# Superintendent’s Memo #020-21


**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

DATE: January 29, 2021

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction

## SUBJECT: Triennial Assessment of the Local School Wellness Policy

The purpose of this memo is to remind local education agencies (LEAs) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) requirement to assess and publicly post the triennial assessment of the Local School Wellness Policy (Wellness Policy) by June 30, 2021. Each LEA participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and/or the School Breakfast Program (SBP) must develop a Wellness Policy. The Wellness Policy provides schools with structure and guidance to promote student wellness, prevent childhood obesity, and assure that school meals and other foods and beverages sold are consistent with applicable minimum federal standards. At least once every three years, LEAs are required to complete an assessment of the Wellness Policy, post the assessment publicly, and update the Wellness Policy based on the assessment results.
([7 CFR§ 210.31](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?rgn=div5&node=7:4.1.1.1.1#se7.4.210_131))

Due to COVID-19, Virginia has elected to utilize a USDA waiver extension for the triennial assessment which provides a revised first triennial assessment deadline of June 30, 2021, allowing necessary flexibility from the original deadline of June 30, 2020. Accordingly, all LEAs are required to complete their first assessment by June 30, 2021.

### Resources for the Triennial Assessment

The Virginia Department of Education, Office of School Nutrition Programs (VDOE-SNP) has provided resources and assistance to LEAs for completing the triennial assessment. These resources include:

* Superintendents Memo 275-19 released on November 22, 2019, with attachments A, B, C, and D. The attachments include an example triennial assessment, sample school level report card, user-friendly worksheet, and blank fillable triennial assessment. The memo and attachment can be accessed on the [VDOE 2019 Superintendent’s Memos webpage](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2019/index.shtml).
* Recorded presentation at the 2020 Director’s Conference on June 10, 2020, [*Completing the Triennial Assessment*](https://zoom.us/rec/play/uMUqdeqq_2k3HYbBuQSDV_R9W9XoL66s0nVIqPEKyE_jAXFWO1HzY7pANuoF4T0fOPoYXaOLxxc8kzDP), which starts at minute marker 01:12:38.
* VDOE-SNP online training, *Local School Wellness Policy: Completing the Triennial Assessment*; released summer 2020. The online training can be accessed on the [Articulate e-learning platform, Rise.com](https://vdoe-school-nutrition.rise.com/login). To view the videos and receive certificates of completion, you must be an enrolled learner in the Rise.com platform. To enroll, please email the VDOE-SNP Training and Marketing Specialist at kelly.shomo@doe.virginia.gov and provide your name, email address, and school division/education site.
* Recorded presentation at the Fall Regional Meeting on November 4, 5, 10, and 12, 2020, [*Updating the Wellness Policy and Triennial Assessment Q&A*](https://doe-virginia-gov.zoom.us/rec/play/06-87JPgxTn4X0Hq90j4TI57_rSZ65_cbXedfJFSOrb-eSGab3HiBHXdpjXlZNFCcsF4S9SsSvxg9WGb.dDnhb1TZyxOnr15h), which starts at minute marker 02:33:39.

### Requirements of the Triennial Assessment

The triennial assessment must be completed at least once every three years, be available to the public, and measure the implementation of the Wellness Policy, including:

* the extent to which schools under the jurisdiction of the LEA are in compliance with the Wellness Policy;
* the extent to which the LEA’s Wellness Policy compares to a model Wellness Policy; and
* a description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the Wellness Policy.

The results of the assessment and, subsequently, the updated Wellness Policy will provide structure for wellness initiatives in the school environment for the next three years. The VDOE-SNP recommends including the following three best practices when considering updates to the Wellness Policy:

1. Offer alternative breakfast models to increase access.
2. Implement farm to school activities.
3. Establish a School Health Advisory Board or similar health committee.

Please direct any questions about the Wellness Policy or triennial assessment to Laura Burns, SNP Wellness Policy Specialist, by email at laura.burns@doe.virginia.gov.

JFL/SCC/LB/cc