**Real Food for Kids – Montgomery’s Recommendations for Updates to the MCPS Wellness Policy and Regulation – 3/22/2017**

These recommendations, along with your own personal comments, should be entered in the appropriate sections of this form: <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/foodserv/wellness/default.aspx?id=525403>

by April 18, 2017.

1. **Nutrition Education**

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.

The MCPS nutrition education curriculum should require students to analyze food served in the school cafeteria with respect to the concepts and nutrition recommendations taught to them.

Nutrition education should include units on media literacy, food marketing techniques, food manufacturing practices that render foods addictive, how chemicals enter the food supply and how politics influence food safety regulations.

The Wellness Regulation should require skills-based nutrition education and identify specific skills that students will develop (e.g., media awareness, menu planning, reading nutrition facts labels).

1. **Physical Education**

MCPS should specify in its wellness regulation that it follows Maryland State Education Department Standards for physical education.

MCPS should specify a minimum number of minutes of physical education per week for elementary school students and set a goal of increasing this number over time with interim goals and target dates.

MCPS should specify minimum student-teacher ratios in physical education classes.

1. **Physical Activity**

MCPS should set a goal (with a target date and interim goals) of giving elementary school children 60 minutes/day of moderate to vigorous physical activity, which should not include transition time between activities or moving between different locations.

MCPS should prohibit physical activity during the school day (including but not limited to recess, classroom physical activity breaks or physical education) from being withheld as punishment for any reason.

MCPS should set a target number of regular brain breaks (breaks for moderate to vigorous physical activity) for all children in elementary schools with interim goals and target dates.

1. **Food and Nutrition Services**

All foods and beverages (including meals and a la carte snacks) served or sold to any child in MCPS during any breakfast or lunch period should contain no more than 10% of their calories from added sugar.

All beverages sold in vending machines in MCPS at all hours should be compliant with MCPS’ wellness policy for drinks sold during the school day.

MCPS should decrease the frequency of pizza, burgers, hot dogs, and processed chicken on school lunch menus.

MCPS should set a goal of putting salad bars in 70% of schools by 2021, implementing best practices from around the country.

MCPS should decrease the frequency of sugar-sweetened breakfast items.

Potable water should be available in every MCPS cafeteria (and not the hallway outside the cafeteria) or an alternate water source should be provided. Free, potable water should be available throughout schools.

All children should be allowed to carry and regularly access water bottles throughout the school day.

MCPS should remove all synthetic food dyes and other chemicals on Center for Science in the Public Interest’s Avoid or Caution lists from all school food by 2019.

A la carte foods with added sugar should be served no more than once a week at the elementary school level.

MCPS should set a goal of cooking 60% of entrées from scratch by 2021 with interim goals and target dates.

Ingredient lists and full nutrition facts labels or equivalent information for all foods sold in MCPS should appear on the MCPS DFNS web site.

All a la carte foods sold in any MCPS cafeteria during lunch should appear on the school lunch menus for the appropriate level by product name and flavor.

MCPS teachers should be prohibited from giving foods and beverages as a reward, or withheld as punishment for any reason, such as for performance or behavior, on an individual or whole class basis.

MCPS should prohibit marketing of not only foods that aren’t Smart Snacks compliant but also brand names and corporate logos of companies selling primarily food, the majority of whose products are not Smart Snacks compliant. Vending machine fronts should be permitted to have messages promoting physical activity, or may advertise only water, white milk or non-sugar sweetened snacks.

MCPS should provide parents with a limited list of healthy snack options for daily whole-class, parent-provided snacks, such as whole grain chips with little to no sugar added, popcorn, hummus, salsa, other fruits and vegetables (fresh, canned or dried with no added sweeteners), cheese sticks, low-sugar yogurt or other dairy products and water. Foods offered should not contain peanuts or tree nuts.

Teachers, in cooperation with room parents, should arrange for only one sugar-sweetened snack to be provided for parties, along with healthy items, as described in the list provided by the district. Water should be served as the beverage. Foods offered should not contain peanuts or tree nuts.

**5. Communication**

MCPS should share the Wellness Regulation JPG-RA in printed format with Kindergarten parents and in subsequent school years via electronic means, along with progress reports on its implementation on a yearly basis.

MCPS should share the Wellness Regulation with teachers, administrators and other staff on a yearly basis.

MCPS should establish the existence of its district-wide Wellness Committee in the Wellness Regulation, including the names, positions and contact information for all members, or a link to a document containing that information. The Wellness Committee should meet at least four times a year and have the authority to make recommendations for changes to the Wellness Regulation and its implementation. No more than 50% of the members of the committee should be employees of the school system and 25% of the members of the committee should be parents. At least one meeting per year should be open to the general public and should allow a minimum time of 30 minutes for public testimonies of no less than 3 minutes.

MCPS should designate a leader in each school accountable for ensuring compliance with the Wellness Regulation within the school.