

# Yeshiva K'tana of Waterbury



Triennial School Wellness Policy

Executive Summary & Findings

SY 2024-2025

## Introduction

Yeshiva K'tana of Waterbury conducted its triennial wellness policy assessment in the 2024–2025 school year to evaluate the alignment of our wellness practices and policies with federal requirements and recognized best practices. This review is mandated by the USDA every three years and serves as a tool to ensure that our Local School Wellness Policy continues to support the health and well-being of our students.

To complete the assessment, we utilized the WellSAT 3.0 tool and accompanying implementation assessment rubrics. A committee composed of school administrators, food service personnel, educators, and staff met during the spring of 2025 to evaluate our current practices across six key areas: Nutrition Education, USDA School Meals, Competitive Foods and Beverages, Physical Education and Physical Activity, Wellness Promotion and Marketing, and Policy Implementation.

Compared to our 2022 assessment, our 2025 results show consistency in many areas with continued strengths in ensuring access to drinking water, privacy in free/reduced meal distribution, and promoting healthy eating behaviors. Several policies, including those related to food service training and physical education, were identified as needing updates or clearer language to match our ongoing practices. We also observed new opportunities for growth, especially in physical education time requirements and district-level wellness committee representation.

The findings from this year's assessment will inform upcoming revisions to the wellness policy and guide the development of strategies to further support student wellness and meet all federal guidelines.

### Strong Policies and Aligned Practices

Yeshiva K'tana of Waterbury is proud to report a number of areas where our policies and practices are fully aligned with federal wellness requirements, reflecting meaningful progress toward our student wellness goals.

This year's triennial assessment identified numerous items rated as "Strong Policies and Aligned Practices", meaning we not only have clear, written policies in place, but also that our daily practices consistently reflect those policies. Federal requirements that fall into this high-performing category include:

FR3: Protecting the privacy of students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals

FR4: Ensuring free drinking water is available during meals

FR14: Designating responsible officials for implementing and monitoring the wellness policy

FR15: Making the wellness policy publicly available

FR16: Assessing implementation of the policy at least once every three years

FR17: Making triennial assessment results available to the public

FR18: Updating the policy based on assessment results

Additionally, in the Nutrition Environment and Services section, we demonstrated full alignment in the following areas:

NES2: Addressing unpaid meal balances without stigmatization

NES3: Communicating eligibility for free/reduced meals to families

NES4: Strategies to increase participation in school meals

NES5: Marketing healthy food and beverage choices

NES6: Ensuring sufficient time for students to eat

NES14: Access to free drinking water throughout the school day

In the Nutrition Education section, we are fully aligned in:

NE2 and NE3: Providing sequential, comprehensive nutrition education to elementary and middle school students

NE5: Integrating nutrition education into other subjects

We also met the criteria for strong alignment in areas of Physical Activity and Wellness, including:

PEPA13: Recess for elementary students

PEPA14: Physical activity breaks during the school day

PEPA18 and PEPA19: Avoiding physical activity as a punishment or withholding it

EW1 and EW2: Supporting employee wellness and encouraging staff to model healthy behaviors

IC1 and IC2: Maintaining active district- and school-level wellness committees

Improvements since the 2022 assessment include refining and strengthening our policy language for several areas that had previously only reflected implementation but lacked clear documentation. For example, while we had implemented annual training for food service staff and offered structured nutrition education in 2022, our policies now more explicitly describe

these practices. Similarly, areas such as water access and wellness committee activity have shown consistent strength, but our current policy documentation has been updated to more clearly define roles and communication methods.

These successes reflect our commitment to creating a healthy, supportive environment for all students. By strengthening both our written policies and daily practices, we are building a sustainable framework for long-term student wellness and federal compliance.

		Policy Score	Practice Score	
FR1	Does the district have specific goals for nutrition education designed to promote student wellness?	2	2	☆
FR3	Does your school take steps to protect the privacy of students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals?	2	2	☆
FR4	Is free (i.e., no cost to students) drinking water available to students during meals?	2	2	☆
FR14	Is there an official who is responsible for the implementation and compliance with the wellness policy at the building level for each school?	2	2	☆
FR15	How is the wellness policy made available to the public?	2	2	☆
FR16	Is wellness policy implementation evaluated every three years?	2	2	☆

		Policy Score	Practice Score	
FR17	What is included in the triennial assessment report to the public?	2	2	☆
FR18	Has the wellness policy been revised based on the previous triennial assessment?	2	2	☆
NES2	Does your school take steps to address feeding students with unpaid meal balances without stigmatizing them?	2	2	☆
NES3	Does your school or district provide information to families about eligibility for free or reduced-price meals?	2	2	☆
NES4	Does your school use strategies to maximize participation in the school breakfast program and/or school lunch program?	2	2	☆
NES5	Are marketing strategies used to promote healthy food and beverage choices in school?	2	2	☆
NES6	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	☆

		Policy Score	Practice Score	
NES14	Do students have consistent and easy access to free drinking water throughout the school day?	2	2	☆
NE2	Do all elementary school students receive sequential and comprehensive nutrition education?	2	2	☆
NE3	Do all middle school students receive sequential and comprehensive nutrition education?	2	2	☆
NE5	Is nutrition education integrated into other subjects beyond health education?	2	2	☆
PEPA13	Is there daily recess for all grades in elementary school?	2	2	☆
PEPA14	 Do teachers provide regular physical activity breaks for students in the classroom?	2	2	☆
PEPA18	Do teachers ever use physical activity as a punishment?	2	2	☆
PEPA19	Do teachers ever withhold physical activity as a classroom management tool?	2	2	☆

		Policy Score	Practice Score	
EW1	 Are there strategies used by the school to support employee wellness?	2	2	
EW2	Are school staff encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity behaviors in front of students?	2	2	
IC1	Is there an active district-level wellness committee?	2	2	
IC2	Is there an active school-level wellness committee?	2	2	

#### Create Practice Implementation Plan

The 2024–2025 triennial assessment identified several areas where Yeshiva K’tana of Waterbury has either strong or adequate written policies in place, but where implementation practices need to be improved to fully align with the Local School Wellness Policy (LSWP) and federal requirements. These areas fall under the "Create Practice Implementation Plan" category and will be the focus of targeted follow-up actions over the coming year.

#### Federal Requirements in This Section

The following federally aligned wellness areas were rated as having limited or absent implementation despite the existence of a supporting policy:

FR11: Regulation of food and beverages served at class parties and school celebrations in elementary schools

FR13: Inclusion of relevant stakeholder groups on the wellness committee

NES13: Prohibition of using food as a reward

NE1: Use of behavior-focused and interactive methods in nutrition education

NE6: Integration of nutrition education with the school food environment

NE7: Inclusion of agriculture and food systems in nutrition education

PEPA1–3: Written curriculum and promotion of active lifestyles in physical education

PEPA12: Opportunities for before- and after-school physical activity

#### Improvement Plan

To address these gaps, we will develop a Practice Implementation Plan that includes the following strategies:

#### Classroom Celebrations (FR11 & NES13)

Distribute clear guidelines to staff regarding acceptable food for celebrations and discourage food-based rewards.

Offer staff training and alternative ideas for celebrations and positive reinforcement.

Monitor implementation by requesting teachers to report planned celebrations in advance.

#### Stakeholder Involvement (FR13)

Expand wellness committee membership to ensure representation from parents, school food authority staff, teachers, and health professionals.

Schedule quarterly wellness committee meetings and publicize meeting invitations to community members.

#### Nutrition Education Enhancements (NE1, NE6, NE7)

Provide teacher training on interactive, skills-based nutrition instruction.

Increase collaboration between food service staff and teachers to connect cafeteria offerings with classroom nutrition lessons.

Incorporate agriculture and food systems content into middle school science or social studies classes.

#### Physical Education and Activity Opportunities (PEPA1–3, PEPA12)

Develop a written physical education curriculum aligned with state standards and ensure consistent delivery across grades.

Encourage after-school clubs that incorporate physical activity, such as walking groups or

recreational sports.

Provide professional development to PE staff on activity-based learning and lifestyle fitness education.

#### Responsibility and Oversight

The Wellness Coordinator—in partnership with the school principal, PE department, and nutrition services director—will be responsible for creating and overseeing the practice implementation plan. The wellness committee will review progress quarterly and make necessary adjustments.

#### Timeline

Plan creation: September 2025

Implementation launch: November 2025

Mid-year review: February 2026

Full assessment of implementation success: June 2026

#### Assessment of Success

Implementation success will be measured by:

Internal staff surveys

Observations and checklists during classroom visits

Participation rates in physical activity and nutrition programs

Student feedback

Updated compliance ratings in the next annual wellness committee review

By creating and following this detailed implementation plan, Yeshiva K'tana of Waterbury will ensure its wellness practices are fully in step with policy language and federal expectations, while building a healthier school environment for all students.

		Policy Score	Practice Score	
NES13	Do teachers or school staff give students food as a reward?	1	0	
PEPA3	How does your physical education program promote a physically active lifestyle?	1	0	
PEPA12	 Are there opportunities for all students to engage in physical activity before and after school?	2	0	

#### Update Policies

The 2024–2025 triennial assessment identified several areas where Yeshiva K’tana of Waterbury is already implementing strong or partial wellness practices, but the written Local School Wellness Policy (LSWP) does not adequately reflect those practices. To ensure our policy aligns with actual implementation and meets all federal requirements, we will update the policy to include more specific, clearly written language.

#### Federal Requirements in This Section

The following items are federally required and were identified as having insufficient or no policy language despite implementation being in place:

FR2: Compliance with USDA nutrition standards for reimbursable meals

FR5: Annual training for food and nutrition services staff per USDA Professional Standards

Additionally, these important practice areas for our school also require policy updates to better reflect actual efforts:

NE1: Use of behavior-focused, interactive nutrition education

PEPA14: Physical activity breaks during classroom instruction

EW2: Staff encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity

These areas received a practice score of “2” but either had no corresponding policy language or the language was too vague. Documenting these practices formally in the policy will strengthen transparency, compliance, and sustainability.

#### Responsibility and Oversight

The Wellness Coordinator, in collaboration with the school principal, food services director, and curriculum leads, will be responsible for drafting the revised policy language. Drafts will be reviewed and approved by the Wellness Committee before submission to school leadership for formal adoption.

#### Timeline

Draft policy revisions: October 2025

Wellness Committee review: November 2025

Final approval and adoption: January 2026

Public posting of revised policy: February 2026

#### Improving Partial Implementation

While many of the identified practices are being implemented fully, one item—NE1 (skills-based, behavior-focused nutrition education)—was rated with a practice score of “1,” indicating only partial implementation. To improve in this area, we will:

Provide training and curriculum support to teachers to incorporate hands-on and interactive nutrition lessons.

Integrate more behavior-based activities, such as food label analysis, cooking demos, or cafeteria tastings.

Align the nutrition curriculum more closely with USDA and state best practices.

Progress in these areas will be monitored through classroom observations, teacher feedback, and student engagement in nutrition-related activities.

		Policy Score	Practice Score	
FR2	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?	1	2	
FR5	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	
NE1	Are skills-based, behavior-focused, and interactive/participatory methods used in nutrition education to develop student skills?	1	2	
PEPA11	 Are there opportunities for families and community members to engage in physical activity at school?	1	2	

### Opportunities for Growth

The 2024–2025 triennial assessment identified several areas where Yeshiva K'tana of Waterbury has either not addressed federally required topics in policy or practice, or has only addressed them in a very limited way. These areas represent key opportunities for both policy development and practice implementation to ensure full compliance with USDA regulations and to support student wellness more effectively.

### Federal Requirements in This Section

The following federally required items were identified as needing immediate attention:

FR11: Regulation of foods and beverages served at classroom parties and other celebrations in elementary schools

FR13: Inclusion of all relevant stakeholders in the wellness committee

#### Additional Local Priorities

While not federally required, the following items are important to our school's wellness culture and were also scored as limited in both policy and practice:

NES13: Food not being used as a reward

PEPA1–4: Written PE curriculum, alignment with standards, and minimum PE minutes for elementary and middle school students

PEPA11: Family and community engagement in physical activity

PEPA12: Before- and after-school physical activity opportunities

IC1 & IC2: Active district- and school-level wellness committees with broad representation

#### Implementation Plans

To improve in these areas, we will take the following actions:

##### Class Parties & Food-Based Celebrations (FR11)

Create and distribute clear school-wide guidelines limiting sugary or unhealthy foods at parties.

Encourage non-food celebrations and provide teachers with alternatives.

Include this language in the wellness policy and monitor compliance through teacher reporting.

##### Wellness Committee Membership (FR13, IC1, IC2)

Recruit additional members including parents, students (if applicable), school health professionals, and food service staff.

Schedule regular meetings (at least quarterly), and publicize agendas and outcomes.

##### Use of Food as a Reward (NES13)

Train teachers and staff on non-food-based incentives and include guidance in the staff handbook.

Monitor implementation through staff surveys and classroom walkthroughs.

##### Physical Education Improvements (PEPA1–4, PEPA11, PEPA12)

Develop and implement a written PE curriculum aligned to national/state standards.

Set minimum PE instructional time goals for elementary and middle school students.

Create partnerships for after-school activities (e.g., fitness clubs, open gym) and invite family/community participation.

Monitor PE schedules and participation through teacher logs and student surveys.

#### Responsibility and Oversight

Practice Implementation Plan: Led by the Wellness Coordinator, in partnership with the PE department, classroom teachers, and school administrators.

Policy Updates: Will be overseen by the Wellness Committee, with final approval by school leadership.

#### Timeline

Practice Plan Development: October 2025

Implementation Launch: January 2026

Policy Drafting and Review: November 2025

Policy Finalization and Adoption: February 2026

Assessment of Implementation Success: June 2026

Measured through surveys, PE schedules, wellness committee attendance, and classroom observation

		Policy Score	Practice Score	
FR11	Does your district regulate foods and beverages served at class parties and other school celebrations in elementary schools?	1	1	
FR13	Which groups are represented on the district-level wellness committee?	1	1	
NES1	Does the district offer breakfast every day to all students?	1	1	
NES7	 In your district, is it a priority to procure locally produced foods for school meals?	1	1	
NE6	Do school nutrition services staff members use the following methods to collaborate with teachers to reinforce nutrition education lessons taught in the classroom?	1	1	
NE7	 Does nutrition education address agriculture and the food system?	1	1	
PEPA1	 Does the district have a written physical education curriculum that is implemented consistently for every grade?	1	1	

### Conclusion

Yeshiva K'tana of Waterbury remains committed to promoting a healthy, supportive environment for all students through strong wellness policies and practices. This triennial assessment showed that we are meeting many federal wellness requirements, especially in areas like access to nutritious meals, drinking water, physical activity, and nutrition education.

We also identified areas where we can grow—such as increasing physical education time, improving our policy language, and making sure our celebrations and rewards reflect our wellness goals. Over the next year, we will update our wellness policy, expand implementation of wellness practices, and involve more voices in the process by strengthening our wellness committee.

By working together—families, staff, and community members—we can continue to build a school culture that supports lifelong healthy habits for our students.