

# Dissertation Defense

Presented by  
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*“Using the Consolidated Framework for  
Implementation Research to Improve  
Within-School Collaboration and Support  
the Whole School, Whole Community,  
Whole Child Model”*

**Thursday, April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

**12:00 p.m.**

**Virtually via [WebEx](#)**

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## Abstract

The Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model provides a comprehensive, coordinated framework that integrates education and health to support students' health and learning in safe, supportive, and engaging school environments. It highlights the need to coordinate policies, processes, and practices to coordinate all the components of healthy schools. However, such coordination may be difficult, as teachers and staff from multiple areas often must collaborate, and schools have limited time, personnel, and resources. This dissertation uses the Inner Setting domain of the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (CFIR) to examine how local school wellness policies (LSWPs) that support the WSCC model are implemented in schools, particularly when they require coordination and collaboration between staff.

**Study 1** examined the relationship between administrator turnover and improvements in district wellness policies and practices, using data from all public school districts in Kansas (N = 286) during a five-year initiative to improve school wellness. Analyses indicated that principal and superintendent turnover were not related to changes in a measure of districts' wellness policies and practices. This suggests that changes in school administrators do not necessarily stall efforts to improve LSWPs and their implementation.

**Study 2** surveyed local educational agencies (N = 52) about the forms of technical assistance they found helpful for completing a federally-required triennial LSWP assessment. Their responses indicated that 1) a variety of technical assistance options helped them complete the assessment; 2) they would like to see the process streamlined; and 3) they believe the triennial assessment should be a district-wide responsibility.

**Study 3** interviewed school district staff (N = 8) about implementing three WSCC-aligned policies requiring collaboration between multiple parties. Interviewees indicated that barriers to implementation included the COVID-19 pandemic, lack of goals or incentives, and isolation from other staff. Active wellness committees, partnerships with external organizations, and quality interpersonal relationships helped districts overcome challenges to implementation.

Together, these findings highlight opportunities to support LSWP implementation despite the challenges schools face. Using the CFIR to guide these studies underscored the importance of district wellness committees in implementation. Districts should support their wellness committees to support students' healthy development better.

**Keywords:** school wellness; Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child model; implementation; Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research