



# CHECKLIST FOR IMPROVING YOUR SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICY

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An effective policy is tailored to a school's individual needs, goals, and resources. Because of the unparalleled access schools have to children, effective wellness policies have the potential to help reverse the epidemic of childhood obesity and instill healthy eating and physical activity as lifelong habits. Please use this introductory checklist to identify gaps in your school's wellness policy.

## Step 1: Find your school's wellness policy

If your school does not have a wellness policy, please refer to *Healthy Schools, Healthy Communities Project's Workbook for Developing a Local School Wellness Policy* ("Healthy Schools Workbook").

## Step 2: Review your school's wellness policy

Use the checklist to evaluate the strength and comprehensiveness of your school's policy. Identify key provisions that are missing in the "not mentioned" column. Check "Included But Weak" if the provision uses words such as "encourage", "try to", "should" or "make an effort". "Strong Language" includes specific directives and words like "must", "shall" or "will".

## Step 3: Update your school's wellness policy

If you identify key sections that are missing from your school wellness policy, please refer to *Healthy Schools Workbook*. If you have sections that are weak, please refer to Public Health Law Center's *Improving Your School Wellness Policy*.

<b>Does your Wellness Policy have strong language?<sup>1</sup></b> <small>*Denotes current state or federal requirement **Denotes proposed federal reauthorization requirement</small>	Not Mentioned	Included But Weak	Strong Language
<b>Nutrition guidelines for all food available on school campuses *</b>			
1. Does the policy have <i>specific</i> nutrition requirements for school breakfasts?			
2. Does the policy have <i>specific</i> nutrition requirements for school lunch?			
3. Does the policy have <i>specific</i> nutrition requirements for competitive foods (foods available in vending machine, à la carte, school stores, and fundraising items)?			
4. Does the policy have <i>specific</i> "food in the classroom" requirements (snacks, classroom celebrations, birthdays, etc.)?			
5. Does the policy have <i>specific</i> nutrition requirements for after-school programs?			
<b>Nutrition education goals *</b>			
1. Does the policy have <i>specific</i> nutrition education standards (hours of instruction, curriculum, etc.)?			
2. Does the policy require teacher certification or training in nutrition education?			

Does your wellness policy have strong language?	Not Mentioned	Included But Weak	Strong Language
<b>Physical Activity Goals *</b>			
1. Does the policy have <i>specific</i> physical education requirements (hours and types of instruction, graduation requirements, etc.)?			
2. Does the policy have <i>specific</i> requirements for physical activity in the classroom?			
3. Does the policy have <i>specific</i> recess time requirements?			
4. Does the policy have <i>specific</i> school transportation (walking, biking, school bus, and school patrol) requirements?			
5. Does the policy have <i>specific</i> requirements for physical activity for before-school and after-school programs?			
<b>Accountability</b>			
1. Does the policy put someone in charge to oversee implementation and ensure compliance?*			
2. Does the policy require the school district to measure and report on implementation of the policy? **			
a. Does the policy require a report on compliance? **			
b. Does the policy require a comparison between the school district's policy and a model policy? **			
c. Does the policy require a report on the school's progress toward attaining the policy goals? *			
3. Does the policy allow for necessary revisions of the policy?			
4. Does the policy have a means for measuring success? *			
<b>School wellness committee</b>			
1. Does the committee include parents, students, school board members and school administrators, school food authority representation, and other members of the public?			
2. Does it require the committee to review the policy and update it every two years?			
<b>Public involvement *</b>			
1. Does the policy provide for public (including parents, students, and others in the community) involvement in the development and periodic review of the policy? **			
2. Does the policy require the public be informed and updated about the content and implementation of the policy? **			
<b>Funding</b>			
Does the policy identify areas that need funding and ways to obtain funding?			



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