

Duluth Edison Charter Schools

DECS Wellness Policy

Annual Report 2015-2016

Health and Wellness Goals and Initiatives for 2016-2017:

1. The DECS Health and Wellness Committee will continue to enhance the DECS Health and Wellness Policy.

As Health and Wellness initiatives and laws change in our city, state, and nation it's vital that our school's Health and Wellness policy is not only in compliance, but ahead of the curve. The DECS Health and Wellness Committee will continue to enhance our health and wellness programs for both students and staff by researching best practices in schools and determining what we might be able to implement. Our goal will be to present our findings to the School Board by the end of the 2016-2017 school year.

2. Increase Health and Wellness activities during recess.

New activities, equipment, and strategies will be researched, trialed, and implemented to improve the opportunities our students have during the recess time. Recess monitors will meet on a biweekly basis to explore the best ways to provide support and encourage active play at recess.

Duluth Edison Charter Schools is proud to offer wellness education and opportunities to students and staff. DECS strives to promote the importance of a healthy diet, as well as taking advantage of physically active opportunities in order to grow, learn, and thrive. We believe good health fosters student attendance and education. In compliance with Section 204 of Public Law 108-265 of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act, the DECS Wellness Committee provides this annual report for the 2015-16 school year.

The four components reviewed and required by policy include:

1. Nutrition Education
2. Physical Activity
3. Other school-based wellness activities
4. Nutritional guidelines for all foods available on campus during the day (Minnesota Department of Education, 2007).

MN Department of Education Audit Report gives DECS High Marks on Wellness Policy

All schools are audited every three years by MN Department of Education Food and Nutrition Service personnel. This Audit is completed to ensure our schools are adhering to the Food Service requirements set by USDA. A part of those requirements addresses our district's wellness policy. Duluth Edison Charter Schools wellness policy was created to ensure a school environment that promotes and protects student's health, well being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity.

During this year's Audit, we received high marks for the work being done locally related to student and staff wellness. "You are ahead of many other schools in the implementation of your wellness policy," said the MDE Auditor. She further added, "You are doing a great job."

Our goal for the upcoming school year is to get students and parents more involved with the wellness policy initiatives by holding meetings throughout the year where we will develop plans for continued wellness within our community.

North Star Physical Education Features

- Climbing wall unit including safe climbing commands, knot tying, flexibility, and problem solving skills.
- Multi-age organized activities with a focus on team goals and initiatives.
- Snow Flake Trail hikes, runs, snowshoeing, and creative outdoor exploration.
- 40 min of Physical and Health Education for all students on an every other day basis.
- Jump Rope for Heart three week program which promotes heart health, education, awareness, and fundraising.

Duluth Public Schools Academy

Wellness Policy

Wellness Policy Goal

Highlights

2015-16:

- First Annual DECS soccer skills camp coordinated by the North Star boys soccer program had 40 students from 3rd-7th grade participate. Over 30 students are already registered for this summer's camp!
- First annual DECS Dribble basketball camp held at North Star Academy for 3rd-5th grade students.
- Fifth year of the staff sports night program to encourage healthy activity outlets for staff.
- First year of district wide Wellness Wednesday program encouraged students to actively experience classroom lessons such as competing in the Olympic games, nature walks, and many other activities led by classroom teachers.
- North Star staff met with representatives from WLSSD to discuss and trial food composting program.

Please note this report reflects a progressive change and improvement to our wellness education program. Activities, trainings, and opportunities listed are in addition to previous accomplishments. If you are interested in reviewing previous reports, please contact me at:

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RALEIGH ACADEMY AWARDED ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS GRANT

In April of this year, Raleigh Academy was awarded an "Action for Healthy Kids" grant through a partnership with the University of Minnesota Extension, SNAP-ED and MN Action for Healthy Kids.

The goal of this grant is to facilitate school wellness enhancements focusing on healthy eating, physical activity, and ensuring that the healthy choice is the easy choice for MN students, families and schools.

Raleigh Edison continues to strive to educate the whole child. In morning energizers (ME time), we offer new opportunities to our students, taking into consideration every aspect of childhood development – including physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development. Structured ME time has been added to the school's daily schedule allowing students movement opportunities before their academic school day begins. Studies have demonstrated that the brain needs regular breaks in order to function optimally. Based off that research, Raleigh will be instituting additional recess opportunities for all students.

Nutrition education and taste testing opportunities have been occurring as the physical education teachers and food service manager collaborate and co-teach monthly lessons for all students. Foods that are sampled are then added to the school lunch menu. This year we sampled blackberries, avocado, and spaghetti squash. Next year, we will try other fruits and vegetables that are not as familiar to the students in hopes they will eat more fresh fruits and vegetables at school, as well as at home with their families.

As we move forward beyond the life of this grant, Raleigh Academy will continue the nutritional education program in conjunction with our food service program. Nutrition education will continue to be a part of the students' academic life. The food service manager will work with the meal vendor to see that new fruits and vegetables are included on the school menu as we constantly work to improve and offer more choices for our students.

ME time and extra recess time will also be added to the school-wide calendar. Raleigh has also established an initiative with our Parent Advisory Council (PAC) working towards playground improvements which will provide our students with new and exciting opportunities for unstructured play.

The money received from this grant will be used to purchase new playground equipment for Raleigh Academy.

Gardening Elective at North Star Academy

During 4th Quarter, the JA Gardening Elective chose a site on campus to plant and maintain a butterfly garden. The Gardening Elective buddied up with a second grade class and planted milkweed and coneflower in hopes of creating a Monarch habitat that will support both caterpillars and Monarch butterflies. The students of the Gardening Elective also raised and sold herbs as a fundraiser in hopes of starting a school garden next year.

Minnesota Department of Education. (2007). *Local wellness policy: A guide for development and local wellness policy development tool*. <http://education.state.mn.us>.