

# How School Wellness Policies Were Developed in Washington

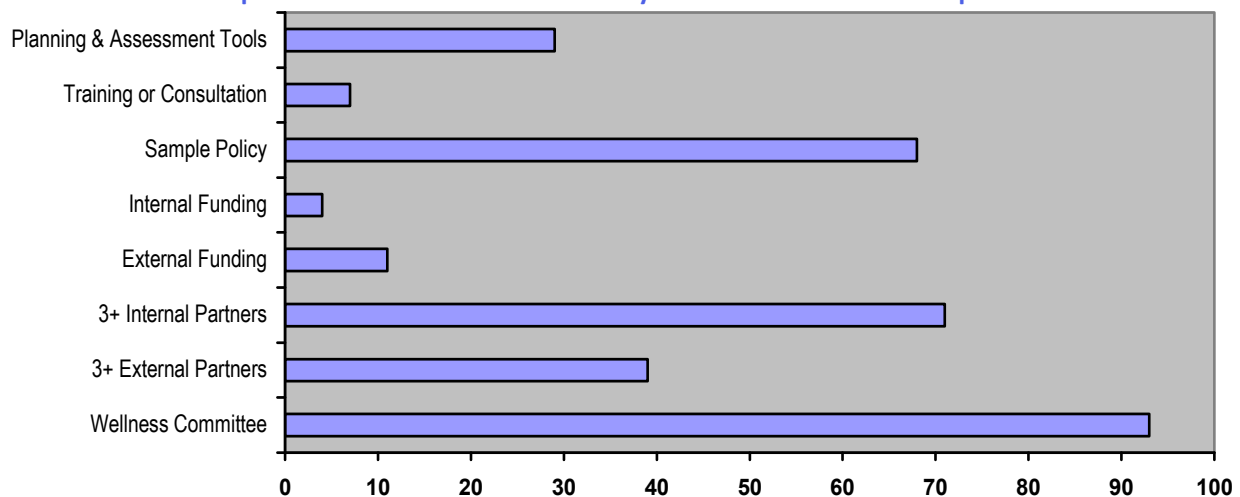


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State legislation required Washington's school districts to develop a nutrition and fitness policy by the start of the 2005-2006 school year, a year before the federal legislation required districts to develop wellness policies. Most districts complied with this mandate, but there are differences in the quality of these policies and the process that was used in local school districts across the state to develop the policies. In order to describe what happened in local school districts, ninety-seven local leaders involved in policy development were interviewed during the 2006-2007 school year.

## Key Results

Proportion of Districts that Extensively Used Resources to Develop Policies



### Most Extensively Used Development Tools, Policies and Trainings Reported By Districts

- Planning & Assessment Tools: Action for Healthy Kids (18%), CDC's School Health Index (7%), USDA's Changing the Scene (3%)
- Sample Policies: WA Sample Policy (WSSDA) (61%), other districts' policies (57%)
- Training and Consultation: Children's Alliance (3%)

### Community Movement Towards Healthier Schools

This survey was collected after state and federal policy requirements were in place. Many districts continue to develop and modify their policies. Reasons given for ongoing policy improvement:

- Commitment to improving the health of the students
- Community-wide interest in health and wellness
- Increasing BMI, overweight, diabetes and out of shape kids
- The efforts of champions for student health and fitness
- Feedback from students & teachers that it is important

## Opportunities for Action

- Many districts engaged in a meaningful process to develop policies to support student health and readiness-to-learn.
- State and federal legislation effectively increased awareness of school wellness issues – which is a necessary first step towards creating healthier school environments.
- There is variability between schools in the development process and quality of the final policy.
- On-going policy improvement provides an opportunity to improve the health of all Washington students.