



Montgomery County
Public Schools

Triennial Assessment of the Local School Wellness Policy

June 2021



OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

In accordance with the *Final Rule* of the federal Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 and the Virginia Administrative Code: Title 8. Education, Agency 20. State Board of Education, Chapter 740 *Final Rule*, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) presents the first triennial report. The triennial report outlines updates on the progress and the implementation of our wellness policy and wellness initiatives in MCPS and provides the required documentation of actions, steps, and information outlined in the *Final Rule*.

Due to COVID-19, Virginia has elected to utilize a USDA waiver extension for the triennial assessment which provides a revised first triennial assessment deadline of June 30, 2021, allowing necessary flexibility from the original deadline of June 30, 2020.

AUTHORITY & RESPONSIBILITY DESIGNEE(S)

Responsibility of creating a culture of well-being and supporting the whole child is shared among all students, families, staff, departments, schools, and leaders within Montgomery County. However, the *Final Rule* requires specific designee(s) be identified to help lead the oversight, implementation, and progress assessment of the wellness policy and its requirements. The Director of Student Services and Safety provides direct oversight for this policy at the division level, with the support of the School Health Advisory Board (SHAB), building administrators, HPE teachers, food services staff, and school nurses.

Those interested in serving on the School Health Advisory Board (SHAB) can contact the Director of Student Services & Safety at (540) 382-5100.

WELLNESS POLICY

The MCPS Wellness Policy (7-5.5) includes important division expectations for our schools. The policy can be found on the division website at: <http://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/mcps/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=8WKHQ49A002>. Like most policies, it has been revised, as regulations change.

- Originally adopted: June 6, 2006
- Last revised: June 1, 2011
- Anticipated revisions in 2021 as a response to VDOE Superintendent's Memo 050-21.

SUPPORTING POLICY

Additionally, MCPS has approved a number of other policies that support student and staff wellness. These policies are also available for review from the division website.

Notable policies include:

- Policy 2-3.1 - Community Involvement in Decision-Making
- Policy 2-4.4 - Tobacco Use on School Property
- Policy 2-5.4 - Fundraising by Students
- Policy 5-7.5 - Employee Absences/Leave
- Policy 6-3.10 - Health/Physical Education
- Policy 6-3.12 - Teaching About Drugs, Tobacco, and Alcohol
- Policy 6-3.8 - Family Life Education (FLE)
- Policy 7-5.3 - Suicide Prevention
- Policy 7-5.4 - Annual Screening for Scoliosis
- Policy 7-5.7 - Parent Information Regarding Student Health Concerns



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT: WELLNESS POLICY UPDATES PROCESS

The Director of Student Services & Safety, in conjunction with the Board Clerk, is responsible to make any required revisions to the division wellness policy whenever required by state or federal guidance, and when recommended by the School Board Attorney. These usually come in the form of mass updates to multiple policies at the beginning of each school year.

Additionally, suggestions or recommendations from the local community can be shared at school board meetings during public address, communicated directly to the Director of Student Services and Safety, or discussed at a SHAB meeting. Any suggested revisions that are not required would be discussed among the SHAB and the division leadership team (to ensure compliance with other division policies and initiatives).

All suggested policy revisions are presented before the school board for review and discussion. The school board must vote to approve any revision in policy.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT: ANNUAL COMMUNICATION OF THE WELLNESS POLICY

School principals are the division agents primarily responsible for communicating the contents of the wellness policy to their school communities. This may include formal opportunities, such as reviewing the policy with school staff at a faculty meeting, or informal opportunities, such as providing an array of student activities that encourage physical activity. The goals and intentions of the wellness policy can also be shared within typical school events, like PTA/PTO meetings, sports contests, field days, and classroom celebrations. The complete policy is available on the division website, and featured prominently on the MCPS School Nutrition Programs webpage.



SCHOOL WELLNESS TEAMS

All Montgomery County Public Schools should have a School Wellness Team consisting of members drawn from staff, students, and parents. This team may plan events, send wellness information in school newsletters, and plan other activities surrounding the marketing of nutrition information. The school principal is responsible for ensuring the active involvement of this team, although it may be a subcommittee of another school organization like PTA/PTO, School Leadership Team, or PBIS Team.

WELLNESS POLICY PROGRESS ASSESSMENT

As part of the requirements outlined in the *Final Rule*, Montgomery County Public Schools conducted the first wellness policy progress assessment for all of our twenty schools (11 elementary schools, 4 middle schools, 4 high schools, and 1 alternative school). This initial assessment will serve as our baseline and will be the basis for bolstering weaker elements in our plan. And, as noted above, we do already expect to make revisions to the wellness policy in light of VDOE Superintendent's Memo #050-21.

Part 1. Nutrition

Goal	Fully in Place	Partially in Place
All school meals must comply with USDA regulations and state policies.	X	

All a la carte food items sold to students during the school day must meet the competitive food standards.	X	
All vended foods sold to students during the school day must meet the competitive food standards.	X 18 schools report they sell <u>no</u> vended foods during the school day	
At least 50% of school fundraisers during the school year do not involve the sale of food and/or beverages.	X 13 schools reported having <u>no</u> food fundraisers	
At least 50% of foods provided by teachers to students comply with Smart Snack guidelines.	X 9 schools reported that their teachers <u>do not</u> provide food to students	

Part 2. Nutrition Education & Promotion

Goal	Fully in Place	Partially in Place
Each school may designate one or more school officials to ensure that the school complies with the local wellness policy guidelines.		19/20 schools BMS
Each school has a wellness team consisting of members drawn from staff, students, and parents.		16/20 schools BHS BMS CES CPS
A minimum of two hours of nutrition education is provided for each grade level K-12.		18/20 schools EMHS MBES

Part 3. Physical Activity

Goal	Fully in Place	Partially in Place
All students have the opportunity to participate in physical activity each school week.	X	

OTHER WELLNESS INITIATIVES, RECOGNITIONS, & SUCCESSES

- Schools initiated their various school-specific activities, such as walking clubs, yoga clubs, intramural programs, and healthy fundraisers like “Jump Rope for Heart.”
- Partnered with local church and community organizations to provide take-home food bags for students identified with food insecurity.
- Provided “advanced” Health/Physical Education classes for upperclassmen.
- Eliminated a scheduling issue that forced students in need of remediation coursework to forgo a specialty class (typically was Health/Physical Education).
- Expanded elementary recess time to 40 minutes during the typical day, with 20 minutes in the morning and 20 minutes in the afternoon.
- Added Securly software to student email and internet searches to identify concerning language, such as “suicide.”
- Implemented the “Too Good for Drugs” Program as a partnership with the local community services board.
- Implemented the “Friend2Friend” student mental health module of Kognito in high school health classes.
- Added the Corps of Cadets Program to the curriculum as an elective that emphasizes fitness as a primary goal.
- Established a division Mental Health Advisory Board composed of students, parents, staff members, and community providers.
- Revised student and staff absence policies to include mental health absences under the umbrella of excused illness days (to reduce stigma).
- School Nurses are trained to provide First Aid/CPR/AED certification for staff.
- Contracted with The Nutrition Group for division cafeteria services.
- Employees have been offered the opportunity to participate in professional development on topics such as: Youth Mental Health First Aid, Zones of Regulation, Mindfulness, and the Adverse Childhood Experiences Quiz.
- The Human Resources Department sponsored a wellness challenge for employees each semester that includes incentives and prizes for those who participate.

- Coordinated with the local health department to provide vaccine opportunities during the school day (flu and required vaccines annually, and COVID in 2021).
- Emphasized the health component of HPE classes, rather than giving time to physical activity alone.
- Delivered school breakfast and lunches along bus routes from March to June 2020.
- Classroom delivery of breakfast and lunches twice daily during hybrid instruction (Fall/Winter 2020-21 school year).
- Faculty, Staff, and Student presentations regarding the health impacts of vaping.
- Provided “Stop the Bleed” trauma training for School Nurses.
- Provided Narcan administration training for School Nurses.
- Employed a School Nurse in every building. Added an additional “Float Nurse” position to support for employee absences.
- Secured a grant to implement a universal screening tool to identify “at-risk” students. Administered the screener twice in 2020-21.
- Secured a grant to purchase an additional spot vision screener to increase effectiveness and efficiency in conducting student vision
- Coordinated COVID vaccine clinics for employees during the workday.
- Provided 5 online counseling meetings through the division’s Emergency Assistance Program to support employees’ mental health needs during the pandemic.
- Safely provided in-person instruction to students during a global pandemic through the 2020-21 school year.

QUALITY OF THE MCPS WELLNESS POLICY

To fulfill the federal requirement of assessing the quality of the wellness policy under the *Final Rule*, Montgomery County Public Schools compared our 2017 Policy with Guidelines to Local School Wellness Model Policy (Superintendent’s Memo #050-21, dated February 26, 2021). In addition, Nutrition Services completed the USDA and met Federal Program Accountability Review to ascertain the division’s compliance with various other regulations.

AREAS OF STRENGTH

- Diversity of initiatives - programs for physical activity, mental health, safety, and good nutrition.
- Partnerships with the community and other agencies.
- Division support. Montgomery County is the only *local* school district that maintains a School Health Advisory Board.
- Caring community. Citizens want to be involved and make a difference.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Ensuring that each school has an active, productive wellness team.
- Better data capture/collection.
- Greater reliance on data, such as the Youth Risk Behavior Survey/School Climate Survey.
- Update the local Wellness Policy.

GOALS FOR THE NEXT THREE YEARS (2021-2024)

- Update the division Wellness Policy to align with the latest guidance from VDOE.
- Utilize data sources, such as the Youth Risk Behavior Survey/School Climate Survey.
- Provide data collection tools for school leaders (e.g. fundraiser logs).
- Provide resources to schools toward meeting the wellness goals.
- Continue our engagement with the School Health Advisory Board.

REPORT PREPARATION & CONTACT INFORMATION

This report was written by the Director of Student Services & Safety, Jason Garretson, with input and review from the School Health Advisory Board. Individual school data was collected from administrators at each school location. For additional information, please call (540) 382-5100, or email: jgarretson@mcps.org.