

**Triennial Assessment Report: Elm City Triennial Assessment (6/2025)
(6/2025)
District: ELM CITY COLLEGE PREPARATORY**

Introduction

As part of the 2025 Triennial Assessment, Achievement First has reviewed and reflected on our Wellness Policy and practices across all schools. This process provided an important opportunity to evaluate our progress and ensure alignment with federal nutrition and wellness guidelines.

Achievement First is in compliance with the majority of federal requirements governing school meals and competitive foods. We proudly offer the National School Breakfast Program daily and ensure that all meals meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School standards. All students receive free meals, and we are fully compliant with regulations that protect student eligibility and privacy.

To support student health and well-being, our schools implement multiple strategies to increase participation in school meal programs and ensure that drinking water is readily available throughout the day.

Our commitment to physical wellness is equally strong. Achievement First schools meet the standards for physical education instruction and professional development, including daily recess for elementary students. Teachers incorporate regular physical activity breaks into the school day and promote physical activity as a positive reward—never as a form of punishment.

Looking ahead, we are eager to expand student and parent involvement in the development of our Wellness Policies and participation in Wellness Committees. We are actively exploring ways to strengthen engagement and collaboration over the next three years.

Strong Policies and Aligned Practices

Our school remains committed to supporting student health through strong nutrition and physical activity policies. We are in compliance with the majority of federal regulations related to school meals and competitive foods.

We offer the National School Breakfast Program each day and ensure all meals meet USDA Smart Snack Standards. All students have access to free meals, and we fully uphold student privacy in meal eligibility processes.


To encourage student participation in school meal programs, we employ a variety of strategies and have improved practices to ensure that clean drinking water is easily accessible throughout the school day.

We also meet federal standards for physical education, including class time and professional development for PE teachers. Elementary students receive daily recess, and all students benefit from regular physical activity breaks during the school day. Physical activity is consistently promoted as a positive experience and never used as a form of punishment.

Our Wellness Policy has been reviewed within the past three years, and the assessment results have been shared publicly in accordance with federal requirements.




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		P O L I C Y	P R A C T I C E		P O L I C Y	P R A C T I C E	
F R 1	Does the district have specific goals for nutrition education designed to promote student wellness?	2	2	☆	2	2	☆
F R 2	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	☆	2	2	☆
F R 3	Does your school take steps to protect the privacy of students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals?	2	2	☆	2	2	☆
F R 4	Is free (i.e., no cost to students) drinking water available to students during meals?	2	1		2	2	☆
F R 6	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	☆	2	2	☆
F R 7	Do all a la carte foods and beverages sold in the cafeteria meet Smart Snacks standards?	2	2	☆	2	2	☆
F R 8	Do all foods and beverages sold in vending machines meet Smart Snack standards?	2	2	☆	2	2	☆
F R 9	Do all foods and beverages sold in school stores during the school day meet Smart Snack standards?	2	2	☆	2	2	☆


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F R 1 0	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	1		2	2	★
F R 1 2	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	★	2	2	★
F R 1 5	How is the wellness policy made available to the public?	2	2	★	2	2	★
F R 1 6	Is wellness policy implementation evaluated every three years?	2	1		2	2	★
F R 1 7	What is included in the triennial assessment report to the public?	2	1		2	2	★
N E S 1	Does the district offer breakfast every day to all students?	2	2	★	2	2	★
N E S 3	Does your school or district provide information to families about eligibility for free or reduced-price meals?	2	2	★	2	2	★
N E S 4	Does your school use strategies to maximize participation in the school breakfast program and/or school lunch program?	2	2	★	2	2	★
N E S	Are marketing strategies used to promote healthy food and beverage choices in school?	2	2	★	2	2	★

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N E S 6	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	★	2	2	★
N E S 8	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	1		2	2	★
N E S 14	Do students have consistent and easy access to free drinking water throughout the school day?	2	2	★	2	2	★
P E P A 8	Is ongoing professional development offered every year for PE teachers that is relevant and specific to physical education?	2	2	★	2	2	★
P E P A 9	What percentage of students do you estimate do not take PE each year due to exemptions?	2	2	★	2	2	★
P E P A 10	What percentage of students do you estimate do not take PE each year due to substitutions?	2	2	★	2	2	★
P E P A 13	Is there daily recess for all grades in elementary school?	2	2	★	2	2	★

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P E P A 1 4	 Do teachers provide regular physical activity breaks for students in the classroom?	2	2	☆	2	2	☆
P E P A 1 7	 Are teachers encouraged to use physical activity as a reward for students?	2	2	☆	2	2	☆
P E P A 1 8	Do teachers ever use physical activity as a punishment?	2	2	☆	2	2	☆

Create Practice Implementation Plan

As part of our ongoing commitment to student health and well-being, we have identified key areas for growth in our district's Wellness Policy and practices.














One priority is increasing the frequency and inclusivity of our Wellness Committee meetings. We aim to ensure representation from all stakeholder groups—including students, families, educators, school leaders, and community members—at the district level. Expanding stakeholder participation will strengthen our ability to review policies, implement improvements, and amplify student and family voices in shaping our wellness initiatives.

We are also exploring updates to practices around food and beverages served at school events, such as class celebrations, and evaluating how food is used as a reward in classrooms.

Additionally, we have identified the need to review our health and physical education curriculum to ensure that all K–12 standards are being taught consistently across the school year. In health education, we plan to enhance content related to nutrition and connect classroom lessons more directly to our school food environment. We also seek to integrate topics such as local agriculture and food systems across multiple subjects.



















Looking ahead, we are committed to prioritizing the sourcing of locally produced foods to support both student health and our local community.

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		P O L I C Y	P R A C T I C E		P O L I C Y	P R A C T I C E	
F R 1 1	Does your district regulate foods and beverages served at class parties and other school celebrations in elementary schools?	2	0		2	0	
F R 1 3	Which groups are represented on the district-level wellness committee?	2	1		2	1	
F R 1 8	Has the wellness policy been revised based on the previous triennial assessment?	2	1		2	0	
N E S 7	 In your district, is it a priority to procure locally produced foods for school meals?	2	1		2	1	
N E S 1 3	Do teachers or school staff give students food as a reward?	2	1		2	1	
N E 1	Are skills-based, behavior-focused, and interactive/ participatory methods used in nutrition education to develop student skills?	2	1		2	1	

















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N E 2	Do all elementary school students receive sequential and comprehensive nutrition education?	1	0		1	0	
N E 5	Is nutrition education integrated into other subjects beyond health education?	2	0		2	0	
N E 6	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		2	0	
N E 7	 Does nutrition education address agriculture and the food system?	1	0		1	0	
P E P A 1	 Does the district have a written physical education curriculum that is implemented consistently for every grade?	2	1		2	1	
P E P A 2	Does the district have a written physical education curriculum that is aligned with national and/or state standards?	2	1		2	1	
P E P A 3	How does your physical education program promote a physically active lifestyle?	2	1		2	1	
P E P A 4	How many minutes per week of PE does each grade in elementary school receive?	2	1		2	1	

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P E P A 5	How many minutes per week of PE does each grade in middle school receive?	1	0		1	0	
P E P A 6	How many minutes per week of PE does each grade in high school receive?	1	0		1	0	
P E P A 7	Are all physical education classes taught by state certified/licensed teachers who are endorsed to teach physical education?	2	1		2	1	
P E P A 1 1	 Are there opportunities for families and community members to engage in physical activity at school?	2	1		2	1	
P E P A 1 2	 Are there opportunities for all students to engage in physical activity before and after school?	2	1		2	1	
P E P A 1 5	Does the district have "joint-use" or "shared-use" agreements?	2	0		2	1	
P E P A 1	What proportion of students walk or bike to school?	2	1		2	1	

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P E P A 1 9	Do teachers ever withhold physical activity as a classroom management tool?	2	1		2	1	
EW 2	Are school staff encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity behaviors in front of students?	2	1		2	1	
IC 1	Is there an active district-level wellness committee?	2	1		2	1	
IC 2	Is there an active school-level wellness committee?	2	1		2	1	

Update Policies

As part of our recent review, we identified several opportunities to update and strengthen our district's Wellness Policy to better reflect our current practices and ensure continued alignment with federal standards.

Currently, the policy does not outline the frequency or scope of training provided to our food and nutrition services staff. We plan to revise the policy to include this important component, recognizing the critical role staff training plays in maintaining high-quality meal service.














We also see an opportunity to formally include strong practices already in place across our schools, such as the food and beverage standards for sales at after-school events and the various strategies each campus uses to support employee wellness.

Additionally, our Wellness Policy does not yet address standards for food and beverage marketing within school buildings. Adding clear guidelines in this area will help ensure our practices remain in compliance and aligned with our wellness goals moving forward.

These updates will help us create a more comprehensive and transparent Wellness Policy that reflects both our values and our practices.

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		P O L I C Y	P R A C T I C E		P O L I C Y	P R A C T I C E	
F R 5	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?	1	2		1	2	
N E S 9	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?	0	2		0	2	
N E S 1 1	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)?	1	2		1	2	
N E S 1 2	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)?	1	2		1	2	
N E 4	Do all high school students receive sequential and comprehensive nutrition education?	1	2		1	2	
EW 1	 Are there strategies used by the school to support employee wellness?	1	2		1	2	

Opportunities for Growth

Our Local School Wellness Policy (LSWP) compared favorably to national model policies, as measured by the WellSAT 3.0 assessment tool. This reflects our strong commitment to student health and wellness across the

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district.

Through this assessment, we identified several important areas for improvement. One key finding was the need to designate an official at the district level who is responsible for ensuring consistent implementation of and compliance with wellness policies across all school buildings.

We also recognized an opportunity to strengthen our middle school curriculum by providing more comprehensive and sequential nutrition education. These priorities were first noted in our previous Triennial Assessment but were not fully addressed—something we are committed to changing in the upcoming school year.

Additionally, we remain focused on supporting the creation and regular convening of Wellness Committees at each school. Ensuring these committees include representatives from all stakeholder groups—students, families, staff, and community members—will help us center community voices in the ongoing improvement of our wellness policies and practices.

		6/2021			6/2025		
		P O L I C Y	P R A C T I C E		P O L I C Y	P R A C T I C E	
F R 1 4	Is there an official who is responsible for the implementation and compliance with the wellness policy at the building level for each school?	1	1		1	1	
N E 3	Do all middle school students receive sequential and comprehensive nutrition education?	1	1		1	1	

Comparison with prior assessments

Since our last Triennial Assessment, Achievement First has made meaningful progress in strengthening our Local School Wellness Policy (LSWP) and implementing health-promoting practices across our schools. Key improvements include:

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Enhanced Access to Meals and Water: We have improved practices to ensure that water is readily available to students throughout the school day and continued offering free, nutritious meals to all students under the National School Breakfast and Lunch Programs.

Increased Student Participation Strategies: Our schools implemented additional strategies to boost student participation in school meal programs, helping more students benefit from healthy, balanced meals.

Physical Activity Supports: We continue to meet or exceed standards for physical education instruction, daily recess in elementary schools, and regular activity breaks during the day—encouraging movement and well-being in age-appropriate ways.

Public Posting of Assessment Results: For the first time, results from our wellness policy review have been publicly posted, increasing transparency and community engagement.

Recognition of Strong District Practices: We identified and aim to reflect in policy strong existing practices such as food and beverage standards for after-school events and employee wellness initiatives at the campus level.

Stakeholder Engagement Focus: We have renewed efforts to build inclusive Wellness Committees at each school, ensuring representation from all stakeholder groups and increasing opportunities for community input.

These advances reflect our ongoing commitment to student health and well-being, and they lay the foundation for additional improvements in the years to come.

Conclusion

At Achievement First, we are committed to creating a healthy school environment where all students can learn and thrive. As part of our 2025 Triennial Assessment, we reviewed our Wellness Policy and found areas where we're doing well and others where we can continue to grow.

What's Going Well:

All students receive free, healthy meals each day, and we meet national standards for school nutrition.

Water is easily available to students throughout the day.

Our schools offer daily recess and regular movement breaks, and we use physical activity in a positive way—not as punishment.

We've made progress in sharing our wellness efforts publicly and increasing student participation in meal programs.

Areas for Growth:

We want to hold more frequent Wellness Committee meetings and include voices from all groups—families, students, staff, and community members.

We plan to improve our nutrition education in middle schools and update our health and PE programs to meet standards across all grades.

We're working to better document staff training, food marketing guidelines, and wellness efforts already happening at our schools.

We're excited to keep building on this progress and to involve more families and community members as we

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strengthen our Wellness Policy in the years ahead.

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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