



Montgomery County Public Schools

Triennial Assessment of the Local School Wellness Policy

June 2024



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 2024 triennial report. The triennial report outlines updates on the progress and implementation of our wellness policy and wellness initiatives in MCPS and provides the required documentation of actions, steps, and information outlined in *Final Rule*.

The previous triennial report (2021) can be accessed from the MCPS website at: <https://www.mcps.org/departments/student-services>.

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 & Safety provide direct oversight for this policy at the division level, with the support of the Supervisor of School Nutrition Programs, the School Health Advisory Board (SHAB), building administrators, Health & PE Teachers, food service 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 <https://www.mcps.org/about-us/policies> and linked [here](#). Like most policies, it has been revised as regulations change.

- Originally adopted: June 6, 2006
- Last revised: June 1, 2011
- The School Health Advisory Board intends to present a draft replacement policy in August of 2024 for implementation in the 2024-25 School Year.

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 at <https://www.mcps.org/about-us/policies>.

Notable policies include:

- Policy 2-3.1 - Community Involvement in Decision-Making
- Policy 2-4.4 - Tobacco Use on School Property
- Policy 2-4.5 - Service Animals in Public Schools
- Policy 2-5.4 - Fundraising by Students
- Policy 3-3.5 - Vendor Relations
- Policy 4-2.1 - Safety of School Facilities
- Policy 4-2.2 - School Crisis, Emergency Safety and Crisis Management.....
- Policy 4-4.4 - School Bus Safety Program
- 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 UPDATE PROCESS

The Director of Student Services & Safety oversees revisions to the Wellness Policy whenever required by state or federal guidance and/or 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 school board members, communicated to the Director of Student Services & Safety, discussed at a school wellness team meeting, or discussed at a SHAB meeting. Any suggested revisions that are not required would be reviewed by 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 to the public on the division website and features prominently on the MCPS School Nutrition Programs webpage.



SCHOOL WELLNESS TEAMS

The school wellness team is the driving force for implementation of the Wellness Policy at the building level. All schools should have a school wellness team consisting of members drawn from staff, students, and parents. This team may plan events, communicate wellness information to the school community, and work to reinforce the tenets of the Wellness Policy. 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*, MCPS has conducted a progress assessment for all of our twenty schools (eleven elementary, four middle, 4 high, and 1 alternative school). It is important to note that these results represent progress toward

goals; the guidelines do not require that all goals are “Fully in Place.” For comparison, results from the 2021 assessment are included in the second column below.

| | | 2024 Assessment | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|----------------------------|
| Goal | 2021 Result | Fully in Place | Partially in Place |
| My school provides adequate time for students to eat in a clean, safe, and pleasant setting. | Not Assessed | X | |
| My school provides developmentally appropriate physical education as defined by state guidelines, which include opportunities to foster lifelong habits of physical activity. | Not Assessed | | 19/20 MC |
| My school has formed partnerships with relevant community resources to provide physical activity experiences for all community members at school and in the community. | Not Assessed | | 17/20 HAE EMES MC |
| My school collaborates with parents, staff, and community agencies to promote mental health as part of a total approach to wellness. | Not Assessed | X | |
| Our school-based activities are consistent with local wellness policy guidelines. | Not Assessed | X | |
| My school encourages personnel to use non-food rewards and refrains from using physical activity as a consequence. | Not Assessed | X | |
| All food and beverage | Not Assessed | X | |

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| marketing meets Smart Snack nutrition standards. | | | |
| All school meals comply with USDA regulations and state policies. | Fully in Place | X | |
| All a la carte food items sold during the school day meet competitive food standards. | Fully in Place | X | |
| All vended foods sold to the students during the school day meet competitive food standards. | Fully in Place | X 13 schools note they sell no vended foods | |
| At least 50% of school fundraisers during the school year do not involve the sale of food and/or beverages. | Fully in Place | X | |
| At least 50% of foods provided by teachers to students comply with Smart Snack guidelines. | Fully in Place | | 17/20 AHS AES KES |
| Our school has one or more school officials designated to ensure that the school complies with local wellness policy guidelines. | Partially in Place | X | |
| My school provides a minimum of two hours of nutrition education for each grade level (K-12). | Partially in Place | | 14/20 BHS AHS HAE AES KES MC |
| At my school all students have the opportunity to participate in physical activity each school week. | Fully in Place | | 18/20 BHS MC |
| My school has a wellness team consisting of members drawn from staff, students, and parents. | | X | Although: 18 schools include staff only |

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| | | | 2 schools include staff and parents 0 schools include students |
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OTHER WELLNESS INITIATIVES, RECOGNITIONS, & SUCCESSES

School Responses:

- CES hosts the Hokie Health Club that comes in the Fall and Spring semester. They provide students with healthy snacks and physical activity. The CES Wildlife Club also provides healthy snacks for our students after school and talks about nutrition in addition to their normal topics.
- CHS reports creation of the CHS Wellness Website, Wellness Newsletter, CHS Walking Club for Staff, CHS Blood Drive, OMT (Osteopathic Massage Therapy) Sessions for Staff, Healthy Snack/Lunch for Staff.
- At GLE they held an annual GLE Walk-a-thon and a Walk/Bike to School Day.
- AMS Morning Walking Program - all students walk a lap around the track before entering the building.
- HAE participated in 2 challenges involving physical activity wellness and mental health this year.
- AES partnered with the Lion's Club to provide free swimming lesson to all 2nd grade students. Health screenings were conducted for students in grades K and 3. The Lion's Club provided assistance. All students were given the opportunity to

go bowling at the NRV Super Bowl free of charge. All students participated in Field Day in the month of May. Career Day offered students an opportunity to exercise with a Body Pump instructor. Wellness Themes were communicated throughout the building (by the copier, bathroom doors, hallways).

- EMES hosts a Running Club and the Mudder Run.
- FBE participates in Wellness Bingo - Staff select wellness items for the month and wins a bingo prize donated by the community.
- BES celebrated the installation of a new playground.
- BMS sponsored the Atten-Dance event and Disability Awareness week.
- KES utilized activity-based fundraising and reward opportunities such as Walkathon and Field Day. Wellness-centered field trips that are either physical in nature or focus on healthy topics such as Glade Road Growing.
- PFES was proud to host Girls on the Run. They also partnered with VT/VCOM in hosting a wellness day. A parent volunteer & VCOM students engaged students in their PE classes.
- The MCPS Lead Nurse offered yoga and mindfulness sessions at our division alternative school (MC).

Division Initiatives:

- MCPS maintains advisory committees with ties to wellness: School Health Advisory Board, Mental Health Advisory Committee, and School Safety Committee. These committees include community members and meet on a quarterly basis.
- MCPS introduced a Unified PE course in our high schools that pairs students with disabilities with a mentor in assorted physical activities.
- MCPS signed a Memorandum of Understanding with local law enforcement partners to utilize the Handle With Care (HWC) Program. This program allows road officers to notify school leaders when students have been exposed to traumatic or violent incidents in the community.
- MCPS trained all school nurses in crisis triage.
- MCPS adopted the Standard Response Protocol (SRP) for crisis management in schools.
- MCPS partnered with the county Board of Supervisors, New River Valley Community Services, and local law enforcement to host four Student Safety Seminar, including topics such as social media, vaping, bullying, and mental health.
- MCPS trained all School Counselors to use the Columbia Suicide Screener.
- MCPS provided professional development opportunities for staff to become trained in the administration of Narcan (all school nurses are already trained).

- MCPS employed a second Float Nurse position to support school nurses who need to absent, special projects, and/or larger schools.
- MCPS employed one additional School Counselor and two more have been hired for the 2024-25 School Year. This brings our total number of school counselors to 37, for a 259:1 division-wide student-to-counselor ratio.
- MCPS building administrators received dating violence and abuse training from Dr. Brem at Virginia Tech.
- MCPS allocated \$1 million dollars in ESSER funding to support *additional* mental health services in our schools following the pandemic. This contract with New River Valley Community Services included 4 new Therapeutic Day Treatment Clinicians, 4 new Outpatient Clinicians, and a supervisory position.
- MCPS has undertaken significant capital improvement projects to include CES, CPS, BES, and now CHS. These building renovations have not only resulted in improving wellness in the building through upgraded mechanical systems such as HVAC and fire control, but they also have enhanced outdoor learning/play areas and access to natural light.
- MCPS staff continue to implement components of the 2021-2026 Strategic Plan with wellness impacts. Particularly, the Poverty and Mental Health Sections have action steps that include topics such as addressing food insecurity, supporting homeless students, and addressing the mental health needs of students and staff. One major initiative involves the adoption of a Social Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum for all our schools. These programs are scheduled for implementation beginning in the 2024-25 School Year.
- MCPS students in middle and high schools completed the Youth Risk Behavior Survey in the Spring of 2024 through a partnership with the United Way of Southwest Virginia and Emory & Henry College. We expect these results in August of 2024.
- MCPS has incorporated gun safety information on our website.
- MCPS now participates in the Community Eligibility Provision. This program allows 6 of our schools to offer free breakfast and lunch to all enrolled students.
- Effective July 1st, 2024, MCPS has partnered with Sodexo Food Services. We are excited to see changes to our food service program that will result in healthier options, fresh local fruits and vegetables and high quality, appealing food selections.



QUALITY OF THE MCPS WELLNESS POLICY

To fulfill the federal requirement of addressing the quality of the wellness policy under the *Final Rule*, Montgomery County Public Schools recognizes that our current policy needs revision. While our School Nutrition Program continues to meet its requirements under the Federal Program Accountability Review, some of the goals, language, and general organization needs improvement. Thus, as mentioned above, we plan to submit a revised draft policy to our school board by August 2024 for potential adoption in the 2024-25 School Year.

OVERALL AREAS OF STRENGTH

- MCPS has access to numerous community partners that can enhance and support student and staff needs.
- MCPS recognizes that “wellness” is a multi-faceted concept and involves more than just nutritional requirements and physical activity.
- Caring community. Citizens want to be involved with the schools.

OVERALL AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Being more intentional with wellness efforts; planning the work and keeping data.
- Increasing student and community involvement.

GOALS FOR THE NEXT THREE YEARS (2024-2027)

- Implement and evaluate the new wellness policy.
- Emphasize the school wellness teams; broaden their membership to include community members and students.

- Make wellness resources more available to students, staff, and community members.

REPORT PREPARATION & CONTACT INFORMATION

This report was written primarily by the Director of Student Services & Safety, with input and revision from the Supervisor of School Nutrition Programs, the Division Leadership Team, and the School Health Advisory Board. Individual school data was collected from administrators at each school location. For additional information, please call (540) 382-5100.