

Triennial Assessment Report: Plymouth Public Schools LSWP (6/2025)

District: PLYMOUTH

Introduction

As part of our ongoing commitment to student health and wellness, the Plymouth Public Schools Food Service Department has completed a triennial assessment of the district's wellness policy. Conducted every three years, this review helps ensure that our policies and practices align with federal USDA requirements and incorporate current best practices for supporting student nutrition, physical activity, and overall well-being.

The results of this year's assessment indicate that our district remains largely in compliance with USDA guidelines and continues to make meaningful progress in implementing evidence-based strategies that promote student wellness. The assessment was completed with the collaboration of a diverse group from our school community, including staff, administrators, and other key stakeholders. Data collection began in the fall of 2024 and was finalized in June of 2025, and included a thorough review of our wellness policy, school-level practices, and feedback from across our district.

We are proud of the improvements we've made and remain committed to fostering a healthy, supportive environment for all students. Thank you for your continued partnership in this important work.

Strong Policies and Aligned Practices

The Plymouth Public Schools continue to demonstrate a strong commitment to student health and wellness by fully implementing practices that align with both federal requirements and our district's wellness policy. This year's triennial assessment highlights several key areas of success, reflecting our dedication to fostering a healthy school environment for all students.

School meals offered through the National School Lunch Program and, where applicable, the School Breakfast Program consistently meet all USDA requirements for meal patterns, nutrient content, and calorie limits appropriate for each grade level. In addition, breakfast is made available to all students each day, ensuring every child has the opportunity to begin their day with a nutritious meal.

We remain committed to protecting student privacy regarding eligibility for free or reduced-price meals and work diligently to ensure that all students are treated with respect, regardless of their meal payment status. The district also takes intentional steps to eliminate stigma related to unpaid meal balances by addressing them in a sensitive and non-punitive manner.

Plymouth Public Schools are fully aligned with the USDA's Smart Snacks standards. All competitive foods and beverages sold during the school day, including à la carte items in the cafeteria, meet or exceed these nutritional guidelines. Additionally, any food or beverage marketing that occurs on school campuses during the school day exclusively promotes items that comply with Smart Snacks criteria.

Transparency is a core value in our wellness efforts. The district's wellness policy is easily accessible to the public via our website and is also available upon request, keeping families and community members informed and engaged in our shared commitment to student health.

In the area of nutrition education, our schools implement interactive, skills-based instruction that goes beyond teaching facts about food. Lessons are designed to actively engage students through hands-on activities, real-life applications, and behavior-focused strategies that help them develop lifelong healthy habits. Activities such as meal planning, reading nutrition labels, understanding balanced diets, and practicing informed food choices help students build essential life skills. This approach not only aligns with national health education standards but also empowers students to make healthy decisions both in and out

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of school, supporting their overall well-being and academic success.

Physical education remains a vital component of our wellness initiatives. All PE classes are taught by state-certified teachers with proper endorsements, ensuring instruction is both high-quality and aligned with state standards. Our program promotes lifelong physical activity and wellness, encouraging students to stay active in meaningful ways. Importantly, our schools do not use physical activity as a punishment, nor is it withheld as a means of managing classroom behavior.

		Policy Score	Practice Score	
FR2	Do your National School Lunch Program meals (and, if applicable, School Breakfast Program meals) meet all federal standards for meal patterns, nutrient levels, and calorie requirements for the grade levels served?	2	2	★
FR3	Does your school take steps to protect the privacy of students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals?	2	2	★
FR6	Do all competitive foods and beverages sold to students during the school day meet or exceed the USDA's nutrition standards, commonly called Smart Snacks?	2	2	★
FR7	Do all a la carte foods and beverages sold in the cafeteria meet Smart Snacks standards?	2	2	★
FR12	Is there food or beverage marketing on the school campus during the school day? If yes, do the marketed items meet Smart Snacks criteria?	2	2	★
FR15	How is the wellness policy made available to the public?	2	2	★
NES1	Does the district offer breakfast every day to all students?	2	2	★
NES2	Does your school take steps to address feeding students with unpaid meal balances without stigmatizing them?	2	2	★

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NE1	Are skills-based, behavior-focused, and interactive/participatory methods used in nutrition education to develop student skills?	2	2	☆
PEPA3	How does your physical education program promote a physically active lifestyle?	2	2	☆
PEPA7	Are all physical education classes taught by state certified/licensed teachers who are endorsed to teach physical education?	2	2	☆
PEPA18	Do teachers ever use physical activity as a punishment?	2	2	☆
PEPA19	Do teachers ever withhold physical activity as a classroom management tool?	2	2	☆

Create Practice Implementation Plan

While Plymouth Public Schools have established a strong wellness policy aligned with federal guidelines, this year's triennial assessment identified several areas where policy exists but where practice implementation is limited or not yet fully realized.

Key Areas for Improvement

The assessment highlighted the following areas needing increased implementation support:

- Development of clearly defined goals for nutrition education that promote student wellness
- Designation of a building-level wellness policy coordinator in each school
- Integration of nutrition education into subjects beyond health education
- Collaboration between school nutrition services staff and classroom teachers to reinforce nutrition education
- Revision of the wellness policy based on findings from the previous triennial assessment
- Consistent implementation of a written physical education (PE) curriculum across all grade levels
- Clear documentation and reporting of PE minutes per week by grade level (elementary, middle, and high school)

Federal Requirements Addressed

Several of these areas directly align with federal mandates outlined in the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, including:

- Designating school-level wellness policy leadership
- Establishing measurable goals for nutrition education
- Periodic review and revision of the wellness policy
- Professional collaboration between food service staff and educators
- Transparency and documentation of physical education programming

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Plan for Improving Practice Implementation

To address these gaps, the district will develop a comprehensive practice implementation plan to ensure that all components of the LSWP are effectively and consistently executed district-wide.

Action Steps Include:

- Each school will appoint a wellness policy coordinator by September 2025, responsible for local implementation, communication, and monitoring.
- District leaders will collaborate with classroom and health teachers to develop nutrition education goals by Spring 2026.
- Nutrition services staff will begin working directly with teachers to coordinate classroom visits and activities aligned with nutrition lessons starting in Spring 2026.
- Based on the assessment findings, an updated wellness policy will be drafted and submitted to the School Committee for approval by Spring 2026.
- A comprehensive, grade-level PE scope and sequence will be developed and finalized by June 30, 2026, ensuring consistency and alignment with state standards.





Responsibility and Oversight

The District Wellness Committee, in partnership with school administrators and food service leadership, will oversee the development and implementation of the plan. The District's Business Manager will review and approve the final plan to ensure alignment with district goals and compliance with federal mandates.

Measuring Success







Implementation success will be measured through:

- Submission and review of school-based checklists by wellness coordinators
- Evaluation of PE scope and sequence documents and sample instructional materials
- Feedback gathered through staff and student surveys
- Annual review meetings conducted by the District Wellness Committee to monitor progress and make ongoing improvements

		Policy Score	Practice Score	
FR1	Does the district have specific goals for nutrition education designed to promote student wellness?	2	1	
FR14	Is there an official who is responsible for the implementation and compliance with the wellness policy at the building level for each school?	2	1	
FR18	Has the wellness policy been revised based on the previous triennial assessment?	1	0	
NE5	Is nutrition education integrated into other subjects beyond health education?	2	1	

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NE6	Do school nutrition services staff members use the following methods to collaborate with teachers to reinforce nutrition education lessons taught in the classroom?	1	0	
PEPA1	 Does the district have a written physical education curriculum that is implemented consistently for every grade?	2	1	
PEPA4	How many minutes per week of PE does each grade in elementary school receive?	2	1	
PEPA5	How many minutes per week of PE does each grade in middle school receive?	2	1	
PEPA6	How many minutes per week of PE does each grade in high school receive?	2	1	

Update Policies

This year's triennial assessment identified several areas where Plymouth Public Schools are either fully or partially implementing wellness-related practices, yet lack strong or specific policy language to support and sustain these efforts. To ensure our written wellness policy fully aligns with federal requirements and accurately reflects practices in place across the district, we are committed to updating and strengthening the policy accordingly.

Federal Requirements Addressed in This Section

The following items are federally mandated components of a Local School Wellness Policy under the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, but are currently underrepresented or missing from our written policy:

- Access to free drinking water during meals and throughout the school day
- Adherence to USDA Professional Standards for school nutrition staff training
- Fundraiser food and beverage compliance with Smart Snacks standards
- Evaluation of wellness policy implementation at least once every three years
- Public reporting of the triennial assessment results
- Promotion of participation in school meal programs
- Distribution of information about eligibility for free and reduced-price meals
- Marketing strategies that promote healthy food and beverage choices
- Minimum seated time for students to eat school meals

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- Accessibility of USDA Smart Snacks nutrition standards

Additional District Priorities for Policy Inclusion

Beyond federal requirements, Plymouth Public Schools will revise policy language to address additional wellness priorities that support the health and well-being of all students, including:

- A clear prohibition on the use of food as a reward by staff
- Guidelines to ensure all foods and beverages served or sold after the school day (e.g., during aftercare, clubs, or other programs) meet federal nutrition standards (CACFP or Smart Snacks)
- Policy on the sale of caffeinated beverages at the high school level
- Promotion of joint-use/shared-use agreements to increase access to physical activity spaces
- Assuring daily recess for all elementary grade levels
- Clarification of the physical education curriculum's alignment with state and national standards, including limitations on PE exemptions or substitutions

Responsibility and Oversight

The District Wellness Committee will lead the revision and update of the wellness policy. This committee includes representation from school administrators, food services, nursing, teaching staff, physical education, and parents/community stakeholders.

Policy revisions will be drafted collaboratively with the Central Office, Food Services Department, and Building Principals, with oversight and final approval from the Business Manager and the Board of Education.

Timeline for Policy Updates

- Policy Review and Drafting: August–December 2025
- Stakeholder Input and Feedback: September–December 2025
- Final Policy Draft Approval: December 2025
- Board Presentation and Adoption: Spring 2026
- Implementation and Communication to Schools and Families: Spring 2026

Improving Implementation Where Needed

For practices that were only partially implemented (receiving a score of "1" on the WellSAT), the district will strengthen training, procedures, and accountability systems to ensure consistency across all schools.

Examples include:













- Establishing clear protocols to ensure students receive adequate seated time to eat meals
- Updating professional development plans to guarantee that all school nutrition staff meet USDA annual training requirements
- Reviewing and revising fundraising practices to ensure all food/beverage sales meet Smart Snacks standards

Issuing district-wide guidance discouraging the use of food as a reward and encouraging alternative, positive reinforcement strategies

The District Wellness Committee will monitor progress through annual review meetings, school feedback, and policy audits to ensure that all written policies are not only adopted but effectively implemented and sustained.









	Policy Score	Practice Score	
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FR4	Is free (i.e., no cost to students) drinking water available to students during meals?	0	2	
FR5	Do all school nutrition program directors, managers, and staff meet or exceed the annual continuing education/training hours required by the USDA's Professional Standards requirements?	0	2	
FR10	Are there fundraisers that sell foods or beverages to be consumed during the school day? If yes, do the foods and beverages sold meet Smart Snacks standards?	0	2	
FR13	Which groups are represented on the district-level wellness committee?	1	2	
FR16	Is wellness policy implementation evaluated every three years?	1	2	
FR17	What is included in the triennial assessment report to the public?	1	2	
NES3	Does your school or district provide information to families about eligibility for free or reduced-price meals?	0	2	
NES4	Does your school use strategies to maximize participation in the school breakfast program and/or school lunch program?	0	2	
NES5	Are marketing strategies used to promote healthy food and beverage choices in school?	1	2	
NES6	Do students have at least 10 minutes to eat breakfast and at least 20 minutes to eat lunch, counting from the time they are seated?	0	2	
NES8	Do you know where to access the USDA Smart Snacks nutrition standards to check and see if an item can be sold in school during the school day?	0	2	
NES10	Are foods or beverages containing caffeine sold at the high school level?	0	2	

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NES11	Do all foods or beverages SERVED (not sold) to students after the school day on school grounds (including aftercare, clubs, and afterschool programming) meet federal nutrition standards (e.g., CACFP or Smart Snacks)?	0	2	
NES12	Do all foods or beverages SOLD (not served) to students after the school day on school grounds (including aftercare, clubs, and afterschool programming) meet federal nutrition standards (e.g., CACFP or Smart Snacks)?	0	2	
NES13	Do teachers or school staff give students food as a reward?	0	2	
NES14	Do students have consistent and easy access to free drinking water throughout the school day?	0	2	
PEPA2	Does the district have a written physical education curriculum that is aligned with national and/or state standards?	1	2	
PEPA10	What percentage of students do you estimate do not take PE each year due to substitutions?	0	2	
PEPA13	Is there daily recess for all grades in elementary school?	1	2	
PEPA15	Does the district have "joint-use" or "shared-use" agreements?	0	2	

Opportunities for Growth

This year's triennial assessment revealed several wellness-related areas that Plymouth Public Schools have either not addressed in current policy or practice, or have addressed only minimally. To create a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to student and staff wellness, the district is committed to expanding both policy language and practice implementation to ensure full alignment with federal requirements and best practices.

Federal Requirements Identified

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 requires school districts to address several core wellness components. The following federally mandated elements are not yet fully reflected in our current policy or practices and will be prioritized in upcoming updates:

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- Regulation of foods and beverages served at classroom parties and school celebrations
- Provision of sequential and comprehensive nutrition education for all K–12 students
- Establishment and support of active district- and school-level wellness committees to monitor implementation

Additional District Wellness Priorities

In addition to meeting federal mandates, Plymouth Public Schools will strengthen wellness efforts in the following key areas:

- Promoting procurement of locally sourced foods through Farm to School initiatives
- Offering annual professional development opportunities specific to physical education
- Expanding before- and after-school opportunities for student physical activity
- Supporting staff wellness and encouraging positive role-modeling of healthy behaviors
- Incorporating physical activity breaks into classroom routines
- Limiting PE exemptions and clearly defining expectations around the use of physical activity as a reward

Implementation Plan for Practice Improvement

To address these gaps and promote consistent, sustainable wellness practices, the district will implement the following steps:

- Spring 2026: Launch pilot programs for classroom activity breaks, Farm to School procurement, and before/after-school physical activity opportunities
- June 2026: Develop and adopt a comprehensive K–12 nutrition education framework that ensures sequential instruction across all grade levels
- March 2026: Create a professional development plan for PE teachers, with annual training beginning in the 2026–27 school year
- Introduce strategies to offer alternative options for students who might otherwise be exempt from PE, promoting full participation in physical activity

Assessment of Success will include:

- Participation data from wellness-related classroom and extracurricular programs
- Survey results from students, families, and staff
- Attendance and engagement records from wellness committee meetings
- Review of instructional minutes in nutrition education by grade level
- Documentation of annual PE-specific professional development completion

















Policy Update Plan and Timeline

To ensure policy reflects updated practices and meets all requirements:

- The District Wellness Committee, in collaboration with Central Office, Food Services, and Building Principals, will draft revised wellness policy language in Spring 2026
- Stakeholder feedback will be collected during Spring 2026, with input from school-based wellness teams, community partners, and family engagement groups
- A final draft of the revised policy will be submitted to the Board of Education for review and approval by late Spring 2026
- District-wide communication and implementation of the updated policy will take place at the start of the 2026–27 school year








	Policy Score	Practice Score	
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FR11	Does your district regulate foods and beverages served at class parties and other school celebrations in elementary schools?	0	1	
NES7	 In your district, is it a priority to procure locally produced foods for school meals?	0	1	
NES9	Are you familiar with any state laws allowing exemptions for school-sponsored fundraisers during which foods and beverages do not have to meet Smart Snacks?	0	1	
NE2	Do all elementary school students receive sequential and comprehensive nutrition education?	1	1	
NE3	Do all middle school students receive sequential and comprehensive nutrition education?	1	1	
NE4	Do all high school students receive sequential and comprehensive nutrition education?	1	1	
PEPA8	Is ongoing professional development offered every year for PE teachers that is relevant and specific to physical education?	0	1	
PEPA9	What percentage of students do you estimate do not take PE each year due to exemptions?	1	1	
PEPA11	 Are there opportunities for families and community members to engage in physical activity at school?	0	1	
PEPA12	 Are there opportunities for all students to engage in physical activity before and after school?	0	1	
PEPA14	 Do teachers provide regular physical activity breaks for students in the classroom?	1	1	
PEPA16	What proportion of students walk or bike to school?	0	1	

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PEPA17	 Are teachers encouraged to use physical activity as a reward for students?	1	1	
EW1	 Are there strategies used by the school to support employee wellness?	0	0	
EW2	Are school staff encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity behaviors in front of students?	0	0	
IC1	Is there an active district-level wellness committee?	1	1	
IC2	Is there an active school-level wellness committee?	1	1	

Conclusion

As part of our commitment to student health and wellness, Plymouth Public Schools recently completed a triennial assessment of our district's wellness policy. This federally required review, conducted every three years, evaluates our alignment with USDA standards and best practices in areas such as nutrition, physical activity, and wellness education.

The assessment found that the district is largely in compliance with federal guidelines and has strong implementation of many wellness practices including:

- School meals and snacks that meet USDA nutrition standards
- Daily access to breakfast for all students
- Privacy protections and stigma-free procedures around meal payments
- Consistent use of interactive, skills-based nutrition education
- Certified PE teachers and a commitment to using physical activity appropriately
- Transparency in wellness policy communication and marketing of healthy options

While our wellness policy is robust, the assessment identified areas where policy exists but practice implementation needs strengthening including:

- Developing measurable nutrition education goals
- Appointing school-level wellness coordinators
- Expanding integration of nutrition into subjects beyond health
- Improving collaboration between food service staff and educators
- Ensuring consistent PE curriculum and tracking minutes across grade levels

The district will revise its wellness policy to reflect both federal mandates and district priorities by Spring 2026. Updates will address:

- Required access to free water and nutrition training for food service staff
- Minimum time for meals and stronger guidance around fundraising food sales
- Prohibition of using food as a reward and better alignment of after-school snacks with nutrition standards

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- Support for staff wellness, daily recess, and increased access to physical activity opportunities

Plymouth Public Schools will launch pilot programs, professional development, and planning efforts throughout 2025–2026. Policy updates will be reviewed and approved by the Board of Education by Spring 2026, with full implementation beginning in the 2026–2027 school year.

The District Wellness Committee will monitor progress through surveys, meeting reviews, and regular reporting from schools.

We remain committed to creating a healthy, supportive environment for all students and thank our families and community members for being partners in this important work.

Key



Strong Policies and Aligned Practices - District has a strong policy and is fully implementing practices that align with the policy



Create Practice Implementation Plan - District has a strong or weak policy, but practice implementation is either absent or limited



Update Policies Update Policies - District is fully implementing a practice but there is no or only weak language in the written policy, or the district is partially implementing practices and there is no language in the policy



Opportunities for Growth - District has either not addressed the topic in policy or practice; or has only addressed the topic in a very limited way

For more resources, visit: wellsat.org/resources

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