

SUBJECT: Information: Staff Wellness Procedures FAQ

Dear Colleagues –

In June 2014, the District’s Wellness Committee shared procedures it had developed over 18 months of lively debate, discussion, input and research. We want to commend and thank all who have worked to implement these procedures and most importantly, asked clarifying questions. As a result, we have developed an FAQ that we hope will further build your understanding and ongoing support as we continue to move toward creating a healthier environment for all our students.

Edmonds School District Wellness Committee

(K-12) Why did the District decide to ban the sale of food to students that do not meet the “Smart Snacks” guidelines?

The District did not make that decision. It is a new Federal regulation effective July 1, 2014 that food sold to students on school grounds from midnight until 30 minutes after the close of school meet specific [nutritional guidelines](#). Failure to comply could result in the loss of \$3 million which supports our Food Services Department for all students.

(K-12) What about the “use of food” in lesson plans, such as gummy worms for science and candies for math?

Yes, this is acceptable. We recognize that these activities make learning fun, and are done on a limited and reasonable number of times in some classrooms during a school year.

(K-12) When studying culturally-inclusive curriculum, we have students bring in food during school hours that represents their culture or country of origin. Can we continue to do that?

Yes. If that is done during school hours, it will count as one of three classroom parties a teacher can hold during a school year. Please remember, the Snohomish Health District guidelines cite that due to the risk of foodborne illness, that these foods need to be store bought and not home prepared. Additionally, food allergens need to be considered. We encourage you to look at nonfood ways to celebrate culture, such as music, clothing and photos that students could bring from home.

(K-12) What about food as a “celebration” vs. a party? Can our school’s parent groups host “Moms & Muffins / Dads & Donuts” or similar events?

We understand that these events are held to build school spirit and community. We strongly encourage that in the “spirit” of the wellness policy and the newly-implemented procedures,

that healthier options and portion sizes be explored. Does it have to be a full-size muffin or can they be cut in to reasonable portion sizes? Read nutrition labels – make it fun!

(K-12) Popcorn is sold to raise funds and/or to celebrate students. We are sad to lose this fun tradition. Is there any popcorn recipe for our popcorn machines that meets the Smart Snacks” criteria?

Yes. Harlan’s “All in One” Popcorn Kits (add link). This popcorn works as long as your serving size does not exceed 5 cups of popped popcorn.

(Elementary) What about “Food as Nutrition?” Many of our classrooms provide mid-morning snacks. Can we still do that?

If teachers, the parent group or individual parents are going to provide an entire classroom a mid-morning snack we strongly encourage them to provide healthy food that follows the “spirit of the procedure.” Please remember, the Snohomish Health District guidelines cite that due to the risk of foodborne illness, that these foods need to be store bought and not home prepared. Additionally, food allergens need to be considered.

(Elementary) Our school has provided “Lunch with the Principal” to celebrate outstanding student behavior. Can we continue doing that?

The District is strongly discouraging the use of food items as incentive or reward. We encourage you to look at nonfood options. “Face time” with the principal or extra recess time are examples of ways to reward students without food.

(Elementary) We provide crossing guards with hot cocoa and candy after a rainy or cold shift. Can we continue doing that?

We encourage you to look at alternative ways to warm students up! Ask parents to donate disposable hand warmers, recognition at school assemblies or certificates of recognition.

(Middle/High) We are holding a party to celebrate the end of a sports season. We have to wait 30 minutes until after the school day to start serving food, right?

No. The “midnight to 30 minutes” after the close of the school day applies to the sale of food to students on school grounds and is part of the Federal regulations we as a District must adhere.

(Middle/High) Our school has provided “Students of the Month” a special lunch, usually from an area fast food restaurant. Can we provide the student with a coupon or gift card to a food establishment instead?

The District is strongly discouraging the use of food items as incentive or reward. We encourage you to look at nonfood options, such as “activity” coupons. Examples include swim passes to local recreation centers, bowling alleys or physical-activity promoting businesses.

***(Middle/High)* We occasionally have parents and/or students bring in a dozen cupcakes for their child or friends on their birthday to share. Does the new procedure apply to lunchrooms and “common spaces” in addition to classroom in our schools?**

We strongly discourage trays of treats being brought into any lunchrooms or “common spaces.” Any or all of your three allotted classroom parties can be held in these spaces at the discretion of the teacher.

***(High)* The Federal Law states that food not meeting the “Smart Snacks” criteria cannot be sold to students from midnight until 30 minutes after dismissal. Will the Edmonds School District allow for timer vending machine sale of products that do not comply with the “smart snacks” guidelines between 30 minutes after dismissal and midnight?**

No. After extensive conversation by the District’s Wellness Committee, it was decided that allowing this practice sends the wrong message to students. The Federal laws intent is to have students make healthier choices. Allowing timed vending machines with unhealthy choices available to students after hours defeats the purpose of creating a healthy environment at our schools. While we realize the vending machine companies have few options at this point, we are working to have more healthy options available in our schools vending machines.