

2017-2020 Triennial Assessment of the Local Wellness Policy

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Overview & Purpose

In accordance with the Final Rule of the Federal Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 and the Virginia Administrative Code: 8VAC20-740, Richmond Public Schools (RPS) presents the 2017-2020 Triennial Assessment which includes the timeframe from August 2017 - June 2020. The Triennial Assessment indicates updates on the progress and implementation of Richmond Public Schools' Wellness Policy and wellness initiatives, and provides required documentation of actions, steps, and information as outlined in the Final Rule. Fifty-one schools in the Richmond district are included in this Triennial Assessment; however, not all schools participate in the National School Lunch or School Breakfast Program and therefore some questions do apply to every school. These exclusions are noted appropriately. The full list of all schools are included in Appendix 1.

The Local Wellness Policy

The Richmond Public School Wellness Policy can be found at <https://www.rvaschools.net/wellness>. The website allows for families to download a copy or view it directly on the website. After June 2021 updates to the policy, the School Health Advisory Board, in partnership with RPS, plans to offer summarized versions for parents and community members. RPS updates the Wellness Policy as appropriate and ensures it is posted to the website in a timely manner.

School Wellness Committee

Richmond Public Schools established a Wellness Policy leadership committee in 2012 to develop the first Wellness Policy. This committee was composed of nursing services staff, the director of student nutrition, health and physical education specialists, and teachers. This team met regularly to write the first Local School Wellness Policy, which was published for the public in 2012. Since that time, the Wellness Policy committee has added representatives of community organizations that work in youth health and wellness. The committee has updated the policy three times, 2015, 2017 and 2018. Each update has been posted to the student nutrition services and health & physical education websites for families.

In October 2018, the School Board of the City of Richmond voted to create the Richmond City School Health Advisory Board (SHAB) to supplement the school wellness committee. The application and selection process began in 2019 and the first meeting was held in November 2019. The Advisory Board still represents the previous RPS team members mentioned, plus additional teachers, students, parents, and community advocates. These individuals apply to serve two-year terms on the SHAB. The group meets at a minimum once every quarter, but regularly more often. Separate work group meetings are held outside of the full voting body meetings; these workgroups focus on priority health areas: mental health, nutrition and physical activity. All SHAB meetings are open to the public and advertised through the school website, the school board meetings, the superintendent's newsletter, and other less formal channels such as social media. Throughout 2020, the SHAB has focused on revising the Wellness Policy.

If interested in knowing more about the SHAB, you can email the Chair and Co-chair directly at RPSshab@gmail.com

Wellness Policy Compliance

Richmond Public Schools must conduct an assessment of the Wellness Policy every three years, at a minimum. The final rule requires State Agencies to assess compliance with the Wellness Policy requirements as a part of the general areas of the Administrative Review every three years.

The content in Richmond Public Schools’ local wellness policy meets and exceeds the standards outlined by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Virginia Code. Further details of this can be found in the *Quality of Wellness Policy* section.

USDA primarily sets regulations specific to what information should be included in the local wellness policy, as well as nutritional content of foods being offered in schools, through either school meals or other offerings, and how information about foods is communicated in schools and to families. The district’s compliance to the USDA wellness policy regulations is mostly satisfactory, and largely in compliance. As it relates to foods being sold on campus during the school day, no more than three schools (or <6%) are not in compliance with these regulations and we feel confident that we can resolve these issues to bring schools into compliance by the 2021 - 2022 school year. Areas of non-compliance that will take more time to address with schools will be related to foods and beverages that are offered to students during the school day in the individual classroom. We will need to work with principals and teachers to support them in offering items that are nutrient rich in celebrations and classroom snacks. Lastly, we will need to do an audit of posters and materials in classrooms and other areas outside of the cafeteria to ensure they meet USDA regulations.

Virginia Code primarily sets regulations specific to the nutritional guidelines of competitive food offerings and physical education programs. As mentioned previously, the district sets higher standards than the Virginia regulation as it relates to food-fundraisers. The district is almost in perfect compliance with Virginia regulations. Only one school is not meeting nutritional requirements of competitive food offerings and six schools are not meeting physical activity program requirements for sixth - twelfth grades. We will work with principals to identify necessary changes to bring all schools into compliance.

The following tables provide details of district compliance for USDA and Virginia regulations.

Standards and Nutrition Guidelines for all Foods and Beverages Sold

Standard/Guideline	Met	Not Met
We follow federal school meal nutrition standards for all foods and beverages available for sale on campus during the school day.	Fully met	

We have implemented Smart Snacks nutrition standards for ALL items sold during school hours, including: a la carte offerings, items in school stores, and items in vending machines.	48 out of 49	1 out of 49
Richmond City Public School’s policy on exempt fundraisers is outlined in our Division’s Wellness Policy with three criteria. Schools were evaluated on their compliance of each three. Results are below:	<i>See below</i>	
Food and beverage fundraisers during the school day meet the Smart Snack Standards.	47 out of 49	2 out of 49
Schools do not exceed five food-based fundraisers per year. ¹	46 out of 49	3 out of 49
No fundraisers or sales of food or beverages of any kind are conducted during the breakfast and lunch service.	48 out of 49	1 out of 49

All of the above are USDA regulations unless otherwise noted.

Standards and Nutrition Guidelines for all Foods and Beverages Offered

Standard/Guideline	Met	Not Met
Schools follow Richmond City Public School’s policy on standards for all foods and beverages offered. Schools do not offer foods or beverages that do not meet nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually as rewards for academic performance or good behavior.	27 out of 49	22 out of 49

All of the above are USDA regulations unless otherwise noted.

Policy for Food and Beverage Marketing

Standard/Guideline	Met	Not Met
All food and beverage marketing meets Smart Snacks standards.	44 out of 49	5 out of 49
Nutrition messages and resources are consistent throughout the school, including classrooms, gymnasiums, and cafeterias.	31 out of 49	18 out of 49
Schools only advertise foods and beverages that meet the nutrition standards of items permitted to be sold on the campus.	43 out of 49	6 out of 49
Marketing materials for fundraisers outside of the school hours promote and portray healthy food product options that meet Smart Snack Standards.	36 out of 49	13 out of 49

All of the above are USDA regulations unless otherwise noted.

¹ This higher standard is set locally in the Richmond District. All schools are in compliance with the [Virginia regulation](#) of thirty fundraisers.

Wellness Policy Public Involvement

Standard/Guideline	Met	Not Met
Richmond Public Schools permits participation by the general public and the school community in the Wellness Policy process. This includes parents, students, and representatives of the School Food Authority, teachers of physical education, school health professionals, the School Board, and school administrators.	Fully Met	

All of the above are USDA regulations unless otherwise noted.

Physical Education and Activity Requirements

Standard/Guideline	Met	Not Met
In accordance with the Code of Virginia, schools shall implement a program of physical activity requirement that requires at least 20 minutes of physical activity per day, or an average of 100 minutes per week during the regular school year for students in grades kindergarten through five .	25 out of 26	1 out of 26
The Wellness Policy requires physical activity programs are made available to all students in grades six through twelve with a goal of at least 150 minutes per week on average during the regular school year. ²	12 out of 17	5 out of 17

All of the above are Virginia regulations unless otherwise noted.

Wellness Policy Public Updates

Standard/Guideline	Met	Not Met
The Wellness Policy is made available to the public on an annual basis, at minimum. This includes any updates to and about the Wellness Policy.	Fully Met	
The Triennial Assessment, including progress toward meeting the goals of the policy, will be made available to the public on or before June 30, 2021.	Fully Met	

All of the above are USDA regulations unless otherwise noted.

Description of Policy Leadership

Standard/Guideline	Met	Not Met
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² Exempt schools: Richmond Technical Center, Virgie Binford Technical Center, Richmond Career Education and Employment Academy

Richmond Public Schools established a Wellness Policy leadership of one or more LEA's and/or school official(s) who have the authority and responsibility to ensure each school complies with the policy.		Partially Met
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All of the above are USDA regulations unless otherwise noted.

Description of Evaluation Plan

Standard/Guideline	Met	Not Met
Richmond Public School will conduct an assessment at least once every three years of the following: policy compliance and progress towards goals. Within this assessment, the district will ensure the school environment enables nutrition, physical activity and mental health policies. The assessment will be used to develop work plans and facilitate implementation.	Fully Met	
The School Health Advisory Board, in partnership with Richmond Public School leadership, will meet at least four times per year to establish goals and oversee school health and safety policy and programs, including development, implementation and periodic review and update of the wellness policy. ³	Fully Met	
School food service staff at the school and the Director of School Nutrition Services will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the Chief Operating Officer of Support Services.	Fully Met	

All of the above are USDA regulations unless otherwise noted.

Quality of the Local Wellness Policy

As directed under the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) 2016 final rule, Richmond Public Schools (RPS) has a local school wellness policy that meets the minimum federal standards under the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. [The Alliance for a Healthier Generation provides a model policy](#) that outlines ways that local wellness policies can exceed the standard requirements. Below is an overview of RPS's local school wellness policy meets and exceeds the federal minimum requirements.

Standards Met:

- **District Wellness Committee:** The wellness policy provides an overview of the committee, its composition, purpose and meeting frequency.
- **Accountability:** The wellness policy provides an overview of when the policy will be assessed for compliance, reviewed for updates, utilize public involvement, and made publicly available.
- **Nutrition services:** The wellness policy provides detailed overview of the nutrient makeup of school meals and competitive foods and beverages, in addition to guidance on how to promote

³ This is a district-specific regulation.

nutrient rich food items in meal delivery, celebration and rewards, fundraisers, and food and beverage marketing.

- **Physical activity opportunities:** The wellness policy provides a detailed overview of how schools and teachers can promote physical activity in the classroom, during recess, before and after school, and through active transportation to and from school.

Areas of Excellence:

In addition to the minimum standards described above, Richmond Public Schools' local school wellness policy includes language from the model policy that promotes the highest of health and wellness standards in schools. Sections denoted by an asterisk below are items that superseded what was recommended in the model policy. This demonstrates RPS's values and focal areas in the past. Revisions of the policy will continue to adapt to the needs of students and families.

- **Nutrition promotion and education:*** The wellness policy sets high standards of promoting healthier food items in the cafeteria and throughout the school environment. Nutrition education is integrated into the core curriculum but also developed in a culturally relevant manner.
- **Community partnerships:** The wellness policy outlines ways that the school will partner with organizations and the broader community to leverage existing resources and reach more students and families.
- **Whole family engagement:*** The wellness policy outlines ways that the school can promote the health of the entire family, offering opportunities during and after the school day.
- **Staff health and wellness:** The wellness policy provides an overview of steps schools take to promote the health and wellness of the teachers and staff on campus.
- **Professional training opportunities:*** The wellness policy promotes professional training resources for staff and teachers to promote a healthy school environment for students.

Areas of Improvement:

- **Accountability:** The wellness policy outlines the triennial assessment requirement; however, the model policy recommends annual review and update, along with a plan that includes actions and timelines.

Progress towards Goals

As described above in the comparison to the model wellness policy, Richmond Public Schools set high standards for its focus on health and wellness in schools. In particular, the 2017-2020 wellness policy emphasized the importance of nutrition education and promotion, incorporation of physical activity throughout the school environment, and promoting the well-being of the whole family.

The progress made towards each goal is detailed below in the tables. Highlights of the progress include:

- **41 out of 51 schools make healthier food items easier, more available, and fun!** Participating schools met the goal of implementing five nutrition promotion techniques daily. The other 10 schools implemented at least two or more techniques.
- **50 out of 51 schools keep nutrition an integral part of the day!** Participating schools chose at least one nutrition education strategy outlined in the wellness policy to implement.
- **49 out of 51 schools keep things moving!** Participating schools incorporate movement and kinesthetic learning approaches into other core subject instruction.
- **The focus on physical activity is fun and rewarding!** Schools do not use physical activity as punishment (43), nor do they withhold recess or physical education as punishment (41).
- **Health and wellness doesn't stop at the end of the school day!** 49 out of 51 schools participate in at least one of the seven family health promotion techniques outlined in the wellness policy.

Progress towards Nutrition Promotion and Education Goals

Description	Met	Not Met
The Wellness Policy outlines twelve techniques to promote healthy food and beverage choices for students; schools are required to implement at least five of them. See list in Appendix 2.	41 out of 51	10 out of 51
The Wellness Policy outlines seven nutrition education strategies that can be implemented in the school or classroom. They are encouraged, but not required, to incorporate them. See list in Appendix 2.	50 out of 51	1 out of 51

Progress towards Physical Activity Goals

Description	Met	Not Met
Teachers incorporate movement and kinesthetic learning approaches into subject instruction such as science, math, language arts, social sciences, and others.	49 out of 51	2 out of 51
Teachers provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate	33 out of 51	18 out of 51
Teachers and other school personnel do not use physical activity (e.g., running laps, pushups) as a punishment.	43 out of 51	8 out of 51
Teachers or other school personnel do not withhold physical activity (e.g. recess, physical education) as punishment.	41 out of 51	10 out of 51
All elementary, middle, and high schools offer extracurricular physical activity programs, such as physical activity clubs or intramural programs.	39 out of 51	12 out of 51

Progress towards other School-Based Wellness Activity Goals

Description	Met	Not Met
Teachers have annual professional development opportunities and resources for promoting physical activity and movement in the classroom.	44 out of 45	1 out of 45
Each school has a designated Wellness Champion that works with the Employee Wellness Coordinator to help promote employee wellness initiatives through the WE-FIT program.	10 out of 45	35 out of 45
Richmond Public Schools supports promoting active transport to and from school, such as walking and biking. They outline nine activities and are encouraged to participate. See list in Appendix 3.	47 out of 50	3 out of 50
Richmond Public Schools values promoting health and wellness for the full family. The district outlines seven after-school activities that involve the full family. They are encouraged to participate. See list in Appendix 4.	49 out of 51	2 out of 51

Appendix 1.

List of All Participating Schools by Category

Preschools⁴

J.H. Blackwell Preschool
Martin Luther King, Jr. Preschool
Mary Scott Preschool
Maymont Preschool
Summer Hill Preschool

Elementary Schools

Barack Obama Elementary School
Bellevue Elementary School
Broad Rock Elementary School
Cardinal Elementary School
Chimborazo Elementary School
Elizabeth D. Redd Elementary School
Fairfield Court Elementary School
G.H. Reid Elementary School
George W. Carver Elementary School
Ginter Park Elementary School
Henry L. Marsh, III Elementary School
J.B. Fisher Elementary School
J.H. Blackwell Elementary School
J.L. Francis Elementary School
John B. Cary Elementary School
Linwood Holton Elementary School
Mary Munford Elementary School
Miles J. Jones Elementary School
Oak Grove-Bellemeade Elementary School
Overby-Sheppard Elementary School
Patrick Henry School of Science and Arts

⁴ Preschools are not included in state health and physical education requirements.

Southampton Elementary School
Swansboro Elementary School
Westover Hills Elementary School
William Fox Elementary School
Woodville Elementary School

Middle Schools

Albert Hill Middle School
Binford Middle School
Lucille M. Brown Middle School
Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School
River City Middle School
Thomas C. Boushall Middle School
Thomas H. Henderson Middle School

High Schools

Armstrong High School
George Wythe High School
Huguenot High School
John Marshall High School
Open High School
Richmond Community High School
Thomas Jefferson High School

Specialty Schools

Amelia Street School
Franklin Military Academy
Richmond Alternative School
Richmond Career Education and Employment Academy
Richmond Technical Center⁵
Virgie Binford Education Center⁵

⁵ Schools do not participate in the NSLP or SBP and are included in only a subset of responses

Appendix 2.

Nutrition Promotion Techniques

The district will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students by implementing Smarter Lunchroom techniques. Individual schools will implement at least five of the following techniques:

- Whole fruit options are displayed in attractive bowls or baskets (instead of chafing dishes or hotel pans)
- Sliced or cut 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
- Daily vegetable options are bundled into all grab and go meals available to students
- 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
- Alternative entrée options (e.g., salad bar, yogurt parfaits, etc.) are highlighted on posters or signs within all service and dining areas
- A reimbursable meal can be created in any service area available to students (e.g., salad bars, snack rooms, etc.)
- Student surveys and taste testing opportunities are used to inform menu development, dining space decor, and promotional ideas
- Student artwork is displayed in the service and/or dining areas
- Announcements may be used to promote and market menu options

Nutrition Education Techniques

Richmond Public Schools aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Schools should provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- is offered at each grade level 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.

Appendix 3.

Active Transport Activities

The District will support active transport to and from school, such as walking or biking. To the extent possible, the district will encourage active transport by supporting and promoting the activities below; including but not limited to:

- Designation of safe or preferred routes to school
- Promotional activities such as participation in International Walk to School Week, National Walk and Bike to School Week
- Secure storage facilities for bicycles and helmets (e.g., shed, cage, fenced area)
- Instruction on walking/bicycling safety provided to students
- Promotion of safe routes program to students, staff, and parents via newsletters, websites, local newspaper
- Placing crossing guards when feasible
- Ensuring that crosswalks exist on streets leading to schools
- Walking school buses Documentation of number of children walking and or biking to and from school
- Creation and distribution of maps of school environment (e.g., sidewalks, crosswalks, roads, pathways, bike racks, etc.)

Appendix 4.

Whole Family Wellness Practices

The district values promoting health and wellness for students and their families even after the school day ends. Schools are encouraged to participate in the following initiatives that promote nutrition, health and wellness for the entire family.

- We offer healthy eating seminars for parents
- We send home nutrition information
- We post nutrition tips on the school website
- We provide nutrient analysis of school menus for families
- We host family fitness nights
- We conduct taste tests at community and family events
- We promote access to our school or community garden