



BARNSTABLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MEG MAYO-BROWN, Superintendent of Schools
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September 12, 2016

Re: Wellness Guidelines and Practices

Dear Barnstable Public Schools Community:

It is our goal to consistently place the well-being of Barnstable Public Schools students at the forefront of all decision-making. As the new school year begins, we are taking the opportunity to ensure consistent wellness practices during the school day throughout the Barnstable Public Schools. In August, we met with our nine building principals and reviewed a district wellness survey from last year which showed considerable inconsistencies across the district regarding our wellness practices. We agreed to open the school year with a commitment to uniform practices across all schools in the district. Our wellness practices reflect policy established in 2006, and additional wellness guidelines created by the Health Advisory Council in 2013. These guidelines address the Massachusetts School Nutrition Regulations signed into law in 2010, as well as added components that the original policy did not address such as rewards, snacks and celebrations.

The purpose of our letter to you is to clarify our Barnstable Public Schools (BPS) wellness practices for the 2016-17 school year. The first clarification addresses sharing food brought from home. In BPS there are more than 100 students with food allergies and many with Epi-Pens, as well as students with other medical conditions, and shared food from the outside puts them at risk. Our wellness practice requires that students refrain from sharing food brought from home. This practice is necessary as we work to create a safer environment for our students. This practice does not restrict or limit the types of food students bring to school for individual snack or lunch.

Our second clarification relates to alternate methods of reward. At times our schools and classrooms have used food as a reward. The federal government requires all school districts to put in place wellness policies and practices. Congress recognized that “schools play a critical role in promoting student health, preventing childhood obesity, and combating problems associated with poor nutrition and physical inactivity.” (*Child Nutrition and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Reauthorization Act*

(*Sec. 204 of [Public Law 108-265](#)*). Given our role to promote student health, principals are employing alternatives to support classrooms in identifying alternative methods of rewards.

Our third area of clarification is intended to provide procedural information as we consider food for student celebrations and events during the school day. Our wellness practice, beginning with the 2016-17 school year, is to provide a catering menu created by Aramark, our food service provider, to make items available for celebrations and events. This menu will be shared with staff, and parents are welcome to work through their child's teachers if they would like to provide a food offering to classrooms during the school day. Staff can contact the food service department directly with requests/inquiries. The "catering menu" does have some items outside of our standard nutritional regulations, but is allowed because it is not considered a school lunch item. Please consider moderation as well as a thoughtful approach focused on wellness for celebrations and events.

In closing, BPS principals will work with their school communities to ensure a consistent and reasonable application of our wellness practices. As questions arise from parents or staff members, principals will provide guidance and make school-based decisions using a common sense approach to implement our wellness practices. It is important to note that our wellness practices apply during the school day only. According to our 2013 Wellness Guidelines, the use of foods that meet the nutrition standards will be encouraged to be used by fundraising groups and school sponsored events outside of the school day.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to the students of Barnstable Public Schools.

Sincerely,

Meg Mayo-Brown, Superintendent of Schools

Pam Ciborowski, BPS Nursing & Wellness Coordinator