

## **SECTION A**

### **FOUNDATIONS AND BASIC COMMITMENTS**

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <b>AA</b>                | <b>SCHOOL DISTRICT LEGAL STATUS</b>   |
| <b>AB</b>                | <b>THE PEOPLE AND THEIR SCHOOL DISTRICT</b>                                   |
| <b>AC</b>                | <b>NONDISCRIMINATION</b>  |
| <b>ACA</b>               | <b>NONDISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF SEX</b>                                  |
| <b>ACAB/<br/>ACAC</b>    | <b>HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION</b>  |
| <b>ACAB-P<br/>ACAC-P</b> | <b>HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION<br/>PROCEDURES</b>                           |
| <b>ACE</b>               | <b>NONDISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF<br/>DISABILITY</b>                       |
| <b>AD</b>                | <b>MISSION OF THE READING PUBLIC SCHOOLS</b>                                  |
| <b>AD-E</b>              | <b>EDUCATIONAL FOCUS AREAS AND TARGETS<br/>FOR THE READING PUBLIC SCHOOLS</b> |
| <b>ADC</b>               | <b>TOBACCO PROHIBITION</b>  |
| <b>ADDA</b>              | <b>C.O.R.I. REQUIREMENTS</b>  |
| <b>ADF</b>               | <b>WELLNESS POLICY</b>  |

**Note: Administrative Guidelines are not School Committee Policy. Guidelines are developed as a result of School Committee Policy. Such Guidelines are denoted (-P).**

## SCHOOL DISTRICT LEGAL STATUS

The legal basis for public education in the district is vested in the will of the people as expressed in the Constitution of Massachusetts and state statutes pertaining to education.

Under the General Laws of Massachusetts,

"... Every town shall maintain... a sufficient number of schools for the instruction of all children who may legally attend a public school therein."

The public educational system of Reading structurally is a department of the town operated under laws pertaining to education and under regulations of the Massachusetts Board of Education. The area served by the Reading Public Schools is coterminous with the Town of Reading.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee on August 24, 2006

LEGAL REFS: Constitution of Massachusetts, Part II, Chapter V, Section II  
M.G.L. 71:1

CROSS REF.: BB, School Committee Legal Status

Historical Note: Massachusetts has the oldest public school system in the nation. Dating back to 1647, the laws of the Massachusetts Bay Colony required towns to provide for a program of public education.

## **THE PEOPLE AND THEIR SCHOOL DISTRICT**

The School Committee has the dual responsibility for implementing statutory requirements pertaining to public education and local citizens' expectations for the education of the community's youth. It also has an obligation to determine and assess citizens' desires. When citizens elect delegates to represent them in the conduct of public education, their representatives have the authority to exercise their best judgment in determining policies, making decisions, and approving procedures for carrying out the responsibility.

The School Committee therefore affirms and declares its intent to:

1. Maintain two-way communications with citizens of the community. The public will be kept informed of the progress and problems of the school system, and citizens will be urged to bring their aspirations and feelings about their public schools to the attention of this body, which they have chosen to represent them in the management of public education.
2. Establish policies and make decisions on the basis of declared educational philosophy and goals. All decisions made by this Committee will be made with priority given to the purposes set forth, most crucial of which is the optimal learning of the children enrolled in our schools.
3. Act as a truly representative body for members of the community in matters involving public education. The Committee recognizes that ultimate responsibility for public education rests with the state, but individual School Committees have been assigned specific authority through state law. The Committee will not relinquish any of this authority since it believes that decision-making control over the children's learning should be in the hands of local citizens as much as possible.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee on August 24, 2006

## NONDISCRIMINATION

Public schools have the responsibility to overcome, insofar as possible, any barriers that prevent children from achieving their potential. The public school system will do its part. This commitment to the community is affirmed in the following statements of the School Committee's intent to:

1. Promote the rights and responsibilities of all individuals as set forth in the State and Federal Constitutions, pertinent legislation, and applicable judicial interpretations.
2. Encourage positive experiences for children, youth and adults, all of whom have differing personal and family characteristics and who come from various socioeconomic, racial and ethnic groups.
3. Work toward a more integrated society and to enlist the support of individuals as well as groups and agencies, both private and governmental, in such an effort.
4. Use all appropriate communication and action techniques to air and reduce the grievances of individuals and groups.
5. Carefully consider, in all the decisions made within the school system, the potential benefits or adverse consequences that those decisions might have on the human relations aspects of all segments of society.
6. Initiate a process of reviewing policies and practices of the school system in order to achieve to the greatest extent possible the objectives of this statement.

The Committee's policy of nondiscrimination will extend to students, staff, the general public, and individuals with whom it does business. No person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privileges, and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or disability. If you have a complaint or feel that you have been discriminated against because of your race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or disability, register your complaint with the Title IX compliance officer.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee on August 24, 2006

Revised and Adopted by the Reading School Committee on November 5, 2012

LEGAL REFS: Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964  
Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972  
Executive Order 11246, as amended by E.O. 11375  
Equal Pay Act, as amended by the Education Amendments of 1972  
Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972  
Rehabilitation Act of 1973  
Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975  
M.G.L. 71B:1 et seq. (Chapter 766 of the Acts of 1972)  
M.G.L. 76:5; Amended 2011  
M.G.L.76:16 BESE regulations 603 CMR 26:00 Amended 2012  
BESE regulations 603 CMR 28:00

CROSS REFS: ACA - ACE Subcategories for Nondiscrimination  
GBA, Equal Opportunity Employment  
JB, Equal Educational Opportunities

**NOTE: This category is for a general policy covering all types of**

**nondiscrimination and relating to students, staff, and others. Federal and state laws apply.**

**If a policy relates to staff only, to students only, or a particular form on non-discrimination, it is better filed elsewhere. Appropriate codes for such statements are indicated in the cross-references.**

**Regulations pertaining to all forms of nondiscrimination – or a procedure all persons can resort to for redress of grievances related to nondiscrimination – would follow under code AC-R.**

**Law in most instances requires official School Committee approval of regulations in this area.**

## **NONDISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF SEX**

The School Committee, in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, declares that the school system does not and will not discriminate on the basis of sex in the educational programs and activities of the public schools. This policy will extend not only to students with regard to educational opportunities, but also to employees with regard to employment opportunities.

The School Committee will continue to ensure fair and equitable educational and employment opportunities, without regard to sex, to all of its students and employees.

The Committee will designate an individual to act as the school system's Title IX compliance officer. All students and employees will be notified of the name and office address and telephone number of the compliance officer.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee on August 24, 2006

Revised and Adopted by the Reading School Committee on November 5, 2012

LEGAL REFS:            Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972  
                             45 CFR, Part 86, (Federal Register, 6/4/75)  
                             M.G.L. 76:5; 76:16 (Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971)  
                             BESE 603 CMR 26:00

CROSS REF.:            AC, Nondiscrimination

**Reading Public Schools**

**Discrimination and Harassment Grievance Procedures**

The Reading Public School system is committed to maintaining a school environment free of harassment based on race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age or disability. Harassment by administrators, certified and support personnel, students, vendors and other individuals at school or at school-sponsored events is unlawful and is strictly prohibited. The Reading Public Schools requires all employees and students to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner with respect to their fellow employees, students and all members of the school community.

Definitions

For the purposes of this procedure:

- A. A “Complaint” is defined as an allegation that a student or employee has been discriminated against or harassed on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or religion.
- B. “Discrimination” means discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, age, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or religion that is excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity of the school.
- C. “Harassment” means unwelcome conduct on the basis of race, age, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or religion that is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive to create a hostile environment for the individual at school. Harassment may include insults, name-calling, off color jokes, threats, comments, innuendoes, notes, display of pictures or symbols, gestures, or other conduct which rises to the level of a hostile environment.
- D. “Sexual Harassment” means unwelcome, sexually offensive or gender-based conduct which is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive to create a hostile environment for the individual at school. Additionally, under M.G.L. c. 151C, § 1, the term “sexual harassment” may also include, but is not limited to, sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:— (i) submission to or rejection of such advances, requests or conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of the provision of the benefits, privileges or placement services or as a basis for the evaluation of academic achievement; or (ii) such advances, requests or conduct have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s

education by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive educational environment.

When determining whether an environment is hostile, the school district examines the context, nature, frequency, and location of the sexual or gender-based incidents, as well as the identity, number and relationships of the persons involved. The school district must consider whether the alleged harassment was sufficient to have created such an environment for a reasonable person of the same age, gender, and experience as the alleged victim, and under similar circumstances.

### Harassment and Retaliation Prohibited

Harassment in any form or for any reason is absolutely forbidden. This includes harassment by administrators, certified and support personnel, students, vendors and other individuals in school or at school related events. Retaliation against any individual who has brought harassment or other inappropriate behavior to the attention of school officials or who has cooperated in an investigation of a complaint under this policy is unlawful and will not be tolerated by the Reading Public Schools.

Persons who engage in harassment or retaliation may be subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to reprimand, suspension, termination/expulsion or other sanctions as determined by the school administration and/or School Committee, subject to applicable procedural requirements.

### How to make a complaint

- A. Any student who believes that he/she has been discriminated against or harassed should report their concern promptly to any teacher, guidance counselor, nurse, building administrator, or central office administrator. The school staff member should then report the concern to the school principal or Civil Rights Coordinator. If the school principal receives the report, either verbally or written, he or she will notify the Civil Rights Coordinator of the Complaint. Students or employees who are unsure whether discrimination or harassment has occurred are encouraged to discuss the situation with the school principal.
- B. Any employee or other person who believes that he/she has been discriminated against or harassed should report the incident to the building principal, assistant principal, his/her department chair or his/her supervisor. Additionally, the employee may, if applicable, request union/association representation to assist him/her through the complaint process. Employees may also file complaints directly to the Human Resources Administrator.



- C. District staff is expected to report possible incidents of discrimination or harassment of students and fellow employees. Parents and other adults are also encouraged to report any concerns about possible discrimination or harassment of students or employees which have allegedly occurred on school grounds, at school related events, or actions which occurred outside of school but possibly create a hostile environment for a student or employee while he/she is at school.

#### Complaint Handling and Investigation

- A. The school principal shall promptly inform the relevant Civil Rights Coordinator and the person(s) who is the subject of the Complaint that a Complaint has been received.
- B. When a complaint of discrimination or harassment is alleged, the person making the allegations will be encouraged to write out a description of the allegations and the impact the alleged conduct has had on him or her (*See Complaint and Reporting Forms at Appendix A and B*). If the complainant or reporter is a student and the student chooses not to fill out a written report, the person accepting the complaint shall listen to the student and complete the complaint or reporter form for the student.
- C. After notifying the appropriate Civil Rights Coordinator, the school principal or designee may pursue an informal resolution of the Complaint with the agreement of the parties involved. Informal resolution is optional, and the Complainant may elect to proceed according to the formal resolution procedure at any time prior to the completion of the informal resolution.
- D. Under the formal resolution procedure, the complaint will be investigated by the school principal or other individual designated by the school principal or the Civil Rights Coordinator. The investigator will gather evidence to determine whether, by a preponderance of the evidence, discrimination against or harassment has occurred. Any Complaint about an employee who holds a supervisory position shall be investigated by a person who is not subject to that supervisor's authority. Any Complaint about the Superintendent should be submitted to the School Committee Chair, who will consult with legal counsel concerning handling the investigation of the Complaint.
  - 1. The Complainant shall have the opportunity to identify witnesses and provide other relevant evidence to the investigator.
  - 2. The person who is the subject of the Complaint will be provided with an opportunity to be heard as part of the investigation including the opportunity to provide relevant information and identify witnesses for the investigator's consideration.

3. The privacy rights of all parties to the Complaint shall be maintained in accordance with applicable state and federal laws.
  4. The investigator will keep a written record of the investigation process.
  5. The investigator may take interim remedial measures to reduce the risk of further discrimination or harassment while the investigation is pending.
  6. The investigation and the notification of the outcome to the complainant and the subject of the complaint shall be completed within fifteen (15) school days of the date of the receipt of the Complaint.
  7. The investigator may extend the investigation period beyond fifteen (15) school days because of extenuating circumstances, including but not limited to availability and cooperation of witnesses, complexity of the investigation, school vacation periods, and the involvement of law enforcement and other outside agency investigations. If the investigator extends the investigation, he or she will notify the Complainant of the extension.
  8. If a complaint or report of discrimination or harassment is received after June 1 of a given school year, the investigator will attempt to complete the investigation by the end of the school year. In the event that the investigation extends beyond the last day of school, the District will make reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within the above-referenced time frame, but may extend the investigation period to account for the availability of witnesses during the summer vacation period. If the investigator extends the investigation, he or she will notify the Complainant of the extension and make reasonable efforts to interview the witnesses during the summer vacation period.
  9. Nothing in this procedure will preclude the investigator, in his or her discretion, from completing the investigation sooner than the fifteen (15) school days described above.
- E. If the investigator determines that discrimination or harassment has occurred, he/she shall take steps to eliminate the discriminatory or harassing environment, which may include but is not limited to determining what disciplinary action should be taken against the person(s) who engaged in discrimination or harassment, if any; and determining what corrective and/or remedial steps are necessary to prevent recurrence of any discriminatory behavior, including but not limited to harassment, and to correct its discriminatory effects if appropriate.
- F. The investigator will inform the alleged target of the discrimination and/or harassment and the person(s) who was the subject of the complaint of the results of the investigation (in accordance with applicable state and federal privacy laws) within fifteen (15) school days of receipt of the Complaint, unless the investigation is extended under the provisions described above. This notice of the outcome of the

investigation must inform the complainant as to whether or not the investigation determined that the conduct occurred, any individual remedies offered or provided to the complainant or any sanctions imposed on the perpetrator that directly relate to the complainant (e.g., stay away order or no contact order), and other steps the school has taken to eliminate the hostile environment, if one has been found to exist, and prevent recurrence. The perpetrator should not be notified of the individual remedies offered or provided to the complainant (e.g., counseling; alternative classes, etc.).

G. If the Complainant or the student’s parents/legal guardians are dissatisfied with the results of the investigation, an appeal may be made to the Civil Rights Coordinator within ten (10) school days after receiving notice of the outcome of the investigation. In the appeal, the appellant should identify any specific alleged factual or legal errors and explain why the errors should result in a different conclusion. The Civil Rights Coordinator shall review the investigation and may conduct further investigation if deemed appropriate. Within five (5) school days of receipt of any such appeal, the Civil Rights Coordinator shall decide whether or not to reopen the investigation, uphold the principal or designee’s determination, or reverse the principal or designees determination. The Civil Rights Coordinator shall provide written notification of that determination to both the Complainant and the accused. The Civil Rights Coordinator’s decision shall be final, subject to further written appeal to the Superintendent within five (5) days of receipt of the decision of the Civil Rights Coordinator.

**H. The District’s Civil Rights Coordinators are:**

**Employees:**

Micheala Saunders,  
Human Resources Administrator  
Reading Public Schools  
62 Oakland Road  
Reading, Massachusetts 01867  
781-944-5800

**Students:**

Title VI (race, color, national origin),  
Title IX (gender), the Age Act, and for  
claims related to religion, gender, gender  
identity and/or sexual orientation:

Craig Martin,  
Assistant Superintendent for Learning and  
Teaching  
Reading Public Schools  
82 Oakland Road  
Reading, Massachusetts 01867  
781-944-5800

Section 504 Coordinator (disability-related claims)

Carolyn Wilson  
Director of Student Services  
Reading Public Schools  
62 Oakland Road  
Reading, Massachusetts 01867  
781-942-9129

- I. Students and employees are encouraged to utilize the District's Complaint Procedure. However, students and employees are hereby notified that they also have the right to report complaints to:

The United States Department of Education  
Office for Civil Rights  
5 Post Office Square, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Boston, Massachusetts 02110-1491  
Telephone: (617) 289-0111  
Fax: 617-289-0150  
TDD: 877-521-2172

or

Program Quality Assurance Services  
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148-4906  
Telephone: 781-338-3700  
TTY: N.E.T. Relay: 1-800-439-2370  
FAX: 781-338-3710

Revised and Adopted by the Reading School Committee on November 25, 2013

Revised and Adopted by the Reading School Committee on October 6, 2014

**APPENDIX A  
READING PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**BULLYING/HARASSMENT/DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINT FORM**

**Note: \*If concerned about anyone's immediate physical safety, please call 911 first, then notify an administrator.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Who was responsible for the alleged harassment or discrimination?

Describe the alleged harassment or discrimination:

Date, time and place the alleged harassment or discrimination occurred:

Were there others involved with the alleged harassment or discrimination? If so, who were they?  
Describe their involvement:

List any witnesses and describe what they may have seen or heard:

What was your reaction to the alleged harassment/discrimination?

Describe any subsequent incidents.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Complainant

**APPENDIX B  
READING PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**BULLYING/HARASSMENT/DISCRIMINATION REPORTER FORM**

**Note: \*If concerned about anyone's immediate physical safety, please call 911 first, then notify an administrator.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date    /    /   

School \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Name of individual harassed / discriminated against:

Who was responsible for the alleged harassment/discrimination?

Describe the alleged harassment/discrimination:

Date, time and place the alleged harassment/discrimination occurred:

Were there others involved with the alleged harassment/discrimination? If so, who were they? Describe their involvement:

List any other witnesses and describe what they may have seen or heard:

Describe any subsequent incidents.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Reporter

## NONDISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF DISABILITY

Title II of the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1992 requires that no qualified individual with a disability shall, because the district's facilities are inaccessible to or unusable by individuals with disabilities, be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, and activities of the district or be subject to discrimination. Nor shall the district exclude or otherwise deny services, programs, or activities to an individual because of the known disability of a person with whom the individual is known to have a relationship or association.

### Definition

A "qualified individual with a disability" is an individual with a disability who, with or without reasonable modification to rules, policies, or practices, the removal of architectural, communication, or transportation barriers, or the provision of auxiliary aids and services, meets the essential eligibility requirements for the receipt of services or the participation in programs or activities provided by the district.

### Reasonable Modification

The district shall make reasonable modification in policies, practices, or procedures when the modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability, unless the district can demonstrate that making the modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity.

### Communications

The district shall take the appropriate steps to ensure that communications with applicants, participants, and members of the public with disabilities are as effective as communications with others. To this end, the district shall furnish appropriate auxiliary aids and services where necessary to afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy benefits of, a service, program, or activity conducted by the district. In determining what type of auxiliary aid or service is necessary, the district shall give primary consideration to the requests of the individuals with disabilities.

### Auxiliary Aids and Services

"Auxiliary aids and services" includes (1) qualified interpreters, note takers, transcription services, written materials, assisted listening systems, and other effective methods for making aurally delivered materials available to individuals with hearing impairments; (2) qualified readers, taped texts, audio recordings, Braille materials, large print materials, or other effective methods for making visually delivered materials available to individuals with visual impairments; (3) acquisition or modification of equipment or devices and (4) other similar services and actions.

### Limits of Required Modification

The district is not required to take any action that it can demonstrate would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of a service, program, or activity or in undue financial and administrative burdens. Any decision that, in compliance with its responsibility to provide effective communication for individuals with disabilities, would fundamentally alter the service, program, or activity or unduly burden the district shall be made by the School Committee after considering all resources available for use in funding and operating the program, service, or activity. The decision shall be accompanied by a written statement of the reasons for reaching that conclusion.

Notice

The district shall make available to applicants, participants, beneficiaries, and other interested persons information regarding the provisions of Title II of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and its applicability to the services, programs, or activities of the district. The information shall be made available in such a manner as the School Committee and Superintendent find necessary to apprise such persons of the projections against discrimination assured them by the ADA.

Compliance Coordinator

The district shall designate at least one employee to coordinate its efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under Title II of ADA, including any investigation of any complaint communicated to it alleging its noncompliance or alleging any actions that would be prohibited under ADA. The district shall make available to all interested individuals the name, office address, and telephone number of the employee(s) so designated and shall adopt and publish procedures for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any action that would be prohibited under the ADA. The school system receives federal financial assistance and must comply with the above requirements. Additionally, the School Committee is of the general view that:

1. Discrimination against a qualified handicapped person solely on the basis of handicap is unfair; and
2. To the extent possible, qualified handicapped persons should be in the mainstream of life in school community. Accordingly, employees of the school system will comply with the above requirements of the law and policy statements of this Committee to ensure nondiscrimination on the basis of handicap.

Re-Adopted by the Reading School Committee on August 24, 2006

LEGAL REFS:           Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504  
                          Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975  
                          M.G.L. 71B:1 et seq. (Chapter 766 of the Acts of 1972)  
                          Title II, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992  
                          Board of Education Chapter 766 Regulations, adopted 10/74, as amended  
                          through 3/28/78

CROSS REFS:         IGB, Special Instructional Programs and Accommodations  
                          IGBA, Programs for Handicapped Students



## **MISSION OF THE READING PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

The Reading Public Schools strives to ensure that all students will have common challenging meaningful learning experiences in the academics, health and wellness, the arts, community service, co-curricular activities and athletics. We will lead and manage our school community to reflect the values and culture of the Reading Community, and guide and support our students to develop the appropriate skills, strategies, creativity and knowledge necessary to be productive informed independent citizens in a global society.

Re-Adopted by the Reading School Committee on August 24, 2006

## **EDUCATIONAL FOCUS AREAS AND TARGETS FOR THE READING PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

### **Focus Area: Climate and Culture**

The Reading Public Schools will be a school community that...

- Target 1: has respectful, healthy, safe, drug-free, intimidation-free environment.
- Target 2: removes obstacles to learning and promotes positive social, emotional, and physical development.
- Target 3: collects and interprets data to make informed decisions leading to continuous improvement.
- Target 4: instills personal qualities such as citizenship, leadership, collaborative, risk-taking, effective effort, and celebration of diversity.

### **Focus Area: Teaching and Learning**

- Target 5: holds each student to high standards and expectations for behavior and academic achievement.
- Target 6: has a well-developed district-wide standards based curriculum in all subject areas that is aligned to the Department of Education Frameworks and is well articulated vertically and horizontally.
- Target 7: uses student work protocols, intelligently developed benchmark assessments, MCAS results, and authentic assessments to evaluate student achievement.
- Target 8: commits to the utilization of technology to promote student learning and increase operational efficiency and communication.

### **Focus Area: Fiscal and Human Resource Management**

- Target 9: is supported by resources (time, fiscal, policy and personnel) that meets the educational needs of all students.
- Target 10: has well-maintained and clean facilities that support teaching and learning.
- Target 11: values the recruiting, hiring, training, evaluating, and retaining of high quality and diverse staff and supports them so that they achieve and maintain a high level of professional standards and expectations of performance, expected by the Reading Community.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee in 2005

Re-Adopted by the Reading School Committee on August 24, 2006

## **TOBACCO PROHIBITION**

The Reading School Committee is dedicated to establishing and maintaining a healthy, safe, comfortable and productive educational work and recreation place for its students, staff, and visitors to its facilities. The Committee therefore endorses the concept of a tobacco-free environment in school department buildings and on its grounds for students, staff, and other users of school facilities.

### 1. Prohibition of Tobacco Use

Students, staff and visitors shall not smoke or use tobacco products in school, on school grounds, on a school bus or in other school vehicles. This ban will apply to all school-related functions, during and beyond the regular school day, as well as to activities sponsored by outside groups renting or using the buildings or grounds.

### 2. Policy Implementation

Copies of this policy shall be included in handbooks distributed to all staff, students and parents, and shall be included in all rental agreements for school facilities. Signs shall be prominently posted in public areas indicating that tobacco use is prohibited by the Reading School Committee on grounds and in buildings at all times.

At each grade level, developmentally appropriate information on the health hazards of tobacco use will be included as part of the comprehensive health education curriculum. Smoking cessation counseling and clinics for students and staff will be offered as part of the school health services.

### 3. Penalties for Violation

Students or staff who allegedly violate this policy must receive appropriate due process. Repeated confirmed violations of the policy by students or staff will be reported to the Superintendent and will result in disciplinary measures which may include suspension for students and dismissal for employees.

Users or renters of school property will adhere to tobacco prohibition policies. Use or rental of school buildings and grounds may be denied to outside groups whose participants or audiences violate this policy.

Signs shall be posted in all school buildings informing the general public of the district policy and requirements of state law.

Re-Adopted by the Reading School Committee on August 24, 2006

Adopted: 28 June 1993

**Criminal Background Checks**

As a part of its on-going commitment to providing a safe and appropriate learning and work environment for its students and staff, READING PUBLIC SCHOOLS will review available criminal history information on all individuals, who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children. In accordance with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations regarding Criminal Offender Record Information (“CORI”) and Criminal History Record Information (“CHRI”), the READING PUBLIC SCHOOLS shall conduct individual criminal background checks (CORI and/or CHRI) before an applicant is hired or otherwise provides services and periodically, at least once every 3 years.

The Superintendent, Principal or their certified designees shall obtain all CORI and CHRI information from the Department of Criminal Justice Information Services (“DCJIS”) on all current employees and prospective individuals who may have direct and unmonitored contact with students,<sup>1</sup> which includes, but not limited to, the following:

- employees and applicants for employment, including promotions;
- volunteers and interns;
- student teachers;
- individuals who regularly provide school related transportation to children;
- subcontractors or laborers commissioned by READING PUBLIC SCHOOLS or employed by the town to perform work on school grounds or with students; or
- any other individuals who may have direct and unmonitored contact with students.

All individuals listed above, except volunteers, subcontractors or laborers, are required by law to submit to fingerprint based state and national criminal history record check. READING PUBLIC SCHOOLS, in its discretion, may require volunteers, subcontractors or laborers to submit to fingerprint based state and national criminal history record checks.

Any review of Criminal Offender Record Information (“CORI”) and/or state and national criminal history record information accessed through fingerprints (“CHRI”) available through the Department of Criminal Justice Information Services (“DCJIS”) will follow procedures and requirements established by the DCJIS, as authorized by Mass. Gen. Laws, c. 71, § 38R and 42 U.S.C. § 16962 in accordance with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations, and in compliance with Mass. Gen. Law, c. 6, §§167-18 and 803 CMR §§ 2.00.

Accepted by Reading School Committee on August 25, 2014

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<sup>1</sup> Direct and unmonitored contact with children is defined as contact with students when no other employee for whom the school/district has made a suitability determination is present. “Contact” refers to any contact with a student that provides the individual with opportunity for physical touch or personal communication.

**Criminal Background Checks**  
**Administrative Guidelines**

When requesting CORI and other criminal history information, the following policy and procedures should be followed:

The Superintendent, Principal or their certified designees shall obtain all CORI and CHRI information from the Department of Criminal Justice Information Services (“DCJIS”) on all current employees and prospective individuals who may have direct and unmonitored contact with students,<sup>2</sup> which includes, but not limited to, the following:

- employees and applicants for employment, including promotions;
- volunteers and interns;
- student teachers;
- individuals who regularly provide school related transportation to children;
- subcontractors or laborers commissioned by READING PUBLIC SCHOOLS or employed by the town to perform work on school grounds or with students; or
- any other individuals who may have direct and unmonitored contact with students.

All individuals listed above, except volunteers, subcontractors or laborers, are required by law to submit to fingerprint based state and national criminal history record check. READING PUBLIC SCHOOLS, in its discretion, may require volunteers, subcontractors or laborers to submit to fingerprint based state and national criminal history record checks. **Beginning on October 1, 2014, any volunteer who has direct or unmonitored contact with students on an overnight field trips or an activity outside of the school day will be required to submit to a fingerprint-based state and national criminal history record check.**

1. Requests for CORI.

The individual will be asked to complete a CORI Acknowledgement Form (Attachment A) and the school/district will confirm the individual’s identity.

Unless a negative decision is made regarding suitability for employment, the individual will be required to submit his/her fingerprints following the procedures outlined in the attached instruction sheet. (Attachment B).

If an individual’s CORI has already been accessed within a year that s/he signed the CORI Acknowledgement Form, the individual must be given seventy-two (72) hour notice that an additional CORI check will be conducted.

2. Access to CORI and CHRI.

All CORI/CHRI information must be treated as confidential and may only be accessed by individuals with a “need to know” which may include, but is not limited to, staff submitting or processing the criminal

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<sup>2</sup> Direct and unmonitored contact with children is defined as contact with students when no other employee for whom the school/district has made a suitability determination is present. “Contact” refers to any contact with a student that provides the individual with opportunity for physical touch or personal communication.

history requests and school officials making hiring decisions. A list of those individuals authorized to have access to, or view, CORI/CHRI information must be established and updated every six (6) months.

CHRI information cannot be shared with any unauthorized entity for any purpose, including subsequent hiring determinations.

READING PUBLIC SCHOOLS may be audited by DCJIS and/or the FBI and could be subject to sanctions. Unauthorized disclosure of CORI/CHRI information may result in criminal charges.

3. CORI/CHRI Training.

An informed review of a criminal record requires training. All staff authorized to conduct CORI/CHRI checks and/or to review CORI/CHRI will review and become familiar with, the educational and relevant training materials regarding CORI/CHRI and Statewide Applicant Fingerprint Identification Services (SAFIS) made available by appropriate agencies, including the DCHIS.

4. Storage of CORI/CHRI.

CORI/CHRI shall only be stored for extended periods of time when needed for the integrity and/or utility of an individual's personnel file. Administrative, technical, and physical safeguards that are in compliance with the most recent CJIS Security Policy have been implemented to ensure the security and confidentiality of CORI/CHRI. The CJIS Security Policy can be found at: <http://www.mass.gov/eopss/docs/chsb/cjis-security-policy-v5-1-07132012.pdf>. Each individual involved in the handling of CORI/CHRI is to familiarize him/herself with these safeguards.

In addition to the above, each individual involved in the handling of CORI/CHRI will strictly adhere to the policy on the storage, retention and destruction of CORI/CHRI.

5. Retention and Destruction of CORI/CHRI.

Federal law prohibits the repurposing or dissemination of CHRI beyond its initial requested purpose. Once an individual's CHRI is received, it will be securely retained in internal agency documents for the following purposes only:

- Historical reference and/or comparison with future CHRI requests
- Dispute of the accuracy of the report
- Evidence for any subsequent proceedings based on information contained in the CHRI.

CHRI/CHRI will be kept for the above purposes in separate, secured, locked locations in the Reading Public Schools Administrative Offices.

When no longer needed, CHRI/CORI and any summary of CHRI/CORI data must be destroyed by shredding paper copies and/or by deleting all electronic copies from the electronic storage location, including any backup copies or files. If the shredding of paper copies of CHRI/CORI is performed by an outside vendor, an employee of READING PUBLIC SCHOOLS must supervise such shredding.

6. Use of Criminal History in Background Screening.

Information from CORI/CHRI records used for employment purposes shall only be accessed for applicants who are otherwise qualified for the position for which they have applied and for current employees during periodic criminal background checks.

Unless otherwise provided by law, a criminal record will not automatically disqualify an individual from employment, contract work, volunteering or interning. Rather, determinations of suitability based on background checks will be made consistent with this policy and any applicable law or regulations.

7. Verifying a Subject's Identity.

If a criminal record is received from DCJIS, the information must be closely compared with the information on the Acknowledgement Form and any other identifying information provided by the applicant to ensure the record belongs to the applicant.

If the information in the CORI/CHRI record provided does not exactly match the identification information provided by the applicant, a determination is to be made by an individual authorized to make such determinations based on a comparison of the CORI/CHRI record and documents provided by the applicant.

8. Inquiring About Criminal History.

In connection with any decision regarding employment, internships or volunteer opportunities within READING PUBLIC SCHOOLS, the individual shall be provided with a copy of his/her criminal history record, whether obtained from DCJIS or from any other sources, prior to questioning the individual about his/her criminal history. The source(s) of the criminal history record is also to be disclosed to the individual.

9. Determining Suitability.

If a determination is made, based on the information as provided in section 7 of this policy, that the criminal record belongs to the individual under consideration, and the individual does not dispute the record's accuracy, then the determination of suitability for the position will be made. Unless otherwise provided by law, factors considered in determining suitability may include, but not be limited to the following:

- Relevance of the record to the position sought;
- The nature of the position or work to be performed;
- Time that has passed since the [offense,] conviction and/or completion of the sentence;
- Age of the applicant at the time of the offense;
- Seriousness and specific circumstances of the offense;
- The number of offenses;
- Whether the applicant has pending charges;
- any relevant evidence of rehabilitation or lack thereof; and
- any other relevant information, including information submitted by the applicant or requested by the organization.

The applicant is to be notified of the decision and the basis for it in a timely manner.

A record of the suitability determination must be retained for the period of the employee's employment or for seven (7) years, whichever is longer. The following information will be included in the determination:

- The name and date of birth of the employee or applicant;
- The date on which the school received the national criminal history check results; and
- The suitability determination (either "suitable" or "unsuitable").

A copy of an individual's suitability determination documentation must be provided to another school employer, or to the individual, upon request of the individual for whom READING PUBLIC SCHOOLS conducted a suitability determination.

10. Relying on Previous Suitability Determination.

Under certain circumstances, consistent with 603 CMR 51.06, the READING PUBLIC SCHOOLS may rely on a suitability determination made by another school employer or DESE, if the following factors are met:

- Suitability determination was made within the last seven (7) years; and
- The applicant has not resided outside Massachusetts for any period longer than three (3) years since the suitability determination; and
- either (i) the individual has been continuously employed for one or more school employers or has gaps totaling no more than 2 years in his/her employment for school employers; or (ii) if the individual works as a substitute employee, the individual is still deemed suitable for employment by the school employer who made the favorable suitability determination.

Upon request of another school employer or the individual for whom the READING PUBLIC SCHOOLS conducted the suitability determination, READING PUBLIC SCHOOLS shall provide documentation of the suitability determination.

11. Adverse Decisions Based on CORI/CHRI.

If an authorized official is inclined to make an adverse decision based on the results of a criminal history background check and/or CORI/CHRI, the following steps must be taken immediately prior to making a final adverse determination:

- Provide the applicant/employee with a copy of his/her CORI/CHRI used in making the adverse decision;
- Provide the applicant/employee a copy of the employer's CHRI/CORI policy;
- Identify the information in the individual's CHRI/CORI that is the basis for the potential determination;
- Provide the source(s) of the criminal history;
- Provide the applicant/employee with a copy of this CORI/CHRI Policy;
- Provide the applicant/employee the opportunity to complete or challenge the accuracy of his/her CORI/CHRI; and
- Provide the applicant/employee with information on the process for updating, changing, or correcting CORI/CHRI.

A final adverse decision based on an individual's criminal history/CORI/CHRI will not be made until the applicant/employee has been afforded a reasonable time depending on the particular circumstances no longer than 30 days to correct or complete the CORI/CHRI.

12. Secondary Dissemination of CORI/CHRI.

All CORI/CHRI obtained from the DCJIS is confidential and can only be disseminated as authorized by law or regulation. If an applicant/employee's CORI/CHRI is released outside of READING PUBLIC SCHOOLS, including dissemination at the request of the applicant/employee, a record of dissemination must be



made in the secondary dissemination log. The central secondary dissemination log is subject to audit by DCJIS and the FBI.

The following information must be recorded in the log:

- Applicant/Employee Name;
- Date of Birth;
- Date and Time of the dissemination;
- Name of the individual to whom the information was provided;
- Name of the agency for which the requestor works;
- Contact information for the requestor; and\
- The specific reason for the request.

13. Reporting to the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, § 38R and 603 CMR 51.07, if READING PUBLIC SCHOOLS dismisses, declines to renew the employment of, obtains the resignation of, or declines to hire a licensed educator or an applicant for a Massachusetts educator license because of information discovered through a state or national criminal record check, READING PUBLIC SCHOOLS shall report such decision or action to the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education in writing within 30 days of the employer action or educator resignation. The report shall be in a form requested by the Department and shall include the reason for the action or resignation as well as a copy of the criminal record check results. READING PUBLIC SCHOOLS shall notify the employee or applicant that it has made a report pursuant to 603 CMR 51.07(1) to the Commissioner.

Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, § 38R and 603 CMR 51.07, if READING PUBLIC SCHOOLS discovers information from a state or national criminal record check about a licensed educator of an applicant for a Massachusetts educator license that implicates grounds for license action -pursuant to 603 CMR 7.15(8)(a), READING PUBLIC SCHOOLS shall report to the Commissioner in writing within 30 days of the discovery, regardless of whether READING PUBLIC SCHOOLS retains or hires the educator as an employee. The report must include a copy of the criminal record check results. The school employer shall notify the employee or applicant that it has made a report pursuant to 603 CMR 51.07(2) to the Commissioner and shall also send a copy of the criminal record check results to the employee or applicant.

## **Reading Public Schools Student Nutrition and Physical Activity Policy**

### **Policy Intent/Rationale**

The Reading Public Schools promote healthy schools by supporting wellness, good nutrition, regular physical activity, and positive dietary and lifestyle practices as part of the total learning environment. Our schools contribute to the basic health status of children by facilitating learning through the support and promotion of good nutrition and physical activity. Improved health optimizes student performance potential and ensures that children need to be healthy to learn and learn to be healthy. The following information builds a rationale for the development of this policy:

- Children need access to healthful foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive.
- Good health fosters student attendance and education.
- Obesity rates have doubled in children and tripled in adolescents over the last two decades, and physical inactivity and excessive calorie intake are the predominant causes of obesity.
- Heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes are responsible for two-thirds of deaths in the United States, and major risk factors for those diseases, including unhealthy eating habits, physical inactivity, and obesity, often are established in childhood.

To support wellness, good nutrition, and regular physical activity, the Reading Public Schools will do the following:

- 1) **Empower each school's School Council to be the school's School Health Council and, as such, the Council will develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity guidelines.**

The councils also will serve as resources to school sites for implementing these policies. A school health council consists of a group of individuals representing the school and community, and should include parents, students, PTO representative, school cafeteria employees, community members, school administrators, teachers, health professionals, and members of the public. The school district will engage all stakeholders in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing district-wide nutrition and physical activity policies. Nutrition lessons will be developed under the leadership of the Director of Nurses and will be taught by the school nurses to grade levels assigned. Nutrition lessons will be included in the curriculum at the grades with specific health curriculum (grades 8, 9 and 11).

- 2) **Provide a comprehensive learning environment for developing and practicing lifelong wellness behaviors.**

The entire school environment, not just the classroom, shall be aligned with healthy school goals to positively influence a student's understanding, beliefs and habits as they relate to good nutrition and regular physical activity. A healthy school environment should not be sacrificed because of a dependence on revenue from high-added fat, high-added sugar and low-nutrient foods to support school programs. Schools will provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity, and will establish linkages between health education and school meal programs, and with related community services.

**3) Support and promote proper dietary habits contributing to students' health status and academic performance.**

To the extent possible, all foods available on school grounds and at school-sponsored activities during the instructional day should meet or exceed the nutritional guidelines set forth by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and State of Massachusetts. In addition, all schools in our district will participate in available federal school meal programs. Emphasis should be placed on foods that are nutrient dense per calorie. To ensure high-quality, nutritious meals, foods should be served with consideration toward variety, appeal, taste, safety and packaging. Students will have access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students, as well as, provide a clean, safe, pleasant setting and adequate time for students to eat. These foods should also comply with the District Food Allergy Guidelines that have been established by the Reading Public Schools.

**4) Provide opportunities for students to engage in physical activity.**

A quality physical education program is an essential component for all students to learn about and participate in physical activity. Physical activity will include regular instructional physical education as well as co-curricular activities and recess, when developmentally appropriate. All students in Grades K-12 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.

**5) Commit to improving academic performance for all students.**

Educators, health and nutrition staff, administrators, parents, and community members must consider the critical role student health plays in academic stamina and performance and adapt the school environment to ensure students' basic nourishment and activity needs are met.

**6) Create a monitoring and accountability system.**

To ensure that the wellness policy is enacted, there will be an assessment system created to monitor progress. This will include:

- A monitoring system that ensures that the district is in compliance with the federal mandates at both the district and individual school level.
- An annual report, conducted by the district health-wellness committee, that informs the district and the community stakeholders of program progress.
- Discussions with the School site councils or designee(s) about ways to promote the wellness policy in their buildings.

Adopted by the Reading School Committee on July 31, 2006

Revised and Approved by the Reading School Committee on May 28, 2013

# Reading Public School Wellness Guidelines on Physical Activity and Nutrition

## Preamble

Whereas, children need access to healthful foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive;

Whereas, good health fosters student attendance and education;

Whereas, obesity rates have doubled in children and tripled in adolescents over the last two decades, and physical inactivity and excessive calorie intake are the predominant causes of obesity;

Whereas, heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes are responsible for two-thirds of deaths in the United States, and major risk factors for those diseases, including unhealthy eating habits, physical inactivity, and obesity, often are established in childhood;

Whereas, 33% of high school students do not participate in sufficient vigorous physical activity and 72% of high school students do not attend daily physical education classes;

Whereas, only 2% of children (2 to 19 years) eat a healthy diet consistent with the five main recommendations from the USDA's MY PLATE;

Whereas, nationally, the items most commonly sold from school vending machines, school stores, and snack bars include low-nutrition foods and beverages, such as soda, sports drinks, imitation fruit juices, chips, candy, cookies, and snack cakes;

Whereas, school districts around the country are facing significant fiscal and scheduling constraints; and

Whereas, community participation is essential to the development and implementation of successful school wellness policies;

Thus, the Reading Public Schools is committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, it is the policy of the Reading Public Schools that:

- The school district will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing district-wide nutrition and physical activity policies.
- All students in grades K-12 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Foods and beverages sold or served at school will meet the nutrition recommendations of the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and State of Massachusetts.
- Qualified child nutrition professionals will provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students; will accommodate the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning; and will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.

- To the maximum extent practicable, all schools in our district will participate in available federal school meal programs (including the National School Lunch Program )
- Schools will provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity, and will establish linkages between health education and school meal programs, and with related community services.

## **TO ACHIEVE THESE GOALS:**

### **I. School Health Councils**

The school district and/or individual schools within the district will create, strengthen, or work within existing school health councils to develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies. The councils also will serve as resources to school sites for implementing those policies. It is recommended that members of the school health council should include parent, students, school administrators, teachers, health professionals, and members of the public.

### **II. Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served on Campus**

#### **A. School Meals**

Meals served through the National School Lunch Programs will:

- be appealing and attractive to children;
- be served in clean and pleasant settings;
- meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations;

Schools should engage students and parents, through taste-tests of new entrees and surveys, in selecting foods sold through the school meal programs in order to identify new, healthful, and appealing food choices. In addition, schools should share information about the nutritional content of meals with parents and students. Such information could be made available on menus, a website, on cafeteria menu boards, placards, or other point-of-purchase materials.

**B. Free and Reduced-priced Meals.** Schools will make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to, and prevent the overt identification of, students who are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals<sup>1</sup>. Toward this end, schools may utilize electronic identification and payment systems; provide meals at no charge to all children, regardless of income; promote the availability of school meals to all students; and/or use nontraditional methods for serving school meals.

**C. Meal Times and Scheduling.** Schools:

- will provide students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch;

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<sup>1</sup> It is against the law to make others in the cafeteria aware of the eligibility status of children for free, reduced-price, or "paid" meals.

- should schedule meal periods at appropriate times, e.g., lunch should be scheduled between 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m.;
- should not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities;
- will attempt to schedule lunch periods to follow recess periods (in elementary schools);
- will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks; and
- should take reasonable steps to accommodate the tooth-brushing regimens of students with special oral health needs (e.g., orthodontia or high tooth decay risk).
- Dining facilities will comply with the district food allergy guidelines.

**E. Qualifications of School Food Service Staff.** Qualified nutrition professionals will administer the school meal programs. As part of the school district’s responsibility to operate a food service program, we will provide continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals in schools. Staff development programs should include appropriate certification and/or training programs for child nutrition directors, school nutrition managers, and cafeteria workers, according to their levels of responsibility.<sup>2</sup>

**F. Sharing of Foods and Beverages.** Schools should discourage students from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns about food allergies and other restrictions or special dietary needs. The Reading Public Schools will continue to implement the District Food Allergy Guidelines

**G. Foods and Beverages Sold Individually-All School Levels (i.e., foods sold outside of reimbursable school meals, such as through vending machines, cafeteria a la carte [snack] lines, fundraisers, school stores, etc.)**

The school food service program will and provide all food and beverage sales to students. Food should be sold as balanced meals. If available, foods and beverages sold individually should be limited to low-fat and non-fat milk, fruits, and non-fried vegetables. All foods should comply with the nutritional guidelines set forth by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and State of Massachusetts.

the *A-List* (See Appendix) The *Massachusetts for Healthy Kids* makes the following recommendation:

### **Recommendation**

- Eliminate, during the school day, foods that are sold outside of the school meals program that do not meet a la carte standards. The school day begins with the arrival of the first child at school and ends after the last scheduled instructional period.
- If the school offers a morning or afternoon break/snack, individual items sold should meet the standards for a la carte foods. The school snack or break should occur at least 1.5 hours before the lunch meal.

**H. Fundraising Activities.** To support children’s health and school nutrition-education efforts, school fundraising activities during the school day will not involve food or will use only foods that meet the above

<sup>2</sup> School nutrition staff development programs are available through the USDA, School Nutrition Association, and National Food Service Management Institute.

nutrition and portion size standards for foods and beverages sold individually. Schools will encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity. The school district will make available a list of ideas for acceptable fundraising activities.

**I. Snacks.** Snacks served during the school day or in before/after-school care or enrichment programs will follow the above nutrition guidelines, with an emphasis on serving fruits and vegetables as the primary snacks and water as the primary beverage.

**J. Rewards.** Schools will not use foods or beverages, especially those that do not meet the nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually (above), as rewards for academic performance or good behavior,<sup>3</sup> and will not withhold food or beverages (including food served through school meals) as a punishment.

**K. Celebrations.** Schools should limit celebrations that involve food during the school day to no more than one party per class per month. All food served at these celebrations must comply with the guidelines in Section I (Snacks) as well as the Allergy Guidelines. Classroom pizza parties are included as celebrations. Pizza should be ordered through Food Services in order to follow the district allergy guidelines.

**L. School-sponsored Events (such as, but not limited to, athletic events, dances, or performances).** Foods and beverages offered or sold at school-sponsored events outside the school day will be strongly encouraged to meet the nutrition standards for meals or for foods and beverages sold individually (above).

### **III. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion**

**A. Nutrition Education and Promotion.** The Reading Public Schools aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Schools should strive to provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- is offered at each grade level as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based program 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 classroom instruction in subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects;
- promotes fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices;
- emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise);
- links with school meal programs, other school foods, and nutrition-related community services;
- teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food marketing; and
- includes training for teachers and other staff.

**B. Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting.** To the extent possible, for students to receive the nationally-recommended amount of daily physical activity (*i.e.*, at least 60 minutes per day) and for students to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior, students need opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class. Toward that end:

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<sup>3</sup> Unless this practice is allowed by a student's individual education plan (IEP).

- classroom health education will complement physical education by reinforcing the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically-active lifestyle and to reduce time spent on sedentary activities, such as watching television;
- opportunities for physical activity will be investigated to be incorporated into other subject lessons; and
- classroom teachers will strive to provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

**C. Communications with Parents.** The district/school will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. The district/school will offer healthy eating seminars for parents, send home nutrition information, post nutrition tips on school websites, and provide nutrient analyses of school menus. Schools should encourage parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks and to refrain from including beverages and foods that do not meet the above nutrition standards for individual foods and beverages. The district/school will provide parents a list of foods that meet the district's snack standards and ideas for healthy celebrations/parties, rewards, and fundraising activities. In addition, the district/school will provide opportunities for parents to share their healthy food practices with others in the school community.

The district/school will provide information about physical education and other school-based physical activity opportunities before, during, and after the school day; and support parents' efforts to provide their children with opportunities to be physically active outside of school. Such supports will include sharing information about physical activity and physical education through a website, newsletter, or other take-home materials, special events, or physical education homework.

**D. Staff Wellness.** The Reading Public Schools highly values the health and well-being of every staff member and will plan and implement activities and policies that support personal efforts by staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Each district/school should establish and maintain a staff wellness committee composed of at least one staff member, school health council member, local hospital representative, dietitian or other health professional, recreation program representative, union representative, and employee benefits specialist. (The staff wellness committee could be a subcommittee of the school health council.) The committee should develop, promote, and oversee a multifaceted plan to promote staff health and wellness. The plan should be based on input solicited from school staff and should outline ways to encourage healthy eating, physical activity, and other elements of a healthy lifestyle among school staff. The staff wellness committee should distribute its plan to the school health council annually.

## **IV. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education**

**A. Daily Physical Education (P.E.) K-12.** To the extent possible, all students in grades K-12, including students with disabilities, special health-care needs, and in alternative educational settings, will strive to receive daily physical education (or its equivalent of 60 minutes/week for elementary school students and 100 minutes/week for middle and high school students) for the entire school year. All physical education will be taught by a certified physical education teacher. Student involvement in other activities involving physical activity (*e.g.*, interscholastic or intramural sports) will not be substituted for meeting the physical education requirement. Students will spend at least 50 percent of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

**B. Daily Recess.** All elementary school students will strive to have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which schools should encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment.

Schools should discourage extended periods (*i.e.*, periods of two or more hours) of inactivity. When activities, such as mandatory school-wide testing, make it necessary for students to remain indoors for long periods of



time, schools should give students periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.

**C. Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School.** All elementary, middle, and high schools will offer extracurricular physical activity programs, such as physical activity clubs or intramural programs. All high schools, and middle schools as appropriate, will offer interscholastic sports programs. Schools will offer a range of activities that meet the needs, interests, and abilities of all students, including boys, girls, students with disabilities, and students with special health-care needs.

After-school child care and enrichment programs, if applicable, will provide and encourage – verbally and through the provision of space, equipment, and activities – daily periods of moderate to vigorous physical activity for all participants. Students are encouraged to walk and bike to school safely, when appropriate.

**D. Physical Activity and Punishment.** Teachers and other school and community personnel will not use physical activity (e.g., running laps, pushups) or withhold opportunities for physical activity (e.g., recess, physical education) as punishment.