

## WELLNESS POLICY SET FOR SCHOOLS

Many parents have questions about the new broad, wide-ranging wellness policy now in place for all Madison schools and school-related events. The policy, passed this summer by the Board of Education, is a federal requirement for all school districts with federally-funded breakfast and lunch programs.

A committee of students, parents, staff and community health professionals helped develop the policy. The policy and related information are available on the district's Web site [www.mmsd.org](http://www.mmsd.org) under "Hot Topics." Some of the policy's key components include:

- There will be no vending machines in elementary and middle schools. All machines in high school common areas will only serve milk, water, 100% fruit juices and some sports drinks. All soda will be removed from machines, including diet soda.
- No candy will be sold in vending machines.
- No foods — including candy — will be used as rewards.
- Snack items sold in vending machines, at school "stores" and carts will be limited to items from an approved list developed annually by the Wellness Committee. (The initial list will be available by the end of September.)
- Candy will be permitted as a fundraising item for the 2006-07 school year, but after September 1, 2008 will not be offered for sale as part of any school-related activity. During the time while candy sales are still allowed, sales during the school day on school grounds will not be permitted.
- Staff and parents will be encouraged to consider non-food alternatives for birthday parties and other celebrations, during which candy and soda will not be allowed. The goal is to decrease the frequency of celebrations that involve food.
- Schools will still be able to host events that include food (potlucks, food fairs, cultural nights). A School Potluck Food Safety brochure is available with guidelines on foods to avoid due to allergy concerns (peanuts, shellfish, etc.).
- Bake sales offering home-produced food will be allowed after lunch, but should be an infrequent event, and adhere to the Potluck Food Safety brochure.

"The evidence is clear that we have a serious problem with obesity in our country," said Lucy Chaffin, chairperson of the district's Wellness Committee and director of Madison School & Community Recreation. "While schools cannot solve this problem, schools are integral to the solution. The food policy developed by students, parents, staff and community members is a good start. We'll continue to assess and evaluate the policy's implementation; the policy is just the beginning of our ongoing efforts to have healthy students and a healthy school environment."