

Mohave Accelerated Learning Center Wellness Policy

Table of Contents

Preamble	2
Nutrition	2
Physical Activity	4
Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness	6
Policies	7
School Wellness Committee	10
Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability, and Community Engagement	11
Glossary	13

Mohave Accelerated Learning Center Wellness Policy

Preamble

Mohave Accelerated Learning Center (hereafter referred to as MALC) is committed to the optimal development of every student. MALC believes that for students to have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic, developmental, and social success, we must create positive, safe, and health-promoting learning environments at every level and 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. Finally, there is evidence that adequate hydration is associated with better cognitive performance.

This policy outlines MALC's approach 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 a framework to ensure fulfillment of the following goals and procedures:

- MALC Students 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;
- Schools engage in nutrition and physical activity promotion and other activities that promote student wellness;
- MALC establishes and maintains an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about and monitoring of the policy and its established goals and objectives.

MALC's Wellness Facilitator (Facilitator) will coordinate the wellness policy with MALC management, appropriate department heads, each school's administrators and wellness representatives as necessary.

Specific measureable goals and policies are identified within each section below.

I. Wellness Policy Goals

Nutrition Promotion Goals

MALC is committed to serving healthy meals to children. 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 cultural food preferences and special dietary needs. Accordingly, each MALC School will:

- Be encouraged to participate in as many of the USDA's child nutrition programs as appropriate, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program (SBP), and the Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program (FFVP),

MOHAVE ACCELERATED LEARNING CENTER WELLNESS POLICY

UPDATED 3/23/2022

- Post its menus on individual school websites and, when appropriate, at strategic locations throughout each campus.
- Promote participation in Federal child nutrition programs among students and families to help ensure that families know what programs are available in their children's school.
- Parents/Guardians will receive an email, phone call, and personal (private) letter acknowledging that their child(ren) is/are eligible for program benefits.

Smarter Lunchroom Techniques

Each MALC School will promote healthy food and beverage choices using at least ten of the following [Smarter Lunchroom techniques](#):

- Sliced or cut fruit is available daily.
- Daily fruit options are displayed in a location in the line of sight and reach of students.
- At least two kinds of vegetables are offered.
- Vegetables are offered on all service lines.
- A serving of vegetables is incorporated into an entrée item at least once a month (e.g. beef and broccoli bowl, spaghetti, black bean burrito).
- Pre-packaged salads or a salad bar is available to all students.
- Pre-packaged salads or a salad bar is in a high-traffic area.
- Milk cases/coolers are kept full throughout meal service.
- White milk is offered in all beverage coolers.
- White milk is organized and represents at least 1/3 of all milk in each designated milk cooler.
- Students must use cash to purchase a la carte snack items if available.
- Students are offered a taste test of a new entrée at least once a year.
- All staff members, especially those serving, have been trained to politely prompt students to select and consume the daily vegetable options with their meal.
- Cafeteria staff smile and greet students upon entering the service line and throughout meal service.
- Attractive, healthful food posters are displayed in dining and service areas.
- All lights in the dining and meal service areas work and are tuned on.
- Trash cans are emptied when full.
- Student artwork is displayed in the service and/or dining areas.
- A monthly menu is posted in the main office.
- A monthly menu is provided to students, families, teachers, and administrators.

Smarter Lunchrooms strategies are included in the Local School Wellness Policy.

Nutrition Education Goals

MALC Schools will model, encourage and support healthy eating by all students and will teach them behavior-focused skills to safeguard health and make positive choices regarding food and nutrition according to the following plan:

- Students in each grade level from K-12 will be taught according to their understanding and maturity.
- At its elementary schools, nutrition education will be taught as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based, health education curriculum throughout the school year.
- At its junior high and high schools, nutrition education will be integrated into core and elective subjects where appropriate.
- Whenever possible, nutrition education will be taught in collaboration with community partners.

Experiential Hands-on Learning

- Nutrition education will include experiential, hands on learning experiences including the following enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant and participatory activities:
 - Cooking demonstrations or lessons
 - Taste-testing
 - Promotion of new school menu items
- Nutrition education will promote fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, and healthy food preparation methods.
- Nutrition education will emphasize caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise).
- MALC schools will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students and encourage participation in school meal programs by doing the following:
 - Implementing at least ten or more evidence-based healthy food promotion techniques through the school meal programs using [Smarter Lunchroom techniques](#); and
 - Ensuring 100% of foods and beverages promoted to students meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.

Physical Activity Goals

Physical activity is defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that result in energy expenditure. Regular physical activity in childhood and adolescence improves strength and endurance, helps build healthy bones and muscles, helps control weight, reduces anxiety and stress, increases self-esteem and may improve blood pressure and cholesterol levels. Because incorporating regular physical activity in MALC Schools is an important contributor to student wellness the following goals have been established:

Physical Activity

- Physical activity is available for at least 20 minutes per day for all students.

MOHAVE ACCELERATED LEARNING CENTER WELLNESS POLICY

UPDATED 3/23/2022

- Physical activity during the day (including but not limited to recess, classroom physical activity breaks, or physical education) is not used or withheld as punishment for any reason.
- To the extent practicable, MALC will ensure that its grounds and facilities are safe and that equipment is available to students to be active. MALC will conduct necessary inspections and repairs.
- MALC schools will strive to ensure that inventories of physical activity supplies and equipment are known and, when necessary, will work with community partners to ensure sufficient quantities of equipment are available to encourage physical activity for as many students as possible.
- Students have the option of joining Positive Action Intramural competitions as well as multiple sports programs through MALC AIA approved sports, such as:
 - Golf
 - Football
 - Volleyball
 - Basketball
 - Softball
 - Baseball
- To the extent practicable, teachers promote and encourage physical activity for five minutes per hour throughout the school day.

Physical Education

- All elementary students in each grade will receive physical education for at least 55 minutes per week throughout the school year.
- MALC will provide students with physical education, using an age-appropriate, sequential physical education curriculum consistent with national and state standards for physical education.
- MALC schools' physical education programs will promote student physical fitness through individualized fitness and activity assessments (via the [Presidential Youth Fitness Program](#) or other appropriate assessment tool) and will use criterion-based reporting for each student.
- Students will be moderately to vigorously active for at least 50% of class time during most or all physical education class sessions.
- MALC schools' physical education teachers will be required to participate in at least a once a year professional development in physical education.
- Where possible, MALC schools' physical education classes will be taught by teachers who are certified, highly qualified, or endorsed to teach physical education.

Recess for Elementary Schools

- MALC elementary schools will offer at least 20 minutes of recess on all school days during the school year. This policy may be waived on early dismissal or late arrival days.
- In schools where recess is offered before lunch, those schools will have appropriate hand-washing facilities and/or hand-sanitizing mechanisms to ensure proper hygiene prior to eating and students are required to use these mechanisms before eating.
- Outdoor recess will be offered when weather is feasible for outdoor play.

MOHAVE ACCELERATED LEARNING CENTER WELLNESS POLICY

UPDATED 3/23/2022

- Recess will complement, not substitute, physical education class.
- Recess monitors or teachers will encourage students to be active.

Classroom Physical Activity Breaks and Active Academic

- MALC recognizes that students are more attentive and ready to learn if provided with periodic breaks when they can be physically active or stretch. Thus, students will be offered periodic opportunities to be active or to stretch throughout the day on all or most days during a typical school week.
- MALC recommends teachers provide short (3-5-minute) physical activity breaks to students during and between classroom times at least three days per week. These physical activity breaks will complement, not substitute, for physical education class, recess, and class transition periods.
- MALC provides the following resources, tools, and technology with ideas for classroom physical activity breaks and ideas at: <https://healthymeals.fns.usda.gov/state-resources/stories-motion-%E2%80%93-physical-activity-breaks> and the <https://www.healthiergeneration.org/take-action/schools/wellness-topics/physical-activity/classroom-physical-activity>.
- Health education will be required in all grades (elementary).
- MALC will require middle and high school students to take and pass at least one course that includes health education curriculum.

Active Transport

- MALC schools will support and encourage active transport to and from school, such as walking or biking by the activities below:
 - Use crosswalks on streets leading to schools
 - Provide secure storage facilities for bicycles and helmets (e.g., bike racks)
 - Use crossing guards

Goals for Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness

Relationships with Community Partners

- MALC will continue relationships with community partners (e.g., hospitals, universities/colleges, local businesses, SNAP-Ed providers and coordinators, etc.) in support of the MALC Wellness Policy's implementation. Existing and new community partnerships and sponsorships will be evaluated to ensure that they are consistent with the wellness policy and its goals.

Community Health Promotion and Family Engagement

- MALC will promote and provide information to parents/caregivers, families, and the general community about the benefits of and approaches to healthy eating and physical activity throughout the school year.
- Families will be informed and invited to participate in school-sponsored activities and will receive information about health promotion efforts.
- MALC will use electronic mechanisms (e.g., email or displaying notices on MALC's website), as well as non-electronic mechanisms, (e.g., newsletters, presentations to parents or sending

information home to parents), to ensure that all families are actively notified of opportunities to participate in school-sponsored activities and receive information about health promotion efforts.

Staff Wellness and Health Promotion

- MALC schools will implement strategies to support staff in actively and explicitly promoting and modeling healthy eating and physical activity behaviors by encouraging teachers and administrators to do the following:
 - Eat lunch with students;
 - Eat healthy foods in front of students;
 - Join students in PE and recess activities;
 - Avoid sharing experiences or practices that contradict a healthy lifestyle;
 - Plan Holiday fun-runs/walks on or around campus

II. MALC Charter School Policies

School Meals Standards

National School Lunch Program

- All MALC schools participate in the National School Lunch Program.
- Lunch meals served meet the new meal pattern requirements for fruits, vegetables (and subgroups), whole-grain rich foods, meat/meat alternatives, and two varieties of milk.
- 10% of lunch items will be prepared from scratch or made on site.
- Students are served lunch at a reasonable and appropriate time of day.
- Where possible, lunch will follow the recess period to better support learning and healthy eating.
- Students will be allowed at least 15 minutes to eat lunch, counting from the time they have received their meal and are seated.

School Breakfast Program

- All MALC schools participate in the School Breakfast Program.
- Breakfast meals served meet the new meal pattern requirements for fruits, vegetables (and subgroups), whole-grain rich foods, meat/meat alternatives, and two varieties of milk.

School Meal Standards meet the additional guidelines established by MALC

- Meals are appealing and attractive to children.
- Meals are served in clean and pleasant settings.
- Fresh fruits and vegetables are served every school day.
- MALC schools serve a variety of milk including low-fat and fat-free.
- School meals are administered by a team of child nutrition professionals.

MOHAVE ACCELERATED LEARNING CENTER WELLNESS POLICY

UPDATED 3/23/2022

- School meals meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established by local, state, and Federal statutes and regulations. (MALC offers reimbursable school meals that meet [USDA nutrition standards](#).)

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, MALC will make free drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes.
- All water sources and containers will be maintained on a regular basis to ensure good hygiene and health safety standards.
- Students will be allowed to bring and carry (approved) water bottles filled with only water with them throughout the day.

Competitive Food and Beverages (Food Sold to Students)

MALC is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages available to students on the school campus during the school day support healthy eating.

- Foods and beverages sold and served outside of the school meal programs (e.g., “competitive” foods and beverages) on the school campus during the school day (midnight to thirty minutes after the end of the school day) will meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, at a minimum.
- 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, à la carte options in cafeterias and snack or food carts.
- 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. Each MALC school is encouraged to become familiar with the standards and information that promote Smart Snacks found at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschools> and <https://foodplanner.healthiergeneration.org/calculator/>.

Celebrations and Rewards (Food Served to Students)

School Sponsored Events

- Foods served to K-8 students meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snack in School nutrition standards per the Arizona Nutrition Standards (ARS 15-242) <https://cms.azed.gov/home/GetDocumentFile?id=598379ff3217e10bf8f0b7ec>.
- Foods served to 9-12 students meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snack in School nutrition standards per the Arizona Nutrition Standards (ARS 15-242) <https://cms.azed.gov/home/GetDocumentFile?id=598379ff3217e10bf8f0b7ec>.

Fundraising

MALC has adopted the following fundraising policy:

- Foods and beverages that meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in Schools nutrition standards may be sold through fundraisers on the school campus during the school day. Healthy fundraising ideas can be found at the [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#) and [USDA](#).
- Any exceptions to the policy will require an exemption request from the school that MALC will submit to ADE.

Notification of MALC Fundraising Policy

- This fundraising policy is distributed and made available online to all MALC schools as part of this wellness plan.
- This fundraising policy is distributed and made available online to all parents/guardians as part of this MALC Wellness Policy.

Food and Beverage Marketing in Schools

MALC 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. MALC 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 school property that contains messages inconsistent with the health information MALC is imparting through nutrition education and health promotion efforts. It is the intent of MALC 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 the MALC Wellness Policy.

- All 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 guidelines. These guidelines apply to the following:
 - Vending machine exteriors;
 - School equipment, such as marquees, message boards, scoreboards, buses, etc.
 - Cups used for beverage dispensing, menu boards, coolers, trash cans and other food service equipment;
 - Posters, book covers, school supply displays, etc.
 - Advertisements in school publications or school mailings.
 - Free product samples, taste tests, coupons of a product, or free samples displaying advertising of a product.

MALC has established the following additional guidelines for all foods and beverages marketed to students:

1. As MALC/school nutrition services/Athletics Department/PTA/PTO reviews existing contracts and considers new contracts, equipment and product purchasing (and replacement) decisions should reflect the applicable marketing guidelines established by the MALC Wellness Policy.

III. **MALC Wellness Committee**

Committee Role and Membership

- MALC will convene a representative wellness committee, known as the MALC Wellness Committee.
- The MALC Wellness Committee will meet at least two time per year to establish goals for and oversee school health, nutrition, fitness, and safety policies and programs, including development, implementation and periodic review and update of the MALC Wellness Policy.
- The public is notified of their ability to participate on the MALC Wellness Committee by using the following methods:
 - Notice on the MALC website
 - Newsletters
- The MALC Wellness Committee will actively recruit and has representation from:
 - All school levels (elementary and secondary schools)
 - Parents and caregivers
 - Students
 - Representatives from the school nutrition program (e.g. school food service director);
 - Physical education teachers
 - School health professionals (e.g., health education teachers, school health services staff [e.g. nurses, physicians, dentists, health educators, and other allied health personnel who provide school health services
 - School administrators (e.g. principals, vice principals)
 - School board members
 - When possible, membership will also include Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education coordinators (SNAP-Ed)

Leadership

- The superintendent and food service director or a designee, also known as the Facilitator, will convene the MALC Wellness Committee and facilitate development of and updates to the MALC Wellness Policy.
 - The current Superintendent is Casey Mulligan (cmulligan@mohavelearning.org; 928.758.6252)
 - The current Food Services Director is Dobry Cieszko (dCieszko@mohavelearning.org)
- The superintendent will ensure each school's compliance with the policy.

IV. **MALC Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability and Community Engagement**

Implementation Plan

- MALC will develop and maintain a plan for implementation to manage and coordinate the execution of the MALC Wellness Policy at each of its schools. The plan delineates roles, responsibilities, actions and timelines specific to each school to ensure compliance that promotes the utmost in student wellness.
 - The MALC Wellness Committee strongly encourages each school to use the [Healthy Schools Program online tools](#) to complete a school-level assessment and create an action plan that fosters improvement and implementation.
- Each school will be required to complete the Arizona Department of Education's Local Wellness Policy Activity and Assessment Tool (<http://www.azed.gov/hns/nslp/lwp/>) at least once each three years to guide their wellness efforts and inform all stakeholders, including the MALC Wellness Committee, of its progress.
- The Facilitator will meet with each school principal and Wellness Policy Coordinator at least once each year to conduct a School Health Index, review, manage, and coordinate the execution of the MALC Wellness Policy at their school.
- Each year during the plan review, specific roles, responsibilities, actions, and timelines will be agreed upon and assigned.

Triennial Progress Assessments

- At least once every three years, MALC management 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 MALC are in compliance with the wellness policy
 - The extent to which MALC's wellness policy compares to the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's model wellness policy
 - A description of the progress made in attaining the goals of MALC's wellness policy
- The Facilitator is responsible for managing the triennial assessment. The current Facilitator is Dobry Cieszko (dCieszko@mohavelearning.org).

Revisions and Updating the Policy

- The MALC Wellness Committee will update or modify the MALC Wellness Policy when appropriate including when:
 - MALC's priorities change
 - Community needs change
 - Wellness goals are met
 - New health science, information, and technology emerges
 - New Federal or state guidance or standards are issued.

- The results of the annual school reviews, School Health Index, or triennial assessments warrant
- The MALC Wellness Committee will conduct an annual School Health Index at each school.

Notification of MALC Wellness Policy, Policy Updates, and Triennial Assessment

Availability of the MALC Wellness Policy

- MALC's schools will ensure that the public has access to this wellness plan at all times.
- The MALC Wellness Policy and the progress reports can be found at <https://www.mohavelearning.org>.

Notification/Availability of Revisions and Updates to the MALC Wellness Policy

- MALC actively informs families and the public each year of basic information about this policy, including its content, any updates (with date of change) to the policy and implementation status.
- MALC will make this information available via:
 - Its website at <https://www.mohavelearning.org>.
- Each MALC school will 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. MALC will use electronic mechanisms, such as email or displaying notices on MALC's 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 MALC Wellness Policy, as well as how to get involved and support the policy. MALC will ensure that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community, and accomplished through means similar to other ways that MALC and individual schools are communicating important school information with parents.

Availability of the Triennial Assessment

- MALC will actively notify the public about the content of or any updates to the MALC Wellness Policy.
- MALC will post the annual and triennial reports to inform the community about their availability at <https://www.mohavelearning.org>

Recordkeeping

- MALC will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of the MALC Wellness Policy on its website. Documentation maintained in this location will include but will not be limited to:
 - The written MALC Wellness Policy
 - Documentation demonstrating that the policy has been made available to the public
 - Documentation of efforts to review and update the MALC Wellness Policy, including an indication of who is involved in the update and methods MALC uses to make stakeholders aware of their ability to participate on the MALC Wellness Committee

MOHAVE ACCELERATED LEARNING CENTER WELLNESS POLICY

UPDATED 3/23/2022

- Documentation to demonstrate compliance with the annual public notification requirements
- The most recent assessment on the implementation of the local school wellness policy
- Documentation demonstrating the most recent assessment on the implementation of the MALC Wellness Policy has been made available to the public.

Glossary:

School Campus – Areas that are owned or leased by the school and used at any time for school-related activities, including on the outside of the school building, school buses or other vehicles used to transport students, athletic fields, and parking lots.

Triennial – Recurring every three years.

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