

Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School



Wellness Policy

November 2025

BACKGROUND

Section 204 of PL 108-265, The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, mandates that each local education agency participates in programs authorized by the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act or the Child Nutrition Act establishes a local wellness policy.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School (GNBRVTHS) is committed to providing a school environment that promotes and protects student health, well-being, and academic success by supporting healthy lifestyles that include nutritious eating and physical activity. A healthy school environment leads to improved academic achievement, enhanced social-emotional development, and greater student engagement.

WELLNESS COMMITTEE

The District establishes a Wellness Committee under the direction of the School Principal, comprising a school committee member, school administrator, food services representative, nurse, community member, parent/guardian, student, staff, and faculty. The council will meet at least four times per year to develop and maintain a comprehensive Local Wellness Policy that includes district goals, compliance, and best practices related to wellness.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND ACTIVITY

The primary goal of physical education is to provide opportunities for every student to develop the knowledge and skills for specific physical activities and to regularly participate in structured physical activity at school. All students will have the opportunity to participate in physical activity through regular physical education classes that meet or exceed Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education requirements:

- Physical education will include instruction in individual activities, physical conditioning, weight training, and both competitive and non-competitive team sports to encourage lifelong physical activity.
- GNBRVTHS will ensure that students are provided multiple opportunities to engage in physical activity throughout the school day.
- Participation in physical education shall not be contingent upon satisfactory behavior or academic performance, and physical education will not be restricted as a disciplinary measure unless there is a threat of harm.

NUTRITION STANDARDS

GNBRVTHS will adhere to the USDA nutrition standards for the National School Lunch Program and the Massachusetts School Nutrition Standards for competitive foods and beverages:

- The school lunch program will provide meals that are appealing and nutritious, served in a clean and pleasant setting. Students will have adequate time (30 minutes) to eat lunch.
- Healthy choices will be promoted, ensuring foods meet nutritional guidelines. Strategies may include, but are not limited to student demographic reflection, minimally processed, local foods, plant based meat/meat alternatives, fruit and vegetable bars, and Farm to School programs. Free drinking water will be available throughout the school day and during after-school activities.

- Nutrition education will be integrated into other subjects, assuring that each student receives an equitable health education that emphasizes the impact of food quality on health and performance and food system education.
- GNB RVTHS is committed to student dignity by ensuring confidentiality for all meal eligibility data and strictly prohibiting shaming, public identification, or disciplinary action related to meal status or unpaid debt.
- District Cafeteria staff will participate in the annual required hours of professional learning per the USDA at the start of the school year in August and/or September.
- All non-sold foods and beverages provided to students during the school day, including for parties or rewards, **meet the strictest federal and Massachusetts competitive food standards**. Non-food rewards are also strongly recommended.

SCHOOL-BASED ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE STUDENT WELLNESS

GNB RVTHS will support school-based activities that promote wellness, including:

- Encouraging the sale of healthy food items at school-sponsored events and fundraisers.
- Providing fresh fruits and vegetables daily.
- Promoting a supportive learning environment that includes access to nursing, guidance, and counseling services to link students and families to appropriate health resources.
- Provide access to free, potable water during the school day including meal service. The filtration system automatically notifies of filtration changes every 3,000 gallons to the District Facilities department.
- The DEI and Community Specialist will communicate with families and caregivers about community based support monthly.

EMPLOYEE WELLNESS

GNB RVTHS highly values the health and well-being of every staff and faculty member. The district will provide access to and encourage participation in wellness programs and resources that support healthy eating, physical activity, stress management, and social-emotional health. District resources include the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and outside private counseling services along with a discounted gym membership at a local health club.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND EVALUATION

GNB RVTHS is committed to ongoing assessment and evaluation of this wellness policy. The Wellness Policy will be available to students, families, and the general public through the district website. The policy will be reviewed and updated annually by the District Wellness Committee and School Council to ensure compliance with federal and state regulations.

- Monthly notification for School Food Service meal programming
- Annual Wellness Goals created by Committee for students and faculty/staff. Goals will be distributed via the wellness committee through communication platforms of the District.