**UConn CSCH Podcast Episode transcript**

**The WSCC Blueprints: helping schools integrate health and learning**

Helene Marcy: Hello and Welcome to the CSCH Podcast. My name is Helene Marcy, Director of Programs & Communications at the UConn Collaboratory on School and Child Health, or CSCH. The CSCH mission is to facilitate innovative and impactful connections across research, policy, and practice arenas to advance equity in school and child health. CSCH is committed to anti-racist work that prioritizes inclusion, reduces disparities, and creates systemic change. I invite you to take a look at our website at csch.uconn.edu.

Today I’m here with Jessica Koslouski and Kathleen Williamson. Both Jess and Kate are Postdoctoral Scholars with CSCH. The CSCH Team has recently created the WSCC Blueprints—guides to help schools plan and coordinate efforts to integrate health and learning, and we’ll talk about those blueprints today. Welcome to you both!

Jessica Koslouski: Hi, there!

Kate Williamson: Hi! Thank you for having us.

Helene Marcy: So before we get into what the WSCC Blueprints are, let’s step back a few years. WSCC is an acronym for the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model. And this is the model that actually inspired the creation of CSCH as a whole back seven years ago now. Jess, can you give us a bit of background about that WSCC model?

Jessica Koslouski: Yes, of course. The Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child model was originally developed by the Centers for Disease Control and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, or ASCD. The goal was to create a proactive and integrated model of child health and well-being. The model is quite complex, identifying 10 core domains that affect child health and well-being and fall within the purview of a school. These include domains related to health services; the food and nutrition environment; physical activity; the safety of the physical environment; social, emotional and behavioral supports; and family and community engagement.

The model focuses on coordinating policies, processes, and practices across these domains with the goal to ensure that children are safe, healthy, supported, engaged, and challenged.

And so the WSCC model was released in 2014. It reflects long standing efforts in health and education to bring attention to the various domains of development that affect the whole child. And so, rather than thinking about schools as places that only focus on academics, we recognize the interconnectedness of students’ academic, social, emotional, behavioral, and physical development. And when we attend to all of these in schools we have healthier and more successful students.

Helene Marcy: So what led the CSCH team to develop the blueprints based on that model?

Jessica Koslouski: Yeah. So as I just described, the WSCC model is quite complex. And what we found in our work with schools is that conceptually many bought in. The model made sense to them, and reflected what they saw with their students. When their students were healthy, thriving socially and emotionally, and the school was engaged with families and community partners, students were successful. Yet they weren't sure on the how of incorporating the WSCC model into their work. Schools saw that they had some elements already reflected in their policies or practices—maybe an SEL curriculum, or regulations on the food served in their cafeteria—but they weren't sure how to build from that, or integrate across domains.

And of course, schools aren't starting from zero. They are complex systems that already have many established policies and practices. And another piece that comes up is that traditionally, these efforts have been siloed rather than integrated within schools. And so the school psychologist focuses on the counseling services; the food service director focuses on the nutritional environment; and the administrators and custodial staff focus on emergency preparedness and maintaining a safe environment.

And this makes sense. These people hold expertise in their respective areas, and with the time constraints in schools dividing up the work becomes a strategy for getting it done. But what we lose here is an integrated approach. And some efforts might be duplicative or even contradictory. And so, when our classroom teachers are using various materials to teach emotion regulation skills to students; the school psychologist is using a different curriculum with students needing more intensive support; and the school nurse hasn't been trained in the language of any of these, we aren't optimizing our efforts with students.

And so we developed the blueprints to guide schools through an action planning process of assessing where they currently are with WSCC implementation and to build from there. We help schools to zoom out, to consider the whole. their strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for growth, using the WSCC model. And then we give them tools to thoughtfully plan their next steps. No school can go from where they are to full WSCC implementation overnight. We give schools tools to evaluate their potential next steps and then using input from key groups, identify areas of focus. The blueprint gives a process that they can return to multiple times as they continue to strengthen their WSCC implementation. The blueprints provide the how of WSCC implementation.

Helene Marcy: Thanks. So, Kate, let's get into that actual how that Jess was just talking about, and to the actual tools. Can you tell us about the blueprints and how they're set up?

Kate Williamson: Absolutely so a couple key words that Jess just said: tools and process. We all are in support of the what, with the WSCC model, but putting it into action is what can be challenging. So to do that the blueprints present a process called the 3 E's, or the blueprinting process. Now the 3 E's are Explore context, Evaluate directions, and Establish actions.

So for each of those Es, I’ll give a little bit more detail, ‘cause—in and of themselves not clear what that might be. For Explore context: here we identify strengths and needs related to educating the whole child by considering existing areas of strength and how current work being done in school aligns with the WSCC model. Then moving on to Evaluate directions: here we look for opportunities to strengthen whole child initiatives by prioritizing areas of focus and identifying possible directions for moving forward. And finally, in Establish actions, we plan for success by identifying action steps to take, as well as how to address potential barriers to implementation, and how to monitor implementation. This 3 E's process is rooted in implementation science, and also draws on ideas from backwards design and congruence theory.

Helene Marcy: So Jess, as you said the WSCC model integrates policy and practice, why did the team separate them out and create two different blueprints

Jessica Koslouski: Great question. So in our initial draft we had combined policy and practice into one blueprint. And so we define policies as being what schools and districts have written down in official documents, stating what they'll do. And practices being what actually happens in the day-to-day operations of a school. And for many reasons, these aren't always aligned in schools. So perhaps practices have evolved over time, and we haven't updated a policy. Or we have practices that are part of our day-to-day, but aren't documented anywhere. And so as we were developing the blueprints and designing activities and preparing materials, we found that we were really trying to speak to two different audiences.

When thinking about practices, we were really thinking about school-based teams made up of educators with expertise across the WSCC domains. So bringing together perhaps an administrator, a classroom teacher, the physical education teacher, school nurse, food services director and a school social worker. Really, those multidisciplinary teams that are considering school practices across domains of child development.

But then, when thinking about school policies, it is primarily school and district administrators that hold the role of considering revisions to school policy. And so the guidance and activities that supported consideration of policies and practices looked different. And ultimately we created two blueprints: one focused on policy and one focus on practice. But both include guidance for users to consider how their proposed changes affect the other. So what would need to happen to put this revised policy into place or into practice? Or how should these revised practices be documented in policy? The structures and the goal of each blueprint are the same, but we found that to advance change in schools, we needed to attend to the audiences that would have the most success and opportunity to affect change in their school community.

Helene Marcy: That makes a lot of sense. So, Kate, let's take a look at that practice blueprint. Tell us about how a school might use that.

Kate Williamson: Absolutely. So just like Jess said, we have the practice blueprint designed for use by school teams—teams who are interested in improving the alignment between their practices and the WSCC model. We recommend that this team be multidisciplinary in nature, as Jess said, so comprised of educators who hold expertise in different domains of the WSCC model. And we also recommend that this team include those who are involved in the day-to-day implementation of WSCC practices: the health teachers, the nurses, the school psychologists, right, as well as those in the school building who are decision makers. So those who can make some decisions about practices that are are done in the building, whether that's a department chair, an assistant principal or the like. So that's who we have designed the practice blueprint for. Now that team will go through the 3 E's or this blueprinting process to develop action plans for one to five school practices that they will change. That's the end goal of working through the blueprint: to get to some change, a plan for change.

Now, to reach that end goal where a team is set up for sustainable implementation of WSCC-aligned practices, we provide a suggested 10 session structure in the practice blueprint. These sessions are expected to take about 30 to 45 min each on average, and they include background reading and activities for the team to complete. The first few sessions are dedicated to introductory content. This is where a team can build its knowledge about the WSCC model, including knowledge about evidence-based WSCC practices, and build its capacity for engaging in this work.

Then the remaining sessions follow the 3 E process. So the team is asked to explore its existing practices and resources in the building; then evaluate their practices to determine which WSCC domains are areas of strength right now and which domains are areas for growth; and then establish the practice changes that they will pursue, based on the resources, fit, and readiness unique to their school environment.

While working through these sessions and activities, we strongly encourage teams to seek input from the broader school community to ensure that all key groups have a voice. And, as Jess mentioned, we also strongly encourage teams to consider policy changes that might be needed to reflect the practice changes they will pursue. Again, this continues to promote the coordination of WSCC efforts between what you're supposed to be doing in a school—the policy—and what's actually happening on a day-to-day basis—the practice.

Helene Marcy: And tell us about how about the policy blueprint is different and how it works.

Kate Williamson: So typically, in a school, administrators are responsible for creating, revising or evaluating school policy. That's why we designed the policy blueprint for school administrators. Now, an individual administrator may complete the entire blueprinting process by themselves, perhaps over the summer, or as a part of a concentrated strategic goal, and seek input from their colleagues as needed as they go through that process. Or a *team* of administrators may complete the policy blueprint. A team at a school level, or even at a district level. Either way the end goal of the policy blueprint is to develop action plans for one to five changes to school policy, to promote greater alignment with the WSCC model. Just like the practice blueprint, the policy blueprint provides a suggested 10 session structure to accomplish this. So following introductory activities to build knowledge and capacity, the administrator—or team of administrators—will explore existing policies and their alignment with the WSCC model. To do this they'll use the WellSAT WSCC, which is a freely accessible policy evaluation tool developed by CSCH and the UConn Rudd Center. Then the administrator will use the results of that evaluation to identify the WSCC domains where policy might be strengthened, just like the practice blueprint. And finally, after prioritizing possible policy changes based on urgency and readiness, the administrator will make an action plan for the policy changes to pursue at this time. And with the policy blueprint, we strongly encourage policy and practice to be considered in tandem again. And so, therefore, one of the final activities of the policy blueprint asks administrators to think about the practice changes that might be needed, based on the results of their blueprinting process.

And one thing that I really want to make sure we highlight for both the practice and policy blueprint is that they are tools, just as we discussed earlier. So throughout the blueprints we include links to additional resources, reflection questions, tips, and case studies to support folks as they go through the blueprinting process. The timing and structure of the activities can be adapted to fit your school building and your goals for WSCC-related work

Helene Marcy: So for listeners who are interested in exploring the blueprints. How can they learn more? What should their first step be?

Jessica Koslouski: We would encourage listeners to visit our website, CSCH's website, where both blueprints are available as full documents, or split up into individual sessions and the related resources.

Helene Marcy: terrific. These blueprints are really a great and comprehensive resource, and I hope that our listeners find them helpful in looking at how to support the whole child. Thank you both so much for joining us today to talk about and explain these resources.

Jessica Koslouski: Thanks so much for having us.

Kate Williamson: Thank you so much.

Helene Marcy: We’ll add links to the WSCC Blueprints and other CSCH tools in the podcast description. And a reminder to our listeners that you can find information about our work and all our podcast episodes at the CSCH website, csch.uconn.edu. You can also follow us on social media @UConnCSCH. Thanks for listening.