



Local School Wellness Policy Implementation Under the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010: Summary of the Proposed Rule

What is a local school wellness policy?

A local school wellness policy (“wellness policy”) is a written document that guides a local educational agency (LEA) or school district’s efforts to establish a school environment that promotes students’ health, well-being, and ability to learn.

The wellness policy requirement was established by the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 and further strengthened by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA). It requires each LEA participating in the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program to develop a wellness policy. The responsibility for developing a wellness policy is placed at the local level so the unique needs of each school under the LEA’s jurisdiction can be addressed.



Provisions of the Proposed Rule

On February 26, 2014, USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) proposed regulations to create a framework and guidelines for written wellness policies established by LEAs.

Public Involvement

At a minimum, LEAs must:

- **Establish wellness policy leadership** of one or more LEA and/or school official(s) who have the authority and responsibility to ensure each school complies with the policy.
- **Permit participation** by the general public and the school community (including parents, students, representatives of the school food authority, teachers of physical education, school health professionals, the school board, and school administrators) to participate in the wellness policy process.



Content of the Wellness Policy

At a minimum, policies would be required to include:

- **Specific goals for:** Nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness. LEAs are required to review and consider evidence-based strategies in determining these goals.
- **Nutrition guidelines for all foods and beverages** available or for sale on the school campus during the school day that are consistent with Federal regulations for:
 - School meal nutrition standards, and the
 - *Smart Snacks in School* nutrition standards.
- **Policies for other foods and beverages** available on the school campus during the school day (e.g. in classroom parties, classroom snacks brought by parents, or other foods given as incentives).
- **Policies for Food and Beverage Marketing** that allow marketing and advertising of only those foods and beverages that meet the *Smart Snacks in School* nutrition standards.



Annual Progress Reports

The rule proposes that LEAs provide wellness policy annual progress reports, which would include:

- The Web site address for the wellness policy and/or information on how the public can access a copy;
- A description of each school's progress in meeting the wellness policy goals;
- A summary of each school's local school wellness events or activities;
- Contact information for the leader(s) of the wellness policy team; and
- Information on how individuals and the public can get involved.

Triennial Assessments

The rule proposes to require an assessment of the wellness policy to be conducted every 3 years, at a minimum. It would determine:

- Compliance with the wellness policy;
- How the wellness policy compares to model wellness policies; and
- Progress made in attaining the goals of the wellness policy.

Updates to the Wellness Policy

The proposed rule requires that LEAs update or modify the wellness policy as appropriate.

Public Updates

The rule proposes that LEAs must make available to the public:

- Wellness Policy;
- Information and updates to and about the Wellness Policy, on an annual basis, at a minimum;
- Annual Progress Report; and
- Triennial Assessment.

Monitoring/Oversight

The proposed rule would require State agencies to assess compliance with the wellness policy requirements as a part of the general areas of the triennial administrative review.

Regulation

The proposed rule was published in the Federal Register, and the 60-day public comment period closed on April 28, 2014. USDA is currently analyzing public comments received and working on a final rule.

Find the proposed rule online:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/local-school-wellness-policy>

Resources

USDA Food and Nutrition Service's "School Nutrition Environment and Wellness Resources" Web site has information and resources on:

- Local School Wellness Policy Process;
- Wellness Policy Elements;
- Healthy School Nutrition Environment;
- Samples, Stories, and Guidance;
- Research Reports; and
- Grants/Funding Opportunities.



NEW!

Model Wellness Policy – Thoroughly reviewed by USDA FNS, the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's model policy template is in compliance with the requirements set forth in the proposed rule.

Putting Local School Wellness Policies into Action: Stories from School Districts and Schools – CDC and USDA developed a compilation of 11 stories to help LEAs and schools implement wellness policies.

National Wellness Study Briefs – Bridging the Gap's research briefs highlight areas of opportunity for State agencies, LEAs, and schools to strengthen wellness policy components.

Check it out! <http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/school-wellness-resources>