



Wellness Program Evaluation 2025



Mary Jo Gruber - Chief Financial/Operations Officer
JoAnn Greenwell - Director of Community and Staff Engagement

Mission: The District's staff wellness program provides support and resources to cultivate overall staff wellness to meet the variety of staff classifications, develop a positive working environment, focus on a healthy organization, and instill a culture of engagement to give our best for all our students.

WELLNESS SELF-ASSESSMENT

Schools play an important role in the overall health of children and adolescents. Schools can give children and adolescents more chances to:

- Consume nutritious meals, snacks, and beverages;
- Get regular physical activity; and
- Learn about the importance of lifelong healthy behaviors.

Research has linked healthy eating and physical activity with better academic performance and classroom behavior, such as concentration, attentiveness, and time-on-task. For example, eating a healthy breakfast has been associated with improvements in memory, mood, and academic performance, as well as fewer absences from school. School-based physical activity has been associated with improved academic achievement, including higher grades and standardized test scores, as well as better cognitive skills, attitudes, and academic behavior. Policy changes at the federal level have helped make it possible for schools to play a leading role in preventing obesity. For example, the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 required that all local education agencies that participate in the National School Lunch Program or other child nutrition programs create a local school wellness policy with goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school activities designed to promote student wellness and set nutrition standards for all foods available on school campuses. Further, the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 requires schools to evaluate their wellness policies and report this information to the public on a tri-annual basis.

As required by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, and because Pattonville participates in the National School Lunch program, Policy ADF (District Wellness Program) was adopted on February 28, 2006, and revised on May 24, 2016, and April 11, 2023. In compliance with the policy, the district has established a Wellness Committee that consists of at least one parent, student, nurse or other school health professional, physical education teacher, school food service representative, board member, school administrator, member of the public, and other community members as appropriate. Current Wellness Committee members are:

Co-Chairs

Mary Jo Gruber, Chief Financial/Operating Officer
JoAnn Greenwell, Director of Community and Staff Engagement
Audrey Westrich, Director of Food Service

Members

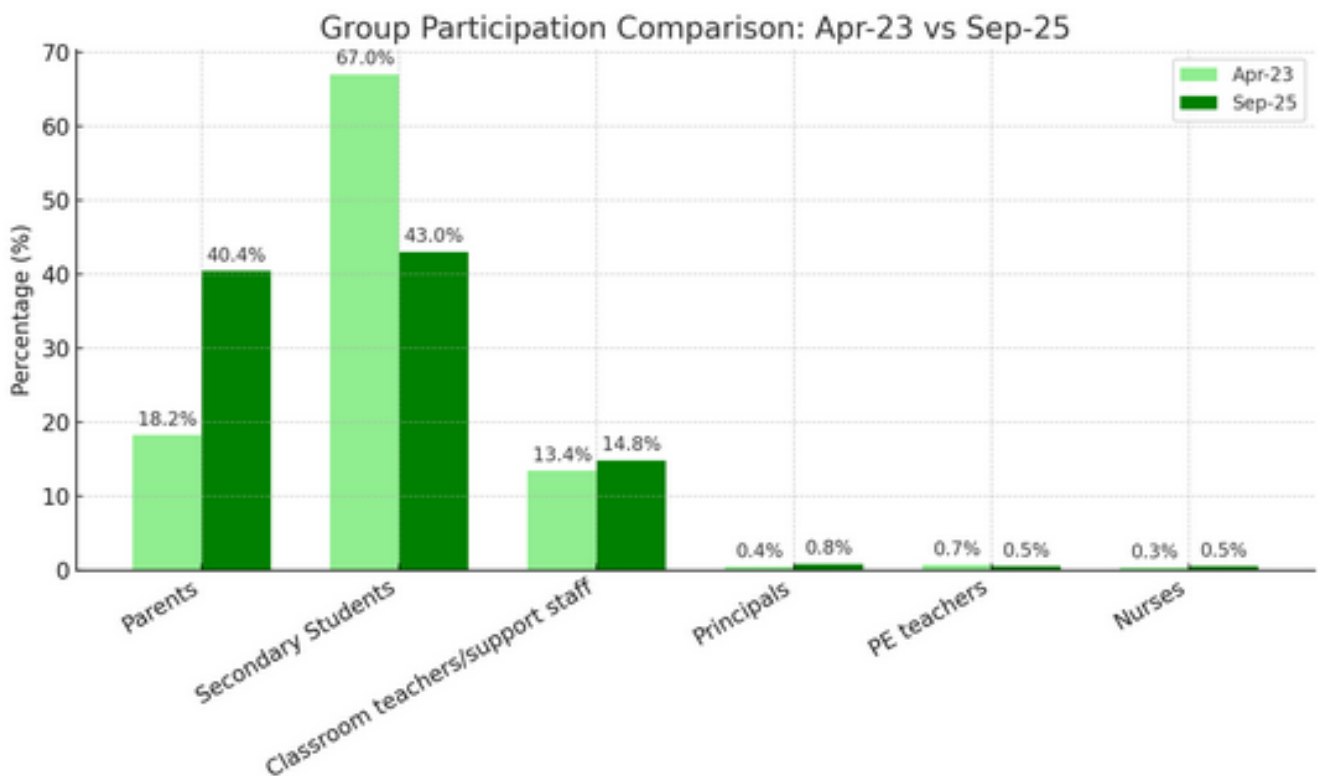
Dr. Brian Gray, Board Member
Mary Kay Campbell, Board Member
Melissa Yount-Ott, Parkwood Principal
Jon Fitzgerald, Ed.D., Asst Principal High School
Kendress Hughes, Lead Nurse
Denise Grimshaw, Elementary PE Resource Teacher
Travis Williams, Middle School PE Resource Teacher
Anna Braswell, Department Chair PE High School
Michelle Evans, Parent
Stacy Martin, Staff (Recorder of Minutes)

Committee meeting dates and agendas are posted on the district's wellness [website](#). All Wellness Committee meeting agendas include a public comment period in which participants are encouraged to provide input on the district's wellness program. Meetings and records of the Wellness Committee adhere to the requirements of the Missouri Sunshine Law.

Community Wellness Survey Results and Analysis

Survey Background

A wellness survey was made available to parents, district employees, and secondary students in [April 2023](#) (Google forms) and [September 2025](#) (Qualtrics). The survey was designed to ask questions relevant to the surveyed group. Many questions were worded specifically to that group but acquired the same information across all groups. Overall in 2025, 1,585 responses were received with 43% from secondary students and 40% from parents and 17% from staff.



Survey Results Demonstrate

- Increase in overall awareness regarding the District's wellness policy and feedback mechanisms from our last survey.
- Increased awareness by staff of district-wide PE/health experiences of our students but a decrease in awareness by parents of the initiatives provided by the district to increase physical activity and positive nutritional choices for our students.
- Need to increase staff awareness of nutritional requirements and National [Smart Snack](#) guidelines.

Awareness of the District's Wellness Policy

Multiple data points suggest that community stakeholders have an increased awareness of Pattonville's wellness policy and ways to provide feedback on parts of the program. This increased by 3-5% compared to the May 2023 survey. However, there is still an opportunity for improvement since only 50% of parent participants and 55% of district staff reported they agreed or strongly agreed that they were aware of the components of the district wellness policy ADF.

Awareness of PE and Health Programs

There has been an increased awareness among staff regarding the district's PE and health programs and the experiences they provide for students. Of the teachers who responded, 57% reported incorporating activities and lessons that promote physical activity and positive nutritional choices. Multiple data points indicate that community stakeholders also recognize the importance of encouraging participation and collaboration in PE classes. Respondents understand that the district's PE and health programs emphasize vigorous exercise, the development of movement skills, and the cultivation of healthy habits. However, survey results revealed a decrease in parent awareness of the district's initiatives designed to increase students' physical activity and support positive nutritional choices.

Awareness of Food Offerings

Several points stand out in the data related to school menus and knowledge of USDA meal requirements. First, over 80% of adult respondents agreed that parents have access to school menus and nutritional information. However, 32% of respondents did not know if school meals met the USDA nutritional requirements for the national meal programs. Similarly, 69% of respondents did not know that the district participates in farm-to-school initiatives.

Secondary Student Response Highlights (64% of these student responses were middle school)

- 85% (up from 82%) of secondary students responded that they feel they are at or almost at the best of their ability. (Question 119)
- 42% (up from 36%) of secondary students responded that they ate fruit 2-3 times a day before they were surveyed. However, 28% (down from 29%) did not eat any. (Question 121)
- 65% (down from 70%) of secondary students responded that they usually watch TV, play video games, or use a computer, tablet, or phone (excluding the time required for school/homework) more than 3 hours a day. (Question 123)
- 25% (up from 22%) of secondary students eat breakfast at school. (Question 127) Pattonville School District provides a free breakfast to all students.
- 16% (down from 17%) of secondary students experienced anxiety 3-5 times in the last 7 days; 12% responded with a rate of 6 or more times. (Question 129)
- Similarly, 17% of secondary students experienced hunger 3-5 times in the last 7 days. 15% responded that they experience hunger 6 or more times. (Question 129)

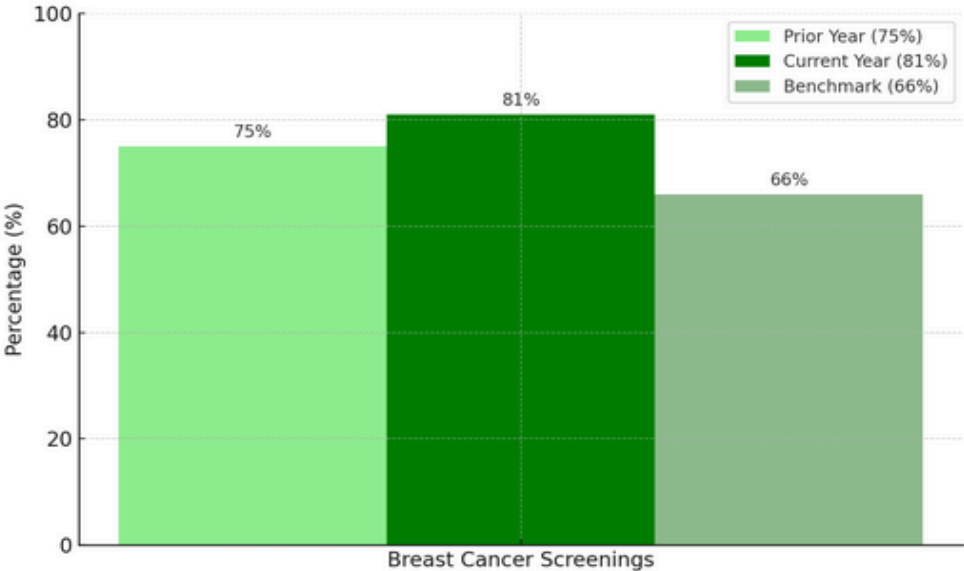
- 53% (down from 57%) of secondary students would be interested in the school having more opportunities to be active before school, after school, and on the weekend. (Question 130)
- 46% (down from 53%) of secondary students would be interested in learning more about how food choices can help them stay healthy. (Question 131)

STAFF WELLNESS

The district’s staff wellness program provides support and resources to cultivate overall staff wellness to meet the variety of staff classifications, develop a positive working environment, focus on a healthy organization, and instill a culture of engagement to give our best for all our students.

The staff wellness committee is designed to include every employee and what makes their department and building unique. Wellness Captains from each building have volunteered their time to focus on district initiatives within their buildings. Having building-based captains allows the program to reach staff where they are, as the captains are in the building and know staff needs and wants. The program’s first focus is to inform staff of the great benefits already in place in Pattonville such as CareATC, PAS - Employee Assistance Program, Livigno, UMR, and many more. We also utilize our community partners to provide benefits to our staff, including SSM Health for Mammagramathon, Visiting Nurses for flu shots, Anthem for the Be Well walking app and other initiatives, and Chartwell for our variety of nutrition initiatives and meals.

Mamma-gram-athon - Yearly partnership with SSM Health DePaul to offer a Mamma-gram-athon to all staff on the collaboration day in January. This January will be our 4th year partnering to focus on breast cancer screening. Anthem data indicates our breast cancer screening compliance rate to be at 81% this benefit calendar year and 75% the prior year, which is over the benchmark of 66%.



Sword/Thrive Program - The program was launched in May 2025 to offer our employees a virtual physical care program to overcome back, joint, or muscle pain from the comfort of their home. It combines physical care specialists with easy-to-use technology. Our data showed high claims for musculoskeletal claims. Since its launch in May 2025, 98 staff members enrolled, 498 sessions performed, and an overall rating of 4.6% out of 5 on the satisfaction survey.

District Wellness Captains Structure

- **Regular Meetings & Communication:** Quarterly in-person meetings provide a space to plan initiatives, exchange ideas, and address site-specific needs. Captains also receive ongoing updates and connect through dedicated communication channels to share successes and challenges.
- **Training & Resources:** Captains receive ongoing training on all the great benefits PSD offers, including medical wellness benefits, the CareATC clinic, our Employee Assistance Program, and chronic disease management options. We provide toolkits, promotional materials, and ready-to-use content to help them lead building-based activities.
- **Empowerment & Autonomy:** Each Captain is encouraged to assess the unique needs of their building and adapt initiatives to fit, ensuring relevance and high engagement.
- **Recognition & Motivation:** We highlight Captains' successes in newsletters, meetings, and events, offering recognition that keeps them motivated and connected to the mission.
- **Feedback Loop:** Captains gather staff feedback and share it with the district wellness team, helping shape future wellness programming and benefits.

District Wellness Challenge

- January 2024 - Be Well Bingo
 - 150 employees participated - 15% of staff
- January 2025 - Sail into Wellness
 - 245 employees participated - 24% of staff
- January 2026 - Soundtrack to Wellness

District Walktober Challenge

- October 2024 - Spook Walktober
 - 226 Staff participated
 - 155 completed the 120,000-step goal
- October 2025 - Show Me Your Steps
 - 236 Staff currently participating

During Back-to-School Staff Week, wellness captains engaged with their buildings by highlighting recent wellness initiatives. They also shared a staff wellness video that emphasized the importance of wellness and the “why” behind our efforts. [Link to video](#). In addition, captains facilitated interactive “get-to-know-you” activities for staff, which included scavenger hunts, bingo, and various physical activities to encourage connection and fun.

Pattonville applied for the **2025 BHC Business Health Culture Award** through the Gateway Business Health Coalition. This award is given to member companies of the Gateway Business Health Coalition (BHC) that demonstrate exceptional and innovative approaches to promoting employee well-being.

PROGRESS MADE

- To strengthen awareness of the district's wellness policy across all stakeholder groups and school levels, a more comprehensive communication plan was developed. Efforts have focused on improving outreach before each meeting through district-level updates and principal newsletters, ensuring that students, staff, and community members receive timely and consistent information. Progress has been made by featuring wellness highlights and a dedicated nutrition section in the quarterly highlights magazine distributed by Community Relations, as well as sharing information with parents about student events and wellness initiatives through Bloomz.
- To enhance staff engagement and understanding of wellness initiatives, wellness captains have led efforts through regular newsletters and incentive programs. Updates are shared through both the district wellness newsletter and school wellness bulletin boards, creating multiple channels to keep staff informed, motivated, and involved.
- Collaboration with building leaders has continued to educate staff and PTOs on Smart Snack initiatives and policies. Elementary schools have discontinued the acceptance of treats for student birthdays, reinforcing healthy celebration practices. The district has also presented at principals' meetings on the nutritional needs of students, and Audrey Westrich, Director of Food Services, has provided several professional development sessions for staff.
- To further strengthen district wellness efforts, recommendations identified through the review of the School Health Index (SHI) and the new grant process are being implemented. These actions ensure that wellness initiatives are data-driven, resource-aligned, and designed to maximize their impact on student and staff well-being (see below).

Grant Opportunity

Pattonville was selected to participate with the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) as the priority Local Education Agency in the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, School-Based Interventions to Promote Equity and Improve Health, Academic Achievement, and Well-Being of Students Grant](#). The purpose of this 5-year cooperative agreement is to protect and improve the health and well-being of school-age children and adolescents.

As part of the grant, the district completed the *School Health Index (SHI) Self-Assessment*, which is an online self-evaluation and planning tool for schools. The SHI is built on the CDC's research-based guidelines for school health programs that identify the policies and practices most likely to be effective in reducing youth health risk behaviors. The SHI is completely confidential.

The District then used the [Whole School Whole Community Whole Child \(WSCC\) model](#) to establish key partnerships to support school health programs; promote dissemination and implementation of CDC school health guidelines, tools, and resources through professional development and technical assistance; and use action planning to implement physical activity, school nutrition, and school health policies, practices, programs, and services within state and local education agencies, schools, and out-of-school time settings.

Expected outcomes to be achieved include an (1) increase in the number of schools with an action plan based on the completion of CDC's School Health Index (SHI); (2) increased implementation of Comprehensive School Physical Activity Programs; (3) increased school nutrition and food security policies and practices; (4) increased school-based health services that support students with chronic health conditions; and (5) increased physical activity, healthy dietary behaviors, and self-management of chronic health conditions among students.

Over the past two years, grant funding has supported a variety of initiatives across our district. Professional development opportunities were provided for physical education and health teachers to prepare for upcoming curriculum updates and material adoption. Gaga ball courts were purchased for elementary PE classes, while the applied sciences, culinary classrooms, and high school greenhouse received updated materials and equipment.

The high school plant sale was even featured on the Missouri Healthy website and newsletter ([video link](#)). In addition, our wellness program utilized funds to install ice/water dispensers in several staff lounges, promoting staff health and hydration.

NEXT STEPS

- Continue to strengthen communication of the district wellness policy through district updates, principal newsletters, and community outreach.
- Increase staff engagement in wellness with newsletters, incentives, and wellness captain outreach and initiatives.
- Continue to educate wellness captains on our benefits and wellness programs.
- Provide staff training on nutrition education and the district wellness policy.
- Expand K–8 athletics by ongoing partnering with the high school administration, coaches, and students to build school capacity for student activities and sports.
- Educate staff and PTOs on Smart Snack policies and healthy fundraising and celebratory options.