

School Wellness Policy Evaluation

Overview--Sheridan County School District #2 annually reviews its policies in key areas including Wellness. In April 2014, the district asked its external evaluator to gauge how well Policy EFB meets established criteria, including but not limited to, federal regulations imposed by Public Law 108-265. She identified 17 criteria (including 6 federal mandates) to offer policy recommendations to the District Wellness Committee. The committee met on April 29 to consider the external reviews and to make their recommendations to Policy Review Committee. The Policy Review Committee makes recommendations for policy changes to the Board Policy Committee, which in turn makes recommendations to the entire Board where it receives two readings in public meetings.

Policy Items used to evaluate Wellness Policy--

1. Includes goals for nutrition education that are designed to promote student wellness in a manner that the local education agency determines is appropriate. (Federal Requirement)
2. Nutrition curriculum provided for each grade level.
3. Nutrition education extends beyond the school environment.
4. Assures that guidelines for reimbursable school meals shall not be less restrictive than USDA school meal regulations. (Federal Requirement)
5. Nutrition information for school meals (e.g., calories, saturated fat, sugar) is available.
6. Includes nutrition guidelines selected by the local education agency for ALL foods available on school campus during the school day with the objective of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity. (Federal Requirement)
7. Addresses access to free drinking water.
8. Addresses physical education curriculum for each grade level.
9. Specifies competency assessment (i.e., knowledge, skills, or practice).

10. Includes goals for physical activity that are designed to promote student wellness in a manner that the local education agency determines is appropriate. (Federal Requirement)
11. Addresses not using physical activity (extra or restricted) as punishment.
12. Involve parents, students, and representatives of the school food authority, the school board, school administrators, and the public in the development of the school wellness policy. (Federal Requirement)
13. Addresses methods to solicit or encourage input from stakeholder groups (e.g., two-way sharing).
14. Specifies how district will engage parents or community to meet district wellness goals (e.g., through website, email, parent conferences, or events).
15. Specifies what content/information district communicates to parents.
16. Establishes a health advisory committee or school health council that is ongoing beyond policy development.
17. Establish a plan for measuring implementation of the local wellness policy, including designation of one or more persons within the local educational agency or at each school, as appropriate, charged with operational responsibility for ensuring that the school meets the local wellness policy. (Federal Requirement)

The policy items listed above are being used as criteria to evaluate the comprehensiveness and strength of the Sheridan County School District #2 Wellness Policy. These items have been chosen because they represent what should be an important part of the District's policy. The criteria and their ratings listed below will indicate whether or not the policy clearly addresses student well-being and academic achievement by supporting quality nutrition and physical activity. Policy recommendations are provided when necessary.

Criteria and Recommendations

Rating Scale: 0=Not Mentioned, 1=Weak Statement (item is mentioned, but statement is vague; there are loopholes that weaken enforcement; statements are listed as future goals), 2=Meets/Exceeds Expectations

(item is mentioned and is described using specific language; language used indicates regulation is required; goal is clearly stated)

Includes goals for nutrition education that are designed to promote student wellness in a manner that the local education agency determines is appropriate. (Federal Requirement)

This item received a rating of “2” because a nutrition education goal statement is clearly stated and specific language is used to describe the goal (e.g., Students in the District will receive nutrition education.....). We feel that the Sheridan County School District #2 Wellness Policy is well written in regards to this item.

Nutrition curriculum provided for each grade level.

This item received a rating of “2” because it is clear that the district has a nutrition education curriculum for all grade levels. This curriculum is found in the Wyoming Department of Education’s Health Education Standards, and is integrated within the comprehensive health education curriculum taught at every grade level. The state standards are required to be met or exceeded in the District. We feel that the Sheridan County School District #2 Wellness Policy is well written in regards to this item.

Nutrition education extends beyond the school environment.

This item received a rating of “1” because the District policy contains a required but vague statement about parents being involved in nutrition education. Currently, the policy states, “The District will encourage parents, teachers, school personnel, and students to serve as role models in practicing healthy eating and being physically active.” Specific strategies regarding community and familial involvement would enhance the policy. We recommend adding a statement regarding the creation of stronger partnerships with community organizations to provide opportunities for information dispersion and student projects related to nutrition. The District has developed great relationships with the Wellness Council, The Food Group, the YMCA, and the Rec District, and we should utilize those connections to enhance student health and academic achievement.

Assures that guidelines for reimbursable school meals shall not be less restrictive than USDA school meal regulations. (Federal Requirement)

This item received a rating of “2” because the District Wellness Policy assures that it uses and meets the federal/USDA school meal regulations and standards when deciding what foods and beverage to offer students on a daily basis. We feel that the Sheridan County School District #2 Wellness Policy is well written in regards to this item.

Nutrition information for school meals (e.g., calories, saturated fat, sugar) is available.

This item received a rating of “0” because there is no mention in the District policy regarding the availability of nutritional information for school meals. This information is available to the public via the school district’s website, yet this information is not publicized. We recommend that a specific statement be added to the policy informing readers that the nutritional content of school meals is available to students and parents.

Includes nutrition guidelines selected by the local education agency for ALL foods available on school campus during the school day with the objective of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity. (Federal Requirement)

This item received a rating of “2” because the District Wellness Policy states that it follows the National Dietary Guidelines for Americans, which requires that ALL foods available on campus during the school day will promote student health and the reduction of childhood obesity. We feel that the Sheridan County School District #2 Wellness Policy is well written in regards to this item.

Addresses access to free drinking water.

This item received a rating of “1” because it can only be assumed that the drinking water available to students throughout the day is free. The District policy states, “Safe drinking water will be available throughout the school day.” This statement allows readers to draw the assumption that the drinking water available to students is free; however, this is never specifically addressed. We recommend that specific language be added to the policy so that safe, free drinking water is explicitly stated.

Addresses physical education curriculum for each grade level.

This item received a rating of “1” because the District policy follows the state physical education curriculum standards and guidelines, but does not require its schools to follow the National Association for Sport & Physical Education (NASPE) standards, which is required for a rating of “2”. We recommend that the policy committee review the state standards and the NASPE standards and amend the SCSD2 policy to comply in full with the NASPE standards.

Specifies competency assessment (i.e., knowledge, skills, or practice).

This item received a rating of “2” because students are required to demonstrate competency in movement and fitness according to the state physical education curriculum standards and guidelines. Assessment of knowledge, skill, or practice occurs as a part of the physical education curriculum. We feel that the Sheridan County School District #2 Wellness Policy is well written in regards to this item.

Includes goals for physical activity that are designed to promote student wellness in a manner that the local education agency determines is appropriate. (Federal Requirement)

This item received a rating of “2” because goals for physical activity that are designed to promote student wellness are included in the state standards that are met and/or exceeded by the District. We feel that the Sheridan County School District #2 Wellness Policy is well written in regards to this item.

Addresses not using physical activity (extra or restricted) as punishment.

This item received a rating of “0” because there is no mention in the District policy regarding the prohibition of using physical activity (extra or restricted) as punishment. We recommend that a specific statement be added to the policy prohibiting the use of physical activity as punishment with exceptions for IEPs. An example of this would be, “Students shall not be denied participation in recess or physical activities as a form of discipline or punishment unless there is a question of student safety.”

Involve parents, students, and representatives of the school food authority, the school board, school administrators, and the public in the development of the school wellness policy. (Federal Requirement)

This item received a rating of “0” because there is no mention in the District policy specifying who was on the policy development team. Parents, students, members of the school food authority, members of the school board, school administrators and the public are all groups required to be represented on the policy development team. We recommend that the policy (or supporting documentation) specifies who was on the policy development team, and all groups are represented.

Addresses methods to solicit or encourage input from stakeholder groups (e.g., two-way sharing).

This item received a rating of “1” because the District policy suggests open communication between the schools, parents, and community members, but does not require the use of specific methods for soliciting input from stakeholders. As the policy currently states, “The school will encourage families and community members to support programs outside the school that encourage physical activity.” We recommend that more specific language be used in this statement to include the requirement of solicitation of input from stakeholders. For example, “The District will solicit feedback and support for physical activity programs from families and community members through stakeholder meetings.

Specifies how district will engage parents or community to meet district wellness goals (e.g., through website, email, parent conferences, or events).

This item received a rating of “0” because there is no mention in the District policy regarding how the district will engage parents or the community to meet district wellness goals. We recommend that a statement be added to the policy that combines how and what information will be provided to parents and community members. This statement will include wording that makes it clear that the District will provide information and where it can be found (e.g., the District’s website). An example of this is, “The District will share information on nutrition, a healthy lifestyle, and physical activity to parents via the SCSD#2 website.”

Specifies what content/information district communicates to parents.

This item received a rating of “0” because there is no mention in the District policy regarding what content/information the district will communicate to parents or the community regarding wellness and physical education information and goals.

We recommend that a statement be added to the policy that combines how and what information will be provided to parents and community members. This statement will include wording that makes it clear that the District will provide information and where it can be found (e.g., the District’s website). An example of this may be, “The District will share information on nutrition, physical activity, and overall wellness to parents via the SCSD#2 website.”

Establishes a health advisory committee or school health council that is ongoing beyond policy development.

This item received a rating of “0” because there is no mention of the SCSD#2 Wellness Committee that currently exists. The purpose of the current Wellness Committee is to develop policy, review policy, ensure compliance with policy, act as a resource during policy implementation, and collaborate with stakeholders to achieve overall wellness for the District. We recommend including information regarding the purpose of the Wellness Committee to the statement describing the policy development team.

Establish a plan for measuring implementation of the local wellness policy, including designation of one or more persons within the local educational agency or at each school, as appropriate, charged with operational responsibility for ensuring that the school meets the local wellness policy. (Federal Requirement)

This item received a rating of “0” because there is no mention of the SCSD#2 Wellness Committee that currently exists and no plan establishing policy compliance, nor is there a person or group of people

designated responsible for compliance. The purpose of the current Wellness Committee is to develop policy, review policy, ensure compliance with policy, act as a resource during policy implementation, and collaborate with stakeholders to achieve overall wellness for the District. We recommend including information regarding the purpose of the Wellness Committee to the statement describing the policy development team.