

Triennial Assessment Report: Windsor Locks 2025 WellSAT Triennial (4/2025)

District: WINDSOR LOCKS

Introduction

Every three years, Windsor Locks Public Schools (WLPS) conducts a comprehensive review of our district's wellness policy and practices to ensure we are supporting the health, well-being, and academic success of all students. This process, called a triennial assessment, helps us evaluate how well our current practices align with our wellness policy and where we can make improvements. Our 2025 assessment was conducted by members of the District Health and Wellness Committee composed of Administration, Food Service leadership, Nurse and EL/ML Coordinators and Health/Physical Education Educators. Following districtwide policy and practice interviews, the survey data collected was input into the WellSAT tool to generate a detailed comparison of our wellness policy from 2022 to 2025 and an examination of how policies are being implemented in daily practice across our schools. The results show that we are making important progress and have identified new opportunities to strengthen our efforts moving forward.

The written policies for Windsor Locks Public Schools have significantly improved in both comprehensiveness and strength between 2022 and 2025. Overall, Windsor Locks Public Schools policy and practice results improved 25% with an additional 8% and 9% increase in either policy or practice, respectively, reflecting clear efforts to enhance the clarity, specificity, and enforceability of wellness policy language. Updates include more explicit references to frequency of nutrition education, strengthened standards for USDA meal compliance, clearer guidance on food and beverage marketing, and measurable expectations for physical activity and wellness promotion. These revisions better align the district's policy with federal and state guidelines and best practices for student health and wellness.

Strong Policies and Aligned Practices

Windsor Locks Public Schools has made significant progress in ensuring that our written wellness policies are strongly aligned with the practices implemented across all schools. As of our 2025 triennial assessment, 29 items received top scores (2/2) in both policy and practice, indicating full compliance with federal wellness policy requirements and consistent implementation districtwide.

Our district's most notable strengths are found in the areas of nutrition education, USDA school meal standards, physical education, and policy transparency. These represent core areas of federal compliance and best practice, including:

Nutrition Education (NE1–NE4): All grade bands now receive sequential, interactive, and standards-aligned nutrition education, a marked improvement from 2022, when these items scored 1/1. Policy and practice were strengthened simultaneously to ensure developmentally appropriate instruction that integrates nutrition concepts across disciplines.

USDA Meal Standards (FR2, FR4, FR7, FR10): Our food service operations meet or exceed USDA requirements, including Smart Snack compliance, access to free drinking water at all times, and annual staff training. These areas maintained high scores from the previous assessment, reflecting long-term consistency and operational excellence.

Physical Education (PEPA1–PEPA3, PEPA12): Our physical education program continues to meet national standards and is delivered by certified educators. Notably, PEPA3 (promoting lifelong physical activity) improved from 1/1 in 2022 to 2/2 in 2025. This gain reflects our district's investment in extended wellness opportunities and enhanced curriculum goals.

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Policy Accessibility and Accountability (FR14–FR18): Our policies are publicly accessible, regularly reviewed, and updated based on assessment findings. The presence of a district health and wellness committee ensures accountability and transparency.

Many of the items now in this "strong policy and aligned practice" category were previously rated lower in the 2022 assessment. In response, Windsor Locks Public Schools worked diligently to strengthen both policy language and implementation fidelity. For example:

Nutrition Education (NE1–NE4) was elevated through curriculum development and integration into other subjects.

Physical Activity Before/After School (PEPA12) was added to the policy and supported by expanded programming.

Promotion of Active Lifestyles (PEPA3) was enhanced through intentional curricular focus and staff modeling (EW2).

		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	☆



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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	☆
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	☆
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	☆


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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	☆
NES7	 In your district, is it a priority to procure locally produced foods for school meals?	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	☆
NES10	Are foods or beverages containing caffeine sold at the high school level?	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	☆
PEPA1	 Does the district have a written physical education curriculum that is implemented consistently for every grade?	2	2	☆

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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	☆
PEPA12	 Are there opportunities for all students to engage in physical activity before and after school?	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	☆

Create Practice Implementation Plan

In our 2025 triennial assessment, several items were identified where Windsor Locks Public Schools has either strong or improved policy language but where practice implementation remains limited or absent. These represent important areas for future growth, particularly as we seek to ensure full compliance with federal wellness policy requirements and close the gap between written policy and day-to-day practice.

To close these gaps, Windsor Locks Public Schools will develop and execute targeted practice implementation plans by December 2025. These plans will include action steps, timelines, and designated responsibilities to ensure follow-through and effectiveness.

1. Prohibiting Food as a Reward (NES13)

Federal relevance: Aligns with USDA Smart Snacks guidance discouraging the use of food as reward.

Next steps:

- Provide resources for educators on alternatives to food-based rewards.

- Update student behavior plans and celebration policies to reflect non-food incentives.

- Communicate policy with families and staff in school handbooks and weekly updates.

Responsible party: Building administrators with support from district wellness team

Timeline: School year rollout fall 2025; full implementation by January 2026

Assessment: Annual staff feedback and classroom walkthroughs

2. Integrating Nutrition into Other Subjects (NE5)

Federal relevance: Supports comprehensive school health models and CDC guidance.

Next steps:

- Identify current curricula that support cross curricular nutrition education.

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Provide interdisciplinary planning tools and sample lessons for integrating nutrition into science, health, and language arts.

Identify grade-level wellness liaisons to support integration.

Responsible party: Curriculum director and wellness team

Timeline: Resource development in fall of 2025; teacher implementation begins 2026

Assessment: Teacher feedback forms, curriculum review

3. Collaboration Between Food Services and Teachers (NE6)

Federal relevance: Promotes a whole-school approach to healthy eating.

Next steps:

Host quarterly collaboration opportunities between food services staff and pe/health teachers.

Introduce "taste tests" in the lunch room incorporating fresh farm to school products.





Responsible party: Director of Food Services and elementary pe/health teachers

Timeline: Meeting schedule commence fall 2025

Assessment: Documentation of meetings, teacher participation, and event feedback

Commitment to Accountability

Each implementation plan will include specific metrics, and progress will be reviewed quarterly by the District Wellness Committee, with updates shared at Board of Education meetings and through family communications.

		Policy Score	Practice Score	
NES13	Do teachers or school staff give students food as a reward?	2	1	
NE5	Is nutrition education integrated into other subjects beyond health education?	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	0	
PEPA16	What proportion of students walk or bike to school?	2	1	

Update Policies

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Our assessment identified several practices that are already taking place in schools but are not yet fully captured in our written policy. For instance, while many of our schools limit marketing of unhealthy food and promote healthy alternatives, the current policy language lacks specific and enforceable language to reflect this. Additionally, we have informal procedures for evaluating and sharing wellness policy progress, but these are not outlined in the policy itself.

Moving forward, WLPS will revise the wellness policy to:

- Include clear language around food marketing, celebration practices, and wellness communications
- Fully incorporate federally required components related to policy leadership, stakeholder engagement, and public updates
- Reflect the practices already embedded in school culture so that our policy accurately supports our actions

In general, the district's practices exceed or align well with written policy language, suggesting a strong culture of wellness that may not have been fully captured in the original 2022 policies. Our assessment identified several areas where Windsor Locks Public Schools are actively implementing wellness practices, yet our written policies do not fully reflect or support these efforts. Strengthening the language in our Local School Wellness Policy (LSWP) is essential to ensure clarity, accountability, and alignment with federal requirements.

One area of focus includes the Physical Education and Physical Activity (PEPA) standards. Specifically, PEPA standards 7, 8, 13, 14, 17, 18, and 19 are addressed in Board Policy 6142.101: Student Nutrition and Physical Activity, which outlines the district's commitment to promoting physical wellness through certified instruction, structured activity opportunities, and supportive practices across all school settings. However, while these practices are taking place consistently—such as using certified physical education teachers (PEPA7), offering professional development for PE staff (PEPA8), providing daily recess (PEPA13), and integrating activity breaks and alternatives to punitive practices (PEPA14, 17, 18, 19)—our current wellness policy lacks explicit language codifying these efforts and/or clear links to policies that do.

Additionally, FR13 (Wellness Committee Stakeholder Representation) received a lower policy score in 2025 compared to 2022, despite continued practice. The updated wellness policy will reinforce stakeholder engagement and clearly identify roles and procedures for inclusive committee participation, ensuring all school and community voices are represented in wellness planning and oversight.

Moving forward, Windsor Locks Public Schools will revise our LSWP to:














- Incorporate clear language for all federally required wellness components, particularly those currently reflected in practice but not policy.
- Reference or integrate Board Policy 6142.101 to ensure coherence and eliminate gaps between written expectations and day-to-day implementation.
- Outline consistent expectations for student physical activity across classrooms and grade levels.
- Formalize processes for stakeholder participation, wellness policy communication, and policy monitoring.

The Wellness Committee, in collaboration with district administrators and curriculum leaders, will lead this policy revision. A draft will be completed by December 2025, with the final policy presented to the Board of Education for approval in early 2026. Implementation success will be monitored using the WellSAT tool, along with regular stakeholder feedback and annual policy reviews to ensure ongoing alignment between wellness goals, policy language, and school practices.

The 2025 policy revision reflects an effort to align written expectations with these strong existing practices.

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Continued alignment will ensure accountability and sustain positive health outcomes.

		Policy Score	Practice Score	
FR13	Which groups are represented on the district-level wellness committee?	1	2	
PEPA7	Are all physical education classes taught by state certified/licensed teachers who are endorsed to teach physical education?	0	2	
PEPA8	Is ongoing professional development offered every year for PE teachers that is relevant and specific to physical education?	0	2	
PEPA13	Is there daily recess for all grades in elementary school?	1	2	
PEPA14	 Do teachers provide regular physical activity breaks for students in the classroom?	1	2	
PEPA15	Does the district have "joint-use" or "shared-use" agreements?	0	2	
PEPA17	 Are teachers encouraged to use physical activity as a reward for students?	1	2	
PEPA18	Do teachers ever use physical activity as a punishment?	0	2	
PEPA19	Do teachers ever withhold physical activity as a classroom management tool?	0	2	
EW1	 Are there strategies used by the school to support employee wellness?	1	2	

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Opportunities for Growth

The 2025 triennial wellness assessment identified several areas where Windsor Locks Public Schools (WLPS) have either minimal policy language, limited practice implementation, or both. These areas represent opportunities to strengthen our commitment to whole-child wellness and meet all federally required components of the Local School Wellness Policy (LSWP).

Key growth areas include:

Physical Education Instructional Minutes (PEPA4, PEPA5, PEPA6): Policy language related to required PE minutes at the elementary, middle, and high school levels has declined since 2022, with current implementation also rated as low. To address this, WLPS will review state standards and best practices to inform grade-level expectations for PE instructional time. The revised policy will include clear language on state standards and expectations.

School-Level Wellness Committees (IC2): While district-level efforts are in place, there is currently no policy or practice supporting school-based wellness committees. Due to the small size of WLPS it has been decided that site-based wellness efforts will be guided by the District Committee, as represented by each school, to increase relevance and engagement with wellness initiatives, ensuring representation from staff, students, and families.











Family and Community Engagement (PEPA11): Though practice in this area is beginning to emerge, there is no policy language encouraging collaboration with families or community organizations. This represents a valuable opportunity to extend wellness beyond the school building and build a shared culture of health. WLPS will explore opportunities to engage in local partnerships and add language to the policy supporting this collaboration.

Staff Wellness and Outreach: Currently, there is no district wide program or policy language related to staff wellness, beyond our EAP program through Anthem. To create a more holistic wellness culture, WLPS will expand employee wellness strategies that promote physical, mental, and emotional well-being. These efforts will be informed by staff surveys and input and aligned with existing health benefits and community resources.

The Wellness Committee, with support from building administrators and the curriculum office, will be responsible for developing both the updated policy language and the practice implementation plans. Draft plans and policy revisions will be completed by June 2026, with implementation beginning in Fall 2026. Success will be measured through follow-up WellSAT assessments, policy adoption, stakeholder feedback, and increased participation in wellness activities across all schools.

	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?	1	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?	1	1	
NE7	 Does nutrition education address agriculture and the food system?	1	1	
PEPA4	How many minutes per week of PE does each grade in elementary school receive?	0	0	
PEPA5	How many minutes per week of PE does each grade in middle school receive?	0	0	
PEPA6	How many minutes per week of PE does each grade in high school receive?	0	0	
PEPA11	 Are there opportunities for families and community members to engage in physical activity at school?	0	1	
IC2	Is there an active school-level wellness committee?	0	0	

Conclusion

The 2025 triennial assessment shows that Windsor Locks Public Schools has made strong progress in creating healthy school environments through improved policies and aligned practices. We've identified clear successes in nutrition, physical education, and meal standards, and we have plans in place to support consistent practice implementation across all schools. Our district is committed to updating our wellness policy to reflect our values and meet federal requirements, while also exploring new ways to support staff

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and family engagement in wellness. With continued collaboration, WLPS will build on these strengths to ensure all students thrive both physically and academically.

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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