



ALBANY LEADERSHIP

CHARTER SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

A 6-12 Academy of Excellence



WELLNESS POLICY

2022-2023

Mission Statement

The Albany Leadership Charter School for Girls will provide a wellness program that utilizes national nutrition and physical fitness standards to promote healthy eating habits and increased physical activity as well as encourages the development of lifelong habits in order to lead more productive lives.

Goals to Promote Student Wellness

Albany Leadership Charter High School for Girls is committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, it is the policy of The Albany Leadership Charter School for Girls that:

- The school will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing schoolwide nutrition and physical activity policies.
- All students in grades 6-12 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Foods and beverages sold or served at school will meet the nutrition recommendations of the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
- Qualified child nutrition professionals will provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students; will accommodate the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning; and will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.
- To the maximum extent practicable, all students in our school will participate in available federal school meal programs (including the School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program [including after-school snacks], Summer Food Service Program, Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program, and Child and Adult Care Food Program [including suppers]).
- ALCS will provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity, and will establish linkages between health education and school meal programs, and with related community services.

TO ACHIEVE THESE POLICY GOALS:

I. School Health Councils

Albany Leadership Charter High School for Girls will create, strengthen, or work within existing school health councils to develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as

necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies. The councils also will serve as resources to school sites for implementing those policies. (A school health council consists of a group of individuals representing the school and community, and should include parents, students, representatives of the school food authority, members of the school board, school administrators, teachers, health professionals, and members of the public.)

II. Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served on Campus

School Meals

Meals served through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs will:

- be accessible to all students
- be appealing and attractive to children;
- be served in clean and pleasant settings;
- meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations;
- offer a variety of fruits and vegetables;¹
- serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk² and nutritionally-equivalent nondairy alternatives (to be defined by USDA); and
- ensure that all of the served grains are whole grain.^{2,3}

ALCS should engage students and parents, through taste-tests of new entrees and surveys, in selecting foods sold through the school meal programs in order to identify new, healthful, and appealing food choices. In addition, ALCS should share information about the nutritional content of meals with parents and students. Such information could be made available on menus, a website, on cafeteria menu boards, placards, or other point-of-purchase materials.

¹ To the extent possible, ALCS will offer vegetable and two fruit options each day and will offer five different fruits and five different vegetables over the course of a week. Schools are encouraged to source fresh fruits and vegetables from local farmers when practicable. ² As recommended by the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005*.

² A whole grain is one labeled as a “whole” grain product or with a whole grain listed as the primary grain ingredient in the ingredient statement. Examples include “whole” wheat flour, cracked wheat, brown rice, and oatmeal.

Breakfast

To ensure that all children have breakfast, either at home or at school, in order to meet their nutritional needs and enhance their ability to learn:

- ALCS will, to the extent possible, operate the School Breakfast Program.
- ALCS will, to the extent possible, arrange bus schedules and utilize methods to serve school breakfasts that encourage participation, including serving breakfast in the classroom, “grab-and-go” breakfast, or breakfast during morning break or recess.
- ALCS will notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast Program.
- ALCS will encourage parents to provide a healthy breakfast for their children through newsletter articles, take-home materials, or other means.

Free and Reduced-priced Meals

ALCS will make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to, and prevent the overt identification of, students who are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals³. Toward this end, ALCS may utilize electronic identification and payment systems; provide meals at no charge to all children, regardless of income; promote the availability of school meals to all students; and/or use nontraditional methods for serving school meals, such as “grab-and-go” or classroom breakfast.

Meal Times and Scheduling

Albany Leadership Charter School for Girls:

- will provide students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch;
- should schedule meal periods at appropriate times, *e.g.*, lunch should be scheduled between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.;
- should not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities;
- will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks; and

³ It is against the law to make others in the cafeteria aware of the eligibility status of children for free, reduced-price, or “paid” meals.

- should take reasonable steps to accommodate the tooth-brushing regimens of students with special oral health needs (e.g., orthodontia or high tooth decay risk).

Qualifications of School Food Service Staff

Qualified nutrition professionals will administer the school meal programs. As part of the school's responsibility to operate a food service program, we will provide continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals in ALCS. Staff development programs should include appropriate certification and/or training programs for child nutrition directors, school nutrition managers, and cafeteria workers, according to their levels of responsibility.⁴

Sharing of Foods and Beverages

ALCS should discourage students from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets.

High School

At ALCS, all foods and beverages sold individually outside the reimbursable school meal programs (including those sold through a la carte [snack] lines, and student stores, or fundraising activities) during the school day, or through programs for students after the school day, will meet Smart Snack standards.

Beverages

- **Allowed:** water⁵ without added caloric sweeteners; fruit and vegetable juices and fruit-based drinks that contain at least 50% fruit juice and that do not contain additional caloric sweeteners; unflavored or flavored lowfat or fat-free fluid milk and nutritionally-equivalent nondairy beverages (to be defined by USDA);
- **Not allowed:** soft drinks containing caloric sweeteners; sports drinks; iced teas; fruit-based drinks that contain less than 50% real fruit juice or that contain additional caloric sweeteners; beverages containing caffeine, excluding low-fat or fat-free chocolate milk (which contain trivial amounts of caffeine).

⁴ School nutrition staff development programs are available through the USDA, School Nutrition Association, and National Food Service Management Institute.

⁵ Seltzer water may not be sold during meal times in areas of the school where food is sold or eaten because it is considered a "Food of Minimal Nutritional Value" (Appendix B of 7 CFR Part 210).

Foods

- A food item sold individually:
 - will meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, at a minimum.
 - will have no more than 35% of its calories from fat (excluding nuts, seeds, peanut butter, and other nut butters) and 10% of its calories from saturated and trans fat combined;
 - will have no more than 35% of its *weight* from added sugars;⁶
 - will contain no more than 230 mg of sodium per serving for chips, cereals, crackers, French fries, baked goods, and other snack items; will contain no more than 480 mg of sodium per serving for pastas, meats, and soups; and will contain no more than 600 mg of sodium for pizza, sandwiches, and main dishes.

- A choice of at least two fruits and/or non-fried vegetables will be offered for sale at any location on the school site where foods are sold. Such items could include, but are not limited to, fresh fruits and vegetables; 100% fruit or vegetable juice; fruit-based drinks that are at least 50% fruit juice and that do not contain additional caloric sweeteners; cooked, dried, or canned fruits (canned in fruit juice or light syrup); and cooked, dried, or canned vegetables (that meet the above fat and sodium guidelines).⁷

Portion Sizes:

- Limit portion sizes of foods and beverages sold individually to those listed below:
 - One and one-quarter ounces for chips, crackers, popcorn, cereal, trail mix, nuts, seeds, dried fruit, or jerky;
 - One ounce for cookies;
 - Two ounces for cereal bars, granola bars, muffins, bagels, and other bakery items;
 - Four fluid ounces for frozen desserts, including, but not limited to, low-fat or fat-free ice cream;

⁶ If a food manufacturer fails to provide the *added* sugars content of a food item, use the percentage of weight from *total* sugars (in place of the percentage of weight from *added* sugars), and exempt fruits, vegetables, and dairy foods from this total sugars limit.

⁷ ALCS that have vending machines are encouraged to include refrigerated snack vending machines, which can accommodate fruits, vegetables, yogurts, and other perishable items.

- Eight ounces for non-frozen yogurt;
- Twelve fluid ounces for beverages, excluding water; and
- The portion size of a la carte entrees and side dishes, including potatoes, will not be greater than the size of comparable portions offered as part of school meals. Fruits and non-fried vegetables are exempt from portion-size limits.

Fundraising Activities

To support children's health and school nutrition-education efforts, ALCS will stay within Smart Snack standards for all school fundraising activities. ALCS will encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity. The school will make available a list of ideas for acceptable fundraising activities.

Snacks

Snacks served during the school day or in after-school care or enrichment programs will stay within Smart Snack standards. ALCS will assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, children's nutritional needs, children's ages, and other considerations. The school will disseminate a list of healthful snack items to teachers, after-school program personnel, and parents.

- If eligible, schools that provide snacks through after-school programs will pursue receiving reimbursements through the National School Lunch Program.

Rewards

ALCS will stay within Smart Snack standards for any food used as rewards for academic performance or good behavior and will not withhold food or beverages (including food served through school meals) as a punishment.

Celebrations

ALCS should limit celebrations that involve food during the school day to no more than one party per class per month. Celebrations will stay within Smart Snack standards. The school will disseminate a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers.

School-sponsored Events

(Such as, but not limited to, athletic events, dances, or performances).

ALCS will stay within Smart Snack standards for any food at School-sponsored events.

III. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing

Nutrition Education and Promotion

Albany Leadership Charter High School for Girls aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. ALCS should provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- is offered during Health Education (a course required for graduation) as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards based program 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 classroom instruction in subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects;
- includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally relevant, participatory activities, such as contests, promotions, taste testing, farm visits, and school gardens;
- promotes fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health enhancing nutrition practices;
- emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise);
- links with school meal programs, other school foods, and nutrition related community services;
- teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food marketing; and
- includes training for teachers and other staff.

Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting

Students participate in physical activity as incorporated into the School's required curriculum. For students to receive the nationally-recommended amount of daily physical activity (*i.e.*, at least 60 minutes per day) and for students to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior, students need opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class. Toward that end:

- students are encouraged to participate in interscholastic sports programs offered by the School.
- classroom health education will complement physical education by reinforcing the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically-active lifestyle and to reduce time spent on sedentary activities, such as watching television;
- opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into other subject lessons; and

Communications with Parents

The school will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. The school will offer healthy eating seminars for parents, send home nutrition information, post nutrition tips on school websites, and provide nutrient analyses of school menus. ALCS should encourage parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks and to refrain from including beverages and foods that do not meet the above nutrition standards for individual foods and beverages. The school will provide parents a list of foods that meet the school's snack standards and ideas for healthy celebrations/parties, rewards, and fundraising activities. In addition, the school will provide opportunities for parents to share their healthy food practices with others in the school community.

The school will provide information about physical education and other school-based physical activity opportunities before, during, and after the school day; and support parents' efforts to provide their children with opportunities to be physically active outside of school. Such supports will include sharing information about physical activity and physical education through a website, newsletter, or other take-home materials, special events, or physical education homework.

Food Marketing at ALCS

School-based marketing will stay within Smart Snack standards. As such, ALCS will limit food and beverage marketing to the promotion of foods and beverages that meet the nutrition standards for meals or for foods and beverages sold individually (above).⁸ School-based marketing of brands promoting predominantly low-nutrition foods and beverages⁹ is prohibited. The promotion of healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products is encouraged.

⁸ Advertising of low-nutrition foods and beverages is permitted in supplementary classroom and library materials, such as newspapers, magazines, the Internet, and similar media, when such materials are used in a class lesson or activity, or as a research tool.

⁹ ALCS should not permit general brand marketing for food brands under which more than half of the foods or beverages do not meet the nutrition standards for foods sold individually or the meals are not consistent with school meal nutrition standards.

Examples of marketing techniques include the following: logos and brand names on/in vending machines, books or curricula, textbook covers, school supplies, scoreboards, school structures, and sports equipment; educational incentive programs that provide food as a reward; programs that provide ALCS with supplies when families buy low nutrition food products; in-school television, such as Channel One; and free samples or coupons. Marketing activities that promote healthful behaviors (and are therefore allowable) include: vending machine covers promoting water; pricing structures that promote healthy options in a la carte lines or vending machines; and coupons for discount gym memberships.

Staff Wellness

Albany Leadership Charter High School for Girls highly values the health and well-being of every staff member and will plan and implement activities and policies that support personal efforts by staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Each school should establish and maintain a staff wellness committee composed of at least one staff member, dietitian or other health professional, recreation program representative, and employee benefits specialist. The committee should develop, promote, and oversee a multifaceted plan to promote staff health and wellness. The plan should be based on input solicited from school staff and should outline ways to encourage healthy eating, physical activity, and other elements of a healthy lifestyle among school staff. The staff wellness committee should distribute its plan to the school health council annually.

IV. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

Daily Physical Education (P.E.)

All students attending ALCS, including students with disabilities, special health-care needs, will receive physical education as required by New York State Education standards. All physical education will be taught by a certified physical education teacher. Students will spend at least 50 percent of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School

Albany Leadership Charter High School for Girls will provide a comprehensive sequential Physical Education curriculum that is validated and aligned with the New York State Standards for secondary students. This curriculum will have an emphasis on lifetime fitness activities. This curriculum will be taught by New York State certified Physical Education instructors.

Albany Leadership Charter High School for Girls will provide administrative leadership to the Health and Physical Education staff to coordinate professional development, new initiatives, communication and motivation.

Albany Leadership Charter High School for Girls will provide, to the extent possible, appropriate computer access to all Physical Education offices to allow for comprehensive, timely communications throughout the Department.

Albany Leadership Charter High School for Girls will work to create partnerships and mentorships with community agencies to increase student physical activity and improve student and staff wellness.

Safe Routes to School

The school will encourage students to use public transportation when available and appropriate for travel to school, and will work with the local transit agency to provide transit passes for students.

Use of School Facilities Outside of School Hours

School spaces and facilities should be available to students, staff, and community members before, during, and after the school day, on weekends, and during school vacations. These spaces and facilities also should be available to community agencies and organizations offering physical activity and nutrition programs. School policies concerning safety will apply at all times.

V. Monitoring and Policy Review

Monitoring

The Principal will ensure compliance with established school-wide nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. The principal will ensure compliance with those policies in the school and will report on the school's compliance to the Board of Trustees.

Food service staff, at the school level, will ensure compliance with USDA nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the Business Manager.

Policy Review

Assessments will be repeated every three years to help review policy compliance, assess progress, and determine areas in need of improvement. As part of that review, the school will review our nutrition and physical activity policies; provision of an environment that supports healthy eating and physical activity; and nutrition and physical education policies and program elements. The school will, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.