WELLSAT WSCC: A COMPREHENSIVE TOOL FOR EVALUATING SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICIES

A CSCH Brief by Breanna McFarlane, Sandra M. Chafouleas, Marlene B. Schwartz, Helene M. Marcy, Jessica Koslouski, and Emily Iovino

What is the WellSAT WSCC?

The WellSAT WSCC 2.0 is an evaluation tool aligned with the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child model and developed jointly by the UConn Collaboratory on School and Child Health (CSCH) and the UConn Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity. It is designed to assist users in applying a comprehensive and integrated lens to school policy evaluation, and is available in paper or online formats

What are its Origins?

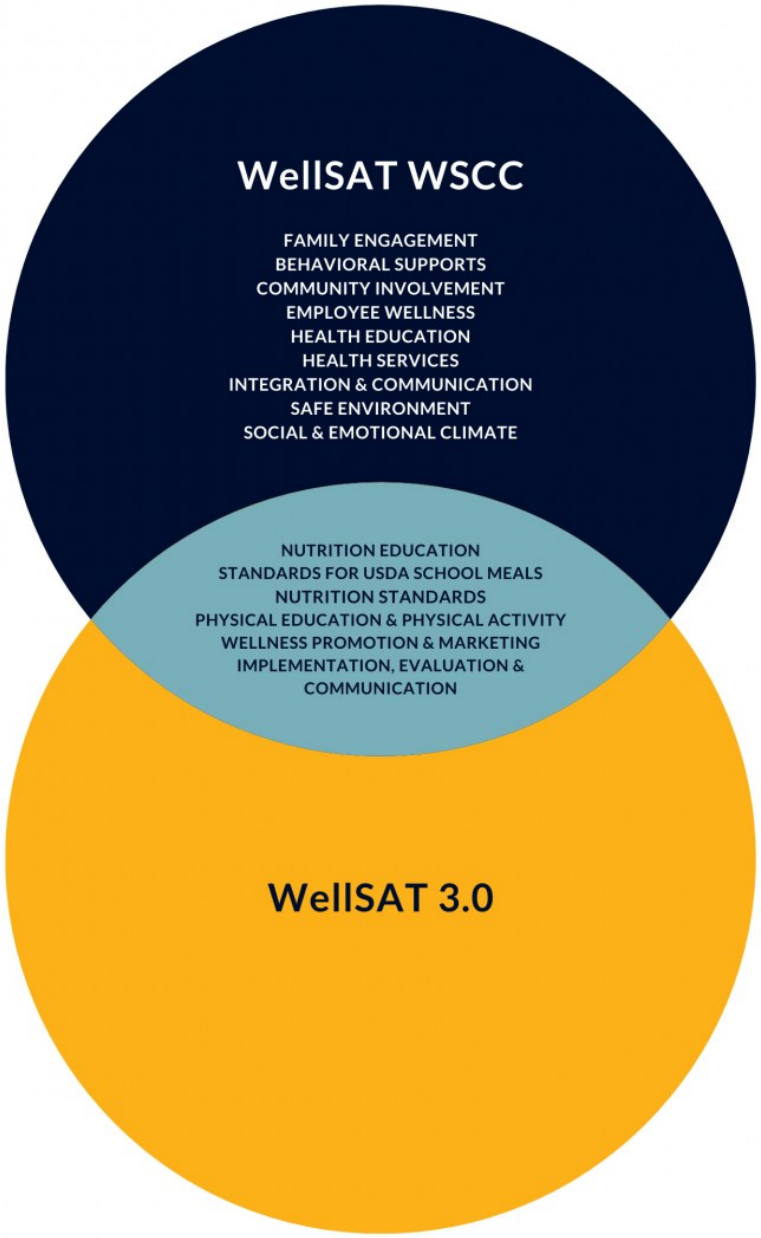
The WellSAT WSCC builds from the WellSAT (Wellness School Assessment Tool), a tool for evaluating school wellness policy. The WellSAT was first developed by the Rudd Center after a 2006 federal law required districts participating in national school meal programs to have a written school wellness policy in place. The tool has been used by researchers, state government agencies, and individual school districts since its inception in 2010. The WellSAT was updated in 2014 and again in 2019 (to the current version 3.0) to align with revisions to federal requirements.

Federal requirements in school wellness policy focus heavily on physical activity and nutrition, yet the idea of incorporating a comprehensive wellness perspective in schools was garnering interest. In 2014, the ASCD and U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) jointly developed the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) Model. The WSCC model is comprised of ten domains linked to child well-being: health education; physical education and physical activity; nutrition environment and services; health services; counseling, psychological, and social services; social and emotional climate; physical environment; employee wellness; family engagement; and community involvement.

In 2019, the Rudd Center and CSCH collaborated to create the WellSAT WSCC. The WellSAT WSCC uses the WellSAT structure to incorporate the complete WSCC model into school policy evaluation.

How are WellSAT and WellSAT WSCC Different?

The WellSAT and WellSAT WSCC both include domains related to nutrition and physical education as well as a wellness, promotion and marketing section and an implementation, evaluation, and communication (IEC) section. The WellSAT WSCC expands the WellSAT by including the eight additional domains outlined in the WSCC Model and adds an integration component to the IEC section.



To develop the WellSAT WSCC items, researchers from the Rudd Center and CSCH consulted national guidelines, reviewed recommendations from professional organizations, and conducted a synthesis of the literature in each of the domains of the WSCC model. The team then consulted with research and practice experts to finalize the items included within each domain.

In 2021, the WellSAT WSCC team revised the tool (v 2.0) and developed an online version.

What are the Benefits to Using the WellSAT WSCC?

The WellSAT WSCC tool is designed to assist users in applying a comprehensive and integrated lens to school policy evaluation and allows for the evaluation of both the *comprehensiveness* and *strength* of school policies. Because integration of the WSCC domains within and across school policies and practices is foundational to the WSCC model, school districts are provided with instructions on assessing *all* their relevant policies. Through use of the WellSAT WSCC, school districts can assess the alignment of their written policies and their school and district practices with identified best practices and policies. This enables districts to identify areas of strength, areas in need of improvement, and opportunities for increased integration across domains.

What Does the WellSAT WSCC Evaluate?

The first ten domains include those outlined in the WSCC Model:

Domain	What is included	Relevant Materials & Policies
Physical Activity	Comprehensive strategies to facilitate student physical activity	Physical education curriculum and physical activity opportunities
Nutrition Environment and Services	Facilitation of healthy eating by providing nutritious food options, education, and messages	School meal program and schools' nutrition environment
Health Education	Experiences and opportunities to help students learn information and skills that facilitate healthy behaviors	Health education curriculum
Social and Emotional Climate	Bullying prevention and intervention, school climate monitoring, and social emotional learning standards	Policies and strategies in place for bullying, school climate, discipline, and social emotional learning
Safe Environment[1]	Physical condition of school buildings; protection of students from physical and psychological threats and injuries	Policies concerning maintenance of physical building conditions and safety and security measures, including crisis prevention and response
Health Services	Preventive care and management of students' acute and chronic health conditions	Plans for the preventive and interventive care of students' physical heath
Behavioral Supports[2]	Supports for the social, emotional, and behavioral well-being of students	Prevention through intervention policies and strategies that identify and address student mental health concerns
Employee Wellness	Personalized health programs that address the health and well-being of the staff	Policies addressing supports for employees' physical and mental health
Community Involvement	Resource sharing and volunteer opportunities through partnerships with groups, organizations, and businesses in the community	Policies regarding the involvement of community stakeholders in schools
Family Engagement	Family-school partnerships that actively support the successful development of students	Policies and strategies for communication with and involvement of families

The final two domains were derived from the WellSAT 3.0 tool.

Integration, Implementation, Communication, and Evaluation	Successful integration, implementation, communication, and evaluation of district wellness policies	Policies that cut across domains relevant to school and child wellness
Wellness, Promotion, and Marketing	Policies concerning staff wellness, use of physical activity as a reward and not as a punishment, and food marketing in school buildings	District wellness policy

[1] In the WSCC model, this is called Physical Environment.
[2] In the WSCC model, this is called Counseling, Psychological, and Social Services.

How do I Use the WellSAT WSCC?

1. **Decide who will be involved in the process.** People to consider include district and school level officials, members of school wellness committees, and school climate committee members.

2. **Determine which policies and domains to evaluate.** The WellSAT WSCC User Manual has suggestions about the types of policies that users can evaluate under the description of each domain.

3. **Create a timeline and process.** The WellSAT WSCC User Manual contains an action planning template to help with creating a timeline and process for completion.

4. **Score the policies.** The WellSAT WSCC Coding Guide states the requirements needed to obtain a specific score and the Scoresheet helps track scores for each item.

5. **Reflect and Action Plan.** Using the results of the WellSAT WSCC, identify areas of strength in your school policies as well as areas for improvement. Identify top priorities and create an action plan for updating policy language and associated practices.

For support with identifying next steps, districts are encouraged to review the WSCC Think About the Link Project webpage, which offers videos and practice briefs that outline recommended best practices in each of the 10 WSCC model domains. The WSCC evidence-based practice briefs summarize each domain and why it is important, and outline strategies that those working in schools can use to promote WSCC implementation in their own setting. The practice briefs also describe the anticipated resource demand (i.e., funding, time, space, training, materials) needed for implementation.

Additional Resources

WellSAT WSCC Online Tool
Includes a description of the tool as well as links to the user manual, coding guide, and scoresheet.

WellSAT WSCC Podcast Episode
CSCH Co-Director Sandra Chafouleas and CSCH Steering Committee Member Marlene Schwartz discuss their development of the WellSAT WSCC.

WSCC Evidence-Based Practice Briefs
Each brief contains a description of the WSCC Model domain and evidence-informed practices that are categorized by the resource demand (i.e., low, medium, or high).

WSCC Video Modules
Provides an overview of each WSCC domain and outlines model practices.

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The WellSAT/WellSAT WSCC Venn diagram was created by Kristin Messina of the UConn Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity.