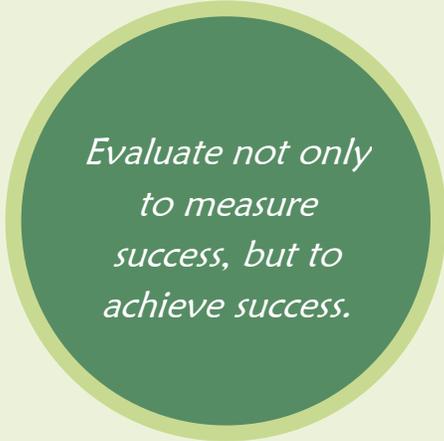


Successful Monitoring of Wellness Policies

1. Assess Current Status

Before implementing policy changes, it is recommended that schools assess current wellness activities. Establish baseline data on current practices to compare future results once policies and activities have been implemented. This may require you to:

- assess the quality and/or quantity of physical education;
- assess the vended foods and beverages for sale;
- calculate revenues from vending and à la carte food and beverage sales;
- evaluate current marketing on campus;
- determine meal participation rates;
- assess the availability of physical activity opportunities before and after school; and
- assess school facilities and equipment.



*Evaluate not only
to measure
success, but to
achieve success.*

2. Develop Implementation Plan

Developing a policy implementation plan requires thinking about the nuts and bolts of getting the policy into place and **breaking the policy into separate goals, activities, and action steps**. The set of tasks and the people who need to be involved will be very different for each goal. In addition, most systems must adopt Administrative Regulations or Procedures (ARPs) that provide additional details on a policy. A well-developed implementation plan will support the successful implementation of a Wellness Policy.

The implementation plan should include:

- Goals: **What** are the key policy goals and what is the priority of each goal?
- Activities: **What** activities should be conducted and what outcomes are expected?
- Responsibility: **Who** is responsible to monitor and **what** are the established deadlines?
- Monitoring: **How** will the activities be monitored? **When** and how often will they be monitored?
- Reporting: **Who** will you report results to and how often will reports be issued?
- Follow up: **How** will you act on results?

(See Section 7 Implementation Plan for a sample plan.)

3. Establish a Monitoring Process

To ensure success, school systems and schools must monitor the implementation of the Policy. As required by law, each school system must:

- establish a plan for measuring implementation of the local Wellness Policy; and
- designate one or more persons with operational responsibility for ensuring that the school system is meeting the policy.

Monitoring **allows systems and schools to determine what is working** so the policy can be revised and improved as needed. There should be a set schedule for how frequently monitoring will take place. It is also important to decide who will monitor policy implementation and who needs to hear about the progress and outcomes. Reports may be monthly, quarterly, annually, etc., and should be shared with the school administration, school board, community, and key stakeholders.

A sustained monitoring effort by each school site helps to:

- ensure that new policies are successfully implemented;
- reinforce the policy goals with school staff;
- assess how well the policy is being managed and enforced;
- recognize policy success milestones; and
- periodically update and amend a policy as required.

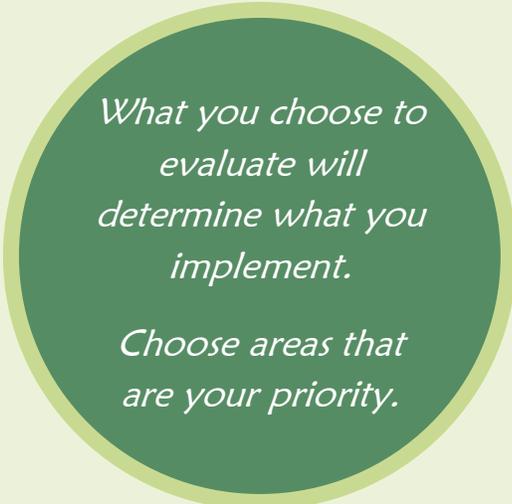
Through the monitoring process, you will be able to address some important questions asked by policymakers, students, school staff, parents, and the general public.

For example you may ask:

“What changes to nutrition education, physical activity, the nutritional quality of foods available to students, and other aspects covered by the policy occurred in each school as a result of the system’s Wellness Policy?”

By asking such a question, you can determine if:

- the number of students participating in nutrition education changed;
- students have a different number of minutes of physical activity than in prior periods;
- the campus changed available food options;
- the students’ increased their knowledge of healthy foods; and
- participation in the National School Breakfast or Lunch Program changed.



*What you choose to
evaluate will
determine what you
implement.*

*Choose areas that
are your priority.*

4. Evaluate Implementation

Evaluation and feedback are very important in maintaining a local Wellness Policy. Evaluation is **what you do with the information you have gathered**. Evaluation helps determine the effectiveness of your strategies and strength of the policy. Evaluation is critical to assessing local Wellness Policy activities in individual school systems and helps state agencies to provide targeted technical assistance and school system accountability. It also helps determine if your strategies need to be modified in order to meet or maintain goals. Monitoring and evaluation results should be shared with your key stakeholders.

Evaluation helps to:

- improve the content of, support for, and implementation of, local Wellness Policies;
- document environmental changes, staff needs, and changes in revenue;
- provide better services for staff, faculty, and students;
- make a case for more staff, funding, or policies;
- ensure programs are on course; and
- identify new and changing needs.

What does success look like?

Look for opportunities to recognize achievements and celebrate successes as a part your Wellness Policy evaluation process.

Examples of success include the following:

- Policies have been implemented at all schools.
- Policies were changed if they did not achieve desired outcomes or if they were causing unintended negative outcomes.
- Policies were changed if the needs of students or staff changed.
- Barriers to success have been identified and overcome.
- Behaviors have changed and been redirected toward healthier options.
- Collaboration with the Parent Teacher Association and nutrition services at back to school nights has increased.
- Staff has been trained on comprehensive health education.
- More schools are recognized by the National Association of Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) Stars Program.
- More schools receive HealthierUS Challenge awards.

Types of Data to Collect:

Both process and outcome data will be useful in evaluating the success of local school Wellness Policies. You should collect the data that provides the best information to track and improve policy implementation and maintenance. Schools frequently collect large amounts of data as a general course of school administration. Look for existing data that can be used to review the progress of a Wellness Policy. This data could be from your school system, local health department, county organization or a national data source.

Examples of process and outcome questions and data include:

<u>Process Questions</u> (What did you do?)	<u>Process Data</u> (How will you know what happened?)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What activities were undertaken? When? 2. What was the level of quality of the activities? 3. How many people were involved? 4. How many people in the school system received copies of the local Wellness Policy? 5. How many teachers received training to implement physical and nutrition education recommendations? 6. Are resources and support available to implement and maintain the policy? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Types and number of activities implemented. 2. Quality and consistency of efforts/information. 3. Sign-in sheets. 4. Number and type of individuals reached through information distribution efforts. 5. Number and type of teachers reached through professional development efforts. 6. Resources and budgets allocated.

<u>Outcome Questions</u> (What changed as a result of what you did?)	<u>Outcome Data</u> (How will you know what happened?)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What were the intended outcomes of the policy? 2. What were the actual outcomes? 3. What parts of the policy were implemented? 4. Did the parts that were implemented address the greatest needs of students and school staff? 5. What are the documented and observed changes to the nutrition and physical activity environments of local schools? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School culture and environment changes. 2. Changes in school nutrition programs including marketing and promotion. 3. Policy changes and implementation plans. 4. Needs and satisfaction surveys of students and school staff. 5. Changes to physical and health education programs using tools such as Youth Risk Behavior Survey and School Health Policy and Promotion Survey.

Student Data

Collect and review data on student performance or activity that will describe how the Wellness Policy directly impacted the students.

<u>Student Data</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • student absenteeism; • referrals, suspensions, classroom stresses, fights; • meal participation (breakfast and lunch); • academic performance; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical activity opportunities, before, during and after school; • eating patterns in connection with recess (before, after) and • FitnessGram[™] or The President's Challenge Results.

Match Outcomes to Data Collection

Identify specific outcomes first and then look for data that exists to support measuring the outcome. Some data may apply to multiple outcomes.

<u>Sample Outcomes</u>	<u>Sample Data to Collect</u>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wellness Policy is a school system priority. 2. Wellness Policy is a systemic effort. 3. School staff has skills necessary to support Policy goals. 4. Foods and beverages sold and served comply with Policy. 5. Student stakeholders are involved with Policy implementation. 6. School meals promoted as the meal of choice to all students. 7. School meals environment is pleasant and inviting. 8. Regular physical activity is promoted. 9. Only foods that comply with Wellness Policies are sold and profits maintained. 10. Foods as a reward were discontinued, and foods offered during celebrations are healthier. 11. Resources and budgets for equipment are funded. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agendas or meeting minutes at school health councils and school board meetings. 2. Audit nutrition and physical activity promotional efforts throughout the school. 3. Professional development or training conducted. 4. Compliance with nutrition standards for competitive foods. 5. Numbers of students assist in planning menus or selecting foods/ beverages for sale on campus. 6. Participation rates in the National School Lunch or Breakfast programs or number of activities designed to promote school meals. 7. Satisfaction survey of the cafeteria environment quality. 8. Opportunities for physical activity. 9. Monitor fundraising types of foods sold by and profits from school groups. 10. Document classroom reward and celebration practices. 11. Equipment purchased and secured that supports policies (e.g., vending machines without ads, physical equipment).

How to Collect Data

Look for easy and quick methods to collect data. This can be accomplished by conducting a survey of progress in a health education class from year to year or a simple visual survey of the school cafeteria environment. Data could also be collected by the local health department, Parks and Recreation, a County organization or a national organization.

<u>How to Collect Data</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• self-administered questionnaires;• site observations (environmental assessments);• fiscal analysis; e.g., sales from vending and fundraising activities, and foodservice department purchases;• systematic document review;• environmental observations;	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• online surveys;• established monitoring plans;• student and stakeholders questionnaires and interviews;• focus groups;• Nutrition Advisory Council meetings; and• data extraction (from existing data sources).

Potential Sources of Data in Maryland

Many sources of data exist in Maryland and in your school system. Check with your school's information office to determine what could be used to monitor and evaluate your activities.

<u>Potential Sources of Data in Maryland</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Youth Risk Behavior Survey;• Maryland Adolescent Survey;• Youth Tobacco Survey;• School Health Services Annual Survey;• Kids Count;• Jump Rope and Hoops for the Heart;• School Health Policies and Programs Study;	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intramural Sports Participation;• Interscholastic Sports Participation;• Maryland School Performance Report;• Walk to School Day;• School Meals Initiative; and• FitnessGram[™] or The President's Challenge.

For additional ideas on what to monitor and evaluate, see California Project LEAN's *School Food and Beverage Marketing Assessment Tool*, available at www.CaliforniaProjectLEAN.org. Project LEAN revised CDC's *School Health Index* to address just nutrition and physical activity.