

Five Tips for Large-Scale Assessment of School Wellness Policies Using the WellSAT Scoring System

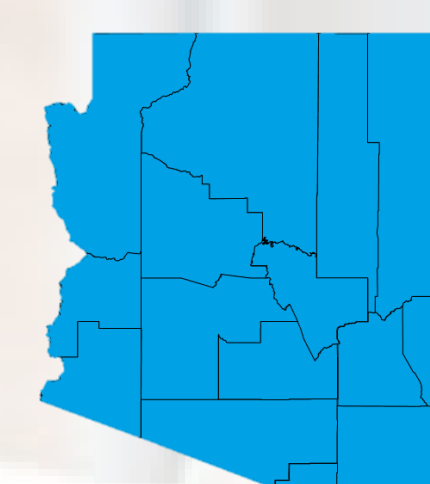
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Who Should Read This Poster?

This information is for those looking to systematically assess written School Wellness Policies (SWPs), including state SNAP-Education agencies and health departments.

Who Are We?



The **AZ Health Zone** administers Arizona's SNAP-Education program. Our multi-year, statewide evaluations follow the American Evaluation Association's evaluation standards and guiding principles.

The **Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity** developed the WellSAT to measure the quality of written SWPs, in consultation with an advisory board. The WellSAT has been updated twice to reflect changes to national regulations from the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act.

What Did We Do?

From October 2015—September 2018, the AZ Health Zone State Evaluation Team used a WellSAT scoring process (**Figure**) to assess the quality of written SWPs from over 120 SNAP-Education-qualified districts and schools across Arizona's 15 counties.

We prioritized low user burden and use of findings, and conducted a meta-evaluation to improve the scoring process. Consequently, we identified best practices for large-scale SWP assessment using the WellSAT.

Why Did We Do It?

To identify key characteristics of an **accurate, consistent, and useful** system for large-scale SWP assessment.

What Did We Find?

We identified **5 key practices** for systematically scoring SWPs on a large scale.

TIP 1

Train scorers using the wellsat.org instructions and state guidelines. School health policies vary by state. We developed an Arizona-specific scoring template.

EXAMPLE: The Arizona Nutrition Standards (ANS) include the USDA Smart Snack Standards, so we credited SWPs that reference the ANS as addressing Smart Snacks.

TIP 2

Use two scorers. We compared results from two trained, independent scorers on our team to catch errors and resolve discrepancies.

WHY? If districts score their own SWPs, it is hard to compare scores across districts. And, this places added burden on local SNAP-Education agencies or districts.

TIP 3

Make easy-to-use recommendations. We provided detailed, score-based recommendations on how to revise SWP language.

HOW? For each SWP scored, we created a 2-page Word document with bullet-point recommendations organized by WellSAT section.

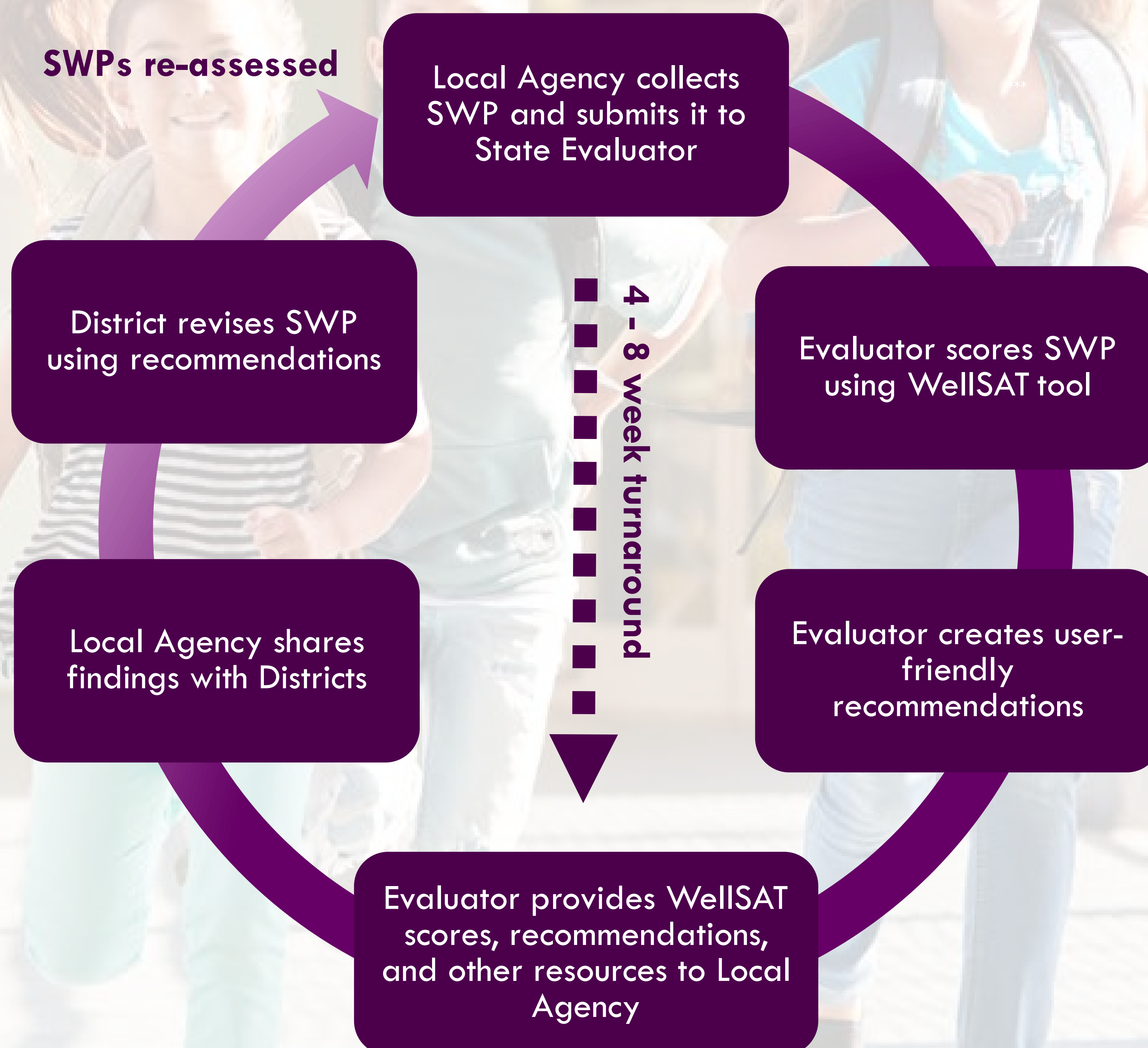
Section 1: Nutrition Education
 • Adding the **grade levels receiving education** to the "Nutrition Education" section will increase clarity.

TIP 4

Aim for rapid, responsive turnaround. We generated results within 4-8 weeks, or prior to district SWP meetings.

EXAMPLE: When a local SNAP-Education agency learned that a district wanted to review their SWP the following week, we provided the WellSAT scorecard and recommendations back within 2 days.

Arizona's SWP Assessment Process is Cyclical



TIP 5

Offer guidance for how to interpret scores. We created a visual that categorized scores into 4 phases: beginning, developing, accomplished, and exemplary. This fostered interest for reaching the next phase of development.

WHY? WellSAT scores range from 0-100, so districts interpreted scores as A-F grades. A strength score of 60 was perceived as failing, when 60 was actually exemplary relative to statewide scores.

