Exploring Context

WSCC **Policy** Blueprint

Session 3

Purpose: To gain experience with a policy evaluation tool, the WellSAT WSCC, which helps you to evaluate policy alignment with the WSCC model

Review

- ❑ Intro to Exploring Context
- ❑ The WellSAT WSCC
- ❑ What Does the WellSAT WSCC Evaluate?
- ❑ Structures of the WellSAT WSCC 2.0
- ❑ An Important Note about WellSAT WSCC 2.0 Scoring

Do Together

- ❑ Activity 3: Practice with the WellSAT WSCC

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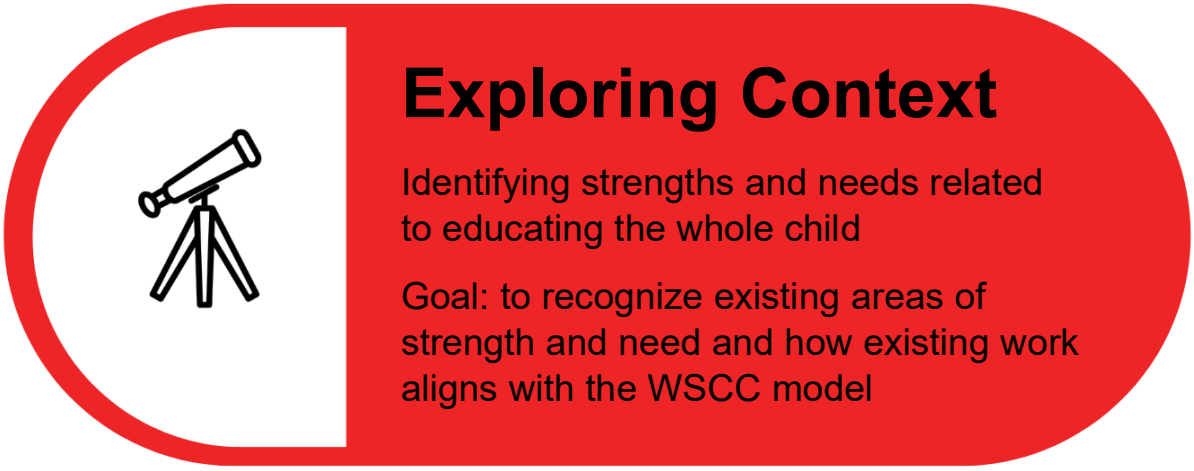
SECTION II: THE 3ES OF WHOLE CHILD I-MTSS

STEP 1: Exploring Context



As noted previously, we know that likelihood of sustainable change for any initiative is not automatic and should not be expected to happen quickly. Instead, successful, sustainable change generally takes at least 3-5 years in schools (Fixsen et al., 2005; Metz et al., 2015). Many schools experience false starts or a revolving set of initiatives that never take hold. **Systematic and planful work is a necessary prerequisite to successful change** and can help to prevent false starts and unsuccessful implementation. Thus, this early part of the planning blueprint has you gather background information that will inform your planning and implementation efforts. We call this stage **exploring your context**.

The activities in this section address two key goals:

1. Identifying existing policies that address WSCC domains
2. Recognizing areas of strength and current and future needs

TIP

If you are new to the WSCC model and have not already done so, we encourage you to read the Introduction to the WSCC Model and complete Activity 1 – Build WSCC Knowledge to learn important definitions and foundational principles of engaging in this work.

The WellSAT WSCC

One tool that you can use to identify areas of strength and current and future needs in your policy is the WellSAT WSCC 2.0. In this section, we describe the WellSAT WSCC and how to use it. Then, we introduce an activity in which you have the opportunity to use the WellSAT WSCC 2.0 with a sample policy that we have selected. We provide guidance on how to navigate and use the WellSAT WSCC 2.0 to score this policy, as well as explanations of how we scored this policy. This will give you an opportunity to explore the platform and gain experience coding a policy before diving in to score your own policies.

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.

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.

More information about the history and development of the WellSAT WSCC is available online.

> If your school or district uses the CDC's School Health Index (SHI) to evaluate policy, that can be used here in place of the WellSAT WSCC.

What Does the WellSAT WSCC Evaluate?

The WellSAT WSCC evaluated the ten domains of the WSCC model as well as two additional domains that assess integration and wellness promotion across domains.

Domain	What is Assessed	Relevant Policies
Physical Activity	Comprehensive strategies to facilitate student physical activity	• District Wellness Policy • Recess Policy
Nutrition Environment and Services	Facilitation of healthy eating by providing nutritious food options, education, and messages	• District Wellness Policy
Health Education and Nutrition Education	Experiences and opportunities to help students learn information and skills that facilitate healthy behaviors	• Curriculum and Instruction Policy • Sexual Health Education Policy • Substance Use Prevention Policies
Social and Emotional Climate	Bullying prevention and intervention, school climate monitoring, and social emotional learning standards	• Bullying Policy • Student Discipline Policy • Student Code of Conduct
Safe Environment	Physical condition of school buildings; protection of students from physical and psychological threats and injuries	• Cleaning Policy • Green Cleaning Policy • School Safety • Emergency Preparedness Policies • Construction/ Remodeling Policies • Pesticide/ Hazardous Material Policy
Health Services	Preventive care and management of students' acute and chronic health conditions	• Health Services policy • Responding to Communicable Disease Policy • Allergy Management Policy • Overdose Prevention • Chronic Disease Management Policies
Behavioral Supports	Supports for the social, emotional, and behavioral well-being of students	• Suicide prevention • Responding to student substance use • Student discipline/code of conduct

Domain	What is Assessed	Relevant Policies
Employee Wellness	Personalized health programs that address the health and well-being of the staff	• District wellness policy • Tobacco use policy
Community Involvement	Resource sharing and volunteer opportunities through partnerships with groups, organizations, and businesses in the community	• District wellness policy • Community relations • Graduation requirements (e.g., volunteering or service-learning components)
Family Engagement	Family-school partnerships that actively support the successful development of students	• District Wellness Policy • Parent involvement • Community relations
Integration, Implementation, Communication, and Evaluation	Successful integration, implementation, communication, and evaluation of district wellness policies	• District wellness policy
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

Structures of the WellSAT WSCC 2.0

The WellSAT WSCC 2.0 can be completed by individuals or by teams. For example, various WSCC domains could be delegated to personnel or teams with expertise in that area (e.g., Health Services to the school nurse). These individuals or teams may be more familiar with the relevant policies and dividing up the work reduces that amount of time any one person needs to dedicate to completing the evaluation. It may also open opportunities for brainstorming and collaboration in your efforts to strengthen your WSCC-related policies.

If using a team approach to completing the WellSAT WSCC 2.0, users will need to create one account and share the credentials with any colleagues contributing to the evaluation.

Importantly, the WellSAT WSCC 2.0 is a single sign-on system. Users will need to create one account and share the credentials with any colleagues completing a part of the assessment.

Throughout the WellSAT WSCC 2.0, the **icons** below are used to signal key information to users.

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 or sections that are also included in the WellSAT 3.0 measure

The WellSAT WSCC 2.0 guides users through evaluating their policies in each the 12 domains outlined above. Users are presented with 3-12 items in each domain and are asked to score their school policies using this scale:

WellSAT WSCC 2.0 Scoring		
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").

An Important Note about WellSAT WSCC 2.0 Scoring

The WellSAT WSCC 2.0 is intended to be a ***tool*** for schools and districts to evaluate their school policies. Even amongst school policy experts, we find variation in the scores that users give to various policies. This variation is not often confusion between a 0 and 2, but instead differentiating between a 0 and 1, or a 1 and 2.

It is less important that you score your policy exactly as someone else would score it (i.e., a "right" answer), **and more important** that you use this as a tool to flag and alert you to policies that could be strengthened.

You are unlikely to revisit items for which you award a score of 2. You have identified that you are strong in these areas of policy. Therefore, if you wish to revisit the item – or see opportunities to strengthen the policy based on language provided in the WellSAT WSCC 2.0, you might award a score of 1. In addition, if you marginally meet an expectation (e.g., including one key group when the item asks about including the voice of key groups such as staff, families, and students), you might consider scoring yourself a 0 or a 1 to flag this item as a potential area of improvement.

TIP

Several additional resources are available to support your use and understanding of the WellSAT WSCC 2.0. These include a UConn CSCH Podcast Episode, CSCH Brief, User Manual, Coding Guide, and Scoresheet.

Activity 3 – Practice Using the WellSAT WSCC

Anticipated time needed to complete this activity: 20 minutes

Before you begin evaluating your own policies, it can be helpful to practice navigating the WellSAT WSCC platform. The WellSAT WSCC 2.0 is an evaluation tool aligned with the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child model. It allows users to assess the strength and comprehensiveness of their integration of the WSCC model into their policies. Based on feedback from school personnel, we have created a short practice activity to build your understanding of the platform before having you assess your own policies. The practice activity offers you the opportunity to use the platform to assess one sample policy (provided) and to compare your scores to an answer key. When completing the WellSAT WSCC for your own policies, you will be encouraged to evaluate all of your WSCC-related policies (which you will gather in Activity 4) - without an answer key! We encourage you to take this opportunity to learn about the platform as your results in the next step will inform the rest of your blueprinting work.

> Since there are many parts to the WellSAT WSCC platform, we encourage you to take this opportunity to learn how to use it before evaluating your own policies in Activity 5.
>
> If you are familiar with the WellSAT WSCC, you can proceed to Activity 4.

Activity 3 – Practice Using the WellSAT WSCC can be found in Appendix B.

Case Study:

Mrs. Washington's Practice Using the WellSAT WSCC

Mrs. Washington spent 20 minutes getting familiar with the WellSAT WSCC platform as she scored the sample Social and Emotional Climate policy that was provided. The step-by-step instructions and screenshots helped her to know that she was in the right place, and she was happy to have taken this time to get familiar with the platform before embarking on scoring her own school's policies.

Mrs. Washington also noticed that some of the scores she gave to the sample Social and Emotional Climate policy differed from those provided in the Answer Key. The differences were primarily by 1 point and the scoring explanations provided helped her to understand the differences in scoring. She reread the "An Important Note About WellSAT WSCC 2.0 Scoring" above to confirm that these variations in scoring are not a concern – rather, the reflections and insight that the scoring process offers is more important!

Mrs. Washington is excited to use the tool to evaluate her own policies next!

Exploring Context

ACTIVITY 3 – PRACTICE USING THE WELLSAT WSCC

Time to Complete: 20 minutes

Goal of Activity: To gain experience with the WellSAT WSCC 2.0, a policy evaluation tool that helps to evaluate policy alignment with the WSCC model

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Instructions for Scoring the Model School Climate Policy

1. Review the "Model School Climate Policy."
2. Familiarize yourself with the Social & Emotional Climate Scoresheet.

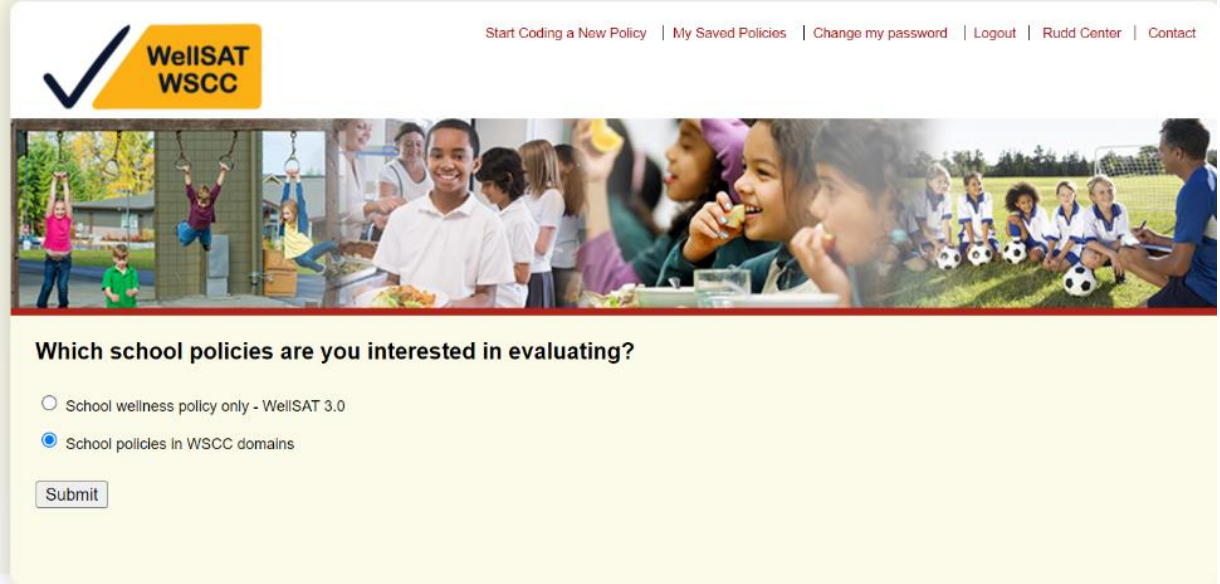
SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL CLIMATE

		Rating
SEC1	Addresses participation in school climate surveys.	
SEC2	Addresses sharing aggregate results of school climate surveys with stakeholders (e.g., families, community members, staff, state and/or district leadership).	
SEC3	Addresses promoting positive relationships between students and employees.	
SEC4	Identifies school-wide approaches to prevent and address harassment, bullying, and cyberbullying.	
SEC5	Addresses diversity and inclusion to promote engagement of all students in school activities.	
SEC6	Addresses reviewing and responding to school climate data (e.g., bullying reports, discipline data, or other related data sources).	
SEC7	Addresses use of positive behavior support practices.	
SEC8	Addresses minimization of exclusionary disciplinary practices (e.g., suspension and expulsion).	
SEC9	Addresses social emotional learning.	
SEC10	Connects social emotional learning standards and academic standards.	
Subtotal for Section 4: SEC	**Comprehensiveness Score:** Count the number of items rated as "1"or "2." Divide this number by the total number of items, excluding those that are not applicable (N/A). Multiply by 100.	
	Strength Score: Count the number of items rated as "2." Divide this number by the total number of items, excluding those that are not applicable (N/A). Multiply by 100.	

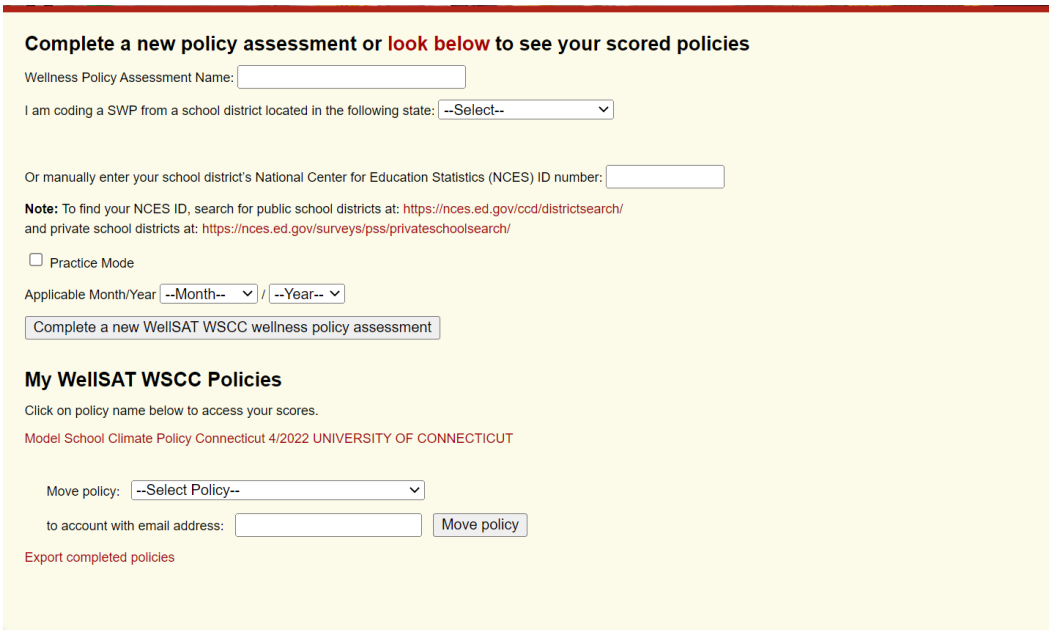
Federal Requirement | Farm to School | CSPAP | WellSAT 3.0 Item

3. Login to the WellSat WSCC 2.0 website. Importantly, you will be asked to create an account. Your account is immediately available once you have created it – you do not need to wait for a follow up email.

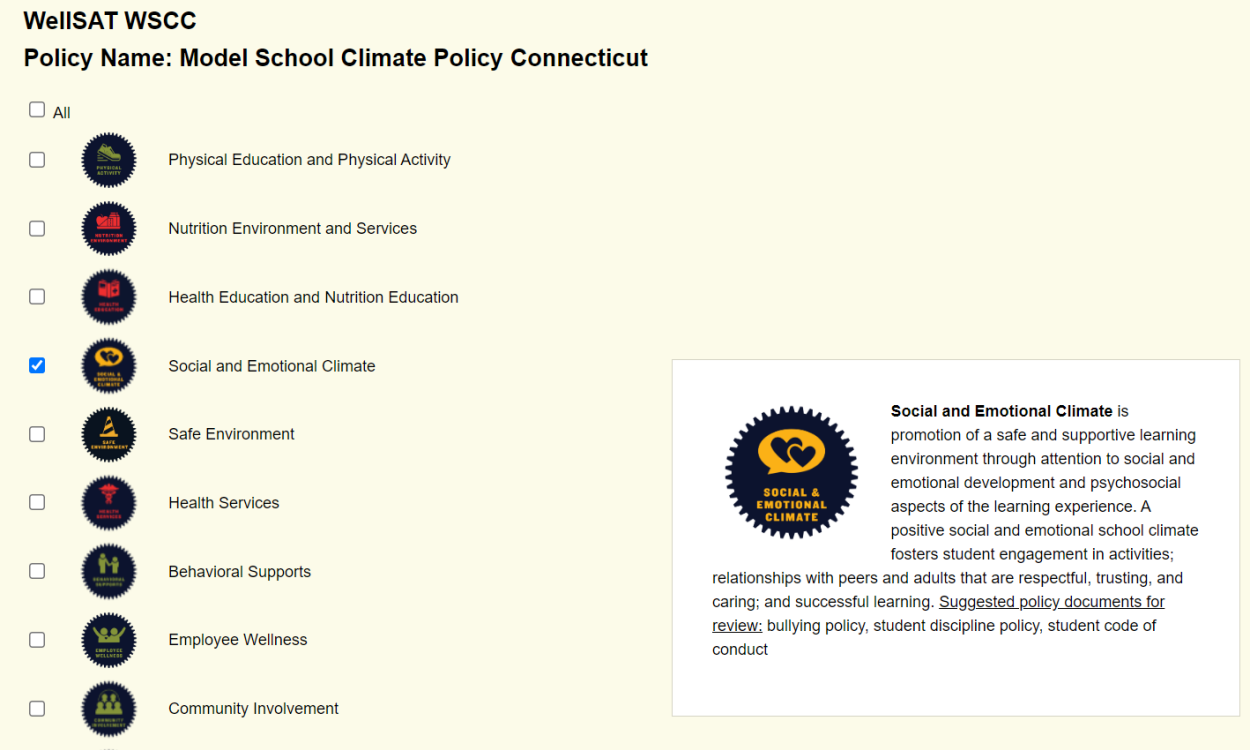
4. When asked “Which school policies are you interested in evaluating?” select “School policies in WSCC domains.”



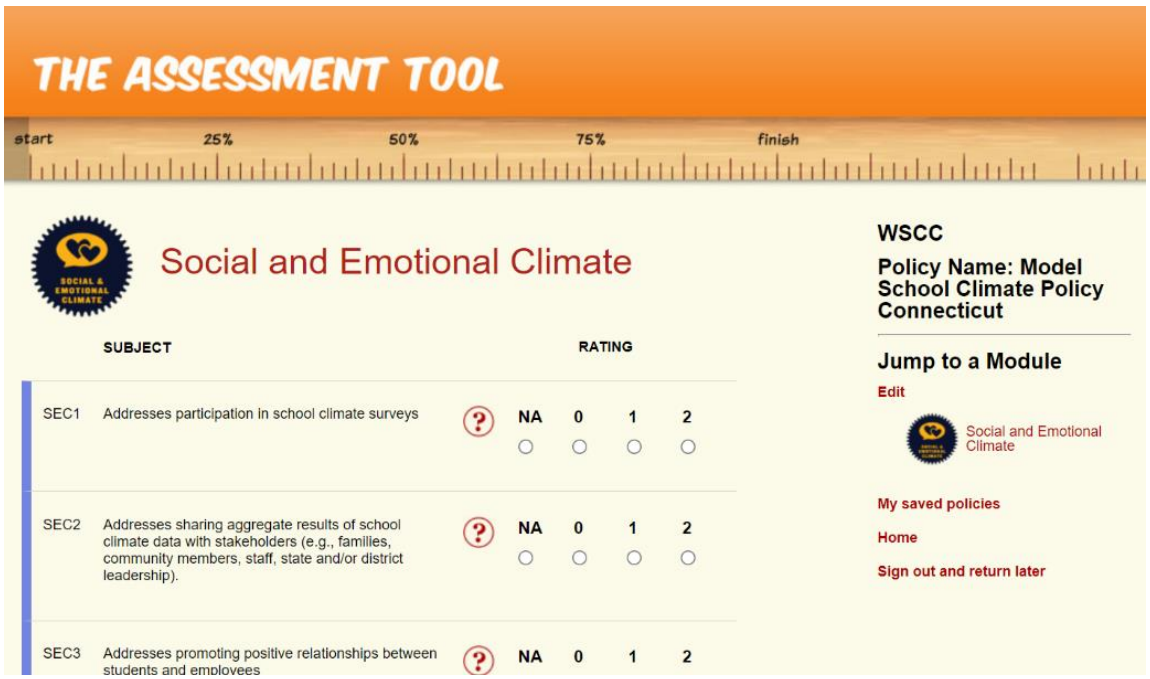
5. Fill in the “Start a New Coding Policy” page with information from the “Model School Climate Policy”. On this page you can also return to policies you have already started by clicking on one under “My WellSat WSCC Policies.”



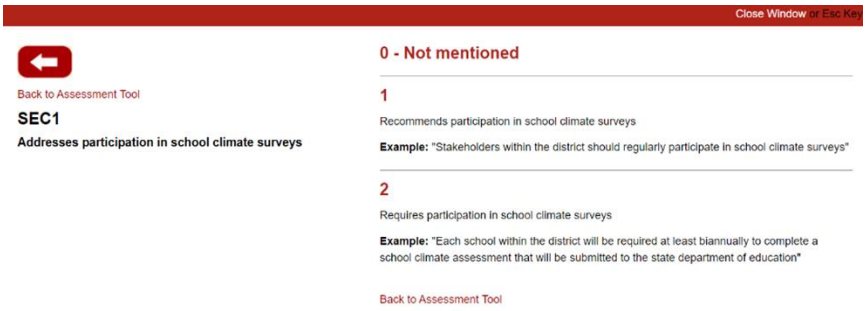
6. The Model School Climate Policy is relevant to the WSCC domain of Social and Emotional Climate. Therefore, select Social and Emotional Climate.



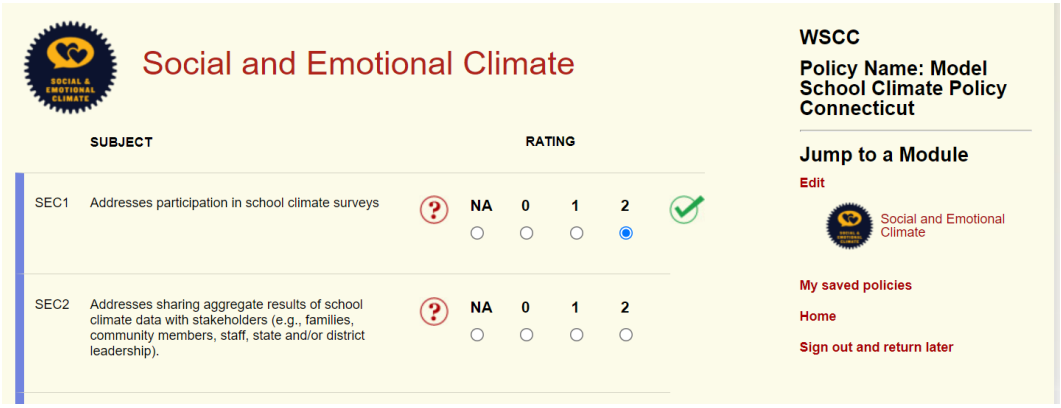
7. After clicking "Proceed to Survey," you should be on the Assessment Tool. The subject areas should match the areas found in the scoresheet above. If you click on the '?' next to the ratings, the coding criteria should pop up.



8. Starting with SEC1, look over the coding criteria and begin searching the model policy to determine if the area is not mentioned, recommended, or required. The coding criteria include examples for you to reference.

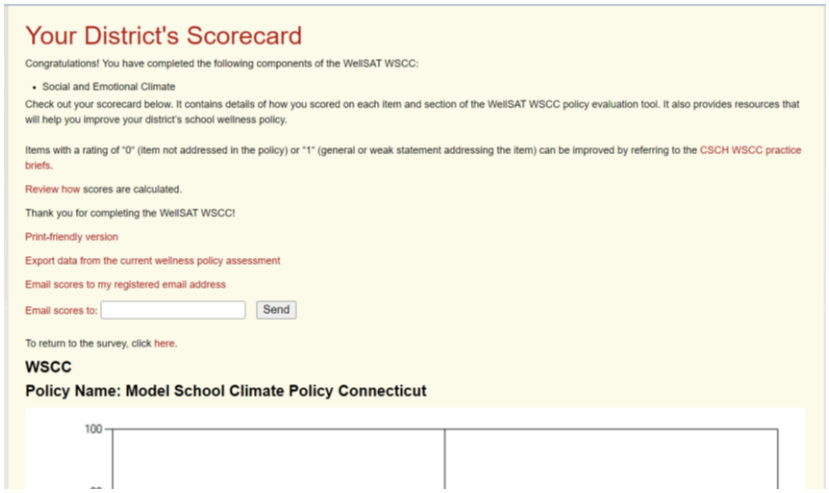


When you have a rating, click the appropriate bubble for it to be recorded. A check mark will appear to indicate that you have completed the item. Repeat for each item.



9. Once you have completed the section(s), click Finish at the bottom. This will bring you to a new page where you can access your ratings and view the overall district policy score. You will see results related to the strength and comprehensiveness of your policies that can help you to identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement.

Note: if you have entered scores incorrectly, there is the option to return to the survey above the graph.



10. Finally, when coding the sample policy, check your scores against the answer key below. Evidence and an explanation are provided for each score.

Our Scoring of the Sample School Climate Policy

Section 1: Addresses participation in school climate surveys

Recommended Score: 2

Evidence	Explanation
"Each school, supported with oversight by the Coordinator and under the guidance of the committee, shall administer, on an annual basis, at the same time of year each year, the School Climate Survey in order to assess a school's strengths and challenges" (page 8).	A rating of 2 is for policies that require participation in school climate surveys. The policy explicitly states that each school must administer the School Climate survey on an annual basis.

Section 2: Addresses sharing aggregate results of school climate data with stakeholders (e.g., families, community members, staff, state and/or district leadership).

Recommended Score: 0

Evidence	Explanation
"Providing data and information regarding school climate improvement to the Connecticut State Department of Education, in collaboration with the Superintendent as may be required by law" (page 6).	A rating of 0 indicates that the policy does not mention sharing aggregate results of the school climate data with stakeholders. The policy talks about providing data and information regarding school climate improvement where it is required by law, but it does not specifically specify that this needs to include the results of the school climate survey. There is also no mention of sharing school climate survey results with other stakeholders (e.g., families, community members, staff, district leadership).

Section 3: Addresses promoting positive relationships between students and employees.

Recommended Score: 2

Evidence	Explanation
"School Climate" means the quality and character of the school life with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community between and among students and adults" (page 3) "Meeting with the Specialists at least twice during the school year to: (i) identify strategies to improve school climate that promotes high quality relationships among all school community members, and, as a result, is designed to eliminate intentional and unintentional mean-spirited behaviors including, but not limited to bullying and harassment" (page 6)	A rating of 2 indicates that the policy requires the promotion of positive relationships between students and staff. While the policy recommends the promotion of positive relationships between students and staff in the first piece of evidence, it goes further and requires that meetings be held to identify strategies to improve the school climate that promotes high quality relationships among all school community members.

Section 4: Identifies school-wide approaches to address harassment, bullying, and/or cyberbullying.

Recommended score: 2

Evidence	Explanation
"Safe School Climate Plan" means the district plan developed and implemented pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. Section 10-222(d), containing provisions pertaining to bullying, filing complaints and conducting investigations, and posted on the district website" (page 3) "Preventing, identifying and responding to any kind of mean-spirited behavior including, but not limited to reports of alleged bullying and harassment in the schools of the district, in collaboration with the Specialists, as well as the Board and the Superintendent as appropriate" (page 6) "Meeting with the Specialists at least twice during the school year to: (i) identify strategies to improve school climate that promotes high quality relationships among all school community members, and, as a result, is designed to eliminate intentional and unintentional mean-spirited behaviors including, but not limited to bullying and harassment" (page 6) "Investigate, or supervise the investigation of, reported acts of mean-spirited behaviors including, but not limited to reports of alleged bullying and harassment in the school in accordance with this Policy" (page 6).	A rating of 2 indicates that the policy requires that schools develop approaches for preventing and responding to bullying and harassment. This policy states that the "Safe School Climate Plan" is the district's plan that contains areas related to bullying. Additionally, the Coordinator is given duties that include preventing, identifying, and responding to mean-spirited behavior (bullying, harassment, etc.) and meeting with Specialists to identify strategies to improve the school climate that will result in a decrease in the mean-spirited behavior. The Specialists are also given the duty to investigate or supervise the investigation of reported mean-spirited behaviors.

Section 5: Addresses diversity and inclusion to promote engagement of all students in school activities.

Recommended score: 1

Evidence	Explanation
"The Specialist and the Committee shall develop and/or update the Improvement Plan, using the School Climate Improvement Plan template12 (Appendix D), taking into consideration the needs of all key stakeholders, with sensitivity to equity and diversity" (page 8).	A rating of 1 indicates that the policy recommends the promotion of diversity and inclusion to engage all students. The policy states that there should be sensitivity to equity and diversity but does not explicitly require these to be considered for the School Climate Improvement Plan.

Section 6: Addresses reviewing and responding to school climate data (e.g., bullying reports, discipline data, or other related data sources).

Recommended score: 2

Evidence	Explanation
"(2) Utilizing psychometrically sound quantitative (e.g., survey) and qualitative (e.g., interviews, focus groups) data to drive action planning, preventive/intervention practices and implementation strategies that continuously improve all dimensions of school climate, including regularly collecting data to evaluate progress and inform the improvement process" (page 2). "iv. Providing Survey data to the Coordinator; v. Reviewing and analyzing the school-based school climate assessment data; vi. Using the data and other appropriate data and information to identify strengths and challenges with respect to improving school climate; vii. Using the data to create and/or update the school-based School Climate Improvement Plan" (page 7).	A rating of 2 indicates that the policy requires that schools review climate data. This policy states that part of the duties of the Committee includes providing survey data to the Coordinator, reviewing and analyzing the data, using the data to identify strengths and challenges, and using the data to create/update the plan. Additionally, it states that quantitative and qualitative data should be used to drive action planning and prevention/intervention.

Section 7: Addresses use of positive behavior support practices.

Recommended score: 1

Evidence

"(5) Basing curriculum, instruction, student supports, and interventions on scientific research and grounding in cognitive, social-emotional, and psychological theories of youth development. Interventions include strength-based programs and practices that together represent a comprehensive continuum of approaches to promote healthy student development and positive learning environments as well as address individual student barriers to learning" (page 2).

"Codes of conduct for both students and adults shall be amended to reinforce positive school climates by detailing, and consistently recognizing and supporting positive behavior, applying appropriate graduated and restorative responses for inappropriate conduct, in order to address the root causes of the individual's specific conduct, while promoting physically, emotionally, and intellectually safe and supportive teaching and learning environments for all students and adults in the school community" (page 9).

Explanation

A rating of 1 indicates that the policy recommends the use of positive behavioral support practices. In the first piece of evidence, the policy references that interventions should include "strength-based programs" and promote "positive learning environments." In the second piece of evidence, the policy states that "Codes of conduct .. shall be amended to reinforce positive school climates by detailing, and consistently recognizing and supporting positive behavior." Therefore, although the policy recommends use of positive behavioral support practices, it does not name or provide a clear and required approach to this.

Section 8: Addresses minimization of exclusionary disciplinary practices (e.g., suspension and expulsion).

Recommended score: 1

Evidence

"Such responses shall be educative and restorative and be chosen in response to the context of each situation to support relationship-building and improvement, and with particular attention to issues of equity. These responses may include, but are not limited to one or more of the following:

Ii. Student discipline (including detention, in or out of school suspension, and expulsion)."

Explanation

A rating of 1 indicates that the policy recommends the minimization of use of exclusionary disciplinary practices. The policy states that "Responses [to inappropriate conduct] shall be educative and restorative," which suggests alternatives to exclusionary discipline practices. However, the policy does not explicitly name that exclusionary school discipline practices are to be minimized or the contexts in which suspension or expulsion would be warranted.

Section 9: Addresses social emotional learning (SEL).

Recommended score: 1

Evidence

"(5) Basing curriculum, instruction, student supports, and interventions on scientific research and grounding in cognitive, social-emotional, and psychological theories of youth development. Interventions include strength-based programs and practices that together represent a comprehensive continuum of approaches to promote healthy student development and positive learning environments as well as address individual student barriers to learning" (page 2).

"Standard 2: Develop policies that promote social, emotional, ethical, civic and intellectual learning as well as systems that address barriers to learning.

Standard 3: Implement practices that promote the learning and positive social, emotional, ethical and civic development of students and student engagement as well as addressing barriers to learning." (page 9).

a. Reflective activities
b. School counseling support
c. Anger management
d. Health counseling or intervention
e. Mental health counseling
f. Skill building such as social and emotional, cognitive, and intellectual skills
g. Resolution circles and restorative conferencing;
…
i. Conflict resolution or mediation" (pages 9-10)

"2. Model and provide high quality academic, social, emotional and ethical learning;" (page 10).

Explanation

A rating of 1 indicates that the policy recommends SEL implementation. The policy names several SEL initiatives, but does not provide any requirements about where they are to be implemented (e.g., across all grade levels or at selected levels).

Section 10: Connects social emotional learning standards (SEL) and academic standards.

Recommended score: 0

Evidence

None

Explanation

A rating of 0 indicates that the policy does not mention connecting social emotional learning standards (SEL) and academic standards. The policy does not contain any information about connecting those standards.

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