Cocke County School District



Wellness Policy

Updated Fall 2026

Cocke County School Wellness Policy

The Cocke County Board of Education is committed to student wellness as a vital component of the District's education program. It is the Board's belief that:

- 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.
- Using statistics from 2024-2025, 48.2% of Cocke County students screened were found to be overweight or obese. Physical inactivity and excessive calorie intake are the predominant causes of obesity.
- Heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes are responsible for 45.9% of all deaths in the USA and major risk factors for those diseases, including unhealthy eating habits, physical inactivity, and obesity, often are established in childhood.
- Most children do not eat a healthy diet. RealFood.gov
- School districts/LEAs around the country are facing significant fiscal and scheduling constraints.
- Community participation is essential to the development and implementation of successful school wellness policies.

Thus, the Cocke County School District 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 Cocke County District that:

- The school district will engage students, parents, teachers, school nutrition professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing district-wide nutrition and physical activity policies.
- Nutrition topics shall be integrated within the comprehensive health education curriculum and taught at every grade level (K-12). Nutrition education will be integrated into the broader curriculum where appropriate.
- Opportunities for physical activity will be supported and encouraged as a daily component of the school day as well as outside the parameters of the school day.
- Foods and beverages sold or served at school will meet the recommendations of the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and the Nutritional Standards set forth by the Tennessee State Board of Education.
- 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; and will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.

Our district will participate in the available federal school meal programs including the School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program, After School Snacks and Summer Food Service Program and such programs will comply with federal, state, and local requirements.

To achieve these objectives, the Board establishes nutritional and physical activity education standards and goals as outlined herein.

I. Nutritional Standards and Goals

A. Nutrition Education and Promotion

The Cocke County School District aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating. Schools should provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that is in accordance with the state curriculum.

B. Marketing

Marketing will promote healthy food and beverage choices.

C. Quality of District Meals and Cafeteria Settings

All schools will provide breakfast through the USDA School Breakfast Program, and lunch through the USDA National School Lunch Program. Meals served in District schools shall: be age appropriate, appealing and attractive to children; be served in clean and pleasant settings; meet, as a minimum, nutritional requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations; offer a variety of fruits and vegetables at each meal; include low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives, as defined by the USDA; and, Students and parents are encouraged to participate in meal planning in order to identify new, healthful, and appealing food choices. The school nutrition program will continually evaluate and procure items which can enhance the nutritional value of district meals. The district shall provide "taste testing" of healthy new foods to determine if they should be added to the menu.

D. District Meal Schedules and Time Allocation

District schools shall serve breakfast and lunch. Breakfast and lunch menus shall consist of items which fulfill established minimum nutritional requirements for reimbursable school meal programs. Breakfast and lunch options may include sale of a la carte items, provided such items meet the nutritional standards required. These items are offered in addition to the meal, not as a substitute for the District's planned meal. Breakfast should be scheduled to begin no less than 30 minutes prior to the start of school. To the extent practical, depending on the arrival times of buses, students should be given no less than 10 minutes after being seated to eat breakfast. Lunch should be scheduled between the hours of 10:15 A.M. and 1:45 P.M., depending on class schedules, number of students, and other influencing factors. Interferences with this time allotment should be minimized and not occur on a regular basis. Students should be given no less than 20 minutes after being seated to eat lunch.

E. Meals at No Cost to the student

Cocke County is currently classified as a CEP school, therefore there is no cost for students. Our CEP status is in effect until July 2028.

F. Summer Food Service Program

Schools in which more than 50% of students are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals will, to the extent possible, sponsor the Summer Food Service Program for at least six weeks between the last day of the academic school year and the first day of the following school year.

G. Sharing of Foods and Beverages

Schools shall discourage students from sharing or trading their foods or beverages with others, given concerns about allergies and restrictions on some children's diets. Trading foods can create an unhealthy imbalance in the nutritional value of a child's meal.

H. Qualifications of District Food Service Staff

Qualified nutrition professionals will manage and administer the District nutrition and meal programs. Continuing professional development shall be provided for all nutrition professionals. Staff development programs should include appropriate certification and/or training programs for the District nutrition director, nutrition coordinators, managers, and cafeteria workers, according to their levels of responsibility.

The USDA Professional Standards for State and Local Nutrition Programs are followed to ensure that professional development in the area of food and nutrition is provided for food service directors, managers and staff. New and current food service directors must have at least 12 hours; new and current managers must have at least 10 hours; new and current staff must have at least 6 hours.

I. Foods and Beverages Sold or Provided Individually

It is the policy of the Cocke County School District that all foods and beverages sold to students during the school day on any property under the jurisdiction of the district will meet the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) school meal and Smart Snacks in School (Smart Snacks) nutrition standards.

Food Service shall strive to include some healthy choices for all a la carte items sold.

Smart Snack Calculator: https://foodplanner.healthiergeneration.org/calculator/

Carbonated beverages containing calorie and non-calorie sweeteners are not allowed during breakfast and lunch. Advertisements on vending machines shall be limited to the allowed items that meet the smart snack guidelines.

High School principals are encouraged to limit the sale of beverages with caffeine to high school students. **Smart Snacks nutrition standards apply to all foods and beverages sold to students through district-sponsored fundraisers, unless an exemption applies. Each school will be allied to hold 20 exempt fundraisers per semester during which any food or beverages may be sold.*

J. Extra-Curricular Fundraising Events

Schools will be encouraged to give priority to fundraisers which involve the sale of non-food items. For fundraisers which involve the sale of food, deliveries will be made after the meal service periods. Concessions, which provide food and beverages during optional-attendance school events including after school events such as dances, sporting events, talent shows, PTA events are exempt from the guidelines contained herein. However, healthy choices should be offered during these events.

K. Snacks

Snacks served during the school day or in after-school care or enrichment programs should make a positive contribution to children's diets and health. 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.

Only healthy snacks will be served to students in after school programs.

L. Rewards

The district will encourage non-food alternatives as rewards. For example, extra recess may be provided when time allows.

M. Classroom Parties

Celebrations that occur during the school day should be limited, must be approved by the school principal, and will be conducted under the supervision of the responsible teacher. Such celebrations shall not interfere with classroom instructional time. Celebrations that include food shall follow the guidelines below. All non-hazardous and potentially hazardous foods must be enclosed in sealed packages from a licensed commercial source. Examples of potentially hazardous foods include foods made with poultry, meats, rice, pasta, beans, potatoes, eggs, seafood, mayonnaise, dairy products, casseroles and sauces containing meat. Baked foods prepared by a licensed and inspected commercial source are allowable (i.e., bakery). Individual birthday celebrations must be approved by the building administrator.

The Cocke County School District will provide parents with a list of allowable party foods that meet the Smart Snack standards. Approved Smart Snacks in Schools List

N. Outside Deliveries

All outside deliveries to be consumed on campus will be prohibited during a regular school day when school food services are available. Staff and students will be allowed to bring breakfast and lunch to school as long as it is not in containers with logos of eating establishments that are in competition with the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program (i.e., local eating establishments). Staff social gatherings and in-service days are exceptions to the rule.

O. USDA Farm to School Program

The district will participate in the USDA Farm to School Program by procuring local foods to be purchased, promoted and served in schools.

II. Policy Compliance

A. Wellness Leadership

The Director of Schools, Coordinated School Health Supervisor, and Food Service Supervisor will, along with school nurses and building principals, have the authority and responsibility to ensure each school complies with the Wellness policy.

B. District Wellness Committee/School Wellness Committee

Parents, students, PE teachers, school food authority representatives, school health professionals, school board members, school administrators, and the general public will be included in the development, implementation, review and update of the wellness policy.

District Wellness committee leaders will actively recruit parents, students, PE teachers, school food authority representatives, school health professionals, school board members, school administrators, and the general public to invite members to join the wellness committee.

The District Wellness Committee meets twice a year.

C. Nutrition Education:

Teachers shall integrate nutrition education into other classroom subjects, such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects.

The Cocke County School System (CCSS) recognizes the value of student wellness and proper nutrition and its impact on students' physical, mental, emotional and social well-being. CCSS is committed to providing a healthy school environment that promotes the knowledge and skills necessary for students to make informed decisions regarding their health and well-being. CCSS also promotes student wellness through proper nutritional and physical education practices, outstanding staff and curriculum standards, and productive opportunities for parent/community involvement.

- ✓ Provide professional development training for health and wellness teachers in grades K-12
- ✓ Offer AED/CPR trainings to faculty and staff
- ✓ Ensure implementation of the Tennessee Lifetime Wellness Standards (grades 9-12) and Tennessee Health Education Standards (grades K-8)
- ✓ Ensure compliance with the Family Life and Sexuality Education Policy
- ✓ Use community resources to promote health education
- ✓ Work with community partners to provide and/or promote opportunities for family participation in health education programs whenever possible

D. Healthy School Environment

- ✓ Annual review of the District Crisis Response Plan
- ✓ Annual review of school AEDs
- ✓ Provide principals, teachers, parents, community with a listing of ideas for healthy snacks
- ✓ Form emergency core team, consisting of school and district personnel
- ✓ Form a Healthy School Team/School Wellness Committee to complete the school health index modules. This committee will meet twice yearly.
- ✓ Develop goals and action steps to improve the health of students, staff, and community
- ✓ Submit required reports to the Office of Coordinated School Health
- ✓ Provide training for faculty and staff in the identification of and response to allergy and/or asthma triggers
- ✓ Consider fundraisers activities that don't include food
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ School gardens and nutrition instruction are encouraged as part of the academic curriculum.
- ✓ School staff members shall be encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity behavior.

E. School Health Services

- ✓ Develop as appropriate Student Services related policies in compliance with State law and State Guidelines from the Tennessee Department of Education and the Tennessee Department of Health
- ✓ Develop procedures for getting health and emergency information forms returned from students
- ✓ Complete the Annual Data and Compliance Report for the State Department of Education
- ✓ Ensure immunization requirements for each student are complete as indicated in Entrance Requirements Policy
- ✓ Ensure compliance with Guidelines for Diabetic Care in Schools policy
- ✓ Ensure compliance for Vision and Hearing Screenings
- ✓ Ensure compliance for Health Screenings for schools with Coordinated School Health
- ✓ Ensure compliance for administration for medication and assisting with self-administration of medication
- ✓ Ensure Head Lice Plan

F. Health Promotion for Staff

- ✓ Offer opportunity for flu shots at various schools throughout district whenever possible
- ✓ Conduct voluntary health and wellness assessments (e.g. blood pressure, blood cholesterol, BMI)
- ✓ Provide opportunities for annual physicals through certificated medical plan
- ✓ Promote programs to increase exercise, weight management, good nutrition and stress management
- ✓ Distribute health promotion campaigns
- ✓ Disseminate staff wellness material

G. Nutrition Promotion

School nutrition services shall use the Smarter Lunchroom Self-Assessment Scorecard to determine ways to improve the school meals environment. Smarter Lunchrooms Scorecard

Marketing: The district food service provider should be sensitive to the nutrition environment when displaying logos/trademarks on school grounds.

H. Water

Potable water will be available to all students during mealtimes and throughout the school campus during the day. Approved water sources include: water fountains, water pitchers or urns with cups furnished at no cost to students, faucets that allow students to fill their own cups or bottles, and or water refill stations.

I. Physical Activity

The district shall provide students with physical education, using an age-appropriate, sequential physical education curriculum consistent with national and state standards for physical education. The district shall also provide opportunities for students to participate in physical activity in addition to physical education.

✓ Physical Education for grades K-12 is required to be taught by a certified/licensed teacher who is endorsed to teach physical education.

✓ The School District shall provide all physical education teachers with annual professional development opportunities that are focused on physical education/physical activity topics and competencies specifically for physical education teachers.

✓ Ensure compliance with the Physical Activity Law for grades K-12 as indicated in TCA 49-6-1021: **ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS:** (1) a minimum of 40 minutes of physical activity per full school day. Physical activity must include unstructured play outside (weather permitting). Physical activity may not include time spent in a physical education class. All schools are required to schedule recess for 20 minutes per school day in the Master Schedule.

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOLS: (1) a minimum of 90 minutes of physical activity per full school week. Physical activity may include time spent in a physical education class.

Elementary students must participate in a Physical Education class that meets at least two times per full school week, totally no less than 60 minutes.

High School must complete ½ credit hour of Physical Education or a Lifetime Wellness course to graduate with a standard high school diploma.

✓ Complete and submit the Physical Activity Compliance Report to the TN Department of Education annually.

✓ Physical activity during the school day (including but not limited to recess, classroom physical activity breaks or physical education) will not be withheld as punishment for any reason.

✓ Physical activity and recess will complement, not substitute, physical education class

✓ Physical activity (running laps, push-ups, etc.) shall not be used as a form of punishment

✓ Provide safe and adequate equipment, facilities and resources for physical education classes.

✓ Physical activity opportunities should be promoted at the school, for families and community members.

✓ Physical activity clubs and intramurals shall be available during, before, and after-school hours.

✓ Teachers should provide students with physical activity breaks.

J. Other School-Based Strategies for Wellness

The district will offer 2 family-focused events supporting health promotion (e.g., health fair, nutrition/physical activity open house) each year.

K. Family and Community Involvement

✓ Partner with families and community members to institute programs that support nutrition education and physical activity

✓ Encourage parents to serve on Healthy School Teams

✓ Encourage parents/families to attend School Health Advisory Council meetings

✓ Communicate health and wellness requirements (i.e. immunizations, emergency forms, etc.) with families

L. Counseling, Psychological and Social Services

- ✓ Ensure district compliance with Tennessee School Counseling Model and Standards State Board Policy
- ✓ Ensure district compliance with suicide prevention training for all certified staff and submit proper documentation
- ✓ Ensure all principals are provided with a copy of TCA 37-1-403 explaining the Child Sexual Abuse Law
- ✓ Ensure all teachers and staff understand the district procedures for reporting child abuse
- ✓ All principals will be provided a copy of the Wellness policy.

M. Triennial Assessment

The district will evaluate compliance with the Wellness Policy no less than once every three years using the Wellness School Assessment Tool (WellSAT).

The triennial progress report will be posted on the district website. The report will include an assessment on compliance, the extent to which our wellness policy compares to model wellness policies, and progress made in achieving goals.

Every three years, the wellness committee will review the latest national recommendations pertaining to school health and will update the wellness policy accordingly.

III. Inform the Public

The district will actively inform families and the public about the content of and any updates to the policy through the district website.

**Students, parents, staff and/or community members are welcome to join the committee. If you are interested in being part of the Wellness committee please contact:*

Karoline Sutton: bowmank@cocke.k12.tn.us 423-248-9241 or

Lisa Kelley: kelleyl@cocke.k12.tn.us 423-623-7821 ext. 2040

Resources for Local School Wellness Policies on Nutrition and Physical Activity

Resources for Local School Wellness Policies on Nutrition and Physical Activity

- National School Lunch Program Meal Pattern, School Breakfast Program National School Lunch Program Meal Pattern | Food and Nutrition Administration
- *School Health Index,* Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC Archive

- Local Wellness Policy website, U.S. Department of Agriculture, https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/local-school-wellness-policy

- New Fit to Learn Teachers Ready to Make Their Schools Healthier, New Fit to Learn Teachers Ready to Make Their Schools Healthier

- Managing Obesity In Schools Managing Obesity in Schools | Managing Health Conditions in School | CDC

- *The Learning Connection: The Value of Improving Nutrition and Physical Activity in Our Schools,* Action for Healthy Kids, The Learning Connection Report | Action for Healthy Kids
- SNP Local School Wellness Policy, SNP Local School Wellness Policy

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