers**

1. Fundraising activities will support healthy eating and wellness. Schools will promote the sale of non-food items for school-sponsored fundraising. For a food or beverage item to be sold as a fundraiser, it must meet the approved nutrition standards. Fundraisers subject to this rule are those sold during the school day on school grounds. School day is defined as from midnight the night before to 30 minutes after the end of school.

G. Non-sold food and beverages:

1. Non-sold food and beverages will comply with federal nutrition guidelines.

H. Marketing

1. Signage or similar media on school campus during the school day may only advertise food and/or beverages provided and sold by the school that meet the competitive foods standards for foods sold in schools (i.e. Smart Snacks).

## **Nutrition Education and Promotion**

A. Nutrition Education

1. Nutrition education shall be included in the health curriculum so that instruction is sequential and standards-based and provides students with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to lead healthy lives.
2. Nutrition education shall be included in the sequential, comprehensive health curriculum in accordance with the curriculum standards and benchmarks established by the State.
3. Health education will be integrated into subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects.

B. Nutrition Promotion

1. The schools will have signage that promotes a healthy lifestyle and choices.
2. The school lunch menu will include nutrition and wellness reminders and tips.

## **Physical Activity**

#### A. Physical Education K-8

1. A sequential, comprehensive physical education program shall be provided for students K-12 in accordance with the physical education academic content standards and benchmarks adopted by the State.
2. The sequential, comprehensive physical education curriculum shall provide students with opportunities to learn, practice, and be assessed on developmentally appropriate knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to engage in lifelong, health-enhancing physical activity.
3. Planned instruction in physical education shall be sufficient for students to achieve a proficient level with regard to the standards and benchmarks adopted by the State.
4. Planned instruction in physical education shall promote participation in physical activity outside the regular school day.
5. The sequential, comprehensive physical education curriculum shall stress the importance of remaining physically active for life.
6. Planned instruction in physical education shall be presented in an environment free of embarrassment, humiliation, shaming, taunting, bullying, or harassment of any kind.

#### B. Daily Recess and Physical Activity Breaks

1. Each elementary school shall provide daily physical activity in accordance with Indiana Code 20-30-5-7.5.
2. Physical activity shall not be employed as a form of discipline or punishment.
3. All elementary school students will have at least 1 period of active recess per day that is at least 20 minutes in length as recommended by the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE). This recess period will be outdoors when possible. If outdoor recess is not possible due to inclement weather, teachers will provide an indoor physical activity break in the classroom.
4. All teachers will be encouraged to use physical activity breaks during classroom time as often as possible.
5. RCSC will discourage extended periods of inactivity (2 or more hours). During events such as mandatory school-wide testing, teachers will give students periodic breaks for moderate physical activity.

### **School Based Activities**

#### A. Walking and Bicycling to School

1. Where appropriate and safe, RCSC allows walking and bicycling to school.
2. Schools will promote walking and bicycling to school, including the promotion of International Walk to School Day, which falls on the first Wednesday of October each year. RCSC will also have a Walk/Bike to School Event in the Spring.

#### B. Use of School Facilities Outside of School Hours

1. School spaces and facilities, such as the playground, gym, pool and track, will be made available to students, staff and community members on days designated by RCSC. School policies concerning safety will apply at all times.

#### C. Staff Wellness

1. Schools will allow staff to use school facilities outside of school hours for activities such as group fitness classes, walking programs and individual use.

#### D. Cafeteria

1. The schools shall schedule mealtimes so there is minimum disruption by bus schedules, recess, and other special programs or events.
2. The school shall provide attractive, clean environments in which the students eat.

### **Evaluation and Evaluation Tool**

1. Every three years, Rensselaer Central School Corporation (RCSC) is required to conduct an evaluation of its Wellness Policy. The committee uses the Indiana Department of Education Wellness Policy Evaluation Checklist as its evaluation tool.
2. The three-year assessment and evaluation report will be made available to the public by posting it on the school corporation website.