

WellSAT:

Wellness School Assessment Tool SM



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Overview

- History and the basics about the Wellness School Assessment Tool (WellSAT)
- Update to 3.0

Why did we create the WellSAT?

- Written school wellness policies became a federal requirement in 2006
- Researchers were interested in the potential impact of these policies
- This required the ability to quantitatively score policies
- RWJF Healthy Eating Research program pulled together a team in 2005 to develop a coding measure

Original 96-item measure to quantitatively score school wellness policies

Researchers used
data from
Connecticut,
Pennsylvania,
Washington, and
Minnesota

 American Dietetic
Association

Research and Professional Briefs

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

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ABSTRACT

In 2006, all local education agencies in the United States participating in the National School Lunch Program were required to establish school wellness policies that covered nutrition education, nutrition standards for school foods, and physical activity. The purpose of this psychometric study was to develop and evaluate the properties of a comprehensive and quantitative coding system to evaluate the quality of these policies. A 96-item coding tool was developed to evaluate seven goal areas: nutrition education, standards for US Department of Agriculture child nutrition programs and school meals, nutrition standards for competitive and other foods and beverages, physical education, physical activity, communication and promotion, and evaluation. Each goal area subscale and the total scale were scored on two dimensions: comprehensiveness and strength. Reliability was assessed by having pairs of researchers from four different states code a sample of 60 policies between July 2007 and July 2008. Goal area subscales were internally reliable (Cronbach's $\alpha = .60$ to $.93$). Adequate interrater reliability scores were obtained at each level of scoring: total comprehensiveness and strength scores (intraclass correlation coefficient 0.82), subscale scores (intraclass correlation coefficient 0.70), and individual items (intraclass correlation coefficient 0.72). This coding system provided a reliable method for analyzing

and comparing school district wellness policies in single or multistate studies.
J Am Diet Assoc. 2009;109:1256-1262.

The Child Nutrition and Women, Infants, and Children Reauthorization Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-265) required all local education agencies (public, private, and parochial) participating in the National School Lunch Program to create a school wellness policy by the 2006-2007 school year. The federal legislation required policies to include goals for nutrition education and physical activity to promote student wellness; nutrition guidelines for all foods available on each school campus during the school day; an assurance that reimbursable school meals follow federal law; a plan for measuring implementation of the policy; and the involvement of parents, students, the food authority, schoolboard, school administrators, and the public in the development of the policy. In addition, local wellness policies are subject to relevant state-level statutes; for example, nutrition standards, physical education standards, or body mass index reporting (1).

Early descriptive assessments found that districts adopted policies ranging from strong and specific to weak and vague; however, no quantitative method existed to score policies (2,3). Our study describes development of a coding system to evaluate local school wellness policies for comprehensiveness (ie, breadth of areas covered) and strength (ie, degree to which policies included specific and firm language) and to score policies for comparative analyses.

METHODS

This study was designed to test some of the psychometric properties (eg, range, internal reliability, and interrater reliability) of a coding system to abstract school wellness policies. The policies studied were drawn from a convenience sample of available policies (ie, all the policies from the four states being studied by the investigators: Connecticut, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, and Washington). All Institutional Review Boards deemed the study exempt from review. The coders included the authors and three senior-level research assistants. All coders were experienced researchers with a master's degree or doctorate in nutrition, public health, or psychology.

Developing the Code Book

A group of researchers, each independently completing projects funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

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WellSAT Online Tool

- www.WellSAT.org
- Funded by RWJF to create a simpler, online tool
- Original WellSAT website launched in 2010
 - 50 items
 - Broadened committee beyond researchers to also include state and federal government representatives and national advocacy groups
- Online tool updated
 - 2.0 in 2014 in response to HHFKA 2010 regulations
 - 3.0 in 2018 in response to USDA Wellness Policy Final Rules in 2017-2018

Who has used the WellSAT?

- 13,000 unique users and 23,000 visits
- All 50 states
- Individual school districts to assess strengths and areas for improvement
- Researchers
 - Examine how written policies change over time
 - Examine link between written policy and reported practices
- CDC, AFHK, AHG
- State government agencies
 - State of New York Department of Health uses it to support districts
 - Arizona uses as part of SNAP-Ed assessment

WellSAT Subscales



Scoring Strategy

Every item is scored as a 0, 1, or 2



Item was not addressed



Item was addressed in a
vague, suggested, or unclear
manner



Item was required in a clear
and specific manner

NS12: Addresses food not being used as a reward

0 = Not mentioned OR only allows healthy food to be used as a reward

1 = Discourages food as a reward

- "Food should not be used as a reward."

2 = Prohibits food as a reward

- "The use of food or candy as a classroom reward in any school is prohibited."

Scoring

□ Comprehensiveness

- How many topics does the policy address?
- The percent of items that score a “1” or “2”

□ Strength

- How many topics have required practices?
- The percent of items that score a “2”

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.

SIGN IN FOR YOUR WELL VISIT

Email Address:

Password:

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[Register](#)

GO

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

WellSAT 3.0 Update

Collaboration with Margaret Read (Rudd) and
Jamie Chriqui and Betsy Piekarz-Porter at the
University of Illinois Chicago



New!! WellSAT 3.0

WellSAT 3.0 reflects the USDA final rule for local wellness policies, the latest research and best practices, and feedback from our users. Click [here](#) to see a detailed description of the changes from 2.0 to 3.0.

Happy Coding!

Welcome to the WellSAT 3.0

The WellSAT is a quantitative assessment tool to help you score and improve your local School Wellness Policy. Since 2010, this measure has been used by thousands of people across the country, representing school districts from every state.

All WellSAT items reflect the federal law or best practices. The purpose of scoring your district policy is to identify where it is strong and where it could be improved.

This is the third update to the WellSAT and we would like to thank all of the **people** who have contributed to each version of the WellSAT.

Click [here](#) for a full list of updates.

Click [here](#) for a pdf of the questions and [here](#) for a blank scorecard.

Highlights of the changes from WellSAT 2.0 are below:

- Items that are part of the latest federal regulations are noted with this symbol: These items also include direct quotes from the final rule in the scoring guidance.
- Instead of one "Farm to School" question, there are now two separate questions that address the **components** of education, school gardens, and procurement. These questions are noted with this symbol:
- Instead of one CSPAP (Comprehensive School Physical Activity Plan) question, there are now separate questions for the **components** of physical education, physical activity before and after school, physical activity during school, staff involvement, and family and community engagement. These questions are noted with this symbol:

New items address:

- Feeding children with unpaid meal balances without stigmatizing them
- School level health advisory teams (in addition to district wellness committees)
- Food marketing in schools and fundraising

Old items were removed if they were no longer relevant due to Smart Snacks and other Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act meal nutrition standards.

SIGN IN FOR YOUR WELL VISIT

Email Address:

Password:

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GO

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

If you would like to view the survey without scoring a school wellness policy, click [here](#). Data will not be saved.



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Update the content


- Made items consistent with language from the latest federal regulations
- Reviewed the NWPS data for items that were rarely present

User requests

- Mark items based on federal regulations; add language to guidance

NE1	 Includes goals for nutrition education that are designed to promote student wellness.		0	1	2
			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Close Window or Esc Key


Back to Assessment Tool

NE1
Includes goals for nutrition education that are designed to promote student wellness.

Notes:
Federal Rule language states that policies must include "**specific goals** for **nutrition** promotion and **education**, physical activity, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness."

0
Either of the following

- No goals for nutrition education are mentioned
- Policy clearly detracts from requirement

1

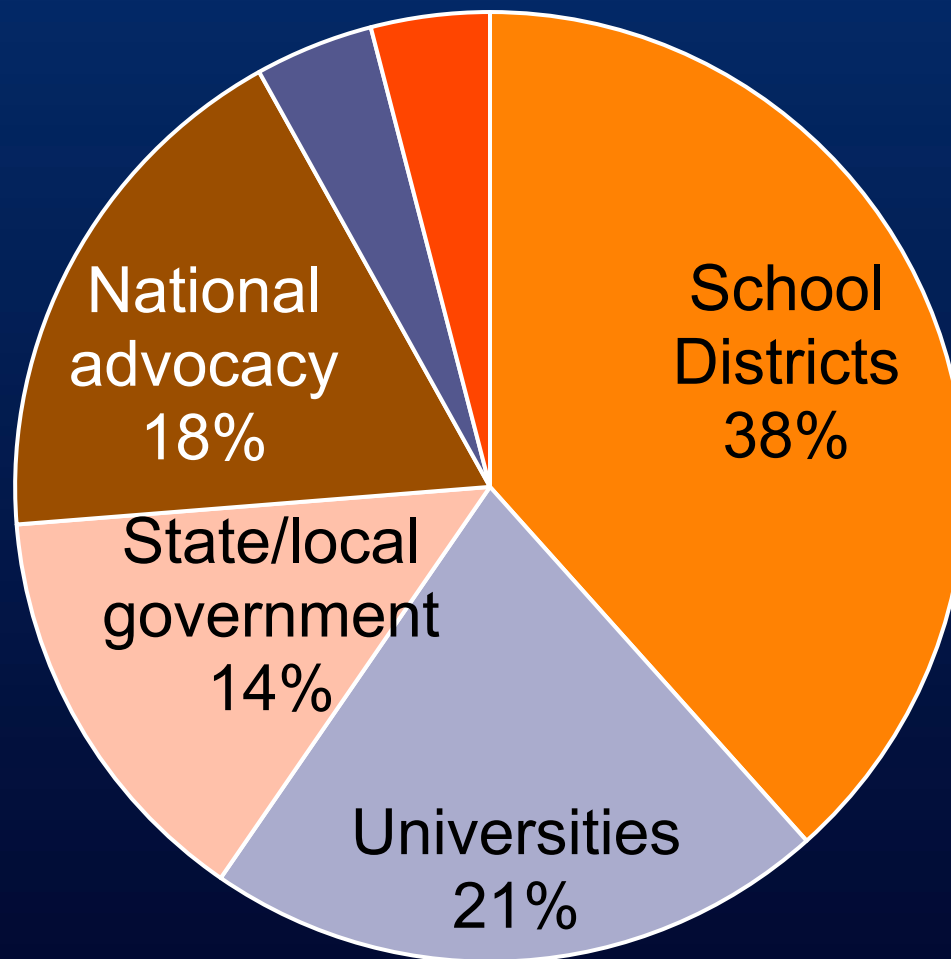
User survey

- NOPREN/PAPRN School Wellness Working Group
- Alliance for a Healthier Generation Voices for Healthy Kids School workgroup
- Emails from all users
- HER, CDC, USDA, AFHK
- Survey asked users to:
 - Rate every item for importance
 - Rate every “2” score to indicate if it should be weaker, stronger, or is just right

Survey respondents (N=77)

National government 4%

State/local advocacy 4%



Nutrition Education

- Update language for first item to reflect federal rule about “goals for nutrition education”
- Added “sequential and comprehensive” to questions about elementary, middle and high school nutrition education
- New items
 - Integrate nutrition education into other subjects beyond health education
 - Address agriculture and the food system (Farm to school component)

Standards for USDA School Meals

□ New items

- Addresses how to handle feeding children with unpaid meal balances with stigmatizing them
- Address purchasing local foods for the school meal program (Farm to school component)

□ Dropped

- School meal standards are more stringent than required by USDA
- Open campus
- School meal environment
- Provides nutrition information (e.g., calories) for school meals

□ Adjustments

- Water during meals and student privacy are federal requirements
- Changed "adequate time" to "seat time"

Nutrition Standards for Competitive and Other Foods and Beverages

□ New items

- Federal regulations for foods and beverages sold a la carte, vending, school stores
- Fundraising during the school day
- Fundraising exemptions

□ Dropped

- Foods and beverages with non-nutritive sweeteners in high school

□ Adjustment

- Addressing foods and beverages served during the school day (e.g., class parties) is a federal requirement

Physical Education and Physical Activity

□ New items

- Instead of one item about CSPAP, each component is its own item
- PE promotes a physically active lifestyle

□ Dropped

- Teacher-student ratio in PE class
- PA training for all teachers
- PE waivers (these occur at the state level)

Wellness Promotion and Marketing

□ New items

- Strategies to promote staff wellness
- Federal requirement to restrict marketing during the school day to Smart Snacks

□ Dropped

- Staff not modeling unhealthy eating
- Staff PA at school

□ Adjusted

- Combined staff modeling healthy eating and PA
- Specific settings of marketing (property; educational materials; where food is purchased; school publications and media; fundraisers)

Implementation, Evaluation, and Communication

□ New items

- Federal requirement for a triennial assessment
- Federal requirement for components of the assessment
- School level wellness committee/health team

□ Dropped

- Annual assessment

□ Adjusted

- Communication and updates revised to reflect federal language
- Description of committee and responsible individual updated to reflect federal language

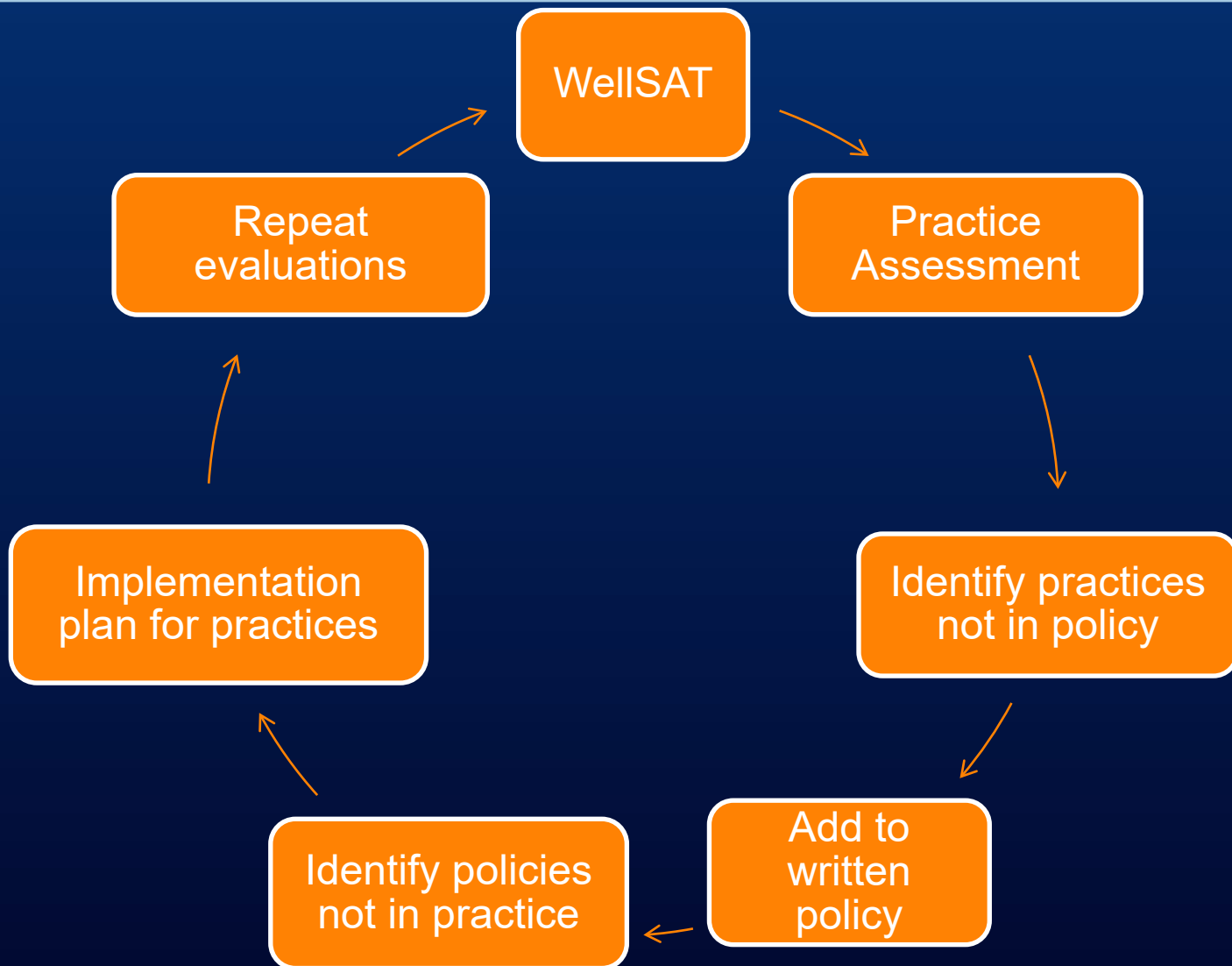
WellSAT 3.0 Update

- Final item count = 59
- Last step was to code 50 policies from a NSWP sample and establish interrater reliability
- Three rounds of reliability coding
 - First – 73% agreement; kappa = .56
 - Second – 82% agreement; kappa = .71
 - Third – 92% agreement; kappa = .88
- Revised coding guidance for clarity
- Identified examples for each item from policies

Additional resources on website

- Introductory video on coding
- Video on how to find your policy
- Guidance on knowing your state laws
- Coding tips
- Mean and distribution for the 50 coded policies from national sample
- Resources on best practices and implementation of wellness topics
- References for published studies that have used the WellSAT

The cycle of measurement and change



Thank You!

Questions?

Please visit us at:

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