



WSSC Policy Blueprint

Session 7

Purpose: To identify potential areas for policy strengthening within one WSSC domain

Review


- Transitioning from Considering WSSC Domains to Considering Individual Policies within these Domains
- Further explanation of decisions to keep as is, de-implement, or add new language

Do Together

- Activity 7: Zooming in to the Individual Policy Level



Before proceeding, we encourage you to consider the following questions:



REFLECT

1. Do you see opportunities for strengthening policy in the WSCC domains that you identified as current areas of weakness? How would these support practices at the universal, targeted, or select levels?
2. Do local, state, or federal priorities align with any of your areas of weakness or opportunity?
3. As you complete your blueprinting work, what do you need to keep in mind in relation to the tensions that you identified?

Transitioning from Considering WSCC Domains to Considering Individual Policies within these Domains

Choosing a WSCC Domain of Focus

Thus far, we have organized our thinking by WSCC domains. Next, we are going to transition to thinking about individual policies within these domains.

After completing your Big Picture WSCC SWOT analysis, we recommend identifying WSCC domains for follow up (e.g., those identified as weaknesses or opportunities). Then, share these areas with others to gain insight and feedback on which are the greatest priorities in your setting.

To maximize the potential for success, consider choosing a WSCC domain of focus that aligns with current school and district goals. Then, confirm this choice with others!

We recommend choosing **one WSCC domain of focus** for the remainder of your blueprinting work. We hope that you will complete the blueprinting activities multiple times; for this first pass, we suggest choosing **one** WSCC domain as a manageable starting place. Then, you can return to blueprint for additional domains that are areas of weakness and opportunity.

To streamline your work and optimize the potential for successful implementation, you might consider choosing a domain that is aligned with current school, district, or state areas of focus.

Considering Policies Within your Chosen WSCC Domain

Then, we are going to **consider each of the policies** that you have within this domain more closely. You'll be led through activities to consider whether to keep existing policies as they are, update, de-implement, or add new language or policies.

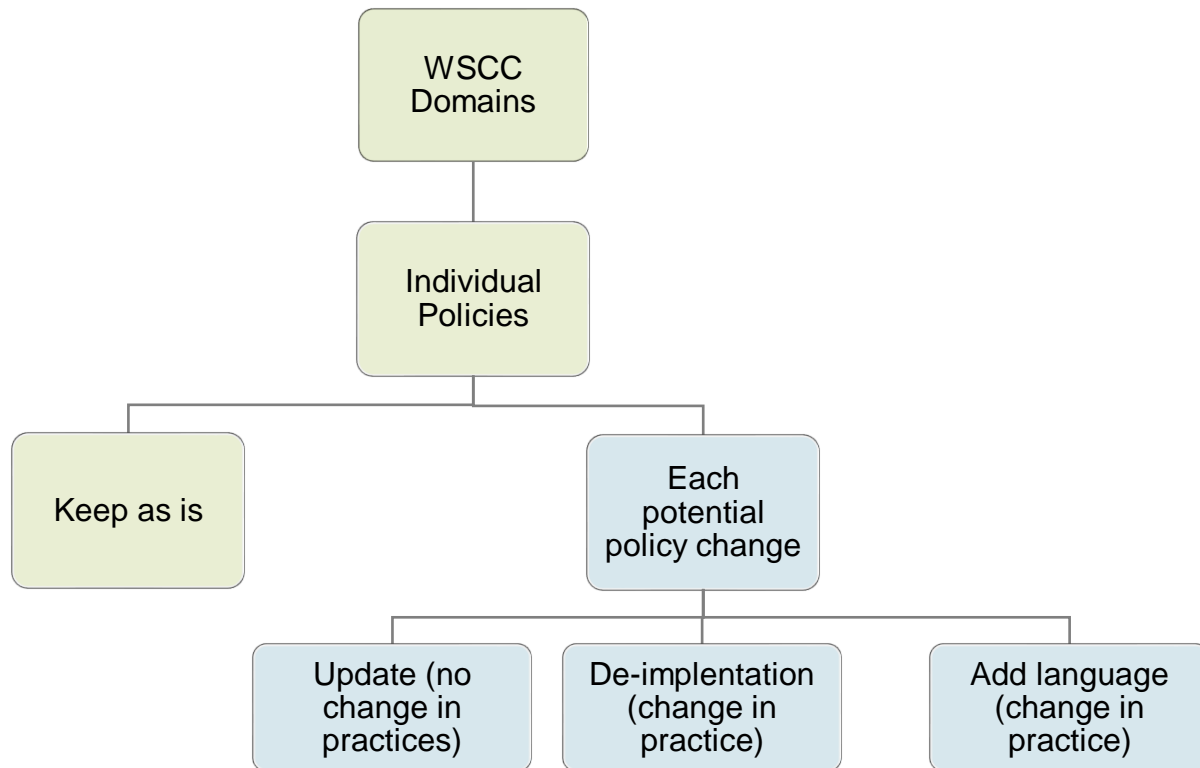
You may consider multiple changes to a policy and we will want to **view each of these changes individually**. For example, in her Discipline Policy, Mrs. Washington is considering (1) updating the policy to include practices related to minimizing the use of exclusionary school discipline and associated disproportionality, (2) updating to remove zero-tolerance language, and (3) adding language related to restorative practices.

An important distinction in these potential policy changes is whether they **require a change in existing practices**. We make this distinction because policy changes that require associated practice changes require greater effort and resources to implement than those that are simply documenting existing practices into policy.

To provide examples, Mrs. Washington's idea to document her work related to reducing exclusionary discipline does not require changes in practices. The practices are already in place; she would simply be updating school policy to reflect these practices. The same is true for removing language related to zero tolerance; this policy language is no longer enacted in Mrs. Washington's school. Although they require less work to adopt, these updates are still very important! Documenting current practices within policy promotes sustainability of practices when staffing or priorities shift.

On the other hand, Mrs. Washington's idea to add language about using restorative practices would require a change in practices. Mrs. Washington would need to arrange for qualified professional learning for her staff and set up appropriate structures to support this work. To put the policy into action, her staff would need to adopt these practices. This is also a potentially valuable policy change, but **requires some additional considerations** as it requires **changes in practices**.

To provide a bird's eye view, the image below shows the various considerations we might make.



Let's first take a closer look at why you might make each of these decisions:

Keep as is: The policy is clear, up to date with current practices, explicitly addresses measures to promote equity, and is generating favorable and equitable whole child outcomes.

Each potential policy change: Again, we emphasize that each policy may have multiple potential changes. Each potential change to a policy should be considered individually as they each might require a different amount of resources for successful implementation. Each potential policy change might be:

Updates that do not require a change in practices: There is a need to document existing whole child practices or remove language that duplicates or contradicts other policies and is no longer in effect. Updates do not require a change in practices; the desired practices are already in place.

De-implementation that requires a change in practices: Discontinuing existing policy and associated practices because it is not generating the intended impact or is producing adverse consequences. De-implementing requires a change in practices.

Adding new language that requires a change in practices: You might add new language to improve equitable outcomes or strengthen whole child practices. In most cases, you will add new language to an existing policy. However, in some cases, you may need to create an entirely new policy; this is most common when state or federal legislation requires the adoption of a new policy.

Further explanation of decisions to keep as is, update, de-implement, or add new language

Keep As Is

In many cases, you might choose to keep a policy as is. Your work to evaluate this policy using the WellSAT WSCC 2.0 is valuable and gives you a strong sense of the language that exists in your policy. You might revisit this policy later to reevaluate its relevance to your setting and subsequent opportunities for strengthening.

Updates (do not require changes in practice)

We expect that policy updates will be a common outcome of this blueprinting process. Policy updates most often document existing whole child practices into policy. In these cases, this close look at your policies provided you an opportunity to recognize gaps in your policy that are currently being addressed in practice. Documenting these practices into policy is an important step to strengthen their use and sustainability when staffing or priorities shift.

Updates may also include removing language that is no longer in practice and should not be re-implemented. An example of this is the zero-tolerance language in the Discipline Policy at Mrs. Washington's school.

De-Implementation (requires change in practice)

Policy changes that require changes in practice warrant additional consideration as they will require greater effort and resources. The possibility of de-implementation is often overlooked, and thus, we provide more information here.

De-implementation is the “discontinuation of existing practices or interventions” (McKay, 2018). De-implementing is desirable when initiatives are not having the intended impact. De-implementation frees up resources (e.g., time, staff, energy, finances) that can be reallocated towards more promising work.

De-implementation often requires **learning** and **unlearning**. Staff may need to learn new procedures or unlearn old procedures. It is important to identify the learning and unlearning that each de-implementation initiative will require. As such, de-implementation is a process, not an event.

There are 4 types of de-implementation (Northern Territory Department of Education, 2020). De-implementation generally falls into one of these four categories, but the de-implementation of a policy may trigger another category of de-implementation.

Types of De-Implementation		
Reverse	It is not working anywhere	<p>Example: A zero tolerance discipline policy is not improving student behavior or increasing school safety. The policy is also contributing to disproportionality in suspensions and expulsions.</p> <p>Action: Support administrators and staff to unlearn the zero tolerance procedures. Create understanding about its lack of effectiveness.</p> <p>Consideration: The reversal of a procedure may require something to take its place. See: Replace.</p>
Reduce	It is working at some schools but not all, or for some sub-groups but not all	<p>Example: A social emotional curriculum that had been identified for K-8 students has been found to be more developmentally appropriate for K-5 students.</p> <p>Action: Policy is updated to state that the curriculum is only delivered to K-5 students and a replacement curriculum is identified for students in grades 6-8. Staff who implement in grades 6-8 should be supported to unlearn the previous curriculum. See: Replace.</p>
Replace	It is not working, but the problem that it is aiming to improve still exists	<p>Example: Policy language aimed at increasing student voice has been difficult to put into action, but a desire to increase student voice remains strong.</p> <p>Action: Identify an alternative approach to increasing student voice and how to support its implementation. Support learning of new approach.</p>
Rethink	It is not working or has achieved its desired outcome and should be de-implemented to make room for something else	<p>Example: Requirements for reporting student outcomes (e.g., attendance, discipline) to the state have become redundant with a new electronic student records system.</p> <p>Action: Remove policy language and associated practices related to manually reporting these outcomes each month.</p> <p>Consideration: This may free up resources (e.g., a person's time) that can be re-allocated.</p>

Note. Adapted from Northern Territory Department of Education, 2020.

Activity 7 – Zooming in to the Individual Policy Level will provide some structured questions for you to consider whether de-implementation might be relevant to your current policies. If you pursue de-implementation, further considerations regarding necessary learning and unlearning will be addressed in Activity 9 – Action Planning.

Adding New Language (requires change in practice)

Finally, you might be considering **adding language to a policy** that requires a change in practices. Schools might do this to improve equitable outcomes or strengthen whole child practices. In most cases, you will add new language to an existing policy. However, in some cases, you may need to create an entirely new policy; this is most common when state or federal legislation requires the adoption of a new policy.

In considering adding language to a policy, **it is critical to consider whether you are positioned to implement the practices required by this added language**. Key considerations include whether you have the buy-in, resources (e.g., time, materials), and structures needed for sustainable implementation of the new policy language. You will also want to assess evidence in support of implementation in your setting and alignment with community values. You might recall that these were introduced as part of the Congruence Model (Nadler & Tushman, 1980) in the introduction of this blueprint.

The next two activities will help you to narrow in on 1-5 policy changes to undertake. These might all be within the same policy or across a few existing policies. Additionally, the activities will **help you to prioritize** which policy changes to pursue first.



Activity 7 – Zooming in to the Individual Policy Level

Anticipated time needed to complete this activity: 20 minutes

In this activity, we shift our focus from considering WSCC domains to considering individual policies within those domains. You will first identify your chosen WSCC domain of focus and then record your current policies related to this domain. Then, using a list of brainstorming questions, you will quickly audit each of these policies. This will allow you to develop a list of potential next steps for strengthening your policies in this domain.

The goal of this activity is to identify opportunities to strengthen existing policies within your chosen WSCC domain.

Activity 7 – Zooming in to the Policy Level can be found in Appendix B. A complete example is below.

Current Policy Name	Potential Updates	Potential De-Implementation	Potential Language Additions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does this policy capture your current practices related to the topic? Is any of the language in this policy outdated? What updates could be made to strengthen this policy? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does any language in this policy have negative or adverse consequences in your setting? Do you have sufficient resources to implement the language in this policy? Does any of the language in this policy contradict other policies? What could you de-implement to strengthen implementation of this policy? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was there language in the WellSAT WSCC that is of interest and would strengthen this policy? Does the policy explicitly address equitable opportunities and outcomes? What language could you add to strengthen this policy?
Discipline Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update to reflect efforts taken to minimize exclusionary school discipline and assess for disproportionality. Update to remove language related to zero tolerance. 	n/a	Add restorative practices (would require implementing these practices).
School Climate Policy	Update to include efforts related to school climate policy (efforts to increase family participation, listening sessions to share back results)	n/a	n/a
Bullying Prevention Policy	n/a	Replace the annual anti-bullying assembly with a more evidence-based strategy for bullying prevention.	n/a

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Zooming in to the Policy Level | csch.uconn.edu

Case Study:

Mrs. Washington's Focus on Individual Policies

After completing her Big Picture WSCC SWOT Analysis, Mrs. Washington shared her work thus far and completed SWOT Analysis with her grade level leaders, which includes representation from each grade level, special education, related arts, and student support personnel. After consulting with their colleagues, this team shared that there was broad agreement that *Social and Emotional Climate* was a priority area for the school's policy work. Staff felt this had been a strong area of focus in the school's recent work and it was important they have these changes documented in policy. As planned, Mrs. Washington also shared this potential direction at a staff meeting to further confirm staff support and at a PTO meeting. Parents expressed that they strongly supported this direction for the school's policy work, and specifically asked her to address the school's approach to anti-bullying, which is currently only formalized in an annual assembly for students. Mrs. Washington had not considered this yet and agreed to assess ways to strengthen the school's bullying prevention work.

Although Mrs. Washington had also identified opportunities in the *Health Education* domain, she and others felt that the school's recent efforts have been more aligned with the *Social and Emotional Climate* domain and thus, this was a better starting point for their WSCC policy work.

When beginning Activity 7 – Zooming in to the Policy Level, Mrs. Washington returned to Activity 4 and identified the school’s Discipline Policy, School Climate Policy, and Bullying Prevention Policy as related to the Social and Emotional Climate domain.

Based on the questions provided in Activity 7, her ideas thus far, and input from staff and families, Mrs. Washington identifies the following potential policy changes:

Discipline Policy:

- (1) Updating to reflect efforts taken to minimize exclusionary school discipline and assess for disproportionality.
- (2) Updating to remove language related to zero tolerance.
- (3) Adding restorative practices (would require implementing these practices).

School Climate Policy:

- (4) Updating to include efforts related to the school climate survey.

Bullying Prevention Policy:

- (5) Replacing the annual anti-bullying assembly referenced in the Bullying Prevention Policy with a more evidence-based strategy for bullying prevention (de-implementation).

Mrs. Washington is not sure that her school is ready to pursue all of these policy changes but sees that the next activity will help her to determine directions. She is excited to see that she has generated numerous potential directions for strengthening school policy in this domain! She imagines she could eventually do the same for several more domains!

After completing Activity 7, we encourage you to answer the following questions:

REFLECT



1. Did you identify opportunities to strengthen your attention to equity and whole child development through policy changes?
2. Have you identified whether each of these potential changes would require a change in current practices?
3. How are the policy changes you are considering aligned with school priorities and values?



ACTIVITY 7 - ZOOMING IN TO THE POLICY LEVEL

Time to Complete: 20 minutes

Goal of Activity: To identify potential areas for policy strengthening within one WSCC domain.

In this activity, you will use all of the data and insight that you have gathered up to this point to brainstorm potential directions for policy strengthening in your setting. We provide guiding questions to help you consider opportunities for strengthening policy through updates, de-implementation, or adding language.

Instructions

1. On Page 2, identify your WSCC domain of focus. Then, use the leftmost column of the table to record the policies that you have within this domain (if needed, refer back to Activity 4 - Identifying Existing Policies to gather these policy names).
2. Next, focus on the first policy you have listed in the leftmost column. Using the questions provided in the table, identify opportunities to strengthen this policy through updates, de-implementation, or adding language. Record “n/a” if a category does not apply to your policy.
3. Repeat for each policy that you have recorded in the leftmost column.
4. Review your potential directions for policy strengthening! In the next activity, you will consider your setting’s readiness and urgency to undertake each of these potential policy changes. In this step, focus on brainstorming using all of the data and insight you have gathered up to this point!

Potential Action Steps to Strengthen Policy

WSCC Domain of Focus:

Current Policy Name	Potential Updates	Potential De-Implementation	Potential Language Additions
<i>e.g., Discipline policy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove language related to zero tolerance. • Codify efforts taken to minimize exclusionary school discipline and assess for disproportionality. 	<i>n/a</i>	<i>Add restorative practices</i>

Current Policy Name	Potential Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does this policy capture your current practices related to the topic? • Is any of the language in this policy outdated? • What updates could be made to strengthen this policy? 	Potential De-Implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does any language in this policy have negative or adverse consequences in your setting? • Do you have sufficient resources to implement the language in this policy? • Does any of the language in this policy contradict other policies? • What could you de-implement to strengthen implementation of this policy? 	Potential Language Additions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was there language in the WellSAT WSCC that is of interest and would strengthen this policy? • Does the policy explicitly address equitable opportunities and outcomes? • What language could you add to strengthen this policy?