

# Checklist for School Representatives

## **Wellness Committee/Policy**

- Is there a wellness committee/team open to parents that meets at least bimonthly? The new wellness regulation ([JPG-RA](#)) requires each school to have a team under the direction of the principal.
- Is there a wellness policy for the school and if so, does it contain policies about:
  - Food served/sold at fundraisers and special events?
  - Food served at testing?
  - Food served at sports events?
  - Food offered for snacks?
  - Food served at parties?

## **Setup of Cafeteria**

- Is cafeteria arranged to encourage healthy eating?
- Is white milk in front of or more easily accessed than chocolate milk?
- Is fruit attractively arrayed and near register?
- Are unhealthy foods in less favored locations?
- Are fruits and vegetables ordered in sufficient quantities, available in all lines and served ripe?
- Are there posters or nutritional information on display in cafeteria?
- Are there advertisements or posters promoting juice, chocolate milk or a la carte items in the cafeteria?

## **Time for Lunch**

- Is there sufficient time for children to eat their lunch after waiting in line?
- Do children have to give up recess time if they want to finish their lunch?
- Is recess before lunch (leads to greater consumption of fruits and veggies and less plate waste)?

## **Atmosphere in the Lunch Room**

- Are children allowed to talk in quiet voices or is the cafeteria chaotic? Are frequent announcements made rushing the children?
- Are children allowed to get up freely to get water?
- Does the atmosphere in the cafeteria contribute to a normal, healthy eating environment?

## **Share Table**

- Is there a share table in the cafeteria?
- If so, is unhealthy food allowed on the share table (e.g., chocolate milk, etc.)?
- Could the healthy food from the share table be saved and given to needy children at the end of the day?

## **Food Rewards**

- Is principal aware of MCPS wellness policy discouraging the use of food as a reward?
- Are teachers told to avoid food rewards? Do teachers know about alternatives?

## **Food Given or Sold at Special Events/During Testing/Sports Events**

- Who picks this food? Could it be changed?
- Do people selecting food for testing understand connection between good nutrition and school performance?

## **PTA/ Fundraisers/Marketing**

- Do PTA leaders know about RFKM? Would they be open to a presentation?
- Has the PTA signed the RFKM Healthy Kids PTA Pledge? How is it shared on a yearly basis with new PTA leaders?
- What events does the PTA sponsor each year where food is served? How could choices be improved?
- Are PTA fundraisers supportive of healthy eating and physical activity?
- Is food sold at PTA fundraisers during the school day compliant with the MCPS Wellness Regulation?
- Do other entities host fundraisers, and if so, who hosts them and what are they?
- Are there marketing materials promoting non-Smart Snacks compliant foods to children (including vending machines fronts, posters, advertisements, announcements, equipment and uniforms, flyers, redemption programs, TV programs, text books, school projects)? Is the principal aware that student-directed food marketing of non-Smart Snacks compliant food is prohibited under the new wellness

regulation, except for eventual replacement of equipment like score boards, uniforms, etc. as of the 2017-2018 school year?

### **Vending Machines and à la Carte Items**

- Which a la carte items are offered in the cafeteria and how often (e.g., some schools offer ice cream only on Fridays)?
- When did the principal last look at a la carte options and make selections?
- How much income comes from vending machines? Would the principal be open to removing or replacing soda vending machines?
- Will the principal consider a limited selection of healthier items for a la carte or daytime vending?
- Has the principal ever shared a list of a la carte items sold at the school (other than foods also sold as part of the reimbursable meal) with parents on paper or on the school's web site? Would they?
- When and how often are parents informed of their ability to opt-out of letting their child buy à la carte items? Is this an easy process or could it be made easier (for example, an e-mail to cafeteria manager)?
- Are parents informed if their child is abusing à la carte privileges (buying excessive snacks, buying snacks for other children)? Can a program be put in place to inform parents of excessive à la carte consumption?
- Are children allowed to buy/eat only à la carte items without buying or bringing a regular meal?
- Is there a school store or snack cart? If so, when is it available and are items sold compliant with the MCPS Wellness Regulation (and USDA Smart Snacks in Schools rules)?

### **Chocolate Milk**

- Can parents request that their child only be allowed white milk?
- If not, could this be implemented (it has in other schools with a message on screen)?
- How and when will parents be notified of this option?
- Would the Principal consider moving to an opt-in system for chocolate milk (if DFNS agrees)?

### **Nutrition Education Program in School**

- Who teaches nutrition education in the school at what grades and when?
- Do they ever discuss the food served/offered in school and whether it lives up to good nutrition?
- Is the school open to additional nutrition education programs offered by parent volunteers?
- Does the school have a Healthy Eating Kids Club, cooking classes or something similar?

### **Salad and Burrito/Asian Bars**

- Is there a salad bar in the school? How well is it used? Is it encouraged?
- How many days a week is it offered? How is it marketed to parents and children?
- How many options are there (e.g., is it just lettuce and tomatoes or is there a good variety of fruits and vegetables)? Are there proteins and carbohydrates so it can be a complete meal?
- Is principal supportive of getting a salad bar? What kind of support would the school need to implement a salad bar?
- What obstacles exist to putting one in?
- Has your school tried a burrito or Asian bar? Could it become a regular offering? Could it be piloted as a potential regular offering?

### **Water Available in the Cafeteria**

- Is there free water available to kids in the cafeteria itself (and not in the hall outside it)?
- Could an easier system be put in place for water (e.g., water bottles + cups and a large container, pitchers on the tables)?
- Are water bottles included on supply lists and their use allowed and encouraged or are they prohibited?
- Is the MCPS policy of giving a bottle of free water to elementary school children purchasing lunch made known to children and parents? If so, how and when?
- Are the principal and cafeteria manager aware of federal regulations requiring free, potable water in the place where the children eat lunch?

### **Complaint Process**

- How can parents complain when they see something in contravention of best practices to promote healthy eating in school?
- Can a simple, anonymous complaint process be set up?
- Is there a chart of responsibility for various issues at the school?