Integration Charter Schools
Wellness Policies on Physical Activity and Nutrition
2026-2027

Preamble

At Integration Charter Schools ("ICS") we believe that children need access to healthful foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive.

We believe that good health fosters student attendance and education and recognize that 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.

Despite the fact that school districts around the country are facing significant fiscal and scheduling restraints, ICS feels that development and implementation of a school-wide wellness policy is imperative to address these issues.

Thus, ICS 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 ICS that:

- ICS 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 ICS will meet the nutrition recommendations of the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans.*
- 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 possible, ICS will participate in available federal school meal programs (including the School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program).

TO ACHIEVE THESE POLICY GOALS:

I. **School Health Committees**

ICS, with the help of the ICS Wellness Coach, will create, strengthen, or work within school health committees to develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies. This policy will be reviewed once every three years by the Director of Operations.

II. **Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served on School Grounds**

Regina Caterers
Meals served through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs will:

- Be appealing and attractive to children
- Be served in clean and pleasant settings
- Meet, at minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal states and regulations
- Offer a variety of fruits and vegetables
- Serve only low-fat and fat free milk and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (defined by USDA)
- Ensure that half of the served grains are whole grain

ICS will share information on their website about the nutritional content of meals.

Breakfast/Lunch
To ensure that all children have breakfast, either at home or in school, and in order to meet their nutritional needs and enhance their ability to learn:

- ICS will operate the School Breakfast Program and notify parents and students of the program offered
- ICS will utilize methods to serve school breakfasts that encourage participation, including serving breakfast in the classroom and "grab and go breakfast".

Free and Reduced-price Meals
ICS 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 meals. Towards this end, ICS may use electronic identification and payment systems and promote the availability of school meals to all students. ICS will provide training to all staff members each year on the importance of discretion when students go through the lunch line.

Qualifications of School Food Service Staff

Qualified nutrition professionals will administer the school meal programs. As part of ICS responsibility to operate a food service program, we will provide continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals. Staff development programs should include appropriate certification and/or training programs for child nutrition directors, managers and cafeteria workers, according to their levels of responsibility.

Sharing of Foods and Beverages
ICS will discourage students from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets.

III. Food and Beverages Sold Outside the Reimbursable School Meals

ICS currently serves students from grades K-12. All beverages and foods served sold individually outside the reimbursable school meal program during the school day, or through programs for students after the school day, will meet the following nutrition and portion size standards:

- Beverages
  - Allowed: water or seltzer without added caloric sweeteners; fruit and vegetable juices and fruit-based drinks that contain at least 50% fruit juice and that do not contain additional caloric sweeteners; low calorie sports drinks, low calorie iced-teas, milk that has 360 calories or less.
  - Not Allowed: soft drinks containing caloric sweeteners; fruit based drinks that contain less than 50% real fruit juice or that contain additional caloric sweeteners; beverages containing caffeine including all coffee products, excluding low-fat or fat-free chocolate milk (which contain trivial amounts of caffeine).
- Foods
  - A food item sold individually and A la carte: (50% of food items offered individually meet these guidelines)
    - Will have no more than 35% of its calories from fat (excluding nuts, seeds, peanut butter, and other nut butters) and 10% of its calories from saturated and trans fat combined;
    - Will have no more than 30 grams of sugar per serving;
    - Will contain no more than 230 mg of sodium per serving for chips, cereals, crackers, French fries, baked goods, and other snack items; will contain no more than 480 mg of sodium per serving for pastas, meats, and soups; and will contain no more than 600 mg of sodium for pizza, sandwiches and main dishes.

- A choice of at least two fruits and/or non-fried vegetables will be offered for sale at any location on the school site where foods are sold. Such items could include, but are not limited to, fresh fruits and vegetables; 100% fruit or vegetable juice; fruit-based drinks that are at least 50% fruit juice and that do not contain additional caloric sweeteners; cooked, dried, or canned fruits that are canned in fruit juice or light syrup; and cooked, dried, or canned vegetables that are meet the above fat and sodium guidelines.

- Portion Sizes
  - Limit portion sizes of foods and beverages sold individually to those listed below:
    - One and one-quarter ounces for chips, crackers, popcorn, cereal, trail mix, nuts, seeds, dried fruit, or jerky
    - One ounce for cookies
    - Two ounces for cereal bars granola bars pastries, muffins, donuts bagels and other bakery items
    - Four fluid ounces for frozen desserts including but not limited to low-fat or fat-free ice cream
    - Eight ounces for non-frozen yogurt
    - 12 fluid ounces for beverages excluding water
    - The portion size of a la carte entrées and side dishes including potatoes will not be greater than the size of comparable portions offered as part of school meals fruits and non-fried vegetables are exempt from portion size limits
- Fundraising Activities
  - To support children's health and school nutrition education efforts, it is highly recommended that school fundraising activities should not involve food or will use only foods that meet the above nutrition and portion size standards for foods and beverages sold individually.
- Snacks
  - It is recommended that snacks served during the school day or in afterschool care or enrichment programs will make a positive contribution to children's diets and health with an emphasis on serving fruits and vegetables as the primary snacks and water as the primary beverage. Schools will assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, children's nutritional needs, children's ages and other considerations. The district will disseminate a list of healthful snack items to teachers, after school program personnel,

and parents.

- If eligible, schools that provide snacks through afterschool programs will pursue receiving reimbursement through the National School Lunch Program.

- Rewards
  - It is suggested that schools will not use foods or beverages, especially those that do not meet the nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually, as rewards for academic performance or good behavior, and will not withhold food or beverages as a punishment.

- Celebrations
  - We encourage parents, students and staff to bring in healthy store-bought items for celebrations. It is recommended that each party should try to include no more than one food or beverage that does not meet nutrition standards for food and beverages sold individually. ICS will disseminate a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers.

- School Sponsored Events
  - Foods and beverages offered or sold at school sponsored events outside the school day are encouraged to meet the nutrition standards for meals or for foods and beverages sold individually.

IV. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing

- Nutrition Education and Promotion

  ICS aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. ICS will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion in the students wellness class (2x per week) that:

  - It is offered at all grade levels as part of their wellness and physical education curriculum. It will include gaining knowledge of the food pyramid and making healthy choices to promote and protect their health
  - Promotes fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutritional 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

- Includes training for teachers and other staff

- Communication with Parents

  ICS will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. 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 food and beverages.

  ICS will provide a monthly nutritional fact on menus and the school website to enhance nutritional communication with parents.

  ICS 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 support 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.

V. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

- Weekly Physical Education

  All students, including students with disabilities and special health-care needs, will receive a minimum of 120 minutes per week of physical activity for the entire school year. All physical education classes will not have more than 18 students in a class. Students will spend at least 50% of the class participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

- Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School

  All students will be offered extracurricular physical activity programs, such as physical activity clubs or competitive sports programs. ICS 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.

VI. Monitoring and Policy Review

- Monitoring

  The Director of Operations will ensure compliance with established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. He/she will also ensure compliance with those policies at ICS and will report on the schools compliance to the school board of directors.

ICS food service staff will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the Director of Operations. In addition, ICS will report on the most recent USDA School Meals Review. If ICS has not received a review from NYSED within the past five years, one will be requested.

The Director of Operations will develop a summary report every three years on district-wide compliance with the established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies.

- Policy Review

  Assessments will be repeated every year to help review policy compliance, assess progress, and determine areas in need of improvement. As part of that review, the school district will review the nutrition and physical activity policies; provision of an environment that supports healthy eating and physical activity; and nutrition and physical education policies and program elements. ICS will, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.