



WSCC Policy Blueprint

Session 8

Purpose: To narrow down to 1-5 policy changes to pursue, with these prioritized based on urgency and readiness

Review

- Intro to Establishing Actions
- Weighing Urgency and Readiness to Undertake Policy Change

Do Together

- Activity 8: Weighing Urgency and Readiness to Undertake Policy Change



STEP 3: Establishing Actions



Establishing Actions

Planning for success by identifying action steps, addressing anticipated barriers, and creating plans for monitoring implementation

Goal: to define specific project goals, plan action steps, consider potential barriers, and monitor progress

Congratulations! You have made it to the final step of the policy blueprinting process! Blueprinting concludes with **establishing actions** for policy updates, de-implementation, or adoption.

The first step in establishing actions is to identify which of the potential directions that you have identified to undertake. To do so, we will weigh your setting's readiness and urgency for each potential policy change. After this, you will create an action plan to guide your next steps and finally, consider necessary next steps in putting your new policy into practice!

Weighing Urgency and Readiness to Undertake Policy Change

At this point, you likely have a list of potential directions for policy change within your school or district. In deciding which changes to pursue, we will weigh your setting's readiness and urgency for each potential policy change. **The goal** at the end of this session is to have **no more than 3-5 policy changes** that you are going to pursue.

The goal at the end of this session is to have a prioritized list of no more than 3-5 policy changes that you are going to pursue.

What do we mean by readiness?

Readiness refers to your **ability** to engage in this policy change in the near future. High readiness can be indicated by having the necessary resources available (e.g., time, staffing, materials, any necessary professional learning), alignment with school priorities and community values, and ability and willingness to implement associated practices. High readiness may also be present when the policy change would be documenting **practices that are already well established** in the setting; in this case, remaining

considerations in regard to readiness include having community (e.g., staff, students, families) support for the practices and the time and capacity to draft and adopt the policy change.

On the contrary, if practices are in place, but are not widely adopted or have received some pushback, you may not yet be ready to take on this policy change. In addition, not having the necessary resources (e.g., time, staffing, materials, necessary professional learning) or attitudes developed (e.g., staff, community) may indicate less readiness to engage in this policy change at the present moment.

Evaluating readiness differs based on **how much change is required** from the parties involved. There is less to consider with policy updates – because the associated practices are already in place, less change is required. De-implementation or adding new language, both of which require changes in practice, require greater considerations for readiness.

As a reminder, we need to evaluate each potential policy change on its own. For example, Mrs. Washington will need to evaluate (1) updating Discipline Policy to include practices to minimize the use of exclusionary school discipline, (2) updating Discipline Policy to remove zero tolerance language, (3) adding restorative practices to the Discipline Policy, (4) updating the School Climate Policy to include practices related to the school climate survey, and (5) replacing the annual anti-bullying assembly referenced in the Bullying Prevention Policy with a more evidence-based strategy for bullying prevention. Although #1-3 are all potential changes to the Discipline Policy, they will each require different resources and considerations, and therefore, should be considered individually.

What do we mean by urgency?

Urgency means that the policy change is **necessary** in the near future. This might be because the current policy is causing adverse consequences, there is strong community pressure or a legislative mandate for the policy change, or the absence of a policy is creating problems in your setting. Urgency may also be indicated by a need to explicitly document measures taken to promote equitable opportunities and outcomes for all members of the school community. Policy changes that have less urgency may include documenting existing practices in policy or updating language to be clearer or more encompassing of whole child development.

Readiness sets us up for successful and sustainable implementation.
Urgency motivates us to complete the work necessary to engage in the policy change.

In addition to readiness, the success of any potential policy change will be enhanced by having established urgency. *Readiness* sets us up for successful and sustainable implementation. *Urgency* motivates us to complete the work necessary to engage in the policy change.

In the next activity, you will use a matrix to weigh your setting’s readiness with the urgency for each of the potential policy changes (i.e., update, de-implementation, adding new language).

After placing each potential policy change in one of the four quadrants, you will be well positioned to determine priorities and decide next steps! We recommend **first** taking on potential policy changes with **high urgency and high readiness**. With both high urgency and readiness, you will be well positioned for successful and sustainable implementation!

After addressing potential policy changes with high urgency and high readiness, you can **next** focus on those with **low urgency and high readiness** (e.g., documenting existing practices into policy) as these should be an easy lift. At this point, it can also be helpful to revisit potential policy changes that have **high urgency and low readiness**. The goal with these is to increase readiness. You might solicit necessary resources (e.g., funding, professional learning opportunities) or reallocate current resources (e.g., time, staffing) to increase readiness. You may also need to develop staff or community attitudes towards the policy change; in this case, professional learning opportunities and community conversations might be helpful.

The final quadrant to revisit will be potential policy changes with **low urgency and low readiness**. These are your lowest priority, and you might consider that these potential policy changes are not a good fit for your setting at this time. In lacking urgency and readiness, you are not set up for successful and sustainable implementation.

To review, we recommend the following actions based on the urgency and readiness of your **potential** policy changes.

	High Urgency	Low Urgency
High Readiness	Pursue: Create an action plan	(Potentially) Wait: Pursue these after those with high urgency and readiness. These should be a light lift.
Low Readiness	Wait: Build readiness. Revisit after completing those with high urgency and high readiness.	Wait: After completing other quadrants, re-evaluate these; they may not be a good fit for your setting.



Activity 8 - Weighing Urgency and Readiness to Undertake Policy Change

Anticipated time needed to complete this activity: 15 minutes

In this activity, you will weigh your setting’s readiness and urgency for each of the potential policy changes. Then, based on the recommendations above, you will rank order your priorities for policy change. Activity 8 - Weighing Urgency and Readiness to Undertake Policy Change can be found in Appendix B. A completed example is shown below.

This activity is another key opportunity to gather input and feedback from key groups (e.g., staff, families, students, administrators) regarding your setting’s urgency and readiness for various policy changes.

Weighing Urgency and Readiness

	<u>High Urgency</u> (Necessary immediately; e.g., causing adverse consequences, a need to explicitly document efforts to promote equity, strong community pressure, absence of a policy is creating problems)	<u>Low Urgency</u> (Not immediately necessary; e.g., policy change documents practices that will continue in the interim, policy change clarifies language but will not change existing practices)
<u>High Readiness</u> (e.g., alignment with school community’s priorities and values, necessary resources and professional learning are available, capacity to draft and adopt policy change)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updating the Discipline Policy to reflect efforts taken to minimize exclusionary school discipline and assess for disproportionality. Updating the Discipline Policy to remove language related to zero tolerance. Updating the School Climate Policy to include efforts related to the school climate survey.
<u>Low Readiness</u> (e.g., necessary resources are not yet available, staff or community attitudes are not favorable towards the policy change)	Replacing the annual anti-bullying assembly with a more evidence-based strategy for bullying prevention.	Adding restorative practices to the Discipline Policy.

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Case Study:

Weighing Urgency and Readiness in Mrs. Washington's Setting

Mrs. Washington places her five potential policy changes into the matrix. She begins with the three policy updates that do not require changes in practices:

- (1) Updating the Discipline Policy to reflect efforts taken to minimize exclusionary school discipline and assess for disproportionality.
- (2) Updating the Discipline Policy to remove language related to zero tolerance.
- (3) Updating the School Climate Policy to include efforts related to the school climate survey.

She places each of these in the **low urgency – high readiness** quadrant. Because there are no adverse consequences or pressure from the community, the urgency is low. Because the practices are already in place, have community support, and she has the time to pursue the changes, the school's readiness for these policy changes is high.

Next, Mrs. Washington considers:

- (4) Replacing the annual anti-bullying assembly with a more evidence-based strategy for bullying prevention.

Although she feels some pressure from parents to implement an evidence-based strategy for bullying prevention, she does not yet have the information or resources that she needs to do so. Therefore, she places this potential policy change in the **high urgency – low readiness** quadrant.

Finally, she revisits the idea of:

- (5) Adding restorative practices to the Discipline Policy.

Although she hopes to move in this direction, Mrs. Washington recognizes that her school does not have the resources (e.g., professional learning time) to do so now, and thus has low readiness. In addition, she is not seeing high rates of disciplinary referrals and feels that student-teacher relationships are relatively strong. As such, she rates the potential policy change as low urgency. Therefore, Mrs. Washington places this in the **low urgency – low readiness** quadrant. She plans to revisit this potential policy change each school year to re-evaluate readiness and urgency.

Mrs. Washington's list of **immediate priorities** is as follows:

- (1) Updating the Discipline Policy to reflect efforts taken to minimize exclusionary school discipline and assess for disproportionality.
- (2) Updating the Discipline Policy to remove language related to zero tolerance.
- (3) Updating the School Climate Policy to include efforts related to the school climate survey.

- (4) Speak with her school’s mental health team about next steps in researching bullying prevention programs. Discontinue annual assembly.

For each of these updates, Mrs. Washington plans to reach out to her superintendent regarding next steps for contacting the district’s lawyer. Then, she plans to solicit feedback on the drafted language from administrative colleagues. Because these are policy updates that document existing practices, Mrs. Washington does not feel that she needs to solicit staff, family, or community feedback on the updated language. She notes that this type of feedback will be particularly important when drafting policy changes that require changes in practice (e.g., new bullying prevention approaches).

Excellent! After completing Activity 8, you should be well positioned to create action plans for 1-5 policy changes that you plan to pursue. Before proceeding, consider the following questions:



REFLECT

1. How can you work efficiently to draft and adopt policy changes that have high urgency and high readiness?
2. If you are going to wait on any policy changes that have high readiness, how will you remind yourself to return to these?
3. How can you build readiness for policy changes with high urgency and low readiness?



Activity 9 - Action Planning

Anticipated time needed to complete this activity: 25 minutes

Next, you will create a concrete action plan for the policy changes you are going to pursue at this time. Using Activity 9 - Action Planning, available in Appendix B, you will plan actionable steps that can facilitate the adoption, updating, or de-implementation of identified policy changes. This worksheet includes planning to strengthen equity and congruence. It also includes attention to any associated practices that will need to be put into place and any to learning and unlearning that will need to happen. Finally, you will document the expected impact of the policy change and how this will be measured.



ACTIVITY 8 - WEIGHING URGENCY AND READINESS TO UNDERTAKE POLICY CHANGE

Time to Complete: 15 minutes

Goal of Activity: To narrow down to 1-5 policy changes to pursue, with these prioritized based on urgency and readiness.

Instructions

1. Refer to each of the policy changes that you identified as potential areas for policy change (update, de-implementation, or adding new language) in Activity 7 – Zooming In.
2. Place each potential policy change in one of the four quadrants below. To do so, identify whether the policy change has high or low urgency in your setting. Then, drawing on the example indicators provided and what you read in the blueprint, identify whether your setting has high or low readiness for the policy change. Write the policy change in the quadrant that corresponds to where your urgency and readiness for the policy change intersect.

Weighing Urgency and Readiness

	<u>High Urgency</u> (Necessary immediately; e.g., causing adverse consequences, a need to explicitly document efforts to promote equity, strong community pressure, absence of a policy is creating problems)	<u>Low Urgency</u> (Not immediately necessary; e.g., policy change documents practices that will continue in the interim, policy change clarifies language but will not change existing practices)
<u>High Readiness</u> (e.g., alignment with school community's priorities and values, necessary resources and professional learning are available, capacity to draft and adopt policy change)		
<u>Low Readiness</u> (e.g., necessary resources are not yet available, staff or community attitudes are not favorable towards the policy change)		

Now, identify up to 3-5 potential policy changes to undertake. Start with those with **high urgency and high readiness**. If space and capacity allows, continue with those with **low urgency and high readiness**. As more of a long-term goal, consider how to build readiness for those policy changes that have high urgency and low readiness.

Immediate Priorities for Policy Change

(Start with high urgency and high readiness)

1.

2.

3.

(If space and capacity allows, low urgency and high readiness)

4.

5.