



WELLNESS POLICY

for the

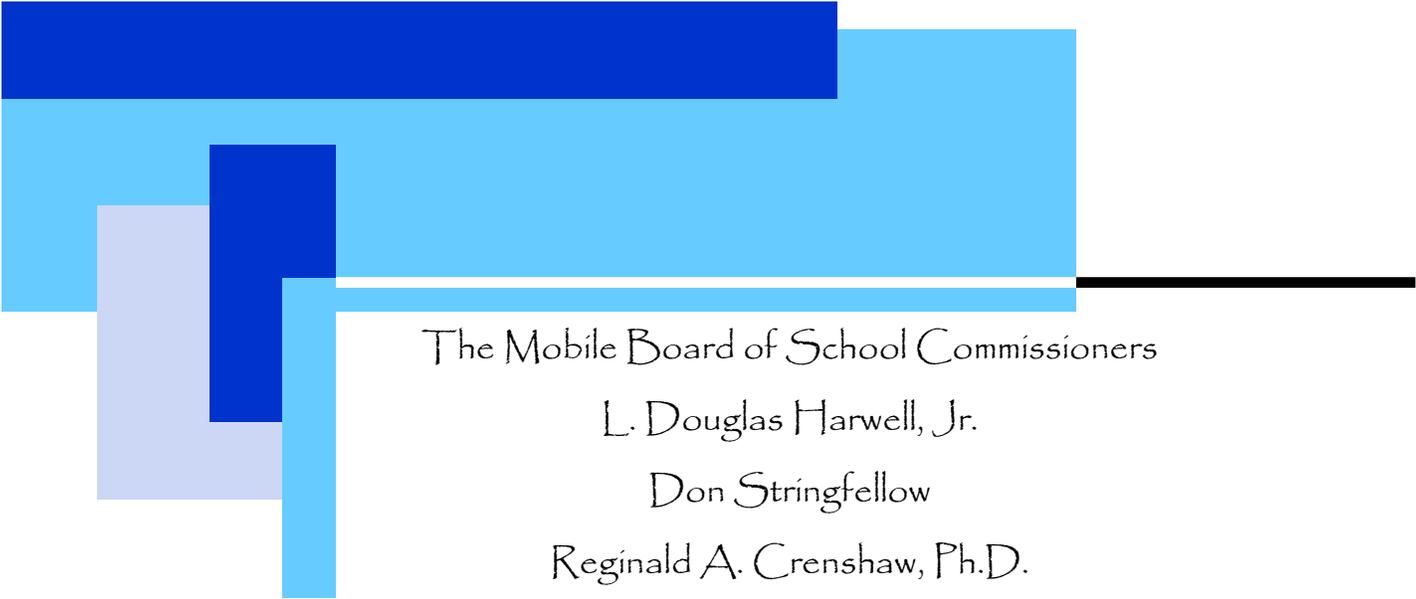
Mobile County Public Schools

Chresal D. Threadgill

Superintendent

Mobile County Public Schools

www.mcpss.com/wellnessplan



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Letter From The Superintendent



Chresal D. Threadgill
Superintendent

Greetings,

The Mobile County Public Schools System's vision for encouraging healthy lifestyles for our students and staff remain as always. We believe that all children have the ability to learn and we take responsibility for helping them achieve.

The knowledge of how to maintain our health is vital for our children to know and practice. To be "healthy" is relevant to each of us and a healthy lifestyle includes good nutrition, physical exercise, having a body free of foreign substances and disease, being able to make positive decisions, and displaying appropriate behavior. If all of these things are present, students will learn, grow, and become wonderful citizens for this nation.

We ask you, our community, to continue to help our students become healthy and productive citizens for the Mobile area. Our efforts will make our schools, community, state and nation, a better places for us all.

In Good Health.

Sincerely,

Chresal D. Threadgill

Our Goal

Mobile County School System (hereto referred to as MCPSS) is committed to the optimal development of every student. MCPSS believes that for students to have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic, developmental, and social success, we need to create positive, safe, and health-promoting learning environments at every level, in every setting, throughout the school year.

Research shows that two components; good nutrition and physical activity before, during, and after the school day, are strongly correlated with positive student outcomes. For example, student participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) School Breakfast Program is associated with higher grades and standardized test scores, lower absenteeism, and better performance on cognitive tasks. Conversely, less-than-adequate consumption of specific foods including fruits, vegetables, and dairy products, is associated with lower grades among students. In addition, students who are physically active through active transport to and from school, recess, physical activity breaks, high-quality physical education, and extracurricular activities – do better academically.



This policy outlines the approach of MCPSS to ensuring environments and opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. Specifically, this policy establishes goals and procedures to ensure that:

- *Students in MCPSS have access to healthy foods throughout the school day—both through reimbursable school meals and other foods available throughout the school campus—in accordance with Federal and State nutrition standards;*
- *Students receive quality nutrition education that helps them develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors;*
- *Students have opportunities to be physically active before, during, and after school;*
- *Schools engage in nutrition and physical activity promotion and other activities that promote student wellness;*
- *School staff are encouraged and supported to practice healthy nutrition and physical activity behaviors in and out of school;*
- *The community is engaged in supporting the work of MCPSS in creating continuity between school and other settings for students and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits; and*
- *MCPSS establishes and maintains an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about, and monitoring of the policy and its established goals and objectives.*

This policy applies to all students, staff, and schools in MCPSS.

Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability, and Community Engagement

Implementation Plan

MCPSS will develop and maintain a plan for implementation to manage and coordinate the execution of this wellness policy. The plan delineates roles, responsibilities, actions, and time lines specific to each school, and includes information about who will be responsible to make what change, by how much, where, and when, as well as specific goals and objectives for nutrition standards for all foods and beverages available on the school campus, food and beverage marketing, nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, physical education, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness. It is recommended that the school use the Healthy Schools Program online tools to complete a school level assessment based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's School Health Index, create an action plan that fosters implementation, and generate an annual progress report.

This wellness policy and the progress reports must be published to inform the public. The policy will be placed on the district website.

Record keeping

MCPSS will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of the wellness policy at the Central Office of the Mobile County Public School System, 1 Magnum Pass Drive West, Mobile, AL 36618 and/or on the systems website. Documentation maintained in these location will include but will not be limited to:

- *The written wellness policy*
- *Documentation demonstrating compliance with community involvement requirements, including:*
 - 1 *Efforts to actively solicit MCPSS membership from the required stakeholder groups*
 - 2 *These groups' participation in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the wellness policy;*
- *Documentation of annual policy progress reports for each school under its jurisdiction; and*
- *Documentation of the triennial assessment* of the policy for each school under its jurisdiction;*
- *Documentation demonstrating compliance with public notification requirements, including:*
 - 1 *Methods by which the wellness policy, annual progress reports, and triennial assessments are made available to the public*
 - 2 *Efforts to actively notify families about the availability of wellness policy.*

Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability, and Community Engagement

MCPSS will actively notify households/families of the availability of the annual report.

MCPSS will establish and monitor goals and objectives for all MCPSS schools, specific and appropriate for each instructional unit (elementary, middle, and high school, as appropriate), for each of the content-specific components listed in Sections III-V of this policy.

Triennial Progress Assessments

At least once every three years, MCPSS will evaluate compliance with the wellness policy to assess the implementation of the policy and include:

- The extent to which schools under the jurisdiction of MCPSS are in compliance with the wellness policy;
- The extent to which MCPSS wellness policy compares to the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's model wellness policy; and
- A description of the progress made in attaining the goals of MCPSS wellness policy.

MCPSS, in collaboration with individual schools, will monitor schools' compliance with this wellness policy.

- MCPSS will actively notify households/families of the availability of the triennial progress report.

Revisions and Updating the Policy

MCPSS will update or modify the wellness policy based on the results of the annual progress reports and triennial assessments, and/or as District priorities change; community needs change; wellness goals are met; new health science, information, and technology emerges; and new Federal or State guidance or standards are issued. The wellness policy will be assessed and updated as indicated at least every three years, following the triennial assessment.

Community Involvement, Outreach, and Communications

MCPSS is committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of the wellness policy. MCPSS will actively communicate ways in which representatives of MCPSS and others can participate in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the wellness policy through a variety of means appropriate for that district. MCPSS will also inform parents of the improvements that have been made to school meals and compliance with school meal standards, availability of child nutrition programs and how to apply, and a description of and compliance with Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. MCPSS will use electronic mechanisms, such as email or displaying notices on MCPSS website, as well as non-electronic mechanisms, such as newsletters, presentations to parents, or sending information home to parents, to ensure that all families are actively notified of the content of, implementation of, and updates to the wellness policy, as well as how to get involved and support the policy. MCPSS will ensure that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community, and accomplished through means similar to other ways that the district and individual schools are communicating other important school information with parents.

MCPSS will actively notify the public about the content of or any updates to the wellness policy annually, at a minimum. MCPSS will also use these mechanisms to inform the community about the availability of the annual and triennial reports.

Nutrition Education

School Meals

Our school district is committed to serving healthy meals to children, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat milk; moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and zero grams trans fat per serving (nutrition label or manufacturer's specification); and to meet the nutrition needs of school children within their calorie requirements. The school meal programs aim to improve the diet and health of school children, help mitigate childhood obesity, model healthy eating to support the development of lifelong healthy eating patterns, and support healthy choices while accommodating special dietary needs.

Our school district will not prepare foods by deep or pan frying and will work to reduce the number of processed foods items that are planned and served each week.

Our school meal programs also practice the Offer vs. Serve food service model which allows students to decline certain food items to reduce food waste.

All schools within MCPSS participate in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program (SBP), and some in the At-Risk After school Meals Program. Several of our Elementary School also participates in the Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program (FFVP). MCPSS also operates additional nutrition-related programs and activities including Breakfast in the Classroom. All schools within MCPSS are committed to offering school meals through the NSLP and SBP programs, and other applicable Federal child nutrition programs, that:

- Are accessible to all students;
- Are served in clean and pleasant settings;
- Meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established by local, state, and Federal statutes and regulations. (MCPSS offers reimbursable school meals that meet USDA nutrition standards.)
- Promote healthy food and beverage choices using at least four of the following Smarter Lunchroom techniques:
 - Daily fruit options are displayed in a location in the line of sight and reach of students
 - All available vegetable options have been given creative or descriptive names
 - Daily vegetable options are bundled into all grab and go meals available to students
 - All staff members, especially those serving, have been trained to politely prompt students to select and consume the daily vegetable options with their meal
 - White milk is placed in front of other beverages in all coolers
 - Alternative entrée options (e.g., salad bar, yogurt parfaits, etc.) are highlighted on posters or signs within all service and dining areas
 - A reimbursable meal can be created in any service area available to students (e.g., salad bars, snack rooms, etc.)
 - Student surveys and taste testing opportunities are used to inform menu development, dining space decor, and promotional ideas
 - Student artwork is displayed in the service and/or dining areas
 - Daily announcements are used to promote and market menu options
- Menus will be posted on MCPSS website or individual school websites.
- MCPSS child nutrition program will accommodate students with special dietary needs once the students submit a special diet prescription form signed by a licensed physician or authorized medical authority.
- Students will be allowed at least 20 minutes to eat breakfast and lunch, counting from the time they have received their meal and are seated. Students are served lunch at a reasonable and appropriate time of day.

Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

- All school nutrition program directors, managers, and staff will meet or exceed hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements in the USDA professional standards for child nutrition professionals. These school nutrition personnel will refer to USDA's Professional Standards for School Nutrition Standards website to search for training that meets their learning needs.

Water

To promote hydration, free, safe, unflavored drinking water will be available to all students throughout the school day* and throughout every school campus* ("school campus" and "school day" are defined in the glossary). MCPSS will make drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes. In addition, students will be allowed to bring and carry water bottles with them to the classroom.

All water sources will be maintained on a regular basis to ensure good hygiene standards. Such sources and containers may include drinking fountains, water jugs, hydration stations, water jets, and other methods for delivering drinking water.

Nutrition Education Continued....

Competitive Foods and Beverages

MCPSS is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages available to students on the school campus during the school day support healthy eating. The foods and beverages sold and served outside of the school meal programs (i.e., “competitive” foods and beverages) will meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, at a minimum. Smart Snacks aim to improve student health and well-being, increase consumption of healthful foods during the school day, and create an environment that reinforces the development of healthy eating habits. A summary of the standards and information are available at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/tools-schools-smart-snacks>. The Alliance for a Healthier Generation provides a set of tools to assist with implementation of Smart Snacks available at www.healthiergeneration.org/smartsnacks.

To support healthy food choices and improve student health and well-being, all foods and beverages outside the reimbursable school meal programs that are sold to students on the school campus during the school day will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks nutrition standards. These standards will apply in all locations and through all services where foods and beverages are sold, which may include, but are not limited to, a la carte options in cafeterias, vending machines, school stores, and snack or food carts.

Celebrations and Rewards

All foods offered on the school campus will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, including through:

1. Celebrations and parties. The district will provide a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers, including non-food celebration ideas. Healthy party ideas can be found from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation and from the USDA.
2. Classroom snacks brought by parents. The District will provide to parents a list of foods and beverages that meet Smart snacks nutrition standards; and
3. Rewards and incentives. The District will provide teachers and other relevant school staff a list of alternative ways to reward children. Foods and beverages will not be used as a reward, or withheld as punishment for any reason, such as for performance or behavior.

Fundraising

Foods and beverages that meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in Schools nutrition standards, but are not sold in competition with the school meals program, may be sold on the school campus one hour after the end of the last meal period. MCPSS will make available to parents and teachers a list of healthy fundraising ideas [examples from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation and the USDA].

- Schools will use only non-food fundraisers and fundraisers that encourage and promote physical activity (such as walk-a-thons, jump rope for heart, fun runs, etc.) during the school day.
- Foods that do not meet the USDA Smart Snacks in Schools standards, but are not consumed at school, may be sold. This may include but is not limited to, cookie dough sales, frozen pizza sales, etc.

Exempt fundraisers are allowed, but limited to a maximum of 30 one (1) day fundraisers per school per year. The food items sold as part of an exempt fundraiser do not have to meet the USDA Smart Snacks in Schools standards and can be sold during the school day; however, these items may not be sold one (1) hour before or after a school meal period

The school principal will complete an Exempt Fundraiser Form on July 1st and Jan 1st of each year. MCPSS superintendent will complete an Attestation of Compliance Form to certify that the school district is aware of the USDA Smart Snacks in Schools standards and agree to comply with the requirements.

Nutrition Promotion

Nutrition promotion and education positively influence lifelong eating behaviors by using evidence-based techniques and nutrition messages, and by creating food environments that encourage healthy nutrition choices and encourage participation in school meal programs. Students and staff will receive consistent nutrition messages throughout schools, classrooms, gymnasiums, and cafeterias. Nutrition promotion also includes marketing and advertising nutritious foods and beverages to students and is most effective when implemented consistently through a comprehensive and multi-channel approach by school staff and teachers, parents, students, and the community.

MCPSS will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students throughout the school campus, as well as encourage participation in school meal programs. This promotion will occur through the following methods:

- Implementing evidence-based healthy food promotion techniques through the school meal programs using smarter lunchroom techniques; and
- Promoting foods and beverages that meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.

Nutrition Education Continued....

MCPSS aims to teach, model, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Schools will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- Is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
- Is part of not only health education classes, but also integrated into other classroom instruction through subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects;
- Include enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, and participatory activities, such as cooking demonstrations or lessons, promotions, taste-testing, farm visits, and school gardens;
- Promote fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, and healthy food preparation methods;
- Emphasize caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (promotes physical activity/exercise);
- Link with school meal programs, cafeteria nutrition promotion activities, school gardens, Farm to School programs, other school foods, and nutrition-related community services and;
- Include nutrition education training for teachers and other staff.

Essential Healthy Eating Topics in Health Education

MCPSS will include in the health education curriculum the following essential topics on healthy eating:

- The relationship between healthy eating and personal health and disease prevention
- Food guidance from MyPlate
- Reading and using USDA's food labels
- Eating a variety of foods every day
- Balancing food intake and physical activity
- Eating more fruits, vegetables, and whole grain products
- Choosing foods that are low in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol and do not contain trans fat
- Choosing foods and beverages with little added sugars
- Eating more calcium-rich foods
- Preparing healthy meals and snacks
- Risks of unhealthy weight control practices
- Accepting body size differences
- Food safety
- Importance of water consumption
- Importance of eating breakfast
- Making healthy choices when eating at restaurants
- Eating disorders
- The Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- Reducing sodium intake
- Social influences on healthy eating, including media, family, peers, and culture
- How to find valid information or services related to nutrition and dietary behavior
- How to develop a plan and track progress toward achieving a personal goal to eat healthfully
- Resisting peer pressure related to unhealthy dietary behavior
- Influencing, supporting, or advocating for others' healthy dietary behavior

USDA's Team Nutrition provides free nutrition education and promotion materials, including standards-based nutrition education curricula and lesson plans, posters, interactive games, menu graphics, and more.

Food and Beverage Marketing in Schools

MCPSS is committed to providing a school environment that ensures opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. MCPSS strives to teach students how to make informed choices about nutrition, health, and physical activity. These efforts will be weakened if students are subjected to advertising on MCPSS property that contains messages inconsistent with the health information MCPSS is imparting through nutrition education and health promotion efforts. It is the intent of MCPSS to protect and promote student's health by permitting advertising and marketing for only those foods and beverages that are permitted to be sold on the school campus, consistent with MCPSS wellness policy.

Any foods and beverages marketed or promoted to students on the school campus* during the school day* will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.

Food advertising and marketing is defined as an oral, written, or graphic statements made for the purpose of promoting the sale of a food or beverage product made by the producer, manufacturer, seller, or any other entity with a commercial interest in the product. This term includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Brand names, trademarks, logos or tags, except when placed on a physically present food or beverage product or its container.
- Displays, such as on vending machine exteriors.
- Corporate brand, logo, name, or trademark on school equipment, such as marquees, message boards, scoreboards, or backboards (Note: immediate replacement of these items are not required; however, districts will consider replacing or updating scoreboards or other durable equipment over time so that decisions about the replacement include compliance with the marketing policy.)
- Corporate brand, logo, name, or trademark on cups used for beverage dispensing, menu boards, coolers, trash cans, and other food service equipment; as well as on posters, book covers, pupil assignment books, or school supplies displayed, distributed, offered, or sold by MCPSS.
- Advertisements in school publications or school mailings.
- Free product samples, taste tests, or coupons of a product, or free samples displaying advertising of a product.
 - "Healthy Living . . . It Starts With Us"

Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness

MCPSS will integrate wellness activities across the entire school setting, not just in the cafeteria, other food and beverage venues, and physical activity facilities. MCPSS will coordinate and integrate other initiatives related to physical activity, physical education, nutrition, and other wellness components so all efforts are complementary, not duplicative, and work towards the same set of goals and objectives promoting student well-being, optimal development, and strong educational outcomes.

Schools in MCPSS are encouraged to coordinate content across curricular areas that promote student health, such as teaching nutrition concepts in mathematics, with consultation provided by either the school or MCPSS curriculum experts.

All efforts related to obtaining federal, state, or association recognition for efforts, or grants/funding opportunities for healthy school environments will be coordinated with and complementary of the wellness policy.

All school-sponsored events will adhere to the wellness policy. All school-sponsored wellness events will include physical activity opportunities.

- Community Partnerships
- Community Health Promotions and Engagements
- Staff Wellness and Health Promotion
- Professional Learning

The Food Service Operation

The management of the Child Nutrition Program will be under the direction of the Child Nutrition Program, Food Services Director.

It is acknowledged that the feeding of children is primarily a family responsibility. To supplement their efforts, every school shall operate a child nutrition program to ensure that all students have affordable access to the varied and nutritious foods they need to stay healthy and learn well.

The child nutrition program shall aim to be financially self-supporting.



The Food Service Operation

each school day, the Child Nutrition Program shall offer breakfast and lunch at no charge to each student under the nutritional guidelines of the US Dational School Lunch and Breakfast Program using the Community Eli-gibility Provision. Each school shall encourage all students to participate in these meal opportunities. In particular, the school shall make efforts to en-sure that families are aware of these meals being offered

at no charge to the students and encourage their participation.

The school child nutrition program shall monitor the nutrient breakdown of their menus.

Regardless of menu planning, the child nutrition program shall analyze the menus offered to students to ensure that USDA guidelines are being met.

School child nutrition program shall operate in accordance with the National School Lunch Act and the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 as amended and applicable laws and regulations of the state of Alabama. Schools shall offer varied and nutritious food choices that are consistent with the federal governmentary Guidelines for Americans, the Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, and Smart Snacks for

Schools Standards. For the purpose of this policy, "Dietary Guidelines for Americans" refers to the current set of recommendations of the federal government that are designed to help people choose diets that will meet nutrient requirements, promote health, support active lives, and reduce chronic ease risks. Menus will be planned taking into account student cultural norms and preferences. Students may purchase extra portions of foods offered if they choose to do so. Procedures are in place to provide information about the ingredients and nutritional value of the foods served.

The Food Service Operation

Staffing

The Mobile County Public School System shall employ a Food Service Director who meets the educational requirements as specified in the standard in the Code of Alabama (1975), 290-080-030-06, to administer the child nutrition program and satisfy reporting requirements.

Dining room staff shall receive appropriate training in how to maintain safe, orderly, and pleasant eating environments.

The Food Service Director will offer appropriate up-to-date staff development training for all food service personnel on an annual basis and as needed as guidelines and responsibilities change.

Collaboration

- *The Food Service Director and staff are encouraged to inform and collaborate with classroom teachers regarding the school nutrition food service environment, cultural norms and nutrition education.-*

The Food Service Operation

Food Safety

All food available in the cafeteria must comply with the state and local food safety and sanitation regulations. Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) plans and guidelines are implemented to prevent food illness in schools.

All Child Nutrition staff have current ServSafe Certifications or food handler permits from the Mobile County Health Department. For the safety and security of the food and facility, only Child Nutrition staff and authorized personnel can have access to the food service operations.

~ food service equipment and facilities must meet applicable local and state standards concerning health; safe food preparation; handling, and storage; drinking water; sanitation; and workplace safety. The district goal is to have 95% of all Health Department cafeteria ratings or greater. -

Glossary

<i>Extended School Day</i>	<i>time during before and after school activities that include clubs, intramural sports, band and choir practice, drama rehearsals, etc.</i>
<i>School Campus</i>	<i>areas that are owned or leased by the school and used at any time for school-related activities such as the school building or on the school campus, including on the outside of the school building, school buses or other vehicles used to transport students, athletic fields, and stadiums (e.g. on scoreboards, coolers, cups, and water bottles), or parking lots.</i>
<i>School Day</i>	<i>midnight the night before to 30 minutes after the end of the instructional day.</i>
<i>Triennial</i>	<i>recurring every three years.</i>

“Healthy Living . . . It Starts With Us”