



# Updating School Wellness Policy Measurement: WellSAT 3.0 and WellSAT-Interview



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**RUDD CENTER**  
FOR FOOD POLICY & OBESITY

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# Original measure to quantitatively score school wellness policies



American Dietetic  
Association

*J Am Diet Assoc. 2009;109:1256-1262.*

## A Comprehensive Coding System to Measure the Quality of School Wellness Policies

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# WellSAT 1.0

- Funded by RWJF to create a simpler, online tool
- WellSAT website launched in 2010
  - 50 items
  - Broadened committee beyond researchers to also include state and federal government representatives and national advocacy groups

## WellSAT: 2.0

Wellness School Assessment Tool

[How To Use This Tool](#)

[FAQ](#)

[How WellSAT Scores are Calculated](#)

[Resources](#)



**New!! WellSAT 2.0**  
With the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, the nation stepped up its commitment to safeguard children's health. Now your district can too! WellSAT 2.0 reflects new USDA school food requirements and current best practices in all areas of school wellness.

Let's get started!

## Welcome to the WellSAT 2.0

In passing the Child Nutrition and WIC (Women, Infants and Children program) Reauthorization Act of 2004, Congress mandated that all school districts participating in federal school meal programs create and implement school wellness policies by July 2006. In 2010, the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act strengthened local wellness policy requirements and added requirements for public participation, transparency and implementation. These policies must address nutrition education, nutrition standards for foods sold, and physical activity, and must include measures for evaluating the policy's effectiveness. By completing the updated Wellness School Assessment Tool, WellSAT 2.0 users will be able to assess the quality of their school district's wellness policy\*, and will be provided with personalized guidance and resources for making improvements, based on the assessment.

\*WellSAT 2.0 measures the quality of *written* policies. A printable copy of the WellSAT 2.0 is available [here](#). For information on how to assess wellness policy implementation, email [margaret.read@uconn.edu](mailto:margaret.read@uconn.edu).

**SIGN IN FOR YOUR WELL VISIT**

Email Address:

Password:

[Forgot password?](#)

[Don't have an account?  
Register](#)

**GO**

Your email address will ONLY be used to provide you with updates pertaining to this website.

# WellSAT 3.0 Update

- Collaboration with Jamie Chriqui at UIC
- Evaluated the evidence supporting the item
- Evaluated each item's frequency using national data
- Factor analysis to remove redundant items
- Currently gathering feedback on revised measure from stakeholders
- Release summer 2018

# Uptake

- 13,000 unique users and 23,000 visits
- All 50 states
- Used in published research, thesis/dissertation
- Recommended by
  - Action for Healthy Kids
  - Alliance for a Healthier Generation
  - USDA
  - CDC
  - State of New York Department of Health uses it to support districts
  - Arizona uses as part of SNAP-Ed assessment

# Studies comparing WellSAT to measures of Implementation

- Mixed findings – some studies found that stronger policies were associated with better implementation
- Other studies found no relationship
- Three possibilities –
  - Written policies are not implemented
  - Practices implemented that are not written
  - Measurement is not adequate

# WellSAT-I: Interview to assess implementation

- Research tool
- Distinct from the CDC's School Health Index, which is a self-assessment planning tool
- Interviews
  - Principal
  - 2 Teachers (PE and other)
  - Food service director and cafeteria manager
  - Executive director of curriculum and instruction
  - IT supervisor
  - District level wellness committee member



# Development of WellSAT-I

- Team: Margaret Read, Kim Gans, Jamie Chriqui, Lindsey Turner, Erin Hager, Susie Nanney, Nicole Larson
- Developed questions to match each item
- Cognitive interviews (Margaret and Nicole)
- Revisions
- Identified research groups in different states to test the measure

# WellSAT and WellSAT-I

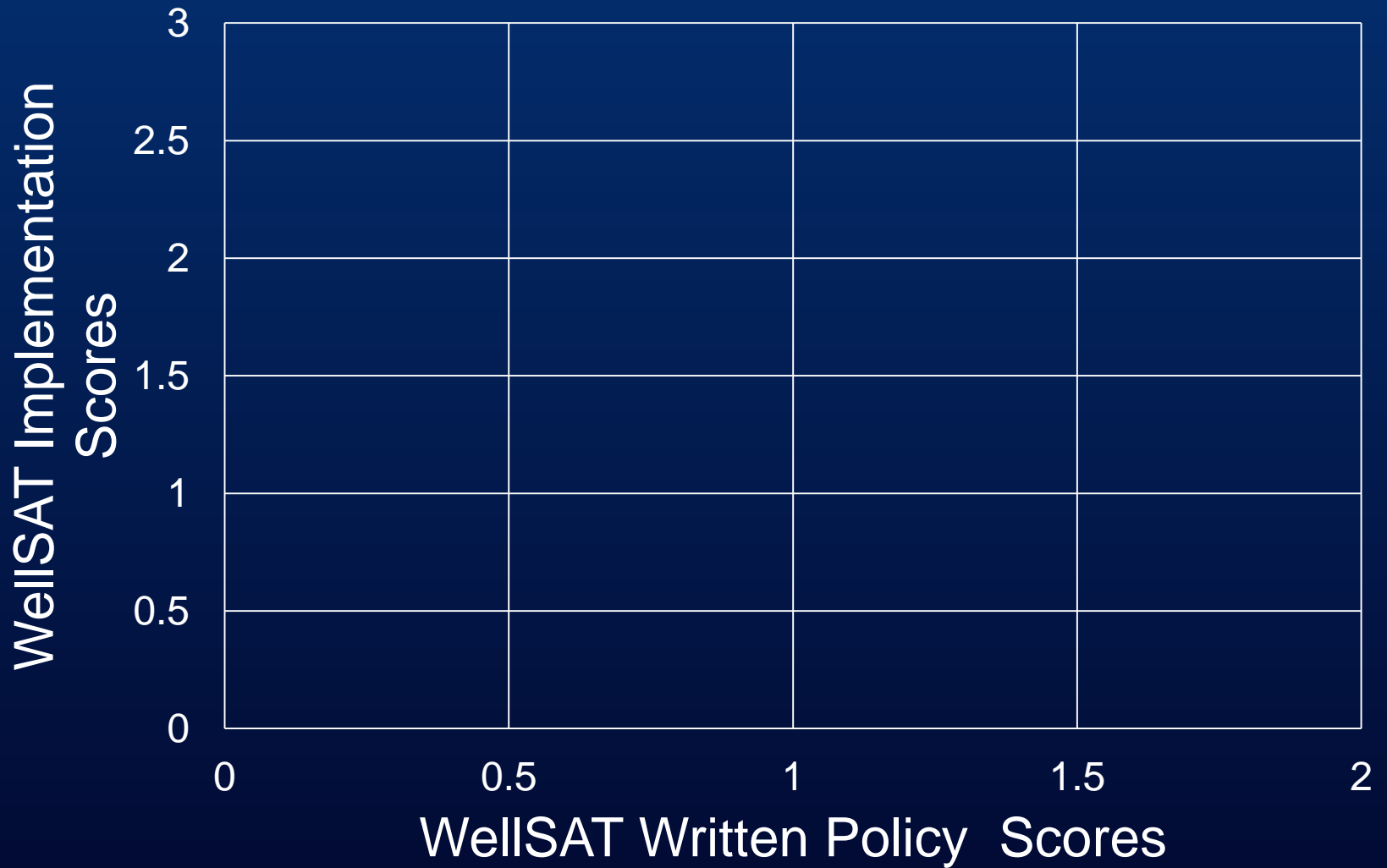
- Regulates food served at parties and celebrations during the school day
- Score 1: There are restrictions (e.g., Smart Snacks)
- Score 2: Food is not served at parties or celebrations
- Do food based celebrations occur during the school day? Are there restrictions? How confident are you that the restrictions (if any) are followed?

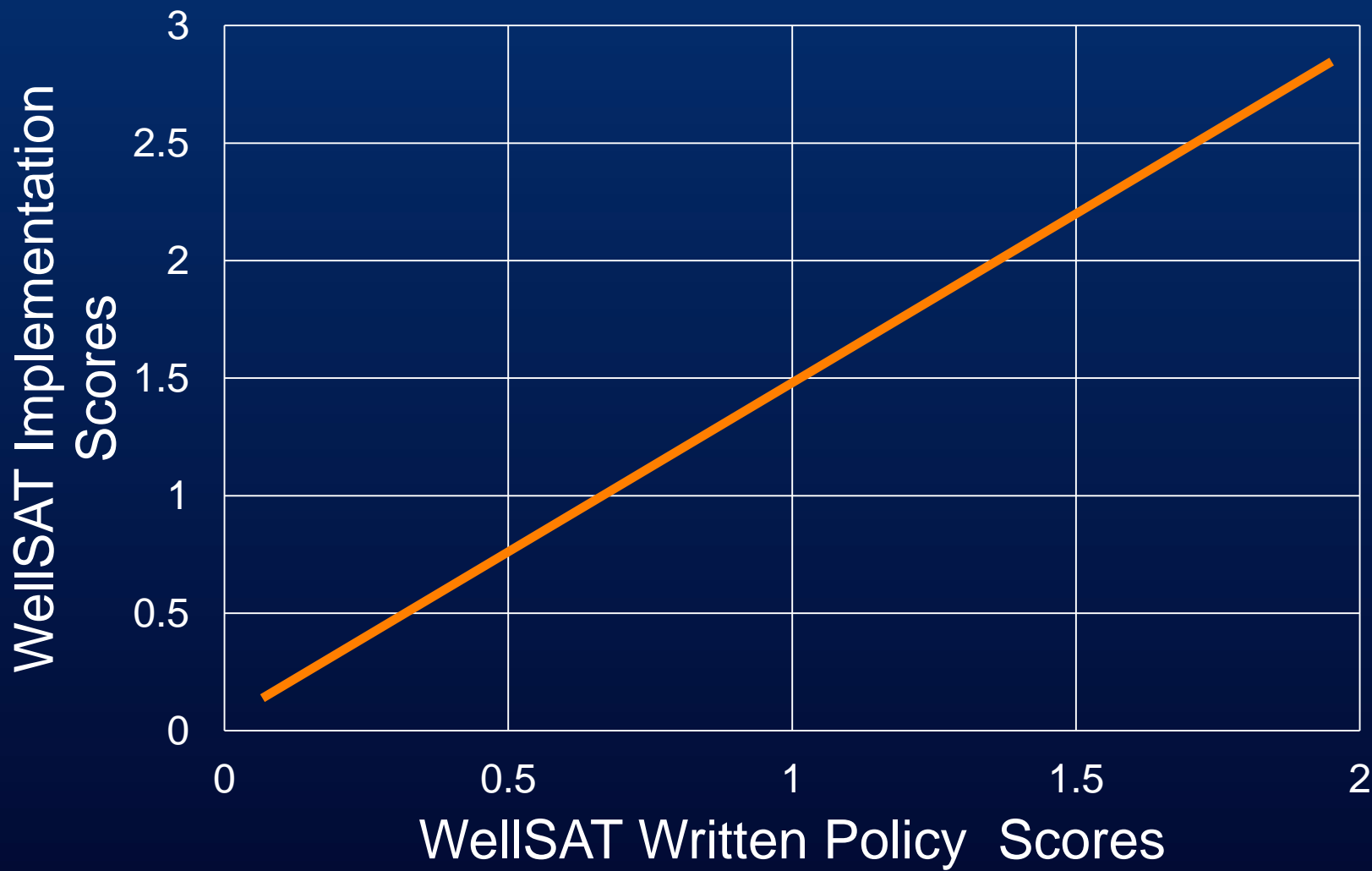
# Research groups that pilot tested WellSAT-I

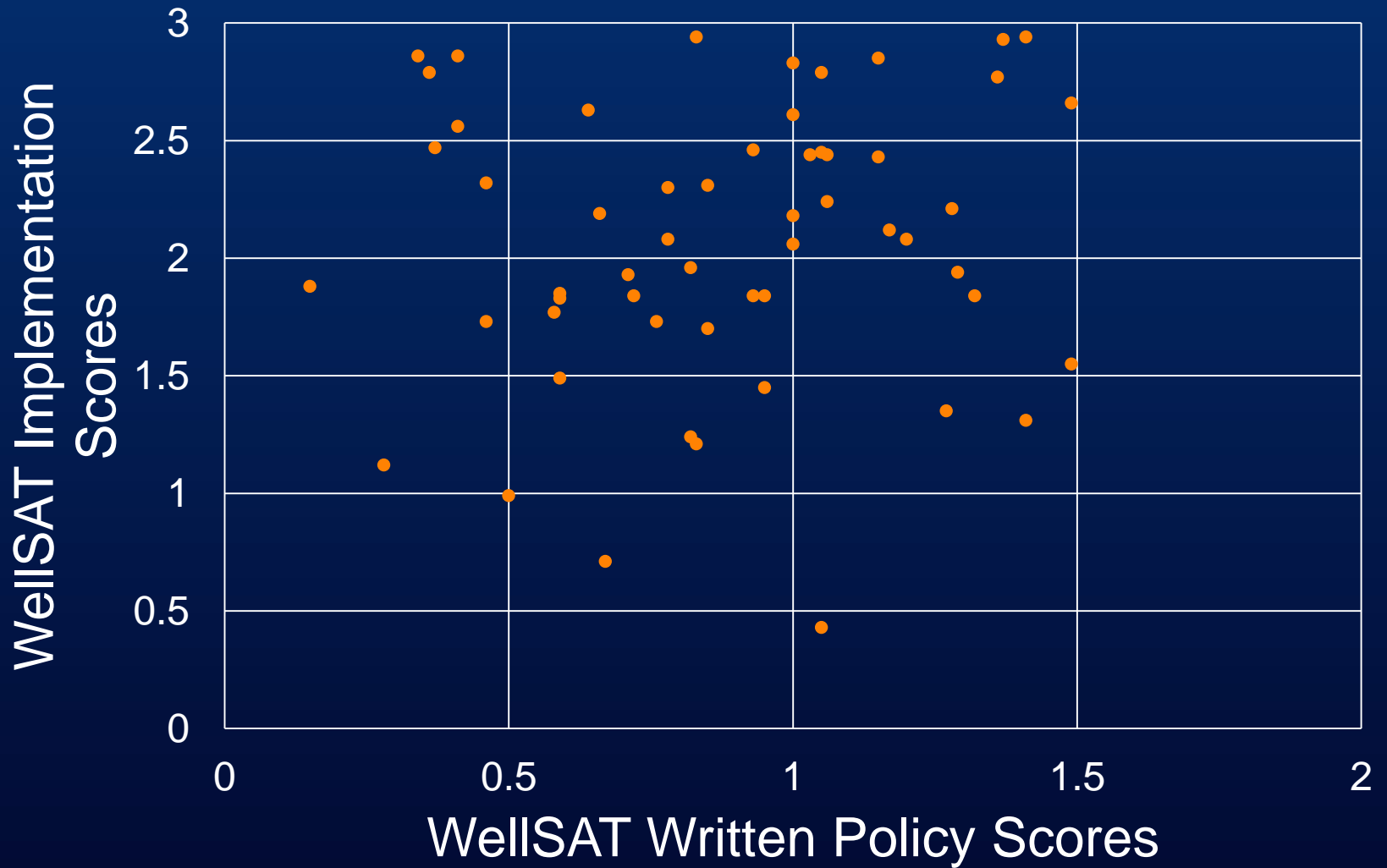
|               | Districts | Schools   | Elem      | Middle    | High      |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| California    | 1         | 42        | 31        | 4         | 7         |
| Connecticut   | 3         | 11        | 4         | 5         | 2         |
| Kentucky      | 1         | 2         | 1         | 1         | 0         |
| Minnesota     | 5         | 6         | 2         | 1         | 3         |
| Oklahoma      | 5         | 5         | 3         | 0         | 2         |
| Rhode Island  | 1         | 3         | 1         | 1         | 1         |
| South Dakota  | 24        | 24        | 24        | 0         | 0         |
| West Virginia | 1         | 1         | 0         | 0         | 1         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>41</b> | <b>94</b> | <b>66</b> | <b>12</b> | <b>16</b> |

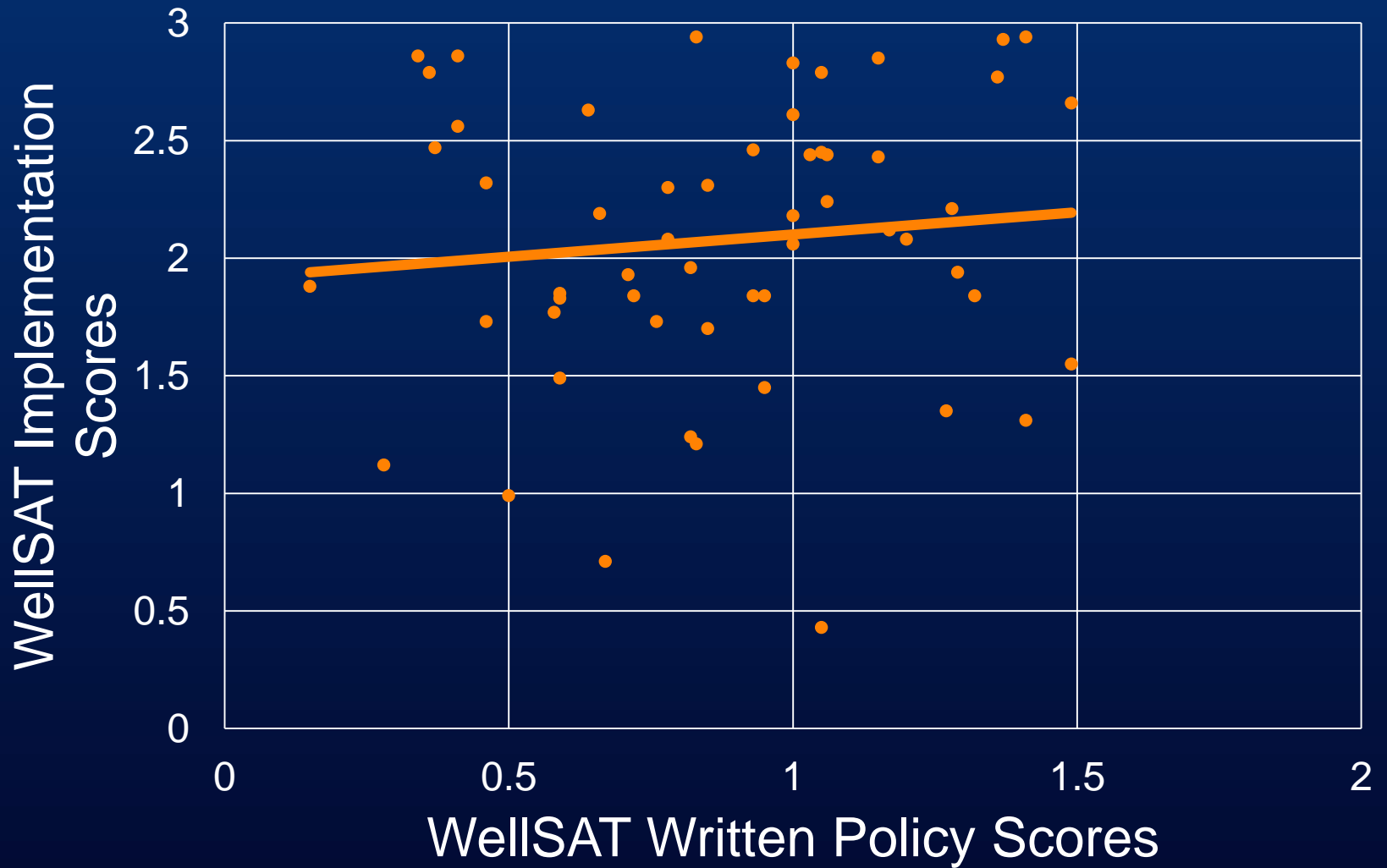
# Interrater reliability

- A sample of the pilot interviews were tape recorded
- 15 school districts, 25 schools
- Two people coded the WellSAT-I
- Intraclass Correlations calculated for each item
  - District items average ICC = .93
  - School items average ICC = .96

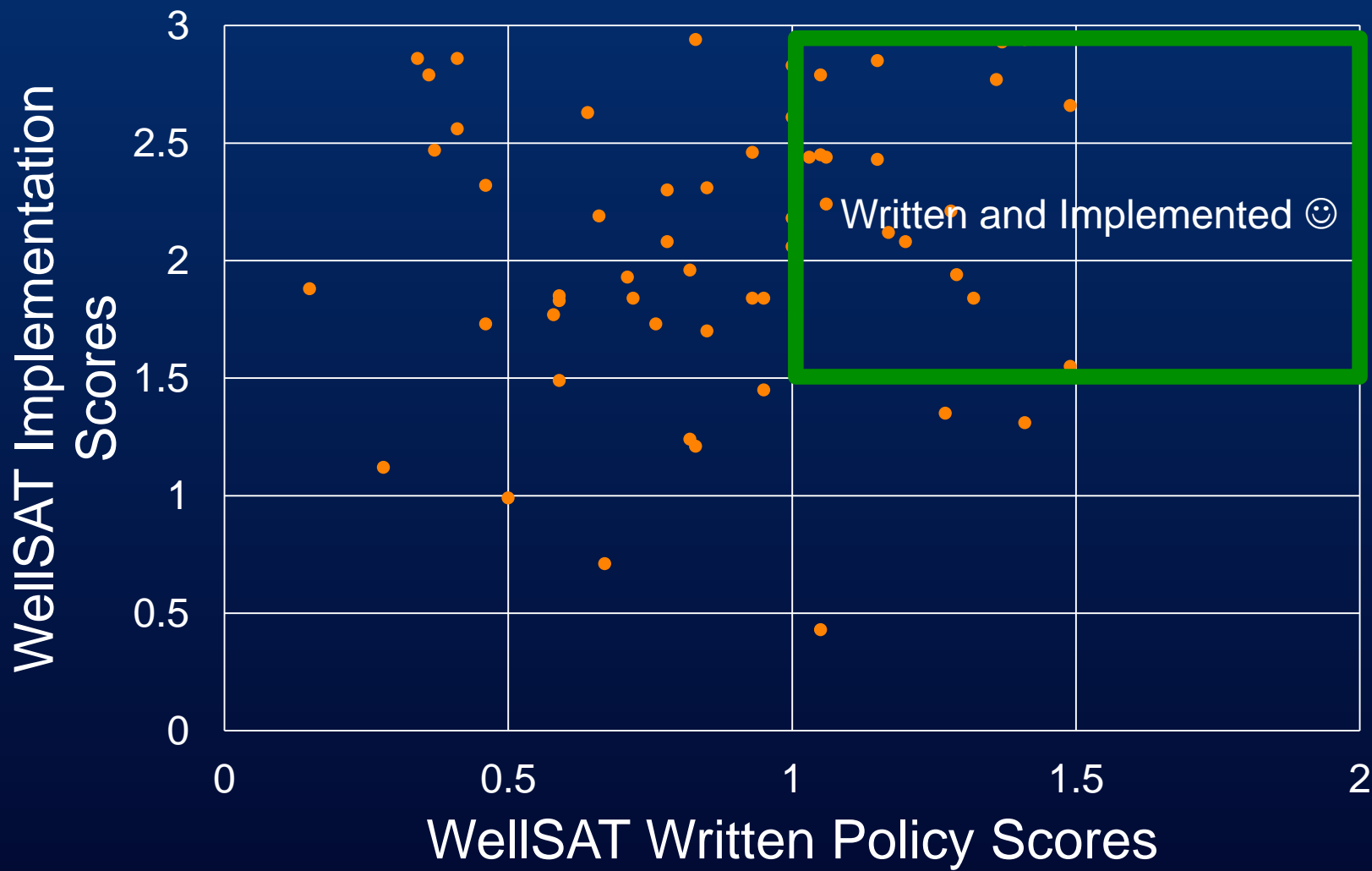




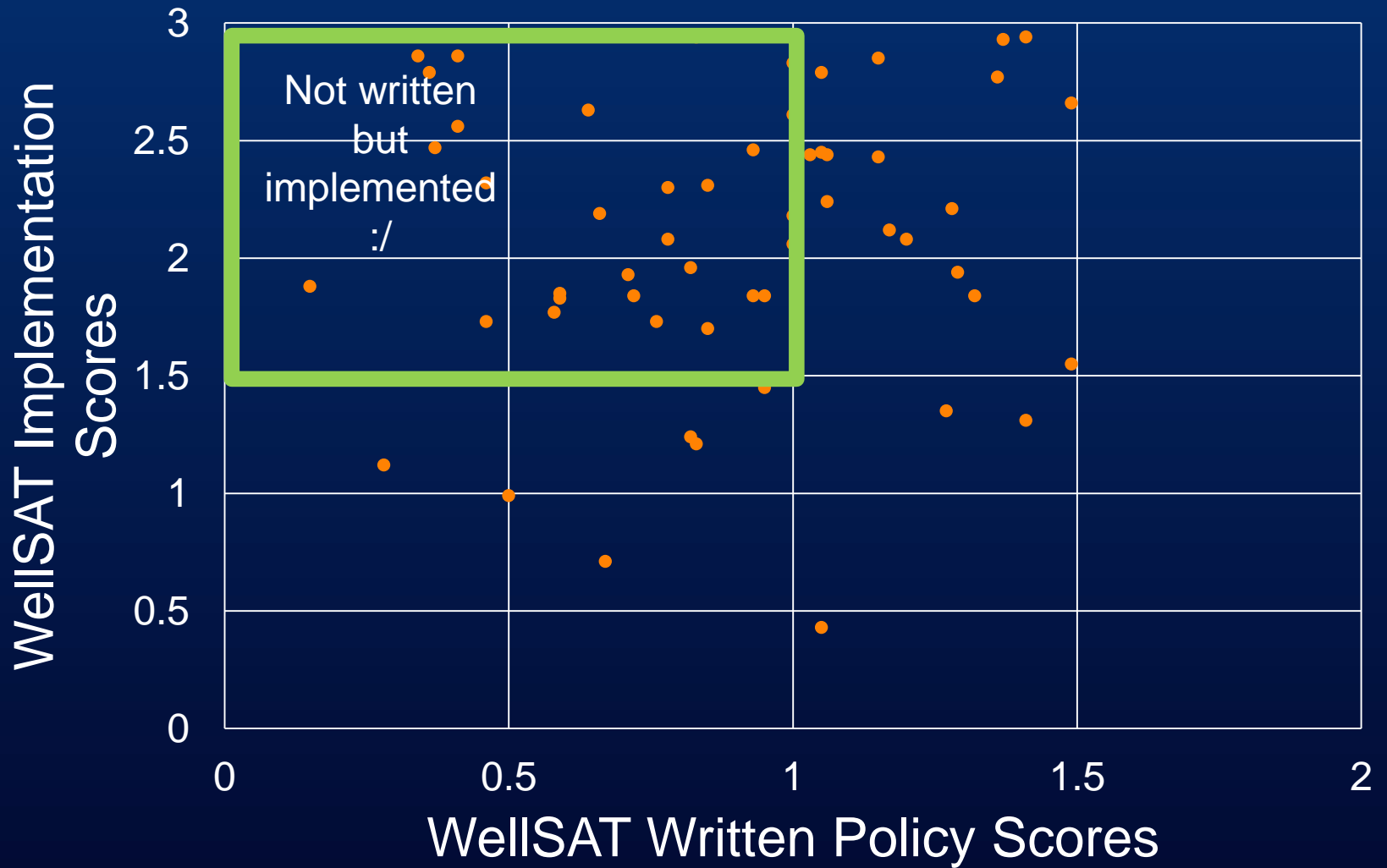


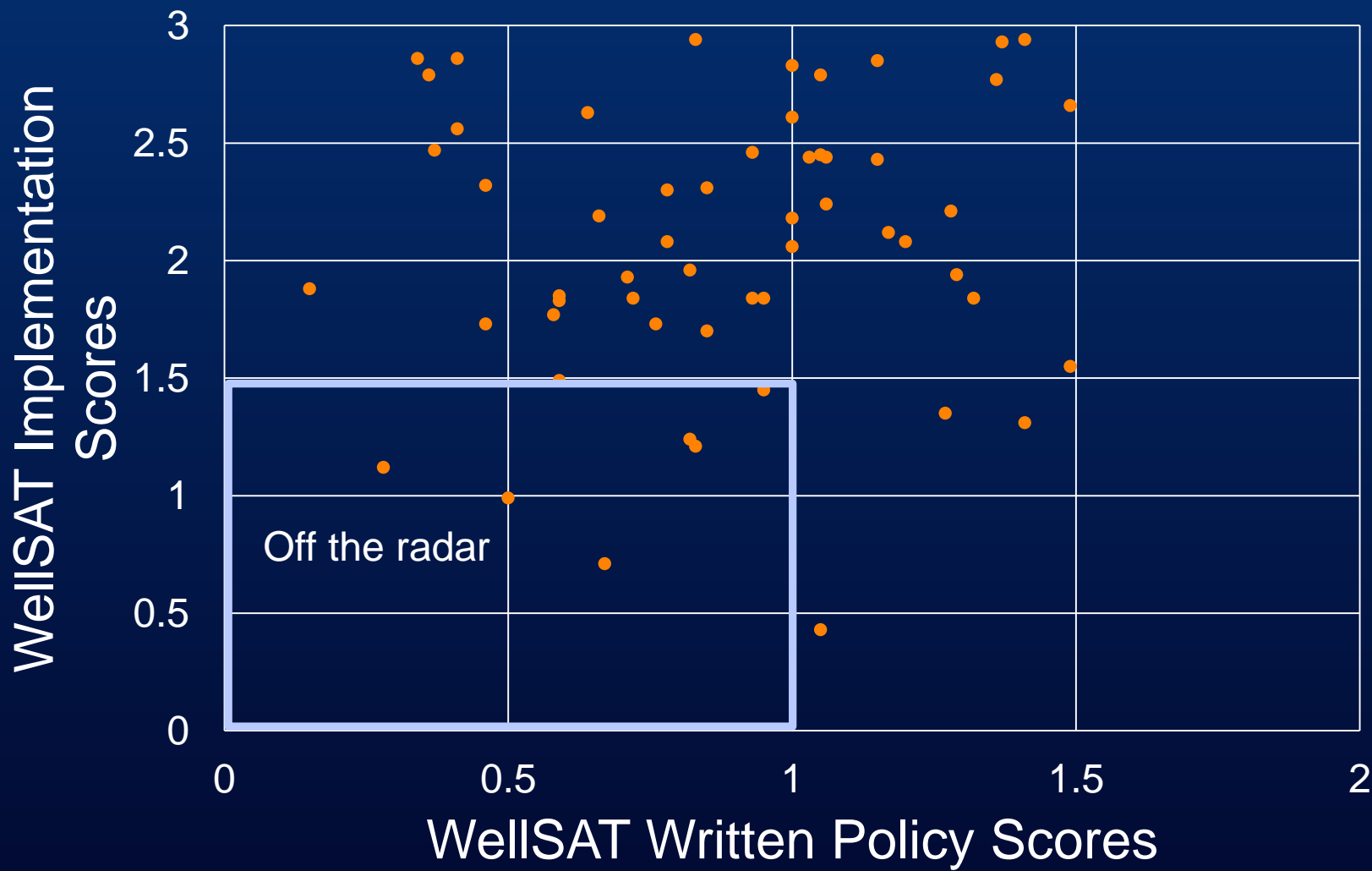


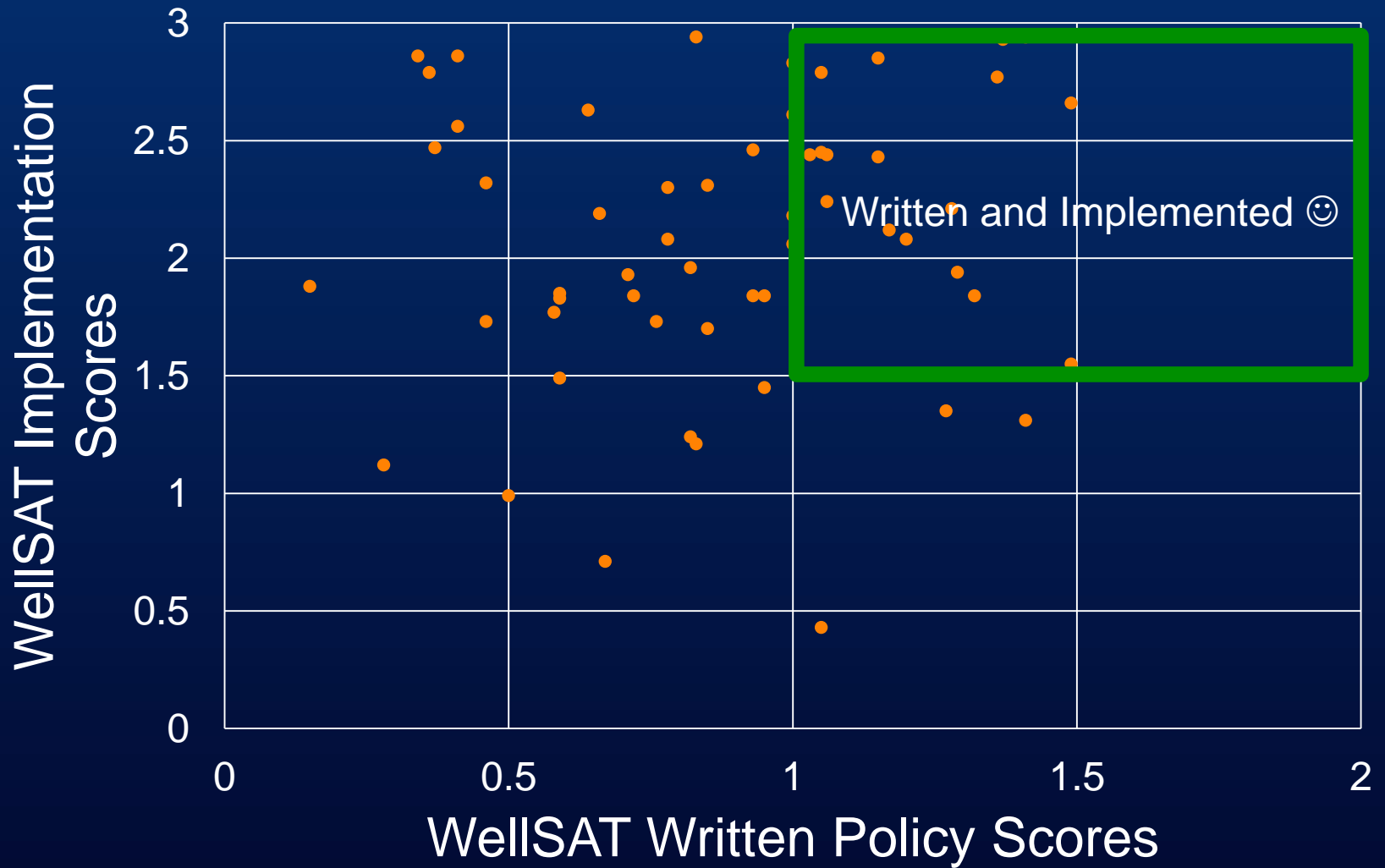










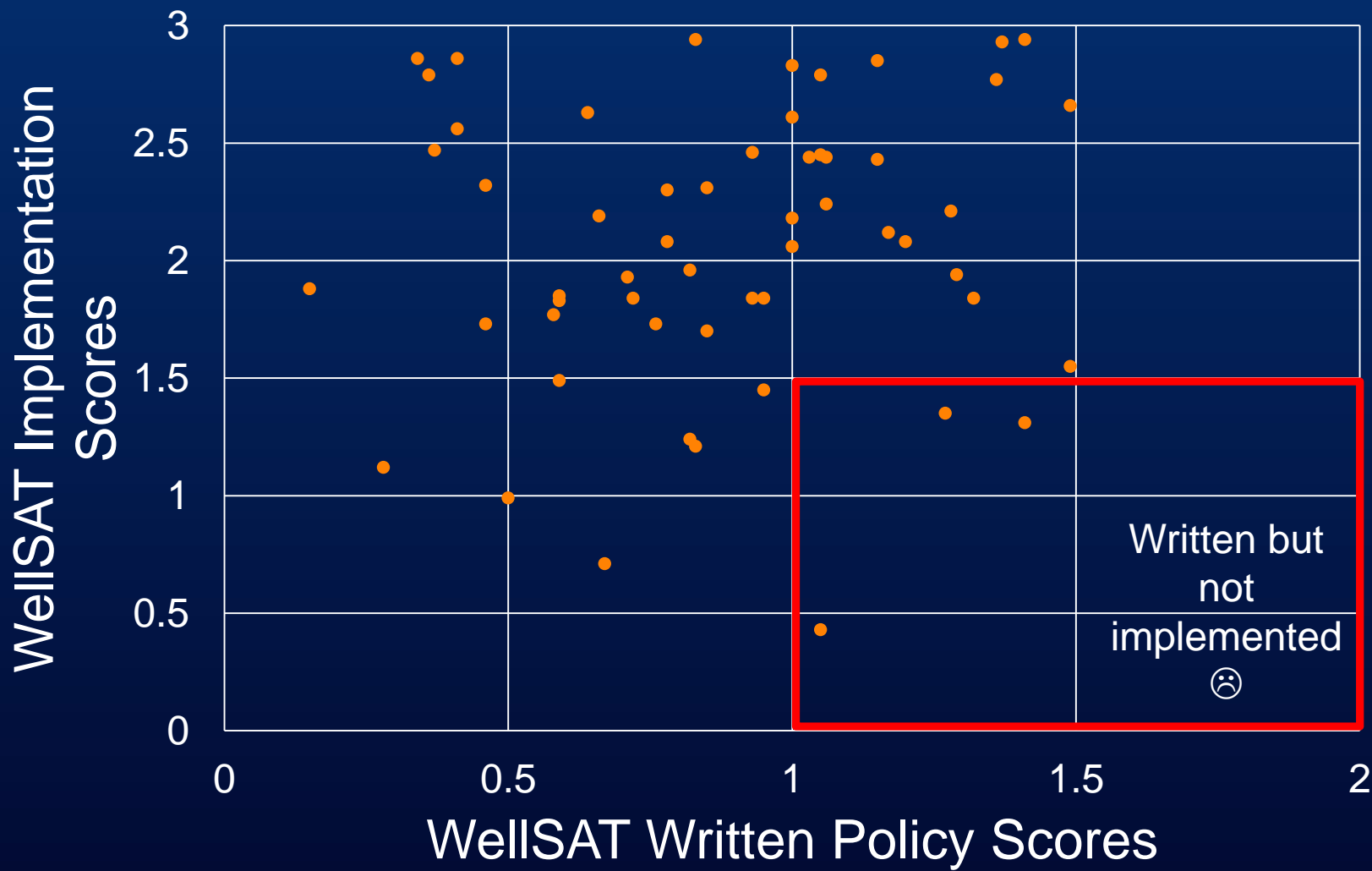


# Strong policies, good implementation

- Federal meal requirements
  - Compliance with school meal standards
  - Compliance with Smart Snacks in cafeterias, vending machines, school stores
  - Free drinking water during meals
  - Annual training for food and nutrition services staff
- District wellness committee
  - Ongoing committee
  - Has community-wide representation
- Nutrition education
  - Standards based nutrition education curriculum
  - Nutrition education is behavior focused
- Adequate time to eat

# Strong policies, good implementation

- PE and PA topics
  - Written PE curriculum
  - Before and after school PA opportunities
  - Recess in elementary school
  - Physical activity not withheld as punishment
- Free drinking water throughout the school day





# Strong policies, low implementation

- Time per week for PE for elementary school 😞  
Note: Time for PE for middle and high school were mixed – moderately strong policies, moderate levels of implementation
- Not using food as a reward in the classroom
- Linking nutrition education with the school food environment



# Low rates of written policy, but good implementation

- Restricting marketing
  - School publications, announcements
  - School websites, curriculum materials
  - Signs, scoreboards, equipment
  - Vending machines, food containers
- School meal issues
  - Access to school breakfast
  - Protect privacy of students receiving f/r meals
- Posting wellness policy on district website

# Low rates of written policy, but good implementation

- Concern about putting it in writing
  - Qualifications for PE teachers
  - PE teacher student ratio
  - Training for PE teachers
  - Recess before lunch
- Perhaps in another written policy
  - Joint / shared use agreements
  - Restrict PE exemptions and substitutions



# Rare policy, low implementation

- School garden
- Clear plan to assess implementation of the policy in the district
- Clear plan to assess implementation of the policy in each school building
- School level wellness committees/teams (School Health Advisory Committee – SHAC)

# Implications

- Written policies do not necessarily predict better implementation -- schools tend to do more than they want to put on paper
- Encourage districts to write policy components to reflect practices they are implementing, perhaps acknowledge financial resources
- Future research to test whether providing this feedback can lead to stronger written policies and more consistent implementation over time

# Thank You!

## Questions?

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