



Class Snacks-Less Setbacks

Project Citizen 2025/2026

Wellton Elementary School 5th-8th Grade

Mrs. Bushong WESD #24

Overview of the Issue

The current snack policy at Wellton Elementary School does not allow for students to have snacks in the classroom between meals unless the nutrition services purchased the snacks and distributes them. Students should be allowed to have snacks in the classroom between meals because it helps them stay focused and ready to learn. By the middle of the day, many students start to feel hungry, and it becomes harder to pay attention when their stomachs are growling. A small, healthy snack between breakfast and lunch and between lunch and dinner can give them the energy they need to stay alert and do their best work. Allowing snacks can also improve behavior, because students who aren't hungry are calmer and more able to concentrate. Plus, not every student has access to food at home, so snack time helps make sure everyone has the same chance to succeed. Letting students eat a quick snack is a simple way to support learning, build a positive classroom environment, and help all students feel their best.

The Problem

Aylin, Emma, Wyatt

The Problem

Students are hungry between meals while at school.

The current “snacks in the classroom” policy states the cafeteria staff will provide all classroom snacks to ensure classroom snacks are in compliance with the federal and state guidelines “Smart Snacks”.

There has not been any distribution of healthy snacks by the nutrition services department of the school during the 2025/2026 school year.

The people affected by the policy includes the following: the students, the parents, and the staff of WES.

The Problem

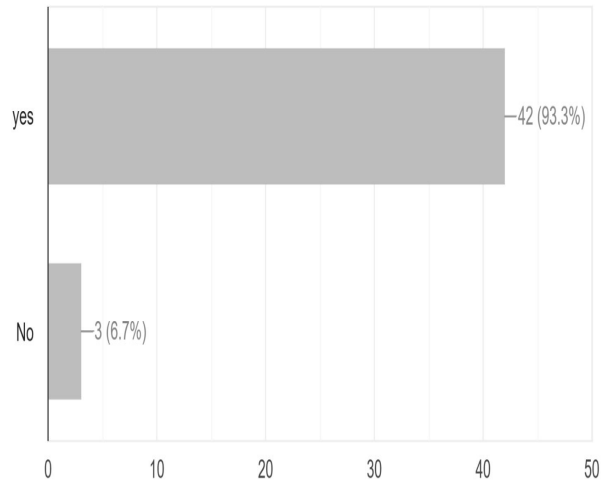
The problem with the current school snack policy is inconsistency and a lack of clarity amongst staff as to how the policy should be carried out.

The current snack policy was drafted and published in 2023 but not implemented.

Evidence of the Problem Students Being Hungry: Student Survey

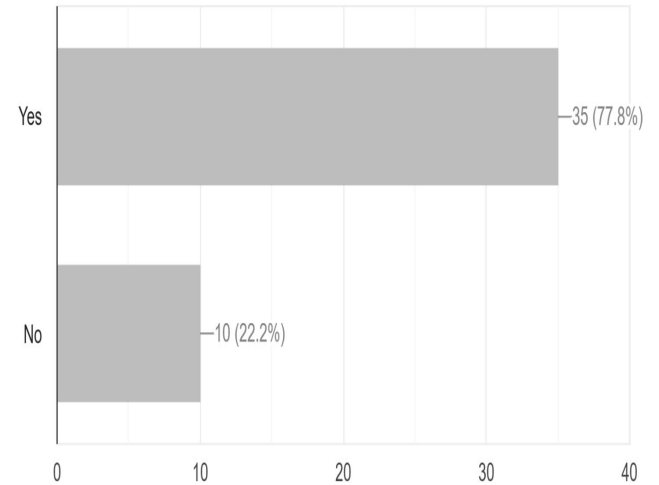
Do you get hungry after breakfast but before lunch?

0 / 45 correct responses



Do you get hungry after lunch but before school dismissal?

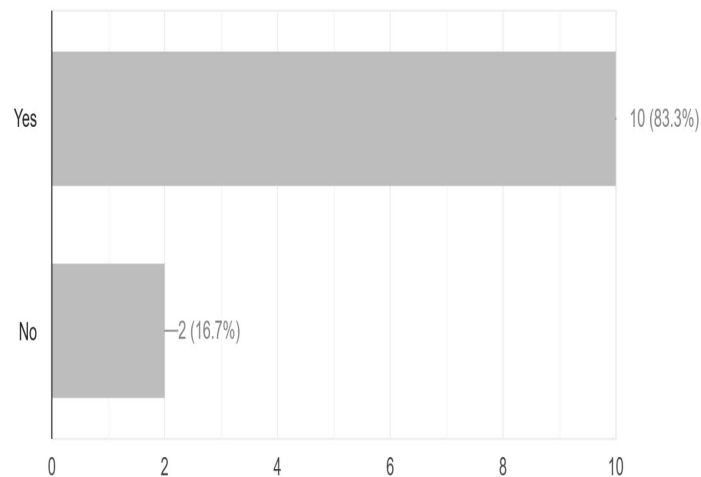
0 / 45 correct responses



Evidence of the Problem of Students Being Hungry: Teacher Survey

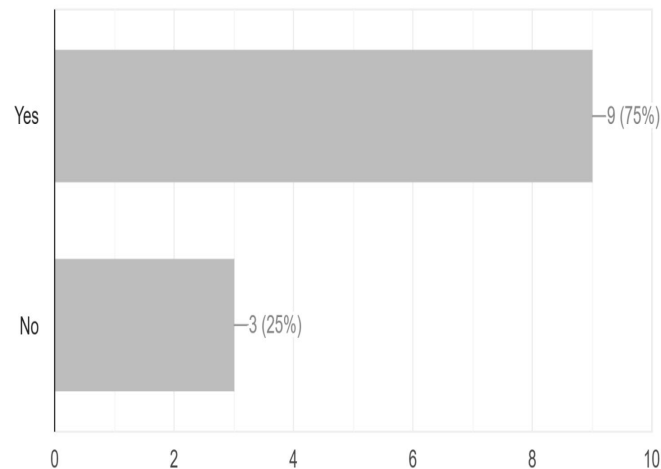
Have you ever had students say they are hungry after breakfast but before lunch during the school day?

0 / 12 correct responses



Have you ever had students say they are hungry after lunch but before school dismissal during the school day?

0 / 12 correct responses



The Problem and Student Academic Performance

Allowing snacks in the classroom addresses physical nourishment and academic performance.

For many students, long gaps between meals lead to a drop in blood sugar, resulting in things such as fatigue, and a significant loss of focus known as "brain fog."

By providing access to quick, healthy snacks, teachers can stabilize students energy levels and improve the students function, ensuring that hunger doesn't become a barrier to learning.

Furthermore, a flexible snacking policy creates a more inclusive environment for students who may have missed breakfast or have higher metabolic needs, ultimately fostering a more comfortable and productive atmosphere for everyone.

Current Policies or Laws

Our school's current policy is insufficient because it states that "*Any snacks on campus would be purchased by the Food Service Department and would meet all the standards in order to be served on campus in the Cafeteria and/or special events,*" but on a survey given to the teachers at Wellton Elementary School, some teachers aren't aware of the current school policy on snacks during school hours so the Policy isn't clear nor enforced upon.

https://files-backend.assets.thrillshare.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/1737/Wellton_Esd/a492a0f7-ccf9-49b1-91c5-cc80be097b01/Smart_Snacks_Policy.pdf?disposition=inline

Teacher Survey on What the Current Policy is

In your own words, what is the current "snacks in the classroom" policy at WES?

12 responses

I pretty much made my own I think, snacks are allowed if they are snack during raffle or party in my class.

As far as I know older kids don't have snacks.

In my classroom, we only have a snack on Thursdays at 2:55. The snacks are what we have left over from what parents have brought in the past.

They must meet requirements.

Teacher Survey on What the Current Policy Continued

In your own words, what is the current "snacks in the classroom" policy at WES?

School snack policies generally follow USDA "Smart Snack" guidelines requiring it to be nutritious, limiting fat, sugar, sodium, and calories.

After 2:45 and have to be healthy choices whole grain. Must be store bought and packaged. I purchase periodically not a daily occurrence.

only healthy snacks

Teacher Survey on What the Current Policy Continued

In your own words, what is the current "snacks in the classroom" policy at WES?

I believe it is to have snacks be in compliance to the USDA Smart Snack, but flyers were not handed out this school year. Snacks should also be after 2pm.

I'm not familiar with the policy.

No snacks allowed in the classroom

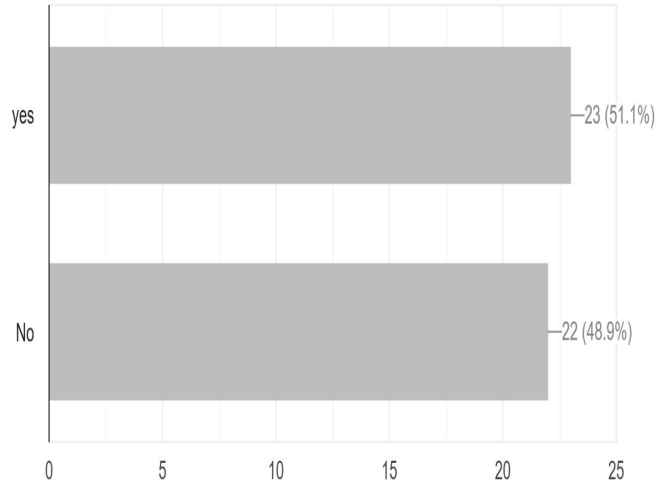
I don't know if there is one. But I would guess snacks would have to meet the cafeteria's requirements.

No snacks until after lunch.

Student Survey on What the Current Policy is

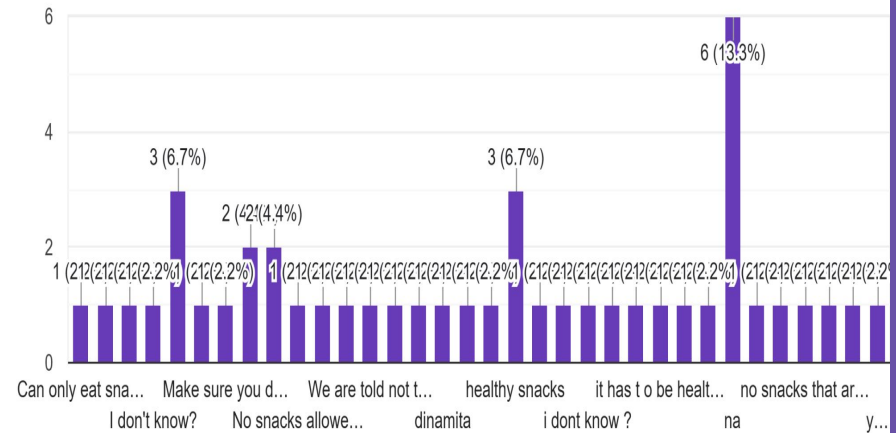
Do you know what the current "snacks in the classroom policy" at WES?

0 / 45 correct responses



If you answered yes, in your own words, what is the current "snacks in the classroom policy" at WES?

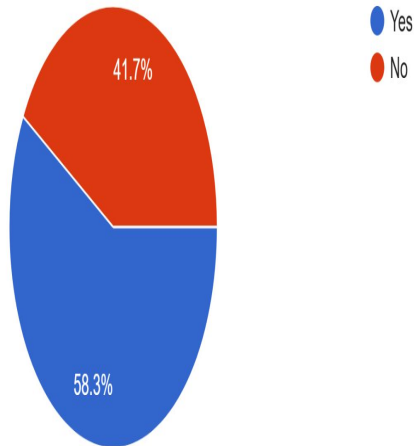
45 responses



Survey of teachers and their classroom snack policies are inconsistent with the actual published policy

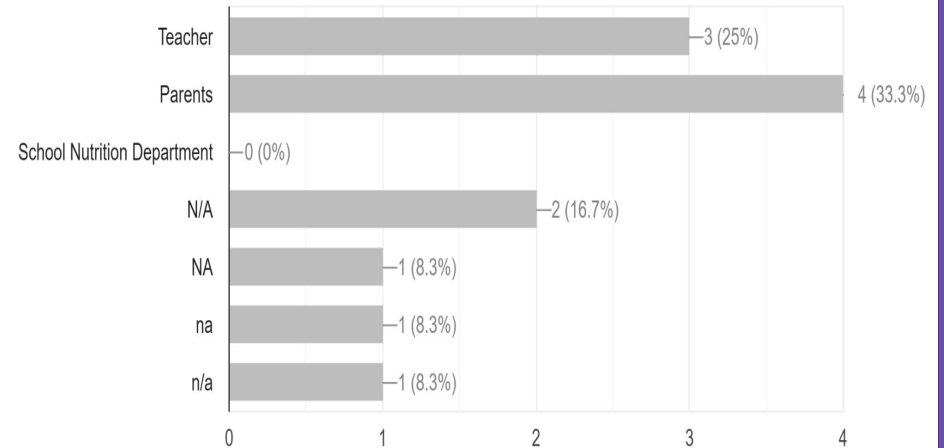
Do you allow snacks in your classroom during the school day?

12 responses



If YES, who purchases the snacks for your classroom? Type N/A if you do not allow snacks in your classroom during the school day.

0 / 12 correct responses



Disagreements

What different viewpoints on whether this is truly a public policy problem with snacks in a classroom

Public policy is often seen as necessary to create "safe" environments. Regulating what snacks can be brought into a classroom helps protect students with life-threatening food allergies. Policies that ensure students have access to nutritious snacks can improve concentration, memory, and academic performance.

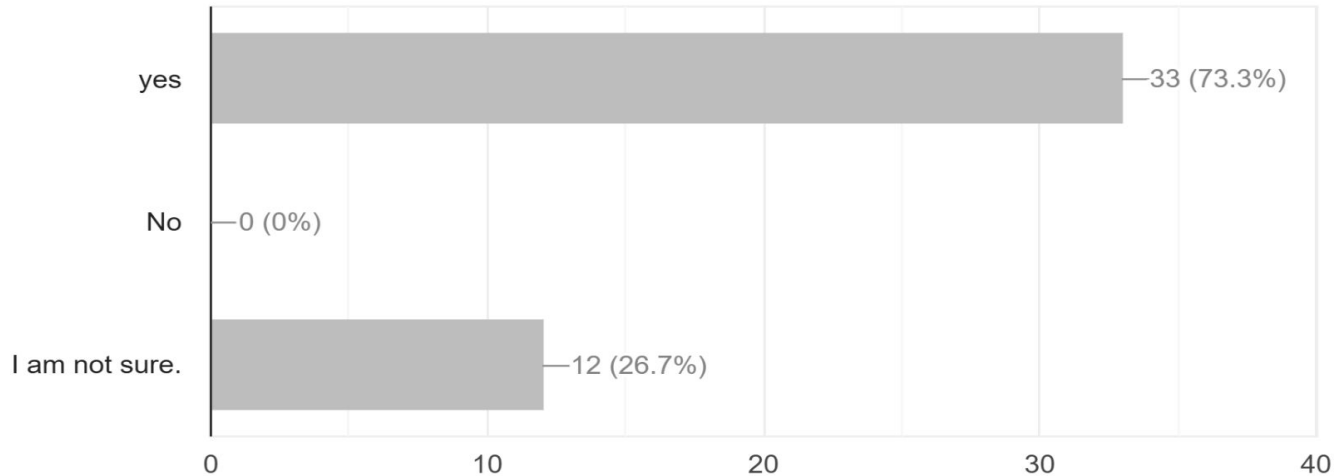
Reasons some people believe the problem does not require a new policy

The problem does not require a new policy because personal responsibility, parental choice, and existing educational efforts are considered sufficient to address student nutrition.

If given the option, Students would support Smart Snacks in the Classroom

The United States Department of Health and Human Services has a strict policy that all snacks eaten at a school must follow the USDA smart snack...room even if you could only eat healthy choices?

0 / 45 correct responses



Why Government Should be Involved

The U.S. government is involved because they create the laws, they set the regulations, the limitations, and they enforce the rules.

Public school nutrition programs are regulated by both the federal and state governments.

How government involvement could address the issue effectively could be as simple as providing USDA approved snacks or a budget to schools as part of the free/reduced lunch program which our school qualifies for 100% of our students.

Alternative Policies

Augustus, Adrian, Kayden, Xande

Alternative Policy #1

Open up snack policy to parents/guardians providing daily snacks from students homes.

Students can now bring any snacks to classrooms to eat between meals.

Students would be focused on learning rather than their hunger.



Advantage and Disadvantages

Pros of Alternative Policy #1

- Hunger won't be a problem anymore.
- Students are more focused.
- Students will behave.

Cons of Alternative Policy #1

- Messes of wrappers.
- Food crumbs lead to pests like ants or mice in classroom if not cleaned up daily.
- Possible allergy issues if there are students with food allergies.
- Does not identify “healthy” snacks so students might just bring whatever they want for a snack such as candies, cookies, and chips.
- Equity issues some parents/guardians do not have money to buy snacks. Food shaming.



Supporters

Alt Policy #1

Opponents

Parents/Guardians

School board

Students

Teachers

Pediatricians

Policy Makers

Custodians

Alternative Policy #2

No snacks allowed during the school day, only during sports practice

Sports/after school activities students may be allowed to bring a healthy snack since they do not leave school until 4:30 pm

Students are provided a healthy nutritional breakfast at 7:45 a.m.

Students are provided at no cost a healthy nutritional lunch between 11:00-12:45

Students are dismissed from school at 3:15

Advantage and Disadvantages

Pros of Alternative Policy #2

- No mess
- No Food Shaming
- No food sharing
- Allows those who are at school longer an option to bring their own snack

Cons of Alternative Policy #2

- Long periods of no nutrition
- Less focus on learning
- Does not solve the current issues
- Students are getting hungry between meals

Supporters

Alt Policy #2

Opponents

students with allergies

Parents/guardians of students with allergies

Parents of students who cannot buy snacks due to budget constraints

Janitors/custodians

Some teachers

Students who are hungry before the end of school day

parents/guardians concerned with children's hunger

Nutritional staff

Some teachers

Sports coaches

Our Proposed Policy

Anthony, Carson, Elliot

Our Proposed Policy

Our new school snack policy will change the current snack policy to allow teaching staff, parents, and donors to give snacks to students between breakfast and lunch, as well as, between lunch and dismissal.

The new school snack policy will allow students to have 2 snacks from the USDA Smart Snacks list per day in a full time school day.

At the moment our school has breakfast at 7:54 am, and lunch at 11:55 I believe that the distribution of snacks should be in between breakfast and lunch I distribution times should at 10:00 am, and 1:30pm

According to the current snack policy, all snacks given to students must be bought by the cafeteria staff to stay within federal school nutrition policy.

Government Responsible for the Policy

Federal: The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS),

State: Arizona Department of Education (AZDE)

Local: Wellton School District #24 School Board

Local: Wellton Elementary School Nutrition Department

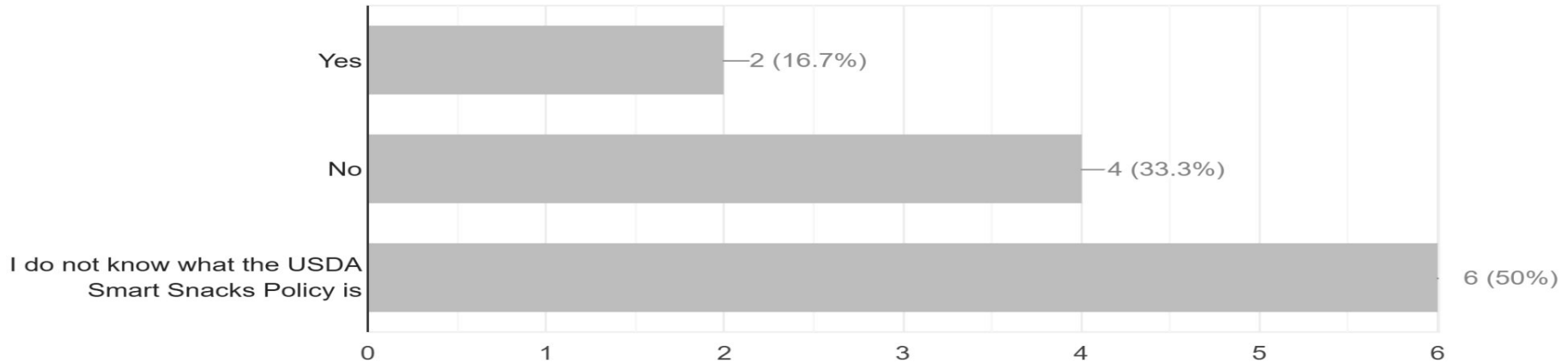
Evidence Supporting Our Policy

According to Maryville University, “ For students, eating to optimize brain performance is just as important. Choosing the right foods helps you feel better physically, and healthy study snacks are also better for your cognitive function.”

This helps us understand that eating snacks during school hours can help boost performance, focus, and morale. Also depending on the snacks it can help with health and improve classroom behavior.

A clear guideline in compliance with the USDA Smart Snacks requirements would be published and distributed to all stakeholders to ensure consistency to change these teacher survey results:

If YES, are snacks for your classroom in compliance with the USDA Smart Snacks policy?
0 / 12 correct responses



Advantages of Our Policy

Our policy is clear, concise, and meets recommendations from the American Pediatric Association for Nutritional Health

The benefits of our new policy is that kids get the nutrients and energy to focus better in class. A Majority of kids are still growing which means their bodies require more nutrients and water.

The stakeholders who benefit are teachers, parents, and students. Teachers benefit by having students focus and listen more, parents benefit by not having to cook as much food for their kids when they come home from school, and students get to enjoy their snacks.

Disadvantages of Our Policy

Possible drawbacks or challenges to our new policy is more waste around our campus and also wasted food. Some students might eat very high sugar snacks and might get hyperactive and not stay focus on what his or hers teacher is teaching them. Some students may get checked out before and become check back in missing the snack period

Another disadvantage is the cost. The cost per student annually is between \$150 and \$300, estimated for a 150 day school year with costs of snacks ranging from \$1-\$2 per student daily.

Other limitations are most processed snack foods are unhealthy foods so fresh snacks may need to be purchased locally and need additional refrigeration.

Constitutionality of Our Policy

According to a search the first amendment says, “Policies usually regulate what the school *sells* or *provides*, rather than what a student *brings* for personal consumption, to avoid overreaching into private family choices”

This says that the school snack policy might be associated with the first amendment due to students being able to bring their own snacks.

Why Our Policy Is the Best Choice

Our policy is the best choice as it can help all sides, because of the fact that students can become more productive and focused, while also being fed well enough to not have to eat the school lunch if its not to their taste.

It also helps in the sense that students can have time to snack, while a teacher needs to take a call, print papers, etc.

Why Our Policy Is the Best Choice

We believe our policy is the best choice because it can let other stakeholders other than just the nutrition staff purchase snacks for the students.

Another reason is this can let students focus more on their work then focusing on what their next meal is.

Action Plan

Janyn, Scarlett, Renata, Derrick

The Goal of the Action Plan

The goal is to explain **why the school needs a snacks policy**, how it will **help students**, and how the school will **keep everyone safe and included**.



Supporters & Stakeholders for a Snack in the Classroom

School wide policy

Students — They are the ones eating the snacks and following the rules.

Principal and Superintendent— They make sure the rules are fair and used in every classroom.

School Board — They may review or approve the policy.

Teachers — They help students follow the snack rules in class.



Cafeteria/Nutrition Staff — They make sure snacks match health guidelines.

Custodians — They deal with trash and cleanliness, so the rules affect their work too

Parents and Guardians — If they send snacks from home and need to know what is allowed.

Opponents

Those who do not think students should have snacks in the classroom are the groups most likely to have concerns about safety, fairness, or extra work.

Custodians who will have more to clean if students do not clean up after themselves

Teachers who worry about distractions when eating or lost learning time

Cafeteria and nutrition staff who are in charge of all food ate by students on campus

Parents who cannot afford snacks

Parents of children with food allergies

School administrators

School wellness committee

School board members



Step 1: Ask stakeholders if snacks in the classroom policy change is needed?

Firstly, we will send a survey to all WESD students and teachers pertaining to the current policy to find out what is already being done.

Let survey takers know our goal is to create a fair snacks in the classroom policy to meet the needs of all of the stakeholders.

Our school snack policy needs to be changed to meet the nutritional needs of our students to ensure our school is in compliance with local, state, and federal policy



Step 2: Explain the Problem

Tell the school board why the policy matter.

- Some students get hungry before lunch and after lunch.
- Hungry students have trouble focusing and learning.
- Snacks can help students stay calm and ready to learn.

This helps the board understand why the rule is important.



Step 3: Explain the Benefits

Share how the policy will help the whole school.

- Students will have more energy.
- Teachers will see better focus.
- Fewer students will miss school because they know they won't get hungry.
- Classrooms will run more smoothly.

This shows the board that the policy makes learning better.



Step 4: Explain the Policy Rules

Give simple, clear rules so the board knows exactly how it will work.

- What kinds of snacks are allowed.
- When students can eat them.
- How classrooms will stay clean.
- How allergies will be handled.
- How all students will get snacks, even if they can't bring one.

This shows the board that the plan is safe and fair.



Step 5: Explain who supports the new policy

Explain that many people agree with the idea.

- Teachers
- Students
- Parents

This helps the board see that the school is working together



Step 6: Be Proactive Explain the solutions to predicted problems

Show that you already thought about possible problems.

- Allergy-safe snack lists
- Quick cleanup routines
- Trash rules
- Snack donations for students who need them
- Teachers using the same rules in every classroom

This helps the board feel confident that the plan will work.



Step 7: Share the Plan for Starting the Policy

Tell the school board or superintendent how the school will begin using the rule.

- When the policy will start
- How teachers will learn the rules
- How families will get the information
- How the school will check if the policy is working

This shows the board/superintendent that the school is ready to make a positive change.



Conclusion

Our school needs a clear, snacks-in-the-classroom policy because it helps students stay focused, feel better, and be ready to learn. When kids have healthy snacks and clear rules, classrooms stay calm, clean, and safe for everyone. This policy also shows that our school cares about student health and fairness, because every child will have the chance to get a snack if they need one. By approving this policy, we can make our school a place where students learn their best every day. We hope you will support this plan so all students can grow, stay energized, and succeed.

Works Cited



State and Local Nutrition Rules

Arizona Department of Education – Health & Nutrition Services

This site explains how Arizona schools make sure students get healthy meals and snacks.

Link: <https://www.azed.gov/hns/>

Wellton Elementary School District #24 – Food Services

Our school's own rules about meals, snacks, and what foods are allowed on campus.

Link: <https://www.welltonschool.org/page/food-services>

School Nutrition Association – Smart Snacks Policies

Helps schools understand which snacks meet the “Smart Snacks in School” standards.

Link: <https://schoolnutrition.org/resource/smart-snacks-competitive-foods-policies/>

Works Cited



Federal Nutrition Guidelines

American Academy of Pediatrics – Nutrition in Schools

Doctors explain why healthy food at school helps students learn, grow, and stay focused.

Link: <https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/school-health/nutrition-in-schools/>

U.S. Department of Agriculture – Smart Snacks in School

The official rules for what snacks can be consumed in schools (like vending machines or fundraisers).

Link: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GOVPUB-A98-PURL-gpo75095/pdf/GOVPUB-A98-PURL-gpo75095.pdf>

Works Cited

Healthy Snack Ideas for Studying

SnackNation – Healthy Study Snacks

Fun, kid-friendly snack ideas that help your brain stay energized while you study.

Link: <https://snacknation.com/blog/healthy-study-snacks/>

Maryville University – Healthy Study Snacks

More ideas for snacks that boost energy, focus, and memory during homework time.

Link: <https://online.maryville.edu/blog/healthy-study-snacks/>