

Essex County Public Schools

2020-2021 Triennial Assessment
First Edition



OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

In accordance with the *Final Rule* of the federal Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 and the Virginia Administrative Code: Title 8. Education, Agency 20. State Board of Education, Chapter 740 *Final Rule*, Essex County Public Schools (ECPS) presents the first triennial report. The triennial report outlines updates on the progress and implementation of our wellness policy and wellness initiatives in ECPS and provides the required documentation of actions, steps, and information as outlined in the *Final Rule*. *The schools included in this Triennial Assessment are: Tappahannock Elementary School, Essex Intermediate School, and Essex High School.*

AUTHORITY & RESPONSIBILITY DESIGNEE(S)

Responsibility of creating a culture of well-being and supporting the *whole child* is shared among all students, parents, staff, departments, schools, and leaders within Essex County. However, the *Final Rule* requires specific designee(s) identified to help lead the oversight, implementation, and progress assessments of the wellness policy and its requirements. Responsibility for the oversight of the Wellness Policy in ECPS was delegated to a handful of individuals and/or groups. These include the Assistant Superintendent, the Supervisor of Child Nutrition Services, Physical Education Representative, and the soon to be appointed School Health Advisory Board (SHAB). For further information regarding the Wellness Policy or to ask questions and provide comments, the Supervisor of Child Nutrition Services can be reached at 804-443-4366.

WELLNESS POLICY

The Essex County Public Schools Wellness Policy had not been made available publicly. However, it will be made available on our website, once approved by the school board. The policy will be accessible by clicking (will update once approved). Once this link is clicked, the policy can be accessed by scrolling down to “Wellness Policy.” ECPS will review the Wellness Policy annually, updating or modifying it as appropriate. In addition, the ECPS School Board policy, JHCF, which provides guidance in developing and editing the Wellness Policy, can be found at <https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/essex/Board.nsf/Public> under “Policies: Section J Students.” As the policy is changed, updates will be posted on the website.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT: WELLNESS POLICY UPDATES PROCESS

The School Health Advisory Board (SHAB) will be established during the 21-22 School Year. They will receive primary authority and responsibility to ensure each school complies with the Wellness Policy. SHAB will meet at least four times a year with review and updating of the Wellness Policy comprising one of its components for discussion and/or action. SHAB includes nurses from each school, Health and PE teachers from each level, the high school Athletic Director, the Supervisor of Child Nutrition Services, a representative from Nutrition Services, community members, and parents. Members will also solicit support from teachers, school cafeteria managers, or other persons as needed. The Supervisor of Child Nutrition Services will update the Wellness Policy based on the feedback of SHAB members, who have sought input from other school staff.

The policy will be presented to the school board during the May 2021 Work Session with approval requested at the June Regular Board Meeting. Upon approval, the first SHAB meeting will be scheduled for August 2021. A Robocall message will be sent to school staff and parents in advance of the meeting to invite them to the meeting specifically to review, discuss, and provide input toward the Wellness Policy. This will encourage diverse representation from the community and across schools.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT: ANNUAL COMMUNICATION OF WELLNESS POLICY

In addition to the policy being available on our ECPS website under **BoardDocs**, the policy will also be shared in our **2021-2022 School Handbook** that will go to all families at the beginning of the school year and will be found on the ECPS website. Lastly, ECPS will place a new student wellness page on the ECPS webpage to provide a wealth of information, resources, initiatives and a link to our wellness policy in 2021-2022.

SCHOOL WELLNESS COUNCILS & SCHOOL WELLNESS ACTION PLANS

All schools will be charged with creating school wellness councils (SWC) under the leadership of the individual school's administration. The goal is for all three schools in ECPS to have a SWC by the end of the 2020-2021 school year. The councils will act as the school leadership group around student and staff wellness. School councils vary in size and membership, however, the ideal council consists of an administrator, grade level teachers, physical education teacher, nurse, other staff (i.e. counselors, nutrition staff, instructional assistants, coaches, etc.) and student and PTA/(O) representation. Councils are charged with helping to create goals for an annual **School Wellness Action Plans (SWAP)**. Plans will be approved by the principal and should be shared with the school staff and community. Goals should be created by the school so that forward movement is made based on the individual school need. Additionally, division goals may be incorporated into the plan to ensure all schools align with our Strategic Plan goals and federal requirements. Goals should also be aligned with our wellness policy and best practices in school wellness.

WELLNESS POLICY PROGRESS ASSESSMENT

As part of the requirements outlined in the *Final Rule*, Essex County will conduct the first wellness policy progress assessment for all of our 3 school sites prior to the end of the **2020-2021 school year**. This initial assessment will act as our baseline and will be used to look at future goals and opportunities for our schools individually and collectively as a school division.

Essex County will use the *Healthy Schools Assessment* provided by the Alliance for a Healthier Generation. This eight module assessment has been developed utilizing the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's School Health Index (SHI) and best practices for healthy schools. The Alliance for a Healthier Generation was founded by the American Heart Association and the William J. Clinton Foundation and works to reduce childhood obesity and to empower kids to develop lifelong, healthy habits.

While the assessment does not include all aspects of a student's well-being, it does align well with the focus of the USDA's *Final Rule* and regulations related to the wellness policy. The eight modules included in the assessment are:

1. School Health and Safety Policies & Environment*
2. Health Education*
3. Physical Education and other Physical Activity*
4. Nutrition Services*
5. Health Services
6. Counseling, Psychological & and other Social Services
7. Health Promotion for Staff*
8. Family and Community Engagement*

*Required module of the Healthy School Assessment

The school wellness councils will lead the completion of the *Healthy School Assessment* for their respective school. Once all three schools have completed the assessment at the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year. A **division level report** will be generated by the Alliance for a Healthier Generation.

There is an action plan component on the Alliance for a Healthier Generation portal. ECPS schools will use the tool to capture the wellness goals/action plans. The action plans on the portal act as opportunities and possible goals that can be utilize as the individual schools complete their annual School Wellness Action Plans.

PROGRESS ASSESSMENT FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The assessment data in addition to other division data will be used to assess baseline progress of our Student Wellness Policy implementation. The main areas of our policy and the baseline data from the division level are provided below. Please note that the policy encourages additional healthy practices that are not indicated below. Additionally, our policy may not align exactly to the questions within the *Healthy School Assessment*. As such, we utilized our policy language to assess our progress. Please see the policy (JHCF) for more details.

Nutrition Service and Food and Beverages

WELLNESS POLICY LANGUAGE	FULLY IN PLACE	PARTIALLY IN PLACE	NOT IN PLACE- Scheduled for SY 21-22
All schools participate in the National School Lunch and breakfast program, along with the Community Eligibility Program	FULLY IN PLACE		
Free, safe, unflavored drinking water is available to all students throughout the school day.			Review opportunity during the school year
All food sold outside of the reimbursable school meals, including a la carte items and vending options by Nutrition Services meet the USDA Smart Snacks in Schools nutrition standards.	FULLY IN PLACE		
All food and beverages outside of the reimbursable school meal programs that are sold to students on the school campus during the school day must meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks nutritional standards.	FULLY IN PLACE		
Encourage food and beverages that are offered during the school day meet the USDA Smart Snacks nutritional standards.	FULLY IN PLACE		
Nutrition Standards are provided to the community within the nutrition policy	FULLY IN PLACE		

Nutrition Education

WELLNESS POLICY LANGUAGE	FULLY IN PLACE	PARTIALLY IN PLACE	NOT IN PLACE- Scheduled for SY 21-22
Students receive nutrition education that teaches the skills they need to adopt and maintain healthy eating behaviors.	FULLY IN PLACE		
Health, wellness, and nutrition information, including menus and nutritional information will be posted on the division's website.	FULLY IN PLACE		
Applications for free and reduced priced meals will be made available at the beginning of each year and will be available upon request.	FULLY IN PLACE		
Will host periodical food-tasting opportunities to gain feedback on food choices offered as part of the school breakfast and lunch programs.			SCHEDULED FOR 21-22 SY
Food and beverage fundraisers <i>during</i> the school day must meet the Smart Snacks standards.	FULLY IN PLACE		
Advertising and marketing of food and beverages are permitted only if those items maintain the nutritional standards of Smart Snacks in Schools.	FULLY IN PLACE		
Encourage healthy and non-food choices for celebrations, treats, and rewards.	FULLY IN PLACE		

Nutrition Education and Physical Activity

WELLNESS POLICY LANGUAGE	FULLY IN PLACE	PARTIALLY IN PLACE	NOT IN PLACE- Scheduled for SY 21-22
Promotes and offers opportunities for physical activity in a variety of ways including: before/after school programs, athletics, intramurals, brain boosters/breaks and active lessons/kinesthetic learning in the classroom.	FULLY IN PLACE (Some activities impacted by COVID restrictions)		
Promotes active transport including walking and biking (where such activities can be conducted in a safe manner).		PARTIALLY IN PLACE	
Recess is provided for at least 30 minutes (including transition time) most days during the school year (elementary only).	FULLY IN PLACE		
Prohibits taking away recess as a means of punishment for an individual or whole class (if make-up work is necessary only ½ of recess time can be used for the make-up session).	FULLY IN PLACE		
Physical activity should not be imposed as a consequence for misbehavior.	FULLY IN PLACE		
Physical education will use age-appropriate, sequential curriculum consistent with national and state standards.	FULLY IN PLACE		
Provide a program of physical activity for elementary students consisting of at least 30 minutes each day of physical activity - or an average of 150 minutes per week.	FULLY IN PLACE		
Strive for at least 150 minutes of physical activity per week on average during the regular school	FULLY IN PLACE		

WELLNESS POLICY LANGUAGE	FULLY IN PLACE	PARTIALLY IN PLACE	NOT IN PLACE- Scheduled for SY 21-22
year for secondary students (middle and high).			
Evidence-based essential topics on physical activity will be included in the health education curriculum.	FULLY IN PLACE		

Community Engagement

WELLNESS POLICY LANGUAGE	FULLY IN PLACE	PARTIALLY IN PLACE	NOT IN PLACE- Scheduled for SY 21-22
When practicable, schools' indoor/outdoor facilities are available to students, families, community and other organizations.	FULLY IN PLACE (After COVID restrictions are removed)		
Actively seek community involvement for updating and maintaining the wellness policy.			REVIEW 21-22 SY
Annual notification to families/community on the basic information of the policy.	FULLY IN PLACE		
Conducting and producing a triennial report (every three years).	FULLY IN PLACE		

Other Wellness Components

WELLNESS POLICY LANGUAGE	FULLY IN PLACE	PARTIALLY IN PLACE	NOT IN PLACE- Scheduled for SY 21-22
All schools will have school wellness councils.			DEVELOP 21-22 SY
Schools will create an annual School Wellness Action Plan.			DEVELOP 21-22 SY

DIVISION WELLNESS GOALS

Essex County Public Schools recognizes the importance of health and wellbeing on students' academic and future success. We have created structures and initiatives to ensure we are supporting the *whole child*. Initial wellness goals will be established in our new Strategic Plan for the upcoming school year.

GOALS	PROGRESS
Develop a Wellness Council to create recommendations to support student, family, and employee wellness.	School Year 2021-22
Expand Wellness Integration through community partnerships and develop future plans for expanding Wellness Integration within our division.*	School Year 2021-22
Develop Social Emotional Standards (SEL) for elementary schools. 1. Implement and expand SEL curriculum/model.* 2. Develop and receive approval for middle school SEL standards.*	School Year 2021-22
Establish School Wellness Councils at all schools in the division.	School Year 2021-22
All schools will complete the Healthy School Assessment by the Alliance for Healthier Generation.	School Year 2021-22

Current and past goals have helped to establish a framework and foundation to implement the updated wellness policy. Division and individual school goals around wellness will continue to adapt as we move forward with the implementation of the wellness policy and wellness recommendations. Additionally, 2018 - 2019 begins the implementation of our new strategic plan, *Imagine Tomorrow*. *Imagine Tomorrow* continues to support students' health and wellbeing through Goal #2 - *Character for Tomorrow*, Objective 2.1 - *Improve student health, social readiness, and well-being*.

GOALS FOR NEXT 3 YEARS (2021 - 2024)

ECPS will continue to stay committed to the goals outlined above that have not been fully executed. Additionally, division goals will be created based on the identified opportunities of the progress assessment that will be completed the school year of 2021-2022. All schools will continue to have their own individual goals as well and will be captured in their School Wellness Action Plans.

Goals to be completed by the next triennial report (2023 - 2024):

1. All schools will have functioning School Wellness Councils
2. **Nutrition Goal:** All schools will be fully compliant with fundraising with only healthy items (meets Smart Snacks in Schools Nutrition Standards) or non-food items *during* school hours.

3. **Physical Activity Goal:** All schools will be fully compliant with prohibiting recess being withheld due to punishment.

QUALITY OF OUR ECPS WELLNESS POLICY

To fulfill the federal requirement of assessing the quality of the wellness policy under the *Final Rule*, we used the WellSAT 2.0 tool, which measures the quality of written wellness policies including content comprehensiveness and strength of the policy language as it relates to the requirements under the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010. Please note, that there may be common practices in ECPS that are not indicated in the policy. This assessment only recognizes items explicitly indicated in the policy and does not take into account common practices that aren't identified or described in the policy.

OTHER WELLNESS INITIATIVES, RECOGNITIONS & SUCCESSES

Our schools and division are leading the way on creating a healthy school culture and environment and supporting our students' health and well-being. There are too many great programs, partnerships, and highlights across our county to recognize within this report, however, here are a few successes to mention.

HIGHLIGHTS 2020-2021

- ECPS received a \$15,700 grant from No Kid Hungry to provide funding to school districts to enable districts and schools to maximize the child nutrition programs and other emergency food programs and resources to ensure children and families have access to healthy meals at school and at home.
- ECPS received a \$26,000 grant to assist with purchasing new coolers for EHS cafeteria.