It’s not just about academics or behavior: MTSS is for the whole child, school, and community

Sandra M. Chafouleas, PhD
BOT Distinguished Professor, Neag School of Education
Co-Director, Collaboratory on School and Child Health
University of Connecticut

March 20, 2019 presentation for the Washington District MTSS Leader PLC
Presentation Goals

- Review the rationale behind the Whole School, Whole Child, Whole Community (WSCC) Model.
- Highlight connections between WSCC and integrated MTSS.
- Review components to the WSCC toolkit — designed to facilitate policy, process, and practice decisions across domains of student functioning and within an integrated MTSS framework.
- Discuss opportunities and challenges across contexts in extending MTSS work to a whole child, school, and community approach.
Traditional School-Health Initiatives

- Past models developed with a singular focus – health or education
- Increased push for meeting short-term, academic based goals
- Limited leadership → poor collaboration between school and community agencies

CDC

ASCD
Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model (WSCC)

- Developed in joint partnership by the ASCD and CDC in 2014.

- **Student Centered**: Collaborative research is critical toward informed policy, processes, and practices that address the whole child.

- **Evidence Grounded**: 10 components help key stakeholders organize and prioritize efforts.

- **Ecological**: Community plays a crucial role in implementing and sustaining practices across these components.
Project Overview

THINK ABOUT THE LINK

ACADEMIC • SOCIAL • EMOTIONAL • PHYSICAL • BEHAVIORAL

WHOLE CHILD
REFLECTIONS ON "THINK ABOUT THE LINK"

From Siloes to Systemic Change
Summary Themes

• **Somewhat unexpected:** the *what*
  – or the degree of request for multi-media material to build WSCC content knowledge

• **Somewhat expected:** the *who*
  – strategy for leadership to sustain efforts

• **Expected:** the *how*
  – or the need for support as to “how” to do WSCC implementation
    • E.g. overwhelming to look at it all simultaneously
BUILDING A TOOLKIT TO FACILITATE WSCC IMPLEMENTATION

KEY CONSIDERATIONS
Lessons from Schoolwide Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (SWPBIS):

What are challenges associated with accurate, durable, and relevant [WSCC] implementation?
Embrace Complex Change - Using Implementation Science

The EPIS Model

EXPLORE → PLAN → IMPLEMENT → SUSTAIN

Aarons et al (2011)
Setting the Stage: Initial Exploration

- Core Content Knowledge
- Implementation Features

Readiness of the inner organization for WSCC

EXPLORE... *Fit and commitment to WSCC work*

- PLAN - IMPLEMENT - SUSTAIN -

Adapted from Aarons et al (2011); NIRN
Core Content Knowledge & Implementation Features

- Overall model
- 10 components
WSCC Model

Readiness & Exploration - Coordinating

- Policy
- Process & Practice
- For every child
The WSCC Toolkit:

- Practice Briefs and Videos
- Policy Evaluation Tool
- Action Planning Blueprint
Building Core Content Knowledge & Implementation Features

PRACTICE BRIEFS AND VIDEOS
Creating the Briefs: 
*methods for each domain*

1. **Systematic review of the literature**
2. **Studies coded for quality**
3. **Highest quality studies selected**
4. **Conduct expert review**
   - Consulted best practice guidance
5. **Brief Development**
6. **Synthesized results**
Using feedback from the expert review process, each article was evaluated in detail to identify evidence-based strategies and interventions.

We also consulted best practice recommendations relevant to each domain of the model.

We classified identified practices into three levels based on the resources needed to implement each strategy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy Level</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 1: Low resource demand</strong></td>
<td>Establish an employee wellness committee, evaluate existing wellness practices across domains, provide physical activity breaks, promote positive relationships between students and staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 2: Moderate resource demand</strong></td>
<td>Implement environmental modifications to support healthy lifestyle habits, encourage family involvement in wellness activities, utilize positive behavioral strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 3: High resource demand</strong></td>
<td>Establish after-school programs with community partners, provide mental health supports for employees, provide competitive pricing for healthy foods, promote student social emotional learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What do we mean?

*Social and Emotional Climate* refers to the psychosocial aspects of student experiences. A positive school climate for both students and staff reflects attention to fostering psychological, social, and physical safety, providing support to reach academic potential and behavioral standards, and maintaining respectful, trusting, and caring relationships throughout the school community. A positive social and emotional climate can reduce stress, increase academic achievement, and foster positive attitudes toward self and others and also is conducive to effective teaching and learning practices. Further, a positive school climate supports students’ general health and development by ensuring a safe and supportive learning environment for all.
Why Is It Relevant to Child Outcomes?

Physical Health Outcomes

Social and emotional climate has been associated with physical health outcomes for students. A healthy social and emotional climate can provide students with education involving proper nutrition, dietary habits, and physical activity. Acquiring knowledge in these health-related areas can improve physical health outcomes in a variety of ways. Previous research has documented a relationship between positive school climate and decreased substance use, as well as reduced engagement in risk-taking behaviors. Specifically, a positive social and emotional climate that fosters school connectedness has been associated with positive physical health outcomes such as decreases in drug and alcohol use, sexual risk behaviors, decreased violence, and lower rates of delinquency and suicide.

Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Outcomes

Research shows that supportive school and classroom climates can positively impact student social, emotional, and behavioral health. Specifically, a social and emotional climate that encourages independence, supports shared decision-making and responsibilities among students and staff, maintains high behavioral expectations, and fosters supportive teacher-student relationships has been shown to result in lower engagement in problem behaviors (e.g., alcohol and drug use, bullying/fighting, carrying a
The Final Product

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1 Strategies: Low resource demand</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Promote positive relationships between students and staff</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• School connectedness promotes positive educational and health outcomes for students through fostering supportive relationships with adults and positive peer groups. School connectedness may also serve as a protective factor against emotional distress, anxiety, depressive symptoms, and substance use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Schools can work to promote positive relationships and school connectedness by ensuring that students have a connection or relationship with at least one adult (teacher, coach, or other staff) in the building.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collect, review, and respond to school climate data</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Available data sources—such as responses to school climate surveys, office discipline referrals, use of exclusionary disciplinary practices, evaluations of classroom management strategies—can be used to continuously monitor and improve school climate and culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• School leadership teams can implement a plan to review available school climate data and create an action plan to respond to identified areas of need.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 2 Strategies: Moderate resource demand</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Utilize positive, proactive behavior strategies</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Positive behavior support strategies that create school-wide environments that reinforce appropriate behavior should be utilized more frequently than exclusionary practices (e.g., removals from class, in and out of school suspensions). Implementation of positive behavior support strategies is associated with reductions in office discipline referrals, suspensions and expulsions and improved student behavior across grade levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Schools can implement proactive, positive school-wide behavior support strategies, such as the use of clear and positively stated classroom expectations, explicit teaching of expectations, reinforcement of appropriate student behavior, and consistent responses to inappropriate behavior.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Implement bullying and harassment prevention and intervention</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Bullying and harassment are associated with negative outcomes (e.g., mental health risk, substance use, physical illness), which may persist through adulthood. Research supports the use of anti-bullying programs, although more work is needed to clearly identify the common components of effective programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Current recommendations include using whole school, multi-tiered approaches, as well as strategies such as increasing student supervision throughout the school environment, developing classroom and school-wide rules related to bullying, promoting use of bystander interventions, and sustaining multi-component interventions (as opposed to a one-time assembly or presentation related to bullying).</td>
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<tr>
<th>Level 3 Strategies: High resource demand</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expand student engagement opportunities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• An essential component of school climate is the engagement and inclusion of all students; student engagement is associated with graduation rates, academic achievement, and dropout prevention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strategies used to increase student engagement include student involvement in school-based organizations, such as sport teams or gay straight alliances, while also creating opportunities for academic engagement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Final Product
WSCC in Action: Brief Videos

- Perspectives from different school staff
- Examples and outcomes for each domain
Other Resources

Building Core Content Knowledge & Implementation Features

• CDC Healty Schools – WSCC Virtual School
  – https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/vhs/index.html#!/scene/1

• National Association of Chronic Disease Directors – WSCC Videos
  – https://www.chronicdisease.org/page/shvideos
Readiness & Exploration – Coordinating Actions

ACTION PLANNING BLUEPRINT: PROCESSES AND PRACTICES
Action Planning Blueprint

• Explains key concepts
  – Defines “gears” and providing exemplars
  – Uses multiple sources/formats of information

• Provides tools to facilitate decisions
• WSCC embraces school role and responsibility in **integrating learning and health initiatives**, building on substantial history of related initiatives in child success and well-being (CDC coordinated school health, ASCD whole child)

• WSCC **weaves together efforts** in supporting the whole child – which means that although academic indicators do form a critical part to school buy-in, efforts also attend to social, emotional, behavioral, and physical domains

• WSCC requires **coordinated leadership** across district and school decision making policy, process, practice arenas
  - Examples: school improvement plan, school wellness plans, district strategic plans, mission statements

• WSCC is **contextually relevant** in that efforts will look different across districts and within schools in the same district
  - Example differing factors: leaders, policies, culture, needs and assets, resources, family engagement, community involvement

• WSCC is a **continual process** of coordinated decision making about needs, priorities, and actions
  - Not doing it all at once, but systematic coordination of efforts

• WSCC is **data-driven**, with data options that include “big” data (scores, attendance, discipline, climate/safety) deemed critical as well as “component” data (reports of chronic illness, behavior plans, family contacts)

• WSCC requires school **commitment to collaboration** with community and families

• WSCC must be viewed as the **umbrella to school initiatives**, cutting across layers to influence common vision
  - To be successful, planful efforts focus on reduction of duplication, inefficiency, and confusion (e.g. what are the current areas of focus and resource allocation, what is the gap analysis across policies, processes, and practices)
Embracing WSCC work in *integrating learning and health initiatives* means taking an expanded view of school role and responsibility.
Defining “Gears” and Providing Exemplars

**Employee Wellness:** Fostering health in all school staff as healthy employees are more productive and better able to do their job in attending to student needs. Employee wellness approaches include programs and policies that embrace a continuum of prevention to intervention strategies, and offer personalized health programs such as stress management, improved physical health and nutrition, and risk reduction.
WSCC work weaves together efforts
weaving occurs across domains, settings, and service intensity

School Examples
- SELECT
  - Academic remed. & mod.
  - Behavioral therapies
- PHYSICAL
- SOCIAL
- EMOTIONAL

Community Examples
- SELECT
  - Intensive family supports
  - Long-term therapies
- TARGETED
  - Basic needs ident. & service access
  - Family supports, such as birth-3 programs
  - Physical health monitoring
- UNIVERSAL
  - Safe environment for all
  - Engaging academic curriculum
  - Healthy school nutrition
  - Time for physical activity
  - Family-school collaboration
  - Public safety services
  - Preventive health programs
  - Recreation & enrichment activities
  - Community education & engagement programs
Case Example – Moving from silo to integrated in addressing student anxiety

**Typical example of WSCC individual component efforts**

- Physical education faculty meet to re-design the two-year health education and physical activity curriculum
  - The need for increased focus on mental health is noted with plans to embed an extra lesson in the required health education curriculum

- Student services faculty meet to plan options for providing additional 1:1 supports for students exhibiting anxiety

- Separate budget requests reflect (1) staffing, training, and materials associated with physical education faculty delivery of health lesson & (2) increasing student services faculty capacity to provide supports

**Coordinated example of WSCC integrated efforts**

- WSCC school leader facilitates meeting with physical education and student services faculty to plan for reducing student anxiety.

- Phys. Ed. faculty work with student services faculty to design a relaxation unit for all students to be embedded in health/phys. education curriculum. The work includes families as partners to support learning and stragey use.

- School nurses are included to discuss a “surveillance” protocol to identify and refer those students who need additional support by student services faculty.

- Coordinated budget requests are submitted to facilitate time for protocol development and faculty training.
Identify Leadership Team – Explore to Do the Work

Who/What is the Leadership Team?

✓ Leadership, Climate, Citizenship Behaviors

✓ Lyon et al, 2018 - Evidence-Based Practice in School Mental Health

**HUB** – the effective center of an activity, region, or network

*Synonyms:* center, core, heart, middle, central point, nucleus, kernel

Source: https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hub
Identify Leadership Team – Explore to Do the Work

Example Visual - Drivers of Implementation in School Systems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding</th>
<th>Visibility</th>
<th>Political Support</th>
<th>Alignment of Policy &amp; Systems</th>
<th>Personnel Capacity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**LEADERSHIP TEAM**

Responsible for Planning, Implementation, & Coordination

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Training and Professional Development</th>
<th>Coaching &amp; Technical Assistance</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Local Content Expertise</th>
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</thead>
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Adapted from School-Wide Positive Behavior Supports (Sugai, 2010)

**2011 ASCD report** - identified the following “WSCC” levers: (1) principal as leader; (2) active and engaged leadership; (3) distributive leadership; (4) integration with school improvement plan; (5) effective use of data for continuous improvement; (6) embedded professional development; (7) mutually beneficial community collaborations; (8) stakeholder support; and (9) related policy (Source: Rasberry, Slade, Lohrmann, & Valois, 2015).
Action Planning Tool – Linking WSCC and MTSS
What we are doing at each tier within each domain?
How do those practices align with the evidence-informed strategies?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1: Low resource demand</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establish data sources to identify student risk</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate current behavioral support practices</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 2: Moderate resource demand</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase universal school-based mental health promotion</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement targeted behavioral interventions</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 3: High resource demand</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) based interventions</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilize function-based interventions</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td></td>
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**Rating Guide**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Currently Implemented well</td>
<td>Could be implemented better</td>
<td>Interested in implementing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How do I/we reflect on our work in this area?

**Applying Core Principles:**

How does *my school* demonstrate commitment to Behavioral Supports?

How do *I* demonstrate commitment to Behavioral Supports?

What can we do more of to improve Behavioral Supports?
Explore to Do the Work

The Hexagon Tool
Exploring Context

The Hexagon Tool can be used as a planning tool to evaluate evidence-based programs and practices during the Exploration Stage of Implementation.

See the Active Implementation Hub Resource Library
http://implementation.fpg.unc.edu

Example Tools
Readiness & Exploration – Coordinating Actions

POLICY EVALUATION TOOL
GOAL: TO EXPAND THE WELLSAT TO EVALUATE ALL 10 DOMAINS OF THE WSCC MODEL
2004 - WIC Reauthorization Act

- All schools participating in federally funded meal programs must create wellness policies by July 2006

Required Components (2004):

1. Goals for nutrition and physical activity
2. Nutrition guidelines for all foods available during school day
3. Statement that reimbursable meals follow regulations
4. Plan for measuring implementation of policy
5. Involvement of stakeholders

2010 - Health, Hunger-Free Kids Act

- Strengthened requirements for local wellness policies

Required Components (2010):

1. Goals for nutrition and physical activity
2. Nutrition guidelines for all foods available during school day (and specific guidelines for competitive foods)
3. Statement that reimbursable meals follow regulations
4. Involvement of stakeholders, with permission for families to participate in policy development and review
5. Plan to update community about policy content
6. Plan for measuring implementation of policy, more specific guidelines for frequency and areas to assess
7. Designate specific person for ensuring school level compliance
• Districts almost always have an existing policy but quality of written policy varies greatly (Piekarz et al., 2016)

Figure 1. Progress in Adopting District Wellness Policies and Required Policy Components, School Years 2006-07 through 2013-14

http://www.wellsat.org/

http://www.wellsat.org/

Significant change from SY 06-07 to 13-14 at p<.01 level. ***Significant change from SY 06-07 to 13-14 at p<.001 level. Data reflect policies in place as of the first day of each school year.

Source: National Wellness Policy Study and Bridging the Gap, Institute for Health Research and Policy, University of Illinois at Chicago, 2016
What does the WellSAT measure?

Policy related to:
- Nutrition Education
- Nutrition Standards
- Physical Activity
- Implementation, compliance, and communication with school community related to wellness policies

Scoring allows for measurement of:
- Strength
- Comprehensiveness
Problem: As a field, we recognize that wellness is more than just physical health but.....

What most wellness policies and (policy evaluation tools) look like:

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<td>7</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness</td>
<td>16</td>
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</table>

What about the other 8 domains?
WSCC Policy Evaluation Tool

in development

Examples of Scoring for Employee Wellness
Employee Wellness

**Item:** Addresses creating an environment that supports employees’ healthy lifestyles

- **1 point**
  - Vague and/or suggested
  - OR
  - Mentions that district will create a healthy work environment but does not cite examples of environmental supports that can be used

- **2 points**
  - States that district *will* create a healthy work environment and cites specific examples of environmental supports (e.g., access to healthy food options, access to free drinking water, opportunities for physical activity breaks)

**Policy Language:**

All staff shall promote a school environment supportive of healthy behaviors." (Boston Public Schools, p. 6)
Employee Wellness

**Item**: Addresses creating an environment that supports employees’ healthy lifestyles

- **1 point**
  - Vague and/or suggested
  - Mentions that district will create a healthy work environment but does not cite examples of environmental supports that can be used

- **2 points**
  - States that district **will** create a healthy work environment and cites specific examples of environmental supports (e.g., access to healthy food options, access to free drinking water, opportunities for physical activity breaks)

- "The District will use a healthy meeting policy for all events with available food options, created by the SWC/DWC or one that currently exists that optimizes healthy food options with a variety of choices and selections of healthy foods for a variety of dietary needs" (Alliance for a Healthier Generation Sample Policy)
Employee Wellness

**Item:** Addresses methods to communicate information about and encourage participation in available wellness programs

1 point
- Vague and/or suggested

OR
- Mentions that information will be distributed and participation encouraged but not specific means to do so

2 points
- States that district will create a healthy work environment and cites specific examples of environmental supports (e.g., access to healthy food options, access to free drinking water, opportunities for physical activity breaks)

**Policy Language:**

The committee should develop, promote, and oversee a multifaceted plan to promote staff health and wellness” (National Alliance on Nutrition and Activity Sample Policy)
Employee Wellness

**Item:** Addresses methods to communicate information about and encourage participation in available wellness programs

- **1 point**
  - Vague and/or suggested
  OR
  - Mentions that information will be distributed and participation encouraged but not specific means to do so

- **2 points**
  - States that district **will** create a healthy work environment and cites specific examples of environmental supports (e.g., access to healthy food options, access to free drinking water, opportunities for physical activity breaks)

**Policy Language:**

Each school and site shall designate at least one staff member to serve as wellness champion. A wellness champion is responsible for communicating information from the BCPS employee wellness council to the staff at their school or site”

(Baltimore County Public Schools)
The WSCC Toolkit:

- Practice Briefs and Videos
- Policy Evaluation Tool
- Action Planning Blueprint
**Discussion: Key Opportunities Across Different School, District, and State Contexts**

- How do you embrace WSCC as a framework, not a one size fits all approach? How can it look different across contexts?
- What are facilitators and barriers to successful implementation and sustainability?
- How important is leadership at different levels – state, district, building? How to engage leaders as collaborative partners in the work?
- How do you scale up the efforts? What are the needed resources and the role for partnerships?
Questions, Comments, & Thank You!

Sandra M. Chafouleas
sandra.chafouleas@uconn.edu