

Triennial Assessment Report: Side By Side (3/2025)

District: NORWALK

Introduction

For our first Triennial Assessment, completed on April 10, 2025, Side by Side's school wellness policy scored well compared to federal compliance. The members involved in the assessment were: the operations/facilities coordinator, physical education teacher, assistant director, the NPS Wellness Chairperson and food services staff.

We found some of the federal policies difficult to capture due to being a charter school of our size population. The committee will work toward updating our policy to be more in line with the federal.

Strong Policies and Aligned Practices


Side by Side Charter School is a satellite school to the Norwalk Public School's meal programs. Therefore, we meets regularly with the director of the NPS and food services staff to ensure we are all in alignment with any new guidelines and/or procedures. We also work collaboratively in developing new strategies for encouraging student participation in our school breakfast program--a vital source of fueling the brain and body for learning.

		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	☆
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	☆
FR11	Does your district regulate foods and beverages served at class parties and other school celebrations in elementary schools?	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	☆
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	☆
NES1	Does the district offer breakfast every day to all students?	2	2	☆
NES3	Does your school or district provide information to families about eligibility for free or reduced-price meals?	2	2	☆
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	☆

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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	☆
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?	2	2	☆
NES13	Do teachers or school staff give students food as a reward?	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	☆
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	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	☆


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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	☆
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	☆
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	☆







Create Practice Implementation Plan

Our goal will be to have an updated policy, fully accessible on our school website by the start of the upcoming school year, 2025-2026. Additionally, the committee will meet 3 times or more throughout the school year to ensure that our practices are in line with our policy.

		Policy Score	Practice Score	
FR15	How is the wellness policy made available to the public?	2	1	

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NES7	 In your district, is it a priority to procure locally produced foods for school meals?	2	1	
PEPA4	How many minutes per week of PE does each grade in elementary school receive?	2	1	
PEPA5	How many minutes per week of PE does each grade in middle school receive?	2	0	
PEPA11	 Are there opportunities for families and community members to engage in physical activity at school?	2	1	

Update Policies

In collaboration with the director of the NPS Wellness Program and committee members, SBS will update the wellness policy as needed to be in accordance with the Federal and/or State guidelines. The schools' Board of Directors will be responsible for approving and posting all new policy.

SBS will implement additional "wellness" time during school sponsored meetings.

		Policy Score	Practice Score	
EW1	 Are there strategies used by the school to support employee wellness?	1	2	
EW2	Are school staff encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity behaviors in front of students?	1	2	





Opportunities for Growth

The members of the Wellness committee: the operations/facilities coordinator, physical education teacher, assistant director, the NPS Wellness Chairperson and food services staff will meet 3 times/year to review,

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update and implement any changes or practices to the policy. The policy will be posted by the start of the upcoming school year, 2025-2026 and updated accordingly.

		Policy Score	Practice Score	
FR13	Which groups are represented on the district-level wellness committee?	1	1	
NE7	 Does nutrition education address agriculture and the food system?	0	1	
IC2	Is there an active school-level wellness committee?	1	1	

Conclusion

Side by Side will continue to develop and coach students and staff alike for long-term health and wellness.

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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