

Triennial Assessment Report: Dare County Schools Triennial Assessment 2025 (6/2025)

District: DARE COUNTY SCHOOLS

Introduction

Families and Community Members,

We're excited to share an update on our commitment to student health and well-being here at Dare County Schools! As part of our ongoing efforts to create a supportive and healthy environment for all students, we recently completed our Triennial Assessment of our Local School Wellness Policy.

The Triennial Assessment is a federally required review for all school districts participating in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. It's a comprehensive look at our district's policies and practices related to student health, nutrition, and physical activity. Think of it as a health check-up for our school environment, designed to ensure we're meeting federal requirements and following best.

Overall, Dare County Schools' policies and practices were found to be well-aligned with federal requirements and recognized best practices in school wellness. We are particularly proud of our commitment to providing nutritious school meals that meet USDA standards, our efforts to integrate physical activity throughout the school day, and nutrition education in classrooms.

Compared to our previous assessment in June 2022, this year's results indicate continued progress in several key areas. We've seen an increase in participation in our breakfast and lunch programs and enhanced efforts in promoting local produce in our cafeterias. We also identified areas where we can further enhance our efforts.

Our Triennial Assessment was a collaborative process, completed June 2025. We reviewed our existing Local School Wellness Policy, comparing it against federal guidelines. We are committed to continuously improving the health and well-being of our students. We encourage you to review the full assessment report, which is available on the Dare County Schools website.

Strong Policies and Aligned Practices

Our district has made significant strides in meeting the federal requirements outlined in this section of the Local Wellness Policy, including nutrition promotion, nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based wellness activities. These components are aligned with USDA regulations that mandate the inclusion of goals for nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, and wellness activities in the Local Wellness Policy.

All students enrolled in Dare County Schools have access to nutritious breakfast and lunch at no cost each school day. Through participation in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) and county supported funds, the district is able to provide universal free meals to all students, regardless of household income. This removes financial and social barriers to school meal participation, ensuring equitable access to healthy food for every child. The availability of no-cost meals has led to increased participation in both breakfast and lunch programs across the district. Higher meal participation not only supports students' physical health but also contributes to improved focus, academic performance, and classroom behavior.

We also implemented a Farm to School, which connects our cafeterias with local growers and includes seasonal produce and rice featured in school meals. We have involved students in taste testing to promote breakfast, lunch participation, and healthy meal choices.

Triennial Assessment Report: Dare County Schools Triennial Assessment 2025 (6/2025)

District: DARE COUNTY SCHOOLS

Dare County Schools has demonstrated strong commitment and measurable success in creating healthier school environments. Through intentional policy updates, targeted wellness initiatives, and community partnerships, we continue to meet and exceed our wellness goals while ensuring compliance with USDA federal requirements.

		Policy Score	Practice Score	
FR1	Does the district have specific goals for nutrition education designed to promote student wellness?	2	2	★
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	★
FR4	Is free (i.e., no cost to students) drinking water available to students during meals?	2	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?	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	★
FR8	Do all foods and beverages sold in vending machines meet Smart Snack standards?	2	2	★

Triennial Assessment Report: Dare County Schools Triennial Assessment 2025 (6/2025)

District: DARE COUNTY SCHOOLS

FR9	Do all foods and beverages sold in school stores during the school day meet Smart Snack standards?	2	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?	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	☆
FR13	Which groups are represented on the district-level wellness committee?	2	2	☆
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	2	☆
FR15	How is the wellness policy made available to the public?	2	2	☆
FR16	Is wellness policy implementation evaluated every three years?	2	2	☆
FR17	What is included in the triennial assessment report to the public?	2	2	☆
FR18	Has the wellness policy been revised based on the previous triennial assessment?	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	☆
NES3	Does your school or district provide information to families about eligibility for free or reduced-price meals?	2	2	☆



Triennial Assessment Report: Dare County Schools Triennial Assessment 2025 (6/2025)

District: DARE COUNTY SCHOOLS

NES4	Does your school use strategies to maximize participation in the school breakfast program and/or school lunch program?	2	2	☆
NES5	Are marketing strategies used to promote healthy food and beverage choices in school?	2	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?	2	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?	2	2	☆
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)?	2	2	☆
NES14	Do students have consistent and easy access to free drinking water throughout the school day?	2	2	☆
NE1	Are skills-based, behavior-focused, and interactive/participatory methods used in nutrition education to develop student skills?	2	2	☆
NE2	Do all elementary school students receive sequential and comprehensive nutrition education?	2	2	☆
NE3	Do all middle school students receive sequential and comprehensive nutrition education?	2	2	☆
NE4	Do all high school students receive sequential and comprehensive nutrition education?	2	2	☆
NE5	Is nutrition education integrated into other subjects beyond health education?	2	2	☆






Triennial Assessment Report: Dare County Schools Triennial Assessment 2025 (6/2025)

District: DARE COUNTY SCHOOLS

NE7	 Does nutrition education address agriculture and the food system?	2	2	★
PEPA1	 Does the district have a written physical education curriculum that is implemented consistently for every grade?	2	2	★
PEPA2	Does the district have a written physical education curriculum that is aligned with national and/or state standards?	2	2	★
PEPA3	How does your physical education program promote a physically active lifestyle?	2	2	★
PEPA4	How many minutes per week of PE does each grade in elementary school receive?	2	2	★
PEPA5	How many minutes per week of PE does each grade in middle school receive?	2	2	★
PEPA6	How many minutes per week of PE does each grade in high school receive?	2	2	★
PEPA7	Are all physical education classes taught by state certified/licensed teachers who are endorsed to teach physical education?	2	2	★
PEPA8	Is ongoing professional development offered every year for PE teachers that is relevant and specific to physical education?	2	2	★
PEPA9	What percentage of students do you estimate do not take PE each year due to exemptions?	2	2	★

Triennial Assessment Report: Dare County Schools Triennial Assessment 2025 (6/2025)

District: DARE COUNTY SCHOOLS





PEPA10	What percentage of students do you estimate do not take PE each year due to substitutions?	2	2	☆
PEPA11	 Are there opportunities for families and community members to engage in physical activity at school?	2	2	☆
PEPA12	 Are there opportunities for all students to engage in physical activity before and after school?	2	2	☆
PEPA13	Is there daily recess for all grades in elementary school?	2	2	☆
PEPA14	 Do teachers provide regular physical activity breaks for students in the classroom?	2	2	☆
PEPA15	Does the district have "joint-use" or "shared-use" agreements?	2	2	☆
PEPA17	 Are teachers encouraged to use physical activity as a reward for students?	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	☆
EW1	 Are there strategies used by the school to support employee wellness?	2	2	☆
EW2	Are school staff encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity behaviors in front of students?	2	2	☆
IC1	Is there an active district-level wellness committee?	2	2	☆
IC2	Is there an active school-level wellness committee?	2	2	☆

Triennial Assessment Report: Dare County Schools Triennial Assessment 2025 (6/2025)

District: DARE COUNTY SCHOOLS

Create Practice Implementation Plan

To ensure full compliance with all components of the Local School Wellness Policy, Dare County Schools is committed to creating implementation plans that are clear, measurable, and sustainable across all schools. These plans will not only align with federal requirements but also promote ongoing collaboration with stakeholders to support the development and evaluation of wellness initiatives district-wide.

		Policy Score	Practice Score	
NES7	 In your district, is it a priority to procure locally produced foods for school meals?	2	1	
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)?	2	1	
NE6	Do school nutrition services staff members use the following methods to collaborate with teachers to reinforce nutrition education lessons taught in the classroom?	2	1	

Update Policies

Dare County Schools is committed to regularly reviewing and updating its Local School Wellness Policy to ensure full alignment with all federal requirements.





Opportunities for Growth

Dare County Schools is committed to regularly reviewing and updating its Local School Wellness Policy and related implementation practices to ensure full compliance with all current federal requirements.

	Policy Score	Practice Score	

Triennial Assessment Report: Dare County Schools Triennial Assessment 2025 (6/2025)

District: DARE COUNTY SCHOOLS


FR11	Does your district regulate foods and beverages served at class parties and other school celebrations in elementary schools?	1	1	
NES10	Are foods or beverages containing caffeine sold at the high school level?	0	0	
NES13	Do teachers or school staff give students food as a reward?	1	1	
PEPA16	What proportion of students walk or bike to school?	1	1	

Conclusion


Dare County Schools is dedicated to creating healthy, supportive environments where all students can thrive. Our recent wellness policy assessment highlights meaningful progress in key areas, including free access to nutritious meals, expanded nutrition education, increased physical activity opportunities, and growing support for staff wellness.


At the same time, we recognize opportunities to strengthen our efforts, particularly in areas such as consistent policy implementation, food marketing practices, and stakeholder engagement. With the continued involvement of families, staff, and community partners, Dare County Schools will build on this momentum to promote lifelong wellness habits and support the academic and success of every student.

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

Triennial Assessment Report: Dare County Schools Triennial Assessment 2025 (6/2025)

District: DARE COUNTY SCHOOLS

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the state or local agency that administers the program or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, [AD-3027](#), found online at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call 866-632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

1. **Mail:**
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Mail Stop 9410
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
2. **Fax:**
(202) 690-7442; or
3. **Email:**
program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.