

**Triennial Assessment Report: North Stonington Triennial Assessment
(12/2025)
District: NORTH STONINGTON**

Introduction

North Stonington Public Schools conducted a Triennial Wellness Assessment to review how well our district’s policies and daily practices support student health, nutrition, and physical activity. This assessment ensures that NSPS continues to meet federal requirements, reflect national best practices, and uphold our district commitment to the whole child.

This year’s results show that NSPS is largely aligned with federal guidelines and continues to make steady progress compared to our previous review. Across the district, we have strengthened our work in nutrition education, healthy food access, and opportunities for movement throughout the school day. The assessment also highlighted a few key areas for continued growth, which will guide our priorities over the next three years. In 2025, the Board Wellness Policy was updated from its 2014 version. The revised policy includes language on free and reduced lunch, marketing of food items, and ensures compliance with all federal and state regulations.

To complete this process, NSPS convened the District Wellness Committee, which included administrators, teachers, school nurses, food service staff, families, and community partners. Together, the team reviewed district policies, school-level practices, menu and nutrition data, health programming, and stakeholder input. The work took place in the Spring of 2025.

Strong Policies and Aligned Practices

In this section, NSPS demonstrated strong alignment with the federal requirements, including NSPS’s efforts to make changes to provide access to nutritious meals, meet USDA Smart Snack standards, offer regular opportunities for physical activity, and engage families and community members.

NSPS expanded classroom movement opportunities by adding a morning recess time for elementary school students. Opportunities for students’ physical activity have increased with the addition of grade six to middle school sports. A variety of recess equipment has been purchased for middle school students. Time for grade-level team activities with outdoor and exercise elements has been increased. All seventh and eighth-grade students now participate in a dedicated health education class. Collaboration between food services and the central office has increased. These renewed partnerships will hopefully improve menus and add more appealing, healthy options for students. At the elementary level, this includes a student choice day. However, there is still more work to be done in consistently providing fresh, nutritious meals with locally sourced produce on a consistent basis.

		Policy Score	Practice Score	
FR1	Does the district have specific goals for nutrition education designed to promote student wellness?	2	2	☆

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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	☆
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	☆
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	☆
FR13	Which groups are represented on the district-level wellness committee?	2	2	☆
FR15	How is the wellness policy made available to the public?	2	2	☆

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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	☆
NES2	Does your school take steps to address feeding students with unpaid meal balances without stigmatizing them?	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	☆
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	☆
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	☆
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	☆

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NES12	Do all foods or beverages SOLD (not served) 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	☆
NE4	Do all high school students receive sequential and comprehensive nutrition education?	2	2	☆
NE5	Is nutrition education integrated into other subjects beyond health education?	2	2	☆
NE7	 Does nutrition education address agriculture and the food system?	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	☆
PEPA7	Are all physical education classes taught by state certified/licensed teachers who are endorsed to teach physical education?	2	2	☆

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PEPA9	What percentage of students do you estimate do not take PE each year due to exemptions?	2	2	☆
PEPA10	What percentage of students do you estimate do not take PE each year due to substitutions?	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	☆
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	☆
PEPA15	Does the district have "joint-use" or "shared-use" agreements?	2	2	☆
PEPA16	What proportion of students walk or bike to school?	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	☆
EW1	 Are there strategies used by the school to support employee wellness?	2	2	☆
IC1	Is there an active district-level wellness committee?	2	2	☆

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IC2	Is there an active school-level wellness committee?	2	2	★
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Create Practice Implementation Plan











To strengthen implementation across all identified wellness areas, NSPS will develop targeted practice implementation plans that address healthy classroom celebrations, building-level wellness leadership, food marketing, farm-to-school priorities, Smart Snack fundraiser requirements, non-food rewards, nutrition education collaboration, consistent PE curriculum use, required PE minutes, annual PE professional development, and staff modeling of healthy behaviors. The plan will outline specific steps, communication expectations, needed resources, and procedures for building-wide consistency. Improvement efforts will focus on increasing clarity, strengthening communication to staff and families, and creating routine structures that reinforce healthy nutrition and physical activity practices districtwide.

The District Wellness Committee will share responsibility for creating these implementation plans. The Director of Instruction and Learning, in collaboration with the Business Manager, will oversee alignment, monitor progress, and ensure all required components meet state and federal expectations.

The timeline for this work will follow a clear two-step process: all practice implementation plans will be drafted by Spring 2026, with documented efforts occurring the following school year. Success will be assessed through annual wellness committee reviews, staff feedback, cafeteria observations, analysis of PE schedules, and evidence of reduced policy violations. Improved consistency across schools, increased staff awareness, and clearer communication with families will serve as indicators that the implementation strategies have been effective.

		Policy Score	Practice Score	
FR11	Does your district regulate foods and beverages served at class parties and other school celebrations in elementary schools?	2	1	
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	1	
NES5	Are marketing strategies used to promote healthy food and beverage choices in school?	2	1	
NES7	 In your district, is it a priority to procure locally produced foods for school meals?	2	1	

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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	1	
NES13	Do teachers or school staff give students food as a reward?	2	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?	2	0	
PEPA1	 Does the district have a written physical education curriculum that is implemented consistently for every grade?	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	
PEPA8	Is ongoing professional development offered every year for PE teachers that is relevant and specific to physical education?	2	1	
EW2	Are school staff encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity behaviors in front of students?	2	1	

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NSPS continues to demonstrate strong alignment with federal wellness requirements and best practices, with consistent standards and improved communication around nutrition and physical activity. Collaboration among administrators, School Nutrition Services, PE staff, and the District Wellness Committee has strengthened practices and increased consistency since the last assessment. This resulted in BOE adoption of a new Wellness Policy that meets all federal requirements. The updated policy reflects steady progress in supporting the whole child through healthier celebrations, expanded nutrition education, and enhanced opportunities for physical activity.

Opportunities for Growth

Policy meets all federal requirements

Conclusion

North Stonington Public Schools remain committed to the well-being of our students, staff, and families. The updated report shows that North Stonington Public Schools is making steady, meaningful progress in meeting its wellness goals. Our policies and practices are well-aligned with federal requirements and we continue to strengthen nutrition services, physical activity opportunities, and overall wellness supports for students.

This review also highlighted areas where NSPS has grown since the last assessment—such as expanded movement opportunities, improved monitoring of Smart Snacks standards, and stronger communication with families. We also identified a few priorities for continued improvement, which will guide our work over the next three years.

NSPS remains committed to promoting the health, safety, and well-being of all students. We appreciate the support of families and community members as we work together to create a healthy and positive learning environment for every child.

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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