



Assessing Your School's Current Wellness Practices

NOW THAT YOU HAVE FORMED YOUR COMMITTEE, it is time to look at your school's current wellness practices. No doubt, your school is already involved in activities that enhance student wellness. These tools will help you to recognize the great work that you already are doing and determine potential gaps. Here are three simple tools specific to MCPS that will be helpful in assessing your school. Completing all three of these tools will take about one to two hours. You may wish to divide the tools between the LSWC members or go through them with your entire team as a unit.

MCPS Assessment Tools

1. **Current School Wellness Activities Assessment**—This tool will help you list your school's current wellness-related activities
2. **Core School Environment Needs Assessment**—This tool will assess your school's environment in relation to the MCPS Wellness regulations and compliance with USDA regulations. *Compliance in each area of the Core School Environment Needs Assessment is required.*
3. **Enhanced School Environment Needs Assessment**—This tool will provide you with additional wellness actions that could improve both student wellness and academic performance.

Both the **Core** and **Enhanced School Environment Needs Assessments** will provide your team with an individual score you can use to measure progress.

The assessment results will provide your team with baseline information about current wellness practices, which will help guide the development of goals specific to your school. Complete the three assessments annually and keep them in your local school wellness binder.

Current School Wellness Activities Assessment

Create a list of the wellness activities you currently are doing. Ideas may include, but are not limited to, the following:

Activity clubs

- Walking clubs
- Zumba
- Girls on the Run
- Jump Rope for Heart
- Yoga

Nutrition education

- After-school cooking classes
- Healthy eating presentation during the school day

School-promoted fitness days

- Turkey Trot
- Fitness Fun Night
- Walk to school
- Bike to school day

Gardening

- School garden
- Gardening curriculum in class

Other

- Mindful corner or room/ mindful moment
- Manny (Manna’s mobile nutrition teaching kitchen)
- University of Maryland Extension Program
- Water consumption encouragement (e.g., water-bottle refill station, purchase of water tower)
- Staff wellness activities

School Wellness Activities		
Activity	Lead	Details
<i>Example—Zumba</i>	<i>Ms. Mary</i>	<i>Wednesdays @ 3 p.m. in gym</i>
<i>Example—Family Fit Night</i>	<i>PTA</i>	<i>March 14, Sept 8 @</i>

Date: ___ / ___ / ___ Name/Position _____

Core School Environment Needs Assessment

The Core School Environment Needs Assessment will assess your school's current wellness environment.

Directions: Using the following scale, mark the corresponding number for each question: **3 = Fully in Place, 2 = Partially in Place, 1 = Under Development, 0 = Not in Place or Not Applicable.** For accurate recordkeeping, be sure to sign and date the assessment.

Core School Environment Needs Assessment	
	Rating
1. The school has a local school wellness council/wellness team that focuses on student health and well-being.	
2. All school stakeholders are represented in the school wellness council/wellness team (e.g., parents, students, teachers, before- and after-care sponsors, community members, school clubs, school administrators/counselor).	
3. All elementary students have recess daily, consistent with MCPS Wellness regulations.	
4. Students are encouraged to be physically active during recess.	
5. Physical education and physical activity practices are compliant with MCPS Wellness regulations.	
6. Students may not be denied recess or any other physical activity as a form of punishment. Recess may be withheld only at the discretion of the principal or designee, when student safety is a concern or a child is at risk of harm.	
7. Safe, unflavored, and free drinking water is accessible to all students throughout the day.	
8. Foods and beverages (outside of school meals) sold to students from midnight until 30 minutes after the school day ends meet MCPS Wellness regulations. This includes all products available through vending machines, concessions, school stores, fund-raising, and à la carte items in the cafeteria.	
9. The school uses either non-food items for fundraising activities or foods/beverages that are compliant with the MCPS Wellness regulations.	
10. Healthier food and beverage choices are encouraged at classroom parties and at school-sponsored celebrations.	
11. Using food and beverages as a reward or punishment is prohibited.	
12. Students who are held in the office for disciplinary issues are provided the same lunch selections as their peers.	
13. Food and beverage marketing for fund-raisers or evening events is restricted to foods and beverages that meet MCPS Wellness regulations. This includes posters or flyers for distribution to students, PA announcements, school marquis, etc. (Marketing information to parents should be communicated via listserve, connect Ed, email, website, mail correspondence.)	
14. At least one wellness goal has been included in the School Improvement Plan.	
TOTAL SCORE	

Date: ____ / ____ / ____ Name _____

Core School Environment Needs Assessment Scoring (42 possible points)

What does your score mean?

To be compliant with the state and local regulations, your school needs to score a 3 in all the assessment areas. For assistance with that work, please contact the Director of School Wellness Initiatives at studentwellness@mcpsmd.org.

33-42 points—Congratulations! Your school has taken significant steps to ensure that student health and wellness is a priority. You recognize the value of staff wellness, psychological well-being, and the importance of communicating practices with all stakeholders.

Below 33 points—Needs Improvement! Identify the areas where your school scored below a 3. Use the goal setting and action planning sections to create an improvement plan for your school. All areas of the core assessment are mandatory, per MCPS Wellness regulations and USDA regulations. For assistance and support, please contact the Director of School Wellness Initiatives at studentwellness@mcpsmd.org.



Enhanced School Environment Assessment

The Enhanced School Environment Needs Assessment will help the team assess additional areas to improve health and wellness for students and staff.

Directions: Using the following scale: **3 = Fully in Place, 2 = Partially in Place, 1 = Under Development, and 0 = Not in Place or Not Applicable**, mark the corresponding number for each item. Then prioritize the area in your school with the following scale: **High = H, Medium = M, Low = L**. For accurate recordkeeping, be sure to sign and date the assessment.

Enhanced School Environment Assessment		
	3, 2 1 or 0	H, M or L Priority
1. The Committee has identified two to three goals annually to support student wellness.		
2. School wellness goals were determined by school community survey, general interest of a committee, or based on a needs assessment.		
3. The school promotes policies and environmental changes to support a healthy, active lifestyle for students.		
4. There are initiatives that promote safe routes to school and encourage walking and bicycling to school.		
5. The school shares its wellness activities with families and community members through newsletters, school website, or appropriate communication channels.		
6. Classrooms are encouraged to have physical activity breaks.		
7. Physical activity resources, support, and training have been provided to implement physical activity breaks.		
8. The school has a food and beverage policy/plan for school-sponsored events and birthday celebrations. The principal or designee vets any plan alternative.		
9. The school's policy/plan for school-sponsored events and birthday celebrations is communicated via parent handbook, school website, or other communication channels.		
10. Food and beverages served at community and family events that occur later than 30 minutes after the school day ends are not required to meet MCPS Wellness regulations; however, the school offers healthier items.		
11. The MCPS Wellness regulations have been shared with staff.		
12. The school has psychological and psychosocial interventions available to students, as needed.		
13. There are employee wellness programs that support healthy eating, active lifestyles, and tobacco-free and stress management.		
14. There is active family engagement surrounding wellness for the entire school community.		
15. Students are provided with opportunities to develop and practice skills such as empathy, compassion, and conflict resolution.		
TOTAL SCORE		

Date: ___ / ___ / ___ Name _____

Enhanced School Environment Assessment Scoring (45 possible points)

What does your score mean?

Above 35—Congratulations! Your school has taken significant steps to ensure that student health and wellness is a priority. You recognize the value of staff wellness, psychological well-being, and the importance of communicating practices with all stakeholders. Keep up the great work!

Between 20 and 35—Take a look at the areas where you scored a 2 or below. Note the priority level of the items for your school. Consider adding one or two of these areas into your wellness goals or your school improvement plan.

Below 20—Take a look at the areas where you scored a 2 or below. Note the priority level of the items for your school. Consider adding one or two of these areas into your wellness goals or your School Improvement Plan.

For additional resources or assistance, please contact the Director of Student Wellness Initiatives at studentwellness@mcpsmd.org.





Additional Resources for Assessing Your School's Wellness Practices

If you want to do a more in-depth assessment of your school, consider using one of the resources below.

- **Full version of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's School Health Index:** A full-version online tool that has eight modules, looking at School Health and Safety Policies and Environment, Health Education, Physical Education and Other Physical Activity Programs, Nutrition Services, Health Services, Counseling, Psychological and Social Services, Health Promotion for Staff, and Family and Community Involvement. Completion will take approximately six hours. www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/shi/index.htm.
- **Condensed version of the School Health Index via the Alliance for a Healthier Generation:** Requires registration and sign-in to access the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's free tools. The condensed version of the School Health Index consists of six modules (plus two optional* modules) and looks at School Health and Safety Policies and Environment, Health Education, Physical Education and Other Physical Activity Programs, Nutrition Services, *Health Services, *Counseling, Psychological and Social Services, Health Promotion for Staff, and Family and Community Involvement. Completion takes about two hours. www.healthiergeneration.org/resources/assessments.
- **Condensed version of the School Health Index via Action for Healthy Kids:** Requires registration and sign-in to access the Action for Healthy Kids free tools. The condensed version consists of six modules (plus two optional* modules) and looks at School Health and Safety Policies and Environment, Health Education, Physical Education and Other Physical Activity Programs, Nutrition Services, *Health Services, *Counseling, Psychological and Social Services, Health Promotion for Staff, and Family and Community Involvement. Completion takes about two hours. www.actionforhealthykids.org/what-we-do.