

Triennial Assessment Report: Auburn School District Triennial Assessment January 2026 (1/2026)

District: AUBURN

Introduction

Auburn School District is committed to supporting the health and well-being of every student and staff, recognizing that wellness of both is a key foundation for academic success. To ensure we are meeting our goals, we recently completed our 2026 Triennial Wellness Assessment, a comprehensive review required every three years to evaluate our local school wellness policy and how well it is being put into action across our schools.

Assessment Process and Timeline

This WellSAT assessment was begun in January and completed in May 2026. The process involved a detailed review of our district's written wellness policy and a survey of actual practices in our buildings. The evaluation was led by the Wellness Advisory Committee with members from classified administrators, classified staff, certificated administrators and teachers with input from other school administrators and nutrition staff to ensure an accurate picture of wellness in our schools.

Overall Performance and Growth

Overall, Auburn School District continues to demonstrate a strong commitment to student health, with many of our programs meeting or exceeding federal requirements and national best practices.

Strong Alignment: We have successfully aligned our written policies with daily practices in critical areas such as nutrition education, physical education standards, and professional training for our nutrition staff.

Improvements Since 2023: Compared to our 2023 Alliance for a Healthier Generation Healthier Schools Assessment, we have made significant strides. For example, the procurement of local foods for school meals and the communication of Smart Snacks standards have both moved from "under development" or "mostly in place" to being fully implemented with strong policy support.

Future Focus: While we have many successes to celebrate, the 2026 results also highlight specific opportunities to strengthen our written policies and expand healthy practices, such as increasing community involvement and ensuring consistent snack standards in all school venues.

This report serves as a roadmap for the next three years as we continue to work with our staff, families and community to foster a healthy learning environment.

Strong Policies and Aligned Practices

The Auburn School District has demonstrated significant success in meeting its wellness goals, as evidenced by the high number of items categorized under Strong Policies and Aligned Practices in the 2026 WellSAT Scorecard. This section highlights areas where the district possesses both robust written policies and strong implementation of those practices across schools.

Federal Requirements in this Section

Several items in the "Strong Policies and Aligned Practices" category directly correspond to federal requirements for school wellness: Nutrition Education Goals (FR1): The district has established specific goals for nutrition education designed to promote student wellness.

Drinking Water Access (FR4): Free drinking water is available to all students during meal times.

Professional Standards for Nutrition Staff (FR5): All school nutrition directors, managers, and staff meet or exceed the annual continuing education and training hours required by the USDA.

Smart Snacks in Cafeteria (FR7): All a la carte foods and beverages sold in the cafeteria meet the federal Smart Snacks standards. Wellness Policy Leadership (FR14): There is a designated official at each building level responsible for the implementation and compliance of the wellness policy.

Public Access (FR15): The wellness policy is made available to the public.

Improvements from Previous Assessment

A comparison with the 2023 Healthier Schools Assessment reveals that the district has successfully improved several areas that were previously identified as needing development or being only partially implemented:

Procurement of Local Foods (NES7): In the 2023 assessment, prioritizing locally produced foods for school meals was rated as "Mostly in place". By 2026, this has moved into the "Strong Policies and Aligned Practices" section with a perfect score (2 for policy, 2 for practice), indicating a shift from a general practice to a codified, fully implemented policy.

Access to Smart Snacks Standards (NES8): Previously, ensuring staff knew where to access USDA Smart Snacks standards (NS-11) was listed as "Under development" in 2023. This is now a "Strong" area, showing that the district has effectively communicated these standards to relevant personnel.


Comprehensive Nutrition Education (NE1, NE2, NE3): While the district's previous assessments focused on general accessibility of our meal programs, the 2026 scorecard shows that sequential and comprehensive nutrition education for elementary and middle school students is supported by strong policy and practice.

Physical Education Standards (PEPA1, PEPA2, PEPA7): The district's physical education program ensures a written curriculum is implemented consistently, aligned with state/national standards, and taught by certified teachers—all scoring perfectly in both policy and practice. The district also prioritizes physical activity by providing opportunities for students, families, and community members to engage in physical activity in our schools.

Classroom Management Practices (PEPA18, PEPA19): The district has successfully implemented policies that prohibit using physical activity as punishment or withholding it as a management tool, moving these into the "Strong" category.











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		Policy Score	Practice Score	
FR1	Does the district have specific goals for nutrition education designed to promote student wellness?	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	☆
FR7	Do all a la carte foods and beverages sold in the cafeteria meet Smart Snacks standards?	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	☆
NES1	Does the district offer breakfast every day to all students?	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	☆
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	☆
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	
PEPA7	Are all physical education classes taught by state certified/licensed teachers who are endorsed to teach physical education?	2	2	
PEPA9	What percentage of students do you estimate do not take PE each year due to exemptions?	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	
PEPA15	Does the district have "joint-use" or "shared-use" agreements?	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	

Create Practice Implementation Plan

The Create Practice Implementation Plan section of the 2026 WellSAT Scorecard highlights areas where the Auburn School District has established strong written policies but is currently experiencing gaps in practical implementation or compliance.

Federal Requirements in this Section

The following items in this section are mandated federal requirements for school wellness:

FR6: Ensuring all competitive foods and beverages sold to students during the school day meet USDA Smart Snacks standards (Policy: 2, Practice: 1).

FR8: Ensuring all foods and beverages sold in vending machines meet Smart Snack standards (Policy: 2, Practice: 1).


FR9: Ensuring all foods and beverages sold in school stores meet Smart Snack standards (Policy: 2, Practice: 0).

FR10: Ensuring fundraisers selling food or beverages for consumption during the school day meet Smart Snacks standards (Policy: 2, Practice: 0).

Plan for Improving Implementation









These federal requirements for school wellness involve and impact many organizations across the districts. The Wellness Advisory Committee will provide responsible staff members and district organizations with information about Smart Snacks and the link to the USDA Smart Snacks Calculator annually. Child Nutrition Administrators may provide additional support as requested.

Some additional areas related to the use of food as a reward and some curriculum decisions concerning nutrition education and physical education are addressed in our policy. Our curriculum meets all federal and state requirements; any discrepancies with WellSAT recommendations will be discussed with stakeholders during the Wellness Policy update in SY 26-27.

		Policy Score	Practice Score	
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	1	

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FR8	Do all foods and beverages sold in vending machines meet Smart Snack standards?	2	1	
FR9	Do all foods and beverages sold in school stores during the school day meet Smart Snack standards?	2	0	
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	0	
NES13	Do teachers or school staff give students food as a reward?	2	0	
NE4	Do all high school students receive sequential and comprehensive nutrition education?	2	1	
PEPA4	How many minutes per week of PE does each grade in elementary school receive?	2	0	
PEPA5	How many minutes per week of PE does each grade in middle school receive?	2	1	
PEPA6	How many minutes per week of PE does each grade in high school receive?	2	0	

Update Policies

Based on the 2026 WellSAT Scorecard and the 2023 Healthier Schools Assessment, the Auburn School District has identified several areas where current practices are strong or emerging, but the written wellness policy requires updates to ensure full alignment and compliance with federal standards.

Federal Requirements in this Section

The "Update Policies" section identifies three specific federal requirements where the district is fully implementing the required practices but lacks strong or specific language in the written policy:

Standards for Reimbursable Meals (FR2): While the district's meals fully meet federal standards (Practice Score: 2), the policy language is currently rated as "weak" (Policy Score: 1).

Food and Beverage Marketing (FR12): The district ensures that foods marketed on campus meet Smart Snacks criteria in practice, but the policy language needs strengthening to codify these restrictions.

Triennial Assessment Evaluation (FR16): The district successfully evaluates its wellness policy implementation every three years, but the written policy does not sufficiently detail this requirement.

Priorities for the District

In addition to federal mandates, several items that impact student health have improved since the 2023 assessment. Adding or strengthening policy language to support these positive practices would be beneficial and will be considered by the Wellness Advisory Committee. These include:

Maximizing Participation in Meal Programs (NES4): In 2023, strategies to maximize breakfast and lunch participation were rated as "Mostly in place". In 2026, these are fully implemented (Practice Score: 2), but there is currently no language in the written policy (Policy Score: 0).

Daily Recess (PEPA13): Ensuring daily recess for all elementary grades is a fully implemented practice; stronger policy language would protect this time for students.

District Wellness Committee (IC1): The district maintains an active committee (Practice Score: 2), but the policy should be updated to formally define its role and meeting frequency.

Improving Partially Implemented Practices












Several items were identified as having no policy language and only being partially implemented (Practice Score: 1). The Wellness Committee will discuss and evaluate with stakeholders. These include:

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Marketing Strategies for Healthy Choices (NES5)
 Agriculture and Food Systems (NE7)
 Physical Activity as a Reward (PEPA17)
 Safe Routes to School (PEPA16)

The Wellness Committee in collaboration with stakeholders will draft new or updated policy language as needed during the Wellness Policy Update during SY 26-27.

		Policy Score	Practice Score	
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?	1	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?	1	2	
FR16	Is wellness policy implementation evaluated every three years?	1	2	
NES4	Does your school use strategies to maximize participation in the school breakfast program and/or school lunch program?	0	2	
NE5	Is nutrition education integrated into other subjects beyond health education?	0	2	
PEPA3	How does your physical education program promote a physically active lifestyle?	1	2	
PEPA8	Is ongoing professional development offered every year for PE teachers that is relevant and specific to physical education?	1	2	
PEPA10	What percentage of students do you estimate do not take PE each year due to substitutions?	0	2	
PEPA13	Is there daily recess for all grades in elementary school?	1	2	
PEPA16	What proportion of students walk or bike to school?	0	2	
IC1	Is there an active district-level wellness committee?	1	2	

Opportunities for Growth

The Opportunities for Growth section of the 2026 WellSAT Scorecard identifies critical areas where the Auburn School District has either not addressed a topic in policy or practice or has only done so in a very limited way (scoring 0 or 1). This section represents the district's primary roadmap for long-term improvement in student and staff wellness.

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Federal Requirements in this Section

Three key federal requirements are currently identified as opportunities for growth:

FR11 (Foods & Beverages at Elementary School Celebrations): This requires that foods and beverages that may be served at class parties and other school celebrations in elementary schools be defined in the Wellness Policy.














FR13 (Wellness Committee Participation): This requirement focuses on the active participation of various stakeholders in the development and implementation of the wellness policy. It is currently minimally addressed in policy, and greater representation and diversity is needed.

FR17 (Communication of Triennial Assessment to the Public): The requirements for informing the public are not included in the current policy.

Policy language addressing these federal requirements will be drafted by the Wellness Committee during the Wellness Policy Update during SY 26-27.



The Wellness Committee will discuss and evaluate other opportunities for growth with stakeholders and draft policy language if needed.

Work on the Wellness Policy Update is anticipated to begin in October 2026, with the updated draft ready for the approval process in Spring 2027. After School Board approval, the updated policy will be communicated through district channels and posted on the Wellness webpage and with the School Board Policies. Success will be measured by achieving improved scores on the next Triennial Assessment.

		Policy Score	Practice Score	
FR11	Does your district regulate foods and beverages served at class parties and other school celebrations in elementary schools?	0	0	
FR13	Which groups are represented on the district-level wellness committee?	1	1	
FR17	What is included in the triennial assessment report to the public?	0	0	
NES5	Are marketing strategies used to promote healthy food and beverage choices in school?	0	1	
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?	1	1	
NES10	Are foods or beverages containing caffeine sold at the high school level?	0	0	
NE6	Do school nutrition services staff members use the following methods to collaborate with teachers to reinforce nutrition education lessons taught in the classroom?	1	1	
NE7	 Does nutrition education address agriculture and the food system?	0	1	
PEPA14	 Do teachers provide regular physical activity breaks for students in the classroom?	1	1	
PEPA17	 Are teachers encouraged to use physical activity as a reward for students?	0	1	
EW1	 Are there strategies used by the school to support employee wellness?	1	1	

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EW2	Are school staff encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity behaviors in front of students?	0	0	
IC2	Is there an active school-level wellness committee?	0	0	

Conclusion

The 2026 Triennial Wellness Assessment shows that the Auburn School District is making significant progress in creating a healthy environment for all students. By comparing our current practices with our written policies, we have identified clear successes and a roadmap for future improvements.

Our Successes

The district is currently meeting several key federal requirements with strong policies and implementation. We are excelling in providing:

Healthy Meals: Our cafeterias offer a variety of fruits and vegetables, and our staff meets high professional training standards.

Physical Education: Our PE classes are taught by licensed teachers using a high-quality, sequential curriculum.

Healthy Choices: We ensure that students have access to free drinking water and that cafeteria snacks meet strict nutritional standards.

Our Goals for Growth

While we have a strong foundation, we are committed to improving in the following areas over the next three years:

Consistency Across Schools: We are working to ensure that snacks sold in vending machines and school stores meet the same high standards as our cafeteria meals.

Policy Updates: We will update our Wellness Policy and Procedures to better reflect the great work we are already doing..

Community Involvement: A top priority is making our wellness committee more inclusive by inviting more parents, students, and community members to help shape our health goals.

Moving Forward

The Auburn School District remains dedicated to the health and well-being of every student and staff. We invite our families and community members to join us in this ongoing effort to build a healthier future for our children.

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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