

# Connecticut Whole Child Convening

CT WSCC Partnership, February 2026

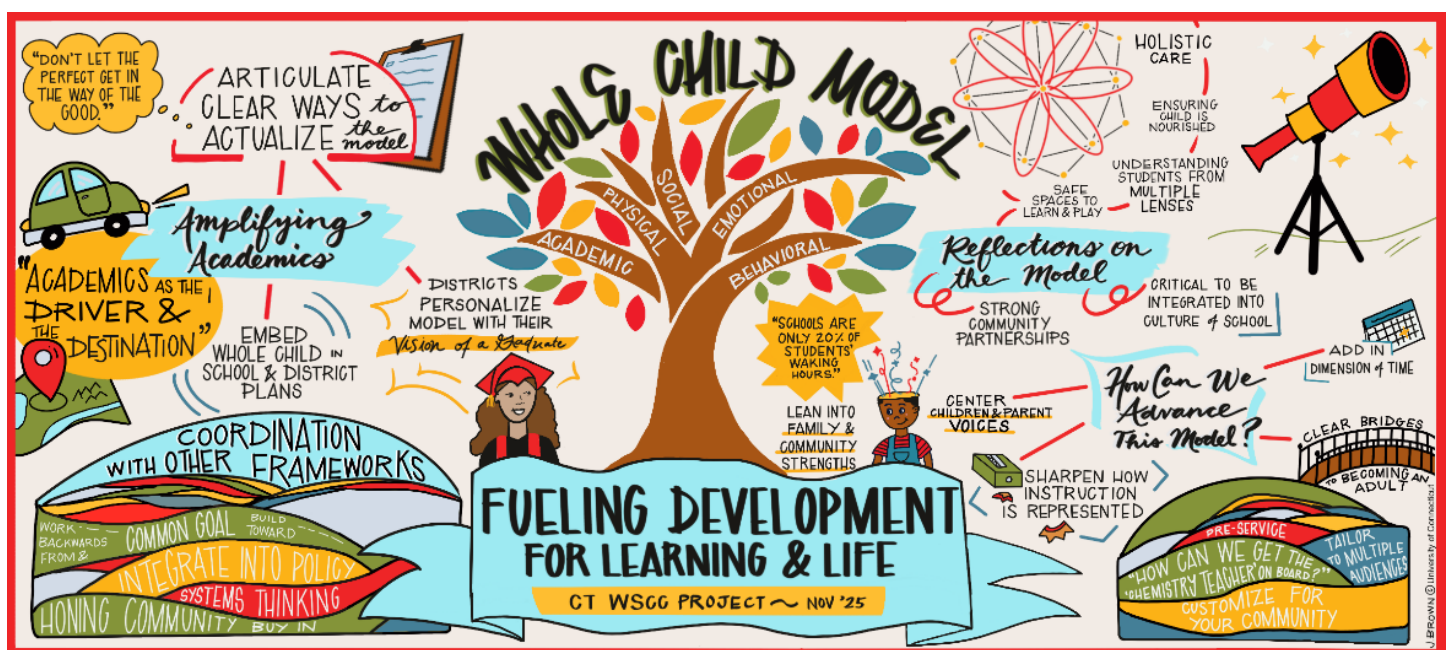


**Whole child approaches benefit student outcomes.** The Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model is the [CDC's framework](#) for integrating health and education efforts. With CDC support, UConn researchers formed the CT WSCC Partnership, which seeks to protect and improve the health and well-being of school-age children and adolescents in Connecticut. The CT WSCC Partnership team provides professional development and technical assistance across the state, strengthening the capacity for whole child aligned policies, processes, and practices.



**In November 2025, the CT WSCC Partnership hosted a convening of leaders to advance whole child efforts in Connecticut.** Twenty leaders with expertise in areas including academic instruction, behavioral supports, health services, family engagement, and community involvement gathered to discuss strengths and opportunities within the WSCC model. Participants from the State Department of Education, Department of Public Health, community-based organizations, and school districts engaged in small group discussion and full group share-outs. A visual scribe captured the conversation.

## Visual Developed through the CT Whole Child Convening



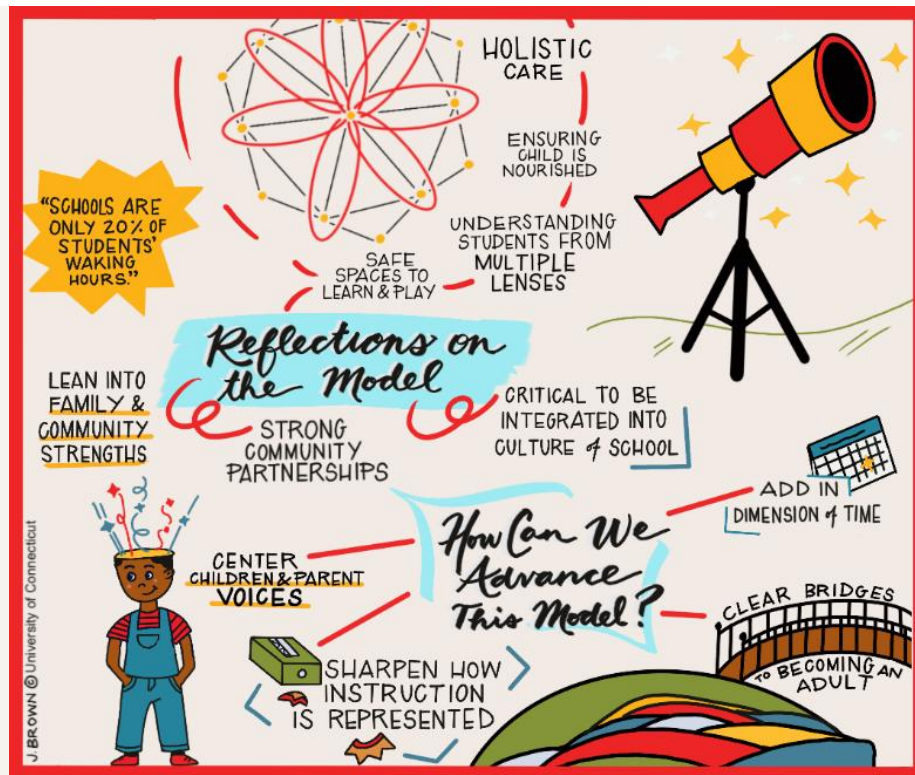


## Defining the “Whole Child”

Participants said that caring for the “whole child” meant **meeting their complete hierarchy of needs**, including emotional, mental, behavioral, physical, and spiritual. Participants described a supported child as well-balanced, happy, self-aware, aware of others, and able to express themselves authentically. Participants viewed their roles in supporting the whole child as “providing safe spaces to learn and play” and recognizing the unique strengths and needs of each child.

## Strengths and Opportunities to Advance the WSCC Model

Participants described how the WSCC model **encompassed many aspects of supporting children in schools**, helping users support the “whole child” or see children through multiple lenses. They viewed the model as **adaptable** to the needs of each individual school district. The model promotes **integration and coordination** of efforts across domains, while also allowing users to focus on a few priority domains at a time.

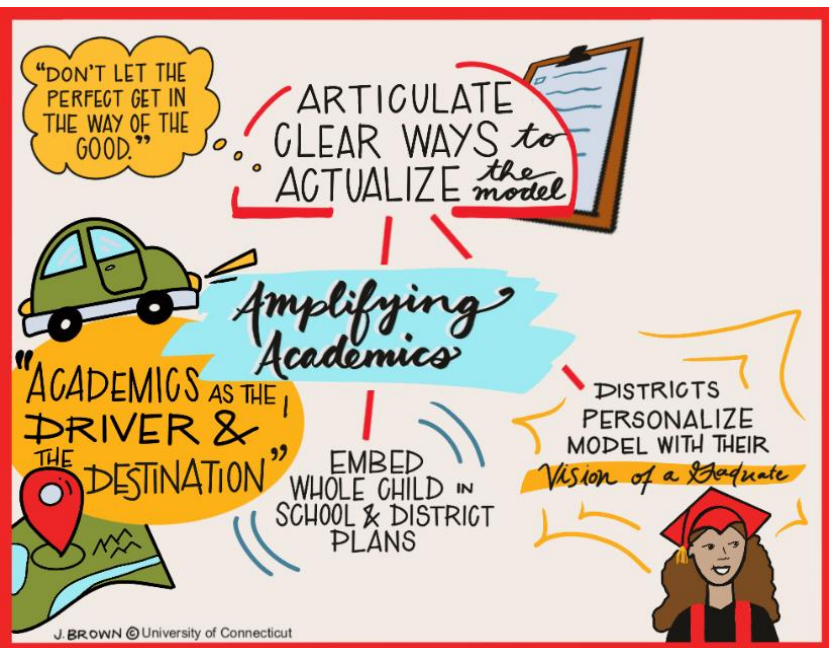


However, participants also expressed that the model must more clearly foreground **academic instruction** in order secure family and educator buy-in. The model also misses explicit consideration of **student and parent voices**. Some suggested adding the dimension of **time** to depict student development and evolving **societal considerations** (e.g., increased role of technology in students’ lives).



## Amplifying Academics within the WSCC Model

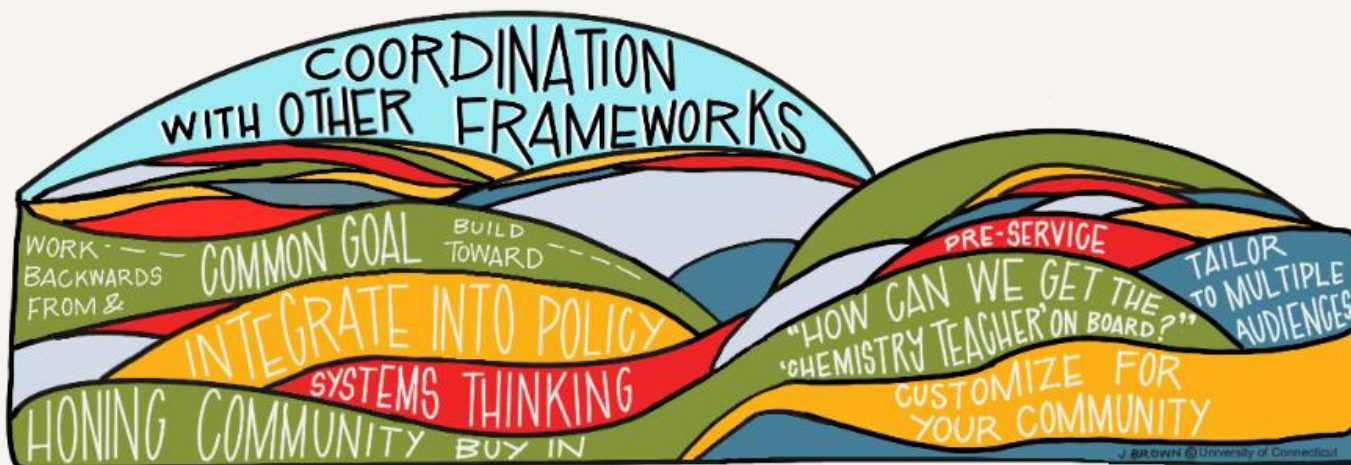
Participants suggested that academics are “both the driver and the destination” of whole child work. Whole child work could be **embedded within district strategic planning** to increase buy-in and strengthen connections to academic goals. Others suggested the model could be **personalized with each school’s “Vision of a Graduate”** to further reinforce alignment with district priorities. The explicit link between community values and the model would increase buy-in from administrators, educators, and families.



“Don’t let the perfect get in the way of the good.”

## Coordinating the WSCC Model with Other School Frameworks

Participants stressed the importance of approaching this work with a **systems mindset**: starting small, building gradually, measuring impact, and growing over time. A range of school frameworks (i.e., the WSCC model, MTSS, strategic plans) could be viewed as pieces of the whole and steps to the outcome. **Tailored communication** would generate buy-in for whole child work from school administrators, educators, families, and the community. Participants suggested varied language and information campaigns. Policies could also address opportunities for **school personnel professional growth** on whole child topics (e.g. pre-service requirements, early career professional learning).



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