

**Overview of the WSCC Model: The CT WSCC Partnership On-Demand Webinar Series Transcript**

Welcome to the Overview of the WSCC Model video. This video accompanies the on-demand webinar series created by the Connecticut WSCC Partnership. This video introduces and explains the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child—or WSCC—model. The accompanying webinars then each dive into one domain of the WSCC model in greater detail.

The Connecticut WSCC Partnership is a joint collaboration between the University of Connecticut’s Collaboratory on School and Child Health and the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Health. Before we begin, we’d like to acknowledge our funding partners and share that the content of this webinar does not necessarily reflect the official views of the CDC or the Department of Health and Human Services.

The Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child model is a comprehensive framework for addressing health in schools. It was developed jointly by the CDC and the ASCD, a leading organization in the field of education, in 2014. The WSCC model is student-centered and stresses the need to coordinate policy, processes, and practice across 10 domains of student health and well-being to maximize student success. The WSCC model is not a prescriptive program, instead, it’s a framework for organizing a school or district’s efforts to support the whole child, facilitate high-quality teaching, and maximize student learning and success.

First, let’s take a brief look back at the creation of the WSCC model. In 2013, the ASCD and CDC brought together experts from the fields of education and public health to discuss lessons learned from their respective efforts to support health and learning outcomes in schools. The CDC’s efforts utilized the Coordinated School Health approach while the ASCD focused on a Whole Child Approach and leaders sought to promote greater alignment and coordination between these approaches. As a result of this collaboration, the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child model was developed. The WSCC model combines and expands upon the whole child and coordinated school health approaches to create one comprehensive and integrated approach to supporting student health and learning. For a more detailed history of the WSCC model, viewers are invited to read the 2015 article by Lewallen and colleagues.

The WSCC model is significant because it aligns the goals of the education and public health sectors. For years, these two fields were working on really the same priorities, the academic, social, emotional, behavioral, and physical health and well-being of students. But they were doing it in parallel without a lot of concrete integration and coordination. So the WSCC Model is groundbreaking in that we have a unified, comprehensive approach for promoting health and learning in schools.

Now let’s consider the elements that make up this comprehensive model. At the center of the WSCC model are the whole child tenants. Whole child development is the focus of all our work in schools. As we know, feeling safe in school relates to higher academic achievement, increased well-being, and greater engagement. To learn at their best, students must be engaged in their learning. Central to supportive schools are staff and administrators that care about their students and curricula that challenges students better prepares them with the skills and knowledge to succeed in their future endeavors. And finally, we know that students do better in school when they are emotionally and physically healthy.

The model includes 10 domains that influence school and child health. As you can see here, domains of the WSCC model range from health education and nutrition environment, to safe environment and counseling, psychological, and social services. The model also highlights the importance of employee wellness, family engagement and community involvement. The goal here is to provide the services and supports students need to be safe, engaged, supported, challenged, and healthy.

The yellow outmost ring reminds us that schools are a reflection of their communities and they require community input, resources, and collaboration to support students. Further, as schools are situated in unique communities, we know the needs of each school will vary. The WSCC model provides a contextually flexible framework, so schools can adapt to the unique needs of the students in their school and their local community when implementing systems and supports to promote health and learning outcomes.

Finally, the coordination of policies, processes and practices, which are represented by the white band around the five whole child tenants, plays a critical role in creating and sustaining a school environment that supports learning and health. Districts and schools can use the WSCC model to promote greater integration of initiatives within and across domains, as well as communication between the key players leading these initiatives.

The distinct elements of the WSCC model help leaders take an ecological perspective, embracing the coordination and collaboration between school, family, district, and community systems to improve health and learning for our students.

So why is the WSCC model important?

The WSCC model really reinforces the reciprocal relationship between health and learning. Healthy students are better learners. Academic achievement is associated with better health and well-being, and ultimately, educational attainment is associated with better life course health outcomes. The design of the WSCC model is incredibly important. Every educator can see exactly where they fit in the model and how their work supports the development of children. This validates all of their efforts and motivates them to keep doing the work, the hard work to support our students and families.

The WSCC model is valuable because it provides an opportunity for schools to work smarter, not harder. So often in the business of schools, we don’t have the opportunity to step back and look at the different initiatives or priorities and how they’re either working together or maybe working as siloed efforts. So, the model provides a framework for us to think through what are the strengths and weaknesses in the various domains and then create a strategic plan for how we can improve or grow.

So why is the WSCC model important? A report from the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors highlights many strong connections between learning and health. One of the things that was shared is that when students basic nutritional and physical needs are met, they’re able to attain higher achievement levels.

So how can schools leverage the WSCC model as an organizing framework?

Schools can leverage the WSCC model as an organizing framework to perform an audit, to really say what are our strengths and weaknesses, and then from there, build a strategic plan. Think about what are some goals, what are some areas where we can grow, maybe we’re not paying attention to, where do we see opportunities for partnership beyond the walls of our schools, so within our greater community, who else can we bring to the table?

In addition, it provides us an opportunity to celebrate the things that we’ve done and sometimes in school communities we don’t have the opportunities to showcase all the great work that’s happening. So to me it provides a pause and an opportunity to say okay, here’s what we’re doing well; here’s what we’re maybe not paying attention to; and then also here is where some of our work overlaps. So there’s an overlap between social emotional learning, employee wellness, that they don’t, they’re not siloed. And so it allows us to say -- okay how are the things that we’re doing within our school overlapping and working together? Or maybe where is there an opportunity again to elevate? Because we haven’t yet taken the time to see that there is alignment and opportunity between these two efforts.

By utilizing the WSCC model as an organizing framework, school leaders can create a map of their whole child initiatives to drive coordinated, strategic planning efforts. Connecting policies, practices, funding streams and teaming structures to the distinct elements of the WSCC model allows school leaders to identify gaps in their policies or practices that might need to be addressed, redundant or duplicated efforts that might need to be streamlined and opportunities to strengthen integration and communication to better take advantage of existing resources.

Here's an example of how one district used the WSCC model to identify district decision makers and community partners for their whole child leadership team. By using the WSCC model as an organizing framework, they were able to ensure the team included diverse voices, perspectives, and areas of expertise.

Another way to leverage the WSCC model as an organizing framework is to create a leadership team from leaders or representatives from other teams and committees. In this way, you can make sure that you have one centralized committee that is aware of the work of everyone else.

Why it’s important, because again I think people believe it’s important. But it’s how do we embed it? How do we incorporate it into being a part of your life? And I think that’s what it really is and you know, it’s not easy but again, just the repetition of being able to do it but embedding it in the different areas where you’re not having to talk about it as opposed to seeing it in action.

If you have any questions about the Connecticut WSCC Partnership, please feel free to contact us at ctwscc@uconn.edu.