

Duluth Edison Charter Schools

DECS Wellness Policy

Annual Report 2017-18

2017-18 DECS Health and Wellness Highlights:

Yoga Classes with Susan Maras

We've had fun trying yoga together this year at North Star. I taught five hour-long yoga classes after work for staff. We focused on relaxation and stress relief as well as strength and stability. We started out light and worked up to an exercise called Sun Salutations in our last class just in time to greet Spring. All levels participated, from those who had never tried yoga to advanced yogis. It really is for everybody. Yoga is all about feeling good.

I've also been able to visit K-8 classrooms for 10 minute yoga breaks. We've worked on deep breathing before tests; students have enjoyed doing animal poses such as Cobra, Puppy, and Frog. We've also done poses and tied them with positive statements such as doing Peace Warrior and repeating, "I can stand for peace."

Other Initiatives

- District blood drives
- Weekly staff sports night
- Wellness Wednesdays
- Gym membership discounts through Health EZ
- Health EZ workshops & nurses on campus

Duluth Edison Charter Schools continues to offer wellness education and opportunities to students and staff. DECS believes students and staff need access to healthy foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive. Good health fosters student attendance and education. In compliance with Section 204 of Public Law 108-265 of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act, the DECS Wellness Committee provides this annual report for the 2017-18 school year.

The four components reviewed and required by policy include:

1. Nutrition Education
2. Physical Activity
3. Other school-based wellness activities
4. Nutritional guidelines for all foods available on campus during the day (Minnesota Department of Education, 2007).

This report highlights areas of growth and improvement through action plans put in place by the committee members and wellness coordinator. Due to the brief summary of each area, this report does not highlight the depth of changes and growth that occurred throughout the academic year.

Taher Food Service

There were many new and exciting changes in the Food Service Department this year. The biggest change was offering two hot entrée choices and still offering a cold choice as well. We also continued to upgrade our fresh fruit options available at breakfast and lunch, and many new vegetable options as well.

Our new Food Service Management Company, Taher, also provided some other new programs as well:

- Chef visits throughout the year providing sampling
- Harvest of the Month (HOM) implementing different fruits and vegetables into the menu for the students to try
- Healthy to the "T" newsletter with some great recipes to try at home

Physical Education/Athletics Highlights

- Skate Time learn to skate program at Raleigh and North Star
- 5th grade Heart of Dance program at Raleigh.
- K-5 Field day at Raleigh
- K-5 students also participated in Jump Rope for heart, raising money for the American Heart Association.
- Continued to offer a variety of middle school athletics programs at North Star (soccer, track, cross country, nordic skiing, basketball & volleyball).

Duluth Public Schools Academy

Wellness Policy

2017-18 DECS Health and Wellness Highlights:

North Star Garden

This spring, North Star elementary students worked to plan, build, and plant a school garden. Funds were made available both from the general fund and a grant from the Jeffers Foundation's "A Garden 4 Every School" program. Volunteers built six 8'x4' cedar raised beds. Students started seeds indoors in April and transplanted them into the garden in May. They also planted rhubarb, strawberries, flowers, and vegetables. Students have been learning gardening techniques, including native methods of a "three sisters" plot and an Ojibwe medicine wheel. The health and wellness benefits of gardening are many, including an active hobby, learning to plant fruits and vegetables, promoting better nutrition, along with the mental and spiritual benefits of spending time in nature.

Please note: this report reflects a progressive change and improvement to our wellness education program. Activities, trainings, and opportunities listed are in addition to previous accomplishments. If you are interested in reviewing previous reports, please contact me at:

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Project Produce

Over the first half of the year, the food service department offered taste tests to all students at Raleigh as we finished up the Project Produce grant we started in January 2017. We were able to offer all students a sample of a fruit or vegetable they may not have otherwise tried.

The response by the students was great! They really enjoyed taste test days. Since the grant wrapped up, we are noticing the students eating more fresh fruits and vegetables at lunch and at breakfast. Our new food service management company is offering vegetables at both meals, and it has been accepted well at both schools.

The Chef Ann Foundation, who offered this grant opportunity, reached out to me and wanted to feature some of the things we did during the grant period. They have included Raleigh in their best practices section of their website. This is an area other food service directors, as well as the general public, can go to see what worked for us and what we had some struggles with.

Check it out and see some more information about what we did with this grant money. We really enjoyed it!!

- <http://www.chefannfoundation.org/programs-and-grants/project-produce>
- <http://www.thelunchbox.org/marketing/lunchroom-education-1/project-produce-best-practices>

DECS Third Decade Celebration 5K/1Mile

As part of DECS Celebration of three decades of providing academic and personal excellence for all students, a 5K/1Mile was held on Saturday, May 19th. The participants took off from Raleigh Academy and connected with the Western Waterfront Trail. 133 runners/walkers participated in the first ever event of its kind for the Duluth Edison Charter Schools. The goal of the race/walk was not only to celebrate, but to also promote overall health and wellness within our schools and community.

Junior Academy Electives

- Girls Fitness Elective worked on increasing our personal fitness in the areas of strength, agility, flexibility confidence, and stamina. We worked on team-work while playing team sports such as ultimate frisbee, soccer, and basketball. We did a variety of other activities that included, but not limited to, gymnastics, HIIT workouts, partner workouts, yoga, boys vs. girls dodgeball, etc.
- Girls Volleyball Elective worked on developing basic volleyball skills such as bumping, setting, hitting, serving, blocking and order of rotation.
- Zumba elective students incorporated dance and aerobic exercises with a Latin rhythm. Zumba incorporates many different types of Latino music from salsa, flamenco, hip-hop and the tango. Zumba is a great way to incorporate dance, culture, and exercise.

Minnesota Department of Education. (2007). *Local wellness policy: A guide for development and local wellness policy development tool*. <http://education.state.mn.us>.