



# **Triennial School Wellness Policy**

## **Executive Summary & Findings**

### **June 2022**

1

#### **General Information**

An assessment was performed during the 2021-22 school year to measure the effectiveness of the Norwalk Public Schools [District Wellness Student Nutrition and Physical Activity \(Wellness Policy\)](#). Using the WellSAT-I Interview Documentation Tool in accompaniment to the WellSAT 3.0 Wellness School Assessment Tool, teams reported findings across six standards: Nutrition Education, Standards for USDA Child Nutrition Programs and School Meals, Nutrition Standards for Competitive and Other Foods and Beverages, Physical Education and Physical Activity, Wellness Promotion and Marketing, and Implementation, Evaluation, and Communication. This was NPS's first Triennial Assessment using Well-SAT tool, so we will utilize the data as a benchmark to be used in future District planning and setting goals. The summary of the findings can be found in the following report.

#### **Triennial Assessment Information**

The Connecticut State Department of Education requires that all Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) organize a District Wellness Committee that meets each school year. The mandates were established as part of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 ([Public Law 108-265](#)), and further strengthened by the [Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010](#). The NPS District Wellness Committee meets quarterly during the academic year. Specific Committee responsibilities can be found in the Wellness Policy.

The 2021-2022 Council Members are:

Lisa Lenskold, Norwalk Grows (Chairperson)  
Sandra Faioes, Assistant Superintendent of Business and Operations  
Godfrey Azima, BOE Member  
Brenda Wilcox Williams, Chief of Staff and Communications  
Jill Kress, NPS Food Service Liaison  
Angela Valentin, Chartwell's Resident District Manager  
Kelly Gruber, RDN, Chartwell's Wellness and Student Engagement Manager  
Brenda Brush, Tracey Elementary School Principal  
Sue Ellen O'Shea, Marvin Elementary Principal  
Shannon Roman, Naramake Elementary Assistant Principal  
Casey Cummings, Rowayton Elementary Principal  
Christina Guerra, Brookside Elementary Principal  
Ed Singleton, Norwalk High Assistant Principal  
Jenifer Rolinson, BOE Nurse and parent  
Theresa Argondezzi, Norwalk Health Department  
Jeremy Dane, Nathan Hale Middle School Health Teacher

## **Compliance with Model Wellness Policy**

The Norwalk Public School District Wellness Policy was rewritten during the 2016-2017 school year. The goal of the review was to ensure compliance to Connecticut State Department of Education requirements as well as changes required by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA); final rule, published in July 2016. The district plan was to create a comprehensive District Wellness Policy that utilized the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) framework as outlined by CDC. Community Partners such as Norwalk Health Department, Norwalk Grows, FoodCorps, Family & Childrens Agency (FCA), Mid Fairfield Child Guidance Center and Norwalk ACTS were an integral part of the Wellness Committee.

### **A. Assessment Review**

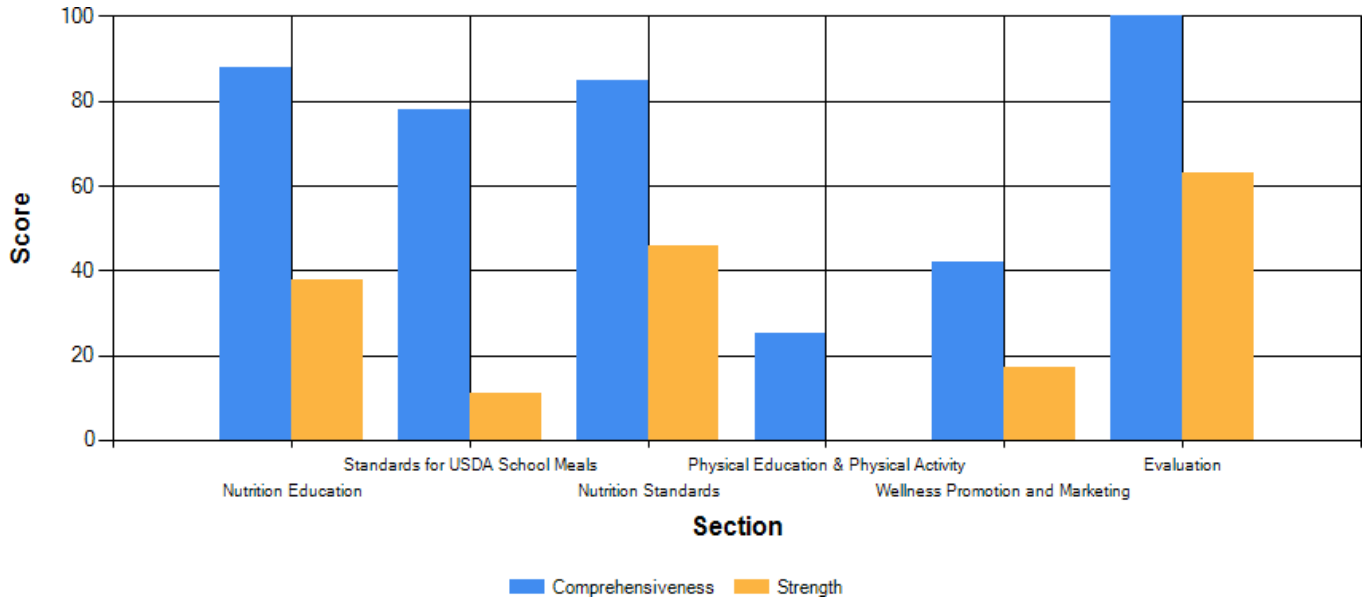
While the current wellness policy encompassed the required attributes and a strong comprehensive score, the strength of the policy language in areas such as Standards for USDA Child Nutrition Programs and Wellness Promotion and Marketing should be reviewed as the Committee found in several instances the Practices far exceed the Policy language. Additionally, the Physical Activity and Recess Policy was not part of the comprehensive Wellness Policy review in 2017 and should be reviewed as part of the NPS Comprehensive Policy Review Process in 2022-23 school year.

### **B. WellSAT3.0: Wellness School Assessment Tool Completion**

Representatives from the District Wellness Committee met in October 2021 to review the current wellness policy, review the guidelines of the triennial assessment process, and begin collaborating with schools and district administration to determine compliance of the current policy across the six standards. The District Wellness Chairperson reviewed the WellSAT3.0 results with the Wellness Committee at its November 2021 meeting. Schools were then identified to participate in the Well-SATi process for interviews to determine how the wellness policy was being implemented in schools. The results of the Well-SATi were shared with the District Wellness Committee at the March 2022 meeting.

The raw data was submitted through the electronic [WellSAT tool](#) published by the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity at the University of Connecticut. The WellSAT adheres to best practice in compliance with the USDA final rule. An electronic copy of the district scorecard has been included as an appendix to this report. Major trends with regards to the comprehensiveness and strength scores for the district have been included below.

Norwalk Public school district scorecard



## Standard Review & Action Planning

### Standard #1: Nutrition Education

Utilizing the WellSAT 3.0 School Assessment Tool, the following areas were noted as strengths and areas for continuous improvement for our current plan:

Areas of Commendation	Areas for Improvement
<b>NE3-5:</b> Students in the district receive sequential and comprehensive nutrition education.	<b>NE7:</b> Create a link between nutrition education and the school food environment.
	<b>NE8:</b> Nutrition education addresses agriculture and the food system

**Action Plan:** Review existing curriculum and align resources like Harvest of the Month and School Gardens to Nutrition Education curriculum.

**Standard #2: Standards for USDA Child Nutrition Programs and School Meals**

Areas of Commendation	Areas for Improvement
<b>SM5:</b> All families are provided information and eligibility for free/reduced priced meals.	<b>SM1-4:</b> Strengthen policy language to align to current practices in HHFKA, District Breakfast availability, practices to identify free and reduced meal participants and unpaid balance practices.
<b>SM6:</b> Strategies such as Breakfast in the Classroom and Grab and Go are used to increase participation in school meal programs	<b>SM8:</b> Free drinking water is available during meals.
	<b>SM9:</b> Strengthen language in policy to indicate frequency and training for food service staff
	<b>SM10:</b> Addresses purchasing local foods for the school meals program.

**Action Plan:** As part of the Comprehensive Review of all District Policies, it is recommended that policy language be reviewed to align Policy Comprehensiveness with the Practices that are ongoing and implemented by School Food Department. The district will review strategies for improving free drinking water during meals. The local procurement practices will be reviewed and the District will begin a process for tracking and improving Farm to School and Local Procurement. The District will utilize FoodCorps Norwalk team and Chartwell’s leadership to establish school and student involvement including taste tests, menu feedback and student collaboration with District Culinary staff.

**Standard #3: Nutrition Standards for Competitive and Other Foods and Beverages**

Areas of Commendation	Areas for Improvement
<b>NS1:</b> Addresses foods that are not part of school meals that meet Smart Snacks nutrition standards.	<b>NS2:</b> USDA Smart Snack standards are easily accessed in the policy.
<b>NS3:</b> Addresses a la carte foods that meet Smart Snacks nutrition standards.	<b>NS10:</b> Addresses nutrition standards for all food and beverages <b>served</b> to students <b>after</b> the school day, including before/after care on school grounds, clubs, and after school programming.
<b>NS8:</b> Addresses foods and beverages containing caffeine at the high school level.	

<p><b>NS12:</b> Addresses using food as a reward in classroom for good student behavior.</p>	
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**Action Plan:** During District Policy Review, establish a link to Smart Snacks nutrition standards. After School Providers will be included on the District Wellness Committee and strategies for access to healthy and nutritious snacks and meals can be reviewed.

**Standard #4: Physical Education and Physical Activity**

Areas of Commendation	Areas for Improvement
<p><b>PEPA2:</b> The written physical education curriculum for each grade is aligned with national and/or state physical education standards.</p>	<p><b>PEPA3:</b> Physical education promotes a physically active lifestyle.</p>
<p><b>PEPA10:</b> Addresses physical education substitution for all students.</p>	<p><b>PEPA4:</b> Addresses time per week of physical education instruction for all elementary students.</p>
<p><b>PEPA 13:</b> Addresses daily recess for all grades in elementary school</p>	<p><b>PEPA5:</b> Addresses time per week of physical education instruction for all middle school students.</p>
	<p><b>PEPA6:</b> Addresses time per week of physical education instruction for all high school students.</p> <p><b>PEPA7:</b> Addresses qualifications for physical education teachers for grades K-12.</p>
	<p><b>PEPA8:</b> Addresses providing physical education training for physical education teachers.</p>
	<p><b>PEPA14:</b> Addresses physical activity breaks during school.</p>

**Action Plan:** What the Assessment found was the Practices in Norwalk Public Schools exceed the minimum standard language as represented in the Physical Activity and Recess Policy. This Policy was not reviewed as part of the 2017 Wellness Policy review process. The Physical Activity and Recess Policy should be reviewed as part of the Comprehensive District review in 2022-23 and recommended to be aligned with updated standards and language.

**Standard #5: Wellness Promotion and Marketing**

Areas of Commendation	Areas for Improvement
<p><b>WPM3:</b> Addresses teachers encouraged to use physical activity as a reward for students.</p>	<p><b>WPM1:</b> Encourages staff to model healthy eating and physical activity behaviors.</p>

<b>WPM4 &amp; 5:</b> Addresses teachers using physical activity as punishment and Addresses physical activity not being withheld as a punishment.	<b>WPM2:</b> Addresses strategies to support employee wellness.
<b>WPM6:</b> Specifies marketing to promote healthy food and beverage choices.	
<b>WPM7, 8, 9, 10, 11</b> Addresses food and beverage marketing in schools	

**Action Plan:** Encouragement of staff participation in the health and wellness committee and district wellness policy, and staff wellness activities on professional learning days will all be targeted action items to support compliance with this plan standard.

**Standard #6: Implementation, Evaluation & Communication**

Areas of Commendation	Areas for Improvement
<b>IEC1:</b> Addresses the existence of an active district wellness committee.	<b>IEC2:</b> Addresses the wider group of representation on the District Wellness Committee
<b>IEC4:</b> Addresses making the wellness policy available to the public.	<b>IEC8:</b> Addresses the establishment of an ongoing school building level wellness committee.

**Action Plan:** To continue to develop a culture of health and wellness across all school campuses, school-based wellness teams will be constructed to review data and compliance to the local wellness plan at each school. Information regarding the process for triennial review and dissemination of triennial results to stakeholders will be clearly communicated as part of the revised plan.

## Overall District Policy Score

<b>Total Comprehensiveness</b> Add the comprehensiveness scores for each of the six sections above and divide this number by 6.	<b>District Score</b> 70
<b>Total Strength</b> Add the strength scores for each of the six sections above and divide this number by 6.	<b>District Score</b> 29

**Date of Next Triennial Review:** June 2025