WellSAT WSCC

Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child School Policy Assessment Tool

Version 1.0

USER MANUAL

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Introduction & Background

History of the WSCC Model

In 2014, the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model was developed through a joint partnership between the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and ASCD (formerly known as the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development). The model was developed in response to research demonstrating the connection between student health and educational outcomes and combined previously separate Whole Child and Coordinated School Health models. The WSCC responds to calls for integration and coordination across the various systems of care that support student outcomes that often operate in isolation of one another.

The WSCC model (right) is comprised of three layers of support surrounding the whole child. The center of the model depicts meeting the needs of the whole child including physical, social, and emotional health. Surrounding the whole child in the model is coordination of policy, process, and practice. Outside of this are the ten core components of the model supporting school wellness—physical education and physical activity, nutrition environment and services, health services, counseling, psychological, & social services, social and emotional climate, physical environment, employee wellness, family engagement, community involvement, and health education. Finally, the entire model is surrounded by community factors representing the ecological factors affecting students and schools.

History of the WellSAT measure

In 2006, federal law was created requiring all local education agencies participating in the national school meal programs have a written school wellness policy that addresses policies related to school food, nutrition education, and physical education and physical activity. Although these schools were required to develop wellness policies, the policies differed markedly in their quality, comprehensiveness, and strength of the policy

language (e.g., mandates or requirements versus recommendations). A team of researchers developed a measure to quantitatively evaluate wellness policies (see Schwartz et al., 2009). In response to requests from the field, a shorter version of the original measure was developed by a multidisciplinary team and named Wellness School Assessment Tool (WellSAT). The WellSAT was posted online in 2010 at www.wellsat.org. In 2014, WellSAT 2.0 was released to respond to updates in federal regulations related to district wellness policies—including requirements to address food marking in schools and nutrition standards for all food sold on school grounds. In 2018, WellSAT 3.0 was released to reflect current best practices and input from 77 experienced users.

Why the WellSAT WSCC tool was developed

Although tools are available to evaluate how well district and building-level practices align with the WSCC model, there is a complementary need for a tool to evaluate how school policies are aligned. As shown on the right, WellSAT 3.0 primarily addresses the domains related to physical activity and nutrition, and was not designed to assess all of the policies associated with the full WSCC model. Thus, the WellSAT WSCC policy assessment tool was developed to expand WellSAT 3.0, allowing users to evaluate how well district policies align with the WSCC model and 'best practices' in policy associated with each domain.
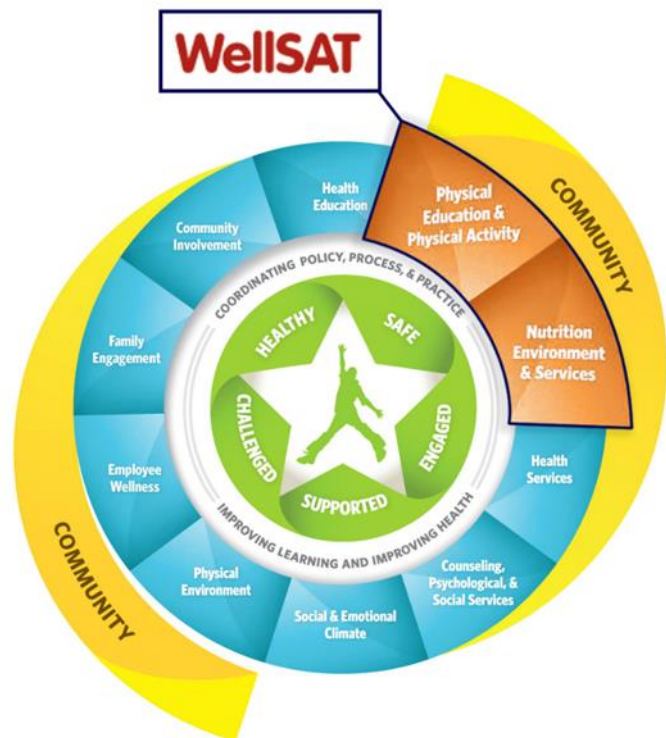
In summary, the WellSAT WSCC is an assessment tool to help districts identify strengths and areas for improvement in their policies in relation to the WSCC Model. WellSAT WSCC items reflect the federal law (when applicable), the current evidence base, and best practices from professional organizations.

The WellSAT WSCC tool includes 11 sections: one for each domain of the WSCC and one that addresses integration, implementation, and evaluation of WSCC-related policies. Definitions of each of the domains can be found in **Appendix A**.

To view the tool, see the **WellSAT WSCC Coding Guide**.

How to use the WellSAT WSCC

Who should complete this tool

The tool is most appropriately used by those individuals who are engaged with work in school district policy. Those individuals might include:

- District level school officials
- Members of School Wellness Advisory Boards or committees, particularly those charged with evaluation responsibilities
- Public health professionals
- Researchers
- School-level officials, provided they have a clear understanding that the tool is to be used for assessment of district, rather than school-level policies.

Who else should be involved

Because of the wide range of policies assessed by the WellSAT WSCC, it can be useful to consult with district and school personnel who hold roles/responsibilities related to specified domains, related to policies, processes, and/or practices. For example, consider including:

- Members of the school or district wellness committee
- Wellness coordinators
- School nurses and other district healthcare providers
- School psychologists, counselors, or social workers
- Health educators
- School safety team members
- School climate committee members.

How to decide which policies to evaluate

Given the comprehensiveness of the WSCC model, there are a lot of policies that could be evaluated! Thus, to make the task more manageable, it is recommended that you prioritize which domains should be evaluated, and then build an action plan for completing the task. As previously noted, definitions of each of the domains can be found in **Appendix A**.

A worksheet to facilitate prioritizing WSCC domains for evaluation can be found in **Appendix B**. Using the worksheet, each domain is rated with regard to considerations

such as how easy it is to find policies associated with the domain, how the domains aligns with strategic plans, or how clarifying policy in a domain may strengthen practice implementation. Once the ratings are completed, 3-5 might be selected as top priorities for evaluation.

Next, for each of the selected domains, an action plan can be built to specific process, timelines, and persons – which can then be used to monitor progress. See **Appendix C. Action Planning Around Prioritized Domains for School Policy Evaluation** for a template.

How to find district policies

Most school districts list their policies on their websites. Find your district's website and locate:

- Board of Education policies
- Any superintendent regulations
- Any administrative guidelines

You will need to find all potentially relevant policies to score. These will include the local wellness policy, but also be sure to check policies for buildings, students, staff, and curriculum.

If your district does not post these policies online, you may need to contact the district's office to request them.

How to score your policies

Policy statements are rated "0," "1," or "2" - using the definitions below.

0	**Not Mentioned**	The item is not included in the text of the policy.
1	**Weak Statement**	The item is mentioned, but • The policy will be **hard to enforce** because the statement is **vague, unclear, or confusing**. • Statements are listed as **goals, aspirations, suggestions, or recommendations**. • There are **loopholes** in the policy that weaken enforcement of the item. • The policy mentions a **future plan to act without specifying** when the plan will be established. Words often used include: *may, can, could, should, might, encourage, suggest, urge, some, partial, make an effort, and try*

2	**Meets Expectations**	The item is mentioned and it is clear that the policy makers are committed to making the item happen because: • **Strong language** is used to indicate that action or regulation is required, including: shall, will, must, have to, insist, require, all, total, responsibility, comply and enforce. • A district is unable to enforce an item (e.g., teachers role modeling healthy behaviors), but the goal is **clearly stated** (e.g., "shall encourage teachers to role model healthy behaviors").

Users should always refer to the specific rating guidance for each item, which contains information about best practices and example policy language to assist the user and is included in this document.

In addition, if a law addressing an item is mentioned in the policy, the law should be reviewed and coded according to the 0-2 coding guidelines.

How to get started

In addition to this user guide, make sure to download the **WellSAT WSCC Coding Guide and Scoresheet.**

After assembling your team, reviewing this user guide, and downloading your district's policies, we recommend starting by reviewing your district wellness policy. This should allow you to code (a) Nutrition Environment and Services, (b) Physical Activity, and (c) Implementation, Integration, and Evaluation (IIE) items. However, it may be that some of these items are addressed in other policies. In addition, policy language aligned with other items may also be included in the wellness policy. For example, some districts may address family engagement, community involvement, health education, and/or employee wellness in the wellness policy. Therefore, we suggest that you also code those items as you come across aligned language in the wellness policy.

Symbols used in the WellSAT WSCC

🏛	Items that are part of the latest federal regulation; also include direct quotes from the final rule in the scoring guidance
🪣	Items that address the "Farm to School" components of education, school gardens, and procurement

🏃	Items that address the CSPAP (Comprehensive School Physical Activity Plan) components of physical education, physical activity before and after school, physical activity during school, staff involvement, and family and community engagement
🍎	Items that are also included in the WellSAT 3.0 measure

Frequently asked questions

How does this tool differ from the WellSAT 3.0?

The WellSAT WSCC is designed to be a complement the existing WellSAT3.0—you can think of the tools as puzzle pieces which address all 10 domains of the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child model for school health when combined.

The WellSAT was originally designed to assess local school wellness policies, which are federally mandated to address nutrition and physical activity. The WSCC model provides a broader picture of all of the elements of school health. Districts are not required to have policies that address all components of the WSCC, but districts that desire to take this integrated, collaborative approach to school health may find it useful to assess their policies using this framework.

When completed together, the WellSAT WSCC and WellSAT 3.0 provide interested parties with a snapshot of how well a school districts' policies address all of the components of the WSCC model of school health.

Does the WellSAT WSCC measure policy implementation?

No, the WellSAT WSCC measures the quality of written wellness policies.

Why should I be familiar with federal and state laws relevant to district policies?

Federal laws regulate a number of items in this assessment tool. The items that are mandated under the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act or other federal laws are noted with a capitol icon on the measure.

State laws vary considerably, and this measure will not indicate whether your school district is in compliance with all of the laws in your state. Therefore, we recommend a thorough review of your state's laws and regulations related to WSCC. The National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) has developed a catalog of state

laws that are aligned with WSCC model. This website can be a helpful tool in coding district polices.

How should I use the results of this assessment?

This tool can be used to identify strengths and areas for improvement in your district's policies. See Appendix A for a worksheet to facilitate prioritization of WSCC domains for your policy evaluation efforts and Appendix B to learn how to develop an actio plan around the domains you identify as priorities in your district.

Where can I find more information about the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child model?

ASCD: http://www.ascd.org/programs/learning-and-health/wscc-model.aspx

CDC: https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/wscc/
https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/wscc/index.htm
https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/wscc/components.htm

UConn CSCH Think About the Link Project:
https://csch.uconn.edu/wscc-think-about-the-link/

Appendix A. WSCC Domains and Definitions

Domain & Definition
Physical Activity describes comprehensive strategies to facilitate student physical health, which includes both (a) engaging in planned and sequential teaching of the motor skills, knowledge, and behaviors needed for physical activity and fitness and (b) providing students with opportunity to be physically active throughout the day. <u>Suggested policy documents for review:</u> district wellness policy
Health Education includes planned learning experiences and opportunities to gain information and skills needed to make healthy decisions, achieving health literacy, and adopting healthy behaviors in self and others. Comprehensive and effective school health education extends appropriately across developmental periods and is based on identified needs and provided in a variety of ways – such as direct instruction, patient visits, and public service announcements. It addresses issues such as personal health, physical activity, nutrition, mental & emotional health, sexual health, violence prevention, tobacco use, and alcohol & drug use. <u>Suggested policy documents for review:</u> curriculum & instruction, sexual health education, substance use prevention policies
Social and Emotional School Climate is promotion of a safe and supportive learning environment through attention to social and emotional development and psychosocial aspects of the learning experience. A positive social and emotional school climate fosters student engagement in activities; relationships with peers and adults that are respectful, trusting, and caring; and successful learning. <u>Suggested policy documents for review:</u> bullying policy, student discipline policy, student code of conduct
Community Involvement describes involving groups, organizations, and businesses within the community as important anchors to a school, creating partnerships, sharing resources, and volunteering to support student learning and health. Not only can schools benefit from these connections, but these benefits can be reciprocal such as when schools share facilities with the community (e.g. meeting spaces, library sharing) and coordinate to disseminate information about resources and services available within the community. <u>Suggested policy documents for review:</u> district wellness policy, community relations, graduation requirements (volunteering or service learning)
Nutrition Environment and Services includes facilitating healthy eating by providing appropriate food choices, education, and messages. The nutrition environment extends to all school places in which food and beverage access is available (e.g. cafeterias, vending machines, classrooms). School nutrition services provide meals that meet government nutrition standards and the school community supports a healthy nutrition environment. <u>Suggested policy documents for review:</u> district wellness policy
Safe Environment (derived from Physical Environment in the WSCC model) focuses on the physical school building, the land on which it is located, and the areas surrounding it. A healthy school environment attends to physical conditions during normal operation as well as renovation, and addresses factors such as ventilation, pollution, lighting, noise, and temperature – as well as protecting students from physical threats and injuries (e.g. traffic, crime, hazardous materials, pollution). <u>Suggested policy documents for review:</u> cleaning policy, green cleaning policy, school safety, emergency prep. policies, construction/remodeling policies, pesticide/hazardous material policy

	Employee Wellness involves fostering health in all school staff, as healthy employees are more productive and better able to do their job in attending to student needs. Employee wellness approaches include programs and policies that embrace a continuum of prevention to intervention strategies, and offer personalized health programs such as stress mgt., improved physical health and nutrition, and risk reduction. <u>Suggested policy documents for review:</u> district wellness policy, tobacco use policy, employee substance use policy, sexual harassment
	School Health Services staff and facilities are typically available to help all students with preventive care such as vision and hearing screening, as well as dealing with immediate injuries and first aid. In addition, school health services staff play a large role in the management of student chronic health conditions, including coordinating care and communicating with the student's family and other health care providers. <u>Suggested policy documents for review:</u> health services, responding to communicable disease, allergy management, overdose prevention, chronic disease management policies of school health policies and practices.
	Family Engagement describes family-school partnerships to support the learning and health needs of students across student developmental periods, working together through shared responsibility of both school staff and families in actively supporting successful development of students. <u>Suggested policy documents for review:</u> district wellness policy, parent involvement, community relations
	Behavioral Supports (i.e. Counseling, Psychological, and Social Services) is described as supporting the social, emotional, behavioral, and mental health of students, and extends along a continuum of prevention through intervention strategies that identify and address barriers to learning. School employed professionals such as school psychologists, school counselors, and school social workers provide direct services to individual students and families as well as classes and schools as a whole. In addition, referral and consultation with community providers is important in the coordination of counseling, psychological, and social services. <u>Suggested policy documents for review:</u> suicide prevention, responding to student substance use, student discipline/code of conduct
	Integration, Implementation, & Evaluation assesses policies that are meant to ensure the successful implementation and evaluation of district wellness policies. Districts should also include language that integrates all domains of school wellness throughout the school. <u>Policy documents for review:</u> district wellness policy only

Appendix B. Worksheet for Prioritizing WSCC Domains for School Policy Evaluation

Date Completed:	Persons Involved:

Use this worksheet to facilitate prioritization of WSCC domains for your policy evaluation efforts. First, complete a rating for each domain using a 0 (needs work) to 2 (doing great) point scale. When rating each domain, consider things such as: *how easy it is to find policies associated with this domain*, *how the domain aligns with strategic plans, how clarifying policy may strengthen practice implementation in each domain.* Next, provide a brief justification for your rating. As part of this justification, indicate the persons who were consulted to help determine the rating (e.g. staff holding roles/responsibilities related to that domain). Finally, go back through to identify priority areas that might be targeted – *hint, select no more than 3-5 as top priorities*.

> **Policies –** The laws, mandates, regulations, standards, resolutions, and guidelines which provide a foundation for school district practices and procedures.

Domain	Rating 0 (needs work), 1 (sort of), 2 (got it)	Rating Justification <u>Explain</u>: provide brief justification <u>List</u>: persons consulted in determining rating
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY		
HEALTH EDUCATION		
SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL CLIMATE		
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT		
NUTRITION ENVIRONMENT		
SAFE ENVIRONMENT		

EMPLOYEE WELLNESS		
HEALTH SERVICES		
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT		
BEHAVIORAL SUPPORTS		
Integration, Implementation, & Evaluation		

Appendix C. Action Planning Around Prioritized Domains for School Policy Evaluation

Date Completed:	Persons Involved:

Using the information gathered through completion of *Appendix A. Prioritizing WSCC Domains for School Policy Evaluation*, indicate the domain that you have prioritized for evaluation of school policy, and build an action plan for the policy evaluation process.

Complete one form for each of your selected domains. *Hint – it is recommended that you select no more than 3-5 domains at a time.*

Step 1: Place a ✔ next to the chosen WSCC domain for evaluation of your policies.

Physical Education & Physical Activity		Nutrition Environment & Services		Family Engagement	
Health Education		Safe Environment		Behavioral Supports	
Social & Emotional Climate		Employee Wellness		Integration, Implementation, & Evaluation	
Community Involvement		School Health Services			

Step 2. Provide brief rationale as to why this domain has been selected for policy review.

Step 3. Identify who will be involved in the review.

(e.g. leader(s), review team, any additional staff that hold responsibilities related to the chosen domain)

<u>Step 4</u>. Provide the timeline and process for your review.

(e.g., who, what, when, where, how)

<u>Step 5</u>. Define the expected outcomes from this review.

(e.g., what will happen next?, what are the deliverables?, how will impact be measured?)

Step 6. Maintain progress notes throughout your process.

(e.g., include date, brief description, and progress rating with 1 (not proceeding as planned) to 10 (proceeding as planned)