

## How to Use the WellSAT Policy - Transcript

Hello, and thanks for joining me for this brief introduction to the WellSAT Policy.

Now that you've started a new assessment, let's talk about how WellSAT items are rated.

Each policy item is rated "0," "1," or "2." The WellSAT lists each policy item, followed by an explanation of the item and examples of text from real policies that would be rated "1" and "2".

A zero means the item is not included in the text of the policy.

Assign a rating of "1" when 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, or

The policy mentions a future plan to act without specifying when the plan will be established.

Words often used in statements rated as a "1" include: may, can, could, should, might, encourage, suggest, urge, some, partial, make an effort, and try.

Assign a rating of "2" when the item is mentioned and it is clear that the policymakers are committed to making the item happen because:

Strong language is used to indicate that action or regulation is required, and

The item is described with concrete plans or strategies for implementation

Words often used in statements rated as a "2" include: shall, will, must, have to, insist, require, all, total, comply and enforce.

One method for deciding between assigning a rating of "1" or "2" is to consider the scenario of a parent approaching a school district's Board of Education to discuss an issue. If the policy is ambiguous on how the school should handle the issue, assign the item a rating of "1." If the written policy gives clear guidance about how to decide whether the school is compliant with the policy, assign the item a rating of "2."

Here are examples of language from two policies that relate to not using food as a reward.

The first example states that the district “will encourage non-food alternatives or healthy foods as student rewards.” This statement would receive a rating of “1” because it is weakened by the word “encourage.”

The second example states that “food rewards or incentives shall not be used in classrooms to encourage desirable behavior.” This statement uses strong, enforceable language, so it receives a rating of “2.”

The WellSAT produces two scores upon your completion of the assessment: a comprehensiveness score, reflecting the extent to which recommended content areas are covered in the policy; and a strength score, reflecting how strongly the content is stated.

Comprehensiveness indicates how many topics the policy covers. Strength indicates how many topics the policy covers with strong, specific language that requires that actions be taken.

It is important to remember not to treat comprehensiveness and strength scores as grades. There are no “passing” or “failing” scores, and you should not communicate your results as a letter grade.

In our research with a sample of 50 districts from across the country, the average comprehensiveness score was 54 out of 100 and the average strength score was 33 out of 100.

These scores are included on your scorecard so that you can compare the overall quality of your policy across assessments. If, for example, you are completing a triennial assessment, you can use these scores to quickly determine whether your policy has generally improved since your last assessment, stayed the same, or fallen behind.

Now let’s look at how to navigate the WellSAT Policy tool.

The WellSAT has six sections: Federal Requirements, Nutrition Environment and Services, Nutrition Education, Physical Education and Physical Activity, Employee Wellness, and Integration and Coordination. You can navigate between these sections by clicking the circles at the top of the page, or the Next and Back buttons at the bottom of the page.

Each item shows guidance on how to score policy language pertaining to a specific topic. Click to select a score. The guidance will automatically collapse once you choose a score, but you can expand it again by clicking the item text to change your score. You can also expand or contract all item guidance by clicking the button at the bottom of the page.

Items that address components of the Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program are marked with an icon of a running person.

Items that address components of Farm to School are marked with an icon of a watering can.

This is how your WellSAT Policy scorecard will appear.

This will be automatically generated when you complete the WellSAT online. It details your scores for each item, highlights any federally required items with a score of “0” (indicating that updates to the written policy are necessary), and calculates comprehensiveness and strength scores.

If you are only assessing your policy, congratulations! You are done. However, if you are completing a triennial assessment or would otherwise like to assess your practices, you should proceed to the WellSAT Practice measure.

If you are completing a triennial assessment, completing the WellSAT Policy is your first step in the process.

When you complete this step, you will have compared your wellness policy to a model policy and assessed compliance with federal requirements in your written policy.

For more information about the WellSAT, please visit the Rudd Center and WellSAT websites.