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Background

- Federal law requires all local educational agencies participating in the national school meal programs to assess their wellness policy at least triennially.¹
- Sponsors must measure how well their wellness policy is implemented and publicly post the results, including
 - how the sponsor's wellness policy compares to a model policy,
 - the extent to which schools are following the wellness policy, and
 - describe the sponsor's progress towards their wellness policy goals.
- First assessment was due June 30, 2022.

Objective

- Provide technical assistance to Connecticut school meal sponsors in completing the triennial assessment of their local school wellness policies

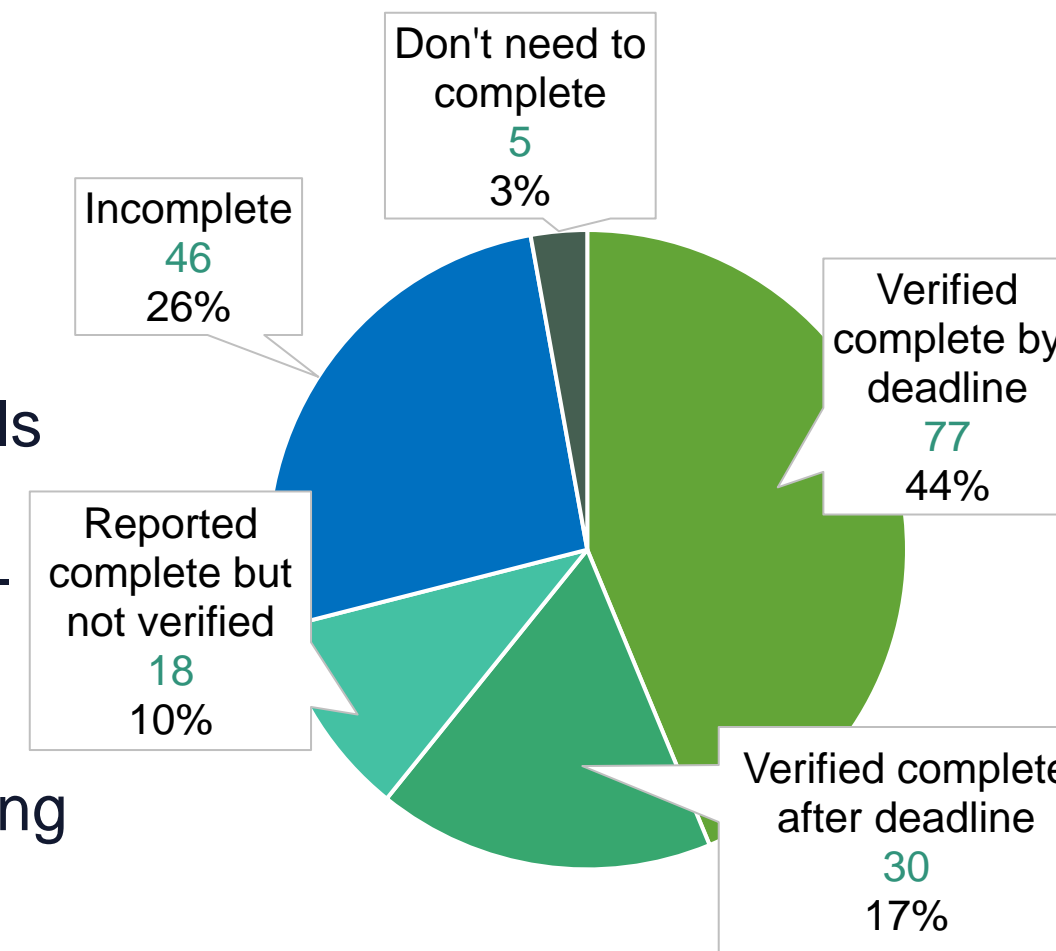
Process

- Collaborated with Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) beginning in spring 2021
- Created guidance on completing the triennial assessment
- Developed a four-step process to complete assessment
- Created instructions, worksheets, videos, and webinars to help sponsors
- Additional one-on-one assistance via email, phone, and WebEx meetings
- Helped CSDE verify whether sponsors posted documentation publicly

Findings

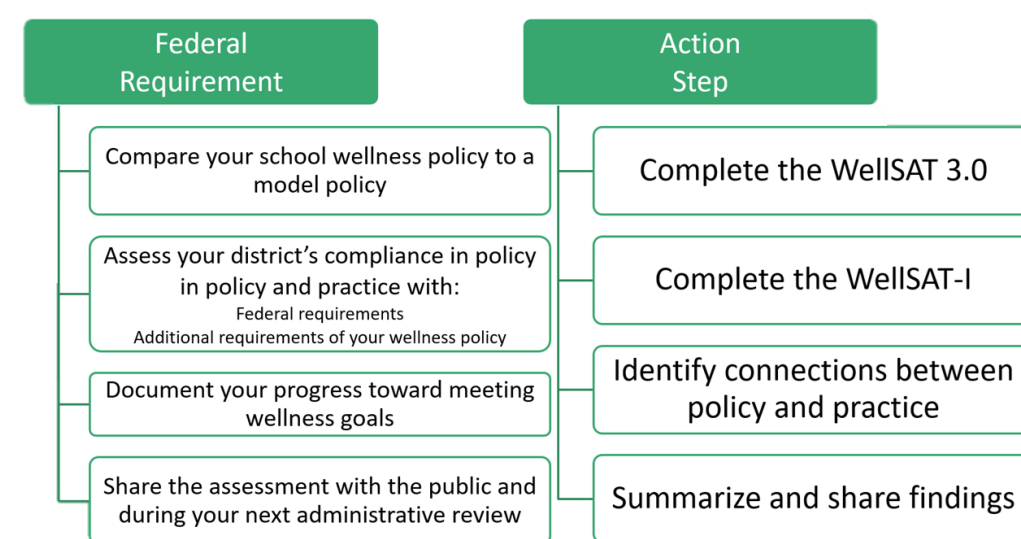
- Hosted 14 webinars:
 - four covering the entire process,
 - one covering the process for residential institutions, and
 - nine covering individual steps.
- Webinars were attended by 203 individuals from 134 sponsors.
- CSDE obtained USDA approval for a one-year deadline extension, allowing the remaining sponsors to complete the process and post their results without facing corrective action.

Connecticut School Meal Sponsors (N = 176) by Triennial Assessment Completion



Products Developed

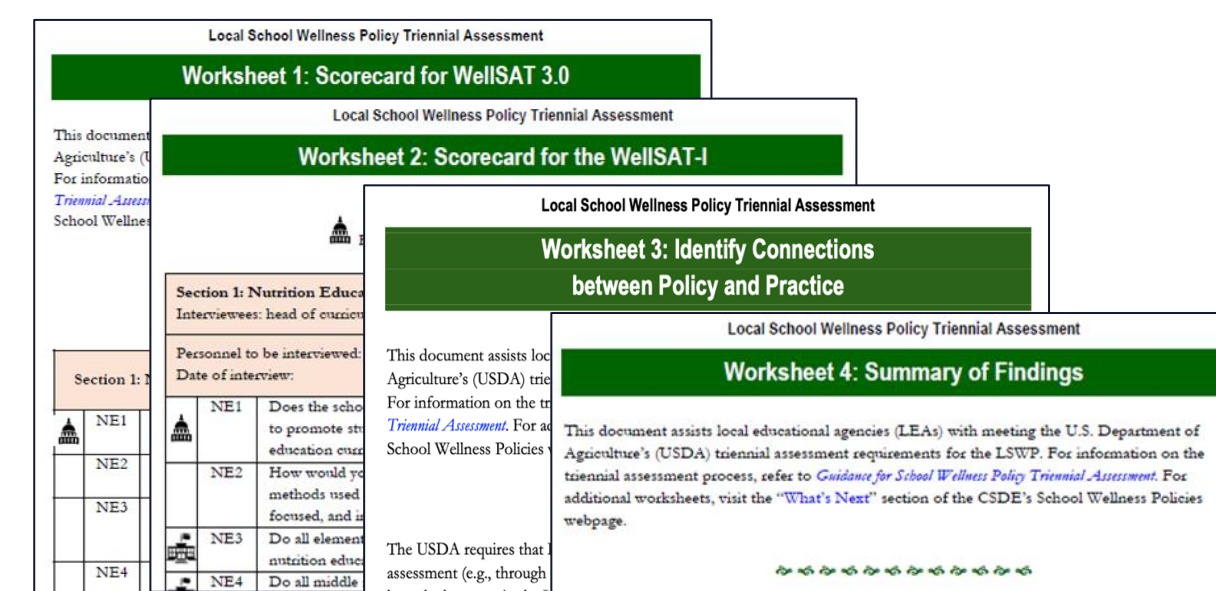
Triennial assessment steps²



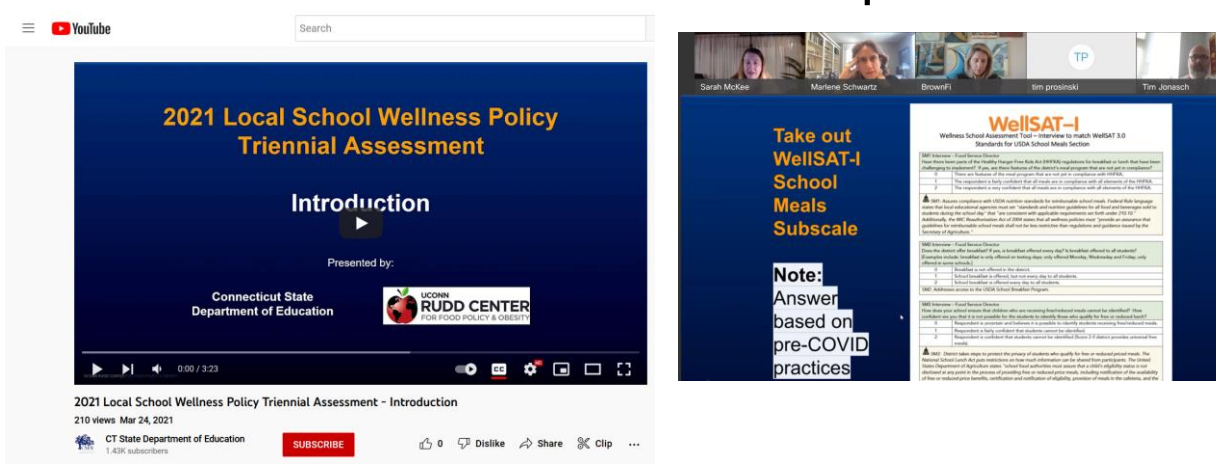
Updated WellSAT scorecard combining policy and practice scores³

Section	WellSAT 3.0 Score	WellSAT-I Score
Section 1: Nutrition Education	2	2
Section 2: Nutrition Assessment	1	2
Section 3: Nutrition Environment	0	1

Worksheets to complete the assessment⁴



Videos and webinars to assist sponsors^{2,4}



Key Takeaways

- Policies balance being prescriptive versus providing flexibility.
- Creating a standardized process to complete the assessment may help.
- Many sponsors did not meet the June 2022 deadline, but a majority reported they had completed the requirements.
- COVID presented additional challenges for sponsors.
- State education departments should consider what forms of guidance and technical assistance were most successful in their state and others, then apply this knowledge to future guidance to sponsors.

Acknowledgements

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References

1. Final Rule: Local School Wellness Policy Implementation Under the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, 81 FR §50151. (2016). <https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2016-17230>
2. UConn Rudd Center (2022). *Triennial Assessment*. WellSAT.org. https://www.wellsat.org/triennial_assessment.aspx
3. UConn Rudd Center (2022). *WellSAT 3.0*. <https://www.wellsat.org/>
4. Connecticut State Department of Education (2022). *What's next: Local school wellness policy triennial assessments*. <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/School-Wellness-Policies/What-Next>