

Menu of Actions



Instructions: Use this tool to take action in your Local Education Agency (“LEA”) and improve your school wellness environment. The Menu of Actions is organized into three sections. Each section includes the relevant USDA regulations (see yellow boxes) as well as specific actions and resources (see teal tables) to help you do the following:

1. Make changes to your Local School Wellness Policy ☰
2. Focus on required wellness policy processes 📅
3. Launch or enhance school wellness activities 🚀

Depending on your LEA’s needs and priorities, you may choose to select actions in one or more categories. If you are not currently meeting all USDA requirements, we recommend starting with actions that will bring your LEA into compliance.



Make Changes to Your Local School Wellness Policy

Take action in this area if you scored a “0” on any items included in the Federal Regulations section of the WellSAT Policy assessment. This is also a great place to start if you feel that your current policy is unrealistic, missing important initiatives, or if your WellSAT assessment highlighted best practice areas you want to target.

USDA requires that local school wellness policies (LWPs) include:

- ☐ Specific goals for nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, and other school-based activities designed to promote student wellness.
- ☐ Standards and nutrition guidelines for all foods/beverages available on campus during the school day that are consistent with Federal Regulations for school meals and Smart Snacks in Schools nutrition standards.
- ☐ Specification that marketing/advertising is only allowed for foods and beverages that meet federal regulations or Smart Snack standards.
- ☐ Designation of school official(s) who will ensure LWP compliance.
- ☐ Information on LEA’s process for involving stakeholders to review and update the LWP.

Action	Resources
Add or Remove Policy Items: ➤ <i>Meet USDA requirements.</i> ➤ <i>Adjust items to reflect your LEA’s priorities.</i> ➤ <i>Incorporate best practice areas identified in WellSAT.</i> 	• The Rudd Center’s model policy was developed to accompany the WellSat Policy assessment. Start here! • Alliance for a Healthier Generation’s Model Wellness Policy provides recommended language based on a variety of best practices. Download this model and leverage the language provided to incorporate your wellness priorities. • Change Lab’s Model Policy is a simple example that demonstrates how to meet compliance, plus suggestions to address marketing more comprehensively
Improve Language or Clarify Your Objectives 	• Use suggested language in the WellSAT Policy assessment to strengthen your objectives. • Minnesota Department of Health’s SMART Objectives resource can be used to ensure the goals included in your policy are meaningful and impactful.
Support Farm to School Initiatives 	• Use the Washington State Department of Agriculture’s (WSDA) webpage resources to update your policy to support local purchasing, school gardens, and other farm to school activities.

Focus on Required Wellness Policy Processes

Take action in this area if you are NOT currently doing one of these required LWP related actions. You could also select actions from this section if 1) your triennial assessment is coming due, 2) you want to increase public awareness, or 3) you want to focus on strengthening your wellness committee.

USDA Requires that LEAs:

- ☐ Make LWP available to the public.
- ☐ Invite stakeholders (including parents, students, community members, staff, etc.) to participate in the development, review, update, and implementation of LWP.
- ☐ Designate one or more school officials with the authority to ensure wellness policy compliance at each school under LEA's jurisdiction.
- ☐ Conduct a triennial assessment which determines SFA compliance with LWP, the extent to which LWP aligns with model policies, and progress toward goals in LWP.
- ☐ Share triennial assessment and results with the public.

Action	Resources
Wellness Leadership: Find Champions + Form a Committee One of most impactful ways to reinvigorate your district's wellness efforts is to focus on finding community champions and strengthening your wellness committee efforts. Involving a variety of stakeholders helps ensure that your policy and practices reflect district needs and priorities. It also spreads the work and responsibilities among members. 	• Increase awareness & invite stakeholders into the process: ○ Download communication tools from USDA's Wellness Policy Outreach Kit. This site includes template letters to the principal, flyers, newspaper articles, sample presentations and easy-to-use social media posts. ○ Use the Iowa Department of Education's Outreach kit, which features templates, emails, trainings, videos, and recruiting materials. ○ Maryland State Department of Education's Parent Workshop is a great way to inform and engage families in LWP work. Plug-and-play materials include a facilitation guide, handout, and PowerPoint presentation. • Launch or streamline your wellness committee with Alliance for a Healthier Generation's School Wellness Committee Toolkit. ○ First, determine who should be at the table. Pages 7-13 provide information on how to start and organize your wellness committee. ○ Plan and run effective meetings. Appendix A includes a helpful checklist for facilitating effective and efficient wellness committee meetings.

**Public Communication:
Keep Your Community
Informed**

Develop or enhance a wellness webpage featuring LWP updates, committee information, and your triennial assessment results. Promote your wellness policy work and keep your community updated by instituting a strong communication plan.



- Use [Alliance For a Healthier Generations' Public Update Guide](#) to develop a webpage for your local wellness policy that meets USDA's public update requirements.
- Build broader support for your local wellness program through district-wide messaging, newsletters, and more! Utilize [Alliance for a Healthier Generation's Public Communication Checklist](#) to gain strategies for keeping the public updated and crafting

**The Triennial Assessment:
Monitoring & Implementing
Your Policy**

No matter how great your policy is, your wellness efforts only matter if your district is **doing what you have committed to doing**. Use resources in this section to assess your LEA's progress and satisfy the required triennial assessment requirement.



- The [WellSat Practice \(Step 2 of the WellSAT Assessment\)](#) can help you understand where your policy isn't in compliance. Use your completed WellSAT Policy, the Practice assessment, and WellSAT reflection questions to complete your triennial assessment.
- Iowa Department of Education's [Triennial Assessment Resource](#) provides a simple review of what is required. Use their [Local School Wellness Policy Progress Report](#), a simple tool that can be used to assess progress toward wellness objectives.
- Developed by ICN and USDA, the [Resource to Sustain and Strengthen Local Wellness Initiatives](#) includes step-by-step instructions for conducting evaluations, interpreting results, and communicating these results to the public.
- If you have a large district with many schools, consider using free survey platforms to aggregate responses across the school district. For example, see these [survey responses](#) from Lake Stevens School District which were used to meet part of their triennial assessment.

Launch or Enhance Wellness Activities

USDA requires that local school wellness policies (LWPs) include:

- ☐ Specific goals for nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, and other school-based activities designed to promote student wellness. *(Note: USDA doesn't specify what these goals are and how they are implemented. That is left up to the LEA!)*
- ☐ Nutrition guidelines that are consistent with federal rules for school meals and Smart Snack Standards for all food sold on school campus.
- ☐ Standards for all food and beverages offered (but not sold) to students during the day.
- ☐ Restrictions on marketing of foods/beverages that don't meet Smart Snacks standards.

Remember, what you include in your LWP is a formal commitment. Use actions and resources from this section to follow through on these commitments. This could mean providing training or materials to support educators and staff who carry out parts of your wellness policy. Additionally, use this section to 1) initiate or expand on wellness initiatives that your community wants to see prioritized, or 2) leverage resources in this section to try something new. Work with administrators or teachers to get buy-in or test feasibility before amending your policy.

Action	Resources
Nutrition Education: Focus on Learning and Messaging Nutrition education can take place throughout the school day in the classroom, the cafeteria, school gardens, and more. Students are learning every step of the way! Explore these resources and consider whether there are specific practices you want to add to your policy. (For help with policy wording, refer to model policies in section 1 above). 	• Increase nutrition education in the classroom. ○ Ensure that your district is meeting WA's required Health & Physical Education Learning Standards. ○ Incorporate nutrition into subject-based curriculum such as science, language arts, and history. See our Nutrition Education Menu of Actions for links to lessons and more. • Consider nutrition messaging in the cafeteria. ○ Use USDA posters, labels, or signage to show how menu items contribute to a balanced meal. ○ Incorporate taste tests into your process with Team Nutrition's Ingredients for a Successful Taste Test Event and Taste Testing Resources. Show students their opinions matter and provide the learning experience of trying a new food. • Highlight and educate about local foods. ○ Plan to celebrate National Farm to School Month and Taste Washington Day each October. ○ Participate in Harvest of the Month. Visit OSPI's Farm to School or Farm to CACFP webpages for the current <i>Harvest of the Month</i> calendar and fact sheets.

School Nutrition Environment: *Support Healthful Foods on Campus*

The benefits of a strong school nutrition environment are multifold. By ensuring that foods available on campus are nutrient-dense, students get the physical benefit of consuming healthy foods.

More than that, **eating is a learning opportunity.**

Students start to internalize what a balanced meal looks like. They develop preferences and habits as they learn about and taste new foods. These learnings can translate into long term attitudes about food and life-long eating behaviors.

Choosing actions in this area could mean improving meal quality, developing policies on school celebrations and incentives, or simply ensuring that your non-meal program foods are up to Smart Snacks Standards.



- **Use resources linked on [USDA's Smart Snacks page](#) to ensure that all foods sold on campus during the school day meet this requirement.**
 - Consider how you might use the [Smart Snacks Product Calculator](#) to support your triennial assessment monitoring efforts.
- **Consider your lunchroom set-up and strategies to cultivate a positive lunchroom culture.** Use the [Meal Appeal Self-Assessment tool](#) developed by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction to identify improvement areas.
- **Focus on local, quality, and/or scratch-made meals.**
 - Consider a policy statement such as "X percent of produce purchased and served will be locally grown." See Page 2 for more local food language suggestions.
 - Use [Montana Team Nutrition's Roadmap to Building Quality School Meals](#) to assess your meal program quality in 5 categories. Choose one or more of these categories to target in your policy and implementation activities.
 - Use USDA's [tips for salad bars](#) to ensure you are adhering to best practices. Consider applying for Chef Ann Foundation's [Salad Bars to Schools Grant](#).
 - Check out [OSPI's Recipe Development Training](#) for guidance on developing tasty scratch-made recipes.
- **Offer non-food rewards.** Consider your LEA's rules, if any, around food at celebrations, family events, or as classroom incentives.
 - Add language to your policy prohibiting or limiting the use of food as a reward or withholding food as punishment. Use suggested language from the WellSAT.
 - Get ideas about non-food rewards using [Alliance for a Healthier Generation's Non-Food Rewards resource](#).
- **Expand access to drinking water** using resources and ideas from [CDC's Water Access In Schools Toolkit](#).
- **Skim through [Action for Healthy Kid's School Environment webpage](#)** for a variety of resources for improving the school environment, from fundraising ideas to promoting walking to school!

Physical Education & Physical Activity: *Make Movement the Norm*

Actions focused on enhancing physical education and physical activity throughout the school day can instill lifelong habits in your students. While USDA requires that LEAs set physical activity and physical education goals, each LEA defines those goals.

Bolster your policy's requirements and share resources to help your LEA implement physical activity related activities.



- **Consider physical education requirements.**
 - Review [Washington's Physical Education \(PE\) Learning Standards](#) and ensure your district is meeting them.
 - Use [SHAPE America's PE resources](#), which include posters, a guidebook on how PE teachers can provide health education, and more.
 - Define your district's requirements for weekly minutes of physical activity for your students.
- **Encourage movement breaks throughout the school day.** Get simple ideas for how your LEA can support daily movement from [Action for Healthy Kids \(AFHK\) Movement in the Classroom Tip Sheet](#).
 - Share specific tools from the [AFHK Resource Library](#) with teachers, including videos for brain breaks, active learning opportunities, and more.
- **Ensure adequate recess time** and consider stipulating that recess can't be withheld as a punishment in your district. Find healthy alternatives on this [AFHK webpage](#).
- **Active Celebrations** can promote a healthy lifestyle. Consider your district's policy on birthdays and family events. Rather than cakes or cookies, encourage teachers to implement [these active celebration ideas](#) from AFHK.
- **Incorporate physical activity before and after school.** Consider encouraging active transportation or clubs using the resources linked on the [Alliance for Healthier Generation's resource page](#).
- **Encourage community-wide physical activity through joint agreements.** Use [this page from AFHK](#) to explore what it can look like to make gyms and exercise equipment available for use before or after school.
- **Host a 5k or walkathon as a school fundraiser.** This can be a great alternative to fundraisers that sell sweet treats. [This page from AFHK](#) has some great ideas!

Other Wellness Priorities: *Staff Wellness*

Focus on staff wellness to support your employees while also helping them model positive behaviors for students.



- Consider adding strategies for supporting employee wellness to your policy. [CDC's Employee Wellness Guide](#) provides guidance on how to launch staff wellness programs.
- [Montana's School Employee Wellness Policy page](#) includes sample language and examples of staff wellness initiatives.
- Encourage staff to model healthy behaviors. Students learn through observation.