

Duluth Edison Charter Schools

DECS Wellness Policy

Annual Report 2018-19

Health and Wellness Highlights for 2018-2019:

Taher Food Service

This year the decision was made to go back to serving one hot entrée and one cold entrée in order to concentrate on delivering a fresher, hot product to the students. We also decided, with input from the students, to offer more of the entrées they like more frequently during the month. As mandated by the USDA, we always serve Whole Grain products. We were able to offer more fresh vegetables and fresh fruits this year as well. This year we have witnessed our student participation increase to record numbers, all the while giving them healthy choices that they like.

DECS Physical Education

Returning once again this year, we brought the Skatertime program to our school. Skatertime rents roller skates for K-5 students and inline skates for 6-8 students. Students were taught a six day skating curriculum that allowed them to pick their level of difficulty based on their skills, comfort level, and experience. Skatertime awarded scholarships to cover the rental cost for families who could not afford to pay the \$8/\$9 fee. Students improved their skills and exposure to a great lifetime activity! This was once again a highlight for the students as well as the staff.

Duluth Edison Charter Schools continue to provide 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 2018-19 school year.

The four components reviewed and required by policy include:

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

This report highlights areas of growth and the 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 occurs throughout the academic year.

Restorative Circles and Mindfulness

Over the past year several staff members had the opportunity to partake in Restorative Practices trainings led by the Minnesota Department of Education. Following these trainings, multiple teachers have piloted Restorative Circles and Mindfulness techniques within their classrooms. The following was written by one of our kindergarten teachers:

In our Kindergarten class we begin and end each day in Circle. Our "closing Circle" is a calm time to center ourselves and reflect on positive parts of the day. We share compliments, times we practiced a core value, and also any struggles we had that day. We've gathered in a problem solving Circle a few times as a large group and small groups, addressing problems such as excluding others and gossip. I find Circles to be such a valuable practice in our classroom - students are all heard and shown their voices carry power. I've seen their vocabulary grow (students often say "I felt respected when..." or "___ showed compassion to me when..."), and I know this is directly connected to our time in Circle. I'm so thankful to have had this training, and have also grown within our staff Circle.

To practice Mindfulness, we take "mindful minutes" throughout our day to connect to calm. We have a few favorite visual timers we pull up on youtube as we breathe deep, practicing different breaths like "hot chocolate breath" or "smell the flower, blow out the candle." I've seen students independently use these breathing tools during times of chaos. I love that it's translating from a class routine to an individual practice!

- Jill Ellison, North Star Kindergarten Teacher

Duluth Public Schools Academy

Wellness Policy

Health and Wellness

Highlights for 2018-2019:

Jump Rope for Heart

The DECS Physical Education Department raised over \$5,000 for the Jump Rope for Heart program that benefits the National Heart Association. This program continues to get students excited to exercise in an effort to benefit others.



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

DECS Partners with Second Harvest Northern Lakes Food Bank

Once again we are partnering with our local Food Bank as we work together to try and end childhood hunger. This spring, North Star Academy piloted the Food Bank's Back Pack Program in the Primary Academy.

The Back Pack Program provides a small bag of nutritious, non-perishable food for our students to eat on the weekend throughout the school year. The Back Pack Program food is provided at no cost to our families.

Initially school staff identified students we wanted to extend this offering from school to home. Parents are able to sign their child(ren) up at any time for this program if they haven't yet been identified by staff. The "opt in" form is available on our district website on the food service page. In the fall of 2019, we will be expanding this offering to all DECS students in grades K – 5 at both North Star and Raleigh Academies.

Staff Wellness

In on going efforts to provide for staff health and wellness, DECS sought out opportunities for staff to participate in yoga and vitamin D therapy during the school day. DECS family sports night was also organized to give staff and their families the opportunity to get together and get active.

Yoga

It's been another fun year exploring yoga here at North Star. I guided a group of staff through an after work yoga series this winter. We focused on relaxation and stress relief and improving flexibility, stability and strength. All levels were welcomed—those who have never tried yoga and those who were experienced. Yoga really is for everybody. It's all about connecting the mind and body and feeling good.

I've also had the opportunity to give staff yoga breaks during the day. These are 20 minute come-as-you-are breaks which focus on breathing and gentle stretching. They are designed to have staff leaving feeling refreshed.

- Susan Maras, Yoga Instructor

Vitamin D Therapy

DECS understands that due to our location, the long, cold winter take it's toll. This year staff was provided with the opportunity to take a vitamin D break during the school day. Contracting with the local company, the SunSpot, a mobile vitamin D therapy bus, staff was able to take a break or eat their lunch while taking in some much needed sun. Following their visit to the SunSpot one staff commented, "Now I don't have to go to Florida."

DECS Family Sports Night

On several evenings throughout the school year, and even a few Saturdays, the North Star gym was opened up for staff to bring their families to play games and run around during the cold winter months. Several staff children even created a life sized board game throughout the entire building!