Trailblazers Academy

Family Handbook 2018-2019



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www.trailblazersacademy.org

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Dear Trailblazer's Academy Families,

Welcome to the 2018-2019 school year! Whether this is your first year with us or your last, we would like you to know that you're an extremely important partner in this journey. In order to help your child succeed we need to collaborate with you every step of the way. At Trailblazers Academy our work is all about the kids, we never give up on people, we believe that everyone should be treated with respect and dignity, that people should have many chances to learn and grow from their mistakes and that loving relationships change people. We hope that with your partnership our students will blaze towards a trail of excellence.

Sincerely,

Miguel Pickering, Director Francesca Principe, Dean of Student Culture Bianca Shinn, Director of Family Advocates

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MISSION AND VALUES

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Trailblazers Academy is to successfully transition students to high school on track to go to college. While maintaining small classes and fostering positive relationships, the school builds a strong academic foundation for each student by emphasizing core subjects, high academic standards, life skills, and character development.

TRAILBLAZERS ACADEMY PLEDGE

As a Trailblazers, I pledge to myself, my family, my Trailblazers Academy peers and my community to be the best that I can be. I will respect myself, and those around me, and my environment as I work to embody the best attributes of a leader: Honesty, Courage, Perseverance, Innovation, Motivation, Leadership, Fortitude, Dedication, Respect, Responsibility, Confidence and Integrity. Together we will blaze a trail towards excellence.

DOMUS CORE PRINCIPLES

Our work is about the kids.

We never give up on people.

Everyone should be treated with dignity and respect.

People should have many chances to learn and grow from their mistakes.

Loving relationships change people.

ACADEMICS

THE TRAILBLAZERS ACADEMY DIFFERENCE

Trailblazers Academy is Stamford's first charter school, a public school of choice. Our mission is to create a safe, supportive, and structured school community. Together, we enable students to identify and develop their abilities and interests as they meet high academic standards. What sets our school apart from others is that we:

- Are the only sanctuary certified non-profit in the State of Connecticut and use a trauma informed approach in all of our activities.
- We have family advocates who work to remove the non-academic barriers to ensure academic success with all of our students.
- Our staff work one on one with each family to ensure we meet the specific needs of each child
- Our free after school program offers multiple enrichment activities such as working with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, sports, cooking and music.
- We have a music program that takes place during school hours and in our after school program.
- We do not have more than 15 students in a class
- We offer a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, & Mathematics) program to all students
- We offer gym and recess to each of our students on a daily basis.
- Every student, regardless of financial background, receives free breakfast, lunch and snack on a daily basis.
- We have a student leadership who chooses monthly activities based on what our students want and everyone involved is completely voted on by our students.
- We offer programming during school breaks through our Lions Den after school program.

REGULAR SCHOOL DAY			
Time/Day	A Day	B Day	C Day
7:30-7:55	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
8:00-8:15	HR	HR	HR
8:19-9:19	Block 1	Block 3	Block 5
9:23-10:23	Block 2	Block 4	Block 6
10:27-11:27	Block 3	Block 5	Block 1
11:30-12:08	Lunch 1	Lunch 1	Lunch 1
12:10-12:48	Lunch 2	Lunch 2	Lunch 2
12:52-1:52	Reading	Reading	Reading
1:56-2:56	Block 4	Block 6	Block 2
3:00-3:15	HR	HR	HR
Drop	Block 5	Block 1	Block 3
	Block 6	Block 2	Block 4

EARLY RELEASE			
Time/Day	A Day	B Day	C Day
7:30-7:55	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
7:55-8:05	HR	HR	HR
8:09-9:09	Block 1	Block 3	Block 5
9:13-10:13	Block 2	Block 4	Block 6
10:17-11:17	Block 3	Block 5	Block 1
Drop	Block 4	Block 6	Block 2
	Block 5	Block 1	Block 3
	Block 6	Block 2	Block 4

2 HR DELAY			
Time/Day	A Day	B Day	C Day
9:30-10:00	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
10:05-10:20	HR	HR	HR
10:27-11:27	Block 3	Block 5	Block 1
11:30-12:08	Lunch 1	Lunch 1	Lunch 1
12:10-12:48	Lunch 2	Lunch 2	Lunch 2
12:52-1:52	Reading	Reading	Reading
1:56-2:56	Block 4	Block 6	Block 2
3:00-3:15	HR	HR	HR
Drop	Block 1	Block 3	Block 5
	Block 2	Block 4	Block 6
	Block 5	Block 1	Block 3
	Block 6	Block 2	Block 4

GRADES/ GPA

Letter Grade	Numerical Value
A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
В	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
С	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	60-62
F	0-59

PROGRESS REPORTS/REPORT CARD DATES

Quarter	Progress Report	Report Card Night
Quarter 1	October 17 th	November 15 th
Quarter 2	December 19 th	February 7 th
Quarter 3	March 6 th	April 11 th
Quarter 4	May 15 th	June 21 st (mailed home)

Parent Portal (sis.stamfordpublicschools.org)

Parents are encouraged to utilize the parent portal to monitor their child's attendance and grades.

HOMEWORK POLICY

A necessary part of the learning process, homework is assigned in order to prepare students for the introduction of new material, to reinforce instruction or to give students the opportunity for independent practice. Assignments vary in complexity depending upon the teacher and student.

It is expected that each student will have a **minimum** of one hour of homework per evening.

Each student is given a binder and an assignment book as part of their uniform and is required to carry them around all day. Students should record all homework assignments, projects, and upcoming quizzes and test in them on a daily basis. Teachers will check the assignment book daily and parents are encouraged to communicate with teachers by writing notes in the assignment book.

Definition

Homework is any activity or assignment directed by the teacher to be performed outside the classroom that may include practicing skills learned in class, reading, studying, projects, or completion of assignments.

Assistance for Homework

It is recommended that students seeking assistance with homework speak directly with their teachers as they will be able to provide strategies and support with completing difficult assignments. In addition to working directly with classroom teachers, Lion's Den provides homework hour with certified teachers every day during

afterschool. Students who need assistance are encouraged to use this time to complete daily assignments, projects, and review any material they are struggling with.

Student's Responsibilities:

- Complete assignments to the best of your ability.
- Bring your homework home and to school every day.
- Understand all homework assignments by listening in class, reading directions and asking questions when something is unclear.
- Gather all materials necessary to complete assignments before leaving the classroom.
- When you have questions about the homework, place a note next to it and ask the teacher the next day.

Family's Responsibilities:

- Provide a routine and an environment that is conducive to do homework (i.e. a quiet and consistent place and time, necessary materials etc.,)
- Offer assistance to the student, but not do the actual homework.
- Communicate with the teachers right away if homework presents as a problem.
- Review school notices and respond in a timely manner.
- Teach techniques that can help students allocate their time wisely, meet their deadlines, and develop good personal study habits.
- Contact the student's Family Advocate if a solution cannot be reached regarding homework.

Teacher's Responsibilities:

- Provide purposeful/meaningful homework.
- Include clear directions and instructions.
- Implement a system for routinely providing feedback and sharing work done at home.
- Communicate to the student and family what is expected for completing homework successfully.
- Communicate with families when students are struggling with homework.

PLAGIARISM/CHEATING

Both students and teachers lose when there is plagiarism or cheating. It takes away from the student's true academic abilities.

Plagiarism is defined as:

- The copying of a phrase, sentence or longer passage from a source and passing it off as your own
- Summarizing or paraphrasing someone else's ideas without acknowledging that the work is not your
- Buying a term paper or report and handing it in as your own
- Forgetting to place quotation marks around another writer's words

Cheating is defined as:

- Using answers or work that you did not create or formulate as your own
- Looking at another person's test, quiz or homework with the intent of using the answers as your own
- Bringing written answers into a classroom with the intent of using those answers on a test or quiz

A student caught cheating, attempting to cheat or plagiarizing will be subject to consequences outlined in the discipline policy.

CONTACTING TEACHERS

Should you wish to speak to one of your child's teachers feel free to email them or contact the main office and leave them a message.

REPORT CARDS

Report cards are issued on a quarterly schedule, 4 times per year. Report card night is held 3 times per year in November, February and April. Report cards must be picked up by a parent/guardian on these nights. The 4th quarter report card is mailed home in June.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Progress reports are sent home mid-way through each quarter. Student progress is assessed at that time and gives students an opportunity to improve in areas where they may be deficient.

HONOR ROLL

Honor Roll will be announced and published each quarter giving recognition to those students with outstanding scholastic achievement. Students are honored at an awards assembly where they receive a certificate.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special Education services are provided to eligible students with disabilities at all grade levels. Special Education services are based on the individual needs of the student. Parents who suspect that their child may have a disability should contact a teacher, family advocate, or administrator. Trailblazers Academy has Special Education teachers who coordinate services through the Stamford Board of Education. These individuals are available in school to provide additional resources, materials and services to our students.

AFTER SCHOOL ENRICHMENT

The Lion's Den, an extended learning program, operates:

Monday – Thursday: 3:20pm – 6:00pm

Friday: CLOSED

Early Dismissal: 11:15am – 4:00pm

School closed, LD open: 9:00am – 4:00pm

All students may participate, free of charge, once they have completed a Lion's Den registration form.

Transportation is provided for those young people who need a ride home after they participate in the Lion's Den program. Bus stops are available in most parts of Stamford. If the bus doesn't go to a certain area of Stamford, we provide students with a ride in an organizational vehicle.

Programs at Lion's Den:

Studio LD: Students get a chance to work and record music and videos

Crunch Time: Students are given time to do homework, group reading, & math.

Cooking: Teaches students about cooking and eating healthy

Sports: Students do wide variety of different sports during the seasons: football, basketball, cheerleading, baseball, softball, and etc...

Paw Club: Students get the opportunity to do work in the community of Stamford and their school *Fitness First:* Students get the chance to work out and stay in shape in a different array of activities from weight lifting, doing cardio, and many other types of exercises.

SCHOOL CULTURE

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Our Staff believes that regular attendance is essential to the academic success of all our students. We monitor daily attendance through collaboration with students and their families.

Students are required to attend school on time, every day. Any student who misses more than three consecutive absences a parent meeting is necessary upon student's return to reassure academic support. Excused absences are designated for extraordinary circumstances such as but not limited to, illness, death in the immediate family, religious holidays and approved school activities.

When students are missing so many days of schools, they are academically at risk. Poor attendance can significantly influence academic proficiency. Whether students are absent for excused or unexcused they will fall behind. We strongly encourage daily attendance among our students in order to foster a thriving school community. Our goal at Trailblazers Academy is to reduce chronic absenteeism among students by at least 15 percent, therefore; we take a proactive and engaging approach through family engagement to help reach the goal. We discourage students from missing 10 percent or more of their school time. Missing more than 10 percent of school time for any reason is defined as chronically absent by the State of Connecticut. For example, a student enrolled for the first 30 school days at the beginning of the school year and has been absent three of those days is chronically absent.

We value open communication with our students and their families. When our students are absent, the Family Advocates plan to reach out to families regular to provide support regarding attendance and other related issues that may arise. If a student misses a day of school, all families should expect a phone call. If a student misses four or more non-consecutive days of school a meeting with the Director of Family Advocacy, is required. The reasoning for the meeting is to address any challenges and provide support to ensure a successful academic journey. We have created an attendance practice that additionally includes the following policies;

- Any student with 5 or more absences either excused or unexcused will result in a collaborative parent meeting with the Director of Family Advocacy.
- Any student with 7 or more excused or unexcused absences may be referred to the Attendance Review Board for a collaborative meeting to address the issues of chronically absent. The Attendance Review Board (ARB) is a community based effort to bring together resources to assist families with attendance issues. The ARB's goal is to help students stay in school, attend school daily through supportive services.

We encourage parent support and feedback. If you have any questions, information sharing or concerns regarding a student's attendance or about our attendance policy, please feel free to reach out to the Family Advocate, Ms. Denise Donald in the main office at 203-977-5690. Attendance Matters at Trailblazers Academy and as a school we will work together for a thriving community.

Homework Request

If your child has been absent, you may call the student's teacher or Family Advocate and request missed assignments.

Tardiness

A student is considered tardy after 8:15 AM. A student arriving late to school must report directly to the main office to receive a late pass.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS/PHONE NUMBERS

Parent/guardian should notify the school as soon as possible concerning changes in home/cell/work phone numbers and/or home address.

WITHDRAWALS/TRANSFERS

Parent/guardian should notify the school at least 3 to 5 days before the student's last day of attendance. Parent/guardian should visit the main office to complete withdrawal forms and release student's records.

DISCIPLINE

The concept and practice of discipline at Trailblazers Academy is founded on the principles of respect, cooperation and safety. Students need to respect themselves, the people around them and their school environment. At Trailblazers, we model the type of behavior that is expected of our students.

We believe that there are basic principles that must be adhered to and that these are non-negotiable. They are:

- Uniforms must be worn according to the definition of full uniform. See **Dress Code** for further explanation.
- Cellphones/Electronics- are not allowed to be used during school hours.
- Property of students, teachers and school must be treated with respect. Students may not remove, deface, defame or otherwise destroy property that does not belong to them.
- Students must always use respectful language.
- Students are not to fight or debate the instructions of an adult when they are given.
- Students are not permitted to go anywhere in the building without knowledge and permission of an adult.
- Students are not to touch one another inappropriately: hitting, fighting, wrestling, and punching.

BULLYING

Bullying is a form of harassment that is, like all forms of harassment, unacceptable at Trailblazers Academy. Pursuant to Public Act 08-160, An Act Concerning School Learning Environment, the state of Connecticut defines bullying as "any overt acts by a student or group of students directed against another student with the intent to ridicule, harass, humiliate or intimidate the other student while on school grounds, at a school sponsored activity or on a school bus, which acts are committed more than once against any student during the school year."

Generally speaking, bullying is deliberately aggressive or hurtful behavior toward another person that is repeated over time. Bullying can be present in many forms, including, but not limited to:

Physical aggression: Pushing, hitting, kicking, tripping

Verbal aggression: Name-calling, taunts, threats, saying things to hurt feelings

Indirect aggression: Excluding someone, spreading rumors

Cyber bullying/texting

Student Rights and Responsibilities

Students have the right to be educated in an environment that is both physically and emotionally safe.

Students have the right to be treated with respect by all those within the school community, including their peers.

Students and their parents have the right to submit written reports of bullying (either signed or anonymous) to school officials. (However, school officials may NOT implement disciplinary actions based solely on an anonymous report.)

Students have the responsibility to at least verbally report instances of bullying (either personally experienced or witnessed) to school personnel.

Should a verified act of bullying occur, students (both "bully" and "target") have the right to be invited to the school with their parents to discuss with school officials the incident and its consequences.

Students have the responsibility to treat all others with respect and, in general, to promote an environment where bullying and other forms of harassment are rejected.

School Personnel Rights and Responsibilities

School personnel have the right to be treated with respect by all those within the school community.

School personnel have the responsibility to foster an educational environment where bullying, as described above, is not tolerated. To that end, teachers and other staff have the responsibility to implement prevention strategies including "character-building" curricula as assigned by the school's administration.

School personnel have the responsibility to submit, in writing, to the assigned Family Advocate(s), and School Directors any observed incidents of bullying.

Preventive Strategies

The school has specific anti-bullying programs both within the regular classroom environment and as specially-designed workshops or other events. School staff attends trainings on maintaining a safe school environment, and the school promotes parent involvement in bullying prevention.

School Response to Bullying Incidents

Generally speaking, school responses to incidents of bullying include the following, in rough order: Individual verbal redirection with reminder of bullying policy; temporary removal from class (time out) with policy reminder; referral to problem solving room with resulting phone call home and after-school detention; referral to in-school counseling to address bullying behavior; school/family meeting; referral to mandatory bullying awareness program; referral to law enforcement.

UNIFORM POLICY

The uniform policy has been established as one piece of Trailblazers Academy's overall mission to set a higher standard for excellence, not only in dress but also conduct, safety and achievement. This policy is in force to facilitate the education of TA students.

The following items have been selected as the approved uniform for students at Trailblazers Academy. All items must be worn year round as appropriate.

Pants

Solid color of khaki/tan pants (Leggings are not allowed) Pants must be clean with no holes, frays, designs or writing

Shorts and Skirts

Solid color of khaki/tan

Shorts and skirts must be no shorter than the top of the knee

Shirts

Trailblazers Academy polo (long or short sleeve) or sweatshirt

Shirts must be tucked in at all times (gym is the only exception)

Long sleeve shirts or turtlenecks may not be worn under the short sleeve Trailblazers shirt.

Shoes

Solid black, brown, white, or grey sneakers, boots, dress shoes or flats must be worn at all times Socks/tights must match and be solid in colors

Sandals, flip flops, open toe shoes, beach shoes, crocs or slippers are not allowed

Students must wear sneakers during gym class

Non-Trailblazers Academy Clothing

Coats, sweaters and non-Trailblazers sweatshirts must be stored in lockers during the day. Hoodies, of any kind, are not allowed to be worn (above or underneath the school uniform)

Miscellaneous

The wearing of any kind of hat is not allowed

Scarves and doo rags are not allowed

Backpacks, bags and purses must remain in your locker all day

Binders & Agenda Books

All students will be provided with a binder and an agenda book at the start of the school year. They will be expected to carry these throughout the day as part of their uniform. The first one will be given free of charge, parents/guardians are expected to purchase replacements in the event that the student loses them.

MORNING MEETING

During homeroom everyone participates in a community meeting prior to starting their academic day. During the community meeting each student is asked three questions: How are you Feeling today? What is a Goal you would like to accomplish for today? And who can help you? The purpose of these meeting is to not only set a positive tone, but to give students the mindset to work together as team.

SCHOOL OPPERATIONS

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Trailblazers Academy 83 Lockwood Ave, Stamford CT 06902

Telephone: (203) 977-5690

Fax: (203) 977-5688

www.trailblazersacademy.org

School Main Office Hours: 8:00 A.M. – 3:20 P.M.

Community Health Center Hours: 8:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M Telephone: (203) 602-8895

Trailblazers Academy follows the Stamford Public School system for decisions on school closures, delays and early releases. This information can be gathered by contacting the SPS hotline at (203)977–6600. Important information is also communicated via www.stamfordpublicschools.org

Please Note: CHC services are only provided to students whose parents/guardians have signed them up.

ARRIVAL TO SCHOOL

Once students arrive on school property, they will report directly to their homeroom table in the cafeteria for attendance and breakfast. Students are expected to be in full Trailblazer's Academy uniform when they enter the building. During breakfast, students and staff members sit together and bond with one another as we all start the day! Daily announcements, the Pledge of Allegiance, and the Trailblazers Academy Pledge are said every morning prior to students heading to their respective homerooms.

STUDENT PICKUP

Student safety is a priority. To ensure student safety, parents/guardians are asked to report to the main office when picking up a student and sign him/her out of school. Any adult not listed on the student's record will not be allowed to pick up the student.

VISITORS

Visitors are always welcome. If a visitor is volunteering for the day he / she must report to the main office and sign-in the Visitor's Log. Visitors will receive a badge and will be escorted to the appropriate location. Parents/guardians must give the school 24 hours' notice to visit/observe their child's classroom.

CAFETERIA

One of the best ways to build relationships with our students is by sitting with them during breakfast and lunch. Our staff sit at homeroom tables during every meal to help foster better relationships between our youth. Meals are provided by the vendor selected by the school in accordance with the federal and state dietary requirements and are free of charge regardless. We pride ourselves on teaching social responsibility and therefore it is everyone's duty to make sure that the cafeteria is cleaned after each meal.

NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

Trailblazers Academy is participating in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) as part of the National School Lunch Program for school year 2018-2019. Under this provision, participating districts and schools provide free breakfast and lunch to all students at all times. All students enrolled at Trailblazers Academy will receive meals through the School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program at no charge. Household income applications are no longer required to determine eligibility for free or reduced-price meals at schools participating in the CEP.

CELLPHONE/ELECTRONICS POLICY

Students will be required to keep their electronic device out of sight for the duration of the school day (7:30am-3:20pm). The only exception to this rule is when specific permission is granted by a staff member for an academic or emergency reason.

Violations:

- 1. The first time a student is seen using a cellphone/electronic they will be reminded of the no cellphone/electronics policy and asked to put it away.
- 2. If a student is caught using a cellphone/electronic a 2nd time, the staff member will confiscate it and turn the phone/electronic over to an administrator. That phone will be returned at the end of the school day.
- 3. A 3rd violation will result in the cell phone/electronic being confiscated and a phone call made home, requesting that the cell phone/electronics not return to school. The student will also receive a detention for the 3rd infraction and any additional which follow.

ITEMS NOT ALLOWED AT SCHOOL

In order to keep our environment focused on learning, free of distractions and to prevent loss or damage of personal property, the following items are not allowed during school hours:

Electronic devices

iPads, cell phones, handheld games (PSPs), and other electronic devices are not allowed during school hours

<u>Hats, scarves, & doo-rags</u> (unless permission is granted by an Administrator)

Backpacks

May be used to/from school but will not be permitted in classrooms. Students are required to keep backpacks in their lockers as they transition to each class. Opportunities to retrieve necessary class materials will be provided by teachers during the day.

LOCKERS

Each student will be assigned a locker and lock at the beginning of the school year. They must keep their jackets, backpacks, books and other personal belongings in their lockers. Students are urged **NOT** to bring expensive items to school; personal items are not covered by school insurance.

Students should keep their lock combination to themselves. If, during the year, the lock is lost or stolen, the student may purchase a new one from the school for \$5. Students are to use only their assigned lockers and are responsible for the contents as well as keeping it clean inside and out. Lockers are not to be banged, kicked or mutilated. Any damage to a student's locker will be their responsibility.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

STUDENT HEALTH

All students enrolled in Trailblazers Academy need a current physical and up-to-date immunizations in order to attend school.

Emergency Cards

Students will not be released from school if ill or injured unless authorized by a legal parent/guardian or another designated adult. Parents/guardians must notify the school immediately if a phone number or address changes so that the school can maintain accurate and up-to-date records.

In case of an emergency, the school will make every effort to contact the parent/guardian. If the appropriate contacts cannot be made, the school will proceed with action deemed necessary for the welfare of the child.

Medication

Students who are on medication need a medical authorization form completed by their physician clearly stating the prescription. No medication will be administered without this form. Medical forms may be obtained from the administrative assistant in the main office or Family Advocates. We can email, fax, and send the form home with student to your attention. We are readily available to provide any support while ensure a safe school environment. We encourage that that parents share any new pertinent medical information regarding students.

In order to provide a safe school environment for students, there are certain information that will help in this endeavor. We require that you provide the following information to the school if your child has allergies, asthma or other health issues:

- Provide written medical documentation, instructions by a physician or health provider
- Provide a completed medical authorization form for the administering of EpiPen, inhaler or any medication
- Provide an EpiPen, inhaler or medication in case of an emergency.

A designated staff member will administer student medication. This staff member will be responsible for securing medication as well as recording when medication was administered to students.

SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH CARE

The Community Health Center offers school-based health services for your child during the school day. Licensed healthcare providers are available to provide expanded medical (treatment for illnesses or injuries, and physicals), behavioral health (individual, group, and family therapy), and dental hygiene (exams, cleanings, and sealants) services. School-based health services work in conjunction with the care provided by your child's pediatrician and/or dentist and are not intended to replace regular care by your child's primary health-care provider.

FAMILY ADVOCATES

At Trailblazers Academy, every student is assigned a Family Advocate when he/she begins her educational journey at the school.

What is a Family Advocate?

You will be assigned a Family Advocate who will help both you and your child to navigate the school process. Family Advocates are available to meet with you in your home, at the school and in the community to support you in removing any barriers that may be getting in the way of your child's success. Family Advocates will support you and your child in developing goals and will continuously provide guidance around meeting these goals throughout the school year. Family advocates support families with:

- School attendance providing support and strategies for regular attendance
- Positive behavior support including developing healthy relationships with peers and school staff
- Social and emotional skill building both individually and in the classroom setting
- Family support including assistance and referrals for important needs such as food, clothing and counseling where necessary
- 24;7 availability via cell phone for any needs that arise outside of the regular school day

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL LEARNING

We are pleased to inform you that we provide Social/Emotional Learning classes to all Trailblazers Academy students for the entire school year. We believe strongly in the importance of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). As such, we have structured weekly classes where students will receive 1 hour per week of specific skill building by Family Advocate and Youth Development staff. We use the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning's (CASEL) framework for SEL which promotes the following five competencies: self-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision making and self-management. We use a variety of curricula designed to help students to grow in these five areas. Additionally, we invite members of the community to support that learning by providing specific information around current topics such as bullying and social media safety.

Topics discussed in S/E class:

- Emotion management; Resiliency
- Friendships; Competition
- Body Image; Sexuality
- Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco
- Decision Making; Rejecting Violence; Goals

We feel that this program is instrumental in helping students to navigate their middle school-years and enhance their abilities so they are able to take full advantage of their talents, academic interests, career pursuits, and potential for healthy relationships.

SAFETY

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In order to make sure that all school employees and students are prepared for emergency situations Trailblazers Academy provides monthly drills to practice what to do during emergency situations such as a fire, a shelter in place or a lockdown. Trailblazers Academy has adopted enhanced safety procedures that we, as well as the experts across the country, believe will increase the chance of survival should an armed intruder enter our schools. These enhanced procedures provide our staff and students additional response options by utilizing the **A.L.I.C.E**. approach.

Alert - Get the word out! Use clear, concise language to convey the type and location of the event **Lockdown** - We will continue to lock down students when it is the best option **Inform** - Communication allows for good decision-making **Counter** - Apply skills to distract, confuse and gain control **Evacuate** - Get out! Put distance between you and the intruder.

In short, when faced with an armed intruder invading our secure area, we will use the A.L.I.C.E. approach to:

- Listen carefully to the location and type of event
- Get to and/or remain in a secure area until it is safe to evacuate
- Apply skills to distract, confuse and gain control should an armed intruder enter the area
- Evacuate as soon as it is safe

In **no-way** are we asking or teaching our students to make any attempt to subdue an armed intruder. However, we will provide them with options that can be applied if faced with a life or death situation to enhance their chances for survival.

SEARCHES

For reasons of health, safety and discipline, the school has the right to exercise a search of students, their locker and property when deemed necessary.

<u>Lockers</u>: An Administrator and/or designee may search a student's locker when there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that it contains an object that may hinder the safety of the student, their peers or the school.

<u>Search of Student:</u> An Administrator and/or designee will conduct a search when there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that the student may in possession of something that will hinder the safety of the student, their peers or the school. An Administrator will conduct the search in the presence of another adult witness; the witness will be the same sex as the student.

SCHOOL BUS GUIDELINES

- Take a seat promptly and remain seated
- Keep aisles clear of legs, book bags and other objects
- Talk quietly so that you do not bother others or distract the bus driver
- Do not tamper with safety or bus equipment
- Follow the instructions of the driver

Listed below are types of inappropriate and unacceptable behavior for the school bus:

- Damaging bus property
- Abusive language (swearing)
- Injury to others (hitting, punching, fighting)
- Unsafe behavior
- Excessive noise
- Disobeying the bus driver
- Throwing objects inside or out of the bus

Any student who jeopardizes the safety and comfort of other students will lose the privilege of school bus transportation.

CHEMICAL USE/POSSESSION

Trailblazers Academy will not allow the use, possession, or distribution of drugs and alcohol by students as it jeopardizes personal safety and interferes with the learning process.

In the event of a violation of this policy, appropriate disciplinary and/or legal action will be taken.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION

We know the key to your student's academic progress is the successful collaboration between your family and our staff: our school leaders, our teachers, our family advocates, our afterschool staff and our support staff. As such, we welcome and encourage your input into every meeting we have regarding your child. Please let us know at the beginning of the year the best way to contact and include you: email, text message, cell phone, snail mail, or other method. Included in this handbook is the email and cell phone number of every Trailblazers Academy employee. We encourage you to reach out to us with questions, concerns, compliments, or complaints. We are always available, and you are never bothering us-we love to hear from you! Additionally, you are welcome to stop by our school at any time. If you want to meet with a staff member about a particular issue or incident involving your child, it is best to call and arrange a meeting beforehand, but we will do our best to accommodate any last minute requests or walk-ins.

On a regular basis we will also be reaching out to you to ask for your help and support with your child, your child's classroom, and or the larger school community.

FAMILY INVOLVMENT

All parents/guardians are required to complete thirty (30) hours of volunteer hours with the school each year. There are many opportunities available for parents to get involved in the school including but not limited to: homeroom parent, office greeter, assisting with mailings, serving breakfast/lunch.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: STUDENT RECORDS AND RIGHTS

In accordance with Public Law 93-380, Section 438, Trailblazers Academy recognizes the rights of parents and guardians to examine their child's cumulative record and any temporary records.

A student's record, whether cumulative or temporary, shall be construed to mean anything concerning the student which is maintained in writing, on video or tape for others to see or hear. Private notes by staff shall not be considered part of the pupil's record until they are made available to any person other than the writer of the notes.

Student records are the confidential property of the school. Access to student records is limited to parents/guardians and authorized school staff. Records are shared with other persons outside the school district only upon written authorization from parent/guardian.

Parents and legal guardians who wish to examine student's records should contact the Director twenty four (24) hours in advance to set up an appointment.

APPENDIX B: SCHOOL CODE OF CONDUCT & DISCIPLINE CODE

TRAILBLAZERS ACADEMY CODE OF CONDUCT & DISCIPLINE CODE			
Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV
These behaviors are	General infractions of	Deliberate infractions	Serious or dangerous
off-task, inattentive	safety, respect and	of safety, respect and	infractions that may include
or minor distractions	effort that disrupt the	effort that impact	willful or malicious acts that
that do not involve	learning environment,	other student's	substantially disrupt the
blatant disrespect to	classroom property,	personal rights and	learning environment.
peers or impact the	or the sanctity of	ability to learn.	
learning of self or	learning for self or		
others.	others.	May include serious	
		or repeated Level I or	
		II infractions.	
	CONS	SEQUENCES	
Immediate	Problem Solving	Immediate Problem	Immediate Problem Solving
redirection, possible	referral,	Solving referral,	referral,
seat change, or	student/administrator	student/administrator	student/administrator
Problem Solving	conference,	conference, parent/	conference,
referral if persistent	parent/guardian	guardian/administrator	parent/guardian/administrator
to the point of	contact, detention,	conference, alternative	conference, alternative
disrespectful or	alternative	educational setting, or	educational setting, or
classroom disruption.	educational setting,	school suspension	school suspension
	or school suspension		
	for repeated, serious,		
	dangerous or		
	deliberate infractions.		

CODE OF CONDUCT

Level I Infractions:

These behaviors are off-task, inattentive or minor distractions that do not involve blatant disrespect to peers or impact the learning of self or others. Level I infractions include:

- Body control- getting out of their seat without permission, hitting peers, not moving with class
- Classroom Disruption- making noises, calling out, verbal and non-verbal distraction, and indirect cursing
- Failure to meet classroom expectations- unprepared, improper materials, uniform, not following directions, & internet misuse
- Respect for environment- running around the hallways, littering, making a mess in the cafeteria

Level II Infractions:

General infractions of safety, respect and effort that disrupt the learning environment, classroom property, or the sanctity of learning for self or others. Level II infractions include:

- Repeated Level I offenses that have risen to the level of disrupting the learning of others
- Academic dishonesty-cheating on test or homework

- Skipping class- leaving class without permission
- Disrespect towards peers- inappropriate language, behavior, outburst that distract other from learning, teasing, name calling, etc.
- Inappropriate physical contact- pushing, shoving, tripping
- Theft
- Threat to person or property-intimidating or hostile language, taking another scholars property without permission
- Vandalism-graffiti

Level III Infractions:

Deliberate infractions of safety, respect and effort that impact other student's personal rights and ability to learn. Level III infractions include:

- Serious or repeated Level I or II offenses
- Assault- physical attack, pulling out chair, deliberate hitting, pushing, kicking, or other behavior resulting in the intentional harm to peers/staff
- Repeated use of cellphone
- Bullying- repeated unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power
- Extortion
- Fighting or inciting a fight
- Foul language or gestures
- Harassment-related to race, ethnicity, religion or gender
- Hazing
- Leaving school grounds or running away/hiding from staff
- Misbehavior during emergency drills
- Outburst- throwing items, pushing, furniture or verbal abuse
- Theft
- Threat towards staff

Level IV Infractions:

Serious or dangerous infractions that may include willful or malicious acts that substantially disrupt the learning environment. Level IV infractions include:

- Serious or repeated Level I, II, or III offenses
- Acts of gross misconduct at school or out in the community during a school event
- Arson
- Assault and battery with substantial bodily injury
- Bomb threat
- Creating a false alarm about an emergency situation
- Physical attack on Trailblazers Academy employee
- Possession, use, or distribution of alcohol, illegal drugs, prescription drugs or drug paraphernalia
- Possession or use of weapons or instruments

APPENDIX C: SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICY

SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICY

Preface

Domus operates Stamford Academy and Trailblazers Academy and is committed to establishing a healthy learning environment that influences students' overall well-being, eating behaviors, physical capacity and learning ability to succeed academically and to go on to live a healthy lifestyle. This commitment provides all students the opportunity to take part in their education process while developing healthy eating habits through nutritional education. A learning environment that fosters wellness and good nutrition will be promoted for all students who attend Stamford Academy and Trailblazers Academy. Healthy eating and a positive life style will be promoted through the support and promotion of good nutrition and social emotional education. All students will be given the opportunity to participate in daily physical activity. Improved health will improve student performance potential and give students the opportunity to live healthy lives and avoid health complications later on in life. Stamford Academy and Trailblazers Academy strive to promote the-physical, emotional, and social wellbeing of our students through a comprehensive school health program. This includes providing a healthy physical and psychological environment based on our trauma responsive model, medical services through our school based health clinic, nutritious school meals, health education, weekly social emotional learning groups, on-site therapeutic services and opportunities for physical education and activity in every setting throughout the school year.

This policy outlines our schools approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day. Specifically, this policy establishes goals that enable students to become independent learners by taking the initiative to meet their own health and nutritional needs and ensures that:

- Students have access to healthy foods throughout the school day through reimbursable school meals in accordance with federal and state nutrition standards;
- Students receive quality nutrition education that helps them develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors;
- Students have opportunities to be physically active during and after school;
- Schools engage in nutrition and physical activity promotion and other activities that promote student wellness;
- School staff are encouraged and supported to practice healthy nutrition and physical activity behaviors in and out of school;
- Students meet weekly in their social-emotional learning groups to promote future focused goals for a healthy and successful lifestyle;
- The community is engaged in supporting the work of the students by fostering relationships between students and members of it to support lifelong healthy habits; and
- The school establishes and maintains an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication and monitoring of the policy and its established goals and objectives.

This policy applies to all students and staff within Stamford Academy and Trailblazers Academy.

I. School Wellness Committee

Committee Role and Membership

The schools will convene a Representative Wellness Committee that meets at least four times per year to establish goals for and oversee school health and safety policies and programs, including development, implementation and periodic review and update of this wellness policy

The membership will represent both Stamford Academy and Trailblazers Academy and, but not be limited to: parents and caregivers, students, physical education teachers, teachers from various grades, mental health and social services staff [e.g., family advocates, Juvenile Review Board Members and/or the Chief of Clinical Services], school administrators (e.g., Chief Educational Officer and the Dean of Student Culture).

Leadership

The designees will convene and facilitate development of and updates to the wellness policy, and will ensure each school's compliance with the policy.

The designated officials for oversight are Francesca Principe, Dean of Student Culture at Trailblazers Academy (FPrincipe@trailblazersacademy.org) and Steve Paul, Dean of Students at Stamford Academy (SPaul@stamfordacademy.org)

The names, titles, and contact information of these individuals are:

Name	Relationship to the School	Email address
Craig Baker	Chief Education Officer	cbaker@domuskids.org
Michael McGuire	Director of School Support	mmcguire@domuskids.org
Francesca Principe	Dean of Student Culture	fprincipe@trailblazersacademy.org
Steve Paul	Dean of Students	Spaul@stamfordacademy.org
Courtney Carey	Chief Clinical Services Officer	ccarey@domuskids.org
Vanity Vazquez	Family Advocate	vvazquez@trailblazersacademy.org
Ryan Carey	Physical Education Teacher	rcarey@trailblazersacademy.org
Jeremey Kosbob	Director of Juvenile Review Board	ikosbob@domuskids.org
Amanda Lewis	Science Teacher	alewis@trailblazersacademy.org
Jamie Waggaman	Literacy Teacher	jwaggaman@trailblazersacademy.org

Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability and Community Engagement

Implementation Plan

The schools will develop and maintain a plan for implementation to manage and coordinate the execution of this wellness policy. The plan delineates roles, responsibilities, actions and timelines specific to each school; and includes information about who will be responsible to make what change, by how much, where and when; as well as specific goals and objectives for nutrition standards for all foods and beverages available on the school campus, food and beverage marketing, nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, physical education and other school-based activities that promote student wellness.

This wellness policy is available to view by clicking on each of the schools individual sites through: www.domuskids.org

Recordkeeping

The Schools will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of the wellness policy in both designated officials offices Documentation maintained in this location will include but will not be limited to:

- The written wellness policy;
- Documentation demonstrating that the policy has been made available to the public;
- Documentation of efforts to review and update the schools Wellness Policy;
- Documentation to demonstrate compliance with the annual public notification requirements;
- The most recent assessment on the implementation of the local school wellness policy;
- Documentation demonstrating the most recent assessment on the implementation of the Local School Wellness Policy has been made available to the public.

Annual Notification of Policy

The schools will actively inform families and the public each year on basic information about this policy, including its content and any updates to the policy and implementation status. The schools will make this information available via the Stamford Academy and Trailblazers Academy websites. The schools will provide as much information as possible about the school nutrition environment. This will include a summary of the schools events or activities related to wellness policy implementation.

Triennial Progress Assessments

At least once every three years, there will be an evaluation of the wellness policy to assess the implementation of the policy and include:

- The extent to which Stamford Academy and Trailblazers Academy are in compliance with the wellness policy;
- The extent to which Stamford Academy and Trailblazers Academy wellness policy compares to the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's model wellness policy; and
- A description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the schools' wellness policy.

The school will actively notify households/families of the availability of the triennial progress report.

Revisions and Updating the Policy

The schools will update or modify the wellness policy based on the results of the annual triennial assessments. The wellness policy will be assessed and updated as indicated at least every three years, following the triennial assessment.

Community Involvement, Outreach and Communications

Stamford Academy and Trailblazers Academy are committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of the wellness policy. They will actively communicate ways in which representatives of the Wellness Committee and others can participate in the development, implementation and periodic review and update of the wellness policy. They will also inform parents of the improvements that have been made to school meals and compliance with school meal standards.

II. Nutrition Education and Promotion

School Meals

Trailblazers and Stamford Academies are committed to serving healthy meals to children, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat milk; that are moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and have zero grams trans-fat per serving (nutrition label or manufacturer's specification); and to meeting the nutrition needs of our students within their calorie requirements. The school meal programs aim to improve the diet and health of our students help mitigate childhood obesity, model healthy eating to support the development of lifelong healthy eating patterns and support healthy choices while accommodating cultural food preferences and special dietary needs.

Stamford Academy and Trailblazers Academy participate in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP). SA and TA are committed to offering school meals through the NSLP and SBP programs, and other applicable Federal child nutrition programs, that:

- Are accessible to all students:
- Are appealing and attractive to children;
- Are served in clean and pleasant settings;
- Meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established by local, state, and Federal statutes and regulations
- Promote healthy food and beverage choices using the following techniques:
 - Whole fruit options are displayed in attractive bowls or baskets.
 - Fresh fruit is available daily.
 - Daily fruit options are displayed in a location in the line of sight and reach of students.
 - All available vegetable options have been given creative or descriptive names.
 - All staff members, especially those serving, have been trained to politely prompt students to select and consume the daily vegetable options with their meal.
 - White milk is placed in front of other beverages in all coolers.
 - Student artwork is displayed in the service and/or dining areas.
 - Daily announcements are used to promote and market menu options.
 - Menus will be created/reviewed by a Registered Dietitian or other certified nutrition professional.
 - School meals are administered by a team of child nutrition professionals.
 - The child nutrition program will accommodate students with special dietary needs.
 - Students will be allowed at least 10 minutes to eat breakfast and at least 20 minutes to eat lunch, counting from the time they have received their meal and are seated.
 - Students are served lunch at a reasonable and appropriate time of day.

Water

To promote hydration, free, safe, unflavored drinking water will be available to all students throughout the school day and at both of our campuses or locations. The schools will make drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes.

Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

All school nutrition program directors, managers and staff will meet or exceed hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements in the <u>USDA professional standards for child nutrition professionals</u>. These school nutrition personnel will refer to <u>USDA's Professional Standards for School Nutrition Standards website</u> to search for training that meets their learning needs.

Nutrition Promotion

Nutrition promotion and education positively influence lifelong eating behaviors by using evidence-based techniques and nutrition messages, and by creating food environments that encourage healthy nutrition choices and encourage participation in school meal programs. Students and staff will receive consistent nutrition messages throughout schools, classrooms, gymnasiums, and cafeterias.

Nutrition Education

The health curriculum emphasizes nutritional knowledge and healthy habits and shall be continually revised and updated to comply with state standards and mandates to ensure that instructional strategies reflect current best practice. The nutrition education program shall focus on students' eating behaviors and physical activity to ensure overall healthy lifestyles. Our two schools will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- Is 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 integrated into other classroom instruction as well as social emotional groups.
- Includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant and participatory activities, such as cooking demonstrations or lessons;
- Promotes fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products and healthy food preparation methods;
- Emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (promotes physical activity/exercise); and
- Includes nutrition education training for teachers and other staff.
- All health education teachers will provide opportunities for students to practice or rehearse the skills taught through the health education curricula

Essential Healthy Eating Topics in Health Education

The Schools will include in the health education curriculum some of the following essential topics on healthy eating:

- Relationship between healthy eating and personal health and disease prevention
- Eating a variety of foods every day
- Balancing food intake and physical activity
- Eating more fruits, vegetables and whole grain products
- Choosing foods that are low in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol
- Choosing foods and beverages with little added sugars
- Eating more calcium-rich foods
- Preparing healthy meals and snacks
- Risks of unhealthy weight control practices
- Accepting body size differences
- Food safety
- Importance of water consumption
- Importance of eating breakfast
- Eating disorders
- Social influences on healthy eating, including media, family, peers and culture
- Resisting peer pressure related to unhealthy dietary behavior
- Influencing, supporting, or advocating for others' healthy dietary behavior

III. Physical Activity

Students participate in at least 45 minutes of physical activity during their daily physical education classes and are encouraged to participate in the many after school activities that involve education and physical activities. Our schools will ensure that these varied physical activity opportunities are in addition to, and not as a substitute for, physical education.

Physical activity during the school day (including but not limited classroom physical activity breaks or physical education) **will not be withheld** as punishments. Our schools will provide teachers and other school staff with a list of ideas for alternative ways to discipline students.

To the extent possible, our schools will ensure that our grounds and facilities are safe and that equipment is available for students to be active.

- TA and will ensure that indoor and outdoor physical activity facilities and spaces will be open to students, their families, and the community outside of school hours.
- TA and SA will ensure that inventories of physical activity supplies and equipment are known and, when necessary, will work with community partners to ensure sufficient quantities of equipment are available to encourage physical activity for as many students as possible.

Physical Education

TA and SA will provide students with physical education, using an age-appropriate, sequential physical education curriculum consistent with national and state standards for physical education. The physical education curriculum will promote the benefits of a physically active lifestyle and will help students develop skills to engage in lifelong healthy habits, as well as incorporate essential health education

All students will be provided equal opportunity to participate in physical education classes. TA and SA will make appropriate accommodations to allow for equitable participation for all students and will adapt physical education classes and equipment as necessary. All students are required to take physical education throughout all secondary school years (middle and high school).

The physical education program will promote student physical fitness through individualized fitness and activity assessments and will use criterion-based reporting for each student.

Free Time

Free time will complement, not substitute, physical education class. Teachers will encourage students to be active, and will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

Classroom Physical Activity Breaks

TA and SA recognize that students are more attentive and ready to learn if provided with periodic breaks when they can be physically active or stretch. Thus, students will be offered **periodic opportunities** to be active or to stretch throughout the day on all or most days during a typical school week. We recommend teachers provide short (3-5-minute) physical activity breaks to students during homeroom and at the end of classroom time, if work is completed. These physical activity breaks will complement, not substitute, for physical education class, recess, and class transition periods.

Active Academics

Teachers will incorporate movement and kinesthetic learning approaches into "core" subject instruction when possible (e.g., science, math, language arts, social studies and others) and do their part to limit sedentary behavior during the school day.

TA and SA will support classroom teachers incorporating physical activity and employing kinesthetic learning approaches into core subjects by providing annual professional development opportunities and resources, including information on leading activities, activity options, as well as making available background material on the connections between learning and movement.

Teachers will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

After School Activities

We encourage students to participate in intramurals and interscholastic sports such as football, basketball, cheerleading, step and baseball.

Active Transport

TA and SA support active transport to and from school, such as walking or biking. We will encourage this behavior by engaging in the activities below; including but not limited to:

- Designate safe or preferred routes to school
- Promote walking to school
- Secure storage facilities for bicycles and helmets (e.g., shed, cage, fenced area)
- Instruction on walking/bicycling safety provided to students
- Use crossing guards
- Use crosswalks on streets leading to schools
- Document the number of children walking and or biking to and from school
- Create and distribute maps of school environment (e.g., sidewalks, crosswalks, roads, bike racks, etc.)

IV. Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness

TA and SA will integrate wellness activities across the entire school setting, not just in the cafeteria and physical activity facilities. We will coordinate and integrate other initiatives related to physical activity, physical education, nutrition and other wellness components so all efforts are complementary, not duplicative, and work towards the same set of goals and objectives promoting student well-being.

All school-sponsored events will adhere to the wellness policy guidelines. All school-sponsored wellness events will include physical activity and healthy eating opportunities when appropriate.

Community Partnerships

We will continue relationships with community partners (e.g., school based health centers, universities/colleges, local businesses, police officers and local fire departments.) in support of this wellness policy's implementation. Existing and new community partnerships and sponsorships will be evaluated to ensure that they are consistent with the wellness policy and its goals.

Community Health Promotion and Family Engagement

TA and SA will promote to parents/caregivers, families, and the general community the benefits of and approaches for healthy eating and physical activity throughout the school year. Families will be informed and invited to participate in school-sponsored activities and will receive information about health promotion efforts.

Staff Wellness and Health Promotion

We have an agency wellness committee that focuses on staff wellness issues, identifies and disseminates wellness resources and performs other functions that support staff wellness in coordination with human resources staff.

TA and SA implement strategies to support staff in actively promoting and modeling healthy eating and physical activity behaviors. Examples of this include: fitness challenges, mini grants for staff for wellness activities, healthy snacks and meals during staff professional developments, student vs. staff basketball games, and healthy breakfast and lunch. TA and SA promotes staff member participation in health promotion programs and will support programs for staff members on healthy eating/weight management that are accessible and free or low-cost.