

Triennial Assessment Report: WellSAT (12/2025)

District: HOPE COMMUNITY ACADEMY

Introduction

Dear HOPE Families and Community Members,

We are pleased to share the results of our 2025 Triennial Wellness Policy Assessment, completed in December 2025. Federal law requires all schools participating in the National School Lunch Program to evaluate their wellness policies every three years to ensure we are creating healthy school environments that support student success.

Our Assessment Process

This assessment was completed using the WellSAT (Wellness School Assessment Tool), a nationally recognized evaluation tool that measures both our written policies and our actual practices across six key areas: federal requirements, nutrition environment and services, nutrition education, physical education and physical activity, employee wellness, and integration and coordination. Our district-level wellness committee, which includes administrators, teachers, nutrition staff, and community representatives, collaborated on this evaluation to provide an accurate picture of our wellness efforts.

Our Results

We are proud to report that HOPE Community Academy demonstrates strong alignment between our wellness policies and practices. In the majority of areas assessed, we scored at the highest level (a score of 2), indicating that we not only have strong written policies but are also fully implementing practices that support student health and wellness. Our assessment shows particular strengths in:

- Meeting all federal nutrition standards for school meals and competitive foods
- Providing comprehensive, sequential nutrition education to all grade levels
- Implementing a consistent physical education curriculum aligned with state standards
- Maintaining active wellness committees at both the district and school levels
- Ensuring transparency and accessibility of our wellness policy to the public

Areas for Growth

While our overall performance is strong, we have identified several opportunities for improvement, including:

- Enhancing professional development opportunities for physical education teachers
- Strengthening wellness committee representation to include more diverse stakeholders
- Reducing exemptions from physical education classes
- Expanding collaboration between nutrition services staff and classroom teachers

We are committed to continuous improvement and will use these findings to strengthen our wellness initiatives over the coming three years. A complete copy of our assessment results is available <https://hopecommunityacademy.org/annual-reports-and-school-policies/>, and we welcome your feedback and involvement in our wellness efforts.

Strong Policies and Aligned Practices

Section 1: Federal Requirements - Areas of Success

HOPE Community Academy demonstrates exceptional compliance with federal wellness policy requirements, reflecting our commitment to creating a healthy and supportive learning environment for all students. The federal requirements assessed in this section encompass nutrition education goals, meal program standards, student privacy protections, water access, staff training, competitive food standards, food marketing

Triennial Assessment Report: WellSAT (12/2025)

District: HOPE COMMUNITY ACADEMY

regulations, wellness committee composition, policy leadership and accountability, public transparency, and triennial assessment procedures.

Exemplary Performance Areas

Our district has achieved the highest possible scores (2 out of 2) in both policy and practice for the vast majority of federal requirements.

We are particularly proud of the following accomplishments:

Comprehensive Nutrition Standards: All meals served through our National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program meet or exceed federal standards for meal patterns, nutrient levels, and calorie requirements across all grade levels. Additionally, all competitive foods and beverages—including those sold à la carte in the cafeteria and through fundraisers during the school day—comply with USDA Smart Snacks nutrition standards. This ensures that every food option available to students during the school day supports their health and academic success.

Student Privacy and Dignity: We have implemented robust procedures to protect the privacy of students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals, ensuring that no student experiences stigma related to their meal benefits. This commitment to dignity and respect is fundamental to our school culture.

Access to Drinking Water: Free drinking water is readily available to all students during meals and throughout the school day, supporting proper hydration and overall wellness.

Food Marketing Accountability: All food and beverage marketing present on our campus during the school day meets Smart Snacks criteria, ensuring that students are only exposed to messages promoting nutritious choices.

Policy Transparency and Assessment: Our wellness policy is made publicly available through multiple channels, and we conduct comprehensive triennial assessments as required. We complete thorough assessment reports that include policy updates, implementation progress, and areas for improvement. Importantly, we have revised our wellness policy based on findings from previous assessments, demonstrating our commitment to continuous improvement.

Leadership and Accountability: We have designated officials responsible for wellness policy implementation and compliance at the building level for each school, ensuring clear accountability and consistent execution of our wellness initiatives.

Areas for Continued Growth

While our overall performance is strong, we have identified two areas where we can strengthen our efforts:

Staff Training Requirements: Our policy language regarding USDA Professional Standards continuing education requirements for nutrition program staff could be more comprehensive (policy score of 1), though we are pleased to report that in practice, all school nutrition program directors, managers, and staff meet or exceed the required annual training hours (practice score of 2). We will update our written policy to reflect the strong practices already in place.

Elementary School Celebrations: Both our policy and practice regarding foods and beverages served at class parties and other school celebrations in elementary schools received scores of 1, indicating room for improvement. While we do regulate these items to some degree, we recognize the need to strengthen both our written guidelines and our implementation to ensure that celebration foods align more consistently with

Triennial Assessment Report: WellSAT (12/2025)

District: HOPE COMMUNITY ACADEMY

our wellness goals. This represents an opportunity to engage families and teachers in creating festive, inclusive celebrations that also support student health.

Wellness Committee Representation: While we maintain an active and effective district-level wellness committee (policy score of 2), our practice score of 1 indicates that we could benefit from expanding the diversity of stakeholders represented on the committee. We will work to ensure broader representation from parents, students, community members, and various school staff to bring more perspectives to our wellness planning.

Continuous Improvement




The strong alignment between our policies and practices in meeting federal requirements reflects years of dedication from our nutrition services staff, administrators, teachers, wellness committee members, and community partners. As we move forward, we will focus on addressing the identified growth areas while maintaining our exemplary performance in other federal requirements. Our goal is to ensure that every aspect of our school environment—from the food we serve to the policies we implement—supports the health, well-being, and academic success of every HOPE Community Academy student.

		Policy Score	Practice Score	
FR1	Does the district have specific goals for nutrition education designed to promote student wellness?	2	2	★
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?	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	★
FR7	Do all a la carte foods and beverages sold in the cafeteria meet Smart Snacks standards?	2	2	★
FR10	Are there fundraisers that sell foods or beverages to be consumed during the school day? If yes, do the foods and beverages sold meet Smart Snacks standards?	2	2	★

Triennial Assessment Report: WellSAT (12/2025)
District: HOPE COMMUNITY ACADEMY

FR12	Is there food or beverage marketing on the school campus during the school day? If yes, do the marketed items meet Smart Snacks criteria?	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	☆
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	☆
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	☆
NES8	Do you know where to access the USDA Smart Snacks nutrition standards to check and see if an item can be sold in school during the school day?	2	2	☆
NES9	Are you familiar with any state laws allowing exemptions for school-sponsored fundraisers during which foods and beverages do not have to meet Smart Snacks?	2	2	☆
NES11	Do all foods or beverages SERVED (not sold) to students after the school day on school grounds (including aftercare, clubs, and afterschool programming) meet federal nutrition standards (e.g., CACFP or Smart Snacks)?	2	2	☆

Triennial Assessment Report: WellSAT (12/2025)
District: HOPE COMMUNITY ACADEMY

NES14	Do students have consistent and easy access to free drinking water throughout the school day?	2	2	☆
NE1	Are skills-based, behavior-focused, and interactive/ participatory methods used in nutrition education to develop student skills?	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	☆
NE4	Do all high school students receive sequential and comprehensive nutrition education?	2	2	☆
PEPA1	 Does the district have a written physical education curriculum that is implemented consistently for every grade?	2	2	☆
PEPA2	Does the district have a written physical education curriculum that is aligned with national and/or state standards?	2	2	☆
PEPA3	How does your physical education program promote a physically active lifestyle?	2	2	☆
PEPA11	 Are there opportunities for families and community members to engage in physical activity at school?	2	2	☆
PEPA13	Is there daily recess for all grades in elementary school?	2	2	☆
PEPA17	 Are teachers encouraged to use physical activity as a reward for students?	2	2	☆
IC1	Is there an active district-level wellness committee?	2	2	☆

Triennial Assessment Report: WellSAT (12/2025)

District: HOPE COMMUNITY ACADEMY

IC2	Is there an active school-level wellness committee?	2	2	★
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Create Practice Implementation Plan

While HOPE Community Academy demonstrates strong overall performance in wellness policy implementation, we have identified three specific areas where our written policies are comprehensive, but our practices require strengthening to achieve full alignment with our Local School Wellness Policy (LSWP).

Areas Requiring Practice Implementation Plans

Based on our WellSAT assessment, the following items have strong policies (score of 2) but need improved practice implementation (score of 1):

FR13: Wellness Committee Representation - Expanding diversity of stakeholders on our district-level wellness committee

NES13: Food as Reward - Eliminating the use of food as rewards by teachers and staff

PEPA12: Before and After School Physical Activity - Ensuring consistent physical activity opportunities are available and accessible to all students

Responsible Parties and Timeline

The Wellness Committee Leadership Team, in collaboration with building principals, will oversee implementation. Specific responsibilities include:

Wellness Committee Chair: Overall coordination and committee expansion

Assistant Principal/Dean of Students: Food reward policy enforcement and physical activity programs

Building-Level Wellness Coordinators: Day-to-day monitoring and staff support

Timeline:

By January 31, 2026: Assign responsibility for each implementation area

By February 28, 2026: Complete detailed action plans with specific steps and metrics

March - August 2026: Staff training, pilot implementation, and full rollout

Quarterly Reviews: September 2026, December 2026, March 2027, June 2027

Annual Assessment: June 2027 to evaluate success

Implementation Plan: Wellness Committee Representation (FR13)

Current Gap: Committee lacks sufficient representation from students, families, and community members.

Action Steps:

Recruit at least two student representatives, three parent/guardian representatives, and two community members by March 2026

Provide orientation and training for new members

Offer flexible meeting options (virtual attendance, varied times) to maximize participation

Translate materials into languages spoken by our families

Success Metrics:

Triennial Assessment Report: WellSAT (12/2025)

District: HOPE COMMUNITY ACADEMY

Committee includes all required stakeholder groups by March 2026
80% or higher attendance rate at meetings
Documented input from diverse stakeholders in wellness decisions

Implementation Plan: Food as Reward (NES13)

Current Gap: Despite policy discouraging this practice, some teachers continue to use food as behavioral or academic rewards.

Action Steps:

Provide coaching for all staff on non-food reward alternatives by March 2026
Create and distribute a "Positive Reinforcement Toolkit" with alternative reward ideas
Allocate budget for non-food reward supplies in each classroom
Include expectation in staff handbook and review during back-to-school training
Recognize classrooms successfully implementing non-food reward systems

Success Metrics:

100% of teachers coached by March 2026
Classroom observations show 90% or higher compliance by June 2027
Reduction in food allergy concerns related to classroom rewards
Student/parent surveys indicate decreased food-based incentives

Implementation Plan: Before and After School Physical Activity (PEPA12)

Current Gap: Physical activity opportunities exist but are not consistently available or accessible to all students across all buildings.

Action Steps:

Conduct inventory of current programs and identify barriers to participation (transportation, cost, awareness, variety)
Ensure at least one free, no-tryout physical activity opportunity is available daily at each building by August 2026
Expand offerings to include diverse activities (intramurals, dance, yoga, walking club, fitness)
Partner with community organizations for additional programs and resources
Create transportation solutions for students needing support getting home
Promote programs through multiple channels in multiple languages

Success Metrics:

Offering daily before or after school physical activity by August 2026
Participation rates increase by 25% over baseline by June 2027
Programs reflect diversity of student interests and abilities
Documented reduction in barriers to participation

Assessment and Accountability

Ongoing Monitoring:

Monthly check-ins by building-level wellness coordinators
Quarterly staff surveys to identify implementation challenges
Biannual student focus groups for feedback

Triennial Assessment Report: WellSAT (12/2025)





District: HOPE COMMUNITY ACADEMY

Quarterly Wellness Committee progress reviews

Continuous Improvement:

If assessments reveal challenges, the Leadership Team will adjust strategies, provide additional support, or reallocate resources. Implementation plans will be shared publicly through our website and newsletters, with regular progress updates to our school community.

By addressing these three practice gaps, HOPE Community Academy will ensure our strong wellness policies translate into consistent, equitable practices that support the health and well-being of every student.

		Policy Score	Practice Score	
FR13	Which groups are represented on the district-level wellness committee?	2	1	
NES13	Do teachers or school staff give students food as a reward?	2	1	
PEPA12	 Are there opportunities for all students to engage in physical activity before and after school?	2	1	

Update Policies

Policy Updates to Align with Federal Requirements and Best Practices

HOPE Community Academy's triennial assessment identified areas where our policy language needs strengthening and where both policy and practice require improvement to meet federal requirements and best practices.

Areas Requiring Policy Updates

Items where policy language is weak or absent, and practices need improvement:

Federal Requirements:

FR11: Foods at Class Parties - Policy score 1, Practice score 1

Other Priority Areas:

NES7: Local Food Procurement - No policy, Practice score 1

PEPA4, PEPA5, PEPA6: PE Minutes - Policy score 1, Practice score 1 (all levels)

PEPA16: Walking/Biking to School - No policy, Practice score 1

Responsible Parties and Timeline

Responsible Parties:

Wellness Committee Chair & Assistant Principal: Lead policy drafting and implementation

Triennial Assessment Report: WellSAT (12/2025)

District: HOPE COMMUNITY ACADEMY

Nutrition Services Director: Local food procurement and celebration guidelines

PE Department Head: PE minutes policy and implementation

Director of Operations: Active transportation initiatives

School Board: Final policy approval

Timeline:

January-March 2026: Draft policy language and implementation plans

April-June 2026: Legal review, community input, and Board approval

July 2026-June 2027: Implementation with quarterly progress monitoring

June 2027: Annual evaluation of success

Policy Updates and Implementation Plans

1. Foods at Class Parties and Celebrations (FR11)

Proposed Policy: "At least 50% of foods and beverages at elementary school celebrations must meet Smart Snacks standards. The district will provide guidelines and resources for healthy celebrations and non-food alternatives."

Implementation Plan:

Create "Healthy Celebration Toolkit" for teachers and families

Provide teacher training on healthy celebrations

Communicate guidelines through multiple channels in multiple languages

Monitor through principal observations and annual surveys

Success Metrics: 100% teacher training completion; 75% compliance; positive family feedback

2. Local Food Procurement (NES7)

Proposed Policy: "When feasible, the Nutrition Services Department will prioritize purchasing locally produced foods and explore partnerships with local farms and suppliers. Students will learn about local food systems through nutrition education."

Implementation Plan:

Assess current procurement and identify local sourcing opportunities

Pilot 2-3 local food items in Fall 2026

Develop farmer partnerships and explore grant opportunities

Feature local foods on menus with educational connections

Success Metrics: 2-3 local supplier partnerships; 5-10% of produce budget local; monthly featured local items

3. Physical Education Minutes (PEPA4, PEPA5, PEPA6)

Proposed Policy: "The district will work toward providing recommended weekly PE minutes: Elementary (150 min), Middle School (225 min), High School (225 min). Progress will be monitored and reported annually."

Multi-Year Implementation Plan:

Year 1 (2026-27): Assess current minutes, analyze constraints, pilot increased minutes at select schools

Year 2 (2027-28): Expand to additional buildings, hire additional PE staff as budget allows

Year 3 (2028-29): Work toward full implementation across all levels

Resource Needs: Additional PE staffing (2-3 FTE phased over 3 years), professional development, potential facility improvements

Success Metrics: Documented increase in PE minutes annually; improved student fitness data; reduced

Triennial Assessment Report: WellSAT (12/2025)

District: HOPE COMMUNITY ACADEMY

exemption rates

4. Safe Routes to School (PEPA16)

Proposed Policy: "The district supports active transportation to school. The district will partner with local government and community to implement strategies making it safer for students to walk or bike, including infrastructure improvements, safety education, crossing guards, and promotional events."

Implementation Plan:

Conduct walking/biking assessment identifying barriers

Partner with city/county for infrastructure improvements

Apply for Safe Routes to School grants

Establish crossing guard and walking school bus programs

Organize monthly Walk/Bike to School Days

Install bike racks and provide safety education

Success Metrics: Complete assessment; 10% increase in walking/biking rates; monthly promotional events; improved parent awareness

Monitoring and Accountability

All updates will include:

Clear implementation responsibility




Quarterly Wellness Committee progress reviews

Data collection on key metrics















Annual reporting to School Board and community

Strategy adjustments based on feedback

By strengthening our policies and systematically improving implementation, HOPE Community Academy will ensure all students have access to comprehensive wellness supports that promote healthy, active learning.

		Policy Score	Practice Score	
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	
NES1	Does the district offer breakfast every day to all students?	1	2	
NES3	Does your school or district provide information to families about eligibility for free or reduced-price meals?	1	2	

Triennial Assessment Report: WellSAT (12/2025)
District: HOPE COMMUNITY ACADEMY

NES4	Does your school use strategies to maximize participation in the school breakfast program and/or school lunch program?	1	2	
NE5	Is nutrition education integrated into other subjects beyond health education?	1	2	
NE7	 Does nutrition education address agriculture and the food system?	1	2	
PEPA7	Are all physical education classes taught by state certified/licensed teachers who are endorsed to teach physical education?	1	2	
PEPA8	Is ongoing professional development offered every year for PE teachers that is relevant and specific to physical education?	0	2	
PEPA9	What percentage of students do you estimate do not take PE each year due to exemptions?	0	2	
PEPA14	 Do teachers provide regular physical activity breaks for students in the classroom?	1	2	
PEPA15	Does the district have "joint-use" or "shared-use" agreements?	1	2	
PEPA19	Do teachers ever withhold physical activity as a classroom management tool?	0	2	
EW1	 Are there strategies used by the school to support employee wellness?	1	2	
EW2	Are school staff encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity behaviors in front of students?	1	2	

Opportunities for Growth

Improving Policy and Practice for Full Federal Compliance

Triennial Assessment Report: WellSAT (12/2025)

District: HOPE COMMUNITY ACADEMY

HOPE Community Academy's triennial assessment identified one area where both our written policy and our practices need improvement to meet federal requirements and best practices:

Area Requiring Improvement:

FR11: Foods and Beverages at Class Parties and School Celebrations in Elementary Schools

Policy Score: 1

Practice Score: 1

This federal requirement addresses regulating foods and beverages served at elementary school celebrations to support student health while maintaining enjoyable, inclusive events.

Implementation and Policy Update Plan

Responsible Parties:

Wellness Committee Chair & Assistant Principal: Coordinate policy updates and implementation

Nutrition Services Director: Develop celebration food guidelines

Elementary Principals: Ensure building-level implementation

School Board: Approve policy updates

Timeline:

Policy Updates:

January-February 2026: Draft updated policy language requiring at least 50% of celebration foods to meet Smart Snacks standards

March 2026: Wellness Committee review and approval

April-May 2026: Legal review and community input

June 2026: School Board approval

Implementation Strategies:

Provide user-friendly guidelines that make compliance easy for families and teachers

Offer creative non-food celebration alternatives (extra recess, special activities, games, dance parties)

Include healthy recipes and compliant snack ideas that are still appealing to students

Address common concerns about allergies, dietary restrictions, and inclusivity

Recognize and celebrate classrooms successfully implementing healthy celebrations

Assessment of Success:

Quarterly: Building principals conduct informal observations and check-ins with teachers

Annually: Staff and family surveys on celebration experiences and satisfaction

June 2027: Formal assessment measuring:

100% of elementary teachers trained on guidelines

75% or higher compliance in classroom celebrations

Positive feedback from families and students





Reduction in food allergy concerns related to celebrations

Documented examples of successful healthy and non-food celebrations

Triennial Assessment Report: WellSAT (12/2025)

District: HOPE COMMUNITY ACADEMY

By strengthening both our policy language and our implementation practices for elementary school celebrations, HOPE Community Academy will ensure compliance with federal requirements while maintaining the joy and community-building aspects of school celebrations.

		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	
PEPA4	How many minutes per week of PE does each grade in elementary school receive?	1	1	
PEPA5	How many minutes per week of PE does each grade in middle school receive?	1	1	
PEPA6	How many minutes per week of PE does each grade in high school receive?	1	1	

Conclusion

HOPE Community Academy's 2025 Triennial Wellness Policy Assessment demonstrates our strong commitment to supporting the health and well-being of our students and staff. Overall, our assessment reveals that we have comprehensive wellness policies in place and are successfully implementing practices that promote healthy eating, physical activity, and positive learning environments.

Our Strengths

We are proud of our accomplishments in several key areas:

Nutrition Standards: All meals and foods sold in school meet or exceed federal nutrition requirements, ensuring students have access to healthy, nutritious options throughout the day

Nutrition Education: Students at all grade levels receive comprehensive, engaging nutrition education that builds lifelong healthy habits

Physical Education: We have a consistent, standards-aligned PE curriculum that promotes active lifestyles

Transparency and Accountability: We maintain active wellness committees, conduct regular assessments, and share our policies and progress publicly

Federal Compliance: We meet nearly all federal wellness policy requirements with strong policies and aligned

Triennial Assessment Report: WellSAT (12/2025)

District: HOPE COMMUNITY ACADEMY

practices

Our Priorities for Growth

While we have much to celebrate, we have identified specific areas where we will focus our improvement efforts over the next three years:

Expanding Wellness Committee Representation: We will recruit more diverse stakeholders, including students, parents, and community members, to ensure all voices are heard in our wellness planning

Eliminating Food as Reward: We will provide teachers with training and resources to use non-food rewards, creating healthier classroom environments while still recognizing student achievements

Increasing Physical Activity Opportunities: We will ensure all students have consistent access to school physical activity programs

Healthy Celebrations: We will strengthen both our policies and practices around foods served at elementary school parties and celebrations, providing families and teachers with guidelines and creative alternatives

PE Minutes: We will provide recommended weekly physical education minutes for all grade levels through a phased, multi-year approach

Supporting Active Transportation: We will explore partnerships and programs to make it safer and easier for students to walk or bike to school

Our Commitment

These improvement priorities require collaboration, resources, and time. We have developed detailed implementation plans with clear timelines, responsible parties, and measurable goals to ensure progress. We will monitor our efforts quarterly, adjust strategies as needed, and report progress to our school community regularly.

Most importantly, we remain committed to creating a school environment where every student has the support, knowledge, and opportunities they need to develop healthy habits that will serve them throughout their lives. Wellness is not just about what we teach in the classroom or serve in the cafeteria—it's about creating a culture where health, activity, and well-being are valued and prioritized every day.

We invite all families and community members to join us in this important work. Whether by serving on our wellness committee, volunteering for programs, providing feedback, or simply modeling healthy behaviors at home, you play a vital role in supporting student wellness.

Thank you for your partnership in helping our students thrive.

Complete Assessment Available

The full triennial assessment, including detailed scores and implementation plans, is available on our district website at <https://hopecommunityacademy.org/annual-reports-and-school-policies/> or by contacting Katie Kruger. We welcome your questions, feedback, and ideas as we work together to support the health and success of all HOPE Community Academy students.

Key



Strong Policies and Aligned Practices - District has a strong policy and is fully implementing practices that align with the policy



Create Practice Implementation Plan - District has a strong or weak policy, but practice

Triennial Assessment Report: WellSAT (12/2025)

District: HOPE COMMUNITY ACADEMY

implementation is either absent or limited



Update Policies Update Policies - District is fully implementing a practice but there is no or only weak language in the written policy, or the district is partially implementing practices and there is no language in the policy



Opportunities for Growth - District has either not addressed the topic in policy or practice; or has only addressed the topic in a very limited way

For more resources, visit: wellsat.org/resources

Triennial Assessment Report: WellSAT (12/2025)

District: HOPE COMMUNITY ACADEMY

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