

Washington School Wellness Policies' Strengths and Comprehensiveness

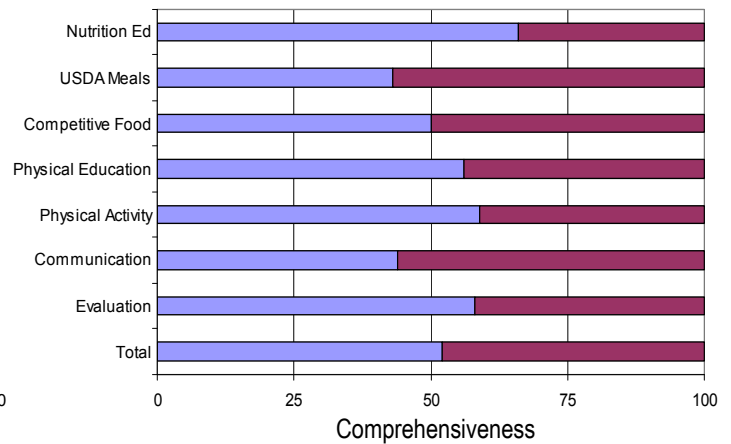
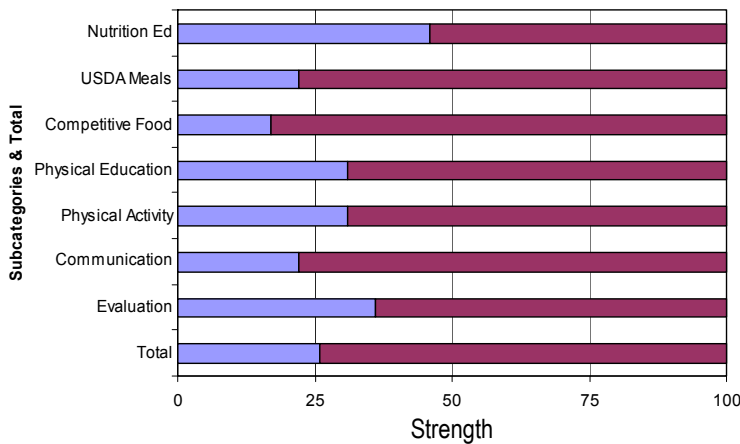


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State legislation required Washington's school districts to develop a nutrition and fitness policy by the start of the 2005-2006 school year, a year before the federal legislation required districts to develop wellness policies. Most districts complied 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.

Average Wellness Policy Quality Scores for 93 WA School Districts

■ Score ■ Room for Improvement



Key Results

- All 93 districts had developed a policy that addressed nutrition and/or fitness by the 2007-08 school year.
- Many of the policies addressed a broad range of topics.
- The majority of the school district wellness policies are broad but weak; they are not measurable or enforceable.
- Washington Senate Bill 5436 did not result in robust policies in many school districts.

Opportunities for Improvement

- **Nutrition:** Policies are especially weak in the areas of foods sold in competition with school meals, school meals themselves, and communication about implementing and enforcing school wellness policies.
- **Physical Activity:** Over half the policies guarantee that elementary students are provided recess, but almost no policies institutionalized safe and active routes to school.
- Local policies could be improved through additional guidance, support, funding and incentives.

