

**Integrating Health into Education Policy and Practice  
with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)**

**Local Wellness Policies and School Improvement Plans**

	<b>Local Wellness Policy (LWP)</b>	<b>School Improvement Plan (SIP)</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	A written document that guides a <b>local</b> educational agency (LEA) or a school district's efforts to create a supportive school nutrition and physical activity environment. Ensures that the school environment is supporting the whole child.	A strategic plan for ensuring that the greatest number of children in a school achieve academic proficiency. A process of identifying deficiencies in order to implement strategies aimed at boosting academic achievement. Provides the opportunity to ensure that academic environment supports the whole child.
<b>Requiring Authority</b>	US Department of Agriculture (USDA) (Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act, 2010)	State or LEA (was federally required under No Child Left Behind but no longer required under ESSA)
<b>When Required?</b>	All LEAs that participate in the National School Lunch Program are required to have a state agency-approved, USDA-compliant LWP.	States must develop an accountability system and identify schools that are not meeting expected benchmarks. Those schools must develop an SIP.
<b>Required Components</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nutrition education and promotion</li> <li>• Physical activity, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness</li> <li>• Standards and nutrition guidelines for all foods and beverages sold and served to students during the school day</li> <li>• Policies for food and beverage marketing</li> <li>• Description of public involvement, public updates, policy leadership, and evaluation plan</li> </ul>	There must be a strong evidence base that the interventions within the SIP will lead to improved performance on the state accountability system components.

<p><b>Development</b></p>	<p>Based upon a health and wellness needs assessment such as the School Health Index. A school wellness committee (SWC, at the district or school-level) should conduct the assessment, and develop and carry out an action plan for LWP implementation.</p>	<p>Based upon a comprehensive needs assessment. States may provide guidance to LEAs on required components of needs assessments. A school improvement team should be involved in conducting the needs assessment and developing the SIP.</p>
<p><b>Monitoring and Reporting</b></p>	<p>LEAs are expected to measure and publicly report (annually) wellness policy implementation progress. The SWC can assist with this process. Not tied to any funding source.</p>	<p>Schools must report progress on implementing the SIP to the LEA/state.</p>
<p><b>Stakeholders</b></p>	<p>School staff, students, family members, community members, and the general public.</p>	<p>School staff, students, family members, and community members.</p>
<p><b>Additional Notes</b></p>	<p>LWPs may address a variety of health and wellness areas beyond nutrition and physical activity, including but not limited to physical and mental health services, social and emotional learning, school climate and safety, and environmental health.</p>	<p>Though not required by ESSA, SIPs are still a component of school improvement in most states. Some states require SIPs for all schools, not only those failing to meeting benchmarks on their state accountability system. LEAs may also develop district improvement plans.</p>



## HEALTHY SCHOOLS CAMPAIGN

### **Health and wellness initiatives are an integral part of school improvement:**

- Improving academic outcomes tied to more than high-quality resources and instruction; non-academic barriers must be addressed.
- Healthy eating, physical activity, chronic health conditions, and safe and positive school environments impact school attendance, behavioral issues, and academic outcomes.
- Health and physical education and healthy school environments support students in developing healthy habits, which helps to reduce health disparities that negatively impact academic achievement, college attendance, and career success.
- What is included in SIPs is what gets measured and accomplished on an ongoing basis, so the role of health in learning and academic achievement should be considered.
- SIPs can incorporate physical, social emotional, and/or behavioral health priorities into schools.

### **LWCs can ensure the development of SIPs that support student health and wellness by:**

- Informing district and school-level needs assessments, and identify sources of health and wellness data and evidence-based programming.
- Ensuring integration of the LWP with the SIP.
- Serving on the school improvement team.
- Bringing school staff, families, students, and community members together to address pressing student health issues.
- Advising the school board/district on school/community health issues, coordinating efforts and programs that exist in the district and the community, identifying student/staff health needs, and monitoring and evaluating implementation of district health and wellness policies and programs.
- Supporting family and student engagement in school-level planning.

### **Additional Resources:**

- ESSA Frequently Asked Questions: [schools.healthiergeneration.org/asset/7qnx8/ESSA-FAQ.pdf](https://schools.healthiergeneration.org/asset/7qnx8/ESSA-FAQ.pdf) (Alliance for a Healthier Generation and Healthy Schools Campaign)
- Using Needs Assessments to Connect Learning + Health: Opportunities in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): [healthyschoolscampaign.org/needs-assessment](https://healthyschoolscampaign.org/needs-assessment) (Alliance for a Healthier Generation and Healthy Schools Campaign)
- The Every Student Succeeds Act Creates Opportunities to Improve Health and Education at Low-Performing Schools: [pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/reports/2017/08/the-every-student-succeeds-act-creates-opportunities-to-improve-health-and-education](https://pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/reports/2017/08/the-every-student-succeeds-act-creates-opportunities-to-improve-health-and-education) (Pew Charitable Trusts Health Impact Project)
- A Guide for Incorporating Health and Wellness into School Improvement Plans: [c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.chronicdisease.org/resource/resmgr/school\\_health/NACDD\\_SIP\\_Guide\\_2016.pdf](https://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.chronicdisease.org/resource/resmgr/school_health/NACDD_SIP_Guide_2016.pdf) (NACDD)

***Sign up at [healthyschoolscampaign.org/essa-updates](https://healthyschoolscampaign.org/essa-updates) to get monthly updates from Healthier Generation and Healthy Schools Campaign on how states are implementing ESSA in a way that supports student health and wellness.***