

# Professional Development and Training

Professional development and training are central to implementation of the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model, and properly trained staff and teachers are critical to the healthy development of the whole child. This analysis reviews how state policy supports the **professional development and training** of staff and teachers across components of the WSCC model.

## What professional development and training-related topics have been emphasized in state laws?

**Professional Development.** While teachers and staff often have prescribed professional development mandates, the required content and availability of courses in certain topic areas varies greatly by state.

- An average of 22 states' laws address professional development-related topics; however, most states focus on professional development related to bullying and suicide prevention (41 states each), and far fewer states focus on the other seven professional development topics examined here.
- Given the important role that school nurses play in supporting the whole child, it was notable that only 20 states' laws provide for professional development of school nurses.

**Table 1 State Law Coverage of Professional Development and Training-Related Constructs**

School Staff/Teacher-related Professional Development (PD) Constructs	# States Addressing Construct	School Staff/Teacher-related Qualifications/Training Constructs	# States Addressing Construct
Bullying PD	41	School Counseling Staff Qualifications	51
Suicide Prevention PD	41	School Nurse Qualifications	39
Cultural Competency PD	20	Food Service Staff Training	18
School Nurse PD	20	Physical Education Teacher Qualifications	18
Mental Health PD	19	Food Service Director Qualifications	13
Parent Engagement PD	16	Health Education Teacher Qualifications	12
Health Education PD	15	<b>Average # of states addressing staff/teacher qualifications/training in state law</b>	<b>25</b>
Physical Education Teacher PD	11		
Trauma-Informed Practices PD	11		
<b>Average # of states addressing WSCC-related PD in state laws</b>	<b>22</b>		

**Staff Training and Qualifications.** Six topics captured staff qualifications and training for specific WSCC-related positions throughout the school environment.

- An average of 25 states address the staff training and qualification-related topics examined for this report.
- All states' laws specify standards governing school counselor qualifications, and 39 states' laws specify requirements for school nurses.
- Eighteen states' laws require that training be provided for food service staff, but only 13 states' laws specify standards for food service director qualifications.
- Laws address qualifications for physical education and health education teachers in only 18 and 12 states, respectively.

**Figure 1. Two states (CT & AR) require professional development on 11 separate topic areas.**

*Comprehensiveness of policies promoting professional development and qualifications in schools, by state*



### How much variation was observed in state law?

- On average, state laws address seven of the 15 professional development and training-related topics examined for this report.
- The number of professional development and training topics that state laws address ranges from three (7 states) to 11 topics (2 states).

*This map shows states that have [◊] comprehensive (2), [Δ] moderate (32), and [□] low (17) coverage of professional development and qualifications topics in statutes and regulations governing education.*

### What opportunities exist for states to address WSCC-related professional development and training constructs in their state laws?

- Providing additional requirements for professional development, training, and teacher qualifications related to healthy schools are clear areas of opportunity for states. Without such training and professional development opportunities, staff and teachers will not be able to provide children with the lifelong skills and knowledge they need to make good choices regarding health, nutrition, and physical activity. However, schools often have limited time and resources for implementing such professional development; identifying ways to integrate and coordinate professional development across multiple domains is critical to ensuring schools adhere to such laws with fidelity.

*Child Trends, in partnership with The Institute of Health Research and Policy, University of Illinois at Chicago and EMT Associates, Inc., examined the extent to which 11 healthy schools domains are addressed in state policy. These domains include the 10 components of the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model: Health Education; Physical Education and Physical Activity; Nutrition Environment and Services; Health Services; Counseling, Psychological, and Social Services; Social and Emotional Climate; Physical Environment; Employee Wellness; Family Engagement; and Community Involvement. An additional domain, the WSCC References domain, addresses the extent to which state laws include explicit references to the WSCC model or similar language, such as the Center for Disease Control and Preventions' Coordinated School Health model.*

*This sub-brief provides an overview of how state policies prepare schools to implement the WSCC model by promoting Professional Development and Training. Data on these topics are available through the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) [State Policy Database on School Health](#). Sub-briefs covering the individual domains as well as the compiled report can be found on the [Child Trends website](#).*