

RCW 28A.210.360 Model policy on access to nutritious foods and developmentally appropriate exercise—School district policies. (1)

Consistent with the essential academic learning requirements for health and fitness, including nutrition, the Washington state school directors' association, with the assistance of the office of the superintendent of public instruction, the department of health, and the Washington alliance for health, physical education, recreation and dance, shall convene an advisory committee to develop a model policy regarding access to nutritious foods, opportunities for developmentally appropriate exercise, and accurate information related to these topics. The policy shall address the nutritional content of foods and beverages, including fluoridated bottled water, sold or provided throughout the school day or sold in competition with the federal school breakfast and lunch program and the availability and quality of health, nutrition, and physical education and fitness curriculum. The model policy should include the development of a physical education and fitness curriculum for students. For middle school students, physical education and fitness curriculum means a daily period of physical activity, a minimum of twenty minutes of which is aerobic activity in the student's target heart rate zone, which includes instruction and practice in basic movement and fine motor skills, progressive physical fitness, athletic conditioning, and nutrition and wellness instruction through age-appropriate activities.

(2) The school directors' association shall submit the model policy and recommendations on the related issues, along with a recommendation for local adoption, to the governor and the legislature and shall post the model policy on its website by January 1, 2005.

(3) Each district's board of directors shall establish its own policy by August 1, 2005. [2004 c 138 § 2.]

Findings—2004 c 138: "(1) The legislature finds:

(a) Childhood obesity has reached epidemic levels in Washington and throughout the nation. Nearly one in five Washington adolescents in grades nine through twelve were recently found to be either overweight or at risk of being overweight;

(b) Overweight and obese children are at higher risk for developing severe long-term health problems, including but not limited to Type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, and certain cancers;

(c) Overweight youth also are often affected by discrimination, psychological stress, and low self-esteem;

(d) Obesity and subsequent diseases are largely preventable through diet and regular physical activity;

(e) A child who has eaten a well-balanced meal and is healthy is more likely to be prepared to learn in the classroom;

(f) Encouraging adolescents to adopt healthy lifelong eating habits can increase their productivity and reduce their risk of dying prematurely;

(g) Frequent eating of carbohydrate-rich foods or drinking sweet liquids throughout the day increases a child's risk for dental decay, the most common chronic childhood disease;

(h) Schools are a logical place to address the issue of obesity in children and adolescents; and

(i) Increased emphasis on physical activity at all grade levels is essential to enhancing the well-being of Washington's youth.

(2) While the United States department of agriculture regulates the nutritional content of meals sold in schools under its school breakfast and lunch program, limited standards are in place to regulate "competitive foods," which may be high in added sugars, sodium, and saturated fat content. However, the United States department of agriculture does call for states and local entities to add restrictions on competitive foods, as necessary." [2004 c 138 § 1.]